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Shared Space

Breaking Boundaries – Transforming Ashford’s Ring Road

Integral to the expansion of the town centre has been breaking the barrier created by the former Ring Road.

Since its completion in the mid 1970’s, most of the development has turned its back creating an unpleasant, car dominated environment that does not encourage walking or active street frontages.

But a multi-million pound project to transform it back into a two-way system, incorporating the UK’s first fully functioning ‘shared space’ scheme, has dramatically improved both traffic flow and the entire character of Ashford.

The shared space area at the bottom of the lower High Street allows motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists to occupy the same space and create safer environments, with reduced speeds.

Visitors will notice the improved paving and street furniture, and a 20mph zone to increase safety, and the stunning road design makes the area an attractive place for residents, businesses and visitors, stimulating growth and opening up the town centre.

Further phases will be implemented in conjunction with progress on Victoria Way and Park and Ride, that will reduce the need for traffic to enter the town centre.

Since its launch, the area has been accident free and several UK cities and towns, including Edinburgh, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Oxford, Blackpool and Staines, are considering redesigning their urban streets using the principles of shared space - using Ashford as a model for success.

Kent County Council have produced a DVD to explain more about shared space - [Watch the DVD](#).

Read the story of the Ashford ring road project as told by the participants - [The Ashford Ring Road Project leaflet 3.03 MB PDF](#)

A series of information leaflets has also been produced, which provides information on the scheme download the [Breaking Boundaries Leaflets](#) or visit the [Kent County Council website](#).

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