

ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD

Regeneration Plan and Investment Priorities

2026 - 2030

Executive Summary

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1. Neighbourhood Board

Led by Doug Wright MBE DL, the independent chair, the Royal Sutton Coldfield Pride in Place Board (The Board) has 19 members including the local MP, councillors, police, education, and community representatives. It is responsible for developing the 10-year Regeneration Plan and 4-year Investment Plan and overseeing up to £20m in funding (2024–2036). The Regeneration Plan has been co-created with the community to reflect local needs and foster collective responsibility.

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council is the Accountable Body for the Pride in Place Programme PiPP and ensures compliance with Managing Public Money, procurement, subsidy control, environmental and equality regulations. It supports project development, commissions external expertise, manages risk, monitors delivery, and ensures accountability.

2. An Overview of Royal Sutton Coldfield

In 2025, with around 109,000 residents, the town combines relatively high employment and incomes with strong transport links, excellent schools, and extensive green space and Sutton Park, one of the largest urban parks in Europe. Cultural assets include Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Highbury and Sutton Arts Theatres, and the Royal Cinema, alongside over 420 community and voluntary groups and 100+ sports groups. Employment is supported by retail, professional services, and business parks such as Minworth and Peddimore, the latter expected to generate 6,500 new jobs, once complete. Challenges include an ageing population, housing costs, local inequalities, and the need to support new investment within the town centre.

Regeneration projects, including the £25m Royal Sutton Coldfield Gateway Scheme, Gracechurch Centre redevelopment, healthcare and active-travel initiatives, and the proposed 5,500-home Langley Sustainable Urban Extension will collectively improve connectivity, inclusivity, and sustainability, securing the town's vibrant future.

The PiPP boundary reflects the eight electoral wards that form the administrative area of Royal Sutton Coldfield as shown in the map overleaf: Across the town, there are notable variations in population size, structure and socio-economic profile across the wards. Overall, the Town performs strongly however, pockets of deprivation persist.

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Centre is Birmingham's largest suburban centre and the economic heart of the town. PiPP Investment will support the ambitions of the Birmingham Local Plan and the Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst the town centre serves the main economic hub, other centres such as Boldmere, Mere Green, New Oscott, Wylde Green, Walmley, and Minworth are important as retail and services locations and sustain neighbourhood economies and community life. In 2028, Royal Sutton Coldfield will celebrate 500th anniversary of its Royal Charter.

- 1 Sutton Four Oaks
- 2 Sutton Mere Green
- 3 Sutton Reddicap
- 4 Sutton Roughly
- 5 Sutton Trinity
- 6 Sutton Vesey
- 7 Sutton Walmley & Minworth
- 8 Sutton Wylde Green



3. Consultation

The Board appointed Genecon to lead on community and other key stakeholder engagement to identify challenges and opportunities for Royal Sutton Coldfield and investment priorities for the PiPP funding. Between May-October 2025, engagement included:

- Two meet the Chair events – **15** local groups attended;
- Community survey & ward drop-ins – **3,750** survey responses, **333** drop-in attendees;
- Research undertaken by community groups – **468** participants from key demographic groups;
- Thematic workgroups – **77** attendees exploring heritage, economy, parks, and sustainability;
- Grassroots Engagement: Explored the needs of under-represented groups (youth, disabled people, working families, older adults, and global majority women);
- Board Meetings - defining local challenges, opportunities, and desired PiPP outcome; Desktop Review – an analysis of socioeconomic and spatial data;
- Survey - This collected information regarding public sentiment and priorities;
- Ward Engagement – detailed ward discussions inviting local feedback. These also served to raise awareness of the PiPP;
- Thematic Workshops: Discussed issues and project ideas across four theme groups – Heritage & Well-being; Economy & Skills; Parks & Sport; Sustainability & Travel.

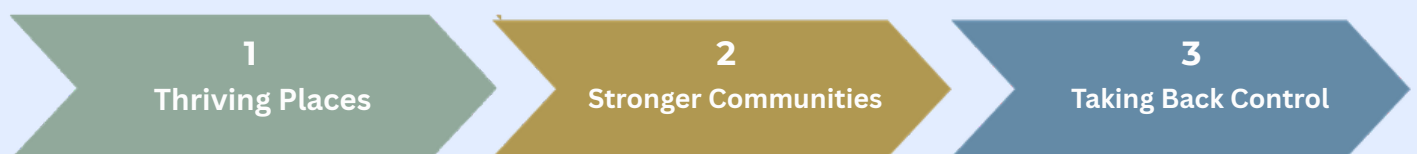
Key Survey Headlines:

- ◆ **96%** of respondents prioritised improving public and green space
- ◆ **85%** viewed the town centre's mix of shops, restaurants and entertainment as a challenge
- ◆ **80%** identified Sutton Park and green spaces as the town's greatest strength
- ◆ **78%** wanted transport investment to feature in investment decisions
- ◆ Key investment needs identified included youth services (**59%**) and wider community activities (**52%**)

4. Evidence

Methodology

In addition to the community engagement data was analysed under the **three PiPP objectives** –



Findings combined secondary, quantitative, and qualitative evidence to shape 10 Priorities for Change – a number of which cut across more than one of the three government objectives for the fund.

Objective 1 - Thriving Places

The Thriving Places theme focuses on revitalising shared spaces - especially Sutton Park, the Town Centre, local centres, and key infrastructure - to boost enterprise, culture, footfall, and community wellbeing. It also considers the role of public services' in promoting the quality of life in the Town.

Analysis revealed a number of challenges and opportunities relating to addressing barriers to active travel (walking, cycling and wheeling) within the town, re-purposing Sutton Coldfield Town Centre and attracting investment to address issues such as a high vacancy rate, declining footfall and under-used buildings, and spaces, including the historic High Street Conservation Area, improving links between Sutton Park and the town centre, supporting the role of local and district centres as hubs for services and community facilities.

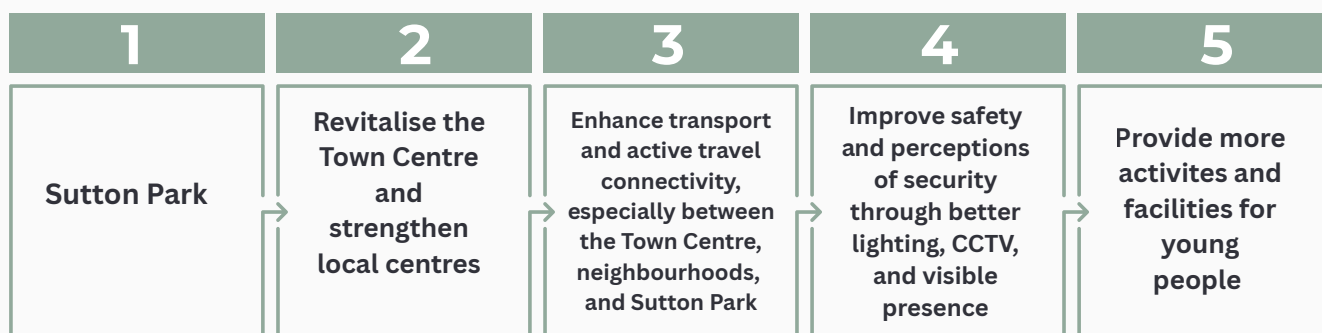
Progress is being made. This includes new housing in the Town Centre and redevelopment of parts of the Gracechurch Centre along with a new ALDI store and a growing trend towards different uses. Planned regeneration initiatives, including the Royal Sutton Coldfield Gateway Scheme and active travel projects aim to enhance connectivity, inclusivity, and sustainability in the expectation this will help to facilitate a vibrant future for the town centre and the town's network of smaller centres.

Qualitative Research Evidence

Engagement across all wards emphasised Sutton Park, the town centre, green spaces, and safety as top priorities. Residents wanted more youth facilities, reliable public transport, affordable parking, and safer cycling and walking routes. Sutton Park and the town's heritage were seen as major assets that could attract more visitors. Thematic sub-groups called for improvements to Sutton Park, improved connectivity from the Town Centre to Sutton Park, a more diverse town centre offer, measures to address anti-social behaviour and more activities and facilities for young people.

Summary and Proposed Investment Themes

Themes for future investment were:-



Objective 2 - Stronger communities

The Stronger Communities theme has reviewed existing levels of community well-being across the town. It also considers the availability of community facilities, services and activities required to meet community needs. Analysis reveals that Royal Sutton Coldfield performs strongly on most social and economic well-being indicators and has a rich base of community and voluntary organisations, across faith, social, cultural, and youth activities, and sports and recreation clubs. Physical assets include three libraries, community centres, and leisure facilities. Sutton Park stands out as the town’s central community asset. Over half of Royal Sutton Coldfield’s land is green space.

However, there are disparities both within and between wards and pockets of deprivation. The English Indices of Deprivation (2025) shows areas of deprivation in central Reddich, the boundary of Reddich and Walmley & Minworth, the south of Vesey and Wylde Green; and the north of Mere Green. These areas are characterised by lower incomes and skill levels/qualifications, poor health and higher levels of crime compared to other areas.

Royal Sutton Coldfield has an older average population than Birmingham and England and older aged residents are more likely to have complex needs for health and social services with limited funding to address. Unmet needs have been identified including loneliness, mental health needs and physical well-being challenges for certain groups. Other community assets require additional funding, including Sutton Park.

Qualitative Evidence

Ward-level engagement emphasised creating and improving green spaces, supporting youth and community infrastructure, and investing in arts, culture, and heritage. Participants also stressed safety, tackling anti-social behaviour, and providing support for vulnerable and homeless residents. Thematic discussions highlighted that Sutton Park defines local identity and contributes to health, recreation, and social cohesion. However, many voluntary groups lack affordable, flexible spaces, and community ownership models were proposed to improve sustainability.

Summary and Proposed Investment Themes

Themes for future investment were:-



Objective 3 - Taking back control

Taking Back Control explores how Sutton Coldfield's community can lead local change by:

- helping residents gain skills and employment;
- equipping community leaders with the knowledge and partnerships to drive local improvement;
- equipping community leaders with the knowledge and partnerships to drive local improvement.

Secondary Research Evidence

Royal Sutton Coldfield performs relatively strongly in education and employment. However, inequality persists: the number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) rose from 1,733 in 2020 to 2,316 in 2025 and school funding to respond to needs remains limited. Royal Sutton Coldfield remains largely a commuter town, though developments such as Peddimore employment park and a diversified town centre are gradually expanding local job options. Significantly, strategic changes in the labour market will mean that opportunities expand for local young people across the ability range in these sectors. Supporting local training and employer collaboration will be essential to ensure residents benefit from emerging opportunities. The voluntary sector is strong but management and delivery capacity is uneven between age groups. Funding is often short-term and administrative requirements complex. Many organisations lack expertise in bid-writing, reporting, and management, and need support to sustain community action.

Quantitative Evidence

Ward discussions and thematic groups called for:

- Training tailored to local economic opportunities;
- Stronger school-employer-community links to assist young people, especially more vulnerable young people to access opportunities;
- More recognition of vocational routes;
- Business support for small firms and social enterprises;
- Greater coordination of community networks and volunteering.

The Economy, Education, Skills and Training group highlighted the need for inclusive employment pathways for those with additional needs and improved understanding of vocational education. The voluntary sector group stressed collaboration, communication platforms, and leadership development as key enablers.

Summary and Proposed Investment Themes

Themes for future investment were:-

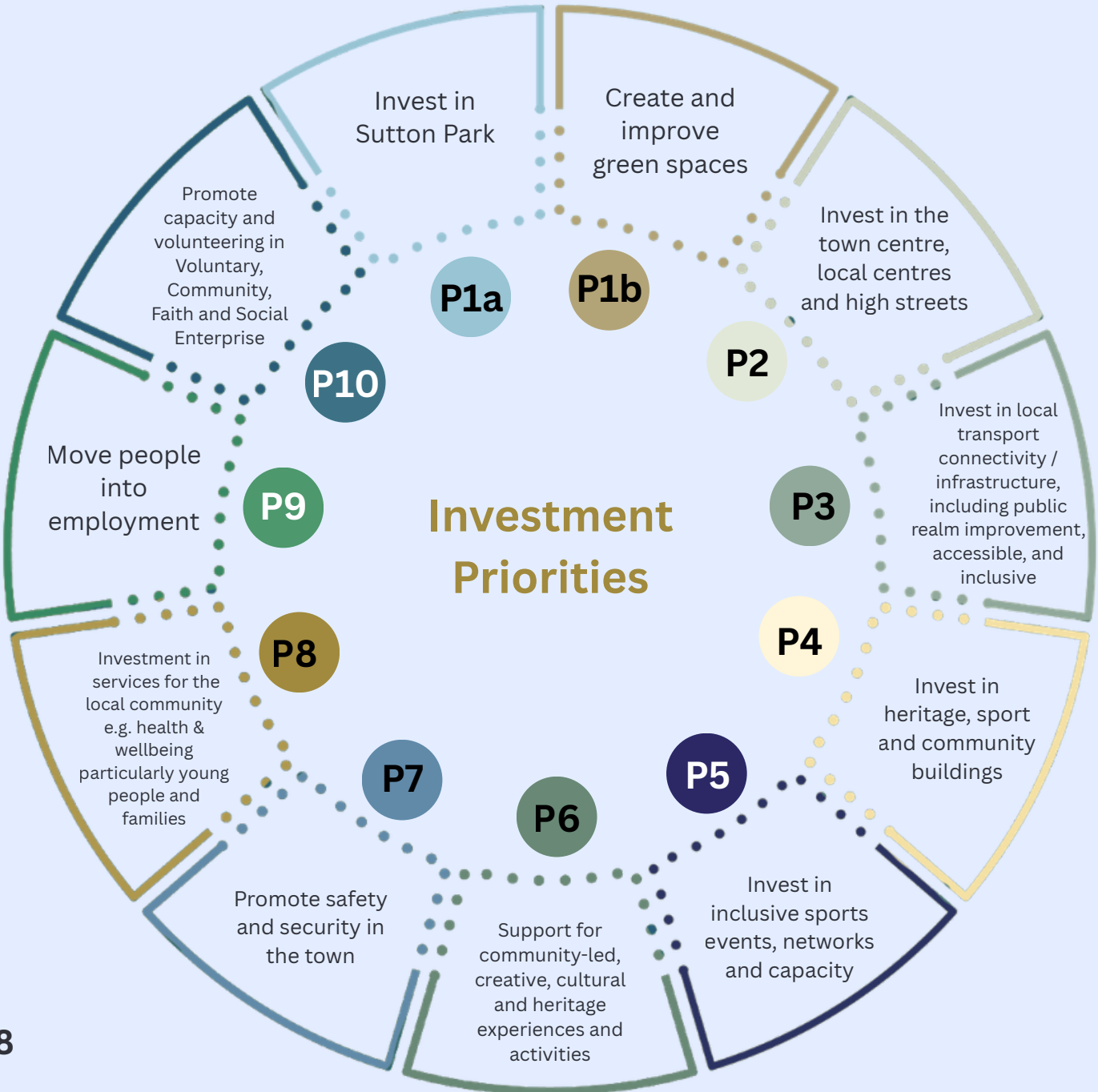
1	2	3	4	5	6
Employment and Skills Development	Support local residents—especially young and vulnerable people—into work through employer networks, placements, and targeted training	Promote both academic and vocational progression routes	Community Capacity and Leadership	Strengthen voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups through training, funding support, and leadership development	Encourage youth volunteering and cross-sector collaboration through the Town Council and Neighbourhood Board

5. Investment Priorities Rationale for Approach

The suggested investment themes were drawn together into 10 Priorities for change set out in the table overleaf. Some are relevant to more than one PiPP Investment Objective. The table also includes the anticipated outcome from delivering the 10 priorities.

The PiPP Regeneration Plan and priorities have been reviewed to ensure they align with existing regional, citywide and local plans and strategies alongside investment programmes focused on inclusive growth, skills, sustainability, connectivity, health, and community wellbeing. This should ensure they compliment each other to increase the likelihood of them being successfully delivered. These strategies include:

The West Midlands Combined Authority's West Midlands Growth Plan (2025), Local Skills Plan (2023) and Local Transport Plan (2023) alongside Birmingham City Council's Local Plan (2017), emerging Development Plan (2025), Strategic Framework for Culture, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and City of Nature Plan (2022) as well as the Town Council's Strategic Plan (2024) and Active Travel Vision (2022). Investment programmes include the local grant programmes operated by Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council and Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust alongside public sector funding for the Royal Sutton Coldfield Gateway Scheme and the Sutton Cottage Hospital Health Hub. A key objective for the Board will involve attracting additional investment from other public, private and philanthropic sources to support future projects aligned with the PiPP Regeneration Plan. This should help maximise PiPP's impact by combining multiple funding streams to support sustainable, community-focused projects.



Priority No.	Priority	Thriving Places	Stronger Communities	Taking Back Control	Proposed Outcomes
P1a	Invest in Sutton Park				- Increased visitor numbers and events hosted - Measurable improvements in biodiversity condition - Long term – The Park builds a reputation as a regional destination
P1b	Create and improve green spaces				- Measurable improvements in biodiversity condition - Improved perceptions of local communities
P2	Invest in the town centre, local centres and high streets				- A reduction in vacancy rates and a more diversified town and local centre economy. - Growth in footfall and dwell-time and local spend - Improved perceptions of town centre vibrancy and visitor experience
P3	Invest in local transport connectivity / infrastructure, including public realm improvement, accessible, and inclusive				- Increased proportion of trips made by walking, cycling or public transport - Increased linked trips between key assets e.g. the Park and the Town Centre - Reduced road accidents
P4	Invest in heritage, sport and community buildings				- Reduction in vacant or underused heritage and community assets. - Improved financial sustainability through ownership of facilities by community organisations and sports clubs - Increased heritage engagement and awareness of the town's heritage
P5	Invest in inclusive sports events, networks and capacity				- Increase participation rates in sport and physical activity, particularly for disabled people and underrepresented groups - Greater diversity of local sports networks and volunteers.
P6	Support for community-led, creative, cultural and heritage experiences and activities				- Growth in local creative and cultural events and attendance - Increased visibility of Sutton Coldfield's civic and cultural identity - Increased visitor numbers
P7	Promote safety and security in the town				- Reduction in anti-social behaviour and shoplifting. - Improve perceptions of safety in public spaces - Increased evening economy participation and confidence
P8	Investment in services for the local community e.g. health and wellbeing particularly young people and families				- Increased levels of participation in preventative health and wellbeing services - Increase in young people engaged in positive activities and support programmes - Improved health outcomes
P9	Move people into employment				- Increased local employment and apprenticeships linked to new investment - Sustained progression from education into further education, training and work
P10	Promote capacity and volunteering in Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise				- Growth in volunteering hours and local leadership roles - Increase in the number and reach of community-led initiatives - Improved financial resilience and collaboration, capacity and skills across the VCFSE sector, education institutions and businesses.

6. Vision for the Future

Underpinning the PiPP is a vision for what Royal Sutton Coldfield will look and feel following delivery of PiPP. This is based on the results of the consultation undertaken and the priorities identified:

Royal Sutton Coldfield is a Town which celebrates its rich heritage, embraces today's opportunities and is fit for the challenges which may lie ahead. Founded in our past, forging into the future. Over the next 10 years Royal Sutton Coldfield will be transformed with its green nature extended from the suburbs through the town centre, seamlessly linked to the jewel in the crown that is Sutton Park. A programme of investment will restore its natural and historic features and improve the park to meet the needs of future generations for everyone to enjoy.

The town centre will evolve to be a vibrant place with a variety of uses and spaces for business, cultural and social activities which is easily accessible for all users. It will be a 'go to' destination for residents and visitors where people dwell and meet in a safe environment with high quality design at its heart.

There will be a sense of pride in our public realm, with re-designed spaces, new planting, surfacing, street furniture and signage alongside investment in its historic fabric, providing the setting and a visible demonstration of a Town which is proud of its past and confident in its future. Key local community facilities and services will be the subject of investment and support to create stronger social networks.

Strong partnerships will be developed to maximise the use of these enhanced facilities providing support for better physical health, mental wellbeing and social connection for all age groups and backgrounds. Royal Sutton Coldfield will be a thriving place where local people ensure that residents, businesses and visitors flourish together, connected by community, culture, shared spaces and opportunity.

7. Next Steps

Now that the PiPP plan and priorities have been agreed the next step is submitting the plan and investment priorities to government for approval. These will be submitted by 28th November with a decision expected in early 2026. If approved, the first funding is expected to be released later in 2026.