






Solihull Town Centre Masterplan

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SOLIHULL TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

DRAFT MASTERPLAN

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01 | Executive Summary

The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan aims to provide a framework for future investment and development which maximises the opportunities for Solihull, capitalises on its existing assets, and sets out a clear vision for Solihull 2036; as a vibrant, sustainable, aspirational and diverse 21st century town.

It is predicted that UK Central could create an additional 100,000 jobs with a town centre range of between 4,000 and 16,000 jobs, and increase the region's revenue up to £19.5 billion annually by 2040. The masterplan outlines how bold measures need to be taken to capitalise on the potential of the town centre; guaranteeing its resilience and ensuring that it can meet future challenges through 'managed' growth, whilst retaining the character which makes Solihull so popular.

1.1 Understanding Solihull Today

The masterplan is underpinned by a strong evidence base which brings together; a detailed physical analysis of the town centre undertaken by AECOM; a baseline market report prepared by Cushman and Wakefield; a transport study and traffic model conducted by WSP; and feedback from stakeholder engagement workshops.

The evidence base draw out the current strengths of the town centre including the high quality character and rich heritage of Solihull, and its existing market reputation. This is weighed against numerous weaknesses, in particular the effect of large scale infrastructure on placemaking and the pedestrian experience.

1.2 Creating a Shared Vision

Achieving local buy-in to the framework and principles identified in the masterplan is a fundamental requirement

of the whole process. In response a public consultation was held in a series of venues within the town centre; it gave the local community an opportunity to get involved in shaping the vision for the town and confirmed key objectives. Key outcomes of the consultation included:

- A large number of people recognised the importance of maintaining the inherent character of Solihull;
- Renovation of Mell Square is welcomed
- 67% of respondents thought that the masterplan should explore the potential of relocating the train station;
- 62% supported improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity;
- 68% agreed that residential uses should be encouraged within the town centre;
- 86% agreed that a more diverse evening and leisure offer is required; and
- 68% thought that there was opportunity for commercial development, particularly in the existing business area.

Key elements drawn from the evidence base together with the outcomes of the stakeholder and public consultation, have driven the formation of the Solihull 2036 Vision:

"A 21st century town, nationally 'best in class' and the focus of long term regional investment at the forefront of innovation, diversity and sustainability. Offering better living, retail and offices with great connections and public realm to meet the aspirations of local people and businesses."

1.3 Developing Framework Concepts

By gaining a clear understanding of the fundamental issues, opportunities and ambitions for Solihull, three main themes emerged which hold the key to achieving the Solihull 2036 Vision:

- **Connections** - The overall connection concept is focussed on the need to reconnect Solihull Town Centre with its currently disjointed areas into one cohesive, integrated centre. It seeks to create a network which integrates the town centres various retail, commercial, civic, residential, and cultural precincts;
- **Living and Working** - Diversification is a central aim of the living and working concept helping to inform future market and land use considerations. Central to this concept is the introduction of more residential uses and further office uses into the town centre to inject new vitality through a mixture of activities, economic relationships, times of use and built form; and
- **Experience** - The Solihull Town Centre user experience is a crucial component of creating an appealing environment to live, work and enjoy. This concept seeks to enhance the town's evening and leisure offer, upgrade the quality of the streets and public spaces and promoting high quality development; encouraging people to play an active role in streets and confirming Solihull as a prime destination.

Both in combination and as distinctive agendas, these strategies set out a broad framework for future growth and development, which can then form the basis for future development projects and interventions.

1.4 Identifying Areas of Change

The masterplan identifies seven areas of change (see figure 1.1) within Solihull Town Centre which provide opportunities to identify practical interventions which can deliver the three emerging concepts.

It is not the intention of the areas of change to be prescriptive in a way that suppresses future creativity or the ability of the town centre to respond to external influences. However, it is important to explore a number of the spatial relationships that are likely to be generated through examination of a particular approach. The definition of the physical boundaries have been derived through the spatial and market analysis of Solihull as well as an appreciation of existing ambition for change that has emerged through discussions with key stakeholders.

In this context, the position of the railway station is significant – investment in the station may in the short-term be focused in the present location but that does not mean that a town centre masterplan that considers a 20 year timeframe should not look at a future where the station is relocated, with the potential wider economic and placemaking benefits that this change could generate.

Within each of the areas of change, the masterplan identified a number of development sites through which Solihull might accommodate significant additional growth and improvements to the connectivity of the town centre. The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan broadly follows the sites identified in earlier work, but also includes a number of new sites which could provide further opportunities to respond to the emerging concepts in the longer term.

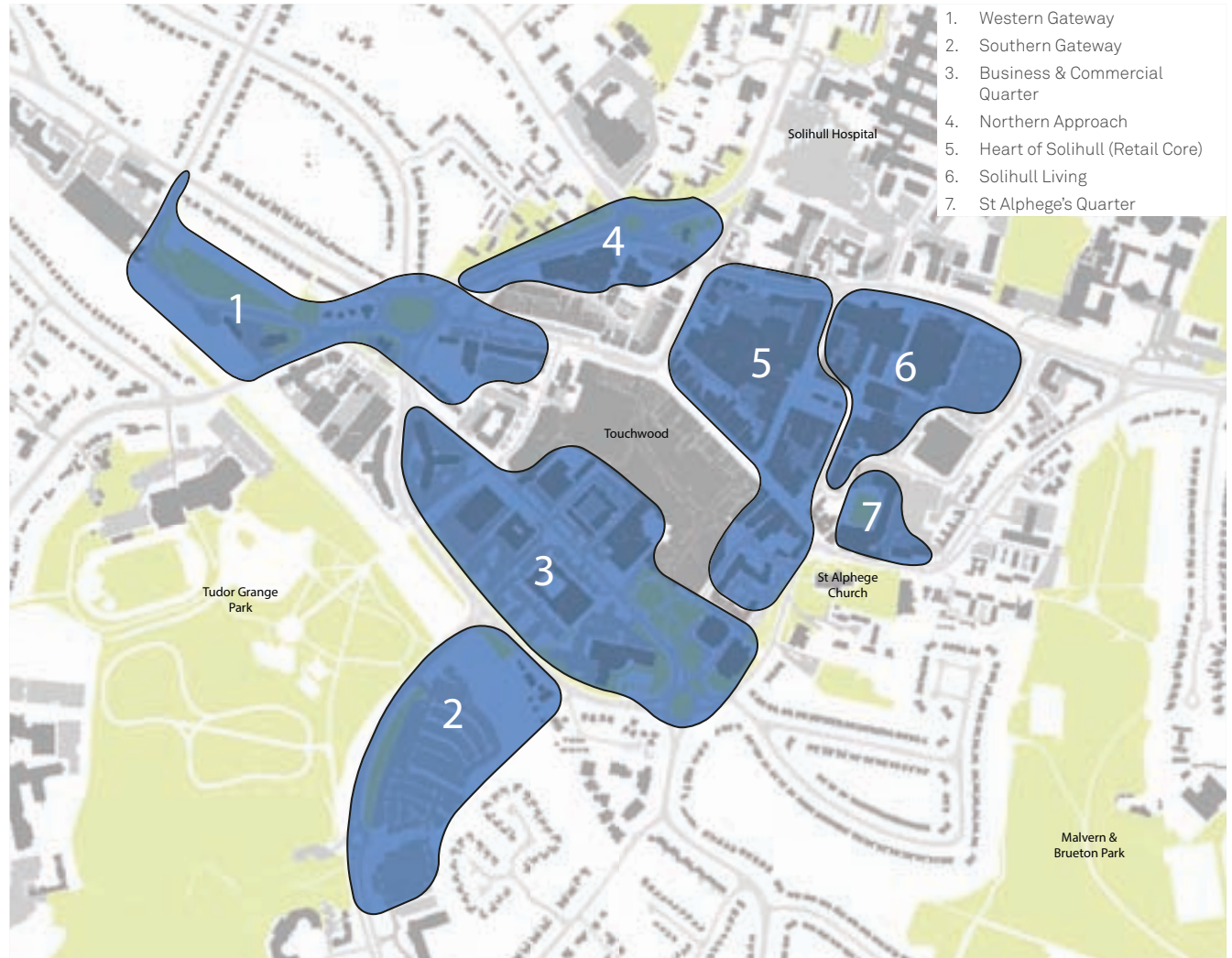


Figure 1.1 Plan identifying the seven areas of change incorporating key areas for intervention.



1.5 Solihull Town Centre Masterplan

The following points relate to the plan opposite (figure 1.2) and summarise the key interventions proposed by the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan:

1. Short term upgrades to the public realm and green space surrounding the existing train station providing a positive frontage to the train station.
2. Suburban residential development to come forward in accordance with the long term relocation of the station.
3. Traffic management interventions and enhancements to the public realm around Blossomfield Road roundabout, including a new path through the roundabout, to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the Town Centre and the station.
4. High quality town centre offices, up to 199,500 sqft / 18,534 sqm of new office development to provide an attractive new arrival point into Solihull's business and commercial quarter.
5. High quality new residential development (up to 71 new homes) to provide an attractive frontage onto Lode Lane and incorporate enhancements to the public realm and adjacent green space.
6. Planning consent for a 12,626 sqft / 1,173 sqm mixed-use restaurant and office building at Drury Lane. In addition, plans are currently being developed for the wider redevelopment of Mell Square, which could provide a further 147 new homes and 110,075 sqft / 10,226 sqm of retail development.
7. Large scale redevelopment for high density urban living accommodating up to 309 new homes and providing upgraded public realm and attractive new frontage onto Warwick Road.
8. Medium density family housing providing attractive frontage onto New Road, providing up to 11 new homes.
9. Touchwood II extension and Solihull Council House include the 115,000 sqft / 10,684 sqm expansion of the Touchwood Shopping Centre to accommodate 30 new shops and restaurants.
10. New urban living residential development providing up to 226 new homes.
11. A new pedestrian / cycle link established between Touchwood and Homer Road.
12. New office development which fronts onto Prince's Way providing up to 227,300 sqft / 21,117 sqm of new accommodation.
13. An attractive north-south link between the relocated train station and Homer Road, improving pedestrian / cycle connectivity.
14. Long term relocation of the Solihull Train Station bridging over the train line, connecting Tudor Grange Park and residential development in the south to the town centre in the north.
15. New civic square and transport interchange adjacent the relocated Solihull Train Station is overlooked by commercial development which could enhance the user experience by providing places to eat, drink and browse.
16. A new multi-storey car park providing up to 951 car park spaces for commuters and visitors.
17. High density family housing providing up to 398 new homes and associated parking.
18. Medium density family housing providing up to 54 new homes, with on plot parking.



Figure 1.2 Solihull Town Centre Key Masterplan Objectives

02 | Introduction

Solihull is already a successful and popular town, and has consistently been named as one of the best places to live within the United Kingdom. With its excellent shopping, cultural facilities, buoyant employment (presently around 15,000 jobs) and attractive setting; Solihull has a lot to offer to residents, businesses and visitors.

UK Central is a prime investment location, which is the West Midland’s principal economic gateway and strongest performing economy, centred around Solihull. Incorporating the town centre, Birmingham Airport, Jaguar Land Rover and the National Exhibition Centre, UK Central is also the site of the West Midland’s proposed new High Speed Rail Interchange. In June 2013, Solihull Council, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, and Arup published the UK Central Masterplan, showcasing the development potential of the area up to 2040. The masterplan outlines how bold measures need to be taken to capitalise on the potential of the already successful gateway site. It is predicted that UK Central could create an additional 100,000 jobs with a town centre range of between 4,000 and 16,000 jobs, and increase the region’s revenue up to £19.5 billion annually by 2040.

It provides significant opportunities to maintain and enhance Solihull’s existing economic base on a scale of national significance; positioning the town as part of the engine room of the West Midlands. In order to ensure managed growth and the retention of the character which makes Solihull so popular, the Town Centre Masterplan will provide a framework for future development, which aims to balance the sometimes conflicting needs for growth and infrastructure investment with quality of place.

2.1 Purpose of this document

This document presents the supporting evidence and final Solihull Town Centre Masterplan, which builds upon previous visioning work, established through the Town Centre Study (GVA Grimley, 2009) and draws together the principles defined in the Solihull Town Centre Access and Movement Study.

The work in this report has been underpinned by Cushman and Wakefield’s analysis of the market, which reviews the current and potential office, retail, leisure and residential markets within Solihull Town Centre, and has helped to inform the emerging strategy. Figure 2.1 provides a diagrammatic explanation of these separate workstreams and inter-relationships.

2.2 Extent of the Study

The Town Centre Masterplan study area (Figure 2.2) covers the immediate town centre which is bounded by the B4102 Warwick Road to the north, the railway line to the south, Church Hill Road / New Road to the east and Solihull Train Station and Lode Lane to the west. This area encompasses Solihull’s retail and commercial core.

In addition, two further areas of influence have been identified, one to the north and one to the south. The northern area of influence, beyond the B4102 includes Solihull Hospital, Solihull School and a number of existing commercial buildings. The area to the south includes Tudor Grange Park and Solihull College. These areas, whilst not forming part of the town centre core, are important components of the town and it is important that the masterplan ensures that these important assets are integrated and well connected with the town centre.



Figure 2.1 Diagram illustrating the separate work streams and interrelationships



Figure 2.2 Extent of the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan Study Area and associated Area of Influence.



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03 | Solihull Today

03 | Solihull Today

This section analyses the various urban components of Solihull Town Centre including; heritage, public realm, land use, activities and movement. It aims to provide a foundation which informs and underpins development of the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan.

3.1 Heritage

Patterns of development over time as recorded in the historical mapping show a number of fixed points (St Alphege Church) and considerable change in the development of the Town Centre over the last two hundred years. Dating back to the 12th Century, Solihull originated as a small, successful market town, which flourished until the 14th Century when it suffered ongoing decline due to poor harvests and competition from other towns. Solihull continued as a quiet village until the 18th Century, when the introduction of turnpike roads and more importantly the railway in the mid-19th Century stimulated new growth. This improved transport network helped to establish Solihull as a successful commuter town, providing an attractive place to live for wealthy professionals working in Birmingham.

Figure 3.1 opposite illustrates the evolution of the town from a traditional village high street to a significant town; demonstrating visually, how the development of the town's movement networks over time have influenced land use arrangement and created physical barriers for pedestrians and cyclists:

Solihull 1789

This image illustrates how the extent of the settlement is largely contained along the High Street and Warwick Road, demonstrating the traditional linear character of its market town origins. The High Street terminates at Malvern Park where St Alphege church forms the eastern edge of town.

Solihull 1945

This mapping illustrates how the introduction of the railway in the mid-19th Century now forms the southern edge of town, with Solihull Train Station located just to the west of the town centre and connected via Station Road. The arrival of the railway caused a significant change in the town's character as it opened access for commuters to Birmingham which commenced a period of suburbanisation. Due to the station location, settlement and activity in the town centre has over time shown a gradual shift away from St Alphege Church and further west. New settlement has expanded into Malvern Park, which has also merged with Brueton Park creating a linear green space on the eastern fringe of the town centre.

Solihull 1999

Solihull again underwent considerable change over the last 50 years, evolving from a wealthy suburban neighbourhood into a commercial centre. This evolution comes as a result of Solihull's accessible location at the centre of the national motorway and rail network, and its close proximity to Birmingham International Airport. It was over this 50 year period that Solihull's population grew substantially, advancing the town from Solihull Rural District to Solihull Metropolitan Borough created in 1974. This image illustrates the impact of the introduction of Lode Lane to the west of the town centre and also the conversion of the Lode Lane and Blossomfield Road junctions into roundabouts. Land to the south of the railway becomes Tudor Grange Park with the town expanding south into the countryside. Interestingly, a large area in the heart of the centre is now void due to the construction of the new Touchwood Shopping Centre. In addition, a large area of housing has been removed to the south of Warwick Road and replaced with Mell Square shopping centre, which retains the historic street pattern. The final image shows the development of a number of large scale blocks located to the north and south of the town centre, which are poorly integrated and further fragment the previously tight urban grain.



View of St Alphege Church from the High Street.



Solihull 1789



Solihull 1945



Solihull 1999



Solihull 2013

Solihull 2013

Lastly, the latest mapping shows Solihull as it is today, following the development of Touchwood which forms the new heart of the town centre.



Solihull School (founded 1560)

Figure 3.1: Charting Solihull's historical evolution

3.2 Solihull Conservation Area

Solihull Conservation Area is located at the heart of the town centre and roughly follows the High Street and Poplar Road as indicated in Figure 3.2. The conservation area contains all of the listed buildings within the study area which create the historic character associated with Solihull. These include:

- The Church of Saint Alphege (Grade I Listed);
- War Memorial to the front of the Church of Saint Alphege (Grade II Listed);
- A cluster of 15 listed buildings along the eastern end of the High Street (Grade II and Grade II* Listed);
- The Roman Catholic Church of Saint Augustine of Canterbury, located on the corner of Herbert Road / Station Road (Grade II Listed); and
- A cluster of 5 listed buildings located to the north of the Warwick Road/Poplar Road junction (Grade II Listed).

Other notable listed buildings just outside of the study include: parts of Solihull School (Chatwin Building and Bradford House, Grade II Listed) which front onto Warwick Road, just north of the study area; and The old Grammar School (Grade II* Listed) located at the Park Road/New Road Junction.



Figure 3.2: Solihull Town Centre Heritage and Conservation Plan

3.3 Gateways and Key Frontages

Gateways and frontages are instrumental in helping to determine the character of a place and the ability to navigate through it. They signify the key arrival points into a town and provide key landmarks which aid wayfinding and emphasise the hierarchy of a place.

Perhaps surprising for a town of such quality and heritage, Solihull's main gateways are currently characterised by large scale infrastructure such as the Lode Lane/ Prince's Way roundabout, Lode Lane / Warwick Road roundabout and Church Hill Road / Prince's Way roundabout which dominate in scale compared to the surrounding context. This presents a missed opportunity in terms of creating a 'front door' to Solihull which demonstrates the inherent quality of the town. Key arrival points for pedestrians and cyclists include Solihull Train Station and the underpass which connects Tudor Grange Park and Prince's Way. These areas fail to convey the quality and vibrancy associated with Solihull, particularly in terms of the station, which feels extremely remote from the town, and is relatively poor in terms of environmental quality.

There is a marked contrast between the quality of frontages within the internal town centre (such as the High Street) and the outward facing town centre viewed from the surrounding ring road. Frontages associated with the main High Street are relatively high quality and provide a varied and positive street frontage with numerous cafés and a varied built form which reflects the historic nature of the town. Frontages along the ring road are generally of a lower quality and quite often do not overlook the street; this is particularly evident along Prince's Way which is characterised by tall vegetation and backs of existing office buildings. This has the resulting effect of creating an insular facing town, which fails to promote itself to people arriving into Solihull, creating a negative perception which is at odds with the town centre core.

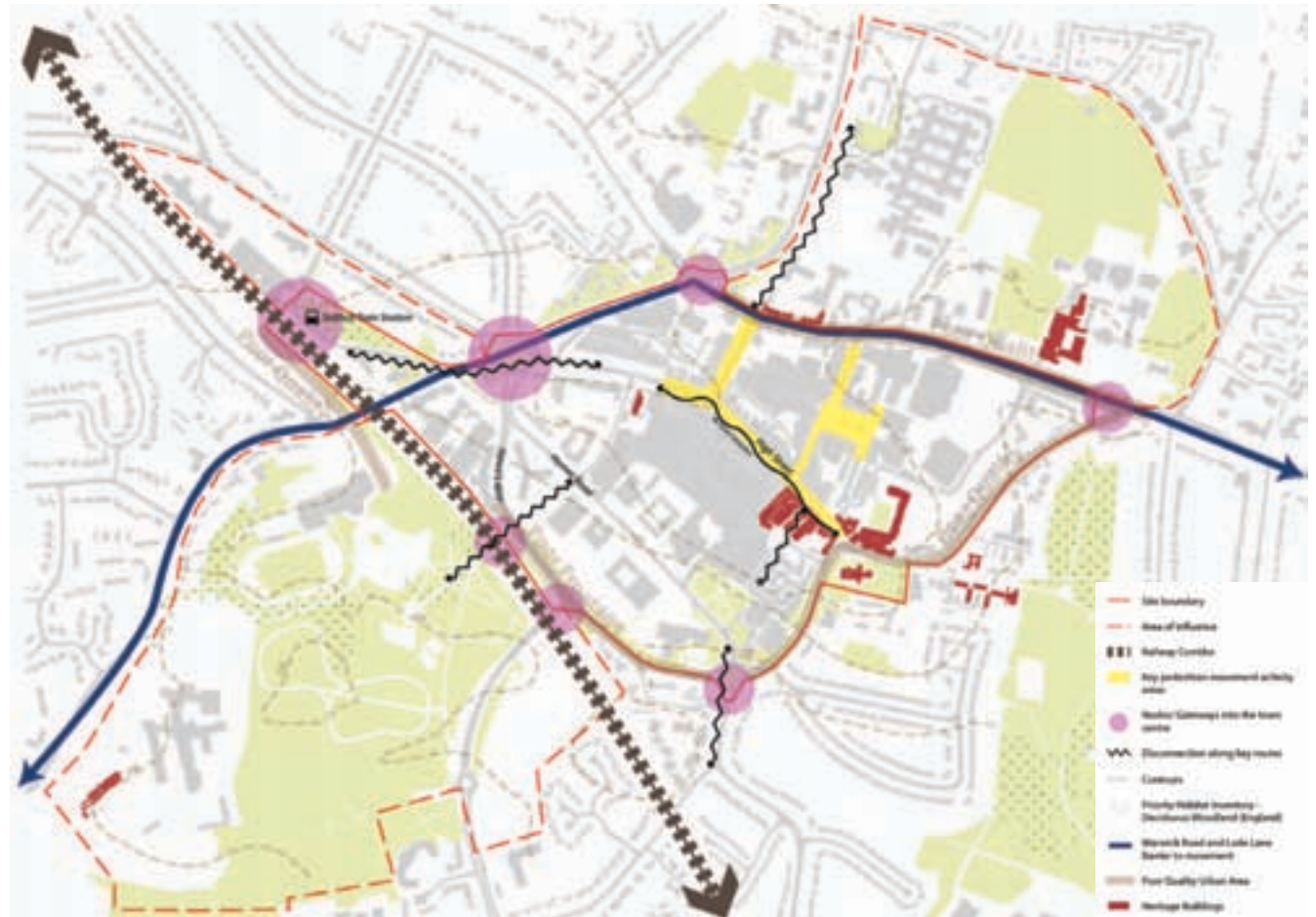


Figure 3.3: Solihull Town Centre Spatial Appreciation Plan

3.4 Public Realm and Open Space

3.4.1 Public Realm

Solihull Town Centre provides a variety of public spaces, which support a range of different functions. Some like the eastern entrance to Touchwood (Manor Walk) accommodate quieter, more reflective uses; whilst others such as Mell Square and Theatre Square are more geared towards activity and public events.

- Mell Square is the main public square within the town and is a large formally arranged rectangular space, which incorporates street trees, planters, lighting, bollards, benches and litter bins. To the centre of the square sits a large Costa Coffee Shop, approximately 163sqm in size, which provides a large outdoor seating area. Whilst the space experiences a large volume of footfall, the layout and relatively poor quality of the public realm mean it is currently underutilised and is not representative of Solihull's high quality town centre. In addition, the large volume of street furniture and trees combined with the layout means that the potential uses of the space are restricted despite its large size.
- Theatre Square provides spaces for seating and events adjacent to the library. Whilst well maintained and overlooked by the library café, this space is relatively underutilised, perhaps due to the shade cast by surrounding buildings and the characterless facades defining the north of the space, which is as a result of the space fronting onto the back walls of Touchwood Shopping Centre. The space provides opportunities to introduce other complementary uses such as an outdoor gallery, which could introduce colour and draw people into the space.
- Manor Walk Square successfully contrasts modern stainless steel street furniture with a formal layout and heritage style planting (clipped box hedges) and

provides a more reflective space than Solihull's other public spaces. Whilst successful the space could be improved through increased seating provision.

- The High Street is pedestrianised and was formerly the main retail spine through the town centre. Over time however, the retail emphasis has shifted as a consequence of Touchwood Shopping Centre. The positive feel of the High Street is due largely to the vibrant and high quality uses located to either side, which offer a positive café culture and attractive heritage architecture. Whilst the High Street does benefit from a wide range of street furniture, the often contrasting styles (stainless steel, cast iron and wood) and sheer volume of elements give the public realm a rather cluttered feel. In addition, the dated and low quality concrete pavers do little to respond to the historical buildings and conservation area.

3.4.2 Open Space

Solihull town centre benefits from being in close proximity to two large public parks namely Tudor Grange Park; and Malvern and Brueton Park;

- Tudor Grange Park – Located adjacent to the southern edge of the town centre, this Green Flag Park incorporates a children's play area, skate park, outdoor gym, cycle track and pitch and putt course. Situated adjacent to the Leisure Centre and Solihull College, the main access to the park from the town centre is via the underpass to Prince's Way.
- Malvern and Brueton Park – Located to the east of the town centre is designated as a Green Flag Park and incorporates ornamental and sensory gardens, tennis courts, children's play area, picnic area and walking trails. The park is also a designated nature reserve, characterised by mature woodland.

By improving accessibility to these parks and encouraging people to use them, they offer the potential to improve the

health and wellbeing of residents and make Solihull Town Centre a more attractive place to live and work.

Despite the close proximity of these large green open spaces, there is very little soft landscaping within the town centre itself and access to the parks is at present poorly signposted and visually disconnected.

Within the town centre itself there are a number of smaller green spaces including:

- Jubilee Gardens - Located to the northern edge of Homer Road (adjacent to Solihull Registry Office), this south facing space has the potential to become a popular and well used destination for workers and shoppers. However, the park is relatively underutilised and lacks suitable facilities such as seating, bins and shelter for people to access and use the space through varying weather conditions and changing times of day. In order to improve this space, new user friendly facilities could be introduced and improvements made to the relationship between the park and the buildings immediately surrounding it. Links could also be improved between the park and; Theatre Square, the Hotel, Tudor Grange Park, and the Council Offices.
- The setting of St Alphege Church provides an attractive green edge to the town centre and complements the historic nature of the High Street.
- At the eastern edge of the Lode Lane/Station Road roundabout is an area of green space consisting of mature trees and vegetation which provides a green buffer between the town centre and the roundabout. Situated at a key gateway into the town centre, this space provides little function and has the potential to be greatly improved as an urban park or be consolidated into the surrounding urban fabric to complement nearby land uses and create frontage onto Lode Lane.

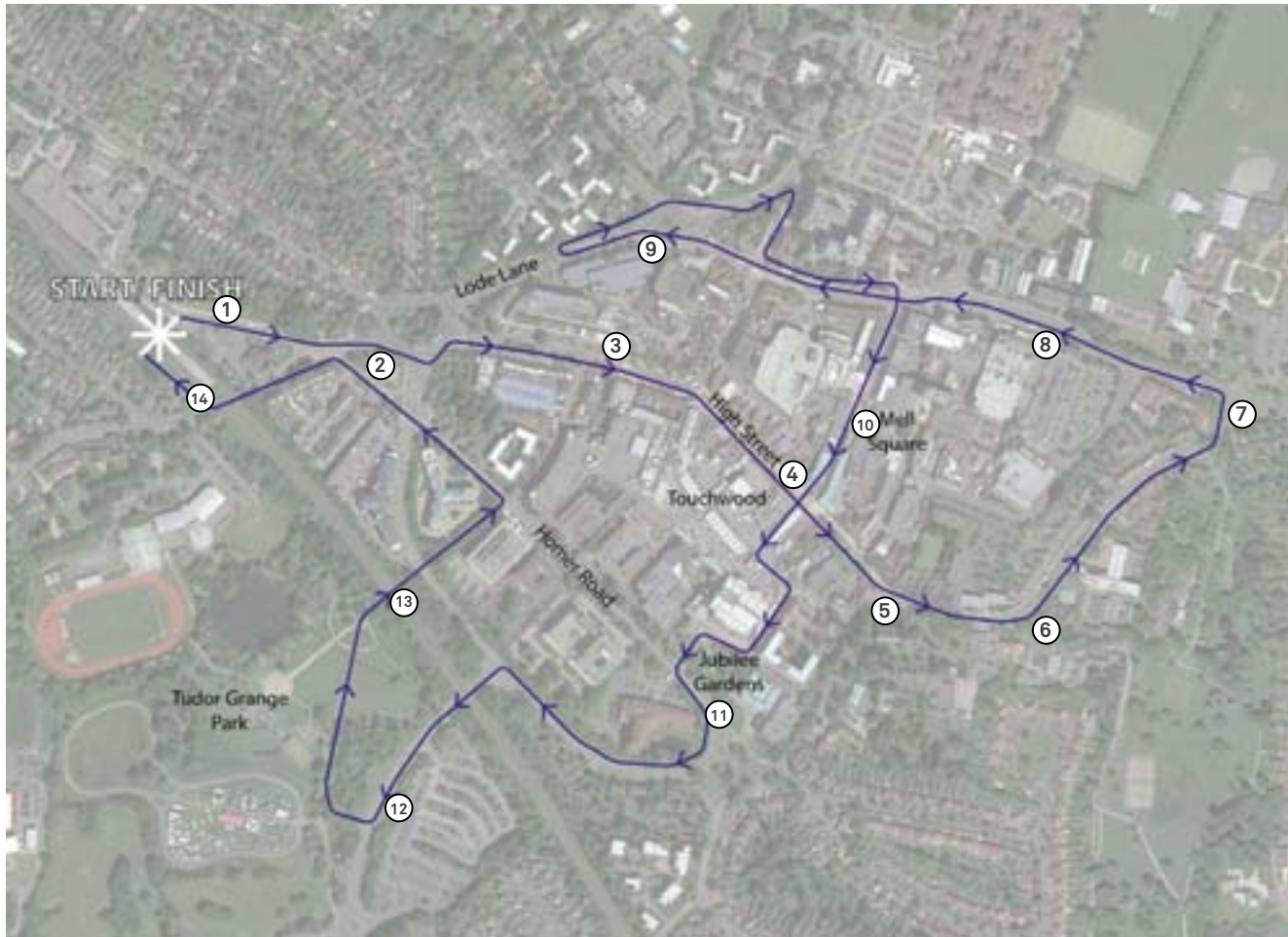


Figure 3.4: Solihull Town Centre photographic survey plan



1
Bus interchange outside Solihull Station: despite its important function as a key gateway into Solihull the current quality of public realm outside the station is relatively poor. The area has poor pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the town centre and limited wayfinding facilities.



2
View looking towards Blossomfield Road roundabout from Station Approach: The approach to the town centre from the five arm roundabout at Blossomfield Road has poor pedestrian and cycle connectivity and doesn't provide a positive gateway into Solihull.



3 Station Road looking west towards Blossomfield Road Roundabout: Has recently undergone improvements as part of the Solihull Gateway Project, including upgraded public realm and improved pedestrian priority.



4 View of the High Street with local markets: The High Street has an outdated public realm with cluttered and mismatched street furniture.



5 View of Church Square, outside St Alphege Church: An attractive historical setting, although there are limited places to stop and appreciate it. A large amount of street furniture is located at the entrance of the High Street, which can form a barrier to pedestrians.



6 View of the western pedestrian and cycle route between the town centre and Malvern and Brueton Park: The park is psychologically disconnected from the centre, however this could be improved visual connection through enhanced wayfinding and public realm to strengthen links with the town centre.



7 Northern entrance into Malvern and Brueton Park: This formal entrance into the park is grand, and is used as a setting for various calendar events.



8 Frontage along Warwick Road: Photo shows both multi- storey and ground level car parking along Warwick Road. This creates a poor frontage to Warwick Road and a negative pedestrian experience.

Figure 3.5: Photos of the public realm and open space in and around Solihull Town Centre. An analysis of these spaces is provided, which builds on the findings produced from the Solihull Town Centre Public Realm Framework (2014).



9 Lode Lane Car Park: A multi-storey car park at the Warwick Road and Lode Lane roundabout, which provides poor frontage onto this important corner.



10 Mell Square: Has a dated and relatively low quality public realm. While it provides seating and performance space, these are not placed in appropriate locations to facilitate activity.



11 Jubilee Gardens: Feels isolated from the town centre and is at present somewhat under used and under exploited as a key green space within the town.



12 Monkspath Hall Road Car Park: A ground level car park which doesn't provide frontage or out look to Monkspath Hall Road and lacks character and connection with Tudor Grange Park.



13 Railway underpass connecting Tudor Grange Park and Solihull Town Centre: the underpass can present safety concerns particularly in the evening, due to poor lighting and little overlooking.



14 Pedestrian connection to Solihull Train Station on the southern edge of the railway line: A poor quality urban space with limited wayfinding facilities, which can present safety concerns.

3.5 Use and Activities

The historic development patterns described within Section 3.1 have ultimately shaped the town centre land use characteristics. This is presently dominated by large single use areas, which have little interaction between uses and form obvious character areas; these are illustrated within Figure 3.6. Whilst this provides positives in reducing potential conflicts between differing land uses, it fails to recognise the potential benefits which complementary mixed land uses can provide, which can include greater promotion of walking and cycling, enhanced vitality and development of an area's unique identity.

At present, land uses are generally divided as follows:

- The retail core at the centre of the town, to both sides of the High Street, and extending north towards the B4102. This area encompasses the existing Touchwood Shopping Centre, Mell Square and the High street.
- The commercial area centred along Homer Road that includes National Grid's Metering Head Quarters, Solihull Immigration Centre, Solihull Police Station, Paragon House and The Holiday Inn Hotel.
- A commercial area located along the Lode Lane/ Warwick Road junction which includes the Premier Inn Hotel, The Courtyard, plus a number of smaller scale offices.
- A number of civic uses are located throughout the town centre including St Augustine's Catholic Church which provides an attractive frontage onto Station Road and St Alphege Church which provides a striking terminus

to the High Street, and is a key landmark within Solihull. As previously stated within Section 3.3, Solihull Train Station is located on the periphery of the town centre to the west of Lode Lane, which makes it feel isolated from the town due to the existing infrastructure.

- There are currently very few residential areas within the town centre as they are generally located on the periphery of the town. A relatively modest residential area is located along New Road and is mainly formed of terraced housing with the exception of a number of apartments located off George Road and Deerpark Court sheltered apartments at the New Road/Warwick Road junction.



Entrance of Touchwood Shopping Centre



The Courtyard commercial development on Warwick Road



Tudor Grange Park



St Augustine's Catholic Church



Commercial buildings along Homer Road



Figure 3.6: Solihull Town Centre Existing Land Use Plan

3.6 Movement

There is no doubt that Solihull is currently dominated by the car; with 79% of people arriving by car despite the town centre being the most accessible place in the Borough (Solihull Connected Green Paper, 2015). In addition 42% of commuters into the town centre are travelling less than 5km and walking and cycling combined account for just 7% of the current number of trips being generated.

Solihull's town centre is defined and bounded by an inner ring road formed from Lode Lane, Warwick Road, New Road and Prince's Way. Created originally to alleviate traffic congestion within the centre, the ring road also acts as a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement, effectively disconnecting the town centre with its surrounding areas.

The same is also true of Solihull Train Station, which is currently disconnected from the town centre by the ring road and requires people to cross a number of busy roads and major junctions; further compounded by a lack of signage, poor legibility and lack of clear sightlines to the town centre. At present, Solihull suffers from relatively low usage of the train station compared to other modes, despite its frequent services to Birmingham and London.

The main bus interchange is located opposite the station entrance on Station Road, and provides connections to the town centre and beyond. Whilst functional the public realm is relatively poor and its current layout has led to conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. Overall, the current station environment doesn't feel welcoming and fails to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists with narrow footways and no designated cycle route.

Despite the majority of the town centre being just five minutes' walk (400m) from the centre of the High Street,

the town centre currently has a disconnected and staggered network of pedestrian and cycle routes into and out of the town. This is particularly evident in the poor connections that exist between the north and the south of the town, largely due to the sloping gradient and terracing of buildings. This has led to routes into the town centre often being stopped short at the outer edges, severed by buildings, rail lines and major roads. The few routes that do exist, such as the pedestrian route between the Solihull Immigration Office and the Holiday Inn Hotel are often poor quality, not overlooked and feel unsafe.

In comparison, east-west connections for pedestrians are relatively good, largely due to the pedestrianised High Street and Mell Square, which provide a safe vehicle free environment. Furthermore the internal connections provided by Touchwood, are high quality, sheltered from the weather and well integrated with other routes.

Provision for cyclists within the town centre is relatively poor, with current cycle routes disconnected, sporadic and mainly limited to main roads, away from key desire lines. In particular, cyclists are prevented from using the main pedestrianised routes such as the High Street, forcing them onto the more hostile main roads, and reducing the incentive to cycle. In addition, there is also a distinct lack of cycle parking throughout the town and at key destinations, particularly Solihull Train Station.

As Solihull continues to grow over time, there is a risk that new development could potentially increase the number of cars and therefore exacerbate congestion. Therefore it is imperative that the masterplan provides opportunities to increase accessibility for sustainable travel and improve the environment to encourage greater pedestrian, cycle and public transport use.



Mell Square



Warwick Road



Homer Road



Solihull Train Station on Station Approach



Figure 3.7: Solihull Town Centre Movement and Access Analysis Plan

3.7 The Future of Solihull Train Station

Located on the periphery of the town, Solihull Station is currently not representative of Solihull's or the Borough's future ambitions. The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan provides opportunities to evaluate the current offer and investigate the prospects to better integrate and modernise the station in the future.

This future proofing of the station is extremely important given the projected increase in the number of passengers using the station in the coming years. At present approximately 1.6 million passengers use Solihull Station each year, or around 2,500 per day. This figure reflects annual growth of 16.5% in the three years since 2011/2012. Applying longer term growth forecasts from Network Rail a 49% passenger volume growth to 2023 and 114% growth to 2043 is predicted. For Solihull this would mean an increase

to 3,800 passengers per day in 2023 and 5,500 in 2043. The case for a radical change in the station offer is therefore obvious.

The table below provides a brief summary of existing issues and potential future opportunities associated with either the refurbishment of the current station, or the potential to relocate the station to a more central location.

Point of analysis	Train Station Location Comparison		
	Existing station	Existing station with potential refurbishment	New station relocated to a more centralised location
Connectivity to the town centre	The station is currently situated on the periphery of the town centre with poor connectivity to the centre, due largely to the barriers created by major roads and junctions, and also poor existing wayfinding /legibility.	Whilst refurbishment will not resolve the issue of the stations peripheral location; better signposting and upgrading of key routes and crossings between the station and the town centre could go some way to improving legibility and wayfinding.	Relocating the station to a more centralised location provides opportunities to improve connectivity with the town centre, through the use of clear, direct links to Touchwood and the High Street. This could be further supported through the use of signposting and a clear route hierarchy to aid legibility.
Gateway to the town centre	The current station does not match the quality of the town centre or the ambitions of the Borough for UK Central in terms of creating a principal gateway between the National Rail Network and Solihull Town Centre.	Refurbishment of the station could vary in terms of scale and potential cost. A refurbished station could deliver a more attractive gateway into the town centre in terms of it's aesthetic appearance and also its scale.	Relocation could provide opportunity to create a new, bespoke station which responds to its surroundings and acts as an important new landmark within the town centre. A relocated station also provides opportunities to support new mixed use development, helping to put the station at the heart of the town.
Visitor / passenger experience	The current station is not particularly welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists and has the feel of a suburban station, with little in the way of facilities. In addition, there is no formally allocated space for pick up and drop off.	Refurbishment of the station could provide opportunities for improving visitor and passenger experience, through improvements to capacity, public realm and station facilities.	A relocated station could significantly improve visitor / passenger experience by shortening the distance to the town centre, presenting opportunities for new mixed use development around the station and providing new, modern facilities in an attractive setting. A relocated station would offer the opportunity to improve links between Monkspath Hall Road, Homer Road and the High Street.
Connectivity with public transport	The current layout of the station and associated transport interchange can generate congestion in and around Station Approach which impacts upon buses, taxis, cars, pedestrians and cyclists.	Refurbishment of the station could look to improve the station environment, however there is little scope to reconfigure the interchange in any significant manner.	A relocated station would require the re-routing of bus and SPRINT public transport network and the creation of a new modern multi-modal interchange facility. SPRINT routing options have been considered as part of the TP2 Movement Studies. Associated integrated public transport changes would require significant highway modifications but could greatly improve general town centre connectivity within core developments within a five minute walk of SPRINT and local bus services.

3.8 Key Opportunities & Constraints

The table to the right provides a summary of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats outlined within section 3.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high quality town rich in heritage. Frontages associated with the main High Street are relatively high quality and provide a varied and positive street frontage with numerous café's and a varied built form which reflects the historic nature of the town. Solihull town centre benefits from being in close proximity to two large public parks namely Tudor Grange Park; and Malvern and Brueton Park. Existing market reputation and high quality of living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of outward frontage resulting in an insular facing town, which fails to promote itself to people arriving into Solihull. Solihull's main gateways are currently characterised by large scale infrastructure. Key arrival points for pedestrians and cyclists fail to convey the quality and vibrancy associated with Solihull. The train station feels remote from the centre, and has a relatively poor environmental quality. Frontages along the ring road are generally of a lower quality and do not overlook the street. There is very little greenspace within the town centre core and access to parks is at present poorly signposted. The town is characterised by large single use areas, which have little interaction. Limited residential offer in the town centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train Station has the opportunity to create a 'front door' to Solihull which demonstrates the inherent quality of the town. Build on it's reputation as an affluent town. Build on Solihull Town Centre's existing variety of public spaces, which support a range of different functions. Improve accessibility to surrounding parks to encourage people to use them. Increase the residential offer in the town centre. Recognise the potential benefits which complementary mixed land uses provide. Support the wider Borough ambitions outlined by UK Central. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market considerations for demand and viability. Environmentally and socially responsive to a changing demographic; elderly, youth and young families - from an environmental and social perspective. Responding to the competitive nature of similar towns in the wider context. Responding to climate change and the push for sustainability.



04 | Vision

The creation of a clear vision will help communicate the values and ideas which will drive the future development of Solihull Town Centre. It will also continue to inform the development of aims and objectives for the town centre which respond to current and anticipated needs. The vision presented within this section encapsulates a deliverable set of aspirations for Solihull Town Centre which has been based upon its current success and takes into account stakeholder collaboration and wider economic drivers such as UK Central.

Solihull 2036

“A 21st century town, nationally ‘best in class’ and the focus of long term regional investment at the forefront of innovation, diversity and sustainability. Offering better living, retail and offices with great connections and public realm to meet the aspirations of local people and businesses.”

“Focus
for future
investment”

A PLACE TO LIVE

A PLACE TO WORK

"A unique place that provides aspirational quality of life for the people who live and work in the town"



21st CENTURY TOWN

"Attractive home for local business"



"Stands apart from its neighbours"

"Modern & diverse"





05 | Framework Concepts

05 | Framework Concepts

This section explores the overarching concepts that emerged from the data collection, analysis and engagement conducted in the early stages of the masterplan studies. By gaining a clear understanding of the fundamental issues, opportunities and ambitions for Solihull, three main themes emerged which hold the key to achieving the Solihull 2036 Vision:

- Connections ;
- Living and Working; and
- Experience.

Both in combination and as distinctive agendas, these strategies set out a broad framework for future growth and development, which can then form the basis for future development projects and interventions.

5.1 Connections

The overall connection concept is focussed on the need to reconnect Solihull Town Centre with its currently disjointed areas - areas which are covered in the analysis undertaken in sections 3.3-3.5 - into one cohesive, integrated centre. It seeks to create a network which integrates the town centres various retail, commercial, civic, residential, and cultural precincts. The connection concept is underpinned by the following ambitions for the Town Centre:

- Deliver a train station which serves as a strong gateway and arrival point into the town centre. The station forms part of the wider town centre influence area with strong links to the centre's major destinations;
- Maximise opportunities for sustainable travel through improved transport infrastructure that helps to reduce congestion in the town centre. Vehicular movement around the town centre will be focused along the western edge at Lode Lane and Prince's Way, reducing



vehicle movement in the east along Church Hill Road and New Road;

- Complement the public realm experience which as a result of softening the northern and eastern edges of the town centre will open Warwick and Church Hill Roads to opportunities for placemaking, green infrastructure, improved permeability, and improved public realm;
- Improve access between the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods. Reducing the road barriers surrounding the town centre will improve connections with the residential neighbourhoods and parklands beyond. It will also better enable and encourage residents, visitors, and workers to choose more sustainable means of travel into town;
- Key locations surrounding the town centre will benefit from improved pedestrian, cycle and bus connections including Solihull Hospital, Solihull School, Tudor Grange Leisure Centre, Solihull Train Station;
- Better integrate key destinations within the town centre by upgrading key connections such as the High Street, Blossomfield roundabout and Lode Lane roundabout; and
- Set out proposals for the management of town centre car parking to ensure that this supports accessibility to the town centre and economic activity.



Figure 5.1: Conceptual connections strategy for Solihull Town Centre



5.2 Living and Working

Diversification is a central aim of the living and working concept for Solihull Town Centre, helping to inform future market and land use considerations. Central to this concept is the introduction of more residential uses and further office uses into the town centre to inject new vitality through a mixture of activities, economic relationships, times of use and built form. The living and working concept will:

- Strengthen the centre's retail core to reinforce Solihull as a unique town and retail destination;
- Encourage residential uses into the town centre, particularly in areas around the eastern and western periphery of the retail core. This will create a mixed use residential and commercial environment which will encourage activity in the town centre beyond retail trading hours and help open the market to evening economy and leisure opportunities; and
- Promote the development of high quality new office development with positive frontages onto key routes. This will consolidate and build upon the existing office offer, and provide opportunities to improve north-south connections.

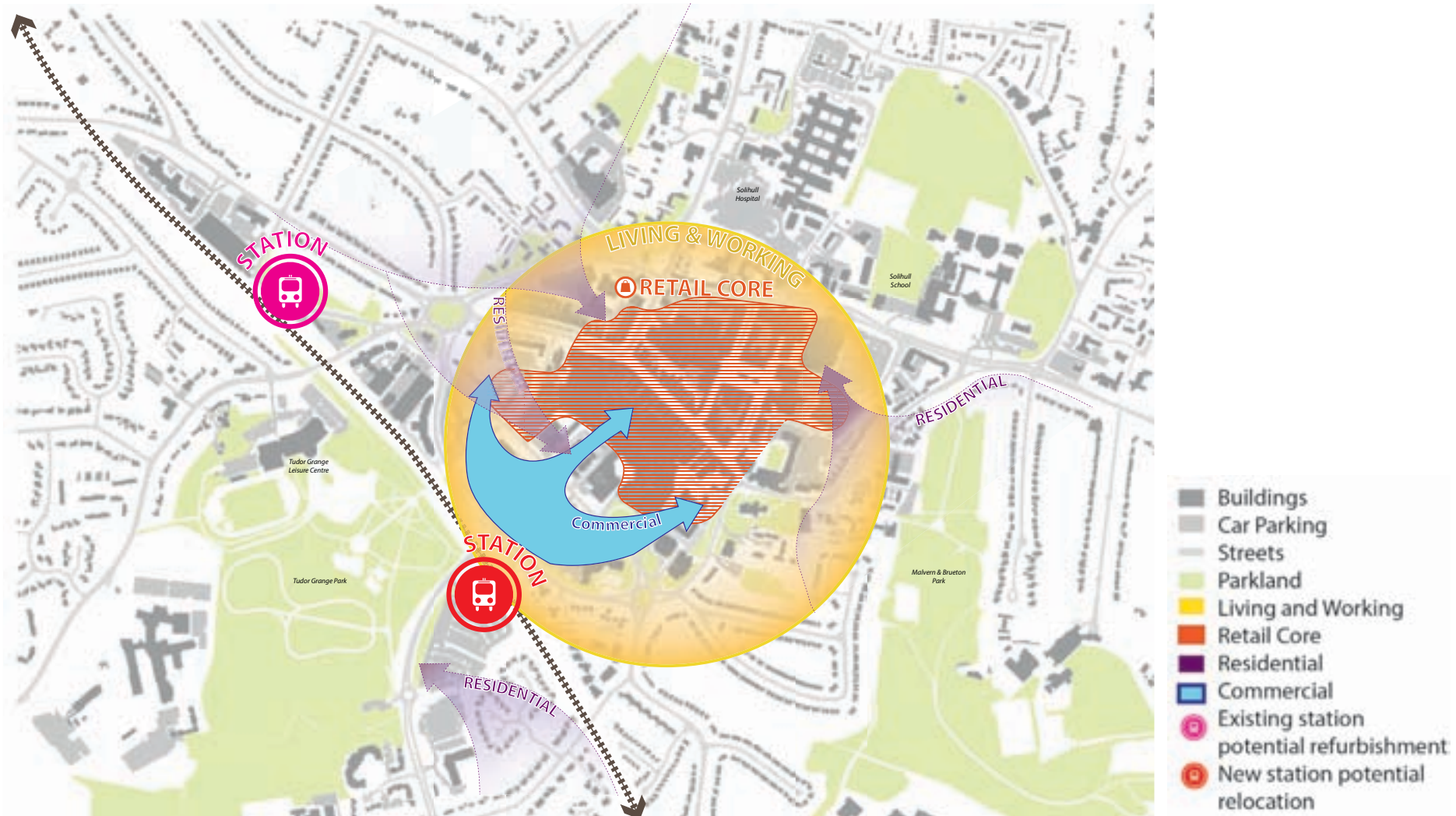


Figure 5.2: Concept of the future living and working strategy for Solihull Town Centre



5.3 Experience

The Solihull Town Centre user experience is a crucial component of creating an appealing environment to live, work and enjoy. The experience concept will aim to:

- Reinforce the retail appeal of Solihull by maintaining a retail core focused around Touchwood Shopping Centre, Mell Square and the High Street which will include widening the retail offer;
- Provide new opportunities to enhance the town centre's evening and leisure offer which can be focused around the High Street and Mell Square;
- Promote high quality and sustainable urban design which Solihull can be proud of;
- Create a town centre where people can choose to live, work and spend their leisure time, encouraging people to play an active role in streets. In turn this will encourage activity in the town centre beyond retail trading hours and strengthen the market for evening and leisure opportunities;
- Build upon the town's existing assets including its heritage, to create a distinctive place to shop, work and live;
- Encourage green infrastructure into the town centre tracing from Tudor Grange Park and Malvern Park and Brueton Park; and
- Upgrade key areas of public realm with high movement and activity within the town centre such as the High Street, Blossomfield roundabout and Lode Lane roundabout.

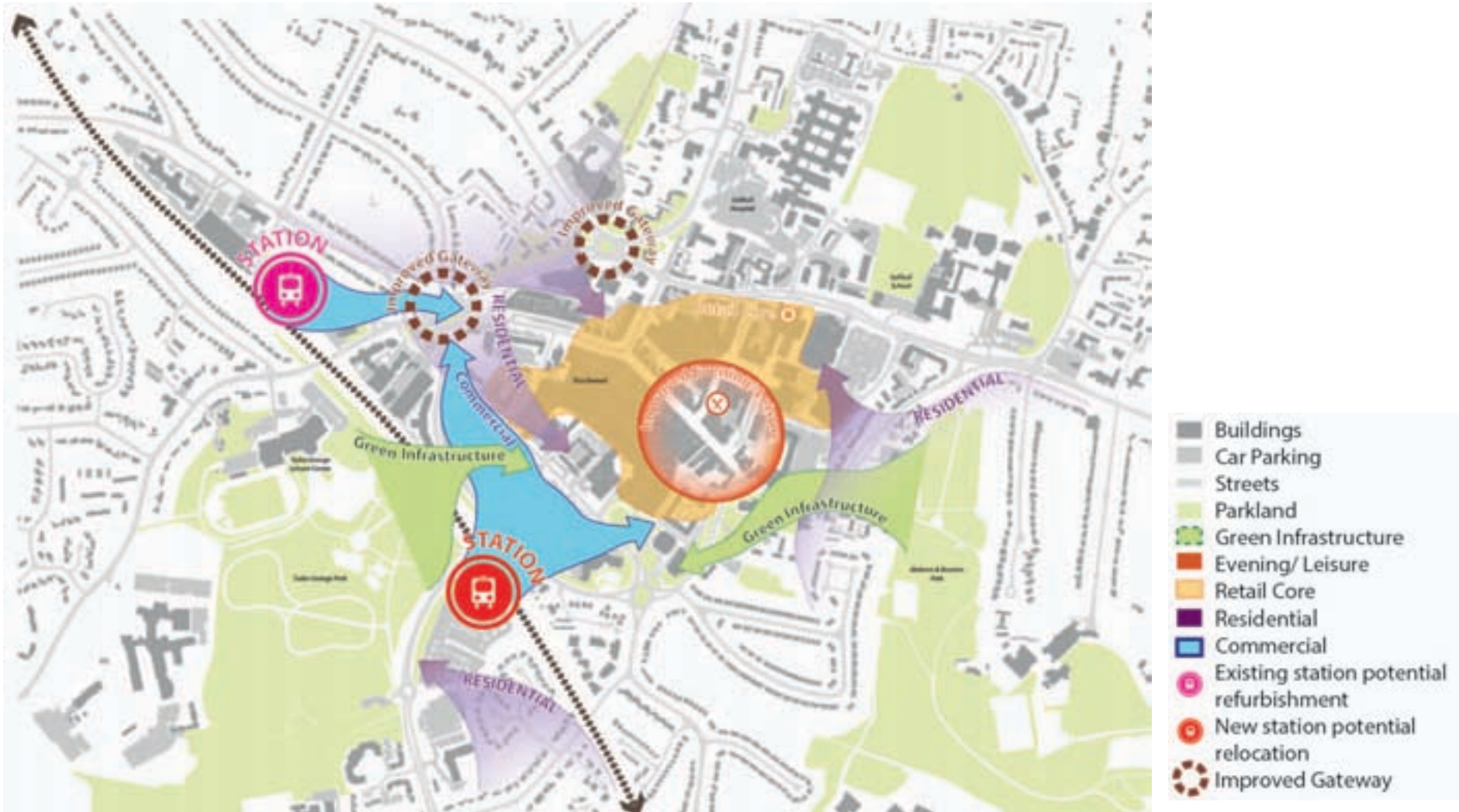


Figure 5.3: Plan illustrating the experience strategy Solihull Town Centre



06 | The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan

06 | The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Areas of Change

This section identifies seven areas of change within Solihull Town Centre which provide practical interventions in order to deliver the emerging concepts outlined within the previous section.

The framework concepts define an overarching direction for the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan; a strategy for change that can be flexible over time in order to accommodate changes in the market as well as social and economic trends. It is important to maintain this flexibility whilst at the same time demonstrating how intervention in a specific part of town will link to the wider area and can have potential cross-cutting benefits such as improvements in the perception branding of Solihull and general health and wellbeing, leading to a more sustainable place.

It is important to recognise that the level of intervention envisaged as part of the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan will be delivered over a broad timeline. Areas are likely to overlap and will influence one another as well as forming part of an evolution of the overall town centre offer, as highlighted in the Vision section of this document (Section 4).

It is not the intention of the areas of change to be prescriptive in a way that suppresses future creativity or the ability of the town centre to respond to external influences. However, it is important to explore a number of the spatial relationships that are likely to be generated through examination of a particular approach. The definition of the physical boundaries have been derived through the spatial and market analysis of Solihull as well as an appreciation of existing ambition for change that has emerged through

discussions with key stakeholders. In this context, the position of the railway station is significant – investment in the station may in the short-term be focused in the present location but that does not mean that a town centre masterplan that considers a 20 year timeframe should not look at a future where the station is relocated, with the potential wider economic and placemaking benefits that this change could generate.

Section 6.9 to 6.15 provide details of each area of change which set out the key opportunities and influences associated with each area. The association with the three emerging concepts is confirmed and the ideas are reinforced through a series of precedent images and best practice examples.

6.1.2 Development Sites

The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan builds upon the previous work carried out as part of the Solihull Town Centre Study. The study identified a number of opportunity sites through which Solihull might accommodate significant additional growth and improvements to the connectivity of the town centre. The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan broadly follows the sites identified in earlier work, but also includes a number of new sites which could provide further opportunities to respond to the emerging concepts in the longer term. Sections 6.9-6.15 provide a breakdown of the individual development sites within each area of change, which they have been defined in order to help inform developing transport studies and give an early indication of potential future capacity. It should be noted that the boundaries of the sites are not definitive at this stage, and it is envisaged that they may evolve as the masterplan progresses.

Each section includes a brief overview of the opportunity site and its location followed by a high level indication of the potential capacity of new development calculated under its preferred end use.



Figure 6.1 Solihull Town Centre Masterplan - Model View



1. Western Gateway
2. Southern Gateway
3. Business & Commercial Quarter
4. Northern Approach
5. Heart of Solihull (Retail Core)
6. Solihull Living
7. St Alphege's Quarter

Figure 6.2 Plan identifying the seven areas of change incorporating key areas for intervention.

6.2 Evolution of the Masterplan

The masterplanning design process has evolved through a comprehensive understanding of Solihull's physical setting in the context of wider market, stakeholder and economic drivers. In order to gain an initial understanding of the potential scale of change that could occur over the masterplan period, three levels of intervention were produced (see figures 6.3-6.5). These evolutions tested different quantum's of development and land use in order to understand the potential impact of car parking and public transport connectivity, and in respond to different market scenarios.

The low level of intervention approach included approximately 14.05 hectares of developable land which could potentially deliver approximately 273 residential units (at 120dph) and circa 56,911m² of new floorspace for commercial, retail and food and beverage uses. This option was based upon the modest refurbishment of the existing train station to emphasise its importance as a gateway into Solihull and encourage public transport as a sustainable travel option.

A medium intervention approach provided a significant increase in developable land (approximately 19.47 hectares). It expected to deliver approximately 927 residential units (at 120dph) and circa 105,511 m² of new commercial, retail and food and beverage floor space. This approach saw substantial refurbishment and upgrading of Solihull Train Station and its surrounding area into a landmark building and new public space.

A high intervention approach included approximately 21ha of developable land which was expected to deliver approximately 924 residential units (at 120dph) and circa 56,911 m² of new commercial, retail and food and beverage

floor space. This approach proposed the relocation of Solihull Train Station from the western fringe of the town centre to Monkspath Hall Road Car Park creating a new centrally located landmark building to either side of the railway line. This solution is proposed to emphasise the importance of the station as a gateway into Solihull, encourage public transport as a sustainable travel option and provide direct and permeable access between the station and town centre.

In addition to informing the transport interventions within the Solihull Connected Technical Package TP2 Access and Movement Study Report, the interventions assisted in understanding a preferred approach which could then be tested further.



Figure 6.3: Low Level Intervention Plan



Figure 6.5: High Level Intervention Plan

6.2 Solihull Town Centre Masterplan

The preferred framework and illustrative masterplan detailed in this section has been developed in response to the understanding of place, key spatial, transport and property considerations that have been debated throughout its evolution and as a consequential outcome of the overarching messages derived from both stakeholder engagement and public consultation. The framework incorporates a description of the individual masterplan layers supported with a series of high level 3D studies that portray the type of place envisaged and the key principles for future development. It responds to the key objectives that were defined in the initial information and analysis stages of the masterplan design process and shows how the areas of change could be developed over the next 20 years. Figure 6.6-6.8 overlays the illustrative masterplan onto an existing aerial view of the town centre and demonstrates how areas of development and public realm intervention will come together as a holistic strategy.

Sections 6.3-6.8 provide a breakdown of the individual development parameters that will inform more detailed design studies. The material includes the principal components that come together to achieve the illustrative masterplan such as land use, scale, movement and frontages.



Figure 6.6: Solihull Town Centre Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 6.7: Solihull Town Centre Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 6.8: Solihull Town Centre Illustrative Masterplan

6.3 Land Use

The plan opposite (Figure 6.9) illustrates the potential land use response to the framework concepts and areas of change described within Sections 5 and 6 of the document. The strategy's central aim looks to diversify Solihull Town Centre through the introduction of new residential and commercial uses to attract more people throughout the day and meet changing demands. The masterplan looks to create a broader mixture of land uses, across different areas of the town centre, which blend together and create a positive and distinct identity whilst ensuring that the existing character of Solihull is preserved and strengthened.

The potential relocation of Solihull Train Station provides a unique opportunity to achieve significant transformational change within Solihull. It could act as a catalyst for investment and refocus new high quality development around the southern gateway, providing tangible opportunities to improve north-south connectivity. New high quality office development could front along Prince's Way strengthening Solihull as a place for business and investment and enabling greater permeability between the station and the town centre.

Through the introduction of new residential uses in the heart of the town centre, the masterplan looks to support existing commercial and leisure uses, whilst also providing additional activity and vibrancy outside normal shopping hours. Residential development could also support sustainability objectives, with many residents able to walk, cycle or use public transport to their work place and other parts of the town centre, reducing reliance on the car.

As indicated on the plan, should the station be relocated, this could also potentially provide opportunity to introduce new suburban family housing, focussed around the enhanced public green space and Streetsbrook Road.

The schedule below confirms the development capacity and potential number of dwellings that could be achieved in the preferred land use framework:

- **A new train station and transport interchange;**
- **Up to 1,217 new homes within the town centre with potential for over 100 plus additional houses on the station site following relocation of the station;**
- **Up to 541,188 sqft / 50,278 sqm of new office development; and**
- **Up to 235,623 sqft / 21,890 sqm of new commercial and leisure development.**

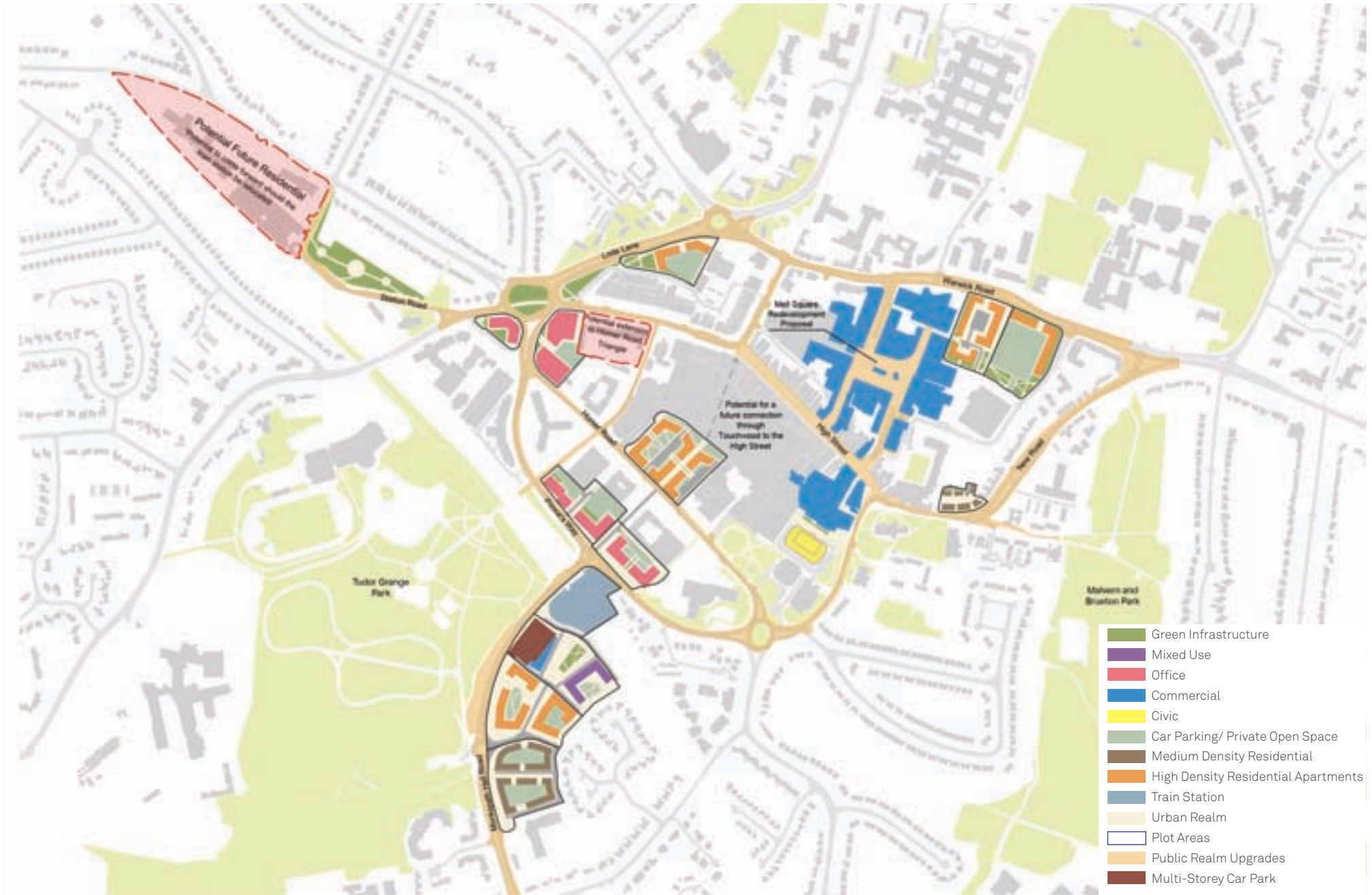


Figure 6.9: Solihull Town Centre Land Use Plan

6.4 Movement and Car Parking

The masterplan has evolved around strengthening connectivity by providing improved routes for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport that are high quality, legible and safe. Approximately 20 transport concept proposals (or packages of proposals) to support the masterplan have been identified, taking account of wider Solihull Connected policies and associated evidence base, the outcomes of the Masterplan Stakeholder Workshops and other committed and proposed schemes.

An important consideration has been the need to support the masterplan aims in respect of strengthening the “place” element of the transport network in Solihull town centre including those areas where the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are to be prioritised. This includes High Street, Station Road, Poplar Road, Station Approach and sections of Homer Road, Warwick Road and Church Hill Road.

To be truly transformative, the quality of the resulting schemes needs to reflect best practice, in terms of design, materials and signage and should support the ambition to create a balanced investment in multi-modal transport infrastructure and behaviour change which recognises the roles of public transport and active travel modes (walk and cycle) as well as the car.

6.4.1 Interventions

The concept proposals were subject to a broad assessment against a set of criteria covering: strategic fit with Solihull Connected policies and objectives, alignment with the emerging Masterplan, broad costs, development and implementation timescales and deliverability. The concept

proposals were then subject to an initial prioritisation process which assessed their compatibility with the criteria associated with them being placed in one of three potential delivery timescales; short (up to 5 years), medium (5 – 10 years) and long (over 10 years).

Potential Short Term Priorities (Up to 5 Years)

A potential short term package of concept proposals to begin improvements to active travel and public transport (bus) links between the railway station and the town centre has been identified. This would begin to address some of the existing and potential development accessibility issues identified in the Masterplan stakeholder workshops and as part of previous work undertaken in support of Solihull Connected, in particular the quality and continuity of the pedestrian and cycle connections between the railway station and the High Street and Homer Road areas.

The potential short term package would consist of the following concept proposals:

- Widening of footway along Station Approach between the station entrance and Blossomfield Road to provide a two-way shared cycle and pedestrian facility; and
- The potential re-alignment and improvement of the Toucan Crossing across Blossomfield Road.

Potential Medium Term Priorities (5 - 10 Years)

In the medium term a number of additional potential concept proposals have been identified including:

- Improvements to the layout of the Blossomfield Road/, Station Approach Junction and the Lode Lane/Station Rd/Prince's Way/Blossomfield Road/Streebsbrook Rd Junctions. This package would further improve the quality and continuity of walk and cycle access between the railway station and the High Street and Homer Road areas, including potential development sites;

- Improved and more continuous active travel mode infrastructure along Homer Road at and between its junctions with Blossomfield Road, Prince's Way and Church Hill Road, including improved surfacing, signage and layout of the pedestrian and cycle route, tying into Toucan improved crossings and a new shared footway cycleway along Homer Road to provide a continuity of high quality route to/from the railway station. This would involve traffic management measures, including the implementation of one-way operation along a section of Homer Road;
- Further enhancements to infrastructure at the railway station interchange, including increased capacity to accommodate SPRINT services and improved cycle storage facilities;
- Priority measures and improved on-street infrastructure for SPRINT and local bus services, including, potentially (subject to assessment of traffic impacts), a dedicated SPRINT-only lane through the and Lode Lane/Station Rd/Prince's Way/Blossomfield Road/Streebsbrook Rd Junction, selective vehicle detection at traffic signals and upgraded stops, compatible with SPRINT design standards;
- A wider package of concept proposals for active travel modes that help to provide greater continuity of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and improve links to the wider networks.
- Enhanced public realm and supporting traffic management measures, including “Gateways”, road space reallocation and reduced traffic speed/20miles/hour zones in areas with a high place function, supporting the masterplan through improvements to facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport whilst maintaining access for traffic; and

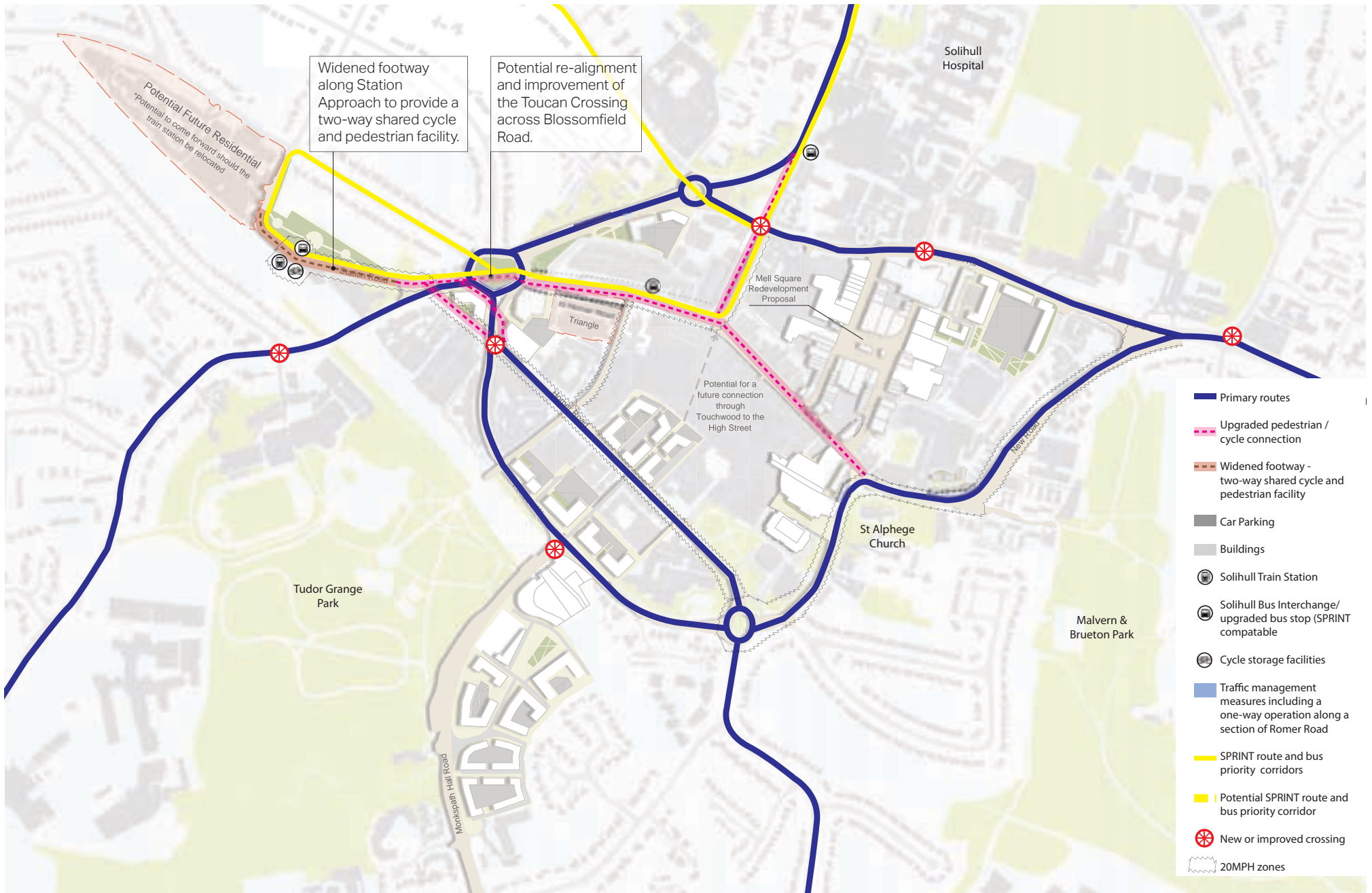


Figure 6.10: Solihull Town Centre Movement and Car Parking Plan (Short Term)

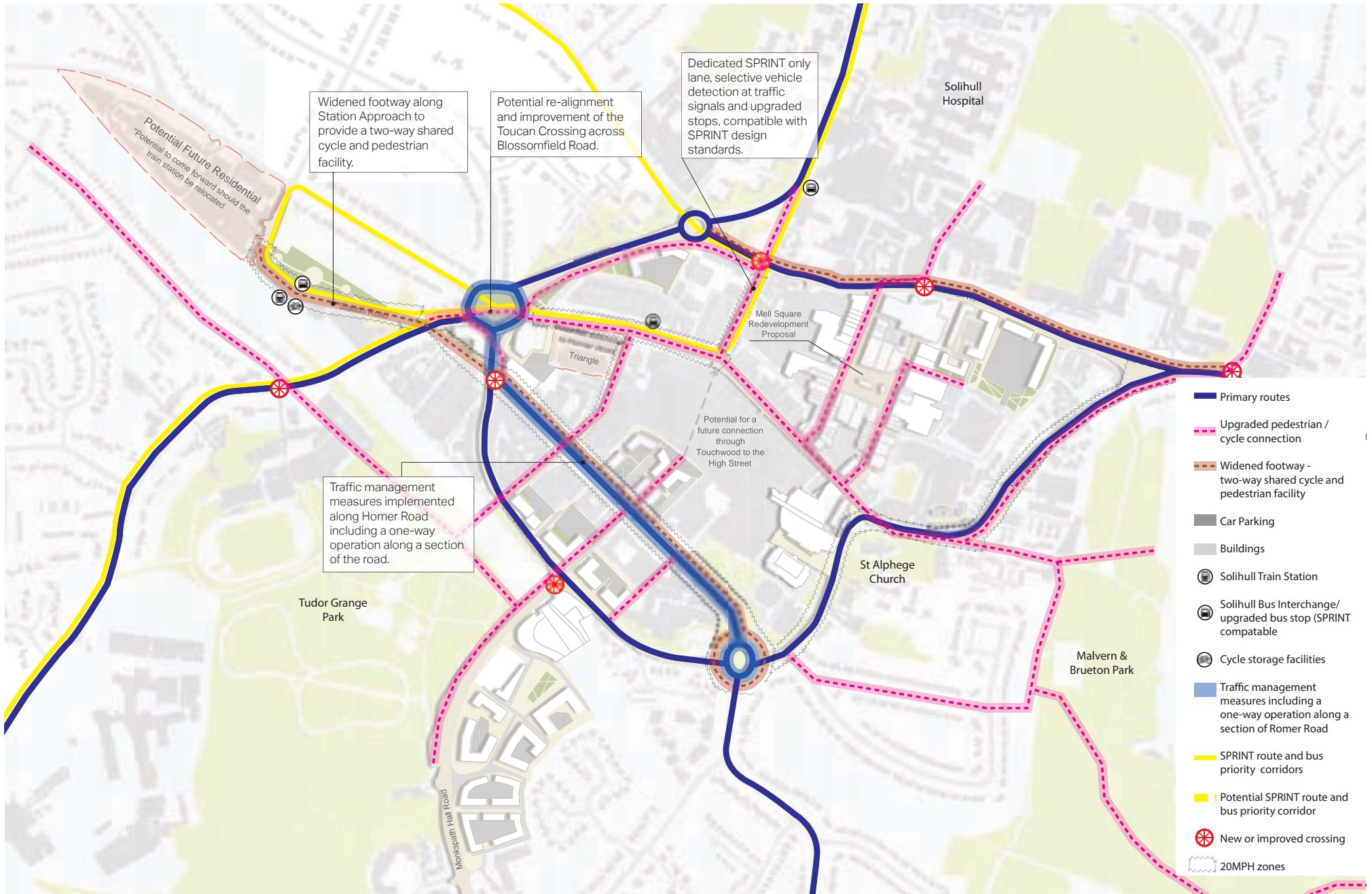


Figure 6.11: Solihull Town Centre Movement and Car Parking Plan (Medium Term)

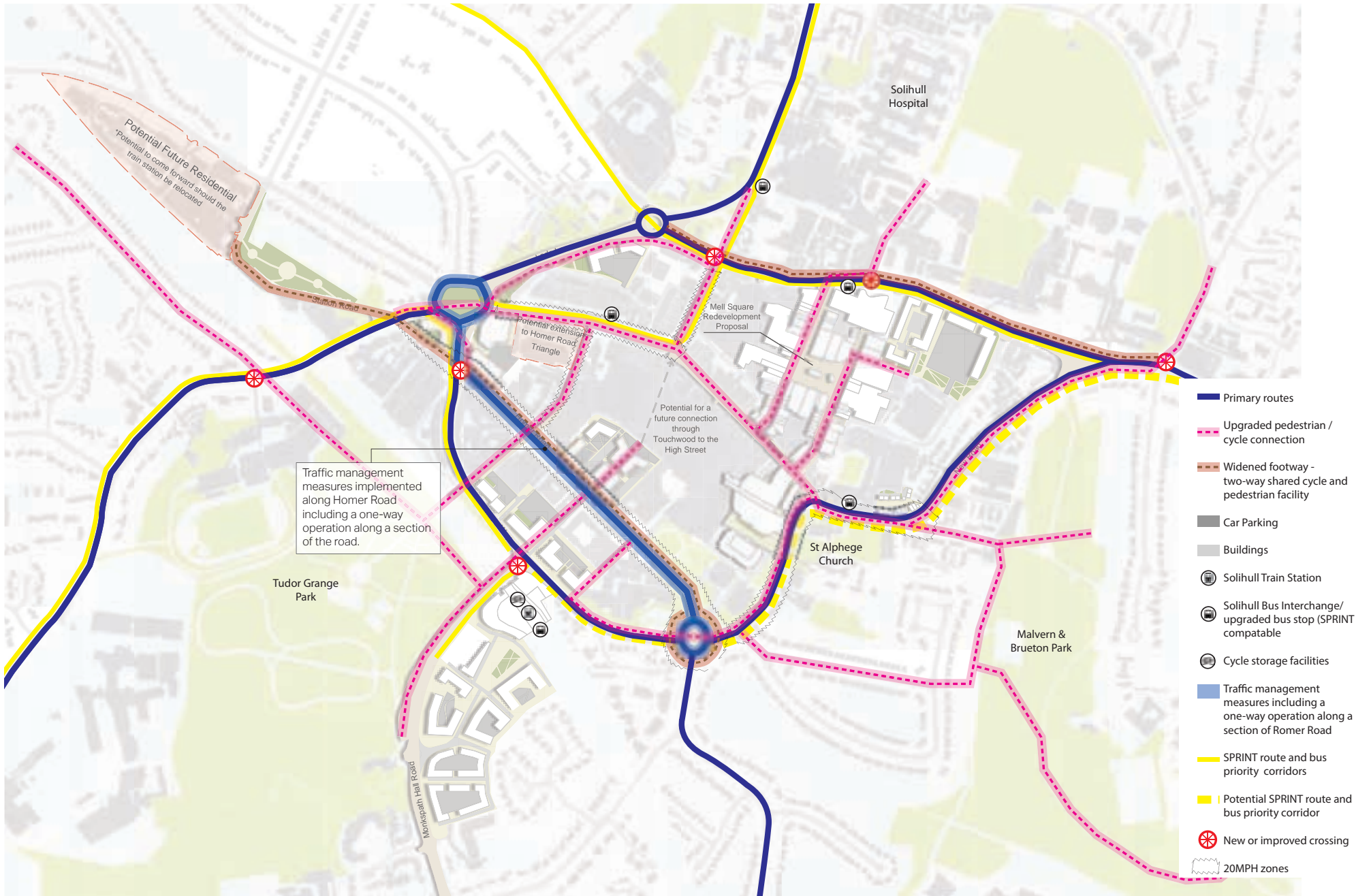


Figure 6.12: Solihull Town Centre Movement and Car Parking Plan (Long Term)

- Potential amendments to the town centre parking strategy and associated quantum, location and charging regimes for off-street parking.

Development work on some of these concept proposals will need to begin in the short term, if they are to gain stakeholder and wider public buy-in, access the necessary funding and obtain the required permissions to enable delivery within the anticipated timescales.

Potential Long Term Priorities (10+ Years)

The identification of potential concept proposals for the longer term is significantly influenced by the assumption regarding the potential relocation of the railway station. A re-location would result in changes to patterns of demand and the routing of SPRINT and local bus services, taxis and general traffic and would place greater importance on the quality and continuity of the walk and cycle links between this site and the town centre.

6.4.2 Moving the Station

The identification of potential longer term concept proposals for Solihull is significantly influenced by the assumption regarding the potential relocation of the railway station and associated bus: rail interchange to a site adjacent to Monkspath Hall Road and its junction with Prince's Way. A relocation of the station would result in changes to patterns of demand and the routing of SPRINT and local bus services, taxis and general traffic and would place greater importance on the quality and continuity of the walk and cycle links between this site and the town centre.

The Solihull Town Centre Traffic Model will be used to inform the identification and assessment of the potential

transport concept proposals required to support the emerging Masterplan, including the proposed relocation of the railway station. This traffic model (in conjunction with the Solihull Parking Allocation Model) will enable account to be taken of the traffic generation and routing impacts of the relocated station in conjunction with the land use changes/development and car parking options identified in the emerging masterplan.

6.4.3 Public Transport

The relocation of the railway station and provision of a new bus: rail interchange of adequate capacity would require a potentially significant, but localised, change to the routing of SPRINT and local bus services within the town centre with associated need for supporting priority and bus/SPRINT stop infrastructure. Two broad and indicative routing strategy options have been developed for SPRINT, CityLink and local bus assuming the relocation of the railway station. Whilst these would serve a new bus: rail interchange at the relocated station, both retain a focus along the central axis linking Warwick Road with the Poplar Road and Station Road, thereby maintaining access to the existing town centre and the emerging Masterplan developments.

The first option would involve routing services via a loop of the town centre using an anti-clockwise circuit, via: Poplar Road, Station Road, Prince's Way, Monkspath Hall Road, Prince's Way, Church Hill Road, New Road and Warwick Road. This would have the benefit of ensuring that the town centre and planned developments would be within a 5 minute walk of SPRINT and local bus services.

There are, however, a number of issues with this option, including:

- Supporting traffic management changes, particularly along Church Hill Road and St Alphege Square, including

potential infrastructure measures to enable operation of articulated SPRINT vehicles through St Alphege Square.

- The potential adverse impact on the historic and environmentally sensitive environment along Church Hill Road and, in particular, in the area of St Alphege Church.

The second option would involve routing services to and from the relocated station via Prince's Way, whilst retaining access to the Lode Lane – Poplar Road – Station Road corridor. This would also result in the town centre and planned developments being within a 5 minute walk of SPRINT and local bus services.

This option is likely to require changes to the Lode Lane/ Station Road/Prince's Way/Blossomfield Road/ Streetsbrook Road junction to provide SPRINT services with the necessary protection from traffic related delays when travelling between Station Road and Prince's Way (in both directions).

6.4.4 Pedestrian and Cycle Links

The relocation of the station would offer the opportunity to further improve pedestrian and cycle links between Monkspath Hall Road, Homer Road and the High Street, significantly so if the station scheme were associated with a wider redevelopment of the area between Prince's Way and Homer Road. Further measures to link the relocated station with the wider walk and cycle networks would also be needed, including linkages via Prince's Way and Tudor Grange Park and north through the town centre to link with existing and proposed active travel mode corridors.

6.4.5 Traffic Impacts

The traffic impacts of the masterplan including the relocation of the station and potential changes to parking capacity will be quantified using a combination of the TP3 traffic model and the Solihull Parking Allocation Model.

Changes to the layout of the Lode Lane/Station Rd/Prince's Way/Blossomfield Road/Streetsbrook Rd Junction are likely to be required to reflect the changes in general traffic, cycle and walk trip patterns and public transport routeing arising from the relocation of the station. Dependent upon the ultimate routing of SPRINT and local bus services the junction layout is likely to need modification to accommodate and prioritise these. The junction will also have to accommodate safe and convenient access to the station for pedestrians and cyclists.

6.4.6 Further Work

It is recommended that additional transport related evidence should be developed to support the case to relocate the station. This could build on and update the previous (2008) Network Rail assessment and meet the current business case requirements of the railway industry and potential funding bodies. In the first instance this work could be limited to that required of GRIP2 stage (or equivalent), only progressing to GRIP stages 3 and 4 (or equivalents) if business case and key stakeholder and industry support is sufficiently strong.

6.4.7 Modelling the Concepts

It is strongly recommended that, when available, the traffic model developed as part of the TP3 commission (Solihull Town Centre Traffic Model) is used in conjunction with the Solihull Parking Allocation Model to forecast the traffic

conditions with the Masterplan land use and parking interventions in place and both with and without the broad concept proposals set out in the Solihull Connected Technical Package TP2 Access and Movement Study Report. This will help to identify:

- The locations where the network is likely to be under pressure in terms of capacity and delays;
- The broad quantum of impact; and
- The impact on traffic of the potential concept proposals identified for public transport, cycle and walk modes.

It is recommended that the Solihull Parking Allocation Model be used to support the emerging masterplan in terms of a supporting parking strategy which establishes the quantum, location, cost and management of car parking in the town centre. This should consider publicly available private and publicly-owned car parks and in addition private non-residential (PNR) parking. It should be noted that the Solihull Parking Allocation Model was not used during the initial phase of developing the masterplan as it was Solihull MBC's view that this could result in the plan being overly influenced by a single issue. Rather it was decided to use the model to subsequently test and refine the emerging strategy. This is discussed further below.

6.4.8 Car Parking Strategy

The masterplan sets out progressive levels of development to sites, and potential packages of walk, cycle, public transport and highways concept interventions have been identified in support of these, as set out in the Solihull Connected Technical Package TP2 Access and Movement Study Report.



Currently there is sufficient capacity in the town for parking demand on typical weekdays, weekends and also on peak days. Delivery of the masterplan proposals in full would lead to a net reduction in parking capacity in the town centre. If Solihull town centre is to move towards a position where less parking is provided the next policy decisions arise between how the parking provided is allocated. In particular the availability and location of short stay parking for those coming to the town to shop or do business is of importance. If parking capacity is to be retained at its current level, or increased, then thought will need to be given to how the development sites proposed can provide additional car parking spaces, or whether alternative locations exist for intensified parking arrangements.

The following steps will be taken to develop a parking strategy that responds to the masterplan

1. Discussion with key stakeholders on the parking strategy options which could support the masterplan, specifically in terms of the quantity and the proximity to the town centre of parking capacity;
2. Calculate the expected loss in capacity, including PNR, arising from the preferred masterplan; the capacity known to be replaced and the additional demand arising from the developments allocated to each site;
3. Consider what parking policy choices may be implemented, including pricing to effect a reduction in parking demand (this should take into account the overarching Solihull Connected policies in respect of encouraging use of walk, cycle and public transport modes particularly for journeys to work);

4. Forecast parking demand for the preferred masterplan broken down by type of user (e.g. long stay commuter);
5. Establish whether there is a shortfall between the over-all supply provided and the demand at a town-wide level (disaggregating demand by user-type);
6. Examine options to provide the capacity required and identifying potential locations for this capacity along with management regimes, compatible with the town centre Masterplan and the Overarching Solihull Connected policies. Options to be examined include:
 - Performance Pricing: Which is based on adjusting the tariff paid to park based on expected demand to achieve the "ideal" 85-90% occupancy at all times. At times and locations where demand has historically been high, the price to park is increased, whereas where there is high availability, the price is reduced.
 - Re-Prioritisation: A direct policy to reduce use of central area parking for long stay and ensure that this space is available for short stay users. In the case of the masterplan's "high" level intervention, there may not be adequate off-street capacity available unless additional long-stay parking is provided within the boundary of the town centre or measures provided to encourage commuters and other long stay visitors to use alternative modes of transport, such as walk, cycle, rail and bus/SPR INT (Bus Rapid Transit).
 - Under provision of long-stay parking capacity for commuters could help to underpin the Solihull

Connected objective to promote use of walk, cycle and public transport modes for the journey to work, having a direct impact on vehicular traffic levels in peak hours and the consequent positive impacts on the environment associated with that.

- Maintaining capacity through the provision of long-stay car parks more remote from the town centre (depending on availability/cost of land) may also support modal change in that accessing the town centre could involve a longer less convenient walk, and in not reducing parking capacity it encourages choice rather than forcing it.
- Park & Ride. It is important to note that few Park & Ride sites in the UK return a financial surplus and many have been closed or had their service curtailed in the last few years. Given the potential improvements to walk, cycle and public transport set out in Solihull Connected and this report, there appears limited scope or need to promote a dedicated Park& Ride within the context of Solihull. It should not be discarded as a potential solution, but its financial implications must be fully understood.
- Parking Provision by New Developments: Retaining sufficient capacity for parking may be established by planning consent for new developments, potentially in combination with re-allocation for more general use of parking associated with existing development through agreement or formal acquisition.

7. Undertake modelling using the Solihull Parking Allocation Model and the traffic model to understand how the overall demand and supply work spatially;
8. Adjust the location, capacity and pricing regimes to reflect the results of the modelling;
9. Confirm a strategy and outline plan for parking provision consistent with the access strategy ambitions for the town; and
10. Undertake sensitivity and resilience testing for aspects of concern to provide comfort that given the uncertainty of development, the planning process and the uncertain social and technological trends that the solution retains some flexibility, scalability and resilience.



6.5 Gateways and Frontages

The framework level gateway and frontages strategy (Figure 6.15), looks to mark the town's key gateways including Lode Lane/Blossomfield Road roundabout, Prince's Way / Church Hill Road roundabout, Lode Lane / Warwick Road roundabout, New Road / Warwick Road junction and the relocated station, through the creation of new landmark buildings. It is envisaged that these buildings will be of a larger scale and have notable architectural character which gives them a unique style and identity. It is important that new development in Solihull supports the creation of well-designed streets and understands that they play a key part in delivering sustainable places where people want to visit, live and work. Providing active and attractive frontage onto key routes will encourage a vibrant and active street life, while buildings of varying scales will create character and define important spaces / routes.



Figure 6.13: Precedent image of active frontage along a pedestrian route.



Figure 6.14: Precedent image of modern architectural landmark building with active frontage onto a pedestrian route.



Figure 6.15: Solihull Town Centre Gateways and Frontages

6.6 Building Heights

The modest scale of existing development in the town centre is reflected in the building heights framework plan (Figure 6.18). The scale of proposed buildings looks to respond to this context, with larger buildings fronting onto principal routes and key gateways to reflect street hierarchy and improve legibility. This will be particularly true along Prince's Way, Lode Lane and Warwick Road, which are primary routes and require buildings of a more significant presence to balance out the scale of the street.

In contrast, it is envisaged that building heights in sensitive areas like St Alphege Quarter will be of a lower order to ensure that existing character is maintained and that the prominence of St Alphege Church is preserved.



Figure 6.16: Precedent Building Height Examples



Figure 6.17: Precedent Building Height Examples



Figure 6.18: Solihull Town Centre Building Heights

6.8 Strategic Market Commentary

6.8.1 Introduction

The delivery of the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan will require targeted action and effective management of the implementation process, in order to achieve and sustain the managed growth of the town centre. The following key steps set out how this could be achieved:

- Establishing an appropriate delivery structure – An important first step following endorsement of the masterplan is to establish appropriate delivery structures to drive and manage the delivery of the masterplan. It is envisaged that SMBC will take a lead in the delivery of the masterplan through its planning, property and Solihull Connected departments, supported by key stakeholders and external property, design and technical consultants as and when appropriate. It is suggested that a dedicated delivery team is established led by UGC / UKC which could include key officers from SMBC and key private sector stakeholders.
- Maximising use of public land ownerships – SMBC can help to drive projects through development on its own land, or can use its land acquisition powers to assemble sites and enter into development partnerships with the private sector to help deliver projects. In the latter case, public sector costs can be recovered from the private developer and this should be recognised in any future development briefs.
- Targeting public and private investment – Public sector funding is limited and this is expected to be the case for some time. Investment in both capital projects and in the tools and skills to deliver projects will be important. The public sector has an important enabling

role to play in development and it will require time and resources to lead this process. The masterplan should be proactively used by SMBC to generate investor and developer interest. An important element of generating this interest is to provide confidence that the Council will support proposals that come forward in accordance with future planning documents

6.8.2 Offices

The Solihull Town Centre market review revealed a continuing latent demand for office space in the town centre, especially for “larger” or headquarters style office space, which are characterized by large floorplates to efficiently serve the operational requirements of the occupier.

Whilst a significant amount of space in the town centre has come on the market in the past year or so, the reaction of the market with regard to large floorplate “Grade A” office space has been encouraging and a sign of confidence in the town centre as an office location. During the course of the Masterplan study period, related “lease events” has seen National Grid vacate 31 Homer Road, and a refurbishment scheme is underway, and prior to that the British Airways Pension Trustees let 46,000 sqft of office space at Lansdowne Gate to National Grid, on behalf of Xoserve, (11 year lease at the asking rent of £21 per sqft.) after a comprehensive strip to shell refurbishment.

The Masterplan has responded to this clear latent demand for large format space through promoting the Homer Road Triangle as the key location for future new build “headquarters scale” office development. The location has excellent access to the town centre amenities, the new build Waitrose, and the train station (current and potential location), such accessibility being increasingly important to corporate occupiers. The Masterplan also recognises

the importance that office development of this scale will have in terms of visits made to the town centre, particularly in providing a northern anchor to the town centre and encouraging footfall in the Station Road and High Street vicinity towards Touchwood and Mell Square.

In scoping out the development capacity of Homer Road, and other potential office locations, the Masterplan has been careful to base this on commercially deliverable parameters and densities. On this basis, all new office development scoped is based on a parking ratio of 1 space per 700sqft of net lettable space, and assuming this is surface level parking.

The Masterplan envisages development at Homer Road to be possible over the next 10 years and onwards; the majority of the land being owned by Solihull Council, with Opus Land also having a key interest that will have a bearing on the pace and delivery of development. Based on recent transactions, achievable rentals for new build development are sufficient to make speculative office development viable during this period.

The emergence of UK Central alongside the proposed High Speed 2 Station from around 2026 is clearly a point of note, overlapping with the Masterplan period, and is a material consideration for the delivery of the Masterplan, though there is scope for the offer at the two locations (Solihull Town Centre and UK Central) to be complementary. Solihull Town Centre currently has a rental premium over out of town, combining Grade A office space with good parking with the amenity of the town centre. A refreshed supply of new headquarters style office space prior to 2026 will be important in maintaining the overall town centre occupier appeal, and assist distinguishing the town centre offer from that of UK Central.

The Masterplan also considers the future of the existing Homer Road office corridor, specifically south east of the former National Grid offices at 31 Homer Road (currently being refurbished), including 35 Homer Road (National Grid), the Immigration Office, and 51 Homer Road (Paragon House, occupied by Paragon Financial Services). A higher density form of office development is envisaged, with a frontage on to Prince's Way, and responding to the prospect of Solihull Station being moved to Prince's Way. Clearly the current land uses remain viable, and occupy land out of the control of Solihull Council, such that the redevelopment of this area as envisaged (which would have to take a comprehensive approach involving the footprint of the existing buildings on site) is most likely to depend on the relocation of Solihull Station, and should be seen as a long term aspiration.

6.8.3 Residential

A key objective of the Masterplan is to promote appropriate sites for residential development with a view to increasing the resident population of the town centre, in order to diversify the town centre economy, particularly the "evening economy".

There is continued market interest in apartment building in Solihull town centre, with the location appealing both to young professionals and "downsizing" couples, with well-located apartments comfortably achieving in the order of £300/sqft. Such values would make the provision of a floor of basement parking viable, which has the potential to impact on achievable development densities.

The Masterplan proposes a number of areas as being suitable for apartment development, with varying degrees of delivery risk, which generally relates to the control of land, and in the case of the proposals for Monkspath Hall Road Car Park, where 452 dwellings are proposed (which

Solihull Council controls) are dependent on the delivery of a relocated Solihull Station. Should the relocation not come forward residential development at a lower density could be considered.

Overall, the Masterplan proposes up to 1,217 dwellings, (based on capacity studies carried out), the possibility of basement parking, and blocks of between 2 and 6 storeys high. This is an aspirational figure taking a 20-30 year view, and the actual figure may vary. The key potential variation relates to the nature and scale of development at two key sites – the Southern Gateway (around Monkspath Hall Road Car Park), and Solihull Living (around Mell Square and Mell Square East):

- Southern Gateway: Whilst the land is under the control of Solihull Council, the scale of development (452 dwellings, 398 of which are proposed as apartments), is dependent on the relocation of Solihull Station. If the Station remains where it is over the Masterplan period then market interest would likely be for a lower density suburban development (around 120 dwellings);
- Solihull Living : A significant element of the Mell Square East land being outside the control of Solihull Council, will mean that the scale of development envisaged in the Masterplan proposals for this area (456 dwellings) should be seen as a long term ambition, requiring the redevelopment of the existing multi-storey car park and negotiations with key stakeholders. In particular, the land in the east looks to provide 123 dwellings and is situated upon the current Morrison's car park. The adjoining Superstore remains a viable use in this location, with no known plans to relocate, and therefore development here is also seen as a longer term ambition.

6.8.4 Retail, Restaurants, Food & Beverage

The Masterplan has deliberately avoided planning additional new space for retail and leisure beyond the "Heart of Solihull" proposals currently being promoted around the existing Mell Square and Touchwood destinations.

Rather, the overall Masterplan approach is based around strengthening the retail function of the town centre through the introduction and addition of complementary town centre uses in the appropriate places, with new office and residential development seen as having an important role in increasing visits and use of the town centre as a whole.

The limited area of space, beyond the "Heart of Solihull", that is proposed in the Masterplan, is of an amount that is ancillary to the neighbouring main use, notably the mixed use commercial development proposed in the vicinity of the possible relocated Solihull Station.

6.9 Western Gateway

As discussed within Section 3, the western arrival into the town is currently dominated by roads and a lack of frontages around the Solihull Methodist Church and Homer Road Triangle, with the train station physically and psychologically disconnected from the town centre. Reconfiguration of key frontages and movement patterns here would provide opportunities to enhance key pedestrian and cycle connections from Solihull Train Station into the town centre, and also potentially improve journey times for buses by reprioritising and supporting sustainable travel.

Supported by new landmark development fronting onto the street and an improved public realm, the Lode Lane/ Blossomfield Road roundabout could be transformed into a key visual gateway; which represents an important arrival point into Solihull Town Centre for those entering by public transport and from the west. In the short term, upgrades to Solihull Train Station could look to improve the look and feel of the station, providing new facilities which promote its use and a more fitting representation of Solihull's future aspirations. Longer term, should the station be relocated, there is opportunity to introduce new residential uses within easy walking distance of the town centre.

Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
<p>Improve pedestrian and cycle connections into and out of the town centre</p> <p>Enhance connection to Solihull College and Tudor Grange Park.</p> <p>Encourage greater use of sustainable travel.</p>	<p>Longer term opportunities to diversify the town centre and provide sustainable urban living.</p>	<p>Strengthen and enhance key gateway into the town.</p> <p>Promotion of high quality and sustainable new development.</p> <p>Upgrade key route into town improve legibility and wayfinding.</p>











-  Railway Line
-  Potential for landmark building
-  Potential frontage
-  **Connections**
Improved connections
-  **Living & Working**
Potential living and working
-  **Experience**
Improved urban experience and placemaking

Figure 6.19: Broad design principles and precedent image examples.



Figure 6.20: Location plan

6.9.1 Solihull Train Station

Located on the western edge of town centre, the Solihull Train Station site provides opportunities for improvement in both the short and the long term.

In the short term, the public realm and green space surrounding the existing train station could be upgraded, providing a positive frontage to the train station. A package of improvements have been identified which would improve the capacity within the station building and connectivity along the route between the station and the town centre. The improvements would comprise:

- Widening the underpass linking the booking office to the stairwell up to the platform level;
- Providing an additional stairwell from the widened underpass providing additional capacity between the underpass and platform level;
- Enhancing the pedestrian, cycling and associated environment between the rail station and the town centre which involves widening of footways, improving the pedestrian and cycle crossings, provision of new shared space infrastructure; Improved way-marking and signage to support use of the improved route and emphasise connectivity with the Town Centre

The long term relocation of the station provides opportunities for development of the areas to the north west of the station (long stay car park, Sapphire Court offices and Solihull Fire Station) for suburban residential development. Identifying the potential of these sites at an early stage widens the opportunity associated with the site and allows a larger potential development and appreciation of critical mass. It is envisaged that the development could front onto the upgraded green space opposite the station and become a vibrant and attractive new neighbourhood. In this long term scenario, there is potential for the original station to be converted for commercial use, such as a shop or restaurant to support the growing residential community.



Figure 6.21: Illustrative View - Solihull Train Station



Figure 6.22: Model View - Solihull Train Station

6.9.2 Homer Road Triangle

Located on Lode Lane/ Blossomfield Road roundabout, Homer Road Triangle is situated on a prominent gateway into the town centre and provides opportunity to create an attractive new arrival point into Solihull's business and commercial quarter. It is envisaged that high quality new town centre offices could be developed complementing the proposed offer at The Hub, Zone 1 of UK Central. These new offices could provide larger floorplate 'headquarter type space' particularly on the corner of the junction to emphasise the scale and prominence of the development. In addition, it is envisaged that enhancements would be made to the public realm and around Lode Lane/Blossomfield Road roundabout to improve pedestrian connectivity and provide an attractive setting for new development.

The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out below:

- **Up to 199,500 sqft / 18,534 sqm of new office development;**
- **Accommodated on buildings between four and six storeys in height; and**
- **Up to 285 surface car parking spaces to serve the development.**

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
0.9 ha	Short – Medium	High	Solihull MBC, Opus Land

Current Use

Currently the site contains a multi-storey car park, a number of small businesses in converted houses, and the BUPA health centre.

Current Planning Designation

The site is currently designated within the Solihull Local Plan (2013) as a Mature Suburb. It is also contained within the Local Plan's Proposed Mixed Use Site 8 and is identified as a Development Opportunity Site.

Site Opportunities

The Solihull Town Centre market review revealed a continuing latent demand for office space in the town centre, especially for "larger" or headquarters style office space, which are characterized by large floorplates to efficiently serve the operational requirements of the occupier.

Whilst a significant amount of space in the town centre has come on the market in the past year or so, the reaction of the market with regard to large floorplate "Grade A" office space has been encouraging and a sign of confidence in the town centre as an office location. During the course of the Masterplan study period, related "lease events" has seen National Grid vacate 31 Homer Road, and a refurbishment scheme is underway, and prior to that the British Airways Pension Trustees let 46,000 sqft of office space at Lansdowne Gate to National Grid, on behalf of Xoserve, (11 year lease at the asking rent of £21 per sqft) after a comprehensive strip to shell refurbishment.

The Masterplan has responded to this clear latent demand for large format space through promoting the Homer Road Triangle as the key location for future new build "headquarters scale" office development. The location has excellent access to the town centre amenities, the new build Waitrose, and the train station (current and potential location), such accessibility being increasingly important to corporate occupiers. The Masterplan also recognises the importance that office development of this scale will have in terms of visits made to the town centre, particularly

in providing a northern anchor to the town centre and encouraging footfall in the Station Road and High Street vicinity towards Touchwood and Mell Square.

In scoping out the development capacity of Homer Road, and other potential office locations, the Masterplan has been careful to base this on commercially deliverable parameters and densities. On this basis, all new office development scoped is based on a parking ratio of 1 space per 700sqft of net lettable space, and assuming this is surface level parking.

Planning History

Approval was granted in 2013 over the site at 29 Homer Road for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of a Waitrose Food Store of 2,647 square metres GIA (use class A1). (Planning Application Reference: PL/2013/00231/FULM)

Key Stakeholder Partners

Solihull District Council and Opus Land

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

Agreement needs to be reached with Opus Land, which has a controlling interest, regarding a deliverable scheme; negotiations are ongoing. The emergence of UK Central alongside the proposed High Speed 2 Station from around 2026 is clearly a point of note, This overlaps with the Masterplan period, and is a material consideration for the delivery of the Masterplan, though there is scope for the offer at the two locations (Solihull Town Centre and UK Central) to be complementary. Solihull Town Centre currently has a rental premium over out of town, combining Grade A office space with good parking with the amenity of the town centre. A refreshed supply of new headquarters style office space prior to 2026 will be important in maintaining the overall town centre occupier appeal, and assist distinguishing the town centre offer from that of UK Central

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

The Masterplan envisages development at Homer Road Triangle to be possible over the next 10 years and onwards; the majority of the land being owned by Solihull Council, with Opus Land also having a key interest that will have a bearing on the pace and delivery of development. Based on recent transactions, achievable rentals for new build development are sufficient to make speculative office development viable during this period. As such it would be notionally feasible to be deliverable by a private sector developer after a market disposal of the site. The precise manner in which the land comes forward will be through the agreement of Solihull Council and Opus Land, which has a key interest.



Figure 6.23: Illustrative View - Homer Road Triangle



Figure 6.24: Model View - Homer Road Triangle

6.10 Southern Gateway

Cut off from the town by busy roads and the rail line embankment, the south of the town centre feels disconnected from its surroundings, in particular Tudor Grange Park. In addition, large swathes of surface car parking leave large voids in the urban structure at a key arrival point into the town. In the short term, new residential development could provide sustainable new housing within close walking proximity of the town centre and also provide a positive edge to Tudor Grange Park. In the long term a relocated Solihull Train Station could be positioned to bridge the rail line and improve accessibility into the town centre, encouraging sustainable travel. The development of a new landmark station could create an attractive new gateway into the town centre which befits Solihull's aspirational vision; this could be further supported by improved public realm and wayfinding.

The future development of this site is dependent on the decision made regarding the stations' future location. This will fundamentally effect the market positioning and opportunity for the site. If the station remains in its existing location then market interest in the site would be for suburban densities. If the station was to relocate to this site, there would be the opportunity for apartments with lower densities further to the south.



Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
Improved cycle and pedestrian connections into the town from the south.	Opportunity to diversify the town centre and provide sustainable urban living.	Creation of a landmark new station, and attractive southern gateway.
Provision of an accessible, centralised new train station to encourage greater rail usage.	Strengthen, support and extend Solihull's business and commercial offer through relocation of the station.	Positive frontage onto Tudor Grange Park. Linking the town centre with public parks.

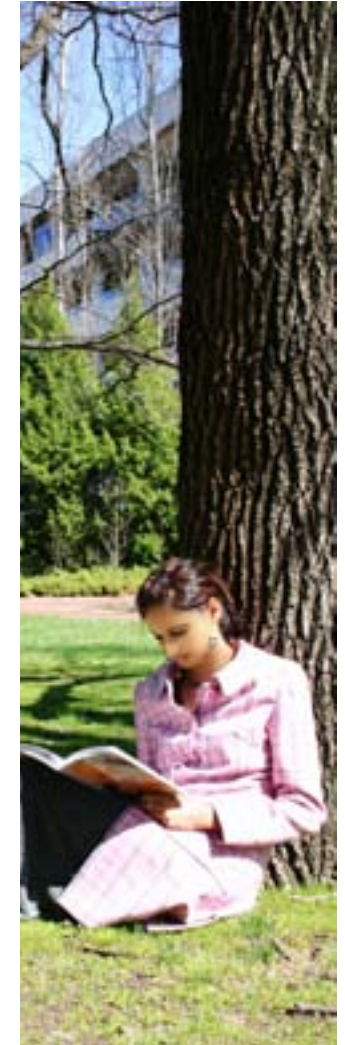




Figure 6.25: Broad design principles and precedent image examples.



Figure 6.26: Location plan

6.10.1 Monkspath Hall Road Car Park

Located just south of the town centre and adjacent to Tudor Grange Park, Monkspath Hall Road Car Park represents a strategically significant opportunity to accommodate a relocated train station, and substantial new development, within a few minutes' walk of the town centre. It is envisaged that a new station could span the railway line providing easy access between a new civic square and associated development to the south and the town centre to the north. A new multi-storey would provide car parking for commuters and visitors, and the creation of a new transport interchange would ensure a linked public transport system for Solihull. The creation of a new civic square would be complemented by surrounding commercial development which could enhance the user experience by providing places to eat, drink and browse overlooking the square.

There is opportunity to provide family housing to the south of the site, which could come forward prior to the station relocation, with higher density residential development coming forward and infilling around the station once it has been relocated. The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out to the right:

- **A new train station and transport interchange;**
- **Up to 20,451 sqft / 1,900 sqm of leisure / commercial uses;**
- **A new 248,689 sqft / 23,104 sqm multi-storey car park providing up to 951 spaces;**
- **Up to 398 new high density homes (to the north) incorporating up to 398 basement car parking spaces; and**
- **Up to 54 new medium density family homes (to the south) incorporating on plot parking.**



Figure 6.27: Illustrative View - Monkspath Hall Road Car Park

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
4.68ha	Medium	Medium	Solihull MBC

Current Use

The Southern Gateway is located south of the town centre and is disconnected from its surroundings by busy roads and the rail line embankment. The site predominantly consists of large swathes of surface car parking, which leave large voids in the urban structure at a key arrival point into the town.

Current Planning Designation

Policy P2 of the Solihull Local Plan (2013) identifies the Monkspath Hall Road Car Park as a large scale, longer term development opportunity site. The site is currently listed as a Mature Suburb in the Local Plan. Mature areas are characterised by Victorian and Edwardian development, the canal and railway network, a tighter urban grain and extensive gardens and parks.

Site Opportunities

A key objective of the Masterplan is to promote appropriate sites for residential development with a view to increasing the resident population of the town centre, in order to diversify the town centre economy, particularly the “evening economy”.

There is continued market interest in apartment building in Solihull town centre, with the location appealing both to young professionals and “downsizing” couples, with well-located apartments comfortably achieving in the order of £300/sqft. Such values would make the provision of a floor of basement parking viable, which has the potential to impact on achievable development densities.

This site, however, occupying an attractive location between the town centre and the “mature suburbs”, and would

appeal to more to the market as a suburban residential development opportunity, with a limited element of apartment building.

Notwithstanding this, if Solihull Station was to move to Princes Way, a high density apartment scheme would appeal to the market.

Planning History

In 2015 approval was granted on the southern portion of the car park site for temporary portable cabin accommodation to accommodate council staff during Church Hill House refurbishment. No other planning applications have been lodged over the site in the past 5 years.

Key Stakeholder Partners

Solihull Council, Network Rail

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

Dependence on re-location of Solihull Station

Whilst the land is under the control of Solihull Council, the scale of development (452 dwellings, 398 of which are proposed as apartments), is dependent on the relocation of Solihull Station. If the Station remains where it is over the Masterplan period then market interest would likely be for a lower density suburban development (around 120 dwellings)

Car Parking Capacity in Solihull Town Centre

Beyond any specific involvement of Solihull MBC at the site level, a critical issue, with market and delivery implications is transport infrastructure and parking.

The testing the Masterplan under the TP3 Town Centre Traffic Model has previously been flagged as a priority action, with particular regard to the “supply impact” implicit removal of car parking capacity through the development of certain sites, as well as the “demand impact” of such new development.

The options of management of demand through the “under provision” of long stay parking for commuters, and the tolerating of “inconvenience” at peak periods carry a risk to future investment from current and future occupiers. Notable, in this respect, is a representation at the Stakeholder Consultation stage of the Masterplan preparation, which reported concerns from Homer Road employees regarding the potential removal of car parking at Monkspath Hall Road Car Park.

The implications of such concerns should not be underestimated. Businesses are increasingly taking a holistic view regarding the meaning of operational excellence, including an accessible talent pool (human capital), and being able to offer amenable working environments (including the journey to work experience) for staff is seen as key in maintaining and enhancing access to the talent pool.

The TP3 modelling of the Masterplan will be important in gauging the impact of the removal of car parking capacity on the highway network, enabling the potential commercial impact of the site development to be gauged against the attendant impact on the highway network and the wider appeal of Solihull Town Centre.

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

With the land under the control of Solihull Council, the site would be deliverable now, by the market, for a suburban density residential scheme.

The Masterplan, however, as part of the brief to consider, model and test potential change over a 20 year plus timescale, has scoped the possibilities for the site on the basis of the potential relocation of Solihull Station, and on this basis sets out a high density, residential led, mixed use scheme based around such a relocated Solihull Station, and entirely dependent on the relocation.

The vision for the Masterplan with respect to this site, and also the potential impact on the vision for Princes Way, is reliant on the relocation of Solihull Station, and to this extent the Masterplan will form a strategic basis from which a future external funding business case may be developed.



Figure 6.28: Model View - Monkspath Hall Road Car Park

6.11 Business and Commercial Quarter

The spatial audit (Section 3) highlighted the poor quality of existing north-south connections, inadequate cycle provision, weak urban form and the lack of frontage along Prince's Road. Through expansion of the current commercial offer and the potential integration of new urban living, there are opportunities to promote Solihull as a place to do business, whilst addressing some of the key urban design issues facing the town. Potential enhancement of Homer Road and north-south connections could provide opportunities to promote walking and cycling, and also introduce green infrastructure into the town linking with Tudor Grange Park. The introduction of landmark buildings could improve the southern aspect of the town by redefining frontage which could support a relocated new train station in the longer term.

Prince's Way and Homer Road are presently characterised by a high concentration of large, single occupier, buildings. A number of well known names including Npower, National Grid, Paragon Financial Services, and HM Immigration Office, occupy these buildings and consequently lend the area a particular quality. In particular, the area between Prince's Way and Homer Road, is defined by large buildings, set back from the road with extensive surface parking areas. These qualities have been important in establishing Solihull Town Centre as an important location within the wider office market outside of Birmingham City Council (defined as "out of town" market).

Any proposed changes to this quarter to address the issues identified will be sensitive to the importance of this area to Solihull Town Centre (Paragon employees at this location-circa 500+, N Power 500+, National Grid 500+) and the qualities that appeal to occupiers, including on site car parking.

Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
Improve north-south connections through the town centre.	Strengthen, support and extend Solihull's business and commercial offer.	Introduction of green infrastructure linking the town centre with public parks.
Enhance provision for cyclists to encourage sustainable travel.	Opportunity to diversify the town centre and provide sustainable urban living.	Improving the look and feel of north south connections.
Create a more permeable town centre.		Enhance the southern gateway into the town centre through high quality new development.





Figure 6.29: Broad design principles and precedent image examples.



Figure 6.30: Location plan

6.11.1 Homer Road Civic Buildings

Situated along Homer Road, the existing Civic Buildings provide opportunity for large scale redevelopment, through the relocation of the Solihull Police Station and the development of the Magistrates Court which currently occupy the site. As described within Section 6.11, it is envisaged that this could strengthen Solihull's current residential offer integrating new urban living opportunities to create a vibrant mixed use area that supports the living and working concept. In addition, development of the site provides a key opportunity to create a pedestrian / cycle link between Touchwood and Homer Road, which in the long term would be extended to Princes Way and the relocated station.

This development site proposed in the masterplan includes the police station and magistrates court and potential capacity is based on these two sites combined. It is worth acknowledging that adjacent land is also part of public estate and if included could enhance the attractiveness and opportunity of this site, and provide an opportunity which could deliver transformational change in this area for the wider benefit of the town centre.

The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out below:

- **Up to 226 new homes;**
- **Accommodated on buildings up to four storeys in height; and**
- **Up to 226 basement car parking spaces to serve the development.**

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
1.18ha	Medium	Medium	West Midlands Police

Current Use

Situated between Homer Road and Touchwood Shopping Centre, the site is currently occupied by large scale, low quality civic buildings. Opportunities are currently being explored for relocation of these buildings, which include the Solihull Police Station and the Magistrates Court.

Current Planning Designation

The site is currently designated within the Solihull Local Plan (2013) as a Mature Suburb. It is also contained within the Local Plan's Proposed Mixed Use Site 8 boundary and identified as a Long Term Development Opportunity Site.

Site Opportunities

A key objective of the Masterplan is to promote appropriate sites for residential development with a view to increasing the resident population of the town centre, in order to diversify the town centre economy, particularly the "evening economy".

There is continued market interest in apartment building in Solihull town centre, with the location appealing both to young professionals and "downsizing" couples, with well-located apartments comfortably achieving in the order of £300/sqft. The site occupies a location in good proximity to town centre amenities, and appeals as a residential development location

Such values would make the provision of a floor of basement parking viable, which has the potential to impact on achievable development densities.

Planning History

No planning applications have been lodged over the existing Magistrates Court or Police Station sites in the past 5 years.

Key Stakeholder Partners

West Midlands Police, Home Office, Solihull MBC

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

Control of Land

Whilst the Magistrates Quarter is currently being marketed by GVA as potentially suitable for a range of town centre uses, subject to planning, and this would include residential use, the neighbouring Police Station site remains in use. Its marketability for residential use may be assisted in the knowledge of the future of the Police Station.

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

The key issue for the Masterplan here, is that, the Magistrates Court aside, site remains in use. The vision of the Masterplan spans 20 years and beyond, however, and assumes the fitness for purpose of these sites and building in their current public service use will be subject to review in the future. Indeed, the fitness for purpose of the extensive public sector "estate", and the potential for ensuring operational efficiency combined with realising site value for the public purse, is a Government priority. The One Public Estate (OPE) programme, delivered jointly by Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association (LGA), channels funding and practical support through local authorities to deliver collaborative property-focused projects with central government and others. How this might assist Solihull MBC in advancing the masterplan objectives alongside public sector partners is a key consideration.

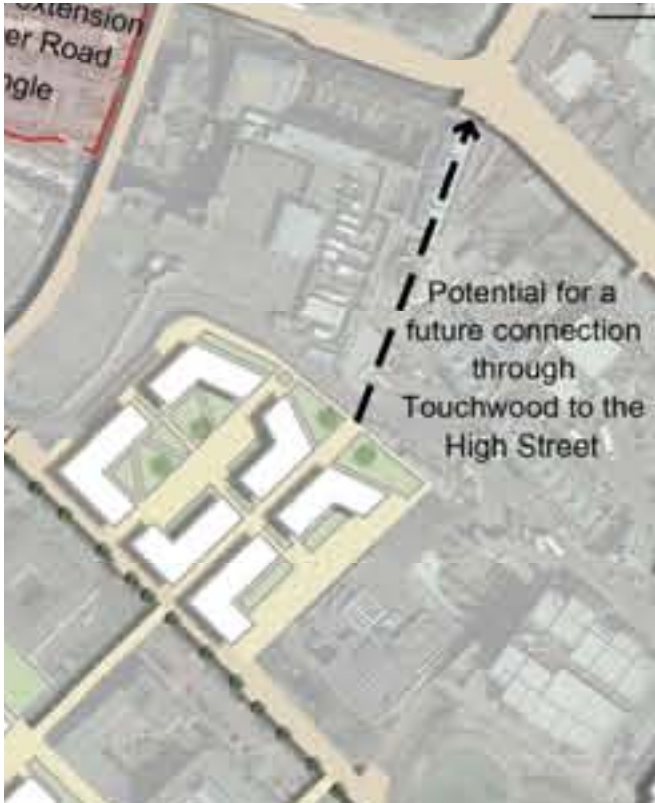


Figure 6.31: Illustrative View - Homer Road Civic Buildings

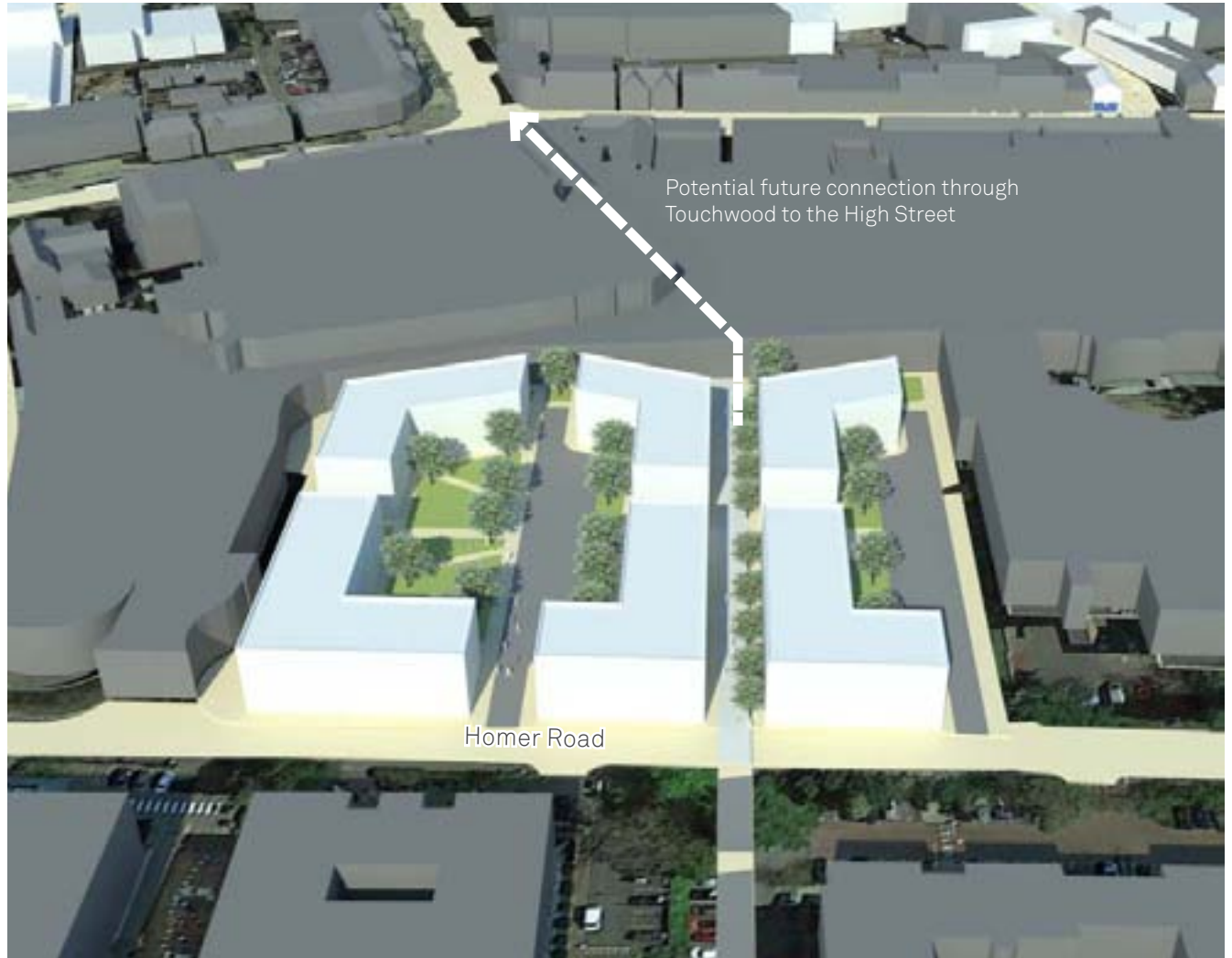


Figure 6.32: Model View - Homer Road Civic Buildings

6.1.1.2 Prince's Way

In the long term, should this site become available there is opportunity to reconfigure the existing office sites in order to provide new office development which fronts onto Prince's Way. This would provide a valuable opportunity to create a clear, attractive north-south link between the relocated station and Homer Road, improving pedestrian / cycle connectivity, whilst also providing new frontage onto an important arterial route.

In addition, residential development on the site could respond positively to adjacent streets and could incorporate a new public square. This could improve connectivity to Jubilee Gardens and enhance the town's permeability.

The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out below:

- **Up to 227,300 sqft / 21,117 sqm of new office development, providing up to 325 surface car parking spaces;**
- **Accommodated on buildings between four and six storeys in height.**

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
1.36ha	Long	Low	Numerous private ownerships

Current Use

Prince's Way and Homer Road are presently characterised by a high concentration of large, single occupier, buildings. A number of well known names including Npower, National Grid, Paragon Financial Services, and HM Immigration Office, occupy these buildings and consequently lend the area a particular quality. In particular, the site is occupied

by the Paragon Office surface car park and the Immigration Office surface car park.

Current Planning Designation

The site is currently designated within the Solihull Local Plan (2013) as a Mature Suburb. It is also contained within the Local Plan's Proposed Mixed Use Site 8 boundary.

Site Opportunities

Responding to the prospect of Solihull Station being moved to Princes Way, opposite the site, a higher density form of office development is envisaged, with a frontage on to Princes Way.

The Solihull Town Centre market review revealed a continuing latent demand for office space in the town centre, especially for "larger" or headquarters style office space, which are characterized by large floorplates to efficiently serve the operational requirements of the occupier.

Whilst a significant amount of space in the town centre has come on the market in the past year or so, the reaction of the market with regard to large floorplate "Grade A" office space has been encouraging and a sign of confidence in the town centre as an office location. During the course of the Masterplan study period, related "lease events" has seen National Grid vacate 31 Homer Road, and a refurbishment scheme is underway, and prior to that the British Airways Pension Trustees let 46,000 sqft of office space at Lansdowne Gate to National Grid, on behalf of Xoserve, (11 year lease at the asking rent of £21 per sqft.) after a comprehensive strip to shell refurbishment.

Planning History

No planning applications have been lodged over the Prince's Way sites in the past 5 years.

Current Proposals

The site has a physical capacity of up to 227,300sqft / 21,117 sqm of office development. This is a gross figure, as redevelopment would only take place through the comprehensive development of the entire site including the existing occupied buildings, the net additional floorspace figure is likely to be considerably lower.

Key Stakeholder Partners

Current landowners

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

A higher density form of office development is envisaged, with a frontage on to Princes Way, and responding to the Masterplan vision of Solihull Station being moved to Prince's Way.

Clearly, the current uses (35 Homer Road (National Grid), the Immigration Office, and 51 Homer Road (Paragon House, occupied by Paragon Financial Services), all remain viable, and occupy land out of the control of Solihull Council, such that the redevelopment of this area as envisaged (which would have to take a comprehensive approach involving the footprint of the existing buildings on site) is most likely to depend on the moving of Solihull Station, and should be seen as a long term aspiration.

The long term time frame of any possible relocation of Solihull Station would put the notional development opportunity at this site firmly in timeframe of the delivery of UK Central around the proposed HS2 Station.

The emergence of UK Central alongside the proposed High Speed 2 Station from around 2026 is clearly a point of note, overlaps with the Masterplan period, and is a material consideration for the delivery of the Masterplan, though there is scope for the offer at the two locations (Solihull Town Centre and UK Central) to be complementary.

In contrast, however, with the potential shorter term delivery prospects of Homer Road Triangle, the longer term development timeframe of a possible Station relocation, would mean the potential office proposition having to compete with a firmly established proposition around HS2, which is a notable risk.

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

Here, the Masterplan explores long term possibilities, on the basis of its brief to consider, model and test, potential change over a 20 year plus timescale. Any long term change here would be a commercial decision taken by the respective land owners, responding to changing market demand and new opportunities, particularly the relocation of Solihull Station



Figure 6.33: Illustrative View - Prince's Way



Figure 6.34: Model View - Prince's Way

6.12 Northern Approach

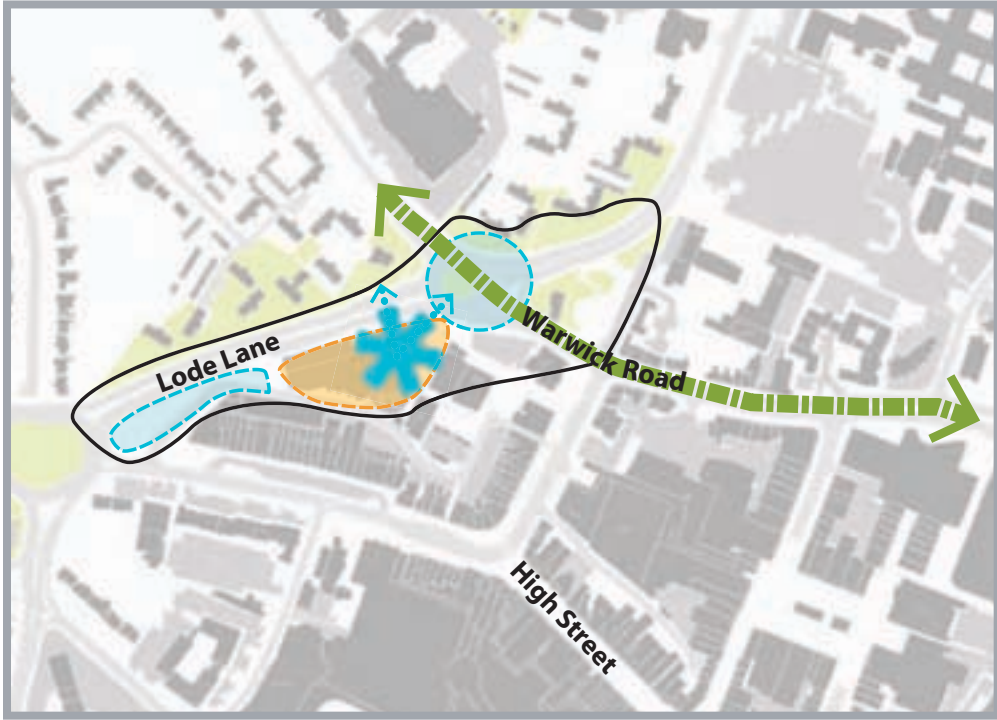
Heavily dominated by traffic and large scale highway infrastructure, the Lode Lane / Warwick Road roundabout currently acts as a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement. The distinct lack of direct frontage onto the street and relatively poor quality of surrounding buildings mean that this key arrival point into the town fails to match the attractiveness of the inner town centre. The Lode Lane multi-storey car park was identified in the Solihull Town Centre Study (2009) as an unattractive and outdated site, with recommendations for redevelopment. The Solihull Public Realm Strategy (2014) also recognised the lack of gateway articulation and negative public realm impact caused by the multi-storey car park. This low urban quality and underutilisation brings the site forward as a key area for future change.

Improvements to the Warwick Road environment have the potential to enhance connectivity along the northern edge of the town with opportunities to create improved crossing facilities and greater provision for cyclists. A new landmark development fronting onto the roundabout could improve the attractiveness of this important arrival point and deliver attractive new urban living and/or car parking facilities.



Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
Enhanced connectivity across Warwick Road.	Opportunity to diversify the town centre and provide sustainable urban living potentially alongside new car parking facilities.	Enhance the northern arrival point into the town through high quality new development.
Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities.		





- Railway Line
- Connections**
Improved connections
- Experience**
Improved urban experience and placemaking
- Potential for landmark building
- Living & Working**
Potential living and working
- Potential frontage

Figure 6.35: Broad design principles and precedent image examples.

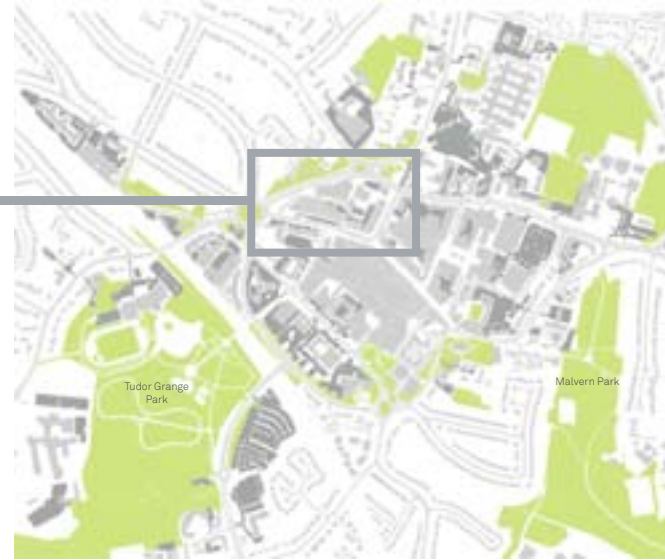


Figure 6.36: Location plan

6.12.1 Lode Lane Car Park

Situated adjacent to a major arterial route and junction, Lode Lane Car Park is currently an underutilised and unattractive feature. Should this site become available, in the medium term, there is potential to redevelop the site to provide high quality new residential development, whilst retaining existing access to adjacent building uses including the Premier Inn Hotel. It is envisaged that the new development will provide an attractive frontage onto this key junction and that the scheme would incorporate enhancements to the public realm and adjacent green space to improve the existing streetscape. It is envisaged that a mixture of surface car parking (to the rear) and basement parking could be provided to serve the development.

At present it is understood that Lode Lane Car Park provides allocated parking for the Premier Inn Hotel, and it would be the intention to respect this existing use as the proposals evolve.

The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out below:

- **Up to 71 new homes;**
- **Accommodated on buildings up to four storeys in height; and**
- **Up to 71 car parking spaces (mixture of surface and basement) to serve the development.**

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
0.59ha	Medium	Medium	Solihull MBC

Current Use

The Lode Lane site is situated adjacent a major arterial route and junction and currently contains an underutilised Multi Storey Car Park which provides 486 car parking spaces. The site also provides vehicular access to the existing adjacent uses including the Premier Inn Hotel. The car park is currently utilised by the hotel to provide guest parking.

Current Planning Designation

The site is currently designated within the Solihull Local Plan (2013) as a Mature Suburb. It is also contained within the Local Plan's Proposed Mixed Use Site 8 boundary and identified as a Long Term Development Opportunity Site.

Site Opportunities

A key objective of the Masterplan is to promote appropriate sites for residential development with a view to increasing the resident population of the town centre, in order to diversify the town centre economy, particularly the “evening economy”.

There is continued market interest in apartment building in Solihull town centre, with the location appealing both to young professionals and “downsizing” couples, with well-located apartments comfortably achieving in the order of £300/sqft.

Such values would make the provision of a floor of basement parking viable, which has the potential to impact on achievable development densities.

There is known market interest in Lode Lane as a potential residential site.

Planning History

No planning applications have been lodged over the Lode Lane Car Park Site in the past 5 years.

Key Stakeholder Partners

Premier Inn, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

Premier Inn Parking Lease

We understand that the neighbouring Premier Inn hotel leases car parking spaces, the terms of which may have a bearing on the pace of implementation at this site. Furthermore, an arrangement would require to be reached that does not affect the operational viability of the hotel business.

Car Parking Capacity in Solihull Town Centre

Beyond any specific involvement of Solihull MBC at the site level, a critical issue, with market and delivery implications is transport infrastructure and parking.

Testing the Masterplan through the development of a car parking strategy has previously been flagged as a priority action, with particular regard to the “supply impact” implicit removal of car parking capacity through the development of certain sites, such as Lode Land Car Park, as well as the “demand impact” of such new development.

The development of the car parking strategy will be important in gauging the impact of the removal of car parking capacity on the highway network, enabling the potential commercial impact of the site development to be gauged against the attendant impact on the highway network and the wider appeal of Solihull Town Centre. The impact of potential removal of shoppers car parking at Lode Lane will be critical in this context.

Demand management options through the “under provision” of long stay parking for commuters, and the tolerating of “inconvenience” at peak periods, all of which are options

that are being considered carry a risk to future investment from current and future occupiers. The redevelopment of Lode Lane Car Park will need to be considered in this context, prior to a decision on the future of the site.

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

There is market interest in the Lode Lane Car Park site for apartment development, and the scheme would work as a market disposal without the need for further land assembly.



Figure 6.37: Illustrative View - Lode Lane Car Park

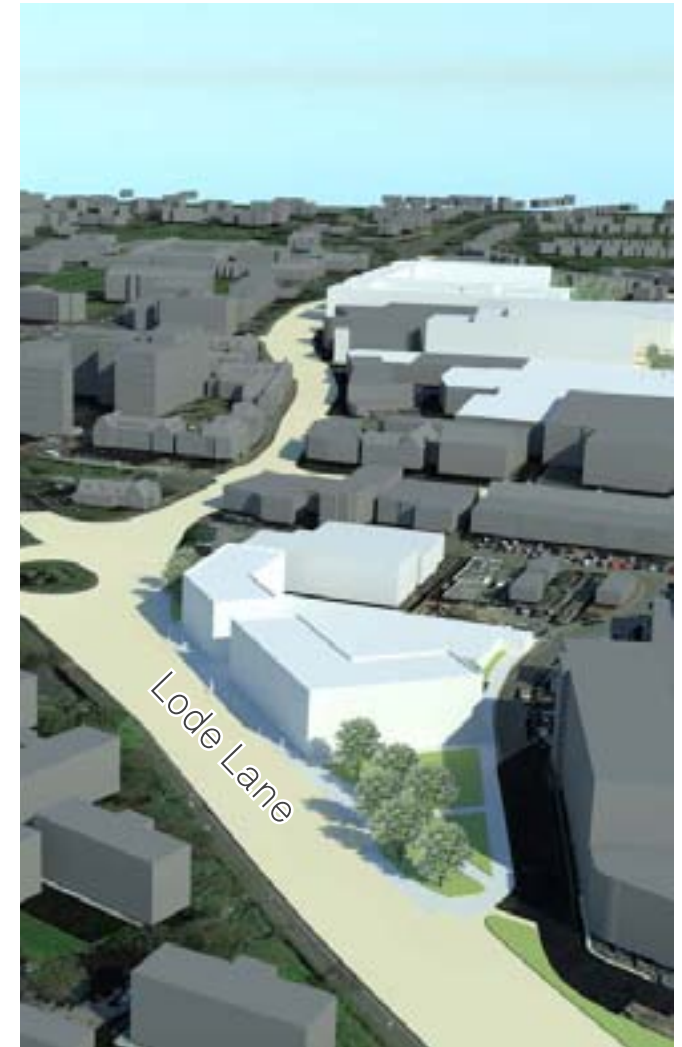


Figure 6.38: Model View - Lode Lane Car Park

6.13 Heart of Solihull (Retail Core)

Solihull benefits from a popular and successful retail core centred around Touchwood Shopping Centre and Mell Square. The masterplan will seek to re-establish the High Street as a key component of Solihull's retail heart. Currently there is a distinct lack of quality evening offer and some of the existing public realm is tired and fails to reflect the ambitions of the town. The planned introduction of new mixed use development at Touchwood II and Mell Square will provide further diversity and vitality to the town centre whilst also acting as a catalyst for future redevelopment. Providing a greater variety of food and beverage uses, the proposals will also boost Solihull's evening economy, which could be further supported through the development of new higher density residential uses. There are also opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycle connections through the town, using new development to reinforce and positively reflect main routes, particularly around St Alphege Church. Furthermore, an upgraded public realm along the High Street and at Mell Square will more appropriately reflect the historic character and quality of the town centre, and provide the opportunity to create a high quality destination space for residents, visitors and workers.

A strong emphasis will be placed on enhancing the existing retail core, by encouraging renewal through enhancing connectivity and encouraging mixed uses. Any new notable retail development, aside from that already in the planning process, would be envisaged from reconfiguration of the existing underused sites.

Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
Improve provision for cyclists.	Increase the diversity of uses within the town centre.	Strengthen the identity and historic character of the town.
Enhance connections through the town centre through additional wayfinding measures and a clear route hierarchy.	Grow Solihull's evening economy.	Create a vibrant and attractive destination.
	Introduce further sustainable urban living to support the town centre.	Enhance streets and public realm and develop a clear hierarchy of routes to aid legibility.



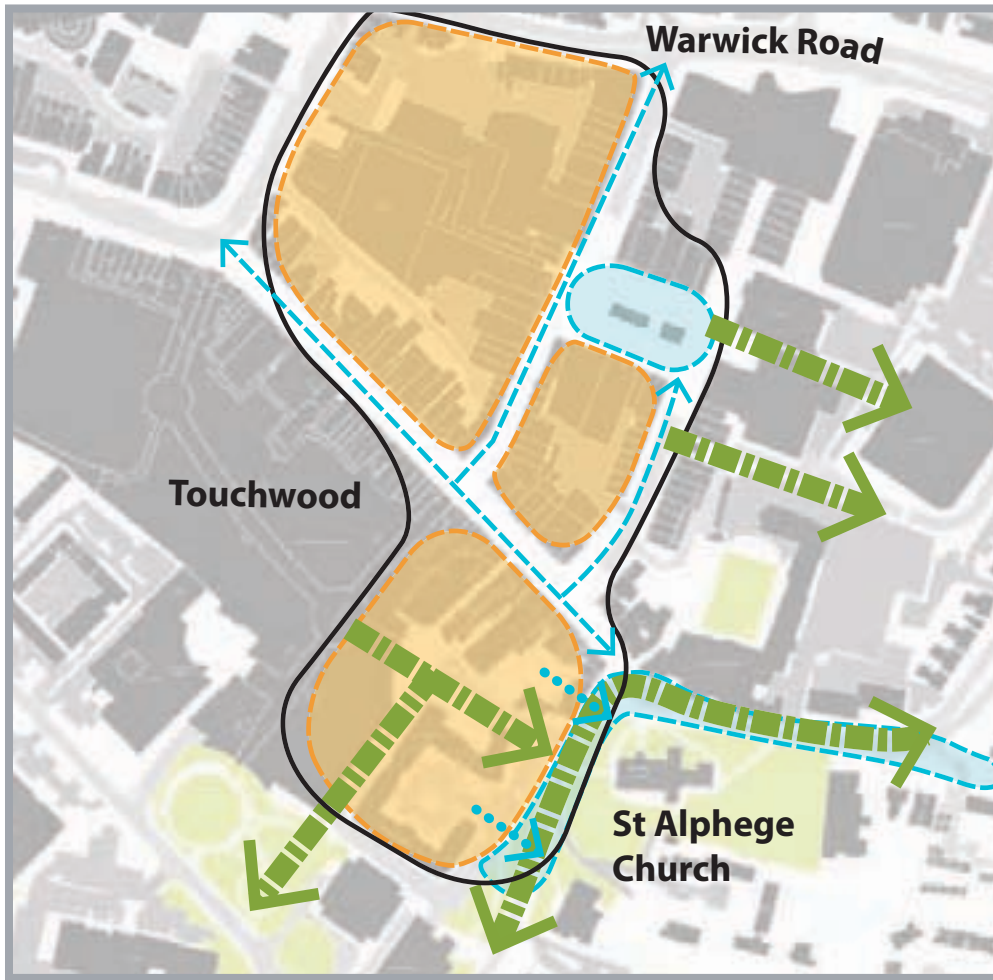


Figure 6.39: Broad design principles and visualisations of the planned Touchwood II and Mell Square developments.



Figure 6.40: Location plan

- Living & Working**
Potential living and working
- Experience**
Improved urban experience and placemaking
- Railway Line**
- Potential for landmark building**
- Potential frontage**
- Connections**
Improved connections

6.13.1 Mell Square

Planning consent has been granted for a 12,626 sqft / 1,173 sqm mixed-use restaurant and office development at IM Properties' Mell Square Drury Lane in Solihull town centre and the scheme is currently on site. In addition, IM Properties are currently developing plans for the wider redevelopment of Mell Square, which will look to:

- Create a retail loop to complete the shopping experience;
- Uplift the identity of the area attracting high quality retailers and restaurateurs;
- Provide opportunities to introduce larger footprint retail offer;
- Create a legible and attractive environment for visitors through the scale and massing of buildings to the detailing of the landscaping, street furniture and signage.
- Reduce traffic flow in order to prioritise pedestrians;
- Increase the residential offer within the site (up to 147 new homes); and
- Establish Mell Square as a destination with increased dwell time.

The proposals are currently at the early stages of development and definitive capacities are still to be confirmed. IM Properties are presently working with SMBC to ensure that the masterplan and Mell Square proposals are aligned. Anticipated uses are likely to include a mixture of retail, leisure, office, residential and associated public car parking.



Figure 6.41: Illustrative View - Mell Square



Figure 6.42: Model View - Mell Square

6.13.2 Touchwood II and Council Offices

Situated at the south east corner of the town centre this important site will form a bridge between the main retail core and the emerging business quarter. The proposals for the Touchwood II extension and Solihull Council House include the 110,000 sqft / 10,219 m² expansion of the Touchwood Shopping Centre to accommodate 30 new shops and restaurants, which will involve the demolition of two existing council buildings. The remaining council building (Church Hill House) is proposed to be fully refurbished and will become the Council's main headquarters. The expansion will bring 900 new jobs to the town, around 500 during the construction phase and 400 jobs to help run the new shops and restaurants.

Development of this site has the potential to influence the opportunities of surrounding areas including; the Job Centre site, Jubilee Gardens, Mell Square and Monkspath Hall Road Car Park. Some influences of this development include:

- The potential to provide enhanced connectivity to Jubilee Gardens which could increase activity and use of the space;
- Assist in the support of a residential development at the job centre site;
- Support residential development at Monkspath Hall Road Car Park;
- Improving access to the eastern edge of the town centre strengthening links to Malvern and Brueton Park; and
- Proposed food and beverage uses at Mell Square would complement the Touchwood proposals, creating a new food and beverage quarter.

The plans for development were approved by SMBC planning in December 2015. There is work ongoing around land assembly which if resolved in 2016 would allow enabling work to commence on site in 2017.



Figure 6.43: Illustrative View - Touchwood II and Council Offices



Figure 6.44: Model View - Touchwood || and Council Offices

6.14 Solihull Living

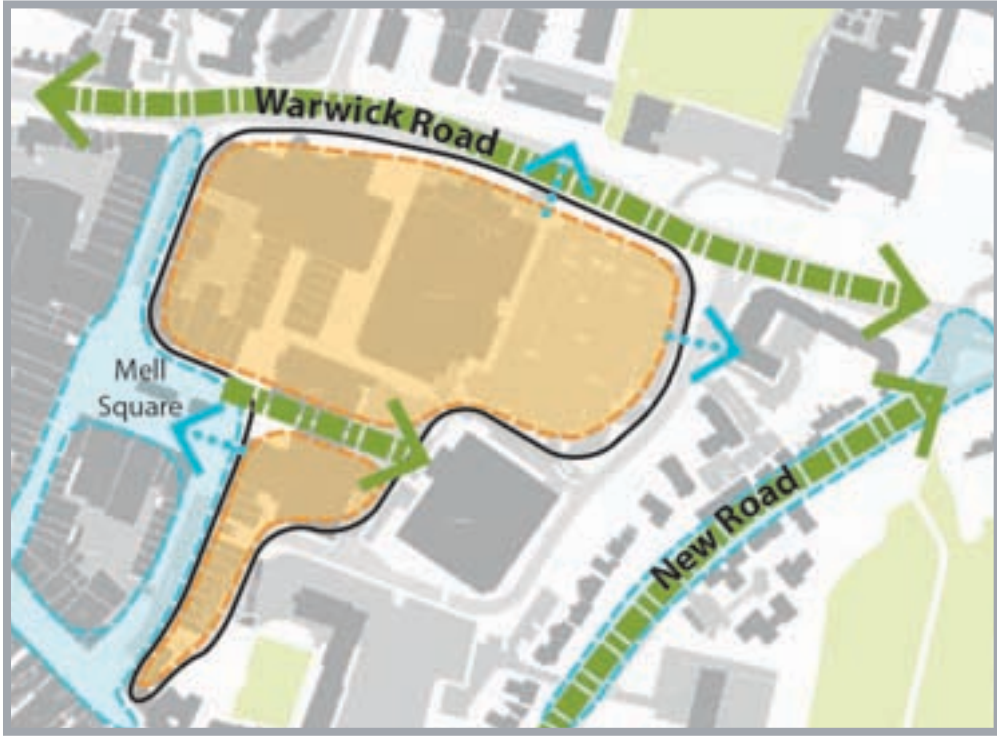
Elements within the north east of the town centre are underutilised and fail to provide an attractive frontage along Warwick Road. In addition, the existing building formats hinder permeability and there is a lack of positive frontage onto many pedestrian routes. With the opportunities associated with the planned Mell Square and Touchwood II developments, there is an exciting opportunity to further diversify the town and support the wider town centre's envisaged new evening uses through the creation of a new residential quarter.

We envisage the quarter may have particular appeal to the retirement market and young professionals. A greater representation of these demographic groups will support the diversification of the evening economy in the town centre, as such groups appreciate and seek an increasingly broad range of good quality and convenient leisure and entertainment options. This would provide new opportunities to consolidate and reconfigure existing car parking provision, and enable increased permeability from Mell Square through to the eastern edge of the town.

New development would also provide opportunities to improve frontage onto Warwick Road, enhancing the edge of the town and adding further vibrancy and variety into the town centre. Enhanced crossings across Warwick Road could improve pedestrian connectivity with the north of the town, whilst an upgraded public realm will assist in creating an attractive, outward facing Solihull.

Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
Improved north-south connectivity	Opportunity to diversify the town centre and provide sustainable urban living potentially alongside new car parking facilities.	Positive frontage onto Warwick Road.
Improved pedestrian and cycle provision.		Improved perceptions of the northern edge to pedestrians and cyclists.
Enhanced permeability within the town centre.		Enhanced overlooking onto key routes.





- Railway Line
- Living & Working
Potential living and working
- Connections
Improved connections
- Potential for landmark building
- Experience
Improved urban experience and placemaking
- Potential frontage

Figure 6.45: Broad design principles and precedent image examples.



Figure 6.46 Location plan

6.14.1 Mell Square East

Forming the north eastern edge of the town centre and fronting Warwick Road, this prominent site has the long term potential to accommodate large scale redevelopment for high density urban living. Providing attractive new frontage onto Warwick Road, new residential development will present an opportunity to enhance the existing public realm and tie in with future Mell Square proposals to improve pedestrian connectivity. There are opportunities to bring forward the site in stages to align with when sites become available, however it will be important to ensure that the overall development has a common character and links together.

Should this site become available. The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out below:

- **Up to 309 new homes;**
- **Accommodated on buildings up to five storeys in height; and**
- **Up to 679 car parking spaces (mixture of surface and basement) to serve the development and replace existing displaced parking.**

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
1.82ha	Long	Medium	IM Properties, Morrisons

Current Use

Situated along Warwick Road, the site is currently used as a large scale surface car park for supermarket retailer Morrisons. The car park currently provides approximately 370 spaces.

Current Planning Designation

The site is currently designated within the Solihull Local Plan (2013) as a Mature Suburb. It is also contained within the Local Plan's Proposed Mixed Use Site 8 boundary and identified as a Long Term Development Opportunity.

Site Opportunities

A key objective of the Masterplan is to promote appropriate sites for residential development with a view to increasing the resident population of the town centre, in order to diversify the town centre economy, particularly the “evening economy”.

There is continued market interest in apartment building in Solihull town centre, with the location appealing both to young professionals and “downsizing” couples, with well-located apartments comfortably achieving in the order of £300/sqft. The site occupies a location in good proximity to town centre amenities, and appeals as a residential development location.

Such values would make the provision of a floor of basement parking viable, which has the potential to impact on achievable development densities.

Planning History

No relevant planning applications have been lodged over the Mell Square East site in the past 5 years.

Key Stakeholder Partners

IM Properties, Morrisons Plc, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

Control of Land

The current occupation and ownership, with a significant element of the Mell Square East land being outside the

control of Solihull Council, will mean that the scale of development envisaged in the Masterplan proposals for this area (456 dwellings) should be seen as a long term ambition, requiring the redevelopment of the existing multi-storey car park and negotiations with key stakeholders.

In particular, the land in the east is situated upon the current Morrison's car park. The adjoining Superstore remains a viable use in this location, with no known plans to relocate, and therefore development here is also seen as a longer term ambition.

Car Parking Capacity in Solihull Town Centre

Beyond any specific involvement of Solihull MBC at the site level, a critical issue, with market and delivery implications is transport infrastructure and parking.

Testing the Masterplan through the development of a car parking strategy has previously been flagged as a priority action, with particular regard to the “supply impact” implicit removal of car parking capacity through the development of certain sites, such as the current provision at “Mell Square East”, as well as the “demand impact” of such new development.

The development of the car parking strategy will be important in gauging the impact of the removal of car parking capacity on the highway network, enabling the potential commercial impact of the site development to be gauged against the attendant impact on the highway network and the wider appeal of Solihull Town Centre. For this site, however, this consideration may remain notional, given that the site lies outside the control of the council, has a viable current use, and with a key landowner having an

alternate vision for the land in their ownership

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

Here, the Masterplan explores long term possibilities, on the basis of its brief to consider, model and test, potential change over a 20 year plus timescale. Any long term change here would be a commercial decision taken by the respective land owners, responding to changing market demand and new opportunities.



Figure 6.47: Illustrative View - Mell Square East



Figure 6.48: Model View - Mell Square East

6.15 St Alphege Quarter

St Alphege Church is a key landmark and provides an attractive conclusion to the eastern end of the High Street. The quality of the surrounding historic buildings is representative of Solihull's attractive heritage character, however the relatively tired public realm, and heavy traffic disappoint. In addition, the popular and attractive Malvern and Brueton Park is located just a short distance to the east; however the park is not promoted and the connection is not obvious for visitors to follow. Opportunities to provide attractive and sensitive new residential development here could improve frontages onto New Road and further diversify the town centre. Improvements in the public realm could prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, whilst also supporting the areas historic character. In addition, improved wayfinding and the introduction of new green infrastructure could actively link the town centre with Malvern and Brueton Park.



Association with Framework Concepts		
Connections	Living & Working	Experience
Improved provision for cyclists.	Opportunity to diversify the town centre and provide sustainable urban living.	Creation of positive frontage onto St Alphege Church.
Enhanced pedestrian connections along New Road.		Linking the town centre with public parks.
Improved connectivity to Malvern and Brueton Park.		Strengthen the identity and historic character of the town.



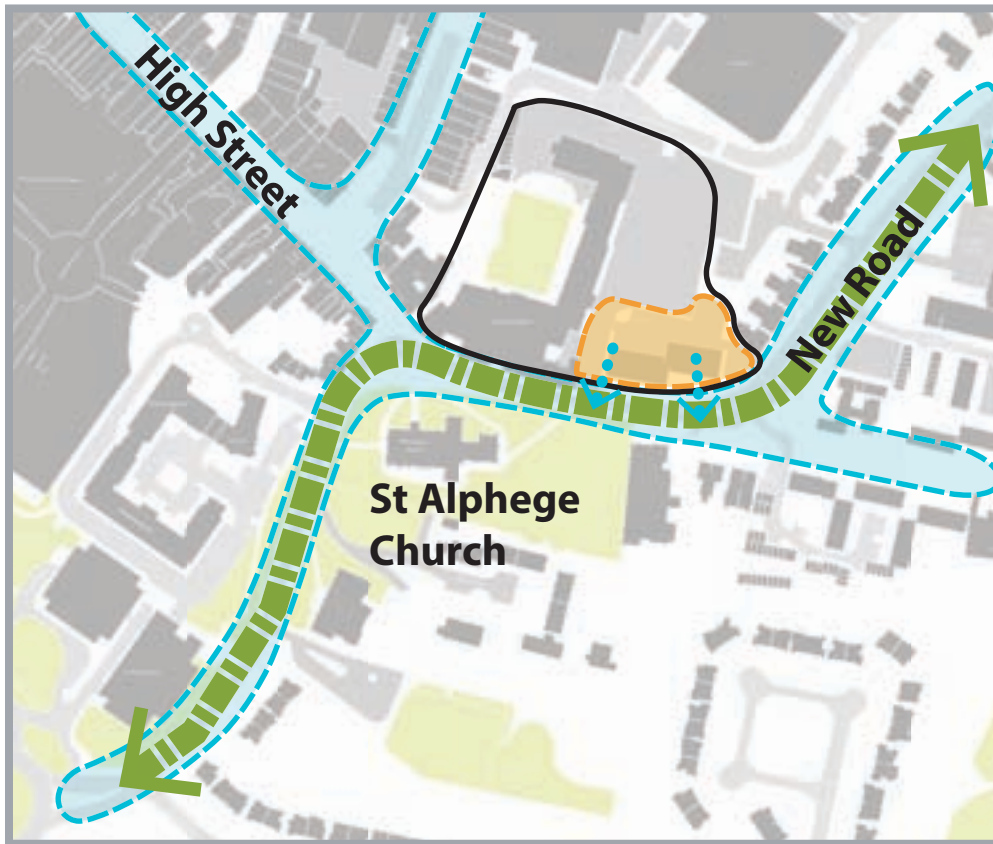


Figure 6.50: Location plan

- Railway Line
- Experience
Improved urban experience and placemaking
- Potential for landmark building
- Potential frontage
- Connections**
Improved connections
- Living & Working**
Potential living and working

Figure 6.49: Broad design principles and precedent image examples.

6.15.1 The Job Centre

Located within the historic St Alphege's Quarter, the job centre site has the potential to accommodate comprehensive future redevelopment. This new development would front onto New Road and provide an attractive entrance to the High Street. Should this site become available, it is envisaged that medium density family housing could be developed which sits sensitively within the existing context and provides similar typologies to those that already exist along New Road.

Residential development of this site would be complemented by enhancements to the public realm in the area around St Alphege church known as The Square. This would include Churchyard enhancements to encourage the public to use and enjoy the space; provision for informal 'staying' activities through the provision of seating and outdoor dining, and the creation of a self-enforcing 20 mph zone. This would provide an attractive environment linking this development site with the High Street, Touchwood II and the Council Offices development site.

The potential capacity and preferred use for the site are set out below:

- **Up to 11 new homes;**
- **Accommodated on buildings up to two storeys in height; and**
- **Up to 11 on plot car parking spaces to serve the development.**

Size ha	Phasing	Priority	Land Ownership
0.24ha	Medium	Medium	Department of Work & Pensions

Current Use

Located in the historic St Alphege Quarter, the site currently hosts the Job Centre, a large scale, low quality concrete building and associated rear surface car parking.

Current Planning Designation

The site is currently designated within the Solihull Local Plan (2013) as a Mature Suburb. It is also contained within the Local Plan's Proposed Mixed Use Site 8 boundary. The Solihull Town Centre Spatial Strategy highlights the site and its immediate surrounds as the Civic Core and illustrates enhancement of the Public Realm in this area to establish a connection with Malvern Park.

Site Opportunities

A key objective of the Masterplan is to promote appropriate sites for residential development with a view to increasing the resident population of the town centre, in order to diversify the town centre economy, particularly the "evening economy".

This site, located in an attractive setting at the edge of the town centre would be well suited to a small development of townhouses or a care scheme.

Planning History

No planning applications have been lodged over the Job Centre site in the past 5 years.

Key Stakeholder Partners

Department of Work & Pensions, Solihull MBC.

Key Delivery Issues (Risks / Constraints)

Control of Land.

The Job Centre is operational and the property is outside the control of Solihull Council,

Recommended Delivery Mechanism

A residential development would be delivered by the private sector in the current market. The land is under the control of the public sector, but not Solihull MBC.

The key issue for the Masterplan here, is that, the site remains in use. The vision of the Masterplan spans 20 years and beyond, however, and assumes the fitness for purpose of these sites and building in their current public service use will be subject to review in the future. Indeed, the fitness for purpose of the extensive public sector "estate", and the potential for ensuring operational efficiency combined with realising site value for the public purse, is a Government priority. The One Public Estate (OPE) programme, delivered jointly by Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association (LGA), channels funding and practical support through local authorities to deliver collaborative property-focused projects with central government and others. How this may assist Solihull MBC in advancing the masterplan objectives alongside public sector partners is a key consideration.



Figure 6.51: Illustrative View - The Job Centre



Figure 6.52: Model View - The Job Centre

6.16 SWOT Review

The below table demonstrates how the interventions within the Areas of Change can respond and react to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified within Section 3.8.

Strengths	Areas of Change Response	Weaknesses	Areas of Change Response
A high quality town rich in heritage.	St Alphege's Quarter (6.15) will look to strengthen the historic character of the town by improving the setting of St Alphege Church and frontages onto New Road.	Lack of outward frontage resulting in an insular facing town, which fails to promote itself to people arriving into Solihull.	Areas of change with frontages along the edges of the town (6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14 and 6.15) provide opportunities to create new attractive frontage and an outward facing town centre.
Frontages associated with the main High Street are relatively high quality and provide a varied and positive street frontage with numerous cafés and a varied built form which reflects the historic nature of the town.	The Heart of Solihull (6.13) looks to enhance the public realm, encourage mixed uses and improve connectivity to further strengthen the High Street. Further food and beverage uses associated with Touchwood II and Mell Square will add to existing positive frontages and provide attractive built form.	Solihull's main gateways are currently characterised by large scale infrastructure.	Four key Areas of Change (6.9, 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12) are focussed around the existing junctions and look to create new attractive frontage and improved pedestrian and cycle connections. New landmark buildings could be used to further strengthen Solihull's identity and aid legibility.
Solihull town centre benefits from being in close proximity to two large public parks namely Tudor Grange Park; and Malvern and Brueton Park.	The Southern Gateway (6.10) aims to improve north south connections and will provide positive frontage onto Tudor Grange Park. St Alphege's Quarter (6.15) will improve connectivity and pedestrian / cycle experience between the High Street and Malvern and Brueton Park.	Key arrival points for pedestrians and cyclists fail to convey the quality and vibrancy associated with Solihull.	Improvements to Solihull Train Station (6.9) and the potential relocation in the longer term (6.10) will improve arrival points for visitors / users and better reflect Solihull's character. In addition, the Areas of Change will look to improve connectivity and experience for pedestrians and cyclists.
Existing market reputation and high quality of living.	It is envisaged that the Areas of Change will together sustain Solihull's enviable reputation and the introduction of new town city living will provide new high quality residential uses at the heart of the town.	The train station feels remote from the centre, and has a relatively poor environmental quality.	The improved connections in the short term (6.9) will enhance routes from the station to the town centre, and longer term relocation could centralise the train station and provide closer links with the centre.
		Frontages along the ring road are generally of a lower quality and do not overlook the street.	Many Areas of change include frontages along the edges of the town (6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, 6.14 and 6.15). This provides opportunities to create new attractive frontage which overlook the street.
		There is very little greenspace within the town centre core and access to parks is at present poorly signposted.	The Southern Gateway (6.10) and St Alphege's Quarter (6.15) will provide opportunities to provide improved signage to the parks.
		The town is characterised by large single use areas, which have little interaction.	The Areas of Change will introduce new mixed uses into the town centre (offices, residential and leisure) adding further vibrancy broadening the current offer.
		Limited residential offer in the town centre.	There are opportunities to add new urban living into all Areas of Change with particular emphasis on the Southern Gateway (6.10) and Solihull Living (6.14) areas.

Opportunities	Areas of Change Response	Threats	Areas of Change Response
Train Station has the opportunity to create a 'front door' to Solihull which demonstrates the inherent quality of the town.	Improvements to Solihull Train Station (6.9) and the potential relocation in the longer term (6.10) will improve arrival points for visitors / users and better reflect Solihull's character. It will also provide opportunity to plan for the future and encourage further usage of the train station.	Market considerations for demand and viability.	The Areas of Change are inherently flexible, providing a framework for future change. This flexibility will allow sites to come forward at different times which can respond to market demand yet still conform to and support the overall vision for Solihull.
Build on it's reputation as an affluent town.	Further diversifying the town centre offer by introducing new leisure, office and residential uses will build on Solihull's existing positive reputation and encourage greater use of the town centre.	Environmentally and socially responding to a changing demographic; elderly, youth and young families.	The Heart of Solihull (6.13) will increase leisure uses within the town centre to create a destination for families and young professionals. The introduction of new urban living within the town centre will provide attractive new housing within easy reach of the town centre uses which could be an attractive proposition for the older generation as well as young professionals.
Build on Solihull Town Centre's existing variety of public spaces, which support a range of different functions.	New development within the Areas of Change provides opportunities to create new public spaces and improve existing ones. The Heart of Solihull (6.13) in particular looks to provide a reconfigured Mell Square which has the potential to become a high quality public space and destination for events.	Responding to the competitive nature of similar towns in the wider context.	The Heart of Solihull (6.13) looks to encourage a greater diversity of uses within the town centre and support the independent retail base strengthening Solihull's identity. Solihull Living (6.14) and other Areas of Change provide opportunities to introduce new urban living to support the growing commercial and leisure uses.
Improve accessibility to surrounding parks to encourage people to use them.	The Southern Gateway (6.10) and St Alphege's Quarter (6.15) will provide opportunities to provide improved signage and connections to the parks.	Responding to climate change and the push for sustainability.	The Areas of Change look to promote improved pedestrian and cycle connections to encourage greater sustainable travel reducing dependence on the car. This is of particular importance at the Western Gateway (6.9), Business and Commercial Quarter (6.11) and Southern Gateway (6.10). In addition, improvements to the train station (6.9 and 6.10) will encourage people to travel to Solihull by train.
Increase the residential offer in the town centre.	There are opportunities to add new urban living into all Areas of Change with particular emphasis on the Southern Gateway (6.10) and Solihull Living (6.14) areas.		
Recognise the potential benefits which complementary mixed land uses provide.	The introduction of new urban living into the town centre will help support emerging food and beverage and commercial uses (Mell Square and Touchwood II) and provide new opportunities for sustainable working and living reducing the need to use the car.		
Support the wider Borough ambitions outlined by UK Central.	The relocation of the train station (6.10) will help support the UK Central ambition of creating a principal gateway between the National Rail Network and Solihull Town Centre.		

6.17 Development Plots

The plan opposite (Figure 6.53) breaks down the masterplan elements into individual development plots. The plots broadly follow existing physical boundaries and have been used to help understand the viability of each site in terms of potential development costs and value. It should be noted that Mell Square, Touchwood II and the council offices are therefore not included within the development plots shown as the design development of these sites is currently in progress and they will be subject to their own individual viability studies.

The schedule to the right gives an indication as to the land use, development capacity and potential number of dwellings that could be achieved for each of the development plots:

Total Residential Units (total residential capacity figure doesn't include residential development figures for the existing train station site):	1,217
Total Residential Floor Space (sqft)	1,029,326
Total Residential Floor Space (sqm)	95,627
Total Office Floor Space (sqft)	541,188
Total Office Floor Space (sqm)	50,278
Total Retail/ Leisure / Food / Beverage Floorspace (sqft)	235,623
Total Retail/ Leisure / Food / Beverage Floorspace (sqm)	21,890
Total Floor Space of Train Station (sqft)	221,728
Total Floor Space of Train Station (sqft)	20,599
Total Indicative New Car Parking spaces provided (excluding 1,784 spaces car parking spaces as part of the Proposed Mell Square Redevelopment)	3,099

	Building	Plot Number	Plot Area (Ha)	Use	Total Floorspace (sq ft)	Total Floorspace (sqm)	Indicative number of High Density Residential Units*	Indicative number of Medium Density Residential Units (45 dph)	Car Parking Provision based on 80% site coverage and 25 sqm per space			
									Surface	Basement	Multi-Storey	
1. Western Gateway	1A	1.1	0.25	Office	53,900	5,007			77			
	1B	1.2	0.65	Office	145,600	13,527			208			
	1C			Office								
2. Southern Gateway	2A	2.1	0.85	Train Station	221,728	20,599						
	2B	2.2	1.32	Multi Storey Car Park	248,689	23,104					951	
	2C			Leisure / Food / Beverage	7,104	660						
	2D	2.3	1.32	Mixed Use	66,736	6,200	66			66		
	2E			Residential	55,200	5,128	73					
	2F			Residential	99,222	9,218	131				333	
	2G	2.4	1.19	Residential	98,242	9,127	129					
	2H			Residential	28,750	2,671						
	2I			Residential	20,557	1,910			54		135	
	2J			Residential	25,673	2,385						
	2K			Residential	6,828	634						
	2L			Residential	16,629	1,545						
3. Business and Commercial Quarter	3A	3.1	0.72	Office	123,000	11,427			176			
	3B			Office								
	3C			Office								
	3D	3.2	0.63	Office	104,300	9,690			149			
	3E			Office								
	3F	3.3	1.18	Residential	27,274	2,534	36			226		
	3G			Residential	33,980	3,157	45					
	3H			Residential	29,307	2,723	39					
	3I			Residential	24,949	2,318	33					
	3J			Residential	25,920	2,408	34					
3K	Residential			30,113	2,798	40						
4. Northern Approach	4A	4.1	0.59	Residential	31,990	2,972	42			71		
	4B			Residential	22,303	2,072	29					
5. Heart of Solihull (Retail Core)	Plot 5.0	Touchwood II		Leisure / Food / Beverage	115,000	10,684						
				Office	105,206	9,774						
		Mell Square Vision		Mixed Use (Residential/ Retail)	116,750	10,846	147			1,784		
		Mell Square Drury Lane Development		Mixed Use (Office/ Food/ Beverage)	12,626	1,173						
6. Solihull Living	6A	6.1	0.81	Residential	40,903	3,800	54			679		
	6B			Residential	66,306	6,160	87					
	6C			Residential	34,068	3,165	45					
	6D	6.2	1.01	Residential	31,484	2,925	41					
	6E			Residential	61,946	5,755	82					
	6F			Residential								
7. St Alphredge Quarter	7A	7.1	0.24	Residential	1,808	168		11	28			
	7B			Residential	1,808	168						
	7C			Residential	1,808	168						
	7D			Residential	6,458	600						
	7E			Residential	6,458	600						
	7F			Residential	3,229	300						



Figure 6.53: Demolition Plan Illustrating development plots

6.18 Landscape & Public Realm Strategy

The scale of change envisaged in the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan provides a unique opportunity to capitalise on these benefits and rectify existing issues, through the implementation of key public realm interventions. The plan opposite (Figure 6.54) illustrates where these interventions should be focussed and sets out the type of space envisaged. These range from individual spaces, local green spaces, urban squares, and tree lined boulevards.

Good urban design and green infrastructure adds value to a town by increasing the economic viability of development and by delivering social and environmental benefits:

Economic Benefits

- Producing high returns on investments (good rental returns and enhanced capital values);
- Responding to occupier demands;
- Helping to deliver more lettable area;
- Attracting more visitors and users of the town centre;
- Reducing management, maintenance, energy and security costs;
- Contributing to more contented and productive workforces;
- Supporting the 'life giving' mixed-use elements in developments;
- Differentiating places and raising their prestige; and
- Attracting investment.

Social & Environmental Benefits

- Creating well connected, inclusive and accessible new places;
- Delivering missed-use environments with a broad range of facilities and amenities;
- Delivering development sensitive to its context;
- Enhancing the sense of safety and security;
- Boosting civic pride and enhancing civic image;
- Revitalising urban heritage;
- Improving people's health and well being; and
- Street trees can help reduce the impact of the urban heat island effect and help improve air quality.

6.18.1 Design Objectives

The approach to the public realm and open space strategy is based upon the findings of the site appreciation analysis (Section 3) and the Solihull Public Realm Framework (Phil Jones Associates, Feb 2014) which set out the following overarching design objectives:

- Legible – Improve legibility within the town centre by providing clear, signage and ensuring that streets and spaces have a clear hierarchy. The use of gateways and key nodes will be used to aid wayfinding and ensure that places have a clear identity;
- Distinctive – It will be important to create features which are distinctively Solihull, to ensure that the character of the town is preserved and to set the town apart from its competitors. This could include unique, unusual elements of street furniture / public art or even the layout of a space so that it can accommodate distinctive events;
- Flexible – The design of streets and spaces should be inherently flexible so that they can accommodate a variety of uses and respond to changing needs over time;
- Attractive – The public realm should be attractive both in the day and at night and respond positively to the surrounding uses. It should ensure that it reflects and enhances the historic character of Solihull and provides places for people to sit and enjoy their surroundings;
- Functional – Spaces and street furniture should also be functional both in terms of accessibility, usability, comfort and maintenance;
- Future Proof – The detailed design of the public realm will need to be mindful of the robustness of materials /

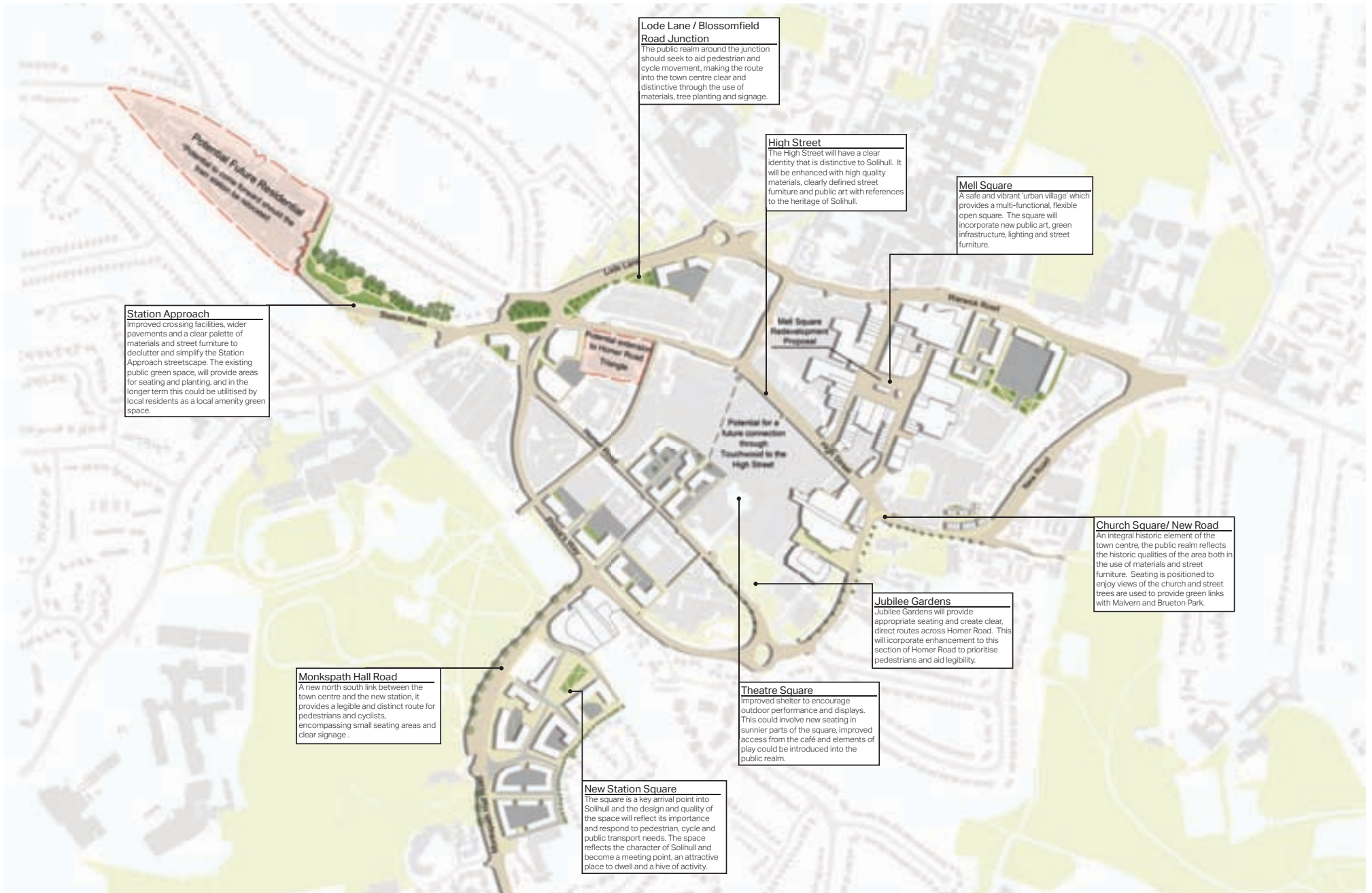


Figure 6.54: Solihull Town Centre Masterplan - Landscape and Public Realm Strategy

furniture that are chosen and ensure that elements can be easily replaced when required;

- Inclusive – The town centre is for everyone and therefore the design of the public realm must be inclusive both in terms of accessibility and also usability; and
- Safe – New development and the design of the public realm will need to ensure that the town centre feels safe and usable at all times of the day. The design of the streetscape will need to ensure that cyclists and pedestrians are prioritised and protected from vehicles, and also that streets and public spaces are active, well-lit and overlooked.

6.18.2 Key interventions

A number of key areas have been identified for public realm enhancement based upon the preferred masterplan. As these areas come forward for development, further studies will need to be undertaken to develop detailed design proposals, however the overall design objectives should remain an integral part of this process.

Mell Square

IM properties are currently developing designs for the phased redevelopment of Mell Square, which will look to comprehensively de-clutter the streets and spaces and provide a main square which is lighter, greener, more attractive and multi-functional. The guiding principles behind the redevelopment of the square will look to create a safe and vibrant 'urban village' which ensures high quality design, improved access and signage and provides a safer, more secure feel. It is envisaged that this will include a flexible open square which can be used for a variety of events during the day and evening. In addition, new public art, lighting, street furniture and seating could be based around a central café to create a focus for activity.

High Street

As the principal route at the heart of the town centre, the High Street should be enhanced to reflect its status, with materials and street furniture of a suitably high quality to make the proposed street hierarchy clear. The streetscape could be improved by decluttering and framing views towards St Alphege Church, and by identifying clear areas for seating and market stalls which work together reducing potential conflict. In addition, there are opportunities to introduce public art and references to the heritage of Solihull to create a clear identity that is distinctly Solihull.

Theatre Square

SMBC are currently investigating options to maximise the utilisation and attractiveness of Theatre Square, including options to provide improved shelter to encourage outdoor performance and displays. This could involve the creation of new seating in sunnier parts of the square and improved access from the café to encourage people to use the space. In addition, elements of play could be introduced into the public realm in order to increase dwell time and provide a reason to visit the square.

Church Square / New Road

The public realm around St Alphege Church is regarded as an integral historic element of the town centre and it is therefore essential that any alterations to it must take the historical and cultural significance of the town centre conservation area and church into consideration. Future public realm enhancements should reflect the historic qualities of the area both in the use of materials and street furniture and also in the envisaged function. The space should be reflective, with seating positioned to enjoy views of the church and should take the opportunity to introduce street trees to provide green links with Malvern and Brueton Park. Designs should also look to explore the potential narrowing of the carriageway to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and reduce vehicle dominance.

Station Approach

In the short term there are opportunities to improve the quality of the public realm around the existing station particularly for pedestrians. This could take the form of improved crossing facilities, wider pavements and a clear palette of materials and street furniture to declutter and simplify the streetscape.

In addition there are opportunities to enhance the existing public green space opposite the station, introducing areas for seating as well as planting. This could also improve the waiting environment for bus passengers and recognise that in the short and medium term, the station is an important arrival point into the town. In the longer term the green space could be utilised by local residents as a local amenity green space

Lode Lane / Blossomfield Road Junction

The scale and detailing of the roundabout Lode Lane / Blossomfield Road create significant barriers to movement. Improvement or modification to the roundabout is likely to be linked to proposals for Station Approach and should consider options to how the roundabout could be reduced in scale without loss of capacity, and the introduction of simple measures to widen and emphasise the continuity of the pedestrian route. As a key gateway into the town, the public realm around the junction should seek to aid pedestrian and cycle movement, making the route into the town centre clear and distinctive through the use of materials, tree planting and signage.

Jubilee Gardens

In order to take advantage of its location at the heart of the business and commercial quarter, Jubilee Gardens should look to provide greater seating opportunities and create clear, direct routes across Homer Road to the development to the south. This could include enhancement to this section of Homer Road to improve pedestrian priority and

aid legibility of the north south connections into the town centre.

New Station Square (Long Term)

In the long term, the relocation of the station provides opportunities to create a new civic square adjacent to the new station. The design and quality of the square will need to reflect its importance as a key arrival point and respond to pedestrian, cycle and public transport needs. The square will need to reflect the character of Solihull and become a meeting point, an attractive place to dwell and a hive of activity.

Monkspath Hall Road (North-South Link)

Over time it is envisaged that a new north south link will be created between the town centre and the relocated station. It will provide a legible and distinct route for pedestrians and cyclists encompassing small seating areas, clear signage and should be fronted onto by new development to ensure that the route is safe and overlooked.

Further consideration of individual public realm interventions in the areas listed above is provided in the Supplementary Information document: Public Realm Framework Guidelines. This includes important future design decisions relating to materials (hard and soft landscaping), signage and wayfinding, lighting, street furniture, the layout of footways and public art.



6.19 Heat Network

Solihull Town centre has been identified as a potential opportunity site for a Heat Network. Heat networks provide a more efficient, low carbon and lower cost approach to providing buildings with heating and are at the heart of the Government's strategy for decarbonising heating in the UK.

To identify potential sites, energy data is gathered and spatially assessed to identify locations of primary clusters of heat demands, the best opportunities of which are put forward for more detailed assessment and masterplanning. Solihull Town Centre has been identified as a primary cluster and has therefore been considered in more detail as part of an Energy Masterplanning Study which explores technical and commercial viability. The report makes recommendations concerning development and improvement of performance of potentially viable schemes.

The Solihull Town Centre cluster contains an even mix of private and public sector loads with significant heat demands and therefore represents a good opportunity for a network to be established based primarily on public sector demands, but with excellent expansion opportunities to the private sector, when the scheme has been de-risked and demonstrated to be successful.

Retrofitting a heat network into an already developed site such as a town centre is complicated, so it is timely that whilst developing a masterplan which will guide future development of the town centre, that the opportunity for a heat network to be established is also being considered. The heat network would require significant infrastructure to be installed. Having a masterplan for the town centre enables us to understand what future development in the town

centre may look like, and ensure that infrastructure work undertaken to enable future development is coordinated with the installation of heat network infrastructure.

Following conclusion of the masterplan the next step in relation to heat networks will be to undertake a more detailed feasibility study on the heat network opportunity within Solihull Town Centre, building upon the initial Energy Masterplanning findings with a detailed technical assessment and economic modelling of heat network development options.

6.20 Safety and Security

Good streets and spaces not only look good but also make the people using them feel safe. Feeling safe and secure in a social public space can play a large role in an individual's ability to function and feel good in that locality. In order to achieve this, the layout of new development and design of the public realm must ensure that::

- Streets and spaces are overlooked by the fronts of buildings so that there are 'eyes on the street' and people in the public realm feel safe;
- There is a mix of uses, so that spaces are active throughout different times of the day;
- Views along streets and through spaces unfold as pedestrians walk along, so that people can see what lies ahead of them;
- Where appropriate, vehicle speeds are kept low to provide a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Streets and spaces are free of clutter that makes access difficult;
- Changes in level are carefully designed to provide access for all – e.g. steps and ramps integrated with one another; and
- Good management and maintenance of green spaces is obvious to users, helping to give a feeling of safety.

6.20.1 Integration of Counter Terrorism Measures

The UK currently faces a significant threat from international terrorism. Whilst there have been attacks against well protected targets around the world, experience shows that crowded places remain an attractive target

for terrorists who have demonstrated that they are likely to target places which are easily accessible, regularly available and which offer the prospect for an impact beyond the loss of life alone (for example, serious disruption or a particular economic/political impact), such as a town centre environment.

As developments within the town centre masterplan come forward, a key challenge will be blending counter-terrorism protective security measures with urban design principles. Although there will need to be an overarching approach, it should be recognised that each site is different and there is no “one size fits all” solution. Different sites will present unique challenges and considerations that will result in bespoke solutions. Care should be taken to avoid an over-sensitivity to risk, which can result in bland and standardised places and design should instead find imaginative ways to integrate safety measures into the public realm which are appropriate to the risk.

Typical measures that help to deter, detect and delay a terrorist attack are provided within the document Protecting Crowded Places (HM Government, 2014) and are grouped into five key counter-terrorism design principles:

- Better blast resistance – in the form of building materials and barriers;
- Better building management facilities – with regards to communication systems, entrance arrangements and building systems;
- Search and screening – providing sufficient space at the entrances of buildings / spaces to enable screening of people and vehicles should it be required;
- Better traffic management and hostile vehicle mitigation measures – to reduce vehicle speeds and

protect against unauthorised vehicle entry – a review of the access strategy to the Town Centre will also be required to control permitted access in a secure and robust way; and

- Better oversight – in the form of clear lines of sight around a building, uncluttered street, CCTV and security guarding to provide formal oversight, managed access points and ensuring buildings are overlooked.

“Designing-in” counterterrorism protective security measures from the outset will benefit those involved throughout the development process, from concept design through to planning approval, as well as those who will use and visit the places and buildings. These benefits will best be achieved through collaborative working and broad engagement with all parts of the community.



6.21 Phasing

The scale of the changes envisaged for Solihull Town Centre Masterplan will inevitably take some time to realise. The phasing plan (Figure 6.55) and associated commentary describe an approach that has been informed by land ownership, predicted longevity of existing uses and market conditions. It is anticipated that the masterplan could be brought forward in the following way:

6.21.1 Short Term (0-5 years)

In the short term it is envisaged that development at Mell Square, Touchwood II, Council Offices, Job Centre, Police Station and Magistrates Court could come forward. This would take advantage of land already in public ownership or currently being considered for development. In addition, it would be possible for some residential development to come forward ahead of the relocation of the train station at Southern gateway as this is already an established residential area.

Development could be supported in these areas by the implementation of key public realm upgrades such as the High Street, New Road, and Station Approach. These projects could provide early wins and help to create a setting for investment.

6.21.2 Medium Term (5-10 years)

In the medium term it is envisaged that development around the Homer Road triangle and Lode Lane could come forward, creating a prominent gateway into the town and an attractive frontage onto this important route.

6.21.3 Long Term (10+ years)

Long term redevelopment generally focuses on large scale interventions of more significant scale, predominantly on sites outside public ownership. The potential new train station is a key project in the long term timeframe. This visionary project could provide enhanced pedestrian connections as well as becoming an attractive arrival point for visitors, strengthening Solihull's identity and character. The delivery of the station will act as a catalyst for new office, commercial and residential development along Homer Road, Prince's Way and Monkspath Hall Road. The development of these sites would enable the final part of the north-south pedestrian link to be created and would be supported by new high quality public realm. Following the relocation of the station, there is potential for new suburban residential to be developed adjacent to the old station, overlooking the improved green space.

It is anticipated that the Solihull Living development along Warwick Road would come forward in the long term, although parts of the site such as the redevelopment of Mell Square Car Park could be brought forward earlier should this accord with market requirements.

6.21.4 Individual Development Site Phasing

While a higher level of phasing is used to show the timed delivery of areas within the town centre, a second, more detailed scale of phasing is also applied. This investigates the delivery of individual development plots (section 6.17) which sit within the larger areas of change (section 6.1.1). Areas of change are numbered in the diagram opposite from 1-7. The phasing of individual development plots is illustrated using alphabetical letters.



Figure 6.55: Solihull Town Centre Masterplan - phasing Plan



07 | Conclusion

Solihull Town Centre is a vibrant and attractive place, the civic heart and crucially important to economic and social well-being. Aspirations for managed growth as one of the UK Central centres, provides opportunities to secure Solihull's place in the face of regional competition and for increased town centre living. Such growth will bring issues, opportunities and challenges and will need to be carefully managed to ensure that the growth is positive. The masterplan provides a flexible framework that will enable future development and investment to respond and react to changing conditions. It will also ensure that as sites are developed independently, over different time periods, there will remain an overarching framework which ensures that overall the town centre is developed in a cohesive and integrated way.

7.1 Key Framework Principles

A key objective of the masterplan has been to develop a framework that will form the foundation of a sustainable town centre that is an excellent place to live, work and play. Its successful implementation will require sustained and co-ordinated commitment from not just SMBC but also partner agencies, key stakeholders and the local community.

A summary of the principal masterplan components is provided in the illustrative plan opposite (Figure 7.1). This plan embeds the following overarching place making principles:

Connections

- Promote pedestrian and cycle connections throughout the town centre, and into the surrounding neighbourhoods by enhancing, extending and linking routes.
- Emphasis on creation of a hierarchy of pedestrian friendly, pedestrian priority and genuine shared surface streets/routes.
- Easily accessible public transport through improved links between the major transport hubs and the wider area.

Safety

- Careful consideration to the layout and orientation of buildings to provide natural surveillance to public routes and spaces.
- Equally the public realm layout should avoid nooks and crannies, and have clear lines of sight. Narrow streets should have furniture lines to enable this.

- Use of active ground floors at key nodes and along key routes.
- Management and maintenance should be kept to a high standard to encourage respectfulness, civic pride and to deal with vandalism. Appropriate use of CCTV to enhance safety without infringing on privacy.
- Suitable lighting along key routes and public spaces - specifically the use of white light.

Views and Legibility

- Visual connection between key routes and new public realm.
- Selected glimpses into semi-private courtyards.
- Gateway features/buildings at key locations.
- Clear street hierarchy to assist legibility/wayfinding.
- Wayfinding strategy to form part of the town wide plan.

Public Realm

- Creation of significant new public spaces such as the refurbished Mell Square and Theatre Square, but also in the form of amenity green space.
- Attractive new pedestrian routes taking advantage of the adjacent parkland setting.
- Enhancement and refurbishment of existing footpaths and towpaths

Innovation and Sustainability

- Promotion of sustainable living through environmentally friendly buildings and landscape where possible.
- Utilisation of sustainable technologies and thinking, current at the time of development.
- Promotion of sustainable transport, including convenient access to public transport and provision of local amenities within walking distance.

Community

- Mix of residential types and building uses located around usable public realm, semi-private courtyards and private garden spaces.
- Opportunities for living, working and recreation.
- Location of a variety of play opportunities close to and integrated into main pedestrian routes.
- Interpretative signage interventions to be developed through a curatorial project in partnership with community stakeholders.



Figure 7.1: Model View - Solihull Town Centre

7.2 Summary of Key Interventions

1. Short term upgrades to the public realm and green space surrounding the existing train station providing a positive frontage to the train station.
2. Suburban residential development to come forward in accordance with the long term relocation of the station.
3. Traffic management interventions and enhancements to the public realm around Blossomfield Road roundabout, including a new path through the roundabout, to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the Town Centre and the station.
4. High quality town centre offices, up to 199,500 sqft / 18,534 sqm of new office development to provide an attractive new arrival point into Solihull's business and commercial quarter.
5. High quality new residential development (up to 71 new homes) to provide an attractive frontage onto Lode Lane and incorporate enhancements to the public realm and adjacent green space.
6. Planning consent for a 12,626 sqft / 1,173 sqm mixed-use restaurant and office building at Drury Lane. In addition, plans are currently being developed for the wider redevelopment of Mell Square, which could provide a further 147 new homes and 110,075 sqft / 10,226 sqm of retail development.
7. Large scale redevelopment for high density urban living accommodating up to 309 new homes and providing upgraded public realm and attractive new frontage onto Warwick Road.
8. Medium density family housing providing attractive frontage onto New Road, providing up to 11 new homes.
9. Touchwood II extension and Solihull Council House include the 115,000 sqft / 10,684 sqm expansion of the Touchwood Shopping Centre to accommodate 30 new shops and restaurants.
10. New urban living residential development providing up to 226 new homes.
11. A new pedestrian / cycle link established between Touchwood and Homer Road.
12. New office development which fronts onto Prince's Way providing up to 227,300 sqft / 21,117 sqm of new accommodation.
13. An attractive north-south link between the relocated train station and Homer Road, improving pedestrian / cycle connectivity.
14. Long term relocation of the Solihull Train Station bridging over the train line, connecting Tudor Grange Park and residential development in the south to the town centre in the north.
15. New civic square and transport interchange adjacent the relocated Solihull Train Station is overlooked by commercial development which could enhance the user experience by providing places to eat, drink and browse.
16. A new multi-storey car park providing up to 951 car park spaces for commuters and visitors.
17. High density family housing providing up to 398 new homes and associated parking.
18. Medium density family housing providing up to 54 new homes, with on plot parking.

7.3 Next Steps

The Solihull Town Centre Masterplan has been created through an extensive process of consultation with both stakeholders and the public, with emphasis placed on delivering an aspirational place which retains the inherent character of Solihull but can meet the needs of the future community. The goal is to attract investment and improve the quality of life for the people who will, one day, live and work there and positively contribute to the cities economics, cultural and social well-being and providing long term job prospects and brighter futures for everyone.

SMBC is currently in the process of carrying out a local plan review for which the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan will form part of the evidence base and feeds into the ongoing work on Solihull Connected.

7.4 Recommendations of Further Work

- It is recommended that additional transport and feasibility studies be undertaken to investigate the case to relocate the station;
- It is strongly recommended that the traffic model developed as part of the TP3 commission (Solihull Town Centre Traffic Model) is used in conjunction with the Solihull Parking Allocation Model to forecast the traffic conditions;
- It is recommended that the Solihull Parking Allocation Model be used to support the emerging masterplan in terms of a supporting parking strategy which establishes the quantum, location, cost and management of car parking in the town centre;
- Investigate the impact of the masterplan using the traffic model and develop a mitigation strategy and comprehensive car parking strategy.



Figure 8.2: Solihull Town Centre Key Masterplan Objectives

