

Two Waters Strategic Framework

DRAFT Report

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urbanism





This report sets out a strategic framework for the Two Waters area, south of Hemel Hempstead town centre. The framework will help guide and shape future development proposals and has been based on a series of consultation responses.

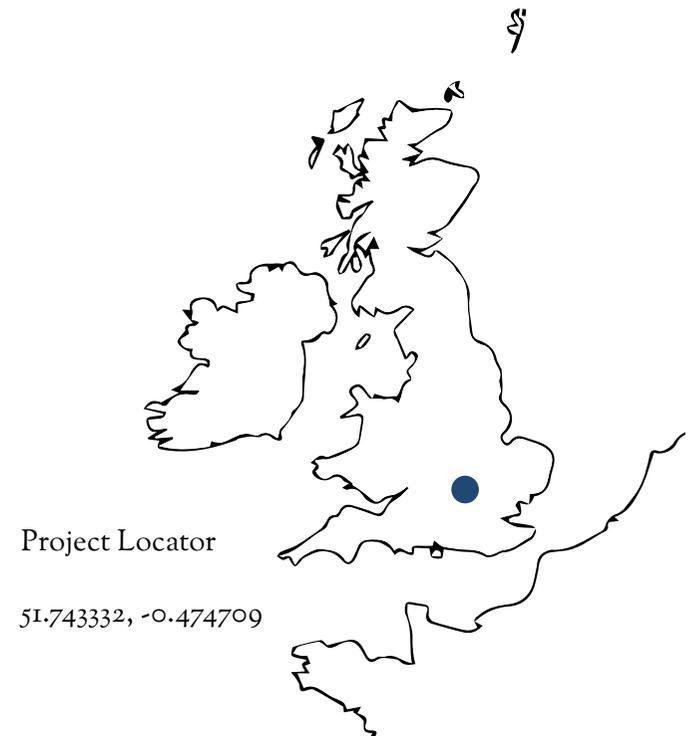


Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio that specialises in urban design, urban planning, neighbourhood strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of planning and design projects across the UK.

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Project Locator

51.743332, -0.474709

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Project Background

What is the strategic framework for Two Waters?



Two Waters is an area of approximately 124 hectares located on the southern edge of Hemel Hempstead. There is an varied mix of land uses in the area, including residential, light industrial, retail and community uses, together with large and valuable recreational spaces in the centre.

The area is experiencing growing pressure for change and in response to this pressure, Dacorum Borough Council has commissioned a “strategic framework” to provide clear planning and design guidance for this part of the town.

The context to the study

The Two Waters area is anchored in the west by Hemel Hempstead railway station, in the east by Apsley railway station and to the north by the Magic Roundabout on the southern edge of the town centre. There is currently an eclectic mix of land uses around the edges of Two Waters, including residential, light industrial, retail and community uses, and a large swath of valuable recreational land in the centre, owned and managed by the Box Moor Trust.

While this mix of living, working and open space currently creates a vital and vibrant neighbourhood on the southern edge of Hemel Hempstead town centre, there is a growing pressure for change through planning applications for change of use and redevelopment of various sites.

The risk facing the area right now is of a series of ad hoc or piecemeal redevelopment proposals that fails to join together and also fail to maximise the opportunities presented by the conditions of this fascinating rural-urban edge.

Therefore, Dacorum Borough Council has commissioned the production of a robust “strategic framework” to help guide development over the coming months and years. This framework will become be a valuable part of the planning and design toolkit for this part of the town. This report has been prepared on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council by Feria Urbanism a design studio with specialisms in civic design and urban strategies.

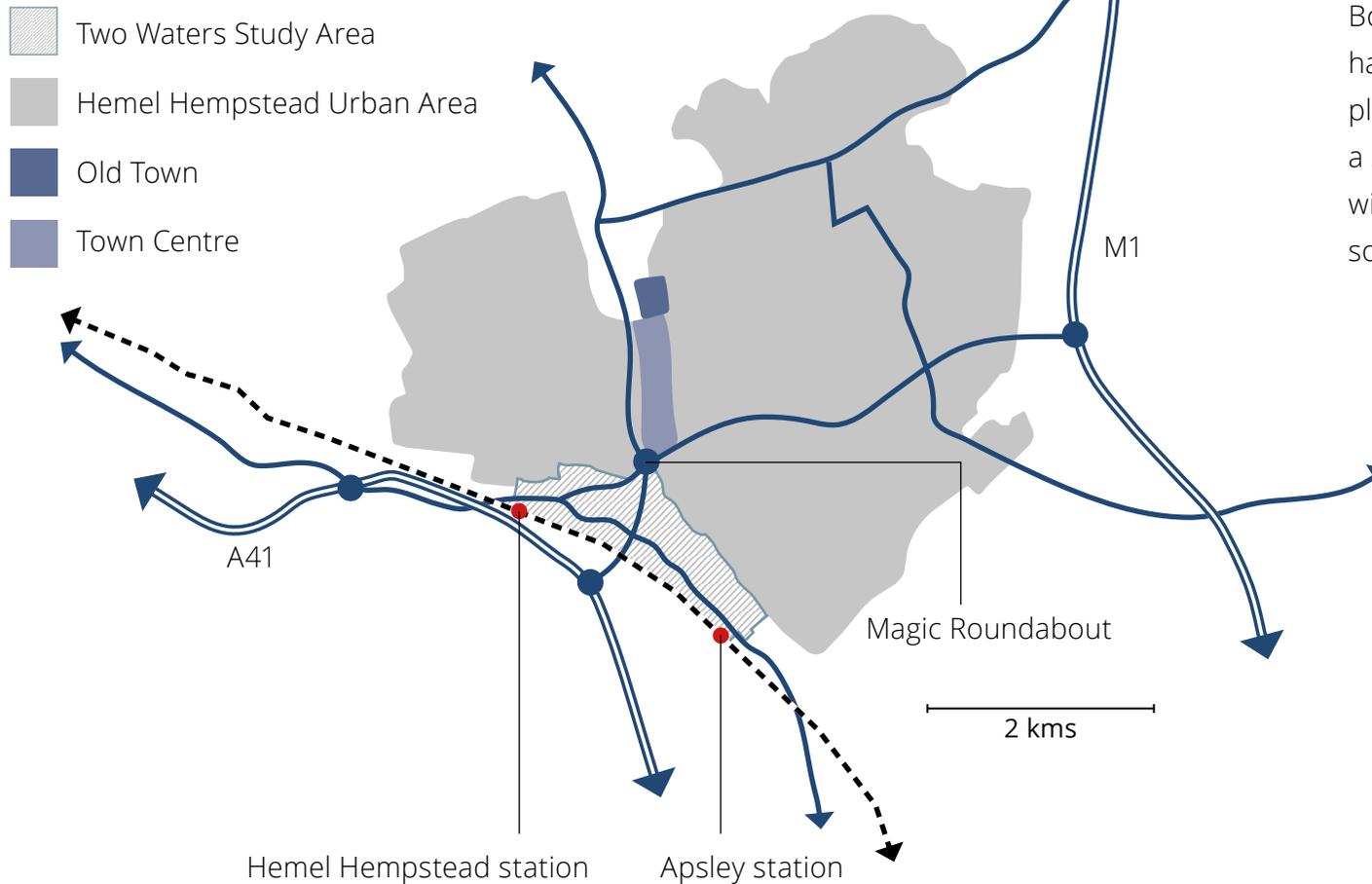
Strategic framework vs. Master plan

The strategic framework will help guide successful renewal and change on the ground in Two Waters by ensuring that there is a clear and widely-supported vision in place. Therefore the strategic framework has been prepared to provide immediate planning and design guidance for the area and also inform future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters, should this be commissioned at a later stage.

The need for this two-tier approach (i.e. strategic framework followed by a more detailed master plan) results in part from the relatively short timeframe covered by the work to date. This has not necessarily allowed for the required depth of research to be undertaken to inform a full master plan at this stage. This expediency as regards the timeframe was necessary however due to the growing redevelopment pressures in the area and the need for an overall sense of direction for the area to guide planning decisions in both the short and medium term.

There has also been a substantial level of stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the strategic framework. It is therefore considered that the framework will in be a sound platform for a subsequent master plan due to the level of consultation and engagement at this stage. The follow-on piece of work, in the form of a more detailed master plan, will be able to readily pick up where this strategic framework leaves off and add more detail at the next tier down.

Strategic Location



The Two Waters study area covers approximately 124 hectares on the southern edge of the Hemel Hempstead urban area. Anchored in the west by Hemel Hempstead railway station, in the east by Apsley railway station and to the north by the Magic Roundabout on the southern edge of the town centre. Both the Town Centre and the Old Town have recently been subject to master plans and development strategies and a strategic framework for Two Waters will help unite the town core with the southern edge in a coordinated manner.

The site is of strategic significance for the town, acting as a southern gateway

Consultation & engagement

The strategic framework has been developed with significant stakeholder involvement. Two participatory workshops were organised and run by the Feria Urbanism team in the first part of 2015.

The first of these two events asked a series of questions about the status of the area right now, the opportunities and challenges it offers and the pressures for change. The results of this first workshop were used to directly inform the scope and content of the second workshop, at which a series of “hypothesis” drawings were tested and challenged.

The hypothesis drawings presented different scenarios for change and suggested ways in which they could be implemented on site. These ideas were challenged and tested by the participants and a wide range of issues were addressed including a draft public realm and landscape strategy, building heights and urban form and the different community groups and organisations that could play an active role in the development of the area moving forward.

The results of the two workshops have not only helped inform this strategic framework but have also helped to define the scope and content of the more detailed master plan.

More details about the first workshop can be found in Appendix 01 (page 37 — 49). Details of the second workshop can be found in Appendix 02 (page 51 — 79) and copies of all consultation materials can be found in Appendix 03 (pages 81 — 87).

How the framework will be used

Following the two successful workshops events, there is now a greater understanding of the topic areas that the Two Waters strategic framework can address with a degree of certainty and those areas that will need to remain flexible, or will be addressed by a future master plan.

The strategic framework will become a material consideration for use by the planning team at Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire Council and other statutory agencies with an interest in the future of the Two Waters area. Following a period of public consultation, it is proposed that the framework will be endorsed by cabinet as the agreed vision for the Two Waters area.

There may be potential conflict between part of this report and aspects of Dacorum Borough Council’s adopted planning policy for the study area but the visioning and forward-thinking nature this strategic framework means that this is in places, inevitable. Over time, it is expected that these inconsistencies will be addressed.

Issues & opportunities

Over the following pages (10 — 15) is an objective assessment of the qualities and opportunities that the Two Waters area currently presents, presented through a series of photographs taken by the study team. These photographs, and the issues they illustrate, were also used to inform participants of the issues at the start of the two consultation and engagement events.

Issues & Opportunities



The Grand Union canal runs through the site, providing good opportunity for walking and cycling links alongside the water. However, industry tends to “turn its back” on the water creating several blank edges.



Other sections of canal are edged with new development that provides a sense of overlooking and natural surveillance. This makes these areas feel safer to use. House boats also add to the activity levels alongside the water.



Hemel Hempstead in the west is the busier of the two railway stations, with regular trains direct to London in only 20 minutes. The station car park is very popular with commuters.



Meanwhile, Apsley station in the east is not as busy as Hemel Hempstead and has fewer direct services to London.



Apsley High Street is located in the eastern part of the Two Waters areas. A traditional local high street, it contains a lively mix of local shops and services but can be blighted by traffic congestion at peak periods. Further east beyond the high street can be found big-box format retail units (including a Sainsbury's supermarket) and light industrial units.



The Corner Hall neighbourhood, on the eastern side of the study area, contains some significant heritage buildings. These act as local landmarks and add to the rich mix of architectural types and forms across the area.



Contemporary architecture is also present across the study area and this further adds to the sense that there is no dominant overall style or form to development in the area. The framework will seek to strengthen this idea of an eclectic yet coordinated mix of forms and styles.



The area has many wide roads, big junctions and narrow pavements, as shown here in Apsley. This can often make walking a frustrating experience.



The Station Road — London Road junction is a key decision point in the street network for the area.



The large junction at the A414 Two Waters Road — A4251 London Road crossroads was highlighted as a significant bottleneck for peak-time traffic problems. While there are pedestrian facilities around this space, the scale and size of the junction deters walking in this area. New development is also starting to be established immediately adjacent to this junction.



East of the Two Waters Road and north of the Grand Union canal is a B&Q retail unit. The car park is adjacent to the water's edge. There was a general acceptance at both workshops that this was not the best use of valuable land close to the water. Redevelopment opportunities in this location, should they arise, must create more intensive, more "people-centred" forms of development and the framework will acknowledge this.



Three-storey, flat-roofed housing can be found north of the canal in the western part of the site. While “of its time” in terms of form and architectural style, the waterside development was seen as relatively successful at the workshop events and could be model for future waterside redevelopment opportunities elsewhere in the Two Waters area.



The variety of architectural forms in the area is marked and cottages can be found alongside the canals just as readily as flats and higher density forms of dwelling. The framework will seek to protect this variety as a characteristic of the area.



Local landmarks, such as the Fishery Inn, are important social and economic reference points for the study area.



Higher density housing can be found in the Apsley area, close to the lock development and the railway station. Higher density around public transport nodes will be encouraged by the strategic framework.



London Road contains less intensive land uses (e.g. car dealerships) that are currently subject to change of use applications. The strategic framework needs to provide guidance on how this can be managed in a coordinated way.



London Road provides access to recreational land and parking congestion can arise as a result.



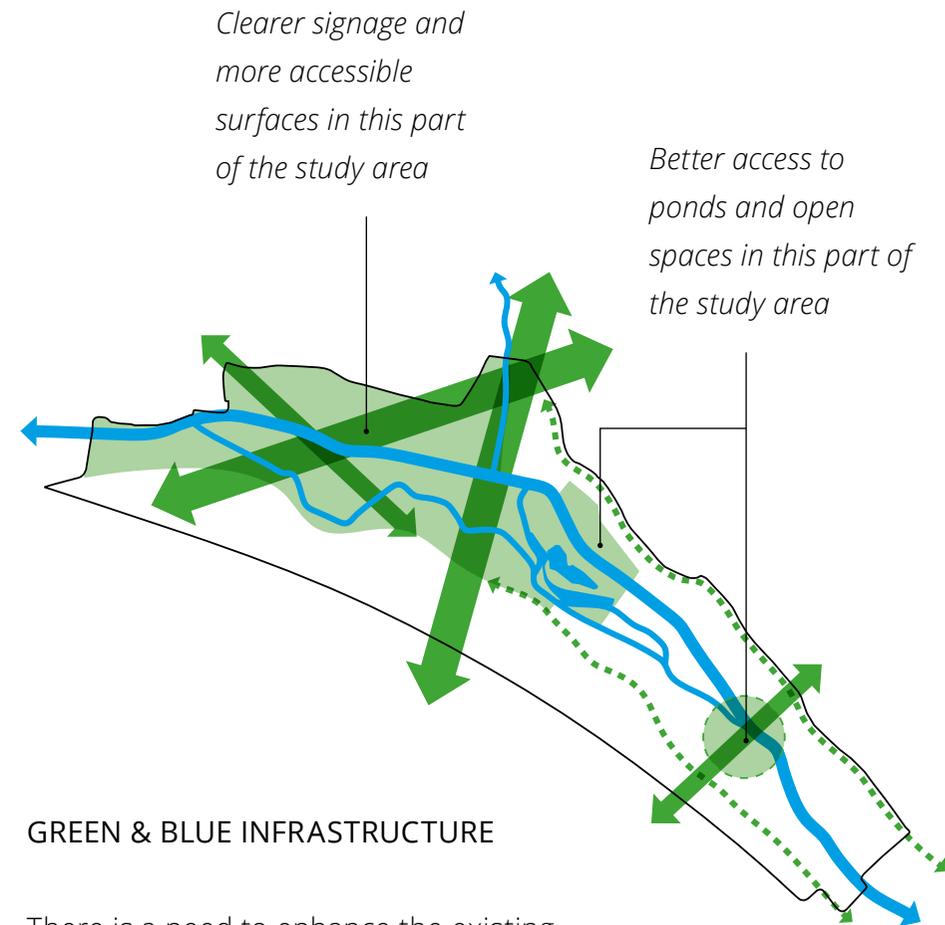
The green open land in the heart of the study area is owned and managed by the Box Moor Trust. This land provides a valuable resource for all Hemel Hempstead residents and visitors but is under increasing pressure as it becomes more intensively used. The strategic framework therefore seeks to increase access to the less well-used parts of the recreational network in order to relieve some of this pressure. Furthermore, the intensive redevelopment of sites in and around the study area should be asked to contribute towards the protection, management and enhancement of this major recreational resource.

A Vision for Two Waters

The Two Waters area is complex and ever-changing but there are some key issues around which the strategic framework has been able to establish some design and planning principles around some important fixes. These are set out here in a series of five diagrams, created to address the issues of green and blue infrastructure; land uses and attractions; streets and movement; and edge conditions.

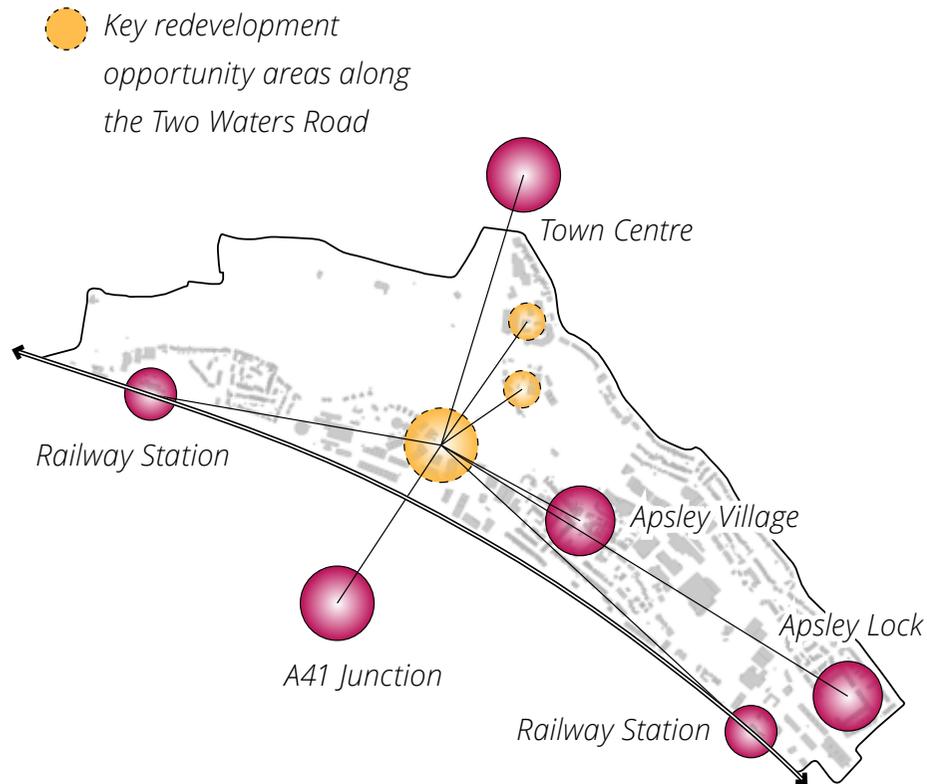
These diagrams were prepared by the Feria Urbanism team and are based on both its own assessments of the study area and the outcomes of the two consultation workshops.

These diagrams should be seen as high-level information to guide the overall vision for the area. They should be read alongside the series of four more detailed drawings in this report (see pages 23, 27, 31 and 35) which essentially comprise the strategic framework proper and address four critical components of place-making i.e. uses and activities, access and movement, streets and spaces and form and detail.



GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

There is a need to enhance the existing green and blue network and extend a connected network deeper into the south east of the study area to help relieve the pressure on the more accessible areas in the north west.



LAND USE & ATTRACTIONS

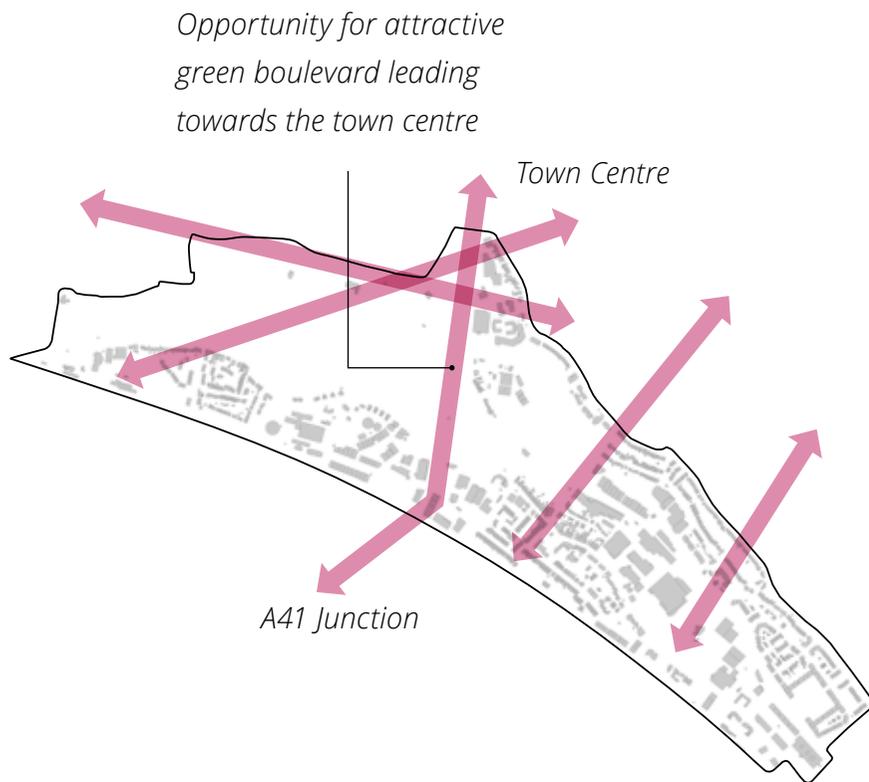
Connect the study area with the anchors at the corners through active travel modes and create new focal points along the Two Waters Road at the key redevelopment opportunity sites.

➤ Redevelopment of land south of London Road to look over the top and between development in front to obtain views of open space



THE LONDON ROAD GOLDEN THREAD

Create a "golden thread street" running along the southern edge of the study area. London Road is to be re-imagined as an attractive address street that links together areas of change.



STREETS & MOVEMENT

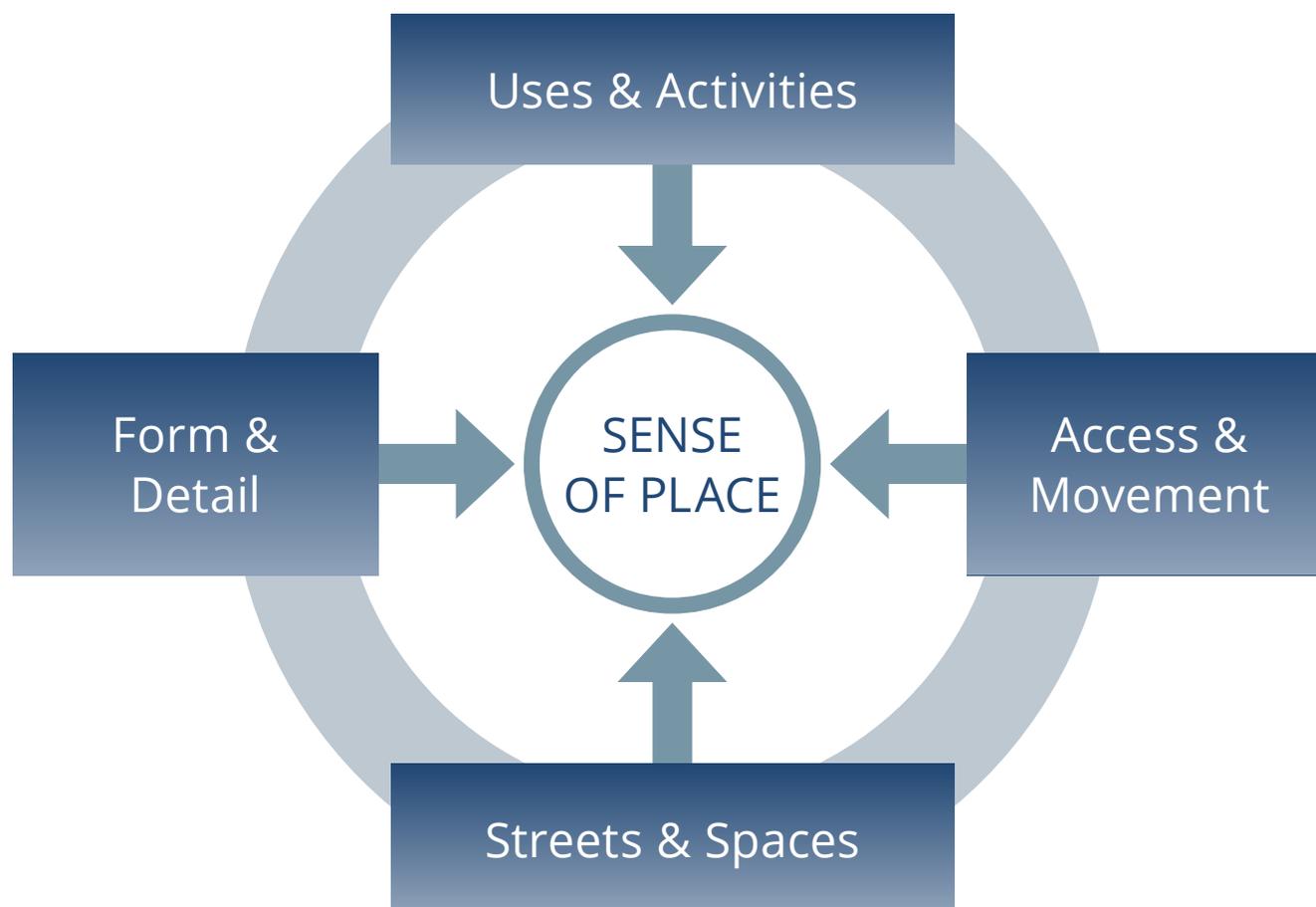
Develop a clear and legible street pattern to better connect the study area with the surrounding areas. Create a strong spine street running north-south linking the A41 with the town centre in the form of a green boulevard or similar.



RESPECT THE EDGES

Be a good neighbour to the surrounding residential areas. Understand the communities that live and work in the surrounding areas and ensure they have enhanced access to an improving and evolving Two Waters area.

What creates a sense of place?



In order to create a positive sense of place, the four components of place i.e. uses and activities, access and movement, streets and spaces and form and detail need to work in harmony to support one another. Therefore, the strategic framework has looked at each component part in detail before fitting them together to create an integrated approach to place-making for Two Waters. This methodology provides a robust set of tools to inform future development opportunities.

Ensuring that all four components are working in harmony will be critical to a successful future

Uses & Activities

What are the changing patterns of land use and activity across the study area?



There is a growing pressure to redevelop employment and industrial land for residential purposes. The framework therefore seeks to manage this change in a coordinated way to ensure an appropriate balance between living and working is maintained across the Two Waters study area. It does this by identifying specific areas where such as shift will be encouraged and the criteria that will apply.

Right use, right place

The two workshop results suggested that one of the key roles for the strategic framework is to establish a clear vision for the future distribution of land uses that encouraging the right sort of development in the right areas. The criteria to define what is the right location has been informed by the local landscape context and the strategic context, linking Hemel Hempstead town centre with the outlying anchors of the railways stations and the A41 road access.

Therefore, to ensure sustainable land use patterns for Two Waters, the strategic framework needs to encourage certain areas to be developed in certain ways through adherence to an adaptable set of planning and design criteria. This includes the ground floor mix of uses. The consultation work also revealed anxiety about a potential imbalance between housing and other equally important elements in a successful neighbourhood, such as community infrastructure including medical and educational services.

Business relocations

The relocation of businesses from Two Waters to other, potentially more appropriate, locations in the town or in the borough, also needs to be considered as part of a future master planning stage. It was considered vital to the future of the area that business development is given as much focus as with housing delivery.

Longer term options

The workshops also revealed a radical interventions as regards a major rail project, the relocation the two train stations to a single, more central location, about midway between the two current locations. While this was seen by many participants as either impractical or too costly there was nevertheless a sizeable number of views reflecting this concept as something to pursue further. Consideration should therefore be given at the master plan stage to safeguarding land in this general area for such a major rail project and a separate work stream could be commissioned to understand in more detail the feasibility and deliverability issues associated with such a bold relocation project.



The area contains a wide variety of employment uses and while there is pressure to redevelop these for more economically valuable residential uses, there needs to be a future strategy that addresses retention/expansion or off-site relocation to other sites in the town or borough.

Uses & activities

The strategic framework advises that in terms of uses and activities, the following guidance should apply:

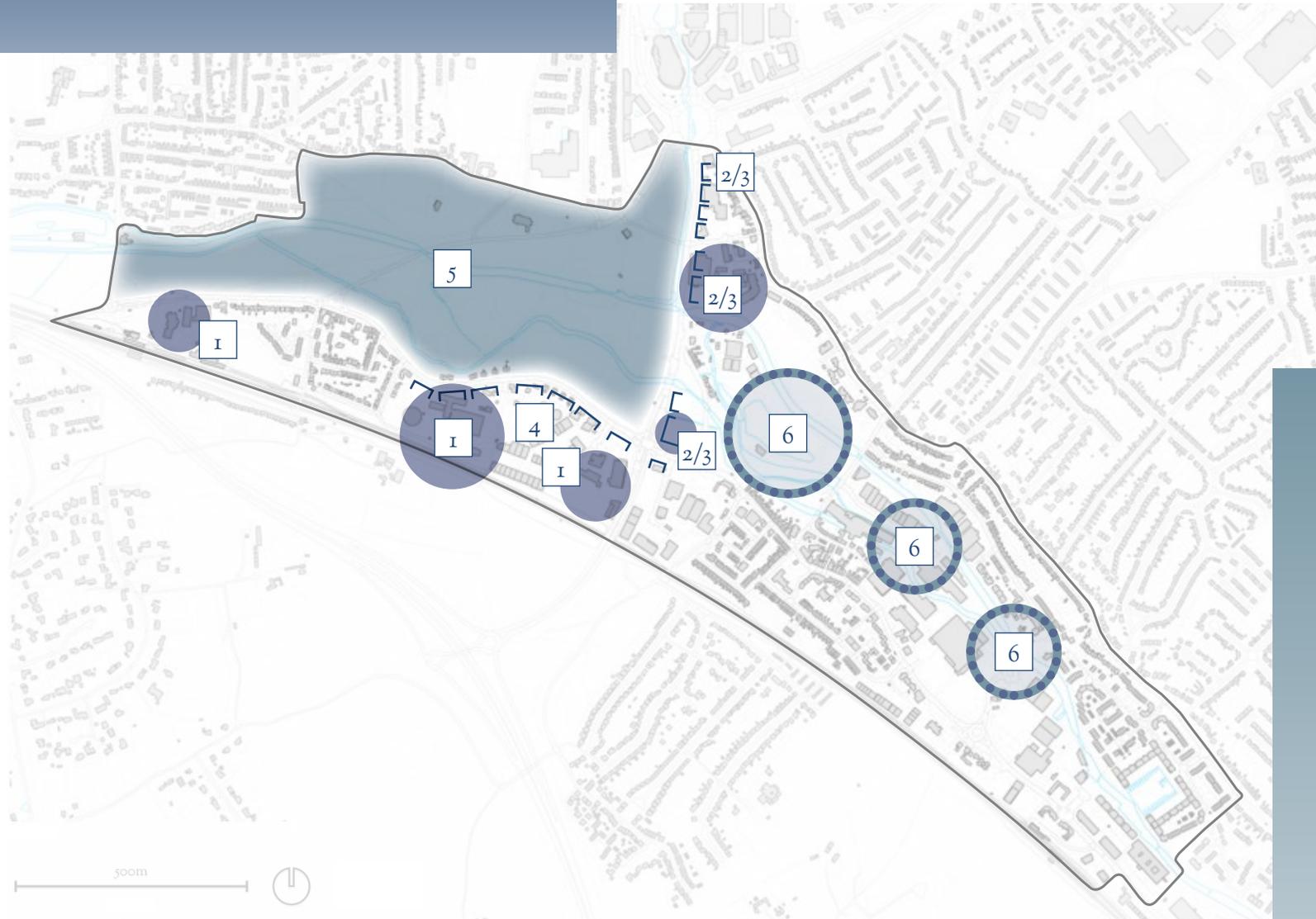
- 1 A general shift away from employment uses and towards residential land uses south of London Road;
- 2 A general shift away from employment uses and towards residential and leisure-based activities to the east of Two Waters Road;
- 3 Substantial sections of active ground floor uses, such as niche retailing, leisure (e.g. food and drink) to the east of Two Waters Road, looking westwards over the open spaces;
- 4 Significant stretches of positive frontage design, such as attractive residential ground floors, to create a safe and secure public realm on the southern edge of London Road;
- 5 Continue to maintain and enhance significant areas of recreational open space in the centre of the study area — these are well-used at the present time but will require future investment and protection as the area becomes more intensively used by a growing residential population;
- 6 Open up new areas of open space through enhanced access to the water courses and bodies of water to the east of Two Waters Road in order to create a more opportunities for recreational activity but also to relieve the pressure on the more intensively used areas of recreational land.

Future master plan work

The following uses and activities issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis. Uses and activities topics for a master plan to address include:

- Creation of more detailed “proving” layouts to demonstrate site-by-site floor space capacities;
- Indicative and/or accurate floor space areas in square metres;
- More precise guidance over land uses mixes, as defined under the formal Use Class Order designations (i.e. A1, A2, A4, B1 etc.)
- Upper floor land use mix indications and how this may or may not relate to the associated ground floor uses (i.e. viability testing);
- Incorporate a strategy for employment retention/expansion or off-site relocation to other sites in the town or borough;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

Uses & Activities Framework Plan



KEY

-  Positive and active built frontages
-  New residential
-  Better public access

The significant areas of change are on the Two Waters Road and London Road

Access & Movement

What are the different ways people will move across the study area?



Peak-time traffic congestion was identified at the first workshop as the number one challenge faced by the Two Waters area. The second workshop explored a range of solutions to address this challenge and almost all of them involved greater provision and support for non-car modes of travel, especially walking and cycling.

Better non-car alternatives

Encouraging walking and cycling was a key recommendation from both workshops. These active travel improvements should be aimed principally at commuters using the stations in the mooring and evening peaks to help reduce the number of cars heading across the Two Waters area. The number of “green network” alternatives across the study area gives Two Waters a head-start over other similar sized-areas faced with the same challenges.

A localised Hemel Hempstead bike hire scheme, with docking points at both railways stations and near the Magic Roundabout should be considered as it is likely to appeal to both weekday commuters and weekend leisure riders too. Improving canal towpath surfaces and lighting will help make these alternative network routes cycle-friendly.

A further consideration to alleviate the current congestion issues is the introduction more frequent bus services on routes, plus the implementation of new bus priority measures.

The stations as traffic generators

Peak-time traffic congestion is considered a critical issue within Two Waters and the workshop results suggest that much of this traffic, especially along London Road is due in part to commuters travelling to and from both Hemel Hempstead and Apsley railway stations. This traffic flow can be further obstructed by parked cars and tight bridges along this route. Some participants at the workshop believed that the introduction of a new central train station (i.e. relocation the two train stations to a single, more central location, about midway between the two current locations) could help alleviate this problem.

Car parking

The workshops revealed a desire to see greater car parking provision across the Two Waters, especially at the railway stations, but providing more parking space for cars is only likely to encourage greater cars use within Two Waters and therefore add to current traffic congestion.



The area has a significant length of waterside routes, and while much of this network is way-marked participants at the workshop events felt more could be done to make these routes more legible and more accessible.

Access & movement

The strategic framework advises that in terms of access and movement, the following guidance should apply:

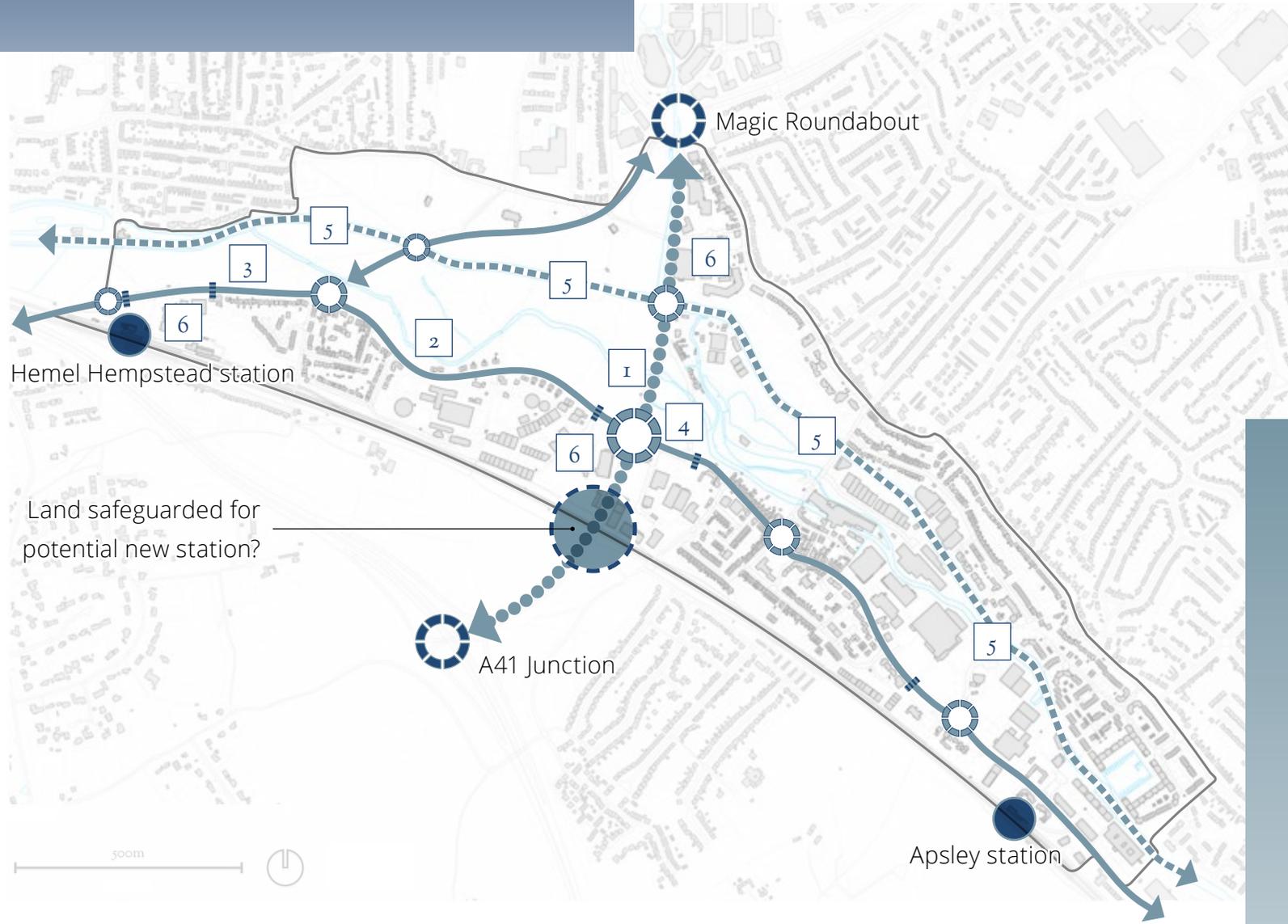
- 1 Two Waters Road should become a “green boulevard approach road” linking the town centre with the A41; The street should be multi-modal with renewed emphasis on active travel modes (i.e. walking and cycling) and include bus priority measures;
- 2 London Road needs to become an “address street” with redevelopment opportunity sites providing strong active frontages to the street. This street should also be multi-modal with renewed emphasis on active travel modes (i.e. walking and cycling) and include bus priority measures;
- 3 London Road needs more frequent pedestrian crossing points, especially close to origin/destinations such as the railway stations;
- 4 The Station Road and London Road junction should be redesigned as a civic space with shared space qualities; The A414 and London Road junction needs to be simplified and incorporate better cycling and walking infrastructure;
- 5 Waterside routes and canal towpaths require smooth, well-drained surfaces to encourage access for all across all seasons;
- 6 Areas with higher levels of parking demand are likely to be found in the where clusters of taller buildings will be permitted.

Future master plan work

The following access and movement issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis. Access and movement topics for a master plan to address include:

- More precise street and/or carriageway widths;
- Location and extent of underground services and how this may affect delivery/costs;
- Travel demand patterns, to be determined through movement survey work;
- Car parking levels, to be informed by more detailed proving layout work and site capacity testing (i.e. number of residential units will inform car parking levels);
- Public transport viability, for example on new routes and services;
- Rail provision/re-provision of station requirements and expansion;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

Access & Movement Framework Plan



Hemel Hempstead station

Magic Roundabout

A41 Junction

Apsley station

Land safeguarded for potential new station?



KEY

- Junctions with improved pedestrian and cycling facilities
- Improved pedestrian crossing points

Given its green and open nature, the area must prioritise active travel

Streets & Spaces

What qualities should the different streets and spaces have across the study area?



Perhaps the defining quality of Two Waters is the green and open nature of the landscape at the heart of the area. This is the memorable image for the visitor and local resident alike. Green, attractive, distinctive, dynamic and open were the top five descriptors as established by the tasks at the first workshop and now the framework needs to set out how these qualities can be maintained and enhanced.

Green spaces, civic spaces

While there is a glorious green heart to the study area, there is a marked absence of high quality civic spaces (e.g. market squares, town squares, small hard-landscaped spaces etc).

A primary candidate for a new civic square is Hemel Hempstead station, that currently offers a poor quality welcome to visitors. Such a new civic space could be introduced if the area also accommodates an increase in workers and residents through the redevelopment of the adjacent sites. At the very least, the landscape and public realm across the station forecourt front needs to be improved and there should be high quality mapping and signage (e.g. legible city infographics) of the Two Waters area available to visitors on arrival.

Apsley is another area that would benefit from the introduction of a proper civic space. A small-square to accommodate local events (e.g. farmer's markets) will help give this active community a greater sense of identity and focus.

Green routes, great streets

As already mentioned, the Two Waters Road should become a green boulevard approach road linking the town centre with the A41 junction. The street should be multi-modal with renewed emphasis on active travel modes (i.e. walking and cycling) and include bus priority measures. Avenue planting along this street will help deliver the step-change that is sought.

Continuity & enclosure

Potential redevelopment of the B&Q site offers the opportunity to create a waterside destination for the public, perhaps anchored by leisure uses and food/drink uses. Redevelopment principles for this site should insist on direct access to a public waterfront and the creation of a high quality civic space as a focus for the area.

Any redevelopment of the site needs to be economically viable and deliver a regular income to the Box Moor Trust (the site's landowner) as income from this site contributes greatly to the upkeep of the green open space in the heart of the Two Waters area.



Two Waters Road is a primary route into the town centre and lead to a positive user-experience, with high quality development edging the street and overlooking the open space to the west. However, the current land uses and urban forms fail to exploit this opportunity and therefore the framework sets out how redevelopment could bring about a positive change in this area.

Streets & spaces

The strategic framework advises that in terms of streets and spaces, the following guidance should apply:

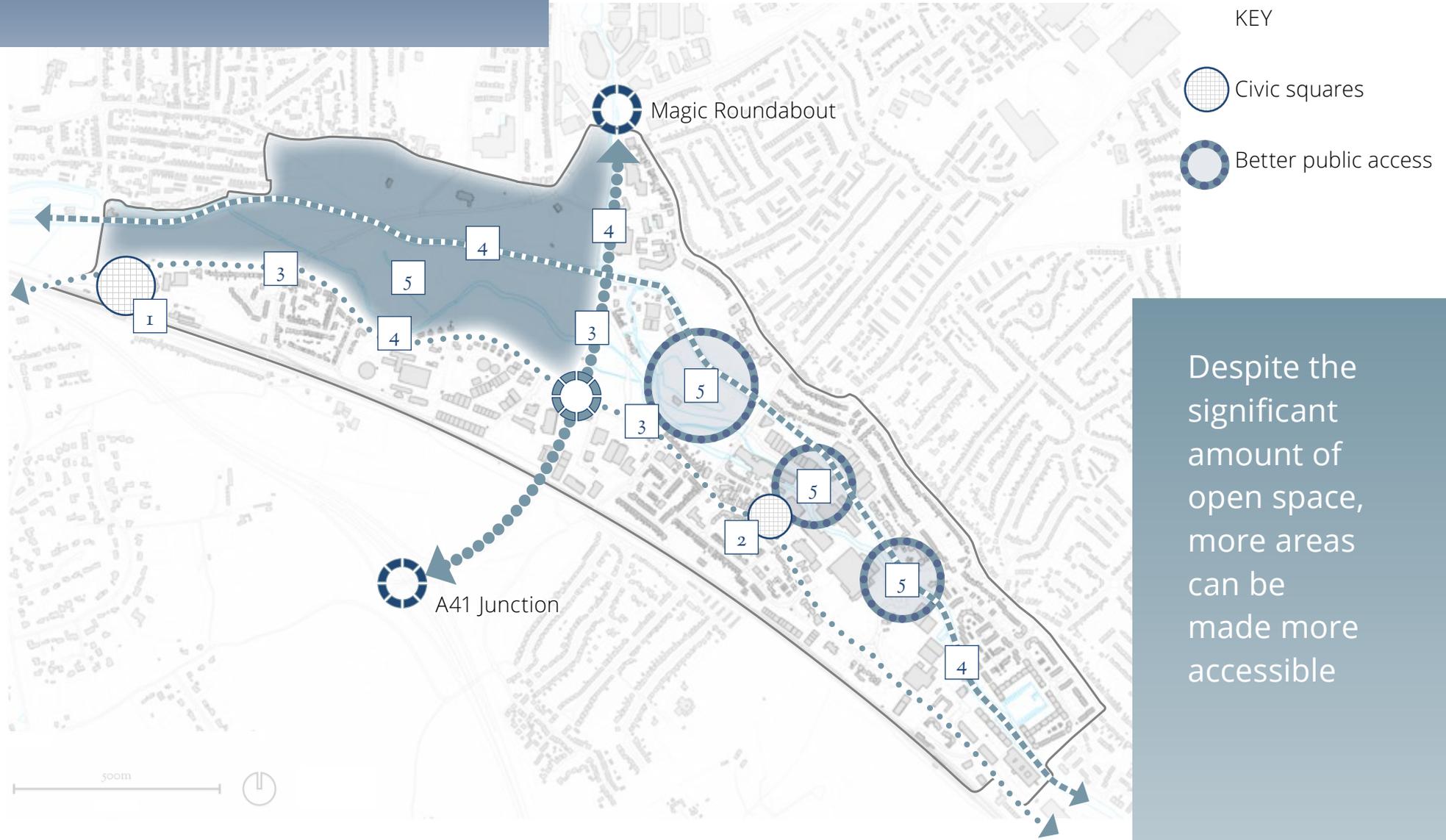
- o1 Key public realm interventions are required around Hemel Hempstead railway station to deliver a new civic square and welcome space; this landscaped space could be cross-funded/linked to new residential development on adjacent sites;
- o2 A small-scale civic space in Apsley to provide a focus for the local community should be delivered; a portion of existing surface car park should be transformed to deliver this high quality pedestrian-focused landscaped square;
- o3 The implementation of street-tree planting schemes to create avenues and/or boulevards along Two Waters Road and sections of London Road will be encouraged; such interventions can raise land values on adjacent sites and widen the redevelopment opportunities as well as mark out the primary movement routes and reinforce the street network hierarchies;
- o4 The user experience for all streets and spaces should be walkable, safe, convenient, connected, active and open;
- o5 Significant investment in the maintenance of the green opens spaces in the heart of the study area together with new investment to open up and offer greater accessibility to the green and blue infrastructure network to the east of Two Waters Road.

Future master plan work

The following streets and spaces issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis. Streets and spaces topics for a master plan to address include:

- More detailed street and/or carriageway design standards and widths;
- Hard and soft landscape specifications, such as planting schemes and design details;
- Maintenance regimes;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

Streets & Spaces Framework Plan



Despite the significant amount of open space, more areas can be made more accessible

Form & Detail

Which architectural and design principles should inform new development proposals?



The combination of buildings, green open space and the local environment is key to the charm of Two Waters. The rich mix of architectural styles across the area provides an attractive backdrop and the design quality of the many individual buildings and structures, such as the canal bridges, enhances this mix further. New designs need to be complimentary to this existing mix. The delivery of quality open space alongside innovative architecture was a key design feature of the original 1947 New Town plan and the strategic framework seeks to recapture the spirit of this pioneering movement.

Design codes

Workshop participants described Two Waters as being distinctive due to its unique mix of design styles that nevertheless integrate well e.g. old and new architecture compliment one another. Future master plan work should seek to create design codes specific to the area in order to better define exactly what is distinctive about the area how this ideas can be realised through future developments.

Taller buildings

There was general agreement at the second workshops that general agreement that the area south of the Magic Roundabout, Hemel Hempstead station and the A414 and London Road junction are suitable places for a taller building clusters. Building heights along the Two Waters Road could be lower than that suggested at the workshop (i.e. 5-6 storeys) as development should not over-shadow the canal and not be too overpowering.

Likewise, Hemel Hempstead railway station is also in a sensitive location, with a more

immediate proximity to the Box Moor Trust open space than some other areas. Taller buildings here also need to acknowledge the presence of more domestic-scale urban forms further east along London Road.

High density, high quality

Should higher density forms of development come forward, then the necessary infrastructure (e.g. high quality pocket parks, communal gardens) to support these higher density new residential forms is needed. Without this open space provision to offset the intensity of the development, then the pressure on the Box Moor Trust land is only likely to increase further as new residents seek recreational opportunities across the heart of the area.

Two Waters Road

New development edging the Two Waters Road should be set back to allow sufficient space for attractive boulevard tree planting and the provision of multi-modal movement infrastructure (e.g. generously wide cycle paths).



Functional and attractive two-storey domestic-scale architecture can be found across the Two Waters and makes up the bulk of the “background” buildings across the study area. While there is a pressure to deliver more innovative, high-rise developments (with some schemes already being granted planning permission subject to agreement) care must be given to the successful juxtaposition of these contrasting urban forms.

Form & detail

The strategic framework advises that in terms of form and detail, the following guidance should apply:

- o1 The creation of greater intensity around Hemel Hempstead railway station, the Two Waters Road and the A414 and London Road junction; this intensity can be offset by open gaps in between the development to provide views to and from the open space;
- o2 The creation of taller building clusters around Hemel Hempstead railway station, the Magic Roundabout and the A414 and London Road junction;
- o3 Taller and more intense development needs to be in areas of high accessibility so the successful implementation of active travel modes to these identified areas will be critical;
- o4 In areas where the land rises (e.g. between London Road and the railway line) redevelopment should positively exploit this level change to allow longer distance views into open countryside to the north either between or over the top of other buildings;
- o5 A fresh contemporary approach to architecture will be welcomed but care is needed to ensure scale, density and visual qualities enhance and compliment the existing built forms, especially heritage assets and more domestic scale architecture;

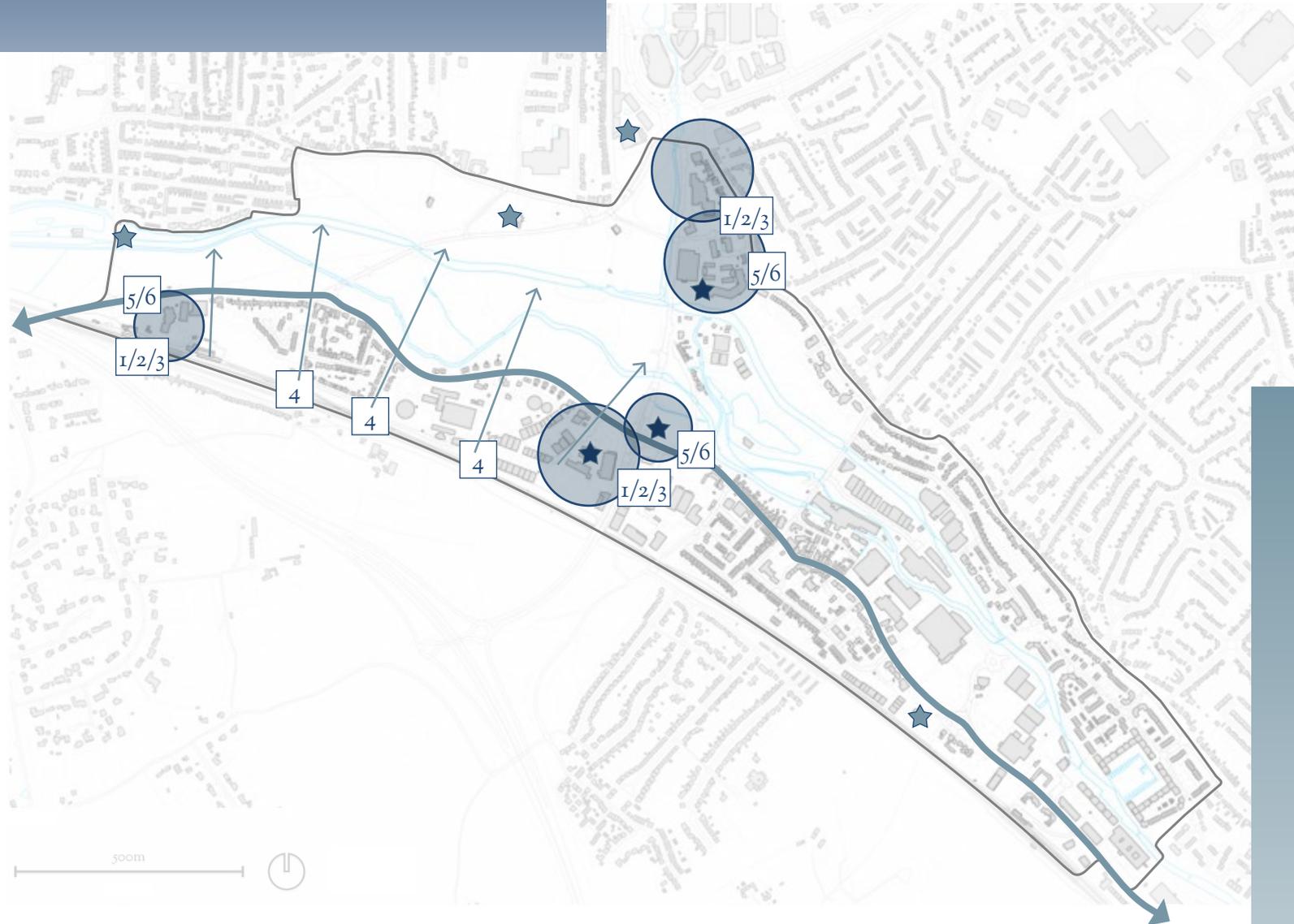
- o6 The pioneering tradition of the New Town movement, especially its deliver of high quality homes through innovation in architecture can be reinterpreted for Two Waters in the 21st Century; Contemporary ways of achieving this include ecological innovation, technological innovation and community asset building, for example.

Future master plan work

The following form and detail issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis. Form and detail topics for a master plan to address include:

- Building density i.e. calculations based on plot ratio, site coverage, viable developable areas etc;
- Design codes that set out specific architectural approaches;
- Detailed building heights policy;
- Specific topography advice based on AOD figures;
- Materials, detailed form, massing and rooflines;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

Form & Detail Framework Plan



KEY

- ★ Landmark opportunities
- ★ Existing landmarks
- Intensity clusters

The area needs to recognise its gateway location relative to the town centre





Appendix 01

First Workshop — 13th May 2015

Task 01

What are the main challenges facing the Two Waters area today?

Workshop participants were asked to identify the main challenges facing the Two Waters area today.

Twenty different issues were presented and the groups had to select the ten most important to them and place them in top ten order of significance. The aggregated results were as follows →

1. Peak-Time Traffic Congestion
2. Development Pressure
3. Architectural Quality
4. Housing
5. Car Parking
6. Sense of Community
7. Sense of Identity
8. Off-Peak Traffic Congestion
9. Pressure on Rail Services
10. Well-Connected Cycle Network

Task 02

What different types of activity occur in the green spaces?

Groups were asked to identify the main activities that occur in the green spaces in the heart of the area under a series of categories: Formal recreation, informal recreation, passive recreation and active recreation.

Participants were also asked what interventions are needed to make this range of activities more successful or open to a wider group of people.

Formal Recreation

Workshop Comments Football pitch on the north-west corner of London Road and Two Waters Road junction; Cricket grounds east and west of Station Road; The Paper Trail; Apsley Marina; Scout Hut next to Apsley Pond; Fairs and events such as Carters Steam Fair (on Box Moor Trust land).

Informal Recreation

Workshop Comments Play area to the south of Lawn Lane; Play area to the west of Durrants Hill Road; Park on the junction of the Magic Roundabout is underused e.g. only used at lunchtime by workers; Picnics on the north east corner of London Road and Two Waters Road junction; Football “kick-about” west of Station Road; Fishing all along the canal; Fishing on the River Gade along Two Waters Road; Fishing in Apsley Pond (i.e. between the River Bulbourne and the canal); Fishing along the River Bulbourne; Grazing on Box Moor Trust land.

Passive Recreation

Workshop Comments Cycle routes to the station along London Road and Station Road; Cycle route along London Road (behind the Paper Mill); Walking along the canal; Walking along the River Bulbourne (from Two Waters Road to Durrants Hill Road).

Active Recreation

Workshop Comments Box Moor Trust land allows jogging, walking and cycling; Canal towpaths allow jogging, walking and cycling.

What positive interventions are needed

Workshop Comments Formal car park for Box Moor Trust; Improved canal towpath surfaces to allow access for all year round; Access to the River Bulbourne in the Box Moor Trust land (e.g. children paddling etc); Info boards throughout Box Moor land about wildlife and heritage; Better signage for walking and cycling routes; Greater investment in conservation and management of wildlife; More seating; Café or refreshment kiosk at the urban park near to the town centre; Heritage interpretation (e.g. the old railway track can be seen on maps but not explore on the ground). A further comment received was that when travelling west to east, once Durrants Hill Road is reached the open green space becomes a lot more sparse and there is an abrupt end to the recreational land. The canal tow path continues east but much potential recreational land is off-limits.



The workshop marked up aerial photographs with differently coloured stickers to identify areas of formal recreation, informal recreation, passive recreation and active recreation.

Task 03

What are the main issues associated with London Road?

Groups were asked examine the 2.5 kms stretch of London Road, from Hemel Hempstead railway station in the west to Apsley railway station in the east. Participants were asked to identify the various issues associated with this street that they felt were most relevant to the study.

Pedestrian Experience

Workshop Comments There are positive views north of the green open spaces all along London Road from Hemel Station to Two Waters Road; Footpath from Lower Roughdown Woods is badly sign-posted and no crossing at the end it to get a walker across London Road; Hard to cross Two Waters Road from the western green spaces to the eastern green spaces (e.g. Apsley Pond area); Dangerous to cross from Station Road to London Road; At eye level, London Road is not always attractive but stand back and look up and around the land around it is fascinating; Maybe

better provision of wider pedestrian access would allow for a more visually appealing street; Between Featherbed Lane and Weymouth Street, London Road needs a change in environment and needs to become more pedestrian (and cyclist) friendly.

Railway Station

Workshop Comments Redevelopment opportunity in and around Hemel Hempstead railway station; We need “old-style” dwellings front London Road near to Hemel Hempstead railway station; Need a multi-storey car park in close proximity to the station; Hemel Hempstead railway station is a major problem for London Road at peak times and building a bigger car park will only make this worse — a conundrum.

Development Opportunities

Workshop Comments New residential development off Stratford Way/Harding Close; Big opportunity along the south of London Road (above Hardings Close) for a light industry with housing fronting the street; Possible

constraints here because of industrial historic uses leading to contamination; The old railway line passes through London Road just before Whiteleaf Road; New Symbio House as a landmark tower?; With Symbio, Aldi and the potential redevelopment of B&Q, will access by car get worse?; A new hotel or “Symbio type” development could be implemented on the north east corner of the Two Waters Road and London Road junction; A development opportunity on the south east corner of the Two Waters Road and London Road junction?; A waterside or leisure café could be developed along the north western edge of Two Waters Road; The cycle network is disjointed.

Other Comments Received

Workshop Comments Two Waters Road is the gateway to the town; Lighting at night to be improved; On-street parking issues near Apsley Station; Public car park off Durrents Hill Road underused; Employment area at Whiteleaf Road to be intensified; Apsley Mills Retail Park provides employment; Apsley Marina needs more activity as it often seems too quiet; Box Moor village needs a retail focus to prevent shops being too spread out and losing trade; Apsley Pond is a wildlife conservation area; New pedestrian bridge over the River Bulbourne next to Apsley Pond; Featherbed Lane bridge is well used in the day but has dark corners at night, creating a hostile pedestrian environment.



The London Road corridor was the focus of a specific task.

Task 04

What are the main qualities of Two Waters area right now?

Workshop participants were asked to identify the main qualities of the area today.

Twenty different phrases were presented to the groups and they had to select the ten most relevant to them and place them in top ten order of significance. The aggregated results were as follows →

1. Green
2. Attractive
3. Distinctive
4. Dynamic
5. Open
6. Unique
7. Well Connected
8. Diverse
9. Enterprising
10. Inspiring

Task 05

What land uses options could be encouraged across the study area?

Groups were asked examine a series of indicative land use parcels labelled A — P and note down their ideas for the future direction for each parcel with regard to land use mix, building heights, architectural form, access & movement, landscape issues, relationship to nearby green space and relationship to nearby residential areas.

Parcel A

Provide small retail area at Hemel Hempstead railway station; Key development opportunity; Need offices near station; Current limited capacity to cope with more use at the train station; Housing/flats needed but not to compromise parking.

Parcel B

Increase parking via multi-storey in the railway sidings; Better walking and cycling links into town; Low-density residential; Needs higher density residential development if station stays; Consider including office employment but understand any effects this may have on the town centre office provision.

Parcel C

Residential of reasonably high density; Reduce the increasing need for car parking; Low density residential; Keep as it is.

Parcel D

Major business redevelopment needed; Mixed-use but primarily residential; High rise residential; Residential development opportunity; Pay attention to frontage presence on London Road; Preserve views of open land.

Parcel E

Major business redevelopment needed; Mixed use opportunities; High rise residential; New residential development should interact with open green space across London Road; New school site (educational area?); Develop housing as a single entity so that it looks visually appealing from the road.

Parcel F

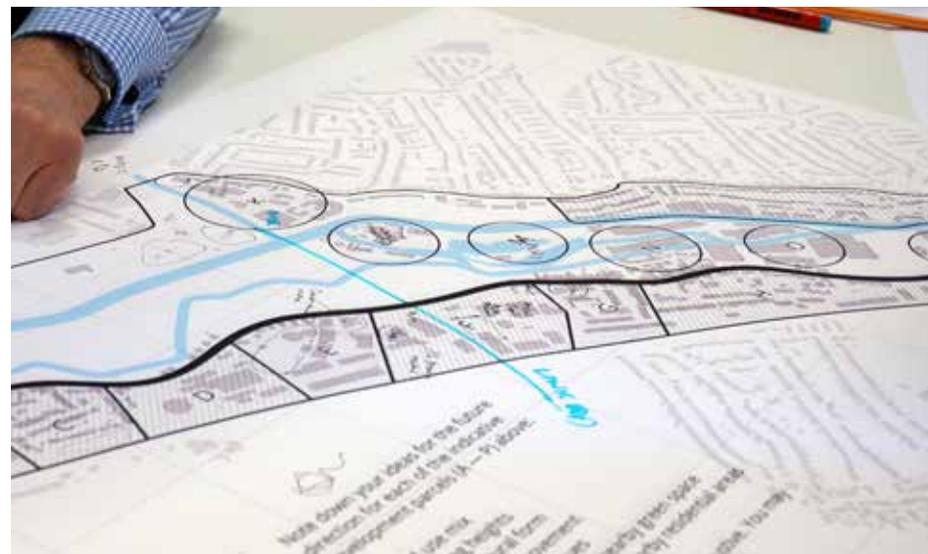
Major business redevelopment needed; Potentially mixed use with opportunity for higher density development; Retail or light industrial; Consider a transport hub here; New “centralised” railway station here, this maybe a longer term ambition but safeguard the land; The new tower planned is not too bad.

Parcel G

Improve retail provision in high street; Residential or retail frontage; Small infill; Redevelop frontage on London Road.

Parcel H

More residential properties; Residential or light industrial — industrial units will have to relocate if residential development is placed here.



The workshop explored land use options for a variety of specific land parcels across the study area.

Parcel I

Redevelop station to increase residential (more flats); Constrained but some potential for mixed-use or residential; Residential infill.

Parcel J

Mix of residential and commercial already so not much more needed in improvements; Residential; Access over water from here to the rest of the town needs improving; Remove industrial units along Ebbens Road.

Parcel K

Should increase retail and business use; Has good links to town centre; Potential for redevelopment (riverside location); Frontage and the gateway into town needs improving; High quality corridor, active interaction with green space and waterside; Better use of B&Q wall & canal basin opposite B&Q; Needs to work with Parcel L on the south of the canal; New development to overlook water; Needs adequate parking.

Parcel L

Maintain current feel; Green space for informal leisure; Fantastic opportunity at the heart of Two Waters to develop a new water frontage.

Parcel M

Concentrate on improving water environments; Opportunity to enhance green space and improve access; Provide walking and cycling links to reduce pressure on London Road.

Parcel N

Focus on links from east to west for walking and cycling modes; Waterside development opportunities on Frogmore Road employment area; Waterfront residential.



The tasks at the first workshop were completed in a set time, with no more than 15 minutes allowed for each. This helped ensure a positive momentum and that all topics were covered in an even-handed way.

Parcel O

Maintain current feel; Residential waterside opportunities; Leisure or medium-sized retail; Improve canal footbridge next to the supermarket.

Parcel P

Maintain current feel; Link to Apsley Lock as a single destination with daytime and evening economy; Introduce more artwork throughout Two Waters — take inspiration from the fabulous brush factory sculpture.

Task 06

What are the main access and movement issues across the area?

Groups were asked examine access and movement issues and note down their ideas with regard to walking (e.g. pavements, crossing points), cycling (e.g. safe routes, need for improved facilities), car parking, services and deliveries, traffic movements, peak time queues and waiting times, access points to green space, and access to and from the town centre.

Walking

Air quality issues along Durrants Hill Road; No clear routes leading pedestrians from one green space to another; Pedestrian crossing over London Road to the station needs to be realigned as people do not cross where the crossing is; No safe crossing point at the junction of London Road and Station Road; No convenient crossing points at many junctions.

Cycling

No clear routes or signage leading cyclists from one green space or path to another; No proper cycling provision along London Road between Station Road and Two Waters Road.

Waterways

Can there be a canal “destination” mooring behind B&Q?; Improve boat, cyclist and pedestrian movements alongside the canal; Improve access and service to canal towpaths; The access arrangements around Apsley Pond are confusing and unclear; No vehicular crossing of the canal between Durrants Hill Road and Red Lion Lane as this will only increase traffic congestion as development continues.

Bus Service

Clear choice of routes using info-graphics or colours (e.g. Aylsbury bus routes); Bus route needs to be improved from both stations into the town centre; More frequent bus services will reduce amount of cars on the road.