

Charnwood Borough Council Shepshed Town Centre Master Plan and Delivery Framework

May 2013

Charnwood Borough Council

Shepshed Town Centre Master Plan and Delivery Framework

A consultancy report by **BBP Regeneration**
in collaboration with **Wei Yang + Partners** and **Shared Intelligence**

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Summary

Introduction and context

Although Shepshed has many qualities that other towns aspire to, decades of factory closures have resulted in a **loss of local jobs** and a decline in the level of economic activity within walking distance of the town centre. **Competing centres** such as Loughborough and Coalville offer a wider range of shops and services, contributing to further decline.

The problems have been recognised for some time. Various studies have been undertaken but none have generated the critical mass of activity that is needed to reverse the decline. More recently, however, work on a variety of fronts has pointed the way to creating a policy framework that would support change. The **regeneration of Shepshed** will feature as a strategic priority in Charnwood Borough Council's Core Strategy (due to be published as a pre-submission draft in June 2013), together with proposals for some 500+ dwellings in and around the town. **Shepshed's Town Team**, formed in late 2012, will play a pivotal role going forward - guiding and directing the regeneration process, creating opportunities for investment and ensuring that Shepshed makes the most of its assets.

The purpose of this commission was to deliver a **Master Plan** that provides a strategic vision, and a **flexible Delivery Framework** to improve the overall economic health and vitality of the town centre. The work was undertaken on a **collaborative and participatory** basis engaging the Town Team in three events and the wider community at a public exhibition.

Some of the **key issues** for Shepshed town centre include:

- Poor comparison retail offer (with few national multiple retailers located in the town)
- Low retention of retail expenditure, with residents travelling elsewhere to work and shop
- No clearly defined 'town centre' and no readily discernible 'high street' – retail uses interspersed with non-retail uses
- Poor public realm and pedestrian safety harm the town centre shopping experience
- A public space used for a declining street market in Hall Croft that is invisible to passing trade
- Lack of leisure facilities to meet the needs of its community

Conversely, some of the **key opportunities** include:

- An excellent location close to the M1 and National Forest
- An attractive urban fabric, particularly around Market Place
- A growing population, with potential new residential development of around 500 homes
- Potential to improve significantly access through better signage, rationalisation of traffic flows and parking, and improved links from car parks to the town centre
- A number of important buildings, features and frontages in the town centre that could be exploited and enhanced
- A active local community with lots of interest groups, clubs and societies across all ages

Defining the vision

Four broad scenarios were presented to and explored with the Town Team in order to define a new vision for Shepshed. During these discussions, it was recognised that due to the historic fabric of the town centre and limited amounts of vacant/underused land and buildings, the **scope for redevelopment within Shepshed was limited** and, in consequence, much of the vision would need to be delivered by way of **social and economic interventions, supported by environmental improvements**, as opposed to a spatial strategy delivering substantial amounts of new floorspace.

In the light of these conclusions, a preferred vision emerged: of a local centre for local people, based on support for, and expansion of, independent traders, repairing the physical fabric of the town and thereby making it more attractive. Defining this vision enabled the identification and agreement of **six Strategic Objectives**:

1. To promote Shepshed as a **historic market town** whose heritage and location will attract visitors and drive prosperity.
2. To reinvigorate town centre activity and prosperity based around a **new/enhanced market and independent retail offer**.
3. To provide **enhanced leisure facilities across the town** to serve the residents of Shepshed and to attract visitors to the town centre from outlying employment areas and surrounding settlements.
4. To **improve the visual appearance** of the town centre to enhance the public realm making it an attractive environment to visit, shop and spend leisure time.
5. To **improve connectivity** and make the town centre an easier and safer place to access and visit.
6. To attract new businesses to Shepshed and to facilitate **retailers and local businesses** working together with appropriate support, a common purpose and mutual commitment to invest in the town centre.

Delivering the vision

The Master Plan

The Master Plan provides the framework within which detailed interventions can be designed, development proposals can be formulated, funding sought and planning policies prepared. It focuses interventions around **a spine of complementary activities** combining public realm improvements with strategies to relate character and identity to the town's retail function. Three '**destinations**' would be created each with its own character, identity and economic rationale. The **Bull Ring** would be the principal gateway to the town, **Market Place** the 'heritage quarter and the central meeting / pedestrian area would be formed around **Hall Croft**, the 'heart' of the town.

The proposal for **Hall Croft is by far the most complex and difficult intervention area to deliver**. It is also perhaps the most important as it presents the one opportunity to give the town a "heart". A **public sector led approach, which seeks to bring forward development by setting up the conditions for private developers to invest** is most likely to deliver beneficial change.

However, recognising the current funding environment, we have also suggested an alternative development strategy based on the management of private sector led development proposals through the statutory planning system alongside more limited public sector investment over an extended period of time.

The Delivery Framework

The Master Plan vision will be delivered over many years and each action should be seen as one in a **series of incremental steps** building towards that common goal. The Delivery Framework examines what actions, taken collectively, would deliver the Master Plan vision for Shepshed.

We propose a **wide range of actions**, some of which can be implemented at little or no cost, and others where substantial financial investment will be required. Similarly, with timescales, we have sought to set out some interventions that can be implemented immediately, some that will take a little longer, and others that may take a number of years to realise due to their complex nature and the need for funding. However, it is essential that those taking ownership of the delivery programme **regularly review and amend the Delivery Framework** to take account of changing circumstances and needs.

Finally, our list of proposed interventions is also intended to inspire – to get people **thinking creatively** about what can be done, how else the vision can be achieved, and what actions they can take to make it happen. We therefore include a number of examples of what has been successful elsewhere.

Establishing the framework for change

It is essential that structures to manage, facilitate and implement change be put in place swiftly as they form the basic framework upon which this Delivery Plan is conceived. In the final section of this report, we explore the three crosscutting themes which need to be considered: policy, funding and governance.

The Delivery Framework assumes at least a ten-year programme of reinforcing activity. Money is important, but more important still is the willingness of local people, businesses, public bodies and other organisations to turn the vision into reality. Through the town's potential, the commitment of public bodies and the enthusiasm of local people, notable and lasting change can be achieved in Shepshed.

Section 1

Introduction





01 Introduction

Shepshed is Charnwood Borough's second largest settlement after Loughborough. Shepshed has many qualities to which other towns aspire:

- A growing population in generally high quality housing
- Successful employment areas enjoying an excellent location
- Good schools, medical and dental services
- A range of community buildings and services
- An urban environment with strong potential for enhancement
- Accessible green space within and on the edge of the town.

Historically, the town's economy has been dependent upon a large number of small-scale manufacturing operations, primarily within the hosiery sector. Decades of factory closures, however, have resulted in a loss of local jobs contributing to the emergence of Shepshed as a dormitory settlement for Loughborough and beyond. Most of the mills and factories have now been redeveloped for new housing, reducing the amount of economic activity within walking distance of the town centre.

Today, the town centre lacks definition, with narrow pavements and intrusive traffic movements. Competing centres such as Loughborough and Coalville offer a wider range of shops and services, contributing to further decline. The town underperforms in terms of comparison retail offer (with few national multiple retailers located in the town), low retention of retail expenditure, and a lack of leisure facilities to meet the needs of its community.

The problems have been recognised for some time. Various studies have been undertaken in the period since 2002 but none have generated the critical mass of activity that is needed to reverse the decline. More recently, however, several events have come together that both re-energised the local community and pointed the way to creating the policy framework that would support change. These include the Portas Pilot Bid, the Shepshed Community Plan, the Charnwood Regeneration Strategy and the Charnwood Local Plan. Although the Portas Pilot Bid was unsuccessful, it lay the seed for a 'Town Team' and created a focus of activity. Work on the other documents collectively prioritised the need for action in Shepshed and opened a debate on what needs to be done.

The Town Team

The Town Team was formed in late 2012 to act as a reference group for this project; as set out in this report it will play a pivotal role going forward, guiding and directing the regeneration process, creating opportunities for investment and ensuring Shepshed makes the most of its assets. A list of organisations from which the current membership is drawn, and the current remit of the Town Team, is attached as Appendix A.

The Town Team was established with the following purposes:

1. To act as a representative consultative forum on matters of relevance to the regeneration, development and management of Shepshed Town Centre.
2. To act as a reference group to consider and comment on the delivery of the Shepshed Town Centre Master Plan and the relevant delivery documents.
3. To work with the Council and its partners to assist in implementing the Town Centre Master Plan, development briefs and other relevant documents or reports.
4. To act as a 'Critical Friend' by delivering constructive criticism and praise.

The objectives of the Town Team were identified as being:

1. To foster strong community and business leadership.
2. To invigorate Shepshed Town Centre and make it a vibrant, accessible and pleasant place to live, work and visit.
3. To enhance accessibility and provision for safe and comfortable movement in and around the town for everyone.
4. To encourage the delivery of businesses, supporting services and amenities for the benefit of the community and visitors.
5. To improve investment opportunities and promote economic development.



The Town Team



Time for change

Charnwood Borough Council is preparing its Core Strategy, with a pre-Submission draft due in June 2013. It is widely anticipated that the regeneration of Shepshed will feature as a strategic priority in this draft document. There is also a number of recent and proposed projects within the Loughborough/Shepshed area that indicate an upcoming period of change for the town, including the proposed construction of 500+ new homes in and around the town; the extension of the successful University Science and Enterprise Park in Loughborough, which is readily accessible from Shepshed; and the proposed development of a Sustainable Urban Extension to the west of Loughborough for up to 3,500 homes.

At a national level, the Government's localism agenda encourages residents to influence, contribute to, and participate in their communities. The Localism Act 2011 gives communities new powers such as those to prepare neighbourhood plans; propose small-scale, site-specific, community-led developments; and buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them.

Charnwood Borough Council embraces the localism agenda in its Corporate Plan for the period 2012-2016, with a commitment to *"facilitating community groups to develop and grow in their capability to take ownership of local issues and lead on finding solutions"*. The Council's Regeneration Strategy (Sept 2012) highlights Shepshed Town Centre as one of seven *"strategic priorities"*, meaning that its regeneration is *"seen as pivotal in boosting the local economy"*. This document sets out a vision of Shepshed as a *"vital and viable town centre characterised by a mix of businesses, shops, cafes, bars, leisure and entertainment facilities supported by adequate convenient parking facilities and a public realm designed with pedestrian comfort and safety as a priority."*



The Bull Ring



Access to Hall Croft from Britannia Street

Our work

The purpose of this commission was to deliver a co-ordinated Master Plan that provides a strategic vision, and a flexible development Delivery Framework to improve the overall economic health and vitality of the town centre. The resulting regeneration strategy needed to be realistic and deliverable, with specific actions that help to improve the investment environment for Shepshed as a whole.

In December 2012, Charnwood Borough Council appointed a team led by BBP Regeneration and included Wei Yang & Partners (urban designers and town planners) and Shared Intelligence (specialists in economic development) to prepare the Master Plan and Delivery Framework.

The specific aims of the strategy are to:

- Encourage community and economic activity within the town centre
- Enhance the overall town experience and offer for all users and investors
- Improve the legibility of the town centre and viability of business activities
- Improve the connectivity of the town centre to the wider community
- Provide a vehicle to support applications for capital funding
- Co-ordinate redevelopment opportunities
- Balance the needs for accessibility, movement, pedestrian safety and the maintenance of a high quality public realm

The Borough Council appointed an officer-level Steering Group to oversee the work and the Town Team acted as the driver and sounding board for the study. The work was undertaken on a collaborative and participatory basis, engaging the Town Team in three events and the wider community at a public exhibition.

Our approach

Our approach was as follows:

Forming a baseline: The consultancy team's first task was to review previous studies in order to start from the same baseline as other participants, and guide further research. Our findings were summarised in three technical papers: an economic analysis, property market review, and urban design and townscape assessment. The three technical papers are annexed to this report and were summarised at our first meeting with the Town Team.

Exploring and testing options: Based on our initial research, we formed a range of four scenarios for the future of the town, presenting each as a distinct vision. The four potential visions are summarised in the 'Defining the vision' chapter of this report and in the briefing paper on the scenario planning workshop.

Defining the vision: The consultancy team held a scenario planning workshop with the Town Team on Thursday 7 February 2013, sharing and exploring the four potential visions with attendees. The purpose of this workshop was to define a shared ambition, agreeing the most appropriate approach for Shepshed. The workshop also provided an opportunity to capture additional knowledge from the community, complementing our own research.

Articulating the vision and identifying interventions: The agreed vision was then worked up in detail and Strategic Objectives were agreed with the Town Team at a meeting on Monday 4 March 2013; the agreed vision is set out in the 'Defining the vision' chapter of this report. At the same meeting, a number of desirable interventions (social, economic and environmental) were discussed.

Consulting on the vision: We then prepared exhibition boards communicating the emerging vision. We held a public exhibition on Monday 18 March at Christchurch Methodist Church Hall, during which over 80 visitors browsed the display boards, talked with us, and some kindly completed feedback forms. By 15 April 2013, 24 written responses had been received. All of the feedback was analysed and considered in the context of the draft Master Plan and Delivery Framework as appropriate. A report on the public exhibition is annexed to this report.

Master Plan and Delivery Framework: Finally, we identified the strategies and mechanisms that need to be put in place to deliver the vision. We have taken a realistic approach, highlighting potential early wins, whilst laying the foundations for longer-term change.

Our work therefore seeks to establish a partnership-based Master Plan and Delivery Framework to lead and influence the range of public, community, economic and environmental improvements required to ensure a successful future for Shepshed town centre.

Structure of this report

This Master Plan and Delivery Framework is presented in a way that reflects our journey from appointment through to the final report (see 'Our work' section above):

- The next chapter, '**Context of this report**', notes the key findings from previous studies.
- The '**Shepshed today**' chapter summarises the three technical papers we have prepared on the wider economic context, property market considerations, and urban design and townscape
- '**Defining the vision**' is the Master Plan itself. The chapter begins by outlining the four scenarios that were tested and then details the subsequently agreed vision. It introduces the six Strategic Objectives identified for the town centre.
- '**Delivering the vision**' – describes how each Strategic Objective will contribute to the regeneration of Shepshed town centre and provides suggested interventions, recommendations and ideas as to how each can be achieved.
- '**Establishing the framework for change**' explores the framework required to deliver change. It covers policy, funding and governance issues.

This report will form part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and other policy documents for Shepshed.

Section 2

Context of this Report



02 - Context of this report

Previous studies of Shepshed

Giving Shepshed New Heart' by Flying Giraffe Limited (June 2002)

Regeneration consultancy Flying Giraffe Limited was commissioned by Charnwood Borough Council on behalf of Loughborough Outreach Partnership in January 2002 to generate ideas that would change Shepshed physically, economically and psychologically.

The report made six key recommendations, some of which would eventually lead to spatial interventions:

- Develop a new vision for Shepshed together with a promotional image and branded strap-line
- Make the case for improved road signage at strategic locations around the town
- Identify the next five-year phase of town centre improvements including gateways and through flow
- Develop a future retailing strategy for Shepshed
- Develop a Shepshed Business Centre and promote small business workspace zones
- Produce a Shepshed Town Prospectus for use as a marketing tool

The need to improve communication with residents was also highlighted.

Feasibility Study by Bellinger Design (2 September 2010)

Landscape Architects Bellinger Design were commissioned in September 2010 by Shepshed Town Council to provide a public realm landscaping plan for Shepshed Town Centre. Their plan focused on three main character areas for intervention: the Bull Ring, Market Place and Hall Croft.

Proposals included:

- Highways improvements - resurfacing and reconfiguration of parking bays on Market Place and Charnwood Road.
- Enhanced public realm - additional planters, repainted railings, renovated seating, new mural in Hall Croft and a new plaza in Market Place. Gateway features were proposed at Market Place, and in the form of an archway to Hall Croft.
- There was also a historic trail, dubbed the 'Wool Trail', running throughout the town centre.

Shepshed Community Plan (August 2011)

In June 2010, members of the community established a Steering Group and volunteered their time to raise the necessary funds to put together a Community Consultation, facilitated by the Rural Community Council and Leicestershire County Council. Funding of £4,100 was secured in the form grants from Charnwood Borough Council, the Rural Community Council and 'Awards for All' (a National Lottery fund).

The consultation spanned various meetings and events such as the Christmas Fair, two public exhibitions (one of which endured for six weeks) and three surveys (including a household survey with 950 responses, representing 17% of Shepshed households).

This research uncovered extensive concerns about parking, speeding, litter, and the general appearance of the town. Many statistics from the household survey suggest that Shepshed's status as a dormitory suburb of Loughborough has solidified since 2002, despite residents' aversion to this happening at that time.

The consultation identifies demand for enhanced sports and leisure facilities, a more diverse retail offer, and more local events. More specific uses identified as being desirable were a garden centre and tearooms, and film screening facilities. For businesses, reduced business rates and shared facilities such as photocopiers and fax machines were desirable. The safety of pedestrians and cyclists, especially children walking and cycling to all the schools arose as a major issue. The need for improved local information also remains since the 2002 Flying Giraffe report.

The resulting action plan identified close to sixty separate actions, each prioritised and with potential resources and partners noted. Many of these actions are focused outside of the town centre, and the majority were non-spatial, involving building relationships, conducting reviews and further research and promoting existing assets.

Portas Pilot bid (July 2012)

In July 2012, the Community Plan Steering Group, supported by Charnwood Borough Council as the accountable authority, submitted an application for a £100,000 grant under the second round of funding for 'Portas Pilots' (set up following Mary Portas' review of town centres in December 2011). Other partners involved in the bid were Leicester & Leicestershire Local Economic Partnership, four local businesses including Shepshed Building Society and Nicky Morgan MP.

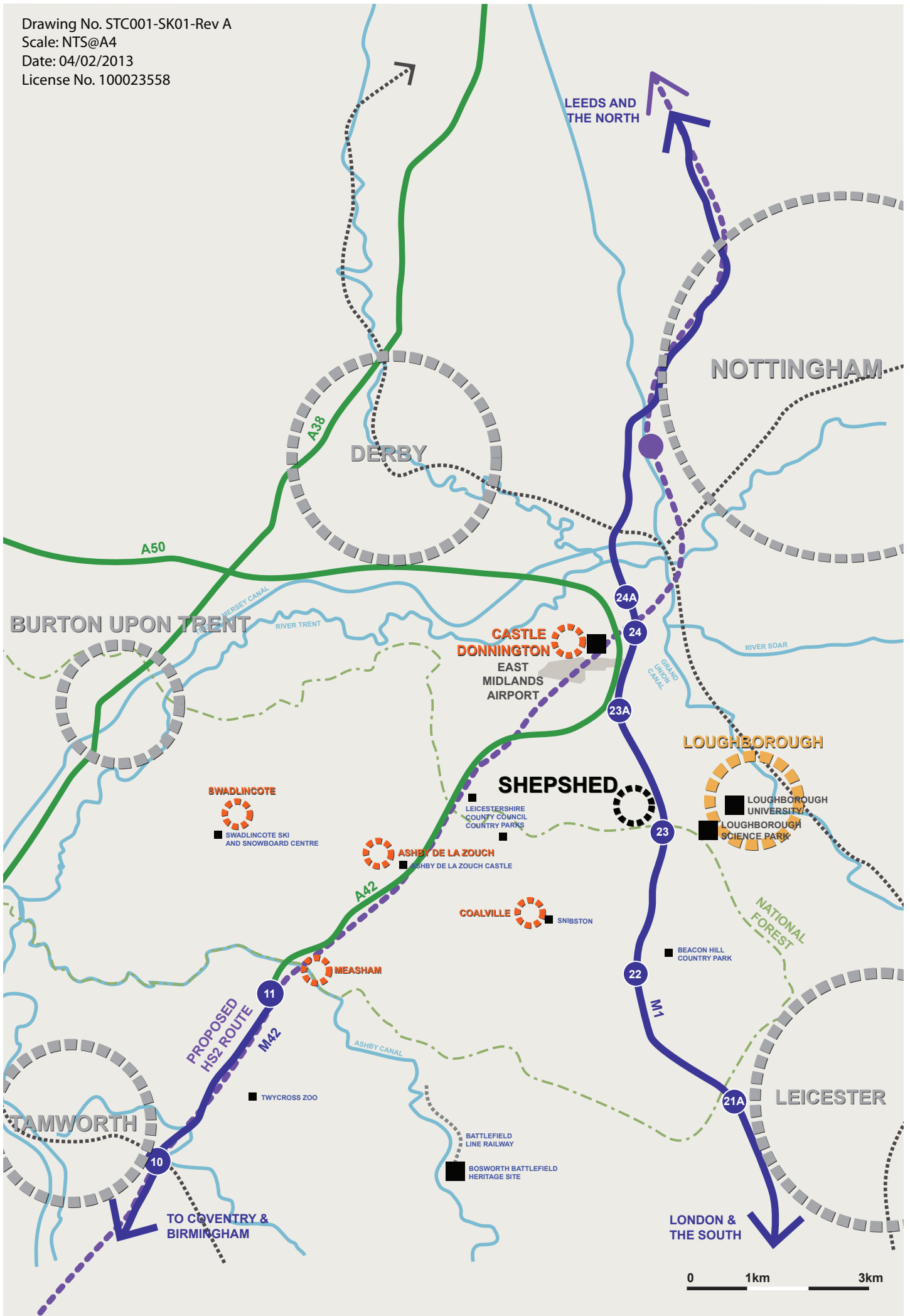
The funding application outlined progress since the Community Plan; referring to the working groups set up, the partnerships that were forming and the many Action Plan items already in progress. Although the bid was unsuccessful, Shepshed received a £10,000 grant.

Section 3

Shepshed Today



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03 – Part 1 Economic Analysis

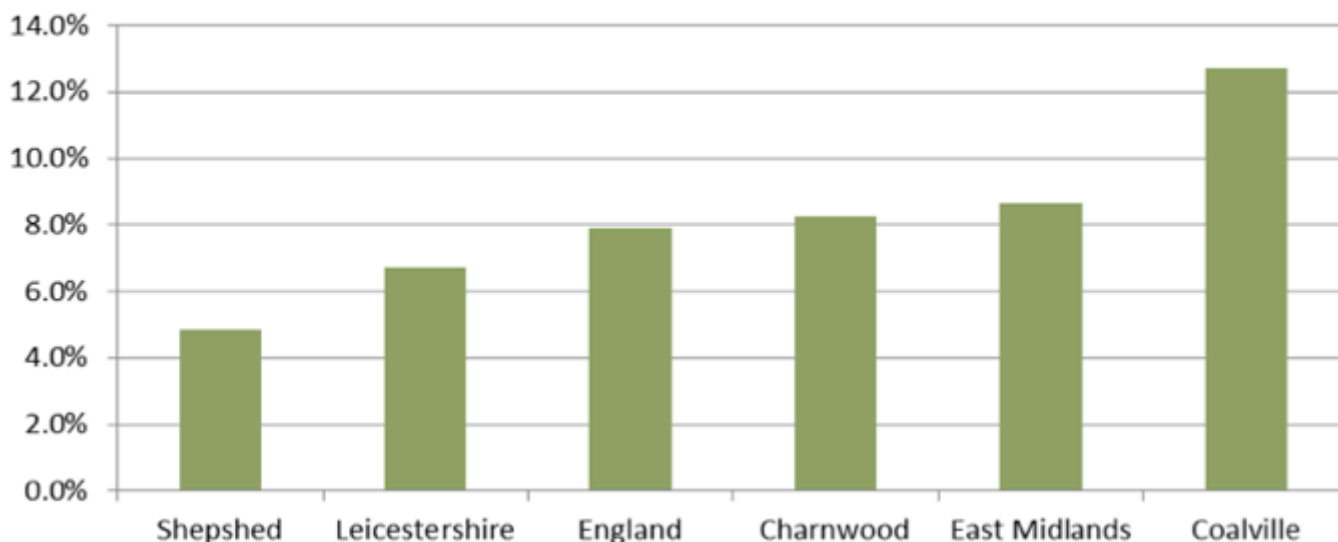
Population

The latest population estimate for Shepshed is 13,505, although Shepshed has grown relatively slowly over the past decade compared to the rest of the borough and is less than half the rate of nearby Coalville. Shepshed has slightly fewer young people (0 to 15 years) and slightly more older people (65+ years) than the national average.

64.8% of Shepshed's population are of working age (16 to 64 years). This is the same as the national average and very similar to the wider county (64.2%) and region (64.5%) proportions. Within Shepshed's working age population, the town has a larger proportion of older working age people (40+ years) than the county, regional and national averages.

At 67.7%, Shepshed has a larger proportion of family households (including cohabiting couples) than the East Midlands average (64.5%), and significantly higher than the national average (61.8%). Conversely, Shepshed has a lower proportion of single-person households (28.3%) than the national average (30.2%).

Total Population Growth (2001 - 2011)



Labour market

The 2011 census shows that Shepshed had a relatively large proportion of employed residents – 60.9% of working age residents compared to 54.2% across England as a whole. Shepshed had a slightly lower proportion of self-employed residents (8.3% of working age residents compared to 10.1% across England), and a relatively low unemployment rate (3.9%, compared to 6.6% nationally).

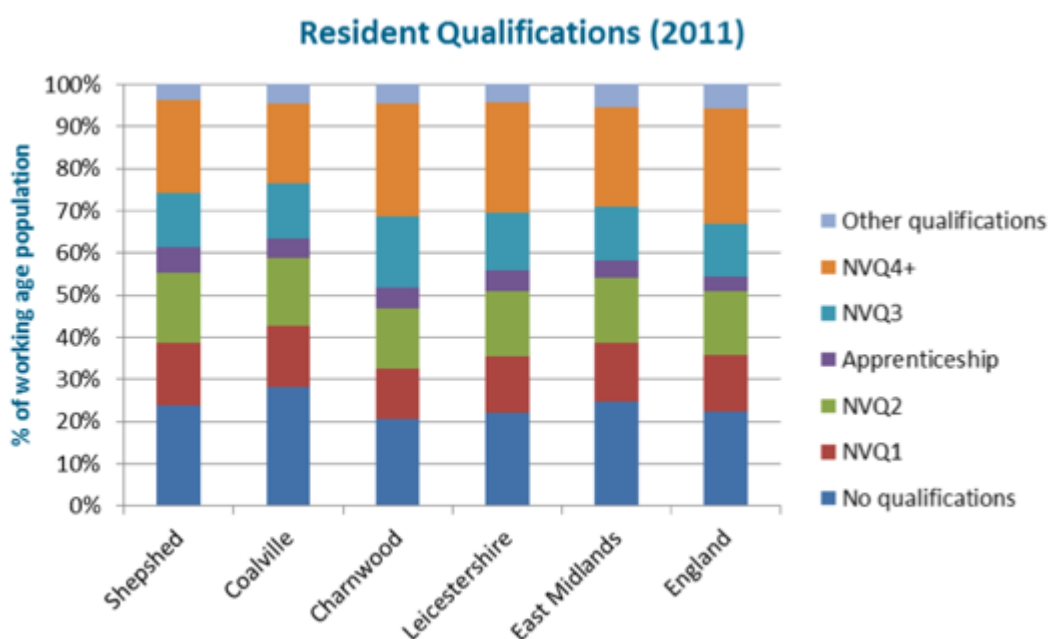
The Census also found that Shepshed had a slightly lower proportion of economically inactive residents than the national average –28% of working age residents compared to 31.2%. This was despite having relatively more retired residents (16.2% compared to 14.2% nationally). Shepshed had fewer students and other residents who were inactive for other reasons (e.g. caring for family members).

Shepshed generally performs relatively poorly in terms of the skill levels of residents. Shepshed has fewer residents educated to degree level compared to the borough, county and national averages (22.1% compared to 27.4% nationally) and more residents lacking skills than other comparator areas (23.8% compared to 22.5% nationally). However, a greater proportion of Shepshed residents have apprenticeship level skills (6% compared to 3.6% nationally).

Differences between residents' employment sectors and the main sectors present within the town suggest that many residents commute outside the town for work. In particular, many residents work in public services and education, which implies commuting outside the town to work for local authorities in the surrounding areas, though clearly some of this employment will be within local schools in the town.

The predominance of wholesale and retail employment also highlights the importance of nearby centres for employment. Despite having relatively little retail employment in the town centre, a greater proportion of Shepshed residents work in retail or wholesale sectors.

As per the common perception, the majority of Shepshed residents commute by car (77.8% of Shepshed residents commute by car or motorcycle, compared to 73.1% in Charnwood as a whole, and 62.9% across England as a whole). The predominance of car ownership means that just 4.3% of Shepshed residents use public transport to commute to work, compared to 6.6% across Charnwood and 16.9% across England as a whole.



Local economy

There are 4,600 jobs in Shepshed. This is equivalent to 0.34 jobs per resident, which is lower than the borough level (0.36 jobs per resident) and significantly lower than the regional level (0.44) and the national level (0.45).

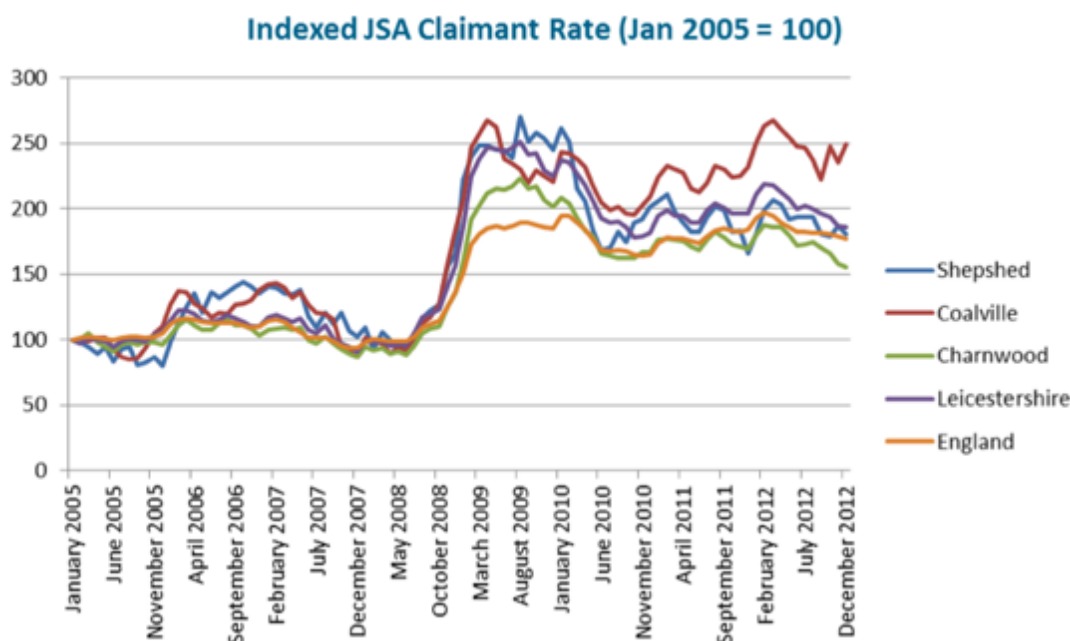
The most significant employment sector in Shepshed is manufacturing, which accounts for over 1,500 jobs in the town, or nearly 32.9% of total employment. This is significantly higher than both the borough as a whole (where manufacturing employment represents 15% of total employment) and also the national average (12.7%).

The next most significant sector in Shepshed is healthcare, which accounts for 700 jobs or 15.4% of total employment. This is also higher than either the borough or national averages (8.7% and 12.4% respectively), and reflects a large concentration of nursing and care homes in the town. The education sector and the transport and storage sectors both account for a further 300 to 400 jobs each.

By comparison to other parts of the country, Shepshed has relatively little employment in retail, professional services or business services. This reflects the widespread perception that Shepshed has a limited town centre offer and that many people travel outside of the town for shopping and leisure purposes. It also suggests that there may be limited office accommodation or at least very little demand from service-type businesses.

In terms of where firms are located, there are two main employment locations. Within the town itself there is a small retail core in the centre of the town radiating out from the Bull Ring. Unsurprisingly given the lack of major retailing, the most recent retail study found that Shepshed had a 9% retention rate for comparison goods in 2012. Leisure provision seems to be confined to pubs, with few restaurants or other amenities.

On the south of the town there is a strip of industrial activity adjacent to the Ashby Road, which accommodates a mix of manufacturing firms and out-of-town retail. Between the M1 and White Horse Wood there are a number of important firms. Alongside these higher value firms the southern area of the town is also home to lower value premises including a lorry park, a builders' merchants, caravan and car dealerships, and wholesalers. It is also worth noting that energy company, Biffa, has been given planning permission to build a waste-to-energy incinerator on the former Newhurst Quarry site which lies on the south side of the Ashby Road.



03 – Part 2 Property market considerations



Shepshed residential; area



Gelders Hall Industrial Estate

National and regional context

Nationally, the property market remains challenging across all sectors, and this report takes account of difficult property market conditions prevailing in the short to medium term, with longer term growth prospects aligned with broader economic and property market recovery.

Throughout our towns and cities, high street retailing is struggling. There has been a seismic shift in retail and consumer spending patterns in recent years particularly to online retailers. Conditions on the High Street have changed forever, and commentators suggest that reinvention and innovation are the keys to securing a successful new future for town centres.

Regionally, Shepshed is well located and easily accessible by road, but with limited public transport accessibility.

Retail and Leisure

In light of current economic conditions and changing retail trends, national policy has recently renewed its focus on improving the vitality and viability of town centres, spurred on by the Portas Review.

Shepshed town centre is a District Centre within Charnwood Borough, but has a limited retail offer compared to easily accessible higher-order centres such as Loughborough, Leicester and Nottingham.



Asda store, Charnwood Road



View towards Market Place from Church Street

In terms of convenience shopping, Shepshed has three small supermarkets, two of which have opened in the last three years. Despite this increase in choice and floorspace, there is still considerable leakage of convenience spending to alternative centres such as Coalville. There is reported demand for a larger supermarket that caters for a weekly shop, and locally grown food.

Shepshed offers poor consumer choice for comparison goods, with few national multiple retailers present in the town. Surveys suggest that limited choice of products is the key factor driving comparison spending away from Shepshed.

Shepshed's service provision seems adequate for its current needs; however, leisure provision is limited. There is demand for a variety of leisure and sports facilities, ranging from pubs and restaurants to a gym.

Signage and access to the town centre is poor; traffic flows, parking arrangements and the pedestrian experience are in need of improvement. Shepshed's retail floorspace is dispersed widely and interspersed with residential uses. There is therefore no concentrated retail 'core' or legible hierarchy of streets to build footfall.

Commercial rental values in Shepshed town centre are low compared with other towns in the region, notably Loughborough.

Office and industrial

The most important employment sector in Shepshed is manufacturing, with a concentration of good quality units in the Gelders Hall Road / Ashby Road employment area to the south of the town. Good quality industrial and warehouse units located close to the motorway are popular and take-ups are swift; however, there is little demand for office space in Shepshed.

Housing

The population of Charnwood is increasing and the number of households is forecast to expand even more due to changes in household size. Charnwood's emerging Core Strategy has identified Shepshed as a 'Direction for Growth' to accommodate at least 500 new homes.

The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) demonstrates that there is sufficient identifiable developable land in Shepshed to meet the town's residual housing requirement in the plan period to 2028. However, over a period of seven years, Charnwood Borough Council has an additional affordable housing need equivalent to 38% of all new home provision.

Housing in Shepshed represents good value and appeals to households on lower to middle incomes. It offers larger properties, in a good location, at a price point lower than Loughborough. Residential developer interest in Shepshed is strong, with house builders promoting edge of town sites to accommodate traditional family housing; however, the market does not favour apartments in this location.

The West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) is likely to provide only limited additional consumer spending power and developer contributions for Shepshed, on the basis that the development is intended to be largely self-contained in terms of its basic needs.

By definition, a sustainable urban extension is intended to be as self-sustaining as possible and, to that extent, it will be expected to provide for primary education on site. The development will also be supported by a local service centre, including a small supermarket of up to 2000 sqm net.

However, elements of secondary education may be delivered in Shepshed and there is the opportunity to secure improved connectivity between the SUE and Shepshed by footpaths, cycle links and public transport. Additionally, Shepshed will continue to offer a wider range of shops and services, which will be attractive to the new community.

The 'Direction of Growth' in Shepshed has a more direct link with the town centre as it will be the main focus for the needs to the new residential population.



New residential development off Charnwood Road



Office / Industrial buildings off Charnwood Road

Land ownership

There is not a significant amount of public land ownership in Shepshed town centre; however, the public library is situated in a key central position next to Hall Croft, and Shepshed Town Council owns several sites in particular public parks that may offer some potential to be incorporated into a town centre regeneration strategy.

National multiple retailers

Choice of products is the key factor cited by residents that would inspire them to change existing habits and encourage them shop in Shepshed. Shepshed offers poor consumer choice for comparison goods, with very few national multiple retailers. The comparably populated town of Ashby de la Zouch, which is a 20-minute drive west of Shepshed, hosts national multiples such as New Look, Peacocks and Specsavers.

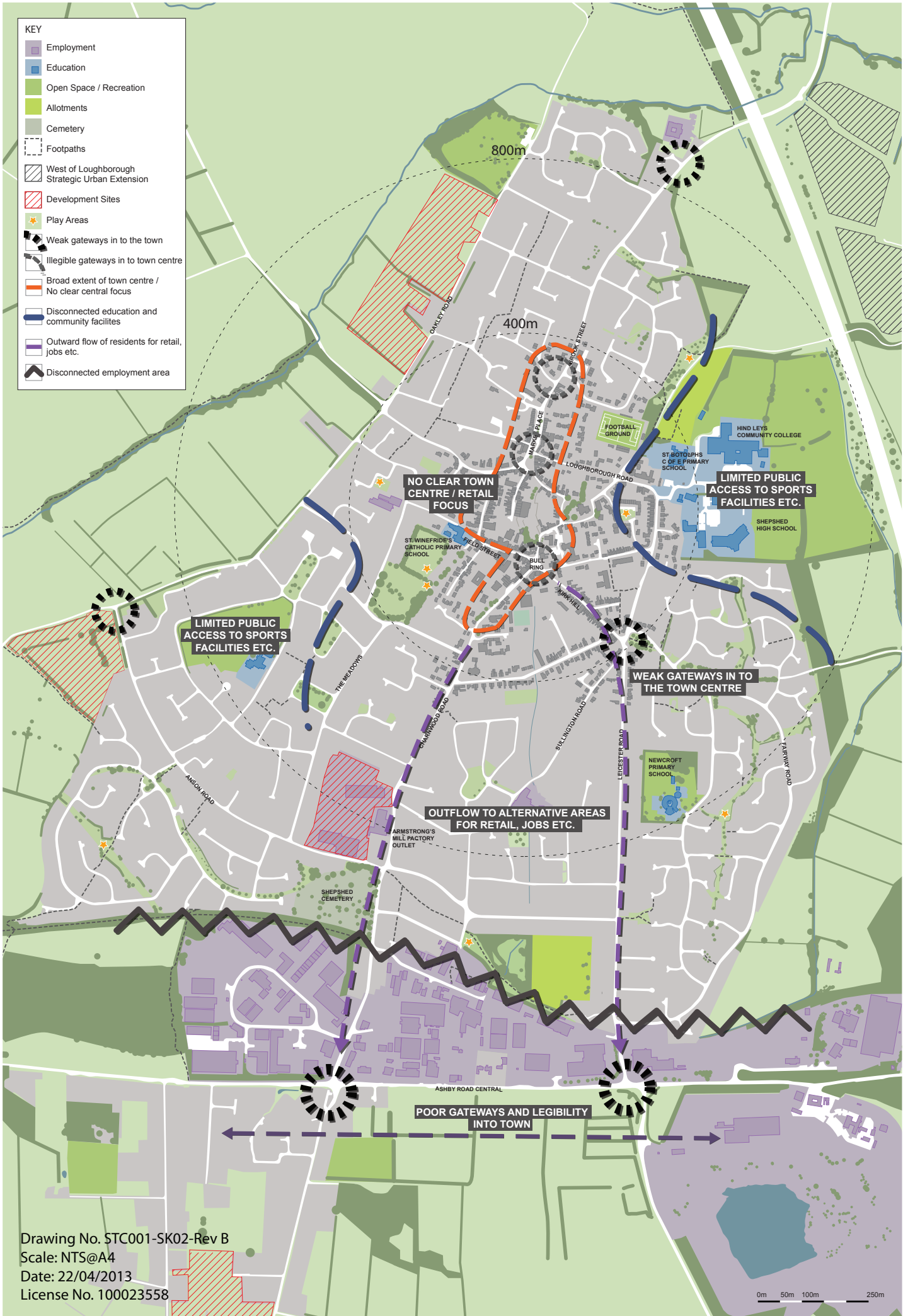
Our discussions with national multiples suggest that population and affluence are currently their key drivers for new store location. Co-location with leisure and large employers, and limited extant competition are also important conditions (in the case of pharmacies, the number of existing independents is a barrier to investment from a national multiple).

Whilst it is desirable to attract national multiples into Shepshed, it is likely that the superior shopping offer of easily accessible alternative destinations such as Loughborough will continue to deflect national multiple investment from Shepshed in the short to medium term.

It is also important to take account of current economic conditions, with household spending having fallen, on average, £3,000 compared to 2008 levels. A number of national retailers do seek expansion however; Lloyds pharmacy and 99p stores are aiming to open fifty units in 2013, and Phones 4u are aiming for one hundred. The bakery chain Greggs aims to open 500 new stores in the coming years. However, almost 2,000 stores closed in 2012, and PriceWaterHouseCoopers predict this could double in 2013 as further national retailers such as Jessops, HMV and Blockbuster have recently gone into administration. Many high street businesses have also changed their strategies: New Look plans to refurbish 120 existing stores this year rather than expanding, WHSmith are focusing on small stores in affluent areas rather than discounted superstores, KFC and McDonald's are focusing on Drive Thrus rather than town centre or food court sites.

The recommended strategy for Shepshed town centre is to focus on smaller, independent traders. However, we are hopeful that, given Shepshed's relative affluence, there is scope to attract investment from national multiples in the longer term as the town centre is revitalised and economic conditions improve. We recommend that Charnwood Borough Council and the Town Team focus efforts on attracting independent retailers but build relationships with potential national multiples in order to promote key sites within the town at the appropriate time.

- KEY**
- Employment
 - Education
 - Open Space / Recreation
 - Allotments
 - Cemetery
 - Footpaths
 - West of Loughborough Strategic Urban Extension
 - Development Sites
 - Play Areas
 - Weak gateways in to the town
 - Illegible gateways in to town centre
 - Broad extent of town centre / No clear central focus
 - Disconnected education and community facilities
 - Outward flow of residents for retail, jobs etc.
 - Disconnected employment area



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 Date: 22/04/2013
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0m 50m 100m 250m

03 – Part 3 Urban Design & Townscape

Local context

The employment areas on the A512 are very prominent, there is little sense of a substantial residential hinterland and the limited signage to Shepshed gives no indication that there is a town of any note to the north; there is no sense of a 'gateway' into a place more interesting or useful.

First impressions count and there is no sense of arrival at any of the entrances to the town centre, nothing to suggest a heart or a focus, and nothing to stop the casual visitor passing straight through. There is no clearly defined 'town centre'. It is fragmented with separate pockets of activity around the Market Place, Hall Croft, Field Street and the Bull Ring; each of these appears to function independently with little evidence of linked trips.

Fig. 03 shows walking distances of 400m and 800m (5 minutes and 10 minutes respectively) in concentric circles; this demonstrates that a lot of employment and housing is some distance from the town centre. Gelders Hall, the main employment area, theoretically with the most potential to increase trade in the town centre, is some 1.2-1.5km away and poorly connected to it. The age profile of some residents, old and young, militates against widespread use of bicycles and longer distance walking.

The sites on the western edge of town, for which planning permission has been granted, are too limited in size to have any significant impact on the amount of retail activity in Shepshed town centre. Other land within and on the edge of the town, which is currently being promoted for some 500+ dwellings will provide additional trade but the town centre will need to provide a competitive offer if it is to attract future residents. The proposed 'West of Loughborough Strategic Urban Extension' will contain its own retail, education and community facilities and is likely to look to Loughborough for its comparison retail needs but improved connectivity with all new residential development will help to capture new trade.

Conclusions

Gateways to, and within, the town need to be improved but particularly from the A512.

The sense of arrival in the town centre needs to be improved and made more welcoming.

The retail area needs to be more visible, attractive and clearly defined; there needs to be better connections between different retail areas.

Proposed new housing has the potential to increase trade but this needs to be captured with a good retail offer.



Signage in the town centre



Traffic navigating junction at the Bull Ring with Charnwood Road

Drawing No. STC001-SK05-Rev A

Scale: NTS@A4

Date: 22/04/2013

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Connections

Charnwood Road and Leicester Road, the principal roads from the south, can be difficult to navigate particularly close to the town centre (narrow roads, parked vehicles, traffic-controlled in places). This can make it difficult and frustrating for drivers wanting to access the town centre. Brook Street, the access from the north, is less constrained but there are pinch points. The limited footpath network means that residents in outlying areas tend to use the main roads. Connectivity is restricted largely as a result of distance.

Principal routes converge on the Bull Ring and use Field Street and Britannia Street to access Market Place. The Bull Ring is arguably the least attractive gateway to the town, with the need for substantial improvements in the public realm, but any such improvements are severely restricted by the need for buses to turn around in this location.

Buses, delivery vehicles, construction and agricultural vehicles find some routes difficult to negotiate (e.g. the sharp right-angled turn at the southern end of Britannia Street). They themselves can be intimidating in the relatively narrow streets. The narrow pavements within the town centre exacerbate the problem but, as roads are also narrow, there is limited scope for widening pavements. The nature of the urban fabric is such that there are no easy solutions to highway problems. There are limited opportunities to introduce more radical solutions: land ownership and topography are both problematical, as is funding in the absence of significant new development, and major improvements would have a significant adverse impact on the townscape.

Conclusions

Most visitors to the town centre will continue to arrive by car. The employment areas and some residential areas are too remote, realistically, to assume a significant amount of walking, cycling or use of buses. It is therefore necessary to make adequate provision for off-street parking in convenient locations. Car parking (including disabled parking) needs to be carefully managed with good provision for the disabled and short-stay parking.

Additional steps need to be taken to improve connectivity between existing and proposed residential and employment areas; wherever possible public transport and cycleways should be promoted. Within the town centre localised improvements need to be considered e.g. extending footways where possible, even if limited in extent, to give some pedestrian 'refuge' areas.

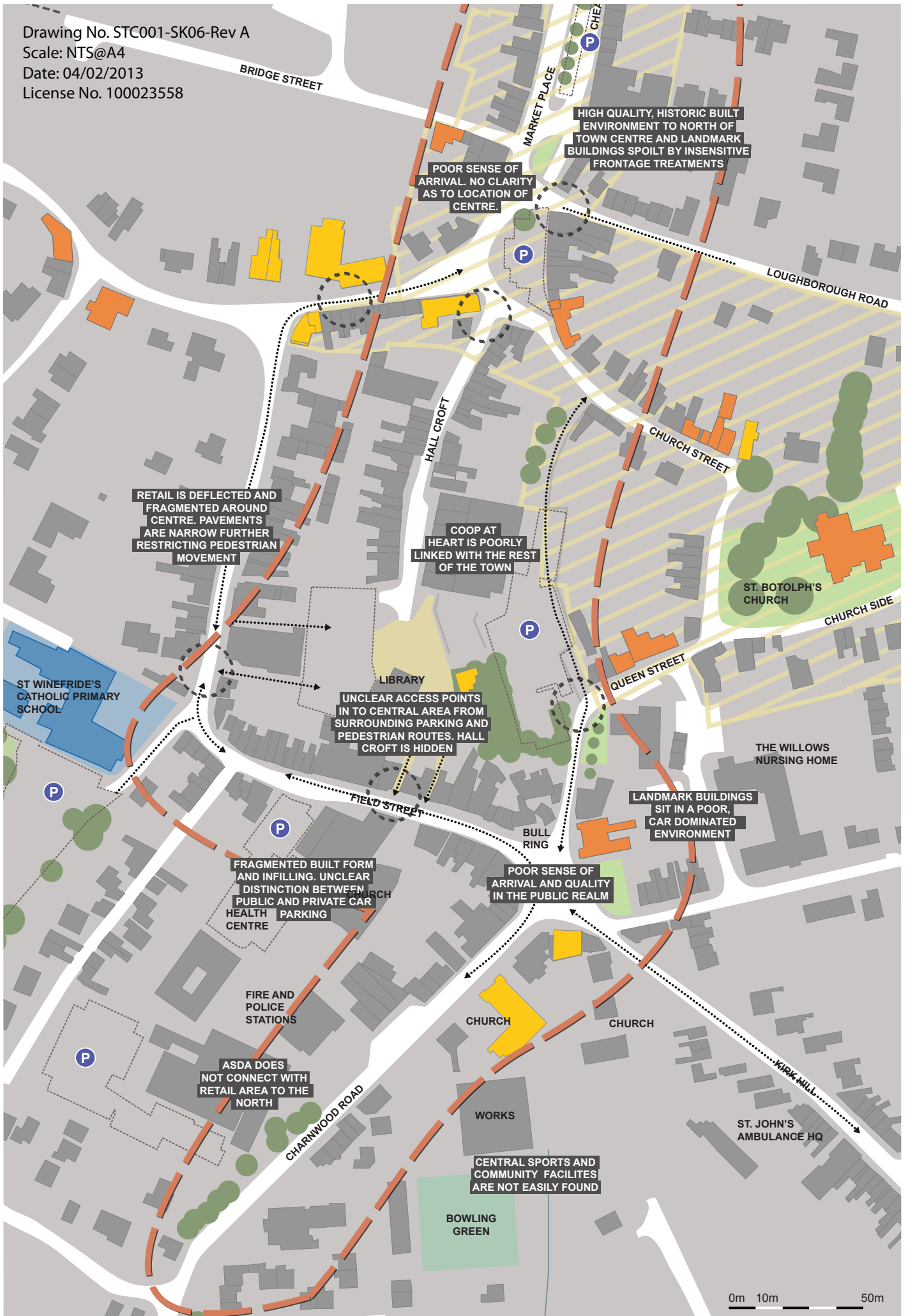


Traffic impacting retail area on Field Street



Wide vehicle navigating Field Street / Britannia Street

Drawing No. STC001-SK06-Rev A
Scale: NTS@A4
Date: 04/02/2013
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Town centre issues

The Bull Ring appears to be the 'centre' of town in that five routes converge at this point but it has little sense of 'arrival' and the quality of the public realm is poor. Premises around the Bull Ring and towards the northern end of Charnwood Road appear to be well-used and mixed in terms of their offer. Field Street has more non-residential uses interspersed with shops.

On the south side of Field Street the urban fabric is fragmented, there is variety of age and architectural styles and no clearly defined frontage in the central part of the street. There is lack of clarity over the public and private realm.

On the north side of Field Street, the narrow entrances into Hall Croft, the library and the Friday market are not easily discernible. In and around Hall Croft there is an air of neglect with vacant properties, unsightly service yards, backs of properties and vacant/underused land dominated by car parking. The sitting area next to the library, with attractive views of St Botolph's Church, is in a car-dominated environment. The library is an unremarkable building but sits in a pivotal location.

The Co-op store in the centre of town is not readily visible from surrounding streets, and its principal access is not on a through route; its car park dominates the area to the east.

Shops and services around Market Place appear to be generally well-used, the quality of the buildings is better (Market Place, Cheapside and parts of Brook Street lie within the Conservation Area) but the quality of the public realm is poor. There are some specialist retail outlets, which cater for a wider market. There are several pubs.



Lack of clarity as to direction of town centre from Market Place



Poor sense of arrival at the Bull Ring

Within the remainder of the town centre, the quality of the buildings is generally unremarkable (the Conservation Area is focused on St Botolph's Church and excludes the town centre). The Charnwood Dental Centre, housed in one of the most imposing Listed buildings in the town, is dominant in the street scene but sits in a poor, car-dominated environment.

The southern end of Britannia Street is dominated by the vacant pub and snooker hall, and a stalled residential development. A couple of vacant shops (one converted to a dwelling) and take-away food stores provide the only retail outlets. There are ways into Hall Croft from Britannia Street but these are not readily discernible and it is hard to differentiate between public and private spaces.

The junction of Britannia Street and Field Street is problematic in terms of vehicle movements (it is narrow and there is a lack of visibility and manoeuvring space). This junction also provides the only access into the biggest free public car park in the town centre; most others are related to shops (e.g. the Co-op, Asda on Charnwood Road) or other activities (e.g. the health centre pay-and-display car park).

Shop fronts and signs are often unsympathetic to the buildings on which they are located, or are visually strident on the street scene. Others would benefit from routine maintenance.

The Tesco and Asda stores, both on Charnwood Road, do not appear to function as part of the town centre. Armstrong's Mill, also on Charnwood Road draws visitors to the town but few may link this with a visit to the town centre.



Tesco Store, Charnwood Road



Junction between Britannia Street and Field Street

The town centre sits within a circle which has a radius of only 200-250m yet psychologically places feel further apart. The problem is exacerbated by non-retail frontages between key stores or streets. There are several 'destinations' for shoppers with few of these being linked on the same trip. Field Street ought to function as a 'high street' but does not do so. The mix of units (vacant shops, charity shops, take-aways, betting shops and non-retail uses) is not of the standard required for a primary retail area.

There is a limited range of other services, few leisure and entertainment facilities (cafes, restaurants, other eating and drinking places except in Market Place). There are relatively few vacant premises but these tend to be located in prominent locations.

There is an air of neglect about many of the buildings but many would respond well to general maintenance e.g. cleaning, painting, better window displays, etc.) Co-ordinated shop front design and signage would improve townscape quality significantly.

Conclusions

There is no clearly defined 'town centre' and no readily discernible 'high street'; these need to be more clearly defined, both physically and in policy terms.

The town centre is fragmented with shoppers most likely to visit individual shops, arriving and departing by car and making few linked trips.

A co-ordinated strategy for the public realm giving a sense of identity and cohesion, combined with relatively low-cost improvements to existing buildings could have a major impact.

Improvements to the retail offer need to be combined with a strategy to attract additional activities to the town centre; these can be both commercial and community based but should be designed to increase the general level of activity within the centre and the potential customer base.

Better use of upper floors would increase activity.



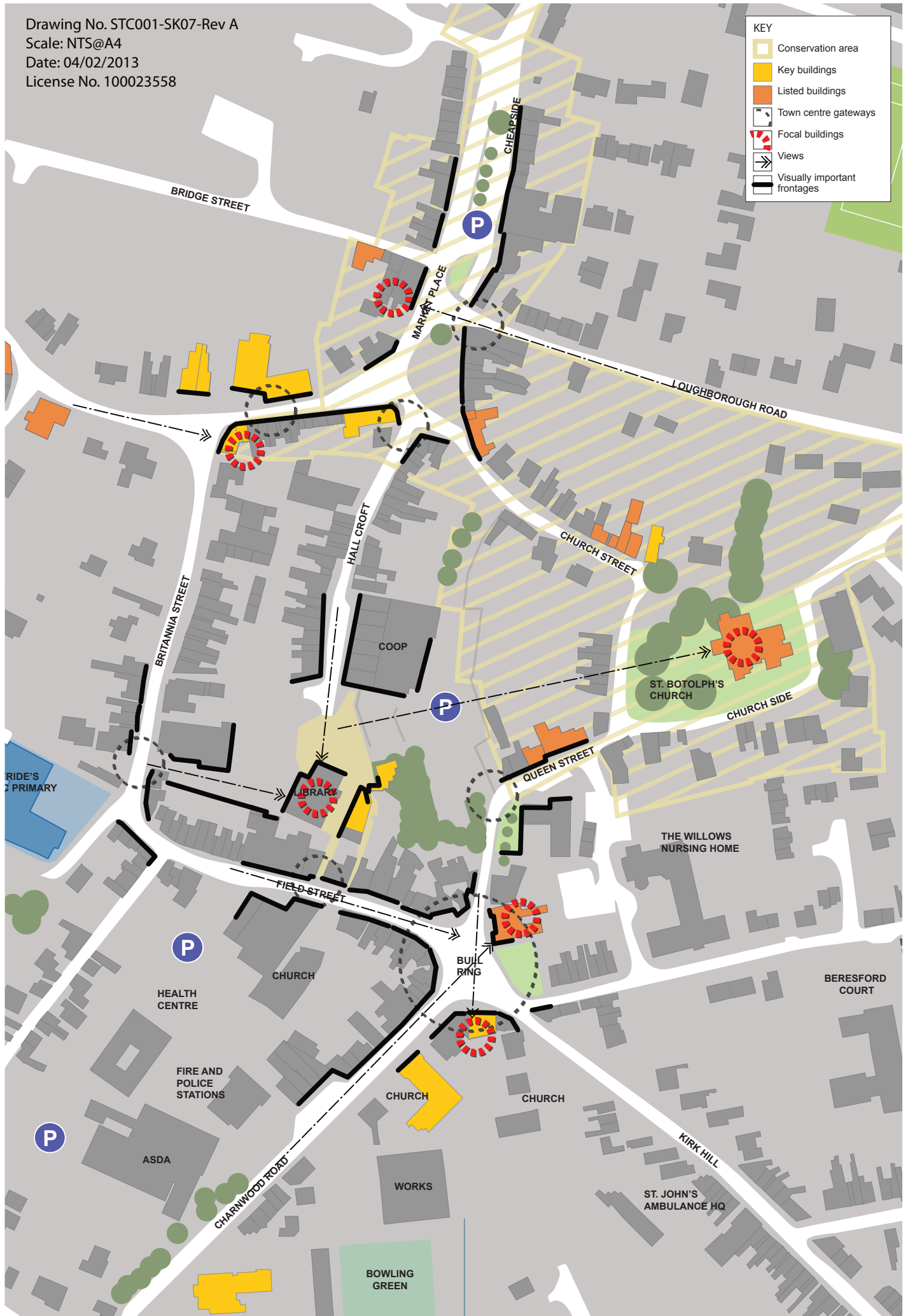
Kim's Café is one of the town centre 'destinations'



Shop fronts lacking cohesion

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KEY	
	Conservation area
	Key buildings
	Listed buildings
	Town centre gateways
	Focal buildings
	Views
	Visually important frontages



Town centre legibility

There are remarkably few Listed buildings within the town centre although around Market Place there is a small concentration of Listed and other key buildings in gateway locations. There is also a small cluster close to St Botolph's Church but these are tucked away on routes with little pedestrian or vehicular movement and so have little impact on visitors. Other than this, the Charnwood Dental Practice is the most prominent Listed building with views to it from several streets converging on the Bull Ring. All of the frontages in this area are visually important due to the convergence of routes.

The Conservation Area, with the highest quality townscape, lies generally to the east of the town centre and is focused around St Botolph's Church and Market Place. St Botolph's itself is highly dominant in the townscape particularly around Hall Croft and the library.

Hall Croft is an important location within the town. The space to the west of the library is negatively influenced by the rear of that building, those fronting onto Field Street and the vacant pub and snooker hall on Britannia Street.

Buildings fronting on to Field Street are important because a number of pedestrian and vehicular accesses converge here; it is also an important vehicular route. There is confusion between the 'backs' and 'fronts' of properties in the area around Hall Croft and Britannia Street; this detracts from the appearance of the area. In places, there is a lack of clarity between public and private spaces e.g. around the former snooker hall.

The standard of the public realm is often poor and, although there are areas where environmental improvements have been undertaken, these have tended to be isolated rather than part of a co-ordinated strategy with critical mass.

Conclusions

A co-ordinated approach to improvements in the public realm, particularly around the Bull Ring, Field Street and Market Place would greatly assist in creating a unique character and identity for the town centre. Selective choice of materials, street furniture, hard and soft landscaping would have a cohesive effect

Around Hall Croft and Britannia Street a more interventionist approach could be taken to secure new development that would provide active frontages and improve links/visibility. New development needs to focus on mid- and long-range views; public spaces need to be designed to take account of these.



Illegible entry in to Hall Croft from Field Street










Long views to St. Botolph's Church

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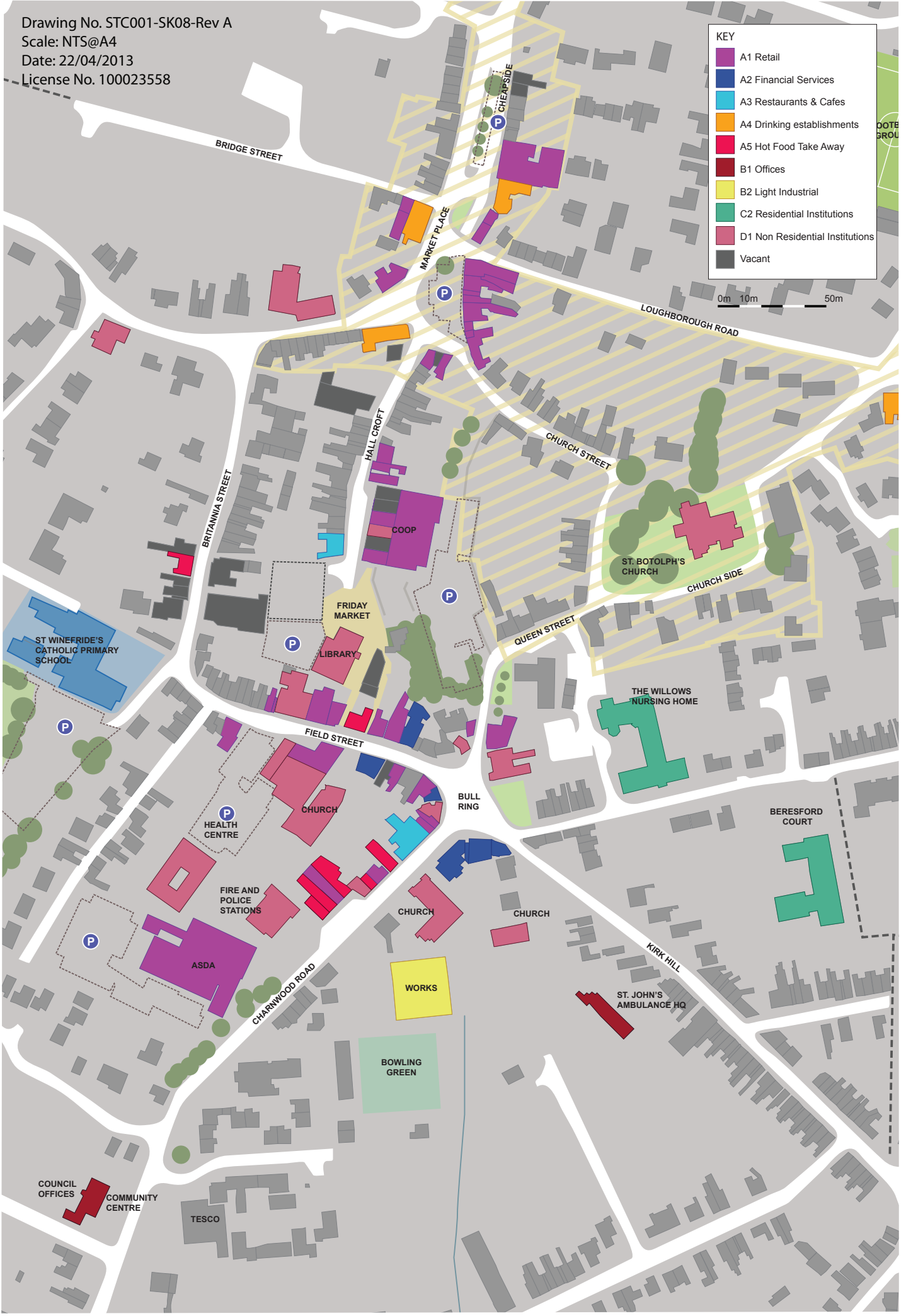
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Date: 22/04/2013

License No. 100023558

KEY	
	A1 Retail
	A2 Financial Services
	A3 Restaurants & Cafes
	A4 Drinking establishments
	A5 Hot Food Take Away
	B1 Offices
	B2 Light Industrial
	C2 Residential Institutions
	D1 Non Residential Institutions
	Vacant

0m 10m 50m



Town Centre Land Uses

The land use distribution suggests that there are three centres of retail activity: around the Market Place; around Hall Croft; and around Field Street/The Bull Ring/Charnwood Road. Market Place appears to fare reasonably well with a healthy mix of convenience stores (including a Post Office), specialist shops and eating and drinking places

There is a concentration of civic uses to the north and south of Field Street (the library, the health centre, Christchurch). The police station, however, is used as a base but has no public access; the fire station is understood to be scheduled for closure. There is a limited number of restaurants and cafes in the town centre (and these are generally held to be an important part of modern shopping trips). Similarly although there are three pubs on or close to Market Place there are none elsewhere within the town centre.

There is remarkably little vacant land and buildings although that which does exist tends to be concentrated in specific areas (e.g. at the southern end of Britannia Street and within Hall Croft) or in a prominent location (e.g. to the east of the library, new units adjoining the Co-op and the at the northern end of Hall Croft). Armstrong's Mill, by far the biggest comparison goods store in town, is some 800m away; it probably draws visitors to the town but few link this with a visit to the town centre.

There is no high street bank, only a building society and cash point on the far side of the Bull Ring. Primary retail frontage on Charnwood Road and Field Street is interrupted by non-retail uses or take-aways (which open primarily in the evenings). There are few office premises (although it is likely that there is some on upper floors) but this attests to the limited amount of economic activity within the town.

Conclusions

Overall, retail uses are dispersed and there is no central core of activity.

Market Place, Hall Croft, Field Street, the Bull Ring and Charnwood Road function in their own right.

The general level of activity in the town centre is low.

More non-retail uses (commercial or community) would improve activity levels within the town centre.



Armstrong's Mill



Low level of general activity on Field Street

Drawing No. STC001-SK10-Rev A
Scale: NTS@A4
Date: 04/02/2013
License No. 100023558

KEY

- Vacant buildings
- Vacant Land
- Notable buildings - Visually attractive, Listed etc.
- Residential buildings

0m 10m 50m



Identifying Development Opportunities

There are no large, vacant, derelict or underused sites within the town centre although smaller parcels do exist. The only concentration of vacant land and buildings is located towards the southern end of Britannia Street comprising the former Britannia Inn, the snooker club adjacent and the stalled residential development on the opposite side of the road and a nearby building.

The privately owned car parks to the west of the library (associated with the snooker hall and the vacant Britannia Inn) occupy a significant part of the Hall Croft area but also provide rear access to dwellings and other premises.

Elsewhere there are small, individual parcels or buildings on Field Street and around Hall Croft/Market Place. The area to the south of Field Street contains a number of civic buildings: the health centre, the combined police and fire stations and Christchurch.

The library is the only civic building to the north of Field Street but there are some notable (and in some cases vacant) buildings adjacent. Land to the north of Field Street appears to be largely in private ownership; land to the south has a greater proportion of public sector interests.

Overall, the amount of vacant and underused land and buildings and buildings is limited; most 'vacant' land is used for car parking, formally or informally. The civic buildings to the south of Field Street, with large surface-level car parks, occupy a significant amount of land in a town centre location.

The fact that the civic buildings are widely dispersed across this part of the town centre dissipates the level of activity that would be generated if they were located closer together. There is a significant amount of residential development within the town centre, possibly more if upper floors are taken into account.

Conclusion

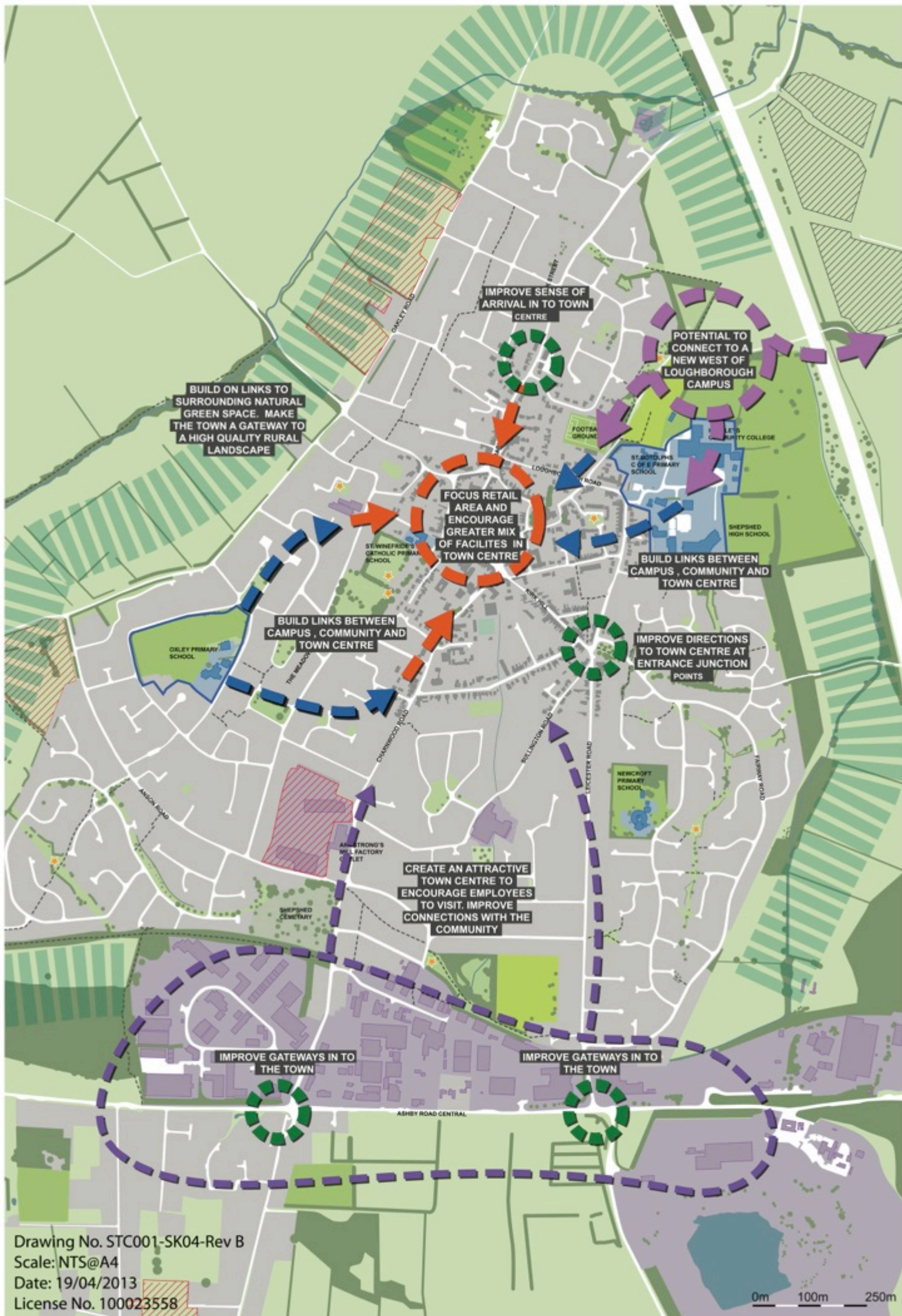
There are few readily available development sites. If additional floorspace is to be created, land and buildings would have to be assembled and amalgamated.

Summary of issues and opportunities affecting the town centre

Table 1 summarises a number of issues and opportunities identified through background research and discussions with the Town Team. These were used to direct the Master Plan vision and test the deliverability of each scenario.

Issues	Opportunities
Shepshed Town Centre as a visitor destination	
Shepshed does not make the most of its heritage assets / location close to the National Forest	Location close to the National Forest provides an opportunity as an associated tourist destination
Most people commute via car to work elsewhere. This reduces daytime economic activity and establishes commuting patterns away from the town centre	Number of important buildings, features and frontages in the town centre that could be exploited and enhanced
Employment areas to the south of the town are remote from the town centre. It will prove challenging to attract national multiple comparison retailers that would make Shepshed a shopping destination given competition elsewhere	Opportunity to draw more employees from employment areas into the town centre
Limited land availability in town centre to create a major new retail / leisure offer	Improved connectivity with new residential development including the West of Loughborough SUE, represents an opportunity to capture additional trade.
Physical appearance of town detracts from its potential as a visitor destination	Land availability and accessibility from motorway network could offer opportunity for edge of town expansion of shopping / leisure / visitor offer.
Town centre activity and retail offer	
Existing food stores are too small to satisfy consumers' demands and do not cater for the 'weekly shop'	Market Place and the Bull Ring / Field St are visible to passing traffic
Shepshed offers poor consumer choice for comparison goods, with few national multiples	There is potential to create an activity spine from Market Place to the Bull Ring via Hall Croft
People work and shop elsewhere - significant leakage to other centres such as Loughborough, Coalville, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicester and Nottingham	Bringing parcels of land in Hall Croft into single ownership would create the potential for new floorspace
Hall Croft is 'invisible' to passing trade, and access is constrained	Opportunity to build on existing small specialist retailers, leisure (particularly quality pubs, cafes, bars and restaurants) and an improved market designed to attract weekend trade
Vacant units make the town centre a less attractive destination, contributing to a spiral of decline	Opportunity for the managed concentration of retail and service provision within a small core with stronger footfall
There are relatively few vacant premises in absolute terms but those that do exist are in prominent locations	Opportunity to expand the current street market. Lack of medium sized supermarket may present an investment opportunity for private sector bring parcels of land into single ownership / town centre redevelopment project. Active use of upper floors would increase vitality
Retail units interspersed with non-retail uses reduces legibility and footfall	

Table 1. Issues and Opportunities



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0m 100m 250m

Fig.09 Wider Opportunities Plan

Leisure facilities

Leisure provision is perceived to be limited, and fails to meet community expectations

There is demand for improved leisure facilities, including cafes and restaurants, gym and film screenings

Limited land availability for larger town centre schemes

There is significant leakage of residents' spending to other centres that may otherwise be retained in Shepshed

Market research shows private sector unlikely to deliver significant sports or other recreational under current economic conditions

Flexible floor space in the town centre could be suitable for small scale private leisure operators e.g. gym / play group / crèche

Population of Shepshed would not support "big box" leisure uses such as a bowling alley – this would need to capture a much wider market

There is already a significant number of community activity groups

The community may benefit from any improvements to sports and leisure facilities at Hind Leys College

Public realm and visual appearance of the town centre

Gateways to, and within, the town need to be improved but particularly from the A512

Market Place has heritage potential

The Bull Ring is the main gateway to the town centre, but provides no sense of arrival; the need for bus turning facility significantly restricts the potential to make changes to the public realm

Hall Croft has beautiful views towards St Botolph's Church, and small scale characterful buildings

Individual buildings have potential for enhancement; historical character could be restored at modest cost

There is no readily discernible 'town centre'; retail uses are dispersed and there is no central core of activity. Field Street should be the 'high street' but isn't

Public realm improvements coupled with improved shop fronts and window displays could significantly enhance the visitor experience

There is confusion between the fronts and backs of properties

Many shops in the town centre have been poorly maintained and do not fully utilise window displays

Table 1. Issues and Opportunities (cont)

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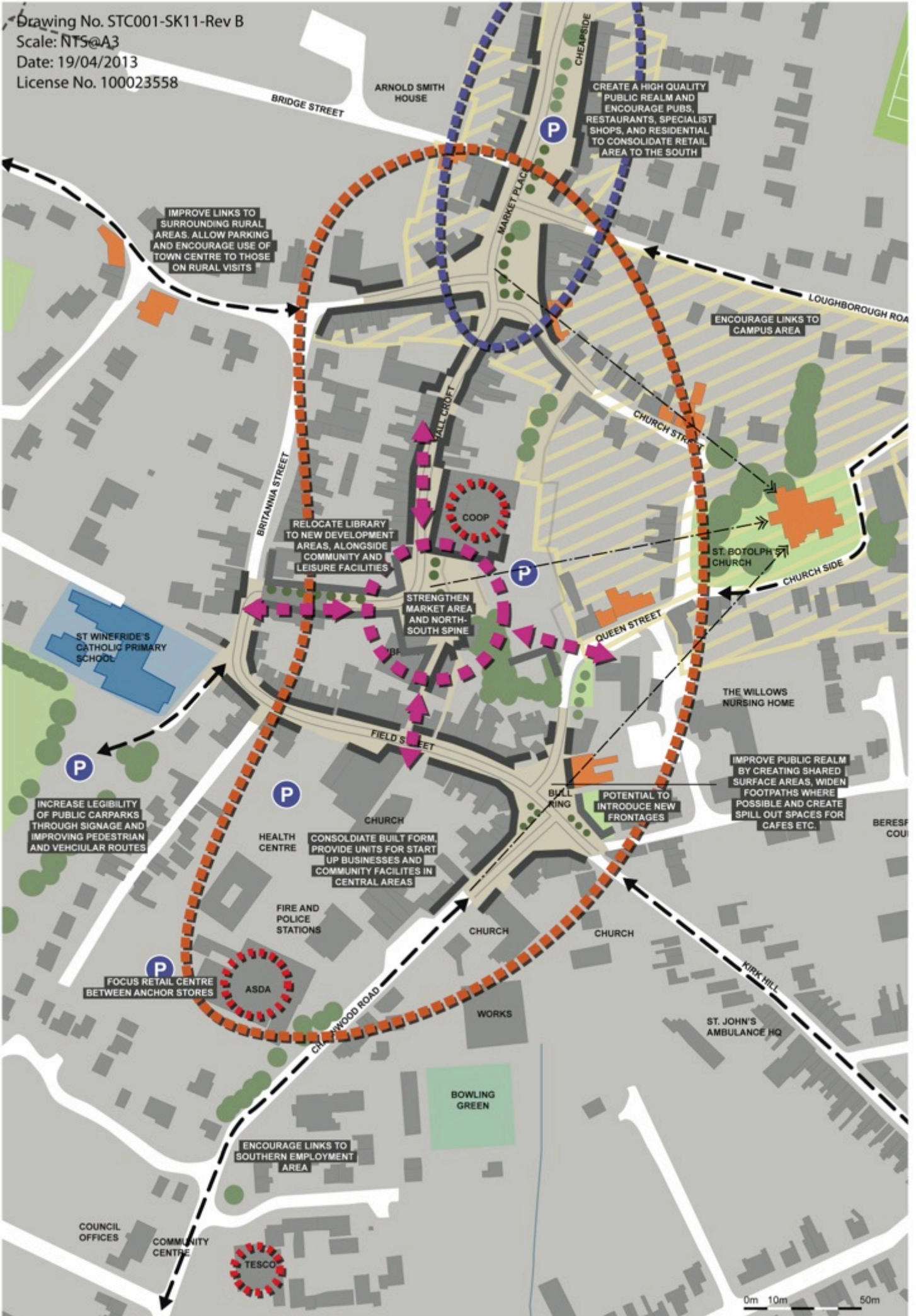


Fig.10 Town Centre Opportunities Plan

Connectivity and pedestrian safety

Poor signage to and within the town

Improved signage, the rationalisation of traffic calming and parking, and improving links from car parks to the town centre could significantly improve access

Traffic flows and parking facilities are in need of improvement

A one-way gyratory around the town centre would allow wider pavements to be created on Field Street and Britannia Street, improving pedestrian safety and reducing the sense of vulnerability. However, delivery is complicated by land ownership, topography, traffic impact and other issues

Poor public realm and pedestrian safety harm the town centre shopping experience

The town is compact and there is potential to improve walking and cycle routes to the town centre for residents and employees

Retail floorspace is dispersed widely and interspersed with residential uses. There is therefore no concentrated retail 'core' or legible hierarchy of streets to build footfall

Existing housing estates seem 'disconnected' from town centre

Localised improvements to highways and pavements may be possible; there is the potential to create a largely car-free/shared surface area within Hall Croft

There are few places to 'linger' or to meet

Most visitors will continue to arrive by car so adequate provision for car parking needs to be made

Connections between Glenmore car park and the town centre need to be improved

Business Environment

Little demand for office space; this is not a location that would attract corporate head office or service companies

Excellent location for light industrial workspace and regional distribution and warehousing. Opportunity to build on existing employment areas taking advantage of Shepshed's location close to the M1 and East Midlands Airport

Much of the existing office space is over retail units and unfit for modern needs

Potential opportunities to link with Loughborough University and the Science and Enterprise Park, particularly as a secondary location for support industries associated with that cluster

Limited business support available to local firms, and little evidence that Shepshed's businesses work together on initiatives to increase trade

Businesses might consider how they can organise events, provide loyalty discount schemes to retain customers, and implement consistent branding to attract visitors

Opportunity to work with partners such as the chamber of commerce and the LEP to unlock support for local firms

The Portas Pilot bid proposed the creation of small business units and a new business hub within the town centre to promote innovation and support local employment

Delivering change

Shepshed's identity as an independent town is perceived to be threatened by the growth of Loughborough

Charnwood Borough Council's emerging draft Core Strategy recognises Shepshed as a priority regeneration area

Significant local opposition to further residential development especially on greenfield land

Newly instigated Town Team to drive change from a local level

Current retail turnovers and rental values unlikely to attract speculative private investment under current conditions

Opportunities to increase retention of resident expenditure, and capture new demand from growth areas

Limited public land ownership in Shepshed town centre.

Public library is situated in a key central position next to Hall Croft, and Shepshed Town Council owns several sites which may offer some potential to be incorporated into a town centre regeneration strategy

Not much vacant or underused land for redevelopment in the town centre

Developer contributions from residential development may contribute towards town centre improvements

The West of Loughborough SUE is likely to provide only limited additional spending power and developer contributions for Shepshed, less than would be required for a transformational effect. The Direction for Growth (500+ units) will have stronger associations with the town centre.

There will be additional demand for education, healthcare and other service provision associated with new housing development. There may be opportunities for some of this provision to be located in areas so as to draw people into the town centre

Property prices are some of the lowest in the Borough. This may affect the viability of bringing forward redevelopment of brownfield / existing use sites, or limit their potential to make s106 contributions.

Need for affordable housing within Charnwood at a level exceeding that which has historically been delivered. This may be important when considering land and property uses, or impact on S106 provision for town centre improvement.

Table 1. Issues and Opportunities (cont)

Section 4

Defining the Vision



04 – Defining the Vision

Introduction

Our baseline analysis has shown that Shepshed has numerous advantages not least an excellent location, a manufacturing base that would be the envy of many larger settlements and an attractive setting in rolling countryside, close to many places of interest.

Within the town itself, the housing is generally of a high quality, there are good schools, reasonable bus services and generally well-maintained public open spaces. Access to leisure facilities is perceived as a problem (common to many towns of its size), and there are complaints about traffic and parking (again a common problem). There is a very active local community with lots of interest groups, clubs and societies across all ages. There is however a general sense that the town could be doing better, that it has been left behind by others and that the time for change has come. The heart of the problem is that the town centre is in decline, in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The role of the Master Plan and Delivery Framework, therefore, is to set out a strategy which will help to arrest this decline and set out a vision for the future which can be used as the basis for policy formulation, development decisions and investment planning.

The Master Plan itself is a two-dimensional representation of the vision but it is the key document around which discussions can take place and decisions can be made. It is the framework within which detailed interventions can be designed, development proposals can be formulated, funding sought and planning policies prepared. Although it is called a 'Master Plan', it is not rigid or fixed in stone; but neither is it so flexible that major variations can take place. Key principles need to be identified and followed through in both planning and investment decisions.

In this chapter of our report, we describe the participatory and collaborative process that has led to the preparation of the Master Plan for Shepshed. With the 'buy-in' of key decision-makers and the local community, there is a far greater chance of successful regeneration of the town centre. There were three principal areas of activity:

Scenario planning – where we explored the 'big picture' vision for Shepshed, identifying alternative futures, what they might mean for the town and selecting a preferred way forward

Setting strategic objectives - developing the preferred vision and exploring interventions, working out what actions were needed to deliver the transformation

Developing the master plan – examining the spatial implications of the strategy.

The results are set out in this chapter. One matter which it is important to emphasise from the outset is that the urban fabric of Shepshed is such that there is little scope for major redevelopment: there are few areas of vacant or underused land and buildings, and property market values are low which means that viability may be a critical issue in bringing projects forward. Resolving certain detailed problems (e.g. narrow pavements and traffic congestion) would have a consequential impact on the fabric of the town (its street patterns, townscape and buildings) that is neither justifiable nor desirable. The Master Plan for Shepshed, therefore, is focused on the detailed hand-stitching of small scale interventions across a wide range of interests, social, economic and environmental. With careful timing and judicious expenditure of public and private sector funding, the Master Plan will support a critical mass of activity that will act as a catalyst for other investment.

Scenario planning – the ‘big picture’ vision

Based on a review of baseline information, and the planning policy context, a number of high level scenarios for the town centre were identified. These were tested at a scenario planning workshop on 7 February 2013 (the first workshop with the Town Team). A number of key stakeholders were specifically invited, but the workshop itself was open to the general public and publicised by the Community Plan Group. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop with a mixture of representatives from local residents groups and businesses. A facilitator from the consultant team led the attendees in a discussion of the key overarching trends affecting Shepshed as a town and a local economy, followed by a discussion on the drivers for change and the implications for the town in terms of choices that needed to be made to ensure an attractive and successful future.



Town Team workshop

Scenario 1: Serving Local People – ‘a local centre for local people’

Re-concentrating the town centre around a smaller retail core, accepting some loss of fringe retail space and carrying out limited physical intervention to support a town centre focused around the needs of local residents.

Scenario 1 assumed that the three existing food stores would continue to trade as at present and that existing centres of activity at the Bull Ring/Field Street/Charnwood Road and Market Place would continue to be the focus of retail activity. In these locations, primary retail areas would be protected against change of use to non-retail uses but, on the fringes, there would be some loss of retail floorspace. In this scenario, the town centre would do little more than support the day to day needs of the resident population and, on that basis, would remain vulnerable if residents continued to favour other centres.

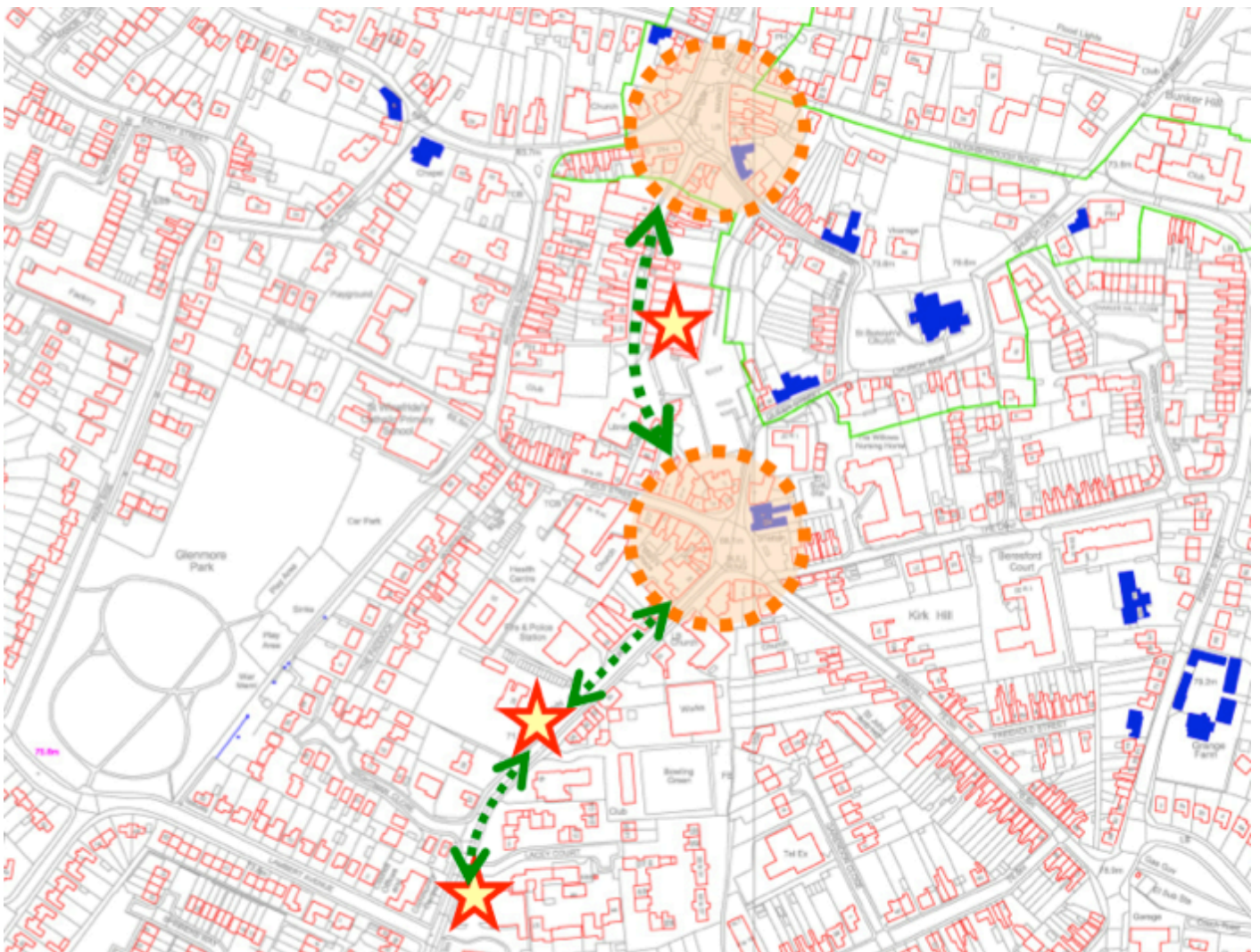


Fig. 11 Scenario 1 – Serving Local People

Scenario 2: Thriving on Difference – ‘The independent High Street’

Re-defining the town centre as a location for independent retail with quality cafes, restaurants and family pubs to provide a strong draw for residents and visitors alike. Some physical intervention would be needed to make the town centre a more appealing and better functioning destination for visitors.

Scenario 2 again assumed that the three existing stores would continue to trade as at present and that the existing centres of activity at the Bull Ring/Field Street/Charnwood Road and Market Place would continue to be the focus of retail activity. Whilst primary retail uses would be protected and serve the needs of local people, deliberate steps would be taken attract new people to the town and give it a stronger role in the visitor economy. To be successful it would be necessary to improve the image of the town, widen its appeal and make it a destination of choice. This would require a wider range of shops, ideally selling specialist goods, and more eating and drinking places. In this scenario, some expansion of retail floorspace could be expected in the medium-long term, with selective development/re-development of town centre sites.

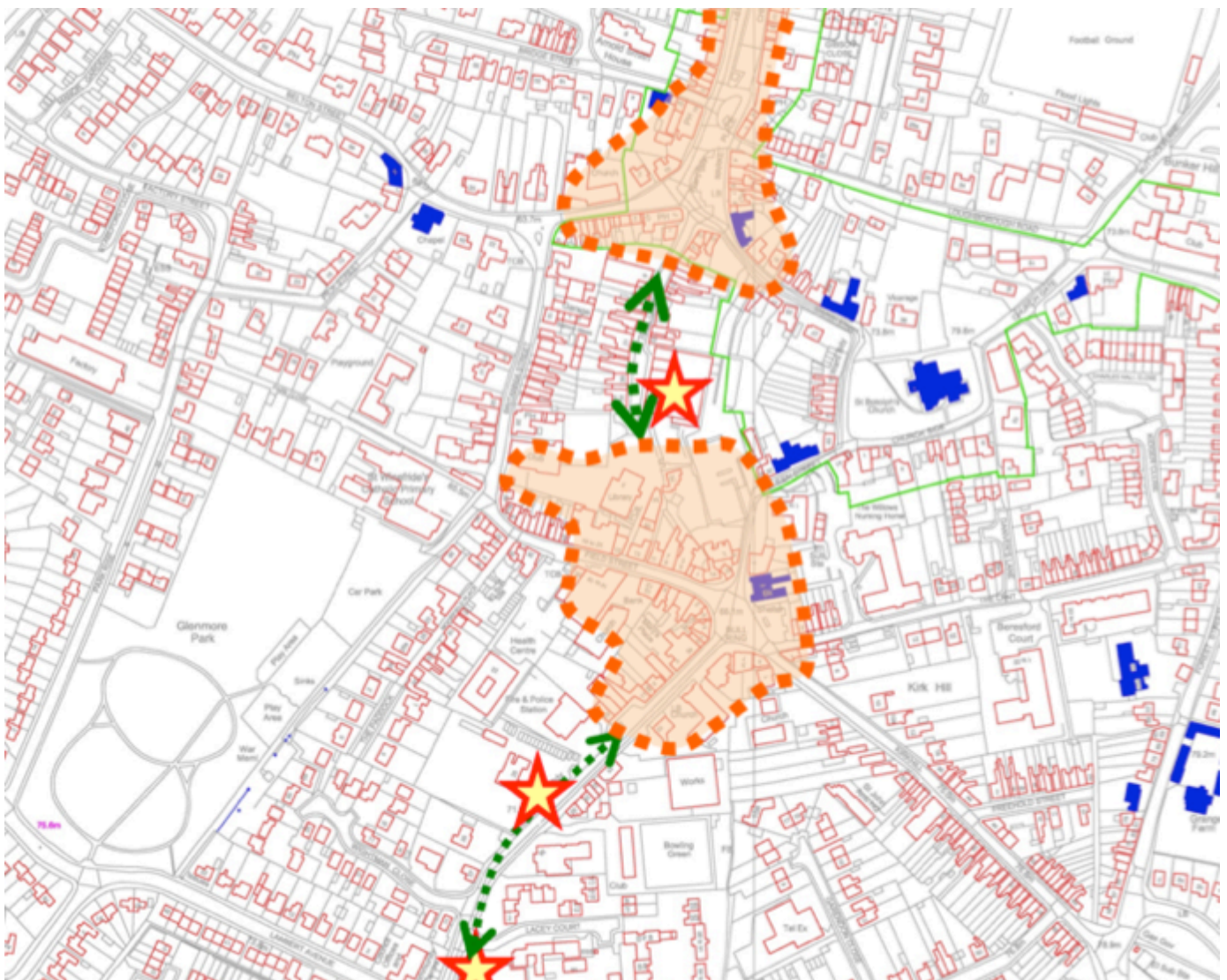


Fig. 12 Scenario 2 – Thriving on Difference

Scenario 3: Strengthening the Centre – ‘familiar places, new choices’

Developing a large supermarket in the town centre to provide greater choice for local residents and an anchor for improved retail offer. This would require significant alteration of the urban fabric and surrounding roads to achieve this.

Scenario 3 tested the extent to which there was a desire on the part of local people to see more radical change in the town centre. It also assessed the extent to which this might be viable commercially. Interest had been expressed in having a medium-sized food store, satisfying weekly as opposed to ‘top-up’ shopping needs, within the town. In recognition of national planning policy, this would need to be within or on the edge of the town centre. Scenario 3 tested the potential to accommodate stores of varying size (2,500-6,000 sq. m, excluding car parking). Given the physical impact of a store of this size on the physical fabric of the town centre, and the likely traffic and commercial impact on local stores, this option was rejected.

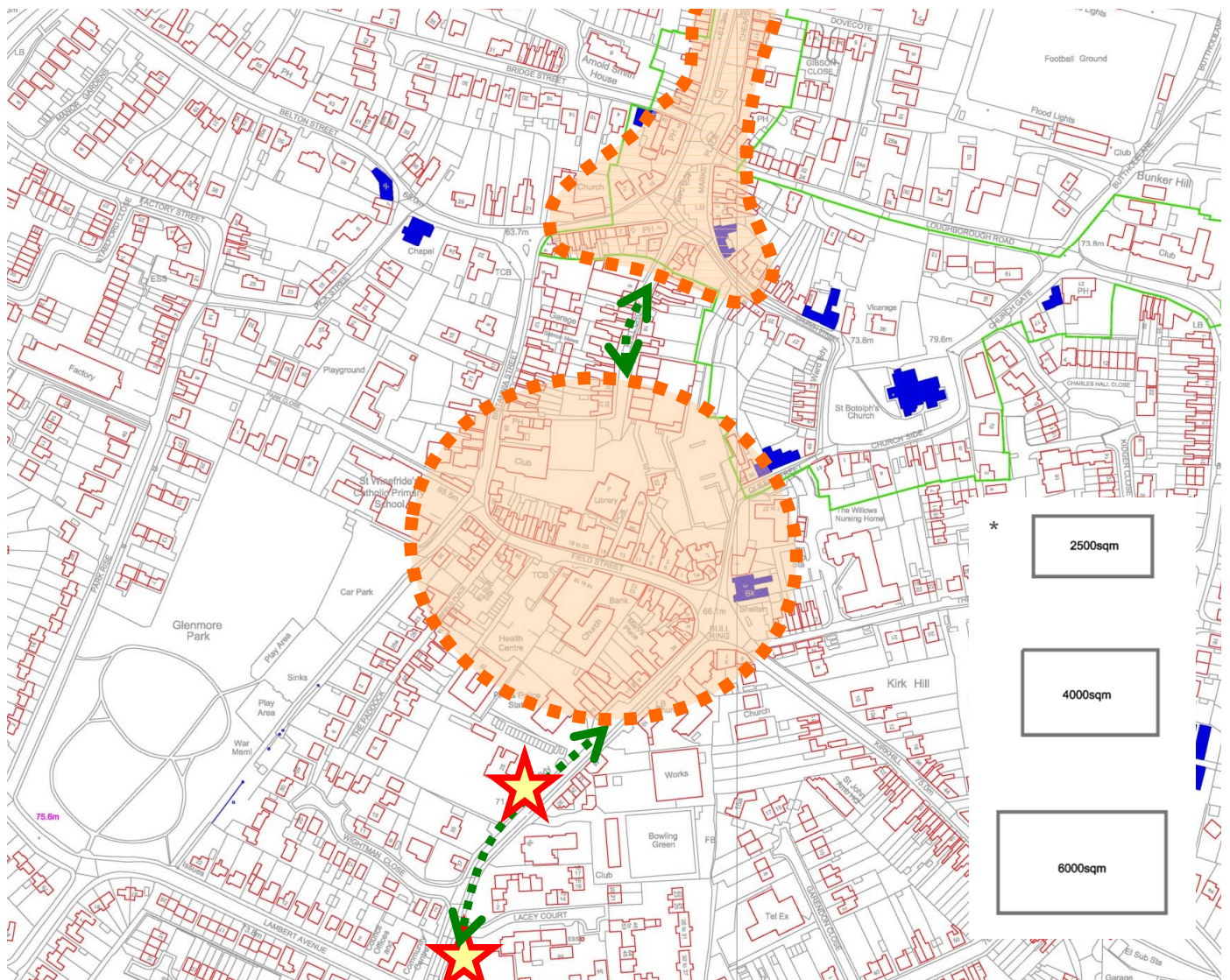


Fig. 13 Scenario 3 - Strengthening the Centre

*Indicative food stores of different sizes (buildings only, excluding car parks etc.)

Scenario 4: Shifting the centre – ‘Destination Shepshed’

Developing a large supermarket/retail park on the edge of the town to serve residents and re-capture some of the expenditure lost to other areas. This would have important implications for the future of the town centre.

Scenario 4 assumed that a superstore/retail developer would promote land on the edge of town for development; potential sites were not identified. It was recognised that this scenario was contrary to national planning policy but some residents welcomed the prospect of not having to travel out of the town for their weekly shopping. On balance, however, it was concluded that any edge of centre development would have a highly damaging effect on the existing town centre, impacting particularly on the three existing food stores. This scenario was therefore rejected.

Matters Agreed

The response to the workshop was generally very positive and there was a great deal of consensus about the direction that the town needs to take. The discussion was quite wide-ranging but there were some key points which were generally agreed upon by the attendees:

- Improving the market should be a priority – the current market place needs to be expanded to do this
- Independent trading should be encouraged so that Shepshed can develop a distinctive and attractive offer
- Expanding the leisure offer is an important part of improving conditions for local people and attracting more people into the town
- Charnwood Borough Council has a role to play in assembling sites to accommodate improved retail and leisure provision
- Market Place and Field Street need to be better connected to promote a more unified and coherent centre
- Further supermarket development in the town is not needed and a supermarket development on the edge of town would be highly detrimental to the future use of the town centre
- The natural and historic heritage of Shepshed should be a key part of the town’s ‘brand’ and links with the National Forest should be developed

Preferred Scenario

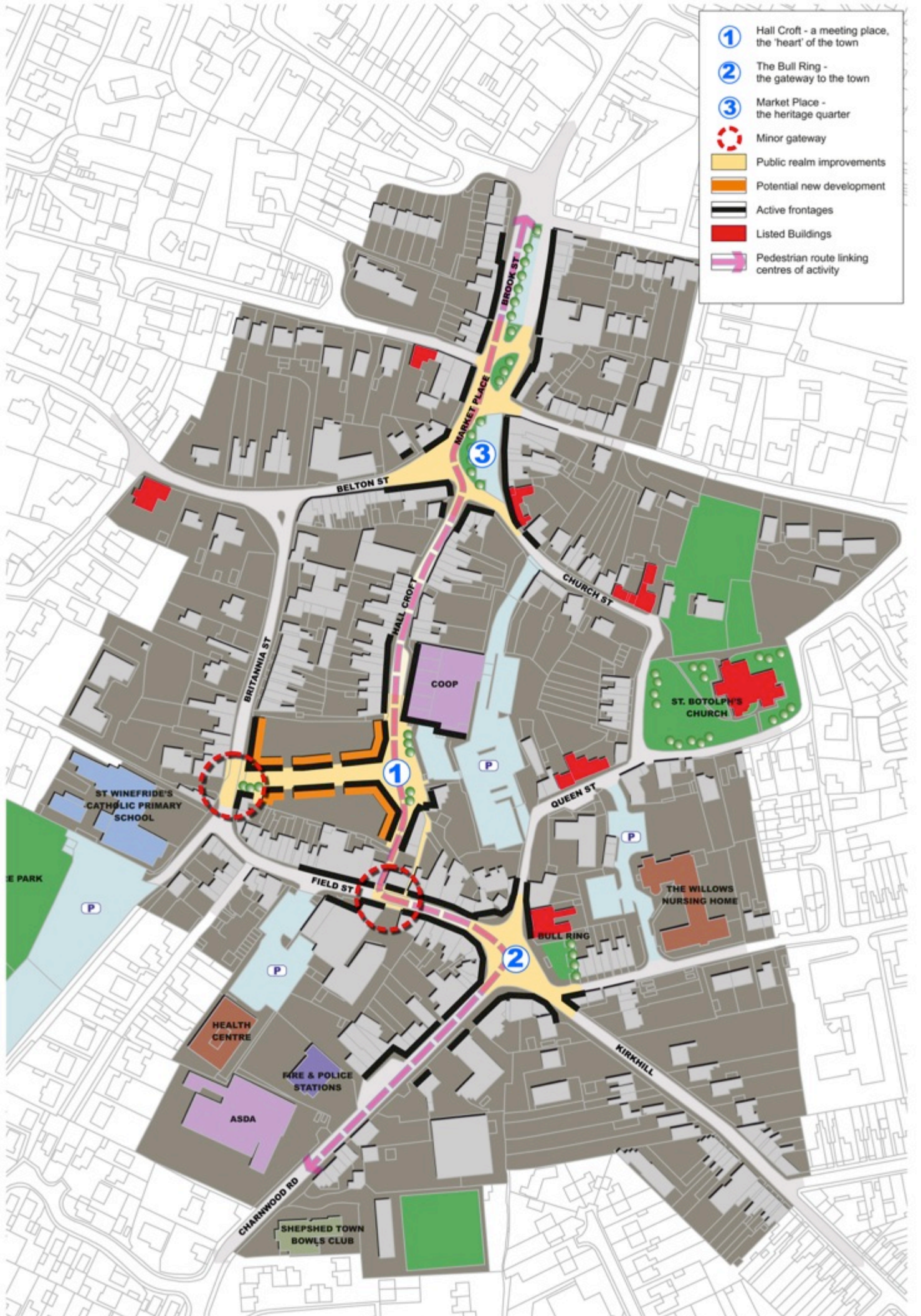
In the light of these conclusions a preferred scenario emerged. This was a combination of scenarios 1 and 2: a local centre for local people, based on support for, and expansion of, independent traders, repairing the physical fabric of the town and thereby making it more attractive to visitors. It was accepted that selective demolition and/or rebuilding of some existing properties might be desirable in the interest of strengthening the retail offer with the caveat that any development should respect the existing urban fabric.

Strategic objectives

Turning then to how the overall vision might be delivered, six Strategic Objectives were discussed and agreed at the meeting. It was already recognised that, due to the historic fabric of the town centre, and the limited amounts of vacant/underused land and buildings, the scope for redevelopment within Shepshed was limited and, in consequence, much of the vision would need to be delivered by way of social and economic interventions, supported by environmental improvements, as opposed to a spatial strategy delivering substantial amounts of new floorspace.

The six Strategic Objectives used to guide the Master Plan and Delivery Framework were:

1. To promote Shepshed as a historic market town whose heritage and location will attract visitors and drive prosperity
2. To reinvigorate town centre activity and prosperity based around a new/enhanced market and independent retail offer
3. To provide enhanced leisure facilities across the town to serve the residents of Shepshed and to attract visitors to the town centre from outlying employment areas and surrounding settlements
4. To improve the visual appearance of the town centre to enhance the public realm making it an attractive environment to visit, shop and spend leisure time.
5. To improve connectivity and make the town centre an easier and safer place to access and visit.
6. To attract new businesses to Shepshed and to facilitate retailers and local businesses working together with appropriate support, a common purpose and mutual commitment to invest in the town centre.



- ① Hall Croft - a meeting place, the 'heart' of the town
- ② The Bull Ring - the gateway to the town
- ③ Market Place - the heritage quarter
- ⊕ Minor gateway
- Public realm improvements
- Potential new development
- Active frontages
- Listed Buildings
- Pedestrian route linking centres of activity

ST WINEFRIDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH

THE WILLOWS NURSING HOME

HEALTH CENTRE

FIRE & POLICE STATIONS

ASDA

SHEPSHED TOWN BOWLS CLUB

COOP

BULL RING

CHARWOOD RD

KIRK HILL

BELTON ST

HALL CROFT

QUEEN ST

FIELD ST

CHURCH ST

MARKET PLACE

BROOK ST

BRITANNIA ST

The Master Plan

The overall vision for Shepshed is one of a thriving town centre serving the needs of residents, employees and visitors, from three clearly defined centres linked along a spine of complementary activities. Town centres are places where diversity is celebrated but the grouping together of like-minded businesses with a common purpose can create a powerful critical mass.

The idea of a spine of complementary activities picks up on the theme of a 'town trail', already in existence in the form of a historical route through the town and developed in landscape terms in the Bellinger Design study. The Master Plan takes this one step further and relates this to the town's retail function creating a series of destinations each with their own character, identity and economic rationale.

Our proposals are grounded in the physical fabric of the town so that we build upon what is there. Change is often most effective if it builds on what is there already and is seen as a gradual progression. Time allows people and places to adapt.

The three destinations within the town centre are:



A place to meet, the 'heart' of the town – Hall Croft



A clearly defined gateway – the Bull Ring



A heritage quarter – Market Place.

Hall Croft – A place to meet, the ‘heart’ of the town



Fig. 15 Hall Croft Master Plan Extract

A town centre needs to have a gathering place, usually a strong central focus of concentrated activity, around which people can meet, spend time and socialise. Uses other than retailing will normally contribute to the overall mix. Energy and activity are crucial to the social and economic success of the centre.

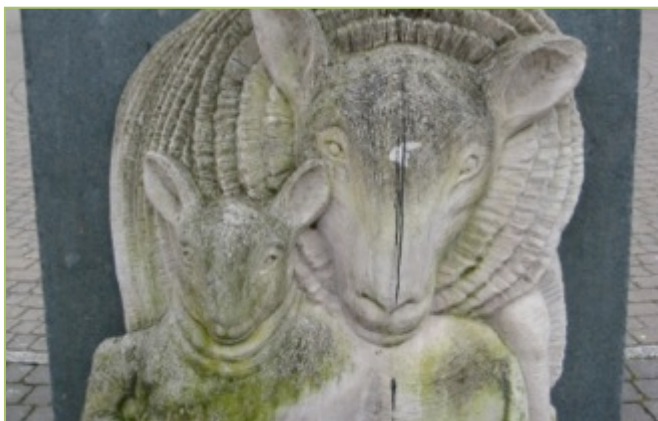
These places are often mixed in terms of their land uses, with active frontages and public spaces at ground floor level. Other uses, commercial, residential, etc. can be accommodated above. Most such locations also enjoy an attractive environment.

The area around Hall Croft has this potential. Although it is invisible to passing trade it is nevertheless exceptionally well connected to the rest of the town. It is the shortcut through which pedestrians can move, or congregate in a relatively quiet, potentially pleasant part of town. It has the Co-op and the library as its anchors, and it is the only part of town where there is a collection of vacant or underused land and buildings. This presents opportunities that do not exist elsewhere.

Hall Croft also has remarkably good views of St Botolph's Church and some characterful and quirky buildings in its own right. As the location for the Friday market, it is a well-recognised part of town.

To achieve its full potential, however, Hall Croft needs to be strengthened, as a destination, with new development which removes the unsightly views of rear entrances, car parks, service yards and refuse collection areas. Whilst the library provides a much valued service within the town, the building itself is not of high quality but it is positioned in such a way that it dominates this part of Hall Croft and restricts its development potential. In addition, its only active frontage is to the east of the building fronting on to the access to Field Street rather than on to the public square.

The Master Plan proposes that the Hall Croft area should become the 'heart' of Shepshed. Ideally this would be achieved through the comprehensive redevelopment of existing vacant and underused land (the Britannia Inn and car park, the snooker hall and the site of the current Friday Market and sitting area). New development would be created to take advantage of the views towards St Botolph's Church, at the same time creating an axis for new development towards Britannia Street and Glenmore Car Park. This could incorporate new retail uses, community uses, a café/restaurant, a more attractive market place and sitting area. Closer to Britannia Street there could be a transition to residential development although the pedestrian access would need to be maintained to Glenmore Car Park. It is vital that the new mixed use development should have active frontages at ground floor level and that, any residential use at ground floor level should be resisted other than at the western end closest to Britannia Street.



Images from Hall Croft

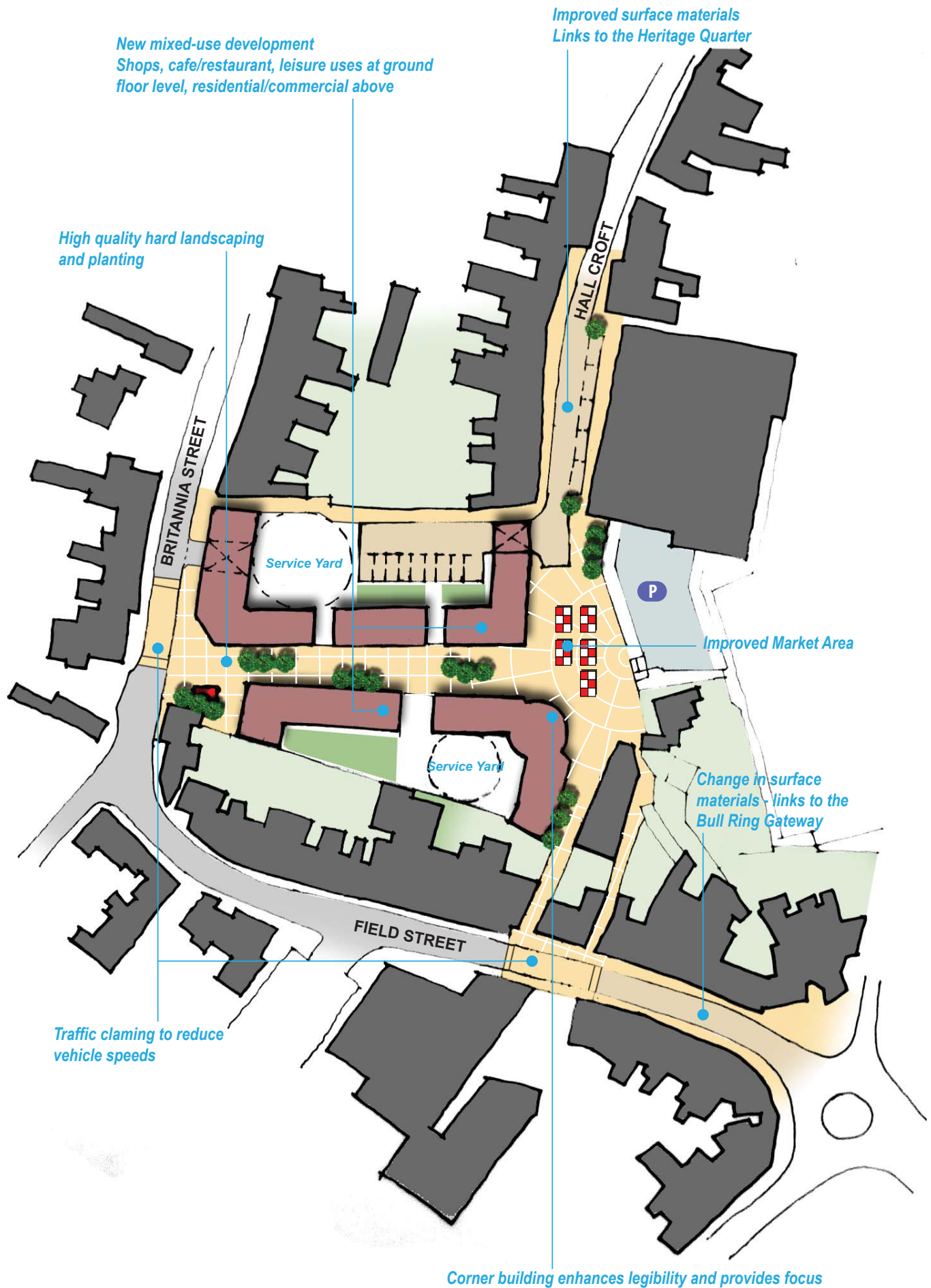


Fig. 16 Hall Croft Illustrative Plan

The new space would be beautifully landscaped, providing a better, more vibrant setting for the market and other uses. The views towards St Botolph's Church, sitting above the trees, need to be respected. New development needs to respond positively to this context, creating active frontages around the re-designed, central 'square' and route along the axis to Britannia Street.

The library and an improved market place must be included in the development mix. The accessibility that exists in all directions needs to be maintained and enhanced if possible. Indeed, connections to surrounding residential areas, Glenmore Car Park and civic functions need to be strengthened. This would be a largely car-free environment, although there would need to be provision for servicing and disabled parking.

Matters relating to the delivery of this proposal area considered in Chapter 5 of this report.



Traffic free, pedestrianised areas



Pleasant places to meet



New, high quality frontages



Design features creating meeting places

The Bull Ring – the gateway to the town



Fig. 17 Bull Ring -Master Plan extract

Visitors need to recognise when they have arrived in a town centre and have a sense of what is available to them. Understanding how a town 'works' can often be a sub-conscious reaction, based on experiences elsewhere, so clear messages need to be given. Signage is important, but changes to the physical fabric (public realm and individual buildings) can be very powerful: distinctive branding, differentiated treatments of highways and pavements, public open space and street furniture all play their part.

In Shepshed, the Bull Ring is the principal gateway to the town centre. Local people value highly its historical associations with the cattle trade and the fact that it is second only to the Bull Ring in Birmingham. Yet it is a hugely car-dominated environment where the need for a bus turning circle has dictated the nature and form of the space: vehicle-maneuvring space is very generous, pavements are cramped. The central feature, a pole with four blue directional arrows, is a far cry from the historic central feature with attractive lighting columns and beautiful ironwork.

Nevertheless, the Bull Ring is the principal gateway to the town. Although Market Place performs a similar function to those arriving from the north this is very much a sub-ordinate gateway to the Bull Ring. As the principal gateway, the Bull Ring needs to make a clear statement about its importance within the town through its physical form, the treatment of the public realm, the activities that are located around it and the signage to other places.

The Master Plan proposes that the public realm should be enhanced significantly. Careful consideration should be given to balancing the needs of road users (principally the buses) with those of pedestrians. Resolution of this problem should be a high priority and should be combined with the other measures identified.

Bull Ring's function as a gateway also needs to be linked with the role of Field Street which the Master Plan proposes should be Shepshed's High Street, the point of access to Hall Croft and the space around which key civic functions are located. At present the townscape is fragmented, the pedestrian environment is poor and the quality of buildings and shop fronts is variable. There is also a significant amount of non-primary retail and service uses.



Traffic calming methods



Well-designed junctions to support all forms of vehicular and pedestrian movement safely



Well-integrated carriageway and footpaths



Use of high quality materials

For Field Street to assume the role of a 'high street' it will need to attract a concentration of popular shops and essential services that are readily visible to passing traffic; the Master Plan sets the context for this in the form of environmental improvements. Planning policy recommendations are also made later in Delivery chapter of the report.

Improvements to Field Street will in turn reinforce activity around the Bull Ring and on Charnwood Road. It is essential that Field Street acts as a 'bridge' between the land to the north and the south. The pedestrian environment needs to be improved and shop front design and signage needs to be co-ordinated.

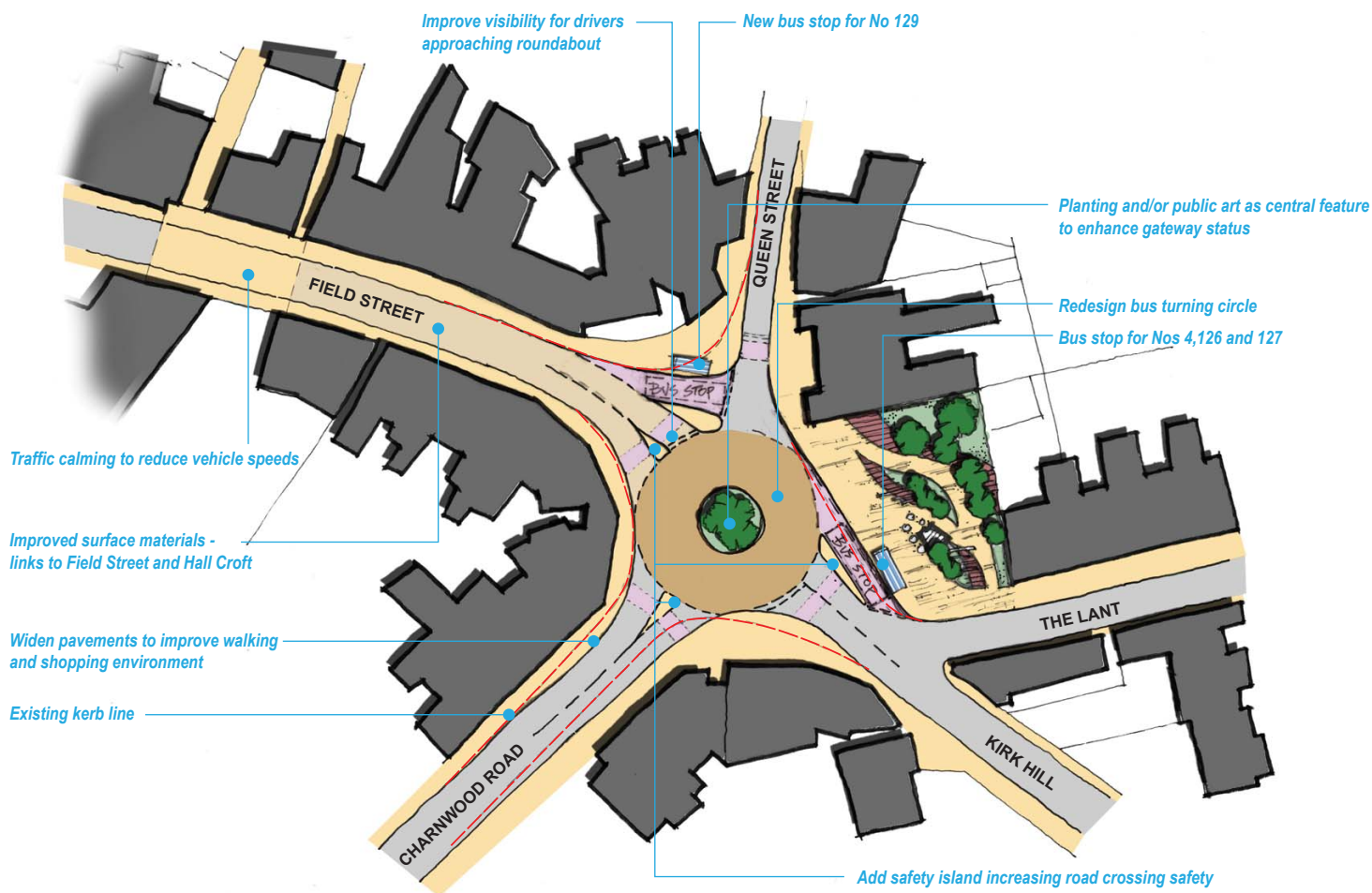


Fig. 18 Bull Ring Illustrative Plan

Market Place – the ‘Heritage Quarter’



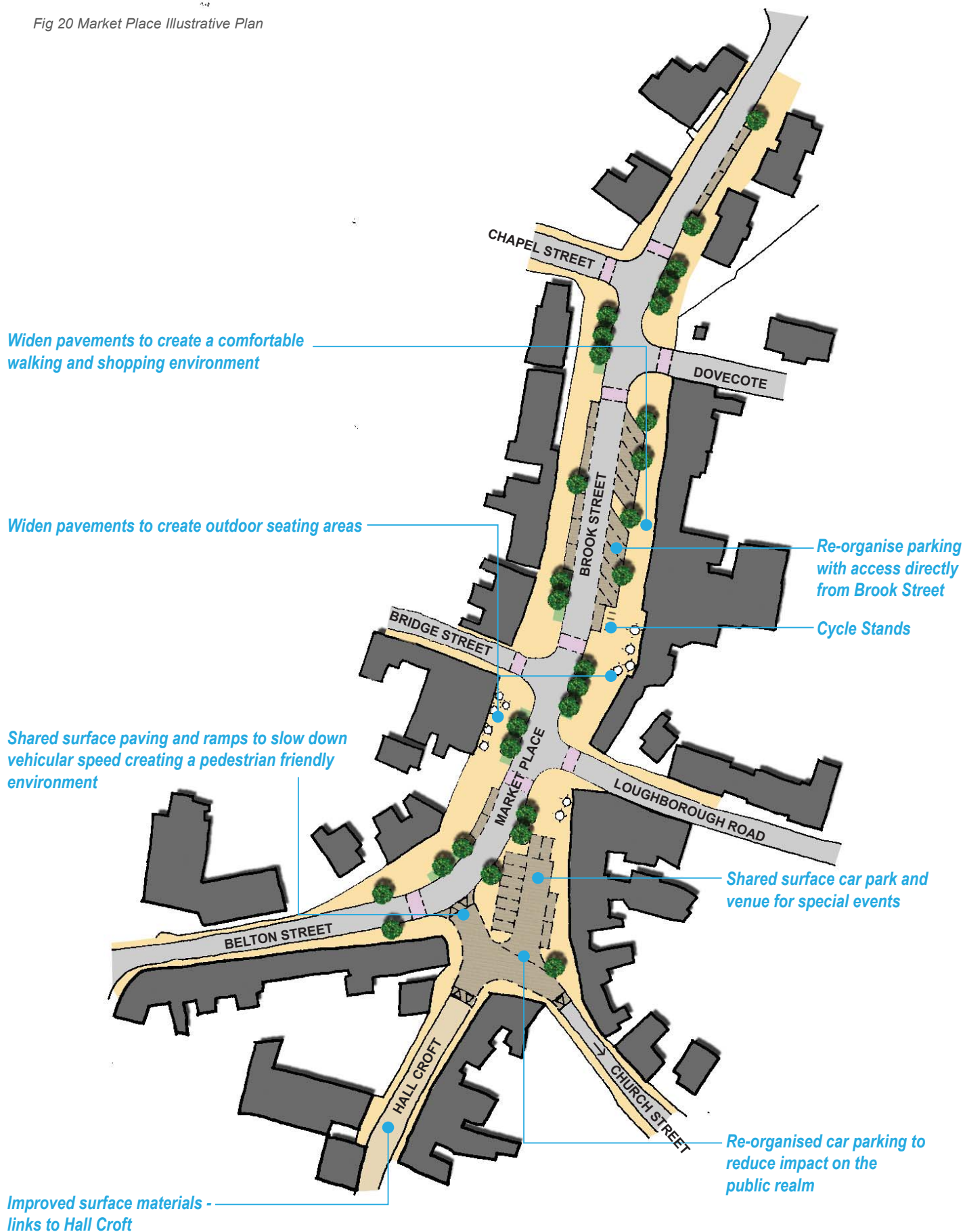
Fig. 19 Market Place Master Plan Extract

Most towns have a conservation area at their heart, a concentration of heritage properties and attractive townscape. Retailers exploit the advantage of a characterful environment and often eating and drinking places co-exist with speciality retailing.

In Shepshed, the conservation area lies generally to the east and north of the town centre, encompassing Market Place. Here, and extending down Hall Croft, there are characterful properties, often well-maintained, and a nucleus of pubs, overnight accommodation, specialist shops and services that could be co-ordinated and enhanced to extend the appeal of the town to visitors.

Again, however, this is a heavily car-dominated environment at present. The carriageway width is extensive and there is much on-street parking. There are few trees, soft landscaping or places to stop and rest.

Fig 20 Market Place Illustrative Plan



If Market Place is to achieve its full potential, the public realm must be improved substantially. The Master Plan proposes that the carriageway width should be reduced and pavements widened. Car parking could also be re-organised to provide access directly from Brook Street rather than via a parallel access road; this allows wider pavements to be provided in front of shops. Some of these could be used as sitting areas by pubs and cafes, allowing the uses to spill out in to the public realm, thereby making a stronger connection between the frontages and the public space. Improvements to buildings, repaired and renovated shop fronts and co-ordinated signs would substantially enhance the townscape, especially if themed to respond positively to the historic environment.



Pedestrian friendly environment



Attractive shop frontage



Attractive shop front adding to the public realm with positive features



Outdoor seating areas and street trees

Active frontages and primary retail areas

The Master Plan also identifies places where the creation or retention of active frontages is essential to the overall success of the retail environment. These are locations where it is important to have publicly accessible land and buildings, where business or community activities will contribute to the vitality and viability of the retail stores. Planning permission should be resisted for uses which do not support a vibrant and active town centre.

More detailed work is required to define the precise extent of primary shopping areas, and these can be protected through planning policy following adoption of the Core Strategy. In broad terms these should sit within the active frontages shown on the Master Plan.

Section 5

Delivering the Vision



05 – Delivering the Vision

Introduction

This chapter of the report constitutes the “Delivery Framework”. It examines what actions, taken collectively, would deliver the Master Plan vision for Shepshed.

Chapter 3 of this report outlined six Strategic Objectives identified and agreed through consultation. We have proposed specific interventions that will support the achievement of each of these Strategic Objectives. This is not a comprehensive list of all the actions that stakeholders *could* or even *may want* to make; rather it is a set of ideas forming the basis of an ambitious work programme which, if implemented, would have a transformative effect on the town centre. That is not to imply that change will only occur if and when the programme is completed in full. The Master Plan vision will be delivered over many years and each action should be seen as one in a series of incremental steps building towards that common goal.

Furthermore, it would be wrong to see this Delivery Framework as a fixed or rigid programme. Change is inevitable – and it could come in a number of forms: economic and market conditions, land and funding availability, policy, people, priorities, etc. What we set down today may not be relevant in the future and it is essential that those taking ownership of the delivery programme regularly review and amend the Delivery Framework to take account of changing circumstances and needs.

This list of interventions is also intended to inspire – to get people thinking creatively about what can be done, how else the vision can be achieved, and what actions they can take to make it happen. This section therefore includes a number of examples of what has been done elsewhere to help stimulate this thought process.

A common denominator of other successful town centres is a passionate and active local community prepared to commit time energy and good ideas which are tailored to the needs of the place.

Times are tough, the market is struggling across a number of sectors and public funding is constrained. The interventions proposed therefore need to be realistic as well as ambitious. We propose a wide range of actions, some of which can be implemented at little or no cost, and others where substantial financial investment will be required. Given current financial constraints we do not underestimate the difficulties in raising funding, but there is a multitude of potential sources, both public and private, and an active fund raising programme needs to be a cornerstone of the delivery plan.

Similarly, with timescales, we have sought to set out some interventions which can be implemented immediately, some that will take a little longer, and others that may take a number of years to realise due to their complex nature and the need for funding. For each intervention, we have suggested some specific actions and ideas as to how the outcome can be achieved, offered an indication of potential funding sources and a realistic timescale for delivery. We have also indicated those organisations that we see having a key role in leading or supporting each intervention.

Money is important, but more important still is the willingness of local people, businesses, public bodies and other organisations to turn the vision into reality. The interventions proposed to improve the vitality and viability of Shepshed town centre rely on people's time, skills and commitment. We feel that it is important to acknowledge that success will depend greatly on:

- Capacity building (developing knowledge, skills and experience within the community)
- A structured approach (prioritisation, scheduling, project monitoring and management, decision-making, responsibilities and accountability)
- Resilience (financial sustainability, flexibility to adapt to change, knowledge sharing and succession planning in case of volunteers' circumstances changing, scalability for when big and small projects begin and end)
- Motivation (monitoring and evaluation of impact, recognition of volunteers, promotion of achievements, feeling supported, ownership of assets), and
- Collaboration (inclusiveness, co-production, and buy-in from other parties)

The process of implementing change can - and should - start now, capitalising on the goodwill and enthusiasm generated throughout the consultation process and recent Town Team workshops. It is, however, unrealistic to imagine that the town will be transformed overnight. Resolve, determination and a continuous commitment to the vision will be required over a number of years from all stakeholder groups. The Delivery Framework assumes at least a ten year programme of reinforcing activity - through the town's potential, the commitment of public bodies and the enthusiasm of local people, notable and lasting change can be achieved.

Strategic Objective 1: To promote Shepshed as a historic market town whose heritage and location will attract visitors and drive prosperity

Shepshed is an historic market town. Some of its greatest assets are its heritage and the quality of its historic buildings, albeit that these are interspersed with development of varying architectural quality and repair. There is a Shepshed Town Trail, but this is not well advertised, nor immediately obvious to visitors. The town is also very accessible from the national motorway network and well placed to serve visitor needs associated with tourism to the National Forest. However, the town does not presently make best use of these assets, and it certainly does not present itself as an appealing tourist destination. There is therefore significant potential to transform the town, over time, into a market town noted for its history and visual appeal, and a place that offers a range of interesting and quirky places to shop, eat and drink. In doing so, it can become a place of choice for visitors to stay during short breaks to the National Forest, or for those wanting somewhere pleasant to spend a weekend afternoon.

This vision may, at present, seem rather far off; however the basic ingredients are there. They need to be protected, enhanced and emphasised. The town needs to be re-branded and marketed both to local residents (who do not presently use the town) and to those further afield. There is also a clear need to help existing businesses better access and target consumers, and to offer support and advice as to how this can be achieved.

This Strategic Objective cannot stand alone; its success will depend on the other Strategic Objectives being brought forward in parallel. In particular, the need to enhance the visual appearance and to offer visitors a better range of shops and leisure activities are vital if this objective is to be achieved. The ability to deliver these interventions and the level of their success relies in large part on the enthusiasm and commitment of a dedicated Shepshed Marketing Team. The ability to identify, recruit and motivate people to volunteer their time is a key risk in this strategy. Charnwood Borough Council also has its part to play in reviewing and developing policy to protect historic assets.

Case study: Volunteer-led visitor information centre

KingstonFirst Business Improvement District formed the first volunteer-led Visitor Information Centre to become an Enjoy England Official Partner. Ticket sales for the year 2011/12 rose by 500% on the previous year.

Find out more:

<http://www.britishbids.info/Home/Nationwidebidsurvey2012.aspx>

Table 2 sets down some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 1.

Strategic Objective 1: To promote Shepshed as a historic market town whose heritage & location will attract visitors and drive prosperity				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs & funding sources	Timescale
Establish a "Shepshed Marketing Team" - a working sub-group reporting to the Town Team	<p>Town Team seeks nominations from parties with appropriate interest, knowledge and skills who are prepared to commit some of their time.</p> <p>Ideally this would include people with branding / marketing / tourism / journalism experience, IT / web-based skills, local historians / interest groups, local retailers, market traders, hoteliers and other business representatives etc. The group could then determine what, if any, professional support it may require to support specific initiatives / fill skills gaps.</p>	Town Team to establish	<p>Nil cost to establish.</p> <p>Marketing Team may identify requirement for specific external support to fill skill gaps or undertake specific projects. This could be acquired flexibly as funds allow.</p> <p>Potential funding sources: see marketing programme below.</p>	<p>Immediately:</p> <p>The process of establishing a working group could commence straight away.</p>
Developing a branding / marketing programme e.g. promoting Shepshed as "The Gateway to the National Forest"	<p>Very wide range of activities to be defined by the Shepshed Marketing Team. Examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining the Shepshed "brand", including logos, etc. Identifying target consumers & sectors both locally and regionally Helping local businesses with promotion / advice / marketing initiatives Co-ordinating marketing strategies e.g. public tourism campaigns, local business investment etc. to maximise impact and provide mutually reinforcing messages Forge links with and supply information to tourist information providers e.g. www.goleicestershire.com Attracting desirable businesses into the area by communicating town's potential; this could include for example market traders, specialist / independent retailers, quality food & drink providers, leisure and B&B operators Identifying and securing funding for marketing campaigns Developing / running bespoke marketing campaigns to support local business and encourage tourism Engaging local residents to support their town centre retailers Informing local development / investment policy Providing face to face visitor information services, particularly at key times such as during seasonal events 	Shepshed Marketing Team (Town Team Sub-Group)	<p>A tremendous amount could be achieved at very little cost by motivated local people offering their skills and time e.g. web based marketing, co-ordinating existing marketing strategies & budgets, local journalism / newspaper reports etc. Local businesses such as printers / graphic designers could be approached to offer services at cost.</p> <p>Funding sources for more ambitious marketing projects could include voluntary contributions from local businesses and grant applications for tourism / economic development support. A funding plan would need to be developed based on research as to what grants may be available from time-to-time.</p>	<p>Short term and then on-going:</p> <p>Once the Shepshed Marketing Team has been established it would be possible to commence smaller scale (but meaningful) marketing activity in a matter of weeks, developing more ambitious programmes as funds are secured.</p>
Enhanced protection for important buildings, features, frontages and views.	<p>Commission a review of historic buildings and other assets in Shepshed in light of the Master Plan vision and extend statutory and local Listing where necessary to afford these assets greater status and protection</p> <p>Review Conservation Area boundaries and consider whether this should be extended to include other key areas of the town centre.</p> <p>Emphasise the importance of Listed Building and Conservation Area status through effective development management</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council to lead on policy formulation and development management</p> <p>Contributions from local history groups and Shepshed Marketing Team regarding important features to protect</p>	This type of work would usually be undertaken by the Borough Council's planning department utilising internal resources	<p>Short term:</p> <p>With appropriate resource the policy decisions could be completed within 12 months and then promoted via the development t</p>

Table 2 Strategic Objective 1

Strategic Objective 1: To promote Shepshed as a historic market town whose heritage & location will attract visitors and drive prosperity				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Capitalise on historic assets through enhanced signage and art	<p>Engage local history and interest groups to review and enhance information included within the Shepshed Town Trail - focussing on key historic buildings, landmarks, stories and heritage assets, as well as other notable points of visitor interest</p> <p>Prepare and deliver an improved signage plan - highlighting the route / opportunities presented by the Town Trail, and plaques providing visitor information at key points of interest</p> <p>Seek investment for relevant art work that reflects the heritage interests of the town.</p> <p>Consider links with Loughborough University or other educational / craft / arts groups to help procure public art perhaps through challenges / competition</p> <p>Identify and offer display points for commercial exhibitors / artists to showcase their work free of charge</p> <p>Incorporate heritage assets into Shepshed Marketing Strategy</p>	<p>Town Team to lead funding / delivery strategy</p> <p>Shepshed Marketing & Public Realm Teams play key role</p> <p>Inputs and guidance from various stakeholder groups - local history / interest groups</p> <p>Town and Borough Council funding / support</p>	<p>Much of the initial research and preparation of intellectual material could be done without funding by local interest groups.</p> <p>Funding for signage and art works could come from a variety of sources including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer contributions • Public Capital programmes • Public grants e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage etc. • Businesses sponsors • Charitable / legacy donations <p>The programme could be as constrained or as ambitious as funds allow, but to have a meaningful impact would suggest a minimum funding target of £5,000</p>	<p>Short to Medium Term:</p> <p>Work on assembling local information and commencing funding bids could commence almost immediately.</p> <p>It may take some time to assemble funds, and would likely become an on-going programme of investment as projects emerged and funds allow</p>
Encourage leisure cycling, developing and promoting a route for 'health tourists'	<p>Whilst it will be difficult to change residents' engrained car habits for commuting and shopping, there is potential to encourage them to enjoy the town and neighbouring countryside by bicycle as a leisure activity. This could be achieved by enhancing existing cycle routes, improving connectivity with the National Cycle Network and the National Forest and organising group cycling events</p> <p>Cycle training, bike surgeries and the sale of biking accessories may also encourage take-up</p> <p>Similar to the Heritage Trail, a cycle route could be developed that incorporates the town's assets. In due course, this should be promoted as an afternoon itinerary for 'health tourists'</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council to review opportunities to improve cycle routes</p> <p>Town Team to investigate potential partners for cycle training, bike surgeries and sale of biking accessories</p> <p>Shepshed Marketing Team to propose a tourist route, and promotion strategy</p>	<p>Developer contributions</p> <p>Capital funding from local authorities</p> <p>Sponsorship from bike-related private firms</p>	<p>Short to medium term: A route can begin to be developed right away, linking with review and promotion of the Heritage Trail</p> <p>We expect consultation on potential improvements to highways in Shepshed, including cycle routes within the next 12 months</p>

Table 2 Strategic Objective 1 (cont)

Strategic Objective 2: To reinvigorate town centre activity and prosperity based around a new market and independent retail offer

Shepshed town centre fails to serve the retail needs and expectations of its community, especially given its population size. This is characterised by the poor retention of convenience and comparison spending. This situation will only worsen with additional housing being brought forward through the Local Plan process. Improving and diversifying the retail offer is therefore a key issue to be addressed.

Through consultation, a number of issues and opportunities were identified, including:

- The need to concentrate retail activity into a defined town centre “core” to strengthen footfall and help encourage multiple shop visits.
- The need for flexible and affordable floor space to encourage new businesses, and for landlords to offer reasonable tenancy terms in order to ensure that ground floor space within the town centre is not converted to other uses.
- The need to make best use of any vacant space that may become available quickly, to prevent unsightly empty units that give a “down at heel” impression.
- The need for financial and business support for retailers.
- The need to limit or reduce certain uses within the town centre, an over-abundance of which detracts from Shepshed’s appeal as a shopping and visitor location e.g. fast food takeaways and budget off-licences.

The Master Plan places particular emphasis on promoting and developing an enhanced retail offer, in particular focussed around small, independent and perhaps specialist retailers and an improved street market, potentially including a farmers’ market and seasonal, specialist or touring markets selling higher value goods. A reinvigorated retail offer of this kind has the potential not only to attract local residents but also to appeal to a wider audience, including the development of a tourist offer for weekend and day trip leisure visitors.

Shepshed has very few national multiple brands, but it already has a number of independent retailers offering a range of products and services. This Strategic Objective therefore seeks to build on the current position, seeking to encourage those retailers whose presence aligns with the Master Plan vision, and to attract further retailers that will enhance the town’s retail offer.

Shepshed has a Friday street market, which has traditionally served local demand. This market has unfortunately declined in recent years to the point where there are now only a handful of regular stalls selling flowers, greetings cards, budget clothing and a larger fruit and vegetable stall. Consultation has revealed that there are a number of factors that have contributed to this decline, with poor footfall principal among them. This is attributed to the general decline in the retail offer within the town resulting in people going elsewhere, inadequacy of the existing space in Hall Croft, and its lack of visibility to passing trade. Weekly ground rent charge was not thought to be an issue by traders as it is already significantly lower than Loughborough. However, given the relative number of customers using the market in the two locations, any increase in weekly rent would almost certainly deter those stallholders who are “hanging-on”.

There is much research and current policy to support street markets as a means of increasing social vitality and economic growth. For example, a study conducted by the National Farmers' Union found that 80 per cent of neighbouring businesses saw a boost in trade following the establishment of a market nearby. WH Smith and Debenhams in Winchester, which are both adjacent to the local farmers' market site, reported a rise in takings of up to 30 per cent on market days. In London, customers spend on average £1.75 in other shops in the town centre for every £1 they spend in the market. The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) states that Local Planning Authorities should *"retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive."*

For the Friday market to expand significantly, it will require a better laid out and more attractive space, that is more visible to potential customers. A high quality space brought forward as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of Hall Croft could serve these needs. If the redevelopment of Hall Croft does not progress, then relocation of the market to Market Place provides an alternative location that is more accessible and visible to passing trade, although this was less favoured during consultation due to traffic impact, noise and air quality issues. This relocation would also be subject to appropriate reconfiguration of the space and provision of electricity and wind anchors for stallholders. A parking plan would need to be devised, which may include the erection of signs directing drivers-by to appropriate parking. A 'Community Toilet Scheme' run by local businesses may be necessary to counteract the additional distance from public conveniences.

Whilst it is important for the Friday market to remain on a weekday because market traders attend bigger markets (e.g. Loughborough) at the weekend, there is potential to move Shepshed's quarterly weekend Craft Fair to the town centre, helping to concentrate activity there. Expanding the food element of this market may serve local demand for a farmer's market. However, this would require arrangements for the provision, storage and erection of stalls for hire, and waste management services.

The greatest hurdle to overcome is persuading enough people to form new habits, regularly visiting and shopping in the town centre to encourage new, more diverse and higher quality retailers to set up shop – creating a spiral of improvement, rather than the previous spiral of decline. The greatest risk is that having established the conditions for investment, and perhaps even persuaded a few new retailers to open, local residents do not switch their behaviour and support the strategy with their custom.

Banking Facilities

Shepshed has a building society but no longer a high street bank; there were once a number of bank branches in Shepshed but over the years these have closed. This issue was repeatedly raised by members of the public and the Town Team during consultation. As part of this study we have therefore sought to engage banks in a discussion about the requirements and possibilities of providing enhanced banking facilities in Shepshed and have managed to speak with a major high street bank (one of the “big four”) and also with Handelsbanken who have recently opened in Loughborough.

The closure of bank branches is well documented in the national press:

“Last year, the big four banks, HSBC, Barclays, Lloyds TSB and NatWest, that operate last-bank branches in 96% of rural and suburban communities, closed 156 branches.....In 2011, the four banks closed 178 branches between them and in 2010, 193. Only months into 2013 and NatWest, which is part of RBS, has already announced 41 more closures for the year.” – www.moneywise.co.uk

The reasons for these closures is complex, and reflects long term trends in customer behaviour towards online and mobile banking, hastened by the financial crisis and recession. That discussion does not need repeating here suffice to say that what has happened in Shepshed reflects a much wider national and international picture of reduced branch networks with little reason for a change in direction.

Branches are expensive to open and operate, however when running a retail bank the need to interact with and attract new customers, to sell them banking products and handle their money remains. This has led to a number of innovations and new banking models, centred on “customer contact points” and therefore how we bank in the future will be different and more diverse than in the past. For example:

- High Street banks are increasingly looking at new technology and new types of “hole-in-the-wall” or “photo-booth” type machines that allow customers to make deposits and access all kinds of banking services – these can include call for help facilities, or may be manned at peak times.
- Alternative customer contact points – information and service desks – located in other buildings e.g. supermarkets or elsewhere. This keeps costs down, seeks to engage customers at their convenience and means that longer opening hours may be possible without staff being isolated. These points can include the types of machine referred to above.
- New banking models, for example Handelsbanken has open in Loughborough in a non-retail environment, it occupies an office building where customers can visit and discuss their financial / banking needs – however it does not provide money handling / counter services.
- The Post Office now offers a counter service where customers of a number of banks can withdraw cash, check balances or make deposits of cash or cheques in their network of over 11,500 branches.
- Tesco Bank has recently reconfirmed its commitment to providing a current account to its customers.

Our research suggests that the primary motivating factors for a bank to provide new facilities in Shepshed would be an assessment of how many potential customers (private and businesses) would be likely to switch over their accounts, and the wealth / customer profiles that would allow banking products to be sold.

There was also recognition that many people drive out of Shepshed to work and therefore are not in Shepshed during the core banking hours; hence new provision would need to consider how it provided extending opening hours beyond 5pm to serve those customers. A bank would not want to be the “only light in the street” as this would both fail to attract customers and raise security issues.

It is unlikely that a major bank is going to be persuaded to reopen a branch in Shepshed anytime soon, the costs are simply too high to justify investment with the present state of the local economy. Therefore embracing new banking models, contacting banks and working with them to provide alternative solutions presents the best opportunity for delivering better and greater choice of banking in Shepshed. Facilitating these discussions and identifying opportunities could be an important work strand for the Town Team.

Case study: Incredible Edible Todmorden

Two friends began planting vegetables on sites around the town. As more and more vegetables started sprouting mysteriously, so residents caught onto the vision, and now local institutions from the police to an old people's home are involved in growing vegetables.

The town now has a unique identity and is attracting attention from all over the world. The high school serves produce in its canteen that the pupils have grown themselves in a commercial sized polytunnel, and businesses in Todmorden have benefited from a boom in locally produced food.

Find out more: <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk>

Case study: Hitchin's community-operated street market

Hitchin's market is one of the oldest in England but after several years of decline, local people decided it was time for it to get more investment. The local town centre partnership, the Hitchin Initiative, stepped in to take on the management of the market. The market is outdoors with fixed stalls and the partnership has invested any profits in improving those stalls and in other works including better lighting.

By taking it on they were able to manage it at a lower cost than the council had before them while making improvements to the market's environment.

Since the takeover, the market's footfall and trader base have increased. A weekly car boot sale and monthly farmers' market and craft market have been added to the timetable.

Find out more:
<http://towns.org.uk/2011/06/23/localism-casestudy-asset-management-hitchin-market/>

Table 3 overleaf sets out some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 2

Strategic Objective 2: To reinvigorate town centre activity and prosperity based around a new market and independent retail offer				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Protect core retail area and frontages with planning policy	<p>Develop local plan policy to identify a core retail area that defines the geographic boundary of the town centre and secures appropriate uses within it that align with the agreed Master Plan Vision. Policy should focus on the ground floor use and identify key retail frontages to be retained</p> <p>Policy should seek to prioritise retail, leisure, community and food/drink provision at ground floor level, with a greater mix of uses including offices / residential on upper floors - to encourage activity within the town centre throughout all hours of the day</p>	Charnwood Borough Council to develop planning policy	This type of work would usually be undertaken by the Borough Council's planning department utilising internal resources.	Short Term: With appropriate resource availability this policy formulation could be completed within 12 months and then promoted through the development plan.
Limit the expansion of uses in the town centre that do not align with the strategic vision through planning and licensing policy	Develop local plan and licensing policy specifically relating to the defined town centre that places strict limits on certain use classes that in abundance would detract or negatively impact the agreed Master Plan Vision. Public consultation would be required to determine what these may be, but for example it could apply to uses such as hot food takeaways, off licences, betting shops, etc.	Charnwood Borough Council to develop planning policy	This type of work would usually be undertaken by the Borough Council's planning department utilising internal resources.	Short Term: With appropriate resource availability this could be completed within 12 months.
Make best use of empty shop space: facilitate "pop-up" uses and quality shutter / window art	<p>Consider whether to manage this directly or engage an established pop-up co-ordinator / company</p> <p>Using best practice from elsewhere, develop and promote a flexible licensing arrangement for landlords and prospective occupiers to use "off the shelf"</p> <p>Approach landlords / retailers / agents with vacant premises or spare floorspace and get them to sign-up to the "pop-up" programme</p> <p>Identify and approach potential users such as artists and craft producers, start-up businesses, self-employed practitioners, etc. who may benefit from such space.</p> <p>Consider opportunities for community and leisure uses, especially with youth involvement</p> <p>Consider linking pop-up uses with stallholder activity on market days, perhaps with a particular promotional theme e.g. food and drink fairs, seasonal goods, etc.</p> <p>Experiment with short-term pilots, reviewing what works well and what does not</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities for quality window / shutter art to liven up street scene during closing hours or for vacant premises. Approach companies that specialise in providing advertising space on shutters.</p>	<p>Town Team to lead</p> <p>Shepshed Retailers Forum, Shepshed Marketing Team, Shepshed Public Realm Team</p> <p>Landlords / agents</p> <p>Support from Town Council / Charnwood Borough Council</p> <p>Consider engaging external support</p>	<p>Much could be achieved simply by committing time to coordinate activity, approaching relevant parties and utilising best practice from elsewhere.</p> <p>External professional support may be available but would likely charge a percentage of licensing fees, etc. which may make pop-up space less viable or attractive to landlords.</p> <p>Pop-up users would need to be charged minimal licence fees to use space to make this attractive to them. Landlords may benefit by covering business rates, avoiding security costs and making premises more "marketable".</p> <p>Advertising income may be available for shutter space</p> <p>Economic development grant and public artwork grant opportunities need to be explored</p>	<p>Short to Medium Term: Research into best practice and testing interest from landlords / occupiers could begin straight away. It is likely to take several years to build up to a portfolio of properties and occupiers and annual events.</p>

Table 3 Strategic Objective 2

Strategic Objective 2: To reinvigorate town centre activity and prosperity based around a new market and independent retail offer				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Provide financial & business support to small / start-up retailers and help those looking to locate in the town centre	<p>Ensure businesses are aware of small business rate relief until 31 March 2014. This comprises 100% relief (doubled from the usual rate of 50%) for properties with a rateable value of £6,000 or less. The rate of relief will gradually decrease from 100% to 0% for properties with a rateable value between £6,001 and £12,000</p> <p>Work closely with Charnwood BC to signpost to providers of small business support (see http://www.charnwoodbusiness.com/organisations)</p> <p>Promote training sessions for start-ups run by the Council</p> <p>Signpost training initiatives run by National Skills Academy for Retail and other similar organisations</p> <p>Network with other Town Teams to learn and apply best practice</p> <p>Consider a local business mentoring scheme</p>	<p>Town Team lead</p> <p>Shepshed Retailers Forum</p> <p>Shepshed Marketing Team</p> <p>Support from Town Council / Charnwood Borough Council</p>	<p>Signposting role could be undertaken with Charnwood BC.</p> <p>A Town Team member could be set the task of networking with other Town Teams and other interest groups promoting independent retailers</p> <p>Grant funding opportunities should be kept under review for training/mentoring and financial support.</p> <p>Possible voluntary role for business mentor.</p>	Short term and ongoing
Enhance and grow the weekday street market	<p>If a comprehensive redevelopment of Hall Croft can be delivered the street market will become more accessible and visible to passing trade</p> <p>If this redevelopment of Hall Croft does not come forward, Market Place may provide a potential alternative location that is more accessible and visible to passing trade. This would be subject to appropriate reconfiguration of the space and provision of electricity and wind anchors for stallholders. A 'Community Toilet Scheme' run by local businesses may be necessary to counteract the additional distance from public conveniences</p> <p>Promote the weekday market to residents who do not typically venture into the town centre.</p> <p>Charnwood Borough Council should review the boundaries of access rights for parking, to allow expansion of the market at lower level without needing to use the higher level surface</p> <p>Transferring responsibility for the operation and administration of the market would allow increased flexibility and local 'ownership'. If the market grows, or is moved to Market Place (thereby saving ground currently rent paid to Co-op), there may also be a small profit for reinvestment</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council to clarify its commitment to / strategy for comprehensive redevelopment of Hall Croft</p> <p>Shepshed Marketing Team to incorporate promotion of the weekday street market into their strategy</p> <p>Town Team / Retail Forum / Shepshed Town Council to consider taking over responsibility for the operation and administration of the market</p> <p>The new responsible party would be supported by CBC's Markets and Fairs Team</p>	<p>Funding for the delivery of public realm improvements to Hall Croft and Market Place are covered separately within this chapter.</p> <p>Additional ground rents from Craft Fair stallholders and growth in weekday market traders would provide additional revenue for reinvestment</p>	<p>Immediately: These discussions could progress straight away, forming a strategy and timetable for implementation</p> <p>Public realm improvement works to provide enhanced market facilities are likely to take several years</p>

Table 3 Strategic Objective 2 (cont)

Strategic Objective 2: To reinvigorate town centre activity and prosperity based around a new market and independent retail offer				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Relocate the Craft Fair to the town centre, expand the food element, and link with seasonal / specialist touring markets	<p>Explore the potential for relocating the quarterly Craft Fair to the town centre, to concentrate activity back in the town centre. Issues such as the provision, storage and erection of stalls and waste management services would need to be discussed and resolved</p> <p>The existing food element of the Craft Fair could be expanded to serve demand for a Farmers' Market. However, it will be important to preserve the local, self-made/grown principles of a Farmers' Market so as not to harm its reputation of integrity</p> <p>Similarly, if flea market / car boot stalls are introduced at any point, these should not harm the quality and amenity of the specialist market</p> <p>This expanded specialist market should continue to be held on weekends, when residents who commute out of town can attend. The frequency of the market may also be increased over time</p> <p>Town Team to identify opportunities to link with seasonal / specialist touring markets</p>	<p>Existing Craft Fair team</p> <p>Organisations such as the Plunkett Foundation provide support to community-led farmer's markets</p>	<p>The operation and administration required by Charnwood Borough Council is currently minimal (traders take away their own waste and provide their own stalls), and so breaks even from stallholders' ground rents (over £4,000pa), despite ground rent paid to Co-op for use of the space (c.£2,500pa)</p> <p>There may be capital and revenue costs associated with relocating the Craft Fair to the town centre, in terms of the provision, storage and erection of stalls and waste management</p> <p>New ground rents from Craft Fair stallholders and growth in weekday market traders would provide additional revenue</p>	<p>Immediately: These discussions could progress straight away, forming a timetable for implementation</p>

Table 3 Strategic Objective 2 (cont)

Strategic Objective 3: To provide enhanced leisure facilities across the town to serve the residents of Shepshed and to attract visitors to the town centre from outlying employment areas and surrounding settlements.

Shepshed does not currently meet the sports and leisure needs of its community and, unless this gap is addressed, it is only likely to widen with additional pressure from new housing. For the purposes of this report, we consider four main headings to comprise 'leisure': entertainment uses, community facilities, sports provision and food and drink.

Shepshed does not currently have the population, land availability or town centre vitality to sustain viable entertainment uses such as a bowling alley, cinema, nightclub or casino. However, there is the possibility for activities such as film screenings, quiz, comedy and bingo nights to be organised by the community and held at venues such as pubs, schools, churches and the library. This may provide opportunities to work with creative residents within the town, as well as involving youth organisations such as the Shepshed Youth Forum, Youth Centre, and Passion drop-in centre.

There is potential for new community uses such as public meeting space, children's play groups and youth facilities – especially as part of a mixed use scheme within the town centre. This could be funded, at least in part, through developer contributions; however, these uses should be focused within the town centre where possible to help build a critical mass of activity there. A gymnasium could also be delivered in this way.

In terms of sports, it is important to safeguard the existing provision at the high school and college for continued use by the wider community. This will require negotiations with both institutions to come to a formal arrangement. Enhanced sports provision, such as a publicly available gymnasium or multi-purpose courts (for basketball, netball, hockey, tennis and badminton), could also be focused at these institutions. This may allow access to additional sources of funding to close any short-term viability gaps from private sector investment.

There are also a number of outdoor activities that have greater land requirements, such as sports pitches (for rugby, football, rounders, cricket), open space, and allotments. This is likely to be secured through the planning system, through developer contributions from larger housing schemes in the form of land or finance.

Food and drink (pubs, bars, cafes, gastro-pubs and restaurants) is the leisure use most likely to be provided entirely by the private sector, particularly once activity returns to the town centre through other initiatives. It will be necessary for the policy and licensing environment to be flexible enough to provide viable conditions for any new leisure operators.

Community notice boards, media such as Shepshed Eye, websites such as Leicestershire Villages, social media such as Twitter and Facebook should all form part of a strategy of information provision and community engagement.

Table 4 overleaf sets out some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 3

Strategic Objective 3: To provide enhanced leisure facilities across the town to serve the residents of Shepshed and to attract visitors to the town centre from outlying employment areas and surrounding settlements				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Ensure that Local Plan and licensing policy facilitates the flexible use of existing floor space for, and the development of, new leisure facilities including quality places to eat and drink	Review, and develop where necessary, Local Plan policy that facilitates the conversion of existing buildings and the development of new leisure facilities for sports and recreational use across the town use and for gastro pubs, restaurants, cafés and bars throughout the town centre	Charnwood Borough Council to develop planning and licensing policy	This type of work would usually be undertaken by the Borough Council's planning and licensing departments, utilising internal resources	Short term: With appropriate resource availability this could be completed within 12 months
	Review licensing policy to ensure that such activities are permitted within the town centre to encourage inward investment and new operators			
	Consider policies relating to the flexible use of public realm / outdoor space for seating areas / street vendors to facilitate greater summertime or festive activity			
Organise a programme of night-time entertainment events	Potential events include film screenings, quiz, comedy and bingo nights, live music, lectures and debates, training sessions and craft workshops	Venue owners, creative residents, with support from Town Team for coordination and marketing	Minimal costs, which could be paid for through ticket sales, or commission on food and drink sales	Short term: The first events could be arranged in a matter of weeks
	Longer term, more ambitious events could include choral concerts, theatre and dance	Could be linked with school activities and events	Competitions and raffles on the night could generate further revenue	
	Potential venues include pubs, schools, churches and the library			
	Guage demand in terms of type of event, numbers of people, frequency, ticket prices, preferred locations and acts - or alternatively, experiment and evaluate!			
	Promote the events, building up a network of interested contacts for direct marketing.			
	Coordination will be required to ensure that events do not directly compete with one another			

Table 4 Strategic Objective 3

Strategic Objective 3: To provide enhanced leisure facilities across the town to serve the residents of Shepshed and to attract visitors to the town centre from outlying employment areas and surrounding settlements				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Provide financial and business support to leisure operators (including sport and recreational activities, pubs, cafes and restaurants) and help those looking to locate in the town centre	Liaise with education and providers of leisure to explore opportunities for community use	Team to lead Shepshed Marketing Team	Signposting role for funding opportunities could be undertaken with Charnwood BC	Short term and ongoing
	Track (and apply for) funding offered by Sports England, Lottery and others	Support from Town Council / Charnwood Borough Council	A Town Team member could take responsibility for networking with other Town Teams	
	Ensure businesses are aware of small business rate relief [Until 31 March 2014, 100% relief (doubled from the usual rate of 50%) for properties with a rateable value of £6,000 or less. The rate of relief will gradually decrease from 100% to 0% for properties with a rateable value between £6,001 and £12,000]		Grant funding opportunities (e.g. through Sports England, Lottery) should be kept under review	
	Work closely with Charnwood BC to signpost to providers of small business support and services (see http://www.charnwoodbusiness.com/organisations)		Possible voluntary role for business mentor	
	Promote training sessions for start-ups run by the Council			
Secure new community uses such as public meeting space, children's play groups and youth facilities – especially as part of a mixed use scheme in the town centre. A gymnasium could also be delivered in this way.	These uses should be focused within the town centre where possible, helping build a critical mass of activity	Town Team to identify opportunities / users	User charges should be able to cover revenue expenditure, but unlikely to cover capital costs.	Short to medium term: Short term opportunities for the conversion of existing space may present themselves if end users can be identified to make this a commercial proposition. A public sector led solution using developer contributions / public funding may take longer
	Seek opportunities for flexible floor space provision within conversions / new development within the town centre e.g. as part of the provision within public buildings	Charnwood Borough Council to consider opportunities presented by the planning process especially in and around Hall Croft	Possible sources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developer contributions Public capital expenditure programmes for community / leisure provision Loan / grant finance from social enterprise funds (e.g. from Local Enterprise Partnership, Community Builders Fund etc.) 	
	Encourage the provision of such space by private developers by identifying demand and preparing a list of user groups committed to renting such space	Town Team and Charnwood Borough Council to identify potential private operators	The cost of such a facility would vary significantly based on scale, specification and existing use value; however a budget of between £150,000 - £400,000 would allow a suitable property of to be delivered either through acquisition and conversion or as part of a new build development	
	Explore opportunities to subsidise provision through developer contributions, public funding or cross subsidy by sharing space with commercial activity e.g. day-care nursery space suitable for evening community use	Developers to consider the potential for such uses in any proposed schemes		
	Clarify through policy that any significant redevelopment of Hall Croft should include the provision of such space	All public bodies to consider the provision of such space within any future town centre development they bring forward (e.g. redevelopment of Hall Croft / Library)		

Table 4 Strategic Objective 3 (cont)

Strategic Objective 3: To provide enhanced leisure facilities across the town to serve the residents of Shepshed and to attract visitors to the town centre from outlying employment areas and surrounding settlements

Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Secure land and finance for outdoor activities that have greater land requirements, such as sports pitches (for rugby, football, rounders, cricket), open space, and allotments	<p>Charnwood Borough Council and Shepshed Town Council should identify opportunity sites and the needs of the community, including reviewing youth facilities in parks. These needs should be incorporated into planning policy, particularly to guide developer contributions</p> <p>The Town Team should identify potential user groups. With Charnwood Borough Council, they should also identify potential operators (including CBC and educational institutions for potential maintenance of open spaces)</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council to incorporate into the planning policy process</p> <p>Town Team and Charnwood Borough Council to identify potential operators</p> <p>Developers to consider the potential for such uses in any proposed schemes</p>	<p>This is likely to be secured through the planning system, through developer contributions from larger housing schemes in the form of land or finance</p> <p>Some public expenditure from Charnwood Borough Council or education institutions may be secured for capital expenditure or operating costs</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: Some housing schemes may go through the planning system in the next couple of years</p>
Safeguard and enhance publicly available leisure and sports facilities associated with schools and college	<p>Come to a formal arrangement to safeguard the existing provision at the high school and college for continued use by the wider community</p> <p>Charnwood Borough Council, schools and college to identify potential opportunities for enhanced provision</p> <p>Enhanced sports provision, such as a publicly available gymnasium or multi-purpose courts (for basketball, netball, hockey, tennis and badminton), could also be focused at these institutions</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council, schools and college to identify potential opportunities</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council may wish to lead negotiations with schools and college</p>	<p>Public user charges may contribute to revenue expenditure, but unlikely to be entirely viable as a private concern, or cover capital costs.</p> <p>Possible sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developer contributions Public capital expenditure programmes for educational / leisure provision Loan / grant finance from social enterprise funds (e.g. from Local Enterprise Partnership, Community Builders Fund etc.) <p>The cost of such facilities would vary significantly based on scale and specification.</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing: Safeguarding existing provision could begin immediately.</p> <p>Short term opportunities for the conversion of existing space may present themselves if end users can be identified to make this a commercial proposition. A public sector led solution using developer contributions / public funding may take longer</p>

Table 4 Strategic Objective 3 (cont)

Case study: Boosting the night-time economy

Newcastle Business Improvement District focused on boosting the night-time economy. They extended retail opening hours and bus times, and introduced early evening meal deals.

The extended hours were worth an estimated £106m in the first 12 months.

Find out more: <http://www.britishbids.info/Home/Nationwidebidsurvey2012.aspx>

Strategic Objective 4: To improve the visual appearance of the town centre to enhance the public realm making it an attractive environment in which to visit, shop and spend leisure time

Historic market towns capitalise on their character and visual appeal to attract shoppers and tourists. Shepshed has areas of beauty, character and interest – but these are let down by many intervening buildings, shop fronts and window displays that are drab, poorly maintained and portray an image of decline. Improving the visual appearance of Shepshed would help attract more visitors and encourage them to linger once they are there – transforming it from a place where one goes to complete specific tasks, to a place where one wants to be and stay. This is critical to the realisation of the Master Plan vision.

It is unrealistic to assume that all architecturally unattractive buildings can or should be redeveloped; however, it is realistic to assume that as turnovers and values increase, property owners will increasingly want to invest to make the most of their assets.

Whilst larger scale public realm works such as those proposed by this Master Plan, and by the Bellinger Design study, will have a significant impact on the visual appearance of the townscape, an awful lot can be achieved by relatively modest investment in shop fronts, window displays and the general maintenance of buildings. Throughout this study we have heard and accept that local traders do not have large sums of money to spend, but a few hours' work with a tin of paint, attractive window boxes and creative arrangement of products can make a vast difference and be a visible first step in delivering change. However, the impact will not be as great if done in isolation; it needs a collective approach by a number of retailers and property owners to have a meaningful impact - that requires coordination.

A particular opportunity identified during consultation was to provide landlords and shopkeepers with design guidance and an artistic impression, of how the street could be improved, would help illustrate what is possible, inspiring collective confidence.

Case study: Turning a vacant shop into a creative hub

Peel Precinct is a run-down shopping area on the South Kilburn Estate in northwest London, currently undergoing major development. Number 24 had been empty for some time, and in poor condition. The Empty Shops Network took it over and created Workshop 24, a creative community hub, finding ideas and firing imaginations.

Workshop 24 improved the Peel Precinct environment with new planting and enhancements to the physical environment. It has left a legacy of creative people thinking about developing future careers, which fed into the new South Kilburn Studios.

Find out more: <http://www.emptyshopsnetwork.com>

The table sets out ideas for how the community can be mobilised to work together to have a substantial impact on the visual appearance of the town centre which, combined with more major public realm works brought forward by public authorities, would have a dramatic and transformative effect on the appearance of the town.

Table 5 sets out some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 4

Strategic Objective 4: To improve the visual appearance of the town centre to enhance the public realm making it an attractive environment in which to visit, shop and spend leisure time				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Establish a "Shepshed Public Realm Team" - a working sub-group reporting to the Town Team	<p>Town Team seek nominations from parties with appropriate interest, knowledge and skills who are prepared to commit some of their time.</p> <p>Ideally this would include representatives of local business, Town, Borough and County Councils (especially planners and highways representation) and motivated residents or other individuals</p> <p>The Public Realm Team would set its own agenda, but could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the County and Borough Council to drive forward, promoting and secure funding for major public realm works to The Bull Ring, Market Place and Hall Croft identifying other public realm improvement programmes including working with Borough and County Councils, local businesses and the Retailers Forum to enhance visual appearance of the town (see below) establish voluntary work programmes e.g. gardening, planting or additional litter picks etc. 	Town Team to establish	Nil cost to establish.	Immediately: The process of establishing a working group could commence straight away.
Shop front improvements	<p>Undertake a design study establishing a coherent approach to shop front improvement</p> <p>Commission of an architect or urban design practice to undertake the study, including consultation with landlords & tenants. Sketches and plans would help inspire and co-ordinate the approach to shop front improvement to maximise impact and facilitate delivery.</p> <p>Perhaps consider assisting shop owners by obtaining contractor quotations and negotiating multiple shop front discounts</p> <p>Review other shop front improvement schemes operating nationally and draw out key aspects which would benefit Shepshed</p> <p>Lobby for provision of grants / loans for the improvement of shop frontages</p> <p>Consider training/mentoring on shop front displays</p>	<p>Shepshed Public Realm Team and Shepshed Retailers Forum to lead / co-ordinate.</p> <p>Town / Borough Council to provide expert guidance / planning inputs and possible funding.</p>	<p>A budget of up to £5-10k might be needed for a design study. This would likely need to be paid for from Town or Borough Council</p> <p>Possible volunteer mentoring role</p> <p>Funding for grants should be agreed with the Council with the possibility of sourcing finance from other external programmes</p>	Short Term: The availability of funding would determine the timescale.

Strategic Objective 4: To improve the visual appearance of the town centre to enhance the public realm making it an attractive environment in which to visit, shop and spend leisure time				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Initiate and manage other on-going aesthetic improvement and maintenance programmes to buildings and public spaces within the town centre	<p>In addition to pursuing the delivery of major public realm works (such as those proposed to The Bull Ring, Market Place and Hall Croft) the Public Realm Team should strive to conceive and deliver a number of smaller, long term investment and maintenance programmes which collectively would have a transformative effect on the quality of public realm and the visual appearance of the town centre.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanging Basket Schemes such as in Swansea & Stratford where the local authority facilitates the provision of brackets, baskets and watering at very reasonable cost to local businesses; • Joining Britain in Bloom competition or making space for "guerrilla gardening" initiatives; • Organising voluntary work parties for additional cleaning / litter picks <p>It would be important to liaise closely with the Town and Borough Council to ensure that such schemes are clearly supported and additional to statutory services - not replacements for them.</p>	Shepshed Public Realm Team working closely with the Town Council to initiate, run and raise funding for these types of on-going projects.	Funding opportunities would depend on the type of schemes pursued. Financial contributions from the Town and Borough Council could be supported by voluntary contributions in labour and modest funding from retailers and local businesses where community spirit and peer pressure play an important role.	<p>Short Term:</p> <p>The collecting of ideas and testing support could be straight away, and voluntary programmes initiated over a period of a few months.</p> <p>Ideas requiring public funding support could be brought forward for consideration once significant retailer / business support had been established and costings obtained.</p>

Table 5 Strategic Objective 4

Strategic Objective 5: To improve connectivity and make the town centre an easier and safer place to access and visit

For Shepshed town centre to prosper it needs to attract increased visitor numbers. That means it needs to be easy to access and a convenient, safe and pleasant place to visit. The town no longer has a railway station, but it is serviced by bus routes and the National Cycle Network. However, existing research shows that travel by car is by far the most important mode of transport for shoppers in the region. That being so, the town needs to consider the needs of the motorist if it is to thrive whilst continuing to improve and promote alternative means of transport.

Shepshed is located very close to the M1 motorway and ought, therefore, to be easily accessible and visible to the motorist, particularly those using the A512. However at present the prominence of signage is inadequate and does not clearly indicate that there is a significant settlement, let alone historic market town which you may want to visit, immediately to the north. Passing traffic may be left with the impression that there is nothing more than a well-established industrial / employment area and certainly nothing of significant visitor interest worth investigating. This needs to be addressed.

The town also needs to capitalise on the potential for enhanced footfall presented by forming strong connections with the proposed West of Loughborough SUE, and additional 500 homes proposed for Shepshed. It should also seek to improve connectivity and ease of access for those working in the successful employment area to the south of the town – to encourage lunch time or after work trips. That requires free flowing traffic along Charnwood Road and Leicester Road and somewhere convenient to park.

Town centre parking is confused. Signage already directs visitors towards Glenmore Car Park – however the first time visitor is presented with a rather bewildering array of parking options and opportunities, some formal, others informal - the delineation between private and public parking areas is not clear. This should be improved. The Britannia Inn and Snooker Hall car parks provide a significant amount of informal, opportunistic parking opportunities on private land. At present this is available because the properties are vacant and goes un-policed, however the proposed redevelopment of Hall Croft (or any re-use of these properties) will prevent this and consideration therefore needs to be given as to how this is accommodated. Consideration should also be given specifically to the needs of the disabled, elderly, parents with children or others less able to walk, and, to promote short convenience shopping trips, short stop / quick turnaround bays. These uses need to be very close to the shops and services they serve as these users are less likely, or less able to walk. A parking strategy therefore needs to be developed with these considerations in mind.

The needs of the pedestrian also need to be considered. Access from Britannia St car park to the town centre via safe and comfortable walking routes needs to be prioritised. Space within the town centre is limited and narrow footpaths are a problem.

Field Street is of particular concern in this regard, however there is very limited scope for using existing highway land given the narrowness of the carriageway. A one way system has been examined in the past, but found to be undeliverable since there is no practicable or deliverable “return-leg” to complete a circuit from Market Place to the Bull Ring. This Master Plan recognises that it is impossible, given the existing built form, to address the issue of narrow pavements everywhere within the town centre - rather it seeks to redress the balance, offering alternative pedestrian friendly routes (particularly through Hall Croft) and seeking an improvement in the situation wherever and whenever possible by reducing the length of narrow footways and providing wider “safe havens” for pedestrians.

Table 6 sets out some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 5

Strategic Objective 5: To improve connectivity and make the town centre an easier and safer place to access and visit				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Improve directional signage towards and around town centre.	Consider and, if necessary, revise Shepshed's position within the hierarchy for directional signage to give the town greater sub-regional prominence - as the second largest settlement in Charnwood Borough with a population of 13,500 and growing, it should be well sign posted	The County Highway Authority would need to lead a review of the highway signage strategy	Developer contributions should be sought for signage improvements associated with new development, in particular the West of Loughborough SUE	Medium Term: Signage improvement programmes would need to be implemented as developer contributions and public capital funding becomes available over a period of several years.
	Improve signage on the M1 Junction 23 and in both directions on the A512 to provide direction signage to Shepshed, and to make it clear to passing traffic that a large settlement and town centre is located immediately to the north. A longer term aim could be to have sufficient justification for brown tourist signage on the A512 identifying an Historic Market Town if the visitor / tourism strategy can be realised	The Highways Agency would need to be consulted and deliver any improvements to Motorway signage	Other signage improvements would need to be funded from public capital budgets for highways and tourism	
	Similarly improved directional signage with greater prominence for Shepshed should be introduced on the A6 Loughborough Road, directing traffic via Shepshed / Hathern Road	Charnwood Borough Council would have an important role in providing visitor / tourist information signs		
	In due course, Shepshed should be clearly signposted from the West of Loughborough SUE, in particular at the junction with Hathern Road.	There is an important role for the Town Team and Shepshed Marketing Team to help consider signage requirements given that this strategy is being driven by the need for a higher visitor profile. The signage review therefore should therefore not be simply a "technical" review of highway requirements undertaken by Highway Engineers in isolation.		
	It would be beneficial to introduce "Town Centre this way" signage along all three principal access routes - Charnwood Road, Leicester Road and Hathern Rd / Brook St, and to reinforce the sense of arrival at the town centre with high quality tourism signage emphasising Shepshed as an historic market town			
	Parking signage already directs visitors to Glenmore Car Park, however as part of a parking strategy review consideration should be given as to whether this is sufficiently prominent for first time visitors arriving from all directions			

Table 6 Strategic Objective 5

Strategic Objective 5: To improve connectivity and make the town centre an easier and safer place to access and visit				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Improve footpath, cycle and public transport connections to existing and new residential development	<p>New residential development in Shepshed and at the West of Loughborough SUE should be well connected to the town centre by a series of footpaths and cycleways aimed at drawing people into town to use shops and services in a sustainable manner. These connections should be secured through the planning and development control process</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council to secure developer contributions / connections via planning process</p>	<p>Developer Contributions from residential development, including West of Loughborough SUE for new footpath / cycle connections and bus subsidy contributions</p>	<p>Medium Term: Improvements associated with new development to be brought forward in parallel with development. Footpath / cycle signage scheme as public funds become available.</p>
	<p>Secure new bus routes connecting new residential development areas including the West of Loughborough SUE to Shepshed town centre through the planning and development control process</p>	<p>Borough Council, Town Council and Town Team to work collectively to identify important walking / cycling routes for signage</p>	<p>Borough and Town Council capital programme allocations for pedestrian / cycle route signage</p>	
Improve footpaths within the town centre when and where possible	<p>Introduce improved street, park and footpath signage including route / distance markers encourage walking / cycling into the town centre to try and strengthen connections between the town centre and outlying residential areas</p>	<p>Residential developers and bus operating companies</p>		
	<p>Use of development control powers to require new development within the town centre to provide adequate space for footpath widening, including where necessary the setting back of new buildings relative to the existing build line with a particular emphasis on Field Street and Britannia Street</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council - development control policy</p>	<p>Development control policy would be developed / implemented by Charnwood Borough Council using internal resources</p>	<p>Short Term: Both policy development and small scale highway improvement works to Field Street should be deliverable quite quickly dependent upon resource availability.</p>
	<p>Investigate the acquisition of a small parcel of land to the immediate south side of Field Street (in front of Shepshed Books Ltd), to remove the existing wall, widen the pavement and landscape this as public realm offering a pedestrian refuge</p>	<p>County Highways Department to lead highway / footpath improvements</p>	<p>County highway maintenance and improvement funding</p>	
<p>Re-examine vehicular pavement cross-overs along the south side of Field Street which presently prioritise vehicular over pedestrian movement. Undertake highway improvement works to improve the situation for pedestrians by the use of kerb-lines and surfacing materials</p>				

Table 6 Strategic Objective 5 (cont)

Strategic Objective 5: To improve connectivity and make the town centre an easier and safer place to access and visit				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Rationalise and improve town centre car parking	<p>Develop a robust Shepshed Town Centre Car Parking Strategy to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current need and provision and the potential loss of (informal) car parking in Hall Croft • Developing an understanding of how Market Place and other street parking is being used by residents / businesses rather than visitors • The opportunity to rationalise parking arrangement so that "on-street" parking principally serves the needs of disabled, elderly or parent and toddlers (and others less able to walk) and quick trip shoppers • Balancing the need for localised street parking throughout the town with traffic flows e.g. Charnwood Road, particularly the few bays immediately adjacent to the Bull Ring which cause traffic congestion • Recognising Glenmore Park Car Park as the principal longer stay car park for the town, with adequate signage for first time visitors • The potential need / opportunity to expand Glenmore Car park utilising if public sector land to meet future parking demand if the Master Plan Vision of delivering a thriving town centre serving local requirements and attracting tourism / visitors is realised <p>Implement the recommendations of the Car Parking Strategy to rationalise and improve the parking situation and facilitate economic growth.</p>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council working with the Town Team would need to commission and implement this study.</p> <p>Town Council land (Glenmore Park) may be required to meet future parking demand - it is not clear where else this could be accommodated.</p>	<p>The Car Parking Strategy study would need to be commissioned and funded by Charnwood Borough Council.</p> <p>The implementation of the recommendations (assuming they are similar to what has been outlined here) would be relatively modest and principally associated with implementing new markings / signage etc. The primary cost would likely rest with the Borough Council.</p> <p>The Town Council would need to provide land for car park expansion, were this found to be required.</p>	<p>Short Term: Subject to funding availability the timescale for undertaking a Car Parking Strategy would be a matter of months.</p> <p>The timescale for implementation would depend on the outcome, however assuming that this is relatively straight forward and in line with what is outlined here could be within 12 - 18 months.</p>

Table 6 Strategic Objective 5 (cont)

Strategic Objective 6: To attract new businesses to Shepshed and to facilitate retailers and local businesses working together with appropriate support, a common purpose and mutual commitment to invest in the town centre.

This strategic objective seeks to mobilise the local business community. It places a particular emphasis on retailers and other service providers operating within the town centre but embraces other businesses across the town. It also recognises the need to attract new retailers and new employers if the Master Plan Vision is to be achieved. All play a vital role in delivering jobs and wealth to the town, and new retailers are required to enhance the town centre offer in line with Strategic Objective 2.

The interventions proposed are all about bringing businesses together to share knowledge and skills - to help each other and therefore the town, to prosper. Whilst it recognises the need for some external funding and support, this objective, above all others, throws down the gauntlet to the community to do things for itself. It places an emphasis on helping oneself and helping one's neighbour. It also recognises that businesses need to stand behind the Vision and be prepared to make firm commitments and investment if lasting change is to be achieved. This in turn will establish the conditions to attract more visitors, more customers and more wealth - helping those same businesses to thrive.

The biggest challenge / delivery risk is the ability to motivate and crystallise firm actions from individual businesses. A small nucleus of pro-active individuals from within the retail / business community itself will be vital to achieving success. This cannot be imposed from without – it has to be driven from within the town.

The interventions matrix sets down some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 6.

Case study: A loyalty card that uses existing Visa terminals

Residents in a participating My Card area can load their loyalty card with cash and then use it at Visa terminals to pay for goods purchased at local shops. It can be tailored to a city, a town or even just a neighbourhood and aims to unite communities, recirculate local wealth and create significant income for local regeneration.

Local merchants can not only expect increased sales but will also receive monthly intelligence generated through the transactions that will enable them to target products and services to their customers.

This organisation also benefits by accruing income from transaction fees that can be used to further develop sustainable town centre regeneration.

Find out more: <http://towns.org.uk/amt-i/loyalty-cards-shop-local/my-card-smart-local-loyalty-programme/>

Table 7 sets out some key activities that should be pursued in respect of Strategic Objective 6

Strategic Objective 6: To attract new businesses to Shepshed and to facilitate retailers and local businesses working together with appropriate support, a common purpose and mutual commitment to invest in the town centre.				
Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Establish a "Shepshed Retailers and Business Forum" - a working sub-group reporting to the Town Team	<p>Town Team to approach a range of retailers, market traders, café/pub/ restaurant owners and other service providers e.g. hairdressers etc. to form a body of active members that will seek to engage their fellow traders</p> <p>Individuals who are creative, enthusiastic and committed to joint working to achieve town centre improvement, as well as being prepared to invest some of their time would need to be identified and brought together. This committee would represent retailers' interests and form a working sub-group to report into the Town Team</p>	Town Team to establish	No cost to establish.	Immediately: The process of establishing a working group could commence straight away.
Develop a voluntary "Retailers Charter" and encourage town centre retailers / landlords and businesses to sign up to certain standards.	<p>The Retailers Forum would consult with shop owners, landlords and other businesses to understand what is important to them, and what level of commitment they may be prepared to make</p> <p>A voluntary Retailers Charter would ask local businesses to sign-up and commit to certain standards and commitments. This could include for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of shop fronts / window displays • Property maintenance • Customer care or service standards <p>Commitment to certain initiatives / programmes e.g. discount schemes or other joint programmes</p> <p>Commitment to small investments in time and/or small amounts of annual funding for specific programmes</p>	Shepshed Retailers Forum	No cost - just time and initiative.	Short Term: Work could commence as soon as the Retailers Forum was established, however consultation and agreement to a specific charter could take some time to achieve, and it would also likely need to be revised, updated and amended over time.
Provision of small business skills and training to help start up retailers and other businesses	<p>Promote training sessions for start-ups run by the Council</p> <p>Signpost training initiatives run by National Skills Academy for Retail and others</p> <p>Network with other Town Teams to learn and apply best practise</p> <p>Consider local business mentoring scheme</p>	<p>Town Team lead</p> <p>Shepshed Retailers Forum</p> <p>Shepshed Marketing Team</p> <p>Support from Town Council/Charnwood Borough Council</p>	<p>Signposting role could be undertaken with Charnwood BC.</p> <p>A Town Team member could be set the task of networking with other Town Teams and other interest groups promoting independent retailers. Grant funding opportunities should be kept under review for training/mentoring and financial support. Possible voluntary role for business mentor.</p>	Short Term and On-going.

Table 7 Strategic Objective 6

Strategic Objective 6: To attract new businesses to Shepshed and to facilitate retailers and local businesses working together with appropriate support, a common purpose and mutual commitment to invest in the town centre.

Intervention	Actions / ideas	Key roles	Potential costs and funding sources	Timescale
Develop a collective approach to sharing knowledge and procurement.	<p>Most retail businesses have certain basic requirements in common: the need for good marketing & window displays, cleaning, maintenance and accountancy support, the need to recruit, train and retain quality employees etc. By coming together to share knowledge, skills and procurement retailers can help each other and help encourage / support start-up businesses</p> <p>The Shepshed Retailers Forum could play a vital role in coordinating this knowledge share. Activities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing part time employees / joint recruitment • Joint procurement of goods / services to obtain discounts e.g. window cleaning or accountancy • Sharing skills / knowledge e.g. Someone with a flair for window displays could help a fellow shop keeper thus improving the overall street appeal. • Joint marketing initiatives e.g. package deals such as flowers, cards and chocolates or a bottle of bubbly for Valentine's / Mother's Day; or buy a bag of dog food from the pet shop and get a free bone from the butcher - basic initiatives that get people travelling between and visiting multiple shops / stalls 	Shepshed Retailers Forum	No cost - just time and initiative	Short Term: This type of dialogue should be facilitated as soon as the Retailers Forum is formed.
Develop a strand of the Marketing Programme outlined above specifically targeted at attracting new businesses into the town	<p>As well as supporting existing businesses, an important strand of work for the Shepshed Marketing Team would be to try and attract new businesses and retailers into the town.</p> <p>Actions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying service provision or product gaps that present an opportunity for new businesses and communicating these. • Approaching traders / businesses / start-ups that may be prepared to expand into the Shepshed market. 	Shepshed Marketing Team working with the Town and Borough Council and Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce	It is unclear what funding may be required until a programme of activity is agreed.	Medium Term: The marketing team should focus on providing support to existing businesses to secure and consolidate their activity, before going on to consider the potential to attract new businesses to the town. It will be significantly easier to attract new business if the prosperity of those already in the town can be improved.

Table 7 Strategic Objective 6 (cont)

Delivering Public Realm Improvements to the Bull Ring and Market Place

The Master Plan recognises The Bull Ring as the principal gateway to the town and Market Place as the heritage quarter. It acknowledges that both require significant landscaping and public realm works if they are to fulfil their potential. The Town, Borough and County Councils need to recognise this and prioritise these two areas for investment. Furthermore, these two areas should be the main priority for the use of developer contributions secured for public realm / landscaping improvements. Both sites are, in essence, highway improvement schemes and should be led by Leicestershire County Council Highways Department. To facilitate delivery we suggest that only highway and other public land is used.

It is understood that Market Place already has a County Council Highways capital allocation for resurfacing work in 2013/14. We understand, however, that the allocation is unlikely to be sufficient to deliver all of the proposed landscaping improvements as set out in this Master Plan and/or the Bellinger Design study. Therefore careful consideration should be given as to how this money can be used to implement part of the scheme without prejudicing further improvements at a later date, or whether funding can be rolled forward (with guarantees that it will not be lost or re-allocated) to be supplemented by developer and other contributions in coming years.

There are several key steps which need to be taken, they are:

- Consider using existing highways capital allocation for Market Place by Leicestershire County as set out above.
- Charnwood Borough Council to ensure policies are in place to require developer contributions from all new development in Shepshed to make landscape improvement contributions to these areas.
- Shepshed Town Council to make available land at the Bull Ring (to the rear of the bus shelter) to the County Council for the purpose of this project. (Certain parts may be handed back to the Town Council as public realm at a later date – this will need to be explored.)
- Leicestershire County Council to undertake an initial high level assessment of implementing the full scheme in each area. Initial considerations will include: impact on traffic flows and bus routes, required service diversions and confirming land ownership / highway boundaries. It should also provide an estimate of the potential cost of bringing forward these schemes based on different pallets of materials which may have vastly different costs and townscape outcomes.
- Leicestershire County Council to prioritise the allocation of capital funding for these two projects (in addition to the existing capital allocation for resurfacing Market Place).
- Once funding has been confirmed, Leicestershire County Council to commission a detailed design, cost and delivery plan. This should be based on the principles of this Master Plan and the Bellinger Design study, but tailored to meet budget availability once this has been firmly established.

One of the particular issues that needs to be addressed in any design scheme for the Bull Ring is the requirement for a bus turning circle. This severely restricts the options for improving the public realm as a very substantial amount of land has to remain as public highway. This in turn restricts the amount of land that can be given over to pavements, soft landscaping and green areas.

Budget availability will depend on the three key factors – the availability of public funds from County Highways budgets, the outcome of developer contribution negotiations and whether any other public grants are available e.g. from the Local Enterprise Partnership or other bodies that may be prepared to support the scheme based on its potential to drive economic growth.

In addition to the key steps outlined above, there are a number of important actions for the Shepshed Public Realm Team – these include lobbying for the allocation of capital budgets for these works, providing the political and community support where necessary to allow the County Highways Department to prioritise the allocation of funds against this as opposed to other important projects, and identifying / coordinating funding applications.

The Public Realm Team should also act as a consultative body when budgetary and detailed design decisions are being made.

Delivering the Redevelopment of Hall Croft

The Master Plan for Hall Croft is by far the most complex and difficult intervention area to deliver. It is also perhaps the most important as it presents the one opportunity to give the town a “heart” – a place to meet, a place for pedestrians and shoppers to move comfortably and safely away from passing traffic, and it connects key locations within the town. Redevelopment also presents an opportunity to sort out the mass of uncontrolled car parking and rear facades that presently blight this area.

There are two alternative delivery options for this area. The Preferred Delivery Option would involve Charnwood Borough Council undertaking a programme of bringing land into single ownership to bring forward comprehensive redevelopment. There are numerous advantages to this approach which include:

- The ability to bring forward comprehensive development and the transformative effect that this would create
- The ability to bring forward comprehensive development and the design opportunities / flexibility that this provides
- The opportunity to acquire properties on Field Street / Britannia Street to improve access to and visibility of Hall Croft and to improve linkages to Glenmore Car Park
- The ability to deliver active frontages, movement and vision corridors in accordance with the Master Plan, which would be more limited without comprehensive re-development
- The ability to determine the precise mix of uses
- The opportunity to ensure the delivery of flexible community / leisure space or other uses that are less commercially attractive
- The ability to directly control the architectural quality of buildings
- The ability to prioritise the provision of high quality public realm
- The ability to control the delivery timescale
- The opportunity to control long term maintenance / governance and management arrangements, in particular related to the provision of street market facilities

Due to the complexity of landownership, present property values and the cost of implementing such a scheme, we do not believe it is realistic to assume that the private sector would be prepared to bring land into single ownership / comprehensive redevelopment of this area at this time. The Preferred Delivery Option is therefore necessarily a public sector led approach, which seeks to bring forward development by setting up the conditions for private developers to invest.

However the Preferred Delivery Option may not be possible for a number of reasons, which include the availability of public funds and the possibility of private landowners bringing forward the redevelopment of individual sites before a land acquisition programme can be implemented.

It is therefore necessary to consider an alternative delivery mechanism, which although less favourable (because it will not allow comprehensive redesign and redevelopment), still has the potential to deliver significant improvement to this important area of the town. We will refer to this as the Alternative Delivery Option and it involves controlling private sector led redevelopment through effective development management alongside more limited public sector investment over an extended period of time.

The two delivery options are outlined below.

Preferred Delivery Option

The first step in this process would be for Charnwood Borough Council to prioritise the redevelopment of Hall Croft and commit itself to leading the redevelopment of this area, including a resolution to make the necessary capital and revenue funds available within a specific period of time.

The Borough Council should also consider the potential for developer contributions towards land acquisition and / or public realm works. However we would suggest that due to the complexity of delivering Hall Croft, this is considered secondary to public realm improvement works to The Bull Ring and Market Place. We must emphasise that whilst there may be scope for developer contributions to make a financial contribution they are highly unlikely to replace the need for a significant investment by the public sector.

Charnwood Borough Council would then need to commission a Development Brief including a land acquisition and development strategy for Hall Croft. This would set out in detail the type and quantum of development, individual land ownerships and values, a development viability assessment and gap funding requirements, and a detailed delivery strategy. This would need to be a confidential report due to market issues and the possible use of CPO powers.

Utilising the findings of this report, the Borough Council would then need to make the necessary capital allocations and proceed with land acquisition. Once land had been brought into single ownership, public consultation and liaison with the Town Team would form an important part of the process, in particular agreeing the detail of the development to be brought forward.

In parallel with the above programme, Charnwood Borough Council, supported by the Town Team, would need to open a dialogue with Leicestershire County Council regarding the redevelopment of the library. The County would need to play its part by prioritising the re-provision of library facilities in a mixed use community hub, and to make its land as well as capital funding available for this project. During public consultation there were significant, and understandable, concerns raised with regards to the loss of the library. It is therefore important that we emphasise the need for a firm and binding commitment from Leicestershire County Council to the replacement of library facilities with at least an equal amount of floor space and improved services before any closure or demolition occurred.

Charnwood Borough Council would then lead the development and delivery process either directly or with a private developer / investment partner. The opportunity would be marketed with a clear planning framework and property rights secured. Some residual land value may be generated to offset the investment made by the Council and others although this cannot be certain.

This is a complex process and will require substantial public funds. It is therefore realistic to assume that it would take a number of years to implement, largely dependent on the availability of public resources and funding. A ten year programme could be assumed.

It is however the most likely scenario to deliver transformational change and offer a high quality heart for the town.

Alternative Delivery Option

The alternative delivery option also requires the preparation of a detailed Development Brief for Hall Croft, to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This should establish clear development control policies for the area in order to guide developer proposals that may come forward over time. (We would recommend this is done in any instance, even if the Borough Council commits itself to the Preferred Delivery Option, as a safeguard against unsuitable development proposals that do not align with the Master Plan Vision for the area.)

Building on the recommendations of this Master Plan, the Development Brief would need to be quite explicit in its description of use classes, quantum of development, built form and build lines, requirement for active frontages and movement / vision corridors, the provision of public open space / soft and hard landscaping requirements and the architectural quality of buildings required.

Other aspects of the delivery strategy outlined above should also be pursued, including the Borough Council considering the potential for developer contributions towards public realm works, and working with the County Council to bring forward the redevelopment of the library. This would require provision within future capital programmes possibly supplemented by other sources of funding available through colocation of other facilities. Examples of this within Charnwood Borough include a visitor information centre in Melton Mowbray, adult social care services in Loughborough, and a job club in Hinckley. Community space, SME workspace or a coffee shop may provide other opportunities for funding.

A detailed dialogue with the Co-Op regarding the ownership / control of their land within Hall Croft would need to be entered into before any landscaping works were committed. The provision of improved access routes from Field Street and Britannia Street would be difficult to secure under this delivery option. Access from Field Street is restricted by existing buildings. Access to Britannia Street requires access across private land.

Section 6

Establishing the Framework for Change



06 Establishing the framework for change

Introduction

The interventions set out in Section 5 touch on, and in some instances presuppose, that certain structures to manage, facilitate and implement change are already in place. It is essential that these structures are put in place swiftly as they form the basic framework upon which this Delivery Plan is conceived.

We have identified three cross-cutting themes which need to be considered, they are:

- **Policy**
- **Funding**
- **Governance**

This section of the report examines each of these themes and sets out what needs to be done to establish a framework for change. Setting up these mechanisms should be viewed as laying the foundations of the Delivery Plan.

Policy

Shepshed Town Council, Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council need to develop and align policy in support of this Master Plan if it is to succeed. There needs to be a firm policy commitment to prioritise the regeneration and economic growth of Shepshed Town Centre. This in turn will facilitate the allocation of public funds to specific intervention projects over a sustained period of time.

Planning policy also needs to be developed.

Charnwood Borough Council will publish its Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy in June 2013 for a six week consultation period prior to examination in public; this is the first of the new development plan documents that will make up the Charnwood Local Plan. The Core Strategy sets out the strategic policies to deliver the Council's Vision for Charnwood for the period to 2028. This Master Plan and Delivery Framework for Shepshed forms part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

It is anticipated that the regeneration of Shepshed will feature as a strategic priority in the Draft Core Strategy, as will the identification of Shepshed as an area of growth to accommodate an additional 500+ homes.

The Core Strategy will be supported by a number of other documents including a Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, due for publication in 2014. To support this Master Plan, these and subsequent local plan documents should:

- Recognise the importance of Shepshed Town Centre as a retail area to be protected and reinforced.
- Define the geographic boundary of the town centre and secure appropriate uses within it.
- Identify and protect important retail frontages.
- Seek to prioritise retail, leisure, community and food/drink provision at ground floor level, with a greater mix of uses including offices / residential on upper floors. This will encourage activity within the town centre throughout all hours of the day.
- Promote the development of new leisure facilities for sports and recreational use across the town and gastro pubs, restaurants, cafés and bars within the town centre.
- Limit the expansion of uses in the town centre that do not align with the Master Plan Vision.
- Deliver enhanced protection for important buildings, features, frontages and views of historic and/or architectural merit.
- Secure developer contributions for town centre improvements including contributions towards improving connectivity (footpaths, cycleways and public transport), public realm and landscaping, leisure provision, public art & heritage enhancements.

We would also suggest that a detailed Development Brief for Hall Croft is prepared which includes the general policies and principles set out in Chapter 4 of this report.

Funding

Many of the interventions referred to in our report rely primarily upon community or entrepreneurial spirit - requiring time, skills and energy but with little or no financial outlay. Other interventions will require substantial investment, often from multiple funding streams if they are to become a reality.

Private sector investment

In Shepshed, private sector investment could come in a wide variety of forms – people spending money in local shops, a gymnasium operator investing to expand leisure provision, a property developer redeveloping Hall Croft, or existing businesses and freeholders improving their own shop fronts.

With limited resources available (particularly in the current economic environment where businesses of all types are struggling to access bank finance), businesses must selectively prioritise ventures that have a favourable balance of risk and potential return. In practical terms, this means that investment in Shepshed is competing with investment in other projects, in other parts of the country (and, increasingly, further afield). Where a project is not immediately viable for an investor, the public sector may be able to help close the viability gap.

The nature of private sector investment makes it necessary to create the early conditions for the private sector to invest in Shepshed with confidence, creating a snowball effect as more and more investment has a positive impact on the town and investment becomes increasingly viable. Such conditions for investment include population growth, low unemployment, high average incomes, strong footfall in the town centre with high retention of expenditure within the town, and meaningful investment from other parties.

Investment from the public sector and existing businesses within Shepshed will be crucial to creating these early conditions for more significant investment in future. CBC and LCC can play a pivotal role by committing to capital investment in Shepshed and by publicising this in a transparent and visible way. Working with Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, they should act to promote the opportunities for investment in Shepshed and build key relationships with the private sector. Where existing businesses are willing and able to invest in growth initiatives (promotion and marketing, expansion of products and services, training and recruitment of staff, shop front improvements, etc.) they should be supported by the public sector and the Town Team, with coordination for the sharing of costs where possible.

In many parts of the UK and beyond, businesses have set up Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) following a majority vote, agreeing to the collection of a mandatory levy from businesses based on their rateable value. The number of businesses and rateable values in Shepshed would not generate meaningful funds after deducting overheads, and we do not therefore recommend this as a funding strategy. However, retailers have much to gain from the regeneration of Shepshed town centre, and leveraging private investment through the Retailers and Business Forum or other initiatives will be important. Where businesses are asked to contribute to collective initiatives, calculating the contribution based on floorspace or rateable value would capitalise on the potential for more significant contributions from larger operators.

Developer contributions

The emerging policy enabling 500+ new homes in Shepshed brings with it additional demands on the town centre, but also potential for financial contributions from developers. There may also be justification for securing contributions from other proposed developments in and around Loughborough (such as the West of Loughborough SUE).

Charnwood Borough Council should develop planning policy working in partnership with developers and the community to maximise on this opportunity. In particular we would suggest that developer contributions are sought towards:

- **Connectivity and public transport improvements**
- **Leisure provision**
- **Public realm improvements and landscaping works**
- **Public art and heritage improvements**
- **Other contributions as may be appropriate**

Public sector capital investment

Shepshed Town Council, Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council, are an important source of funding for capital projects. We recommend that the Town Team pre-prepare business plans for each intervention in dialogue with both authorities, ready to make its case for inclusion in future Capital Plans over the coming years. This will help to ensure that the required funding is positioned around each authority's policy priorities.

Charnwood Borough Council allocates capital funding in a three-year Capital Plan.

Leicestershire County Council has a similar programme of capital investment, although theirs is allocated on an annual basis.

- Transport projects are the most significant capital allocation within the County's budget. In 2013/14, funds are set aside for the resurfacing of Market Place and Britannia Street in Shepshed, although this is not understood to be adequate for significant upgrading of the public realm. Funds are also allocated for a study looking at parking arrangements on Kirkhill and Leicester Road, which currently narrow the main route into Shepshed town centre from the M1.
- Desirable transport projects for future funding allocation in Shepshed include highway and public realm improvements around Market Place and The Bull Ring.
- The second-largest capital allocation is for Children and Young People's Services. It will be important for the Town Team to discuss the priorities of this fund with LCC, especially with regards to sports education and youth activities.

It may also be possible for the public sector to access debt finance as a gap funding stream for projects that have a capital assets and a viable business plan. This would most likely apply to larger scale projects such as the redevelopment within Hall Croft.

Public sector capital grants and loans

As well as capital investment from the local authorities the Town Team and other organisations within Shepshed may be able to bid for grants and loans.

Below are some examples of capital grants available from CBC that may be relevant in Shepshed:

- Staying Healthy Community Grants are revenue grants for health-related projects. The scheme covers strictly 'one-off' expenditure, such as the running of conferences, promotional campaigns, and events for small projects with community benefits. Staying Healthy Community Grants can provide grants of between £250 and £2,000.
- Community Development Grants are revenue grants to cover the running costs of a project, including the costs of employing staff, stationery, heating, lighting, printing, postage and telephones. It is possible that Shepshed's evening events programme could benefit from a Community Development Grant.
- CBC's Community Facilities Grant supports the renovation, improvement and provision of community buildings, and also small-scale environmental improvement schemes with funding up to £20,000 to a maximum of 50% of the cost of the project. Grants of up to £5,000 are also available for related feasibility studies, up to 50% of the cost of the study.

The Town Team should also explore opportunities for investment from a wide range of public bodies to support a wide range of economic, health, leisure, townscape or heritage programmes. This could include funding from for example the Local Enterprise Partnership, Community Builders Fund, Government Departments / Programmes, National Lottery Fund etc. Identifying, considering and targeting these opportunities is a major programme of on-going work for the Town Team.

An opportunistic approach must be taken to applications, as they often have strict criteria and short timescales.

Coordinating investment

With so many potential interventions, stakeholders and funding uncertainties and limited resources, it is crucial to implement a flexible but coordinated approach whereby one intervention does not prejudice other funding streams or conflict with other interventions. Considering such conflicts and directing investment is a key activity of the Town Team.

Governance

The regeneration of Shepshed requires coordinated activity and the extended commitment of a number of public, private and voluntary organisations; success therefore relies on appropriate governance structures being put in place from the outset. Proper governance is also required to ensure that the interests of all stakeholder groups are represented, that funds and interventions are used to greatest effect, that the Master Plan vision is kept updated and refreshed, and to offer continuity and resilience so that the ownership and success of the project does not reside with the commitment of a few individuals.

A Town Team has now been established to fulfil this role. Its membership is drawn from local people, organisations, traders, and the town, Borough and County Councils. The Town Team's role is to act as a representative, consultative forum on matters relating to the regeneration, development and management of Shepshed Town Centre and to foster strong community and business leadership.

It is the Town Team's role to continue to enthuse, prioritise and hold themselves and other bodies to account over an extended period of time - to ensure that everyone is working together to deliver the Master Plan vision, and to keep that Vision fresh and alive.

A key consideration from the outset should be clearly defining the separate roles and responsibilities of the Town Council and Town Team, and how these bodies are to interact. The membership and structure of the Town Team is illustrated in Figure 21



Fig. 21 The Town Team

For the Town Team to be an effective decision making body it needs to limit its size and balance / encourage inputs from different sectors and interest groups. It is for the Town Team to decide on its precise composition, but we would suggest limiting this to no more than say 16 people.

However, the workshops have illustrated the enthusiasm and level of interest which needs to be embraced. We recognise that there is too much to be delivered by a single team, and therefore suggest that the answer is to make the Town Team a supervisory body which sets up a number of specific working-groups each assigned a particular sphere of interest or outcome. These working groups would then report into the Town Team, which would be responsible for coordinating and directing their activity.

In the interventions section of this report we have suggested three specific working groups that we recommend are set up as soon as possible, they are: a Marketing Team, a Public Realm Team and a Shepshed Retailers and Business Forum, however any number of working groups could be set up as may be required and decided upon by the Town Team. This structure is illustrated in Figure 22. It allows individual tasks to be assigned and many more people to play an active role in delivering the Master Plan without directly having to be on the Town Team. We envisage that each working-group would elect one or more representatives to sit on and report to the Town Team.



Fig. 22 Town Team Structure

Receiving, Holding and Expending Funds

Since the Town Team is not incorporated it cannot, at this time, hold money itself. Many public grants require funds to be held by a suitably qualified accountable body, and this role will therefore need to be fulfilled by either the Town or Borough Council. The specific details for this will need to be agreed; however it is possible for the Town Team to make decisions and direct expenditure held on its behalf by the accountable body - for example County Councils holding funds and acting as the accountable body for Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The above mechanism works well for larger sums of grant money, however it may not be suitable for other initiatives where there is no specific requirement for the Council to be involved, for example voluntary contributions towards a collective goal or income and expenditure generated from running services or events.

Alternative financial mechanisms may need to be considered; this could include the setting up of a social enterprise or local businesses taking the lead and running a separate account for specific activities (that is properly protected and ring fenced).

Whilst the Town Team will need to seek legal and financial advice on the specific options the following factors should be considered:

- Access to grants and funding - many funds are currently on offer specifically for social enterprises.
- Retaining and recycling the benefit from capital gains and revenue profit may be a useful motivator and tangible measure of success
- The potential need to provide a vehicle for owning certain assets for shared use or hire
- It will be important to create a sense of common endeavour, with transparent objectives, values and ownership. This is particularly important to maintain perceptions of ethical activity and prevent unfair practices.
- Costs associated with financial and legal consultancy and a need to limit liability.
- The possible need to employ staff or issue contracts.
- Enterprise-based models can benefit from positive aspects of the commercial sector, including profit-driven innovation, business case for investment, customer-focus etc.

Early consideration should therefore be given to the above requirements and structures put in place as appropriate. A decision on whether this should be centralised and controlled by the Town Team or whether separate arrangements will be made for different initiatives should be made.

Appendix A



Appendix A

Shepshed Town Team

Shepshed Town Team was formed in late 2012 to assist in the process of regenerating Shepshed Town Centre. Membership is drawn from the following organisations:

- Charnwood Borough Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire Police Authority
- Shepshed Community Plan Group
- Shepshed Portas Pilot Team
- Shepshed Town Council
- Local community groups
- Local business community representatives
- Local amenity groups
- Local residents' groups

Constituent organisations as of 9 January 2013 were:

- Action for Better Charnwood
- Charnwood Arts
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Charnwood Disability Forum
- Charnwood Youth Council
- Registered Social Landlords – de Montfort Housing and the Longhurst Group
- Garendon Park Countryside Protection Group
- Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire Police Authority
- Loughborough and District Civic Trust
- Loughborough Chamber of Trade
- Market Traders Federation
- Shepshed Community Plan Group
- Shepshed Town Council
- Serenade Ladies' Choir
- Tax Assist Accountants
- Passion Youth Club
- Christchurch Methodist Church
- A local trader

The remit of the Town Team is:

1. The team will be consulted on all relevant planning applications that affect the town centre.
2. The team will be kept abreast of current developments and plans and proposals within the Town Centre remit and will consider these in the light of aspirations and vision as laid out in the Master Plan.
3. The team will consider all matters relevant to the town centre and delivery of the Town Centre Master Plan in advance of their consideration by the Borough Council or consultation on them with the general public and other organisations.
4. Members of the team will observe normal standards in relation to declarations of interest of a personal or financial and prejudicial nature in relation to matters being considered by the team. Where such interests exist team members would be expected to declare them.
5. The team is not a decision-making body but will proceed by way of discussion and consensus where possible.
6. The team will be a consultative body where individual members can bring matters on which they would like to inform the team or seek views from the team. This would include matters relating to policy or proposal of any of the team members of relevance to the Town Centre on which the other members may be expected to have an interest or view.
7. The team will provide a forum for information and advice to be shared and exchanged.
8. The team will offer advice to parent bodies of team members of which account may be taken as appropriate by those bodies in discharging their own functions and responsibilities.
9. The team is able to consider anything which it feels if of relevance and related to the development and management of Shepshed Town Centre.



**Charnwood Borough Council
Shepshed Town Centre Master Plan and Delivery
Framework**

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