



BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL

MASTERPLAN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT

PREFACE

This document has been prepared on behalf of Wirral Council by BDP acting as Masterplanners, Planning Consultants and Landscape Architects supported by Aspinall Verdi as delivery / Implementation Consultants, WSP as Transport Consultants.

It captures both Masterplan and Neighbourhood Development Framework areas within Birkenhead Central, and provides the vision, framework and future development context for their long term regeneration context.

The Masterplan is supported by a design code which details the design requirements for any subsequent Outline or Detailed Planning Applications to be brought forwards, whilst the Neighbourhood Framework provides strategic objectives to be developed by development proposals.

The council's approach to Neighbourhood Frameworks and Masterplans Local Plan Spatial Strategy

The council's emerging Local Plan sets out the overall spatial strategy for the borough which is to focus on the regeneration of Birkenhead and the wider regeneration programme for the 'Left Bank' of the River Mersey, stretching from New Brighton to New Ferry. The emerging Local Plan identifies 11 Regeneration Areas and 19 Masterplan Areas. The council has been working on a series of documents to support these designations and to assist the delivery of the regeneration strategy for the borough. All of the documents can be found on the council's web pages at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-planning-evidence-and-research-reports-3>

Birkenhead 2040 Framework

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework is a 20 year strategy that defines the vision and ambition for the transformational regeneration of Birkenhead. The document has been approved by the council as its Interim Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead and provides a comprehensive regeneration framework for Birkenhead as a low carbon, sustainable waterfront garden 'city'. Eight of the Regeneration Areas lie within the Birkenhead 2040 area. The three remaining are designated at Liscard, New Brighton and New Ferry. Each of the Regeneration Areas has a specific policy approach included within Part 4 of the emerging Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Frameworks

Neighbourhood Frameworks are primarily regeneration strategy documents. They provide further information on each Regeneration Area, building upon Birkenhead 2040. Neighbourhood Frameworks will also help to inform the development of Masterplans and site specific proposals.

Masterplan

Emerging Local Plan Policy WS 6.3 - Masterplan Areas requires proposals within defined Masterplan Areas to be in general conformity with a Masterplan which has been endorsed by the council.

The policy identifies 19 Masterplan Areas where Masterplans are required to guide site specific proposals.

Policies WS6.2, RA1, RA2, RA3, RA4, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA9, RA10, RA11, WP4.2 and WP6.3 of the emerging Wirral Local Plan set out requirements for development within a series of Masterplan Areas to conform with Masterplans which have been endorsed by the council. With the exception of the Masterplan for West Kirby Concourse, all Masterplan areas fall within Regeneration Areas.

THE TEAM

Client: Wirral Council

Masterplan: BDP

Implementation / Delivery: Aspinall Verdi

Highways Consultant: WSP

Planning: BDP

Landscape: BDP

Revision

Comment

Prepared by

Checked by

Date

CONTENTS //

Executive Summary

1.0	INTRODUCING BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL //				
1.1	Introduction	4.8	Spaces + Interfaces	7.0	INFRASTRUCTURE //
1.2	The Purpose of the Masterplan and Framework	4.9	Landscape Masterplan	7.1	Car Parking Provision
1.3	Masterplan and Framework Boundary and Context	4.10	Pedestrian & Cycle Movement	7.2	Servicing & Subterranean Bins
1.4	Planning Status	4.11	Vehicle Movement	7.3	Potential Heat Network
1.5	The Town Center Today	4.12	Landscape Character	7.4	Public Transport
1.6	Engagement	4.13	Public Realm Design Principles		
1.7	Future Context	4.14	The Borough Road 'Sponge Park'		
		4.15	Active Ground Floors	8.0	PHASING //
		4.16	Sustainability	8.1	Extent of Demolition
2.0	VISION + MASTERPLAN //			8.2	Phase 0 - Enabling Works
2.1	Vision	5.0	LAND USE, DESIGN PRINCIPLES + DESIGN CODE //	8.3	Meanwhile Use
2.2	Objectives	5.1	Land Uses – Ground Floor	8.4	Phase 1
2.3	Key Issues for the Masterplan to Address	5.2	Land Uses – Upper Floor	8.5	Phase 2
2.4	Key Masterplan Themes	5.3	Scale and Massing	8.6	Phase 3
2.5	Key Urban Design Principles	5.4	Opportunity for a Tall Building	8.7	Phase 4
		5.5	Public Open Space	8.8	Phase 5
3.0	SPATIAL CONTEXT, OPPORTUNITIES + CONSTRAINTS //	5.6	Sub Character Areas	8.9	Phase 6
3.1	Spatial Context	5.7	The Birkenhead Palette	8.10	End State
3.2	Constraints and Opportunities			9.0	KEY VIEWS //
3.3	Drivers for Regeneration	6.0	DEVELOPMENT SITE AREAS + SITE-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES //	9.1	Key View Assessment
4.0	BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL MASTERPLAN //	6.1	Development Parameters - Birkenhead town centre East	9.2	Masterplan Key Views
4.1	Development Opportunities / Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)	6.2	Development Parameters - Birkenhead town centre West	10.0	BACKGROUND //
4.2	Development Opportunities / Grange Road Primary Shopping Area (WS11.3-TCA-SA2.1)	6.3	Development Parameters - Central Neighbourhood	10.1	Historic Development
4.3	Development Opportunities / Charing Cross Quarter (MPA-RA4.2)	6.4	Development Parameters - Europa Square	10.2	Movement
4.4	The Big Picture	6.5	Development Parameters - Charing Cross	10.3	The Retail Circuit
4.5	The Masterplan	6.6	Policy Context	10.4	Environmental Conditions
4.6	Approach to Street Character + Identity	6.7	Policy Parameters	10.5	Heritage and Conservation
4.7	Active Frontages			10.6	View Corridors
				10.7	Surface Water
				11.0	PARAMETER PLANS //

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY // “Birkenhead is THE CAPITAL OF THE WIRRAL”

Birkenhead is the Capital of the Wirral, and provides the largest urban conurbation on the Wirral. It is the sub regional centre in the borough’s town centre retail hierarchy, playing a critical role in terms of amenity and service provision for an immediate and wider community, but today connects with only a fraction of the population and offers a significant opportunity for the future.

It is a place with huge potential to catalyse wider regeneration plans, and to **re-establish itself as the Capital of the Wirral**, as a unique destination for **Wirral’s 320,000 population**, whilst **attracting new users** from the wider city region to shop, work, live and play.

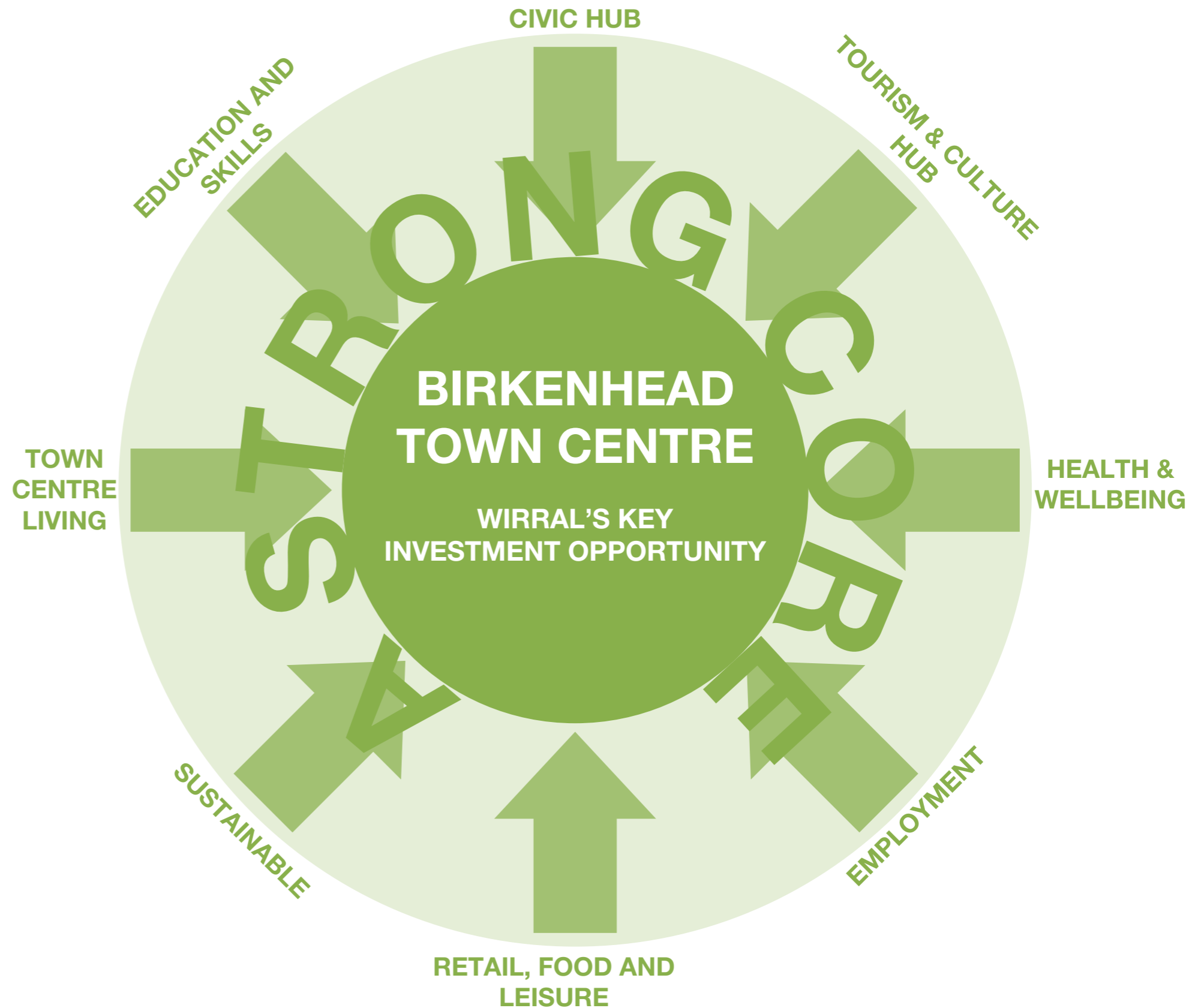
It has access to some of **the best sustainable transport systems in the city region**, with two underground stations in close proximity, and a bus interchange with national services. The town centre is a hub of public transport with services funnelled through this point on the peninsula connecting to Liverpool in just over 5 minutes and beyond to Chester in just over half an hour. However conversely this is also the place which connects to all points on the Wirral, and offers the potential for a focal point of movement, arrivals and departures, that also recognises the need for better pedestrian and cycling connectivity.

One of two Mersey road tunnels are in close proximity, which provides excellent connectivity for private vehicles, buses, taxi’s and service vehicles, and a huge opportunity to capitalise on over 35,000 vehicles that use this tunnel and pass the town centre everyday.

The Liverpool skyline is an enduring component of the town centre, with framed views offered around the town centre, and a visible sense of being part of a bigger whole and a historic and international identity.

The culture and heritage of Birkenhead is exemplified by its grid iron town plan, which alongside Birkenhead Park (which inspired New York’s Central Park), and Hamilton Square (offering more Grade I Listed Buildings than anywhere outside of Trafalgar Sq in London) creates a captivating framework to respond to. Birkenhead Priory - Merseyside’s oldest building is framed by a natural valley and mark’s the founding of the town and the adjacent Liverpool.

Wirral Council made a strategic decision in 2023 to purchase and take **significant control** of what is considered the retail heart of the town— The Pyramids Shopping Centre. This **major asset, located at the core of the town centre**, offers substantial potential to help shape the town’s future role. The Council has secured a significant amount of grant funding to enhance key areas including Grange Road, Charing Cross, Conway Street, Europa Boulevard, and Woodside Waterfront and its surroundings (including Argyle Street). Additionally, they have recently completed two new council office buildings, which provide a much-needed new source of footfall to support the transformation of the town centre and its connection to the wider borough. These developments represent the transformative potential the town centre holds for the future.

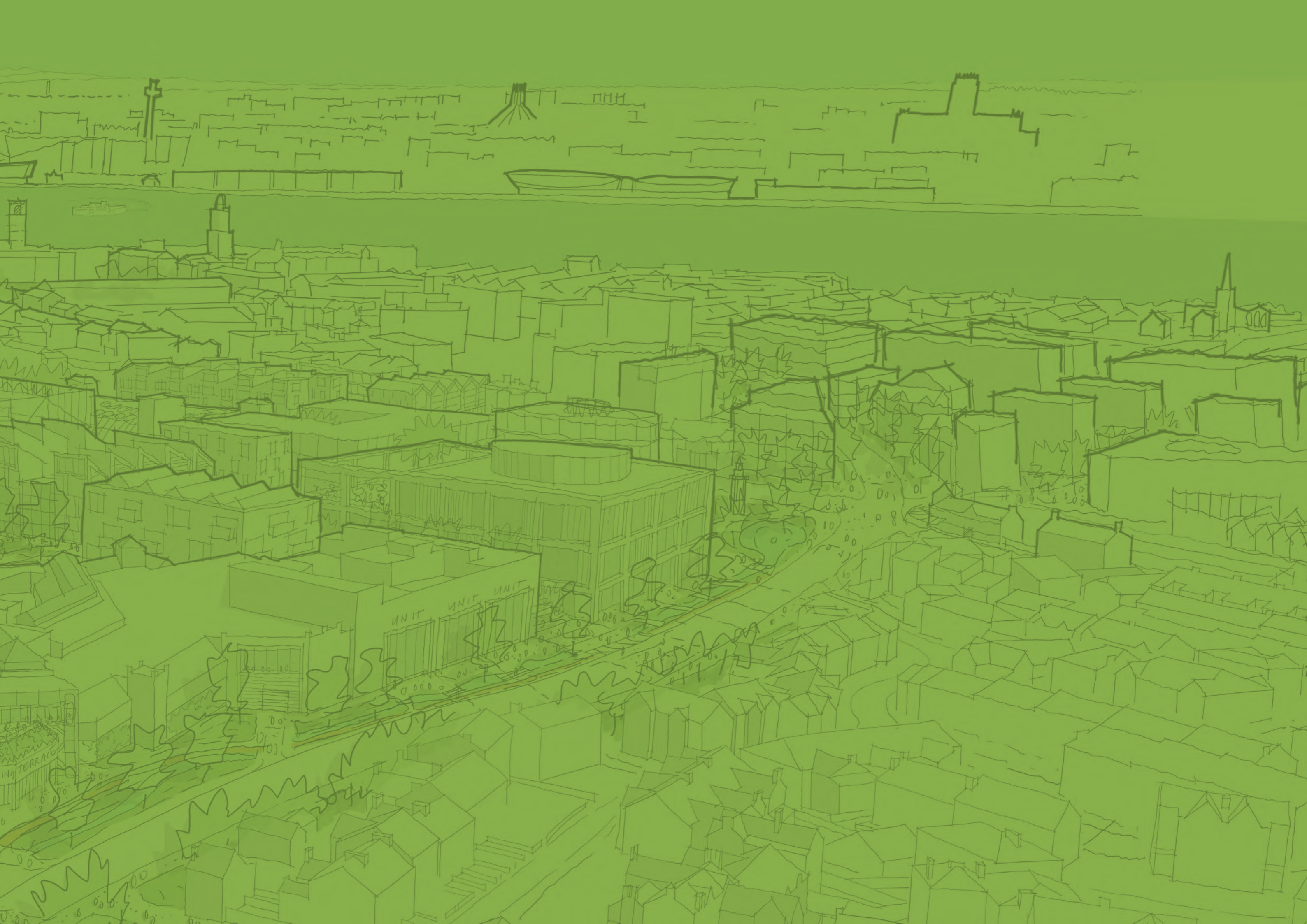




A green-tinted architectural sketch of a cityscape, showing various buildings and structures. A large white number '1' is positioned on the left side of the image.

1

INTRODUCING BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL //



1.1 INTRODUCTION //

Birkenhead is the capital of the Wirral, and the Town Centre is the heart of the town. A thriving town centre is critical to the outward success of the borough as a whole. A revitalised and right sized retail core, that is diverse in its use, attraction to residents and visitors, and inclusive in its potential for growth is at the heart of the regeneration strategy set out within this report.

The **Wirral has a population of 320,200 people, making it the 37th largest population size in the UK.** The latest census in 2021 shows a small increase in population (0.1%), lower than the North West average (5.2%), and the national average (6.6%). However, this highlights the **clear potential for population growth** that the emerging Local Plan is looking to promote within the left bank and brownfield first approach.

Birkenhead town centre has been focused on commercial retail for almost 50 years, but the sector has shifted significantly with recession, internet shopping and pandemic marking key points of departure for the high street and shopping habits. However **the town centre has a lasting value to the borough** as a wider whole, offering cultural, commercial and retail, leisure sense of focus, all underpinned by amazing infrastructure; the Laird Grid Iron Plan, two underground stations, a bus interchange, access to two road tunnels to Liverpool, and heritage buildings in immediate context. The **connections possible to the core employment hubs of Liverpool, Chester and beyond** create the potential for engaging with a new audience offering **a unique town centre quality of life, but with city connections and amenities.**

The **average age of residents increased by two years in the last census from 42 to 44**, which is a higher average age than the North West at 40 years old. In England the largest age group in 2021 were people aged 30 to 34, whilst the North West was aged 50 to 54 years old. The total fertility rate for the Wirral is broadly within national average for England and Wales, but was previously over the average from 2001 to 2018. This highlights the importance of the town centre providing an offer that is appealing to a younger demographic to retain, and then grow a balanced new population and community, but also one that allows an aging population to be included in the regeneration and growth.

The latest census data highlights that 139,510 were in employment, of which 109,929 lived and worked on the Wirral, and 29,581 travelled to another area. **Birkenhead has the largest workday population** with 7,784 people travelling here from other areas, and 350 people travelling within Birkenhead Central. 13,842 travelled from another area to work in the borough. The delivery on the new office buildings to the core of the town create green shoots of employment growth, and a reinforcement of the town centres economic role, with amazing potential for further linked growth aligned to an increase in users in a realigned town centre offer, population growth focused around these urban areas, and a new diverse town centre employment and leisure use focus.

THE GREEN HEART OF THE WIRRAL BIRKENHEAD

THE CAPITAL OF THE WIRRAL

THE 37TH LARGEST POPULATION SIZE IN THE UK

GRANGE ROAD

PART OF THE ORIGINAL LAIRD GRID & ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS GRANGE LANE & THE PRINCIPAL SHOPPING HIGH STREET



320,200 WIRRAL POPULATION, A PLACE WITH SIGNIFICANT GROWTH POTENTIAL
CENSUS 2021 DATA SHOWS NORTH WEST AVERAGE GROWTH OF 5.2% WITH WIRRAL AT 0.1%



31 HECTARES OF PRIME TOWN CENTRE LAND



BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL & CONWAY PARK STATIONS ON THE DOORSTEP

PROVIDING CONNECTIONS TO LIVERPOOL IN 8 MINUTES, OR 36 MINS TO CHESTER FROM CENTRAL, AND 16 MINS TO NEW BRIGHTON / 27 MINS TO WEST KIRBY



VIEWS TO THE LIVERPOOL SKYLINE

AND A ROAD TUNNEL PROVIDING DIRECT ACCESS WITH AROUND 35,000 VEHICLES GOING THROUGH IT EVERYDAY, AND JUST UNDER 12.8 MILLION A YEAR





Birkenhead Park

Hamilton Square

River Mersey

TOWN CENTRE

CHARING CROSS

Clifton Park Conservation Area

Central Train Station

Cammel Lairds

- RA-4-Birkenhead Central Regeneration Area
- Grange Road Primary Shopping Area (WS11.3-TCA-SA2.1)
- Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)
- Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.2)
- Clifton Park Conservation Area
- Cammel Lairds

Figure 1.1.1 - Aerial of Birkenhead

The Wirral has **the largest deprivation gap in the country** between the highest and lowest earners, with the urban areas providing the worst deprivation, and as such the greatest opportunity for transformation and for inclusive growth. This shows the importance of **the town centre and its role in rebalancing the borough**, and bringing the existing community new opportunities for employment, better places to live, and a higher quality shopping and leisure experience attracting spending.

Whilst the population of the Wirral is over 320k people, only 191k are seen as the key catchment of the town centre based on Impact Gravity Modelling, and of that **only 61k use the shopping offer** within the town centre. The spend profile aligns to less affluent users and the more deprived demographic being the principal users. This demonstrates the need to **create an offer that can draw a more diverse audience** in to the town centre, and drive new spending with **an offer that has a broader relevance to the wider Wirral catchment**.

Dwell times are a key metric for a healthy town centre, and today the lack of diversity in the offer, and demographic results in **poor dwell times and resultant spending**. There is an almost complete lack of family focused night time economy in terms of restaurants and cafés, and whilst the centre has a cinema it is disconnected from the traditional retail core and unsupported by other leisure uses to encourage longer dwell times. **Introducing new uses into the town to create an attractive offer to a wider audience is key to the success of the town centre.**

Birkenhead is common with many towns and cities suffering with an over-provision of retail space, and types that no longer suit current retailer demands, and with limited potential for adaptive re-use. There is a **significant opportunity to consolidate the retail offer, and curate an experience that suits the current and future audience of the town**. The market is a key component of this renewal already planned by the council, and like the new council led office buildings completed recently, offers the potential for enabling regeneration. A refreshed and relocated market facility that provides both produce and products, along with an event space offering diverse food and drink options, is a common feature in town centre regeneration proposals. It also has the potential to serve as a new high street anchor, attracting a fresh customer base.

Wirral as a whole scored 99.1 on the Census Health Index Score which when compared to the national average at 100% provides a good metric. It's scores improved from the previous Census, and well above national average for Living Conditions and access to green space, **however health outcomes in Birkenhead are almost 10 years lower than that of the more affluent suburbs.** This is a **key opportunity to promote healthy inclusive living, focus on well-being and reinforcing the amazing infrastructure that the town already enjoys.**

This Masterplan and Neighbourhood Framework is looking to establish a series of principles to help guide the future of the town to capitalise on the opportunity for sustainable, inclusive growth.

A LANDMARK PARK JUST MOMENTS AWAY

BIRKENHEAD PARK PROVIDES AN AMAZING 56 HECTARES OF PARK, JUST 5 MINS WALK FROM THE CENTRE, DESIGNED BY JOSEPH PAXTON (BEST KNOWN FOR DESIGNING THE CRYSTAL PALACE AND THE FIRST WORLD EXPO) AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND NEW YORK'S CENTRAL PARK



AMAZING HERITAGE

HAMILTON SQUARE HAS THE 2ND HIGHEST NUMBER OF GRADE I LISTED BUILDINGS IN ONE PLACE IN THE COUNTRY OUTSIDE OF TRAFALGAR SQUARE LONDON

CLIFTON PARK

A VILLA ESTATE FROM THE 1820'S- 1840'S WITH 30 LISTED BUILDINGS SET WITHIN A SMALL AREA ON TRANMERE HILL AND THE BROOK NOW BOROUGH ROAD, AND KNOWN AS 'HAPPY VALLEY'



BIRKENHEAD MARKET

A CONTINUOUS OFFER SINCE 1835, AND AT THE HEART OF THE TOWN'S IDENTITY, AND DEVELOPMENT. ONCE PART OF THE TOWN HALL, THEN A LANDMARK BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE ROAD TUNNEL, NOW PLANNED FOR A MAJOR UPGRADE AND A RENEWED FOCUS IN THE TOWN CENTRE



A TOWN CENTRE FOR EVERYONE

99.1% ON THE HEALTH INDEX SCORE FOR RESIDENTS, BUT WITH THE HIGHEST DISPARITY FROM THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST EARNERS IN THE UK





Figure 1.1.2 - Aerial photo of Birkenhead Central

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE MASTERPLAN AND FRAMEWORK //

This report captures both Masterplan and Neighbourhood Framework Areas, brought together to provide a strategic context for both. The purpose of these are described in more detail in the Preface.

This Masterplan and Framework will be subject to public consultation, following which responses received will be considered and, as required, the Masterplan and Framework updated.

The document provides the foundation for future development regeneration proposals, whilst ensuring that the necessary flexibility is provided to enable detailed design of each plot to be refined. The flexibility of the report is important to allow future development to respond to changing market conditions, technological advancements, design innovation, technical analysis, and environmental considerations, throughout the long term deliver phase.

A Catalyst for the Town Centre

- This Masterplan supports the council's aims for delivering a brownfield first regeneration strategy across the borough with a focus on the 'Left Bank' underpinned by a strong sustainable heart and establishment of Birkenhead as the place for local residents to engage with.
- Developed through an in-depth understanding of the Masterplan and Framework area, it's interfaces with the Town Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods, and the wider context the city region. It has been directly informed by the emerging Local Plan, and Birkenhead 2040 Framework.

A Long Term Structured Vision

- This Masterplan and Framework provides a clear long term vision which aligns to key stakeholder expectations, objectives and priorities.
- A range of guiding principles are contained within this report to achieve the vision and objectives of the council, whilst encompassing a future proofed strategy allowing flexibility for future change.

A Guide for Future Development and placemaking

- This report provides strategic guidance on the future coordinated delivery of future development, maximising the environmental, economic and social potential of the town centre.
- This report is intended to provide clear guidance on holistic principles of development within the red-line area, but allow flexibility for a future changing market, technological advancements and design innovation.

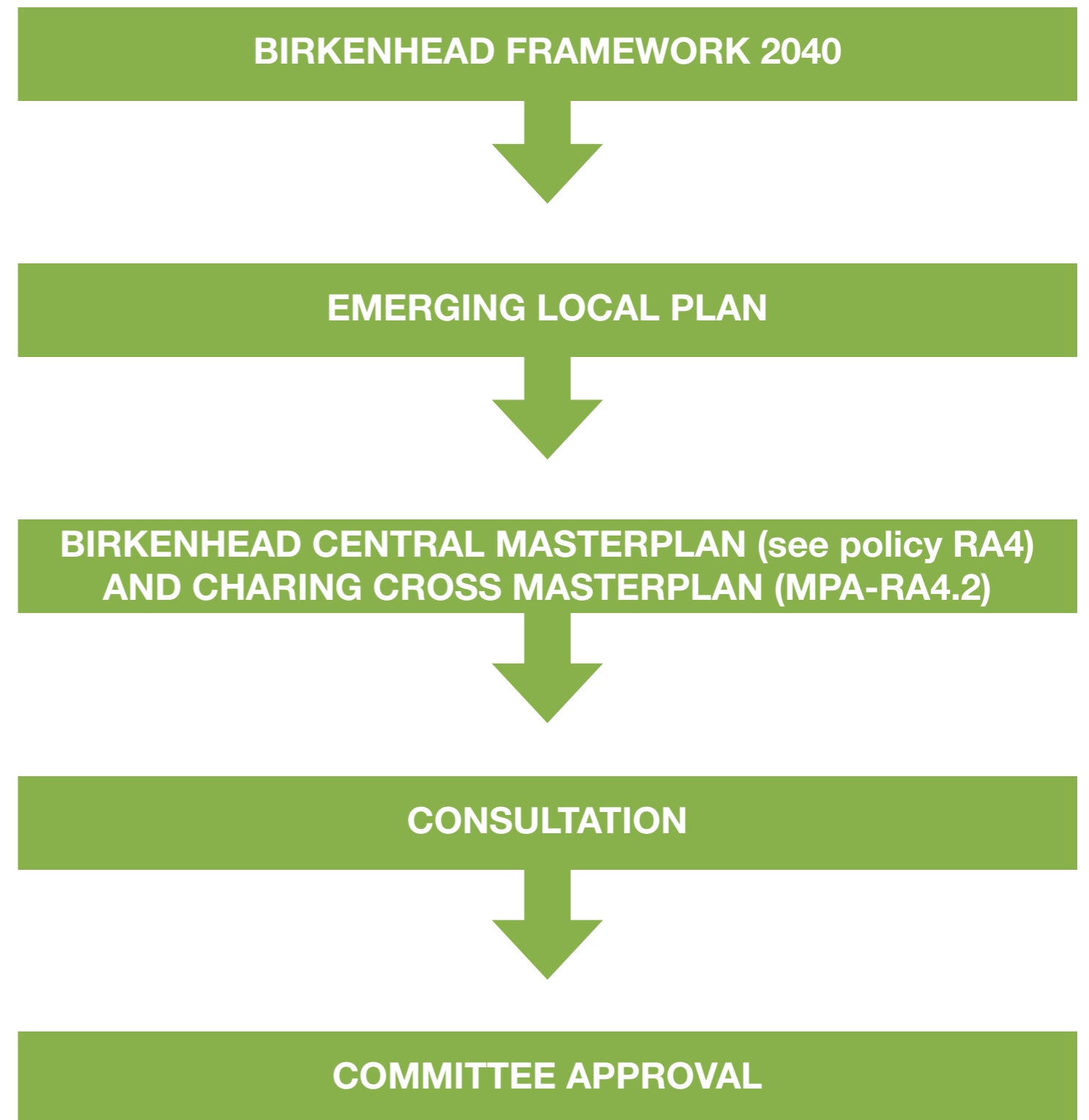




Figure 1.2.1 - Aerial View - Looking North East

1.3 MASTERPLAN AND FRAMEWORK BOUNDARY AND CONTEXT //

The Birkenhead Central masterplan and Neighbourhood Framework is defined within Wirral's emerging local Plan under policy RA4 – Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area and encompasses the following:

- Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter Masterplan Area 148 (MPA-RA4.1)
- Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.2)
- Grange Road (Primary Shopping Area) (TC-SA2.1)

The adjacent diagram (Figure 1.3) illustrates the context of the wider defined masterplans that surround Birkenhead and the docks, as well as proposals for known development.

Key considerations for the Masterplan Boundary are:

- Hind Street (RA5)
- Dock Branch Park (Northern Section) Masterplan (MPA-RA4.3)
- Hamilton Square Conservation Area
- Draft Birkenhead Waterfront Neighbourhood Framework
- Birkenhead 2040 Framework vision for regeneration
- Birkenhead Park
- St Werburgh's Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA RA5.2)

Immediately adjacent to this is the St Werburgh's Quarter and the proposed Dock Branch Park Masterplan Area which connections from the Town Centre to Wirral Waters (See Submission Draft Local Plan Policy RA4, (MPA-RA4.3)). This masterplan area will contain a new world-class linear park providing active travel links to Wirral Waters to the North.

The Hind Street Urban Garden Village masterplan area lies immediately to the south of St Werburgh's (see Submission draft Local plan Policy RA5 (MPA5.1)). This will establish a new mixed use residential neighbourhood and help facilitate connections from the Priory into the Town Centre for the first time in over 100 years.

This document was produced based on the Submission draft Local Plan (May 2022) . Policies and boundaries should be checked against the most up to date published version of the Local Plan. This can be found on the Council's web site

- █ Red Line Boundary
- █ Hind Street (RA5)
- █ Dock Branch Park (Northern Section) Masterplan (MPA-RA4.3)
- █ Scope of public realm works
- █ Hamilton Square Conservation Area
- █ St Werburgh's Masterplan Area

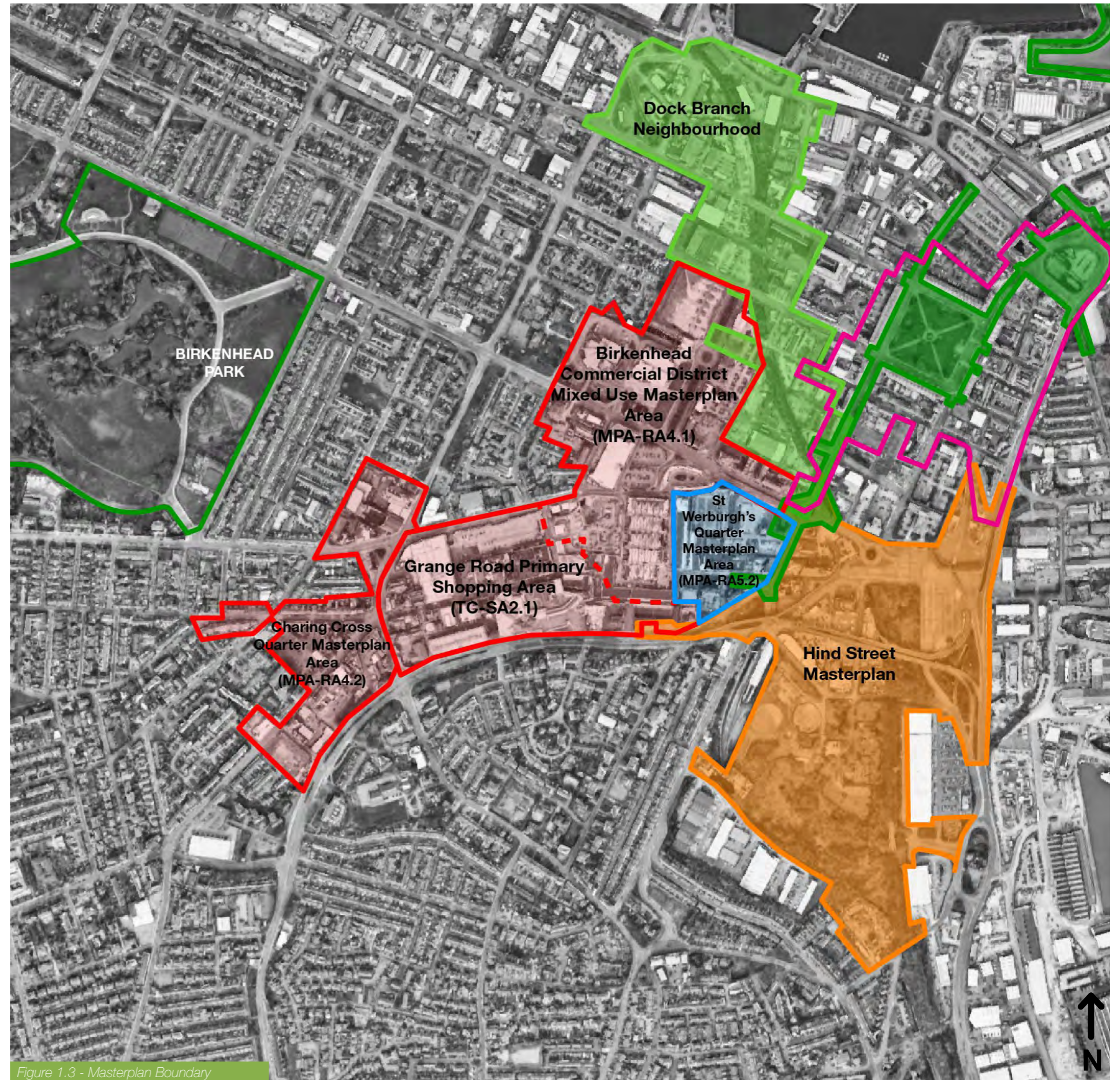


Figure 1.3 - Masterplan Boundary

1.4 PLANNING STATUS //

This Masterplan and Framework, once finalised, will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It will be expected that any future planning applications within this area accord both with the guidance and strategies contained within this document, with National Planning Policy, and the emerging Local Plan. This context is set out for each area later within this report.

The masterplan has been prepared in accordance with Policy RA4 of the emerging Wirral Local Plan Submission Draft (May 2022). As these boundaries are draft and may change, we advise that all boundaries should be checked against the adopted Local plan boundaries.

This document should be used as a guide to the next stage of masterplan development and assist any development proposals contained with the red line of this masterplan report.

Such proposals should adhere to both the guidance and strategies contained within this report as well as the accompanying parameter plans which list the suggested range of planning use class for areas and plots as well as suggested storey heights.

It is essential that the any new development proposal shows conformity to both the document and the parameter plans. Should there be any deviation away from this, there needs to be clear justification on why there is a departure with evidence of how this still fits within the masterplan.

The agent of change principle is a feature of national planning policy and a material consideration to be taken account of by decision-makers in the determination of planning applications.

Paragraph 200 (contained in chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (including places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs).

Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established.

The paragraph goes on to confirm that, where an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or agent of change) should be required to secure suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.



Figure 1.4 - Emerging Local Plan

RA4-Birkenhead Central

- Regeneration Area
- Grange Road Primary Shopping Area (WS11.3-TCA-SA2.1)

- Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)
- Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.2)
- Dock Branch Park (Northern section) Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.3)

- Mixed Use Neighbourhoods (MUA-RA4.1)
- Argyle Street Local Centre (WS11.2 TC-SA2.2) 'Argyle Creative Quarter'

For illustration purposes only



1.5 THE TOWN CENTRE TODAY //

Birkenhead town centre is unique in its retail context with major high street competitors on its doorstep of Liverpool, and Liverpool One, Cheshire Oaks, Chester, and even The Croft and Rock Retail Park on the Wirral offering convenience focused offers. The change in retail over the past decade has impacted on Birkenhead town centre in a more extreme way as a result of this context.

The heart of Birkenhead to many would be the traditional retail high street of Grange Road, or the Pyramids shopping centre. The offer is largely focused on pure retail, with limited leisure uses and almost no residential, or historically purpose designed workspace. The new Wirral Growth Company office buildings have changed this for the first time in a generation.

Today like many high streets the change to retail and shopping habits, has impacted the quantum of retail space required, the type of unit needed, space and access required for deliveries, and a reduced number of stores required by brands across the country to serve their customer base. As a result Birkenhead has a significant proportion of empty units, and space that does not align to retailer demands.

The town centre is very inward looking, disconnected from its surroundings by a band of highways, and designed to serve the needs of the car. The internal environment outside of Grange Road lacks unique identity to draw customers into the town for an experience. The town centre can be broken into a series of zones;

- Zone 1; The Pyramids & Precincts (the majority of commercial provision and likely the main driver of visits with the market),
- Zone 2; Grange Road (the main high street),
- Zone 3; St Werburgh's (part of a separate masterplan focusing on independent and creative use),
- Zone 4; Birkenhead market
- Zone 5; Europa Boulevard & Cloughton Road (provides the principal leisure offer with the Vue Cinema, Europa Pools Leisure Centre, and the Mecca Bingo), and
- Zone 6; Charing Cross (independent Restaurants and Cafés (F&B))

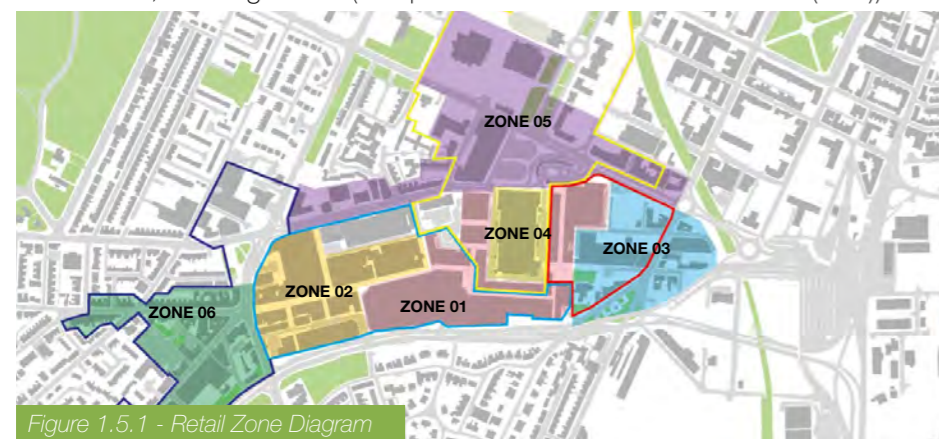


Figure 1.5.1 - Retail Zone Diagram

The Pyramids and Precincts

Wirral Council have recently acquired in 2023, the Pyramids Shopping Centre and wider Precincts as a strategic acquisition to enable effective estate management and transformation of the retail core long term. Today retail ground floor units show;

- 28% of the town is currently vacant, with
- 33% focused on Service,
- 22% Retail,
- 14% F&B, and
- 3% Leisure.

The Pyramids is comprised of a 1980's / 90's dated internal shopping mall with fast food dining court, and in the main two storey precincts with some larger units backing onto Borough Road.

The food court and MSCP car park provide direct access to the internal mall pyramid atrium space, and both functions provide a key footfall generator to the retailers within, and should be protected through redevelopment and wider considerations on the provision of new food and drink outlets within the retail core. The MSCP provides a strategically important public car park to pick up passing traffic arriving in and out of the town, but the quality of parking contained within is poor, and circulation within does not attract users.

The Pyramids and Precincts form the largest proportion of retail space within the town centre with the offer largely value driven and independent offers, albeit a number of high street brands including Next, River Island and JD Sports.

There is an over-provision of similar scale smaller units, with large areas of blank frontages to Borough Road, large areas of service yard from Cloughton Road, and internal partially covered precincts which provide little to no visibility for the users or retailers from the primary streets surrounding.

The internal mall is dated in appearance and unlikely to attract a wider audience in comparison to the competitors within the catchment - but is considered to have some 'all weather' lasting appeal. Some of the larger units to Borough Road are considered to be an asset for attracting future high street retailers providing the potential for external visibility and independent access - which is further supported by the location of an internal service yard which runs underneath the building along its length of Borough Road, allowing this potential transformation.

The Pyramids Shopping Mall lacks a public entrance to Borough Road and is something that needs addressing to provide internal recognition of what is contained within. The frontage to Borough Road is south facing and is also

not capitalised upon today, with the potential for new external dining spaces.

Grange Road

Grange Road High Street was once a traditional cranked high street, highly permeable to the surrounding streets. However, today it is severed by the Pyramids' internal street/precinct network and obscured by inactive frontages:

- The area to the west with Primark, Boots, Waterstones, Asda Supermarket, and one of the main entrances to the Pyramids Shopping Mall represent the main high street in Birkenhead.
- The area to the east known as St Werburgh's and covered by a separate Masterplan area, provides excellent proximity to Birkenhead Central Station which today is blighted by tunnel flyovers. Plans to remove this obstacle should improve the setting of this key arrival point into the town, and attractiveness of this area. The former House of Fraser was located to the end of the high street providing a traditional anchor to a retail 'dumb-bell' diagram. With the loss of this anchor retailer the high street here feels weak and disconnected, but this area provides a key link to both the station, a link to Argyle Street, Hind Street Urban Garden Village, and onwards to the Waterfront and Birkenhead Priory. This provides this end of the high street with an enduring importance to Birkenhead and its sense of being connected / joined up.

It is clear that the main high street of Grange Road does not provide the attraction, or offer, needed by the town or the wider population, and the labyrinth like pedestrian precinct streets combine with low quality public realm, poor lighting, and exposed back of house areas to retail units, to create a confusing low quality visitor experience.

The food and drink offer to Grange Road is very limited, and does not provide an accessible or attractive night time economy driving footfall into the town centre after shops shut. After trading hours the centre feels unwelcoming, and prone to anti-social behaviour. There is very little passive surveillance to the streets from any use other than retail, and limited opportunities to exit to the surrounding streets further enhancing the feeling of being unsafe for users.

The new council office buildings completed to the 'crank point' to the high street, proposed new market offer, and elements such as Future Yard and Woodside Ferry Village are starting to shift the potential increase in footfall and create a new market.

The council have consulted on public realm plans to Grange Road to the west which will provide a major upgrade to the visitor experience, providing improved public realm, landscaping seating and lighting. Works started on site in summer 2024.



Figure 1.5.2 - Historic view of Grange Road High Street



Figure 1.5.4 - 1970's Market Hall to Europa Square



Figure 1.5.5 - Pyramids Precinct view of original scheme drawing



Figure 1.5.6 - Historic view from Grange Road



Figure 1.5.7 - View from Grange Road today



Figure 1.5.3 - View from Grange Road today



Figure 1.5.8 - Historic view from Borough Road



Figure 1.5.9 - View from Borough Road today

St Werburgh's

This area is covered within a separate masterplan, but as noted above provides a key role to the end of the high street, and connecting to a wider movement circuit around Birkenhead town centre.

The St Werburgh's Masterplan sets a context for a new creative independent quarter with living, retail and leisure uses bridging the change in context from the Town Centre to Argyle Street leading onto Hamilton Square and the waterfront.

Birkenhead Market

The market is a key part of Birkenhead town centre's identity. It provides a wide range of independent traders offering fresh produce, food and drink, fashion, clothing, home-ware, technology and accessories.

It has been an important part of Wirral life since 1835, and has been located in a number of places around the town centre. The current market has a value driven outlook with no night time opening, and some of the more established traders have relocated to vacant units within the precinct to improved footfall and visibility. The market is set behind a service ring road to the Precinct retail units, providing very little identity. Its only public face opens to the north onto Europa Square surface car park, and to the rear of the bus station. There is no significant market square for external trading / events, and the northerly aspect creates a space that is unattractive and does not encourage longer dwell times.

Future plans consulted on by the Wirral Growth Company set a new food and drink events focus for the market with 6 underpinning principals:

- Tradition
- Destination
- Evolution
- Sustainability
- Distinctiveness
- Inclusivity

The future relocation of the market has now been approved at Committee to be relocated to the former Argos unit below the Conway Street multi-storey car park. Its future location and relationship to the high street and public realm hold the potential for an anchor use within the town centre and bring with it catalytic regeneration potential.

Europa Boulevard & Claughton Road

Europa Boulevard provides the town centre with its principal leisure offer with Vue Cinema, Mecca Bingo, and Europa Pools Leisure Centre. The leisure centre has the single highest footfall in the town centre.

The Vue Cinema and Leisure Centre are disconnected from the town

centre by Conway Street, and surface parking. With the consolidation of the retail core to Claughton Road to align to a reduced demand in space, the connection will become more protracted in the future. The cinema offer lacks typical supporting amenities such as restaurant and café's, and as such feels like a single destination which does little to support the wider area. The footfall to the leisure centre clearly identifies this as a loved asset by the community, but the facility is tired and needs improvement to align to both the required offer for the current and future community, but also costs to maintain an aging asset.

The Mecca Bingo and former Wilko's retail unit open to Europa Square - which today is a surface car park, and one that the council car parking study identified as one of the most used in the town centre. However, the place has a poor outlook with the rear of the bus station, and unengaged market aspect, and the retail building blocks any connection to the residential and heritage assets to the rear. The new office buildings have changed this context providing new footfall, but need a new aspect to drive transformation of this arrival space into the town centre.

Charing Cross

This marks the western end of the traditional Grange Road high street, and the start of a multi cultural independent retail, food and drink area, and the beginning of one of Birkenhead's residential neighbourhood edges and a connection to Birkenhead Park.

The area has a split personality today with late night takeaways and bars, and international restaurants and independent retail. The buildings are generally domestic with larger heritage buildings to the Charing Cross junction.

There are a number of strong community and cultural assets within the area with the Hive Youth Zone, The Little Theatre, St Vincent's Centre, Wirral Methodist Church, and Birkenhead Community Fire and Ambulance Station.

The Charing Cross junction has a strong visual identity; two Grade II listed buildings, two heritage buildings, and a later 1990's McDonald's fast food restaurant. The road layout here has had a number of iterations, and landscape and highway works have started on site to reduce the carriageway width, improve cycling and trial pedestrianisation of a section of Grange Road West to respond to its culture, food and drink identity.

There are a number of underutilised surface car parks within the area which offer long term potential for redevelopment, and strengthening connections back to the town centre is a key part of the opportunity to unlock this.

Birkenhead Park is a key open space amenity, heritage and potential visitor attraction asset for the town, but today does not feel like the walk-able connected piece of the town centre experience it should be.



Figure 1.5.10 - Vue Cinema and Europa Pools



Figure 1.5.11 - Wirral Met College



Figure 1.5.12 - Conway Park



Figure 1.5.13 - Oxtan Road today



Figure 1.5.14 - Grange Rd W



Figure 1.5.15 - Historic view of Oxtan Road looking to Charing Cross



Figure 1.5.16 - Charing Cross historic view



Figure 1.5.17 - View from Charing Cross today



Figure 1.5.18 - Historic view from Cloughton Road



Figure 1.5.19 - View from Cloughton Road today



Figure 1.5.22 - Birkenhead Market today



Figure 1.5.20 - Historic view of Whetstone Lane junction



Figure 1.5.21 - View from Whetstone Lane junction today



Figure 1.5.23 - View from St John Street to the Pyramids

1.6 ENGAGEMENT //

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework set out an ambitious vision for the transformation of the town centre and highlighted the importance of reconnecting it to the people of Wirral, building a strong core, and addressing the concrete collar that subdivides the town from its immediate suburbs and assets. A core message was to deliver a town centre that 'should be arrived at and enjoyed rather than one that is passed through and ignored'.

The Wirral Growth Company Masterplan for areas within the Mixed Use Masterplan Area was approved as a Hybrid Planning Application in August 2021, and the two detailed new build office buildings with retail, leisure ground floor use were completed recently. Consultation associated with this provided the following feedback;

- Lack of night-time economy
- Reduce the number of vacant units
- Birkenhead market is a key feature of the town centre
- Job Creation through the regeneration plans
- Enhance the green spaces in the town centre
- Improve the community facilities
- Improve the connectivity of the town with better footpaths, signage and cycleways

St Werburgh's Masterplan is a direct influence on the Town Centre Masterplan's contained within this report, and whilst St Werburgh's was developed in advance of this report to align to the need to deliver a strategic context to the proposed new market building. St Werburgh's Masterplan also provided key principals now contained within this report. This looked to address the previous consultation feedback responses to the Wirral Growth Company proposals, and the need to create a stronger sense of destination, unique identity and interface with the surrounding areas. The images in Figure 1.6.3 show the consultation boards used as part of the St Werburgh's consultation event and highlight the comprehensive nature of the proposals. Key feedback to this event was as follows;

- Shopping was the most common reason to come to Birkenhead town centre
- Almost 70% of people were in support of the principles being shown
- Housing being provided was strongly supported, but note on the affordability of the product and need for a family offer
- Increasing footfall was the most identified benefit of the plans
- The biggest concern was deliverability of the plans

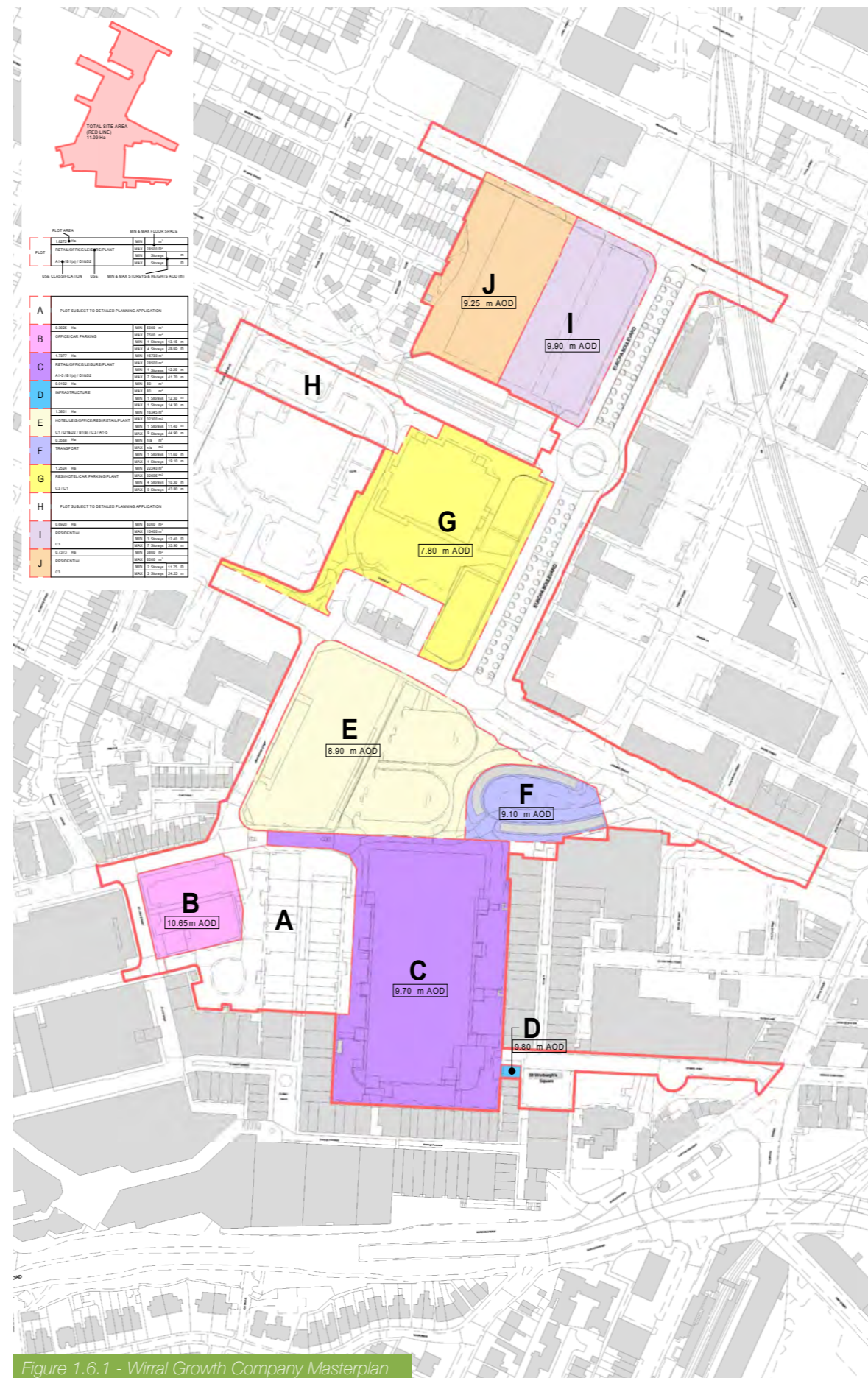


Figure 1.6.1 - Wirral Growth Company Masterplan



Figure 1.6.2 - Wirral Growth Company Planning Application



Figure 1.6.3 - St Werburgh's and Town Centre Masterplan Consultation Boards

1.7 FUTURE CONTEXT //

Birkenhead town centre is at the heart of wider regeneration plans, and as such ensuring the proposed masterplan complements and supports their integration and growth is key to the proposals achieving their objectives.

There are a number of strategically important projects that will influence and take influence from the town centre plans. These include:

- Wirral Growth Company Masterplan
- New Birkenhead market proposals
- Dock Branch Park and Neighbourhood
- Birkenhead Park and its application to become a UNESCO World Heritage site
- The future of the Birkenhead Library and the potential benefits there may be to relocate this into a more central accessible location.
- Wirral Waters
- Hind Street Urban Village
- Demolition of the remaining flyovers serving the road tunnel
- Dock Branch Park Neighbourhood
- St Werburgh's Masterplan
- Woodside Masterplan
- Landscape proposals for highway and public realm improvements connecting the town centre to the waterfront and creating a new quality of environment.



Figure 1.7.1 - Birkenhead Park Aerial



Figure 1.7.2 - Grand Entrance to Birkenhead Park



Figure 1.7.3 - Existing Birkenhead Central Library



Figure 1.7.4 - Birkenhead Market Relocation Proposals



Figure 1.7.5- Redbridge Quay in Wirral Waters



Figure 1.7.6 - Wirral Waters



Figure 1.7.7 - Hind Street Urban Village



Figure 1.7.8 - Dock Branch Park

A green-tinted architectural sketch of a city, showing buildings, streets, and a waterfront with wind turbines in the distance. A large white number '2' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

2

VISION AND MASTERPLAN //



2.1 VISION //

Our vision for Birkenhead town centre is to re-establish **the Capital of the Wirral as a place to be proud of**, somewhere that **capitalises on its amazing heritage and public transport infrastructure**, is **green with a vibrant and diverse mix of uses**, and is **the first choice destination for the people of the Wirral to shop, relax, eat, drink, work and play - a neighbourhood that is aspirational and inclusive for all, improving health and wellbeing and economic sustainability:**

- A locally distinctive place where the 'essential' town centre high street retail mix of convenience, fashion and lifestyle retail is well catered for, but where independence is maximised through placemaking, the introduction of a revitalised market, and the re-use of historic buildings for creative purposes.
- Somewhere that doesn't look to compete with Liverpool, Cheshire Oaks or Chester as a retail centre, but to mark its differences a place for people, quality of life, culture, heritage, living, working, educating and relaxing.
- A 24/7 place that welcomes all with safe and active street edges, allowing visual permeability to pedestrian priority streets and squares.
- A place which has a strong sense of identity with visual connections to Birkenhead & surrounding Liverpool landmarks letting people know they're in Birkenhead.
- A new highly visible town centre leisure offer drawing people into the heart of the town, with a family focus and supporting chain and independent restaurants, café's and bars
- A new Health and Well-Being Hub in the town centre, addressing the health issues of the town and bringing together services making residents life better.
- New houses and apartments focused on offering a range of homes for; young professionals, affordable, and retirement, driving new footfall and responding to the business and amenities surrounding.
- A place that capitalises on the arrival of the new council offices and a new workforce adding vibrancy to the town centre, but bringing with it opportunities to generate new and adaptive creative workspace and employment opportunities.
- Transform Borough Road into a place that is active and green, reconnecting to the heritage of the spine with a new linear park focusing on SuDS that expresses the sustainability of the town, and bring new biodiversity and wellbeing benefits.
- Health and Wellbeing is to be at the centre of placemaking, somewhere that promotes walking and cycling, access to employment and open green space, health and leisure facilities.
- Capitalise on the rich tapestry of heritage assets including the historic areas and streets around Argyle Street and Hamilton Square as well as Birkenhead Park.

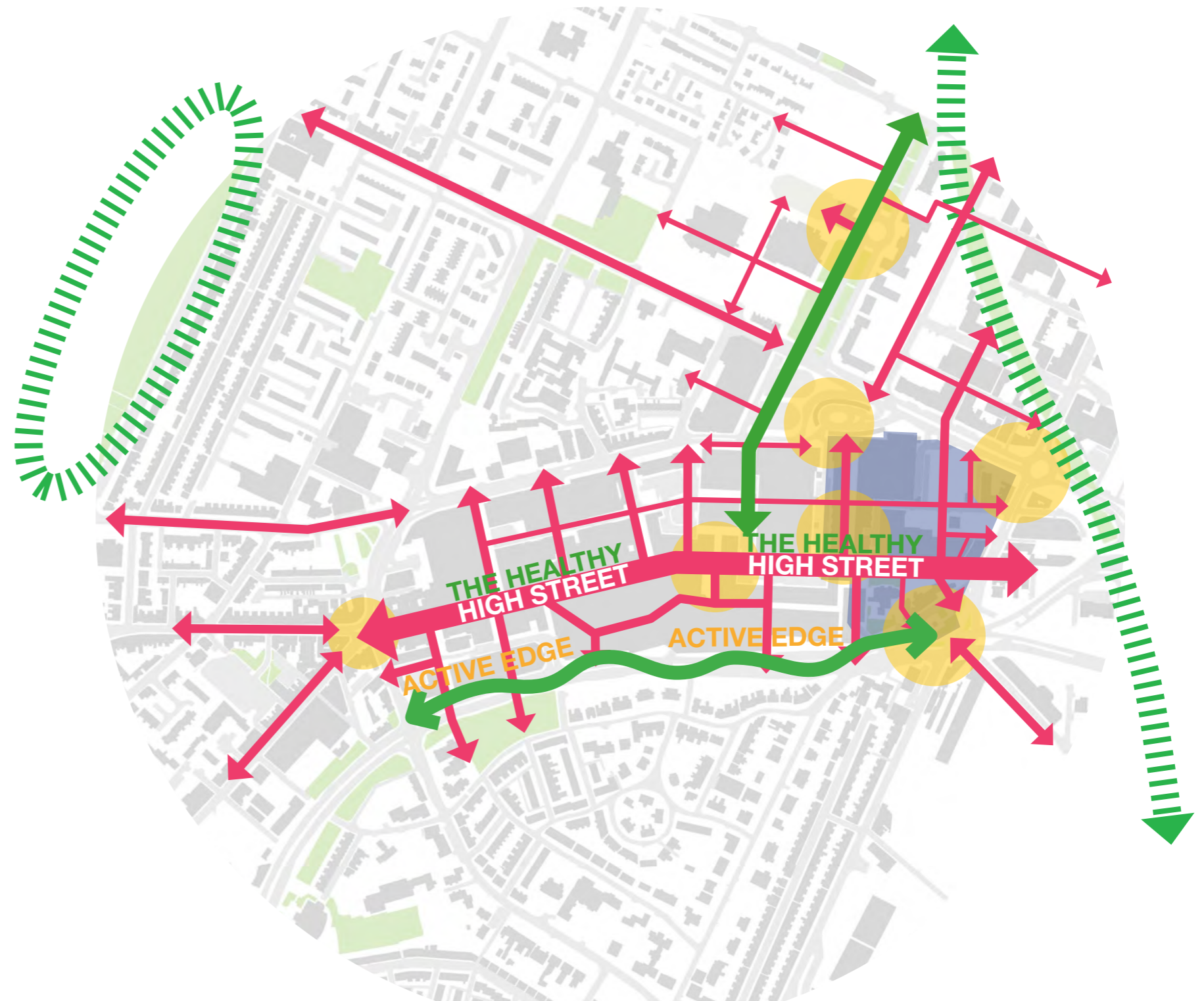


Figure 2.1 - Vision Diagram

2.2 OBJECTIVES //

The principal objective of this SPD is to provide a framework that will facilitate the regeneration of Town Centre as a vibrant new mixed use quarter of Birkenhead.

The principle objectives are to:

- Identify key development sites and future land uses.
- Improve connections to adjoining areas in particular the Hind Street Urban Garden Village, Argyle Street, Hamilton Square, Dock Branch Park, Charing Cross, Birkenhead Park and the Priory / Waterfront and Woodside.
- Highlight the importance of highway upgrades to Borough Road and Charing Cross to successfully integrate and connect into surrounding areas such as the Clifton Park to the south and Grange Road West.
- Highlight the importance of highway and public realm upgrades to Conway Street and Europa Boulevard to enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity to the town centre and respond to the reduced Retail Town Centre Core.
- Set out a design code to inform land-use, street hierarchy, character, and building heights for Masterplan Area's and strategies for Neighbourhood Framework Area's.
- Establish view corridors to key assets in the local area and wider views to Liverpool.
- Inform how the adjacent St Werburgh's can help facilitate the transformation of the town centre.
- Highlight the underpinning need for a focus on Health and Wellbeing and economic sustainability, both for the high-street, but also the population of the town and wider Wirral.
- Management of surface water through integration of appropriate local SuDS into all elements of design from single plot commercial and residential buildings to public realm and highway design.

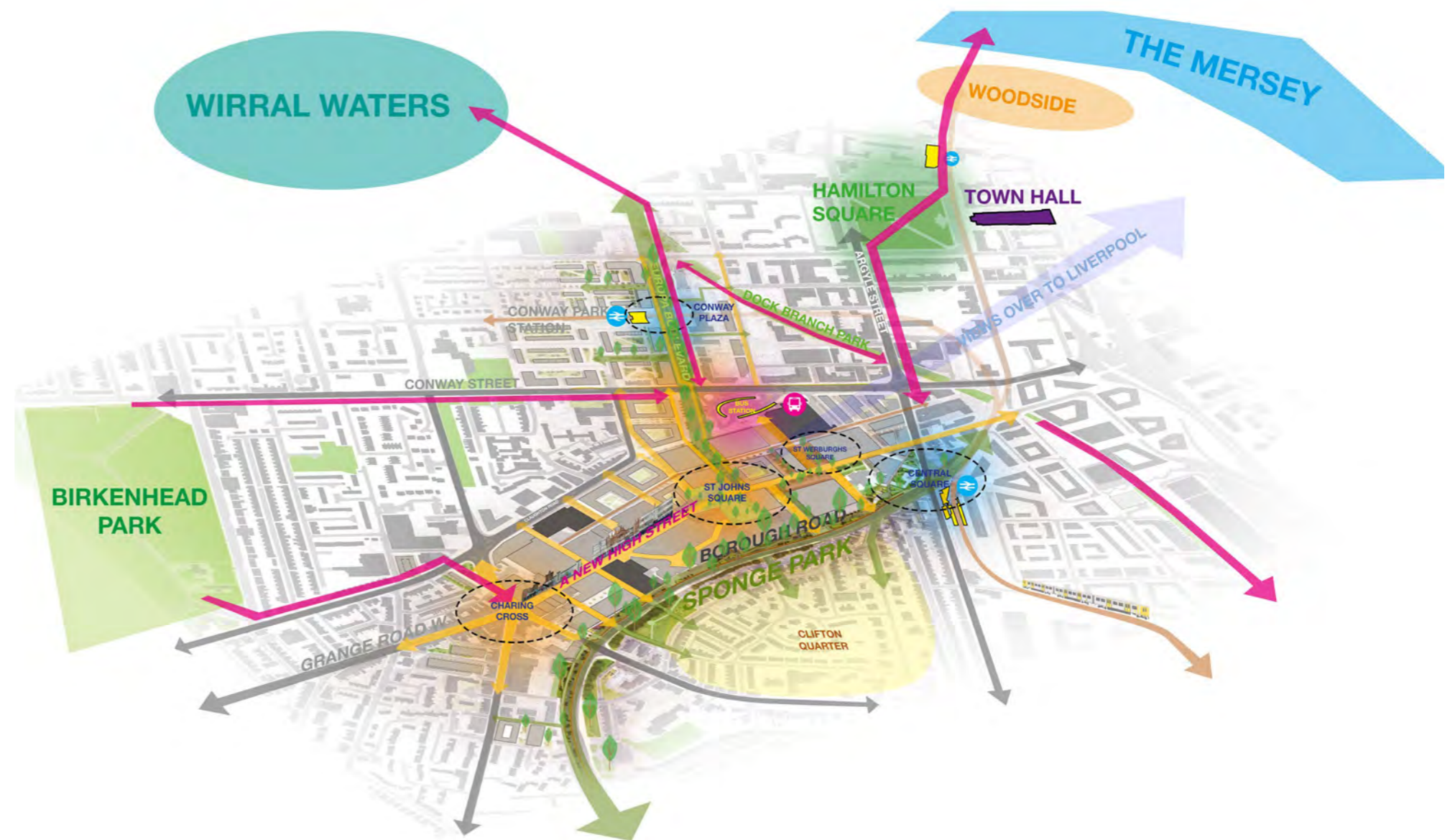


Figure 2.2 - Objectives Diagram

2.3 KEY ISSUES FOR THE MASTERPLAN TO ADDRESS //

This Masterplan Report is covering 3 areas within Birkenhead Central Regeneration Area, and will set out to address and overcome a range of issues and problems which exist today including:

- Consolidate the retail core to align to future space requirements of a thriving but 'right-sized' town centre offer.
- Address the quality of the retail and leisure experience.
- Creating new visibility into the town centre.
- Bring new uses into the heart of the town that can act as an attraction, and realign surrounding uses to a more residential focus.
- Rebalancing the current highway dominance and activating the edges of the town centre creating a pedestrian and cycle friendly place to visit.
- Enhance connections to existing sustainable modes of transport; two underground stations, bus station and cycle networks.
- Minimise the impact of uncontrolled servicing and backs of buildings to enhance the quality of experience.
- Create a car parking provision that is located in the right place at an appropriate scale, and with the right type to attract users into the centre.
- Creating the right kind of retail space to re-attract old tenants, and spaces for new ones.
- Provide a stronger end to Grange Road and the retail core (there is currently no anchor to attract shoppers).
- Creating a new mix of uses (commercial / leisure / residential) to drive a vibrant safe and welcoming town centre.
- To engage and connect with the surrounding areas and uses and draw those communities into the heart of the town.
- Addressing and mitigating some of the anti-social uses around the town centre with lack of passive surveillance.
- Support the arrival of the new council offices with complimentary uses to drive new workplace economy.
- Create a visible emphasis on Health and Wellbeing to address health outcome issues within the local area.
- Create new opportunities for employment through a diverse town centre.
- Create public realm and public open space that attracts a range of uses and life being brought back to the town centre, and provide a green and biodiverse identity that reflects the wider peninsula and the overarching identity of its residents.
- Enhance wider way finding and connections to ensure the town centre is a joined up experience rather than an isolated retail focused one.
- Seek to aid the reduction of surface water flood risk (and a contribution to reducing the number of CSO spills) through the inclusion of SuDS within the building and landscape design principles

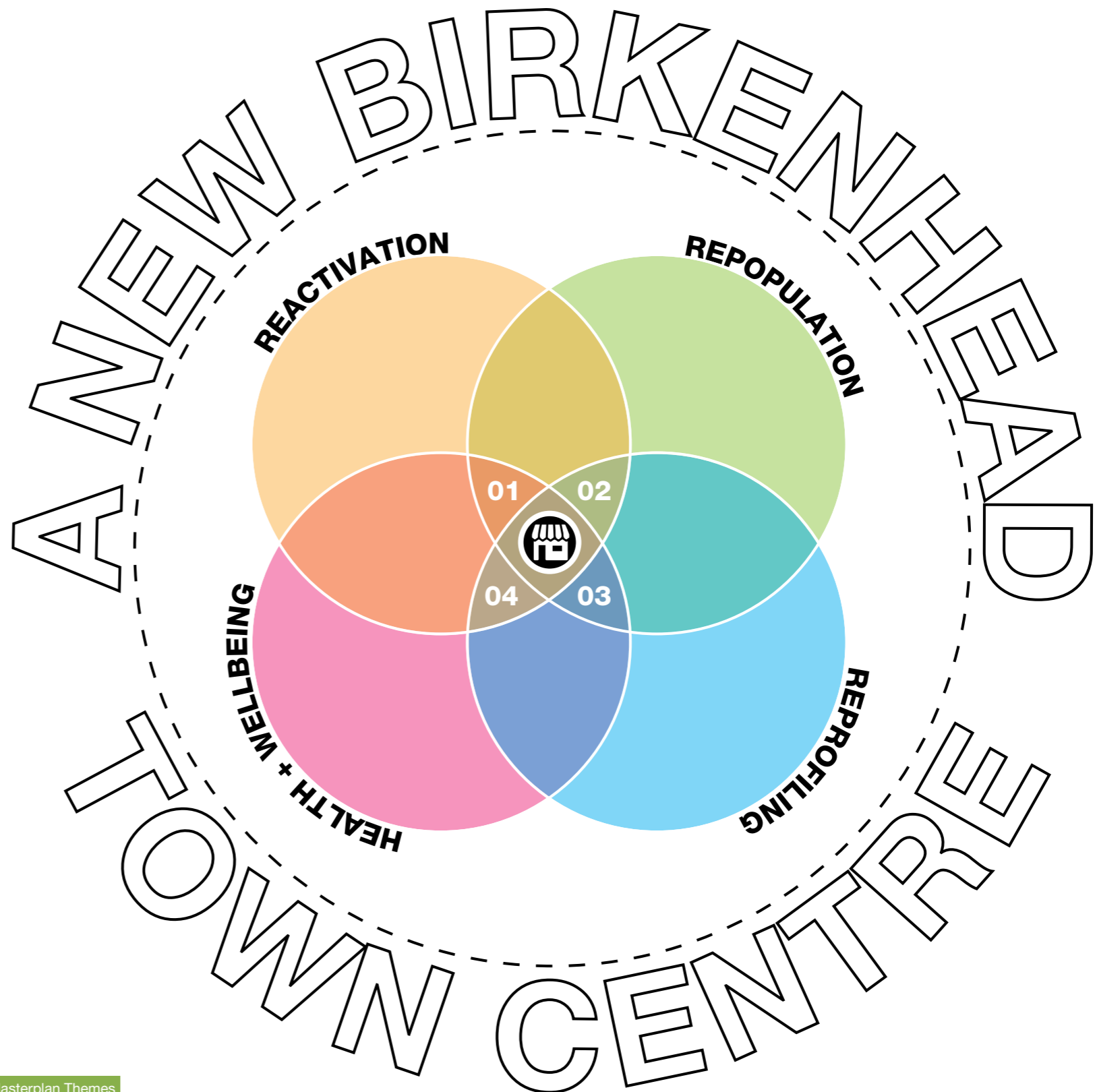


Figure 2.3 - Masterplan Themes

2.4 KEY MASTERPLAN THEMES //

4 core themes have been identified for the masterplan to address include:

- Reactivation
- Re-population
- Health + wellbeing
- Re-profiling

These are explained in greater detail later in the document identified to address the unique constraints and opportunities that the town centre requires.

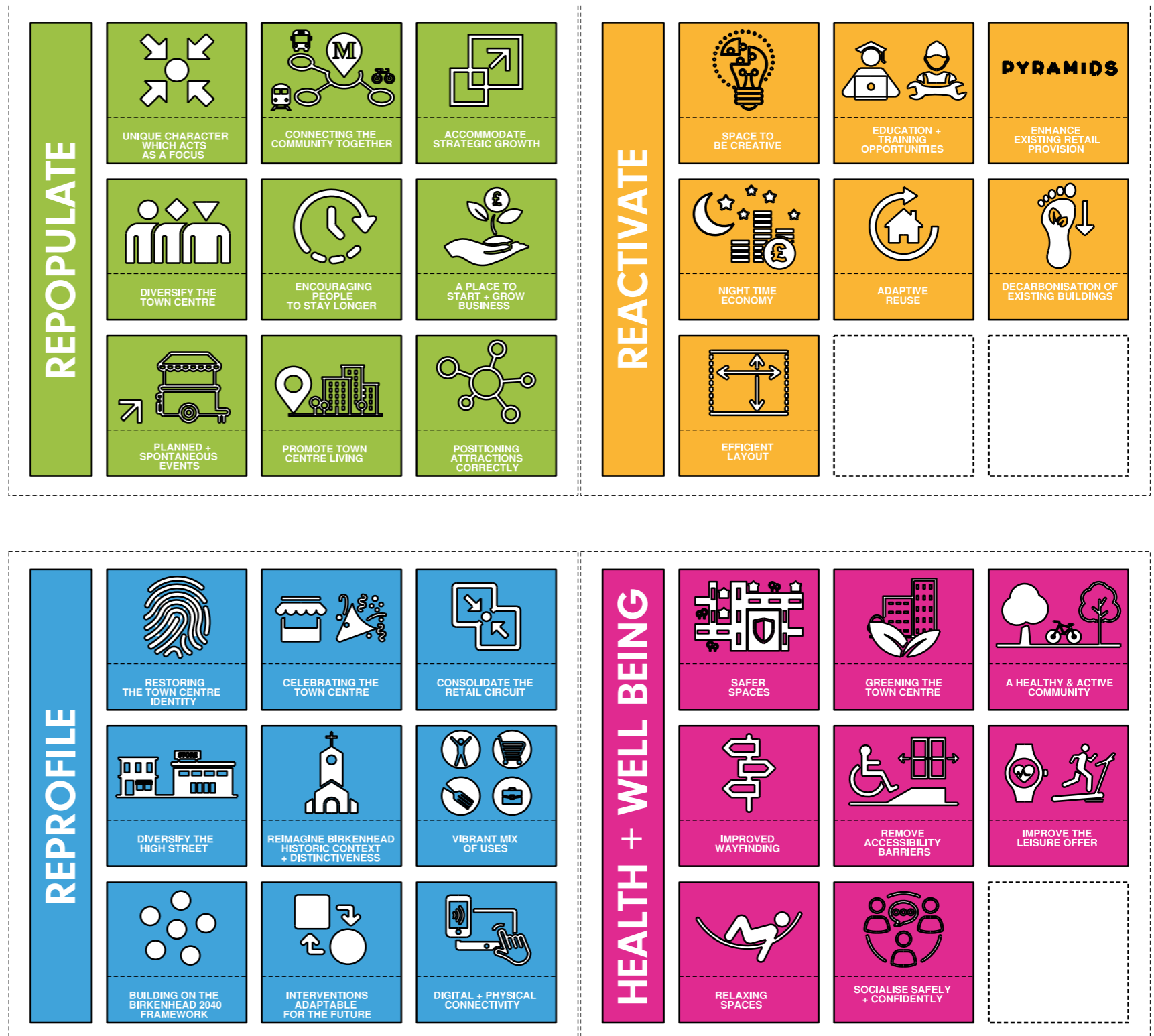
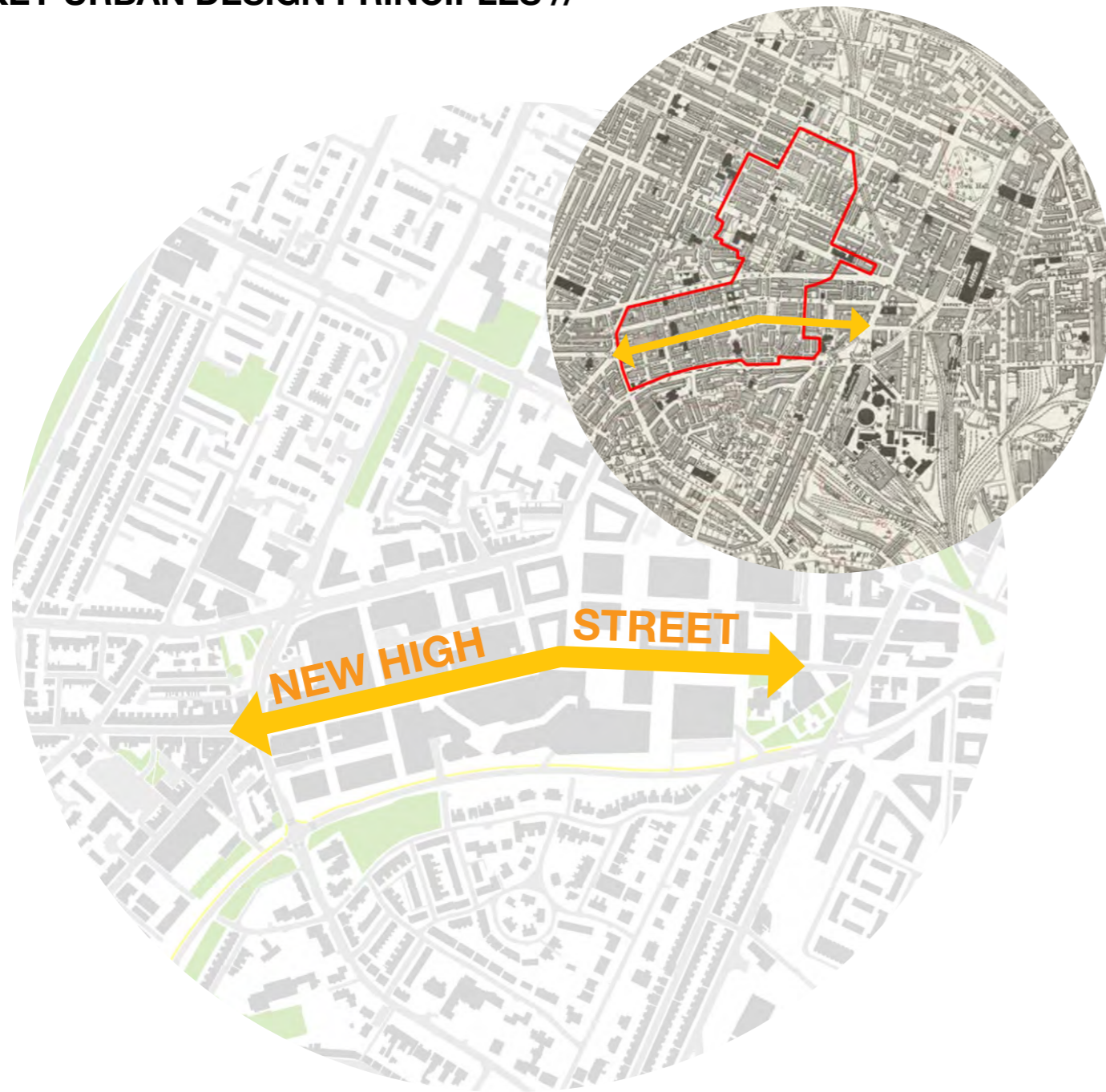


Figure 2.4 - Masterplan Themes

2.5 KEY URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES //



RECONNECTING GRANGE ROAD

The key move within the masterplan is to reconnect Grange Road. Historic maps show that Grange Road was once a key route through the town centre, connecting Charing Cross with Haymarket Square.

Reconnecting Grange Road reintroduces the high street back into the town centre.



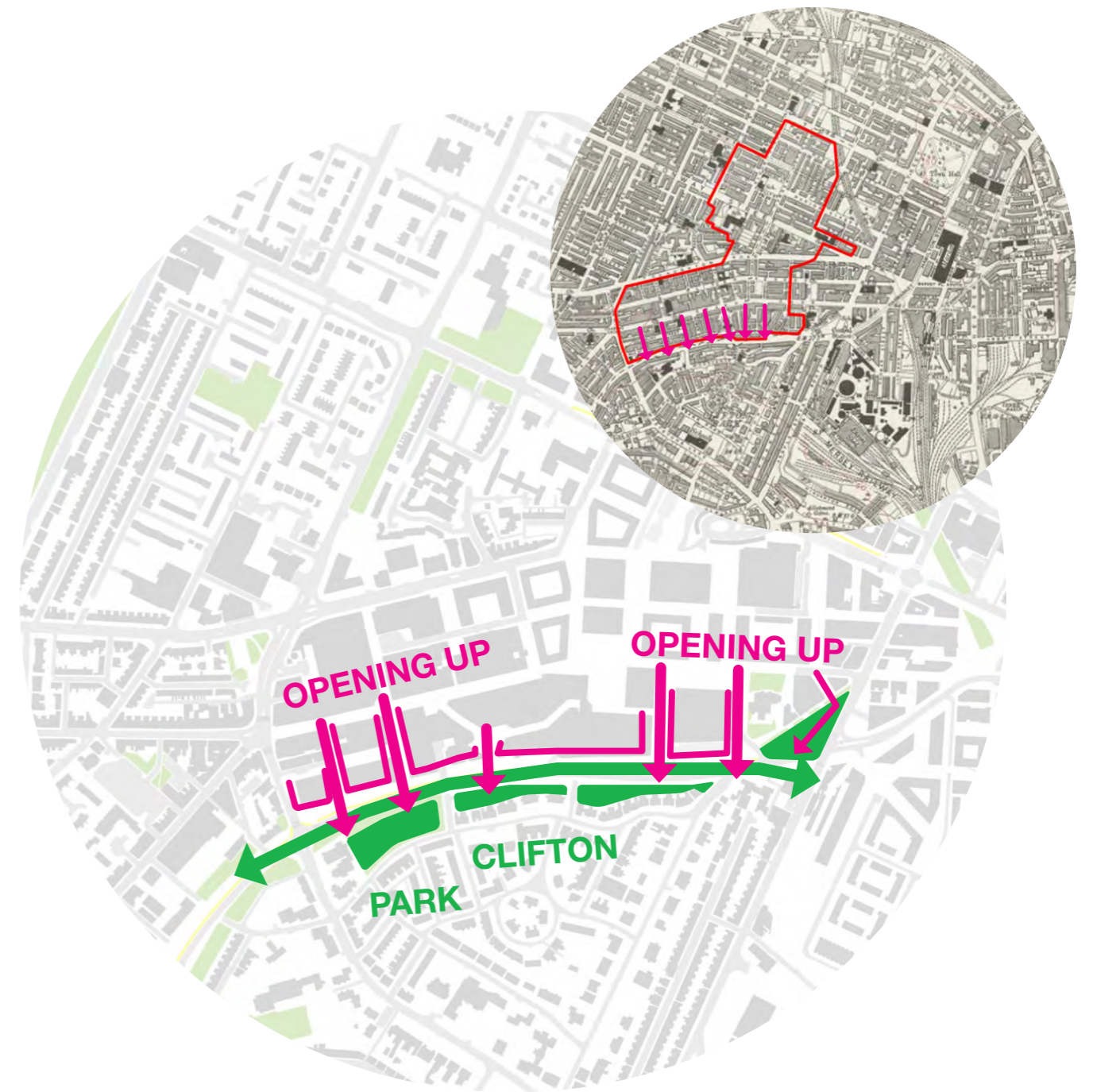
INTRODUCE A NEW NORTH/SOUTH GREEN SPINE

The introduction of a new green spine through the centre of the town provides a green North/South corridor that connects the town centre to Conway Street and the soon to be reconfigured Europa Boulevard and Conway Park Station.



CAPITALISING ON KEY VIEWS AND VISTAS

Through opening up streets, carefully sculpting buildings and reintroducing historic street patterns the masterplan will both protect existing view corridors, but will also provide new ones.



OPENING UP BOROUGH ROAD & REINTRODUCING ENHANCED PERMEABILITY CONNECTING TO CLIFTON PARK AND THE SOUTH

Through the considered removal of parts of the Pyramid shopping centre we are able to create further North/South permeability and open up Borough Road to the town centre. This also gives the potential to provide wider connections through to the Clifton Park.



A NEW SuDS PARK FOR BIRKENHEAD

Changing the nature of Borough Road is a key ambition within the Masterplan, to create a more accessible, active and green entrance into the town centre. Looking back at the earliest plans of Birkenhead Borough Road represented a natural tributary to the Mersey, and today an opportunity to introduce a new Sustainable Urban Drainage corridor also providing new biodiversity, visual greening, and an attractive southerly aspect to the town centre.



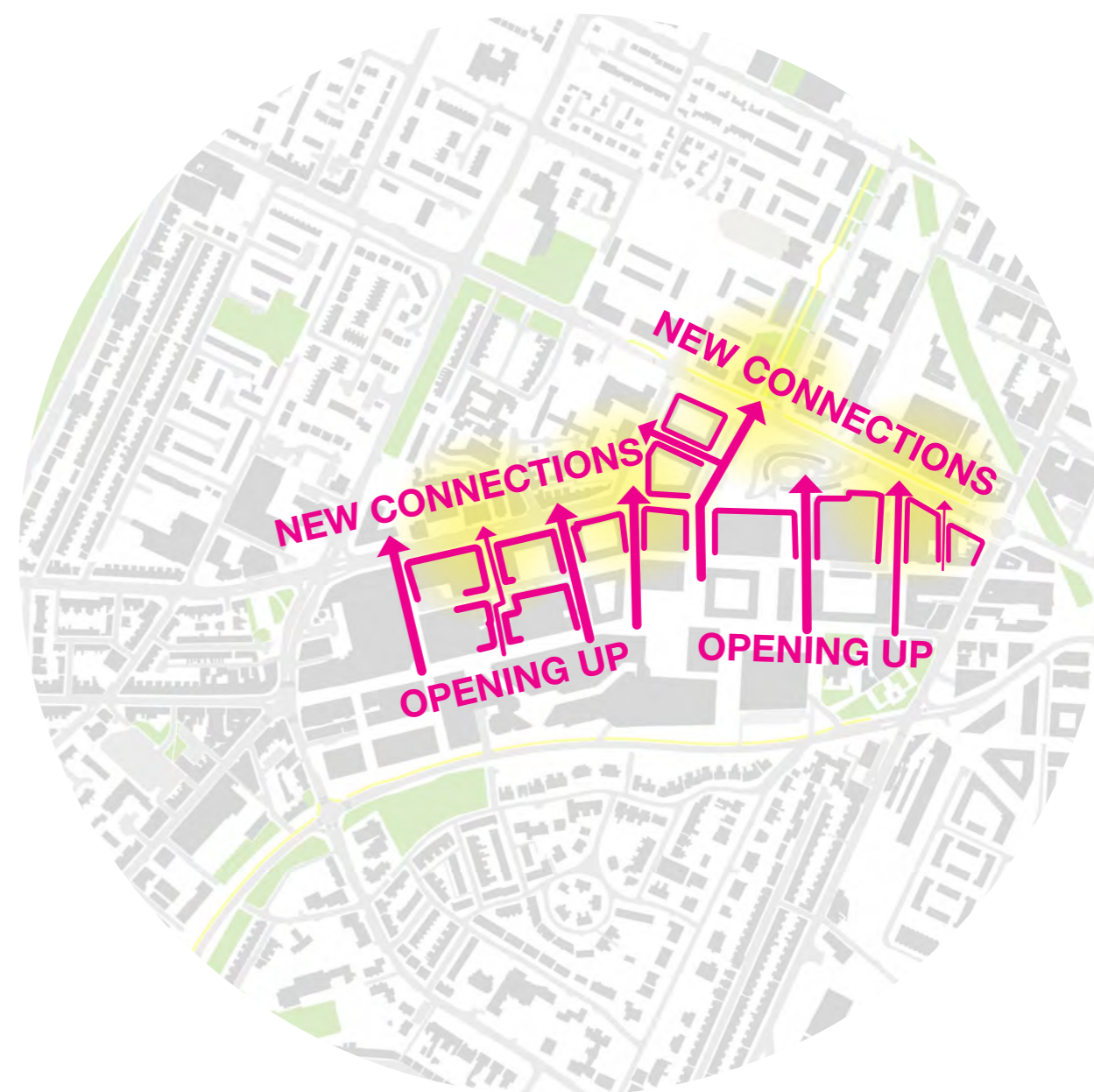
CONSOLIDATE PARKING

Parking for the town centre still represents an important functional aspect for users, and the parking offer should be consolidated and improved over time to pick up strategic movements from all directions to capture the today lost potential of the town through the flyovers and other highways dominated infrastructure that act as a bypass to the town.



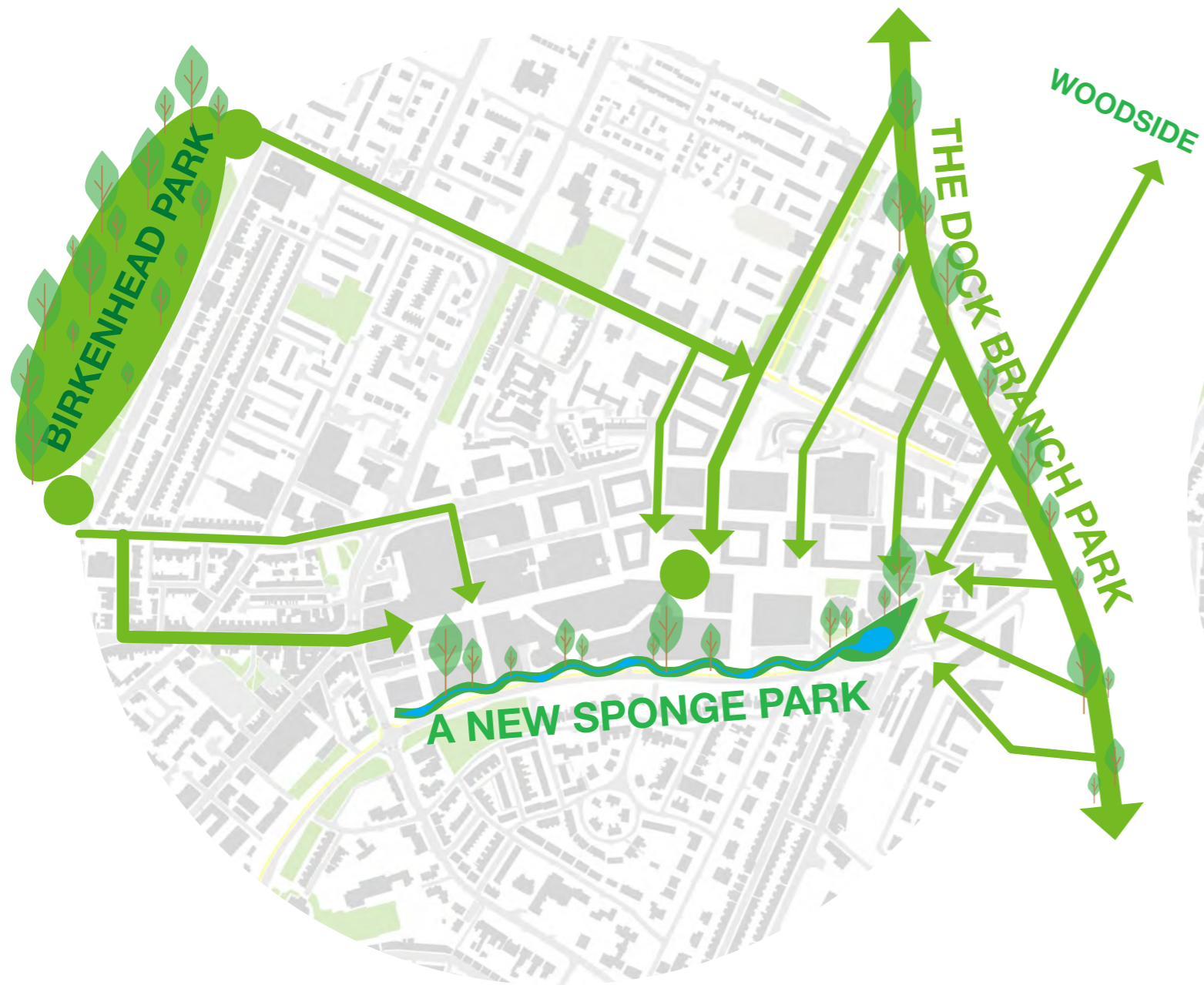
CELEBRATING HERITAGE ASSETS WITH NEW SPACES AND CONNECTIONS

Through opening up streets, framing historic buildings, and reintroducing historic street patterns the masterplan will both protect existing view corridors, but will also provide new ones enhancing the sense of history, connections to the wider area, and the value of the adjacent Conservation Areas.



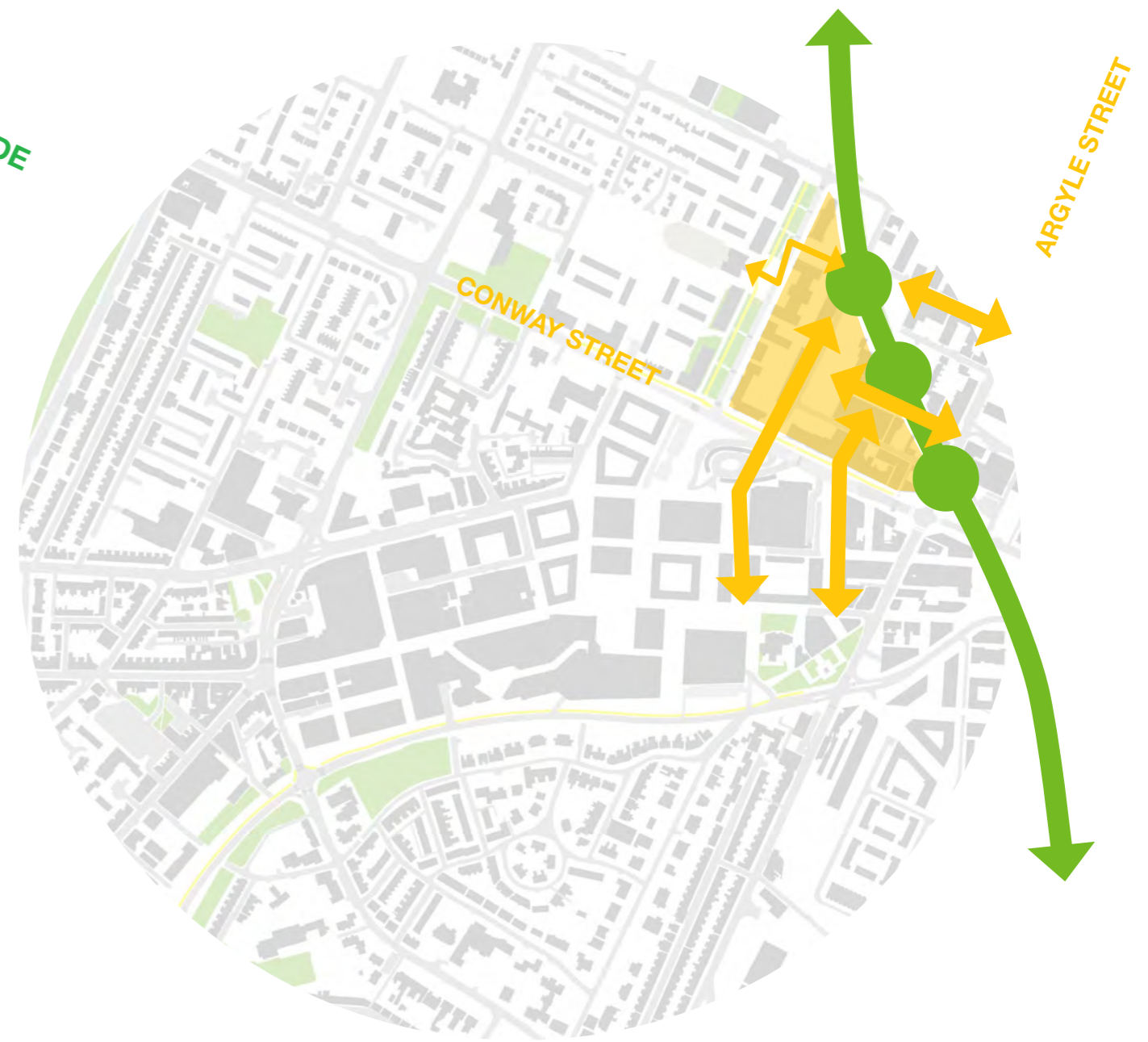
OPENING UP CLAUGHTON ROAD AND CONWAY STREET CREATING NEW ACTIVE FRONTAGES & CONNECTING TO THE NORTH

Changing the feeling of Claughton Road as a back street service space and enhancing the existing residential community to the north with new connectivity offers significant potential. Conway Street like many of the streets surrounding the town acts as a barrier, and breaking this through new connections and integration of surrounding residential neighbourhoods is at the heart of the plans.



BIRKENHEAD AND DOCK BRANCH PARK

Birkenhead Park is on the doorstep of the town centre, and is a landmark historic public park, offering both significant scale, tourism potential, and public amenities. Alongside this a new linear park is proposed as part of the wider regeneration plans for Birkenhead; Dock Branch Park which occupies an historic railway cutting, and links from Green Lane, through Hind Street to Wirral Waters. Enhancing connections to these assets via cycleways, signage and public landscape is an important part of the masterplan approach to create a cohesive town centre experience for all.



RE-INTRODUCING A GRAIN AND DENSITY

The Area to the north of Conway Street and to the east of Europa Boulevard feels disconnected from the town centre, a back street area of surface car parking with limited activity. The Plans for the Dock Branch Park, and improved connections across Conway Street offer the potential to reconnect this area of the town, but also capitalise on the links to the creative uses emerging on Argyle Street and the workplace and education uses in the area and from this establish a new sense of identity and character.



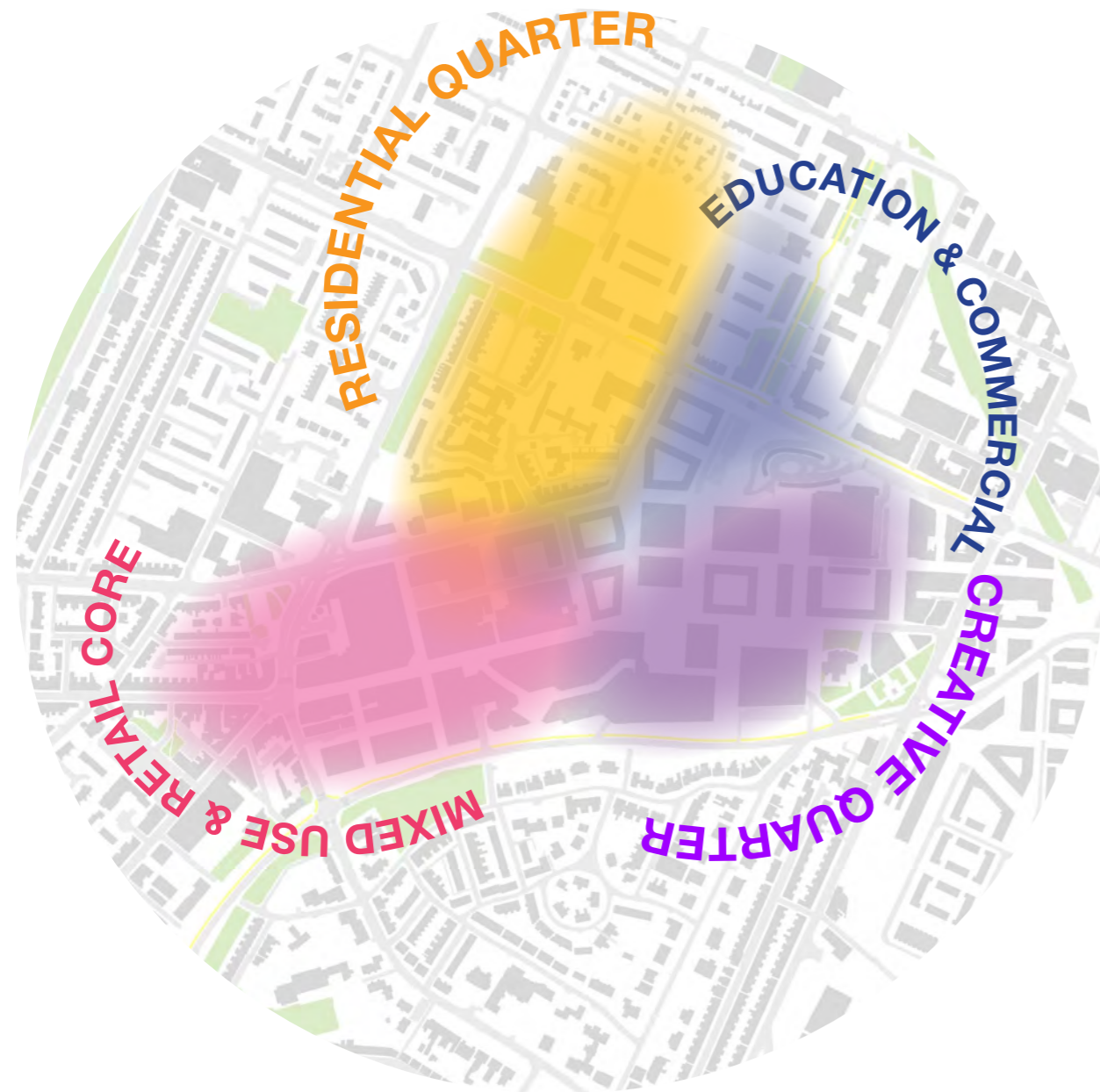
A NEW RETAIL CIRCUIT

The retail core is consolidated within the emerging Local Plan aligned to a change in the high street retail environment, and the need to diversify the mix of uses to create a sustainable and liveable town centre. Grange Road is proposed to be reinstated to an earlier form and act as the primary spine for movement and retail focus for the town centre. Supporting this, the masterplan proposes a number of relocated services into the heart of the town centre, in highly visible locations to drive new footfall, alongside improved connections to public transport hubs.



A NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

Conway Park Station, and the consolidation of the retail core offer the potential to establish a new sustainable family residential neighbourhood clustered around the station, expanding the existing communities and offering new permeability. The existing Saint Laurence School also offers an established focus to family life.



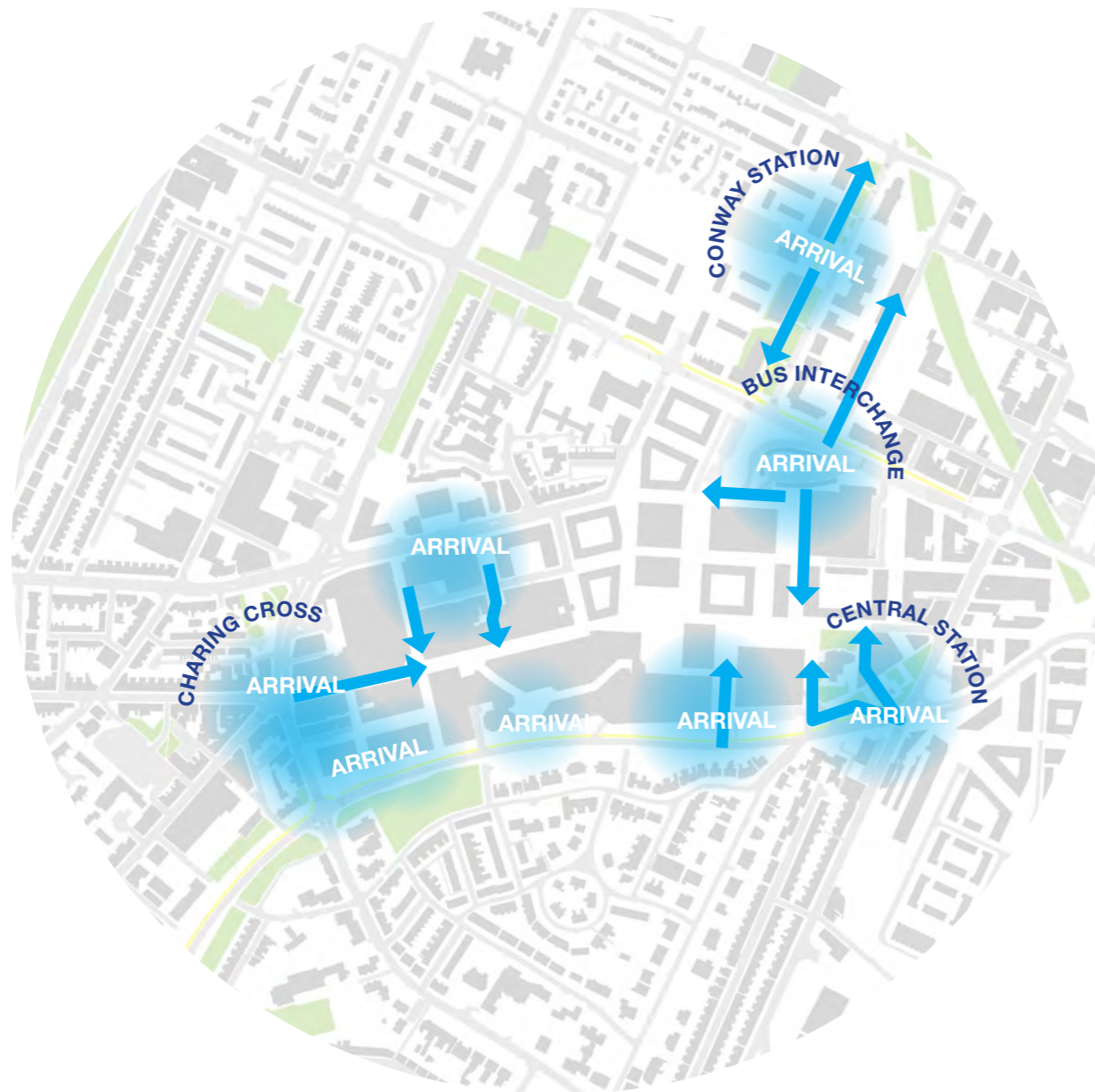
DISTINCT CHARACTER AREAS

The consolidation of the retail core provides the opportunity to create new distinct character areas within the town centre. A clear mixed use retail core, more active and diverse in its uses than ever before, an expanded commercial and educational quarter, and a reinforced residential neighbourhood.



A MIXED USE TOWN CENTRE

A mix of new uses provides an exciting new buzz for the Birkenhead. This increase in critical mass helps to create lively metropolitan style town centre that enables a live, work, play environment. The town centre should be varied in its mix reflecting the needs of the Local Plan and the community.



A NEW SENSE OF ARRIVAL

Arrival is a key part of making people feel connected and wanting to engage with Birkenhead. Our vision creates a clear edge to the town centre, and seamlessly reconnects into the networks of existing and new streets and squares of the town centre.



STREETS AND SQUARES AT THE HEART OF THE TOWNSCAPE

Alongside key arrival spaces in Central Square and Charing Cross, the town centre is to be shaped by major new pieces of public open space. A new market Square linking to the new market creating space for variety and change, a civic square that focuses the high street with a point of decision and link to the education and commercial quarter, and a stronger sense of arrival from Conway Park Station and the Bus Interchange.

3

SPATIAL CONTEXT, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS //



3.1 SPATIAL CONTEXT //

The Town Centre Masterplan Report covers 2 Masterplan area's; and one Framework Area. All are within Birkenhead Central, and would be considered either the heart of the primary shopping area, or it periphery and areas of influence.

The Town Centre has the potential to catalyse a wider urban regeneration programme, and the new council office buildings, and committed new public landscape & highways works to Grange Road, Conway Street, Argyle Street, Charing Cross, and market are at the heart of this.

'Repopulating Birkenhead'

The Town Centre Masterplan is one of six masterplans to be prepared as part of the proposals of the emerging Wirral Local Plan Submission Draft (May 2022) within and adjoining the town centre. Each of these masterplans will create new residential and mixed use neighbourhood, which will together provide over 4,000 new homes with over 10,000 new residents repopulating the town centre and creating opportunities for new businesses to prosper. One of the key principles of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework is to connect the centre of the town to its waterfront and to existing and new mixed use neighbourhoods created in part through the restructuring of the town centre.

A new refocussed retail and commercial core

The masterplan sets to address the declining fortunes of the Birkenhead town centre and assist the emerging Local Plan. This will be addressed by looking at ways we can restructure and reinvent the wider town centre and the retail core through the introduction of mixed use neighbourhoods, with an alignment to new town centre trends, and future potential. A key part of this refocussing and restructuring is the development of the new council offices by the Wirral Growth Company, and the recent acquisition of the Pyramids Shopping Centre which provides significant control of key areas of land within the town centre.

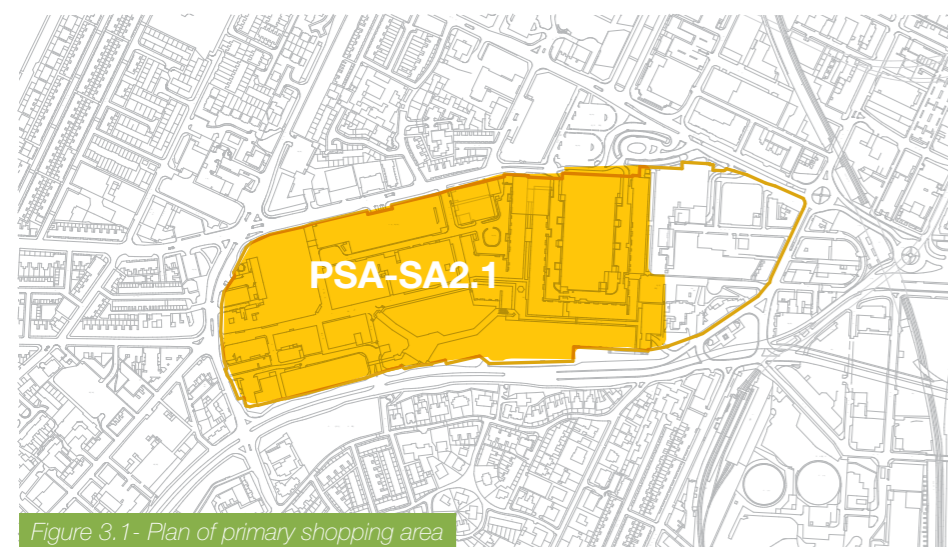


Figure 3.1- Plan of primary shopping area

Place Making

The Town Centre masterplan will benefit from a context of a number of major place making proposals which provide new residents with access to high quality public infrastructure spaces and public realm.

Birkenhead Park and Dock Branch Park (1)

The historic Birkenhead Park is on the doorstep to the town centre providing high quality accessible green space for all, and the potential for a wider visitor destination to be capitalised upon. Along with this a future new world class Dock Branch Park is to be built along the path of the former dockland railway cutting and will transform the centre of Birkenhead providing a variety of attractive open spaces and recreation resources for the new residents of the town centre.

Birkenhead Market (2)

The new Birkenhead market will become a key focus for new mixed use town centre.

Public Realm proposals

Conway Street and Europa Boulevard are to be benefit from both public realm, and highways adaptations to improve walking and cycling and align to a wider highways movement strategy for vehicles. These works also include wider areas such as Argyle Street, through Hamilton Square and leading towards Woodside Ferry Terminal and the waterfront. Further to this the historic high street Grange Road and Charing Cross junction is proposed to be improved in both quality and space provided for pedestrians.

An upgrade to Borough Road is also seen as a potential piece of work, which downgrades the dual carriageway to two lanes of traffic, with and increased pedestrian zone which will feature cycling lanes, SuDS drainage and a greening of the road. The council will prioritise projects that involve the reallocation of road space to greening initiatives, supporting a modal shift that encourages more walking and cycling.

Removal of Flyovers (3)

The removal of the flyovers is a key piece in the Birkenhead 2040 framework noted as being a catalyst project in the regeneration of the town. They represent a visual blight and a severance of the town from surrounding areas with the greatest impact being on St Werburgh's, the primary shopping area, and the immediate areas surrounding.

Education

The Town Centre will be within the catchment of a new primary school. This may be provided as part of the Hind Street Urban Garden Village Development.

Leisure and Health (4)

The Town Centre benefits from existing nearby leisure facilities at the Vue Cinema and Europa Pools, however as part of the Local Plan the retail core is proposed to be consolidated and these facilities considered to be re-provided within the core of the town centre enhancing footfall and supporting amenities to both existing and new users of the town.

Accessibility and Movement

The town centre is extremely accessible by public transport and road. There are two Merseyrail underground stations and the town centre bus station within easy walking distance. In particular, the proposals to remove the flyovers and to enhance accessibility to the Birkenhead Central Railway Station will provide new residents and workers with the ability to travel to Liverpool City Centre within 10 minutes and to Chester in 30 minutes. The emerging proposals for a new Mass Transit system could provide improved connectivity around the town including the Wirral Waters Regeneration Area, and beyond along the left bank.

The area is also located close to the **Queensway tunnel (5)** portal providing easy access for vehicles travelling to Liverpool and south towards Chester along the A41.

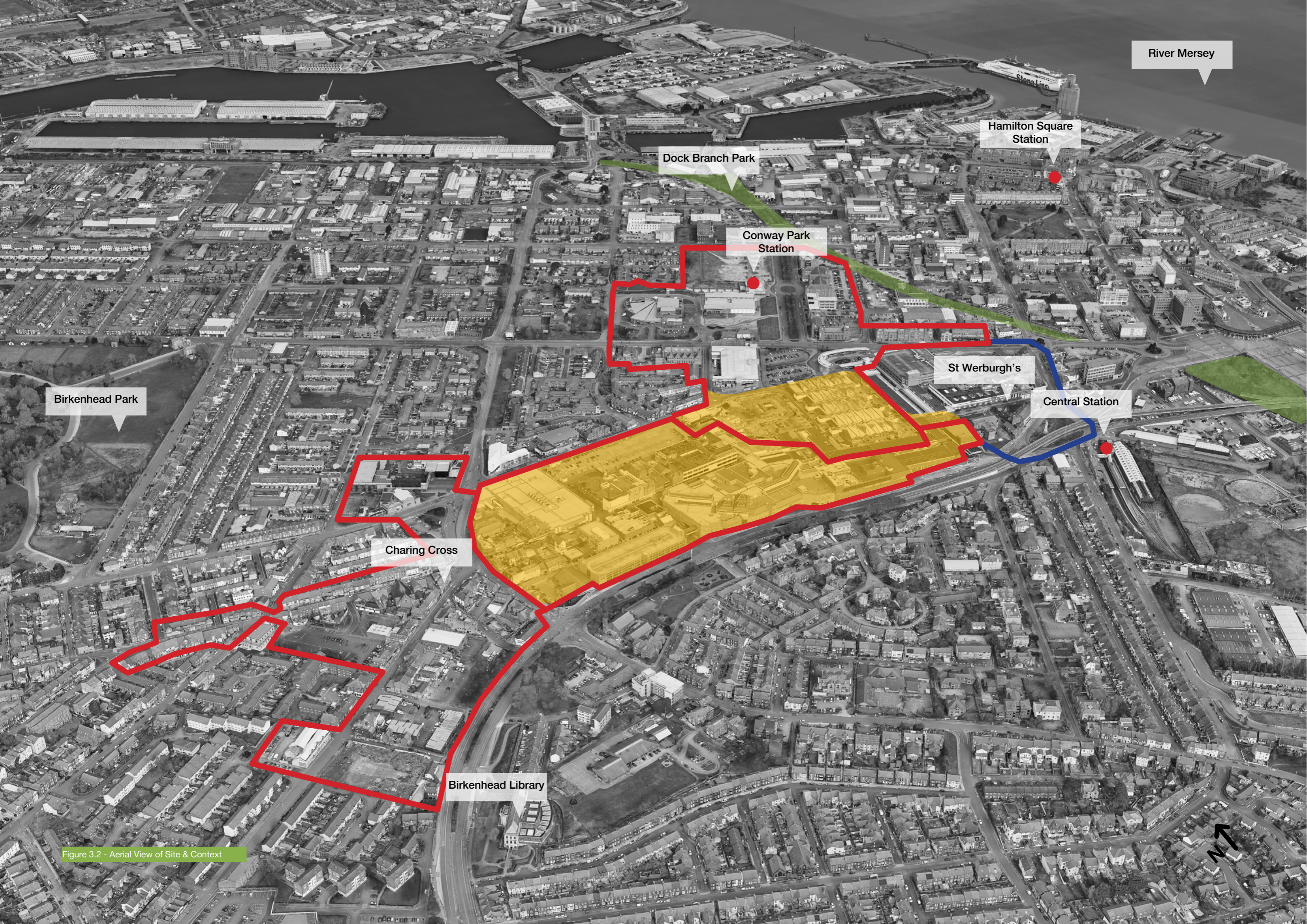
The legibility of the town centre assets from one another is today fractured, and part of the strategy for the Birkenhead 2040 Framework is for the wider assets of the town to be connected by signage and quality public realm and cycleways to create a new cohesive town centre experience.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS)

The combined sewer system is already at flood risk, so it is vital that a SuDS strategy becomes a key part of the masterplan. With the increase in density through the planned development of the masterplan it is vital that drainage becomes a key strategy for each and every development coming forward. This shouldn't be exclusive to just the overall masterplan strategy, but a strategy within each development plot. Early engagement with United Utilities, and LLFA is advised.

Birkenhead Library

The Library is detached from the town centre, and it is identified through the masterplan as a potential additional component of the mix of uses in the town centre in the future.



River Mersey

Hamilton Square Station

Dock Branch Park

Conway Park Station

St Werburgh's

Central Station

Birkenhead Park

Charing Cross

Birkenhead Library

Figure 3.2 - Aerial View of Site & Context



3.2 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES //

There are a number of key constraints and opportunities identified that have informed the masterplan approach. This section provides a summary and for further detail they are described in Section 10 - Background:

Environmental considerations

- Borough Road forms the low point in the local landscape, with a former tributary connecting to the River Mersey. This provides a south facing aspect to much of the masterplan area.
- The natural topography of the area provides natural screening from the prevailing North Westerly winds, and winds funnelled from the Mersey river corridor.
- There are two major roads to be considered Borough Road and Conway Street which both serve the town centre and movement towards the Queensway road tunnel. Air quality and acoustic impact assessments will be important to consider with any development adjacent to these edges.
- Birkenhead Bus Station, and 3 multi storey car parks provide focuses of vehicle movement to the town centre, and as above will need considering against both air quality and acoustic impacts.
- As the major retail centre for the borough there are a number of businesses to the centre, some of which require extensive servicing such as the market. As above understanding the impact of acoustic and air quality will be important to consider.
- There is very little existing greening in the town centre / masterplan areas. Whilst Europa Boulevard and Borough Road have a tree lined aspect, these provide little benefit to residents / users of the core of the town and pulling the greening into the heart of the town will be important to consider.

Flooding

- No tidal flooding is identified on the Environment Agency Maps.
- Surface water flooding can be seen aligned to the historic natural topography; hills and valleys. Borough Road is evident to provide a corridor with an area of pooling noticeable to the Central Station Gyratory. Further detail is advised for any planning application development to understand any detailed surface water risk and future climate change requirements.
- Europa Pools is the only site that appears to be directly impacted by surface water flood risk, but further detail is required to understand the true impact.

Heritage

- Wirral has 26 Conservation Areas, none of these directly cover any of the current redline areas included within this report. Two are in close proximity and would be considered to be relevant context to be addressed; Hamilton Square Conservation Area, and Clifton Park Conservation Area.
- The Hamilton Square Conservation runs along the west of Argyle Street and extends to Conway Street junction.
- Clifton Park Conservation Area runs along the southern boundary of the redline, and the south of Borough Road.

- Both Conservation Areas have unique qualities, and opportunities to be engaged with.
- Birkenhead Park Conservation Area is in close proximity also, but today does not feel like a connected part of the town centre experience.
- There are 4 listed buildings within the Masterplan area:
 - Caffè Bien; Grade II Listed former Bank built c.1900, two storeys with attic to the corner of Grange Road and Oxton Road / Whetstone Lane
 - 1- 7 Charing Cross; Grade II Listed run of shops built c.1901, 2 storeys with stone and brickwork plinth in a semi Gothic style to the corner of Grange Road West and Charing Cross.
 - The Crown Public House; Grade II Listed public house built in the late 1800's. 3 storey building fronting Conway Street.
 - The Conway Building; Grade II Listed former school building built in 1903. A strong civic 3 storey red brickwork building.
- There are also a number of non listed heritage buildings and features which represent a rich Georgian, and Victorian past and whilst not protected make up part of the towns rich history and past industrious nature.
- There are key views from within the town towards the Liverpool Skyline, in particular a view from Grange Road to the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool.
- Wider to the core area is the Priory spire, visible from Grange Road from St Werburgh's Square. This was historically visible from longer views but lost with the development of the Pyramids internal precincts.

Highways

- Borough Road - A551 and Conway Street - A553 both serve the Queensway Road tunnel and the town centre. Whetstone Lane and Exmouth Street - A5029 provide a cross route cutting across to the docks and the Kingsway road tunnel. These are defined as a Key Route Networks and provides large scale transport links between areas.
- There are plans being developed to reduce the impact of the highway running along Conway Street to make this more permeable, improving pedestrian crossings to Charing Cross and reducing the extent of highway, and removal of the flyovers serving the tunnel from Borough Road. The planned changes present a significant opportunity to improve the experience, and engagement with the town centre.
- There is a proposed trial closing a section of Grange Road West, removing a movement onto Charing Cross, and supporting the small businesses along the street including the Little Theatre a community venue of over 150 seat capacity.
- As part of the Wirral Growth Company approved Outline Planning Application for the Town Centre there are plans proposed to also improve access arrangements to the Bus Station. These have been further developed and consulted upon.

Car parking

- There are a number of multi storey car parks (MSCP's) serving the town centre. Based on strategic movement into the town and the A road access points, car parks from Borough Road and Conway Street

provide strategic importance, and are opportunities for future footfall and picking up passing traffic. A single deck car park to Claughton Road has less strategic importance to the town centre, but plays an important role for the ASDA Supermarket. Further evidence on utilisation is required to understand the levels of use, and the opportunity that may be presented if alternate uses could be introduced.

- There are a number of smaller surface car parks and on street parking areas within the town, but many of these are less visible and as such has less strategic value.
- Wirral Council is developing a new parking strategy that, once developed, aims to help support businesses and communities across the borough, manage traffic, improve current parking facilities, ensure the right type of parking is in the right place for residents and local people and improve access to and the ability to use more sustainable modes of transport

Pedestrian and Cycle access

- The Wirral Circular Trail is a well recognised walking and cycling route around the borough, and the Wirral Way along its southern edge, however the town centre lacks any comprehensive cycle / public realm features. The Dock Branch Park is proposed to introduce this, and would connect the docks to the town centre at Europa Boulevard and Conway Street then linking on to Green Lane.
- Further improved cycle and pedestrian spaces are proposed to Conway Street, Argyle Street and connecting down to Woodside and the Ferry, and onto the Wirral Circular. However, Borough Road is a missing piece of this jigsaw and a significant opportunity if the format of the road can be reconsidered as part of the flyover removal.
- The council will increasingly consider opportunities to increase the priority for walking and cycling over private vehicles.
- As well as the town centre as a hub for movement, there are a number of important community assets surrounding that should / could be connected;
 - Birkenhead Park .
 - Local Schools (and proposed new primary to Hind Street).
 - Birkenhead College.
 - Major employment spaces - Cammell Lairds, the port, docks, and waterfront

Public Transport

- Birkenhead has city scale enviable public transport, with 3 underground stations, a bus interchange and Ferry. Further to this are Wirral Council's emerging proposals for a new Mass Transit system to further improve links along the Left Bank to those place and employers that are currently not connected to the amazing infrastructure on offer in the town.
- Liverpool is one of a few cities trailing the lawful use of e-scooters as a last mile transport solution. Given the nature of Birkenhead's relationship to Liverpool and the potential benefit this could add to connect the town together this could be an interesting opportunity to explore.

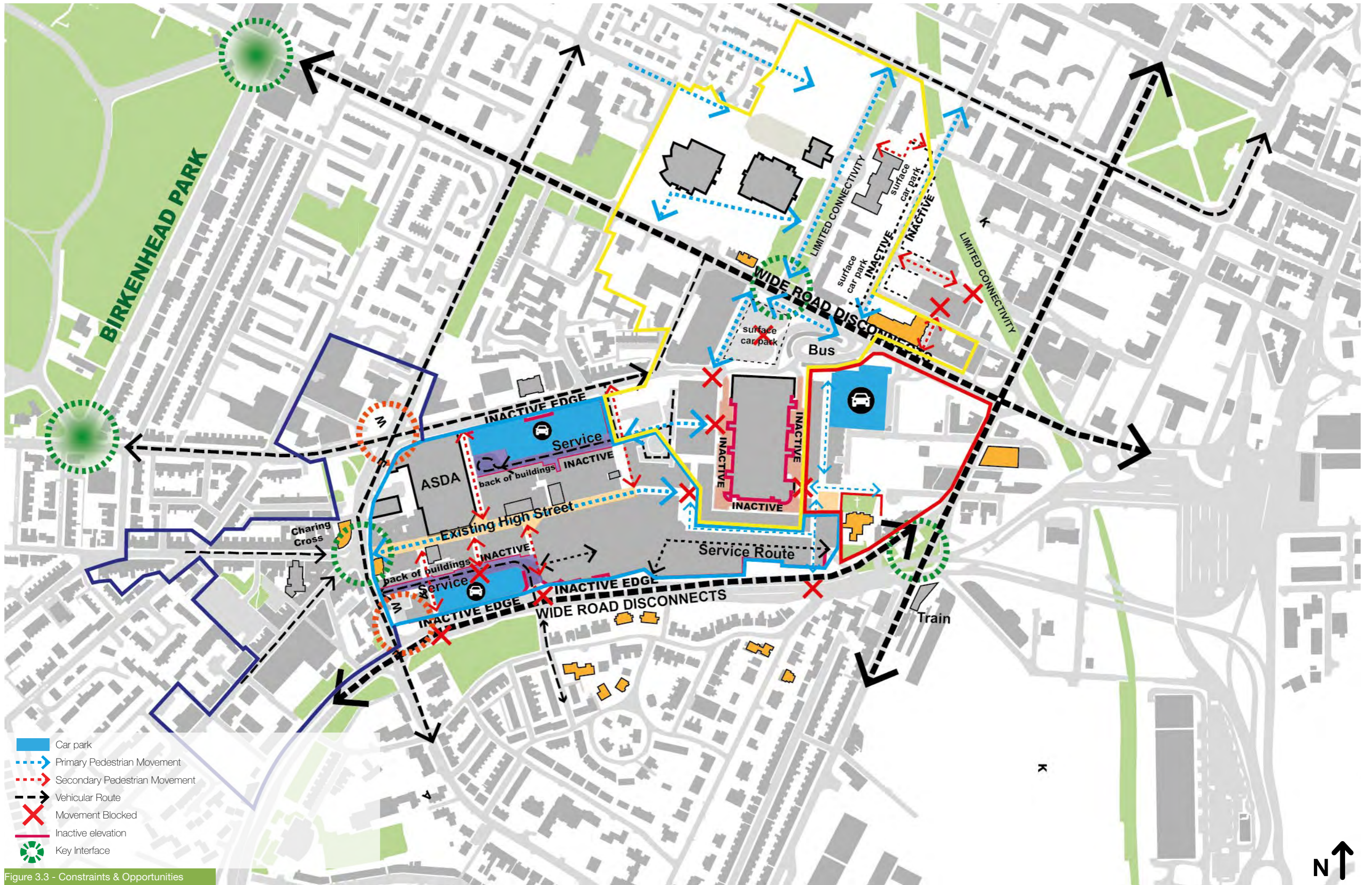


Figure 3.3 - Constraints & Opportunities

View Corridors & Skyline

- There are a number of view corridors which cover or are in close proximity to the site. These are set out within the Emerging Birkenhead Design Guide and Liverpool Council's Local Plan. Views should be assessed against their respective drivers and set out clear justification for change.
- Further site specific view corridors have been identified specific to Woodside which draw out the site's unique character and identity. Whilst there are not wider town / city perspectives it is important that these are treated in a similar manner and the relevance for any schemes agreed with Planning and Conservation Officers.
- Hamilton Square Conservation Area sets out a number of views which are also captured to be assessed from the perspective of impact on the setting of the Conservation Area / Listed Buildings within.
- There is an opportunity to establish new visual connections across the site and enhance permeability through building form and massing of new proposals
- Two key view corridors have been identified through the analysis of the Local Area;
 - View 01; from Grange Road to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.
 - View 02; from Grange Road to Birkenhead Priory Spire.
- Further to these there have been a series of views recognised that are important to assess any potential change;
 - View 03; from Oxton Road looking towards the Liverpool Skyline and today a view of the Beetham Tower.
 - View 04; from Park Road South with a distant obscured view to the Birkenhead Priory Spire.
 - View 05; from Claughton Road towards the Rowse vent shaft marking the Dock Branch Park.

Building Heights

- The context varies across the masterplan areas;
 - Charing Cross; is in general domestic in scale, with a mix of converted / purpose building Victorian terraced 2 - 3 storey dwellings, and a small number of purpose built apartment buildings from 3-4 storeys
 - Grange Road Primary Shopping Area; is in general a mix of converted / purpose building Victorian terraced 2 - 3 storey dwellings with commercial ground floor use, and a range of periods of 2 - 4 storey purpose designed retail buildings. The Pyramids Shopping Centre is notably higher and more massive than any other structure with its 3 glazed pyramids to the food court area being visible from a number of vantage points.
 - Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Area; is now defined by the two recently completed new office buildings providing a new datum at 5 office scaled stories. The older buildings along Europa Boulevard are between 2 - 3 stories which broadly corresponds with the Conway Building and MSCP to Conway Street. The emerging Local Plan identifies the potential for a landmark building of scale to help create a unique sense of place.
- Any building over 7 stories needs full assessment under WS7.5

- Respect of the heritage and view corridors is key consideration.

Infrastructure/Services

- All detail will require development to suit proposals being brought forwards.
- As noted with the surface water flooding issue, it is identified as a potential opportunity to address this issue to Borough Road with a major new surface water attenuation device that could also add new public landscaping and increase biodiversity in the town and associated health and wellbeing benefits.
- Early engagement with United Utilities as part of a Flood Risk Assessment and master drainage strategy is advised.

Tunnels

- Conway Park Station connecting on to Hamilton Square Station is the only known tunnel in the site area.

Land Contamination / below ground structures

- Given the historic developed nature of the land and varied land use including elements of industry, it would be expected that a number of constraints will be expected in the ground. Further survey / analysis is required by a specialist to advise, and early engagement with the Environment Agency alongside the Wirral Council EHO will be required.

Visitor Economy

- Liverpool is an immediate neighbour, and whilst it is a threat to the success in attracting retailers to the high street, it is an opportunity to capitalise on the over 70m visitors who are attracted to the city every year.
- The Birkenhead 2040 Framework aims to address the clear need to improve way finding and connectivity to and between Birkenhead's culture and heritage assets, and the links from these to the Town Centre.
- Creating a unique offer in the town is key to the success of engaging a new audience. The proposed new market is a key component of this regeneration, and bringing this together with leisure offer and a realigned retail offer is a key opportunity for the town.

Neighbouring Development sites

- There are a number of developments in close proximity to the site that will have a direct impact on the character of the area;
- The new Wirral Growth Company have recently completed two new office buildings at the heart of the town
- Hind Street is a major development looking to bring forward a new neighbourhood focused around Central Station, and connect to the end of Grange Road as an extension to the town centre. This is intended to also provide new links to the Priory, and future proposed areas of Waterfront Regeneration.

Land Use

- The emerging Local Plan has identified Birkenhead's commercial District Mixed Use Qtr Masterplan area (MPA-RA4.1) with the need to maintain

the vitality of the borough's primary shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities, and other main town centre uses with borough wide significance.

- Policy WS 11 Strategy for Town, District and Local Centres should be referenced.
- Charing Cross Quarter (MPA-RA4.2) is identified as a secondary shopping area based around the distinct qualities of the Grange Road West Character, and serve as a local centre for surrounding residential areas.
- The emerging Local Plan identifies residential potential across the masterplan areas; 1449 new homes, 449 of which are within the Wirral Growth Company Approved Planning Application.
- The introduction of Planning Use Class E helps to diversify the town centre responding in a way that provides flexibility in land use, however for the town centre the intended land-uses are described within the parameter plans to help shape and define a robust and diverse town centre.

Sustainability

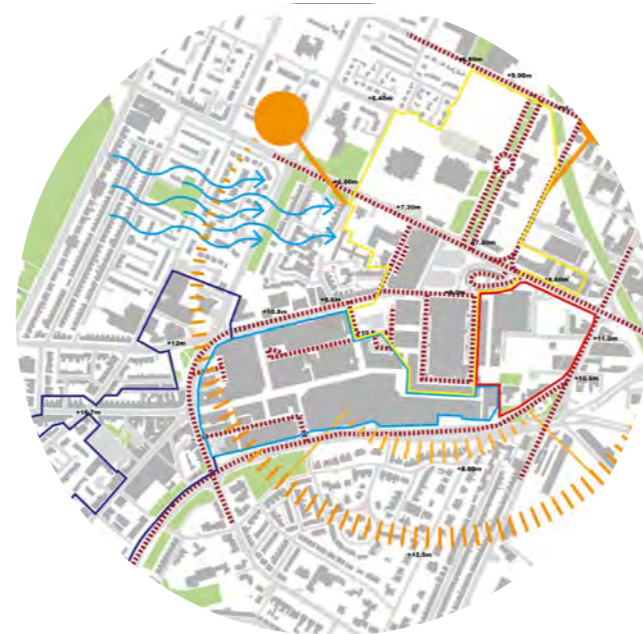
- The site is inherently sustainable with its proximity to fantastic public transport amenities, encouraging sustainable travel and low to no car ownership requirements.
- The town centre offer needs to be diversified, however it already provides a number of convenience and service retail offers to ensure walking can be the first choice option.
- Encouraging a healthy lifestyle is at the heart of the issues and opportunity in the town centre, and ensuring people's first choice is to use public transport, or walk / cycle is key. Aligned to this is the need to create places for people to work, and diversify the night time economy with places to eat and drink, and live a healthy lifestyle.
- Wirral's emerging Local Plan has set out an ambition to deliver a Heat Network which is important to investigate with any detailed proposals being brought forwards.

Public Open Space

- The site lacks any high quality public open space, apart from the hard public realm of the pavements and the central shopping area, and represents a significant opportunity to provide a new public space at the heart of the town
- Bringing new communities to live in the town centre will require consideration against the provision of suitable play space for children and families.
- With some significant health issues identified, public open space could provide some of the solution to encouraging active travel and engagement with a rich landscape setting focused on improving health and wellbeing.
- Birkenhead Park is in close proximity, and provides large scale public open space as well as a fantastic historic asset, and potential attraction in its own right. This should be celebrated by the town centre and provide clear directions for visitors.



Scale



Environment



Surface Water Flooding



Public Transport



Heritage



Views



Roads



Use

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.1 // THE FUTURE HIGH STREET

The retail market has experienced a significant downturn due to both the recession in 2008, and the expansion of online shopping resulting in a rapid decline in sales densities and the loss of major high street retailers. To support their long-term vitality, town centres should adapt by introducing a more diverse range of uses to generate footfall, activity and experiences that can not be gained online. Leisure uses, evening and night-time within dining and socialising activity can also play a crucial role in boosting a sustainable town centre and creating more diverse employment opportunities while enhancing their reputation as attractive visitor destinations. Further to this is the rapid development of a UK based town centre living offer, which brings with it consistent footfall and activity, but also new demands on the town centre and the high street.

Birkenhead is identified within the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's emerging Spatial Development Strategy engagement document as one of two centres in the Inner Urban Area, along with Bootle, with Liverpool being the Regional Centre . It is noted that this will provide the focus for retail, leisure, cultural, tourism, and where appropriate residential development.

As the sub-regional centre for the borough and a key retail and commercial destination, Wirral's retail offer has evolved over the last few decades. Historically, Birkenhead's shopping centre was the borough's premier shopping destination, but with strong competitors within Liverpool, Cheshire Oaks and Chester this is challenged further in an environment where retailers are choosing to locate fewer stores in close geographic locations. This has resulted in the Pyramids in particular being over provided with units that no longer suit market demand, and budget brands dominating the town.

Today, retail units within the Pyramids and wider Grange Road struggle to attract national and regional brand occupiers which is exacerbated by the over provision of traditional retail and the high proportion of charity shops and smaller budget-focused brands. To address this, there is an opportunity to reduce existing duplication and vacancy by introducing more mid-range national brands and expanding dine-in food and beverage options to enhance the appeal of Birkenhead to a broader customer base.

Birkenhead market is a poor reflection of its heritage - suffering the similar decline of the high street, however it still provides a cornerstone for the town centre and a proposed new market and a shift to provide more focus on dining and events creates the opportunity for this landmark to continue its anchor role in the town centre .

The town centre needs to adapt and respond to changing circumstances by rationalising traditional retail floorspace and offering more 'experience-driven' retail, leisure, and food and beverage offerings to support the town centres long-term vitality. By doing so, Birkenhead can be a key component in the wider borough reaching its full potential by acting as a catalyst for future investment in the town centre. Creating new visible activity to major external road arteries is part of the solution to encourage as many users as possible back into the town centre.



Figure 3.3.1.1 - Grange Road Landscape Upgrades



Figure 3.3.1.2 - Lille Road 'The Pop up' retail, London

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.2 // RESIDENTIAL DEMAND

After many years of decline and disappointment, the regeneration of Birkenhead is gaining momentum. Planning Policy and political support are behind the transformation of Birkenhead with a clear focused emerging local plan on brownfield first housing delivery being developed and a sophisticated and deliverable regeneration strategy in place. There is also strong support from public sector funding partners underpinning the viability of proposals.

There are several notable residential schemes happening and more importantly, selling and values that can support viable development. Registered Providers have funding from Homes England and have identified the area as a priority. A variety of private developers and national house builders have all expressed confidence in Birkenhead as a location, particularly if regeneration plans continue to progress.

If the council and its partners can get this right, the town centre will be a lively, attractive place to live, work and spend leisure time in. It will also attract more people from the wider area. To make this strategy a reality, there needs to be significant and sustained public sector investment in infrastructure, land assembly and regeneration to create a platform to catapult the area forward during the next decade.

Birkenhead must be a vibrant centre for living of all types, culture, entertainment, leisure, shopping, business and civic activity. It needs to constantly evolve to remain economically vibrant, and relevant. If local people are proud of their town, they will use it and support its businesses.

There needs to be more people living close to the town centre. These people can drive the renaissance and enhance vitality and viability, supporting a smaller retail core, supplemented by the introduction of a wider range of uses such as food and leisure, accessible and affordable transport, as well as a greater number of office, employment and civic functions.

There needs to be as wide a tenure mix as possible. This will enhance viability and will also broaden market appeal. The housing stock should give particular consideration to Registered Providers and Build to Rent developers who can look at developments over a longer time period of forty years. This enables them to look at schemes in a different way to traditional house builders and can make seemingly unviable schemes deliverable.

There will need to be supporting infrastructure. This involves the creation of an environment of high quality (green spaces and good design) with high quality connections (including ICT, plus public transport and attractive walking and cycling routes through the area. It also needs to be perceived as a safe town centre and one where facilities (including community uses, leisure amenities and shops) are excellent.

Transformational and sustainable regeneration of post-industrial towns has happened elsewhere and has been a success. Lessons have been learnt and best practice has been noted. An improved town centre can support new housing and the population that arrives can provide fresh footfall and a new customer base for town centre businesses. New public realm, cultural attractions and world class green infrastructure will add to the quality of place. Local people will start to view Birkenhead differently and will become a destination that is attractive to new residents and visitors.



Figure 3.3.2.1 - Marmalade Lane Cohousing Development, Mole Architects



Figure 3.3.2.2 - Eco-neighbourhood Vilmorin Massy, MCBAD

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.3 // HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Relocating and establishing new health and wellbeing facilities in the town centre is a key element of the proposed transformation. This initiative addresses local health issues and improves outcomes for the wider borough.

All sections of the local population utilise recreation centres, health facilities, and pharmacies. These venues generate substantial footfall, and their co-location near public transport hubs and local amenities, as well as major population centres on the Wirral, is clearly beneficial.

One aspect of this transformation is creating a 'healthy high street,' fostering an environment that encourages active travel, healthy lifestyle choices, and access to a diverse and healthy range of retail and leisure options.

Providing access to high-quality open spaces and sports facilities aligns with Sport England's guidance. This promotes physical activity and community well-being, thereby enhancing the quality of life in Birkenhead.

Transforming the town to be green and rich in biodiversity is beneficial both for the planet and for residents' wellbeing, bringing elements of the green suburbs into the heart of the town.

The council will increasingly consider restricting through traffic that is not shopping or using Birkenhead town centre facilities. The reallocation of road space to greening initiatives and supporting a modal shift to encourage more walking, cycling and sustainable landscape features will be prioritised to help encourage a greener town centre.

An increased health and wellbeing presence in the town centre would also boost demand for housing for older people and care facilities.



Figure 3.3.3.1 - Lakeside Park Activity Ground, China



Figure 3.3.3.2 - Centre For Movement And Sports, Windesheim



Figure 3.3.3.3 - Woolwich New Leisure Centre



Figure 3.3.3.4 - Woolwich New Leisure Centre

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.4 // EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Birkenhead already provides the largest employment hub on the Wirral, however the disparity between the highest and lowest earners is a key driver to rebalance for the town centre regeneration.

There is a substantial population on the Wirral - bigger than many cities. There are many highly skilled and educated entrepreneurial people. Not all of these want to work in Liverpool, or to commute further afield. More effort should be made to create and sustain new employment on the Wirral. There are many accessible employment areas nearby, but the borough needs to create more jobs and investment to support its own economy, the town centre should perform a critical role in this.

Bringing education into the heart of the proposals to raise aspirations and opportunities for creating higher value jobs is an important connection to be addressed. Educational providers in Wirral Met College, The University of Chester, and Liverpool John Moores University all have presence in the town, but these need to be brought into the heart of the centre.

The visitor economy also needs to be developed. Millions of visitors come to Liverpool every year and only a tiny fraction make Wirral a part of their journey. It is not that long ago, that nobody visited Liverpool. After a concerted effort it has now become one of the major leisure destinations of the UK with the visitor economy supporting hundreds of businesses and thousands of jobs. The town centre can play a role in this attraction for users with a unique town centre destination offer.



Figure 3.3.4.1 - Co-Working Space



Figure 3.3.4.2 - Library and Hub, D'Houndt+Bajart Architects

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.5 // INCLUSIVE GROWTH

It is important that the town centre regeneration brings inclusive growth, aiming to ensure that economic development benefits all segments of society. Key components include community engagement, economic diversification, affordable housing, and infrastructure improvements.

The masterplan area has a multitude of users that will help to achieve this inclusive growth, with emphasis placed on education, skills development, and environmental sustainability.

The masterplan envisions a vibrant, resilient community where residents actively contribute to and benefit from the development, fostering equitable opportunities for all which helps to build a healthy sustainable neighbourhood that benefits all users and residents.

The provision of new services, homes and amenities should be focused on what each can bring to support a wider whole.



Figure 3.3.5.1 - Marmalade Lane, Mole Architects



Figure 3.3.5.2 - Make Hamilton Square



Figure 3.3.5.3 - Learning Landscape, Rosan Bosch Studio

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.6 // SUSTAINABILITY

The planning system strives to achieve sustainable development by delivering economic, social, and environmental benefits together.

To achieve a clean, carbon-neutral, climate-resilient place, the emerging Wirral Local Plan sets out clear strategies for 'delivering growth through sustainable low carbon regeneration'. At both a national and regional level, the importance of this is recognised as playing a crucial role in improving health and well-being outcomes for communities, while also reducing reliance on public sector services.

The town has an enviable public transport network, and plans for a new Mass Transit system to connect the less well connected towns into the heart of Birkenhead will further add to this.

Sitting alongside this are Wirral Council's plans for its own district heating network, this is in the early stages of development, but again could help sustainable development be brought forwards in the town centre.

The town centre is prone to localised surface water flooding, and each new development must address this issue individually. However, the town centre presents a significant opportunity to turn this challenge into an asset through a collective approach. The council will prioritise projects that involve the reallocation of road space to greening initiatives, supporting a modal shift that encourages more walking, cycling and sustainable landscape features.

This can foster a new identity for the town centre as a sustainable and environmentally responsible place to live. By embracing community-led regeneration focused on sustainability, the town can become a desirable place to call home.



Figure 3.3.6.1 - Biodiverse Landscape, New York, SCAPE



Figure 3.3.6.2 - Birkenhead Bus Interchange

3.3 DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION //

3.3.7 // CULTURE AND HERITAGE

There is a wealth of rich cultural and heritage assets in and around Birkenhead, which the masterplan should look to protect and enhance. This should serve as the foundation for crafting a unique, and comprehensive dynamic regeneration for the town centre, informing street alignments, building heights and new connections proposed.

The town is known as a place of firsts; the first civic public park in Birkenhead Park, the first tramline, the first urban gridiron town plan in England, and even the first Scout meeting held by Lord Baden Powell in the former YMCA building now occupied by Primark. The heritage of this 'place of firsts' should be celebrated in the masterplan, and bring with it a rich and diverse culture through this heritage.

A core driver for the regeneration of the town centre is to reconnect historic lost links to Birkenhead Priory, a building that is fundamental to the town and wider Merseyside. The masterplan should ensure strong connections are created to highlight the importance of the town to the wider city region.

The town centre has a range of heritage assets, some of which have listed status which help to forge a character and identity unique to Birkenhead. Not only are these assets physical structures and buildings, but also great public spaces such as Birkenhead Park which provides an amazing amenity and attraction to the town centre.

By integrating these historical assets into the fabric of the masterplan, we not only honour the intricate tapestry of Birkenhead's past but also infuse it with vitality, ensuring that its legacy endures while embracing a fresh and progressive vision for Birkenhead.



Figure 3.3.7.1 - Bank Buildings, Charing Cross



Figure 3.3.7.2 - Birkenhead Park Aerial



Figure 3.3.7.3 - Birkenhead Priory





4

BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL MASTERPLAN //

4.1 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES // MASTERPLAN AREA

Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)

There are a number of development opportunities within the Masterplan Areas and emerging Local Plan policy RA4 identified. Figure 4.1 sets out each potential development parcel which aligns to building ownership / logical combined plot boundaries:

- 1 Price Street surface car park is in the ownership of Wirral Council, and currently provides pay and display parking spaces on an unmade surface. In 2021 the site was approved with Outline Consent to be redeveloped for residential use as part of the Wirral Growth Company Masterplan. The Outline Consent (Plots I and J) allowed up to 19,400m² of Residential C3 Use, with building heights from 2 to 7 storeys. With Conway Park Station adjacent and Dock Branch Park redevelopment proposed to the North, plus existing homes to the west and the town centre to the south, this represents an excellent opportunity to reinforce the residential community and creation of sustainable homes.
- 2 The Vue Cinema to Conway Street / Europa Boulevard is disconnected from the town centre, and acts like an out of town destination, albeit with no supporting restaurants and cafés. As such it performs poorly, and the freehold is owned by Wirral Council. With the consolidation of the retail core, there is an opportunity to redevelop this site for additional housing and as with site 1 capitalise upon its location. The Wirral Growth Company Masterplan gained Outline Consent for (Plot G) Residential, hotel, car parking and plant uses on the site. With a maximum floorspace of 32,695m² and building heights from 4 to 9 storeys. The illustrative Masterplan showed a new MSCP, and apartment buildings being delivered.
- 3 Europa Pools is a council owned and run leisure centre asset with a wet pool facility. Footfall figures indicate this is one of the highest draws within the town centre, however it is an aging facility which is disconnected from the town centre and has potential with its destination use to add to the vibrancy and health and wellbeing identity of the town centre if relocated / re provided elsewhere in the town centre. As part of the Wirral Growth Company Masterplan a new Primary Sub Station was proposed (Plot H), this was a detailed part of the planning application and removed some of the existing car parking spaces. If this site was redeveloped it would offer significant potential to reinforce the residential use around Conway Park Station as a new residential hub.
- 4 Mecca Bingo, and the former Wilko's building was previously an ASDA Supermarket with rooftop parking. Today it is owned by Wirral Council and fronts onto a popular small surface car park to the rear of the Bus Interchange. The site formed part of the Outline Consent for the Wirral Growth Company Masterplan (Plot E), and provided for Hotel, Leisure, Office, Residential, Retail and Plant use. A maximum of 32,300m² of floor space was consented, with building heights from 1 to 9 storeys. With the consolidation of the retail core, the site offers significant potential for residential or office type use, or for the provision of a Hotel within close proximity of workplace and sustainable transport hubs.
- 5 The Hamilton Building to Conway Street is a former council office building and although not listed is a heritage asset. There is potential for redevelopment of the former play ground spaces / council car park to the street and to the rear for alternate use, as well as reconsidering the use of the existing building. The existing building has a strong vertical window grid, and would appear to lend itself to residential conversion if required / subject to detail surveys etc. being undertaken. With the consolidation of the retail core, and the potential for the redevelopment of plot 4 opening views and providing aspect, this changes the value of this site for a more residential focus. Two existing uses adjoin the site, the Wirral Multi Cultural Organisation and Charles Thompson Mission. Both will require consideration within any development proposals, as well as existing homes to the south.
- 6 The mobility shop and site compound to St John Street is part of the Wirral Growth Company Masterplan, and was identified (Plot B) for car parking use. With a maximum floor space of 7500m², and between 3 and 4 storeys building height. With the acquisition of the Pyramids this site offers greater potential use for either residential above active ground floor space or additional workspace.
- 7 The current market building is a large single storey structure. It has limited value outside of its current market use, and as part of the Wirral Growth Company Masterplan it was proposed to be demolished and redeveloped. The Outline Consent (Plot C), allowed for Retail, Office, Leisure and plant use. A maximum floorspace of 28,500m² was permitted, with building heights from 1 to 7 storeys. Given the shifting nature of town centres and the high street, a further opportunity is felt to be to introduce the opportunity for further residential use, to provide more footfall and vitality to the ground floor uses.
- 8 Borough Pavement Precinct is adjoined / considered part of the market and Pyramids Development. It has heavy service access delivery provision for units that today would have light to no direct access provision outside of extended pedestrian delivery corridors. As such these offer significant potential to be considered as part of the wider redevelopment potential of the area. They were excluded from the Wirral Growth Company Masterplan as were Princess and the remaining elements of St John's Pavement, but are considered to hold a critical role and realising the town centres full potential to integrate into the wider context.
- 9 Adelphi Street is today characterised as a rear street to Europa Boulevard. It is used predominately for surface parking, but with either office or educational use - with the college overlooking. As a road it provides a direct route all the way to the Twelve Quays Campus, but today is unattractive and feels antisocial. The Dock Branch Park linear park and cycle corridor is proposed to deliver major transformation as a spine of regeneration in the area, and as such highlights potential to consider future use in this location. Given the workplace and educational nature of the plots (and their respective owners), it is considered that these could offer future potential for expansion of their business use, and add much needed activity to the street.
- 10 The Conway Building is a Grade II Listed asset, originally a school building, and more recently used as the Wirral Education Centre. It represents an under utilised council asset. It has significant presence to the street, and could provide future creative workspace aligned to the immediate context, or conversion for residential / hotel use. The ground floor is relatively inactive due to the nature of the original use with limited access to the street.

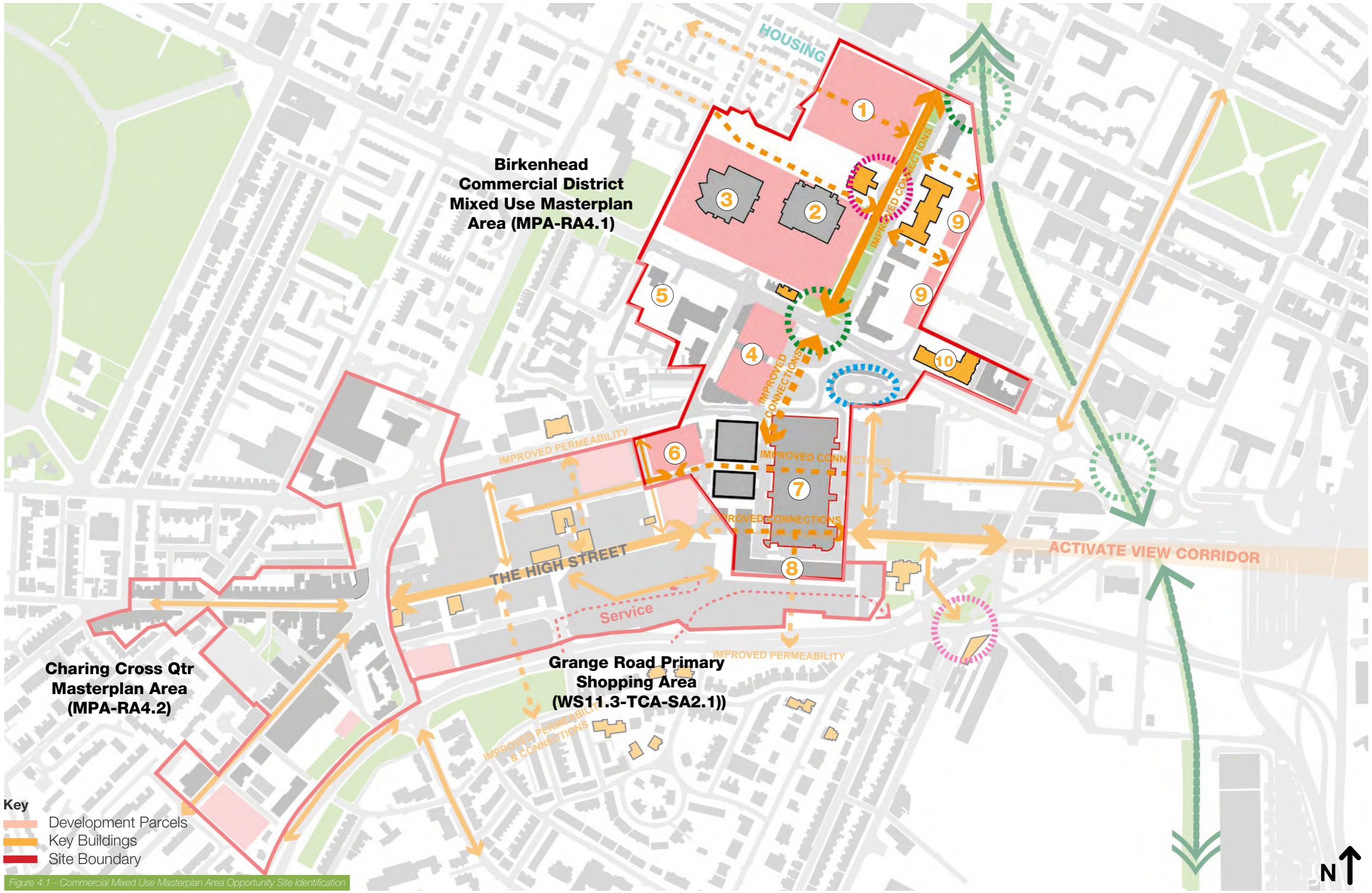


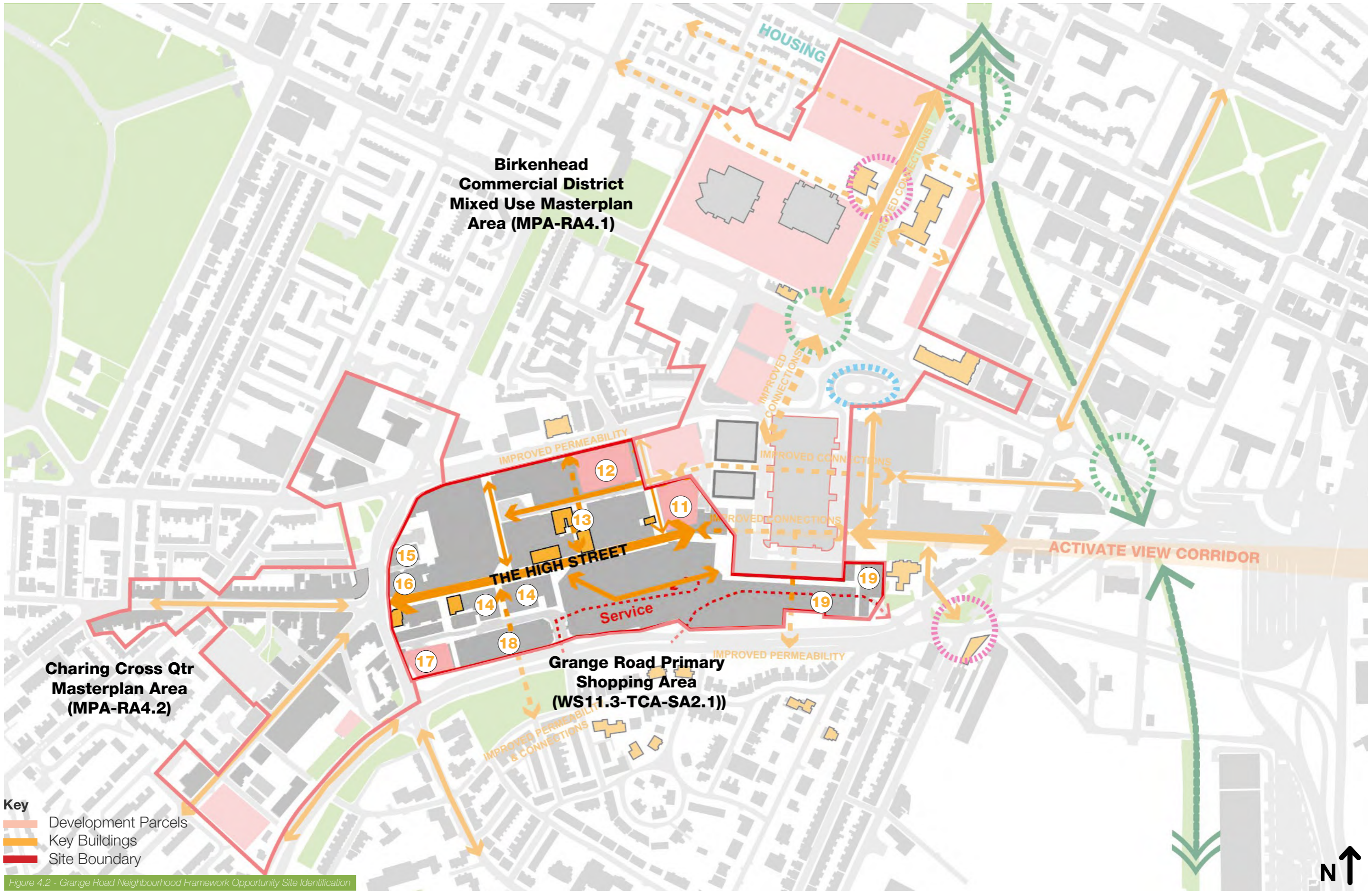
Figure 4.1 - Commercial Mixed Use Masterplan Area Opportunity Site Identification

4.2 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES // NEIGHBOURHOOD FRAMEWORK

Grange Road Primary Shopping Area (WS11.3-TC-SA2.1)

There are a number of development opportunities within the Neighbourhood Development Framework Area and emerging Local Plan policy RA4 identified. Figure 4.2 sets out each potential development parcel which aligns to building ownership / logical combined plot boundaries:

- 11** St John's Pavement is a small cluster of part single / two storey retail units. It forms part of the Pyramids Complex which has recently been acquired by Wirral Council, and with this represents a new opportunity to open up the site and reveal the new office buildings recently completed. As a point in the plan where Grange Road cranks, it is an important retail corner, and as such it would be expected that this will form an important part of the future Birkenhead high street. The opportunity here is for comprehensive redevelopment and to deliver both new retail / leisure provision, but also active uses above ground in the form of residential, office uses.
- 12** The Claughton Road car park is part owned by Wirral Council, and provides a single deck of multi storey car parking serving both the town centre and the ASDA supermarket. It is not considered to be well utilised today, but could with future intensification of the town centre offer potential use / extension for new office, residential users in the town. However, through this report it has been identified that this car park is not strategically in the right place for serving the town centre, and as such could be considered for future redevelopment - subject to retaining car parking for the supermarket. Claughton Road would benefit from additional ground floor active uses, with a focus on residential use to respond to the neighbourhood to the north, whilst Oliver Street will need to retain its service function, and could hold commercial or car parking use.
- 13** Oliver Street and Grange Road are unusually long at around 170m without any breaks for movement north to south. It has been identified that there is potential for a new mews street route to be created that could provide both commercial benefit to the high street, but also create a break to an otherwise long rear service street. This would allow the potential for Oliver Street to become more active and address the anti social nature of the space today.
- 14** Grange Road high street features numerous high-quality heritage buildings that contribute significantly to Birkenhead's unique sense of place. However, there are also several later, lower-quality buildings that present opportunities for redevelopment. In the long term, these could be transformed to include new upper-level residential or creative workspaces. The Masterplan highlights that the Pyramids MSCP is strategically positioned to capture passing traffic but currently obstructs broader movement and visibility into the town from the south. There is potential for a reconfigured MSCP with active uses to address this issue, offering comprehensive development and associated benefits to the town centre.
- 15** Originally Oliver Street ran through to Exmouth Street and the former Yates Wine Lodge anchored the corner of the plot. Today with the introduction of the ASDA supermarket this connection has been lost. This plot now opens in part to the delivery yard entrance area to the supermarket, and opens north westerly to Exmouth Street on a highway falling to the north. There may be long term future potential for consolidation of this plot joining to those that front onto Grange Road removing River Street. However this would require multiple landowners to work together which may well be unrealistic. The plot is impacted by the service yard, and as such may have limited redevelopment opportunities, however there may be potential for an increase in scale away from Charing Cross that would allow distant views to the Liverpool Skyline offering the potential for upper level residential uses to be proposed.
- 16** The current McDonald's site and some adjacent 1950s buildings present a long-term redevelopment opportunity to introduce upper-level active uses, such as residential or creative workspaces, to the street. The Masterplan highlights the need to protect a potential view corridor from Oxton Road to the Liverpool skyline. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of respecting the heritage character of Charing Cross and the context of the nearby Listed Building.
- 17** The Farnfoods store sits on a key corner site in the masterplan. It is the key arrival space along Borough Road with views funnelled down the street to the cross road with Whetstone Lane running north to south, and the junction being a low point in the valley. The supermarket today provides no active frontages to the street, and allows exposed views to the rear of shops fronting Grange Road. It is considered there is potential on this site for delivery of an active ground floor use - which could be a re provision of the supermarket, with active uses above in the form of residential or hotel use. The site offers potential for an increase in scale, and a landmark nature of architecture to express the arrival space in the town.
- 18** The Pyramids MSCP is within the ownership of Wirral Council, and represents a strategically important location to pick up passing traffic. Today however there is little to highlight the quality of offer or experience the town centre offers, and as such relies on previous knowledge. The Masterplan has identified a long term opportunity to redevelop this site, and re provide the MSCP use, but with an opening of views into the town centre and revealing of the offer. This would also allow the potential to improve connection to Clifton Park to the south, which is considered to hold the potential for a high quality residential neighbourhood on its doorstep which today through highways and flyovers feels disconnected. Alongside any redevelopment, active uses would be encouraged with residential and some leisure use opening to the street to provide engaging and exciting street-scape encouraging passers-by to stop.
- 19** The Pyramids is now owned by Wirral Council, and with this the large blank frontages, uninviting sets of steps and ramps, can be transformed to create an active and engaging experience, encouraging new and old users back to the town. There is a semi basement delivery route that is hidden within this outlook today. It is considered this is a positive attribute that allows hidden servicing, but that today it not well utilised, and has potential to improve / remove the impact of the church adjacent.



- Key**
- Development Parcels
 - Key Buildings
 - Site Boundary

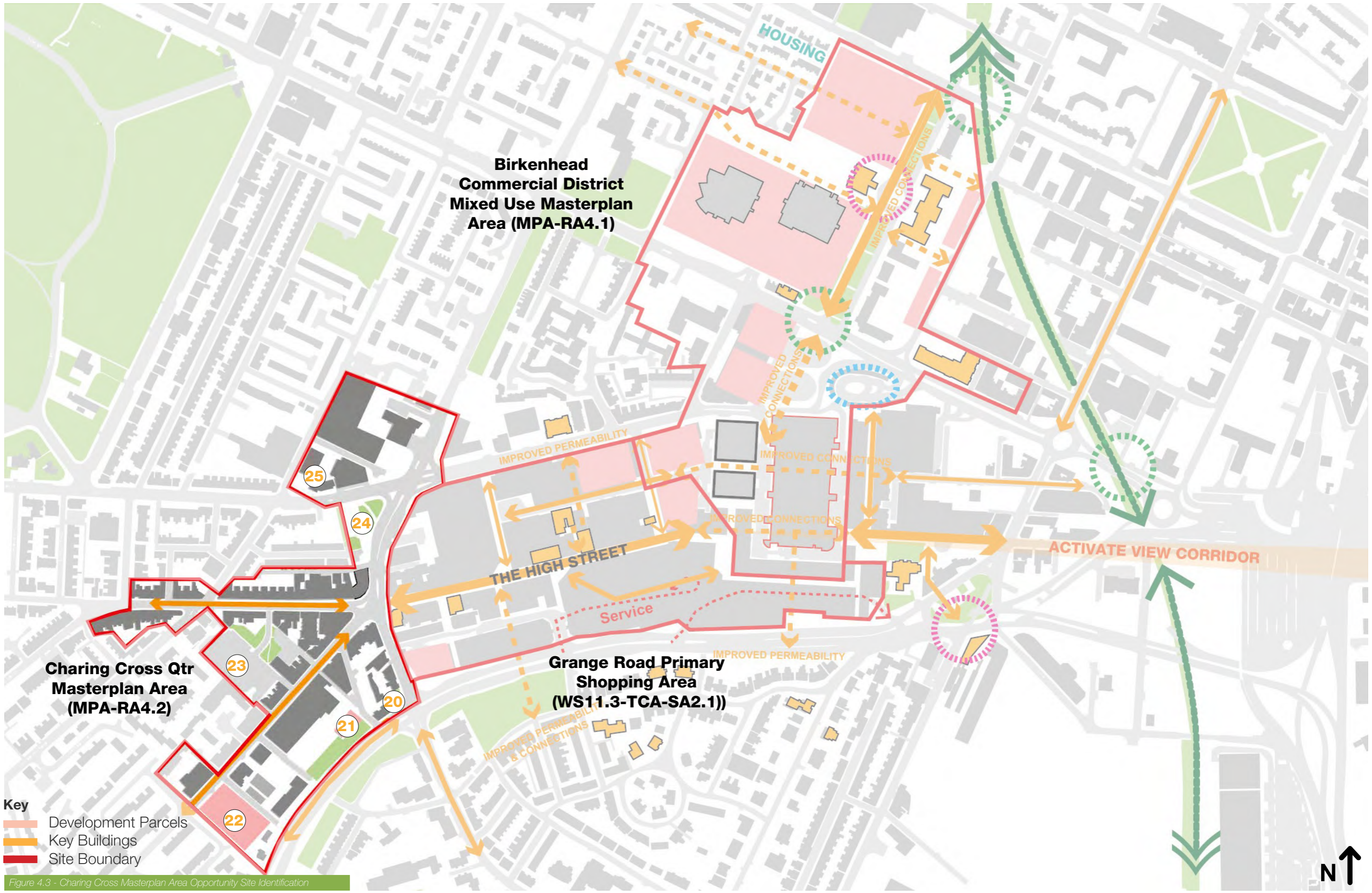
Figure 4.2 - Grange Road Neighbourhood Framework Opportunity Site Identification

4.3 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES // MASTERPLAN AREA

Charing Cross Quarter (MPA-RA4.2)

There are a number of development opportunities within the Neighbourhood Development Framework Area and emerging Local Plan policy RA4 identified. Figure 4.3 sets out each potential development parcel which aligns to building ownership / logical combined plot boundaries:

- 20** This location is a key arrival space into the town centre with views funnelled naturally to this cross road junction. Historically photographs show the corner plot was developed, but has stood vacant for at least over 20 years. The small run of terraces that remain and front Borough Road are part of the historic development, and as such could be considered important to be retained to link to the historic past of the road and site. However there may be potential to consider comprehensive redevelopment of this frontage and reinstatement of the corner edge to the Borough Road and Whetstone Lane junction. In this situation it would be expected that there would be increased potential for scale, and the introduction of new homes or business space.
- 21** Borough Road has a strong green buffer to this section which is provided by a mature copse of trees. This provides an attractive green setting as you arrive into the town, but also serves to screen in the summer months the backs of shops fronting Oxton Road. Historically Borough Road was lined with houses fronting the street, and there is potential in this location to consider redevelopment of the surface car park to provide new homes which front onto this green space, and add activity to the street. The treatment of the existing trees to be managed in line with Wirral Councils Tree and Hedgerow Strategy.
- 22** This site was cleared in around 2010 after sustained use since earliest town mapping for industry, and has stood empty since. It has had recent use as a practice area for Marriott Motor Cycles on Oxton Road opposite, however is a clear opportunity for residential redevelopment, and for providing new homes with active frontages to the edges with own front doors, and possible small scale independent retail or workspace to Oxton Road. The site is elevated from Borough Road, but has good visibility and offers potential over looking benefits to the street and perception of coming arrival into the town centre.
- 23** The Barton Street surface car park is owned by Wirral Council, and a recent parking strategy report highlights a peak utilisation of 43% of the total 197 spaces. The car park is hidden behind buildings to Oxton Road and Grange Road West, with entrances unclear and little passive surveillance making the car park feel vulnerable to antisocial use. The car park is used by the Little Theatre which has a capacity of 150 and is a strong community asset with uses likely out of hours. It was formerly two streets of terraced housing, and could offer potential to be re provided in the future subject to demand, and a parking strategy being provided to serve the business and Little Theatre.
- 24** The Atherton Street surface car park is a council owned pay and display car park. It provides 21 spaces and shows a 92% utilisation at peak times. Its visibility from Exmouth Street, and proximity to the town centre Grange Road high street, and the Hive - Wirral Youth Zone facility opposite provide good footfall. Historically Atherton Street was the more dominant street, with Exmouth Street being secondary. Today Exmouth Street provides A road connections, and Atherton Street has been lost to all but a car park. There is the potential to deliver a small number of homes in place of the surface car park, and front onto the junction / small triangular area of open green space if this car park was determined to no longer be required. The benefit of bringing this site forwards for redevelopment, would be to encourage a stronger street scene leading towards Birkenhead Park which today feels disconnected from the town centre, albeit just a short walk away.
- 25** The Wirral Methodists Charing Cross Youth Centre is owned by Wirral Council, and with the opening of the Hive to the rear is now no longer in use. As such this offers an opportunity to open the view to the main entrance to the Hive which is mid way down Bright Street, and also redevelop the frontage to Bentick Street and deliver active ground floor frontages with residential uses and own front doors addressing a poor corner location today and the next plot visible on the journey to Birkenhead Park. With the width of the plot, it would be anticipated that this would provide an apartment development potential.



Key
Development Parcels
Key Buildings
Site Boundary

Figure 4.3 - Charing Cross Masterplan Area Opportunity Site Identification

4.4 THE BIG PICTURE //

This report is bringing together 3 parts of the town centre in order to create a Framework and Masterplan for cohesive and comprehensive development to be brought forwards. The core principles have been set-out in both the Vision, Objectives and Key Urban Design Principles highlighted earlier. The plan opposite is an illustration of these principles, it is not requiring development to come forwards, but looking to highlight the potential offered in the town centre:

- Promote a permeable and connected town centre
- Highlight key arrival spaces into the town with strong frontages and active ground floor uses.
- Consolidate the retail core, and create opportunities to connect to the surrounding neighbourhoods to create stronger use, and remove unwanted overlap / competition with the town centre offer.
- Improve views of Priory Spire from Grange Road, through to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral from the High Street and Hamilton Square down Argyle Street to strengthen way finding and sense of place.
- Create a new green identity to Borough Road, one that expresses health and wellbeing, opening up views into the town centre, and creating an offer that encourages new people to use the amenities.
- Design a public realm featuring a network of routes and squares that offer various uses, play areas, and spaces for relaxation. This will create an enjoyable and functional landscape that complements the surrounding buildings.
- Create a distinct residential led district to the north of Conway Street providing family housing and apartments focused around the Conway Park underground railway station
- Enhance the diversity of uses within the town centre by introducing new places to live, work, and play. This will help create a thriving, round-the-clock town centre that complements and improves the existing building stock as well as the town centre's reputation.
- Consolidate and piece back together Charing Cross with meaningful infill residential led development and enhancement of the existing area
- Optimise and rationalise parking locations to enhance the overall efficiency of accessing the town centre by vehicle and provide valuable development land for other appropriate uses
- Design and incorporate user-friendly cycleways and pedestrian focussed footways into the town centre's landscape to enhance green public transport links, fully integrating them into the existing network around the town centre
- Sustainable landscape design should incorporate SuDS in all elements of the design across the town centre.



4.5 THE MASTERPLAN //

The Masterplan figure ground plan presented here in figure 4.5.2 is an illustration of the design principles brought together from the vision, objectives, constraints, opportunities and challenges identified. It is intended as a framework and not prescriptive plan to be implemented. The following sections will illustrate and set out the design drivers that future development will be assessed against captured within this to ensure that the area maintains its vision and ethos, but is flexible and adaptable to change.

The Masterplan area's will have associated Design Parameters set out for individual plots, and the Neighbourhood Framework will set out principals to be developed and considered with any future proposals.

The pages that follow describe the strategies that form the masterplan and describe how the masterplan is designed and how it functions.



This could help to deliver:
c.1685 homes across the 3 Masterplan Area's.

2 new hotels

1 New Leisure Hub

1 New Health and Wellbeing Hub

Consolidated Retail space - with new active ground floor town centre uses including Retail, Workspace, F&B, Leisure and Health & Wellbeing.

3 multi-storey car parks, with the future potential for one replacement MSCP supporting a centralised parking solution and improved permeability

Birkenhead Mixed Use // c.985
Grange Road Primary Shopping // c.450
Charing Cross Quarter // c.250

A small provision of surface parking to key strategic routes

Enhanced public realm

New External Event Space

Improved **Cycleways** and enhanced **connections to public transport and the town centre**

Figure 4.5.1 - Aerial View - Looking North East



Figure 4.5.2 - Illustrative Masterplan

4.6 APPROACH TO STREET CHARACTER + IDENTITY//

The street hierarchy proposed should be in-line with the approach set out within the National Model Design Code for Town Centres and the emerging Birkenhead Design Guide - yet to be published for consultation.

The variety in streets and spaces planned is core to the integration into the Birkenhead Grid Iron and surrounding streets, formation of clear hierarchy, legible user orientation and memorable welcoming and engaging spaces.

Primary Streets

These streets are intended to have a clear legibility of being important through scale and use. They have a clear relationship to the core of the Grid Iron Birkenhead plan and the roads meeting this and responding to the natural topography. Grange Road is a key pedestrian Primary Road for the high street, the masterplan proposes to reinstate a lost connection from east to west - connecting from Charing Cross to Birkenhead Priory, whilst also drawing in positive activity from the surrounding primary roads in Borough Road, Whetstone Lane / Exmouth Street, Conway Street and Argyle Street.

A new primary spine is proposed north to south, to connect the existing Europa Boulevard and beyond to Wirral Waters via the Dock Branch Park.

With strengthened east / west and north / south connections into the heart of the town centre, this will drive new footfall and vitality.

Secondary Streets

These streets play a more functional role, still having importance in the general movement around the area, but also as a way of distinguishing vehicle movement corridors. As with the Primary Streets existing heritage features and skyline views have shaped their locations and the supporting active frontages illustrated on the following page. New secondary streets are proposed to breakdown the inward facing town centre, and promote historic connections into the surrounding streets and neighbourhoods.

Tertiary Streets

These streets are intended to be focused on pedestrian and light vehicle movement, more domestic in their quality to allow small scale workspace and ground floor residential uses to inform the character of the streets. As with the secondary routes they offer potential to break down the barrier established during the 1970's retail planning and create a new permeable town centre experience.

Key

- █ Primary Routes
- █ Secondary Routes
- █ Tertiary Routes

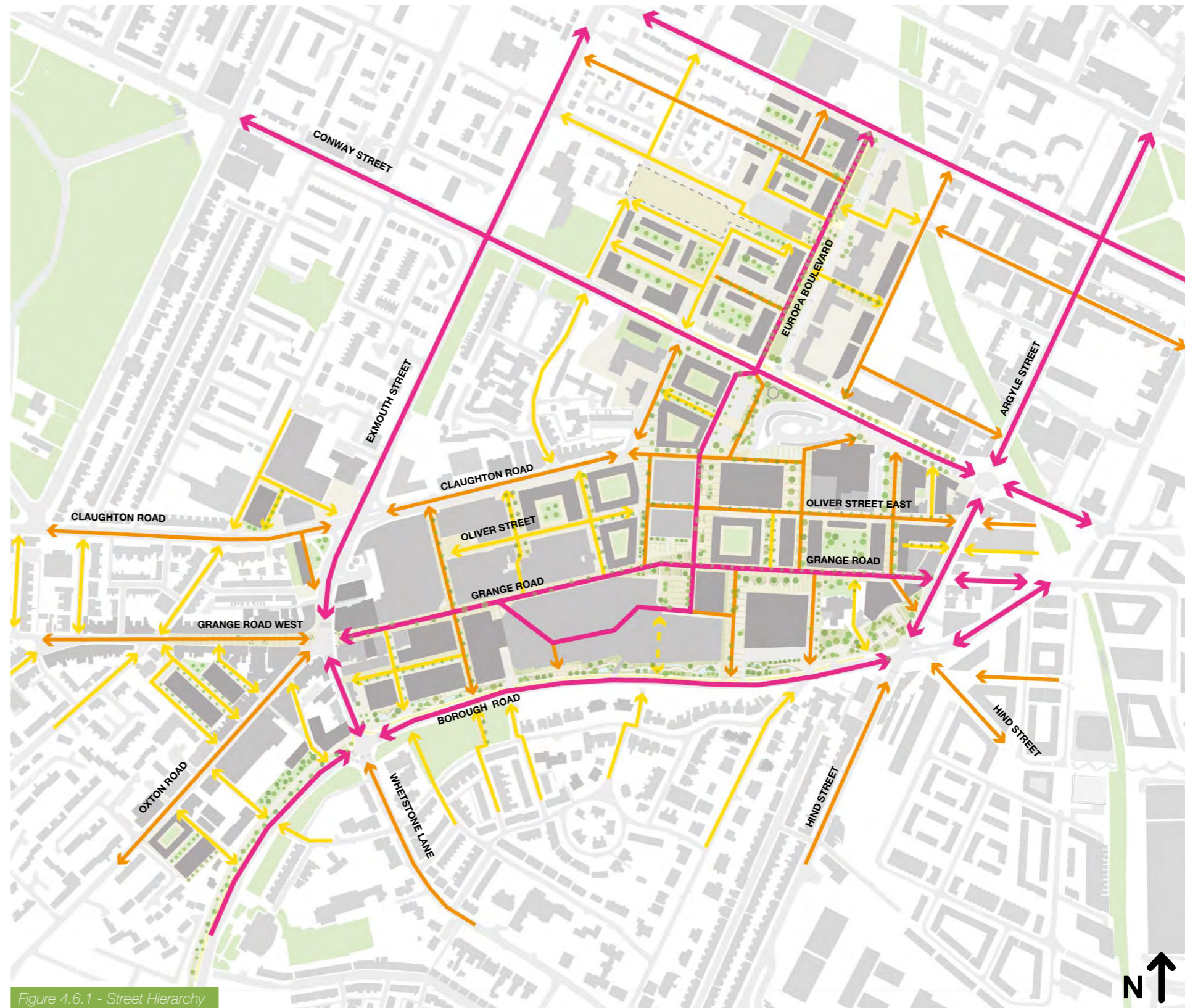


Figure 4.6.1 - Street Hierarchy

4.7 ACTIVE FRONTAGES //

The existing town centre is one that is inward looking, and impermeable. The adjacent areas feel disconnected and in-cohesive. Active frontages in general are hidden from the surrounding primary feeder streets, and focused on opening to the pedestrianised internal retail precinct.

The masterplan is promoting a new outward facing town centre, with new permeability, cohesion to adjacent areas, active frontages promoting clear hierarchy of routes and spaces supporting connecting and bringing in new and past users into the town.

The solid magenta lines in the image opposite represent where active frontages are existing or proposed with a commercial focused aspect; with possible uses including; Retail, Leisure, Restaurants, Café's and Bars, workspace or centralised residential amenity spaces with an outward facing nature to the street, and other community spaces. The extent of use should be in accordance with the consolidated retail core, and policy WS 11.3 on uses outside of this boundary. Use should be focused on driving footfall to the heart of the town centre, and not competing with the centre as a destination and an attraction.

The dotted magenta lines are proposed to be new openings introduced to existing buildings for commercial use as noted above in order to add further animation to the streets.

The solid blue lines represent where ground floor residential use should be considered as a primary use. With the intention to provide engaging streets through clear passive surveillance delivered by overlooking windows, front doors opening to the street, and distinction from retail focused town centre uses. Where ground floor residential use is proposed this should be considered against creating high quality homes that feel both safe and welcoming, whilst offering some element of defensible landscaped space.

It is important that where active frontages are proposed ancillary plant, bin stores and the like are minimised or located to non active frontages. This should align with the street hierarchy and access / delivery strategy.

Key

- Active Commercial Frontages
- Active Residential Frontages
- Active Streets

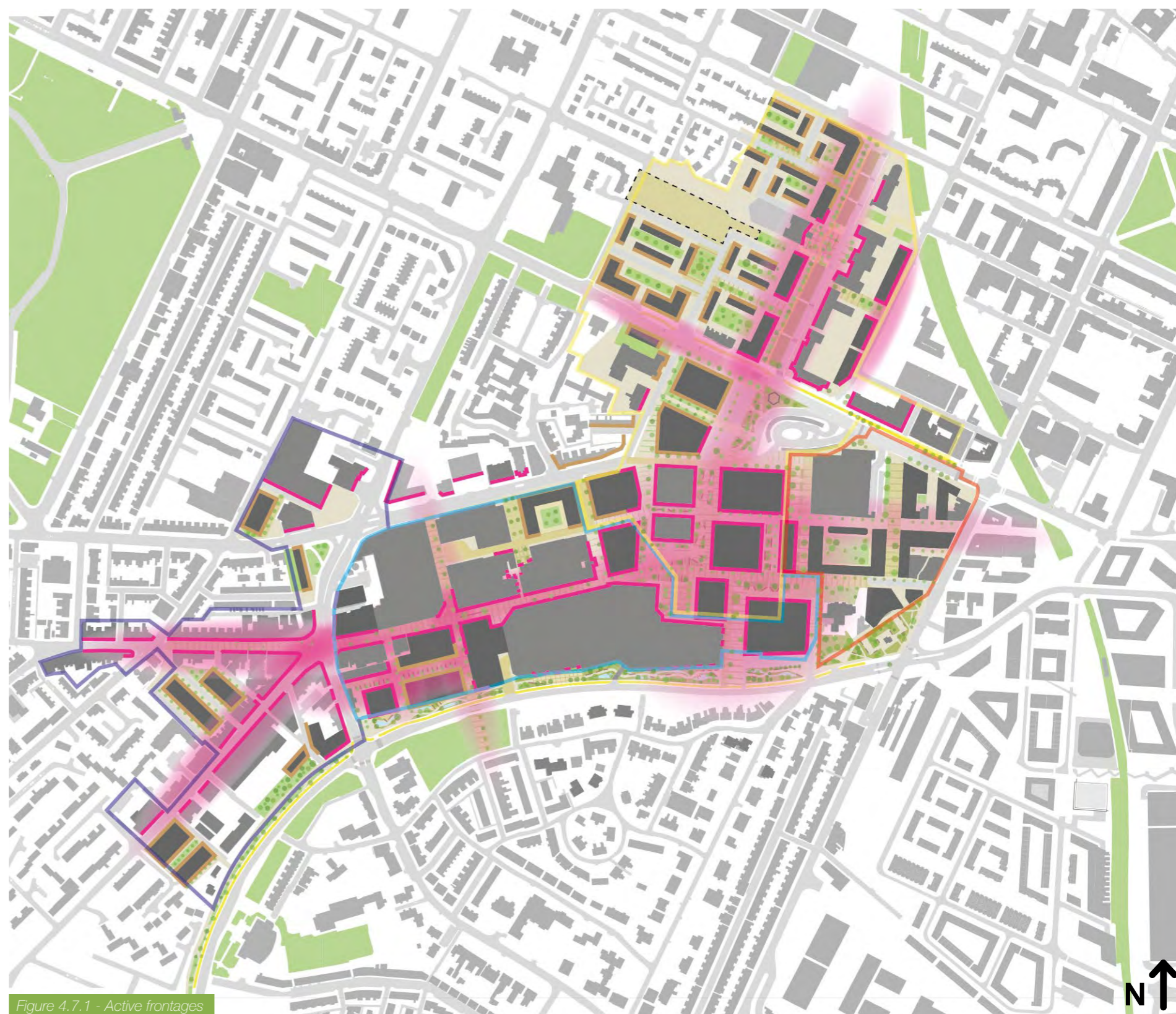


Figure 4.7.1 - Active frontages

4.8 SPACES + INTERFACES //

There are a series of key spaces within the proposed Masterplans as described in Figure 4.8.1. Each key space provides a unique role to suit their location, context and aspect. They are focused around key arrival spaces, and node points in the urban grid, and are underpinned by 3 core experiences;

- Grange Road; the High Street (Orange arrow),
- Borough Road; a new linear SuDS park (Blue Arrow), and
- Europa Boulevard; an extended green spine connecting the retail heart to business and the docks (Green Arrow).

Each space is intended to provide a unique experience and function in the Masterplan:

St Johns Square

This existing space has been enlarged and now acts at the hinge point along Grange Road to change direction linking east to the Priory, and west to Charing Cross and Oxtou. This also picks up the eastern exit to the Pyramids Mall, and interfaces with the Europa Boulevard spine, and the new council office buildings providing new commercial footfall and civic function. It is intended to be a key civic space along the high street, and one that is focused on events and gatherings, representing a unique green identity for the town centre promoting health and well-being of visitors and residents.

Charing Cross

This is a historic space, with heritage buildings and an elevated position on the ridge line of a hill. Distant views to the Liverpool skyline, and to Liverpool Waters are possible from this space offering a unique point of context for Birkenhead. It marks the end of the Grange Road high street, and a point of change. It is both the Gateway to the high street, but also into Grange Road West; a unique and vibrant independent retail, restaurant and cultural hub. Unique heritage architecture marks this space, and offers the potential to become one the key arrival spaces to the town centre, re-establishing a former role in the town centre.

St Werburgh's Square

This extended historic square, linked to the historic St Werburgh's Church, should foster a slower pace, providing areas for pausing and relaxing, with a family-friendly ambiance and a strong sense of community. It is also intended for this space to connect with the potential new leisure offerings, supporting the development of a vibrant night-time economy.

Claughton Place

This is an arrival space into the town from the bus and the north, it is a space focused on convenience and service retail and leisure. Europa Square car park is intended to be retained to offer continued convenience

car parking for the town centre picking up trade arriving from Conway Street and Claughton Road. It is intended that this feels more engaging and open to the public, with improved permeability to Conway Park train station, and views into the town centre streets beyond.

Conway Plaza

This is a space that is focused around the train station to the north of the town centre. Today it opens to Europa Boulevard and a roundabout. It is intended that one side of the avenue is changed to pedestrian footpath and cycleways, whilst the opposite carriageway adjacent to the College and other commercial buildings is changed to allow two way traffic. This allows the space to the entrance of the station to be transformed into a new public space, be contained by new homes and some small retail / cafe type offers to the ground floor, and help shape and direct users to the town centre and towards the proposed dock branch park. The relationship to the college and other commercial buildings is an important one, and this space will need to create both a residential feel, but also retain a civic function.

Grange Vale

The junction of Borough Road and Whetstone Lane is today a highways junction and does little to announce the town centre. It is a unique place in the Birkenhead topography / landscape. It is a place in the valley, down from Charing Cross and Tranmere Hills and Clifton Park. Views to the Liverpool Skyline are possible providing this space unique attributes to be capitalised upon. The intention is that this space should be one that clearly indicates a sense of arrival. Public Art, landmark buildings and a landscape setting that is both civic, but also green and engaging with cycleways and public transport highly visible and enhanced pedestrian crossings connecting the town centre with the communities to the south.

Central Square

This is a space that is contained within the St Werburgh's Masterplan area, but an important one to acknowledge within this strategy. It is a space that connects Birkenhead Central Station and the new Hind Street development to the town centre. It is facilitated by the demolition of the high level flyovers and the reconfiguring of the ground level highways to allow improved pedestrian connections into the town centre and a space that is the low point to the Borough Road former tributary and a major new SuDS sponge park bringing with it enhanced biodiversity and visual greening for the town centre in a south facing shelter space.

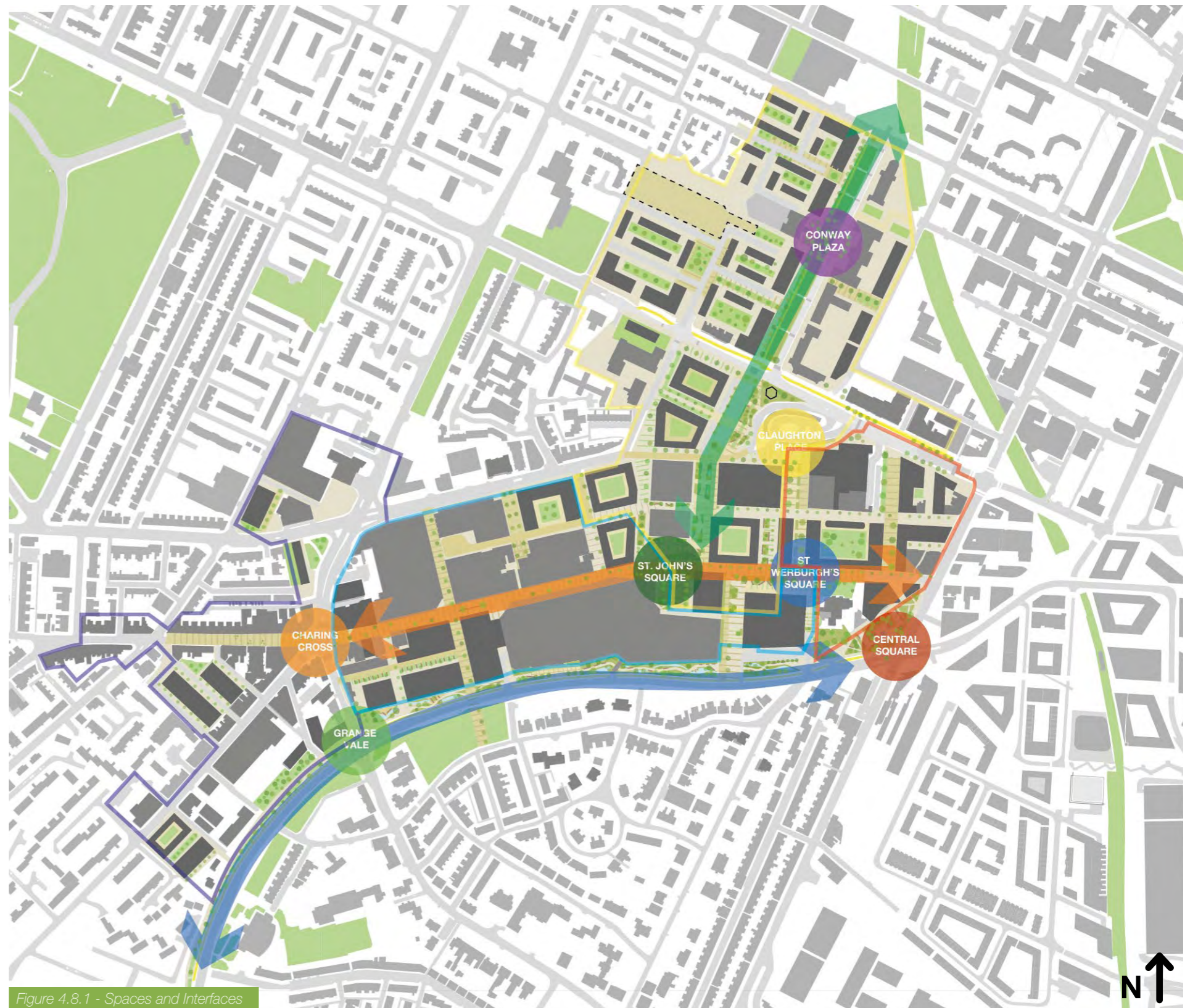


Figure 4.8.1 - Spaces and Interfaces

4.9 LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN //

The Landscape Masterplan should deliver the spaces & interfaces, urban design principles, and create a landscape environment that is unique to the town centre context and each of the spaces unique strengths and opportunities.

The landscape is integral to the creation of a welcoming, functional public realm that supports the objectives of a sustainable town centre.

In order for the town centre to become a place of choice to live, work, and play, its outdoor environment should:

- Create spaces for street dining and families and support an inclusive night time economy.
- Create new spaces that are flexible for pop-up events use in the town, creating an identity that is flexible and appealing encouraging repeat visits.
- Be supportive of the existing businesses in the town centre and bring in additional trade through functional understanding of visitor flow and spaces to dwell.
- Include a network of streets and spaces that are connected to the wider neighbourhoods surrounding and draw new users into the heart of the town.
- Express the importance of health and well-being and the green peninsula identity of the Wirral.
- Create a new Sustainable Urban Drainage strategy that addresses wider surface water flooding issues that adds new biodiversity habitats, creating new places to engage with nature.
- Subtly integrate servicing and delivery requirements into a pedestrian priority landscape.
- Create streets that allow for residential use in a town centre context.
- Frame views to the wider context and Liverpool Skyline to capitalise on Birkenhead's unique sense of place.

The landscape Masterplan is illustrative to provide an indication of the importance of public realm and the sense of connection that must be achieved in order to promote strong movement within the redline area and inwards to the Town Centre. The plans includes elements of the previous consultation exercises undertaken on Grange Road, Charing Cross and Conway Street.



Figure 4.9.1 - Illustrative Landscape Masterplan



4.10 PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE MOVEMENT //

The town centre should be a pedestrian and cycle friendly experience, opening new connections to the wider neighbourhoods and drawing new views and people in. These should create compelling reasons for people to want to stop and engage with the town centre and encourage spaces for people to dwell.

Enhanced permeability is at the heart of the Masterplan proposals, with new streets, crossing points to primary barriers of Conway Street and Borough Road, and improved activation to streets to aid the feeling of being welcoming and engaging.

Creating an experience that is logical and navigable is also a key requirement of the regeneration, improving way finding, improving the feeling of safety, and enhancing visual connections. Making use of wider views, local landmarks and heritage assets will also enhance the creation of a unique visitor experience.

Borough Road and Conway Street are proposed to have improved cycling facilities linking key public transport nodes, employment and leisure experience. Within the town the use of shared public space should be promoted to encourage slower cycling or last mile transport solutions. These enhanced cycleways also connect into wider cycleways such as the LCWIP to the north connecting Birkenhead to Liscard.

Alongside improved connections to key public transport nodes connection to Birkenhead Park and other cultural / leisure attractions such as the planned Dock Branch Park, Hamilton Square, Birkenhead Priory and the waterfront should be encouraged through quality of landscape and wayfinding.

The council will increasingly consider restricting through traffic that is not shopping or using Birkenhead town centre facilities. The reallocation of road space to greening initiatives and supporting a modal shift to encourage more walking and cycling will be prioritised.

KEY			
	Primary Route		Periphery Routes
	Cycle Route		Transport Link
	Waterfront path		Arrival Point
	Secondary Routes		Existing Landmarks/ Focal Points
	Tertiary Routes		Proposed Landmarks/ Focal Points
	Waterfront		

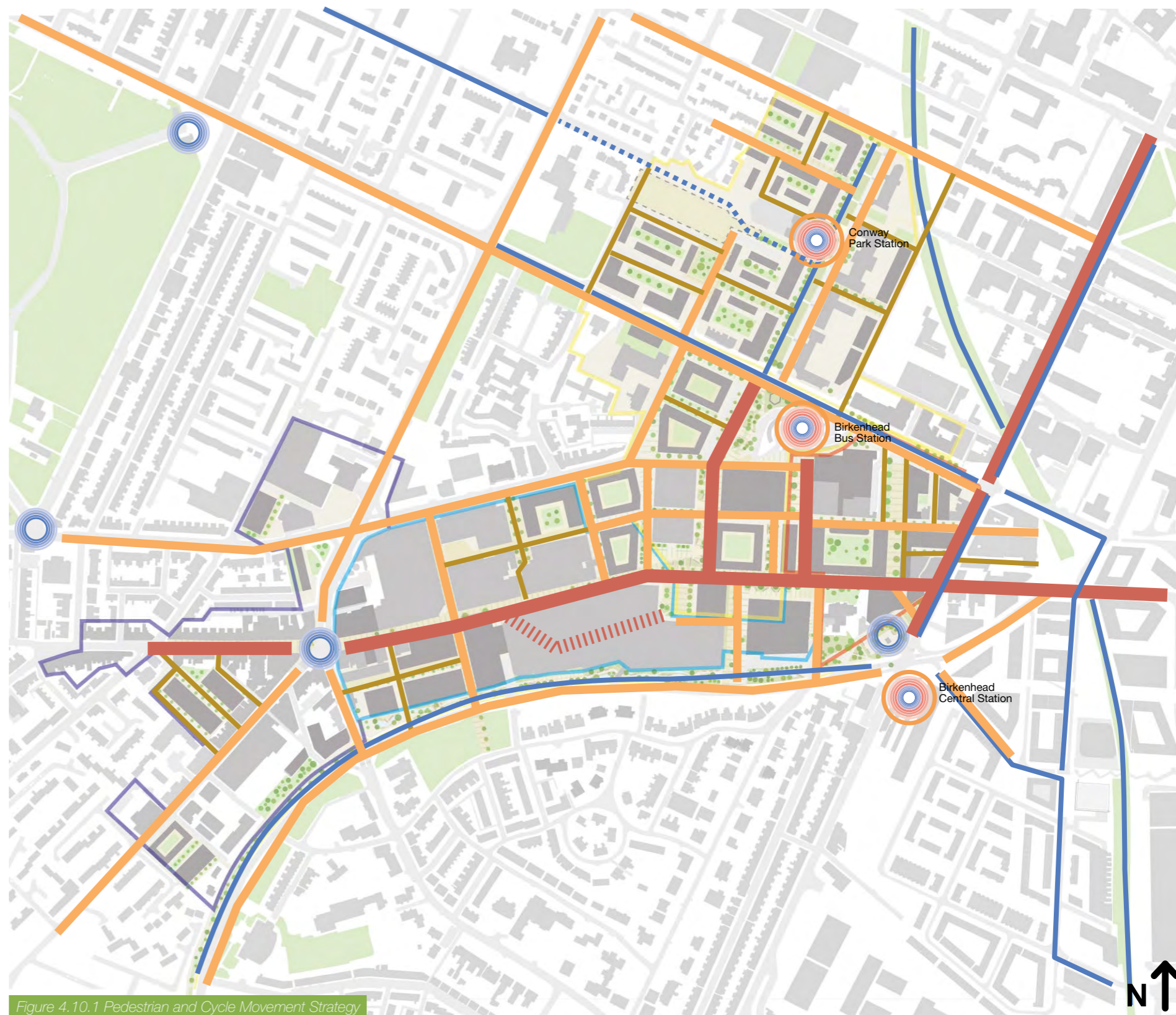


Figure 4.10.1 Pedestrian and Cycle Movement Strategy

4.9 ACTIVE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL //

Sport England Active Design

Development and design of the combined masterplan has been developed to align with the principles set out in the Sport England Active Design Guidance fulfilling the 10 Principles of Active Design.

These all assist in 'supporting active travel', providing 'active, high quality places and spaces' and 'creating and maintaining activity'.

By applying Active Design's 10 principles to the built and natural environments, active environments that encourage people to be active through their daily everyday lives can be created, helping to provide activity for all across Birkenhead Central. This includes;

- Activity for all
- Walkable communities
- Providing connected active travel routes
- Mixing uses and co-locating facilities
- Network of multi-functional open spaces
- High quality streets and spaces
- Providing activity infrastructure
- Active buildings, inside and out
- Maintaining high quality flexible spaces
- Activating spaces

The design of the landscape and public open space is a key principle of the masterplan and will provide the glue to enable the principles of Sport England Active Design to be initiated. This is described further in Section 5.5.

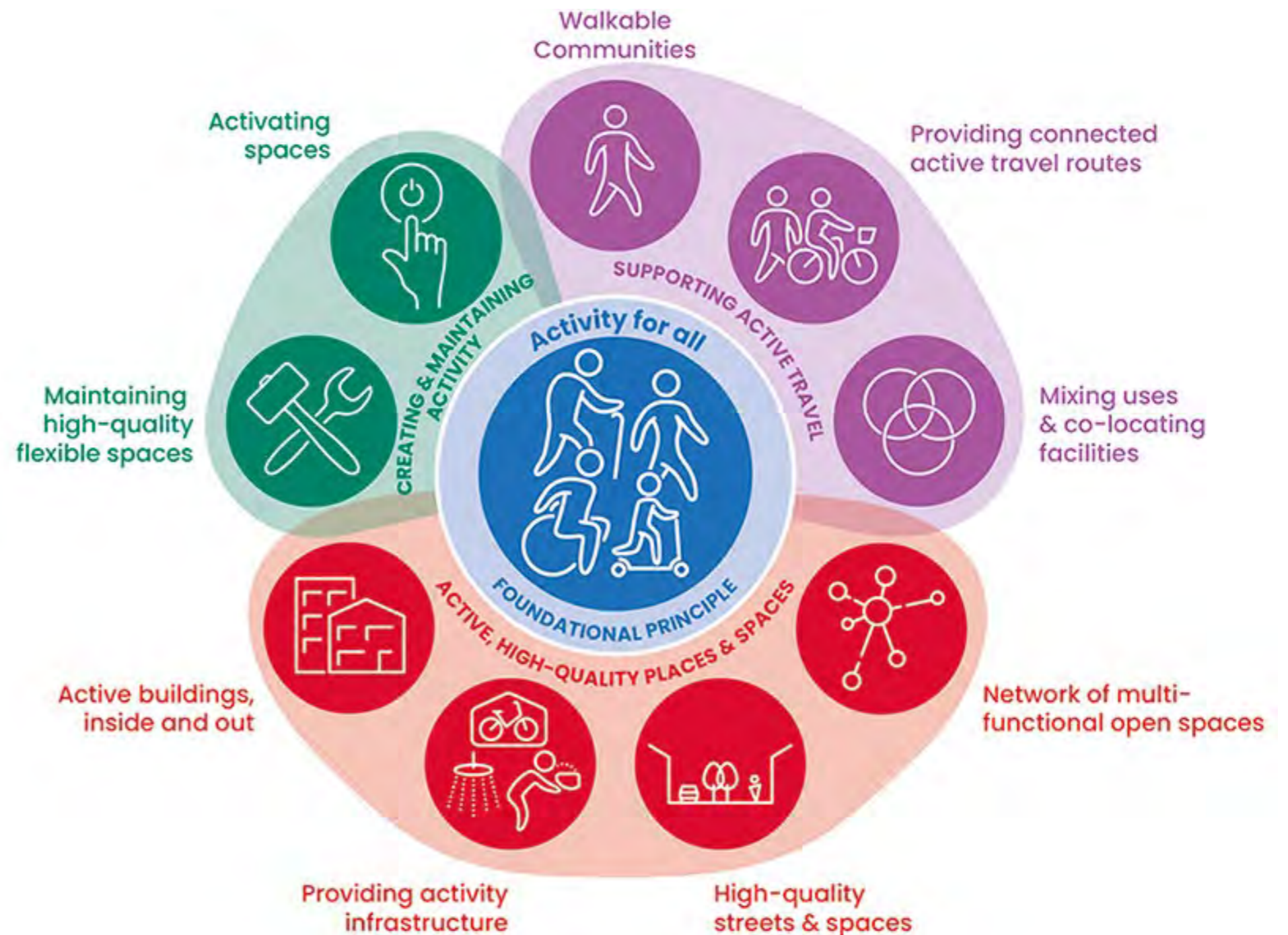


Figure 4.9.1- Active Design Guide, Sport England

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVE DESIGN

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE



Principle 1 – Activity for all

All environments should support physical activity equitably across all ages, ethnicities, genders, and abilities, enabling everyone to be active and build long-term active habits and behaviours. This is essential for the delivery of all the principles of Active Design and is its foundational principle.

SUPPORTING ACTIVE TRAVEL



Principle 2 – Walkable communities

Facilities for daily essentials and recreation should be within easy reach of each other by active travel means, making it more likely that people will make the journey by using active travel modes (defined in Theme 1). Good active travel connections should be provided to extend the range of services that are accessible while remaining physically active.



Principle 3 – Providing connected active travel routes

Encourage active travel for all ages and abilities by creating a continuous network of routes connecting places safely and directly. Networks should be easy to use, supported by signage and landmarks to help people find their way.



Principle 4 – Mixing uses and co-locating facilities

People are more likely to combine trips and use active travel to get to destinations with multiple reasons to visit. Places with more variety, higher densities, and a mix of uses also reduce the perception of distance when travelling through spaces. They also generate the critical mass of travel demand to better support public transport services.

ACTIVE HIGH-QUALITY PLACES AND SPACES



Principle 5 – Network of multi-functional open spaces

Accessible and high quality open space should be promoted across cities, towns and villages to provide opportunities for sport and physical activity, as well as active travel connections and natural or civic space for people to congregate in and enjoy.



Principle 6 – High-quality streets and spaces

Streets and outdoor public spaces should be Active Environments in their own right. They should be safe, attractive, functional, prioritise people and able to host a mix of uses, with durable, high quality materials, street furniture in the right places and easy-to-use signage. High quality streets and spaces encourage activity, whereas poor quality streets and spaces are much less likely to be used to the same degree.



Principle 7 – Providing activity infrastructure

Infrastructure to enable sport, recreation and physical activity to take place should be provided across all contexts including workplaces, sports facilities and public space, to facilitate activity for all.



Principle 8 – Active buildings, inside and out

Buildings we occupy shape our everyday lives, both when users are inside and outside. Buildings should be designed with providing opportunities for physical activity at the forefront, considering the arrival experience, internal circulation, opportunities to get up and move about, and making the building an active destination.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING ACTIVITY



Principle 9 – Maintaining high-quality flexible spaces

Spaces and facilities should be effectively maintained and managed to support physical activity. These places should be monitored to understand how they are used, and flexible so that they can be adapted as needed.



Principle 10 – Activating spaces

The provision of spaces and facilities which can help to improve physical activity should be supported by a commitment to activate them, encouraging people to be more physically active and increasing the awareness of activity opportunities within a community.

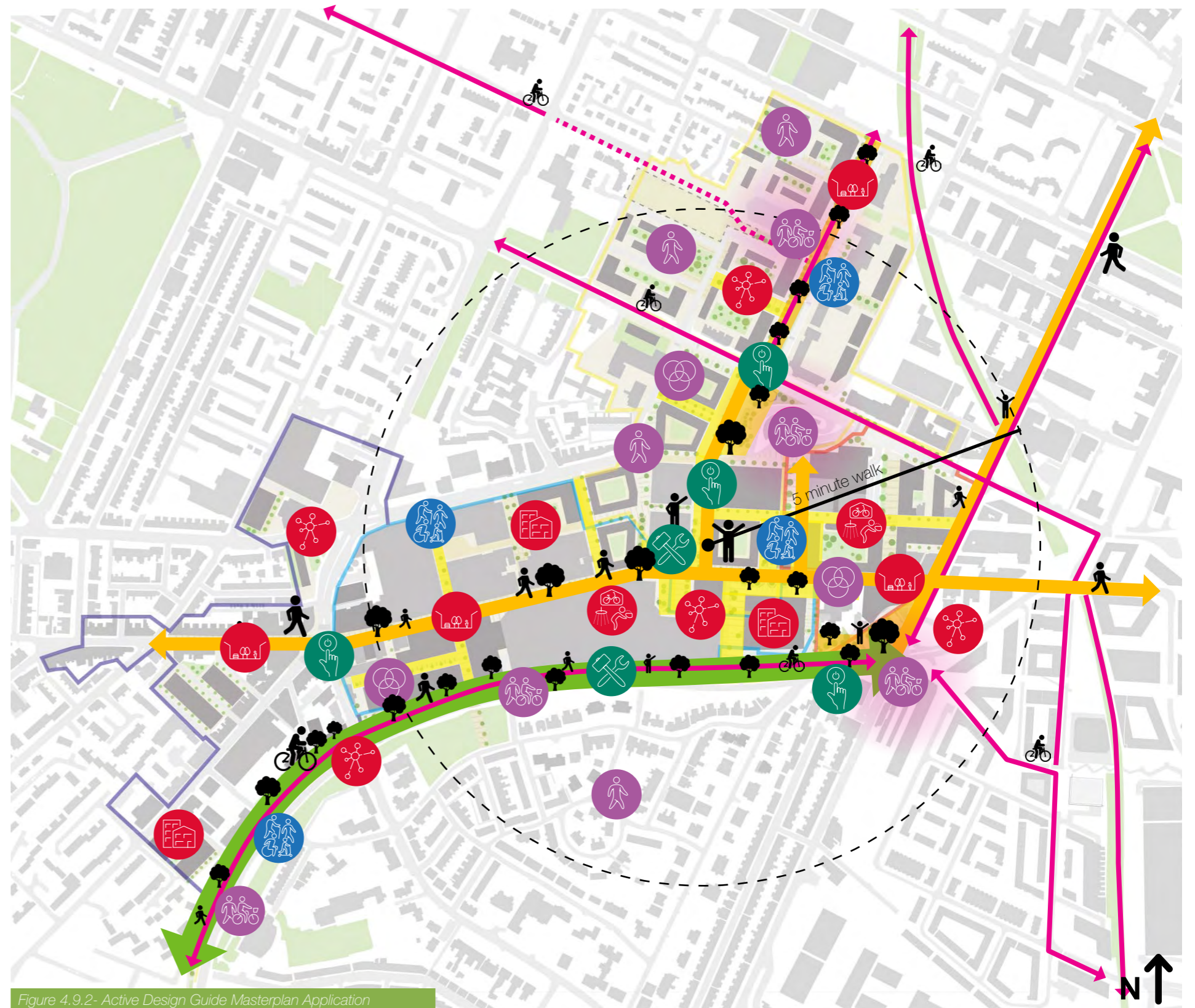


Figure 4.9.2- Active Design Guide Masterplan Application

4.11 VEHICLE MOVEMENT //

Birkenhead has a strategic role in vehicle movement and the connection of the wider peninsula to Liverpool via one of the two road tunnels. Borough Road and Conway Street provide these strategic connections to the road tunnel, but today provide little attraction for passing traffic. A key role of the masterplan is to transform this relationship, and encourage significant improved engagement with the town centre assets.

Aligned to this vision, the intention for the future town centre is to retain two key locations for multi-storey parking and some provision of surface car parking to Conway Street and Borough Road, whilst minimising surface and multi-storey parking in non strategic locations. The diagram in Figure 4.11.2 sets out this context, but shows a future re-provision of the Pyramids MSCP to a realigned relationship allowing increased permeability to the south. This is a significant change to deliver improved permeability and as such this is seen as a long term vision rather than a requirement in the Framework Area.

The single deck car park to Claughton Road serving the ASDA supermarket and the town centre is a necessary functional part of the supermarket, and whilst this does not form a strategic location for the highways, this is an important commercial function. The illustrative masterplan in the Framework Area highlights the potential for a reduced car parking provision in this location allowing for a more active frontage to be created to Claughton Road and the potential for increased permeability to Grange Road whilst also addressing the anti-social and service nature of Oliver Street.

There are a number of smaller surface car parks to Charing Cross which the masterplan is highlighting the potential for redevelopment for residential purposes. The Little Theatre and smaller scale independent retail and restaurant / cafe uses within this area are an important consideration and improved street parking and increased use of the MSCP's to Borough Road and Claughton Road would be proposed to compensate for any loss.

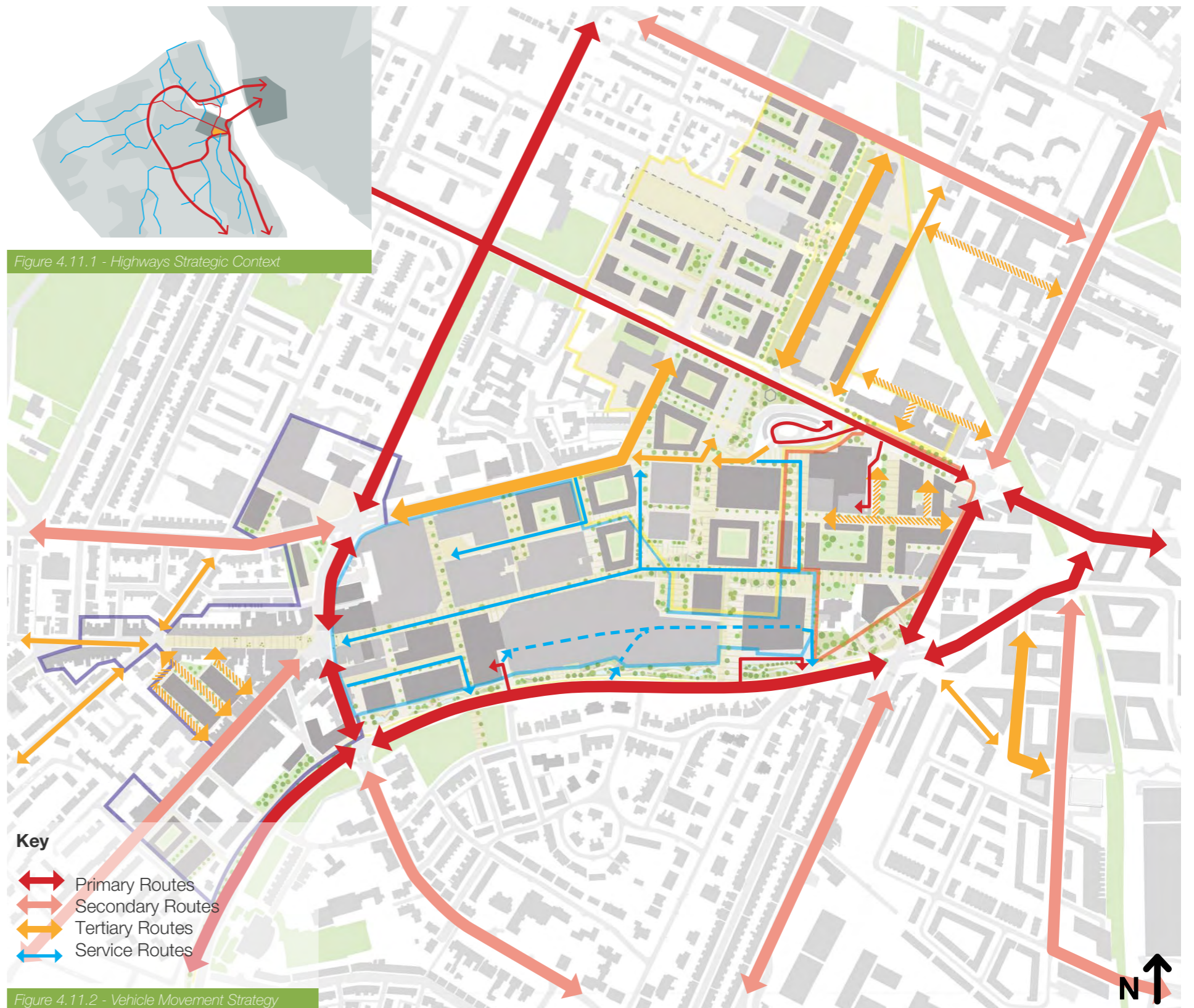


Figure 4.11.1 - Highways Strategic Context

4.12 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER //

General Character principles //

The town centre is focused on creating high quality public realm and spaces, that provide an experience that is reflective of the 'capital of the Wirral'; encourage active and vibrant public use, draws in surrounding neighbourhoods and communities, and breaks down existing barriers to open the town to a wider audience.

The high street is the primary spine from which the landscape will mediate to surrounding; residential, educational / commercial and independent cultural areas. Each surrounding area should have a sense of direction towards the town centre and the high street to drive footfall and engagement.

Key principles of this are:

- Civic mediating to domestic,
- Planting to provide seasonal interest to bring footfall into the town and create an experience,
- Strong framed view corridors capturing the Liverpool and local skyline and heritage assets,
- Expressing health and wellbeing with new landscape offering green, active and engaging qualities with combined source control and landscaped SuDS designed in throughout the masterplan area in accordance with emerging local plan policy WD 4.3 to maximise benefits and effectively manage surface water flood risk
- Family and night time economy spaces designed to improve dwell times and align to commercial needs
- Maximising the use of sustainable features including a new SuDS 'Sponge Park' as a central resource for the wider area

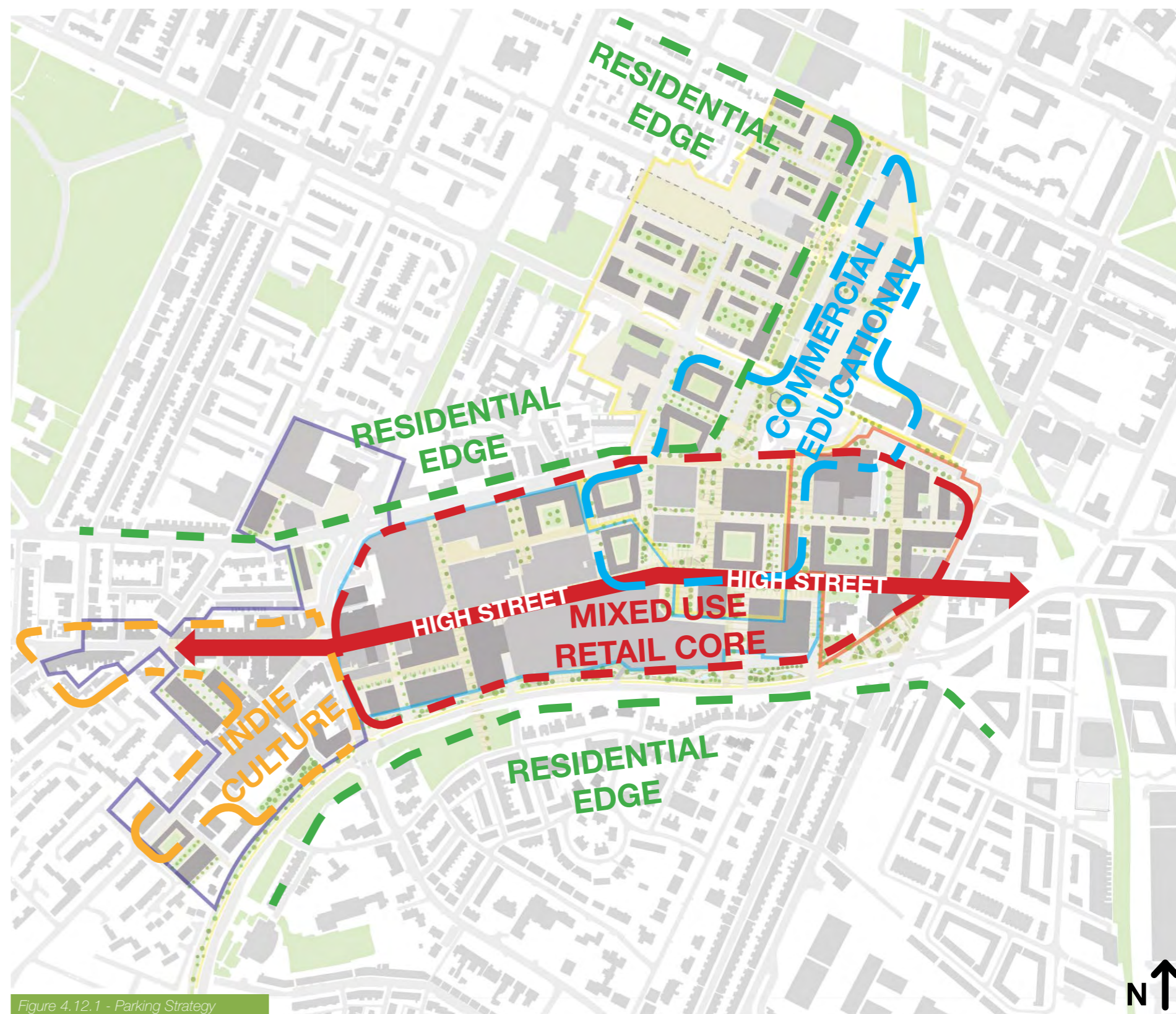


Figure 4.12.1 - Parking Strategy

4.13 PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PRINCIPLES //

4.13.1 // Animated outdoor spaces

Reference to a range of town centre based activities



4.13.2 // Safer spaces with lighting

Spaces that work well in the day and at night



4.13.3 // Enhance and improve movement

Create clear walking and cycling routes within the town centre and masterplan



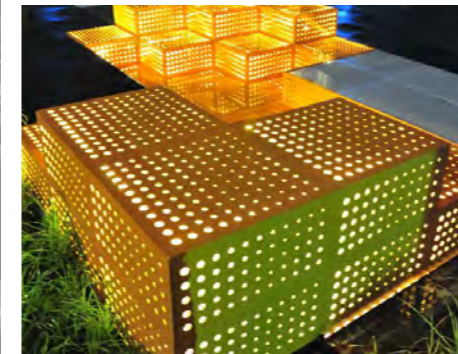
4.13.4 // Sustainable greenspace

Create sustainable gardens and spaces that have a sense of ownership



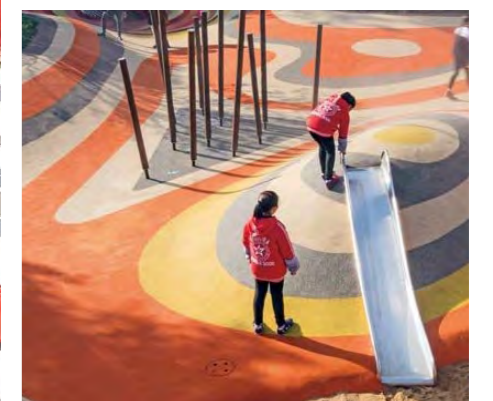
4.13.5 // Art and visual distinctiveness

Create a bold visual and welcoming identity



4.13.6 // Providing passive and active uses

Informal and formal play for all ages



4.14 THE BOROUGH ROAD 'SPONGE PARK' //

Borough Road is a key arterial route into the town, but with the removal of the flyovers presents a significant opportunity to claim back some of the highway to recreate a much earlier natural valley form. Figure 4.14.3 illustrates the earliest plan found in c1836 where Borough Road can be seen as a tributary leading towards Central Station and Hind Street.

Borough Road is known to act as a natural low point for surface water to gather and flow, and with increased development in the area, and as part of the town centre sustainability vision, Borough Road has been identified as a major opportunity to introduce a major new Sustainable Urban Drainage solution into the town centre.

This feature is intended to act as both a major conveyancing / natural holding / soak away for surface water, but also a significant opportunity to provide a rich new green first impression of the town. The area is not known to be suitable for infiltration and so careful consideration will need to be given to the point of discharge to ensure flood risk is not increased.

Where health and wellbeing are firmly at the top of the agenda, and where biodiversity, new walking and cycling routes as well as natural habitats provided an integrated solution to strategic issues.



Figure 4.14.1 - Masterplan Vision Sketch



Figure 4.14.2 - Concept Image of Sponge Park



Figure 4.14.3 - Birkenhead 1836 showing former tributary



Figure 4.14.5 West Gorton Sponge Park by BDP



Figure 4.14.6 West Gorton Sponge Park by BDP



Figure 4.14.4 - Birkenhead 1836 with overlay of present day



Figure 4.14.7 Hassett Park by Jane Irwin Landscape Architects



Figure 4.14.8 Hassett Park by Jane Irwin Landscape Architects

4.15 ACTIVE GROUND FLOORS //

Commercial Ground Floors

1. Cafés, restaurants and bars - A commercial offering such as this can boost street activity and create an opportunity for active uses to spill onto the pavement. Signs, awnings and temporary fixtures also contribute to the feeling of active streetscape



Figure 4.15.1 - Cutting Room Square



Figure 4.15.2 - Kampus by Mecanoo

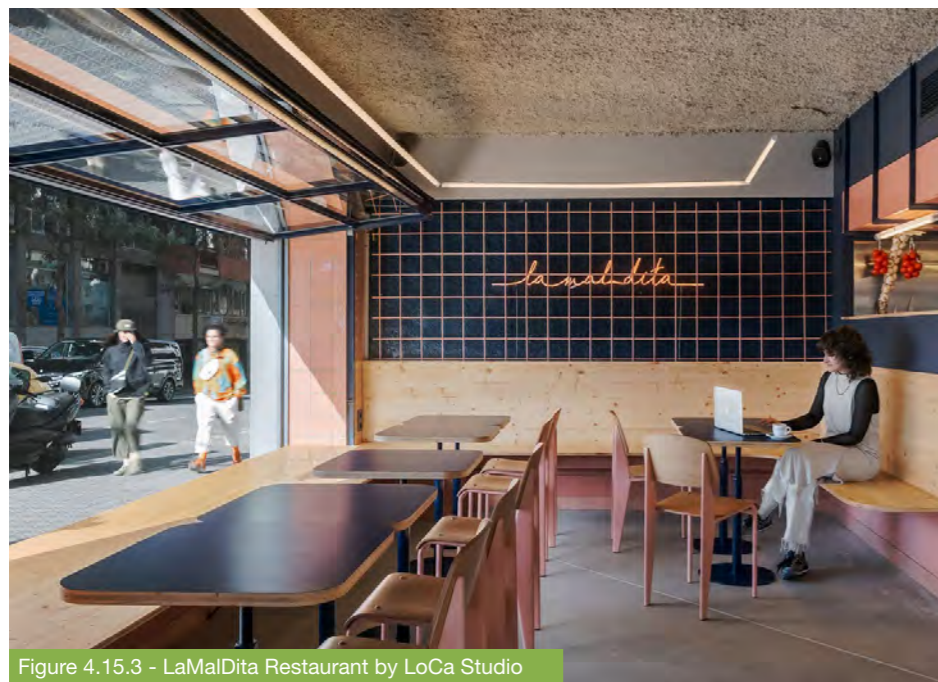


Figure 4.15.3 - LaMalDita Restaurant by LoCa Studio

2. Studios, crafts and small business - A variety of small retail offerings with a mix of studio and exhibition spaces can add to the visual interest of the street and offer glimpses into a mix of occupied spaces



Figure 4.15.4 - Roseberry Mansions by Maccreanor Lavington



Figure 4.15.5 - 4 Pancras Square



Figure 4.15.6 - Nightingale Ballarat Resi.

3. Creating space for people - The overall building design should consider introducing spaces that are suitable for people to linger. Stepping back from the building line on ground floor and utilising balconies and platforms can help add to the identity



Figure 4.15.7 - New Islington Marina



Figure 4.15.8 - Lokdepot 123 by Robertneun

Residential Ground Floors

1. Street level entrances and thresholds - Introducing unit entrances at ground floor can help activate the façades. Duplex units can be utilised along with ground floor apartments facing tertiary streets.



Figure 4.15.9 - Eddington by Wilkinson Eyre



Figure 4.15.10 - Smith's Yard, Manchester

2. Residential Stoops - Residential stoops can help ease the transition between home and the public realm. They also help link the living space to the wider context. The stoops can manifest in a number of ways incorporating steps, set back entrances, greenery including plot drainage and SuDS.



Figure 4.15.11 - Goldsmith Street



Figure 4.15.12 - Cobalt Place, London



Figure 4.15.13 - Eddington by Wilkinson Eyre

3. Residential Amenity - Offering ground floor amenity for residential blocks can boost permeability to the public realm. This offering also increases passive surveillance to streets and can link block residents to the wider community.



Figure 4.15.14 - Ducie St by Archer Humphries

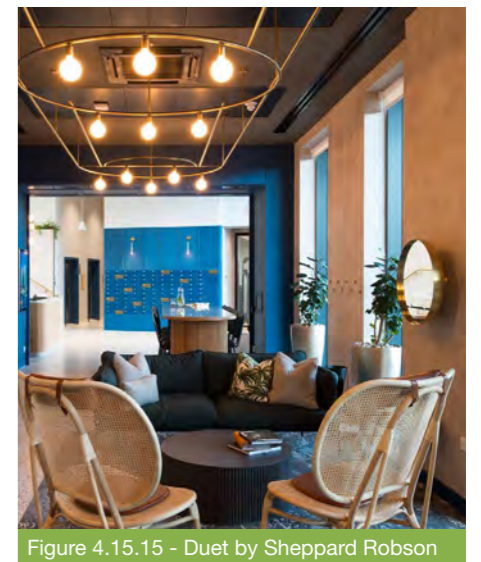


Figure 4.15.15 - Duet by Sheppard Robson



Figure 4.15.16 - Redchurch Townhouse by 31/44 Architects

4.16 SUSTAINABILITY //

Sustainability Vision //

Future proposals should consider their impact on the environment and should be encouraged to comply with key sustainability design principles

- The sites location adjacent to a number of key public transport stations will minimise the need for the use of personal vehicles, promoting walking and cycling, and improving air quality and also serve to maximise the use of existing infrastructure helping overall viability and vitality.
- Located adjacent to Birkenhead Central Station, and Conway Park Station, as well Birkenhead Bus Station and to a number of bus routes enables the use of sustainable and affordable public transport. The masterplan will bring enhanced use of the public transport assets, boosting connections to transport links and enhancing the sustainability of the network providing the opportunity for residents to have a wider connectivity to major surrounding cities whilst enjoying a high quality living environment in Birkenhead.
- New cycling routes are to be integrated into the landscape design of the area, linking existing cycle paths and boosting the cycle network.
- Where parking is provided, EV charging options are to be provided. The scheme proposes increased utilisation of multi-storey car park serving the site. Those can act as 'mobility hubs' allowing vehicle parking, charging, car club provision and last mile transport hubs with EV bikes and Scooters.
- Creation of new employment opportunities with commercial, retail and leisure space within the development creates pedestrian focused commuting, boosting the viability of the wider amenities within the town centre.
- Future District Heating Network (DHN) is planned for Birkenhead. This should be utilised and incorporated in proposed designs
- Any proposed development should sit in-line with the objectives outlined in Wirral's Climate Change strategy 'Cool 2.



Figure 4.16.1 - View looking down Grange Road to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral

Key design principles //

- Designs should create strong connections into the heart of the town centre
- The built environment should deliver durable, flexible solutions that can respond to changing conditions
- Developments should aim to achieve 'net zero' carbon and must align with wider sustainability goals set by Wirral Council
- Renewable energy and low carbon technologies must be assessed and incorporated where feasible
- Proposals should take into consideration the current and future climate change flood risk in the area and design with awareness of these conditions
- Landscaping and building materials should be durable and carbon-conscious.
- Future proposals must deliver a robust and future-proofed sustainable drainage strategy (SuDS) that responds to local context as well as the flood risk in the area.
- Proposals should address the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain ('BNG') requirement outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- Developments should be accessible to all and resilient over time.
- New developments should have regard of site specific environmental conditions and should address microclimate and noise conditions



Figure 4.16.2 - View looking from Birkenhead Priory to the town centre

5

LAND USE, DESIGN PRINCIPLES & DESIGN CODE //



5.1 LAND USES – GROUND FLOOR //

The ground floor use within the Town Centre is proposed to be as active as is possible across a wide range of uses to drive footfall, vibrancy and economic sustainability. Commercial active frontages should be placed to align to key primary and some secondary routes, and to highlight key node points. The land-use of these spaces should align to Planning Policy and the emerging Local Plan.

Whilst specific uses are noted on this plan for the commercial, retail, leisure uses, these are illustrative and the land use is flexible to change and evolution to suit the market conditions. The plan illustrates a vision of the current / anticipated conditions based on expert advice and national precedent. Change to this should be considered as a whole to ensure complimentary development is brought forwards to not create undue internal competition or repetition.

The plan proposes drawing in wider uses into the town centre, with locations identified for these. Residential is a key addition to the town centre and knitting this together with surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Residential uses in the town centre should be considered with due regard given to resident privacy and sense of security.

The land use within Europa Boulevard is subdivided to the West with a residential focus, and the east new commercial workspace or educational use.

Charing Cross is already a unique and vibrant multicultural part of the town, and the plan is not proposing any significant change here, other than proposing the future potential for residential infill development to address issue of underutilised spaces and lack of activity.

Key

- Hotel
- Residential
- Offices / Education
- Leisure
- Health & Wellbeing
- Market
- Commercial / Retail
- Commercial / F&B
- Parking
- Religious
- Service

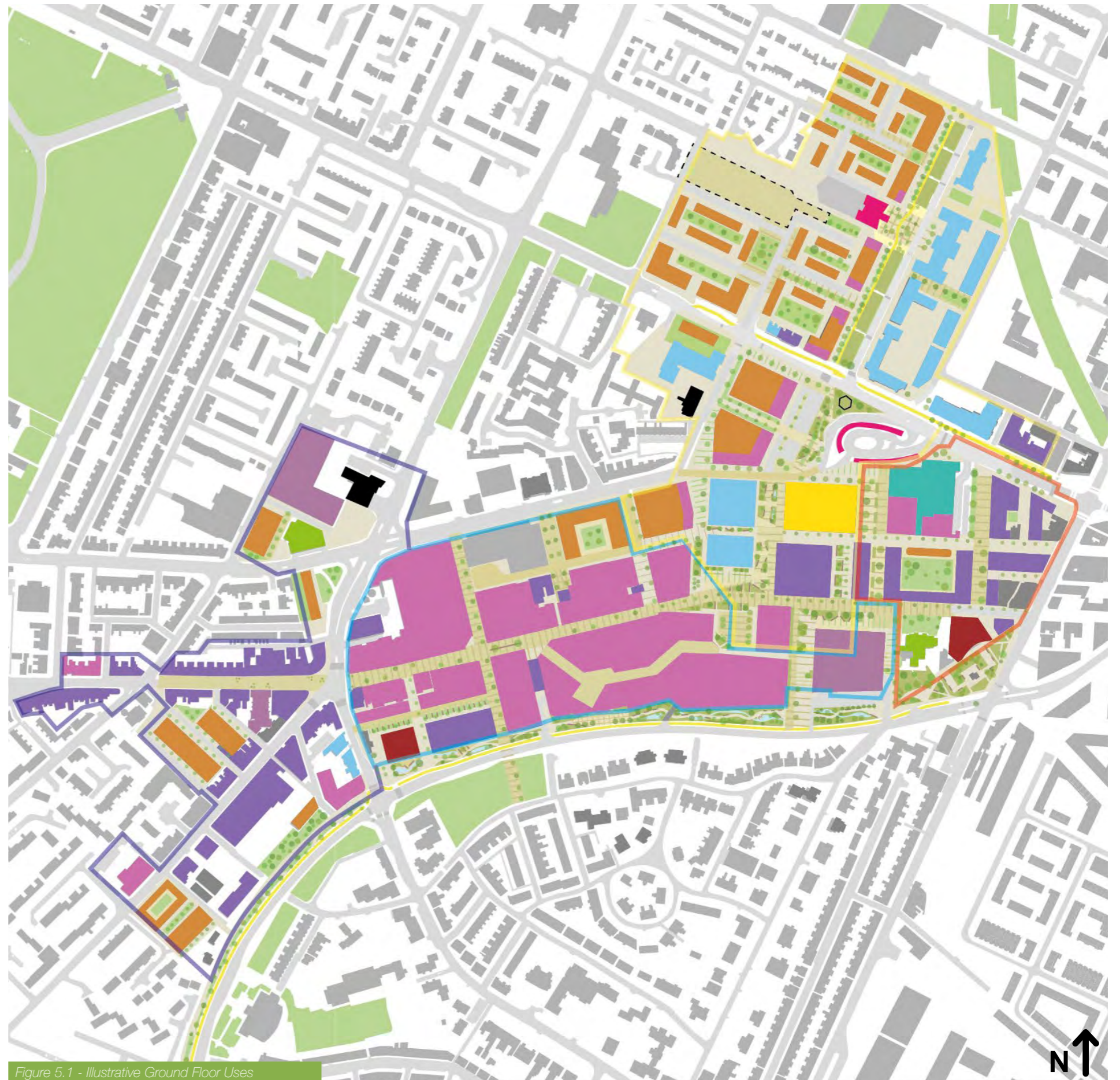


Figure 5.1 - Illustrative Ground Floor Uses

5.2 LAND USES – UPPER FLOOR //

As with the ground floor uses, upper floor levels provide a significant opportunity to diversify the town centre and bring new communities to live and work in the heart of the town. This will bring new daytime and night-time passive security to streets and spaces and provide the backbone to a new night-time economy offer that can attract a wider demographic and families into the town.

Upper floor uses are primarily proposed to be residential, but with opportunities for new commercial office spaces as identified. As with the ground floor, this plan is illustrative and is flexible to market conditions as long as the key design intent is achieved.

The residential offer in the town centre should provide a focus on young professionals, affordable housing as well as retirement products all benefiting from the new found ground floor amenities and providing active frontages and vibrancy to the town. This provides an alignment to the lack of retention of young people in the town, social deprivation, and a growing elderly population that can benefit from the offer a regenerated town centre can bring. This is intended to create a circular economy with residents building and growing the place in which they live.

There is potential for new hotels to be located to the heart of the town centre, with a focus on key gateway and visible locations near transport hubs.

A new Health and Wellbeing offer, and leisure hub is proposed within the reconfigured town centre, bringing with it new footfall as destination anchors and connecting to a wider community.

Key

- Hotel
- Residential
- Offices / Education
- Leisure
- Health & Wellbeing
- Market
- Commercial / Retail
- Commercial / F&B
- Parking
- Religious
- Service

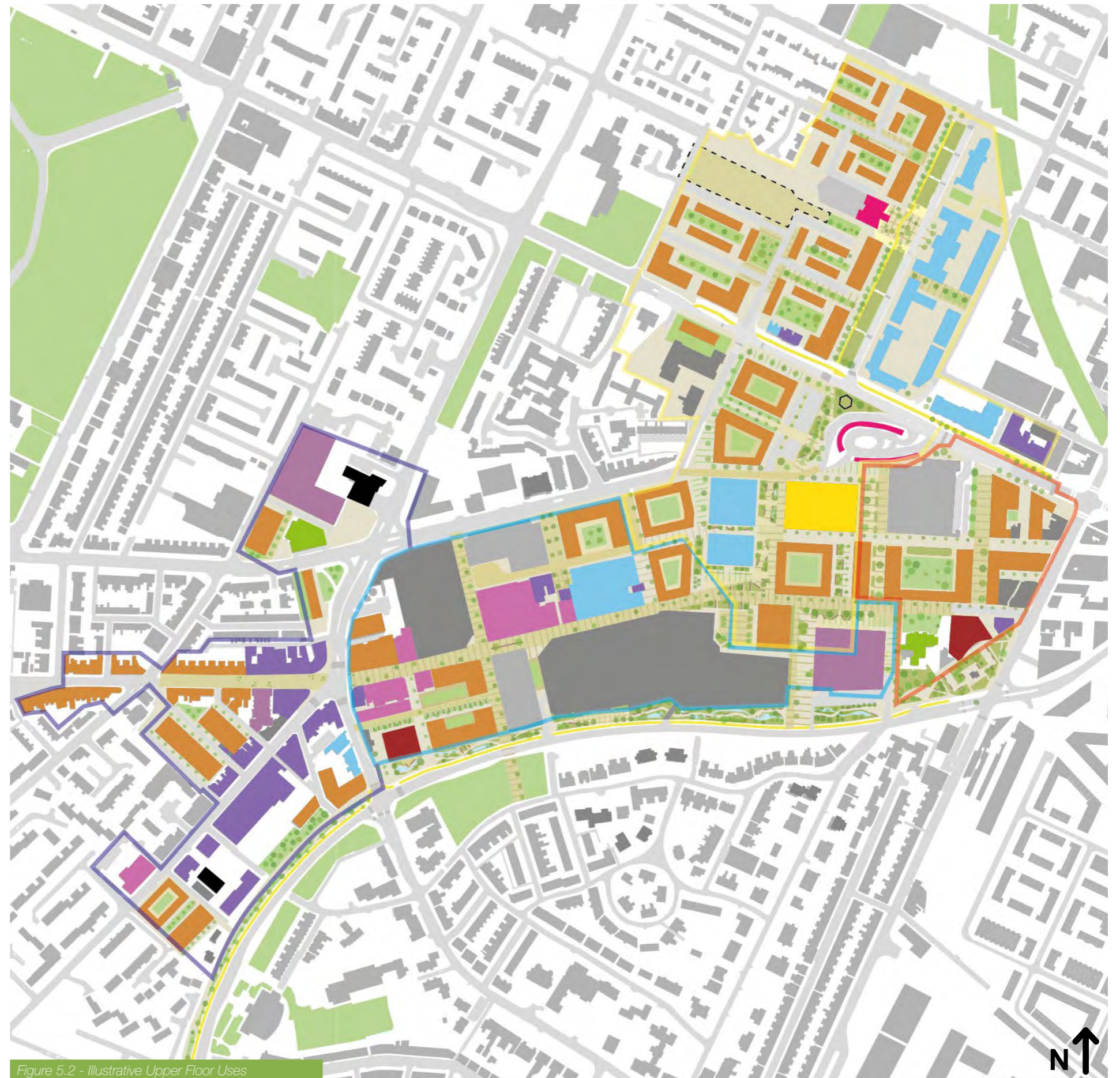


Figure 5.2 - Illustrative Upper Floor Uses

5.3 SCALE AND MASSING //

Through providing a mixed use town centre, there is the opportunity to increase the general scale of the town centre as illustrated in Figure 5.3.1.

Key view corridors have been identified - these are covered in detail in Section 09. These create views to Birkenhead Priory, Liverpool Cathedral, the Liverpool waterfront, and vent shafts that make up the unique aspects of the town. These are critical aspects to the success of the town centre regeneration and its ability to create a unique environment.

As well as establishing view corridors there is an existing building context, and natural valley topography to be addressed.

The scale of the buildings proposed are identified to be between 2 - 7 / 8 stories in height. This represents a shift in height but is being used as part of a holistic strategy to establish the town centre as an area of critical mass of development that is in itself self sustaining.

The town centre is seen as being somewhere of a 'human scale', where building heights are focused around creating active street scenes, rather than tall buildings. This is covered in the section 5.4. There are a number of landmark building locations identified which offer gateway potential or building designs that can aid the user orientation around the town.

Subject to detail, taller buildings may be acceptable to some of these locations but will be subject to core strategies and sufficient design quality being presented (Refer to the emerging Local Plan policy WS 7.5 Tall Buildings).

- Key**
- 1-2 Stories
 - 2-3 Stories
 - 3-5 Stories
 - 4-5 Stories
 - 5-6 Stories
 - 5-7 Stories
 - 6-8 Stories
 - * Landmark Location

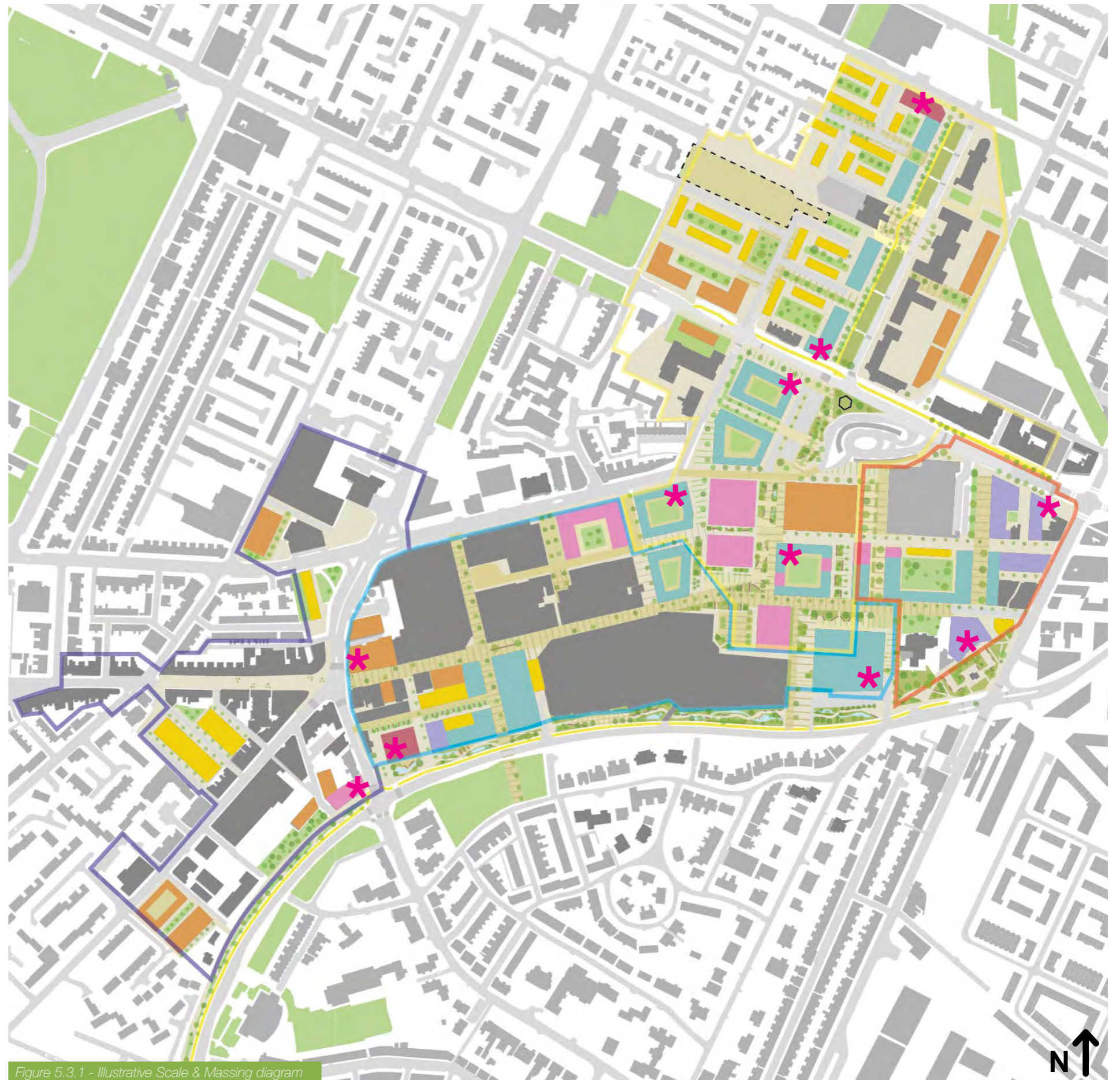


Figure 5.3.1 - Illustrative Scale & Massing diagram



Figure 5.3.2 - Massing view of the town centre

5.4 OPPORTUNITY FOR A TALL BUILDING //

Tall building policy

The emerging Local Plan defines a tall building in the context of Wirral as anything over 8 stories. With use identified as a means of landmarking locations, enhancing land use adjacent to public transport hubs, but with care required to heritage settings. The Left Bank is identified as a potential location for the use of tall buildings as either singular or clusters of buildings.

It is not intended that there are any buildings over 8 stories within the town centre Masterplan areas, but that there are locations where landmark building may be possible which subject to detail may allow the potential for tall buildings to be considered.

Tall Buildings: a supporting guide to applying WS7.5 states that tall buildings must adhere to the following principles, any proposal which does not address these will be refused;

Design must be exceptional and of the highest quality, grounded in context. It should:

- i. Add to local distinctiveness, identity and place-making; acknowledge and respect the heritage context; and activate the street-scape; and
- ii. Make positive contributions to public space and the environment at ground floor level. Provide high quality private and communal space and public realm including the use of outdoor space.

The design must be inclusive in design enabling use and occupation by all generations and demonstrate positive consideration of:

- i. Scale;
- ii. Form and massing;
- iii. Proportion and silhouette;
- iv. Detailed surface design;
- v. Facing materials;
- vi. Relationship to other structures;
- vii. Impact on street scape, near and approach views;
- viii. Impact on cityscape, local and distant views; and
- ix. Impact on the skyline.

Townscape and impact assessments will be required with proposals that identify the impact of the structure and assess harm against any public benefit. They should demonstrate how the structures will enhance navigation, way-finding and landmarking where appropriate, and facilitate permeability of the townscape.

Micro-climate assessments will be required which demonstrate that the proposal either as stand-alone or as part of a cumulative series of buildings, will not damage local environmental conditions. These are to include wind modelling, shadow/light issues, noise, air quality, privacy and amenity

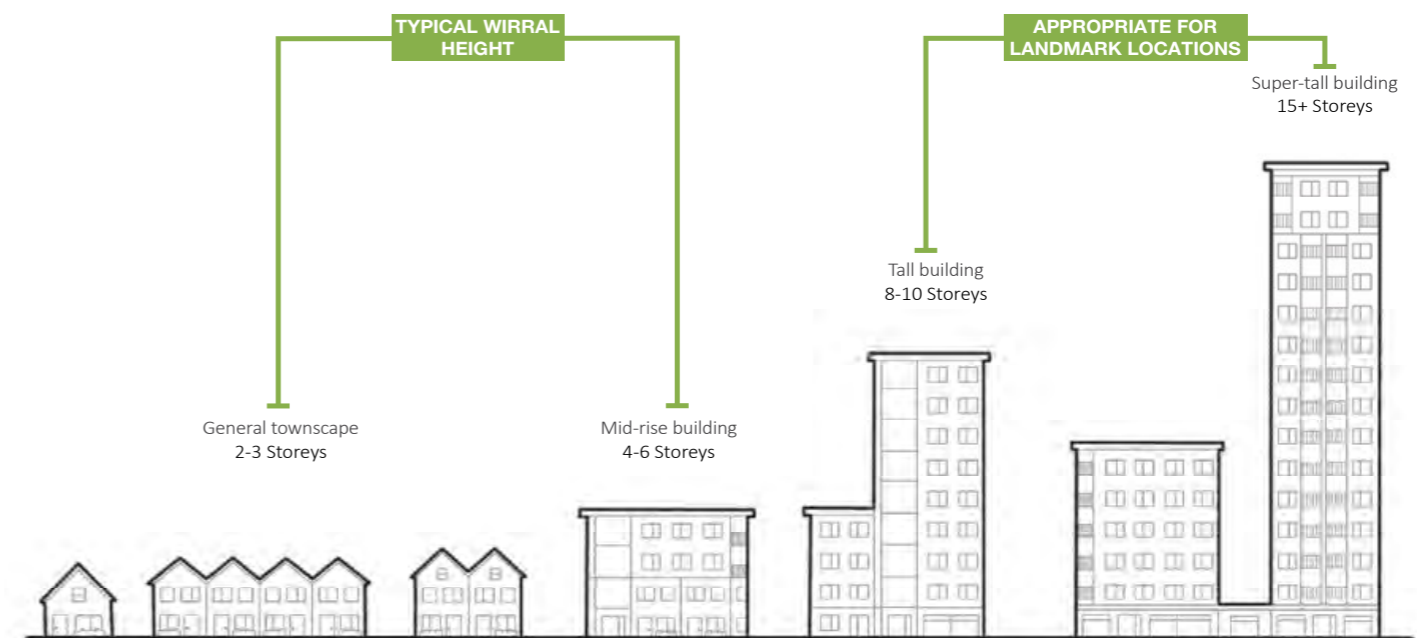
Fully detailed proposals demonstrating the quality of finish, servicing, ventilation, structure, car parking and other logistical matters should be provided rather than dealt with as part of Reserved Matters applications. -

Impact Assessment

The potential location of tall buildings has been developed in order to respond to the location of landmarks in both immediate and distant context.

With the use of tall or taller buildings within the context of Birkenhead a series of view points have been identified against which proposals should be assessed. It is intended that the Wirral 3D Model is utilised for this purpose and any proposals developed should be considered against this context.

A full Townscape Visual Impact Assessment should be considered as part of any proposal in line with industry guidance and the emerging Local Plan.



Statement of Common Ground between the council and Historic England here - https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/WBC009%20Statement%20of%20Common%20Ground%20between%20WBC%20and%20Historic%20England_1.pdf

Figure 5.4.1 - Defining of building heights for Birkenhead



Figure 5.4.2 - Massing view of the town centre

5.5 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE //

The town centre is lacking in any high quality public open space, and today makes for a low quality pedestrian experience for both visitors and residents. There are however some great assets close by such as Birkenhead Park and the future development of Dock Branch Park. There is also a small play ground along Borough Road which adds to the selection of play space on offer.

As noted in the drivers for regeneration section, the use of the new public open space to enhance the health and wellbeing of residents is a key consideration, and landscape proposals should identify clear measures as to how these points are being addressed.

Further to this, the Masterplan must provide compliance with Policy WS 5.2 - Open space Provision. The proposed approach within the town centre would be to deliver full compliance with both LEAP and LAP provision, and justify on the grounds of proximity to the amazing Birkenhead Park NEAP provision is not appropriate in this location.

Indicative locations are identified for the provision of LEAP and LAP within the Masterplan. Whilst the LEAP provision is intended to be prescriptive in its general location, the LAP provision are to be taken as illustrative only and subject to detailed planning in terms of location and numbers to be provided.

In line with WS 5.2 item J as a regeneration area the provision of public accessible open space will be provided through alternative well designed, high quality open space, which may include access to formal or informal areas for local recreation or play, waterfront access, tree lined streets, green roofs, access to community growing areas, bespoke approaches to community involvement in maintenance and improved access to appropriate strategic provision. This also supports Sports England Active Design guidance for providing activity to all to high quality sports facilities.

Key



-  Public Open Space - LAP (0.01ha local area for play)- within 100m of each dwelling (Small area of open space specifically designated and primarily laid out for very young children)
Secondary Public Realm Space
-  Public Open Space - LEAP (0.04ha locally equipped area for play)- within 400m of each dwelling (Open space specifically designed and laid out with features including equipment for children who are beginning to play independently)



Figure 5.5 - Landscape plan highlighting Public Open Space Strategy

5.6 SUB CHARACTER AREAS //

This Report covers 3 areas;

- Grange Road Primary Shopping Area (TC-SA2.1)
- Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)
- Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.2)

However within this there are proposed to be 4 distinct character areas:

- Birkenhead town centre; Focused on the traditional high street, market, principle leisure offer, and a mixed use town centre environment with a strong night time family economy.
- Charing Cross; An independent multi cultural hub in Birkenhead, with community arts and strong residential feel.
- Central Neighbourhood; A new residential neighbourhood centred around Conway Park Station, connecting to the surrounding neighbourhoods and offering a family focused town centre living offer with quieter residential focused streets and public spaces.
- Europa Square; a commercial focus, connecting from the creative independents to main stream commercial office and educational uses

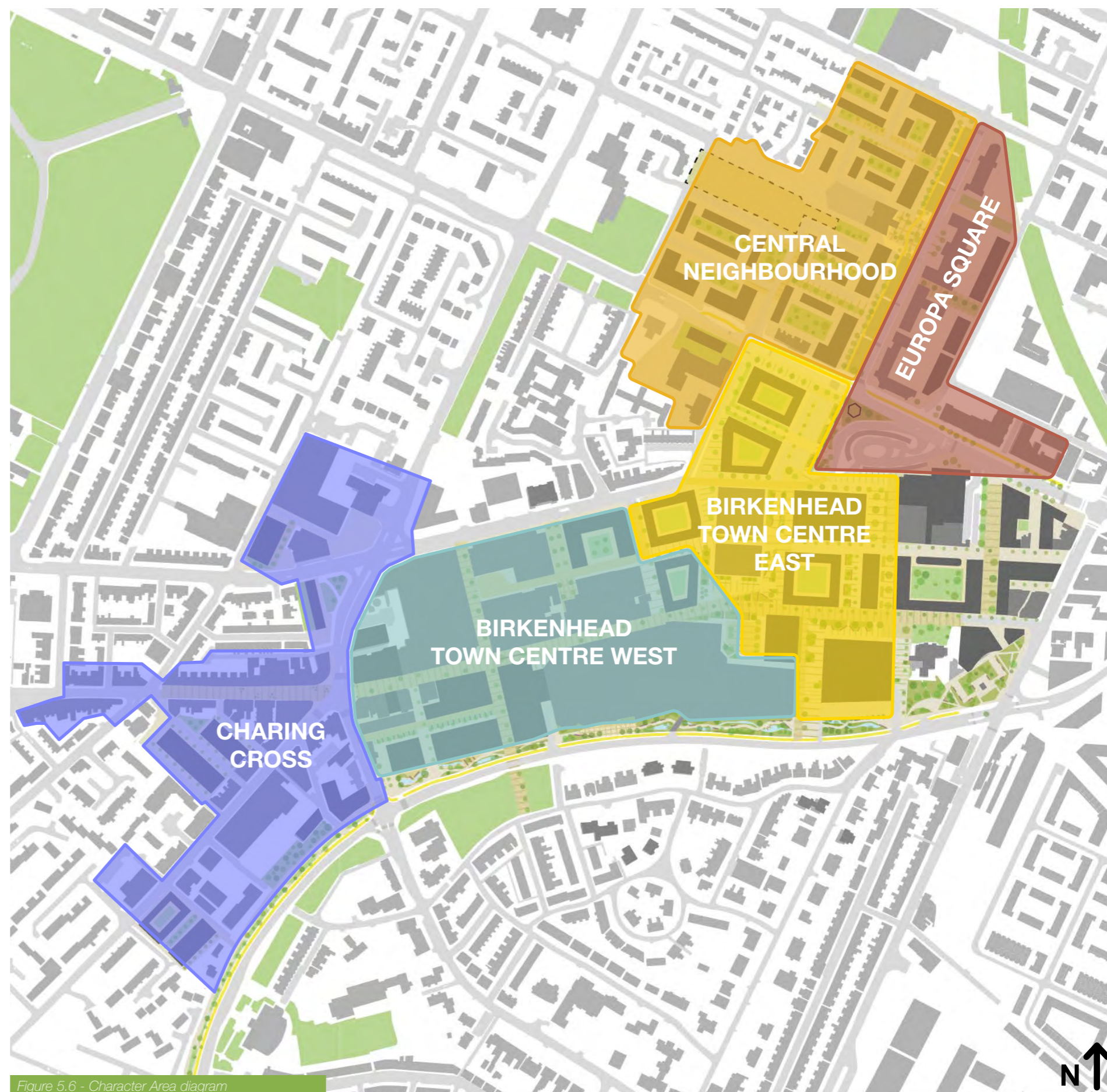


Figure 5.6 - Character Area diagram

5.7 THE BIRKENHEAD PALETTE //

Aligned to the identification of sub character areas, Birkenhead has a distinct material palette that new development should make clear design response.

Outlined in the following analysis is a summary investigation taken for each surrounding character area which can assist in the future architectural expression and place making of the town centre.

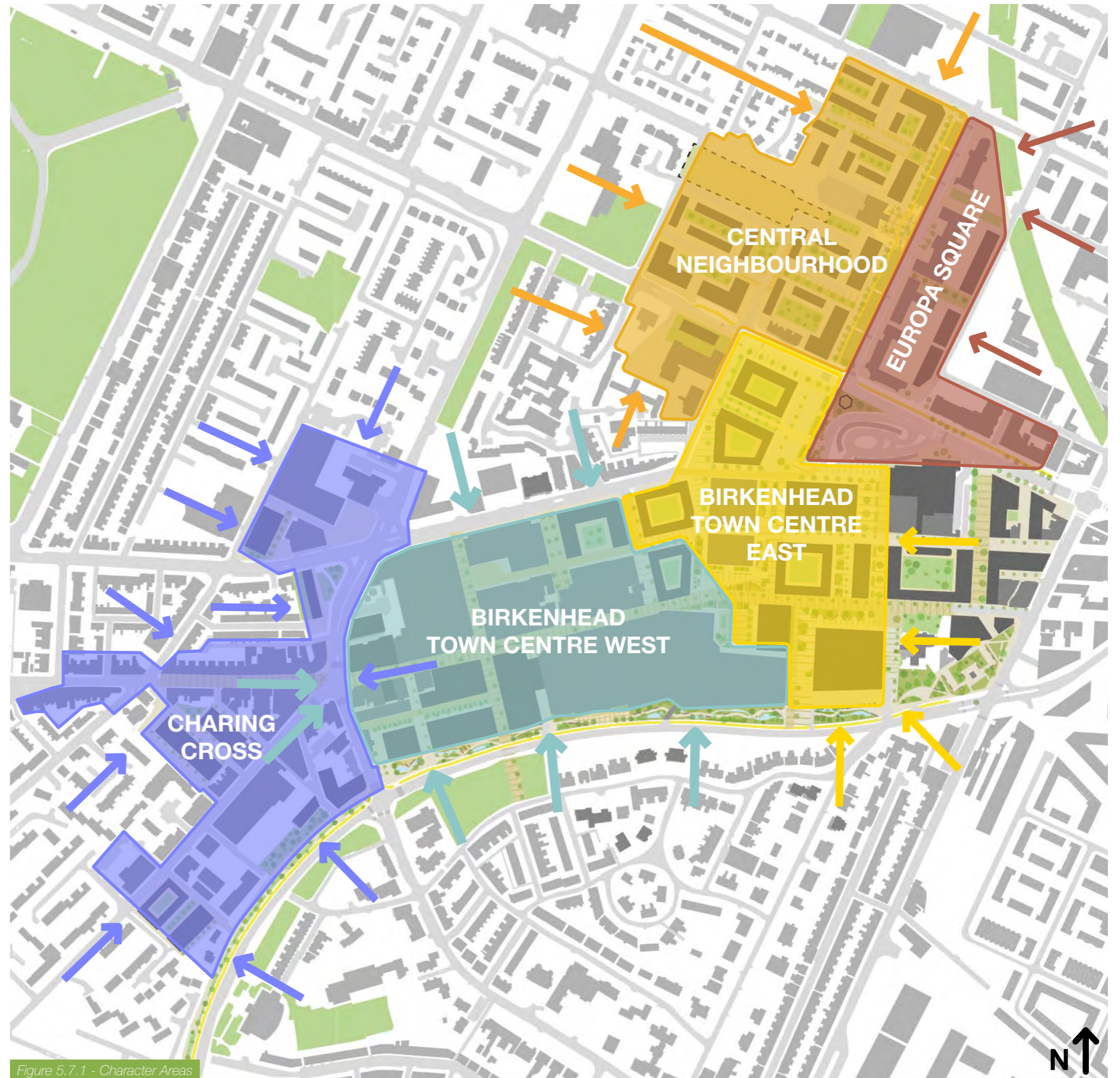


Figure 5.7.1 - Character Areas

CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

MATERIALITY //
Brickwork and render, with elements of stone to civic and public houses. Copper roof from to Europa Pools.

ROOFSCAPE //
Pitched roof forms, with flat roof / feature roof's to larger public facing buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE //
Generally smaller individual built form, with a mixture of Victorian, and late 20th century domestic buildings, and feature roofscape Europa Pools building.



Birkenhead town centre EAST

MATERIALITY //
Brickwork with elements of render, and curtain walling. Some elements of curtain walling, metal and terracotta cladding

ROOFSCAPE //
Flat within the heart of the retail core outside of existing market hall which has a feature roofscape

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE //
Larger built form in general, with a mixture of late 20th century buildings.



Birkenhead town centre WEST

MATERIALITY //
The most varied materiality within the town, with brickwork, stone, metal cladding, render and concrete

ROOFSCAPE //
Mainly flat roofs to the Pyramids and ASDA, and a range of Pitched and flat roof forms to buildings along Grange Road

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE //
Mixture of larger and smaller built form, upper levels on Grange Rd show earlier smaller scale street grain from early Victorian to contemporary infill developments.



CHARING CROSS

MATERIALITY //
Brickwork and stone - some elements of render

ROOFSCAPE //
A mix of varied pitched roofs with flat roof forms to backs of buildings

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE //
Victorian, Edwardian, and Gothic style



EUROPA SQUARE

MATERIALITY //
Typically heavy Masonry buildings, with stone elements to heritage buildings. Contemporary buildings more glassy with elements of metal and curtain walling to façades

ROOFSCAPE //
Varied; pitched, flat and curved

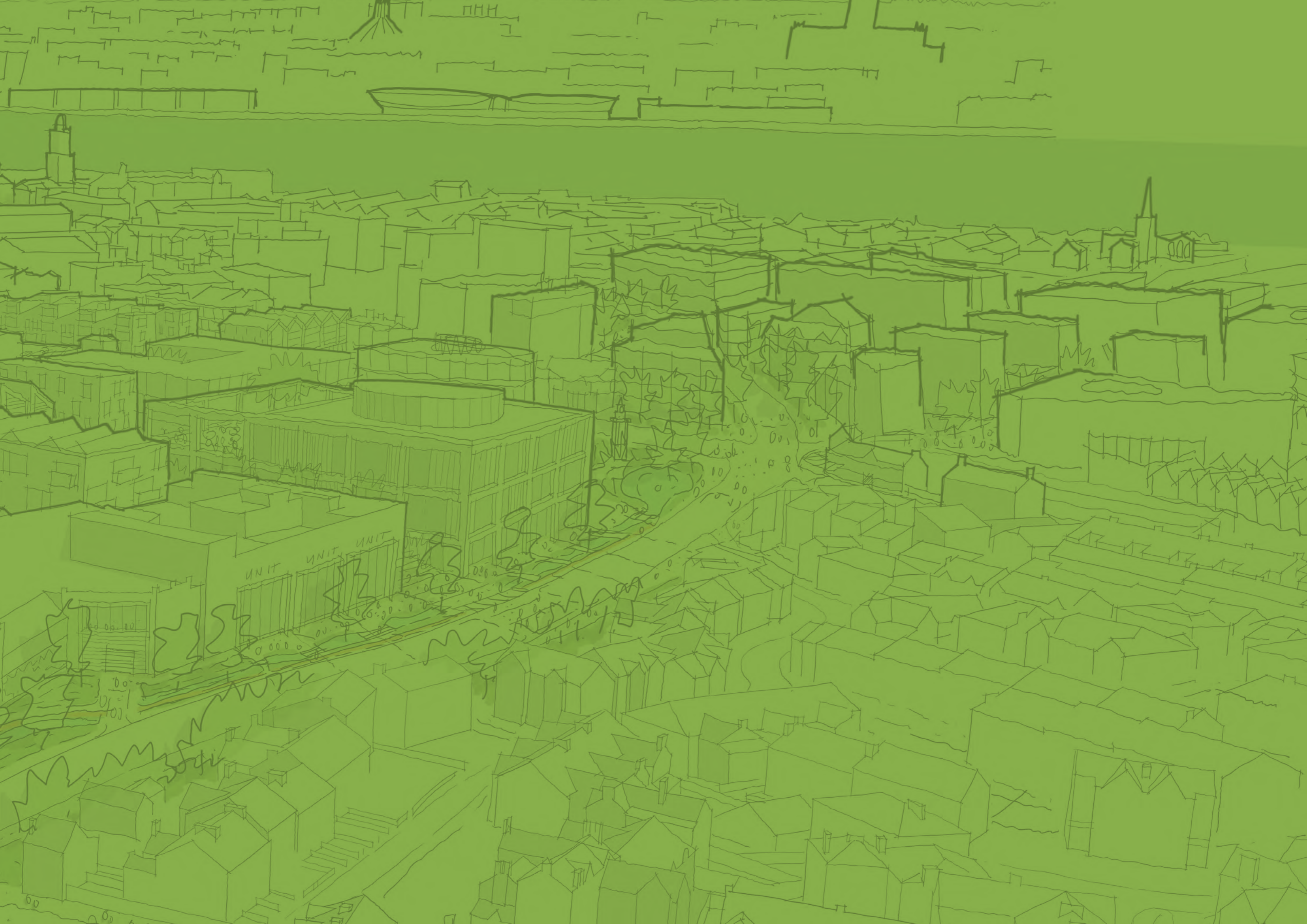
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE //
Contemporary



6

DEVELOPMENT SITE AREAS & SITE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES //





6.1 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS BIRKENHEAD TOWN CENTRE EAST //

Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)
MASTERPLAN AREA

Ground Floor Use: The town centre is an important part of the wider Wirral Retail Strategy with Birkenhead providing the principal centre in the borough.

Ground floor uses within town centre east should provide both primary retail within the consolidated retail core boundary, and mixed use residential to the north as the site moves towards Conway Street from Claughton Road. Any major provision of retail outside of the core will be subject to Policy WS 11.3 and retail impact assessment.

Three anchor town centre uses have been identified to the retail core area; A re-provision of Birkenhead's market with a new leisure and events focus, a new leisure and family dining offer, and a new health and well-being hub to offer leisure centre facilities and supporting health amenities.

Supporting uses should be focused on: Restaurant, Bars and Cafés - including Hotel receptions or residential amenity space, and leisure. Blank frontages are to be minimised for any large scale leisure use to avoid impacting on the creation of an active street scene.

Residential entrances should be located to the new side streets to maximise commercial frontage to primary and secondary streets, with own front door provision to side streets away from the main footfall.

Upper Floor Use: A key driver is to provide passive surveillance to the ground floor streets to create an environment that feels both safe and welcoming to town centre users. This has been identified to be provided with a mix of uses from residential apartments, additional purpose designed workspace, a new leisure offer and associated dining terrace, health and well-being uses, and even the potential for a new town centre hotel.

The Conway Street multi-storey car park offers potential for high level connection directly into a new health and well-being hub.

Density: Residential Density would be expected to significantly exceed a minimum of 60dph in-line with the emerging Local Plan Policy WS 3.2 - Housing Density Grain: Buildings should ensure that the building alignment allows the view corridors to be maintained as identified. This over provision is expected to be achieved through the provision of apartment town centre buildings to the extent of their respective development plots to create active parts of the street scene.

Response to neighbouring buildings: There are a number of points to consider in developing high quality design responses within the town centre east;

There are three listed buildings to be considered; The Crown Public House, and the Conway Centre Building both fronting Conway Street, and St Werburgh's Church and Presbytery to Grange Road / Borough Road. All buildings are Grade II Listed. However, further to this there are also a number of heritage assets that should be considered; Hamilton Building and Thompson's Mission to Hemingford Street, and terraced houses fronting Claughton Road. To the south of Borough Road is the Clifton Park Conservation Area which is seen as an asset to be drawn into the town centre through the proposed works, however is also an important consideration in design response to this aspect.

New developments close to these buildings may require Heritage Impact Assessment or townscape visual impact assessment.

The Conway Street MSCP provides a large building block to the north with limited facade activation. Adjacent to this is Birkenhead Bus Station which provides an important footfall generator, but also a point of vehicle movement which must be considered within developing plans to ensure this movement is not at odds with the integration of building and spaces.

The Pyramids to the south provides a significant building block, and large scale demolition is proposed to the this area to facilitate enhanced permeability and the introduction of new active uses. It is important that any retained buildings to the Pyramids Shopping Centre provide active frontages, with new openings and uses



Figure 6.1.1 - Land Use Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 6.1.2 - Proposed building heights



Figure 6.1.3 - Aerial view of Masterplan



Figure 6.1.4 - Liverpool One, BDP



Figure 6.1.5 - Wellington House, Matt Architecture, London



Figure 6.1.6 - Park 'n' Play, JAJA Architects, Copenhagen



Figure 6.1.7 - Landscape Masterplan



Figure 6.1.8 - Liverpool One, BDP

opening to primary frontages.

Heights: Existing buildings in the area range from 2 / 3 storeys to 5 / 6 stories with the new council office building and Pyramids Shopping Centre mall building and MSCP. In general buildings are identified to be in the Mid Rise ranging from 4 - 6 / 7 stories. The scale of these buildings is explored through the view corridors within Section 9 of this document.

Roofscape: The roofscape to this area has been uniform since the 1970's and 1980's shopping centre where previous to this the roofscape was varied and broken by a number of church spires and varied streets. It is intended that this area should look to re-kindle this unique identity to aid the user orientation and legibility of the town centre. Traditional roof forms which bring with it a sense of being a collective of smaller vertical buildings is important to avoid homogeneous blocks and singular identities. Where new anchor uses are proposed this should vary from this and with this create clear hierarchy is the townscape.

Active Frontages: The frontages are described within the ground floor uses, but this should also be considered with upper floor uses including balconies, winter gardens and windows that allow excellent views both in and out of the development.

No unit should be provided with excessive frontage that will not provide a functional need and as a result form a blank aspect to the street. Applications should describe how these frontages will be used and provide illustrations on design intent.

Base of the building and Thresholds: The buildings should provide a clear relationship to the street with strong active frontages. Residential entrances should be located away from commercial frontages, but where possible provide active ground floor functions themselves with amenity spaces and active lobbies, or on side streets own front doors with defensible space provision. Hotels should provide active ground floor functions with entrance lobbies, amenity spaces and restaurants opening to the street.

Shop fronts should have a clear zone for signage that provides a consistent approach.

Design Quality: This is a landmark location in the town and design quality in appearance, materiality and relationship to context is paramount. External Design review input would be expected for any major application being submitted for peer review of the proposals.

Key Masterplan Development Principles:

- Densify the town centre with a mixed-use environment and reduce outdated retail units within the heart of the town.
- Consolidate the retail core to a tighter footprint which connects from the bus station to Borough Road, Charing Cross to Argyle Street.
- Create a more permeable town centre with views into the town from key external streets such as Conway Street and Borough Road.
- Capitalise upon key view corridor considerations with framing of view to Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral, Birkenhead Priory, and the surrounding streets.
- Full redevelopment potential, with the integration of the two new office buildings.
- This site is allocated to provide new homes as part of the emerging local plan.
- Active ground floor uses responding to a high footfall future context which activates the new external streets and spaces and the opening up onto Borough Road.
- A mix of new town centre homes, two key leisure assets with active ground frontages to maximise active commercial frontage.
- New enhanced public realm with a family focus with enlarged St Johns Square.
- Public realm space to be designed to allow external dining space to be created with clear demise lines associated to units.
- External lighting is a key consideration and potential attractor to a new night time economy.

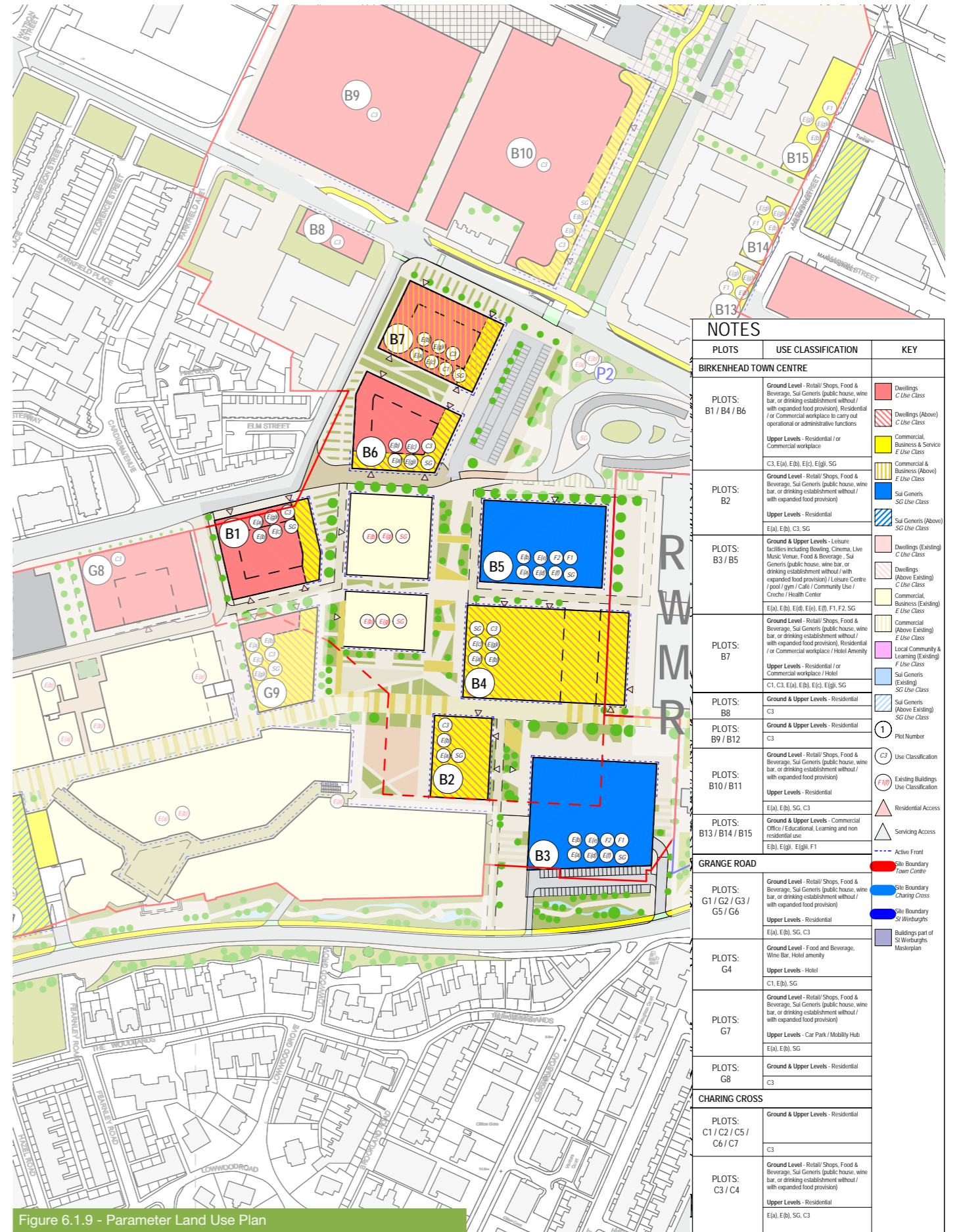


Figure 6.1.9 - Parameter Land Use Plan



Figure 6.1.10 - Birkenhead town centre East Massing Diagram

Emerging Planning Policy Appraisal

Birkenhead town centre

Plots B1 to B7:

On Plots B1 to B7, the Masterplan illustrates the potential for uses falling within Use Classes E(a), (b), (c), (g), Sui Generis (Drinking Establishments and the potential for a new leisure hub) and C3 – predominantly on upper floors. C1 is also proposed on Plot B7.

The emerging Local Plan identifies Plots B1 to B5 as falling within a Town Centre, where emerging Local Plan Policy WS 11.2 (Hierarchy of Retail Centres) identifies that Birkenhead town centre is the Borough's main comparison-shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities and other main town centre uses.

Plots B6 and B7 are identified as Housing Allocations in the emerging Local Plan – they fall within RES-RA4.1 - WGC Town Centre Plot E, Hemingford Street, Birkenhead, a 1.38 hectares site, identified for the delivery of 172 units.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) identifies main town centre uses as: retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Emerging Local Plan Policy WS 11.6 (Residential Development in Centres) advises that, in centres, residential development will be permitted upper floors within retail and commercial frontages including within primary shopping areas, provided that the operations of existing and future businesses and community facilities are not adversely affected. As such, the uses illustrated on the Masterplan are deemed to comply with both the adopted and emerging

Development Plan and as such, the principle of said development is deemed to be acceptable.

Generic emerging Local Plan Policies applicable to the Masterplan

Policy WS 3.2 (Housing Density) advises that, within the Urban Core & Town Centres Density Zones (RES-DZ2), the minimum density should be 60 dwellings per hectare.

Policy WS 3.3 (Affordable Housing Requirements) states that, within Viability Zones 1 (VZ-1) and 2 (VZ[1]2), proposals for new-build market housing of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide tenure blind affordable housing within the site at 10% unless up to date and robust evidence indicates otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) no longer requires First Homes or a specific percentage for affordable home ownership to be provided. The mix of affordable housing provided will therefore need to reflect the most up-to-date identified local needs.

Policy WS 3.4 (Housing Mix) advises that, within identified Regeneration Areas, a minimum of 30% of market dwellings will be developed for larger dwellings of three or more bedroom.

Policy WS 5.2 (Open Space Provision) states that, new residential development will be required to contribute to the improvement and enhancement of open space, based on the following standards:

- The provision of 37sqm of publicly accessible open space per person, of which 2.5sqm per person will be for equipped children's play or 80sqm per dwelling, of which 6sqm will be for equipped children's play; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space or designated Tourism Area of 1.5ha or above; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped open-access facility for children's play.

Where 50 or more new dwellings will be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space of 1.5 ha or above but not within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped facility for children's play, appropriate provision must be made on a site of no less than 0.40 ha.

New on-site open space should be provided as a single site for public recreation, centrally located to serve the development as a whole unless additional provision is required to secure appropriate access to safe children's play within 400m of each new dwelling. Within Regeneration Areas, strategic provision should be identified within an appropriate Masterplan or neighbourhood framework.

Where appropriate on-site provision would not be achievable, alternative well-designed, high quality open space must be provided, which may include access to formal or informal areas for local recreation or play, waterfront access, tree lined streets, green roofs, access to community growing areas, bespoke approaches to community involvement in maintenance and improved access to appropriate strategic provision.



Figure 6.1.11 - 3D Visual looking down Grange Road with St Werburgh's Church on the left

6.2 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS BIRKENHEAD TOWN CENTRE WEST //

Grange Road Primary Shopping Area (WS11.3-TCA-SA2.1)
NEIGHBOURHOOD FRAMEWORK AREA

Ground Floor Use: This is a core part of the retail core of the town centre, and is an important part of the wider Wirral Retail Strategy with Birkenhead providing the principal centre in the borough. It holds the greatest proportion of traditional high street retailers with a focus on Grange Road and the Pyramids Shopping Centre Mall.

Ground floor uses within town centre west should provide primary retail focus to Grange Road, and mixed use residential to the north towards Claughton Road and South towards Borough Road. Diversity in the retail offer should be considered to attract a wider audience to the town centre, with cafés and other leisure uses introduced to create a vibrant street scene. St John's Square and Charing Cross act as anchor spaces to the high street and it would be expected that these provide a change in the ground floor unit response with more public focus and space to allow units to 'break - out' into the street / square. Restaurants and Cafés should be considered to these locations to create visual anchors to the high-street experience.

A new leisure offer and family focused dining location is proposed to open to the south with aspect to Borough Road and Grange Road attracting new users into the town.

A new hotel offer has been identified to the junction of Borough Road and Whetstone Lane to respond to the gateway location into the town, and the proximity to MSCP and other cultural offers presented by Charing Cross.

Blank frontages are to be minimised for any large scale leisure use to avoid impacting on the creation of an active street scene.

Residential entrances should be located to the new side streets to maximise commercial frontage to primary and secondary streets, with own front door provision to side streets away from the main footfall.

Upper Floor Use: A key driver is to provide passive surveillance to the ground floor streets to create an environment that feels both safe and welcoming to town centre users. This has been identified to be provided with a mix of uses from residential apartments, additional purpose designed workspace, a new leisure offer and associated dining terrace, and even the potential for a new town centre hotel.

Two long term opportunities have been identified to redevelop the pyramids MSCP and decked car park to Claughton Road. These present opportunities to address back street impermeability and lack of passive surveillance, whilst also allowing new routes into the town centre and to surrounding residential neighbourhoods. With the redevelopment of the Pyramids MSCP this offers the potential for residential uses to be introduced to upper levels in new buildings looking onto the high street. These are illustrated on the following page parameter plans.

Density: Residential Density would be expected to significantly exceed a minimum of 60dph in-line with the emerging Local Plan Policy WS 3.2 - Housing Density Grain: Buildings should ensure that the building alignment allows the view corridors to be maintained as identified. This over provision is expected to be achieved through the provision of apartment town centre buildings building to the extent of their respective development plots to create active parts of the street scene.

Response to neighbouring buildings: There are a number of points to consider in developing high quality design responses within the town centre west;

Charing Cross has two Grade II Listed buildings to the junctions with Grange Road, and to the south of Borough Road is the Clifton Park Conservation Area which is seen as an asset to be drawn into the town centre through the proposed works. However Grange Road has a number of heritage non listed assets to be considered which talk to a richer past. The potential for a new mews street has been identified to link through to Claughton Road and frame a view to a non Listed heritage building. This could facilitate a unique new retail



Figure 6.2.1 - Land Use Illustrative Masterplan

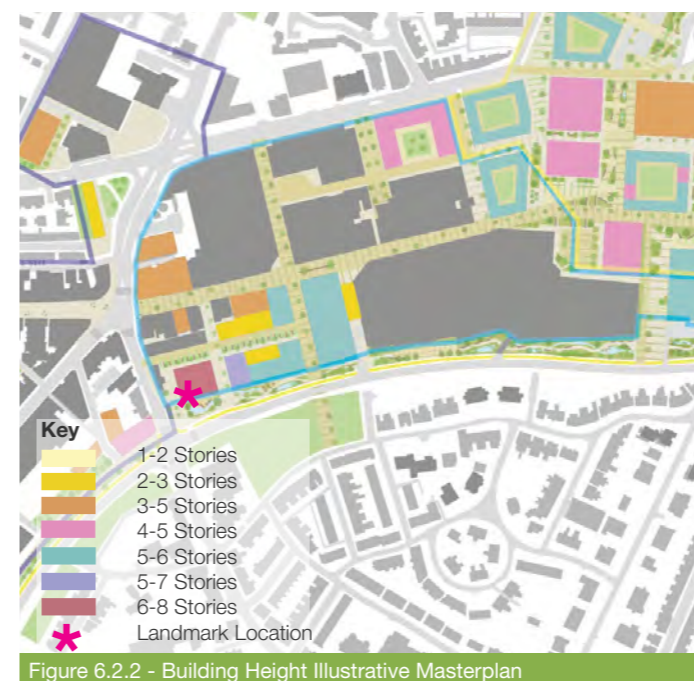


Figure 6.2.2 - Building Height Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 6.2.3 - Aerial View of Masterplan



Figure 6.2.4 - 197 Kensington High Street Stiff and Trevillion, London



Figure 6.2.5 - Dairy Block, Denver USA



Figure 6.2.6 - Kampus, Mecanoo, Manchester



Figure 6.2.7 - Landscape Masterplan



Figure 6.2.8 - Johann Jacobs House Germany



Figure 6.2.9 - South Molten Street Building, DSDHA, London

/ leisure space for the high street.

New developments close to these buildings may require Heritage Impact Assessment or townscape visual impact assessment.

The Pyramids to the south provides a significant building block, alongside the MSCP. Options are captured in the parameter plans opposite in figure 6.2.10 and 6.2.11.

Roofscape: The roofscape to this area has been uniform since the 1970's and 1980's shopping centre where previous to this the roofscape was varied and broken by a number of church spires and varied streets. It is intended that this area should look to re-kindle this unique identity to aid the user orientation and legibility of the town centre. Traditional roof forms which bring with it a sense of being a collective of smaller vertical buildings is important to avoid homogeneous blocks and singular identities. Where new anchor uses are proposed this should vary from this and with this create clear hierarchy is the townscape.

Active Frontages: The frontages are described within the ground floor uses, but this should also be considered with upper floor uses including balconies, winter gardens and windows that allow excellent views both in and out of the development.

No unit should be provided with excessive frontage that will not provide a functional need and as a result form a blank aspect to the street. Applications should describe how these frontages will be used and provide illustrations on design intent.

Base of the building and Thresholds: The buildings should provide a clear relationship to the street with strong active frontages. Residential entrances should be located away from commercial frontages, but where possible provide active ground floor functions themselves with amenity spaces and active lobbies, or on side streets own front doors with defensible space provision. Hotels should provide active ground floor functions with entrance lobbies, amenity spaces and restaurants opening to the street.

Shop fronts should have a clear zone for signage that provides a consistent approach.

Design Quality: This is a landmark location in the town and design quality in appearance, materiality and relationship to context is paramount. External Design review input would be expected for any major application being submitted for peer review of the proposals.

Key Masterplan Development Principles:

- Densify the town centre with a mixed use environment and reduce outdated retail units within the heart of the town
- Consolidate the retail core to a tighter footprint which connects from the bus station to Borough Road, Charing Cross to Argyle Street.
- Create a more permeable town centre with views into the town from the external streets as well as new active frontages along Borough Road.
- Capitalise upon key view corridor considerations with framing of view to Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral, Birkenhead Priory, and the surrounding streets.
- Enhance, improve and reactivate the quality of the high street to Grange Road with improved existing and new active retail frontage
- Listed building context around Charing Cross.
- Transforming Borough Road into an active and green edge to the town centre, reducing the highways and creating a new linear park with integrated cycleways and SuDS.
- This site is allocated to provide new homes as part of the emerging Local Plan.
- Active ground floor uses responding to a high footfall future context.
- Landmark gateway building to the corner of Borough Road and Whetstone Lane
- A mix of new town centre homes, potential for a market driven hotel, and new leisure spaces to the ground floor and maximum active commercial frontages.
- New enhanced connected public realm.
- External lighting is a key consideration and potential attractor to a new night time economy.



Figure 6.2.10 - Parameter Land Use Plan

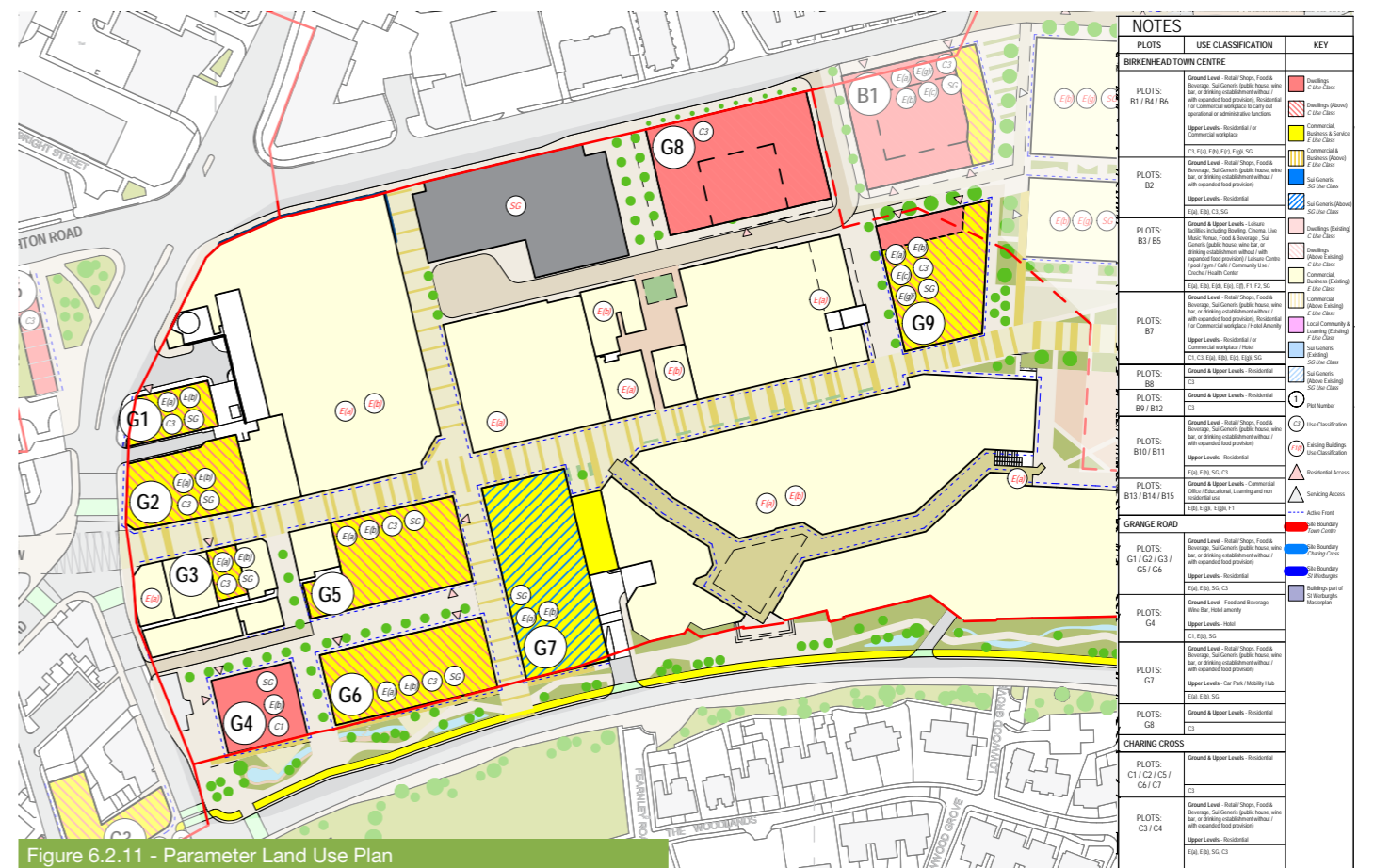


Figure 6.2.11 - Parameter Land Use Plan

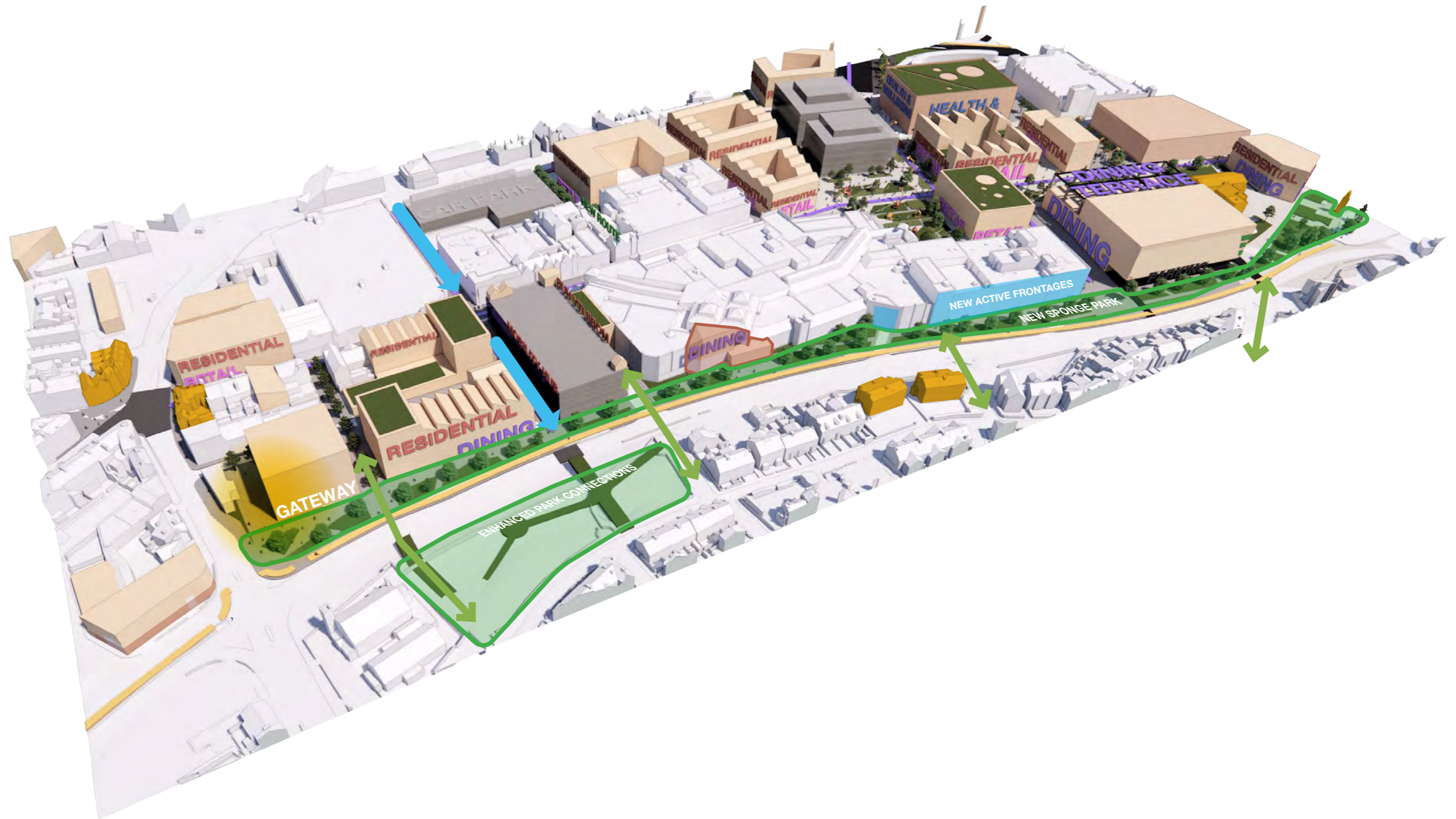


Figure 6.2.12 - Birkenhead town centre West Massing Diagram

Emerging Planning Policy Appraisal

Grange Road Plots G1 to G9:

The Masterplan illustrates uses falling within E(a), (b), (c), (g) and Sui Generis (Drinking Establishment) across Plots G1 to G7 and G9, together with a C3 use on the upper floors. A C1 Hotel use is also identified on Plot G4 and a Sui Generis Multi-storey Car Park is also identified on Plot G7. A C3 use is identified on Plot G8.

Plots G1 to G9 are all identified as falling within a Town Centre in the emerging Local Plan.

Emerging Local Plan Policy WS 11.2 (Hierarchy of Retail Centres) identifies that Birkenhead town centre is the borough's main comparison-shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities and other main town centre uses.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) identifies main town centre uses as: retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Emerging Local Plan Policy WS 11.6 (Residential Development in Centres) advises that, in centres, residential development will be permitted upper floors within retail and commercial frontages including within primary shopping areas, provided that the operations of existing and future businesses and community facilities are not adversely affected.

A multi-storey car park does not sit within any use class – it is Sui Generis. Whilst it cannot be reasonably described as a main town centre use, its role and function is to serve those who wish to visit the town centre and, as such, can be described as being

complimentary to the main town centre uses. Any planning application would need to justify the siting of the multi-storey car park, but it is not envisaged that such a proposal would be opposed.

As such, the uses illustrated on the Masterplan are deemed to comply with both the adopted and emerging Development Plan and as such, the principle of said development is deemed to be acceptable.

Generic Emerging Local Plan Policies applicable to the Masterplan

Policy WS 3.2 (Housing Density) advises that, within the Urban Core & Town Centres Density Zones (RES-DZ2), the minimum density should be 60 dwellings per hectare.

Policy WS 3.3 (Affordable Housing Requirements) states that, within Viability Zones 1 (VZ-1) and 2 (VZ[1]2), proposals for new-build market housing of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide tenure blind affordable housing within the site at 10% unless up to date and robust evidence indicates otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) no longer requires First Homes or a specific percentage for affordable home ownership to be provided. The mix of affordable housing provided will therefore need to reflect the most up-to-date identified local needs.

Policy WS 3.4 (Housing Mix) advises that, within identified Regeneration Areas, a minimum of 30% of market dwellings will be developed for larger dwellings of three or more bedroom.

Policy WS 5.2 (Open Space Provision) states that, new residential development will be required to contribute to the improvement and enhancement of open space, based on the following standards:

- The provision of 37sqm of publicly accessible open space per person, of which 2.5sqm per person will be for equipped children's play or 80sqm per dwelling, of which 6sqm will be for equipped children's play; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space or designated Tourism Area of 1.5ha or above; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped open-access facility for children's play.

Where 50 or more new dwellings will be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space of 1.5 ha or above but not within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped facility for

children's play, appropriate provision must be made on a site of no less than 0.40 ha.

New on-site open space should be provided as a single site for public recreation, centrally located to serve the development as a whole unless additional provision is required to secure appropriate access to safe children's play within 400m of each new dwelling. Within Regeneration Areas, strategic provision should be identified within an appropriate Masterplan or neighbourhood framework.

Where appropriate on-site provision would not be achievable, alternative well-designed, high quality open space must be provided, which may include access to formal or informal areas for local recreation or play, waterfront access, tree lined streets, green roofs, access to community growing areas, bespoke approaches to community involvement in maintenance and improved access to appropriate strategic provision.



Figure 6.2.12 - 3D Visual along Borough Road looking from the junction of Whetstone Lane

6.3 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD //

Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)
MASTERPLAN AREA

Ground Floor Use: With the potential for the provision of a leisure hub into the heart of the retail core, the sites adjacent to Conway Park Station offer fantastic potential for a distinct new family focused housing development to be established.

It would be expected that ground floor use would be focused on residential own front door town house development or apartment development adjacent to the spine roads of Conway Street or Europa Boulevard.

Europa Boulevard offers potential for some small scale local retail / leisure amenity provision to locations adjacent to the station entrance and opposite the college, or to corner locations where residential use may either be less attractive or offer better commercial use.

Two new buildings are proposed to Europa Square with the preference for residential use, but with commercial frontage facing onto a retained small surface car park providing convenient access into the town centre. Residential amenity / high quality entrance lobbies could be used to supplement this frontage, whilst the frontages away from the footfall should have a residential focus.

Building plot B8 has been identified as having the potential for hotel use or workspace use at upper floor levels, whilst building B7 has been identified to also have the potential for commercial workspace use, providing flexibility for the future market demand. Entrances for these uses should be focused on Europa Square or Conway Street to provide engaging street scenes.

Upper Floor Use: The use within the plots to north of Europa Square are to be residential at upper floor levels either with single town house dwellings, or in apartment format.

To the south of Conway Street aligned to Europa Square the intention is for the masterplan to provide flexibility to respond to market demand with hotel, residential or workspace uses identified.

The Masterplan requirement for these uses will be to provide active engaging frontages addressing all street frontages with balconies or communal amenity space

with residential use activating the street scene.

Density: Residential Density would be expected to significantly exceed a minimum of 60dph in-line with the emerging Local Plan Policy WS 3.2 - Housing Density Grain: Buildings should ensure that the building alignment allows the view corridors to be maintained as identified. This over provision is expected to be achieved through the provision of apartment town centre buildings to the extent of their respective development plots to create active parts of the street scene.

Response to neighbouring buildings: Central Neighbourhood is being considered as a more residential focused neighbourhood in response to it's wider family housing neighbours, both helping to consolidate town centre uses into the core of the town and with this clarify the land-use intent for this quarter of the masterplan.

There are two Grade II listed buildings to be considered; The Crown Public House, and the Conway Centre Building both front Conway Street, and provide important context to respond to with building design and scale. However, further to this there are also a number of non listed heritage assets that should be considered; Hamilton Building and Thompson's Mission to Hemingford Street, and terraced houses fronting Claughton Road to the south. The Hamilton Building and Crown Public House provide the principal neighbours to respond to, and buildings should respect their historic setting.

New developments close to these buildings may require Heritage Impact Assessment or townscape visual impact assessment.

Europa Boulevard has a number of larger commercial and educational buildings with a distinct town centre outlook. These buildings require the frontage of Europa Boulevard to provide a scale of building that is appropriate in this context and offer the potential for ground floor activation as identified.

Land has been allocated for a new future substation which sits north of Europa Pools along the northern



Figure 6.3.1 - Masterplan area highlighting Woodside Landing Stage



Figure 6.3.2 - Proposed building heights



Figure 6.3.3 - Aerial View of Masterplan



Figure 6.3.4 - Abode, Procter and Matthews, Cambridge



Figure 6.3.5 - Goldsmith Street, Mikhail Riches, Norwich



Figure 6.3.6 - Landscape Masterplan



Figure 6.3.7 - Marmalade Lane, Mole Architects, Cambridge

edge of the site.

Roofscape: There should be a distinct difference from the buildings proposed to front Europa Boulevard and those within the site. These should be more domestic in nature, and more finely varied to suit their individual occupier nature.

There is opportunity to landmark a number of things along Europa Boulevard to the North the proposed Dock Branch Park, to the centre the Conway Park Station entrance and to the south the junction with Conway Street and its route directing people into the heart of the town centre.

Active Frontages: The frontages are described within the ground floor uses, but this should also be considered with upper floor uses including balconies, winter gardens and windows that allow excellent views both in and out of the development.

No unit should be provided with excessive frontage that will not provide a functional need and as a result form a blank aspect to the street. Applications should describe how these frontages will be used and provide illustrations on design intent.

Base of the building and Thresholds: The buildings should provide a clear relationship to the street with strong active frontages. Residential entrances should provide a strong identity to the street and make the space feel active. Centralised residential amenity / entrance lobbies, and small scale amenity provision should open to the street.

Residential entrances and ground floor apartments should be provided with defensible space in the provision of small front garden areas and low walls / railings to allow over looking but also a provision of passive security to the street.

Shop fronts should have a clear zone for signage that provides a consistent approach.

Design Quality: This new residential neighbourhood has the potential to offer a significant new community being brought into the town centre. Design excellence of home design, elevations and materiality will be key within this area to ensure high quality homes and places are created.

Key Masterplan Development Principles:

- Full redevelopment potential to create a new residential neighbourhood that integrates with the existing housing south of Conway Street and connects into the arrival hub of Conway Park Station.
- Respond to the listed building context along Conway Street
- This site is allocated to provide new homes as part of the emerging Local Plan.
- New enhanced connected public realm which connects from Europa Boulevard into the town centre.
- External lighting is a key consideration to ensure safe and welcoming new spaces - with a key focus on Europa Boulevard.
- Housing standards of high design and material quality fit for purpose and future proofed.
- Activating Europa Boulevard with active commercial and residential frontage.
- Design that responds to the substation and still provides a pleasant living environment for residents.

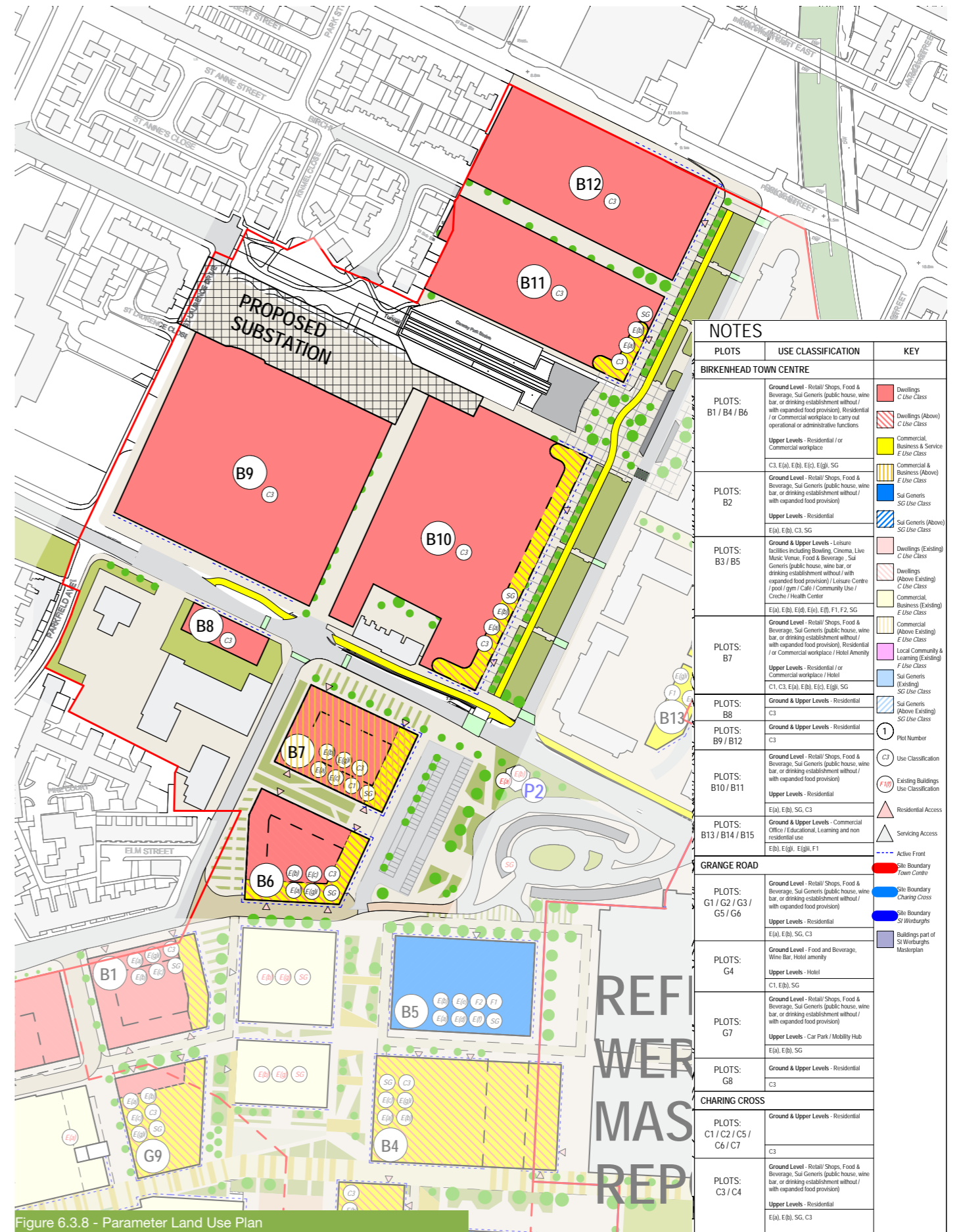


Figure 6.3.8 - Parameter Land Use Plan



Figure 6.3.9 - Central Neighbourhood Massing Diagram

Emerging Planning Policy Appraisal

Birkenhead town centre

Plot B8:

The Masterplan illustrates C3 on Plot B9.

In the emerging Local Plan, Plot B8 falls within the Regeneration and Masterplan Area boundaries, without being explicitly identified for a specific use. Policy RA 4 (Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area) identifies that, outside of the specific Housing Allocations, the council will aim to deliver 1,000 dwellings across the Regeneration Area. MPA-RA4.1 (Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter Masterplan Area) advises that development proposals should conform with the delivery of a mixed-use commercial quarter and residential neighbourhood.

As such, the principle of C3 development on Plot B8 is deemed to be acceptable, and conforms with the emerging Development Plan.

Plots B9 to B12:

The Masterplan illustrates C3 uses at Plots B9 and B12 - the parcel to the rear of B9 has previous consent for a new Energy Centre as part of the Wirral Growth Company Plans which the Masterplan is retaining as key supporting infrastructure. At Plots B10 and B11 Use Classes E(a), (b) and Sui Generis (Drinking Establishments), with C3 above are proposed.

Plots B9 falls within the Regeneration and Masterplan Area boundaries within the emerging Local Plan, but are not explicitly allocated for a specific use.

Emerging Local Plan Policy RA 4 (Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area) identifies that, outside of the specific Housing Allocations, the council will aim to deliver 1,000 dwellings across the Regeneration Area. MPA-RA4.1 (Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter Masterplan Area) advises that development proposals should conform with the delivery of a mixed-use commercial quarter and residential neighbourhood.

Plots B10 to B12 are allocated in the emerging Local Plan as Housing Allocations. Plots B10 falls within RES-

RA4.2 - WGC Town Centre Plot G, South of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead, a 1.24 hectares site, identified for 92 units. Plots B11 and B12 fall within RES-RA4.3 - WGC Town Centre Plots I and J, North of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead, a 1.43 hectares site, identified for 185 units.

Given the advanced nature of the emerging Local Plan, significant weight in the decision-making process would be applied to the policies contained within the document, which is supportive of development proposals which conform with the delivery of a mixed-use commercial quarter and residential neighbourhood.

As such, it is envisaged that the C3 development proposed on these Plots would be supported given the advanced nature of the policies and guidance contained within the emerging Local Plan.

Plots B13 to B15:

On Plots B13 and B14, uses within E(b) and E(g) are identified within the Masterplan. Within Plot B24, uses within E(b), E(g) and F1 are illustrated.

In the emerging Local Plan, Plots B13 to B15 fall within the Regeneration and Masterplan Area boundaries, but are not specifically allocated. MPA-RA4.1 (Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter Masterplan Area) advises that development proposals should conform with the delivery of a mixed-use commercial quarter and residential neighbourhood.

As such, the uses proposed within the Masterplan are deemed to conform with both the adopted and the emerging Development Plan.

Generic Emerging Local Plan Policies applicable to the Masterplan

Policy WS 3.2 (Housing Density) advises that, within the Urban Core & Town Centres Density Zones (RES-DZ2), the minimum density should be 60 dwellings per hectare.

Policy WS 3.3 (Affordable Housing Requirements) states that, within Viability Zones 1 (VZ-1) and 2 (VZ[1]2), proposals for new-build market housing of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide tenure blind affordable housing within the site at 10% unless up to date and robust evidence indicates otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) no longer requires First Homes or a specific percentage for affordable home ownership to be provided. The mix of affordable housing provided will therefore need to reflect the most up-to-date identified local needs.

Policy WS 3.4 (Housing Mix) advises that, within identified Regeneration Areas, a minimum of 30% of market dwellings will be developed for larger dwellings of three or more bedroom.

Policy WS 5.2 (Open Space Provision) states that, new residential development will be required to contribute to the improvement and enhancement of open space, based on the following standards:

- The provision of 37sqm of publicly accessible open space per person, of which 2.5sqm per person will be for equipped children's play or 80sqm per dwelling, of which 6sqm will be for equipped children's play; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space or designated Tourism Area of 1.5ha or above; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped open-access facility for children's play.

Where 50 or more new dwellings will be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space of 1.5 ha or above but not within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped facility for

children's play, appropriate provision must be made on a site of no less than 0.40 ha.

New on-site open space should be provided as a single site for public recreation, centrally located to serve the development as a whole unless additional provision is required to secure appropriate access to safe children's play within 400m of each new dwelling. Within Regeneration Areas, strategic provision should be identified within an appropriate Masterplan or neighbourhood framework.

Where appropriate on-site provision would not be achievable, alternative well-designed, high quality open space must be provided, which may include access to formal or informal areas for local recreation or play, waterfront access, tree lined streets, green roofs, access to community growing areas, bespoke approaches to community involvement in maintenance and improved access to appropriate strategic provision.



Figure 6.3.10 - 3D Visual from Cloughton Road looking towards Europa Boulevard

6.4 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS EUROPA SQUARE //

Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1)
MASTERPLAN AREA

Ground Floor Use: Adelphi Street has a direct relationship with the Dock Branch Park Neighbourhood, which sets a residential context surrounding the Dock Branch Park corridor bisecting the Laird Grid. A new 'carbarn' is proposed within the adjacent cluster as well as new infill apartments and houses. The existing buildings which front Europa Boulevard and Conway Street all have a commercial or educational purpose, and as such the land use proposed to this street is in support of this employment / educational outlook and provide some containment to this urban block.

It would be expected that ground floor use would be focused on commercial workplace or educational use, but with the allowance for some small scale provision of amenity in the form of small cafés / local retail offer only so as to not compete with the centre.

Upper Floor Use: The use at upper floors should be focused on providing expansion space for workspace or educational use.

Density: There is no residential density expectations for these development plots.

Response to neighbouring buildings: As noted these is a clear relationship to the existing buildings which front Europa Boulevard an Conway Street. To Conway Street these mixed with recent office buildings and the Grade II Listed Conway Centre Building, or other smaller heritage buildings which line the street leading towards Argyle Street including the Grade II Listed Conway Building.

New developments close to these buildings may require Heritage Impact Assessment or townscape visual impact assessment.

The identified development plots have the clearest relationship to the commercial and educational buildings to Europa Boulevard, and it is these that would be expected to play the key context to respond to within the masterplan context. With the proposal to introduce a mixture of residential and car parking to the infill plots around the Dock Branch Park, it should be acknowledged that this represents the potential for

future more sensitive neighbours to any development and façades should take account of this context.

Roofscape: The buildings which front Europa Boulevard present a mixture of traditional pitched, flat roof and even barrel roofed form, and as such there is flexibility to the approach taken with the roof form to new proposed buildings to respond to the individual context and design approach taken.

Active Frontages: The frontages are described within the ground floor uses, but this should also be considered with upper floor uses providing as much overlooking to the street as possible.

Base of the building and Thresholds: The buildings should provide a clear relationship to the street with strong active frontages.

Entrances should be located to activate Adelphi Street as much as possible locating any central reception / amenity provision to look on to the street. Routes leading to the Station or Conway Street provide key points of activation for the street scene and should form the focus for active frontages / entrances.

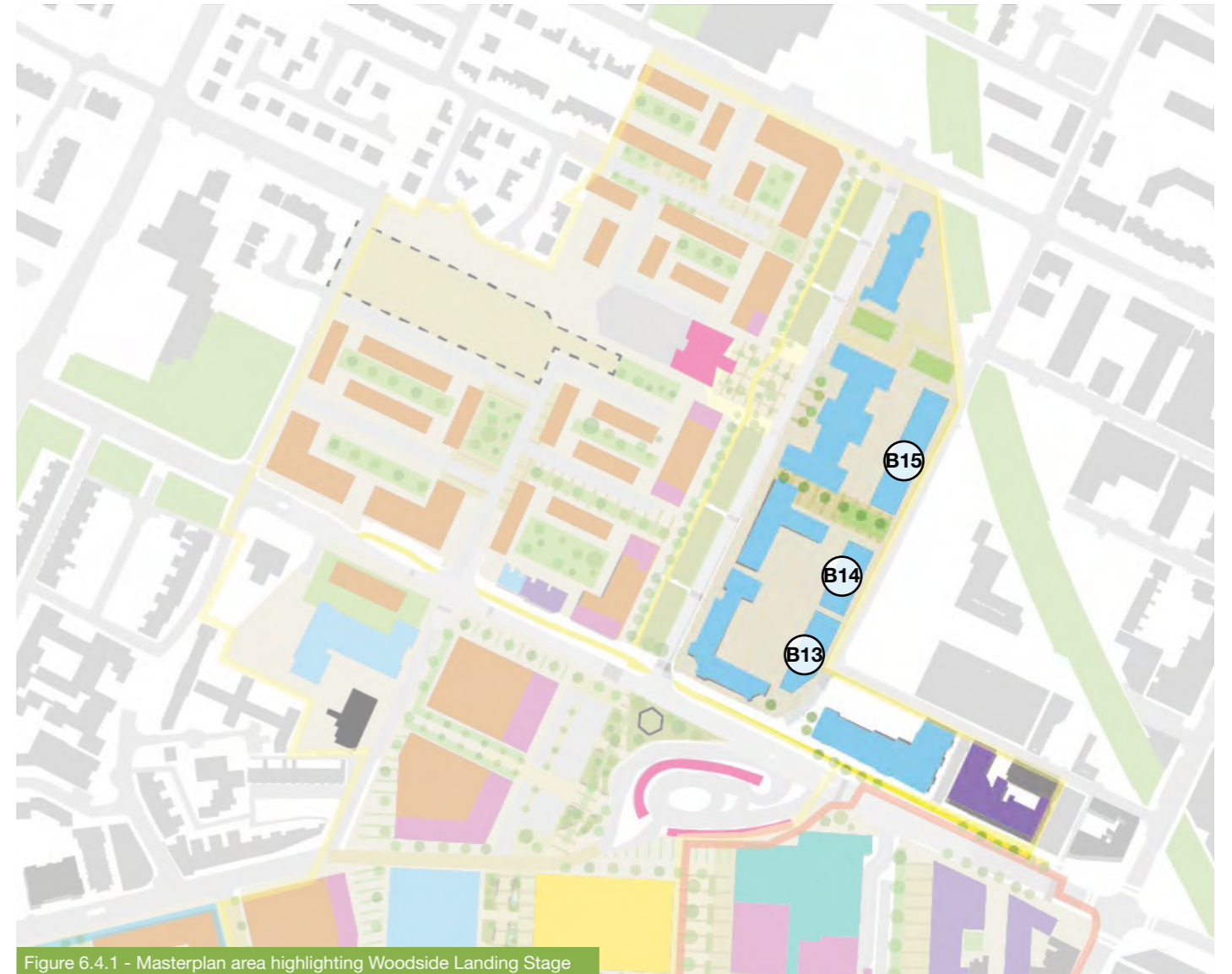


Figure 6.4.1 - Masterplan area highlighting Woodside Landing Stage



Figure 6.4.2 - Proposed building heights



Figure 6.4.3 - Aerial View of Masterplan



Figure 6.4.4 - Flat Iron Building, Rosenbergs Architects



Figure 6.4.5 - Shanghai In-Bund Office, HPP Architects



Figure 6.4.6 - Office Building, Ultra Architects



Figure 6.4.7 - Landscape Masterplan



Figure 6.4.8 - Albina Yard, LEVER Architects



Figure 6.4.9 - Office Building, MAD arkitekter

Design Quality: These plots provide the potential for high quality new employment and educational space provision. High quality facade approaches and environmental sustainability will be a key functional aspect of these buildings.

Key Masterplan Development Principles:

- Densify the town centre with a mixed use environment and develop surface car parking sites which detract from the street scene.
- Activating Adelphi Street with future employment and educational buildings that respond to the neighbouring Dock Branch Neighbourhood and the existing buildings along Europa Boulevard
- Create a more permeable town centre with streets that feel safe and welcoming.
- Respond to the listed building context along Conway Street.
- Highest Design and material quality expectations.
- New enhanced public realm that connects into Dock Branch Park, Europa Boulevard and the town centre.
- External lighting is a key consideration to ensure safe and welcoming new spaces - with a key focus on Europa Boulevard and Adelphi Street.

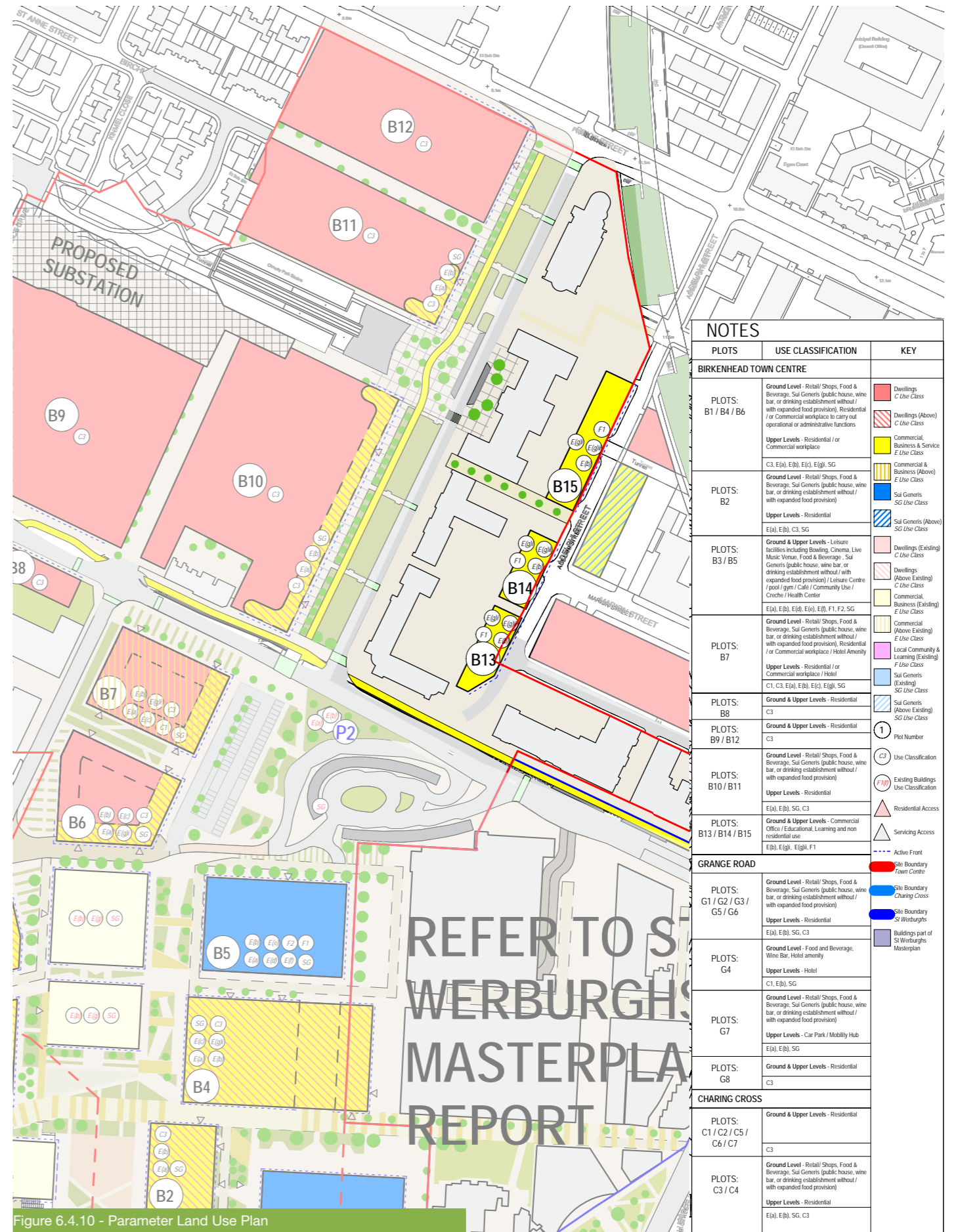


Figure 6.4.10 - Parameter Land Use Plan

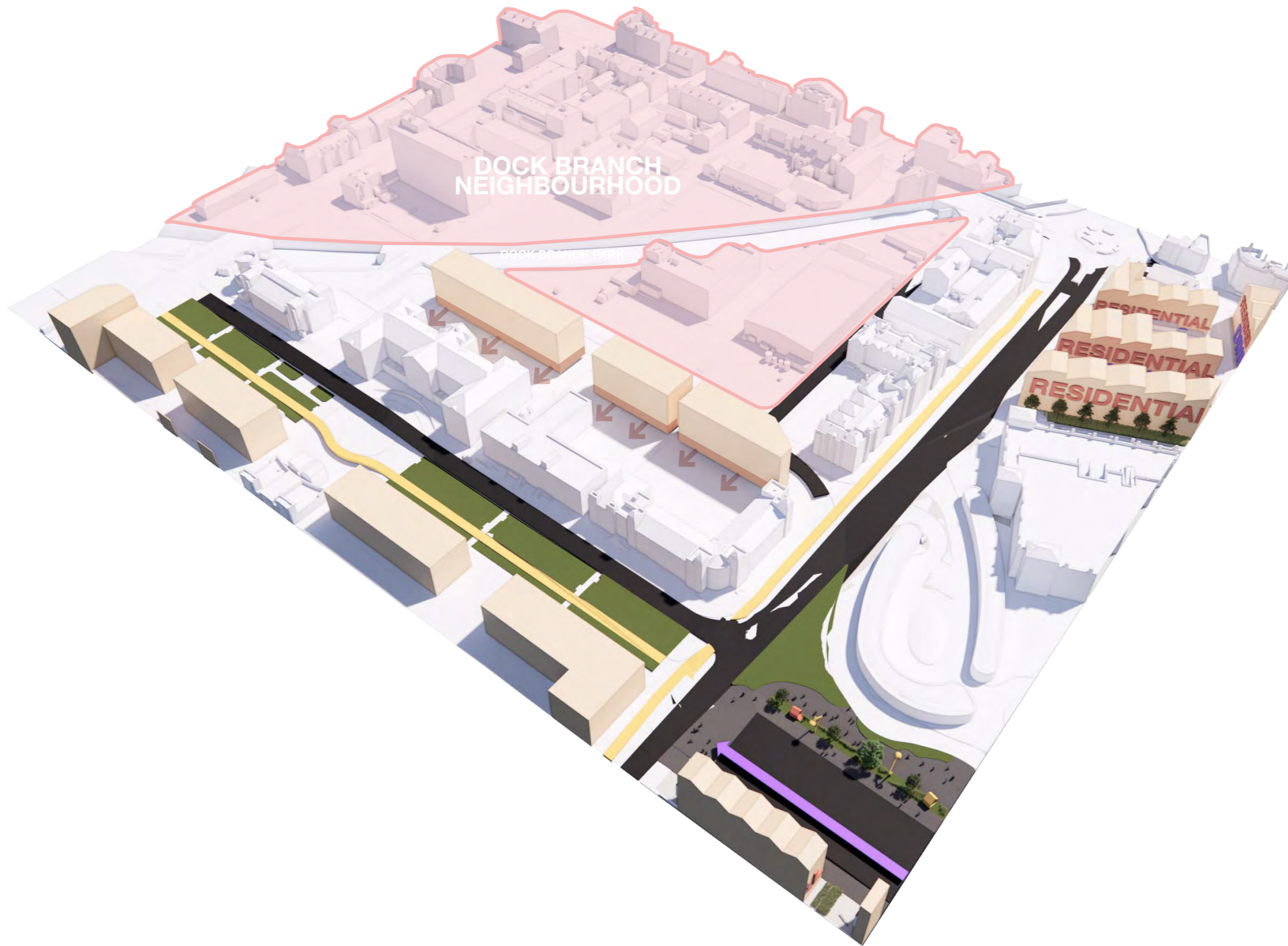


Figure 6.4.11 - Europa Square Massing Diagram

6.5 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS CHARING CROSS //

Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.2)
MASTERPLAN AREA

Ground Floor Use: Charing Cross is already a vibrant mixed use neighbourhood with a focus on independent retail, leisure, international cuisine, and culture with the Little Theatre. The development sites identified within the illustrative masterplan focus primarily on the sites which are vacant or offer the potential for intensified use. Most are focused on residential use with own front doors to largely town house type accommodation, other than the potential for plot C4 which identifies the opportunity subject to owners interest and an appropriate scheme to bring forwards a new development in a landmark location that could offer a new or re provision of the commercial / retail use today with increased space at upper floor levels.

The primary active streets within Charing Cross are; Whetstone Lane, Oxton Road and Grange Road West. Oxton Road has a wider role providing access towards Oxton, whilst Grange Road West provides a potentially quieter road leading eventually to local residential streets. There is the potential for future strategies to be developed to reduce the extent of retail / commercial properties back to Eastbourne / Westbourne Road subject to long term demand and viable use. This strategy would look to set out a clear plan for incremental conversion of these heritage buildings back to residential use, and the introduction of defensible space to the street to enable this.

Upper Floor Use: A key driver is to provide passive surveillance to the ground floor streets and spaces to create an environment that feels both safe and welcoming to Charing Cross users. The primary upper level use would be proposed to be residential within this neighbourhood, providing new residents and increased demand on the businesses to help create a sustainable and attractive gateway to the high street.

Density: Residential Density would be expected to be in line with the minimum of 60dph in-line with the emerging Local Plan Policy WS 3.2 - Housing Density Grain: Buildings should ensure that the building alignment allows the view corridors to be maintained as identified. Some over provision could be expected to be achieved through the provision of apartment town centre buildings developed to the extent of their respective

development plots to create active players in the street scene.

Response to neighbouring buildings: There are a number of points to consider in developing high quality design responses within the Charing Cross;

Charing Cross has two Grade II Listed buildings to the junctions with Grange Road, and to the south of Borough Road / Whetstone Lane is the Clifton Park Conservation Area which is seen as an asset to be drawn into the town centre through the proposed works highways works to improve pedestrian connections and greening of the corridor.

To Claughton Road, the Wirral Methodists Church and community Centre sits adjacent to the Hive - the youth Zone for Birkenhead - which alongside the Little Theatre provides excellent community facilities. With the opening of the Hive, the former Methodists Youth Club is now redundant and is owned by Wirral Council - this presents an opportunity to redevelop this site and by doing so create new visibility to the front door of the Hive Youth Club which is accessed via Bright Street and is today hidden from external view.

The illustrative masterplan has identified the potential for two council surface car parks to be redeveloped for residential purposes. Both were formerly residential sites, and car park surveys show a low utilisation in particular the Barton Street car park which is today a night-time anti-social space, and would benefit from active uses providing passive surveillance. It will be important to maintain delivery access to the existing businesses in any redevelopment.

Another option for potential redevelopment identified is with development plot C4, this is exploring two scenarios; one where the small vacant plot to the Whetstone Lane junction is occupied, and another where a larger redevelopment is explored to bring new scale and upper level activity to this junction.

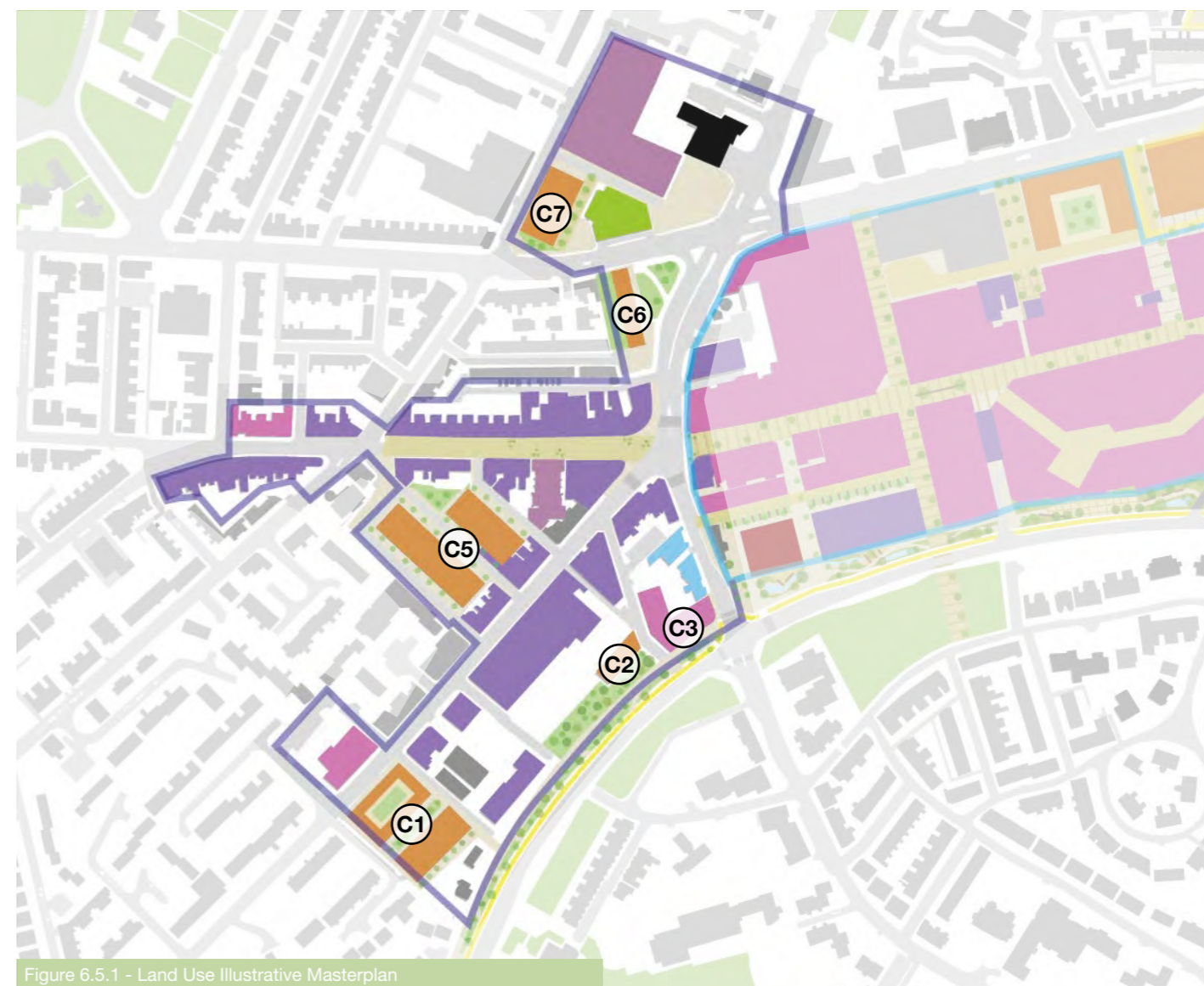


Figure 6.5.1 - Land Use Illustrative Masterplan

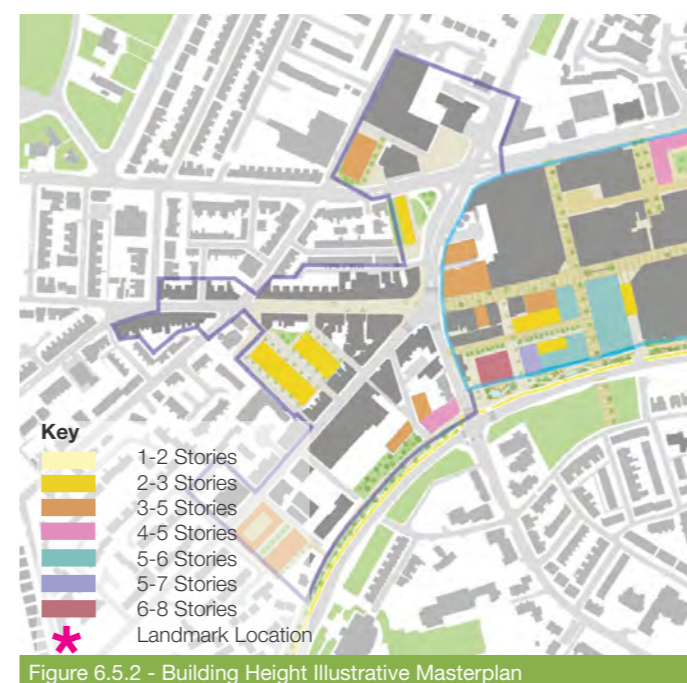


Figure 6.5.2 - Building Height Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 6.5.3 - Aerial View of Masterplan



Figure 6.3.10 - 3D Visual St Johns Square looking towards the new office buildings

Roofscape: The roofscape in Charing Cross is largely traditional pitched roof forms, but with characterful identity of individual buildings each with a unique approach. New development within this area would be expected to reflect the content of the area. It would not be envisaged that any tall buildings are introduced, rather a varied and interesting roofscape that may push a storey or two above the datum at most.

Active Frontages: The frontages are described within the ground floor uses, but this should also be considered with upper floor uses including balconies, and windows that shape to frame views to the surrounding street or the Liverpool skyline / wider Birkenhead town centre which is possible from upper levels in this area which sits along a natural ridge line.

No retail / commercial unit should be provided with excessive frontage that will not provide a functional need and as a result form a blank aspect to the street. Applications should describe how these frontages will be used and provide illustrations on design intent.

Base of the building and Thresholds: The buildings should provide a clear relationship to the street with strong active frontages. Residential entrances should provide a strong identity to the street and make the space feel active. Centralised residential amenity / entrance lobbies, and small scale amenity provision should open to the street.

Residential entrances and ground floor apartments should be provided with defensible space in the provision of small front garden areas and low walls / railings to allow over looking but also a provision of passive security to the street.

Shop fronts should have a clear zone for signage that provides a consistent approach.

Design Quality: The existing Charing Cross area has a unique identity and character, it will be important that any new development is in keeping with this in terms of materiality and building form approach. High quality contemporary additions should be explored as unique additions to the fabric.

Existing streets and shop fronts are varied and would benefit from repair to improve the general perception of the area. New works to shop fronts and properties within the area would be expected to confirm the shop front design guide, or propose suitable alternatives as part of the areas unique identity.

Key Masterplan Development Principles:

- Infill development to vacant sites with a focus on residential use.
- Create new permeability and activity to back street spaces to improve the general feeling of safety and welcome within the area
- Future potential to consolidate small scale retail to Grange Road West over time with planned residential use approach.
- Respond to the listed building context around Charing Cross.
- Housing standards of high design and material quality fit for purpose and future proofed
- New enhanced public realm proposed within Charing Cross and Grange Road West pedestrianisation connecting into the town centre.
- External lighting is a key consideration to ensure safe and welcoming streets and spaces.

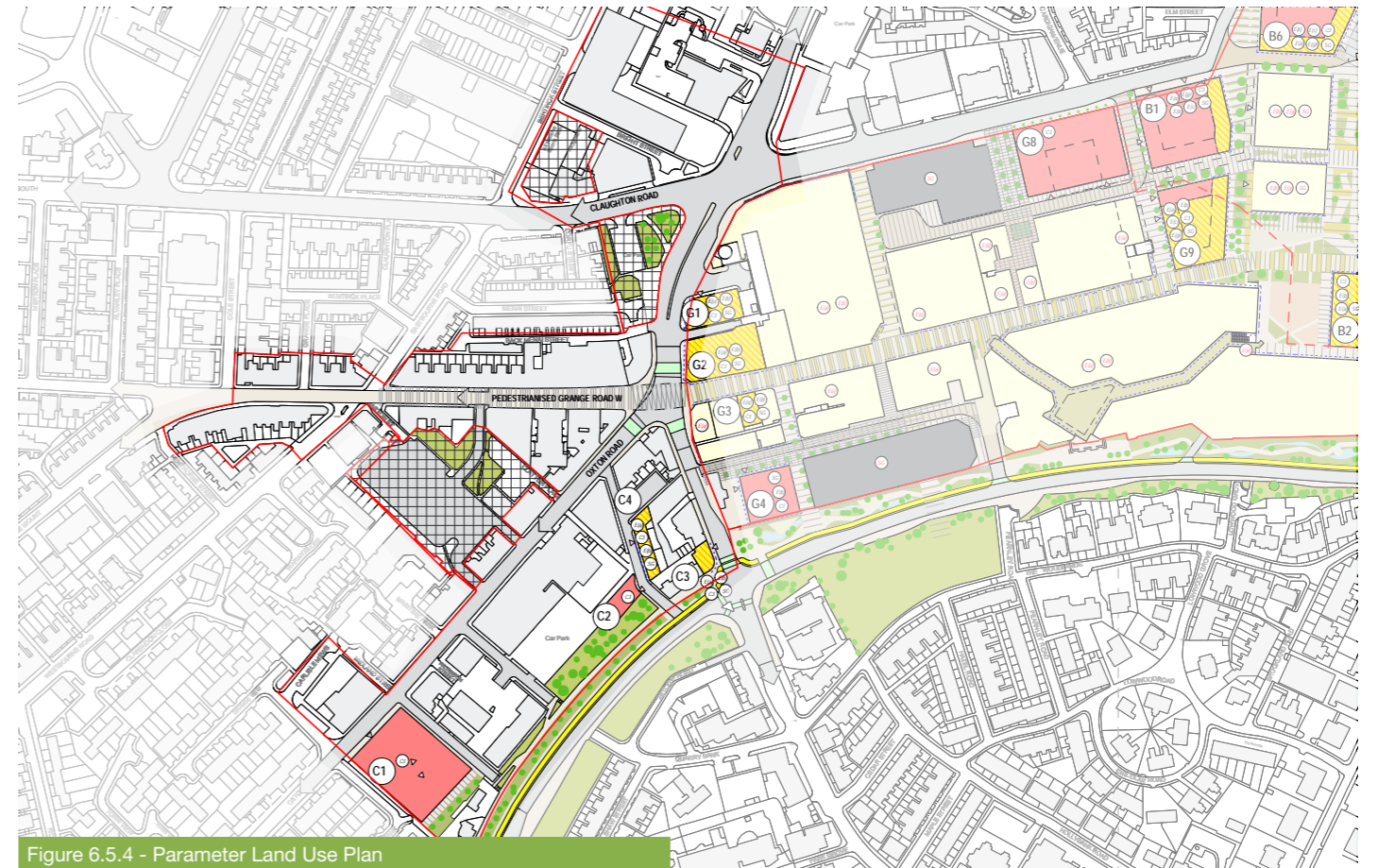


Figure 6.5.4 - Parameter Land Use Plan

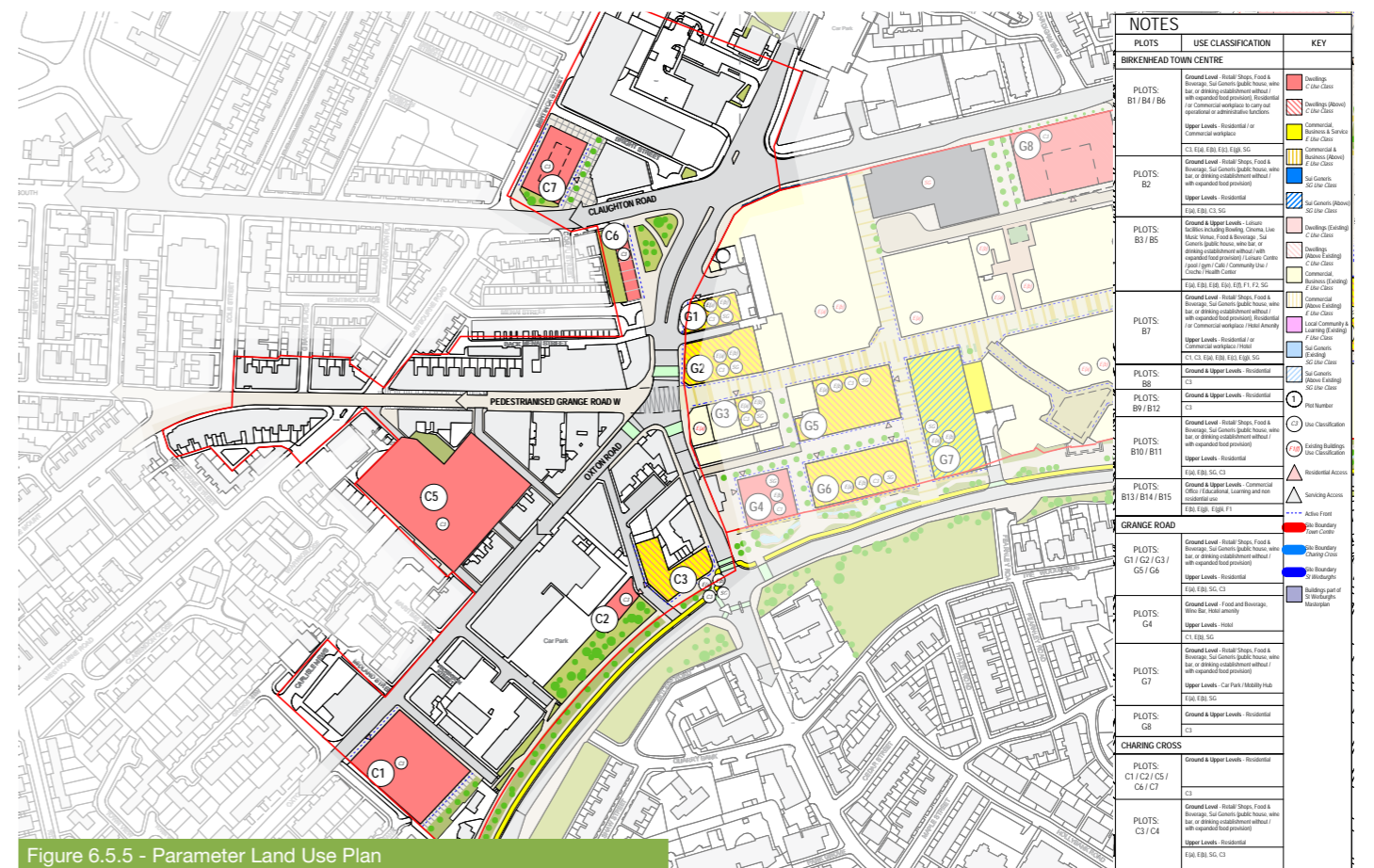


Figure 6.5.5 - Parameter Land Use Plan

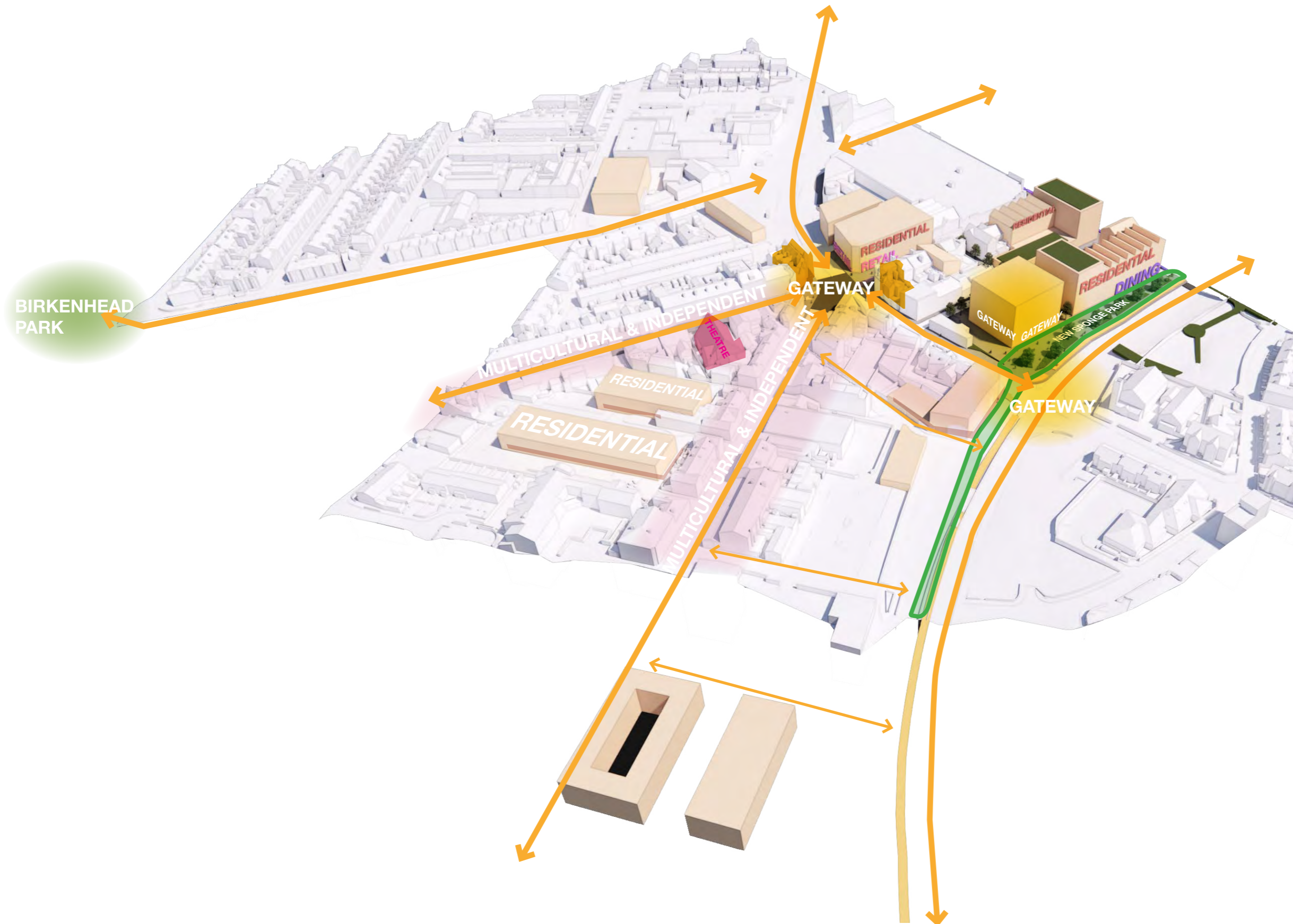


Figure 6.5.6 - Charing Cross Massing Diagram

Emerging Planning Policy Appraisal

Charing Cross Plots C1 to C7:

Plots C1, C2, C6 and C7 are identified for C3 on the Masterplan. Plots C3 to C7 are identified for C3 above uses falling within E(a), (b) and Sui Generis (Drinking Establishments).

Plots C1 to C5 are identified within the emerging Local Plan, where Policy WS 11.2 (Hierarchy of Retail Centres) advises that the primary focus will be for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities and other main town centre uses.

Emerging Local Plan Policy WS 11.6 (Residential Development in Centres) advises that, in centres, residential development will be permitted upper floors within retail and commercial frontages including within primary shopping areas, provided that the operations of existing and future businesses and community facilities are not adversely affected.

Plot C7 is not specifically designated within the emerging Local Plan, but falls within the Charing Cross, where MPA-RA4.2 (Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area) advises proposals should provide for the delivery of a mixed-use retail led neighbourhood, which retains retail and active ground floor uses.

Plot C7 is identified in the emerging Local Plan as falling within a Mixed Use Area- reference MUA-RA4.2. As per the commentary contained within the Policy Baseline section, the emerging Local Plan only appears to provide specific commentary on MUA-RA4.1, which is the area around Hamilton Square. It is assumed, however, that the same uses in MUA-RA4.1 are applicable to MUA-RA4.2, which includes a mix of modern, contemporary uses, including offices, residential and retail.

The uses identified within the Masterplan are deemed to be fully compliant with the emerging Local Plan.

Generic Emerging Local Plan Policies applicable to the Masterplan

Policy WS 3.2 (Housing Density) advises that, within the Urban Core & Town Centres Density Zones (RES-DZ2), the minimum density should be 60 dwellings per hectare.

Policy WS 3.3 (Affordable Housing Requirements) states that, within Viability Zones 1 (VZ-1) and 2 (VZ[1]2), proposals for new-build market housing of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide tenure blind affordable housing within the site at 10% unless up to date and robust evidence indicates otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) no longer requires First Homes or a specific percentage for affordable home ownership to be provided. The mix of affordable housing provided will therefore need to reflect the most up-to-date identified local needs.

Policy WS 3.4 (Housing Mix) advises that, within identified Regeneration Areas, a minimum of 30% of market dwellings will be developed for larger dwellings of three or more bedroom.

Policy WS 5.2 (Open Space Provision) states that, new residential development will be required to contribute to the improvement and enhancement of open space, based on the following standards:

- The provision of 37sqm of publicly accessible open space per person, of which 2.5sqm per person will be for equipped children's play or 80sqm per dwelling, of which 6sqm will be for equipped children's play; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space or designated Tourism Area of 1.5ha or above; and
- That all new dwellings should be within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped open-access facility for children's play.

Where 50 or more new dwellings will be within 720m safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space of 1.5 ha or above but not within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped facility for

children's play, appropriate provision must be made on a site of no less than 0.40 ha.

New on-site open space should be provided as a single site for public recreation, centrally located to serve the development as a whole unless additional provision is required to secure appropriate access to safe children's play within 400m of each new dwelling. Within Regeneration Areas, strategic provision should be identified within an appropriate Masterplan or neighbourhood framework.

Where appropriate on-site provision would not be achievable, alternative well-designed, high quality open space must be provided, which may include access to formal or informal areas for local recreation or play, waterfront access, tree lined streets, green roofs, access to community growing areas, bespoke approaches to community involvement in maintenance and improved access to appropriate strategic provision.



6.6 POLICY CONTEXT //

REGIONAL AND LOCAL REGENERATION AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy (LCRGS)
The LCRGS outlines the City Region's Strategy for Growth, acknowledging the unique strengths and assets of each of the local authority areas and communities. The strategy is built upon three pillars - Productivity, People and Place, each with a strategic goal.

"Productivity" focuses on how to maximise the potential of the LCR's sector strengths and related assets and focuses on starting and growing more successful businesses by promoting innovations and entrepreneurial activity.

"People" aims to improve and increase skills, developing existing talent and attracting new talent for sustainable growth. This includes falling unemployment with the resident employment rate of the 16-plus population increasing to 58% by 2025.

"Place" looks improve transport, energy and digital infrastructure and protect and enhance cultural and environmental assets; the aims of this pillar will be achieved through increased demand for public services such as health and education, with additional demand for public transport as well.

The strategy seeks to target investment at major employment sites, spaces and places of potential economic opportunity, the regeneration of town centres and disadvantaged communities and environmental improvements.

Local Regeneration Context

The local regeneration context for the sites includes the following documents:

- Wirral Strategic Regeneration Framework (2017-2020)
- Wirral Climate Change Strategy 'Cool 2' (December 2019)
- Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025
- Wirral Retail and Centres Study (2019)
- Birkenhead Framework 2040 - Public Consultation Report (25 June 2021)

- Draft Central Birkenhead Neighbourhood Framework (April 2021)

Wirral Strategic Regeneration Framework (2017 - 2020)
Wirral's Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) provides the route map to driving regeneration, creating jobs and ensuring sustainable, long-term growth in Wirral's economy.

It defines Wirral's plans for future development and investment, by providing an evidence base, principles and strategic drivers on which to plan future regeneration.

The Framework sets out Wirral's ambitions, plans and vision for the borough. The opportunities set out in the Framework are based on an assessment of what is deemed realistically deliverable, but is described as requiring focused energy and resources from a range of partners, including the private sector if these are to be achieved.

Wirral consider the Strategic Regeneration Framework reflects the priorities and approach outlined within the City Region's Growth Strategy.

Birkenhead town centre is identified in the SRF as an area for 'Key Investment Opportunities' – that provides 'the key opportunities for development and investment following analysis of employment land availability, business space and feedback from developers and investors.'

The SRF's ambition is that Birkenhead town centre will 'once again be a thriving town centre of choice, a destination in its own right as a result of the range and quality of its retail, food and leisure offer, and our civic hub. Its position in the sub-region will be cemented as a second-tier centre only behind Liverpool.'
Several areas of potential are identified: maximise and grow the retail, leisure and evening economy in Birkenhead - significant given its catchment potential and the presence of key assets; all the makings of a vibrant, creative and inspiring destination with a well-established market and transport infrastructure; opportunity to redevelop and redesign existing assets

into a modern highly functioning, thriving centre with a reconfigured civic function, a new, vibrant and refocussed market dedicated to fresh produce and local goods, with a retail and leisure offer worthy of its prime location.

The SRF highlights some key investment opportunities / outputs:

- A civic cluster of 60,000sqm, incorporating civic and commercial floorspace and car parking spaces;
- Increased and improved residential offer;
- An enhanced station gateway – a recognised entry point to the town centre, bringing in visitors from the City Region and beyond;
- An entertainment and leisure offer, providing visitor and evening economy focussed space to complement the commercial opportunities;
- Total Gross Development Value across the neighbourhood in excess of in excess of £200m.

Wirral Climate Change Strategy 'Cool 2' (December 2019)

Wirral Council declared an Environment and Climate Emergency at a meeting of full council on 15 July 2019 and committed to action to address the ecological and climate crisis that we all face.

The commitment to action aims to:

- cut climate damaging pollution locally in line with global targets, whilst developing resilience to more extreme weather patterns and rising sea levels that impact Wirral
- protect and enhance biodiversity

Cool Wirral is a campaign aimed at encouraging local climate-related action in support of the climate change strategy for Wirral. The Cool Wirral Partnership co-ordinates local action on climate change. The partnership is supported by Wirral Council and meets three times a year.

- A strategy, known as Cool 2, was developed and endorsed by all partners in December 2019.
- Wirral Council has formally endorsed this new strategy and has developed its own climate emergency action plan in support.

Wirral Council is committing to acting to:

achieve 'net zero' carbon emissions associated with our activities by 2030

- promote wider action to help reach 'net zero' emissions for Wirral as a whole no later than 2041
- identify risks and prioritise nature-based solutions to build resilience to climate change
- become a 'Carbon Literate' organisation
- promote sustainable regeneration and green investment, with a brownfield first development strategy in the emerging Local Plan
- reduce unnecessary travel through planning and the use of information technology
- facilitate modal shift from fossil fuelled vehicle use to active travel, public transport and ultra-low carbon vehicles, for example, electric vehicles)
- manage our use of energy, water, and resources as efficiently as possible
- promote sustainable resource use more widely, to encourage the transition to a less wasteful 'circular economy'
- make use of cleaner renewable energy to meet our energy needs
- promote a wider shift to non-fossil fuel clean energy sources
- manage at least 30% of land in Wirral for the benefit of wildlife by 2030 (in line with government commitments)
- ensure a 20% 'net gain' in biodiversity across all council land
- increase tree planting to double Wirral's tree canopy cover
- increase the number of parks and open spaces achieving green flag status

Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025

The Community Wealth Building Strategy (CWBS) sets out our ambitions to support communities to become more independent, financially self-sufficient and take ownership of public assets to run them in ways that are beneficial to them.

Community Wealth Building is a people centred approach to local economic development. Community Wealth Building seeks to restructure the composition of the economy itself so that wealth is widely held, shared and democratised. It reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of our communities, towns and cities, and instead places control of this wealth into the hands of local people, communities, businesses and organisations.

The Strategy sets three objectives and five outcomes:

- Strategic Objective 1: Democratic Economy - An economy where decision making power is shifted from corporate managers and shareholders to a larger group of public stakeholders including, workers, customers and the community.
- Strategic Objective 2: Generative Economy - An economy with a built-in tendency to be to be socially fair and ecologically stable. A generative economy is built on a foundation of stakeholder ownership designed to generate and preserve real wealth that is shared by communities.
- Strategic Objective 3: Financial Resilience - A resilient economy is one where families and communities that hold assets (such as social networks, a home, some savings, an ownership stake in a business, a secure job) are more able to withstand knocks such as job losses or illness. It also means local public services and the community sector are less vulnerable to the shocks of austerity, budget cuts and economic recession.
- Outcome 1: Residents of Wirral have ownership of the economy and have a say in what happens to the wealth generated by their communities.
- Outcome 2: Procurement practices of Wirral anchor institutions are used to build the wealth of our local communities.
- Outcome 3: Council land and assets are used as a

base to build community wealth.

- Outcome 4: Wealth that exists in the Wirral is harnessed to increase investment in local communities.
- Outcome 5: Residents of Wirral are in secure and quality employment with progression opportunities and good terms and conditions.

Wirral Retail and Centres Study (2019)

In 2019, WYG was commissioned to undertake a Retail and Centres Study for Wirral.

This Study provides an up-to-date assessment of retail and leisure needs over a fifteen-year period to 2034, together with a review of the health of the borough's town, district and local centres. It identifies the future retail and leisure capacity of each centre, assesses the appropriateness of the centre hierarchy and reviews the boundaries to the town centres and defined retail frontages to be shown on the emerging Local Plan policies map.

The key purpose of this Study was to act as the evidence base to assist in the formulation of future development plan policy and land use allocations, as well as providing baseline information to assist in the determination of planning applications for potential retail and leisure development.

The Study explains how the NPPF identifies that LPA's planning policies should define the extent of their town centres and primary shopping areas and set out the range of uses permitted in such locations as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre.

As the main destination in Wirral, Birkenhead town centre provides a range of retail and leisure uses which draw shoppers from across the borough.

The Study recognises that the council are actively seeking to bring forward the regeneration of Birkenhead town centre. It advises that:

- Proposals to introduce a mix of additional land uses into the town centre would be fully supported by this study (and the NPPF) and will increase town centre footfall, extend dwell time and spend.
- Having regard to the importance of the market to

the town centre, its relocation needs to be carefully considered to make sure it better integrates with the rest of the town centre and is in a sufficiently prominent position with good levels of footfall to remain attractive to existing market stall operators and to potential new ones.

- In order for existing retailers and businesses in the town centre to fully benefit from the masterplan redevelopment, the integration and linkages between the masterplan area and the rest of the town centre will be important.
- The town centre evening / night-time economy is in need of improvement. The redevelopment should include a café / restaurant quarter, which is as centrally located to the retail core as possible.
- Civic uses will provide an important centrally located hub of community uses, which will provide a further reason for residents to visit the town centre and in turn link their trip with other uses in the town centre.
- It will be important to seek to provide alternative town centre premises for those retailers / leisure operators which will be displaced as a result of the proposed regeneration plans.
- The town centre contains a high number of vacant units. The potential relocation of existing displaced operators resulting from the masterplan development will assist in some of these units being re-occupied.

The delivery of the masterplan itself will also make Birkenhead more attractive to operators and investors, which could, in turn, further reduce vacancy levels. For those vacant units located in the more peripheral parts of the town centre, the council should adopt a more flexible approach to allow alternative uses including residential.

- The masterplan should seek to accommodate the requirement / identified need for health and fitness facilities. Alternatively, existing vacant units should be investigated and discussed with potential health and fitness operators to establish whether any would meet their requirements.
- The existing town centre retail core provides a poor level of environmental quality. Whilst, the new masterplan development is likely to involve attractive public realm areas, the existing retail shopping streets are also in need of public realm /

environmental enhancement / investment.

- The pedestrian linkage between Birkenhead Central Railway Station and the town centre is poor. Any wider town centre strategy should investigate potential options to improve this linkage.
- With the exception of the Premier Inn on Conway Street, there is no hotel accommodation in the town centre. Subject to the demand from hotel operators, additional centrally located hotel accommodation is considered as part of the masterplan development.

Birkenhead Framework 2040 - Consultation Draft (March 2021) / Public Consultation Report (25 June 2021)

The Birkenhead Framework 2040 (BRF) sets out an overarching strategy for the regeneration of the Birkenhead urban area. This includes the identification of nine neighbourhoods each with their own character and contribution to the programme, one of which is Central Birkenhead.

The BRF establishes a draft vision and high-level strategy for potential land use change, including scale of potential brownfield housing delivery, alongside supporting public realm and infrastructure requirements, all to be tested further through Neighbourhood Framework production as appropriate.

The BRF specifically recommends the preparation of NFs for seven of the nine neighbourhoods, of which, Central Birkenhead is included.

Central Birkenhead features heavily within the spatial priorities identified within the BRF, including:

- Building a strong core; Central Birkenhead is identified to have a vital role in defining the sense of place, identity and health of the wider town and communities;
- Connecting through Birkenhead's 'Heritage Heart' to the Waterfront as an iconic place, a vibrant corridor, and a cultural destination – with the 'Heritage Heart' falling within Central Birkenhead; and
- Recognition of the importance of a commercial offer within Central Birkenhead to deliver the wider economic strategy ambitions including specifically the importance of the delivery of the Commercial District proposals.

The BRF identifies a significant degree of underutilised and vacant brownfield land across Birkenhead on which development can and should be delivered in line with the principles and spatial priorities set out.

But it also recognises that there is a reason why these sites are not coming forward currently in this way as a result of the market failures that do exist across

Birkenhead. There is no one factor preventing high quality development being delivered, but it is known that viability and market perception is having a material impact.

The BRF seek to address this issue through the identification of a number of catalyst projects, all of which are described as 'progressing', to address structural place or market issues, and ultimately create the right conditions for investment and value growth.

These catalyst projects are deemed to be strategically important for Wirral – underpinning the reconnection, re-imagining, and rediscovery of Birkenhead. Birkenhead Commercial District is identified as Catalyst Project no. 3.

Birkenhead Commercial District

The flagship project of the Wirral Growth Company - WGC - a 50:50 Joint Venture Partnership between Wirral Council and Muse Developments, formed in 2019 - is a major redesign and redevelopment of Birkenhead town centre, creating a new office quarter, development of over 600 new homes on vacant town centre sites, and development of a new permanent indoor market, something fundamental to the history, character and spirit of Birkenhead.

This town centre project has been developed following extensive consultation and engagement with local residents, businesses and stakeholders who have consistently said that revitalisation of the town centre is one of their biggest priorities.

Demolition has started as the first phase of the new office quarter, and a number of important gateway and transport improvements will take place, part of the wider programme of removing the 'concrete collar', which has constricted and blighted the town centre for so long.

Central Birkenhead

Change is coming to the centre of Birkenhead, at scale, and at pace. Work is now underway on a new office quarter and market, and further plans are focused around the creation of distinct neighbourhoods within the central area (only those of relevance to this

Masterplan are referenced below):

- Grange Road: Birkenhead's High Street – including the pedestrianised and non-pedestrianised extents of Grange Road (crossing the Charing Cross junction) and the Pyramids Shopping Centre as a more concentrated and revitalised core of the traditional retail offer within the Town Centre;
- Commercial District and Mixed-Use Quarter: an emerging prestigious commercial, leisure and housing district within Birkenhead, set in the context of high quality and well-managed public realm and supported by a vibrant mix of uses including Birkenhead market and the Pavements shopping area;
- St Werburgh's Quarter: The built environment between the Commercial District and Hind Street Urban Village is perhaps the most apparent physical legacy of retail decline within the town centre. This presents significant opportunity for change and potential to bring the listed church to the forefront of this new residential led mixed use neighbourhood area and create a people friendly link to the new Hind Street Urban Village neighbourhood; and
- Argyle and Conway: the most prominent intersection of the Laird grid within Central Birkenhead, with the disused former Dock Branch line cutting through its middle – creating an underwhelming, disjointed, and largely forgotten neighbourhood of Birkenhead, predominantly industrial in use and feel, and very much underutilised in nature.

Draft Central Birkenhead Neighbourhood Framework (April 2021)

Draft Central Birkenhead Neighbourhood Framework (CBNF) was produced in April 2021 and is described as being one of a series to be prepared as part of the BRF. The document was produced to consider the strategic recommendations of the BRF in more detail at the neighbourhood level, with a view to enabling a greater focus on the delivery strategy associated with the ambitions of the BRF, at the neighbourhood scale and below.

The CBNF has been developed having regard to the BRF Vision and Objectives. It has further regard to the wider strategy of the BRF, including the prominent role of this particular neighbourhood within the wider strategy.

The CBNF:

- provides a baseline analysis to present a snapshot of context within the Central Birkenhead neighbourhood, including SWOT analysis summary;
- sets out the vision and principles for the CBNF in response to the context, drivers and opportunities identified;
- proposes a mix of land uses and identifies key projects coming forward as a result of the CBNF process;
- sets out recommendations relating specifically to the planning policy approach to retail and mixed-use delivery within Central Birkenhead; and
- provides a project action plan, phasing plan, consideration of funding, delivery vehicles and governance.

The CBNF describes the vision for Central Birkenhead as:

- If Birkenhead is the heart of Wirral, then its core needs to be the best – made up of a series of thriving, resilient, strong, exciting, creative neighbourhoods connected to its waterfront and serving and supporting residents and attracting visitors. Its town centre will be rebalanced and vibrant. Its heritage assets will be celebrated and fully utilised. The regeneration of Birkenhead will start in its core – Central Birkenhead.

Sitting beneath the vision are a number of objectives:

- A sustainable core: A concentrated and simplified high street, with a mix of uses and environment that ensure its long-term sustainability, vibrancy and quality, concentrated within an identified and protected high street at Grange Road.
- A diversified core: Creating vibrancy through the introduction of a mix of uses, which encourage longer dwell time and linked trips including an improved hotel offer alongside leisure to complement high street retail, and the creation of a quality evening offer. Collectively giving visitors more reason and opportunity to spend time and money within Central Birkenhead.
- A walkable and sustainably connected centre:
- Maximising the potential of the current and future residential communities within and near to the high street, by facilitating sustainable movement of visitors and shoppers. Improving arrivals and routes through the Central Birkenhead area through investment in key gateways to the NF with meaningful, high quality, safe and legible links to Birkenhead's Waterfront.
- An environmentally and digitally exemplar neighbourhood: Delivering positive and meaningful impact on the climate emergency, delivering a smart and sustainable core including sustainable energy infrastructure and future proofing strategic public realm delivery to enable future connectivity and sustainability.
- An attractor of visitors: Drawing in visitors and spend from a wider catchment, competing well with sub-regional centres, becoming a destination of choice – attracting people with Birkenhead's heritage, enhanced by a high-quality physical environment and experience and a programme of events and activities that create a buzz about this place year on year.
- A home for all: Delivering high quality residential development of a variety of types and tenures, within an environment and public realm that supports Central Birkenhead becoming a home for people, creating safe, healthy and vibrant communities that in turn will generate activity, spend power and footfall to underpin wider ambitions.
- A physical environment to be proud of: Delivery of strategic and incidental scale open space and public

realm as destinations and places in their own right. Building on Birkenhead's past, bringing the heritage assets it houses to life –and ensuring a high-quality design and long-term stewardship of buildings, public realm and landscape.

- An investable proposition: Leveraging private sector investment through creating the right conditions and opportunities for development in line with this NF across Central Birkenhead.

To seek to ensure the long-term resilience and vibrancy of the Birkenhead Primary Retail Area the CBRF recommends:

- Consolidation of existing retail floorspace, concentrating high street comparison retailing on Grange Road and within the covered Pyramids Shopping Centre;
- Diversifying land uses and diversifying retail provision within the town centre to include a greater presence of Food and Beverage and Leisure retailing alongside a great mix of uses including Arts and Community, Commercial Office, and Residential; and
- Recognition of different character areas with the potential to accommodate town centre uses across the NF area including the importance of Grange Road West and Argyle Street in providing an alternative retail offer with aspirations for more a more independent offer in these locations.

The CBRF suggests boundaries for the Birkenhead Primary Retail Area, to be considered through the emerging Local Plan, including:

- The proposed Primary Retail Area – Grange Road, the Pyramids, and the new home of Birkenhead market (proposed). This will be the borough's main comparison-shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities and other main town centre uses of borough wide significance;
- Proposed Secondary Retail Area – Reflecting the intended slightly different identity than that within the Primary Retail Area, with supported uses still main town centre uses with residential permissible on upper floors within retail and commercial frontages,

or as the sole use on 'backland' sites with no street level retail and commercial frontages; and

- Proposed Mixed Use Area – with suggestion across this zone of non-retail uses at ground floor alongside main town centre uses, but all development still requiring active frontages.

6.7 POLICY PARAMETERS //

This document was produced based on the Submission draft Local Plan (May 2022) . Policies and boundaries should be checked against the most up to date published version of the Local Plan. This can be found on the Council’s web site.







LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT – EMERGING

A new emerging Local Plan is being prepared to shape the future of the borough to 2037. Upon adoption, the Plan will replace the existing Unitary Development Plan and will provide the main basis upon which future planning applications will be determined.

The emerging Local Plan Submission Draft sets out a vision for how Wirral will change as a place over the next 15 years. On 26 October 2022, the emerging Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for independent examination.

Hearing sessions took place between April – May and September – November 2023. Throughout the examination process, the council has put forward suggested modifications to the Submission Draft Local Plan, some of which relate to policies referenced in this Masterplan. At the time of writing, the Inspectors post hearing letter, setting out their initial conclusions is still awaited. Any modifications which the Inspectors recommend should be made to ensure the “soundness” of the Local Plan will be subject to public consultation, before the Inspectors proceed to determine in their final report, whether the Local Plan can be deemed sound and recommended for adoption, anticipated by the end of 2024.

The Parcels are identified on the emerging Local Plan Submission Draft Policies Map as follows:

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN PLOTS		Emerging Local Plan ALLOCATION
B1 to B24 G1 to G9 C1 to C9 (All Plots)		Birkenhead 2040 Framework
		Regeneration Area
B1 to B24 C1 to C9		Masterplan Area
B1 to B6 G1 to G9 C1 to C7		Town, District and Local Centre
B7,B8 B14 to B21		Housing Allocation
C9		Mixed Use Area

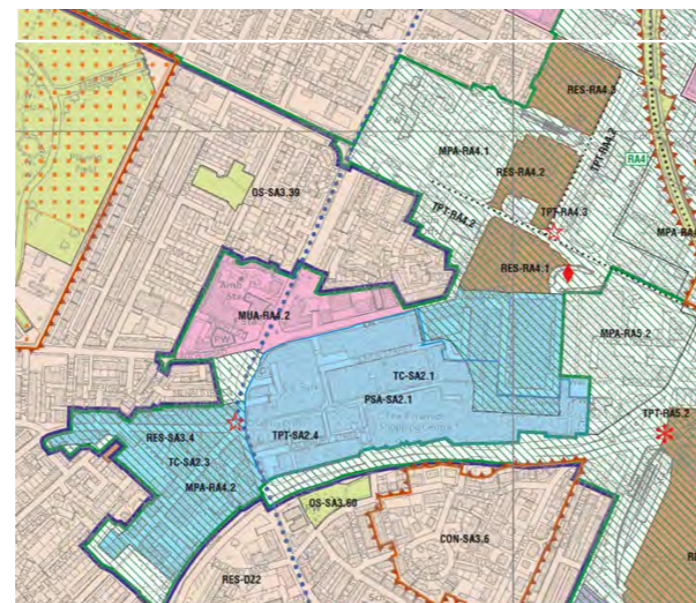


Figure 6.7.1 - Emerging Local Plan Draft Policies Map



Set out following is a summary of the policies contained within the emerging Local Plan, which are deemed to be of relevance to the Masterplan site (with Plot references highlighted against Policies, where applicable) - text in italics is ‘implementation or complimentary supporting information. For the avoidance of doubt these are the policies contained in the Wirral Local Plan Submission Draft 2021-2037 <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning->

and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/wirral's-new-local-plan/new-local-plan and do not take into account any suggested modifications arising from the Examination of the Local Plan, which remain subject to scrutiny by the Examining Inspectors at the time of writing.

Local Plan Submission Draft extract (pages 45 and 46): The Regeneration of Birkenhead

The Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework and the ‘LeftBank’ programme

3.6 The council’s strategy to meet its development needs sits entirely within existing urban areas. The council has undertaken a detailed analysis of the issues facing Birkenhead and the need and potential for comprehensive regeneration through brownfield development.

The Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework, (BRF) defines the Vision and ambition for the transformational regeneration of Birkenhead included in this emerging Local Plan. This will be one of the largest and most ambitious regeneration programmes in the UK with the most significant spatial proposals for Birkenhead since the 2nd World War.

The Framework details further aspects of the regeneration vision which is about reconnecting, re-imagining, rediscovering and repopulating Birkenhead. It has identified the potential to deliver over 20,000 new homes over the next 20 years through a radical re-use of neglected and brownfield sites.

3.7 The emerging Local Plan incorporates significant plans for regeneration and growth within Birkenhead accordingly. The Birkenhead area identified for regeneration extends along the Wallasey river corridor at Seacombe and includes Liscard (see Figure 3.1 below).

3.8 The regeneration programme for Birkenhead is being developed alongside a strategy to create a strong economy for Wirral. This economic plan incorporates skills, business support, inward investment and town centre recovery, and is particularly focused on

responding to the impact of Covid-19 through creation of a strong and resilient economy.

3.9 Wirral Council and its partners are ambitious to deliver regeneration in Birkenhead at scale and at pace, with high quality urban design and sustainability embedded throughout.

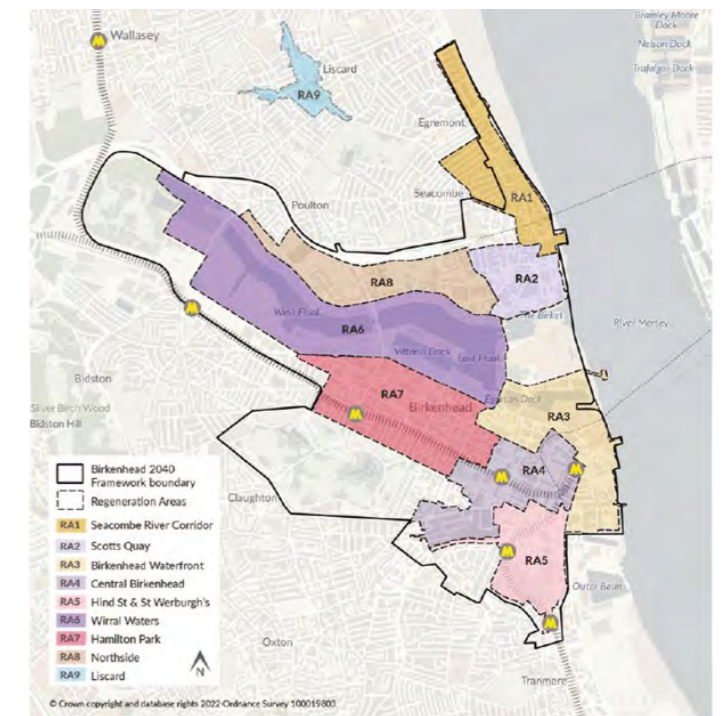


Figure 6.7.2 - Draft 2040 Framework Boundary & Regen Areas

Plots B1 to B24 and C1 to C9 (Plots G1 to G9 are excluded):

Policy WS 6.3 - Masterplan Areas

C. Development proposals within the following Masterplan Areas shown on the Policies Map, must be in conformity with a Masterplan which has been endorsed by the council:

- MPA-RA4.1 - Birkenhead Commercial District and Mixed Use Quarter
- MPA-RA4.2 - Charing Cross Quarter

Plots B1 to B24; G1 to G9; and C1 to C9 (All Plots):

Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area

4.50 The Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area is shown on Figure 4.6.

One of the key spatial priorities of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework is 'Building a Strong Core based on Central Birkenhead', which emphasises the vital role that Central Birkenhead has in defining the sense of place, identity and health of the wider town and communities.

The Draft Central Birkenhead Neighbourhood Framework (CBNF, May 2021) sets out the following vision for Central Birkenhead:

4.51 "If Birkenhead is the heart of Wirral, then its core needs to be the best – made up of a series of thriving, resilient, strong, exciting, creative neighbourhoods connected to its waterfront and serving and supporting residents and attracting visitors. Its town centre will be rebalanced and vibrant. The regeneration of Birkenhead will start in its core – Central Birkenhead".

4.52 The Central Birkenhead area comprises a number of key neighbourhoods described below:

Grange Road (Birkenhead Primary Shopping Area)

4.53 Birkenhead town centre is designated as a Sub-Regional Centre in Policy WS 11 Strategy for Town, District and Local Centres and is Wirral's main town centre comparison retail shopping destination.

After several years of decline the centre is now blighted by vacant shop frontages and the proportion of vacant retail units in the town centre is more than double the UK average. In common with most other major retail areas in the UK there is an urgent need to restructure the town centre to address the wider economic changes taking place.

4.54 Informed by the Draft CBNF, the Policies Map identifies a much reduced Primary Shopping Area - bounded by Cloughton Road, Charing Cross and Borough Road. This includes the pedestrianised Grange Road and the indoor Pyramids Shopping Centre, along with those parts of the outdoor Pyramids Shopping Centre where main town centre uses are expected to predominate at street level – including the remainder of

Milton Pavement, St John's Square and Pavement, and Borough Pavement.

4.55 The overall objective for Birkenhead town centre is that it will remain the borough's main comparison town centre shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities and other main town centre uses of borough wide significance.

Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter

4.56 The Wirral Growth Company's proposals for a new mixed use quarter overlaps with the eastern part of the redefined primary retail area, to provide a new prestigious commercial core within the town centre, set within high quality public realm and supported by a mix of modern, contemporary uses, including offices, residential and retail.

Note that the above commentary is with reference to Mixed Use Area MUA-RA4.1, which is the area around Hamilton Square. The emerging Local Plan does not appear to provide any specific commentary regarding MUA-RA4.2, which is where Plot C9 is located. It is assumed, however, that the same uses as referenced above are applicable in MUA-RA4.2 – i.e. a mix of modern, contemporary uses, including offices, residential and retail.

Charing Cross Quarter (Grange Road West Local Centre)

4.57 The secondary shopping area immediately to the west of the Town Centre Primary shopping area based around Grange Road West has a distinct character and serves as a local centre for surrounding residential areas.

The retail offer in the area has been in decline for some time and there are increasing vacancies as the centre faces increasing pressures from the rapidly changing retail environment and economic changes arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Housing Delivery

4.62 This emerging Local Plan allocates three main housing sites within the Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area which will deliver up to 450 new

dwellings.

It is anticipated that an additional 1,000 new dwellings will also be delivered during the Plan period within the Regeneration Area.

4.63 The Draft CBNF identifies the need for two Masterplan Areas to support the delivery of the development identified; the Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.1) and the Dock Branch Park (northern section) Masterplan Area (MPA-RA4.2) (NB, we believe this reference should be MPA-RA4.3).

Since the preparation of the Draft CBNF the council has identified the need for a further masterplan for the Charing Cross Quarter (MPA-RA4.3) (NB, we believe this reference should be MPA-RA4.2) to address the challenges faced by this secondary shopping area.

4.64 High density development will be expected within this Regeneration Area (at a minimum of 60 dwellings per hectare), in order to make the best use of available land, whilst enabling the delivery of "thriving, resilient, strong and creative neighbourhoods" (CBNF Vision).

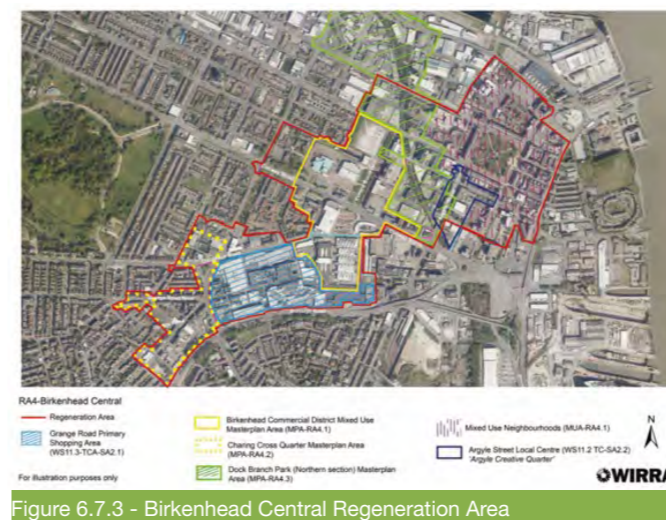


Figure 6.7.3 - Birkenhead Central Regeneration Area

Plots B1 to B24; G1 to G9; and C1 to C9 (All Plots):

Regeneration Area

Policy RA 4 - Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area A. Development within the Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area shown on the Policies Map will comprise a new commercial office quarter with new residential-led mixed use neighbourhoods which will provide for approximately 1,450 new dwellings. The following sites are allocated for residential use within the Regeneration Area to support the delivery of the development and regeneration strategy set out in Policy WS 1:

Plot B7, B8; B14 to B21:

Housing Allocation

Site Ref	Location	Size and Capacity
RES-RA4.1 (Plot B7, B8)	WGC Town Centre Plot E Hemingford St	1.38 Ha 172 Units
RES-RA4.2 (Plots B14 to B17)	WGC Town Centre Plot G South of Conway Park Station	1.24 Ha 92 Units
RES-RA4.3 (Plots 18 to 21)	WGC Town Centre Plot I and J North of Conway Park Station	1.43 Ha 185 Units
	Other	1000 Units

B. Applications within the Central Birkenhead Regeneration Area will be permitted subject to meeting the following requirements and other relevant policies of the emerging Local Plan. Development proposals should:

1. protect and enhance the area's historic environment, including views from and to Birkenhead Park, Hamilton Square Conservation Area, Birkenhead Priory, and Clifton Park Conservation Area;
2. incorporate distinctive and climate resilient landscaping and public realm to reflect the area's coastal environment; and
3. provide or contribute proportionately and appropriately to the provision of a comprehensive network of high quality public realm, including Dock Branch Park Phase 1 as identified in the Birkenhead Design Guide SPD;
4. incorporate active travel improvements and enhance permeability and connectivity within the regeneration

area;

5. contribute proportionately and appropriately to primary school place provision.

MPA-RA4.1 - Birkenhead Commercial District Mixed Use Quarter Masterplan Area

C. Development proposals within the Masterplan Area shown on the Policies Map must be in conformity with a Masterplan and Design Code which has been endorsed by the council and provide, as appropriate, for:

1. the delivery of a mixed use commercial quarter and residential neighbourhood;
2. a high quality distinctive design framework and public realm strategy that is designed to reflect its relationship to the waterfront and adjoining neighbourhoods;
3. inclusion of one or more building/s of appropriate scale and height to create a landmark and sense of place having regard to the impact on heritage assets and strategic views to and along the Birkenhead waterfront, including planned development within the Birkenhead Waterfront (RA 3), Hind Street and St Werburgh's (RA 5), Wirral Waters (RA 6) and Scott's Quay (RA 2) Regeneration Areas, and across the peninsula.

MPA-RA4.2 - Charing Cross Quarter Masterplan Area

D. Development proposals within the Masterplan Area shown on the Policies Map must be in conformity with a Masterplan and Design Code which has been endorsed by the council and provide, as appropriate, for the delivery of a mixed use retail led neighbourhood which retains retail and active ground floor uses along Grange Road West.

MPA-RA4.3 - Dock Branch Park (Northern section) Masterplan Area

The commentary references 'MPA-RA4.3' which is N/A to this Masterplan, so has not been included.

Mixed Use Neighbourhoods

The commentary references 'MUA-RA4.1', which is N/A to this Masterplan so has not been included.

Implementation

MPA-RA4.1 - Birkenhead Commercial and Mixed Use Quarter

4.65 Development proposals within the Birkenhead Commercial District will be implemented by the Wirral Growth Company. In June 2021 the council approved a Hybrid Planning Application for the construction of the first phase office development and outline permission for a mix of uses including up to 650 homes, a new 'super' crossing, and replacement market building. Construction of the 1st phase (150,000 sq ft) of the new office development which will house the council's new centralised offices commenced in autumn 2021 and delivery of the 1st Phase of residential development north of Conway Park station is expected to commence in 2023.

PSA-SA2.1 - Grange Road (Birkenhead Primary Shopping Area)

4.68 The Birkenhead Primary Shopping Area, shown on the Policies Map (PSA-SA2.1), is now concentrated on the Pyramids Shopping Centre and Grange Road. The council will work in partnership with the major asset owner and individual landlords across the designated Primary Shopping Area to ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of the high street within Birkenhead.

Initial public realm improvements will be delivered through funds provided by the Future High Street Fund and Town Deal and the council will continue working in partnership to maximise any future funding opportunities to enable ongoing support for this key area of Central Birkenhead.

4.69 Secondary retail areas are identified on the Policies Map at Grange Road West / Oxtan Road (TC-SA2.1)- Charing Cross Quarter and at the Local Centre at Argyle Street (TC-SA2.2)- where main town centre uses would remain the focus at street level, but where residential uses would be permissible on upper floors or as the sole use on backland sites with no street level retail and commercial frontages.

The Argyle Street Local Centre is a growing focus for an increasingly active cluster of digital and creative businesses which are bringing vitality and employment to the central part of the town. The council will continue

to work with these groups to develop and promote this area as the 'Argyle Creative Quarter'.

4.70 The council will prepare a masterplan for the Charing Cross area (MPA-RA4.2) which encompasses the Grange Road West / Oxtan Road secondary shopping area.

Plots B1 to B6; G1 to G9; C1 to C7:

Policy WS 11.2 - Hierarchy of Retail Centres
Sub-Regional Centre

B. Birkenhead town centre (TC-SA2.1) shown on the Policies Map is the borough's main comparison shopping destination and the primary focus for retail, office, leisure, service, arts, culture and tourist development, community facilities and other main town centre uses of borough wide significance.

Local Centres

E. The focus for local level shops, services and community facilities to serve everyday needs will be the Local Centres shown on the Policies Map at:

- Argyle Street, Birkenhead (TC-SA2.2) - Grange Road West/Oxtan Road (TC-SA2.3)

Policy WS 11.3 - Town and Local Centre Impact Assessments

G. Development proposals for main town centre uses that are edge of centre or outside a Town, District or Local Centre shown on the Policies Map will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. no alternative, suitable sites are available, first within, and then at the edge of a Town, District or Local Centre shown on the Policies Map in line with the sequential test; and
2. the site is easily accessible by a choice of means of transport and is, or will be, well-connected to a Town, District or Local Centre shown on the Policies Map.
3. they do not undermine the vitality and viability of existing centres.

H. Development proposals for new retail, and leisure floorspace, in edge or out-of-centre locations not

designated for such use will be required to submit an impact assessment, that includes consideration of impact on relevant centres in adjoining districts. The applicable thresholds for an impact assessment of proposed new edge-of-centre and out-of-centre floorspace are:

- Sub-Regional Centre
- Birkenhead town centre (TC-SA2.1) - 1,500 square metres (gross) retail

Should any assessment demonstrate that there would be a significant adverse impact on the existing, committed or planned investment in the centre or its vitality or viability then the application will normally be refused.

Appendix 9 Transport and Infrastructure Schemes

A. The delivery of the following key transport infrastructure will be progressed over the plan period:

- i. Active travel networks for walking and cycling that enable safe, healthy, access to jobs, leisure and community facilities and throughout the borough:
 - c. Argyle Street (TPT-RA4.1);
 - d. Conway Street (TPT-RA4.2);
 - g. Implementation of a Birkenhead 2040 Framework Active Travel network including active travel improvements at junctions included within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and Neighbourhood Frameworks to facilitate Wirral Waters and the redevelopment of Birkenhead:
- ix. A5029 Charing Cross / Grange Road (TPT-SA2.4)

Generic emerging Local Plan policies of note:

Policy WS 3.1 - Housing Design Standards

- A. New build dwellings should be built to the following standards:
1. Compliance with the nationally-described space standard or any successor standard.
 2. Compliance with the higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres/ per person/ per day under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations or any successor standard.
 3. Be 'zero carbon ready by design' in line with Policy WS 8 Sustainable Construction, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Strategy.
 4. All new build dwellings will be accessible and

adaptable in line with Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations or any successor standard, unless site specific factors clearly indicate an alternative design solution is necessary or the following criteria apply:

- i. On developments of 17 or more new build dwellings at least 6% will be 'wheelchair adaptable' in line with Part M4(3)(2)(a) of the Building Regulations or any successor standard.
- ii. If the Council is responsible for allocating or nominating a person for immediate occupation the 6% of dwellings will be 'wheelchair user' in line with Part M4(3)(2)(b) of the Building Regulations or any successor standard, unless site specific factors clearly indicate an alternative design solution is necessary.

Policy WS 3.2 – Housing Density

B. New residential development within the Density Zones shown on the Policies Map should be provided at the following minimum densities unless it can be demonstrated that this is not appropriate having regard to site characteristics:

Residential Density Zone	Definition	Minimum density (dwellings per hectare)
Urban Core & Town Centres Density (RES-DZ2)	Sites within 800m (10 minute walk) of Birkenhead town centre or within 400m (5 minute walk) of other designated town centres, which are well served by public transport and other community facilities.	60

Policy WS 3.3 – Affordable Housing Requirements

D. Within the following areas shown on the Policies Map and shown and listed in Appendix 5, proposals for new-build market housing of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide tenure blind affordable housing within the site at the following rates:

- Viability Zones 1 (VZ-1) and 2 (VZ-2) - 10%

E. In Viability Zones 1 and 2 on multiphase schemes, provision may be made via a S106 agreement to meet

the full affordable housing requirement of 10% on later phases of development, to permit a greater proportion of market housing to be delivered earlier and to accommodate any future rise in property or land values.

F. 25% of the affordable housing provided shall comprise First Homes where this is required by national policy. The remaining affordable housing will be for alternative affordable home ownership products, affordable rent and social rent in line with national policy and the needs identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment unless this significantly prejudices the provision of dwelling types and tenures required to meet the needs for specific groups. Where relevant, affordable housing for rent should be designed to facilitate transfer to an appropriate Registered Social Landlord or equivalent affordable housing provider.

G. Affordable housing, will be secured through an appropriate planning condition or legal agreement. Off-site provision or equivalent payment in lieu of affordable housing will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that on-site provision would not be practicable, the approach can be robustly justified, and the proposal would be more effective for achieving a mixed and balanced community.

Policy WS 3.4 - Housing Mix

H. All new residential developments must provide homes of an appropriate type, size and tenure to meet the needs of the local community including specialist housing for the older population and other specialist needs where appropriate.

I. Outside identified Regeneration Areas, a minimum of 70% of market dwellings will be developed for larger dwellings of three or more bedrooms, within Use Class C3. Within identified Regeneration Areas this should be a minimum of 30%.

Policy WS 5.2 - Open Space Provision

D. New residential development will be required to contribute to the improvement and enhancement of open space, which may be secured through a mix of on-site provision and/or financial contributions, based on

the following standards:

1. the provision of 37 square metres of publicly accessible open space per person, of which 2.5 square metres per person will be for equipped children's play or 80 square metres per dwelling, of which 6 square metres will be for equipped children's play; and
2. that all new dwellings should be within 720 metres safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space or designated Tourism Area of 1.5 hectares or above; and
3. that all new dwellings should be within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped open-access facility for children's play.

E. Where new on-site provision is not required or cannot be achieved, an equivalent financial contribution will be required to secure improvements to existing local facilities and/ or access to strategic provision, within the catchment of the development proposed. A residual contribution will be sought where only provision for children's play is required under clause F below.

F. Where 50 or more new dwellings will be further than 720 metres safe walking distance of a publicly accessible open space of 1.5 hectares or above, new on-site provision will be required at 37 square metres per person or 80 square metres per dwelling, with provision for children's play on the following basis:

Size of development	Type of play provision (or equivalent)	Minimum size of activity area for play
50 dwellings (or 109 residents) or more)	Local Area for Play (LAP)	100 square metres
67 dwellings (or 160 residents) or more	Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	400 square metres
167 dwellings (or 400 residents) or more	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	1,000 square metres

G. Where 50 or more new dwellings will be within 720 metres safe walking distance of a publicly accessible

open space of 1.5 hectares or above but not within 400m safe walking distance of an appropriately equipped facility for children's play, appropriate provision for play in line with clause F above must be made on a site (or sites) of no less than 0.40 hectares.

H. Off-site provision will be accepted where this would secure an equivalent or better level of provision on an appropriate site. The cost of any agreed on-site or off-site provision will be deducted from the contribution to secure improvements to existing local or strategic facilities or strategic provision required under clause D.

I. New on-site open space should, wherever possible, be provided as a single site for public recreation, centrally located to serve the development as a whole unless additional provision is required to secure appropriate access to safe children's play within 400m of each new dwelling. Where a facility for play or outdoor sport is provided, an appropriate distance must be maintained between the main activity area and the nearest residential property boundary, to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.

J. Within Regeneration Areas, strategic provision should be identified within an appropriate master plan or neighbourhood framework. Where appropriate on-site provision would not be achievable, alternative well-designed, high quality open space must be provided, which may include access to formal or informal areas for local recreation or play, waterfront access, tree lined streets, green roofs, access to community growing areas, bespoke approaches to community involvement in maintenance and improved access to appropriate strategic provision.

Policy WS 6.1 - Placemaking Principles

A. Development proposals, must demonstrate that the following placemaking principles have been adhered to in a manner which is commensurate with the scale and nature of development and which responds well to the local context and character of the area. Developments are required to:

1. provide high quality and well designed development to promote healthy and active lifestyles, vibrant communities, and contribute positively to the

- efficient revitalisation and regeneration of existing neighbourhoods;
2. enhance the key features, visual amenity, character, and distinctiveness of existing settlements;
 3. ensure permeability within the site through the provision of a choice of safe, direct and attractive routes, and provide for positive integration with adjacent communities and services, and public realm, and where relevant and safe to do so, waterfront access;
 4. contribute to and where relevant provide for the strategic provision of facilities for open space and recreation, shops, schools and health services;
 5. provide high quality, sustainable connections and access internally and externally to the site, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport within the design, ensuring that people of different ages, abilities and characteristics can move around internally and externally without difficulty over the lifetime of the development;
 6. be flood resilient throughout its lifetime and incorporate sustainable drainage and water management systems and adaptability to address climate change;
 7. conserve and positively enhance trees, landscapes, habitats and biodiversity and provide appropriate green and blue infrastructure including landscaping and amenity space including giving consideration to the use of communal space for growing food;
 8. conserve, sustain and enhance the character, integrity and setting of the historic environment, including designated and non designated heritage assets;

Policy WS 7.4 - Parking

E. Development proposals must provide well-designed, safe and appropriately supervised parking, including parking for disabled people and electric vehicle charging facilities, that incorporates appropriate landscaping and materials to reduce visual impact and not dominate the streetscene, in accordance with the parking standards at Appendix 8.

F. In highly accessible areas where alternative modes of transport are available that can meet the likely demand and where mitigation measures are introduced, the

acceptable levels of car parking may be below the parking standards.

Policy WS 7.5 - Tall Buildings

F. Proposals for tall buildings must adhere to the following principles. Proposals which fail to address these matters will be refused:

1. Design must be exceptional and of the highest quality, grounded in context. It should:
 - i. add to local distinctiveness, identity and placemaking; acknowledge and respect the heritage context; and activate the streetscape; and
 - ii. make positive contributions to public space and the environment at ground floor level. Provide high quality private and communal space and public realm including the use of outdoor space.
2. The design must be inclusive in design enabling use and occupation by all generations and demonstrate positive consideration of:
 - i. scale;
 - ii. form and massing;
 - iii. proportion and silhouette;
 - iv. detailed surface design;
 - v. facing materials;
 - vi. relationship to other structures;
 - vii. impact on streetscape, near and approach views;
 - viii. impact on cityscape, local and distant views; and
 - ix. impact on the skyline.

G. Townscape and impact assessments will be required with proposals that identify the impact of the structure and assess harm against any public benefit. They should demonstrate how the structures will enhance navigation, way finding and landmarking where appropriate, and facilitate permeability of the townscape.

H. Micro-climate assessments will be required which demonstrate that the proposal either as stand-alone or as part of a cumulative series of buildings, will not damage local environmental conditions. These are to include wind modelling, shadow/light issues, noise, air quality, privacy and amenity.

I. Fully detailed proposals demonstrating the quality of

finish, servicing, ventilation, structure, car parking and other logistical matters should be provided rather than dealt with as part of Reserved Matters applications.

Policy WS 11.5 - Ground Floor Uses

J. Proposals for non-main town centre uses at ground floor within retail or commercial frontages, will not normally be permitted unless:

1. active frontages are maintained and enhanced; and
2. the function of the centre and neighbouring uses would not be adversely affected.

Policy WS 11.6 - Residential Development in Centres

K. In all centres and parades, residential development will be permitted at appropriate sites in the following circumstances:

1. on upper floors within retail and commercial frontages including within primary shopping areas, where identified;
2. on back-land sites with no street level retail and commercial frontages including within primary shopping areas where identified;
3. within any area that has been formally identified for planned contraction through a future review or masterplan;
4. provided that the operations of existing and future businesses and community facilities are not adversely affected.

Policy WD 4.3 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Natural Flood Management

J. Applications should be supported by strategies for foul and surface water management.

K. Surface water should be managed as close to its source as possible. Measures such as rainwater recycling, green roofs, water butts and permeable surfaces will be expected to be considered to mitigate the impact of potential flood risk and climate change.

L. Planning applications for major developments, and other developments where flood risk is likely, must clearly demonstrate how sustainable drainage will manage surface water run off on the site. This must be in line with surface water drainage principles by integrating SuDS into the fabric of development using

landscaped spaces and the construction profile of buildings and having regard to technical guidance produced by the Local Lead Flood Authority; unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. Applicants should consider site topography, any naturally occurring flow paths and any low lying areas where water will naturally accumulate. Resultant layouts should take account of such existing circumstances to ensure the most sustainable drainage and flood resilient solution is achieved.

M. Sustainable drainage must be considered early in the design process and integrated with other aspects of site design, especially multifunctional green and blue infrastructure. Landscaping proposals will be expected to be integrated with the strategy for surface water management. This can include hard and soft landscaping to reduce the volume and rate of surface water discharge (for example permeable surfaces and bioretention areas). Applicants will be expected to incorporate site drainage as part of a high quality green and blue environment. Unless a below ground infiltration system is proposed for the management of surface water, applicants will be expected to manage surface water through sustainable drainage features with multifunctional benefits.

N. Where the SuDS system will not be adopted by the Water and Sewerage Company or other public body, proposals will need to show that suitable arrangements will be in place for the implementation, operation, maintenance, access to, and management of sustainable drainage systems over the life time of the development. Any communal components must be legally and physically accessible to those who will be served by the system.

O. Natural Flood Management techniques must be incorporated to aid with flood alleviation and implementation of suitable SuDS where appropriate.

P. Where appropriate, SuDS design should be evolved through a master plan to mimic natural processes and enable full integration with neighbouring property without prejudicing comprehensive development of the area as an essential part of land use and development planning,

and be considered in conjunction with other aspects of the design. Phasing of development must be carried out to avoid any cumulative impacts of flood risk and ensure that any sites at risk of causing flooding to other sites are developed first.

Q. Clean uncontaminated surface water must be discharged in accordance with the following hierarchy:

1. infiltration into the ground (where ground conditions allow)
2. into a watercourse or surface water body
3. into a surface water sewer
4. into a combined sewer.

R. Outside of Groundwater Source Protection Zones, source control measures, such as rainwater harvesting and permeable paving must be incorporated, where appropriate, to manage rainfall close to where it falls and treat frequent but smaller polluting events.

S. SuDS schemes must be designed to manage surface water up to and including the 1 in 100 year six hour event and:

1. limit discharge rates and volumes to the greenfield equivalent for green field sites, and as close to greenfield rates with a minimum 50% betterment on brownfield sites; or
2. where it can be clearly demonstrated that it is not feasible to provide volume control through the provision of long term storage/infiltration, events up to the 1 in 100 year critical event must be attenuated and released at a rate no greater than the mean annual flood flow (Qbar) to manage downstream flood risk;
3. Include allowances for climate change and urban creep and assume 100% runoff from impermeable areas;
4. prevent flows from accumulating at low spots (except where designed as temporary storage);
5. ensure surface pathways are linked together in the same way as conventional drainage networks to safely convey exceedance flows off site; and
6. ensure that materials and components are fit for purpose and when reasonably maintained, retain their structural integrity over the design life of the development.

T. To derive the maximum benefit, priority must be

given to the use of soft SuDS, or where this is clearly not practical utilising a combination of hard and soft components, taking full account of site opportunities and constraints.

U. The design of SuDS should be in accordance with CIRIA C753 The SuDS Manual or any subsequent replacement guidance, and have regard to the adoption standards of the Water and Sewage Company (or other adopting body) and ensure the system will operate as intended and manage flood risk for the lifetime of the development and that maintenance charges are economically proportionate.

Appendix 8 - Parking Standards, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan Thresholds

Residential Parking Standards

In Sub regional, Town, District and Local Centres within Regeneration Areas in Birkenhead the council will support flexible and innovative approaches to car parking where supported by investment in sustainable transport, parking beat survey evidence, management mechanisms and robust travel planning.

The council may consider provision below the standards in highly accessible areas where alternative modes of transport are available that can meet the likely demand. For example, where the development would be:

- within 400m safe and convenient walking distance of a designated Town, District or Local Centre shown on the Policies Map; and/or
- within 400m of a bus stop or railway station with a regular service with a frequency of 20 minutes or greater; and/or
- initiatives to reduce the level of traffic through significant investment in walking and cycling and public transport are planned or are being introduced within the locality; and/or
- adequate off-street parking is already available within 400m safe walking distance; and/or
- there is potential for the shared use of spaces, for example as part of a mixed-use development.

Guidelines for car, motorcycle and bicycle parking provision within non-residential development are included as maxima standards in Table A8.2.

Electric Vehicle Charging

8.11 Electric vehicle charging will be provided in line with Government requirements set out in the Building Regulations i.e. Building Regulations 2010, Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, Approved Document S, 2021 edition and any successor. This document outlines electric charging provision for new residential, mixed use and other buildings as well as for material changes of use and major renovations. It also provides standards for electric vehicle charge points and cable routes.

Note - Policies will be subject to modifications so check latest version on Wirral Councils web site.



Figure 6.7.4 - Masterplan Aerial

7

INFRASTRUCTURE //





7.1 CAR PARKING PROVISION//

The provision of car parking has two roles to play in the town centre. The first is to serve the visitors to the town centre and enable a thriving retail core and strategic centre to the borough as a whole - this is described in Section 4. . The second is to provide businesses, their employees and residents with parking appropriate to the location.

In-line with the emerging Local Plan policy with regards provision of parking in town centres as described in Section 6.7, the intention would be for any new homes or businesses within 400m of a bus stop or train station in the town centre context to provide a minimum offer, favouring intensification of use of existing multi storey car parks first before considering additional capacity. Opportunities should be sought to actively remove vehicles from the masterplan and framework area by appeasing the width of streets, limiting the number, size and frequency of servicing vehicles, and rationalising on-street parking where ever possible.

The ambition is to create a town centre living offer that in particular is not dependant upon car ownership. This should be a place that creates an environment that encourages a 'no car ownership' culture in favour of use of the fantastic public transport and amenities on offer in the town centre. It would be expected that a 1 for 1 relationship is the maximum provided for family houses, whilst apartments would use a no car ownership approach first and justify provision to suit market demand / viability. The inclusion of 'car-clubs' should be considered as a part of the solution through a Framework parking approach.

Where new parking provision is created to apartment buildings within the town centre context, this should not impact the provision of active ground floors. Parking provision to family houses should be provided on curtilage, or within on street parking bays designed to allow future re purposing for additional street greening in the future should demand change.

Where Multi storey parking or surface parking is located these should be considered as 'mobility hub's, places where a car can be left, parcels delivered, and last mile transport can be used in the form of bike rentals, and when possible e-scooters to encourage sustainable and active travel.

All parking provision should be in-line with the emerging Local Plan policy with regards to the provision of electronic vehicle charging and accessible space provision in order to create an inclusive environment. Future development proposals will need to consider an emerging EV infrastructure plan which is being developed by the council and will need to be fed into future masterplan work.

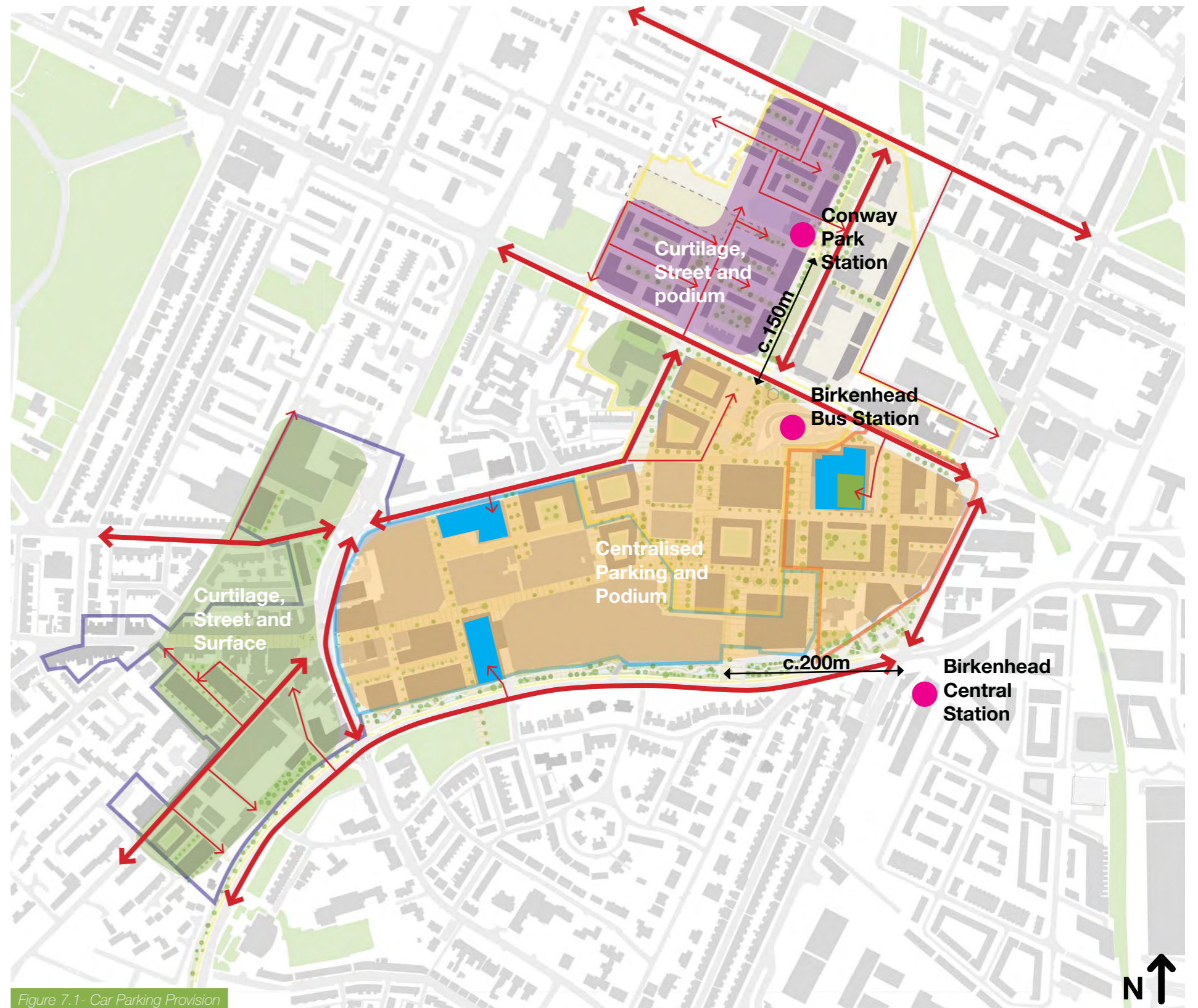


Figure 7.1- Car Parking Provision

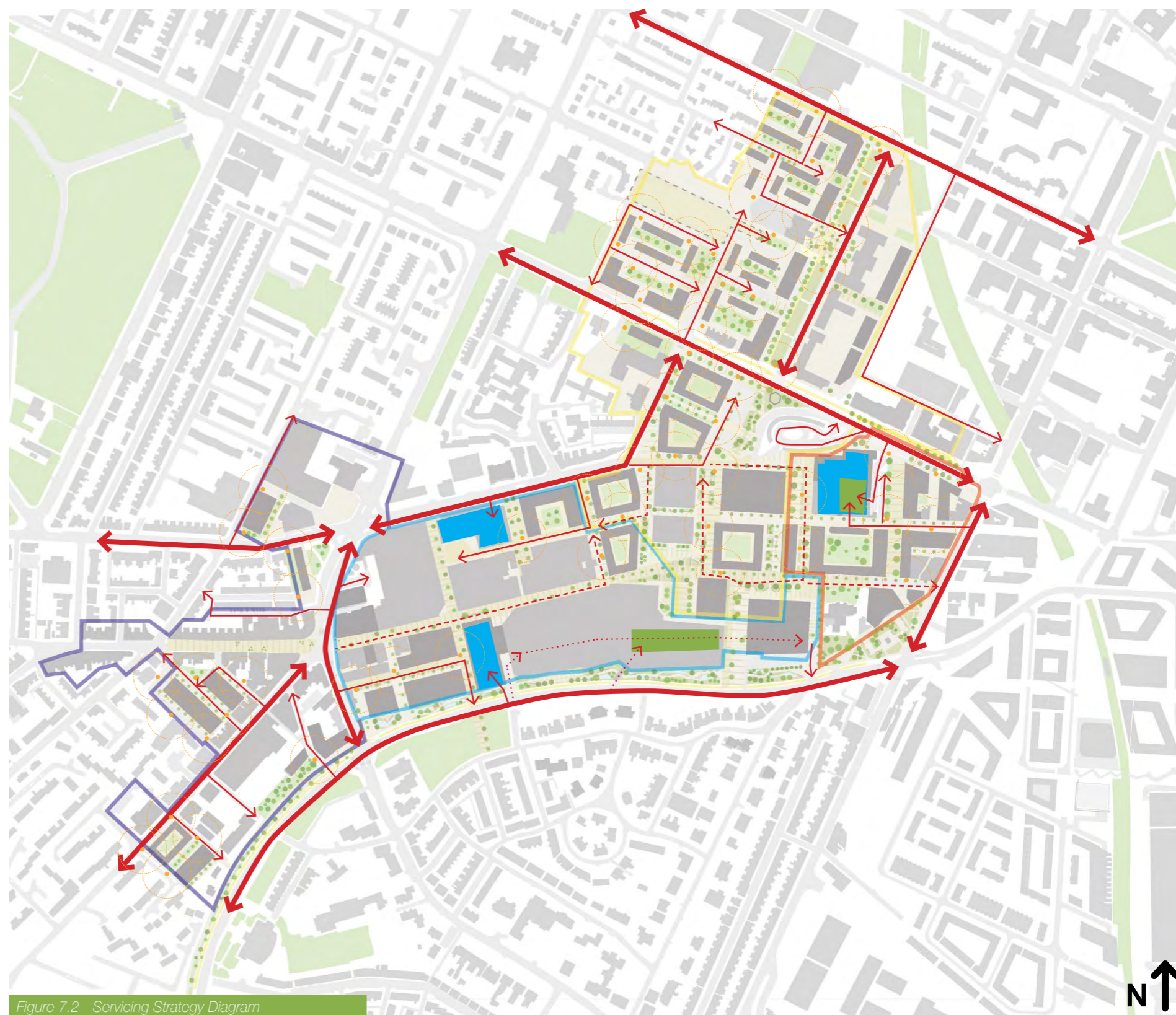
7.2 SERVICING & SUBTERRANEAN BINS //

The Masterplan and Framework plan set out in Figure 7.2 is illustrating a vision to reduce the area of access for servicing vehicles to a spine and circuit within the town centre. Areas where servicing vehicles have sole access is intended to be reduced to a minimum, and shared managed space is proposed to be preferred with clear operational conditions allowing access outside of trading hours.

The Pyramids has an existing semi basement servicing route which is accessed via Borough Road, and the multi storey car park to Conway Street has a large distribution covered area, both of these provide the potential for centralised distribution hubs subject to a managed approach being taken to the retail core under the council ownership.

With new homes being brought into the heart of the town centre alongside servicing requirements, refuse vehicle access must also be considered. It is intended that these will utilise the same distribution circuit set-out on the illustrative masterplan.

The emerging Local Plan is investigating the potential for a subterranean bin store approach and the location of these should be within 30m of any front door located to the servicing routes to allow centralised collection.



Key

- - - - -> Out of Trading Hours Routes
- > 24/7 access Routes
- · · · ·> Pyramids Servicing Route
- Mobility Hub
- Centralised Distribution Hub
- · · · · · Subterranean Bin Store Indicative Locations

Figure 7.2 - Servicing Strategy Diagram

7.3 POTENTIAL HEAT NETWORK //

As part of the 2040 Framework a district Heat Network is being investigated with the intention that this will provide low carbon heating to properties within the town. The layout opposite is for illustrative purposes only to show a potential network of pipes connecting across the town delivering low cost green heating to homes and businesses.

The intention would be that any development that is brought forwards within the Town Centre Masterplan area will form part of this network, or be designed to allow future connection as the District Heat Network is delivered.

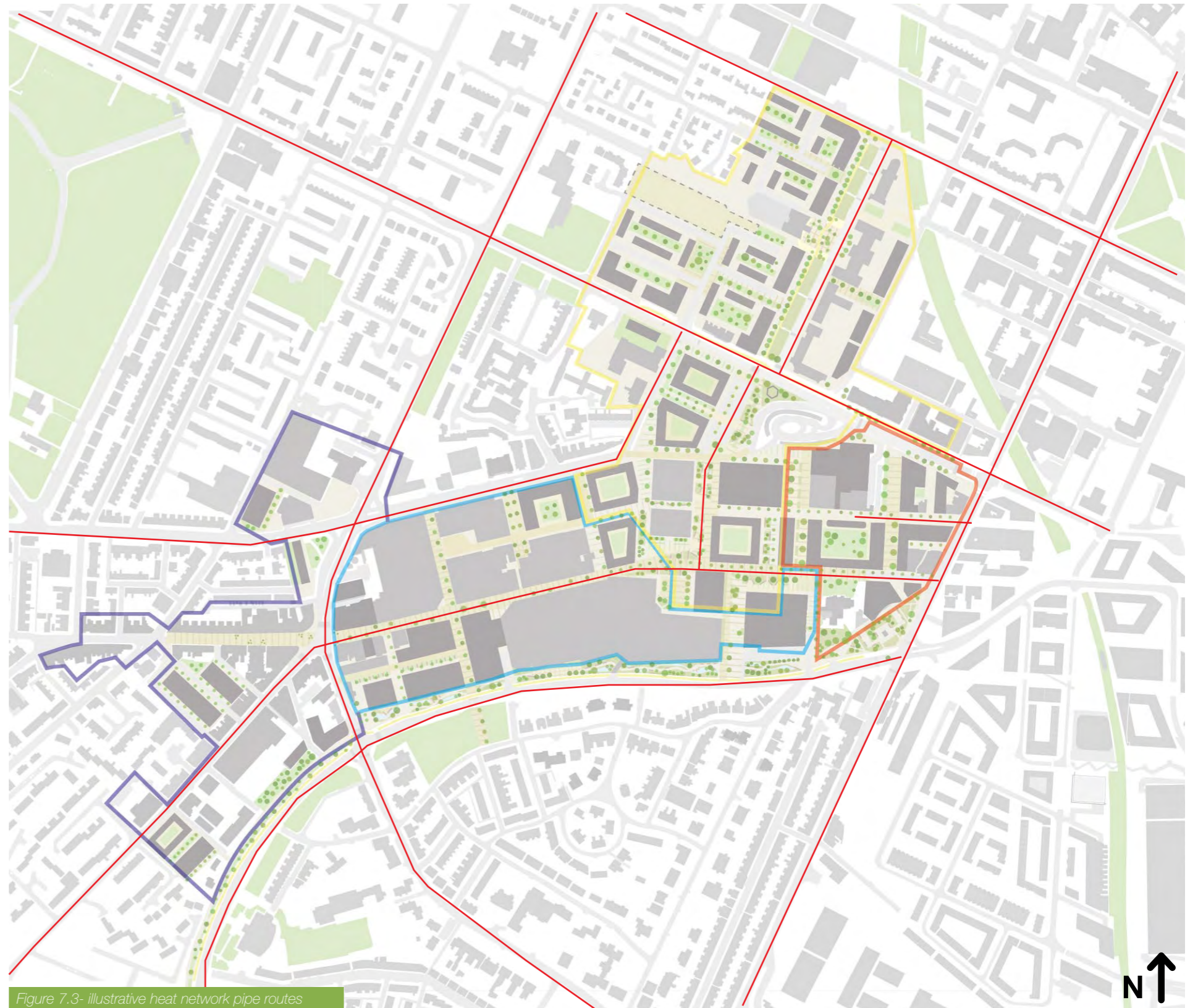


Figure 7.3- illustrative heat network pipe routes

7.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT //

Birkenhead town centre has enviable access to public transport with two railway stations, and a bus interchange alongside a large number of bus routes and stops around the town and a reliant taxi service.

Further to this Wirral Council have submitted a business case for a Mass Transit system to link into Liscard, Wallasey and New Brighton, through Wirral Waters through the town centre and connecting major employers at Cammell Laird.

The Masterplan has proposed minor changes to bus stop locations to Conway Street and Borough Road to align to a new context and future permeability to drive increased footfall and viability of those services but also trade coming into the town centre.

Taxi Rank provision should align to public transport hubs, and also key arrival spaces. The masterplan sets to establish three key taxi hubs strategically placed across the town centre for ease and accessibility located close to Charing Cross, Birkenhead Central Station and Birkenhead Bus Station. This will also help to enhance the night time economy with the future influx of new night time offer within the town centre.



Figure 7.4 - Public Transport Diagram

Key

-  Bus Stop
-  Bus Route
-  Railway Station
-  Mass Transit Stop
-  Mass Transit Route
-  Taxi Hub