

# ADEPT President's Awards 2023

Entry form

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**Award category** Shaping Places for People

**Project Title** Macclesfield town centre was facing an erosion of trade linked to expansion of out of town retail, economic downturn and the rise of online shopping.

**Local authority entrant** Ringway Jacobs/Cheshire East Highways

**Partner/s if applicable** Cheshire East Council and Eurovia

## Headline summary (150 characters max.)

Macclesfield Town Centre was facing an erosion of trade. The redevelopment of Castle Street was decided to create a more appealing area.

## Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3neZg0cjcs>

## Shaping places for people: How was this project an innovative response to a significant concern? (150 words max.)

Macclesfield town centre was facing an erosion of town centre trade linked to expansion of out-of-town retail, economic downturn, and the rise of online shopping.

The project enhanced the area and involved the redevelopment of Castle Street, a well-used pedestrian link between Churchill Street car park and the town centre.

Castle Street was previously a narrow and uninviting pedestrian link, but the redevelopment has created a more appealing area with widened pavements, new seating areas, cycle lanes and tree planting.

It also incorporated sustainable design principles, such as using permeable paving to reduce surface water runoff and installing energy-efficient lighting, it also prioritised public transport by creating bus bays.

By transforming Castle Street, it has created a more vibrant and accessible town centre encouraging people to spend time in the area. The revitalised street has attracted new businesses and visitors, contributing to the local economy and addressing the declining trade.

## Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

The project has enhanced the pedestrian experience by prioritising foot traffic over vehicles. The wider pavements (resurfaced with natural stone) and reduced street clutter have allowed businesses to

create outdoor seating areas, enlivening the street scene and boosting the viability of local businesses.

Granite cobblestone-style paving was used in the road with new street furniture and improved lighting installed. It has also supported more sustainable travel choices by creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. This has increased footfall, encouraging people to visit and attracting investment to the area. Since the completion of the project, £7 million has been invested and 50 new jobs have been created by new businesses.

The scheme has been well received by the community, receiving an award from the Macclesfield Civic Society. The finished project has futureproofed the service by improving connections between the primary shopping area and other destinations, ensuring its sustainability in the long term.

**Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)**

The Castle project involved a high level of collaboration between place and people services both within the council and with external partners and supply chain partners.

The project was initiated by Cheshire East Council (CEC) recognising the need for town centre adaptation. Ringway Jacobs (RJ) and Eurovia worked with the council to bring the Macclesfield strategic regeneration framework into reality, securing funding and developing the scheme. The project also engaged an Urban Design Architect to develop a conceptual design.

In detailed design, a challenge and opportunities workshop was led by RJ and Eurovia, collaborating with client and discipline specialists to maximise scheme outcomes. Pre-construction surveys were procured, and value engineering activities were undertaken to ensure affordability and high quality.

Stakeholder liaison was also a key aspect of the project, with a Public Liaison Officer building relationships with businesses and ensuring effective communication through press, newsletters, web/social media, and engagement.

**Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care and external organisations. (150 words max.)**

Prior to finalising the detailed designs, the project received significant support through stakeholder engagement events involving businesses on the street, the local Grosvenor Shopping Centre, and various local groups.

The East Cheshire Eye Society, an independent charity supporting people with sight loss, provided valuable feedback that influenced the design, including the 60mm kerb height, contrasting kerb colour, wide kerb width, and decluttering of street furniture. Tactile paving was also integrated into the design for crossing points to enhance accessibility. The Macclesfield Disability Information Bureau were also involved.

The design aimed to reflect the local context and community, with bespoke kerbstones featuring extracts from a poem titled 'A Love Letter to Macc' written by Jacqui Wood, artistic director of community arts organization Arc. The new benches were supplied by a local furniture business, Artform Urban Furniture, located in nearby Poynton, known for creating inspiring and functional outdoor spaces.

**Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)**

Since the completion of Castle Street, CEC have developed concept designs for a wider area of the town centre. Castle Street joins a growing portfolio of successful public realm schemes delivered by RJ and CEC.

Value for money was at the heart of the project - removal of materials offsite was minimised and materials carefully selected to ensure value. Some street furniture was retained for reuse. Old paving

slabs were gifted to community schemes as part of social value commitments. Costly service diversions were avoided, with a reduced number of trees planted.

All materials removed were recycled and used again as part of our waste management strategy and energy efficient LED lighting was installed to minimise electricity use. Wider pavements maintained good levels of air quality, taking vehicles away from the building line.

These measures highlight the consideration of cost-effective and sustainable solutions for funding and implementing public realm projects.

### **All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry**

The project's communication plan kept the public and stakeholders informed through press releases, newsletters, web and social media updates, and engagement activities. The high level of engagement and collaboration with the community and external organisations contributed to the success of the project and the positive reception it received.

To minimise the impact on air quality, RJ and Eurovia utilised electric plant and equipment, reducing onsite emissions to zero, and minimising noise nuisance for locals.

This project was an innovative response to a significant concern as it strove to address the problem of the declining town centre trade. It did so by making the town centre more accessible with improved pedestrian links, enhancing the area with its design, and encouraging sustainable travel modes. It also sought to bring funding, development, and strategic planning together to ensure the town centre could remain viable

During the scheme we carried out various examples of social value:

- Donated the onsite printer to Macclesfield Citizens Advice Centre
- Delivering over 100 surplus paving stones to three local community allotments
- Personally delivering supplies to businesses when vehicle access was prohibited
- Removing the existing benches and reinstalling them at Macclesfield Bus Station
- Using a local supplier from Poynton (Artform Urban Furniture) to make the new benches that were installed as part of the scheme

“At every stage, quality, functionality and maintainability of design was discussed – sometimes in the minutia of detail to ensure a robust scheme that met highways demands as well as regeneration objectives that makes the street what it is – a now celebrated, award winning, quite beautiful street.”

Craig Wallace, Cheshire East Council's Regeneration Team