

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT

MARCH 2018



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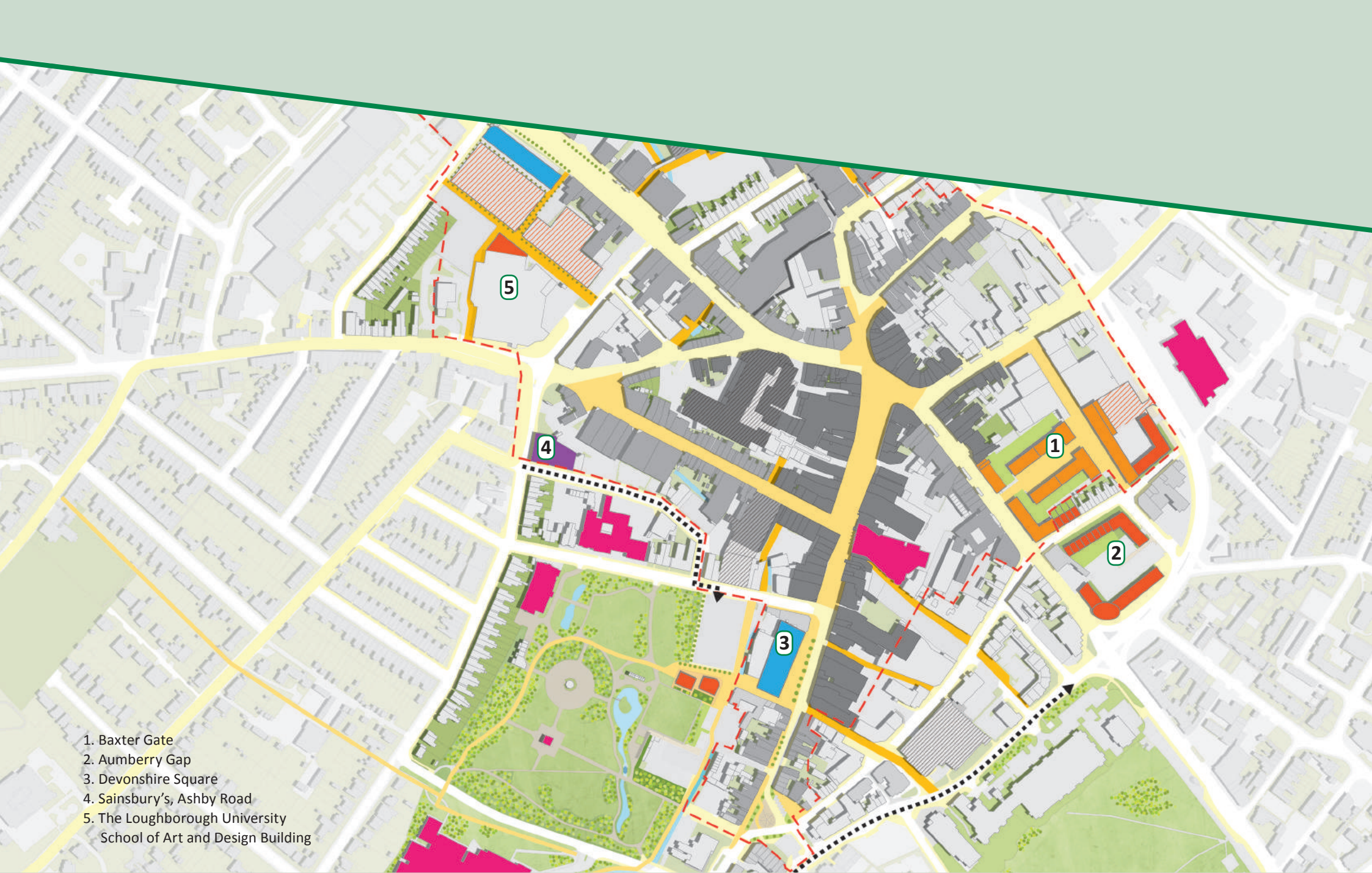
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- 1. Baxter Gate
- 2. Aumberry Gap
- 3. Devonshire Square
- 4. Sainsbury's, Ashby Road
- 5. The Loughborough University School of Art and Design Building

Executive summary



Illustrative masterplan

BACKGROUND

The masterplan for Loughborough Town Centre was commissioned by Charnwood Borough Council in October 2016. Its remit is to ensure the future viability and vitality of the town centre and secure its role as Charnwood's primary destination for retail, leisure and culture.

The Borough Council commissioned the masterplan as part of the evidence base that will inform the implementation of Policies CS7 and CS9 of the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2014-2028). It will also be used to help to create new policies for inclusion in the replacement Local Plan which will extend policy coverage to the year 2036.

The plan supersedes an earlier masterplan prepared by the Council in 2007. Much has changed over the last ten years. Many of the initiatives included in the earlier masterplan have been delivered however the planning and socio-economic context surrounding Loughborough is changing.

Loughborough is going through a period of growth with a planned urban extension to the west of the town expected to deliver 3,000 new homes by 2028. This will be accompanied by the urban expansion of important employment sites such as the Science and Enterprise Park.

Whilst Loughborough cannot directly compete with Leicester, Derby and Nottingham, it is important that the town centre continues to provide an attractive environment and offer that appeals to a more local catchment. The town should take full advantage of its assets including its history and heritage, the attractive market, the presence of Loughborough University and its walkable centre. At a more strategic level the role and function of town centres has been evolving as high street retailers face ongoing competition from internet sales. For these reasons a need to update the 2007 plan was identified.

THE VISION FOR LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE

The masterplan vision and objectives were formed in close collaboration with the Borough Council, the public and stakeholders (including local landowners and organisations including the 'Love Loughborough' BID).

The Vision and objectives for the plan are shown below:

VISION

'Loughborough Town Centre will be a successful and vibrant place with a strong identity that stems from its role as a market town and home to Loughborough University. It will be an attractive destination with a diverse retail and leisure offer, a mix of housing and a wide range of employment opportunities.

The town will be easy to access with a well connected network of vehicular and pedestrian routes. Activity in the town will be supported by a range of events and innovative marketing, business and promotional strategies that will make Loughborough a great place to be.'

OBJECTIVES

1. Movement and arrival

To strengthen connections across the town centre to create a more legible network of streets and spaces linking key destinations and promoting active travel

2. Character, identity, uses and offer

To enhance the townscape by ensuring that new development responds to the distinctive pattern of uses and character across the town and to protect and enhance the town's offer

3. Town centre experience, events and promotion

To support physical interventions with a series of short term interventions to promote the towns brand, attract visitors and enliven the town centre

THE MASTERPLAN

The role of the master plan is to determine an overall vision and spatial strategy for the town centre. The proposals have been closely informed and endorsed by local stakeholders, consultees and the public. It aims to:

- Build partnerships;
- Provide direction and define limits;
- Demonstrate confidence in the future of the centre;
- Raise awareness of development opportunities;
- Deliver a coherent strategy to underpin bidding for public funding;
- Engage and attract private sector investment;
- Provide an evidence base to assist in the preparation of Local Plan Policies; and
- Assist in the assessment of planning applications.

The Masterplan is not inflexible or prescriptive, nor does it represent a commitment to funding by the Borough Council.

THE PROPOSALS

The Masterplan proposals fall into four distinct categories.

- 1 Public realm improvements;
- 2 Changes to the movement network and parking;
- 3 Opportunity sites; and
- 4 Small interventions.

These are summarised on the following pages.

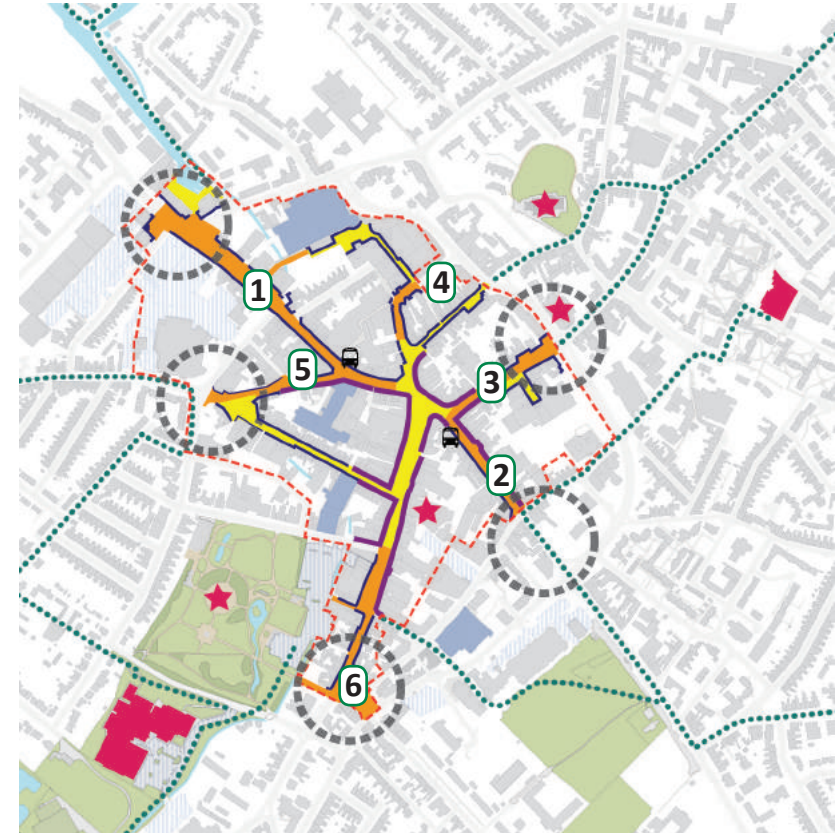
1) Public Realm Improvements

In recent years significant changes in the public realm have taken place in the town centre however there is potential for further improvement. Following recommendations in the 2007 masterplan the Inner Relief Road was constructed. This removed vehicular traffic from the core town centre and allowed the completion of a pedestrianised area along Market Place and Market Street. A pedestrian priority area extends from here along Baxter Gate and High Street.

Whilst these changes have had a positive impact, analysis of the town reveals a disconnect between the pedestrianised area and key destinations across the town. The public realm proposals in the masterplan aim to extend the pedestrian priority area to provide high quality pedestrian links between Market Place, the main pedestrian entry points into the town and important destinations such as The Rushes Shopping Centre and Queen's Park. These include proposals for an enhanced streetscape in the following locations:

- 1 The Rushes between Swan Street and the junction of Derby Road / Bridge Street;
- 2 High Street between Baxter Gate and Jubilee Way;
- 3 Baxter Gate between High Street and Nottingham Road;
- 4 Biggin Street between Swan Street and The Rushes Shopping Centre;
- 5 Derby Square between The Rushes and Ashby Square; and
- 6 Ward's End between Devonshire Square and Bedford Square.

These improvements connect the streets included in the town's primary and secondary retail areas.



Public realm proposals

These streetscape improvements could be complimented by an initiative aimed at improving the town's secondary movement network of small lanes and alleyways. The Loughborough Lanes Strategy would see these improved through the use of public art and temporary interventions.

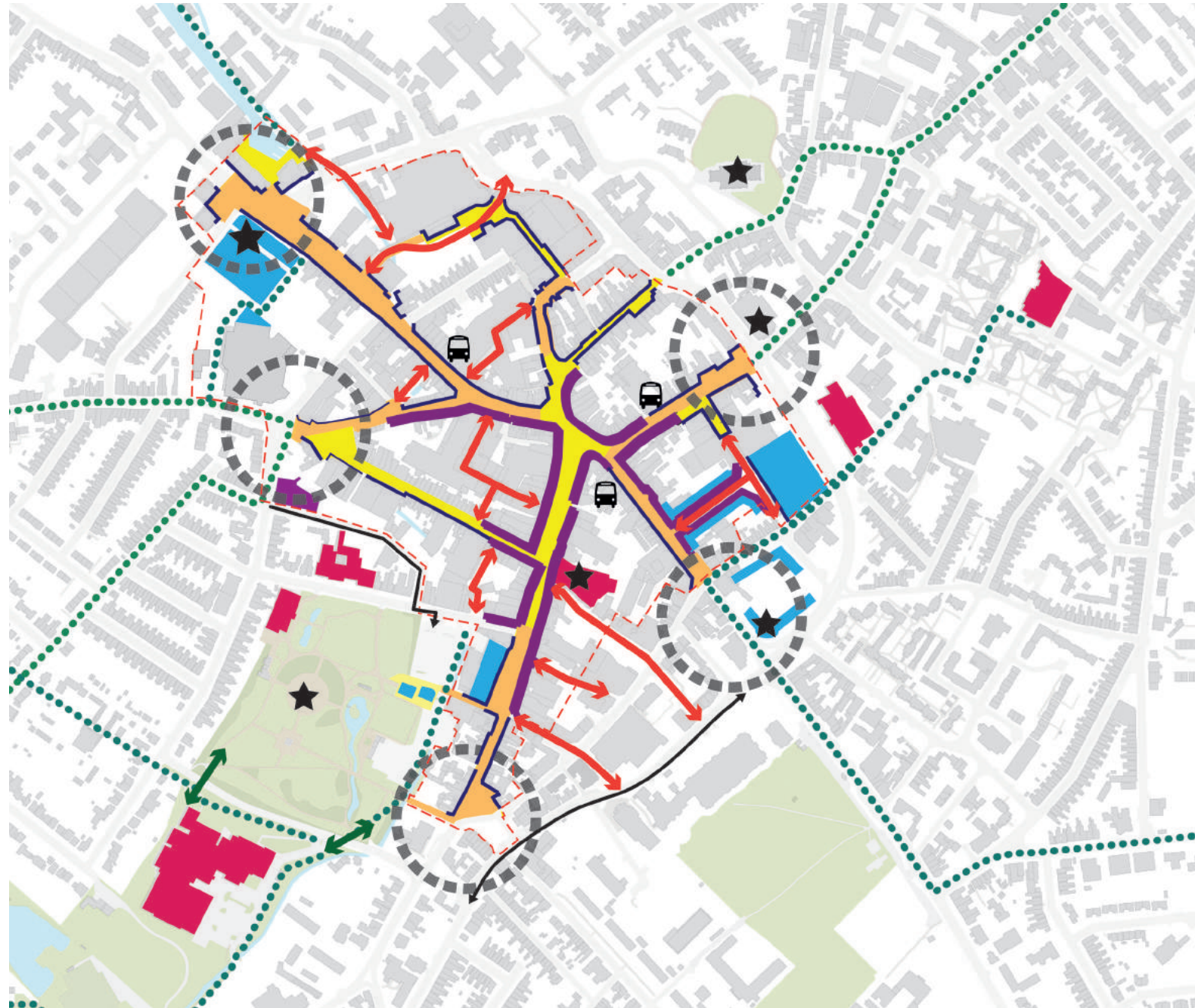
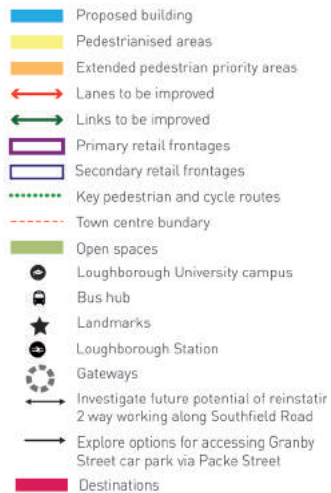
Longer term improvements to the pedestrian and cycle routes between the town centre, the station and the university could also be considered by the Council in partnership with the County Highway Authority.

2) Changes to the movement network and parking

Public realm improvements in the town could be supported by potential changes to the vehicular movement network. The masterplan suggests that the Council should work with the County Highway Authority to:

- Explore the potential of re-introducing two way traffic on Southfield Road in order to identify any network benefits and provide an effective evidence base to enable the testing of public realm improvement opportunities (such as removing through traffic from Bedford Square); and
- Explore options for accessing Granby Street Car Park from Packe Street to reduce through traffic on Wards End and Devonshire Square and give more space over to pedestrians in these locations.

A new town centre car park, facilitated through commercial development, is proposed at Baxter Gate to address the need for more town centre car parking.



Proposed Spatial Strategy



Loughborough School of Art and Design Building
 Refurbishment of the former Loughborough School of Art and Design Building to provide business space for the creative industries.

3) Opportunity Sites

Within the town centre a number of under-utilised sites have been identified that offer potential for development to strengthen the town centre offer and improve the townscape and sense of place.

These are:

1. Baxter Gate;
2. Aumberry Gap;
3. Devonshire Square;
4. Sainsbury's, Ashby Road; and
5. The Loughborough School of Art and Design Building (The Generator).

The masterplan explores development options for opportunity sites 1-4 listed above. Proposals for The Generator building are currently being developed by a community interest company. These are endorsed by this masterplan.

There are other smaller sites in the town centre that may come forward for development. However, the opportunity sites have the most potential to transform the town and are seen as critical to the overall environment. The masterplan proposes a

set of design principles for each site and a preferred development option. The proposals for each site are briefly described below.

Baxter Gate

A mixed-use development providing new retail units, a replacement health centre, residential apartments, a limited number of student residences enabling a new town centre car park.

Aumberry Gap

A development of new apartments to encourage town centre living.

Devonshire Square

The refurbishment of the Devonshire Square block and provision of additional floorspace accommodating an apart-hotel above. A new entrance into Queen's Park via Devonshire Lane would also be provided.

Sainsbury's, Ashby Road

A major mixed use development to intensify development on this site and create a more welcoming environment along The Rushes.

4) Small Interventions

The public realm, movement and development site proposals identified within the masterplan require significant funding and planning to deliver and it may take many years before they are realised. The masterplan anticipates this and includes a number of 'softer' small interventions that can deliver local and more immediate change.

Small interventions are tactical / low cost projects that deliver quick and tangible change before long term investment is made. The masterplan includes three categories of small intervention. These are;

- Events;
- Animating the town; and
- Supporting businesses.

The masterplan outlines a strategy for each of these elements and identifies how they could be used to build the town's brand and identity.

The Implementation Strategy

To be effective a masterplan needs to be accompanied by a clear understanding of how projects and initiatives could be delivered and programmed. The masterplan for Loughborough town centre includes an implementation strategy that explains how the key site specific masterplan projects might be delivered, who would need to be involved and that outlines the key actions required to enable delivery.

Together the Masterplan and implementation strategy show a financially viable way forward for Loughborough Town Centre to realise its potential.



1. Introduction



Figure 1.1: Aerial image of Loughborough and the town centre boundary identified by this study

1.1 BACKGROUND

Urban Initiatives Studio and Montagu Evans were commissioned to prepare the Loughborough Town Centre masterplan in October 2016. Its remit is to ensure the future viability and vitality of the town centre and secure its role as Charnwood's primary destination for retail, leisure and culture.

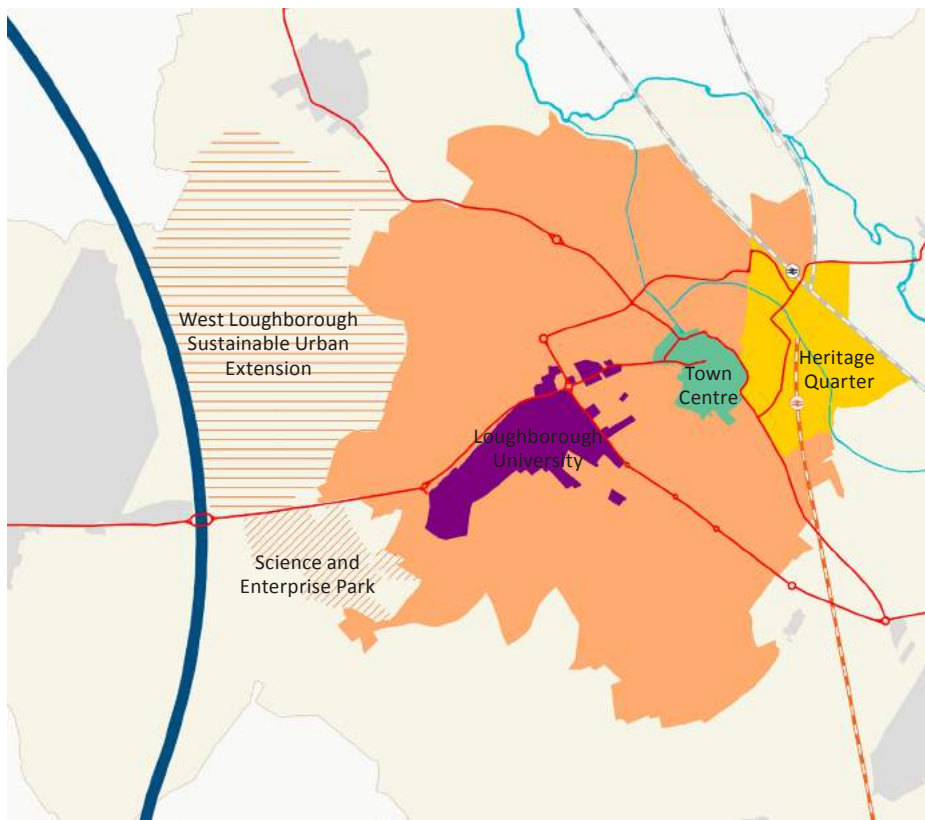
The Borough Council commissioned the masterplan as part of the evidence base that will inform the implementation of Policies CS7 and CS9 of the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2014-2028). It will also be used to help to create new policies for inclusion in the replacement Local Plan which will extend policy coverage to the year 2036.

The plan supersedes an earlier masterplan prepared by the Council in 2007. Much has changed over the last ten years. Many of the initiatives included in the earlier masterplan have been delivered, others stubbornly remain unchanged. The planning and socio-economic context surrounding Loughborough is however changing. Loughborough is going through a period of growth with a planned urban extension to the west of the town expected to deliver 3,000 new homes by 2028. This will be accompanied by the expansion of important employment sites such as the Science and Enterprise Park.

Whilst Loughborough cannot directly compete with Leicester, Derby and Nottingham it is important that the town centre continues to provide an attractive environment and offer that appeals to a more local catchment and that it takes full advantage of its assets including the town's history and heritage, the attractive market, the presence of Loughborough University and its walkable centre.

At a more strategic level the role and function of town centres has been evolving as high street retailers face ongoing competition from internet sales. For these reasons a need to update the 2007 plan was identified.

As the largest town in Charnwood, Loughborough is an important service centre. It has a range of both national and independent retailers and a thriving street market. It is also the home of some 14,500 students at the University. The Council wishes to ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre continues in the future and has identified a continued need for additional retail and leisure floorspace.



- Charnwood Borough
- Loughborough
- Loughborough Town Centre
- Loughborough Heritage Quarter
- Loughborough University Campus
- West Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension
- Other developed areas
- Motorway (M1)
- Primary road
- Railway line
- Great Central Railway (Heritage Railway)
- Loughborough Railway Station
- Loughborough Midland Station
- Water (canal/river)

Figure 1.2: Growth and opportunity in Loughborough

The 2007 masterplan led to significant regeneration of the town centre and much has changed over the past ten years. The Inner Relief Road has been completed – this effectively removes traffic from the key retail areas in the town giving more space over to pedestrians. This has been accompanied by public realm improvements in key locations (including the station) and recently the delivery of the new leisure complex at Baxter Gate.

These physical interventions have been supported by the ‘Love Loughborough’ Business Improvement District – established in 2011. It provides a range of promotional and marketing initiatives to support the town and has just secured a second 5 year term.

Despite the positive achievements of the 2007 masterplan implemented under the guidance of the Town Team and the other initiatives supported by the BID there are still several areas of the town that are in need of investment and that blight the character of the centre.



Retail competition from surrounding settlements is an issue for Loughborough

The overall connectivity of the town is fragmented and public realm improvements have been limited to the core area and do not connect to more marginal locations such as Southfields Park and the Canal Basin on Derby Road. In addition, two of the main development sites identified in the 2007 masterplan remain undeveloped or partially undeveloped.

The economic climate of the high street has also changed significantly over the last ten years. As well as competition from other centres, the town is faced with exponential growth in online sales. The focus for town centres is changing towards leisure uses such as cinemas, food and drink and entertainment.

This masterplan is charged with identifying how Loughborough could continue to regenerate whilst recognising new trends in town centre development.

1.2 THE MASTERPLAN

The remit of this masterplan is to ensure the future viability and vitality of the town centre and secure its role as Charnwood's primary destination for retail, leisure and culture.

It is recognised that change cannot take place overnight and that physical development alone will not transform the area. Whilst an indicative masterplan and some key structuring principles are presented here, the concept masterplan also explores softer interventions that can help to revitalise the town. These include elements like marketing and temporary spatial interventions.

This document is sub-divided into the following sections:

Section 2: The Place

A description of the town and its history and an analysis of the towns spatial composition and character;

Section 3: Planning background

A description of the policy context,

Section 4: Property market review

An overview of the property market in Loughborough;

Section 5: Spatial strategy

Suggested spatial improvements to the town;

Section 6: Opportunity sites

Design guidelines for key development sites;

Section 7: Marketing and promotion strategy

A strategy for softer interventions to support the spatial strategy and development on opportunity sites; and

Section 8: Implementation and delivery strategy

Details of how development on key sites could be delivered.

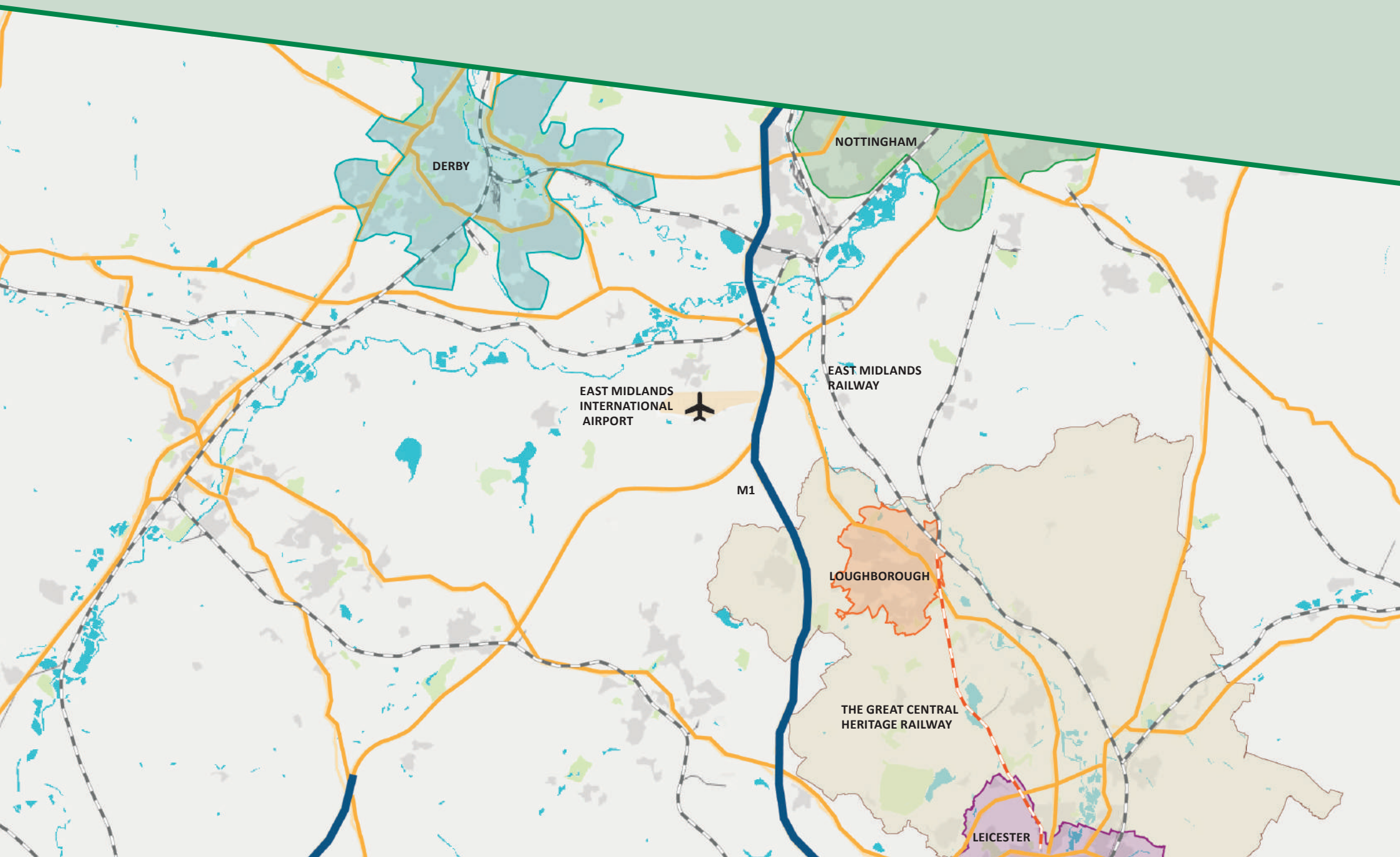
1.3 MASTERPLAN PROCESS

Urban Initiatives Studio and Montagu Evans were appointed to prepare this masterplan and implementation strategy. The consultant team developed the plan through an iterative process working closely with the Council and an invited group of stakeholders and local people. The masterplan evolved through a series of workshops that were held to stimulate discussion and debate at key points in the design process. These included:

- A visioning workshop to agree the strategic concept for the masterplan;
- A masterplan workshop to agree the spatial strategy;
- An implementation strategy workshop to agree how development could be delivered;
- A marketing and promotion strategy workshop to identify complementary initiatives that could be implemented to support spatial proposals.

Feedback received during these sessions directly informed the emerging proposals and has helped to shape this document.

A public exhibition of the masterplan proposals was held in Summer 2017. Comments received from this exercise have shaped the proposals in this document.



2. The Place

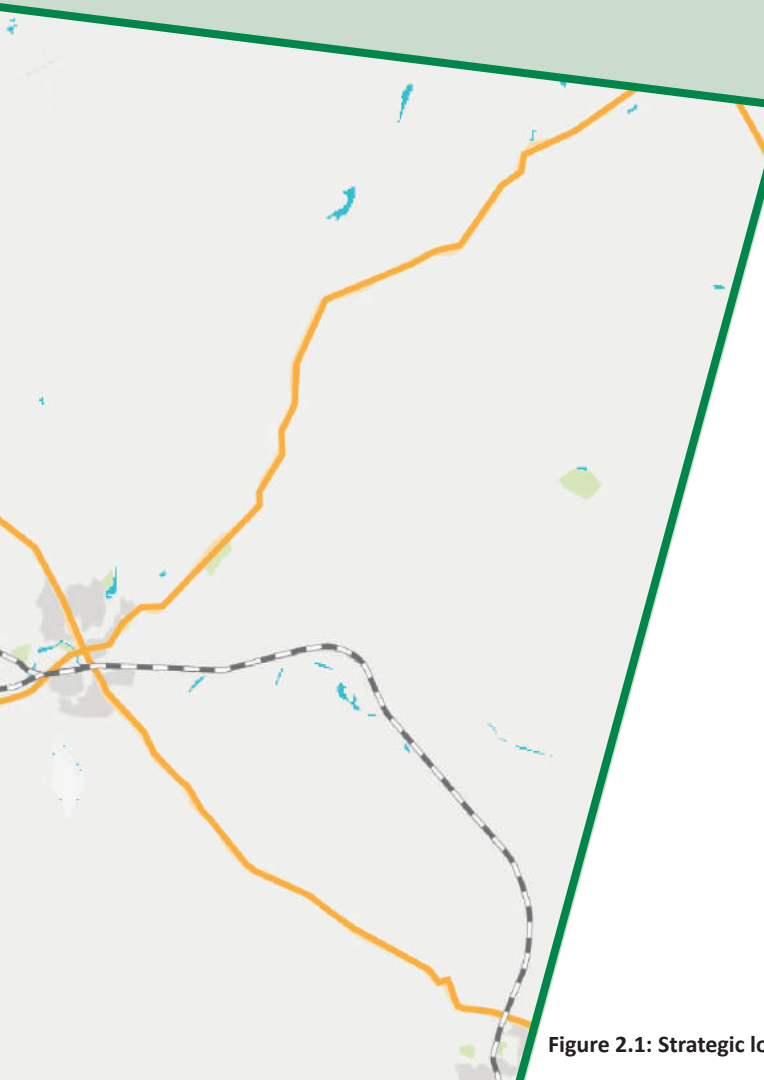


Figure 2.1: Strategic location plan

2.1 STRATEGIC LOCATION

Loughborough is located in north Leicestershire, centrally positioned between the cities of Nottingham, Derby and Leicester. It is the largest market town in Leicestershire with a population of approximately 64,014 (2015) and enjoys a high profile by reason of its association with Loughborough University, home to nearly 17,000 students (2015/16).

In common with other market towns Loughborough is located at the meeting point of a number of routes. The A6, Derby Road, extends through the town centre connecting Derby to the north with Leicester to the south. Loughborough also benefits from proximity to the M1 motorway. This motorway lies just to the west of the town and provides a connection to London and Leeds and to the wider motorway network.

The town also benefits from a mainline rail station. The station is located on the Midland Railway Line and this provides regular services to Leicester and London to the south and Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield to the north. The Great Central Heritage Railway also runs through the town and is an important visitor attraction.

The East Midlands International Airport is located approximately nine miles to the north-west of the town. A number of domestic and international flights, providing both passenger and cargo services, operate from the airport and it plays an important role in the local economy.

2.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Early years

Loughborough dates back to the Saxon period and is mentioned in the Domesday Book, as Lucteburne, with a population of approximately 200 people at that time. From its early origins Loughborough had a market and in 1221 a charter was granted for Loughborough Fair.

By 1600 the town's population had grown to 2,000 people. At this time the hosiery industry was starting to develop with framework knitters making stockings in the town in the 17th Century. The opening of the Loughborough Canal in 1778 improved connections to London and Birmingham via the Grand Union Canal and led to an expansion of this, and other industries, in the town.

Growth and industry

These developments saw an increase in Loughborough's population from 4,500 to 10,000 people between 1801 and 1841. The invention of steam operated machinery supported the continuous growth of the hosiery industry which in turn attracted associated uses to the area (such as bleach and dye works).

Other heavy industry included the John Taylor Bell Foundry which in 1881 famously cast the 'Great Paul' the largest bell cast in Britain for St Paul's Cathedral, The Falcon Works, that made steam trains and cars, and the Empress Works that made cranes.

Historically the town developed around Market Place and Church Gate. Early development followed a compact medieval street pattern (See Figure 2.2). Further expansion of Loughborough town centre took place following the arrival of the railway in 1840.



Figure 2.2: Early map of Loughborough (circa 1940)



Dyeworks at Devonshire Square (circa 1910)



19th Century image of Market Place



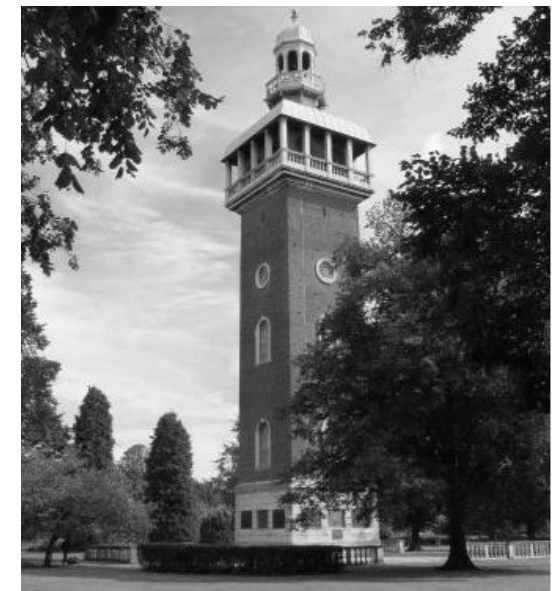
The largest bell cast in Britain, 'Great Paul' cast at John Taylor and Co Bell factory in Loughborough



Figure 2.3: Historic plan 1884

The 1884 map (Figure 2.3) shows the expansion of the town through the Victorian period. The townscape at this time changed from the mediaeval street pattern to a Victorian pattern of terraced housing. Large footprint mill / industrial buildings can be seen along the canal with many dye works across the town, including several in the area that is now occupied by Queens Park.

The town continued to develop in the late 19th and early 20th century with an increase in population from 21,000 – 37,000 between 1901 and 1951. Queen's Park opened in 1899 followed by the adjacent Carnegie Free Library in 1905. The town's iconic Carillon War Memorial was built in 1923. Through the 20th Century the town became known for the publication of Ladybird books which were produced by Wills and Hepworth in the town from 1914-1998.



Carillon War Memorial in Queens Park



Figure 2.4: Historic plan 1947

The textile and hosiery industries continued to thrive in the town until the 1990s peaking in the 1960s and attracting many immigrants from India and Bangladesh.

The town continued to act as a market town and service centre and an outdoor market still runs in Market Square to this day.

The shape and pattern of the town centre has remained largely unchanged since the mid 20th century (Figure 2.4). However two shopping centres,

The Carillon Court Shopping Centre (which opened in 1972) and the more modern Rushes Centre which dates back to 2002, together with a large foodstore on Ashby Road and the adjacent Regent Place Retail Park reflect the changing form of retail development through this period.

Beyond the centre the most significant change has been the development and continued expansion of the University Campus located to the south-west of the town centre.



Loughborough University campus

The emergence of the University

The town's role as a seat of education dates back to 1909 when the Loughborough Technical Institute was founded in the town centre. This Technical Institute expanded rapidly. It was eventually renamed Loughborough College and relocated to the current university campus. After the war the college split into four distinctive colleges:

- Loughborough Training College;
- Loughborough College of Art;
- Loughborough College of Further Education; and
- Loughborough College of Technology.

The College of Technology was to evolve into the modern day university. In 1953 it gained the status of a College of Advanced Technology. In 1963 the Robbins Report on higher education recommended that all colleges of advanced technology, should become universities. The College of Technology hence became Loughborough University of Technology on 19th of April 1963. The College of Education and Arts College were later amalgamated into the University.

The University is largely contained to the south west of the town centre however significant student accommodation has been built in the town centre in the last decade and the large student population is evident in the town centre.



Market Place has been transformed following the removal of traffic and still holds markets on several days of the week

Recent changes

Significant changes occurred in 2014 when the Jubilee Way inner relief road was opened. This directed traffic away from Market Place and the town centre. This allowed the pedestrianisation of Market Place to be completed creating a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and shoppers.

In 2016 the former hospital site at Baxter Gate was redeveloped with a leisure led development providing a new cinema and several food and beverage outlets. This reflected a shift in the town centre function from a primarily retail centre towards more leisure related uses.

Overall the town has maintained most of its historic character and has remained a compact and walkable centre. Loughborough can be defined as both a market and university town. A market continues to be held on several days of the week in Market Place and the University is going from strength to strength. The town also benefits from access to high quality jobs and services provided at the Science and Enterprise Park and the Charnwood Campus. Both sites now form parts of the recently designated Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone.



2010 Tesco's opens in former Woolworths store



Leisure led development at Baxter Gate

2.3 CONSERVATION AREAS AND HERITAGE

Loughborough has several Conservation Areas and many listed buildings however most are situated to the periphery of the town centre and do not lie within the core area covered by the masterplan.

However, there are some areas of the study area that are within Queen's Park and Church Gate Conservation Areas (refer to Figure 2.5). Reference to the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans covering these locations will be required to understand sensitivities and inform new development within these areas. Relevant considerations are described below.

Queen's Park Conservation Area

The Queen's Park Conservation Area is located to the south-west of the town centre. The Conservation Area Appraisal sub-divides this area into three sub areas:

- The Ward's End area – the first part of this area to be developed and where buildings have a distinctive commercial character (most relevant to this masterplan);
- Queen's Park itself which provides valuable open space in the town centre and has a historic landscape; and
- A further area of Edwardian terraces to the west of the park between Frederick Street and William Street.

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the Carillon Tower, located within Queen's Park, as an important local landmark which is visible from much of the wider area. Specific direct views of the Carillon Tower and Park are identified along New Street and Arthur Street. These should be protected. Other important views towards the tower can be glimpsed from Browns Lane and Granby Street.

The Appraisal identifies many important buildings in the area including:

- The Orange Tree Public House at Ward's End;
- The late 19th Century building at the junction of Ward's End and Devonshire Lane;
- The former dye works on Devonshire Lane;
- Queen's Hall;
- The Carnegie Library and its modern extension;
- The United Reform Church; and
- The former Loughborough College of Technology building on the corner of Packe Street and Frederick Street.

The Appraisal goes on to identify many of the area's distinctive local features and architectural details, including the limited palette of materials of smooth red brick and welsh slate and some use of terracotta in commercial buildings, the traditional shopfronts on Ward's End and arts and crafts detailing. These features are particularly relevant to the town centre masterplan.

The Church Gate Conservation Area

The Church Gate Conservation Area is located in the historic centre of Loughborough to the east of Market Place. This area houses most of the towns Georgian and Victorian era buildings. Church Gate itself is of particular importance as it is the only street in Loughborough to retain its mediaeval width.

All Saints Church and associated churchyard sit at the centre of this character area. Views towards the tower of the church (a local landmark) should be preserved. The sense of place and character in this area - particularly to the south of the church - is partly driven by the mix of land uses that create a vibrant atmosphere. Buildings along Church Gate and Sparrow Hill follow a mediaeval street pattern with buildings sitting directly on to the street frontage. This creates a sense of enclosure and intimacy that further defines the character of the area. Vibrancy is brought by the mix of uses including retail, residential and civic functions. Despite the age span of the buildings in the area, the materials used in their construction are drawn from a relatively small palette, principally of brick and slate or tile. Some of these materials are very distinctive and make a significant contribution to the unique character of the area.

The appraisal identifies several important buildings in the character area. These include:

- The Baptist Church;
- Charles Lowe Antiques on Church Gate;
- Ivy Cottage on Meadow Lane; and
- Denham's Jewellers on Baxter Gate.

The condition of some of the retail uses, especially along Baxter Gate, is identified as a threat to the character of the area. The Appraisal states that despite proximity to the main shopping area some retailers here tend to be short term users who do not apply particularly high standards of design to their properties. The mix of ownerships is partly blamed for the poor condition of some of the properties as no one owner has an incentive to repair their buildings.



View of the open space and Carillon War Memorial in the Queen's Park Conservation Area



The Town Hall is listed but not within a Conservation Area



The Mediaeval street pattern of Church Gate

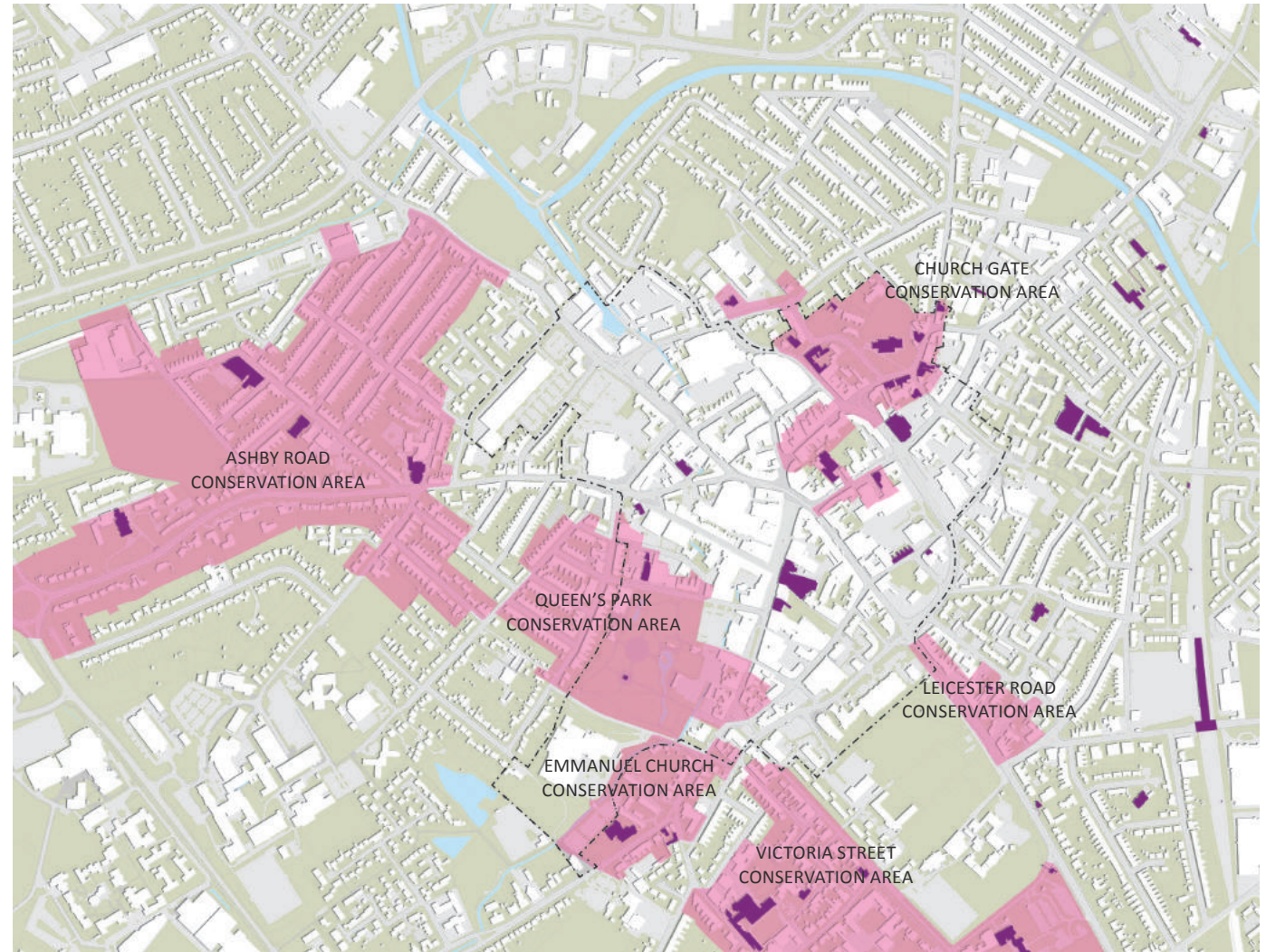


Figure 2.5: Town centre heritage

- Conservation area
- Listed building

2.4 MOVEMENT

2.4.1 VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

Access and circulation

The main vehicular routes into the town are:

- Derby Road (A6) from the north-west;
- Nottingham Road (A60) from the north-east;
- Leicester Road (A6) from the south;
- Forest Road from the south-west; and
- Ashby Road (A512) from the west which connects to the M1 Motorway.

Vehicular access through the core town centre area at Market Place is not possible. Vehicles entering the town are directed away from this area. This is made possible by the Inner Relief Road (Jubilee Way) which wraps around the north and eastern side of the town centre.

Whilst the Inner Relief Road creates a more positive environment for pedestrians in the town centre, it, in combination with a number of one way systems, can be confusing for motorists entering the town.

One way routings have been introduced towards the south of the town centre on Woodgate and Southfield Road, on Ward's End and Granby Street and on the eastern end of The Rushes and on Derby Square.

Whilst these systems have been designed to direct vehicles away from the centre they reduce legibility and accessibility making it difficult for road users to navigate their way around the town and locate the town centre.

Areas with restricted vehicular access

The introduction of the Inner Relief Road in 2014 made restricting traffic on several town centre streets possible. Vehicular access along High Street and Baxter Gate is now restricted to 'bus only' and traffic on the The Rushes is markedly reduced.

Whilst this continues to bring buses into the town centre the restrictions are not made clear enough for motorists and those entering the town from Leicester Road and Woodgate often continue their journey along the restricted area on Baxter Gate. The design of this area should be amended to make the bus and access only areas more distinguishable.

Bedford Square / Ward's End

The one way systems also restrict movement through the centre and in some places encourage significant vehicle movement on streets that are not designed to accommodate this, or where they have a significant effect on the quality of the environment within the centre.

This is particularly evident towards the south of the centre around the historic Bedford Square and Ward's End. Traffic entering the town from the south can currently travel in one direction only in order to access the Granby Street car park. Whilst this access is necessary at present, it brings vehicular traffic along this narrow and attractive street.



View of the pedestrianised area on Market Place - this was consolidated and enhanced by the introduction of the Inner Relief Road

Similarly the one way working on Southfield Road (eastbound) and Woodgate (westbound) mean that a significant volume of traffic is routed across Bedford Square. This space is used primarily as a surface car park and rather than functioning as an attractive arrival point into the centre it is dominated by cars and vehicle movements.

Both Ward's End and Bedford Square are within the Queen's Park Conservation Area and changes in traffic management here could deliver significant enhancements to the centre.

Public realm improvements were proposed in the 2007 masterplan but have not been delivered. A plan to improve Bedford Square is currently being prepared by the Council although it does not include proposals to remove or reduce through traffic which could transform the space.



One way working on Woodgate



Bedford Square is dominated by parked cars



The bus/ cycle only route on Baxter Gate



Figure 2.6: Existing movement network

- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Local street
- - - Restricted local street
- Surface car park
- Multi storey car park

2.4.2 CAR PARKING

There are a total of 2,641 (2,733 on Saturday) parking spaces within car parks in Loughborough town centre and an additional 347 on-street spaces.

Some of the town's car parks are operated by Charnwood Borough Council. These account for 1,180 of the town's spaces and include Browns Lane, Granby Street and Beehive Lane.

The remaining 1,553 spaces are provided in car parks operated by private companies. These include the Sainsbury's and The Rushes car parks.

Existing occupancy levels demonstrate that during the week there is overall spare capacity in town centre car parks. However, during peak Saturday hours car parks are near to capacity. The most popular car parks at peak times are The Rushes and Granby Street. The least popular car park is Browns Lane. This is effectively a car park for the leisure centre and is busiest in the evenings.

During peak times on Saturdays overall existing occupancy levels in all town centre car parks are near to capacity. However, the privately owned car parks appear to be slightly more popular. The overall occupancy for these sites is below 85% at this time. Car parks operated by the Council fall below 85% mark. This may in part be related to pricing structures. The Rushes and Regent Place offer their customers free parking. Sainsbury's and Somerfield offer free parking to all town centre users. With the exception of Browns Lane, all the Council operated car parks use a single tariff structure.

At peak times a large proportion of the on-street parking spaces are occupied with many vehicles parking for longer than the maximum time permitted.

During the week the busiest car parks are The Rushes and the Southfield Road Extension car park. Regent Place experiences low occupancy levels during the week - far below average for the town. This is likely to be related to its relatively remote position from the town centre.

The Loughborough Town Centre Parking Strategy

The Loughborough Town Centre Parking Strategy (2007) reviewed the existing parking provision in the centre and provides a framework for parking policies in the town centre until 2021. It made a number of recommendations that should be considered as part of this masterplan. These include:

- The creation of a new parking area at Browns Lane and opening up the Council's office car park at Southfield Road for public use;
- The creation of a new car park run by CBC and accessed from the Inner Relief Road;
- The need to provide more and better parking facilities for motor cyclists and cyclists;
- That a park and ride facility is not considered to be viable at this time;
- That the Southfield Road Extension car park should be closed; and
- That additional coach parking should be created along Granby Street.

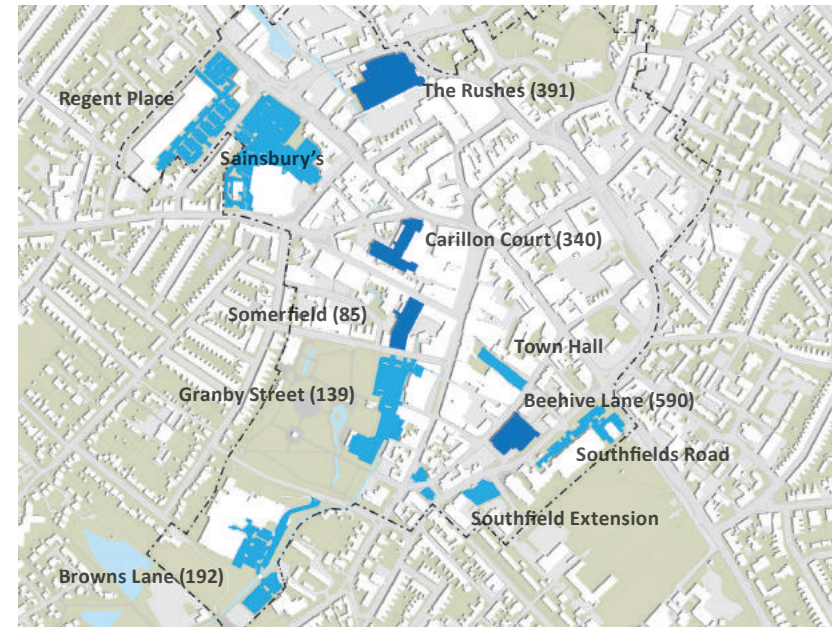


Figure 2.7: Town centre car parks

Surface car park
Multi storey car park

Charnwood Parking Impact Assessment

In December 2015, the Council commissioned a study to refresh the assessment of parking needs. To meet projected needs in Loughborough up to 2036 that study recommended the provision of a new multi-story car park with a capacity of 200 – 300 spaces, preferably towards the southern quadrant of the town centre to reduce circulating traffic in search of parking spaces. The report further acknowledged the cost implications attached to the delivery of such a facility and recommended that the Council explore potential partnership delivery options with developers and/or private car park operators.

2.4.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses are the main form of public transport in Loughborough. As with cars, these are not permitted to circulate through the central area of the town and are directed away from Market Place. There is no bus station in the town. Instead buses are directed to a number of bus hubs at Baxter Gate, High Street, The Rushes and Lemington Street. Bus hubs, as opposed to a dedicated bus station, were proposed as part of the 2007 masterplan.

The train station is located approximately half a mile to the north-east of the town centre. This provides regular services to London, Leicester, Nottingham and other destinations in the region. Improvements have recently been carried out to enhance the arrival experience at the station however the walk into the town centre could be improved through further improvements to the public realm.

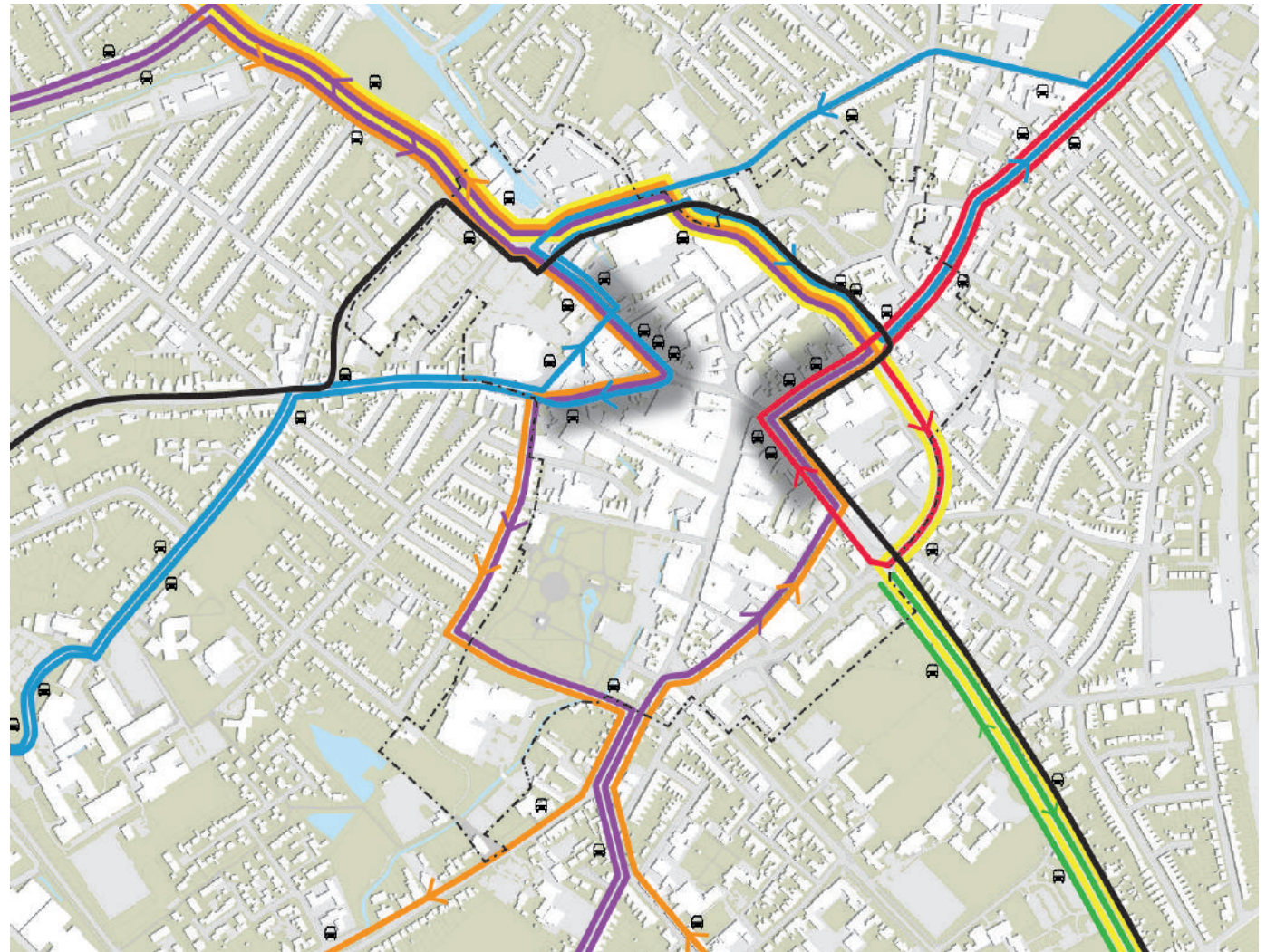










Figure 2.8: Bus routes in the town centre

-  Skylink
-  Sprint
-  Bus 2
-  Bus 5
-  Bus 9
-  Bus 11/12
-  Arriva routes
-  Bus stop

2.4.4 PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND ARRIVAL

The street pattern in Loughborough as a whole is generally well connected and overlooked by buildings. However, circulation across the town, and between some destinations in the town centre, is somewhat fragmented. Often the most direct routes between destinations in the town require pedestrians to walk along small secondary streets and lanes (such as from The Rushes to Queen's Park). These routes are often poorly lit and unattractive. In other cases there is no legible connection between destinations. For instance, there is no direct route between the Baxter Gate leisure development and The Rushes.

Some parts of the town centre are pedestrianised. The most significant area encompasses Market Place, Market Street and Church Gate. Other pedestrianised areas include a route through The Rushes shopping area, a small space at Baxter Gate and an area at the Canal Basin adjacent to the Travelodge hotel. These discrete areas are not connected and this creates a disjointed environment. This is exacerbated by the poor quality connections between destinations

Retail 'loops' and strong connections between leisure and retail centres are a vital part of successful town centres. These are lacking in Loughborough and should be addressed as part of this masterplan.

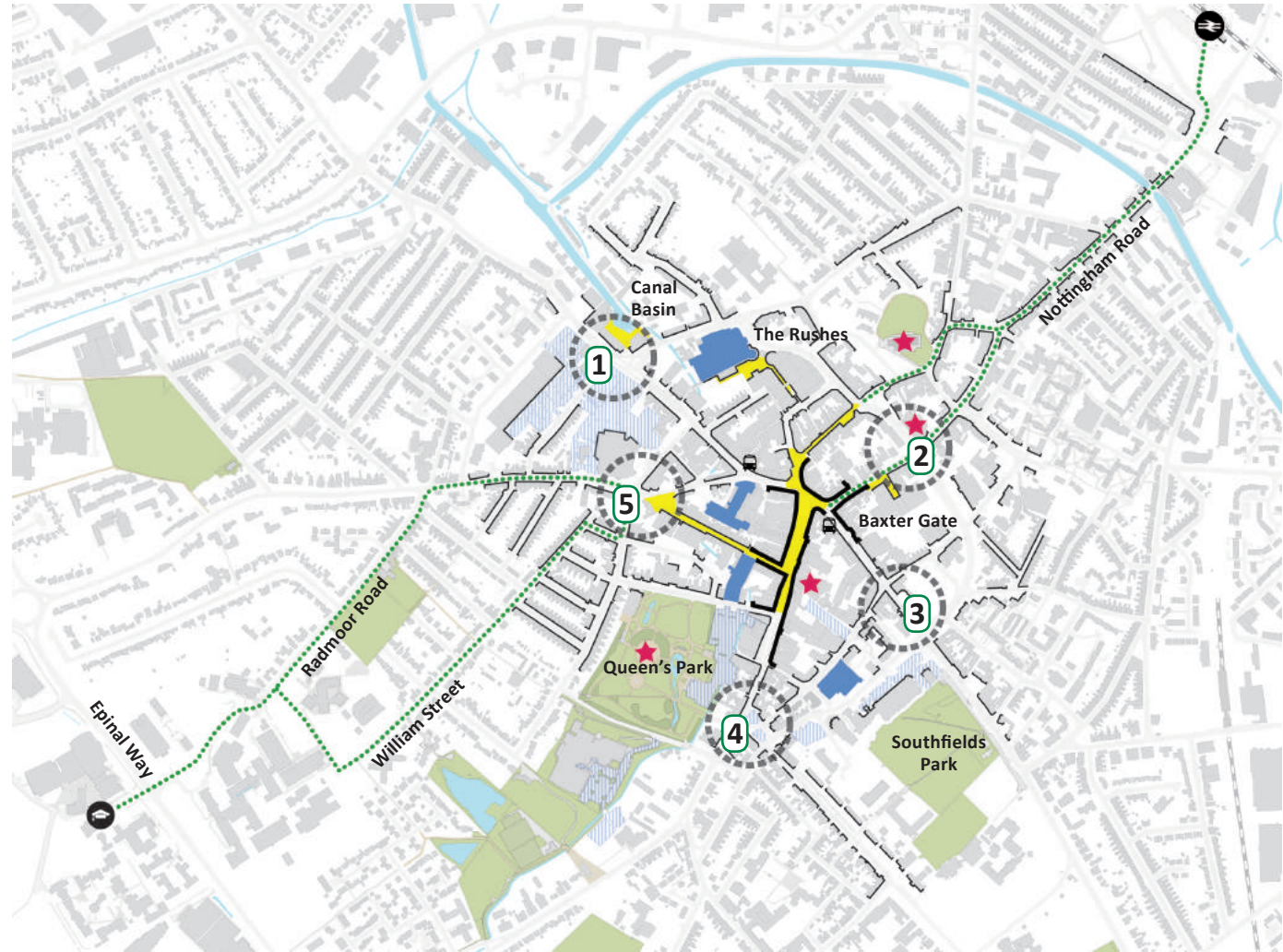
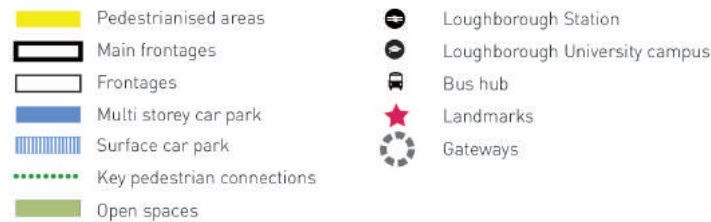


Figure 2.9: Pedestrian movement and points of arrival



GATEWAYS



Gateways

The main points of arrival into the town centre should be clear and welcoming to pedestrians and other road users and act as 'Gateways' to the town. There are several locations that should fulfill this function however the quality of these gateways is variable.

Gateways include:

- 1 The junction of The Rushes/Bridge Street** which is poorly defined by buildings and dominated by road space;
- 2 The junction of Jubilee Way/Nottingham Road** which is defined by the distinctive Art Deco Beacon Bingo building. However, a number of poorer quality buildings, and the width of Jubilee Way, impact on the pedestrian experience here;
- 3 The junction of Jubilee Way/High Street** which is poorly defined by buildings and dominated by road space;
- 4 Bedford Square** which is currently dominated by parked cars and traffic. It has potential to be a very attractive space and provide a focal point for this historic part of the town; and
- 5 Ashby Square** which functions reasonably well with a good quality public realm treatment and some attractive buildings.

The masterplan must aim to enhance these point of arrival into the town.

Key pedestrian routes

Two of the most important pedestrian routes in Loughborough are between the town centre and the University and the town centre and the train station.

The train station is located approximately half a mile from the town centre. The most direct route for pedestrians is along Nottingham Road. The pedestrian environment along this route is not of a particularly high quality by virtue of the narrow pavements, high volume of traffic and general low quality of the buildings in this area. For a visitor arriving at the station it is not obvious how you would walk to the town centre.

The University campus is located approximately half a mile to the south-west of the town centre. The most direct routes from the university campus to the town centre take pedestrians through Loughborough College to Ashby Square via Radmoor Road or William Street. There are several barriers which make this journey unattractive.

Epinal Way is a significant road marking the edge of the university campus and it acts as an initial barrier to movement. Once crossed accessing either Radmoor Road or William Street require students to walk through the Loughborough College campus. The buildings here are arranged informally and without a clear pattern of streets and blocks and there is no direct visual or physical connection from Epinal Way to Radmoor Road or William Street. The design of the routes themselves offer very few signs or visual cues that indicate that they will lead to the town centre. This lack of legibility makes the university feel further from the town centre than it really is and could deter students from walking into the town.

Alternative pedestrian links to the town are provided via a series of green spaces, including Emmanuel Way, Loughborough Lawn Tennis Club, Wood Brook and Queen's Park. Whilst these provide a pleasant route it is not well overlooked or lit and would not be an attractive option for students at night time or in poor weather. Again this route is not particularly legible.

Further to the south Forest Road brings students into the town at Bedford Square. Whilst well overlooked, Forest Road is a busy route and dominated by fast moving traffic.

Another important pedestrian route in the town runs alongside the Grand Union Canal. This can be accessed at a number of locations including at the basin alongside the Travelodge hotel on The Rushes and from Nottingham Road. The canal is not a visible feature within the town centre. It is located much further to the north. However, there is some potential to strengthen links between the town centre and the entrance points to the towpath.



2.4.5 CYCLE ROUTES

There are several cycle routes in and around the town centre providing a mix of on and off road facilities. These bring cyclists in to the heart of the town and to the pedestrian priority area at Market Place / Market Street. However, most of these cycle routes are unmarked and the network is fragmented and broken. For instance the cycle route from Epinal Way, through Loughborough College does not connect to the cycle routes in the town centre via Westfield Drive and along the Wood Brook.

The cycle route to the station is located on Nottingham Road. This is a narrow route dominated by heavy traffic and does not create a pleasant environment for cyclists.

The Loughborough Town Centre Parking Strategy recommends that cycle parking in the town should be upgraded in places. It suggests that existing bike racks in Market Place should be replaced with covered stands and that cycle parking along Market Street should be consolidated to an area in Ashby Square (where student cyclists are likely to enter the town).



Cycle route at Loughborough College

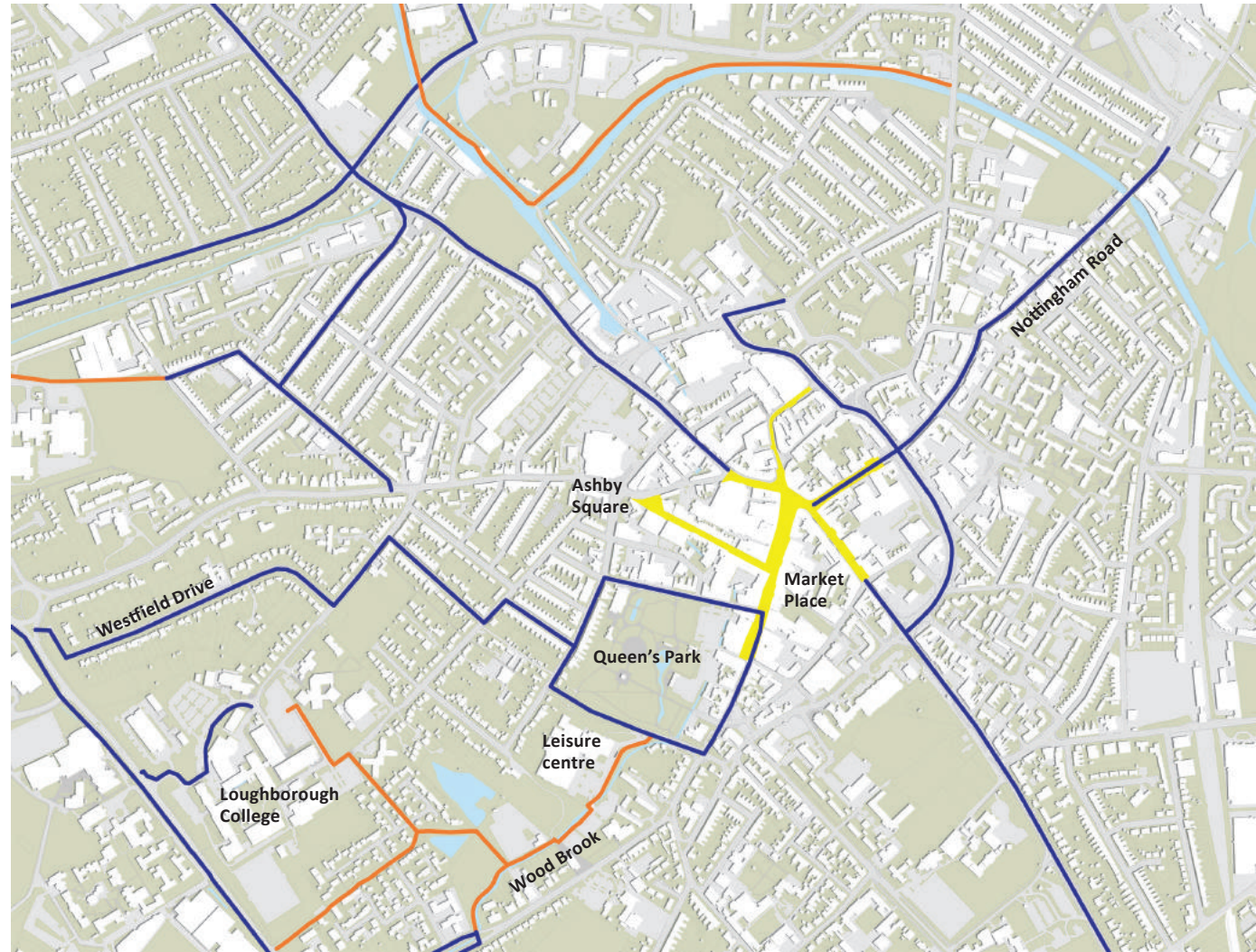


Figure 2.10: Cycle routes

- On road cycle route
- Off road cycle route
- Pedestrian priority area

2.5 TOWNSCAPE

The townscape in Loughborough is generally quite consistent. The town is structured around a network of streets and spaces. Buildings generally face the street and enclose the route network.

Building frontages in the town centre are generally continuous and the building lines are uniform. Buildings normally front directly onto the street and are not set back behind gardens or other boundary treatments. Buildings are generally fine grain. These elements and the generally uniform building heights create a sense of uniformity across the town (for more detailed information on character see Section 2.10).

However, there are parts of the town where the townscape is very different. These fracture the urban fabric of the town and are out of character with the predominant pattern of development. They include:

- Areas with large footprint retail uses dominated by surface car parking at The Rushes, Sainsbury's and Regent Place;
- Vacant and underutilised sites at Granby Street car park and Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap; and
- Fragmented areas particularly at the points of arrival into the town at Ashby Square, Bedford Square, Baxter Gate / Jubilee Way, High Street and the Canal Basin - all of which lack enclosure by buildings and are dominated by vehicles.

The town's key landmarks are:

- The Town Hall;
- The Carillon War Memorial;
- The tower of All Saints Church; and
- The Beacon Bingo Hall.



Figure 2.11: Existing townscape

These help people to navigate their way around the town, and their setting, and views towards them should be protected.



2.6 LAND USES

The land uses in the town centre are very mixed. This creates a vibrant and active atmosphere.

Retail uses are focused on Market Place / Ward's End, Market Street and Church Gate and within the Carillon Court and The Rushes shopping centres. Ward's End and Church Gate have a higher concentration of smaller independent shops and cafes. Market Street has both larger high street and independent retailers as well as a high concentration of cafes.

Larger floorplate retail uses are located within the newer developments at The Rushes, the Regent Place Retail Park and Sainsbury's at Ashby Road. Large areas of associated car parking form part of these developments. These shopping areas are on the periphery of the town centre, with poor pedestrian connections and are generally out of character with the rest of the town.

The Sainsbury store turns its back on the town centre and is located within a large surface car park. Connections to The Rushes shopping area are generally uninviting (particularly the access points from The Rushes and Swan Lane via Clay Pipe Jitty) and lack overlooking.

Leisure uses are focused to the east of the Market Place / Church Gate axis and include The Town Hall (gallery and theatre), the Odeon cinema on Devonshire Square and the Cineworld Complex at Baxter Gate. Food and drink uses are concentrated at Baxter Gate, Bedford Square and Market Street.

The town's museum and library are located on Granby Street.

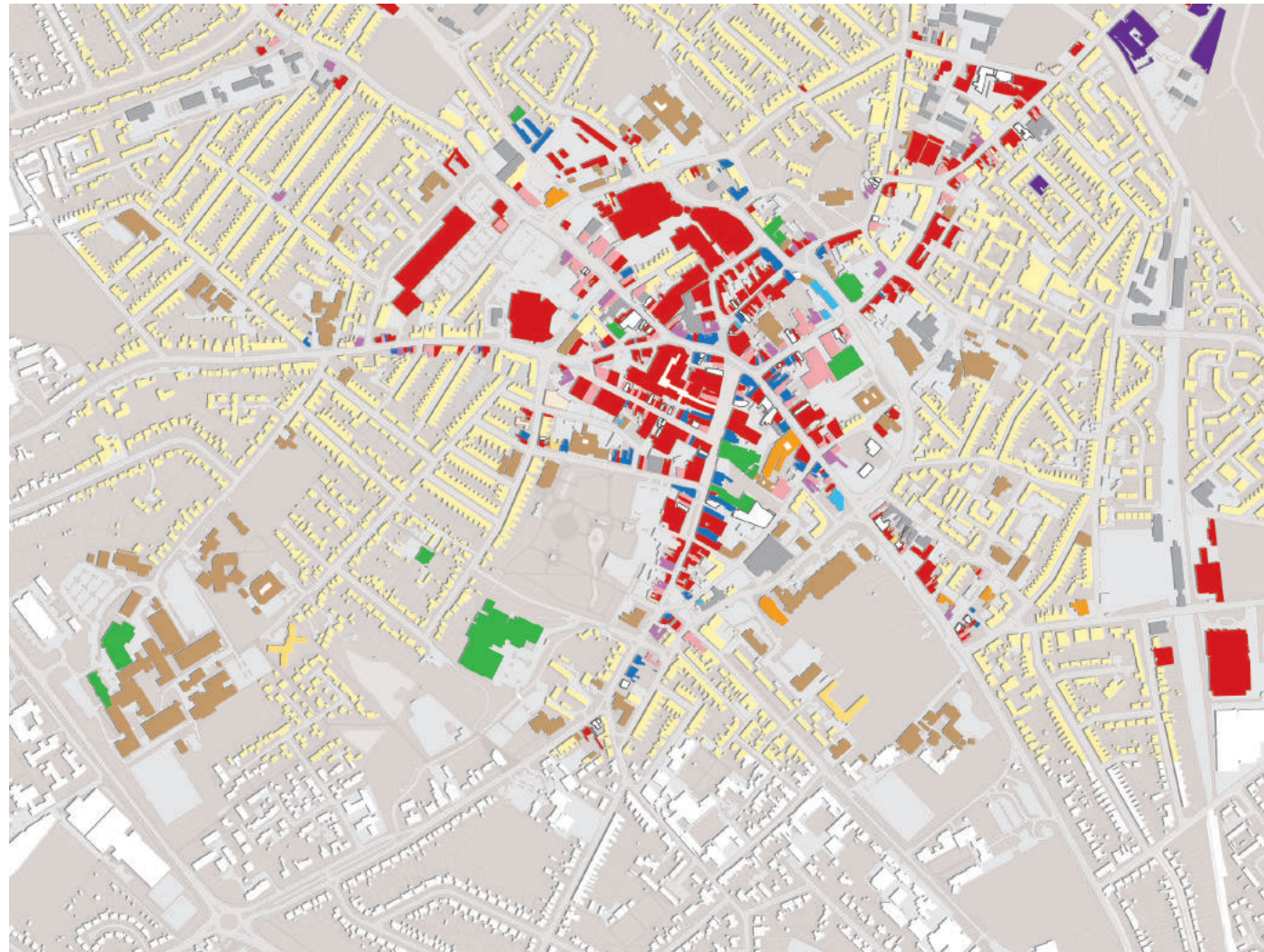
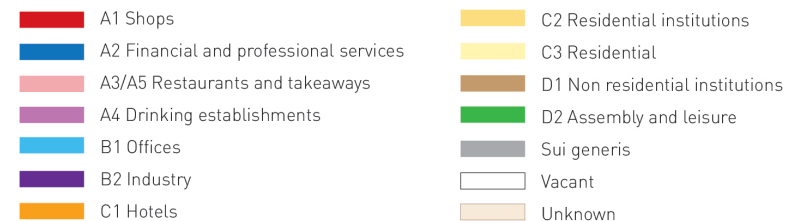


Figure 2.12: Land uses





Retail uses are concentrated along Market Place and Market Street

Loughborough town centre has a strong residential hinterland within easy walking distance of the centre however properties in the town centre are limited. Most of the newer residential uses in the town centre have taken the form of student accommodation with this concentrated on Derby Road, Ashby Square and Woodgate.

Sports facilities are located to the south of Queen's Park and include the Leisure Centre and Loughborough Lawn Tennis Club. There is a bowling green in Queen's Park and open space with play areas at Southfields Park.

Civic uses are focused around Southfields Park and include the council offices, registry office and police station. The magistrates court was formerly on Woodgate until it was moved to a new building opposite the Cineworld complex on Jubilee Way.

There are three hotels in the town centre, the Ramada on High Street, the Premier Inn on Southfield Road and the Travelodge on The Rushes.

Across the town there are relatively few vacant buildings and a generally vibrant streetscene.



Independent retailers are clustered on Church Gate

Industrial heritage

Loughborough is particularly proud of its industrial heritage. Eastern Loughborough witnessed rapid growth in the second half of the 19th Century with a range of mills and engineering works springing up around the Great Central Railway and alongside the Grand Union Canal.

Loughborough's Industrial Heritage Quarter is located primarily between Nottingham Road and the Great Central Railway line. It has a unique character defined by long rows of red brick terraces built for workers. Although many of the industrial uses have long since disappeared many of the former mill buildings remain such as the Towles Hosiery factory on Nottingham Road and the Works factory on the Grand Union Canal (formerly Herbert Morris Ltd.). Some of these industrial remnants remain active and have tourism value. The Taylors Foundry on Freehold Street is now the largest Bell Foundry in the world. It has a small museum and sometimes opens its doors to the public for pre-arranged tours.

The Great Central railway is the UK's only double track, main line heritage railway and the only place in the world where full size steam trains can be seen passing each other. The railway has considerable plans for expansion including the extension of the line and opening of a new visitor centre in Leicester.

Despite these positive features, much of the Industrial Heritage Quarter is in disrepair. Many of the industrial buildings have fallen into disuse, and are unsuitable for contemporary efficient manufacturing processes. Several sites have been redeveloped for housing but a number remain vacant. The area has high levels of crime compared to the rest of the town and is identified as amongst the 2% most deprived in Loughborough.

Although an attractive asset, the canal is difficult to locate and is not used for leisure as much as it could be. The Bell Foundry and Great Central Railway are not easy to locate and the main walking route between the town centre, train station and heritage quarter along Nottingham Road is of a poor quality with narrow pavements and fast moving traffic.

There is clearly a need to reinvigorate this part of the town. Whilst this task is outside the scope for the town centre masterplan there are some small interventions that the masterplan could prompt to help kick start this process. These include:

- Improving key routes between the town centre, station, canal and key heritage attractions;
- Improving signage between the town centre, station, canal and key heritage attractions; and
- Promoting events that highlight the towns industrial heritage (Refer to Section 7).

2.7 BUILDING HEIGHTS

Loughborough is generally a low rise town. The majority of the buildings in the town centre are three storeys in height. More modern development along Woodgate and Southfields Road tends to be higher – up to four or five storeys. Most of the residential development surrounding the town centre is composed of two storey terraces.

The tallest structure in the town is the Carillon War Memorial in Queen's Park. This is an important local landmark in the town.

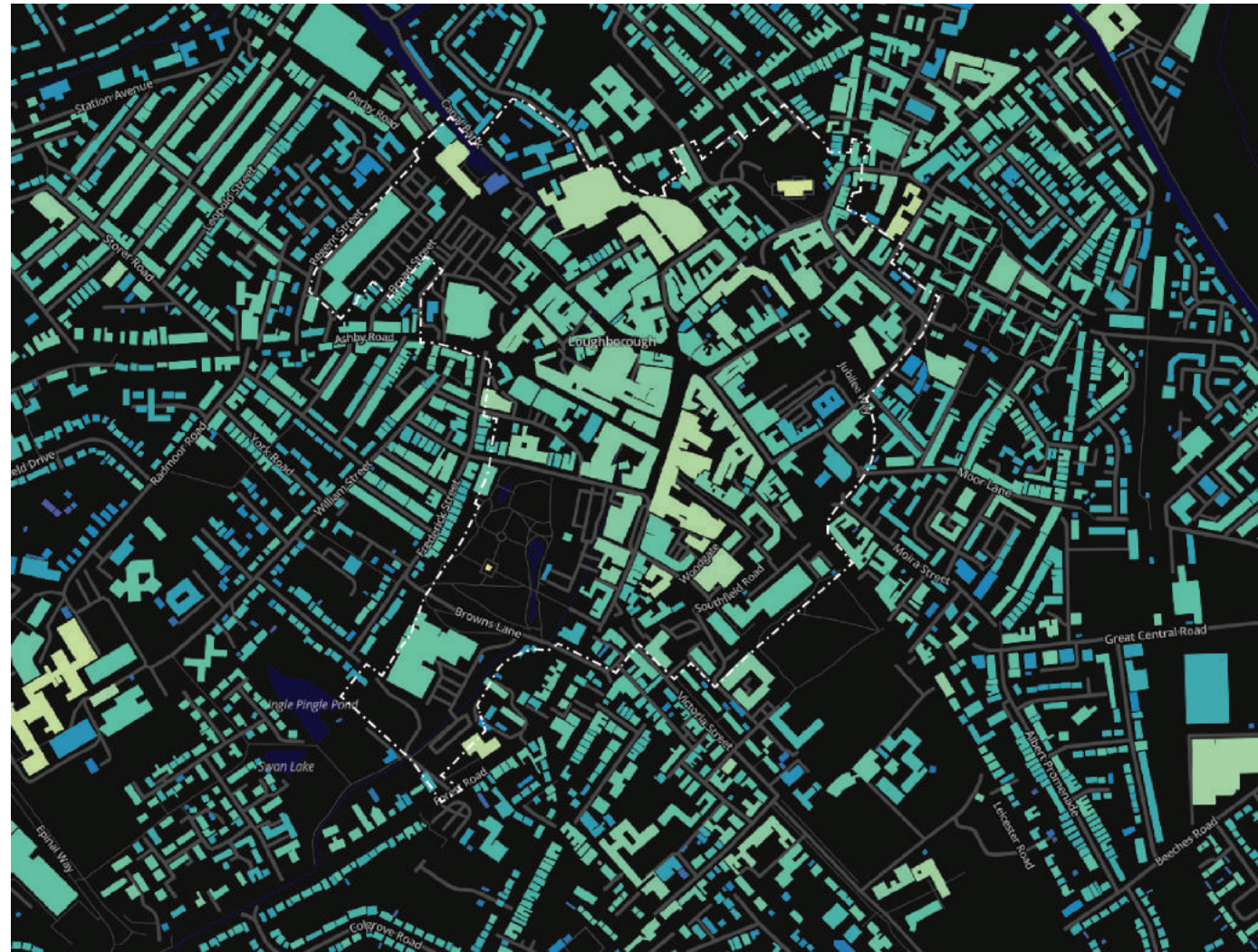
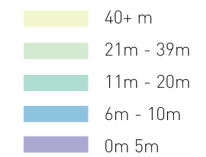


Figure 2.13: Building heights



2.8 OPEN SPACES

The main open green spaces in the town centre are Queen's Park and Southfields Park. These two spaces have very different characters. Queen's Park has a formal ornamental landscape with well maintained plants, lawns and trees. Southfields Park is much less formal and lends itself to more active uses such as playing sports.

Queen's Park forms part of a green corridor that extends southwards to the leisure centre, tennis club and Ingle Park allotments. Wood Brook links these spaces. A cycle and pedestrian route runs alongside the brook eventually splitting in two at Emanuel Way and Wood Brook Way. Whilst this path is a positive feature it is not particularly legible in the townscape and it is not clear how you access this path from Browns Lane.

The town's main public space is Market Place. This is used to host outdoor markets and is the focus for the Loughborough Fair. When it is not used for these purposes the Market Place can feel quite empty. Other pedestrianised areas also provide valuable civic spaces including Ashby Square and the new public space at Baxter Gate. As stated earlier some of these pedestrianised areas do not connect to other destinations and do not function particularly well as part of the overall pedestrian network.

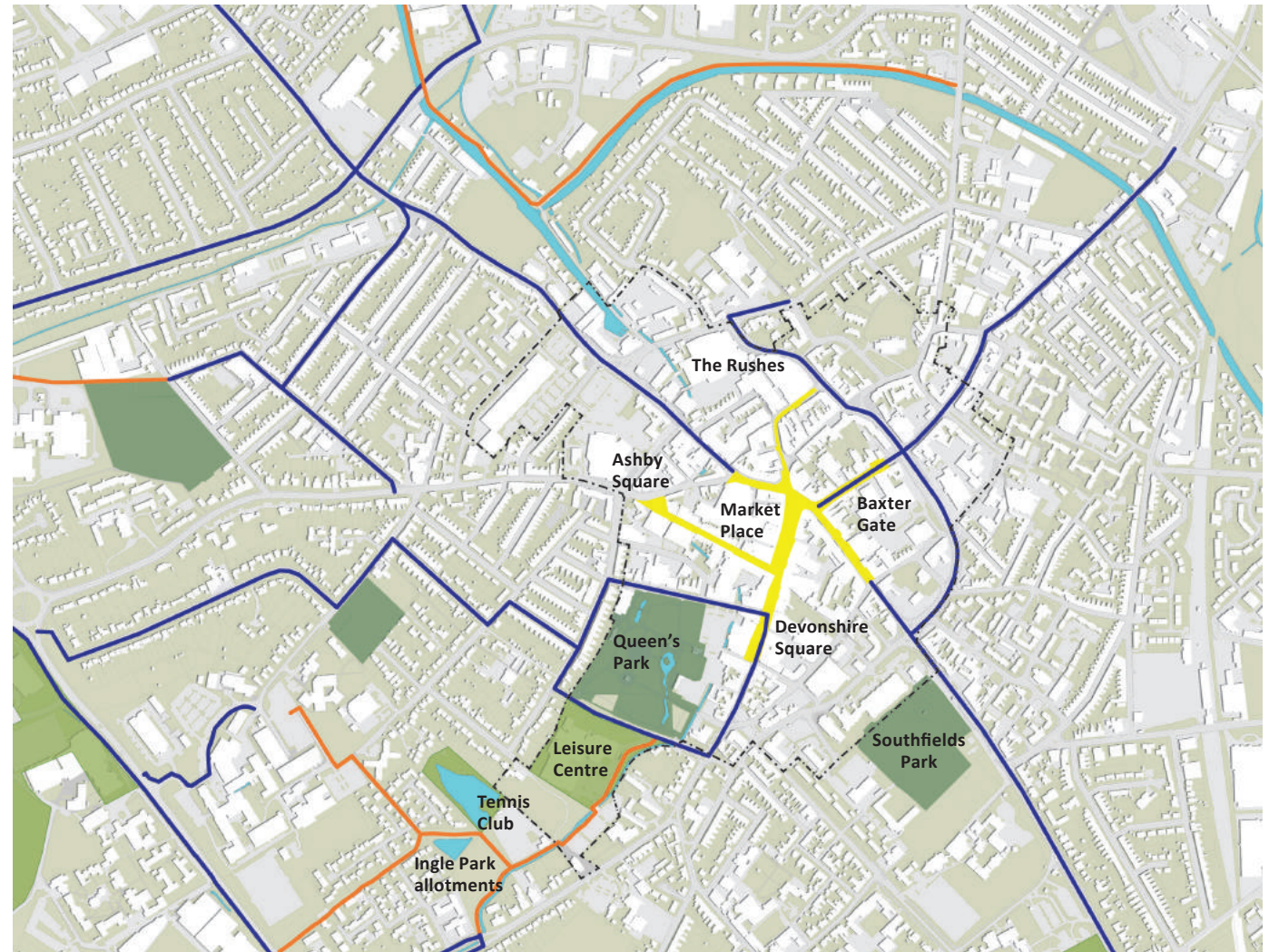


Figure 2.14: Open spaces

- Parks
- Leisure facilities
- Pedestrian priority area

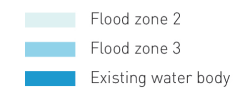
2.9 FLOOD RISK

The Wood Brook extends through the town centre but is within culvert for much of its length and so not apparent to most town centre visitors. The route of the brook is however susceptible to flooding and this has some limitations on development. Development within Flood Zone 2 areas will have to provide flood compensation storage and this also restricts potential uses and in particular residential development.

The Ruses development is within the area susceptible to flooding as is Queen's Park and the northern part of the Granby Street car park.



Figure 2.15: Flood risk



2.10 CHARACTER AREAS

The character of a place is formed by the pattern of development, its scale and massing, by the mix of uses, architectural styles and details and by the underlying topography. Loughborough's character is what makes it unique and has evolved through time, shaped by the people who have lived and worked in the town.

Character is not uniform but varies across the town depending on how different parts of the centre have evolved and the role it fulfills within the wider centre. New development can serve to strengthen or reduce the character and identity of different parts of the centre and of course the character can change over time.

An understanding of the existing character of each part of the centre is an important starting point to developing both the future vision and opportunities and roles for these areas in the future.

Our analysis has identified eight distinctive character areas within the town centre. These are:

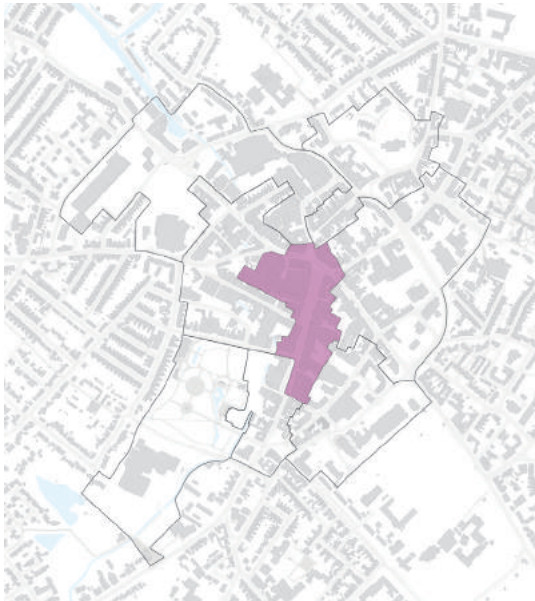
- Market Place;
- Baxter Gate / High Street;
- Church Gate;
- The Rushes / Derby Road;
- Ashby Square/ Market Street;
- Queen's Park;
- Ward's End / Bedford Square; and
- Woodgate.

The approximate extent of each is indicated in Figure 2.16 and each character area is described on the following pages.



Figure 2.16: Character Areas

2.10.1 MARKET PLACE



Uses

Market Place is the heart of Loughborough and is a key component of its identity and function. Market Place is the core retail focus for the town and many well known high street names can be found here. Leisure uses can also be found on Market Place including the theatre and art gallery at the Town Hall and the Odeon Cinema. Whilst ground floor uses within the area are active, upper floors are often used as store rooms or office uses.

The town's market occupies Market Place on several days of the week and the space is often used for events such as the annual Loughborough Fair.

Built form

Market Place is of a grand civic scale and includes several distinctive monumental buildings such as the Town Hall. These features provide a strong sense of place and signify that this is an important part of the centre.

As with any high street there are a variety of building ages and styles on Market Place. Most date back to the late Victorian and early 20th Century. These older structures include the neo-classical Town Hall, constructed in 1855. The Town Hall is an important local landmark that terminates the vista along Market Street. Whilst there are many brick built traditional Victorian and Edwardian buildings in the character area, Market Place also has several distinctive Art Deco buildings. The abundance of Art Deco buildings is a distinctive feature of Loughborough.

There are a number of newer structures within the Market Place character area including Sital House and the Carillon Court Shopping Centre.

Despite the mix and variety of architectural styles there is a level of consistency in the area that creates a coherent townscape. All of the buildings are two or three storeys in height, they sit directly on the street and form a largely continuous frontage along Market Place.

'The Sock' a contemporary sculpture at the southern end of Market Place, provides a reminder of the town's hosiery industry and is an important and memorable part of the townscape.



'The Sock' sculpture in Market Place



Carollin Court



View of the pedestrianised Market Place

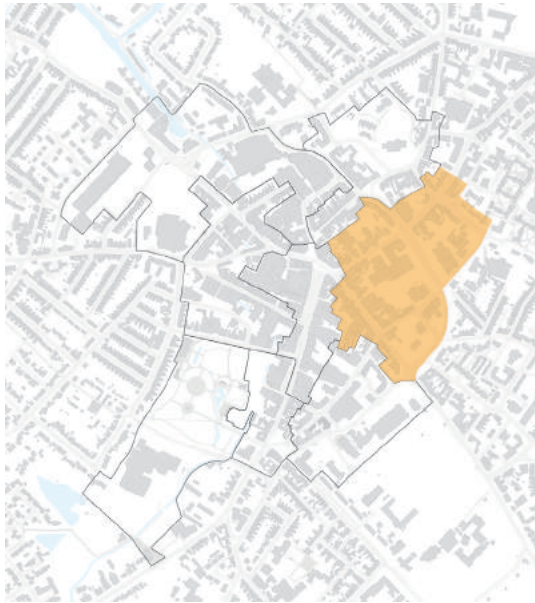


The Town Hall is a local landmark

Opportunities

- Improve connections and interface with rest of town to maintain the primacy of Market Place;
- Extend programme of events / specialist markets; and
- Enhance links to Queen's Park.

2.10.2 BAXTER GATE / HIGH STREET



Uses

This character area is located to the north-east of Market Place. It is a secondary retail area with a number of shops and cafes / restaurants at ground floor with other uses above. Baxter Gate and High Street mark the entry point of the town from the north and east. Both have bus hubs located on them where people arrive and depart from the town.

Built Form

High Street has a very mixed character. The buildings along the northern edge in particular are not of high quality. These include many modern in-fill blocks dating from the mid 20th Century, such as the post office. Several of these are in a poor state of repair and bring down the overall quality of the street. A sense of disorder is also created by staggered building frontages and the variety of shop front designs along the street.

Baxter Gate has a far higher quality environment. The buildings on Baxter Gate are largely formed of attractive groups of Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco buildings. Baxter Gate has benefited from the recent development of the Cineworld complex. This development is focused around a small public space animated by restaurants and cafes. The development has a modern and contemporary design that introduces a new architectural style to Loughborough. This fits relatively comfortably with the existing townscape and respects the materiality, scale and height of the area. This modernity is reflected in the nearby Magistrates Court which is also located within this character area.

The quality of the environment on Baxter Gate declines to the north around the junction with Jubilee Way. This is due in part to the condition some buildings were left in when the road was constructed. The quality of this part of Baxter Gate should be improved – especially at the Beacon Bingo building which is part of the northern gateway to the town.

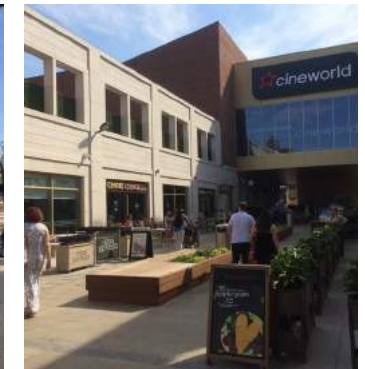
The under utilised Aumberry Gap and Baxter Gate sites occupy much of the character area. The Aumberry Gap site is currently occupied by a car park and a short row of shops. It is a critical site in the town located at the southern gateway and currently presents a poor first impression to visitors. Further development opportunities are presented by the undeveloped portion of the Baxter Gate site located to the rear of the Cineworld development. This site is currently occupied by a single storey health centre and car park but offers potential to connect through to Baxter Gate.



Poor quality buildings along High Street



Views towards the Aumberry Gap site

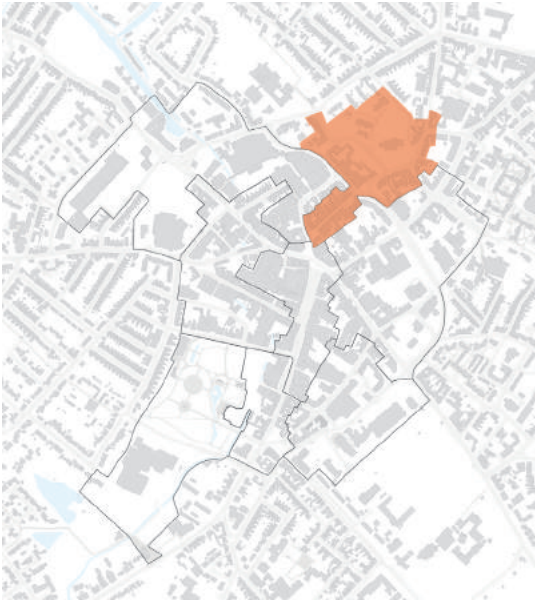


Cineworld complex

Opportunities

- Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap site offers a significant development opportunity;
- Potential to enhance image and arrival experience through new development; and
- Potential to improve streetscape.

2.10.3 CHURCH GATE



Uses

Church Gate is one of the town's most mixed use areas. It houses many small independent shops and restaurants and has a residential population that helps activate this area during the day and night.



All Saints Church

Built Form

This character area is one of Loughborough's most historic and most distinctive areas. Although many of the buildings date back to the Georgian and Victorian eras the street pattern is mediaeval. Some of these streets have been widened over time but Church Gate retains its narrow mediaeval width.

The area is structured around All Saint's Church and its associated churchyard. This is an important local landmark. The area is characterised by its fine grain historic buildings. These sit directly on the street and form continuous frontages. There is an intimate and enclosed character here which is enlivened by the mix of uses.

The area has a very coherent character by virtue of the limited palette of materials, and consistency in building heights and form.



Medieval Church Gate

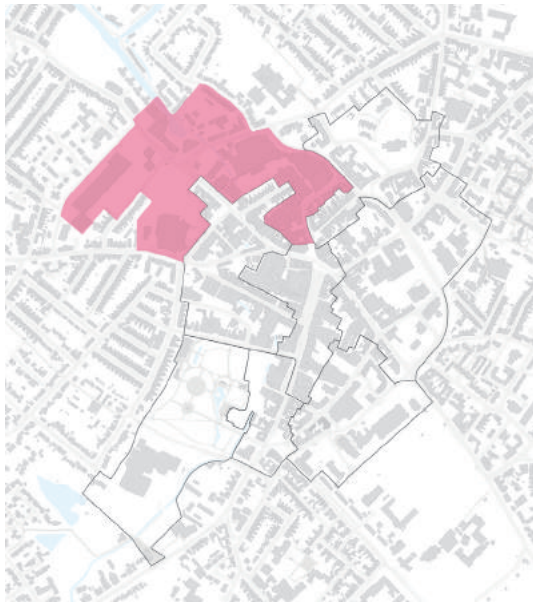


Character buildings with continuous frontages

Opportunities

- Improve interface with rest of centre;
- Enhance setting of historic buildings;
- Ensure that any new development is complementary to the existing built form and materiality; and
- Ensure that the condition of attractive heritage buildings is retained.

2.10.4 THE RUSHES / DERBY ROAD



Uses

The Rushes / Derby Road character area is dominated by large footprint retail uses and associated areas of car parking at the The Rushes Shopping Centre, Regent Place Retail Park and Sainsbury's store. The area focuses around The Rushes / Derby Road - the main approach to the town from the north-west. This is the location of one of the town's bus hubs and is an important arrival point.

Most of the buildings that do not lie within dedicated retail complexes have retail or commercial uses at ground floor. They are generally more traditional in style and follow the fine grain character of the town. There are some pockets of housing such as the row of terraces on Shakespeare Street. Student housing and a hotel have recently been constructed adjacent to the canal basin.

Built Form

The Rushes / Derby Road sits at the centre of this character area. It is the main north-western approach to the town but presents a fragmented and poor quality environment. This is particularly noticeable along the southern edge of Derby Road along the edge of the Sainsbury's site and Regent Place Retail Park where there is no built frontage enclosing or fronting the street. This is important at the junction of Bridge Street and Derby Road which acts as an arrival point / gateway into the town and an access point to the Canal Basin. The absence of built development in this area may be in part due to the flood risk associated with the Wood Brook.

The streetscape itself is dominated by road markings and hard landscaping despite much of the traffic now bypassing the area following construction of the Inner Relief Road.

The style and form of buildings along The Rushes / Derby Road is very mixed with little consistency in scale or form. Buildings are typically between one and three storeys in height but many are in poor condition. Most of the buildings along the road have active uses at ground floor and front directly onto the street.

Behind the main road carriageway the area is dominated by large floorplate retail uses and associated areas of surface and decked car parking (such as The Rushes Centre and Sainsbury's store). These structures are out of character in a town that is largely defined by finer grain development.



Inconsistent building form along The Rushes

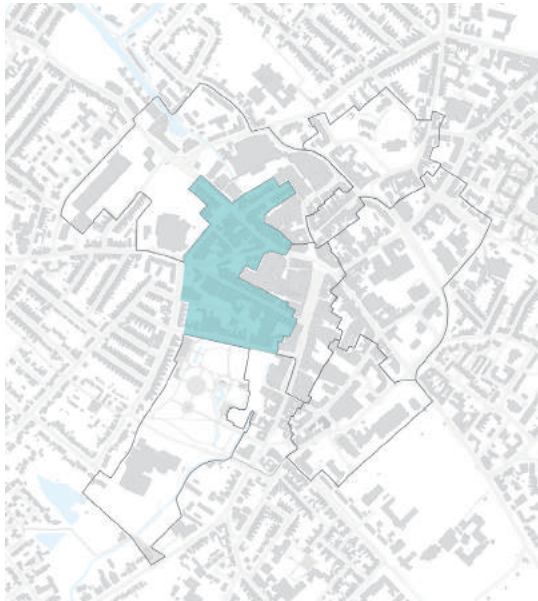


The Rushes viewing north-westwards with the new student housing at the Canal Basin at the end of the view

Opportunities

- Enhance streetscape and reduce dominance of vehicular modes;
- Improve connectivity with adjacent parts of the town;
- Deliver development that enhances the sense of arrival at The Canal Basin and on the junction of Bridge Street and The Rushes; and
- Encourage infill development to consolidate street frontages.

2.10.5 ASHBY SQUARE / MARKET STREET



Uses

Ashby Square is a distinctive area in the eastern part of the town. It centres around Market Street and the eastern end of The Rushes. The area is popular with students as it is located at the point where students walking and cycling from the university campus enter the town. There is a youthful vibe with many shops and eateries aimed at the student market. This is enhanced by attractive street art on the gable ends of some of the buildings. This has been established by a local artist and enlivens the area.

To the north of Market Street, the character of the area and its function changes. There is a greater concentration of student housing, including a number of new build or recently converted student blocks.

There are a number of empty buildings or properties in poor repair in this area. However, there are some signs that these are being brought back in to use. One of the blocks on The Rushes has recently been developed as start up business space.

Within the character area upper floor uses often lie empty and perhaps offer potential to create new town centre homes.

Built Form

The area has a fine grain character of predominantly two and three storey traditional buildings mainly constructed in brick. These front directly onto streets and form continuous street frontages. Most have active uses at ground floor with some residential use at upper levels.

Market Street is the focal point of this character area. This pedestrianised street links Market Place and Ashby Square. It is largely a secondary retail quarter with a noticeable concentration of cafes. The northern edge of the street includes several distinctive Art Deco buildings with residential uses at upper level. Ashby Square is an attractive, leafy public space framed by the Griffin Public House.

Opportunities

- Improve connectivity with adjacent areas including Queen's Park;
- Encourage further residential uses within upper floors of buildings;
- Celebrate the Art Deco architectural heritage; and
- Encourage development of affordable workspace, temporary uses and activities and events that will bring more life to this part of the town.



The Generator Building- a former university building with a proposal to convert to provide workspace

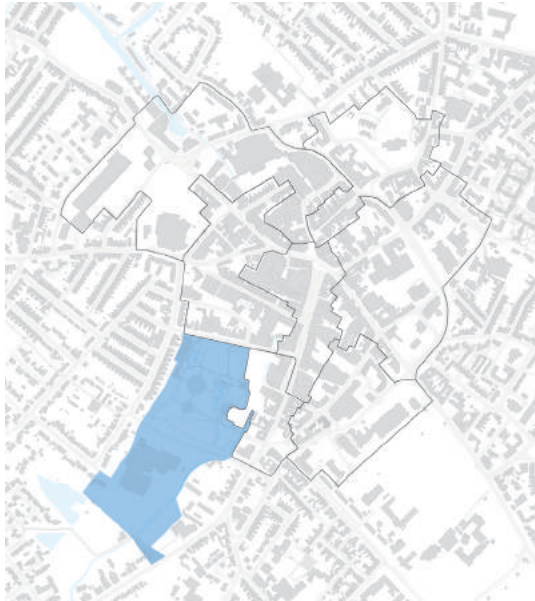


Shops at eateries along Market Street



Street art near Ashby Square

2.10.6 QUEEN'S PARK



Uses

This character area focuses around Queen's Park. This ornamental park was first opened in 1899 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Several civic buildings are located around the park including the Carnegie Library and Charnwood Museum.

Built form / open space

Queen's Park is an attractive, well maintained and formal public space. At its centre is the Carillon War Memorial. This was built between 1922 and 1923 to commemorate people who lost their lives fighting in the First World War. At 46m this is the tallest structure in Loughborough. The tower was designed by architect Walter Tapper. It is a relatively simple brick structure topped with a copper upper section forming a viewing balcony and domed roof.

The lower levels of the tower house small museum spaces dedicated to the two world wars and Leicestershire yeomanry. The upper storeys house the Carillon musical instrument and bells. A Carillon is a musical instrument consisting of at least 23 bells. The bells are played on a pedal keyboard. There are 47 bells in the Loughborough Carillon located in the top levels of the tower.

The style of this building is reflected in other nearby civic buildings in the area including the Charnwood Museum and Carnegie Library.

Despite being an important destination in the town, Queen's Park is not particularly well integrated into the townscape. It is only overlooked by development along its northern edge. Development along its other edges back on to the park. The Granby Street car park forms the park's eastern edge but access to the park from here is prevented by a high boundary wall. Trees partially obscure views between the park and the car park however the backs of buildings along Ward's End, some of which are unattractive, are visible across the parking area.

The car park has been identified as one of the town's key opportunity sites. However, as described earlier in this document it is constrained by its awkward shape and the flood risk associated with the Wood Brook which runs across Queen's Park but has been culverted for much of its length. There is no continuous path along this waterbody.



Buildings backing on to Queen's Park and Granby Street Car Park



Carnegie Library



Queen's Park

Opportunities

- Enhance access and links to the town centre and leisure centre;
- Provide overlooking on southern edge through development at Devonshire Square; and
- Improve access to Wood Brook as a linear route to the town.

2.10.7 WARD'S END / BEDFORD SQUARE



Uses

The Ward's End / Bedford Square character area is a distinctive historic area located between the southern end of Market Place and the town's southern gateway at Bedford Square. Part of the area is included in the Queen's Park Conservation Area. It is a secondary retail area populated by a sizeable number of independent businesses. There are also a number of restaurants, cafés and pubs.

Built Form

The townscape is characterised by its fine grain historic buildings. These follow a historic street pattern forming continuous frontages along the streets. The architecture is of a simple vernacular style formed from a limited number of materials. The area's retail units are noted for their traditional shop fronts.

The quality of this area is notably different at Devonshire Square. This area is dominated by an unattractive, single storey mid 20th century building between Devonshire Lane and Granby Street. The BID has recently installed a mural across the front elevation of this building to temporarily improve the appearance of the block. The environment is also compromised by the vehicular drop off arrangement and parking area that dominates the street scene in front of the shops.

Bedford Square is an important focal point for this area and marks the southern entry point of the town. It is currently dominated by car parking and through traffic. This presents a poor first impression of the town and is a missed opportunity to provide a high quality civic space for the town.

Cars also have a dominating effect on the Ward's End / Devonshire Square area. Currently vehicles must travel along Ward's End to access the Granby Street car park and this conflicts with pedestrians walking into the town along this street. The pedestrian environment in this part of the town is already compromised by the narrow width of the pavements. If carriageway widths could be improved and pavements widened the quality of the public realm could be improved.



Attractive shop displays



View towards Bedford Square



Shops on Devonshire Square

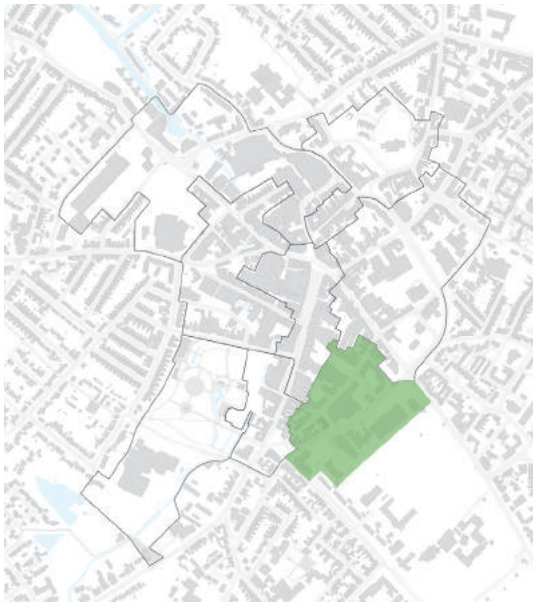
Opportunities

- Enhance streetscape and southern gateway into the town at Bedford Square, Ward's End and Devonshire Square;
- Encourage further independent specialist shops and services to strengthen the offer and character;
- Explore development opportunities for Devonshire Square; and
- Improve access to Queen's Park.



Attractive shopfronts on Ward's End

2.10.8 WOODGATE



Uses

This area extends around two thoroughfares - Woodgate and Southfield Road. The area provides a mix of uses including student housing and offices, with supporting commercial uses including gyms and a hotel. It accommodates a number of car parks including a large multi-storey structure and is also home to the council offices and Loughborough Tribunal Service

Built Form

The area is varied in character. The northern part along Woodgate is compact with a mix of buildings of varying styles and age constructed at the back of the footway along this narrow street.

Development on Southfield Road is stepped back behind a row of trees and the road is wider giving a much more open character to the street. These streets are one way only and this means that both carry a significant volume of traffic.

Whilst older buildings in the area are at a modest scale many of the newer structures are taller than is typical in Loughborough with several up to six storeys. The greater height and dominance of hard landscaping make Woodgate feel quite dark and unwelcoming. The trees on Southfield Road soften the environment on this street.

Connections through this area in a north-south direction from Market Place to Southfields Park are very poor. Most of the connections from Market Place to Woodgate are made by means of secondary lanes and alleyways. These are not well overlooked and are not easy to locate. Town Hall Passage for instance is accessed by a narrow doorway on Market Place.

There are currently no links to Southfields Park from Southfield Road. Access is blocked by the council offices. This is a missed opportunity. Like Queen's Park, Southfields Park only has buildings fronting onto it along one edge, along Leicester Road. Access from other areas is limited. Any opportunity to open up this green space and link it better to the town centre should be investigated.

Opportunities

- Create better connections in an east / west direction;
- Reduce the dominance of moving vehicles; and
- Open up access to Southfields Park.



Inconsistent building forms and styles along Southfield Road



Premier Inn on Southfield Road is a significant structure



Southfields Park



3. Planning background



3.1 STRATEGIC POLICY

3.1.1 STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

The importance of Loughborough to the local economy is acknowledged in the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP's) Strategic Economic Plan where Loughborough is ranked among the five priority Growth Areas and the proposed Science and Enterprise Park is identified as one of four Transformational Priorities. This plan focuses on the growth of the town's University Science and Enterprise Parks rather than the town centre itself.

3.1.2 STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

The future of the town centre will be considered part of the LLEP's forthcoming **Strategic Growth Plan**. This over-arching plan will set out the aspirations for delivering growth in Leicester and Leicestershire until 2050. It is currently being developed by the nine local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire and the LLEP.

The Strategic Growth Plan is in the early stages of development however, a Strategic Growth Statement (which sets out a vision and objectives) was released for public consultation between August and September 2016.

The Growth Statement, although not yet finalised, sets out what the plan wants to achieve. It includes ambitions for the area's market towns.

Objective 4 states that the plan will: *'Support the City of Leicester, Loughborough, Hinckley and the other market towns across the County as accessible business, service and cultural centres.'*

The statement recognises the importance and role of market towns such as Loughborough. It recognises the benefits that derive from having strong urban centres as focal points for rural areas.

It goes on to state that market towns should be the location for much of the development in the area. This will ensure that development can make the most of existing services and transport infrastructure.

It states that the main plan will consider how the critical mass of settlements can be strengthened. This would support a more competitive, strong and stable economy and promote the enhancement of existing towns as vibrant centres for commerce, learning, leisure and living.

3.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The local importance of Loughborough is further embedded in Charnwood's own planning policy documents. These are summarised on the following pages.

3.2.1 THE CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY

The strategic importance of the town is recognised in the Core Strategy's Vision and Strategic Objectives. These set an ambition to enhance the town to ensure that it can continue to be the main economic, social, and cultural heart of the borough.

The town will see significant growth over the current plan period with over 6,550 new homes proposed within its catchment area over the period 2014 – 2028 through the provisions of the adopted Charnwood Local Plan (November 2015).

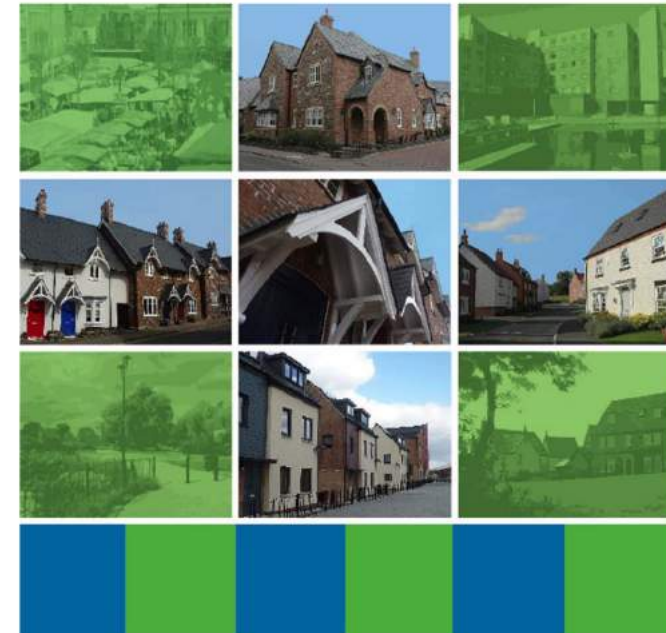
Loughborough's function as a university town and employment centre and the role of the University and Science Park in providing high quality jobs are also recognised in the Plan's Vision and Objectives. The need to protect and enhance these elements is highlighted – with particular reference given to the need to protect high quality employment sites (including the Science Park which is to be extended).

The Local Plan sets out ambitious proposals for the town that will see it grow and develop.

Policy CS1 (Development Strategy) details plans for a sustainable urban extension to the west of the town. This will provide approximately 3,000 new homes and 16 hectares of employment land by 2028. This will be accompanied by a 77 hectare expansion of the Science and Enterprise Park to the west of Loughborough University.

Policy CS7 (Regeneration of Loughborough) further details the Local Plan ambitions for the town. Elements relevant to the town centre masterplan include:

- A desire to support proposals for town centre uses at strategic regeneration sites in particular Devonshire Square and towards the south-east of the town centre;
- Support for proposals to reconnect the Great Central Railway at Railway Terrace together with the delivery of a direct connection to the Midland Railway;
- Support for development which enhances the tourism potential of the town's heritage assets such as the Railway and Grand Union Canal; and
- A requirement for any development adjacent to the canal to contribute to an active waterfront with public access.



Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028

Core Strategy
Adopted 9th November 2015



The Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2018 adopted in 2015

Policy CS9 (Town Centres and Shops) details more specific spatial ambitions for the town centre. This policy states that the council will make a significant contribution to the regeneration and the continued vitality of Loughborough Town Centre by supporting developments which:

- Reinforce and enhance the compact, legible and walkable character of the town and maintain the Market Place at its heart;
- Maintain the continuous street frontage activity in and around the retail core;
- Follow the design principles set out in the 2007 Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan unless it can be demonstrated that quality can be delivered in other ways; and
- Make a significant improvement in the character and appearance of the town centre from key gateways.

The main emphasis of this policy centres around the promotion of the retail and leisure attraction of the town. It states that the Council will support leisure uses that will promote activity throughout the day and night. To achieve this the council will:

- Ensure comprehensive redevelopment of the key town centre opportunity sites;
- Secure adequate vehicular access from the Inner Relief Road to Baxter Gate;
- Encourage the delivery of a new car park;
- Enhance key pedestrian routes between Baxter Gate, Churchgate, Market Place, Devonshire Square and town centre green spaces; and
- Promote heritage features to help secure regeneration of opportunity sites.

Other town centre uses to the north-west of the town centre will be supported when development will not compromise the redevelopment areas in Devonshire Square and the south-east of the town centre and when proposals support the compact and walkable character of the town.

Loughborough is the town at the top of the Borough's retail hierarchy and is expected to receive 70% of all of the floorspace needed for town centre uses in the Borough. This amounts to 5,000sqm of food retail space, 17,700 – 22,700sqm of non foodspace and 5,400sqm of commercial and leisure floor spaces.

Other relevant policies in the Core Strategy Document include:

Policy CS2 (High Quality Design)

This sets out the Council's requirements for new development to be sensitive to the environment and amenity for local people and make a positive contribution to the character, function and legibility of an area.

Policy CS3 (Strategic housing needs)

This states that on sites of ten dwellings or more 30 % of new housing must be provided at affordable levels. Housing should have an appropriate mix of types, tenures and sizes and where possible be delivered to Lifetime Homes standards.

Policy CS14 (Heritage)

This states that the Council will conserve and enhance historic assets. It encourages the refurbishment and re-use of historic buildings and support for development that responds to local architectural character and secures improvements to 'at risk' heritage assets such as Taylor's Bell Foundry.

Policy CS17 (Sustainable Travel)

This states the Council's intention is to achieve a 6% shift from car travel to walking, cycling and public transport. To do this the Council will require major developments to provide high quality walking and cycling routes and access to public transport.

Policy CS25 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

This policy reflects the Council's positive approach in favour of sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

3.2.2 BOROUGH OF CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN SAVED POLICIES (2004)

The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004) was adopted on January 12, 2004. Many of its policies have become out of date and have been replaced but others were retained in the 2015 Local Plan. The key policies relevant to this masterplan are listed below.

Policy EV/1 Design

This policy sets out the Council's design requirements for new development.

TR18 Parking provision

This policy states that in the central areas of Loughborough the quantity of parking within new development will be determined through negotiation based on controlling parking provision. Spaces to be provided will reflect the proposed use and location of development.

Policy CA/7 Pedestrian preference in Loughborough Town Centre

This policy states that measures will be introduced to limit vehicular access in the town centre to improve the environment at Baxter Gate, Devonshire Square, Biggin Street and on the A6 Corridor.

Policy CA/11 Use of Upper Floors

This policy encourages the occupation of upper floors for a number of uses including dwellings, shops and offices.

Policy CA/12 Shop Front Design

This policy sets out the Council's desire for high quality design of shopfronts.

3.2.3 NEW LOCAL PLAN

The Council is now committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan scheduled for adoption in November 2019. That plan will replace the Core Strategy and saved policies.

An Issues and Options Report has been prepared which will inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. It includes five town centre sites at The Rushes Retail Park, Baxter Gate, Pinfold Gate, Sainsbury's and the Regent Place Retail Park as potentially suitable locations for redevelopment adjacent to the town centre.

3.2.4 THE 2007 LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

As well as the strategic policies the town centre masterplan must take account of the following Supplementary Planning Documents.

- The 2007 Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan;
- The 2007 Devonshire Square Development Brief; and
- The Former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap Development Brief.

These are described on the following pages.



The 2007 Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan

This masterplan was completed in 2007.

Its Vision was:

'Loughborough Town Centre will be a successful, attractive and vibrant place and improve on its relative position in the hierarchy of the town centres year on year.'

To achieve this vision the plan set out the following key objectives:

An Accessible Town Centre

- A town centre that is easy for people to get to with public transport at its heart;
- A centre with clean safe links into the town centre for pedestrian and cyclists;
- A town centre with adequate, safe and well located parking;
- A town centre that is easy for people of all abilities to use and move around within the centre; and
- A town with a walkable market at its centre and the major uses within a ten minute walk.

Achieving High Quality Design and Development

- A town centre that can achieve high quality design for buildings and public spaces;
- A town centre that is clean and safe by day and in the evening;
- A town centre that has a mix of quality retailers – both national and independent; and
- Encourage the redevelopment of poor quality buildings and sites.

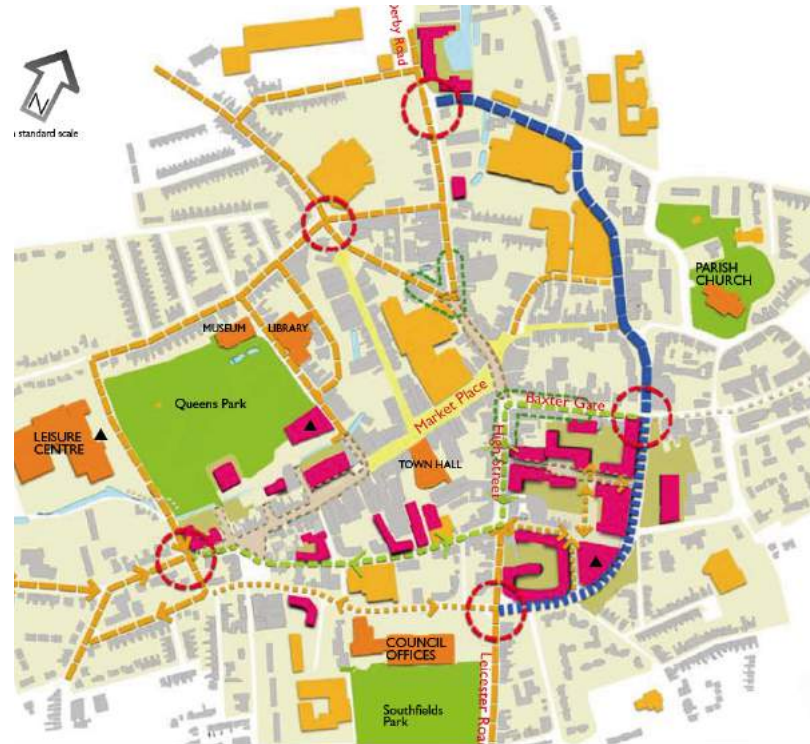


Figure 3.1: Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan

Based on Sustainable Development Principles

- A town centre with sustainably designed transport and buildings;
- Encouragement for initiatives that promote energy efficiency and biodiversity;
- The need for development to respect for the needs and amenities of the town centre residents; and
- The encouragement of mixed use developments on all sites and adaptable building design.

Creating a Distinctive Character

- Retaining the town's unique assets – its scale, compactness, mix of uses and distinct character;
- Protect the town's rich architectural heritage, distinctive buildings, street furniture and public art;
- Develop the town's cultural and leisure attractions; and
- Encourage participation across all sections of the community.

The masterplan document sets out a number of proposals designed to deliver these objectives. Many of these relate to movement and public realm with a number of projects that would help improve the function of the town for vehicles and pedestrians and create a higher quality environment.

Many of these projects have now been delivered. - the most significant of which was the Inner Relief Road Scheme which was opened in 2014. This removed traffic circulation from the central area of the town and allowed some areas, including Market Place, to become wholly pedestrianised. This has been of benefit to the town and led to various public realm improvements in Market Place and other areas of the town.

Other achievements include:

- The creation of the bus hubs at High Street / Baxter Gate and The Rushes / Derby Square;
- The successful completion of the Eastern Gateway project at the railway station;
- The improved public realm at Swan Street / High Street; and
- The improved public realm at Baxter Gate.

Some of the movement and public realm projects have not as yet been delivered. The most significant of these are:

- The removal of traffic from Bedford Square and the restriction of traffic access into Ward's End and Devonshire Square;
- Public realm schemes at the two opportunity sites at Queen's Park / Devonshire Square / Granby Street and the General Hospital Site / Inner Relief Road;
- A public realm scheme for Parish Green at All Saint's Church;
- The possible conversion of Southfield Road from one way to two way traffic;
- The delivery of a multi storey car park (the need for this has recently been reinforced in the Charnwood Car Parking Impact Assessment - 2015);
- Improved pedestrian links between Southfield Road, Woodgate, Devonshire and Bedford Squares through to Queen's Park and Market Place;
- Improved pedestrian and cycle links between the town and the railway station; and
- Changes to the arrangement or access to the Granby Street car park.

The masterplan also contains a section on **General Design Principles**. This sets out the Council's design requirements for new developments in the town centre. This encourages development to respond to the character of the town centre and strengthen its identity. The guidelines outline the Council's approach to continuity and enclosure, legibility, adaptability, diversity of uses and sustainable design.

The document then sets out development guidance for **two town centre opportunity sites** at:

- Devonshire Square and Granby Street car park: and
- The former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap Site.

Development briefs for these two sites have been prepared and adopted (see below). The key principles of these two documents are summarised in the masterplan.

Both sites are complex and since 2007 only part of the Former General Hospital Site has been developed. This scheme, at Baxter Gate, provides a leisure led scheme anchored by a cinema and with a number of food and drink uses.

Devonshire Square and Granby Street car Park – Development Brief 2007

In March 2007 the Council prepared an SPD for the Devonshire Square / Granby Street site. This aimed to transform the existing row of shops and surface car park into a vital part of the town centre. It envisaged mixed-use development that enhances the key frontages to Queen's Park, Devonshire Square, Granby Street and a new gateway building at John Storer House.

The plan shows a series of new mixed-use buildings centred around a new high quality route linking Granby Street to Browns Lane. The route would be lined with active uses at ground floor level with residential uses above. The principles proposed are shown in Figure 3.2.

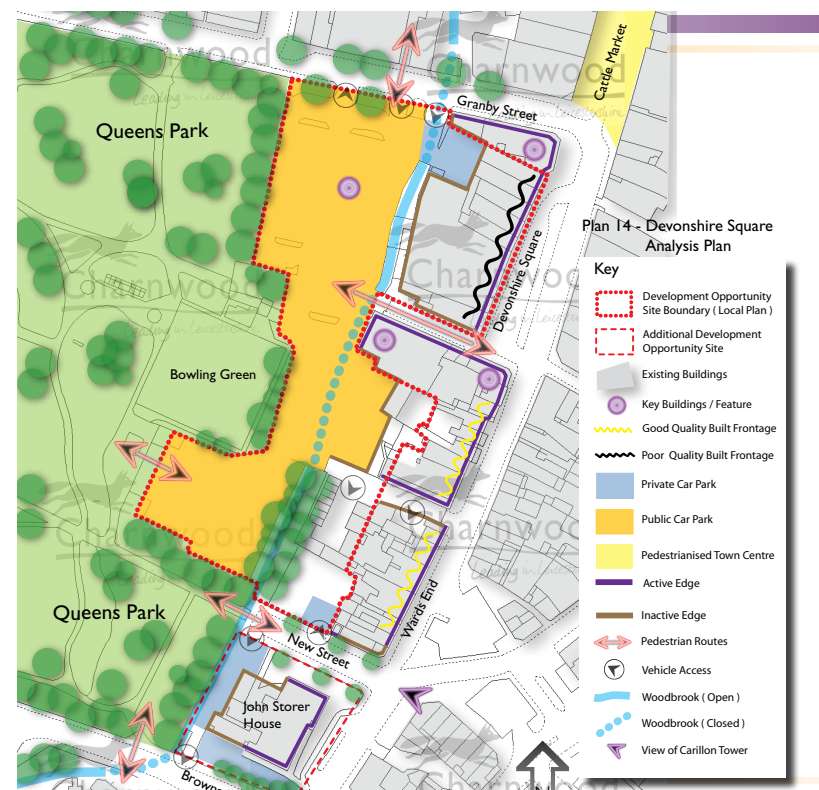


Figure 3.2: Devonshire Square and Granby Street car park analysis plan from the 2007 Development Brief

This is a difficult and constrained site. The Wood Brook which runs through the site provides a major flooding constraint. There are many historic buildings in proximity to the site and the part of the site is within the Queen's Park Conservation Area. Development would also remove all of the parking spaces in a popular town centre location. The SPD does not clearly articulate how these issues, especially flooding and the loss of town centre car parking, should be addressed.

Former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap Development Brief

This Development brief sets out an ambitious Vision for the site. It aims to deliver:

'A development of high quality, which will transform an existing blighted area, containing a significant number of vacant buildings, discordant uses and extensive surface parking and servicing areas, into a positive part of the town centre offering a mix of uses, distinctive architecture and townscape, respect for heritage assets and an excellent approach to the treatment of the public realm.'

The document lists the key constraints on the site – most of these relate to policies in the previous local plan. Other considerations are the adjacent Conservation Area, listed buildings such as the row of cottages on Pinfold Gate, locally listed buildings and the alignment of the relief road (now complete).

The SPD provides an indicative layout for new development. This has now been partially built out as part of the Cineworld Complex.

A new perimeter block is shown on the Aumberry Gap site. This would provide active frontages around its boundaries at ground floor level. The southern corner of the block is located at the southern vehicular gateway to the town. For this reason a landmark building was promoted on the corner of Jubilee Way and Leicester Road to mark the entry in to the town centre.

A number of in-fill perimeter blocks are proposed on the remainder of the site. These would frame new pedestrian routes, one from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate and one from the Magistrates Court to the High Street. These would increase pedestrian permeability in the area. Neither of these routes have been delivered although a potential north-south route from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate has been incorporated in the leisure led development.

Many uses are deemed appropriate for this site including, retail (A1), office and business (A2 and B1a), food and drink (A3), hotels and hostels (C1), residential (C2 and C4), non-residential institutions (C2a) and assembly and leisure (D2).

3.2.5 OTHER SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Other relevant local planning guidance includes the following:

Leading in Design SPD

This SPD explains the importance that the Council places on good design, the principles that good design should follow and a series of checklists for applicants and officers to assess proposals against.

Shopfronts and Signs SPD

The document sets out the principles of good shop sign and shopfront design.

Making it Easy SPD

This SPD provides a good practice guide for access for people with disabilities

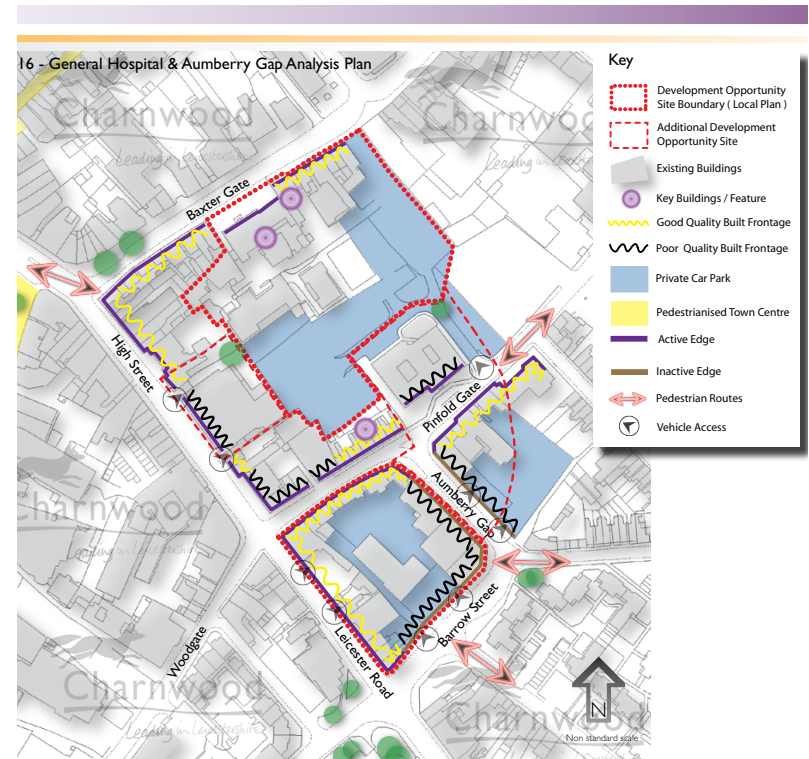


Figure 3.3: Former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap analysis plan from the 2007 Development Brief



Charnwood Leading in Design SPD



LOVE Loughborough Again!

A Summary of the Last 5 Years

Love Loughborough BID was established in February 2012 after a successful ballot and has been driving the improvement of the town centre since then. Representing almost 600 businesses, we have implemented many successful projects and initiatives in our first term in order to show each business a financial return for their investment and to improve the overall trading environment for BID businesses, residents, employees and visitors.

In its first 5-year term,
Love Loughborough BID has:

- Invested £1.5m of BID levy income into 30 exciting new business initiatives to boost trade and footfall.
- Worked with partners to add value, both financially and in kind, to the tune of £50,000 in support of the levy raised from businesses.
- Provided business development, support and training to over 300 businesses.
- Contributed over 250,000 hours of volunteer time from Board members to support the BID.
- Became a Portas Pilot Town attracting £100,000 of funding and support.
- Became one of the first 30 locations selected as a Healthy High Street Town by Business In the Community.
- Established the Love Loughborough Partnership bringing together a wide range of organisations and agencies with a shared interest in the success of the town centre.
- Inaugurated an annual meeting of town centre landlords and agents, chaired by Nicky Morgan MP.

3.3 LOUGHBOROUGH BID

Introduction

Loughborough's Business Improvement District (BID) was set up in February 2012 following a ballot of local businesses. The initial term for the BID ran until 2017. However, a successful ballot has secured a second 5 year term.

The BID represents almost 600 businesses, across all sectors, located within the BID boundary. Each pays an annual levy to fund improvements. A Board of Directors made up of local business representatives oversees the delivery and management of the scheme.

BID Loughborough set up '**Love Loughborough**', the public facing brand used to market the town to residents and visitors.

The BID works closely with local organisations and authorities and in July 2012 was selected as one of only 27 Towns to be a 'Portas Pilot'. This aimed to trial some of the ideas in Mary Portas's report on the future of the High Street carried out for the Government.

Selection as a Portas Pilot brought with it £100,000 of funding and access to a wide range of support and advice. The BID has also secured external funding averaging around £125,000 per annum. This is added to the BID levy income to deliver projects and services to member businesses.

Main aims and initiatives

The BID's aim is to make Loughborough a destination of choice for shoppers and visitors and a vibrant location for businesses and residents.

It has four main initiatives.

- **Shout about Loughborough**
(Marketing and promotional strategies);
- **Enjoy Loughborough**
(Initiatives to make Loughborough an attractive safe and clean town);
- **Business Support and Added Value**
(Services, support and training to support businesses); and
- **Vision and Strategy**
(Lobbying and advocating on behalf of the town).

Main achievements

In its first five year term the BID has completed a number of impressive achievements. It has:

- Invested £1.2 million of levy into 30 new business initiatives to boost trade and footfall;
- Provided business development, support and training to over 200 businesses;
- Contributed over 250,000 hours of volunteer time from Board members to support the BID; and
- Become a Portas Pilot Town attracting £100,000 of funding and support.

The delivery of this masterplan, especially the softer initiatives included in Section 7, will require close collaboration with the BID. The BID will be able to help support and deliver the proposals and are a vital partner in this process.



4. Property Market Review



4.1 PROPERTY MARKET

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

To understand the property market context for Loughborough, this section examines the property demand and supply characteristics for the town. This will inform the future development potential and uses that could be accommodated in the town centre.

The analysis draws upon independent property market research as well as other available relevant sources of information, such as Rightmove, Zoopla, Promis, Land Registry and CoStar.

Town centres typically include a mix of activities and uses, namely:

- Retail;
- Leisure;
- Hotels;
- Offices;
- Residential; and
- Parking.

For each of these key sectors, a high level review of UK market trends has been undertaken and then set in relation to Loughborough itself. Firstly, the broader context for Loughborough is explored.

4.1.2 CONTEXT

Loughborough is Leicestershire's second largest centre. The population of the town is around 60,000, with its primary retail catchment extending to 144,000 (Promis 2016). Loughborough, a market town, benefits from an attractive historic core. Loughborough's surrounding hinterland is largely rural, punctuated by a number of smaller settlements. Key competing centres are Leicester (11 miles), Derby (18 miles), Nottingham (16 miles) and Birmingham (40 miles). Each of these centres has significantly greater amounts of retail floorspace.

Loughborough benefits from good connections. The M1 lies just to the west of the town, and East Midlands Airport some 10 miles to the north-west. The town's train station is around 15 minutes walk to the north-east of the core town centre, offering regular connections to, for example, Leicester (10 minutes), Nottingham (20 minutes), and further afield to London (1hr 20 mins).

4.1.3 RETAIL MARKET

Key Retail Trends

In recent years there has been flight to quality, with some retailers favouring a strategy of representation in the top 25 - 50 retail locations in the UK. Generally speaking, larger more robust city centres have retained their attraction to retailers and shoppers, with mid-sized centres suffering from higher levels of vacancy. There is though considerable regional and centre specific variation, with centres in the south east and London having generally performed better than those elsewhere in the UK. As at September 2016, average UK high street unit vacancy rates stood at around 12%. There is also variance in vacancy levels across differing retail destinations: retail parks 5.7%; town centres 10.8% and shopping centres 13.3% (LDC 2016).

Since the mid-1970s there has been a shift toward a much greater proportion of new retail development being located at out of centre rather than town centre locations. Statistics from DCLG (2007) show that in the 1970s almost 65% of new retail floorspace in England was in town centre locations. By 1994, it accounted for only 14% of new stock. While there has been some increase in the amount of retail development being located in, or on the edge, of town centres (33% in 2007: DCLG), the trend continues to be skewed toward more retail development being promoted at out of centre locations. By way of example, in 2014 60% of retail schemes were being promoted in out of centre locations (Estates Gazette, 2015).

Out of centre developments are considered more attractive for a number of reasons, including typically strong accessibility characteristics (especially by car), plentiful free (often surface) car parking and the availability of modern large and well configured retail units. Out of centre schemes do not normally suffer the constraints of town centre schemes where land assembly and development costs typically make scheme viability much more challenging. Thus, when promoting new retail development in town centres, schemes need to compete by selling the attributes of its locality, such as a high quality built environment a strong and unique sense of place with a diverse and attractive offer.

Retailing and Technology

Statistics from the ONS (Office for National Statistics) illustrate the strong rise in internet retail sales. The expectation is that this trend will continue, with other forms of technological advance in multi-channel retailing becoming noticeable; for example an increase in mobile shopping.

Allied to this, consumers are faced with a far greater diversity of shopping choices - local, out of town, town centre, service station, online, click and collect, TV shopping, mobile shopping, airport retailing, station retailing. The diversity of retail channels is increasing all the time.



Figure 4.1: UK Internet Sales as a % of Total Retail Sales

Retail Growth Sectors

Despite the substantial rise in internet related retail sales, there has been marked growth in retail sales overall since around 2013. A consumer boom is considered by many as a key reason that the UK economy is performing fairly well.

In recent years, certain retail sub-sectors have performed better than others. Of note:

- **Comparison retailing** The value orientated retail market has grown considerably, with occupiers such as Primark, 99p Stores, Poundland and Wilkinsons all expanding quickly. In many cases, these retailers have taken advantage of a spate of vacant units appearing on high streets, together with a much more expenditure conscious shopper;

There has also been a trend of increasing demand for higher quality fashion led goods and luxuries. In recent years the combined pressure of both luxury oriented retailers and growth of the value sector resulted in the middle ground retailers being squeezed in the market, although there are some signs that this trend is abating;

- **Service Sector uses** Some sub-sectors in this category have weathered recent times better than others. Obvious examples include the proliferation of betting shops and pawn brokers. Others service sector retailers, such as travel agents, have faced a much stronger challenge especially from the growing use of the internet;
- **Restaurants, Cafés, Coffee Shops, Takeaways** This sector has seen very rapid growth. Branded coffee shops have for example become far more prevalent in the heart of city and town centres, rather than perhaps more traditionally being found in secondary or off pitch locations. Many shopping mall extensions now include a bigger and better leisure and eating out experience, often accounting for around 15 - 20% of space in total; and
- **Foodstore development** The pace of large scale foodstore development from the largest four multiples (Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda, Morrisons) has stalled. Recent development strategies have been focused on convenience stores (typically less than 3,000 sq ft) rather than supermarket development. IGD research shows convenience multiples have seen the largest increase in store numbers, up 10.6% year on year (2015). Social and economic changes are helping to deliver growth in the convenience market. Changes such as smaller household sizes, longer working hours, and reducing food waste are playing to the strengths of the convenience stores as shoppers look to shop little and often – and purchasing less on each trip (IGD 2012).

- The discount grocery retailing sector has however grown – and continues to grow substantially. Front runners are Lidl and Aldi, although others are present as well as grocery products that can be found in value oriented stores such as Poundland, B&M and 99p stores.

Loughborough's retail offer

The town centre retail offer is concentrated around the Market Place and Market Street, and spreads out along a series of spoke streets, such as Cattlemarket / Devonshire Square, Churchgate, High Street and the Rushes. Carillon Court is the most centrally located shopping mall. Other more modern retail areas exist too, such as Biggin Street, The Rushes and Churchgate Mews. At the north western edge of the town centre is Regent Place Retail Park. Promis estimates that the total retail floorspace in the centre is 71,000 sq m (770,000 sq ft).

Larger units are generally found in the more modern shopping centres / developments. Smaller units are clustered in Market Place, Market Street and Churchgate. Generally, there appears to be a reasonable mix of unit sizes, though noting that the multiple retail occupier trend has been toward operating from larger units.

There is a good mix of both national multiples and independents, a balance of which is usually viewed as a positive attribute. Key retailers include Primark, Boots, Next, New Look, TK Maxx and Wilkinsons. Notably, there is no chain department store (though the independent Tylers exists), nor larger variety store such as M&S. There is a low representation of higher quality fashion retailers, with the offer very strongly focused on middle sector operators. There has also been little or no growth in higher quality fashion retailer representation, where on average in the UK this has increased a little. Increasing the quality of retail in Loughborough may firstly need to be driven through greater representation of higher quality independent operators. Generally too, there has been a decrease in the representation of fashion retailers in the centre in the last 10 years – though this is also a UK wide trend. Overall, Loughborough has broadly the expected volume and quality of retail provision given the size and affluence of the shopping population.

The main foodstores present are Tesco, Sainsbury's and Iceland. Morrisons is present at the northern edge of the town, and Waitrose to the south of the town at Mountsorrel. In that respect, the town is well represented by larger foodstores – with the only key exception being Asda. Smaller town centre convenience stores include M&S Simply Food. There may be potential for further growth in the convenience sector in the town. There is also an Aldi store to the north of the town centre, with interest noted from Lidl too.

There is also a large general market located in Market Place on Thursday and Saturdays, with around 125 stalls. This adds positive diversity and activity in the centre on market days. Specialist markets are also held on occasions.

Until recently, there was a fairly low representation of cafés and restaurants in Loughborough. The new cinema / leisure development at Baxter Gate has rebalanced this with recent opening of Starbucks, Pizza Express, Nandos and several other restaurants at the complex in the last 12 months or so. In addition, there are considerable clusters of restaurants, cafés and takeaways elsewhere in the town – for example, along The Rushes and Ashby Road. Overall, given the continuing growth in this sector, it could still present an opportunity for expansion in the town.

Rents and Yields

As at mid-2016, estimated prime rents in Loughborough were around £55 per sq ft Zone A. This represents a fall from £80 Zone A since 2008/9. Rents in the town fell slightly more than the UK average and also have only shown very marginal growth overall since 1987 when they stood at around £45 - £50 Zone A. This marked reduction in retail rental tones is a familiar pattern across much of the UK.

Prime rental yields in Loughborough are placed at 7.0%. They have remained relatively steady since about 2013 (Promis 2016). Generally, the rent and yield profile for the town suggests that viable retail development could take place – subject to demand. However, yields are very tenant covenant specific: for example, certain occupiers could command keener yields, whilst for independents these figures would be pushed out considerably.

Retailer demand

The demand from retailers for town centre pitches is muted in many centres in the UK. For Loughborough specifically there are 16 requirements logged, amounting to a maximum requirement of 66,450 sq ft (source: propertydata.com). Of the 16 logged requirements, 50% are from A3 – A5 operators, demonstrating the current strength of this retail sector. Some caution needs to be placed on such requirement lists – not all retailers advertise their requirements, plus not all will be seeking town centre locations.

Vacancy

Vacancy levels are low in Loughborough town centre. According to the Charnwood Retail & Town Centre Study 2013, 7% of retail units were vacant. Although not updated for this review, there is little to suggest that there has been a significant increase in vacancy in the town centre. From observation, there appears to be no major concentration of vacant units in the centre, though those which tend to be smaller units are located in secondary pitches. This view accords with the Council’s Retail Study. The low vacancy rate indicates a vital and vibrant shopping destination – especially when considering that average UK vacancy rates are around 10%.

Retail Expenditure

The Charnwood Retail & Town Centre Study 2013 identifies the amount of comparison, convenience and leisure floorspace forecast to meet need in the Borough.

Much of the estimated need for leisure floorspace may have already been soaked up by the new Baxter Gate development, assuming this commitment is not already factored into the above figures. While there is a substantial amount of theoretical expenditure available, the challenge may be to secure sufficient occupier demand to support significant new retail development in Loughborough – especially within the town centre.

Timescale	Convenience (sq m net)	Comparison Goods (sq m net)	Leisure A3–A5 (sq m net)
2013-2016	1,200	2,300	1,100
2016-2021	2,200	7,300 – 11,000	2,700
2021-2031 (indicative)	2,700	10,700 – 13,000	2,900
2016-2031 (indicative)	2,800	12,400 – 15,300	3,100
Total	8,800	32,800 – 41,600	9,800

Figure 4.2: Table showing convenience, comparison, and leisure floorspace forecasts for the Borough (Charnwood Retail Study 2013)



High street shops and banks located near Market Place

4.1.4. LEISURE

The leisure sector covers a wide range of uses – bowling alleys, children’s play facilities, cinemas, health and fitness centres and casinos. Certain sectors of the leisure market have experienced good growth in recent years. Major cinemas have continued to expand their operations in the UK: most notably Cineworld and Vue, but also smaller niche operators such as The Light. The number of screens in the UK has risen from around 3,500 screens in 2005 to close to 4,000 in 2015 (UK Cinema Association, 2016). Health and fitness clubs have also experienced considerable expansion.

According to the 2013 State of the UK Fitness Industry Report, this sector now accounts for over £4.4 bn of expenditure, up from under £4bn in 2013. Over 9 million of the UK population are now members of a private health & fitness club, equating to 1 in 7 persons: an all-time high for the UK. In particular, there has been growth in the value orientated market, Pure Gym and The Gym are good examples of operators which have expanded rapidly. Generally, these types of leisure uses favour town or edge of town locations.



New Cineworld complex at Baxter Gate

Leisure uses are not though particularly viable. In the very largest locations, cinemas might for example command a rent of around £20 psf, though rents tend to be lower for centres the size of Loughborough. This too would be coupled with a cinema operator potentially seeking a substantial premium for securing their occupation. Generally, developers look to cross fund cinemas with other more lucrative uses, such as restaurants (see Baxter Gate for example). They do however add much needed diversity, extend dwell times, support the evening economy and increase the propensity for linked trips. Likewise, gyms and nightclubs may only be prepared to pay a rent of, say, £8 psf - £12 psf. Sometimes gyms are located at upper floors or more secondary locations or re-use vacant space. Yields vary depending on the operator and type of leisure use, though are generally in the order of 6% – 8%.

Many town centres and shopping malls have diversified their offer through introducing more leisure activities – especially cinemas – alongside a far greater range of eateries and cafés. This trend also relates to consumers looking for an enhanced shopping experience.

Loughborough itself has a reasonably good leisure offer, with most key commercial sectors catered for:

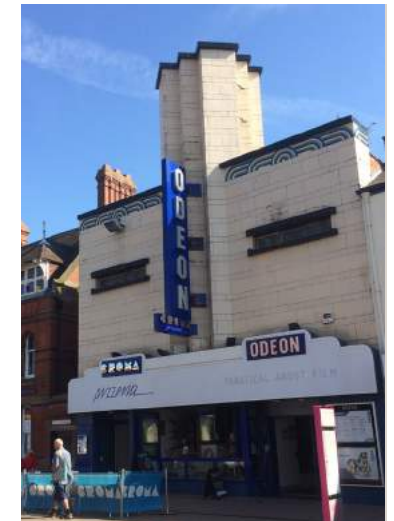
- **Cinemas:** an Odeon, Cineworld and Flex Student Cinema;
- **Gyms:** Pure Gym plus a number of independents including Dynamite and Holywell Fitness Centre (at Loughborough University Campus);
- **Bingo:** Beacon; and
- **Theatre / Art Gallery / venue:** Loughborough Town Hall.



Beacon Bingo



The Art Gallery in the Town Hall



Odeon Cinema

There is also a town centre night club, snooker/pool hall and museum as well as substantial sports and other facilities at Loughborough University and at the public run leisure centre.

The new Baxter Gate development is very likely to sate demand for cinemas in the town for the foreseeable future. Possibly there may be gaps in the market for additional gym operators as well as the opportunity for more cultural and leisure activities – either in buildings or through street events.

4.1.5 HOTEL SECTOR

There has been a very significant growth in the hotel sector during the last decade, especially (though not exclusively) in the budget sector. Travelodge and Premier Inn are prime examples of rapid expansion by operators. There has also been an increase in the average size of budget hotels. Hoteliers typically seek highly visible locations next to major infrastructure – and particularly motorways and trunk roads – and increasingly town centre locations, where they can capitalise on business and visitor trade. Another growing trend has been the development of aparthotels. There are examples of this in both larger cities and towns of Loughborough's scale.

For a typical budget hotel, rents per room per annum in Loughborough would be expected to be in the order of £5,000 - £5,500. Prime yields for the strongest operator (Premier Inn) are around 5%.

Loughborough has a fairly good range of hotels, both chain and independent. Premier Inn is present in the town centre, alongside Travelodge and Ramada. It is likely that these hotels will be sufficient to meet current town centre demand. In the mid to long term, and possibly linked to the large student population, there might be additional demand, though presently there are no confirmed requirements. The development of aparthotels might also offer an alternative accommodation mix for the town.



Premier Inn Hotel in Loughborough



Ramada Hotel Loughborough



Vacant office space

4.1.6 OFFICE SECTOR

The UK office market had a strong year in 2015 – for both occupier and investment market activity. UK-wide take up was its highest since 2001 and rents in many core office locations showed growth. However the vast majority of this activity is focused on large regional centres – London and the south east, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Manchester. Other larger centres do have a modest office stock: such as Leicester and Nottingham.

Loughborough's office market itself is much more focused on meeting local and sub-regional occupier needs. The only modest strength of Loughborough's office market is demonstrated by low levels of letting activity. Only 20 office deals were recorded in the 12 months to August 2015. These were all for small office suites of 3,500 sq ft or less. The general rental tone was £10 - £13 per sq ft for better quality stock in the town. There are though a few larger office occupiers in the town centre – Charnwood Council and the Immigration Office.

Typical office yields for Loughborough are hard to pinpoint due to the lack of recorded transactional evidence. The localised nature of tenant covenants probably means that typically they will be in excess of 8%. This combination of low rents and high yields would mean that new office development is very unlikely to be a viable proposition.

Unless there is a substantial office requirement for the town centre, it is not envisaged that large scale office development will occur. There might though be alternative models which could generate new economic activity and have been successfully adopted in centres where occupational demand and development market is far more fragile. This would be a via a serviced office / innovation style operation where flexible serviced packages are offered with support services, typically geared up for smaller or start-up businesses.

4.1.7 RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

Macroeconomic Perspective

The UK economy has performed well in recent years. Despite this, the referendum decision for the UK to leave the European Union has led many commentators to point toward the prospect of a period of greater political and economic uncertainty. However, according to the ONS there has been little hard statistical evidence of a negative impact of the Brexit vote on the UK economy to date. Recent key economic indicators include:

- Sustained economic growth of 0.7% in Q2 2016 which is driving improved real incomes. The GDP growth prediction for 2016 remains unchanged at 2%. The Bank of England has even revised the UK's growth predictions upwards for 2017 and 2018 following a more conservative estimate in the immediate period after the Brexit vote.
- Unemployment fell by 39,000 to 1.63 million people between May and July 2016, according to the ONS. The UK's unemployment rate has remained at 4.9% – the lowest level since July 2005.
- The annual rate of inflation (CPI) has risen marginally to 0.6% in August 2016, largely due to rising prices of imported food and fuel. Inflation remains below the Bank of England's target rate of 2%, though there are signs of increasing inflationary pressure.
- Interest rates remain at historically low levels. They were reduced to 0.25% in August 2016.

While inevitably there are some concerns regarding the longer term impact of leaving the European Union on the economy, presently the market signals remain strong for the UK.

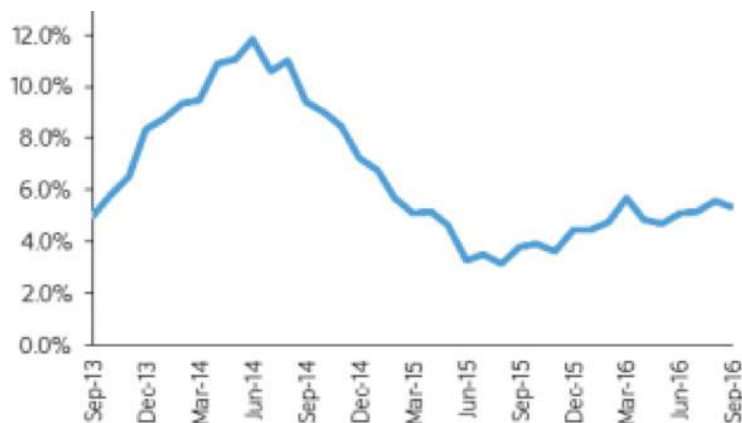


Figure 4.3: Table showing UK house price growth (Source: Land Registry)

UK house price growth (Source: Land Registry)

The annualised rate of house price growth in the UK has, overall, softened slightly in recent months. However, the pace of house price growth has remained within the range of 3% to 6% – a rate that has prevailed since early 2015, and is substantially above the rate of inflation. This continued house price growth bodes well for sustaining housing market activity. Generally the shortage of homes coming on to the market will also provide underlying support for higher prices.



Loughborough's Housing Market

Loughborough is an attractive housing market. There are significant plans to deliver additional housing at the edge of the town, amounting to over 3,000 homes. Residential development activity is focused on peripheral suburban housing developments, rather than new town centre living. While demand in Loughborough is largely focused on family homes, certain sectors of the population often favour town centre living – for example students and young professionals. Interest is supported if a centre offers an attractive environment with good amenities. More central sites are generally – though not exclusively – better suited to flatted development and smaller units. Edge of town centre sites may though allow for a broader mix, say including townhouses.

There is some evidence of new build residential development taking place fairly close to the centre of the town:

- Great Central Square – a development by Jelson Homes (Figure 4.4), 1 km east of the town centre comprising 1 and 2 bed flats and townhouses. Prices in the range of £120,000 - £170,000, breaking back to £3,010 - £3,445 per sq m (£280 - £320 per sq ft).



Figure 4.4: Great Central Square east of the town centre

According to Zoopla, the average price paid for homes in Loughborough is £213,117. There is though price variation depending on the type of dwelling.

Type of Dwelling	Average price per sq ft	Average no. of beds
Detached	£226	3.7
Semi Detached	£204	3.0
Terraced	£189	2.7
Flats	£193	1.8

Figure 4.5: Table showing average house prices paid in Loughborough
(Source Zoopla October 2016)

A note of caution needs to be applied to the above figures. This data is drawn from a wide range of properties, styles and ages. New build properties can command substantial premiums compared to second hand stock – often around 25%. House prices in Loughborough have risen by around 5.6% in the last 12 months and over 23% in 5 years. This is broadly comparable to the wider UK house price trends described above.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

The private rental sector has grown by 1.7 million households in the last 10 years, while construction over the same period has delivered 1.4 million homes. Good growth in residential rents are forecast to 2020 generally (over 10% nationally from 2015 – 2020), with yields of 6-7% for regional cities. Private rented properties are also being perceived as being essential in providing mobility in the market. While however large, institution scale PRS has taken a strong foothold in London and major regional cities such as Manchester and Bristol, it is a far more embryonic market outside of the largest centres.



Houses for sale in Leicester Road

Over the last ten years new investors have entered this market, including pension funds and institutions. Discussions with a more premium PRS provider have indicated that values in excess of £400 per sq ft on new builds would be needed for them to show interest. Evidence suggests that values of around £300 per sq ft are likely to be achievable on new builds in Loughborough, therefore PRS is unlikely to be a viable option at the moment, unless an alternative delivery model is considered (perhaps including by the public sector).

A further challenge for delivering PRS schemes is that traditional ‘build and sell’ housebuilders can typically outbid PRS operators for sites. The reasons for this are that PRS developments tend to have slightly higher gross to net ratios and incur higher management and build costs. PRS developments also need to provide a degree of scale in order to be more efficient for managing – and to satisfy potential institutional purchasers who are seeking certain lot / value size thresholds. Even so, there is clearly a growing interest in this market. Institutional investors are targeting such opportunities for the prospect of longer term income streams to meet pension liabilities, whilst more traditional residential landlord companies, such as Grainger, are developing PRS stock in locations that have in the past not generally been seen as favourable locations (for example, Wellesley Urban extension at Aldershot will offer some PRS units, and potentially as an early phase).

Retirement / Care Homes

There has been an increase in retirement homes development. Generally, these types of developments comprise 40 – 60 apartments, with associated parking. Specialist retirement homes developers can outbid traditional housebuilders for sites. Though difficult to pin point, this can be at a premium of 15%. These types of developments can also favour more central locations which are close to town centre amenities. There is also considerable specialisation in the market – from independent living retirement homes through to supported living complexes, with greater degrees of care available.

An example of this is at the Mosely site, Derby Road. This development includes ten close care units and a 62 unit Extra Care complex. The scheme will be affordable in nature.

Student Accommodation

Over £5bn of investments were transacted in the purpose built student accommodation market in 2015. Major institutions have been active in this sector for some time, demonstrating the confidence in this sector. This market has matured so much that there are now sector specific Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), such as Empiric Student Property.



Loughborough University



Loughborough too has seen major student development companies deliver purpose built stock. Schemes include Unite's 'Waterways' and CRM Students 'The Cube'. There is also new development activity at Woodgate in the centre of Loughborough – a 29 unit student block.

Interest by developers in this sector in Loughborough relates to the internationally renowned University of Loughborough, located a few kilometres west of the town centre in a campus style setting. Around 17,000 students are enrolled at the University. The University itself is building additional student accommodation, amounting to 600 beds. This suggests that there is demand for additional stock and student numbers are expected to grow.



New student accommodation at the Canal

Offering a range of student accommodation and locations is likely to appeal to students. This would be expected to include a mix of on and off campus locations, including in the town centre. A number of local authorities have sought to direct student activity into the town centres as part of regeneration strategies – for example, Southend and a new college in the heart of the town.

The development at Woodgate demonstrates that student development can be a viable proposition. Rents in Loughborough for privately run student accommodation blocks vary between £4,000 - £7,000 per room/studio per term year. Yields are also fairly keen at 5% - 6% depending on agreement and management arrangements.

4.1.8 CAR PARKING

Loughborough already has a range of car parking facilities, including both surface and multi storey. The largest of these are at Beehive Lane, Carillon Court, The Rushes (MSCPs) and surface spaces associated with the Sainsbury's store at the edge of the town centre. Car parking is a crucial part of a town centre make up – and is necessary to ensure it is an accessible location. As a rule, surface car parks are favoured by customers due to ease of access and perceptions of safety.

Income return from car parks varies enormously, depending on the location, tariff regime and usage levels. From experience, for a town of Loughborough's scale an income of say £750 - £1,000 per space gross per annum could be achievable for a modern, prime car park located adjacent to the main shopping area, though operational costs would reduce the net return very considerably (usually assumed to be 25%+ of the income). Generally though average car park returns per space in a town of Loughborough's scale will be expected to be well below this. Car park yields are commonly linked to the performance of the town centre (or shopping mall), so for Loughborough a yield of 7% might be typical (though some car park operators do command better yields).

New town centre car park development rarely comes forward in isolation (and where it does it can be funded by the public sector).

Presently, most standalone new build car parking is coming forward at train stations or larger airports. Typically, in town centres car parking is linked to new commercial development, such as retail units, cinemas or hotels. As a general rule – unless surface parking - car parking development is a cost to development schemes and is not a viable proposition. Build costs are the main reason for this: surface parking is usually delivered at a cost of around £3,000 per space; multi storey spaces are usually in excess of £15,000 per space to deliver – and basement parking even more costly. In Loughborough, there appears to be few opportunities where new car parking could come forward as part of a major new commercial scheme, save perhaps with the provision of large retail units with adjacent surface parking.

As noted above, where parking is brought forward as part of town centre schemes, they can be supported by local authority investment. For example, using the Council covenant strength to underwrite the car park income (or via direct development). We are aware of examples of this taking place as part of town centre schemes. This might provide an avenue to deliver additional parking in the centre, were this considered necessary to support Loughborough.

4.2 LOUGHBOROUGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

A high level review of the socio economic profile of Loughborough and the wider area has been undertaken. It draws on available information to provide an insight into the makeup of Loughborough and its retail catchment in terms of such matters as education, population, demographics and resident profiles, among others.

Much of the information has been sourced from the Charnwood Economic Profile 2016 – this provides a detailed analysis of the district. Where alternative data sources are used, these are referenced separately.

Employment

Earnings for Charnwood (for both workplace and resident at c. £520 - £530 per week) are broadly comparable to the average for Leicestershire (c. £490 - £530) and England (c.£525 - £535).

Charnwood has a higher proportion of managers, directors and senior officials, professional occupations, associate professional and technical positions.

Occupation category	Charnwood %	England %
Managers, directors and senior officials, professional / associate professional & tech	47.9	44.8
Administrative and secretarial, skilled trades	20.6	21.2
Caring, leisure and other service, sales and customer	15.4	16.8
Process, plant and machine operatives, elementary	16.0	17.1

Figure 4.6: Table showing occupations in Loughborough



Growth has been stronger in the managers, directors and senior officials, professional / associate professional and technical occupations category in the local area compared to nationally over 2011 – 2014.

Charnwood has high levels of employment in the sectors of advanced manufacturing and engineering (5,700), professional services (5,600) and sports, health and well-being (6,200). There has though been significant declines in the sectors of construction, creative industries and textiles between 2011 – 2014.

Unemployment rates are low in Charnwood (3.3%): comparable to Leicestershire and marginally below the UK average.

Population

The population split for Charnwood is very similar to the UK average, although there is a slightly higher proportion of over 64 year olds.

At a more local level of analysis, there is though a very high proportion of 15 – 24 year olds: a likely reflection of the high numbers of students in the town (2011 census area statistics / Promis).

	Charnwood	Leicestershire	England
Total Population	166,100	650,500	53,012,500
Under 15	26,300	109,300	10,022,800
15 - 64	110,400	425,800	34,329,100
Over 64	29,400	115,400	8,660,500
Under 15 (%)	16	17	19
15 – 64 (%)	66	65	65
Over 64 (%)	18	18	16

Figure 4.7: Table showing population structure

Education

As at 2014 Charnwood District has a well-qualified workforce. This may be a reflection of the higher proportions of those employed in manager, director and senior official, professional / associate professional and technical occupations.

	NVQ2+	NVQ4+
Charnwood	75.8%	35.9%
Leicestershire	75.8%	34.7%
England	73.2%	35.7%

Figure 4.8: Table showing educational attainment

Other Key Economic Indicators

Household tenure – higher levels of outright owners or mortgaged properties compared to both private rented and renting from Council / Housing Association.

Car Ownership – higher levels of car ownership than UK average (79.2% v 73.1%) for Loughborough’s catchment.

Retail Catchment Profile

Experian provide catchment profile information for retail centres across the UK, including for Loughborough. The retail catchment area is based on a gravity model and accounts for both the primary and secondary shopping population catchments. Based on this catchment area, Mosaic groupings are defined – as set out in the table below, and compared to the UK average.

The Mosaic groupings for Loughborough shows:

- High representations in the profiles of Domestic Success, Aspiring Homemakers, Vintage Value, and Modest Traditions.
- Low representation in the profiles of Senior Security, Transient Renters, Urban Cohesion and Rental Hubs

The Mosaic analysis for Loughborough points toward a greater need to meet the needs of families and their shopping habits. Interestingly, whilst there is a high proportion of 15-24 year olds in the immediate Loughborough area, there are low proportions of the Transient Renters and Rental Hubs groups.



Mosaic grouping	Catchment %	UK %
City Prosperity	4.0	4.1
Prestige Positions	6.4	6.7
Country Living	5.5	6.4
Rural Reality	7.4	6.7
Senior Security	4.3	8.2
Suburban Stability	4.7	5.9
Domestic Success	11.7	7.9
Aspiring Homemakers	11.3	9.3
Family Basics	6.4	7.5
Transient Renters	2.3	6.2
Municipal Challenge	6.9	6.6
Vintage Value	13.8	7.1
Modest Traditions	13.3	5.0
Urban Cohesion	1.2	4.8
Rental Hubs	4.6	7.7

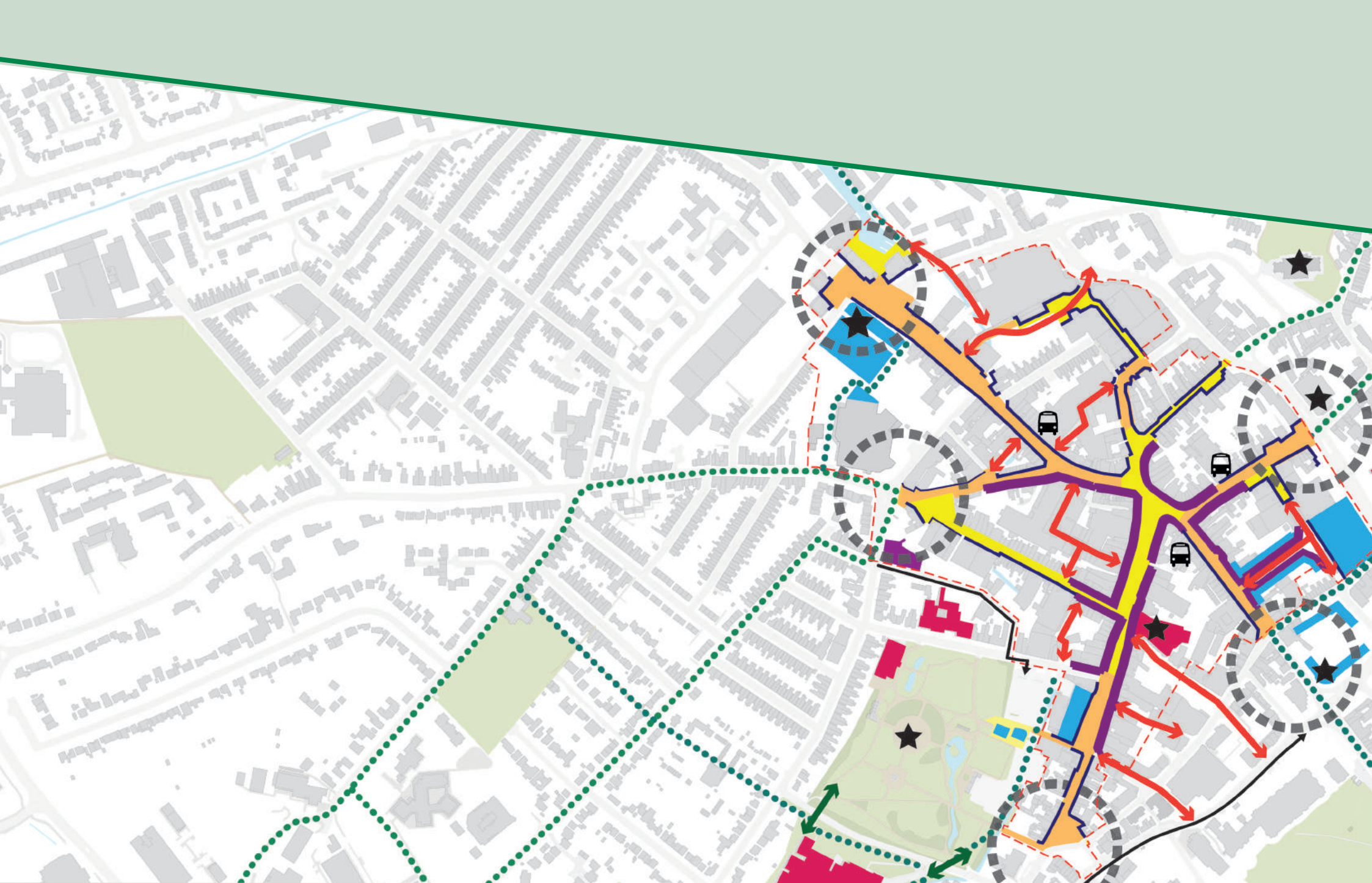
Figure 4.9: Tables showing mosaic groupings (classifications are provided in Appendix A)

4.3 KEY PROPERTY MARKET MESSAGES

4.3.1 SUMMARY

- The high street / town centre retail market continues to be challenging, especially in terms of occupier demand.
- There are though a number of growth sectors – in particular, convenience, discount oriented, restaurants and cafés as well as some service sector retailers.
- There is a general trend toward multiple retailers looking to upsize requirements.
- Loughborough has a reasonably low vacancy rate and modest retail rental levels. Its offer is broadly mid quality, with less higher quality / luxury outlets.
- Identified retailer demand for Loughborough is fairly muted – a trend consistent across the UK generally. Demand is focused on A3-A5 retailers and discount operators.
- The UK's leisure sector continues to grow and evolve. In particular, cinemas and gyms. In development terms, leisure uses tend not to be especially viable, are land hungry and are typically cross funded by other more lucrative uses.
- Loughborough already has a fairly good representation of leisure uses, bolstered by the recent Baxter Gate development. The addition of other leisure based activities would serve the increased diversity and interest in the centre – possibly building on existing successful events such as the November fair.
- Loughborough's office market is limited. With low demand, rents and yields, major new office development is not expected nor would be viable. Arguably, the only exception to this would be if a substantial public sector requirement arose.
- An alternative could be to provide flexible start up workspace, with managed facilities and a suite of services offered, say in the form of an innovation centre.
- While Loughborough already has a reasonable representation on hotels, in the longer term there might be further future demand for this use. Diversification of the hotel market might for example support an apart hotel in the town, though presently there is no confirmed demand.
- Residential could be a key growth sector for Loughborough town centre. This could be through a combination of flatted or town house development, retirement homes – or additional private student accommodation. The development of residential uses could add to the town's footfall and support retail and service uses. There is already evidence of all of these types of residential development coming forward in, or close to the heart of the town centre. This includes both new build and refurbishment opportunities.
- The socio-economic analysis for Loughborough points toward a well-educated population, with greater representations of professional managerial positions. There is also an emphasis on families, with higher levels of home ownership / mortgages.





5. Spatial Strategy



5.1 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The baseline section of this document has identified the key issues that this masterplan should address. These are summarised in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.

STRENGTHS

- **Compactness** - the town centre is walkable;
- **Character** - the centre has a distinctive character with the Market Place at its heart and there are numerous attractive and historic buildings including many Art Deco buildings;
- **The market** - Loughborough has had a market in the centre for over 800 years and this still forms an attractive focus for the town;
- **The University** - Loughborough University is a leading university with specialisms in sports and engineering;
- **Variety of shops** - the town includes a mix of high street retailers and independents;
- **Leisure attractions** - the centre benefits from a number of attractions including Cineworld, the Bell Foundry, the heritage railway and the Canal;
- **Employment** - the centre benefits from several significant employers and has a new Enterprise Zone close to the University;
- **Accessibility** - the centre benefits from good rail and road links;
- **Open spaces** - there are a number of attractive open spaces in the centre including Queen's Park and Southfields Park; and
- **Love Loughborough** - the BID is delivering a programme of activities and programmes to enhance the centre and assist businesses.

WEAKNESSES

- **Arrival experience** - many of the points of arrival into the centre are poorly defined and uninviting;
- **Connectivity** - poor quality pedestrian connections between key destinations – often by way of secondary lanes and alleyways;
- **University connections** - poor quality and indirect cycle and pedestrian links between the town and the university;
- **Fragmented townscape** - the built environment in some parts of the town centre (such as The Rushes and Woodgate / Southfield Road character areas) is disjointed and incoherent;
- **Confused road network** - one way systems make the town hard for vehicle users to navigate;
- **Town centre living** - limited residential use in the town centre aside from student accommodation;
- **Isolated greenspaces** - open spaces are poorly integrated into the town centre;
- **Parking** - numerous town centre car parks but overall a shortfall in parking spaces; and
- **Heritage assets** - Loughborough does not take full advantage of many of its heritage assets including the heritage railway, Bell Foundry and Ladybird books.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Opportunity sites** - potential to develop a number of significant sites in the centre and enhance the points of arrival to the town;
- **New homes** - potential to attract new residents to use the centre as the town grows;
- **Town Centre Living** - potential to bring new residential accommodation in to the town to add vitality;
- **Connections** - the opportunity to create stronger connections between destinations in the centre including green spaces, heritage assets and core shopping areas;
- **Celebrate the University** - enhance the physical and social connections between the University and town and benefit economically from its expertise and economic potential;
- **Car parking** - potential to enable the delivery of a new town centre car park;
- **Traffic management** - potential to enhance movement through the centre through changing one way routing
- **Business support** - work with the BID to support the towns businesses, improve the physical environment and encourage entrepreneurial activities / provide workspace;
- **Animation** - develop the attraction of the town by animating the town centre with events and temporary uses;
- **Market** - hold specialist markets that attract people to come into the centre; and
- **Public realm** - enhance the pedestrian environment to reduce car dependency and improve attractiveness of the town centre.

THREATS

- **Competition** - from other centres in the region including Derby, Leicester and Nottingham;
- **Internet** - the increasing role of internet shopping;
- **Offer** - the centre must continue to offer a range of activities and experiences that attract people to come and spend time in the centre;
- **Lack of investment** - failure to invest in the environment will reduce attractiveness of the centre and could lead to a spiral of decline;
- **Vacancy** - the failure to redevelop the town's opportunity sites which could leave large unattractive gaps in the townscape;
- **Identification and ownership** - new and existing residents must see Loughborough town centre as their centre and the place to spend time;
- **Car parking** - development of car parks would exacerbate the overall under supply in absence of specific opportunities to provide compensatory facilities elsewhere; and
- **Car dependency** - failure to improve the pedestrian environment may increase car dependency and the need for increased car parking spaces.



Character buildings



View of All Saint's Church

5.2 THE VISION

'Loughborough Town Centre will be a successful and vibrant place with a strong identity that stems from its role as a market town and home to Loughborough University. It will be an attractive destination with a diverse retail and leisure offer, a mix of housing and a wide range of employment opportunities.'

The town will be easy to access with a well connected network of vehicular and pedestrian routes. Activity in the town will be supported by a range of events and innovative marketing, business and promotional strategies that will make Loughborough a great place to be.'

Figure 5.1: Vision Statement

Analysis and the points identified through the SWOT analysis have helped to shape the vision statement above.

The statement was presented to an invited group of local representatives and stakeholders at a workshop in December 2016. They endorsed the sentiment of the vision and its appropriateness.

This will replace the statement included in the 2007 masterplan to reflect current economic and spatial issues.





5.3 MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES

To achieve the Vision three main objectives have been identified. These relate to:

1. Movement and arrival;
2. Character, identity and uses; and
3. Town centre experience.

The remainder of this chapter will detail how the first two of these objectives could be realised. The Town Centre Experience objective is discussed further in Section 7.

Details of each objective can be read in Figure 5.2



1. Movement and arrival

To strengthen connections across the town centre to create a more legible network of streets and spaces linking key destinations and promoting active travel



2. Character, identity, uses and offer

To enhance the townscape by ensuring that new development responds to the distinctive pattern of uses and character across the town and to protect and enhance the town's offer



3. Town centre experience, events and promotion

To support physical interventions with a series of short term interventions to promote the towns brand, attract visitors and enliven the town centre

Figure 5.2: Masterplan objectives

5.4 MOVEMENT AND ARRIVAL

This section details both the public realm improvements and changes to the movement network and parking arrangements that are proposed within the masterplan.

5.4.1 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The public realm improvements in this masterplan aim to:

- Connect existing areas of high quality public realm;
- Connect the towns gateways at Ashby Square, the Canal Basin, Bedford Square, Baxter Gate and High Street; and
- Increase the legibility of the bus only route along Baxter Gate.

Extending the existing pedestrian priority area.

The masterplan promotes public realm enhancements in the following locations (Figure 5.3):

1. The Rushes (Swan Street to Derby Road);
2. High Street;
3. Baxter Gate;
4. Blggin Street - The Rushes Shopping Centre;
5. Swan Street to Derby Square; and
6. Market Place to Bedford Square.

Improvements in these areas would effectively extend the existing pedestrian priority areas to meet the identified gateways into the town centre. This would help create a stronger sense of arrival into the town and aid legibility.

These improved pedestrian areas follow the town's primary and secondary retail frontages which have been identified in Figure 5.3.

It is not intended to pedestrianise these areas but rather to increase the level of priority given to pedestrians and cyclists, create a more attractive and welcoming environment and reduce the impact of motor vehicles within these areas. This would help promote active travel and reduce reliance on the private car.

It is recommended that a more detailed public realm strategy is prepared for the town centre. However, the key priorities for each area are identified on the following pages.

Figure 5.3 also provides a definition for the town centre boundary based on our analysis of the town.



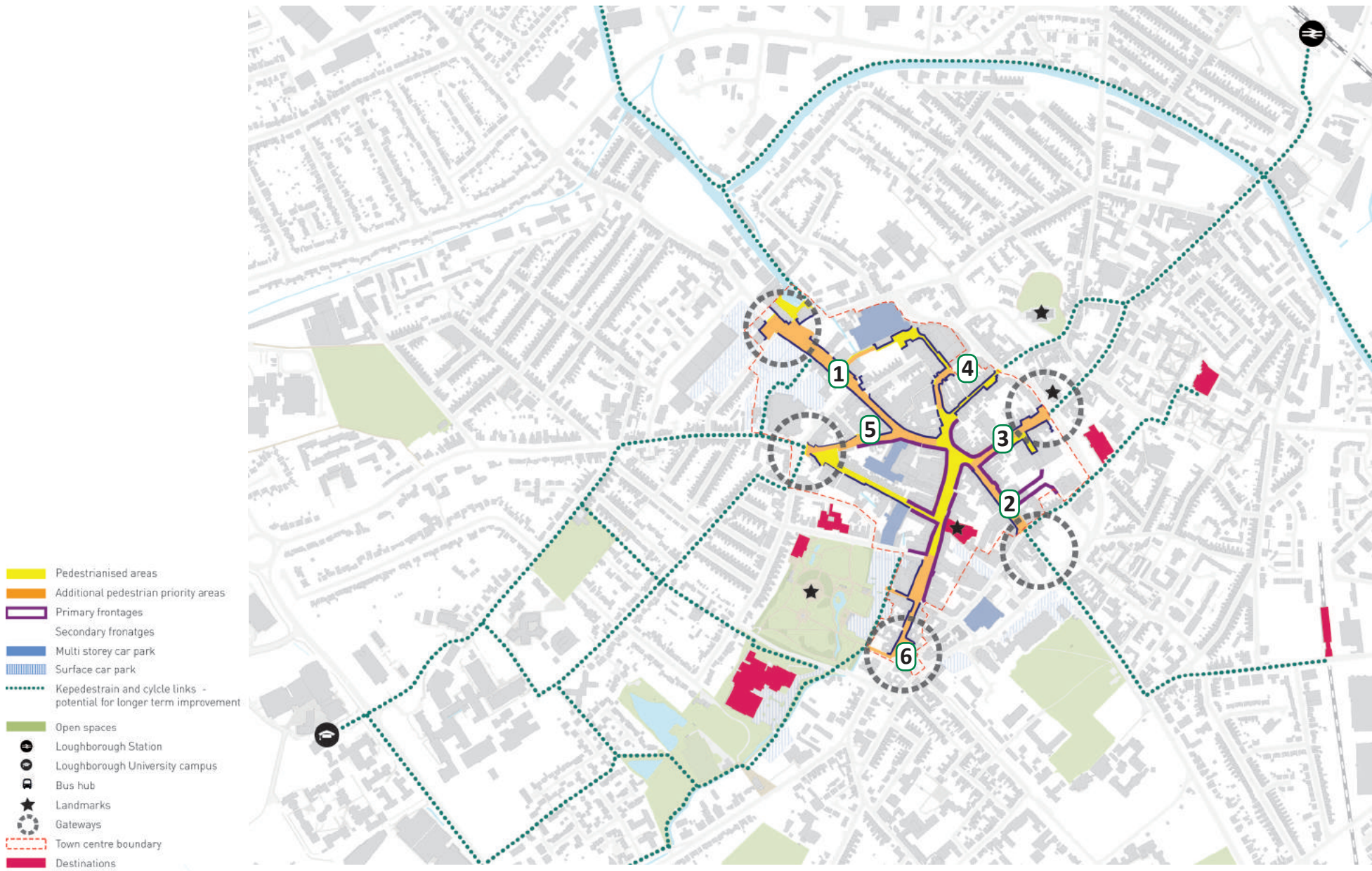


Figure 5.3: Public realm improvements and points of arrival



1. The Rushes (Swan Street to Derby Road)

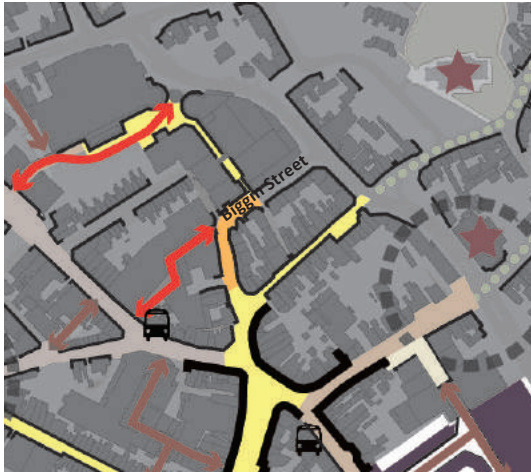
- Where possible reduce the width of the carriage way and give more space over to pedestrians;
- Tree planting from the gateway at the Canal Basin through to the town centre;
- De-clutter the street through rationalisation of signage and street furniture;
- Investigate potential for public art along the blank wall along the Sainsbury's site;
- Reduce dominance of road markings; and
- Resurface footways in high quality paving materials.

2. High Street

- Provide visual clues in the streetscape that vehicles are prohibited or must slow down including surface materials to indicate change in priority from vehicles to pedestrians; and
- Change road markings.

3. Baxter Gate

- Provide visual clues in the streetscape that vehicles are prohibited or must slow down including surface materials to indicate change in priority from vehicles to pedestrians;
- Change road markings;
- Enhance the setting of the Beacon Bingo Building; and
- Improve the gable ends of buildings at the north-eastern end of Baxter Gate.



4. Biggin Street - The Rushes Shopping Centre

- Extend the public realm scheme from Market Place to The Rushes Shopping Centre.



5. Derby Square

- Potential use of shared surface to indicate increased pedestrian priority and enhance the streetscape;
- De-clutter the street through rationalisation of signage and street furniture; and
- Explore opportunities for planting to soften the streetscene.



6. Market Place to Bedford Square

- Modest pavement realignment with retention of parking on Bedford Square;
- Widening of pavements and narrowing of the carriageway through Ward's End;
- Creation of a new public space at Devonshire Square;
- Provision of improvements to Devonshire Lane linking to Granby Street car park and Queen's Park; and
- Installation of a safer pedestrian crossing facility at the junction of Cattle Market and Granby Street.



Opportunity to enhance walking and cycle routes between the town centre and the University

Cycle / walking routes

The masterplan promotes enhancements to the walking and cycle routes to, and within the town centre. In particular the following improvements are prioritised:

- From the town centre to the University;
- From the town centre to the railway station; and
- Access to Queen's Park and Southfields Park.

These are important routes for the town that can improve accessibility and encourage greater patronage of the centre.

Connections to the University

The main walking and cycling route from the University runs from Epinal Way through Loughborough College to Ashby Square via Radmoor Road or William Street. The current routes lack legibility with an incoherent public realm treatment. This route could be enhanced by:

- Straightening the route to create a more direct visual and physical connection between Epinal Way, across the College Campus to the residential area on Radmoor Road;
- Changing the materiality of the route with a consistent public realm treatment to emphasise its importance;
- Articulating the route with tree planting; and
- Clear signage.

An alternative cycle route is currently provided along Emanuel Way and Woodbrook Way providing an off road walking and cycling route to the town. Whilst this route is in generally in good condition it is neither legible nor direct. Browns Lane is crossed by an unattractive subway and the route into the town from there is confusing. Further investment to deliver a clearer more legible route with consistent surface treatment should be explored.

This could for instance be routed alongside the Wood Brook to Granby Street with cycle parking / stands provided in the car park.



Opportunity to enhance Nottingham Road improving walking and cycle connections between the town and the railway station



Opportunity to improve access to Queen's Park via Devonshire Lane

Connection to the station

Nottingham Road is an important walking and cycling route between the mainline railway station and the town. Whilst this route is extremely direct, it is not clear on arriving at the station how you would navigate to the town centre or how far away it is. Whilst there have been some recent improvements to the public realm around the station these have not been continued along Nottingham Road.

A consistent public realm treatment is required that enhances the pedestrian and cycling experience along the route including raised tables at side streets, narrowing of junctions and improved signage and crossing facilities.

Nottingham Road passes through a neighborhood that is home to other important heritage assets such as the Bell Foundry, the canal and the Great Central Railway. Wayfinding between Nottingham Road and these elements is not clear and could be improved with better, more attractive signing, information boards and potentially a heritage trail linking these elements together.

Improving access to Queen's and Southfield Parks

Queen's Park and Southfields Park are important assets for the town centre but access to both is constrained and illegible. This impacts on both their use and on the success of the town centre.

The masterplan promotes improved access with a new entrance to Queen's Park from Devonshire Square via the Granby Street car park and to Southfields Park from Southfield Road.



Cycle and walking routes to the town should be well defined and legible

5.4.2 CHANGES TO THE MOVEMENT NETWORK AND PARKING

To support the public realm improvements. The masterplan promotes a number of changes to the movement network in Loughborough. These are described below.

Explore the potential of the re-introduction of two way traffic along Southfield Road

The Council should work with the County Highway Authority to explore the potential of reintroducing two way traffic along Southfield Road in order to identify any network benefits and provide an effective evidence base to enable the testing of public realm improvement opportunities.

There are potentially many benefits to reorganising this part of the movement network. Firstly, it would create a more legible environment for vehicles moving through or arriving in the town centre. One way working leads to confusion about how one moves through a centre and can be counter intuitive taking a visitor in the direction that they do not want to go in. One way streets also tend to encourage faster travel speeds.

Secondly, it would enable the diversion of traffic away from Bedford Square allowing it to become a more attractive space and point of arrival for visitors walking into the centre from the south.

Thirdly, it would allow the downgrading of Woodgate so that this narrow street could become a more attractive environment for pedestrians. Collectively these interventions would deliver a better walking environment in the centre.

However, introducing two way working would not be straight forward and there are pinch points on Southfield Road where the highway passes through older built fabric to the south of Bedford Square. Further feasibility work is therefore required before any of these potential benefits could be realised.

Explore the potential of changing access arrangements to Granby Street car park

The Council should explore with the County highway authority options for accessing the Granby Street car park by way of Packe Street. This would reduce traffic flow through Granby Street and Ward's End / Devonshire Square. Both Granby Street and Ward's End/Devonshire Square are attractive historic streets and the environment on these routes could be improved through a reduction in moving vehicles. This is especially relevant for Ward's End / Devonshire Square where the width of the road carriageway and pavements is narrow leading to the overdominance of parked cars and moving vehicles.

Car parking

The masterplan includes a proposal that would enable delivery of a new town centre car park to the east of the town reflecting the recommendations of the of the Charnwood Parking Impact Assessment (2015). This facility is proposed in association with the redevelopment of the Baxter Gate site and is detailed later in this report. It is anticipated that the car park would be funded as part of a wider mixed-use scheme for this area.

Residential parking standards on the development sites at Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap have been assumed at one space per dwelling. This is in line with guidance in the Parking Strategy which states that the maximum of one space per dwelling should be provided on these, and all residential developments of a similar nature.

Cycle parking

Cycle facilities throughout the town centre should be improved in line with the proposals in the Loughborough Town Centre Parking Strategy and include:

- New covered cycle stands on Market Place and Granby Street;
- Eight covered stands on Bedford Square;
- Cycle parking provision at the Baxter Gate and Devonshire Square sites;
- Replacement of existing cycle stands with covered stands at Market Place and Granby Street;
- Replacement of eight stands at Biggin Street / Swan Street with covered stands; and
- Cycle parking removed along Market Street and moved to Ashby Square.



Figure 5.4: Proposed changes to the movement network

5.4.3 LANES STRATEGY

In addition to the improvements to the main pedestrian routes in and out of the town, the masterplan proposes a number of enhancements to the secondary movement network around the town. It focuses on improvements to the large number of lanes and alleyways that play an essential role in linking many of the towns important destinations.

The Loughborough Lanes Strategy could see these routes improved through a series of art interventions. These would help to improve the overall experience of the town centre for people as well as enhancing retail loops to increase footfall for town centre businesses. This approach has been tested in several cities across the world including Montreal, San Francisco and Sydney and proven to deliver real benefits to local people and businesses.

The Lane Strategy could be run in conjunction with the University and local artists. The University offers degree courses in fine art, graphic communication, illustration and textile design. Their involvement in this project could help to strengthen links between the town and the University. Loughborough also has a network of local artists who could be offered the chance to showcase their talents through this strategy.

The lanes identified for inclusion in the strategy include:

- Town Hall Passage;
- Mills Yard;
- South Street;
- Granby Street to Market Street;
- Clay Pipe Jitty;
- A potential new connection through Baxter Gate;
- Brook Side; and
- Rushes Shopping Centre.

An annual competition to design a 'Lane Transformation' could be launched and a tied into other events in the town including the Loughborough Fair. The briefs for the lanes could change to reflect different themes related to the town's history and character.

It is recommended that a separate strategy is developed that explores the specific challenges and opportunities of the lanes strategy – including how the relevant consents and other logistical elements of the project may be delivered. This should include representatives from each part of the Council and County Council that would need to be involved in the project.



Some examples of similar strategies carried out across the world



- Pedestrianised areas
- Additional pedestrian priority areas
- Lanes to be improved
- Links to be improved
- Primary shopping frontages
- Secondary shopping frontages
- Multi storey car park
- Surface car park
- Key pedestrian connections
- Destinations
- Open spaces
- Loughborough Station
- Loughborough University campus
- Bus hub
- Landmarks
- Gateways

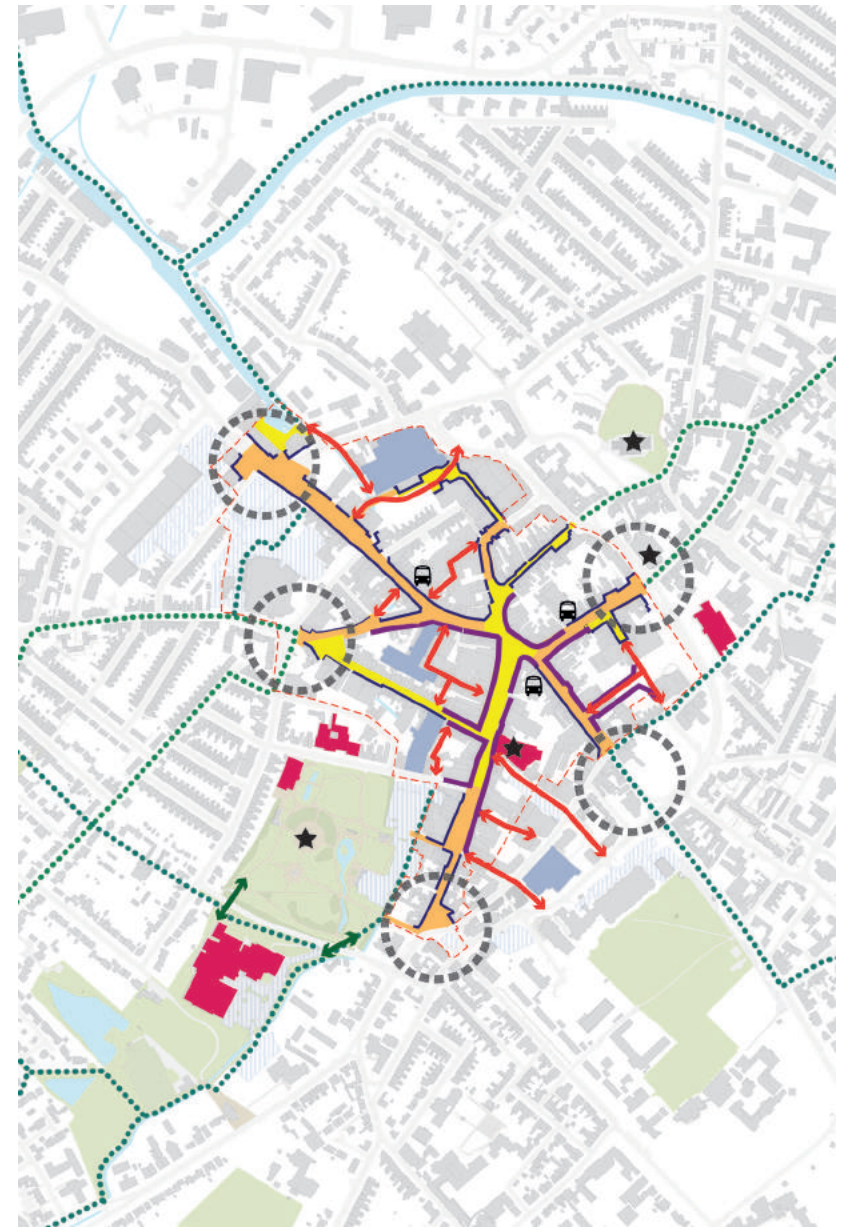


Figure 5.5: Proposed Lane Strategy

5.5 CHARACTER, IDENTITY, USES AND OFFER

Section 2.10 sub-divides Loughborough town centre into eight character areas. This section identifies the opportunities and priorities for each character area and how new development should respond to these.

5.5.1 MARKET PLACE

Uses

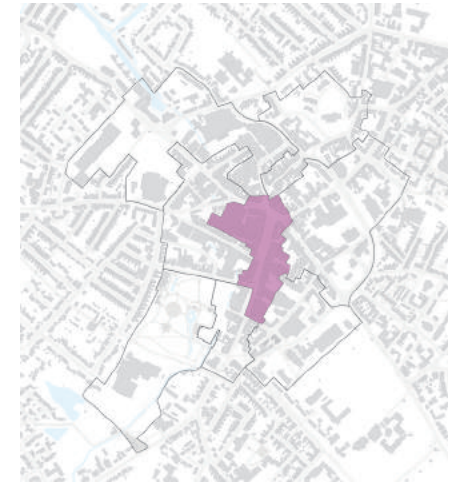
Market Place will remain the heart of the town and the town's core retail area. The character and function of the grand civic market space should be preserved. Additional specialist markets and events could be promoted to add to animation and interest in the area.

Character and identity

Any new buildings or building refurbishments should respect the area's continuous building frontages, the existing material palette and ensure active uses at ground floor. Building height and massing must ensure that the town hall remains the area's most prominent landmark.

Movement and connections

Secondary routes linking to Market Place should be improved as part of the Lanes Strategy. These include Town Hall Passage, South Street and Mills Yard. Covered cycle stands should be provided for cyclists arriving in this area.



Market Place will remain the heart of the town but with an increasing programme of events and activities to animate the space

5.5.2 BAXTER GATE / HIGH STREET

Uses

This area should remain a mixed-use quarter with Baxter Gate and High Street retaining their function as secondary retail streets with active uses at ground floor level. The area offers opportunity for change with Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap offering the most significant development opportunity in the town centre. A mix of new retail and residential uses would help to bring further life to the area throughout the day and into the evening. Further guidance on these sites is provided in Section 6 of this document.

Character and identity

Development in this area should respect the prevailing scale and massing of buildings in the area. Any development on High Street and Baxter Gate should respect the continuous building frontages and where possible follow a consistent building line. Proposals that improve the streetscape along both High Street and Baxter Gate should be encouraged. This includes the development or redevelopment of poor quality buildings.

Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap site is a blight on the area and presents a poor impression from the southern and eastern approaches to the town on Leicester and Nottingham Road and from Jubilee Way, the Inner Relief Road. New development here should integrate with the existing built form, improve permeability and provide positive frontages to all routes.

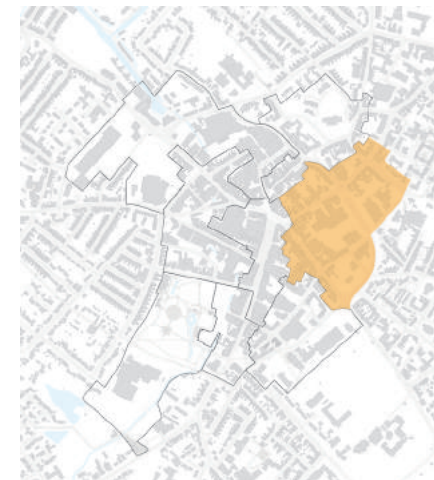
There is potential for a landmark building on the corner of Leicester Road and Jubilee Way to mark the southern entry point in to the town. A slightly taller building delivered as part of a comprehensive scheme may be acceptable here. This must be of superior architectural quality.

The northern portion of the character area is located within the Church Gate Conservation Area. Any new development and refurbishment projects in this area must relate sensitively to the existing area – especially the key buildings / groups of buildings mentioned in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Movement and connections

Improvements to the public realm along High Street and Baxter Gate should clearly demonstrate the pedestrian and bus priority (and discourage vehicular traffic from entering this area. See Section 5.4.1).

Development on the Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap site should increase permeability of the site including facilitating a continuation of the pedestrian link from Baxter Gate, through the Cineworld site to Pinfold Gate. (see Section 6 for further detail).



Baxter Gate / High Street - a lively mixed-use quarter on the eastern edge of the town centre

5.5.3 CHURCH GATE

Uses

Church Gate should remain a mixed-use area on the northern edge of the town centre. The mix of shops, cafes, businesses and homes, set within the historic fabric, give the character area a distinct identity in the town. Active uses at ground floor are very much a feature of this area and should be preserved wherever possible.

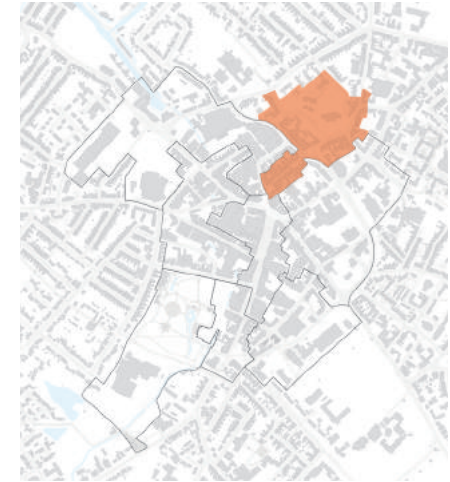
Character and identity

The character of this area is shaped by the pattern of historic buildings with All Saint's Church and the mature trees within the churchyard around it the central element. Any development within the area must be sensitive to the area's history and heritage and take reference from the Church Gate Conservation Area Appraisal.

Movement and connections

There are a number of opportunities to increase the connectivity between the Church Gate area and the wider town centre to the south. Biggin Street, that connects The Rushes to Church Gate, and Clay Pipe Jitty, should be improved as part of the public realm and Lanes Strategy respectively.

Church Gate is Loughborough's historic quarter and has a distinct character that must be respected through any new development



5.5.4 RUSHES / DERBY ROAD

Uses

The Ruses / Derby Road area is where larger floorplate retail uses are located within Loughborough. These are supported by secondary retail uses and in recent years by an increasing number of food and drink uses. Intensification and infill development are encouraged to replace existing poor quality structures and repair the fragmented urban fabric - especially along the Ruses / Derby Road. New development here should have active uses facing on to the street and may have commercial or residential uses, including student housing, at upper floors levels.

Character and identity

Development along The Ruses / Derby Road should face onto the street. New development along the edge of the Sainsbury's site and Regent Retail Park should be encouraged. This would help to enclose the street and enhance the gateway at the Canal Basin.

Any new development should take an urban form and avoid the creation of further large areas of parking that break up the townscape. The scale of the street allows larger scale blocks (four to five storeys) that would help to provide enclosure.

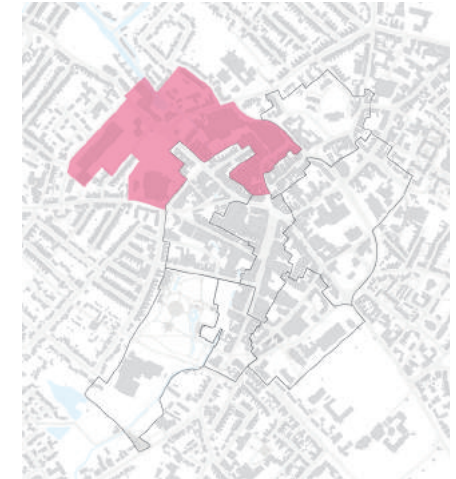
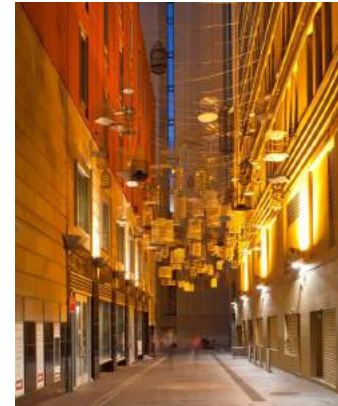
The Sainsbury's site offers a significant opportunity for new development to improve this area. This site is dominated by car parking and there are no direct pedestrian links from Ashby Road to The Ruses. The Sainsbury's store currently turns its back on Ashby Road and Green Close Lane. These blank facades create a hostile environment and a poor first impression of the town.

Any future redevelopment of this site should take a more urban form with clearly defined patterns of streets and blocks. Buildings should face on to the street and enclose routes and spaces. Parking should be rationalised. If redevelopment of this site does not take place any opportunities to improve this facade with the use of public art or temporary interventions should be encouraged.

Movement and connections

The Ruses / Derby Road itself should be improved as part of the public realm strategy to create a more attractive northern gateway into Loughborough. Improving permeability is important in this area and opportunities to enhance links to The Ruses shopping centre and across the Sainsbury's site should be explored through the Lanes Strategy. Clay Pipe Jitty is likely to be a priority for this strategy.

Any future potential redevelopment of the Sainsbury's site should include a direct pedestrian route from The Ruses to Ashby Square.



The Ruses / Derby Road will be transformed into an attractive northern gateway to Loughborough

5.5.5 ASHBY SQUARE / MARKET STREET

Uses

Ashby Square is an important arrival point for students coming into the town. The area currently accommodates a mix of smaller shops and businesses on Derby Square and many cafes on Market Street. There are also a number of either new build or refurbished buildings that provide student accommodation.

The smaller scale nature of buildings in the area offers opportunity for temporary uses, small business space and entrepreneurial activity that could appeal to students and graduates.

These are covered later in Section 7 of this report but could include:

- A street food market on the vacant site at the rear end of Carillon Court shopping centre;
- Pop up shops in vacant units along Market Street; and
- Temporary uses that promote connections between the university and town such as art exhibitions or spaces for lectures and talks.

Consideration is already being given to conversion of the former School of Arts on Frederick Street into a creative business space to be known as 'The Generator'. The vision is to develop and support a creative community that will help individuals, start-ups, and small companies from across the creative sectors to thrive in Loughborough. The Generator would encourage the growth of emerging creative businesses, and hold events, exhibitions and training.

The project is being coordinated by a dedicated community interest company which is exploring opportunities for attracting funding from potential partner agencies.

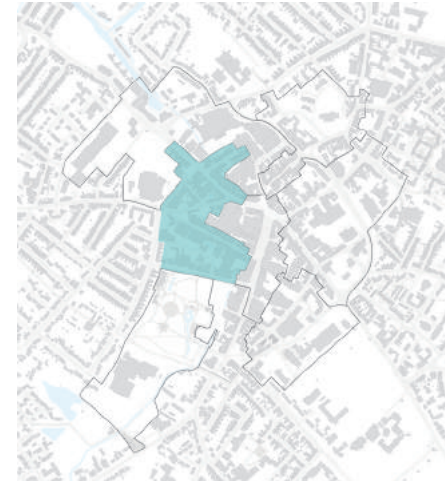
Character and identity

The area is generally fine grain with buildings from a variety of periods, including many Art Deco buildings, arranged to front onto streets.

The fabric is however fragmented particularly along Derby Square where the network of streets and pedestrian connections create a series of small blocks. The rear of Carillon Court shopping centre is unsightly and should be reconfigured to create a positive frontage to the street. In the short term a temporary use could be provided on this space.

Movement and connections

Improved public realm along Derby Square will help to connect the Ashby Square area better with The Rushes and towards Baxter Square. Brookside, Angel Yard and Carillon Court could be enhanced as part of the Lanes Strategy. New covered cycle stands are proposed at Ashby Square to consolidate cycle parking currently provided along Market Street.



Ashby Road / Market Street will become Loughborough's creative quarter

5.5.6 QUEEN'S PARK

Uses

The Queen's Park character area extends from Queen's Park, the town's primary ornamental park, southward to encompass the leisure centre and the land adjacent to it. This character area provides both an active and passive leisure function for the town. More events and activities are proposed in the park so that it becomes more central to the life of the town.

Character and identity

No new built development is expected to be delivered in Queen's Park. The Carillon Tower is an important local landmark. Views to this structure across the town should be preserved. The key vistas to the tower are listed in Section 9 of the Queen's Park Conservation Area Appraisal.

Movement and connections

The masterplan aims to improve access to Queen's Park both from Market Place and Devonshire Square to the north-east in order to better integrate the space with the wider town centre (refer to the proposals for Devonshire Square / Granby Street car park in Section 6.3) and from the south as part of the Movement Strategy (Section 5.4.1).

This Movement Strategy promotes the creation of a continuous green walking and cycling route along the Wood Brook to provide a direct and legible route into the town centre.



Queen's Park will be better integrated into a green network for the town and access and use of the space will be increased

5.5.7 WARD'S END / BEDFORD SQUARE

Uses

This character area is defined by independent businesses that front onto Ward's End, Bedford Square and Devonshire Square. Buildings house a variety of business, shops and food and drink uses and offer an attractive secondary shopping environment in the town.

There is potential for this offer to improve to become a more established specialist independent food and drink quarter over time; an improved public realm will help to facilitate this. Greater use of upper floor uses should also be encouraged.

The Devonshire Square site offers an opportunity for new development to provide town centre residential or an apart hotel development benefiting from proximity to Queen's Park - see Section 6.3 Devonshire Square.

Character and identity

Development along Ward's End should reflect the fine grain, historic character of this area. This is defined by simple two and three storey buildings with pitched roofs and high quality shop fronts at ground floor.



Movement and connections

Public realm improvements could include the widening of pavements in Bedford Square and Ward's End and the creation of additional space for pedestrians in Devonshire Square with minimum loss of on street parking facilities

Improved access to Queen's Park is also proposed to better integrate this fine grained historic area with the park.



Wards End / Bedford Square could become Loughborough's specialist independent food and drink quarter

5.5.8 WOODGATE

Uses

This mixed-use area has a variety of office, residential and civic functions. In recent years several blocks of student accommodation have been built within the area. The Woodgate character area will remain mixed-use ensuring that there is activity at all times of the day.

Character and identity

The built form in this area is generally of greater height and massing than elsewhere in the centre with newer development typically four or five storeys. Development generally fronts onto the two main streets through the area, Woodgate and Southfield Road, but with little overlooking or frontage to the east-west routes that give access to the Market Place and Ward's End. Any new development should provide positive frontage to these streets whenever possible.

Frontage onto Southfield Road is mixed with some gap sites.

Woodgate will retain its employment function with elements of residential and student housing

Movement and Connections

The masterplan promotes enhanced east - west connections linking this area to Market Place and Southfields Park. These should be provided as part of the Lanes Strategy. Park access could be achieved either through the Council offices site or a short distance to the south via the access road to the police station.

Further longer term plans to improve the approach to the town along Leicester Road together with the setting of Southfield Park could also be considered.



5.6 MASTERPLAN FOR LOUGHBOROUGH

5.6.1 SPATIAL STRATEGY

The overall spatial strategy for the town is indicated in Figure 5.7. This shows the proposed improvements to the public realm, Lanes Strategy and the important connections that should be enhanced. It also shows potential development sites in the centre. These are described further in Section 6.

The individual projects that would be needed to deliver this plan are described in the Strategic Action Plan in Appendix B. This list should be used by the Council to bring forward with its partners the ideas and initiatives in this document.

The diagram indicates the extents of the town centre and where the town's primary and secondary retail frontages are. These are areas where commercial uses - especially at ground floor - should be protected from change of use.

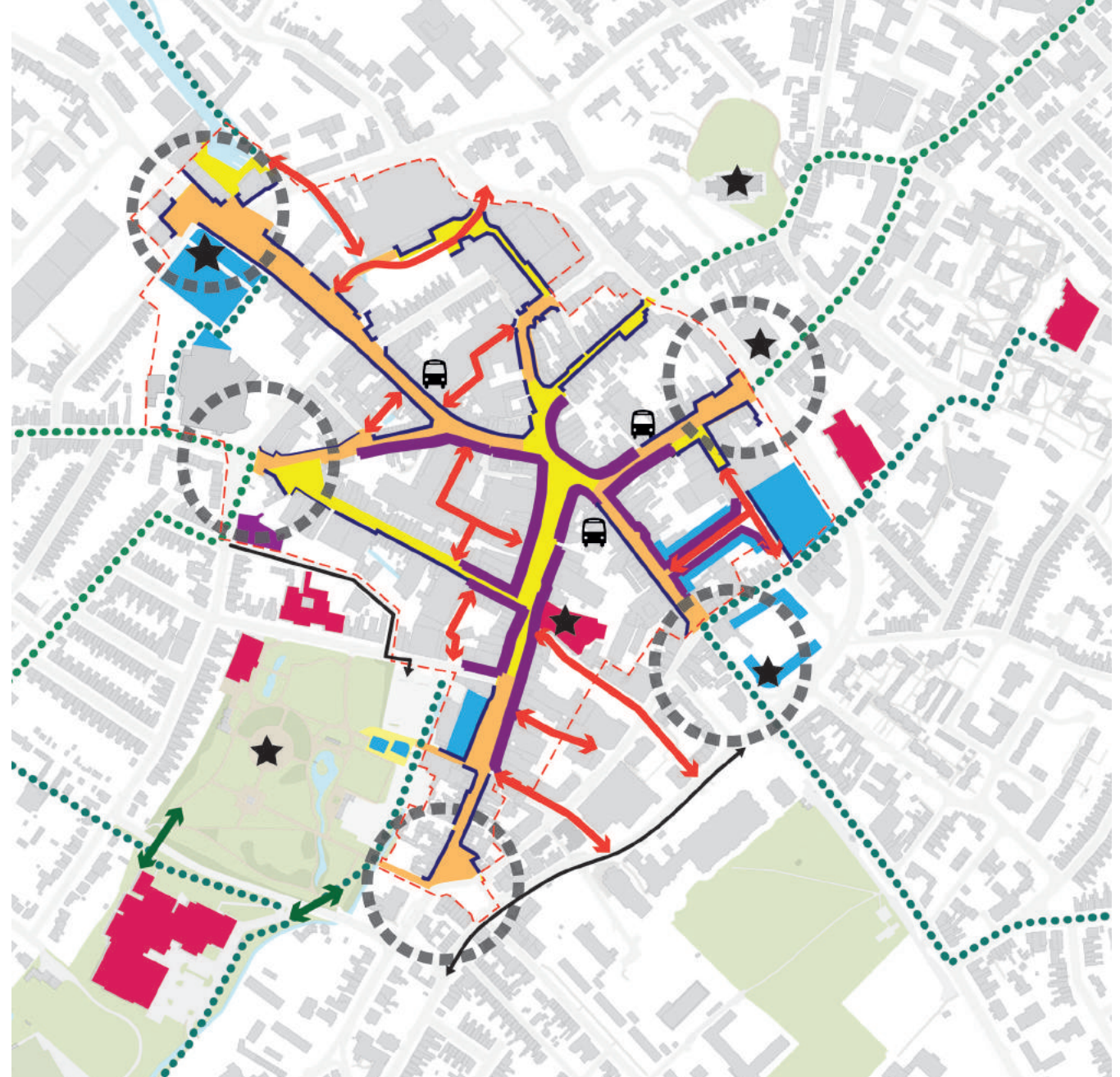


Figure 5.6: Proposed spatial strategy

5.6.2 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The spatial strategy has been translated into an illustrative masterplan and this is indicated in Figure 5.8. This provides an illustration of the potential layout for new development on opportunity sites and the connections and distribution of public spaces green across the town.

Further detail for each of the potential development sites is provided in Section 6 of this report.

- Primary shopping area
- Secondary shopping area
- Proposed pedestrian lanes
- Pedestrian priority area
- Extended priority pedestrian area
- Attractors / destinations
- Existing building
- Existing multi storey car park
- Proposed multi storey car park
- Open spaces
- Existing private garden
- Proposed privacy strip
- Proposed garden
- Proposed green terrace
- Proposed trees
- Town centre boundary
- Proposed building in primary shopping area
- Proposed building in secondary shopping area
- Proposed generator building
- Proposed building outside primary/secondary shopping areas
- Explore options for accessing Granby Street car park via Packe Street
- Investigate future potential of reinstating 2 way working along Southfield Road

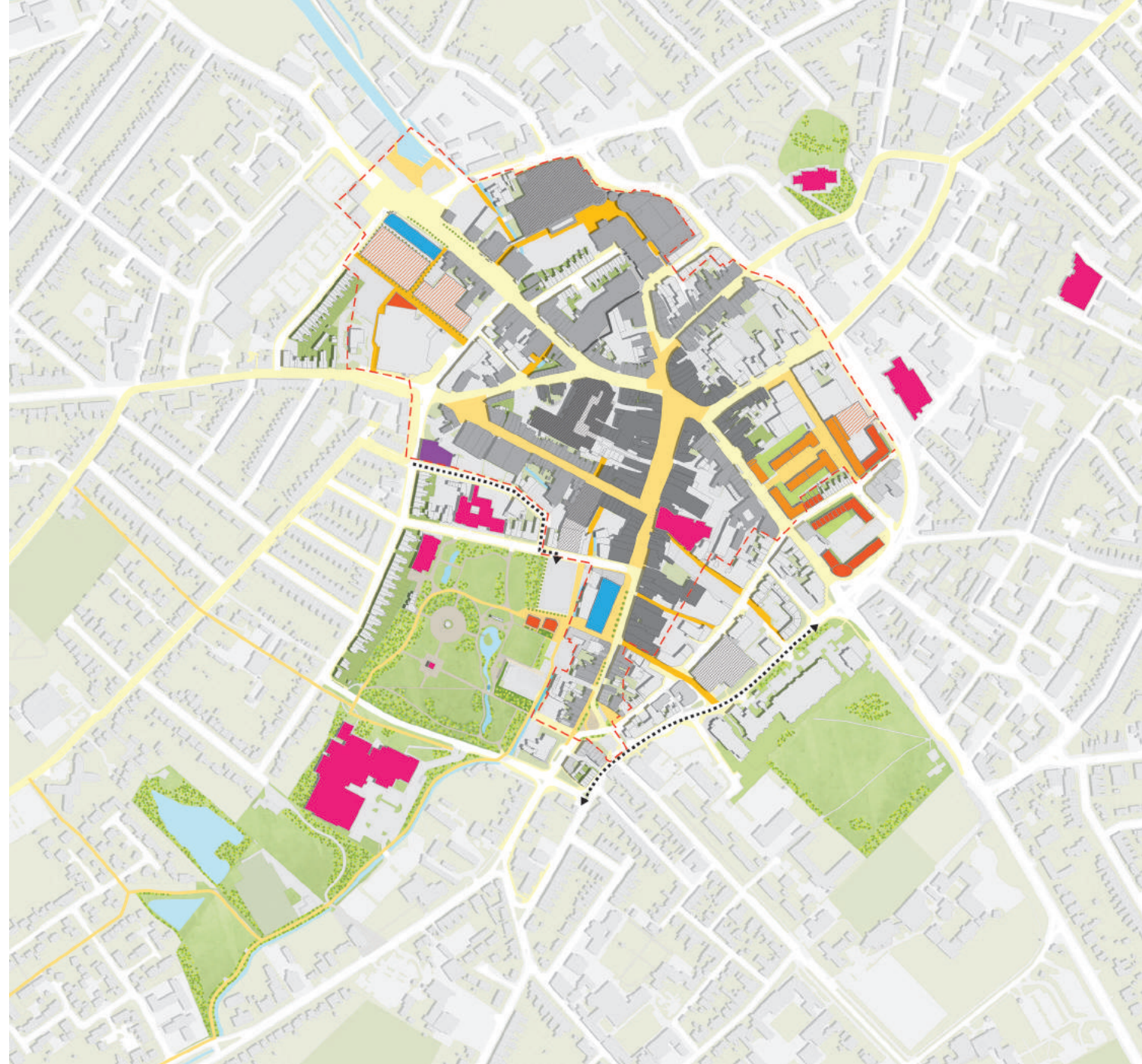
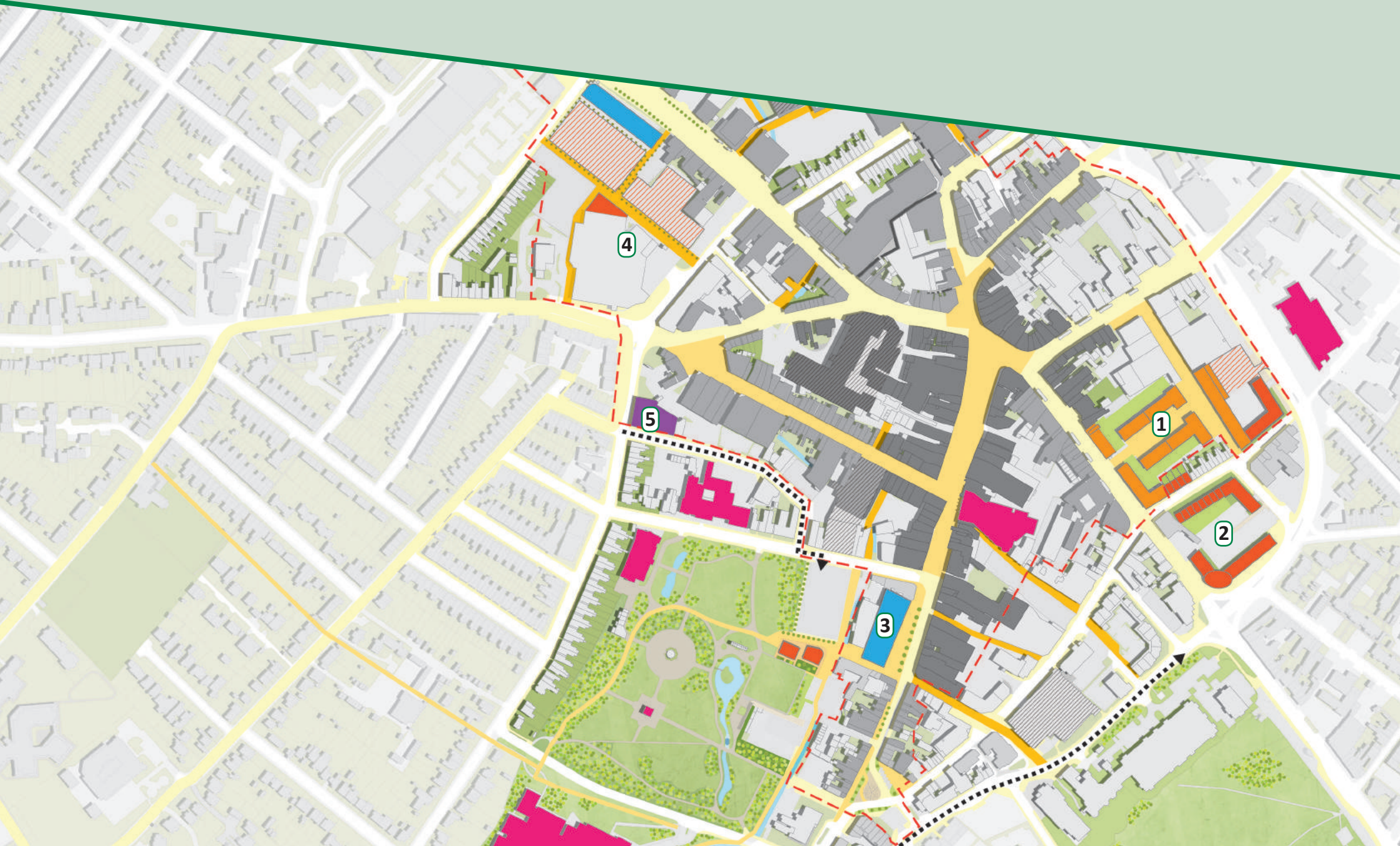


Figure 5.7: Illustrative masterplan



6. Opportunity sites



Figure 6.1: Illustrative masterplan indicating opportunity sites

6.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of opportunity sites have been identified within the town centre study area. Several of these were identified in the 2007 masterplan but have not come forward for development. The identified sites are:

1. Baxter Gate;
2. Aumberry Gap;
3. Devonshire Square;
4. Sainsbury's store on Ashby Road; and
5. The Loughborough University School of Art and Design Building.

For sites 1-3 development option(s) have been prepared and their financial viability tested. As part of the masterplanning process these options were presented to an invited group of local stakeholders and representatives. This process was used to help determine the preferred option for each site. The preferred option was then presented at a public consultation in summer 2017 and then refined to reflect comments received.

Site 4 (Sainsbury's) is in active use and not likely to come forward for development in the near future. There is potential however to intensify development on this site and improve the arrival experience along The Rushes. In recognition of this potential a number of development principles to guide any future redevelopment have been prepared along with an illustrative layout.

Proposals for the Loughborough University School of Art and Design Building are already being prepared by a community interest company. Therefore, site options and viability testing have not been included for this site. However, it is recognised that the redevelopment of this building is a significant opportunity for the town and its economy. It is fully supported by this masterplan.

There are other smaller sites in the town centre that may come forward for development. However, the sites described in this section have the most potential to transform the town.

Section 8, the Implementation and Delivery Strategy, describes the potential mechanisms that could be adopted to encourage and facilitate delivery of development on these sites.

6.2 BAXTER GATE AND AUMBERRY GAP

6.2.1 OVERVIEW

This significant development site can be sub-divided into two distinctive areas to either side of Pinfold Gate:

- Land to the south of the Baxter Gate Cineworld complex (north of Pinfold Gate); and
- The Aumberry Gap site (south of Pinfold Gate).

These two sites are located to the east of the town centre within the Baxter Gate / High Street character area. Both were included in the 2007 masterplan but only the northern part of the Baxter Gate site has come forward for development. This has left a considerable gap in the townscape.

The Baxter Gate site was once home to the General Hospital. The northern part of this site was recently developed as a leisure complex anchored by a multi-screen cinema (Cineworld) with supporting food and drink uses. The development broadly followed principles set out in the 2007 masterplan.

The complex is planned around a high quality central courtyard space that extends from Baxter Gate towards Pinfold Gate. Food and drink uses front onto the courtyard and benefit from a high quality public realm and space for outdoor seating. There is potential to extend the courtyard space to form a new north-south route through the southern half of this site – in line with the movement principles included in the 2007 masterplan and SPD.

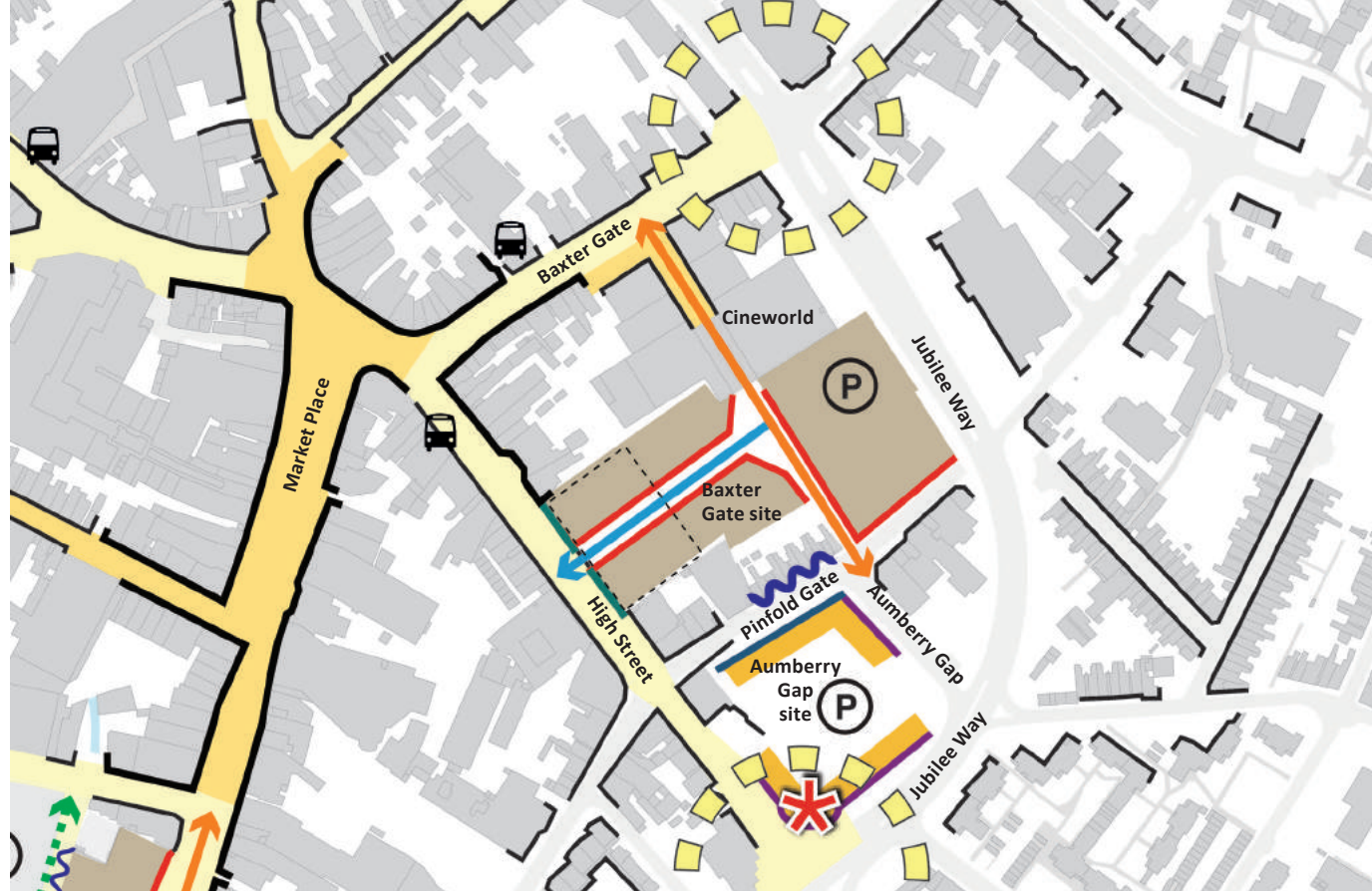


Figure 6.2: Baxter Gate and Aumberry Gap development principles

The remainder of this site is occupied by the Pinfold Medical practice and its associated surface car park, a row of Grade II listed two storey cottages on Pinfold Gate and a number of buildings, mostly in poor condition and including the Post Office, on High Street and Pinfold Gate.

The medical centre is housed in a single storey building accessed from Pinfold Gate. A planning application has recently been approved to resurface its car park and extend the provision of spaces from 57 to 83 spaces. All development options assume re-provision of the medical centre at this stage.

The Aumberry Gap site is bound by Pinfold Gate to the north, by Jubilee Way to the south, High Street to the west and by Aumberry Gap to the east. Most of the site falls under one ownership and can be considered for redevelopment. The Phantom Public House on the corner of Pinfold Gate and High Street is however in separate ownership. The pub and associated beer garden add character to the area, and are considered worthy of retention. Other buildings on site include a small row of shops along Pinfold Gate, a car sales area and an area of private surface car parking. These all sit within the one ownership and could be redeveloped.


Although the two sites are in separate ownerships and could be brought forward for development separately, they are considered together in order to ensure a cohesive piece of townscape is delivered. These sites offer the greatest development opportunity for the town and should be part of a planned approach to the regeneration. Development principles for both sites are shown above.


6.2.2 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Based on an analysis of the area a number of design principles have been developed for the Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap site. These help to shape the options that are detailed on the following pages.


Use

Baxter Gate

 Development on this site should be mixed-use with a combination of retail, leisure and residential uses. At this stage it is assumed the health centre will be replaced on site.


 A new town centre car park accessed from Jubilee Way should be provided

Aumberry Gap


 The primary use on the Aumberry Gap site should be residential (including student housing or other specialist types of residential). Elements of commercial uses at ground floor will also be supported.


Built form


Baxter Gate


 The layout of development blocks should be planned to deliver north-south and east-west pedestrian connections.

Development across the site must be over 2 storeys and a maximum of 5 storeys. The architectural style for the site should be informed by the Cineworld Complex which brings a simple contemporary design language to the town whilst respecting the characteristics of the contextual architecture and material palette.


 Active frontages must animate new routes across the site


 Proposals should consider the potential to redevelop some of the poorer quality buildings on High Street.


 The frontages along High Street are sensitive due to the historic character of the street and dominant 3 storey height datum. Any development above 3 storeys should be set back so that it is not dominant on the street. Buildings should follow the predominant building line.

 The listed buildings on Pinfold Gate should be retained.

Aumberry Gap

 Development on the Aumberry Gap Site Should follow a perimeter block pattern

 Development should face on to Pinfold Gate, Jubilee Way, Aumberry Gap and High Street. Building heights must be appropriate to the local context. Proposals for active ground floor uses will be supported.

 The buildings along Pinfold Gate should be part of a perimeter block but limited to 3 storeys in height to respect the setting of the listed cottages opposite.



Particular attention should be given to the design of the building on the southern corner of the Aumberry Gap Site. This building will be especially prominent and is located on one of the key gateways into the town. To fulfil a gateway landmark this part of the building may be taller in height than the remainder of the block. However, the height of this element must be in-keeping with the local character. A majority of the buildings in Loughborough are 3 storeys in height with some more modern developments going up to 4 or 5 storeys. Any significant increase in height above the 5 storey datum will need to be justified by the quality of the of the architectural solution proposed.



Car parking associated with this development should be located within the development block or at basement/undercroft level.

Key connections

Baxter Gate



A pedestrian route should be provided that connects through the site from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate.



A new pedestrian link should be provided connecting High Street and the above pedestrian permeability and encourage the creation of a new pedestrian loop.

6.2.3 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Three options are presented for the Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap sites. These options are shown on the following pages.

The options were discussed with local stakeholders and consultees and key points from these discussions are summarised alongside each option.



View of new development to the north of Baxter Gate - this should set the minimum standard for the remainder of the Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap site

OPTION ONE: RETAIL LED DEVELOPMENT

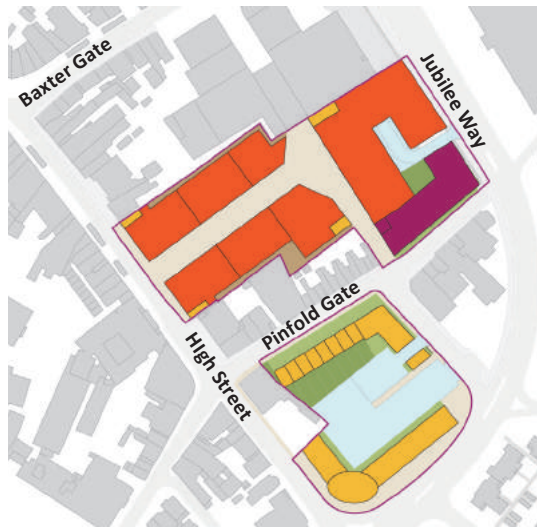


Figure 6.3: Option One - ground floor plan

Overview

Baxter Gate

Proposes large floorplate retail uses at ground floor together with a new health centre (of equivalent floorspace to the existing provision). Student housing and residential apartments are provided on upper floors. A two storey town centre car park is proposed above the retail block to the north east of the site. This would also serve the medical centre. Access to the car park is off Jubilee Way (or alternatively Pinfold Gate).

Aumberry Gap

Residential apartments and with town houses along Pinfold Gate.

New development fronts onto a connected network of routes that increase permeability through the area and creates links from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate and to High Street.

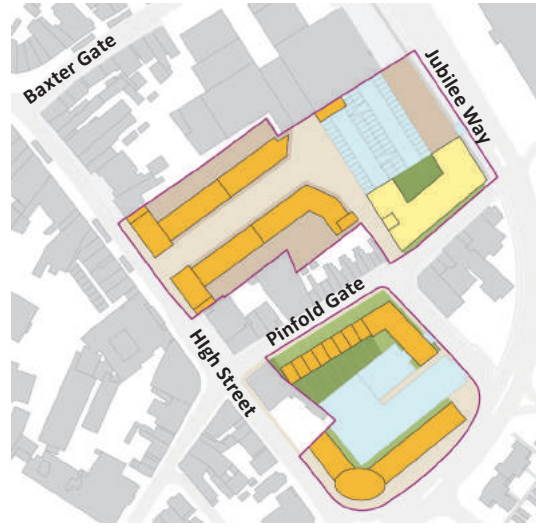


Figure 6.4: Option One - typical upper floor plan



Development varies in height from three to five storeys.

Development quantums

Baxter Gate

- Retail: 5,150sqm
- Health: 1,000sqm
- Apartments: 60
- Student bedspaces: 176 beds spaces
- Parking: 125 space car park over retail - shared between uses - net gain of 38 spaces over the proposed parking improvements on the existing health centre site

Aumberry Gap

- Apartments: 65
- Houses: 8
- Car parking provided at ground floor level to serve new homes

Comments from Stakeholders and Consultees

Positive features

- Support for the provision of new retail units to help the town to grow its retail offer;
- Support for the provision of a new town centre car park;
- Support for the provision of new private residential apartments;
- Support for some student residential units - so long as these are limited to a small proportion of the site; and
- Support for provision of two new pedestrian links through High Street.

Negative features

- High Risk - with a need to reprovide the health centre and acquire several properties along the high street;
- Concern as to whether there is a market / demand for further retail in the town centre; and
- Concern that the new retail units may detract from the core town centre retail area on Market Place and be difficult to let.

Notes on viability

Requires acquisition of properties on High Street to deliver in its entirety.

This option has a **good prospect** of being viable, if sufficient retail demand can be found.

OPTION TWO: RESIDENTIAL LED DEVELOPMENT

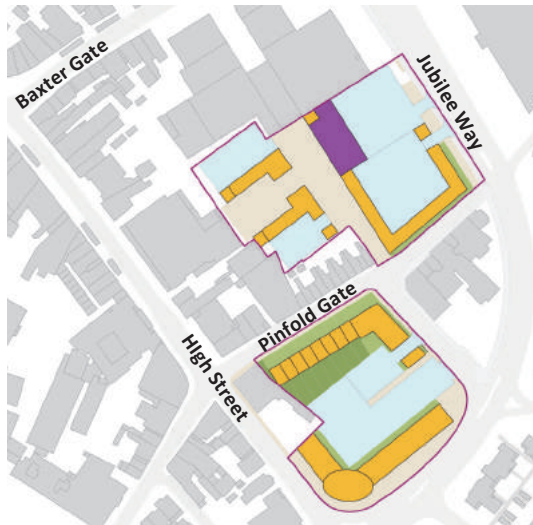


Figure 6.5: Option Two - ground floor plan

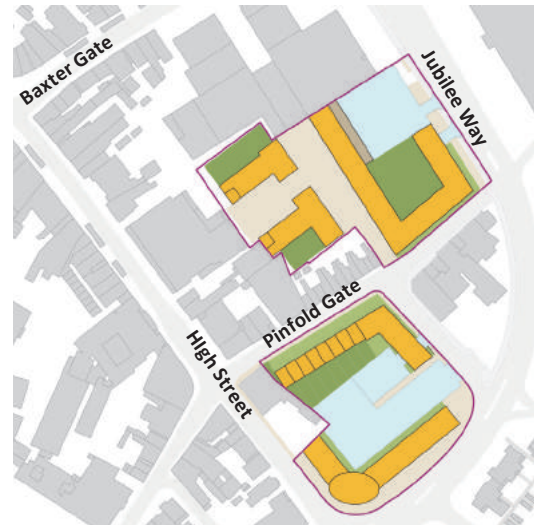


Figure 6.6: Option Two - typical upper floor plan



Overview

Baxter Gate

Proposes residential led development on the medical centre site together with a replacement medical centre.

Aumberry Gap

Residential apartments with town houses along Pinfold Gate.

New development fronts onto a connected network of routes that increase permeability through the area and creates a link from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate but not to High Street. Car parking is provided to support the residential and health care uses but there is no town centre car park in this option.

Development varies in height from three to five storeys.

Development quantums

Baxter Gate

- Health: 950sqm
- Apartments: 87
- Parking: 40 space car park for medical centre - residential parking in courtyards

Aumberry Gap

- Apartments: 65
- Houses: 8
- Car parking provided at ground floor level to serve new homes

Comments from Stakeholders and Consultees

Positive features

- Low risk and less complex than Option One, with no need to purchase any land - only replace the health centre;
- Provides a new pedestrian link from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate; and
- Support for the provision of town centre residential units.

Negative features

- Does not improve the street frontages along High Street;
- Does not provide a town centre car park;
- Does not provide a new pedestrian link between Baxter Gate and the High Street; and
- Concern that it is potentially not ambitious enough for the town and misses the opportunity for further retail use on the only realistic site that could achieve this in the centre.

Notes on Viability

This option could **potentially** be viable

OPTION THREE: RESIDENTIAL LED DEVELOPMENT - COMPREHENSIVE



Figure 6.7: Option Three - ground floor plan

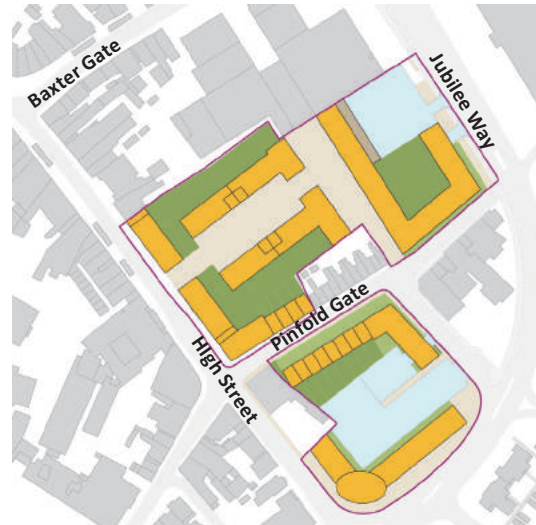


Figure 6.8: Option Three - typical upper floor plan



Overview

Baxter Gate

Proposes mixed-use development with retail uses on High Street and residential led development on the medical centre site together with a replacement medical centre. Residential uses are provided at upper floor levels throughout the scheme.

Aumberry Gap

Residential apartments with town houses along Pinfold Gate.

New development fronts onto a connected network of routes that increase permeability through the area and creates links from Baxter Gate to Pinfold Gate and to High Street.

Development varies in height from three to five storeys.

Development quantums

Baxter Gate

- Retail: 2,880m²
- Health: 950sqm
- Apartments: 118
- Houses: 4
- Parking: 40 space car park for medical centre - residential parking in courtyards

Aumberry Gap

- Apartments: 65
- Houses: 8
- Car parking provided at ground floor level to serve new homes

Comments from Stakeholders and Consultees

Positive features

- Medium Risk - provides some retail uses but at a lower quantum than Option One which will be potentially easier to fill;
- Creates pedestrian connections to both the High Street and Pinfold Gate;
- Support for the creation of new town centre residential; and
- Improves the street frontages along High Street.

Negative features

- Does not provide a new town centre car park; and
- Requires acquisition of buildings along High Street.

Notes on Viability

Requires acquisition of properties on High Street to deliver in its entirety.

This option is **not likely** to be viable

6.2.4 PREFERRED OPTION

After careful consideration of the options the stakeholder group preferred **Option One** for the Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap site. It was seen as the more ambitious option offering both comprehensive change and wider benefits for the town including increasing permeability and an enhanced frontage to the High Street.

There was also widely held support for the delivery of a new town centre car park which is included as part of this option. These views were endorsed through the public consultation process.

On the Baxter Gate site flexibility is offered in the final mix of uses with potential to substitute some retail use for leisure, office or residential space. This reflects potential challenges in regard to retail demand.

There is also some flexibility in regards to the uses on the Aumberry Gap site. The masterplan would support proposals for different types of residential use coming forward on the site (such as student housing). It would also support active, ground floor commercial uses where appropriate to animate the street.

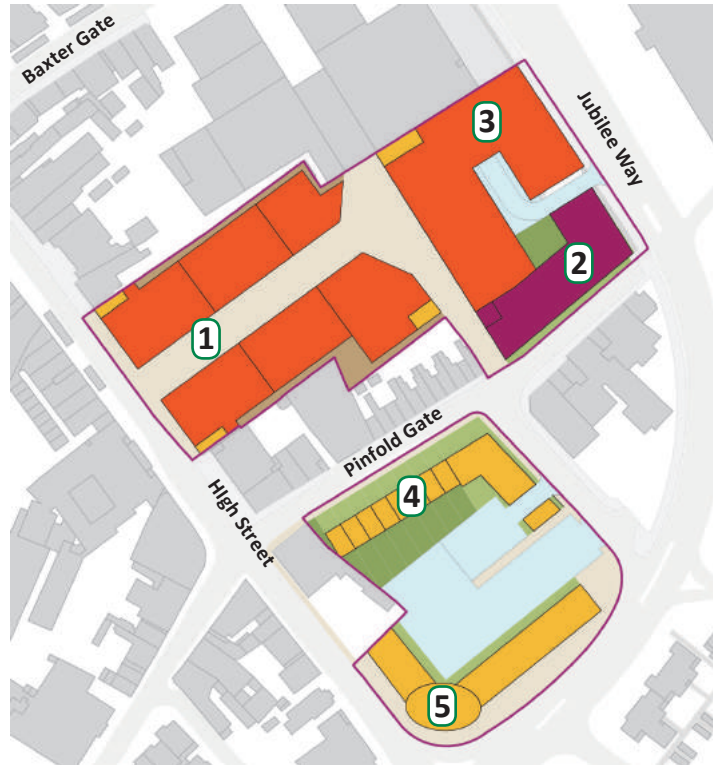


Figure 6.9: Preferred option for Baxter Gate / Aumberry Gap sites



A new retail parade



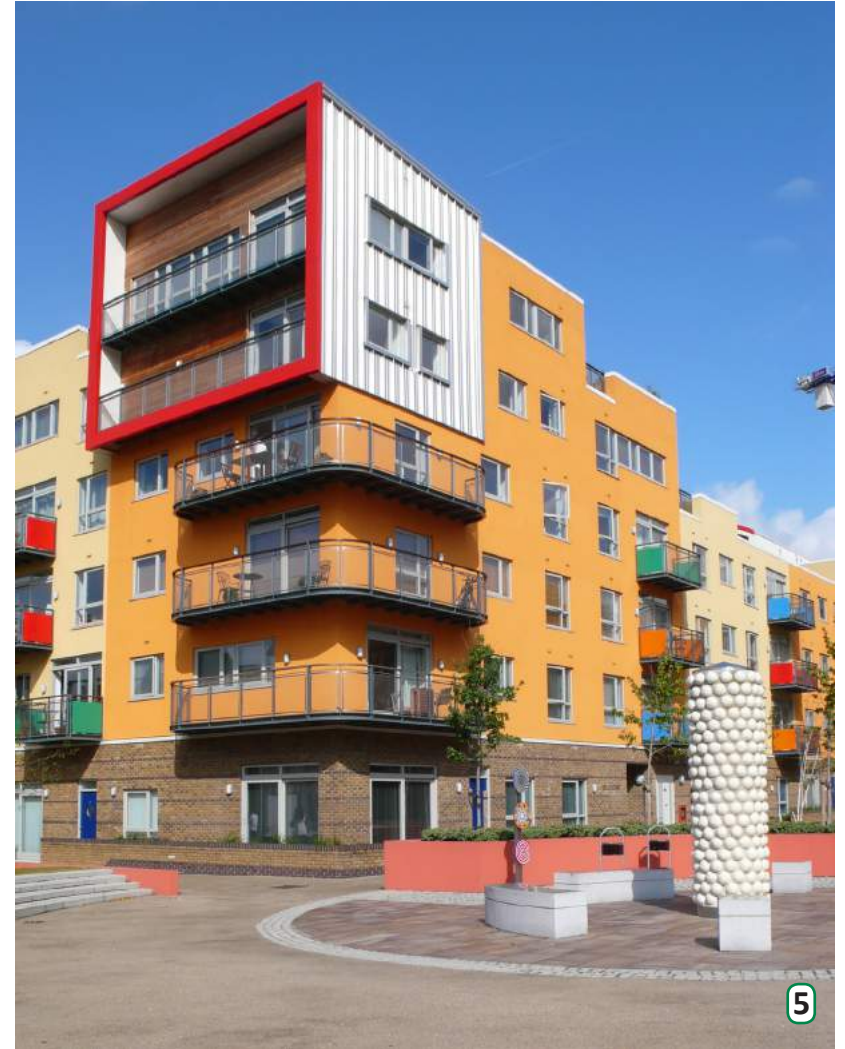
A new health centre



A multi storey car park



Town houses on Pinfold Gate reflect the scale and massing on the other side of the street



Corner of Leicester Road and Jubilee Way accentuated through architectural expression

6.3 DEVONSHIRE SQUARE

6.3.1 OVERVIEW

The Devonshire Square site is currently occupied by a single storey row of shops dating from the 1960's. The block is in poor condition and significantly impacts on the surrounding townscape - especially along sensitive frontages facing Queen's Park and Devonshire Square itself. The block is serviced from the rear.

In recent years the 'Love Loughborough' BID has invested some money in the Devonshire Square block with an artist commissioned to paint a mural that extends across the building covering the upper storey concrete balustrade facing onto Devonshire Square. However, this is a temporary improvement only and there is potential for more significant change.

To the rear is the Granby Street car park site which extends southwards as a series of car parking areas to the rear of shops and premises on Ward's End. This car park is owned by the Council and is one of the most popular and profitable car parks in the town. A multi-storey car park was formerly located on the northern most car park area.

This is an attractive site with views over the park and could offer the potential for fine grained development that enhances both the setting of, and access to Queen's Park and provides an extension of the town centre offer. It was identified alongside the Devonshire Square site for development in the 2007 masterplan. For these reasons options for this site were reconsidered as part of this masterplan and development options are shown on the following pages.



Figure 6.10: Devonshire Square development principles

However, public consultation revealed a distinctive lack of support for any development on the Granby Street car park. This was due to a concern over the loss of parking spaces and impact on the park.


For this reason the built proposals for this part of the site have been removed from the development principles above and the preferred option.

However, a new pedestrian and cycle route through the car park linking Granby Street to Browns Lane and a new access to Queen's Park are proposed. The existing car park layout could be altered to accommodate these links without significant loss of parking spaces.

6.3.2 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Based on an analysis of the area a number of design principles have been developed for the Devonshire Square site. These help to shape the options that are detailed on the following pages.


Use


 Ground floor retail, food and drink and commercial uses should be retained along Devonshire Square at ground level. Upper floor uses can vary dependent on market demand.




Retention of existing car park


Built Form

 New development should provide active frontages along Devonshire Square and Devonshire Lane to animate the route to the park and shopping frontages.


 There is potential for increased height to 3-4 storeys to maximise the value of the site and better integrate the block with the wider streetscape along Ward's End


Development must be informed by the surrounding character including its impact on the Queen's Park Conservation Area.

 The rear elevation of any new developments should create a more attractive elevation to the park and take advantage of views. If possible any active frontages at ground level should overlook the Wood Brook. If not the existing service area should be tidied up and improved.

 There is potential for a cafe or new bowling green pavilion to animate the new access to Queen's Park from Devonshire Square

Connections

 A new access to Queen's Park should be created from Devonshire Square via Devonshire Lane. This link could extend eastwards to provide a direct link between Queen's Park and Southfields Park

 A new pedestrian and cycle route is proposed extending from Browns Lane in the south through the car park site to Granby Street

6.3.3 OPTIONS

As stated on Page 96 the masterplan team prepared options that explore potential development on Devonshire Square and Granby Street car park. The five options are shown on the following pages. The options were discussed with local stakeholders / consultees and key points from these discussions are summarised alongside each option.

Proposals for development on Granby Street car park were not supported by the public and have been removed from the development principles and preferred option for this area. However, to show transparency in the masterplan process and provide an accurate record of the work prepared, the options for Granby Street are shown in this document.

The Granby Street options are not endorsed by the masterplan and only the development principles on Page 96 and preferred option on Page 104 should be used to guide future development in this area.



Existing view across the northern are of Granby Street car park

OPTION ONE: LOW INTERVENTION

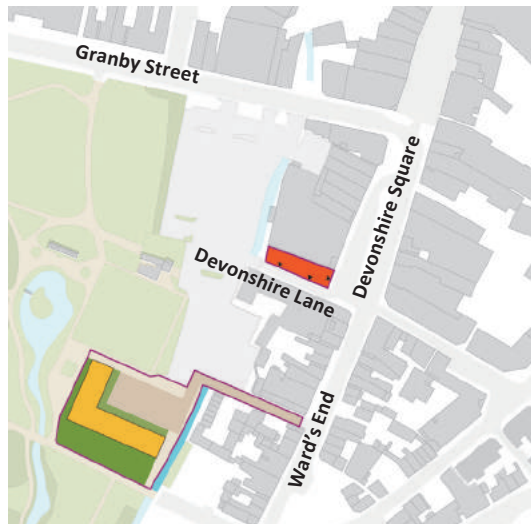


Figure 6.11: Option One - Ground Floor Plan

Overview

This Option shows a minimal approach to redeveloping the sites.

Devonshire Square

In this option the existing block of shops on Devonshire Square would be partially refurbished. Improvements include the creation of an active frontage along Devonshire Lane to animate the route to Queen's Park.

Granby Street car park

A three storey residential apartment block is proposed on the southern car park and provides overlooking to Queen's Park. This would result in the loss of approximately 44 car parking spaces.

A new route across the car park is indicated from Devonshire Lane leading to a new eastern access to Queen's Park.

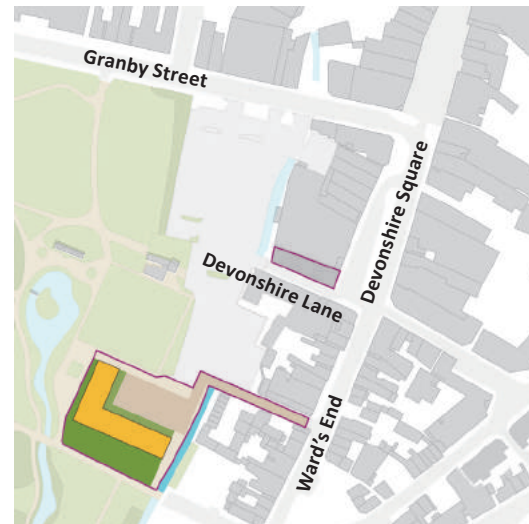


Figure 6.12: Option One - Typical Upper floor Plan

Development quantum

Devonshire Square

- Refurbished retail floorspace

Granby Street car park

- Apartments: 22 + private car parking

Notes on Viability

Potential to be viable if substantial reduction in affordable housing



Comments from Stakeholders and Consultees

Positive features

- Creates a slightly stronger entrance to the park accessed off Devonshire Lane;
- Low Risk; and
- Provides high quality residential uses in the town centre on the Granby Street car park

Negative features

- Concern that it was not ambitious enough for the town;
- Concern over the loss of 44 parking spaces;
- Does not deliver the north- south pedestrian link through the sites; and
- Housing only likely to be viable if affordable housing requirements are reduced

OPTION TWO: MEDIUM INTERVENTION



Figure 6.13: Option Two - Ground Floor Plan

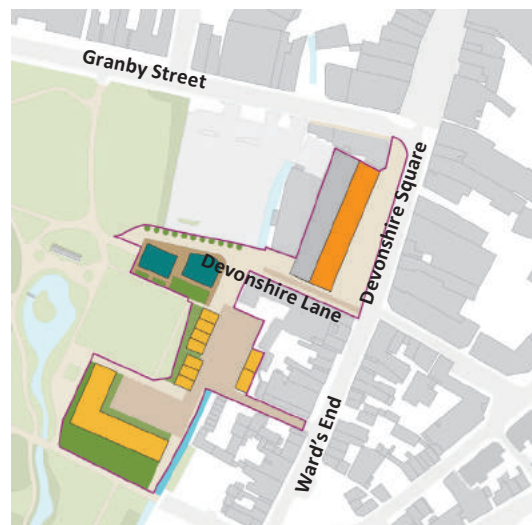


Figure 6.14: Option Two - Typical Upper floor Plan



Overview

Devonshire Square

In this option the existing block at Devonshire Square is refurbished and extended. A three extension is proposed above the existing roof level. This could be developed as an apart-hotel. The upper floor would be set back to reduce impact on the street. An active frontage would be created along the Devonshire Lane edge of the block to activate the route to Queen's Park.

Granby Street car park

To be partially developed to provide a mix of apartments, townhouses and mews properties that will help to animate a new north-south pedestrian / cycle route through the area (alongside the Wood Brook) and create a positive interface with Queen's Park.

A three storey residential apartment block is proposed on the southern car park and provides overlooking to Queen's Park. A mix of town houses and mews properties are proposed on the middle portion of the car park. Together this would result in the loss of approximately 93 car parking spaces.

A new route across the car park is proposed from Devonshire Lane leading to a new eastern access to Queen's Park. The option also indicates the potential to locate a new cafe / park store/ toilets and bowling pavilion alongside this route. The store would replace the existing facility that would be removed if Granby Street car park was developed.

Comments from Stakeholders and Consultees

Positive features

- Support for refurbishment of the existing building on Devonshire Square;
- Support for new upper floor uses on Devonshire Square block;
- Support for the creation of high quality residential uses on the Granby Street car park and on the upper floors of Devonshire square;
- Support for the creation of stronger pedestrian links through the sites; and
- Devonshire Square proposals are potentially viable.

Negative features

- Development on the car park is not likely to be viable; and
- Concern over the loss of 93 parking spaces.

Development quantum

Devonshire Square

- Refurbished retail floorspace
- 1,850m² apart-hotel (approx 40 bedspaces)

Granby Street car park

- Apartments: 22
- Houses: 9
- Cafe and bowling pavilion
- Parking within courtyard to serve new homes

Notes on Viability

Devonshire Square is a low risk project with a high probability of being viable. The Granby Street car park proposals are more complicated and present a mid level of risk.

OPTION THREE: MEDIUM INTERVENTION PLUS

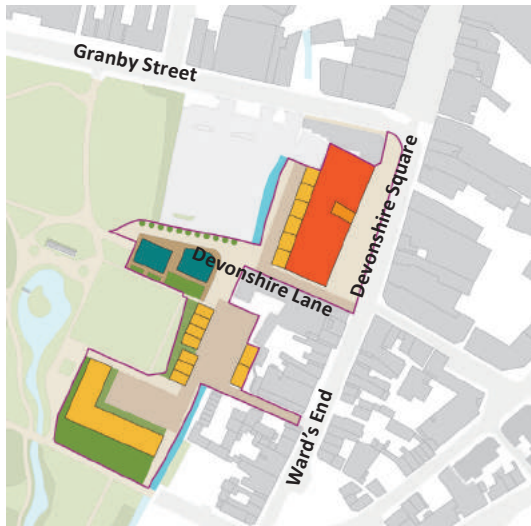


Figure 6.15: Option Three - Ground Floor Plan

Overview

Devonshire Square

This option is identical to Option Two but with the addition of a row of town houses to the rear of the Devonshire Square block. These would provide some passive surveillance over the car park and the path along the Wood Brook.

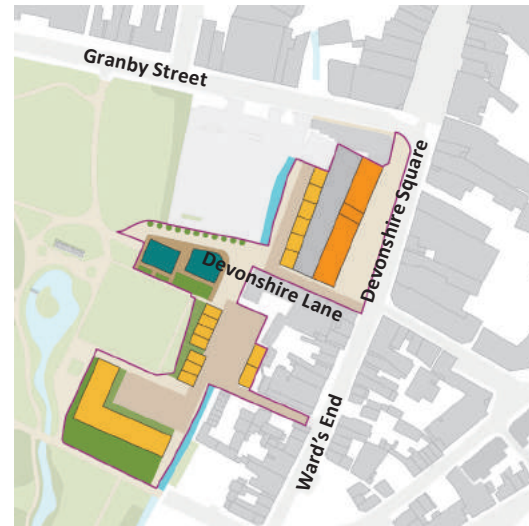


Figure 6.16: Option Three - Typical Upper floor Plan

Development quantum

Devonshire Square

- Refurbished retail floorspace
- 1,850m² apart hotel (approx 40 bedspaces)
- Houses: 7

Granby Street car park

- Apartments: 22
- Houses: 9
- Cafe and bowling pavilion
- Parking within courtyard to serve new homes

Comments from Stakeholders

Positive features

- Support for the refurbishment of the existing building on Devonshire Square and the provision of upper floor uses;
- Creates an attractive frontage to the park from new town houses on the Devonshire Square block;
- Support for the creation of high quality residential uses on the Granby Street car park and on the upper floors of Devonshire square; and
- Support for the creation of stronger pedestrian links through the sites.

Negative features

- Concern over the loss of 93 parking spaces; and
- The project is very unlikely to be viable in the short term.

Notes on Viability

This option is unlikely to be viable in the short term

OPTION FOUR: HIGH INTERVENTION

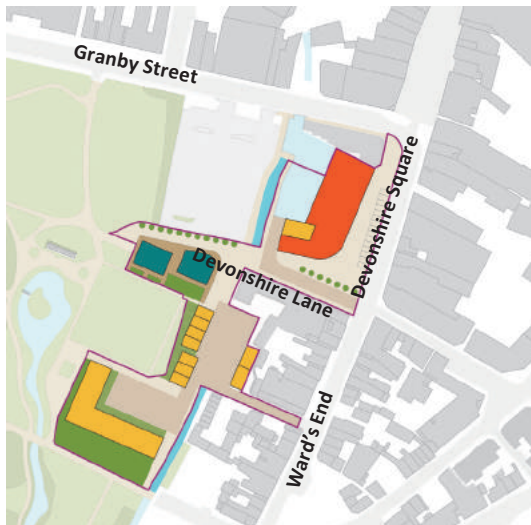


Figure 6.17: Option Four - Ground Floor Plan

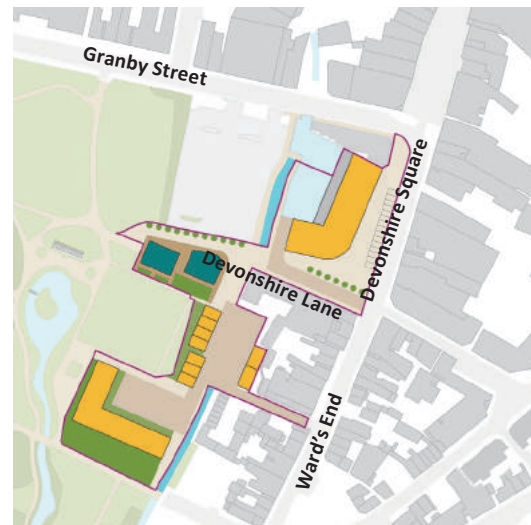


Figure 6.18: Option Four - Typical Upper floor Plan



Overview

Devonshire Square

This option examines the potential to completely redevelop the existing row of shops at Devonshire Square. The block would be replaced with a new retail frontage with residential apartments above but with the building form pulled back to open up views to Queen's Park and create a stronger connection between the town and the park via Devonshire Lane. The Wood Brook would be opened up and the rear elevation designed to create a more attractive interface with the car park.

Granby Street car park

To be partially developed to provide a mix of apartments, townhouses and mews properties that will help to animate a new north-south pedestrian / cycle route through the area (alongside the Wood Brook) and create a positive interface with Queen's Park.

A three storey residential apartment block is proposed on the southern car park and provides overlooking to Queen's Park. A mix of town houses and mews properties are proposed on the middle portion of the car park. Together this would result in the loss of approximately 93 car parking spaces.

A new route across the car park is proposed from Devonshire Lane leading to a new eastern access to Queen's Park. The option also indicates the potential to locate a new cafe / park store/ toilets and bowling pavilion alongside this route. The store would replace the existing facility that would be removed if Granby Street car park was developed.

Comments from Stakeholders

Positive features

- Support for the complete redevelopment of the Devonshire Square block as this would provide most benefits to the town;
- Support for the creation of high quality residential uses on the Granby Street car park and on the upper floors of Devonshire Square; and
- Support for the creation of stronger pedestrian links through the sites.

Negative features

- Development on the car park is not likely to be viable;
- Devonshire Square redevelopment is not viable; and
- Concern over the loss of 93 parking spaces.

Development quantum

Devonshire Square

- New retail: 1,100m² floorspace
- Apartments: 27
- Car parking for new residential to the rear of the block

Granby Street car park

- Apartments: 22
- Houses: 9
- Cafe and bowling pavilion
- Parking within courtyard to serve new homes

Notes on Viability

This option is not likely to be economically viable

OPTION FIVE: HIGHEST INTERVENTION

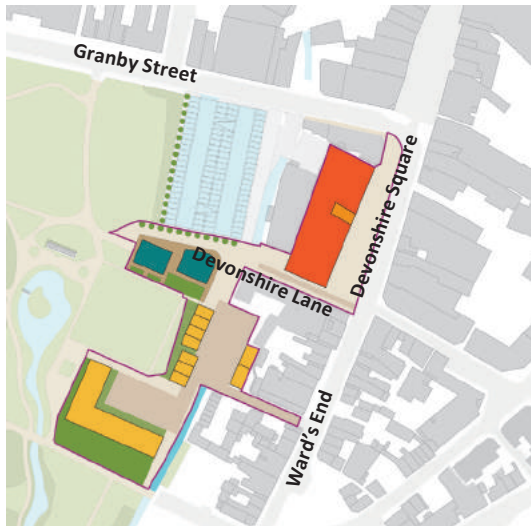


Figure 6.19: Option Five - Ground Floor Plan

Overview

Option Five is a variation on Option Two with the addition of a multi-storey car park on the northern portion of the Granby Street car park.

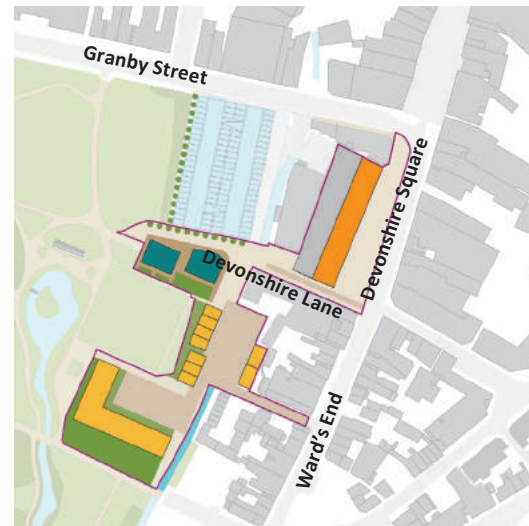


Figure 6.20: Option Five - Typical Upper floor Plan

Development quantum

Devonshire Square

- Refurbished retail floorspace
- 1,850m² apart hotel (approx 40 bedspaces)

Granby Street car park

- Apartments: 22
- Houses: 9
- Cafe and bowling pavilion
- Parking within courtyard to serve new homes
- Multi-storey car park: 260 spaces over three car parking levels



Comments from Stakeholders

Positive features

- Support for the potential creation of new car parking spaces;
- Support for refurbishment of the existing building on Devonshire Square;
- Support for new upper floor uses on Devonshire Square block;
- Support for the creation of high quality residential uses on the Granby Street car park and on the upper floors of Devonshire square;
- Support for the creation of stronger pedestrian links through the sites; and
- Devonshire Square proposals are potentially viable.

Negative features

- Impact of the car park on the Queen's Park Conservation Area and on the new pedestrian route to the park was considered to be unacceptable.

Notes on Viability

This Option is unlikely to be viable (refer to section 4.1.8 relating to delivery of multi-storey car parks)

6.3.4 PREFERRED OPTION

Following discussion with stakeholders and consultees it was agreed that **Option Two** was the preferred option for the Devonshire Square. This was partially endorsed through public consultation but without the proposed residential development on the Granby Street car park - this element of the plan has been removed.

The refurbishment of the existing Devonshire Square parade with the addition of extra storeys above was considered more realistic than redevelopment of the blocks. The option tested indicates an apart-hotel at upper levels. The masterplan would however support other viable uses for the upper floors so long as the development principles shown on page 96 are met.

The potential future development of a new cafe/ replacement bowling pavilion was supported. This would not come forward as part of the redevelopment of Devonshire Square and would need to be delivered by the Council.



Figure 6.21: Devonshire Square / Granby Street preferred option



1 A cafe could help to create a welcoming entrance to Queen's Park from the town centre



3 New cycle/pedestrian path linking Granby Street to Browns Lane car park.



An apart-hotel is proposed for the upper floors over the Devonshire Square block



An active frontage could be created along the Devonshire Lane facade - animating the route to Queen's Park.



Shop front and public realm improvements to Devonshire Square.

6.4 SAINSBURY'S SITE

6.4.1 OVERVIEW

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of The Rushes character area is the presence of large footprint retail units with extensive areas of associated car parking. These are out of character with the town which is generally defined by fine grain, traditional buildings. They also break the predominant street pattern of perimeter blocks.

The Sainsbury's store on Ashby Road is one such site. Its impact on the townscape is particularly noticeable as it affects two of the town centre gateways at Ashby Square and at the junction of Derby Road and Bridge Street.

The Sainsbury's store is located on an awkward shaped site bound to the north by The Rushes, to the south by Ashby Road, to the east by Greenclose Lane and to the west by Broad Street. Historically, the centre of this block was occupied by a gas works. The works were screened by other development that lined the edges of the site and followed a traditional block pattern. Much of this perimeter development has now disappeared. The only elements remaining are a row of houses along Broad Street and some shops with flats above on the Ashby Road / Broad Street corner and on The Rushes / Greenclose Lane corner.

The lack of built frontage along the edges of this large site has a negative impact on the townscape. There is no development frontage to animate the street or frame the site. This issue is exacerbated by the layout of the site. The Sainsbury's store itself is positioned in the south eastern corner of the site. However, it

fronts onto the car park presenting a blank façade to Ashby Road and Greenclose Lane corner. This is an important arrival point into the town located within the Ashby Square gateway. The blank façade creates a poor first impression.

The north-western corner of the site is defined by a brick wall and this located at the Derby Road / Broad Street gateway creates a poor first impression of the town. It also prohibits pedestrian movement across the site.

Whilst the site owners have no immediate intentions to remodel or relocate the store the potential improvements that remodelling this site could offer the town cannot be ignored. There is potential to improve the layout of this site and in turn repair the impact it has on the urban fabric of the town. For this reason the masterplan includes a number of design principles that specifically address this site.



6.4.2 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

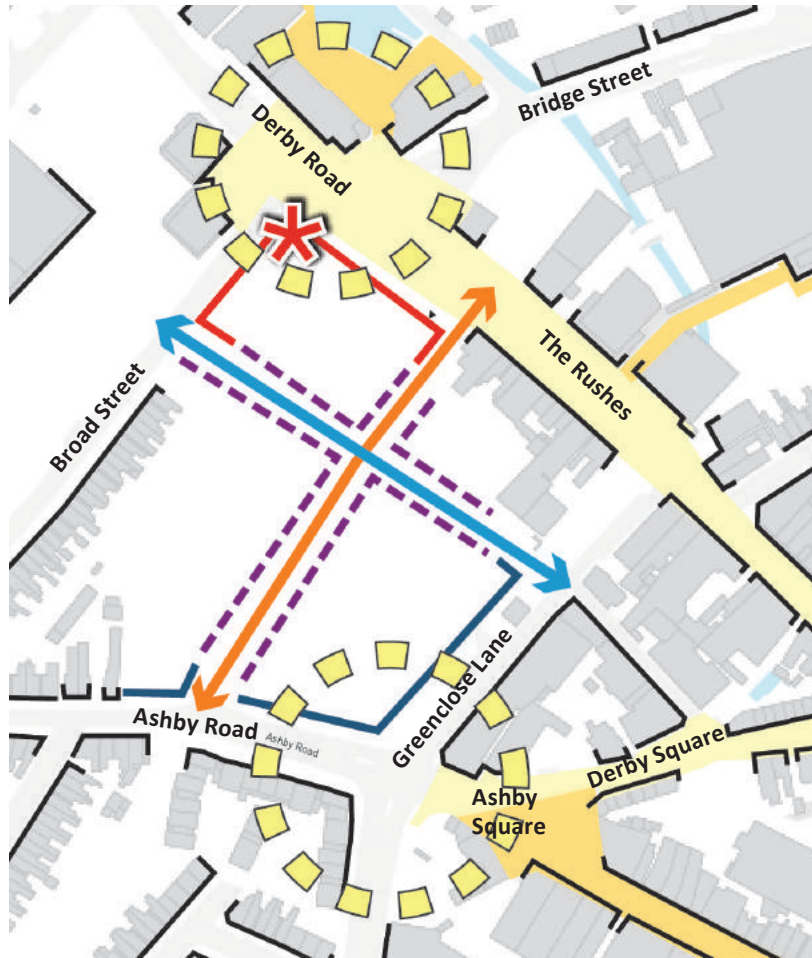


Figure 6.22: Development principles for the Sainsbury's site

Uses

There are no requirements for specific uses on the site. However, there should be no loss of car parking.

Built Form

— Development should create active frontages on to Derby Road and Broad Street



An engaging design response is required on the corner of Derby Road and Broad Street marking the north western entry point into the town.

— Development should create active or improved frontages on to Ashby Road and Greenclose Lane

- - - If possible new development within the interior of the block should face on to new pedestrian routes through the site

Connections

→ A new pedestrian connection should be created between Ashby Road and The Ruses

→ A new pedestrian connection should be created between Broad Street and Greenclose Lane

6.4.3 PREFERRED OPTION

Overview

Sainsbury's have confirmed that they have no immediate plans to redevelop their Ashby Road store. However, they advised that if they were to redevelop the site they would require a replacement foodstore of the same size as the existing premises and an increase in car parking spaces. A more likely scenario is the refurbishment of the existing store.

The preferred option indicates the potential to:

- 1 Provide two new pedestrian routes across the site to improve accessibility and permeability;
- 2 Deliver a block of student housing on the Derby Road / Broad Street corner. This would replace the blank brick wall along this edge and enclose and activate the street;
- 3 Remodel the store entrance on the northern side of the store;
- 4 The potential re-provision of any car parking lost through the above through a decked car parking solution; and
- 5 An arts / lighting installation to better animate the stores Ashby Road frontage.

The preferred option for this site is shown in Figure 6.23. It shows one way that the development principles for this site could be realised. A more comprehensive redevelopment of the site would be preferred but it is recognised that this is not likely to come forward in the short to medium term.

Notes on Viability

No viability analysis has been carried out for this site.

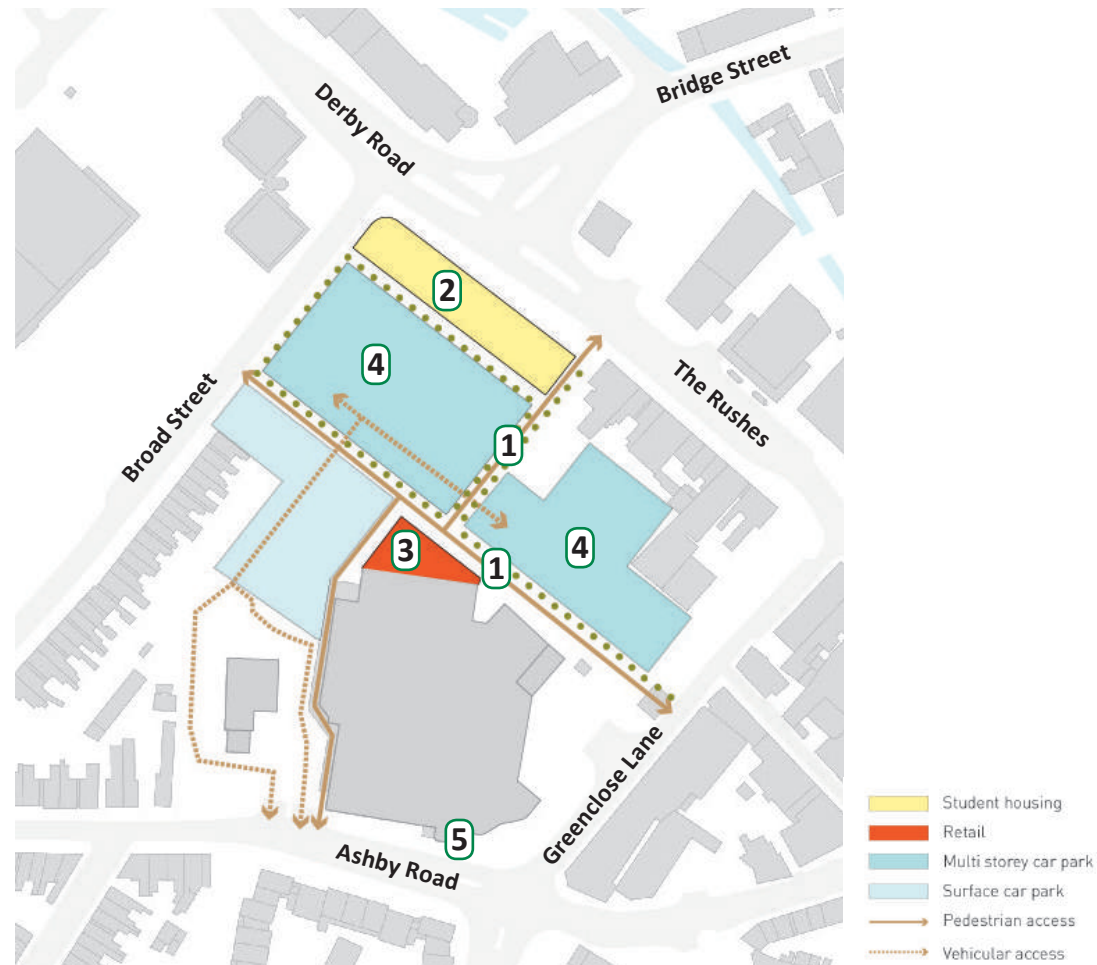


Figure 6.23: Concept proposals for the Sainsbury's site



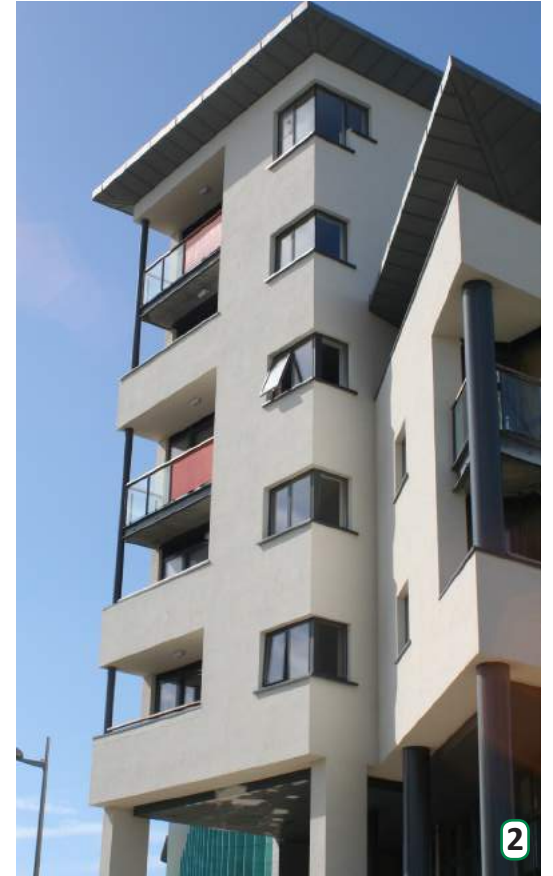
Clear pedestrian routes extending across the car park



Decked car parking to increase efficient use of land and allow other parts of the site to be developed



Public art / lighting project to animate the Sainsbury's facade on Ashby Road



Student housing at the Bridge Road / Derby Road gateway

6.5 LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN BUILDING (THE GENERATOR)

6.5.1 OVERVIEW

This four storey building, located on the corner of Frederick Street and Packe Street towards the western edge of the town centre, was vacated when the Loughborough University School of Art and Design was relocated to premises on the main campus. The building is locally distinctive and occupies a prominent site at the edge of the town centre.

The property remains in the ownership of the University which has agreed to a 25 year pepper corn lease to a community interest company which proposes to convert the building into a centre for creative businesses. The project envisages the provision of space for established businesses, start-ups and individuals to run, develop and collaborate on activities across the creative industries sector.

The project is expected to deliver 13,500 sqft with the capacity to accommodate 120 jobs on site. Through networking and shared use of some space within the facility it is estimated that the project will support an estimated 230 creative businesses.

The establishment of a creative community in this part of the town centre is expected to deliver collateral benefits in generating additional footfall, supporting neighbouring businesses and contributing to the establishment and growth of a wider creative quarter enhancing the town centre offer.

Feasibility studies place the cost of refurbishing the building in the region of £3 million, although the project promoters are exploring alternative delivery strategies which might reduce initial costs with a view to getting the project underway and embarking on a gradual programme of restoration and improvement.

Development quantum

- Workshop / office accommodation for up to 60 small businesses
- Networking café / exhibition space

Notes on Viability

Feasibility studies suggest a business model which could deliver a viable business but funding will be required for significant initial investment to enable the occupation of the building. Favourable lease terms have already been negotiated but initial capital investment will be dependent on agencies responsible for the conservation of heritage buildings and delivery of economic development.



Location plan showing the 'Generator Building'

Proposed generator building
Town centre boundary



The Generator Building - a former University building with a proposal to convert to provide workspace



Image showing existing interior space



Image showing the logo of the community interest group promoting the project



Time to Look to the Future

Business Plan 2017–2022

7. Marketing and promotion strategy



LOVE
Loughborough

Figure 7.1: BID Business plan

7.1 BUILDING THE BRAND

The physical changes suggested in this masterplan are strategic, long term, projects which may take several years to come to fruition.

For the masterplan to be successful it must also consider smaller interventions that can deliver local and immediate change.

These interventions are often tactical / low cost projects that deliver quick and tangible change before long term investment is made. They could include pop up shops, temporary public realm interventions and support for existing community projects.

Successful interventions will change people's everyday experience of the town. They will help to create a sense that things are changing and generate interest in the town centre. They can be used to test ideas and projects that may later become permanent features in the town.

This section details some of the locations and types of small intervention that could help to regenerate Loughborough and promote its position as both a market and a university town.

Brand Loughborough

The first element of the marketing and promotional strategy involves building the brand of the town. Through conversations with local people, as part of the masterplanning process, the following elements that make up the town's unique brand, were identified:

- **Loughborough as a university town.** The town is well known for its university and especially for its reputation in sports and engineering. This attracts many young people to the town and promotes it as a seat of education across the world;
- **Loughborough as a market town.** Loughborough is proud of its market town heritage and the continued success of its market and retail / civic functions;
- **Loughborough industrial heritage.** Loughborough's industrial legacy is an important part of the town's identity. This includes the town's heritage railway, bell foundry and association with the hosiery industry; and
- **Loughborough cultural heritage:** Loughborough has a rich cultural tradition with many interesting buildings, and links to art and culture.

These four elements sit at the core of all of the small interventions programme promoted in the masterplan. This programme is structured under three themes discussed in this section:

- Events;
- Animating the town; and
- Supporting business.

7.2 SMALL INTERVENTIONS

7.2.1 EVENTS

Strengthening the town's capacity to host events is a vital part of promoting the town's brand. Events can be designed to cater for a wide range of ages and tastes and attract visitors and tourists. This will help enliven the town and encourage spending in local shops and services.

The events themselves should centre around the town's brand and help to promote the key elements of this brand in order to strengthen its identity. These could include:

1. Sports events

One of the strongest elements of the town and university's brand is its association with sport. The University has an international reputation for fostering and supporting sporting ability. It is home to many national sporting bodies such as British Swimming and the Youth Sports Trust and was named Sports University of the Year 2017 in the Times Good University Guide. Indeed if Loughborough University was a country its graduates would have finished the 2016 Olympic Games 17th on the medal table.

Sports themed events would help to promote these impressive statistics and could help to strengthen links between the town and the university. They could be held both at the university campus and in town centre locations such as Southfields Park. Ideas for such events could include:



Figure 7.2: Events and specialist markets

- **Student and Community Games** a collaborative event to bring together the town and the university in competitive sports. Similar events are already happening in other locations such as Oxford, Cambridge and Leicester (10k running events) and St Andrews (golf tournament).
- **Great Loughborough Run** This event could be similar to the Great North run held annually in Gateshead and which brings £20 million plus to the local economy. The route could navigate through both the town centre and university and show case professional and amateur athletes.
- **Loughborough Sports Festival** This town wide event could be used to showcase the university's success as a centre of sporting excellence and inspire local people and visitors alike. It could include talks from the University's most notable sportsmen and women, sales and demonstrations from sports manufacturers and sports themed activities.

2. Specialist markets

In 2017 Loughborough was crowned 'Best Large Outdoor Market' in the British Market of the Year Award organized by the National Association of British Market Authorities. The continued success of the market is vitally important. Markets can generate a footfall increase of around 25% for town centres and are excellent business incubators.

Currently the markets are held every Thursday and Saturday between 7 am and 5pm with a vintage market held on a Friday between 8am and 4pm and a monthly farmers market on the second Wednesday of each month. Whilst this existing provision is impressive it could be expanded to cater for a wider range of tastes and more extensive opening times. Expansion could include:

- A programme of specialist markets – such as a weekend street food market throughout the year and a Christmas market;
- Sunday markets; and
- A teenage market where young entrepreneurs are given the chance to run their own stall.

Specialist markets could be held across the town, as well as in Market Place, to enliven other parts of the town – including Bedford Square or vacant development sites such as Baxter Gate and the plot to the rear of Carillon Court Shopping Centre .

3. Industrial heritage themed events

Loughborough's industrial heritage is largely focused around the Nottingham Road area. This area is at the edge of the town centre and is in a peripheral location for visitors.

Events aimed at encouraging people to visit this area and some of its attractions including the heritage railway, canal and bell foundry would promote this part of the town's identity. They could also help attract investment into this area and support local businesses. Events could include:

- **Loughborough Heritage** Weekend events could be held across the heritage quarter and include canal boat trips, tours of the bell foundry, steam train rides and talks from the University's school of engineering. Stalls and markets could enliven the routes between the events and vintage transport used to ferry people from one destination to another.
- **Vintage Loughborough** This event could combine some of the events that already happen in the town such as the classic car show and the vintage market. These could be supplemented with a programme of vintage themed events such as dances and tea parties.



Figure 7.3: Industrial heritage

4. Cultural Heritage

Loughborough's cultural heritage is intrinsically linked to the University's School of Art and Design. This has fostered great talent including the well known 1960s 'Op Artist' Bridget Riley. This artistic side of the town is not visible in the town centre. Indeed, the annual degree shows for students of the art and design courses are held on the university campus.

To strengthen links between the university, exhibitions and events that are currently held on campus could perhaps be brought in to the town centre. For instance a summer exhibition highlighting the best of the University's graduating students could be held in the Town Hall or in vacant or underused spaces. This could be coupled with a series of talks and lectures from the University's staff.

Loughborough is also well known for its long association with Ladybird Books which were published in the town until 1998. These recognisable, pocket sized, hardback, children's books date back to 1914. Their illustrative design and reduced vocabulary has helped several generations of UK children to read. Many of these books are considered collectors items and there is an avid community of adults who enjoy this hobby.

The Loogabaroooga festival celebrates illustrative literature and can help to promote books like these. However, there is potential for the town to do more to commemorate the success of Ladybird. This could include an exhibition of Ladybird Covers – borrowed from the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life which has over 20,000 images preserved from the Ladybird archive. This could be accompanied by events and talks by collectors.

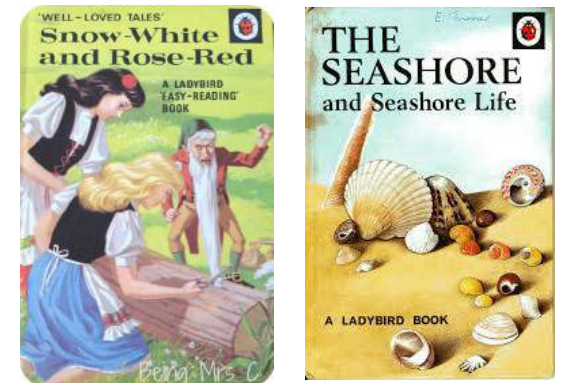


Figure 7.4: Cultural Heritage

7.2.2. ANIMATING THE TOWN

Whilst events will go some way to enliven the town and build its brand, they should be supported by temporary environmental improvements that may help to improve circulation around the town centre and to animate quiet and underused spaces.

These interventions are inspired by, and expand upon, the work already being delivered by the 'Love Loughborough' Business Improvement District including temporary shop front displays in vacant units and the public art installation at Devonshire Square.

The Lanes Strategy

The Lanes Strategy described in Section 5.4.3 of this document could be delivered as part of the programme of smaller interventions that support the longer term spatial improvements in the town. This strategy would see the enhancement of the towns secondary movement network of lanes and alleyways. This would create stronger retail loops and safer and more attractive pedestrian connections across the town as well as opening up opportunities for local artists.

Temporary public realm / environmental improvements

As well as the Lanes Strategy other temporary public realm and environmental improvements could be used to create interest and buzz and quickly improve spaces before permanent interventions can be made. These could include:

- Parklets (temporary pavement extensions that provide additional amenity space) installed on busy traffic routes, such as The Rushes;
- Interventions to slow or divert traffic in busy locations such as The Rushes; and
- Further temporary improvements to building facades.

Temporary uses

Temporary uses could help colonise the towns underused and empty spaces. These could include:

- Provision of start up business space at upper floor levels, especially within the Ashby Square / Market Street Character Area. These should be aimed at graduates and young entrepreneurs;
- The use of the empty site to the rear of Carillon Court on Derby Square for a weekend street food market or other events;
- The promotion of Pop up shops across the town centre - especially in independent retail areas, to enliven the streetscene and create a more attractive environment for shoppers and businesses;
- The use of vacant sites (such as the Aumberry Gap site) for events and markets; and
- Creation of trial 'information kiosks' (one in the town centre and one at the University) that advertise all of the events going on in the town.



Figure 7.5: Temporary furniture and public art

7.2.3 SUPPORTING BUSINESS

The Masterplan recognises the role and continued importance of the 'Love Loughborough' BID as a regenerating force for the town. Particular support is given to the work of the BID not covered by the recommended small interventions such as:

- Digital interventions including smart marketing, free wifi and the continued development of the Love Loughborough website;
- Support for start up businesses - especially in the Ashby Square / Market Place character area (including The Generator Building project);
- Business information and networking events;
- Ongoing improvement to the levels of cleanliness across the town;
- Dressing the town and investing in vacant properties that cannot accommodate temporary uses; and
- Development of a marketing strategy to attract the University community to visit the town centre.



Support for the work of the BID





8. Implementation and delivery strategy



8.1 DELIVERY PARTNERS AND PROCESS

8.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Loughborough town centre masterplan includes a series of physical (development) projects and non-physical initiatives. It sets out the projects that will shape the town centre over the next 15 years and beyond. It is ambitious, yet flexible to ensure that it can meet changes in circumstances, especially economic and property related.

The masterplan illustrates the vision and potential for change. To be an effective masterplan however, there needs to be a clear understanding of how projects and initiatives could be delivered and programmed. This implementation strategy therefore explains how the key site specific masterplan projects could be delivered and by when, and outlines the key actions which would be required to ensure delivery.

While the implementation strategy discusses the steps to achieve realisation of schemes or delivery of initiatives, it can only be a starting point. There needs to be flexibility to allow the proposals to respond to changes in the property market or challenges that they face.

The delivery plan should be regarded as a 'live' document: periodically reviewing and updating the plan is an important and a necessary process.

8.1.2 DELIVERY AGENCIES

The delivery of the masterplan cannot be achieved by the Council acting alone. It will need to be supported by activity from a wide range of stakeholders, delivery partners and agencies – both public and private. Otherwise, the masterplan will not come to fruition. While the Council is expected to perform a key role, other agencies that may be involved with enabling, funding and delivering the projects may include:

- Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP);
- Leicestershire County Council;
- The 'Love Loughborough' BID;
- Community organisations;
- Registered social landlords;
- Landowners;
- Developers;
- Businesses;
- Utility suppliers;
- Loughborough University and other education bodies;
- Private and philanthropic sponsors;
- Other public sector organisations - including the police and NHS; and
- Transport bodies - such as bus operators.

Other organisations may also be identified – or be founded during the lifetime of the masterplan – which may be able to assist in the delivery of projects.

8.1.3 FUNDING MASTERPLAN DELIVERY

Not all of the proposals contained in the masterplan are commercial in nature. Project delivery is fully expected to be secured using a combination of public and private sector investment, with the balance of need for funding varying depending on the type, nature, cost and commercial viability of the project. These funds might include:

- LLEP administered grants and funding streams;
- Prudential borrowing;
- Section 106 Agreements / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) / developer contributions;
- Housing revenue;
- Rolling Investment Funds;
- Charnwood Council's Capital Programme;
- Lottery funding; and / or
- Transport funds.

Crucially, funding opportunities continue to evolve and will undoubtedly do so over the lifetime of the masterplan. Any funding strategy must be refreshed and reviewed as time progresses.

8.1.4 DELIVERY MECHANISMS

There is a need to consider what delivery mechanisms could underpin initiatives. There is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' delivery mechanism for projects and the choice should reflect the size, scale and nature of the individual masterplan initiatives. The delivery of the masterplan will require support too through planning mechanisms, such as:

- Local Development Plan policies;
- Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- Development and Design Frameworks; and
- Action Plans.

8.1.5 SITE SPECIFIC DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND STRUCTURES

A number of delivery mechanisms could potentially be used to deliver site specific physical (development) schemes in the masterplan. Site specific developments can be delivered through three core approaches:

- **Private sector delivery** - where a private sector company delivers a scheme without the need to enter into a property or development agreement with a Council. This typically occurs where the developer controls all the land needed, and the Council does not have land or property interest;
- **Public sector delivery** - where the Council (or other public sector body) owns the land, has fully specified the development and procures a construction firm to undertake the development to that specification; and
- **Public / private development partnerships** the most common form of delivery mechanism used to procure more complex urban regeneration schemes by Councils. The key characteristic is some form of 'core' development agreement in place between a developer and Council (or other public sector body). The development agreement is a legal document which sets out what the scheme will comprise, the roles and responsibilities of the parties, preconditions which must be discharged to enable the development and the financial return to each party on completion of the scheme.

8.2 SITE SPECIFIC DELIVERY PLANS

8.2.1 BAXTER GATE

Description

Redevelopment of an underused and peripheral site, with the potential to create a strong, new link from High Street to Baxter Gate. A retail led scheme, with the flexibility to include other active ground floor uses, including leisure, community / health as demand dictates. Upper floors given over to residential uses, perhaps including student accommodation too. It would also include a new multi-storey car park to help support wider town centre accessibility.

Phasing

Expected to be a single phase, so as to create a comprehensive solution to creating change. However, an initial sub-phase will require the relocation of Pinfold Health Centre.

Development of a new car park at this site may also act as precursor to releasing other land used for parking elsewhere in the town.

Land assembly and relocation issues

Requires the relocation of Pinfold Gate health centre first: either on site or possibly to another site or premises if suitable and available. This too will likely need to ensure that continuity of service can also be provided. Careful estate management of leases and interests together with private treaty negotiations in respect of properties fronting the High Street (potentially nos 8 – 14) would be required to assist in securing necessary land assembly. An alternative would be for a more interventionist approach, with the Council using land assembly powers which may be necessary to promote and de-risk development at this site.

Another important aspect of the design of the scheme would be to secure a good quality connection between the new Baxter Gate leisure development and the redeveloped Pinfold Gate site.

Priority

Mid to high priority.

Funding

Expected to be commercially funded. Potential for flexibility around affordable housing content, if required to improve viability. May be opportunities for other parties to contribute to the scheme: for example, through direct development or acquisition of the car park.

Likely delivery mechanisms

Public sector led initially. Use of public sector land (and possibly latterly land assembly powers) to drive forward change. Leading toward marketing campaign to secure developer: most likely scheme then delivered through public / private partnership (see Figure 8.1).

Timescales

Mid-term 5-10 years.

KEY DELIVERY ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
1. Initial discussions between landowners and CBC	Landowners / CBC / NHS
2. Confirm potential development area	Landowners / CBC / NHS
3. Agree relocation proposal for health centre	CBC / NHS
4. Embed proposals for change in planning policy	CBC
5. Undertake marketing	Landowner(s) / CBC
6. Secure developer	Landowner(s) / CBC
7. Implement development	Landowner(s) / CBC

Figure 8.1: Table identifying key delivery actions and responsibilities in respect of the Baxter Gate site



Baxter Gate site

8.2.2 AUMBERRY GAP

Description

Redevelopment of a site currently used for open storage and car related activities. The scheme should be residential led with flexibility on the type of residential accommodation to be delivered. This could include student housing. Commercial uses at ground floor level would be supported if proved viable.

Phasing

Flexibility may be required to phase in delivery of any residential elements in order to avoid oversupply of units.

Land assembly and relocation issues

Core site in single ownership, though a number of lesser property interests expected to exist. Careful estate management of occupier leases and interests needed in order to secure vacant possession, with possible need to find new premises for businesses affected.

Priority

Mid to high priority.

Funding

Expected to be commercially funded.

Likely delivery mechanisms

Private sector led. Delivered through a traditional marketing campaign to secure developer (See Figure 8.2).

Timescales

Short to mid-term 0-10 years.

KEY DELIVERY ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
1. Initial discussions between landowner(s) and CBC	Landowners / CBC
2. Embed proposals for change in Planning Policy	CBC
3. Undertake marketing	Landowner
4. Dispose site / secure developer	Landowner
5. Secure permission	Developer
6. Implement development	Developer

Figure 8.2: Table identifying key delivery actions and responsibilities in respect of the Aumberry Gap site



Aumberry Gap site



8.2.3 DEVONSHIRE SQUARE

Description

Refurbishment and extension of retail block to allow for development of upper floor uses.

Phasing

Single phase development.

Land assembly and relocation issues

Site in single ownership, though considerable number of sub-interests exist (e.g. retail leases). Dependent on construction approach and whether there is a need to relocate ground floor retailers.

Priority

Mid priority.

Funding

Expected to be commercially funded.

Key actions / next steps

Likely delivery mechanisms: Private sector led development (Refer to Figure 8.3).

Timescales

Short term 0-5 years.

KEY DELIVERY ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
1. Embed proposals for change in planning policy	CBC
2. Secure permission	Developer
3. Implement development	Developer

Figure 8.3: Table identifying key delivery actions and responsibilities in respect of the Devonshire Square site



Devonshire Square block - lack of frontage onto Devonshire Lane



Devonshire Square block - a mural has been added to the facade as a temporary environmental improvement

8.2.4 SAINSBURY'S

Description

Major development of Sainsbury's site for a mixed use scheme with a relocated / reconfigured foodstore, decked car parking and residential development.

Phasing

Likely phased in order to secure continuity of trade for the foodstore.

Land assembly and relocation issues

Site in single ownership. Any loss of parking spaces through redevelopment - both temporarily and longer term - will need to be considered carefully and managed at a town centre wide level.

Priority

Low priority.

Funding

Expected to be commercially funded.

Key actions / next steps

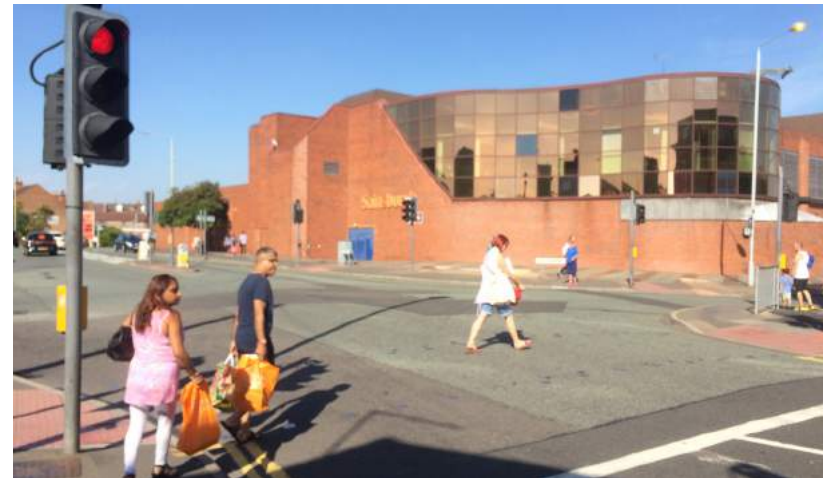
Likely delivery mechanisms: Private sector led development (Refer to Figure 8.4).

Timescales

Long term 10 - 15+ years.

KEY DELIVERY ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
1. Embed proposals for change in planning policy	Landowner
2. Market site	Landowner
3. Dispose part(s) of site	Landowner
4. Secure permission	Developer
5. Implement development	Developer

Figure 8.4: Table identifying key delivery actions and responsibilities in respect of the Sainsbury's store on Ashby Street



Sainsbury's on Ashby Road

8.2.5 LOUGHBOROUGH SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN BUILDING (THE GENERATOR)

Description

Refurbishment of 1930s building to provide work spaces for the creative industries.

Phasing

Single phase development.

Land assembly and relocation issues

Site belongs to the University who have agreed a 25 year lease to a community interest company.

Priority

Mid to high priority.

Funding

The community interest company are making applications to various funding bodies to support the projects.

Key actions / next steps

Likely delivery mechanisms: Private sector led development (Refer to Figure 8.5).

Timescales

Short term.

KEY DELIVERY ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
1. Embed proposals for change in planning policy	CBC
2. Market site	n/a
3. Dispose part(s) of site	n/a
4. Secure permission	Community interest company
5. Implement development	Community interest company

Figure 8.5: Table identifying key delivery actions and responsibilities in respect of the Generator Building



Image from the community interest company's website

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MOSAIC CLASSIFICATIONS

APPENDIX B: STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR LOUGHBOROUGH

APPENDIX A: MOSAIC CLASSIFICATIONS

The Table below provides definitions of the Mosaic classifications referenced in Section 4.2 of this report under the socioeconomic profile of Loughborough’s residents

CITY PROSPERITY	City Prosperity work in high status positions. Commanding substantial salaries they are able to afford expensive urban homes. They live and work predominantly in London, with many found in and around the City or in locations a short commute away. Well-educated, confident and ambitious, this elite group is able to enjoy their wealth and the advantages of living in a world-class capital to the full.
PRESTIGE POSITIONS	Prestige Positions are affluent married couples whose successful careers have afforded them financial security and a spacious home in a prestigious and established residential area. While some are mature empty-nesters or elderly retired couples, others are still supporting their teenage or older children
COUNTRY LIVING	Country Living are well-off homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Some people are landowners or farmers, others run small businesses from home, some are retired and others commute distances to professional jobs.
RURAL REALITY	Rural Reality are people who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.
SENIOR SECURITY	Senior Security are elderly singles and couples who are still living independently in comfortable homes that they own. Property equity gives them a reassuring level of financial security. This group includes people who have remained in family homes after their children have left, and those who have chosen to downsize to live among others of similar ages and lifestyles.
SUBURBAN STABILITY	Suburban Stability are typically mature couples or families, some enjoying recent empty-nest status and others with older children still at home. They live in mid-range family homes in traditional suburbs where they have been settled for many years.
DOMESTIC SUCCESS	Domestic Success are high-earning families who live affluent lifestyles in upmarket homes situated in sought after residential neighbourhoods. Their busy lives revolve around their children and successful careers in higher managerial and professional roles.

ASPIRING HOMEMAKERS	Aspiring Homemakers are younger households who have, often, only recently set up home. They usually own their homes in private suburbs, which they have chosen to fit their budget.
FAMILY BASICS	Family Basics are families with children who have limited budgets and can struggle to make ends meet. Their homes are low cost and are often found in areas with fewer employment options.
TRANSIENT RENTERS	Transient Renters are single people who pay modest rents for low cost homes. Mainly younger people, they are highly transient, often living in a property for only a short length of time before moving on
MUNICIPAL CHALLENGE	Municipal Challenge are long-term social renters living in low-value multi-storey flats in urban locations, or small terraces on outlying estates. These are challenged neighbourhoods with limited employment options and correspondingly low household incomes.
VINTAGE VALUE	Vintage Value are elderly people who mostly live alone, either in social or private housing, often built with the elderly in mind. Levels of independence vary, but with health needs growing and incomes declining, many require an increasing amount of support.
MODEST TRADITIONS	Modest Traditions are older people living in inexpensive homes that they own, often with the mortgage nearly paid off. Both incomes and qualifications are modest, but most enjoy a reasonable standard of living. They are long-settled residents having lived in their neighbourhoods for many years.
URBAN COHESION	Urban Cohesion are settled extended families and older people who live in multi-cultural city suburbs. Most have bought their own homes and have been settled in these neighbourhoods for many years, enjoying the sense of community they feel there.
RENTAL HUBS	Rental Hubs contains predominantly young, single people in their 20s and 30s who live in urban locations and rent their homes from private landlords while in the early stages of their careers, or pursuing studies.

APPENDIX B: STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR LOUGHBOROUGH

The table below lists the key projects identified in the masterplan and their complexity, cost and level of priority. It also identifies the key parties likely to be involved in their delivery and implementation.

Reference	Project / Initiative	Level of complexity	Potential cost	Delivery partners and process	Timescale
PUBLIC REALM					
1.1	Deliver public realm improvements from Derby Square to Ashby Square	Medium	Medium	CBC / LCC	Early win
1.2	Deliver public realm improvements along Biggin Street	Low	Medium	CBC / LCC	Early win
1.3a	Deliver public realm improvements to Wards End to Devonshire Square	Medium	Medium	CBC / LCC / traders / businesses	Medium term
1.3b	Deliver a new layout for Bedford Square. The potential benefits of removing traffic from Bedford Square should be investigated with the County Highway Authority as part of the design process for this scheme.	Medium / High	Medium	CBC / LCC	Medium term
1.4	Deliver public realm improvements to increase the visibility and extend the pedestrian priority area along High Street to Jubilee Way	Medium	Medium	CBC / LCC / bus operators	Medium term
1.5	Deliver public realm improvements to increase the visibility of the pedestrian priority area along Baxter Gate.	Medium	Medium	CBC / LCC / bus operators	Medium term
1.6	Implement a public realm scheme from the existing pedestrian priority area on Swan Street, along The Rushes to Derby Road.	Medium	High	CBC / LCC / bus operators	Medium term
1.7	Improve public realm along Nottingham Road – including heritage trail to Bell Foundry and heritage railway.	Medium	Medium	CBC / LCC	Long term
1.8	Improve the visibility and quality of pedestrian and cycle routes between the university and the town	Medium	Low / Medium	CBC / LCC / University / College	Early win
1.9	Implement the Lanes Strategy and temporary public realm improvements	Medium	Medium	CBC / LCC	Early wins through to long term (numerous projects)
MOVEMENT NETWORK					
2.1	Work with the County Highway Authority to explore any potential benefits of reintroducing two way working on Southfield Road and Wood Gate	High	High	CBC / LCC	Medium term
2.2	Work with the County Highway Authority to explore the potential benefits of reconfiguring access to Granby Street Car Park from Packe Street	Low	Low	CBC / LCC	Short to medium term
2.3	Enable delivery of a new town centre car park as part of new development on Baxter Gate	High	High	CBC / LCC / Landowner / Developer	Long term

Reference	Project / Initiative	Level of complexity	Potential cost	Delivery partners and process	Timescale
KEY SITES					
3.1	Baxter Gate: Deliver a mixed-use retail led scheme on this site delivering a combination of new retail units, residential, a health centre and a new town centre car park together with enhanced connectivity	High	High	CBC / Developer / Landowner	Medium term
3.2	Aumberry Gap - Deliver residential led development on this site.	Medium	High	CBC / Developer / Landowner	Medium term
3.3	Devonshire Square – Deliver new / remodelled mixed use development on this site	Medium	Medium / High	CBC / Landowner / leaseholders	Short to medium term
3.4	Sainsbury's - major mixed use development to Intensify development on this site	High	High	CBC/Landowner	Long term
3.5	Loughborough School of Art and Design Building (Generator)- Refurbishment of existing building to deliver work spaces for the creative industries	Medium	Medium /High	CBC / Community Interest Company	Short term
SMALL INTERVENTIONS					
4.1	Events / Temporary uses: Create a town centre guide to holding events and temporary uses. This should make the process easy.	Low	Low	BID / CBC / LLC / University	Short term
4.2	Prepare detailed project plan for the Lanes Strategy and any other temporary public realm improvements identifying priority lanes for improvement and implementation strategy.	Low	Low	BID / CBC / LLC / University	Short term



URBAN
INITIATIVES
STUDIO

 MONTAGU
EVANS


Charnwood