

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan 2011-2021

Report for Cabinet November 2012
following consultation August 2012



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Foreword

A key aspiration of the Council is to enhance the quality of offer and environment of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. The Council is focused on revitalising the town centre with the ultimate goal of increasing its prosperity and celebrating and conserving its heritage for future generations.

The Council has taken the lead in moving the vision forward by setting out its key Hemel Evolution proposals. The aim is to rejuvenate the seven town centre character zones and kick start extensive regeneration.

The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan is a major new step towards the achievement of the Council's goals. It provides a vision to 2031 and will guide the town centre's regeneration over the next ten years.

In the course of developing this Masterplan the Council has consulted extensively with key stakeholders including representatives of local businesses, landowners, organisations, community groups and relevant officers from Dacorum Borough Council and Herts County Council. Their input has helped identify key issues, aims and objectives, and refine emerging strategies. We would like to thank all parties who have engaged in the consultation process for their valued contributions.

We are excited by the strategies set out in this Masterplan and eagerly anticipate the evolution of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre into a vibrant place where people want to shop, work, live, learn and visit.

The plan opposite shows the 1947 New Town Masterplan for Hemel Hempstead. The 1947 Town Centre Masterplan is shown in Appendix 1

1947 Masterplan of Hemel Hempstead
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Dacorum Borough Council 100018935: 2011)

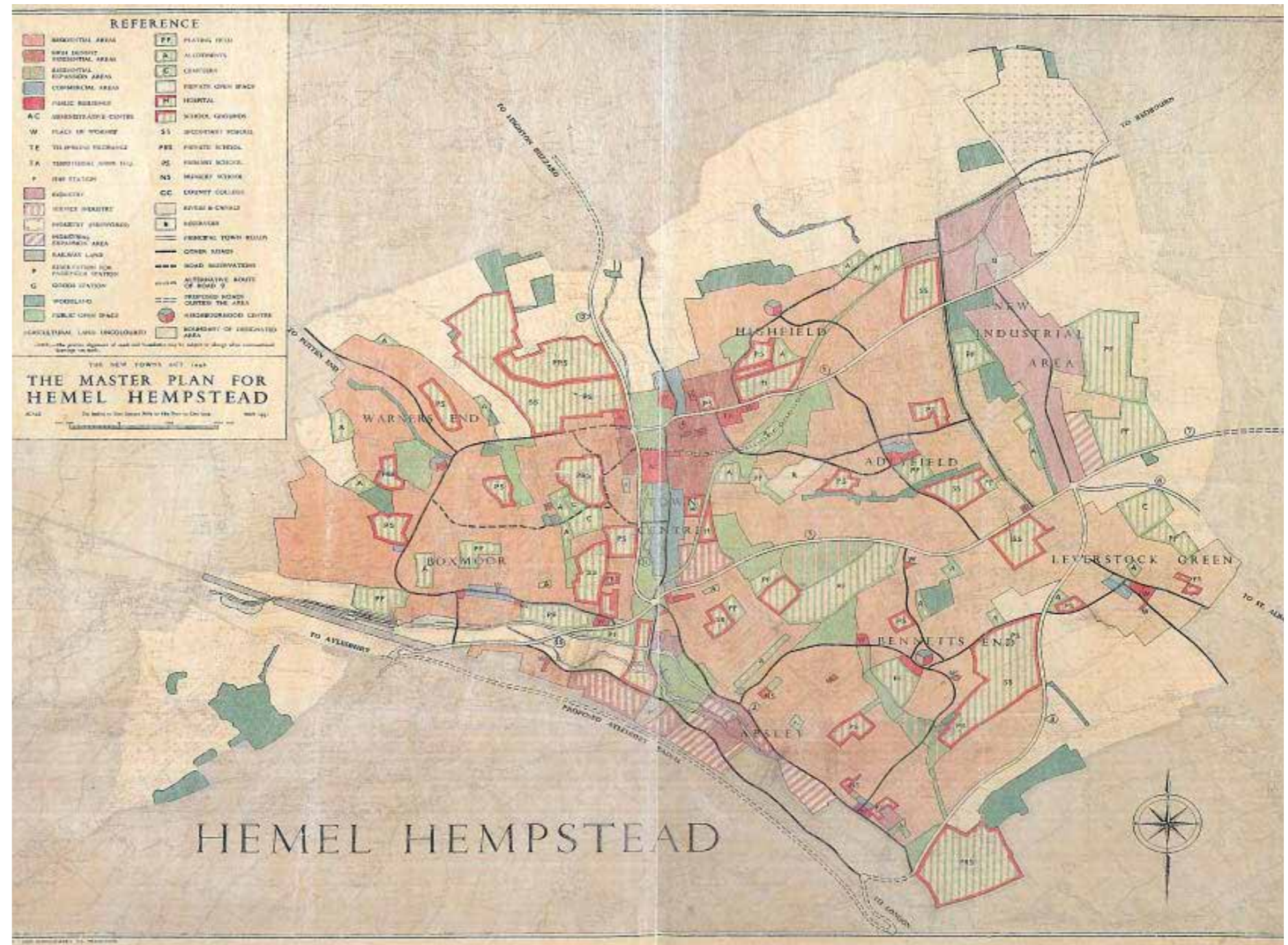
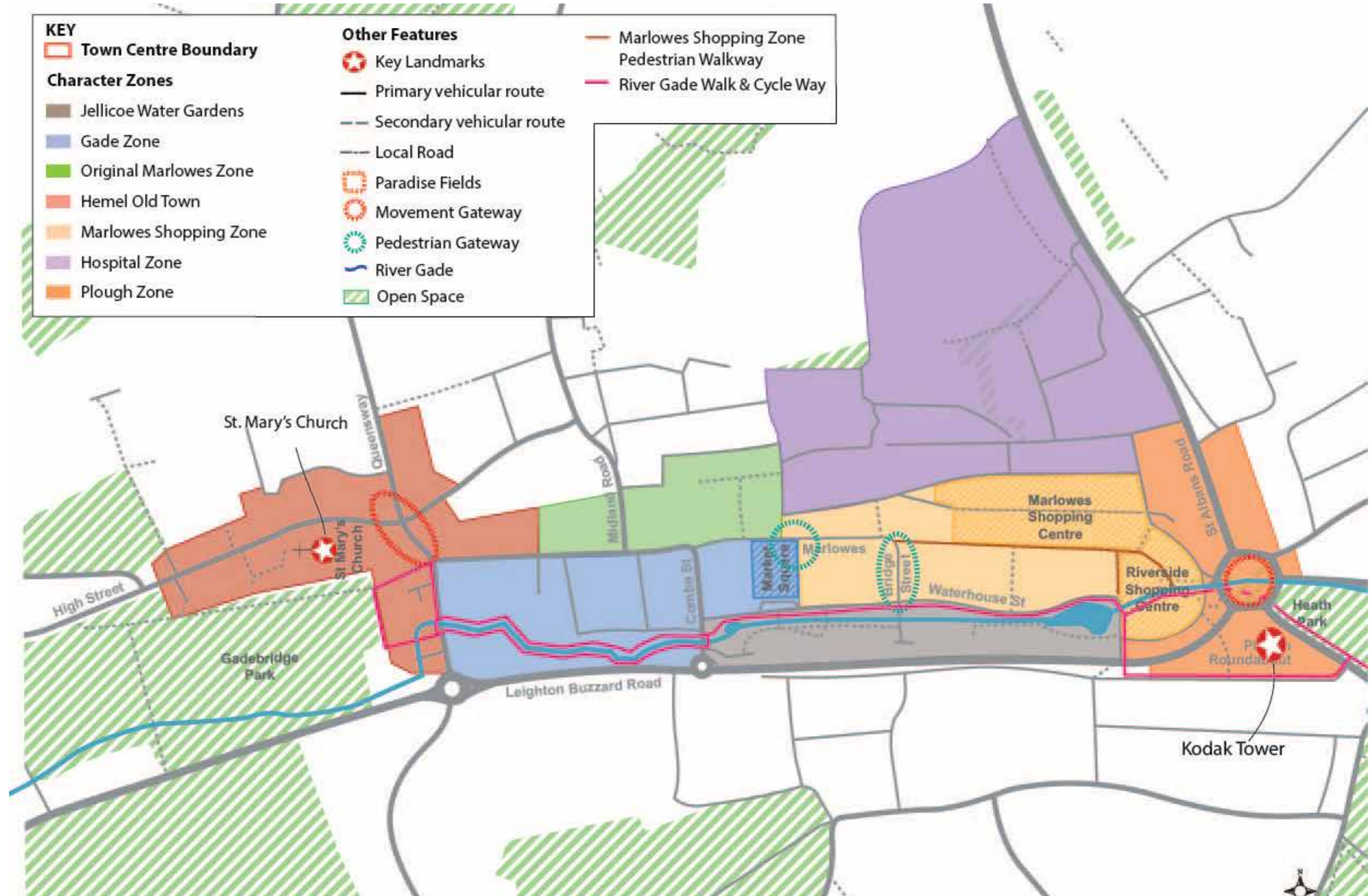


Figure 1: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan Map



Chapter 1: Masterplan Context

Figure 2 : Context Map of Dacorum
(Source : DBC Core Strategy)



1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Hemel Hempstead is a town in Hertfordshire, 24 miles north west of London. It is located close to the M1 and M25 and is within easy travelling distance of both London Luton and London Heathrow airports. Its proximity to London and connections to major transport infrastructure are a key strength of the local economy. Hemel Hempstead railway station is situated on the West Coast Main Line between Rugby and London Euston. It is located approximately 1 mile south west of the town centre and provides direct and frequent links to Central London and Shepherd's Bush. A smaller railway station is located in Apsley to the south east of the town centre.
- 1.1.2 Hemel Hempstead Town Centre was established in the 1950s and 1960s as part of the Masterplan for the Hemel Hempstead New Town. The centre is linear in form and runs north to south along the valley floor. The main shopping area was remodelled in the 1990s to include a pedestrianised area along Marlowes with an indoor shopping centre. Service yards flank Marlowes to the east and west.
- 1.1.3 With the exception of Riverside - a mid 2000s retail led development in the main shopping area - the fabric of the town centre is largely out-dated. On the whole it is failing to reach its economic potential. There is also a notable lack of community pride in the area. To remedy this situation specific issues need to be addressed including the poor quality public realm characterised by dated frontages, surfaces and street furniture, and access and movement difficulties such as relate to pedestrians, cyclists, buses, taxis and private vehicles. The town centre has an underdeveloped evening and leisure economy and is failing to make the most of its natural and cultural assets. Regeneration and upgrading of key sites together with restoration of heritage assets is required to help secure the town centre's long-term prosperity and to create an appealing, attractive and sustainable location with a high quality environment.

- 1.1.4 In response to this challenge, Dacorum Borough Council has taken the lead in the regeneration of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre and has produced this Masterplan. These steps follow the untimely demise of the Waterhouse Square regeneration scheme in 2010 which failed to deliver much needed regeneration due to the Council's development partner, Thornfield Ventures Ltd, falling into administration linked to the global banking crisis.
- 1.1.5 The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide the direction for the future of the town centre and to enable transformation and regeneration to proceed as quickly as possible. It takes its lead from, and builds upon, the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy which is set out in the Core Strategy, a central document in the Local Planning Framework.
- 1.1.6 In accordance with the framework set out in the Core Strategy, the Masterplan identifies seven distinct but interlinked town centre character zones to guide development proposals. Detailed guidance is provided for each zone together with overarching guidance to cover the whole of the town centre. This will ensure that a holistic approach is taken to future improvements and that benefits across the town centre as a whole are maximised.

1.2 Study Area

- 1.2.1 The Town Centre Masterplan covers an area of approximately 62.5 hectares (154.5 acres) in the centre of Hemel Hempstead.

1.3 Study Process

- 1.3.1 To help develop the Masterplan key studies were commissioned using specialist consultants. These comprised:
- An Access and Movement Study by JMP Consultants

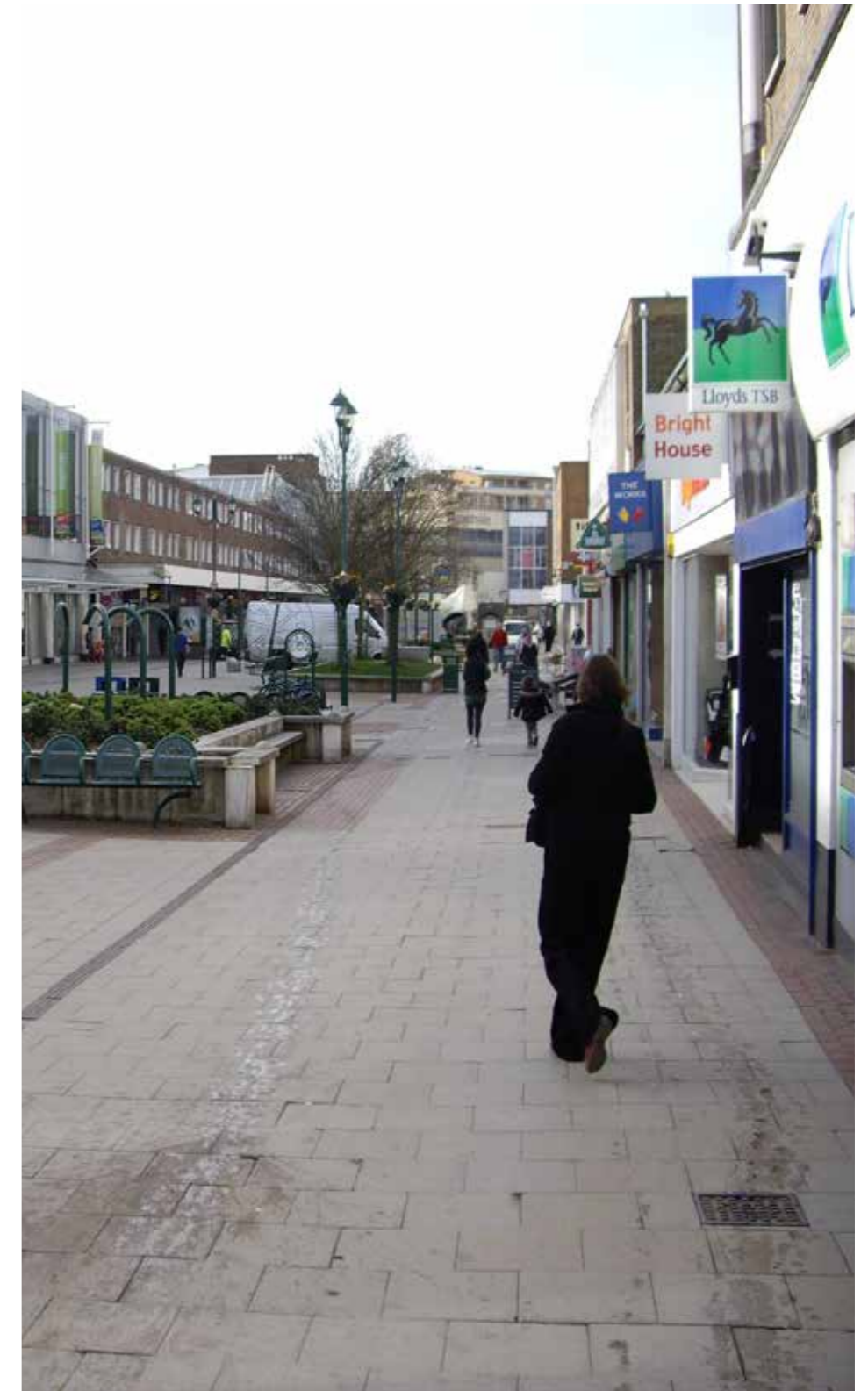
- A Major Land Use Study by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners
 - A Retail Update Study by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners and GL Hearn
 - A Heritage Improvement Study by Forum Heritage Services and Context4D
 - A Water Gardens Study by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners and The Landscape Partnership
 - A Viability and Phasing Study by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners and DTZ
- 1.3.2 The Masterplan was developed and managed by the Council's Strategic Planning and Regeneration Team. Working groups were formed to bring together existing knowledge and expertise and to help steer the study outcomes. These groups included key officers from Dacorum Borough Council and Herts County Council together with representatives from the Town Centre Partnership, key landowners and service providers.
- 1.3.4 Stakeholder workshops were held in January 2011 and January 2012. Both events were attended by over 50 town centre stakeholders and provided vital input into the preparation of the Masterplan.
- 1.3.5 This draft document reflects all stakeholder input to date.
- 1.3.6 The draft Masterplan has been subject to a formal Sustainability Appraisal (SA) by independent consultants C4S. The Sustainability Appraisal incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required under European law.
- 1.3.7 The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan accords fully with the policy framework set out in the Council's Core Strategy. The Masterplan will be formally adopted once the report has been subject to public consultation and approved by Council. The Masterplan will gain full Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) status upon adoption.
- 1.3.8 The Masterplan is intended to outline the form of development that will be acceptable in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. It is not intended to be unduly prescriptive but to help guide development and future planning applications within the defined study area.

- 1.3.9 The Masterplan will inform more detailed future guidance for the character zones. This will be set out in Improvement Strategies as and when significant regeneration proposals are anticipated. Feasibility studies, development briefs and planning statements will be developed where they are considered necessary.
- 1.3.10 The Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvement Strategy has already been produced to help deliver short and medium terms proposals over the period 2011 to 2016.

1.4 Masterplan Structure

- 1.4.1 This chapter has set out the broad context from which the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan has been conceived and developed.
- 1.4.2 Chapter 2 considers how Hemel Hempstead Town Centre is currently performing in a range of key areas. It includes a SWOT analysis of the seven town centre Character Zones.
- 1.4.3 Chapter 3 builds upon the analysis in the previous chapter setting out key regeneration objectives for the town centre and stating the principles that will guide its future transformation.
- 1.4.4 Chapter 4 sets out the overall vision for the town centre in a written statement and through a Masterplan Diagram. It identifies the preferred distribution of town centre land uses and summarises the three key strategies that underpin the Masterplan.
- 1.4.5 Chapter 5 contains detailed strategies for individual Character Zones and is focused around specific sites, developments and improvements.
- 1.4.6 Chapter 6 considers the delivery aspects of the Masterplan. It sets out a strategy for delivery taking into account viability and phasing of key town centre proposals.
- 1.4.7 A range of appendices are included. These provide supplemental detail where it has not been possible or appropriate to include it within main text.
- 1.4.8 A range of maps are included within the Masterplan. The Masterplan proposes a flexible approach to delivery therefore these should be read as indicative.

Marlowes - Pedestrianised area (source : DBC)



Riverside - Pedestrian area
(Source : DBC)



Marlowes - Market Area
(Source : DBC)



Chapter 2: Hemel Today

2.1 The New Town

- 2.1.1 Hemel Hempstead is a Mark One New Town built during the 1950s and early 1960s to help disperse London's population following the Second World War. Unlike the majority of other New Towns, Hemel Hempstead was already a thriving community of 20,000 people. Set within a river valley and with a proud history and prosperous market centre, existing landscape and heritage assets were at the forefront of the New Town design and planning process.
- 2.1.2 Geoffrey Jellicoe created the original plan based around the idea of a town in a park with generous open spaces in and around the town centre and the residential neighbourhoods. Whilst his Masterplan was substantially modified by the Development Corporation, his vision for the town centre was largely retained.

2.2 Hemel Today

- 2.2.1 By 1962 the New Town Masterplan was substantially complete. Today, Hemel Hempstead rivals Watford as Hertfordshire's largest town with a population of around 89,000 (Hertfordshire County Council estimation).
- 2.2.2 The Local Planning Framework Core Strategy identified seven distinct but interlinked zones with the town centre, each with a clear identity and character. These comprise the Old Town, the civic and educational area of the college and public sector uses along with the Market Square, the original area of Marlowes, the primary retail area along Marlowes, the Hospital and light industrial area of Paradise, the Water Gardens and the large scale buildings around the Plough roundabout. Accordingly, these seven areas are identified as individual "Character Zones" within the Core Strategy (see Figure 1: Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan Map). Surrounding the town centre are clear areas of open space with Gadebridge Park to the north, Paradise Fields to the east and Heath Park, the moors at Boxmoor and Two Waters to the south. The town centre lies in the river valley, which is largely responsible for the elongated north-south alignment.
- 2.2.3 There is a marked difference between the Old Town in the north and the new town centre to the south. The Old Town is centred upon the High Street with its rich heritage and historic character.

The High Street contains a concentration of listed buildings and is protected as a key part of the Old Town Conservation Area. In contrast, the primary shopping area focussed at the southern end of the town centre along Marlowes and the adjacent Water Gardens (registered in 2010 as a Garden of Special Historic Interest) exhibit a strong New Town character.

2.3 Major Land Uses and Activities

- 2.3.1 As a highly accessible and sustainable location the town centre is ideally suited to accommodating a range and mix of land uses. However, the current uses are sub-optimal in terms of supporting a vibrant and viable town centre.
- 2.3.2 Hemel Hempstead is the principal retail destination within the borough but its neighbouring town, Watford, is the region's central hub for shopping. On its own, Hemel Hempstead's social-demographic population mix is not attracting retail department stores and other quality stores that are not already present in the town. The town centre's primary shopping frontage is located along and off Marlowes. The area is predominantly pedestrianised, includes mostly retail chain stores and has two purpose built shopping centres, Marlowes Shopping Centre, an indoor mall located on the east side of Marlowes, and the relatively new Riverside Shopping Centre, which is located at the southern end of Marlowes.
- 2.3.3 As you move to the north along Marlowes away from the shopping centres the retail offer changes to include a significant number of discount stores, betting shops, charity shops and amusement arcades. The outdoor street market is located along the pedestrianised area and operates on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- 2.3.4 North of Bridge Street, the primary frontage ends and the shops become more service orientated and more secondary in nature (similar to the Old Town's retail offer). The Old Town is separate from the new town and comprises a host of restaurants, cafés and pubs. There are a cluster of estate agents along the northern end of Marlowes together with various takeaways, a number of hairdressers/beauty shops and a few convenience shops. In between the Old Town and New Town lies mainly office, civic and educational uses, including West Herts College, the Civic Centre, Library and Police Station.

2.3.5 The town centre suffers from a high degree of linearity and as a whole is characterised by very uneven levels of footfall. The retail offer in Marlowes pedestrianised area is generally good quality and attracts a high level of pedestrian activity. However, uses in the middle and northern sections of Marlowes and on Waterhouse Street generate substantially less footfall. The Market Square is underused and is flanked by small unattractive units and the bus station to the west.

2.3.6 The town centre lacks an anchor in the north to attract footfall from the principal shopping area in the south. This is not to say that the pedestrianised area is without issues. Almost 13% of units in the town centre's main shopping frontage (comprising shop uses protected by Policy 42 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011) were identified as vacant in the February 2012 Town Centre Health Audit. This is concerning given that it is above the average town centre vacancy rate (10%). Stakeholders who attended the Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan Workshops (January 2011 and 2012) commented that the town centre lacks independent retailers and that people shopped in Hemel Hempstead for convenience rather than due to the range of shops or the attractiveness of the town as a shopping destination.

2.3.7 An additional problem pertains to the town centre's underdeveloped evening economy. The Old Town is a relatively vibrant in the evening owing to numerous pubs and its excellent restaurant offer. However, evening activity in the rest of the town centre is very limited. There is little to attract people after office or shopping hours. Leisure facilities are limited being confined to Quasar, a few gyms and a handful of bars and restaurants, the majority of which are located on the fringes of the town centre. Hemel Hempstead's main leisure and sports facilities are situated on Jarman Park, an out of town leisure and retail park on St Albans Road (A414). Other leisure uses in the town include Sports Space which is within walking distance of the town centre and Virgin Active which is located on Maylands Business Park.

2.3.8 The town centre is home to a growing residential population. In recent years a significant amount of flatted development has been built in the town centre, most notably as part of redevelopment of the Kodak Tower. Further residential development is planned.

2.3.9 The level of convenience offer within the town centre itself is limited at present. The main operators are Asda and Iceland to the east of Marlowes and Marks and Spencer's and Tesco Express to the south in the primary shopping area. The 2011 Retail Study identifies a need for additional convenience goods (food) floorspace to serve Hemel Hempstead. A new supermarket is planned for the central area of the Gade Zone as part of

a large scale regeneration scheme that would deliver a new college, a new food store and a new civic hub including a modern library at its heart.

2.3.10 With respect to commercial and business uses, larger scale quality offices are located at the southern end of the town centre, west and east of the Riverside Shopping Centre. These include office space in the image building (former Kodak building), One Park Lane, Bryanston Court and major employers like Haven along Wolsey Road.

2.3.11 In recent years, the town centre has lost a number of town centre businesses with sizeable office blocks. The Kodak and McAlpine sites have been converted to residential and the former Royal Mail depot site is now subject to redevelopment proposals for residential and light industrial uses. However the town centre continues to have high vacancy rates for existing office space. There is a considerable amount of available high quality office space in the town centre but also a substantial amount of low quality office space, particularly in the Marlowes Shopping Zone such as Swan Court and offices above shops along Marlowes and Hamilton House.

2.3.12 To the north of Paradise and south of Hillfield Road is Hemel Hempstead General Hospital. Other than the town centre and Two Waters and Apsley, the focus for employment in Hemel Hempstead is Maylands Business Park. This is the largest business park in the eastern region and lies two miles the east of the town centre.

2.4 Access and Movement

2.4.1 Hemel Hempstead bus station is situated within the Market Square along Waterhouse Street. The bus station is of poor quality and offers only limited passenger facilities. It is also considered an obstacle to the regeneration of both Market Square and Waterhouse Street.

2.4.2 Public transport, pedestrian and cycle linkages together with navigational aids between the town centre, the railway station and Maylands Business Park are sub-standard and in need of improvement. The situation is not made any easier by the Plough roundabout, a series of six roundabouts with two way traffic around one large roundabout. The problem is currently compounded by ongoing maintenance issues with the Plough's pedestrian underpass and the lack of appropriate signage and crossings to facilitate direct access to the town centre by pedestrians and cyclists.

Jellicoe Water Gardens
(Source: British Pathe)



Market area - Marlowes
(Source: Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



Old Town Shopping area
(Source: Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



2.4.3 The town centre benefits from a large pedestrianised area which makes it easy for pedestrians to move around but there is a need for better east-west permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. With the exception of the primary shopping area, the public realm is in need of substantial improvement. Due to its high linearity and the current distribution of land uses, footfall in the town centre is highly uneven. Improved north-south pedestrian and cycle routes have a key role to play in promoting movement from the shopping core towards the Gade Zone and Old Town.

2.4.3 A one-way scheme is to be implemented in the Old Town with works scheduled to begin in late 2012. The one way route will run northwards with vehicular access to the High Street from Queensway only. A dual purpose bus stop and taxi rank will be provided as part of the scheme together with major public realm improvements including providing new wider pavements, new street furniture and more on-street parking.

2.4.4 In general, there is a high level of car parking within the town centre with 3567 spaces serving the primary shopping area. Signage to car parks around the town centre is due to be automated in the second half of 2012.

2.5 Quality of the Environment

2.5.1 Hemel Hempstead town centre benefits from a range of heritage and natural assets.

2.5.2 The Old Town is recognised for its special architectural and historic importance. The Church of St Mary is the oldest, most prominent building along the High Street. The Old Town Hall is another focal building of noteworthy architecture. Despite the Old Town being an attractive destination the Old Town's economy is under performing. However, planned public realm and streetscape improvements will create a better environment for visitors, shoppers, residents and local businesses.

2.5.3 The original elements of the new town have distinct heritage significance. Examples of new town architecture include buildings in Bank Court, Marlowes and Bridge Street. The new town centre is ageing though with some areas in need of considerable attention. While the pedestrianised shopping area benefits from being car-free, the overall quality of the environment is poor. Lack of investment in recent decades has led to the deterioration of the public realm and consequently it is failing to meet modern requirements and support economic aspirations

2.5.4 The Water Gardens were completed in 1962 and appear to be mostly intact as per Jellicoe's original intention. They are considered to be a nationally importance landscape as as such

have been registered Grade II listed, Park and Garden. However, they have declined to a point where significant capital investment is urgently required for restoration and repair purposes. The Gardens and adjacent areas of the public realm along Waterhouse Street are currently in poor condition and do not provide a positive setting for the town centre. The Council will be submitting a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for restorative work.

2.5.5 The town centre's principle natural assets are the River Gade and Paradise Fields open space. The Gade is a chalk stream, examples of which are globally rare. It is a significant environmental resource that has the potential for further ecological improvements under the directive objectives. A key challenge therefore is to enhance the ecological status of the River Gade, whilst restoring the Grade II Jellicoe Water Gardens. Paradise Fields open space makes an important contribution to local green infrastructure. It has significant ecological value both in terms of biodiversity and wildlife. Degredation of the space has become an increasing issue due to fragmented management.

2.5.6 Gadebridge Park and Heath Park are located just outside the town centre boundary but are noted for their contribution to the setting of the town centre and as bookends to the town centre green corridor

2.6 SWOT Analysis of Town Centre Character Zones

2.6.1 Each town centre character zone has strengths and weaknesses. At the same time they are also subject to opportunities and threats. The following section sets out a SWOT analysis of each zone. The analysis has informed key proposals and strategies set out in the masterplan.

2.7 Old Town

2.7.1 The key strengths of the Old Town are its historic character and vibrant evening economy. Other than a strong evening leisure focus, the Old Town provides a niche market for services together with some retail. This complements the strong shopping offer in the new town centre.

2.7.2 The economy does however suffer from a disconnection with the rest of the town centre. The primary shopping area is located a considerable distance away from the Old Town and linked trips and movement between the two are unusual.

2.7.3 There is however an opportunity to improve north-south pedestrian and cycle routes and signposting which may help draw activity from the shopping core. The addition of a northern town centre anchor and new residential development in the Gade Zone may also have a beneficial impact on the Old Town. A number of public realm improvements are planned on the High Street to accompany the implementation of a one-way traffic system. These interventions will help create a better environment for visitors, shoppers, residents and local businesses, which should help stimulate the under performing economy.

2.7.4 Funding restrictions may however limit the positive impacts arising from public realm improvements.

2.7.5 The delivery of an economic and business study will help identify key issues and recommendations to help improve the vitality and vibrancy of this area.

2.8 Original Marlowes Zone

2.8.1 The Original Marlowes Zone contains a number of listed buildings and buildings with character. It also contains the town centre's main convenience offer in the form of both Asda and Iceland. However the area lacks identity, the quality of the public realm is generally poor, and Asda and Iceland are not well connected to the main town centre retail.

2.8.2 Opportunities in this zone are relatively limited with public realm improvements and improvements to the NCP Car Park firm priorities. The Original Marlowes Zone is not one of the Council's key areas for regeneration focus and the extent of improvements that come forward will be highly dependent upon what happens in neighbouring zones.

2.9 Gade Zone

2.9.1 The Gade Zone contains a number of large buildings that are vacant, under-utilised or no longer suitable for modern requirements. There are also two large vacant sites in the form of the Market Square and the site of the former "Dacorum Pavilion". Buildings tend to be poorly related to the wider streetscape and the River Gade, the public realm is generally poor and both east-west and north-south pedestrian and cycle routes are inadequate. However, along with the Hospital Zone, the Gade Zone is one of two zones with the greatest opportunity for change in the town centre. The zone holds significant regeneration opportunities to deliver new educational and civic facilities, alongside supporting

residential and retail. There is a high level of public sector land ownership which increases the likelihood that comprehensive redevelopment can be achieved.

2.9.2 The key strength of the Gade Zone is its location near the heart of the town centre. Regeneration of the area can therefore help the north and south of the town centre become better connected particularly through the delivery of the River Gade walk and cycle way which will run from Heath Park in the south to Gadebridge Park in the north. There are however restrictions to development layout and use due to the river's floodplain and the groundwater protection zone.

2.9.3 There is an opportunity to deliver a new supermarket to the north of the Gade Zone as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme. The scheme could bring much needed housing to the area which would help generate activity to the north of the town centre. This would also help improve the economic vitality of the Old Town.

2.9.4 There are major opportunities in the south of the Gade Zone. Market Square holds great regeneration potential as it is largely unused at present. If the bus station is relocated to the highway within Marlowes Shopping Zone this would free up a significant area of land. A leisure and evening economy could be supported on Market Square spilling out onto Waterhouse Street.

2.9.5 Highway improvements will be required in the Gade Zone to support regeneration opportunities.

2.10 Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone

2.10.1 This zone encompasses the registered Water Gardens and three car parks.

2.10.2 The Water Gardens are an invaluable environmental and historic asset of both local and national importance. The wider zone provides a high amount of car parking and is a key gateway into the town centre for pedestrians. The Water Gardens are currently in poor condition though. The cost of a proper restoration and maintenance regime is significant therefore the opportunity to secure funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund is a key one.

2.10.3 Another weakness of the zone is the condition of the surrounding public realm and the lack of vibrancy on Waterhouse Street. Waterhouse Street separates the Water Gardens from the Marlowes Shopping Zone and includes a number of service yards along its length. Little activity is apparent. There is a significant opportunity to introduce more active frontages along Waterhouse

Gade Zone - Market Area
(Source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



View of the Flower Gardens from the eastern boundary
(Source : HTA Consultants)



Hemel Hempstead Hospital

(Source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



Street and to make it a more pedestrian friendly environment by introducing more leisure uses and a shared surface. New leisure uses such as a cinema, restaurants, pubs and cafés could improve the evening economy, which is currently underdeveloped outside of the Old Town. A restored Water Gardens would make this a highly attractive and desirable location for leisure and catering uses. It is however difficult to envisage the development of these uses without major restoration to the Water Gardens.

- 2.10.4 There is the opportunity to integrate the Water Gardens as part of the River Gade walk and cycle way which would encourage north-south movement through the town centre. There may also be scope to improve east-west links in the Water Gardens for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- 2.10.5 Another possibility is to make improvements to the setting of the Water Gardens. This could be achieved by removing some of the decked car park to deliver a new cultural facility and by refurbishing and re-landscaping the other car parks. Any new development adjacent to the Water Gardens would have to be sensitively designed to avoid harmfully impacting the setting of the Water Gardens.

2.11 Hospital Zone

- 2.11.1 The Hospital Zone holds significant regeneration opportunities for mixed use. There is scope to provide a new or refurbished more compact local general hospital in the area whilst releasing under-used land for new housing and a new primary school. There may be opportunities to deliver improved open space and play provision as part of this. There are, however, limited sites, which are suitable for a new primary school.
- 2.11.2 The Paradise General Employment Area also offers various opportunities for mixed use development. The ex-Royal Mail sorting office could provide new residential and light industrial uses as part of its redevelopment.
- 2.7.23 East-west links between the hospital and the wider town centre are currently poor. The steep gradient discourages pedestrian movement along this axis. The redevelopment of the hospital site will be a key opportunity to address accessibility issues in the area. Public transport links to the hospital could also be improved.

2.12 Marlowes Shopping Zone

- 2.12.1 The Marlowes Shopping Zone contains the town centre's primary retail offer.

- 2.12.2 The key strengths of the area are its vibrancy during the day and its pedestrian friendly environment (the main shopping area is fully pedestrianised). The New Town public realm is in need of major renewal and refurbishment though. In view of this, Dacorum Borough Council has set aside £3m over the next 5 years to implement improvements that will significantly enhance the public realm and help secure greater footfall and expenditure.
- 2.12.3 While the shopping area is very vibrant in the daytime it has an extremely limited night time economy with little to attract people once shops and offices have closed. There is a significant opportunity to encourage a diversification of uses and to support the development of an evening economy in the area.
- 2.12.4 There is also an opportunity to improve the layout and design of the street market along the pedestrianised area. The Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvement Strategy contain plans to address the layout, appearance and consistency of the market which could bring enormous benefits to the shopping area.
- 2.12.5 There may be potential to relocate the bus station from its current position to provide a new bus interchange along Bridge Street and Marlowes (next to the ramped area). This more central position would help promote sustainable modes of transport and could allow for improved facilities for customers.

2.13 Plough Zone

- 2.13.1 The Plough Zone is focused around the Plough roundabout and is an important gateway into the town centre.
- 2.13.2 While the roundabout is successful in traffic management terms it presents a major barrier to pedestrian and cycle access between the station and the town centre. The subway running under the roundabout is subject to ongoing maintenance issues. This has greatly impacted upon pedestrian movement.
- 2.13.3 The area has been enhanced by major new developments in recent years including the construction of the Riverside Shopping Centre and the re-development of the Kodak tower. The latter development provided a new pedestrian footbridge link to Riverside Shopping Centre but access and movement improvements are still required for cyclists and to improve navigation.
- 2.13.4 The public realm is currently in a poor condition therefore improvements in this respect are also required.

Marlowes - Food Court (Source: DBC)



Chapter 3: Aims, Objectives and Principles

3.1 Context

3.1.1 The starting point for the development of the Masterplan was the town centre vision set out in the Local Planning Framework Core Strategy. This has informed the following aims, objectives, principles and challenges.

3.2 Extract from the Core Strategy:

3.2.1 The Town Centre vision:

The town centre will be a vibrant place where people will want to shop, work, live, learn and visit during the day and evening. Business and commerce are successful. New development has included offices, civic facilities, homes and shops. The Marlowes Shopping Zone is busy. A residential community occupies the homes. Their demand for services has been met by local provision, use of the town centre facilities and improved access to open space out of the centre. New facilities will include a local general hospital, school, college and cultural centre. Shoppers, visitors and residents benefit from the rationalisation of bus stops and interchange facilities within the centre. The town centre is attractive. New buildings, refurbishment and extension of pedestrian routes have delivered a pleasant and secure environment that makes best use of its built and natural assets and respects its New Town history. Marlowes and Waterhouse Street are significantly improved. There are good connections with the Old Town. A walkway and cycleway runs alongside the River Gade. Green links with Gadebridge Park, Two Waters Open Space, Paradise Fields and the Nickey Line have been enhanced. The restoration of the Water Gardens is admired and public art promoted.

3.3 Regeneration Aims

3.3.1 The Council aims to facilitate the regeneration of the town centre over the next 10 years through phased redevelopment of key sites in order to strengthen and diversify the town centre economy and create a quality environment that generates community pride.

3.4 Regeneration Objectives

3.4.1 The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan has been created with ten interlinked objectives in mind. These are to:

1. Set out the long-term vision for the future Hemel Hempstead town centre;
2. Provide a strategy to realise this vision with a plan for the short, medium and long term;
3. Enable transformation and regeneration of the town centre to proceed as quickly as possible;
4. Assist the town centre in reaching its economic potential;
5. Ensure that the growth and improvements are balanced, sustainable and maintained for future generations;
6. Ensure that redevelopment of key sites is commercially realistic and deliverable;
7. Provide a town centre to be proud of which accommodates a broad range of uses and activities and meets the needs and expectations of all sections of the community;
8. Ensure that future development is of the highest quality and contributes to a sense of place;
9. Ensure that future development enhances the town centre's natural assets and builds upon and complements its unique identity and heritage; and
10. Encourage sustainable access and easy movement to, and within, the town centre allowing access by all forms of travel, most particularly walking and cycling.

3.5 Regeneration Principles

3.5.1 The Masterplan is based on a number of important guiding principles. These flow from the regeneration objectives and have informed the detailed proposals set out in Chapter 5. The guiding principles are as follows:

3.5.2 *New Major Land Uses and Activities*

- Deliver a mix of uses that will promote a vibrant and prosperous economy;
- Enable a distribution of uses that secures the greatest benefit to the town centre as a whole;
- Strengthen Hemel Hempstead's role as a sub-regional shopping hub;

Image of Gade Zone - Market Square
(Source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



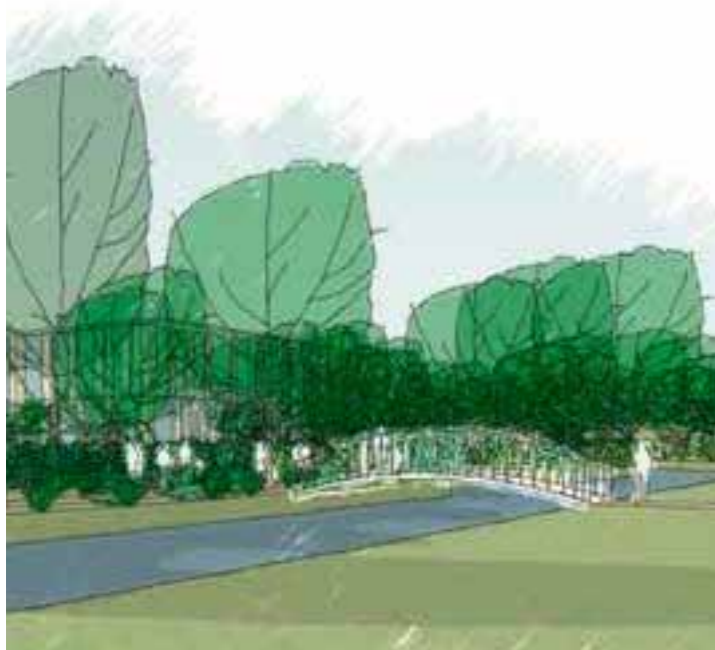
Image - Old Town
(Source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



Bank Court - Link to Water Gardens
(Source : DBC)



Indicative sketch of Water Garden
(Source : HTA Consultants)



- Encourage the development of a leisure and evening economy;
- Develop a new civic and community focus for the people of Hemel Hempstead;
- Provide for a full range of social, leisure and community facilities and services;
- Provide a mix of new homes including an appropriate level of affordable homes (residential development to be part of mixed use schemes where appropriate);
- Retain/re-use buildings of character and historic importance; and
- Ensure that all development contributes appropriately to local and strategic infrastructure requirements.

3.5.3 *Sustainable Access and Movement*

- Create a more cohesive form of development that promotes sustainable methods of transport and strengthens links to and between key facilities (bus and railway stations, the hospital, the town centre and main areas of employment);
- Improve linkages and navigation for pedestrian and cycle movement between the railway station and town centre, and other key destinations;
- Incorporate a new bus interchange and appropriate levels of taxi ranking;
- Create new north-south and east-west pedestrian and vehicular connections;
- Incorporate sufficient and appropriate access, servicing and car parking; and
- Manage traffic circulation to optimise town centre functionality.

3.5.4 *A Quality Town Centre*

- Encourage the highest quality, legible development with cohesive and effective urban design, and appropriate co-ordinated materials and street furniture;
- Ensure the town centre public realm is maintained;
- Enhance and maximise well-designed, high quality public space;
- Create a safe and pleasant environment in which to live, work and visit, where all uses contribute towards public safety, community cohesion and security;

- Ensure the effective use of existing land and previously developed sites;
- Encourage sympathetic landmark buildings at gateway locations;
- Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment of both the Old and New Town;
- Enhance natural features including the River Gade and surrounding open spaces;
- Mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change; and
- Protect people and property from flooding.

3.5.5 *Regeneration Challenges*

The following challenges need to be met if Hemel Hempstead town centre is to be successfully regenerated:

- Change perceptions and raise aspirations for the future of the town centre, putting behind the failure of previous proposals;
- Encourage key stakeholders including landowners to work together and in partnership with the Council;
- Recognise that transforming the town centre does not depend solely on the size of a scheme;
- Accommodate a wide range of uses to help diversify the economy and cater for the needs and aspirations of all the community;
- Maintain the impetus associated with the Town Centre Masterplan;
- Integrate new development successfully with retained buildings and uses;
- Ensure that the objectives and principles of the Masterplan are followed through to implementation through use of improvement strategies, planning statements and design briefs;
- Ensure that the Masterplan has clear support within the Borough, from adjoining Local Authorities and amongst a full range of town centre stakeholders;
- Link with regeneration schemes in the wider area where possible and appropriate;
- Enhance the River Gade to 'good ecological' Water Framework Directive status whilst retaining and restoring the Jellicoe Water Gardens; and
- Commitment to managing and maintaining an enhanced town centre environment.

Chapter 4: Town Centre Vision

4.1 Town Centre Vision

4.1.1 A detailed vision for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre is set out in the Core Strategy. The abbreviated Hemel Evolution vision is as follows:

By 2031 Hemel Hempstead Town Centre will be an appealing, attractive and sustainable destination with a thriving economic centre and a high quality environment. The regeneration and evolution of the town centre will emphasise the natural and cultural assets of the town and celebrate its New Town history and rich heritage.

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre will evolve into a vibrant place where people want to shop, work, live, learn and visit.

4.1.2 This Masterplan seeks to realise key aspects of this vision over the course of the next ten years by guiding the way that regeneration of the town centre is delivered.

4.1.3 The Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan is comprised of three main strategies. They are:

- A Major Land Use Strategy
- An Access and Movement Strategy
- An Urban Design Strategy

4.1.4 This chapter sets out the highest level of these strategies (the overarching level). These consider the regeneration of the town centre as a whole. Chapter 5 contains detailed strategies for individual Character Zones focused around specific sites, developments and improvements.

Figure 3: Town Centre Vision Diagram



- Further information on new access and movement links can be found in Chapter 5: Character Zone Strategies. Bridge Street will be opened up on to Leighton Buzzard Road for pedestrians and cyclists only. A new vehicular access is proposed to the Gade Zone north from Leighton Buzzard Road to serve new development. However, the proposal does not involve a new road between Leighton Buzzard Road and the Marlowes.

Indicative photo - Water gardens are at their best when associated with high quality developments (Source : Feria Urbanism)



Contemporary bus stations can be architecturally striking whilst offering retail and civic uses as part of their design (Source : Feria Urbanism)



4.2 Overarching Major Land Use Strategy

- 4.2.1 The Major Land Use Strategy provides a framework for major land uses in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, identifies major investment/development opportunities and provides advice on the scale of the opportunities and the locations considered suitable.
- 4.2.2 Significant land use changes are proposed in the Gade Zone and the Hospital Zone. These are major development opportunities that are critical to the achievement of the Masterplan's long-term regeneration objectives.
- 4.2.3 In other areas, specifically the Old Town Zone and the Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone, proposals are far more limited. The aspiration is to protect, and where possible enhance, the existing character of these zones.
- 4.2.4 The northern end of the Gade Zone is identified for extensive redevelopment. A major scheme is expected to come forward in the first five years of the Masterplan period to include a medium-sized supermarket on the current civic centre site, a replacement college on the existing college site and the re-provision of the civic centre in a new Public Service Quarter on the site of the former Dacorum Pavilion. This will also incorporate a new modern library, a new Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages and a range of other public sector and community organisations. Residential development is expected to come forward in the northern area of the Gade Zone in the latter stages of the Masterplan.
- 4.2.5 The Market Square is located at the southern tip of the Gade Zone. Its regeneration will be key to increasing vibrancy outside of the pedestrianised shopping area. A major ambition of the Masterplan is to improve the evening offer in the town centre outside of the Old Town Zone. New family-friendly leisure uses are proposed for the Market Square to increase vibrancy, particularly in the early evening. In order to accommodate an improved leisure offer and facilitate improved east-west movement the bus station to the west of Market Square will be relocated along the Marlowes.
- 4.2.6 Hemel Hempstead's Hospital facilities occupy a substantial site within the Hospital Zone. The Hospital Trust and the Primary Care Trust have been working together in considering options for a new or refurbished hospital. As the hospital site is far larger than their future operational requirements the Council anticipate that some of it (possibly all of it if the hospital relocates within Hemel Hempstead) will be auctioned off and developed for residential purposes. Along with development of parts of the Paradise employment area, a substantial amount of new residential development plus some mixed use employment opportunities is envisaged. A new two-form entry primary school is proposed within the Hospital Zone.

- 4.2.7 The Plough Zone has been subject to significant development in recent years, particularly higher density residential. There are two major opportunities for additional residential development. They are the BT exchange site and the site of the former petrol-filling station south of the Plough Roundabout.
- 4.2.8 The Hospital and Plough Zones include a large amount of high quality office space, however there is also a high overall vacancy rate in the town centre. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council wishes to retain high quality office space but consider alternative uses for low quality office space that has been vacant for a long period of time. This will improve the mix of uses in the town centre and deliver a more vibrant place.
- 4.2.9 No significant land use changes are proposed in the Marlowes Shopping Zone other than redeveloping existing vacant low quality office space to provide additional homes in the town centre. The bus station will be relocated along the Marlowes between Bridge Street and the Hillfield Road in the form of an elongated super-stop with associated passenger facilities. This more central location should further encourage sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.2.10 No significant land use changes are proposed in the Old Town Zone or the Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone. There is an aspiration to create an events space in the Old Town, centred around St Mary's Square car park. Opportunities to enhance the Old Town's evening economy are also encouraged.
- 4.2.11 Proposals for the Water Gardens are linked to a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to restore the area. Any associated development will need to be sensitive to the character and setting of the Water Gardens. It is envisaged that a new community facility on the site of the decked car park would be complementary as would an improved leisure offer along Waterhouse Street linked closely to the leisure offer proposed for the Market Square.

4.3 Overarching Access and Movement Strategy

- 4.3.1 The access and movement strategy seeks to balance the needs of all town centre users by promoting a permeable and easily navigable town centre that minimise conflicts between the different modes of travel.
- 4.3.2 The town centre suffers a number of issues due to its high linearity therefore a key aim is to improve north-south and east-west connections. One of the strategy's key proposals is to develop a north south pedestrian and cycling route along the River Gade corridor. It also proposes various measures to improve east-west links across the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

- 4.3.3 The strategy recognises the importance of giving greater priority to walking, cycling, public transport, and blue badge parking. This will be achieved through a range of measures including reallocating road space in favour of non-car users, providing additional cycle parking, formalising blue badge parking along Waterhouse Street, improving signage and navigation to main facilities and key routes, and by reducing barriers to movement (e.g. by providing safer crossings). The relocation of the bus and coach interchange from Market Square to a more central location with upgraded passenger facilities will help support this transport priority.
- 4.3.4 The creation of a shared surface on Waterhouse Street will help foster a more pedestrian friendly environment. This will encourage activity and footfall in the area.
- 4.3.5 Opportunities will be taken, chiefly along Waterhouse Street, to replace and increase the provision of taxi ranking to complement the new bus interchange and to support the evening economy.
- 4.3.6 Adequate parking must be provided to support growth in the town centre. There are currently around 3,600 on and off-street car parking spaces within the town centre. However, there is currently capacity during the peak Saturday daytime period as not all car parks are well used and there has been a recent decline in usage as fewer people have been driving to shops.
- 4.3.7 The strategy forecasts that there will be sufficient capacity to meet demand up to 2021, with a small estimated shortfall by 2031 (of around 300-350 spaces). The latter could be addressed by additional capacity at the Water Gardens (South) car park, via redevelopment of the NCP car park, and through regeneration opportunities within the Hospital Zone. Additional car parking on Water Gardens south car park will be subject to sensitive design criteria due to the heritage value of the gardens. Therefore a multi-storey car park on the Hospital site would provide a preferred way forward, subject to agreement with the Hospital Trust.
- 4.3.8 The provision of shared car parking to serve the proposed new foodstore would also provide opportunities for additional public spaces and encourage linked trips to the town centre.
- 4.3.9 The opening up of Bridge Street on to the Leighton Buzzard Road would allow more immediate access to the Water Gardens car park, and enable the traffic calming of Waterhouse Street. There will be some spaces lost through minor development of the Water Gardens (North), although sufficient capacity should remain.
- 4.3.10 The installation of variable message signs around the town centre will improve the information on the availability of parking spaces, and access to rear service yards will be maintained.

- 4.3.11 Navigation and signage will support the above approach. The emphasis will be on focusing measures at gateway approaches to the town and improving wayfinding and information at these locations, and in supporting the existing pedestrian and cycling network.
- 4.3.12 The introduction of a one way system in the Old Town offers an opportunity to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, to traffic calm the High Street, to encourage the return of a bus service, and to provide additional general and taxi parking and new loading bays.

4.4 Overarching Urban Design Strategy

- 4.4.1 The Urban Design Strategy for the Masterplan is woven into Chapter 5. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the seven town centre character zones was conducted together with a health check of the town centre as a whole. A key aspect of the SWOT was identifying opportunities to address weaknesses in the town centre environment with a view to creating a vibrant place that people want to live, work, visit and spend leisure time in.
- 4.4.2 The strategy helped identify a long-term vision for the town centre and individual visions for each of the zones. It also established a number of local objectives, key opportunities and key proposals for each of the town centre zones together with a series of design principles to help deliver an appealing, attractive and sustainable location with a high quality environment. These principles build on the policies set out in the Core Strategy regarding Urban Design, the Historic Environment and design principles for the town centre.
- 4.4.3 A key strength of the town centre was identified as its combination of Old and New Town Heritage. The Old Town, centred on the historic High Street is an extremely valuable heritage asset. Furthermore, the town centre benefits from its new town heritage, most particularly the architecture around Bank Court and the Jellicoe Water Gardens. The River Gade and the high level of green space surrounding the town centre were also noted as important assets.
- 4.4.4 The SWOT analysis identified a number of weaknesses in the town centre environment. A substantial proportion of the public realm is poor quality, characterised by dated frontages, surfaces and street furniture. A great concern is that the town is failing to make the most of its natural and cultural assets. The Water Gardens are in need of significant restoration and major improvements to the Old Town public realm are necessary. In addition, the town centre environment is not supporting pedestrians and cyclist movement as well as it should.

Civic buildings in formal landscape form a potent combination of architecture and landscape (source : FERIA Urbanism)



Indicative design characteristics for an urban food store (Source: FERIA Urbanism)



Water and lighting can be a potent combination
(Source : FERIA Urbanism)



4.4.5 Linked to the town centre's current strengths and weaknesses are a host of future opportunities. The design principles seek to maximise the town centre's strengths whilst simultaneously addressing its weaknesses. The principles centre on enhancing the image of the town centre and better celebrating its heritage assets as well as supporting the other overarching strategies by improving the economic viability and vitality of the area and providing better connectivity within the town centre and beyond.

4.4.6 The approach for the Old Town is to reinforce the historic character of the area. The built environment has special architectural and historical importance. The public realm will be upgraded and enriched to help meet heritage objectives. Street furniture and surface materials should be in keeping with traditional forms.

4.4.7 With respect to New Town Heritage, the approach is to enhance key frontages of buildings and reinforce the new town character within the Areas of Special Character (see zone maps). Proposals also include plans to restore the Water Gardens and create high quality interconnected corridors of public realm between Waterhouse Street and the Marlowes at three strategic points: Bank Court, Bridge Street and Market Square.

4.4.8 A bid has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to comprehensively restore the Water Gardens to reflect and reinforce their historical significance. This will incorporate an environmental solution to support the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, which is appropriate to the heritage listing of the Gardens. The status of the town centre section of the Gade will be enhanced from 'ecologically moderate' to 'ecologically good'. The other principal natural asset in the town centre is Paradise Fields open space. Connections to Paradise Fields will be improved and an enhanced management regime sought.

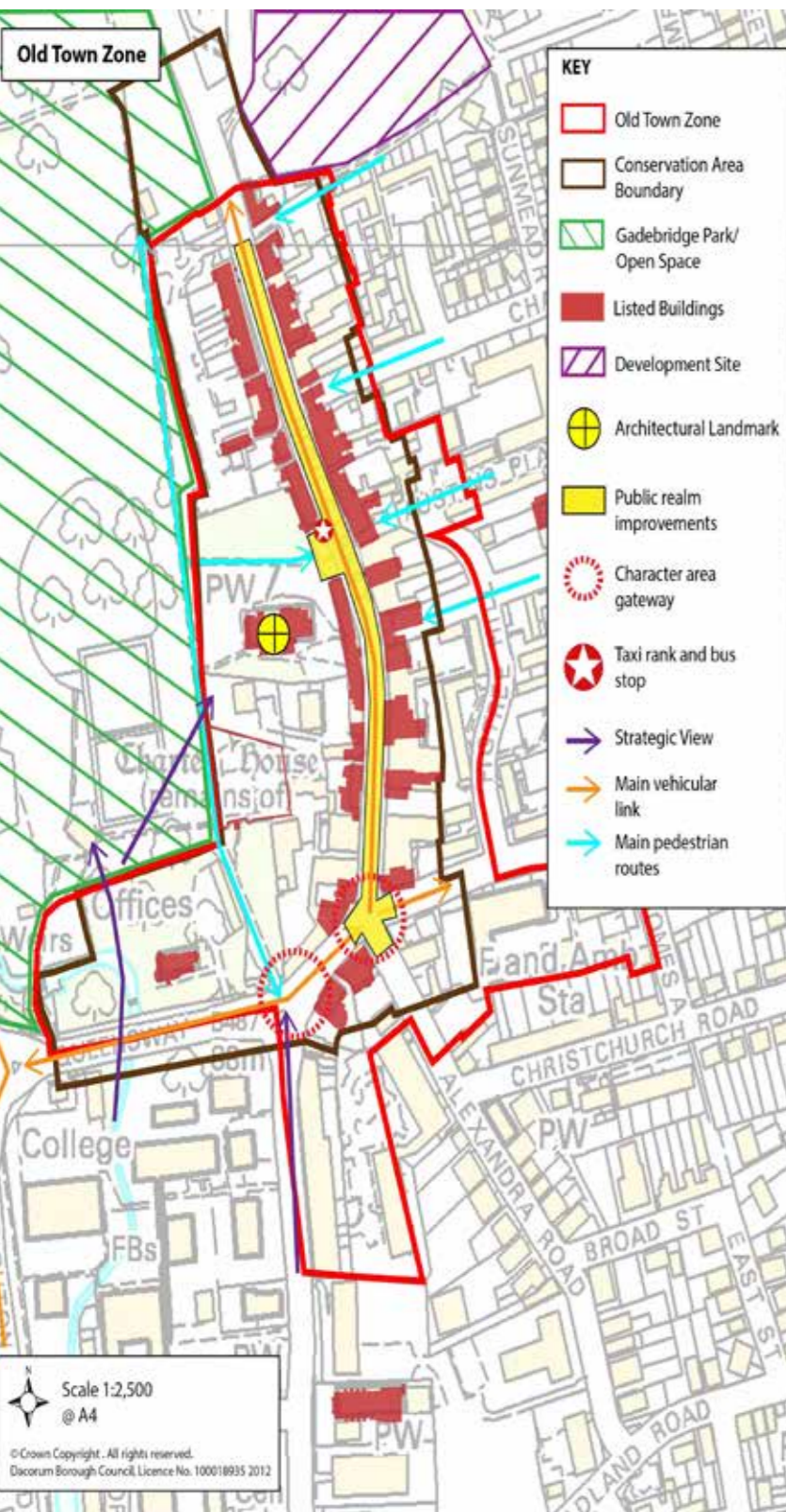
4.4.9 Detailed design principles for each town centre character zone are set out in Chapter 5. These are linked to the vision for each area and have been informed by specialist studies.

4.4.10 An important part of the Urban Design Strategy was to establish a Public Realm Design Guide Appendix. This has been assembled to guide and co-ordinate development and improvements in the public realm to ensure consistency and achieve the best possible outcome for the town centre as a whole. It addresses Heath Park and Gadebridge Park both of which are outside of the town centre boundary. These are vital areas which connect the town centre to the wider network of green spaces beyond.



Chapter 5: Character Zone Strategies

Figure 4: Old Town Zone Context Diagram



5.1.1 Old Town Zone

5.1.1.1 The Old Town is based around the High Street, Queensway and the northern tip of Marlowes. The main businesses include professional services and quality specialist shops. There is a strong evening economy with a variety of pubs, restaurants, cafés and an arts centre.

5.1.1.2 The Old Town Improvement Strategy is wrapped up within the Heritage Improvement Strategy for the town centre. This has been developed to help support proposals to improve and restore aspects of the town centre's heritage.

5.1.2 The Vision

5.1.2.1 To enhance the historic character of the Old Town whilst improving traffic flow and pedestrian movement.

5.1.2.2 Local Objectives:

- Reinforce the historic character of the area and enrich the public realm
- Preserve the built environment which has special architectural and historical importance
- Improve public access and movement from Gadebridge Park to The Bury and the High Street
- Improve traffic flow through the zone
- Bring new life to the Old Town Hall and The Bury, and the economy in general

5.1.2.3 Key Opportunities:

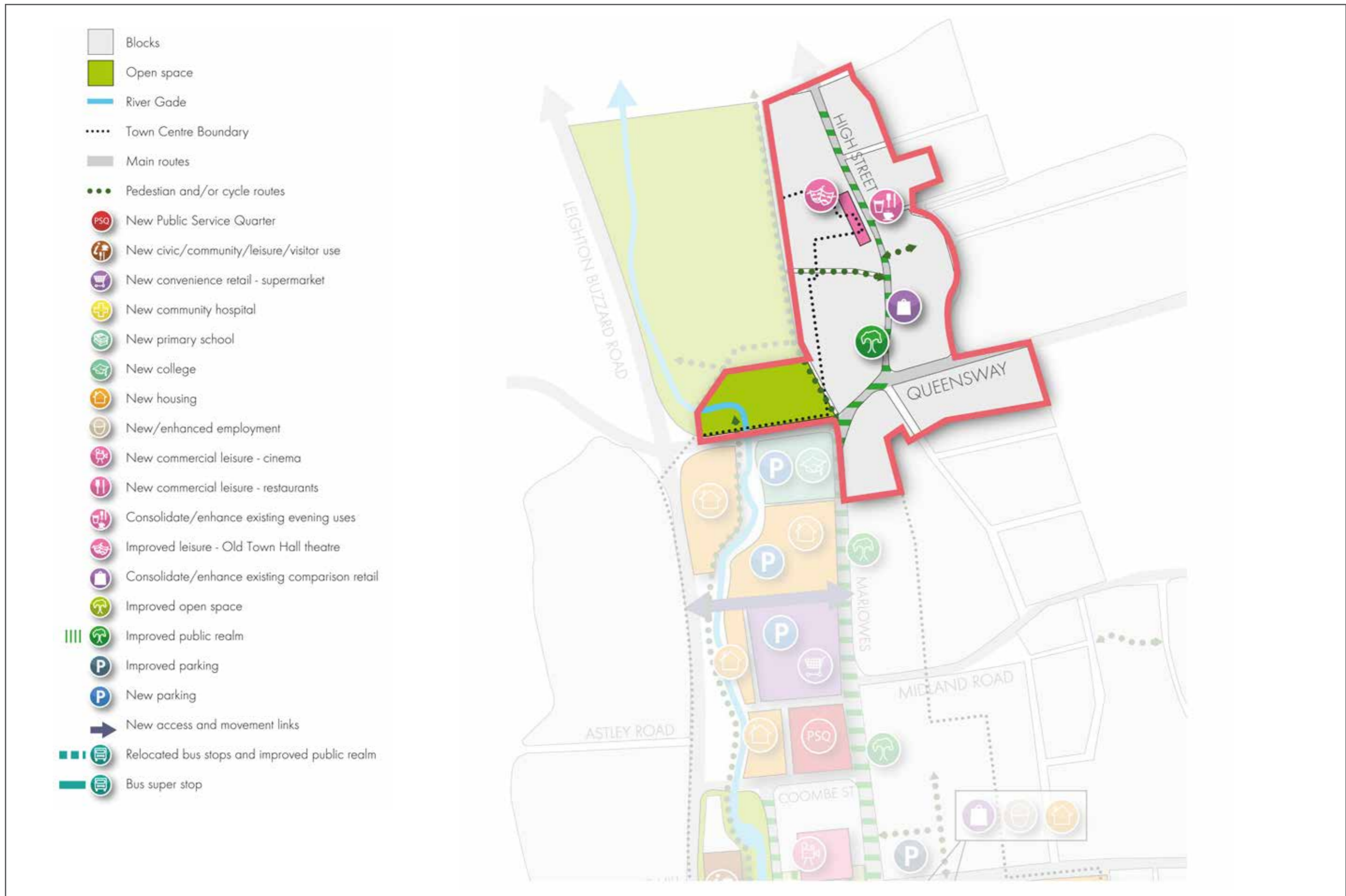
- To retain views of notable landmarks such as St Mary's Church, the Old Town Hall and The Bury
- To improve the frontage of 45-47 High Street
- To improve connections between the Old Town and the wider town centre
- To provide a taxi rank and a bus stop
- To improve the public realm along the High Street and around the gateways

- To deliver co-ordinated signage and way finding techniques
- To create an events space with a shared surface for future specialist markets and events
- To implement a Traffic Regulation Order to allow for greater road closures in order to host events
- To develop the Old Town's economic, retail, food and drink offer

5.1.2.4 Key Proposals:

- Highway improvements resulting in better traffic flow with a one-way street and more on-street parking
- A new events space
- A taxi rank and better links to public transport
- A defined gateway to the High Street
- A new heritage trail
- An economic and business development strategy

Figure 5: Old Town Zone Vision Diagram



Old Town - Walled Memorial Gardens
(Source: DBC)



Old Town - High Street
(Source: DBC)



5.1.3 Strategies

- 5.1.3.1 The Old Town benefits from a strong historical character and attractive setting, and is ideally located to gain from the improvements planned for the Gade Zone. Over the last twenty-five years redevelopment in the southern end of the town centre and changes in shopping habits and retail provision have isolated the Old Town from the shopping area. Therefore, a priority is to improve general navigation, access and connectivity to the Old Town, particularly for non-car users and to develop its retail and business offer.
- 5.1.3.2 Other wider proposals that will have a significant impact on the success and number of visitors to the Old Town include the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way and heritage trail. The walk and cycle way will link the wider town centre to the Old Town via Gadebridge Park and the heritage trail will create links between important heritage assets within the town centre. Both will be accompanied by appropriate signage.
- 5.1.3.3 The other aspect of the vision for the Old Town involves enhancing the existing uses and maximising the character of the area and unique buildings.
- 5.1.3.4 A Core Strategy Local Allocation adjoins the Old Town to the north. This expects development of around 80 new homes during the second half of the plan period to 2031. Further residential development is also planned for the northern end of the Gade Zone, which will help to foster activity in the Old Town.

5.1.4 Major Land Uses

- 5.1.4.1 Key Changes:
- The Old Town is currently under performing during the day, therefore uses that improve daytime activity will be encouraged.
 - Opportunities to maintain and enhance the evening economy will also be encouraged.
- 5.1.4.2 In order to meet the vision for the Old Town the major land uses in the zone are envisaged to remain the same. However to help improve the economy a range of diverse uses will be encouraged to increase activity.

- 5.1.4.3 The economy may also be improved by the promotion of more events in the Old Town Hall and more regular events and markets in the new events space based in St Mary's Close car park.
- 5.1.4.4 An economic and business development strategy will consider the best prospects for retail, food and drink, and other service uses within the Old Town with the aim of increasing footfall and developing a vibrant and bustling centre with a distinct economic offer for customers.

5.1.5 Access and Movement

- 5.1.5.1 Key Changes:
- The creation of a one-way system will help to meet economic, social, environmental, and heritage objectives.
 - The highway and public realm improvements will secure a safer and more attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - The one-way system will encourage the reinstatement of a regular bus service by improving the access, convenience and safety for buses and passengers.
 - New taxi ranks will complement the bus service while supporting the evening economy.
 - Those arriving by car will also benefit from the creation of additional short-stay parking along the High Street.
- 5.1.5.2 The development of the New Town shopping area since the 1950s have resulted in the Old Town becoming disconnected from the main shopping area. Since the retail and service offer is particularly different between the new and old town areas they can operate as separate centres. Nevertheless, general navigation together with pedestrian and cycle access and movement will be improved throughout the town centre which will benefit the Old Town.
- 5.1.5.3 Creation of a shared surface throughout the events space will enable better use of the limited space for functioning events such as the yearly Halloween and Victorian themed events. The High Street will also be closed to traffic during an event or market providing a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians. Improvements to the Old Town Hall include an additional lift for better access to the function room in the cellar.

5.1.6 Quality of Environment

5.1.6.1 Key Changes:

- An events space will be created on St. Mary's Close car park and the highway outside the Old Town Hall.
- The events space will have a shared surface to help provide a better quality environment for events and markets.
- A new southern gateway will mark the entrance to the Old Town

5.1.6.2 There are a number of public realm improvements planned for the Old Town. They include new paving, signage and street furniture along the High Street.

5.1.6.3 Other improvements are planned for the Old Town Hall to help improve its appeal to a wider demographic. This includes an extension to the gallery bar and reuse of the redundant toilets and the cloister area under the Old Town Hall. Potentially, the toilets and cloister area could be redesigned to deliver a café or other commercial space, ideally for public use. This would spill out onto St. Mary's Close car park, adding to the vibrancy and interest in the area.

5.1.7 Design Principles

5.1.7.1 In order to facilitate the delivery of high quality development in the town centre all development proposals within the Old Town should take account of the following design principles when considering:

5.1.7.2 Layout, uses and activities:

- A new public events space will be created using St Mary's Close car park.
- The new events space will be a versatile space encouraging a variety of uses and providing additional seating and improved lighting.
- Promote a range of (specialist) cultural activities within the area.
- Additional uses should be promoted that complement the existing activities in the area.
- A cafe culture should be encouraged where possible.
- Key views and vistas should be protected.
- The visual corridor along the High Street and views of St Mary's Church should be maintained.
- New development should respect the gateways to the High Street.
- The mass and scale of the historic urban form should be maintained.
- Future development should respect the density, compact urban form and building heights.

- The existing tight network of buildings should be maintained.
- The existing strong sense of enclosure should be maintained.
- Active frontages with high quality shop fronts should be encouraged.
- The setting of The Bury, St Mary's Church and the Old Town Hall should be enhanced to reflect their stature as key landmarks defining the character of the area.
- New development should respect the traditional pattern and variety of roof-lines.
- The condition of important and historic buildings should be improved wherever the opportunity exists.

5.1.7.3 Access and Movement

- Signage to and throughout the Old Town should be improved.
- A south to north one-way road system will be implemented together with provision of new on street parking and loading bays, bus stops, signage and street furniture.
- The public realm along the High Street will be improved.
- The cycle route through Gadebridge Park should be improved with new lighting, navigation and signage together with appropriate connections leading into the High Street.
- The River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should be linked into Gadebridge Park with appropriate signage and navigational aids.
- Public realm clutter and signage should be minimised wherever possible.
- The Old Town bus service should be improved.
- A taxi rank should be provided to serve the evening economy.
- A paved gateway feature will be created at the southern entrance to the Old Town.
- Variable Message Signs on key transport routes leading to the Old Town will provide real time parking information

5.1.7.4 Materials and Street Furniture:

- New materials and street furniture should adhere to the specifications set out in Appendix 2.
- Construction materials and external detailing should be in keeping with traditional forms.
- Additional seating should be provided in the new public events space.

Old Town Hall, High Street (source : DBC)



Indicative image - St Mary's car park/ market area (source : DBC)



Figure 6: Gade & Original Marlowes Zones' Context Diagram

5.2.1 Gade & Original Marlowes

5.2.1.1 The Gade Zone includes the north western section of the town centre from Queensway to Market Square. Notable features include the River Gade and the Marlowes Methodist Church. The Original Marlowes Zone contains part of the north eastern section of Marlowes. Its notable features include listed villas and a New Town mosaic on the side of the NCP Car Park. Retail and service uses include the food stores Asda and Iceland, and a large doctor's surgery.

5.2.1.2 The Gade Zone is expected to be the first area in the town centre to come forward for redevelopment. A planning statement for the Gade Zone has been produced in parallel with the Masterplan to kick start the regeneration process and help deliver a comprehensive guide for prospective developers.

5.2.1.3 It is envisaged that a new college and food store will be part of the first phase of development. This will be followed by a new Public Service Quarter which will accommodate a new library and other civic uses.

The Vision

The Gade Zone.

5.2.2.1 A regenerated area with a strong architectural identity, providing new educational, civic, residential, retail, leisure and community uses.

A welcoming area that people will want to visit with good access to the Marlowes Shopping Zone, the Old Town and Gadebridge Park

A quality urban living and working environment within a high density development.

Original Marlowes Zone

5.2.2.2 The Original Marlowes Zone will be a revived and enhanced area with a high quality, low rise form based on its historic fabric.

5.2.2.3 Local Objectives

- Create a high density mixed-use development that will encourage street activity throughout the day and evening
- Bring forward significant residential and commercial development
- Create a more cohesive development which improves linkages and pedestrian movement between Marlowes shopping area, the Water Gardens, Gadebridge Park and the Old Town
- Deliver the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way
- Provide new and enhanced east-west pedestrian connections
- Improve the quality of the streetscape
- Develop landmark buildings at character zone gateways
- Improve the building fascias of listed buildings and buildings of less architectural merit along Marlowes
- Respect the character and setting of heritage assets including the River Gade, Gadebridge Park, the Bury, the Old Town and listed buildings

5.2.2.4 Key Opportunities

- To improve connections with the wider town and town centre
- To deliver new civic and public facilities
- To create a more interconnected urban structure with clear identity
- To improve the quality of the public realm
- To enhance the natural environment along the River Gade
- To deliver co-ordinated signage and wayfinding techniques
- To improve lighting
- To improve east-west pedestrian links
- To create new activities in the Market Square public space
- To retain key vistas towards St Mary's Church

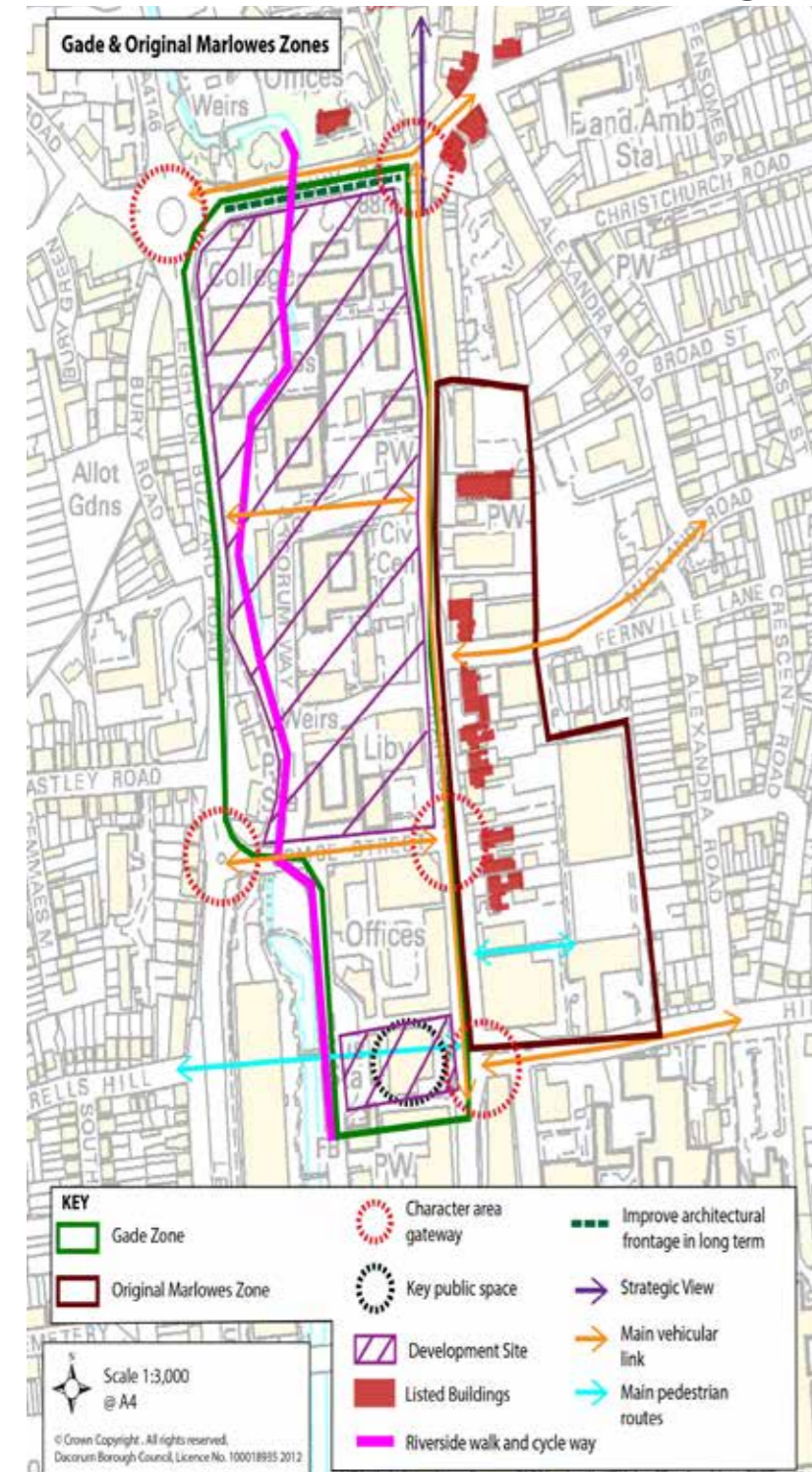
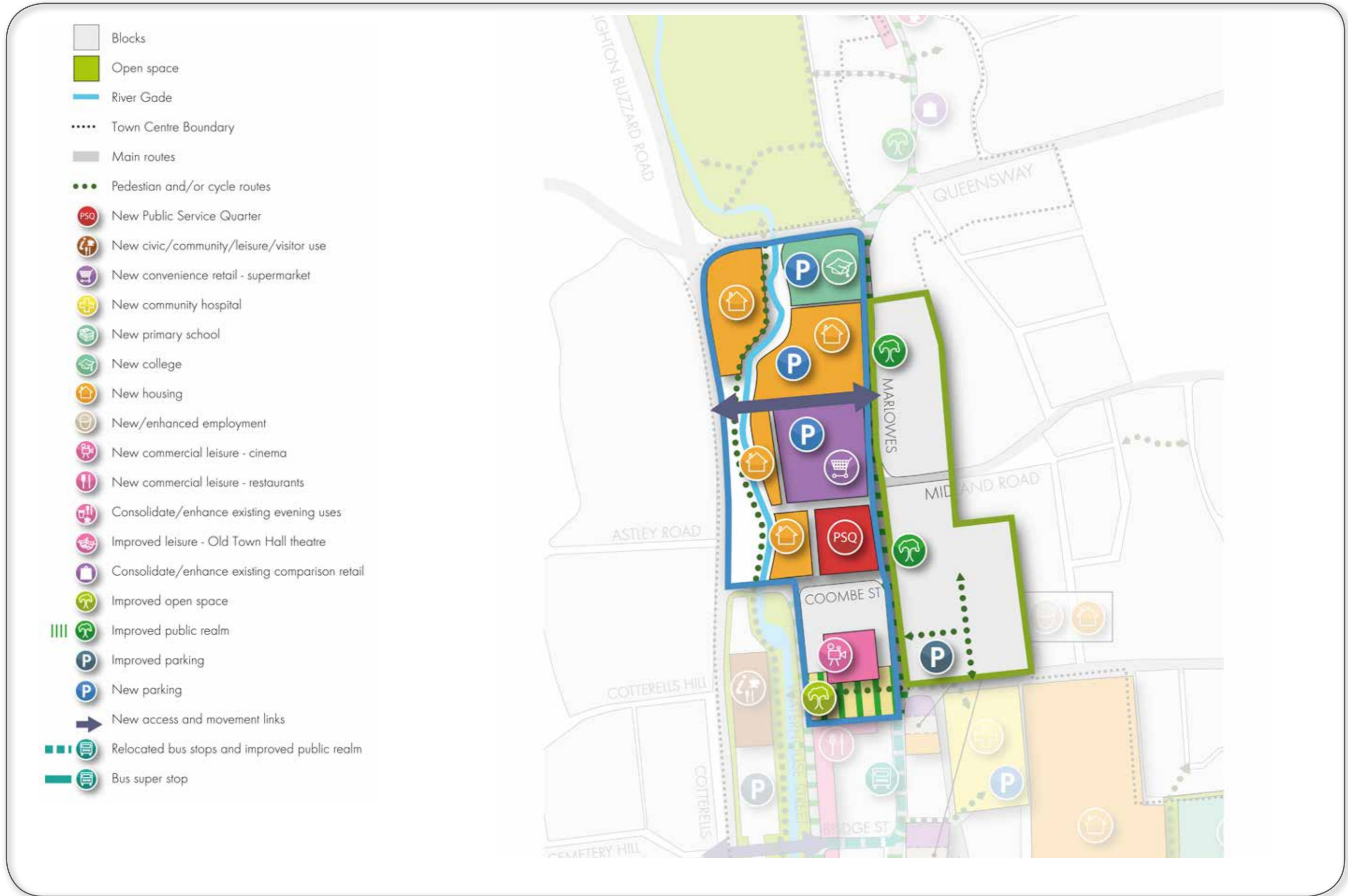


Figure 7: Gade and Original Marlowes Zones Vision Diagram



5.2.2.5 Key Proposals

- A new Public Service Quarter
- A new college
- A new food store
- An enhanced and regenerated Market Square
- A new hub for leisure and cultural uses
- A relocated bus station
- New high quality urban houses
- New leisure, commercial and business use opportunities

5.2.3 Strategies

- 5.2.3.1 Increasing the number of visitors to the town centre is vital to sustaining regeneration, especially in the north of the town centre. The delivery of new land uses and improvements to existing uses and the zones connectivity will help to increase footfall to the area.
- 5.2.3.2 The Gade zone has several land uses that are important to the town and must be retained to ensure that their positive impacts are not lost. By reducing the footprint of existing uses through re-providing them in new buildings and redesigning the layout of the northern section of the zone, new additional uses can be provided that will help to link the Marlowes shopping zone to the Old Town, regenerate this character zone, and meet the wider town centre objectives. The delivery of a new college and food store together with a new Public Service Quarter to replace the civic facilities and library is anticipated.
- 5.2.3.3 Towards the south of the Gade Zone there is a substantial opportunity to regenerate the under used Market Square site with a number of potential uses. Improving the leisure and business offer in this area will increase linked trips to the surrounding zones and specifically links with the proposals for Waterhouse Street (see the Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone, section 5.3.1). The Market Square site is of crucial strategic importance as it sits between the northern and southern sections of the town centre, linking the two ends of the town, as well as having a strong relationship with the Jellicoe Water Gardens. Improvements to its layout and use therefore need to consider wider benefits to adjoining zones. As part of these improvements it is worth noting that some open public space would be expected to be retained on this site.
- 5.2.3.4 There are a number of access and movement improvements to consider within the Gade Zone. These include plans to improve east-west and north-south links for vehicular traffic, as well as

significant improvements for pedestrians and cyclists with a new River Gade Walk and Cycle Way that will cut through adjoining zones and link to Gadebridge Park to the north and Heath Park to the south. Substantial improvements to the public realm throughout the zone will be expected to accompany the major land use changes.

- 5.2.3.5 There is also scope to introduce innovative spatial solutions in this zone, specifically in regards to car parking.

5.2.4 Major Land Uses

5.2.4.1 Key Changes:

- Significant new major land uses will be delivered including a new food store, college and Public Service Quarter.
- A new food store will create a significant number of new linked trips and help to connect the north and south of the town.
- A new food store will support wider regeneration initiatives by attracting people to the area and improving economic vitality.
- New residential development will be delivered to improve social vitality, deliver a strong urban identity and help promote natural surveillance and a safe environment.
- A range of leisure, retail, business and cultural facilities with new housing can be delivered around Market Square to help regenerate this area of the town centre.

- 5.2.4.2 The Gade zone is envisaged as one of the major drivers for the regeneration of the town centre and as such there are significant major land use changes proposed.

- 5.2.4.3 Providing an improved college at the north eastern tip of the zone will ensure that footfall is maintained all the way along Marlowes and help to support the Old Town. This facility will also provide a valuable educational resource to the town centre. By significantly reducing the footprint of both of the existing buildings, there will be sufficient space on this site to deliver the key changes identified above.

- 5.2.4.4 The Public Service Quarter, food store and improved leisure offer will promote significant footfall to the northern end of the town centre and help anchor the northern end of Marlowes. Improving the leisure, retail and business offer in the Market Square will also attract more visitors to the area and is vital to sustaining the regeneration initiatives throughout the rest of the town centre, and promoting activity and interest in the Jellicoe Water Gardens.

Indicative Image - Waterhouse Street cycleway/pedestrian access (source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



Indicative image - major land use (source : Woolwich Town Masterplan Feb 12)



Use of links to other zones

(Source : Woolwich Town Masterplan Feb 12)



Improved transport links to zones

(Source : Woolwich Town Masterplan Feb 12)



5.2.4.5 Crucial to the successful redevelopment of Market Square is the replacement of the bus station with a new bus interchange on Marlowes and Bridge Street (Section 5.6 Marlowes Shopping Zone) and the improvements planned for the Water Gardens and Waterhouse Street.

5.2.4.6 Currently, the Gade Zone provides parking for associated employees and public car parking. It is envisaged that the new food store will provide a large decked car park to enable linked trips into the town centre. The NCP car park in the south of the zone could also be improved to provide additional car parking.

5.2.5 Access and Movement

5.2.5.1 Key Changes:

- The bus station will be replaced by a new bus interchange on Bridge Street/Marlowes.
- A new road access to the zone can be taken from the Leighton Buzzard Road
- East-west links will be improved across the Gade/Original Marlowes Zones through more and upgraded crossing facilities along the Leighton Buzzard Road.
- The Gade and Jellicoe Water Gardens Zones will benefit from the creation of an attractive and well landscaped north-south cycle and pedestrian route along the River Gade corridor and improved access and movement across the Market Square.
- A new taxi rank will be positioned to the north of Waterhouse Street.
- Pedestrians and cyclists will be given priority over vehicles along Waterhouse Street.
- Links to the Old Town will be strengthened through pedestrian and cycling priority measures, traffic calming along Queensway and better navigation and signage.
- Signage will be improved at key gateway locations around the Leighton Buzzard Road, Queensway, Combe Street, Bridge Street, Waterhouse Street, Marlowes and Hillfield Road.

5.2.5.2 Redevelopment of the Gade Zone will be a catalyst for a range of access and movement improvements in and around these zones. Traffic modelling has been undertaken to ensure that new development can be safely accommodated within the town centre. Wider proposals to Waterhouse Street

include reducing on street parking to make it more pedestrian friendly and creating a shared surface with vehicular access restricted to buses / taxis / permit holders.

5.2.5.3 Access to rear service yards will be maintained and opportunities sought throughout the zone to provide additional cycling and motor cycle parking.

5.2.6 Quality of Environment

5.2.6.1 Key Changes

- The public realm around Queensway, Marlowes, Market Square and along Waterhouse Street will be significantly improved with new paving, lighting, street furniture and improvements to some building fascias.
- New development will provide a strong urban form through more intense use of land, strong and distinct architectural elevations to public highways, and landmark developments at character area gateways.
- The River Gade Walk and Cycle Way will be delivered providing a high quality safe environment for people to move through the town centre.
- The improvements to Market Square will include public open space and seating, with green links between the restored Water Gardens.

5.2.6.2 In addition to major land use redevelopment opportunities, this zone also has the potential to deliver much needed public realm improvements. These include a new north-south River Gade Walk and Cycle Way, an enhanced public space next to restaurants, cafés and other leisure uses, and complimentary public realm improvements on surrounding streets.

5.2.6.3 These zones will also benefit from the changes to the Old Town to the north (which include highway and public realm improvements to start late 2012), restoration plans for the Water Gardens to the south west and significant public realm improvements planned for the Marlowes Shopping Zone.

5.2.6.4 Some temporary improvements have been delivered in the short-term in Market Square. These improvements were agreed through a local community participatory working group. They include a green screen in front of the toilets and bus station, new planters with seating and a maze.

5.2.7 Design Principles

5.2.7.1 In order to facilitate the delivery of high quality development in the town centre all development proposals within the Gade and Original Marlowes Zone should take account of the following design principles when considering:

5.2.7.2 Layout, uses and activities:

- Development uses should provide activity throughout the site during the day and evening.
- The site should include residential development to provide daytime and evening activity.
- Key views and vistas towards the River Gade, St Mary's Church and the Water Gardens should be maintained.
- Development at the northern end of the Gade Zone should respect the character, setting and built form of the Old Town.
- A strong building line and active frontage should be delivered along the western side of Marlowes.
- Opportunities should be considered to emphasise gateways around the Gade Zone through new landmark buildings.
- Development should respect the setting of the River Gade and where necessary be set back from it to avoid overshadowing.
- Buildings built in the vicinity of important public realm, such as the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way or along pedestrian and vehicular routes, should have attractive and welcoming frontages facing these areas.
- Building heights of up to 2.5 storeys are generally appropriate for Marlowes frontage rising to 4 storeys if taking advantage of the site's sloping topography – this could potentially lead to more innovative land uses and allow for the possibility of multi-storey car parks.
- The height of landmark buildings may exceed 2.5 storeys depending upon the scale, mass, layout and architectural design approach.
- Street trees should be planted along Marlowes.

- The open space that is retained at the Market Square should be designed to link with the changes being made to Waterhouse Street, the Jellicoe Water Gardens and the Marlowes Shopping Zone.

5.2.7.3 Access and Movement

- The River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should be resin bound gravel and compliant with the Equalities Act.
- Improve north-south connections with the delivery of the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way.
- Improve east-west connections, particularly from the Leighton Buzzard Road.
- Identify a key vehicular route to serve a new food store and to help improve east-west links.
- All servicing and parking for new developments should be designed as an integrated part of the development and not visible from the street or important public realm such as the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way.

5.2.7.4 Materials and Street Furniture

- New materials and street furniture should adhere to the specifications set out in Appendix 2.
- The path for the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should be made out of resin bound gravel and compliant with the Equalities Act.
- Develop opportunities to enhance the Market Square.
- Provide appropriate lighting along the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way.
- The setting of the listed buildings on Marlowes should be protected and enhanced.
- The NCP car park requires improvements to its exterior.
- Signage to key destinations should be improved.

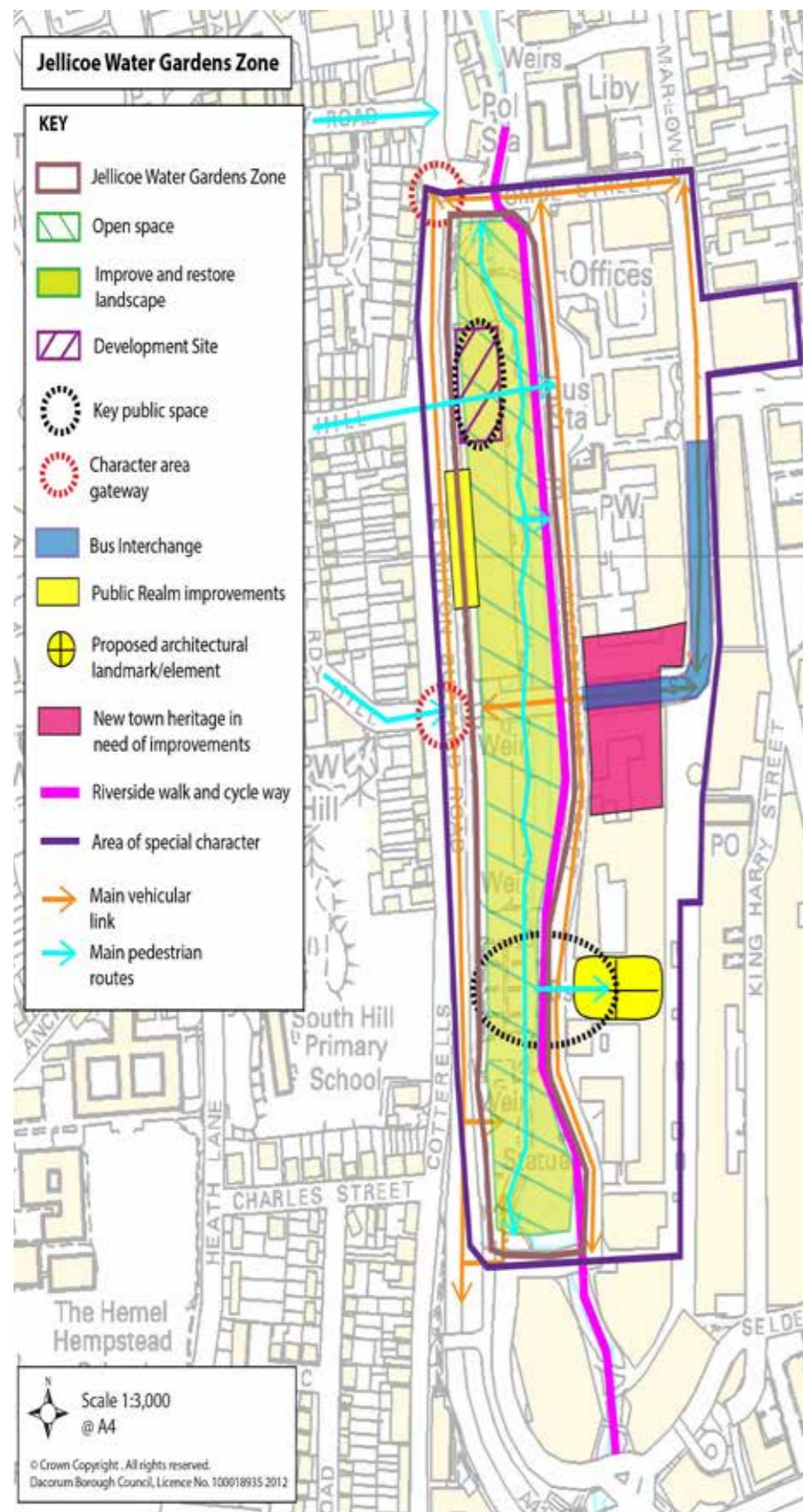
LB Greenwich Civic Centre / Library
(Source : Woolwich Town Masterplan Feb 12)



Indicative image - Hemel Public Service Quarter (PSQ)
(source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



Figure 8: Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone Context Diagram



5.3.1 Jellicoe Water Gardens

5.3.1.1 Jellicoe Water Gardens encompasses the whole of the registered Water Gardens running from Combe Street to Moor End Road.

5.3.2 The Vision

5.3.2.1 To restore the Water Gardens to reflect and reinforce their historical significance and create new cultural uses within a pedestrian friendly environment.

5.3.2.2 Local Objectives

- Restore the Water Gardens to reflect and reinforce their historical significance and to create a unique high quality space for people to meet, relax and enjoy
- Enhance the ecological status of the River Gade
- Improve Waterhouse Street and connections between the Water Gardens and the rest of the town centre
- Encourage an enhanced town centre evening economy centred around Waterhouse Street
- Reduce traffic along Waterhouse Street.
- Enhance New Town heritage assets

5.3.2.3 Key Opportunities

- To restore the condition of the Water Gardens and create a long-term maintenance plan
- To improve the quality of the public realm
- To deliver co-ordinated signage and wayfinding techniques
- To improve lighting
- To improve east-west pedestrian links
- To create an active frontage along Waterhouse Street with the opportunity
- To create additional leisure and cultural uses
- To create a shared surface
- To restore and enhance architectural landmarks and new town heritage
- To enhance the ecological status of the River Gade

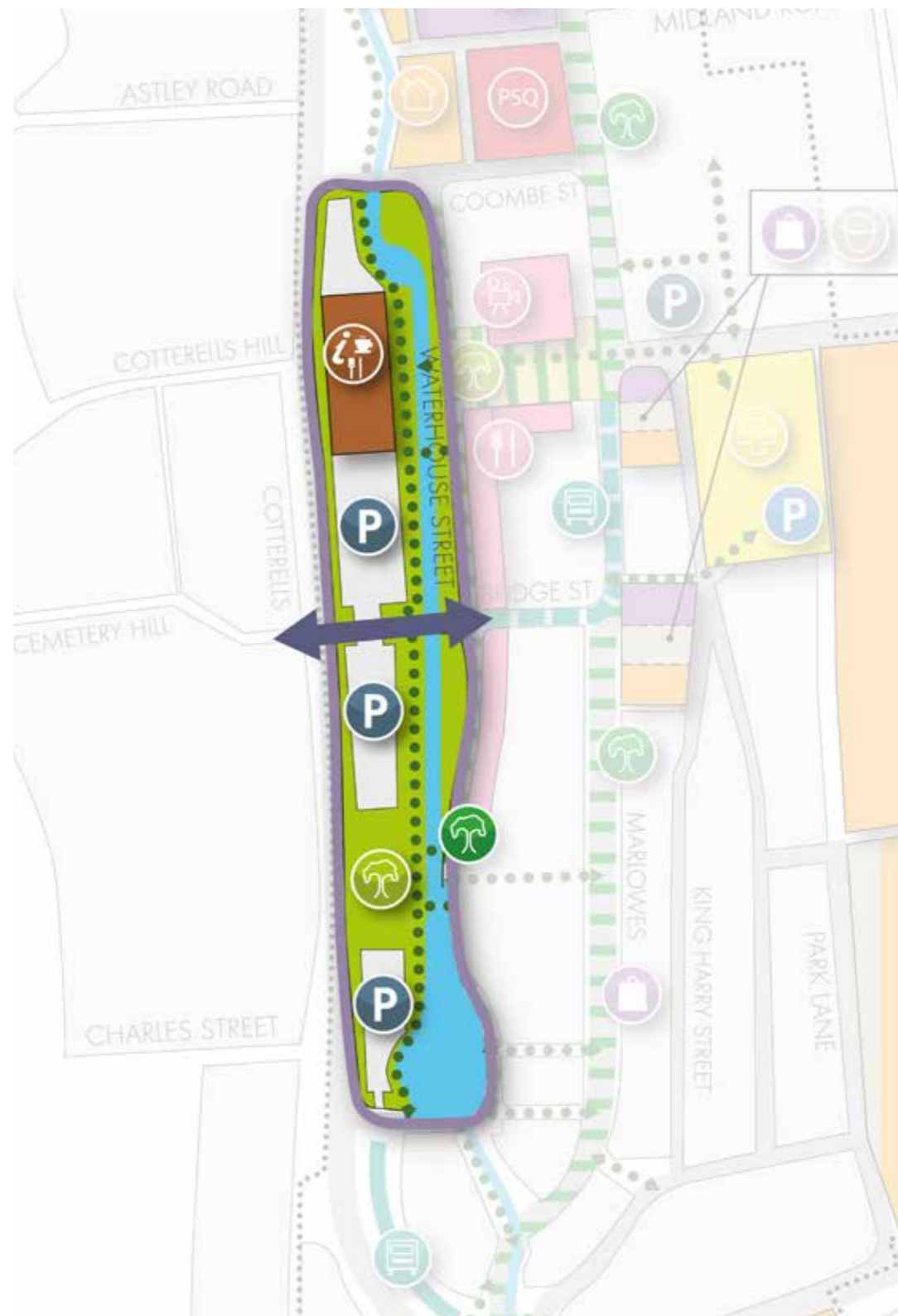
- To redefine parking arrangements along Waterhouse Street
- To improve bus movements along Waterhouse Street

5.3.2.4 Key Proposals

- Restoration of the Water Gardens
- A shared surface treatment to Waterhouse Street
- New and improved leisure offer along the east of Waterhouse Street, connecting to Market Square
- The River Gade Walk and Cycle Way
- A new heritage trail
- Opening up of Bridge Street on to the Leighton Buzzard Road

Figure 9: Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone Vision Diagram

-  Blocks
-  Open space
-  River Gade
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Main routes
-  Pedestian and/or cycle routes
-  New Public Service Quarter
-  New civic/community/leisure/visitor use
-  New convenience retail - supermarket
-  New community hospital
-  New primary school
-  New college
-  New housing
-  New/enhanced employment
-  New commercial leisure - cinema
-  New commercial leisure - restaurants
-  Consolidate/enhance existing evening uses
-  Improved leisure - Old Town Hall theatre
-  Consolidate/enhance existing comparison retail
-  Improved open space
-  Improved public realm
-  Improved parking
-  New parking
-  New access and movement links
-  Relocated bus stops and improved public realm
-  Bus super stop



Indicative image - Water Gardens and PSQ
(source : Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners)



5.3.3 Strategies

- 5.3.3.1 The Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone is one of the most important heritage sites in Dacorum and as such any changes to the area must be handled with the highest degree of sensitivity. The vision for this zone clearly indicates that the regeneration and restoration of the Gardens is a key priority.
- 5.3.3.2 The Water Gardens are one of Hemel Hempstead's greatest public assets and there is potential, through sensitive and imaginative changes to the zone and surrounding area, to enhance both the leisure and business offer of the town centre. As such several additions to the zone are designed to complement the regeneration of the Water Gardens and the existing land uses, and many of the key proposals are linked to improving movement in to and throughout the zone.
- 5.3.3.3 New leisure and other uses in and around Market Square (southern area of the Gade Zone) are expected to form part of an improved leisure offer along the eastern side of Waterhouse Street.
- 5.3.3.4 Alongside the Market Square redevelopment, proposals for new housing and the Public Service Quarter (Gade Zone) are the closest developments of a significant scale that could generate more activity in and around the Water Gardens. Pedestrian traffic from the new bus interchange (Marlowes Shopping Zone) will also create new pedestrian movement and vitality through the Gardens. To ensure that the benefits from the neighbouring zones impact positively on the Water Gardens the quality of the routes linking into the zone must be improved and it should be ensured that these routes use complementary design coding for materials and street furniture.

5.3.4 Major Land Use

5.3.4.1 Key Changes:

- There will be an improved leisure offer along the eastern side of Waterhouse Street that will take advantage of the restoration plans and community benefits planned for the Water Gardens.
- Water Garden restoration plans can be complemented by a community facility on a corner of the decked car park.
- A leisure hub (between the Water Gardens and Market Square) will attract families and visitors into the town centre and help revitalise the area with an improved evening offer.

5.3.4.2 Environmental improvements, restoration work and the potential for a new community facility in the Water Gardens should attract residents and visitors to the town centre helping to secure the long-term future of the Gardens and improve the economic vitality of other major land uses in the town centre.

5.3.4.2 Several land use changes are proposed in and around this zone to help revitalise the town centre. These include the possibility of providing a new leisure/cultural facility on the northern section of the Water Gardens car park, if sufficient replacement parking can be delivered. The Heritage Lottery Fund bid is also considering the possibility of delivering a smaller community building to support the Water Gardens friends group. This is expected to be an important part of the restoration plans to help facilitate friends group meetings in order to promote a long-term vision for the gardens.

5.3.4.3 The northern decked car park has been identified as one of two preferred locations for the Public Service Quarter with the potential to deliver a carefully designed civic building that would respect the setting of the Water Gardens (Water Gardens Report, 2011). This is the Council's second choice, with the Marlowes/library being pursued (Original Marlowes Zone). However the site still has the potential to deliver offices or other public facilities should a proposal become viable in the future.

5.3.4.4 Further land use changes are also planned for the wider area including the creation of new leisure uses along the eastern side of Waterhouse Street and replacing the bus station with a new bus interchange on Marlowes/Bridge Street.

Indicative view - Waterhouse Street, pedestrian and cycle movement
(Source : DBC)



View of Welwyn Garden City Green spaces and use of water help improve the environment (source: Feria Urbanism)



5.3.5 Access and Movement

5.3.5.1 Key Changes:

- The Gade and Jellicoe Water Gardens Zones will benefit from the creation of a north-south cycle and pedestrian route along the River Gade corridor and improved access and movement across the Market Square.
- A new taxi rank will be positioned to the north of Waterhouse Street.
- Pedestrians and cyclists will be given priority over cars along Waterhouse Street.
- Taxis will be relocated to the Plough Zone and the northern end of Waterhouse Street.
- Signage will be improved at key gateway locations around Leighton Buzzard Road, Queensway, Combe Street, Bridge Street, Waterhouse Street, Marlowes and Hillfield Road.
- A shared surface will be created at key points along Waterhouse Street to emphasise key pedestrian gateways and to enhance and integrate the heritage values associated with the Water Gardens into the wider area.
- The opening up of Bridge Street on to the Leighton Buzzard Road will allow for improved east-west links and better access into the car parks.

5.3.5.2 Improvements to access and movement within the Water Gardens are restricted given its historic value. Therefore, priorities will be to develop the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way along Waterhouse Street and to improve navigation in general.

5.3.5.3 It is envisaged that a new vehicular access will be created into the decked car park and adjacent surface car park from the Leighton Buzzard Road. Existing entrances will be landscaped as part of the restoration and enhancement proposals for the Water Gardens. Vehicles will not be able to access Waterhouse Street from this junction improvement.

5.3.5.4 Other important access and movement improvements for the zone include improving east-west links between the Leighton Buzzard Road and Moor End Road and the Market Square.

5.3.6 Quality of Environment

5.3.6.1 Key Changes:

Following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid, restoration and environmental improvements will include:

- River Gade Walk and Cycle Way
- Restored riverbanks
- New surfacing throughout the Gardens
- Restored bridges
- Improved east-west and north-west links connecting the Gardens with adjacent zones
- New street furniture and lighting
- New relocated play area
- Tree works to improve light and visibility
- Reduction in the amount of geese.
- A new community facility
- Waterhouse Street will have a shared surface giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Enhance the ecological status of the River Gade

5.3.6.2 Improvements to Jellicoe Water Gardens are a priority for the town centre. The size of the Water Gardens and the importance of the heritage site make the restoration and enhancement plans an important change and thus it will have a significant impact on the quality of the environment in the town centre. It is also envisaged that Bank Court, Bridge Street and the Market Square will all be enhanced to integrate better with the Water Gardens.

5.3.6.3 Other associated improvements will include new planting and interpretation panels for the heritage trail, and the creation of a community friends group to support the restoration plans and ongoing maintenance of the Water Gardens. Service yard entrances along Waterhouse will also be screened when development opportunities arise.

Jellicoe Water Gardens Formal Flower Gardens, 1960s
(Source : DBC)



Water Gardens 'Lovers' Walk,
(Source : HTA)



5.3.7 Design Principles

5.3.7.1 In order to facilitate the delivery of high quality development in the town centre, all development proposals within the Jellicoe Water Gardens should take account of the following design principles when considering:

5.3.7.2 Layout, uses and activities

- Restore the Water Gardens closely to the original design.
- Encourage leisure and cultural uses along Waterhouse Street.
- Any development in the Water Gardens Car Parks should be subject to careful design consideration (Water Gardens Report, 2011).
- New development along Waterhouse Street may be up to 6 storeys but must respect the setting of the Water Gardens.
- Bridge Street should be greened via tree planting to encourage stronger links between the shopping area and the Water Gardens.
- Key views and vistas should be protected.

5.3.7.3 Access and Movement

- The path for the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should be created from resin bound gravel and compliant with the Equalities Act.
- A shared surface should be created at key pedestrian nodes along Waterhouse Street – Bank Court, Bridge Street and Market Square.
- The Water Gardens should be opened up to create new east-west vistas between the Leighton Buzzard Road and the Marlowes Shopping Zone.
- Service and delivery yards along Waterhouse Street should be screened.
- Key junctions leading onto the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should be enhanced to provide an attractive entrance to the route, together with clear signage.
- Parking should be reduced on Waterhouse Street to make it more pedestrian friendly.

- Create a shared surface along Waterhouse Street with vehicular access restricted to buses / taxis / permit holders/ blue badge holders.
- East-west connections should be improved, including the opening up of Bridge Street onto the Leighton Buzzard Road, Moor End Road and Market Square, together with the Rose Gardens and Bank Court.
- Signage to key destinations should be improved.
- Variable message signs to provide real time parking information.
- Pedestrian connections to the Riverside shopping area should be maximised.

5.3.7.4 Materials and Street Furniture

- New materials and street furniture should adhere to the specifications set out in Appendix 2.
- The path for the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should be made out of resin bound gravel and compliant with the Equalities Act.
- Lighting in the Water Gardens and on Waterhouse Street should be upgraded.
- Key features of the Water Gardens such as fountains, bridges and banks should be up-lighted.
- A maintenance plan should be written to support the long-term improvements set out in the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

5.4.1 Hospital Zone

5.4.1.1 The Hospital Zone includes the hospital site, Paradise Fields and employment area, the offices, hotel and surgery between Park Lane and Wolsey Road, and Maynard Road residential area.

5.4.2 The Vision

5.4.2.1 A regenerated area providing modern health care facilities, high quality housing and open space, whilst retaining business development opportunities.

5.4.2.2 Local Objectives

- Deliver a mix of uses including health, residential, educational and business uses to serve the community and strengthen the overall viability of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre
- Retain the majority of Paradise Fields as open space
- Improve access and movement particularly pedestrian east-west connections
- Improve the quality of the public realm

5.4.2.3 Key Opportunities

- To improve the quality of the public realm
- To deliver co-ordinated signage and way finding techniques
- To provide additional town centre car parking
- To improve east-west links to the main shopping area
- To improve the accessibility of Paradise Fields

5.4.2.4 Key Proposals

- To deliver a primary school possibly incorporating playing fields on Paradise Field dependent upon its location
- To achieve a high quality re-configuration of local General Hospital facilities
- To create a high quality residential development on the hospital site
- To provide additional parking for the town centre if the reconfiguration of the hospital site allows

- To promote a wider mix of uses within the Paradise employment area to include high quality residential development
- To improve the quality of, and links to, Paradise Fields
- To improve pedestrian and cycle movement

5.4.3 Strategies

Summary of strategic considerations:

5.4.3.1 The Hospital Zone is another zone where the major land uses are expected to change significantly in order to meet local objectives and the wider vision for the town centre.

5.4.3.2 There are opportunities for multi-use regeneration in this zone, mainly by freeing up land in the Paradise employment area and on the hospital site, as part of proposals to consolidate hospital facilities. This zone has also been identified as a suitable location for a new multi-storey car park and a primary school to support the new leisure facilities and housing proposed for the town centre.

5.4.3.3 A mix of housing and new employment uses with the right infrastructure will benefit the town centre by bringing new footfall and new investment. The redevelopment of the Royal Mail site is the first site to come forward and will help kick-start these plans.

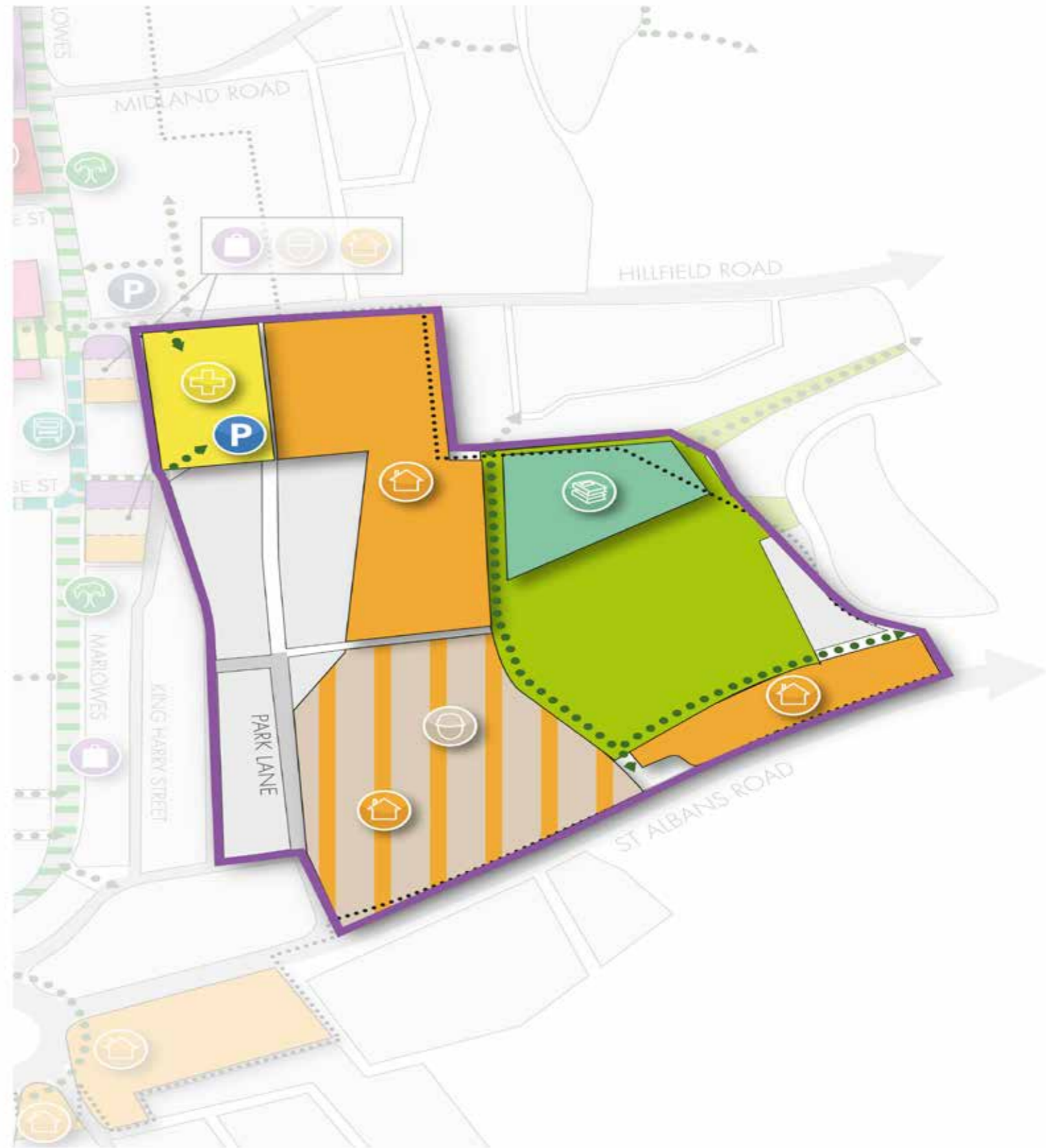
5.4.3.4 Consideration will also be given to improving east-west connections with the shopping area and transport routes through this zone to the wider town centre.

Figure 10: Hospital Zone Context Diagram



Figure 11: Hospital Zone Key Vision Diagram

-  Blocks
-  Open space
-  River Gade
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Main routes
-  Pedestian and/or cycle routes
-  New Public Service Quarter
-  New civic/community/leisure/visitor use
-  New convenience retail - supermarket
-  New community hospital
-  New primary school - indicative
-  New college
-  New housing
-  New/enhanced employment
-  New commercial leisure - cinema
-  New commercial leisure - restaurants
-  Consolidate/enhance existing evening uses
-  Improved leisure - Old Town Hall theatre
-  Consolidate/enhance existing comparison retail
-  Improved open space
-  Improved public realm
-  Improved parking
-  New parking
-  New access and movement links
-  Relocated bus stops and improved public realm
-  Bus super stop



Access to Hemel Hempstead Hospital
(Source : NHS)



Watford hospital redevelopment
(Source: Watford Heath campus)



5.4.4 Major Land Uses

5.4.4.1 Key Changes:

- A Local General Hospital will be re-provided within the hospital site.
- A new multi-storey car park should be delivered to serve the hospital and town centre.
- New residential development will be delivered to address housing need.
- A new primary school will be delivered to support housing growth in the town centre.
- Paradise employment area will become a mixed use development with business/light industrial uses and new housing.

5.4.4.2 The key changes identified will have a positive impact on the Marlowes Shopping Zone and convenience retail in the town centre, and help revitalise Paradise employment area.

5.4.4.3 The majority of Paradise Fields will be retained as open space and access improvements will be made including footpaths and signage. Part of Paradise Fields could be used to provide school playing fields but further work is needed to establish where the school buildings will be located.

5.4.5 Access and Movement

5.4.5.1 Key Changes:

- Pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movement will be improved as a result of the major land use changes.

5.4.5.2 Decisions taken on the future of the hospital site will be key to the extent of changes within the zone. New development (e.g. housing and new school) will allow opportunities to better connect the zone with the wider town centre and the adjoining open land. Relocation and concentration of the hospital buildings closer to the town centre would also improve access for patients and visitors arriving by bus and on foot. However, it is recognised that the steep topography of the area does not favour increased pedestrian and cycle movement.

5.4.5.3. The access arrangement into the zone will continue to be served by Hillfield Road and Maynard Road.

5.4.6 Quality of Environment

5.4.6.1 Key Changes:

- The public realm will be upgraded as a result of new development.
- New street trees will be sought where appropriate.
- Improvements will be made to integrate Paradise Fields better with residential development.
- New areas of open space will be sought as part of new residential developments.

5.4.6.2 In addition to having significant major land use redevelopment opportunities, this zone also has the potential to upgrade the public realm and provide new public open space.

5.4.7 Design Principles

5.4.7.1 In order to facilitate the delivery of high quality development in the town centre, all development proposals in the Hospital Zone should take account of the following design principles when considering:

5.4.7.2 Layout, uses and activities

- Residential development should be of a high quality.
- Development in the hospital area should respect the character, scale and footprint of existing housing in Maynard Road.
- Residential development closer to Paradise employment area including the Royal Mail site may be more contemporary.
- Key views and vistas to the rest of the town should be protected.

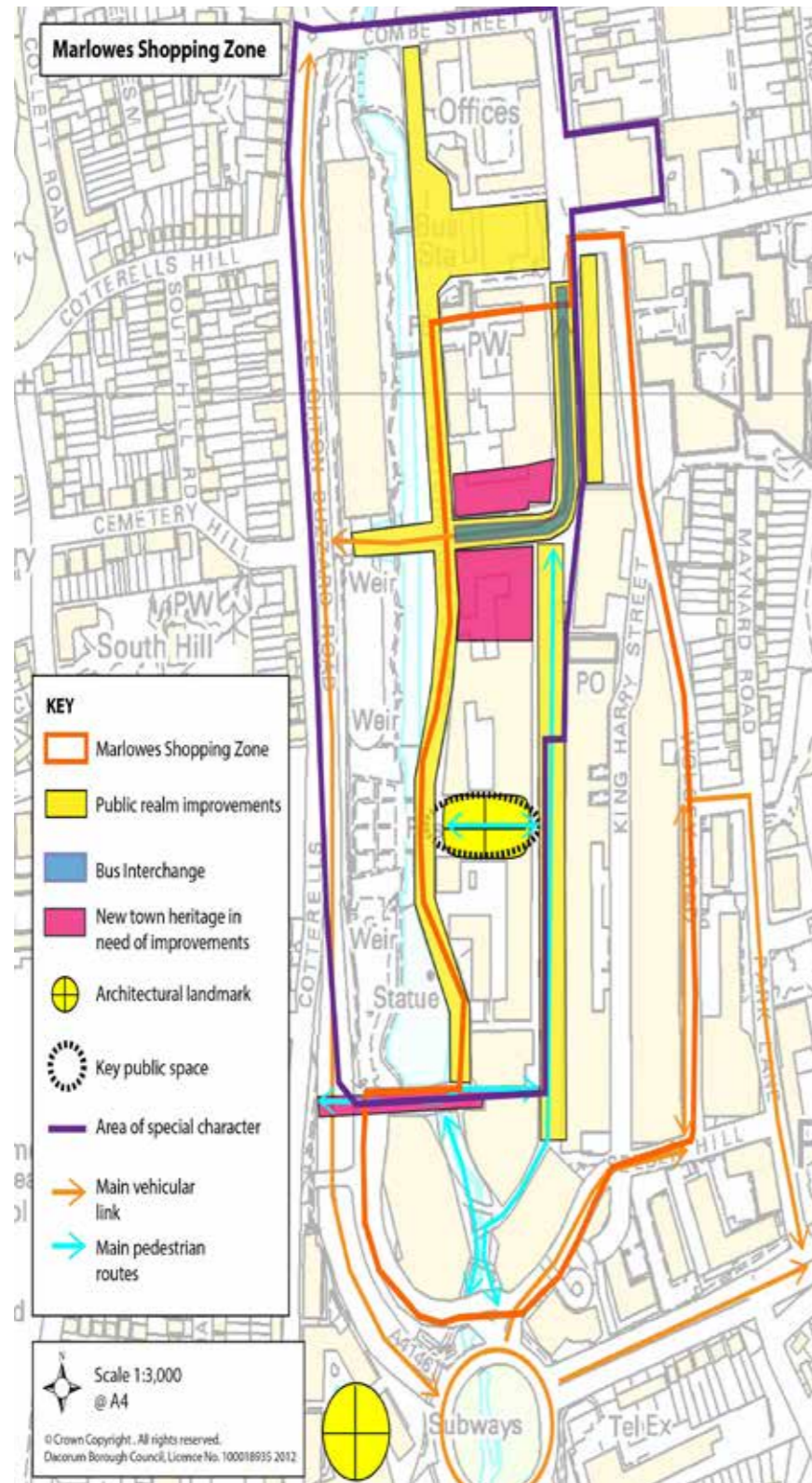
5.4.7.3 Access and Movement

- East-west connections should be improved.
- New residential developments should be well linked into existing public transport routes.
- Linkages to existing open space should be improved.

5.4.7.4 Materials and Street Furniture

- New materials and street furniture should adhere to the specifications set out in Appendix 2.

Figure 12 : Marlowes Shopping Zone Context Diagram



5.5.1 Marlowes Shopping Zone

5.5.1.1 The Marlowes Shopping Zone is located around the Riverside and Marlowes Shopping Centres, the pedestrianised area and ramped area. It is the prime retail pitch of the town centre. The opening of the Riverside retail development and riverside walk in 2005 enhanced the southern end of the zone.

5.5.2 The Vision

5.5.2.1 A lively, busy, vibrant shopping area in the heart of Hemel Hempstead offering a fresh modern environment in which people will be able to shop, eat, drink and meet in, together with housing and business development opportunities.

5.5.2.2 Local Objectives

- Invite longer and enhanced use of Marlowes pedestrian area through a balanced mix of building uses and improvements to the public realm
- Create a strong retail offer to draw in visitors and shoppers
- Encourage increased evening and night-time activity in the area
- Improve pedestrian movement in the Marlowes Shopping Zone
- Improve connections between the Marlowes Shopping Zone and other town centre zones helping to spread activity more evenly throughout the town centre
- Improve the quality of building frontages
- Reduce traffic along Waterhouse Street.

5.5.2.3 Key Opportunities

- To improve the quality of the public realm
- To deliver co-ordinated signage and wayfinding techniques
- To improve lighting
- To improve the form and function of the street market
- To improve east-west pedestrian links

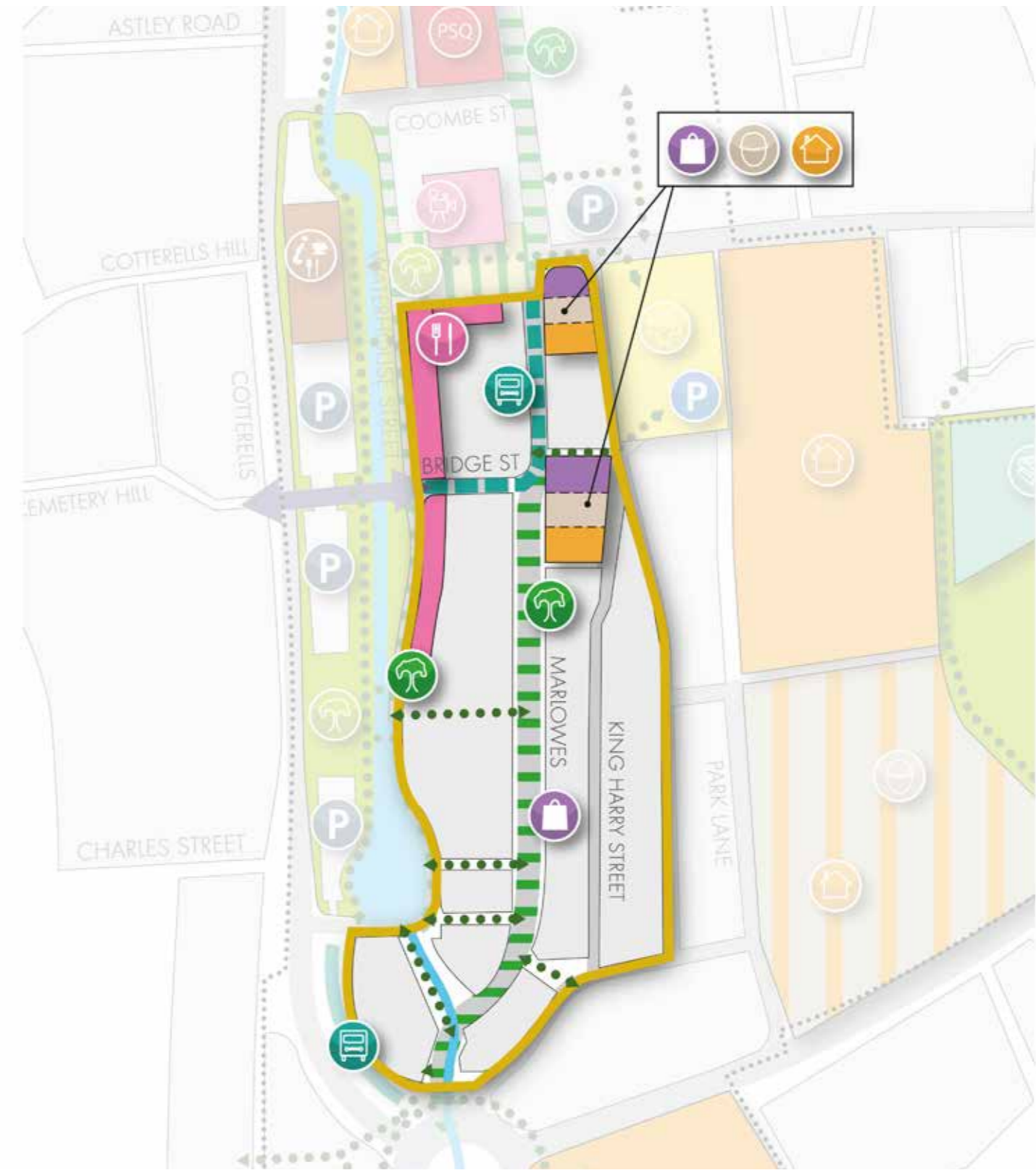
- To restore and enhance architectural landmarks and new town heritage
- To provide new residential units through reuse of existing buildings
- To create an attractive environment on Waterhouse Street.

5.5.2.4 Key Proposals

- An outdoor food court
- A new bus interchange
- Improve play and activity equipment
- Improve the layout and appearance of the market
- Introduce feature lighting
- Resurface the pedestrianised area and Waterhouse Street
- Restore and enhance the buildings and streetscape in Bank Court
- Restore and enhance new town heritage frontages along Bridge Street and Marlowes

Figure 13: Marlowes Shopping Zone Vision Diagram

-  Blocks
-  Open space
-  River Gade
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Main routes
-  Pedestian and/or cycle routes
-  New Public Service Quarter
-  New civic/community/leisure/visitor use
-  New convenience retail - supermarket
-  New community hospital
-  New primary school
-  New college
-  New housing
-  New/enhanced employment
-  New commercial leisure - cinema
-  New commercial leisure - restaurants
-  Consolidate/enhance existing evening uses
-  Improved leisure - Old Town Hall theatre
-  Consolidate/enhance existing comparison retail
-  Improved open space
-  Improved public realm
-  Improved parking
-  New parking
-  New access and movement links
-  Relocated bus stops and improved public realm
-  Bus super stop



5.5.3 Strategies

5.5.3.1 The Marlowes Shopping Zone is currently a vital area of the town centre and contains the primary retail zone that is currently the biggest draw to the town centre. The town centre is typical of other new towns and attracts a large range of multiple chain stores, charity shops and low quality discount stores. As such the proposals for this zone seek to enhance the quality of the offer available and reinforce the existing uses that we wish to retain.

5.5.3.2 Improving the quality of the environment throughout the zone is linked to several key objectives and ensuring that these improvements in the public realm are sympathetic to adjoining zones is important. Maximising pedestrian movement whilst also considering vehicular movement and access to shops and market stalls is also a feature of the changes.

5.5.3.3 Replacing the bus station with a new bus interchange from Market Square to Bridge Street/Marlowes (Figure 12) is key to the proposals to regenerate the Gade Zone, the Jellicoe Water Gardens and the northern area of the Marlowes Shopping Zone. This location ensures that bus users can still easily access the town centre facilities and that there is no drop in the quality of the service. Vehicle access to the bus interchange will be restricted to buses and market traders with permits. A one-way route will be provided for market traders through the pedestrianised area from Bridge Street exiting onto Waterhouse Street via the highway link close to Primark. This will help provide a safer environment for pedestrians.

5.5.3.4 Two new taxi ranks will be created; one near the proposed leisure offer adjacent to Market Square (see the Gade Zone for further details) and another at the existing bus super stop next to Debenhams. This will help reduce the amount of traffic along Waterhouse Street, thus ensuring that buses are not parked along the Marlowes for an extended period of time.

5.5.4 Major Land Use

5.5.4.1 Key Changes:

- A new bus interchange will be created along Bridge Street/Marlowes.
- New residential development will be delivered by refurbishing existing buildings.

5.5.4.2 The major land uses in the Marlowes Shopping Zone are not expected to change other than from the delivery of the bus interchange and new residential development. The existing retail offer in the shopping area is not expected to grow significantly during the life of the Masterplan. It is more important to improve the current offer available in the shopping area by attracting new investors and providing a better shopping offer.

5.5.5 Access and Movement

5.5.5.1 Key Changes:

- A new one-way route for vehicles through the pedestrianised area.
- A new bus interchange will run through the northern section of this zone.
- Two new taxi ranks will replace the existing rank along the Marlowes.
- Vehicular access and parking will be controlled along Waterhouse Street and Bridge Street in favour of pedestrians, buses and taxis.
- The resurfacing of the pedestrianised area and Waterhouse Street (along with other measures) will also create a more attractive and safe environment for pedestrians.
- The opening up of Bridge Street onto the Leighton Buzzard Road for pedestrians and cyclists only (see Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone) to reinforce the east-west link, its role as a key gateway into the town centre and to support restoration plans for the Water Gardens.
- New strategic signage will be delivered to improve navigation.
- Marlowes pedestrianised area will be improved with new paving, street furniture and lighting.

5.5.5.2 Proposals involve maintaining access to rear service yards, and securing opportunities throughout the zone to provide additional cycling and motor cycle parking. There is also an aim to provide better links between the Local General Hospital and the town centre. Variable automated signs will also be installed along key junctions into the town centre to help drivers navigate towards suitable parking.

Pedestrian movement - Riverside
(Source: DBC)



5.5.6 Quality of Environment

5.5.6.1 Key Changes:

- The ramped area will be enhanced and integrated better with the new bus interchange.
- The street market layout will be improved.
- The Marlowes pedestrianised area will be improved with new paving, street furniture and lighting.
- New play areas will be created along the pedestrianised area.
- A new fountain with surface jets will replace the existing fountain to make better use of the space and allow for a new events space.
- A lighting strategy will illuminate important buildings and artwork.
- Bank Court will be enhanced and better integrated with the Water Gardens.
- Enhance key frontages and new town character, particularly within the Area of Special Character.

5.5.6.2 Improvements to the fascias of building will also be sought as part of any redevelopment proposals. Areas of special New Town heritage value such as Bank Court and buildings of note either side of Bridge Street will be enhanced and their distinctive features reinforced (draft Heritage Improvement Strategy, 2012).

5.5.7 Design Principles

5.5.7.1 In order to facilitate the delivery of high quality development in the town centre all development proposals within the Marlowes Shopping Zone should take account of the following design principles when considering:

5.5.7.2 Layout, uses and activities

- New development should normally be between 4 and 6 storeys.
- The design and layout of the market should be improved.
- Evening uses should be encouraged along Waterhouse Street.

5.5.7.3 Access and Movement

- Strategic and finger post signs should be delivered to direct people to key destinations.
- Establish a new bus interchange along Marlowes with an improved mini roundabout on Waterhouse Street / Bridge Street junction and a new taxi drop off area near the Market Square (west side).
- Relocate the existing taxi rank on Marlowes with two new ranks; one off Waterhouse Street north of Market Square and the other within the bus super stop by Debenhams.
- East-west connections should be improved, including the opening up of Bridge Street onto the Leighton Buzzard Road for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Restrict vehicular access to Waterhouse Street and create a new shared surface between Bank Court and Market Square.
- Retain restricted vehicle access from Bridge Street onto Waterhouse Street.
- Signage to key destinations should be improved, including enhanced signage and navigation around the Hillfield Road / Marlowes and Bridge Street / Waterhouse Street junctions.
- Service and delivery yards should be screened.
- Variable message signs should be delivered to provide real time parking information.
- Access to all rear servicing yards should be maintained.
- The River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should clearly link through Riverside Shopping Centre into Heath Park.

Materials and Street Furniture

- New materials and street furniture should adhere to the specifications set out in Appendix 2.
- Temporary improvements to shop fronts should be installed to revitalise vacant units.
- The improvements delivered through the Marlowes Shopping Zone Improvement Strategy should be supported by a long term maintenance plan.

Marlowes bandstand (source : DBC)



Stevenage Town Centre refurbished play area (source : Stevenage Borough Council)



5.6.1 Plough Zone

5.6.1.1 The Plough Zone is focused around the Plough roundabout. It is an important gateway to the town centre and includes the former Kodak site with its residential and commercial uses.

5.6.2 The Vision

5.6.2.1 A modern, high density, unique gateway to the town centre with offices, homes and other uses providing a dynamic and attractive focal point to the town.

5.6.2.2 Local Objectives

- Improve pedestrian and cycle access and movement around the Plough roundabout
- Enhance the public realm
- Improve connections between Heath Park and the Marlowes Shopping Zone
- Provide recreational facilities for the community at Heath Park

5.6.2.3 Key Opportunities

- To improve the quality of the public realm
- To deliver co-ordinated signage and wayfinding techniques from Heath Park through to Gadebridge Park and throughout the seven zones
- To create clear pedestrian and cycle routes from the railway station to the town centre
- To improve the use and condition of the subway
- To improve lighting
- To provide recreational facilities within Heath Park

5.6.2.4 Key Proposals

- To enhance the public realm including Heath Park
- To deliver improved wayfinding and navigation between the railway station and the town centre
- To deliver improved pedestrian and cycle movement around the Plough Roundabout

Figure 14: Plough Zone Context Diagram

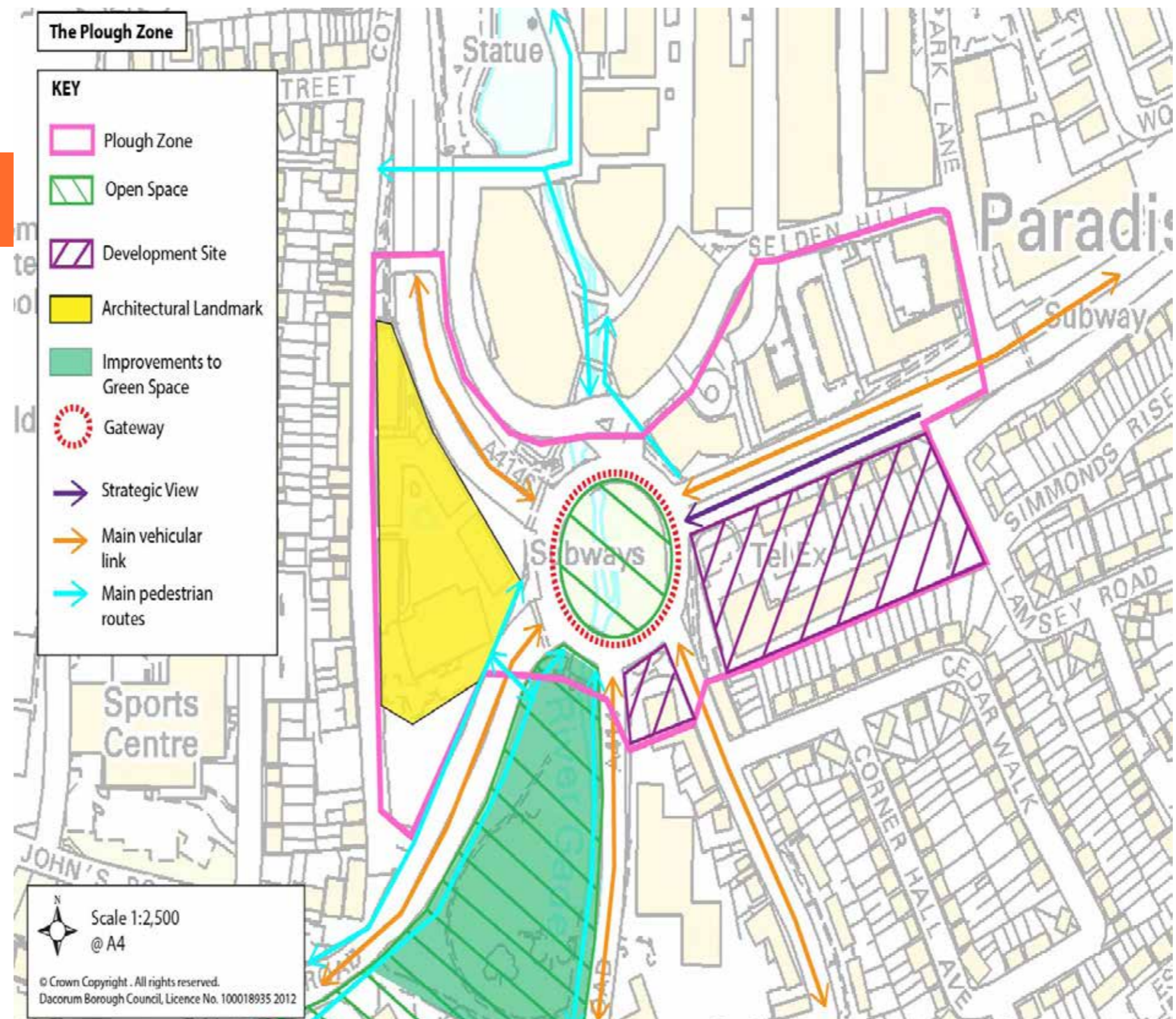


Figure 15: Plough Zone Vision Diagram

-  Blocks
-  Open space
-  River Gade
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Main routes
-  Pedestian and/or cycle routes
-  New Public Service Quarter
-  New civic/community/leisure/visitor use
-  New convenience retail - supermarket
-  New community hospital
-  New primary school
-  New college
-  New housing
-  New/enhanced employment
-  New commercial leisure - cinema
-  New commercial leisure - restaurants
-  Consolidate/enhance existing evening uses
-  Improved leisure - Old Town Hall theatre
-  Consolidate/enhance existing comparison retail
-  Improved open space
-  Improved public realm
-  Improved parking
-  New parking
-  New access and movement links
-  Relocated bus stops and improved public realm
-  Bus super stop



5.6.3 Strategies

- 5.6.3.1 The Plough roundabout is one of the major gateways into the town centre. It is effective from a traffic management standpoint being subject to high traffic flows, particularly at peak times. Its unique layout promotes Hemel Hempstead as a place of interest, however it is a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.
- 5.6.3.2 One of the key features of the proposals for this zone is to improve pedestrian and cycle access over this key junction to better facilitate non-vehicular traffic into and out of the town centre, whilst not impeding the flow of vehicular movement.
- 5.6.3.3 Better signage and navigation is required between the railway station and the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists. It is also important to create a strong link between Heath Park, the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way and Gadebridge Park to the north.
- 5.6.3.4 Since this zone is considered a gateway into the town centre it is necessary to improve the image of the roundabout and the quality of the surrounding public realm to make it a more attractive and inviting place to pass through.
- 5.6.3.5 This zone is also home to some recent residential development, most notably the flats in the former Kodak site. This is a relatively new use for the zone and this trend will be encouraged as it would benefit the wider town centre objectives.

5.6.4 Major Land Uses

5.6.4.1 Key Changes:

- New residential development will be delivered
- New retail/commercial use can be accommodated on the former petrol station site

5.6.4.2 There will not be major changes to land uses in this zone, partly as many changes have recently been made with the development of the Riverside Shopping Centre and the redevelopment of the former Kodak site into residential flats.

5.6.4.3 The Masterplan seeks to continue to support the development of residential units, whilst focusing on improvements to access and movement for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

5.6.4.4 Complimentary improvements will also be made to Heath Park to provide a high quality park for the local community to use.

5.6.5 Access and Movement

5.6.5.1 Key Changes:

- The priority will be to improve the safety and quality of crossing opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists across the Plough roundabout.
- New strategic signage and finger posts will be delivered to improve navigation between the railway station and the town centre.
- Access into the subway will be improved.

5.6.5.2 Wider measures include improving connections between the most southerly zones and the Old Town to the north. This can be facilitated with co-ordinated signage and navigation strategies as set out in the Access and Movement Study. Variable automated signs will also be installed to help drivers navigate to suitable parking.

5.6.6 Quality of Environment

5.6.6.1 Key Changes:

- Improvements will be made to the roundabout to make it a more attractive landmark. This will include new landscaping and a lighting strategy.
- The Plough roundabout subway will be made more attractive with better lighting.

5.6.6.2 Other improvements include delivering co-ordinated signage and navigation between Heath Park, the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way and Gadebridge Park to help deliver a high quality environment.

View of Plough Roundabout - access and movement
(Source : DBC)



‘Magic’ roundabout - Plough zone
(Source : DBC)



5.6.7 Design Principles

5.6.7.1 In order to facilitate high quality development all development proposals within the Plough Zone should take account of the following design principles when considering:

5.6.7.2 Layout, uses and activities

- Opportunities should be considered to emphasise the Plough roundabout gateway and new landmark buildings.
- Building heights of up to 4 storeys on the former petrol filling station site and 8 storeys on the BT Exchange sites may be appropriate subject to other considerations.
- Landscaping improvements should be made to the Plough roundabout.

5.6.7.3 Access and Movement

- Access and movement around and under the Plough roundabout should be improved for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Signage and navigation is required between the town centre, railway station, key parks and main non-vehicular routes, such as the River Gade Walk and Cycle Way.
- The River Gade Walk and Cycle Way should clearly link through Riverside Shopping Centre into Heath Park.
- Connections to the Water Gardens should be enhanced and reinforced.

5.6.7.4 Materials and Street Furniture

- New materials and street furniture should adhere to the specifications set out in Appendix 2.
- Lighting improvements should be made to the Plough roundabout to enhance the area as a gateway to the town centre.
- Co-ordinated signage and wayfinding techniques should be installed to navigate between key destinations .

Night view of Plough Zone (source : DBC)



Chapter 6: Viability and Phasing

6.1 Context

- 6.1.1 The implementation of the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan will depend on a variety of factors including:
- The overall strength of local and regional economies and property markets;
 - Improving the inherent attractiveness of Hemel Hempstead as a place to invest;
 - The ability to provide appropriate physical development opportunities;
 - The timing and delivery of physical regeneration initiatives elsewhere within the Borough and more established competing locations within south east England; and
 - Effective partnership working between stakeholders.

6.2 Development Capacity

- 6.2.1 The Core Strategy anticipates the town centre will deliver around 1800 new homes over the period 2006-2031. Since 2006 over 500 homes have been built. The table below sets out some key potential development opportunities identified through the Major Land Use Strategy (figure 16). however, Paradise Fields is more likely to come forward as playing fields to support a new 2-form entry school within the Hospital Zone. There is also scope for new commercial floorspace where appropriate including a medium sized supermarket. The Gade Zone and Hospital Zone are the two town centre areas with greatest opportunity for large scale regeneration. The Gade Zone is particularly critical to the delivery of the wider Masterplan as both the Civic Centre site and the Market Square are under Council ownership.
- 6.2.2 A full overview of the capacity study undertaken for each of the key sites is outlined in the Viability and Phasing Study which can be found at www.dacorum.gov.uk/regeneration.

6.3 Market Conditions

6.3.1 Current market conditions are having a severe impact on the viability of development proposals in prime locations across the east of England. DTZ consultants advised the Council that in secondary locations such as Hemel Hempstead the effect is amplified. This will unavoidably influence delivery in the early stages of the Masterplan period. With respect to the delivery of the Masterplan it is important to remember that what is being proposed is a short, medium and long term regeneration programme to improve the town centre and its surrounding area. Short term market conditions will not necessarily hold for the entirety of this period.

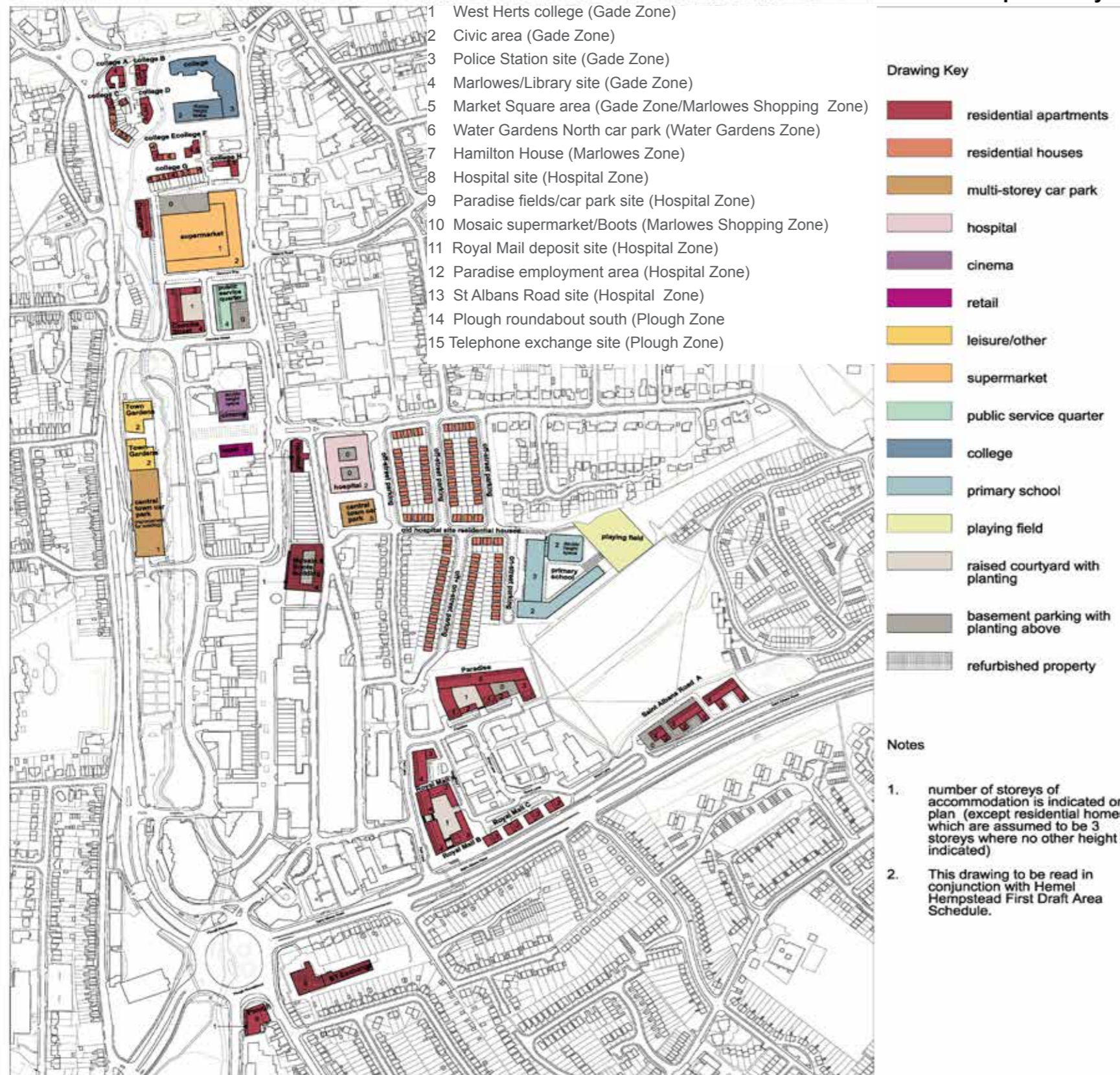
6.4 Viability

- 6.4.1 Viability and deliverability of Potential development sites (Figure 17) has been considered and assessed during the planning stage of the Masterplan. The Masterplan has been designed flexibly with the ability to respond to changing market circumstances, particularly as initial phases of development are brought forward.
- 6.4.2 Whilst this assessment must be treated with caution, it does provide an overview of the relative viability of delivering the regeneration and associated improvements across each town centre zone as the Masterplan is implemented. Additional detailed viability work will subsequently be required on a site by site basis.
- 6.4.3 The analysis includes
- A 15% profit allowance within total costs (this is the typical average rate of profit that DTZ anticipate developers would seek, although low-risk pre-let schemes would have a higher allowance and high-risk speculative schemes would have a higher one); and
 - 35% affordable housing provision.

Figure 16: Key potential development opportunities

Site no.	Site name	Character Zone	Area - ha*
1	Paradise open space (HCA site)	Hospital Zone	0.8
2	Royal Mail depot site	Hospital Zone	1.4
3	Paradise employment area	Hospital Zone	3.0
4	Hospital car park (owned by HCA)	Hospital Zone	0.7
5	Paradise fields	Hospital Zone	5.0
6	Hospital site	Hospital Zone	4.7
7	West Herts College	Gade Zone	2.9
8	Civic area	Gade Zone	2.5
9	Water Gardens North car park	Water Gardens	1.0
10	Market Square area	Gade Zone/Marlowes Shopping Zone	1.3
11	Mosaic supermarket	Marlowes Shopping Zone	0.25
12	Plough roundabout south	Plough Zone	0.2
13	Telephone exchange site	Plough Zone	0.7

Figure 17: Map of potential development sites with indicative residential development layout



6.4.4 This analysis excludes:

- Cost of purchasing the existing land;
- Lost income during development;
- Revenue and cost inflation;
- An analysis of absorption rates and considerations on the timing of development regarding infrastructure phasing etc.;
- Detailed analysis as to how the individual schemes would be developed (in terms of joint venture partnerships etc.);
- No section 106/CIL due to infrastructure costs being borne by the proposed development;
- Differentiation in values within 'use classes' across the sites; and
- The hospital, primary school, West Hertfordshire College and the Water Gardens cultural facility building are all assumed to be cost neutral projects as we consider that it is highly unlikely that they would be developed in order to pay a market rent; rather they would be developed subject to a return (for the developer/ investor) commensurate with the cost plus a margin for risk etc.

6.4.5 The key output from the analysis is the 'Scheme Balance' and 'Scheme Balance on Cost' percentage. If these figures are positive it does not necessarily make the scheme viable as key cost considerations have not been included; in particular, the cost figure does not include the cost of purchasing the existing land and the lost income from the subject site during development. Therefore, to get a more detailed view of viability, the 'Scheme Balance' needs to be weighed against the existing land use (and its associated value) and the rental receipts which will be lost in the redevelopment period.

6.4.6 It was assumed that the estimate for costs arising from the Access and Movement Strategy will be paid for by the developments within the Town Centre Masterplan.

Figure 18: Scheme Balance and Scheme Balance on Cost

Developed Site			Developed Site		
Area	Land Uses	Scheme Balance on Cost	Area	Land Uses	Scheme Balance on Cost
Full masterplan area			Gade Zone		
Hospital Zone			College A	Residential Apartments	
Hospital	Basement Car Park, Hospital		College B	Residential Apartments	
town central car park (hospital)	Car park multi		College C	Residential Apartments, Residential Houses	
Old hospital site	Residential Houses		College D	Residential Apartments,	
Primary School	Primary School, Playing Fields		College E	Residential Apartments, Residential Houses	
Paradise	Residential Apartments, Basement Car Park		College F	Residential Apartments	
Royal Mail A	Residential Apartments, Surface Car Park,		College G	Residential Apartments, Residential Houses	
Royal Mail B	Residential Apartments, GF Car Park		College H	Residential Apartments	
Royal Mail C	Residential Apartments, Surface Car Park,		West Herts College	College	
Saint Albans Road A	Residential Apartments, Basement Car Park		Dacorum	Residential Apartments, Surface Car Park,	
Jellicoe Water Gardens			Coombe Street	Residential Apartments, GF Car Park	
Town Gardens building	Leisure		Supermarket	Supermaket	
town central car park (Town Gardens)	Car park multi		PSQ (including library)	PSQ	
Plough Zone			2 screen cinema + cafe to front	Cinema	
BT Exchange	Residential Apartments, GF Car Park		Retail (town centre)	Retail	
Plough	Residential Apartments, Surface Car Park,		Marlowes Shopping Zone		
			Hamilton	Residential Apartments, Retail	

6.4.7 Overall the Town Centre Masterplan area shows a 9% positive balance (revenue over costs excluding costs associated with the purchase of existing land and lost income during development).

6.4.8 The main value generator is the Gade Zone which shows a 17% positive balance. The two developments in the Jellicoe Water Gardens (multi storey car park and cultural/leisure building) are not viable without a significant grant or other funding and pull overall scheme viability down.

6.4.9 The two individual elements which drive much of the overall value of the scheme are the supermarket in the Gade Zone and the new housing on the old hospital site. Multi-storey car parking on the other hand (at the Jellicoe Water Gardens and the old hospital site) shows a significant negative balance because of relatively high construction costs and the inability to charge a rent commensurate with these costs.

6.4.10 Elements that generate a negative return will need to be delivered alongside other development to improve the return or be subsidized through other funding streams. This is mostly associated with car parking in the town centre, which is a costly but an important part of the town centre's infrastructure.

6.5 Individual Zones

6.5.1 Hospital Zone

6.5.1.1 Due to the large size of this zone, the extent of potential development and the varied land ownerships the Hospital Zone has been split into two areas.

6.5.2 Northern Area

6.5.2.1 This comprises the area north of the Paradise employment area. It is controlled by two landowners: West Herts Hospital Trust and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). In this respect, the delivery strategy for the area is driven by the operational and timing requirements of these organisations. For the purposes of our analysis it has been assumed that a new hospital will be built and that it would take 3 - 5 years to complete including:

- Funding, internal approvals and planning permission;
- Demolition of the existing structures on the hospital site and decant of existing uses into other areas;
- Construction of new hospital facility; and
- Decant into new hospital facility.

6.5.2.2 However, we acknowledge that there could be a refurbishment of the existing hospital buildings rather than a new facility built in which case less time would be required.

6.5.2.3 Once the new or refurbished facility is completed, 3 years are then allowed for:

- Funding, internal approvals and planning permission for a new school and 142 new houses;
- Demolition of existing structures;
- Construction of houses and school; and
- Sale of houses.

6.5.3 Southern Area

6.5.3.1 This comprises the area north of St Albans Road up to and including the Paradise employment area. The Royal Mail site and the St Albans Road (A) development are expected to come forward in the near future due to the settled land ownerships and

high potential viability. Around 230 residential units should be deliverable in this area over a four year period.

6.5.3.2 The Paradise block to the north of this is likely to come forward much later due to complex land assembly issues. The time and cost involved in this are likely to be significant due to the number of potential partners and the peripheral nature of the site. The scheme is likely to be private sector led but for the site to come forward at all would be very dependent on residential values increasing. It is considered that improved market conditions allied with successful regeneration of the wider Hemel Hempstead town centre will be required for development to happen on this site.

5.5.3.3 The Site Allocations DPD due to be adopted in Summer 2014 will identify red line boundaries for housing, open space, employment and education uses within the zone.

5.5.3.4 The Hospital Zone Feasibility Study will be completed early 2013. This study will clarify where the mix of uses will be best sited based on development values, urban design principles and officer advice.

6.5.4 Gade Zone

6.5.4.1 The Council is currently negotiating a scheme that would see the delivery of a new college and supermarket in the Gade Zone. The sale of the civic centre site for redevelopment would secure a significant capital receipt. This could be used to deliver a new Public Service Quarter facility on Council owned land elsewhere in the Gade Zone. Without this receipt a new civic facility is unviable.

6.5.4.2 A scheme which seeks to redevelop the Market Square site would need to include the provision of new on-street bus facilities as a replacement of the bus station. A redevelopment to provide a cinema would likely require significant ancillary restaurant/bar provision in order to be a viable proposition. It has been assumed that an 8 year time frame for procurement and completion would be required.

6.5.5 Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone

6.5.5.1 A multi-storey car park is unlikely to be viable in

the current economic environment as it would not justify the construction costs. Viability might however improve if demand in the town for parking increases. The proposed cultural/leisure facility element will not deliver a commercial rent therefore funding from other sources will need to be obtained to bring this scheme forward. A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund could provide a significant opportunity to deliver environmental improvements.

6.5.6 Plough Zone

6.5.6.1 The Plough Zone has been subject to significant residential development in recent years, particularly higher density flats. Residential developers have however increasingly moved away from apartment block schemes towards traditional housing. It is understood that units are still available within the Kodak development which may be a sign that the demand for flats in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre is currently not very strong.

6.5.6.2 The Council will look to engage with British Telecom regarding their operational requirements for the Exchange Building with a view to bringing it forward at the earliest opportunity.

6.5.6.3 The other scheme considered for the Plough Zone is on the site of the former petrol filling station (currently in use for the purposes of a small hand car wash business). To justify selling up their operations (assuming that the business is economically viable) they would be likely to seek a significant amount to cover the cost of the entire business as opposed to a site valuation (which a national chain may seek). Any intensification of use on the site will need to be justified by a development value far in excess of the value of the existing business concern.

6.5.6.4 The two sites are not interdependent and private sector development is the likely delivery mechanism assuming that market conditions allow for it. It has been assumed that 3 years for design and build and a 2 year sales period will be required for circa 130 units. An assumption has also been made for five years lag prior to the market improving to the requisite level.

6.5.7 Marlowes Shopping Zone

6.5.7.1 There is currently a surplus of office properties in

Hemel Hempstead. Conversion of Hamilton House, a late 1980s office development, to residential use is a possibility but only if the existing use value dips to an extent to justify the significant refurbishment costs that would be involved. There is also the issue that there is currently an over supply of flatted development in the town centre.

- 6.5.7.2 Private sector development could occur post the redevelopment of the hospital site and once other significant environmental improvements to the town centre have been completed if they succeed in creating a bigger demand in the town. We have assumed that the Hamilton House has at least 10 years of economic life prior to any significant refurbishment works to residential use.
- 6.5.7.3 The Mosaic supermarket and its neighbouring unit are also a potential area for redevelopment.
- 6.5.7.4 The site occupies a very prominent position in the town centre but contributes little in townscape terms. With extensive high street frontage, easy rear access arrangements and the opportunity to intensify the uses on the upper floors, the Council is supportive of redevelopment proposals for this key site. Redevelopment would also present an opportunity to improve east-west links in the town and, in particular, improve pedestrian links to the hospital. The site has not been included within the viability analysis given the existing retail tenants on the ground floor. There would be a need to add significant value to any redevelopment scheme to ensure such a scheme was viable. There may be scope to increase the amount of development on the site and introduce more intensive residential or office space on upper floors but market conditions would need to improve.

6.5.8 Original Marlowes Zone

- 6.5.8.1 No development opportunities have been identified within the Original Marlowes Zone.

6.5.9 Old Town Zone

- 6.5.9.1 No development opportunities have been identified within the Old Town Zone.

6.6 The Strategy

- 6.10.1 This Masterplan proposes a significant level of change in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre of which there are a number of potential options for delivery.
- 6.10.2 The Council will take a flexible approach to the delivery of the Masterplan. Due to the scale of change and range of uses proposed the Masterplan will be delivered as a series of projects across a number of phases as private sector appetite presents itself rather than as a single scheme.
- 6.10.3 As public sector resources available to deliver the project are limited a combination of public and private resources will be required to deliver the Masterplan. The Council will coordinate delivery agencies and stimulate private sector development interest.
- 6.10.4 The Council will:
- Champion and lead key projects identified within the Masterplan;
 - Take a joined up approach to delivering all its services in Hemel Hempstead for the benefit of delivering the Masterplan;
 - Use all its relevant powers (planning, land assembly, etc.) where necessary to deliver the Masterplan;
 - Work closely with and where possible influence key partners and other land owners to facilitate the delivery of the Masterplan;
 - Resource a dedicated officer team covering all relevant functions with clear reporting lines through to the Council's Senior Management Team and Council Members with project sponsors at both Senior Management and Member level;
 - Communicate internally and externally about the project and its aspirations through a range of marketing and branding initiatives.
- 6.10.5 As with any major regeneration programme, land ownership is central to delivery. The Gade Zone and the Hospital Zone are the two areas most crucial to the delivery of the Masterplan vision. The Council owns a cluster of key sites in the Gade Zone but none within the Hospital Zone.

- 6.10.6 Where the Council owns assets in the town centre it will explore with other key stakeholders how land can be brought forward in a coordinated way to help deliver the wide range of potential improvements outlined in the Masterplan.
- 6.10.7 With respect to land which is primarily in private ownership, it is acknowledged that the timing and eventual shape of any new development will largely be dependent upon existing landowners. In such situations, the Council will work closely with landowners and investors to promote the opportunities presented in the Masterplan and to eventually enable delivery.
- 6.10.8 A range of projects within the Masterplan are in the control or influence of the Council and should be relatively simple to bring forward. These include improvements to the public realm, public transport facilities and management of car parking.

6.7 Partnership Working

- 6.11.1 The town centre incorporates a variety of land uses and is subject to a vast range of ownerships and interests. In view of this, it is essential that the Masterplan is endorsed by the widest range of stakeholders possible. This includes existing landowners, the wider business and resident community, and key amenity and public interest stakeholders.
- 6.11.2 Partnership working between public sector agencies, local community representatives and key landowners will be critical to the delivery of regeneration in Hemel Hempstead town centre.
- 6.11.3 The Council has already established the principle of partnership working in bringing forward proposals for extensive redevelopment of the Gade Zone. A partnership approach is vital in making the most of the Council's assets and in providing landowners and developers with the confidence that the full set of proposals in the Masterplan will be delivered. The objective is to build an ongoing and mutually supportive process of positive change and regeneration.
- 6.11.4 The Council will bring together key stakeholders at an early stage to shape proposals and facilitate

their delivery. A feasibility study has been jointly commissioned with Hertfordshire County Council, the West Herts Hospital Trust and the HCA to consider options for redeveloping Hemel Hempstead Hospital and regenerating the wider Hospital Zone.

6.11.5 The Council is committed to ongoing partnership working to deliver its key proposals. With respect to the regeneration of the Water Gardens the Council will work with the Environment Agency and English Heritage to bring forward a scheme which improves the ecological status of the river whilst restoring the Water Gardens in line with the original Jellicoe design. Extensive liaison will be carried out with Hertfordshire Highways and key public transport operators to deliver the bus interchange. Other partnerships will be cultivated as necessary to achieve the Masterplan objectives.

6.8 Funding

6.12.1 Public funds are extremely limited in the present economic climate and look set to remain so for the foreseeable future. Primarily, therefore, the Masterplan will need to be delivered by the private sector.

6.12.2 A number of public sector facilities within the Masterplan appear not to be commercially viable due to the high development costs involved. The proposed cultural facility on the site of the decked car park in the Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone is one such example.

6.12.3 In such instances there is a need to look at what other funding sources and delivery mechanisms can be utilized.

6.12.4 The following sources will be considered for their potential to assist in delivering elements of the Masterplan:

Type of funding	Sources
Capital Reserves	DBC
Grant	Central Government/HCA LEP/DfT Environment Agency Lottery pots Other
Other public sector funding	Hertfordshire County Council PCT
Business rates	Business Improvement District Local Authority Business growth Incentive Business Rate Supplement
Borrowing	Prudential borrowing Public Works Loan Board Bonds TIF
Planning gain	Section 106
Asset values	Land in public sector ownership
Private sector investment	

6.12.5 To maximise the potential from the above sources the Council will:

- Draw up business cases for funding for specific projects within the Masterplan to allow applications to be made for grant;
- Put in place a lobbying strategy to tap other sources of public sector funding;
- Test the potential for business rate-related funding;
- Develop a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule that is set at a realistic level and which gives specific consideration to the development of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre;
- Create a strategy for the use of S106 and CIL monies to help fund the delivery of infrastructure needed to support the development of the town centre;
- Assess the value of public sector land that could be added into regeneration schemes taking a joined up internal approach that balances maximising short term property values with promoting longer term improvement in the town centre;
- Ensure discussions with key private sector landowners commence early in order to advance the case for funding assistance to achieve redevelopment; and
- Develop and implement an inward investment strategy to generate private sector investment in the area.

Figure 19: Indicative Masterplan Phasing Schedule

Zone	Sub Area	Year									
		2012					2017				2022 onward
Hospital	North	Build and decant into new or refurbished hospital				Phased build out and sale of residential units.					
	South	Development of St Albans Road and Royal Mail sites								Acquisition and development of Paradise site	
Jellicoe Water Gardens			HLF bid for restoration works			Long term funding for cultural centre sought, obtained and building constructed					
Gade		Comprehensive phased development across the whole site									
Plough						BT exchange and ex-Texaco site developed over a 3 year period in this range					
Marlowes Shopping										48 units delivered over a 2 year period in this range	

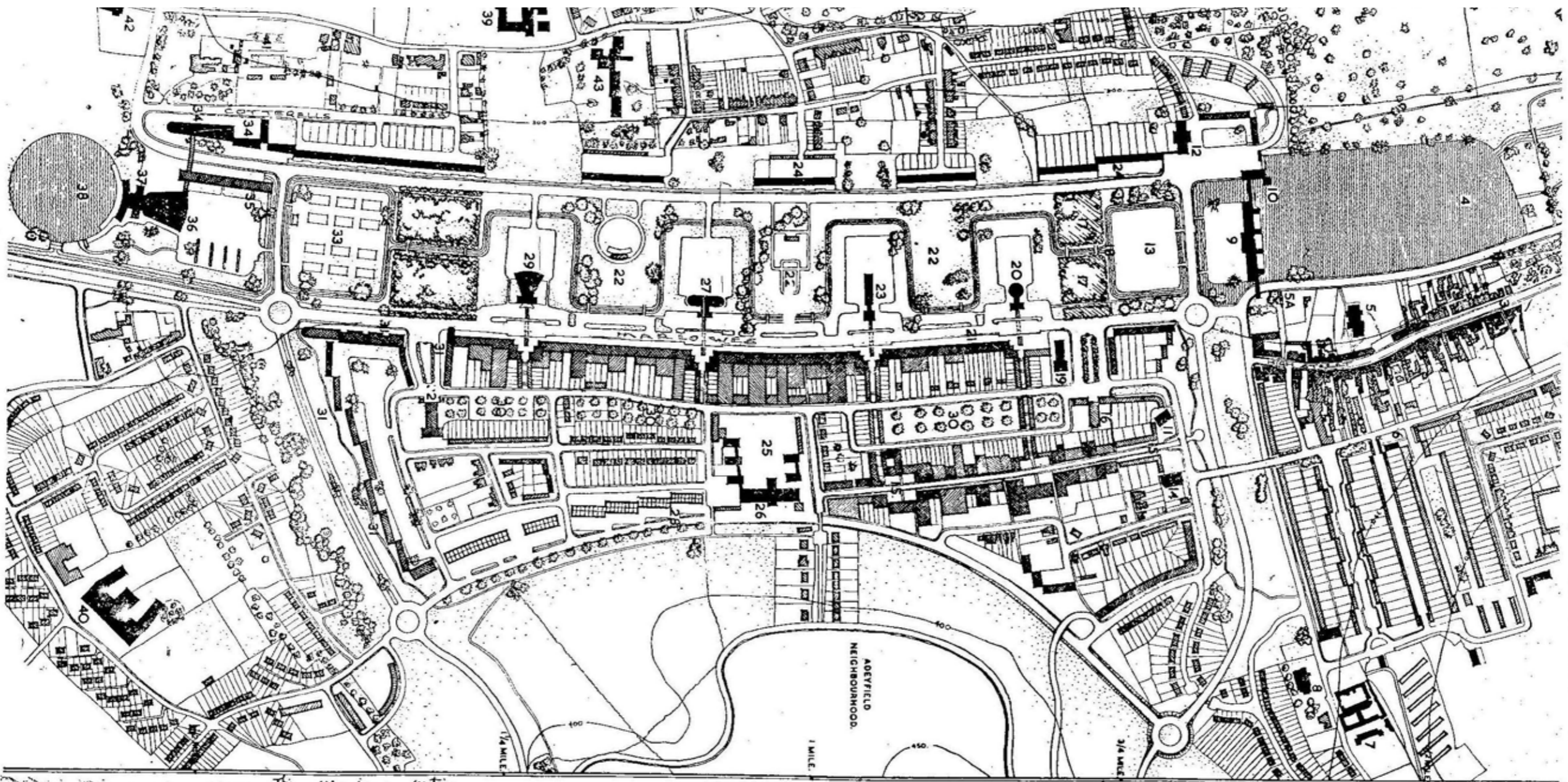
Appendix 1:

Hemel Hempstead - New Town Plan - Central Area 1947

Appendix 2:

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Public Realm Design Guide

NEW TOWN PLAN—CENTRAL AREA



- 3 OLD HIGH STREET.
- 4 LAKE.
- 5 ST. MARY'S CHURCH.
- 5A. CHARTER HOUSE.
- 6 FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE.
- 7 HOSPITAL.
- 8 ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.
- 9 CIVIC CENTRE.
- 10 CAMPANILE.
- 11 CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL.
- 12 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
- 13 HELICOPTER PARK.
- 14 CHRIST CHURCH.
- 15 PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING STREET OR ALLEY.
- 16 THE KIRK ARMS.
- 17 GROVE OF TREES.
- 18 CANAL.
- 19 BAPTIST CHAPEL.
- 20 LIBRARY.
- 21 ARCADED SHOPS.
- 22 GARDENS.
- 23 ART GALLERY.
- 24 TERRACE HOUSING OR FLATS.
- 25 MARKET PLACE.
- 26 MARKET.
- 27 RESTAURANT.
- 28 WAREHOUSES, WORKSHOPS, ETC.
- 29 REPERTORY THEATRE.
- 30 CAR PARKS.
- 31 COMMERCIAL OFFICES.
- 32 THE HART ARMS.
- 33 HELICOPTER PARK.
TEMPORARY TENNIS COURTS.
- 34 GUILD OF CRAFTSMANSHIP.
- 35 OFFICES.
- 36 THEATRE.
- 37 RESTAURANT.
- 38 BOATING POOL.
- 39 GRAMMAR SCHOOL.
- 40 PRIMARY SCHOOL.
- 41 CHURCHILL.
- 42 ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.
- 43 J.M.I. SCHOOL.

Note:—Figures 1 and 2 refer to terrace housing and garages to the north of the development area.