

Wednesbury Town Centre Public Realm and Urban Greening

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the 'public realm'?

The public realm is the space between buildings that is open and accessible to everyone. This includes open spaces such as Brunswick Park and Hydes Road Playing Fields, streets and squares such as Market Place, and public buildings such as Wednesbury Library and Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery. It's where people walk, play, and meet friends. Public transport areas, waterfronts, and marketplaces are also part of it. These spaces are for everyone to enjoy and are often looked after by local councils.

What is 'urban greening'?

Urban greening means adding plants, trees and green spaces to make cities and towns healthier and nicer to live in by providing clean air, shade, and places to relax. This can include planting trees along streets, creating parks, and adding rain gardens to improve drainage and reduce flooding.

Why is this being done in Wednesbury town centre and what are the benefits?

This public realm and urban greening scheme is one of a range of projects which aims to improve Wednesbury so that residents have a better experience of living and working in the town. Together with the Wednesbury Town Centre Masterplan which will provide a long-term strategy to revitalise the town centre, the main aims of the public realm scheme are to:

1. Create safe, lively and welcoming public spaces whilst promoting active and sustainable travel via walking, wheeling and cycling.
2. Encourage better use of public spaces with more seating and spaces to relax.
3. Promote biodiversity, for example types of trees and plants to contribute to the health and wellbeing of people and to help protect against changes in weather and temperature.

How has this been informed by the public consultation?

Earlier this year we asked for your feedback on the Wednesbury town centre public realm and urban greening proposals. We received 147 online survey responses and 138 comments from the in-person events and workshops. Thank you for your feedback and suggestions and for sharing your thoughts on the priorities to improve the appearance of the town centre.

What we heard:

- Safety is the highest priority and better lighting, and more CCTV should be the focus
- More trees and planting are supported in the town centre but consideration will need to be given to maintenance

- More benches and places to sit are required but the design should adequately consider accessibility, ASB, crime, litter and homelessness
- More events are needed to activate underused spaces in the town centre
- Movement and transport will need to be particularly at Market Place and Holyhead Road crossings
- That proposals reflect the heritage and culture of Wednesbury

Comments received have been incorporated into the final designs and informed the contents of the Masterplan which was consulted on from 7 May 2024 – 10 June 2024 and approved by Sandwell Council Cabinet on 17 July 2024.

What is taking place?

This scheme will build on Wednesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) works in Wednesbury Conservation Area for example Market Place through improving paving materials and introducing more seating and greenery.

Union Street – replacing the paving with high quality, brighter and warmer colour pallet, introducing new benches and trees to allow more opportunities to meet, sit and rest.

Public Square (near Wednesbury bus station) – introduce new seating and planting.

Victoria Street/ Holyhead Road Junction – improve planting to enhance the visibility of the town centre from Victoria Street and Wednesbury Great Western Street Tram Stop.

Victoria Street – improve street lighting for visibility and promote safety during the evening and night.

Wednesbury Great Western Street Tram Stop – improve the arrival experience and visibility of the tram stop to and from the town centre with new benches, planting and wayfinding signage.

How will the public realm scheme benefit people in Wednesbury?

The scheme aims to create more attractive, functional, and inclusive public spaces that encourage more people to come into the town centre which will support local businesses, contribute to community well-being, encourage active lifestyles and foster a sense of pride and belonging.

Will the public realm scheme impact businesses and residents in the area?

While the scheme may involve construction activities and temporary disruptions, efforts will be made to minimise inconveniences and ensure ongoing communication with affected businesses and those using the town centre through regular updates on the ground through the contractor and online. Ultimately, the scheme is intended to benefit businesses and residents by enhancing the overall quality of the materials and introducing more greening in the town centre.

What is the timeline for the public realm scheme?

Construction started on Union Street in August 2024, with further phases to follow later in the year. The works are scheduled to complete in Spring 2025. Regular updates will be provided to businesses and those using the town centre through the contractor on site and the council Facebook and 'X' (formerly known as Twitter) social media pages.

Who's paying for this?

This project is being paid for by grant funding as part of the Wednesbury Partnership with the UK Government.

Could this money be used in other ways?

The money for this project has been given to the council for a specific purpose and comes with conditions. It's intended to improve the public realm and help to kickstart new development in the town centre.

Other projects in Wednesbury are taking place as part of the programme. You can find out more on the website: [Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership - Regenerating Sandwell](#)

How will Wednesbury town centre be safer?

During the public consultation in early 2024 the council spoke to a range of community groups and young people's groups. Respondents' highest priority was to improve safety in the town centre. Safety concerns were also raised by Wednesbury residents in the Sandwell Residents Survey in 2023 where many residents told us that they do not feel safe in Wednesbury.

The council aims to help partners tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. New and upgraded CCTV has already been installed in the Town Centre. We will be improving measures around green spaces to discourage nuisance bike activity in Wednesbury and are working with businesses to support them with ASB and crime prevention.

More information on improving community safety can be found on the link below:

[Wednesbury Community Safety - Regenerating Sandwell](#)

Where can I find more information about the public realm scheme?

More information and project updates can be found on the Regenerating Sandwell page below:

[Wednesbury Town Centre Improvements - Regenerating Sandwell](#)

Where can I find more information about the Wednesbury Partnership?

[Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership - Regenerating Sandwell](#)

I think public toilets are really important. Are there proposals for new public toilets?

There are no proposals for new public toilets as part of this project but the public toilet near Wednesbury bus station is available for everyone to use.

Will events in Wednesbury still go ahead during the work?

Yes, events in Wednesbury will continue as planned at Market Place while the work on Union Street is underway

The market isn't very busy. What is being done about this?

We understand your concern about the market activity. As part of the Wednesbury Town Centre Masterplan, we're actively exploring new ways to improve the market offer and increase community events.

I'd like to see a cover over Union Street. Is this happening?

While the idea of covering Union Street has good intentions this has the potential to create more anti-social behaviour issues which could have a negative impact on the town centre. We don't currently have plans to cover Union Street.