BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
Item: 11

Cabinet

Monday
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at 7.00 pm

The Guildhall
St Peter’s Place
Canterbury
CT1 2DB

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Page (s)

11 CITY AND TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES 3 - 406

Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable project directories:

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canterbury city council

Canterbury City Centre

Project Directory

The City Centre Strategy Vision

"A world-class visitor destination, with a reputation for learning, literature and its unlocked historic treasures that are inviting, exciting and effortless to explore. Canterbury will encourage visitors to stay longer, students to put down long-term roots and businesses to grow. The city will be a hub for creativity, education and enterprise all year-round."

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Overview

What the directory is for

This project directory sets out how we will turn the city centre strategy into action across Canterbury. The three strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable were developed with residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders, and are intended to be owned by the places themselves, with the council acting as an enabler rather than the only delivery body.

For that reason, the directory is not limited to Canterbury City Council projects. We want it to reflect what is happening on the ground, so it will include partner-led and community-led projects alongside council-led activity that support the shared vision and principles in the strategies.

By bringing this wider range of projects together, the directory will help partners see how different activity connects, where collaboration could increase impact, and what support or coordination might be needed to move projects forward. It will also help us maintain momentum and provide continuity as responsibilities change through local government reorganisation and the transition to a new unitary authority.

We welcome partners to share their projects for inclusion, so the directory provides a fuller picture of delivery and helps us work together towards the shared vision for each place.

This project directory follows established UK Government best practice by applying HM Treasury's Green Book[1] principles of consistent, evidence-based appraisal, incorporating the 2025 review's[2] emphasis on place-based decision-making and integrated local project pipelines, and adopting Teal Book[3] guidance on project deliverability, risks, permissions and roles.

Its structure also reflects the Five Case Model[4] used across government for robust business cases, ensuring clear rationale, strategic alignment, defined outcomes and a transparent, proportionate scoring method fully aligned with recognised national standards.

Why it's beneficial for partner and stakeholder projects to be included

Shared direction and legitimacy: It shows how projects contribute to an agreed place-based vision and principles that were developed through extensive engagement, helping partners demonstrate community relevance and strategic fit.

Coordination and reduced duplication: A consolidated list helps identify overlaps, gaps, dependencies and opportunities to collaborate, especially where projects need multiple organisations to succeed.

Better access to investment and funding: Being able to point to an agreed pipeline of projects aligned with strategic priorities strengthens bids for external funding and helps partners align investment with a coherent place narrative.

Visibility and advocacy: The directory creates a clearer picture of "what's happening where" and can be used to communicate priorities to decision-makers, funders and future delivery bodies, ensuring partner-led projects are part of the overall story.

Clearer accountability and delivery planning: Capturing lead organisations, partners, timescales and links to strategy principles supports realistic sequencing (e.g., feasibility, scoping, partnership formation) and enables progress to be monitored and reviewed.

1 www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-green-book-and-accompanying-guidance-and-documents
2 lordslibrary.parliament.uk/governments-green-book-review-and-reforms/
3 projectdelivery.gov.uk/2025/04/01/government-project-delivery-launches-the-teal-book/
4 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6984ac702df808759a7bd740/The_Green_Book_2026.pdf

Supports a co-created, place-led approach: The strategies are intended to be shared frameworks owned by the places themselves. Including partner projects reinforces shared ownership and collective responsibility for delivery.

Continuity through local government reorganisation (LGR): With council responsibilities expected to transfer to a new unitary in April 2028, the directory helps ensure partner projects don't lose momentum and provides an organised starting point for the successor authority.

Creates a clear audit trail and preserves corporate memory: capturing projects that are underway, completed, or removed/rejected (with rationale) provides a transparent record of decisions and progress, helping retain tacit knowledge and ensuring a smooth handover to the new unitary authority during LGR.

How we intend to use the directory

The directory will be developed as a comprehensive long list of projects identified through engagement and evidence. It will then be used to prioritise and sequence activity into action plans, including a time-bound CCC plan aligned to the 2026–2028 transition period as well as longer-term opportunities. It will also support oversight through council governance routes and ongoing monitoring and review.

What we need from partners

To make the directory useful, comparable and as a basis for prioritisation, projects are captured in a consistent format. Key information is required to help better identify which projects are most strongly aligned to the strategies, likely to deliver the greatest public value, and are most realistic to progress in the short term.

The best submissions will:

- Be place-based - they clearly show how the project addresses the specific needs, challenges or opportunities of Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.
- Link directly to one or more strategy principles - projects will be scored on strategic fit based on these connections.
- Provide a meaningful outcome, not just an activity - 'what changes' is more important than 'what we will do'.
- Be realistic about deliverability - projects need not be fully designed, but they must be plausible.
- Identify partners early - strong partnership working is a core principle across all strategies.
- Acknowledge uncertainties - transparent submissions are preferable over overly polished but unrealistic ones.

More detail about the information required is below.

Core project criteria

A project should be included if it meets all of the following:

1. **Fits the strategies**

   The project clearly supports and is therefore strategically aligned with at least one of the agreed strategy principles and/or the place vision for Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.

2. **Is place-based**

   The project is geographically relevant and is located in, serves, or has a clear impact on one (or more) of the three centres (or their immediate connections/gateway areas where relevant).

3. **Has an identified lead and delivery route**

   There is a named lead organisation (not necessarily CCC) and an outline of who else needs to be involved (partners/stakeholders).

4. **Is described consistently**

   The project can be captured and compared with others using the directory template fields (title, description, location, delivery partners, outputs, outcomes, deliverability etc.).

5. **Is lawful/appropriate in principle**

   Nothing obvious suggests it is unlawful, unsafe, discriminatory, or incompatible with relevant policies in principle (even if detail comes later).

6. **Not "business as usual"**

   The work is a time-limited piece of activity that goes beyond routine service delivery/maintenance and is intended to deliver a defined change aligned to the strategies. It must have:

   - a clear start point and a clear end point (or clear phase end),
   - a defined output (what will be delivered), and
   - a clear intended impact/outcome (the change it will make).

Routine maintenance or ongoing services should not be included unless they are part of a clearly defined improvement project with specific outputs and outcomes.

Inclusion in the directory does not mean a project is approved, funded or favoured by Canterbury City Council or its partners. Inclusion means that the project could meaningfully contribute to the shared direction of one or more of the district's urban areas, and broadly meets the criteria set out above.

Exclusion/out-of-scope criteria

A project will be excluded if:

- There is no clear link to any strategy principle or place vision.
- It is not place-based and therefore has no clear impact on Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.
- There is no identifiable lead and no realistic delivery route.
- It is mainly routine service delivery/maintenance with no strategic regeneration/value link.
- It is clearly non-viable or inappropriate in principle (e.g., conflicts with law/policy in an obvious way).
- It cannot be progressed during the lifetime of the city and town centre strategies (2026–2043).

Draft Local Plan allocations and Regeneration Opportunity Areas (ROAs)

The Draft Local Plan includes several development allocations across the Canterbury district and identifies a number of "Regeneration Opportunity Areas" (ROAs) where the council is committing to prepare development briefs to guide the delivery of future development within these areas.

Development allocations in the city and town centre will be shaped by landowners, developers, planning policy and future planning applications. Those allocations will be added to the directory when there is enough detail to understand what is proposed and how it will contribute to the shared vision, movement, public realm, economic, social and environmental aims of the strategy.

Although many of the ROAs are on council-owned land, many of these areas are at an early or aspirational stage and do not yet have a defined proposal, delivery route or agreed scheme. At this stage, they are better understood as places with development potential rather than projects that can be meaningfully assessed through this directory. This directory therefore does not seek to list every ROA identified in the draft Local Plan.

The council is committing to undertaking further work over the period of the Draft Local Plan to bring forward development on these important brownfield regeneration opportunity sites. When this work gets underway and is sufficiently developed to describe what is being proposed, how the site may change and how it could support the city and town centre strategies, they can be included in the directories. Until that point, there is not enough information to explain their outputs, outcomes, deliverability, risks or contribution to the strategy principles. As proposals emerge, relevant sites will be brought into the directories so their contribution to the city and town centre strategies can be considered alongside other projects.

This position will also need to be reviewed once the plan is formally adopted, and the allocations and ROAs are confirmed.

Project submissions

Submission form

The submission form for the project directories is currently hosted on the Canterbury City Council website: forms.canterbury.gov.uk/xfp/form/1013

Projects submission form guidance notes

These guidance notes help applicants provide the right level and type of information so their project can:

- be understood clearly,
- be compared fairly with others,
- be scored consistently, and
- contribute meaningfully to the shared vision and strategy principles for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.

The directory will be a list of projects that will help the centres achieve the visions set out in the city and town centre strategies

The stronger and clearer the information you provide, the easier it will be to assess how your project contributes to the strategic direction for each place.

Below is detailed guidance for every section of the form. Applicants should read this carefully before submitting.

Project title: The title of your project

Lead organisation: Which organisation is the accountable body and will drive and/or fund the project?

Main contact: What are the contact details of the main contact?

Date submitted: The date you submit your project.

Section 1: Project overview

Place: Tick all locations your project meaningfully affects. Projects must have a place specific relevance to Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable city and town centres.

Specific location(s) (site/street/area): Provide the street, site boundary, building name or defined area. This helps assess deliverability, planning implications and relationship to nearby assets.

Short description: Clearly describe:

- what the project is,
- the problem or opportunity it addresses,
- who it benefits,
- why it matters in the town/city context.

Linked strategy principle(s): Which city or town centre strategy principles does the project support? Each strategy includes eight strategic principles. Tick which principle(s) your project supports.

Delivery partners: Which partners will need to be involved to enable or deliver the project? These could be public, private, community or third-sector organisations e.g. landowners, local groups, transport bodies, cultural partners, utilities, funders.

Project stage: Select the current stage (idea, scoping, feasibility, design, delivery, completed or other). This helps us understand:

- the level of certainty,
- what evidence exists,
- how soon the project could realistically move forward.
- Early-stage ideas are welcome, just be clear about what is known and unknown.

Timescale: tick the most accurate timeframe

- Short term (pre-April 2028) – priority for the transition period
- Medium term (2028–2032)
- Long term (post-2032)
- Other (explain)

Target start and end dates: Provide estimated dates, even if broad. This supports action planning and sequencing across programmes.

Section 2: What will change?

This section focuses on *impact,* not just activity.

Outputs: What measurable outputs will be delivered at the end of this project? List measurable, tangible deliverables, such as:

- new or improved public spaces, routes or buildings
- events delivered
- feasibility studies completed
- number of businesses supported
- square metres of enhanced public realm
- wayfinding installed
- cultural, youth or community facilities created

Outcomes: What will the impact of this project be and what will change? Describe the difference your project will make such as:

- increased footfall
- safer walking routes
- reduced congestion
- improved access to water, culture or play
- enhanced biodiversity
- improved perceptions of the town centre
- increased visitor dwell time
- increased cultural participation
- improved youth provision
- strengthened heritage value

Outcomes should relate to the strategy's ambitions.

Mechanism of change: How will this project lead to the outputs and outcomes you have stated? Keep it clear and evidence-based.

Beneficiaries: Who will benefit from this project (e.g residents, young people, older people, disabled people visitors, traders/businesses, low-income households, students etc.) and where will the benefits be felt (town centre, gateways, seafront, specific street(s)/site(s), area-wide etc.)

How we will know it's worked: Some simple (one to three) indicators explaining how we will know the project has had the desired impact. Examples could include:

- footfall increase of X%
- reduction in vacancy rates
- visitor satisfaction improved
- safer or greener routes created
- increased participation numbers
- reduction in antisocial behaviour
- improved accessibility for certain groups

Indicators should be simple, focused and realistic.

Section 3: Deliverability

Projects must show a credible route to delivery

Key dependencies (max five bullet points): e.g., landowner agreement, funding decisions, planning permissions, railway or highways approvals, partnership agreements, utilities or ground condition constraints, completion of another linked project.

Dependencies help identify risk and sequencing

Permissions/consents likely needed (if known): e.g planning permission, listed building/conservation area consent, highways/TRO, landlord/freeholder agreement, licenses (markets/events, premises), environmental/marine consents etc.

Key risks/issues: Identify the biggest risks, such as:

- lack of funding
- community opposition
- technical constraints
- anti-social behaviour concerns
- viability challenges
- procurement complexity
- dependency on other organisations

Support needed to progress: Explain what you need from the council or partners:

- convening power
- feasibility resource
- fundraising support
- planning guidance
- highways engagement
- data/evidence
- brokering between landowners or stakeholders

This informs the future action plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost (if known): Provide a realistic range or note if unknown.

Projects will not be excluded for early-stage uncertainty.

Likely funding route (eg grant, private, revenue, in-kind, mixed, unknown/to be explored, other): Tick the relevant option(s) and briefly note any assumptions (such as expected external funding, for example)

Funding or in-kind support already identified (optional): Include offers of materials, land access, volunteer time, sponsorship etc.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: How confident are you that the project will realise the intended benefits? Select high, medium or low.

Evidence/sources (one to three bullets): Examples:

- results from local consultations
- survey data
- feasibility studies
- market analysis
- case studies from other towns
- insight from local businesses, BID or community groups
- health or deprivation data
- heritage or tourism analysis

This supports transparent scoring and gives confidence in the proposal.

How projects will be scored

Projects will be scored by the relevant place panel based on the information provided by the project lead in the projects template (the directory submission form). The scoring framework asks Panels to assign a 0–5 score across five headings:

- Strategic fit (0–5)
- Economic impact (0–5)
- Social impact (0–5)
- Environmental benefit (0–5)
- Deliverability (0–5)

This approach reflects a light touch version of established appraisal thinking: considering the likely costs, benefits and risks of proposals and comparing options in a structured way, without requiring full appraisal-level detail at the directory stage.

The scoring is intended to be proportionate: early-stage ideas can still be included and scored using the best available information, and scores can be refined as projects develop (for example, when moving from an 'idea' to 'feasibility' stage or when preparing funding bids).

Where information is missing or genuinely unknown, panels will avoid guessing and can use an "unknown/low confidence" note alongside the score, so the project can be revisited once more detail is available.

How the scores will be used

The place panels' scores will be used to help:

- Identify priority projects to progress and coordinate with partners.
- Sequence activity and agree realistic next steps (e.g., feasibility, permissions, partnership building, design).
- Develop recommendations for inclusion the action plans
- Provide a clear, consistent basis for discussion and oversight as the directory and action plans return through governance routes.

To keep scoring fair and comparable across different types of projects (council-led, partner-led, and community-led), the place panels will use the agreed definitions for what 0-5 means under each heading.

Where projects are similar or interdependent, panels can also note links and dependencies so that sequencing decisions reflect how projects work together as a programme, not just as stand alone items.



Image: © Josh Carter

1 Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Enhancing Canterbury's gateways and arrival points, ensuring visitors have a coherent and positive first impression of the city. Improving signage and connectivity between the historic core and growth areas, supporting business development and employment beyond the city walls.

1.1 Canterbury gateways

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council to transition to successor unitary authority; delivery in partnership with KCC Highways and Canterbury BID.

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Primary arrival points and radial gateways including railway stations (Canterbury East and West), coach parks, ring road interfaces and Park & Ride (P&R) arrival nodes; priority sequence to be confirmed at feasibility.

Description: A phased programme to enhance gateways and arrival points, improve wayfinding/legibility, and strengthen connections between the historic core and growth areas. Works will focus on coherent signage, public-realm upgrades at key thresholds, and clearer routes from stations and Park & Ride sites into the centre, creating warm welcomes and memorable first impressions while easing pressure on the medieval core by supporting active travel and P&R use.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Ease transport pressure on the historic centre.

Delivery partners: KCC Highways; Network Rail/Train Operating Co. (for station forecourts); Canterbury Cathedral/precinct stakeholders (where relevant); Canterbury BID; local landowners; utilities.

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: Phase 1 implementation by Q1 2030

Target end date: Unknown

What will change?

Outputs:

- Gateway design briefs and wayfinding strategy approved.
- Installed gateway/arrival improvements at priority nodes.
- New/renewed wayfinding assets (totems/maps/fingerposts) to complement those which we installed as part of the LUF programme
- Public-realm upgrades at station approaches and ring-road crossings.
- Communications toolkit and visitor orientation map suite.

Outcomes:

- Improved first impressions and legibility for residents, visitors and students.
- More active travel/P&R trips into the centre; reduced pressure on the medieval core.
- Better distribution of footfall from gateways to heritage/cultural assets, supporting spend and dwell time.

Mechanism of change: Consistent signage, clearer routes and improved public realm thresholds reduce wayfinding friction and create positive arrival experiences, encouraging people to walk/cycle from gateways and use Park & Ride. This shifts short trips away from car use, spreads footfall more evenly, and links visitors more effectively to heritage/cultural attractions, supporting dwell time and spend

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, older people, disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased visitor wayfinding satisfaction and first-impressions ratings
- Mode share: Percentage arrivals via P&R/active travel increased, vehicle counts at sensitive pinch-points decreased.
- Increased gateway-to-core footfall conversion (automatic counters) and average dwell time.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- KCC Highways approvals for on-street assets and crossings.
- Rail/station landowner consents (Network Rail/ TOC).
- Branding/wayfinding design coordination (BID/ Visit partners).
- Utilities checks and buildability at constrained sites.
- Procurement route and works phasing to minimise disruption.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways/ TRO, planning, permission/advertisement consent (for signage structures), listed building/conservation area (location dependant), landowner/freeholder agreement, licenses (events/temporary works), rail asset protections where applicable.

Key risks/issues:

- Multi-party consents and programme alignment
- Funding availability (no ring-fenced capital; reliance on mixed sources)
- Construction impacts at busy gateways
- Asset maintenance responsibilities post-installation
- Support needed to progress:
- Council convening of KCC/rail/landowners
- Feasibility/design funding and specialist wayfinding consultancy
- Early engagement with BID/Visit Canterbury on branding roll-out
- Data support for baseline footfall/mode-share.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown but it may be possible to make optimum use of the existing evidence base (e.g. Local Plan, design guide/s, Levelling Up Fund programme), for example in steering the project towards a preferred hierarchy of arrival/entry points.

Likely funding route: Mixed - external grants (heritage/public realm/transport), partner contributions (BID/landowners/rail), potential council capital (subject to unitary governance), and in-kind (design/maintenance).

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits (high, medium, low): Medium

Evidence/sources (one to three bullets):

- Canterbury strategic principles - gateways, first impressions, wayfinding and P&R/active travel corridors.
- Tourism/visitor rationale - improving first impressions and access supports dwell time/spend profiles for Canterbury.

1.2 Underpass improvements

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with Kent County Council Highways

Main contact: Place directorate and community safety team

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Pedestrian underpasses and associated approaches around the city centre and ring road, including key routes that connect arrival points, neighbourhoods, car parks, green spaces and the historic core. Priority locations to be confirmed through a city-wide audit.

Description: A phased programme to improve the safety, appearance, accessibility and perceived quality of Canterbury's underpasses, recognising their important role as everyday walking and cycling links and as first impressions for people entering or moving around the city. The project would focus on better lighting, improved sightlines, cleaning, graffiti removal, drainage, CCTV where appropriate, surface repairs, wayfinding, vegetation management and public art or mural opportunities. It would treat underpasses not simply as functional infrastructure, but as important gateway and linkage points that should feel cared for, legible and safe throughout the day and after dark. The programme would be developed with the Community Safety team, Canterbury BID, Kent County Council Highways, Kent Police and local users, and would align with wider work on community safety, public realm management, active travel and city centre gateways.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Promote pilgrimage
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; Kent Police; Canterbury BID; Community Safety Partnership; local residents and community groups; access groups; nearby landowners; universities and student representatives; lighting and CCTV specialists; public art/mural partners; maintenance and cleansing contractors.

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for audit, design and pilot delivery; wider programme phased beyond 2028.

What will change?

Outputs:

- City-wide audit of underpasses, including lighting levels, CCTV coverage, sightlines, cleanliness, drainage, accessibility, condition, ownership and maintenance responsibilities.
- Prioritised underpass improvement plan identifying quick wins, medium-term upgrades and longer-term capital works.
- Pilot improvements at one or more priority underpasses.
- Upgraded lighting using robust, vandal-resistant fittings and improved vertical illumination to support visibility, facial recognition and CCTV effectiveness.
- Improved sightlines through vegetation clearance, removal of unnecessary clutter, management of blind corners and better approach visibility.
- Cleaning, graffiti removal, surface repairs and drainage improvements where required.

- CCTV, mirrors or other reassurance measures installed where evidence shows they are justified and deliverable.
- Public art, murals or design treatments introduced where appropriate to improve visual quality and deter graffiti.
- Agreed maintenance and monitoring plan covering cleansing, lighting repairs, graffiti response, CCTV maintenance and vegetation management.

Outcomes:

- Underpasses feel safer, brighter, cleaner and more welcoming for residents, visitors, students and workers.
- Improved confidence using walking and cycling routes that connect the city centre with surrounding neighbourhoods, car parks, stations, green spaces and growth areas.
- Reduced avoidance of underpass routes, particularly after dark, supporting more direct and sustainable movement around the city.
- Improved perceptions of community safety and public realm care at key gateways and linkage points.
- Reduced opportunity for antisocial behaviour through better lighting, visibility, surveillance and maintenance.
- Stronger connection between Canterbury's historic core and surrounding areas, supporting the city centre strategy aim to make the city easier and more effortless to explore.

Mechanism of change: Underpasses can become avoided when they are dark, dirty, poorly maintained or have restricted sightlines. Improving lighting, visibility, cleanliness, surveillance and surface quality changes both the practical and perceived safety of these routes, making people more likely to use them with confidence. Treating underpasses as part of the city's public realm and gateway network also helps shift them from "leftover" infrastructure into valued links that support active travel, community safety and first impressions.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, young people, older people, disabled people, low-income households and people travelling on foot or by cycle between the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved user perceptions of safety, cleanliness and comfort in priority underpasses, measured through short intercept or QR surveys before and after works.
- Reduced reports of graffiti, lighting faults, cleansing issues and antisocial behaviour in treated underpasses compared with baseline.
- Increased pedestrian and cycle use of improved routes, measured through manual or automated counts where feasible.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Confirmation of ownership, maintenance responsibilities and decision-making routes for each underpass.
- Agreement with Kent County Council Highways on design standards, works access and approvals.
- Baseline safety, lighting, condition and usage audit to prioritise locations and avoid spreading resources too thinly.
- Funding package for both capital improvements and ongoing revenue maintenance.
- Coordination with community safety, policing, CCTV, cleansing, public realm and active travel programmes.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; landowner/freeholder agreement where relevant; CCTV and data protection approvals; planning permission or advertisement consent if new public art, signage or structures require it; temporary works licences and traffic management where required; conservation area input where underpasses or approaches sit in sensitive settings.

Key risks/issues:

- Maintenance risk: improvements will lose impact quickly if lighting faults, graffiti, litter and vegetation are not managed through an agreed response plan.
- Ownership and responsibility risk: underpasses may involve multiple agencies, creating delays or gaps unless roles are clarified early.
- Displacement risk: improvements at one location may move antisocial behaviour to another if the programme is not linked to wider community safety work.
- Technical risk: drainage, structural constraints, power supply, CCTV connectivity or vandalism may increase costs or limit feasible options.
- Perception risk: physical improvements alone may not change behaviour unless supported by visible stewardship, communications and ongoing monitoring.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to bring together Kent County Council Highways, Community Safety, Kent Police, Canterbury BID and maintenance partners.
- Feasibility and audit funding to assess condition, lighting, CCTV, safety, accessibility and maintenance requirements.
- Community and user engagement to identify priority locations and understand lived experience, including women and girls, students, older people, disabled people and night-time users.
- Design and technical support for lighting, CCTV, sightlines, accessibility, drainage and public art.
- Monitoring support to establish baseline data and track improvements after delivery.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Likely to vary significantly by site, with lower-cost quick wins such as cleaning, vegetation clearance, graffiti removal and lighting repairs, and higher-cost interventions where new lighting, CCTV, drainage, surfacing or structural works are required.

Likely funding route: Mixed - community safety funding, Safer Streets-style grants where available, highways/public realm funding, active travel funding, Canterbury BID or partner contributions, developer contributions where linked to growth areas or movement routes, and council or successor authority capital subject to programme priorities.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No confirmed funding identified. Potential in-kind support may include partner data, community safety insight, business feedback, cleansing/maintenance alignment and public art or student-led design input.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Underpass improvement schemes elsewhere have shown that combined measures such as upgraded lighting, CCTV, graffiti removal, vegetation clearance, improved sightlines and targeted design changes, can improve reassurance and reduce fear of crime when linked to active monitoring and maintenance.
- Active travel and inclusive design guidance emphasises that underpasses should be short, direct, well-lit, naturally overlooked where possible, and designed to maximise perceived safety; poorly maintained, poorly lit or poorly drained underpasses can deter walking and cycling.
- Community safety practice and crime prevention through environmental design support interventions that improve visibility, remove hidden corners, strengthen surveillance, maintain cleanliness and signal active stewardship of public spaces.

1.3 Green welcome bridge

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, KCC

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): The pedestrian road bridge over the ring road at Canterbury East station.

Description: A targeted gateway improvement to transform the pedestrian bridge at Canterbury East station into a greener, safer and more welcoming arrival experience. The project will introduce high-quality planting/greening, alongside complementary public-realm enhancements such as improved lighting, decluttering, surface repairs and wayfinding. The bridge is a key first step for many arriving by rail and crossing the ring road into the city. It currently serves as a functional piece of infrastructure rather than a "welcome". Enhancing this pinch-point will strengthen first impressions, support active travel and create a more pleasant, inclusive route into the newly renovated park, aligning with the wider strategy aim to make Canterbury effortless to explore and to improve gateways and arrival points.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre

Delivery partners: KCC Highways, Network Rail/Train Operating Company, Canterbury BID/Visit Canterbury

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Completed feasibility/design package (structural checks, planting specification, maintenance plan)
- Installed greening interventions on/adjacent to the bridge (e.g., integrated planters/greening features) with resilient, low-maintenance species
- Improved lighting and legibility on the bridge approaches (integrated with wider wayfinding where feasible
- Agreed long-term stewardship arrangement (who maintains planting, irrigation if any, litter removal, replacements)

Outcomes:

- Improved first impressions for rail arrivals and a clearer sense of arrival into Canterbury.
- A more pleasant and inclusive walking route from Canterbury East Station across the ring road (supporting active travel and confidence for a wider range of users).
- Improved perceptions of care, safety and welcome at a key gateway point (responding to city centre strategy engagement themes around lighting and public realm quality).
- Biodiversity/public realm uplift at a hard-edged infrastructure location, reinforcing the city's wider green-infrastructure value and residents' strong attachment to green spaces

Mechanism of change: By converting a utilitarian ring-road crossing into a greener, better-lit "threshold space", the project reduces the psychological and practical friction of arriving on foot from the station. Improved comfort, legibility and attractiveness increase the likelihood that visitors, students and residents choose to walk into the centre, strengthening the "warm welcome" gateway experience and supporting the strategy's ambition for an effortless city experience

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, older people, disabled people (via improved comfort/legibility/lighting).

How we will know it has worked:

1. **Arrival satisfaction** (short intercept survey/QR feedback at station bridge) improves vs baseline (welcome, wayfinding, attractiveness).
2. **Pedestrian counts** over the bridge increase (manual counts or automated counter) and/or improved station-to-centre "conversion" footfall.
3. **Perceived safety after dark** improves (survey) following lighting/greening works, reflecting engagement priorities.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Structural feasibility (wind loading, additional weight, fixing points, drainage, any irrigation needs).
- Agreement with KCC Highways on works affecting highway land/ring road interface.
- Station/rail interface permissions where required (Network Rail/TOC) and branding/wayfinding alignment.
- Clear maintenance/asset ownership plan (planting care, replacement cycles, litter management).
- Funding package identified (capital and ongoing revenue for maintenance).

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways/TRO (if any traffic management or highway land works), planning permission (if structures/fixtures materially alter appearance), landowner/freeholder agreement (bridge ownership/maintenance responsibility), licences (temporary works/traffic management during install).

Key risks/issues:

1. **Maintenance and durability risk:** planting fails or looks unkempt without funded stewardship, undermining "welcome" impact.
2. **Technical constraints:** structural limits, drainage constraints or wind exposure increase costs or reduce feasible greening options.
3. **Multi-party approvals:** bridge/highway/station interfaces require alignment, affecting programme and delivery window.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening to align KCC Highways and rail/station partners and confirm ownership/maintenance.
- Small feasibility/design budget (structure, drainage, planting specification; inclusive design and lighting review).
- Access to baseline data (pedestrian flows, arrival feedback) to evidence change.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (indicative feasibility will confirm; scope likely small-to-medium capital with ongoing maintenance revenue).

Likely funding route: Mixed – public realm/active travel/green infrastructure grants; partner contributions (rail/BID); limited council capital subject to wider programme; plus revenue/in-kind for maintenance.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong alignment with stated priorities; delivery detail depends on feasibility and maintenance plan)

Evidence/sources:

- City centre strategy priority to improve gateways/arrival points and create warm welcomes.
- Engagement themes show demand for more greening/planting and improved lighting/public realm quality.
- Place-based evidence that green infrastructure is highly valued and that improving walking routes/legibility supports wider city centre goals.

1.4 Traffic direction and entrance signage

Lead organisation: Kent County Council (Highways)

Main contact: KCC highways

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Key highway approaches and arrival points around the ring road and radial routes, including main entry corridors from strategic roads, Park & Ride approach routes, coach park access, and key city centre car park decision points. Priority locations to be confirmed through an audit (e.g., ring-road junctions, station approach routes, visitor car park gateways, and primary "decision points" where drivers choose routes into the centre).

Description: A coordinated programme to improve traffic direction, entry and destination signage so visitors can reach the right car parks, Park & Ride, coach drop-off and key arrival points quickly and confidently, without unnecessary circulation around the ring road. The project will review existing signs, simplify messaging, and introduce a clear, consistent hierarchy of "arrival" and "destination" information aligned with Canterbury's destination identity. It will prioritise clarity at key decision points, reduce clutter where possible, and ensure signage is accessible, legible and appropriate for a historic city setting. Better signposting will improve first impressions, reduce congestion caused by uncertainty and last-minute manoeuvres, and support a smoother arrival experience that encourages use of Park & Ride and walking routes into the centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre

Delivery partners: KCC Highways; Canterbury City Council/successor unitary; Canterbury BID/ Visit Canterbury; coach operators/visitor economy partners; major car park operators/landowners; Network Rail/Train Operating Companies (where signage links to station approaches); utilities (where new sign foundations are needed); conservation/ heritage officers (where in sensitive settings).

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-Apr 2028) for audit, design and phase 1 priority locations; medium term for wider roll-out and refinements.

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phase 1 installed by Q1 2029 (subject to approvals and procurement)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A signed-route audit and "signage hierarchy" plan (what information appears where, and what is removed/merged).
- A coordinated signage and destinations schedule (car parks, Park & Ride, coach, stations, key visitor gateways).
- Design pack for a consistent family of signs (fonts, colours, materials, mounting approach), aligned with local place branding where appropriate.
- Phase 1 installation at priority decision points (including any removals/decluttering, replacements and new signs).
- Updated digital mapping and visitor information alignment (so physical signs match online guidance and sat-nav prompts where feasible).

Outcomes:

- Fewer unnecessary vehicle movements and "circling" around the ring road caused by unclear

directions, helping reduce congestion and emissions at peak times.

- Safer driving environment with fewer late lane changes and better compliance at junctions.
- Improved arrival experience and first impressions for visitors, including clearer choices between Park & Ride, car parks and coach arrangements.
- More efficient distribution of arriving traffic to appropriate parking locations, reducing pressure on the medieval core and improving the pedestrian environment.
- Stronger coherence between "arrival", "wayfinding" and Canterbury's destination identity.

Mechanism of change: Clear, consistent and timely information at key decision points reduces uncertainty and prevents drivers overshooting or circulating to find parking. By reinforcing Park & Ride and directing vehicles efficiently to suitable car parks and coach facilities, the project helps reduce avoidable trips around the ring road and discourages pressure on the historic core. A coherent signage hierarchy also supports a calmer, safer and more welcoming arrival sequence.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, older people, disabled people (via improved legibility and reduced stress at arrival points)

How we will know it has worked:

- Reduction in ring-road "circulation" indicators at peak times (e.g., traffic counts/turning movements at selected junctions).
- Increased proportion of visitor arrivals using Park & Ride/appropriate car parks (proxy measures: ticket sales, occupancy patterns, surveys).
- Improved visitor satisfaction with "arrival and getting to parking" (short intercept survey/QR feedback at gateways).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on destinations hierarchy (what we prioritise on signs, and where) across partners.
- KCC Highways approvals for sign locations, mounting and any traffic management during installation.
- Heritage/conservation input where signage sits within sensitive settings or impacts street scene.
- Utilities checks and buildability for new foundations/poles in constrained areas.
- Alignment with the wider Canterbury gateways/ wayfinding programme to avoid duplication and ensure consistent messaging.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways/ TRO (if required for installation and traffic management), planning permission (where new structures materially alter appearance, subject to final scope), advertisement consent (where applicable), listed building/conservation area consent (location dependent), landowner/freeholder agreement (where not on adopted highway), licences for temporary works/traffic management during install

Key risks/issues:

- Sign clutter risk: adding signs without removals could worsen legibility and harm the historic streetscape.
- Misalignment risk: inconsistent messaging across physical signs, visitor materials and online mapping could confuse users.
- Approvals/programme risk: multi-party consents (highways, conservation, landowners) may affect delivery timescales.
- Maintenance/renewals: unclear ownership and maintenance responsibilities could reduce quality over time.
- Behavioural displacement: improved signing may shift traffic patterns; monitoring and adjustments will be needed.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to agree destinations hierarchy with KCC Highways, BID/Visit partners and parking/coach operators.
- Small feasibility/design budget for the audit, sign schedule, design development and consultation with conservation/highways.
- Baseline and monitoring data support (traffic counts, P&R/car park usage, visitor feedback).
- Communications support to align online/print visitor guidance with new signed routes.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed following audit and scope; likely a phased, small-to-medium capital programme with modest ongoing maintenance costs).

Likely funding route: Mixed – transport/active travel and visitor economy grants; developer contributions (where linked to growth and access); partner contributions (BID/parking operators) and limited council capital subject to wider programme; in-kind support for communications and mapping alignment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- City centre strategy engagement themes highlight the need for clearer wayfinding/signage and frustration with congestion.
- Established link between clearer "arrival" information and reduced unnecessary circulation in historic centres.
- Alignment with wider gateway and visitor experience improvements being progressed for Canterbury.

1.5 Riverside walk

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate (public realm/ open spaces)

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): River Stour riverside path sections close to Kingsmead North School and the route near the Coach Park/Stour Street area (including connecting approaches and access points).

Description: A targeted set of improvements to widen and upgrade two pinch-point sections of the riverside walk so it feels safer, more accessible and more consistently "park-like" all year-round. The project will address narrow paths, worn surfaces and constrained edges by widening the usable route where feasible, improving surfacing and drainage, and rebalancing space between movement and riverside habitat. Alongside access upgrades, the scheme will strengthen biodiversity through pollinator-friendly planting, improved riverside edge habitat and better management of invasive species and scrub where it reduces visibility or habitat value. Small, well-sited additions (seating, litter bins, simple wayfinding and low-impact lighting where justified) will make the route more welcoming for everyday walking/cycling, school journeys and visitors moving between the city centre and riverside spaces.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre

- Promote pilgrimage (better quality, coherent walking routes)
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council (public realm/open spaces); Kent County Council Highways (where interfaces affect highways/bridges/crossings); Environment Agency (river corridor consents/advice); Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership; landowners/ leaseholders (including school/adjacent sites where relevant); local community/friends groups; access groups; utilities (if works affect buried services).

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term.

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and outline design package for the two priority sections (options, constraints, cost range, maintenance plan).
- Widened and resurfaced path at identified pinch points (with improved edges, verges and drainage).
- Biodiversity enhancements delivered alongside the route (e.g., pollinator planting, habitat strips, selective scrub management, invasive species action where needed).
- Targeted accessibility upgrades at access points (smoother transitions, reduced trip hazards, clearer route definition).
- Small-scale route "welcome" improvements where appropriate (wayfinding points, seating in suitable locations, well-placed covered litter bins).
- Agreed stewardship plan setting out ownership/ maintenance responsibilities and frequency (path, planting, bins, any lighting).

Outcomes:

- A safer, more comfortable and inclusive riverside route, with reduced conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and other users at narrow points.
- More people choosing to walk/cycle along the riverside for short everyday trips, including school-related journeys, reducing pressure on the historic core.
- A more attractive and better-managed corridor that supports visitor dwell time and encourages movement between riverside spaces and the city centre.
- Improved biodiversity and habitat connectivity along the river corridor, with stronger pollinator and riverside edge value.
- Improved perceptions of care, safety and cleanliness on a highly visible green/blue corridor.

Mechanism of change: By widening constrained sections and improving surfaces, the route becomes easier to use for a wider range of people (including buggies, wheelchairs and less confident cyclists) and reduces pinch-point conflict. Integrating habitat and planting upgrades alongside access works improves the riverside's ecological function while maintaining sightlines and a cared-for feel. Together, these changes make the riverside a more appealing everyday route and a stronger part of Canterbury's visitor and resident experience.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, young people, older people, disabled people, students, low-income households (free/low-cost access to high-quality public space).

How we will know it has worked:

- Pedestrian/cycle counts increase at the improved sections (baseline vs post-completion).
- User satisfaction improves (short intercept/QR feedback focused on comfort, safety, accessibility and route quality).
- Biodiversity indicators improve (e.g., pollinator/ planting establishment checks and simple habitat condition scores) and litter/maintenance issues reduce (fewer reports/cleaner audits).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on exact widening extents and land/edge treatments at each pinch point (including any landowner approvals).
- Ecology and riverside constraints understood early (seasonal working windows, protected species considerations, riverbank stability).
- Appropriate consents and permits secured for works close to the river and any structures.
- Funding package confirmed (capital and revenue for ongoing maintenance).
- Clear maintenance and stewardship arrangements agreed before installation (planting care, path upkeep, bin emptying, any lighting maintenance).

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder agreement, Environment Agency/watercourse consents (as applicable), Planning permission (if required for structures/material changes in sensitive settings), Listed building/conservation area consent (location dependent), Highways approvals/traffic management (where works interface with highways or require closures), Licences for temporary works (as required), Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Space constraints limit how much widening is achievable without impacting habitat or requiring complex land agreements.
- Flooding/ground conditions and riverside ecology increase cost or constrain construction windows.
- Maintenance risk: planting and edges can look untidy without a funded stewardship plan, undermining perceived quality.
- User conflict risk persists if behaviour management is not supported by design cues (line of sight, clear edges, "slow" pinch-point design).
- Consents and multi-party approvals extend programme.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to align landowners, Environment Agency and highways partners quickly.
- Small feasibility/design budget (survey, ecology input, drainage/ground checks, concept design and cost range).
- Baseline monitoring support (footfall/user counts, simple habitat condition baseline).
- Stewardship planning support to lock in long-term maintenance responsibilities and resourcing.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed via feasibility; likely small-to-medium capital plus modest ongoing maintenance revenue).

Likely funding route: Mixed – active travel and public realm funding; environmental/green infrastructure grants; developer contributions (where relevant); council capital (subject to wider programme); in-kind/community support for monitoring and stewardship.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No (to be explored)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Strong fit with place priorities around improving walking routes, greening and better use of valued riverside spaces.
- The riverside is a key green/blue corridor with clear potential to carry more everyday walking/cycling and support biodiversity.
- Pinch points and inconsistent route quality reduce accessibility and user comfort; targeted upgrades are a practical, deliverable response.
- Feedback from Kings School students at Cabinet in February 2026 indicated that this route is a particular issue

1.6 Roundabout art

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (in partnership with Kent County Council Highways)

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Selected ring road roundabouts and key gateway/arrival points on the approaches to the city centre (priority sites to be confirmed through a short feasibility/audit and highways safety assessment)

Description: A programme to introduce a coherent set of high-quality public artworks at selected ring road roundabouts and gateway points to help "tell the story of Canterbury" and improve first impressions for residents, visitors and commuters. The project will create a recognisable visual identity at key arrival points, celebrating Canterbury's heritage, learning, creativity and river landscape while creating a stronger sense of place on routes that currently feel purely functional. The approach will prioritise a small number of well-chosen sites and commissions rather than scattered, unrelated pieces, ensuring artworks are safe, durable, maintainable and designed to work with the historic character of the city. Where appropriate, the artworks can be paired with subtle landscaping/greening to strengthen impact and improve perceptions of care and welcome.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre (by improving legibility and the experience of arrival/wayfinding at gateways)

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Highways (road safety, approvals, maintenance interfaces); Canterbury City Council (project sponsor, commissioning and coordination); local arts/cultural partners (commissioning support and curation); universities/colleges (creative input, potential makers/fabrication); Canterbury BID/visitor economy partners (place branding alignment, sponsorship); local community groups (co-design and local stories); conservation/heritage advisors (context and sensitivity); insurers and specialist fabricators/structural engineers.

Project stage: Idea (move to scoping via a short feasibility phase)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 (pilot complete and evaluation report)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Gateway/roundabout art feasibility and site audit (shortlist of suitable locations, constraints, safety requirements, utilities and ownership).
- Commissioning brief and curation framework (themes, quality bar, materials, sustainability and maintenance requirements).
- Pilot artwork(s) delivered at one or two priority sites (including foundations, any associated planting/ landscape works, and safe installation plan).
- A consistent identity approach (a "family" of artworks or linked design language) to avoid one-off pieces that don't connect.
- Maintenance and stewardship plan agreed (inspection regime, cleaning, repairs, vandalism response, who pays and who does what).

- Evaluation report and recommendations for phase two rollout (what worked, costs, risks, resident/ visitor feedback).

Outcomes:

- Improved first impressions at key arrival points and a clearer sense of entering a distinctive, confident city.
- Stronger place identity and civic pride, with stories and themes that reflect Canterbury's heritage and creative energy.
- A more attractive gateway environment that supports the visitor economy and encourages people to explore beyond the retail core.
- Better perceptions of care and quality in public spaces that currently read as "traffic-only" infrastructure.

Mechanism of change: High-quality, well-sited artworks at gateways create memorable landmarks and signal arrival, shifting perceptions of the city from the moment people enter. A coherent set of commissions builds a recognisable identity and strengthens the link between Canterbury's heritage and its contemporary creativity. Pairing artworks with an agreed maintenance plan preserves quality over time, sustaining the "welcome" effect rather than allowing decline.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, young people, older people, disabled people (through improved legibility and calmer arrival cues)

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved "first impressions/arrival" satisfaction (short survey/QR feedback at key points and through visitor channels).
- Positive sentiment and reach (press/social engagement, visitor economy partner feedback, qualitative resident feedback).
- Reduced incidence of maintenance issues over time (tracked defects, vandalism repairs, and response times), demonstrating a sustainable stewardship model.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Highways safety review and approvals for each site (sightlines, distraction risk, set-backs, crash risk and maintenance access).
- Land ownership clarity and legal agreements (including responsibilities for ongoing maintenance and insurance).
- Utilities searches and buildability checks for foundations and installation.
- Commissioning and procurement route agreed (artist selection, fabrication, installation contractor, CDM responsibilities).
- Funding package secured for both capital delivery and ongoing maintenance.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals/traffic management (including road space, works permits, any lane closures during install), Planning permission (depending on scale and sensitivity of location), Advertisement consent (if any elements include signage-style features), Listed building/conservation area consent (location dependent), Landowner/freeholder agreement, Licences for temporary works during installation, Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Road safety risk: poorly sited or overly complex designs could distract drivers or create hazards.
- Vandalism/maintenance risk: without funded stewardship, artworks can deteriorate and undermine the intended welcome.
- Public acceptance risk: if themes feel imposed rather than locally rooted, reputational value is reduced.
- Cost escalation risk: foundation/traffic management requirements can materially increase installation costs.
- Coordination risk: multiple stakeholders (highways, planning, conservation, sponsors) may extend programme.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to establish an agreed shortlist of sites with KCC Highways and planning/ conservation input.
- Small feasibility budget (site audit, safety/structural advice, utilities searches, outline costs and programme).
- Commissioning support (curation and community engagement approach to shape themes and secure buy-in).
- Sponsorship and fundraising support to develop a blended funding model and protect maintenance funding.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed via feasibility; likely a pilot-scale commission first, then phased delivery)

Likely funding route: Likely funding route: Mixed – arts/heritage/public realm grants; private sponsorship (BID/visitor economy/major employers); developer contributions where linked to growth and gateway works; council capital subject to wider programme; in-kind support (design, fabrication partnerships).

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No (to be explored)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Strong alignment with Canterbury's priorities around first impressions, storytelling and strengthening identity.
- Gateway/arrival points are high visibility locations where relatively small interventions can shift perceptions.
- A phased pilot approach enables learning and refinement before wider rollout.

1.7 Canterbury welcome centre

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Guildhall (Holy Cross Church) and Tower House/Tower House Square at the Westgate gateway, linked to Westgate Gardens and Westgate Square (with a potential small new-build element for a combined visitor information hub and urban room, subject to feasibility).

Description: A project to secure a long-term, publicly focused future for a small cluster of high-value civic heritage assets at a key gateway into Canterbury, by repurposing them as a dedicated welcome centre and coordinated visitor information offer, alongside flexible civic/event space and an "urban room" for ongoing place-based engagement. The scheme would improve the experience of arrival and orientation, provide a clear front door for visitors, and Canterbury's heritage, culture, gardens and city centre businesses. It would also protect civic presence and local voice through local government reorganisation by creating a permanent, accessible space where plans, regeneration proposals and local stories can be shared and debated. The ambition is to leverage external heritage funding and establish a robust stewardship model so these buildings move into active reuse and

regeneration rather than becoming underused or deteriorating through transition.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Promote pilgrimage (clearer, more coherent walking routes and visitor orientation)
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential (bringing underused assets back into productive civic use)

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council (asset owner/enabling role); Kent County Council Highways (gateway connectivity and any interfaces); Canterbury BID and visitor economy partners; cultural and heritage organisations; universities/education partners; community groups and access groups; potential heritage trust entity (as delivery body); professional team (heritage architect, cost consultant, structural engineer, planning/heritage consultant); funders and grant bodies; operators (events, café/ hospitality, visitor information) as appropriate.

Project stage: Scoping (with an early feasibility/ options phase required)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029 (feasibility and governance set-up)

Target end date: 2030 (development phase complete, delivery-ready with consents and funding route confirmed)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and options appraisal for the welcome centre/visitor information hub/urban room and events use (including condition surveys, constraints, governance and operating model, and capital cost range).
- Clear concept design and interpretation approach (what stories are told, how visitors are welcomed and directed, links to routes/gardens/heritage assets).
- Heads of Terms/asset arrangements agreed to enable a stable stewardship and delivery model (including responsibilities for repairs and maintenance).
- A coordinated visitor offer at the Westgate gateway (welcome point, information, ticketing/booking, orientation mapping, and simple wayfinding connections).
- Flexible bookable space for community, civic and partner use (exhibitions, consultations, talks, events) with an agreed management approach.
- Development-phase funding application(s) submitted and, if successful, a consent-ready, costed delivery package prepared.
- A long-term maintenance and stewardship plan in place for buildings and public-facing functions.

Outcomes:

- Improved arrival experience and first impressions at a prominent gateway, helping visitors orient quickly and confidently.
- A more coherent and coordinated visitor offer that encourages longer stays and disperses footfall to gardens, heritage and cultural assets.
- Heritage assets protected and actively used, with reduced risk of vacancy, decline or "limbo" through governance transition.
- Stronger civic participation and local voice through a permanent urban room function that supports engagement on planning, regeneration and heritage.
- Increased year-round activity at the gateway through events, exhibitions and programming, supporting the local economy and civic pride.

Mechanism of change: Creating a single, well-designed "front door" at the gateway reduces friction for visitors (orientation, tickets, information) and creates a more welcoming and legible route into the city. Repurposing heritage assets into flexible

civic and visitor uses generates regular footfall and revenue while safeguarding public purpose through a dedicated stewardship model. A permanent urban room function provides continuity for engagement and helps build understanding and consent for change as Canterbury moves through reorganisation.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, young people, older people, disabled people, low-income households (free/low-cost civic space and access to information)

How we will know it has worked:

- Visitor "arrival and orientation" satisfaction improves (simple survey/QR feedback at the gateway and through visitor channels).
- Increased use of the gateway offer (visitor counts, enquiries, ticketing/booking volumes) and increased dwell time/dispersal to linked assets (proxy measures and partner feedback).
- Urban room and events utilisation (number of events/exhibitions/consultations hosted and attendance), demonstrating sustained civic use.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Condition surveys and a preferred reuse option agreed (including scope for any enabling works or new build element).
- Delivery vehicle and governance model established (including asset arrangements and decision-making).
- Funding strategy agreed and development-phase funding secured to reach consent-ready stage.
- Consents strategy confirmed and progressed (heritage, planning, listed building, and any other statutory requirements).
- Operating model and long-term stewardship secured (staffing, programming, maintenance responsibilities and revenue plan).

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission (scope dependent), Listed building/ conservation area consent, Landowner/freeholder agreement and lease/asset transfer arrangements, Licences for events and hospitality uses (as relevant), Highways approvals (only if external works affect the highway/arrival spaces), Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Funding risk: heritage capital funding and match funding availability may shape scope and phasing.
- Programme risk: multi-party approvals and consents may extend timescales.
- Viability risk: revenue assumptions (events/hire/ retail/café) must be realistic and resilient year-round.
- Governance transition risk: changes in responsibilities through reorganisation could slow decisions without an agreed delivery vehicle.
- Heritage/technical risk: building condition and constraints may increase costs and complexity.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening and clear sponsorship to bring partners together and agree scope, governance and next steps.
- Feasibility funding to complete surveys, options appraisal, outline design and business planning.
- Early engagement with planning/heritage stakeholders to de-risk consent route.
- Visitor economy coordination support to align offer with wider wayfinding, programming and marketing.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed through feasibility; likely phased capital works and fit-out with ongoing revenue for staffing/programming).

Likely funding route: Mixed – heritage grants; charitable/funder support; council enabling support (in-kind and/or capital, subject to programme);

sponsorship and partner contributions; earned income from events/hire/retail/ticketing/hospitality; service-level arrangements for civic/visitor functions (if required).

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Strong strategic fit with gateway/first impressions, storytelling, heritage reuse and visitor experience priorities.
- Clear need to secure long-term stewardship for civic heritage assets becoming redundant through reorganisation.
- Proven potential for a gateway "cluster" approach where nearby heritage/cultural assets reinforce each other and create year-round activity.

1.8 City centre management plan

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre area-wide, with an initial focus on the primary pedestrian routes, key public spaces, gateways, the riverside corridor, and known hotspot locations (to be confirmed through a baseline audit).

Description: A practical, city-wide management approach to define, deliver and monitor the "hygiene factors" that shape day-to-day experience of the city centre: cleanliness, street scene quality, waste/litter, lighting, basic maintenance, rapid response to issues, and visible reassurance activity where needed. The project will bring together standards, roles, reporting routes and performance monitoring into a single, shared plan so that residents, businesses and visitors experience a city centre that feels cared for, safe and welcoming. It is not a one-off clean-up campaign; it is a structured improvement programme with clear service standards, hotspot plans, and a simple performance dashboard that partners can use to coordinate action and track progress over time.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story (a well-managed public realm supports events, culture and pride)
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre (better walking experience supports active travel and dwell time)

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council (street cleansing, waste, public realm, parks/open spaces, enforcement, comms); Canterbury BID (business engagement, joint initiatives); Kent County Council (highways public realm interfaces, lighting where relevant); Kent Police and community safety partners; contracted cleansing/grounds/public realm maintenance providers; major landowners/asset managers; local community and "friends" groups; access groups; visitor economy partners.

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 (pilot delivered and performance framework embedded)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A city centre management plan document that sets:
  - agreed standards for cleanliness, waste, lighting checks, basic repairs, and rapid response
  - who is responsible for what (including where responsibilities sit with county/highways, private landowners, or contractors)
  - a simple escalation and "one front door" reporting route for issues
  - Baseline audit and hotspot map (litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, broken street furniture, dark spots, repeat ASB locations, cleanliness and maintenance issues).
- A set of priority "hotspot action plans" (e.g., 5–10 locations) with targeted interventions and review dates.
- A joined-up monitoring dashboard (monthly) with a small set of public-facing indicators and an internal action log.
- Pilot delivery package (first 6–9 months) including:
  - enhanced cleansing schedule on priority routes/spaces
  - rapid removal response for graffiti/fly-posting and broken street scene items
  - declutter/repair micro-projects (benches, bins, minor surfacing defects, signage tidies)
  - targeted lighting checks and fixes (where responsibility sits locally) and escalation where it does not
  - coordinated reassurance/enforcement activity at agreed hotspots (where appropriate)
- A communications approach that makes standards visible (what to expect, how to report, what happens next) and supports pride in place.

Outcomes:

- The city centre feels cleaner, safer and better cared for on an everyday basis, improving confidence for residents and visitors.
- Fewer recurring public realm issues because responsibilities, response times and escalation routes are clear.
- Improved perceptions of safety after dark through more consistent attention to lighting, visibility and hotspot management.
- Better trading environment and stronger visitor experience because the basics are consistently delivered.
- Improved partner coordination and accountability through shared data, agreed standards and transparent performance reporting.

Mechanism of change: Clear standards, shared ownership and visible monitoring reduce "gaps" where issues persist because they sit between organisations. Targeted hotspot plans focus limited resources on the places that most affect perceptions and footfall. Consistent delivery of basic public realm quality increases confidence, supports dwell time, and helps the city centre function as a welcoming place for daily life, business and events.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, young people, older people, disabled people, low-income households

How we will know it has worked:

- Cleanliness and public realm condition scores improve (monthly audit on priority routes and hotspots).
- Reduction in repeat reports for the same issues (e.g., recurring litter/graffiti/fly-tipping locations) and improved average response times.
- Improved perception measures (short quarterly pulse survey via BID/visitor channels or QR feedback) focused on cleanliness, safety and welcome.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on standards, responsibilities and escalation routes across partners (including county/highways and private landowners where relevant).
- Access to baseline data (existing reports, cleansing schedules, ASB data, lighting fault reports) and ability to combine into a simple dashboard.
- Contract alignment or flexibility (cleansing/grounds/maintenance) to adjust frequencies and response times on priority routes.
- Governance/coordination capacity to run the plan (a named lead, monthly performance cycle, and a hotspot tasking group).
- Communications support to publish standards and keep reporting routes simple and consistent.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Licences/authorisations as required for targeted operations (e.g., enforcement activity, temporary measures, events interfaces), procurement/contract variations (where required), unknown/to be explored (scope will confirm where responsibilities sit outside CCC control)

Key risks/issues:

- Scope creep: plan becomes too broad unless it stays focused on practical, measurable "hygiene" outcomes.
- Capacity risk: improvements cannot be sustained without an agreed operating rhythm and ownership.
- Dependency risk: some levers sit with other bodies/landowners; without clear escalation, issues may persist.
- Reputational risk: publishing standards raises expectations; delivery and communications must match.
- Data quality risk: inconsistent reporting and fragmented datasets make performance hard to interpret unless simplified

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to agree standards and responsibilities with BID, police, highways and key landowners.
- Small set-up resource for baseline audit, hotspot mapping and dashboard build.
- Contract management support to adjust schedules and embed rapid-response expectations.
- Communications support to launch the plan and keep it visible (what's changed, what's next, how to report).

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (mix of existing service budgets re-prioritised plus targeted uplift for hotspot actions and rapid response).

Likely funding route: Revenue-led (service budgets and contract optimisation), with potential partner contributions (BID/landowners) and small capital for minor public realm fixes; external funding may be explored for specific hotspot enhancements.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No (to be explored)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Day-to-day cleanliness, safety and lighting are recurring priorities raised through engagement and strongly influence perceptions of the city centre.
- A single, shared plan reduces duplication and closes gaps between agencies, improving consistency and accountability.
- A hotspot-led approach is practical and deliverable within short-term timescales while building a longer-term management culture.

1.9 Hotel and conference provision

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): TBC

Description: To encourage development of new visitor accommodation and enhanced conference/ corporate facilities in Canterbury to strengthen the city's ability to attract higher-value overnight visitors and business events, and to support year-round economic activity.

There is a strong level of interest in Canterbury from potential providers though finding available and deliverable sites capable of supporting such facilities is more challenging. The project will seek to respond to a recognised gap in Canterbury's offer: the limited supply of higher-end hotel accommodation and facilities capable of hosting major conferences and events. It also provides an opportunity to package a Canterbury "conference and culture" offer that links delegates to the city centre's heritage, cultural venues and hospitality, increasing dwell time and spend.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Champion innovation and the power of learning (supporting conference and business tourism)
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story (stronger destination offer and year-round activity)
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions (improved arrival and visitor experience)
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre (supporting Park & Ride/active travel access patterns)

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council (planning, enabling, visitor economy coordination); development partner/investor and hotel operator; Universities/ other anchor institutions (conference market links, potential overflow venues); transport partners (KCC Highways, bus/rail stakeholders, Park & Ride); Visit Canterbury/BID and visitor economy partners; utilities providers; local stakeholders and neighbouring residents; specialist advisors (planning, design, highways, sustainability, and event operations).

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term (Identify sites and match with interested operators)

Target start date: 2027

Target end date: 2028 (At least one active project identified – hotel and/or conference facilities)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Potential sites identified.
- Developer, operator and/or venue identified.
- Business case understood including local economic benefits (jobs, visitor nights, delegate spend, year-round utilisation).
- If proceeding: next steps identified in relation to planning and delivery (e.g. pre-application planning engagement and indicative programme etc).

Outcomes:

- Increased supply of quality accommodation in Canterbury, supporting higher-value overnight stays and reducing loss of conference business to competing destinations.
- Stronger ability to host regional and national conferences, corporate events and related functions, increasing midweek and off-season economic activity.

- Higher visitor spend and improved year-round footfall for city centre businesses, cultural venues and hospitality.
- Improved viability and resilience of the host venue through revenue streams, supporting longer-term investment in facilities.
- Enhanced profile of Canterbury as a place to do business, study and visit, complementing learning and cultural strengths.

Mechanism of change: A hotel and upgraded conference facilities increase Canterbury's capacity to host multi-day conferences and events by providing on-site (or near-site) accommodation and modern event space. Packaging the offer with Canterbury's heritage, culture and food/drink encourages delegates to stay longer and spend more locally. A year-round venue model supports sustainable operation and reinvestment, creating ongoing benefits beyond peak tourism periods.

Beneficiaries: Residents (jobs, stronger local economy), visitors, traders/businesses, students, low-income households (employment pathways),, older people, disabled people (if inclusive design is embedded)

How we will know it has worked:

- Increase in conference/event delegate numbers and multi-day bookings hosted in Canterbury (venue and partner data).
- Increase in overnight stays and average spend linked to conference/business tourism (proxy measures via occupancy and visitor economy reporting).
- Increased year-round utilisation of conference spaces (midweek/off-season booking rate) and associated local supply chain spend.

Deliverability

Key dependencies (if proceeding):

- Site confirmation and constraints understood (land availability, set-backs, servicing, utilities capacity).
- Planning and design alignment with local character and neighbouring amenity.
- Transport and access strategy (Park & Ride, coach and taxi management, walking links).
- Commercial delivery model secured (developer/operator interest, investment case, risk-sharing, and operating agreements).
- Sustainability and environmental requirements addressed early (energy strategy, water, biodiversity, and any required mitigation in the Stour catchment).

Permissions/consents likely needed (if proceeding): Planning permission, highways approvals/travel plan (where required), environmental and drainage consents (scope dependent), licensing (premises/events) as relevant, landowner/freeholder agreements, unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm if heritage/conservation constraints apply)

Key risks/issues:

- Market/viability risk: hotel and conference demand assumptions must be robust year-round, not only peak periods.
- Planning risk: scale, traffic, servicing, and neighbour impacts could constrain design and extend programme.
- Operational risk: impact on city during construction.
- Environmental risk: nutrient neutrality and drainage requirements may add complexity, cost and timescales.
- Delivery risk: securing an investable partnership structure and operator agreement may take time.

Support needed to progress:

- Visitor economy partnership development support to secure developer/operator interest.
- Council convening to align planning, highways, visitor economy partners and anchor institutions around a proceeding project.

- Feasibility resource (market assessment, concept design, transport/access, and cost plan) to de-risk the proposition.
- Pre-application planning coordination to identify constraints early and set a realistic programme.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed via feasibility; likely significant private capital with enabling works as needed)

Likely funding route: Private investment/joint venture (venue, developer and operator), strategic partner involvement; revenue model based on accommodation, conferencing, events and ancillary spend.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/source:

- Canterbury has a clear opportunity to strengthen its higher-value overnight and conference offer to compete with peer destinations.
- A venue-led hotel and conference model supports year-round activity and can unlock sustainable revenue.
- The project complements Canterbury's strengths in learning, culture and heritage and can be packaged into a distinctive delegate experience.

1.10 DWP youth hub (employability and skills offer)

Lead organisation: Department for Work and Pensions, working with Canterbury City Council

Main contact: DWP Youth Hub Offer/Canterbury City Council communities and place teams

Date submitted: 2026 - DWP Youth Hub development and city centre strategy engagement

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre venue to be confirmed. The preferred venue should be visible, accessible by public transport and walking routes, welcoming to young people, and capable of hosting DWP work coaches and partner drop-in services separately from the traditional Jobcentre setting. It should be highlighted that this is a different project to the Youth Club located by the city wall just off St George's Street (operating from a shipping container).

Description: A Canterbury Youth Hub providing a dedicated, youth-friendly employment, skills and wellbeing support space for 16 to 24 year olds. The hub would be delivered with DWP as part of the Youth Offer, with work coaches and local partners providing tailored support in a setting that feels more approachable than a Jobcentre. It would act as a one-stop shop for young people seeking help with employment, education, apprenticeships, training, work experience, career planning, confidence, wellbeing, housing or financial issues. The hub would be open to young people whether or not they are claiming Universal Credit, with more intensive support available where appropriate and drop-in or appointment-based access for wider guidance.

The project responds to Canterbury's younger age profile, student and skills strengths, and areas of higher deprivation to the north and south east of the city centre. It also supports the city centre strategy's ambition for Canterbury to be a hub for learning, enterprise and opportunity all year-round. By locating youth employment and support services in a welcoming city centre setting, the hub would

help young people connect to local employers, colleges, training providers, cultural organisations and community support, while increasing positive daytime activity and widening the range of civic uses in the centre. Once a suitable venue is secured, DWP would need to prepare and submit a business case to head office, including a funding bid for a hub coordinator.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Department for Work and Pensions; Canterbury City Council; Canterbury College/East Kent College Group; local venue host; Canterbury BID and local employers; National Careers Service; CXK; Social Enterprise Kent; Connect to Work providers; housing and homelessness support services; Kent County Council youth services and care leavers support; mental health and wellbeing partners; apprenticeship and training providers; voluntary and community organisations; access and safeguarding leads.

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Short term for venue selection, business case development and pilot launch; medium term for expansion, refinement and longer-term partnership model.

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for venue secured, business case agreed, pilot operational and evaluation completed.

What will change?

Outputs:

- Venue options appraisal completed and preferred city centre venue secured.
- DWP business case prepared and submitted, including funding request for a hub coordinator.
- Operating model agreed, including opening days, staffing, referrals, safeguarding, data sharing and partner coordination.
- Youth Hub pilot launched, potentially operating several days per week from the chosen venue.
- Regular programme of employment, skills and wellbeing support delivered, including CV and interview workshops, job search support, careers guidance, apprenticeship and training advice, work experience brokerage and employer engagement.
- Drop-in partner timetable established with local support providers, employers, training organisations, careers advisers, housing support and wellbeing services.
- Monitoring framework agreed, including participation, referrals, employment and training outcomes, young person feedback and partner learning.

Outcomes:

- Young people have easier access to employment, training and wellbeing support in a setting designed around their needs.
- Increased progression into jobs, apprenticeships, education, training and work experience.
- Reduced barriers to work, including confidence, skills, mental health, housing, finance and lack of employer networks.
- Stronger links between young people, employers, colleges, training providers and community services.
- A more inclusive city centre that provides visible support for young people and reinforces Canterbury's role as a learning and enterprise hub.
- Positive reuse or activation of an accessible city centre venue, increasing footfall and civic activity.

Mechanism of change: Locating DWP work coaches and partner services in a dedicated, youth-friendly setting reduces the stigma and friction associated with accessing support through more formal routes.

Young people can receive joined-up help in one place, with employment advice connected directly to training, wellbeing, housing, careers and employer opportunities. A coordinator role would help maintain the partner timetable, manage referrals, broker employer involvement and ensure the hub remains responsive to young people's needs. This combination of trusted support, practical skills development and direct links to opportunities increases the likelihood that young people progress into work, education or training and sustain those outcomes.

Beneficiaries: Young people aged 16 to 24, including those who are unemployed, economically inactive, in education, leaving care, claiming Universal Credit, looking for apprenticeships or training, facing wellbeing or housing barriers, or seeking early career support. Wider beneficiaries include local employers, education and training providers, families, city centre businesses and community support organisations.

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of young people using the hub, including repeat engagement and attendance at partner sessions.
- Number of young people progressing into employment, apprenticeships, education, training, work experience or structured volunteering.
- Improved confidence, employability and satisfaction reported by young people through simple feedback before and after support.
- Number and range of employers, providers and support organisations actively delivering through the hub.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Suitable venue secured with accessible facilities, appropriate safeguarding arrangements and sufficient space for confidential appointments, group sessions and partner drop-ins.
- DWP business case approved, including funding for a coordinator role and any fit-out or operating costs.
- Agreement with venue host on lease/licence, opening days, access, security, utilities, insurance and maintenance.
- Partner commitment to regular delivery, including DWP work coaches, careers guidance, training providers, wellbeing services, housing support and employers.
- Safeguarding, data sharing, referral pathways and evaluation arrangements agreed before launch.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner or landlord agreement; lease or licence to occupy; planning permission or change of use if required; building control and fire safety checks for any fit-out; safeguarding and data protection agreements; insurance arrangements; premises or event licences only if the final operating model includes activities that require them.

Key risks/issues:

- Venue risk: a suitable and affordable city centre venue may not be secured quickly enough to support the DWP business case.
- Funding risk: the hub depends on DWP approval and coordinator funding, with additional fit-out or venue costs still to be confirmed.
- Partner capacity risk: the model depends on regular attendance by multiple providers and employers, not one-off support.
- Engagement risk: young people may not use the hub if it feels too formal, inaccessible or insufficiently shaped by their needs.
- Sustainability risk: the hub may struggle to maintain momentum without clear coordination, evaluation and a stable long-term operating model.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening support to help DWP engage venue hosts, education partners, employers, youth providers and city centre stakeholders.
- Feasibility support for venue assessment, fit-out needs, accessibility, safeguarding, operating costs and partnership model.

- Evidence and local data to support the DWP business case, including youth need, deprivation, employer demand and city centre strategy alignment.
- Communications and engagement support to ensure the hub is co-designed with young people and promoted through schools, colleges, universities, employers, community groups and youth services.
- Monitoring support to establish a baseline and evaluate outcomes during the pilot period.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Costs will depend on the venue, fit-out requirements, opening days, staffing model, coordinator funding, partner contributions and whether the hub begins as a pilot or moves directly to a longer-term arrangement.

Likely funding route: DWP business case and revenue funding for coordination, supplemented by partner in-kind contributions, venue support, external youth employment or skills funding, employer sponsorship, charitable or VCSE funding, and limited council enabling support subject to priorities and capacity.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: DWP is expected to develop a business case once a venue is secured, including a bid for coordinator funding. Potential in-kind support may include partner staff time, employer engagement, training provider delivery, careers guidance, venue support and local authority convening.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Youth Hub models provide dedicated, youth-friendly access to employment support, skills training, careers guidance, employer engagement and wellbeing support; this reduces access barriers compared with traditional service settings and strengthens routes into work, education and training.
- The Thanet Youth Hub model demonstrates how DWP, local authority funding, education providers, employers, careers services, housing teams and VCSE partners can combine drop-in and appointment-based support into a practical one-stop shop for 16 to 24 year olds.
- Employment support interventions are most effective when they combine individual coaching with practical skills development, employer access, training pathways and support to address wider barriers such as confidence, wellbeing, housing and finance.

1.11 City pass

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (enabling role), working with Visit Canterbury/ visitor economy partners (delivery lead to be confirmed)

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre-wide - participating attractions, cultural venues, tours, experiences, independent businesses and (optionally) transport offers, with a simple "pick-up/help" point at key arrival locations (stations/Park & Ride/city centre welcome points) as the offer develops.

Description: Create a single, easy-to-use "Canterbury City Pass" that bundles entry to multiple attractions

and experiences, with optional retail/hospitality discounts, into one digital product. The pass would be designed to help visitors do more, stay longer and explore beyond the obvious hotspots by making it simple to discover, book and access a curated set of heritage, culture, tours and experiences. It would be digital-first (QR/app/wallet), supported by clear visitor information and partner training, and delivered through a commercial model that works for participating venues (revenue share/commission) while strengthening the wider city centre economy. A phased pilot would test the offer with a small set of flagship attractions and experiences first, then expand to include more independents and seasonal/event content as confidence grows.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Promote pilgrimage (helping visitors follow coherent routes and trails)
- Champion innovation and the power of learning (digital product, learning-led curation)

Delivery partners: Visit Canterbury/Canterbury BID; key attractions and cultural venues (e.g., cathedral/ heritage sites, museums, theatre/culture partners); tour operators and experience providers; independent retail/hospitality businesses (discount partners); accommodation providers; universities/colleges (student-facing offers and learning links); transport partners (bus/rail/Park & Ride operators if included); digital ticketing/distribution platform supplier; customer service partner (if not in-house); data/insight partners.

Project stage: Idea (move to scoping via a short feasibility and partner onboarding phase)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 (pilot live, evaluated, and decision taken on scale-up)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and business model pack (offer design options, pricing, revenue share, governance, risk, operating plan).
- A curated pilot pass product (e.g., 24/48/72-hour options or "X attractions in Y days"), with clear terms and customer support route.
- Partner agreements signed for pilot venues and discount partners (including redemption process, settlement, and data sharing).
- Procured digital platform (QR redemption, online sales, basic booking where needed, fraud controls).
- Visitor-facing content set (maps/routes, attraction info, suggested itineraries, accessibility info, multi-language basics where feasible).
- Launch and marketing plan delivered (web, social, visitor channels, hotels, stations, partners) with agreed brand/identity.
- Pilot monitoring dashboard and evaluation report (sales, redemptions, satisfaction, dispersal insights, partner feedback).

Outcomes:

- Visitors are more likely to stay longer, spend more, and participate in a wider range of cultural and heritage experiences.
- Footfall and spend are better distributed across the city centre and across seasons, supporting independents and "second-tier" assets.
- A clearer, more confident visitor experience (less friction in deciding what to do, how to get there, and how to access venues).
- Stronger collaboration across the visitor economy, with shared data and a more joined-up offer.
- Increased cultural participation and learning-led experiences for residents and students where local/ off-peak variants are included.

Mechanism of change: By bundling multiple experiences into one product, the City Pass reduces the "planning effort" and cost uncertainty that

drives short, single-attraction day trips. A curated set of suggested routes and itineraries encourages exploration beyond the retail core and supports coherent storytelling across the city. The commercial model creates a shared incentive for partners to promote the pass and improve the overall visitor experience, reinforcing repeat visits and longer stays.

Beneficiaries: Visitors; traders/businesses; cultural and heritage organisations; residents (if local/off-peak versions are included); students; young people and low-income households (if discounted/local access routes are built in); disabled people (if accessibility information and inclusive redemption processes are embedded).

How we will know it has worked:

- Pass sales volume, redemption rate and customer satisfaction (e.g., star rating/short survey).
- Evidence of longer stays and/or higher visitor spend (proxy measures: attraction admissions uplift, partner-reported sales, accommodation/ visitor economy indicators where available).
- Dispersal and diversification: number of participating venues used per pass, and increased attendance at a wider range of sites (including quieter areas/assets).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the offer design, pricing and revenue share model across partners.
- Procurement/selection of a suitable digital pass platform and settlement process.
- Securing a critical mass of pilot partners (attractions + discounts) and clear redemption procedures.
- Capacity for customer support, dispute resolution, and ongoing partner management.
- Marketing and distribution agreements (hotels, online travel channels, stations, visitor information points).

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Partner commercial agreements and licensing/ brand permissions (as needed).
- GDPR-compliant data sharing and privacy notices; payment processing and fraud controls (platform dependent).
- No planning or physical consents anticipated unless a physical sales/help point is created as part of another project.

Key risks/issues:

- **Partner buy-in risk:** insufficient attractions/ discounts to make the pass compelling at launch.
- **Commercial viability risk:** pricing/commission model does not work for partners or does not cover operating costs.
- **Customer experience risk:** unclear redemption rules, limited capacity/booking constraints, or inconsistent frontline knowledge across venues.
- **Technical risk:** platform reliability, fraud/ chargebacks, settlement disputes, and data quality.
- **Reputational risk:** if the pass is perceived as poor value or excludes smaller independents; mitigated through phased design and clear comms.

Support needed to progress:

- Council/Visit Canterbury convening to bring partners together and agree a viable commercial model.
- Seed resource for feasibility, procurement and initial marketing (and staff time for partner onboarding).
- Access to baseline visitor insight (dwell time, spend, footfall patterns) and support to build a simple evaluation approach.
- Links into wider gateway/wayfinding and welcome-centre work to ensure the pass is easy to discover and use on arrival.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (pilot likely small-to-medium set-up cost plus ongoing operating cost; to be confirmed through feasibility and platform procurement)

Likely funding route: Mixed – commercial revenue from pass sales (commission/settlement model), partner contributions/sponsorship, and potential grant support for digital visitor economy/culture-led regeneration; limited council enabling support (staff time and/or seed funding) for pilot set-up.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored (in-kind marketing via partners, accommodation providers and visitor channels is likely)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Strong alignment with priorities to increase dwell time, strengthen the visitor economy and improve the experience of exploring Canterbury.
- Comparable city-pass models demonstrate demand for bundled experiences when the offer is simple, curated and easy to redeem.
- Engagement themes indicate appetite for better wayfinding, clearer visitor orientation and incentives to stay longer.

1.12 Urban room

Lead organisation: Universities, working with Canterbury City Council (enabling role) and wider city centre partners

Main contact: Universities and Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre - a visible, accessible "shopfront-style" or co-located space to be confirmed through feasibility. The project will identify the most suitable location(s), with an option for hybrid physical and digital provision from the outset.

Description: Create a Canterbury Urban Room: a neutral, welcoming place (physical and online) where residents, businesses, students, community groups, landowners, developers and public bodies can see, discuss and shape the future of Canterbury city centre. The Urban Room would act as a shared "front door" for place-based information and engagement, bringing together plans, projects, proposals, data and storytelling in a way that is easy to understand and contribute to. It would host regular public sessions, exhibitions and workshops, and provide a practical platform for co-design, design review and collaborative problem-solving around regeneration, public realm, movement, heritage-led reuse and the growth of a creative and cultural economy. The model is intended to strengthen civic participation and improve the quality and transparency of engagement, while helping partners align investment and delivery. It would also support stronger university presence in the city centre through a visible civic-facing space, connecting research and teaching to real-world challenges and opportunities in Canterbury.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage

- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council (place, planning, regeneration, visitor economy, culture); Canterbury BID; cultural and heritage organisations; community and voluntary groups; resident and youth voices; local schools/colleges; universities (including Canterbury Christ Church University and UCA where relevant); Design Review bodies and built-environment SMEs; landowners and developers; local businesses; access and inclusion groups; digital/visualisation suppliers (where specialist support is required).

Project stage: Idea (moving to scoping via feasibility, partner agreement and location options)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 (pilot operational, evaluated, and decision taken on long-term model/scale-up)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and operating model pack (purpose, functions, governance, staffing, costs, venue options, risk, evaluation approach).
- Secured pilot location and fit-out for a public-facing space (scale and tenancy model to be confirmed), plus a digital companion platform (basic "no walls" version live early).
- A clear programme of activity (e.g., monthly open sessions; themed workshops; exhibitions on priority projects; university-led engagement events).
- A shared "repository" of accessible place information (plain-English summaries of key plans/projects; maps; timelines; FAQs; signposting to how to comment/participate).
- Practical co-creation tools and methods (including model/digital visualisations where appropriate) to support inclusive engagement across different ages and backgrounds.
- Agreed protocols for how outputs from engagement are captured, shared and fed back into decision-making (closing the loop).
- Partner onboarding and training so frontline staff and participating organisations can consistently explain how the Urban Room works and how people can get involved.

Outcomes:

- Stronger, more inclusive civic participation in shaping the city centre, with clearer routes for residents and stakeholders to influence emerging proposals.
- Better coordinated regeneration conversations and fewer "siloed" decisions, improving collaboration between public bodies, community voices and delivery partners.
- Higher quality proposals over time (public realm, heritage reuse, development and meanwhile uses) because local knowledge and lived experience are captured earlier and more consistently.
- Improved trust and transparency in city centre change, with visible feedback on what has been heard and what has changed as a result.
- Stronger university presence in the city centre, supporting learning, skills, research translation and innovation connected to real place challenges.
- Better conditions for a resilient creative and cultural ecosystem, by linking space, planning, design and investment conversations to sector needs.

Mechanism of change: By providing a neutral, well-curated space to see and discuss plans and projects, the Urban Room reduces barriers to participation and makes "how decisions get made" clearer. Regular co-creation activity captures local insight early, improving design quality and helping partners align around shared priorities and sequencing. A consistent feedback loop builds trust, strengthens collaboration and increases the likelihood that regeneration activity reflects local needs and delivers public value.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; students; young people; cultural and heritage

organisations; community groups; disabled people and access groups (through inclusive engagement design); developers and landowners (through clearer local insight and improved dialogue).

How we will know it has worked:

- Participation and reach: number and diversity of attendees/users (in-person and online), repeat engagement, and partner involvement.
- Quality and trust signals: user satisfaction, perceived transparency, and evidence of "you said/we did" feedback being understood and valued.
- Influence and coordination: documented examples where Urban Room engagement informed changes to proposals, priorities, phasing, design choices, or partnership arrangements.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agree the governance and operating model (lead, roles, responsibilities, decision pathways, and how outputs feed into formal processes).
- Secure a suitable, visible city centre location and tenancy/management arrangements (or confirm a meanwhile/phased approach).
- Identify core resource for staffing, programming, communications and basic digital hosting (not just the space).
- Confirm partner pipeline of content and activity (so the Urban Room is regularly refreshed and genuinely useful).
- Establish a proportionate data and evaluation framework, including how engagement outputs are recorded and shared.

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Lease/licence agreement for premises and fit-out permissions (scope dependent).
- Basic health and safety, public liability, and safeguarding protocols for public activity.
- Data protection and consent arrangements for capturing and publishing engagement outputs (digital platform and recordings).

Key risks/issues:

- Venue risk: inability to secure an appropriate city centre location at the right cost and visibility; mitigated through phased/multi-site or meanwhile options and a strong digital offer.
- Sustainability risk: the Urban Room becomes a one-off exhibition rather than an ongoing service; mitigated through a funded programme, shared content pipeline and clear ownership.
- Expectations risk: perceived as a "decision-making body" rather than an engagement and collaboration space; mitigated through clear communications and transparent governance links.
- Neutrality/trust risk: if perceived as owned by one interest group; mitigated through shared governance, published principles and inclusive programming.
- Capacity risk: insufficient staff time to curate content and run sessions; mitigated through partner contributions, student placements, and a realistic operating plan.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening and practical support to connect the Urban Room into existing city centre governance and partner networks.
- Feasibility resource to confirm location options, operating model, costs, and the first-year programme.
- Communications support and shared branding approach so residents can easily find, understand and use the service.
- Access to baseline place information and datasets (in a publishable, plain-English format) to populate the repository early.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (dependent on location, fit-out, staffing model and the scale of digital/visualisation tools; likely a mix of modest capital for set-up plus ongoing revenue for staffing and programming)

Likely funding route: Mixed-– university-led resource (staffing/knowledge exchange), partner contributions (in-kind content and time), external grant opportunities (civic engagement, culture/heritage, innovation), sponsorship where appropriate, and limited council enabling support subject to priorities and capacity.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: In principle partner support to be explored; council support remains non-financial unless agreed at a later stage through governance and resourcing processes.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified (optional):

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Clear alignment with the direction of strengthening collaboration, public engagement and university civic presence in the city centre.
- Urban Room models elsewhere show value as a practical, visible mechanism for improving understanding, trust and co-creation in regeneration and placemaking.
- Canterbury's need for clearer, more joined-up engagement and delivery coordination during transition and regeneration is well established.

1.13 International partnerships

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (enabling role) in partnership with international partner bodies (lead delivery partner(s) to be confirmed per programme strand)

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre-wide - key civic/public spaces and partner venues used for international-facing activity (e.g. cultural venues, public realm event locations, learning institutions). Specific venues to be confirmed per event/programme, with a focus on highly visible and accessible locations.

Description: A programme to actively develop and use international partnerships to support Canterbury's city centre strategy by strengthening cultural exchange, civic diplomacy and international profile. This includes delivering a small number of well-curated international-facing events and collaborations (e.g., the German Day of Friendship 2026 and similar partnership moments), alongside practical partner-to-partner projects that create year-round benefits for the city centre.

The programme is designed to:

- reinforce Canterbury's identity as a learning, cultural and heritage city with a global outlook
- create distinctive reasons to visit (and revisit) across the year, supporting longer stays and higher spend
- open routes to collaboration for universities, cultural organisations, creative businesses and the visitor economy
- build relationships that can support future funding bids, inward investment conversations and learning-led innovation links.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

(Secondary link where relevant: Promote pilgrimage – international visitors and routes; Unlock Canterbury's

spaces – activation of civic/heritage venues through programming)

Delivery partners: International partner organisations (twin towns/friendship associations/ cultural institutes); universities and colleges; cultural and heritage organisations; Canterbury BID/ visitor economy partners; local creative businesses; community groups with international links; schools; accommodation and hospitality sector; transport partners (as needed for visitor management); event delivery suppliers; sponsors; safety and stewarding partners.

Project stage: Idea (move to scoping via a pilot-year programme plan and partner mapping)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2027 (programme scoping and partner confirmation)

Target end date: 2028 (pilot programme delivered and evaluated; scale-up plan agreed)

What will change?

Outputs:

- International partnerships programme plan (12–18 months) setting out:
  - two to four anchor activities/events (including international "days" and exchange moments)
  - two to three practical collaboration strands (e.g., creative exchange, learning/skills, business links)
  - roles, governance and delivery responsibilities.
- Delivery of at least one flagship partnership event (e.g., German Day of Friendship 2026) with a clear city centre footprint.
- A repeatable "international event and partnership toolkit" (permissions, safeguarding, inclusive design, comms, evaluation) to reduce effort for future years.
- A curated calendar of international-facing activity integrated with the city centre events and visitor offer (seasonal programming, off-peak opportunities).
- Partnership agreements/MoUs where helpful (light-touch, focused on deliverable activity rather than symbolic statements).
- Communications and place-marketing assets that amplify Canterbury's international links (digital content, partner channels, visitor information integration).
- Evaluation report (attendance, spend proxies, partner outcomes, learning captured, recommendations).

Outcomes:

- Increased year-round city centre vibrancy through distinctive international-facing events and collaborations.
- Stronger cultural participation and community pride, including opportunities for residents and students to engage with international culture and exchange.
- Improved visitor perception of Canterbury as an outward-looking, welcoming and culturally active city (supporting longer stays and repeat visits).
- Stronger networks for universities, cultural organisations and creative businesses, supporting collaboration, learning opportunities and potential investment/funding pathways.
- Better coordination across partners through a clear programme and repeatable delivery approach.

Mechanism of change: By focusing international partnerships into a small, high-quality programme of visible city centre activity and practical collaborations, Canterbury creates new reasons to visit and engage across the year. These events and exchanges strengthen the city's distinctive narrative (heritage, learning, creativity) and connect local organisations to international networks that can support future projects, funding and innovation. A repeatable toolkit and shared calendar improves deliverability, reduces duplication and increases consistency over time.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; traders/ businesses; cultural and heritage organisations; young people; community groups; local creative SMEs; partners involved in international exchange and collaboration.

How we will know it has worked:

- Participation: attendance numbers and audience mix (including residents/students/visitors) across the pilot activities.
- City centre impact proxies: partner-reported uplift during events (footfall/visitor enquiries/occupancy where available) and qualitative business feedback.
- Partnership depth: number of active partner organisations involved and number of repeat/next-step collaborations agreed for the following year.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Confirmation of priority international partners and a focused pilot-year programme (what we will actually deliver).
- Venue availability and event feasibility for the proposed anchor activities (including stewarding and accessibility needs).
- Funding/sponsorship package for delivery costs and comms (not just goodwill).
- Clear governance and delivery roles (who owns delivery, comms, safeguarding, and evaluation).
- Integration with the wider city centre events calendar and visitor economy channels to maximise reach and avoid clashes.

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Event permissions/licences (public realm use, road closures where applicable, temporary structures, amplified sound).
- Safety planning (crowd management, safeguarding where youth involvement is included).
- Landowner agreements for any private venues/ spaces.
- Insurance and risk assessments; food/drink licensing where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Spread-too-thin risk: too many partnership ideas without deliverable focus; mitigated by a small pilot programme with clear objectives.
- Funding risk: reliance on uncertain sponsorship/ grants; mitigated by scalable event design and early sponsor approach.
- Delivery capacity risk: insufficient project management and comms resource; mitigated by a defined lead delivery partner and a repeatable toolkit.
- Reputational risk: partnerships perceived as symbolic without local benefit; mitigated by clear outcomes, inclusive programming and transparent reporting.
- Event risk: weather, security, or operational issues; mitigated by contingency planning and venue flexibility.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to align BID, cultural partners, universities and international partner bodies around a single pilot programme.
- Modest feasibility/resource to scope venues, permissions, delivery costs and sponsor opportunities.
- Communications support to integrate partnership activity into visitor information, partner channels and the city centre events narrative.
- Evaluation support (simple baseline, practical data collection, rapid learning loop for improvement).

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely small-to-medium revenue per event plus comms and coordination; to be confirmed via feasibility and programme scope)

Likely funding route: Mixed – sponsorship, partner contributions (cash/in-kind), grants (culture/education/international exchange where applicable), limited council enabling support subject to priorities and capacity.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored (partner venues, volunteer/community support, university involvement, BID amplification channels).

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Strong strategic alignment with strengthening Canterbury's year-round cultural offer and international-facing identity.
- Opportunity to convert international connections (including student and cultural networks) into visible city centre activity with measurable benefits.
- A pilot-and-learn approach makes the programme proportionate and deliverable while building a foundation for longer-term collaboration.



Image: © Matt Wilson

2 Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre

Ensuring traffic management and parking strategies support business activity, visitor comfort and pedestrian safety while respecting Canterbury's historic fabric. Park & Ride improvements and active travel corridors should help to reduce congestion and carbon emissions in the medieval centre.

2.1 Wincheap Park & Ride expansion

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate/Transport and parking teams

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Wincheap Park & Ride, Ten Perch Road, including land associated with the existing Canenco depot on Cotton Road and the wider Wincheap/A28 approach to Canterbury.

Description: A major expansion and reconfiguration of Wincheap Park & Ride to maintain and increase Park & Ride capacity on one of Canterbury's most important approaches into the city. The scheme responds to the expected loss of around half of the existing spaces as a result of the new A2 slip road through the site, while also planning for future demand generated by growth to the south and west of the city. The preferred approach is to expand the facility onto the nearby Canenco depot site, subject to the relocation of that depot, site remediation, planning and detailed design. The aim is to increase overall capacity to around 900 spaces, supported by improved bus infrastructure and a layout that continues to intercept car trips before they enter the historic core. The project is central to Canterbury's transport strategy because Park & Ride provides a practical alternative to city centre parking, helps reduce vehicle pressure on the ring road and medieval street network, and supports a more pedestrian-friendly city centre. The scheme will also include a Wincheap contraflow bus lane.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Connect new parts of the city
- Promote pilgrimage

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; bus operator(s); Canenco/ waste services; planning and environmental specialists; land and property teams; utilities providers; neighbouring landowners and residents; Canterbury BID; local businesses; accessibility groups; transport consultants; construction and remediation contractors.

Project stage: Cabinet decision/preparatory work

Timescale: Short term for design development, relocation planning, feasibility, planning and procurement; medium term for construction and opening.

Target start date: 2026

Target end date: 2028/29, subject to planning, funding, relocation, remediation and construction programme.

What will change?

Outputs:

- Detailed design and planning submission for the expanded Wincheap Park & Ride.
- Relocation plan for the Canenco depot and associated operational services.
- Site investigation, contamination assessment and remediation strategy for the depot land.
- Reconfigured and expanded Park & Ride facility providing capacity for around 900 vehicles.

- Replacement of spaces lost through the new A2 slip road and provision for future growth in demand.
- Improved bus infrastructure, including stop arrangements, passenger waiting facilities and routing within the reconfigured site.
- Revised access, circulation, pedestrian and cycle arrangements within and around the site.
- Updated signage and visitor information to encourage use of Wincheap Park & Ride before drivers enter the city centre.
- Parking management and monitoring plan linked to wider city centre parking strategy.
- Wincheap contraflow bus lane

Outcomes:

- Continued operation of Wincheap Park & Ride despite the loss of existing spaces from the A2 slip road.
- Increased Park & Ride capacity on a key approach into Canterbury, supporting future housing growth and visitor demand.
- Reduced pressure on city centre car parks and fewer car trips entering or circulating around the historic core.
- Lower congestion and improved journey reliability on sensitive city centre routes, particularly where traffic currently affects the medieval street network.
- Improved air quality, pedestrian comfort and visitor experience in the city centre.
- Better arrival experience for residents, commuters, students and visitors using Park & Ride.
- Protection of green and recreation land compared with previously considered expansion options, subject to final design and environmental mitigation.
- Stronger alignment between parking supply, Park & Ride, public transport and the city centre strategy's ambition for a more people-focused historic centre.

Mechanism of change: Park & Ride works by intercepting car trips before they reach constrained historic streets and converting the final leg of the journey into a bus trip. Expanding Wincheap Park & Ride preserves and increases this intercept capacity at a key southern/western gateway, particularly as planned growth and the new A2 slip road change travel patterns. By making Park & Ride more available and convenient, the project helps reduce unnecessary car movements into the city centre while maintaining access for shoppers, workers, students, visitors and people who still need to travel by car for part of their journey.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, commuters, students, traders/businesses, bus users, pedestrians, cyclists, disabled people and people travelling from growth areas to the south and west of Canterbury.

How we will know it has worked:

- Wincheap Park & Ride capacity is maintained and increased despite the loss of existing spaces from the A2 slip road.
- Park & Ride usage increases, including peak period occupancy, passenger trips and revenue compared with baseline.
- City centre vehicle circulation and car park pressure reduce or are better managed, measured through parking occupancy, traffic counts and journey time data.
- User satisfaction improves for Park & Ride customers, including perceptions of convenience, reliability, safety and value.
- The scheme supports wider transport strategy outcomes, including reduced congestion, reduced emissions and improved city centre pedestrian experience.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Successful relocation of the Canenco depot and continuity of waste service operations.

- Confirmation of funding and business case for the preferred expansion option.
- Planning permission and detailed design approval for the expanded Park & Ride facility.
- Site investigation and remediation of contaminated land where required.
- Coordination with the A2 slip road scheme, highways design and wider Wincheap transport planning.
- Agreement with bus operators on service patterns, stop locations, operational requirements and customer experience.
- Community and stakeholder engagement, particularly with nearby residents, businesses and Park & Ride users.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; environmental permits or remediation approvals where required; land and property agreements; utilities approvals/ diversions; construction traffic management approvals; operational approvals for bus infrastructure and site management.

Key risks/issues:

- Depot relocation risk: the Canenco relocation is a major dependency and may affect programme, cost and service continuity.
- Cost risk: the scheme is expected to require significant capital funding, with relocation, remediation, highways works and bus infrastructure all adding complexity.
- Contamination and remediation risk: depot land may require investigation and treatment before construction can proceed.
- Planning and community risk: local impacts, construction disruption, traffic movements and design quality will need to be managed carefully.
- Demand risk: expanded capacity must be matched by an attractive, reliable and affordable Park & Ride service, otherwise behaviour change may be limited.
- Programme risk: timing needs to align with the A2 slip road works so that capacity is not lost before replacement provision is available.
- Operational risk: the reconfigured layout must be efficient for buses, safe for pedestrians and easy for drivers to understand.

Support needed to progress:

- Council project sponsorship and programme management to coordinate transport, property, waste services, planning, finance and communications.
- Funding and business case development, including capital financing options and revenue assumptions.
- Technical design support for highways, car park layout, bus operations, drainage, contamination, utilities and sustainability.
- Engagement with Kent County Council, bus operators, local residents, businesses, accessibility groups and Canterbury BID.
- Clear communications explaining why expansion is needed, how it supports the city centre strategy, and how impacts will be managed.
- Monitoring framework linking the project to wider parking, congestion, air quality and Park & Ride performance data.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Up to approximately £18m, subject to detailed design, depot relocation, remediation, planning, procurement and construction costs.

Likely funding route: Mixed – council capital, borrowing or prudential financing, parking and Park & Ride income, developer contributions where linked to growth and transport impacts, transport infrastructure funding and potential external grant opportunities.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Cabinet has agreed to progress the preferred option and begin preparatory work. Further funding, business case and delivery approvals will be required as the scheme moves through design, planning and procurement.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Park & Ride is a proven transport intervention for historic and constrained city centres where the aim is to intercept car trips before they enter sensitive streets, reduce parking pressure and maintain visitor access.
- Demand at Wincheap Park & Ride has grown since the pandemic, and the site is expected to lose substantial existing capacity as a result of the new A2 slip road, creating a clear capacity and continuity issue.
- Increasing Wincheap Park & Ride capacity to around 900 spaces would directly support the city centre strategy by reducing pressure on the historic core, supporting future housing growth, and helping maintain access to the city while encouraging the final leg of journeys to be made by public transport.
- The preferred option avoids relying on more sensitive recreation or meadow land options and provides a practical route to increasing capacity, subject to depot relocation, remediation, funding and planning.

2.2 Rebalancing of parking supply

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Kent County Council and major parking operators

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide parking estate including city centre car parks, Park & Ride sites, ring-road parking approaches and edge-of-centre locations

Description: A strategic review and phased rebalancing of parking provision across Canterbury to reduce transport pressure within the historic core while supporting accessibility, economic activity and sustainable travel choices. The project would assess the long-term role, pricing, distribution and management of city centre parking alongside Park & Ride capacity, peripheral parking opportunities and changing travel patterns. The intention is not simply to remove parking, but to better align parking provision with Canterbury's wider ambitions around active travel, heritage protection, visitor management and movement efficiency.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; Park & Ride operators; major landowners and parking operators; Canterbury BID; Visit Canterbury; transport consultants; accessibility groups

Project stage: Scoping/strategic review

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: 2030

What will change?

Outputs:

- Comprehensive parking supply and demand review.
- Assessment of city centre versus edge-of-centre parking roles.
- Updated parking management and pricing strategy.
- Identification of opportunities to support Park & Ride and sustainable access.
- Phased implementation plan linked to wider transport and regeneration projects.

Outcomes:

- Reduced traffic circulation within the historic core.
- Improved pedestrian environment and air quality.
- Better balance between accessibility and heritage protection.
- Increased use of sustainable transport and Park & Ride services.
- More efficient management of visitor and commuter parking demand.

Mechanism of change:

Parking supply and pricing strongly influence how people choose to travel into and through Canterbury. Rebalancing parking provision alongside improved alternatives can reduce unnecessary vehicle trips within the city walls while still maintaining accessibility for residents, visitors and businesses.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; disabled people; commuters; students

How we will know it has worked:

- Reduced vehicle circulation within the city centre.
- Increased Park & Ride usage.
- Improved pedestrian experience and air quality indicators.
- Positive feedback from businesses and visitors regarding accessibility.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Robust parking and movement data.
- Political and stakeholder support.
- Integration with wider transport and active travel improvements.
- Clear communications regarding changes.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Traffic Regulation Orders; planning permissions where physical changes are proposed; landowner agreements

Key risks/issues:

- Perception that reduced city centre parking harms trade.
- Displacement parking into surrounding residential areas.
- Limited behaviour change without improved transport alternatives.

Support needed to progress: Transport modelling; parking strategy expertise; stakeholder engagement and communications support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium (strategic review and phased implementation costs)

Likely funding route: Transport funding, parking revenue, regeneration funding and external transport grants

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider transport and climate objectives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Historic cities including York and Oxford have used phased parking management approaches to reduce congestion and support more sustainable travel patterns.
- Research consistently shows that parking supply and pricing significantly influence travel behaviour and city centre traffic circulation.
- Stakeholder engagement identified congestion and vehicle dominance within the historic core as major concerns affecting visitor experience and movement.

2.3 Ringroad flow management

Lead organisation: Kent County Council Highways working with Canterbury City Council

Main contact: KCC Highways

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Canterbury ring road, principal junctions and gateway corridors

Description: A programme of traffic flow management interventions aimed at improving movement efficiency around Canterbury's ring road while reducing unnecessary circulation and congestion pressure affecting the historic centre. The project would explore signal optimisation, intelligent traffic systems, real-time travel information, parking guidance, junction improvements and better coordination between traffic management and visitor information systems.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Highways; Canterbury City Council; transport technology providers; Park & Ride operators; Network Rail; Canterbury BID

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2030

Target end date: Initial improvements and pilot systems by 2031

What will change?

Outputs:

- Ring-road traffic flow and congestion assessment.
- Smart traffic management and signage interventions.
- Improved parking and Park & Ride guidance systems.
- Real-time travel information improvements.

Outcomes:

- Reduced congestion and circulation around the ring road.
- More efficient movement into parking and transport hubs.
- Reduced pressure spilling into the historic centre.
- Improved arrival experience and journey reliability.

Mechanism of change: More responsive and coordinated traffic management can reduce unnecessary circulation, improve decision-making for drivers and help distribute traffic more efficiently before it reaches constrained city centre streets.

Beneficiaries: Residents; commuters; visitors; businesses; transport operators

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved traffic flow and reduced delays.
- Reduced circulation around ring-road junctions.
- Increased use of Park & Ride.
- Improved journey reliability.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Traffic modelling and data collection.
- Technology procurement and integration.
- Coordination between agencies and systems.
- Funding for infrastructure and software upgrades.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; technology and utility consents where required

Key risks/issues:

- Limited impact without wider behavioural change.
- Technology integration complexity.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational costs.

Support needed to progress: Traffic engineering expertise; transport modelling; smart mobility and procurement support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Transport funding, highways investment, smart mobility grants and partnership funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with intelligent transport system and congestion reduction programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Intelligent traffic management systems have improved traffic reliability and reduced unnecessary circulation in constrained urban areas.
- Real-time parking and routing information can reduce "search traffic" associated with city centre congestion.
- Stakeholder engagement highlighted ring-road congestion and confusing arrival conditions as key transport challenges.

2.4 Hopper buses

Lead organisation: Kent County Council and local bus operators working with Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre, railway stations, Park & Ride sites, university campuses and surrounding neighbourhoods

Description: Explore the development of a frequent "hopper bus" service linking Canterbury's railway stations, Park & Ride sites, university campuses, edge-of-centre neighbourhoods and key city centre destinations. The service would provide simple, high-frequency short-distance connections reducing the need for private vehicle trips within and around the historic core while improving accessibility for residents, visitors, students and workers.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Connect new parts of the city
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Kent County Council; bus operators; Canterbury City Council; universities; major employers; Network Rail and train operators; Canterbury BID

Project stage: Idea/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2027

Target end date: Pilot service by 2028/29

Outputs:

- Feasibility study and route planning.
- Pilot hopper bus network and timetable.
- Integrated ticketing and visitor information.
- Links between stations, Park & Ride and city destinations strengthened.

Outcomes:

- Reduced short-distance car trips.
- Improved accessibility and connectivity.
- Increased public transport use.
- Reduced transport pressure within the city walls.

Mechanism of change: Simple, visible and frequent local transport services reduce reliance on private vehicles for short trips and make movement between key destinations easier for a wider range of users.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; commuters; older people; disabled people; businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Passenger uptake and repeat use.
- Reduced city centre traffic movements.
- Improved user satisfaction regarding city connectivity.
- Increased use of Park & Ride and rail services.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Operator participation and commercial viability.
- Funding support during pilot stages.
- Integration with rail and Park & Ride services.
- Bus priority measures where needed.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Bus operating agreements; highways approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Congestion affecting service reliability.
- Difficulty sustaining services outside peak periods.
- Behaviour change may take time.

Support needed to progress: Transport modelling; operator engagement; revenue support and feasibility funding

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high depending on operating model

Likely funding route: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), bus service improvement funding, transport grants, university partnerships and council support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with Bus Service Improvement Plan and sustainable transport priorities

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Shuttle and circulator bus services in university and heritage cities have improved connectivity and reduced short-distance car dependency.
- Frequent and easy-to-understand services are associated with higher uptake amongst visitors and occasional users.
- Canterbury's compact but fragmented movement patterns create strong potential demand for simple local connections between transport hubs and destinations.

2.5 Last mile delivery

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with freight and logistics partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Historic core, ring-road edge locations, servicing routes and commercial areas within the city centre

Description: Develop a "last mile delivery" approach to reduce large vehicle movements within Canterbury's historic centre by consolidating deliveries at edge-of-centre locations and using smaller low-emission vehicles, cargo bikes or timed servicing arrangements for final delivery into the city walls. The project would aim to improve pedestrian experience, reduce congestion and support more efficient servicing within constrained historic streets.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; freight operators; local businesses; logistics providers; Kent County Council; Business Improvement District; cargo bike operators

Project stage: Idea/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Pilot delivery and servicing model by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study into freight consolidation and servicing models.
- Identification of suitable edge-of-centre consolidation points.
- Pilot low-emission or cargo-bike delivery services.
- Business engagement and servicing review.

Outcomes:

- Reduced HGV and servicing vehicle movements within the historic core.
- Improved pedestrian safety and comfort.
- Reduced emissions and congestion.
- More efficient servicing arrangements for businesses.

Mechanism of change: Consolidating deliveries outside the city walls and reducing the number of large vehicle trips into constrained streets can significantly improve pedestrian conditions while maintaining reliable servicing for businesses.

Beneficiaries: Residents; traders/businesses; visitors; cyclists; pedestrians; delivery operators

How we will know it has worked:

- Reduction in large vehicle movements within the city centre.
- Positive feedback from businesses and pedestrians.
- Increased use of low-emission delivery methods.
- Improved servicing efficiency.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Participation from freight and logistics operators.
- Identification of suitable consolidation space.
- Business willingness to adapt servicing patterns.
- Funding for pilot operations and infrastructure.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; landowner agreements; highways approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Commercial viability challenges.
- Limited business participation.
- Complexity of coordinating multiple operators.

Support needed to progress: Freight expertise; feasibility funding; operator engagement and pilot coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Transport innovation funding, clean air funding, freight decarbonisation grants and private sector contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with sustainable freight and emissions reduction programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Urban consolidation and cargo-bike delivery schemes in cities including Bath and London have reduced delivery vehicle movements and emissions.
- Historic environments with constrained streets benefit disproportionately from reductions in servicing traffic.
- Businesses and stakeholders identified delivery pressures and vehicle conflict as key issues affecting the pedestrian environment within Canterbury's historic core.

2.6 Mobility as a service (MaAS)

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Kent County Council and transport technology partners

Main contact: CCC Smart Mobility and Transport lead (TBC)

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide with focus on journeys into and around the city centre

Description: Explore the development of a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform bringing together rail, bus, Park & Ride, cycling, walking, parking and potentially shared mobility services into a single integrated journey-planning and payment platform. The project aims to simplify sustainable travel choices and reduce reliance on private vehicle trips into Canterbury's historic core.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; transport operators; technology providers; universities; Network Rail and train operators; shared mobility providers

Project stage: Early idea/feasibility

Timescale: Medium-to-long term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: Pilot platform exploration by 2031/32

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study into MaaS opportunities and delivery models.
- Partnership framework between transport providers.
- Pilot digital journey-planning and ticketing platform.
- Integration of travel information and payment systems.

Outcomes:

- Increased use of sustainable transport.
- Reduced dependency on private vehicles.
- Improved journey planning and travel confidence.
- Better integration between transport modes.

Mechanism of change: Integrated travel platforms reduce friction between transport modes and make sustainable travel choices easier and more attractive for residents, commuters and visitors.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; commuters; students; transport operators; businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Uptake of integrated transport services.
- Increased multimodal journeys.
- Reduced private vehicle trips.
- Positive user feedback regarding ease of travel.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Technology partnerships and interoperability.
- Participation from transport operators.
- Revenue and governance model.
- Data-sharing agreements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Data protection and digital service agreements; procurement approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Complexity of integration across operators.
- Limited user uptake without service quality improvements.
- Long-term commercial sustainability.

Support needed to progress: Digital mobility expertise; transport partnerships; feasibility funding and data integration support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Smart mobility funding, innovation grants, transport technology partnerships and public sector investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with smart city and sustainable mobility programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- MaaS platforms have been shown to improve awareness and use of sustainable travel options where integrated services are strong.
- University cities are often well-suited to integrated mobility pilots due to concentrated travel patterns and digitally engaged populations.
- Canterbury's combination of rail, Park & Ride, universities and visitor economy creates strong potential for integrated mobility approaches.

2.7 Sturry Link Road bus lane

Lead organisation: Kent County Council, working with Canterbury City Council and bus operators

Main contact: KCC Highways/Canterbury transport and place teams

Date submitted: 2026 - Canterbury transport strategy and city centre strategy alignment

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Sturry Link Road and Sturry Road corridor, including the bus lane element associated with the new link road serving Sturry, Broad Oak and the eastern approach to Canterbury.

Description: Delivery of the bus lane element of the Sturry Link Road scheme, providing bus priority on a key eastern approach into Canterbury and supporting faster, more reliable bus journeys between Sturry, Broad Oak, Hersden, the Park & Ride network and the city centre. The wider Sturry Link Road provides a new connection across the railway and River Stour, helping remove pressure from Sturry level crossing and improving movement resilience in an area affected by congestion. This project focuses specifically on ensuring the bus priority element is delivered, integrated with the local bus network and used as part of a wider shift towards sustainable transport. It will help make bus travel more competitive with the private car, support growth around Sturry and Broad Oak, and reduce pressure on routes leading into Canterbury's historic centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

- Connect new parts of the city
- Promote pilgrimage

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Highways; Canterbury City Council; bus operators; developers associated with the Sturry/Broad Oak growth area; Network Rail where rail interface matters are relevant; Environment Agency and environmental specialists where river corridor or drainage matters apply; local parish and community representatives; accessibility groups; transport consultants; contractors and utilities providers.

Project stage: Committed scheme/delivery development

Timescale: Short term to medium term, aligned to the wider Sturry Link Road delivery programme and early years of the transport strategy.

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028, subject to the wider Sturry Link Road construction programme, highways approvals, utilities, rail and environmental interfaces.

What will change?

Outputs:

- Bus lane delivered as part of the wider Sturry Link Road scheme.
- Priority infrastructure that improves bus movement on the Sturry Road corridor.
- Integration with existing and future bus services serving Sturry, Broad Oak, Hersden, Park & Ride and Canterbury city centre.
- Associated bus stop, passenger information, signage and traffic management measures where required.
- Coordination with the walking and cycling provision delivered through the wider Sturry Link Road.
- Monitoring plan for bus journey times, reliability, patronage and wider traffic effects.

Outcomes:

- Faster and more reliable bus journeys on the eastern approach to Canterbury.
- Improved public transport choice for residents in Sturry, Broad Oak, Hersden and surrounding communities.
- Reduced pressure on Sturry Road and routes into Canterbury's historic centre by making bus travel more attractive.
- Better connection between planned growth areas and the city centre without relying solely on private car trips.
- Improved resilience around Sturry level crossing and the wider eastern transport corridor.
- Reduced emissions and improved air quality where mode shift from car to bus is achieved.
- A stronger platform for future service frequency improvements, Park & Ride integration and wider bus priority measures.

Mechanism of change: Bus lanes reduce the amount of time buses spend delayed in general traffic. This improves reliability and journey time consistency, which are two of the main factors influencing whether people see bus travel as a realistic alternative to driving. On a corridor affected by congestion, level crossing delay and planned growth, the bus lane helps ensure that new movement capacity is not used only by private vehicles. By giving buses a time advantage and improving service resilience, the project supports mode shift, reduces traffic pressure on the city centre and helps planned development connect to Canterbury in a more sustainable way.

Beneficiaries: Residents of Sturry, Broad Oak, Hersden and east Canterbury; bus users; commuters; students; visitors; city centre businesses; people without access to a car; disabled people and older people who rely on accessible public transport; pedestrians and cyclists who benefit from lower traffic pressure; and communities affected by congestion on the eastern approach to Canterbury.

How we will know it has worked:

- Bus journey times and journey time variability on the Sturry Road corridor reduce compared with baseline.
- Bus punctuality and reliability improve for services using the corridor.
- Bus patronage increases on services benefiting from the bus lane, particularly during peak periods.
- Traffic congestion and delay on sensitive approaches into Canterbury are better managed, measured through traffic counts and journey time data.
- User satisfaction improves for passengers using services along the corridor.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Delivery of the wider Sturry Link Road scheme, including bridge, road, environmental and utilities works.
- Final highways design that protects the bus lane's function and avoids dilution of bus priority through later design changes.
- Agreement with bus operators on service patterns, stopping arrangements, timetables and operational requirements.
- Traffic Regulation Orders, signage and enforcement arrangements where required.
- Integration with Park & Ride, rail station access, walking and cycling links and future development travel plans.
- Monitoring arrangements to capture baseline and post-delivery journey times, patronage and traffic impacts.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; Traffic Regulation Orders; planning and environmental approvals associated with the wider Sturry Link Road; Network Rail interface approvals where relevant; Environment Agency or drainage consents where required; utilities agreements; construction traffic management approvals; bus stop and operational approvals.

Key risks/issues:

- Programme risk: the bus lane is dependent on the wider Sturry Link Road construction programme and any delays to that scheme.
- Design risk: bus priority benefits could be reduced if junction design, stopping patterns or general traffic arrangements undermine the continuous advantage for buses.
- Operational risk: bus operators must be able to align services and timetables to take advantage of the infrastructure.
- Behaviour change risk: infrastructure alone may not increase bus use unless supported by reliable services, affordable fares, clear information and complementary parking and demand management measures.
- Construction risk: works near rail, river, utilities and existing communities may create complexity, disruption and cost pressure.
- Perception risk: if the bus lane is seen as reducing general traffic capacity without visible bus improvements, public support may be limited.

Support needed to progress:

- Continued coordination between Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council, bus operators and development partners.
- Technical review to ensure the bus lane remains operationally effective through detailed design and construction.
- Bus service planning to maximise the benefits of the new infrastructure, including frequency, timetabling and passenger information.
- Communications explaining how the bus lane supports growth, congestion reduction and better access to Canterbury.
- Monitoring and evaluation support to establish baseline and post-opening performance data.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown as a standalone element. The bus lane is part of the wider Sturry Link Road scheme and its final cost will depend on detailed design, construction phasing, utilities, traffic management, bus stop infrastructure and monitoring requirements.

Likely funding route: Primarily through the wider Sturry Link Road funding and associated developer contributions, with potential support from transport infrastructure, bus priority, sustainable transport and growth-related funding routes where eligible.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: The wider Sturry Link Road is a committed scheme associated with growth and strategic transport delivery. Further confirmation is needed on the precise funding allocation, delivery programme and any additional resource required for passenger information, monitoring, communications or complementary service improvements.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High for journey time and reliability benefits where the bus lane is delivered as continuous, enforceable priority; medium for wider mode shift, which depends on service frequency, fares, passenger experience and complementary demand management.

Evidence/sources:

- Bus priority measures are most effective when they give buses a clear journey time advantage over general traffic, particularly on congested corridors where reliability is otherwise poor.
- Improved journey time reliability is a key driver of bus attractiveness because passengers value predictable arrival times as well as faster journeys.
- Where bus priority is paired with good service frequency, clear passenger information and supportive parking or demand management, it can contribute to mode shift and reduce the number of car trips entering constrained city centres.
- Canterbury's previous bus priority experience indicates that bus lanes and service improvements can support increases in patronage when they materially improve the speed and reliability of services.



Image: © Alex Hare

3 Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

Developing clear pathways to bring key sites back into productive use. Changing the focus of underused spaces towards community, cultural and creative uses, working with partners such as Canterbury BID, the universities and landowners. Promoting meanwhile and pop-up uses wherever feasible to give new and existing businesses room to test ideas, strengthen enterprise and support town centre vibrancy.

3.1 Guildhall Quarter

Lead organisation: Private landowner/ development partner, working with Canterbury City Council and relevant statutory partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Former Debenhams site and associated buildings fronting Guildhall Street, High Street, Mercery Lane and Sun Street, including the annexe building and Cotswold building

Description: A major mixed-use regeneration opportunity focused on bringing the former Debenhams department store complex back into productive use as the Guildhall Quarter. The established development intention is to convert and redevelop the site to provide a mix of ground floor retail units with residential accommodation above, while retaining and refurbishing important historic frontages and listed buildings. The site is one of the most prominent vacant buildings in Canterbury city centre and its future is critical to perceptions of the high street, vitality of the retail core and the city's wider regeneration ambitions. The project matters because it would help address a long-standing high-profile vacancy, secure the future of heritage assets within the block, introduce new city centre homes, and support a more active, diverse and resilient city centre offer.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Site owner/development partner; Canterbury City Council; heritage and conservation advisers; Kent County Council Highways; utilities providers; local businesses and city centre stakeholders; future commercial occupiers; housing and management partners

Project stage: Planning-led regeneration opportunity/stalled development proposal requiring renewed progression

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: To be confirmed - dependent on viability, planning progression and market conditions

Target end date: Phased delivery to be confirmed

What will change?

Outputs:

- Comprehensive redevelopment and conversion of the former Debenhams complex
- Retention and refurbishment of key historic frontages and listed buildings across the site
- Around 12 ground floor retail units across the block
- Around 74 residential units on upper floors and within rooftop extensions
- New residential access points, upgraded shopfronts and rationalised servicing arrangements
- Improved active frontage and occupation across a highly visible city centre block
- Cycle storage, refuse storage and associated building management arrangements
- Potential financial contributions and wider benefits linked to public realm, open space, cycling and local infrastructure, subject to final delivery arrangements

Outcomes:

- Reuse of one of the most prominent vacant sites in Canterbury city centre
- Improved perceptions of Guildhall Street, the High Street and the wider retail core
- A stronger mix of uses in the city centre, combining retail activity with residential occupation
- Increased footfall and day-to-evening presence in this part of the city centre
- Better protection and long-term maintenance of important heritage assets within the block
- More homes in a highly sustainable central location
- Greater confidence in Canterbury's ability to bring forward complex city centre regeneration projects
- Support for wider city centre recovery, diversification and investor confidence

Mechanism of change: The project would convert a large vacant department store into a mixed-use city centre quarter, retaining active commercial frontage at ground floor level while introducing homes above. This would reanimate a currently inactive block, increase daily activity and spending, and reduce the negative impact of long-term vacancy on perceptions of the city centre. By refurbishing historic fabric as part of redevelopment, it would also secure the future of important listed buildings and improve the quality of the surrounding townscape.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local businesses; city centre traders; future occupiers; heritage assets; students; property owners in the surrounding area

How we will know it has worked:

- Former Debenhams site brought back into active use
- Commercial units occupied and residential units delivered
- Increased footfall and improved perceptions of this part of the city centre
- Historic buildings repaired, retained and actively managed
- Positive contribution to wider city centre vitality and diversity of use

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- A viable delivery model in challenging market conditions
- Progress on planning, listed building and conservation matters as required
- Resolution of viability pressures affecting city centre mixed-use schemes
- Ability to secure investment and a realistic phasing strategy
- Continued alignment with wider city centre regeneration and infrastructure priorities

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; listed building consent; conservation area considerations; highways approvals; drainage and environmental approvals; agreements relating to servicing, management and utilities

Key risks/issues:

- The complexity and cost of redeveloping a large historic city centre block
- Viability challenges associated with heritage-led mixed-use regeneration
- The commercial difficulty of bringing forward large vacant department store sites
- Market uncertainty around retail, residential and construction costs
- Need to balance heritage protection, design quality, active frontage and deliverability
- Wider constraints affecting city centre schemes, including planning and infrastructure pressures

Support needed to progress: Planning and conservation coordination; continued dialogue with the landowner and development interests; support with city centre regeneration alignment; viability and delivery strategy review; consideration of meanwhile or phased activation where appropriate if full redevelopment is delayed

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage, but likely to be substantial given the size, complexity and heritage sensitivity of the site

Likely funding route: Primarily private development finance, potentially supported by enabling measures, phased delivery, or other interventions that improve viability

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No confirmed public funding identified for delivery at this stage

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- The site is identified as one of the city centre's most important vacant buildings and a major challenge for the retail core
- A detailed mixed-use redevelopment concept has already been developed for the site
- The planning approach demonstrates a viable direction of travel based on retaining retail frontage and introducing residential use above
- City centre strategy and place-based evidence both identify the former Debenhams site as critical to Canterbury's regeneration, vitality and visitor experience
- Engagement evidence shows strong concern about vacancy and strong support for bringing major empty sites back into active use

3.2 Animation of Guildhall Street

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with businesses and cultural partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Guildhall Street and adjacent public spaces

Description: A coordinated programme of temporary activation, cultural programming, lighting, events and meanwhile activity designed to increase footfall and improve perceptions of Guildhall Street. The project would test low-cost and flexible interventions to create a more animated and welcoming environment while supporting businesses and informing longer-term regeneration approaches.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury BID; local businesses; cultural organisations; community groups; universities

Project stage: Early delivery/pilot opportunities

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Ongoing programme from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Events, pop-ups and cultural programming delivered.
- Temporary public realm and lighting interventions.
- Activation of vacant or underused units.
- Marketing and promotional activity linked to Guildhall Street.

Outcomes:

- Increased footfall and dwell time.
- Improved perceptions of safety and vitality.
- Greater visibility of independent businesses and cultural activity.
- Increased confidence for longer-term investment.

Mechanism of change: Regular activity and visible use of public spaces can quickly change perceptions of underused areas while helping build momentum for longer-term regeneration and commercial confidence.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; businesses; students; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased footfall during activation periods.
- Positive business and visitor feedback.
- Increased participation in events and activities.
- Reduced vacancy or increased temporary occupation.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Business and partner participation.
- Small-scale revenue funding.
- Coordination and programming capacity.
- Flexible permissions and licensing.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Event licences; temporary use permissions; highways approvals where required

Key risks/issues:

- Short-term activity not translating into longer-term change.
- Limited organisational capacity.
- Event fatigue if programming is repetitive.

Support needed to progress: Programme coordination; event funding; communications and place-marketing support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Events funding, BID contributions, cultural grants and council support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider cultural programming and meanwhile use initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Town centre animation programmes have consistently demonstrated positive impacts on footfall and perceptions of vitality.
- Temporary activation can help test ideas and build momentum ahead of larger regeneration investment.
- Stakeholder engagement highlighted Guildhall Street as feeling quieter and less active than surrounding city centre areas.

3.3 Bigglestone Yard

Lead organisation: Private landowner/ development partner, working with Canterbury City Council and relevant statutory partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Former Nasons department store site at 46-47 High Street, extending between High Street, White Horse Lane and St Margaret's Street, including the former Foundry, Forge, Forresters Hall and adjoining yard and churchyard-edge spaces

Description: A major mixed-use regeneration project focused on bringing the former Nasons department store site back into productive use as Bigglestone Yard. The established development approach combines new residential and serviced apartment accommodation with a varied mix of commercial, retail, community and maker-space uses, centred around new pedestrian routes, a market hall and new public open space. The project is especially important because the site is one of Canterbury city centre's most prominent and complex vacant sites, with strong links to the city's industrial heritage and clear potential to diversify the retail core. Bringing it forward would help address a long-term boarded-up frontage, strengthen city centre vitality, create more active frontages and independent business space, and reconnect an underused block to surrounding streets and public spaces.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Site owner/development partner; Canterbury City Council; heritage and conservation advisers; Kent County Council Highways; ecological and drainage specialists; local businesses and city centre stakeholders; future commercial occupiers and operators; housing and hospitality management partners

Project stage: Planning-led regeneration opportunity/consented scheme requiring progression to delivery

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: To be confirmed - dependent on viability, delivery model and market conditions

Target end date: Phased delivery to be confirmed

What will change?

Outputs:

- Comprehensive redevelopment of the former Nasons site as a mixed-use city centre quarter
- Retention and refurbishment of key heritage assets including 46 High Street, the Foundry, the Forge, Forresters Hall and remains of the Church House
- New commercial floorspace across retail, food and drink, market hall, flexible Class E uses and maker-space/artist studio uses
- Around 33 residential flats
- Around 32 serviced apartments for short-stay visitor accommodation
- New public routes through the site linking High Street, White Horse Lane and St Margaret's Street
- New and improved active frontages, including a shopping arcade and pop-up retail spaces

- Two areas of new or improved public open space, including a new courtyard/public square and enhanced churchyard-edge space
- Servicing, cycle parking, accessible parking and associated management arrangements

Outcomes:

- Reuse of one of the city centre's most important vacant sites
- A more diverse and resilient city centre offer, including independent trading, maker uses and flexible commercial space
- Increased footfall, dwell time and activity in the High Street and surrounding streets
- Better permeability through the city centre block and stronger pedestrian connections
- Improved visitor offer through serviced apartments and a destination-style mixed-use scheme
- Better protection, interpretation and active reuse of the site's industrial and historic character
- Greater confidence in the regeneration of Canterbury's large vacant city centre sites
- A stronger contribution to city centre vitality, heritage value and commercial diversity

Mechanism of change: The project would replace a boarded-up former department store with a permeable mixed-use quarter combining homes, visitor accommodation, independent commercial uses and public space. By creating new pedestrian routes, more active frontages and a wider mix of destination uses, the scheme would increase movement through the site, support city centre spending and reduce the negative effects of long-term vacancy. Retaining and repurposing key heritage buildings would also help reveal the site's distinct industrial history and strengthen local character.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local businesses; independent traders; makers and creative businesses; future occupiers; heritage assets; students; surrounding property owners

How we will know it has worked:

- Former Nasons site brought back into active use
- Commercial and maker units occupied
- Homes and serviced apartments delivered
- Increased footfall and activity through the site and surrounding streets
- Public spaces and heritage buildings actively used and maintained

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- A viable delivery model for a complex mixed-use heritage-led scheme
- Progress from planning consent to implementation and investment commitment
- Resolution of viability and market pressures affecting city centre development
- Appropriate delivery of nutrient neutrality and wastewater mitigation requirements
- Coordination of heritage, archaeology, drainage, ecology and servicing requirements

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission and associated conditions; listed building consent where relevant; conservation area considerations; highways approvals; drainage and environmental approvals; legal agreements relating to nutrient mitigation, occupancy controls and financial contributions

Key risks/issues:

- Viability challenges associated with complex heritage-led regeneration
- Delivery complexity arising from archaeology, historic fabric and constrained city centre conditions
- Dependence on a workable and lawful nutrient neutrality solution
- Market uncertainty around commercial demand, residential sales and visitor accommodation

- Cost and programme risks linked to demolition, remediation and infrastructure works
- Need to maintain design quality and heritage sensitivity while ensuring deliverability

Support needed to progress: Continued engagement with the landowner and development interests; planning and conservation coordination; viability and delivery strategy review; support on infrastructure, nutrient mitigation and implementation planning; consideration of phased activation or meanwhile uses if full delivery remains delayed

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage, but likely to be substantial given the scale, complexity and heritage sensitivity of the site

Likely funding route: Primarily private development finance, potentially supported by phased delivery and enabling measures that improve viability

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No confirmed public funding identified for delivery at this stage

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium to high

Evidence/sources:

- The site is recognised as a key vacant city centre site with major influence on vitality and perception of the High Street
- A detailed mixed-use redevelopment scheme has already been developed and supported through the planning process
- The consented concept provides a strong basis for a more diverse city centre offer, including independent retail, market-style activity and maker space
- The wider city centre strategy process repeatedly identified the former Nasons site as critical to regeneration, diversification and city centre confidence
- The project aligns strongly with the need to reuse vacant sites, strengthen active frontages and improve the city's heritage and visitor offer

3.4 Meanwhile use strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with landowners, Canterbury BID, cultural partners and community organisations

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre-wide, with a focus on vacant or underused units, frontages, small sites, courts, yards, pop-up spaces, shopfronts and public spaces across the primary retail core and adjoining streets

Description: A city centre-wide meanwhile use strategy to bring vacant, underused or inactive spaces into temporary productive use while longer-term redevelopment, letting or investment is worked through. The focus is not limited to large department store buildings, where occupation may be difficult, but on a wider network of smaller units, visible frontages, external spaces, yards, event space and adaptable premises that can host pop-up retail, exhibitions, creative activity, markets, community uses, information points and seasonal programming. The project matters because high-profile inactivity affects confidence in the city centre, while smaller and lower-risk meanwhile opportunities can improve vitality, support independent businesses and test new uses. It would provide a practical framework for activation,

reduce barriers for landowners and occupiers, and help the city centre feel more animated, varied and resilient during a period of transition and regeneration.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury BID; private landlords and site owners; cultural organisations; community groups; universities and colleges; local businesses; independent traders; markets and events partners; property agents

Project stage: Scoping/coordination

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Ongoing phased delivery, with early actions before 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- A city centre meanwhile use framework identifying suitable spaces, uses and delivery mechanisms
- A shortlist of priority sites and frontages for temporary activation
- A simple process for matching landlords, operators and temporary uses
- Guidance on licensing, insurance, fit-out, management and risk for short-term occupation and activation
- A programme of pop-up, seasonal and trial activity across selected city centre locations
- Temporary uses that may include pop-up retail, maker and creative space, exhibitions, community uses, youth activity, markets, visitor-facing uses and animation of vacant frontages
- Stronger coordination between property, culture, business support and events activity

Outcomes:

- Reduced visual impact of vacancy and inactivity in the city centre
- A more varied, active and welcoming high street experience
- More opportunities for independent traders, creative organisations and community groups to test ideas at lower risk
- Better perceptions of confidence, momentum and care in the city centre
- Increased footfall and dwell time in underperforming locations
- A stronger pipeline from temporary activation to longer-term occupation where viable

Mechanism of change: By making it easier to use smaller and more practical vacant or underused spaces on a temporary basis, the project would create visible activity without waiting for major redevelopment schemes to progress. This would improve street-level vitality, support enterprise and cultural programming, and help landowners and the council test what kinds of uses attract interest and footfall. In some cases, successful meanwhile activity could build confidence for longer-term occupation or investment.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local businesses; independent traders; start-ups; creative and cultural organisations; students; young people; property owners

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of spaces or frontages activated on a temporary basis
- Number of participating traders, organisations or community users
- Increased footfall or activity in target locations

- Reduction in negative perceptions linked to vacancy and inactivity
- Evidence of temporary uses leading to repeat activity, longer lets or follow-on investment

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Willingness of landlords and property owners to participate
- Identification of suitable lower-risk spaces, not just large vacant buildings
- Clear legal, licensing and management arrangements for temporary use
- Capacity to curate, broker and coordinate activity
- Alignment with wider city centre events, regeneration and business support work

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landlord agreements; licences for events or markets where relevant; planning or advertisement considerations in some cases; insurance and health and safety arrangements; basic fit-out and access permissions

Key risks/issues:

- Some vacant buildings, especially large former department stores, may be too constrained or costly for practical meanwhile use
- Uneven landlord appetite and differing lease or liability issues
- Risk of temporary uses being poorly curated, low quality or unsustained
- Need for management capacity to avoid fragmentation
- Potential mismatch between available spaces and the needs of prospective users

Support needed to progress: A light-touch coordination resource; landlord engagement; legal and property advice; cultural and business programming input; communications support; small-scale enabling funding for fit-out, licensing or animation where needed

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Likely modest to medium, depending on whether the approach is primarily coordination-led or includes enabling grants and programming support

Likely funding route: Mixed - revenue funding for coordination, in-kind support from partners, possible grant support for activation, and private participation by landlords or occupiers

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through council coordination, partner time, landlord participation and possible alignment with wider city centre activity and cultural programming

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium to high

Evidence/sources:

- City centre strategy and place-based assessment both identify vacancy and inactivity as major issues affecting confidence, perception and vitality
- Engagement highlighted demand for more affordable and flexible opportunities for small businesses, makers and community activity
- The largest vacant sites are important but may be difficult to occupy temporarily, making a wider city centre approach more realistic and useful
- Smaller, visible and adaptable spaces can provide quicker wins and help maintain momentum while longer-term schemes progress

3.5 Queningate pocket park

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage and public realm partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Queningate area and surrounding public realm

Description: Create a small-scale pocket park and public realm enhancement within the Queningate area to improve the quality, attractiveness and usability of this important heritage setting. The project would introduce greening, seating, lighting and improved surfaces while creating a more welcoming and accessible space for residents and visitors.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; heritage organisations; local businesses; accessibility groups; landscape designers

Project stage: Idea/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: 2030

What will change?

Outputs:

- Pocket park design and landscape improvements.
- Seating, planting and lighting enhancements.
- Improved accessibility and wayfinding.
- Better use of an underperforming heritage setting.

Outcomes:

- Improved public realm quality and comfort.
- Increased dwell time and passive use.
- Enhanced appreciation of surrounding heritage assets.
- Improved walking experience through the city centre.

Mechanism of change: Small-scale but high-quality public realm interventions can significantly improve perceptions of comfort, care and accessibility while encouraging people to spend more time within historic areas.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; older people; businesses; pedestrians

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of the space.
- Positive visitor and resident feedback.
- Improved perceptions of safety and comfort.
- Increased dwell time within the area.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Site feasibility and ownership clarity.
- Heritage and conservation approvals.
- Maintenance and stewardship arrangements.
- Public realm funding availability.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; listed building consent where relevant; highways permissions

Key risks/issues:

- Heritage constraints.
- Ongoing maintenance responsibilities.
- Limited space and competing uses.

Support needed to progress: Landscape design expertise; heritage advice; small capital funding

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Public realm funding, heritage grants, council capital and environmental funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider greening and heritage initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Pocket parks and small public realm interventions have been shown to improve perceptions of place quality and encourage longer dwell time.
- Historic cities increasingly use greening and seating interventions to improve visitor comfort and legibility.
- Stakeholder feedback highlighted the need for more welcoming and usable public spaces within Canterbury's historic core.

3.6 Canterbury Oast House community hub

Lead organisation: Canterbury Oast House Charity, in partnership with Chatterbox Cafe (CIC) and key local stakeholders

Main contact: Canterbury Oast House Charity

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Oast House, Gas Street, Canterbury

Description: A project to bring the Oast House by Canterbury Castle into active community use as a welcoming, multi-functional community hub/centre anchored by a café and flexible spaces for local groups, learning and creativity.

The scheme would repurpose and upgrade the building to provide a community facility meeting/workshop rooms, youth-focused space including a music room and a commercial kitchen with adaptable facilities for a youth-oriented catering school. Over time the project aims to offer social dining and 100 activities every week, ranging from support groups, clubs, workshops, an informal "chatty table" and cookery classes. This may also include support for NEETS including focused activities which lead towards qualifications and employment and Saturday School provision to help with maths and english tuition at weekends.

The project would create an accessible, year-round facility that supports social connection, volunteering and community activity, while helping animate an underused part of the city centre and strengthening links along the River Stour walking network. The centre is intended to serve residents as well as visitors, providing affordable bookable space and a visible front door for community activity in the city core.

Linked strategy principle(s): Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential; Connect new parts of the city; Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions (riverside arrival

experience); Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre (supporting walkable routes and everyday local use).

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council (place-making, planning, community support); Kent County Council (highways/access interfaces where relevant); riverside partners and landowners; local VCSE, community and disability groups; youth providers; DWP; FareShare; local schools/colleges/universities (programme partnerships); Environment Agency/river corridor stakeholders (if any external works/servicing interfaces); funders and grant bodies; professional team (e.g. architect, cost consultant, building control, fire and accessibility specialists).

Project stage: Pre-delivery (planning with proposals developed).

Timescale: Short term (planning application submitted July 2026). Medium term (pre-April 2028 for consents/funding and mobilisation where relevant; with delivery dependent on funding and approvals).

Target start date: 2026/27 (complete permissions, detailed design, mobilisation).

Target end date: 2028/29 TBC (phase 1 opening, subject to funding and consents).

What will change?

Outputs:

- Refurbished and fitted-out community centre building with accessible entrance, reception and circulation.
- Café, with supporting facilities (commercial kitchen/ catering prep, storage, waste management).
- Flexible community hall plus meeting/workshop rooms for classes, advice sessions and group activity.
- Dedicated youth space and music/creative room(s) suitable for supervised sessions and clubs.
- Core operational facilities (office/reception base, stores, accessible WCs, plant/utility spaces, fire escape arrangements).
- Operating and booking model (pricing, hire policy, safeguarding arrangements, programme plan, and volunteer framework).
- Practical delivery such as basic cookery classes, nutrition education, budgeting and basic life skills like DIY.

Outcomes:

- More people using the city centre for everyday community life, with an inclusive, welcoming space for meeting, learning and support.
- Reduced social isolation and improved wellbeing through regular, low-cost activity and volunteering opportunities.
- Improved youth provision in a central, managed setting, supporting positive activity and stronger relationships between young people and the city centre.
- More employment and training opportunities for young people.
- A more animated and cared-for riverside area, supporting footfall and a safer-feeling environment along key walking routes.
- A productive long-term use for a distinctive building, supporting wider regeneration confidence and investment in the riverside corridor.
- People have access to healthy food at a price they can afford (or for free).
- People are able to live healthier and happier lives following access to provision.

Mechanism of change: By providing a visible, accessible community "front door" (café and reception) and a mix of affordable, bookable spaces, the Oast House project would enable community groups and support providers to run regular activity in the city centre. This increases footfall and positive presence, strengthens social connection, and creates a reason for residents (and students) to spend time in the centre outside retail hours. Locating the offer on the riverside also supports stronger everyday use of the walking corridor, improving perceptions of safety and care through increased legitimate activity and stewardship.

Beneficiaries: Residents; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; community groups and volunteers; students; nearby businesses (through increased local activity and dwell time); visitors (through an improved riverside experience and amenities).

How we will know it has worked:

- Usage: number of bookings/sessions delivered per month and total attendance (including repeat use by groups).
- Inclusion: diversity of users and uptake of accessible provision (e.g. accessible bookings, supported sessions).
- Place impact: increased footfall/dwell time in the immediate riverside area (proxy measures) and improved user perception of safety/welcome (survey/feedback).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Planning consents and any change-of-use route confirmed as appropriate, with an agreed programme to secure approvals.
- Capital funding package secured for refurbishment and fit-out.
- Revenue/operating model confirmed (staffing, safeguarding, utilities, maintenance, booking system, café operation) so the centre is sustainable.
- Clear building ownership/lease and responsibilities (repairs, insurance, compliance) agreed between the lead and relevant parties.
- Partnership pipeline and programme plan in place (community groups, youth providers, advice/support partners) to ensure immediate activation and consistent use.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; listed building/conservation area consent (if applicable); building regulations/building control; licensing (café, events, music) as relevant; landlord/freeholder agreement and lease arrangements; fire safety approvals and compliance; possible environmental/river corridor consents if any external works/interface requires them.

Key risks/issues:

- Funding and affordability risk: inability to secure sufficient capital and revenue to deliver and operate the centre.
- Operating sustainability risk: staffing, safeguarding and maintenance costs.
- Building/technical risk: hidden defects, compliance requirements and fit-out complexity increasing cost and programme.
- Partnership/programme risk: without an agreed programme and anchor partners, the space is underused.
- Neighbour/amenity risk: noise and evening activity concerns if programming and management controls are not clear and consistent.

Support needed to progress: Support to convene and formalise delivery partners; feasibility and business planning resource (cost plan, operating model, governance and programme); planning and conservation guidance to de-risk consents; support to develop a blended funding plan (capital + revenue); access to baseline place data to support monitoring and evaluation.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely medium-scale capital refurbishment plus ongoing revenue for staffing and programme delivery).

Likely funding route: Business model that accesses funding to own and renovate the building, then to operate financially independently over time. Mixed - external grants (community facilities/heritage/levelling-up style programmes where eligible), charitable and trust funding, partner contributions, and earned income from café trading and room hire to cover overheads; user-based pricing models for activities; enabling support from the council may be required depending on delivery route.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed (potential in-kind support through volunteer time, partner programming, and professional advice; early fundraising/grant options may be explored). Volunteers will be an invaluable part of the project. They will be able to earn credits for food or activities, to encourage them to engage with the initiative.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High (strong strategic fit and clear community value; benefits depend on securing a sustainable operating model and funding package).

Evidence/sources:

- Clear need for more affordable, flexible community space in and close to the city centre, with an offer that supports wellbeing, connection and everyday activity.
- Strong place logic: bringing an underused building into active use and adding a steady, positive use on the riverside supports wider regeneration and footfall.
- Planning proposals make a case that the building can accommodate a mix of café, hall, workshop/meeting and youth/creative spaces with supporting facilities.

3.7 Wincheap development brief

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, transitioning to the successor unitary authority post-April 2028

Main contact: Place directorate/Planning policy/Regeneration and property teams

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Wincheap, including the draft Local Plan allocation area, the existing retail parks, industrial and commercial land, Park & Ride site, highway and bus route interfaces, riverside edge, adjoining neighbourhoods and links back to the city centre. Although Wincheap sits outside the defined city centre boundary, it is integral to how Canterbury functions and has a major impact on city centre access, parking, movement, housing growth, employment land and visitor experience.

Description: The first stage of a long-term programme to shape the future of Wincheap as a major mixed-use growth and regeneration area. This project is not a full masterplan or delivery scheme. It is an early development brief and evidence-building stage that will articulate what the site could become, test realistic options, identify constraints and opportunities, and create a clearer basis for future decisions, land assembly, feasibility, viability, engagement and investment.

The work will draw together planning policy, land ownership, commercial and residential market analysis, transport and bus route requirements, Park & Ride needs, infrastructure capacity, flood risk, biodiversity, open space, community views, existing employment uses and development viability. It aims to provide a small number of tested development options rather than a single fixed answer, including different approaches to the balance of homes, employment, commercial floorspace, leisure, student accommodation, green space, mobility infrastructure and public realm. The brief may also seek to identify what land assembly or partnership strategy may be needed if a more comprehensive option is to be pursued.

The project is included in the city centre project directory because Wincheap is one of the main approaches to Canterbury and directly affects how people reach, move around and experience the

historic core. Any planned work will need to be clearly caveated: detailed work based on the aspiration in the draft Local Plan will be undertaken at risk until the Local Plan has been examined and adopted. If the planning inspector requires material changes to the allocation, some work may become abortive or need to be revisited.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Connect new parts of the city
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; successor unitary authority; Kent County Council Highways; planning policy and development management teams; landowners and occupiers; Park & Ride and bus operators; utility providers; Environment Agency and drainage specialists; biodiversity and landscape specialists; commercial, residential and viability advisors; local residents and community groups; businesses and employers in Wincheap; Canterbury BID; active travel and accessibility groups; transport, property and regeneration consultants.

Project stage: Scoping/development brief commission

Timescale: Short-medium term for early development brief and evidence building, baseline analysis and options testing; medium to long term for land assembly, masterplanning, business case, subject to the outcome of the draft local plan examination.

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for the initial development brief, options appraisal and next-stage recommendations.

What will change?

Outputs:

- Development brief for Wincheap setting out the site's role, objectives, constraints, opportunities and design principles.
- Baseline evidence pack covering land ownership, existing uses, planning policy, movement, access, bus routes, Park & Ride, flood risk, utilities, biodiversity, open space, market conditions, infrastructure and viability.
- Options appraisal testing different development scenarios.
- Initial land assembly and delivery strategy identifying ownership patterns, critical parcels, partnership routes, potential acquisition requirements and risks.
- High-level feasibility and viability assessment for each option, including assumptions on residential, commercial, employment, leisure, affordable housing, public open space and infrastructure costs.
- Movement and access principles covering bus routes, walking and cycling links, Park & Ride, servicing, parking, junction capacity and links to the city centre.
- Green infrastructure and biodiversity principles, including opportunities for parks, river corridor enhancement, habitat creation, sustainable drainage and climate resilience.
- Community and stakeholder engagement summary setting out views, concerns, trade-offs and issues to carry into the next stage.
- Recommended next steps, including whether to proceed to a full masterplan, planning framework, delivery strategy, business case or further technical work.

Outcomes:

- A clearer and more realistic shared vision for Wincheap, showing how the area could evolve from an edge-of-centre commercial and movement corridor into a better connected mixed-use place.

- Better understanding of what scale and type of development is feasible, viable and desirable before significant masterplanning or land assembly commitments are made.
- Improved basis for future negotiations with landowners, developers, infrastructure providers, Homes England and transport partners.
- A more coordinated approach to housing, employment, commercial floorspace, public open space, biodiversity, transport and infrastructure.
- Reduced risk of piecemeal development that fails to address movement, infrastructure, open space and community needs.
- Clearer evidence for the successor authority to decide whether and how to progress the wider Wincheap programme after Local Plan examination.

Mechanism of change: Wincheap is too large, fragmented and strategically important to be progressed through isolated site-by-site decisions alone. A development brief creates a shared evidence base and tests options before the council or successor authority commits to a more expensive masterplan or delivery route. The brief helps align landowners, infrastructure providers, communities and public bodies around realistic choices. It also helps identify where intervention, land assembly or public sector enabling may be required to unlock long-term regeneration and prevent development that undermines city centre access or wider place quality.

Beneficiaries: Residents of Wincheap and adjoining neighbourhoods, future residents, existing businesses and employers, landowners, visitors, commuters, bus users, Park & Ride users, city centre businesses, pedestrians, cyclists, disabled people, low-income households and the successor authority responsible for long-term planning and delivery.

How we will know it has worked:

- A completed development brief and options appraisal are endorsed as the basis for future decision-making.
- The work identifies a preferred or shortlisted set of deliverable options, with clear assumptions, risks, costs and dependencies.
- Land ownership and assembly requirements are understood well enough to inform a realistic next-stage strategy.
- Community and stakeholder feedback is captured and visibly reflected in the brief, including where trade-offs remain unresolved.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Draft Local Plan examination and the inspector's conclusions on the Wincheap allocation and related policy requirements.
- Clear commission brief, scope and governance for the development brief work, including how decisions will be made and reported.
- Access to land ownership, lease, market, transport, utilities, flood risk, environmental and infrastructure information.
- Engagement with landowners, occupiers, businesses, residents, transport providers and statutory bodies.
- Alignment with linked work on Park & Ride, bus services, active travel, city centre parking, housing growth and infrastructure planning.

Permissions/consents likely needed: No planning permission is required for the development brief itself. Later phases may require planning permission, highways approvals, environmental permits, flood risk and drainage consents, landowner agreements, utilities approvals, traffic regulation orders, habitat and biodiversity mitigation, construction management approvals and potentially compulsory purchase or other statutory land assembly processes if a comprehensive option is pursued. Development briefs are often adopted by councils as a material planning consideration.

Key risks/issues:

- Policy risk: detailed work is being undertaken at risk before the Local Plan has been examined and adopted; inspector changes could make some work abortive.

- Land assembly risk: fragmented leases and existing occupational interests may limit the ability to deliver a comprehensive scheme.
- Viability risk: infrastructure, remediation, flood mitigation, transport requirements, affordable housing and biodiversity requirements may affect viability, and the development brief will need to consider these factors to ensure deliverability.
- Transport risk: proposals must maintain or improve bus access, Park & Ride operation, servicing and movement into the city centre while accommodating growth.
- Community risk: residents and businesses may have concerns about density, traffic, loss of existing uses, parking, construction impacts, open space and local character.
- Scope risk: the work could drift into an unfunded masterplan unless the commission remains focused on a proportionate development brief and options appraisal.

Support needed to progress:

- Council sponsorship and project governance to keep the commission focused, proportionate and aligned with the draft Local Plan.
- Technical consultancy support covering planning, urban design, transport, viability, land assembly, infrastructure, ecology, landscape and engagement.
- Early occupier engagement to understand constraints, lease events and potential partnership models.
- Community engagement resource to test the vision, understand concerns and build legitimacy before more detailed masterplanning.
- Legal and property advice on land assembly options, risks and future delivery models.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown for the full long-term programme. The initial development brief, options appraisal and technical evidence stage is expected to be a consultancy-led revenue project, with costs dependent on scope, technical inputs, land assembly advice, engagement and viability testing. Later delivery would require significant capital and private investment.

Likely funding route: Council revenue or planning/regeneration budget for the first-stage commission, potentially supplemented by external capacity funding, Homes England-style enabling support if available, and successor authority funding. Long-term delivery would likely require private sector investment, developer contributions, infrastructure funding, public sector land value, borrowing or grant support, depending on the preferred delivery model.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Initial work is being commissioned. Wider funding and delivery resources are not yet confirmed and will depend on the outcome of the development brief, Local Plan examination, landowner engagement and future governance decisions.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Large brownfield and edge-of-centre regeneration areas are more likely to deliver coherent public value when early work tests options, viability, infrastructure requirements and land assembly before a fixed masterplan is produced.
- Wincheap's role in Park & Ride, bus movement, strategic access and employment land means development choices in this area will directly affect city centre congestion, access, parking pressure and the quality of routes into Canterbury.
- Early community and stakeholder engagement can reduce later delivery risk by identifying concerns, constraints and priorities before detailed designs or land assembly decisions are made.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

4 Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage

Building on the legacy of Connected Canterbury: Unlocking Canterbury's Tales of England project by addressing the physical and psychological barriers preventing people from fully accessing and engaging with Canterbury's heritage and culture. Continuing to enhance public realm settings around key heritage sites and routes, protecting historic street furniture, using design and storytelling to further connect residents and visitors more deeply to the city's history.

4.1 Historical accommodation strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage, accessibility and cultural partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre heritage assets and associated public realm locations

Description: Support efforts by Canterbury Cathedral, Eastbridge Hospital and other partners to bring historic buildings and character properties back into sustainable accommodation use, including visitor accommodation, retreat spaces and heritage stays. The strategy would help strengthen Canterbury's distinctive visitor offer while supporting heritage conservation and building reuse.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; heritage organisations; universities; Canterbury BID; community organisations; accessibility groups; cultural partners

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2030 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility, governance and delivery planning.
- Improved interpretation, accessibility or heritage management measures.
- Stronger integration with city-wide heritage and visitor initiatives.
- Partnership development and public engagement activity.

Outcomes:

- Improved visibility and understanding of Canterbury's heritage.
- Increased public engagement and participation.
- Better stewardship and activation of heritage assets.
- Stronger cultural and visitor offer.

Mechanism of change: Improved interpretation, accessibility and active management of heritage assets helps broaden participation, strengthen civic identity and increase engagement with Canterbury's historic environment.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; heritage organisations; businesses; students; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased public engagement and participation.
- Positive visitor and stakeholder feedback.
- Increased visibility and use of heritage assets.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility, identity and heritage quality.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Heritage and conservation approvals.
- Partnership coordination and governance.

- Revenue and capital funding support.
- Alignment with wider regeneration and visitor economy initiatives.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Listed building consent; conservation area approvals; planning permissions and event licences where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Heritage sensitivities and conservation constraints.
- Funding uncertainty.
- Capacity limitations across partner organisations.

Support needed to progress: Heritage consultancy; accessibility and interpretation expertise; project development funding and stakeholder coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, cultural grants, council support, sponsorship and partnership investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with heritage-led regeneration, accessibility and visitor economy initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage-led regeneration and interpretation projects improve engagement, footfall and civic pride.
- Historic asset reuse and accessibility improvements strengthen visitor experience and long-term sustainability.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better reveal and connect the city's layered heritage assets and stories.

4.2 Heritage lighting strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with Kent County Council Highways

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Canterbury city centre, with a focus on historic streets, heritage routes, conservation areas, the Story Garden Walking Routes, key public spaces, pedestrianised streets and areas containing historic or heritage-style lighting assets, including locations such as High Street, The Parade, St Peter's Street, St Dunstan's Street, Burgate, Canterbury Lane, St Radigund's Street, Stour Street, Sun Street and The Friars.

Description: A practical Heritage Lighting Strategy for Canterbury that sets a clear, consistent framework for how street lighting should be designed, specified, installed, refurbished and maintained across the city's historic areas. The strategy will define what "heritage lighting" means in Canterbury, where it should apply, what styles, colours, materials, lanterns, brackets and column types are appropriate in different locations, and how decisions should be made when existing columns are refurbished or new lighting is proposed.

The project responds to an immediate delivery need. Street lighting works are already being progressed through the Levelling Up Fund programme, including repainting existing columns and brackets, replacing lanterns with ornate Birkdale-style lanterns on swan

neck brackets, investigating relocation of repeatedly damaged columns in Burgate, and considering new columns in sensitive historic locations. Without a clear strategy, decisions risk being made case-by-case, creating inconsistency, delay and disagreement between partners.

The strategy will provide a usable decision-making tool for Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council, contractors, designers, councillors and stakeholders. It will support ongoing delivery while protecting Canterbury's historic character, improving safety and legibility, and ensuring future lighting investment contributes positively to the city's public realm and heritage setting.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Promote pilgrimage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; Engineering Services; heritage and conservation officers; lighting designers; public realm consultants; contractors; utilities providers; electricity distribution network operator; building owners where wall-mounted lighting is proposed; accessibility groups; local residents and businesses; Canterbury BID; community and heritage stakeholders; councillors; future successor unitary authority.

Project stage: Scoping/brief prepared, with immediate delivery interface through LUF lighting works.

Timescale: Short term for strategy preparation and adoption of interim principles to guide current LUF works; medium term for fuller implementation, review and embedding into future maintenance and capital programmes.

Target start date: 2026

Target end date: 2027 for strategy completion and initial adoption; ongoing use through future lighting, public realm and highways programmes.

What will change?

Outputs:

- Heritage Lighting Strategy document for Canterbury.
- Clear definition of the geographic extent of heritage lighting areas.
- Character-area approach explaining how different streets and spaces should influence lighting design.
- Design principles for heritage lighting, including column types, lantern styles, brackets and appropriate use cases.
- Materials, finishes and colour palette guidance, including location-specific approaches such as Moss Green, black and blue where these relate to established local character.
- Guidance on refurbishment versus replacement of existing columns, including treatment of cast iron, steel and wall-mounted assets.
- Technical principles covering column heights, lighting levels, wall-mounted versus freestanding lighting, bracket types and lantern replacement.
- Place-based decision rules for streets, pedestrianised areas, gateways, heritage settings and constrained locations.
- Decision framework for choosing between options such as standard steel columns, embellished steel columns, bespoke embellishment kits, cast iron columns or omission/deferral.
- Roles and responsibilities note clarifying Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council responsibilities for ownership, approvals, adoption and maintenance.
- Interim briefing note to support live LUF decisions around painting, lantern replacement, relocation and proposed new lighting installations.

- Agreed approach for priority current locations, including Canterbury Lane, St Radigund's Street, Stour Street, Sun Street, The Friars, The Parade and High Street.
- Practical implementation plan identifying what can proceed immediately and what should wait for strategy completion.

Outcomes:

- More consistent, higher-quality lighting decisions in Canterbury's historic streets and conservation areas.
- Reduced risk of ad hoc lighting choices that undermine the city's heritage character or create visual inconsistency.
- Improved night-time safety, legibility and comfort on key walking routes, including the Story Garden Walking Routes.
- Better protection and enhancement of historic lighting assets, including Biggleston-style columns and wall-mounted lanterns.
- Faster and clearer decision-making between Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council and delivery partners.
- Improved public confidence that lighting upgrades are heritage-sensitive, practical and deliverable.
- Stronger alignment between public realm, heritage, community safety, accessibility and LUF delivery.
- Better long-term maintenance and asset management, reducing uncertainty about responsibility, replacement standards and future costs.

Mechanism of change: The strategy will convert a set of currently fragmented lighting decisions into a clear, agreed framework. By defining which lighting types, colours, materials and installation methods are appropriate in different heritage settings, it reduces uncertainty and allows delivery teams to make consistent decisions quickly. This will help avoid unnecessary delay to live LUF works while ensuring that new and refurbished lighting contributes to Canterbury's historic character, pedestrian comfort, visitor experience and night-time safety.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, businesses, students, pedestrians, cyclists, disabled people, older people, night-time economy users, heritage organisations, contractors, Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council and the future successor unitary authority.

How we will know it has worked:

- Heritage Lighting Strategy completed and agreed by relevant council and highway partners.
- Current LUF lighting decisions are able to proceed with reduced delay and clearer rationale.
- Lighting works are more visually consistent across priority heritage routes.
- Reduction in unresolved design disputes or case-by-case escalation around lanterns, columns, colours and locations.
- Improved user perceptions of safety, legibility and public realm quality on treated routes.
- Clearer maintenance and ownership arrangements are in place for future lighting assets.
- Future public realm and highways schemes reference and apply the strategy consistently.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement between Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council on the purpose, scope and status of the strategy.
- Access to accurate lighting asset information, including ownership, condition, column types, lantern types and maintenance responsibility.
- Alignment with live LUF works so that current painting, lantern replacement and relocation decisions are not delayed unnecessarily.
- Conservation and heritage input to ensure the strategy responds to Canterbury's character areas, listed buildings, conservation areas and World Heritage Site setting.
- Technical input from lighting engineers to ensure heritage aspirations remain compliant with safety, lighting performance and maintenance requirements.

- Agreement on cost, maintenance and adoption implications of different lighting options.
- Clear decision-making route for situations where heritage preference, highway requirements, cost and practical deliverability conflict.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highway approvals; Kent County Council technical approval and adoption agreement; listed building consent where wall-mounted lighting or works affect listed buildings; conservation area input; building owner permissions for wall-mounted lighting; electrical connection approvals; traffic management permissions for installation works; utilities permissions; planning consent where required for new structures in sensitive locations.

Key risks/issues:

- Programme risk: live LUF works require decisions before the full strategy is completed.
- Governance risk: unclear responsibility between Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council could delay approvals or adoption.
- Cost risk: cast iron columns or bespoke embellishment kits may be significantly more expensive than standard steel columns and may not be affordable at all locations.
- Technical risk: some preferred heritage solutions may be difficult because of power supply, underground utilities, road closures, building ownership or maintenance access.
- Consistency risk: if interim LUF decisions are not aligned with the emerging strategy, future changes may be needed.
- Heritage risk: inappropriate lighting types, heights, colours or fittings could harm the character of sensitive streets.
- Maintenance risk: bespoke fittings and finishes may increase long-term maintenance costs or create replacement difficulties.
- Stakeholder risk: local expectations may favour heritage-style lighting everywhere, even where technical, cost or character-area considerations suggest a different approach.

Support needed to progress:

- Council sponsorship to treat the strategy as a practical delivery tool rather than a purely design-led document.
- Joint working group between Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council, heritage officers, engineering services and delivery teams.
- Technical lighting advice covering lighting levels, safety, energy performance, column heights, brackets, wall-mounted options and maintenance.
- Conservation and public realm design support to define character areas and appropriate lighting typologies.
- Quick interim decision note for live LUF works, especially where painting, lantern replacement and new columns are already in progress.
- Cost advice comparing steel columns, embellished steel columns, bespoke embellishment kits, cast iron columns and wall-mounted options.
- Stakeholder communication to explain why some works can proceed immediately and why some new installations may need to wait for the strategy.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown for the full strategy and implementation programme. Strategy preparation is likely to be a modest professional services cost, while implementation costs will vary by location and lighting type. Indicative current options include lower-cost steel columns and lanterns, higher-cost embellished columns, significantly higher-cost cast iron columns, and additional costs where new electricity supplies or road closures are required. Bespoke embellishment design and manufacturing would require a substantial upfront commitment and minimum order.

Likely funding route: Mixed - Canterbury City Council public realm or engineering budgets; Kent County Council highways or lighting budgets where applicable; future capital programmes; developer contributions where lighting relates to development impacts or public realm improvements; heritage or public realm grant funding where available.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing LUF lighting works are in progress, including painting, lantern replacement, relocation investigations and some proposed new lighting installations. Further funding will be needed for any additional new columns, bespoke embellishments, cast iron replacements, electricity connections, road closures and long-term maintenance commitments.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High for improved consistency and decision-making; medium for wider safety, perception and visitor experience benefits, which depend on delivery quality, maintenance and complementary public realm measures.

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage-sensitive lighting strategies help avoid inconsistent public realm decisions by establishing clear rules on column type, lantern style, colour, mounting, height and location.
- Improved lighting on walking routes can increase perceived safety and legibility, especially where combined with maintenance, active frontages, wayfinding and good surface conditions.
- Retaining and refurbishing structurally sound historic columns can preserve local character while reducing unnecessary replacement, provided lanterns, brackets, finishes and technical performance are suitable.
- Poorly coordinated lighting choices can undermine conservation areas and historic streets by introducing inconsistent colours, heights, fittings and column types.
- Live LUF delivery has identified the need for a practical strategy because current works involve multiple decision types, including repainting, lantern replacement, wall-mounted fittings, column relocation, new columns and potential bespoke embellishments.

4.3 City access guide

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage, accessibility and cultural partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre heritage assets and associated public realm locations

Description: Work with disability rights organisations and access groups to create a peer-produced and regularly moderated accessibility guide to Canterbury city centre, covering streets, heritage assets, venues, hospitality businesses and visitor attractions. The guide would support inclusive access, improve confidence for disabled residents and visitors, and encourage businesses to improve accessibility standards.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; heritage organisations; universities; Canterbury BID; community organisations; accessibility groups; cultural partners

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility, governance and delivery planning.
- Improved interpretation, accessibility or heritage management measures.
- Stronger integration with city-wide heritage and visitor initiatives.
- Partnership development and public engagement activity.

Outcomes:

- Improved visibility and understanding of Canterbury's heritage.
- Increased public engagement and participation.
- Better stewardship and activation of heritage assets.
- Stronger cultural and visitor offer.

Mechanism of change: Improved interpretation, accessibility and active management of heritage assets helps broaden participation, strengthen civic identity and increase engagement with Canterbury's historic environment.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; heritage organisations; businesses; students; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased public engagement and participation.
- Positive visitor and stakeholder feedback.
- Increased visibility and use of heritage assets.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility, identity and heritage quality.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Heritage and conservation approvals.
- Partnership coordination and governance.
- Revenue and capital funding support.
- Alignment with wider regeneration and visitor economy initiatives.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Listed building consent; conservation area approvals; planning permissions and event licences where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Heritage sensitivities and conservation constraints.
- Funding uncertainty.
- Capacity limitations across partner organisations.

Support needed to progress: Heritage consultancy; accessibility and interpretation expertise; project development funding and stakeholder coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, cultural grants, council support, sponsorship and partnership investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with heritage-led regeneration, accessibility and visitor economy initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage-led regeneration and interpretation projects improve engagement, footfall and civic pride.
- Historic asset reuse and accessibility improvements strengthen visitor experience and long-term sustainability.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better reveal and connect the city's layered heritage assets and stories.

4.4 Blue plaques co-ordination

Lead organisation: TBC (but Canterbury Commemoration Society and Canterbury Society may wish to lead or would need to be a key players and stakeholders given their experience in this area)

Main contact: TBC

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre-wide, focused on buildings, streets and spaces associated with significant people, events and stories across the historic core and adjoining neighbourhoods

Description: A coordinated blue plaque programme for Canterbury to identify, prioritise, design and install plaques that mark significant people, places and stories across the city centre. The project would seek to build on previous Canterbury Society led work that resulted in the creation of the city's Blue Plaques Trail project. It could create a joined-up and legible approach to on-street heritage interpretation, helping residents and visitors discover Canterbury's layers of history beyond its best-known landmarks. The programme could help establish clear criteria, design standards, permissions routes and a delivery process for future plaques, while identifying an initial priority list of new locations. The scheme would complement the wider storytelling ambitions of the city centre strategy, strengthen walking routes between heritage assets, and encourage people to explore more of the city on foot. It could also support schools, community groups and cultural partners to contribute to plaque nominations and local research over time.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Promote pilgrimage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury Society, Canterbury Commemoration Society, Canterbury City Council/ successor unitary authority; property owners; Canterbury BID; Visit Canterbury; local historians and heritage groups; Canterbury Archaeological Trust; museums and archives; schools, colleges and universities; cultural organisations; community groups; accessibility advisors; and designers/ fabricators

Project stage: Idea/early scoping

Timescale: Short to medium term - establish the programme and deliver an initial tranche pre-April 2028, with further plaques added over time

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for phase 1, with ongoing additions thereafter

What will change?

Outputs:

- A blue plaque framework setting out nomination criteria, themes, design standards and delivery process.
- A prioritised longlist and shortlist of new plaque candidates across the centre.
- An agreed design approach that is consistent, high quality and appropriate to Canterbury's historic environment.
- Permissions and agreements secured for an initial phase of plaque locations.

- Installation of an initial tranche of plaques at priority sites.
- Supporting interpretation content, mapping or simple walking-route material linking plaque locations together.

Outcomes:

- Canterbury's heritage becomes more visible, legible and engaging in everyday streets and spaces.
- Residents and visitors are encouraged to explore more widely and spend longer in the city centre.
- Lesser-known stories, people and places are better recognised and connected to the city's wider identity.
- The city centre gains a clearer and more coherent approach to heritage interpretation in the public realm.
- Community pride and participation in local heritage are strengthened through nominations, research and storytelling.

Mechanism of change: A plaque programme would build on existing work by continuing to make hidden or overlooked stories visible in the everyday city. By marking notable buildings and locations, the project creates a distributed layer of interpretation that encourages walking, curiosity and discovery. When linked to routes and wider storytelling, plaques can help spread footfall, deepen engagement with heritage and reinforce Canterbury's distinct identity as a historic and cultural city.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; students; schools and young people; heritage organisations; community groups; and the wider economy

How we will know it has worked:

- New plaque installations are completed and well distributed across the city.
- Residents and visitors engage with the plaques and associated walking/interpretation material.
- Footfall and interest increase at locations beyond the main heritage hotspots.
- Positive feedback is received from communities, heritage partners and visitor economy organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on programme governance, nomination criteria and quality standards.
- Property owner consent for plaque installation.
- Heritage and conservation approvals where required.
- Research and verification of shortlisted subjects and locations.
- Funding for design, fabrication, installation and maintenance.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Property owner/freeholder agreement; listed building or conservation area consent where relevant; planning permission where required; highways or public realm approvals in some locations; and final design/installation approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Disagreement over who or what should be commemorated could slow delivery without clear criteria.
- Permissions may be difficult to secure on some priority buildings.
- Inconsistent design or poor siting could reduce the quality and coherence of the programme.
- Without maintenance arrangements, plaques could weather poorly or lose impact over time.

Support needed to progress: Heritage research support; council coordination; property owner engagement; design and fabrication input; and modest capital funding for the first tranche of plaques

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage - likely to be modest and capable of phased delivery, with costs depending on number of plaques and installation complexity

Likely funding route: Mixed - modest council or partner funding, heritage grants, sponsorship, charitable support and community fundraising for individual plaques where appropriate

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None identified at this stage

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- The city centre strategy supports reconnecting heritage assets, improving storytelling and encouraging people to explore the city more deeply.
- The place-based assessment highlights Canterbury's exceptional historic fabric and the importance of strengthening the cultural and heritage offer.
- A coordinated plaque programme is a practical, visible and relatively low-cost way to reveal overlooked stories and support heritage-led walking and discovery.

4.5 Poor Priests Hospital

Lead organisation: The Marlowe Theatre

Main contact: The Marlowe Theatre

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Poor Priests' Hospital, Stour Street, Canterbury

Description: A major heritage-led regeneration project to restore and reopen Poor Priests' Hospital as a free public heritage destination and permanent creative learning centre for children and young people. Following completion of earlier external repairs through the Levelling Up Fund programme, the project has now secured a major delivery-phase award from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The next phase will conserve and re-present the site's nationally significant medieval spaces, embed new interpretation and artworks, and create The Hive is a long-term home for the Marlowe Theatre's learning and participation work. The scheme will also introduce community-use spaces, public events and a riverside café, helping to bring a neglected heritage asset back into daily use while strengthening Canterbury's cultural offer, visitor appeal and youth provision.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; National Lottery Heritage Fund; Garfield Weston Foundation; wider trusts, foundations, corporate and individual funders; heritage and design specialists; community and education partners; organisations involved in asset transfer and lease arrangements.

Project stage: Underway. Continued work towards securing match funding etc

Timescale: Medium term, with enabling actions and legal arrangements required in the short term

Target start date: 2026/27, subject to sign-off and legal agreements

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Restoration and conservation of the Grade I listed building's key medieval spaces, including the Great Hall and St Mary's Chapel.
- Creation of The Hive as a permanent creative learning centre with studio and breakout spaces for children and young people.
- Free public opening of the site as a heritage destination with interpretation, embedded artworks and a programme of events and learning activity.
- Community-use spaces, public hire offer and riverside café introduced to support regular use and longer dwell time.
- Lease arrangements are completed which will enable delivery and long-term stewardship.

Outcomes:

- A nationally significant heritage asset is brought back into active, publicly accessible use, improving Canterbury's heritage offer and strengthening the city's distinctiveness.
- More children and young people access high-quality creative learning, participation and wellbeing opportunities through a permanent dedicated base.
- The project helps animate a currently underused part of the city centre, increasing footfall, dwell time and wider spillover benefits for nearby businesses and cultural destinations.
- Canterbury's visitor economy is strengthened through a broader year-round cultural and heritage offer that encourages repeat visits and longer stays.
- The project demonstrates Canterbury's ability to attract major external investment through culture and heritage-led regeneration.

Mechanism of change: Restoring and reopening Poor Priests' Hospital combines heritage conservation with a clear public use and participation model. By pairing capital restoration with a permanent learning function, public access, cultural programming and community use, the project turns a fragile and largely closed asset into a well-used destination that supports youth development, local pride, visitor activity and wider regeneration benefits.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, young people, students, schools, community groups, heritage audiences

How we will know it has worked:

- Public visitor numbers and repeat use of the site increase year on year once open.
- Participation by children and young people in Marlowe learning and creative programmes rises substantially from the current baseline.
- User feedback shows improved perceptions of heritage access, welcome, learning value and the cultural offer in this part of the city centre.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Final sign-off with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and confirmation of delivery conditions.
- Lease arrangements between Canterbury City Council and the Marlowe Theatre completed.
- Remaining match funding secured over the delivery period.
- Listed building, heritage and technical delivery requirements managed through detailed design and procurement.
- Long-term operating and stewardship model remains viable once the site reopens.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Listed building and conservation-related consents as required for delivery; lease agreements; any further operational licences associated with public access, events and café/community uses.

Key risks/issues:

- Raising the remaining match funding will require a sustained fundraising campaign over several years.
- As a complex historic building, unforeseen conservation or technical issues could affect cost and programme.
- Revenue and operating assumptions will need to remain robust to support long-term public use and programming.

Support needed to progress: Continued council support to complete lease and asset transfer arrangements; coordinated support around permissions and legal processes; wider partnership advocacy to help the Marlowe Theatre secure the remaining match funding and maintain delivery momentum.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Approximately £8.5 million

Likely funding route: Mixed - major heritage grant funding, charitable trusts and foundations, corporate and individual fundraising, and Marlowe Theatre capital and in-kind contribution.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: £4.4 million National Lottery Heritage Fund award secured; £1.25 million match funding raised to date including a lead gift from Garfield Weston Foundation; £650,000 committed by the Marlowe Theatre through direct investment and volunteer time.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage-led regeneration typically increases public use, visitor numbers and local economic activity when historic assets are reopened with a strong public offer rather than remaining closed or underused.
- Creative learning and youth participation programmes are more likely to expand and sustain impact when they have a permanent, purpose-designed base with consistent access to staff, space and community partners.
- Projects that combine heritage conservation with free public access, interpretation, events and community use tend to generate broader social value, including stronger place attachment, improved access to culture and higher repeat visitation.

4.6 St Mary De Castro

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council/ successor unitary authority

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): St Mary De Castro site and surrounding open space near Canterbury Castle and Castle grounds, Canterbury

Description: A heritage-led public realm and archaeology project to excavate, reveal and interpret the footprint of St Mary De Castro, making visible an important but currently hidden part of Canterbury's historic fabric. The project would investigate and expose the remains of the former church in a carefully designed way, potentially leaving key elements open

and legible as a visitor attraction within an improved park setting. Alongside archaeological work, the surrounding space would be opened up, made more attractive and better overlooked, with clearer paths, interpretation and landscape improvements that help transform an underused area into a more inviting and interesting destination. The project would strengthen the castle quarter, reconnect heritage assets, improve perceptions of safety and reduce the conditions that currently allow anti-social behaviour to take hold.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Promote pilgrimage

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council/ successor unitary authority; Historic England; Kent Archaeological Society/local archaeology partners; conservation specialists; landscape architects; Canterbury Castle/Connected Canterbury partners; community safety partners; local heritage groups; Visit Canterbury/visitor economy partners; accessibility groups; and potential academic partners.

Project stage: Idea/early scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: 2030 and beyond depending on archaeology, design development, permissions and funding

What will change?

Outputs:

- Archaeological investigation and excavation of the known or likely footprint of St Mary De Castro.
- A publicly accessible and interpreted heritage feature that reveals the church plan and significance of the site.
- Improved park layout with opened-up views, clearer circulation routes and better visibility across the space.
- New heritage interpretation, storytelling and wayfinding linking the site to Canterbury Castle and the wider heritage network.
- Landscape and public realm improvements including seating, planting, surfacing and other measures to make the space more welcoming and usable.
- A long-term management and maintenance approach for the revealed remains and surrounding open space.

Outcomes:

- A hidden layer of Canterbury's heritage is made visible and meaningful to residents and visitors.
- The castle quarter becomes more distinctive, attractive and engaging, encouraging greater footfall and dwell time.
- An underused space becomes a better-used civic and visitor destination.
- Improved visibility, activity and passive surveillance help reduce anti-social behaviour and improve perceptions of safety.
- The project strengthens links between heritage, public realm improvement and visitor experience in this part of the city centre.

Mechanism of change: Revealing the footprint of St Mary De Castro turns an overlooked open space into a place with clear identity, purpose and interest. Archaeological interpretation and public realm improvements would attract more regular visitors and increase passive surveillance, while a more open and legible layout would reduce the sense of neglect that can contribute to anti-social behaviour. By combining heritage recovery with landscape improvement, the project helps make the area both more culturally valuable and more inviting for everyday use.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; students; young people; heritage organisations; community groups; and the wider visitor economy

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased footfall and dwell time in the space and surrounding castle quarter.
- Improved public perceptions of attractiveness, safety and interest in the area.
- Reduced reports of anti-social behaviour and related management issues.
- Positive use of the site as a heritage stop within wider walking and visitor routes.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Archaeological feasibility and agreement on the extent and condition of remains.
- Capital funding for excavation, conservation, interpretation and landscape works.
- Heritage, archaeological and conservation consents.
- Agreement on long-term maintenance and management of exposed remains.
- Coordination with wider improvements and programming in the castle quarter.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission where required; scheduled monument/ archaeological consents if applicable; listed building/ conservation area consent where relevant; landowner approvals; heritage and technical approvals; and any further permissions linked to excavation, conservation and public access works

Key risks/issues:

- Archaeological remains may be more limited, fragile or complex than expected, affecting scope and cost.
- Exposed remains will require careful design and ongoing maintenance to avoid deterioration.
- Funding may be difficult to secure without a strong heritage and public benefit case.
- If the space is not sufficiently animated and maintained after works, benefits to perception and behaviour may be reduced.

Support needed to progress: Archaeological scoping and feasibility resource; heritage and conservation advice; fundraising support; landscape and interpretation design input; and coordination with community safety and castle quarter partners

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage - likely to require feasibility funding first, followed by a capital package for archaeology, conservation, interpretation and landscape improvements

Likely funding route: Mixed - heritage grants, public realm/regeneration funding, charitable trusts and foundations, and potential partner support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None identified at this stage

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- The city centre strategy and place-based assessment identify underused heritage assets, poor perceptions in parts of the city centre, and the need to reconnect heritage and public space.
- Historic information confirms the significance of St Mary De Castro as a former church site associated with Canterbury Castle.
- The project responds directly to the opportunity to reveal hidden heritage while improving the attractiveness and usability of an underused space.

4.7 St John's Hospital

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage, accessibility and cultural partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre heritage assets and associated public realm locations

Description: Support the conservation, interpretation and sensitive public activation of St John's Hospital as a significant historic and charitable institution within Canterbury's heritage landscape. The project would explore improved public engagement, heritage interpretation, events, educational use and stronger integration with pilgrimage routes and city storytelling initiatives while respecting the building's operational and residential functions.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; heritage organisations; universities; Canterbury BID; community organisations; accessibility groups; cultural partners

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility, governance and delivery planning.
- Improved interpretation, accessibility or heritage management measures.
- Stronger integration with city-wide heritage and visitor initiatives.
- Partnership development and public engagement activity.

Outcomes:

- Improved visibility and understanding of Canterbury's heritage.
- Increased public engagement and participation.
- Better stewardship and activation of heritage assets.
- Stronger cultural and visitor offer.

Mechanism of change: Improved interpretation, accessibility and active management of heritage assets helps broaden participation, strengthen civic identity and increase engagement with Canterbury's historic environment.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; heritage organisations; businesses; students; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased public engagement and participation.
- Positive visitor and stakeholder feedback.
- Increased visibility and use of heritage assets.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility, identity and heritage quality.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Heritage and conservation approvals.
- Partnership coordination and governance.
- Revenue and capital funding support.
- Alignment with wider regeneration and visitor economy initiatives.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Listed building consent; conservation area approvals; planning permissions and event licences where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Heritage sensitivities and conservation constraints.
- Funding uncertainty.
- Capacity limitations across partner organisations.

Support needed to progress: Heritage consultancy; accessibility and interpretation expertise; project development funding and stakeholder coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, cultural grants, council support, sponsorship and partnership investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with heritage-led regeneration, accessibility and visitor economy initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage-led regeneration and interpretation projects improve engagement, footfall and civic pride.
- Historic asset reuse and accessibility improvements strengthen visitor experience and long-term sustainability.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better reveal and connect the city's layered heritage assets and stories.



Image: © David Furness

5 Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story

Completing the Levelling Up Fund projects, including the story gardens and events infrastructure. Building a critical mass of events and activities celebrating Canterbury's unique identity and character from festivals and performances to folklore traditions and civic celebrations. Positioning Canterbury as a leading destination for cultural experiences, helping residents and visitors spend more time in the city and strengthening civic pride.

5.1 UNESCO City of Literature bid

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with universities, cultural organisations and literary partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide including libraries, universities, schools, cultural venues and public spaces

Description: Explore and coordinate a long-term programme supporting a potential UNESCO City of Literature bid for Canterbury, building on the city's literary heritage, universities, cultural institutions and contemporary creative sectors. The initiative would strengthen Canterbury's identity as a place of storytelling, learning and creativity while supporting cultural programming, education, tourism and international partnerships.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; universities; libraries; schools; Marlowe Theatre; literary organisations; Visit Canterbury; community groups

Project stage: Scoping and partnership development

Timescale: Medium-to-long term

Target start date: 2027

Target end date: Initial feasibility and partnership framework by 2028

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study and gap analysis for UNESCO City of Literature status.
- City-wide literary and cultural partnership framework.
- Public literary events and programming.
- Development of an international cultural profile linked to literature and storytelling.

Outcomes:

- Stronger cultural identity and international recognition.
- Increased participation in literary and creative activity.
- Improved cultural tourism and year-round programming.
- Greater collaboration between education, culture and community sectors.

Mechanism of change: A coordinated literary identity helps connect Canterbury's heritage and educational strengths with contemporary cultural activity, creating a more distinctive and internationally visible city narrative.

Beneficiaries: Residents; students; visitors; cultural organisations; schools; businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in literary events and programmes.
- Growth in cultural partnerships and funding opportunities.
- Increased national and international profile.
- Positive stakeholder and visitor feedback.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Strong partnership governance.
- Long-term cultural programming capacity.
- Evidence of sustained literary and educational activity.
- Funding and bid-development support.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with bid development

Key risks/issues:

- Resource requirements for bid preparation and delivery.
- Competition from other cities.
- Need for sustained long-term commitment.

Support needed to progress: Cultural strategy support; bid-development expertise; partnership coordination and funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Arts funding, educational partnerships, sponsorship and council enabling support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with university and cultural sector programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- UNESCO creative city programmes support cultural profile, tourism and international collaboration.
- Literary identity strategies strengthen cultural participation and educational engagement.
- Canterbury's educational and literary heritage provides strong foundations for a coordinated narrative-led cultural programme.

5.2 Canterbury and coast digital hub

Lead organisation: Canterbury BID working with Canterbury City Council, Visit Canterbury and visitor economy partners

Main contact: Canterbury BID

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury (and coastal towns)

Specific location(s): Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay city/town centre

Description: Creation and roll-out of a new digital hub (app) called 'Canterbury and Coast' to the city. It will combine a personalised mobile app, business dashboards, real time messaging, footfall analytics, event and offer publishing tools, surveys, maps and curated trails. It will make a range of information available that will be valuable to regular (and new) city users such as students, residents and visitors.

This project will focus on making optimum use of this exciting and potentially powerful new resource to improve efficiency, data insight and user experience including:

- exploring innovative ways of showcasing business offers and widening its reach to users as well as obtaining customer feedback;

- fully testing the app's use across different domains such as development of new walks and trails;
- make full use of app analytics

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Promoting pilgrimage

Delivery partners: Canterbury BID; Loqiva (provider); Canterbury City Council; Visit Canterbury; tourism businesses; cultural organisations; accommodation providers; universities

Project stage: July to September (soft launches - e.g. businesses)

Timescale: Short-to-medium term. September (hard launch with PR to users/customers); October 2026 – March 2027 (growth campaigns and ongoing partnership development)

Target start date: Ongoing

Target end date: Continuing programme through to 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Coordinated destination campaigns and storytelling content.
- Improved visitor information and digital engagement.
- Stronger promotion of cultural, heritage and independent offers.
- Better integration between city-wide events and visitor marketing.

Outcomes:

- Increased visitor awareness and engagement.
- Longer dwell time and repeat visitation.
- More balanced year-round visitor economy.
- Improved visibility for independent and secondary destinations.

Mechanism of change: Stronger and more efficient destination management and storytelling that improve the city user/visitor experience while helping distribute activity more evenly across the city centre and calendar year.

Beneficiaries: Visitors; businesses; cultural organisations; residents; accommodation providers

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased visitor engagement and digital reach.
- Growth in visitor numbers and dwell time.
- Positive business and visitor feedback.
- Increased participation in promoted events and activities.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Continued partnership coordination.
- Marketing and digital capacity.
- Shared visitor data and insights.
- Funding for campaigns and content development.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with marketing activity

Key risks/issues:

- Funding pressures within destination management.
- Competition from other heritage destinations.
- Dependence on external visitor market conditions.

Support needed to progress: Marketing support; shared data and insight; partnership coordination and campaign funding

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Funding in place until 2029

Likely funding route: Primarily Canterbury BID with some Canterbury City Council support (i.e. UKSPF funding to allow inclusion of coastal towns)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: BID membership and other visitor economy partnerships and promotional channels

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Destination management organisations improve visitor coordination and economic impact.
- Strong storytelling and digital promotion support dwell time and repeat visits.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need for more joined-up promotion of the city's wider cultural and heritage offer.

5.3 Festival forum/toolkit

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with event organisers and cultural partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide public spaces, cultural venues and event locations

Description: Create a Festival Forum and practical event toolkit supporting coordination, collaboration and growth across Canterbury's festivals and events sector. The project would provide shared guidance, networking opportunities, event planning resources and support for organisers while helping improve programming coordination and reduce duplication. It could also widen the pre-agreed guidance for closure of city event spaces such as Westgate Towers, Westgate Hall Road and Iron Bar/Link Lane.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; festival organisers; Canterbury BID; cultural organisations; venues; emergency services; universities

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028)

Target start date: 2027

Target end date: Forum and toolkit established by 2028

What will change?

Outputs:

- Festival and events forum.
- Shared event planning toolkit and guidance resources
- Improved communication and programming coordination.
- Networking and capacity-building activity for organisers.

Outcomes:

- Better coordinated city-wide events programme.
- Increased confidence and capacity among organisers.
- Reduced duplication and scheduling conflicts.
- Stronger collective promotion of Canterbury's cultural activity.

Mechanism of change: Shared coordination and practical support improve the sustainability and quality of local events while strengthening collaboration and city-wide visibility.

Beneficiaries: Festival organisers; residents; visitors; businesses; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in the forum.
- Positive organiser feedback.
- Improved coordination across event programming.
- Increased attendance and visibility for festivals and events.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Organiser participation and engagement.
- Ongoing coordination capacity.
- Shared communications and governance arrangements.
- Support from cultural and business partners.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with forum creation

Key risks/issues:

- Difficulty sustaining long-term engagement.
- Resource limitations for smaller organisers.
- Overlap with existing networks if not clearly defined.

Support needed to progress: Facilitation support; communications resources; events expertise and coordination capacity

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low

Likely funding route: Council support, sponsorship and cultural partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential in-kind support through partner venues and organisations

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Event networks and shared toolkits improve coordination and organisational resilience.
- Better programming coordination strengthens city-wide visitor offers.
- Stakeholder engagement highlighted the need for stronger collaboration across cultural programming.

5.4 Live music strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with venues, promoters and cultural partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide venues, public spaces and hospitality locations

Description: Develop a live music strategy for Canterbury city centre supporting grassroots venues, outdoor performance, festivals and year-round music programming. The strategy would identify barriers to live music activity, opportunities for venue support, licensing coordination, audience development and integration with wider cultural and evening economy initiatives.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; music venues; promoters; artists; hospitality businesses; universities; cultural organisations

Project stage: Strategy development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Strategy and pilot initiatives by 2028/29

What will change?

Outputs:

- Live music and venue audit.
- Strategic action plan for live music development.
- Pilot events and venue support initiatives.
- Stronger coordination between venues and city programming.

Outcomes:

- Increased live music activity and cultural participation.
- Stronger evening economy.
- Improved opportunities for local musicians and creatives.
- Greater vibrancy and diversity of city centre activity.

Mechanism of change: Supporting live music infrastructure and programming strengthens the cultural offer and creates more reasons for people to spend time in the city centre across different times of day.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; musicians; hospitality businesses; young people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased number of live music events.
- Positive audience and business feedback.
- Increased evening footfall.
- Improved sustainability of local venues.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Venue participation and licensing flexibility.
- Revenue funding and sponsorship.
- Noise management and resident engagement.
- Coordination between operators and promoters.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Event licences; premises licences; Temporary Event Notices where required

Key risks/issues:

- Noise and amenity concerns.
- Financial pressures on independent venues.
- Limited organisational capacity.

Support needed to progress: Cultural coordination; venue engagement; licensing and funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Arts funding, sponsorship, venue contributions and council support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with evening economy and cultural participation programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Live music activity contributes positively to evening economy vitality and city identity.
- Grassroots music ecosystems support local creative talent and visitor appeal.
- Stakeholder engagement identified opportunities to strengthen Canterbury's evening cultural offer.

5.5 Curatorial residencies

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with cultural organisations, universities and creative partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide cultural venues, public spaces, galleries and meanwhile-use spaces

Description: Develop a curatorial residency programme bringing artists, writers, researchers, designers and creative practitioners into Canterbury to create new work, public programmes and interpretation linked to the city's heritage, communities and contemporary identity. The programme would support experimentation, collaboration and public engagement while helping animate city spaces and strengthen Canterbury's cultural narrative.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; universities; galleries; museums; cultural organisations; community groups; arts funders

Project stage: Idea/partnership development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Pilot residency programme by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Curatorial residency framework and commissions programme.
- Temporary exhibitions, installations and public events.
- Partnerships between artists, institutions and communities.
- New interpretation and storytelling content linked to Canterbury.

Outcomes:

- Increased cultural activity and experimentation.
- Greater public engagement with Canterbury's stories and heritage.
- New creative work responding to city spaces and identity.
- Stronger profile for Canterbury's creative sector.

Mechanism of change: Residency programmes bring new perspectives, experimentation and public-facing activity into city centres while creating opportunities for collaboration and cultural participation.

Beneficiaries: Artists; residents; visitors; students; cultural organisations; businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of residencies and commissions delivered.
- Public participation and audience feedback.
- Increased collaboration between cultural organisations.
- Media and sector recognition.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Cultural partnership coordination.
- Suitable venues and workspace.
- Revenue funding for artists and programming.
- Curatorial and operational capacity.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Event permissions and venue agreements where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Short-term funding uncertainty.
- Limited affordable space for artists.
- Audience development challenges.

Support needed to progress: Arts funding support; cultural coordination; venue partnerships and curatorial expertise

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Arts Council funding, university partnerships, sponsorship and council support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with creative economy and meanwhile-use initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Artist residency programmes support cultural innovation and city animation.
- Temporary creative activity increases footfall and engagement with underused spaces.
- Canterbury's cultural and educational institutions provide strong foundations for collaborative residency models.

5.6 Oral history stations

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with community, heritage and educational partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Libraries, cultural venues, public spaces and heritage sites across Canterbury

Description: Develop a network of oral history stations, sound benches and digital storytelling points capturing and sharing stories from Canterbury's pilgrims, communities, workers, students, businesses and visitors. The project would create opportunities for intergenerational participation while strengthening understanding of Canterbury's changing identity, lived experiences and historic importance.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; libraries; museums; universities; schools; community groups; heritage organisations

Project stage: Idea/pilot development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Pilot stations operational by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Oral history collection and recording programme.
- Digital and physical storytelling stations.
- Community workshops and participation activity.
- Archive and interpretation materials.

Outcomes:

- Increased participation in heritage and storytelling activity.
- Greater representation of diverse community experiences.
- Improved intergenerational and community engagement.
- Stronger emotional connection to place and identity.

Mechanism of change: Capturing and sharing lived experiences broadens heritage narratives and creates more personal and inclusive ways for people to connect with place. This would include stories of how people have journeyed to the city throughout history and the significance of those journeys.

Beneficiaries: Residents; schools; community groups; visitors; heritage organisations; students

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of stories collected and shared.
- Participation across different community groups.
- Positive public feedback.
- Use of materials in learning and interpretation activity.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Community participation and trust-building.
- Recording and archive infrastructure.

- Data management and safeguarding arrangements.
- Long-term hosting and maintenance.

Permissions/consents likely needed: GDPR and consent agreements for recordings and publication

Key risks/issues:

- Uneven participation across communities.
- Long-term archive maintenance responsibilities.
- Technical and accessibility challenges.

Support needed to progress: Community engagement support; digital archive expertise; heritage and learning funding

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, educational partnerships, cultural grants and council support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with local heritage and civic participation programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Oral history programmes improve participation and strengthen community identity.
- Community storytelling broadens representation within heritage interpretation.
- Digital storytelling tools increase accessibility and engagement with local history.

5.7 Marlowe Theatre – future programming

Lead organisation: The Marlowe Theatre working with cultural and other partners

Main contact: Marlowe Theatre

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Marlowe Theatre and surrounding city centre cultural quarter

Description: Support the continued development of the Marlowe Theatre's role as a major regional cultural anchor within Canterbury city centre. Future projects could include expanded programming, education and outreach activity, improved public realm connections, wider use of public spaces and partnerships with local creative organisations and businesses.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: The Marlowe Theatre; Canterbury City Council; cultural sector; universities and colleges; schools; Canterbury BID; businesses

Project stage: Ongoing development and partnership expansion

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: Ongoing

Target end date: Phased progress through 2030

What will change?

Outputs:

- Expanded cultural and educational programming.

- Improved integration with surrounding public spaces and city events.
- Partnerships with local creative and educational organisations.
- Increased outreach and participation activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased cultural participation and city centre activity.
- Stronger evening economy and visitor offer.
- Greater opportunities for local creative talent.
- Enhanced reputation of Canterbury as a cultural destination.

Mechanism of change: Large-scale cultural anchors increase footfall, dwell time and civic participation while helping shape a distinctive city identity and supporting wider economic activity.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; artists; students; businesses; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased attendance and participation.
- Positive visitor and audience feedback.
- Increased city centre footfall linked to cultural activity.
- Growth in partnerships and educational engagement.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Long-term funding avenues.
- Audience growth and programming capacity.
- Partnership working across the cultural sector.
- Infrastructure and accessibility improvements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: TBC

Key risks/issues:

- Funding limitations.
- Audience and economic uncertainty.

Support needed to progress: Cultural investment; partnership development; marketing and audience development support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: TBC

Likely funding route: A mix of funding routes potentially including Arts Council, ticket revenue, sponsorship, grants and partnership investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing institutional and cultural partnerships

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Major cultural venues generate economic impact through footfall, visitor spend and evening activity.
- Cultural anchors improve city identity and support wider creative ecosystems.
- The Marlowe Theatre is already a defining city centre destination with potential for broader civic and cultural impact.



Image: © Matt Wilson

6 Promoting pilgrimage

Improving the quality, coherence and safety of walking and cycling routes across the city centre. Supporting new routes such as those proposed through Canterbury Tales of England to connect cultural, educational and shopping destinations. Making active travel a key part of the Canterbury experience for residents, students and visitors. Enhancing the visibility and opportunities of the Via Francigena partnership and route

6.1 Story gardens expansion

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage, visitor economy and transport partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide walking routes, heritage corridors and public realm locations

Description: Build on the Connected Canterbury programme through expanded interpretation, public art, planting, digital storytelling and cultural programming that further connects Canterbury's public spaces with the city's literary, religious and pilgrimage traditions. The project would strengthen the city's distinct identity while encouraging exploration and dwell time.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promoting pilgrimage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury Cathedral; Visit Canterbury; Canterbury BID; Kent County Council; heritage organisations; accessibility groups; cultural organisations; walking and cycling groups

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Improved walking route infrastructure and interpretation.
- Enhanced wayfinding and digital visitor information.
- Public realm and accessibility improvements.
- Coordinated pilgrimage and heritage storytelling activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased walking and exploration within the city centre.
- Improved visitor orientation and confidence.
- Increased dwell time and engagement with heritage assets.
- Stronger perception of Canterbury as a pilgrimage and walking destination.

Mechanism of change: Clearer, safer and more engaging walking routes encourage visitors and residents to explore the city on foot, increasing interaction with heritage assets, public spaces and local businesses while strengthening Canterbury's identity as a historic pilgrimage city.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; pilgrims; businesses; accessibility groups; cultural and heritage organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of walking routes and trails.
- Positive visitor and accessibility feedback.
- Increased dwell time and dispersal across the city centre.
- Increased engagement with heritage and cultural destinations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Coordination between transport, heritage and visitor economy partners.
- Funding for public realm and interpretation improvements.
- Digital platform development and maintenance.
- Accessibility and conservation considerations.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; conservation area consent; listed building consent; highways approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Fragmented ownership and route management responsibilities.
- Funding constraints.
- Balancing accessibility improvements with heritage sensitivities.

Support needed to progress: Wayfinding and heritage consultancy support; public realm design expertise; accessibility input; funding and partnership coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, transport grants, cultural funding, council investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with pilgrimage, tourism, accessibility and active travel programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Pilgrimage and heritage walking routes increase visitor dwell time and strengthen place identity.
- Improved wayfinding and accessibility support wider participation and visitor confidence.
- Walking-based visitor experiences encourage exploration of secondary streets and heritage assets beyond primary attractions.

6.2 Pilgrims route

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Canterbury Cathedral and heritage, visitor economy and transport partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide walking routes, heritage corridors and public realm locations

Description: Develop and promote a coherent contemporary Pilgrims Route through Canterbury city centre, improving wayfinding, interpretation, public realm connections and arrival experiences for visitors approaching the city on foot or by cycle. The route would strengthen Canterbury's role as a modern pilgrimage destination while supporting wider heritage and visitor economy objectives.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promoting pilgrimage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury Cathedral; Visit Canterbury; Canterbury BID; Kent County Council; heritage organisations; accessibility groups; cultural organisations; walking and cycling groups

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Improved walking route infrastructure and interpretation.
- Enhanced wayfinding and digital visitor information.
- Public realm and accessibility improvements.
- Coordinated pilgrimage and heritage storytelling activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased walking and exploration within the city centre.
- Improved visitor orientation and confidence.
- Increased dwell time and engagement with heritage assets.
- Stronger perception of Canterbury as a pilgrimage and walking destination.

Mechanism of change: Clearer, safer and more engaging walking routes encourage visitors and residents to explore the city on foot, increasing interaction with heritage assets, public spaces and local businesses while strengthening Canterbury's identity as a historic pilgrimage city.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; pilgrims; businesses; accessibility groups; cultural and heritage organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of walking routes and trails.
- Positive visitor and accessibility feedback.
- Increased dwell time and dispersal across the city centre.
- Increased engagement with heritage and cultural destinations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Coordination between transport, heritage and visitor economy partners.
- Funding for public realm and interpretation improvements.
- Digital platform development and maintenance.
- Accessibility and conservation considerations.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; conservation area consent; listed building consent; highways approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Fragmented ownership and route management responsibilities.
- Funding constraints.
- Balancing accessibility improvements with heritage sensitivities.

Support needed to progress: Wayfinding and heritage consultancy support; public realm design expertise; accessibility input; funding and partnership coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, transport grants, cultural funding, partner investment and contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with pilgrimage, tourism, accessibility and active travel programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Pilgrimage and heritage walking routes increase visitor dwell time and strengthen place identity.
- Improved wayfinding and accessibility support wider participation and visitor confidence.
- Walking-based visitor experiences encourage exploration of secondary streets and heritage assets beyond primary attractions.

6.3 City wall walk

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage, visitor economy and transport partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide walking routes, heritage corridors and public realm locations

Description: Enhance and promote the Canterbury City Wall Walk through improved interpretation, accessibility measures, wayfinding, lighting and digital content. The project would strengthen awareness of Canterbury's historic form and create a more legible and engaging walking experience connecting key heritage assets and viewpoints.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promoting pilgrimage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury Cathedral; Visit Canterbury; Canterbury BID; Kent County Council; heritage organisations; accessibility groups; cultural organisations; walking and cycling groups

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Improved walking route infrastructure and interpretation.
- Enhanced wayfinding and digital visitor information.
- Public realm and accessibility improvements.
- Coordinated pilgrimage and heritage storytelling activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased walking and exploration within the city centre.
- Improved visitor orientation and confidence.
- Increased dwell time and engagement with heritage assets.
- Stronger perception of Canterbury as a pilgrimage and walking destination.

Mechanism of change: Clearer, safer and more engaging walking routes encourage visitors and residents to explore the city on foot, increasing interaction with heritage assets, public spaces and local businesses while strengthening Canterbury's identity as a historic pilgrimage city.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; pilgrims; businesses; accessibility groups; cultural and heritage organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of walking routes and trails.
- Positive visitor and accessibility feedback.
- Increased dwell time and dispersal across the city centre.
- Increased engagement with heritage and cultural destinations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Coordination between transport, heritage and visitor economy partners.
- Funding for public realm and interpretation improvements.
- Digital platform development and maintenance.
- Accessibility and conservation considerations.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; conservation area consent; listed building consent; highways approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Fragmented ownership and route management responsibilities.
- Funding constraints.
- Balancing accessibility improvements with heritage sensitivities.

Support needed to progress: Wayfinding and heritage consultancy support; public realm design expertise; accessibility input; funding and partnership coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, transport grants, cultural funding, council investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with pilgrimage, tourism, accessibility and active travel programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Pilgrimage and heritage walking routes increase visitor dwell time and strengthen place identity.
- Improved wayfinding and accessibility support wider participation and visitor confidence.
- Walking-based visitor experiences encourage exploration of secondary streets and heritage assets beyond primary attractions.

6.4 Via Francigena

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council/ successor unitary authority, working with the European Association of the Via Francigena, Visit Canterbury and route partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Canterbury city centre as the northern anchor/starting point of the Via Francigena, with a focus on the cathedral precinct, arrival points, visitor orientation, walking routes through the city centre, and onward connections towards Dover and the continental route to Arras. The project also relates to linked gateway sites, visitor information points and potential pilgrim-supporting accommodation in and around the city centre.

Description: A partnership project to strengthen Canterbury's role as the starting point of the Via Francigena and to develop the Canterbury–Arras section as a distinctive walking, cultural and tourism offer. The proposal is to build closer collaboration between Canterbury, Arras, tourism bodies, dioceses and route partners, with the aim of promoting this section as an accessible 10 to 12 day itinerary linking two cathedral cities and opening up opportunities for cultural exchange, pilgrim services, visitor economy growth and cross-border funding.

For Canterbury, the project would focus on making the city's role in the route more visible, legible and useful: improving route identity and orientation in the city centre; connecting pilgrims and walkers more clearly to the cathedral, visitor information, accommodation and onward routes; building links with Arras, the Via Francigena network, and cathedral partners; and exploring practical elements such as shared promotion, a coordinated identity, pilgrim-friendly offers, route interpretation and testimonium-related activity. It directly supports the city centre strategy's emphasis on promoting pilgrimage, improving walking routes, encouraging longer stays, strengthening cultural identity and using heritage to deepen the visitor experience.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promote pilgrimage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

Delivery partners: European Association of the Via Francigena; Canterbury City Council/successor unitary authority; Visit Canterbury; Visit Kent; Canterbury Cathedral; diocesan partners in Canterbury and Arras; Arras tourism partners; tour operators; local accommodation providers; heritage and cultural partners; walking and pilgrimage groups; Kent County Council; ferry/cross-channel transport partners; universities and schools; and community/volunteer partners

Project stage: Early partnership development/ scoping

Timescale: Short-Medium term - relationship building, route promotion and pilot actions pre-April 2028, with longer-term growth through partnership and funding bids

Target start date: 2026 (preparation towards Via Francigena assembly)

Target end date: 2027 for initial partnership phase with potential for further delivery and ongoing development thereafter up to 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- A formalised partnership framework between Canterbury, Arras and key route partners to promote the Canterbury–Arras section.
- A clearer city centre arrival and orientation offer for Via Francigena walkers in Canterbury, linked to the cathedral and onward walking routes.
- Shared promotional materials and route messaging aligned with the wider Via Francigena identity and partner ambitions for a stronger section offer.
- Development of practical pilgrim-supporting elements such as accommodation mapping, partner links, tourism information, and potential testimonium-related arrangements.
- A platform for future cultural, educational and tourism collaboration between Canterbury and Arras.
- Exploration of cross-border and regional cooperation funding opportunities to support further route development.

Outcomes:

- Canterbury's role as the starting point of the Via Francigena is more visible, better interpreted and easier for visitors to understand and use.
- More walkers and cultural visitors are encouraged to begin or end journeys in Canterbury, increasing dwell time and supporting overnight stays and local spend.
- The city centre gains a stronger pilgrimage identity, supporting the strategy ambition to make active travel and pilgrimage a visible part of the Canterbury experience.
- Stronger ties with Arras and route partners support wider cultural exchange, tourism cooperation and future funding prospects.
- The project helps turn a historic route into a practical contemporary offer, strengthening Canterbury's heritage-led economy and international profile.

Mechanism of change: The Via Francigena already gives Canterbury a unique role as the starting point of a major European cultural route. By improving how that role is presented, supported and connected to the city centre experience, Canterbury can convert symbolic significance into practical visitor benefits. Better route visibility, partner coordination, pilgrim services and international promotion make it easier for walkers and cultural visitors to start, end or extend journeys in the city, encouraging longer stays, stronger identity and wider economic benefit.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; walkers and pilgrims; traders/businesses; accommodation providers; cultural and heritage organisations; students; universities; community groups; and wider visitor economy partners

How we will know it has worked:

- Clearer visibility of the Via Francigena in the city centre and stronger route information for arrivals in Canterbury.
- Active partnership activity between Canterbury, Arras and route organisations, including joint promotion and pilot actions.
- Increased use of pilgrim/walking-related visitor offers and stronger evidence of overnight stays and dwell time linked to route activity.
- Positive feedback from pilgrims, walkers, tourism partners and cathedral/route stakeholders.
- Progress towards external funding bids or formal collaboration agreements linked to route development.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Continued collaboration with the European Association of the Via Francigena, Arras tourism partners, Canterbury Cathedral and local visitor economy partners.
- Agreement on practical route-development priorities for Canterbury, including identity, information, accommodation and promotion.

- Capacity to coordinate a cross-border partnership and develop the project into clear work packages.
- Support from cathedral, diocesan and tourism partners where spiritual or testimonium-related elements are involved.
- Access to funding for coordination, promotion, route interpretation and pilot actions.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Mostly partnership and programme agreements in the first phase; any future signage, interpretation, wayfinding, public realm or physical infrastructure changes may require planning, highways, landowner or heritage consents depending on scope and location

Key risks/issues:

- The project could remain symbolic unless translated into practical route, visitor and accommodation improvements.
- Cross-border partnership work may progress slowly without dedicated coordination resource.
- Reliance on multiple organisations may affect delivery pace and consistency.
- Route identity and pilgrim services may be uneven unless clearly owned and maintained over time.
- Funding opportunities may take time to secure and may require strong evidence and partnership maturity.

Support needed to progress: Partnership coordination resource; visitor economy and cathedral engagement; route interpretation and wayfinding support; accommodation and operator engagement; and bid development support for relevant cross-border or tourism funding opportunities

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage - likely to begin with modest coordination and development costs, with wider costs dependent on future route interpretation, visitor information, branding, partnership activity and any physical improvements

Likely funding route: Mixed - partner contributions, tourism and cultural programme funding, cross-border cooperation funding, grant funding, in-kind support from route and tourism partners, and potential sponsorship for promotional activity

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: In-kind partner engagement and coordination are already evident through discussions between Canterbury, Arras, cathedral partners and the Via Francigena network, but no confirmed funding package is identified yet

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium to high

Evidence/sources:

- The city centre strategy explicitly supports pilgrimage, improved walking routes and enhancing the visibility and opportunities of the Via Francigena.
- The official Via Francigena route establishes Canterbury as the starting point of a major European cultural route.
- The attached correspondence sets out a concrete proposal to promote the Canterbury–Arras section, identifies likely partners and actions, and highlights tourism, cultural and funding potential.

6.5 Crucifix baobab tree walk

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): A walking route linking the known baobab plane trees across Canterbury, including locations at Westgate Gardens, Canterbury Cathedral precincts, Canterbury Castle, Old Dover Road, Beer Cart Lane/St Margaret's Street area, and St Gregory's Church/St Gregory's Centre for Music area.

Description: A heritage walking route and interpretation project built around Canterbury's unusual "baobab" plane trees, whose locations have been identified as forming the shape of a crucifix across the city. The project would create a clearly legible themed walk linking the seven known trees through a curated route, light-touch interpretation, printed and digital wayfinding, and associated storytelling. It would turn a little-known botanical and historic curiosity into a distinctive Canterbury experience that encourages residents and visitors to explore a wider area of the city on foot, connecting heritage sites, green spaces and quieter streets beyond the main visitor core. The project would support pilgrimage-style movement through the city while offering a unique way to tell Canterbury's story through landscape, folklore, urban form and hidden heritage.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promote pilgrimage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury Cathedral; Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society; local heritage groups; Visit Canterbury; Canterbury BID; local walking and access groups; landowners where relevant; community volunteers; schools, colleges and universities.

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: 2030

What will change?

Outputs:

- A defined walking route linking the seven known baobab plane tree locations across Canterbury.
- Route map, wayfinding and interpretation material explaining the trees, their history and their cruciform arrangement.
- Light-touch public realm or signage interventions at key points, where appropriate and feasible.
- Printed and digital trail materials for residents, visitors and education groups.
- A supporting programme of walks, talks, school activities or seasonal events tied to the route.
- A simple identity for the trail that can be incorporated into wider visitor information and city storytelling.

Outcomes:

- Increased footfall and dwell time across a wider spread of city centre and edge-of-centre locations.
- Greater public awareness of Canterbury's hidden heritage and lesser-known green assets.
- A stronger walking-based visitor experience that complements pilgrimage and storytelling routes.
- Better connections between heritage sites, green spaces and quieter parts of the city.

- A distinctive, low-cost visitor and resident experience that builds civic pride and curiosity.
- Increased use of walking routes as a way to explore Canterbury beyond the main retail and cathedral-focused areas.

Mechanism of change: By packaging the baobab plane trees into a coherent and story-led walking route, the project turns dispersed and little-known assets into a memorable city experience. Interpretation and route legibility encourage people to move between different parts of Canterbury on foot, increasing exploration, dwell time and engagement with heritage and green spaces. Because the route is unusual, place-specific and relatively easy to deliver, it offers a strong way to deepen Canterbury's identity while supporting wider goals around pilgrimage, storytelling and walking-based access.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; young people; older people; businesses; heritage groups; schools; walking groups.

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in the trail through downloads, map pick-up or guided walk attendance.
- Positive visitor and resident feedback on awareness of the trees and route experience.
- Increased footfall at selected points along the route and stronger dispersal beyond the primary core.
- Inclusion of the route in wider visitor information, walking offers or cultural programming.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the final route alignment and safest/most legible walking sequence.
- Permissions for any signage or interpretation on land not directly controlled by the council.
- Coordination with heritage, cathedral and other landowning partners.
- Accessible route design and review of any problematic crossings or path sections.
- Modest resource for design, interpretation and promotion.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder agreement; planning permission or advertisement consent for signage where required; listed building/conservation area consent in sensitive locations; permissions for guided events where applicable.

Key risks/issues:

- Some tree locations may be difficult to interpret or access clearly without careful route planning.
- Over-signage or poorly designed interpretation could conflict with sensitive heritage settings.
- The route may have limited impact if not promoted properly through visitor and local channels.
- Reliance on a niche story means the quality of interpretation and storytelling will be important.
- Ongoing maintenance of any physical trail materials will need to be clear.

Support needed to progress: Council convening to confirm partners and route; light-touch feasibility and interpretation design resource; access review; heritage advice; support from visitor economy partners on branding and promotion.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown

Likely funding route: Mixed – small grant funding, heritage or cultural funding, council enabling support, in-kind partner support, and possible sponsorship for interpretation or printed materials.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Themed heritage walking routes are a well-established way of increasing footfall, dwell time and visitor exploration, especially where they connect multiple sites through a distinctive narrative.
- Interpretation-led trails can improve public awareness of lesser-known heritage and green assets and encourage more dispersed movement beyond primary visitor hotspots.
- Low-cost cultural and landscape trails can be effective where they build on genuinely distinctive local features and link them to a wider place story.

6.6 Safer walking routes and city lighting

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with Kent County Council Highways

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre walking routes, evening economy routes, public spaces and car park approaches where lighting, visibility and perceptions of safety are known issues. Immediate focus areas could include St George's Street, Castle Street, Buttermarket, Orange Street, Castle Street Multi-Storey Car Park and key routes linking car parks, transport interchanges, LUF investment areas, heritage assets and the night-time economy. Seasonal light installation opportunities could also be explored at high-profile locations such as Canterbury Castle, Westgate Towers, the Clocktower and other areas that have benefited from LUF investment.

Description: A phased programme to improve street lighting, route confidence and the experience of moving through Canterbury after dark. The project responds to long-standing requests from businesses and partners for better city centre lighting, recognising that poor illumination affects perceptions of safety, the attractiveness of public spaces, the evening economy, event activity and the use of city centre car parks. The programme would combine practical lighting upgrades on priority walking routes with creative, seasonal and heritage-sensitive lighting installations that make Canterbury feel more welcoming after dark. It would focus on improving illumination, visibility, wayfinding, aesthetics and confidence on key pedestrian routes, while supporting events, cultural activity, social media visibility and evening footfall. Canterbury BID would be a key partner, alongside the Community Safety team, Kent County Council Highways, Kent Police, cultural partners, universities and student groups. Student and university involvement in temporary or seasonal light installations could support creativity, ownership and community involvement, particularly in locations already improved through the Levelling Up Fund.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promote pilgrimage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; Canterbury BID;

Community Safety Partnership; Kent Police; universities and student representatives; cultural and creative partners; Visit Canterbury; car park operators; lighting designers and engineers; heritage and conservation officers; events partners; local businesses and residents.

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Short term for audit, priority lighting review and pilot interventions; medium term for wider route upgrades and recurring seasonal installations.

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for audit, design and first phase delivery; wider programme phased beyond 2029.

What will change?

Outputs:

- City centre lighting and safer routes audit, covering lighting levels, dark spots, sightlines, route confidence, CCTV interfaces, heritage sensitivity, car park approaches and evening economy routes.
- Priority lighting improvement plan identifying quick wins, medium-term upgrades and longer-term capital works.
- Phase one lighting improvements focused on high-priority streets and spaces, potentially including St George's Street, Castle Street, Buttermarket and Orange Street.
- Review and improvement plan for under-lit car park approaches and key arrival routes, including Castle Street Multi-Storey Car Park.
- Lighting design principles for the city centre that balance safety, heritage character, energy efficiency, maintenance and night-time ambience.
- Pilot seasonal or temporary light installations in key locations, potentially linked to February 2026 activity and future winter/shoulder-season programming.
- University and student-led design opportunities for selected installations, supported by professional lighting and safety oversight.
- Improved coordination between lighting, CCTV, community safety, events, wayfinding and cleansing/maintenance activity.
- Monitoring plan covering user perceptions, evening footfall, car park use, reported faults and partner feedback.

Outcomes:

- City centre routes feel safer, brighter and more welcoming after dark for residents, visitors, students, workers and businesses.
- Improved confidence walking between car parks, transport interchanges, cultural venues, hospitality areas, heritage assets and the retail core.
- Stronger evening and night-time economy, with improved conditions for restaurants, pubs, theatres, events and cultural activity.
- Increased use of underused evening arrival points and car parks, including Castle Street Multi-Storey Car Park, where lighting and perceptions of safety may currently deter use.
- Better first impressions and a more attractive evening cityscape, supporting dwell time, visitor satisfaction and social media visibility.
- Stronger civic pride and creative identity through seasonal light installations that animate key spaces and celebrate Canterbury's heritage and culture.
- Reduced fear of crime and improved perceptions of safety through better illumination, visibility and active stewardship.

Mechanism of change: Lighting has a direct effect on how people perceive and use streets, public spaces and routes after dark. Improving illumination, visibility and route legibility makes people more likely to walk, dwell, attend events, use car parks and move between destinations with confidence. Combining functional lighting improvements with creative light installations also changes the atmosphere of the city after dark, supporting safety, aesthetics, cultural activity and the evening economy.

Beneficiaries: Residents, visitors, traders/businesses, students, young people, older people, disabled people, night-time economy workers, cultural venues, event organisers and people travelling on foot between car parks, public transport, hospitality, heritage and cultural destinations.

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved user perceptions of safety, comfort and attractiveness after dark on priority routes, measured through short surveys, BID feedback and QR/intercept feedback.
- Increased evening footfall and/or dwell time in priority streets and spaces, measured through footfall counters, business feedback or event attendance where feasible.
- Increased use of priority car parks or routes after dark, including Castle Street Multi-Storey Car Park where relevant.
- Reduced reports of lighting faults, dark spots and safety concerns in treated areas compared with baseline.
- Positive partner feedback from Canterbury BID, cultural venues, businesses, universities and the Community Safety Partnership.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement between Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council Highways and other asset owners on responsibility for lighting assets, power supply, maintenance and approvals.
- Baseline audit of lighting levels, condition, safety perceptions, pedestrian movement, car park use and known dark spots.
- Early involvement of Canterbury BID and city centre businesses to confirm priority locations and align with evening economy needs.
- Heritage and conservation input to ensure lighting improvements are appropriate for sensitive historic settings and do not create visual clutter or light spill.
- Funding package for both capital lighting improvements and ongoing maintenance, energy and replacement costs.
- Coordination with community safety, CCTV, events, wayfinding, car parking and public realm programmes.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; landowner/freeholder agreement where lighting is attached to buildings or private assets; planning permission or listed building/conservation area consent where fixtures affect sensitive settings; electrical and utilities approvals; event permissions/licences for temporary or seasonal installations; temporary works licences and traffic management where required.

Key risks/issues:

- Maintenance risk: lighting improvements and installations will lose impact quickly if faults, damage or cleaning issues are not addressed promptly.
- Ownership risk: lighting assets and power supplies may sit with different organisations, creating delays unless roles and responsibilities are clarified early.
- Heritage sensitivity risk: lighting that is too bright, poorly located or visually intrusive could harm the character of historic streets and assets.
- Cost and energy risk: capital costs, energy use and replacement cycles need to be managed through efficient technology and a clear maintenance plan.
- Perception risk: lighting alone will not resolve all safety concerns unless linked to wider community safety, cleansing, CCTV, stewardship and activity.
- Seasonal installation risk: temporary lighting can generate positive attention but may become resource-intensive if not designed as a repeatable and affordable programme.

Support needed to progress:

- Council convening role to bring together Kent County Council Highways, Canterbury BID, Community Safety, Kent Police, car park operators, cultural partners and universities.

- Feasibility and audit funding for lighting condition surveys, dark spot mapping, design options and cost estimates.
- Technical support from lighting designers, electrical engineers, conservation specialists and community safety/CPTED advisers.
- Business and user engagement to identify priority routes, including evening economy users, students, women and girls, older people, disabled people and car park users.
- Funding and sponsorship development for seasonal light installations and pilot improvements.
- Monitoring support to establish baselines and track safety perceptions, footfall, car park use and business feedback.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Likely to vary by location and intervention type, from relatively low-cost lighting repairs, lamp upgrades and temporary installations to higher-cost works involving new columns, power supplies, heritage-sensitive fixtures, CCTV interfaces, public realm works or structural attachments.

Likely funding route: Mixed – public realm funding, community safety funding, highways/lighting budgets, evening economy or cultural funding, Canterbury BID or business contributions, sponsorship for seasonal installations, university/student in-kind design support, developer contributions where linked to growth or movement routes, and council or successor authority capital subject to programme priorities.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No confirmed funding identified. Potential in-kind support may include Canterbury BID partner insight and business engagement, university/student design input, cultural partner programming, community safety data, and communications support through visitor and business channels.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Improved lighting on walking routes can increase perceived safety, legibility and confidence after dark, particularly when combined with good sightlines, active frontages, maintenance and community safety measures.
- Lighting improvements can support evening economy activity by making routes between venues, car parks, transport interchanges and public spaces feel more comfortable and attractive.
- Creative and seasonal light installations can increase footfall, dwell time and social media visibility where they are well-designed, safe, repeatable and linked to wider events and cultural programming.

6.7 Digitise walking routes

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with heritage, visitor economy and transport partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City-wide walking routes, heritage corridors and public realm locations

Description: Create a coordinated digital walking routes platform bringing together pilgrimage, heritage, cultural, literary and accessibility routes into a single accessible digital offer. The project would

support visitor orientation, encourage exploration of secondary streets and improve engagement with Canterbury's layered stories and destinations.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Promoting pilgrimage
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Canterbury Cathedral; Visit Canterbury; Canterbury BID; Kent County Council; heritage organisations; accessibility groups; cultural organisations; walking and cycling groups

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Improved walking route infrastructure and interpretation.
- Enhanced wayfinding and digital visitor information.
- Public realm and accessibility improvements.
- Coordinated pilgrimage and heritage storytelling activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased walking and exploration within the city centre.
- Improved visitor orientation and confidence.
- Increased dwell time and engagement with heritage assets.
- Stronger perception of Canterbury as a pilgrimage and walking destination.

Mechanism of change: Clearer, safer and more engaging walking routes encourage visitors and residents to explore the city on foot, increasing interaction with heritage assets, public spaces and local businesses while strengthening Canterbury's identity as a historic pilgrimage city.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; pilgrims; businesses; accessibility groups; cultural and heritage organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of walking routes and trails.
- Positive visitor and accessibility feedback.
- Increased dwell time and dispersal across the city centre.
- Increased engagement with heritage and cultural destinations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Coordination between transport, heritage and visitor economy partners.
- Funding for public realm and interpretation improvements.
- Digital platform development and maintenance.
- Accessibility and conservation considerations.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; conservation area consent; listed building consent; highways approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Fragmented ownership and route management responsibilities.
- Funding constraints.
- Balancing accessibility improvements with heritage sensitivities.

Support needed to progress: Wayfinding and heritage consultancy support; public realm design expertise; accessibility input; funding and partnership coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Heritage funding, transport grants, cultural funding, council investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with pilgrimage, tourism, accessibility and active travel programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Pilgrimage and heritage walking routes increase visitor dwell time and strengthen place identity.
- Improved wayfinding and accessibility support wider participation and visitor confidence.
- Walking-based visitor experiences encourage exploration of secondary streets and heritage assets beyond primary attractions.

6.8 City wayfinding strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre-wide, including arrival points, railway stations, bus station, Park & Ride arrival routes, the historic core, riverside routes, key gateways, major heritage assets, and any future routes or interventions brought forward through section 6 projects.

Description: A city-wide wayfinding strategy to create a coherent, consistent and legible system of orientation, signage and visitor navigation across Canterbury. The project would build on the new wayfinding delivered through Connected Canterbury and rationalise the wider mix of existing markers, signs and interpretation so that the city feels easier to understand and move through on foot. It would establish a single strategic approach for how people are welcomed, oriented and guided between arrival points, heritage assets, green spaces, retail areas and cultural destinations. A key early-stage of the work would be understanding how people currently move through the city, where confusion or friction arises, and how future projects and routes should connect into a joined-up system rather than being developed in isolation.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Promote pilgrimage
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Connect new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; Canterbury BID; Visit Canterbury; transport operators; Canterbury Cathedral and other major visitor destinations; accessibility groups; cultural and heritage partners; local landowners where relevant; universities and colleges including UCA where appropriate.

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- A city-wide wayfinding audit covering existing signs, markers, maps, interpretation and arrival information.
- A movement and legibility study identifying key desire lines, decision points, bottlenecks, gaps and inconsistencies in the current system.
- A strategic wayfinding framework setting out principles, hierarchy, design approach, locations and priorities for future implementation.
- A rationalised plan for how Connected Canterbury wayfinding integrates with older signage, interpretation and any future route-based projects.
- A clear approach for incorporating future projects in section 6 and elsewhere into a single coherent navigation system.
- Priority implementation plan for key arrival points, major routes and places where confusion or inconsistency is greatest.
- Guidance for future city centre projects so new signage and route interventions are consistent in style, language and logic.

Outcomes:

- Easier and more intuitive navigation for residents, visitors and students moving around Canterbury.
- Stronger first impressions at arrival points and clearer movement between stations, the bus station, city centre destinations and heritage assets.
- Increased walking and route confidence, encouraging people to explore more of the city on foot.
- Better connection between the historic core, riverside spaces, cultural destinations and quieter parts of the city.
- Reduced clutter, duplication and inconsistency across the city's signage and wayfinding systems.
- A more joined-up visitor experience that supports longer stays, wider footfall distribution and stronger use of pilgrimage and walking routes.

Mechanism of change: By first understanding how people currently move through Canterbury and then using that evidence to establish a single wayfinding hierarchy and design logic, the city can reduce confusion and make walking routes feel clearer, safer and more purposeful. A consistent system helps people move more confidently between key destinations, strengthens arrival experiences and ensures that future route-based projects contribute to a coherent whole rather than adding further fragmentation.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; older people; disabled people; traders/businesses; cultural and heritage organisations.

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved visitor and resident satisfaction with ease of navigation around the city.
- Increased footfall on priority routes beyond the primary core.
- Reduced duplication and inconsistency in signage across the city centre.
- Stronger uptake and use of walking routes linking arrival points, heritage assets and city centre destinations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Completion of a robust city-wide audit of existing wayfinding and signage.
- Access to movement data and observational insight to understand how people currently navigate the city.

- Coordination between council teams, highways, heritage partners and landowners.
- Agreement on a design hierarchy and governance approach for future signage and wayfinding decisions.
- Alignment with existing Connected Canterbury assets and future city centre projects.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission where new structures are proposed; listed building/conservation area consent in sensitive locations; highways approvals; landlord/freeholder agreement where signage is on third-party land; unknown/to be explored depending on implementation sites.

Key risks/issues:

- Different signage systems and stakeholder interests may make rationalisation difficult without a strong agreed framework.
- New wayfinding could add clutter if older elements are not removed or integrated properly.
- Heritage sensitivities may constrain signage in some parts of the city.
- The strategy may be less effective if it is not linked clearly to real movement patterns and user behaviour.
- Delivery may become fragmented again if future projects are not required to follow the agreed framework.

Support needed to progress: Council convening to bring together relevant partners; feasibility and design resource; movement and behavioural analysis; accessibility input; heritage and highways advice; support developing implementation priorities and governance for future roll-out.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown

Likely funding route: Mixed – council enabling support, external grant funding, transport or public realm funding, partner contributions, and in-kind support.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing Connected Canterbury wayfinding assets provide a starting point; additional evidence and movement insight may become available through related partner work.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Consistent city-wide wayfinding systems are associated with improved visitor confidence, better route legibility and increased willingness to explore on foot.
- Clearer signage and route hierarchy can help spread footfall beyond primary hotspots and improve connections between arrival points, heritage assets and commercial areas.
- Understanding how people move through a place is a strong basis for designing wayfinding that is effective, inclusive and aligned with real behaviour rather than assumed routes.



Image: © Matt Wilson

7 Connecting new parts of the city

Improving the sense of belonging and community by creating pathways and spaces between different neighbourhoods. Facilitating sustainable and active movement to and between emerging neighbourhoods and growth areas outside the city walls.

7.1 Dedicated bus lanes

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with KCC transport partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre movement corridors, gateways and public realm locations

Description: Work with Kent County Council and transport operators to explore targeted dedicated bus lane and bus priority measures on key routes into Canterbury city centre. The project would seek to improve journey reliability, encourage public transport use and reduce congestion and transport pressure within the historic core.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Connecting new parts of the city
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; transport operators; Canterbury BID; landowners; community organisations; accessibility groups; active travel organisations

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Short-to-medium term

Target start date: 2027

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2028 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility studies and movement strategies.
- Public realm, accessibility and transport improvements.
- Improved walking, cycling and interchange infrastructure.
- Pilot activation and public space interventions.

Outcomes:

- Better connectivity between the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Increased sustainable and active travel.
- Reduced traffic pressure within the historic core.
- Improved accessibility, orientation and city centre experience.

Mechanism of change: Improving movement infrastructure, public space quality and transport integration encourages people to travel more sustainably and confidently between different parts of the city while supporting wider regeneration and public realm objectives.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; commuters; businesses; students; accessibility groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility and connectivity.
- Reduced congestion and transport pressure.
- Increased use and activity within public spaces and secondary routes.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Transport and highways coordination.
- Capital funding availability.

- Public and stakeholder support.
- Integration with wider regeneration and public realm projects.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; traffic regulation orders; conservation area approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Funding constraints.
- Potential public resistance to movement changes.
- Heritage and space constraints within the historic environment.

Support needed to progress: Transport planning expertise; urban design support; stakeholder engagement; feasibility and capital funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Transport funding, regeneration funding, active travel grants, council capital investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with active travel, levelling up, public realm and sustainable transport initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Integrated movement and public realm improvements improve accessibility, footfall and perceptions of place quality.
- Sustainable transport infrastructure supports reduced congestion and healthier travel behaviour.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better connect neighbourhoods, gateways and public spaces while reducing pressure on the historic core.

7.2 Northgate blue zone

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with transport, regeneration and public realm partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre movement corridors, gateways and public realm locations

Description: Create a coordinated 'Blue Zone' approach for the Northgate and riverside area focused on health, wellbeing, active travel and public space quality. The project would improve walking and cycling routes, access to green and blue infrastructure, seating, public realm and programming that encourages healthier and more inclusive use of the city centre edge.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Connecting new parts of the city
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; Canterbury Cathedral, University of the Creative Arts, University of Kent, Northgate Medical Practice, Canterbury Commemoration Society, Canterbury Archeology Society, Southeast Trains, Network Rail, transport operators; Canterbury BID; landowners; community organisations; accessibility groups; active travel organisations

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility studies and movement strategies.
- Public realm, accessibility and transport improvements.
- Improved walking, cycling and interchange infrastructure.
- Pilot activation and public space interventions.

Outcomes:

- Better connectivity between the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Increased sustainable and active travel.
- Reduced traffic pressure within the historic core.
- Improved accessibility, orientation and city centre experience.

Mechanism of change: Improving movement infrastructure, public space quality and transport integration encourages people to travel more sustainably and confidently between different parts of the city while supporting wider regeneration and public realm objectives.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; commuters; businesses; students; accessibility groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility and connectivity.
- Reduced congestion and transport pressure.
- Increased use and activity within public spaces and secondary routes.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Transport and highways coordination.
- Capital funding availability.
- Public and stakeholder support.
- Integration with wider regeneration and public realm projects.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; traffic regulation orders; conservation area approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Funding constraints.
- Potential public resistance to movement changes.
- Heritage and space constraints within the historic environment.

Support needed to progress: Transport planning expertise; urban design support; stakeholder engagement; feasibility and capital funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Transport funding, regeneration funding, active travel grants, council capital investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with active travel, levelling up, public realm and sustainable transport initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Integrated movement and public realm improvements improve accessibility, footfall and perceptions of place quality.
- Sustainable transport infrastructure supports reduced congestion and healthier travel behaviour.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better connect neighbourhoods, gateways and public spaces while reducing pressure on the historic core.

7.3 Mobility hubs

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with transport, regeneration and public realm partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre movement corridors, gateways and public realm locations

Description: Develop a network of mobility hubs around Canterbury city centre integrating bus services, cycle hire, micromobility, secure cycle parking, EV charging, wayfinding and visitor information. The project would support sustainable travel choices, reduce pressure on the historic core and improve interchange between transport modes.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Connecting new parts of the city
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; transport operators; Canterbury BID; landowners; community organisations; accessibility groups; active travel organisations

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility studies and movement strategies.
- Public realm, accessibility and transport improvements.
- Improved walking, cycling and interchange infrastructure.
- Pilot activation and public space interventions.

Outcomes:

- Better connectivity between the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Increased sustainable and active travel.
- Reduced traffic pressure within the historic core.
- Improved accessibility, orientation and city centre experience.

Mechanism of change: Improving movement infrastructure, public space quality and transport integration encourages people to travel more sustainably and confidently between different parts of the city while supporting wider regeneration and public realm objectives.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; commuters; businesses; students; accessibility groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility and connectivity.
- Reduced congestion and transport pressure.
- Increased use and activity within public spaces and secondary routes.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Transport and highways coordination.
- Capital funding availability.
- Public and stakeholder support.
- Integration with wider regeneration and public realm projects.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; traffic regulation orders; conservation area approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Funding constraints.
- Potential public resistance to movement changes.
- Heritage and space constraints within the historic environment.

Support needed to progress: Transport planning expertise; urban design support; stakeholder engagement; feasibility and capital funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Transport funding, regeneration funding, active travel grants, council capital investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with active travel, levelling up, public realm and sustainable transport initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Integrated movement and public realm improvements improve accessibility, footfall and perceptions of place quality.
- Sustainable transport infrastructure supports reduced congestion and healthier travel behaviour.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better connect neighbourhoods, gateways and public spaces while reducing pressure on the historic core.

7.4 Pop-up plaza

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with transport, regeneration and public realm partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre movement corridors, gateways and public realm locations. Possible pilot on Westgate Hall Road.

Description: Introduce flexible 'pop up plaza' spaces within Canterbury city centre that can temporarily prioritise pedestrians, community activity, markets, performances and cultural programming. The project would test new approaches to public space activation and traffic reduction while improving perceptions of vibrancy and city centre animation. A potential site for this would be between the Westgate Hall and the Sidney Cooper Gallery, once occupied.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Connecting new parts of the city
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; transport operators; Canterbury BID; landowners; community organisations; accessibility groups; active travel organisations

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility studies and movement strategies.
- Public realm, accessibility and transport improvements.
- Improved walking, cycling and interchange infrastructure.
- Pilot activation and public space interventions.

Outcomes:

- Better connectivity between the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Increased sustainable and active travel.
- Reduced traffic pressure within the historic core.
- Improved accessibility, orientation and city centre experience.

Mechanism of change: Improving movement infrastructure, public space quality and transport integration encourages people to travel more sustainably and confidently between different parts of the city while supporting wider regeneration and public realm objectives.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; commuters; businesses; students; accessibility groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Improved perceptions of accessibility and connectivity.
- Reduced congestion and transport pressure.
- Increased use and activity within public spaces and secondary routes.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Transport and highways coordination.
- Capital funding availability.
- Public and stakeholder support.
- Integration with wider regeneration and public realm projects.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; traffic regulation orders; conservation area approvals where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Funding constraints.
- Potential public resistance to movement changes.
- Heritage and space constraints within the historic environment.

Support needed to progress: Transport planning expertise; urban design support; stakeholder engagement; feasibility and capital funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Transport funding, regeneration funding, active travel grants, council capital investment and partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with active travel, levelling up, public realm and sustainable transport initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Integrated movement and public realm improvements improve accessibility, footfall and perceptions of place quality.
- Sustainable transport infrastructure supports reduced congestion and healthier travel behaviour.
- Canterbury's strategy identifies the need to better connect neighbourhoods, gateways and public spaces while reducing pressure on the historic core.

7.5 Riverside active travel routes

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with Kent County Council and Active Travel England

Main contact: Place directorate transport team

Date submitted: 2026 - city centre strategy engagement

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Riverside active travel corridor east of Canterbury city centre, including the route from Asda to Vauxhall Avenue, onwards to Vauxhall Road, a proposed bridge over the river, the southern and eastern perimeter of the Audi garage, Vauxhall Road crossing, land south of Shalloak Road and connection to the Sturry Link Road cycleway/footway.

Description: A phased programme to extend and complete a high-quality riverside walking and cycling route linking the city centre and Riverside area with neighbourhoods, employment areas and future growth to the east. The project will improve active travel connections along the river corridor, provide safer crossings and help connect new parts of Canterbury without requiring short local trips to pass through the historic core by car.

Phases 2 and 3 are being treated together. Phase 2 originally covered the section from Asda to Vauxhall Avenue and already has planning consent, but technical design issues and a funding gap mean it has been combined with Phase 3. The combined phase extends the route to Vauxhall Road, including a bridge over the river and a route around the southern and eastern perimeter of the Audi garage. This combined phase is awaiting planning consent. It has been submitted to Active Travel England as a funding bid and has been approved in principle, but cannot move forward until planning consent is secured.

Phase 4 is at concept stage and would continue the route eastwards from Phase 3 by crossing Vauxhall Road and then running through the service strip in the field just south of Shalloak Road to meet the Sturry Link Road, which includes a cycleway/footway within its design. Development funding from Kent County Council has been identified to work up this concept. A traffic signal junction with a dedicated pedestrian and cycle stage is proposed for the Vauxhall Road crossing, providing a safer and more direct option than a larger roundabout arrangement that would be difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Connect new parts of the city
- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre
- Promote pilgrimage
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; Active Travel England; landowners and occupiers; Environment Agency; planning authority; utilities providers; developers associated with Riverside and the Sturry Link Road; local residents and businesses; access and active travel groups; ecology and landscape specialists; bridge, highways and transport designers.

Project stage: Planning/concept development

Timescale: Short term for planning consent, funding confirmation and detailed design of Phases 2/3; medium term for delivery and Phase 4 development.

Target start date: 2026/27, subject to planning consent and funding agreement

Target end date: 2028 for Phases 2/3 delivery if consent and funding are secured; Phase 4 to be developed as a later phase.

What will change?

Outputs:

- Planning consent secured for combined Riverside Phases 2/3.
- Active Travel England funding bid progressed from in-principle approval to confirmed delivery funding, subject to consent and final requirements.
- Detailed design completed for the route from Asda to Vauxhall Road, including bridge design, riverside path alignment and the section around the Audi garage perimeter.
- New or improved active travel route delivered from Asda to Vauxhall Road, including the river crossing and path works.
- Phase 4 concept developed using Kent County Council development funding, including route alignment, land requirements, ecology, cost, crossing design and programme.
- Preferred Vauxhall Road crossing option developed, with a traffic signal junction and dedicated pedestrian/cycle stage tested against safety, capacity and deliverability requirements.
- Future connection identified to the Sturry Link Road cycleway/footway, creating a clearer eastern active travel corridor.

Outcomes:

- A safer, more continuous walking and cycling route along the riverside and eastern approaches to Canterbury.
- Improved access between Riverside, Vauxhall, Shalloak Road, Sturry Link Road and the city centre without relying on car trips through the historic core.
- Reduced severance caused by difficult road crossings and fragmented riverside routes.
- Greater confidence for pedestrians and cyclists, including families, students, commuters and less confident users.
- A stronger green/blue movement corridor that supports health, wellbeing and everyday active travel.
- Better integration between planned growth, existing neighbourhoods and the city centre.

Mechanism of change: Continuous, direct and safe walking and cycling routes make active travel a realistic choice for short and medium-distance journeys. By filling missing links, providing a river crossing and creating a safer Vauxhall Road crossing, the project reduces the practical and perceived barriers that currently discourage walking and cycling. Connecting the route to the Sturry Link Road cycleway/footway would extend the network effect, helping more people travel between neighbourhoods, employment areas and the city centre without adding pressure to the historic core.

Beneficiaries: Residents, commuters, students, young people, older people, disabled people where inclusive design is embedded, families, visitors, Riverside businesses, future residents and people travelling between the city centre, Sturry, Vauxhall and eastern growth areas.

How we will know it has worked:

- Pedestrian and cycle counts increase on completed route sections compared with baseline.
- User satisfaction and perceived safety improve, particularly at Vauxhall Road and along previously fragmented sections.
- The route connects successfully into the wider active travel network, including the Sturry Link Road cycleway/footway once Phase 4 is developed.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Planning consent for combined Phases 2/3.
- Confirmation of Active Travel England funding following in-principle approval.
- Resolution of technical design issues from the earlier Phase 2 scheme.
- Agreement on bridge design, river corridor consents, land access and route alignment around the Audi garage.
- Kent County Council support for Phase 4 development work and agreement on the Vauxhall Road junction approach.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; bridge and structural approvals; Environment Agency or watercourse consents where required; landowner agreements; temporary works licences; utilities approvals or diversions; ecology and biodiversity mitigation; traffic signal approvals; construction traffic management approvals.

Key risks/issues:

- Planning risk: Phases 2/3 cannot progress until planning consent is secured.
- Funding risk: Active Travel England funding is approved in principle but depends on planning, final business case requirements and programme approvals.
- Technical risk: bridge design, riverside constraints, ground conditions, drainage, utilities and previous design issues may affect cost and programme.
- Land and access risk: route delivery depends on agreements around the Audi garage perimeter, service strips and any affected private or operational land.
- Junction design risk: a larger roundabout option at Vauxhall Road/Broad Oak Road could be difficult for pedestrians and cyclists, so the traffic signal option will need to be tested and agreed with highways partners.
- Ecology and river corridor risk: works near the river and green corridor may require mitigation, seasonal working windows or design changes.

Support needed to progress:

- Planning and technical support to resolve Phases 2/3 consent, design and funding requirements.
- Continued engagement with Active Travel England to secure funding release once planning consent is in place.
- Kent County Council highways support to develop the Vauxhall Road signalised crossing and resist designs that would weaken pedestrian and cycle connectivity.
- Landowner and stakeholder engagement to secure access and manage construction impacts.
- Ecology, landscape, bridge and transport design input to develop Phase 4 from concept to feasible scheme.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Costs will depend on final planning requirements, bridge design, route alignment, land access, utilities, ecology mitigation, traffic signal design and construction market conditions.

Likely funding route: Active Travel England funding for Phases 2/3, subject to planning consent and final approvals; Kent County Council development funding for Phase 4 concept work; potential developer contributions, highways funding and future active travel or growth funding for later phases.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Phases 2/3 have been submitted to Active Travel England and approved in principle. Kent County

Council development funding has been identified to work up the Phase 4 concept.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Completing missing links in walking and cycling networks increases the usefulness of the whole route, because people are more likely to choose active travel when routes are continuous, direct, safe and legible.
- Safe crossings are critical to active travel uptake; signalised pedestrian and cycle stages can reduce severance where large or complex junctions would otherwise discourage walking and cycling.
- Riverside active travel routes provide both movement and wellbeing benefits, supporting everyday journeys, access to green/blue space, lower car dependency and better connections between existing and emerging neighbourhoods.



Image: © Yorka Georgiev

8 Champion innovation and the power of learning

Partnering with universities and businesses to make Canterbury a regional hub for innovation, knowledge exchange and entrepreneurship. Providing a range of flexible workspaces and digital infrastructure to attract and retain start ups and creative industries. Ensuring the growth of the city's conference venues, hotels and cultural sectors.

8.1 Improve digital infrastructure

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with various partners and stakeholders

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Canterbury city centre

Description: Work with digital infrastructure providers/operators, businesses and public sector partners to improve digital connectivity and infrastructure across Canterbury city centre. The project would take a multi-faceted approach, including exploring improved broadband, public Wi-Fi, smart infrastructure and digital capacity supporting businesses, visitors, students and flexible working. It would also operate in stages. The first stage would be a position review to understand the current status of coverage, connectivity and stakeholders' current/future improvement plans.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Connecting new parts of the city

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; BT and other fixed line broadband providers, mobile phone operators and infrastructure providers, businesses (e.g. BID), Kent County Council and city centre landlords

Project stage: Scoping/partnership development

Timescale: Short-to-medium term

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: Review in place by December 2027.

Also potential for delivery of improvements though 2026 to 2028 by stakeholders and partners

What will change?

Outputs:

- Innovation, cultural and workspace feasibility studies.
- New or improved workspace and digital infrastructure.
- Partnerships between universities, businesses and cultural organisations.
- Public-facing innovation and learning activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased innovation and enterprise activity.
- Improved city centre footfall and economic diversity.
- Greater opportunities for flexible working and creative collaboration.
- Stronger links between education, culture and economic development.

Mechanism of change: Visible and accessible innovation, learning and workspace infrastructure helps attract and retain talent, supports entrepreneurship and strengthens Canterbury's role as a knowledge and creative economy centre.

Beneficiaries: Students; graduates; entrepreneurs; businesses; residents; visitors; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased occupancy and participation rates.
- Growth in enterprise and creative activity.
- Positive business and user feedback.
- Reduced mobile connectivity 'not spots' throughout the city

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Availability of suitable premises and street sites to host digital infrastructure.
- Business partnerships inc. willingness from landlords/property owners to support.
- Commitment to Canterbury from infrastructure and network providers.
- Demand for workspace and innovation activity.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; lease/wayleave agreements; building regulations approvals; some digital infrastructure permissions

Key risks/issues:

- High operating and fit-out costs.
- Physical limitations on sites to host infrastructure (e.g. heritage concerns).
- Difficulty sustaining long-term operational models.

Support needed to progress: Business case development; workspace and digital infrastructure expertise; partnership facilitation and funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Largely borne by infrastructure providers but new investments in Wi-Fi for example could be potentially medium-to-high in scale

Likely funding route: Innovation funding, regeneration funding, university partnerships, private investment and council enabling support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with innovation district, digital infrastructure and creative economy initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Broadband/cellular coverage and connectivity mapping/business surveys
- Innovation and workspace hubs improve collaboration, enterprise growth and graduate retention.
- Flexible workspace and digital infrastructure are increasingly important within city centre economies.
- Canterbury's concentration of universities and creative organisations provides strong foundations for innovation-led city centre activity.

8.2 High-quality business workspace

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council but working closely with BID, universities, businesses inc. workspace providers and innovation partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - City centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): City centre innovation, cultural and workspace locations

Description: Support the provision of flexible and shared workspace (e.g. co-working, managed/ serviced offices) across Canterbury city centre through inward investment, meanwhile-use opportunities, workspace partnerships and adaptive reuse of underutilised buildings. The project would seek

to support entrepreneurship, hybrid working and increased city centre footfall. Directed towards supporting professional and business-to-business services (e.g. tech/digital, legal, financial, consultancy) as well as cultural and creative activities which are vitally important to the city's economic landscape. Despite the growth in home and remote working these industries will still need high quality and diverse accommodation in order to provide high skilled and well paid jobs with career progression opportunities.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Connecting new parts of the city
- Finding new ways to tell Canterbury's story

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; universities; Canterbury BID; businesses; workspace providers and operators; cultural organisations; technology providers; landowners

Project stage: Scoping/partnership development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2027/28 – review of evidence, scope for business occupier survey

Target end date: Initial delivery phases from 2028 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Improved demand-led evidence for new or improved business workspace.
- Innovation, cultural and workspace feasibility studies, where appropriate.
- New or improved business accommodation supported by digital infrastructure.
- Partnerships between universities, businesses and cultural organisations.
- Public-facing innovation and learning activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased innovation and enterprise activity.
- Improved city centre footfall and economic diversity.
- Greater opportunities for flexible working and creative collaboration.
- Stronger links between education, culture and economic development.

Mechanism of change: Visible and accessible innovation, learning and workspace infrastructure helps attract and retain talent, supports entrepreneurship and strengthens Canterbury's role as a knowledge and creative economy centre.

Beneficiaries: Students; graduates; entrepreneurs; businesses such as professional/creative/business to business services; residents; visitors; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased occupancy and participation rates.
- Growth in enterprise and creative activity.
- Positive business and user feedback.
- Increased city centre usage throughout the week.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Availability of suitable premises and infrastructure.
- University and business partnerships.
- Capital and revenue funding support.
- Demand for workspace and innovation activity.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permissions; lease agreements; building regulations approvals; digital infrastructure permissions where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- High operating and fit-out costs.
- Competition from other workspace locations.
- Difficulty sustaining long-term operational models.

Support needed to progress: Demand led business case development; workspace and digital infrastructure expertise; partnership facilitation and funding support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Innovation funding, regeneration funding, university partnerships, private investment and council enabling support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with innovation district, digital infrastructure and creative economy initiatives

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Innovation and workspace hubs improve collaboration, enterprise growth and graduate retention.
- Flexible workspace and digital infrastructure are increasingly important within city centre economies.
- Canterbury's concentration of universities and creative organisations provides strong foundations for innovation-led city centre activity.

8.3 Sidney Cooper Gallery

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, acting as corporate trustee and local authority landlord

Main contact: Place directorate/culture and property teams

Date submitted:

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Sidney Cooper Gallery, St Peter's Street/city centre

Description: A project to secure a long-term future for Sidney Cooper Gallery as a working gallery and arts learning space in line with its charitable purpose. Canterbury City Council is now progressing the formalisation of the trust arrangements, registration of the charity, and regularisation of ownership of the whole property so that the building can be marketed for a new operator under a long lease arrangement. The project matters because the gallery is an important cultural asset in the city centre and must be brought back into active, sustainable use in a way that protects its historic purpose, supports learning and cultural participation, and contributes to the wider city centre offer. The current focus is therefore on legal, governance and property steps needed to enable future occupation and operation, rather than direct programme delivery.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; appointed trustees acting on behalf of the charity; legal advisers; valuation and surveying support; future gallery operator; cultural and arts partners

Project stage: Feasibility/legal and governance implementation

Timescale: Short term

Target start date: 2026

Target end date: 2027 for completion of initial legal, governance and marketing steps

What will change?

Outputs:

- Formal registration of the Sidney Cooper charity
- Appointment of trustees to act on behalf of the corporate trustee
- Establishment of a restricted budget for legal fees and professional advice
- Valuation work on the property and its different ownership elements
- Transfer of the local authority-held rear part of the property to the trust, subject to approval
- Appointment of a Charity Commission-approved surveyor
- Marketing of the opportunity to secure a new operator under a long lease arrangement
- A clearer legal and property structure for the whole site

Outcomes:

- A lawful and workable governance structure for the gallery
- A regularised ownership position across the full property
- The ability to bring the building back into active use through a new long-term operator
- Protection of the gallery's charitable purpose as a place for exhibition and study of art
- A stronger basis for sustainable cultural use in the city centre
- Reduced risk of continued vacancy or uncertainty around the building's future

Mechanism of change: The project first resolves the legal and ownership issues that currently prevent straightforward leasing and operation of the building. Once the charity is formalised and the property ownership is regularised, the council can market the gallery on a long lease basis to secure an operator capable of delivering the charitable objectives and sustaining the building in active use.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; artists; cultural organisations; city centre businesses; young people

How we will know it has worked:

- Charity registration completed and trustee arrangements formalised
- Property ownership position regularised across the whole site
- Long lease opportunity marketed
- New operator identified or procurement process underway

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Charity Commission approval of the formal scheme
- Budget allocation for legal and professional support
- Valuation of the local authority-held part of the property and wider site options
- Cabinet approval to transfer the rear part of the property to the trust
- Appointment of an approved surveyor and completion of required disposal and marketing steps

Permissions/consents likely needed: Charity Commission approvals; council decision-making approvals; valuation and disposal compliance requirements; legal agreements for asset transfer and lease arrangements

Key risks/issues:

- Complexity arising from the split ownership of the property
- Timescales associated with Charity Commission processes
- Requirement to demonstrate that any disposal or lease is in the charity's best interests
- Risk of delay if governance, transfer or valuation steps take longer than expected
- Need to secure a suitable future operator able to fulfil the gallery's charitable purpose

Support needed to progress: Legal support; valuation and surveying advice; trustee capacity; council approvals; property and marketing expertise; future operator engagement

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: At least a modest enabling budget is required for legal fees and professional advice, currently estimated at around £20,000 excluding VAT for the immediate formalisation work

Likely funding route: Revenue/enabling budget in the short term, with longer-term operator-led investment to be explored

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Council officer time and enabling work are already being directed toward formalising the trust and preparing the property for transfer and marketing

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Clarify legal position confirming the charitable purpose of the gallery and the need to formalise governance arrangements
- The latest review has identified the split ownership issue and a route to regularise the whole property
- Once legal position is confirmed identify a clear sequence of actions and indicative timeline is in place, including registration, transfer steps and marketing for a long lease operator

8.4 Canterbury West innovation hub

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with key public and institutional partners

Main contact: Place directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - informed by city centre strategy, place-based assessment and project proposition material

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): Canterbury West station area, including land to the north and south of the railway line around Canterbury West station, Station Road West and adjoining sites

Description: This project idea would focus on draft Local Plan Policy C5 (land north of Canterbury west station) which is also a Regeneration Opportunity Area (ROA). As per the draft Local Plan this would be a major regeneration and economic development project focused on transforming the Canterbury West station area into a new gateway district for innovation, learning and business growth. The project would bring forward an innovation hub linked to Canterbury's universities, with research, education, business incubator, office and co-working space, alongside new homes, improved public realm and better station access. It would make best use of a highly accessible brownfield area at one of the city's most important arrival points. By combining rail-related infrastructure improvements with mixed-use development, the project would strengthen Canterbury's knowledge economy, improve first impressions, attract investment, and create better connections between the station, surrounding neighbourhoods and the city centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Unlock Canterbury's spaces and regeneration potential
- Connect new parts of the city
- Champion innovation and the power of learning

- Ease transport pressure on the city's historic centre

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Network Rail; Kent County Council; University of Kent; Canterbury Christ Church University; Canterbury BID and local businesses; private landowners and development partners

Project stage: Draft Local Plan policy and feasibility

Timescale: Long term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: Long term phased delivery

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility, masterplanning and option appraisal work
- Development of proposals for improved station access and rail infrastructure, including a potential northern entrance
- Innovation-focused floorspace including research, incubator, education, co-working and office space
- New homes as part of a mixed-use scheme
- Improved public realm and gateway space around the station
- Better walking, cycling and interchange connections
- A delivery model capable of aligning infrastructure investment and private development

Outcomes:

- A stronger city centre innovation and enterprise offer linked to Canterbury's universities
- Increased ability to attract and retain knowledge-intensive businesses, graduates and skilled workers
- More high-value jobs and commercial activity in a central, highly accessible location
- A significantly improved arrival experience at Canterbury West
- Better integration between the station area and the wider city centre
- Greater investor confidence in Canterbury as a location for innovation-led growth

Mechanism of change: By combining transport-led regeneration with innovation-led development, the project would unlock underused brownfield land around Canterbury West and create space for research, enterprise and collaboration. Improved access and public infrastructure would increase the site's attractiveness to investors and occupiers, while stronger links to universities would support business growth, graduate retention and knowledge-economy clustering.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; graduates; local businesses; start-ups; workers; investors; rail users; surrounding neighbourhoods

How we will know it has worked:

- Delivery of enabling infrastructure and an agreed development framework
- Provide for new innovation, education and commercial floorspace
- Supporting new jobs and businesses
- Improvements in station access and gateway quality
- New private investment attracted

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership working with key landowners and controllers particularly Network Rail and alignment with planned rail improvements
- Feasibility, masterplanning and viability work
- Land assembly and coordination across public and private ownerships
- Identification of a viable delivery and funding model
- Planning and design development responsive to rail, heritage and access constraints

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; highways approvals; rail industry approvals; landowner agreements; environmental and infrastructure consents; conservation-related approvals where required

Key risks/issues:

- Complexity of development around an operational railway
- Dependence on major enabling infrastructure
- Land assembly across multiple ownerships
- Funding gap for infrastructure that may not be commercially viable to provide privately
- Viability and delivery risk as the project moves from concept to implementation

Support needed to progress: Feasibility and business case development; public-sector convening; specialist rail and infrastructure input; funding for enabling studies; support to shape a delivery vehicle and investment proposition

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage

Likely funding route: Mixed - public infrastructure funding, rail-related investment, external grant funding, private development finance and partner contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Network Rail is progressing funding for station and track improvements. Private investment would have to play a key role once enabling infrastructure issues are addressed.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium to high

Evidence/sources:

- Strong fit with the city centre strategy, especially around gateways, innovation and regeneration
- Clear evidence of Canterbury's academic strengths and the opportunity to strengthen its city centre innovation offer
- The site is identified as a major regeneration and infrastructure opportunity in planning and place-based evidence
- Existing proposition work indicates significant employment and floorspace potential

8.5 Abbot's Mill

Lead organisation: Abbot's Mill Project CIC/ Abbot's Mill Project

Main contact: Abbot's Mill Project

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Canterbury

Specific location(s): St Radigund's Street/Abbot's Garden at the former Abbot's Mill, with linked education and research centre site on the opposite bank of the Great Stour connected by St Radigund's Bridge.

Description: A phased heritage, sustainability and education project centred on the reinstatement of a working water wheel at the site of the former Abbot's Mill, alongside the development of a small education and research centre, community café, woodland and wildlife garden. The project would bring a historically significant mill site back into productive use in a way that reflects Canterbury's heritage while creating a distinctive urban hub for sustainability, learning and community activity. Located close to the city centre and key walking routes, it would strengthen Canterbury's cultural and environmental offer, improve use of an under-recognised riverside heritage site, and create a new destination that supports education, community participation and low-carbon innovation.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Further reveal and reconnect Canterbury's layers of heritage
- Find new ways to tell Canterbury's story
- Promote pilgrimage
- Champion innovation and the power of learning
- Be a city of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Environment Agency; local universities and colleges; heritage and ecology partners; local schools; community groups; energy and engineering specialists; accessibility groups; cultural and visitor economy partners.

Project stage: Scoping/early development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: Phased delivery from 2030 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Reinstated working water wheel within the historic mill race at the former Abbot's Mill Project site.
- Renewable energy generation infrastructure with associated water monitoring and sluice control improvements.
- Education and research centre focused on sustainable and compassionate living, renewable energy and the River Stour's role in Canterbury's history.
- Community café, woodland and wildlife garden managed as part of a wider sustainability hub.
- New programme of tours, workshops, school visits, research activity and community events.
- Improved interpretation and visibility of an important but currently under-recognised heritage site linked to Canterbury's milling and river history.

Outcomes:

- Greater public access to, and understanding of, Canterbury's riverside and industrial heritage.
- A stronger year-round cultural, educational and environmental offer within the city centre.
- Increased footfall and dwell time along the riverside corridor and nearby city centre routes.
- Enhanced civic identity through a project that combines heritage, sustainability and innovation in a distinctive Canterbury setting.
- Improved biodiversity and ecological value along this part of the Great Stour corridor.
- Greater community participation in sustainability, education and volunteering activities.
- A stronger city centre role for learning, research and innovation linked to practical low-carbon infrastructure.

Mechanism of change: By bringing a historically important mill site back into active use through a visible renewable energy installation and linked education hub, the project makes heritage and sustainability tangible in everyday city life. The water wheel, centre and garden together create a new destination that attracts visitors, residents, students and schools, while improving awareness of the River Stour's historic and future importance. This combination of heritage interpretation, environmental enhancement and regular activity can increase footfall, strengthen local identity and support wider city centre objectives around learning, culture and longer visitor stays.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; students; young people; schools; community groups; older people; disabled people; businesses; environmental and heritage organisations.

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased visitor numbers, participation in events, tours and education activities.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in the surrounding riverside and west city centre area.

- Positive changes in visitor and resident awareness of the site's heritage and sustainability role.
- Measurable renewable energy generation and use of the site as a live learning resource.
- Improved habitat condition and biodiversity indicators within the project area.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Landowner agreements and legal arrangements across the two linked sites.
- Planning, heritage, environmental and flood-risk approvals.
- Detailed engineering and hydrological design for the water wheel, sluice and river infrastructure.
- Capital funding for phased delivery and a viable long-term operating model.
- Partner capacity to deliver education, ecology and community programming.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; listed building/conservation area/ scheduled monument considerations as applicable; Environment Agency approvals; landowner/freeholder agreements; environmental and drainage consents; licences relating to public access and operations.

Key risks/issues:

- Complexity of securing permissions and technical approvals for a river-based heritage energy installation.
- Capital and revenue funding requirements across multiple project phases.
- Delivery and maintenance complexity associated with combining engineering, heritage, education and landscape elements.
- Flood risk, ecological sensitivities and operational constraints linked to the River Stour.
- Need to ensure the long-term operating model is robust enough to sustain programming, maintenance and public access.

Support needed to progress: Convening support between the project, council, Environment Agency and other key partners; feasibility and business planning resource; planning and heritage advice; technical support on hydrology and engineering; funding strategy development; support linking the project into the wider city centre visitor, culture and education offer.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown

Likely funding route: Mixed – grant funding, philanthropic/community fundraising, in-kind support, private donations, potential public-sector enabling support, and revenue from future activities and on-site uses.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage-led regeneration and reuse of distinctive historic assets typically improves local identity, visitor appeal and public engagement where sites are made accessible and actively programmed.
- Small-scale urban environmental education centres and community green spaces are associated with increased participation, volunteering, learning activity and wellbeing benefits when they combine regular programming with accessible locations.
- Visible renewable energy demonstrators and live learning environments can be effective in improving public understanding of sustainability and supporting education, especially where linked to schools, community groups and place-based interpretation.

New project entries to follow

The following is a list of emerging ideas for further Canterbury projects that CCC is aware of where the partner or organisation may seek to make a submission. It may also include recently received submissions which have not yet been reviewed.

These include:

- Promotion of St Martin's Church (St Martin's Development Group);
- New sculpture project at Canterbury Castle (Canterbury Commemoration Society);
- Retail Shopfront Design project (University for Creative Arts); and
- Cloisters project (Canterbury Cathedral).

Completed projects

A list of projects that have been completed

Removed projects

A list of projects that have been rejected along with a rationale (for audit purposes, to retain tacit project knowledge and in case they can be revisited at a later date).

Rejected/aborted etc.

canterbury city council

Herne Bay Town Centre

Project Directory

The Town Centre Strategy Vision

"A healthier, more prosperous town where young people want to stay and everyone is proud to call home. Its vibrant seafront and high street will be home to an ambitious calendar of events that bring people together to celebrate their past and embrace a more inclusive, creative future."

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Overview

What the directory is for

This project directory sets out how we will turn town centre strategy into action across Herne Bay. The strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable were developed with residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders, and are intended to be owned by the places themselves, with the council acting as an enabler rather than the only delivery body.

For that reason, the directory is not limited to Canterbury City Council projects. We want it to reflect what is happening on the ground, so it will include partner-led and community-led projects alongside council-led activity that support the shared vision and principles in the strategies.

By bringing this wider range of projects together, the directory will help partners see how different activity connects, where collaboration could increase impact, and what support or coordination might be needed to move projects forward. It will also help us maintain momentum and provide continuity as responsibilities change through local government reorganisation and the transition to a new unitary authority.

We welcome partners to share their projects for inclusion, so the directory provides a fuller picture of delivery and helps us work together towards the shared vision for each place.

This project directory follows established UK Government best practice by applying HM Treasury's Green Book[1] principles of consistent, evidence-based appraisal, incorporating the 2025 review's[2] emphasis on place-based decision making and integrated local project pipelines, and adopting Teal Book[3] guidance on project deliverability, risks, permissions and roles.

Its structure also reflects the Five Case Model[4] used across government for robust business cases, ensuring clear rationale, strategic alignment, defined outcomes and a transparent, proportionate scoring method fully aligned with recognised national standards.

Why it's beneficial for partner and stakeholder projects to be included

Shared direction and legitimacy: It shows how projects contribute to an agreed place-based vision and principles that were developed through extensive engagement, helping partners demonstrate community relevance and strategic fit.

Coordination and reduced duplication: A consolidated list helps identify overlaps, gaps, dependencies and opportunities to collaborate, especially where projects need multiple organisations to succeed.

Better access to investment and funding: Being able to point to an agreed pipeline of projects aligned with strategic priorities strengthens bids for external funding and helps partners align investment with a coherent place narrative.

Visibility and advocacy: The directory creates a clearer picture of "what's happening where" and can be used to communicate priorities to decision-makers, funders and future delivery bodies, ensuring partner-led projects are part of the overall story.

Clearer accountability and delivery planning: Capturing lead organisations, partners, timescales and links to strategy principles supports realistic sequencing (e.g., feasibility, scoping, partnership formation) and enables progress to be monitored and reviewed.

1 www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-green-book-and-accompanying-guidance-and-documents
2 lordslibrary.parliament.uk/governments-green-book-review-and-reforms/
3 projectdelivery.gov.uk/2025/04/01/government-project-delivery-launches-the-teal-book/
4 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6984ac702df808759a7bd740/The_Green_Book_2026.pdf

Supports a co-created, place-led approach: The strategies are intended to be shared frameworks owned by the places themselves. Including partner projects reinforces shared ownership and collective responsibility for delivery.

Continuity through local government reorganisation (LGR): With council responsibilities expected to transfer to a new unitary in April 2028, the directory helps ensure partner projects don't lose momentum and provides an organised starting point for the successor authority.

Creates a clear audit trail and preserves corporate memory: capturing projects that are underway, completed, or removed/rejected (with rationale) provides a transparent record of decisions and progress, helping retain tacit knowledge and ensuring a smooth handover to the new unitary authority during LGR.

How we intend to use the directory

The directory will be developed as a comprehensive long list of projects identified through engagement and evidence. It will then be used to prioritise and sequence activity into action plans, including a time-bound CCC plan aligned to the 2026–2028 transition period as well as longer-term opportunities. It will also support oversight through council governance routes and ongoing monitoring and review.

What we need from partners

To make the directory useful, comparable and as a basis for prioritisation, projects are captured in a consistent format. Key information is required to help better identify which projects are most strongly aligned to the strategies, likely to deliver the greatest public value, and are most realistic to progress in the short term.

The best submissions will:

- Be place-based - they clearly show how the project addresses the specific needs, challenges or opportunities of Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.
- Link directly to one or more strategy principles - projects will be scored on strategic fit based on these connections.
- Provide a meaningful outcome, not just an activity - 'what changes' is more important than 'what we will do'.
- Be realistic about deliverability - projects need not be fully designed, but they must be plausible.
- Identify partners early - strong partnership working is a core principle across all strategies.
- Acknowledge uncertainties - transparent submissions are preferable over overly polished but unrealistic ones.

More detail about the information required is below.

Core project criteria

A project should be included if it meets all the following:

1. **Fits the strategies**

The project clearly supports and is therefore strategically aligned with at least one of the agreed strategy principles and/or the place vision for Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.

2. **Is place-based**

The project is geographically relevant and is located in, serves, or has a clear impact on one (or more) of the three centres (or their immediate connections/ gateway areas where relevant).

3. **Has an identified lead and delivery route**

There is a named lead organisation (not necessarily CCC) and an outline of who else needs to be involved (partners/stakeholders).

4. **Is described consistently**

The project can be captured and compared with others using the directory template fields (title, description, location, delivery partners, outputs, outcomes, deliverability etc.).

5. **Is lawful/appropriate in principle**

Nothing obvious suggests it is unlawful, unsafe, discriminatory, or incompatible with relevant policies in principle (even if detail comes later).

6. **Not "business as usual"**

The work is a time-limited piece of activity that goes beyond routine service delivery/maintenance and is intended to deliver a defined change aligned to the strategies. It must have:

- a clear start point and a clear end point (or clear phase end),
- a defined output (what will be delivered), and
- a clear intended impact/outcome (the change it will make).

Routine maintenance or ongoing services should not be included unless they are part of a clearly defined improvement project with specific outputs and outcomes.

Inclusion in the directory does not mean a project is approved, funded or favoured by Canterbury City Council or its partners. Inclusion means that the project could meaningfully contribute to the shared direction of one or more of the district's urban areas, and broadly meets the criteria set out above.

Exclusion/out-of-scope criteria

A project will be excluded if:

- There is no clear link to any strategy principle or place vision.
- It is not place-based and therefore has no clear impact on Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.
- There is no identifiable lead and no realistic delivery route.
- It is mainly routine service delivery/maintenance with no strategic regeneration/value link.
- It is clearly non-viable or inappropriate in principle (e.g., conflicts with law/policy in an obvious way).
- It will not be able to be progressed during the lifetime of the city and town centre strategies (2026-2043).

Draft Local Plan allocations and Regeneration Opportunity Areas (ROAs)

The Draft Local Plan includes several development allocations across the Canterbury district and identifies a number of "Regeneration Opportunity Areas" (ROAs) where the council is committing to prepare development briefs to guide the delivery of future development within these areas.

Development allocations in the city and town centre will be shaped by landowners, developers, planning policy and future planning applications. Those allocations will be added to the directory when there is enough detail to understand what is proposed and how it will contribute to the shared vision, movement, public realm, economic, social and environmental aims of the strategy.

Although many of the ROAs are on council-owned land, many of these areas are at an early or aspirational stage and do not yet have a defined proposal, delivery route or agreed scheme. At this stage, they are better understood as places with development potential rather than projects that can be meaningfully assessed through this directory. This directory therefore does not seek to list every ROA identified in the draft Local Plan.

The council is committing to undertaking further work over the period of the Draft Local Plan to bring forward development on these important brownfield regeneration opportunity sites. When this work gets underway and is sufficiently developed to describe what is being proposed, how the site may change and how it could support the city and town centre strategies, they can be included in the directories. Until that point, there is not enough information to explain their outputs, outcomes, deliverability, risks or contribution to the strategy principles. As proposals emerge, relevant sites will be brought into the directories so their contribution to the city and town centre strategies can be considered alongside other projects.

This position will also need to be reviewed once the plan is formally adopted, and the allocations and ROAs are confirmed.

Project submissions

Submission form

The submission form for the project directories is currently hosted on the Canterbury City Council website: forms.canterbury.gov.uk/xfp/form/1013

Projects submission form guidance notes

These guidance notes help applicants provide the right level and type of information so their project can:

- be understood clearly,
- be compared fairly with others,
- be scored consistently, and
- contribute meaningfully to the shared vision and strategy principles for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.

The directory will be a list of projects that will help the centres achieve the visions set out in the city and town centre strategies

The stronger and clearer the information you provide, the easier it will be to assess how your project contributes to the strategic direction for each place.

Below is detailed guidance for every section of the form. Applicants should read this carefully before submitting.

Project title: The title of your project

Lead organisation: Which organisation is the accountable body that will drive and/or fund the project?

Main contact: What are the contact details of the main contact?

Date submitted: The date you submit your project.

Section 1: Project overview

Place: Tick all locations that your project meaningfully affects. Projects must have a place-specific relevance to Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable city and town centres.

Specific location(s) (site/street/area): Provide the street, site boundary, building name or defined area. This helps assess deliverability, planning implications and relationship to nearby assets.

Short Description: Clearly describe:

- what the project is,
- the problem or opportunity it addresses,
- who it benefits,
- why it matters in the town/city context.

Linked strategy principle(s): Which city or town centre strategy principles does the project support? Each strategy includes eight strategic principles. Tick which principle(s) your project supports.

Delivery partners: Which partners will need to be involved to enable or deliver the project? These could be public, private, community or third-sector organisations e.g. landowners, local groups, transport bodies, cultural partners, utilities, funders.

Project stage: Select the current stage (idea, scoping, feasibility, design, delivery, completed or other). This helps us understand:

- the level of certainty,
- what evidence exists,
- how soon the project could realistically move forward.

Early-stage ideas are welcome, just be clear about what is known and unknown.

Timescale: tick the most accurate timeframe

- Short term (pre-April 2028) – priority for the transition period
- Medium term (2028–2032)
- Long term (post-2032)
- Other (explain)

Target start and end dates: Provide estimated dates, even if broad. This supports action planning and sequencing across programmes.

Section 2: What will change?

This section focuses on impact, not just activity.

Outputs: What measurable outputs will be delivered at the end of this project? List measurable, tangible deliverables, such as:

- new or improved public spaces, routes or buildings
- events delivered
- feasibility studies completed
- number of businesses supported
- square metres of enhanced public realm
- wayfinding installed
- cultural, youth or community facilities created

Outcomes: What will the impact of this project be and what will change? Describe the difference your project will make such as:

- increased footfall
- safer walking routes
- reduced congestion
- improved access to water, culture or play
- enhanced biodiversity
- improved perceptions of the town centre
- increased visitor dwell time
- increased cultural participation
- improved youth provision
- strengthened heritage value

Outcomes should relate to the strategy's ambitions.

Mechanism of change: How will this project lead to the outputs and outcomes you have stated? Keep it clear and evidence-based.

Beneficiaries: Who will benefit from this project (e.g., residents, young people, older people, disabled people visitors, traders/businesses, low-income households, students, etc.) and where will the benefits be felt (town centre, gateways, seafront, specific street(s)/site(s), area-wide etc.)

How we will know it's worked: Some simple (one to three) indicators explaining how we will know the project has had the desired impact. Examples could include:

- footfall increase of X%
- reduction in vacancy rates
- visitor satisfaction improved
- safer or greener routes created
- increased participation numbers
- reduction in antisocial behaviour
- improved accessibility for certain groups

Indicators should be simple, focused and realistic.

Section 3: Deliverability

Projects must show a credible route to delivery

Key dependencies (max five bullet points): e.g., landowner agreement, funding decisions, planning permissions, railway or highways approvals, partnership agreements, utilities or ground condition constraints, completion of another linked project.

Dependencies help identify risks and sequencing.

Permissions/consents likely needed (if known): e.g planning permission, listed building/conservation area consent, highways/TRO, landlord/freeholder agreement, licenses (markets/events, premises), environmental/marine consents etc.

Key risks/issues: Identify the biggest risks, such as:

- lack of funding
- community opposition
- technical constraints
- anti-social behaviour concerns
- viability challenges
- procurement complexity
- dependency on other organisations

Support needed to progress: Explain what you need from the council or partners:

- convening power
- feasibility resource
- fundraising support
- planning guidance
- highways engagement
- data/evidence
- brokering between landowners or stakeholders

This informs the future action plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost (if known): Provide a realistic range or note if unknown.

Projects will not be excluded for early-stage uncertainty.

Likely funding route (e.g., grant, private, revenue, in-kind, mixed, unknown/to be explored, other): Tick the relevant option(s) and briefly note any assumptions (such as expected external funding, for example)

Funding or in-kind support already identified (optional): Include offers of materials, land access, volunteer time, sponsorship etc.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: How confident are you that the project will realise the intended benefits? Select high, medium or low.

Evidence/sources (one to three bullets): Examples:

- results from local consultations
- survey data
- feasibility studies
- market analysis
- case studies from other towns
- insight from local businesses, BID or community groups
- health or deprivation data
- heritage or tourism analysis

This supports transparent scoring and gives confidence in the proposal.

How projects will be scored

Projects will be scored by the relevant place panel based on the information provided by the project lead in the projects template (the directory submission form). The scoring framework asks Panels to assign a 0–5 score across five headings:

- Strategic fit (0–5)
- Economic impact (0–5)
- Social impact (0–5)
- Environmental impact (0–5)
- Deliverability (0–5)

This approach reflects a light touch version of established appraisal thinking: considering the likely costs, benefits and risks of proposals and comparing options in a structured way, without requiring full appraisal-level detail at the directory stage.

The scoring is intended to be proportionate: early-stage ideas can still be included and scored using the best available information, and scores can be refined as projects develop (for example, when moving from an 'idea' to 'feasibility' stage or when preparing funding bids).

Where information is missing or genuinely unknown, panels will avoid guessing and can use an "unknown/low confidence" note alongside the score, so the project can be revisited once more detail is available.

How the scores will be used

The place panels' scores will be used to help:

- Identify priority projects to progress and coordinate with partners.
- Sequence activity and agree realistic next steps (e.g., feasibility, permissions, partnership building, design).
- Develop recommendations for inclusion in action plans
- Provide a clear, consistent basis for discussion and oversight as the directory and action plans return through governance routes.

To keep scoring fair and comparable across different types of projects (council-led, partner-led, and community-led), the place panels will use the agreed definitions for what 0-5 means under each heading.

Where projects are similar or interdependent, panels can also note links and dependencies so that sequencing decisions reflect how projects work together as a programme, not just as stand-alone items.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

1 Breathe new life into the heart of the town

Reinvigorating the town centre by bringing underused spaces and buildings back into active use. Supporting signature events, pop-ups and creative activities that draw people in all year-round. Improving and programming Wimereux Square into a space that works harder for the town.

1.1 Void management toolkit

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: May 2026 following Town Centre Strategy engagement

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Centred on Mortimer Street and its relationship with William Street into the upper High Street and seafront

Description: There is a clear steer and public support/ endorsement from the town centre strategy for CCC to take an active role in tackling the void situation in Herne Bay town centre.

Preparatory work has helped identify and add more detail to the status etc of the voids to help inform appropriate next steps. This work has primarily focused on higher footfall areas of greatest visibility to users and visitors and public interest. For example voids within the pedestrianised area of Mortimer Street, the upper part of the High Street and the area of William Street connecting the seafront to these.

A void management toolkit will look to identify different potential interventions to help breathe new life into sites currently vacant or underused in the town centre.

It will be important for a toolkit to consider interventions in a joined-up way given the interrelationship of appearance and aesthetics, signposting and orientation for pedestrians and retail activity and offer with footfall, trading and ultimately the appeal of town centre units to prospective entrepreneurs and occupiers. Therefore, its key themes/principles are likely to include:

- Town centre hygiene (i.e. ensuring attractive streetscape and environment for traders and customers to enjoy)
- Activity & Animation (e.g. boosting pedestrian footfall, improve clarity of orientation and circulation of people between seafront and town centre etc)
- Void Reuse (e.g. appealing to users, entrepreneurs and new investors, tackling most challenging units, use of LA powers/partner funding where available); and
- Communication (e.g. ensuring communication with stakeholders and partners; support void prevention by reassuring existing anchor stores that they are important to the town's retail & hospitality offer and reiterate CCC's active support)

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Commercial agents & landlords/ proprietors; Local businesses; Kent County Council; Cultural and community partners; event promoters

Project stage: Preparatory work complete

Timescale: Short term (autumn 2026) for preparation of toolkit; medium term (from autumn 2026) for delivery of any funded activity and identifying funding options for other priorities and any further phases

Target start date: 2026/27 (agree toolkit, funding requests made etc)

Target end date: Toolkit in place by autumn 2026. Specific projects from the toolkit taken forward up to 2028 (along with ongoing monitoring)

What will change?

Outputs:

- More enquiries about availability of commercial space and leads for other investment opportunities
- Increase in the number of proprietors of vacant properties instructing agents to market their units
- Enhanced place promotion of Herne Bay town centre-based properties
- Reduced vacancy rates of agent and non-agent instructed properties
- More events and other activities planned for pedestrianised spaces
- Reports of increased pedestrian footfall from CCC/ traders/other sources
- More improvements made to town centre street scene and public realm

Outcomes:

A 'virtuous circle' is created where:

- Improved commercial vitality generates increased interest/demand for space
- Commercial occupancy in both Mortimer Street and High Street increase
- Key areas provide attractive and animated environments that attract visitors
- People have more reasons to visit and spend time in the town centre
- A thriving, vibrant town centre makes people feel prouder of where they live

Mechanism of change: Development of a toolkit that aims to identify a range of tools to help tackle current voids. It will consider the issue from several angles that complement, interrelate and interdepend as it will need a coordinated approach.

It will aim to expand the range of activity and events on offer while making best use of public spaces (e.g. pedestrianised areas) as well as creating an attractive street scene. These form the setting that help support the retail 'bricks and mortar' offer.

If footfall can be increased by enticing visitors and residents into these areas from the seafront, new residential areas (including higher income consumers etc) this will create conditions that are attractive to new entrepreneurs and investors. They will see new commercial opportunities, assisted by available space and affordable rents etc. This commitment to the town will in turn attract other commercial interest while also encouraging existing occupiers to reinvest in their own units resulting in higher property rents and values. An overall improved commercial environment can build an all-year-round destination while strengthening pride in place.

Beneficiaries: Traders/businesses; visitors; residents; community groups and activators.

How we will know it has worked:

- Increasing footfall, car parking patronage and levels of economic activity
- Higher impact on business trading (e.g. financial performance)
- Improved levels of interest and demand for commercial space
- Increased evidence of property transactions including enquiries and lettings
- Growth in rental and property values from improving yields
- Improved pride in place reported

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Cooperation of commercial agents (acting as proxies), proprietors and landlords. CCC does not own or control any of the town centre voids
- Securing additional resource to deliver identified priority activities that are currently unfunded

Permissions/consents likely needed: Possible – CCC concessions and licensing, event approvals, landlord/ proprietor approvals; highways/public realm consents if required to facilitate or enable activity (e.g. events)

Key risks/issues:

- Lack of CCC control or influence over 'bricks and mortar' in key streets
- Most voids have a small footprint which in many cases are too small for well known or national chains or multiples
- Challenges in reletting former bank sites due to refurb costs/limited frontage
- Continuing loss of occupiers notably important anchor/multiple stores
- Lack of funding leading to scaling down/dilution of key interventions
- Deteriorating economic conditions (e.g. depressed consumer spending)

Support needed to progress: Approval of toolkit, funding for unfunded projects and initiatives

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: TBC – subject to preferred approach to void reuse etc

Likely funding route: CCC primarily supported by community and business activators who are also well positioned to lead on enabling and mobilising others

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed through agent cooperation etc and other partner discussions. Some agents have already signalled their in-principle support

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong strategic fit and demand/need for intervention/s, but benefits depend on improvement of a number of drivers all working in unison to deliver target outputs and outcomes. Strong cooperation needs to be secured with multiple agents (and their clients – i.e. the proprietors who may be unknown to CCC and are not directly engaged in the town) so they are incentivised to act, and act promptly. Benefits may take some time to emerge and accrue in a meaningful way.

Evidence/sources:

- CCC initial audit of voids (vacant commercial space - July 2025)
- Herne Bay Town Centre Vacancy Survey (Cradick Retail, June 2026)
- Anecdotal evidence of weaker footfall and trading from businesses (Town Centre Strategy – public engagement)
- Numbers of visitor trips (Destination Research, Economic impact of tourism report – Herne Bay, 2023-2024)
- Strategy ambition to "reinvigorate the town centre by bringing underused spaces and buildings back into active use. Supporting signature events, pop-ups and creative activities that draw people in all year-round. Improving and programming Wimereux Square into a space that works harder for the town".

1.2 Banking hub

Lead organisation: Cash Access UK (delivery), with LINK (recommendation), supported by Canterbury City Council (enabling/support) and the landlord/developer of the chosen site

Main contact: Vanessa Robinson (Regional Manager, South East and London), Cash Access UK

Date submitted: April 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Central Herne Bay town centre, likely on Mortimer Street; exact address to be confirmed and cannot be shared publicly until lease exchange

Description: Support the establishment of a permanent Banking Hub in Herne Bay, following a recommendation by LINK and delivery by Cash Access UK. The hub will provide counter services for everyday cash transactions for customers of major banks, alongside rotating 'community banker' provision for more complex enquiries. A property has been identified, and early lease negotiations are underway. If these were to take longer than expected or were to be aborted CCC will work with Cash Access UK to help identify a temporary hub site from which to operate from.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Cash Access UK; LINK UK; landlord/ developer of the chosen property; Canterbury City Council (economic development team, comms)

Project stage: Scoping/pre-delivery (site being progressed through planning and early lease negotiations)

Timescale: Short term

Target start date: 2026/27 (agreed, subject to completion of lease exchange)

Target end date: 2027/28 (hub operational; public awareness activity completed; establish in community)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Agreed delivery plan with Cash Access UK and partners, including local stakeholder mapping and communications approach.
- Planning decision secured for the building's proposed reconfiguration enabling lease to be progressed, where required
- Lease negotiations concluded and lease exchanged (triggering ability to confirm location publicly).
- Banking Hub fit-out delivered and operational model in place (counter service plus rotating community banker provision).
- Local awareness and signposting campaign delivered (including targeted outreach to groups supporting older/vulnerable residents and small businesses).

Outcomes:

- No 'break in service' for access to everyday banking/cash services for residents and businesses as local branches close, as per Cash Access UK's stated intention.
- Improved access to cash and face-to-face banking for people who rely on in-person services, including older and more vulnerable residents.
- Support for small businesses that need regular cash deposits/withdrawals and day-to-day banking, strengthening town centre resilience.
- Additional footfall to the town centre location, supporting nearby shops and reinforcing key retail anchors.

Mechanism of change: The Banking Hub provides a single, shared counter for essential transactions for customers of multiple banks, plus rotating bank-specific support for more complex queries. By locating the service in the town centre and supporting local awareness-raising, the hub maintains access to services that underpin day-to-day living and small business activity, helping sustain footfall and inclusion as traditional branches withdraw.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; older people; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked:

- Banking Hub opens and operates as advertised.
- User feedback from residents and businesses indicates improved/maintained access to cash and face-to-face services.
- Evidence of usage levels sufficient to sustain the service.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Planning permission (if required) secured for a site enabling a lease to be firmed up.
- Lease negotiations completed and lease exchanged (only then can the location be confirmed publicly).
- Site suitability confirmed (layout, access, security, servicing) and fit-out specification agreed.
- Stakeholder engagement and comms coordinated to ensure take-up, particularly among vulnerable users and cash-reliant businesses.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission for reconfiguration/change of use (site dependent); landlord/freeholder agreement; premises approvals (e.g., security requirements); any necessary licenses/consents associated with fit-out and operation

Key risks/issues:

- Programme risk if key decisions are delayed.
- Site risk if the chosen building proves operationally challenging (access, servicing, security) or attracts objections.
- Demand/behaviour change risk if awareness-raising is insufficient among target users (older/vulnerable residents and cash-reliant SMEs).

Support needed to progress: Council support to convene stakeholders and help manage communications expectations; planning coordination to ensure timely determination; local introductions to community organisations supporting vulnerable residents and small businesses to maximise awareness and take-up.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Minimal - delivery-funded through the Cash Access UK model

Likely funding route: Private/mixed - Cash Access UK is funded by major high street banks as a not-for-profit

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Delivery commitment confirmed by Cash Access UK following LINK recommendation (January 2026), with site negotiations underway (August 2026).

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (benefits are clear and widely applicable; delivery timing and location are dependent on planning and lease exchange)

Evidence/sources:

- Cash Access UK confirmed (Jan 2026) that Herne Bay has been recommended for a Banking Hub following a LINK review and set out the hub's core service offer.
- Cash Access UK confirmed (August 2026) that a property has been identified, and early lease negotiations are underway; location can only be shared once the lease exchanges.

1.3 Wimereux Square review

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (public realm/asset stewardship)

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Wimereux Square

Description: A standalone review and improvement plan for Wimereux Square to help it function as a flexible, well-managed town centre space that

supports a stronger year-round programme of activity. The square is already home to a monthly artisan food market (run by Kent Food Hubs, second Sunday of the month, 10am–2pm). This project will assess how the square can better support markets, pop-ups and small events (without undermining nearby traders or duplicating the Mortimer Street market), through a combination of: (1) spatial/layout review (how the square is used, servicing and movement), (2) 'soft' public realm changes (seating, micro-spaces, temporary infrastructure), and (3) an operating and programming approach (permissions, utilities, stewarding, and an agreed annual plan). The output will be a practical, costed action plan with quick wins and longer-term options.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Back the Bay; Picture the postcard
- Link the high street to high tide

Delivery partners: Market operator(s) (including Kent Food Hubs); existing Mortimer Street market operator/representatives (to align the overall market offer); local traders and property owners around the square; Kent County Council Highways (if any servicing/traffic management is needed); cleansing and waste services; community safety partners (event-day management); access groups; events/community organisations; utilities providers (electricity/water options)

Project stage: Scoping/review

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028 (begin process of review and stakeholder engagement)

Target end date: 2029 (action plan agreed identifying some quick wins; pilot programming tested)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A short baseline assessment of Wimereux Square: current layout, desire lines, dwell spaces, servicing/loading, accessibility pinch points, and conflict points on market days.
- Stakeholder engagement summary (market operators, traders, residents, access groups) and an agreed statement of purpose for the square (what it is for, and what success looks like).
- A practical 'Wimereux Square action plan' with interventions.
- Event/market operating plan for the square, ideally including: site plan, stall layout options, power/water needs, waste arrangements, stewarding, and a permissions/checklist pack that makes it easier to run small events.
- Utilities options appraisal (electricity access, water) to support markets and events, including indicative costs and delivery route.
- Pilot programme of activations that complement (not duplicate) Mortimer Street's offer (e.g., seasonal themed artisan markets, small performances, community pop-ups).

Outcomes:

- Wimereux Square is used more often and more confidently as a town centre 'front room', not only as a pass-through space.
- Improved quality and consistency of the market/event experience (layout, legibility, cleanliness, accessibility), supporting repeat visits.
- A clearer, joined-up market offer across Mortimer Street and Wimereux Square, reducing duplication and strengthening overall town centre vitality.
- Improved dwell time and spend in nearby shops/cafés linked to market and event days.
- Reduced friction on event days (servicing, waste, crowding) through clearer operating procedures and infrastructure.

Mechanism of change: By clarifying the square's role in the town centre offer, improving the practical 'how-to' of operating markets/events (layout, utilities, waste, stewarding), and testing low-cost public realm and programming changes, Wimereux Square can host more regular, higher-quality activity. This increases footfall and dwell time, strengthens perceptions of vitality and care, and supports nearby businesses.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people (through improved accessible layouts and clearer space management); low-income households (free/low-cost public events and improved public realm)

How we will know it has worked:

- An action plan for Wimereux Square is agreed and used by partners (and kept live through updates).
- Increase in number of programmed days in the square per year (markets/activations), with improved consistency of delivery.
- User and trader feedback shows improved experience (welcome, layout, cleanliness, accessibility) on market/event days.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Clarity on land ownership/management responsibilities for the square and any constraints on changes (street furniture, surfacing, utilities).
- Agreement with market operators on how Wimereux Square activity complements other activities (e.g. Mortimer Street market offer).
- Stakeholder buy-in from surrounding traders and residents, including an access and servicing plan.
- Feasibility of utilities provision (temporary or permanent power/water) and confirmation of ongoing costs/responsibilities.
- Capacity to coordinate a pilot programme (event management, comms, cleansing, stewarding).

Permissions/consents likely needed: Licences for markets/events (as applicable); highways approvals if any temporary traffic management or suspensions are required; landlord/freeholder agreement for any permanent fixtures or utilities; planning/advertisement consent if changes materially affect the public realm or signage (scope dependent)

Key risks/issues:

- Duplication/competition risk with Mortimer Street market if the respective roles are not clearly defined.
- Operational risk: poor servicing, waste, or stewarding could create negative perceptions and trader/resident pushback.
- Accessibility risk: layouts that create pinch points or reduce step-free movement during market days.
- Funding risk: inability to fund even modest utilities/management improvements may limit the ability to diversify programming.
- Delivery risk: 'review without change' - if the work does not conclude with a clear action plan and an owner for delivery, momentum will be lost.

Support needed to progress: Convening power to bring together market operators, traders and KCC where needed; a short piece of work to produce the review/action plan (including an access audit); and modest resource for pilots (event management, comms, cleansing and temporary power where required)

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (low-to-medium, depending on whether the project remains a review/pilot programme or includes permanent utilities/public realm changes)

Likely funding route: Mixed (council revenue/capital for review and small public realm/enabling works; potential external small grants/sponsorship for pilots; in-kind contribution from partners where available)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed (existing market operation provides a starting platform for piloting improved layouts and complementary programming).

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (clear opportunity and strong strategic fit; benefits depend on stakeholder alignment and follow-through into delivery)

Evidence/sources:

- Wimereux Square is already programmed as a monthly artisan food market location (second Sunday of the month), indicating an existing delivery partner and audience.
- Previous market work highlights the need to enhance the wider 'market offer' across Mortimer Street and Wimereux Square and to consider scope for a dual model, making a standalone square review a practical enabling step.
- The town centre strategy narrative (within this directory) explicitly calls for improving and programming Wimereux Square so it "works harder for the town", reinforcing strategic fit for this project.

1.4 Herne Bay Sports Centre supergraphics

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (in coordination with the leisure centre operator/ facilities management)

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay Sports Centre/leisure centre building (external elevations), within the wider town centre area

Description: A bold external supergraphics and façade transformation project for Herne Bay Sports Centre, moving beyond a simple repaint to create a distinctive, high-impact visual landmark in the town centre. The project would use large-scale colour, pattern, typography, illustration or graphic treatment across selected elevations to improve the building's appearance, strengthen its identity as a public leisure and community asset, and create a more memorable arrival experience. The intervention should be designed as part of Herne Bay's wider place story, drawing on coastal colour, movement, sport, wellbeing and civic pride rather than applying a generic "lick of paint". It would include condition preparation, durable coastal-grade finishes, a graphic design brief, community/youth input where appropriate, and a refreshed approach to signage and wayfinding so the building feels more confident, welcoming and visible within the town centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Leisure centre operator/facilities management contractor; Canterbury City Council property/estates, place and communications teams; graphic designers, mural artists or public art specialists; access and equality groups; young people/ sports centre users; local ward members; suppliers/ contractors for coatings, access equipment and installation; insurers/health & safety/CDM support as required.

Project stage: Idea/scoping (scope, specification and procurement route to be confirmed)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028 (subject to specification and procurement)

Target end date: 2029 (works complete and snagged)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Condition check and scope definition, including elevations suitable for supergraphics, coating specification suitable for coastal exposure, access method, working hours and any signage constraints.
- A creative brief for a bold supergraphics treatment, setting design principles, colour palette, relationship to Herne Bay's coastal identity, accessibility/legibility requirements and maintenance expectations.
- Design concept development with input from the leisure centre operator, users, young people and local stakeholders, so the final treatment feels locally rooted and not imposed.
- External preparation works: cleaning, removal of loose material, minor repairs, treatment of corrosion where needed and making good surfaces ready for durable graphic treatment.
- Installation of large-scale façade graphics, colour blocking, pattern, typography, mural or graphic elements across agreed elevations and features.
- Refresh of external presentation and legibility, including clearer entrances, improved visual identity and removal of redundant fixings where feasible.
- Completion pack including maintenance recommendations, inspection frequency, cleaning regime and touch-up schedule to protect the investment.

Outcomes:

- The sports centre becomes a more confident, visible and memorable town centre landmark rather than a tired-looking civic building.
- Improved first impressions and perceptions of care, quality and creativity in the town centre environment.
- A stronger identity for the leisure centre as a place for health, activity, young people and community use.
- Improved user experience on arrival through clearer entrances, stronger visual identity and a more welcoming external environment.
- A visible quick-win public art/public realm intervention that supports pride in place and complements wider town centre activation.
- Reduced medium-term maintenance burden through surface preparation, durable coatings and an agreed upkeep plan.

Mechanism of change: Supergraphics use bold, large-scale visual treatment to change how a building is perceived at street level. Rather than simply making the building look cleaner, the project turns a functional leisure building into a recognisable civic marker that signals energy, activity and investment. A distinctive façade can improve welcome, encourage curiosity, support wayfinding and make the sports centre feel more connected to the wider town centre story. When paired with durable preparation and maintenance, the intervention also protects building fabric while delivering a more ambitious placemaking effect than standard repainting.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; leisure centre users; young people; older people; disabled people (through clearer/cleaner arrival experience and legibility); town centre traders/businesses (through improved perceptions and potential footfall uplift)

How we will know it has worked:

- Before/after visual audit completed and signed off, showing clear transformation from basic building refresh to distinctive supergraphics-led façade improvement.
- User feedback indicates improved perceptions of welcome/appearance (e.g., short on-site survey or QR feedback during the first three months post-completion).
- Facilities data shows stable or increased visits/ entries compared with the same period in the previous year (noting seasonality).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on scope, preferred elevations, creative brief, design quality threshold, colour/graphic approach and coastal-grade specification.
- Access method confirmed (e.g., MEWP/scaffold) and working arrangements agreed to minimise disruption to users.
- Budget identified and procurement route confirmed (framework/call-off or competitive quote).
- Coordination with any planned building maintenance works to avoid abortive effort.
- Communications plan for users and neighbours (timings, access changes, safety arrangements).

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder approval (if not already within CCC control); method statements and H&S approvals; traffic/pedestrian management approvals if required for access equipment on public land; advertising consent only if signage is materially changed (otherwise retain existing signage within current permissions)

Key risks/issues:

- Coastal exposure and substrate condition: additional making-good may be needed once access is in place.
- Disruption risk to customers (noise, temporary closures/route changes) if programming is not managed carefully.
- Short-lived benefit if the supergraphics are not paired with durable preparation, anti-graffiti/cleaning considerations and a basic ongoing maintenance plan.
- Reputational risk if the graphic treatment feels low quality, too timid, overly generic or inconsistent with Herne Bay's wider place identity.
- Procurement/timing risk if works miss the optimal weather window, extending programme.

Support needed to progress: Confirmation of building ownership/maintenance responsibilities; quick scoping survey and specification; design/artist brief for the supergraphics; procurement support; coordination with the operator to plan works around peak periods; and light-touch comms support to present the project as a bold town-centre placemaking intervention, not simply repainting.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Likely medium capital depending on access requirements, extent of making good, design fees, artist/graphic commissioning, specialist coatings and scale of the final supergraphics treatment.

Likely funding route: Council capital/facilities maintenance budget, public realm or placemaking funding, potential cultural/public art funding, and/or contribution from operator maintenance budgets to be confirmed.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed (potential in-kind coordination via operator/facilities management; potential alignment with planned cyclical maintenance)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High (high visibility and stronger placemaking potential than repainting alone; impact depends on design quality, maintenance and whether the final scheme is bold enough to change perceptions).

Evidence/sources:

- Supergraphics and large-scale façade treatments are widely used in public realm and civic building projects to create landmarks, improve legibility, animate blank elevations and shift perceptions quickly without requiring full redevelopment.
- The town centre strategy identifies the importance of improving perceptions of the town centre and supporting a healthier town through stronger leisure and community infrastructure.

- Engagement themes highlight that parts of the town feel run down and not inviting, and that improved presentation of prominent places and buildings matters to people.
- The place-based assessment identifies high levels of deprivation in and around the town centre and the value of visible improvements that help build pride and create a more welcoming environment.

1.5 Greening Mortimer Street

Lead organisation: Kent County Council (Highways Authority/asset owner), with Southern Water (SuDS delivery partner) and Canterbury City Council (local planning/policy authority)

Main contact: KCC Highways/Southern Water

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Mortimer Street (public highway/pedestrianised high street area), including existing brick-built planters and adjacent carriageway/footway gullies

Description: Deliver a high-quality 'green street' upgrade to Mortimer Street, combining public realm greening with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to address stormwater drainage issues and improve town centre experience. Connectivity surveys indicate gullies along Mortimer Street drain to the foul network; the project would install SuDS features (including bio-retention/rain garden elements) to remove surface water from the combined sewer, with public realm benefits. Existing brick-built planters would be replaced with SuDS planting features, complemented by tree and planting improvements and targeted surfacing changes (e.g., permeable/semi-permeable areas where appropriate). The scheme will be designed to protect and improve accessibility and the day-to-day functioning of the high street, while creating a greener, more comfortable place to dwell and shop.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Weave a green thread through the town
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Link the high street to high tide; Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Highways; Southern Water; Canterbury City Council (planning/policy, conservation area liaison); utilities/underground services owners; local traders/business representatives; access groups (incl. disabled users); arboricultural consultant; appointed designers and contractors (highways + SuDS); waste/cleansing teams (to coordinate maintenance and servicing)

Project stage: Design (progressing to detailed design; estimated completion September 2026)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028 (subject to detailed design, approvals and procurement)

Target end date: 2029 (construction complete and initial establishment/defects period managed)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Detailed design package for Mortimer Street SuDS and public realm works (including levels, drainage strategy, planting specification and materials palette).
- Replacement of existing brick-built planters with bio-retention/rain garden SuDS features designed to intercept and treat runoff.
- Surface water separation interventions to reduce

stormwater entering the foul/combined network (location-specific solutions along the street).

- Tree and planting improvements integrated into SuDS features (including small trees, e.g., multi-stems, where appropriate).
- Targeted surfacing upgrades supporting infiltration/permeability where feasible, and improved edges/thresholds around SuDS features.
- Arboricultural actions in line with assessment outcomes (including replacement of any tree removal with a higher-quality specimen, subject to approvals).
- Construction and traffic/pedestrian management plan to maintain access to shops and maintain inclusive routes during works.
- Maintenance and stewardship plan for SuDS planting features (inspection, litter clearance, seasonal planting care and sediment management).

Outcomes:

- Reduced stormwater flows entering the foul/combined sewer from Mortimer Street, contributing to fewer pollution incidents and improved network performance.
- A greener, more attractive high street with improved comfort, shade and biodiversity, supporting pride in place.
- Improved dwell time and overall visitor experience through a more welcoming street environment (more planting, better quality public realm).
- Clearer, safer and more inclusive movement along the street (ensuring accessible routes are maintained and improved).
- Improved resilience to heavy rainfall through on-street storage, attenuation and controlled discharge/infiltration via SuDS features.

Mechanism of change: SuDS features (e.g., bio-retention rain gardens) capture runoff from roofs and highway surfaces that currently drains into the foul/combined system. By retaining, filtering and slowing water on-street, the scheme reduces peak flows to the network while delivering visible greening. A better-quality, greener street environment supports higher dwell time and more positive perceptions of the town centre, provided access and servicing needs are designed-in.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people (through improved accessibility and street comfort); low-income households (through improved public realm and reduced flood/sewer risk impacts)

How we will know it has worked:

- Drainage outcome: monitoring/assessment confirms reduction in surface water connections to foul/combined system from Mortimer Street (as per design intent and post-completion checks).
- Public realm outcome: user/trader feedback shows improved perceptions of attractiveness and comfort on Mortimer Street (simple survey/QR feedback).
- Maintenance outcome: SuDS features remain functional and well-maintained (routine inspections show acceptable sediment levels, planting establishment and no persistent ponding).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement between Southern Water and KCC on scope, roles, approvals pathway and delivery programme for works on the highway.
- Detailed design completion (noted as expected May 2026) and sign-off by relevant stakeholders.
- Underground utilities constraints confirmed and coordinated (surveys, trial holes as required).
- Arboricultural and conservation area processes followed (including notifications/consents for any tree removal).
- Maintenance responsibilities and funding agreed for SuDS features (to avoid deterioration of planting/function).

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals (KCC) and any required traffic management; conservation area/tree notifications where applicable (tree works); potential planning/advertisement consent if any permanent street furniture/signage changes require it; landowner/freeholder agreements if any interfaces beyond the adopted highway are required; other statutory approvals to be confirmed through detailed design

Key risks/issues:

- Street function risk: if loading, servicing and inclusive pedestrian movement are not designed-in, the scheme could create day-to-day operational issues for traders and users.
- Construction disruption risk in a busy retail street (loss of footfall, access constraints), requiring careful phasing and communications.
- Technical risk: SuDS performance may be constrained by ground conditions, utilities, levels and available footprint, requiring design iteration.
- Maintenance risk: without a clear long-term maintenance plan and budget, SuDS planters can fail (blocked inlets, sediment build-up, poor planting establishment).
- Tree/heritage risk: any tree removal or interventions could face objections or delays; at least one tree (noted as low-quality category C) may need removal and replacement.

Support needed to progress: Convening and governance support to align KCC/Southern Water/CCC and local traders; resource for stakeholder engagement and access audits; confirmation of maintenance and adoption arrangements; programme coordination to minimise disruption and align with other town centre works

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed following detailed design and procurement; likely medium capital due to highways and drainage works)

Likely funding route: Mixed (Southern Water investment for drainage/SuDS elements; highways/public realm funding contributions as required; potential complementary town centre/public realm budgets)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Southern Water has progressed Mortimer Street SuDS through concept design and is progressing to detailed design (estimated completion August 2026).

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High (clear technical rationale and advanced design status; place benefits depend on detailed design quality, construction phasing and long-term maintenance)

Evidence/sources:

- Connectivity surveys confirmed gullies along Mortimer Street are connected to foul; the proposal is to install SuDS throughout Mortimer Street to remove surface water from the combined sewer.
- The concept design proposes replacing existing brick-built flower beds/planters with bio-retention SuDS features, delivering both drainage and greening benefits.
- An arboricultural assessment (BS5837:2012) has been undertaken; one low-quality category C tree (T11) may require removal with an opportunity for higher-quality replacement, subject to conservation area process.
- Southern Water notes the scheme is progressing to detailed design, estimated to complete September 2026, indicating delivery readiness.



Image: © Lucy Platel

2 Weave a green thread through the town

Enhancing walking and cycling infrastructure by introducing green corridors and reimagined public spaces that encourage active travel. Improving connections along the historic Saxon Shore Way to neighbouring towns, forts, nature reserves and coastline

2.1 Greening William Street car park

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (car park/public realm), in coordination with Kent County Council Highways where applicable

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): William Street car park and immediate pedestrian/cycle desire lines connecting Memorial Park, William Street, Mortimer Street and Wimereux Square

Description: A targeted greening and public realm 'softening' project for William Street, focusing on the town-centre car park and its key walking/cycling routes between Memorial Park and the retail core. The aim is to make this area feel more welcoming, greener and easier to navigate, supporting active travel and improving perceptions of the town centre. The project would introduce a coherent package of low-disruption measures such as: upgraded planting (including drought/salt-tolerant planting where exposed), new or improved tree pits/planters (where feasible), rain-garden style features where drainage allows, additional seating/'pause points', improved cycle parking, and clearer wayfinding/legibility between the park, the high street streets, Wimereux Square and Mortimer Street. The approach is intended to be pragmatic and deliverable within the transition period: starting with a quick 'design and pilot' and then rolling out a small number of high-impact greening interventions that can be maintained well and refreshed seasonally.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Weave a green thread through the town
- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: CCC (car parks, public realm, cleansing and parks teams); Kent County Council Highways (interfaces on the highway); access groups (inclusive route audit); local traders and businesses; local community greening groups (e.g., in-bloom style volunteers where relevant); utilities providers (constraints and drainage); contractors (landscaping, surfacing, street furniture); events/market partners (to align peak-day management and avoid clashes)

Project stage: Idea/scoping (to progress through a short site audit and concept design)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029/30 (site audit, concept, quick-win planting and wayfinding)

Target end date: 2030/31 (core package installed; first full maintenance cycle completed and reviewed)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A short site audit and concept plan identifying priority greening locations, desire lines, lighting/visibility issues, and maintenance implications.
- Planting and 'softening' interventions in the William Street car park (e.g., upgraded planting beds/planters, new or improved tree pits where feasible, and replacement of failed/low-quality planting).
- Feasibility of small SuDS-style interventions (e.g., rain-garden planters) where drainage and levels allow, to improve resilience to heavy rainfall.
- Improved cycle parking and micro-mobility 'arrival' points to encourage active travel into the town centre.
- Seating/pause points positioned to support older people and inclusive movement between Memorial Park, the car park and the high street.

- Clearer wayfinding/legibility improvements to signpost routes towards Mortimer Street, Wimereux Square, key retail anchors and the park.
- A simple maintenance plan and responsibilities map (who waters, who weeds, who replaces plants, and how issues are reported).

Outcomes:

- A greener, more attractive and more comfortable approach route between Memorial Park and the town centre, supporting walking and cycling.
- Improved perceptions of care and quality in a highly visible town centre space (helping counter "run down" perceptions).
- Increased dwell time and footfall around William Street and adjacent businesses by creating a more pleasant, legible environment.
- Better inclusive access, with more opportunities to rest and clearer routes for wheelchair users, people with buggies and older people.
- Small biodiversity and urban cooling benefits through planting, with reduced heat and wind exposure in key spots.

Mechanism of change: Greening and small public realm improvements make an everyday route feel safer, more comfortable and more welcoming, which increases the likelihood that people choose to walk/cycle and spend time in the town centre. Better legibility and pause points support more inclusive movement and encourage linked trips between Memorial Park, the retail core and Wimereux Square.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked:

- Before/after visual audit and simple maintenance/condition checks show improved appearance and planting establishment.
- User feedback indicates improved comfort, legibility and accessibility on the route between Memorial Park and the town centre.
- Proxy measures (counts/observations) show increased walking/cycling movement through the space at key times compared with baseline.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities across the car park, adjacent verges/edges and any highway interfaces.
- Underground services constraints confirmed so planting/tree pits and any SuDS elements do not conflict with utilities.
- Agreement on a realistic maintenance regime (watering, litter, seasonal replacement) to avoid 'one-season' planting failure.
- Inclusive access audit and layout sign-off to ensure routes remain step-free and do not create pinch points.
- Coordination with any planned town centre works nearby (e.g., Wimereux Square programming and Mortimer Street greening works) to avoid disruption conflicts.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder agreement (CCC where applicable); highways approvals (KCC) if works extend into the highway or require traffic management; planning consent only if new permanent structures/signage materially change the public realm (scope dependent); utilities approvals as required

Key risks/issues:

- Maintenance risk: planting fails or becomes untidy without funded watering and upkeep, undermining perceptions.
- Operational risk: changes interfere with parking circulation, servicing or peak-day management if not designed carefully.
- Accessibility risk: poorly positioned planters/street furniture create obstacles or reduce effective width of routes.
- Vandalism/litter risk if greening is not paired with cleansing and rapid response.

- Delivery risk: overly ambitious scope; project should prioritise a small number of robust interventions that can be delivered and maintained well.

Support needed to progress: A short commissioned site audit/concept and cost plan; convening with KCC Highways and utilities to confirm constraints; modest capital for planters/planting/cycle parking and wayfinding; and agreement of a maintenance and cleansing plan (including who funds seasonal replacement)

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium, depending on extent of planting infrastructure, any SuDS elements, and whether surfacing changes are required)

Likely funding route: Mixed (council public realm/car parks budgets; potential small grants or sponsorship for planters/trees; in-kind community planting support where appropriate)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed (opportunity for in-kind support through local community greening groups and/or local business sponsorship of planters)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong strategic fit and 'quick win' visibility; benefits depend on maintenance follow-through and good design around access/operations)

Evidence/sources:

- The town centre strategy identifies the need to "weave a green thread through the town" and improve walking/cycling connections, including making routes enjoyable and inclusive.
- The strategy also highlights the importance of improving perceptions of the town centre and addressing areas that feel run down through visible, practical interventions.
- The place-based assessment notes limited green infrastructure within the town centre boundary and the value of improvements that support healthier, more welcoming public spaces.

2.2 Replanting Station Road cycle path

Lead organisation: Kent County Council (Highways/active travel), with Canterbury City Council as local place-making and coordination partner

Main contact: KCC Highways Active Travel/ Sustainable Transport lead (TBC) and CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Station Road cycle route and its approaches between Herne Bay rail station, Memorial Park, William Street/Wimereux Square and onward town centre connections

Description: A targeted green infrastructure and route-legibility project to improve the Station Road cycle corridor as a key gateway between Herne Bay rail station, Memorial Park and the town centre. The scheme would combine replanting and landscape improvements along the existing route with clearer wayfinding, improved station arrival information and a review of how cyclists are directed onward into the heart of the town, including via Wimereux Square. The aim is to make this an attractive, legible and welcoming active travel route that better reflects

Herne Bay's ambitions for greener movement, stronger links between the station, seafront and shopping streets, and a more positive first impression for residents and visitors arriving by train.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Weave a green thread through the town
- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Highways; Canterbury City Council; Network Rail and station stakeholders; local access groups; local cycling groups; public realm and parks teams; wayfinding/design consultants; utilities and maintenance teams as required

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- A short route audit and planting plan for the Station Road corridor.
- Replacement or enhancement of planting and soft landscape features along the cycle route.
- Improved arrival signage and wayfinding at Herne Bay station and along the route into the town centre.
- Review and implementation of preferred onward cycling alignment towards Wimereux Square/ William Street connections.
- Minor public realm improvements at key transition points between Memorial Park, the station approach and town centre streets.
- Maintenance plan for planting, signage and route legibility.

Outcomes:

- A greener and more attractive station-to-town-centre cycle approach.
- Improved first impressions for people arriving by train.
- Stronger active travel connection between the station, Memorial Park, Wimereux Square and wider town centre.
- Clearer and more confident cycle navigation for residents and visitors.
- Increased likelihood of linked trips from the station into town centre destinations rather than bypassing them.
- A route that better supports Herne Bay's wider ambitions for sustainable transport and greener public realm.

Mechanism of change: The route from the station into the town centre is one of Herne Bay's most important gateway movements, but the current experience is more functional than welcoming. By improving planting, visual quality and wayfinding, and by making onward routing more intuitive, the project helps turn an underwhelming corridor into a positive active travel connection. A greener and better-signed route should improve confidence, encourage greater use of cycling and walking connections, and help more people move from the station and Memorial Park into the town centre and seafront.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; commuters; traders/ businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; rail users; cyclists and pedestrians using Memorial Park and town centre routes

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved user feedback on the attractiveness and legibility of the route.
- Clearer station-to-town-centre wayfinding in place and maintained.
- Evidence of increased or more confident cycle movement between the station, Memorial Park and the town centre.

- Improved visual condition of planting and route edges over time.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement with KCC and CCC on route scope and ownership responsibilities.
- Network Rail/station stakeholder engagement on signage and station interface improvements.
- Confirmation of planting locations, utilities constraints and maintenance responsibilities.
- Alignment with any wider active travel, wayfinding or public realm projects affecting Memorial Park, William Street or Wimereux Square.
- Availability of revenue and maintenance resource so planting and signage remain in good condition.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; landowner/asset owner agreement; Network Rail or station landlord approvals for signage and station interface elements; utilities checks; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Planting could fail or look untidy without a clear maintenance plan.
- Fragmented ownership may slow delivery.
- Signage changes alone may have limited impact if route geometry and transition points remain unclear.
- Poorly coordinated interventions could create clutter rather than clarity.
- Wider active travel expectations may exceed what a relatively modest gateway improvement project can deliver.

Support needed to progress: A short commissioned route and planting audit; coordination between CCC, KCC and station stakeholders; design support for wayfinding and public realm integration; agreement of a practical maintenance model; modest capital for planting, signage and small route improvements.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium, depending on extent of planting renewal, signage and any minor public realm works)

Likely funding route: Mixed - KCC Highways/active travel funding, CCC enabling or public realm budgets, and any complementary external active travel or place-based funding that can be secured

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; project rationale aligns with existing strategic priorities around active travel, town centre connectivity and greener public realm

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay Town Centre Strategy identifies the need to weave a green thread through the town, improve routes between the station, high street and seafront, and make movement more enjoyable, accessible and inclusive.
- The place-based assessment highlights limited green infrastructure in the town centre, the importance of better pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and the underdeveloped nature of cycling beyond the coast route.
- Both documents emphasise the need for more attractive and legible links between key destinations, including the rail station, Memorial Park, shopping streets and seafront.

2.3 Coastal cycle hire

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (concession/enabling) with an appointed cycle hire operator

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay & Whitstable

Specific location(s): Multi-site coastal hire hubs/docks (to be confirmed) focused on: Herne Bay seafront/promenade, the town centre (Mortimer Street/Wimereux Square vicinity), Herne Bay rail station gateway, and east–west coastal destinations including Hampton, Tankerton/Whitstable and Reculver

Description: Develop a coastal cycle hire offer that connects the seafront with the town centre and supports wider coastal journeys to and from Herne Bay. The project should be progressed as a concession-based or operator-led offer with a focus on convenient hire and return points at locations that help animate redundant or underused spaces and draw people from the coast into the commercial heart of the town. In Herne Bay, this means prioritising a town-centre presence alongside any seafront location, rather than treating cycle hire purely as a promenade-based activity. The offer should complement, rather than duplicate, existing public bike-share provision by focusing on a family-friendly and visitor-facing service, with a range of cycles suitable for different ages and abilities. The project should support linked trips between the seafront, high street and station, improve the town's active travel and visitor offer, and align with the wider strategy objective of creating clearer, more attractive and more sustainable connections across Herne Bay.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Weave a green thread through the town
- Link the high street to high tide
- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: Appointed cycle hire operator; Canterbury City Council town centre regeneration, seafront and property teams; Kent County Council Highways where highway or route interfaces are involved; Network Rail and station stakeholders if a rail gateway location is pursued; landowners or host sites for hire and storage locations; community safety partners where hub security and anti-social behaviour risks need to be addressed; tourism and marketing partners; local cycle groups and accessibility groups; maintenance and charging suppliers where e-bikes form part of the offer

Project stage: Scoping/operator and location development

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for feasibility, operator engagement and pilot set-up; medium term for expansion or multi-site rollout

Target start date: 2027/28 for site identification, operator engagement and concession development

Target end date: 2027/28 for initial pilot or first phase operation and review

What will change?

Outputs:

- A feasibility and operator engagement exercise to confirm the preferred operating model, service type and delivery route, including how the offer complements existing bike-share provision rather than duplicating it.
- Identification of preferred Herne Bay locations for hire, return and storage, with priority given to

sites that strengthen links between the seafront and town centre and support footfall into the high street.

- A concession or operating brief setting out service expectations, including customer management, maintenance, seasonal staffing, safety guidance and any requirements for family-friendly or accessible cycle types.
- An initial pilot or first phase of operation with clearly signed pick-up and drop-off points and simple supporting wayfinding linking the seafront, town centre and key routes.
- A review of operational performance, demand and location effectiveness to inform whether the network should be expanded or refined.
- Market engagement and procurement/concession process to appoint a cycle hire operator (including service specification, pricing principles, data sharing and maintenance standards).
- Network plan identifying priority hub/dock locations and required enabling works (signage, lining, small areas of surfacing, power/charging feasibility for e-bikes).
- Pilot network of hubs/docks launched (e.g., three to six locations) linking town centre, seafront and rail station, with seasonal extension as demand proves.
- Fleet deployed (mix of standard bikes and e-bikes; optional cargo/child-seat compatible options subject to operator offer).
- Wayfinding and user information installed (simple maps, safety guidance, "how to hire", links to coastal routes and destinations).
- Operating plan agreed for rebalancing/collection, repairs, battery management (if e-bikes), and incident reporting.

Outcomes:

- Improved active travel and leisure access between the seafront, town centre and rail station, helping people move through Herne Bay more easily without relying on short car trips.
- Stronger linked trips from the coast into the high street, supporting footfall, dwell time and spend in the town centre.
- A more distinctive and family-friendly visitor offer that broadens the appeal of cycling along the coast and complements the town's tourism and leisure economy.
- Better integration between coastal routes and town-centre destinations, helping Herne Bay function as a more connected and coherent place.
- A practical test of demand for a longer-term coastal cycle hire model that could be expanded across the wider coast if successful.
- More journeys made by sustainable transport for short and leisure trips (town centre–seafront–station and coastal visiting).
- Improved visitor experience and dwell time through easier, enjoyable access to coastal destinations without a car.
- Health and wellbeing benefits from increased everyday cycling and e-bike use (supporting older people and less confident cyclists).
- Support for the town centre economy through increased footfall and linked trips from seafront and station into Mortimer Street/Wimereux Square.
- Reduced pressure on car parking and congestion in peak seasons by providing an alternative for visitors and residents.

Mechanism of change: Locating cycle hire only at the coast risks reinforcing the separation between the seafront and the commercial core. By positioning the service around both coastal and town-centre locations, the project can turn cycling into a practical link between destinations rather than a stand-alone seafront activity. A family-friendly and visitor-facing offer, supported by clear guidance and well-chosen sites, should encourage more people to explore the town by bike, increase linked trips into the centre, and make active travel a more visible and attractive part of Herne Bay's overall offer.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; families; young people; older people; less confident cyclists; disabled people where accessible cycles or adapted options can be accommodated

How we will know it has worked:

- A viable operator model and suitable Herne Bay locations are secured for pilot delivery.
- Usage and customer feedback show the service is supporting trips between the seafront and town centre as well as wider coastal journeys.
- Local businesses and stakeholders report that the offer improves town-centre connections, visibility and visitor experience.
- Usage levels: number of hires/unique users and repeat usage across the pilot season (baseline month vs peak months).
- Mode shift proxy: user surveys indicate journeys that would otherwise have been made by car/bus/walk.
- Place impact: qualitative feedback from town centre and seafront businesses indicates improved linked trips and dwell time.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on suitable locations that strengthen movement between the coast and the town centre and are practical in operational and landownership terms.
- Appointment of an operator able to provide a service that complements existing bike-share provision and offers the right mix of cycles for residents and visitors.
- Operator confidence that routes, host sites and customer management arrangements are safe and workable.
- Any necessary agreements for storage, display, charging or handover space at preferred locations.
- Joined-up wayfinding and communications so the service is clearly linked to wider town-centre and coastal destinations.
- Agreement on hub locations and landowner permissions (including station/seafront sites).
- Procurement of a suitable operator with a robust maintenance/rebalancing model and appropriate insurance.
- Highways approvals where hubs/docks sit on the highway, plus any required TROs for parking/kerbside changes.
- Feasibility of power/charging where e-bikes are included (or viable battery swap logistics).
- Alignment with existing/proposed cycle routes and wayfinding so the user journey feels safe and legible.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner or host-site agreement; concession or lease arrangements where council land or buildings are involved; highways approvals where public highway space or route interfaces are affected; any operational or safety approvals needed for storage, display or charging arrangements

Key risks/issues:

- If locations are chosen purely for coastal visibility, the project may fail to support the stronger seafront-to-town-centre links sought by the strategy.
- An offer that overlaps too closely with existing public bike-share provision may struggle to establish a clear role or market position.
- Unsuitable storage, display or security arrangements could limit viability or create management issues at host sites.
- Poorly managed shared-path use or unclear safety messaging could affect user experience and local support.
- Seasonality and variable demand may affect commercial viability unless the model is proportionate and well targeted.
- Vandalism/theft risk at hubs if locations are poorly chosen or lack passive surveillance.
- Reputational risk if bikes are poorly maintained or hubs become cluttered/untidy.

- Seasonality risk: demand may be highly seasonal; commercial model must reflect winter operations.
- Safety perception risk if routes feel fragmented; must be paired with legible wayfinding and alignment to improved cycling corridors.
- Equity risk if pricing is unaffordable for some users; concession should consider discounts/low-cost options where feasible.

Support needed to progress: Officer support to identify and test preferred locations; concession and property input to shape a viable operating model; coordination with highways, seafront and regeneration teams; and a joined-up approach to wayfinding and promotion so the service supports wider town-centre objectives

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage and dependent on operator model, hub format, storage requirements and any enabling works

Likely funding route: Mixed, with operator investment and earned income alongside any council enabling support needed for locations, permissions or small-scale infrastructure

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Operator interest and potential sites have been explored at a preliminary level, but no confirmed delivery package is yet in place

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- The town centre strategy emphasises increasing sustainable travel and improving walking/cycling connectivity along the coast and through the town, including links between key destinations.
- The place-based assessment notes cycling is underdeveloped beyond coastal routes and identifies the value of interventions that encourage active travel and strengthen connections.
- Herne Bay's visitor economy relies heavily on day trips; a simple, visible cycle-hire offer can help visitors explore further, extend dwell time and diversify the town's offer.

The wider strategy context supports cycle hire as part of a stronger active travel and visitor offer, but also makes clear that Herne Bay's priority is to improve links between the seafront, shopping streets, station and wider destinations. The opportunity is therefore strongest where cycle hire helps animate underused spaces, supports movement into the town centre, and complements rather than competes with other bike-share provision. Early external operator interest also points to demand for a family-oriented and flexible cycle hire model that could serve both residents and visitors if the right locations and operating arrangements can be secured.

2.4 Cycle path redirection

Lead organisation: Kent County Council (Highways Authority), with Canterbury City Council (place-making and coordination)

Main contact: KCC Highways Active Travel/Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Memorial Park and its town-centre connections (including key desire lines to Mortimer Street/Wimereux Square and onward links to the seafront)

Description: Improve the way the existing cycle route brings people into the town centre by redirecting and

clarifying the preferred cycling line through/along Memorial Park so that it connects more intuitively with Mortimer Street (and the retail core) rather than dispersing cyclists onto less legible routes. The project focuses on low-to-medium cost measures that make the active travel journey feel safer, calmer and more welcoming for all users: reviewing the current alignment, smoothing conflict points with pedestrians, improving junction/exit points from the park, and installing clear wayfinding and surface markings that signpost the town centre as the natural destination. This supports the strategy ambition to weave a green thread through the town and to strengthen inclusive, enjoyable movement between green spaces, the high street and the seafront. It also complements the wider active travel context in Herne Bay, including the station-to-seafront active travel scheme and the need to make town-centre routes legible for visitors and residents.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Weave a green thread through the town
- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Highways (route design approvals and implementation on adopted highway where applicable); Canterbury City Council (Memorial Park interfaces, place-making coordination, communications); local cycling and walking groups; accessibility groups (inclusive route audit); schools and youth settings (where routes are used for everyday travel); Kent Police/community safety partners (where conflict/ASB concerns intersect with route comfort); maintenance teams (parks and highways); wayfinding/design supplier(s)

Project stage: Idea/scoping (route audit and options to be confirmed)

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29 (route audit, stakeholder engagement and concept plan)

Target end date: 2029/30 (preferred route implemented and signed; post-implementation review completed)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A short route audit and 'desire line' assessment identifying: current cycling alignment(s), pedestrian conflict points, sightlines/lighting issues, surfacing pinch points, and priority entry/exit points between Memorial Park and the town centre.
- An options plan for cycle path redirection (including any required minor re-alignment, markings, crossing points and junction improvements), with an accessibility check to ensure step-free inclusive movement is protected.
- A clear wayfinding and legibility package: consistent signage, surface markings, and mapping to direct cyclists towards Mortimer Street/the retail core and onward links to the seafront.
- Targeted measures to reduce pedestrian/cycle conflict (e.g., clearer segregation cues where appropriate, 'slow' features, and better priority/visibility at key crossing points), designed in line with inclusive access requirements.
- Post-implementation review (light-touch) capturing user feedback, observed behaviour at key conflict points, and any snagging/adjustments required.

Outcomes:

- A more intuitive and welcoming cycle connection into the town centre, encouraging more people to arrive by bike and make linked trips to Mortimer Street and nearby destinations.
- Improved safety and comfort for cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users through clearer layouts and reduced conflict at key points.
- A stronger "green corridor" experience that connects Memorial Park to the high street and seafront, supporting healthier everyday movement and visitor exploration.

- Incremental uplift in town centre footfall and dwell time from easier, legible arrival routes and improved perceptions of connectivity.

Mechanism of change: By removing ambiguity about where cyclists should go, and by improving the 'last 500 metres' connections from Memorial Park into the retail core, the route becomes easier and safer to use for everyday trips and visitor journeys. Clearer wayfinding and better-managed crossing/exit points reduce conflict and increase confidence, leading to more people choosing to cycle and to make linked trips into the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked:

- Route legibility: signage/markings installed and maintained, with fewer observed "wrong turns" or cyclists using unsuitable informal lines (spot checks).
- Safety/comfort: user feedback (quick survey/ QR) indicates improved confidence and reduced conflict points for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Movement: simple before/after counts (or proxy observations) show increased cycling movements between Memorial Park and the town centre at representative times.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the preferred alignment and treatment of any shared-use sections (balancing cycling desire lines with pedestrian comfort in the park setting).
- Clarification of land/asset ownership and maintenance responsibilities across the route (parks estate vs adopted highway interfaces).
- Inclusive access audit sign-off to ensure step-free routes, adequate widths, and safe crossing arrangements.
- Coordination with any related town-centre movement projects (e.g., wayfinding, public realm changes) so signage and routing are consistent.
- Revenue capacity for ongoing maintenance (signage cleaning, line refresh, vegetation management) so legibility does not degrade.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals (KCC) for any changes on adopted highway; landowner/freeholder agreement for works within Memorial Park; traffic orders only if any changes affect traffic restrictions/roadspace beyond minor signage/ markings; other consents to be confirmed through scoping (e.g., lighting columns/signage in sensitive locations)

Key risks/issues:

- Conflict risk: if shared-use sections are not designed and communicated well, pedestrian/ cycle tension may increase (particularly at busy times).
- Perception risk: if wayfinding is inconsistent with other town-centre signage or feels "bolted on", users may ignore it and benefits will be limited.
- Maintenance risk: faded markings, overgrown edges or damaged signs quickly reduce legibility and undermine confidence.
- Scope creep risk: trying to solve wider network gaps within this project could delay delivery—priority should remain on clear, deliverable 'last-mile' improvements.

Support needed to progress: A short, commissioned route audit and concept design (including inclusive access input); convening with CCC (parks/public realm) and local stakeholders to agree preferred alignment and signage approach; modest implementation budget for signage, lining and minor physical measures; and a light-touch monitoring plan to evaluate impact and inform any follow-on changes.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium, depending on extent of physical changes beyond signage/markings)

Likely funding route: Mixed (KCC Highways/active travel budgets and/or external active travel funding; potential CCC enabling contribution for park/public realm interfaces)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed (to be explored through scoping and alignment with wider active travel and wayfinding workstreams)

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong strategic fit and deliverable 'last-mile' focus; benefits depend on design quality and maintenance follow-through)

Evidence/sources:

- Herne Bay Town Centre Strategy (2026–2043) emphasises improving walking and cycling connections and making movement through the town enjoyable, accessible and inclusive, supporting the case for clearer, better-connected routes into the retail core.
- Kent County Council's delivered station-to-seafront active travel scheme highlights the importance of legible, safe connections between gateways (including the station) and Central Parade/town centre destinations, reinforcing the need to optimise onward routes such as Memorial Park links.
- Place-based evidence in the strategy narrative highlights the value of practical, visible improvements that support healthier everyday travel choices and strengthen connections between green space and the town centre economy.

2.5 Beacon Hill SuDS

Lead organisation: Kent County Council and Southern Water, with Canterbury City Council as local planning, place-making and coordination partner

Main contact: KCC Highways/Southern Water SuDS

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Beacon Hill and its surrounding public realm, highway edges and green verges, including the route down towards the seafront and nearby residential and pedestrian areas

Description:

A Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) project for Beacon Hill that combines surface water management with landscape and public realm improvements. The scheme would use planted drainage features such as rain gardens, swales, tree pits and other SuDS elements to slow, store and filter runoff in a visible and attractive way, rather than relying only on conventional piped drainage. The aim is to reduce pressure on the drainage network, improve resilience to heavy rainfall and surface water issues, and create a greener and more attractive gateway route between the upper part of town and the seafront. The project also has the potential to improve the look and feel of Beacon Hill through coordinated planting, better street edges and a more integrated relationship between drainage, movement and townscape. As well as addressing infrastructure issues, the scheme would

help support Herne Bay's wider ambition to weave a greener, healthier and more climate-resilient public realm through the town.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Weave a green thread through the town
- Link the high street to high tide
- Picture the postcard
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: Southern Water; Canterbury City Council; landscape and drainage designers; utilities providers; local residents and businesses; accessibility groups; public realm and maintenance teams; environmental and biodiversity advisers as required

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Short to medium term, depending on design development, approvals and funding

Target start date: 2026/27 for scoping, concept development and feasibility

Target end date: 2027/28 for agreed design, approvals and first phase delivery if feasible

What will change?

Outputs:

- A concept and feasibility package for SuDS interventions along Beacon Hill, informed by drainage needs, highway constraints and public realm opportunities.
- A coordinated landscape and drainage design showing how features such as rain gardens, swales, tree planting and green edges could be integrated into the street environment.
- Identification of preferred locations for visible SuDS features and any associated highway, footway or verge changes.
- A delivery plan covering phasing, approvals, utilities constraints, maintenance responsibilities and indicative costs.
- If progressed, installation of first-phase SuDS and greening interventions along Beacon Hill.

Outcomes:

- Surface water is managed more effectively on Beacon Hill, helping reduce pressure on the drainage network during heavy rainfall.
- Beacon Hill becomes a greener, more attractive and better-designed route between the town and seafront.
- The public realm feels more resilient, cared for and environmentally responsive.
- Biodiversity, visual quality and climate resilience are improved through planting and greener street infrastructure.
- The project demonstrates how drainage infrastructure can also contribute to placemaking, not just engineering performance.

Mechanism of change: Traditional drainage infrastructure often remains hidden and does little to improve the quality of place. By using visible SuDS features that store, slow and filter rainwater within the landscape, Beacon Hill can become both more flood-resilient and more attractive. If designed well, the scheme would reduce runoff problems while also improving townscape, biodiversity and the experience of moving through this part of Herne Bay.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; pedestrians; nearby businesses; disabled people; older people; low-income households; people using routes between the town and seafront

How we will know it has worked:

- Feasibility work confirms a viable SuDS scheme can be delivered on Beacon Hill.
- Post-delivery monitoring shows improved surface water management and functioning drainage features.
- User and stakeholder feedback indicates improved perceptions of Beacon Hill's appearance and environment.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Detailed feasibility and drainage assessment to confirm the scale and type of intervention suitable for Beacon Hill.
- Agreement between KCC, Southern Water and CCC on scope, ownership, approvals and maintenance responsibilities.
- Utilities and underground services checks to understand constraints on planting and SuDS features.
- Careful design to ensure accessibility, pedestrian movement, road safety and maintenance needs are all properly addressed.
- Capital funding and delivery resource for what may be a relatively bespoke public realm and drainage scheme.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; drainage and utilities approvals; landowner agreements where relevant; planning or other consents if public realm changes go beyond routine highway works; other permissions to be confirmed through feasibility

Key risks/issues:

- Highway and underground utility constraints may limit where SuDS features can be located or reduce the scale of intervention possible.
- Without a clear maintenance plan, planted drainage features could become unattractive or underperform over time.
- Poorly integrated design could create conflicts with access, parking, pedestrian movement or visibility.
- Capital costs may be higher than expected if significant engineering or highway alterations are needed.
- The concept image may raise expectations that need to be tested carefully against technical and budget realities.

Support needed to progress: Feasibility and concept design resource; drainage and highways input; coordination between partner organisations; maintenance planning; funding identification; engagement with local stakeholders

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage

Likely funding route: Mixed – potential combination of water/drainage investment, highways/public realm funding and external environmental or climate resilience funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- The concept image indicates clear potential for Beacon Hill to accommodate visible SuDS features that combine drainage, planting and public realm improvement.
- The Herne Bay strategy supports greener infrastructure, healthier streets and stronger links between the town and seafront.
- SuDS approaches are widely used to reduce runoff, improve resilience and create place-based environmental benefits when integrated into street design.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

3 Link the high street to high tide

Creating a more walkable and connected town centre by improving routes between the seafront, high streets and key destinations. Movement through Herne Bay should be enjoyable, accessible and inclusive

3.1 People movement strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with Kent County Council Highways on movement, traffic management and public realm changes

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate with KCC Highways public realm and traffic management contacts as required

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Mortimer Street, High Street, William Street, Wimereux Square, Market Street and key north-south links between the town centre and seafront, including routes towards Central Parade and the pier

Description: A public realm and movement strategy for Herne Bay town centre that defines a clearer hierarchy of streets and aligns investment, management and activation with how different streets should function. The project would position Mortimer Street as the town's main destination street for independent retail, cafés, markets and longer dwell time, while recognising the High Street's complementary role as the primary location for essential services, anchor uses and day-to-day convenience. It would also strengthen William Street and other north-south routes as the key connectors between the high streets and the seafront. The project would bring together public realm improvements, lighting and seasonal dressing, coordinated signage and wayfinding, traffic and access review, and a framework for managing vacancies and events so the town centre feels more legible, distinctive and commercially resilient.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; local traders and property owners on Mortimer Street and the High Street; market operators; accessibility groups; Visit Canterbury/tourism partners; community safety partners; local cultural organisations; utilities providers where infrastructure changes are required

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for an agreed hierarchy strategy, pilot measures and first phase delivery

What will change?

Outputs:

- A town-centre hierarchy of streets framework and action plan.
- Agreed role statements for Mortimer Street, High Street and William Street.
- Public realm and access audit covering surfacing, seating, clutter, crossings, servicing, disabled access and dwell space.
- Coordinated signage and wayfinding package linking the station, seafront, Mortimer Street and High Street.
- Options for seasonal dressing and identity features such as banners, lighting or street decoration.
- Review of traffic flow, loading, parking and access arrangements on surrounding streets.
- Phased delivery plan for quick wins and longer-term capital works.

Outcomes:

- Mortimer Street gains a stronger identity as Herne Bay's destination street for independent retail, cafés and markets.
- The High Street is better understood and supported as the town centre's essential services corridor.
- The link between the town centre and seafront becomes clearer and more attractive, especially via William Street.
- Visitors and residents find it easier to navigate between key destinations.
- Town-centre dwell time and linked trips increase.
- Public investment and business decisions are guided by a clearer and more place-specific spatial strategy.

Mechanism of change: Herne Bay's town centre currently has the unusual challenge of two parallel high streets with overlapping but different roles, which can dilute footfall and weaken legibility. By clearly distinguishing Mortimer Street as the higher-dwell, independent and market-led destination, and the High Street as the more service-led and convenience-focused street, the project gives businesses, visitors and public agencies a clearer framework for investment and management. Strengthening north-south links and improving signage, public realm and access between these streets and the seafront should increase linked trips, reduce confusion and help the whole centre function more coherently.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; market operators; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked: A hierarchy of streets plan is agreed and used to guide projects and decisions; user feedback shows the town centre is easier to understand and navigate; more activity and dwell time is observed on Mortimer Street and along key connector routes such as William Street; traders report improved visibility of each street's role and better linked footfall between the seafront and shopping streets.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement between CCC, KCC and local stakeholders on the intended role of each street.
- Completion of movement and public realm audits.
- Engagement with traders, property owners and market operators.
- Alignment with any future wayfinding, greening and public realm projects.
- Identification of realistic quick wins alongside longer-term changes to access, loading, parking or traffic arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals and any traffic regulation changes; planning permission where public realm structures, signage or lighting require it; conservation area considerations; landowner agreements where works affect private frontages or third-party buildings; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Lack of consensus about the role of different streets could delay progress.
- Public realm changes may raise competing demands around parking, loading or vehicle access.
- Without phased delivery, the strategy could remain too abstract to change perceptions.
- If Mortimer Street and the High Street are treated as interchangeable, vacancy and footfall challenges may continue to be spread too thinly across the centre.

Support needed to progress: A short commissioned movement and public realm study; trader and stakeholder engagement; urban design and wayfinding support; KCC Highways input on access and traffic options; officer capacity to turn the hierarchy into a practical phased action plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low cost for strategy and quick wins, with medium-to-high capital requirements if significant public realm or traffic changes follow)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council capital and revenue for strategy and enabling work, KCC Highways funding where movement changes are involved, and future external funding or phased public realm investment for implementation

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; project rationale is strongly supported by existing strategy and evidence work

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources: The Herne Bay town centre strategy states that Mortimer Street functions as the more attractive location for café culture and independent retail and should be prioritised, while the High Street plays a complementary role with a stronger presence of financial and essential/specialist services. The strategy and place-based assessment both identify the challenge of two parallel high streets, increasing vacancy, and the need to improve connectivity between Mortimer Street, the High Street and the seafront, especially via William Street. The place-based assessment and draft Local Plan context also emphasise the need for better movement, public realm, wayfinding and stronger north-south links between the shopping area, seafront and wider town centre.

3.2 Community art trail

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with local cultural partners and a nominated charity or trail delivery partner

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Mortimer Street, High Street, William Street, Wimereux Square, Memorial Park approaches, Central Parade, the seafront promenade and other key walking routes linking the town centre, seafront and civic/cultural destinations

Description: A town-wide community art trail using temporary or semi-permanent artworks, decorated sculptures, artist-designed installations or display points to create a linked cultural route through Herne Bay. The trail would encourage people to move between the high street, seafront and key public spaces while celebrating local identity, creativity and community stories. A charity-linked model could be used, with sponsorship, donations, auctioning of artworks or related fundraising helping raise money for local causes. The project would combine public art with wayfinding and town-centre animation, giving residents and visitors more reasons to explore the whole centre rather than just single destinations. It would also provide opportunities for schools, community groups and local artists to participate directly in making and curating the trail.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local charity partner(s); arts and cultural organisations; schools and colleges; local artists and makers; business sponsors; traders and property owners hosting trail locations; Visit Canterbury/tourism partners; community groups; accessibility advisors; any specialist public art trail delivery organisation if appointed

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2028/29 for first trail delivery, evaluation and decision on future editions

What will change?

Outputs:

- A concept and route plan for a Herne Bay community art trail.
- Selection of trail locations and host sites across the town centre and seafront.
- Artist, school and community participation programme.
- Commissioned or decorated artworks/installations designed for public display.
- Sponsorship and charity fundraising package.
- Trail branding, map and simple wayfinding materials.
- Launch, promotion and accompanying events or workshops.
- Evaluation of footfall, participation and fundraising outcomes.

Outcomes:

- More people move between Herne Bay's seafront, high streets and public spaces, increasing linked trips and dwell time.
- The town centre feels more animated, creative and distinctive.
- Local pride and participation are strengthened through visible community-led cultural activity.
- Local charities or community causes benefit from fundraising and sponsorship.
- The trail supports a more positive visitor experience and helps tell a stronger story about Herne Bay as a creative coastal town.

Mechanism of change: A trail works by giving people multiple reasons to move through the town rather than staying in one place. If artworks are positioned along key routes between the seafront, shopping streets and civic spaces, they can improve legibility, create moments of interest and encourage exploration. When combined with community participation, sponsorship and charity fundraising, the trail can deliver both cultural and social value while helping support local businesses through additional footfall and dwell time.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; low-income households; community groups; local charities; local artists and makers

How we will know it has worked: Trail participation and attendance levels are strong; user feedback shows people visited more of the town because of the trail; local businesses report increased footfall or dwell time during the trail period; schools, artists and community groups are visibly involved; fundraising targets for local charities or community causes are met or exceeded.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the trail model and whether it is temporary, seasonal or recurring.
- Identification of a lead charity or delivery partner if fundraising is a core objective.
- Sponsorship and host site commitments.
- Artist and community participation.
- Permissions for artworks in public and private locations.
- A practical maintenance and removal plan for any outdoor installations.

- Alignment with wider events, wayfinding and town-centre programming.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner agreements for host sites; planning or advertisement consent where required for public displays or structures; highways/public realm approvals for installations in public space; licenses for any launch events or associated activities; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Without a strong route and curation approach, the trail could feel fragmented and fail to change movement patterns.
- Outdoor artworks may be vulnerable to weathering, vandalism or maintenance issues.
- Sponsorship or charity income may be lower than hoped if the project scale is too ambitious.
- If community participation is weak, the trail may feel imposed rather than locally rooted.
- Accessibility needs must be considered so the trail is easy to follow and enjoy.

Support needed to progress: A short scoping and curation exercise; route planning and host-site engagement; sponsorship and fundraising support; artist and community engagement capacity; design support for branding and trail materials; officer coordination to link the trail to wider town-centre programming and promotion.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium for a first trail if based on temporary installations and sponsorship; higher if bespoke durable artworks or major commissions are included)

Likely funding route: Mixed - sponsorship, charity partnership funding, council enabling support, grants for culture or community participation, and in-kind contributions from partners and host venues

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; the project could be well suited to sponsor-led delivery and charitable fundraising if a clear local partner and trail concept are established

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources: The Herne Bay town centre strategy places strong emphasis on linking the high street to high tide, animating the town centre, deepening cultural and community programmes, and improving movement between key destinations. It also highlights the popularity of events, community pride and the value of a stronger town narrative and destination identity. The place-based assessment identifies relatively strong cultural infrastructure, the need for better connectivity between the seafront and shopping streets, and the importance of building on local heritage, public spaces and community assets to improve perceptions and attract people through the town centre.

3.3 Wayfinding strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with Kent County Council Highways and town centre stakeholders on a phased wayfinding review and enhancement programme

Main contact: Place Directorate with KCC Highways signage and streetworks contacts as required

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): The seafront, Central Parade, the pier approaches, William Street, Mortimer Street, High Street, Wimereux Square, Memorial Park connections, Herne Bay rail station approaches and other key gateway points into the town centre

Description: A review and second-phase enhancement of Herne Bay's wayfinding system so it does more than replace older fingerposts with a cleaner visual standard. The project would assess how the recently installed signs are performing in practice and refine the wider wayfinding strategy so it better supports one of the town's main objectives: drawing people from the seafront into the retail and hospitality areas around William Street, Mortimer Street and the High Street. This would include reviewing wording, destinations, hierarchy, sightlines, street clutter and the overall user journey from busy seafront locations and key gateways. It should explore whether generic destinations such as "Town Centre" need to be complemented by more specific references to shops, restaurants, markets, Mortimer Street, High Street and other attractions, alongside maps or interpretive elements where useful. The aim is to create a clearer, more purposeful system that improves movement, linked trips and dwell time across the whole centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways; local traders and hospitality businesses; Visit Canterbury/tourism partners; accessibility groups; town centre market operators; station stakeholders; seafront businesses; local property owners; design and wayfinding consultants where specialist input is required

Project stage: Idea/review/scoping

Timescale: Short term (phase 1 - wayfinding delivery); Medium term (phase 2 - continual review and strategy)

Target start date: 2026 (phase 1); 2028 (phase 2)

Target end date: 2029 for review completion, agreed revisions and first round of updated signs/interpretive measures

What will change?

Outputs:

- A Herne Bay wayfinding review and action plan.
- Audit of existing fingerposts, map boards and directional signage, including user journeys from the seafront and station.
- Revised destination hierarchy and wording guidance.
- Identification of quick-win changes to existing sign content and locations.
- Recommendations for more specific signposting to retail, hospitality and key streets such as William Street, Mortimer Street and High Street.
- Options for complementary map-based or interpretive wayfinding at major arrival points.

- Phased implementation plan aligned to wider public realm and movement projects.

Outcomes:

- Visitors arriving at the seafront, station and other gateways are more clearly directed into the shopping and hospitality parts of the town.
- The route between coastal attractions and the high streets becomes easier to understand and more inviting.
- More linked trips are made from the seafront into William Street, Mortimer Street and the High Street.
- Businesses benefit from improved visibility and footfall.
- The town centre feels more legible, coordinated and commercially connected rather than split between separate destinations.

Mechanism of change: Wayfinding shapes how people understand a place and whether they continue walking beyond the first attraction they encounter. If signs from the seafront mainly direct people only to generic destinations such as "Town Centre", they may not provide enough motivation or clarity to draw visitors towards shops, restaurants and key streets. By refining wording, destinations and placement so the system reflects how Herne Bay actually works, the project can make movement more intuitive, support linked trips and improve the relationship between the seafront and the commercial core.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; hospitality businesses; market operators; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked: User testing and stakeholder feedback show that key destinations are easier to find; more visitors report moving from the seafront into shopping and hospitality streets; traders and hospitality businesses observe stronger linked footfall from seafront periods of high visitor activity; revised signage and supporting wayfinding elements are delivered and used consistently across the town centre.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Review of existing recently installed signage and agreement on what can be changed or supplemented.
- Stakeholder engagement with traders, hospitality businesses and accessibility groups.
- Coordination with kcc highways and any existing sign standards.
- On-site user testing from key arrival points such as the seafront and station.
- Alignment with wider hierarchy of streets, public realm and town-centre branding work.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals for sign changes in the public realm; landowner agreement where signs or maps are placed on third-party land; planning or advertisement consent where required for larger signage or map boards; conservation area considerations; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- The project could focus too narrowly on sign replacement rather than user experience and destination clarity.
- Excessive generic wording may continue to limit its impact on footfall.
- Too many added destinations could create clutter or confusion if hierarchy is not handled well.
- Recent investment in new fingerposts may make revisions feel sensitive unless they are clearly justified as a refinement rather than a criticism.
- Without evidence from real user behaviour, the strategy may not address actual movement patterns.

Support needed to progress: A short wayfinding and user-journey study; on-street testing and business engagement; design support to refine wording and destination hierarchy; coordination with KCC on signage standards and approvals; officer capacity to translate findings into a phased implementation plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium for review and quick-win sign changes; higher if additional map boards, interpretation or broader public realm integration is included)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council public realm/ revenue support for review and refinement, KCC Highways contributions where sign changes fall within highway assets, and future capital or external place-based funding for wider rollout

Any funding or in-kind support already identified:

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources: The Herne Bay town centre strategy and place-based assessment both identify the need to improve connectivity between the seafront, Mortimer Street, the High Street and key north-south routes such as William Street. The strategy specifically states that connectivity between Mortimer Street, High Street and the seafront must be improved and that signage and wayfinding across the town centre needs improving. Recent local business feedback on the newly installed fingerposts suggests that while they are a visual improvement, they may not yet do enough to direct people from the seafront towards shops, restaurants and the main retail and hospitality streets, relying too heavily on the generic wording "Town Centre". This project responds to that evidence by treating the current signs as a useful first phase, but not the final answer.

3.4 Visual connection banners and lighting

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with local community groups, traders, property owners and seafront partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Initial pilot on Bank Street, specifically the section running from the junction with the High Street to the junction with Mortimer Street; future phases across key streets and spaces linking the seafront, William Street, High Street, Mortimer Street, Memorial Park approaches and the station gateway

Description: A phased town-centre and seafront visual connection project using festoon lighting and coordinated banner-style dressing to make key routes between Herne Bay's seafront, shopping streets, park and station feel more legible, welcoming and distinctive. The project begins with the funded Bank Street festoon lighting pilot, where permanent lighting is being installed between the High Street and Mortimer Street as a quick-win intervention. Subject to evaluation, the wider project would explore extending festoon lighting to selected streets and spaces where it can strengthen the public realm and evening experience. It would also introduce a complementary family of hanging banners, bunting or similar visual aids along key routes to help guide people between the seafront, High Street, Mortimer Street, Memorial Park and the station. This wider visual language would need to be shaped by place-based branding, which should inform the colours, graphics, typography and overall design approach so the resulting interventions feel coherent, recognisable and rooted in Herne Bay rather than ad hoc seasonal decoration.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town

- Picture the postcard;
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local community groups supporting the Bank Street pilot; traders and property owners on Bank Street, High Street, Mortimer Street and key connector streets; seafront businesses; Kent County Council Highways where highway approvals are needed; electrical contractors; public realm and conservation advisors; graphic design and fabrication suppliers; local sponsors or business contributors for future phases

Project stage: Pilot delivery/wider scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for the Bank Street pilot, evaluation and wider concept development; medium term for phased extension to other routes and spaces

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2027/28 for pilot completion, evaluation and agreed next phase approach

What will change?

Outputs:

- Delivery of the Bank Street festoon lighting pilot between the High Street and Mortimer Street.
- Installation and operation of year-round festoon lighting infrastructure at that location.
- Evaluation of the pilot's impact on perception, movement and footfall.
- A wider visual connection plan identifying where festoon lighting is appropriate and where banner-style dressing, bunting or similar visual aids would be more suitable.
- An agreed family of visual interventions for routes between the seafront, High Street, Mortimer Street, Memorial Park and station, informed by the place-based branding project.
- Identification of preferred phase 2 and 3 locations, delivery routes and maintenance responsibilities.

Outcomes:

- Bank Street becomes a more visible and attractive link between the High Street and Mortimer Street.
- Key routes through Herne Bay become easier to read and more memorable through a consistent visual language.
- People are more clearly encouraged to move between the seafront, shopping streets, Memorial Park and station rather than treating them as separate places.
- The town develops a stronger all-year identity and sense of welcome, particularly in the evening and shoulder seasons.
- Future public realm animation is better coordinated and less piecemeal because lighting and banner interventions are guided by an agreed place identity.

Mechanism of change: Festoon lighting and coordinated overhead visual dressing can make short but important routes feel safer, more intentional and more attractive to follow. The Bank Street pilot helps test this effect in a focused location. If extended carefully, and combined with banner-style visual cues that reinforce key desire lines between the seafront, shopping streets, park and station, the project can help people orient themselves more confidently and encourage more linked trips. Tying later phases to the place-based branding project should ensure that these interventions do not become random decoration, but instead reinforce a distinctive and coherent Herne Bay identity.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; hospitality businesses; young people; older people; low-income households; community groups

How we will know it has worked: The Bank Street pilot is installed and remains operational; local feedback indicates improved attractiveness and a stronger sense of connection between the High Street and Mortimer Street; stakeholders report that visual interventions help people move more confidently between the seafront and town-centre destinations; a clear, branding-led next phase is agreed for additional routes and spaces.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Successful installation and operation of the Bank Street pilot.
- Agreement from relevant landowners and building frontages where lighting or banner fixings are needed.
- Electrical, fabrication and maintenance arrangements for year-round use.
- Completion of project 8.2 Place-based branding so future banner, bunting and visual guidance elements have a clear design language.
- Assessment of where festoon lighting is appropriate versus where other visual interventions are more suitable.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/building owner agreements where lights or banners are attached; electrical and safety approvals; highways approvals where lighting or overhead dressing affects the public realm or highway space; conservation area considerations; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping of wider phases

Key risks/issues:

- Lighting and banner interventions could be treated as decorative add-ons rather than part of a wider movement and identity strategy.
- Maintenance, replacement and electricity costs may undermine longer-term viability if responsibilities are unclear.
- Seafront exposure, wind and salt conditions may limit where festoon lighting or lightweight banner elements are appropriate.
- Without dependency on the place-based branding project, the town could end up with inconsistent colours, graphics or visual clutter.

Support needed to progress: Monitoring and evaluation of the Bank Street pilot; officer coordination to turn the pilot into a wider phased visual connection strategy; design input linked to place-based branding; technical advice on suitable locations and specifications for both festoon lighting and banner-based interventions; stakeholder engagement with businesses, community groups and property owners; modest capital and maintenance planning for any future rollout.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown for wider rollout; Bank Street pilot delivery costs are limited because infrastructure and lighting have already been purchased/installed, with only a nominal fee required for installation

Likely funding route: Mixed - council and local community funding for the pilot, with future phases potentially supported through council public realm budgets, business contributions, sponsorship and external place-based funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: The Bank Street pilot is already being funded by Canterbury City Council and local groups, and the infrastructure and lights have already been purchased/installed for that location

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- The quick-win projects work identifies permanent festoon lighting on Bank Street as a funded pilot intended to encourage movement between the High Street and Mortimer Street and test a wider objective of linking the high street to high tide.
- The town centre strategy emphasises the need to improve connectivity between the seafront, shopping streets, Memorial Park and the station, and to create a more coherent and distinctive experience of moving through the town.
- A wider visual guidance approach will be stronger if linked to project 8.2 Place-based branding, because consistent colours, graphics and typography should improve recognition, legibility and overall place identity more effectively than isolated decorative interventions.

3.5 Land train

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, with potential operation through a specialist land train provider and/or a locally managed pilot model

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Includes seafront promenade, William Street and the Memorial Park as part of a preferred pilot route; potential later expansion into other areas (e.g. Hampton, railway station)

Description: A seasonal pilot land train service to improve east-west movement along Herne Bay seafront and test whether a low-speed visitor transport offer can help connect the town's busier and quieter areas while encouraging linked trips towards the town centre. The current preferred route is outlined above – a simple 30 minute circular journey including three stops. The pilot would test demand, pricing, operational viability and visitor response during a defined trial period in July 2026.

Following a review of the pilot, a range of options will be explored (e.g. no further action, a further extended trial, make into a permanent arrangement etc). Future projects could explore longer and different routes and could function both as a visitor attraction and as a practical transport option linking different sites.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Link the high street to high tide
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Picture the postcard
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; specialist land train hire/operator companies; Kent County Council Highways; seafront businesses and attractions; town centre businesses; tourism and marketing partners; accessibility groups; community safety partners; event and seafront operations teams; potential sponsors

Project stage: Scoping/preparation for pilot

Timescale: Short term (July 2026) for a pilot; medium term for any expanded or recurring service model

Target start date: 2026/27 (preparation from April, delivery of pilot July 2026)

Target end date: 2027 to complete review of pilot, evaluation and decision on whether to repeat, expand or redesign the service

What will change?

Outputs:

- A costed pilot proposal and preferred route option.
- Procurement or booking of a suitable land train provider.
- Agreement of operating model, trial period and fare structure.
- Pilot delivery over a defined period, likely during the school summer holidays.
- Temporary stops/turning arrangements and user information.
- Publicity and sponsorship offer if relevant.
- Monitoring of usage, costs, user feedback and operational issues.
- Evaluation comparing promenade-only and future road-based options.

Outcomes:

- More visitors move along the seafront between key attractions rather than staying only in the busiest locations.

- People with limited mobility and families with young children find it easier to access a wider stretch of the seafront.
- Linked trips towards William Street and the town centre increase.
- Herne Bay gains a distinctive seasonal attraction that strengthens the visitor experience and destination identity.
- The council and partners gain practical evidence on whether a longer-term service is financially and operationally viable.

Mechanism of change: Herne Bay's seafront is long and linear, with high visitor activity concentrated in separate areas. A land train can reduce the friction of moving between those areas, especially for people who may struggle with distance, while also acting as an attraction that encourages people to explore more of the seafront. A short pilot allows the town to test whether this type of service changes movement patterns, supports local spend and justifies a more ambitious future route linking the high street and high tide more directly.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; families with young children; older people; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked: Pilot usage levels are strong enough to evidence demand; user feedback shows the service helped people access more of the seafront and/or town centre; businesses report positive impact on footfall or linked spend; operational issues, route constraints and willingness to pay are understood well enough to inform a clear next-step decision.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Availability of a suitable land train operator for pilot.
- Agreement on the preferred pilot route and turning arrangements.
- Confirmation of whether the pilot remains promenade-only or requires road-running approvals.
- Coordination with seafront events, concessions, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Decision on funding model, including whether fares, sponsorship or subsidy are used.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Promenade and seafront operational approvals; highways approvals and potentially additional permissions/ licensing if any road-running route is pursued; operator insurance and safety certification; landowner agreements for stopping/turning points; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Hire costs are relatively high for a short pilot.
- A promenade-only route may be simpler to deliver but could be too short to feel attractive as a paid experience.
- A road-running option is more appealing in strategic terms but adds permissions, cost and operational complexity.
- The train could create conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists, events or seafront concessions if not carefully managed.
- Summer provider availability may be limited.

Support needed to progress: Officer capacity to refine route options and procure a provider; early decision-making on pilot budget and funding model; coordination with highways and seafront operations teams; sponsor engagement and fare modelling if a mixed-funding pilot is preferred; practical planning for monitoring and evaluation during the trial period.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Approximately £1,500 + VAT per day for many hire options, with indicative examples in the covering note ranging from around £995 per day to £9,850 + VAT for 6 days, and one more competitive weekly hire option of £3,795 + VAT for one week; final cost depends on route type, duration and operator

Likely funding route: UKSPF funded pilot. Funding of future service options TBC. To be supplemented by scope for sponsorship or advertising from local businesses and a user fare

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: UKSPF funding for pilot confirmed. Mixed-funding and sponsorship models have been identified as realistic options for further exploration

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources: The covering note for a Herne Bay land train pilot identifies a clear strategic case for linking dispersed areas of visitor activity along the seafront and improving access for people with limited mobility and families with young children. It concludes that a promenade-only route would be easier to implement in the short term, while a road-running route could be more attractive to paying customers but would require additional permissions and coordination. The note also sets out indicative hire costs, likely funding models and examples from other coastal towns where land trains operate successfully as both practical transport and visitor attractions.



Image: © Leanne Bracey

4 Restore and reconnect the coastal gems

Celebrating Herne Bay's heritage by restoring key assets such as the Bandstand and The King's Hall. The seafront will become a continuous, high-quality public realm; a single destination that brings people together and showcases the town's identity

4.1 The King's Hall

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - informed by town centre strategy work and current project development

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): The King's Hall, Central Parade seafront, and the immediate surrounding public realm including the approaches, foyer-facing frontage and relationship to the wider seafront corridor

Description: A major refurbishment of The King's Hall to secure the long-term future of one of Herne Bay's most important heritage and cultural assets, improve the visitor experience, and strengthen its role within the wider seafront and town centre economy. The project focuses on bringing the building up to current compliance standards, making it wind and weatherproof, repairing and refurbishing key mechanical and electrical systems, improving accessibility and circulation, upgrading toilets, acoustics and internal presentation, and improving the flexibility and commercial performance of the venue's café and bar offer. The refurbishment also aims to celebrate the sea views and heritage character of the building while ensuring the works do not preclude further future improvements. In strategic terms, the project is not only about the building itself. It responds directly to the town centre strategy objective of restoring and reconnecting Herne Bay's coastal gems, using The King's Hall as a stronger anchor for seafront activity, cultural programming, civic pride and a more coherent relationship between the seafront and the town centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Picture the postcard
- Link the high street to high tide
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Appointed architect-led design team and quantity surveyor; specialist consultants including building control, acoustics and accessibility advisers; venue operations staff and commercial operators; planning and heritage officers; community, cultural and event partners; councillors and internal project governance groups; wider seafront and town centre stakeholders whose activity and programming connect to the venue

Project stage: Design/pre-delivery, with specialist team appointed and concept design work underway

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for design, approvals, procurement, construction and reopening, with longer-term benefits extending well beyond that period

Target start date: 2026/27 for closure, intrusive works, procurement and commencement of onsite refurbishment

Target end date: 2027/28 for completion of works and reopening

What will change?

Outputs:

- Refurbished and compliant heritage venue meeting current fire, health and safety and safeguarding requirements.
- Repairs to the building envelope and key mechanical and electrical systems so the building is wind and weatherproof and core infrastructure is brought back into reliable use.
- Improved accessibility, circulation and evacuation arrangements informed by an access audit.
- Better visitor facilities including upgraded toilets, decoration and an improved acoustics strategy.

- A more flexible commercial layout to strengthen café and bar performance and support broader venue use.
- Refreshed spaces that better reveal sea views and heritage features and improve the overall quality of the visitor experience.
- A reopened seafront venue capable of supporting a stronger year-round programme of performance, community, civic and commercial activity.

Outcomes:

- The King's Hall remains an active and attractive landmark cultural venue rather than continuing to decline as a constrained and ageing seafront asset.
- The seafront gains a stronger, more resilient anchor venue that supports events, culture, social connection and town identity.
- Improved accessibility and visitor quality broaden the range of people able and willing to use the building.
- A better commercial offer and a more flexible venue improve operating sustainability and help attract more regular activity.
- Cultural and community programming for residents, visitors and young people is strengthened, helping the building contribute more clearly to social wellbeing, skills and local pride.
- The project reinforces the town centre strategy's wider aim of using heritage-led investment to improve perceptions of Herne Bay and support a more distinctive coastal destination.

Mechanism of change: The town centre strategy is clear that Herne Bay's heritage assets must do more than simply survive; they need to work harder as active parts of the town's social, cultural and economic life. The King's Hall already has strong recognition and draws audiences from across Kent, but its condition, layout and detached relationship to the wider town limit its full impact. Refurbishing the building improves the quality, accessibility and flexibility of the venue itself, making it more attractive to audiences, performers, community users and operators. In turn, a stronger and more active King's Hall supports a better seafront experience, a broader cultural offer, and a more positive narrative about Herne Bay as a place that values and reinvests in its coastal landmarks.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; community and cultural organisations; audiences using the seafront and wider town centre

How we will know it has worked:

- Refurbishment is completed and the venue reopens with improved compliance, accessibility and visitor facilities.
- Audience, user and operator feedback shows improved experience, comfort and accessibility.
- The venue supports a stronger and more varied programme of events and activity than before closure.
- Commercial performance and venue usage improve over time.
- The project contributes to improved perceptions of the seafront and strengthens The King's Hall's role as a key part of Herne Bay's cultural infrastructure.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Completion of design development, intrusive surveys, planning and procurement in line with the current programme.
- Effective coordination between project management, operational staff, specialist consultants and governance arrangements.
- Managing temporary closure arrangements, staff transition and continuity of public toilet and café provision during works.
- Heritage, planning and building control requirements being resolved in a timely way.
- Maintaining budget control and ensuring the project remains aligned with agreed scope and longer-term ambition.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning and heritage input as required; building control approval; procurement and contract approvals; operational and licensing considerations linked to reopening and future use

Key risks/issues:

- Programme delay arising from planning, procurement, specialist surveys or construction complexity.
- Cost pressure within a refurbishment of a coastal heritage asset with ageing infrastructure.
- Temporary closure impacts on staff, users, programming and seafront activity if not carefully managed.
- Risk that physical refurbishment alone will not maximise wider town benefits unless accompanied by strong programming, operations and links to broader seafront and town centre activity.
- Ongoing revenue and stewardship requirements after reopening.

Support needed to progress: Continued project management, design and specialist consultant support; timely approvals and governance; coordinated communications and transition planning; programming and operational planning for reopening so the refurbished venue is fully integrated into the wider seafront and town centre offer

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Approximately £2 million total project budget including consultant, survey and refurbishment costs

Likely funding route: Council capital funding for the current refurbishment programme, with future complementary improvements or enhancements subject to additional funding opportunities if required

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Core budget, appointed consultant team, specialist surveys and active governance arrangements are already in place

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Known condition, compliance and layout issues affecting the building, including the need for repairs to building services, functional improvements to internal spaces and upgraded accessibility.
- Existing project development work already in place, including appointed design team, specialist surveys, access audit, governance arrangements and a live programme for closure, procurement and refurbishment.
- Strong local and strategic case for reinvestment in The King's Hall as a key seafront heritage and cultural asset that can support a stronger visitor offer, wider programming and improved perceptions of Herne Bay.

4.2 The King's Hall rooftop canopy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (asset owner)

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - informed by previous King's Hall development work, the wider seafront regeneration context and town centre strategy ambitions

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): The King's Hall rooftop and upper-level access arrangements, Central Parade seafront, with direct relationship to the wider seafront public realm and the operation of The King's Hall building as a whole

Description: A follow-on project to create a new rooftop canopy and open the roof of The King's Hall for seasonal and event-led public use, building on the core refurbishment in project 4.1. The project would provide a distinctive covered rooftop space that can support eating, drinking and programmed activity while making better use of the building's seafront position and views. Earlier King's Hall development work proposed a stylish modern rooftop canopy as a landmark feature and a way of facilitating south-facing hospitality and events in summer. Within the project directory, this should now be treated as a complementary second-stage enhancement rather than part of the immediate essential refurbishment works. It would only progress once project 4.1 has secured the building's core condition, accessibility, compliance and operational stability. If delivered well, the rooftop canopy would create a highly visible additional venue space, strengthen the seafront offer, and help The King's Hall contribute more strongly to Herne Bay's year-round identity, visitor appeal and event programme.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay
- Link the high street to high tide
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; appointed architect-led design team and structural engineers; planning and conservation advisers; building control and fire safety specialists; accessibility advisers; commercial/operator partners for food, beverage and events; seafront operations and public realm teams; cultural and event partners; potential funders or sponsors for the enhancement stage

Project stage: Idea/longer-term enhancement following core refurbishment

Timescale: Medium term, following completion and embedding of project 4.1

Target start date: Post-4.1, subject to feasibility, funding and design development

Target end date: To be confirmed through subsequent feasibility and delivery planning

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and concept design work testing how the roof can be safely and viably opened for public use following project 4.1.
- Design and delivery of a rooftop canopy that provides shelter, visual identity and practical support for hospitality and event use.
- A new rooftop event and hospitality space with safe access, circulation, servicing and operational arrangements.
- Improved infrastructure to support rooftop use, such as lighting, power, access controls, furniture zones and management arrangements, subject to detailed design.

- An operating model linking rooftop use to the wider King's Hall commercial, cultural and event programme.

Outcomes:

- The King's Hall gains a distinctive additional venue space that strengthens its commercial and cultural appeal.
- The seafront offer is broadened through a new elevated space for events, hospitality and social activity.
- Herne Bay gains a more memorable and visually recognisable seafront landmark that supports destination identity.
- Dwell time and spend around The King's Hall and the wider seafront are increased through a stronger all-day and seasonal offer.
- The refurbished King's Hall is better able to support year-round programming, partnerships and revenue generation beyond the core works in project 4.1.

Mechanism of change: Project 4.1 secures the King's Hall as a functioning and improved venue; this follow-on project would then help it work harder as a seafront destination. Opening the roof with a canopy creates a new reason to visit, increases the flexibility of the building, and makes better use of one of its strongest assets: its coastal outlook. A successful rooftop space could support hospitality, special events and wider animation, helping the building contribute more strongly to footfall, spend, place identity and seafront vitality.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural and event partners; hospitality operators; young people; older people; community groups using or benefiting from a stronger King's Hall offer

How we will know it has worked: Feasibility confirms a safe and viable delivery route after project 4.1; the rooftop space is brought into use with a clear operating model; usage, bookings or event activity show that the space adds value to the wider King's Hall offer; user and stakeholder feedback indicates that the rooftop canopy improves the quality, distinctiveness and appeal of the venue and seafront.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Completion of project 4.1 so the building's core condition, compliance and access issues are resolved first.
- A dedicated feasibility and structural review to confirm rooftop loading, access, weather exposure, servicing and fire/life safety requirements.
- Planning, design and heritage agreement on the form and visibility of a new rooftop canopy in a sensitive seafront setting.
- A viable commercial and operational model for rooftop hospitality and event use.
- Identification of capital funding for what is a discretionary enhancement rather than an essential repair project.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission and design review; building control approval; fire safety, accessibility and structural sign-off; any relevant licensing or operational approvals for hospitality and event use; procurement and governance approvals

Key risks/issues:

- The project could be advanced too early, before project 4.1 has stabilised the building and clarified longer-term operational priorities.
- Structural, access or fire safety constraints may make rooftop public use more complex or costly than first assumed.
- The exposed coastal location may increase design, maintenance and weather resilience demands for any canopy and rooftop use.
- Without a strong operator and programming model, the rooftop space could underperform commercially or be used only intermittently.
- As a higher-ambition enhancement project, funding availability may be a significant constraint compared with more essential capital priorities.

Support needed to progress: Post-4.1 feasibility resource; structural, access, fire and commercial advice; design development support; funding strategy and case-making; operational planning to link the rooftop space properly to the reopened King's Hall offer

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage; likely to require a separate capital package beyond project 4.1

Likely funding route: Grant/capital/mixed funding to be explored as a later-stage enhancement project

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: The concept has previously formed part of wider King's Hall development proposals, but no standalone delivery package is currently identified in this directory entry

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Earlier King's Hall bid material proposed a stylish modern rooftop canopy to facilitate south-facing eating, drinking and summer events, showing there is an established development rationale for opening up the roof.
- The wider King's Hall concept was built around making the venue a stronger entertainment and hospitality hub, including better use of sea views, outdoor activity and destination appeal.
- The Herne Bay town centre strategy supports investment in coastal landmarks that create a high-quality seafront destination, strengthen identity and improve the town's cultural and visitor offer.

4.3 Central Bandstand refurbishment

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (asset owner)

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Central Bandstand, Central Parade seafront (within the Herne Bay Conservation Area) and the immediate public realm surrounding the bandstand

Description: A targeted programme to complete essential structural repairs and final enabling works that bring the Central Bandstand back into full use, including reopening the stage for live performance and improving the functionality of the bandstand complex for year-round activity. The project responds to long-standing structural issues affecting the seaward side/substructure and aims to restore safe, reliable access to the stage and associated spaces. Alongside repair works already delivered (roof, façade, timber and unit improvements), the final stage focuses on comprehensive substructure repairs beneath the stage so the bandstand can once again host regular live music, community events and seafront animation. The wider ambition is to operate the bandstand as a restored coastal landmark and a more active venue, supported by the incoming operator's plans to invest in the commercial units, develop an 80-seat wine bar, install a new commercial kitchen, refresh the existing café offer and improve furniture and presentation across the complex. This should help move the bandstand from a mainly seasonal seafront stop-off towards a more regular events, hospitality and leisure destination that can support activity from Easter to autumn and, over time, reduce the seasonality of the seafront offer. The project will strengthen Herne Bay's event calendar, visitor experience and civic pride.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay (social connection, accessible outdoor culture, active leisure)
- Back the Bay (supporting local enterprise and partnerships)

Delivery partners:

- Bandstand tenant/operator(s) and leaseholders, including Makcari's as incoming operator of the refurbished commercial offer
- Event and cultural partners (including local musicians, promoters and community organisations)
- Community safety partners (event operations and peak-season management)
- Conservation/heritage advisors (as required)
- Specialist consultants and contractors (structural engineer, concrete repair specialists, CDM, access)
- Town centre/public realm teams (wider seafront interfaces, cleaning, waste, lighting)
- Local businesses and sponsors (programming, stewardship and activation)

Project stage: Delivery (committed repair programme underway/final element tendered)

Timescale: Short term (pre-Apr 2028) for completion of structural repairs and return to full operation; medium term for programme growth and public realm enhancements

Target start date: 2026 (final element mobilisation subject to procurement)

Target end date: 2027 (stage reopened; full operational use restored; first full summer programme delivered)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Comprehensive substructure repairs beneath the stage/platform, including reinforcement and concrete repairs to address corrosion/blown concrete.
- Full reopening of the stage area for use (events, live music and community activity), with appropriate safety certification and inspection regime.
- Completion and handover of previously delivered fabric upgrades as part of a single "bandstand ready for use" package (roof/weathering, external timber and façade condition, signage, rainwater goods).
- Refurbished/lettable internal unit(s) with refreshed toilets and back-of-house readiness, supporting a viable food and beverage offer and improved visitor amenities.
- Updated operating and event plan for the bandstand (licensing, capacity, event-day procedures, cleaning/waste, stewarding, noise management, weather and seasonal protocols).
- A simple annual programming and bookings plan, setting out regular music and performance activity, community hire, hospitality-led events and links to wider seafront and town centre events calendar, with the aim of extending activity beyond the peak summer period where commercially and operationally viable.
- A maintenance and stewardship plan for the repaired elements (inspection cycles, cleaning, rapid response to defects), agreed between the council and operator.

Outcomes:

- The bandstand returns to full use as a safe, attractive and reliable performance, hospitality and leisure venue on the seafront.
- More frequent and higher-quality seafront activation, including live music, hospitality-led

programming and community events, improving perceptions of the seafront as lively, cared for and welcoming beyond the peak summer season.

- Increased footfall and dwell time along Central Parade, with knock-on benefits for nearby hospitality and independent businesses.
- Improved visitor experience through better amenities (toilets and refreshed unit offer) and clearer event programming.
- Stronger community pride and participation through a visible, accessible venue supporting free or low-cost cultural activity.
- Better management of seasonal pressures by providing programmed activity in a well-run environment, supporting positive use of the seafront.

Mechanism of change: By fixing the underlying structural issues that have kept the stage out of use, the bandstand can safely host performances again and become a dependable anchor for the seafront's events offer. Coupled with refreshed units/amenities, a stronger café and wine bar offer, and a clear operating plan, this enables regular programming and community hire that brings people back repeatedly across the year. Increased activity, dwell time and positive use supports local trade, improves perceptions, helps reduce the seasonality of the seafront offer and reinforces Herne Bay's coastal identity.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; community groups.

How we will know it has worked:

- Operational readiness: stage reopened and number of event days delivered per year (baseline vs post-repairs).
- Visitor experience: satisfaction feedback on cleanliness, welcome and facilities; plus attendance at programmed events.
- Place impact: footfall/dwell time uplift on Central Parade during event days and shoulder-season trading periods; business/operator proxy measures including secondary spend, bookings and repeat use.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Procurement and appointment of a suitably experienced contractor for specialist substructure/ concrete repair works.
- Weather-dependent programme management (dry conditions required for elements of repair) and clear contingency planning.
- Coordination with operator/tenant to minimise disruption to trading and maintain safe public access during works.
- Statutory compliance and sign-off (structural certification, CDM, licensing/capacity considerations) completed in time for the operating season.
- A realistic operating, maintenance and programming plan agreed so capital repairs translate into sustained activation.
- Operator investment and fit-out plans, including the proposed wine bar, kitchen and café improvements, progressing in step with council-led structural repairs and lease/operating arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Listed building/conservation area considerations (scope dependent)
- Building control/structural approvals as applicable
- Licences (events, premises, alcohol) and capacity management arrangements
- Highways/public realm consents if any temporary closures, hoardings, deliveries or event management require them
- Other statutory requirements to be confirmed through detailed method statements

Key risks/issues:

- Programme risk from weather dependency and the specialist nature of repairs, impacting completion date.
- Disruption risk to operator income and planned events if works overlap with peak season without strong phasing and communications.
- Cost risk from latent defects/extent of corrosion increasing required repairs and contract value.
- Ongoing maintenance risk if responsibilities and revenue provision are unclear after handover, leading to renewed decline.
- Reputation risk if reopening is not paired with a strong operating model (cleanliness, toilets, stewarding, quality control of events and a programme that supports the bandstand as a venue rather than only a fair-weather seasonal attraction).

Support needed to progress:

- Strong client-side project management (programme, comms, stakeholder coordination, health and safety).
- Operator coordination and a clear joint plan for trading/event continuity during works.
- Rapid resolution route for consents and compliance sign-offs (structural, licensing and conservation as required).
- Light-touch monitoring framework for the first year post-reopening (event days, attendance, resident feedback, defects log).
- Partnership development to build a sustainable programme (community groups, promoters, sponsors) beyond the first season.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: £650,000 already invested in works across the site, with the final substructure repairs expected to add a significant further amount (final figure confirmed post-tender).

Likely funding route: Council capital for repairs and enabling works, with operator investment supporting fit-out/operations and income generation (subject to lease terms).

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing operator commitment to activation and community-facing operation through the refurbished unit(s), including reported plans for significant private investment in the bandstand complex, a proposed wine bar, new kitchen, refreshed café offer and improved furniture/presentation, plus potential sponsorship/partner support for programming (to be confirmed).

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High (clear strategic fit and strong local visibility; benefits depend on timely completion and sustained operating model).

Evidence/sources:

- Strong alignment with the strategy priority to restore seafront landmarks, grow year-round events and activity, and reduce the seasonality of the visitor offer.
- Known structural condition issues have restricted use of the stage and reduced the bandstand's ability to function as a cultural anchor.
- Committed repair programme and re-letting approach provides a practical delivery route to restore full operation and unlock regular programming, alongside the operator's reported plans for substantial investment in hospitality, live music and venue activation.

4.4 Pier head stabilisation

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): The detached pier head/landing stage structure offshore from Herne Bay, and the public access point at the end of the breakwater/ seafront where interpretation would be experienced.

Description: A project to protect the remaining offshore pier head structure by stabilising key elements and slowing deterioration, while enabling people to understand and reconnect with the historic pier through on-shore interpretation. The aim is twofold: (1) carry out targeted structural and safety works that help retain the pier head's silhouette as a defining part of Herne Bay's seafront identity, and (2) create a "virtual reconnection" experience from the end of the breakwater (or other safe viewing points) that shows the original scale, route and history of the pier using augmented reality and/or interpretive content. This is a proportionate response that preserves a landmark, strengthens civic pride, and supports the visitor experience without committing to full physical reconstruction in the short term.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Picture the postcard
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town (strengthening the seafront as a destination)
- Link the high street to high tide (a clearer, more compelling seafront experience and story)
- Back the Bay (community stewardship and partnership working)

Delivery partners:

- Herne Bay Pier Trust and local heritage/community groups
- Specialist marine structural engineers and contractors
- Marine regulators and coastal management bodies as required (licensing/consents)
- Coastguard/marine safety partners (method and safety planning)
- Tourism and cultural partners (content development, marketing, programming)
- Digital/creative partner(s) for AR and interpretation design
- Accessibility groups (inclusive design of interpretation and routes)

Project stage: Scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029 (subject to feasibility, surveys, consents and procurement)

Target end date: 2030 (phase 1 stabilisation complete; interpretation/AR live; evaluation and next steps agreed)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Structural and condition surveys to confirm current condition, priority risks and feasible repair methods in a marine environment.
- Options appraisal identifying a phased stabilisation approach (what can be done safely, cost range, programme and maintenance implications).
- Phase 1 stabilisation works to retain the silhouette and reduce immediate risk of further loss (scope confirmed following surveys).
- A safe, shore-based interpretation point at the end of the breakwater (or agreed viewing locations), including durable signage and simple wayfinding from the promenade.

- A pilot augmented-reality/digital interpretation experience that overlays the former pier alignment and provides historic/contextual content (with a non-digital alternative on-site for inclusivity).
- A stewardship and maintenance plan (inspection regime, responsibilities, future funding options) so stabilisation gains are not lost.

Outcomes:

- The pier head's remaining structure is protected for longer, reducing the risk of sudden loss and preserving a defining landmark on the seafront skyline.
- Residents and visitors gain a clearer sense of Herne Bay's story and the historic scale of the pier, strengthening identity, pride and sense of place.
- Improved visitor experience and dwell time on the seafront through a distinctive, family-friendly "heritage + digital" attraction that can be enjoyed year-round.
- Stronger platform for wider seafront regeneration and events programming by adding a compelling focal story and destination narrative.
- Better evidence base and clearer pathway for any future decisions about longer-term preservation, lighting, or more ambitious interventions.

Mechanism of change: Targeted marine stabilisation slows deterioration and protects the pier head's most visible elements, preserving the landmark's presence and reducing the likelihood of abrupt structural loss. Shore-based interpretation and augmented reality allow people to "experience" the pier's historic form without unsafe access or major new construction. Together, this protects heritage value while creating a new reason to visit, linger and engage with the seafront.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; students; community groups.

How we will know it has worked:

- Structural outcome: completion of phase 1 stabilisation and a defined inspection regime, with condition monitoring showing reduced deterioration risk at priority elements.
- Engagement outcome: usage of the interpretation point/AR experience (scan counts or app sessions) and visitor satisfaction feedback on "learning the story" and overall experience.
- Place outcome: increased dwell time/footfall at the interpretation point and nearby seafront businesses during shoulder seasons (proxy measures and partner feedback).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Safe access methodology and specialist marine contractor availability (weather windows, tides, plant and marine logistics).
- Surveys and design that confirm feasible stabilisation measures within a proportionate budget and acceptable risk profile.
- Timely marine licensing/consents and agreement of responsibilities across relevant bodies.
- Coordination with seafront management (public safety, communications, temporary exclusions if needed).
- Digital partner procurement and content development (heritage narrative, AR build, accessibility and maintenance of digital assets).

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Marine licence/MMO consent (likely)
- Environmental/habitat considerations (as applicable)
- Navigation/safety approvals (as required)
- Planning/advertisement consent for on-shore interpretation elements (scope dependent)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Recently installed fingerposts provide an immediate base system to review and refine rather than starting from scratch; unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Marine environment risk: exposure, corrosion and severe weather limit workable windows and can accelerate deterioration or increase costs.
- Safety risk: offshore works and any public interface require robust method statements, temporary restrictions and clear communications.
- Cost uncertainty: latent defects and specialist marine logistics can materially change costs once surveys are complete.
- Reputational risk: expectations for full reconstruction may be raised; project narrative must be clear about a proportionate stabilisation + interpretation approach.
- Digital sustainability risk: AR/tech solutions can date quickly without an agreed maintenance/ update plan and non-digital alternatives.

Support needed to progress:

- Feasibility funding for surveys, marine engineering advice, options appraisal and consent pathway.
- Convening support to align the council, Pier Trust, regulators and coastal/marine safety bodies around a single, agreed phase 1 scope.
- Procurement support for specialist marine works and a digital/interpretation partner.
- Communications and engagement support to set expectations, gather local stories and launch the interpretation offer.
- Baseline monitoring plan (condition, usage, visitor feedback) to evidence impact and inform future phases.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed via surveys and options appraisal; likely a phased package with a modest on-shore interpretation cost and higher marine works costs).

Likely funding route: Mixed - council enabling role, external grants (heritage/coastal), partnership fundraising via the Pier Trust and sponsors, and potential in-kind support for interpretation/content development.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through feasibility and partner discussions.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong place identity and visitor-experience value; delivery depends on marine feasibility, consents and sustainable maintenance plan).

Evidence/sources:

- The seafront and coastal heritage assets are central to Herne Bay's identity and visitor experience.
- A proportionate stabilisation approach can preserve landmark value while building a stronger place narrative and year-round attraction offer.
- The project supports wider aims to strengthen events, visitor experience and pride in place through visible, high-impact coastal interventions.

4.5 Clocktower Square concession

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Clocktower Square/Clock Tower area (town centre public space), including immediate approaches and event management footprint.

Description: To adopt a positive approach to seasonal activation of the Clocktower Square. This could aim to bring a high-profile and family-friendly attraction/s to the site or comprise a programme/series of regular and appealing destination and specialist activities. These would be designed to draw people through the town centre, increase dwell time and create a visible "moment" of activity that complements markets and the wider events calendar. The project may seek to use a time-limited, commercial concession model to animate this prominent public space without requiring permanent capital build. It aims to strengthen the town's identity, improve perceptions of vibrancy, and provide a catalyst for linked trips to nearby shops, cafés, the seafront and other attractions. The concession will be procured with clear requirements on quality, safety, accessibility, community benefit and the operator's contribution to town-wide promotion.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Link the high street to high tide
- Back the Bay
- Give the next generation the space to grow (if programming includes youth-friendly activity and discounts)

Delivery partners:

- Concession operator(s)/attraction supplier
- Town centre businesses and market organisers (cross-promotion and offers)
- Event partners and community organisations (programming and outreach)
- Kent County Council Highways (if any traffic management, suspensions or roadspace interfaces are needed)
- Emergency planning/safety advisory partners as required (crowd management)
- Cleansing and waste services (event servicing and daily "hygiene" standards)
- Accessibility groups (inclusive access, queuing and information)

Project stage: Scoping options

Timescale: Short term – identify new activation opportunities aligning this with a new concessions policy. Medium term - look to procurement and a pilot season; Longer term - repeat seasons and potential expansion to a wider programme of concessions

Target start date: 2027 (procurement and mobilisation), subject to permissions and operator lead-in

Target end date: April 2028

What will change?

Outputs:

- A concession brief and procurement pack setting out the offer, quality expectations, community benefit, operating hours, inclusive access requirements, and revenue model.
- A site layout and operations plan (set-up and take-down, queuing, accessibility, safety barriers, stewarding, cleaning, waste, power, emergency access).

- A permissions and compliance package for the attraction (temporary structures, licensing, safety certification, insurance, and method statements).
- Delivery of a pilot seasonal attraction or set of activities in Clocktower Square, including event dressing and simple place making elements (e.g., lighting, seating, planters, wayfinding) where feasible.
- A linked promotion plan encouraging "town-wide" movement (offers with local businesses, market tie-ins, seafront and high street signposting, visitor comms).
- A monitoring and evaluation report covering footfall, user feedback, operational performance, complaints/issues, and recommendations for future seasons.

Outcomes:

- Increased footfall and dwell time in the town centre during the concession period, supporting local spend and high street vitality.
- Improved perceptions of the town centre as lively, welcoming and family-friendly, strengthening the town's destination narrative.
- Better distribution of visitors through the town (not just the seafront), encouraging linked trips to shops, cafés and markets.
- Positive activity in a prominent public space, with clearer management and stewardship during peak periods.
- A repeatable model for future concessions that can be scaled up or adapted seasonally and used to attract sponsorship or partnership support.

Mechanism of change: A high-profile, time-limited attraction creates a strong reason to visit and a visible focal point that increases dwell time. By designing the concession around cross-promotion and wayfinding, the attraction helps pull people along key routes and into surrounding businesses rather than concentrating activity in one spot. Clear operating standards (safety, cleaning, stewarding) ensure the uplift in activity improves experience and perceptions rather than creating unmanaged impacts.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; community groups.

How we will know it has worked:

- Footfall and dwell time uplift in and around Clocktower Square during the concession period (baseline vs delivery).
- Commercial and participation signals such as operator ticket sales/usage plus partner business feedback and take-up of linked offers.
- User and resident feedback on experience (welcome, safety, cleanliness, accessibility) and recorded complaints/issues.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- A viable concession operator secured through procurement, with an attraction that meets quality, safety and accessibility requirements.
- Confirmed site logistics (power supply, loading/unloading times, storage, and protection of nearby access routes).
- Permissions/consents and safety sign-offs secured in time for the seasonal window.
- A strong operations plan for crowd management, stewarding, cleansing and waste to protect local amenity.
- Joined-up promotion with markets, seafront activity and town centre businesses to maximise "linked trip" benefits.

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Landowner/freeholder agreement (CCC)
- Licensing (public entertainment/events; alcohol if relevant)
- Highways approvals/TTRO or suspensions (scope dependent)
- Planning permission (if required for temporary structures, duration dependent)
- Public liability insurance and independent safety certification

- Other statutory requirements to be confirmed through feasibility and operator method statements

Key risks/issues:

- Safety and crowd management risk if queuing, barriers and stewarding are not well designed or resourced.
- Local amenity risk (noise, litter, late opening) affecting residents and nearby businesses without clear conditions and enforcement.
- Weather risk impacting operations, revenue and user experience.
- Displacement risk if activity draws footfall but does not translate into town-wide spend without strong cross-promotion.
- Reputational risk if the attraction feels low quality or out of keeping with the town's character; quality bar must be clear in procurement.

Support needed to progress:

- Dedicated officer capacity to run procurement, licensing, site planning and stakeholder engagement.
- Early highways and safety advisory engagement where required, to de-risk the operating plan.
- Comms and marketing support to deliver a town-wide campaign and coordinate offers with businesses and markets.
- Simple monitoring support (footfall counts, surveys, issue log) to evidence outcomes and refine future seasons.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (operator-led capital and operating costs expected; council costs mainly procurement, officer time and any enabling works such as power/waste arrangements).

Likely funding route: Primarily concession/operator funded, with potential concession fee/revenue share to the council; small enabling costs met through existing budgets or sponsorship where available.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through market engagement and the concession procurement process.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong fit with town centre activation aims; success depends on quality of operator, management of impacts and the strength of cross-promotion to local businesses).

Evidence/sources:

- Engagement themes show demand for more events, activity and a stronger town identity, plus better use of key public spaces.
- A seasonal concession model offers a practical, low-commitment way to test what drives footfall and dwell time before committing to permanent interventions.
- High-profile activation supports wider aims to improve perceptions and encourage linked trips between the town centre, markets and seafront.

4.6 The King's Hall green space strategy

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Green/public realm space adjacent to The King's Hall on the seafront (exact boundary to be confirmed through feasibility), including the immediate approaches and links to Central Parade/promenade.

Description: A targeted public realm strategy and delivery package to improve the green space around The King's Hall so it becomes a more welcoming, safer and more purposeful place to spend time, with a particular focus on teenagers and young people. The project will introduce site-specific art, better seating and small-scale activity/play elements that are designed for older children/teens (not just small children), alongside improved comfort and everyday usability (lighting, surfacing, shelter where feasible). It will also explore adding public internet connectivity to support inclusive access to digital services and support the venue's programming. The green space improvements are intended to complement the planned King's Hall capital works by improving arrival experience, increasing dwell time, and strengthening the venue's role as a seafront anchor that is used beyond ticketed events.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Weave a green thread through the town
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners:

- King's Hall venue management and programming partners
- Young people and youth providers (co-design and activation)
- Community safety partners (designing-out conflict and managing peak-season pressures)
- Accessibility groups (inclusive design review)
- Local artists/cultural organisations (commissioning and interpretation)
- Telecoms/connectivity provider(s) (public Wi-Fi or equivalent)
- Coastal/highways partners as required (promenade interfaces, event management, lighting responsibilities)
- Local businesses and sponsors (where appropriate for stewardship and programming)

Project stage: Idea (to move into scoping via feasibility and youth co design) - initial AI generated designed shared with working group. To be further developed to incorporate community safety features.

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028 (feasibility and co-design; quick-win improvements where possible)

Target end date: 2029 (pilot delivered and evaluated; phase 2 ready with costed scope)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A site-based green space strategy and concept plan for the King's Hall setting (layout, desire lines, seating zones, activity areas, planting approach, lighting and management).
- Youth co-design programme, including workshops and on-site testing of ideas, with a clear "designed for teens" brief.
- Site-specific art commission(s) and/or interpretation elements that strengthen the identity of the King's Hall area and create a destination feel.
- New or improved seating and "hang-out" infrastructure designed for different groups (including teens), with durable materials and clear maintenance responsibilities.
- Targeted activity/play or informal recreation elements suitable for teenagers (e.g., social seating, small skill-based features, informal games markings, or low-key active elements), selected through co-design.
- Public realm upgrades to support comfort and safety:
  - improved lighting where appropriate
  - decluttering and minor surfacing repairs
  - clearer wayfinding to/from the promenade and town centre routes
  - waste/litter infrastructure and servicing plan

- Internet connectivity solution (e.g., public Wi-Fi) with an agreed provider, coverage area, safeguarding considerations and ongoing cost plan.
- A stewardship and activation plan that sets out:
  - who maintains what
  - how issues are reported and responded to
  - how the space will be programmed seasonally (in link with King's Hall and wider seafront activity)

Outcomes:

- A greener, more welcoming and better-used setting for The King's Hall that supports the venue's function as a seafront anchor.
- Young people feel more included and have a legitimate, well-designed place to spend time, reducing pressure on "move on" responses and improving perceptions of shared space.
- Increased dwell time and repeat visits around the King's Hall area, supporting local spend and making the seafront feel more active outside event nights.
- Improved perceptions of care, safety and quality in a high-visibility public space, supporting civic pride and visitor experience.
- Better functionality for events and informal gatherings through improved layout, seating, lighting and servicing.

Mechanism of change: By co-designing a youth-friendly, well-managed public space and improving the basics (seating, lighting, legibility and cleanliness), the King's Hall green space becomes a legitimate place to spend time rather than a leftover edge. Site-specific art and informal activity elements create a reason to stop and stay, while connectivity supports inclusive access and everyday use. This strengthens the King's Hall as a destination, improves perceptions of safety and care, and supports year-round seafront vitality.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; students.

How we will know it has worked:

- Usage and dwell time: observational counts and/or simple footfall measures showing increased use at different times of day (including evenings and shoulder seasons).
- Youth participation: number of youth-led sessions/events delivered and young people engaged in co-design and use of the space.
- Experience and safety: survey/QR feedback on welcome, comfort and perceived safety; plus reduced complaints about litter/anti-social behaviour in the immediate area.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Clear site boundary and constraints confirmed (ownership, coastal conditions, underground services, event/day-to-day operations).
- Co-design and safeguarding approach agreed with youth partners, including how the space will be stewarded.
- Power and connectivity feasibility confirmed (coverage, installation route, ongoing costs, resilience).
- Alignment with King's Hall capital works scope and programme so public realm works complement, not conflict with, building works.
- Maintenance and servicing responsibilities agreed before installation (cleaning, repairs, lighting faults, Wi-Fi contract).

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Landowner/freeholder agreement
- Planning permission (scope dependent)
- Listed building/conservation area considerations (as applicable)
- Highways/promenade approvals (if interfaces are affected)
- Utilities/telecoms agreements
- Licences (if events/programming require them)
- Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Maintenance risk: new features and planting decline without funded stewardship, undermining perceived quality.
- Community acceptance risk: if teen-focused design is not well communicated or stewarded, concerns about noise/behaviour may rise.
- Technical risk: coastal exposure, wind, salt corrosion and ground conditions increasing costs or limiting feasible materials.
- Disruption risk: misalignment with King's Hall capital works causing abortive work or poor sequencing.
- Connectivity risk: ongoing revenue costs for Wi-Fi and management arrangements not secured.

Support needed to progress:

- Feasibility and co-design resource (site surveys, concept design, cost plan, youth engagement and safeguarding input).
- Council convening to align venue, youth providers, community safety, highways/coastal and telecoms partners.
- Seed funding for a pilot package (physical improvements plus the first season of activation).
- Monitoring support to establish baseline data and evaluate impact quickly to inform phase 2.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (to be confirmed via feasibility; likely a small-to-medium capital package plus ongoing revenue for connectivity and maintenance).

Likely funding route: Mixed – council capital (public realm enabling works), external grants/sponsorship for art and youth elements, and revenue/in-kind for activation and maintenance (including potential partner contributions).

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored; alignment with the wider King's Hall investment programme will inform scope and phasing.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (strong strategic fit and visible impact potential; benefits depend on stewardship, co-design quality and coordination with King's Hall works).

Evidence/sources:

- Engagement themes show demand for more youth-focused activity, improved public realm quality and stronger seafront landmarks.
- Herne Bay's challenges around deprivation and seasonal anti-social behaviour support investment in positive, well-managed public spaces.
- Improving the setting of key seafront anchors helps strengthen perceptions, dwell time and year-round activity.

4.7 Seaside shelters

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Selected seafront shelters along Central Parade/promenade and key desire lines between the pier, bandstand and The King's Hall (priority shelters to be confirmed through a short audit).

Description: A programme to redesign and repurpose seafront shelters as highly visible "micro-galleries" and community notice/display spaces, allowing local community groups, schools and creative practitioners to exhibit work, promote activities and tell Herne Bay's story. The shelters become an easy-to-access platform for local pride and cultural participation, supporting a stronger visitor experience and giving people reasons to stop and linger along the promenade. The approach is based on simple, durable upgrades (display systems, lighting where appropriate, and a basic maintenance plan) paired with a curated programme of rotating exhibitions and community showcases. This is a low-to-medium cost way to animate the seafront year-round, strengthen place identity, and connect visitors to what's happening locally.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay
- Weave a green thread through the town (where shelters support walking routes and linger points)

Delivery partners:

- Local community groups, schools/colleges, arts organisations and creatives
- Seafront businesses and sponsors (printing support, hosting and promotion)
- Accessibility groups (inclusive interpretation and readable design)
- Cleansing and maintenance teams (servicing and rapid response)
- Heritage/conservation advisors (where required)
- Curatorial partner(s) to coordinate programme (could be in-house or partner-led)

Project stage: Idea (to move into scoping via a pilot shelter and programme)

Timescale: Short term (pre-Apr 2028) for pilot and initial roll-out; medium term for network expansion and deeper programming

Target start date: 2028 (audit, design and pilot delivery)

Target end date: 2029 (pilot evaluated; phase 1 network in place with programme calendar)

What will change?

Outputs:

- A short shelter audit and prioritisation plan identifying:
  - which shelters are suitable
  - condition and repair needs
  - footfall/visibility value
  - utilities/lighting feasibility
  - ownership and maintenance responsibilities
- A standard "shelter as showcase" design kit, including:
  - secure, weatherproof display panels or frames
  - tamper-resistant fixings
  - simple interpretation/branding template and QR linking
  - optional low-energy lighting specification where justified
- A pilot shelter installation and curated exhibition programme (three to six month trial), including a simple booking/curation process for community groups.
- A phase 1 roll-out across a small number of additional shelters, with a published annual programme calendar and a named coordinator.
- A maintenance and stewardship plan (cleaning, inspection, graffiti response, replacement cycles, responsibilities and costs).

Outcomes:

- A more animated, interesting and distinctive promenade experience, encouraging people to stop, wander and explore beyond a single destination.
- Increased visibility for local community groups and creatives, strengthening civic pride and participation.

- Better year-round visitor experience through low-cost cultural content that changes regularly.
- Improved perceptions of care and quality along the seafront through purposeful use of shelters and a clear maintenance plan.
- Stronger linkage between the seafront and the town's wider activity, through QR-enabled signposting to events, markets, venues and local businesses.

Mechanism of change:

By turning shelters into curated showcases, everyday seafront infrastructure becomes a changing, local "shopfront" for culture and community activity. Rotating displays create repeat reasons to visit and linger, while QR links convert interest into participation (events, volunteering, markets and local spend). A simple stewardship plan keeps the offer looking cared for, protecting perceptions of quality.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; students; community groups.

How we will know it has worked:

- Engagement and reach: number of exhibitions/ community showcases delivered per year and estimated views (counts/QR scans).
- Participation: number of community groups/ schools involved and participant feedback on inclusion and ease of access.
- Place impact: dwell time/footfall at shelter locations and visitor satisfaction feedback on "things to see and do" along the promenade.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the curatorial/coordination model (who selects content, schedules, installs and removes).
- A robust design solution that withstands coastal exposure, vandalism risk and maintenance realities.
- Clear responsibilities for cleaning, repair and rapid response so the shelters remain an asset, not a liability.
- Permissions route confirmed (especially if shelters sit within sensitive heritage settings or require lighting/power).
- Printing/production approach agreed (costs, sponsorship, in-kind support, accessibility standards).

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Landowner/freeholder agreement
- Planning/advertisement consent (scope dependent)
- Listed building/conservation area considerations (as applicable)
- Utilities/lighting approvals (if power is introduced)
- Licences (if linked to events activity)
- Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Maintenance risk: displays degrade, vandalism persists or content becomes untidy without funded stewardship.
- Programme risk: without a coordinator and a pipeline of contributors, shelters could become static and lose impact.
- Quality control risk: inconsistent content or clutter undermines the intended "gallery" feel; a simple quality bar is needed.
- Accessibility risk: poor readability or inaccessible content; needs inclusive design standards from the start.
- Reputational risk: if shelters are seen as "advertising boards" rather than curated community showcases.

Support needed to progress:

- Small feasibility and pilot budget (design kit, first installations, printing, coordinator time).
- Convening support to build a contributor pipeline (schools, youth groups, community organisations, creatives).

- Comms support to launch the programme and keep the calendar visible.
- Baseline monitoring support to measure footfall/ QR engagement and user feedback.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely small capital per shelter plus programme revenue for coordination and printing).

Likely funding route: Mixed – council enabling support; small grants/sponsorship; in-kind contributions for printing and content production; potential business support for specific themed seasons.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through partner engagement and pilot set-up.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium (high visibility, strong fit with identity and animation aims; success depends on stewardship and a consistent programme pipeline)

Evidence/sources:

- Demand for stronger year-round activity, better use of seafront assets and more visible community culture.
- A shelter-based exhibition model has proven to draw attention in a high-footfall public setting and can be refreshed regularly at low cost.
- A curated approach avoids clutter and supports a coherent "postcard" identity for the promenade.

4.8 St George's toilet block

Lead organisation: CCC

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): St George's toilet block, Central Parade seafront (adjacent pavement/forecourt and immediate pedestrian routes)

Description: A project to bring the St. George's toilet block back into safe use by reproviding or replanning and refurbishing it. The block has been closed due to structural issues and its closure has created a significant gap in essential facilities on a busy stretch of seafront, leading to pressure on nearby businesses and a poor visitor experience.

The project will look at different approaches to bringing the amenity back into use. This may include simple refurbishment or wider options that also re-provide public toilets as part of a wider regeneration project that involves the private sector. Any solution should aim to turn an eyesore and liability into a well-managed seafront asset that supports residents, visitors and the wider seafront economy.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners:

- Cleansing and facilities management teams (toilet servicing and standards)
- Accessibility groups (inclusive design and layout)

- Community safety partners (designing-out ASB and safe operation)
- Highways/public realm partners (pavement access, temporary works, deliveries)
- Potential private sector partners/concession operator(s) (leisure/entertainment or retail for example)
- Planning/conservation advisors (as required)
- Utilities providers (power/water/drainage interfaces)

Project stage: Scoping out of different approaches or options

Timescale: Short-medium term (pre Apr 2028) for scoping out of options and/or feasibility

Target start date: pre-Apr 2028

Target end date: 2028/29 onwards for delivery of solution (e.g. preferred option ready to deliver)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Condition surveys, costed options, appraisals etc. covering:
  - potential refurbishment and reconfiguration options
  - accessibility and inclusive layout requirements
  - servicing model (cleaning, opening hours, security, repairs)
- A preferred design package for a public toilets solution, including internal layout, servicing access, signage/wayfinding and external appearance.
- Delivery of the new/refurbished facility (toilets reopened etc), with an agreed inspection and maintenance plan.

Outcomes:

- Reliable, clean and accessible public toilets restored on a key seafront stretch, reducing pressure on nearby businesses and improving visitor experience.
- Improved seafront appearance and perceptions of care by replacing a closed/cordoned asset with an active frontage.
- Increased dwell time and comfort for families, older people and disabled visitors, supporting a more inclusive seafront.
- A sustainable operating model that helps support stewardship
- Reduced conflict and improved management of antisocial behaviour risks through clearer oversight and better-designed facilities.

Mechanism of change: Restoring toilet provision removes a major barrier to staying longer on the seafront and reduces knock-on impacts on surrounding businesses. An option that combines the facility with other facilities/amenities would create a regular on-site presence and a practical route to shared stewardship, helping keep the building maintained and the area feeling cared for. Whatever the solution this would require clear standards, responsibilities and monitoring support that sustains quality rather than recurring closures.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households.

How we will know it has worked:

- Facility performance: toilets reopened with agreed opening hours, cleaning standards and reduced closure/defect incidents.
- User experience: improved satisfaction feedback on availability, cleanliness and accessibility; reduced complaints about lack of facilities.
- Place impact: reduced demand on nearby business toilets (qualitative feedback) and improved perceptions of the seafront environment at this location.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Safe access and "make safe" works completed quickly to remove cordons and restore pedestrian movement.
- A realistic servicing and management model agreed (who cleans, who pays, who responds, and when).
- Planning/conservation route confirmed early if required (external changes and signage in particular).
- Utilities/drainage capacity and constraints understood and designed-in.

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Planning permission (scope dependent)
- Listed building/conservation area considerations (as applicable)
- Highways approvals and licences for temporary works (during enabling works and delivery)
- Landowner/freeholder agreement as required
- Utilities agreements (water, drainage, power)
- Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Cost and scope risk from latent defects and the condition of the structure increasing required works.
- Revenue and stewardship risk if cleaning/ maintenance responsibilities are unclear or underfunded.
- Programme risk if interim measures become prolonged without a clear decision on the long-term solution.
- Local amenity risk (noise, waste, anti social behaviour) if the facilities are not well managed.
- Reputational risk if the facility reopens without meeting basic standards of cleanliness, accessibility and safety.

Support needed to progress:

- Feasibility resource to produce options related information (e.g. cost plan, servicing model etc).
- Convening across property, facilities, cleansing, highways and community safety to agree a single delivery plan.
- Monitoring support for the first operating season (cleanliness audits, defect log, user feedback).

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (refurbishment to be confirmed through surveys and options review).

Likely funding route: Dependent upon final solution. Mixed - council capital for refurbishment works, potential for other investment where feasible.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through market engagement and partner discussions.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High (clear need and visible impact; benefits depend on speedy progress towards a solution and a sustainable servicing model).

Evidence/sources:

- Closure has created strong demand for toilet facilities and knock on impacts on nearby businesses and visitors.
- The seafront's visitor economy relies on basic amenities; toilets are a key "hygiene factor" for dwell time and inclusivity.
- Examples from elsewhere show that other options such as concession plus toilets model offers another possible practical route to stewardship and active frontage, improving perceptions and day-to-day management.

4.9 Herne Bay in bloom – The King's Hall

Lead organisation: Herne Bay in Bloom (community-led), with Canterbury City Council as landowner/enabler

Main contact: Herne Bay in Bloom project lead

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): The King's Hall setting and immediate public realm (including the phone box location above/near the King's Hall, and identified planting/bed locations on site)

Description: A small-scale, high-visibility community greening and place-care project around The King's Hall, delivered by Herne Bay in Bloom. The scheme combines (1) installation of a "little library" within a phone box near/above The King's Hall to encourage informal sharing, learning and social connection, and (2) additional planting and the establishment of community-owned planting beds on site to improve the look and feel of this prominent seafront location. The project aims to strengthen pride in place and perceptions of care at a key coastal landmark, while providing a low-cost, volunteer-led way to add colour, biodiversity and everyday amenity for residents and visitors.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Weave a green thread through the town
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners:

- Herne Bay in Bloom volunteers and coordinators
- Canterbury City Council (landowner permissions, enabling support, waste/cleansing interfaces)
- King's Hall venue management (coordination on access, sightlines, events operations)
- Local schools/community groups (book donations, planting days, stewardship)
- Local businesses/sponsors (materials, plants, in-kind support)
- Accessibility groups (inclusive design for the library and route access)

Project stage: Scoping/delivery (depending on readiness of permissions and volunteer programme)

Timescale: Short term (pre-Apr 2028)

Target start date: 2027

Target end date: 2027/28 (installation complete and first full growing season established)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Installation of a "little library" within a phone box at/near The King's Hall, including internal shelving, weatherproofing, signage and a simple community use guide.
- Additional planting delivered in agreed locations, using resilient coastal species and a simple seasonal planting plan.
- Creation and launch of community-owned planting beds on site, with a named stewardship group and basic tools/storage approach agreed.
- A maintenance and stewardship plan covering:
  - watering and seasonal care rota
  - litter and minor repairs approach
- book stock management and light-touch safeguarding (appropriate content, tidiness)

- A small programme of volunteer activity days (planting days, refresh days, "swap a book" moments) to build momentum and visibility.
- Simple interpretation/wayfinding that links the project to broader seafront identity and encourages respectful use.

Outcomes:

- Improved first impressions and perceptions of care around The King's Hall through visible greening and community stewardship.
- Increased local pride and participation, with more residents involved in practical "care for place" activity.
- A more welcoming setting for visitors and everyday users, encouraging longer dwell time and a calmer, more pleasant seafront experience.
- Small biodiversity uplift in a high-footfall area through pollinator-friendly planting and better-managed beds.
- Informal learning and social connection benefits through the little library, supporting accessible, free community amenity.

Mechanism of change: Visible, well-maintained planting and a community-run library signal that a place is cared for, which can improve perceptions of safety and welcome and encourage respectful use. Community ownership and regular volunteer presence helps keep the space tidy and resilient, reducing the risk of decline. Small interventions in a prominent location create disproportionate impact on pride, identity and everyday experience.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; low-income households; students; community groups.

How we will know it has worked:

- Stewardship and condition: beds maintained to agreed standard across seasons (simple monthly condition check; reduced litter/complaints).
- Participation: number of volunteer hours and number of community groups/schools involved per year.
- Library use: simple proxy measures (book turnover counts, QR feedback, and observed usage).

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Landowner permissions agreed for the phone box library fit-out, planting locations and any fixings/ signage.
- Confirmation of responsibilities for waste, watering access and any necessary storage.
- Volunteer capacity secured for ongoing maintenance (not just installation).
- Planting design suitable for coastal exposure and vandalism risk, with replacement plan.
- Alignment with King's Hall events operations to avoid conflicts with access, sightlines and peak crowd days.

Permissions/consents likely needed:

- Landowner/freeholder agreement
- Planning permission/advertisement consent (scope dependent, particularly for signage)
- Highways/public realm approvals (if works affect public routes)
- Unknown/to be explored (final scope will confirm)

Key risks/issues:

- Maintenance risk if volunteer capacity drops or watering becomes difficult in dry periods.
- Vandalism/anti-social behaviour risk affecting planting beds or library stock without light-touch mitigation.
- Coastal exposure risk (wind/salt) reducing plant survival without appropriate species selection.
- Interface risk with events operations if locations are poorly chosen or signage creates clutter.

Support needed to progress:

- A named council contact to secure quick permissions, align site operations and support practical issues (waste, access, small materials).

- Small "seed" resource or materials support (plants, soil, planters/bed edging, shelving, signage, tools).
- Communications support to recruit volunteers and promote respectful use and community ownership.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low (small capital for materials plus volunteer time); to be confirmed once scope and locations are agreed.

Likely funding route: In-kind and community-led delivery, with potential small grants, donations and local sponsorship.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed (plants/materials donations and volunteer time expected to form a significant contribution).

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High (high visibility, low complexity, strong community ownership; success depends on stewardship plan and permissions).

Evidence/sources:

- Strong place value in visible greening and improved presentation of seafront landmarks.
- Community-led stewardship can deliver sustained "care and welcome" improvements at low cost.
- Small-scale interventions can support wider seafront regeneration by improving everyday experience and pride in place.

4.10 Eastern esplanade animation trail

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with cultural, public realm, seafront and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - informed by town centre strategy engagement and wider seafront activation ideas

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Eastern Esplanade/Central Parade seafront corridor between Neptune Car Park, the pier/central seafront area, the Central Bandstand and The King's Hall, including key pauses, shelters, blank walls, railings, promenade edges, seating areas and links back towards Mortimer Street, High Street and William Street.

Description: A phased public art, play and public realm animation project to make the seafront walk between Neptune Car Park and The King's Hall more interesting, memorable and purposeful. The project would create a sequence of visual and interactive moments along the promenade so the route feels like a connected coastal experience rather than a long gap between destinations. Possible interventions include temporary and permanent artworks, artist-designed seating, playful sound or musical features, small performance points, improved surfacing or colour treatments, framed views, interpretation, lighting, planting, photo points, and seasonal installations. The project could also incorporate or extend the 7.6 Seafront Gallery idea, turning parts of the eastern esplanade into an outdoor gallery route that displays local artists, young people's work, heritage images and changing seasonal commissions. The purpose is to encourage more visitors to walk east towards The King's Hall and west back towards the pier, Neptune Car Park, Mortimer Street and the High Street, increasing footfall, dwell time and perceived connection between Herne Bay's coastal landmarks and commercial core.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Link the high street to high tide
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay
- Give the next generation the space to grow.

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways where public highway or promenade interfaces are affected; seafront operators and businesses; King's Hall and Central Bandstand operators; Herne Bay Pier Trust; local artists, schools and youth groups; Beach Creative and other cultural partners; public realm and lighting designers; access groups; community safety and cleansing teams; Visit Canterbury/tourism partners; potential sponsors and local businesses.

Project stage: Idea/scoping, with potential to begin with low-cost temporary pilots and develop into a phased public realm and cultural commissioning programme.

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29 for scoping, artist brief and temporary pilot.

Target end date: 2029/30 for first phase delivery and evaluation; 2028–2032 for permanent follow-on works where funding is secured.

What will change?

Outputs:

- A route audit and concept plan identifying priority intervention points between Neptune Car Park, the pier, Central Bandstand and The King's Hall.
- A phased public art and public realm animation brief, including design principles, maintenance standards, accessibility requirements and a preferred mix of temporary and permanent interventions.
- A pilot trail of temporary artworks, outdoor gallery panels, playful installations, musical/sound features or interactive public realm elements delivered along the eastern esplanade.
- A plan to extend or integrate the Seafront Gallery concept along the route, including local artist, school, youth and community participation opportunities.
- Improved seating, pause points, visual markers, lighting or small-scale public realm upgrades at selected locations where feasible.
- Clearer links between the seafront route and town centre destinations, including Mortimer Street, High Street and William Street, through wayfinding, trail maps or interpretive prompts.
- Evaluation of footfall, dwell time, user feedback, maintenance issues and business/stakeholder response after the first phase.

Outcomes:

- More people walk the full seafront route between Neptune Car Park, the pier, Central Bandstand and The King's Hall.
- The eastern end of the seafront feels less detached and more clearly connected to the central seafront, Mortimer Street and High Street.
- The King's Hall benefits from stronger pedestrian movement, improved arrival experience and greater visibility as part of a continuous coastal destination.
- Residents and visitors experience the promenade as more playful, creative and distinctive, improving perceptions of Herne Bay's seafront.
- Local artists, schools, young people and community groups have visible opportunities to contribute to the town's public realm and place story.
- The seafront gains a year-round layer of interest that is not wholly dependent on cafés, concessions or seasonal events.

Mechanism of change: Long linear seafronts can feel fragmented when there are few reasons to pause, explore or continue walking. By introducing a sequence of visible, playful and culturally distinctive interventions, the project reduces the perceived

distance between key landmarks and creates curiosity about what comes next. Outdoor artworks, gallery moments, interactive features, seating and lighting can act as "stepping stones" along the route, encouraging linked movement between the car park, central seafront, The King's Hall and town centre streets. This helps turn an under-animated stretch of promenade into a destination route, supporting footfall, dwell time, local trade and pride in place.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; King's Hall and Bandstand users; young people; older people; disabled people; families; local artists and makers; schools and community groups; low-income households who benefit from free-to-access cultural and public realm activity.

How we will know it has worked:

- Before/after observation shows more people walking between Neptune Car Park, the central seafront and The King's Hall.
- User feedback indicates the route feels more interesting, welcoming, legible and worth exploring.
- King's Hall, Bandstand, pier and seafront businesses report improved linked trips, dwell time or event-day movement.
- The first phase is maintained in good condition, with low levels of damage, clutter or complaints.
- Community participation is visible through schools, youth groups, local artists or community organisations contributing work or content.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the precise route, priority intervention points and relationship to existing Section 7.6 Seafront Gallery proposals.
- A clear curatorial and design brief so interventions feel coherent, high quality and rooted in Herne Bay rather than a collection of unrelated objects.
- Landowner, highways, seafront operations and conservation input where installations affect public realm, structures, railings, walls, shelters or the promenade.
- Maintenance and stewardship arrangements, including cleaning, repairs, seasonal removal and refresh of gallery content.
- Funding for design, fabrication, installation, interpretation and evaluation, with scope to start small through temporary pilots.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder approvals; highways or public realm approvals where required; planning or advertisement consent for larger or longer-term installations; conservation area considerations; structural sign-off for any attached or freestanding works; event or performance permissions if programming is included; risk assessments and public liability insurance.

Key risks/issues:

- If the trail is too thinly spread or poorly curated, it may not change walking behaviour or perceptions.
- Outdoor installations may be affected by salt, wind, weathering, vandalism or maintenance failures.
- Unmanaged additions to the promenade could create clutter, accessibility issues or conflict with events, cycling, servicing or emergency access.
- Permanent commissions could be costly and slow to deliver unless preceded by a realistic temporary pilot.
- The project could overlap with 7.6 Seafront Gallery unless roles are clarified; this should be treated either as an extension of that project or as the physical route-based delivery strand.

Support needed to progress: A short route audit and curatorial brief; coordination between seafront, cultural, highways and public realm teams; engagement with local artists, schools, young people and community groups; modest seed funding for a temporary pilot; maintenance planning; and a decision on how this project relates to the existing Seafront Gallery proposal.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Likely low-to-medium for a temporary pilot using gallery panels, vinyls, temporary artworks, small seating/colour treatments and community commissions; medium-to-high for permanent sculptural works, lighting, bespoke street furniture or wider public realm upgrades.

Likely funding route: Mixed - council public realm and cultural enabling support, external arts and place-based grants, sponsorship, business contributions, developer/public realm funding where available, and in-kind support from artists, schools and community partners.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed. Potential to align with existing Seafront Gallery proposals, King's Hall reopening activity, Bandstand programming, local arts partners, schools and community groups.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High. The strategic fit is strong and there are good comparator models from coastal towns, but benefits depend on design quality, maintenance, route coherence and whether the interventions are substantial enough to change walking behaviour.

Evidence/sources:

- Comparable coastal towns show that outdoor art, sculpture trails and creative promenade interventions can encourage exploration, improve the visitor experience and create a stronger sense of place, including Folkestone Artworks, Blackpool's Great Promenade Show and public art trails linking town centres and seafronts.
- Herne Bay's strategy identifies the need to restore and reconnect coastal gems, improve links between the seafront and shopping streets, and create a continuous, high-quality public realm that works as a single destination.
- Local engagement highlights support for more seafront improvements, more activity for young people, stronger cultural programming, better public spaces and a more positive visitor experience.



Image: © Leanne Bracey

5 Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Enhancing the coherence of the town's leisure offer and developing complementary water-based and wellness activities. Investing in infrastructure that supports inclusive and sustainable access to the water and creates opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing

5.1 Herne Bay health hubs

Lead organisation: Herne Bay Primary Care Network, working with NHS, Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council and voluntary/ community partners

Main contact: Herne Bay Primary Care Network lead and CCC Place Directorate contacts to be confirmed

Date submitted: 2026, updated following engagement with Herne Bay Primary Care Network

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): A network of community-based hub venues across Herne Bay rather than a single fixed site, with potential locations including the Herne Centre, Baptist Church, Age UK and other accessible community spaces subject to availability, suitability and partner agreement.

Description: A flexible Herne Bay Health Hubs model that brings health, wellbeing, advice and community support into accessible venues across the town. Rather than relying on one permanent hub, the project would test a distributed approach using more than one venue so services can be delivered closer to residents, make better use of existing community spaces and respond to venue availability. The Herne Bay Primary Care Network has indicated support for sending social prescribers to the hub and is interested in running frailty and social isolation clinics for older people. These clinics would be delivered by a social prescriber, care coordinator and advanced clinical practitioner, helping residents access clinical and non-clinical support in a familiar local setting. The hubs could also host or signpost wider support services, including mental health charities, the Food Bank, Digital Kent, the Community Clothes Bank and other community organisations. Department for Work and Pensions work coach attendance is likely to be occasional, potentially around monthly, reflecting capacity constraints and possible prioritisation of a Youth Hub in Canterbury. The project would also explore whether a community pantry could operate from one or more hub venues, strengthening practical support for households experiencing food insecurity or cost-of-living pressures. The overall aim is to create a practical, partnership-led health and wellbeing offer that tackles isolation, frailty, digital exclusion and wider social need while strengthening Herne Bay's community infrastructure.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Give the next generation the space to grow

Delivery partners: Herne Bay Primary Care Network; GP practices; social prescribing teams; care coordinators; advanced clinical practitioners; NHS community health partners; Kent County Council public health and adult social care; Canterbury City Council; Department for Work and Pensions; mental health charities; Food Bank; Digital Kent; Community Clothes Bank; Age UK; community pantry providers; faith and community venue operators; local voluntary and community sector organisations; accessibility groups and residents.

Project stage: Scoping/partnership development

Timescale: Short term for venue testing, partner agreement and pilot delivery; medium term for establishing a regular multi-venue hub programme if the pilot is successful

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2027/28 for pilot operation and evaluation, with continuation or expansion subject to partner capacity and evidence of demand

What will change?

Outputs:

- A confirmed pilot model for Herne Bay Health Hubs, including the preferred mix of venues, operating days, service offer and partner responsibilities.
- Agreement with suitable community venues, potentially including the Herne Centre, Baptist Church, Age UK or other accessible spaces.
- Regular social prescribing presence delivered by Herne Bay Primary Care Network in one or more hub locations.
- Frailty and social isolation clinics for older residents, delivered by a social prescriber, care coordinator and advanced clinical practitioner.
- A programme of invited community and support services, potentially including mental health charities, the Food Bank, Digital Kent, the Community Clothes Bank and advice/support partners.
- Occasional Department for Work and Pensions work coach attendance where capacity allows, likely around monthly.
- Feasibility work on hosting a community pantry from one or more hub venues.
- A simple monitoring framework covering attendance, referrals, repeat use, partner participation, user feedback and onward support outcomes.

Outcomes:

- Older people experiencing frailty or social isolation are identified earlier and connected to appropriate clinical, social and community support.
- Residents find it easier to access joined-up support in familiar community settings without needing to travel across Herne Bay to one fixed location.
- Social prescribing becomes more visible and easier to access, helping residents address non-medical issues affecting health and wellbeing.
- People experiencing financial hardship, digital exclusion, poor mental wellbeing or food insecurity can be connected more quickly to practical help.
- Existing community venues are used more effectively as part of Herne Bay's social infrastructure.
- The town gains a stronger preventative health and wellbeing offer that supports the strategy aim of nurturing a healthier Herne Bay.

Mechanism of change: The project reduces barriers to support by taking services to people in accessible community venues rather than expecting residents to travel to one central location or navigate multiple disconnected services. Social prescribing and frailty clinics provide a practical front door into both clinical and non-clinical help, while the presence of community organisations allows residents to receive advice, practical assistance and onward referrals in the same place. A multi-venue model also makes the project more deliverable by spreading activity across available spaces and tailoring provision to different neighbourhoods and audiences.

Beneficiaries: Older people; people experiencing frailty or social isolation; residents with long-term conditions; carers; disabled people; low-income households; people experiencing food insecurity, poor mental wellbeing or digital exclusion; community organisations; town-centre and neighbourhood venue operators.

How we will know it has worked:

- Regular hub sessions are delivered across one or more venues with consistent attendance and partner participation.
- Frailty and social isolation clinics generate referrals, care coordination actions and onward connections to community support.
- Residents report that support is easier to access, more joined-up and available in places they feel comfortable using.

- Partners agree whether the pilot should continue, expand or be refined based on usage, outcomes and operational learning.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement from Herne Bay Primary Care Network on the level, frequency and staffing of social prescribing and frailty clinic provision.
- Identification of suitable venues with accessible rooms, privacy, availability, safeguarding arrangements and appropriate facilities.
- Coordination of multiple community and support partners so the hub offer is useful, reliable and not over-programmed.
- Clarity on information governance, clinical responsibility, referral pathways and data collection for health-related activity.
- Capacity from Department for Work and Pensions and other partners, recognising some services may only be able to attend occasionally.
- Feasibility of hosting a community pantry, including storage, food handling, staffing, insurance and venue suitability.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Venue hire or partner agreements; safeguarding and information governance arrangements; clinical governance sign-off for frailty clinics; insurance and risk assessments; food safety and operational requirements if a community pantry is delivered; any licensing or premises requirements depending on venue and service mix.

Key risks/issues:

- Partner capacity may limit the frequency or breadth of the hub offer, particularly for Department for Work and Pensions attendance.
- A multi-venue model could become confusing unless branding, communications and session information are clear.
- Venues may vary in accessibility, privacy, availability and suitability for health-related activity.
- The project could become too broad if too many services are added without a clear operating model and priority audience.
- Without agreed coordination resource, the hubs may rely too heavily on goodwill and become difficult to sustain.

Support needed to progress: Convening support to agree the pilot model; venue assessment and booking support; coordination between health, local authority and voluntary sector partners; communications and referral pathway design; light-touch monitoring and evaluation; and practical support to test whether a community pantry can operate safely and sustainably from one or more venues.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown, likely low-to-medium for a pilot using hired community venues and existing partner staffing; higher if a regular staffed programme, community pantry infrastructure or dedicated coordination post is required.

Likely funding route: Mixed - Primary Care Network and NHS staff time, public health or prevention funding, local authority enabling support, venue in-kind or discounted hire, voluntary sector resource and potential food/community support funding for a pantry model.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Herne Bay Primary Care Network has indicated willingness to send social prescribers to the hub and to explore frailty and social isolation clinics. Potential venues are being explored, including the Herne Centre, Baptist Church and Age UK.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High, because the project has strong strategic fit and clear partner interest, but benefits depend on venue suitability, coordination capacity and sustained participation from health and community partners.

Evidence/sources:

- Social prescribing models are intended to connect people with non-clinical support that can improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and address wider social issues affecting health.
- Multi-disciplinary frailty approaches can help identify older people at risk earlier, coordinate care more effectively and reduce avoidable escalation by combining clinical assessment with social and practical support.
- Delivering support through familiar community venues can reduce access barriers, particularly for people who may be isolated, digitally excluded, less mobile or reluctant to engage with formal services.
- Community pantry and food support models can improve access to affordable food while creating a route into wider advice, wellbeing and community support when embedded within a broader hub offer.

5.2 Integrated neighbourhood care team

Lead organisation: NHS Kent and Medway/local Primary Care Network and community health partners, working with Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council to identify suitable town-centre host space and support local engagement.

Main contact: To be confirmed through NHS, primary care and local authority partnership discussions.

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): A flexible town-centre base in Herne Bay, ideally within an existing civic, community or health-adjacent building close to the High Street, Mortimer Street, Wimereux Square, Herne Bay Library, Herons Leisure Centre or other accessible community infrastructure. The model should also allow outreach activity in public spaces and community settings across Herne Bay.

Description: A Herne Bay pilot for an Integrated Neighbourhood Care Team, modelled on the neighbourhood health centre approach being trialled in Folkestone. Rather than creating a conventional new health centre, the project would establish a multi-disciplinary, community-facing team that brings health, care and wellbeing support closer to residents in a familiar town-centre setting. The team would work across primary care, community health, social care, prevention, social prescribing and voluntary sector support, with a particular focus on people who are most likely to experience poor health outcomes, isolation, long-term conditions or barriers to accessing services. The project would provide a visible place-based front door for early help, preventative advice, simple checks, care navigation and coordinated support. It would complement, not duplicate, the proposed Herne Bay Health Hub by focusing on outreach, integration and neighbourhood working rather than a purely clinical building-based offer.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Back the Bay

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Give the next generation the space to grow.

Delivery partners: NHS Kent and Medway; local Primary Care Network and GP practices; Kent County Council adult social care and public health teams; Canterbury City Council; community health providers; social prescribing link workers; voluntary and community organisations; mental health, debt, housing, benefits and wellbeing advice services; pharmacies; libraries, leisure and community venue operators; local access and equality groups.

Project stage: Idea/scoping, with a strong comparator model now emerging through the Folkestone neighbourhood health centre pilot.

Timescale: Short term for feasibility, partnership formation and service design; medium term for pilot delivery and evaluation.

Target start date: 2026/27 for partnership scoping and service model development.

Target end date: 2028/29 for pilot delivery, evaluation and decision on whether to continue, expand or fix the model in a permanent location.

What will change?

Outputs:

- A local partnership and service design plan setting out the purpose, target groups, operating model, governance, referral pathways and relationship with the proposed Herne Bay Health Hub.
- Identification of one or more suitable town-centre host locations for a flexible neighbourhood care base, with clear requirements for privacy, accessibility, appointment/drop-in use, storage, data handling and public visibility.
- A multi-disciplinary neighbourhood care team model agreed with health, care and voluntary sector partners, including named routes into primary care, community health, social care, prevention, mental health, housing, debt and wellbeing support.
- A pilot programme of regular sessions offering care navigation, brief advice, social prescribing, prevention conversations, simple health checks and onward referral support.
- A targeted outreach approach for residents less likely to engage with conventional health services, including older people, people with long-term conditions, isolated residents, carers and households experiencing financial or social stress.
- Simple communications, signage and engagement materials explaining what the neighbourhood care team does, who it is for, and how residents and professionals can access it.
- A monitoring framework tracking uptake, referrals, user experience, partner working and learning from the pilot.

Outcomes:

- Residents can access earlier, more approachable support in a familiar local setting before problems escalate into more complex health, social care or crisis needs.
- Health, care and voluntary sector partners work in a more joined-up way around people's needs rather than operating as separate services.
- More residents are connected to preventative support, social prescribing, community activity and practical advice that can improve wellbeing and reduce isolation.
- The town centre gains a stronger civic and wellbeing function, giving people another reason to visit and reinforcing the role of central community infrastructure.
- The pilot provides evidence on whether a Herne Bay neighbourhood care model should become a permanent part of the local health and wellbeing system.

Mechanism of change: The project reduces both practical and psychological barriers to early help by placing support in a familiar, non-hospital, neighbourhood setting and by joining up professionals around the person rather than around organisational boundaries. A resident who

attends for a simple conversation or check can be connected quickly to the right mix of clinical, social, financial, community or wellbeing support. Over time, this should increase prevention, improve care coordination, reduce duplication between services and help address the wider social factors that drive poor health outcomes.

Beneficiaries: Residents; older people; people with long-term conditions; disabled people; carers; isolated residents; low-income households; people with mental health or wellbeing needs; people who find formal healthcare settings difficult to access; voluntary and community organisations; health and care professionals seeking more joined-up referral routes.

How we will know it has worked:

- Pilot sessions are delivered regularly and show meaningful take-up from residents, including people who are not already well connected to support.
- Referral and signposting data shows people being connected to appropriate health, care, prevention, advice and community support.
- User feedback indicates the service felt easier to access, less intimidating and more joined-up than conventional routes.
- Partner feedback shows improved coordination between primary care, community services, social care and the voluntary sector.
- Evaluation provides a clear recommendation on whether to continue, expand, adapt or stop the model after the pilot.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement between NHS, primary care, KCC, CCC and voluntary sector partners on the purpose, scope and governance of the Herne Bay model.
- Confirmation of a suitable host venue or rotating venue arrangement that is visible, accessible, trusted and practical for confidential conversations.
- Availability of staff and partners to run regular sessions and provide follow-up, rather than relying only on one-off events.
- Clear information-sharing, safeguarding, clinical governance and referral arrangements.
- A communications and engagement plan that reaches residents most likely to benefit, not only people already connected to services.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Internal approvals from NHS, local authority and host venue partners; information governance and data protection arrangements; safeguarding and clinical governance protocols; venue agreements for use of rooms and storage; event permissions if any outreach activity takes place in public spaces such as Wimereux Square; other permissions to be confirmed through service design.

Key risks/issues:

- Without clear ownership, the project could become a loose set of occasional outreach sessions rather than an integrated neighbourhood care model.
- Demand could exceed the capacity of a pilot if residents expect a full clinical service or if referral pathways are not resourced.
- Partners may struggle to align staffing, data sharing and governance across organisational boundaries.
- A poorly chosen location could reduce trust, privacy or accessibility, limiting take-up.
- Sustainability may be difficult if no long-term staffing, revenue or commissioning route is identified after the pilot.

Support needed to progress: Convening support to bring together NHS, primary care, KCC, CCC and voluntary sector partners; a short service design and feasibility exercise; identification of suitable host venues; agreement of governance and referral pathways; communications and community engagement support; monitoring and evaluation resource to test whether the model should become permanent.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown. Likely low-to-medium for a pilot using existing community space and partner staff time; higher if the model requires dedicated premises, new staffing or a permanent town-centre base.

Likely funding route: Mixed - NHS and primary care transformation or prevention resource; public health and health inequalities funding; in-kind partner staffing; host venue support; potential community wellbeing or neighbourhood working funding where available.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed. Existing civic, community and health-related spaces in Herne Bay could provide a low-cost route to piloting the model if host venue and partner staffing support can be secured.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High. The need is clear and the intervention type has a strong rationale, but benefits depend on partner commitment, staffing, referral capacity and whether the service is designed as an integrated neighbourhood model rather than occasional outreach.

Evidence/sources:

- The Folkestone neighbourhood health centre pilot provides a relevant Kent comparator for testing a more local, preventative and integrated health model in a coastal community.
- Evidence from integrated care and social prescribing models shows that multi-disciplinary, community-based support can improve access, reduce fragmentation and connect people earlier to non-clinical support that affects health and wellbeing.
- Herne Bay's local context strengthens the case for this intervention: the town has comparatively poor health outcomes, an older population profile, deprivation in the town centre, limited social infrastructure within the centre, and a strategy priority to nurture a healthier Herne Bay.

5.3 Wheelchair accessible water

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (seafront and public realm enabling), working with local operators and accessibility partners

Main contact: Place Directorate, with nominated accessibility and partner liaison contacts

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay seafront, with associated storage and booking point for a beach wheelchair.

Description: A phased accessibility project to make Herne Bay's seafront and water offer more inclusive for disabled people and people with limited mobility. The project would combine three linked elements: (1) installation of a seasonal accessible beach access route, such as matting or a removable ramp, from the promenade to the lifeguarded beach; (2) provision of at least one bookable beach wheelchair, with a simple operating and storage model; and (3) feasibility work with partners on delivering a Changing Places toilet near the seafront. Together, these measures would create a much more realistic route for disabled residents and visitors to reach the beach, spend longer at the seafront, and access the water with dignity, comfort and support.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Herne Bay operators; accessibility and disability organisations; RNLI/lifeguard service and beach safety partners; Changing Places specialists; local volunteers; storage/booking host partner; Kent County Council where public realm interfaces are affected; suppliers of beach matting, ramps and beach wheelchairs

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- A tested seasonal accessible route from promenade to beach, using removable matting or ramp infrastructure at the lifeguarded beach.
- Procurement and operation of at least one beach wheelchair with clear booking, storage and handover arrangements.
- Site assessment and options appraisal for a Changing Places toilet at the pier/old ticket hall.
- Simple user guidance, safety information and publicity so people know what is available, when and how to use it.
- agreed maintenance and seasonal deployment plan for all equipment.

Outcomes:

- Disabled residents and visitors are able to reach and enjoy the beach and water with greater dignity and independence
- Herne Bay becomes a more inclusive seafront destination, supporting longer stays and better visitor experience
- Improved access to the coast contributes to health, wellbeing and social connection
- Families and carers are more able to enjoy the seafront together rather than being limited to the promenade
- The town strengthens its reputation for practical and visible inclusion.

Mechanism of change: Physical barriers are one of the main reasons disabled people cannot fully enjoy coastal places. By providing a usable route over the beach surface, suitable mobility equipment, and an appropriate changing/toilet facility, the project removes several of the most common barriers at once. That makes access to the water more realistic, not just aspirational, and supports more equal participation in everyday leisure, family life and health-promoting activity.

Beneficiaries: Disabled people; residents; visitors; older people; young people; carers and families; low-income households; traders/businesses benefiting from longer dwell time and more inclusive visitor offer

How we will know it has worked:

- Accessible beach route is installed and used during the season.
- Beach wheelchair bookings/usage demonstrate demand.
- User and carer feedback shows improved ability to access the beach and water.
- Progress is made towards a funded and deliverable Changing Places facility.
- Local perception of Herne Bay as an inclusive seafront improves.

Deliverability

- **Key dependencies:** Agreement on the most suitable beach access solution and seasonal operating period.

- Storage, staffing or volunteer support for the wheelchair hire/booking model.
- Beach safety and lifeguard input on where and how accessible access to the water should operate
- Feasibility and partner agreement for a Changing Places facility in or near the pier ticket hall.
- ongoing maintenance and inspection arrangements so equipment remains safe and usable.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/ asset owner agreement; coastal/seafront operational approvals; planning permission and building approvals for any permanent Changing Places installation; licenses or operational agreements for equipment storage and hire arrangements; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Beach access matting or ramp systems may be weather-sensitive and need seasonal removal
- Without clear staffing or volunteer capacity, wheelchair hire could be unreliable
- A Changing Places facility may be more expensive and complex than the short-term access measures
- Poorly maintained equipment could quickly damage trust and reputation
- Demand may be strong, so limited equipment could create pressure unless the system is clearly managed.

Support needed to progress: A short feasibility and operating plan covering matting/ramp options, wheelchair type and booking/storage model; convening of accessibility groups and seafront partners; capital funding for equipment purchase and any enabling works; specialist advice on Changing Places design and delivery route; communications support so the offer is visible and easy to use.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium for pilot access measures and wheelchair provision; medium-to-high if a full Changing Places facility is delivered)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council enabling budgets, external accessibility or coastal access grants, charitable/community fundraising, and in-kind support from partners and volunteers

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; comparable schemes elsewhere show strong potential for blended funding, volunteer support and community fundraising

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay Town Centre Strategy calls for more inclusive access to the water and identifies investment in infrastructure that supports recreation, health and wellbeing.
- Engagement findings in the strategy highlight demand for more water-based activity, better public toilets and changing facilities, and more inclusive seafront improvements.
- Comparable UK schemes show that seasonal beach access matting, beach wheelchair lending and community-supported operating models are already working in places such as Bude, North Berwick and West Bay.

5.4 Widen inclusive play at Memorial Park

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (parks and public realm), working with accessibility partners, play specialists and Kent County Council where parking or highway interfaces are affected

Main contact: Place Directorate lead (TBC), with nominated accessibility and play design contacts

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Memorial Park play area and its immediate access routes, seating, surfacing and Memorial Park car park, including review of disabled parking provision and step-free approach to the play space

Description: Create a significantly more inclusive play offer at Memorial Park by upgrading the existing play area into the district's strongest example of accessible and inclusive outdoor play. The project would focus on a whole-journey approach, not just new equipment: improving accessible parking, step-free routes, surfacing, seating, signage and inclusive play experiences so disabled and non-disabled children can play together more easily. It would explore a package including inclusive swings and roundabout equipment, wheelchair-accessible and sensory play features, better seating for carers, communication and wayfinding elements, quieter/less overwhelming play opportunities, and improved disabled parking in the Memorial Park car park. The aim is to make Memorial Park a genuinely welcoming destination for local families and visitors, while supporting healthier childhoods, social inclusion and longer dwell time in a major town asset.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Weave a green thread through the town
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council parks and assets teams; accessibility and disability organisations; inclusive play designers; local families and carers; schools and SEND partners; Kent County Council where parking or highway access is affected; play equipment suppliers; PiPA-informed or equivalent accessibility advisors; maintenance and grounds teams; potential funders and community fundraising partners

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for audit, co-design and early improvements; medium term for full build-out if required

Target start date: Sept 2026

Target end date: Dec 2026

What will change?

Outputs:

- An inclusive play audit and concept plan for Memorial Park covering access, parking, surfacing, seating, equipment and supporting facilities.
- Co-design activity with disabled children, parents, carers and local stakeholders.
- Installation of a phased package of inclusive equipment and play features.
- Improved accessible surfacing and step-free routes through the play area.
- Review and enhancement of disabled parking and route legibility from Memorial Park car park to the play space.

- Inclusive seating, shade/rest points and communication/wayfinding features.
- A maintenance and inspection plan so inclusive features remain usable and safe.

Outcomes:

- More disabled children and families are able to use Memorial Park confidently and stay longer.
- Children of different abilities can play together rather than separately.
- Memorial Park becomes a stronger family destination for Herne Bay and the wider district.
- Improved access to inclusive outdoor play supports physical activity, confidence, wellbeing and social connection.
- The park's role as a major green and leisure asset is strengthened through a more visibly inclusive offer.

Mechanism of change: Inclusive play works best when the whole experience is addressed, from arrival and parking to routes, surfacing, equipment, seating and supporting facilities. By removing practical barriers and co-designing the space with disabled children and families, Memorial Park can move beyond partial accessibility and become a place where more children can arrive, stay and play together. This improves everyday inclusion while also making the park more attractive to families choosing where to spend time.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; young people; disabled people; older people; carers and families; low-income households; nearby traders/businesses benefiting from increased family visits and dwell time

How we will know it has worked: Increased use of the play area by disabled children and families; positive user feedback on access, comfort and ability to play together; improved quality and availability of accessible parking and routes into the play space; stronger local perception of Memorial Park as an inclusive destination.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the scope of inclusive play ambition and whether the scheme is a major renewal or phased upgrade.
- Meaningful co-design with disabled children, parents and carers.
- Confirmation of parking, route and surfacing changes within Memorial Park and the car park.
- Alignment between play equipment choices and long-term maintenance capacity.
- Identification of capital and any supporting revenue for upkeep, inspections and replacements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/asset owner approval; internal parks and car park approvals; highways input if disabled parking or access arrangements affect adjoining highway areas; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Project could focus too narrowly on a small number of accessible items rather than a fully inclusive play experience.
- Poor surfacing or route design could limit real usability even if equipment improves.
- Maintenance shortfalls could quickly undermine specialist equipment and accessible surfacing.
- Parking changes may be contested if not clearly justified and communicated.
- Expectations may be high, so careful phasing and communication will be important.

Support needed to progress: A short inclusive play and access audit; co-design support with disabled children and families; specialist advice on inclusive play standards and equipment; concept design and cost planning; help identifying external capital funding and any complementary accessibility or community fundraising support.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely medium-to-high depending on whether the project is a partial upgrade or a full inclusive play renewal with parking and route improvements)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council capital, external inclusive play or accessibility funding, charitable/ community fundraising, and potential in-kind support through partners and campaign groups

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; the project is well suited to a blended funding model combining council investment, grant support and community fundraising

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay place-based assessment identifies Memorial Park as the town's most significant green space and a key leisure asset.
- The town centre strategy highlights the need to improve health, create opportunities for young people and strengthen access to inclusive recreation.
- Inclusive play guidance from Scope and PiPA emphasises that accessible parking, step-free routes, surfacing, seating and inclusive equipment all need to work together, while recent UK examples such as the Fair Play playground in Barnet show the value of co-designed, whole-site inclusive play rather than isolated accessible items.

5.5 Seafront play area

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay seafront play area, Central Parade seafront

Description: A full upgrade of the existing Herne Bay seafront play area to create a high-quality, inclusive and attractive destination play space for children and families. The current LEAP serves a wide catchment and benefits from excellent access, nearby parking and proximity to the seafront's wider attractions and amenities, but the equipment is worn and currently offers limited inclusive play value. The project would replace the existing equipment with a refreshed layout and a broader range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities, improving the quality of the seafront environment and strengthening its family offer. As a highly visible intervention in one of Herne Bay's key public spaces, the upgrade would support healthier outdoor activity, improve the visitor experience and help ensure the seafront functions as a more welcoming and well-used destination for both residents and visitors.

Linked strategy principle(s): Nurture a healthier Herne Bay; Restore and reconnect the coastal gems; Give the next generation the space to grow; Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; play equipment designers and contractors; accessibility and inclusive play specialists; local ward members; seafront operations and parks teams; community and family stakeholders as required

Project stage: Scoping/project development (complete)/consultation (complete)

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028)

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2027/28

What will change?

Outputs:

- A fully upgraded seafront LEAP with all new play equipment
- Improved inclusive and accessible play provision for a wider range of ages and needs.
- Refreshed site layout and surfacing.
- Improved overall play value, appearance and durability of the facility.
- A renewed family-focused seafront asset integrated with the wider visitor offer.

Outcomes:

- Children and families have access to a better quality seafront play offer in a prominent and accessible location
- Opportunities for physical activity, outdoor play and informal social interaction are improved
- The seafront becomes more attractive and usable for families, encouraging longer dwell time and repeat visits
- Inclusive provision is strengthened so more children can participate in play
- The quality and perception of the seafront public realm is improved through visible investment in a well-used family facility.

Mechanism of change: High-quality play spaces in well-connected public locations give children more reasons and opportunities to be active, spend time outdoors and interact socially. Upgrading worn equipment and broadening the range of inclusive play experiences should increase use of the site by local families and visitors, improve satisfaction with the seafront offer, and help the seafront function as a healthier and more family-friendly destination. Because the site already has strong access and a wide catchment, investment here should translate quickly into visible benefits.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; young people; families; disabled people; traders/businesses benefiting from increased family footfall and dwell time

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of the play area following completion
- Positive user feedback on the quality and inclusiveness of the upgraded equipment
- Improved perceptions of the seafront as a family-friendly destination.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Confirmation of scope and preferred equipment mix
- Available capital funding
- Procurement of suitable play supplier and contractor
- Detailed design that balances play value, inclusivity, durability and maintenance requirements
- Programming works to minimise disruption during peak seafront use periods.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner approval within council ownership; any routine safety, design and procurement approvals required for play area renewal; other permissions to be confirmed through detailed design if necessary

Key risks/issues:

- Project costs may increase if a higher-specification inclusive offer is pursued
- Construction timing on the seafront may need careful management to avoid peak visitor periods

- If the layout is not designed well, the opportunity to improve inclusive play and widen appeal could be under-realised
- Ongoing maintenance requirements must be understood so the renewed asset remains high quality over time.

Support needed to progress: Capital funding allocation; project development and procurement support; input from inclusive play specialists and relevant council teams to finalise the brief and delivery programme.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Approximately £120,000

Likely funding route: Grant/capital funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Well-designed play area upgrades are associated with increased play value, higher usage and longer dwell time for families, especially where sites are easy to reach and close to other attractions.
- Inclusive play equipment and layouts improve participation for a wider range of children and help broaden the social and wellbeing benefits of public play spaces.
- Refurbishment of worn equipment in destination locations typically improves user satisfaction, strengthens perceptions of safety and quality, and supports more frequent outdoor activity.

5.6 Cafe park

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (parks, assets and property), with an appointed concession operator responsible for the cafe offer and day-to-day activation linked to the adjacent sports facilities

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate/transport and environment and property lead (TBC), with operator contact to be confirmed through procurement or lease/licence agreement

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Memorial Park toilet block/ pavilion area, adjoining tennis courts and wider sports area within Memorial Park, Herne Bay

Description: A project to extend and remodel the existing toilet block at Memorial Park to create a small park cafe concession with retained and improved public conveniences, linked directly to a wider activation plan for the adjacent tennis courts and outdoor sports offer. The concession would be let on the basis that the operator provides more than refreshments: they would also help animate the courts through programming, equipment hire and simple booking/hosting functions, including supporting newer activities such as pickleball. The scheme would include secure storage for sports equipment and a modest upgrade to the surrounding setting so the facility works as a welcoming park hub. The aim is to make Memorial Park more active, sociable and better used throughout the day, improving the park's ability to support healthy recreation, intergenerational use and events while building on its role as Herne Bay's most important green space.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Back the Bay
- Weave a green thread through the town
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council parks, property and public realm teams; appointed cafe/ concession operator; tennis and pickleball clubs or local sports activators; schools and youth organisations; community safety partners; accessibility groups; event organisers; equipment suppliers; potential sponsors or local health and wellbeing partners

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: 2030 (subject to feasibility, permissions and operator procurement)

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and concept design for extension/ remodelling of the existing toilet block.
- A preferred operating model and lease/licence pack for a cafe concession tied to sports activation responsibilities.
- Refurbished or extended building including public toilets, serving area and secure sports equipment storage.
- Upgraded setting around the building with seating, signage and practical park-facing frontages.
- Activation plan for the tennis courts including pickleball, casual hire, introductory sessions and basic booking or stewarding arrangements.
- Procurement and appointment of an operator or delivery partner.

Outcomes:

- Memorial Park becomes a more active and welcoming destination throughout the day rather than a space used only for passing through or occasional recreation.
- Improved refreshments, toilets and equipment storage support longer stays by families, park users and sports participants.
- Tennis courts and associated sports facilities are used more often, including by young people and casual users.
- The park develops a stronger social and health-focused role, helping address the town's need for better everyday leisure and youth activity.
- The concession model provides a more sustainable stewardship presence in the park, improving perceptions of care, safety and animation.

Mechanism of change: Memorial Park is Herne Bay's principal green space and already attracts a wide range of users, but the strategy work identifies a lack of services and supporting infrastructure that limits how well it can host activity and events. By combining a small commercial concession with public conveniences, equipment storage and a requirement to animate the adjacent courts, the project creates both a practical base and a day-to-day presence. This improves the park offer, makes casual participation in sport easier, and gives people more reasons to stay longer, meet others and use the park more regularly.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; young people; older people; families; sports users; low-income households; disabled people (subject to inclusive design of toilets, routes and activity offer); nearby traders/businesses benefiting from stronger park use and events

How we will know it has worked: Increased use of the tennis courts and wider sports area; improved dwell time and footfall in Memorial Park; operator in place with regular activation or hire offer running; user feedback shows better experience of facilities, refreshments and toilets; stronger use of the park by young people, families and casual sports participants.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Confirmation of site constraints and condition of the existing toilet block.
- Agreement on the balance between public toilets, cafe floorspace and storage.
- Identification of a viable operator model that includes sports activation responsibilities.
- Alignment with existing parks management, court maintenance and any booking arrangements.
- Sufficient demand and pricing model to support a small concession in a park setting.
- Inclusive design and safeguarding considerations for youth-focused use.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; landlord/landowner approvals; building regulations; licensing for food and drink operation if required; utilities and servicing agreements; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- The concession may be difficult to make financially viable without the right scale and lease terms.
- If public toilet responsibilities are unclear the service quality could quickly decline.
- Sports activation could be weak unless the operator is selected for more than catering experience.
- Capital costs may rise if the existing building has significant structural or servicing issues.
- The project could underperform if routes, seating and the wider setting are not improved alongside the building itself.

Support needed to progress: Feasibility and cost planning; operator and market testing; concept design for the building and surrounding area; legal and property support to structure a concession or lease with activation obligations; engagement with sports users, youth groups and accessibility partners; identification of funding for capital works and any early activation pilots.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely medium capital cost depending on extent of extension, remodelling and servicing upgrades)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council capital, concession/operator investment, potential sport, health or community infrastructure funding, and possible in-kind support for equipment or activation

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; the project may align well with sport and wellbeing funding streams and with operator-led investment if a viable concession model is demonstrated

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay place-based assessment identifies Memorial Park as the town's most significant green space and notes that it currently lacks services and supporting infrastructure for events, including essentials such as water, electricity and changing facilities.
- The Herne Bay town centre strategy emphasises the need to nurture a healthier Herne Bay, improve opportunities for young people, and make better use of parks, leisure and community assets.
- Engagement findings also highlight demand for more activities for young people, more investment in parks and public facilities, and stronger everyday support for healthy recreation and community use.
- A cafe and sports hub model at Memorial Park responds directly to these themes by combining a practical service base with a more active and sociable park offer.

5.7 Hydrothermal bathing

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (Property & Regeneration/seafront assets), with an appointed concession operator/tenant responsible for delivering and operating the hydrothermal bathing facility

Main contact: Canterbury City Council Property & Regeneration team, with operator contact to be confirmed following the expression of interest and lease process

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Possible option at the moment is a site at the East Cliff Promenade/eastern esplanade, Herne Bay, on vacant land between the former National Coastwatch station and the first of the new beach huts, along the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail

Description: A seafront concession opportunity for a site-specific hydrothermal bathing facility on Herne Bay's eastern esplanade, expected to include a sauna and potentially complementary elements such as cold-water plunge/ice bath and/or hot tubs, subject to operator proposal and approvals. The project is intended to animate a currently vacant seafront site and expand Herne Bay's health, wellbeing and water-based leisure offer in a way that supports year-round use. The council is seeking an operator with a strong track record in seafront hydrothermal facilities who can bring forward a visually high-quality, environmentally sustainable and locally responsive proposal. The offer should help people better access the water for recreation, contribute positively to the identity of the promenade, and encourage more footfall to the eastern seafront and the King Charles III England Coast Path. The operator would take a lease on the site and be responsible for obtaining consents, providing the facility and running it in line with agreed design, environmental and operational requirements.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council Property & Regeneration team; appointed concession operator/tenant; planning and building control; seafront and public realm teams; utilities providers; accessibility and environmental stakeholders; local community and promenade users; potential local suppliers and east Kent delivery partners

Project stage: Live concession opportunity/procurement

Timescale: Short term for operator selection, lease completion, consents and installation; initial operational term with potential continuation subject to performance and any future agreement

Target start date: Autumn 2026 (expression of interest and operator selection)

Target end date: 2027 for initial lease term commencement and first year of operation, subject to lease completion, planning and installation programme

What will change?

Outputs:

- Selection of an operator through the council's concession expression of interest process.
- Completion of a lease for an initial one-year term.
- A site-specific hydrothermal bathing facility installed on the eastern esplanade, potentially including sauna(s) and complementary plunge/heat elements in line with the operator's approved proposal.

- Design and access arrangements that respond to the promenade setting and protect the surrounding environment.
- A clear utilities solution for power and water where required.
- Agreed signage and operating arrangements.
- An operational year-round wellness offer that may include cold drinks as ancillary sales but excludes hot drinks, alcohol and food.

Outcomes:

- Increased year-round footfall and activity on the eastern seafront.
- A stronger health and wellbeing offer linked to water-based recreation.
- Improved use and visibility of a currently vacant site along the seafront.
- A more distinctive and contemporary leisure destination that complements Herne Bay's wider offer.
- Stronger connection between promenade users, the water and the King Charles III England Coast Path.
- A concession model that supports local identity, community wellbeing and wider confidence in seafront activation.

Mechanism of change: The eastern esplanade currently has a vacant site and less activity than the core central seafront. Introducing a high-quality hydrothermal bathing concession creates a clear reason to visit this part of the promenade throughout the year, not just in peak summer. By combining wellness activity, access to the water, and a visually distinctive but locally grounded facility, the project can draw people eastward, extend dwell time, and broaden Herne Bay's leisure offer while making use of a concession model rather than direct council operation.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; older people; younger adults; low-income households if inclusive pricing or community sessions are offered; local businesses benefiting from increased footfall; promenade users; people seeking health and wellbeing activity

How we will know it has worked: An operator is appointed and the facility opens; the site is in regular use across more than the peak tourist season; user feedback shows the offer improves perceptions of the eastern seafront and access to wellness activity; the facility operates in accordance with lease and environmental requirements; and the project generates visible footfall and profile for this part of the promenade.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Successful appointment of a suitable operator through the expression of interest process.
- Confirmation of the final site area and lease plan.
- Operator due diligence on site suitability and viability.
- Planning permission and any other statutory consents secured by the tenant.
- A workable utilities solution for water and electricity.
- Landlord approval of design, layout, signage, operating hours and loading arrangements.
- A proposal that is robust enough for a promenade environment and environmental constraints.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Lease/ landlord agreement; planning permission and building regulations as required; any premises or operational licences needed for the approved use; utilities approvals; environmental and health and safety compliance; other consents to be confirmed by the operator through due diligence and proposal development

Key risks/issues:

- The facility may prove difficult to deliver if the site is too constrained, exposed or costly to service.
- Utilities availability remains a practical risk and may require operator-led solutions.

- Viability may be sensitive to the short initial lease term.
- The proposal could be weakened if design quality is poor or not in keeping with the promenade.
- Environmental or planning issues could delay delivery.
- The operator must manage waste, maintenance, insurance and public liability to a high standard in a seafront setting.

Support needed to progress: Council-side completion of the concession and lease process; site plan confirmation; operator market interest and proposal development; planning and design input; utilities coordination; and legal/property support to finalise lease terms, operating conditions and any landlord approvals.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Primarily operator-funded, with council costs focused on asset, legal and concession management; operator capital cost unknown and dependent on proposal type, utilities approach and installation method

Likely funding route: Private/concession-led, with operator investment in the facility and council input through lease and asset management

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: The council is already marketing the concession opportunity and has prepared draft heads of terms for a lease, including a proposed one-year initial term and landlord-side lease structure; no direct capital funding for the operator's installation is confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- The seafront concession specification states that the council is seeking a hydrothermal bathing facility on the eastern esplanade to support health, wellbeing and increased year-round footfall, and highlights local demand for water-based and wellness activities through the Herne Bay town centre strategy.
- The latest draft heads of terms indicate an initial one-year lease, tenant responsibility for planning and consents, public liability and repair obligations, and a permitted use focused on a hydrothermal bathing facility with cold drinks only as ancillary sales.
- The specification also emphasises the need for positive visual impact, environmental sustainability, local relevance and a design that supports access to the sea and the King Charles III England Coast Path.
- These documents provide a much firmer delivery basis than a generic project idea and show that the opportunity is already in live concession form.

5.8 Inflation station

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with local watersports providers, seafront partners and beach safety stakeholders

Main contact: Place Directorate (TBC), with nominated watersports partner contact to be confirmed

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay seafront, ideally close to the main watersports launch area and promenade access point, with potential locations to be confirmed around the central seafront/beach activity zone

Description: A practical seafront infrastructure project to install a publicly accessible stand-up paddleboard (SUP) and watersports inflation/wash-down point in Herne Bay. The facility would provide an air pump, hose/rinse connection and potentially basic storage or changing support nearby, making it easier for residents and visitors to use paddleboards and other inflatable watersports equipment safely and conveniently. The project is intended to support a stronger water-based leisure offer in Herne Bay, encourage healthier activity, and help the town make better use of its coastal location. It would also complement wider ambitions around inclusive access to the water, seafront activation and a more coherent leisure offer linked to health, wellbeing and visitor experience.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local paddleboarding/watersports providers; beach safety partners; utilities providers; seafront businesses; accessibility groups; local community watersports groups; Kent County Council if public realm/highway interfaces are affected

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: 2030

What will change?

Outputs:

- A feasibility and location review for a SUP inflation station on Herne Bay seafront.
- Installation of a publicly accessible inflation point with suitable power/pump arrangement.
- Hose or rinse-down facility for equipment where feasible.
- Clear user guidance and signage on safe operation and responsible watersports use.
- Agreed maintenance, inspection and servicing arrangements.
- Potential pilot partnership model with local watersports groups or operators to help steward and promote the facility.

Outcomes:

- More people are able to access paddleboarding and similar water-based activities more easily and conveniently.
- Herne Bay develops a stronger and more coherent seafront leisure offer.
- The seafront supports healthier and more active lifestyles for residents and visitors.
- The town becomes more attractive to people seeking informal recreation and low-barrier watersports activity.
- Increased use of the beachfront for positive, health-promoting activity supports a stronger visitor experience and local pride.

Mechanism of change: One of the barriers to casual paddleboarding and inflatable watersports is the lack of basic enabling infrastructure. By providing a reliable place to inflate, rinse and prepare equipment close to the launch point, the project reduces friction and makes participation easier for both regular users and newcomers. That can increase activity levels, support watersports culture in the town, and strengthen Herne Bay's identity as a practical and welcoming place for coastal recreation.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; young people; older people; traders/businesses; low-income households; local watersports users; families

How we will know it has worked:

- The facility is installed and operational.
- Usage by paddleboarders and other watersports users is evident.

- Local user feedback shows the infrastructure makes seafront activity easier and more attractive.
- Partner organisations or businesses report increased interest in water-based activity in Herne Bay.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the most suitable location, balancing convenience, safety and servicing.
- Access to utilities or a viable standalone pumping solution.
- Maintenance and inspection arrangements so the facility remains operational and safe.
- Coordination with seafront management, beach safety and any nearby businesses.
- Clear signage and user guidance to avoid misuse or conflict.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/asset owner agreement; utilities approvals; planning permission if a permanent structure or service point is installed; highways/public realm approvals where relevant; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- The facility could be poorly used if located too far from the preferred launch point.
- Maintenance failure or vandalism could quickly undermine confidence in the project.
- Utilities and servicing costs may be higher than expected.
- Without clear operating guidance, the station could be misused for unrelated purposes.
- The project may need to sit within a wider watersports management approach to avoid isolated delivery.

Support needed to progress: A short feasibility exercise covering location, technical options and maintenance model; partner engagement with local paddleboarding and watersports users; utilities and installation advice; modest capital funding for installation; communications support to promote safe and appropriate use.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium depending on whether the station is a simple standalone pump point or includes water connection, housing, drainage and associated signage)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council enabling support, external small grant funding, sponsorship, and possible in-kind partner support from local watersports or seafront businesses

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage; the project may be suitable for small-scale sponsorship or partnership support due to its visible and practical nature

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay Town Centre Strategy identifies the need to strengthen the town's leisure offer and develop complementary water-based activity as part of a healthier Herne Bay.
- Engagement findings in the strategy show interest in better access to the water and more activities connected to the seafront.
- The place-based assessment and strategy both indicate that Herne Bay's coastal location is an underused asset and that practical infrastructure can help turn that asset into a stronger health, recreation and visitor proposition.



Image: © Leanne Bracey

6 Give the next generation the space to grow

Work with the community to design and deepen cultural, community and leisure programmes with young people, ensuring they can shape the town's future and gain the skills, confidence and opportunities to thrive. Investment in youth spaces, creative hubs and skills pathways will help retain talent

6.1 The King's Hall creative skills hub

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council & East Kent College Group

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): The King's Hall and associated spaces within the seafront and town centre area

Description: A skills-led cultural partnership centred on The King's Hall and developed in collaboration with East Kent Colleges Group to create practical learning, training and progression opportunities linked to theatre, live events, production and the wider creative industries. The project would use The King's Hall as a real-world learning environment where local students can develop technical, creative and operational skills connected to live performance and venue management.

The project could include training and placements linked to lighting, sound engineering, stage management, event production, hospitality, marketing, digital content, front-of-house operations, performing arts and cultural programming. It would also explore opportunities for community use, youth activity, creative workshops and wider partnerships with local arts and cultural organisations.

Longer term there could be potential to establish a community recording studio as part of the site offer. However to build and equip the studio would require new capital funding which is not identified at present.

The primary purpose of the project is practical local skills development and improving access to creative industry pathways for local residents and young people. The project would help position The King's Hall not only as a venue, but as a visible centre for learning, participation and cultural opportunity within Herne Bay.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council, East Kent College Group, The King's Hall, local schools and youth organisations, arts and cultural organisations, local creative businesses and freelancers, community groups, potential university and industry partners

Project stage: Early partnership development/ scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2027/28

Target end date: Initial programme and pilot activity by 2028

What will change?

Outputs:

- Partnership agreement between The King's Hall and East Kent Colleges Group.
- Pilot training and placement programme linked to live venue activity.
- Dedicated learning and rehearsal opportunities within The King's Hall.
- Student involvement in technical production, events and programming.
- Development of creative industry pathways linked to local employment opportunities.
- Community workshops, youth engagement and cultural participation activity.

Outcomes:

- More local young people gain practical creative and technical skills.
- Increased access to cultural and creative industry pathways within Herne Bay.
- Stronger links between education, culture and the town centre economy.
- Increased use and activation of The King's Hall throughout the year.
- Improved confidence, aspiration and participation among young people.

Mechanism of change: Many young people struggle to access practical creative industry experience outside larger urban centres. By using a functioning cultural venue as a real-world training environment, the project creates visible and accessible pathways into employment, further education and creative participation. Embedding learning within the town centre also increases activity, strengthens local identity and reinforces the role of culture within regeneration.

Beneficiaries: Young people; students; residents; creative freelancers; cultural organisations; visitors; local businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of students participating in programmes and placements.
- Increased use of The King's Hall outside traditional event periods.
- Positive learner and partner feedback.
- Progression into employment, further training or creative opportunities.
- Increased cultural participation and youth engagement activity.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership agreement between CCC, EKC and venue operators.
- Availability of teaching and technical space within The King's Hall.
- Staff capacity and curriculum alignment.
- Sustainable operational and programming model.
- Funding for equipment, coordination and training delivery.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Operational agreements; venue licensing considerations; safeguarding and educational compliance requirements; any building adaptation approvals if physical changes are required.

Key risks/issues:

- Venue operational pressures may limit educational use at peak times.
- Revenue funding may be needed beyond initial pilot activity.
- Risk of limited long-term engagement if progression routes are unclear.
- Balancing community, commercial and educational uses within the venue.

Support needed to progress: Partnership facilitation between CCC and EKC; feasibility and operational planning support; curriculum and industry engagement; funding for equipment and programme coordination; stakeholder engagement with local creative sector partners.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Mixed - educational funding, cultural grants, council enabling support, sponsorship and partnership investment. There is longer term potential to introduce a community recording studio into the offer but this is currently unfunded and new capital funding sources would need to be found.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential use of existing King's Hall infrastructure and EKC staffing/resources as part of pilot delivery model.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Place-based cultural learning programmes are most effective when linked to real venues and live operational environments rather than isolated classroom settings.
- Creative industry and technical production skills are often underrepresented in coastal towns despite significant demand within events, hospitality and cultural sectors.
- The Herne Bay strategy and engagement process identified strong demand for more opportunities for young people, better use of cultural assets and stronger pathways linking learning, participation and the town centre economy.
- Multi-use cultural venues that combine education, production and community activity tend to generate more consistent year-round use and stronger civic ownership than single-purpose event venues.

6.2 Seasonal youth offer

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with youth, cultural and community partners

Main contact: Communities directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Seasonal and pop-up locations across Herne Bay town centre and seafront, including Wimereux Square, Memorial Park, the seafront promenade, The King's Hall setting and other suitable public/community venues

Description: A coordinated seasonal youth programme that creates more visible, positive and well-supported activities for young people in Herne Bay, especially during peak holiday periods and times when antisocial behaviour and boredom are more likely to increase. The project would combine structured cultural, creative, leisure and informal activity offers across the town centre and seafront, using existing spaces more actively and linking young people to skills, volunteering, events and community opportunities. Rather than relying on a single venue, the seasonal youth offer would work as a flexible programme model, bringing together partners to animate spaces with youth-led sessions, pop-ups, sport and recreation, creative workshops, music and performance activity, and targeted outreach. The aim is to give young people more reasons to be in the town positively, strengthen safety and belonging, and support a more balanced and inclusive town-centre experience for everyone.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Youth providers; local schools and colleges; East Kent College Group where relevant; Heron Neighbourhood Team; cultural organisations; sports and leisure partners; voluntary and community groups; Kent Police and community safety partners; The King's Hall and other venue partners; family and wellbeing services; local businesses and sponsors; event organisers and outreach teams

Project stage: Scoping/programme development

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for programme design, pilot delivery and seasonal testing; medium term for a recurring annual offer

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for an established seasonal delivery model and partner programme

What will change?

Outputs:

- A mapped seasonal programme of youth-focused activities across summer, school holidays and other peak periods.
- Identified venues and outdoor spaces with agreed host arrangements.
- Youth outreach and engagement plan linked to town-centre and seafront locations.
- Pilot sessions and events covering creative, cultural, leisure and informal activity.
- A partner delivery group and annual programme calendar.
- Simple communications and signposting so young people and families know what is available.
- An evaluation framework covering participation, feedback and community safety outcomes.

Outcomes:

- More young people have access to positive, visible and affordable things to do in Herne Bay.
- Town-centre and seafront spaces feel more balanced, inclusive and actively managed during peak times.
- Young people build stronger links to culture, skills, volunteering and local services.
- Perceptions of antisocial behaviour reduce where positive programming and outreach are in place.
- Herne Bay develops a stronger reputation as a town that invests in and welcomes its younger residents.

Mechanism of change: The evidence for Herne Bay shows a clear demand for more activities for young people and links seasonal antisocial behaviour partly to lack of structured opportunities, space and support. By creating a visible programme of youth-focused activity in places where young people already are, and by linking this to outreach, skills and community partners, the town can provide better alternatives to boredom and exclusion. This should improve youth experience directly while also contributing to safer, more welcoming public spaces for everyone.

Beneficiaries: Young people; residents; families; visitors; community groups; traders/businesses; low-income households; students

How we will know it has worked: Participation levels in seasonal youth activities increase; young people report that there is more to do locally and that the offer feels relevant; partners observe improved engagement and better coordination between services; and local feedback indicates a more positive atmosphere in targeted locations during delivery periods.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on lead coordination and partner roles.
- Capacity from youth, cultural and outreach organisations to deliver seasonal activity.
- Access to suitable indoor and outdoor spaces with clear management arrangements.
- Safeguarding, risk management and staffing/volunteer support.
- A practical programme budget for delivery, equipment, promotion and evaluation.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Event licences and permissions where required; landowner/venue agreements; safeguarding and operational approvals; highways or public realm permissions where activity uses outdoor spaces; other consents to be confirmed through programme planning

Key risks/issues:

- The programme could become fragmented without strong coordination.
- Short-term funding may make it difficult to sustain activity across multiple seasons.
- Some outdoor activity may be weather-sensitive.
- Partner capacity may be stretched during holiday periods.
- If young people are not involved in shaping the offer, activities may fail to attract the intended audience.

Support needed to progress: Officer coordination to convene partners and shape a delivery model; small-scale programme funding and commissioning resource; support from community safety and outreach partners; communications and youth engagement support; and baseline/evaluation resource to understand impact and improve the model over time.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage; likely low-to-medium revenue cost depending on programme scale, staffing, venues and seasonal duration

Likely funding route: Mixed - council revenue, youth and community funding, external grants, partner contributions, sponsorship and in-kind delivery support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be developed through partner discussions; in-kind space, staffing and programme support may be available through local venues, community organisations and delivery partners. Possible Marmot accelerator funding.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay town centre strategy identifies giving the next generation the space to grow as a core strategic principle and states that investment in youth spaces, creative hubs and skills pathways will help retain talent and improve life chances.
- It also highlights seasonal antisocial behaviour involving young people as a current challenge and reports strong public support for more youth clubs, seafront activities and better opportunities for young people.
- The place-based assessment similarly identifies increasing activities for young people as a major theme from engagement and links deprivation and antisocial behaviour to the need for stronger education, employment, skills, health and youth-focused initiatives.
- Together, these sources support a visible, place-based seasonal youth programme as an appropriate and well-grounded intervention.

6.3 Community garden

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with community growing, youth and education partners

Main contact: Place Directorate, with nominated community growing and youth delivery contacts

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): A suitable community growing space in or close to Herne Bay town centre, ideally linked to an existing civic, cultural, youth or education setting and accessible from key walking routes

Description: A community garden project that creates a shared growing and outdoor learning

space for young people and the wider community in Herne Bay. The project would provide a practical, visible and low-barrier way to combine youth activity, community stewardship, food growing, environmental learning and wellbeing in one place. Rather than being only a beautification scheme, the garden would work as a social and educational asset: somewhere for regular youth sessions, volunteering, intergenerational activity, small-scale horticultural learning, and community-led care of place. The garden should be designed so it feels welcoming and usable for different ages and abilities, with accessible paths, seating, raised beds where appropriate, and a clear stewardship model. The aim is to give young people more positive opportunities, improve access to green space and strengthen everyday pride, participation and ownership in the town.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Weave a green thread through the town
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town

Delivery partners: Community growing groups; Beach Creative; local schools and colleges; youth providers; voluntary and community organisations; accessibility groups; parks and public realm teams; local residents; health and wellbeing partners; potential food-growing, environmental or education partners

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for pilot establishment and an agreed stewardship model

What will change?

Outputs:

- Identification and preparation of a suitable site.
- A simple design and growing plan including accessible beds, seating and circulation.
- A pilot programme of youth and community growing sessions.
- Clear stewardship arrangements covering maintenance, watering and seasonal care.
- Planting of productive and/or pollinator-friendly beds.
- Communications/signage that explain the project and invite participation.

Outcomes:

- More young people and residents gain access to positive outdoor activity and practical environmental learning.
- A visible town-centre-adjacent space becomes greener and better cared for.
- Community ownership and stewardship increase
- Social connection improves across different age groups.
- The project contributes to healthier lifestyles, pride in place and a stronger culture of participation.

Mechanism of change: Community gardens create structured but low-pressure opportunities for people to spend time together, learn practical skills and care for shared space. By linking youth activity with visible stewardship and accessible outdoor provision, the project can improve wellbeing, increase participation and give people a stronger sense of ownership over part of the town. This is especially valuable in a place where young people and public facilities have been identified as needing more support.

Beneficiaries: Young people; residents; older people; students; low-income households; community groups; disabled people; families

How we will know it has worked: The garden is established and maintained over time; participation in youth and community sessions is sustained; users report improved wellbeing, enjoyment and sense of ownership; and the space is visibly greener, more used and better cared for than before.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Identification of a suitable and accessible site.
- Agreement on long-term stewardship and maintenance responsibilities.
- Engagement from youth, community and delivery partners.
- Modest capital for setup and initial planting.
- A practical programme model so the garden is actively used rather than passively installed.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/site agreement; planning permission if structures or change of use are required; utilities and water access agreements where needed; safeguarding and operational approvals for organised youth activity; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Without clear stewardship the garden could become difficult to maintain.
- Unsuitable site conditions may limit delivery.
- Volunteer or partner capacity could fluctuate.
- If young people are not involved in shaping the project, the space may not achieve regular use or long-term ownership.

Support needed to progress: Site-finding and feasibility support; coordination between council, youth and community partners; small-scale capital funding for setup; horticultural and accessibility input at design stage; and officer/community capacity to establish a realistic stewardship and activity plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage; likely low-to-medium depending on site preparation, accessibility works, planting and any storage or water infrastructure needed

Likely funding route: Mixed - council enabling support, innovation funding, grants for community growing, environment or youth activity, sponsorship, in-kind materials and volunteer contribution

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be developed through partner discussions; volunteer time, donated materials and support from local growing or community organisations may form part of the delivery model

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- The Herne Bay town centre strategy identifies giving the next generation the space to grow as a core strategic principle and links the town's future to better youth opportunities, healthier lives and stronger community ownership.
- It also promotes weaving a green thread through the town and improving public spaces so they are more welcoming and better used.
- The place-based assessment highlights limited green infrastructure in the town centre, high levels of deprivation, strong demand for more activities for young people, and the need for investment in public and community facilities.
- Together, these sources support a small-scale but visible project that combines youth activity, green infrastructure, wellbeing and local stewardship.

6.4 Employment and skills hub

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council, working with employment, health, education and community partners

Main contact: Place and Community directorates

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay town centre, ideally in an accessible everyday location linked to wider community, health or gateway services; exact site to be confirmed

Description:

A joined-up employment and skills hub for Herne Bay that brings together employment support, training, careers advice and wider everyday support in one accessible town-centre location. The project is intended to respond to local concerns about youth unemployment, NEETs and wider barriers to work, while avoiding an overly narrow age-limited model. Although there is a strong case for a focus on young people up to the age of 25, the hub should also be open to older residents who need support with work, skills, confidence or access to services. The strongest version of the project would align with the wider Community Health Point concept by offering a co-located mix of employment, wellbeing and practical support functions, such as advice on housing, mental health, money and benefits, and signposting into local and national schemes. The hub should also help build clearer pathways into sectors where Herne Bay and the wider district need stronger local workforce development, including health and social care.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay
- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town

Delivery partners:

Canterbury City Council; Department for Work and Pensions; Jobcentre Plus; Kent County Council Public Health; Community Health Point/wider health partners; local colleges and training providers; schools and youth services; housing, mental health and advice organisations; VCSE partners; employers and sector representatives, especially in health and social care; Heron Neighbourhood Team and relevant community partners

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for concept development, partnership model and pilot delivery; medium term for full establishment and service expansion

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2027/28 for agreed model, pilot operation and review

What will change?

Outputs:

- A defined Employment and Skills Hub model for Herne Bay, including target groups, core services, referral pathways and delivery partners.
- Identification of a suitable town-centre location, ideally linked to wider community health or gateway-style provision.
- A co-located support offer bringing together employment, skills and wider practical support such as housing, mental health, money and benefits advice.
- A youth-focused pathway for under-25s, including support for NEETs, careers guidance, training access, work readiness and progression routes.

- A wider all-age pathway so over-25s can also access support where needed.
- Stronger links to existing government-backed employment schemes, local providers and sector-based opportunities, including health and social care.
- A pilot or first phase delivery model with monitoring and review arrangements.

Outcomes:

- More local people, especially young people and those facing multiple barriers, are supported into employment, training or further education.
- Residents can access employment and wider support more easily in one place, rather than navigating separate disconnected services.
- Herne Bay gains a more joined-up and preventative support offer that links work, skills, health and wellbeing.
- Local pathways into priority sectors, including health and social care, are strengthened.
- The town centre benefits from a visible support hub that brings people into an accessible everyday location and supports wider inclusion.
- Partners are better coordinated around local employment, skills and resilience needs.

Mechanism of change: People facing barriers to work often need more than just job-search support. A co-located hub can reduce friction by bringing employment, skills and wider support together in one place, making it easier for residents to access the right help at the right time. If the hub is linked to wider health and community provision, it can respond more effectively to the real reasons people struggle to enter or stay in work, while creating clearer pathways into training, confidence-building and local job opportunities.

Beneficiaries: Residents; young people; NEETs; over-25s needing support into work; low-income households; people facing health or wellbeing barriers to employment; employers seeking stronger local pathways into work and training

How we will know it has worked:

- Residents are using the hub and being referred successfully into employment, training, education or wider support.
- Young people and other target groups report that the service is easier to access and more useful than fragmented support routes.
- Partners can evidence stronger coordination, referral pathways and local progression into work-related opportunities.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on whether the hub is a standalone project or co-located within a wider Community Health Point/community support model.
- Identification of a suitable accessible town-centre site.
- Commitment from core delivery partners to provide services, referrals or staff resource.
- Clear definition of the target groups, especially the balance between youth focus and all-age inclusion.
- Alignment with local and national employment support programmes and any emerging Marmot-related funding or pilot opportunities.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner or lease agreement for premises; any property, fit-out or operational approvals linked to the chosen site; data-sharing and service partnership agreements; other permissions to be confirmed through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- The project could become too narrowly framed around "youth" and miss the wider need for all-age employment and support provision.
- Without co-location or strong referral pathways, the hub may duplicate existing services rather than improving access.
- Partner capacity and long-term staffing/resource commitments may be difficult to secure.

- If no suitable accessible town-centre location is identified, the project may lose the everyday visibility and convenience that make the model attractive.
- The project may be seen as an employment-only intervention when the evidence suggests wider barriers such as housing, mental health and financial resilience also need to be addressed.

Support needed to progress: Partner convening and project development support; agreement on delivery model and location; engagement with DWP, Public Health and wider support providers; feasibility and service design resource; identification of funding and any pilot opportunities

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage

Likely funding route: Mixed – potential combination of grant funding, partner resource, public health or Marmot-related funding, service alignment, and in-kind support through co-location

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be confirmed; the project appears to align with emerging Marmot coastal work, Community Health Point ambitions and wider partnership discussions

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Local discussion has identified Herne Bay as needing stronger project development around skills, work experience, training and employment opportunities, especially for young people and in relation to health and social care pathways.
- Feedback on the draft directory suggested that an employment and skills hub should ideally sit alongside a wider co-located support offer, including housing, mental health, money and benefits support, rather than operating as a narrow standalone service only for under-25s.
- Wider partnership conversations linked to the Marmot and Local Health Alliance context indicate strong relevance to Herne Bay, particularly given local health inequalities and the need to make sure the town is not overlooked in district-level programmes.



Image: © Sarah Baulch

7 Back the Bay

Empowering businesses, residents and communities come together to build a stronger and fairer Herne Bay – ensuring regeneration benefits everyone. Enabling people to maximise their capabilities and take ownership of the town's future

7.1 Coastal events forum

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (place shaping/events coordination role), with local event organisers and partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Town centre, seafront, pier approaches, Memorial Park, Wimereux Square and wider coastal event locations

Description: Establish a coordinated Coastal Events Forum for Herne Bay to bring together organisers, venues, businesses, cultural organisations, community groups and public agencies involved in events and programming across the town. The forum would support better coordination of the annual events calendar, reduce clashes, identify collaborative opportunities, improve communication and help build a stronger year-round programme of activity linked to Herne Bay's identity as a coastal town. It would also provide a space to discuss practical delivery issues such as infrastructure, licensing, accessibility, waste management, marketing, sponsorship and visitor experience. The intention is not to replace existing events or organisations, but to strengthen collaboration and create a more joined-up approach to programming and promotion.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Event organisers; Canterbury City Council; local businesses and traders; Visit Canterbury; cultural organisations; emergency services; community groups; tourism businesses; accessibility groups; seafront and market stakeholders

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Ongoing forum and coordinated annual programme

What will change?

Outputs:

- Establishment of a regular Coastal Events Forum meeting structure
- Shared annual events calendar and coordination process
- Joint promotion and communications opportunities identified and delivered
- Shared guidance/resources covering licensing, accessibility, sustainability and event management
- Identification of infrastructure gaps and opportunities for collaborative funding bids or sponsorship
- Stronger alignment between town centre, seafront and seasonal programming.

Outcomes:

- Better coordinated and more visible events programme across Herne Bay
- Increased visitor numbers and dwell time linked to a stronger year-round offer
- Reduced duplication and scheduling clashes between events
- Improved support network for smaller and community-led events
- Stronger sense of identity and civic pride through visible cultural and coastal activity.

Mechanism of change: Herne Bay already hosts a range of events and community activity, but coordination between organisers is limited. By creating a shared forum and calendar, organisers can collaborate

more effectively, align promotion and infrastructure needs, and strengthen the overall visitor and resident experience. Better coordination should support a more resilient and ambitious events programme while helping businesses and partners plan more confidently.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of participating organisations and regular attendance at forum meetings
- Shared annual programme established and maintained
- Positive organiser feedback on collaboration and coordination
- Increase in events activity or visitor attendance across the year.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Ongoing participation from event organisers and partners
- Coordination resource to manage meetings and communications
- Alignment with existing town centre and seafront programming
- Clear terms of reference and purpose for the forum
- Effective communication and information-sharing arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with the forum itself; individual events may require licensing, highways approvals or landowner permissions as appropriate

Key risks/issues:

- Limited engagement if partners do not see clear value in participation
- Forum becoming discussion-focused without practical outcomes
- Capacity pressures on smaller volunteer-led organisations
- Risk of duplication with other existing groups or networks if scope is unclear.

Support needed to progress: Convening support from CCC; facilitation and administration resource; communications support; venue and digital meeting arrangements

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low

Likely funding route: Council revenue support and in-kind partner participation

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing events networks and relationships provide a strong basis for development

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Coastal towns with fragmented volunteer-led events programmes often struggle with duplicated paperwork, inconsistent stewarding standards and avoidable pressure on a small number of organisers. Shared event coordination forums have been shown to improve resilience, reduce volunteer burnout and make it easier for smaller events to operate safely and consistently.
- Herne Bay's strategy engagement identified events and animation as one of the town's strongest existing assets, but also highlighted concerns about disconnected activity, uneven coordination and the need to better link the seafront, high street and wider community activity.
- A shared events structure can help build cumulative impact across the year by encouraging coordinated programming, shared promotion and common operational standards, increasing the likelihood that events generate wider town-centre spend and repeat visitation rather than isolated one-off activity.

7.2 Tourism infrastructure grants

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Town centre, seafront and visitor-facing businesses and venues across Herne Bay

Description: Develop a small-scale tourism infrastructure grant programme to support improvements that enhance the visitor experience in Herne Bay and strengthen the town's attractiveness as a coastal destination. Grants would focus on practical, visible interventions that align with the town centre strategy, such as shopfront improvements, outdoor seating, accessibility enhancements, visitor information, lighting, greening, signage, cycle facilities, event infrastructure and small-scale public-facing upgrades. The programme would prioritise projects that improve perceptions of the town, support year-round activity and contribute to a stronger, more coherent coastal identity.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local businesses and traders; tourism operators; Visit Canterbury; property owners; accessibility groups; community organisations; potential external funders

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Initial grant programme completed by 2029 with potential continuation subject to funding

What will change?

Outputs:

- Development of grant criteria and application process aligned to the town centre strategy
- Delivery of a small grants programme for visitor-facing improvements
- Support and guidance for applicants to develop deliverable proposals
- Visible physical improvements to tourism and town centre infrastructure
- Promotion of completed projects and good practice examples.

Outcomes:

- Improved quality and attractiveness of visitor-facing environments
- Stronger confidence among businesses and property owners to invest in the town
- Enhanced visitor experience and perceptions of Herne Bay
- Increased dwell time and support for local spending
- Better accessibility and inclusivity within the visitor offer.

Mechanism of change: Small, targeted grants can unlock improvements that businesses or organisations may otherwise struggle to fund independently. Visible enhancements across multiple sites can collectively improve perceptions of the town and strengthen the overall visitor experience, helping support repeat visits, local pride and business confidence.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; tourism operators; disabled people; low-income households through improved free public spaces and infrastructure

How we will know it has worked:

- Number and value of grants awarded
- Visible infrastructure improvements delivered
- Positive business and visitor feedback
- Evidence of additional private investment leveraged through the scheme.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Funding allocation identified
- Clear eligibility criteria and assessment process
- Promotion and outreach to potential applicants
- Capacity to administer and monitor grants
- Alignment with wider public realm and tourism priorities.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission or advertisement consent for some physical improvements; landlord/freeholder agreements where applicable

Key risks/issues:

- Limited funding reducing scale or visibility of impact
- Uneven take-up across sectors or locations
- Delivery delays linked to planning or procurement
- Risk of low-quality or poorly maintained interventions if standards are unclear.

Support needed to progress: Funding allocation; programme administration resource; design and accessibility guidance; communications support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium (dependent on size and number of grants)

Likely funding route: External grant funding, council enabling budgets and potential match funding from recipients

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through future funding opportunities

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Small-scale visitor infrastructure improvements such as signage, seating, shopfronts, outdoor trading facilities, lighting and accessibility measures can have a disproportionate impact on visitor perceptions and dwell time, particularly in coastal towns where the overall experience depends on many small touchpoints rather than single flagship attractions.
- Coastal regeneration evidence consistently shows that independent businesses and smaller operators often struggle to access capital for visitor-facing improvements, despite collectively shaping much of the visitor experience and place identity.
- Engagement linked to the Herne Bay strategy highlighted concerns around inconsistent quality, limited weather resilience, seasonal trading pressures and the need to improve confidence and pride in the visitor offer. A targeted grants programme provides a practical mechanism for incremental but visible change across the town centre and seafront.

7.3 Herne Bay market review

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Mortimer Street market area, with links to Wimereux Square and the wider town centre market offer

Description: A practical review and action programme for the future of Herne Bay's market offer, focused initially on Mortimer Street but considering the relationship with other town centre spaces such as Wimereux Square. The review is intended to revisit earlier review work, supporting and testing recommendations during the 2026 season so that immediate improvements can be delivered while longer-term options are assessed. This will examine the current market offer, operations, capacity, infrastructure, governance and purpose, then use this evidence to identify how the market can better support town centre regeneration, local traders, footfall, animation and pride in place. It will also clarify how the market should relate to other linked projects, including the Wimereux Square Review and Greening Mortimer Street, so the overall market offer is coherent, complementary and aligned with the Herne Bay Town Centre Strategy.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Picture the postcard
- Link the high street to high tide

Delivery partners: CCC markets and economic development teams; current market operators and traders; local businesses; community stakeholders; utilities providers; Kent County Council where highways or traffic management issues arise; linked public realm and town centre project leads

Project stage: Review/live intervention

Timescale: Short term – review during 2026 with some early improvements planned

Target start date: Spring 2026

Target end date: November 2026 to complete review followed by 'quick win' improvements where possible and further implementation up to April 2028 subject to decisions on ongoing investment

What will change?

Outputs:

- A review of the current Mortimer Street and wider Herne Bay market offer, including governance, legal arrangements, infrastructure, capacity, accessibility and operational responsibilities.
- A defined vision and purpose for the market, setting out what it is for, who it serves and how it supports the town centre strategy and wider regeneration aims.
- Immediate recommendations and quick wins tested during the 2026 season, potentially including signage, online presence, environmental improvements, internal support arrangements and infrastructure improvements such as power and water where feasible.
- A clear future operating model, commercial viability, better relationship to Wimereux Square and wider town centre programming, and priorities for further investment.
- A clear future for the market, including street trading review which may identify options for more regular, alternative animation of underutilised areas.

Outcomes:

- The market offer becomes clearer, better managed and more aligned to the role Mortimer Street should play in the town centre.
- The market contributes more effectively to footfall, dwell time, animation and the distinctiveness of the town centre.
- CCC gains stronger evidence on the commercial and strategic viability of the market and what level of ongoing support or investment is justified.
- The market's relationship with linked projects and spaces, including Wimereux Square and Greening Mortimer Street, is clarified so that interventions work together rather than in isolation.
- Residents, traders and visitors experience a stronger and more coherent town centre offer during the busier summer period and beyond.

Mechanism of change: Herne Bay's market is already an important part of the town centre, but its current purpose, operating model and support needs are not yet sufficiently clear. By combining a review with live testing of improvements the project can generate better evidence while also making practical changes on the ground. This should help the market function more effectively as a tool for town centre animation, support a stronger role for Mortimer Street, and provide a sound basis for future investment and management decisions.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; market traders; community groups; town centre partners

How we will know it has worked:

- Earlier reviews and reports are reviewed and used alongside more recent intelligence to inform decisions on the future of the market.
- Practical improvements are delivered and tested during the 2026/27 season.
- Feedback from traders, businesses and users indicates improved clarity, experience and support.
- CCC is in a stronger position to make evidence-based decisions on future management, funding and town centre integration.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Clearer internal agreement on the purpose and scope of the market review and how it links to summer delivery and UKSPF objectives.
- Access to the operational information needed to understand current arrangements, responsibilities and constraints.
- Stakeholder engagement with traders, businesses and relevant internal and external partners.
- Ability to deliver and test quick-win improvements during the summer period.
- Coordination with linked projects and spaces, particularly Wimereux Square and Mortimer Street public realm changes.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Market and event permissions as required; highways or traffic management approvals where relevant; utility and public realm permissions for any infrastructure improvements; legal and contractual review of current arrangements

Key risks/issues:

- The review could remain too abstract if it does not translate into practical action during the season.
- Immediate operational issues may draw focus away from the wider strategic purpose of the review.
- Infrastructure constraints, particularly around utilities, accessibility or traffic management, may limit what can be changed quickly.
- Without a clear long-term view, short-term spend may not deliver lasting improvement or strategic clarity.
- Duplication or confusion could arise if the relationship between Mortimer Street and Wimereux Square is not resolved clearly.

Support needed to progress: Officer time to coordinate the review and delivery phases; stakeholder convening; operational support from the markets team; modest implementation resource for quick wins and test activity; coordination with linked public realm and market-related projects

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Some budget is identified to support a review (e.g. up to date market floor plan) and associated actions up to October 2026

Likely funding route: UK Shared Prosperity Fund initially, alongside CCC delivery support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Budget identified for 2026, with expectation that funding will support actions taken during the summer/autumn

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Existing outline work identifies the need to review the current market offer, governance, legal arrangements, infrastructure, accessibility and purpose.
- The latest April 2026 position identifies some 'quick wins', including signage, online presence, environmental improvements, internal support and possible utility improvements such as power and water.
- Some future improvements have also been identified to be considered over the longer term.

7.4 Community beach huts

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (seafront and place-making role) with community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay seafront and promenade locations to be confirmed

Description: Explore the delivery of a small number of community-focused beach huts that provide affordable, flexible space for local groups, artists, makers, wellbeing activity, pop-up exhibitions and community engagement along the seafront. Unlike traditional privately leased beach huts, the project would focus on shared or rotating community use, helping animate the promenade and strengthen connections between the seafront, cultural activity and local organisations. Huts could support temporary exhibitions, workshops, volunteering activity, family programmes, wellbeing sessions or seasonal visitor information and would contribute to a more active and inclusive seafront environment.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard
- Link the high street to high tide
- Give the next generation the space to grow

Delivery partners: Community organisations; local artists and makers; Canterbury City Council; seafront businesses; cultural organisations; youth groups; accessibility groups; local schools and colleges

Project stage: Idea/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2027/28

Target end date: Initial pilot huts operational by 2027

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study identifying suitable locations, management model and design principles
- Pilot delivery of community-focused beach huts
- Booking and programming arrangements for community use
- Seasonal programme of community, cultural and wellbeing activity delivered from huts
- Branding and interpretation linking huts to Herne Bay's coastal identity

Outcomes:

- More active and animated seafront spaces throughout the year
- Increased opportunities for local groups and creatives to engage with residents and visitors
- Improved sense of ownership and inclusion on the seafront
- Additional low-cost cultural and community activity in visible public spaces
- Strengthened links between the town centre, seafront and local creative/community sectors.

Mechanism of change: Providing small, visible and flexible community spaces on the seafront creates opportunities for low-cost programming and experimentation that might not otherwise be possible in traditional commercial premises. Rotating use by different groups increases variety and visibility while supporting stronger connections between residents, visitors and community organisations. Review after 3 years to evaluate the approach and impact.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; young people; community groups; artists and makers; traders/ businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of participating groups and programmed activities
- Visitor and user feedback
- Evidence of regular activation and use across the year
- Positive perceptions of the seafront environment and community offer.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Suitable seafront locations identified
- Agreement on ownership and management model
- Design approach appropriate to the coastal setting
- Funding identified for pilot delivery and maintenance
- Programming and booking arrangements coordinated.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; seafront and landowner approvals; accessibility and coastal environment considerations; licenses as required for activity

Key risks/issues:

- Exposure to coastal weather and maintenance pressures
- Vandalism or anti-social behaviour risk
- Limited capacity to coordinate programming
- Risk of underuse without active management and promotion.

Support needed to progress: Feasibility and design resource; community engagement; funding support; management and programming coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Mixed - grant funding, council capital support, sponsorship and in-kind community participation

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: To be explored through coastal and cultural funding opportunities

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Community-managed beach huts in coastal towns have successfully supported low-cost community activity, social prescribing, arts programming and inclusive access to the seafront, helping broaden participation beyond traditional tourism uses.
- The Herne Bay strategy and place-based assessment both emphasise the importance of strengthening community ownership, improving access to coastal activity and creating more reasons for residents to spend time in the town centre and seafront throughout the year.
- Small, flexible and visibly community-led spaces can create a stronger sense of stewardship and local identity while also providing low-barrier space for charities, artists, youth activity and micro-enterprise that would otherwise struggle to access seafront locations.

7.5 Community room booking software

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (community development/town centre regeneration enabling role), working with participating venue providers

Main contact: Communities directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Herne Bay town centre community venues including Pettman House, Herne Bay Primary Care Network facilities, Ex Servicemen's Club, Herne Bay Little Theatre, Herne Bay Yacht Club, Herons Leisure Centre and other participating halls/community spaces

Description: Develop a shared online community room booking platform for Herne Bay that brings together information on available community meeting spaces, halls and activity rooms in a single, easy-to-access location. The platform would improve visibility of spaces that are currently difficult to find or book online and support stronger use of town centre and community venues for cultural activity, youth provision, health and wellbeing programmes, volunteering, community meetings and events. The project would include a simple searchable website/interface, shared booking and availability information where possible, venue profiles, accessibility information, contact details and guidance for community users. The aim is to make it easier for residents, community groups and organisations to find and use local spaces, while supporting greater collaboration between venue providers and helping animate the town centre through increased activity.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Back the Bay
- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Give the next generation the space to grow
- Nurture a healthier Herne Bay

Delivery partners: Community venue operators and trustees; local churches and faith groups; Herne Bay Primary Care Network; voluntary and community sector organisations; Canterbury City Council; local arts and cultural organisations; youth and wellbeing providers; digital platform supplier/developer

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Audit and mapping of community-accessible meeting spaces and halls within Herne Bay town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods
- Development of a shared digital booking and information platform or portal for participating venues
- Standardised venue profiles including capacity, facilities, accessibility information, pricing/ contact details and availability information where appropriate
- Shared promotional materials and communications encouraging use of local community spaces
- Training and onboarding support for participating venues to maintain listings and booking information
- Establishment of a collaborative network between venue providers to share information, coordinate activity and identify gaps in community provision.

Outcomes:

- Increased awareness and use of community spaces across Herne Bay
- Improved access to affordable and flexible meeting/activity space for community groups, residents and local organisations
- Stronger visibility of local churches, clubs and community organisations and the social value they provide
- More activity taking place within the town centre, helping support footfall, inclusion and social connection
- Reduced barriers for residents seeking spaces for cultural, youth, wellbeing or volunteer activity
- Improved collaboration between venue providers and community organisations.

Mechanism of change: Many community venues in Herne Bay are difficult to discover or book, particularly for newer groups, younger residents and organisations without existing local networks. By bringing venue information and availability together into a single accessible system, the project reduces friction for people seeking space and helps underused venues attract more activity. Increased visibility and ease of booking should support greater use of community infrastructure, strengthen local partnerships and help animate the town centre with more regular social, cultural and wellbeing activity.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people; voluntary/community organisations; low-income households

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of participating venues and listed spaces on the platform
- Increased booking enquiries or room usage reported by participating organisations
- User feedback indicates improved awareness and ease of finding suitable community space in Herne Bay
- Evidence of new or expanded community activity taking place in participating venues.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Willingness of venue providers to participate and share availability/contact information
- Agreement on a practical and proportionate booking model that works for different organisations and staffing capacities
- Identification of a suitable low-maintenance digital platform/provider
- Ongoing resource or ownership arrangements for updating listings and maintaining accuracy
- Coordination with wider community and cultural programming initiatives within the town centre.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Data sharing/ privacy agreements where booking systems integrate or enquiries are shared; website hosting and accessibility compliance; venue operator agreements; other permissions to be explored through scoping

Key risks/issues:

- Some venue providers may lack capacity or confidence to engage with a shared digital system
- Information may become outdated without a clear maintenance responsibility Differences in pricing, booking processes and venue management arrangements may limit full integration
- Limited uptake could reduce the usefulness of the platform if key venues are absent Long-term sustainability and ownership of the platform will need to be agreed early.

Support needed to progress: Convening support from CCC to bring together venue operators and community organisations; modest resource for platform development and onboarding; communications support to promote the platform; guidance on accessibility and inclusive digital design

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown (likely low-to-medium depending on whether an existing booking platform is adapted or a bespoke system is commissioned)

Likely funding route: Mixed - council enabling funding, potential community/digital grant funding, in-kind partner support and possible low-cost subscription or hosting arrangements

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing venues and community partners provide a strong foundation for participation; further funding and delivery arrangements to be explored through scoping

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Community venues frequently suffer from underuse not because of lack of demand, but because information about availability, pricing and booking arrangements is fragmented across different organisations and difficult for residents to navigate.
- Shared digital booking systems have been shown to improve utilisation of community assets, increase visibility of voluntary and faith-sector activity, and reduce administrative burdens for smaller organisations with limited staffing capacity.
- The Herne Bay strategy process identified the need for stronger coordination, better communication of local opportunities and improved visibility of community infrastructure. A unified booking platform directly supports these objectives by making existing spaces easier to access and better connected to everyday town-centre life.

7.6 Seafront gallery

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): East Cliff area of Herne Bay seafront, focused initially on the wall and photo-wall locations to the east of the new beach huts along the King Charles III coastal path, with longer-term potential for the wider East Cliff promenade to function as an outdoor gallery space

Description: A phased public art and place-making project to establish the East Cliff seafront as a more distinctive art destination and create the foundations for a longer-term outdoor seafront gallery. The project begins with two funded artist commissions: one to refresh the East Cliff art wall and one to refresh the existing photo wall. Both commissions are intended

to be site-specific, visually ambitious, environmentally responsible and rooted in local identity, with community engagement built into their development. Taken together, these first projects will improve the visual quality of the East Cliff area, encourage more footfall eastwards along the promenade and test how curated outdoor art can support a stronger destination story for this part of the seafront. The longer-term aspiration is to build from these initial interventions towards a more established gallery-like model, where artists and community creatives regularly use the East Cliff seafront as a curated outdoor exhibition and interpretation space.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard
- Restore and reconnect the coastal gems
- Link the high street to high tide

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council culture and place teams; appointed artists or artist collectives; local schools, youth groups and community stakeholders; promenade users and local residents; local cultural partners and community artists; seafront operations and maintenance teams; external development/commissioning panel members

Project stage: Delivery of initial commissions/early phase place-making

Timescale: Short term (September 2026) for delivery of initial commissions. Medium term for subsequent phase

Target start date: 2026 for initial commissions; 2028 for artist selection, community engagement and installation of the first works on a longer-term outdoor seafront gallery.

Target end date: 2029 for completion of the first phase and review of next steps for a broader East Cliff gallery approach

What will change?

Outputs:

- Two commissioned public art projects installed at East Cliff: a refreshed art wall and a refreshed photo-wall intervention.
- At least one community engagement workshop incorporated into the East Cliff art wall commission, with broader local input informing both works where possible.
- A more coherent visual identity for the East Cliff area, replacing ad hoc or ageing artwork with curated, site-responsive pieces that better reflect Herne Bay and the seafront environment.
- A tested commissioning and management model for future outdoor art in this part of the seafront, including learning on artist selection, community engagement, materials, maintenance and installation.
- A basis for a future programme in which additional commissions, community artworks or rotating displays could gradually form a more recognisable Seafront Gallery at East Cliff.

Outcomes:

- The East Cliff area becomes more visually engaging and feels like a destination in its own right rather than a secondary stretch of promenade.
- More people are encouraged to walk further east along the seafront, increasing footfall and dwell time in this part of Herne Bay.
- Local identity, community pride and creative participation are strengthened through visible, place-specific artwork shaped by local voices.
- Herne Bay gains a stronger cultural and destination narrative on the seafront, with East Cliff beginning to function as an outdoor gallery space.
- A practical pathway is created for involving more community artists and curated commissions in future, building towards a more established gallery-like model over time.

Mechanism of change: Outdoor art can help redefine how a place is used and understood, especially when it is visible, site-specific and easy to encounter as part of everyday movement. By improving the quality and distinctiveness of the East Cliff walls now, and by involving local people in that process, the project can begin to shift perceptions of this stretch of seafront from a pass-through space to a creative destination. If the first commissions are well received, they provide both the visual proof and the delivery learning needed to grow a wider Seafront Gallery concept over time.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; local artists and makers; community groups; promenade users

How we will know it has worked:

- The two initial commissions are delivered successfully and remain visually strong and fit for purpose in the seafront environment.
- Feedback from local people, promenade users and stakeholders indicates that the East Cliff area feels more welcoming, distinctive and culturally active.
- The project generates interest from additional community artists or partners wanting to use the space creatively.
- CCC is able to identify realistic next steps for extending or curating a broader outdoor gallery model at East Cliff.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Successful appointment of artists or artist collectives able to deliver strong site-specific work within the available budget and programme.
- Effective community engagement so the artwork reflects local identity and is rooted in local voices rather than imposed externally.
- Use of materials and installation methods appropriate to the breeze block surfaces, coastal conditions and vandalism risk.
- Clear internal management and support for artist sign-off, installation, handover and ongoing maintenance considerations.
- A realistic follow-on plan if the first commissions are successful and the gallery concept is to be expanded.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Council asset and site approvals; any required public realm or seafront operational permissions; artist insurance and installation requirements; other consents to be confirmed through delivery planning

Key risks/issues:

- If the first commissions are treated as isolated artworks rather than the beginning of a wider place-making approach, the longer-term gallery ambition may not materialise.
- Coastal weathering, vandalism or poor material choices could reduce the longevity and impact of the works.
- Without strong curation and maintenance, the space could revert to feeling ad hoc rather than intentional.
- Future expansion will require additional funding, artist capacity and a clearer operating model if the Seafront Gallery concept is to become established.

Support needed to progress: Continued officer support for commissioning and artist management; community engagement coordination; communications and promotion support; a simple curatorial framework for how future works might build a recognisable East Cliff gallery identity over time

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: £15,000 currently identified for the first two commissions (£12,000 for the East Cliff art wall commission and £3,000 for the photo-wall refresh), with future gallery development costs to be determined

Likely funding route: Council (UKSPF) funded initial commissions, with future phases likely to require a

mixed model of council support, grants, commissions and/or sponsorship

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Funding is already in place for the first two artist commissions and officer support for commissioning and delivery is established

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Two live artist briefs are already in place for East Cliff sites, each with a clear place-based aim to increase footfall, improve user experience and reflect local identity through public art.
- Both briefs require community-responsive, site-specific and environmentally conscious design, providing a practical starting point for a wider East Cliff outdoor gallery approach.
- Comparable outdoor gallery models, such as Worthing's seafront gallery, show how a small number of weatherproof seafront display points can evolve into a recognisable cultural destination and support recurring exhibitions and local pride.

7.7 Herne Bay to Whitstable shuttle boat

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with maritime, tourism and transport partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay and Whitstable coastal corridor

Specific location(s): Herne Bay seafront and harbour area, Whitstable harbour and associated coastal landing points

Description:

Explore the development of a seasonal shuttle boat service connecting Herne Bay and Whitstable as both a practical visitor transport connection and a distinctive coastal attraction in its own right. The project would create a memorable experience that encourages people to explore multiple coastal destinations, enjoy the coastline from the water and spend longer within the wider district.

The service would seek to strengthen physical and experiential connections between the two towns while supporting sustainable leisure travel and creating a more joined-up coastal visitor offer. The project could include integrated ticketing, links to walking and cycling routes, heritage interpretation, food and cultural experiences, and coordinated marketing with local businesses and attractions.

If successful, the model could provide a foundation for future expansion to other coastal destinations and experiences along the north Kent coast, helping strengthen regional connectivity and the wider coastal economy.

The project would also contribute to Herne Bay's identity as an active and distinctive seaside destination, creating an additional attraction that complements the town's events, seafront activity and visitor experience.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard
- Be a town of warm welcomes and memorable first impressions
- Give the next generation the space to grow

Delivery partners:

- Canterbury City Council
- Maritime operators and harbour stakeholders
- Visit Canterbury
- Local tourism and hospitality businesses
- Active travel and coastal organisations
- Whitstable partners and businesses
- Kent County Council
- Potential private operators and sponsors

Project stage: Early feasibility and market testing

Timescale: Medium-to-long term (2028–2035)

Target start date: 2028 feasibility work

Target end date: Pilot seasonal service by 2029/30

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study and operational business case.
- Assessment of landing infrastructure and coastal access requirements.
- Pilot seasonal shuttle boat service.
- Integrated visitor information and marketing campaign.
- Links to walking, cycling and coastal tourism routes.
- Partnership programme with local businesses and attractions.

Outcomes:

- Increased movement and exploration between coastal destinations.
- Longer visitor dwell time within the district.
- Stronger visibility and profile for the north Kent coast visitor offer.
- Increased activity and footfall within Herne Bay town centre and seafront.
- More sustainable leisure travel choices during peak visitor periods.

Mechanism of change: Creating a memorable and experiential transport connection encourages visitors to view the coastline as a linked destination rather than isolated day-trip locations. Water-based travel also creates an attraction in itself, helping diversify the visitor experience while supporting wider movement between coastal assets, town centres and businesses.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; tourism businesses; hospitality operators; local retailers; cultural organisations; coastal communities

How we will know it has worked:

- Passenger numbers and repeat usage.
- Increased visitor dwell time and linked trips between destinations.
- Positive visitor and business feedback.
- Increased participation in associated coastal attractions and activities.
- Commercial viability and opportunities for route expansion.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Commercial operator interest and viability.
- Landing and coastal infrastructure requirements.
- Seasonal demand and weather resilience.
- Coordination with harbour and maritime stakeholders.
- Marketing and visitor economy partnerships.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Maritime licences and safety approvals; harbour permissions; environmental and coastal consents; operational agreements for landing infrastructure.

Key risks/issues:

- Seasonal viability and weather dependency.
- Infrastructure and maintenance costs.

- Operational complexity and insurance requirements.
- Risk of limited off-season demand.

Support needed to progress: Maritime feasibility expertise; visitor economy partnership support; coastal infrastructure assessment; business case development; pilot funding and operator engagement.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high

Likely funding route: Coastal regeneration funding, tourism funding, transport grants, private operator investment and sponsorship.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with coastal tourism, sustainable transport and regional visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Water-based visitor transport services can create both practical connectivity and high-value experiential tourism offers, particularly in coastal destinations where the journey itself forms part of the attraction.
- Connected coastal destination models encourage visitors to spend longer exploring wider areas rather than concentrating activity within a single location.
- The Herne Bay and Whitstable strategies both identify opportunities to strengthen coastal identity, improve movement between destinations and encourage more joined-up visitor experiences across the district.
- Distinctive transport experiences often generate strong marketing value and place recognition, helping coastal towns differentiate themselves within competitive visitor markets.



Image: © Gill Wilson

8 Picture the postcard

Developing a coherent town narrative and destination brand that reflects Herne Bay's authenticity and difference from other coastal towns. Using joined-up marketing and partnership working to promote responsible, sustainable tourism that attracts visitors, investors and events that align with the town's values.

8.1 Destination management plan

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council with Visit Canterbury and tourism partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Town-wide, including seafront, town centre, station gateways and coastal connections

Description: Prepare a dedicated Destination Management Plan for Herne Bay to provide a coordinated framework for tourism, visitor experience, events, marketing and place management over the medium to long term. The plan would establish a clearer identity and positioning for Herne Bay, identify target visitor markets and priorities, coordinate investment and infrastructure needs, and align partners around a shared vision for sustainable coastal tourism. It would also consider seasonality, visitor movement, accessibility, transport, environmental pressures and opportunities to strengthen links between the seafront, high street, heritage assets and surrounding coastline.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Visit Canterbury; tourism businesses; Canterbury City Council; transport providers; cultural organisations; event organisers; community groups; hospitality sector; accessibility groups; neighbouring coastal destinations

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Plan completed and adopted by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Destination Management Plan produced and adopted
- Visitor and market analysis undertaken
- Action plan covering infrastructure, marketing, events, accessibility and visitor experience priorities
- Stakeholder engagement and partnership framework established
- Shared monitoring and evaluation measures identified.

Outcomes:

- Clearer and more coherent tourism strategy for Herne Bay
- Better coordination of tourism investment and activity
- Improved visitor experience and stronger destination identity
- Increased year-round visitation and reduced reliance on peak summer trade alone
- Stronger collaboration between tourism, cultural and community partners.

Mechanism of change: A shared destination management framework helps align investment, programming and marketing around a common set of priorities and target audiences. By identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities, the plan can support more strategic decision-making and create a more resilient and coordinated visitor economy.

Beneficiaries: Visitors; traders/businesses; residents; tourism operators; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Destination Management Plan completed and used by partners
- Evidence of aligned projects and funding activity
- Positive tourism and business feedback
- Improved year-round visitor activity and perceptions over time.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partner engagement and participation
- Availability of tourism and visitor data
- Resource for commissioning and consultation
- Alignment with wider district and regional tourism strategies.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with plan preparation

Key risks/issues:

- Lack of partner buy-in
- Risk of plan not translating into delivery
- Funding constraints limiting implementation
- Changing tourism patterns and external economic pressures.

Support needed to progress: Commissioning resource; facilitation and stakeholder engagement support; tourism analysis and evidence gathering

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Council revenue funding and potential tourism partnership contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing tourism partnerships and strategy work provide a foundation

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Destination management plans are increasingly used in coastal towns to move beyond short-term tourism promotion and instead coordinate infrastructure, events, public realm, transport, stewardship and visitor behaviour around a shared long-term vision.
- Herne Bay's strategy engagement identified concerns around seasonality, fragmented promotion, inconsistent visitor experiences and the need for a clearer identity distinct from neighbouring coastal destinations.
- A coordinated destination management approach can help align public and private investment, improve resilience to seasonal fluctuations and ensure that tourism growth supports local quality of life rather than creating unmanaged pressure on infrastructure and public spaces.

8.2 Place-based branding

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council with tourism, business and cultural partners

Main contact: Communications and Place leads

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Town-wide

Description: Develop a coherent place-based branding approach for Herne Bay that strengthens how the town presents itself to residents, visitors, investors and businesses. The project would establish

a clear visual and narrative identity rooted in Herne Bay's coastal character, creativity, heritage and community strengths, and apply this consistently across signage, digital communications, events, marketing and public-facing materials. The intention is to move beyond fragmented branding and create a stronger, more recognisable identity that supports tourism, civic pride and inward investment.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Picture the postcard
- Back the Bay

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Visit Canterbury; local businesses; cultural organisations; designers and branding specialists; community groups; tourism operators

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Branding framework and implementation guidance completed by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Place brand research and engagement exercise
- Visual identity and messaging framework developed
- Brand guidance for use across events, signage, digital and promotional materials. · Pilot implementation across selected town centre and tourism projects
- Shared communications toolkit for partners and stakeholders.

Outcomes:

- Stronger and more recognisable identity for Herne Bay
- Improved consistency in public-facing communications and visitor information Increased civic pride and confidence in the town
- Better support for tourism promotion and inward investment activity.

Mechanism of change: A coherent place identity helps shape perceptions of a town and improves how people experience and remember it. By aligning communications, visuals and storytelling around shared themes, the project supports a stronger sense of place and makes Herne Bay easier to promote consistently across multiple audiences and sectors.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; businesses; tourism operators; community organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Brand framework adopted and used by partners
- Increased consistency in town promotion and communications
- Positive stakeholder feedback on identity and recognition
- Improved perceptions of the town in visitor and resident feedback.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Strong stakeholder engagement
- Clear governance around brand ownership and use
- Alignment with wider tourism and town centre projects
- Resource for professional design and engagement work.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with branding framework development

Key risks/issues:

- Lack of consensus on identity themes
- Brand not adopted consistently by partners
- Overly generic branding failing to reflect local distinctiveness.

Support needed to progress: Design and engagement resource; communications coordination; stakeholder workshops and consultation

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Council enabling budgets and potential external place marketing funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing tourism and communications channels provide a foundation

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Place-branding work is most effective when it builds from authentic local identity and lived experience rather than generic tourism marketing. Coastal towns that successfully differentiate themselves tend to emphasise distinct culture, character and community narratives rather than competing directly on scale or traditional seaside attractions.
- The Herne Bay strategy and engagement process repeatedly identified authenticity, creativity, community spirit and everyday coastal life as core strengths that distinguish the town from nearby destinations.
- A clearer and more coherent place identity can improve confidence among residents, businesses, investors and visitors alike, helping align marketing, events, public realm and investment decisions around a shared narrative for the town.

8.3 High Street consultancy offer

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Herne Bay

Specific location(s): Mortimer Street, William Street and wider town centre business areas

Description: Develop a targeted consultancy and business support offer for town centre businesses, independent traders and property owners to help strengthen the resilience, quality and attractiveness of the high street. The programme would provide access to practical specialist advice on topics such as visual merchandising, digital marketing, accessibility, shopfront improvements, sustainability, business planning, events participation and customer experience. The project would aim to support adaptation to changing retail patterns, improve business confidence and encourage more coordinated approaches to improving the high street environment and offer.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Breathe new life into the heart of the town
- Back the Bay
- Picture the postcard

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local business networks; Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce; independent consultants and mentors; Visit Canterbury; property owners; accessibility groups

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Pilot programme completed by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Business needs assessment and engagement exercise
- Delivery of workshops, one-to-one consultancy sessions and mentoring support. · Guidance resources covering town centre improvement themes
- Pilot projects demonstrating improved shopfronts, accessibility or customer experience
- Network-building between participating businesses.

Outcomes:

- Increased confidence and resilience among town centre businesses
- Improved quality and presentation of retail and hospitality premises
- Greater participation in collaborative town centre activity and events
- Stronger customer experience and perceptions of the high street.

Mechanism of change: Many independent businesses lack access to affordable specialist support. By providing targeted advice and practical guidance linked to the town centre strategy, the programme can help businesses make incremental improvements that collectively strengthen the quality, adaptability and attractiveness of the high street environment.

Beneficiaries: Traders/businesses; residents; visitors; property owners; town centre workers

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of participating businesses
- Feedback from participants indicating improved confidence or knowledge
- Visible improvements to participating premises or customer offer
- Increased participation in town centre initiatives and events.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Funding/resource identified for consultancy support
- Engagement from local businesses and property owners
- Suitable delivery partners and specialist advisors identified
- Alignment with any grant or town centre improvement programmes.

Permissions/consents likely needed: None directly associated with advisory support; some resulting physical improvements may require planning or landlord approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Limited engagement from busy businesses
- Support not translating into visible action
- Difficulty sustaining momentum after pilot phase.

Support needed to progress: Funding for pilot support programme; outreach and communications; coordination with business networks and regeneration projects

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Council funding, UKSPF-style business support funding or external business support programmes (e.g. Kent & Medway Growth Hub)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing business networks and economic development relationships provide a basis for delivery

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Independent businesses and small town-centre operators often lack access to affordable specialist advice on areas such as visual merchandising, digital marketing, business planning, accessibility, sustainability and adapting to changing consumer behaviour.
- High street support programmes in comparable towns have demonstrated that relatively small-scale interventions and mentoring support can improve business resilience, confidence and willingness to invest in premises and customer experience.
- The Herne Bay strategy identifies the importance of supporting independent businesses, improving perceptions of quality and helping the town centre adapt to changing retail and visitor patterns. A targeted consultancy offer provides a practical way to strengthen the capability and resilience of existing businesses rather than focusing solely on attracting new operators.

New project entries to follow

The following is a list of ideas for further Herne Bay projects that CCC is aware of where a partner or other organisation/group may seek to make a submission. It may also include recently received submissions which have not yet been reviewed.

These include:

- New Herne Bay Chamber of Commerce (Local businesses);
- Various ideas for Herne Bay seafront (Local business); and
- Package of ideas relating to Herne Bay Cinema (Kavanagh Cinema).

Completed projects

A list of projects that have been completed

Removed projects

A list of projects that have been rejected along with a rationale (for audit purposes, to retain tacit project knowledge and in case they can be revisited at a later date).

Rejected/aborted etc.

canterbury city council

Whitstable Town Centre

Project Directory

The Town Centre Strategy Vision

"A magnet for people drawn to its lively maritime character, creative culture and historic charm, all year round.
Its working harbour and quirky independent High Street will better balance the needs of its residents with the popularity as a tourist destination. A greater variety of high-quality spaces will make sure the town is a great place to live and spend time in."

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Overview

What the directory is for

This project directory sets out how we will turn the town centre strategy into action across Whitstable. The strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable were developed with residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders, and are intended to be owned by the places themselves, with the council acting as an enabler rather than the only delivery body.

For that reason, the directory is not limited to Canterbury City Council projects. We want it to reflect what is happening on the ground, so it will include partner-led and community-led projects alongside council-led activity that support the shared vision and principles in the strategies.

By bringing this wider range of projects together, the directory will help partners see how different activity connects, where collaboration could increase impact, and what support or coordination might be needed to move projects forward. It will also help us maintain momentum and provide continuity as responsibilities change through local government reorganisation and the transition to a new unitary authority.

We welcome partners to share their projects for inclusion, so the directory provides a fuller picture of delivery and helps us work together towards the shared vision for each place.

This project directory follows established UK Government best practice and applies HM Treasury's Green Book[1] principles of consistent, evidence-based appraisal, incorporating the 2025 review's[2] emphasis on place-based decision-making and integrated local project pipelines, and adopting Teal Book[3] guidance on project deliverability, risks, permissions and roles.

Its structure also reflects the Five Case Model[4] used across government for robust business cases, ensuring clear rationale, strategic alignment, defined outcomes and a transparent, proportionate scoring method fully aligned with recognised national standards.

Why it's beneficial for partner and stakeholder projects to be included

Shared direction and legitimacy: It shows how projects contribute to an agreed place-based vision and principles that were developed through extensive engagement, helping partners demonstrate community relevance and strategic fit.

Coordination and reduced duplication: A consolidated list helps identify overlaps, gaps, dependencies and opportunities to collaborate, especially where projects need multiple organisations to succeed.

Better access to investment and funding: Being able to point to an agreed pipeline of projects aligned with strategic priorities strengthens bids for external funding and helps partners align investment with a coherent place narrative.

Visibility and advocacy: The directory creates a clearer picture of "what's happening where" and can be used to communicate priorities to decision-makers, funders and future delivery bodies, ensuring partner-led projects are part of the overall story.

Clearer accountability and delivery planning: Capturing lead organisations, partners, timescales and links to strategy principles supports realistic sequencing (e.g., feasibility, scoping, partnership formation) and enables progress to be monitored and reviewed.

1 www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-green-book-and-accompanying-guidance-and-documents
2 lordslibrary.parliament.uk/governments-green-book-review-and-reforms/
3 projectdelivery.gov.uk/2025/04/01/government-project-delivery-launches-the-teal-book/
4 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6984ac702df808759a7bd740/The_Green_Book_2026.pdf

Supports a co-created, place-led approach: The strategies are intended to be shared frameworks owned by the places themselves. Including partner projects reinforces shared ownership and collective responsibility for delivery.

Continuity through local government reorganisation (LGR): With council responsibilities expected to transfer to a new unitary in April 2028, the directory helps ensure partner projects don't lose momentum and provides an organised starting point for the successor authority.

Creates a clear audit trail and preserves corporate memory: capturing projects that are underway, completed, or removed/rejected (with rationale) provides a transparent record of decisions and progress, helping retain tacit knowledge and ensuring a smooth handover to the new unitary authority during LGR.

How we intend to use the directory

The directory will be developed as a comprehensive long list of projects identified through engagement and evidence. It will then be used to prioritise and sequence activity into action plans, including a time-bound CCC plan aligned to the 2026–2028 transition period as well as longer-term opportunities. It will also support oversight through council governance routes and ongoing monitoring and review.

What we need from partners

To make the directory useful, comparable and suitable as a basis for prioritisation, projects are captured in a consistent format. Key information is required to help better identify which projects are most strongly aligned to the strategies, likely to deliver the greatest public value, and are most realistic to progress in the short term.

The best submissions will:

- Be place-based - they clearly show how the project addresses the specific needs, challenges or opportunities of Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.
- Link directly to one or more strategy principles - projects will be scored on strategic fit based on these connections.
- Provide a meaningful outcome, not just an activity - 'what changes' is more important than 'what we will do'.
- Be realistic about deliverability - projects need not be fully designed, but they must be plausible.
- Identify partners early - strong partnership working is a core principle across all strategies.
- Acknowledge uncertainties - transparent submissions are preferable over overly polished but unrealistic ones.

More detail about the information required is below.

Core project criteria

A project should be included if it meets all of the following:

1. **Fits the strategies**

The project clearly supports and is therefore strategically aligned with at least one of the agreed strategy principles and/or the place vision for Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.

2. **Is place-based**

The project is geographically relevant and is located in, serves, or has a clear impact on one (or more) of the three centres (or their immediate connections/ gateway areas where relevant).

3. **Has an identified lead and delivery route**

There is a named lead organisation (not necessarily CCC) and an outline of who else needs to be involved (partners/stakeholders).

4. **Is described consistently**

The project can be captured and compared with others using the directory template fields (title, description, location, delivery partners, outputs, outcomes, deliverability etc.).

5. **Is lawful/appropriate in principle**

Nothing obvious suggests it is unlawful, unsafe, discriminatory, or incompatible with relevant policies in principle (even if detail comes later).

6. **Not "business as usual"**

The work is a time-limited piece of activity that goes beyond routine service delivery/maintenance and is intended to deliver a defined change aligned to the strategies. It must have:

- a clear start point and a clear end point (or clear phase end),
- a defined output (what will be delivered), and
- a clear intended impact/outcome (the change it will make).

Routine maintenance or ongoing services should not be included unless they are part of a clearly defined improvement project with specific outputs and outcomes.

Inclusion in the directory does not mean a project is approved, funded or favoured by Canterbury City Council or its partners. Inclusion means that the project could meaningfully contribute to the shared direction of one or more of the district's urban areas, and broadly meets the criteria set out above.

Exclusion/out-of-scope criteria

A project will be excluded if:

- There is no clear link to any strategy principle or place vision.
- It is not place-based and therefore has no clear impact on Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable.
- There is no identifiable lead and no realistic delivery route.
- It is mainly routine service delivery/maintenance with no strategic regeneration/value link.
- It is clearly non-viable or inappropriate in principle (e.g., conflicts with law/policy in an obvious way).
- It will not be able to be progressed during the lifetime of the city and town centre strategies (2026-2043).

Project submissions

Submission form

The submission form for the project directories is currently hosted on the Canterbury City Council website: forms.canterbury.gov.uk/xfp/form/1013

Projects submission form guidance notes

These guidance notes help applicants provide the right level and type of information so their project can:

- be understood clearly,
- be compared fairly with others,
- be scored consistently, and
- contribute meaningfully to the shared vision and strategy principles for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.

The directory will be a list of projects that will help the centres achieve the visions set out in the city and town centre strategies.

The stronger and clearer the information you provide, the easier it will be to assess how your project contributes to the strategic direction for each place.

Below is detailed guidance for every section of the form. Applicants should read this carefully before submitting.

Project title: The title of your project

Lead organisation: Which organisation is the accountable body that will drive and/or fund the project?

Main contact: What are the contact details of the main contact?

Date submitted: The date you submit your project.

Section 1: Project overview

Place: Tick all locations that your project meaningfully affects. Projects must have a place specific relevance to Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable city and town centres.

Specific location(s) (site/street/area): Provide the street, site boundary, building name or defined area. This helps assess deliverability, planning implications and relationship to nearby assets.

Short description: Clearly describe:

- what the project is,
- the problem or opportunity it addresses,
- who it benefits,
- why it matters in the town/city context.

Linked strategy principle(s): Which city or town centre strategy principles does the project support? Each strategy includes eight strategic principles. Tick which principle(s) your project supports.

Delivery partners: Which partners will need to be involved to enable or deliver the project? These could be public, private, community or third-sector organisations e.g. landowners, local groups, transport bodies, cultural partners, utilities, funders.

Project stage: Select the current stage (idea, scoping, feasibility, design, delivery, completed or other). This helps us understand:

- the level of certainty,
- what evidence exists,
- how soon the project could realistically move forward.

Early-stage ideas are welcome, just be clear about what is known and unknown.

Timescale: tick the most accurate timeframe

- Short term (pre-April 2028) – priority for the transition period
- Medium term (2028–2032)
- Long term (post-2032)
- Other (explain)

Target start and end dates: Provide estimated dates, even if broad. This supports action planning and sequencing across programmes.

Section 2: What will change?

This section focuses on *impact*, not just activity.

Outputs: What measurable outputs will be delivered at the end of this project? List measurable, tangible deliverables, such as:

- new or improved public spaces, routes or buildings
- events delivered
- feasibility studies completed
- number of businesses supported
- square metres of enhanced public realm
- wayfinding installed
- cultural, youth or community facilities created

Outcomes: What will the impact of this project be and what will change? Describe the difference your project will make such as:

- increased footfall
- safer walking routes
- reduced congestion
- improved access to water, culture or play
- enhanced biodiversity
- improved perceptions of the town centre
- increased visitor dwell time
- increased cultural participation
- improved youth provision
- strengthened heritage value

Outcomes should relate to the strategy's ambitions.

Mechanism of change: How will this project lead to the outputs and outcomes you have stated? Keep it clear and evidence-based.

Beneficiaries: Who will benefit from this project (e.g. residents, young people, older people, disabled people visitors, traders/businesses, low-income households, students etc.) and where will the benefits be felt (town centre, gateways, seafront, specific street(s)/site(s), area-wide etc.)

How we will know it's worked: Some simple (one to three) indicators explaining how we will know the project has had the desired impact. Examples could include:

- footfall increase of X%
- reduction in vacancy rates
- visitor satisfaction improved
- safer or greener routes created
- increased participation numbers
- reduction in antisocial behaviour
- improved accessibility for certain groups

Indicators should be simple, focused and realistic.

Section 3: Deliverability

Projects must show a credible route to delivery

Key dependencies (max five bullet points): e.g., landowner agreement, funding decisions, planning permissions, railway or highways approvals, partnership agreements, utilities or ground condition constraints, completion of another linked project.

Dependencies help identify risks and sequencing

Permissions/consents likely needed (if known): e.g. planning permission, listed building/conservation area consent, highways/TRO, landlord/freeholder agreement, licenses (markets/events, premises), environmental/marine consents etc.

Key risks/issues: Identify the biggest risks, such as:

- lack of funding
- community opposition
- technical constraints
- anti-social behaviour concerns
- viability challenges
- procurement complexity
- dependency on other organisations

Support needed to progress: Explain what you need from the council or partners:

- convening power
- feasibility resource
- fundraising support
- planning guidance
- highways engagement
- data/evidence
- brokering between landowners or stakeholders

This informs the future action plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost (if known): Provide a realistic range or note if unknown.

Projects will not be excluded for early-stage uncertainty.

Likely funding route (e.g. grant, private, revenue, in-kind, mixed, unknown/to be explored, other): Tick the relevant option(s) and briefly note any assumptions (such as expected external funding, for example)

Funding or in-kind support already identified (optional): Include offers of materials, land access, volunteer time, sponsorship etc.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: How confident are you that the project will realise the intended benefits? Select high, medium or low.

Evidence/sources (one to three bullets): Examples:

- results from local consultations
- survey data
- feasibility studies
- market analysis
- case studies from other towns
- insight from local businesses, BID or community groups
- health or deprivation data
- heritage or tourism analysis

This supports transparent scoring and gives confidence in the proposal.

How projects will be scored

Projects will be scored by the relevant place panel based on the information provided by the project lead in the projects template (the directory submission form). The scoring framework asks Panels to assign a 0–5 score across five headings:

- Strategic fit (0–5)
- Economic impact (0–5)
- Social impact (0–5)
- Environmental benefit (0–5)
- Deliverability (0–5)

This approach reflects a light touch version of established appraisal thinking: considering the likely costs, benefits and risks of proposals and comparing options in a structured way, without requiring full appraisal-level detail at the directory stage.

The scoring is intended to be proportionate: early-stage ideas can still be included and scored using the best available information, and scores can be refined as projects develop (for example, when moving from an 'idea' to 'feasibility' stage or when preparing funding bids).

Where information is missing or genuinely unknown, panels will avoid guessing and can use an "unknown/ low confidence" note alongside the score, so the project can be revisited once more detail is available.

How the scores will be used

The place panels' scores will be used to help:

- Identify priority projects to progress and coordinate with partners.
- Sequence activity and agree realistic next steps (e.g., feasibility, permissions, partnership building, design).
- Develop recommendations for inclusion in action plans
- Provide a clear, consistent basis for discussion and oversight as the directory and action plans return through governance routes.

To keep scoring fair and comparable across different types of projects (council-led, partner-led, and community-led), the place panels will use the agreed definitions for what 0-5 means under each heading.

Where projects are similar or interdependent, panels can also note links and dependencies so that sequencing decisions reflect how projects work together as a programme, not just as stand-alone items.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

1 Improve first impressions

Designing a sequence of attractive and functional welcome features announcing people's arrival into Whitstable. This should guide vehicles to appropriate parking and help visitors navigate between the High Street, harbour and beach. Clear, creative wayfinding will improve visitor flow and reduce pressure on the town centre.

1.1 Whitstable railway station arrival

Lead organisation: Network Rail and Southeastern working with Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable railway station and pedestrian routes linking the station to the town centre and harbour

Description: Improve accessibility, arrival experience and pedestrian connectivity at Whitstable railway station through the introduction of step-free access, improved public realm, better signage and enhanced walking routes into the town centre and harbour. The project aims to create a more welcoming and inclusive gateway into Whitstable while supporting sustainable transport and reducing car dependency.

Linked strategy principle(s): Improve first impressions; Connect land and sea through active travel; Put people first on the High Street

Delivery partners: Network Rail; Southeastern; Kent County Council; Canterbury City Council; accessibility groups; local businesses

Project stage: Feasibility/advocacy

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2030 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and business case work for step-free access improvements.
- Enhanced pedestrian routes and signage from the station into the town.
- Public realm improvements around the station entrance.
- Improved accessibility infrastructure for passengers with mobility needs.

Outcomes:

- Improved accessibility and inclusivity.
- Better first impressions for rail visitors.
- Increased use of sustainable transport.
- Stronger connectivity between station, High Street and harbour.

Mechanism of change: Improving station accessibility and pedestrian routes makes Whitstable easier to navigate without relying on cars and creates a more attractive arrival experience for residents and visitors. Better connectivity between the station and town centre can also support local businesses and reduce pressure on town centre parking.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; disabled people; older people; traders/businesses; commuters

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved passenger satisfaction.
- Increased rail and pedestrian usage.
- Improved accessibility outcomes for passengers with mobility needs.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Rail industry approvals and funding.
- Coordination between transport authorities.
- Feasibility and engineering work.
- Integration with wider active travel improvements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Rail approvals; highways permissions; planning permission where required

Key risks/issues:

- High capital costs.
- Long delivery timescales.
- Complex stakeholder coordination.

Support needed to progress: Strategic lobbying; feasibility funding; transport and accessibility expertise

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: High

Likely funding route: Rail investment programmes, transport grants and partnership funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing accessibility and sustainable transport policy priorities provide strong strategic support

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Step-free access schemes elsewhere on the rail network have increased station use amongst older and mobility-impaired passengers while improving overall passenger satisfaction.
- Research by transport bodies consistently shows that the quality of station arrival environments influences visitor perceptions of place and willingness to walk onward into town centres.
- Stakeholder feedback during the development of the town centre strategy identified Whitstable railway station accessibility and pedestrian connectivity as key weaknesses affecting residents, commuters and visitors.

1.2 Tourism infrastructure grants

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour, seafront and key routes connecting the railway station, High Street, Harbour Street, Oxford Street and the beach

Description: A targeted small grants programme to support practical improvements to Whitstable's visitor infrastructure, helping the town better manage its popularity while strengthening the quality of the experience for residents and visitors alike. The programme would focus on projects that improve how people arrive, move through and spend time in Whitstable, especially where relatively modest investment can make a visible difference to accessibility, legibility, comfort, resilience and local distinctiveness.

The purpose is not simply to attract more visitors, but to help Whitstable function better as a high-quality coastal town centre that balances tourism with everyday local life. Grants could support improvements such as signage and wayfinding, visitor information, cycle parking, seating, public realm enhancements, heritage interpretation, shopfront and frontage improvements, external lighting, public-facing cultural infrastructure, accessibility measures, and other small-scale projects that strengthen the relationship between the harbour, High Street and seafront.

The programme should prioritise projects that reinforce Whitstable's distinctive identity as a working harbour town with a strong independent High Street, creative culture and everyday heritage. It should also support the strategy objective of encouraging visitors to explore the whole town centre rather than

concentrating pressure in a small number of locations, while helping local businesses, cultural organisations and community partners improve the quality of the town's year-round offer.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Improve first impressions
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Put people first on the High Street
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners:

Canterbury City Council; local businesses and property owners; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural and community organisations; accessibility groups; tourism and marketing partners; Kent County Council where highways or public realm interfaces are involved; local delivery partners for individual grant-funded schemes

Project stage: Scoping/programme development

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for programme design and first funding round; medium term for subsequent rounds or continuation through successor arrangements

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2030 for initial programme delivery and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- A Whitstable-focused tourism infrastructure grants programme with clear eligibility criteria, application guidance and assessment priorities;
- one or more funding rounds supporting small-scale capital or place-based improvement projects;
- completed grant-funded interventions across the town centre, harbour and seafront; improved signage, wayfinding, accessibility, public-facing infrastructure or environmental quality at selected locations;
- stronger collaboration between the council, businesses, community organisations and cultural partners around practical delivery projects.

Outcomes:

- Whitstable becomes easier to navigate, more comfortable to use and better equipped to welcome visitors without undermining local character or everyday functionality.
- The programme helps spread activity more evenly through the town centre, strengthens links between the station, High Street, harbour and beach, and improves the quality of visitor infrastructure in ways that also benefit residents.
- It supports local businesses and organisations to invest in the town's appearance, accessibility and offer, while reinforcing Whitstable's distinctive identity and helping the town perform more strongly across the year, not only in peak summer periods.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's strategy and evidence base both show that the town's popularity brings pressure as well as opportunity. Many of the improvements needed are relatively small in scale but important in cumulative effect: better signage, clearer routes, improved accessibility, stronger public-facing frontages, better places to pause, and more visible heritage and cultural interpretation. A grants programme allows these practical interventions to be delivered by those closest to the opportunity, while ensuring projects still align with the wider town centre strategy. By supporting multiple small but meaningful improvements across the town, the programme can improve first impressions, visitor movement, local distinctiveness and day-to-day functionality in a way that is more flexible and place-sensitive than relying only on major capital projects.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; community groups; young people; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked: A visible set of completed projects is delivered in priority locations across Whitstable; users report that the town is easier to navigate and more welcoming; businesses and stakeholders observe better movement between the harbour, High Street and seafront; funded projects demonstrate clear improvements to accessibility, appearance, interpretation or visitor experience; the programme generates strong demand and delivers projects that align clearly with the town centre strategy.

Deliverability

Key dependencies: Agreement on programme scope, criteria and governance; identification of a realistic funding pot and grant administration resource; clear assessment framework to ensure projects align with strategy priorities; sufficient local partner interest and capacity to bring forward deliverable proposals; coordination with highways, heritage, harbour and public realm requirements where relevant.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Depends on individual projects, but may include planning permission, listed building or conservation area consent, highways approvals, landlord agreement, harbour-related permissions, or other site-specific consents.

Key risks/issues: Small grants could become too dispersed if priorities are unclear; projects may improve visitor appeal without sufficiently considering impacts on residents unless criteria are carefully framed; some applicants may need support to develop viable proposals; there is a risk of funding attractive but low-impact projects unless assessment focuses strongly on strategic fit and place benefit; ongoing maintenance responsibilities must be clear so improvements are sustained.

Support needed to progress: Officer time to design and administer the programme; clear assessment and monitoring framework; communications and outreach to potential applicants; technical support for applicants where projects involve heritage, accessibility, public realm or movement issues; coordination with wider Whitstable strategy delivery.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: To be confirmed depending on programme size and number of rounds

Likely funding route: Council revenue and/or capital funding, potentially combined with external place-based, regeneration, tourism, culture or public realm funding where available

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Whitstable's evidence base highlights practical gaps in wayfinding, arrival experience, public space and links between the station, harbour, High Street and seafront. Small grants can address these quickly and visibly.
- High-street evidence shows that better public realm, signage, seating and accessibility improve footfall, dwell time and business confidence. For Whitstable, these are relatively low-cost changes with town-wide benefits.
- Places such as Margate, Ramsgate and Bournemouth show that small-scale public realm and visitor infrastructure improvements can strengthen stronger destinations. For Whitstable, that means improving year-round performance, not creating demand from scratch.

1.3 Seasonal seating

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (Harbour and Engineering) working with harbour traders and businesses

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Old Cockleshed site, West Quay promenade and adjoining harbour frontage

Description: Introduce a coordinated programme of high-quality seasonal seating, interpretation and lightweight public realm animation along West Quay and the Old Cockleshed site to support harbour traders, improve dwell time and strengthen the harbour's role as a welcoming year-round destination. The project would provide flexible outdoor seating, temporary planting, maritime interpretation, weather-resilient furniture and opportunities for seasonal cultural programming and food-led activity while maintaining the working harbour character of the area.

Linked strategy principle(s): Improve first impressions; Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor; Shape spaces for community and celebration

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; harbour traders; local cultural organisations; accessibility groups; local schools and community organisations

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- New seasonal seating and public realm features delivered along West Quay.
- Maritime interpretation and storytelling installations.
- Flexible areas for seasonal activity, pop-ups and events.
- Improved visitor seating and dwell spaces adjoining harbour businesses.

Outcomes:

- Increased visitor dwell time and spending within the harbour.
- Improved visitor experience and first impressions.
- Greater year-round use of harbour spaces.
- Increased visibility and support for local harbour businesses.

Mechanism of change: Providing comfortable, attractive and flexible public spaces encourages people to spend longer in the harbour area, supporting local traders and increasing opportunities for social interaction and cultural activity. Small-scale public realm improvements also help soften the hard landscape of the quay while reinforcing Whitstable's maritime identity.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased harbour footfall and dwell time.
- Positive visitor and trader feedback.
- Increased use of seating and promenade spaces outside peak summer months.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on harbour estate management and maintenance.
- Coordination with harbour traders and servicing arrangements.
- Selection of durable furniture suitable for marine conditions.
- Revenue/resource for seasonal animation and maintenance.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder agreement; planning permission where required; conservation area considerations; event licensing for programmed activity

Key risks/issues:

- Weather exposure and maintenance pressures.
- Clutter or poor-quality furniture undermining harbour character.
- Conflict between visitor use and operational harbour activity.

Support needed to progress: Public realm design support; stakeholder coordination; modest capital funding; maintenance planning

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on extent of public realm works

Likely funding route: Mixed - harbour investment, public realm funding, sponsorship and tourism/coastal grant funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential partnership contributions from harbour traders and event organisers

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Visitor economy studies consistently show that seating, dwell space and public realm quality increase visitor spend and length of stay in coastal destinations.
- Comparable harbour schemes in Ramsgate and Margate have successfully used lightweight seating and animation to increase year-round activity and support independent traders.
- Feedback during strategy engagement identified the need for more welcoming places to sit, pause and spend time around the harbour beyond peak summer trading.

1.4 Harbour welcome

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Whitstable Harbour Board, Kent County Council, harbour stakeholders, local businesses and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate/Whitstable Harbour

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Harbour estate, with a particular focus on the southern harbour boundary, Gorrell Tank Car Park, Harbour Street approaches, Beach Walk, the seafront play area, harbour entrances and the walking routes linking the High Street, harbour, seafront and town centre arrival points

Description: Deliver a coordinated harbour signage, welcome and interpretation project that improves the appearance, legibility and accessibility of Whitstable Harbour, with a specific focus on improving the appearance and access to the Harbour from its southern boundary. The project would build on the existing Harbour signage concept but broaden it into a practical access and orientation project for the points where people arrive from the High Street, Gorrell Tank Car Park, Beach Walk and the seafront.

The southern edge of the harbour is a critical threshold between the working harbour, town centre, seafront, parking areas and family-friendly public spaces. At present, this boundary does not consistently communicate that the harbour is a welcoming, active and accessible public-facing place while also remaining a working operational environment. The project would therefore rationalise and improve signage, visitor information, entrance markers, boundary treatment, interpretation and route cues so that people can more easily understand how to enter the harbour, where they can go, how the working harbour operates and how it connects back to the High Street and wider seafront.

The project should be developed as part of the wider harbour and town centre experience rather than as a standalone signage replacement exercise. It should reinforce the harbour's role as a safe, welcoming, memorable and accessible place that supports local business, protects the environment and delivers social value. Potential elements could include a clearer southern harbour welcome point, improved directional signage from Gorrell Tank Car Park and Harbour Street, more consistent harbour identity, interpretation of the working harbour and fishing industry, access information, walking route markers, improved signage around public and operational areas, and better integration with the Whitstable Wayfinding and Tourist Map projects.

The design approach should avoid visual clutter and should respect the conservation area, maritime character and operational needs of the harbour. It should also be accessible, with clear language, suitable contrast, legible typography, simple directional hierarchy and careful placement that supports people with different mobility, sensory and cognitive needs.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Improve first impressions
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Shape spaces for community and celebration

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour Board; Kent County Council where signage affects highway or public realm locations; harbour businesses and users; Visit Canterbury/visitor economy partners; local traders; accessibility groups; local residents; cultural and heritage organisations; signage and wayfinding designers; maintenance and asset management teams

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for scoping, design and first-phase installation; medium term for wider harbour interpretation and future integration with linked projects

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for first-phase delivery and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- Audit of existing harbour signs, welcome points, public access information, operational signs and visitor orientation gaps.
- Agreed signage and interpretation plan for the harbour, with priority focus on the southern boundary and routes from Gorrell Tank Car Park, Harbour Street, Beach Walk and the High Street.

- New or improved harbour welcome signage at key arrival points, especially the southern harbour edge.
- Clearer directional signage linking the harbour, High Street, seafront, Gorrell Tank Car Park and wider town centre routes.
- Interpretation that explains the working harbour, fishing industry, maritime heritage, environmental responsibilities and public access expectations.
- Rationalisation or removal of outdated, duplicated or confusing signage where appropriate.
- Maintenance and ownership plan for new signage and interpretation assets.

Outcomes:

- The southern boundary of the harbour becomes more attractive, legible and welcoming.
- Residents and visitors can more easily find, enter and move around the harbour from the High Street, car parks and seafront.
- The harbour feels more public-facing and accessible without compromising its operational working role.
- Movement between the harbour and High Street becomes clearer, supporting linked trips and more balanced footfall.
- Visitors better understand the harbour's working function, heritage, safety requirements and environmental responsibilities.
- Whitstable presents a more coherent first impression as a connected town centre, harbour and seafront destination.

Mechanism of change: The southern harbour boundary is one of the main points where people encounter the harbour from the town centre, car parks and seafront, but it can feel unclear and fragmented if signage, boundary treatment and route information are inconsistent. Improving signage and interpretation at this threshold will reduce uncertainty, make public access more obvious and help people understand how the harbour works. Clearer routes and welcome points should encourage more people to move between the High Street and harbour on foot, while better interpretation can increase appreciation of the working harbour and reduce confusion between public areas and operational spaces.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; harbour businesses; High Street and Harbour Street traders; disabled people; older people; families; people arriving from Gorrell Tank Car Park; pedestrians moving between the High Street, harbour and seafront; cultural and visitor economy partners; harbour users and operators

How we will know it has worked:

- Signage audit, design brief and priority installation plan are completed and agreed with harbour stakeholders and accessibility representatives.
- New or improved signage is installed at the southern harbour boundary and other priority arrival points.
- Visitor and resident feedback shows the harbour is easier to find, enter, understand and navigate.
- Observations or counts show stronger pedestrian movement between the High Street, Gorrell Tank Car Park, seafront and harbour.
- Harbour stakeholders report that public access is clearer and better managed while operational needs remain protected.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the signage hierarchy, priority locations and relationship with wider Whitstable Wayfinding and Tourist Map projects.
- Harbour Board and operational harbour input to ensure public-facing signs do not conflict with safety, servicing or commercial operations.
- Accessibility review and user testing of sign content, design, contrast, placement and route information.
- Highways, landowner and conservation input for signs located on or adjoining public highway, harbour land or sensitive townscape areas.

- Clear responsibility for maintenance, updates and future replacement.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Harbour permissions; landowner or freeholder agreements; highways approvals where signs are on or affect the public highway; planning permission or advertisement consent where required; conservation area considerations; procurement approvals; accessibility review

Key risks/issues:

- Additional signs could create clutter if the project does not also remove or rationalise outdated signage.
- A purely visitor-focused approach could undermine operational clarity or safety within the working harbour.
- Poorly designed or inaccessible signs could fail to help the people who most need clear orientation.
- The project could duplicate or conflict with wider wayfinding work unless destinations, design language and locations are coordinated.
- Maintenance responsibilities could be overlooked, leading to faded, damaged or outdated information over time.

Support needed to progress: Signage audit; harbour stakeholder coordination; wayfinding and interpretation design expertise; accessibility review; highways and conservation advice; modest capital funding for manufacture and installation; maintenance and asset ownership planning; coordination with visitor economy and public realm projects

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for audit, design and first-phase signage; medium if wider interpretation, entrance features or boundary improvements are included

Likely funding route: Council capital or public realm funding, harbour investment, visitor economy funding, cultural or heritage interpretation funding, developer contributions where appropriate, and potential partner or in-kind support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: No confirmed project-specific funding at this stage, although the project aligns with harbour strategy priorities, town centre wayfinding work and wider public realm and visitor experience improvements

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Wayfinding and welcome signage are most effective where they reduce uncertainty at key decision points and make public routes feel obvious, safe and intentional. Because the southern harbour boundary is a major point of arrival from parking, the High Street and seafront, improving signs and entrance cues should directly improve access and confidence.
- Interpretation can help working waterfronts balance visitor access with operational needs. By explaining where the public can go, what harbour activities take place and why some areas need to remain operational, signage can improve understanding while reducing conflict and confusion.
- Better connected visitor routes can spread footfall and increase linked trips between waterfronts and High Streets. For Whitstable, clearer harbour signage should support movement between the harbour, Harbour Street, the High Street and the seafront, helping the town function as a coherent destination rather than a set of disconnected visitor hotspots.

1.5 Whitstable tourist map

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Visit Canterbury, local traders, Whitstable Harbour stakeholders and accessibility partners

Main contact: Place Directorate/Visit Canterbury

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour, seafront, Tankerton, railway station arrival routes, Gorrell Tank Car Park and key visitor routes between the station, High Street, Harbour Street, beach, harbour and Tankerton

Description: Develop a clear, attractive and accessible Whitstable visitor map that helps residents and visitors understand the town as a connected place, linking the railway station, High Street, harbour, seafront, Tankerton and key cultural, heritage and visitor destinations. The map would sit alongside, and potentially be integrated with, the wider Whitstable wayfinding fingerpost project rather than replacing it. It could be produced as a printed visitor map, a digital map, a downloadable tourism resource, and/or as map panels added to selected fingerposts or welcome points at a later stage.

The project responds to a recognised gap in Whitstable's visitor information. Existing map material is limited and may not meet current accessibility or design expectations. The project should therefore be developed with a strong emphasis on inclusive design, including clear contrast, accessible fonts, suitable text sizes, simple route hierarchy, user testing and careful visual legibility. It should also be shaped with traders, visitor economy partners, accessibility groups and harbour stakeholders so the map reflects what local businesses and users need, rather than being produced unilaterally.

A key early decision will be whether the map should be a more conventional visitor orientation map, a more creative/artistic Whitstable-style map, or a hybrid approach that combines accessible mapping with local character. The project should protect space for creativity and place identity, but not allow visual treatment to compromise readability or accessibility. It should also future-proof the wider wayfinding programme by allowing map panels to be added to selected fingerposts after installation if this proves desirable and affordable.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Improve first impressions
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Visit Canterbury; Whitstable traders and businesses; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; local tourism and business liaison partners; accessibility groups; local cultural organisations; map designers/illustrators; wayfinding contractors; Kent County Council where map panels or highway-based signs are involved; local residents and user-testing participants

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for first version and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- A Whitstable visitor map brief agreed with relevant council teams, Visit Canterbury, traders, harbour stakeholders and accessibility representatives.

- Accessible map design tested with users before publication.
- A printed and/or digital Whitstable visitor map showing key destinations, walking routes, arrival points, toilets, cultural venues, harbour connections, seafront links and routes towards Tankerton.
- Guidance on whether and where map panels could be added to fingerposts or other visitor orientation points in future.
- A simple process for keeping the map updated so it does not become quickly out of date.

Outcomes:

- Visitors can more easily understand how Whitstable's station, High Street, harbour, beach and Tankerton connect.
- Better first impressions for people arriving by train, car, coach, bicycle or on foot from the coast path.
- More balanced visitor movement between the harbour, High Street, seafront and Tankerton, supporting businesses across a wider area.
- Improved accessibility and confidence for people who rely on clear visual information to plan routes.
- A stronger sense of Whitstable as a coherent destination with a distinctive but practical visitor information offer.

Mechanism of change: A good visitor map reduces uncertainty at the start of a journey and helps people make better decisions about where to go, how far places are, and which routes are easiest or most attractive. In Whitstable, this matters because the visitor experience is spread across several linked but distinct areas: the railway station, High Street, harbour, beach, Tankerton and cultural venues. A clear map can encourage people to explore beyond the most obvious routes, reduce repeated wayfinding questions, support walking between destinations and help the harbour and High Street feel like connected parts of one town centre experience. If map panels are later added to selected fingerposts or arrival points, the map can also strengthen the physical wayfinding system without delaying the current fingerpost replacement project.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local traders and businesses; disabled people; older people; families; rail users; walkers using the coast path; cultural venues; harbour businesses; tourism partners

How we will know it has worked:

- Map design is completed, user-tested and published in agreed formats.
- Visitor, trader and accessibility feedback shows the map is clear, useful and easy to read.
- Businesses and visitor-facing staff report fewer basic direction queries and better visitor awareness of town-wide destinations.
- Evidence from feedback or observation shows more confidence moving between the station, High Street, harbour, seafront and Tankerton.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on map purpose, format and design approach.
- Involvement of traders and visitor economy partners at key stages.
- Accessibility review and user testing before final sign-off.
- Coordination with the wider fingerpost and wayfinding project so map content and physical signage do not conflict.
- Clear ownership for updates, reprints, digital hosting and future maintenance.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Design and copyright permissions; image or illustration licences where relevant; landowner or highways approvals if physical map panels are added to fingerposts or welcome points; accessibility review; procurement approvals where external design or print services are commissioned

Key risks/issues:

- A visually appealing map could become hard to use if creativity overrides accessibility and legibility.
- The map may become outdated if no update process is agreed.
- Producing the map without trader and harbour input could reduce local support or miss important visitor routes and destinations.
- Integrating map panels into fingerposts could add cost or complexity if not planned as a future-proofing option early enough.
- Overloading the map with too many destinations could make it less useful for first-time visitors.

Support needed to progress: Map brief development; design and accessibility expertise; trader and stakeholder engagement; user testing; coordination with Visit Canterbury and the wayfinding contractor; modest design, print and digital publication budget; update and maintenance plan

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for design, testing and publication; medium if physical map panels are designed, manufactured and installed as part of the wider wayfinding network

Likely funding route: Council visitor economy or public realm funding, tourism marketing budgets, external place-based funding, trader or partner contributions, and potential integration with wayfinding project budgets where future map panels are included

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Previous UKSPF resource was considered for exploring this type of map, but other visitor economy work took precedence. In-kind support may be available through trader engagement, Visit Canterbury input and coordination with the wayfinding project

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Visitor maps work best when they simplify decision-making and give people confidence to walk between destinations. For Whitstable, a map would directly support the aim of helping people move between the station, High Street, harbour, beach and Tankerton rather than treating these as separate places.
- Accessible design is central to whether the map will achieve its benefits. High contrast, readable fonts, suitable text size and user testing should improve the usefulness of the map for a wider range of people, including older visitors, disabled people and first-time users.
- Local input is essential because traders, harbour stakeholders and visitor-facing partners understand the questions visitors ask, the routes they actually use and the destinations they often miss. A map shaped with those users is more likely to spread footfall, support businesses and improve the overall visitor experience.

1.6 Gorrell Tank artwork

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with local artists, cultural partners, Whitstable Harbour stakeholders, car park users and nearby businesses

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Gorrell Tank Car Park and its key pedestrian edges and routes linking the car park to the High Street, harbour, Beach Walk, Horsebridge, Sea Street, Harbour Street and seafront

Description: Commission a bold public artwork programme for Gorrell Tank Car Park to transform one of Whitstable's main arrival points from an uninspiring concrete parking environment into a more welcoming, distinctive and memorable gateway. The project would use murals, graphic panels, surface treatments or artist-designed interventions to celebrate Whitstable's maritime identity, working harbour, oyster heritage, creative culture, independent High Street and coastal landscape.

The project is inspired by recent car park mural work in Liverpool, where large-scale bright artwork was used to turn a functional car park into a place that reflects local identity and gives people a stronger sense of arrival. For Whitstable, the aim would not be to copy that model directly, but to apply the principle: using high-quality, locally rooted artwork to make a hard, everyday piece of infrastructure feel more cared for, legible and place-specific.

Gorrell Tank is a key town-centre car park and a major route into the harbour, High Street and seafront. Improving its appearance would support better first impressions, encourage people to walk onward into the town with greater confidence, and help link nearby projects such as Whitstable Wayfinding, Harbour Welcome, Sea Street Art Trail, Sustainable Urban Drainage and the Whitstable Harbour Development Brief.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Improve first impressions
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local artists and designers; The Horsebridge and cultural organisations; Whitstable Harbour Board and harbour stakeholders; local businesses and traders; schools, colleges or young people's groups; accessibility groups; parking, estates and maintenance teams; Kent County Council where highway interfaces are affected; community safety partners; mural fabricators or specialist installers

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for first-phase delivery and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- Site audit identifying suitable walls, surfaces, pedestrian edges and arrival points for artwork.
- Artist brief and commissioning framework rooted in Whitstable's identity and community input.
- One or more large-scale murals, graphic panels or artist-designed installations within Gorrell Tank Car Park.

- Improved pedestrian cues linking the car park to the High Street, harbour, seafront and nearby cultural routes.
- Maintenance, cleaning and ownership plan for the artwork.
- Opportunity for local artist, student or community participation in design development, where appropriate.

Outcomes:

- Gorrell Tank becomes a more attractive, welcoming and memorable arrival point.
- Visitors and residents experience a stronger sense of Whitstable's identity before reaching the harbour, High Street or seafront.
- A visually harsh car park environment is softened and made more legible without reducing its core parking function.
- The project supports walking onward from the car park by making routes feel more intentional and connected.
- Local artists and cultural partners gain a visible platform in the public realm.
- The wider town centre feels more cared for, creative and coherent.

Mechanism of change: Gorrell Tank is one of the places where many people first experience Whitstable, yet its current appearance does little to communicate the town's character or guide people towards nearby destinations. Public artwork can change that first impression quickly by adding colour, identity, storytelling and visual orientation to a functional car park environment. If designed with local input and linked to pedestrian routes, the artwork can help people understand they have arrived in a distinctive coastal town and encourage them to continue on foot towards the harbour, High Street, beach and cultural spaces.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local artists; young people; local businesses; harbour and High Street traders; car park users; pedestrians moving between the car park, harbour, High Street and seafront; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Artwork is commissioned, installed and maintained in agreed priority locations.
- Visitor, resident and business feedback shows improved perceptions of Gorrell Tank as an arrival point.
- Observations show clearer and more confident pedestrian movement from the car park towards the harbour, High Street and seafront.
- The project generates positive local recognition and supports wider cultural identity work.
- Maintenance monitoring shows the artwork remains clean, intact and visually effective.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on the precise artwork locations, surfaces and car park operational constraints.
- Commissioning process that secures high-quality artists and a coherent curatorial brief.
- Community, trader and stakeholder input so the artwork reflects Whitstable rather than generic seaside imagery.
- Maintenance, cleaning and anti-graffiti arrangements agreed before installation.
- Coordination with any future SuDS, car park, wayfinding, lighting or harbour gateway works.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/ freeholder approval; planning permission or advertisement consent where required; conservation area considerations; highways approval where any works affect public highway interfaces; public liability and installation method statements; procurement approvals; maintenance and asset ownership agreements

Key risks/issues:

- Poor-quality or generic artwork could weaken the sense of place rather than strengthen it.
- Artwork may deteriorate quickly if materials, coating, cleaning and maintenance are not properly specified.

- Installation could disrupt parking operations if not phased carefully.
- Community support may be limited if the project is not clearly rooted in local identity and local artistic practice.
- The artwork could conflict with future car park, drainage or development plans if not coordinated early.

Support needed to progress: Curatorial and artist commissioning support; public realm and parking team input; stakeholder engagement; permissions advice; modest capital funding for design, fabrication and installation; maintenance planning; coordination with wayfinding, SuDS and harbour gateway projects

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for a first-phase mural or graphic installation; medium if a larger car park-wide artwork programme, lighting, surface treatment or integrated wayfinding elements are included

Likely funding route: Council public realm or visitor economy funding, arts and culture funding, sponsorship, developer contributions where appropriate, local business support and potential in-kind support from cultural or education partners

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: None confirmed at this stage, although there may be alignment with wider wayfinding, harbour gateway, public realm, SuDS and cultural projects in Whitstable

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Large-scale artwork can quickly improve the perception of functional infrastructure when it is well designed, locally rooted and maintained. The Liverpool car park example shows how a car park can be transformed into a more joyful and place-specific environment by celebrating local identity through bold visual storytelling.
- Arrival points shape how people understand a town. Because Gorrell Tank is one of Whitstable's main car parks, improving its appearance should strengthen first impressions and make the route onward to the harbour, High Street and seafront feel more intentional.
- Public art is most effective when it combines visual improvement with local participation and a clear story. A Whitstable-specific commission can support local artists, express maritime and creative identity, and help convert a hard concrete space into a more welcoming civic threshold.

1.7 Gorrell Ward tree planting action plan (pilot)

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (working with others across the town)

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Multiple sites across Gorrell ward are identified for possible enhancement at this early-stage, predominantly known open spaces. Other locations may also be included (with potential for community planting) where appropriate such as edges of car parks, roads/verges, planters and alleyways etc.

Description: This pilot project would see development of a Ward Action Plan for Gorrell aimed at enhancing tree cover and other planting across

the urban area. It is the first stage of a bigger district project which intends to increase tree cover in wards where current coverage falls below Kent County Council's 19% target for 2050. Gorrell has been chosen as the pilot ward due to its strong community networks and established relationships with the council. Once an action plan is developed this will place the ward in a strong position to explore different funding opportunities to secure delivery of the plan.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Improve first impressions
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Shape spaces for community and celebration

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council will need to work alongside businesses, community groups and other stakeholders (e.g. schools, charities, places of worship). These are identified and will be invited to input to the action plan and help set targets/identify planting locations.

Project stage: Scoping & development of action plan

Timescale: Short term - sharing information with stakeholders; agree potential planting locations and draft plan. Short/Medium term – Publish final plan; Medium term – Planting begins; Longer term - Five-year progress review

Target start date: 2026/27 for sharing information with stakeholders; agree potential planting locations and begin to draft plan.

Target end date: Final plan to be published in 2027. Planting could begin 2027/28

What will change?

Outputs:

- Pilot project is completed – action plan developed for Gorrell ward.
- A range of important information about current tree cover in the ward is collected and collated.
- A range of potential planting sites are identified (with constraints and opportunities).
- A strong mix of local partners is brought together to help develop the plan and prepare for delivery (i.e. planting).
- Funding options are identified to help deliver action plan.

Outcomes:

- Pockets of public realm are enhanced across urban areas of the ward which positively contribute to the High Street setting and improve civic pride.
- Whitstable is greener overall with a higher coverage of trees compared to current levels, broadening its appeal and complementing the town's tourism and leisure economy.
- Visitors report an improved first impression of the town, also supporting footfall, dwell time and spend in the town centre.
- Pilot provides a first practical test for longer-term action planning across other district wards.
- Potential health and wellbeing benefits from exposure to more green areas.

Mechanism of change: The Gorrell action plan has an important role to play in improving the Whitstable town centre/urban area. It is one of fourteen wards where tree cover currently falls below Kent County Council's 19% area coverage target for 2050. Tree cover varies in each area due to historic and land-use factors. This local 'Ward Action Plan' approach means it will be developed with communities and stakeholders can help set realistic targets and identify best planting opportunities.

The plan gives strategic and evidence-based weight which potentially opens up funding opportunities to enable new planting to be implemented. In turn a 'greener' urban area would lead to a host of positive outcomes for residents and visitors to the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; families; young people; older people; wildlife.

How we will know it has worked:

- A viable action plan is developed which identifies suitable Gorrell locations for delivery of improved planting.
- A range of stakeholders want to be part of the pilot project and actively contribute and input to its development and support implementation.
- Local residents and stakeholders report that increased planting is improving town-centre impressions and visibility along with visitor experience.
- Place impact: qualitative feedback from residents' report pride in place improvements and wellbeing benefits.
- Potential to contribute to increased trips to the town centre and improvements in dwell time.
- The model employed for Gorrell ward is adopted and applied to other district city and town centres.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on suitable locations that positively impact the town centre and are practical in operational and landownership terms.
- Any necessary agreements for inclusion of sites in plan and implementation/delivery of improved planting.
- Continued availability of funding options to facilitate planting delivery.
- Joined-up communications between the council and partners/stakeholders around activity such as council and community planting.
- Highways approvals where for any identified parking edge/kerbside improvements.
- Alignment with other town centre projects such as greening car parks and High Street cut throughs, creating new event spaces, improving walking and cycling routes and wayfinding so overall user experiences of the town are optimised.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner or host-site approvals and agreements; highways approvals where public highway space interfaces are identified; any operational or safety approvals needed to enable implementation.

Key risks/issues:

- Continued maintenance and support for both council and community planting sites need to be agreed including any operational arrangements (e.g. financial) to ensure continuity.
- Reputational risk if planting sites become untidy.
- There may be competing demands or requirements in terms of usage of identified spaces in urban areas.
- Poorly identified sites or management/ implementation of planting could be counter-productive and negatively affect user experience and local support.
- Vandalism/neglect risks.
- Safety or damage risk from trees in built up areas (e.g. following storms).

Support needed to progress: Officer support identified to take forward pilot action plan. Early input and endorsement of proposed approach needed from ward councillors.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Costs of implementation unknown until action plan can be developed

Likely funding route: Mixed - but options likely to include local (including council, charity and private sector) and national sources (e.g. Tree Council)

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential sources to target are identified based on experience elsewhere

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Biodiversity and Community Projects and Initiatives - CCC's draft Biodiversity Strategy sets out a vision for a "Wilder Whitstable". It highlights the types of public open space that can support nature, provides examples of key urban species, and identifies threats to urban wildlife alongside actions from related strategies and action plans.
- Kent Local Nature Local Nature Recovery Strategy - this county-wide plan aims to help restore habitats, expand nature recovery and improve biodiversity across the county. It identifies priority areas for action and provides practical tools, including interactive maps, habitat data and guidance, to help communities, landowners and organisations plan and deliver nature recovery projects. Measures which can contribute to nature recovery are described and mapped. Some key measures relating to urban tree planting include:
  - WTH2.5 - Plant more urban trees and create urban forests and orchards
  - URB2.3 - Target urban tree establishment to areas of low canopy cover.
  - URB3.1 - Plant trees and hedgerows specifically to deliver air quality, temperature regulation/ cooling and surface water management benefits



Image: © David Willis

2 Connect land and sea through active travel

Creating green links for walking and cycling connecting the station, High Street and seafront towards Tankerton. New routes, such as the extension of the Crab and Winkle Way, will encourage active travel, reduce car dependency and connect the town's key gateways and attractions in a sustainable, enjoyable way.

2.1 Greening car parks and High Street cut throughs

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council in partnership with Kent County Council and Southern Water

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Middle Wall Car Park, Albert Street Car Park, Regent Street Residents Car Park, Bexley Street cut through, Knights Alley, Starvation Point and adjoining public realm locations

Description: Deliver a coordinated programme of greening, planting and sustainable drainage improvements within town centre car parks and pedestrian cut throughs linking the High Street, harbour and seafront. The project would introduce rain gardens, semi-permeable paving, tree planting, climbing greenery, pocket planting schemes, greening bus shelter roofs and biodiversity improvements to soften the visual dominance of hard surfacing, improve climate resilience and create more attractive walking routes between key destinations.

Linked strategy principle(s): Connect land and sea through active travel; Improve first impressions; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; local businesses; environmental groups; accessibility groups; landscape architects; community volunteers

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Greening and sustainable drainage plans developed for priority routes and car parks.
- Installation of rain gardens, tree planting and biodiversity enhancements.
- Improved pedestrian cut throughs between parking areas, the harbour and High Street.
- Pocket greening and public realm interventions delivered in visually harsh spaces.

Outcomes:

- Improved quality and attractiveness of walking routes.
- Reduced surface water runoff and increased climate resilience.
- Enhanced biodiversity and urban greening within the town centre.
- Stronger pedestrian connections between key destinations.

Mechanism of change: Greening highly visible but hard-surfaced environments improves the pedestrian experience and encourages people to move through the town on foot. Better quality walking routes increase comfort, improve perceptions of safety and help reduce the dominance of vehicles within the town centre environment.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; disabled people; low-income households

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of greening interventions delivered.
- Positive public feedback on public realm quality.
- Increased use of pedestrian routes and spaces.
- Reduction in standing water or drainage issues in intervention areas.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Coordination between highways, parking and public realm teams.
- Ongoing maintenance arrangements for planting.
- Suitable drainage and utility assessments.
- Community stewardship and involvement.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways permissions; planning permission where required; landlord/freeholder agreements for some locations

Key risks/issues:

- Long-term maintenance and watering requirements.
- Potential loss of limited parking spaces.
- Damage to planting from weather or vandalism.

Support needed to progress: Landscape design support; climate adaptation expertise; capital funding; community engagement support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Climate adaptation funding, public realm budgets, biodiversity grants and external greening funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with biodiversity net gain and climate resilience funding opportunities

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Research into urban greening consistently demonstrates improved perceptions of place quality, increased walking activity and reduced urban heat impacts.
- Rain gardens and pocket planting schemes have successfully softened highly engineered environments in coastal towns such as Folkestone and Brighton.
- Stakeholder feedback identified car parks and pedestrian cut throughs as visually poor-quality areas that weaken first impressions and walking connections.

2.2 King Charles III coastal path active travel

Lead organisation: Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council working with Natural England and coastal partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Crab and Winkle Way, Whitstable Harbour, Tankerton seafront and coastal route towards Seasalter

Description: Support the completion and enhancement of active travel and coastal walking/cycling links associated with the King Charles III England Coast Path and the Crab and Winkle Way. The project would improve connections between Canterbury and Whitstable, strengthen cycling infrastructure through the harbour and seafront, and introduce clearer route marking, interpretation, resting points and cycle facilities along the coast.

Linked strategy principle(s): Connect land and sea through active travel; Improve first impressions; Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony

Delivery partners: Kent County Council; Canterbury City Council; Natural England; Sustrans; local cycling groups; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; tourism organisations

Project stage: Feasibility/design development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2030 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Improved and extended coastal walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Enhanced route signage and interpretation.
- New resting points, cycle parking and visitor facilities.
- Better integration between the coast path, harbour and town centre routes.

Outcomes:

- Increased active travel and recreational walking/cycling.
- Improved connectivity between Whitstable and surrounding coastal destinations.
- Reduced reliance on short-distance car journeys.
- Stronger visitor experience linked to the coastline and harbour.

Mechanism of change: Improving the quality, visibility and continuity of active travel routes makes walking and cycling more attractive and convenient for both residents and visitors. Better route integration also encourages people to move more sustainably between coastal attractions, the harbour and the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; cyclists; young people; traders/businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased walking and cycling counts.
- Positive user feedback regarding route quality and accessibility.
- Increased use of coastal active travel routes during peak and shoulder seasons.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Coastal path and highways approvals.
- Coordination between multiple agencies and landowners.
- Funding for infrastructure delivery and maintenance.
- Integration with wider active travel improvements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways permissions; coastal and environmental consents; planning permission where required

Key risks/issues:

- Environmental or coastal erosion constraints.
- Limited physical space for route segregation.
- Phased delivery challenges and funding pressures.

Support needed to progress: Active travel funding support; engineering and environmental design expertise; stakeholder coordination

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high depending on infrastructure interventions

Likely funding route: Active travel funding programmes, coastal access funding and partnership investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Natural England Coast Path investment and active travel policy priorities provide a strong basis for future bids

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Evidence from the National Cycle Network demonstrates that well-connected coastal routes support both sustainable travel and local visitor economies.
- The Crab and Winkle Way already attracts significant recreational use, indicating strong existing demand for improved cycling and walking infrastructure.
- Research by Natural England highlights health, wellbeing and economic benefits associated with accessible coastal walking routes.

2.3 Coastal cycle hire

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council (concession/enabling) with an appointed cycle hire operator

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Multi-site hire hubs/docks and storage locations in Whitstable, focused on the harbour/coastal frontage, the High Street/town centre, Library Square, Tankerton and other onward coastal connections towards Herne Bay and Seasalter, subject to feasibility and operator requirements

Description: Develop a coastal cycle hire offer that connects Whitstable's seafront with the town centre and supports wider journeys along the coast. The project should be progressed as a concession-based or operator-led offer, with hire and return points located not only on the coast but also in locations that help draw people into the commercial heart of the town. In Whitstable, this is especially important because the strategy identifies a need to strengthen links between the harbour, High Street and Tankerton, improve active travel, and reduce short car trips in a town where congestion and parking pressure already affect the visitor and resident experience.

The offer should complement, rather than duplicate, existing public bike-share provision by focusing on a family-friendly and visitor-facing service, with a range of cycles suitable for different ages and abilities, including children's bikes, e-bikes and associated family equipment where viable. It should also respond to current operator interest and recent internal discussion suggesting that Whitstable's strongest model may be a multi-site network with a High Street/town-centre presence alongside harbour and coastal locations, rather than a single seafront concession.

Linked strategy principle(s): Connect land and sea through active travel; Improve first impressions; Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Appointed cycle hire operator; Canterbury City Council town centre regeneration, foreshore, harbour, property and transport teams; Kent County Council Highways where highway or route interfaces are involved; landowners or host sites for hire and storage locations; community safety partners where hub security and anti-social behaviour risks need to be addressed; tourism and marketing partners; local cycle and accessibility groups

Project stage: Scoping/operator and location development

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for feasibility, operator engagement and pilot set-up; medium term for expansion or multi-site rollout

Target start date: 2028 for site identification, operator engagement and concession development

Target end date: 2028/29 for initial pilot or first phase operation and review

What will change?

Outputs:

- A feasibility and market engagement exercise to confirm the preferred operating model, service type and delivery route.
- Identification of suitable Whitstable locations for hire, return and storage, with priority given to sites that strengthen links between the harbour, town centre and Tankerton.
- A concession or operator brief setting out service expectations, including maintenance, seasonal staffing, safety guidance and any family-friendly or accessible cycle types.
- An initial pilot or first phase of operation with clearly signed pick-up and drop-off points and simple supporting wayfinding.

Outcomes:

- Improved active travel and leisure access between the harbour, High Street, Tankerton and wider coastal destinations.
- Stronger linked trips from the coast into the town centre, supporting footfall, dwell time and spend beyond the immediate seafront.
- A more distinctive and family-friendly visitor offer that broadens the appeal of cycling in Whitstable.
- Reduced pressure on short car trips and parking at busy times, where the service is attractive and easy to use.

Mechanism of change: If cycle hire is located only on the seafront, it risks reinforcing the separation between Whitstable's coastal frontage and its High Street. A multi-site model with a town-centre presence can instead turn cycling into a practical link between destinations, helping people move between the harbour, High Street, Tankerton and onward coastal routes without relying on the car. A family-friendly offer also gives Whitstable something distinct from conventional bike-share schemes and better fits the town's visitor profile and leisure market.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; families; young people; older people; less confident cyclists; disabled people where accessible cycles or adapted options can be accommodated

How we will know it has worked:

- A viable operator model and suitable Whitstable locations are secured for pilot delivery.
- Usage and customer feedback show the service is supporting trips between the coast and the town centre as well as wider coastal journeys.
- Local businesses and stakeholders report that the offer improves connections, visibility and visitor experience.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on suitable locations that strengthen movement between the coast and town centre and are practical in landownership and operational terms.
- Appointment of an operator able to provide a service that complements existing bike-share provision and offers the right mix of cycles.
- Suitable storage and handover space, with recent discussions indicating that secure space is limited and may be a key constraint.
- Alignment with transport and active travel priorities, including avoiding duplication or unwanted crossover with other cycling initiatives.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner or host-site agreement; concession or lease arrangements where council land or buildings are involved; highways approvals where public highway space or route interfaces are affected; any operational or safety approvals needed for storage, display or charging arrangements

Key risks/issues:

- If locations are chosen purely for coastal visibility, the project may fail to support the harbour-to-high-street links sought by the strategy.
- Poorly chosen sites may create security or anti-social behaviour risks, particularly for docking stations or stored bikes.
- Limited storage space on the coast may constrain the scale or type of offer that is viable.
- An offer that overlaps too closely with existing bike-share provision may struggle to establish a clear role or market position.

Support needed to progress: Officer support to identify and test preferred locations; concession and property input to shape a viable operating model; coordination with transport, foreshore, regeneration and harbour teams; and a joined-up approach to promotion and wayfinding so the service supports wider town-centre objectives

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at this stage and dependent on operator model, hub format, storage requirements and any enabling works

Likely funding route: Mixed, with operator investment and earned income alongside any council enabling support needed for locations, permissions or small-scale infrastructure

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Operator interest and potential site suggestions have been identified at a preliminary level, but no confirmed delivery package is yet in place

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Whitstable's strategy identifies poor links between the station, High Street, harbour and Tankerton, and supports stronger active travel connections and reduced car dependency.
- Recent internal discussion suggests the greatest value would come from locating cycle hire in both coastal and town-centre locations so it helps animate underused spaces and draw people into the town, not just along the seafront.
- External operator interest points to demand for a family-oriented and flexible cycle hire model that could complement existing bike-share schemes if the right locations and operating arrangements can be secured.

2.4 Crab & Winkle Way active travel extension

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Kent County Council, the Crab and Winkle Line Trust, Sustrans/Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and development partners

Main contact: Place Directorate/transport and engineering teams

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Former Crab and Winkle railway alignment between the north side of Whitstable railway station and Whitstable Harbour, including the route north of the station, Teynham Road, Old Bridge Road, the existing railway line, links towards Station Road/Cromwell Road and onward connections to the harbour, town centre and seafront

Description: Complete the next stage of the Crab and Winkle Way extension in Whitstable, creating a continuous high-quality walking, cycling and wheeling route from the north side of Whitstable railway station towards the harbour, following the line of the former Crab and Winkle railway as closely as possible. The route south of the station was constructed in 2021; the current phase focuses on closing the missing link north of the station so that the route can better connect the station, town centre, harbour, seafront and wider Canterbury–Whitstable active travel corridor.

The immediate scheme would provide the route north from the station towards the harbour. The remaining severance points are the bridges over Old Bridge Road, the existing railway line and Teynham Road. Completion of these bridge elements has been identified as a policy requirement linked to the Brooklands Farm development, recognising their importance in creating a fully connected, step-free and traffic-free route through Whitstable and Tankerton.

The project has a strong heritage dimension because the Crab and Winkle Way follows the corridor of the historic Canterbury and Whitstable Railway. However, its primary purpose in the directory is as a deliverable active travel and connectivity project: improving practical everyday movement, reducing reliance on short car trips, and making it easier for residents, visitors and future communities to reach the town centre, harbour and seafront on foot, by bike or by wheelchair.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Improve first impressions
- Put people first on the High Street
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; Crab and Winkle Line Trust; Sustrans/ Walk Wheel Cycle Trust; Active Travel England where funding opportunities apply; landowners; Network Rail where rail interfaces are involved; developers associated with Brooklands Farm; local residents; accessibility groups; cycling and walking groups; environmental and ecology specialists; appointed engineers and contractors

Project stage: Design/tender preparation for the current phase; bridge elements at future delivery/ policy requirement stage

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for current construction phase; medium-to-long term for bridge completion linked to wider development and funding

Target start date: September 2026 for construction of the current phase, subject to tender and approvals

Target end date: 2028 for current phase completion; later phases for bridge completion subject to funding, consents and development delivery

What will change?

Outputs:

- Construction of a new walking, cycling and wheeling route from the north side of Whitstable railway station towards the harbour, following the former railway alignment as far as practicable.
- Tender and delivery package completed for the current extension phase.
- Improved active travel link between the station, town centre, harbour and seafront.
- Lighting, landscaping, surfacing and access arrangements designed to create a safe, accessible and attractive route.
- Clearer integration with the existing Crab and Winkle Way south of the station and onward routes towards the harbour.
- Future bridge elements identified and safeguarded through policy requirements associated with Brooklands Farm.

Outcomes:

- A stronger, more legible active travel corridor between Canterbury, Whitstable station, the town centre and harbour.
- Easier walking, cycling and wheeling access for residents, visitors and future communities to reach the High Street, harbour, schools, health services, seafront and public transport.
- Reduced severance caused by the railway, Old Bridge Road and Teynham Road once the full route, including bridges, is delivered.
- Reduced reliance on short car trips into Whitstable town centre and harbour, supporting lower congestion and parking pressure over time.
- Improved first impressions for people arriving by train and choosing to continue into the town on foot or by bike.
- Increased use of the historic route as both a practical transport link and a distinctive heritage asset.

Mechanism of change: The Crab and Winkle Way already functions as one of Whitstable's strongest active travel assets, but its benefits are limited where the route breaks down close to the station and harbour. Completing the missing section north of the station will make walking, cycling and wheeling feel more direct, attractive and intuitive. The route will help people avoid more traffic-dominated streets, give residents and visitors a clearer way to move between land and sea, and create a stronger connection between future growth to the south of Whitstable and the town centre. The bridge elements are critical to realising the full benefit because they would remove severance and provide a more continuous, step-free, traffic-free route across the most difficult barriers.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; rail users; cyclists; pedestrians; wheelchair users; young people; older people; school pupils; commuters; future residents of Brooklands Farm; town centre and harbour businesses; people accessing health and community facilities

How we will know it has worked:

- Current phase of the route is tendered, constructed and opened for public use.
- Walking, cycling and wheeling counts show increased use of the route between the station, town centre and harbour.
- User feedback shows improved perceptions of safety, directness, accessibility and attractiveness.
- Evidence of more linked trips between the station, High Street, harbour and seafront.
- Bridge delivery pathway is secured through development requirements, funding and approvals.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Finalisation of engineering documents and successful tender process for the current phase.
- Construction funding, contractor appointment and programme management.
- Agreement on land, access, maintenance and asset ownership arrangements.
- Ecology, drainage, lighting, landscaping and neighbour-impact requirements being resolved through design and delivery.
- Future bridge delivery being secured through Brooklands Farm policy requirements, developer contributions, planning obligations and relevant approvals.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission or discharge of planning conditions where required; highways approvals; Network Rail approvals for any railway interface; landowner agreements; environmental and ecology approvals; construction traffic and access arrangements; bridge consents and technical approvals for future phases; safety audits and accessibility review

Key risks/issues:

- Cost inflation, procurement delay or contractor availability could affect the September construction start.

- Physical constraints along the former railway alignment may affect surfacing, levels, lighting, drainage, overlooking, ecology and boundary treatment.
- The current phase may deliver a useful route but still feel incomplete until bridge elements remove the main severance points.
- Bridge delivery is likely to be technically complex and dependent on development timing, funding and approvals.
- Local concerns around lighting, ecology, privacy, anti-social behaviour or construction disruption will need to be carefully managed.

Support needed to progress: Engineering and procurement support; programme and risk management; highways, rail and ecology input; clear communications with residents and users; developer contribution and planning obligation work for bridge elements; monitoring and evaluation support once the route opens

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high for the current route extension; high for the full scheme including bridges over Old Bridge Road, the railway line and Teynham Road

Likely funding route: Council capital funding, developer contributions, active travel funding, transport funding, planning obligations linked to Brooklands Farm, and potential external grant funding for later phases

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Engineering work is progressing for the current phase and tender documents are being finalised.

Completion of the bridge elements has been identified as a policy requirement associated with Brooklands Farm, providing an important route to securing future delivery

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High for the current extension; medium-high for the full route including bridges, subject to delivery of the missing structures

Evidence/sources:

- The existing Crab and Winkle Way is already a well-used walking and cycling route between Canterbury and Whitstable. Extending an established route is likely to achieve stronger uptake than creating an entirely new corridor because users already understand the route's purpose and value.
- Active travel routes are most effective where they are direct, continuous, attractive and separated from traffic. The missing links north of Whitstable station currently weaken the route at the point where it needs to connect most strongly to the harbour, High Street and seafront. Completing this section should therefore deliver a clear improvement in usability and confidence.
- Step-free, traffic-free links are particularly valuable where short journeys can otherwise be made by car because walking or cycling feels fragmented or unsafe. The full Crab and Winkle extension, including future bridge elements, would address severance and create a more inclusive route for children, older people, wheelchair users and less confident cyclists.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

3 Put people first on the High Street

Tackling congestion and accessibility issues by creating a safer, more enjoyable pedestrian experience. Addressing pinch points and reducing traffic through the town centre by encouraging sustainable transport and better traffic management. A calmer, greener High Street will strengthen the town's social life and support traders

3.1 Park and bus

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Peripheral parking locations, town centre gateways and Whitstable High Street corridor

Description: Explore the development of a seasonal or year-round "park and bus" system designed to reduce congestion and parking pressure within Whitstable town centre during peak visitor periods. The scheme would identify peripheral parking locations linked to regular shuttle or loop bus services connecting the harbour, High Street and seafront. The project aims to reduce vehicle movements through constrained town centre streets while maintaining convenient access to Whitstable's key attractions and supporting a more people-focused High Street environment.

Linked strategy principle(s): Put people first on the High Street; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents; Improve first impressions

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; bus operators; landowners; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; tourism businesses

Project stage: Feasibility/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Pilot operation by 2029/30

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study identifying suitable peripheral parking and shuttle locations.
- Pilot shuttle or seasonal bus service established.
- Visitor information and signage strategy delivered.
- Monitoring framework for traffic, parking and visitor behaviour.

Outcomes:

- Reduced congestion and parking pressure within the town centre.
- Improved pedestrian environment and air quality.
- Better visitor experience and reduced traffic conflict.
- Increased use of sustainable transport options.

Mechanism of change: By intercepting some visitor traffic before it reaches constrained town centre streets, the project reduces congestion and creates a calmer, safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians while maintaining access to Whitstable's attractions and businesses.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; disabled people; older people

How we will know it has worked:

- Reduction in peak traffic congestion and parking pressure.
- Uptake of shuttle services.
- Positive resident, visitor and trader feedback.
- Improved pedestrian experience within the High Street area.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Identification of suitable peripheral parking locations.

- Viable operating and funding model.
- Bus operator participation.
- Effective visitor communications and signage.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways permissions; landowner agreements; operator licences

Key risks/issues:

- Limited uptake if service frequency or convenience is poor.
- Financial sustainability challenges outside peak periods.
- Visitor resistance to parking outside the centre.

Support needed to progress: Transport modelling; feasibility funding; operator engagement; visitor behaviour analysis

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high depending on operating model

Likely funding route: Transport funding, council revenue support, parking income and partnership funding.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with sustainable transport and congestion reduction funding programmes.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Seasonal park and ride and shuttle bus schemes in coastal towns including St Ives and Salcombe have demonstrated reductions in peak congestion and pressure on constrained historic streets.
- Visitor management studies consistently show that intercept parking combined with reliable shuttle services can improve perceptions of accessibility and reduce town centre vehicle dominance.
- Engagement undertaken during the strategy process identified traffic congestion and parking pressure as major concerns affecting residents, visitors and the pedestrian experience.

3.2 Short hop bus loop

Lead organisation: Kent County Council and bus operators working with Canterbury City Council

Main contact: Public Transport and Sustainable Travel lead (TBC)

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, Estuary View, Seasalter, Tankerton and Swalecliffe/Chestfield Station.

Description: Develop a local short-hop bus loop service connecting surrounding residential areas and transport interchanges with Whitstable town centre, harbour and seafront. The project would improve access to the town centre without relying on private vehicles and support more inclusive movement for residents, visitors, older people and those with mobility constraints. The service could explore simplified zonal fares, integrated ticketing and seasonal timetable enhancements linked to visitor demand.

Linked strategy principle(s): Put people first on the High Street; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents; Connect land and sea through active travel

Delivery partners: Kent County Council; bus operators; Canterbury City Council; local communities; accessibility groups.

Project stage: Idea/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Pilot service by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study and route planning.
- Pilot short-hop bus service introduced.
- Integrated timetable and visitor information.
- Exploration of simplified or integrated fare structures.

Outcomes:

- Improved access to the town centre without car dependency.
- Reduced short-distance car trips and parking pressure.
- Better social connectivity for residents.
- Improved access for older and mobility-impaired users.

Mechanism of change: Frequent and easy-to-understand local bus connections can reduce reliance on short-distance car journeys while improving access to shops, services and the seafront for residents who are less able or willing to drive.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; older people; disabled people; low-income households; traders/ businesses.

How we will know it has worked:

- Passenger numbers and service uptake.
- Reduced short-distance car trips.
- Positive accessibility and resident feedback.
- Increased use of town centre services by surrounding neighbourhoods.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Bus operator partnership.
- Funding support for pilot operations.
- Passenger demand modelling.
- Integration with wider transport improvements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Bus operating agreements; highways permissions

Key risks/issues:

- Financial sustainability outside peak periods.
- Limited ridership if frequencies are too low.
- Congestion affecting reliability and journey times.

Support needed to progress: Transport modelling; operator engagement; funding support; community consultation.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Bus service improvement funding, transport grants and partnership support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing public transport improvement policy priorities provide a strong basis for future bids

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Community bus loops and town shuttle services have been used successfully in market and coastal towns to improve accessibility and reduce dependency on private vehicles.
- Simplified fares and regular local connections have been shown to improve uptake amongst older residents and lower-income users.
- Stakeholder feedback highlighted the need for improved links between surrounding neighbourhoods, rail connections and Whitstable town centre.

3.3 Temporary pedestrianisation

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Harbour Street and adjoining High Street areas.

Description: Trial temporary or seasonal pedestrianisation measures within Harbour Street and adjoining High Street areas during events, weekends or peak visitor periods to improve safety, increase pedestrian space and support local businesses. The project would test how reduced traffic movement affects footfall, visitor experience and congestion while creating opportunities for markets, seating, performances and public activity.

Linked strategy principle(s): Put people first on the High Street; Shape spaces for community and celebration; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents.

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; local traders; emergency services; accessibility groups; event organisers.

Project stage: Idea/pilot testing

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028)

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: Pilot evaluation by 2030

What will change?

Outputs:

- Temporary pedestrianisation trials and traffic management plans.
- Monitoring of footfall, traffic and business impacts.
- Temporary seating, planting and public realm activation.
- Community and business engagement programme.

Outcomes:

- Safer and more attractive pedestrian environment.
- Increased footfall and dwell time.
- Better quality town centre experience.
- Reduced vehicle-pedestrian conflict.

Mechanism of change: Reducing vehicle dominance in constrained High Street environments creates more space for people, social activity and business spill-out while allowing the impacts of longer-term pedestrian improvements to be tested before permanent investment decisions are made.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people; disabled people.

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased footfall and dwell time.
- Positive business and visitor feedback.
- Reduced traffic conflict and pedestrian safety concerns.
- Increased participation in events and outdoor activity.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Traffic management planning.
- Business and resident engagement.
- Emergency and servicing access arrangements.
- Monitoring and evaluation framework.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs); highways permissions; event licences where applicable.

Key risks/issues:

- Business concerns regarding vehicle access and deliveries.
- Traffic displacement into neighbouring streets.
- Accessibility concerns if measures are poorly designed.

Support needed to progress: Traffic modelling; stakeholder engagement; event and public realm coordination.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium

Likely funding route: Public realm funding, event budgets and regeneration funding.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing event infrastructure and public realm programmes may support pilot delivery.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Temporary pedestrianisation trials introduced during and after the Covid-19 period demonstrated increases in footfall and hospitality spill-out in many town centres.
- Coastal and historic towns including Deal and Shrewsbury have used seasonal traffic restrictions to support visitor experience and local trading activity.
- Engagement undertaken during strategy development identified pedestrian comfort and traffic conflict as key concerns within Harbour Street.

3.4 Limit High Street loading times

Lead organisation: Kent County Council working with Canterbury City Council

Main contact: KCC Highways

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable High Street and Harbour Street loading areas.

Description: Review and amend loading Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) within Whitstable High Street and Harbour Street to better manage servicing activity and reduce conflicts between pedestrians, visitors and large vehicles during peak daytime hours. The project would explore restricting larger HGV servicing to early morning periods while allowing flexibility for smaller vehicles and essential deliveries.

Linked strategy principle(s): Put people first on the High Street; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents; Improve first impressions.

Delivery partners: Kent County Council; Canterbury City Council; local businesses; freight and servicing operators; accessibility groups.

Project stage: Feasibility/traffic review

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: TRO review and implementation by 2029

What will change?

Outputs:

- Review of existing loading restrictions and servicing patterns.
- Updated TRO arrangements and signage.
- Engagement with businesses and servicing operators.
- Monitoring of pedestrian safety and servicing impacts.

Outcomes:

- Reduced daytime HGV presence in constrained town centre streets.
- Improved pedestrian comfort and safety.
- Better balance between servicing needs and visitor experience.
- Improved quality of the public realm during peak periods.

Mechanism of change: Better-managed servicing arrangements reduce conflict between pedestrians and large vehicles while maintaining the operational needs of businesses. Restricting large vehicle movements during the busiest periods can create a safer and more attractive environment without preventing essential servicing.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; disabled people; older people

How we will know it has worked:

- Reduced daytime HGV movements.
- Positive pedestrian and trader feedback.
- Reduced traffic conflict in loading areas.
- Improved pedestrian comfort during busy periods.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Business and freight operator engagement.
- Highways approvals and legal processes.
- Enforcement arrangements.
- Monitoring of unintended impacts.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Traffic Regulation Orders; highways approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Business resistance to servicing restrictions.
- Displacement of loading activity into neighbouring areas.
- Enforcement and compliance challenges.

Support needed to progress: Traffic analysis; stakeholder consultation; legal and highways support

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low

Likely funding route: Highways and traffic management budgets

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential integration with wider traffic and pedestrian management programmes

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Town centre servicing strategies elsewhere have demonstrated that timed delivery windows can significantly reduce pedestrian conflict during peak periods.
- Research into freight management in historic town centres highlights the importance of balancing operational access with public realm quality.
- Local feedback identified HGV movements and loading activity as contributing to pedestrian discomfort within constrained High Street areas.

3.5 Radar speed signage

Lead organisation: Kent County Council working with local resident and business groups

Main contact: KCC Highways

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Harbour Street and adjoining town centre routes

Description: Explore the installation of radar-activated speed signage and associated traffic calming measures along Harbour Street and adjoining areas to improve pedestrian safety and reduce vehicle speeds in highly constrained shared streets. The project responds to concerns raised by local residents and businesses regarding vehicle behaviour and the balance between traffic movement and pedestrian activity within the town centre.

Linked strategy principle(s): Put people first on the High Street; Improve first impressions; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Kent County Council; Canterbury City Council; Sea Street Residents Association; local traders; community safety partners

Project stage: Advocacy/review

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2029

Target end date: Pilot measures installed by 2029/30

What will change?

Outputs:

- Traffic speed and behaviour assessment.
- Installation of radar speed signage where appropriate.
- Public awareness and road safety communications.
- Monitoring of traffic speeds and driver behaviour.

Outcomes:

- Reduced vehicle speeds in pedestrian-priority areas.
- Improved perceptions of safety.
- Better balance between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Increased confidence for walking and crossing within the town centre.

Mechanism of change: Visible speed awareness measures encourage slower driving behaviour and reinforce the shared nature of constrained town centre streets, helping improve pedestrian comfort and reduce perceptions of danger or conflict.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; young people; older people

How we will know it has worked:

- Reduction in recorded vehicle speeds.
- Positive resident and pedestrian feedback.
- Improved perceptions of safety and comfort.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Highways authority support.
- Traffic data collection.
- Funding for installation and maintenance.
- Agreement on suitable locations.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways permissions and traffic management approvals

Key risks/issues:

- Limited impact if unsupported by wider traffic management measures.
- Visual clutter concerns.
- Maintenance and vandalism risks.

Support needed to progress: Traffic surveys; highways engagement; community consultation

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low

Likely funding route: Highways safety funding, local contributions and community partnership support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing resident advocacy and community safety priorities may support delivery

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Vehicle activated speed signs have been shown to reduce average vehicle speeds, particularly in constrained urban environments.
- Community-led traffic calming initiatives elsewhere have improved perceptions of pedestrian safety even where wider highway redesign is not immediately possible.
- Resident and trader feedback identified vehicle speed and driver behaviour as negatively affecting perceptions of Harbour Street as a pedestrian-friendly environment.



Image: © Gordon Nash

4 Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor

Building on the success of the South Quay Shed by introducing new active uses that enhance Whitstable's unique mix of maritime industry and visitor experience. The harbour is a dynamic community asset at the town's heart - a place that sustains livelihoods while offering cultural experiences rooted in its seafaring heritage.

4.1 Curated Harbour enterprise

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council/ Whitstable Harbour Board working with South Quay operators and commercial partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): South Quay, Crab & Winkle, wider Whitstable Harbour estate and adjacent harbour-front commercial spaces

Description: Develop the harbour as a stronger year-round economic anchor by securing and coordinating a broader mix of commercial tenants, visitor-facing activity and managed programming within the Crab & Winkle and wider South Quay area. The project would focus on attracting uses that complement the working harbour and independent High Street, rather than competing with them: food, drink, local produce, maritime-related retail, creative enterprise, small-scale events, markets and seasonal programming.

The project would also explore a more active management and animation model for key harbour assets, learning from the success of the South Quay Shed and ensuring the harbour estate works as a coherent destination across the year. This could include coordinated marketing, tenant curation, events management, meanwhile or pop-up opportunities, shared signage and support for businesses that strengthen Whitstable's maritime character and visitor offer.

Linked strategy principle(s): Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor; Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents; Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour Board; South Quay Shed/Crab & Winkle operators; harbour businesses; local food and drink producers; creative businesses; Visit Canterbury; Canterbury BID/business representatives; event organisers; community stakeholders

Project stage: Scoping/commercial development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for first phase of tenant and programming improvements

What will change?

Outputs:

- Commercial and tenant mix strategy for Crab & Winkle/South Quay.
- Active management and programming plan for harbour-front assets.
- New or refreshed tenancies that support food, maritime, creative and visitor-facing activity.
- Coordinated harbour marketing, events and wayfinding.
- Pilot seasonal and off-season programming to reduce reliance on peak summer trade.

Outcomes:

- Increased year-round activity and footfall at the harbour.
- Greater commercial resilience for harbour-front businesses.
- Stronger relationship between the working harbour, visitor economy and local identity.
- Increased movement between the harbour, Harbour Street and the High Street.
- A more distinctive and curated visitor experience rooted in Whitstable's maritime character.

Mechanism of change: A more deliberate tenant mix and active management approach can turn individual commercial units into a coherent harbour destination. By curating uses that reflect the harbour's working character and linking them with events, signage and marketing, the project can increase dwell time, support local livelihoods and reduce the "feast or famine" effect of seasonal visitor patterns. Active management also helps ensure that growth in visitor activity reinforces, rather than displaces, the qualities that make the harbour distinctive.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; harbour businesses; fishers and maritime businesses; local producers; creative businesses; traders on Harbour Street and the High Street

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased occupancy and reduced vacancy/ underuse of harbour-front units.
- Higher and more consistent footfall across the year.
- Increased participation in harbour events and programmed activity.
- Positive feedback from harbour businesses, residents and visitors.
- Evidence of linked trips between harbour, Harbour Street and the High Street.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on commercial objectives for Crab & Winkle/South Quay.
- Availability of suitable units and flexible lease arrangements.
- Operator interest and market demand.
- Alignment with harbour operational requirements and working harbour uses.
- Capacity for active programming, marketing and tenant management.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Lease/licence agreements; planning or change-of-use permissions where required; food hygiene and licensing permissions; event permissions; harbour operational approvals; conservation/design considerations where external works are proposed

Key risks/issues:

- Risk that commercial uses become too seasonal or generic and fail to strengthen Whitstable's distinctive identity.
- Potential tension between leisure/visitor uses and operational harbour needs.
- Viability challenges for small businesses if rents, service charges or fit-out costs are too high.
- Need for long-term management capacity rather than a one-off letting exercise.
- Resident concerns if evening or event activity is not well managed.

Support needed to progress: Commercial strategy and market testing; engagement with existing harbour businesses and operators; tenant curation and leasing advice; events/programming resource; marketing and visitor economy support; consideration of rent, fit-out and meanwhile models that support local and independent operators.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium (strategy, management and programming costs; higher if capital works or fit-out support are required)

Likely funding route: Mixed - harbour commercial income, operator investment, council enabling support, business contributions, sponsorship and potential regeneration/visitor economy grants

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing harbour assets, commercial relationships and South Quay activity provide a platform for delivery; further funding and operator contributions to be explored through scoping

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Successful harbour and waterfront destinations depend on a curated mix of working, visitor-facing and community uses rather than passive letting of individual units. Active management helps maintain identity, reduce dead periods and avoid a drift towards generic seasonal retail.
- Whitstable already has strong visitor demand, a recognised food and maritime identity, and an example of successful harbour activation through the South Quay Shed. This creates a strong platform for further commercial curation, provided new activity complements rather than dilutes the working harbour.
- Engagement through the strategy process highlighted both the importance of retaining a working harbour and the need for more activity, heritage interpretation and year-round reasons to visit. A managed retail and programming approach directly responds to this by strengthening the harbour as an economic anchor while supporting the wider town centre.

4.2 Wet fish concession

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council/ Whitstable Harbour Board working with local fishers and a concession operator

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): South Quay/Whitstable Harbour, with precise location to be confirmed through feasibility and operational planning

Description: Establish a fish market or fish sales concession at Whitstable Harbour focused on local catch, maritime food culture and the working harbour economy. The project would provide a visible, public-facing outlet for locally landed seafood and help reconnect visitors and residents with Whitstable's fishing heritage and contemporary maritime livelihoods.

The project recognises that a fish market may not be commercially viable as a stand-alone use and should therefore be developed as part of a mixed harbour offer. It could be supported by complementary uses such as seafood demonstrations, local produce, educational interpretation, food events, pop-up stalls or linked programming with the South Quay Shed and harbour businesses.

Linked strategy principle(s): Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor; Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony; Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour Board; Fishing Association; West Whelks; other local fishers and seafood businesses; potential concession operators; food hygiene/ environmental health teams; Visit Canterbury; local restaurants; community and education partners

Project stage: Idea/feasibility

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for feasibility, market testing and concession design; medium term for delivery if viable

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 pilot concession/market model

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility study and operating model for a fish market or seafood concession.
- Identification of suitable harbour location and servicing requirements.
- Operator/concession procurement or partnership model.
- Local catch sales offer and supporting interpretation.
- Potential pilot events, seafood demonstrations or seasonal market activity.

Outcomes:

- Increased visibility of Whitstable's working harbour and fishing economy.
- Stronger local food offer linked to place identity.
- Increased visitor dwell time and spend around the harbour.
- More opportunities for local fishers, producers and food businesses.
- Better understanding of the harbour as a working environment rather than only a leisure destination.

Mechanism of change: A visible fish market reconnects the public-facing visitor economy with the productive economy of the harbour. By giving local seafood a direct and recognisable presence, the project strengthens authenticity, supports local livelihoods and adds a distinctive experience that cannot be replicated by generic retail. Combining sales with interpretation and occasional programming can help make the offer viable while deepening public appreciation of Whitstable's maritime identity.

Beneficiaries: Local fishers; seafood businesses; residents; visitors; restaurants and hospitality businesses; food producers; schools and education groups

How we will know it has worked:

- A viable operator or partnership model is established.
- Regular or seasonal local catch sales take place.
- Positive feedback from fishers, businesses and visitors.
- Increased engagement with harbour heritage/ seafood programming.
- Evidence of linked spend in nearby harbour and town centre businesses.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Commercial viability and realistic operating model.
- Buy-in from local fishers and seafood suppliers.
- Suitable harbour location with servicing, storage and hygiene arrangements.
- Environmental health, food safety and waste management requirements.
- Integration with wider South Quay/harbour commercial programming.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Harbour permissions; concession or lease agreement; food hygiene registration/approvals; planning or change-of-use permission if required; waste and servicing arrangements; licensing permissions for events or tastings where relevant

Key risks/issues:

- Standalone fish retail may not be viable without complementary uses and programming.
- Operational constraints around storage, waste, odour, servicing and food hygiene.
- Supply consistency may vary by season, weather and fishing conditions.
- Risk of over-commercialising the harbour if not rooted in genuine local catch and working harbour activity.

- Need to balance visitor-facing activity with operational harbour safety.

Support needed to progress: Feasibility and market testing; engagement with fishing sector and seafood businesses; environmental health and operational advice; concession procurement support; branding/ interpretation input; pilot programming support.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for pilot concession; medium if permanent fit-out, cold storage or public realm works are required

Likely funding route: Mixed - concession operator investment, harbour commercial income, food/visitor economy grants, sponsorship and limited council enabling support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Local catch, harbour identity and existing visitor footfall provide a strong basis; specific funding or operator contributions to be confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Stakeholder engagement identified a clear desire to see a fish market return to Whitstable, while also recognising that it is unlikely to be viable unless supported by a mix of related uses. This makes the project strongest as part of a curated harbour offer rather than a standalone retail unit.
- Food-led heritage experiences can increase dwell time and strengthen authenticity because they connect visitors directly with local production, local skills and a place-specific story. For Whitstable, seafood and the working harbour are central to the town's external reputation and local identity.
- A public-facing seafood concession would help maintain the harbour's productive character within a growing visitor economy, making maritime livelihoods more visible and helping ensure that harbour regeneration is not perceived as simply leisure or retail-led.

4.3 EdShed

Lead organisation: Whitstable Harbour/ Foreshore Services team working with education, environment and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Harbour estate, with a dedicated community classroom/learning base and linked foreshore, beach and harbour locations

Description: Establish an "EdShed" at Whitstable Harbour: a dedicated learning and community classroom space that coordinates education, environmental stewardship and maritime heritage activities across the harbour estate. The project would provide a base for school sessions, community learning, foreshore activities, guided discovery, volunteering, litter-picking, marine environment education and interpretation of the working harbour.

The EdShed would also support more informal, self-directed learning during the summer, such as foreshore search bags, beach discovery resources, community litter-picking equipment and simple visitor-facing educational materials. The aim is to turn the harbour and foreshore into a visible learning environment while supporting responsible visitor behaviour and stronger community stewardship.

Linked strategy principle(s): Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor; Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit; Shape spaces for community and celebration; Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Whitstable Harbour/Foreshore Services; Canterbury City Council; local schools and colleges; environmental organisations; marine/coastal education providers; community groups; volunteers; local heritage groups; universities; beach-clean groups; accessibility groups

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for pilot learning offer; medium term for permanent base and annual programme

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for pilot EdShed programme and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility and operating model for a harbour learning base.
- Dedicated classroom/learning space within or near the harbour estate.
- Coordinated learning programme for schools, families, visitors and community groups.
- Self-directed education resources, including discovery bags and litter-picking kits.
- Interpretation materials linked to marine ecology, fishing, harbour operations and local heritage.
- Volunteer and stewardship programme.

Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of Whitstable's harbour, foreshore and marine environment.
- Stronger links between the harbour, local schools and community organisations.
- Improved responsible visitor behaviour and environmental stewardship.
- Increased community ownership of harbour and coastal spaces.
- More year-round educational and community activity at the harbour.

Mechanism of change: Providing a dedicated learning base and coordinated resources turns the harbour from a place people simply pass through into a place where they can understand, learn and participate. By linking structured education with informal visitor resources, the project can reach schools, families, residents and tourists. This builds stewardship, supports environmental behaviour change and strengthens the harbour's role as a community asset as well as an economic one.

Beneficiaries: Children and young people; schools; families; residents; visitors; environmental groups; volunteers; harbour users; community organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of school and community sessions delivered.
- Use of self-directed learning resources and litter-picking equipment.
- Increased volunteer participation.
- Positive feedback from schools, families and community groups.
- Evidence of improved awareness and stewardship behaviours.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Identification of suitable classroom/community space.
- Staff or volunteer capacity to coordinate learning activity.
- Safeguarding, risk assessment and insurance arrangements.
- Partnership with schools and environmental education providers.
- Ongoing maintenance and replenishment of learning resources.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Harbour estate permissions; safeguarding and risk assessment requirements; landowner/lease agreements for classroom space; permissions for signage or interpretation installations; public liability and event permissions where required

Key risks/issues:

- Programme may rely heavily on staff or volunteer capacity.
- Seasonal peaks may make harbour operations and educational activity harder to coordinate.
- Resources could be lost, damaged or poorly maintained without clear stewardship.
- Need to manage safety around foreshore, tides, water and working harbour operations.
- Risk of creating a classroom without a sustainable programme or audience pipeline.

Support needed to progress: Feasibility work to identify space and operating model; engagement with schools and education partners; safeguarding and risk management support; start-up funding for resources and equipment; volunteer coordination; environmental education expertise.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for pilot resources and programme coordination; medium if dedicated fit-out is required

Likely funding route: Education and environmental grants, community funding, sponsorship, harbour/council enabling support, school contributions and volunteer in-kind support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing foreshore/harbour knowledge, community interest and environmental activity provide a basis for development; specific funding to be confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Coastal education programmes are most effective when they are rooted in real places and hands-on activity. The harbour, foreshore and working maritime environment provide a rich outdoor classroom that can support environmental learning, local history, citizenship and practical stewardship.
- Engagement on the Whitstable strategy showed that people value the working harbour but want to understand it better and see more activity there. The EdShed responds directly by making the harbour more public-facing without undermining its working function.
- Self-directed resources such as discovery bags and litter-picking kits can extend the reach of a small education programme by enabling families and visitors to participate outside formal sessions, especially during peak summer periods when staff capacity is limited.

4.4 Heritage Harbour status

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council/ Whitstable Harbour Board working with maritime heritage partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Harbour estate, South Quay, harbour pontoon, associated heritage routes and public-facing harbour spaces

Description: Work with maritime heritage partners to secure Heritage Harbour status for Whitstable and use the designation as a platform for celebrating and sustaining the town's working maritime identity. The project would support heritage interpretation, Heritage Open Days, public events, storytelling, historic vessel activity and wider recognition of Whitstable Harbour as a place where working maritime culture remains active and relevant.

A key element would be to explore the creation of a heritage berth on the pontoon to support vessels such as the Gamecock to operate as a community sailing ship, subject to feasibility, safety and operational requirements. The project would connect heritage, education, skills, visitor activity and community pride while helping ensure the harbour is understood as a living working place rather than simply a visitor backdrop.

Linked strategy principle(s): Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor; Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit; Shape spaces for community and celebration; Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour Board; Maritime Heritage Trust/ Heritage Harbours partners; local maritime heritage groups; vessel owners/Gamecock representatives; schools and education partners; Visit Canterbury; local historians; harbour businesses; community sailing and skills organisations

Project stage: Idea/partnership development

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for designation and pilot heritage activity; medium term for heritage berth and programme development

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for Heritage Harbour status/ pilot programme; later phases subject to feasibility

What will change?

Outputs:

- Heritage Harbour status application/designation work.
- Harbour heritage interpretation and storytelling programme.
- Heritage Open Days and public events linked to maritime history.
- Feasibility work for a heritage berth and community sailing use.
- Partnerships with maritime heritage, education and visitor economy organisations.
- Improved visibility of historic vessels, skills and working harbour stories.

Outcomes:

- Stronger recognition of Whitstable Harbour's maritime heritage and working identity.
- Increased public understanding and pride in the harbour.
- More year-round heritage and educational activity.

- New opportunities for community sailing, volunteering and maritime skills.
- Enhanced visitor experience rooted in authentic local heritage.

Mechanism of change: Heritage status can provide a framework for telling the harbour's story, attracting partners and giving structure to public programming. By combining designation with visible activity - events, interpretation and potentially a heritage berth - the project turns heritage from a static label into an active programme that supports skills, education, tourism and community identity.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; young people; schools; maritime heritage groups; harbour businesses; vessel owners; volunteers; local cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Heritage Harbour status is secured or a clear pathway is agreed.
- Heritage Open Days/maritime events are delivered and well attended.
- Increased public engagement with harbour interpretation and historic vessels.
- Feasibility for a heritage berth and community sailing activity is completed.
- Positive feedback from harbour stakeholders, residents and visitors.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership with recognised maritime heritage bodies.
- Harbour Board and operational support.
- Agreement on suitable locations for interpretation, events and any heritage berth.
- Vessel safety, insurance and operational arrangements.
- Volunteer and programme capacity.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Harbour permissions; berth agreements; marine safety and insurance approvals; event licences; planning/listed or conservation permissions for physical interpretation where relevant; safeguarding arrangements for youth or community sailing activity

Key risks/issues:

- Heritage status alone may have limited impact unless backed by active programming.
- Operational harbour requirements may limit locations or access for heritage activities.
- Historic vessel activity requires robust safety, insurance and maintenance arrangements.
- Volunteer capacity may be stretched without a clear coordinating body.
- Risk of romanticising heritage without supporting contemporary maritime livelihoods.

Support needed to progress: Partner convening with Heritage Harbour/maritime bodies; heritage interpretation and programme design; feasibility work for heritage berth and Gamecock use; safety and insurance advice; modest funding for events, interpretation and coordination.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for designation, events and interpretation; medium if berth infrastructure or vessel support is required

Likely funding route: Heritage grants, maritime heritage funding, sponsorship, council/harbour enabling support, community fundraising and in-kind volunteer contribution

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing maritime heritage interest and historic vessels provide a strong starting point; specific funding and berth arrangements to be confirmed

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Heritage designations are most valuable when they are used as a platform for activity, interpretation and partnership building. For Whitstable, Heritage Harbour status could help organise and promote existing maritime heritage interest while attracting new audiences and funding opportunities.
- Public engagement showed strong affection for the working harbour and an appetite to understand its heritage more deeply. Maritime heritage programming can meet this demand while reinforcing the importance of retaining a working harbour rather than allowing it to become purely leisure-led.
- Historic vessels, open days and community sailing opportunities provide tangible ways for residents and visitors to experience heritage directly, supporting skills, volunteering and intergenerational learning as well as visitor appeal.



Image: © Alex Hare

5 Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony

Ensuring new developments in and around the High Street and harbour complement one another and contribute to Whitstable's character and vitality. Development should support mixed use, reflect local materials and scale, and prioritise spaces for people and sustainable transport.

5.1 Whitstable wayfinding

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Kent County Council, Whitstable Harbour stakeholders, local businesses and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, Whitstable Harbour, Tankerton, the railway station, England Coastal Path arrival points, Gorrell Tank Car Park, Cromwell Road, Oxford Street, Harbour Street, High Street and key walking routes between the station, harbour, seafront and Tankerton

Description: Deliver a refreshed Whitstable wayfinding scheme focused on replacing, rationalising and adding pedestrian fingerposts and associated signage across the town centre, harbour, seafront and Tankerton. The project is about implementing a practical upgrade to the existing wayfinding network, replacing worn or outdated posts, removing redundant destinations, adding new posts where gaps exist, and improving consistency in destinations, colour, font, icons and the distinctive discs at the top of fingerposts.

The scheme would help people navigate between Whitstable's key arrival points and destinations, including both sides of the railway station, the harbour, High Street, Harbour Street, Oxford Street, Whitstable Castle and Gardens, The Horsebridge, Whitstable Museum, the library, Playhouse Theatre, Tankerton, the England Coastal Path and other public facilities. Existing discs would be conserved where appropriate, with new designs reviewed before final sign-off.

The project may also include, or be informed by, a movement study to understand how people currently move between the station, town centre, harbour, coast and Tankerton. This would help ensure the final signage locations, destinations and walking routes are based on clear evidence rather than assumption. The movement study could include pedestrian observations, desire-line analysis, stakeholder input, visitor journey testing and review of pinch points, but should remain proportionate to the scale and delivery timetable of the signage works.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Improve first impressions
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; local businesses; accessibility groups; cultural organisations; community representatives; signage designers and contractors; transport and visitor economy partners

Project stage: Procurement preparation (complete)/ Design and stakeholder engagement (September-October 2026)

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028)

Target start date: 2026

Target end date: 2027, subject to procurement, design sign-off and installation programme

What will change?

Outputs:

- Replacement of existing fingerposts where condition, clarity or destination information is poor.

- Installation of new fingerposts in priority locations where gaps in the network have been identified.
- Removal of redundant or misleading destinations from the wayfinding system.
- Updated destination hierarchy covering Whitstable town centre, harbour, station, seafront, Tankerton and England Coastal Path routes.
- Consistent design approach for colour, font, icons, discs and destination naming.
- Conservation of existing fingerpost discs where appropriate.
- Optional movement study or proportionate movement evidence to support final locations and route priorities.

Outcomes:

- Visitors and residents can move more confidently between the railway station, High Street, harbour, seafront and Tankerton.
- Better first impressions at arrival points and gateways into the town.
- Stronger physical and perceptual connection between the harbour and High Street.
- Increased walking between destinations, helping reduce unnecessary short car trips and pressure on parking.
- Improved accessibility and legibility for people unfamiliar with the town, including visitors arriving by train, walking the coast path or using town centre car parks.
- More even distribution of footfall across Whitstable, supporting local businesses beyond the busiest visitor routes.

Mechanism of change: Clear, attractive and well-placed wayfinding reduces uncertainty and makes walking between destinations feel easier, shorter and more intuitive. In Whitstable, this matters because the town's strongest assets are spread across the station, High Street, harbour, seafront and Tankerton, and visitors do not always understand how these places connect. Replacing outdated posts and filling gaps in the network will help people choose walking routes more confidently, encourage linked trips between the harbour and High Street, and make the town feel more coherent as a single destination. A movement study, if undertaken, would strengthen the project by testing where people actually walk, pause, hesitate or get lost, so the final scheme reflects real behaviour and local needs.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; businesses; disabled people; older people; families; rail users; walkers using the England Coastal Path; cultural and visitor attractions; harbour users

How we will know it has worked:

- New and replacement wayfinding posts are installed in agreed priority locations and redundant signage is removed.
- Visitor and resident feedback shows improved confidence in finding routes between the station, High Street, harbour, seafront and Tankerton.
- Observations or counts show stronger pedestrian movement between key destinations, particularly between the station, harbour and High Street.
- Businesses and attractions report fewer wayfinding queries and improved awareness of routes and destinations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Completion of final destination schedule, post locations and design specification.
- Agreement with highways, landowners and harbour stakeholders on installation locations.
- Procurement of signage design, manufacture and installation contractor.
- Clear maintenance and asset ownership arrangements.
- Any movement study or evidence review being proportionate and completed early enough to inform final installation decisions.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Highways approvals; landowner or freeholder agreements; conservation area considerations; harbour permissions where signs are within or adjoining the harbour estate; traffic management arrangements for installation where required

Key risks/issues:

- Signage clutter if new posts are added without removing outdated or redundant signs.
- Poor destination hierarchy could send people along routes that are less attractive, less accessible or less useful.
- Design changes could be delayed if there is disagreement over colour, icons, discs or destination names.
- Installation may be affected by utilities, pavement width, highways constraints or conservation considerations.
- A movement study could delay delivery if its scope becomes too large or if it is not clearly tied to installation decisions.

Support needed to progress: Design and procurement support; highways and conservation input; stakeholder sign-off on destinations and locations; accessibility review; modest movement analysis if required; communications support during installation and launch

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium, depending on final number of replacement and new posts, design detail, installation requirements and whether a movement study is included

Likely funding route: Council capital funding, public realm funding, visitor economy funding, transport or active travel funding, and potential partner contributions where locations directly support harbour, cultural or tourism assets

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Funding has been identified to progress the wayfinding replacement and installation work; in-kind support may be available through stakeholder input on destinations, routes and local knowledge

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Wayfinding improvements are most effective where they simplify decisions at key junctions, connect arrival points to destinations and reduce uncertainty for people on foot. In a town like Whitstable, where visitors arrive from the station, coast path, car parks and seafront and then need to find the harbour, High Street, Tankerton and cultural venues, clearer signage should directly improve confidence and movement.
- Town centre and visitor economy evidence consistently shows that people are more likely to walk further, explore side streets and visit secondary destinations when routes are legible, attractive and easy to understand. Better wayfinding should therefore help spread footfall beyond the most obvious routes and support independent businesses and attractions across the town.
- Engagement and local project work have already identified specific wayfinding gaps, outdated destinations and priority starting points, including the railway station, coast path approaches and Gorrell Tank Car Park. This gives the project a clear local basis, and a proportionate movement study could further strengthen confidence by testing final post locations and route priorities against observed pedestrian behaviour.

5.2 Whitstable Harbour development brief

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Whitstable Harbour Board, landowners, promoters, Kent County Council, harbour stakeholders, local businesses, community partners and relevant statutory bodies

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate, planning policy and Whitstable Harbour

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Harbour mixed-use broad location, including the harbour estate and land around the health centre, Gorrell Tank Car Park, bowling club, car garage and related land on both sides of the main harbour approach, together with the movement corridors linking the harbour, High Street, seafront, Tankerton, Beach Walk, Harbour Street and surrounding neighbourhoods

Description: Prepare a comprehensive development brief for the Whitstable Harbour mixed-use broad location to guide sensitive, transformational regeneration. The brief should establish a clear framework for land use, design quality, movement, public realm, ecology, infrastructure, delivery and phasing across the harbour estate and adjoining land including the health centre, Gorrell Tank Car Park, bowling club, car garage and related sites.

The project should respond to draft Local Plan Policy W2, which identifies the area for mixed-use development including fishing, commercial, business, employment, leisure, community facilities, parking and residential uses. It should support more efficient use of land, improve poor-quality and fragmented areas, and strengthen connections between the harbour, High Street, seafront and Tankerton.

The brief must protect the working harbour, including fishing, mineral handling and processing, while ensuring any new uses are compatible with operational needs. It should also test traffic, servicing, parking, walking, cycling, wheeling and coastal access impacts so harbour growth does not worsen High Street congestion or pedestrian conflict. Ecological constraints, including roosting birds and nearby designated coastal and estuarine habitats, should be addressed from the outset through appropriate assessment and mitigation.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor
- Put people first on the High Street
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Improve first impressions
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour Board; Kent County Council; Local Plan and planning policy teams; landowners and site promoters; harbour businesses and operators; mineral handling and processing operators; local fishers; Whitstable Medical Practice and health partners; community and leisure providers; residents and resident groups; local traders; environmental bodies; Natural England and relevant ecological advisers; transport and highways partners; accessibility groups; design, planning, movement and viability consultants

Project stage: Scoping/policy and brief development

Timescale: Short-to-medium term for development brief preparation; medium-to-long term for phased redevelopment and delivery

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2028 for development brief/SPD preparation and adoption pathway, with phased delivery from 2028 onwards subject to planning, funding, land assembly and partner agreement

What will change?

Outputs:

- Development brief/SPD for the Whitstable Harbour mixed-use broad location, aligned with Policy W2 and the Whitstable Harbour Strategic Plan.
- Clear site boundary, land-use framework and development principles for the harbour, health centre, Gorrell Tank Car Park, bowling club, car garage and related land.
- Movement and access strategy covering walking, cycling, wheeling, servicing, parking, public transport, coastal access, traffic impacts and High Street connections.
- Public realm, townscape and design framework to improve appearance, access, legibility, boundary quality and sense of arrival.
- • Working harbour protection principles covering fishing, mineral handling and processing, servicing, operational access, safety and compatibility with new uses.
- Ecological and environmental assessment framework for designated sites, roosting birds, coastal habitats, drainage, climate resilience and mitigation requirements.
- Engagement programme with harbour users, landowners, businesses, residents, health and community partners, accessibility groups and environmental stakeholders.
- Delivery, phasing and infrastructure plan identifying dependencies, funding routes, land assembly issues and early enabling projects.

Outcomes:

- A clearer and more deliverable framework for transformational regeneration of the harbour broad location.
- More efficient use of land in a highly constrained and strategically important part of Whitstable.
- Improved quality of place, townscape and arrival experience around the harbour, Gorrell Tank Car Park and adjoining streets.
- Stronger physical, economic and perceptual connections between the harbour, High Street, seafront and Tankerton.
- A mixed-use harbour area that supports employment, community facilities, leisure, parking, public realm and potential residential uses in the right balance and sequence.
- Protection and strengthening of the working harbour, including fishing and operational activity.
- Reduced risk that piecemeal development undermines the High Street, harbour operations, environmental assets or local movement networks.
- Better planning basis for future investment, funding bids, landowner discussions and development management decisions.

Mechanism of change: The harbour broad location contains multiple land uses, ownerships, operational requirements and movement pressures. Without a clear brief, individual sites could come forward in a fragmented way, creating more traffic, weak public realm, poor connections and conflict with harbour operations. A development brief/SPD gives the council, landowners, promoters and the community a shared framework for what should happen, what must be protected, what needs to change, and how development should be phased. By setting clear principles for land use, design quality, movement, environmental protection and working harbour compatibility, the project can turn a fragmented and underperforming area into a coherent part of Whitstable's town centre and seafront offer.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; harbour users; local fishers; harbour businesses; High Street and Harbour Street traders; health centre users; community facility users; local employers; disabled people; older people; pedestrians and cyclists; future residents and workers; environmental interests

How we will know it has worked:

- Development brief/SPD scope, governance and project plan are agreed.
- A clear land-use, design, movement and environmental framework is prepared with stakeholder and community input.
- The brief is used to guide planning decisions, landowner negotiations and future funding or delivery work.
- Future proposals demonstrate compatibility with working harbour operations, Policy W2, environmental constraints and the town centre strategy.
- Movement analysis shows that planned development can be accommodated without worsening High Street congestion, pedestrian conflict or servicing problems.
- Stakeholder feedback shows greater confidence that harbour regeneration will improve place quality while protecting local identity and operational needs.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement on SPD/development brief scope, boundary and governance arrangements.
- Coordination between planning policy, harbour, transport, estates, health, parking, environmental and regeneration workstreams.
- Landowner and promoter engagement, including clarity on ownership, lease, operational and viability constraints.
- Robust movement, parking, servicing, ecology, flood risk, drainage, heritage and viability evidence.
- Community and stakeholder engagement that addresses both development opportunity and concern about traffic, environmental impact, working harbour protection and local character.

Permissions/consents likely needed: SPD preparation and consultation process; future planning permissions; environmental assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment as required; highways approvals; conservation area considerations; harbour permissions; landowner and lease agreements; marine or coastal consents where relevant; drainage and utilities approvals; ecological mitigation and monitoring requirements

Key risks/issues:

- Piecemeal or speculative development could come forward before the SPD is in place, weakening the ability to plan the area comprehensively.
- Increased activity at the harbour could worsen traffic, servicing, parking and pedestrian conflict unless movement impacts are addressed upfront.
- Development pressure could dilute the working harbour if operational uses are treated as constraints rather than core place assets.
- Fragmented land ownership, viability pressures and infrastructure costs may make delivery complex.
- Environmental constraints, including impacts on roosting birds and nearby designated sites, could limit development options or require significant mitigation.
- Community confidence could be lost if the project is seen as a residential-led redevelopment rather than a balanced regeneration framework.
- Poor design quality or inefficient land use could fail to address the current eyesore and movement barrier issues around the bowling club, car garage, Gorrell Tank and adjoining land.

Support needed to progress: Planning policy and SPD resource; urban design, masterplanning and movement expertise; ecological and environmental assessment; transport and highways modelling; viability and delivery advice; landowner and stakeholder facilitation; community engagement; harbour operational input; legal advice on planning obligations, land assembly and governance

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium for development brief/SPD preparation and supporting technical studies; high for subsequent infrastructure, land assembly, public realm and redevelopment delivery

Likely funding route: Council planning and regeneration resource, developer contributions, landowner and promoter contributions, harbour investment, transport and active travel funding, public realm funding, health and community infrastructure funding, environmental mitigation funding, coastal and regeneration grant funding, and private sector investment

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing Local Plan policy support, harbour strategy alignment and landowner/promoter interest provide a basis for progressing the brief, but project-specific funding and partner contributions will need to be confirmed through scoping

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Comprehensive development briefs and SPDs are most effective where regeneration involves multiple landowners, sensitive operational uses and significant public impacts. They reduce the risk of piecemeal change by setting clear expectations for land use, design quality, movement, phasing and infrastructure before individual planning applications come forward.
- Mixed-use waterfront regeneration is more likely to succeed when it protects productive harbour functions while adding complementary employment, community, leisure and public realm uses. Treating the working harbour as a core asset, rather than a problem to be designed around, should help maintain Whitstable's distinctiveness and economic resilience.
- Movement planning is essential where new activity is proposed in a constrained historic town with narrow streets, strong visitor demand and existing congestion. Testing traffic, servicing, parking, walking and cycling impacts through the brief should reduce the risk that harbour growth undermines the High Street or resident quality of life.
- Early ecological assessment and mitigation planning should improve deliverability because the harbour sits close to sensitive coastal and estuarine habitats. Addressing roosting birds, designated sites and coastal environmental impacts at the masterplanning stage is more robust than treating them as late-stage planning issues.

5.3 Sound map

Lead organisation: Whitstable Harbour Board/ Canterbury City Council working with University of Kent and project partners

Main contact: Whitstable Harbour/CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Harbour and coastal route including The Horsebridge, the beach between The Horsebridge and the RNLI station, the RNLI station, West Quay, South Quay, Dead Man's Corner, The Street and Whitstable Castle, with potential links back into the wider harbour and town centre experience

Description: Develop a Whitstable maritime coastal soundwalk and digital sound map based on the proposal for the Whitstable Harbour Board. The project would create a free-to-access, GPS-triggered audio experience delivered through a smartphone platform, enabling residents and visitors to explore Whitstable's harbour and coastline through layered sound, music, oral histories, creative writing and environmental recordings. Rather than a fixed linear tour, the experience would allow people to move at their own pace and create their own route through a series of linked listening points. The soundwalk would focus on Whitstable's working harbour, oyster heritage, lifeboat history, coastal change and everyday maritime identity, with content proposed for The Horsebridge, the oyster beach and racks, the RNLI station, West Quay, South Quay, Dead Man's Corner, and the route towards The Street and Whitstable Castle. The project would place particular emphasis on accessibility for visually impaired users through immersive audio, spatial sound, narration and place-based cues, and could also be complemented by a photographic and interpretation display linked to the proposed education space on South Quay.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Whitstable Harbour Board; Canterbury City Council; University of Kent; Hulked creative team; local schools and community groups; RNLI; harbour businesses; heritage organisations; accessibility groups; cultural and education partners; digital platform provider

Project stage: Proposal/partnership development

Timescale: Short-to-medium term

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: 2027 for first public launch, with potential for future expansion

What will change?

Outputs:

- A GPS-triggered digital soundwalk and sound map covering Whitstable Harbour and key coastal heritage locations.
- Commissioned audio content combining sound art, music, field recordings, oral histories, narration and creative writing.
- A set of historical and contemporary listening points across the route, potentially including paired interpretations at each site.
- Accessible audio content designed to support visually impaired users through immersive and spatial listening cues.
- Supporting interpretation, marketing and potentially a linked photographic or exhibition component within the harbour education space.

Outcomes:

- Improved understanding of Whitstable's harbour, coastline and maritime heritage among residents and visitors.
- Stronger links between the harbour, seafront and wider town centre through a shared cultural experience.
- Increased year-round cultural activity rooted in Whitstable's working identity rather than generic visitor offer.
- Greater accessibility to heritage interpretation, particularly for visually impaired users and audiences who engage more strongly through sound.
- Enhanced visitor dwell time, local pride and appreciation of the harbour as both a working and cultural place.

Mechanism of change: A soundwalk allows Whitstable's stories, industries and environments to be experienced in situ, adding a new interpretive

layer without requiring major physical intervention. Because the experience is self-guided and non-linear, it can encourage exploration at an individual pace while strengthening movement between harbour and coastal locations. By combining heritage, creativity and accessibility, the project can deepen public understanding of place, broaden the harbour's cultural offer and support the strategy objective of making the harbour and town centre work together more coherently.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; visually impaired users; schools; young people; heritage organisations; artists; local businesses; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- Soundwalk launched and actively used by residents and visitors.
- Positive feedback on heritage understanding, accessibility and visitor experience.
- Increased engagement with multiple harbour and coastal locations rather than a single focal point.
- Participation by local partners, schools or community contributors in the development or programming of content.
- Evidence that the project supports wider harbour interpretation, education and visitor offer.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership agreement between the Harbour Board, council and creative delivery team.
- Content development, recording and curatorial coordination across multiple sites.
- Access agreements and safe siting for listening zones and interpretation points.
- Digital platform licensing, maintenance and user support.
- Integration with wider harbour education, heritage and visitor experience plans.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Harbour permissions; landowner agreements; copyright and recording permissions; digital platform licensing; permissions for any associated signage, boards or exhibition elements; accessibility and safeguarding review where required

Key risks/issues:

- Ongoing digital maintenance and platform dependency.
- Need to keep content updated and technically reliable over time.
- Potential mismatch between visitor expectations and app-based participation if promotion is unclear.
- Requirement to balance public interpretation with operational harbour activity and sensitive sites.
- Need for strong accessibility testing to ensure the experience is genuinely inclusive.

Support needed to progress: Project development funding; creative production and curation support; accessibility input; stakeholder coordination; heritage research; marketing and interpretation support; integration with harbour education and exhibition planning

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Mixed - arts and heritage funding, harbour/council support, cultural grants, partnership funding and in-kind contribution from delivery partners

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: The submitted brief notes existing project funding and delivery experience, providing a strong base for Whitstable-specific development and partnership working

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- The submitted Hulked brief provides a developed concept, route structure and delivery approach specifically tailored to Whitstable's harbour and coastline.
- The Whitstable strategy and place-based assessment both identify strong demand for better heritage interpretation, more activity at the working harbour and stronger links between harbour, High Street and coastal routes.
- Sound-based interpretation is particularly well suited to Whitstable because it can foreground working sounds, oral histories and maritime atmosphere while also improving accessibility for visually impaired users and broadening the town's year-round cultural offer.

5.4 Sea Street art trail

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with The Horsebridge, property owners and cultural partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Sea Street, Horsebridge Square, the Harbour Street approach at the harbour entrance, the phone box by The Horsebridge, Red Lion Lane and adjoining buildings, walls and street furniture along the route to the beach and harbour

Description: Develop a coordinated public art trail and public realm art programme along Sea Street and its connected spaces, using installations, artist interventions, refurbished street furniture and temporary activity to strengthen the route between the High Street, Horsebridge Square, the beach and the harbour.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Improve first impressions
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; The Horsebridge; JAS Bhalla Architects; local artists and makers; property owners and occupiers along Sea Street and Red Lion Lane; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; local businesses; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highway or street changes are involved

Project stage: Concept/scoping

Timescale: Short-to-medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for first-phase delivery and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- A curated route of public art and public realm interventions along Sea Street and connected spaces.
- A renewed Horsebridge Square capable of supporting live art, artist presence and street performance.

- A refurbished phone box for changing installations.
- A landmark artwork at the harbour entrance.
- Artist-designed bollards and wall-based artworks on willing properties.
- Temporary or recurring brocante and street activity in Red Lion Lane.
- Interpretation or wayfinding elements linking the trail to the beach, harbour and wider coastal walk.

Outcomes:

- Sea Street becomes a stronger and more memorable connection between the High Street, Horsebridge Square, the beach and the harbour.
- Public spaces along the route feel more active, legible and culturally distinctive.
- Whitstable's creative identity becomes more visible in the everyday townscape.
- Local businesses and cultural organisations benefit from increased footfall and dwell time.
- The route supports more year-round activity by creating reasons to pause, gather and explore.

Mechanism of change: Public art can do more than decorate a street: it can signal arrival, slow people down, encourage exploration and make an overlooked route feel purposeful and distinctive. In Whitstable, Sea Street already sits at an important hinge point between culture, coast and commerce. By combining permanent artworks with adaptable spaces for live activity and small events, the project would strengthen the physical and emotional connection between the harbour and High Street, improve first impressions for visitors heading towards the sea, and create a route that better reflects Whitstable's creative and maritime character.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local artists and makers; The Horsebridge; businesses along Sea Street, Harbour Street and Red Lion Lane; young people; cultural organisations; community groups

How we will know it has worked:

- A visible first phase of artworks and public realm interventions is delivered.
- Horsebridge Square, Sea Street and Red Lion Lane see increased cultural use and footfall.
- Businesses and cultural partners report improved visibility and activity.
- Residents and visitors identify the route as a clearer and more attractive way to move between town, beach and harbour.
- The programme supports repeat commissions, changing installations or recurring events over time.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement with willing property owners and occupiers.
- Curatorial and design coordination across multiple sites.
- Alignment between public art, public realm and any temporary traffic or pedestrian-priority changes.
- Capital and revenue funding for commissions, fabrication, installation and maintenance.
- Partnership working between cultural organisations, the council, highways and harbour stakeholders.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner agreements; planning permission or advertisement consent where required; listed building or conservation area consent where relevant; highways approvals for any street or bollard interventions; event or street trading permissions for temporary activity; licensing and maintenance agreements for installations in public space

Key risks/issues:

- Fragmented ownership could limit continuity of the trail.
- Poor-quality or uncoordinated commissions could weaken rather than strengthen the route.
- Maintenance responsibilities for artworks and street elements may be unclear.
- More activity could create sensitivity for nearby residents and businesses if poorly managed.
- Public realm changes need to remain accessible and legible rather than creating clutter.

Support needed to progress: Curatorial leadership; artist commissioning budget; stakeholder coordination with property owners and The Horsebridge; public realm and highways input; conservation and permissions advice; event programming support; and a clear maintenance and stewardship plan for artworks and installations

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium

Likely funding route: Mixed – arts and culture funding, public realm funding, local sponsorship, council capital support, partnership contributions and in-kind support from participating organisations or property owners

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: The concept work and willingness of some participating properties provide a useful starting point for phased delivery, but a confirmed delivery budget would still need to be assembled

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Sea Street and Horsebridge Square sit at an important threshold between the town, the beach and the harbour, so improving their visual quality and cultural activity would help people move more confidently and more slowly between these places, increasing dwell time and supporting nearby businesses.
- The concept aligns strongly with the strategy's emphasis on nurturing Whitstable's creative spirit because it puts culture into the everyday public realm rather than limiting it to indoor venues.
- Art, installations and changing activity that reflect local history, craft and maritime identity would reinforce the qualities that make Whitstable distinctive and memorable.
- The proposal also responds to local evidence showing that people value the working harbour, independent culture and everyday heritage but want stronger interpretation, more activity and better links between destinations.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

6 Shape spaces for community and celebration

Introducing new public pockets of spaces for events, markets and community activities in the town centre and harbour area. These spaces will be inclusive, accessible and flexible, supporting year-round cultural programming and everyday social interaction.

6.1 Coastal events forum

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with cultural, business and community partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 – Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour and associated public spaces

Description: Re-establish a coordinated coastal events forum bringing together organisers, businesses, harbour stakeholders, cultural organisations and public agencies to improve collaboration, reduce duplication and strengthen the delivery of events across Whitstable. The forum would support shared event planning, standardised paperwork and steward training, pooled temporary event infrastructure and coordinated promotion using shared noticeboards and digital platforms. The project would help ensure Whitstable's events programme remains vibrant and locally distinctive while reducing pressure on volunteers and improving operational resilience.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural organisations; local businesses and traders; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highways changes are involved

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Short-to-medium term

Target start date: 2026/27

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2027 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- New and improved spaces for markets, performances and community activity.
- Better coordination of events and temporary activity.
- Flexible public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Enhanced opportunities for local traders, artists and community groups.
- Increased use of public spaces outside peak summer periods.

Outcomes:

- More active and animated public spaces throughout the year.
- Increased footfall and dwell time across the town centre.
- Stronger links between the harbour, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Greater visibility for local creative, cultural and independent businesses.
- Improved balance between tourism activity and everyday local use.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity and strong identity create demand for high-quality public spaces that support both everyday use and cultural activity. Flexible and well-managed civic spaces help spread activity more evenly through

the town, support local businesses and create more opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation and community-led programming. Small-scale but visible interventions can also help reduce pressure on the busiest locations by encouraging people to explore different parts of the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; families; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in events and community activity.
- Positive visitor, trader and resident feedback.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in activation areas.
- Greater year-round use of public spaces.
- Increased opportunities for local traders and creative organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership coordination and programming capacity.
- Highways and public realm approvals where required.
- Funding for infrastructure and management.
- Agreement with landowners and harbour stakeholders.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; Temporary Event Notices; highways approvals; pavement licences; harbour permissions; landlord agreements; licensing approvals where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Balancing animation with residential amenity and movement needs.
- Weather and seasonal trading pressures.
- Funding and long-term management responsibilities.
- Risk of fragmented delivery without strong coordination.

Support needed to progress: Events coordination expertise; public realm and urban design support; stakeholder engagement; funding and sponsorship support; licensing and highways input.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on scale of infrastructure and public realm works

Likely funding route: Council funding, cultural grants, regeneration funding, sponsorship, harbour contributions and partnership investment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider Whitstable public realm, events and visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Flexible civic spaces and small-scale event infrastructure help coastal towns support year-round activity rather than relying solely on peak seasonal tourism.
- Markets, temporary activations and cultural programming increase dwell time, support local independent businesses and strengthen perceptions of vibrancy and place identity.
- Towns with coordinated events infrastructure and management arrangements are generally better able to sustain volunteer capacity, reduce duplication and improve operational resilience.
- Whitstable's strategy and engagement work identified strong demand for more flexible community space, better animation outside summer months and stronger connections between the harbour, High Street and public realm.

6.2 Street trading review

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with cultural, business and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 – Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour and associated public spaces

Description: Undertake a comprehensive review of street trading opportunities, licensing arrangements and temporary activation spaces across Whitstable town centre, including Whitstable Harbour, Woodlawn Street, the Umbrella area, Library Square, Horsebridge Road and Beach Walk. The review would identify appropriate locations, operational standards and seasonal management approaches that support vibrancy and local enterprise while balancing pedestrian movement, accessibility and residential amenity.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural organisations; local businesses and traders; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highways changes are involved

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- New and improved spaces for markets, performances and community activity.
- Better coordination of events and temporary activity.
- Flexible public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Enhanced opportunities for local traders, artists and community groups.
- Increased use of public spaces outside peak summer periods.

Outcomes:

- More active and animated public spaces throughout the year.
- Increased footfall and dwell time across the town centre.
- Stronger links between the harbour, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Greater visibility for local creative, cultural and independent businesses.
- Improved balance between tourism activity and everyday local use.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity and strong identity create demand for high-quality public spaces that support both everyday use and cultural activity. Flexible and well-managed civic spaces help spread activity more evenly through the town, support local businesses and create more opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation and community-led programming.

Small-scale but visible interventions can also help reduce pressure on the busiest locations by encouraging people to explore different parts of the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; families; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in events and community activity.
- Positive visitor, trader and resident feedback.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in activation areas.
- Greater year-round use of public spaces.
- Increased opportunities for local traders and creative organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership coordination and programming capacity.
- Highways and public realm approvals where required.
- Funding for infrastructure and management.
- Agreement with landowners and harbour stakeholders.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; Temporary Event Notices; highways approvals; pavement licences; harbour permissions; landlord agreements; licensing approvals where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Balancing animation with residential amenity and movement needs.
- Weather and seasonal trading pressures.
- Funding and long-term management responsibilities.
- Risk of fragmented delivery without strong coordination.

Support needed to progress: Events coordination expertise; public realm and urban design support; stakeholder engagement; funding and sponsorship support; licensing and highways input.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on scale of infrastructure and public realm works

Likely funding route: Council funding, cultural grants, regeneration funding, sponsorship, harbour contributions and partnership investment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider Whitstable public realm, events and visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Flexible civic spaces and small-scale event infrastructure help coastal towns support year-round activity rather than relying solely on peak seasonal tourism.
- Markets, temporary activations and cultural programming increase dwell time, support local independent businesses and strengthen perceptions of vibrancy and place identity.
- Towns with coordinated events infrastructure and management arrangements are generally better able to sustain volunteer capacity, reduce duplication and improve operational resilience.
- Whitstable's strategy and engagement work identified strong demand for more flexible community space, better animation outside summer months and stronger connections between the harbour, High Street and public realm.

6.3 Woodlawn Street market space

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with cultural, business and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour and associated public spaces

Description: Animate Woodlawn Street as a flexible off-season market and events space capable of hosting brocantes, book fairs, art markets, maker events and community activity throughout the year. The project would seek to strengthen links between the High Street and harbour while creating opportunities for smaller-scale cultural programming that supports local traders, artists and independent businesses outside peak tourism periods.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural organisations; local businesses and traders; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highways changes are involved

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- New and improved spaces for markets, performances and community activity.
- Better coordination of events and temporary activity.
- Flexible public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Enhanced opportunities for local traders, artists and community groups.
- Increased use of public spaces outside peak summer periods.

Outcomes:

- More active and animated public spaces throughout the year.
- Increased footfall and dwell time across the town centre.
- Stronger links between the harbour, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Greater visibility for local creative, cultural and independent businesses.
- Improved balance between tourism activity and everyday local use.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity and strong identity create demand for high-quality public spaces that support both everyday use and cultural activity. Flexible and well-managed civic spaces help spread activity more evenly through the town, support local businesses and create more opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation and community-led programming. Small-scale but visible interventions can also help reduce pressure on the busiest locations by

encouraging people to explore different parts of the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; families; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in events and community activity.
- Positive visitor, trader and resident feedback.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in activation areas.
- Greater year-round use of public spaces.
- Increased opportunities for local traders and creative organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership coordination and programming capacity.
- Highways and public realm approvals where required.
- Funding for infrastructure and management.
- Agreement with landowners and harbour stakeholders.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; Temporary Event Notices; highways approvals; pavement licences; harbour permissions; landlord agreements; licensing approvals where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Balancing animation with residential amenity and movement needs.
- Weather and seasonal trading pressures.
- Funding and long-term management responsibilities.
- Risk of fragmented delivery without strong coordination.

Support needed to progress: Events coordination expertise; public realm and urban design support; stakeholder engagement; funding and sponsorship support; licensing and highways input.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on scale of infrastructure and public realm works

Likely funding route: Council funding, cultural grants, regeneration funding, sponsorship, harbour contributions and partnership investment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider Whitstable public realm, events and visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Flexible civic spaces and small-scale event infrastructure help coastal towns support year-round activity rather than relying solely on peak seasonal tourism.
- Markets, temporary activations and cultural programming increase dwell time, support local independent businesses and strengthen perceptions of vibrancy and place identity.
- Towns with coordinated events infrastructure and management arrangements are generally better able to sustain volunteer capacity, reduce duplication and improve operational resilience.
- Whitstable's strategy and engagement work identified strong demand for more flexible community space, better animation outside summer months and stronger connections between the harbour, High Street and public realm.

6.4 Seaside stage

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with cultural, business and community partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 – Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour and associated public spaces

Description: Install permanent power infrastructure and supporting facilities within Beach Walk Car Park to enable temporary markets, performances, screenings and event staging. The project would create a flexible 'seaside stage' capable of supporting town-wide events, cultural programming and seasonal activity while improving the functionality and attractiveness of the seafront as a civic gathering space.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural organisations; local businesses and traders; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highways changes are involved

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- New and improved spaces for markets, performances and community activity.
- Better coordination of events and temporary activity.
- Flexible public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Enhanced opportunities for local traders, artists and community groups.
- Increased use of public spaces outside peak summer periods.

Outcomes:

- More active and animated public spaces throughout the year.
- Increased footfall and dwell time across the town centre.
- Stronger links between the harbour, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Greater visibility for local creative, cultural and independent businesses.
- Improved balance between tourism activity and everyday local use.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity and strong identity create demand for high-quality public spaces that support both everyday use and cultural activity. Flexible and well-managed civic spaces help spread activity more evenly through the town, support local businesses and create more opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation and community-led programming. Small-scale but visible interventions can also help reduce pressure on the busiest locations by encouraging people to explore different parts of the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; families; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in events and community activity.
- Positive visitor, trader and resident feedback.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in activation areas.
- Greater year-round use of public spaces.
- Increased opportunities for local traders and creative organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership coordination and programming capacity.
- Highways and public realm approvals where required.
- Funding for infrastructure and management.
- Agreement with landowners and harbour stakeholders.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; Temporary Event Notices; highways approvals; pavement licences; harbour permissions; landlord agreements; licensing approvals where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Balancing animation with residential amenity and movement needs.
- Weather and seasonal trading pressures.
- Funding and long-term management responsibilities.
- Risk of fragmented delivery without strong coordination.

Support needed to progress: Events coordination expertise; public realm and urban design support; stakeholder engagement; funding and sponsorship support; licensing and highways input.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on scale of infrastructure and public realm works

Likely funding route: Council funding, cultural grants, regeneration funding, sponsorship, harbour contributions and partnership investment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider Whitstable public realm, events and visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Flexible civic spaces and small-scale event infrastructure help coastal towns support year-round activity rather than relying solely on peak seasonal tourism.
- Markets, temporary activations and cultural programming increase dwell time, support local independent businesses and strengthen perceptions of vibrancy and place identity.
- Towns with coordinated events infrastructure and management arrangements are generally better able to sustain volunteer capacity, reduce duplication and improve operational resilience.
- Whitstable's strategy and engagement work identified strong demand for more flexible community space, better animation outside summer months and stronger connections between the harbour, High Street and public realm.

6.5 Closure of Red Lion Lane

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with KCC Highways, cultural, business and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour and associated public spaces

Description: Explore the closure of Red Lion Lane and the seasonal removal of selected parking bays within Harbour Street to create a small but flexible public space for temporary seating, markets, performances and community activity. The project would test opportunities to rebalance street space towards pedestrians and public life while improving links between the harbour and High Street.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural organisations; local businesses and traders; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highways changes are involved

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- New and improved spaces for markets, performances and community activity.
- Better coordination of events and temporary activity.
- Flexible public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Enhanced opportunities for local traders, artists and community groups.
- Increased use of public spaces outside peak summer periods.

Outcomes:

- More active and animated public spaces throughout the year.
- Increased footfall and dwell time across the town centre.
- Stronger links between the harbour, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Greater visibility for local creative, cultural and independent businesses.
- Improved balance between tourism activity and everyday local use.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity and strong identity create demand for high-quality public spaces that support both everyday use and cultural activity. Flexible and well-managed civic spaces help spread activity more evenly through the town, support local businesses and create more opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation and community-led programming. Small-scale but visible interventions can also help reduce pressure on the busiest locations by encouraging people to explore different parts of the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; families; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in events and community activity.
- Positive visitor, trader and resident feedback.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in activation areas.
- Greater year-round use of public spaces.
- Increased opportunities for local traders and creative organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership coordination and programming capacity.
- Highways and public realm approvals where required.
- Funding for infrastructure and management.
- Agreement with landowners and harbour stakeholders.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; Temporary Event Notices; highways approvals; pavement licences; harbour permissions; landlord agreements; licensing approvals where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Balancing animation with residential amenity and movement needs.
- Weather and seasonal trading pressures.
- Funding and long-term management responsibilities.
- Risk of fragmented delivery without strong coordination.

Support needed to progress: Events coordination expertise; public realm and urban design support; stakeholder engagement; funding and sponsorship support; licensing and highways input.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on scale of infrastructure and public realm works

Likely funding route: Council funding, cultural grants, regeneration funding, sponsorship, harbour contributions and partnership investment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider Whitstable public realm, events and visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Flexible civic spaces and small-scale event infrastructure help coastal towns support year-round activity rather than relying solely on peak seasonal tourism.
- Markets, temporary activations and cultural programming increase dwell time, support local independent businesses and strengthen perceptions of vibrancy and place identity.
- Towns with coordinated events infrastructure and management arrangements are generally better able to sustain volunteer capacity, reduce duplication and improve operational resilience.
- Whitstable's strategy and engagement work identified strong demand for more flexible community space, better animation outside summer months and stronger connections between the harbour, High Street and public realm.

6.6 Animation of Horsebridge Square

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with cultural, business and community partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour and associated public spaces

Description: Support the long-term animation and improvement of Horsebridge Square through public realm activation, temporary road closure arrangements and the installation of projection equipment capable of supporting event promotion, screenings and creative programming. Subject to agreement on land ownership and management arrangements, the project would strengthen the square's role as a civic and cultural gathering space within Whitstable town centre.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Put people first on the High Street
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; cultural organisations; local businesses and traders; event organisers; accessibility groups; community organisations; Kent County Council where highways changes are involved

Project stage: Scoping/feasibility

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- New and improved spaces for markets, performances and community activity.
- Better coordination of events and temporary activity.
- Flexible public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Enhanced opportunities for local traders, artists and community groups.
- Increased use of public spaces outside peak summer periods.

Outcomes:

- More active and animated public spaces throughout the year.
- Increased footfall and dwell time across the town centre.
- Stronger links between the harbour, High Street and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Greater visibility for local creative, cultural and independent businesses.
- Improved balance between tourism activity and everyday local use.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity and strong identity create demand for high-quality public spaces that support both everyday use and cultural activity. Flexible and well-managed civic spaces help spread activity more evenly through the town, support local businesses and create more opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation and community-led programming. Small-scale but visible interventions can also

help reduce pressure on the busiest locations by encouraging people to explore different parts of the town centre.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; cultural organisations; young people; families; older people; disabled people

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased participation in events and community activity.
- Positive visitor, trader and resident feedback.
- Increased footfall and dwell time in activation areas.
- Greater year-round use of public spaces.
- Increased opportunities for local traders and creative organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Partnership coordination and programming capacity.
- Highways and public realm approvals where required.
- Funding for infrastructure and management.
- Agreement with landowners and harbour stakeholders.
- Ongoing maintenance and operational arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission; Temporary Event Notices; highways approvals; pavement licences; harbour permissions; landlord agreements; licensing approvals where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Balancing animation with residential amenity and movement needs.
- Weather and seasonal trading pressures.
- Funding and long-term management responsibilities.
- Risk of fragmented delivery without strong coordination.

Support needed to progress: Events coordination expertise; public realm and urban design support; stakeholder engagement; funding and sponsorship support; licensing and highways input.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on scale of infrastructure and public realm works

Likely funding route: Council funding, cultural grants, regeneration funding, sponsorship, harbour contributions and partnership investment.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider Whitstable public realm, events and visitor economy initiatives.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Flexible civic spaces and small-scale event infrastructure help coastal towns support year-round activity rather than relying solely on peak seasonal tourism.
- Markets, temporary activations and cultural programming increase dwell time, support local independent businesses and strengthen perceptions of vibrancy and place identity.
- Towns with coordinated events infrastructure and management arrangements are generally better able to sustain volunteer capacity, reduce duplication and improve operational resilience.
- Whitstable's strategy and engagement work identified strong demand for more flexible community space, better animation outside summer months and stronger connections between the harbour, High Street and public realm.



Image: © Andrew Hastings

7 Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit

Expand workspace opportunities for creative and cultural businesses and strengthen education links with the town's maritime and artistic heritage. Champion public art and projects that express Whitstable's identity and creativity, ensuring space for artists and makers remains part of the town's fabric.

7.1 Safeguard cultural institutions

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Whitstable's key cultural institutions and community partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre, Whitstable Museum and The Horsebridge Arts Centre, alongside associated town-centre cultural spaces

Description: Develop a coordinated programme to safeguard Whitstable's key cultural institutions such as Whitstable Umbrella, Whitstable Museum and The Horsebridge, and support their long-term community management, resilience and contribution to the town centre. The project would explore governance, funding, programming, building needs, shared promotion, volunteer capacity and opportunities for collaboration so that these institutions remain active, accessible and complementary anchors within Whitstable's cultural life.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Put people first on the High Street

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Whitstable Umbrella; Whitstable Castle; Whitstable Museum; The Horsebridge; community organisations; volunteers; cultural funders; heritage organisations; schools and colleges; local businesses; accessibility groups

Project stage: Scoping/partnership development

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for partnership plan and priority actions

What will change?

Outputs:

- Review of building, governance, funding and programming needs across the three institutions.
- Shared cultural institutions resilience plan.
- Opportunities for joint programming, promotion, fundraising and volunteering.
- Identification of capital, accessibility or maintenance priorities.
- Strengthened community management and stewardship arrangements.

Outcomes:

- Improved long-term resilience of Whitstable's cultural institutions.
- Better coordination between venues and programmes.
- Increased community participation and volunteering.
- Protection of locally valued cultural and heritage assets.
- Stronger year-round cultural offer for residents and visitors.

Mechanism of change: Cultural institutions are often central to civic life but vulnerable to fragmented funding, building pressures and volunteer capacity constraints. By treating Whitstable's key venues as a connected cultural ecosystem rather than separate organisations, the project can identify shared needs, reduce duplication, improve fundraising prospects and make the combined offer more visible and resilient.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; volunteers; cultural organisations; young people; older people; schools; artists; local businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Partnership plan agreed between the institutions and CCC.
- Increased joint programming or promotion.
- Clearer funding and building improvement priorities.
- Increased participation, volunteering and venue usage.
- Improved organisational confidence and long-term sustainability.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Willingness of institutions to collaborate while retaining distinct identities.
- Honest assessment of building condition, governance and financial pressures.
- Funding and fundraising capacity.
- Volunteer recruitment and retention.
- Alignment with wider town-centre cultural and visitor economy activity.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Building consents or planning permissions for any physical works; charity or governance approvals where relevant; licensing and event permissions for programming; landlord or asset owner agreements where applicable.

Key risks/issues: Organisations may have different governance models, financial pressures and priorities; collaboration could become burdensome without dedicated coordination; building maintenance liabilities may be significant; community confidence may be affected if safeguarding is perceived as a precursor to rationalisation rather than investment.

Support needed to progress: Facilitated partnership review; governance and fundraising advice; building condition and accessibility audits; cultural programming support; community engagement and communications.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium, with potential high capital requirements if significant building works are identified

Likely funding route: Mixed - arts and heritage funding, community ownership funding, charitable trusts, council enabling support, sponsorship and fundraising

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Existing community, volunteer and institutional capacity provides a strong base; specific funding to be identified through resilience planning

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: High

Evidence/sources:

- Cultural institutions provide social infrastructure as well as visitor offer: they support volunteering, learning, local identity, wellbeing and year-round activity beyond peak tourism periods.
- Venues are more resilient when they coordinate programming, fundraising and audience development while retaining distinct roles; this reduces duplication and makes a stronger case to funders.
- Whitstable's creative identity depends on permanent civic and cultural anchors, not only events or temporary activity. Safeguarding these institutions protects the spaces where local culture is produced, shared and remembered.

7.2 Creative land trust

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with creative sector partners, landowners and potential trust/foundation partners

Main contact: Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre and harbour area, with potential focus on urban industrial units, larger void units and underused premises suitable for creative workspace

Description: Explore the creation of a Creative Land Trust or equivalent long-term stewardship vehicle to protect and provide affordable creative workspace in Whitstable. The project would investigate whether vacant, underused or at-risk industrial and commercial units could be brought back into use for artists, makers, designers, cultural organisations and creative businesses. The model would seek to safeguard space for creative production within the town as property values, visitor demand and redevelopment pressure increase.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; creative businesses; local artists and makers; landowners; charitable trusts/foundations; social investment partners; community benefit organisations; universities/colleges; workspace operators; cultural organisations

Project stage: Idea/options appraisal

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29 for options appraisal

Target end date: 2029/30 for preferred model, pilot asset or partnership route

What will change?

Outputs:

- Options appraisal for a Creative Land Trust or equivalent stewardship model.
- Mapping of creative workspace demand and potential premises.
- Engagement with landowners, artists, makers and funders.
- Business case for pilot workspace acquisition, lease or meanwhile use.
- Governance and operating model for affordable creative workspace.

Outcomes:

- Increased availability of affordable creative workspace.
- Protection of creative and light-industrial uses that contribute to Whitstable's identity.
- Reduced risk of creative displacement as demand and rents increase.
- Stronger local creative economy and year-round employment base.
- Better use of vacant or underused buildings.

Mechanism of change: Creative economies are vulnerable where artists and makers help create the character and attraction of a place but are then priced out as the area becomes more desirable. A land trust or long-term stewardship model can remove or soften space from purely speculative market pressures, enabling affordable rents, stable leases and investment in suitable premises. This helps retain the people and uses that make Whitstable distinctive

while supporting economic resilience beyond seasonal tourism.

Beneficiaries: Artists; makers; creative businesses; young people; residents; visitors; landowners; cultural organisations; independent businesses

How we will know it has worked:

- Demand assessment completed and potential sites identified.
- Preferred governance and delivery model agreed.
- Number of affordable creative workspaces secured or brought back into use.
- Occupancy and retention of local creative practitioners.
- Positive feedback from creative sector partners.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Identification of suitable premises or landowner partnerships.
- Evidence of creative workspace demand and affordability gap.
- Governance capacity for any trust or stewardship body.
- Capital, grant or social investment funding.
- Long-term operating and maintenance model.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Planning permission or change of use where required; lease or acquisition agreements; building regulations; listed building/conservation area consent where relevant; legal setup for trust or community benefit structure.

Key risks/issues:

- Property acquisition or refurbishment costs may be high
- Suitable space may be limited
- Governance could be complex
- Rents must remain affordable while covering operating costs
- The project could lose local credibility if it appears to import a model without responding to Whitstable's specific creative ecology.

Support needed to progress: Workspace demand study; property and legal advice; engagement with creative practitioners; funder and social investment advice; business planning and governance support.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium-to-high depending on whether the model is based on acquisition, lease, meanwhile use or partnership delivery

Likely funding route: Mixed – heritage/creative economy funding, social investment, philanthropic support, public regeneration funding, community share or trust models, and private/landowner contributions

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with creative economy, regeneration and community ownership funding; specific funding to be identified through options appraisal

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium

Evidence/sources:

- Creative land trust models are designed to address a known regeneration paradox: creative practitioners help make places attractive but are often displaced when rents and land values rise. Long-term stewardship can protect the productive cultural uses that give places their identity.
- Affordable workspace supports more than individual artists; it anchors supply chains, events, workshops, education links and independent retail activity that contribute to year-round economic resilience.
- Whitstable's reputation is strongly connected to creativity, independence and small-scale production. Without protected workspace, those qualities risk becoming a brand rather than a lived economic base.

7.3 Library makerspace

Lead organisation: Kent County Council libraries working with Canterbury City Council and local creative/skills partners

Main contact: KCC Libraries/Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable Library and associated community/function space

Description: Reanimate the community room and wider function of Whitstable Library as a practical makerspace, learning space and community access point. The project would explore the creation of a small-scale, accessible makerspace within the library offer, potentially including a library of things, repair and making workshops, digital skills sessions, creative equipment access, shared resources and signposting to local public services. The aim is to make the library a more active civic and creative space that supports learning, sharing, enterprise, community connection and access to future unitary services.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Put people first on the High Street
- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Delivery partners: Kent County Council Libraries; Canterbury City Council; local makers and artists; adult education providers; schools and colleges; community organisations; repair/reuse groups; voluntary sector partners; digital inclusion providers

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for pilot delivery and evaluation

What will change?

Outputs:

- Feasibility review of library space, equipment needs and operating model.
- Pilot makerspace and/or library of things offer.
- Creative, repair, digital and practical skills workshops.
- Community booking and programming arrangements.
- Signposting role linked to public services and local support.

Outcomes:

- Increased use of the library as an active civic and creative space.
- Improved access to practical skills, digital inclusion and shared resources.
- Stronger community connection and intergenerational learning.
- Reduced barriers to creative participation for residents who may not have space, equipment or confidence to access commercial provision.
- Greater day-to-day footfall and activity within the town centre.

Mechanism of change: A makerspace within a trusted public building lowers the cost and confidence barriers that often prevent people from trying creative, digital or practical activities. By combining access to equipment, workshops, shared resources and signposting, the project turns the library from a primarily transactional service point into a more active social and creative hub. This supports both skills development and community resilience while strengthening the role of civic infrastructure in the High Street.

Beneficiaries: Residents; young people; older people; families; creative practitioners; low-income households; community organisations; learners; small enterprises

How we will know it has worked:

- Increased use of the library community space.
- Number of workshops, lending items or making sessions delivered.
- Participation levels across different age groups and communities.
- User feedback showing improved access to skills, resources and confidence.
- Evidence of partnerships with education, creative and voluntary sector organisations.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Agreement with KCC Libraries on space, staffing and operating model.
- Equipment, storage, insurance and health and safety arrangements.
- Community and partner demand testing.
- Revenue funding or partner capacity for workshop programming.
- Clear maintenance and booking arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Building and fire safety checks; insurance and safeguarding arrangements; any consents required for physical alterations or specialist equipment installation; data protection arrangements for booking and service signposting.

Key risks/issues:

- The offer could become equipment-led rather than community-led if local demand is not properly tested
- staff capacity may limit opening hours or programming
- ongoing maintenance, consumables and insurance costs could be underestimated
- a library of things requires robust loan, repair and liability arrangements

Support needed to progress: Feasibility support; operational planning with KCC Libraries; modest equipment and fit-out funding; community engagement; workshop partner recruitment; evaluation framework.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on fit-out and equipment specification

Likely funding route: Mixed – library service support, skills funding, cultural/community grants, repair/reuse or circular economy funding, sponsorship and in-kind partner support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential in-kind support through existing library space, local creative practitioners, community groups and adult learning providers

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Makerspaces and libraries of things work best where they combine trusted public access, affordable shared equipment and practical programming; libraries are well placed to provide this because they are already familiar, inclusive and non-commercial civic spaces.
- Repair, making and shared-resource models can reduce isolation, build practical confidence and support lower-cost participation in creative and digital activity, particularly for residents who may not otherwise access specialist workspace or training.
- Whitstable's creative economy depends not only on galleries and visitor-facing culture, but on the everyday infrastructure that lets residents learn, make, experiment and share resources locally. A library-based model gives that activity a visible and accessible town-centre home.

7.4 Oxford Street murals

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with local artists, property owners and community partners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Oxford Street and key approach routes into Whitstable town centre

Description: Commission a series of high-quality murals and wall-based artworks along Oxford Street to celebrate Whitstable's creative history and improve the experience of entering the town. The project would use public art to strengthen first impressions, reveal local stories, animate blank or underused frontages and create a more distinctive route between transport gateways, the High Street and harbour.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Improve first impressions
- Put people first on the High Street
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; local artists and designers; property owners; businesses; schools and colleges; community groups; heritage and cultural organisations; accessibility groups

Project stage: Idea/scoping

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29

Target end date: 2029 for pilot mural programme

What will change

Outputs:

- Audit of suitable walls, frontages and approach locations.
- Artist brief and commissioning framework.
- Series of mural commissions along Oxford Street.
- Community engagement and storytelling workshops.
- Maintenance and permissions plan.

Outcomes:

- Improved arrival experience and visual identity along Oxford Street.
- Increased visibility of Whitstable's creative history and contemporary artists.
- Greater pedestrian interest and dwell time along approach routes.
- Stronger connection between the town's creative identity and everyday public realm.
- Opportunities for local artists, students and young people to participate.

Mechanism of change: Public art can quickly change how a street feels by adding colour, narrative and visual interest to otherwise functional or overlooked routes. Murals can help people recognise they have arrived somewhere distinctive, encourage walking and exploration, and provide a visible platform for local creative talent. When rooted in local stories and community participation, they also strengthen civic pride and ownership.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; artists; local businesses; young people; schools; pedestrians; cultural organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Number of commissions completed.
- Positive resident, visitor and business feedback.

- Increased recognition of Oxford Street as a creative arrival route.
- Participation of local artists, schools or community groups.
- Maintenance of artworks and low levels of vandalism or deterioration.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Building owner permissions.
- Artist procurement and curatorial oversight.
- Agreement on themes, locations and maintenance responsibilities.
- Funding for commissions, materials and engagement.
- Public realm and safety considerations during installation.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner/freeholder permission; planning or advertisement consent where required; listed building/conservation area consent if relevant; public liability and method statements for installation.

Key risks/issues:

- poorly coordinated murals could feel tokenistic or visually inconsistent
- artworks may deteriorate without maintenance
- building owner permissions may limit suitable locations
- artistic themes need careful handling so the programme reflects Whitstable's identity without becoming pastiche.

Support needed to progress: Curatorial support; artist commissioning budget; permissions coordination; community engagement; maintenance and cleaning plan.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium depending on number, scale and complexity of commissions

Likely funding route: Arts and culture funding, public realm budgets, sponsorship, developer contributions where appropriate, and local business support

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential in-kind support from building owners, local schools/colleges and artists; funding to be confirmed through project scoping

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- Murals and public art are effective where they are used to improve legibility, animate blank frontages and tell locally specific stories, particularly on approach routes that shape first impressions.
- Public art programmes create opportunities for local artists and young people while giving residents a visible stake in how their town is represented.
- Oxford Street is an important movement corridor into Whitstable; improving its visual quality and storytelling value can help connect arrival, High Street and harbour experiences rather than leaving the route feeling incidental.



Image: © Imogen Tinkler

8 Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents

Maintain Whitstable's popularity as a visitor destination while ensuring it remains a liveable, thriving home for its community. Encourage residents to shop and spend locally throughout the year and manage visitor growth in a way that supports businesses and sustains quality of life.

8.1 Short term let management plan

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Kent County Council, community partners and relevant landowners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour, seafront, residential streets and associated public realm locations

Description: Develop a short-term let management plan for Whitstable to better understand, monitor and manage the impacts of holiday accommodation on housing availability, residential amenity, visitor patterns and town-centre vitality. The project would gather evidence, identify policy and regulatory options, and support a balanced approach that recognises the value of tourism while protecting the needs of local communities.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Put people first on the High Street
- Improve first impressions
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; local residents; resident associations; local businesses; accommodation providers; landowners; environmental partners; accessibility groups; community organisations

Project stage: Scoping/evidence gathering

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Evidence base on short-term let distribution and impacts.
- Review of available planning, licensing, data and policy tools.
- Engagement with residents, accommodation providers and visitor economy partners.
- Management plan and recommendations for future action.
- Monitoring framework to track changes over time.

Outcomes:

- Better balance between visitor activity and everyday residential life.
- Reduced pressure on constrained streets and public spaces.
- Improved town-centre liveability, accessibility and resilience.
- Better evidence to support proportionate policy, parking and public realm decisions.
- More attractive and climate-adapted streets and spaces.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity creates pressure on parking, housing, public space and local infrastructure, particularly during peak visitor periods. These projects help manage that pressure by improving evidence, introducing targeted controls where appropriate, and making small but visible improvements to the public realm. By addressing the practical impacts of visitor demand while improving everyday streets and spaces, the town can remain welcoming to visitors without undermining residential amenity and local quality of life.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local businesses; older people; disabled people; families; accommodation providers; community organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved resident feedback on parking, amenity and town-centre pressures.
- Better evidence available for future parking, planning or visitor management decisions.
- Reduced complaints or pressure in identified hotspots.
- Increased use and appreciation of improved green/public spaces.
- Positive feedback from businesses and visitors on town-centre quality and accessibility.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Robust local evidence and baseline data.
- Resident, business and stakeholder engagement.
- Highways, planning and environmental coordination.
- Political and community support for any controls or physical interventions.
- Clear maintenance and monitoring arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Traffic Regulation Orders; planning permission where required; highways approvals; landowner agreements; drainage approvals; conservation area considerations where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Parking or short-term-let controls may be sensitive if perceived as restricting visitor access or property rights.
- Interventions could displace pressure to neighbouring streets if not designed carefully.
- Public realm and greening projects may fail without clear maintenance responsibility.
- Benefits may take time to evidence, particularly for housing and visitor-management impacts.

Support needed to progress: Data analysis; parking and planning policy expertise; public realm and drainage design support; community engagement; legal and highways advice; capital and maintenance funding.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for evidence, policy and pilot work; medium where physical public realm or drainage infrastructure is required

Likely funding route: Council revenue and capital budgets, transport and parking funding, climate adaptation funding, public realm funding, environmental grants and developer contributions where appropriate.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider town-centre management, climate resilience, parking and public realm improvement programmes.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Coastal towns with high visitor demand often experience pressure on residential parking, housing availability and everyday amenity; targeted management plans help move debate from anecdote to evidence-based action.
- Resident parking and short-term-let management approaches are most effective when based on local data, clear objectives and careful monitoring of displacement effects.
- Small-scale green infrastructure, rain gardens and pocket spaces improve perceptions of place quality while also supporting climate resilience, biodiversity and pedestrian comfort.
- Whitstable's strategy recognises the need to balance visitor activity with resident quality of life, particularly in a town where narrow streets, high demand and strong visitor appeal create pressure on everyday local infrastructure.

8.2 Residents' parking zone

Lead organisation: Canterbury City Council working with Kent County Council, community partners and relevant landowners

Main contact: CCC Place Directorate

Date submitted: 2026 - Town centre strategy engagement (2025)

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Whitstable town centre, harbour, seafront, residential streets and associated public realm locations

Description: Explore the introduction or refinement of resident parking controls in areas of Whitstable most affected by visitor parking pressure, particularly streets close to the harbour, High Street, seafront and station. The project would seek to balance the needs of residents, visitors and local businesses by improving parking management, reducing displacement impacts and supporting a calmer, more liveable town centre environment.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Put people first on the High Street
- Improve first impressions
- Ensure the harbour and High Street operate in harmony

Delivery partners: Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council; local residents; resident associations; local businesses; accommodation providers; landowners; environmental partners; accessibility groups; community organisations

Project stage: Scoping/evidence gathering

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028/29

Target end date: Phased implementation from 2029 onwards

What will change?

Outputs:

- Parking pressure and occupancy review.
- Resident and business engagement.
- Options appraisal for resident parking controls or amendments.
- Traffic Regulation Order process if a preferred scheme is progressed.
- Monitoring plan to assess displacement and town-centre access impacts.

Outcomes:

- Better balance between visitor activity and everyday residential life.
- Reduced pressure on constrained streets and public spaces.
- Improved town-centre liveability, accessibility and resilience.
- Better evidence to support proportionate policy, parking and public realm decisions.
- More attractive and climate-adapted streets and spaces.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's popularity creates pressure on parking, housing, public space and local infrastructure, particularly during peak visitor periods. These projects help manage that pressure by improving evidence, introducing targeted controls where appropriate, and making small but visible improvements to the public realm. By addressing the practical impacts of visitor demand while improving everyday streets and spaces, the town can remain welcoming to visitors without undermining residential amenity and local quality of life.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local businesses; older people; disabled people; families; accommodation providers; community organisations

How we will know it has worked:

- Improved resident feedback on parking, amenity and town-centre pressures.
- Better evidence available for future parking, planning or visitor management decisions.
- Reduced complaints or pressure in identified hotspots.
- Increased use and appreciation of improved green/public spaces.
- Positive feedback from businesses and visitors on town-centre quality and accessibility.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Robust local evidence and baseline data.
- Resident, business and stakeholder engagement.
- Highways, planning and environmental coordination.
- Political and community support for any controls or physical interventions.
- Clear maintenance and monitoring arrangements.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Traffic Regulation Orders; planning permission where required; highways approvals; landowner agreements; drainage approvals; conservation area considerations where relevant.

Key risks/issues:

- Parking or short-term-let controls may be sensitive if perceived as restricting visitor access or property rights.
- Interventions could displace pressure to neighbouring streets if not designed carefully.
- Public realm and greening projects may fail without clear maintenance responsibility.
- Benefits may take time to evidence, particularly for housing and visitor-management impacts.

Support needed to progress: Data analysis; parking and planning policy expertise; public realm and drainage design support; community engagement; legal and highways advice; capital and maintenance funding.

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Low-to-medium for evidence, policy and pilot work; medium where physical public realm or drainage infrastructure is required

Likely funding route: Council revenue and capital budgets, transport and parking funding, climate adaptation funding, public realm funding, environmental grants and developer contributions where appropriate.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Potential alignment with wider town-centre management, climate resilience, parking and public realm improvement programmes.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium–High

Evidence/sources:

- Coastal towns with high visitor demand often experience pressure on residential parking, housing availability and everyday amenity; targeted management plans help move debate from anecdote to evidence-based action.
- Resident parking and short-term-let management approaches are most effective when based on local data, clear objectives and careful monitoring of displacement effects.
- Small-scale green infrastructure, rain gardens and pocket spaces improve perceptions of place quality while also supporting climate resilience, biodiversity and pedestrian comfort.
- Whitstable's strategy recognises the need to balance visitor activity with resident quality of life, particularly in a town where narrow streets, high demand and strong visitor appeal create pressure on everyday local infrastructure.

8.3 Sustainable urban drainage

Lead organisation: Kent County Council (Highways Authority/asset owner where highway interfaces apply) with Southern Water (SuDS delivery partner) and Canterbury City Council (car park owner/local planning and policy authority)

Main contact: Southern Water SuDS lead (TBC)/ CCC Place Directorate/KCC Highways Project Lead (TBC)

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): Middle Wall Car Park, Salt Marsh Lane Car Park, Gladstone Road Car Park, Victoria Street Car Park and Regent Street Car Park, with scope for phased delivery depending on design and feasibility

Description: Develop a phased programme of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) interventions within selected Whitstable car parks to reduce surface water entering the sewer network while improving the environmental quality and climate resilience of these hard-surfaced sites. The project would be progressed in partnership with Southern Water and would focus on car parks where permeable paving, rain gardens, tree pits, planting beds and other SuDS features could be integrated without undermining their day-to-day operation. The approach reflects current work already under way at Middle Wall and Salt Marsh Lane and would extend investigation to additional car parks including Gladstone Road, Victoria Street and Regent Street.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Connect land and sea through active travel
- Improve first impressions
- Put people first on the High Street

Delivery partners: Southern Water; Canterbury City Council; Kent County Council Highways where relevant; utilities and underground services owners; drainage and landscape designers; access groups; parking and public realm teams; appointed contractors; maintenance teams

Project stage: Mixed – Middle Wall at detailed design; Salt Marsh Lane at concept design; Gladstone Road, Victoria Street and Regent Street at scoping/concept stage

Timescale: Medium term

Target start date: 2028

Target end date: 2029 for first-phase delivery and review

What will change?

Outputs:

- Detailed design and concept design packages for priority Whitstable car park SuDS schemes.
- Permeable paving, rain garden, bio-retention, tree pit or planting-based drainage interventions in selected car parks.
- Surface water separation measures that reduce runoff entering the combined/foul sewer network where feasible.
- Greener, better-quality parking environments with integrated planting and climate adaptation measures.
- Maintenance and stewardship plans for new SuDS features.

Outcomes:

- Reduced surface water entering the sewer network from hard-surfaced car parks.
- Improved resilience to heavy rainfall and more visible climate adaptation in the town centre.
- Better-quality arrival and parking environments for residents and visitors.

- More attractive walking routes from car parks into the High Street, harbour and seafront.
- Added biodiversity and urban greening in locations that are currently dominated by hard surfacing.

Mechanism of change: Whitstable's car parks are practical but visually harsh spaces that also contribute to runoff and drainage pressure. Retrofitting SuDS into these sites allows them to do more than store cars: they can help manage rainfall on site, reduce pressure on sewer infrastructure and create greener, more attractive edges to the town centre. Because many visitors and residents begin their town-centre journey from these locations, improving them supports both climate resilience and the wider quality of the Whitstable experience.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; traders/businesses; disabled people; older people; low-income households; pedestrians using routes from car parks to the town centre

How we will know it has worked:

- Design work completed and priority sites progressed into delivery.
- Post-completion monitoring shows reduced runoff entering the sewer network in line with design intent.
- SuDS features remain functional and well maintained.
- Users report improved quality, comfort and appearance of the car park environment.
- Planting establishes successfully and contributes to visible greening of the sites.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Continued partnership agreement between Southern Water, Canterbury City Council and KCC where required.
- Feasibility and design work confirming suitable SuDS solutions for each car park.
- Coordination with parking operations, access, levels, servicing and underground utilities.
- Agreement on maintenance, adoption and long-term stewardship responsibilities.
- Capital funding aligned to phased delivery priorities.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Landowner approvals; planning permission where required; highways approvals where interfaces affect the public highway; drainage approvals; utility coordination; conservation area considerations where relevant

Key risks/issues:

- Ground conditions, underground services and levels may constrain the type or extent of SuDS possible.
- Schemes may reduce parking efficiency or require layout changes if not designed carefully.
- Construction could temporarily disrupt parking supply and nearby businesses.
- Without clear maintenance arrangements, SuDS planting and drainage features may fail over time.
- Benefits may vary by site, so some car parks may prove more suitable than others.

Support needed to progress: Design and engineering resource; partnership coordination between Southern Water, CCC and KCC; parking and access modelling; maintenance planning; programme management for phased delivery; communications support during construction

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Unknown at programme level; likely medium capital per site depending on extent of paving, drainage and planting works

Likely funding route: Mixed – Southern Water investment for drainage/SuDS elements, CCC capital support for council car park improvements, and potential complementary climate adaptation or public realm funding

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Southern Water has already progressed Middle Wall to detailed design and Salt Marsh Lane to concept design, with CCC supportive of progressing additional Whitstable car parks to concept stage

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/sources:

- This project helps deliver Whitstable's strategy because it addresses two issues at once: the need to adapt the town centre to climate and drainage pressures, and the need to improve the quality of arrival spaces that shape first impressions for residents and visitors.
- Car parks are some of Whitstable's most visible but least attractive hard-surfaced environments. Turning them into greener, better-performing spaces would make the town feel more cared for and resilient while still supporting access to the High Street, harbour and seafront.
- The partnership with Southern Water gives the project a strong delivery rationale, and the work already advanced at Middle Wall and Salt Marsh Lane shows that this is more than a generic aspiration. In Whitstable, SuDS in car parks is likely to be an especially useful model because it can improve drainage performance without relying on major redevelopment and can be phased across multiple sites over time.

8.4 Re-establish the Whitstable Rocks Oyster Festival

Lead organisation: Whitstable Oyster Company/ Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company working with The Event Umbrella, Whitstable Oyster Festival Association, Canterbury City Council, Canterbury BID, Visit Canterbury/Choose Canterbury and Whitstable Harbour stakeholders

Main contact: Whitstable Rocks Oyster Festival project lead/The Event Umbrella

Date submitted: 2026

Project overview

Place: Whitstable

Specific location(s): East Quay, Long Beach, Whitstable Harbour and venues across Whitstable town centre, including the High Street, Oxford Street, Harbour Street and wider town centre fringe event locations

Description: Support the continued re-establishment and expansion of Whitstable Rocks Oyster Festival as a town-wide cultural, community and visitor economy event that celebrates Whitstable's historic and contemporary connection with oysters, the working harbour and maritime culture. The latest festival is planned for September 2026 across East Quay, Long Beach, Whitstable Harbour and venues across the town, with a programme combining food, music, family activities, community-led programming, arts, culture and traditional festival activity.

The project is included in the directory because the festival has a strong role to play in delivering the Whitstable Town Centre Strategy. Its value is not simply as a one-off event, but as a platform for extending the visitor season, drawing people into the town beyond the seafront and harbour, supporting local businesses, celebrating local identity and reinforcing the relationship between the harbour and the High Street. The organisers are also seeking to develop longer-term partnership and sponsorship arrangements from 2027 onwards, which could help stabilise and grow the festival as part of Whitstable's wider place-based delivery programme.

The festival should continue to be positioned as a whole-town event rather than only a harbour or beach event. This means strengthening programming, promotion and visitor movement from Oxford Street to the harbour, encouraging linked trips to independent businesses, cultural venues and town centre spaces, and ensuring local residents benefit from free, inclusive and community-focused activity. The project should also support strategic coordination with the BID, Visit Canterbury, harbour partners and council teams so the festival complements other town centre priorities, including wayfinding, cultural programming, public space animation and visitor management.

Linked strategy principle(s):

- Balance the rhythm of visitors and residents
- Ensure the harbour and the High Street operate in harmony
- Shape spaces for community and celebration
- Reimagine the harbour as a dynamic economic anchor
- Nurture Whitstable's creative spirit
- Improve first impressions

Delivery partners: Whitstable Oyster Company/ Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company; The Event Umbrella; Whitstable Oyster Festival Association; Canterbury City Council; Canterbury BID; Visit Canterbury; Whitstable Harbour stakeholders; local traders and venues; cultural organisations; community groups; sponsors; stewards and event infrastructure suppliers; accessibility and community safety partners

Project stage: Delivery for 2026 event; partnership development and strategic growth for 2027 onwards

Timescale: Short term (pre-April 2028) for 2026 delivery and 2027 partnership planning; medium term for three-year partnership and sponsorship model

Target start date: 2026

Target end date: 2028 for first strategic partnership phase and evaluation, with potential for continuation as a recurring annual event

What will change?

Outputs:

- Delivery of the 2026 Whitstable Rocks Oyster Festival across East Quay, Long Beach, the harbour and town-wide venues.
- A programme of family activities, community-led events, live music, arts, cultural activity, food, drink and traditional oyster festival moments.
- Free and inclusive activity on Long Beach delivered through the Whitstable Oyster Festival Association.
- Expanded fringe programming across the town to draw activity beyond the immediate harbour and seafront.
- Partnership and sponsorship packages developed to support the festival's long-term sustainability.
- Coordinated promotion with business, visitor economy and harbour partners.
- Post-event evaluation capturing attendance, business feedback, resident feedback, visitor movement and sponsor/partner learning.

Outcomes:

- Whitstable has a stronger September event that helps extend the visitor season and reduce reliance on peak summer activity.
- The festival generates footfall and spend across the whole town, including Oxford Street, the High Street, Harbour Street, the harbour and seafront.
- Residents and visitors experience a festival that celebrates Whitstable's community spirit, oyster heritage and maritime identity.
- Local businesses, venues and cultural organisations benefit from increased visibility and town-wide programming.
- The harbour and the High Street are experienced as connected parts of the same place, rather than separate visitor destinations.
- Longer-term sponsorship and partnership arrangements improve the resilience and quality of the festival offer.

Mechanism of change: A well-programmed town-wide festival can help shift visitor behaviour by giving people reasons to move between venues, streets and waterfront spaces rather than concentrating activity in a single location. By holding the festival in September, Whitstable can attract visitors and local participation outside the busiest part of the summer season, supporting businesses during a shoulder-season period while maintaining a strong community focus. The oyster theme provides a distinctive and authentic hook because it connects food, heritage, industry, harbour identity and cultural activity in a way that is specific to Whitstable. If the festival is coordinated with traders, harbour partners and visitor economy organisations, it can support linked trips, local spend and civic pride while helping the town manage tourism in a more balanced and place-sensitive way.

Beneficiaries: Residents; visitors; local traders and hospitality businesses; harbour businesses; cultural organisations; families; children and young people; artists and performers; community groups; sponsors; local food and drink producers

How we will know it has worked:

- The festival is delivered safely and successfully with strong attendance across Long Beach, East Quay, the harbour and town centre venues.
- Visitor movement and business feedback show that footfall and spend are distributed across the town rather than concentrated only at the harbour or seafront.
- Resident and community feedback shows the event is inclusive, locally valued and compatible with everyday life in the town.
- Sponsors and delivery partners commit to continued support or a multi-year partnership model.
- Post-event evaluation identifies clear learning for future programming, accessibility, transport, waste, safety and town-wide promotion.

Deliverability

Key dependencies:

- Continued leadership from the festival organisers and operational delivery support from The Event Umbrella.
- Partnership working with BID, Visit Canterbury, Whitstable Harbour and council teams.
- Securing sponsorship, in-kind support and other funding to maintain and expand the programme.
- Effective coordination with local businesses, traders, venues and community groups.
- Event permissions, safety planning, waste management, stewarding, accessibility and resident communications.

Permissions/consents likely needed: Event permissions; Temporary Event Notices and relevant licensing; harbour permissions; landowner agreements; traffic management or highway permissions where required; public liability and event safety documentation; food hygiene and trading approvals; waste and cleansing arrangements; permissions for amplified music, fireworks or temporary structures where applicable

Key risks/ issues:

- The festival could be perceived as benefiting only the harbour or seafront unless fringe activity and promotion actively involve the High Street and Oxford Street.
- Sponsorship and partnership income may be uncertain, particularly if multi-year agreements are not secured.
- Event growth could create pressure on residents, transport, parking, waste, noise and public spaces if not carefully managed.
- Poor weather could affect attendance, trading and the viability of outdoor programming.
- Delivery relies on continued coordination between multiple partners with different roles, resources and expectations.

Support needed to progress: Strategic recognition within the project directory and action planning; partner convening; coordination with BID, Visit Canterbury and harbour stakeholders; support with sponsorship conversations where appropriate; event planning and permissions advice; data and evaluation support; communications support to promote the festival as a whole-town event

Costs and funding required

Estimated cost: Medium, depending on the scale of programming, infrastructure, safety, marketing and free community activity.

Likely funding route: Mixed – sponsorship, partner contributions, in-kind support, festival trading income, cultural or visitor economy funding, and potential council enabling support where strategically justified.

Any funding or in-kind support already identified: Sponsorship packages have been developed, including Gold, Silver, Bronze and Festival Friend levels, as well as bespoke and content-specific packages. The organisers are actively seeking local business support through financial and in-kind contributions, with an ambition to develop longer-term three-year partnerships.

Evidence and confidence

Confidence in benefits: Medium-High

Evidence/ sources:

- Events can extend the visitor season when they are programmed outside the peak summer period and linked to a distinctive local identity. A September oyster festival is well placed to support shoulder-season footfall because it gives residents and visitors a specific reason to visit and spend time in the town after the main summer peak.
- Town-wide festivals are most likely to benefit local economies when they encourage linked trips between event sites, high streets, hospitality venues, cultural spaces and independent businesses. For Whitstable, the strongest benefit will come from ensuring the festival connects Oxford Street, the High Street, Harbour Street, East Quay, Long Beach and the harbour rather than operating as a single waterfront event.
- Community-led and free activities can help maintain local support for visitor economy events by ensuring residents see the festival as something for the town, not only for tourists. This is particularly important in Whitstable, where the strategy seeks to balance visitor popularity with liveability, community pride and year-round economic resilience.

New project entries to follow

The following is a list of ideas for further Whitstable projects that CCC is aware of where a partner or other organisation/group may seek to make a submission. It also includes recently received submissions which have not yet been reviewed.

Completed projects

A list of projects that have been completed

Removed projects

A list of projects that have been rejected along with a rationale (for audit purposes, to retain tacit project knowledge and in case they can be revisited at a later date).

Rejected/aborted etc.