



Guildford on the Way: a Vision for Guildford in 2030 and beyond

Annex: Detailed proposals

Prepared by the Guildford Vision Group

October 2013

Transport and connectivity – at the heart of creating a revitalised town

Our Vision in practice - transport

Infrastructure is improved and vehicle traffic no longer dominates

- Re-engineered transport and communication are at the heart of creating a revitalised town.
- Remodelled highways combined with a more sustainable car parking strategy create better options for residents to travel within the town; for visiting motorists; and for those wishing to bypass the town.
- The beautiful town centre is no longer blighted by congestion, there is lower pollution and increased safety for pedestrians.
- Residents and visitors, high tech workers and students enjoy the freedom to easily navigate the town centre.

What might Guildford be like?

There are better connections between the town's major centres – the Town Centre areas of the historic High Street, Station, riverside and Castle and other key locations - the Cathedral, the University and the Hospital.

- Dedicated, well-maintained walk and cycleways exist and are used with pedestrian areas and new green spaces enhancing these routes.
- Regular subsidised bus service connecting with key points (possibly funded in part by heating allowances donated by more wealthy pensioners).
- A proposal for either a cable car system or driverless tramcars linking all points to Our Town Centre remains on the drawing board and infrastructure has been developed to enable rather than prevent its future construction.

There is raised consciousness about the considerable contribution each of these key locations makes to the physical and spiritual health and vitality of the town.

- The University's internationally-acclaimed Research Park is instinctively recognised as a major driver of the town's economy.
- the Borough Council Executive includes a councillor post with a specific brief covering the Park's activities.
- Because of their distance from the town centre, all three locations have recognised the need to attract on-going interest from residents in all parts of the town. Key figures from all three locations feature regularly on local radio. Additionally these locations reach out in a variety of other ways:

What might Guildford be like?

The Cathedral plays host to a wide range of community events and attractive exhibitions (nonetheless inevitably reminding participants of its central role in the spiritual life of the town).

- The acclaimed Wintershall Easter re-enactment follows the broad path from the town to the Cathedral on the hill.
- The Mayor's annual fireworks procession also takes the same route, and at Christmas there is a spectacular Christmas market along the route, with seasonal food and gift stalls.
- The broad path to the Cathedral also has 'stations' along its length that tell the history of Guildford in an engaging manner – it is considerable attraction for visitors.

The University has sponsored and encouraged a student quarter in the North Street development.

- This area has outlets and an ambience that act as a magnet for students, thereby bringing gown more obviously into town.
- It is connected to the town by a tree-lined boulevard and directly to the new relief road.
- Students at the School of Acting perform at dedicated busking points.
- Residents are now left in no doubt that Guildford is a university town.

What might Guildford be like?

The Research Park has a brilliant visitor centre.

- Residents and others get a great impression of the range and scale of its cutting-edge activities.
- Regular educational visits and displays allow students of all ages to get a hands-on taste of the exciting work that goes on at the Park.
- Future generations of students and workers are inspired to continue making Guildford a centre of excellence that creates value-adding employment.

The Hospital has a town centre minor A&E unit, again in the North Street development.

- Less serious ailments, cuts and bruises are dealt with locally.
- Consultations also take place via video link to the main hospital.
- Dedicated transport takes patients to the hospital if more specific attention is required.

What might Guildford be like?

Vehicles & Traffic

- Traffic congestion removed from the Town. The gyratory is replaced by new bridges and roads put in tunnels
- Through traffic diverted away from the Town by a bypass
- Links improved for local traffic and public transport between Town Centre and the County Hospital, University, Research Park, Sports Park. Railway Station.
- Bridge Street, Onslow Street humanised.
- Two new Park & Ride facilities installed north of the Town
- Surface car parks replaced by parking underground and within new structures.
- Low noise tarmac applied on main roads through and close to residential areas.
- All sizeable residential establishments host car clubs.
- Plentiful electric charging points are in regular use.

Pedestrians

- Guildford is now a safe, attractive town for pedestrians to enjoy, free from vehicle dominance.
- There is an attractive, welcoming walking route from railway station to the Town Centre and other key locations.
- Street clutter has been removed.
- There are safe and enjoyable cycling and walking routes from the Town Centre to the University, County Hospital and the Cathedral.
- Visitors can easily find their way around the Town Centre.
- There are many places to cross the railway and river which link up with the riverside.
- There are ample crossing points complemented where necessary by wide, well lit, welcoming subways below the busiest roads.

What might Guildford be like?

Cycles

- Cyclists are encouraged in the Town by well designed and safe separate routes to all major destinations.
- Traffic space allocated to cyclists to provide either traffic free or dedicated routes.
- More than 15% of Guildford journeys are made by bicycle.
- Busy routes lit after dark..
- Covered, secure cycle parking provided at all major travel locations.
- Subways and ramps not required for pedestrians adapted for cyclists.

Buses

- Attractive and functional interchange with comprehensive waiting facilities placed close to the main shopping area.
- Several bus stops within the Town Centre.
- Regular bus services at the main railway station.
- Long distance coaches, now call at the railway station
- Peak time bus services provided from Park & Ride sites direct to main centres of employment like Slyfield and County Hospital.

What might Guildford be like?

Rail

- Local rail services link Chilworth with new stations at Park Barn and Merrow.
- Guildford station re-designed with public footway and improved facilities for disabled passengers.
- Bus and coach interchange facilities provided.
- Much of the need for car parking at Guildford main station reduced by the creation of Milford Parkway.
- Improved connectivity with Heathrow through a direct rail link via Woking.

Architecture and open spaces – at the heart of creating a revitalised community

Our Vision in practice - architecture

Best in class architecture creates a sustainable urban environment

- The existing town centre is made more beautiful.
- Good modern architecture, green spaces and pleasant public areas replace ugly, poor quality buildings, semi-derelict areas and surface car parks.
- Pavement cafés and restaurants, great entertainment facilities and a high quality retail experience sit comfortably alongside historic buildings and heritage sites.
- Attractive town centre residential developments help create a town that lives.
- Open spaces – squares, parks, boulevards define the successful town or city – often more than buildings. Our open spaces need to be spectacular.
- Together they create an experience without parallel in the region.

What might Guildford be like?

Our Town's character and amenities have been conserved and enhanced.

- Its character remains defined by its situation on the River Wey and the hilly landscape of the North Downs.
- New buildings make use of local construction materials to blend with the existing building stock while also using more modern materials that conserve energy and water.
- Much of the town centre and certain surrounding areas have been designated as conservation areas. or areas of "special architectural or historic interest", the character or appearance of which it is desirable to retain.
- Existing heritage buildings, street and building plot layout, important open spaces, trees and views are preserved.
- Where development has taken place, it has been with due regard to the height and character of Our Town's ancient streets, historic buildings and ancient monuments.
- Best-in-class, modern architecture has not been discouraged and provides new heritage sites of the future. Such buildings have been included in the list of areas being conserved.
- Use is made of roof tops and other surface areas for agriculture and power generation through solar arrays.
- Adjacent parts of the town respect its character and scale, preserving and enhancing the town's overall character and links with its natural heritage.

What might Guildford be like?

Our Town's housing stock has been developed to meet the needs of all residents

- Development of infrastructure, amenities and major commercial facilities will lead to pressure on house prices and an even larger shortfall than currently exists.
- In the 'dream' scenario, there is plenty of sustainable housing across the Borough and especially in the town centre to provide accommodation for all levels of workers and for all age groups.
- The presence of a critical mass of residents in the town centre ensures that the town is lively and safe throughout the waking hours.
- Café culture has really taken off and the choice of basket supermarkets ensures that everyone enjoys living in the town centre - even though housing developments right in the centre are quite dense at around 120 to 160 dwellings per hectare.
- The apartments overlooking the new riverside walk and public spaces are in great demand and are built in County Town vernacular, creating tomorrow's heritage sitting comfortably alongside the heritage of Guildford.

What might Guildford be like?

Our Town has a strengthened retail and commercial offering

Overview

- Our Town has exploited the major opportunity presented by the presence of a world class university and one of only three university-owned research parks in the country.
- It has successfully managed the substantial threat posed by the lack of available housing that skilled and support workers can afford that persisted in 2013 and civic amenities that lag behind the competing centres including Cambridge and Oxford.

Retail

- The 'dream' scenario has been realised. A major expansion of the retail offering has been completed, enabled by and part funding major infrastructure improvements to traffic and travel to, from and past the town centre. This has brought John Lewis and other major retailers to the town.
- Because of the introduction of new retail space, the Debenham store has been converted into residential and leisure space, opening up the High Street to the river for the first time in 100 years. There is a new town square with a maypole and performing arts.

What might Guildford be like?

- The High Street has become Guildford's Bond Street or Regent Street with boutique shops and restaurants complementing its heritage status and the offers of multiple retailers in the completed and award winning North Street development.
- Although many people still commute from Guildford to London, this has been re-balanced and the town is now vibrant at all times.
- Tourists, residents of all ages, students and employees create a buzz that makes Our Town the most desirable place in the South East region to live and work.

Commercial

- Headquarters offices, once attracted to Guildford but which migrated away when full employment, a lack of affordable housing for key workers and unbearable traffic congestion, have started to return.
- The research park has expanded and is home to some of the world's leading high technology companies.

The riverside – an under-developed community jewel

Our Vision in practice – the riverside

A regenerated riverside becomes a new destination in the heart of the town

- The riverside is no longer blighted by unsympathetic commercial buildings and surface car parks.
- It enjoys surface access to the town's other heritage sites – High Street and the castle - and becomes a breathing space where people can meet, sit and socialise.
- It is a waterside location which celebrates the adjacent beautiful countryside and Guildford's industrial heritage blended with the needs of its 21st Century inhabitants.
- It is a key destination which hosts a vibrant range of leisure, sport and arts activities, complemented by ample and sympathetic waterfront dining and bars.

What might Guildford be like?

Overview

- The river from Ferry Lane to Stoke Mill continues to be a key amenity for Our Town that is a vital part of its geographical context in the heart of the Surrey Hills AONB. It provides a tranquil corridor and haven for nature through its heart, while the water meadows and other green spaces upstream perform a vital role in protecting the town's centre from seasonal flood waters.
- The immediate riverside area also forms a vital part of Our Town's industrial heritage, including the River Wey Navigation, Dapdune Wharf, and Old Town Crane. The riverside area is owned by the National Trust with adjacent areas including the Rodboro Buildings, Warehouses and Town Mill in hands of GBC and private owners.
- Despite this outstanding legacy, generations of historical failings in stewardship have left Guildford with a legacy of inappropriate development including surface car parks and the Debenhams department store that blights this amenity.
- Other locations, for example Birmingham, have used their waterside context as a catalyst for regeneration, conservation and economic growth. With Guildford's centre soon to embark on major redevelopment, the opportunity is taken to ensure that a proper plan is in place to reinstate Our Town's riverside area achieved through sympathetic re-development with an amenity of value to all residents.

What might Guildford be like?

- Consequently establishing a clear plan for the riverside area together with the National Trust is vital.

Ferry Lane to Town Mill

- This area of predominantly green space has been retained. Only with minor exceptions has there been further development on the riverside or adjacent areas. Any development that has taken place has been restricted to existing developed plots and preserved the character of existing sites, uses, plot ratios and building heights.
- The use as water meadow has been retained to preserve this vital function as well as conserving views of the local landscape. This has enable local wildlife including birds, dish and otters to flourish while providing an attractive amenity for walkers, cyclists and rowers.

Town Mill to Dapdune Wharf

- This is existing urban area used to comprise an ill-fitting blend of historical and contemporary buildings. It was poorly connected to the rest of the town centre, difficult to navigate as a consequence of arterial routes and lacked homogeneity due to the presence of monolithic developments including Debenhams and Wey House.
- Given its town centre location and history, the area was ideally suited for conversion to leisure and retail use.
- A new leisure destination has been created based around continental style café-culture. This includes the creation of a wide range of drinking, dining and retail options attractive across a wide demographic.

What might Guildford be like?

- Open areas such as piazzas are also an important feature and enable performing arts to thrive, linking with the adjacent Yvonne Arnaud and Electric theatres. There is also a major annual canal festival and sporting events based on the riverside area that bring visitors to Our Town
- Communication with key visitor destinations including High Street, the redeveloped north Street, the Castle and transport hubs have been improved ensuring this area is well linked with the other key areas of Our Town.
- This required extensive development but had a major positive impact on Our Town.
- This included sensitive re-development of existing historical buildings such as Rodboro Building, aiding its conservation.
- New development was sited principally at two sites: the Millbrook and Riverside Market surface car parks. This has improved their economic productivity as well as improving site lines in the direction of The Mount and Quarry Street.
- Finally, a long term objective of removing inappropriate major structures such as the BT Building, Debenhams, and Friary Court has been met as a consequence of plans being developed for this area that facilitated rather than prevented such development which have further contributed to the economic growth and use of this area of Guildford's riverside.

What might Guildford be like?

Dapdune Wharf to Stoke Mill

- This area comprises a combination of residential, retail and industrial space and can be considered to include the area of Walnut Tree close to the west.
- The existing retail and industrial space mars this area of the river and should be relocated where possible to out of town sites such as Slyfield which are better suited to meet their needs.
- The resultant space created can be better used to meet the Town's residential needs by creating new communities that are well sited close to communication hubs and hence meet the needs of Our Town's economic aspirations.

Navigation

- Our Town's riverside area forms a north-south corridor used extensively by walkers, cyclists, rowers and canoeists. It intersects with the Pilgrims Way at its southerly end and the town centre's major communications arteries.
- As an existing leisure site, future development should be balanced with the need to preserve good quality routes and access while enabling improvements to be made to vehicular traffic, the latter being one of the major challenges for Our Town.
- Opportunity exists to improve the quality of footpaths through improved signposting and information, wider verges and reduced railings.

**A vibrant global hub for high-tech
industry creating wealth and jobs**

Our Vision in practice – economy

Guilford is a globally recognised centre for high-tech industries that create wealth and jobs

- The South East and London continue to benefit from net inward migration
- London is a global hub that increasingly controls its own revenue and spend
- Developed economies such as the UK remain dependent on knowledge and technology based businesses to compete globally
- There is an ageing demographic

Families continue to move to Guildford from the hurly-burly of London, bringing wealth and skills. This is supplemented by continued inward migration to the South East of England drawn by the proximity to London and its high quality of life. As a consequence Our Town grows.

Guildford's economic strength arises from becoming a 21st C small scale analogue of Silicon Valley. It has built on existing successes and acquired the critical mass to act as a vibrant commercial hub for niche high-tech industries, supported by an active and internationally recognised University. Our Town also services the local population from its position as a regional retail and leisure destination.

What might Guildford be like?

Overview

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Business and employment thrive

- The University has gone from the strength to strength and is now one of the top ten universities in the country with one in four school leavers aspiring to study there.
- Our Town has an economic strategy focussed on creating employment opportunities in businesses that are either sustainable sources of long term employment or in growth sectors that create new employment. While many residents still commute daily to London, there are thriving and rewarding employment opportunities in Our Town too.

What might Guildford be like?

- Guildford is recognised as a hub for skilled, technology-based industries and their supply chain, hosting several of the government’s “Catapult Centres”. It benefits from more joined up economic development and commercialisation of University developed intellectual property.
- It has sufficient critical mass to compete effectively with other major centres in Cambridge, Harwell and the US.
- It is recognised as one of the world’s centres of excellence in space technology and data, built on the work of SSTL. This allows existing businesses to grow and brings new businesses to Our Town...
- It is recognised as one of the world’s centres of excellence in digital communications having built on existing 5G expertise. Major communications firms such as Avaya remain and grow in Guildford and are joined by other businesses seeking to develop and exploit new technology as spin-offs from research at the University
- The growth of medicine at the University and the Royal Surrey’s status as a regional medical centre create spin-off opportunities in assisted medicine, medical instrumentation, niche pharmaceuticals and biotech.
- Our Town is a regional centre for the computer games industry with major developers and niche designers and technology companies based here..

What might Guildford be like?

- Other internationally recognised centres of excellence have emerged in areas including Big Data, ultra-clean manufacturing and digital connectivity.
- There is an annual science and technology fair that demonstrates Our Town's capabilities and promotes career opportunities
- There is an emerging creative industry that serves local business as well as competing against the established community in London. It draws on the strong artistic heritage of Our Town and provides employment opportunities in music, theatre, the web, or marketing.
- There is a continuing and thriving professional services business community (venture capital/investment banking, legal, accounting), supporting local and regional businesses and providing specialist support for Our Town's high-tech industries. It provides a cost effective alternative to London-based firms and enables able students from the College of Law and University to remain in Our Town.
- There is a trade body representing these growth industries in Our Town which is actively engaged with the Council and residents in its future development.
- An expanded Slyfield provides employment opportunities for the skilled trades necessary to support Our Town's population, supported by training at Guildford College.

What might Guildford be like?

- The regenerated town centre and riverside areas create new employment opportunities in retail and catering that meet the needs of all ages. An increased focus on exploiting Our Town's heritage, making a more attractive tourist destination and expanded leisure offerings provide new employment.
- Small industrial units are built allowing an artisan population to flourish, made sustainable by courses offered at Merrist Wood and the wealth of the town's hinterland. These small businesses are supported by an annual rural crafts fair as Guildford exploits its position at the heart of the Surrey Hills.
- Provision is made for social enterprises.
- With an ageing, wealthy population, provision is made proactively for expanded social care.

Enabled by supporting infrastructure

- The Local Plan and Masterplan for the town centre include appropriate provision for premises for all of these industries, based on an ethos of planning to enable success.
- Our Town has a strategy of supporting high-tech businesses through a global ambassador programme that encourages inward investment. There is effective lobbying of central government and venture capitalists that yields a constant stream of seed capital.

What might Guildford be like?

- Space is allocated in Our Town to niche industries so that they maintain critical mass and create a thriving self-sustaining pool of talent. The Research Park is expanded and new, specialist campuses to accommodate these businesses built at strategic locations. It boasts almost ten per cent of patent applications for high value-added products in the country.
- Modern office space is built for professional services and creative industries.
- Slyfield is expanded.
- All business premises enjoy excellent communications links, including the rail and road networks, airport connections and electronic communications to enable their competitiveness.
- There is a broad mix of space built in all new developments that is capable of accommodating new technology but also capable of conversion for alternative uses as technological change and shifting demographics impact the demand for and the nature of formal workplaces.
- Schools in Our Town wishing to specialise do so in areas linked to its growth industries, building strong partnerships with leading local businesses to create a self-sustaining pool of future talent and securing jobs for school leavers and university graduates.

What might Guildford be like?

- There is an appropriate mix of housing that preserves existing values while making provision for affordable homes in all areas of the town that match the needs of workers. It prevents the creation of ghettos of lower paid people and avoids the creation of isolated gated communities for the better off.
- Our Town's heritage is preserved and the worst of more recent development demolished to make way for new facilities with more sensitive and flexible architecture.

**Strong social infrastructure that
creates good quality of life for all**

Our Vision in practice – social infrastructure

Guildford offers a rewarding social environment for all

Our Town offers excellent services that caters to the needs of all ages. Despite an ageing demographic, the growth of high-tech industries has retained a social balance.

Young people move safely around the town, enjoying some of the best sports and leisure facilities in the South East. There are events that cater to their needs while celebrating the vibrancy of youth with new festivals and fairs throughout the year.

[Arts]

Supporting Our Town's youth

Overview

The youth of Guildford is generally well served with facilities. The quality and range of these services are retained into the future. However there is always scope for improvement and opportunities exist to create better infrastructure, activities and facilities that provide an attractive offer to Our Town's younger residents.

Continued development of Our Town's leisure facilities

- The Spectrum site is developed so that it continues to offer facilities that meet the needs of Our Town's young people. It is home to most of Our Town's amateur and professional sports clubs. The site is regularly refurbished so that it continues to rank among the top five leisure centres in the South East of England.
- There is an artificial beach on the Riverside from which children are able to swim in the safe waters of the canal.
- There is an annual open water swimming race on the River Wey through Guildford.
- There are retail offerings within the centre of Our Town, providing options for young people to socialise in a safe and attractive environment.

Supporting Our Town's youth

- There is increased access to sporting facilities at Our Town's schools and in particular access to those of the many private schools, that have been negotiated as part of planning consents.
- The historic St Catherine's fair is reinstated, celebrating youth culture in the town and raising money for charity. The adjacent College of Law site provides expansion space as the event grows.
- The Guilfest festival and its successors continue, meeting the needs of the youth of the town.

Safe navigation around Our Town

- Young people navigate Our Town freely and safely.
- Well lit cycle routes exist along all major highways, between all schools, the University, key housing areas and leisure sites, providing safe navigation by bike, scooter, roller blade and skateboard. There are parking facilities in the Town Centre for this equipment.
- Underpasses have been removed and replaced by surface crossings as part of the improvement to Our Town's roads and Riverside.

Supporting Our Town's youth

University students socialise within Our Town adding to its cultural depth

- Bars and clubs exist dispersed throughout Our Town. They are located away from residential areas and there are no “no-go” areas at night.
- The range of offers attracts local students, residents and visitors who mix freely and without tension at night

A vibrant, regional centre for the Arts

A centre for culture vultures from across the UK and beyond

- Our Town is furnished with extensive arts venues that are easily accessed from its improved transport links and there is a central box office for all events.
- The GLive venue has flourished and is one of the South East's leading venues for performing arts. The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre is again a commissioning venue and hosts leading touring productions.
- The University also hosts regular performing arts events and has built on the success of the Guildford School of Acting. The Academy of Contemporary Music has relocated to the University enabling it to cater to all musical tastes.
- There is a new Arts Centre piazza built on the riverside as part of its regeneration.
- There are regular art-house cinema shows at a purpose-built venue.
- The Woolsack Art Gallery has opened in one of Our Town's heritage venues
- Guildford benefits from street art and a sculpture trail linking its arts venues. Together with its emphasis on green spaces, this provides a considerably enhanced public realm.
- The cobbled High Street is once again a market area, hosting a lively and diverse market including weekly craft and farmers markets.
- Our Town's heritage sites such as the Castle Grounds regularly host outdoor theatre.
- Our Town's arts heritage is celebrated at the annual Book Festival and the ten-day Guildford Festival held in Shalford Park attended by leading names in the arts.

Vision for Guildford Limited

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