

## **Levelling Up Fund**

### **Stroud Bid - Gateways, Landmarks and Access for All**

#### What are we trying to achieve?

The aim is to make Stroud town centre a more attractive and welcoming place to visit, work and live within, which in turn reinforces pride in the town and wider district, helps local businesses, creates more jobs and builds on the private investment that is already doing so much to benefit the town centre.

The bid focuses on the enhancement of two key but long neglected gateways into the town centre, repurposing vacant office space for new commercial and training uses, the creation of improved pedestrian and cycle routes and the formation of accessible entrances into the town's historic arts venues making the most of its diverse cultural character.

The bid is not about one large project but a considered package of infrastructure interventions from an active partnership of stakeholders that will together achieve more for the town centre as a whole than the sum of its parts. Public investment is being matched by private funding to make the former go much further for local people. The exact content of the final bid submission will be informed by an assessment against the scheme criteria, to be published imminently.

#### What are the projects?

The vision for the railway station is to create an enhanced 'sense of arrival' to the town and district and a higher quality public realm to encourage people to stay and dwell in the vicinity, to support the private investment wanting to move into this area at the Imperial Hotel and New Imperial House and to increase footfall to existing private investment at the Five Valleys Centre/King Street. Specific proposals will include new commercial and training uses and public realm improvements at Station Road, opening up Brunel Mall to the station, forming better pedestrian and cycle routes through and creating an active, vibrant, art focused area around the improved Goods Shed.

Wallbridge is an important historic gateway into the town centre, where transformational change is proposed to welcome visitors arriving by canal and by walking and cycling routes and to improve connections to the town centre. Specific proposals will include the creation of a festivals and market space, canal mooring facilities, a community hub and public realm enhancements. It will also be a transition and signposting space whereby improved pedestrian and cycle routes will enhance physical accessibility between the canal and the town centre.

Linking these two gateways is Cheapside where discussions are already taking place with Network Rail to masterplan this area. This will follow on as the next phase for the regeneration of this part of Stroud with investment from both the district council and private developers to deliver good quality energy efficient homes in the town centre.

Improved cycling and walking routes from these gateways into the town are an important part of the success of these areas and the bid is to also include designed and costed active travel schemes from, to and across these areas to improve the accessibility, safety and ease of travelling into the town centre.

Finally, the bid will include accessibility and facilities improvements at major arts venues within the town centre, supporting our visitor economy and the arts and cultural sector.

### Background

The proposed bid to the Levelling Up Fund builds on the groundwork already established by the District Council's Local Plan, the Town Council's 'Shaping the Heart of Stroud' Neighbourhood Development Plan, and other important strategies, feasibility studies and research projects that have been carried out in recent years.

In particular, the District Council's emerging Canal Strategy and Economic Development Strategy and the Town Council's Stroud Street Spaces Report and Stroud Station Feasibility Report, all provide a strong basis for the bid and have been developed with extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement, helping to underpin and support the bid.

The vision for Stroud town centre as a welcoming, healthy and thriving place is realised through these various plans and strategies. The Levelling Up Fund is a great opportunity to put those plans into practice and deliver on some of the key projects set within the longer term vision for Stroud.