

08 | Emerging Concepts



This section explores the concepts which have emerged from the data collection and analysis conducted in sections 1-7 of this report. By gaining a clear understanding of the fundamental issues, opportunities and ambitions for Solihull, three main themes emerge which hold the key to achieving the Solihull 2036 vision:

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

When read together these strategies set out a broad framework for future growth and development, which can then form the basis for future development projects and interventions.

8.1 Connections

The overall connection concept will help Solihull Town Centre reconnect its currently disjointed areas - areas which emerged from the analysis undertaken in sections 3.3-3.5 - into one cohesive, integrated centre. It will seek to create a network which integrates the town centres various retail, commercial, civic, residential, and cultural precincts. The connection concept will aim to:

- 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 8.1: Conceptual connections strategy for Solihull Town Centre



8.2 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 introducing residential uses and further office uses into the town centre to inject new vitality through a mixed offer of activities, economy, 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.

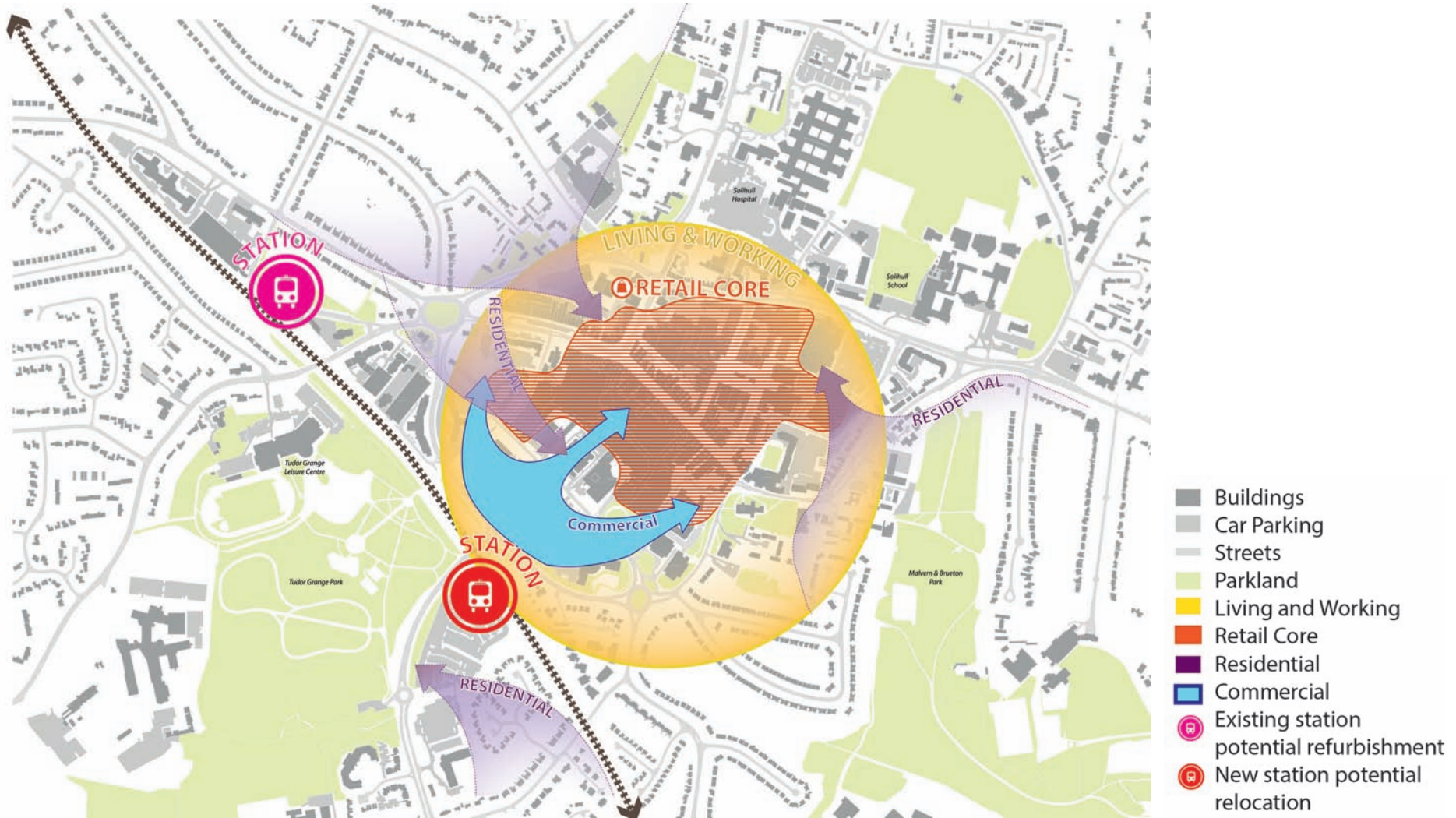


Figure 8.2: Concept of the future living and working strategy for Solihull Town Centre



8.3 Experience

The experience of Solihull Town Centre 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.

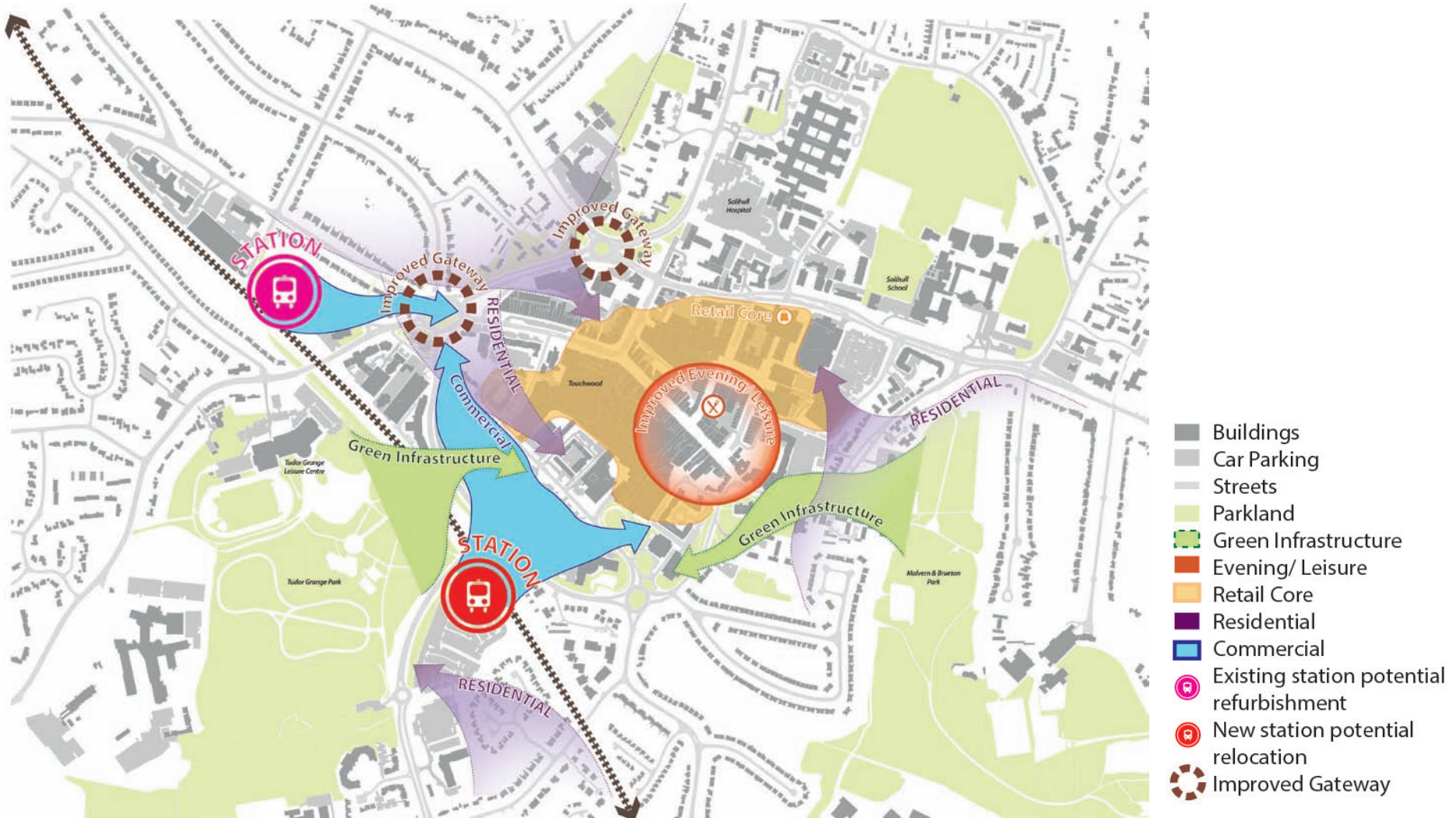


Figure 8.3: Plan illustrating the experience strategy Solihull Town Centre

