

Final Report
Redditch Town Centre Strategy



MARTIN BROWN



ARUP

Redditch Borough
Council

Town Centre Strategy

Final Report

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Council

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September 2009

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.
It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party

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1 Introduction

In March 2009 Arup were appointed by Redditch Borough Council to deliver a Town Centre Strategy for Redditch. Working alongside market experts Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), and urban design specialist Martin Brown the team have put together a high quality and robust strategy which responds to the particular challenges and opportunities of the project, and is capable of delivering a strong and successful vision for the future of Redditch Town Centre.

Redditch has a complex town centre which fulfills different roles and functions and enjoys different relationships with its hinterland and the wider area. In developing a meaningful and realistic Town Centre Strategy, the approach we have adopted to this study seeks to build upon a real understanding of how the town centre functions, its relationship to the wider community and its surroundings, the role it plays now and the potential future directions through which it could continue to develop as a sustainable centre serving the needs of the surrounding communities.

1.1 Requirements of the Strategy

The brief for this study sets out a number of requirements for the Town Centre Strategy which should be addressed, namely:

- Analyse information from the recently completed Retail and Leisure needs survey of the Borough;
- Make recommendations based on the above survey, having regard to relevant national, regional and local planning policies and guidance as well as emerging Council priorities and Town Centre initiatives;
- Articulate a vision for the Town Centre and establish a common goal which will guide development and growth; and

- Establish and Action Plan to implement the Strategy.

A number of other related elements were also identified by the brief and which were required to form part of the study:

- A Town Centre Audit – an assessment in qualitative and quantitative terms, the scope for improvement;
- An environmental audit;
- Address issues of safety and security;
- Assess infrastructure, access and movement

Finally, the brief identified a number of areas on which the study should make recommendations, namely:

- Town centre development and economic development;
- The public realm, environment and urban design;
- Partnership, resources and management; and
- An Action Plan to implement the strategy.

Additionally it is anticipated that the Strategy should include:

- A profile of the centre, identifying its essential qualities;
- An assessment of it's role and the need and scope for change, renewal and diversification; and
- A town centre management strategy or initiative.

1.2 Aim of the Strategy

Specifically the Redditch Town Centre Strategy aims to:

- Set out the baseline position of Redditch Town Centre;
- Establish a vision for the Town Centre, which is based upon a sound evidence base as well as a clear understanding of the existing situation and through consultation with Stakeholders;

- Identify broad-scale property and land assembly interventions, especially in relation to recognised opportunity sites in the town;
- Ensure the accessibility and connectedness of the Town Centre;
- Establish the legibility of the public realm;
- Identify areas where transformational change can be achieved;
- Identify cross cutting actions to be achieved across Redditch Town Centre; and
- Establish a robust programme of actions for strategic investment priorities for Redditch Borough Council and its partners.

1.3 Our Approach

The approach undertaken for this Town Centre Strategy aimed to address the requirements of the brief as identified above. In addition, we sought to address a number of other issues identified during the development of the study, which includes:

- How to achieve a vital and distinctive role for Redditch town centre, through improvements to the existing fabric and sensitive and appropriate development of opportunity sites;
- How to attract increased activity into the centre, particularly at night time; and
- How to accommodate the competing requirements of different uses in a quality environment.

The common link in achieving the requirements of the study and delivering a Strategy is the provision of a quality attractive environment in which people chose to live, work and spend money. Careful husbandry of value, existing assets, and

phasing will be needed to stimulate change given that Redditch is not currently a high value location.

To be successful, it is critical that the Strategy should therefore identify the right mix of substantial opportunities to deliver change, with quick wins through small steps which indicate a positive direction of travel, establish support, build momentum and achieve 'buy in'.

Therefore our approach sought to examine opportunities and constraints first, so that the solution seeks to accommodate vision and potential from the start, rather than retro-fitting solutions to the existing situation.

The Town Centre Strategy for Redditch has been developed cumulatively by a team of urban designer, transport, landscape, environment, commercial market and town planning professionals.

The approach taken to the development of the strategy was divided into three stages, the first of which being data collection and analysis in which a baseline position for Redditch was produced through an evidence review and the context set within which the strategy developed. Stage two of the approach was the undertaking of a Stakeholder Workshop in which the findings of the evidence review were tested, a shared vision developed, in addition to the establishment of a series of priority actions and opportunities to assist in moving towards the vision. Building upon the outputs from the first two stages, a strategy has been developed which supports the sustainable future development of the town centre. This report sets out the details of this strategy, the actions identified, how it can be implemented and key delivery partners.

The Town Centre Strategy should be Credible and Deliverable.

1.4 Structure of the Report

Chapter 2 provides a context for the study, focusing on the socio-economic profile, the residential offer, educational facilities and planning policy context of the town centre.

Chapter 3 examines the existing evidence base relating to the retail offer, commercial and office market and leisure and hotel facilities.

Chapter 4 considers the findings of the urban design analysis of the town centre in terms of quality of place, dominant features, accessibility and movement, car parking, safety and security, open and public space and townscape.

Chapter 5 sets out the results of the environmental audit of the town centre undertaken as part of this study.

Chapter 6 documents the stakeholder engagement which has been undertaken to inform the evidence base, support the visioning process and identify key actions and priorities.

Chapter 7 provides a conclusion to the evidence base for the study and provides the connection from this to the development of the Town Centre Strategy.

Chapter 8 sets out the Town Centre Strategy. This includes a vision for Redditch Town Centre, identifies the guiding principles which underpin the strategy, sets out the cross cutting themes and identifies the priority projects and actions.

Chapter 9 examines the potential outcomes of the Strategy projects and actions.

Chapter 10 sets out a framework for implementation and investment, delivery mechanisms, funding, risk assessment, phasing strategy and action plan.

2 Redditch Town Centre in Context

This section of the report considers the main issues for the strategy; the current role and context for the town centre, and the town centre's position in terms of planning policy.

2.1 The Study Area

Redditch Town Centre lies within the Borough of Redditch which is within the County of Worcestershire. Redditch is bordered to the east and south east by the county of Warwickshire. The town of Redditch is the main town in the Borough and is identified in the Draft Phase Two Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) as a strategic centre and a Settlement of Significant Development (SSD).

Redditch Town Centre is located 14.5 miles south of the Birmingham conurbation and a similar distance from Solihull, with Birmingham International Airport approximately 30 minutes drive time away. Stratford upon Avon is located to the south east of Redditch and to its south west lie's Worcester. Redditch has good connections to its surrounding area with Junction 2 of the M42 located to the north of the town.

Whilst Redditch has no 'High Street', the traditional heart of the centre is around Church Green and St. Stephens Church, with an outdoor market located at Church Green. The other main focus to the town centre is the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Originally opened in the 1970's, the Kingfisher Centre is the main shopping area in Redditch and has undergone substantial development since the millennium which has contributed to it becoming one of the largest covered shopping centres in the West Midlands. The Palace Theatre and St Stephens Church are key landmarks within the town centre, with the reputation of the former extending well beyond Redditch.

The Kingfisher Centre, along with Church Green and municipal buildings which include the Town Hall, Redditch central library

and the North East Worcestershire (NEW) College are enclosed on three sides by the raised one-way, three-lane Redditch Ringway. Designed for access to the car parks, it illustrates the early *roads for prosperity* approach in new town design philosophy applied in the UK between the 1960s and 1980s. Whilst providing access to the town centre, the ring road also separates the centre from its hinterland, preventing its further expansion and inhibiting pedestrian connectivity. The town centre operates as a service centre for a wide catchment area. The central bus and rail station are located close to each other but share a poor environment.

The study area for the Strategy (Figure 2.1 below) is focused on the town centre of Redditch. The boundary broadly follows the Redditch Ringway and the Coventry Highway, but also includes land around the train station and Edward Street, the 'opportunity site' at Prospect Hill and the Trafford Retail Park on Ipsley Street. Figure 2.2 overleaf highlights the land within council ownership in the study area, with the legend depicting the type of council ownership of each of these pieces of land.

Figure 2.1: Study Area Map

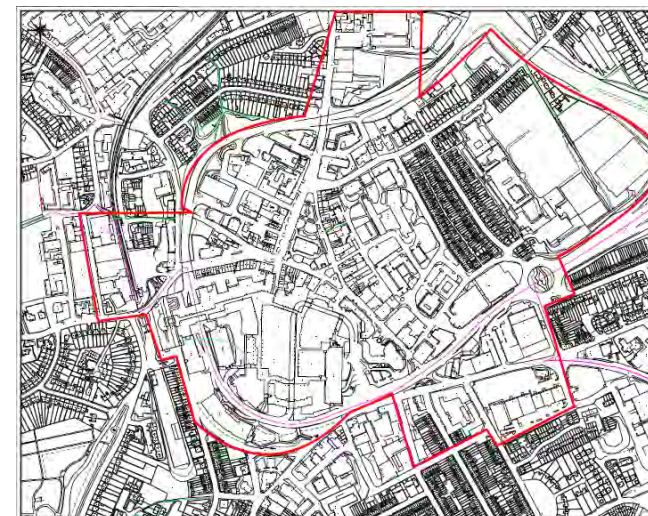
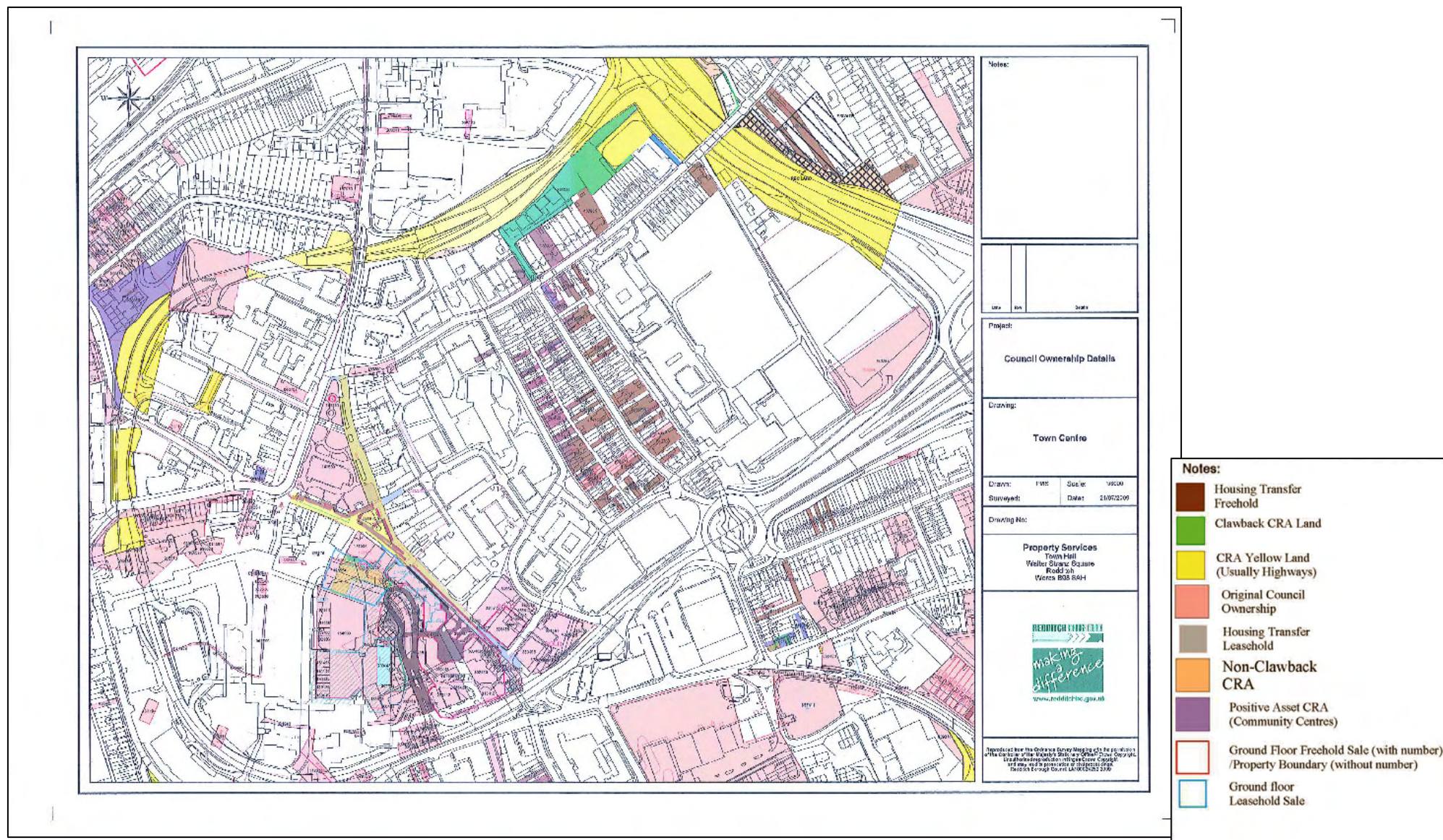


Figure 2.2: Council Land Ownership



2.2 Socio/economic profile

Socio-economic statistics have been reviewed at three spatial levels; the West Midlands region, the Redditch Borough Council administrative boundary and the study area of Redditch Town Centre which we have defined as lying within the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA) 004A. It is important to note that this LLSOA covers a larger area than the town centre boundary; however, it is seen as the best spatial level for this analysis.

2.2.1 Demographics

The population of the study area, based on data for Lower Layer Super Output Area 004A is 1,336¹ which accounts for 1.7% of the population of the Redditch Borough Administrative Area (78,807).

2.2.2 Ethnicity and Religion

Understanding the ethnic make up of the study area is crucial to the regeneration of any area, a fact which is recognised in the document Transforming Places; Changing Lives; *“regeneration needs to be developed with a sensitive understanding of the demographic make up of the local population”*².

In terms of religion, the 2001 census identifies Christian and Muslim groups as the most prominent within the study area, with 50.75%, 32.56% of the population respectively.

In terms of ethnic groupings, the 63% of residents within the Redditch Study area fall within the grouping of White British or Irish. Based on the 2001 census data 33% of residents stated their ethnic group was Asian or Asian British, 2% of residents stated their ethnic group was Mixed Race and Black or Black British respectively.

¹ Neighbourhood Statistics, Census Data 2001

² CLG, Transforming Places Changing Lives- Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework, May 2009.

2.2.3 Economic Activity

In terms of economic activity within Redditch Town Centre, 39.8% of the economically active population (working age population, as defined by Census 16 – 74 year old) are in full time employment, with 11.4% part time and 8.3% self employed.

5.4% of economically active people in the Redditch Town Centre area are unemployed (this excludes those counted as economically inactive). This figure is higher than the percentage of economically active people unemployed in the wider Redditch Administrative Area (3.6%), the West Midlands (3.8%) and England (3.4%).

Recent ACORN analysis (2009) which classifies the residential population of Redditch according to five main groups i.e. wealthy achievers, urban prosperous, comfortably off, moderate means, and hard pressed shows the residential population of Redditch to be broadly consistent with the population of Great Britain as a whole but having a significantly lower population of the most affluent compared to nearby Worcester.

2.3 Residential Offer

There are only 520 households in Redditch Town Centre (at LLSOA 004A), which accounts for just 2% of the households for the whole of the Redditch Borough Administrative Area. As the LLSOA boundary is bigger than the study area and the majority of dwellings in the LLSOA fall outside the study area, socio economic analysis of household composition is of limited value.

The RSS requirement is that Redditch should accommodate up to 6,600 new homes during the strategy period (2006-2026), although not all of this is within Redditch Borough. This is a significant increase in the housing supply for the Borough and for Redditch as its principal urban area. Recent housing

land studies indicate that Redditch is an area of considerable housing need and demand and that there is a substantial shortfall of affordable homes within the Borough. There are currently over 2,000 people on the Council's waiting list and an annual shortfall of approximately 200 units of affordable housing provision.

In line with current regeneration and land use principles efforts should be made to accommodate as much of this provision as possible in Brownfield locations that benefit from public transport and local facilities. In Redditch, like many other towns, this suggests supporting town centre living.

As identified previously Redditch Town Centre has a strong residential hinterland located adjacent or outside the Redditch Ringway. The majority of these are 18th and 19th Century terraced houses along Mount Pleasant and Plymouth Road

There have been more recent developments adjacent to the town centre which provide new residential accommodation including developments at Gloucester Close and Clive Road (Prospect View) developed by Kingsoak and Green Villa Developments. These new properties have generally followed the formula for recent years with a mixture of flats and small two bedroom town houses. There is also strong anecdotal evidence that many of these properties have been purchased by investors on a buy-to-let basis.

The recent recession and tightening of the credit market has severely damaged this development model and those developers that have survived are currently unwilling to develop flats and small town houses in centres such as Redditch for the foreseeable future. This will also affect the 'mixed use' concept that has seen residential, retail and employment provided in combined blocks.

The fundamentals of the residential market in central Redditch remain strong - it is a town centre with a good retail offer, good rail connections to Birmingham, excellent road links to

Birmingham, the West Midlands and the south, an affluent hinterland and an identified housing shortage.

There are a number of challenges to be faced in delivering new residential accommodation in the centre, which include:

- The town centre leisure offer requires improvement to provide more elements of quality restaurants / bars etc. Town centre housing is often the choice of young people who strongly value a leisure offer that meets their aspirations;
- The existing housing in the town centre is not generally regarded as aspirational. It is important for the vitality of the town centre to attract a genuine mix of housing. Efforts must be made to ensure schemes provide a balanced mix of private and affordable housing;
- The housing market has seen significant problems over the last 18 months. This has resulted in a considerable fall in house prices, with a corresponding effect on land value. With residential land values in the West Midlands suffering falls of up to 70% in the worst case scenarios, land owners may be unwilling, or unable, to release their land for development in the short term.

In the longer term there is a need to identify sites in the town centre that can provide a range of housing styles and tenant mix which will add to the vibrancy and diversity of town centre living in Redditch.

Photograph 2.1: Other Road Residential Area**Photograph 2.2: New Housing on the Edge of the Centre**

2.4 Educational Facilities

Redditch has the fourth highest population of young people per local authority area in England.

North East Worcestershire (NEW) College is based within the town centre offering courses catering for those ranging from school leavers (16-19) and university level students to vocational training and part-time adult courses. The NEW College is an important feature of Redditch Town Centre and significantly contributes to the Redditch community and economy. The College operates from both Bromsgrove and Redditch and currently caters for over 17,000 students at the recently redeveloped site in Redditch town centre.

The NEW College is currently exploring options for an out of city campus to be built as an extension to a midlands University. This could attract a variety of students of different ages to Redditch and prompt a future need for student residential accommodation within the town centre. In the longer term the college has aspirations for potentially growing the campus in Redditch by circa 80,000 sq ft. Such developments could be accommodated within the college grounds by the redevelopment of elements of the surface level car parking which are not considered to be operational for education use.

Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre is located within the heart of Redditch Town Centre with its main entrance from Other Road. Trinity is a specialist college for business and enterprise. The school is of average size, with 889 pupils aged between 13 and 18. Students enter the school in Year 9, and about a third, remain on into the sixth form. The 2007 Ofsted report grades the overall effectiveness of the school as satisfactory.

Other schools located in a close proximity to Redditch Town Centre include Birchensale Middle School and Batchley First School and Nursery.

Photograph 2.3: The NEW College at Redditch**Photograph 2.4: Trinity High School Sixth Form Centre**

2.5 Planning Policy Context

2.5.1 National Policy for Town Centres

Town centres are a vital component of successful and vibrant communities. Acting as a focal point for retail, commercial, social and leisure facilities, successful town centres are also an important means of securing wider sustainable development objectives including reducing the need for travel, particularly by car, by maximising linked-trips.

This is recognised in national policy, in particular through Planning Policy Statement 6, Planning for Town Centres and its proposed changes which set out the Government's Objectives for Town Centres; and the consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement 4, Prosperous Economies which looks to combine all national planning policy on economic development in urban and rural areas into one consolidated streamlined PPS.

The advice set out in the companion guide Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools, provides a good range of principles and tools available to address town centre planning and transformation.

The over-riding messages from the documents identified above are the importance of:

- Establishing a clear strategy and vision for town centres in partnership with stakeholders including the private sector;
- Making pro-active use of the plan-led system to establish a degree of certainty in the role of different town centres and proposals for development and improvement; and
- The importance of day-to-day town centre management and town centre partnerships.

These national objectives and tools framed the brief for this study and the approach and recommendations it sets out.

2.5.2 Regional Planning Policy

West Midland Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) determines the scale and distribution of housing and economic development across the region, identifying investment priorities for transport, as well as providing policies for environmental enhancement. The document also incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy. The WMRSS outlines the importance of urban renaissance, highlighting the need to create 'sustainable communities, in which people choose to live, work and invest.' The strategy calls for an integrated approach to improving the urban environment, whereby land-use decisions are tackled alongside other activities such as education, health and safety.

The West Midlands RSS identifies Birmingham, Solihull, the Black Country, Coventry and North Staffordshire conurbation as the Major Urban Area, which will be the main focus for major development in terms of housing and economic growth over the period to 2021. Outside of the MUA and the Sub Regional Foci the RSS under Policy UR2 defines Redditch as a Local Regeneration Area.

Policy PA11 of the RSS identifies a network of 25 town and cities across the region, which includes the town of Redditch. The policy identifies that this network will be the focus for:

- *"Major retail developments (i.e. those of more than 10,000m² gross floorspace, excluding floorspace dedicated to the retailing of convenience goods);*
- *Uses which attract large numbers of people including major cultural, tourist, social and community venues (see also PA10 and UR3); and*
- *Large scale leisure and office (Class B1a) developments (i.e. those of 5,000m² or more gross floorspace)" (P.58).*

Draft Phase Two Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy 2007

The draft revisions, which were the subject of an Examination in Public in spring 2009, cover a range of issues including housing figures, employment land, transport and the environment. The preferred option sets targets for the provision and distribution of 365,000 new homes across the West Midlands over the next 20 years, with 6000 affordable houses to be provided annually. Other changes to the current strategy include new policies on climate change, creating sustainable communities and sustainable construction.

Policy CF2 of the draft Phase Two Revisions identifies a group of towns as Settlements of Significant Development (SSD) where housing development should be concentrated in, and adjacent to, towns which are capable of balanced and sustainable growth. Within the draft revisions of the WMRSS Redditch is seen as a Settlement of Significant Development and a strategic centre (which are seen as the most preferable and sustainable centres in which to accommodate major retail, offices and leisure developments).

The draft Phase Two Revision preferred option sets a total level of new housing development in Redditch of 6,600 additional dwellings for the period 2006 to 2026. The distribution is split with 3,300 dwellings to be included in Redditch and 3,300 adjacent to Redditch Town in Bromsgrove and Stratford-Upon-Avon districts. The draft revision of the WMRSS recognises the importance of the utilisation of Brownfield land (Policy CF5).

In terms of the provision of employment land, the draft Phase Two Revision requires local planning authorities to provide a continuing five-year reservoir of available employment land outside town centres throughout the plan period and make provision for likely longer-term employment land requirements. The levels of employment land provision for Redditch is set at a 17 hectares rolling five year reservoir and an indicative long-

term requirement of 51 hectares, of which 24 hectares to be provided within Bromsgrove or Stratford-Upon-Avon districts.

The draft Phase Two Revision identifies a requirement for 30,000 sqm of comparison floorspace to 2021 within the Borough, with a further 20,000 sqm between 2021 and 2026. The strategy states that planning permission should not be granted for provision of the 2021 to 2026 levels prior to 2016. In addition, Policy PA13A of the strategy states that Local Planning Authorities should make consideration for new office development space within or on the edge of centres, the level of which for Redditch is 45,000 sqm.

Baroness Andrews' response to the Phase 2 Revision 2008 and the NLP Report

Following the submission of the WMRSS Phase Two Revision Draft, the Regional Assembly received a letter from Baroness Andrews. This expressed concern over the proposed housing numbers and asked the Government Office for the West Midlands to commission further work to look at options which could deliver higher housing numbers.

The Government Office for the West Midlands commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to undertake a study into the options for delivering higher housing numbers, in response to the initial National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) report.

The study considered a range of options and presented three potential growth scenarios for the region, proposing between 417,100 and 445,600 housing units up to 2026. The three scenarios, which identify different spatial distributions of housing to accommodate a range of greater housing numbers for the region, build on the Preferred Option put forward in the draft Phase Two Revisions. The additional growth in housing ranges from 51,500 and 80,000 more homes than the draft Phase Two Revision. The scenarios can be summarised as follows:

- Scenario 1: focuses addition growth in the south east and in the rural west, and would deliver an additional 51,500 units;
- Scenario 2: looks at spreading growth across the region, retaining a south east focus but capitalising on capacity for growth in north Staffordshire, Telford and the rural west and delivering an 54,000 additional units; and
- Scenario 3: looks at maximum growth across the region delivering 80,000 additional units.

Whilst Redditch is not identified directly as accommodating additional growth, the neighbouring Local Authorities are the subject of significant increases, particularly Bromsgrove and south Worcestershire.

2.5.3 Local Planning Policy Context

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No: 3 2006

The Local Plan No: 3 (2006) covers the whole of the administrative boundary of Redditch Borough Council and sets out detailed land use policies to guide development. As a results of the changes to the planning system following the introduction of Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Local Plan has been 'saved' for a period of three years to the end of May 2009. The Secretary of State has issued a Direction which extends most local plan policies until replaced by relevant Development Plan Documents.

The vision of the Local Plan No. 3 is that the plan will be a successful tool for implementing the community strategy and for applying national, regional and county level planning policy to Redditch Borough. The plan aims to protect the Borough's environment; promote sustainable development, and provide sufficient land for development and secure appropriate facilities. The following Local Plan Policies are of relevance to the Redditch Town Centre Strategy.

Table 2.1 Redditch Local Plan

| Borough of Redditch Local Plan No: 3 – Policies | |
|--|---|
| CS.3 – Use of Previously Developed Land | <i>“The reuse and regeneration of previously developed urban land will be encouraged in preference to the use of Greenfield sites, subject to safeguarding environmental quality within the urban environment”.</i> |
| CS.7 – The Sustainable Location of Development | <i>“Uses that attract a lot of people will be directed to the Town Centre. Other development will be directed to the urban area, where there will be a sequential approach to the location of all development in the following order: Consideration of locations within the Redditch urban area on previously developed (brownfield) land; Consideration of locations within the Redditch urban area on Greenfield land”.</i> |
| B(HSG).1 – Housing Provision | The local plan makes provision for the construction and completion of 4504 dwellings between April 1996 and March 2011. |
| B(HSG).4 – Density of Housing Development | Policy sets out that unless there are particular local circumstances that would dictate otherwise, that the minimum density standards will be applied to all residential developments. Within Redditch Town Centre densities of about 70 dwellings per hectare should be achieved. |
| E(TCR) 1 – Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre | <i>“seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Redditch Town centre in a number of ways including ensuring that the town centre is the primary focus in the Borough for a wide range of facilities and also promoting a vibrant and safe, high quality evening economy”.</i> |

| Borough of Redditch Local Plan No: 3 – Policies | |
|--|---|
| E(TCR) 2 – Town Centre Enhancement | This policy deals with the appropriate enhancement of the town centre. |
| E(TCR) 3 – Peripheral Zone | This policy sets out criteria for development proposals within the peripheral zone. |
| E(TCR) 4 – Need and the Sequential Approach | This policy sets out the sequential approach for siting main town centre uses. |
| E(TCR) 5 – Protection of the Retail Core | Policy E(TCR) 5 addresses planning permission within the retail core. |
| E(TCR) 6 – North West Quadrant | <i>“encourages development of the North West Quadrant area as marked on the Proposals Map with consideration of certain criteria and in accordance with the North West Quadrant Development Brief, yet to be undertaken by the Council”.</i> |
| B(BE).1 and B(BE).4 The Protection of Historic Assets and Listed Buildings | Policy states that development likely to impact historic assets and their settings (include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas) will be expected to include an assessment. In terms of Listed Buildings policy states that the council will only permit the demolition of a listed building in exceptional circumstances. |
| B(BE).6 – Conservation Areas | Proposals for development within Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Development proposals will be required to meet certain key criteria. |

| Borough of Redditch Local Plan No: 3 – Policies | |
|---|---|
| E(EMP).1 – Employment Provision | <i>“Provision is made for the allocation of about 65 hectares of land for employment uses between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 2011”</i> |
| E(EMP).5 – Edward Street Site | This policy encourages the redevelopment of the Edward Street Opportunity Site. The council is safeguarding the site for primarily employment use, and only after consideration of possible funding opportunities if it is believed that employment use is not economically viable shall some residential development be allowed on site. Development is required to improve the visual appearance of the site. |
| E(TCR).6 - North West Quadrant | The re-development of the North West Quadrant will be encouraged in accordance with the North West Quadrant Development Brief. Policy seeks to ensure that there is appropriate mixed use development including retail, leisure and residential and that new development is integrated successfully with existing buildings. |
| C(T).5 – Waking Routes | The council expects safe and convenient pedestrian access to be an integral feature of the proposed design which aim to promote walking in and around the site and to connect the site to the wider network of pedestrian routes and access to public transport. |

Preferred Draft Core Strategy

The Issues and Options Core Strategy Document was subject to consultation between May and June 2008 and has now been followed by the Preferred Draft DPD Core Strategy (2008). The Preferred Draft Core Strategy was the subject of public consultation, ending on the 8th May 2009.

The Preferred Draft Core Strategy Vision

“By 2026, Redditch Borough will be distinctively green”.

The vision of the strategy recognises the importance of regeneration in the town centre and improving connectivity. Eleven strategic objectives are set out in the Preferred Draft Core Strategy to meet the vision, those of most relevant to the study being:

- To have high quality open space;
- To ensure that all new development is carbon neutral;
- To reduce the causes of, and minimise the impacts of and adapt to climate change;
- Protect, promote and where possible enhance the Borough’s natural and built environment and its distinctive features;
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Enhance the visitor economy;
- Improve the vitality and viability of the Town Centre by day and night;
- Strong attractive and enterprising economic base; and
- Sufficient housing to meet demographic needs.

Of particular importance to this study, Policy SP.4 Regeneration for the Town Centre identifies one strategic site in Redditch Town Centre. This consists of four parcels of land at Prospect Hill, Edward Street and Church Road (former North West Quadrant) and Car Park Number 4 which serves the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Full wording of the draft policy SP.4 can be seen overleaf in Figure 2.3.

Policy BE.1 highlights the importance for new development being 'climate proof' and identifies a number of targets that must be met, those that may have implications to the production of a Strategy for Redditch Town Centre are identified below:

- Development must meet the regional standards within the Code for Sustainable Homes;
- Offices and other non domestic buildings should aim for 10% below the target emission rate of the current building regulations by 2016;

Production of renewable energy should meet at least 10% of developments residual energy demand (applies to all residential development with greater than five units or 1,000 square metres for non residential).

Redditch Town Centre is identified in Policy ES.5 as being the preferred location for leisure, entertainment, cultural activities, major retail developments; large scale leisure, tourist, social and community venues and large scale office uses.

Policy ES.6 of the Core Strategy identifies the intention of the council to plan for approximately 30,000 sq m of comparison floorspace, up to 2021, with an additional 20,000 sq m floorspace between 2021 and 2026. Within policy ES.2 the council's intention is to achieve at least 45,000 sq m of new office floorspace within the Town Centre by 2026 is identified.

In terms of housing policy SC.1 identifies that a provision is made for the supply of 2,243 dwellings to be delivered between 2006 and 2026 within Redditch Borough. In addition,

the Core Strategy sets out the requirement for 40% affordable housing to be achieved on site of more than 15 dwellings or over 0.5 hectares, of which 65% should be socially rented housing. In terms of density, policy sets out that within or adjacent to Redditch Town Centre a density of 70 dwellings per hectare will be sought.

In terms of the location of new employment, policy ES.1 sets out that land allocations have been made for 9 hectares of land immediately available for employment uses to meet the rolling five-year programme, with a total provision for 27 hectares made within the Borough for the period up to 2026.

Figure 2.3 Policy SP.4 – Regeneration for the Town Centre

“To deliver significant amounts of the Borough Councils residential, retail and office requirements whilst supporting the role and function of Redditch Town Centre, regeneration proposals for the Strategic Site should generally:

- i. incorporate a mix of uses including residential, employment (B1), retail and leisure*
- ii. promote excellent accessibility by a range of transport modes, incorporating any necessary infrastructure improvements; and*
- iii. include safe and well designed buildings and places;*

The following mix of uses should be applied to individual proposals:

- i. Church Road / North West Quadrant is the preferred location for convenience and comparison retail as part of a mixed-use development also incorporating food and drink and leisure developments;*
- ii. Edward Street is appropriate for employment use (B1). Convenience retail uses are also appropriate if it can be demonstrated that convenience retail cannot be accommodated at Church Road / North West Quadrant;*
- iii. Car Park Number 4 is suitable for retail use only;*
- iv. Prospect Hill should provide a mixed-use development of Offices (B1) and residential uses”.*

Edward Street Supplementary Planning Document 2007

The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Edward Street provides the planning and urban design guidance for the future redevelopment of the Edward Street site. The site is approximately 0.48 hectares on the corner of Bromsgrove Road and Edward Road and adjacent to Redditch Train Station. The site includes a number of buildings developed in the nineteenth century, which includes two town houses both of which are locally listed.

The SPD sets out a number of development principles. Development needs to create a safe, secure and welcoming environment with a high level of accessibility to be successful. Potentially acceptable uses for the site include: Employment – B1, B2 and B8. An opportunity for the site would be to retain it for employment purposes and to provide workshops for craft industries and possible trade counters. This would retain the employment use of the site and offer something that is not currently available in Redditch. The SPD states that where it can be clearly demonstrated that the redevelopment of the site entirely for primarily employment use is not economically viable, then some residential development will be considered, where at least 50% of the site area is developed for Primarily Employment Use.

In terms of the design strategy for the site, the SPD states that any new development on the site should help to define the two street edges of the site and the boundary of the site facing the railway station. It is noted that any new development along Bromsgrove Road should have a regular building line parallel to the front of Boxwood House, which two thirds of the 30m space between the two town houses should be filled by new development which is no more than three storeys in height. Along the railway frontage of the site the SPD states that the building should be designed to provide a striking and memorable enclosure to the railway station, providing a

gateway site for Redditch and should be two to three storeys in height.

Prospect Hill, Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document 2007

The SPD for Prospect Hill was prepared in the form of a development brief and provides a clear picture of the planning expectations for the redevelopment of Prospect Hill. This site is a reserve housing site with capacity for 61 dwellings allocated for residential development in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 3.

The land at Prospect Hill is 1.21 hectares in area, and is currently used as for car parking for Grosvenor and St Stephens House office buildings, although this car park is not used to its full capacity due to the sites steep gradient and poor quality surfacing material. The SPD states that in addition to supplying car parking on site to serve its new development provision should be made for the existing car parking on site or in the immediate vicinity.

The SPD sets out the following development proposals on site:

- New residential development should be situated in the western half of the site where the gradient of the site is less steep. Houses and/or apartments should be built facing Prospect Hill, up to three storeys high;
- Apartments should be built on the southerly edge to the west of the site. They could be up to five storeys high;
- The non-residential car parking should be located away from the building line along Prospect Hill in the eastern half of the site.
- Vehicular access to the residential development should be from Prospect Hill with vehicular access to the non-residential car parking to be from Albert Street.

Church Road, Town Centre (formerly known as the North West Quadrant) Supplementary Planning Document 2007

This SPD will inform and guide development within the Church Road site (formerly known as the North West Quadrant). The Church Road site is an area of a significant size (5.35 hectares) located within the town centre containing high quality buildings (some of which are locally or nationally listed) with parts of the site located within the Church Green Conservation Area. The site contains a mix of buildings requiring redevelopment (Car Park No. 7 and the Bus Depot) and a number of buildings that are to remain on site The Red House and 7 to 11 Church Road).

Under the Redditch Borough Local Plan No.3 policy E(TCR).6 redevelopment on this site is required to be:

- Mixed use including retail, leisure and residential;
- Make a positive contribution to the evening economy;
- Development that integrates with existing buildings and design that reflects the character of the area;
- Development that enhances this part of the Town Centre and preserves or enhances the character of the nearby conservation area.

The SPD highlights the importance of the inclusion of retail and leisure uses on site, with Car Park No 7 and the bus depot being identified as prime locations for leisure use, with Car Park No. 7 also being identified as a prime location for retail use due to the sites visibility and accessibility to the Ringway. The SPD also identifies the following locations for residential development on site; land to the rear of the Red Chamber following the line of the Ringway, along the west edge of the Church Road and following the Ringway from Bates Hill towards Unicorn Hill.

Figure 2.4 British Retail Consortium: 21st Century for our Town Centres. July 2009 Summary

This study draws on current successful practice to identify 20 recommendations “to achieve the best possible future for our High Streets”. These include:

1. A unique sense of place
 - Town centres are vital to local communities so we must work together to maximise the inherent advantages of each High Street’s local heritage or natural surroundings whilst still providing facilities suitable for modern retailing.
 - The retail mix must complement the public perception of a High Street’s identity.
 - High Streets must be marketed effectively – and deliver on that promise –so customers can appreciate the value of any given location.
2. An Attractive Public Realm
 - Developing and maintaining an attractive trading environment, with consistent styling, is essential.
 - Public spaces must be maintained to the highest standards with effective deterrents against pollution.
 - Local authorities, public bodies and private interests must work together to achieve material improvements, and public sector investment must provide long-term benefits.
3. Planning for Success
 - Strategic planning must define the framework for different types of shopping destination within regional, sub-regional and local contexts.
 - Partnership and collaborative working lie at the heart of all successful retail-led regeneration.
 - Monitoring the health of town centres should underpin any effective town centre system.
 - A clear strategy must be established to address increasing rates of vacancy and the accompanying decline in fortunes of some town centres.
4. Accessibility
 - Parking and transport policy should be seen as a way to attract customers to the High Street rather than simply a means of traffic management. It should aim to reduce town centre congestion and parking demands without affecting footfall. Incentives to use public transport should be offered, not penalties on motorists.
 - Car parks should not be used primarily as a means of raising revenue, and a proportion of funds raised should be ring-fenced to improve car parking options.
 - Retail delivery curfews should be reconsidered taking account of advances in technology.
5. Safety and Security
 - All retail crime and anti-social behaviour must be deterred, with damaged property and streetscape restored as quickly as possible.
 - Achieving meaningful deterrence requires a co-ordinated response by all agencies in the community.
 - Neighbourhood policing must meet the needs of the local business community – Local Area Agreements and Strategic assessments and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships should include business crime among their key priorities.
6. Supportive Regulatory and Fiscal regimes
 - A freeze on all new property and business rate burdens should be accompanied by the reinstatement of Empty Property Rate Relief.
 - The Business Improvement District (BID) or similar partnerships should be the preferred mechanism for raising additional revenue to solve local problems.
 - The cost of complying with existing regulation should be immediately reduced, including the removal of any disproportionate parts of the regulations.
 - Local authorities and the LBRO have a vital role to play in ensuring regulations are enforced without adding unnecessary costs.

3 Town Centre Offer

This section of the report looks at the main market and town centre offerings existing within Redditch Town Centre, which include retail, commercial office space and leisure and their potential for growth.

3.1 Retail

Redditch is classified as a mall dominated town by CACI rankings footprint. According to recent GOAD retail floorspace data (April 2009) there is currently 649,000 sq ft of retailing in Redditch Town Centre contained within 238 units as can be seen in Table 3.1 (this figure represents retailing only and not leisure and finance and business services), of which the Kingfisher represents 585,300 sq ft of retail which is 90% of the town centre.

With the incorporation of leisure and finance and business services the Kingfisher Shopping Centre has 637,000 sq ft which represents 76% of the total retail floorspace in the town centre (as per table 3.1). Both sets of figures have been quoted as the Kingfisher Centre incorporates other non retail uses which include the town centre bus station and the seven screen Apollo cinema.

The convenience offer (sales of food/beverage, etc) is very limited, lacks interest and does not address the needs of families. The percentage of floorspace utilised by convenience retailing is 2% which is significantly lower than the national average. Not surprisingly given the current difficult trading circumstances vacancy rates have risen. Vacancy levels at June 2009 are currently 14.7% compared to the national average of 12.1%, for the West Midlands as a whole the vacancy rate stands at 13.3%. Redditch is currently ranked 18th regionally based on comparison goods spend and 179th nationally (CACI Retail Ranking).

Table 3.1 Redditch Retailing Floorspace

| | Comparison, Convenience, Retail Service, Vacant Retail | % of total | Comparison, Convenience, Retail Service, Vacant Retail, Finance and Business Services and Leisure | % of total |
|--------------------|--|------------|---|------------|
| Town Centre | 51,200 | 8% | 187,200 | 22% |
| Kingfisher Centre | 585,300 | 90% | 637,100 | 76% |
| Prospect House | - | 0% | 1,400 | 0% |
| Smallwood House | 13,000 | 2% | 13,000 | 2% |
| St Stephens House | - | 0% | - | 0% |
| Threadneedle House | - | 0% | - | 0% |
| Total Redditch | 649,500 | 100% | 838,700 | 100% |

Retail led regeneration has recently become a catalyst to release the potential of towns and city centres providing investment and infrastructure to sustain the critical mass necessary to support other facilities that essential for a vibrant centre. As such retail development is seen as critical to re-brand a town, create quality space and diversify and expand other activities.

Redditch has a long history as a market town and the current market has recently relocated on temporary stalls to its historic position on Market Place adjacent to St Stephen's Church

following their move from the purpose built covered market area.

It is perceived by many that the Kingfisher is seen to be central to Redditch Town Centre. If perceptions are to be shifted to encompass the whole centre, then this is an issue which must be tackled. In order to put Redditch Town Centre 'on the map' and encourage additional niche/specialist retailing, the dominance of the centre as merely a mall / retail destination must be addressed. This will increase the attractiveness of the town to new occupiers.

The town centre emphasis should be on creating a distinctive environment that compliments rather than conflicts with the strong offer presented by the Kingfisher Centre. It should seek to strengthen the linkages of the Kingfisher to the rest of the town centre.

Photograph 3.1: The Kingfisher Shopping Centre



The relatively recent White Young Green Retail and Leisure Study produced in September 2008³ to assist the Borough Council with the preparation of its Core Strategy gives a thorough overview of the retail market and the anticipated scale of development for the future of Redditch. By incorporating the household and on-street surveys alongside research of market trends, planning policies and a health check of the town centre, this report on the retail capacity can be viewed with confidence alongside the requirements of the WMRSS.

In terms of the retail hierarchy and the role that Redditch's retail offer plays in the market, it is encouraging to see that the study was realistic in highlighting the scale and attractiveness of the competition for comparison goods. As a result of this any additional space would be difficult to support in terms of retailer demand in the short term. The standard approach taken in calculating the future retail capacity is a good basis for understanding the potential. However the implementation of this will need to be monitored to ensure that it adds to the vitality of the town centre and doesn't compromise it. Above all the selection of development sites is crucial.

Concern lies over the timing of the report with much of the data sourced back to 2007. Since then the UK retail market has changed considerably. This may therefore affect the view of the town centre, the retail requirements and the short term potential of reviving certain areas more so than the district centres and out of town offer. Extremely high profile losses on the high street have occurred with 53 stores being put into administration (some of which have subsequently been saved) since the publication of this report. The retail attractiveness of Redditch has decreased from a tenant's perspective with a recognised reduction in retail requirements; this is reflected in the sourcing of a tenant for the vacant Woolworths. The

³ White Young Green, Town Centre and Retail Study (Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment), September 2008.

Kingfisher Centre has recently signed up both Dorothy Perkins and Burtons to take large space units.

In terms of rental values, zone A rental values for the Kingfisher Centre have fallen over the last 12 months from £110 per square foot to current levels of £85 per square foot reinforcing the current situation (JLL 2009).

The White Young Green Retail and Leisure Study rightly points out that it is the peripheries of the town centre that are struggling as a result of the dominance of the Kingfisher. Any new development should look to enhance the town centre and not further isolate areas. Opportunities to link in other functions such as the college were overlooked. The “gateway” to the college – Peakman Street is one such opportunity to link that function to the town centre more closely. As echoed in the survey data when compared to other comparable sized towns there is a requirement for improved convenience food retailing and for leisure facilities and what has to be considered is a way to drive the night time economy beyond that of the cinema, quick service restaurants and pubs in the town centre. There is a gap in restaurants catering for families and this influences the perception of Redditch as an evening destination. Zoning of these facilities would differentiate the offer from the leisure associated with cinema.

Since the report, the extension of the Sainsbury's supermarket by 11,000sqft to 84,000sqft has been granted full planning permission and it is anticipated that non food (comparison goods) will be included in this extension. A credible supermarket operator linked to the town centre would have a beneficial effect on the rest of the town centre economy if located adjacent to the Kingfisher Centre, central to the town centre, or in the Church Road Opportunity Area (formerly North West Quadrant) site generating an improvement in footfall and the vitality of the town centre. As identified previously Car Park No. 7 has been identified as a prime location for retail use in the Church Road SPD. In addition

there may be the opportunity for the location of a local convenience store within the Town Centre, an example of which is the successful Tesco Metro on New Street in Birmingham.

3.2 Commercial Office Market

Redditch does not have a significant market for office space in the town centre. This is a similar situation to most towns of its size as the vast majority of central office districts in the UK are located in the major cities. In the West Midlands Birmingham is the dominant office market. The last twenty years have seen a rise in out of town offices where available land, excellent road connectivity and a large employee catchment area are the key factors. Redditch is reasonably well placed, being close to the M42, M5 and M40 which provide rapid access to the Midlands and South. However, it has not been able to capitalise on this advantage as much as other towns such as Solihull, Worcester and Warwick which benefit from better proximity to a motorway.

In recent years there has been a definite change in perception whereby out of town premises are not regarded as environmentally and socially sustainable as those located in urban centres. Many towns are now attempting to reverse their previous willingness to allow out of town office development in order to generate town centre employment and prosperity. Redditch is not an established office location but it does benefit from a regular rail link to Birmingham with proposed improvements of this line currently under investigation. This is an excellent selling point, which may allow for the generation of a limited amount of town centre offices. The existing offices are effectively limited to the Town Hall, Grosvenor House and St. Stephens House on Prospect Hill and Threadneedle House off Market Street. The premises primarily cater for public sector occupiers such as Local Government and the Inland Revenue and the limited local professional sector of accountants and solicitors. There is also limited provision in

small scale above-the-shop units. All of this supply is dated and does not meet modern standards.

As with all secondary locations the low rents achievable (circa £8-£10 sq ft per annum) act as a barrier to development on a commercial basis as they do not provide sufficient return to justify the investment. These situations tend to result in a self-fulfilling vicious circle as low rents prevent commercial development, and lack of new premises keeps office rents depressed.

The RSS allocation of 45,000 sq.m. of additional office accommodation by 2026 is a very ambitious target and we do not consider that it can be accommodated within the town centre itself. However, it is our opinion that a limited amount of new office development can be attracted to the town centre. As the key advantage of the town centre, we would recommend that efforts to attract office developers are centred on sites close to the railway station, which could include the Edward Street Development Opportunity Site or sites within the town centre, for instance along Bates Hill. The selling point is that central Redditch can provide very competitive priced offices with a short journey time to central Birmingham, but avoiding the congestion and cost of locating within the city.

It is difficult to estimate the quantum of development that central Redditch could support up until 2026. This will depend entirely on the state of the economy but efforts can be made to improve the situation. The local authority or other public bodies can acquire suitable sites and allocate them in accordance with planning policy. They can also investigate the possibility of entering into a Joint Venture or some other delivery vehicle to de-risk the scheme for the developer. Initial development should not involve large office buildings, rather to consist of two – three storey offices capable of sub-division to meet the needs of small and medium employers. This type of development can help to create momentum and change the perception of the town centre.

Photograph 3.2: St Stephen House – Office Development



3.3 Leisure and Hotel Facilities

A Holiday Inn Express has recently been built on Hewell Road, close to the centre of the town. The hotel offers 100 guest rooms and is within close proximity to Redditch's bus and train stations. Travelodge is currently targeting the town centre for a new hotel development (circa 50 bed). There is the absence of any highly graded luxury hotels, which can be seen as a gap in accommodation provision and would be beneficial to the town if a mixed use development was to take place.

In terms of leisure and recreational facilities it can be seen that Redditch provides a range of facilities within the wider borough but lacks facilities within the town centre. However the town centre does provide a number of established leisure uses including pubs and restaurants.

The town centre also offers the Fuse nightclub, Palace Theatre and Gala Bingo, A seven screen cinema recently open in the Kingfisher shopping centre. There are several out of centre sport and leisure centres which include the Arrow Vale Leisure Centre and Arrow Vale Park (which consist of a

Countryside Centre and Water Sport Centre). The Abbey Stadium provides both indoor and outdoor sports facilities and there are two swimming pools at the Kingsley Sports Centre and Hewell Road. One significant leisure facility which Redditch town centre currently lacks is that of a bowling alley although one currently exists at Howell Road.

There are a number of restaurants in Redditch town centre serving Indian and Chinese food as well as a number of fast food outlets, in addition to the seven public houses within the town centre.

Anecdotal and survey evidence suggests that there is a lack of quality night time and family orientated dining to complement the strong retail offer and recent cinema opening.

Photograph 3.3: Stranz Square



Photograph 3.4: The Palace Theatre



4 Urban Design Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The design of the built environment has a significant effect on many aspects of our day-to-day lives. Buildings, streets and spaces around them influence us in all kinds of ways, some obvious, some less so. The environment of a place is more than its physical form and function; it also has a role to play in delivering social value. Well designed places and buildings encourage people to interact in ways which lead to trust, mutual understanding, shared values and supportive behavior.

A well designed and successful centre is one where the local residents take pride in the area.

As part of the process of developing an evidence base for the Town Centre Strategy an urban design analysis of the town centre was undertaken. Full size images of the urban design diagrams shown in this chapter can be seen in Appendix A.

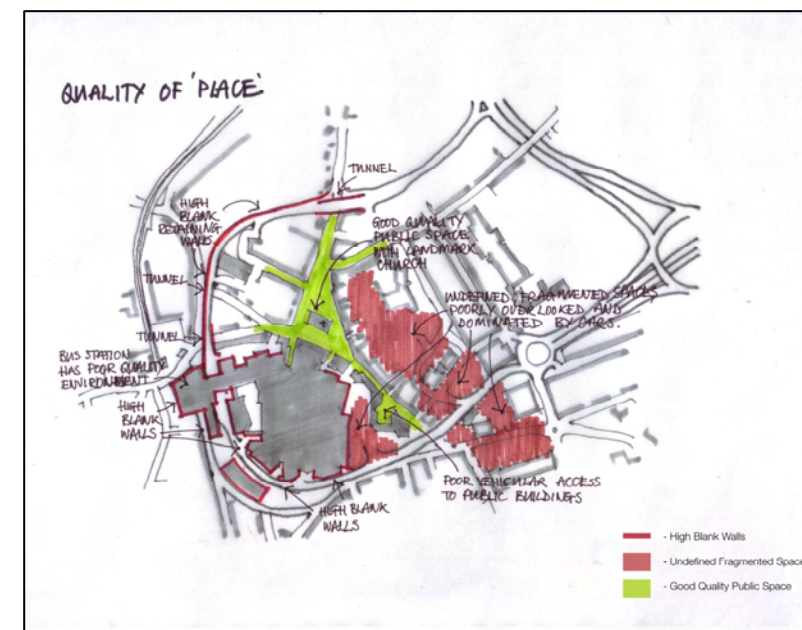
Mixed use urban developments with good accessibility bring people on to the street and reduce opportunities for crime and vandalism. Semi-private spaces in housing estates encourage friendships and neighborly behavior. Attractive and safe open spaces encourage leisure activities and contribute to healthy lifestyles. Popular neighborhoods draw in investment and regeneration. Historic buildings connect us to the achievements and lives of past generations, while modern buildings express the owners' confidence in welcoming the future. Functional, comfortable buildings contribute to people's well-being and productivity. And ecologically responsible developments reduce damage to the environment.

CABE The value of Successful Places 2006

4.2 Quality of Place

The quality of place in the town centre varies between the high quality, underused, historic space of Church Green and the un-surveillance places dominated by the high blank walls of the Kingfisher Centre and the Ringway support structures, as can be seen in Figure 4.1 below. In the NEW College/Victoria Street area, cleared sites open up public access to the rear of properties on Church Green East, this area is dominated by large amounts of surface parking. This feature is repeated on William Street where public access is opened up to the rear of properties on Church Road and Unicorn Hill, allowing for large amounts of surface parking. This feature of underused spaces, which in some cases is taken over by car parking is a recurring feature across Redditch and detracts from its quality of place.

Figure 4.1: Quality of Place



4.3 Dominant Features

Commercial and retail uses alongside a significant range of public buildings and car parks can be seen to dominate the Town Centre.

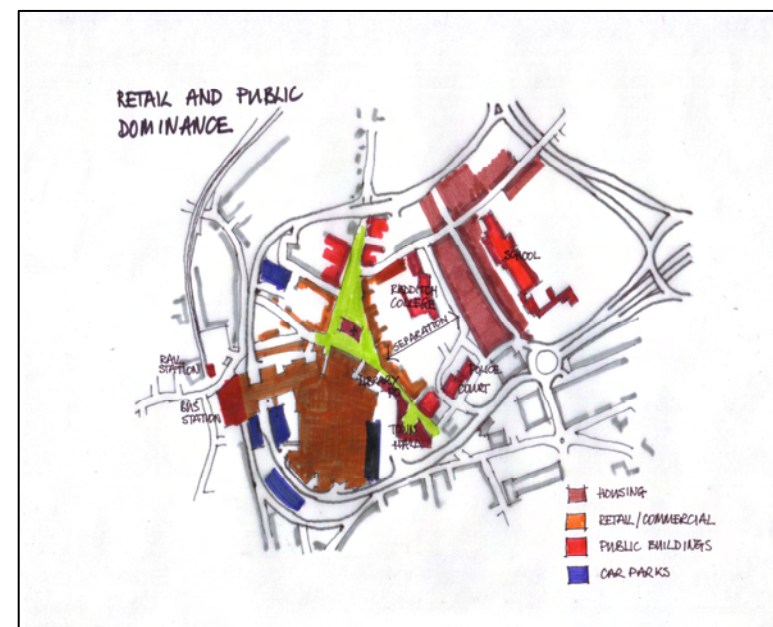
Figure 4.2 shows the extent to which retail and commercial units, public buildings and car parks expand across the Town Centre of Redditch.

Very few people live in the centre of Redditch and those that to are concentrated to the East of the centre on Archer and Other Roads. This means that the Town Centre has not got as significant a night time economy and evening leisure activities as would be seen in other settlements of the same size. A more diverse mix of uses would support a range of activities that could take place throughout the day.

Photograph 4.1: Dominance of the Kingfisher Shopping Centre



Figure 4.2: Retail and Public Building Dominance



Photograph 4.2: Redditch Magistrates Court

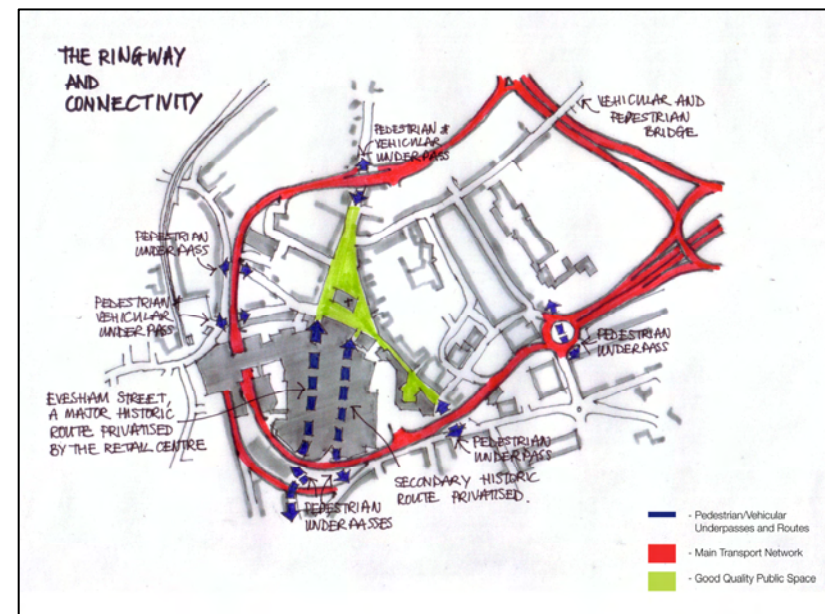


4.4 Accessibility and Movement

Part of the legacy of the 1960s and 1970s growth of Redditch is the Redditch Ringway which forms a 'concrete collar' around the town centre. It acts as a pedestrian barrier into and around the centre, making pedestrian movement difficult in places. Subways are provided in a number of places to allow for pedestrian movement across the town centre. In places, subways can be perceived to be unfriendly and threatening in nature, particularly at night time. The Ringway acts both as a physical and functional barrier, hindering connectivity and movement between the town centre and its hinterland, the extent to which can be seen in Figure 4.3. The Ringway acts as a gateway to the town, therefore it is important that the environment surrounding the Ringway is inviting and of a high standard, as currently it gives a non pedestrian friendly impression. This gateway impression will have an impact on the performance of the centre and its ability to realise its potential.

At present the signage system on the Ringway directs visitors by numbered 'access' roads to anonymous car parks and some subsidiary destinations. This can be confusing to visitors that don't already understand the car parking arrangements and layout of the town centre. It is believed that it may be more beneficial to focus on destinations in the town centre that people wish to visit, directing them to car parks appropriate for those destinations. In addition, it is perceived that signs on gantries over the Ringway enhance the impression of it being a fast road, which encourages high vehicle speeds and reduces the time available for drivers to read signs and make appropriate choices. Once visitors have joined the Ringway, there is no information about the availability of spaces in the four multi-storey car parks accessible from it. Consequently, there is a tendency for most visitors to park in Car Park 2, once full can this can give the impression that parking is difficult in Redditch.

Figure 4.3: The Ringway and Connectivity



Photograph 4.3: Subway to Ipsley Street



4.5 Car Parking

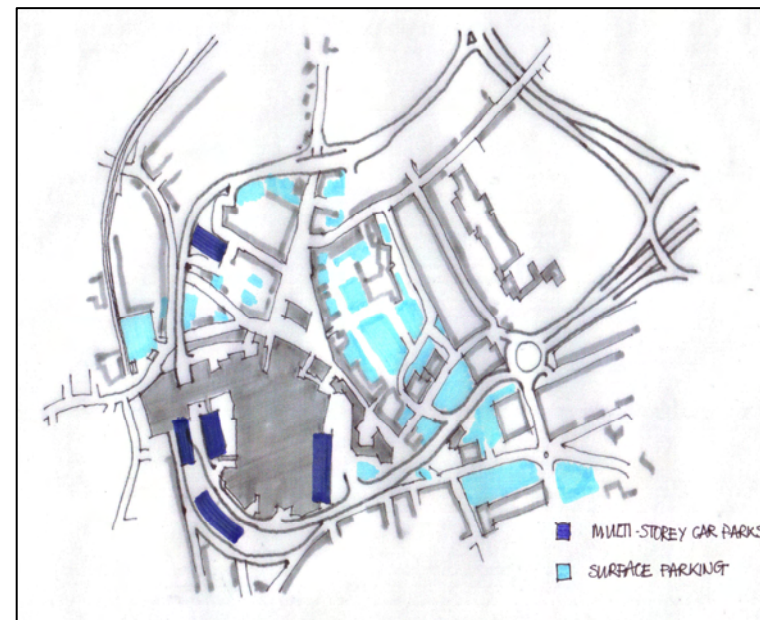
The quality, quantity and distribution of car parking within the town centre are beyond the scope of this study. However, from an urban design perspective it can be seen clear that in places there is a large amount of surface car parking spaces, in comparison to other features within the town centre, which can be seen to have a negative impact on the visual quality of the centre and in particular on the pedestrian environment. Figure 4.4 highlights in blue the dominance of car parking within the town centre of Redditch.

The car, and accessibility to the centre by car, reflects the philosophy of times when the car was 'king'. As we move into an era where challenges of climate change and the need for greater emphasis to be placed on accessibility through sustainable modes of transport, questions need to be asked about the balance between parking provision and its impact and the form in which it is provided.

Photograph 4.4: Kingfisher Multi-storey Car Park from the Town Hall



Figure 4.4: Car Parking



Photograph 4.5: Trafford Park Car Parking



4.6 Safety and Security

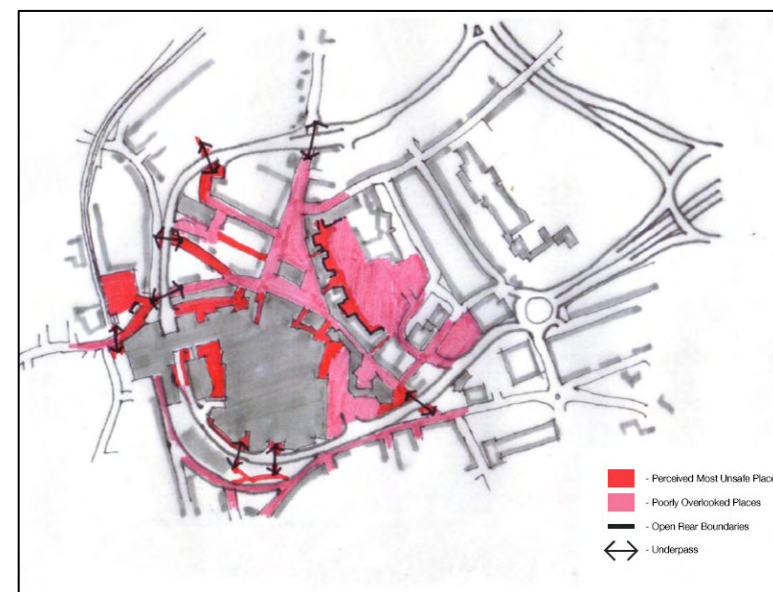
Based upon the evidence review and stakeholder engagement undertaken to underpin this strategy, safety and security in Redditch at night is clearly perceived as an issue. This is due in part to the physical layout of the centre and the urban fabric.

The drawing identifies (Figure 4.5) the public safety and physical design issues, highlighting which areas are perceived to be unsafe and the areas that are overlooked.

From an Urban Design perspective and based upon the feedback received at the Stakeholder Workshop, it is perceived that the routes running to and from the Kingfisher and the multi storey and surface car parks within Redditch are the most unsafe areas within Redditch Town Centre as they have no natural surveillance.

However, it is important to note that the Kingfisher has 158 CCTV cameras covering all entrances and exits to the shopping centre and its car parks but not the parking decks and stairwells. It is believed that the best way for the Kingfisher Centre to secure these areas would be with railings and shutters, so that the car parks could be closed down completely over night. Guards also operate 24 hours a day patrolling the Kingfisher Centre, car parks and external land owned by the centre.

Figure 4.5: Safety and Security



Photograph 4.6: Vine Street – Kingfisher Service Area



4.7 Open and Public Space

Open space within the centre is very limited as shown on the diagram below. Whilst the environmental audit in section 5 below has shown that Church Green scores highest in terms of environmental quality in Redditch, the town centre lacks the range of open and public spaces which usually provide the identity and legibility to a town centre. Re-uniting the centre is a key aspect of improving its image and achieving a rebalance between the Kingfisher centre and the rest of the centre.

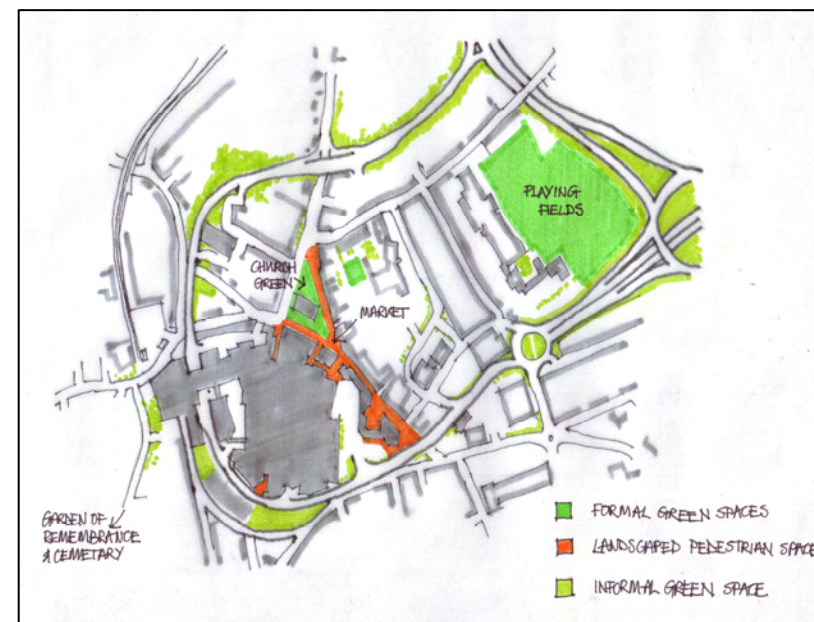
High quality public spaces attract high quality uses around them; as a result there is a positive relationship between the values of a development located alongside a quality public space.

Good quality public space as can be seen around Church Green is a vital element in creating a sense of place and a key component in creating links between places. However, the challenge arises in that the only formal green spaces within Redditch are Church Green and the Playing Fields of Trinity School as can be seen in Figure 4.6. Informal open space across the town centre is sporadic and not interlinked.

Open space has a role to play in mitigating against the impacts of climate change by using public open space to encourage lower carbon forms of movement – walking, cycling and public transport – which in turn improves health and the vitality of our places.

Public spaces within a town centre also offer a meeting place that improves the quality of urban living. Well-designed and managed public spaces increase the numbers of people walking and cycling. The relationship between the two is in some ways reciprocal.

Figure 4.6: Open and Public Space in Redditch



Photograph 4.7: Church Green Public Space



4.8 Townscape

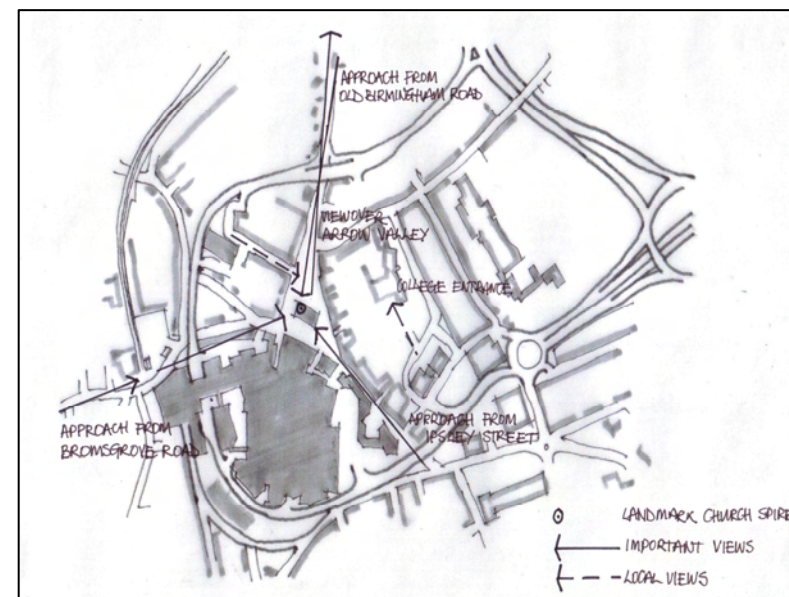
St Stephens Church spire forms a recognisable and identifiable landmark within the town centre. From the town centre there are some impressive views looking outwards from the town centre, across the Worcestershire countryside. However these views are often obscured by development or, in places by the Ringway. Excluding entering the town centre from the Ringway two of the main approaches into Redditch Town Centre are from the Bromsgrove and the Old Birmingham Roads. However, views to and from these routes are obscured by the Ringway.

It is felt that there is a poor sense of arrival at the town centre off the Coventry Highway as visitors only feel that they are in at Redditch once they have joined the Ringway. In addition, drivers immediately need to make quick decisions about where to leave the Ringway to enter the town and park their cars.

Photograph 4.8: View of St Stephens Church



Figure 4.7: Townscape



Photograph 4.9: View from Redditch



5 Environmental Audit

5.1 Introduction

An environmental audit was completed to underpin the Strategy for Redditch Town Centre. The audit involved a general assessment of the town centres environmental strengths and weaknesses.

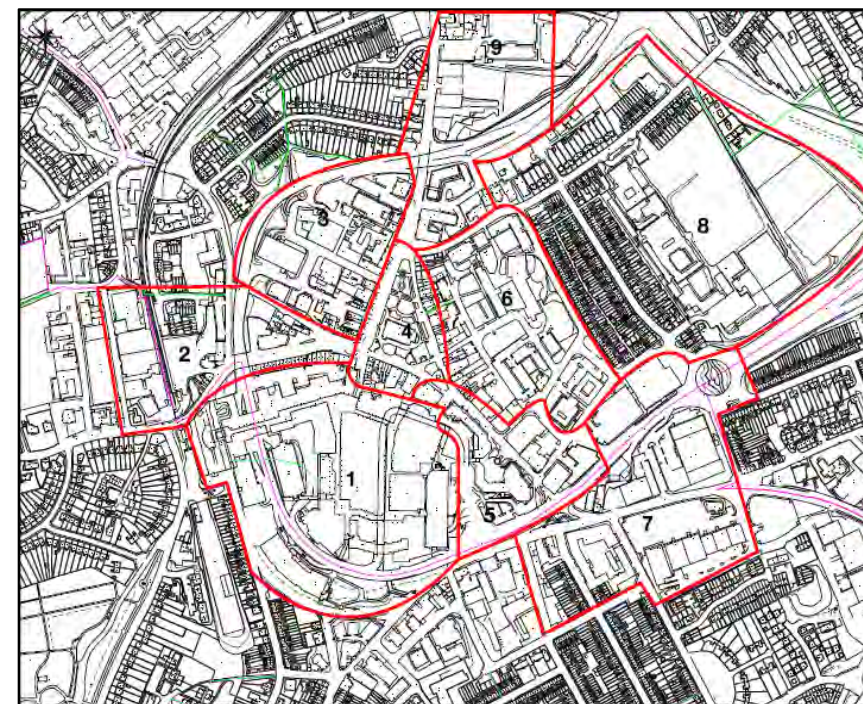
In order to undertake the audit the study area was divided into nine character areas based on the integration and use of each area. The nine character areas are:

1. The Kingfisher Shopping Centre – including the bus station, Station Road and Vine Street;
2. The Train Station – including Hewell Road, Windsor Street, the development opportunity area on Edward Street and the gateway to the town centre from the Train Station which is Unicorn Hill and Bates Hill;
3. Church Road Opportunity Area – including the buildings and land surrounding William Street and Church Road;
4. Church Green – including, Evesham Street, Market Place, and Church Green East and West;
5. Stranz Square – including Alcester Road, Silver Street, Royal Square and the lower end of Grove Street around the Palace Theatre;
6. The NEW College – including the roads and streets running to and from the college and Grove and Queen Street surrounding the Police Station;
7. Ipsley Street – including the access route between the Ringway and Ipsley Street, on which the Trafford Park is located;
8. Trinity School and its surrounding residential area; and

9. Prospect Hill – including the opportunity site on Prospect Hill and the office developments at St Stephens and Grosvenor House.

Figure 5.1 below highlights the Redditch Town Centre Strategy study area and all nine character areas.

Figure 5.1 Environmental Audit Character Areas



5.2 Approach

The audit consisted of an independent review of each street within each character area against a range of indicators of environmental quality, which include:

- Building Character – quality and contribution to street scene;
- Street Condition – surfacing and pavement condition;
- Townscape – views and sights to and from that location;
- Traffic intrusion – noise, fumes, congestion etc;
- Public Realm - Lighting and street furniture;
- Cleanliness;
- Quality of buildings - frontages, maintenance and condition;
- Feelings of safety and security, activity levels;
- Quality of open space – planting;
- Legibility - ease of movement, signage etc;
- Diversity of uses; and
- Overall ‘impression’ - reflecting its overall quality and sense of place.

In addition to the above range of assessed indicators, additional indicators were looked at in certain character areas, including, internal building character and vacancy rates. However, these additional indicators were not considered to be of significance on a street by street basis and therefore they will be considered separately within each character area assessment.

The following sections of this chapter set out the findings of the audit by character area and highlight the main themes arising from the Environmental Audit.

5.3 Character Area Assessment

In undertaking the Environmental Audit each street within a Character Area was scored from 1 – 4 (1 representing Poor to 4 representing Excellent) against each of the 12 indicators, which allows for an overall highest mark of 48 for each street. When looking at the whole of a character area, an average score is given which looks at all areas or streets in that given character area.

Overall the Church Green Character Area scored the highest against the set indicators, scoring 37.5 out of 48. On the other hand the area around the Train Station scored the lowest with 23 out of 48. The scores for each street provide an average quantitative score for each character area, which are supplemented with a qualitative statement for each area below.

5.3.1 The Kingfisher Shopping Centre

The area assessed within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre character area include the centre itself, Vine Street which leads to the Kingfisher servicing area and Station Road which services the bus station. Overall the character area has a score of 26 out of 48. However, this result is skewed slightly due to the low scores given to Vine Street and Station Road against the environmental indicators with a score of 34 being given for the Shopping Centre alone.

The internal and external quality of the Shopping Centre building has been scored as high. The cleanliness, condition of the centre, public realm and the diversity of the uses within the centre have also scored very well. On the other hand in terms of entry to the centre and movement within the centre, lower scores have been given, due to the confusing layout of the entrances and its internal core. A number of units within the shopping centre were also seen as vacant.

Vine Street is an inward looking street, which is flanked on one side by the back of the Kingfisher Centre and its servicing area

and the other side by the back of the units on Unicorn Hill. Overall its general impression is considered poor. In addition, the bus station attached to the Kingfisher Centre is seen as being cold due to the concrete nature of the structure. In addition, the bus station has scored low in terms of its townscape views, legibility and public realm.

5.3.2 Train Station

The assessment of the Train Station Character Area looks at the area immediately surrounding the train station and the streets leading to and from the station. In scoring the train station character area, an overall result of 23 was given based on all indicators assessed. This is below the average for Redditch which is 28 out of 48.

The lowest score within the character area can be seen along Windsor Street (22 out of 48), where the overall quality of building character and open space was seen to be low, equally there was a significant level of traffic intrusion due to the location of the bus station and this area acting as a gateway to Redditch Town Centre from the Bromsgrove Road. The redundant buildings behind the Train Station running along Edward Street have a negative visual impact on the area due to their dilapidated nature. Redditch Borough Council has identified a development opportunity site at the corner of Bromsgrove Road and Edward Street. Edward Street is commercial in nature, with both business and industrial units located on the street.

Unicorn Hill and Bates Hill which to an extent lie within the Church Road Development Opportunity Site, were assessed as part of the Train Station character area as they both lead into Redditch Town Centre from the Train Station and act as one of a number of gateways into the town centre. Bates Hill scored low in the assessment (23 out of 48) due to the redundant nature of a number of buildings along the street. Along the Right Hand Side of Bates Hill leading from Church

Green, buildings back onto the street which lowers the sense of place along the street.

Unicorn Hill which leads directly from the Train Station to Church Green scored 24 out of 48 in the environmental audit, the townscape views from this street is compromised due to the presence of the Redditch Ringway which blocks views from the town centre. However, overall the building character and quality, and the quality of the open space is seen as being good along Unicorn Hill.

Photograph 5.1: Train Station



5.3.3 Church Road Opportunity Area

The assessment of the Church Road Opportunity Area is focused on William Street and Church Road and the streets and buildings that run from and along both streets. It is important to note that this area has been identified by Redditch Borough Council as a Development Opportunity Area. Overall the character area scored just above the average for Redditch with 29 out of 48.

The character area as a whole has a good diversity of uses with a number of service industries located here, ranging from a doctors surgery, pharmacy, funeral home, nightclub, magistrates court and hospital. The character area has a number of buildings which are locally or nationally listed, however a number of buildings offer the opportunity for redevelopment, which include the Bus Depot, Car Park No. 7 and the area to the rear of the hospital.

The townscape views from William St and Church Street to St Stephens Church and Church Green are very good.

However, due to the inward looking nature of William Street, its volume of surface level car parking and the dominance of buildings on Church Road; the quality of open space, public realm and general legibility has suffered and is in need of improvement.

Photograph 5.2: Church Road



Photograph 5.3: William Street



5.3.4 Church Green

The Church Green Character Area has the highest score for environmental quality in Redditch Town Centre with 37.5 out of 48. The three main streets surrounding Church Green and St Stephens Church all score high in terms of building character and quality. In addition, in terms of the public realm, quality of open space and legibility and signage the general score for all streets is high, with the area creating an excellent townscape and focal point for the town centre. Church Green East and Market Place scored highest in the environmental audit due to the overall quality and character of their buildings, the pedestrianisation of the streets and the influence that St Stephens Church and its surroundings has on the streets. However, in terms of diversity of uses Church Road East has a high proportion of service uses in the form of estate agents and solicitor and law firms.

Evesham St runs from Church Green to the entrance of the Kingfisher Centre and is the lowest scoring street in the character area. The street is pedestrianised, with a high quality street condition and has a diversity of uses. However, the street is over shadowed on both sides by the buildings and does not offer an open and transparent entrance to the Kingfisher Centre.

Photograph 5.4: Church Green East



Photograph 5.5: Market Place



5.3.5 Stranz Square

The character area scored highly with 32 out of 48 in the environmental audit. The character area is focused upon Redditch Town Hall. The area has two main aspects to it, the first being the front of the Town Hall which fronts the Redditch Ringway, Silver Street, the market service area and the back of the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and Car Park No. 2. This side of the character area is over shadowed by the Ringway and the rear of the Kingfisher Centre, with limited townscape views and poor legibility and open space. Pedestrian movement patterns in this area are complicated due to the restrictions of the Ringway and the vehicle only entrance to the Kingfisher service area.

The other aspect of the character area is the main Stranz Square which includes the area surrounding the Palace Theatre leading to the subway under the Ringway to Ipsley Street. The square extends along Alcester Road towards Church Green. Generally building character and quality is very good around the square with Apollo 2000, the Town Hall and the Palace Theatre being focal points in the square. The quality of the streets condition, the public realm, open space and the diversity of uses is very good in Stranz Square with all indicators being scored high. Legibility and signage around the square itself is good. However, overall in the character area ease of movement and signage around the Silver Street side of the square and between the square and Ipsley Street and the Trafford Park is poor.

5.3.6 NEW College

This character area is centred on the North East Worcestershire (NEW) College and looks at the area surrounding the college and the routes leading to and from that area. Overall the average score for this character area is 30 out of 48. The college buildings are of an excellent quality and character and resultantly have scored high in this aspect. However, it can be seen that landscaping and open space in this area has been sacrificed for the requirement for surface car parking spaces. The use of land between the NEW College and Queen Street is predominantly surface level car parking spaces. Resultantly open space and public realm have scored low in this area.

In addition to the immediate area surrounding the NEW College, other roads surrounding the college were also assessed; these include Grove and Queen Street, which are dominated by buildings like the police station, court house and Lidl and Staples stores.

Photograph 5.6: Grove Street Retail Units



5.3.7 Ipsley Street

Ipsley street runs adjacent to the Redditch Ringway and is linked to the town centre through a subway which leads from Stranz Square. It is important to consider this area as part of the Redditch Town Centre due to the location of the Trafford Retail Park. An overall environmental audit score of 28 out of 48 was given for this character area.

This area is dominated by the influence of the Ringway and as a result the score for legibility and signage in this area is low with the predominant access to this area from the town centre being via a subway. In addition, the quality of the open space and the public realm can be seen to have suffered in this area due to the old industrial and commercial nature of the street. Ipsley Street is flanked on both sides by what would be classified as out of town retail stores which include Halfords, Wickes and Curry's and the Trafford Park which includes Aldi, KFC, Pets at Home, Instore, Iceland, and Blockbusters. Although these buildings are predominantly new structures they do not add to the character of the area that can be seen in Millsborough House.

Photograph 5.7: Millsborough House, Ipsley House



5.3.8 Trinity School

This character area looks at Trinity School and its surrounding residential area and is given an overall environmental audit score of 28 out of 48. Trinity School is flanked on each side by Easemore Road, Other Road and the Redditch Ringway. This area is generally residential in nature. The quality and character of buildings along Other Road were scored low and it is believed that general improvements are required for the residential units in this part of Redditch. The Trinity School itself and the playing grounds are not generally open to the public and therefore offer no additional benefits to the community.

5.3.9 Prospect Hill

Prospect Hill character area look at two areas, those being the upper side of Prospect Hill on the town centre side of the Ringway Bridge and the lower end of Prospect Hill leading away from the town centre. Overall the score given in the environmental audit is 31.5 which are above the average seen across all character areas in the environmental audit. The upper side of Prospect Hill is characterised by the office developments of Grosvenor Road and St Stephen's House. Both buildings are of a good quality and character, with the surrounding open space and public realm of a high environmental quality. However, views of the landscape leading away from Redditch Town Centre are obscured by the Ringway Bridge.

The lower side of Prospect Hill is characterised by residential and commercial units in addition to woodland. A car park serving the office developments of Grosvenor and St Stephens House is currently located set within the woodland. Due to the differences in the gradient of this site it may not be seen as conducive to car parking. This piece of land is currently seen as an opportunity site by Redditch Borough Council. It can again be seen that the views from the lower end of Prospect Hill to Redditch Town Centre are obscured by the Ringway giving a low score for this environmental audit.

Photograph 5.8: Development Opportunity Site Prospect Hill



Photograph 5.9: View from Town Centre down Prospect Hill



5.4 Conclusion

The environmental audit of the study area identified areas where improvements are required while distinguishing the areas where there is high environmental quality. Any significant issues raised through the environmental audit, either character area specific or a theme that may cross a number of character areas will be addressed through the Town Centre Strategy.

6 Stakeholder Engagement

The findings of the work undertaken as part of evidence review were tested with key stakeholders at a workshop on the 18 May 2009 with over 50 invited key stakeholders participating.

In addition to tapping their knowledge of the centre and gauging views and opinions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the future of the town centre, aspirations and emerging ideas were also explored. A shared vision for the future of the town centre emerged from this process, alongside a series of opportunities and actions to assist in moving towards that vision, and how these could be prioritised.

The consultation was facilitated by various members of the study team from Arup, Jones Lang LaSalle and Urban Design Specialist Martin Brown, supported by Redditch Borough Council and Councillor Colin MacMillan.

Photograph 6.1: Stakeholder Workshop Venue, Redditch Town Hall



6.1 Redditch Town Centre in 2009

Participants were divided into groups and asked to undertake a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis for the town centre. Table 6.1 below lists the main points raised.

Table 6.1 Stakeholder SWOT Analysis

| Strength | Weakness |
|---|--|
| Redditch is a beautiful place | Perceptions that Redditch is a difficult place to get too |
| Good Shopping Centre and amount of retail | Lack of good restaurants |
| Competitive retail location | Sunday parking charges and disabled parking |
| Regional Destination | Short term loss of shopmobility |
| Pedestrian Friendly | External image or perception |
| Public Transport | Bus Station (Image, Management and Connectivity) |
| Older Historic Buildings | Indoor Market |
| Clean | Lack of connectivity and lack of connection to the old part of the Town Centre |
| Planned well ' focal point' | Unicorn Hill |
| Daytime Safety | The concrete collar of the Ring Road and its navigation |
| Car Parking | Lack of leisure and young |

| Strength | Weakness |
|--|---|
| | people facilities |
| New College | Limited diversity of businesses at Church Green |
| Shop-mobility and Mobility Access | Homogenous Centre |
| Transport links and access to motorway network | Lack of Town Centre |
| Market area | Need for Town Centre Management or Partnership |
| Theatre | Charity Shops image |
| Good Environment | Kingfisher facing inward |
| Cinema | Lack of seating in the Kingfisher |
| Library | Lack of Town promotion |
| Crime reduction measures | |
| Health services | |

| Opportunity | Threat |
|---|--|
| Regional location | That Redditch is not taken seriously |
| Amenities that could attract people to Redditch, which include 'the Lake' | Night time anti-social behaviour. |
| Vacant Properties | St Stephens church scheme – need to take forward |

| Opportunity | Threat |
|---|---|
| | |
| Church Green | Tesco and out of town supermarkets |
| Kingfisher (face lift) | Regional standing and the competition with Birmingham and Worcester |
| More Independent Shops | Redditch may be left behind |
| The Ring Road | Lack of investment (public and private) |
| Complicated Signage | Need for action |
| Night time economy | Resources impact on shop-mobility and dial a ride |
| Town centre partnership, Joint working agenda | Lack of sign posting from south |
| External funding | Bromsgrove improvements |
| Bring in out of town shoppers | People will go elsewhere |
| Historical character | Current economic downturn |
| Increase in Residential Development | Funding sources |
| Expansion of market area | Shop rents and ownership structure of Kingfisher |
| Convenience shopping and | Subway |

| Opportunity | Threat |
|---|---|
| generally more retail | |
| Early evening family economy | Night time economy – young people focus |
| Expand greenspace | Clampers at Trafford Park |
| Improved public transport outside borough particularly to the south of Redditch | |
| Improved access for visually impaired | |
| Link to Trafford Retail Park | |
| Enhanced youth facilities | |
| Expansion of New College | |

6.2 Testing the Evidence Base and Identification of Gaps

Generally it was agreed that the evidence base presented at the workshop was both accurate and interesting. A small number of additional suggestions were made including:

- The need to look beyond the town centre boundaries at the connections from wider areas to Redditch;
- The need to look at the environment through which people travel to the town centre;
- The lack of facilities for evening visitors should be investigated;
- Greater advertisement and promotion of the Palace Theatre;

- The streetscape between Ipsley Street and the Palace Theatre is foreboding and there is a lack of street furniture in this area;
- How will Redditch compete for public and private funding resources with other regional towns and cities;
- There is a lack of residential development in the Town Centre;
- Independent access consultants should be employed to undertake an assessment of Redditch Town Centre;
- Better use should be made of Church Green, with quality retail units, and estate agents and banks encouraged to move to the Kingfisher;
- A need for Town Centre Management; and
- Is the town centre in the correct location?

6.3 Developing a vision for Redditch

Participants worked in groups to each develop a vision for the town centre for 2026. From each of the visions it has been possible to develop a 'common' 'shared' vision to guide this study.

'Redditch in 2026 will have a vibrant, prosperous and embracing town centre, which is accessible to all, with exceptional recreational, leisure, retail and community facilities that can be utilised and enjoyed by all'.

6.4 Identifications of Actions and Priorities

In groups participants worked to identify a series of quick win actions and actions for the medium and longer term. In addition, they were asked to identify who they believed could deliver these actions. The results of this exercise can be seen below in Table 6.2. The responses are summarised below and the suggested phasing of each action is broken down into quick win, medium term or long term.

Table 6.2 Actions and Priorities

| Action | Delivery Agency / Organisation | Phase |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|
| St Stephens Church Redevelopment | Church/ RBC | Medium |
| Cafe Culture | RBC | Quick Win |
| Former Market Area Redeveloped (Residential?) | RBC/Developer | Medium |
| Redevelopment of sites around train station | RBC/Developers | Medium |
| New Town Centre Partnership | RBC | Quick Win |
| Increase housing in Town Centre | HCA/RBC/ Developer | Medium |
| Downgrade Ring Road | WCC | Med - Long |
| Cleaning and Landscaping | RBC and the Community | Quick Win |
| Convenience Store | Landowner/Retailer | Medium |
| Further transport assessments | Redditch Borough | Quick |

| Action | Delivery Agency / Organisation | Phase |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|
| to consider enhancement of Ring Road | Council(RBC)/WCC | Win |
| Create better pedestrian links and integration | RBC/WCC | Quick Win |
| Flats above Kingfisher | Kingfisher/RBC/ Developer | Med - Long |
| Encourage Diverse Shops | Kingfisher/Landlord | Medium |
| Trafford Park Pay and Display with cost refunded on purchases in shops | Shops/RBC | Quick Win |
| Advertise attractions at the Palace Theatre in displays on the walls of subways | Palace Theatre/RBC | Quick Win |
| Remove Lobster Pot traffic system | WCC | Quick Win |
| Link Ring Road to Ipsley Street | WCC | Medium |
| Merge New College with Trinity HS | WCC/New College/LEA | Medium |
| Regeneration of housing in Other and Archer Road | RBC/HCA | Quick Win |
| More Seating | RBC/Kingfisher | Quick Win |
| More/improved green space | RBC/Developer | Medium |
| Enhanced toilet facilities | Kingfisher/RBC | Quick Win |

| Action | Delivery Agency / Organisation | Phase |
|---|---|-----------|
| Town centre business development strategy | RBC/Kingfisher/ Chamber of Commerce | Quick Win |
| Further develop university campus for Redditch | RBC/New College | Medium |
| Develop affordable eco - friendly housing | HCA, New College and Redditch Co-op Homes | Medium |
| Non alcoholic related activities for young people | WCC, Community Safety Partnership, Voluntary Groups | Quick Win |
| Security patrols increased to include car parks | Kingfisher | Quick Win |
| Police Station open at night | West Mercia Constabulary | Quick Win |
| Signage Audit and Replacement | WCC | Medium |
| Open up Kingfisher Centre to Banks | RBC/WCC and Kingfisher | Quick Win |
| Link train station and bus station to residential development | | Quick Win |

Participants were asked to rank their personal top three priority actions. In terms of Quick Win actions, further investigations of the Ring Road and the use of outside space to create a cafe culture ranked highest, with 38 and 37 points respectively.

Other quick win high ranking personnel priorities include seating in the town centre (22 points) the removal of the

lobster pot traffic system (19 points) and the establishment of a Town Centre Partnership (10 points).

In terms of the personal preferences for medium to long term actions, the highest ranking action was for the redevelopment of sites around the railway station and integration with the bus station (41 points). The redevelopment of St Stephen's Church and non alcohol related activities for young people actions both scored quite highly with 23 points.

6.5 Additional Information

A number of additional comments or suggestions were made on the day. These included:

- The need to consider the needs of an aging population;
- The Kingfisher centre attracts visitors from the wider area than Redditch;
- The need for transport links to parks and other places of interest;
- Success of Redditch Football Club could raise national awareness of Redditch as a place;
- Redditch needs a clear vision for future development, which will make it easier for key partners and funders to work together;
- It is believed that the train timetable is particularly aimed at to Birmingham, as there are no late night trains;
- A NRAC consultant should do an independent access audit of Redditch;
- Effective and constructive dialogue between landowners and the Council is required;
- Quality shops for older people are needed; and

- Local societies, focus and disability groups in the town centre want to be involved in its future development.

6.6 Commentary

Through the stakeholder workshop, a range of perspectives have cast greater light on the evidence which has been previously analysed. Different needs, issues and challenges were identified, alongside a series of potential positive actions which will be taken forward in the development of the Town Centre Strategy. These include:

- There is a need for improved recreational and leisure facilities for both the old and young, including a Cafe Culture and activities or facilities for younger people;
- Concerns exist with regard to the impact of competition from other centres, including competing for funding, investment and visitors;
- The redevelopment of St Stephens Church and the extended use of Church Green is important for the image of Redditch;
- Better connectivity and the downgrading of the Ring Road were seen as key actions for Redditch;
- Way finding and signage requires upgrading;
- The area around the railway station requires upgrading and integration with the bus station; and
- Opportunities exist to increase residential living in the town centre, including affordable housing.

7 Towards a Strategy

It is clear that the town centre faces a number of challenges if it is to ensure a sustainable future in the long term. As a strategic centre within the West Midlands and a centre with a growing catchment population it needs to build upon its current good performance, to secure this future. The principal challenges include:

- Competition from nearby town and city centres, and out of town retail areas.
- Town centre perception – this strongly influences success and is a function of the range of uses and services, the quality of shop frontages and public realm, access to the town centres, safety in the town centre and physical environment.
- Socio economic profile – the indicators point to the need to integrate a Strategy with initiatives to improve educational attainment, and opportunities to strengthen the mix of employment opportunities within the centre.
- Accessibility and movement - efficient and safe movement to, through and around the town centre, connecting destinations and improving 'way finding'.
- Complementary roles - as a result of the proximity of other town centres there is a need to ensure that Redditch has the qualities which complement and attract visitors.
- Attract new public / private investment funding
- Support local businesses, including small traders and the Kingfisher centre.

Building on the outputs of the evidence review, policy guidance, and the stakeholder workshops, a series of 'key

indicators for success' have been identified (Table 7.1), against which emerging actions are tested within the Strategy.

| Table 7.1: Key Indicators for Success |
|--|
| Support the viability and vitality of the town centre. |
| Support future competitiveness. |
| Support new and existing businesses. |
| Increase the footfall in all parts of the centre. |
| Improve safety / reduce crime in the town centre at night. |
| Improve the cultural offer. |
| Reconnect and strengthen links within and across the centre. |
| Enhance the public realm and streetscape. |
| Develop local distinctiveness and identity, while creating a sense of place. |
| Improve linkages to key destinations and public transport interchanges. |
| Introduce more town centre residential units. |
| Improve the mix of housing. |
| Improve the night time economy. |
| Improve access for less able. |
| Improve the train station area. |
| Break through the barrier of the 'ring road'. |
| Make better use of car parking areas. |
| Reduce retail vacancy rates. |
| Capitalise on assets e.g. St Stephens and Church Green. |

8 Town Centre Strategy

8.1 The Vision for Redditch Town Centre

Emerging from the evidence review and stakeholder workshop, an overarching vision for Redditch town centre was developed. This vision has guided the development of the Strategy.

'Redditch in 2026 will have a vibrant, prosperous and embracing town centre, which is accessible to all, with exceptional recreational, leisure, retail and community facilities that can be utilised and enjoyed by all'.

8.2 Guiding Principles

Five key guiding principles shape the Redditch Town Strategy. These principles are interrelated and in combination they will contribute to realising the vision for Redditch town centre.

8.2.1 Realise the Potential Development Opportunities

There are a number of current development opportunities that have great potential to reinforce and strengthen the town centre, creating confidence in Redditch as a place to invest in. In addition, the redevelopment of the area around the train station could create a new gateway to the centre and improve the image and impression of the centre. There are also a number of other locations across the centre where redevelopment could contribute to a strong and viable future. Many of these other locations are in private ownership and could be brought forward if the right conditions and confidence in the future of the centre can be created.

8.2.2 Improve and Diversify the Town Centre Offer

The Kingfisher Centre is acknowledged as a major retail destination, when ranked against other retail destinations locally, regionally and nationally. However, many shoppers do

not venture beyond the centre. The challenge is to attract visitors further into the town centre, re-balancing the dominance of the Kingfisher centre with the 'offer' beyond its doors. There is the need for opportunities to improve and diversify the wider town centre offer. This can be realised through changes to the activities undertaken within existing premises, but more significantly from the development of spaces and places that will arise over next 15 years. There is a need for a mix of uses in the town centre (beyond shopping), to create areas that are active throughout the day and week, generating additional footfall, spreading expenditure and combating negative perceptions of crime in the town centre.

8.2.3 Improve the Physical Environment

There is a need to improve the physical environment of the town centre to form an attractive, identifiable and useable series of spaces and places, alongside attractive services. There is the potential to build upon recent public realm improvements around Church Green, to continue to improve the pedestrian environment, to provide co-ordinated public spaces, related public arts enhancements and to ensure high quality design from new development.

8.2.4 Expand on the Business and Cultural Offer of the Town Centre

The expansion of the business and cultural offer of the town centre would build on the town's location and leisure facilities. The RSS sets some challenging targets for the centre in terms of new office and retail floor space provision.

8.2.5 Increase Residential Accommodation

Currently there is limited residential accommodation in the town centre. The opportunity to increase this will bring the added advantages of raising the profile of the area with the development industry, improving development viability particularly for those uses which support a night-time economy, increase activity levels in the centre and improve the spending power of the immediate catchment. Increased

residential development would also support local businesses and improve natural surveillance within the centre, whilst meeting the need for new residential accommodation in a sustainable location.

8.3 Strategy for Change

Based upon the research undertaken and the ideas generated by the stakeholder workshop this Town Centre Strategy for Redditch sets out cross cutting issues that require intervention as well as identifying potential actions and projects. The cross cutting themes are issues that can be seen across the town centre and were a number of interventions set out within the projects and actions can take place to remediate these issues.

Each project and action set forward in the strategy has been tested in terms of its likely contribution to the future improvement of the town centre and against current and emerging planning policy in order to identify major policy constraints. A high level 'market reality check' was undertaken by Jones Lang LaSalle, drawing on their local knowledge and expertise.

The output of this process is a set of potential projects and actions of various sizes for Redditch Town Centre, each of which has the potential to contribute to the delivery of the key indicators for success identified and for a healthy and sustainable town centre future. The projects and actions include a mix of public and private sector lead schemes, some capable of early delivery, whilst others requiring a longer delivery process. It is important to note at this stage that any illustrations produced for each projects and action are purely for illustrative purposes and no full design processes has taken place.

8.4 Cross Cutting Themes

Underlying the specific projects and actions identified in section 8.5 are a series of cross cutting themes. These themes

represent issues that can be seen across the whole town centre. The cross cutting themes have no specific actions or projects, but intervention of such issues will take place through the projects and actions put forward in the Town Centre Strategy. These themes are reflected to differing degrees in the various projects and actions, but when combined, should deliver positive change.

8.4.1 Improve and Diversify the Wider Town Centre Offer

Perceptions of the town centre are currently dominated by the Kingfisher Centre, which is a major attraction and synonymous with the image of Redditch. However the centre has much more to offer to residents and visitors alike. The layout and disposition of buildings in parts of the centre interferes with connectivity and works against improving the balance between the Kingfisher centre and the remainder of the town. In addition, there is a perception that the centre has a limited café and restaurant offer and night time activities, which in turn can be linked with the feeling of the centre being unsafe after dark.

The introduction of a mix of uses beyond the Kingfisher centre and the opportunities created through the redevelopment and introduction of new residential units within the central area should assist in the re-balancing of the town centre, through raising activity levels and providing natural surveillance which will improve the 'feel' of the centre. Diversifying the mix of uses on Church Green would improve the town centre offer and image. The regeneration of St Stephens Church, introducing complementary uses to support its role as the 'traditional heart' of the centre will add to the vibrancy and activity which flows to and from this area. Improvements to night time activities and economy can add to the quality and mix of uses in the area. Further information regarding the diversification of uses around Church Green can be seen in section 8.5.5 below which sets out actions regarding the enhancement to Church Green.

8.4.2 Town Centre Living and Mixed Use Development

As detailed previously few people live in Redditch Town Centre. The main residential areas within the town centre are in Evesham Mews, Other and Archer Roads, with most housing beyond the Ringway. The Ringway has the affect of severing the residential and commercial areas, creating an imbalance and poor mix of uses. This in turn affects the vitality of the centre, especially at night time, and in turn impacts on perceptions of safety and security.

An increase in residential living in the town centre would bring with it a greater variety of town centre uses. A demand has been identified for more convenience stores within the town centre. More residential accommodation would create additional demand for convenience stores and support their viability. The scattering of the major supermarkets across the wider town currently serves to draw customers away from the centre, rather than encourage shared purpose trips.

8.4.3 A Well Connected Centre and Improved Physical Environment

Pedestrian connectivity across the town centre can be seen to be weak in places, with barriers being both visual and physical. It is frequently possible to 'see' a 'destination' whilst being unclear as to how to reach it. Connecting destinations across the centre through a series of attractive routes is critical to its future success and securing the 'rebalancing'.

Improvements to the public realm can assist in guiding movement, but there are also opportunities to 'mend' the broken links and connect the key destinations across the centre through a series of open spaces, which will be more attractive to the pedestrian and create a more sustainable centre.

Strong and legible pedestrian links between primary shopping areas and the rest of the centre, and a well connected public

realm, are fundamental to the success of the centre as a whole.⁴

When considering movement within the centre, there is a need to consider the primary users of a particular space. There are a number of examples within the centre where the main users of the space are not those for whom the area has been designed. An example of this can be seen with the amount of surface level car parking close to the NEW College where the main flow is pedestrian, whilst priority is given to the car. A change in the road surface of the route connecting the NEW College to the main centre can have a significant impact on the perception of the users of this space, returning priority to the pedestrian and at the same time improving safety. There is also a need to improve connections between the NEW College, the bus/train station and the residential areas of Redditch Town Centre. Section 8.5.2 of the Town Centre Strategy 'Improvement to Public Spaces and Car Parking', looks at the way in which new connections through a series of open spaces through the town can be made between these places, through the use in certain areas of surface level car parking space for open space or other features. That section of the report details that this should be done following a Car Parking Study to investigate the requirements for car parking in Redditch.

The train station is located on the fringe of the town centre and has an unwelcoming physical environment. There is a need to improve the layout and environment of this area and its connections to the bus station and ensure it is pleasant, attractive, pedestrian friendly and well connected to the rest of the centre, particularly for the less able.

It is believed that the Ringway currently creates a barrier around the centre. This adversely affects both the physical

⁴ ODPM, Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools (2005)

environment and visual links between the centre and its hinterland. Radical change, along the lines of that achieved in Birmingham and other towns and cities could enable these severed links to be restored and integration to be achieved for the benefit of the centre.

Specific actions to tackle both the Ringway and Train Station area are further explored in Section 8.5 of this report.

Other ways in which to improve the physical environment of Redditch include improved lighting in the town centre to enhance the quality of the environment, identify key buildings and spaces along the route. It can also connect, and support after hours activity, providing safety and security. Action is required to enliven the centre in a visually coherent manner; ensuring that the streets and spaces are sufficiently well lit to promote personal safety. With the exception of the white lighting scheme, lighting is not currently used to enhance buildings in the centre or to help strengthen the identity of the individual spaces and places. There are a number of listed and locally listed buildings and commercial buildings which act as distinctive local landmarks. These are generally invisible at night time when they lose much of their landmark-orientation value.

Public Art can also create character and identity and reinforce a sense of place. It can spur community involvement in the design of the urban environment. In the broader context, public art projects can become an important part of any regeneration strategy, attract inward investment and encourage interest and pride in the outdoor environment. However, successful public art projects need a setting of high quality architecture and public space. Art can rarely improve a dull, flawed townscape. Public art can be used as a means of highlighting the significance of a building or space, act as a focal point or signify a gateway. Strategically sited, public art can allow users to identify places and help to improve the legibility of the urban realm. Flags and banners provide vivid splashes of

colour and movement within a street scene. These can often be utilised to promote civic events, exhibitions or attractions and could enliven the outer area around dull 'walls' created by the Kingfisher Centre and car parks.

There are a number of issues in Redditch in regards to connectivity and the physical environment. This theme can be seen across the whole of the town and as such a number of the actions detailed below aim to solve such issues. Further details highlighting the ways in which connectivity and the physical environment of Redditch can be improved are set out across a number of the projects and actions in section 8.5 of the report.

In particular, section 8.5.2 of the Town Centre Strategy 'Improving Public Spaces and Car Parking' sets out the ways in which the introduction of a Public Realm Strategy and improved public spaces can achieve an improved physical environment. While other actions, which include, looking to further developing a lighting strategy in Redditch, and a public art programme will seek to address this cross cutting theme.

8.4.4 Capturing and Maximising Investment through Development Opportunities

The town centre benefits from the presence of a number of high quality buildings. However these are often dominated by post 1970s development which has had little regard for its surroundings. Development has taken place on a site by site basis, and failed to capture the opportunities to create a connected high quality 'place'.

The emerging Core Strategy has identified (Policy SP.4 Regeneration for the Town Centre) a strategic site consisting of four parcels of land Prospect Hill, Edward Street, Church Road (former North West Quadrant) and Car Park Number 4 which serves the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Supplementary Planning Documents has been produced for the Edward Street, Prospect Hill and Church Road opportunity sites and

identifies a range of uses for each site, a summary of which is set out below in Figure 8.1.

The guidance for Edward Street recognises the importance of creating a 'gateway' employment development in this location and one which creates the image of Redditch as an attractive quality location. The SPD states that where it can be clearly demonstrated that the redevelopment of the site entirely for primarily employment use is not economically viable, then some residential development will be considered, where at least 50% of the site area is developed for Primarily Employment Use.

In the case of Prospect Hill, there may be the opportunity to achieve a residential space and place where high quality public realm / public spaces can be delivered in place of its current use for car parking, while maintaining a proportion of car parking spaces. This would add to the connectivity, legibility, and quality of the environment and attractiveness of this area as a place to live.

The case has been set for greater representation of convenience stores within the centre. However, the location of convenience stores needs careful consideration if they are to capture the benefits of their services for the centre. Redditch has a number of large convenience stores, located in places where the benefits of a visit to the stores are not shared beyond the boundaries of that area.

Opportunities should be explored to encourage convenience stores to locate within the existing retail area of the town centre. Developments within the strategic sites identified in the emerging Core Strategy could also include smaller A1 units, which could serve as local convenience stores for office employees and residents. Each site should also make provision for A3 (Restaurants and Café) type uses supporting active frontages, especially to public areas. Taken together the sites present a unique set of opportunities to secure a sustainable future for the town centre. They offer an

opportunity to achieve redevelopment that will integrate effectively with the existing town centre, add real value and improve connectivity across the centre and with the areas beyond its boundaries.

Figure 8.1 Supplementary Planning Document's Summary

SPD's have identified the following uses for the strategic town centre sites:

Edward Street: Potentially acceptable uses for the site include, Employment – B1, B2 and B8. New development should define the two street edges of the site and the boundary of the site facing the railway station. The railway frontage building should be designed to provide a striking and memorable enclosure to the railway station, providing a gateway site for Redditch. It is important to note that the site includes two town houses both of which are locally listed.

The SPD states that where it can be clearly demonstrated that the redevelopment of the site entirely for primarily employment use is not economically viable, then some residential development will be considered, where at least 50% of the site area is developed for Primarily Employment Use.

Prospect Hill: Acceptable uses for the site as stated in the SPD include housing and car parking. New residential development should be situated in the western half of the site.

Church Road, (formerly North West Quadrant): The SPD sets out the acceptable uses for this site as mixed use to include retail, leisure and residential. Car Park No 7. and the bus depot are identified as prime locations for leisure use, with Car Park No. 7 also identified as a prime location for retail. The SPD recognises the possibility of residential development on land to the rear of the Red Chamber, the west edge of the Church Road and following Bates Hill towards Unicorn Hill.

8.4.5 Quality Architecture and Design

There is a need to 'raise the bar' in terms of the quality of design and materials used in new development. Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools (2005) ⁵; provides advice which is relevant to new developments in Redditch Town Centre, a summary of which is set out in Figure 8.3. The Guidance also notes that *"large amounts of surface level parking are likely to detract from the overall appearance of a development and its surrounding area and are unlikely to maximise the development potential of available land."* (Paragraph 2.9).

New development should seek to raise the environmental performance of the buildings through the incorporation of good designs that encourage behavioural changes with regard to energy use and conservation. Higher density development within the centres, high standards of construction, stretching energy generation targets and requirements for the use of renewables, should be pursued. The design principles set out in Planning for Town Centres, as per Figure 8.2, should be taken into account in any future development proposals.

Figure 8.2: Design Principles

Development should:

- Normally be orientated so that it fronts the street;
- Respect the building lines of the existing urban environment and, where appropriate, build up to the edge of the curtilage;
- Maximise the amount of active street frontage;
- Avoid designs which are inward looking and which present blank frontages;
- Provide level access from the public realm; and in the case of development in edge-of-centre locations, provide good pedestrian access to the centre.

Developments with innovative layouts which maximise the use of a site and, where appropriate make use of multiple levels, should be encouraged, having regard to local context.

The design of buildings and shop fronts which are based on a standard design that is not well integrated with its local context should be avoided.

Roof scape design should be carefully considered within the wider context, with any adverse visual impact of rooftop servicing minimised.

'Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools (2005)'

⁵ ODPM, Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools (2005)

8.5 Priority Projects and Actions

The projects and actions identified below are considered as priorities in terms of delivering the changes needed to secure the future of Redditch as a sustainable town centre. Their importance lies in the role they have to play in realising the potential of the town centre. Some of these projects and actions can be delivered in the short term, whilst others will clearly be longer in gestation and delivery. It is important to note at this stage that any illustrations produced for each projects or action are purely for illustrative purposes and no full design processes has taken place. As previously stated each of the artist illustrations within this chapter can be seen at a larger scale in Appendix A.

8.5.1 Tackling the Ringway

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Short Term | Down grading the Ringway - Investigations |
| Medium/Long Term | Delivering Change – Breaking the concrete collar |

The evidence review explored the impact of the Ringway on the town centre, its impact on connectivity with its hinterland and on the image it creates for the centre. The primary purpose of the Ringway, from the perspective of the visitor, is to provide access to the town centre and its car parks. This function does not however require the breadth and standard of carriageway which exists. The size of carriageway encourages speeds which are well above those associated with a normal town centre and respect for the pedestrian is limited.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a study is commissioned to explore the opportunities offered by the down grading of the Ringway to a level more appropriate with its modern role and function. The study should examine the traffic implications of such a decision. Alongside the opportunities to create a sense of

space and place, a more appropriate priority should be given to pedestrian movements across the road, provision of surface level pedestrian crossings and the reconnection of the town centre with its hinterland. Whilst this action will not deliver an immediate change, it is believed that from this study a number of short term actions should emerge which could make a significant early change, for example the provision of surface level pedestrian crossings.

Medium/Long Term

In terms of tackling the Ringway we have looked at a specific action that could deliver significant change. As detailed previously the views to and from Redditch Town Centre in places are obscured by the Ringway. This can predominantly be seen at Prospect Hill which leads to the Old Birmingham Road and Unicorn Hill which leads to the Bromsgrove Road. The photograph below shows Prospect Hill as it stands today, with the bridge carrying the Ringway across, obscuring impressive views of the town centre and the countryside beyond and leaving pedestrians to pass underneath.

Photograph 8.1: Prospect Hill



Overleaf is an artist illustration of the potential impact of changes to the Ringway, which would occur with the removal of the bridge, and the drop of the carriageway to surface level.

Figure 8.3: Ringway Redevelopment Illustration



8.5.2 Improving Public Spaces and Car Parking

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Short Term | Car Parking Study Develop and Implement Public Realm Strategy |
| Medium/Long Term | Car Parking Strategy Creation of a series of Open Spaces |

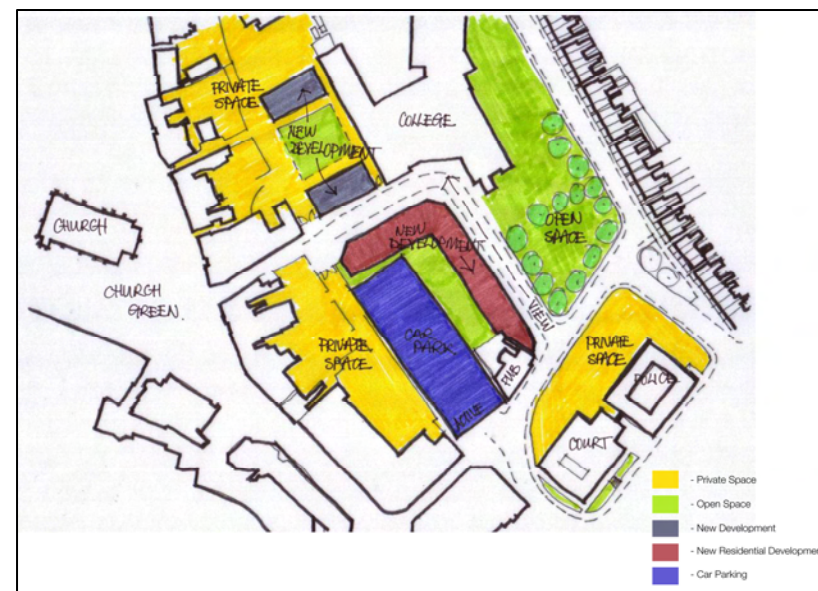
Redditch as a centre lacks the open space and public spaces which provide identity and legibility to a town centre. Currently there are no formal linkages between the train station, Church Green, the NEW College and the residential areas of Redditch. There are open spaces within the town centre, but many of these are used as car parks. Both in terms of car parking and future public space improvements there is a need to review the demand and need for car parking within the town centre in order to determine if it is in the right place, if it is well used, and whether there are any areas of car parking which could be reduced so that the developable nature of these areas could be realised, whether this be through the creation of open space or specific developments. The amount of car parking and its impact on the visual quality of the centre is at present out of balance. Areas such as those around the NEW College are at present dominated by the car, whilst the majority of users arrive by foot.

Recommendation

In the short term a car parking study should be undertaken to explore this issue in more depth. The information received should then be used to inform a car parking strategy. In particular this should address the amount of additional parking spaces required (if any) to support new development and how this can best be accommodated. In addition, the car parking study could look to identify car parking standards for Redditch. This study should also be used to inform the amount and design of car parking required as part of the redevelopment of the strategic site at Prospect Hill.

Through undertaking a car parking study and developing a car parking strategy there may be opportunities to redress the existing imbalance seen in the town and create areas of attractive public space on land currently used for surface car parking, while at the same time allowing for the release of potential developable land. Figure 8.4 below illustrates the potential for the use of the surface level car parking on front of the NEW college for open space with allowance for car parking on site and the possible location of a new residential development to the front of the NEW College off Victoria Street and sufficient lands for the future expansion of the NEW College alongside the current building as indicated in the diagram below in grey. Discussions with the NEW College suggest that in the long terms the college has aspirations for potentially growing the Redditch campus by circa 80,000 sq ft.

Figure 8.4: Open Space Improvement Illustration



As detailed above the re-use of surface level car parking for public space is one way in which to improve the physical environment of Redditch. In addition, there is a recognised need for improved linkages from the train station, the NEW College and residential areas beyond. Physical links between these places already exist in the form of streets to and from each area. However, it is believed that to achieve a link between these areas, a way in which to achieve this could be through a series of public open spaces across the town which draw people from one area to another. It is suggested that following the car parking study and in line with future public realm improvements and the other actions put forward in this strategy (e.g. Train Station Area Redevelopment) that a series of public open spaces be created starting at the train station, leading to Church Green, with another area of public open space at the NEW College. The fact that these areas are for public use will draw people to and from an area, including the residential areas beyond the NEW College, thus creating a series of green networks.

The quality of the public realm is synonymous with the quality of a town centre, its image and the impressions it leaves. In turn this has a marked affect on its future viability, desirability and sustainability. Public realm improvements also offer the potential for 'early wins' and increased confidence in an area. Figure 8.5 highlights the key elements of a public realm framework through which a public realm strategy could be produced. As stated above, we believe that a Public Realm Strategy should be developed and implemented in Redditch to build on the improvements that have already taken place at Church Green and to aid with the improvements of public spaces in Redditch. In addition, the implementation of a public realm strategy based on the key elements set out overleaf for is a way in which to tie a number of the actions set forward in this Town Centre Strategy together. Therefore, the development and implementation of a Public Realm Strategy

would sit alongside the implementation of each of the actions/projects put forward in this strategy.

Figure 8.5

A Public Realm Framework

The key elements of the Public Realm Framework are:

- A town centre wide approach to the public realm and design issues should take place, building on current and planned public realm improvements and investment.
- Connecting a network of places and destinations. Existing and new public spaces (which can be incorporated within redevelopment) need supporting activities including events, markets and meeting spaces.
- Public routes and spaces overlooked by active ground floor uses that relate directly to passing pedestrians, creating activity and interest. They include shops, restaurants, civic and community uses.
- Improvements to the public realm through updating frontages, coordinating street furniture, signage, landscaping and public art.
- Creation of 'gateways' and the introduction of landmark buildings at key locations, to provide improved legibility / orientation.
- Improved physical and visual connections between the town centre and surrounding areas. Views from the centre outwards to the surrounding areas are impressive, particularly around Prospect Hill, and create a sense of location and place, but need to be re-captured when the opportunity allows.

8.5.3 A Sense of Arrival and Signage

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Short Term | Minor 'Quick Win' Changes |
| Medium/Long Term | New Signage System |

Creating a well connected and improved physical environment was an important cross cutting theme, and a key part of this is the ability to 'way find' around the town centre.

Recommendations

In the short term, there are several things that can be done now, some of which may be of a relatively low cost:

- Clear away sufficient vegetation on the roundabout at the end of the Coventry highway to allow visitors a clear view across it to the Ringway and Town Hall. To give a better sense of arrival and more time decision-making time. Commission public artwork to be placed in the same roundabout with sufficient height and presence to reinforce the impression for visitors.
- Impose a speed limit of 30 mph on the Ringway and reduce its width in places with strategic build outs that constrain speed and signal and protect vehicle accesses and exits.
- Take down the gantries and introduce new signage along the Ringway, placed ahead of vehicle exits, as well as at them, so drivers have more decision making time whether to use them. Directions should be to significant destinations and access numbers should be subsidiary.
- Renumber the car parks in the order they are accessed, or rename the car parks so that they can be associated with the primary destinations they serve. Any action to rename or renumber the car parks should be done in consultation with the Kingfisher. Provide information about parking space availability in each of the car parks at or before the roundabout at

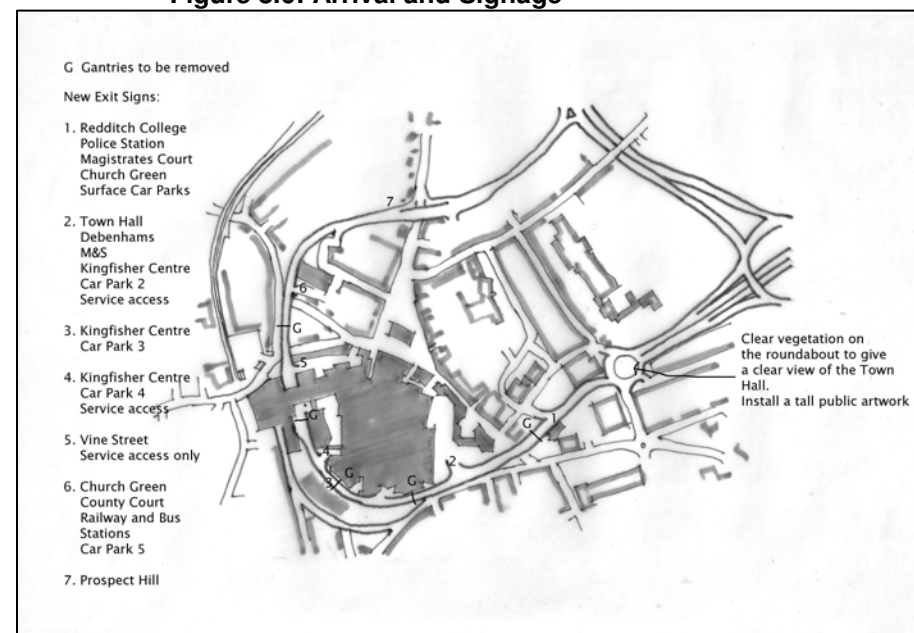
the end of the Coventry Highway. This will give visitors time to decide where it is best for them to park.

Medium/Long Term

Signage should enhance an intuitive sense of where to go, based on an obvious understanding of the place, and should focus on directing visitors to the particular destinations they are likely to be seeking.

In the long term, if the Ringway were to be modified to integrate it into the rest of the town centre network and to allow pedestrians to cross it at grade, a whole new signage system would need to be created. This would parallel changes as they happened, and should aim to provide an integrated system for both vehicular and pedestrian signage throughout the centre based on destinations.

Figure 8.6: Arrival and Signage



8.5.4 Improving the Café and Restaurant Offer

Short to Medium Term

Encouragement of A3 Uses

Improving the diversifying the town centre offer is important to its vitality and viability.

Recommendations

The encouragement of a wider range of cafes and restaurants within the town centre could improve the vitality of the centre, both during the day time and at night. This could be achieved in a number of ways:

- A positive approach to planning applications for A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) uses and for the use of the space in front of the units for outdoor seating;
- Positive marketing with key operators to raise the profile and opportunities in Redditch;
- Explore the opportunity to include A3 uses within a redevelopment of St Stephens Church;
- A 'subsidy' scheme to support the re-use of vacant premises for A3 uses; and
- Ensuring that A3 uses are encouraged at ground floor level in new developments.

The benefits of encouraging such uses are well recognised and impact upon the vitality and life of a centre both during the day time and in the evenings. Locations for such uses would be ideally situated in Church Green or around the already vibrant Stranz Square. The impact on the night-time economy is particularly important as the presence of such uses will attract a different mix of visitors, improving perceptions of the safety and attractiveness of the centre during the evening. As new residential units come forward in the centre, the demand

for such uses will increase further, and at the same time the attractiveness of town centre living will be affected by the quality of the evening economy offer.

Photograph 8.2: Alcester Road, Stranz Square



Photograph 8.3: Cafe Culture Example



8.5.5 Enhancements to Church Green to secure its Role as a Focal Point for Community Activities

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Short Term | Increase and diversify activities on Church Green. Implement Developed Public Realm Strategy. Improve signage. Detailed scheme for regeneration of St Stephens Church |
| Medium/Long Term | Regeneration of St Stephens Church |

Successful town centres have at their heart an area of civic space, where shoppers, workers and residents alike can meet and feel safe in a pleasant environment. This space serves not only as a focal point for community activities and events but also defines and identifies the centre itself. Recent improvements have taken place to the public realm around Church Green. However, it is believed more can be done to develop the area as a focal point for the town with improved activities.

Proposals to revitalise Church Green, would include the regeneration of St Stephens Church to allow it to act both as a Church and as a focal point for the community, reinforcing the 'sense of place' and image of Redditch, complementing the Kingfisher centre and acting as a 'draw' between the Kingfisher Centre and the rest of the town centre.

Freshlife Consulting were commissioned to look at the feasibility for redeveloping St Stephens Church. Their recommendations identify that currently the church is economically unsustainable and the re-use of part of the church and grounds would be feasible. Possible uses identified by Freshlife Consulting include office or commercial space, meeting room facilities, training and exhibition space

and space for cultural activities, bookshop/fair trade shop and cafe. In addition, the preferred option that Freshlife Consulting have put forward includes the remodelling of the outside of the church, which looks to move car parking spaces, to the opposite side of the church, while remodelling and landscaping the grounds running alongside Market Place which could include a rejuvenated band stand next to the outdoor market.

Recommendations

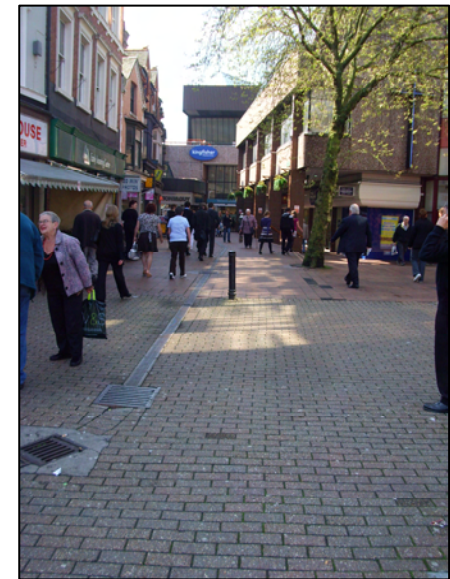
St Stephens Church is a key landmark within Redditch. The vibrancy and activity which flows from it and its role at the heart of the centre are critical to the future of Redditch. Sympathetic regeneration which builds upon this role, by introducing complementary uses to support this function and encourage its use should be explored. Freshlife Consulting consulted on all options put forward during there feasibility assessment of St Stephens Church. It is believed that the process by which their recommendations are based is clear and transparent and as a result we would agree with the proposals they have put forward and would encourage the implementation of these proposals to regenerate St Stephens Church. This regeneration project would also look to deliver some of the actions put forward in this strategy which include the encouragement of A3 uses, the improvement to the public realm and improved public spaces and would support the development and implementation of a town wide public realm strategy as detailed in section in 8.5.2. Public realm improvements should be complemented in Church Green with improved signage to the other parts of the town.

Photograph 8.4: St Stephens Church

Based upon the consultation undertaken for this strategy, the evidence collected through the environmental audit and the need to rebalance the town centre and the dominance of the Kingfisher, it is believed that Church Green should be surrounded by active retail frontages (particularly along Church Green east) and under natural surveillance from residential accommodation at upper floor level – recreating the characteristics of a ‘traditional’ town centre. The presence of the market reinforces the traditional role of this space within town centre, connecting the town to its long history. Church Green needs to be well linked in all directions, ensuring it acts as a safe hub for community activity. Church Green East has high quality building quality and character. However, at present the street does not reach its full potential within the

heart of the town centre due to the nature of services located within these buildings. Incentives to attract retail uses (including niche retail clients and arts and crafts) to these units would help diversify the uses of the town centre and complement the Kingfisher. This would require the suitable relocation of the service business located in these units.

As previously detailed it is important that Church Green acts as a civic centre for Redditch and is one of a series of public open spaces tying places together. In order to achieve this there is a need to encourage the redevelopment of St Stephens Church and its grounds, implement public realm improvements and to open up the entrance to the Kingfisher at Evesham Street. This street and the Kingfisher entrance is overshadowed by the streets buildings and narrowness. Action taken to rectify this overshadowing and open up this entrance could allow for a better draw people between the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and Church Green and the rest of the town centre.

**Photograph 8.5
Evesham Street**

8.5.6 Tackling the Train Station area

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Short Term | Develop regeneration scheme. |
| Medium to Long Term | Redevelopment of the Train Station Area |

The area along Edward Street and the corner of Bromsgrove Road forms part of the strategic regeneration site identified in the emerging Core Strategy. Supplementary Planning Guidance for Edward Street provides the planning and urban design and guidance for the future redevelopment of the area. The redevelopment of the area around the train and bus stations has the opportunity to transform the sense of arrival for visitors to Redditch and enhance pride in the town centre for the local population, while complementing any future development on the Edward Street site. Many of those studying at NEW College will arrive from either the bus or train stations and it is vital to ensure that the memories students take from their time at NEW College extend to encompass an image of Redditch as a pleasant and appealing place.

Recommendations

In redeveloping the train station area it is considered essential to ensure that the opportunity is captured to improve connectivity between the rail station, the bus station and onwards into the town centre. The redevelopment of this area should therefore ensure that the public realm is of a high quality, that it incorporates 'spaces' which improve navigability and leave a lasting impact on users.

Example: At Sheffield station a new public square has been created, the road layout changed with the removal of a roundabout, and several buildings demolished to make way for the 'gateway' development. The centrepiece of the pedestrian area is the Cutting Edge sculpture.

Redevelopment should also ensure the integration of active frontages, cafes and restaurants that can complement a station area and support its integration with the town centre. This area should be seen as a 'gateway' to Redditch.

Through the use of section 106, it could be possible to link future job opportunities realised through office and other employment generating uses on this site with college courses.

Figure 8.7 below sets out a series of proposals for the train station area which show how land adjoining the train station could be developed so that the relationship between the station entrance and the bus station are improved. This proposal would include the removal of a number of units immediately opposite the train station. Their removal would allow for a new train station entrance and a new square and public open space at the same level of the bus station. A short walk, which would mostly be under the cover of a canopy, would lead across Bromsgrove Road to the bus station. It is suggested that the bus station is rejuvenated in the form of a new canopy, or some such structure of a more human scale to mark the main pedestrian entrance. The development of a public square in this area ties with the strategies proposal to link parts of Redditch through a series of public open spaces.

It is proposed that the station entrance would be flanked by new commercial uses with residential development behind this. In addition, two levels of parking, one at the square level, and one below this at the station platform level would be accessed from the square. In addition, the illustration provides for commercial development next to the bus station with possible apartments above and for residential development alongside the bus station facing Plymouth Road.

The redevelopment of the development opportunity site on Edward Street for employment use, with possible residential development would complement the train station proposals.

Figure 8.7: Train Station Proposals Illustration



8.5.7 Rejuvenation of Silver Street/Royal Square

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Short Term | Ringway Investigations Single Aspect Residential Development |
| Medium to Long Term | Redevelopment of Silver Street/Royal Square and Enclosed Market Area |

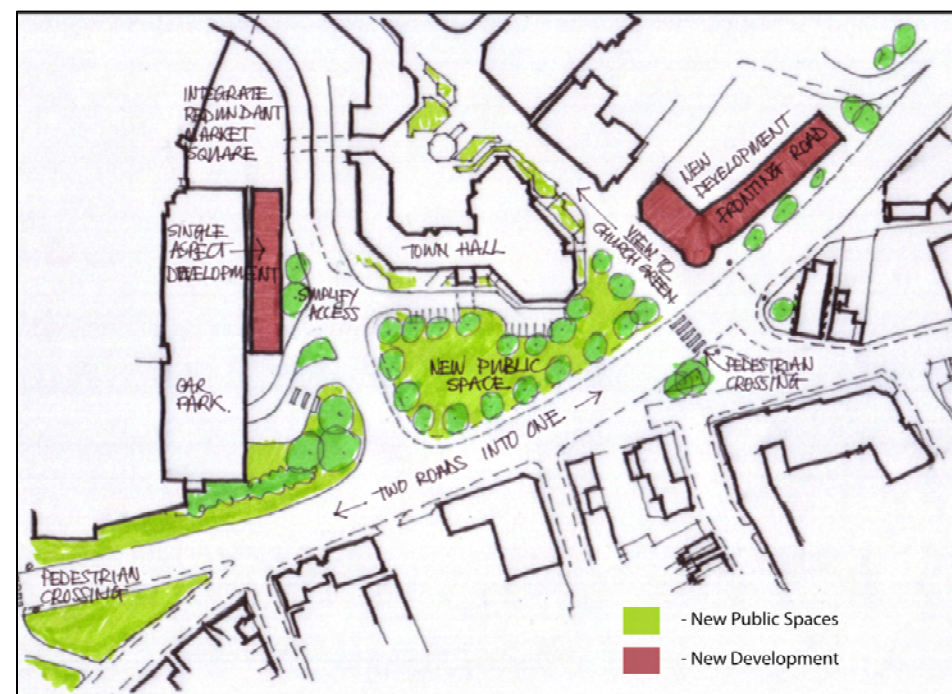
The area of investigation covers the front of the town hall, along with Silver Street and the Royal Square which holds the former enclosed Market. In this area there is a mix of building types and road layouts. The contrasting building types of the Town Hall and Car Park No. 2 stand alongside each other. In addition, pedestrian movement within the area is constricted by the presence of the Ringway and the route which leads from it to the Car Park and the servicing area of the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Currently the Ringway and layout of the Car Park and entrance routes detract from the front of the Town Hall Civic Building. Redevelopment of this area is required so that the Town Hall can become a recognised area of community focus in Redditch and to create improved public open space and pedestrian movements across the area.

Recommendations

Figure 8.8 illustrates at a high level how improvements can be made to the Silver Street/Royal Square area to create an area with community focus. It is proposed that this would primarily work through the downgrading of the Ringway and merging of the route with Ipsley Street. In addition, it is proposed that single aspect apartments are developed alongside Car Park 2 running to the redundant enclosed market area and that the surface parking on front of the town hall is turned into public open space which can be overlooked by the proposed apartments.

It is important to add that the rejuvenation of this area could take place without the removal of the Town Hall surface level parking to open space, however, in our opinion, this change would be a fundamental part of any redevelopment creating a community focus for this area. In addition, to specific improvements to the Town Hall area, it is believed that through the downgrading of the Ringway, which would lead to an at-grade pedestrian crossing in place of the former subway, that the current Apollo 2000 development should be re-developed so that this gateway site is aligned with the road frontage, as currently it obscures views to the Palace Theatre.

Figure 8.8: Rejuvenation of Silver Street/Royal Square (High Level)



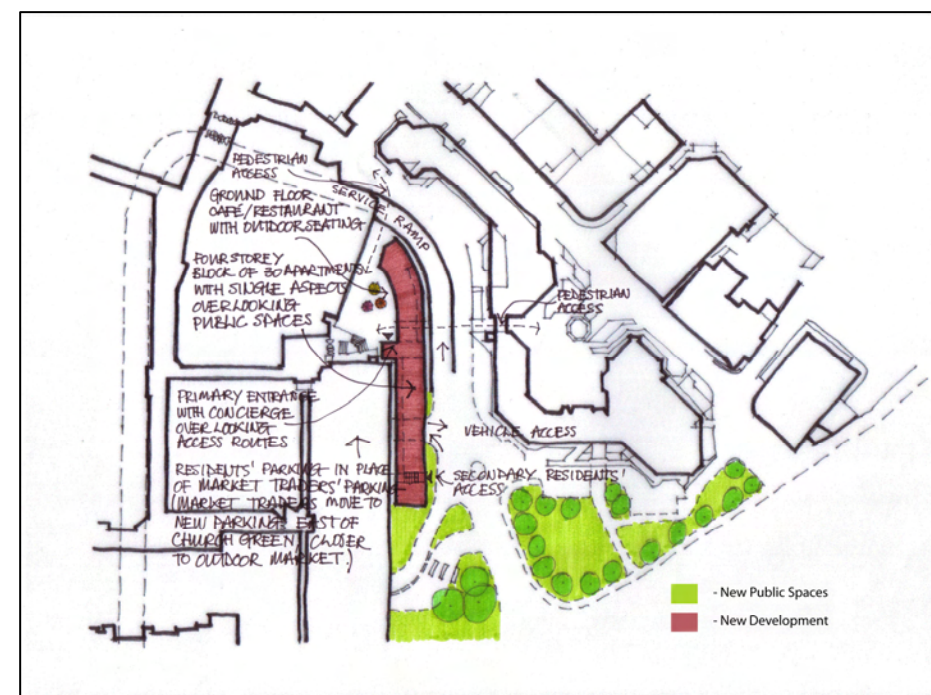
Photograph 8.6: Silver Street Area at Present



Figure 8.9 shows in more detail how the single aspect residential development would work running alongside Car Park 2 and into the redundant enclosed market area. This proposed four storey single aspect apartment block, would encompass ground floor café/restaurant in the area within the former market area which would allow for seating in a courtyard. It is proposed that resident car parking would take place in the area under Car Park 2 currently used by market traders, with car parking for the traders being moved closer to their current position at Church Green (which could be investigated through the Car Parking Study). The primary entrance for residents as can be seen in Figure 8.9 within the former enclosed market area would have concierge facilities and would allow for entry from the residents parking area. There would also be a secondary entrance facing the Town Hall for vehicular drop off and access from the residents' car park. These artist impressions are purely illustrative to show what could take place in this area.

In order to appreciate the benefits of the rejuvenation of the square better accessibility from Stranz Square should take place, and through the downgrading of the Ringway a simplified junction layout to the area as a whole would occur. Together these types of actions would have a major beneficial impact on the visitor arriving into Redditch Town Centre creating an improved gateway and landmark feature at the Town Hall.

Figure 8.9: Rejuvenation of Silver Street/Royal Square and Redevelopment of Enclosed Market Area



8.5.8 Improved Lighting, Safety and Security in the Town Centre

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Short Term | Develop lighting strategy. Undertake safety and security audit. |
| Medium Term | Implement Lighting Strategy and Improve lighting in Town Centre |

There is a perception that safety and security in Redditch at night is an issue. The lack of residential accommodation within the town centre would appear to be a major factor in this and is also linked to the limited night time economy. PPS 6 emphasises the role that town centre living has to play in safety, security and the vitality of the centre. The physical fabric of the centre however also plays a part, and in considering how the public realm and design of new development influences crime and personal safety, this perception can be changed.

Recommendations

There are short term measures which can come forward, to improve town centre safety and security which include increased security patrols in the town centre at night, better lighting of key movement routes to the bus and train station, and other destinations. In addition, as previously identified increased residential development in the town centre with provide natural surveillance of areas.

Lighting should enhance the quality of the environment, and improved lighting should occur at key buildings and spaces across the town centre. Improved lighting will connect, and support after hours activity, providing safety and security. Action is required to enliven the town centre in a visually coherent manner; ensuring that the streets and spaces are sufficiently well lit to promote personal safety. Actions put forward within this Town Centre Strategy will complement the white lighting scheme that is currently being implemented in

the town. The white lighting scheme will be working on Unicorn Hill, Bates Hill, Church Green West and Church Road in August 2009. The white lighting scheme will help improve lighting of the key movement routes in the town. The development of a full lighting strategy which complements and incorporates the white lighting scheme could aim to improve lighting in other areas of the town around Stranz Square and the routes leading to and from the NEW College and current town centre residential areas.

Lighting is not currently used to enhance buildings in the town centre or to help strengthen the identity of the individual centres. Within the town there are a number of significant public buildings which act as distinctive local landmarks. These are generally invisible at night time, except Church Green, when they lose much of their landmark-orientation value.

The floodlighting of buildings is increasingly being scrutinised in terms of both cost and sustainability, however a limited number of existing structures and potential new signature buildings and interventions would benefit from lighting as part of a lighting strategy. Lighting schemes should be sensitive, subtle and changing, thereby adding interest. It could demarcate the entrances to the areas of open space in the town, and should reflect the character of the subject and not attempt to swamp or overwhelm it. In any lighting strategy the interests of road users and adjacent occupiers and communities should also be carefully considered.

Buildings and spaces within the town centre which would benefit from improved lighting, include:

- St Stephens Church and Church Green;
- Along Church Road, which leads to Fuse Nightclub (incorporated in white lighting scheme);

- Lighting within and around the subway leading from the town centre to Ipsley Street and the subway under the roundabout at the Coventry Highway junction;
- Surrounding the entrances to the Kingfisher Centre, beside Evesham Street and its routes from Alcester Road; and
- Along gateway corridors to the town specifically from the train station to Church Green to the NEW College and residential areas.

The town centre management group/partnership will have a clear role to play in delivering this action and if tackled in the short term could have a positive influence on perceptions of Redditch as a place to invest.

Photograph 8.7: Example of Public Lighting



8.5.9 Public Art Programme

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Short Term | Investigate public art programme Deliver Public Art Statue at the Ringway and Coventry Highway Junction Roundabout |
| Medium Term | Deliver Public Art Programme |

Recommendations

Public Art Programmes can create local distinctiveness and a pride in the heritage of a town and its centre. Working together with the community, public art projects could add support to other measures designed to revitalise the town centre and improve environmental quality.

However, successful public art projects need a setting of high quality architecture and public space. Art can rarely improve a dull, flawed townscape. Public art can be used as a means of highlighting the significance of a building or space, act as a focal point or signify a gateway. Strategically sited, public art can allow users to identify places and help to improve the legibility of the urban realm. In the short term the delivery of a public art statue of high quality architecture at the Ringway/Coventry Highway roundabout could help improve the sense of arrival to Redditch and improve the 'gateway' to the town.

The implementation of a public art programme will compliment the delivery of Local Plan Policy B(BE).20 which seeks in appropriate circumstances to secure the provision of public art when considering applications for development. Public Art programmes linked to new development are commonly funded through section 106 agreements.

8.5.10 Encouraging Town Centre Living

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Short Term | Promote the inclusion of Residential Development on all town centre Strategic Sites |
| Medium/Long Term | Increased Residential Development |

The existing provision of residential units in the town centre is significantly below that of comparable centres and is seen as a contributing to the limited night time economy, café and restaurant offer within the centre. It also impacts on the perception of safety and security after dark.

Recommendation

The introduction of new residential accommodation throughout this centre would make a significant difference. New residential accommodation has been proposed at the train station, Prospect Hill Opportunity Site and within parts of the Church Road Opportunity Area which would increase town centre activities. The town centre is an attractive and sustainable location for first time buyers.

There may be value in exploring the opportunity for additional residential units to be incorporated into the strategic development site at Edward Street. It is recognised that the current economic downturn has affected housing investment in town/city centres and therefore this opportunity is seen as longer term.

8.5.11 Town Centre Management

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Quick Win | Set up of Town Centre Management or Partnership |
|------------------|--|

Redditch already has in place a number of existing public / private partnerships including the Local Strategic Partnership and a long term partnership previously existed. However at present there is no co-ordination of other services to any great extent – issues are dealt with on their individual merit and there is not one voice that represents the Town Centre as a corporate (public / private sector) body.

Discussions with various developers, landowners and key interested parties within Redditch together with the known experience of other towns and cities elsewhere in the UK demonstrate that there is a need to ensure that the outputs from this strategy should be delivered in an effective and co-ordinated manner across all separate departments of the Council. Central Government has effectively put the ‘Town Centre’ first in terms of its recent planning policy (PPS 4) but it also recognises that such regulatory planning powers must be supported by a co-ordinated and proactive effort by the private sector, property owners infrastructure agencies and the community led by a strong local authority input in terms of a Town centre partnership or management board.

There is strong support for a Town Centre Management/Partnership group to co-ordinate activities and opportunities within Redditch. Funding support could be through local businesses, the local economic Strategic Partnership and through section 106 contributions from new developments⁶.

⁶ Town Centre Partnerships DETR/ATCM 1997

Recommendation

The role of the Management group could include:

- Liaising with local businesses, acting as the 'Voice of Businesses' to the Council, and the 'Voice of the Council' to businesses and a point of contact for town centre issues;
- Monitor services (i.e. define and secure standards for cleaning; refuse collection; lighting and the maintenance and improvement of public and private space, provision of public toilets, or publicly accessible toilets);
- Work with businesses to promote the town centre and act as town centre Ambassadors;
- 'Promote investment' in the town centre by identifying lacking retail, leisure and other facilities and taking steps to meet these needs, by marketing and promoting the strengths of the town as a place to invest in and handle queries on the town centre;
- Supporting community consultation on the implementation of the priority actions and projects identified in the strategy;
- Involving statutory bodies, the voluntary sector, education and health providers, police and other in town centre issues;
- Looking at ideas for the town centre around the issues of:
 - Crime Reduction;
 - Security of the car parks;
 - Cleanliness;
 - Traffic and parking;

- Improving the centres mix of uses;
- Provision of seating around the centre;
- Town centre events; and
- Community Involvement.
- Help business development, including training initiatives and competitions such as Local Business Awards.
- Promote events at the Palace Theatre and other destinations.

8.5.12 Business Support Scheme

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Quick Win | Investigate Business Support Scheme |
| Medium Term | Deliver Business Support Scheme |

Recommendation

A better trading environment enhances the status of town centres and the demand for property, increasing both its capital worth and rentable value. Increasing competitiveness enlarges the customer base, fuels a continuing drive for differentiation and unlocks opportunities for new facilities and attractions. A business support scheme could take place in areas not covered by a Business Improvement District. In addition a business support scheme would not be considered to be as formal a process as would the implementation of a BID. This would act to compliment Local Plan policy E(TCR).2 which seeks in appropriate circumstance to secure environmental enhancement and/or other improvements to the Town Centre relative to the impact of the development.

Such a scheme could be funded through section 106 monies secured through the re development of the strategic, and other, town centre sites.

8.5.13 Shop Enhancement Scheme

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Short Term | Investigate shop enhancement scheme |
| Medium Term | Deliver Shop Enhancement Scheme |

Recommendation

Shop enhancement scheme can effectively lever not only private funding for 'environmental improvements' but also commitment to the future success of the centre. Additional funds could be secured through section 106 monies. This could include the following works:

- Bringing vacant or underused units or upper floors back into use; structural, internal works to increase or enhance the business and / or the commercial space;
- Restoring or replacing shop fronts in a style appropriate to the building as well as external works to the front of the building (e.g.: brick cleaning, re-pointing);
- Improving eyesore sites and buildings and improving shared rear access ways;
- Anti business crime measures;
- Contributions to public art;
- Provision of improved access for people with disabilities; and
- Improvements that benefit a number of businesses and premises in carrying out minor improvements to the external fabric of the area.

8.5.14 Business Improvement District

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Short Term | Investigate Business Improvement District |
|-------------------|--|

Recommendations

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are an increasingly popular way of formalising a partnership approach and it is suggested that Redditch give serious consideration to a BID in the short term as a means of demonstrating "quick win" environmental / marketing improvements to the business community.

Although BIDs are time consuming in their inception as 'hearts and minds' have to be won from the local business community but there are a sufficient number of successful BID's in operation throughout the West Midlands that it should be possible to demonstrate their value and effectiveness. The ring fenced additional business levy is allocated to projects by a formally constituted board which can evolve into a more ambitious delivery vehicle once set up and shown to be effective.

9 Testing the Outcomes

Section eight of the Town Centre Strategy identified a series of 'Priority Projects and Actions' which together have the potential to deliver a sustainable and healthy future for each of the two centres.

| Table 9.1 Measuring Delivery Indicator / Action Project | Tackle the Ringway | Arrival and Signage | Café and Restaurant | Church Green | Station Area | Silver St/ Royal Sq | Public Space, Car Parking | Town Living | Lighting, Safety, Security | Town management | Business Support | Shop enhancement | Public Art Programme |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Support viability and vitality of the town centre | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Support future competitiveness | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Support new and existing businesses | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Increase footfall in all parts of the centre | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Improve safety / reduce crime in the town centre at night | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Improve the cultural offer | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Reconnect and strengthen links within and across the centre | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Enhance the public realm and streetscape | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Develop local distinctiveness and identity, create a sense of place | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Improve linkages to key destinations and public transport interchanges | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | |

| Table 9.1 Measuring Delivery Indicator / Action Project | Tackle the Ringway | Arrival and Signage | Café and Restaurant | Church Green | Station Area | Silver St/ Royal Sq | Public Space, Car Parking | Town Living | Lighting, Safety, Security | Town manage- ment | Business Support | Shop enhancem ent | Public Art Programme |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Introduce more town centre residential units | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Improve the mix of housing | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Improve the night time economy | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Improve access for less able | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| Improve the train station area | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| Break through the barrier of the 'ring road'. | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Make better use of car parking areas | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Reduce retail vacancy rates | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Capitalise on assets eg St Stephens and Church Green | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |

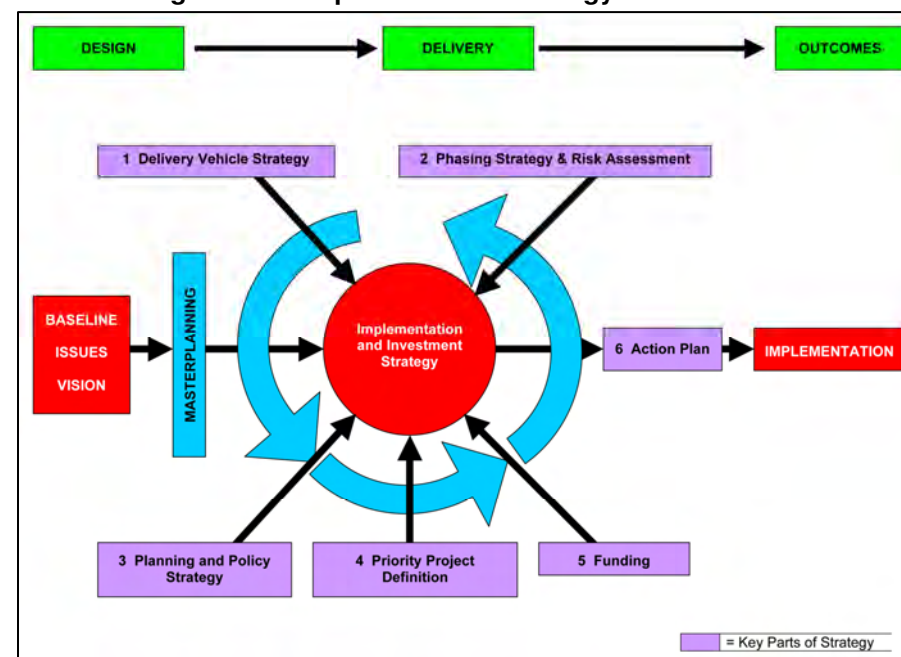
10 Framework for Implementation and Investment

The key ingredients of a successful Implementation and Investment Strategy are:

- A clearly defined outcome;
- The consistency, commitment and leadership to deliver projects over an inevitably long development period;
- The coordination mechanisms and project management to ensure implementation despite the various obstacles that will emerge;
- The supporting statutory plans and consents to enable development to proceed;
- Skills to design and implement a comprehensive plan and individual projects;
- Preparation of a consolidated funding strategy and the financial resources to generate a momentum behind the regeneration process and to fund the non-commercial elements; and
- Infrastructure and environmental improvement investment programme to support new development.

Figure 10.1 sets out the six elements (highlighted in purple) of a successful Implementation and Investment Strategy, showing that delivery is part of a whole process. It is crucial to a successful and meaningful strategy and should be considered throughout the process, and not regarded as an 'add-on' element towards the end. It is this whole process and particularly the delivery element that is represented by the above 'route map'. Delivery is less of a step-by-step process and more of a series of parallel or cyclical processes, often dependent upon one another.

Figure 10.1: Implementation Strategy



10.1 Delivery

The delivery of the strategy and its aspirations will largely be dependant on the civic leadership role of the Council and the active participation of its partners to improve the attractiveness of the town for investors and ultimately for shoppers, visitors and residents alike.

The Strategy needs to be championed and have ownership as a whole whilst individual priority projects are tackled through bespoke partnerships and cooperation where applicable with the private sector.

Such partnerships need to seek to combine the interests and skills of:

- Landowners;
- Developers/Investors;
- Employers;
- Local Authority;
- Regional Development Agency;
- Homes and Communities Agency;
- Other relevant public & private sector partners.

Experience elsewhere suggests that Town Centre Management and BID's have been most successful where the Local Authority itself has established a 'one-stop-shop' approach for their town centre and the delivery of services. Where possible the Local Authority should establish a single Department with named senior officers responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of services. A specific political leader or "champion" is often identified with budgetary responsibilities and in many instances sub committees established as co-ordinated sounding boards for town centre activities.

There is not one model of Town Centre management / partnership board that fits all circumstances. The approach frequently evolves from a Town Centre manager with responsibility for environmental, security and marketing issues (indeed the Broad Street BID in Birmingham City Centre targets "brighter, safer and cleaner" issues). Overtime a more sophisticated and broad range of responsibilities have emerged with more extensive budgetary control delivered to partnership boards once it can be shown to be successful.

The Coventry City Centre, CV One Ltd is an excellent local example of an approach that has grown from an initial Town Centre Manager evolving into an independent company that manages the Town Centre in a truly holistic manner. With the support of Advantage West Midlands and European Funding as well as more traditional local authority and private sector contributions, CV One Ltd now has a budget of over £8 million per annum and it manages marketing, tourist development as well as inward investment, property and marketing for the Town Centre. Car parking revenue and land sales and rents are ring fenced and recycled back into Town Centre activities with the programme agreed and implemented by the joint public / private sector board. CV One Ltd also continues to manage the initial Coventry City centre BID. In the case of some of the larger projects, where delivery is constrained by land ownership issues, then there may be a need to consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to ensure that schemes can deliver expectations.

10.2 The Steering Group

The development of the Strategy has been overseen by a local authority steering group. However, its future membership will require further consideration to ensure that it includes:

- Key landowners, in particular the Kingfisher Centre;
- A skill base shift from policy to implementation for property, environment and transport based schemes;

- Key funding partner representation;
- Linkage with local regeneration schemes (local training and employment, environment and business support);
- Linkage with tourism and inward investment marketing strategies; and
- The Town Centre Manager (if appointed).

To ensure implementation of the strategy, the Steering Group will need to sanction and take responsibility for actions. The steering group will have a valuable role including, but not limited to:

- Champion the Strategy and secure Council approval for the appropriate actions to be carried forward;
- Champion the development of local delivery mechanisms such as Public Service agreements (PSA's), Local Area Agreements (LAA), Area Investment Frameworks (AIF) (where applicable), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and Local Public Service Boards (LSPB) as appropriate funding models;
- Monitor progress on delivery;
- Take a lead on the scale of Section 106 benefits and the type of expenditure that takes place;
- Coordinate the marketing of the town centre to progress the opportunities on the strategic sites;
- Ensure alignment of investment projects coming forward from both public and private sectors; and
- Identification of mainstream funds of the public sector to maximise the public sector investment opportunities available for the Strategy.

10.3 Working with Key Partners

The Steering Group should nominate a public sector front line manager to take the lead. The front line manager should have the nominated authority and Council support to ensure delivery is connected, effective and within the vision of the strategy.

The individual should:

- Work with the key partners, landowners and delivery organisations; and
- Support/develop linked implementation drivers.

The key partner(s) should be ultimately responsible for:

- Delivery of the funding packages;
- Gaining approval for projects / actions; and
- Preparation and marketing of documentation to raise developer interest.

Each of the projects and actions identified currently has key partner(s)/drivers by means of their landownership / sphere of influence (Table 10.1).

10.4 Delivery Mechanisms

The adopted delivery mechanisms may be different for each of the projects / actions. Market interest and phasing opportunities for development on the strategic sites will enable 100% private sector activity to occur with Section 106 advantage to be channelled to the public realm developments.

Recommendations

- The individual developments are pursued through normal planning procedures and private developers wherever possible, but
- A joint venture with a developer is explored when a funding gap is evident.

Table 10.1: Projects Key Partners / Drivers

| Project Action | Key Partner(s)/drivers |
|---|---|
| Tackling the Ring Road | Redditch Borough Council (RBC), Worcestershire County Council (WCC) |
| Arrival and Signage | RBC, WCC, Landowners, Town Centre Management |
| Café and Restaurant | RBC, Landowners, Town Centre Management |
| Enhancement to Church Green | RBC, Landowners, Town Centre Management, St Stephens Church |
| Station Area | RBC, Landowners, Town Centre Management, HCA, RSLs |
| Silver Street/Royal Square | RBC, Landowners, Town Centre Management, Kingfisher Shopping Centre |
| Improved Public Space / Car Parking | RBC, WCC, Landowners |
| Town Centre Living | RBC, Landowners, HCA, RSLs |
| Improved Lighting, Safety and Security | RBC, WCC, Residents, Town Centre Management |
| Town Centre Management | RBC, Landowners, Stakeholders, Residents and Interest Groups |
| Business Support | RBC, WCC, Advantage West Midlands (AWM) |
| Shop Enhancement | RBC, WCC, AWM, Landowners, Occupiers |
| Public Art Programme | RBC, landowners, Town Centre Management. |

10.5 Planning and Policy Strategy

There is a number of planning policy related issues which will require consideration by the Council. These include:

- The incorporation of residential development in all town centre strategic sites (currently the Edward Street SPD states that a proportion of residential development can only be developed on site if primarily employment use is not seen to be economically viable);
- A review of the extent to which car parking is to be included within the Prospect Hill strategic site, in conjunction with the action to undertake a car parking study for the whole of the Redditch Town Centre;
- The creation of a public space in front of the train station, through the redevelopment of the train station area, which could be the component of a SPD or Development Brief;
- A transport assessment of the Ringway to determine its need and the potential for its possible downgrading;
- The encouragement of A3 uses within the town centre;
- A review of existing car parking provision within the town centre against future needs for car parking to guide the potential for release and re-development of existing surface car parks.

10.6 Establish Funding Strategy

A number of projects will depend on an element of public sector funding (in particular public realm improvements, shop enhancements, business support and town centre management) in order to proceed. Therefore, examining appropriate and relevant funding sources is essential, particularly those available at the time (as funding sources are

subject to regular change as new national, regional and local policies and priorities emerge).

Following such an examination, a step-by-step course of action identifying the funding sources, assembling relevant supporting information, making any appropriate funding applications or establishing a 'single pot' approach for receipt of received funds (through applications or S106 contributions) constitutes the funding strategy.

The strategy if implemented will, through the development process, generate uplift in land values and support a strong property market in the medium to longer term. Such positive realisation will only result from generated private sector interest created through the right mix of land uses and delivery mechanisms to solve such constraints as those caused through a funding gap.

A detailed funding strategy to support the implementation strategy would need to cover the wider regeneration outcomes that will result, such as local employment, enterprise and training. A detailed funding strategy would seek to include:

- Strategic context and wider impact of the projects and actions collectively and individually on the area;
- Local impact and value added through outputs, outcomes and results of each of the projects and actions;
- Detail of all funding categories as match and leverage towards the financial programme;
- Timescales and phasing of delivery with impact against each priority project; and
- Confirmed delivery vehicles and partnership arrangements

The funding strategy should seek to underpin the delivery mechanisms and secure commitment in the longer term where possible, with an understanding that funding opportunities are

a moving target and should not be relied upon at any stage of the town centre strategy implementation. The funding strategy should aim to maximise outputs and outcomes from public sector financial inputs within a clearly defined time line.

10.7 Public Sector Intervention

The opportunities for public sector financial intervention are currently limited for the town centre and likely to become increasingly restricted as public expenditure is placed under growing pressure as a result of the global economic downturn.

In order to implement the strategy the steering group will need to be innovative to achieve the front-end funding necessary to engage and invest in land and infrastructure. Public sector intervention will inevitably therefore be sourced from a cocktail of funds. The Steering Group should be continually monitoring and appraising such funding opportunities against the wider strategy objectives. Currently the opportunities under such programme types differ across the country and the steering group should be aware that changes to such funding impacts on the ability to implement the strategy projects and actions can occur at any time.

10.8 Potential Funding Sources

One of the actions identified in the Strategy is the investigation of a BID for the Town centre. Business Improvement Districts have proved successful in a number of areas. They offer an opportunity for the Council and local businesses to work together to improve local services and deliver smaller improvement projects, for example the improvement works set out in this strategy. BIDS are funded by a levy on the business rate, the size of which is a matter for agreement with those affected.^{7 8}

⁷ Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools (2005)

⁸ Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004

Potential funding sources, in addition to a BID, can be explored towards town centre improvements including:

- A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – a strategic planning contribution from all development within the Borough towards strategic infrastructure improvements within the town centre which benefits the whole team. (NB. Requires endorsement via LDF)
- A Planning Tariff – an earlier variation on the CIL theme based as a ‘roof tax’ from all new developments within the Borough as a whole. (NB. Requires endorsement via LDF)
- Lottery (Heritage, etc)
- AWM (Regional Development Agency)
- Main programme (LTP, etc)
- The Local Authority Business Rates Growth Initiative (LABGI) – the ring fencing of enhanced business rates achieved by virtue of improvement work undertaken in the town.
- Section 106 Agreements – Existing policy modified to give priority to town centre improvement work contributions.
- Joint Ventures – with works provided directly by the private developer.
- Capital Receipts – from land sales prioritised for town centre improvement works.
- Tax Incremented Funding / Accelerated Development Zone – whereby the Council is able to borrow / sell bonds against the future income streams from enhanced business rates generated via the implemented commercial development within the town (i.e. hypothetically tax generated).

The following sections explore further a number of these potential funding sources, which include, CIL/Planning Tariff/S106 Contributions, AWM, HCA, Worcestershire County Council/Bromsgrove District Council and Developers/Private Sector. In addition, Table 10.2 below sets out a range of other potential funding sources, particularly for the skills, arts, learning, community and cultural sectors which can be explored by those responsible for the delivery of projects/actions set out in this strategy.

CIL / Tariff / Section 106 contributions

Through the strategy the opportunity arises to identify areas of priority public funding need such as public realm and coordinate the collation of private developer contributions through the planning system. This could be achieved through a CIL / Tariff and would require LDF support. In addition off site Section 106 contributions could be used to support a town centre find to deliver public realm, public art and other initiatives. A clear and comprehensive funding plan should identify financial contributions, in cash or kind and legal covenants provided by the developer. In order for this to be successful the town centre strategy, the developer and the section 106 agreements need to reflect common objectives.

Advantage West Midlands

The Single Pot represents all the money distributed by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), whose role it is to foster job creation, business start-ups and enterprise; Brownfield land reclamation and learning opportunities amongst other strategic objectives. Each case is assessed on its merits. The over-riding criterion for RDA investment is to underpin the economic competitiveness agenda and to promote sustainable economic growth, in particular to demonstrate the cost benefit ratio and strategic added value of RDA funds.

The Regional Development Agency has recently completed a review of its Corporate Plan for Government in order to ensure that it:

- Responds effectively to the changed economic conditions brought on by the global economic downturn;
- Provides even greater levels of support to regional businesses; and
- Manages the financial position following significant reductions to their budget and a refocusing of regional priorities to areas where public investment will have the greatest impact.

Whilst a number of the projects and actions identified through this strategy could potentially fall within the remit of the Agency, it is the new regional priorities agreed with partner agencies such as the HCA, Learning and Skills Council and other AWM updated Corporate Plan priorities that will be resourced first.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

The HCA is the national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England and has four main objectives:

- Growth to meet local and regional housing targets;
- Affordability – to secure the delivery of affordable homes;
- Support the regeneration of under-performing areas; and

- Delivering high standards of building design, public spaces and creating sustainable communities.

The HCA has £635 million from the April 2009 Budget to stimulate the housing market, including Kickstart Housing Delivery and funding for Local Authorities to deliver new council housing. This includes:

- £400m to unlock stalled developments – Kickstart Housing Delivery;
- £50 million to enable Local Authorities to deliver new social housing (plus £50 million prudential borrowing); and
- Up to £80 million to support delivery of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

Worcestershire County Council/Bromsgrove District Council

A number of the projects and actions included in the Strategy are likely to be jointly delivered by Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council. As such joint funding should be explored. In addition, a number of opportunities may arise for the potential consolidation or sharing of resources with Bromsgrove District Council. This may affect the use of public buildings within the town centre.

Developers/Private Sector

Due to the composition of the priority sites, most of the key-landowners and hence drivers are the private sector. As facilitator, the Local Authority will therefore require proactive partnership styles to engage and negotiate with key developers to carry forward the vision of the strategy.

Table 10.2: Potential Funding Sources

| Funding Body | Premise | Over-riding Criteria | Contact / Relevant Information |
|---|--|--|---|
| Big Lottery Fund | The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for distributing half the money for good causes raised by the National Lottery. It has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes since its inception and is committed to bringing real improvements to communities, and to the lives of people most in need. | The community benefit is paramount. There are a number of categories of awards, children's play, family learning and live and learn and the young peoples fund grants to organisations appear to be the most appropriate funding streams. | www.biglotteryfund.org.uk Tel: 0845 4 10 20 30. |
| Adventure Capital Fund | Small grants that make a big difference to people and communities. Projects must extend access to and participation in activities or boost people's skills and creativity with the aim of improving quality of life. | Not-for-profit groups, parish/town councils, schools or health bodies. Applicants must spend the grant within one year. | Contact: T: 0845 600 2040 www.awardsforall.org.uk for an application pack. |
| Department for Culture, Media and Sport / Arts Council of England | DCMS does not fund the arts directly, and channels funds through the Arts Council England. The Arts Council is the national body for the arts in England, and is responsible for distributing public money from government and the National Lottery. | The Arts Council England receives grant-in-aid from DCMS, and is responsible for distributing it in accordance with the objectives set out in the Royal Charter. The majority of grant-in-aid is awarded to organisations that receive funding on an ongoing basis. Arts Council England is also a National Lottery distributor. Project sponsors can apply to Arts Council England for grants for time limited arts-related activities, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects and events; • Commissions and productions; • Research and development; • Activities for people to take part in Education activities; • Buying assets such as equipment, instruments and vehicles. | Regional Contact details: Arts Council England – West Midlands 82 Granville St , Birmingham, B1 2LH Fax: 0121 643 7239. Textphone: 0121 643 2815 www.artscouncil.org.uk Tel: 0845 300 6200. |
| The Barrow Cadbury Trust | The Barrow Cadbury Trust makes grants to individuals and organisations working within three programme areas: Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System; Inclusive Communities; and Global Exchange. The Trust aims to give | The priority is to fund grassroots, user-led projects. Projects are favored that are likely to have a high impact on social change. The Trust mainly works in the West Midlands and give priority to work of national significance in this region. The | Kean House 6 Kean Street London |

| Funding Body | Premise | Over-riding Criteria | Contact / Relevant Information |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| | grants and build partnerships with groups and organisations. | Cities in Transition programme funds projects whose work aims to develop the economic independence and equality of disadvantaged groups. The Trust do not usually support activities they believe central or local Government are responsible for. They do not make capital grants for buildings or provide funding to cover a shortfall from other funders. | WC2B 4AS Tel: 020 7632 9060 Fax: 020 7632 9061 http://www.bctrust.org.uk |
| Jerwood Grant | The Jerwood Charitable Foundation makes donations on a 'one-off' basis. It often awards grants with the condition that the recipient or another interested party, such as a central Government department or a local authority, can match the remaining shortfall. Grants vary between the lower range of up to £10,000 and larger grants between £10,000 and £50,000. | This programme is primarily for organisations with a national remit seeking funding for a particular project or scheme. The Charity rarely sponsors single performances, productions, arts events, or tours of a production, and does not fund any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals; • Building or capital costs (including purchase of equipment); • General fundraising appeals which are likely to have wide public appeal; • Appeals to establish endowment funds for other charities; • Appeals for match funding for National Lottery applications; • Grants for the running and core costs of voluntary bodies; and • Projects that are of mainly local appeal or identified with a locality. | Jerwood Charitable Foundation 22 Fitzroy Square, London, W1T 6EN E-mail: info@jerwood.org |

10.9 Funding Model

The process for gaining and maximising public sector funding requires transparency and a strong case of local economic impact. Public Service Agreements (PSA's), Local Area Agreements (LAA), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and Local Public Service Boards (LPSB) are Central Governments preferred way of devolving power and resources away from central control and towards local front line managers, local democratic structures and communities to ensure delivery, within an agreed framework of national minimum standards and policy priorities.

It is recommended that the Steering Group actively pursues and supports these new localism routes to gain the beneficial outcomes of ownership in decision making, efficiency and effectiveness in delivery and the pooling of funds.

The establishment of Tax Incremented Funding / Accelerated Development Zone, can add to the pool of town centre funds. The Council is able to borrow / sell bonds against the future income streams from enhanced business rates generated via the implemented commercial development within the town (i.e. hypothetically tax generated).

It is the ability to be able to pool funds from a variety of sources (in the themes suggested by Government) and then to create a coordinated, local decision making body that administers and monitors these funds for the public good, which has become central to Government policy.

10.10 Connecting with Employment Opportunities - Future Jobs Fund

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has recently invited bids for funding from the 'Future Jobs Fund'. The majority of bids are to be led by local authorities, sub-regional, city region and local partnerships, or national or local public sector and third sector bodies and are focused on job creation. All jobs must be suitable for long term unemployed young people between 18 and 24 and must deliver direct benefit to the community, for example social, environmental or culture benefits and wherever possible the outcomes should be linked though the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements.⁹

10.11 Risk Assessment

Throughout the delivery process it is important not to lose sight of possible risks and so broad risk assessments for each key element of the Strategy must be set out. Risk assessments are estimates of a future problem, but the exercise of undertaking them can often lead to improvements in delivery and the averting of problems in advance. Perceived risks and obstacles associated with each element of the Strategic 'route map' and with each projects and actions are summarised below.

The purpose of risk assessment is to identify and consider potential risks and obstacles in advance, so that the Council / Delivery Vehicle can begin to solve such difficulties. Risk assessment for successful and timely implementation should be considered in two parts. Perceived risks and obstacles to the Strategic 'route map' can be considered broadly against its six main parts, as set out in Table 10.3.

⁹ www.dwp.gov.uk/futurejobsfund

Table 10.3: Risk Assessment

| Strategic Route Map | Risks and Obstacles |
|---|--|
| Establish Delivery Vehicle Strategy and Priority Project Partnerships | <p>Inability to agree an appropriate partnership.</p> <p>Steering Group unable to respond to additional membership.</p> <p>Absence of appropriate staff to act as delivery or priority project champion.</p> <p>Unable to attract private sector involvement.</p> <p>Delivery mechanism for each site not agreed or able to be utilised.</p> |
| Define Planning and Policy Strategy | <p>Review of development mix on strategic sites not accepted.</p> <p>Strategy perceived to be in conflict with emerging Core Strategy</p> <p>With an absence of an appropriate policy framework, development projects come forward not in accordance with the Strategy.</p> <p>RBC unable to attract private sector interest in developing strategic sites as outlined in the strategy.</p> <p>Benefits of redevelopment and regeneration do not flow into local communities (jobs, spending).</p> |
| Define Projects and Actions | <p>Challenge to composition, land use mix or design of any project / action.</p> <p>Projects / actions are not financially viable and require redefinition, but may challenge planning policy.</p> <p>'Pump priming' infrastructure and public</p> |

| Strategic Route Map | Risks and Obstacles |
|----------------------------|---|
| | <p>realm works cannot be funded.</p> <p>Land assembly problems or problems agreeing approach due to profit share difficulties.</p> |
| Establish Funding Strategy | <p>Limited range of available funds, possibly with long lead-time.</p> <p>Gap funding problems.</p> <p>New Government funding streams requiring greater lead-time.</p> <p>Lack of land value uplift due to limited private sector interest.</p> <p>Lack of S106 contributions.</p> <p>Inability to establish new 'single pot' funding model and funding dependent on traditional sources and 'silo' delivery.</p> |
| Define Phasing Strategy | <p>Key independencies mean that subsequent projects cannot be implemented due to delays in earlier projects.</p> <p>Delays in funding.</p> <p>Early wins not achieved due to land assembly, funding or private sector interest problems.</p> |
| Action Plan | <p>Delivery Vehicle and/or champions not achieving early wins or projects.</p> <p>Lack of progress means that subsequent actions become more difficult.</p> |

10.12 Priority Projects – Risks and Obstacles

Perceived risks and obstacles to each project / action have been considered broadly, as set out in Tables 10.4 below.

Table 10.4: Risks and Obstacles

| Priority Project | Perceived Risks and Obstacles |
|--|---|
| Tackling the Ringway | <p>Quick win - Funding for the study to assess the impacts and options for downgrading the ring road is not forthcoming.</p> <p>Medium / longer term – the study concludes that no changes should be made.</p> <p>Local opposition to the proposal.</p> <p>Quick win – surface level crossings opposed by the highways authority.</p> <p>Medium / longer term – funding is not identified to support the improvements to the spaces released by any down grading.</p> |
| Arrival and Signage | <p>Funding not identified.</p> <p>Section 106 monies reduced due to recession.</p> |
| Café and Restaurant | <p>Investment in new restaurants / cafes not attracted.</p> <p>Quality of operator not sufficient to deliver change envisaged.</p> <p>Interest not shown in locations identified.</p> |
| Church Green and St Stephens Church Improvements | <p>Short term public realm improvements – funding reduced due to recession.</p> <p>St Stephens Church unable to secure necessary funding to deliver regeneration.</p> <p>Landowners around Church Green object.</p> |

| Priority Project | Perceived Risks and Obstacles |
|--|---|
| Train Station Area | <p>Securing an agreed and coordinated/comprehensive approach between public and private sectors.</p> <p>Landowners may choose not to proceed.</p> <p>Landowners may object to the proposals.</p> <p>S 106 does not generate sufficient contributions to fund works elsewhere within the centre (public realm works, connectivity, business support, landscaping).</p> |
| Silver Street/ Royal Square | <p>Down grading of the ring road not supported.</p> <p>Development partner cannot be found.</p> |
| Improve Public Space and Car Parking | <p>Public sector funding not available/ reduced due to recession.</p> <p>Land ownership.</p> <p>Lack of funding to support study.</p> <p>Opposition by car park owners.</p> |
| Town Centre Living | <p>Securing developer interest.</p> <p>Mix of development does not yield sufficient funding to deliver public elements of project.</p> <p>Affordable housing provision affects viability.</p> <p>Lack of investor and market confidence.</p> |
| Improved Lighting, Security and Safety | <p>Funding not identified. Objections from occupiers.</p> |
| Town centre management | <p>Partners do not support proposal.</p> <p>Limited commitment to delivery.</p> |

| Priority Project | Perceived Risks and Obstacles |
|----------------------|--|
| | Lack of alignment between various strands. |
| Business support | Public sector funding not forthcoming. No interest from local businesses. Limited availability of match funding. |
| Shop enhancement | Public sector funding not available. Shop owners may choose not to proceed. |
| Public Art Programme | Lack of support. Lack of funding. |

10.13 Phasing Strategy and Action Plan

Phasing of Priority Projects

For the purposes of the Phasing Strategy and Action Plan it was considered necessary to identify three phasing periods relating to the priority projects. These are:

- Short term (Quick Wins) of 1-2 years (2009-2011);
- Medium term of 2-5 years (20011 – 2014); and
- Long term of more than 5 years (2014 onwards).

Action plan

Projects and actions have been allocated to each potential delivery phases. The allocation has been broken down into two stages 'prepare' and 'deliver'. The Action Plan set out in Table 10.5 below captures this information for each phase, expanding on this allocation by identifying those key actions necessary to achieve delivery of the projects and actions over the strategy period.

Issues covered include actions necessary to make progress on a series of other actions, identifying funding needs, any site

assembly required, planning actions, any required partnership establishment and who is responsible for delivery.

This Action Plan may need to be aligned to funding stream delivery.

Phasing of Projects

Table 10.5 below identify suggested time periods for the preparation and delivery of each priority project.

Table 10.5: Action Plan

| Phase | Actions |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Phase 1 Short Term 2009 – 2011 | <p>Establish Delivery Vehicle and membership.</p> <p>Establish project / action Champions.</p> <p>Confirm 'quick win'/short term projects / actions.</p> <p>Develop town centre management partnership.</p> <p>Identify / create town centre 'funding pot' for assembly of relevant public sector funds.</p> <p>Commence/continue discussions with key landowners to agree a coordinated and comprehensive approach to delivery of Projects.</p> <p>Review the SPDs for the strategic sites.</p> <p>Receive investigation reports on Ringway etc. next steps.</p> <p>Develop Public Realm Strategy and Implement.</p> <p>Complete Church Green public realm improvements</p> <p>Commission car parking study and review findings</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Phase 2 Medium Term 2011 – 2014 | <p>Commission further work for projects to be taken forward.</p> <p>Commence work on redevelopment of strategic sites.</p> <p>Deliver public realm improvements as funding becomes available.</p> <p>Set up monitoring system for projects / actions.</p> <p>Engage with property agent to develop private sector interest in priority projects.</p> |
| Phase 3 Long Term 2014 –onwards | <p>Commence work on down grading of Ring Road</p> <p>Deliver larger regeneration schemes</p> |

Table 10.6: Suggested Priority Projects and Delivery Phasing with Indicative Costs

| Project / Action | Estimated Costs (circa) | Short Term 2009-2011 | Medium Term 2011- 2013 | Longer Term 2013 onwards |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| Strategic review of the Ring Road | £45,000 | Undertake Study Consider impacts / Secure commitment from Stakeholder Identify next steps | Secure design and implementation funding Commission detailed interventions (circa £3 million plus) | Phased delivery |
| Gateway treatment, arrival and signage | £50,000 | Undertake study / identify specific projects / implementation | Implementation | Phased delivery |
| Promotion of café culture / Restaurant Offer | - | Marketing campaign / planning review | Delivery | Delivery |
| St Stephen's Church Green Improvements | £250,000 | Detailed design and implementation | | |
| Train Station Area/Unicorn Hill corridor | £150,000 | Detailed design and implementation | | |
| Enhanced Town Hall Square | £2 million | Detailed design following strategic review of Ring Road. | Implementation dependent on funding availability | |
| General Public Realm Improvements | £250,000 | Detailed design and implementation | | |
| Town Centre Living | - | Marketing campaign, Planning review | Facilitate development, planning guidance | As medium term |
| Strategic review of Car Parking Provision in the Town Centre | £25,000 | Undertake study / review / secure consensus with stakeholders | Consider options for sites released (if any) | Facilitate redevelopment, potentially including site assembly / CPO |
| Town Centre Management | £25,000 | Set up town centre partnership | Consider BID, etc, in long term | On-going implementation |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Business Support | £75,000 | Set up match funding mechanism / implementation | Potential long term commitment | As medium term |
| Shop Enhancement Scheme | £50,000 | Marketing campaign and implementation of grant aid scheme | Potential long term commitment | As med term |
| Public Art Programme | £30,000 | | | |
| Security / Lighting | £50,000 | Concentrate expenditure on key public transport corridors (link bus / rail station) | | |

Appendix A

Illustrations

A1 Document Illustrations

A1.1 Maps

- Figure 2.1 Study Area Map
- Figure 2.2 Council Land Ownership

A1.2 Urban Design Analysis

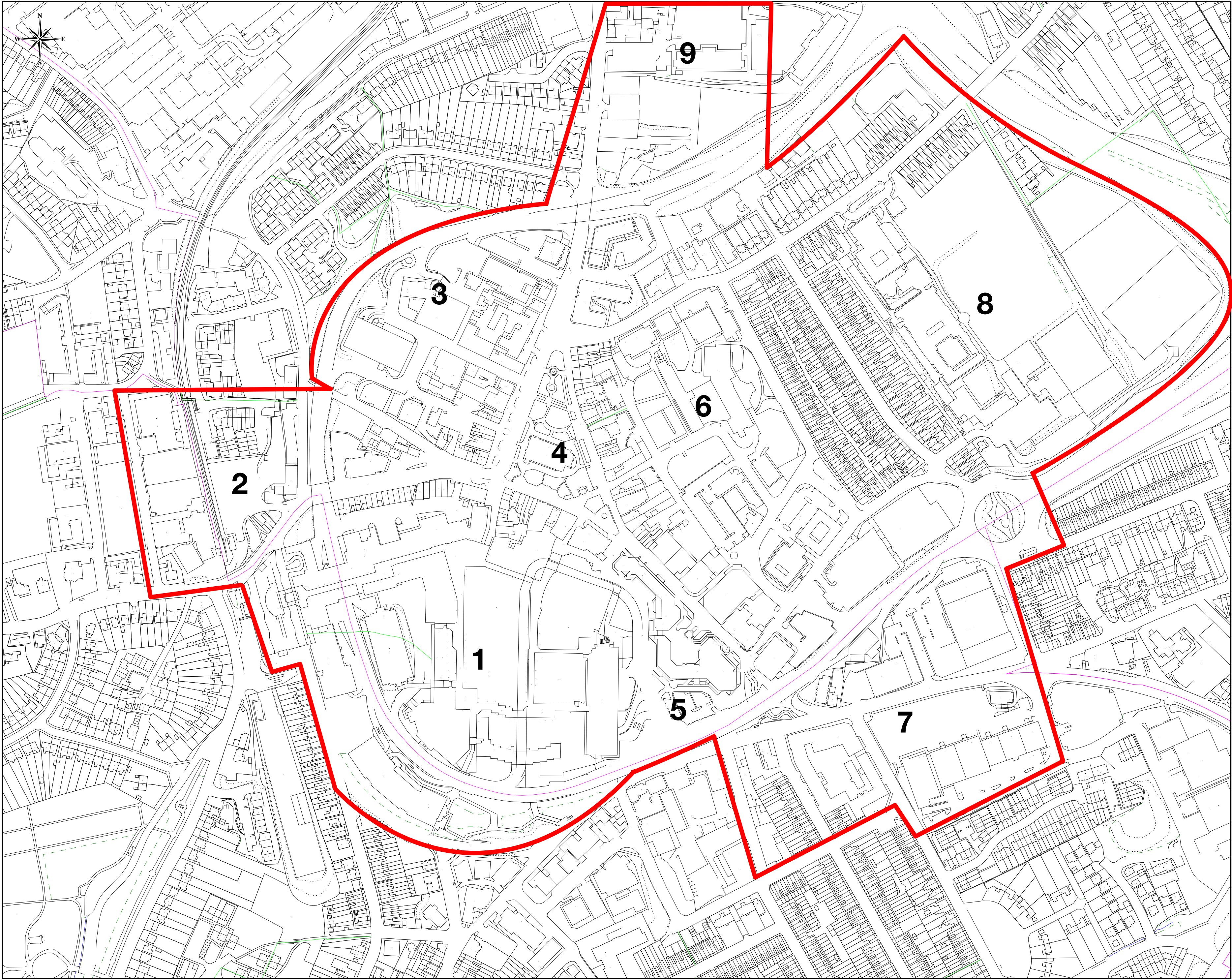
- Figure 4.1 Quality of Place
- Figure 4.2 Retail and Public Building Dominance
- Figure 4.3 The Ringway and Connectivity
- Figure 4.4 Car Parking
- Figure 4.5 Safe and Security
- Figure 4.6 Open and Public Space
- Figure 4.7 Townscape

10.14 Environmental Audit

- Figure 5.1 Environmental Audit Character Areas

A1.3 Town Centre Strategy

- Figure 8.4 Open Space Improvement
- Figure 8.6 Arrival and Signage
- Figure 8.7 Train Station Proposal
- Figure 8.8 Rejuvenation of Silver Street/Royal Square (High Level)
- Figure 8.9 Rejuvenation of Silver Street/Royal Square and Redevelopment of Enclosed Market Area.



Notes:

— Audit Area

| Date | Rev | Details |
|------|-----|---------|
| | | |

Project:

Drawing:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|--------|----------|
| Drawn: | AAA | Scale: | 1/000 |
| Surveyed: | AAA | Date: | BBB 2009 |

Drawing No: **P0000/0**

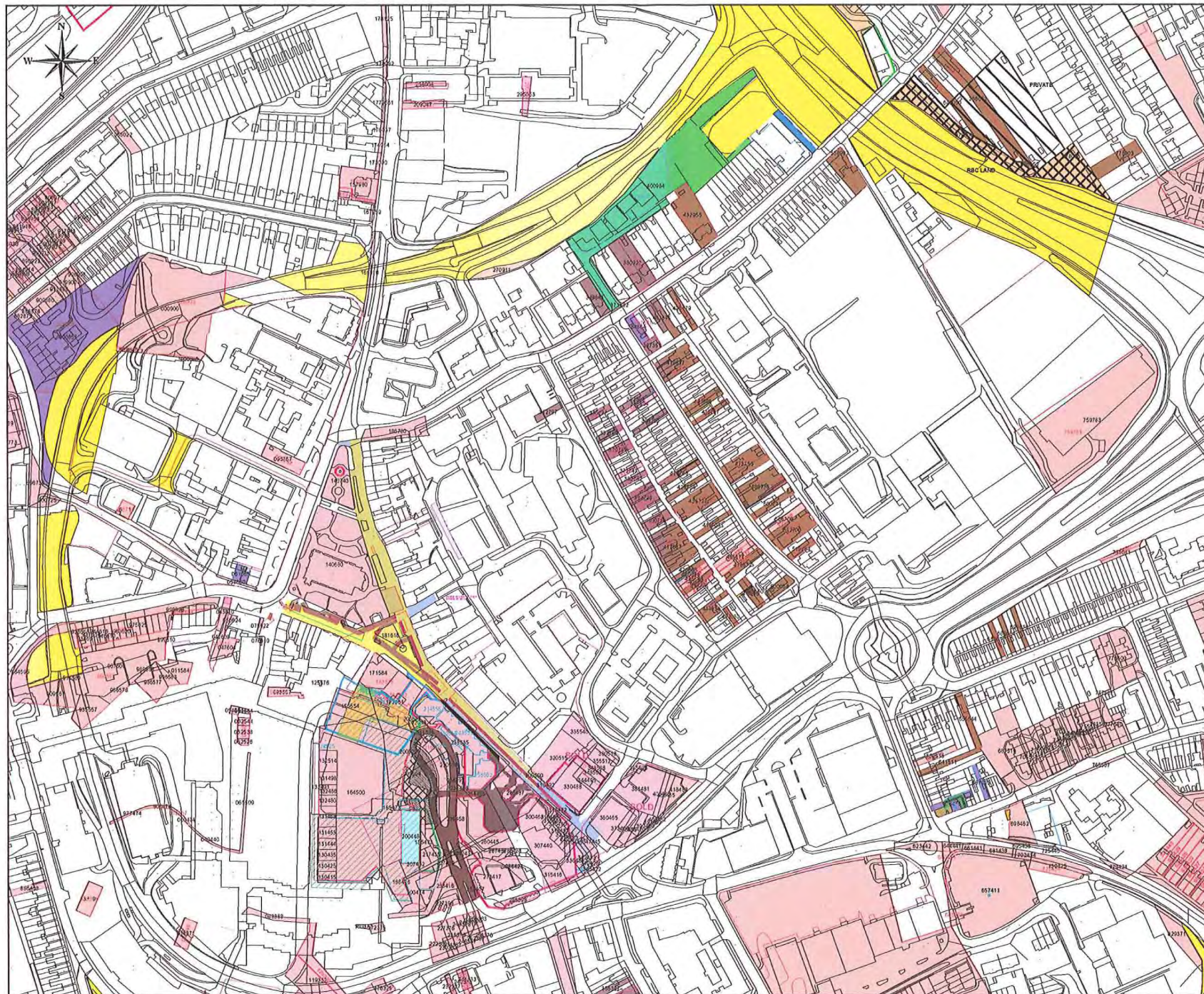
Planning Services
Town Hall
Walter Stranz Square
Redditch
Worcs B98 8AH

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- Notes:**
- Housing Transfer Freehold
 - Clawback CRA Land
 - CRA Yellow Land (Usually Highways)
 - Original Council Ownership
 - Housing Transfer Leasold
 - Non-Clawback CRA
 - Positive Asset CRA (Community Centres)
 - Ground Floor Freehold Sale (with number)
 - Property Boundary (without number)
 - Ground floor Leasold Sale

Project:

Council Ownership Details

Drawing:

Town Centre

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Drawn: PMS | Scale: 1/3000 |
| Surveyed: | Date: 21/07/2009 |

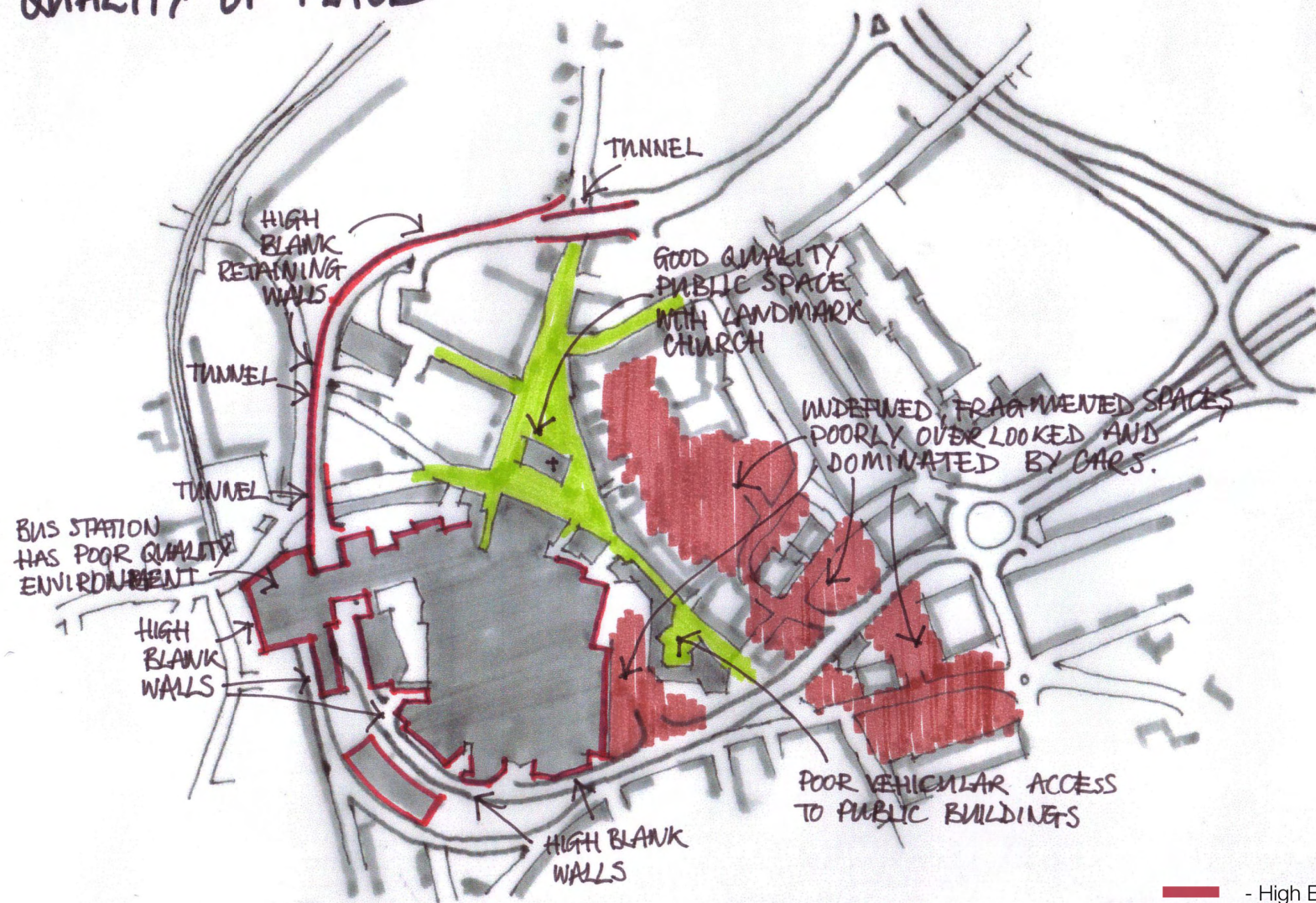
Drawing No:

Property Services
 Town Hall
 Walter Stanz Square
 Redditch
 Worcs B98 8AH



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QUALITY OF 'PLACE'

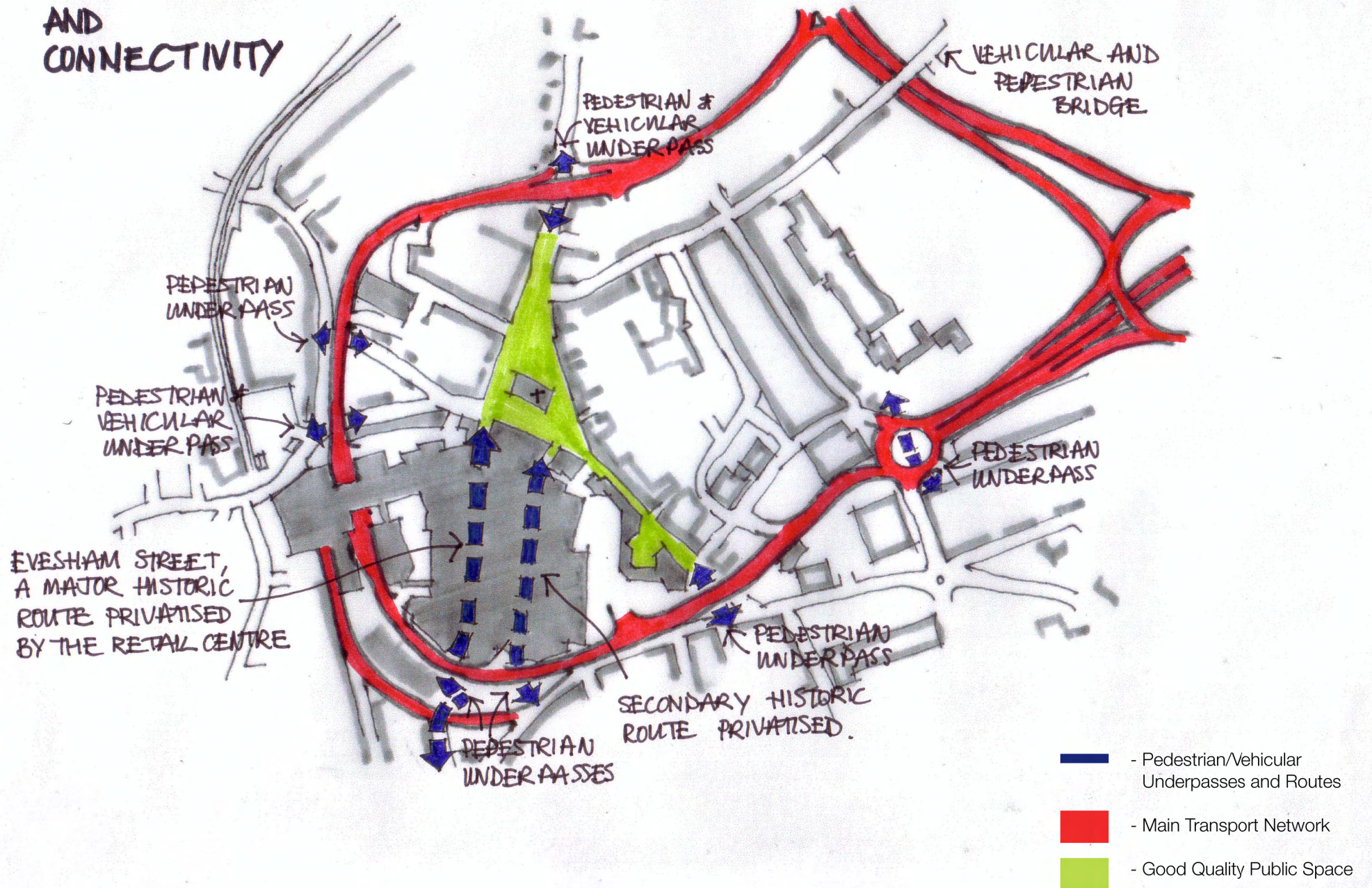


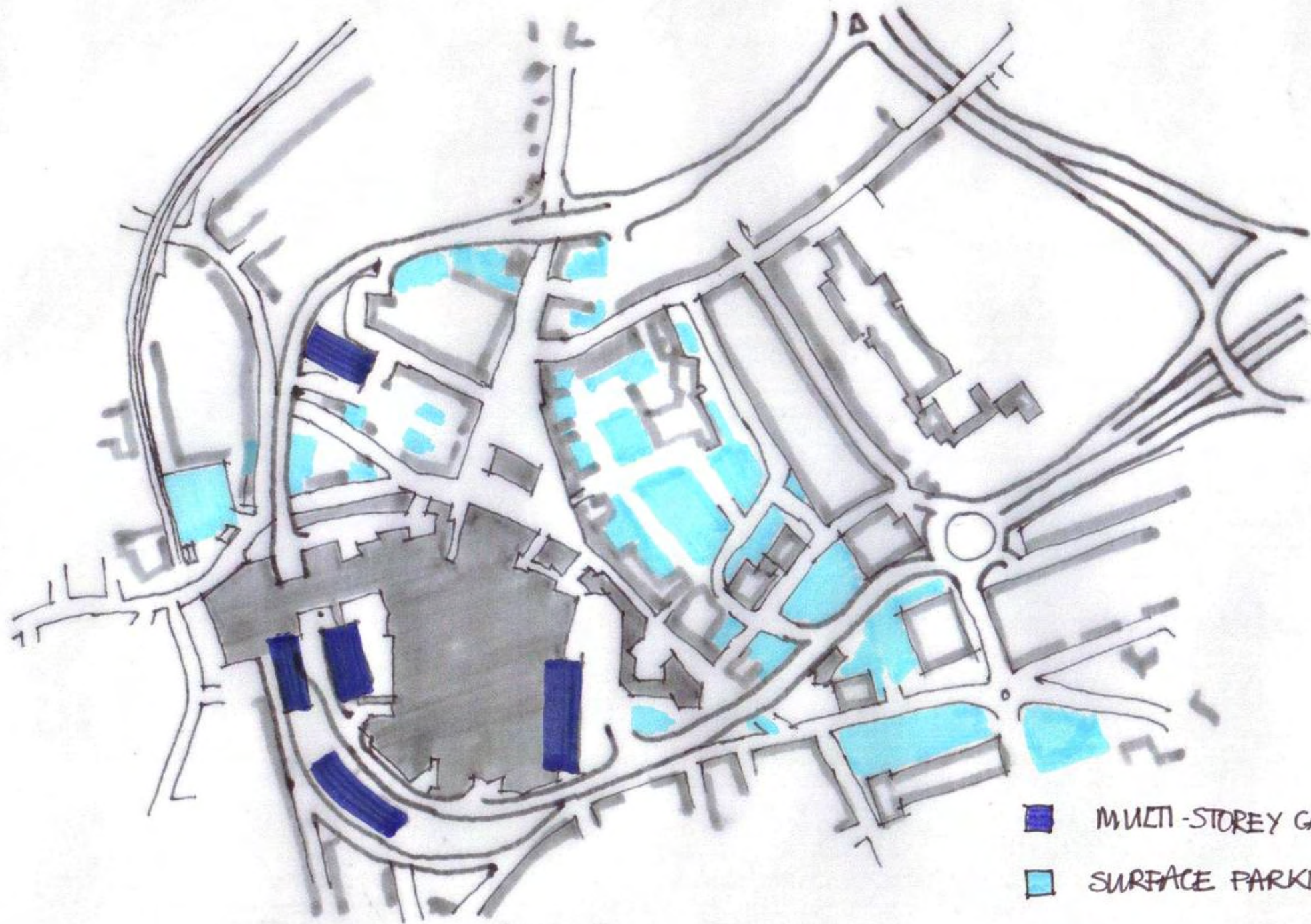
- High Blank Walls
- Undefined Fragmented Space
- Good Quality Public Space

RETAIL AND PUBLIC DOMINANCE



THE RINGWAY AND CONNECTIVITY

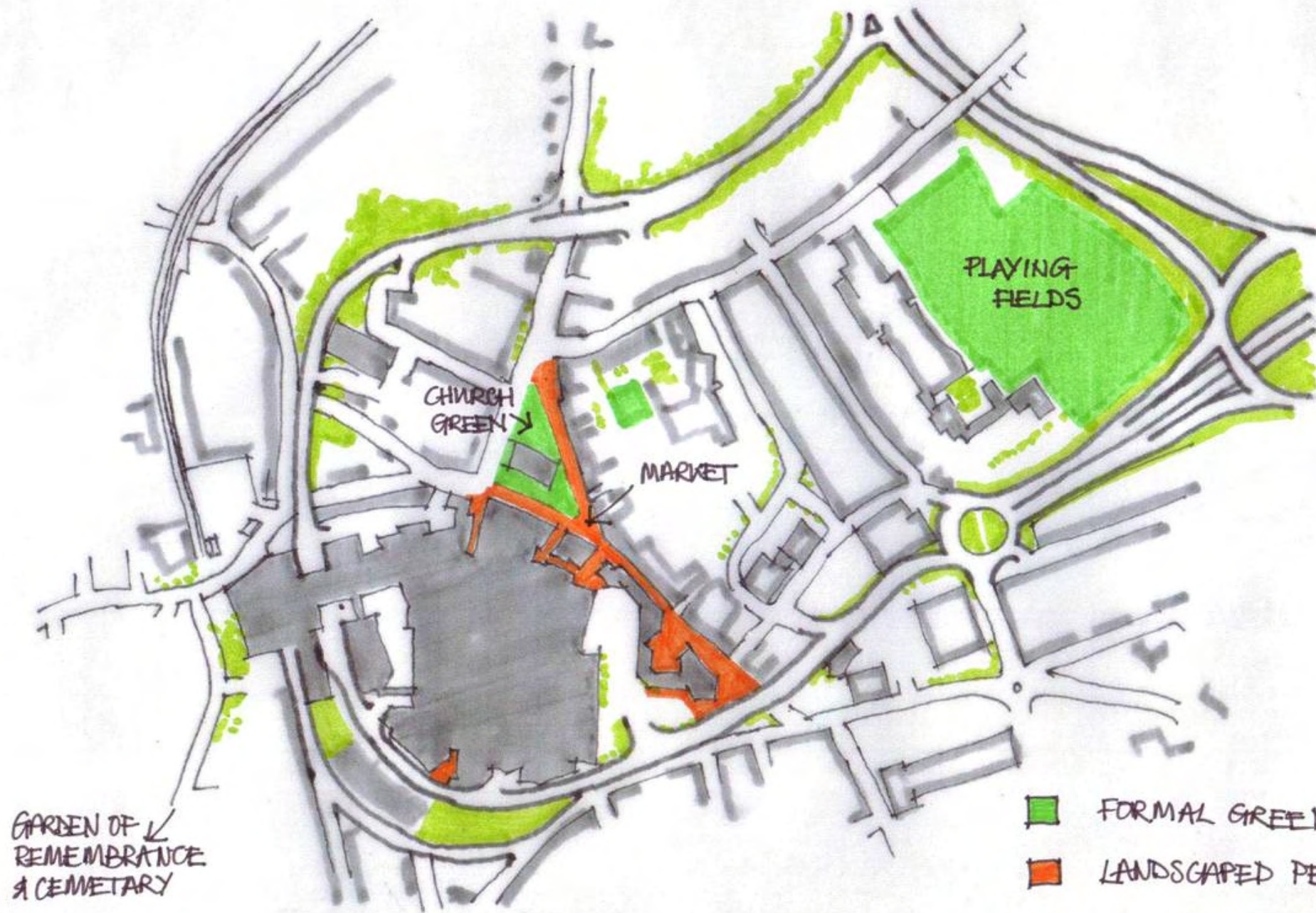




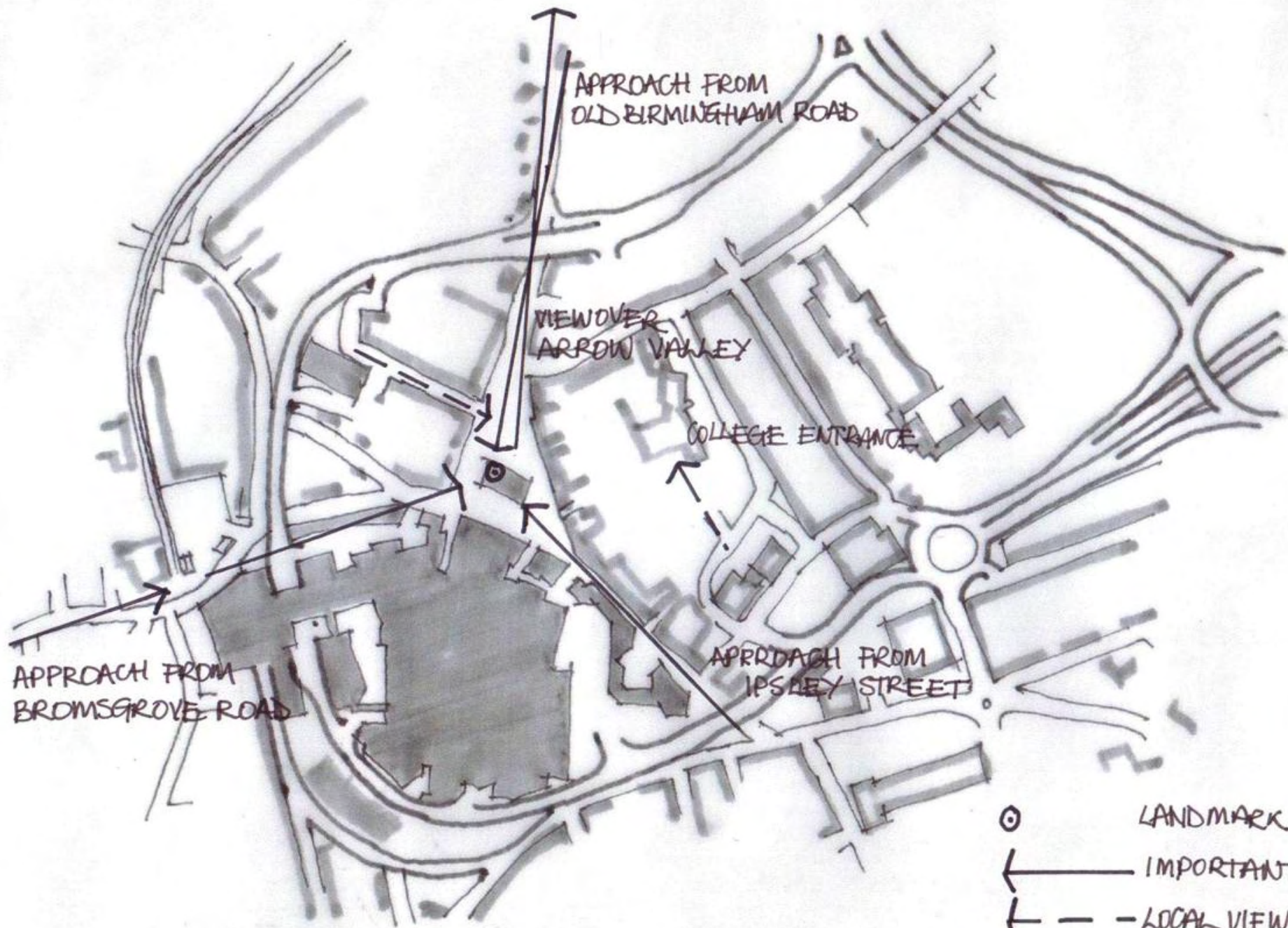
- MULTI-STOREY CAR PARKS
- SURFACE PARKING

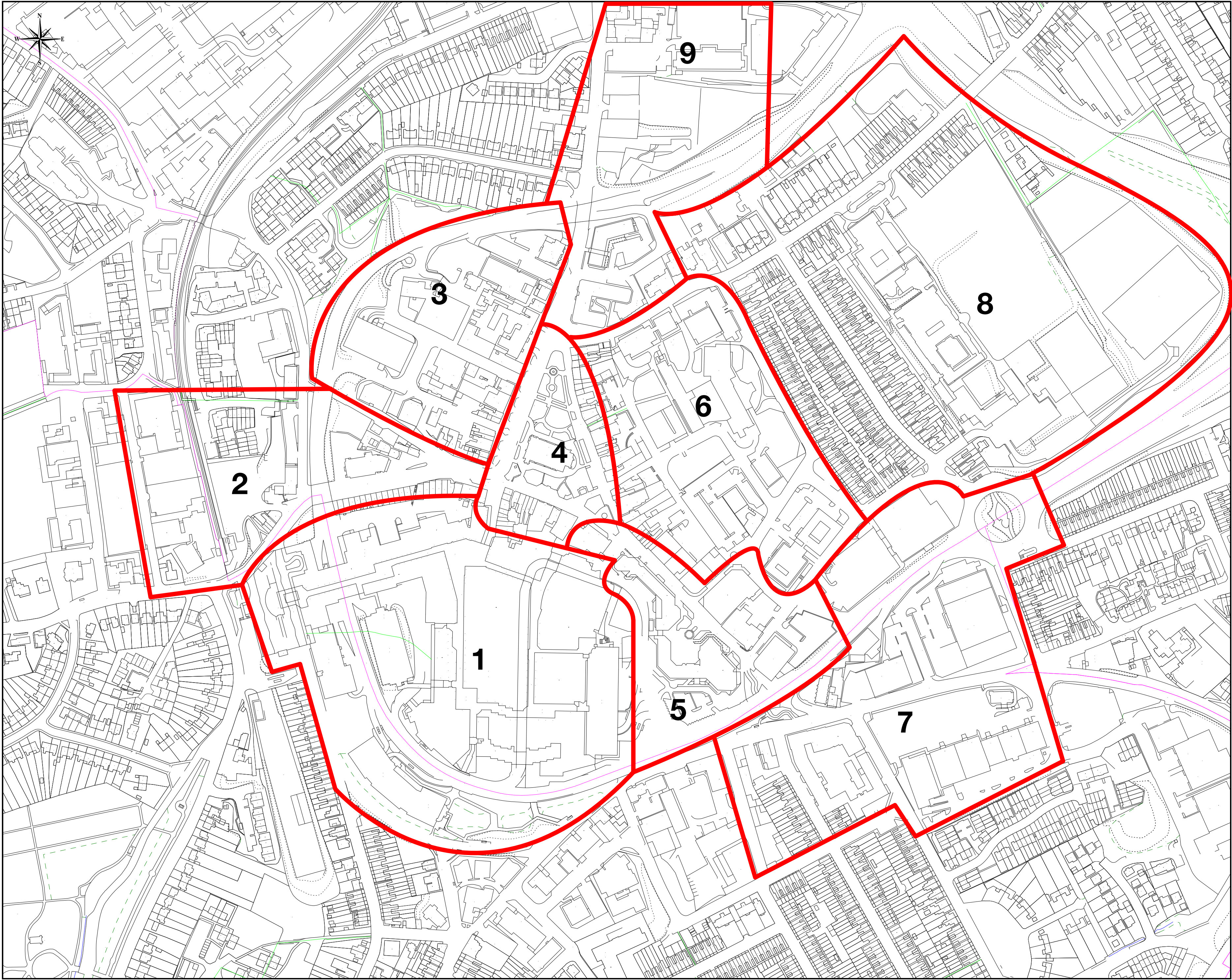


- Perceived Most Unsafe Places
- Poorly Overlooked Places
- Open Rear Boundaries
- Underpass



- FORMAL GREEN SPACES
- LANDSCAPED PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- INFORMAL GREEN SPACE





Notes:

— Audit Area

| Date | Rev | Details |
|------|-----|---------|
| | | |

Project:

Drawing:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|--------|----------|
| Drawn: | AAA | Scale: | 1/000 |
| Surveyed: | AAA | Date: | BBB 2009 |

Drawing No: P0000/0

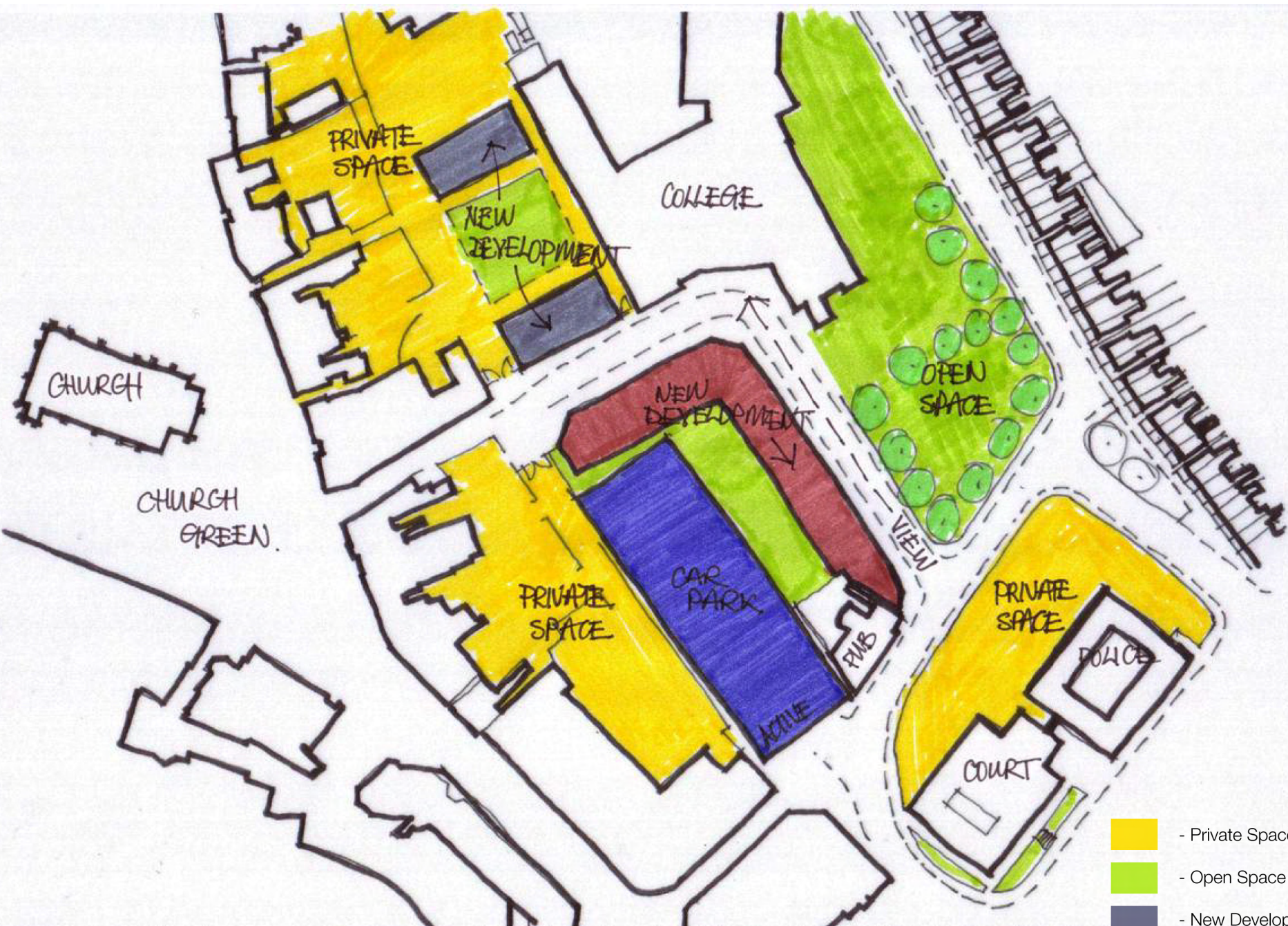
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- Private Space
- Open Space
- New Development
- New Residential Development
- Car Parking

G Gantries to be removed

New Exit Signs:

1. Redditch College
Police Station
Magistrates Court
Church Green
Surface Car Parks

2. Town Hall
Debenhams
M&S
Kingfisher Centre
Car Park 2
Service access

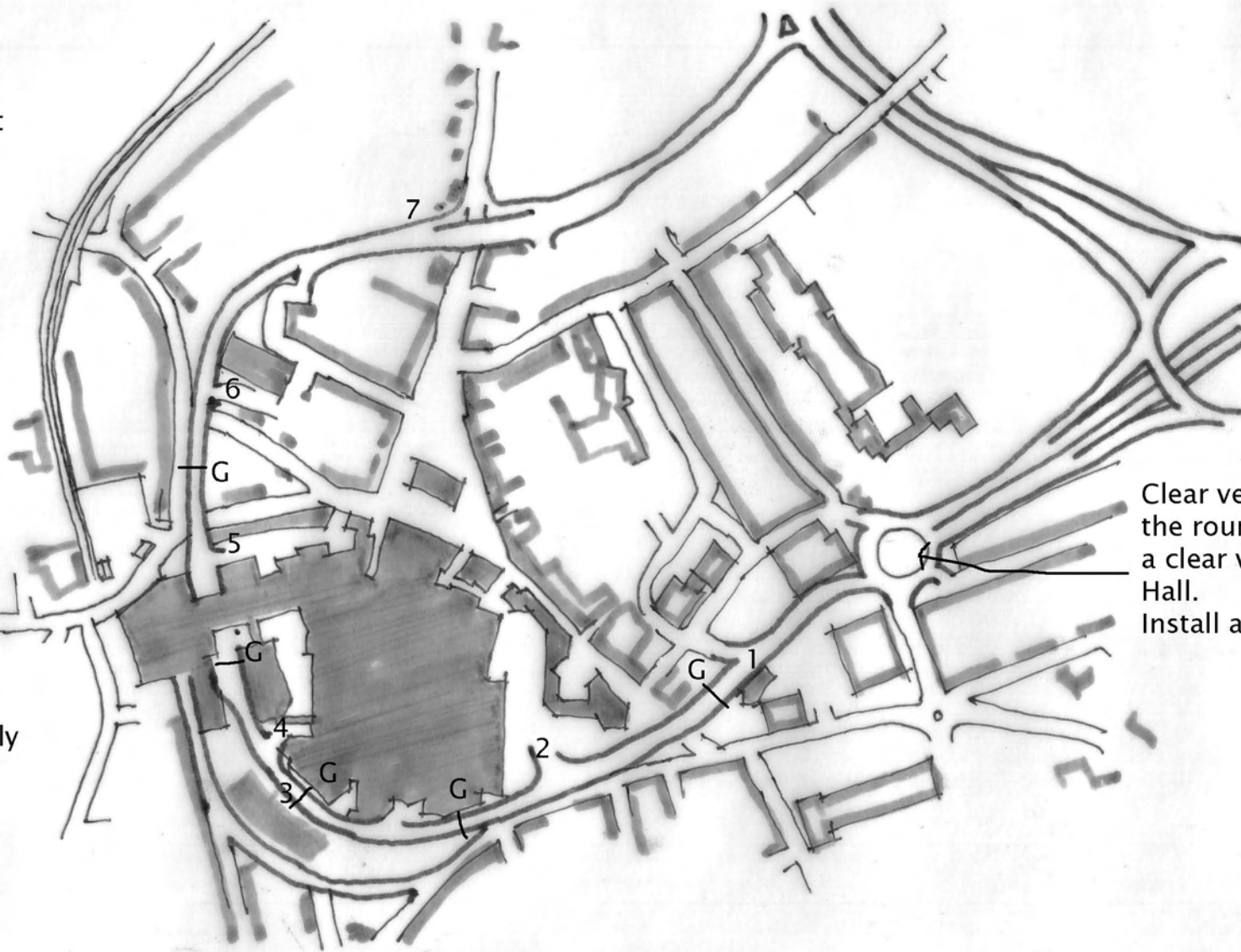
3. Kingfisher Centre
Car Park 3

4. Kingfisher Centre
Car Park 4
Service access

5. Vine Street
Service access only

6. Church Green
County Court
Railway and Bus
Stations
Car Park 5

7. Prospect Hill



Clear vegetation on
the roundabout to give
a clear view of the Town
Hall.
Install a tall public artwork





