

Let's talk about our towns

Yarm



Billingham

Ingleby Barwick

Norton

Stockton

Thornaby

Yarm

January 2020

We're very proud to be home to six towns in the Borough.

- Billingham
- Ingleby Barwick
- Norton
- Stockton
- Thornaby
- and
- Yarm

And we want to have a conversation with you about what you'd like to see for each of them. This booklet focuses on Yarm.

You can find all six documents at www.stockton.gov.uk/towncentres



Ask anybody in the Borough where the town centre is and you'll get a range of different answers.

That is because our Borough is lucky to have six thriving town centres, each with their own individual character, proud history and future challenges. They all hold a special place in the heart of the communities they serve.

We are proud to be home to six towns and recognise the important role they play. However, we know town centres are changing, they are no longer just about 'the shops'. The rise of online shopping and out of town retail parks has meant that town centres have to adapt and reposition themselves in order that they continue to thrive and meet the needs of our local communities.

In the words of the straight-talking retail expert, Bill Grimsey... "there's no point clinging on to a sentimental vision of the past – we have to start planning for a bold new world."

To our credit, we recognised this need to change some time ago. We knew our town centres had to build on their strengths and traditions, to be places that people might choose to visit for reasons other than just shopping. The success of Teesside Park, home to lots of big names, made that obvious. It's about our town centres finding their own role, complementing that offer and not seeking to compete with it.

So, even before this shift in shopping habits, we decided to invest in keeping leisure facilities, theatres, customer service centres, and libraries in our town centres. To us, whether it's Billingham Library, Splash or Thornaby Pavilion, it was common sense to keep attractions and services in town centres rather than relocating them elsewhere. We've also invested in public artwork,

eye-catching lighting schemes, pleasant public spaces, and of course, a year-round events programme.

But there's so much still to do. We have six town centres in the Borough, and we firmly believe they can all thrive. They just need a new sense of purpose. And they need our help.

Our aim? To lead and drive change ourselves because if we don't, nobody else will. The scale and pace of change needed certainly won't just come from the private sector – you only need look at the privately-owned shops and sites standing empty to see that.

That's why, in December 2018 we agreed that we would step in and take control of key sites and assets in our town centres where there is a sound business case to do so. We backed up that pledge with an approval to borrow up to £30million to help make that happen.

Since then we've

- Completed the acquisition of Wellington Square and Castlegate Shopping Centres in Stockton
- Begun a conversation on future plans for Stockton town centre to help inform our bid into the £1 billion Future High Streets Fund
- Been in regular discussions with the owners of Thornaby town centre about how we can support their future plans as well as pushing the leaseholders of the Golden Eagle Hotel and Phoenix House Buildings to bring forward credible plans for the future

- Geared up to support Thornaby's bid for £25million from the Government's Towns Fund
- Held productive talks with the owners of Billingham town centre about their future plans for the centre and how we could support potential new uses for West Precinct
- Explored parking and traffic management improvements in Norton to support its vibrant night time economy
- Made great progress with the construction of Ingleby Barwick Leisure Centre
- Explored long stay parking options in Yarm as well as providing a full time member of staff to support Yarm Business Forum

However, the opportunity exists for us to help strengthen our town centres even further. We want to make sure they continue to meet your needs. We want to know what else we can do to improve them and what our priorities should be.

We've been working up some ideas, but we don't have all of the answers, so we really need your views. It's over to you now.

This booklet focuses on Yarm, please take a look and help us by completing the survey at the end.

Thank-you.



Thornaby



Stockton Town Centre



Norton



Yarm



Ingleby Barwick



Billingham

Yarm High Street

Before we move on to look at the future, it's worth looking at recent achievements and the investment that has helped Yarm continue to be such a success story.

Yarm plays a unique role in Stockton and the wider area as it's the only traditional market town high street in the Tees Valley. The high street retains much of its historic character with a mix of independent retailers and boutiques alongside a wide variety of restaurants, bars and cafes which attract visitors from far and wide.

In recent years we have supported Yarm High Street by investing in improvements to modernise Yarm Library as well as creating new public space around the town hall. This space now plays host to a variety of events and markets whilst retaining the famous cobbles throughout the rest of the high street.

Investment has also been made in new lighting and short stay parking arrangements which have made it easier for visitors to find spaces.

We are close to securing a deal on land to accommodate long stay parking. This will ultimately support longer visits and ensure that all visitors to the high street will be able to access parking easily.

The provision of a dedicated officer to support the development of Yarm Business Forum has helped ensure that resources can be targeted in a way which best meets the needs of businesses and users of the high street.

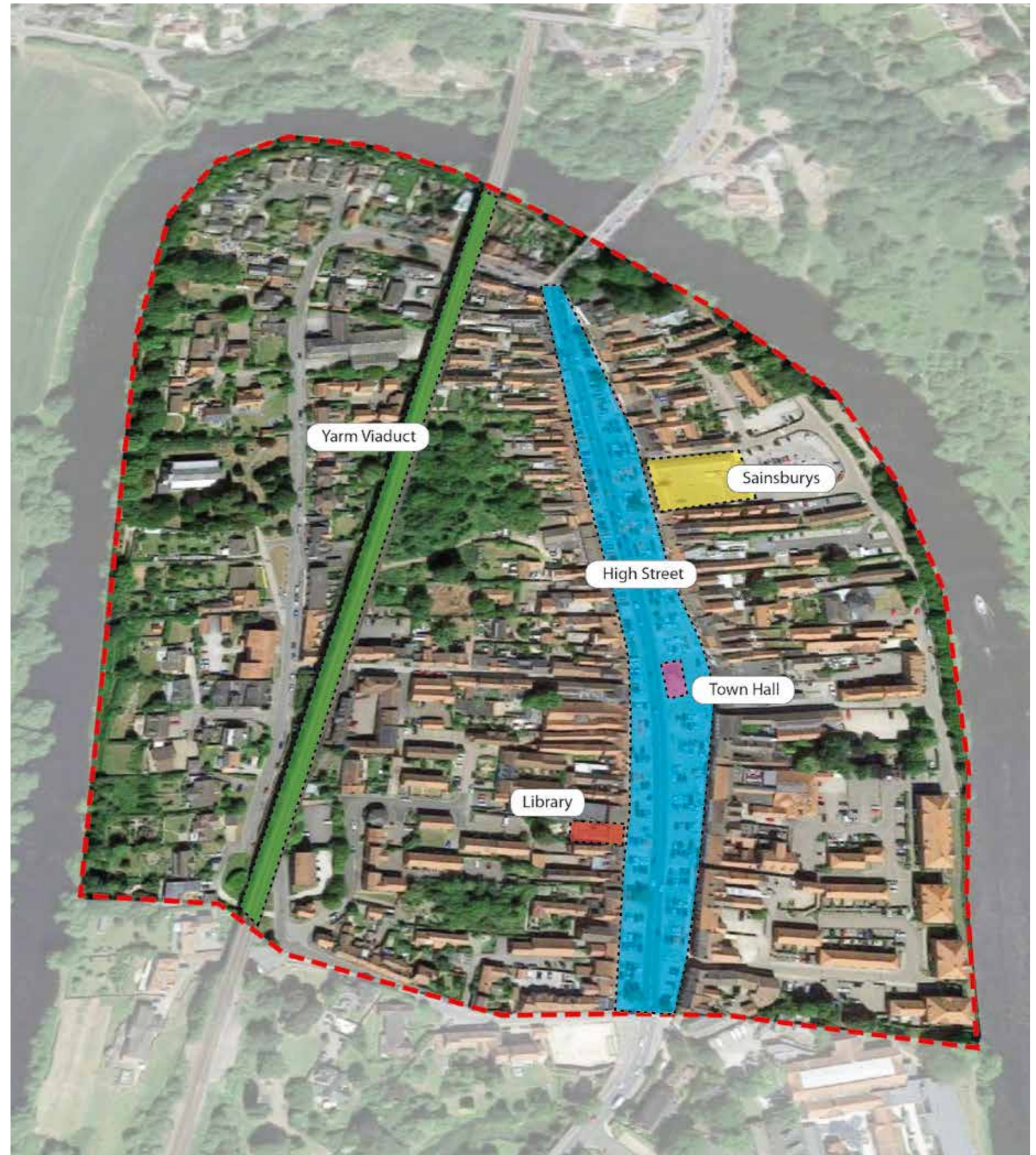


What next?

Whilst there is clearly much to celebrate about Yarm, as evidenced by the shortlist in the 2019 Great British High Street Award, we want to start a conversation with you about what you think the priorities should be for future developments.

We're keen to hear how you think we can work alongside the Town Council and the Business Forum to identify opportunities to ensure Yarm retains and improves its well established reputation and popularity and continues to attract visitors.

To help you when you're completing the survey, we're focusing on the area outlined in red on the map.





We want to identify what your priorities are for future developments in Yarm.

We think there may be opportunities to make more of Yarm Town Hall as a visitor attraction or maybe we could make improvements to public facilities and long stay parking. Here are some ideas but what we really want to know is what is important to you.



How to find out more or tell us what you think

There are lots of ways to get in touch:



You can find out more and fill in a questionnaire online at www.stockton.gov.uk/towncentres



Or pop in and see us at one of the following sessions – we'll be at:

Thursday 9 January	Yarm Library	4pm to 7pm
Monday 20 January	Yarm Library	11am to 3pm
Wednesday 22 January	Stockton Central Library	11am to 3pm
Saturday 25 January	Rediscover Shop – Stockton Town Centre	11am to 2pm



Or, if you are part of a business, group, club or school, and you'd like us to come to you just get in touch and we'd be happy to pay you a visit.



You can call us on **01642 526614** or email us at consultationSBC@stockton.gov.uk



And remember – please get in touch with your thoughts and ideas by Friday 31 January.

We want your views

Thank you for taking the time to help us to develop a shared vision for the continued development of Yarm.

At this stage we just want to know what you want and to hear as many ideas as possible. We'd like to hear what you'd like to see. Remember the area we are focusing on is the area outlined on page 7.

So please fill in the short questionnaire below - cut it out and post it to us in the envelope provided.

Imagine you're in Yarm High Street in 10 years' time. When you look around, what would you like to see?

Circle the number that best represents your opinion on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (would most like)

	Not at all					Would most like				
More leisure facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More community facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More shops	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More housing/flats	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More business/commercial facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More parks/gardens/greenspace	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More activities for older people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More activities for younger people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Better public toilet facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Better footpaths	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Better space for events/markets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More long stay parking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
More cycle ways and bike facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Use the boxes below to add any more things you'd like to see:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

When thinking about Yarm High Street, can you suggest up to three priority areas where you'd most like to see change?

We'd particularly like to know your views on:

Should we explore the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall as a possible visitor attraction?

Not at all

Would most like

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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And finally, is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Please use the box below to share any thoughts, ideas or plans you'd like to be considered.

To help us make the best use of your responses please can you tell us:

What is your connection to Yarm High Street? (please tick as many boxes as you like)	
I live here	<input type="checkbox"/>
I work here	<input type="checkbox"/>
I visit for events /festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>
I visit for a night out	<input type="checkbox"/>
I shop here	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm a business owner here	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

When did you last visit Yarm High Street?	
Within the last week	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within the last month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within the last year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over a year ago	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us your age	
Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>
16-25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-65 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 65 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for sharing your ideas. We'll be talking to you again in the near future to share the results and so we can continue to develop these ideas together. If you'd like us to contact you directly about developments in this work please provide your name and contact details below:

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