

More **to** Medway

More to Medway

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1. 0 Introduction

Medway is a place of distinctive character, a collection of towns, waterfronts, heritage assets and neighbourhoods bound together by the River Medway and a rich shared history. Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Strood, Hoo and the wider area offer a breadth of experience that is rarely found in a single local authority area. The scale and diversity of what Medway has to offer also presents a clear challenge in connecting towns, assets and communities through a wayfinding system that makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Signage and wayfinding systems play a fundamental role in shaping how people experience and move through places. A well-designed, coherent wayfinding system does more than direct people, it builds confidence, encourages exploration, supports active travel and communicates a sense of civic pride and identity. Conversely, fragmented, outdated or poorly designed signage discourages footfall, undermines public realm quality and erodes the legibility of a place.

This Design Guide (DG) sets out Medway Council's approach to signage and wayfinding across the area. It establishes a unified design language and system hierarchy to guide the design, installation and management of wayfinding infrastructure, whether delivered through public realm improvement programmes, private development, or transport and infrastructure schemes. It also provides a clear and consistent framework for applicants, designers, developers and public bodies when bringing forward schemes that affect the public realm.

This Guide should be read alongside the Medway Local Plan and other relevant guidance documents. It does not duplicate or replace existing policy but instead provides the detailed design and delivery framework necessary to implement that policy with precision and consistency.

More to Medway

Sculpture in Strood Town Centre





More to Medway

Purpose of the Design Guide

Establishing a Medway-Wide Coherent Wayfinding System

The primary purpose of this Guide is to establish a unified wayfinding system for Medway. One that operates consistently across the area’s different towns, character areas and public spaces while remaining flexible enough to reflect local identity and place character.

At present, the existing signage within Medway can be broadly categorised into the following groups:

- 1. **Statutory requirements** – Denoting highways, cycle routes, street names etc.
- 2. **Standard orientation** – Route-finding in the form of fingerposts, map totems etc.
- 3. **Storytelling** – Creative and artistic interventions, shaping a more intuitive understanding of place.

The focus of this Guide is primarily around the third signage category – exploring how the richness in Medway’s stories and cultural history can be expressed through a series of routes connecting key destinations throughout Medway. The document collates various opportunities demonstrating ways in which the routes and stories can be highlighted through creative and artistic interventions, to reinforce legibility and place identity as part of a wider wayfinding network.

In parallel, there is the opportunity to introduce certain elements of the artistic interventions, such as colours, materials and repeating motifs, into the existing network of standard orientation signage. By weaving in these intuitive notes across the area-wide infrastructure, the Guide creates the conditions for a coherent and legible Medway that is easier to navigate for everyone.

Providing a Common Design Language

The wayfinding system should operate consistently

across the area’s different towns, character areas and public spaces while remaining flexible enough to reflect local identity and place character. Medway’s existing signage environment is characterised by a wide variety of styles, materials, formats and accumulated over many years and delivered by different parties with differing objectives. This fragmentation can make it difficult for people to navigate confidently between destinations, particularly when moving between town centres, the riverside, heritage sites and transport hubs. It can also result in unnecessary signage clutter that detracts from the quality of the public realm.

A coherent wayfinding system depends not only on consistency of information but also on consistency of appearance. This Guide establishes a common design language for wayfinding infrastructure in Medway, encompassing guidance on typography, colour, form, materials and finish. This shared visual language ensures that all wayfinding elements, whether a finger post on the riverside, an information panel outside a railway station, or a map kiosk in a town centre, are immediately recognisable as part of the same system. Crucially, the design language is not prescriptive to the point of uniformity; it incorporates a principle of local adaptation that allows colour accents, material finishes and secondary graphics to respond to the character of individual areas, while maintaining the integrity of the overall system.

The design language set out in this Guide is informed by Medway’s distinct heritage, landscape and character. It reflects the diversity and creativity of Medway’s communities and supports the broader ambition to present Medway as a confident, distinctive and welcoming place.

Enabling Consistent Implementation Across Public and Private Realms

Effective wayfinding in Medway cannot be delivered by the Council alone. Much of the public realm is shaped by private development, whether through regeneration schemes, residential-led and mixed-

use developments, transport infrastructure projects, or improvements to publicly accessible private land such as the Historic Dockyard. For the wayfinding system to function as a coherent whole, all parties delivering development or public realm improvements in Medway must work within the same framework.

This Design Guide therefore applies to both the public and private realm and sets out clear expectations for developers and applicants. It establishes the principle that new development that affects or adjoins the public realm must integrate with, and contribute to, the area-wide wayfinding system rather than creating standalone or competing signage environments.

The Guide provides the guidance that applicants, designers and planning officers need to ensure that wayfinding is considered from the earliest stages of scheme design, not applied as an afterthought, and that all elements delivered through development contribute positively to the overall legibility of Medway.

Supporting Regeneration, Movement and Place Identity

This Design Guide sits within a broader strategic context of regeneration, growth and placemaking across Medway. The area is undergoing significant change, with major investment in its town centres, waterfront areas, housing and transport infrastructure. This provides a significant opportunity to transform the experience of Medway, both for those who live and work here and for the growing number of visitors drawn to its heritage, culture and riverside setting.

Wayfinding is a critical enabler of that transformation. A legible, well-connected wayfinding system can help to unlock the economic and cultural potential of Medway’s assets by making it easier for people to discover and move between them. It can support the shift from car dependency towards active travel and public transport. It can communicate a strong, coherent place identity that

reinforces Medway’s distinctiveness and builds civic pride.

This Guide therefore serves not only a technical planning function but a strategic one: it is a key tool in delivering the wider vision for Medway as a connected, accessible and historic destination.



Signage in Gillingham

Status and Planning weight

Planning Document Status

This document has been prepared by Medway Council as a Design Guide under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It has been informed by public consultation and has been formally adopted by the Council.

As a Design Guide, this document provides additional detail and guidance to support the policies of the adopted Medway Local Plan. It does not introduce new planning policy, nor does it allocate land or set binding standards beyond those established in the Development Plan. However, it carries material weight in the determination of planning applications and decisions relating to public realm and signage.

Material Consideration in Planning Decisions

This Guide is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications where signage, wayfinding or public realm is a relevant matter. Decision-makers, including planning officers, the Planning Committee and the Planning Inspectorate, are required to have regard to this document when assessing the acceptability of proposals that engage with its content.

Applicants are strongly advised to engage with this Guide at the pre-application stage and to demonstrate, through their application documentation, how their proposals comply with or otherwise have regard to the guidance it contains.

Where proposals are acceptable in principle but require amendments to achieve compliance, the Council may use planning conditions or obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the delivery of compliant wayfinding elements.

Scope of Application

This Guide applies to all development and public realm improvement schemes in Medway where signage or wayfinding is a relevant consideration. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Public realm schemes** including streetscape improvement programmes, public space enhancements, waterfront projects and other publicly funded interventions in the pedestrian environment.
- **Major developments** including residential-led, commercial, retail and mixed-use schemes of a scale that generates significant pedestrian movement or that forms part of, or adjoins, a key pedestrian or cycling route.
- **Town centre regeneration including schemes** within or adjacent to Medway’s defined town centres at Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Strood and Rainham, where wayfinding plays a particular role in supporting retail vitality, visitor orientation and pedestrian flow.
- **Transport and infrastructure projects** including works at or around railway stations, bus stops and interchanges, car parks, the Medway Tunnel, cycling infrastructure and any other transport scheme that interfaces with the pedestrian environment.

Where uncertainty exists about the application of this Guide to a particular proposal, applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice from the Council.

Chatham Centre - Heritage & Wayfinding Strategy 2023

In 2023 and in parallel with the production of the ‘Star Hill to Sun Pier’ SPD, HTA produced a Heritage & Wayfinding Strategy for Medway Council to help reconnect Chatham’s high street with its wider historic assets.

The strategy explored how visual and experiential cues could be used to tell stories, aid navigation and reinforce the area’s identity. The process began with on-site analysis and a review of existing signage and movement routes. We identified two key routes of opportunity: one linking Chatham Railway Station with the Historic Dockyard, and the other following the high street corridor through Intra to Rochester.

Based on these routes, we developed two narrative-led visual concepts. The ‘yellow thread’ concept references the rope-dyeing traditions of Chatham’s naval past, proposing a continuous visual cue that draws visitors through the area. The ‘dazzle’ concept draws inspiration from naval camouflage patterns, bringing bold, graphic interventions into public space. The strategy complements the Guide by grounding future wayfinding and interpretation in local heritage, offering a cohesive, place-specific identity that supports cultural tourism, legibility and pride of place.

This initial piece of work has helped inform this current Guide and was used as a basis for our wider engagement and narrative strategies.



Chatham Hertiage & Wayfinding Strategy 2023

How this Design Guide was produced

Preparation and Consultation Process

This Guide has been prepared by HTA Design in collaboration with Medway Council alongside a range of stakeholders including local communities, businesses, cultural and heritage organisations, transport providers, universities and design professionals. The Council is committed to ensuring that the guidance contained in this document reflects the needs, aspirations and lived experience of those who use Medway’s streets, spaces and public realm every day.

The Guide was informed by an extensive programme of engagement carried out, which included:

- Public consultation events held across Medway’s town centres and communities;
- Targeted engagement with key stakeholders including businesses, cultural institutions, accessibility groups and transport operators;
- Site visits and design workshops with residents and community representatives; and
- Technical consultation with heritage, highways and urban design specialists.

A summary of the responses received during public consultation and the Council’s response to those representations is set out in the Consultation Statement, which is published alongside this Guide.

Key Themes and Priorities

The engagement process revealed a high degree of consensus around a number of key themes, which have directly informed the content and priorities of this Guide. These themes include:

- **Connectivity:** a strong desire for better physical and navigational connections between Medway’s towns, the riverside, heritage assets and transport hubs, particularly for those travelling on foot and by bicycle.
- **Legibility:** widespread recognition that existing wayfinding in Medway is fragmented, confusing and inadequate, particularly for first-time visitors and those unfamiliar with the area.
- **Identity:** strong community attachment to Medway’s distinctive character, diversity and heritage, and a desire for wayfinding to reflect and celebrate that identity rather than imposing a generic or anonymous aesthetic.
- **Accessibility and inclusion:** a clear expectation that wayfinding should work for everyone, including those with visual, cognitive or mobility impairments, and that no group should be disadvantaged by the legibility of the’s public realm.
- **Decluttering:** recognition that the proliferation of inconsistent and outdated signage is a significant problem, and that a unified system would benefit both the visual quality of the public realm and the clarity of navigation.
- **Storytelling:** enthusiasm for using wayfinding as a vehicle for sharing Medway’s stories, its maritime heritage, its communities and its cultural life, and making the a richer and more rewarding place to explore.



Workshop in Spring 2026 with council and organisation representation

2.0

**Vision:
Distinct Medway**

Vision: Distinct Medway

A single, legible wayfinding system that connects Medway’s towns, waterfronts, heritage cores, and neighbourhoods through a shared visual language, adapted locally to reflect place character.

Key Routes and Destinations

This Design Guide presents a starting point for identifying a series of key routes connecting the distinct places and destinations within Medway, drawing on theme of ‘One Medway’ while allowing sufficient flexibility to freely express the unique characters and identities of its component places. These routes are set out as follows:

- Chatham Railway Station – St Mary’s Island
- Chatham Centre – Gillingham
- Gillingham – Rainham
- Intra – Rochester
- Rochester – Strood
- Strood – Hoo
- River Medway Coastal Path

The vision for Medway’s wayfinding system is to create a single, coherent and recognisable network that enables people to move confidently throughout the while celebrating the distinct identity of its towns, neighbourhoods, waterfronts and historic places. Through a shared design language and consistent approach to information, the wayfinding system will improve the experience of residents, visitors and businesses by making Medway easier to understand, navigate and explore.

Wayfinding is more than the provision of signs. It is an essential element of placemaking that shapes how people perceive, experience and move through places. An effective wayfinding system provides clarity, encourages sustainable travel, improves accessibility and helps people develop confidence in their surroundings. It also contributes to the

identity of a place by reinforcing local character, revealing important destinations and encouraging exploration beyond familiar routes.

Medway is a diverse comprising a series of distinctive places - each with its own history, character and role within the wider urban area. Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Intra, Rainham, Strood, the Historic Dockyard, St Mary’s Island and surrounding neighbourhoods all contribute to Medway’s unique identity. While each place possesses its own individual qualities, they also form part of a connected with shared economic, cultural and social relationships.

The wayfinding system should reflect this balance by presenting Medway as one connected destination while allowing each location to express its individual character.

The vision is therefore founded on the principle of One Medway: a single identity for navigation that enables users to recognise and trust the information provided wherever they are within the . Consistent typography, mapping conventions, materials, colours and information hierarchy will create a unified experience, allowing people to navigate intuitively between destinations without needing to learn a different system in each town or development.

At the same time, the system should be sufficiently flexible to respond to local context. Medway’s places vary considerably in their historic significance, urban form, landscape character and visitor experience. The medieval streets of Rochester require a different response from



Barrier Ditch

the contemporary waterfront at Chatham or the residential environment of St Mary’s Island. Rather than imposing a uniform solution, the wayfinding framework allows local identity to be expressed through carefully considered adaptations that respect the setting while maintaining an immediately recognisable family of wayfinding elements across the .

A coordinated -wide approach will also reduce unnecessary duplication and visual clutter within the public realm. Over time, signage installed by different organisations has resulted in a variety of styles, formats and materials that can compete for attention, create confusion and detract from the quality of streets and public spaces. The vision is to replace this fragmented approach with a

coordinated system that rationalises information, removes redundant signs where appropriate and ensures that every wayfinding element performs a clear and necessary function. This will contribute to a more attractive public realm while making navigation simpler and more effective.

Improving accessibility and legibility lies at the heart of the vision. Medway’s wayfinding system should support people of all ages and abilities by providing information that is clear, inclusive and easy to understand. Walking routes should be intuitive and direct, maps should be easy to interpret, and signage should be positioned where people naturally require information to make decisions about their journeys. The system should respond to recognised principles of inclusive design

by considering factors such as readability, colour contrast, lighting, placement, physical accessibility and the needs of people with sensory or mobility impairments. Digital technologies may complement physical wayfinding where appropriate, but the primary system should remain accessible to all users regardless of digital access or familiarity.

The wayfinding network should actively support sustainable movement across Medway by encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Clear information about distances and journey times can help people make informed travel choices and promote confidence in active travel. By revealing the close proximity of many destinations that may otherwise appear disconnected, the system can encourage people to leave their vehicles behind and experience Medway on foot or by bicycle. Better connections between railway stations, bus interchanges, waterfront routes, town centres, visitor attractions and residential neighbourhoods will contribute to healthier lifestyles while supporting wider environmental objectives.

An important aspect of the vision is to strengthen connections between Medway's many heritage assets and cultural destinations. The possesses an exceptional concentration of historic buildings, scheduled monuments, military heritage, maritime infrastructure and nationally significant visitor attractions. A coordinated wayfinding system should help people understand how these places relate to one another, encouraging exploration beyond individual destinations and revealing the broader story of Medway's development.

Rather than viewing places such as Rochester, Chatham, the Historic Dockyard and St Mary's Island as isolated destinations, the wayfinding system should present them as interconnected experiences within a wider visitor journey. Attractive walking routes, consistent information and carefully integrated interpretation can encourage visitors to spend more time discovering the's heritage, waterfronts, public spaces, cultural venues and

neighbourhoods. In doing so, wayfinding becomes an important tool for supporting the local economy, increasing visitor dwell time and strengthening Medway's reputation as a place to explore.

The vision therefore extends beyond helping people reach a destination. It seeks to transform the way Medway is experienced by encouraging exploration, discovery and understanding. Routes should not simply provide the shortest path between two locations; they should reveal the's rich heritage, landscapes and cultural identity. Opportunities to incorporate interpretation, public art, viewpoints and storytelling into the wayfinding network can enrich the experience of moving through Medway while fostering a stronger connection between people and place.

This approach supports Medway's wider ambitions for regeneration. As investment continues across the, new developments should contribute to a connected network rather than creating isolated environments with separate signage systems. By embedding the principles of this Guide within both public and private developments, the can ensure that future growth strengthens the coherence of the overall wayfinding network and reinforces Medway's identity as a connected place.

Ultimately, the vision is to establish a wayfinding system that is trusted, intuitive and enduring. It will provide a common framework that simplifies navigation while respecting the individuality of Medway's diverse communities and places. Through consistent design, inclusive principles and

a focus on connectivity, the system will improve the experience of moving throughout the, strengthen local identity and celebrate Medway's heritage, waterfronts and public spaces.

By connecting places, people and stories through a shared visual language, the wayfinding system will help present Medway not simply as a collection of individual destinations, but as a unified that invites exploration, encourages longer visits and offers a rich and varied experience for residents, workers and visitors alike.

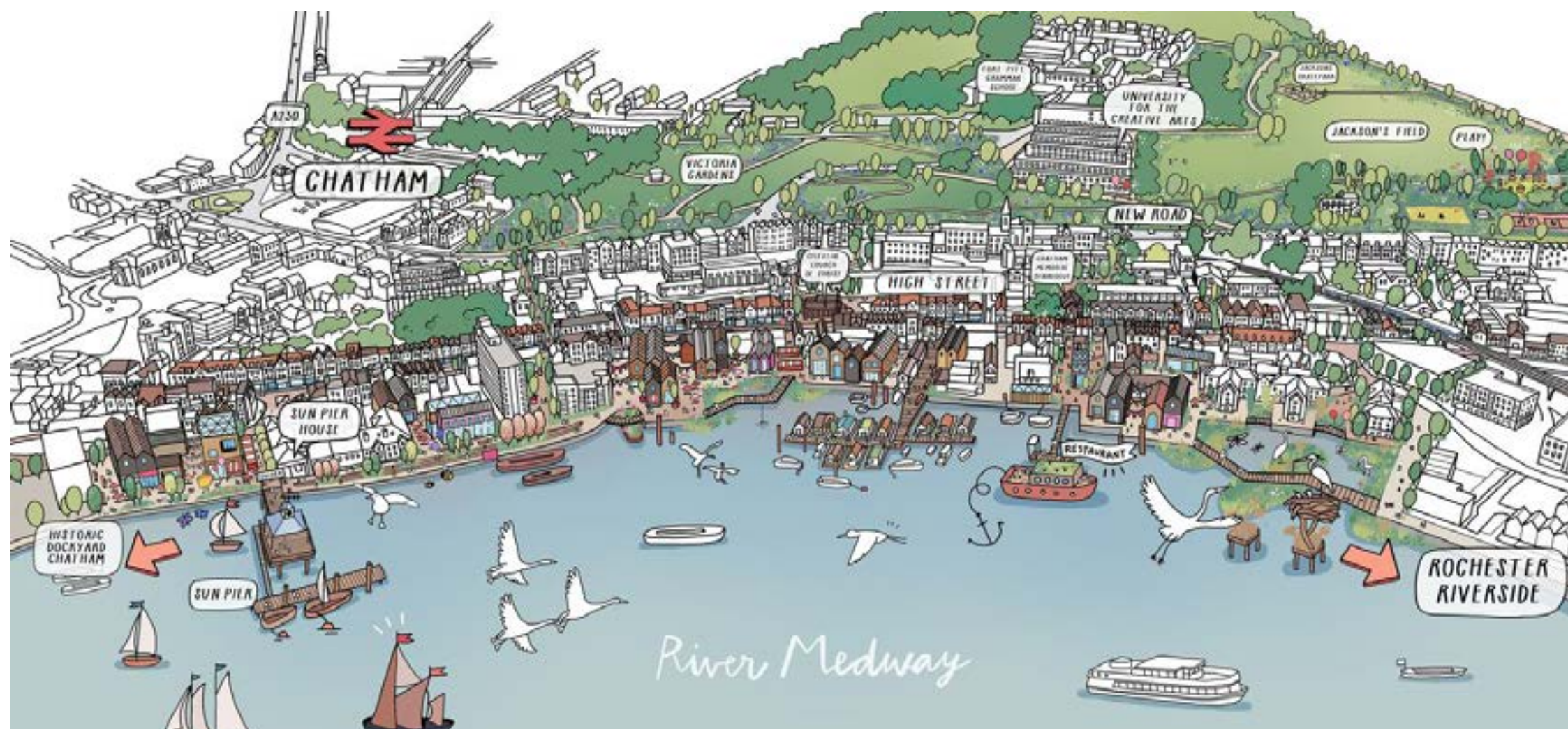


Illustration of Chatham waterfront

Example Sites

The five Medway towns - Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood and the Hoo Peninsula - possess distinct visual identities that are expressed through their architecture, public realm, landscapes, heritage and communities.

Whilst functioning as a connected urban area, each town and the rural peninsula has its own aesthetic language and sense of place, offering unique opportunities for character-led public art, interpretation and wayfinding.

Rather than creating a single, uniform identity, future placemaking should celebrate these individual qualities whilst developing a cohesive wayfinding strategy that helps people navigate Medway’s diverse places through consistent design principles.

Military Area

Secondary/Private Green Spaces

River Medway

Open Spaces



Map of Medway towns

Key Routes and Destinations

Identifying Key Routes and Destinations

The identified routes pick up major landmarks and important destinations throughout Medway, encompassing key arrival and transport hubs, places of historical significance, and cultural hotspots. While framed as one overarching network, there is bountiful opportunity to express individual character and identity as the routes move through each distinct place, with the typology of the signage interventions similarly responding to the nuances of locality.

While a more organic approach such as murals, ghost signs and public art may be more suited to one route, another may lend itself to a more traditional approach with directional and informative signage. The primary objective is to ensure the full richness of Medway is captured, and each of its component places given space within the wider narrative concept to shine.

- Chatham to St Mary's Island
- Intra to Rochester
- Rochester to Strood
- Chatham to Gillingham
- Gillingham to Rainham
- Strood to Hoo
- Coastal Path

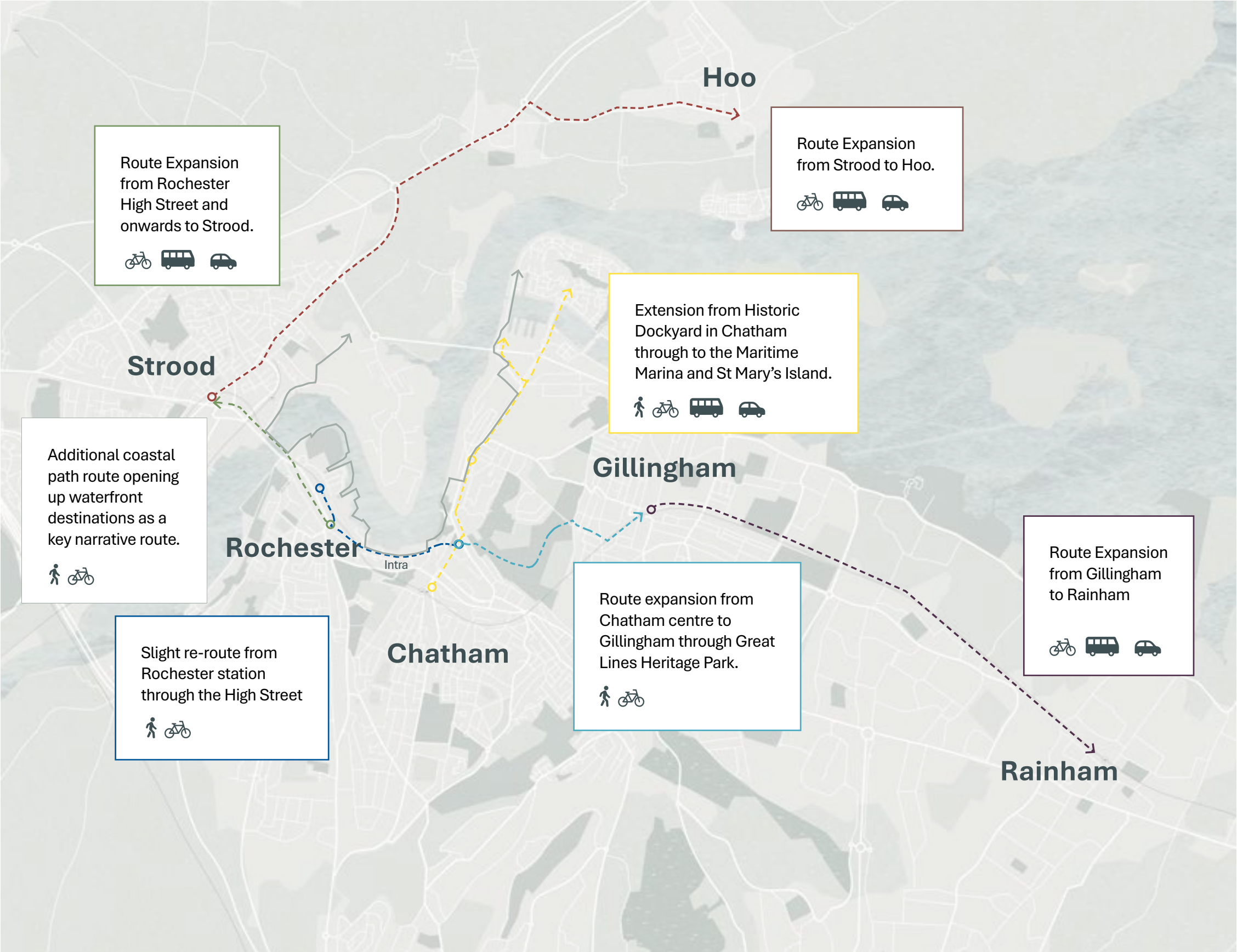


Diagram of proposed key routes and destinations

3.0

More to
Medway

More to Medway

A design guide such as this will be of limited success and value if adherence to its contents is left to those responsible for individual public realm capital or maintenance programme projects.

Consistency of application is essential to the success of making Medway a consistent and successfully functional aesthetic district.

Accordingly, all public realm schemes in Medway must be delivered according to a clear, common, and well-understood process.

Design Review Panel

To ensure consistent quality and alignment with the Design Guide, major public realm and wayfinding proposals should be reviewed by a multidisciplinary Design Review Panel where possible.

Community & Engagement

Community and statutory stakeholders should be engaged with the process to ensure that local input is included.

This is particularly important where projects of co-design are underway including public art commissions, projects where skills, training and development may be included; and where universities, colleges and schools may get involved at an early stage.

Where poossible, local artists should also be engaged to help personalise and develop creative approaches for interventions.

Design Process

The following process should try to be followed as a best practice way to deliver projects:

01

Project Analysis

Audit routes, arrival points, and existing signs to locate gaps, desire lines, and heritage touchpoints where creative interventions add value. Gather baseline data on flows, safety, accessibility, and user pain points. Consider short and longer-term opportunity areas.

02

Engaging all stakeholders

Co-design with residents, access groups, schools, cultural partners, businesses, landowners, and transport operators. Use walkabouts, pop-ups, and prototypes to test ideas and gather consent. Secure custodians for artwork, content, and upkeep.

03

Creating a vision

Set a clear narrative for One Medway with locally adaptable motifs (e.g., the yellow thread) linking towns, waterfronts, and stories. Define goals for legibility, inclusion, decluttering, and pride of place. Illustrate with sample routes and intervention typologies.

04

Planning

Phase delivery around funding windows, events, and construction programmes. Confirm permissions, risk, and stewardship responsibilities. Align procurement and planning to minimise disruption and maximise visibility.

05

Design

Develop system-compliant, accessible concepts that integrate art, mapping, and digital layers. Specify durable materials, contrasts, and placements; prototype and user-test in situ. Coordinate with utilities and heritage settings.

06

Implementation

Install in sequenced packages, maintaining safe access and clear temporary directions where necessary.

07

Maintenance

Set cleaning, inspection, and repair cycles, with trusted contractors. Monitor wear, vandalism, and seasonal visibility.

08

Evaluation

Measure wayfinding success via surveys, route choice, dwell time, and active travel data. Track clutter reduction and accessibility outcomes. Feed lessons learned into future phases and specification refinements.

One Medway

Medway is made up of a diverse set of towns, each with its own distinct character, heritage and identity. Together, they form a varied collection of character areas, historic places, heritage assets and contemporary neighbourhoods, reflecting Medway’s rich history and its evolving role as a place to live, work and visit.



Collage of images depict Medway’s diverse offering



Medway’s Existing Signage & Wayfinding

Medway benefits from an established network of directional signage, highway information, public transport mapping and visitor interpretation that has evolved over many years in response to regeneration, transport improvements and individual development projects.

While the existing system provides a functional level of navigation across the five towns, it has developed incrementally rather than as a single coordinated strategy. As a result, there is considerable variation in the appearance, quality and consistency of signage, creating a fragmented experience for residents and visitors moving between Medway’s town centres, waterfront, transport hubs and heritage destinations.

The current wayfinding network comprises a combination of highway directional signs, pedestrian fingerposts, visitor information panels, interpretation boards, cycle route signage, public rights of way markers and transport information provided by Network Rail, bus operators and National Highways. Individual destinations such as the Historic Dockyard, Rochester Cathedral, Rochester Castle, Riverside Country Park and the Great Lines Heritage Park also incorporate their own bespoke interpretation and orientation systems, reflecting the needs of specific attractions rather than a unified visitor journey. Whilst many of these individual systems are well designed, they often operate independently, with limited visual continuity between one destination and the next.

Medway Council has produced a range of planning, transport and regeneration documents that recognise the importance of improving connectivity, active travel and public realm. Policies within the Local Plan, Public Realm Strategy, Active Travel Strategy, regeneration frameworks and conservation guidance all promote the creation of attractive, accessible and walkable environments.

These documents consistently identify the need for improved pedestrian and cycling connections between transport hubs, town centres, the River Medway and key cultural destinations. However, the delivery of wayfinding has largely been undertaken on a project-by-project basis, meaning signage styles, mapping conventions, materials and graphic language vary considerably.

The existing system also reflects the complexity of Medway’s geography. As five distinct towns connected by the River Medway and major transport corridors, navigation can be challenging, particularly for first-time visitors. Routes between railway stations, car parks, waterfront destinations and heritage attractions are not always intuitive, while important destinations can appear hidden due to changes in level, fragmented pedestrian routes and inconsistent signage.

Visitors frequently rely on personal digital navigation despite being within easy walking distance of key attractions. The Historic Dockyard, riverside walks and cultural venues are particularly affected, with arrival points often lacking clear orientation information or walking-time guidance.

From a heritage perspective, interpretation across Medway is equally varied. High-quality installations exist at nationally significant sites such as Rochester Castle, Rochester Cathedral, the Historic Dockyard and Great Lines Heritage Park, yet there is limited consistency in design, storytelling or branding across the wider area.

Despite these challenges, the existing signage infrastructure provides a strong foundation for future improvement. Many sign locations are well established, and previous investment in interpretation, active travel routes and public realm enhancements can be built upon rather than replaced.



Current wayfinding interventions in Chatham

Improving Medway

Medway has an abundance of signage, heritage assets, public art and visitor attractions across the region, with varying styles, locations and formats.

This section sets out some of the key elements, the current issues for each and solutions to creating a consolidated system across the Medway towns.

The themes identified here were considered through the community and stakeholder process and some of the issues discussed in detail, including the proposed solutions.

The key themes here should be used as a guide and not an exhaustive list.



Routes & Movement

There is a need for more clear, connected walking and cycling routes, especially linking:

- Riverside
- Town centres
- Stations and car parks.

Current issues include:

- Disjointed cycle routes and unsafe crossings
- Poor wayfinding (especially to the Dockyard)
- Confusing entrances and signage.

Goal: Improve visitor flow, orientation and access for all.

Solutions

- Opportunity to create visual trails for routes including clear, legible wayfinding
- More clarity on routes along the river front and around St Mary's Island which is more remote
- Potential to increase river transport and create a more active river network
- Increase the reuse of more disused railway lines as green or activated spaces



Visitor Experience

It would be a positive move for Medway to improve:

- Picnic spots, playgrounds, food & beverage locations
- Public toilets, lighting, safety (especially for women and children and at night)
- Child-friendly destinations and journeys
- Accessible and inclusive routes so they are available to all.

There is a need to support visitors arriving from local arrival points:

- Stations
- Car parks
- Medway Tunnel
- Dockyard.

Goal: Encourage longer dwell time, higher visitor numbers and spend in Medway.

Solutions

- Clear signage at arrival points such as car parks
- Visit Medway website to show clear pre-determined routes for visitors
- Include elements of play, art and heritage information accessible for all at key nodes.



Events & Activation

The enhanced routes and trails could be helpful in supporting:

- River-based events
- Dockyard activities
- Concerts and festivals (e.g., Castle events, Pride, local town centre events)
- Markets
- Events for young people

Routes should help people discover spaces and activities naturally, as well as through online promotion to attract visitor numbers whilst not excluding the local population.

Goal: Creating a more vibrant, high quality visitor and resident offer year round.

Solutions

- Promote more widely online and in social media
- Use QR codes to direct people to both routes and activities to be discovered along the way
- Create a mechanism for local organisations to promote their events locally



Heritage & Storytelling

There is currently a strong focus on telling Medway’s stories, but this could be further enhanced including:

- Maritime heritage
- Local/community stories (e.g., Intra, Electric Medway)
- Intangible heritage.

Some methods for increasing this could be through:

- Public art
- Digital storytelling
- Interpretation boards and trails.

Goal: present a broader, richer narrative of Medway, not just well-known landmarks.

Solutions

- Opportunity to include QR codes in trails to increase narration of spaces
- Increase public art opportunities through localised funding and promotion
- Partner with local organisations to capture and document local stories that enrich the area.



Identity & Place Branding

The Medway identity is composed of many elements but there is a need for consolidation across the towns. It is typically:

- Diverse, multicultural, gritty, creative
- Not traditionally “polished” but rich in character
- Consistent visual language across signage, art, and wayfinding needed
- Recognisable Place brand needed rather than a corporate approach.

Goal: Create a consistent and overarching aesthetic for Medway, with variation delivered at a grass roots level.

Solutions

- Use area based colours to help distinguish each town and the individual identity of Place.
- Utilise community-based activities to help define the character of places - celebrating what is unique and individual about each space.
- Ensure guidance for delivery captures changing character of places as development happens.



Infrastructure & Transport Challenges

Medway is an expansive place with some towns in remote locations that are hard to reach on foot or using the cycle network. There are issues with public transport especially in out-of-town areas:

- Expensive, unreliable buses including reduced service in school holidays on some routes
- Poorly named stops (not visitor-friendly)
- Difficult topography (hills)
- Car dependency across the area causing traffic congestion in hot-spots.

There is a general need to improve:

- Better integration of public transport with visitor routes including visibility of locations
- Improved active travel infrastructure

Goal: Promote a better public transport network across the area to reduce reliance on cars.

Solutions

- Utilise the bus network better with more information including on board and at bus stop announcements
- Define clear routes that can be accessed more easily.



Public Realm & Environment

Medway has fantastic public realm spaces and destinations available across the river frontage. These valuable assets need to be included in key routes and promoted alongside other local assets:

- Green spaces including walking routes and play spaces
- River access and visibility
- Sightlines (making the river more present)

There are key known opportunities, including promoting:

- Greening strategies
- Permanent artworks tied to heritage
- Better viewpoints (e.g., castle and cathedral visibility)

Goal: Increase active pedestrian travel across Medway.

Solutions

- Promote family activities and destinations
- Increase accessibility across the active river frontage
- Enhance the user experience at pedestrian level through the enhanced wayfinding and narratives.

Delivery Opportunities

Current and emerging Medway projects

The Heritage Signage and Wayfinding Strategy is intended to provide a long-term framework that can influence future investment, regeneration, development and placemaking activity across Medway. Given the financial challenges facing local government, the uncertainty associated with Local Government Reorganisation, and the long-term nature of many regeneration programmes, delivery is likely to be phased and opportunistic rather than reliant upon a single Council-led capital programme.

- Medway as:
- A connected, accessible, story-rich destination
 - A place where routes guide discovery
 - A community-led, culturally vibrant area

- Key priorities:
- Better connections (physical + narrative)
 - Stronger identity
 - Improved infrastructure to match population growth



Diagram of current and emerging Medway projects

Delivery Opportunities

Over the lifetime of the Strategy, significant opportunities will arise through the emerging Medway Local Plan, helping to embed wayfinding, heritage interpretation, active travel and placemaking principles into future development proposals and providing a framework through which developers and investors can contribute towards the creation of a coherent and joined-up wayfinding network across Medway. The Strategy should also inform pre-application discussions, development briefs, design guidance and the negotiation of developer contributions where appropriate.

Key delivery opportunities include:

- **The emerging Medway Local Plan**, ensuring wayfinding, heritage interpretation and place identity are considered as part of future development proposals and investment decisions across Medway.
- **Developer and investor-led regeneration projects**, using planning obligations, design guidance and development frameworks to secure contributions towards wayfinding infrastructure, interpretation, public realm improvements and active travel connections.
- **Chatham Town Centre regeneration**, including public realm improvements, Chatham Waterfront, Mountbatten House and related investment programmes, providing opportunities to strengthen connections between Chatham Station, the town centre, the waterfront and the Historic Dockyard.
- **Chatham Creative Quarters**, including Intra, Central, Historic Dockyard and Maritime, where cultural production, creative placemaking, public art, interpretation and wayfinding can be integrated to support a more connected visitor experience.
- **Medway Heritage Place**, including the developing Medway Heritage Strategy, Heritage Map, community heritage projects and future National Lottery Heritage Fund investment, helping to connect and interpret Medway’s heritage assets, people and stories.

- **Love Gillingham and the Gillingham Town Centre Vision and Action Plan**, including future public realm projects, Gillingham Square and town centre improvement programmes.
- **Rochester Riverside and wider Rochester regeneration programmes**, improving arrival points, visitor orientation and links between transport hubs, heritage assets and riverside destinations.
- **Strood Town Centre regeneration and active travel improvements**, helping strengthen connections between Strood, Rochester and the wider Medway area.
- **Hoo Peninsula initiatives**, including the Community Infrastructure Framework and the National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported Whose Hoo programme, creating opportunities to celebrate and interpret the area’s unique landscape, environment and heritage.
- **LCWIP and active travel projects**, including walking and cycling infrastructure, public rights of way improvements, station environments and sustainable transport initiatives.
- **Cultural, tourism and heritage programmes**, using digital storytelling, interpretation, public art and visitor information to improve people’s understanding and experience of Medway’s places and stories.

The Strategy should also act as a shared framework for delivery partners across Medway’s culture, heritage, regeneration and visitor economy sectors. Organisations including Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Chatham Maritime Trust, Rochester Bridge Trust, Historic England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Intra Community Trust, Medway Development Company and other strategic partners will continue to bring forward projects and investment that shape Medway’s public realm and visitor experience. By aligning future projects with the principles set out within this Strategy, partners can collectively contribute towards a more coherent, accessible and recognisable network of routes, destinations and stories across Medway.

As funding opportunities arise, and as regeneration and development programmes progress, projects should be encouraged to adopt the Strategy’s principles of accessibility, storytelling, active travel, digital engagement and place identity. Through this incremental and partnership-led approach, Medway can progressively build a connected and distinctive wayfinding network that strengthens links between communities, destinations and heritage assets, while supporting wider ambitions for regeneration, culture, tourism and sustainable growth.

4.0

Design
Principles

The Yellow Thread

A Yellow Thread

Originally, the yellow threads were used in naval rope and their colour indicated the ropeyard in which they were made. The Historic Dockyard Chatham rope used a yellow thread, distinguishing it from other dockyards.

The rope was originally an expensive commodity, so when it was stolen and traded, the origins of each rope could be traced back, much like watermarking documents or bank notes.

The yellow thread theme could run through our wayfinding system, consolidating the different elements and helping to give cohesion to the system.



Yellow thread indicating rope sourced from Chatham

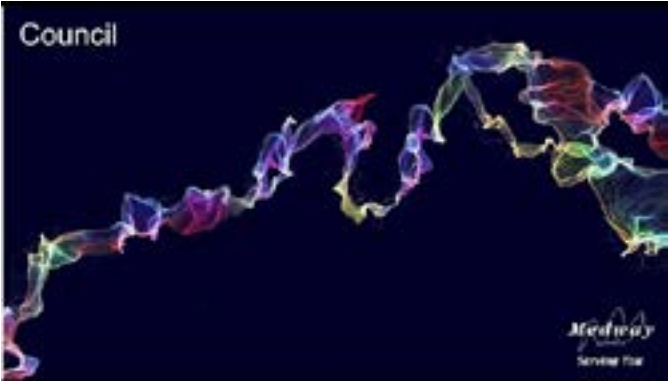
Feedback from stakeholder engagement sessions revealed that The Yellow Thread was strongly preferred because it is bright, highly visible and easy to follow in busy streets. People felt it is uniquely rooted in Chatham’s heritage, making it a simple, memorable device that feels authentic rather than generic.

It was also praised for its flexibility. The idea can adapt across Medway’s different areas and be expressed in multiple media, from standard signage to murals, public art, pop-up events and even planting, while aligning with the existing “Multi-coloured River of Light” place branding.

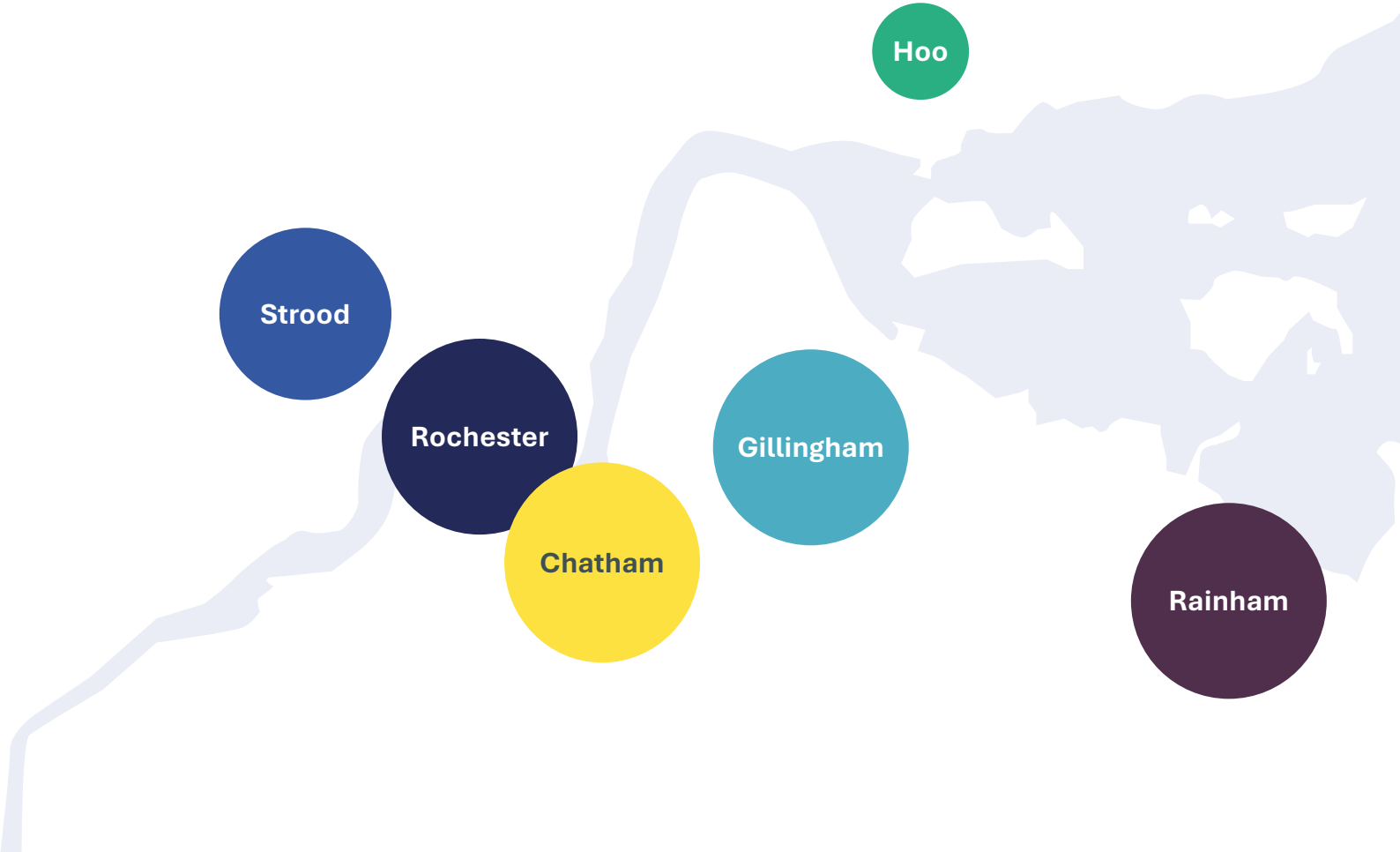
The Yellow Thread concept invites opportunities for layered storytelling. It can deliver quick cues for passers-by while revealing deeper narratives and hidden gems for locals and curious visitors, creating opportunities for special touches and delightful moments beyond conventional panels.

The colours of Medway

The idea of the Yellow Thread can be adapted across other areas of Medway, and additional colours can be used to retain unique character and identity of these locations.



Medway River of Light branding



Design Principles

Delivering creative solutions

New wayfinding for Medway will translate a clear set of design principles into a consistent, inclusive and recognisable system across the towns.

The approach will prioritise simplicity, legibility and accessibility, ensuring people can navigate confidently by foot, cycle, public transport and car.

A unified visual language, consistent sign placement, clear mapping and strong visual contrast will create continuity while allowing each town’s unique character to be reflected.

The principles will connect key destinations, heritage assets, community spaces, transport hubs and waterfronts, helping people understand how places relate to one another and encouraging exploration, movement and discovery across Medway.

Design Language

The Medway wayfinding design language will create a clear, distinctive and consistent identity across the area, while responding to the individual character of each town.

A simple visual system combines typography, colour, symbols, mapping and materials to make information easy to recognise and understand at a glance and enhances the user experience.

Design elements will be applied consistently across directional signs, maps, interpretation and digital touchpoints (including QR codes), creating a seamless experience for residents and visitors alike.

The language is contemporary, accessible and welcoming, drawing inspiration from Medway’s heritage, landscape, waterfronts and communities. This helps to establish a strong sense of place while supporting intuitive navigation across Medway.

Do

- Use simple, plain-English language
- Use symbols to help accessibility
- Supplement with QR codes or digital methods where appropriate.

Don’t

- Overcomplicate the design
- Overpopulate with content.

Unified system

A unified wayfinding system will provide a consistent approach across Medway, helping residents and visitors navigate easily between towns, neighbourhoods, transport hubs, key destinations and public spaces.

The existing signage can be adapted and built upon to create a unified and cohesive new approach.

Shared design principles, materiality, typography, colours, symbols, setting out, mapping conventions and sign formats will create a recognisable system that is easy to understand and use and therefore becomes recognisable to repeat users.

Consistency will reduce confusion and support intuitive navigation, while ensuring information is accessible to people of different ages and abilities.

The system will also allow for local identity, heritage and character to be expressed within a common framework. This balance will create a coherent, connected and welcoming experience across Medway.

Do

- Stick to the guidance but adapt to your needs
- Consult with stakeholders to gather consensus
- Look at your area as a whole and not each element in isolation

Don’t

- Ignore the guidance.

Neighbourhood centric

A neighbourhood-centric approach will ensure that Medway’s wayfinding responds to the needs, character and identity of local communities.

Rather than focusing only on major destinations, the system will help people navigate between neighbourhoods, everyday facilities, community spaces, transport connections and local landmarks.

Wayfinding will reinforce the distinctiveness of each area while maintaining a consistent Medway-wide design language.

Routes will be planned around how people actually move through their neighbourhoods, supporting walking, cycling and public transport alongside vehicular journeys. This localised approach will make navigation more intuitive, strengthen connections between communities and help people develop a stronger sense of belonging and place.

Do

- Engage with local people
- Celebrate what is unique and different to each area
- Include small, unknown and hidden stories

Don’t

- Replicate exactly signage from elsewhere
- Just focus on large celebrated landmarks.

Consistant Mapping

Consistent mapping will provide a familiar visual framework across Medway, helping people quickly understand where they are, where they need to go and how destinations connect.

Maps use common colours, cartography, symbols, typography, orientation and levels of detail, creating continuity across different locations and sign types. Key assets, routes and facilities are depicted the same way across all towns to create a recognisable system. Updates are centrally managed to keep maps current and digitally integrated.

Key destinations, transport links, public spaces, heritage assets and neighbourhoods will be represented consistently, while local information can be layered appropriately.

Mapping will prioritise simplicity and intuitive use, avoiding unnecessary information and complexity. A shared mapping approach will also support digital integration, ensuring that physical and digital wayfinding work together as one connected navigation experience.

Do

- Create interesting destination points and points of interest on the mapping
- Highlight places of interest and tie stories to them

Don’t

- Make mapping illegible or have information overload
- Try and include absolutely everything - edit so that the information is appropriate for the location.

Information structure

A clear information structure will ensure that people receive the right information at the right point in their journey.

Information is organised according to a simple hierarchy, starting with the most important destinations and directions before introducing supporting detail and is prioritised by user need at each decision point.

Consistent naming, terminology and sign sequencing will help users build confidence as they move through Medway and intermittent confirmation messages are used to reassure people that they are on the right route.

Decision points will be carefully considered so that information is provided before people need to make a choice, rather than after. This structured approach will reduce cognitive effort, improve navigation and create a predictable experience across different environments, destinations and modes of travel throughout Medway.

Do

- Conform to the design heirarchy as set out
- Consider decision points for finding destinations.

Don’t

- Use colloquial naming
- Overload with information.

Managed variation

It is important to use a variety of outputs to avoid repetitive output. Medway’s wayfinding system needs to accommodate a diverse range of streets, landscapes, neighbourhoods and town centres without losing consistency.

Managing variation will establish a flexible design framework that can respond to different contexts while maintaining the core visual language. Sign types, materials, scale and information can adapt where necessary to reflect heritage settings, waterfronts, urban centres, residential areas or rural edges.

Interventions can differ, and be mixed along routes to ensure that users don’t meet the same type of signage along one route, but rather a variety of interventions that reinforce they are on the right path.

However, these variations will sit within shared rules for typography, colour, symbols, mapping and placement. This approach will allow local character to come through without creating a collection of unrelated systems, ensuring the overall network remains recognisable and coherent.

Do

- Make sure the information is relevant to the location
- Follow the guidelines for design
- Adapt the rules for the specific setting.

Don’t

- Go too far outside of the rules
- Freestyle!

Minimal visual clutter

The wayfinding system will aim to reduce visual clutter by providing only the information people need, when they need it.

Signs will be carefully located and designed to avoid competing with existing street furniture, advertising, traffic signs and other visual information. A clear hierarchy will distinguish essential directions from secondary information, while consistent layouts will make signs easier to scan quickly.

Removing duplication and unnecessary messaging will create a calmer and more legible public realm. This approach will be particularly important in busy town centres and transport hubs, where too much information can increase confusion and make navigation more difficult for everyone.

Multi-functional elements reduce street furniture and free up public realm. Clear sight lines and calm backgrounds improve legibility.

- Removal of damaged, unnecessary or defunct interventions
- Reuse existing signage where possible, to negate the need for additional signage
- Replacement of damaged signage that still holds value.

Do

- Remove obsolete or damaged signage
- Create additions for existing signage where possible.

Don’t

- Produce unnecessary signage where it is not needed

Accessible to all

Accessibility will be embedded throughout the wayfinding system, ensuring it works for people with different physical, sensory, cognitive and communication needs.

Clear typography, strong visual contrast, appropriate sign heights and simple language will support people with visual or cognitive impairments.

Mapping and symbols will be designed to be intuitive and understandable, with routes considering step-free access, gradients, crossings and rest points where appropriate. Information will be available across complementary physical and digital formats, supporting different ways of navigating.

Digital formats can include multi-language translation, audio and be designed to Government accessibility guidance.

Do

- Integrate digital accessibility where possible
- Consider all users and needs

Don’t

- Design only to accessibility guidance and ignore the design guidance

Shared rules

Shared rules will establish a common standard for the design, placement and management of wayfinding across Medway. These rules will define how destinations are named, how information is prioritised, how signs are positioned and how mapping, colours, symbols and typography are applied.

They provide a practical framework for designers, highways teams, developers, contractors and future projects, helping to maintain consistency over time. Clear guidance will also identify where flexibility is appropriate, allowing the system to respond to different locations without undermining its overall identity. Together, these rules will create a coordinated approach that is easier to deliver, maintain and update.

Following a shared set of rules for wayfinding interventions across Medway towns will create a familiar system that can be followed, and this will also contribute to a cohesive appearance Medway-wide.

Do

- Use the guidelines to shape your narrative
- Look at other best practice examples for inspiration.

Don’t

- Copy or replicate exactly another piece of information
- Bend the rules beyond recognition.

High legibility/Clear hierarchy

High legibility and a clear information hierarchy will make Medway’s wayfinding quick and intuitive to use. Typography, scale, spacing, contrast and positioning will be carefully considered so information can be understood easily while moving through the public realm.

The most important directions will be immediately visible, with secondary information presented in a clear and consistent order. Signs will be designed for different viewing distances, speeds and modes of travel, from pedestrians moving slowly through a town centre to cyclists approaching a junction.

This disciplined approach will reduce uncertainty, support confident decision-making and create a consistent experience across the whole network. Strong contrast, readable type and non-glare finishes support all users. Placement and height follow predictable rules for easy scanning. Consideration of night-time visibility and weather resilience is needed.

From gateways to fingerposts, maps and creative interventions, each element has a distinct role.

Do

- Ensure there is clear differentiation between high and low priority information.
- Use clearly marked destination signage
- Reinforce user journey with supplementary information markers on routes
- Integrate digital methods where possible

Don’t

- Ignore accessibility guidance
- Prioritise one accessibility need over another.

Future proofed

Future proofing is best practice to ensure that all wayfinding and signage interventions have longevity and are a good use of investment funds.

The wayfinding system will be designed to evolve as Medway changes, ensuring that investment remains useful and relevant over the long term. A flexible design framework will allow new destinations, neighbourhoods, transport connections and developments to be incorporated without requiring the system to be redesigned.

Materials and construction will be selected for durability, ease of maintenance and replacement. Clear shared standards will also support future teams and projects, enabling the system to grow consistently while responding to changing patterns of movement, technology and community needs.

Do

- Specify modular components so panels, maps and hardware can be updated or replaced without removing whole structures.
- Use durable, standardised materials and fixings with reliable supply chains to ensure consistent sourcing, repair and like-for-like replacement.
- Design for longevity: weather- and vandal-resistant finishes, non-glare surfaces, service access, and replaceable graphics.
- When using QR codes, ensure that the associated digital infrastructure is maintained and updated in line with technological requirements.
- Document specifications, as-built locations and spares in an asset register to support efficient maintenance cycles over the system’s life.
- For bespoke art interventions, consider the life time of these, as well as an necessary maintenance or up-keep that may be required on an annual basis.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Accessibility and inclusion is fundamental to the principles underpinning the strategy, ensuring that everyone can navigate, understand and enjoy Medway’s towns, heritage and public spaces with confidence, independence and dignity.

A successful wayfinding system should not simply direct people from one destination to another; it should remove barriers, create welcoming environments and support a diverse range of users, including disabled people, older people, children, visitors unfamiliar with the area and those whose first language is not English.

A key objective of the strategy is to establish a unified set of accessible design standards that apply consistently across all wayfinding and interpretation. This will create a coherent and predictable experience throughout Medway, allowing users to recognise and understand signage regardless of which of the five towns they are visiting. Consistency in typography, symbols, colour palettes, materials and information hierarchy will improve legibility while reinforcing Medway’s overall identity.

The strategy should place particular emphasis on cognitive accessibility, ensuring that navigation is intuitive and easy to understand. Routes should follow simple, logical movement patterns with clear decision points, minimal information overload and consistent terminology throughout the network.

Signage should help users build confidence in their journey by confirming they are on the correct route, clearly identifying destinations and providing reassurance at key intersections. Information should be prioritised according to user needs, using plain English, internationally recognised pictograms and logical destination grouping.

Strong visual contrast standards should be applied to all signage to maximise readability for people with visual impairments and in varying lighting conditions. Text, symbols and mapping should achieve appropriate colour contrast ratios, while

fonts should be clear, uncluttered and appropriately scaled for viewing distance. Materials and finishes should minimise glare and reflections, ensuring information remains legible throughout the day and across different weather conditions.

The physical placement of signage should also follow consistent positioning and mounting heights across the entire network. Predictable sign locations make navigation easier for all users, particularly those with visual impairments, mobility requirements or cognitive differences. Signage should remain within comfortable viewing zones, avoid creating obstacles within pedestrian routes and integrate sensitively with the surrounding public realm to minimise clutter while maintaining visibility.

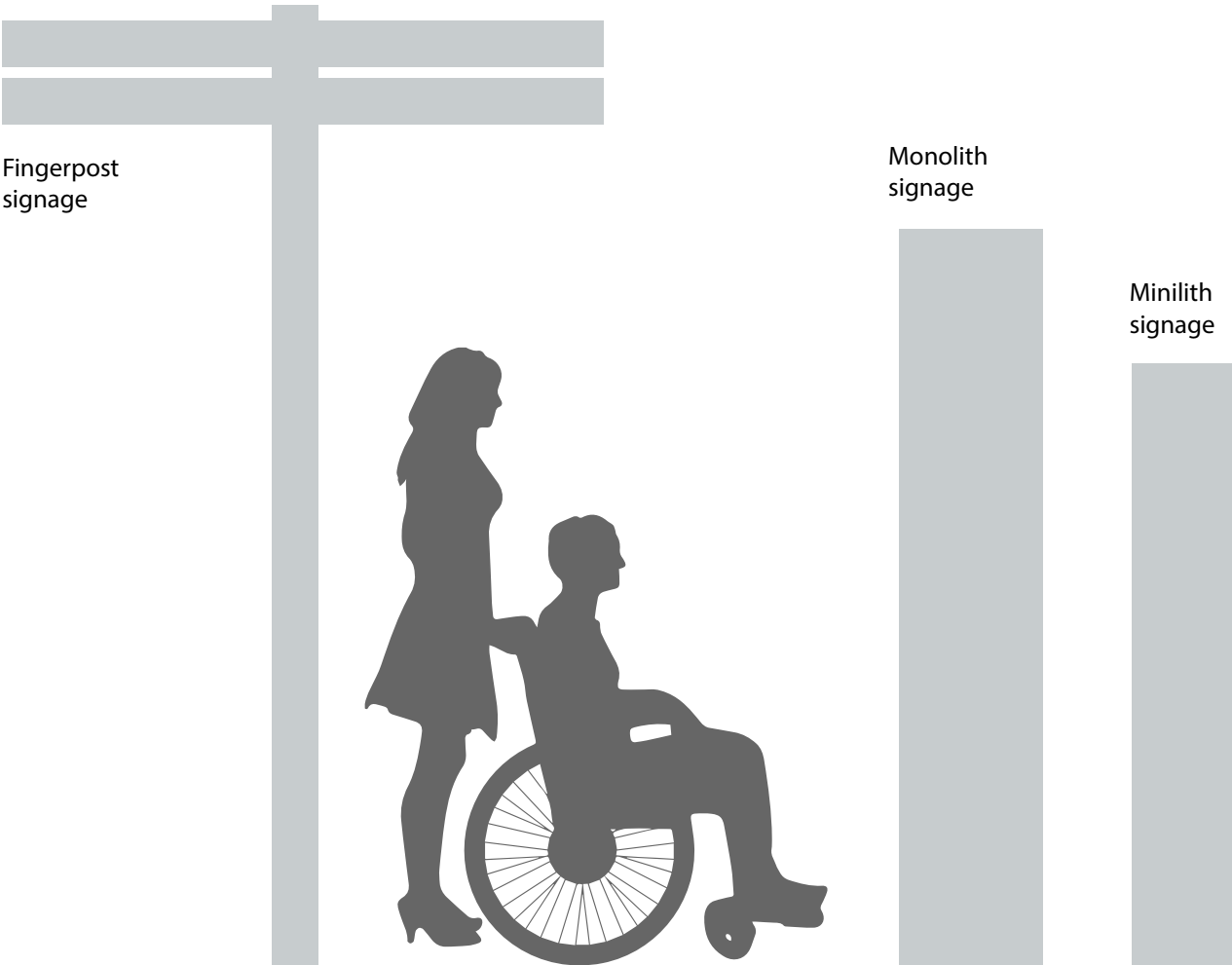
The strategy should also establish inclusive mapping standards that make orientation straightforward for the widest possible audience. Maps should use a consistent graphic language throughout Medway, adopting heads-up orientation so they align with the user’s direction of travel.

Key destinations should be shown alongside estimated walking and cycling times rather than distance alone, while accessible routes, step-free connections, gradients, public toilets, seating, transport interchanges and other essential facilities should be clearly identified. Digital accessibility should complement physical signage through QR codes linking to accessible online mapping, audio guidance and additional interpretation where appropriate.

Heritage interpretation should be equally inclusive, providing multiple ways for people to engage with Medway’s stories through tactile features, audio content, British Sign Language (BSL) videos, easy-read summaries and multilingual interpretation where appropriate.

Public art and storytelling should celebrate the diversity of Medway’s communities alongside its internationally significant maritime, military and cultural heritage.

The strategy should align with recognised best practice, including the Equality Act 2010, BS 8300:2018 Design of an Accessible and Inclusive Built Environment, the Department for Transport’s Inclusive Mobility guidance, and relevant guidance from Historic England and the Design Council. By embedding accessibility into every aspect of the wayfinding system, from strategic planning through to detailed design, Medway can create an inclusive network that is easy to understand, welcoming to all and capable of supporting healthier, more connected and more confident journeys across the five towns.



5.0

Opportunities

A vision for Medway

The Yellow Thread

Using *The Yellow Thread* as a starting point, we envision a series of carefully considered creative interventions across Medway, helping visitors and locals navigate to key landmarks and destinations, while also uplifting, inspiring and enriching their experience of the place.



Aspirational precedent images showing a variety of interventions



Hierarchy of Interventions

Using an example route, we have mapped a range of interventions that help orient users and reinforce direction towards a destination.

The key is to create interest and variety along the journey. A mix of visual cues, landmarks, materials, planting, lighting, activity and signage can provide subtle moments of recognition and reassurance, making the route more engaging and memorable without relying solely on conventional wayfinding.

This transforms the journey from simply getting from A to B into a sequence of distinctive moments that support orientation, discovery and identity.

Interventions include:

- 1. Monolith
- 2. Finger Post
- 3. Street Furniture
- 4. Pedestrian Crossing
- 5. Pavement Graphic
- 6. Banner Signs
- 7. Painted Wall
- 8. Mural & Interpretation

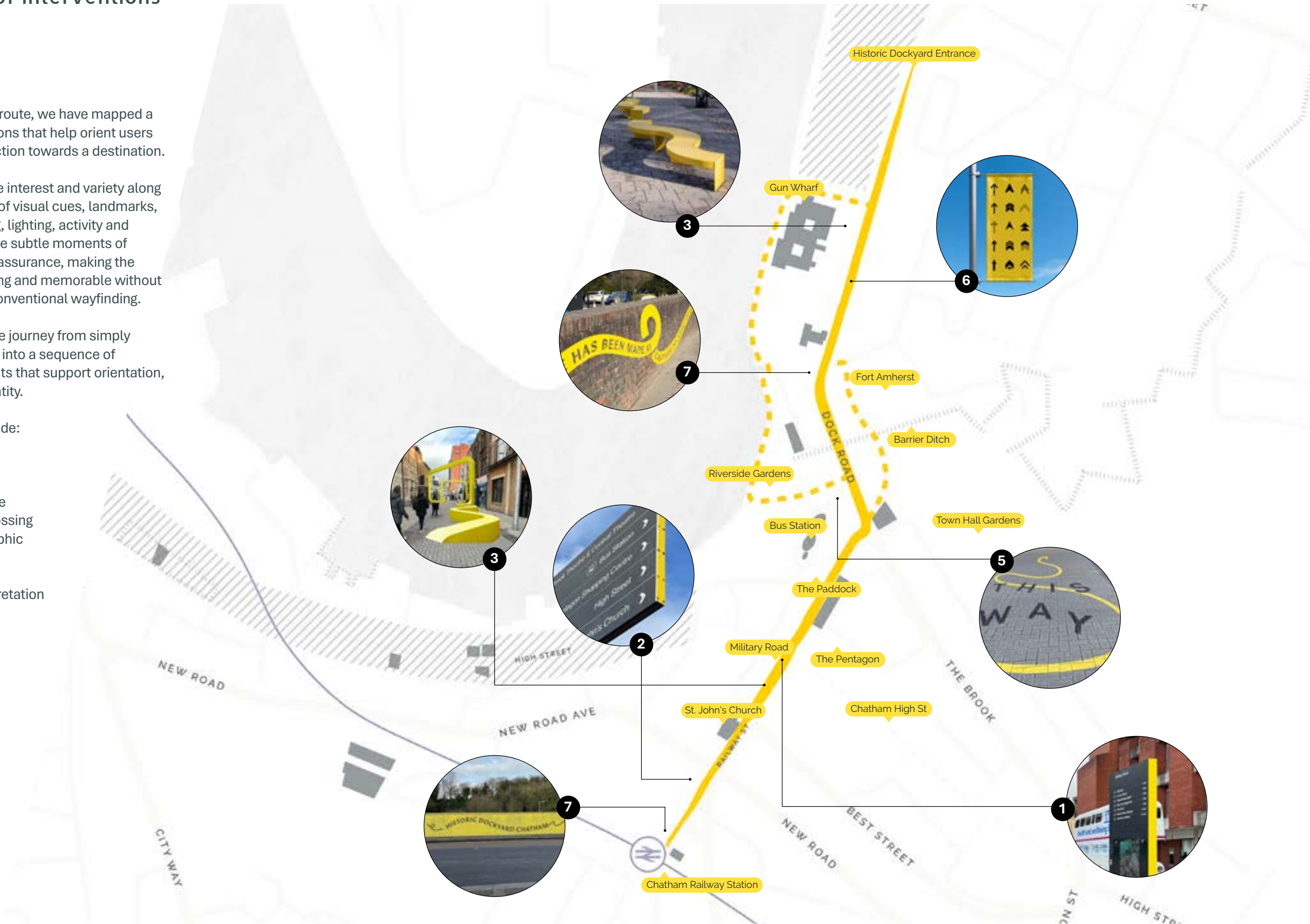


Diagram showing example interventions along route from Chatham Railway Station to Historic Dockyard approach

Study area of Chatham to Gillingham route

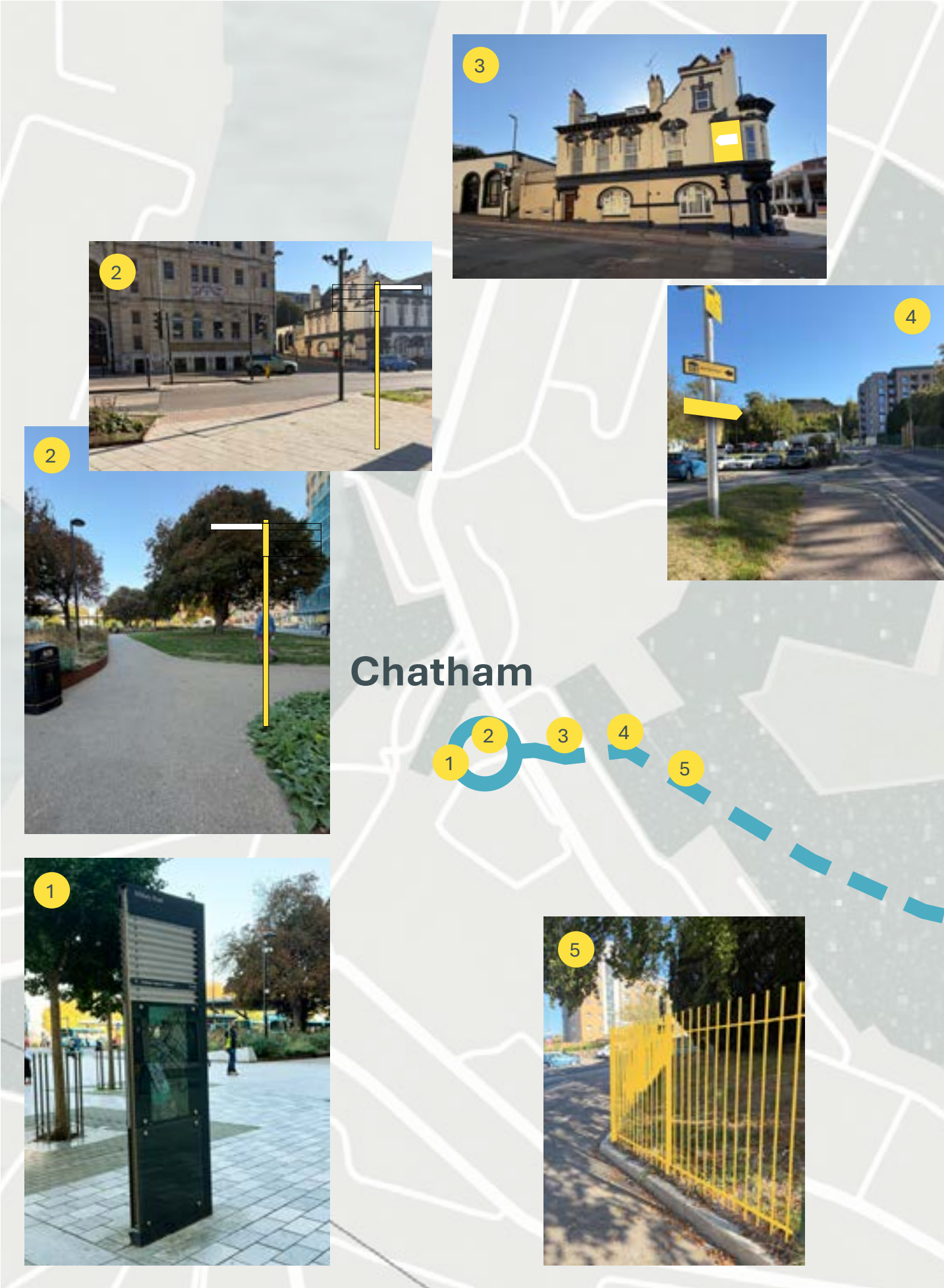
Following the framework that we have created, there should be enough scope for a variety of interventions to be considered as a site or location comes forward.

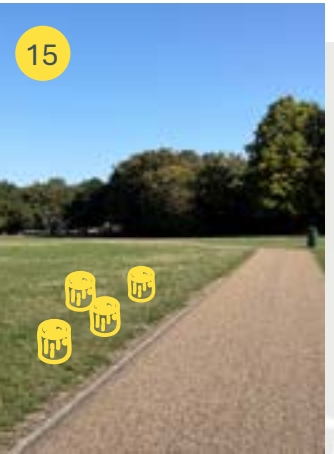
To demonstrate our approach, we have mapped the potential opportunities on a new route from Chatham Town Centre to Gillingham station - across the Great Lines Heritage Park and taking in one of the Gillingham Open Lines interventions of Gillingham High Street. Interventions for Railway Street and the Greenway are beyond this specific route, but also offer exciting opportunities for narrative interventions when the sites come forward.

Interventions from Chatham to Gillingham could include:

- 1. Monolith repairs
- 2. Finger Post
- 3. Building gable artwork
- 4. Directionals
- 5. Rail art
- 6. Interpretation
- 7. Information Panel

- 8. Replaced mapping
- 9. Noticeboard
- 10. Stair markers
- 11. Directionals
- 12. Information Panels
- 13. Fingerposts
- 14. Information Panels
- 15. Playable routes
- 16. Street Furniture
- 17. Entrance markers
- 18. Shop fronts
- 19. Alleyway improvements
- 20. Public building markers
- 21. Gateway art
- 22. Tree pits
- 23. Art plaques
- 24. Tree art
- 25. Floor graphics
- 26. Building elevation murals
- 27. Pedestrian Crossing
- 28. Entrance Marker
- 29. Wall graphic
- 30. Painted Wall
- 31. Rail art
- 32. Healthy walking route markers





- 6. Interpretation
- 7. Information Panel
- 8. Replaced mapping
- 9. Noticeboard
- 10. Stair markers
- 11. Directionals
- 12. Information Panels
- 13. Fingerposts
- 14. Information Panels
- 15. Playable routes
- 16. Street Furniture
- 17. Entrance markers



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- 19. Alleyway improvements
- 20. Public building markers
- 21. Gateway art
- 22. Tree pits
- 23. Art plaques
- 24. Tree art
- 25. Floor graphics
- 26. Building elevation murals



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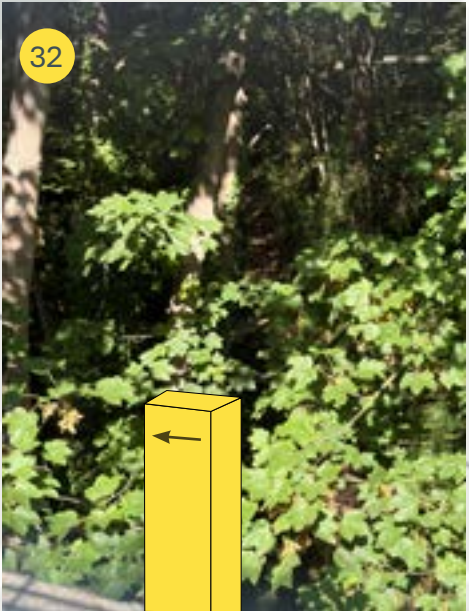
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Gillingham



27. Pedestrian Crossing
28. Entrance Marker
29. Wall graphic
30. Painted Wall
31. Rail art
32. Healthy walking route markers



HIGH STREET

GREENWAY

Gillingham

RAILWAY STREET

Opportunities

Connecting Threads

We propose the idea of connecting thread which use a consistent visual language of colour, pattern, materials, planting, and lighting to link destinations and guide people intuitively. Subtle cues appear at regular intervals to create a coherent journey and spark curiosity.

These interventions enrich street-level experience and make everyday routes more walkable and sociable. By introducing small moments of discovery and a few memorable anchors, the project builds a stronger sense of place and encourages interaction.

With thoughtful engagement, the approach reflects local stories and identities. It invites communities, artists, and businesses to co-create and care for the spaces they use.

Guidance

- Identify suitable locations such as broad footpaths, crossings, public squares, transport stops, and park edges
- Connect interventions to nearby assets like markets, cultural venues, and heritage sites to build a route narrative
- Use varied but cohesive elements such as paving inlays, murals, planting, furniture, and small landmarks
- Ensure accessibility with clear sightlines, step-free routes, tactile cues, and good night-time visibility
- Work with local artists, communities, and businesses to commission and deliver
- Plan for durability, simple maintenance, and manageable life-cycle costs



Comparison showing opportunity to add signage interventions along Dock Road

Case Study: Nantes Green Line

The Nantes Green Line is a citywide wayfinding route that invites people to explore Nantes on foot by following a single green line painted on the ground. Beginning at the Gare de Nantes and threading through historic streets, riverfronts, cultural venues, public artworks, and parks, the line connects major attractions with lesser-known spots, encouraging residents and visitors to discover the city at a human pace. Its simplicity is its strength: rather than relying on an array of signs and maps, the continuous line provides an intuitive guide that is easy to spot and effortless to follow.

Conceived as part of Nantes’ broader cultural programming, including the annual Le Voyage à Nantes, the Green Line functions as an open-air itinerary that refreshes each season. New installations, temporary artworks, and partner venues are added or reinterpreted along the route, so returning walkers encounter a living circuit rather than a static trail. The approach reduces cognitive load for wayfinding while amplifying the city’s identity, joining heritage sites, contemporary architecture, design interventions, and convivial public spaces into a cohesive experience.

Sources:
<https://www.levoyageanantes.fr>



Signage Interventions

Enhance visitor experience by adapting existing signage structures to highlight nearby assets and routes. Strategic updates can reduce the need for new signs, limit visual clutter, and make wayfinding more intuitive.

Creative interventions and additions can refresh outdated information, add character and reflect local identity while keeping systems legible and consistent.



Opportunity to add interventions to existing signage

Guidance

- Audit existing signage to identify suitable candidates for additions and upgrades
- Check routes to ensure signs are in proximity and can be easily followed
- Ensure consistent typography and icons are used across each intervention
- Add layers such as maps, time-to-walk indicators, and links to digital content where relevant to enhance the user experience
- Improve accessibility by ensuring good visibility, legibility, size and placement



Case Study: Tate to Tube

Tate to Tube is a simple, memorable wayfinding scheme that guides pedestrians from Southwark Tube Station to Tate Modern using a sequence of vivid orange lamp posts.

Instead of adding new signs to already busy pavements, the route re purposes existing street furniture to lead visitors safely and intuitively through the neighbourhood to the gallery’s Bankside entrance. The approach results in one continuous thread of colour that cuts through urban visual noise and makes the journey part of the experience.

The concept was developed by Thomas Manss & Company, whose minimalist approach prioritises clarity and directness. Visitors leaving the station need only follow the orange posts to arrive at the museum doors, with no need to decode complex maps or hunt for scattered signs. By using elements that are already part of the street scape, the scheme reduces clutter, improves legibility at a distance, and proves that small interventions can reshape how people move through the city.

Sources:
<https://www.manss.com>
<https://kathrinjacobsen.com>



Updating existing Signage

Finger Posts

Existing signage can be updated using colour to signify routes towards areas of interest, also acting as a way to highlight wayfinding points.

Interprative elements can also be added to existing monolith signs to further enrich the user experience.

Guidance

- Repair and signs in disrepair
- Addition of new finger post blades where needed
- Addition of colour onto post and capping of finger posts

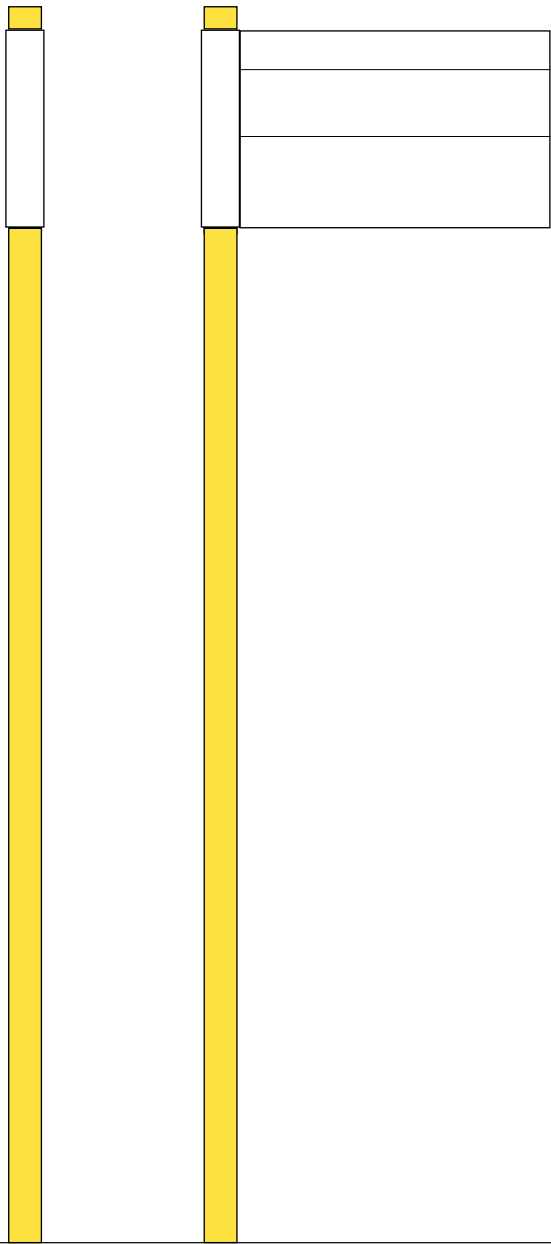


Diagram of yellow accent added to existing fingerpost

Monoliths

Existing monoliths should be in good condition and be from the Medway family of signage.

A coloured edge should be applied to the existing or new monoliths through a new side panel. This will ensure all signs then look like they are from the same family.

Guidance

- Repair any existing signs in disrepair
- Addition of colour onto slim edge of monolith
- Update mapping periodically from central source

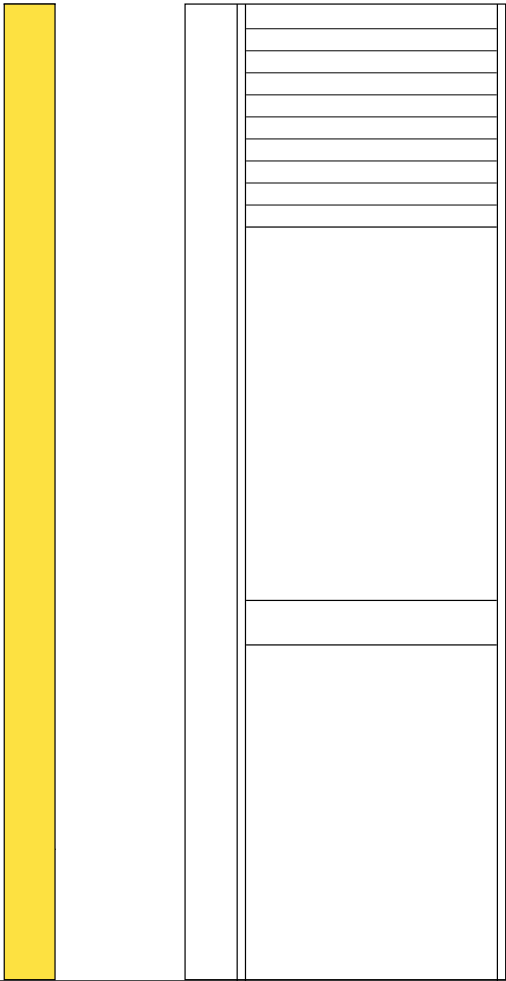


Diagram of yellow accent added to existing monolith

Interpretive Panels

Interpretation panels can be used to inform the public about mural artworks, connecting these to a wider network of creative output.

Guidance

- Addition of descriptive interpretation plaque on mural artwork
- Include QR codes for digital accessibility



Diagram of interpretive yellow plaque addition to Mural

Banner Signage

Adding to existing lighting infrastructure, banner signage can be an effective way of marking specific locations, as well as acting as tool to advertise these destinations.

Guidance

- Addition of banners to existing lighting infrastructure in the vicinity of destinations

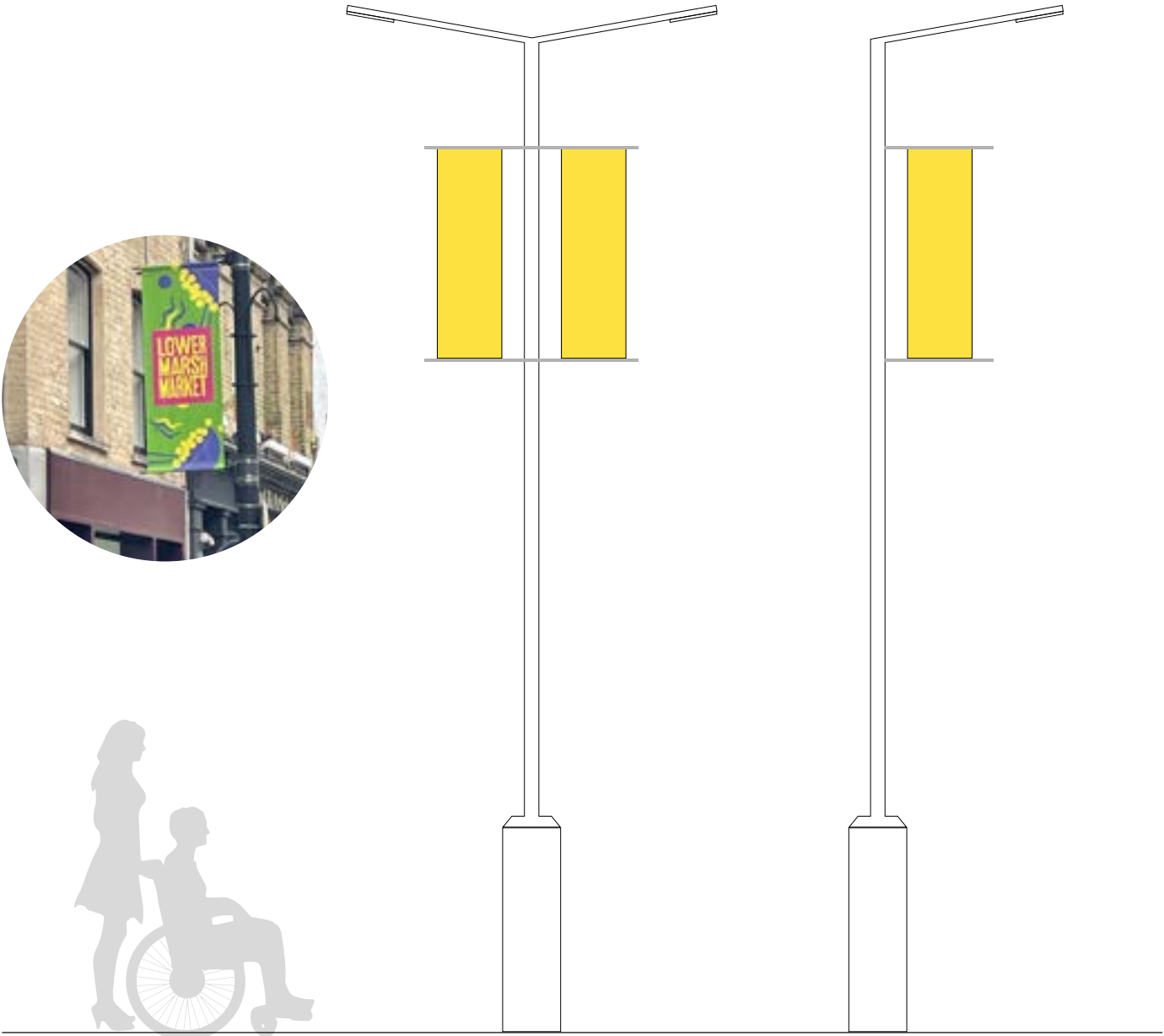


Diagram of Banner signage added to existing lampposts

Wall Artwork

Artwork can be implemented on existing walls and gable ends to improve user journeys and add character, as well as improving the appearance of places.

Bollards

Addition of colour, pattern or artwork to street bollards.

Guidance

- Ensure wall art interventions are placed in visible sightlines
- Artwork design should be considered in line with local character

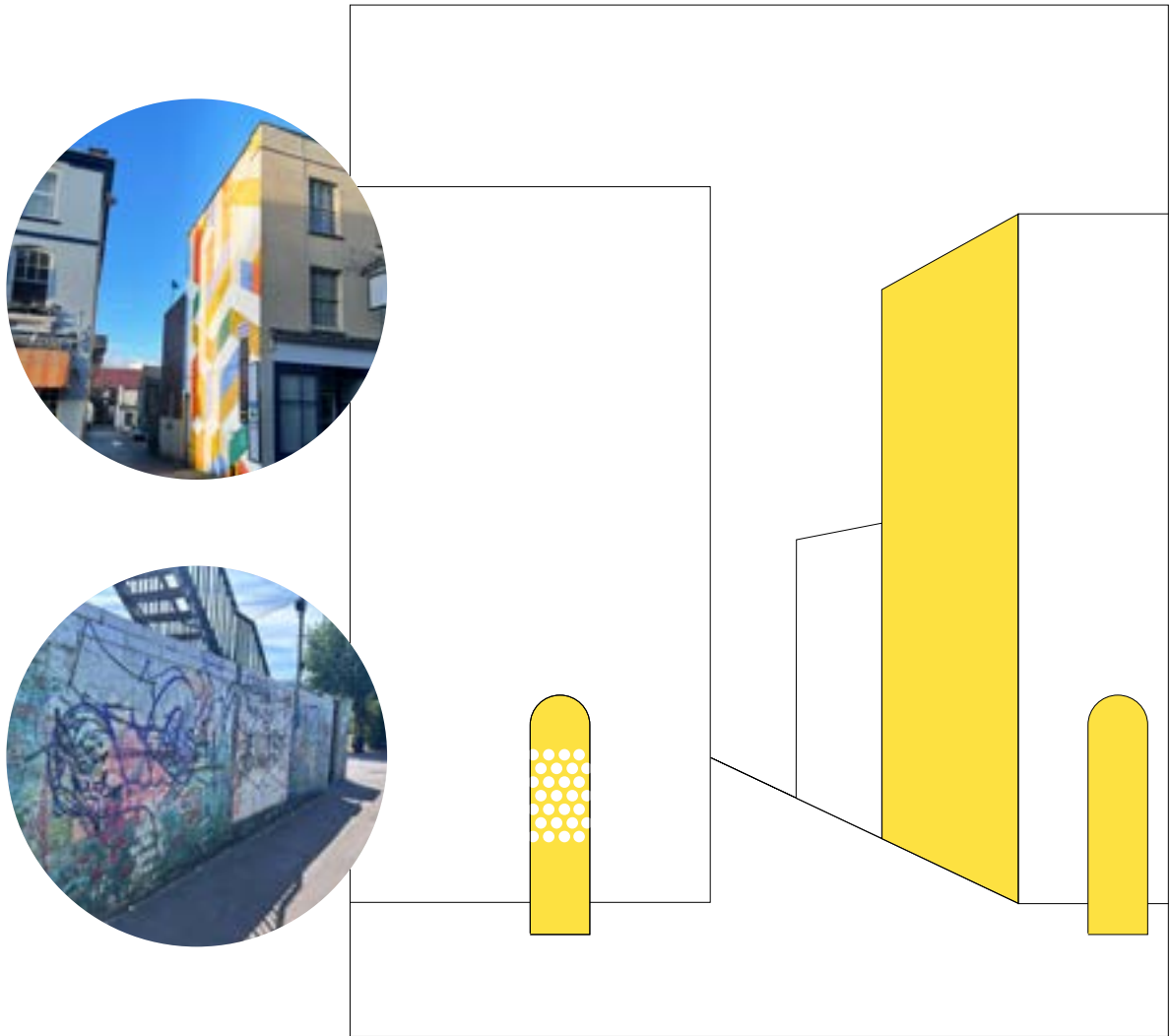


Diagram of signage interventions on bollards and gable walls

Pavement Graphics and Crossings

The addition of floor graphics on pavements or crossings can effectively direct users to specific destinations. These can be temporary or permanent depending on the materials used.

Guidance

- Implement clear graphics to ensure users can follow routes easily and that these join up to other wayfinding interventions.

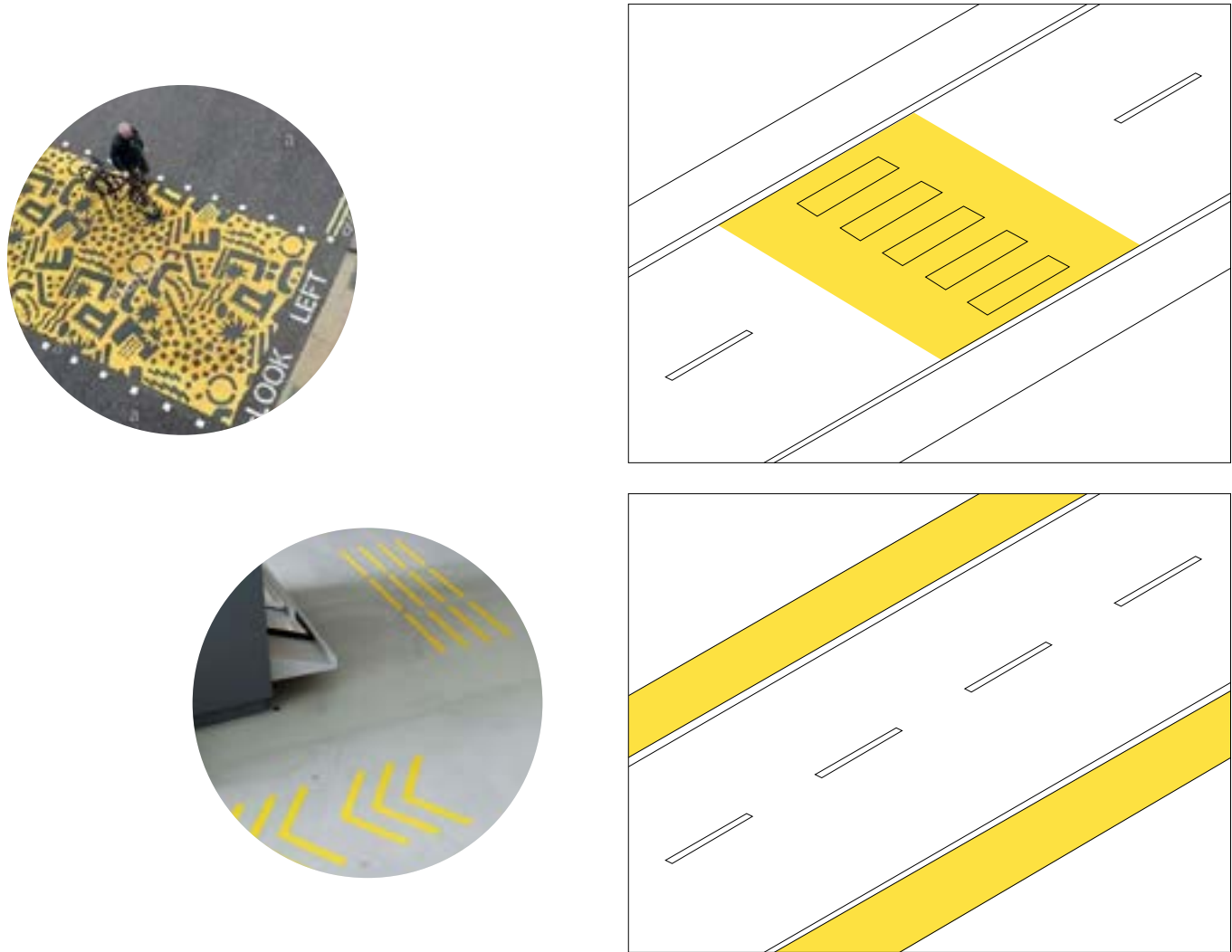


Diagram of signage interventions on footpaths and crossings

Street Furniture

Street furniture can lift streetscapes and bring life to dull or uninviting areas. When pieces are both functional and sculptural, they add visual interest, comfort, and moments of delight.

Furniture can serve everyday needs while acting as small landmarks. Thoughtful forms, materials, and details help create a welcoming character and a coherent sense of place.



Conventional benches in Strood and Rainham

Guidance

- Select durable, low-maintenance materials and source or manufacture locally where possible
- Place items where they support use and visibility without obstructing access or sightlines
- Apply a creative design approach to deliver originality and uplift
- Align with wider area themes and narratives so interventions feel meaningful
- Ensure accessibility with appropriate heights, clearances, and tactile cues
- Plan for repair, replacement, and long-term stewardship



Mock-up of creative furniture in Chatham

Case Study: Our Spaces

Warwickshire County Council’s Our Spaces project is a countywide public realm programme that commissioned a series of artist-led interventions to reconnect town centres with green spaces and rebuild community confidence after the pandemic.

Guided by themes of community voice, local identity, and the interface between nature and urban life, each commission responded to a site-specific brief and delivered a functional street intervention that invites touch, play, and everyday use.

The programme was supported by Creative Giants, local authority partners, and a specialist delivery team who helped artists develop ambitious ideas into buildable works.

Managed with curators Creative Giants and fabricators Factory Settings, the programme provided emerging and established creatives with hands-on experience in collaborative delivery, leaving a legacy of functional art that strengthens pride of place and everyday wellbeing.

Sources:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/spaces
www.samwilliams.uk



Murals and Art

Creative mural interventions can be implemented in order to elevate the public realm and turn blank walls into meaningful landmarks.

Artworks should aim to be well-crafted , uplifting, educational and reflective of local culture, helping residents feel pride and ownership in their local area.

Murals contribute to a recognisable identity and sense of placemaking, becoming reference points and acting as natural wayfinding markers across a neighbourhood.

They can also offer a platform for local storytelling, community voices and emerging artists.

Note that gable end graphics, shop fronts and public realm artwork proposals will require careful negotiation with landowners and statutory approvals by the Council to ensure necessary oversight.



Comparison showing opportunity to add mural intervention to gable end near Intra

Guidance

- To identify suitable walls, gable ends, and underpasses that need enhancement
- Prioritise locations with strong visibility and pedestrian presence
- Develop site-specific concepts linked to local stories, heritage, or place
- To consider the involvement of local artists, schools, and community groups in design and delivery
- Specify durable paints, protective coatings, and clear maintenance plans
- Secure permissions, address conservation constraints, and ensure safety during installation
- Provide informative labels or digital links for context and educational purposes



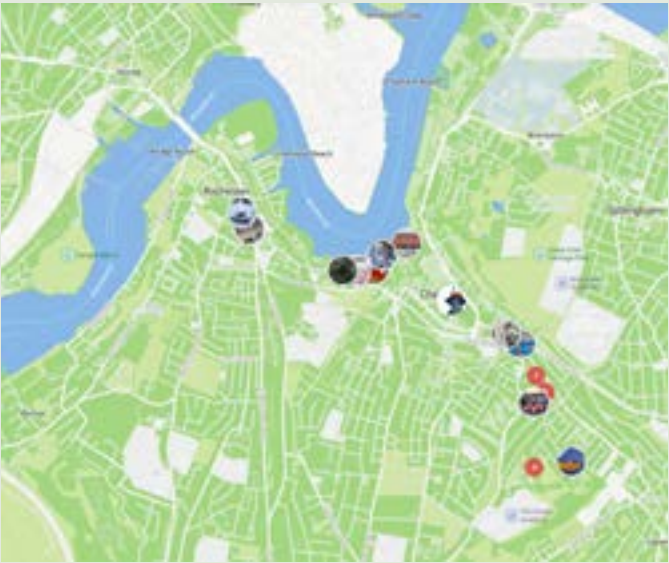
Case Study: Luton Mural Project

The Luton Mural Project is a community-led public art initiative by Arches Local that re imagines the Luton Road area of Medway as an open-air gallery. Working with residents and commissioned artists, the project turns houses and infrastructure into large-scale artworks that surface local history and personal stories. Figures such as Erica Stuart and William Mason appear alongside scenes that celebrate the neighbourhood’s heritage, fostering place-based pride and strengthening connections between people and the streets they share.

The first mural, created by artist WOSKerski in November 2023 on Henry Street, features a giant cabbage framed behind security tape. Its playful, investigative feel nods to “Cabbage Island,” a name tied to Luton’s agricultural past and the area’s long association with cabbage-growing. The term, re popularised in 2017 by Icon Theatre’s work on Luton’s hidden histories, still resonates with some residents who proudly call themselves “Cabbage Islanders.” The mural prompted people to stop, talk, and share memories in the street, demonstrating how art can kindle conversation and curiosity.

Subsequent works have continued to reveal layered histories, including a piece honouring the Windrush Generation that depicted a local man who became the first Black railway guard at Euston station. As each new mural appeared, neighbours gathered to celebrate, and the growing trail reshaped perceptions of the area. The project has evolved from a desire for more public art into a catalyst for civic pride, storytelling, and collective ownership.

Sources:
www.learningfrombiglocal.org.uk
www.streetartcities.com/cities/chatham-kent
www.medwayshewrote.com/the-luton-murals/



Street Utility

Well considered street utility brings everyday fixtures together in a coherent, attractive way. This includes litter bins, cycle racks, bollards, shelters, notice boards, drinking fountains, seating, planters, and dog waste bins.

These elements can reduce clutter, improve safety and comfort, and lift the look and feel of the street.

Details such as color, pattern, materials, and small artworks can connect to local identity and complement wider placemaking projects.



Bins in Strood and Hoo



Example of bin with playful basketball floor graphic



Cycle stands in Hoo and Rainham



Example of creative cycle stands

Guidance

- Place items in visible, high-use locations so they are easy to find and can be well used
- Create opportunities for artistic detailing and small creative interventions
- Source materials and manufacture locally where possible to support the local economy and reduce impacts
- Use a coordinated palette of materials and colours that fits local character

Lighting

Targeted lighting and light art can transform unappealing tunnels, thoroughfares, underpasses, and squares into welcoming places. Carefully designed illumination improves safety, visibility, and comfort while adding atmosphere and creativity.

Light-based artworks can bring beauty to daily routines and encourage evening activity.

Guidance

- Identify priority sites such as dark tunnels, passageways, and poorly lit squares, parks and car parks.
- Consider safety factors such as even illumination and avoiding glare
- Respond to site-specific conditions including materials, sight lines, and adjacent uses
- Engage local community in the selection and design process
- Consider environmental factors



Opportunity to add creative lighting in tunnel



Rainbow light installation

Case Study: Aspire

Aspire, located in Sydney, is a light-based public artwork by Warren Langley that shows how targeted illumination can turn an uninviting thoroughfare into a welcoming civic place. Installed along a road bridge, the piece uses carefully calibrated lighting to improve visibility and clarify routes for pedestrians, transforming a pass-through into a space that feels hospitable and cared for. Thoughtful, creative interventions like this demonstrate how design can meaningfully improve spaces and places.

Beyond function, Aspire brings beauty and atmosphere to an otherwise uninviting setting. Its illuminated ‘blooms’ demonstrate how creative light art can unlock the social potential of tunnels, underpasses, and connectors that are often overlooked.

Sources:

<https://www.warrenlangley.com.au>



Case Study: Pride in Place - Gillingham

Gillingham Pride in Place is a High Street regeneration project centred on a new Civic Square at the crossroads of the High Street, Sappers Walk, and Green Street. The square creates a vibrant, flexible space for meeting, shopping, and community events, designed to feel welcoming and safe for all users. By day, public art, planting, and playful colour animate the heart of the town; by night, effect lighting fills the space with warm, colourful illumination, improving legibility and perceptions of safety.

Greening and stewardship are central to the design. A new planting bed and tree, cared for by the Friends of Gillingham Square, anchors the space, while a seat carved from the burnt Green Street tree provides a meaningful link to local memory and craft. The layout accommodates markets and seasonal programming, such as a Christmas tree, and explores rain gardens to manage surface water and boost biodiversity. Together, these interventions deliver a visible uplift for Gillingham High Street, blending public art, flexible civic space, and community-led care to build pride in place.

Sources:

HTA Design



Case Study: Gillingham Open lines

Gillingham Open Lines is a collaborative regeneration proposal by Medway Council and Peel L&P to create a 1.4 km pedestrian and cycle Greenway along a disused railway line. Submitted to the government's Levelling Up Fund, the project would connect Gillingham Waterfront, Chatham Waters, local university campuses, Gillingham station, and the town centre, providing a direct, car-free route that supports active travel, health, and wellbeing.

The scheme integrates green infrastructure with community amenities, including gardens, pocket parks, and informal play spaces, to encourage everyday use and social interaction. Upgraded lighting and CCTV enhance safety and child-friendliness, while new planting improves air quality and biodiversity. By stitching together key employment, education, transport, and retail destinations, Gillingham Open Lines aims to boost local connectivity, reduce barriers to movement, and catalyse wider town centre regeneration.

Sources:

www.medway.gov.uk

HTA Design



Encouraging Active Travel

Active travel can be encouraged through clear wayfinding, including walking and cycling routes, distances and estimated journey times. Simple information can give users greater confidence to choose active travel.

Signage can highlight connections to key destinations, attractions, green spaces, amenities and public transport, helping users understand how routes connect across the area.

Active travel routes should be clearly integrated into the wider wayfinding network, particularly at key decision points. Where appropriate, they can also form part of themed trails and visitor experiences.

Wayfinding can help make walking and cycling both practical and enjoyable, encouraging users to explore more of the area while supporting sustainable travel.

Guidance

- Identify cycle routes that would benefit from wayfinding or creative interventions.
- Prioritise routes connecting key attractions and visitor destinations.
- Signpost distances and journey times where appropriate.
- Connect cycling routes with walking and wider active travel networks.
- Use creative interventions to enhance the visitor experience.
- Ensure signage is consistent with the wider wayfinding strategy.



Examples of active travel signposting



Case Study: Tulip Cycle Wands

The Tulip Cycle Wands initiative in London uses elegant, tulip-shaped flexible posts to create safe, attractive separation between bike lanes and motor traffic.

By providing clear, human-scale protection without heavy engineering, the wands make routes feel calmer and more inviting for everyday riders, families, and new cyclists.

Their sculptural visibility improves driver awareness and reduces close passes, while the forgiving design lowers the severity of any impacts. Streets look better and feel safer, which builds public confidence, encourages mode shift, and helps more people choose cycling for short trips, commuting, and leisure.

Source
<https://tulipcyclewands.com>



6.0

Digital layer

Digital layer

Digital Stories

The opportunity of refreshing the existing wayfinding enables us to look to the future and include digital capacity within the updated signage.

The inclusion of QR codes, enables us to direct users to additional information along the routes - and allows us to keep updating digital information for repeat engagement.

QR codes are common practice in the public realm now, so different creative ways to incorporate them, and any information they hold should be considered.

Digital content should be considered as an additional layer to the physical wayfinding system, rather than a single standalone proposal.

To ensure a seamless user experience, any QR code or digital link that becomes inactive 404 error page should be redirected back to the Medway homepage, avoiding dead ends and ensuring that the digital layer remains accessible and useful over time.

Once the Medway Tourism App has launched, a collaboration or promotional campaign could direct users to that information.



Examples of digital integration in the public realm



Case Study: Untold Chatham

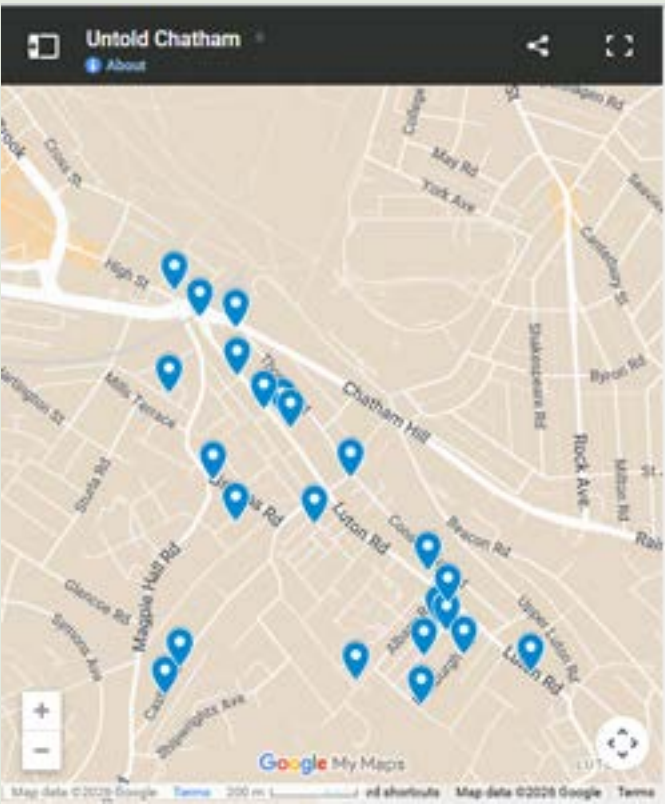
Untold Chatham is a community heritage project led by resident-driven organisation Arches Local, designed to bring the town’s hidden history to life. Building on a successful pilot that installed 30 plaques in the Luton area, the expanded trail will place 100 vinyl plaques in ground-floor windows of eligible properties built before 1925. Each plaque carries a short summary of the property’s past, often highlighting the first known resident and their occupation, and a QR code that links to an interactive digital map, encouraging people to explore nearby stories and discover the connections between streets, homes and local lives.

At its heart, the project celebrates the ordinary people, places and events that shaped Chatham. Research has already surfaced evocative narratives, from South Africa-born Royal Navy sailmaker Edward Kraatskow, to Emily Waller, who ran a small “shop” from her Victorian sitting room, and Reginald Thomas Peterson of Thorold Road, who served in the Royal Australian Navy and died when HMAS Yarra was attacked during the Second World War.

Participation is free and open to both residents and businesses within the project boundary. The plaques are fully removable, making them suitable for homeowners and renters alike. Through this simple, visible intervention paired with digital tools, Untold Chatham fosters local curiosity, strengthens civic pride and creates an accessible, evolving record of Chatham’s social history. Interested participants can apply via Arches Local to research and showcase the history of their own property and add their window to the town-wide trail.

Sources:

www.archeslocal.org.uk/untoldchatham/
www.futuremedway.co.uk/category/news/chatham



Case Study: Talking Telescopes

Talking Telescopes is a Heritage Lottery Funded project at The Strand Leisure Park in Gillingham that lets visitors hear first-hand memories while viewing the Medway Estuary through three interactive audio telescopes. Developed by Medway Council with MidKent College students and Medway Plus, the devices play pre-recorded stories from local residents about the site's heyday, illuminating The Strand's evolution from its early riverside leisure origins to its mid-20th-century popularity. Interpretation panels and a restored mural complement the experience, celebrating Britain's only surviving outdoor saltwater pool.

Launched at The Strand's riverside area in Gillingham, the project shares local history and personal reflections tied to the waterfront's 125th anniversary

Sources
www.upchurchmatters.blogspot.com
www.naturegirlblogdotcom.wordpress.com



Case Study: Oral History Medway

Oral History Medway is a community-driven initiative dedicated to uncovering and preserving the stories of under-represented people across the Medway Towns. By working closely with working class communities, diaspora communities, faith groups, and LGBTQIA+ groups, the project ensures that voices often missing from the public record are heard and valued. Its core purpose is to address the democratic deficit in Medway's archives so that the historical record reflects the area's full breadth of experience and identity.

The project actively engages residents to collect and document personal histories, focusing on themes that reveal the texture of everyday life and social change. Work with diaspora communities records the experiences of Gurkha, Chinese, Ukrainian, and Muslim residents. Engagement with working class communities explores places like football supporters clubs and working men's clubs, examining their role in social life and the reasons many have declined. Housing and social change projects capture the interwoven lives of people in retirement homes and close-knit neighbourhoods. Intergenerational initiatives bring older and younger residents together to share stories, reduce isolation, and build mutual understanding.

A lasting legacy is central to the work. All recordings are deposited at the Medway Archives Centre so researchers, students, and future generations can access them. By training participants in interviewing and recording techniques, Oral History Medway empowers communities to continue documenting their own histories. More than a repository, it is a movement to make local history inclusive, accessible, and truly representative of everyone who has shaped the Medway Towns.

Sources:
www.oralhistorymedway.co.uk

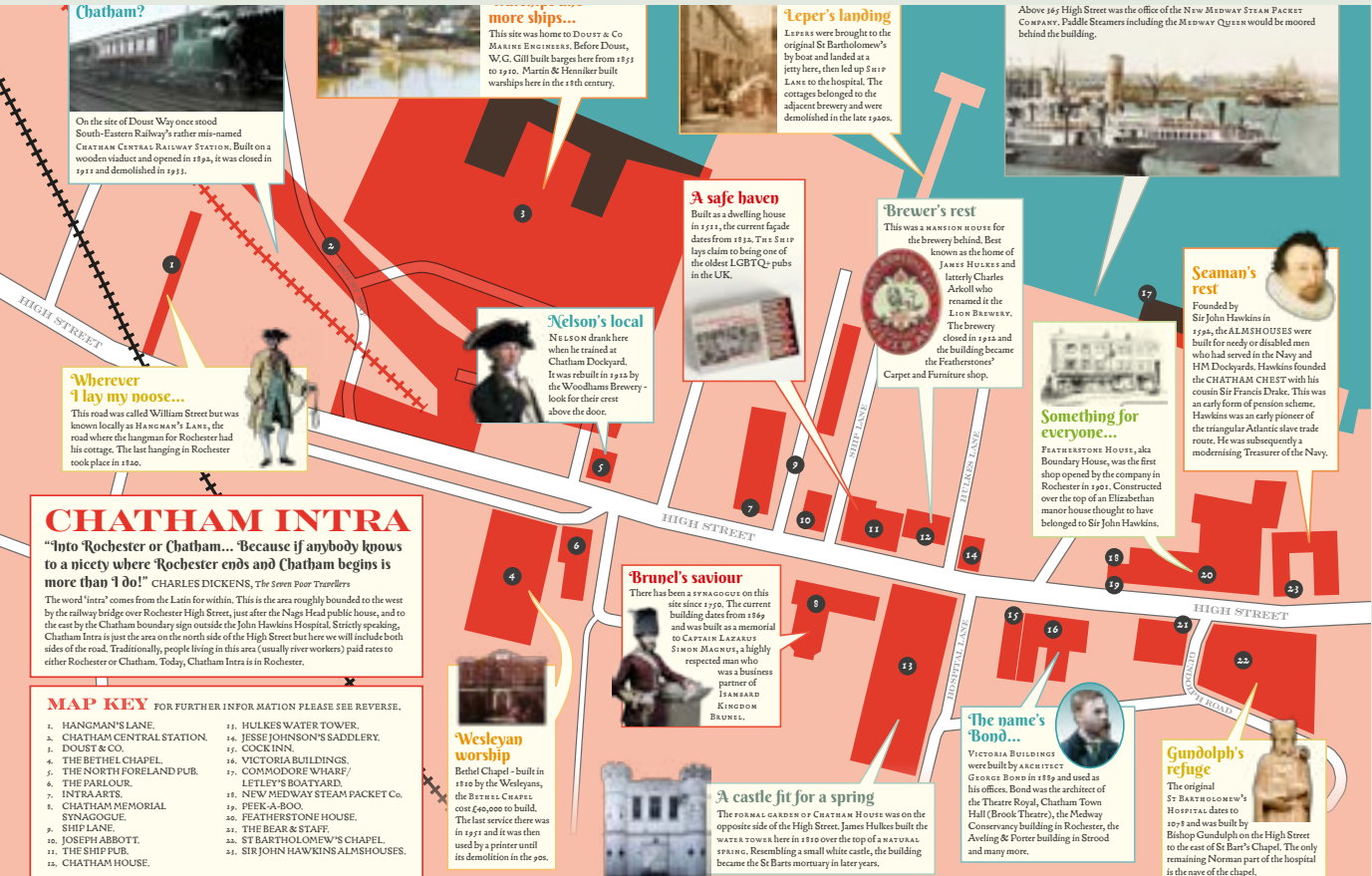


Case Study: Chatham Intra Shopfronts
Improvements to shopfronts in the form of art installation and window displays (the examples shown here from the Chatham Intra High Street Heritage Action Zone), have previously been driven by community-led regeneration and backed by local council funding such as the Shop Front Improvement Grant.

Through supporting the revitalisation of empty or underused commercial spaces within a prominent high street, and crafting creative glimpses into local heritage and stories, the initiative invites both locals and visitors to engage in the narrative themselves. One way of achieving this has been the creation of the Chatham Intra Heritage Trail, available to download from the Visit Medway and Medway Council websites, for use in both physical and digital forms. The element of surprise that comes from pausing on the street to admire a well-curated window display, evolves into a self-led journey into the stories that shape a place.



Using existing shop fronts to display QR codes

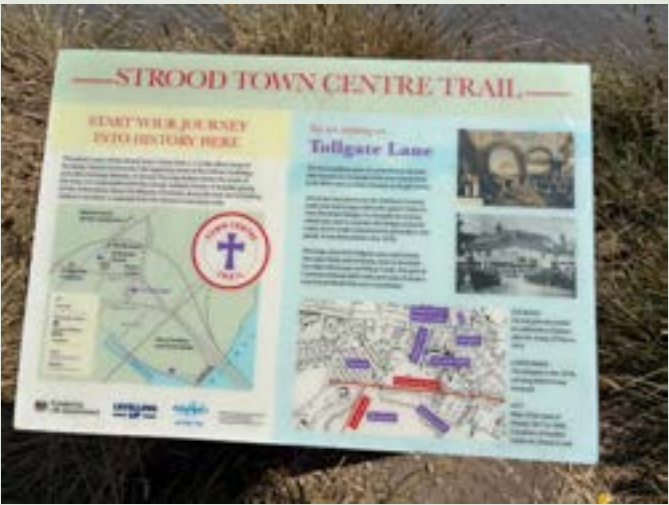


Bringing the history of Intra to life

Case Study: Strood Town Centre Trail
The Strood Trail is a 1.2 mile circular route that guides residents and visitors through Strood's historic heart, linking the Esplanade, High Street, St Nicholas Church, and the former Aveling and Porter Engineering Works. Directional sticker markers lead the way, while three information panels share archival images and stories at key points.

Starting anywhere on the loop, walkers encounter landmarks including the churchyard at St Nicholas, Gun Lane and North Street's heritage sites, Angel Corner with David Annand's Time Piece sculpture, and the locations of the 13th century Newark Hospital and Zoar Chapel. Launched with community support and local councillors, the project was funded through Medway's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to boost local pride and strengthen community connections.

Sources
<https://www.medway.gov.uk/stroodtrail>



7.0

Delivery &
Stewardship

Delivery and Stewardship

The quality and longevity of Medway’s wayfinding system depends not only on sound design principles but on clear, enforceable mechanisms for delivery, maintenance and long-term stewardship. A well-designed system that is inconsistently delivered, poorly maintained or inadequately managed will quickly lose its coherence and effectiveness. This section therefore sets out the practical framework through which the -wide wayfinding system will be funded, implemented and sustained over time.

The Council recognises that the wayfinding system cannot be delivered through public investment alone. The scale of growth and development anticipated across Medway over the coming years presents a significant opportunity to use the planning system to secure developer contributions towards wayfinding infrastructure, and to ensure that all new development connects meaningfully into the -wide system. This section sets out how that opportunity will be realised in practice.

Equally, the long-term success of the system depends on clear lines of responsibility for asset ownership, inspection, maintenance and replacement. This section establishes the Council’s stewardship framework and the expectations placed on other parties who may own or manage wayfinding assets within their development or landholding.

Delivery Mechanisms

The -wide wayfinding system will be delivered through a combination of public investment and developer contributions. The Council will pursue a range of funding mechanisms to enable the phased implementation of the system across Medway’s towns, waterfront areas and key routes. The principal mechanisms are set out below.

Section 106 Agreements

Where a planning application is likely to generate significant pedestrian or visitor movement, or where a development site forms part of or adjoins a key wayfinding route identified in this Guide, the Council will seek contributions towards wayfinding infrastructure through a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Such contributions may include:

- The design, procurement and installation of on-site wayfinding elements compliant with the Medway Wayfinding System as set out in Section 4 of this Design Guide;
- Financial contributions towards off-site wayfinding improvements on key approach routes to the development, including connections to town centres, riverside areas, transport hubs and heritage assets;
- Contributions towards the updating of mapping and information content across the wider network where a development introduces new destinations or significantly alters pedestrian desire lines; and
- Commuted sums for the maintenance and replacement of wayfinding assets over an agreed period, where assets are to be adopted by the Council or managed by a third party.

All Section 106 contributions relating to wayfinding will be assessed on the basis of the three statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended): they must be necessary to make the development

acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Applicants are encouraged to engage with the Council at the pre-application stage to discuss the likely scope of wayfinding contributions and to incorporate these into the design and viability assessment of their proposals from the outset.

Public Realm Projects and Capital Programmes

The Council and its partners, including Homes England, National Highways, Network Rail, Historic England and other public bodies, will continue to bring forward public realm improvement schemes across Medway’s town centres, waterfront areas and key pedestrian routes. All such schemes must incorporate wayfinding elements that comply with this Guide and contribute positively to the coherence of the -wide system.

Where public realm works are programmed by the Council’s highways, regeneration or placemaking teams, the Council will ensure that wayfinding design is integrated into the scheme from the earliest stage of project development, rather than addressed as a separate or secondary workstream. This will include coordination between relevant Council departments to ensure consistency of specification, procurement and installation.

Transport Schemes and Active Travel Funding

Schemes delivered through national transport funding programmes, including Active Travel England grants, Levelling Up Fund successors, and other central government infrastructure investment, present important opportunities to deliver wayfinding improvements on key routes connecting Medway’s towns, stations, cycling network and riverside. The Council will seek to embed wayfinding requirements within the design briefs and funding bids for all such schemes, ensuring that active travel investment also delivers tangible improvements to legibility and navigation.

Medway Council Responsibility Framework

Medway Council is the primary steward of the -wide wayfinding system. The Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining the system specifications set out in this Guide, for approving any variations to the standard components and design language, and for coordinating the delivery of wayfinding improvements across its own programmes and those of partner organisations.

The Council will designate a named officer or team with responsibility for the management of the wayfinding system. This function will include:

- Maintaining a live asset register of all wayfinding installations across the , including type, location, condition, ownership and maintenance schedule;
- Conducting periodic condition audits of wayfinding assets and identifying those requiring repair, cleaning or replacement;
- Coordinating with development management, highways, regeneration and communications teams to ensure that the system remains up to date and consistent as the evolves; and
- Reviewing and updating the content of mapping and information panels to reflect changes in destinations, routes, transport provision and land use.

The Council will publish an annual Wayfinding Stewardship Report summarising the condition of the network, the programme of planned improvements, and the contributions received through developer obligations. This report will be made publicly available and will inform the ongoing prioritisation of wayfinding investment.

Prioritising the Local Community

The Council is committed to ensuring that the management and evolution of Medway’s wayfinding system reflects the needs and priorities of local communities. In implementing this Guide, the Council will:

- Engage with residents, businesses and community organisations when planning significant changes to wayfinding on key routes or within specific character areas;
- Provide accessible mechanisms for members of the public to report damaged, missing or inaccurate signage, and ensure that reported issues are responded to within a defined timeframe;
- Support community-led wayfinding initiatives — including heritage trails, public art programmes and local interpretation projects — provided these are consistent with the design language and system hierarchy set out in this Guide; and
- Ensure that stewardship decisions consider the needs of all users, with particular attention to those with accessibility requirements, as set out in Section 5 of this Guide.

Where wayfinding assets on publicly accessible private land, such as waterfront developments, cultural venues or transport interchanges, are owned and managed by private or third-sector organisations, the Council will seek to establish a formal stewardship agreement, either through a Section 106 obligation or a separate memorandum of understanding, to ensure that those assets are maintained to the standards required by this Guide and remain coordinated with the wider system.

Replacement Cycles and Maintenance Standards

All wayfinding assets installed in accordance with this Guide should be designed and specified with durability and maintainability in mind. The Council will establish minimum performance standards for materials, finishes and fixings, which will be set out in the accompanying Technical Specification Document. Applicants and developers are required to use components that meet these standards.

As a general principle, wayfinding assets should be designed with a minimum operational lifespan of fifteen to twenty years, with provision for content updates, including mapping panels, QR codes and digital interfaces, at shorter intervals as required. Replacement programmes will be managed through the Council’s asset register and capital maintenance budgets, supplemented where appropriate by commuted sums secured through developer obligations.

Requirements for Planning Applications Affecting the Public Realm

All planning applications that affect or interface with the public realm, including streetscape works, development on or adjacent to key pedestrian or cycling routes, and schemes involving any element of signage or wayfinding, must address the requirements of this Guide. Failure to do so will be treated as a deficiency in the application and may result in a request for further information, the imposition of planning conditions, or, where non-compliance is fundamental, a reason for refusal.

Wayfinding Integration Statement

All major applications, and any applications identified by the Council as having a significant interface with the public realm, must be accompanied by a Wayfinding Integration Statement. This document should set out:

- How the proposal connects to, and contributes positively to, the -wide wayfinding system;
- The type and location of all wayfinding elements proposed as part of the scheme, cross-referenced against the system hierarchy set out in Section 4 of this Guide;
- How the design of proposed wayfinding elements complies with the common design language established in this Guide, including typography, colour, form and materials;
- How the proposal addresses accessibility requirements in accordance with Section 5 of this Guide; and
- Where applicable, how the digital layer set out in Section 6 - including QR code integration and open data compatibility - will be incorporated.
- The Wayfinding Integration Statement should be prepared by a suitably qualified designer with relevant experience in urban wayfinding or public realm design. It should be submitted at the same time as the main planning application and form part of the Design and Access Statement where one is required.

Compliance with the Medway Wayfinding System Hierarchy

All signage and wayfinding elements proposed as part of a planning application must comply with the system hierarchy established in Section 4 of this Guide. Applicants must not introduce signage types, formats or information structures that sit outside this hierarchy or that create a parallel or competing

wayfinding environment. Where an applicant believes that a departure from the hierarchy is justified by the particular characteristics of a site or use, this must be clearly argued within the Wayfinding Integration Statement and agreed with the Council prior to submission.

Requirements for Major Developments

Major developments, as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and any other development identified by the Council as having a significant impact on the public realm or pedestrian movement, are subject to additional requirements under this Guide, reflecting the scale of their potential impact on, and contribution to, the -wide wayfinding system.

Connection into the -Wide System

All major developments must demonstrate that their wayfinding strategy connects seamlessly into the -wide system. This means ensuring that the routing of pedestrians and cyclists from the development to key destinations, including town centres, stations, waterfront areas and heritage assets, is clearly signposted using system-compliant elements, and that there are no gaps or discontinuities in coverage at the point where the development interfaces with the wider public realm.

Where a major development is located on a key route identified in this Guide, the applicant will be required to deliver or contribute towards wayfinding improvements along that route as part of the development, not merely within the boundary of the site itself. The extent of these off-site requirements will be determined in negotiation with the Council at the pre-application stage and secured through a Section 106 agreement.

Off-Site Wayfinding Contributions

Where a major development introduces a significant new destination, or substantially increases the volume of people moving through the surrounding public realm, the Council will require the applicant to contribute to off-site wayfinding improvements that reflect the development's impact on the wider network. This may include:

- New or upgraded gateway signage at key arrival points serving the development, including stations, car parks and transport interchanges;
- Additions or amendments to existing mapping panels and information points on approach routes;
- Contributions to the digital layer, including the addition of the development to open data mapping platforms and the installation or upgrading of QR-enabled information points in the vicinity; and
- Improvements to route legibility along identified pedestrian and cycling links connecting the development to the wider network.

The scope and value of off-site contributions will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the scale and nature of the development, its location relative to the existing wayfinding network, and the improvements required to ensure that the system remains coherent and fit for purpose following its completion.



Sculpture near Chatham riverside

