

Cheltenham High Street & Promenade

Developing a public realm toolkit
& maintenance approach

For Public Engagement



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01 . Who we are

01. Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council and the Cheltenham Business Improvement District (BID) are working together to engage businesses, organisations, residents and visitors to seek their views on plans to improve the public realm along Cheltenham's High Street and Promenade.

02 . What is the public realm?

02. The public realm belongs to all of us. It is the places and spaces that belong to the public that are not privately owned and are freely accessible. Streets and pavements, parks and green spaces, lighting and street furniture all form part of the public realm.

03 . What is the public realm toolkit and maintenance approach?

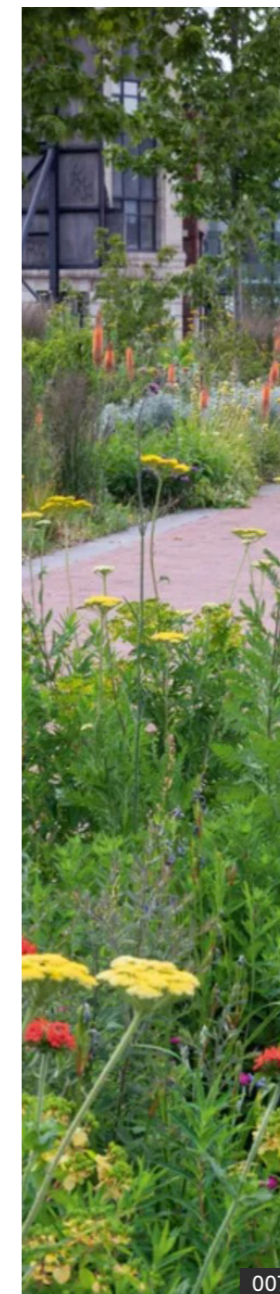
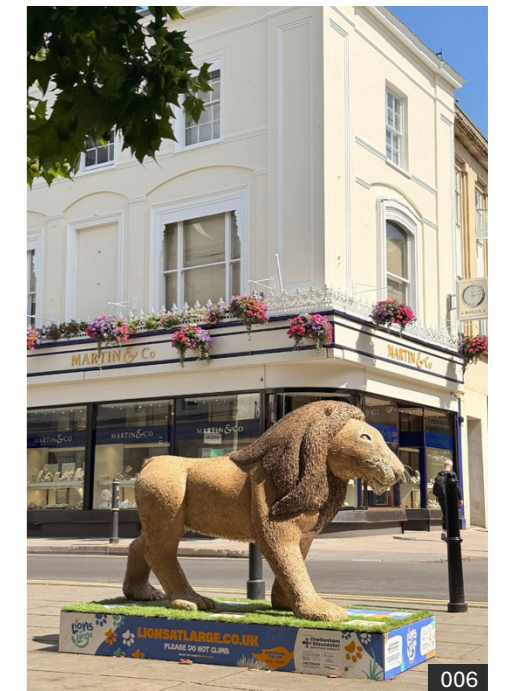
03. A public realm toolkit and maintenance approach is a shared vision aimed at influencing, shaping and guiding better street planning. It's owned by everyone with an interest in the High Street including independent businesses, well-known brands, public sector organisations and street traders. When done successfully the impact is tangible and a High Street is transformed from simply a place people pass through into a place they choose to be in. Streets become more welcoming, more walkable and more human in scale. Clutter is reduced, greenery softens hard edges and high-quality materials replace patchwork fixes. Spaces open-up for people to sit, meet, linger and enjoy as opposed to just shop in.

04. While not a statutory document, a public realm toolkit and maintenance approach that's collaboratively agreed and adopted ensures every improvement, whether by an independent business, the highways department, utilities or council, pulls in the same direction.

04 . How will this document be used?

It will be used to:

- Set clear standards for public realm design ensuring consistency is achieved positively responding to the town's heritage. This includes everything from paving and planting to shopfronts, lighting, signage and street furniture.
- Align public and private sector partners so that utilities companies, council departments and independent traders work to a shared vision, enabling a coordinated approach to the management and maintenance of the public realm.
- Guide future regeneration and investment opportunities related to the public realm.
- Guide future regeneration and investment opportunities related to the public realm.
- Support public realm projects.



05. Developing a shared vision for our public realm

“The quality of spaces between buildings is just as important as the buildings themselves.”

[National Design Guide, Paragraph 99]

05. **Identity & character** - public realm plays a key part in the identity and character of our streets and places. It is both in the composition of the elements that make up the public realm including the choice of materials, street furniture and landscape design that encapsulates the quality, character and identity of the ‘place’ that results.
06. **Competing ‘places’ and historic environments** - the quality and character of public-realm design play a major role in how shopping areas and town centres are perceived, with their appeal often shaped by the distinctiveness of their historic environments. Cheltenham’s High Street currently lacks continuity and legibility in its paving treatments, undermining this sense of place. As the setting for movement and interaction, streets and public spaces must be designed with careful attention to location, connectivity, and the needs of all users - pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers-while integrating well-considered ground surfaces, street furniture, lighting, signage, and public art to create a coherent and attractive urban environment.
07. Well-designed public realm (streets and spaces) should:
- Be well-placed to support diverse activities and foster social interaction, inclusion, and well-being.
 - Feel safe, welcoming, and accessible to everyone.
 - Include trees and planting that enhance enjoyment, provide shade, and help mitigate climate impacts.
 - Provide a good balance between achieving the functional operational requirements of a mixed-use High Street with the placemaking ambitions of its resultant character and identity.
08. This document has three main aims: 1) To engage openly and meaningfully with businesses, residents and visitors on the future vision of our public realm in Cheltenham; 2) To build on the existing vision for a coordinated, high-quality public realm, particularly along the High Street and Promenade; and 3) To set out an approach for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the streets and spaces that form that public realm.
09. The document highlights concerns about the current condition of the public realm, which has been impacted by safety maintenance, repairs, and a piecemeal approach across multiple projects over the years. Over time, this has begun to erode the area’s character and distinct identity.
10. This document recognises that earlier public realm strategies, particularly those centred around fostering civic pride - were shaped by a specific moment in time and relied on a high-specification material palette and approach that proved difficult to implement. It now proposes a more focused and realistic framework suited to current financial constraints, aiming to balance everyday management with design quality. The goal is to maintain ambition without compromising good design and aspirational placemaking, working creatively within limited capital and operational budgets.
11. The document is structured in three parts:
- **Part I** sets out the purpose, scope and background
 - **Part II** assesses the existing quality and character of the public realm along The High Street and Promenade through a SWOT-style analysis and sets out an approach to addressing the issues identified. It also draws from historical public realm documents to ensure that core urban design principles remain intact. In addition, it provides guidance and scope for introducing greener streets and spaces across these important areas of the town, should future opportunities and funding become available. It is our stated aim to extend this approach and methodology into Montpellier as part of next stage development.
 - **Part III** sets out an approach for a consistent and coordinated public realm – setting out suitable options for public realm surface materials. This section also highlights the importance of street furniture and tree planting to the public realm and provides guidance and inspiration for these, together with the general practical requirements for good maintenance and management of the public realm especially within a challenging budgetary environment.



06. What our public realm toolkit and maintenance approach is **not** about

12. We know how important the High Street and Promenade are to Cheltenham. They are central to the future prosperity of the town centre. While this document is designed to guide, shape and influence the future development of the High Street and Promenade, it is important to acknowledge that it does not replace the wider work needed to tackle complex social, economic or enforcement issues, but complements those efforts by creating a more welcoming and well-managed environment.

This document is therefore **not** about:

- The redevelopment of Cavendish House
- Clarence (Boots) Corner: There are no plans to pedestrianise Clarence Corner.
- Homelessness and rough sleeping
- Royal Well
- Car parking

07. Future extension of the public realm toolkit - Montpellier

13. Montpellier is at the heart of what makes Cheltenham special. From its elegant Regency architecture, sweeping terraces and iconic features to the wide range of independent businesses, boutiques and café culture, Montpellier reflects the town's origins as a fashionable spa destination. As part of the work underway to improve the High Street and Promenade, this will be extended to include Montpellier.

14. We plan to adopt the findings from the High Street and Promenade to inform this next stage.

08. Engagement and involvement

15. Our approach to engagement:

- Cheltenham BID is leading the public engagement on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council.
- We understand that good public realm toolkits and approaches to maintenance are informed by the public and community and reflect what people value. Improvements shouldn't just be technical in nature. They should respond to local needs.
- We also recognise that engagement is not a one-off exercise. It is a continuous conversation that will inform decisions at every stage. We will be open about what can and cannot change, clear about how feedback is used and transparent in reporting back to participants.

What are we engaging on?

We want to hear your views on:

- A) The idea of a single, unified vision for the High Street and Promenade.
- B) The use of consistent design, materials and identity in future works.
- C) User experience of the town as a continuous place.

Who are we engaging with?

We want to hear the views of businesses (independent and well-known brands), organisations (public or third sector), residents and visitors.

How can you get involved?

You can get involved in any of the following ways:

Booklet: By completing and returning the survey at the back of this engagement booklet. Hard copies of the survey will be available from Cheltenham BID, First Floor, Isbourne House, 3 Wolseley Terrace, Oriel Road, Cheltenham.

Online: Cheltenham BID has a dedicated website section where materials can be accessed and an online survey can be completed.

Social media: We will be posting regular updates to our social media platforms and encouraging wider participation.

We are working with businesses in the BID area to arrange a business briefing event.

09. Economic climate

Working with businesses directly through the Cheltenham BID.

16. Current economic pressures mean public spending must be carefully prioritised with local authorities balancing rising service demands against constrained budgets. As a result, High Street public realm projects need to be focused on delivering maximum impact rather than relying on expensive or highly bespoke materials.

17. This does not limit ambition. Through thoughtful design, considered detailing and targeted interventions, it is possible to create attractive, durable and people-focused streets that support local businesses, improve accessibility and strengthen civic identity and pride.

10. Public realm assessment

18. This section of the document provides an assessment of the current quality and character of the existing public realm across the High Street and Promenade - assessing the wide range of elements that make up the public realm more generally such as - surface materials, trees and planting, bollards, railings, signage, colours, laying pattern, street furniture and utilities.

19. A range of issues are highlighted through a high-level **SWOT**¹ assessment ranging from the public realm's impact on street character & identity, functionality and amenity, material choices, street furniture and maintenance considerations.

20. Along its length, the High Street changes in appearance and character and lacks a sense of cohesiveness along its length. To avoid reinforcing this sense of fragmentation across the street, this SWOT analysis adopts a simplified and unified terminology. The High Street is treated as a single continuous place, reflecting its role as Cheltenham's principal retail spine and key pedestrian corridor.

21. Historic or informal sub-area names (example Cambray Place, The Strand, Regent Place) are not used as standalone categories within the assessment, as they risk implying disconnected zones that might not all clearly align with a long-term aspiraton for a cohesive public realm.

¹ **SWOT** - 'place' analysis that assesses a study area in terms of its: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats.

Where references to specific locations are necessary - for example to describe particular issues, assets or opportunities - these are described contextually rather than as defined sub-areas.

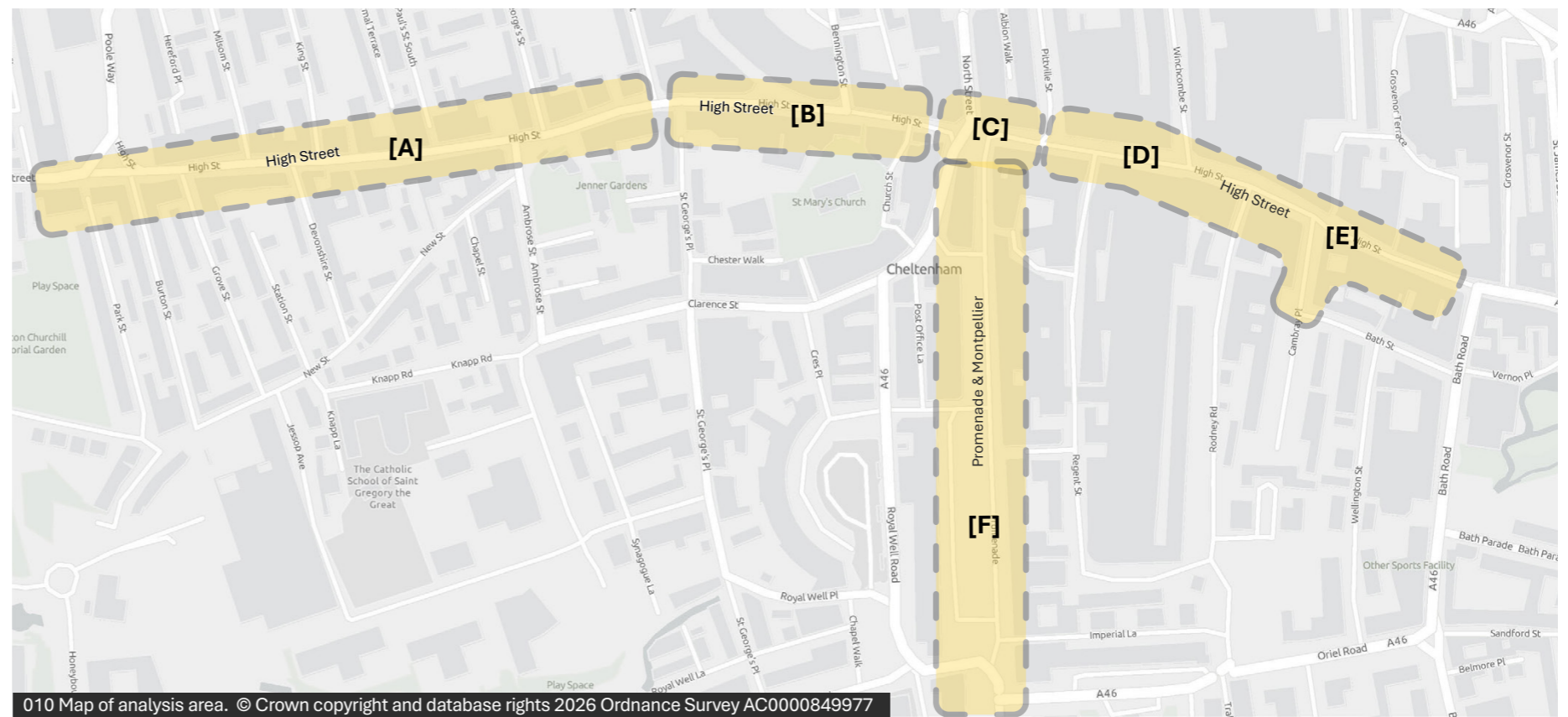
22. A second distinct place, The Promenade, is assessed, recognising its unique character, heritage significance, and different functional role within the town centre.

23. Please note that one section of the analysis is still in progress. We intend to complete the SWOT assessment by extending the review from the High Street along the Promenade, fully covering Montpellier in its entirety.

24. The SWOT analysis approach is intended to:

- Supports a single, unified vision for the High Street;
- Encourages consistency in design, materials and identity;
- Reflects user experience of the town centre as a continuous place.

We want to strengthen our approach and methodology through this programme of public engagement.



010 Map of analysis area. © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000849977

A. High St - west



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B. High St - Brewery Quarter



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C. High St - Clarence Fountain



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D. High St - Regent Arcade



014

E. Cambray Place & The Strand



015

F. Promenade & Montpellier



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25. This page provides a summary of the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats** identified so far across the High Street and the Promenade. We welcome your feedback on these points, as well as any additional considerations you feel should be included.

Strengths

- **Strong, mixed use, multi-cultural commercial spine** - high footfall, diverse mix of retail, food and beverage services including highly-respected retail brands, unique independent shops and restaurants.
- **Regeneration:** the Brewery Quarter, John Lewis, and Clarence Fountain improvements have positively enhanced the town centre experience and mixed-use offer.
- **Good public transport accessibility**, with bus stops distributed along the street and strong links to the wider network.
- **Heritage context** - Cheltenham's distinct Regency architecture provides it with a unique advantage against many other local competing town centres. Distinctive long vistas, landmark buildings, and a fine urban grain define its character including a High Street dating back to medieval times.
- **Active business community** with BID support, providing an engaged partner for future investment and management initiatives.
- **Pedestrianised streets** - much of the High Street & Promenade enjoy a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly retail environment.
- **Promenade's avenue trees** are central to its character and an integral part of the conservation area's charm, linking Clarence Fountain to Montpellier.
- **Pocket park at a key focal point** - Clarence Fountain (Boots Corner) enhances public realm quality and visitor enjoyment.

Weaknesses

- **Inconsistent public realm materials and finishes**, creating visual fragmentation and uneven quality of experience. Mix-match of materials from historic repairs compound this issue.
- **Clutter from ageing or redundant street furniture**, contributing to disorder and obstructing pedestrian flow.
- **Surface condition issues**, including concerns about the performance and durability of certain paving areas, and large areas of discolouration (e.g., The Strand).
- **Vehicles damaging paving on footway** - esp towards western end of High Street. Smaller temporary patch repairs visible.
- **Drainage issues** (impact of cellars along properties at sub surface is the responsibility of the landlords not GCC).
- **Tree pit enclosures** - lifting roots, uneven paving around tree roots.
- **Perception issues** associated with particular parts of the High Street that affect how the area functions as a cohesive place.
- **Some locations are not well-connected, resulting in poor legibility and wayfinding.**

Opportunities

- **Establish a unified materials palette** that strengthens legibility and supports a coherent town centre identity.
- **Quick wins** such as removing disused street furniture to visibly improve the environment in the short term.
- **Strengthened wayfinding and signage**, supporting navigation and linking key destinations more clearly.
- **Improved accessibility**, through inclusive design, ensuring better provision for all users including those with disabilities.
- **Public art and cultural interventions** that reinforce character and animate the street without adding clutter.
- **Incorporate GI** - use planters and rain gardens to soften the environment, improve drainage, and enhance resilience.
- **Future funding bids**, with this document forming a clear foundation for well-evidenced proposals, supported by Council, BID and stakeholder consensus.

Threats

- **Fragmented investment** if future projects continue to be delivered in isolation without a unified strategy.
- **Budget constraints** that limit delivery or long-term maintenance, undermining the quality of the public realm over time.
- **Character erosion and perception** - ongoing lack of investment in the public realm can erode the character of the street, reinforce perceptions of neglect and potentially deter future investment in the area.

High Street (west)

26. **Character & identity** – the street includes a range of independent retailers with residential accommodation above. The character of the street is impacted on by a few cumulative issues of weakened public realm and a mix-match of shopfronts.

27. **Detailed issues include** – [1] tarmac repairs and [2] broken slabs. Broken pavers are prevalent in this area, predominantly caused by delivery vehicles/cars parking on the public footpath, [3] Mix-match of surface materials, [4] no clear laying pattern, [5] water pooling, [6] tree pit enclosures.

28. The street suffers from a weakening street and public realm character due to the cumulative issues mentioned above.



Strengths

- Good mix of independent shops and restaurants
- Culturally-diverse community – providing the area with a wide range of leisure, food and beverage options.
- Western approach to High Street.

Weaknesses

- Vehicles damaging paving on footway. Mix-match of surface materials result of ad hoc repairs undertaken.
- Smaller surface area repairs.
- Drainage issues (impact of cellars along properties at sub surface is the responsibility of the landlords not GCC).
- Lack of tree pit enclosures - lifting roots, uneven paving around tree roots.
- Redundant street furniture.

Opportunities

- Enhance character and identity of area through consistency in public realm surface treatment - improving the walking environment along the western end of the High Street.
- Incorporate green infrastructure through planters / rain gardens to soften the environment and make it more welcoming and improve drainage and enhance resilience.

Threats

- Ongoing lack of investment in the public realm can erode the character of the street, reinforce perceptions of neglect and potentially deter future investment in the area.



High Street [Brewery Quarter]

29. **Character & identity** – a recently completed, vibrant leisure and retail destination offering a mix of food and beverage uses, entertainment venues, retail and accommodation. Public realm delivered as part of the recent development is cohesive and contributes to a positive street character.

30. **Detailed assessment** - no issues currently in this area given its recent completion. Worth noting that only a small part of the development includes the public highway including the High Street. The surface paving material is coordinated across the public realm with paving arranged in a linear alignment - perpendicular to the carriageway. Materials include natural stone paving slabs with a warm complimentary natural colour palette.



Strengths

- Cohesive public realm materials and street furniture. Attractive to both users and occupiers of different mixed-uses along street and spaces between buildings.
- Birch and hazel tree selection have established successfully.

Weaknesses

- No maintenance issues currently stand out.

Opportunities

- Width of carriageway could allow for future additional planting/ greening opportunities.
- Opportunity for some additional seating to be accommodated in sun trap outside the Premier Inn.

Threats

- Need to ensure vehicle movements are controlled and surface material is not damaged by inappropriate vehicle overruns.
- Secure long-term maintenance of paving to retain high quality appearance over time.



High Street [Clarence Fountain]

- 31. **Character & identity** – key focal point along High Street with high levels of footfall. Pedestrian friendly central space with attractive pocket park. Strong, formal architectural buildings enclose the street and public realm.
- 32. **Detailed assessment** – surface paving areas lack coordination across the area. Walking routes compromised in part by the vehicular crossing traffic along Clarence St/North Street and the relationship with the High Street.
- 33. **Tree planting** - Birch and hazel tree species have established very successfully due to underground watering system linked to the fountain.



Strengths

- Central location in town centre, confluence of movement routes at this junction. Strong mixed-use urban node/focal point with recent positive landscape-led pocket park intervention.
- Attractive heritage-rich built form surrounding central space.
- Pedestrian-friendly central landscaped-space in the centre.

Weaknesses

- Vehicular traffic breaks natural pedestrian flow of the High Street.
- Public realm surfaces include areas of mix-match paving, colours and materials across the area - negatively impacting the experience for pedestrians.
- Need to improve accessibility issues at crossings for visually-impaired users.

Opportunities

- Future public realm interventions could improve pedestrian priority along the High Street at the Clarence Fountain crossing.
- A more cohesive public realm around this area would vastly benefit its character.

Threats

- Continued vehicular traffic impacts pedestrian movement and priority particularly along the High Street.



High Street [Regent Arcade]

- 34. **Character & Identity** – a vibrant area along the High Street including the principal entrance into the Regent Arcade shopping centre and the recently completed John Lewis facade. Pedestrianised area of High Street includes tree planting, historic street lighting, attractive seating and planting – all contribute to the quality of the public realm.
- 35. Detailed assessment – recent completion of public realm works outside John Lewis department store include attractive raised planters with integrated seating. This also includes retention of historic, ornate streetlamp posts and uncluttered street furniture - contributing to the quality of the public realm.
- 36. Mix-match of surface materials including broken pavers in and around this area. Area of High Street near John Lewis includes shared surface carriageway with paving provides a unified approach to the public realm.
- 37. Consideration to be given to options of surface materials – comparing traditional paving with coloured asphalt and imprinted finishes to ensure long-term durability, cost-effectiveness, and visual appearance.

Strengths

- Vibrant public realm area with lots of retail activity.
- In part, the shared public realm surface material has a unifying approach.

Weaknesses

- Mix-match of surface materials including broken pavers outside Regent Arcade.

Opportunities

- Opportunities for some small-scale landscape interventions could both green the area and liven the public realm.

Threats

- Surface treatment issues can negatively impact character of street over time and negatively affect people's experience of the place.



High Street [Cambray Place & The Strand]

38. **Character & Identity** - a transitional, characterful area defined by Regency architecture and a mix of residential, office, retail and leisure uses, ranging from the quieter, park-side setting of Cambray Place near Sandford Park to the livelier south-eastern gateway of the High Street, where historic charm sits alongside a vibrant cluster of pubs, bars and eateries.
39. **Detailed assessment** - the recently installed resin bound surfacing around The Strand provides a consistent material approach across the street surface, removing previous trip hazards caused by lifting/ broken pavers, and an approach that unifies the public realm surface with the removal of a multitude of paving materials.
40. The colour of the surfacing has sadly resulted in areas of colour discolouration across the surface - undermining the intended quality of the surface as a unified material.
41. The key challenge is identifying interventions that genuinely enhance the area, as parts of this stretch of the High Street have generous public-realm spaces that are congested with utilities, signage and assorted street furniture; along The Strand there is clear scope to declutter and create a more inviting, landscape-led 'retreat', while further challenges include managing vehicle movements, breaking up long linear spaces, rationalising street furniture and introducing well-placed public art.
42. This end of the High Street forms a 'gateway' into the heart of the shopping area, however its current public realm layout does not convey this role and the space offers considerable scope for enhancement as a more attractive and welcoming space.

Strengths

- Characterful Regency architecture, mixed-uses, quieter residential feel as one moves away from the High Street.
- Relatively new planting and seating intervention outside John Lewis has improved the quality and character of the High Street.
- Resurfaced area at The Strand is now safe for pedestrians with trip hazards removed, providing a blank canvas for new street furniture and artwork.

Weaknesses

- Tired surface material with temporary tarmac replacements at Cambray Place.
- The Strand provides a weak gateway entrance to the High Street - street furniture, utilities and signage lacking a cohesive approach.
- Redundant telephone boxes & advertising street furniture create unnecessary and unattractive obstructions to pedestrian environment.
- The discoloured resin-bound surface weakens the street's visual character- has had negative reviews by the public and retailers, with the night-time economy adding further maintenance pressures.
- Large vehicle deliveries to shop frontages - occasionally result in breakages / damage to surfaces.

Opportunities

- Large area for landscape-led interventions to enhance existing functionality and quality of outdoor eating, seating areas, tree planting, etc.
- The Strand forms a key gateway into the shopping area, but its current public realm does not reflect this role and offers significant potential for improvement as a more attractive, welcoming space.
- Enhance pedestrian safety and experience at Bath Road/High Street by reducing vehicle movements, minimising overrun risks, and adding greening to strengthen public realm quality.

Threats

- Street clutter can detract from a street's perceived character and the way it functions as such obstructions can constrain areas of the public realm through both visual and physical means.
- Lack of sufficient obstructions between Bath Rd/High Street to avoid accidental vehicle overruns into the pedestrianised area.



Promenade [High Street to Montpellier]

43. **Character & Identity** - the heart of Cheltenham's Regency area defined by high activity, street width, historic architecture and distinctive tree-lined avenue from the High Street to Montpellier.
44. **Detailed assessment** – areas of public realm negatively impacted by vehicle movements breaking the paving slabs and with temporary tarmac replacements especially of york stone pavers. Areas of uneven paving over surface-level tree roots.
45. Controlling the vehicle movements (evidence is demonstrating that bollards have reduced the number of broken slabs)
46. Images (below) highlight similar issues with regards to the public realm specifically for the area around The Promenade:
- Broken slabs due to heavy vehicle overruns
 - Tarmac repairs to broken pavers/slabs – temporary fix. This requires a plan going forward to deliver an attractive, robust and coordinated public realm surface.
 - Bollards introduced to block vehicle movement have reduced further breakages of pavers/slabs.
 - Some areas of pooling, requiring some kerbs to be reset.
 - Consistent approach to tree pits – some lifting of pavers within and around tree root areas.
 - Market use needs to be incorporated into any future public realm works along The Promenade.

Strengths

- Civic character very strong along the Promenade. Historic tree-lined avenues are particularly distinctive.
- Well-connected street in close proximity to the High Street with plenty of amenities and facilities within easy reach.

Weaknesses

- Vehicle movements causing broken pavers, with temporary tarmac replacements for york stone weaken the perception of the public realm.
- Bus movement and parking impacts areas of The Promenade.
- Access - inconsistencies with tactile paving and corresponding dropped kerbs across the Neptunes Fountain island crossing - makes crossing more challenging for visually impaired users.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to consolidate specific areas for york stone paving and distinguish between more vehicle-heavy areas in a different material.
- Future public realm intervention could be brought forward with regeneration projects.
- Tree pits are opportunities to enhance the look of the area.

Threats

- Challenges of sourcing york stone and matching colour is proving to be difficult.
- Broken pavers and long-term temporary replacements can affect the street's perception over time.



11. Key challenges & suggestions

47. The SWOT analysis identifies a set of interconnected challenges in achieving a high-quality, character-led public realm. The key issues, drawn from Section 3's analysis of the High Street and Promenade, are summarised below alongside suggested approaches to address them:

- **Heritage & place-value** should inform a sensitive approach to future interventions, responding to the conservation area and its significance to the town. The pedestrianised area should be maximised to encourage longer stays, with opportunities to pause, relax, and enjoy a safe and attractive environment. Early engagement with the Council's Conservation Team is recommended to ensure proposals align with adopted policy requirements.
- **Public realm paving** - poor paving is a common issue across the public realm, with mismatched, broken, and lifting surfaces in both concrete and york stone. This undermines character, creates trip hazards, and increases maintenance costs. A clear replacement strategy should prioritise like-for-like materials to maintain consistency, supported by a maintenance regime that includes a stock of new or reclaimed slabs, particularly york stone for key areas. Reducing damage to surfaces will help lower long-term maintenance pressures.
- **Reducing heavy vehicles over paved areas** is essential to limit damage to the public realm. Delivery and servicing requirements should be reviewed and carefully planned, with a coordinated approach agreed by retailers and other users to minimise large vehicle movements in pedestrianised spaces. Alternatives such as rear servicing courtyards, smaller vehicles, or shared delivery points should be used where feasible. While occasional access for heavy vehicles, including emergency and refuse vehicles, will remain necessary, paving must be designed with robust sub-base construction to withstand these loads. Prioritising these considerations early in public realm works will help protect quality, longevity, and the efficient operation of the High Street.
- **Utilities** - ensure a consistent, robust approach to repairs after interventions made by utility companies to the public realm undertaking works to their infrastructure. Like-for-like replacements must be delivered at the required standards after completion of their works.

- **Accessibility and inclusivity** should be prioritised across the public realm, ensuring a consistent and inclusive experience for all users. Current issues affecting visually impaired users on the High Street and Promenade include the following, which should be addressed to create a clear and accessible environment:
 - unclear footway/carriageway definition
 - poor visual contrast
 - misaligned tactile paving and crossings
 - uneven and loose surfaces
 - obstructed pedestrian routes
 - dropped kerbs and level changes
- **Strengthening connections & focal points:** attractive, coordinated, high-quality surfaces should support pedestrian flow along primary retail routes, with a unified materials palette extending across the High Street and incorporating subtle delineation for vehicles while prioritising pedestrian movement in the town centre's retail and civic core. Key destination spaces and focal points should be enhanced as larger, safer, and less traffic-constrained civic gathering areas, including Clarence Fountain, the most connected nodal intersection linking the historic Promenade and medieval High Street alongside The Strand at the High Street's eastern entrance, and Cambay Place, a quieter, park-side setting connected to The Strand and close to Sandford Park.
- **Climate-friendly** – increased planting using rain gardens to improve drainage and achieving climate-friendly environments through increased planting, improved sustainable drainage opportunities and locally-sourced materials.
- **Balanced and inclusive** - a balanced approach to the public realm should carefully reconcile day-to-day maintenance needs with high-quality design, ensuring that streets prioritise pedestrian movement and vibrant street life while still accommodating the essential servicing requirements of nearby retail, commercial, and residential uses. At the same time, an inclusive mindset must guide all interventions, embedding accessible design that responds to a wide spectrum of needs, including those of people with hidden disabilities, so that the town centre is welcoming and usable for everyone.

Cost-effective enhancements with high impact:

48. A well-designed public realm is achieved by aligning surface materials, street furniture, and landscaping with the character of each street, ensuring consistency across the High Street and The Promenade.
49. Enhance the public realm by prioritising essential, well-positioned signage and strategic lighting that defines entrances, highlights architectural focal points, and supports a feeling of safety after dark, complemented by improved seating within established green spaces to create welcoming places to relax.
50. Public art should be integrated to engage the community, reinforce local identity, and provide opportunities for interaction, delivering strong social value across the town centre.
51. Tree pits should follow a coordinated approach to create a unified and cohesive public realm, drawing on the wide range of available options that support healthy tree growth and contribute positively to the streetscape. Tree grills also offer opportunities for more bespoke/site-specific design responses, particularly within new landscape-led interventions such as pocket parks. For further guidance and illustrative examples, refer to the section on tree pits and grills within the street furniture chapter of this document.
52. A phased action plan allows for prioritised, investigatory stages, testing feasibility and consulting the public before detailed design, ensuring cost-effective implementation.

Greening & high-quality public realm:

53. Introduce strategic planting and trees to bring texture and colour while respecting Cheltenham's historic character and enhancing the overall environment. Use high-quality, consistent ground surfaces to unify the streetscape, complement its Regency architecture, and encourage pedestrian activity. Enhance key spaces with well-sited, coordinated street furniture that delivers clear benefits for all users.

High Street (west)

54. Drainage issues (water pooling) - water pooling caused by sunken basements creates depressions in the footpath, an ongoing issue for several years that sits outside GCC's control because it originates below ground within the landlord's ownership.
55. A mix of paving materials currently creates a fragmented appearance, and the layout needs review to establish a more coordinated, phased approach aligned with a longer-term place vision. Any material change must consider the basements that extend beneath the footways, as alterations could expose additional issues. Ownership of these basements lies outside the control of the Council and GCC, which is an important constraint.
56. Incorporate opportunities for planting and seating to soften the urban environment and create places to rest.

High Street (Brewery Quarter)

57. Prioritise a long-term maintenance strategy that secures consistent, high-quality paving through like-for-like slab replacement and a sustained stock of materials for future repairs.
58. Enhance the street experience by integrating additional seating in sunny locations with rain gardens, combining improved amenity, sustainability, and visual quality.

Clarence Fountain

59. Suggest surface materials are unified to achieve a stronger, cohesive public realm at this important intersection of the High Street and Promenade.
60. Rationalise defined kerb or tactile paving at the Clarence Street junction to improve safety and prevent visually impaired pedestrians from unintentionally entering the road.
61. Rationalising of clarence corner pelican crossing - currently a gap between the edge of the tactile paving and the post with the crossing button creates the potential for disorientation esp for users with sight and hearing loss who require the tactile paving to be right against the post in order to feel the moving toggle.
62. Future cycling and walking improvements in this area should better organise movement to enhance pedestrian safety at this busy junction, where some cyclists, particularly evening delivery riders, currently travel dangerously against the one-way flow in the carriageway.

Regent Arcade

63. Prioritise uniformity in surface material choices and design future public realm space to ensure a coordinated surface across the area.
64. Explore opportunities for small-scale landscape enhancements, such as incorporating attractive planters to improve existing seating areas. These interventions would help create a softer, greener setting while enlivening and enhancing the overall public realm.

High Street (Strand & Cambray Place)

65. The new surface at The Strand has enhanced pedestrian safety by eliminating the previous trip hazards caused by uneven paving. The recent discolouration of the material is disappointing, and consideration should be given to repairing the affected areas. Any remedial work should include appropriate sealants and/or UV stabilisers to help maintain the intended surface tone over time.
66. The next priority is to soften the space, make it more inviting, and reinforce its function as a gateway into the High Street through a coordinated urban-design and landscape-led approach. De-cluttering the area adjacent to Bath Road and incorporating a welcoming arrival space here would vastly improve the legibility at this end of the High Street.
67. Proposals must incorporate robust safety measures to prevent accidental vehicle overruns, particularly in areas with large seasonal pedestrian gatherings. As both CBC and GCC have statutory duties² to address identified risks, a particular weakness at the eastern end of The Strand has been highlighted, requiring targeted pedestrian safety intervention. This also presents an opportunity to deliver wider benefits, including enhanced biodiversity through planting, improved drainage via raised beds, better air quality with additional trees, and the creation of informal spaces for rest and socialising, alongside seating, public art, play features, and other elements that support urban greening and traffic calming.

² See also paragraph 102a) of the NPPF which requires Local Authorities to anticipate and address potential malicious threats and hazards particularly in locations where large numbers of people are expected to gather. Such measures can be incorporated in a multitude of ways with multiple public realm benefits as explained in the previous paragraphs above.

Promenade (High Street to Montpellier)

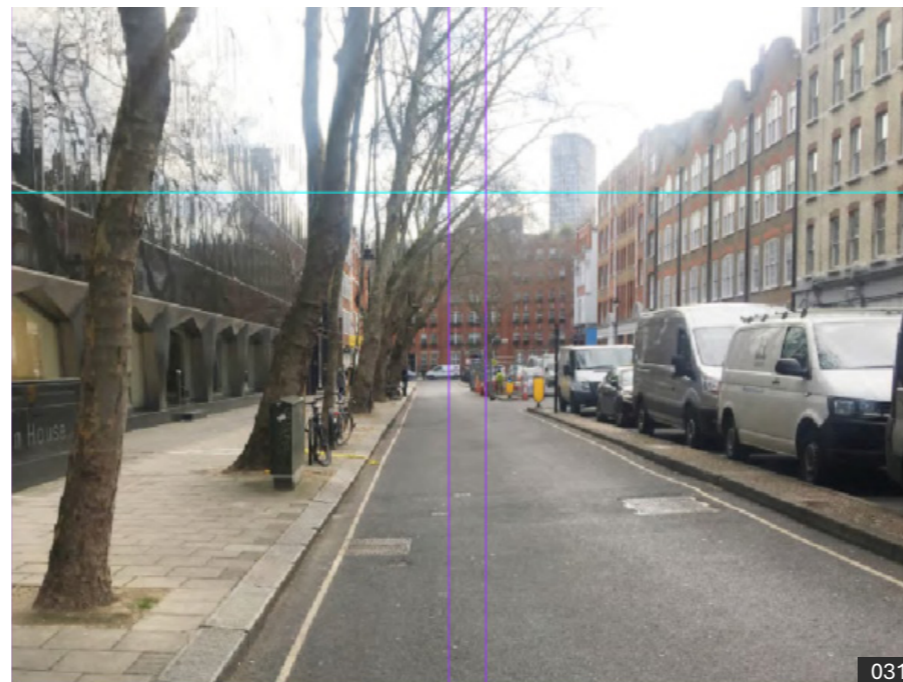
68. Future maintenance should prioritise like-for-like slab replacement, with tarmac used only for temporary or emergency repairs. The presence of existing bollards and the occasional use of space outside Cavendish Square for markets highlight the need for a detailed assessment of market activity, including whether specific areas of the Promenade should be designed with alternative materials or layouts to better accommodate trader requirements.
69. Consider a street-wide design that incorporates sections for alternative uses including deliveries with heavy vehicles in one material with set framed areas of york stone paving for pedestrian-only use. All such proposals need to be well-coordinated and include a collaborative approach to strategic movement including public transport.
70. Analyse the connections between Montpellier and the High Street, considering the historic tree-lined Promenade and any barriers to legibility along this route. There is also an opportunity to enhance tree pits to reinforce the Promenade's distinctive character and identity.
71. Access - provide consistent tactile paving and corresponding dropped kerbs esp at the Neptunes Fountain island crossing to ensure visually impaired users are guided safely to the correct crossing point, currently the alignment causes some confusion for visually-impaired users.

12. Landscaping, raingardens & pocket parks

- 72. Opportunities should be explored to integrate more landscape-led interventions, such as rain gardens and pocket parks, into the public realm. These features support green infrastructure by enhancing public spaces, boosting biodiversity, and encouraging active travel, while also managing stormwater runoff, reducing flood risk, and improving water quality. By creating attractive, green thresholds and incorporating planting, seating, and seasonal interest, they can transform streetscapes into more inviting environments and, when carefully coordinated with underground utilities, provide lasting, resilient improvements to urban character and amenity.
- 73. The challenge this poses within Cheltenham TC are the underground soil conditions and utilities that make traditional raingardens difficult to implement, however there are good examples of above-ground interventions that deliver very high-quality raingardens and pocket parks which could be explored and implemented when funding becomes available.
- 74. The landscape-led scheme at Clarence Fountain is a strong 'above-ground' example of how public realm interventions can transform space between buildings, creating an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment. It provides a welcome High Street retreat for sitting and relaxing, showing how thoughtful design can enhance urban life, social interaction, and overall character.
- 75. Storm drainage drains into the River Chelt. A SUDs improvement scheme could bring water quality improvement, biodiversity enhancement in addition to an uplift in placemaking. Further work is required to work with the EA and water companies to see what opportunities might become available in future.
- 76. Successful examples from elsewhere illustrated on this page include transformations of highway-dominated streets and spaces to landscape-led retreats within urban areas.

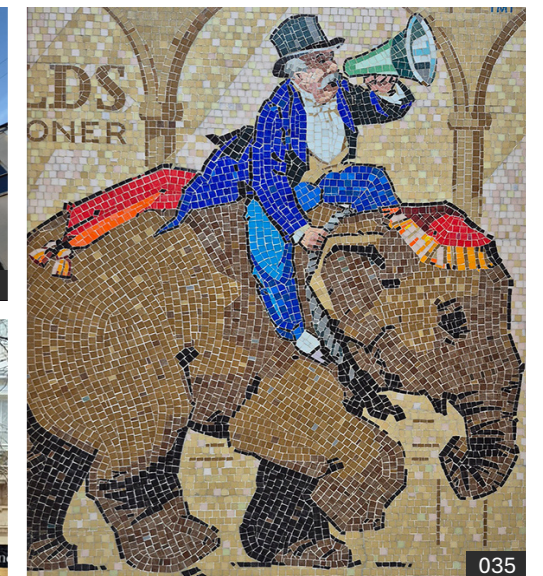
Below right - Alfred Gardens - transformation of an urban street with car parking into a community-focussed, greened amenity space for residents and office workers to enjoy. Connecting vehicular route retained as a secondary route in place of previously located car parking.

(Source: Highways greening, best practice and lessons learnt).



13. Public art

- 77. In the context of Cheltenham Town Centre, public art plays a valuable role in enhancing the character and experience of the public realm. It can be used to tell the story of a place and raise awareness of its history. Historic artefacts and/or sculptures are the most common form of public art, however there are also other options such as incorporating engraved pavers which form part of a wider wayfinding strategy, or other multi-functional public art where functional elements such as street furniture are bespoke-designed by a public artist - such as sculpted seating, lighting, tree grilles, railings, etc.
- 78. In addition to permanent installations that contribute to long-term placemaking, public art can also be delivered as temporary exhibitions that bring fresh energy and engagement to streets and spaces. These artistic interventions support Cheltenham's cultural identity, offer opportunities for community involvement, and can be integrated into wider public realm improvements to enrich both heritage and contemporary settings.



14. Materials palette

81. This section sets out the proposed surface material options for key public realm areas along the High Street and the Promenade. Our foremost priority is ensuring the safety of pedestrians and all highway users. A further key priority is enhancing the area's heritage - ensuring that material choices reinforce the distinct character and identity of the area.

82. Wherever feasible, materials should be locally sourced to promote sustainability and strengthen local and regional character. Establishing a long-term, maintainable materials palette is essential. Material selection should respond to the scale, texture, and colour of historic surrounding buildings, as well as the function of each street, supporting visual coherence, contextual sensitivity, and a strong sense of place.

83. Consistency in material choices through a carefully defined, limited palette remains a core principle for achieving a coordinated and unified public realm.

84. **The Promenade** exhibits an already coherent, heritage-rich palette suited to the conservation area and it is expected that for the most part, along its length - a 'like-for-like' replacement strategy is adopted, taking into account the challenges faced by GCC in the sourcing of york stone - the challenges faced in availability of material, long lead-in delivery times and colour variations of stone due to deeper quarry mining.

85. **High Street** - there are a variety of different surface materials across the High Street leading to a lack of consistency and weakening of character across the street. A more coordinated approach with a limited material palette is required that works incrementally towards a comprehensive and cohesive outcome. This will require a clear understanding of the use of the area to ensure vehicle movements can be accommodated with a material that can withstand the usage required, potentially with clear defined vehicle paths and footways.

Key

- [a]. High St (west)
- [b]. High St (Brewery Quarter)
- [c]. High St (Clarence Fountain)
- [d]. High St (Regent Arcade)
- [e]. High St (Cambray Place & Strand)
- [f]. Promenade
- [g]. Montpellier



Map showing public realm extent of High Street, Promenade and Montpellier. © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000849977

037

Materials - surface types

86. **Shared surfaces** – materials used in shared surfaces need to be fit for purpose and also able to cope with vehicular movements.
87. **Coloured surfaces** – there are a number of techniques and materials which can provide a coloured option. These can be asphalt materials or resins.
88. **Natural stone** options such as sandstone (york stone) are suitable for fully pedestrianised areas; however, where vehicle movements must be accommodated, additional base construction should be applied. It is also important to factor in extended lead-in times, as york stone supply continues to face availability challenges and notable colour variations within and across quarries.
89. **Concrete pavers:** there are a large number of options within the concrete paving and these are engineered for colour retention and structural integrity, but are difficult to maintain in areas of overriding and tree roots.
90. **Resin bound gravel** surfacing can be used as an alternative surface for public spaces and locations with occasional vehicle overrun. Sub-base construction needs to be designed to hold some vehicular traffic. Gravel surface should be designed to drain to localised drainage channels as required. These are very expensive and should be used in limited areas as these are difficult to match if utility works are needed. See image (fig 39) Gloucester High Street.
91. **Imprint surfaces** – imprint options are an alternative and can provide the look of paved surfaces without the risk of breaking. Recently installed imprint surfaces have been positively supported as an alternative to paving.



039



040



038



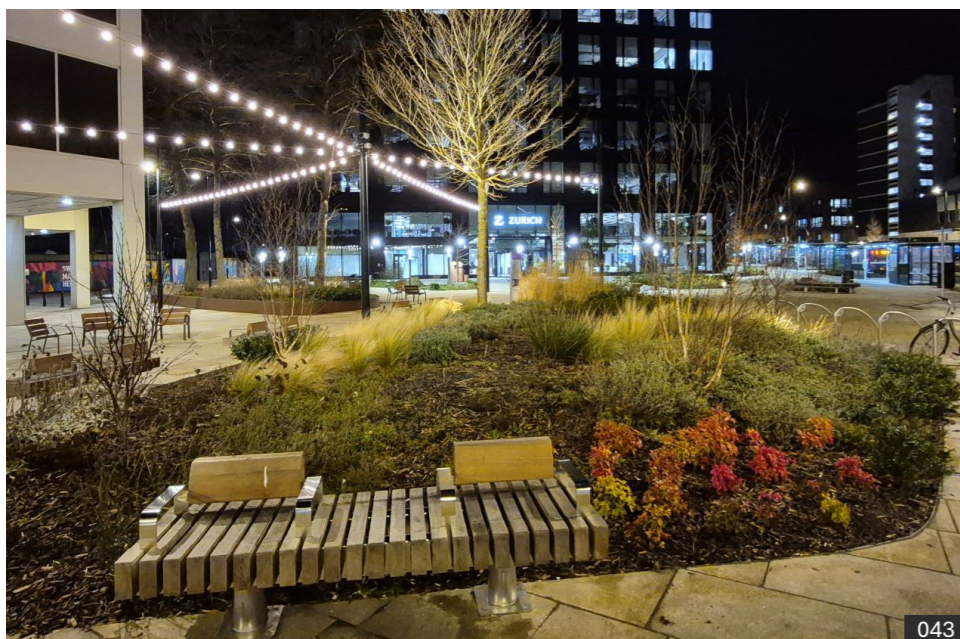
041



042

15. Street furniture & tree planting

92. This section provides generic guidance on the constituent elements that make up the public realm with particular focus on **street furniture, tree planting, signage and lighting**. These principles seek to guide future public realm interventions to deliver high quality public realm in addressing many of the issues raised by the Public Realm Assessment/SWOT analyses in chapter 3.
93. Street furniture, tree planting and other landscape features should form part of a coordinated, landscape-led design approach, including for smaller interventions, with a clear emphasis on enhancing the quality and usability of the public realm. The selection of street furniture must also respond positively to local character and context.
94. **Retain historic features** - historic features such as original surfaces, kerbs, drain covers, seating, signage, and lighting columns should be preserved where they hold heritage value. These elements contribute significantly to the area's character and visual identity, and should be retained or sensitively reused where appropriate.
95. A coherent approach to the public realm should prioritise the removal of unnecessary street clutter and avoid the introduction of large structures such as oversized street furniture and utility services such as telephone boxes or intrusive advertising. These elements can dominate the streetscape, obstruct pedestrian movement and visually compete with important townscape features. Minimising clutter helps create a cleaner, more legible and attractive environment that better supports wayfinding, accessibility and overall placemaking quality.



Seating

96. **Location** - seating within public spaces should be thoughtfully positioned to respond to local microclimatic conditions. Avoid placing seats in areas that receive no sunlight, while ensuring that spots with full sun exposure offer some degree of shade for comfort and usability throughout the day.
97. **Orientation** - people are naturally drawn to activity and interaction in public spaces. Seating should be oriented to face pedestrian routes or areas of visual interest, such as greenery or natural features, to encourage engagement and passive observation.
98. **Materials** - stainless steel offers a robust, low-maintenance option for outdoor seating, eliminating the need for frequent repairs or repainting. However, its cold surface can be uncomfortable. Timber, with its warm and tactile qualities, complements steel well and helps create inviting, user-friendly furniture.
99. **Design** - public realm seating should feature clean, contemporary designs that enhance the character of the space. To support comfort and inclusivity, seats should incorporate armrests and backrests, catering to a diverse range of users and needs.



Cycle stands

100. **Location** - cycle stands should be placed in easily accessible locations with strong natural surveillance, avoiding secluded or hidden areas. Where feasible, they should be positioned within view of CCTV to enhance security and user confidence.
101. **Materials** - stainless steel is recommended as the minimum standard for durability and low maintenance.
102. **Design** - cycle stands should be simple, elegant, and visually appealing, seamlessly integrated into the public realm. Their design should encourage use by cyclists while preserving the overall functionality and aesthetic quality of the public realm. Design standards, including provision of cycle parking should accord with GCC standards. All cycle stands should be designed to achieve good visibility, accessibility, ease of use, security, and attractiveness - to support and promote cycling throughout Cheltenham's town centre.

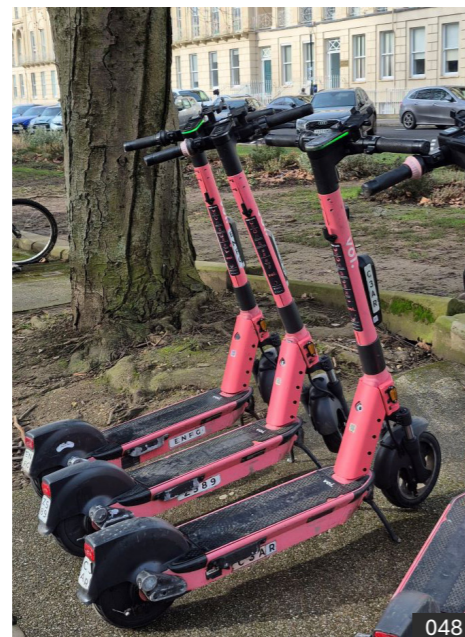


E-scooters

103. E-scooter parking and charging locations should be integrated into the public realm in a way that prioritises safety, maintenance, and effective management. Facilities must be sited to avoid obstructing pedestrian desire lines, entrances, or movement corridors, ensuring clear visibility and safe manoeuvring space for users and non-users alike. Infrastructure should be robust, durable, and easy to maintain, incorporating secure fixing and charging systems (where applicable) that minimise trip hazards and protect electrical components from weather and vandalism. Management requirements including regular inspections, rapid response to misplaced vehicles, and clear operator responsibilities should be established to prevent clutter, uphold public realm quality, and maintain a welcoming, safe environment for all users of the town centre.



047



048



049



050



051

Litter bins

104. Public litter bins should be delivered through a consistent, contemporary approach that uses simple yet effective furniture which is attractive, easy to maintain, and straightforward to use. They should be located outside pedestrian desire lines, with placement carefully coordinated to avoid obstructing movement corridors. Their positioning must minimise visual clutter and cumulative streetscape impact, while their form, materials, and finish remain consistent with the character of the surrounding built environment.

105. Large bins serving commercial business units must meet operational needs while being discreetly located, well-screened, and sensitively designed to protect the quality of the public realm and enhance people's experience of the street environment.

Bollards & railings

106. Bollards can satisfy highway safety requirements but often detract from the character and functionality of public spaces, so they should be used only where strictly necessary and where no viable alternatives exist. More sensitive methods of restricting vehicular movement - such as tree planting, kerb realignment, or strategically placed street furniture should be prioritised to guide movement in a less intrusive manner. Any elements introduced should be contemporary in design, visually coherent, and fully integrated into the wider public realm.

107. Standard traffic-calming railings should be avoided wherever possible as they undermine public realm quality and reinforce a sense of vehicle dominance. Where safety measures are required, use bespoke, context-specific interventions that enhance the spatial character and integrate seamlessly with the surrounding environment.

Legibility, wayfinding & signage

108. **Legibility** refers to how readable and understandable a place is and how intuitively people move through, and find their way around a place - without the need for signage. The legibility of a place is primarily shaped by its structure (network of streets and movement routes), the location of landmark buildings, features and spaces, visible routes and sightlines and the overall 'understanding' of this spatial organisation. The degree to which this understanding is 'coherent' relates to its degree of 'legibility'.

109. Future public realm interventions in the High Street and Promenade should consider how legibility can be improved. Interventions such as improved 'gateways' into the High Street would naturally increase people's awareness of their location, and this could be accompanied by visual linkages to a series of other interventions such as pocket parks, tree planting, public art, seating and other interventions to naturally improve one's navigation and experience through a place.

110. **Wayfinding** signage supports navigation by guiding pedestrians to key destinations and landmarks. A variety of wayfinding signage exists including: map totems, fingerposts and wall-mounted directional signs. New totem boards should align with the established town centre design and be positioned to take advantage of pedestrian flows, visibility, and integration with the surrounding streetscape.

111. Inset feature pavers can define routes and serve as wayfinding through public art, enhancing the walking experience. Designers should explore opportunities to incorporate artistic or historical elements for wayfinding and interpretation.

112. Public art installations also function as public-realm furniture, where inscriptions - using poetry or prose are laser-cut into sheet-metal

elements such as tree grates, contributing to a broader wayfinding strategy. (see image on page 26, tree grate, Leeds Street, Maribymong City Council by HeineJones).

113. **Signage** - Cheltenham Town Centre features a variety of signage types serving different purposes. As a guiding principle, historic signs with architectural or heritage significance should be preserved. Highway signage including street and road name plates should, where possible be mounted onto buildings, low walls, or consolidated with existing street furniture to reduce visual clutter.

114. Building-mounted signage should be minimal, well-proportioned, and sympathetic to the area. Fixings should use mortar joints and non-ferrous materials to avoid damage. LBC may be required for works to Listed Buildings.



Lighting

115. **Role of lighting** - lighting is essential for creating safe, welcoming, and navigable public spaces at night for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. It can be creatively integrated through uplighting trees and historic buildings, building-mounted fixtures, and highlighting key routes.
116. **Coordinated schemes** - enhance evening leisure and support events and festivals; and highlight architectural features and public art, creating a distinctive night-time identity that encourages footfall and community engagement.
117. **Street lighting columns & lampposts** - must be robust and designed to accommodate attachments such as signage, banners, hanging baskets, and festive lighting. Scale and style should complement historic columns and heritage features.
118. **Historic lighting** - should be retained and enhanced wherever possible, with any proposed alterations—including relocation—agreed with the Conservation team to ensure safety standards and heritage value are maintained. Some columns are historic replicas but still contribute positively to local character, and all works must follow consistent maintenance standards to safeguard their appearance and performance going forward.
119. **Lighting strategy** - illuminating Cheltenham's historic architecture strengthens its prominence and appeal. A coordinated approach across the High Street and Promenade ensures consistency and supports safety initiatives like 'Safer Streets' to improve comfort and visibility at night.



Tree planting

120. **Tree planting benefits** - the social, economic and environmental aspects of placemaking, supporting regeneration, climate resilience, and biodiversity. Additional benefits include:
- **Enhanced street quality and economic value** - tree-lined streets contribute to a more attractive urban environment, often leading to increased property values and commercial appeal.
 - **Seasonal interest and urban character** - trees provide dynamic visual interest throughout the year, reinforcing local identity and enhancing street character.
 - **Health and well-being benefits** - green infrastructure supports improved urban liveability by encouraging walking, reducing stress, and enhancing outdoor enjoyment.
 - **Microclimate regulation** - trees offer shade and wind protection, helping to moderate temperatures and improve comfort in pedestrian areas.
 - **Carbon sequestration and air quality** - urban trees absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen and filter air pollutants contributing to climate mitigation and cleaner air.
 - **Biodiversity enhancement** - trees provide habitat and food sources for birds and other wildlife, enriching urban ecology.
 - **Sustainable drainage and water management** - tree roots aid in natural water retention and drainage, reducing surface runoff and supporting flood resilience.



121. Tree planting suggestions -

- **Prioritise new tree planting** in bespoke, in-ground tree pits, replacing like-for-like species where removals have occurred and planting empty tree pits within the public realm.
- **Tree pits** – secure a clear, consistent and uniform approach including: grilles, guards and porous surfaces using fresh soil to BS8545. Open bottom tree pits allow better tree establishment compared to closed bottom planters that have failed due to poor maintenance, vandalism and rubbish collection.
- **Tree grilles** provide protection while allowing watering, drainage and air and can serve as attractive public realm features, also doubling up as attractive public art. Consideration should be paid to detailed level changes with new installations.
- **Space for growth:** design tree planting with adequate underground space for root development to ensure long-term health, stability, and minimal surface impact. Plant directly in the ground where possible, as raised planters are harder to establish.
- **Tree selection:** choose species suited to site conditions that enhance the intended urban and landscape character. Apply the same principles to shrubs and planting to ensure a coherent, high-quality public realm. Refer to TDAG Trees in Hard Landscapes and consult CBC Tree Officers on species choice.
- **Tree protection** - refer to the Council's Tree Strategy for guidance on protecting existing trees within urban areas.



16. Public realm maintenance

122. The need to keep the Town Centre safe and clean is key to provide a space that residents and visitors want to return to and feel proud of. GCC's maintenance regimes are summarised below, and the key principles listed.

123. General Highways Maintenance principles are set out in our Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) and comprises a number of operations to keep the network functioning, these include safety inspections, gully emptying, environmental maintenance including highway tree works to list just a few. The points below summarise the issues that have been raised:

124. **Broken slab repairs** – slabs are being broken due to vehicles traveling over them or pulling up on the footways. If we could remove the vehicles misuse of these areas, we would see less slabs damaged. Slabs are replaced with slabs wherever possible but there are a number of challenges to doing this, the number of different slabs currently used in Cheltenham so we need to look at agreeing a pallet of slabs which stock will be held of and ensure these are replaced whenever possible. Tree roots often cause problems with replacing slabs as they are not flexible, but trails of concrete fillets to replace slabs in problem locations, and these will be monitored to assess their effectiveness.

125. **Vehicle use** within pedestrian areas should be minimised to protect surface materials and ensure user safety, with materials required to meet appropriate load-bearing standards for occasional heavy vehicle access such as refuse or delivery vehicles; in shared surface

areas subject to vehicle overrun, a robust approach to material selection is essential, supported by sub-base and bedding layers engineered to provide adequate structural resilience.

126. **Statutory undertakers / utility works** – actions are being taken to ensure all utility companies are held to account and ensure that like for like replacements are undertaken but this can be difficult and similar issues to our maintenance challenges with the number of different materials currently used.

127. **Managing safety** is key across the public realm, this includes the operational elements of laying paving slabs and repairs. Ensuring any material installed can be kept safe for slips, trips and falls as well as other incidents.

128. **High Street (western end) footpath drainage issues and surface damages due to underground cellars** - such maintenance issues fall outside of GCC's ownership as the sub surface remains the responsibility of the landlords.

129. **Preventing further breakages** - controlling vehicle movements, particularly around paved areas, reduces the likelihood of long-term damage. This has been demonstrated along the Promenade, where the installation of additional bollards has successfully prevented further breakages.

130. **Sourcing of york stone** - challenges currently facing GCC with the sourcing of york stone for replacements. Long delivery timescales and the availability of york stone should be understood going forward

and the impact on maintenance operations.

131. **Supply** - an agreed stock level of storage of materials supply at the Council's Depots has now been implemented with their contractor and will be monitored monthly. This will enable like-for-like replacement in any planned safety defect repairs required - other than emergency reports.

132. **Maintenance feasibility** is important, but safety remains the priority, with materials selected not only for their aesthetic and structural qualities but also for their ease of sourcing and maintenance, and with all solutions tailored to be contextually responsive to the High Street and Promenade's heritage setting. Repairs from damage or utility works should also be considered to ensure replacements match the original materials aesthetically.

- Establish routine cleaning schedules to maintain appearance and suitability for pedestrian-priority areas.
- Integrate drainage solutions to prevent pooling and surface degradation.

Safety considerations for installation and use

- All surface materials must meet minimum slip resistance standards (e.g., BS 7976 or equivalent) to ensure pedestrian safety in both dry and wet conditions.
- Edge treatments should be flush and free of trip hazards, with bevelled or rounded edges where appropriate to reduce injury risk.



17. Servicing & management

133. **Deliveries and servicing** – a more robust management approach is required to prevent delivery vehicles from further damaging public realm surfaces by overrunning the public realm. There is also an opportunity to review future traffic orders to support this.

134. Deliveries to retail units along the High Street and Promenade are provided in a number of ways. The majority of retailers use frontage deliveries where their units front the public highway with vehicular access to that public highway. Other options allow for rear access through dedicated service delivery courtyards.

135. The challenge lies with deliveries using large vehicles to those retail units fronting the **pedestrianised areas** of the High Street and Promenade. In such scenarios the following guidelines are set out below:

- **Retail units fronting pedestrianised streets or spaces** - deliveries should be prioritised to be undertaken from rear accessways. If this proves impossible due to no access or a similar constraint, then such retailers should be required to use using smaller vehicles for deliveries. This is to ensure the longevity and to protect the investment of the public realm, particularly that of the surface materials. HGV's driving over any public realm surface is a risk to the material's surface quality over time and negatively impacts the cost to the public purse.
- **Retail units along the public highway accessible to vehicles** - deliveries should be prioritised to be undertaken in

specific loading bays wherever possible - particularly for larger vehicles.

- Future pedestrianised areas must accommodate retailer delivery needs, including access for heavy goods vehicles, and this should inform both the mix of uses and the type of retail provision based on viable servicing arrangements.

136. **Raised planters** - such as those outside John Lewis require consideration of ongoing maintenance costs, informed by lessons learned to date. Weed control is a key challenge, with restrictions on chemical herbicides and wider environmental concerns making management difficult; mechanical removal is labour-intensive and not the most efficient long-term solution.

137. **Night-time economy impacts** – public realm surfaces are affected by night-time activity, raising issues around access for cleansing and how surfaces can be safely jet-washed and drained.

138. **ANPR** - consideration should be given to the role of ANPR along High Street to support effective servicing management, reduce unnecessary vehicle movements, and uphold pedestrian-priority public realm objectives



Appendix 1 Background

01. Cheltenham Urban Design Framework Public Realm Strategy (SPD), (Feb 2008) - this SPD outlined a clear strategy for the delivery of a coherent public realm in the town centre, shaped by a broader vision and placemaking goals for the town centre. It defined character areas and street types, prioritising key routes and assigning high-quality material palettes to reflect their distinct identities. For example, natural york stone paving was proposed for much of the High Street and Promenade, while alternative materials were suggested for secondary streets beyond the central core.
02. The SPD also highlighted improvements in connectivity and legibility across the town centre, with a particularly insightful outcome from the historical analysis: the recognition of 'Boots Corner' as a key nodal point where the medieval High Street meets the Regency Promenade - two defining eras in the town's development.
03. This current document supports continued investment in Cheltenham's key town centre streets to protect their historic, civic, cultural, and retail value. It promotes a shared vision for a high-quality, affordable, and sustainable public realm, with an opportunity to **review the material palette** to ensure it is aligned to placemaking principles. It also considers wider street use issues—such as homelessness and pedestrian safety—and proposes future opportunities to create **greener, more inclusive streets and spaces** as opportunities arise.

Key principles of the 2008 Urban Design Framework SPD

- **Avoiding street clutter** as it undermines character and can create safety risks. The document promote coordinated working between CBC, GCC, utilities and design teams.
 - **Appropriate surfacing** – applied to footways, cycleways, kerbs, and carriageways, materials are selected to balance function and placemaking. Each street's role and capacity shape its design, with surface materials enhancing visual quality and continuity. The document outlined street types within the study area, reflecting their function and character to guide material selection.
 - **General guidance** on – workmanship, laying patterns, paving at dropped kerbs and hazard warnings.
 - **Street types & public realm palette** - the map extract (right) identified street types and their associated surface materials, aiming to select finishes that align with the overall palette while enhancing distinctiveness and reinforcing a strong sense of place throughout the town centre.
04. Historic setting of both streets within Cheltenham's historic core dates back to medieval times. The map below (1852) illustrates the significance of the High Street during the 19th Century as a major structuring element of the historic settlement.



1842 historic map of Cheltenham. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. 064

This document supports the original principles and approach of the 2008 SPD but recognises the need to explore broader public realm improvement opportunities, including revising the approach to some of the surface materials palette to reflect current budgetary constraints, and also seeks to incorporate greening opportunities within the public realm where possible.

The document defined a series of character areas immediately surrounding the town centre core, encompassing the High Street, Promenade and Montpellier. An enduring historic influence arising from this work is the siting of Clarence Fountain at the convergence of the medieval High Street and the Regency Promenade.



Character Areas –Town Centre, 2008 UD Framework 065

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- TDAG Trees in Hard Landscapes - A guide for delivery. (Trees & Design Action Group, Sep 2014.

Abbreviations

ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
BS	British Standard
GCC	Gloucestershire County Council
GI	Green Infrastructure
LBC	Listed Building Consent
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SUDs	Sustainable urban drainage system
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
TAMP	Transport Asset Management Plan

Image credits

001. The Promenade, Cheltenham
002. Public realm seating outside John Lewis
003. Extent of study area
004. Figure ground of Cheltenham town centre
005. Contemporary timber seating with planting
006. Lions at Large public art exhibition, Cheltenham Town Centre, image by: 'Visit Cheltenham'
007. Public realm planting/greening
008. Clarence Fountain project seating
009. High Street, Cheltenham
010. Placeholder
011. – 016. Public realm assessment areas
017. High Street/Henrietta Street facing west
018. Water pooling issues
019. Tree pits, raised tree roots
020. Vacant tree pit, poor edges
021. High Street - Brewery Quarter
022. High quality paving at The Brewery
023. Clarence Fountain
024. High Street / clarence street / north street intersection
025. Clarence Fountain landscaped pocket park
026. High Street - Regent Arcade
027. High Street-Cambray Place & The Strand
028. High Street at The Strand
029. Promenade facing south
030. Placeholder
031. Alfred Place Gardens, image (C) Neil Speakman @studio.maple www.studiomaple.uk
032. Alfred Place Gardens (after) (C) Neil Speakman @studio.maple www.studiomaple.uk
033. Puzzle pieces in the air, The Strand, High Street, Cheltenham.
034. 'The Hare and the Minotaur', the Promenade, artist: Sophie Rider
035. Elephant mural mosaics, Grovenor Place, artists: Tim Turton & Nick Robertson

036. 'Lions at Large exhibition', Cheltenham, image by: 'Visit Cheltenham'
037. Map showing public realm extent of High Street, Promenade and Montpellier. © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey AC0000849977
038. Natural stone paving against resin-bound gravel
039. Same as above, in context
040. Natural stone paving in central public realm, Oxford city centre
041. Natural york stone paving, Promenade
042. Natural stone paving, the Brewery Quarter, High Street
043. Public realm seating & planting, Fleming Way, Swindon
044. Contemporary timber seating with planting
045. Bicycle enclosure, Imperial Circus, Cheltenham
046. Contemporary bicycle stands
047. E-scooter parking location along Promenade
048. (as above)
049. Mixed recycling and general waste bin along Promenade
050. Outdoor classic heritage litter bin, Promenade
051. Heritage bollard, County Court Road, Cheltenham
052. Placeholder
053. Pixelated aerial image of the intersection between High Street and Promenade
054. Wayfinding totem sign on the Promenade.
055. Large, obstructive street furniture with advertising and redundant telephone boxes blocking the view of the central pedestrianised High Street
056. Placeholder
057. Historic street lamppost outside John Lewis department store, High Street
058. London plane tree (*Platanus x acerifolia*), Promenade
059. Metal street tree grate, Altrincham town centre
060. Recent repairs to york stone paving along the Promenade
061. Construction workers undertaking repairs to public realm paving
062. Illustrative delivery plan to coordinate servicing requirements
063. Impact of large delivery vehicles on High Street
064. 1842 Ordnance Survey map of Cheltenham - Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. See [link](#)
065. Urban Design Framework, Public Realm Strategy, 2008, Character Area map, Cheltenham Borough Council

Cheltenham High Street & Promenade – Quick Survey

Thank you for taking a moment to share your views on the High Street & Promenade Public Realm Toolkit. This anonymous short survey takes will help us understand what matters most to you when planning future improvements.

The Toolkit explains how Cheltenham's High Street and Promenade can be improved and better looked after. Its aim is to create a town centre that is more attractive, consistent, accessible, and greener. It sets out ideas for paving, street furniture, planting, lighting, and maintenance, as well as how future changes should be designed.

Set within Cheltenham's rich historic and cultural setting, the Toolkit focuses on enhancing the town's unique character while supporting a vibrant, welcoming place for residents, businesses, and visitors of all ages.

Fields marked with an * are required

Are you answering this survey as a... *

- Resident
 Visitor from outside Cheltenham
 Business

How often do you visit the High Street or Promenade *

- Daily
 Weekly
 Monthly
 Rarely

Which areas along the High Street and Promenade do you think most need attention? *

- Western end / Lower High Street Area
 Brewery Quarter
 Clarence Fountain
 Regent Arcade
 Cambray Place & The Strand
 Promenade (High Street to Montpellier)

How easy is it to find your way around the area? *

in particular the High Street & Promenade (signs, maps, directions)

Scale: 1 = very hard / 5 = very easy

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5

What should be the top priorities for improving the High Street and Promenade? *

- Better paving
 Street cleansing
 Clearer signs
 More places to sit
 Better cycling facilities
 More trees, planting, or rain garden
 Other

If other, please tell us

What would improve your day-to-day use and experience of the area? *

- Better maintenance
 Fewer issues with large vehicles or deliveries
 More seating
 Better lighting for evenings and events
 More trees and greenery
 Other

If other, please tell us

Which street-management issues affect you most? *

- Advertising boards / café tables and chairs on pavements
 Delivery vehicles (timing, routes, size)
 Bin storage or cleanliness
 Cleanliness in the evening/night
 Utility works
 Surface repairs
 Crossings
 Anti-social behaviour
 Skateboarding
 Other

If other, please tell us

What one idea would most improve the High Street or Promenade for you? *

Examples: events, more seating, public art, greener spaces, skate-friendly design, etc.

Submit

