

Warminster Town Plan

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Warminster

I. Introduction

Introduction

The Town Plan for Warminster has been produced to guide development in Warminster. It is intended to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) into the Local Development Framework for Wiltshire. The Town Plan has been produced by Warminster Town Council in coordination with Wiltshire Council and the input of a number of local community groups and key stakeholders. The document has been developed alongside the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Warminster is a strong, vibrant community that has evolved to meet the changing needs of the town and the wider community that it supports. This transformation must continue in the light of changing circumstances if the town is to ensure sustained social and economic prosperity whilst avoiding stagnation. It can be guided by identifying the many issues that the town faces before determining a vision that helps to shape Warminster's town centre of the future. Encapsulated in this Town Plan, the knowledge will be used to guide developments that meet the needs and aspirations of the community. Indeed, the ethos of Warminster's Town Plan is to empower the community through ownership of its proposals so that it is alive to its exciting possibilities and opportunities for the future.

"It is our town, our plan, our future."





The first step in the production of the Town Plan was the production of a Vision and Scoping document in 2008 which set out the vision (refer to adjacent text box) and the potential future content of a Town Plan for Warminster (available at <http://www.warminster.uk.com/documents/Warminster-Vision-Scoping.pdf>)

The Town Plan has built on these initial findings and augmented them with an in-depth review of the following elements:

- socio economics;
- planning policy context;
- property market context;
- transport context; and
- urban design context.

A Baseline Report was prepared to report the findings of this research; it also details the outcomes of public consultation undertaken in September 2009 which sought the views of local organisations. The Baseline Report is available at <http://www.warminster.uk.com/documents/Warminster%20Town%20Baseline%20Report.pdf>. Along with the original Vision and Scoping Study this forms the suite of supporting documents to this SPD.

The Town Plan focuses on the town centre and its role as a focal point for the outlying communities of the local villages and hamlets and the military garrison. It

includes reference to wider opportunities such as business development.

Section 2 of this report sets out the context for the development of the Town Plan based on the evidence in the Baseline Report.

Section 3 details the Vision and Objectives which have been developed.

Section 4 sets out the opportunities for new development in the town centre. Guidelines for this development, discussed on a character area basis, are at the end of the section.

Section 5 sets out how the Town Plan can be delivered.

The vision for Warminster is that it will build on its strong heritage as a prominent market town with a significant catchment area of local villages. It will develop as a truly sustainable town, providing the mix of employment, services and amenities that will enable residents to build within it all stages of their lives.

The beauty of the surrounding countryside and its villages is a major attribute that will be fostered and supported, with good access and communications links with the town and for visitors coming to the area. This will be matched within the town by strong conservation of its heritage and very high standards in its appearance and cleanliness.

The town's economy will continue to develop in vibrancy, resilience and flexibility to meet the challenges of the future. Warminster will offer a spread of employment. It will also increase its provision of employment requiring high levels of academic and technical achievement with support through education and training. Housing and workspace standards, developed in parallel with excellent amenities, will

see Warminster as a town where people positively want to live and work. These attributes, linked to the world renowned attractions close by and within easy reach, will make Warminster a tourism destination of first choice.

Warminster's already good relations with its army garrison will be strengthened. There will be a high level of integration of social and sporting activities, as circumstances allow. The local highly technical employment opportunities offered by the garrison's use of extremely sophisticated training aids will be fostered.

There will be particular emphasis on developing the bonds of community, backed by a good range of activities run by and for both the young and retired elements of the population.

The preservation of the noted friendliness of Warminster will be a factor in all decisions.

Overall, Warminster will take a pioneering role as a vibrant and sustainable market town for the 21st century.



2. Context

Introduction

This section sets out a summary of the key findings of the baseline review undertaken by Urban Practitioners in Autumn 2009. It covers:

- Strategic context;
- Historic context;
- Urban character;
- Planning context;
- Transport context;
- Social infrastructure;
- Opportunity sites;
- Sustainability; and
- Consultation.

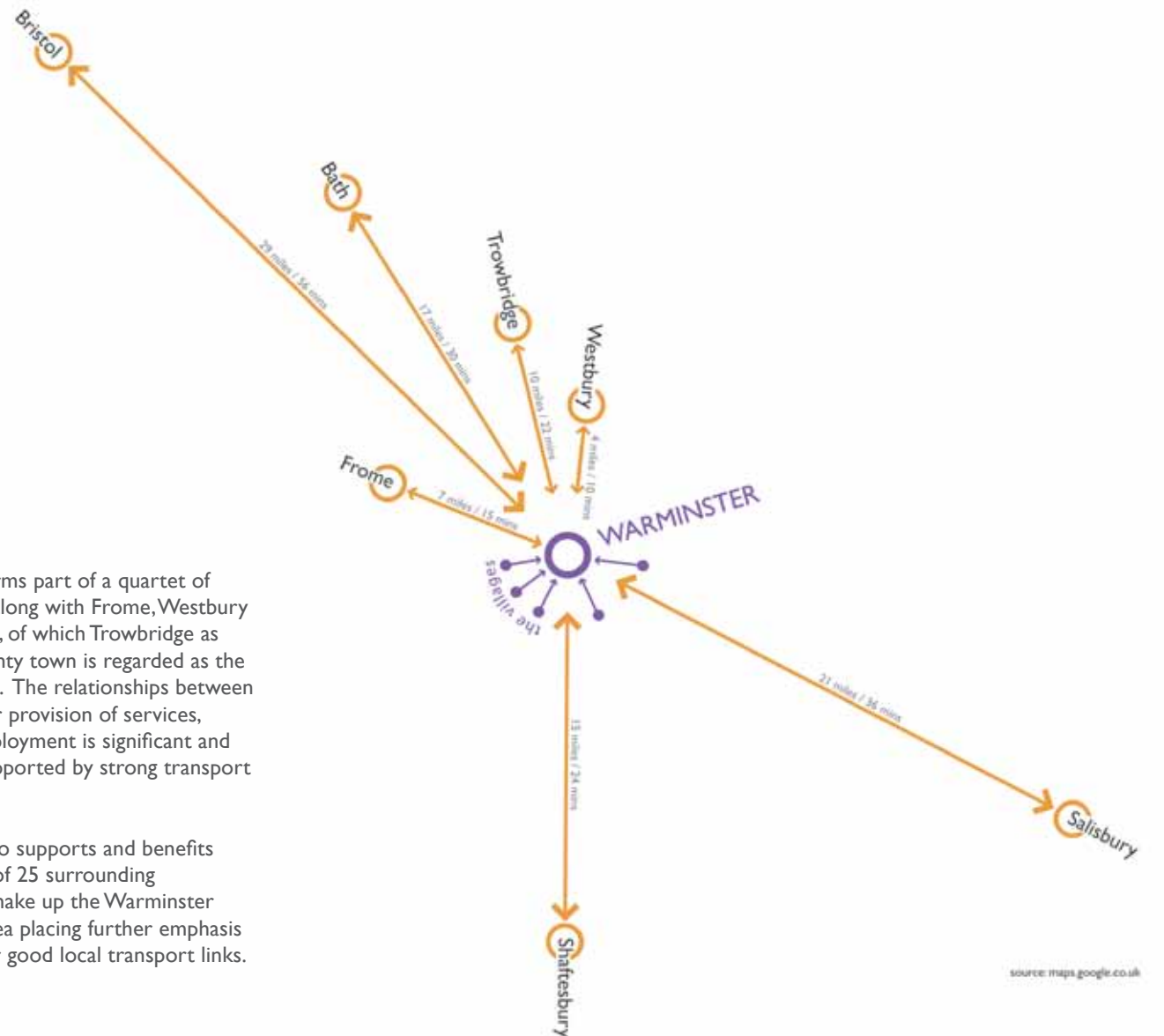
Strategic context

Warminster is situated in the western part of Wiltshire approximately half way between Bath and Salisbury, and to the south east of Bristol. Warminster is close to a number of popular tourist destinations such as Longleat, Stourhead, Avebury, Stonehenge and a Center Parcs and benefits from good road and rail links.

Warminster has a population of approximately 18,000 with a slightly higher than average proportion of residents who are aged over 60. The town's garrison is a major employer within the local area and also has a substantial impact on the population profile.

Warminster forms part of a quartet of market towns along with Frome, Westbury and Trowbridge, of which Trowbridge as Wiltshire's county town is regarded as the most significant. The relationships between these towns for provision of services, leisure and employment is significant and needs to be supported by strong transport links.

Warminster also supports and benefits from a cluster of 25 surrounding villages which make up the Warminster Community Area placing further emphasis on the need for good local transport links.





Historic context

Warminster grew as a significant market town. By the 16th century the town was a well established, with clothing and malting the economic mainstays until the 19th century. A significant number of buildings from this period remain to this day and dominate its character. The opening of the railway in 1851 signalled the decline of the market. New housing spread north of the town towards the railway and Warminster became principally a residential town so moving away from its origins as a trade centre. A significant proportion of the town centre falls within Warminster Town Centre Conservation Area (see adjacent map) and the majority of the buildings are either listed or locally listed, therefore providing a sensitive historic context for development.

A key impact of Warminster's origins is that it now has a town centre out of proportion with its present demand, leaving areas of activity which are separated from each other and which struggle to be vibrant. This suggests that there is a need to concentrate core town centre activities in a more focussed area and to gradually develop other roles for outlying parts of the town.

Historic context

The plan below and the street elevation photos on the previous pages highlight the historic character of Warminster town centre. There are a large number of both listed and locally listed buildings in Warminster Town Centre Conservation Area as shown on the plan below.





Urban character

Warminster has grown from a group of four village settlements centred around their respective parish churches. It has evolved into a linear market town with a strong historic core. The main centre is defined by the historic route between Bath to the northwest and Salisbury to the southeast, with other historic routes radiating out to Frome, Shaftesbury and Trowbridge. These routes define the fundamental nature of the town with initial radiating growth being in-filled by 20th century development.

Warminster lies in the valley bottom at the junction of the Rivers Wylye and Were. The surrounding landscape is dramatic with a number of impressive overlooking hills. This landscape has governed the direction of growth which has been confined mainly to flatter areas that are close to the watercourses. The Wiltshire Character Assessment (2005) identified the areas to the north and south as of strong landscape character, particularly Salisbury Plain. There are two conservation areas within the town, namely:

- Warminster Town Centre Conservation Area
- Boreham Road Conservation Area

Today's town has a coherent body of historic buildings both in its centre and also along its historic approach routes. The main focus for commercial activity remains

the area between East Street to the east and Silver Street to the west. This centre is surrounded by areas of post 1900s housing and employment development. The large garrison lies to the north, separated from the town by the railway line.

A key part of the Town Plan is to work with the unique historic form and landscape when considering new development.

Planning context

Wiltshire Council is currently in the process of preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) for the county, which will replace the current adopted planning policy documents for the area which are: the Wiltshire & Swindon Structure Plan (2006) and West Wiltshire Plan 1st Alteration (2004). The emerging Core Strategy for Wiltshire allocates up to 1,770 homes for Warminster and 6ha of new employment land. It is proposed that 900 homes, along with new employment land, will be provided in a mixed use development to the west and northwest of the town. Core Policy 19 supports new comparison retail provision on the Central Car Park site providing it is well integrated with the existing fabric of the town centre, provides high quality public realm and pedestrian links and enhances the central area. The policy also sets out criteria for development at the West Warminster Urban Extension and the essential infrastructure requirements associated

with this. The policy also seeks to ensure that the surrounding sensitive environment and views to the surrounding countryside are protected and enhanced.

Warminster is also recognised in regional and local planning policy as being within a valued landscape setting with a number of protected countryside areas surrounding it. The Wiltshire Workspace and Employment Land Strategy 2009 identified that Warminster has a key role to play in accommodating employment space, and in particular small scale workshops, incubation space for environmental technology, high value added industries, food and drink, business services, IT, tourism and advanced technology.

One of the key strategic objectives for the Core Strategy is to address climate change (Strategic Objective 1) and promote a sustainable pattern of development, including the self containment of settlements, reduction in the need to travel, ensuring development is sustainably constructed and securing renewable energy in new and existing homes and buildings.

Warminster and Villages Community Partnership also has developed a Community Plan for Warminster and surrounding villages which was shaped by community consultation and recommends the implementation of a number of strategies and initiatives. The Plan notes that the main issues of concern are: traffic, dangerous roads, poor range of shops, litter and untidiness, parking fees and vandalism.

The Town Plan responds to and reflects this context by seeking to provide new retail and employment opportunities for the projected increased population. This growth is focussed in the existing town centre and around existing employment areas as the most sustainable locations.

Socio economic context

Warminster has just above the national average for levels of employment with 3% classified as unemployed in 2011. Over 50% of those that are not in paid employment are retired which relates to the higher proportion of those people over 60 in the town. The proportion of the population classified as upper and upper middle class is slightly lower than average (19% compared to the national average of 23%). There is also a higher than average proportion of skilled manual workers (23% of the population, which compares to the national average of 15%) which may be attributed in part to the dominance of the MoD in the area. Most of the town's housing is owner occupied.

These findings suggest that the town does not currently have problems with unemployment. The planned growth for the town in housing and employment, as set out in the planning context, will help ensure development is balanced. Strengthening infrastructure and retail provision in the town will also provide additional job opportunities.

Property market context

Warminster is the second largest town in west Wiltshire after Trowbridge but is in competition with larger nearby towns such as Trowbridge, Bath and Salisbury.

Employment: The Wiltshire Workspace and Employment Land Strategy 2009 identified Warminster as having a key role to play in accommodating employment space in Wiltshire. There is also a demand for small scale, modern flexible units between 233sqm and 465sqm.

Retail: The 2008-2011 recession saw relatively few empty shops in comparison with many other market towns and there is currently a healthy turnover of occupants. The advent of Waitrose in March 2012 will balance the offer of Morrisons to the west of the centre, and improves the quality of the retail offer overall in the town. It will also help positively to draw in smaller independents to match and support this rise in quality. Furthermore, an additional 900 homes will greatly add to the retail opportunities available which must be encouraged to populate the town centre where ever possible.

Given that retail values in the town are currently relatively limited, any new development should be cost effective and provide the larger retail unit sizes which meet the typical current requirements of national multiple retailers, and which are currently lacking in the town.

Residential: The residential market is dominated by traditional family sized housing rather than flats, of which over 85% is owner-occupied. There is a significant need for more affordable homes. Meanwhile, growth in employment opportunities also needs to be matched by the provision of appropriate housing. The quality and sustainability of new housing needs to be improved and modern methods of construction explored.

The Town Plan responds to this by identifying opportunities to expand and enhance the town's retail and employment offer. The need to improve the supply of a mix of housing types and sizes to meet local needs will be addressed through policy set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Transport context

Warminster lies mainly between the railway line to the north and the by-pass route of the A36 to the south with the B3414 running through the town centre.

There is a general perception that traffic congestion is an issue in the town centre, particularly with the presence of heavy goods vehicles on Market Place and along the narrow approach routes. The situation is exacerbated at certain times of the day by cross town traffic from western residential areas to schools, including Kingdown, on the east side of town. Traffic

to the garrison and Woodcock trading estate places further pressure on these routes. An additional 900 houses and further employment land to the west of the town will pose additional difficulties which will need to be resolved.

Recent improvements to the town centre public realm have significantly improved pedestrian facilities here. However there are issues with narrow footways outside of the town centre. There are also limited cycle facilities in the town both in terms of cycle routes and cycle parking.

The town centre has 11 car parks containing approximately 1,130 spaces, the majority of which are charged for and have a maximum stay limit. The car parks are in a variety of ownerships and have different management regimes. Wiltshire has adopted a Parking Strategy as part of the Local Transport Plan (2011-2026). Policy PSI seeks to efficiently manage the supply, charging and enforcement of parking in Wiltshire. Warminster is identified as falling into “Band 3”, market towns. Appropriate charging has been implemented. The strategy also seeks to prioritise short stay car parking in areas a short distance from town centres and decrease long stay commuter car parking where sustainable transport links exist, which are both strategies relevant to Warminster.

In terms of public transport the town is served by Warminster Rail Station which provides connections to Cardiff, Bath, Westbury and Salisbury and connections

to London. It is also served by a number of bus routes. However, there are no bus services after 7pm in the town and a limited service on Sundays. Funding for bus services is not likely to increase in the near future therefore better use of existing resources will need to be made such as demand responsive services.

The interchange between bus services and the train station is currently poor with most bus stops which serve the town centre a five minute walk away from the railway station. There is limited space in front of the station so only smaller buses can directly serve the train passengers.

The Town Plan responds to these issues by prioritising the need for a full Traffic Assessment of the town. There is a lack of evidence without it to confidently take forward any major long-term redevelopment of the town centre.

Meanwhile the Town Plan prioritises the needs of pedestrians and sustainable modes of transport in the town centre. This includes proposing new bus facilities to provide better integration with the rail services. It also identifies the need to keep under review the management of parking within the town so as to maintain a centre that serves well all those wishing to shop, move and live within it.

In 2011, the Town Council initiated a new Parking Partnership with independent traders to provide a 1 hour free parking scheme via a reimbursement scheme.

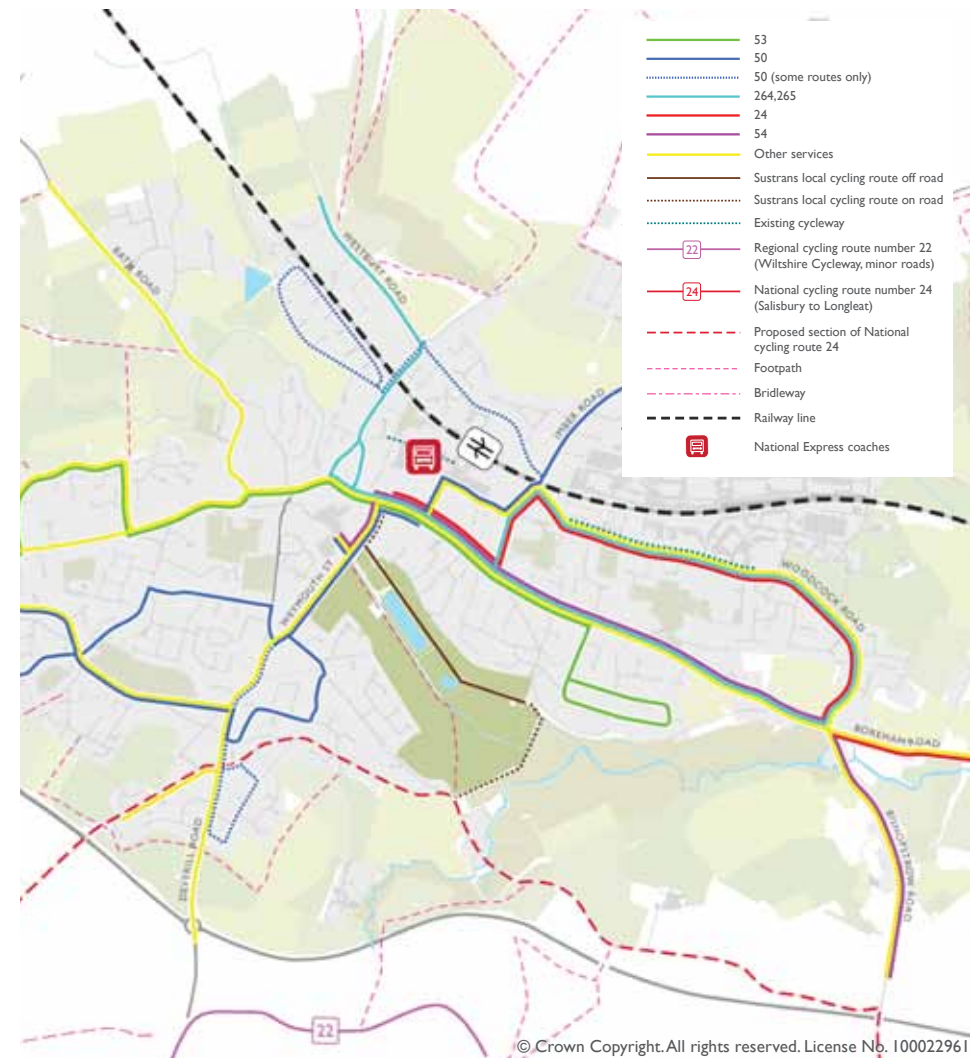


Figure 2.1 Bus routes, cycling and footpaths

Social infrastructure

Warminster is generally well served in terms of its education, health and social facilities. Many key services, including the library, are readily accessible in the centre of town. These are likely to be expanded by Wiltshire Council's proposal to introduce 'campus' style service provision. Locating these new services in a new central location would be an important contribution to the strength of the core of the town. Wiltshire Council reviewed the provision of leisure facilities in the county and identified Warminster as a location for a significant new leisure facility to replace the existing facilities, to be delivered between 2021 and 2025.

As with many similar towns, facilities for younger people and families are a key issue. However, in Warminster there may be options to provide greater access to existing facilities at the garrison which could have significant benefits for both parties.

Housing and employment growth planned for the town should help to deliver improved infrastructure through developer contributions. It will also increase the critical mass of the population to further support the expansion of services and facilities in the town, along with an expansion of the retail offer. However, as land suitable for development has been identified to the west of Warminster, it is important that sustainable travel linkages are provided, particularly to Kingdown



Figure 2.2 Town centre community facilities

School, which is located to the east of the town, to avoid any increases in town centre congestion.

The Town Plan therefore looks at the potential for new and enhanced leisure and community facilities and particularly notes that facilities for younger people need to be accessible. It also looks to better integration of the town and garrison facilities.

Opportunity sites

The Warminster Vision and Scoping Study identified a number of opportunity sites within the town centre and this has been reinforced through further consultation and research. These areas have been identified for a number of reasons:

- They are presently vacant or under-used and awaiting developer interest;
- They represent a weak or under-performing part of the town centre, either from a commercial point of view or an urban design perspective;
- They are the subject of existing developer interest; or
- They are considered essential sites in unlocking development which will have a strategic benefit for the wider town centre.

The Town Plan provides a reasoned approach to the development of these sites, with specific development options and delivery mechanisms where appropriate.

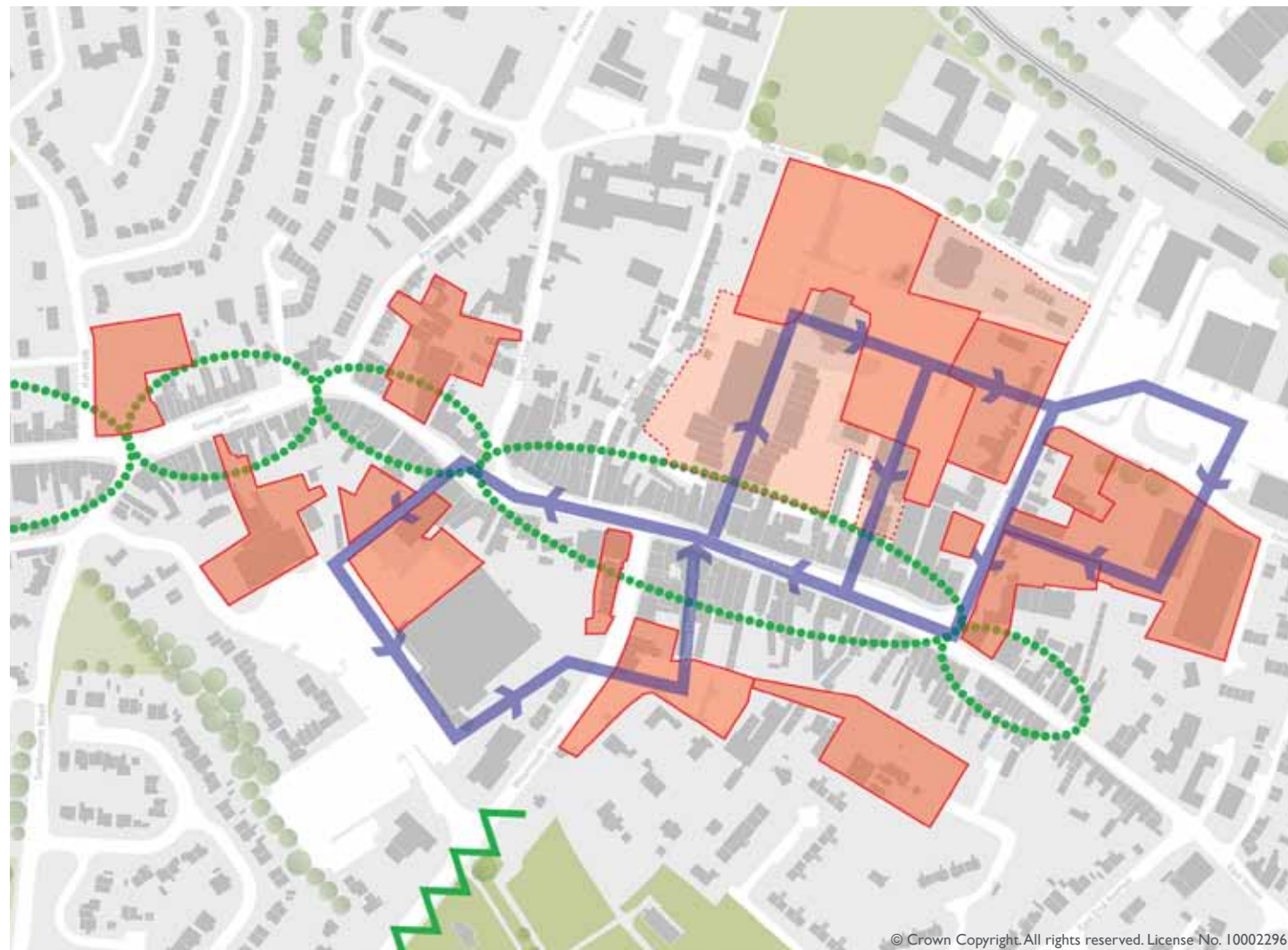


Figure 2.3 Town centre opportunities

Sustainability

A Sustainability Appraisal is being developed alongside the emerging Wiltshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy which provides the overarching framework for this Town Plan. A separate town level Sustainability Appraisal has not been undertaken for this work at this stage. However the principles contained in this plan comply with the framework set out in the emerging county level LDF Core Strategy and therefore have been appraised as part of the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process. The final Town Plan proposals will be cross checked against the content of the final Core Strategy SA and a screening report produced in order to fulfill Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations.

Sustainability is an important aspect of all future development in Warminster. High quality design is a fundamental part of that ambition. High quality buildings should be designed to be sympathetic to their local surroundings using locally sourced material and labour wherever possible. The high sustainability standards will be in accord with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

New development has the potential to add to greenhouse gas emissions. It will therefore be particularly important to consider the integration of on-site renewable energy into new developments. The recent construction of a stand-alone aerobic digestion plant within the town boundary using commercial and farm waste

has shown the way forward. The huge local timber resources of the Stourhead and Longleat estates could be utilised by the new developments to the west of the Town.

The Revised Sustainability Appraisal Report Scoping Report (2010) for Wiltshire's LDF Core Strategy highlights the lack of previously developed land in Wiltshire and the importance of directing development towards previously developed land as much as possible. The landscape character of Wiltshire contributes significantly to its local distinctiveness. However, agriculture in the area has affected biodiversity, and previous work has highlighted detrimental impacts on water quality. Elevated phosphate concentrations in the River Wylye which is a tributary of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation have been highlighted as a particular concern. However the Interim SA Report (June 2011) concludes that policies 50 and 51 in the Core Strategy (June 2011) adequately address this potential issue.

The Core Strategy also highlights opportunities for community district heating as part of new developments in the town centre and the potential for a new renewable energy centre and waste facilities to the north of Warminster.

The Town Plan seeks to promote Warminster as an exemplar in sustainable development. New development and re-development opportunities will integrate renewable technologies and use local resources to the maximum.



Consultation

Consultation has formed a key part of the development of the Town Plan document and the preceding Vision and Scoping Study.

A series of consultation events were held over the summer and autumn of 2009 with key stakeholders, local businesses and residents. These were an important part of the baseline analysis in identifying issues and opportunities for the town centre. Events included a public exhibition held in the Three Horseshoes Mall, the library and at the West Wilts Show as well as a stakeholder walking audit event. One-to-one interviews with key stakeholders were also held

Whilst the consultation has informed the issues already identified in this section this overview is provided to give a clear sense of the way in which consultation has led the Town Plan. These issues have been included because they represent the most frequently occurring concerns and ideas which were raised. A full record of the consultation inputs can be found in the baseline report which accompanies this Town Plan.

Key consultation issues

- Warminster needs an improved range of shops in the town centre and to support independent shops.
- Residents would like an improved range of family friendly cafés and restaurants in the town centre.
- The town needs more youth facilities and better leisure provision such as cinema, bowling alley and climbing wall.
- There is a need to better integrate the army garrison with the town - this relates to the need for improved physical connections such as walking and bus routes; a greater sense of social interaction; and maximising the opportunities for local people to share the garrison's facilities.
- There are a number of empty shops and buildings (significantly the Old Town Hall) which detract from the appearance of the town centre. These should be utilised. Unattractive shop fronts are also a problem.
- There is potential to capitalise on tourism in Warminster, through promoting local assets.
- Warminster has a positive historic character which should be conserved and enhanced.
- The library and hospital are well used and valued community assets which should be retained.
- There is a desire for a new supermarket in the town centre - subsequently a new Waitrose supermarket, A1 and A3 units have been approved and constructed at the old Dents site, which have addressed this concern.
- Current levels of parking provision should be retained, and be free of charge.
- Traffic congestion can be a problem in the town centre. This particularly relates to the cross-town movements at peak times which affects Market Place and the streets leading into it but also has a knock-on impact on Copheap Lane as people seek alternative routes around congested areas.
- There is also potential for more traffic calming and provision of improved pedestrian facilities throughout the town
- A one way loop for vehicles towards the eastern end of the town centre may help traffic congestion along East Street.
- New cycle routes around the town should be promoted.





3. Vision and objectives

A vision for Warminster

This section sets out a strategy for the future of Warminster town centre and the wider town area, identifying the main opportunities for new development and improvement. The vision for Warminster, which is set out alongside, is both inspirational and ambitious in defining the town's future.

This vision has been refined into a series of theme-based objectives for the town which have guided the development of the proposals and opportunities set out in the following chapters. Objectives have been developed for the following themes taken from the Vision and Scoping study undertaken in 2008. Warminster will be:

- a sustainable shopping centre;
- a tourist destination;
- a thriving economy;
- an accessible town;
- an attractive environment; and
- a leisure and community hub.

The detailed objectives set out over the following pages have been developed from the work previously undertaken as part of the Scoping Report, Core Strategy development and its associated evidence base, the review of baseline information and the community consultation events held in September 2009.

The vision for Warminster is that it will build on its strong heritage as a prominent market town with a significant catchment area of local villages. It will develop as a truly sustainable town, providing the mix of employment, services and amenities that will enable residents to build within it all stages of their lives.

The beauty of the surrounding countryside and its villages is a major attribute that will be fostered and supported, with good access and communications links with the town and for visitors coming to the area. This will be matched within the town by strong conservation of its heritage and very high standards in its appearance and cleanliness.

The town's economy will continue to develop in vibrancy, resilience and flexibility to meet the challenges of the future. Warminster will offer a spread of employment. It will also increase its provision of employment requiring high levels of academic and technical achievement with support through education and training. Housing and workspace standards, developed in parallel with excellent amenities, will

see Warminster as a town where people positively want to live and work. These attributes, linked to the world renowned attractions close by and within easy reach, will make Warminster a tourism destination of first choice.

Warminster's already good relations with its army garrison will be strengthened. There will be a high level of integration of social and sporting activities, as circumstances allow. The local highly technical employment opportunities offered by the garrison's use of extremely sophisticated training aids will be fostered.

There will be particular emphasis on developing the bonds of community, backed by a good range of activities run by and for both the young and retired elements of the population.

The preservation of the noted friendliness of Warminster will be a factor in all decisions.

Overall, Warminster will take a pioneering role as a vibrant and sustainable market town for the 21st century.





Town Plan Objectives

A sustainable shopping centre

- To ensure Warminster is a thriving town centre with a range of shops providing a choice of convenience shopping and a variety of high street and independent shops to serve local residents and the wider population.
- To encourage the production and sale of local produce to build on Warminster's unique characteristics and attributes.
- To secure a range of uses in the town centre, such as restaurants and cafés, to encourage more use of the town centre and to also help develop a vibrant evening economy.
- To ensure that Warminster offers the right opportunities for retailers in order to provide sustainable economic growth.
- To create a compact and legible town centre with an attractive network of streets and spaces to create a pleasant shopping environment.
- To create an accessible town centre with good quality walking and cycling routes, public transport and parking that make Warminster easy to visit.
- To ensure that Warminster's supermarkets, both existing and planned are well integrated with the town centre to promote linked trips to smaller local shops.



A tourist destination

- To capitalise on Warminster's attractive landscape setting and proximity to tourist destinations such as Longleat and Stonehenge to promote the town as a place to visit or stay.
- To build on Warminster's particular townscape characteristics, historic buildings and assets such as the Maltings in promoting the town as a unique tourist destination.
- To provide the necessary infrastructure including places to stay and eat which encourage visitors to choose Warminster.
- To provide integrated public transport options which will make Warminster more attractive both as a destination but also as a base for exploring the wider area.



A thriving economy

- To maximise employment opportunities in Warminster, including the potential for increasing employment uses in the existing business parks and also smaller scale employment opportunities within the town centre itself, such as local niche industries including arts and crafts, textiles and maltings. It is expected that the housing growth identified in the Wiltshire 2026 document will be accompanied by an appropriate level of employment development to minimise the need for people to commute away from Warminster.
- To create opportunities for small scale town centre business and enterprise space to develop.
- To pursue technology initiatives including the extension of high speed broadband which will help to promote Warminster as a good location for business.
- To improve and rationalise existing older business and industrial parks.
- To strengthen links with the town's garrison and to pursue opportunities for supporting its tasks and facilities by using local resources.



An accessible town

- To ensure Warminster is accessible to everyone, with good public transport facilities (particularly adequate bus links running throughout the day and evening), good pedestrian and cycle routes and adequate, town centre parking.
- To improve bus facilities and the links/ interchange around the train station.
- To improve the main pedestrian and cycle routes into the town to promote walking and cycling for shorter journeys, particularly including links between the town centre and the garrison.
- To enhance access to the surrounding countryside through improvements to walking links and access points.
- To promote a strategic approach to the management of parking within the town centre and ensure an appropriate supply of town centre parking.
- To reduce the impact of traffic congestion on key streets and spaces.
- To significantly reduce the impact of heavy goods vehicles on the town centre by introducing a weight limit during shopping hours in combination with a managed delivery regime which promotes use of the appropriate access routes into the town.



An attractive environment

- To enhance the environment of Warminster with further improvements to the public realm that will complement the recent improvements in parts of the town.
- To promote the re-use or temporary use of existing vacant shop units for the display of work by local artists, information on regeneration projects or other similar use.
- To encourage the improvement of poor quality shopfronts and buildings in the town centre which currently detract from the streetscape.
- To ensure that key buildings such as the Athenaeum and the Old Town Hall are in vibrant and sustainable use.



A leisure and community hub

- To secure new leisure facilities for all ages, particularly provision for young people and young families. Facilities should be centrally located whenever possible to ensure their ease of access.
- To accommodate 1,770 new homes as identified in the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy in a sustainable manner, including 900 as a planned urban extension to the west of the town centre.
- To secure appropriate related infrastructure such as road improvements, improvements to public transport, environmental improvements and adequate health and education provision to meet the additional needs generated by the new homes.
- To promote the sustainable use of the town centre throughout the day and evening, particularly through encouraging new housing within the town centre where appropriate.
- To open up opportunities provided by the army garrison and other local community groups to the wider community to allow the whole town to share knowledge and facilities as much as possible.





4 Opportunities

4.1 Introduction

This section sets out the main opportunities for new development and town centre initiatives in Warminster until 2026.

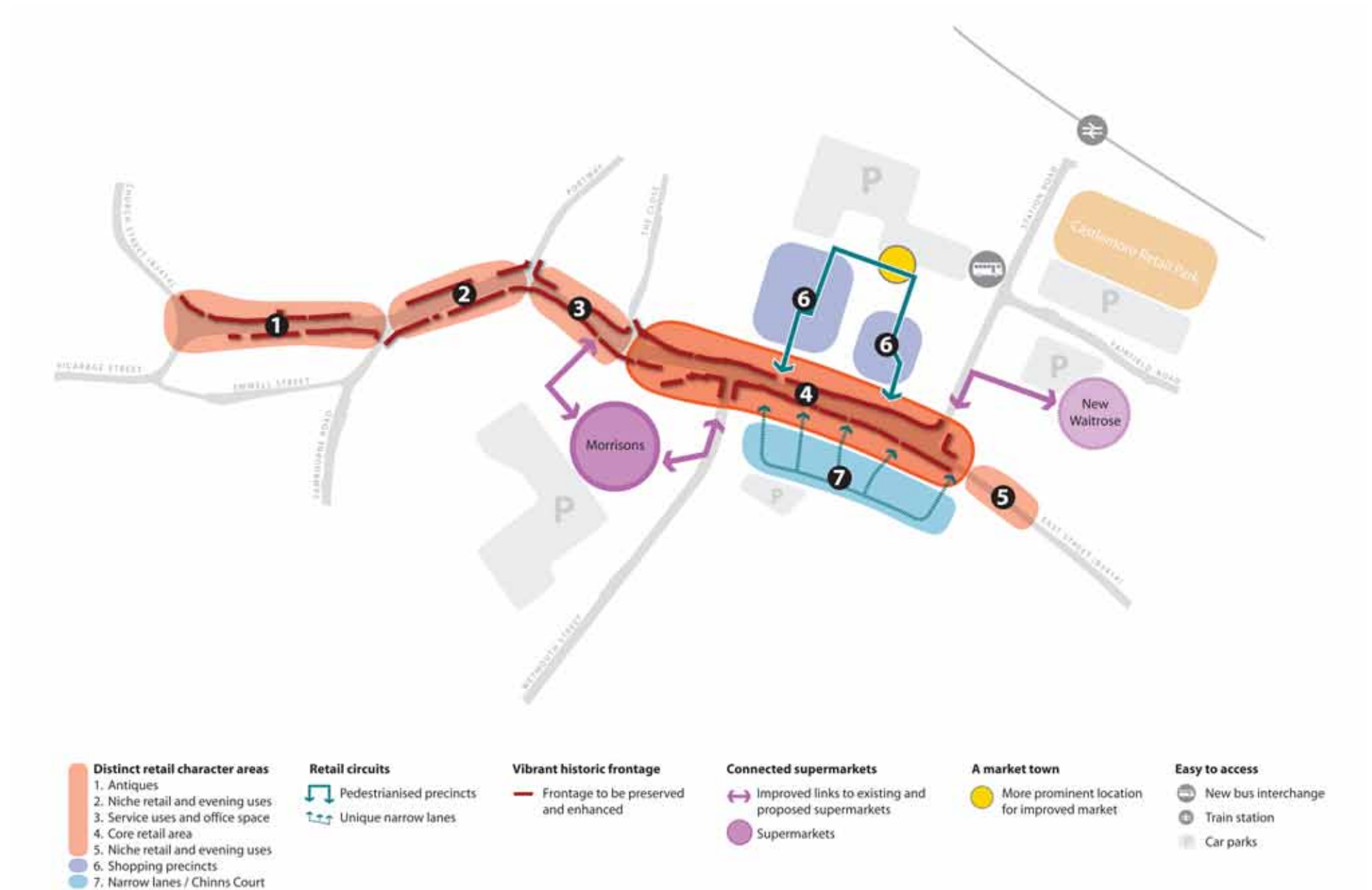
Section 4.2 proposes an overarching strategy for each objective theme from which town policies are derived. They encompass:

- a sustainable shopping centre
- a tourist destination
- a thriving economy
- an accessible town
- an attractive environment
- a leisure and community hub

Section 4.3 examines opportunities in the town centre on a focus area basis and provides detailed guidance in each case.



Sustainable shopping centre - strategy plan



4.2 Overarching strategy

A sustainable shopping centre

In order to strengthen the town's offer, and to ensure its continued sustainability, new retail development should be limited to the central core of the town centre. This is in line with national planning policy for Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (Planning Policy Statement 4) and the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- The core of the town centre has a range of national brands and independent shops. The Town Plan seeks to secure an improved range of shops in the town centre and the development of new commercial units to attract new retailers into Warminster, particularly larger comparison retailers. The distinct character areas in the town provide excellent opportunities for the creation of specialist retail areas building on existing successful businesses. The character areas identified are:
 - Silver Street (antiques);
 - George Street (niche retailers and evening uses);
 - High Street (service uses and office space);
 - Market Place (core retail); and
 - East Street (niche retailers and evening uses).

Potential sites and policies for new retail development in the town centre are shown under section 4.3, focus areas.

As part of creating a compact and integrated town centre it is important that outlying retail uses such as Morrisons, the retail park on Fairfield Road and Waitrose foodstore development on the former Dents factory site have good pedestrian links into the town centre. Opportunities which improve the quality of these links will be welcomed.

To reflect Warminster's role as a historic market town, the regular market should be given a more prominent location. It is considered unlikely that it will be possible to locate the market back into Market Place due to the requirements of traffic movements this document proposes. However, a more high profile location adjacent to the library as part of a wider development project to the main car parking area may be feasible.

It will also be important to promote local independent traders and produce which will help to create a unique identity for Warminster and contribute towards enhancing the town's sustainability.

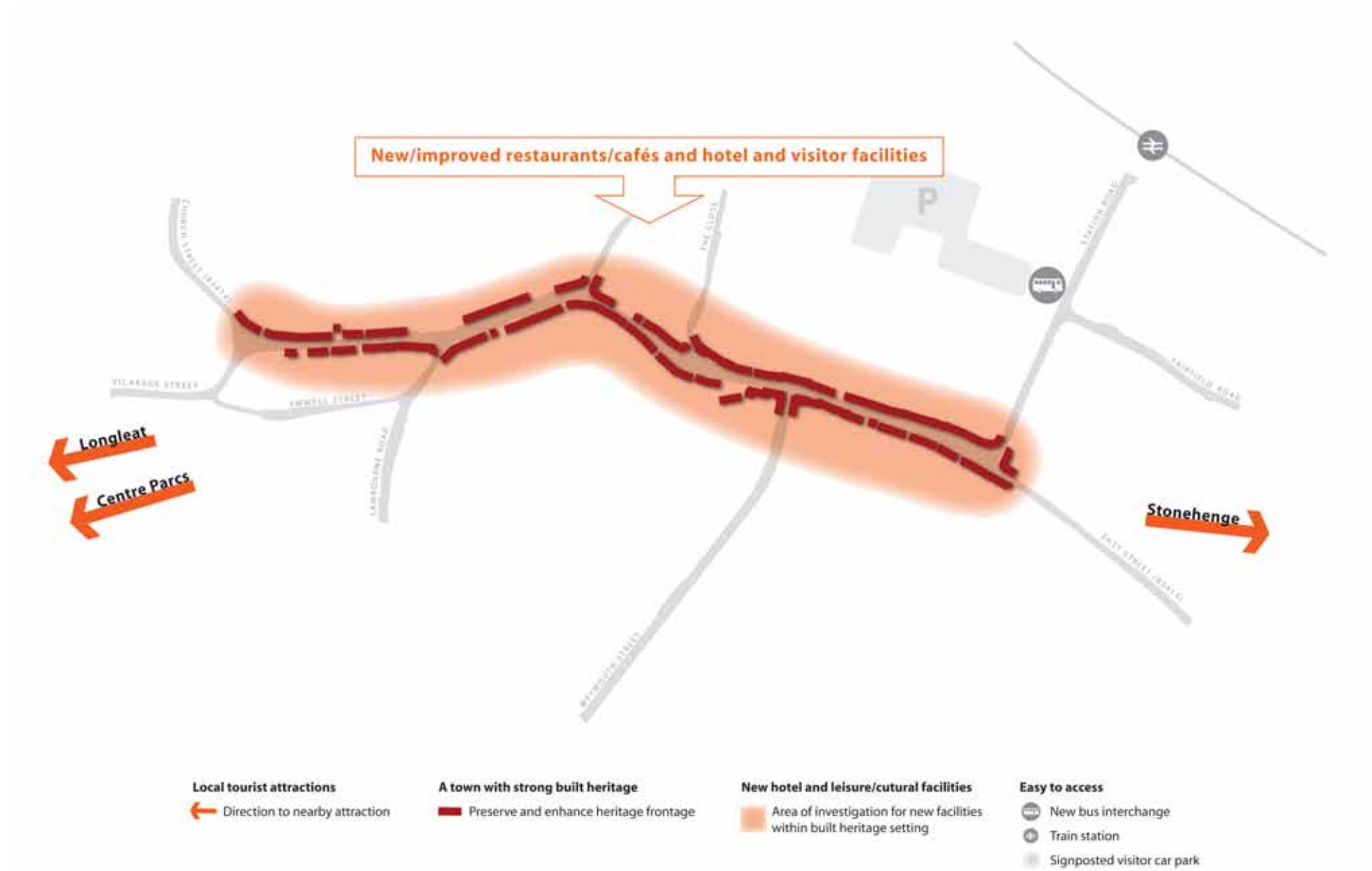
Policy WTC1: New retail development will be directed towards the central core of Warminster town centre. New retail development outside of the core area should complement the character of the distinct retail character areas as illustrated.

Improvements to the quality of linkages between the town centre and outlying retail areas will be encouraged, both through improvements to the public realm and through the integration of active frontage between the areas.

The shopping strategy is set out in the adjacent plan.



A tourist destination - strategy plan



A tourist destination

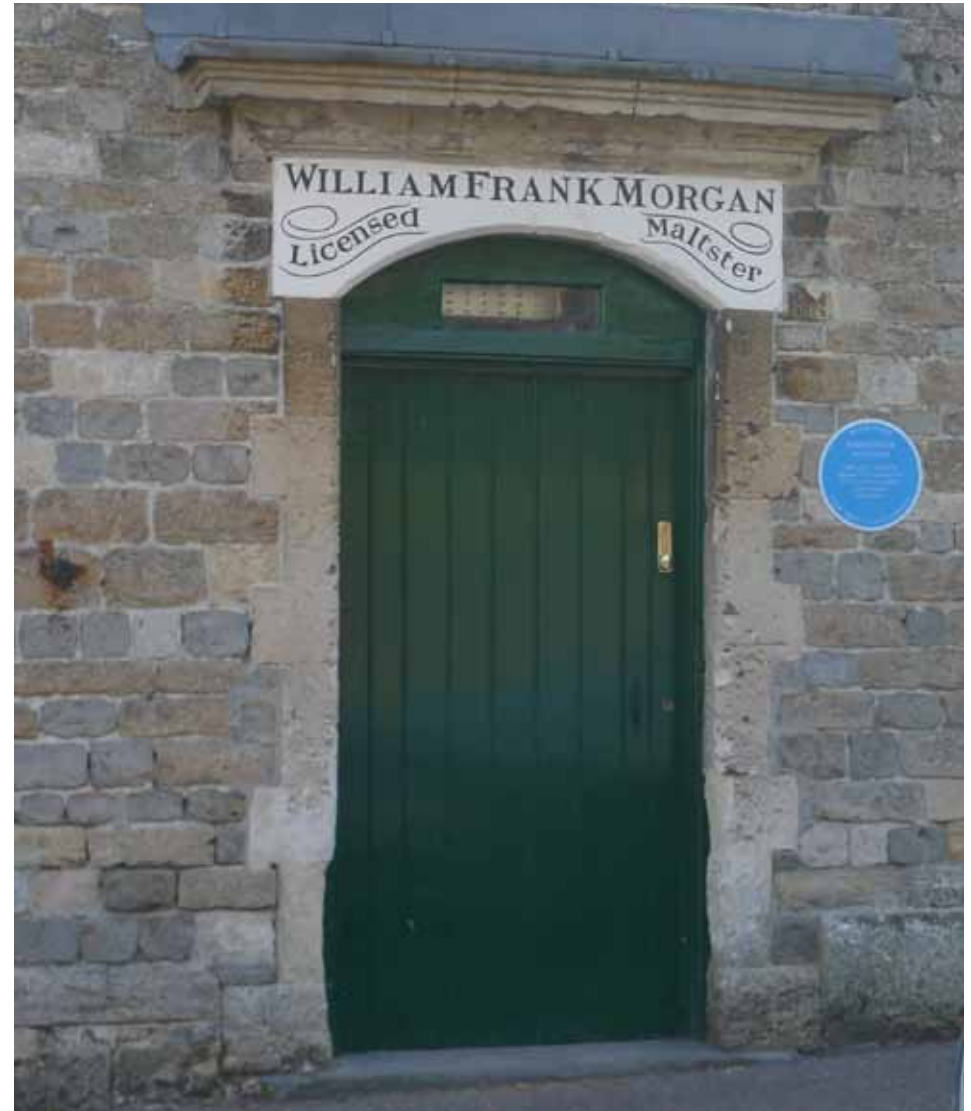
Warminster is located within a relatively short distance of Longleat, Stonehenge, Stourhead and Center Parcs, all of which are popular tourist destinations. There is significant potential for Warminster to capitalise on its proximity to these by improving its tourism offer, such as the potential for new hotel and visitor facilities, and improved public transport links between these destinations and the town centre.

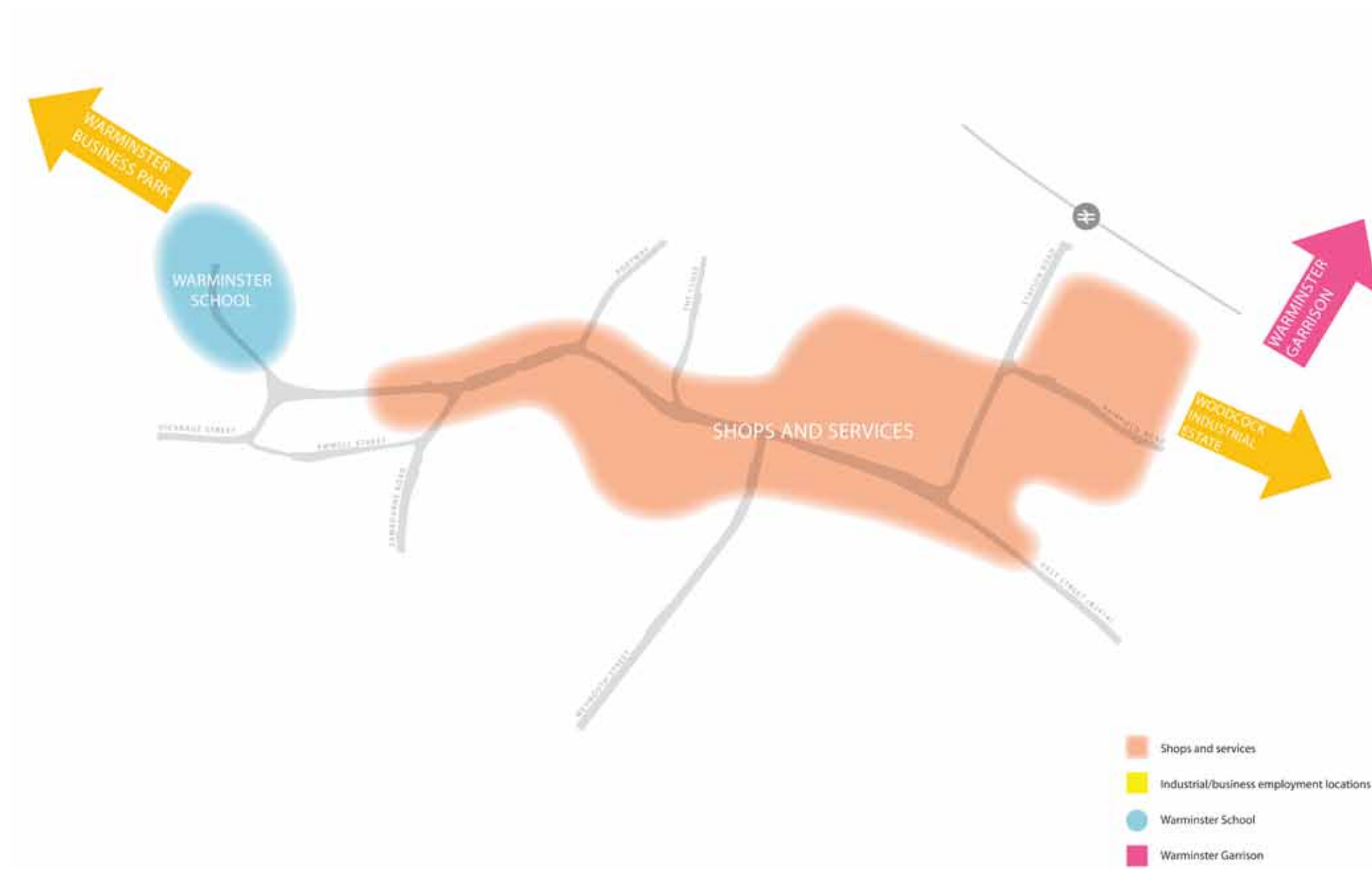
New restaurants, cafés and family-friendly activities and events in the town centre would encourage visitors and local residents to linger in Warminster and improve its attractiveness as a place to stay.

Existing assets such as the attractive countryside setting and strong artist community could be built upon to support the promotion of the town as a tourist destination in itself.

Policy WTC2: New hotel and leisure/cultural facilities and enhancements to existing cultural and tourism facilities will be encouraged in the centre of the town to enhance Warminster's tourism potential, particularly new restaurants and cafés.

The promotion of Warminster as a tourist destination and its proximity to Longleat, Stourhead, Center Parcs and Stonehenge will be encouraged.





A thriving economy

Warminster town centre is home to a number of successful industries. It is important to retain and expand employment opportunities in the local area to serve the existing and new residents from the proposed urban expansion to the west of Warminster. The retention of, and investment in, Woodcock Industrial Estate will be encouraged in association with any new proposals within the estate.

The provision of office space as part of mixed use development within the town centre will be supported where appropriate to assist in providing local employment for the town's residents. The army garrison also plays a significant role in the town's economy both as the town's largest employer, and in terms of the impact of the army families stationed here on local shops, services and education facilities in particular. Opportunities to build links between the garrison and local businesses and suppliers will be promoted, through maintaining regular contact with the garrison and working with them to identify opportunities for local business and improvements to physical and social links.

Policy WTC3: New office and light industrial uses will be supported within existing employment areas and improvements to the environment at Woodcock Industrial Estate will be sought in association with any proposals in this area.

New office space within mixed use development within the town centre will be supported where appropriate.

Policy WTC4: Links with the army garrison will be enhanced and opportunities for new industry to locate in the Warminster area to serve the garrison's specialist needs will be maximised.



An accessible town - strategy plan



An accessible town

Warminster benefits from access to both rail and bus services. However these services are not well integrated and there are opportunities to introduce improvements by developing a new bus and coach interchange as part of the redevelopment of the car parks to the rear of the Three Horseshoes Walk. Bus services are also very limited in the evenings, and as part of any major new developments in the town improvements to the frequency of buses and the introduction of more evening services will be sought. This is a key element of ensuring that any town centre leisure facilities are accessible to young people in particular.

It is recognised that the majority of people in the area mainly rely on using their cars to get into Warminster to access its shops and services. However the existing arrangement of car parks can be confusing and unclear to visitors to the town, with a range of parking locations and restrictions. It is proposed that the parking arrangements in the town centre are simplified thereby encouraging parking to be more evenly spread, simplifying arrangements for visitors to the town and allowing for the rationalisation of some of the town centre parking. Wiltshire's new Parking Strategy sets out a new parking regime for all Council car parks across Wiltshire, which will help to simplify the parking arrangements in Warminster. The

strategy also seeks to prioritise short stay car parking in areas a short distance from town centres and decrease long stay commuter car parking where sustainable transport links exist, which are both relevant strategies to Warminster.

It is recommended that an overall total of approximately 1,100 car parking spaces are provided in the town centre. This reflects the fact that increased town centre activity will be balanced by better use and management of the spaces and by increased use of sustainable travel alternatives.

Traffic is a holistic issue not susceptible to being resolved in isolation, locally by locality. In Warminster there are a number of intractable traffic problems:

- Disruption caused by HGV delivery traffic in the centre of town.
- Congestion along East Street and at its junction with Station Road at peak times, which is also a danger to pedestrians.
- The need to better manage the interconnections within and between the rail, bus and taxi services in the town centre and its hinterland.
- The growth of the existing business and industrial estates.
- The need to take early account of the impact of 1,770 new homes and 6ha of employment land to the west of the town.

- The impact of military traffic (both private and Service vehicles) on infrastructure and routes not designed to take the volume and weight of an increasing garrison and modern armoured vehicles.

A number of piecemeal and ad hoc solutions have been proposed but no coordinated approach to resolving them has been made. Therefore a new Traffic Assessment is required.

Opportunities to improve access to the surrounding distinctive countryside and pedestrian and cycle links to it should be maximised wherever possible. This is an opportunity to enhance the tourism appeal of the town and also to promote local use.

Policy WTC5: The following improvements to public transport in Warminster will be sought as part of any planning application:

- improvement of bus facilities through the development of a new bus interchange off Station Road;
- improvements to the frequency and efficiency of buses (particularly evening services); and
- improvements to the links between the bus services and the train station.

Policy WTC6: A coordinated approach to the management of town centre parking will be undertaken. The release of part of or some of the town centre car park sites for development will be considered where the overall level of town centre parking can be maintained and the development will not compromise wider Town Plan and parking objectives.

A coordinated long-term approach to the management of traffic within the town and its hinterland will be taken.



An attractive environment

The town centre lies mainly in the Warminster Town Centre Conservation Area with a small element to the east in the Boreham Road Conservation Area. There is a significant number of good quality historic buildings around Market Place and High Street. However, parts of the town centre suffer with shopfronts and buildings that have been poorly maintained or left vacant for some time. This detracts from the overall experience of the town centre, particularly as many of the shopfronts, if restored would be unique assets to Warminster and they have the potential to make a strong positive contribution to the streetscape. Therefore improvements to shopfronts will be encouraged, and the potential for shopfront improvement grants in the local area will be investigated in order to facilitate this. Further details on proposals for shopfronts, vacant units and shopping in general are provided in the focus areas section at 4.3.

Maintenance of an attractive environment will be dependent upon the design and quality of future developments. They will need to be sympathetic to the historic nature of the immediate surrounds and enhance their character. The use of appropriate materials will be key and their palette must be defined. The quality of public spaces is also a key factor influencing the attractiveness of the town centre both for businesses and visitors. There are a

number of opportunities to extend the recent high quality improvements which have been implemented along Market Place, most significantly the opportunity to remodel George Street to support existing specialist and evening economy uses. As Warminster is fairly compact, using the same palette of materials around the periphery of the town centre is considered to be most appropriate.

Policy WTC7: Improvements to poor quality buildings and particularly shop fronts will be encouraged and opportunities sought to secure grant aid for schemes which are appropriate to the historic context.

Policy WTC8: The re-use of vacant units for local arts, community or business uses in the short term will be promoted and encouraged to ensure Warminster continues to be a vibrant town centre.

Policy WTC9: Opportunities will be sought to extend the high quality public realm treatment in the town centre to other areas using an agreed palette of materials. Implementation will be through the use of Section 106 funding from developments and through grant aid.

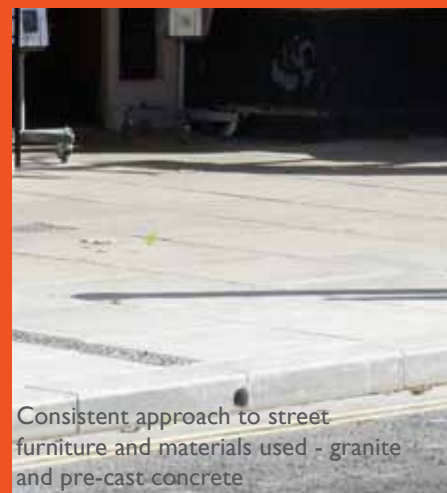
Opportunities to extend the town centre public realm improvements using the same high quality materials and simple palette should be encouraged



Use of setts where appropriate



High quality paving



Consistent approach to street furniture and materials used - granite and pre-cast concrete



Use of different materials to delineate parking/loading bays

A leisure and community hub - strategy plan



A leisure and community hub

Warminster has a strong reputation as a friendly town with many active residents and community groups working towards maintaining and improving a strong community. There is a range of youth and sports provision in the town, but consultation has identified the potential to provide more youth facilities, particularly evening activities and venues, and also potential to promote community use of the army garrison and Warminster School's sports facilities. A range of evening, leisure and community uses will be supported as part of mixed use developments in the town, in addition to improvements to the Pleasure Grounds such as new skate facilities and improved links with the town centre.

The potential development of up to 1,770 new homes, including 900 to the west of Warminster, as proposed in the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy will help to facilitate the delivery of improved health, education and communities facilities in the town through developer contributions. This development will also help to increase the critical mass in the town to support the enhancement to other facilities and an expansion of the retail offer. Core Policy 19 requires that development should provide a sustainable transport solution for pupils attending Kingdown Secondary School which is located on the eastern side of the town.

Wiltshire Council plans to replace its existing leisure provision in the town between 2021 and 2025. It is important that such key services, including the library, remain in the town centre and this provides an excellent opportunity for them to be grouped within a form of 'campus hub'. To complement this leisure provision it will be important that public transport provision is closely matched to ensure that the facilities are readily accessible to the widest number of people, and particularly the young who do not have access to a car.

There are capacity issues for the two GP surgeries in Warminster, with one temporarily based in the local hospital and looking to relocate. The fire station is currently at capacity, indeed it is the busiest retained station in Wiltshire.

Financial contributions towards the provision of the infrastructure outlined above and any further requirements arising from development will be sought from the developer during the planning application process through Section 106 negotiations in accordance with policies set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Policy WTC10: New evening, leisure and community uses will be supported in the town centre as part of mixed use development and in suitable town centre locations as a campus hub. In particular provision for new youth and sports facilities will be encouraged, and the sharing of existing army garrison and other organisations' sports and leisure facilities will be explored where possible.





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4.3 Focus areas

Introduction

This section looks at the opportunities in the town centre on a character area basis, and provides more details on the aspirations for change and development in these locations and guidelines for development. Focus areas 1-9 are all within conservation areas and where proposals include works to listed buildings or demolition within a conservation area appropriate listed building and/or conservation area consent should be sought and plans developed in line with the aspirations and policies contained in Planning Policy Statement 5. Proposals should be appropriately sensitive with regard to these heritage assets and be of the highest design quality.

The focus areas, as shown on the plan on the facing page, are:

1. Silver Street;
2. George Street;
3. High Street;
4. Market Place/High Street;
5. East Street;
6. Morrisons and south of Market Place;
7. Waitrose (former Dents factory);
8. Central Car Park; and
9. Warminster Lake Pleasure Grounds



I. Silver Street

Introduction

This part of the town has a village character with smaller scale buildings than elsewhere in the town focused around the landmark obelisk. There is a concentration of antiques shops in the area which also contributes significantly to its character. Silver Street is the western gateway to the town centre, therefore it forms the first impression for many visitors to the town.



Figure 4.3 Silver Street masterplan

Key elements

- a. **Treatment of the public realm around the obelisk and extension of footway.** To create a better pedestrian environment at this important junction, simplify traffic movements and reduce the amount of public realm given over to vehicles. This approach will also enhance the setting of the obelisk and the surrounding buildings which are of historic value.
- b. **Promotion of the area as an Antiques Quarter.** The existing cluster of antiques shops along Silver Street would benefit from a higher profile and a distinctive branding. This will help with marketing and promotion of the area as a strong asset for Warminster.
- c. **Retention of car parking spaces, pavement widening and tree planting where possible.** Part of Silver Street has a wide carriageway. The remodelling of this to provide a combination of improved pedestrian space and dedicated parking will help to support the antiques uses. Where pavements are widened opportunities can also be sought to introduce tree planting to further soften the character of the street.

- d. **Preservation of existing land use.** The existing mix of land uses including a predominance of housing combined with antiques shops is considered appropriate for the area, given that it is some way from the core of the town centre.

KEY MOVEMENT PROPOSAL

Silver Street/Vicarage Street junction

In order to enhance the setting of the obelisk, the simplification of the junction to create a more conventional T junction will be supported. This will allow the footway around the obelisk to be extended to connect back into the main pavement and create a more attractive public space. This change is unlikely to significantly affect the performance of the junction.



2. George Street

Introduction

George Street is characterised by a mix of commercial uses including convenience shopping, specialist shopping and a large number of takeaway shops. Many of the buildings are in need of maintenance, and their attractive historic features, could be enhanced as part of any future works to them. The street environment could be improved, as there are limited pedestrian crossings and tree planting in this part of town. It should be noted that there is a culvert that runs underneath George Street at this location.

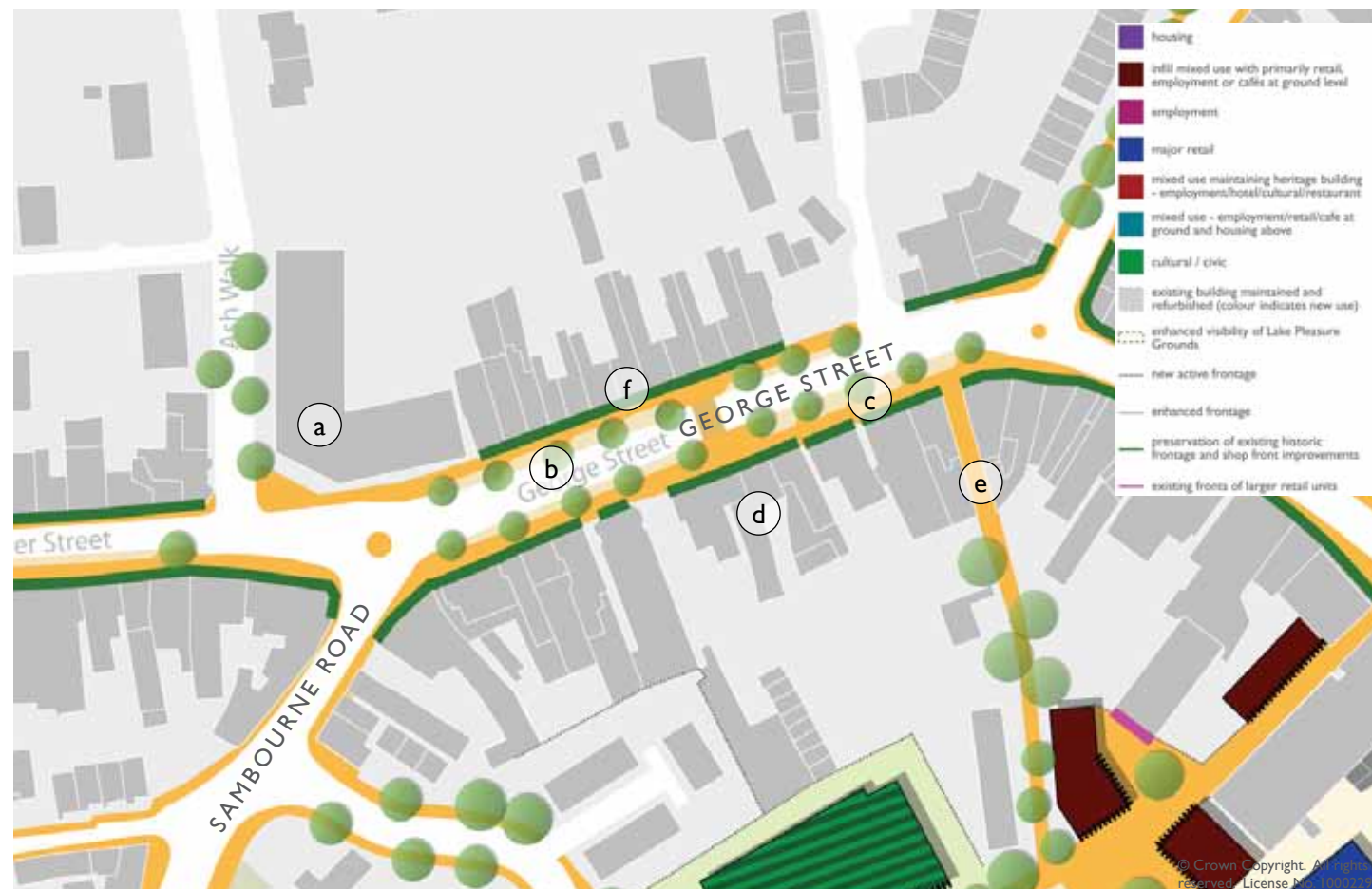


Figure 4.4 George Street masterplan

Key elements

- a. **New retirement housing.** Thirty-nine one and two bedroom high end retirement flats have been developed in Imber Court. These help to restore continuity of the street frontage at the transition from George Street to Silver Street and also to close the important approach vista from Sambourne Road.
- b. **Introduction of chevron parking.** George Street is a wide space with a number of uses such as specialist shops and hot food takeaways which benefit from the availability of short term parking. Remodelling of this area will be supported including the introduction of chevron parking and pavement build-outs that provide safe places to cross the road.
- c. **Tree planting.** New tree planting will be supported in this area, particularly on any pavement build-outs built in association with chevron parking bays.
- d. **Retention of existing land uses.** The existing mix of specialist shops, services uses and hot food takeaways is well suited to this location, being outside the core town centre but easily accessible and with short term parking available.

- e. **Improved signage and lighting to Were Close.** Were Close (named after the culverted Were River which it follows) is a useful pedestrian connection from George Street to the Morrisons Car Park and the new Civic Centre. It should be maintained as a public right of way and improvements such as new lighting, signage and active frontages will be supported.
- f. **Shopfront improvements and building maintenance will be encouraged.** The existing buildings and shops along George Street have a predominantly appealing historic character. However, they would benefit from maintenance and in some instances from more sensitive shop front treatments to complement the historic nature of the area in accord with an agreed palette using traditional materials and styles. Where shops retain separate entrances to the flats above, these should be retained or restored wherever possible in any refurbishment scheme.

KEY MOVEMENT PROPOSAL

George Street parking

The introduction of chevron parking which will provide more short term parking bays and thereby help the local economy.



3. High Street

Introduction

High Street has a strong character with some interesting larger scale historic buildings and an emerging café culture. Although at first impression the area appears to mark the end of the town centre it is actually a key linking zone to Silver Street and George Street.

The warehouse and yard on the north side of the street offers a significant development opportunity. There are a number of shop fronts which detract from the overall streetscape and which could benefit from improvements.

Any development in this location should respond appropriately to the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and conservation area context.



Figure 4.5 High Street masterplan

Key elements

- a. **Shop front improvements appropriate to the conservation area will be promoted.** There are a number of shop units along High Street which have post-war shop fronts that do not contribute to the character of the area. Replacement of these with more appropriate designs will significantly improve the street scene and help to make the units more attractive to potential occupiers.
- b. **Significant development opportunity, including the creation of a new small public space with café facing High Street.** This is a substantial site with frontage onto High Street. Development here should provide continuity of activity between Market Place and George Street. Development should be mixed use with employment to the front of the site and housing to the rear. Development should be integrated through the block to provide a cohesive strategy for access and parking. The areas close to High Street would be suitable for small offices and financial services as well as having the potential to include a café/restaurant at ground floor to take advantage of the new space.

- c. **Opportunity for infill housing development.** This site is considered suitable for the development of town houses or apartments to provide town centre living. This could be integrated with the adjoining proposed development or at least coordinated with it to provide the best design solution.



4. Market Place and High Street

Introduction

Market Place is the historic focus of the town and remains the retail core containing the primary shopping frontage. The area has recently benefitted from extensive improvements to the public realm which have significantly improved the pedestrian experience, although there are still difficulties in crossing at the Market Place/Station Road/East Street junction.

The Old Town Hall is a key landmark and has been vacant for some time. The re-use of this building will be a priority. There is also potential to extend existing retail units to the rear of Market Place to consolidate the retail offer.

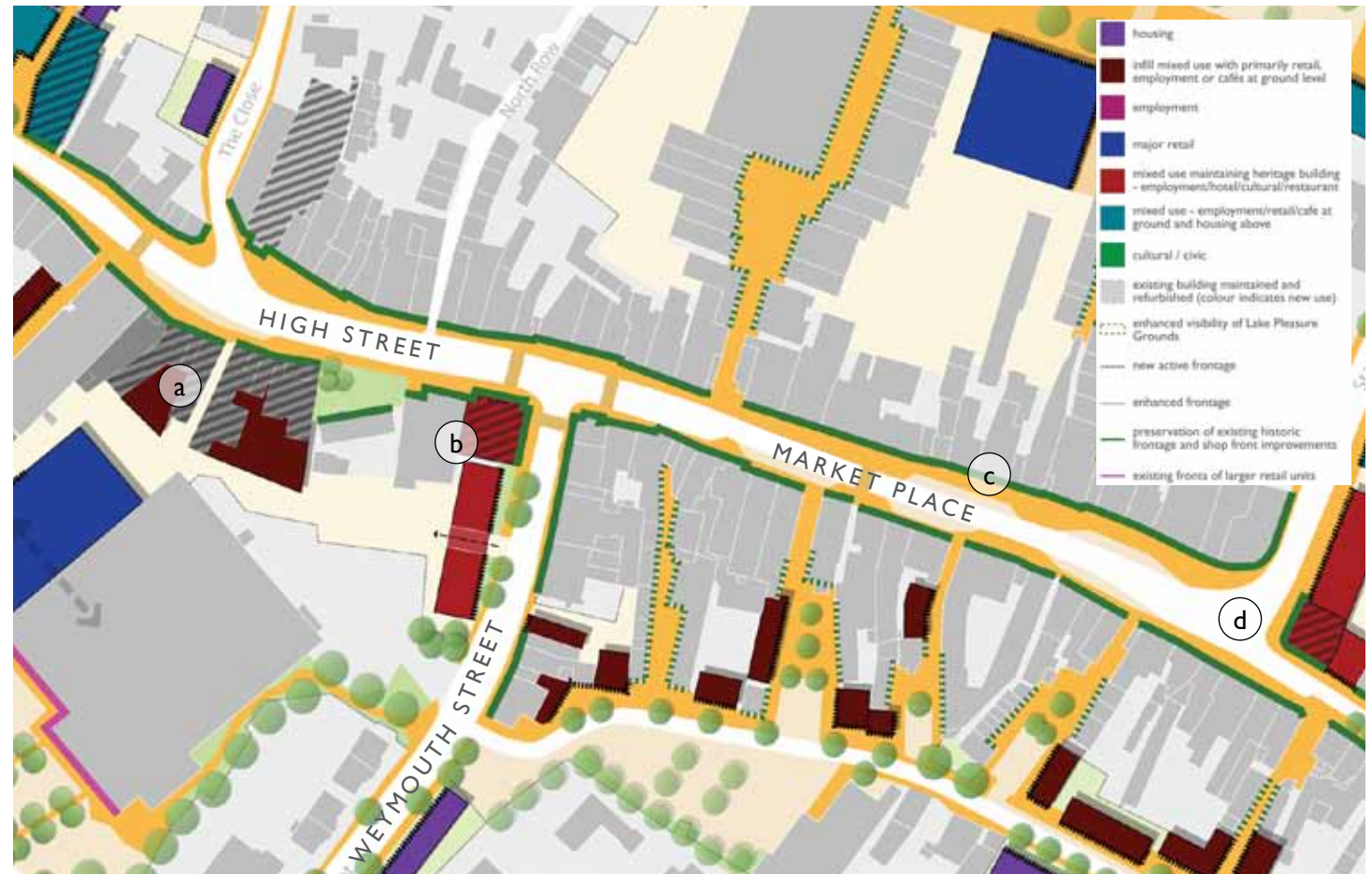
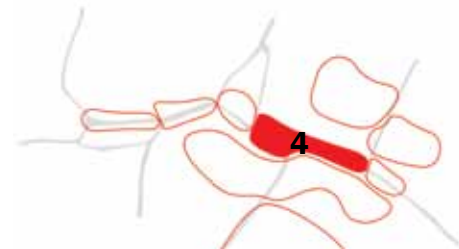


Figure 4.6 Market Place masterplan

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Key elements

a. Expansion of existing retail units.

A number of the existing shops could be enhanced through additional infill development, sensitive merging of existing retail units and mews development. Any proposal along these lines will need to consider parking and servicing requirements.

b. Restoration of the old Town Hall.

The former Town Hall building is an important town centre landmark and should be in active use both to present a strong positive image for Warminster and also to secure its future as an historic building. Its refurbishment and re-use will be strongly supported. The area to the rear of the building, presently occupied by a row of single storey shops, may provide a potential

site for its extension if required to support any proposals.

- c. **Building and shop front improvements.** Improvements to buildings and shop fronts along Market Place should be the highest priority (both funding and timing) due to their visible, central location. Where funding exists to support building and shop frontage improvement alterations should complement the historic character of the buildings without necessarily resorting to pastiche. Where shop units are merged to provide larger floor plates the shop units should retain a clear sense of the original building division rather than appearing as one large elevation.

d. Signalisation of Market Place/ Station Road/East Street Junction.

This junction is presently a roundabout and does not offer a safe pedestrian environment. A signalised crossing linked into wider changes to the traffic network might improve traffic management and create a safer crossing point.



5. East Street

Introduction

East Street is the eastern gateway into the town centre. The area suffers from a high number of vacant shops and has a lower footfall than the rest of the town centre. The road is relatively narrow and there is a poor street environment. On the positive side, there are a number of high quality buildings here such as the old Post Office which is a Grade II listed building and the ex book shop.

The development of the Waitrose supermarket to the north is likely to increase footfall in the area, and could help to stimulate improvements.



Figure 4.9 East Street masterplan

Key elements

- a. **Refurbishment of the Old Post Office.** There is potential for the Grade II listed old Post Office building to be refurbished and extended allowing the sorting office to be relocated out of the town's retail centre. Appropriate reuse of this site should improve the connectivity to the Waitrose development on the former Dents site through careful design and layout.
- b. **Links through to the new mixed use shopping area south of Market Place.** Links from Market Place into a new mixed use shopping area to the south, as discussed under Focus Area 7, will be encouraged to enhance pedestrian connectivity.
- c. **Extension of Market Place paving improvements.** The streetscape in East Street should be enhanced by extending the paving improvements from Market Place along the length of the street.
- d. **Explore uses for empty shop units.** Existing empty shops on East Street have a negative impact, but their temporary use as space for artists or community groups would be strongly supported.
- e. **Support for residential use.** The eastern end of East Street is outside the core town centre. Residential development will be supported in this area.

KEY MOVEMENT PROPOSAL

Traffic management

In order to better manage:

- the congestion in East Street and at its junction with Station Road,
 - the disruption caused by HGV delivery traffic in the centre of town,
 - the interconnections within and between the rail, bus and taxi services in the town centre and its hinterland,
- the impact of future housing, retail and employment developments,

A Traffic Assessment will be supported



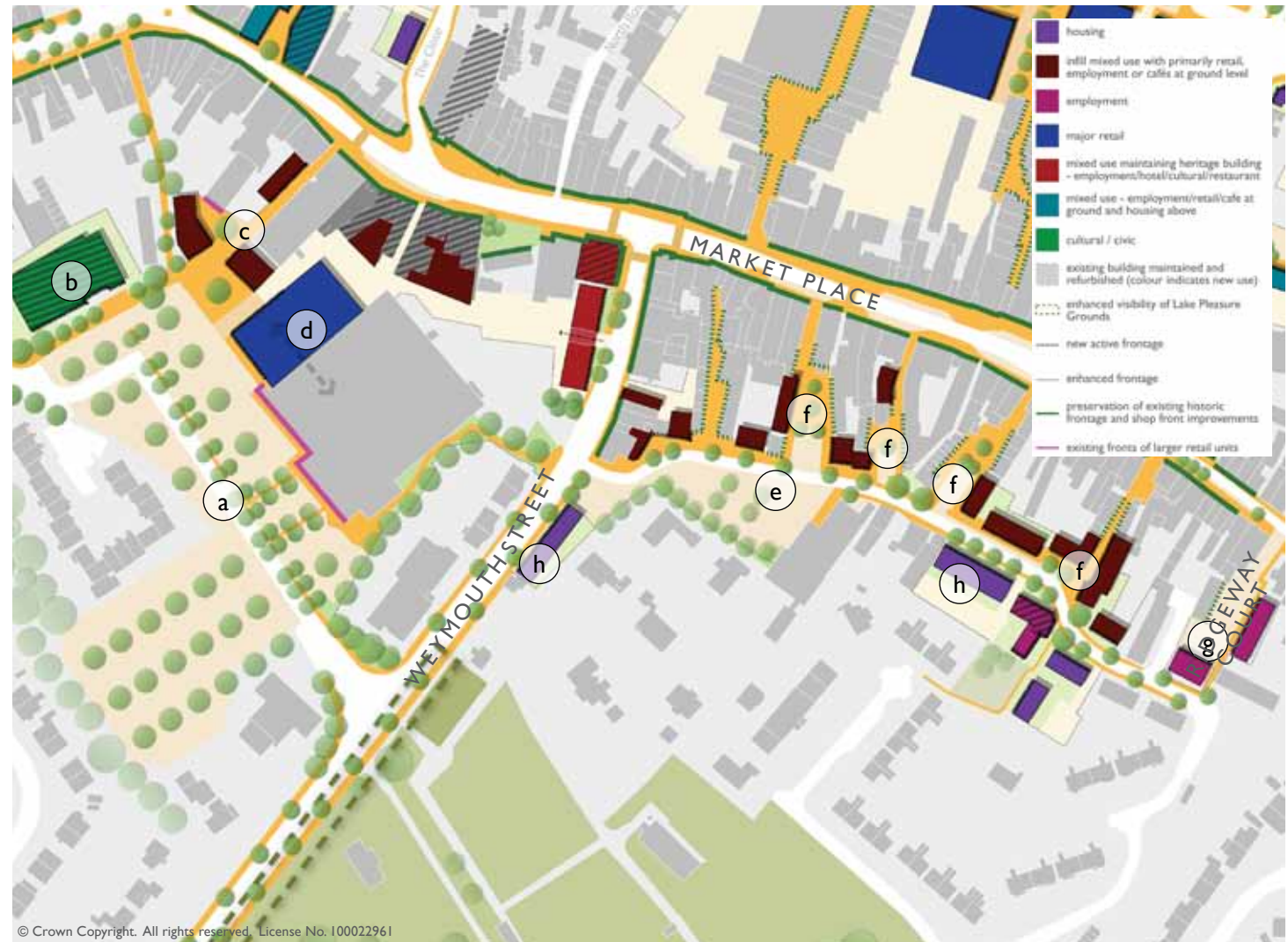
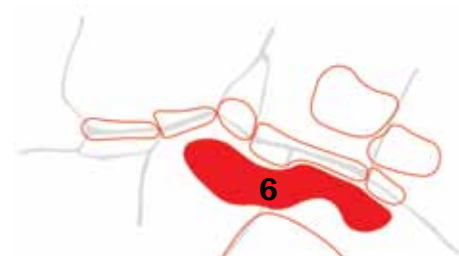
6. Morrisons, the Civic Centre and south of Market Place

Introduction

Morrisons occupies a large site to the south of Market Place along with its associated car parking. The Civic Centre overlooks the car park.

There is an opportunity to rationalise car parking in the town centre to create a single management regime and to introduce an access route to the parking from both the east and western sides of the site to assist with reducing traffic congestion through the town centre, although it should be designed to ensure that it does not provide a through route which acts as a rat run. Safer pedestrian access routes should also be encouraged as part of any new development.

The area to the south of the buildings along Market Place is currently underused and provides the opportunity to create an attractive series of interlinked shopping courtyards building on the success of Chinns Court.



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Figure 4.10 Morrisons and Weymouth Street

There is the potential to encourage specialist independent retailing such as local grocers, crafts, cafés and galleries which would contribute towards creating a unique identity for Warminster, particularly for visitors.

New housing here would also provide overlooking and 24-hour activity in the town centre.

These proposals should be developed through the preparation of a Planning Brief so that a coherent and unified approach can inform the preparation of detailed options.

KEY MOVEMENT PROPOSAL

Car park enhancements

In order to simplify and enhance capacity of existing car parks in this area an integrated approach is recommended.

All pedestrian links to/from the car park should be enhanced to improve connectivity with the rest of the town centre.

Key elements

a. Creation of an integrated car park.

The existing car parks in this area are presently under a number of separate ownerships and management regimes. An integrated approach should be developed to simplify this and provide greater clarity. This revised approach should also include improvements to the car park pedestrian access and landscaping. Whilst the car park should not provide a rat-run it should create the potential for cars to enter and exit from either Flers Court or Weymouth Street to help reduce congestion generally.

b. Refurbishment of the old

Assembly Rooms. The refurbished Assembly Rooms became the new Civic Centre in late 2011. Secure car parking facilities for this venue will be an important feature to retain.

c. Enhanced pedestrian link to

the High Street. This important pedestrian route links the Morrisons car park with the High Street, passing the former Woolworths store (now a Poundstretcher store). Opportunities to create a much stronger pedestrian environment in this area through enhanced active frontage, signage and lighting will be supported.

d. Extended Morrisons supermarket.

There is significant potential to extend Morrisons to the north-west. This

would help to integrate the store with the existing pedestrian routes as well as providing significant additional trading space. Any extension should maintain existing service access to the rear of the High Street shops and create a store entrance and active frontage on the north-western corner.

e. Creation of a new access route linking Weymouth Street to Ridgeway Court.

There are a sequence of spaces to the south of Market Place which are difficult to access due to the restricted connections with the main street. A new route to the rear of Chinns Court linking Weymouth Street with Ridgeway Court would open this area up and permit organic development by a number of landowners. It should not be viewed as creating any strategic highway connection or bypass to Market Place.

f. New retail development in the style of Chinns Court.

New retail should be focused around small courtyards with parking for deliveries and visitors and a new public space. Residential uses could be situated above these retail uses.

g. Opportunity for new employment uses.

New retail outlets will bring

additional employment. Development of this area will also bring opportunities for small offices and financial services.

h. New mews style residential development.

There are opportunities for infill residential development including proposals for a sheltered housing scheme fronting onto Weymouth Street.

7.Waitrose (former Dents factory)

Introduction

The site of the former Dents factory has been fully redeveloped to provide a new supermarket and retail units. The Town Plan has focused on ensuring the new food store developed links into the existing retail areas of the Three Horseshoes Walk, Market Place and East Street. There is potential for the wider town centre area to capture some of the benefits of new retailers at the site through promoting linked trips into the town centre.



Figure 4.11 Dents Factory

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Key elements

- a. **Improved public realm.** There is potential for new linking development on the existing post sorting office site to create a strong link between the new Waitrose and Market Place. It will be essential to ensure that good quality paving, lighting and signage is used to establish an attractive and direct route which will encourage people to make linked trips between the new retail area and the town centre shops. As part of this a new safe crossing should be introduced.
- b. **New retail or café/restaurant uses with housing above on the site of a former car park.** This will help to draw footfall from the new food store development to Market Place and infill an otherwise dead area of street frontage.
- c. **New housing development.** There is an opportunity to improve the public realm around the car park and onto Station Road and Fairfield Road through the development of new housing or other suitable use on the corner of the block. Ground floor active frontage will be encouraged here to help to improve safety in the food store car park through providing

additional overlooking.

- d. **Food store development.** The new Waitrose food store and associated shop units and restaurant development provide 119 car parking spaces which will have a positive impact on the provision of parking in the town generally.



8. Central Car Park

Introduction

The Central Car Park area is to the north of Market Place and the Three Horseshoes Walk and so is adjacent to the core town centre retail provision. The car park is in a number of ownerships and managements. This central site provides an opportunity for new retail development, rationalised car parking, and reorganisation of facilities to better meet the needs of local people, particularly in terms of leisure and community needs in the longer term and also bus interchange facilities (see adjacent key movement proposal).

Two options have been produced for this area. The first option is a lower intervention option and the second option is for more substantial development and both are described in detail over the next few pages.

There is longer term potential for the area to be redeveloped for new leisure or community services as part of Wiltshire Council's programme to provide new community leisure campuses.

Guiding design principles for each option have been developed along with more detailed notes on key elements required as part of redevelopment. The options are not mutually exclusive and could also be regarded as providing a phased approach for the long term.



Warminster Library



Parking and servicing rear of Three Horseshoes Walk



Entrance to Three Horseshoes Walk from car park



Entrance to Three Horseshoes Walk from car park



Existing bus stand



Central Car Park

KEY MOVEMENT PROPOSAL

New bus station

To maximise the potential for redevelopment of land to the rear of the Three Horsehoes Walk, it is proposed to relocate the existing bus stands within the Central Car Park eastwards to a new bus station accessed from Station Road. The new location would also be compatible with the proposals to reroute buses away from East Street onto Fairfield Road. It is intended that the new facility would create a much stronger interchange with the railway station and would cater for the following uses:

- Regular bus services
- National Express coach services
- Tourist coach services

The exact size of the facility would need to be determined in consultation with the existing operators and should take account of the general desire to enhance bus service provision within the town. The site identified for this is likely to affect the former police buildings - requiring their partial or total demolition. As these are of local heritage interest the remaining police building will be required to be brought back into use and refurbished.

In addition, it is recommended that a dedicated car parking area is provided adjacent to the bus station, particularly to assist coach passengers who would be picked-up/ dropped-off by car.

8. Central Car Park - option/phase I

Option/phase I: focuses on provision of new retail facilities which could require the relocation of the Information Centre along with the provision of an improved transport interchange which will require the provision of a clearly visible and accessible bus station. The Information Centre could be relocated close to the new bus interchange in a facility which could also house ticketing facilities.

The main aim of this option is to provide a more complete retail circuit - linking together the existing shopping areas with the public transport facilities of the new bus station and train station and the new Waitrose food store. It should also provide an attractive environment for people using the central car parking area.

Providing a new bus station in an accessible and visible part of the site will affect the old Police buildings on Station Road, which are of local heritage interest. To mitigate the loss of one or both of the policy buildings the remaining building will be required to be brought back into use and refurbished to improve the overall streetscape.

Guiding Design Principles

- Development should help to complete the retail circuit connecting the Three Horseshoes Walk and the Cornmarket Shopping Mall through providing retail frontage as illustrated in blue on the adjacent plan.
- Pedestrian links to Station Road should also be strengthened through development of new retail frontage as indicated on figure 4.13.
- A new bus station at the entrance to the car park from Station Road would enhance the public transport facilities in the area.
- Improved landscaping and lighting of the car park should be incorporated into the design of any proposals.
- Development here will need to respond sensitively to the historic context, as proposals will require conservation area consent.
- The potential for the incorporation of community district heating as part of new development here should be fully explored.

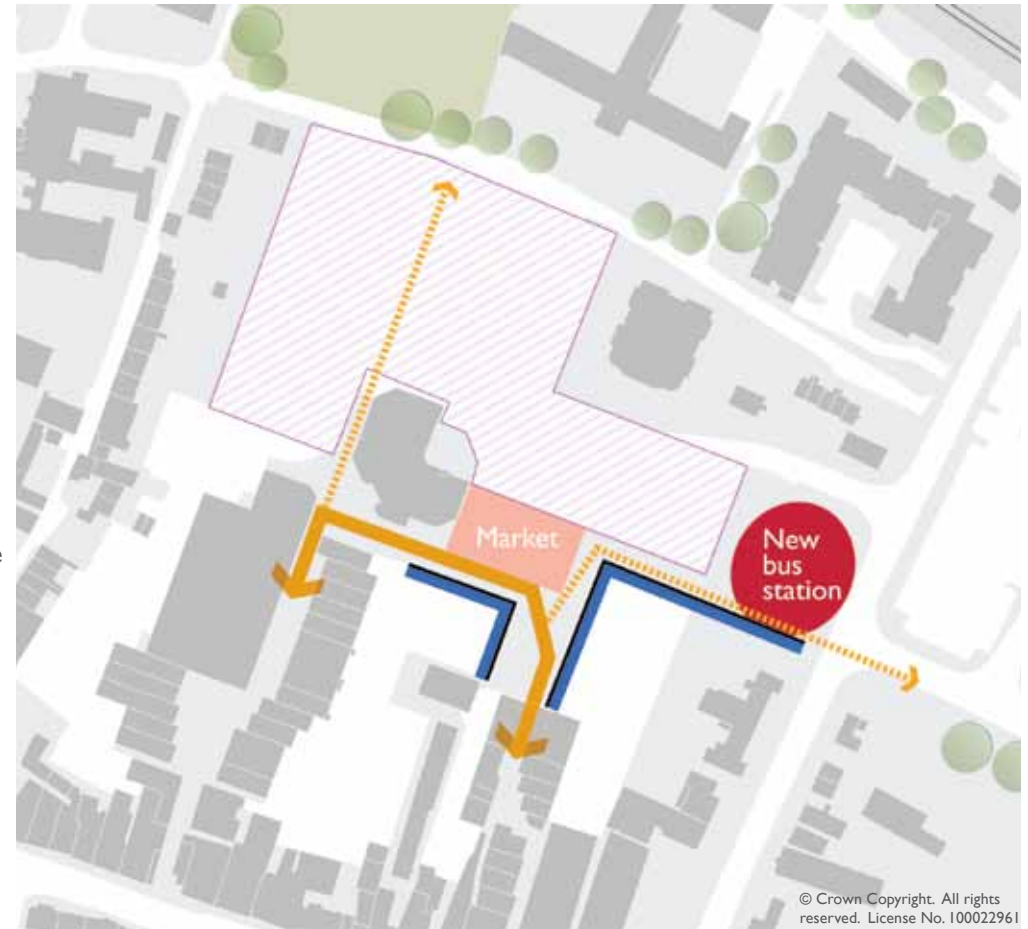


Figure 4.12 Central Car Park option I - guiding design principles

Key elements

- a. **Consolidated parking with a single management regime.** Tree planting and simplification of the car parking layout to improve the attractiveness and usability of this area will be encouraged. Improvements should enhance the pedestrian environment and also create safe routes to surrounding facilities.
- b. **New bus interchange fronting Station Road.** Locating a bus interchange here will allow for easier interchange between the bus routes and Warminster Station and the potential to encourage improvements to bus frequency and facilities.
- c. **New mixed use development including relocating the Information Centre and CAB.** This would need to be relocated to provide space for new larger format retail units which can accommodate the requirements of larger national brands.
- d. **New large retail units.** These larger units in a modern store format would be better able to attract new high street comparison retailers to Warminster and help to create a retail circuit around the Three Horseshoes Walk.
- e. **Potential location for market.** Relocating here would position the market on a more natural retail loop and give it increased prominence adjacent to the library.



Figure 4.13 Central Car Park option I

8. Central Car Park - option/phase 2

Option/phase 2: This option is a higher impact approach and represents a second phase over and above the first option.

The proposals include additional comparison retail space suitable for major high street retailers. Within the phased approach there is an option to leave the library in its existing building as an interim or permanent measure, or relocate it.

Redevelopment or refurbishment of the Three Horseshoes Walk would be strongly supported in the longer term.

In the long term there is also potential for this site to be redeveloped for new leisure and community uses as part of Wiltshire Council's Community Campus proposals. If progressed these proposals should meet with the design principles set out below.

Guiding Design Principles

The same design principles that are listed for option 1 also apply to this option. The additional following elements should also be considered:

- The creation of strong frontage to the north of the Three Horseshoes Walk entrance will help to strengthen the north-south pedestrian link to The Avenue.

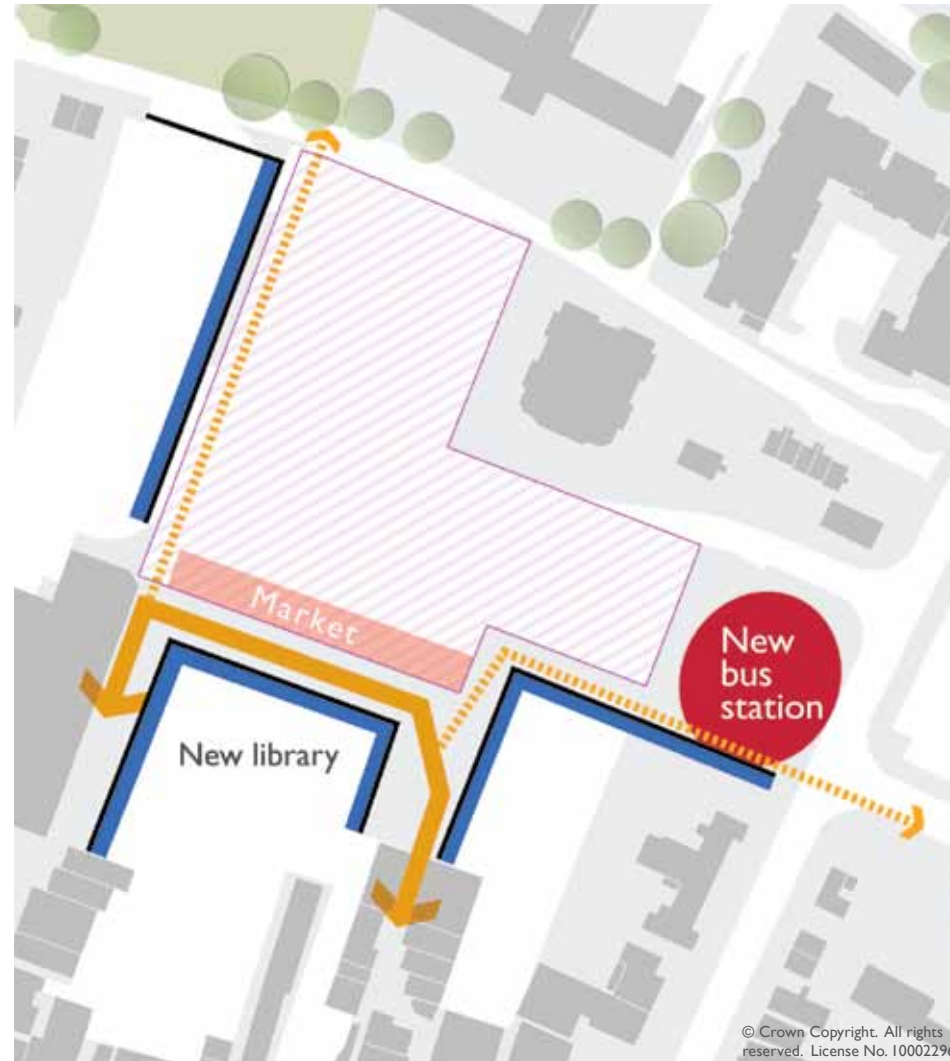


Figure 4.14 Central Car Park option 2 - Guiding design principles

Key elements

- New large retail units.** These new units at the western side of the car park would further add to the potential for Warminster to attract comparison retail. They may alternatively offer scope for a new town centre leisure facility. At the northern end of these units there should be an arcaded projection to create a strong landmark whilst retaining a pedestrian route through to The Avenue.
- Partial redevelopment of the Three Horseshoes Walk.** A new large retail unit to meet large high street retailer requirements could be provided to the north of the Three Horseshoes Walk. This will involve the loss of approximately five existing units but will create a much stronger connection into the Walk.
- Potential to retain the library in its current position.** This allows for a phased approach over time.

- d. **Creation of a new north-south pedestrian link between The Avenue and Market Place.** This route will provide a direct and easy pedestrian link between the school and the main shopping area, generating footfall and creating a more integrated town centre. As noted above it should be anchored at the northern end by some feature or landmark such as an arcaded projection.
- e. **Potential market location on retail loop.** The market should retain its position immediately adjacent to the main shopping area. It may be considered appropriate to move it to the site of the existing library building if/when that is developed.

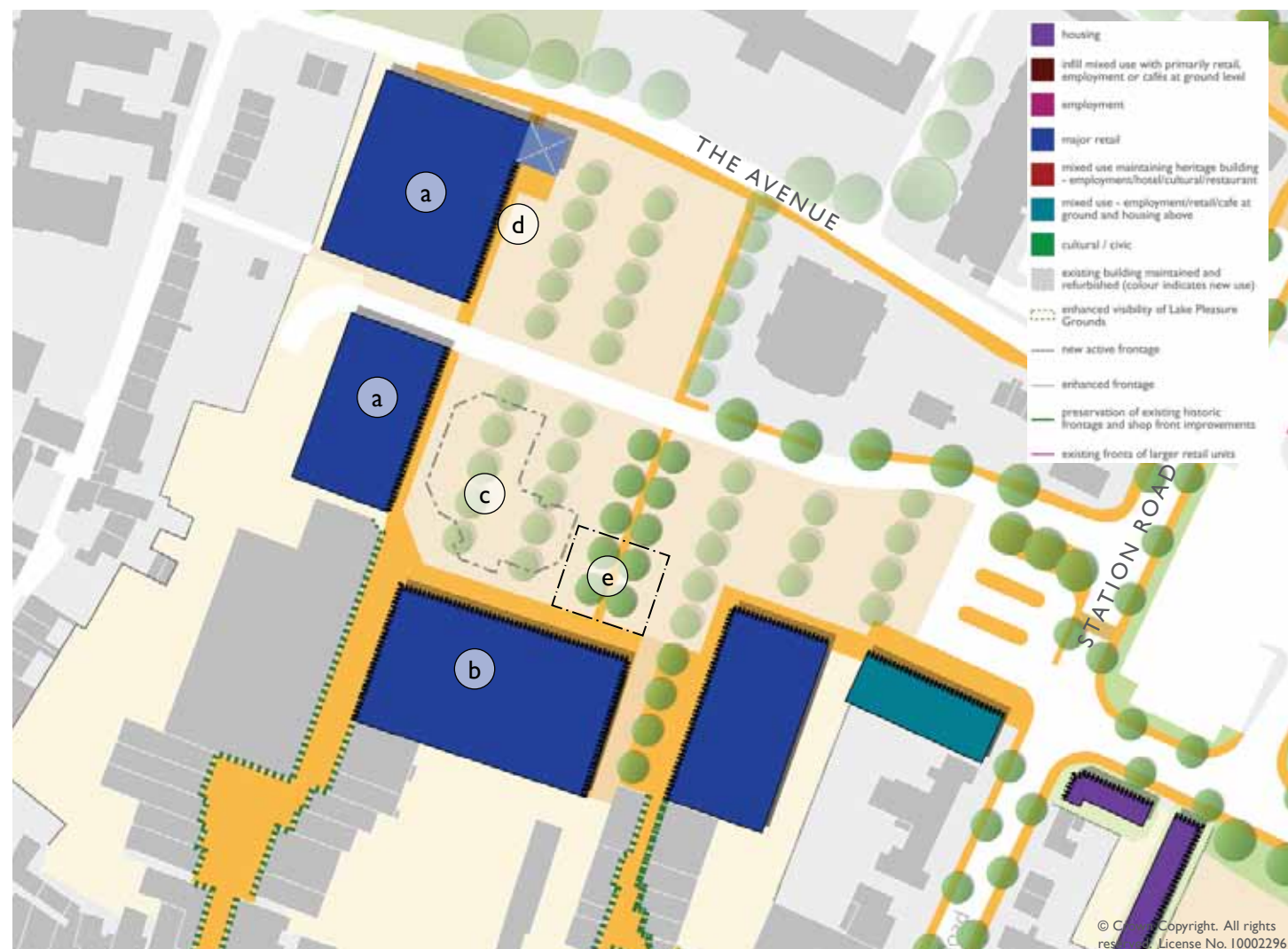


Figure 4.15 Central Car Park option 2

9. Warminster Lake Pleasure Grounds

Introduction

Warminster Lake Pleasure Grounds play an important role in the life of the town. They are located at the bottom of the valley following the line of the River Were Corridor which is channelled and formalised in the centre of the park to create a large rectangular lake. The centre of the park provides formal gardens, particularly to the north near the Weymouth Street entrance. Further away from this the landscaping is more informal, giving way to rough grassland and tree planting on the steeper slopes.

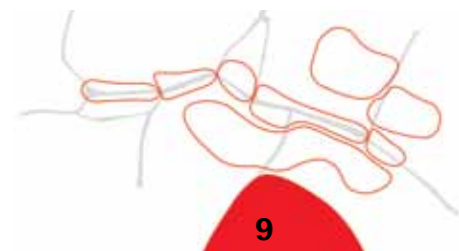


Figure 4.16 Warminster Lake Pleasure Grounds

Key principles

a. Improved visibility and entrance.

The park is largely hidden from Weymouth Street by the presence of the dense boundary hedge. Opening up some or all of this boundary with railings in place of the hedge would significantly improve the visual benefit of the park and promote awareness. The park would also benefit from a new formal entrance from Weymouth Street relating to the strong formal landscape elements.

b. Leisure facilities.

The park has an important role to play in providing leisure facilities for young people which are free to use. The provision and maintenance of facilities such as skate park, basket ball court and football nets will be encouraged here.

c. Access to the wider countryside.

The park has a key role to play in linking the town centre with the countryside, affording easy pedestrian and cycle connections with the River Wylfe corridor

d. Biodiversity and sustainability.

The park is a key ecological resource for Warminster and provides an important corridor for wildlife.





5 Implementation plan

How should change be delivered?

Introduction

This section details how the Town Plan could be delivered by assessing the following elements:

- location;
- constraints;
- commercial issues;
- delivery mechanisms and partners;
- potential timescales; and
- next steps.

The following table addresses these issues on a focus area by focus area basis and highlights any key actions required to deliver the proposed development/opportunity.



Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
1	Silver Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Through traffic – Relatively narrow pavement widths – Relatively “low grade” commercial uses (though important independent / specialist uses) – Relatively low commercial property values – Some distance from the town centre core – We assume the properties are in a multitude of freehold ownerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relatively low values – Low current retailer demand for the town generally – Scope to build upon existing antiques trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wiltshire Council in respect of highways, parking and pavement widening issues – Existing freeholders and business occupiers, and also Town Council, with regard to Antiques Quarter branding and promotion of antiques trade – Work with partners with regard to potential financial contributions to Antiques Quarter branding and promotion of antiques trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is potentially a short-term action, subject to the identification and securing of the necessary funds – Highways, pavement and parking improvements also potentially short-term actions, subject to availability of appropriate funding. Changes to traffic regulation orders would be required (allow six months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding highways works and, in particular, more detailed feasibility testing and design, and availability of funding streams – Discuss with existing landowners/businesses with regard to promotion of antiques trade
2	George Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Through traffic – Relatively narrow pavement widths – Relatively “low grade” commercial uses (though important independent / specialist uses) with relatively low values – We assume the properties are in a multitude of freehold ownerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relatively low values – Low current retailer demand for the town generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wiltshire Council in respect of highways, parking and pavement widening issues – Potential use of shop-front grants to improve appearance of properties – Agree palette of materials for use in the public realm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is potentially a short-term action, subject to the identification and securing of the necessary funds – Highways, pavement and parking improvements also potentially short-term actions, subject to availability of appropriate funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding highways works and, in particular, more detailed feasibility testing, design and availability of funding streams – Explore potential availability of funds for shop-front improvement grants

Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
3	High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The poor quality and repair of some of the existing shop units has a negative impact – The potential development site to the north of the High Street is understood to be in multiple ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Commercial property values are relatively low and demand for the town currently relatively weak – Some scope to build upon existing independent/specialist uses – The existing warehouse building on the north side of High Street presents a “blank” frontage, interrupting the retail uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development in this area is likely to be undertaken by the respective landowners in response to rising values, confidence and demand – Prepare Planning Briefs for key sites e.g. to north of High Street (mixed use development) and infill residential site on west side of The Close – In order to derive the benefits of comprehensive development, it may be appropriate for one party (either existing landowner, or developer) to acquire the whole of the development site on the northern side of High Street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Owing to the relatively poor current economic climate, and lack of demand, together with the multiple ownerships, this is likely to be a medium term opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discuss with key landowners – Warminster Town Council and Wiltshire Council to discuss opportunities to prepare Planning Briefs for key sites

Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
4	Market Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Variety of freehold ownerships – While Market Place has an attractive historic character, some of the existing historic premises are in need of repair/maintenance – The old Town Hall is a key landmark building within the town centre, and one which occupies a prominent frontage, on the corner of Market Place/Weymouth Street. However, at present, it is in very limited use and, creates a poor “image”, and adds very little to the functioning and economic life of the town – Commercial property values are relatively low and demand for the town currently relatively weak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A number of the existing shop units are relatively small in size, and not capable of meeting the current requirements of many operators, particularly national multiple retailers. – The old Town Hall is a potentially “difficult” but important historic building, which does not necessarily lend itself to ready re-occupation for commercial uses. – There are a number of potential uses for the Town Hall: A3/ restaurant uses, cultural or community uses, employment uses (e.g. small scale office suite/business start-up facilities, particularly on the upper floors), possible hotel etc, though these are subject to demand and viability testing, in the context of the constraints imposed by the historic fabric of the existing building. – While the existing building is imposing, it is of relatively small size, and therefore would not be suitable for some uses (e.g. hotel) without extension to the rear; alternatively, extension of the existing building may allow additional income to be generated which could help fund improvements to its frontage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Combination of existing retail units is likely to occur as and when demand/values rise, and individual owners can be confident that investment in expansion works can be justified. Alternatively, it may happen as and when existing leases expire, and there is therefore a clear rationale to improve units, in order to increase the chances for successful re-letting – It is also conceivable that some pressure may arise for such works, from existing occupiers themselves, if they have a strong desire to improve their existing representation within the town – It may be appropriate to explore potential opportunities for grant funding with Wiltshire Council and the Town Council. – As local planning authority, Wiltshire Council has statutory powers to “encourage” the appropriate maintenance of listed buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some measures within Market Place – such as the re-introduction of the market – could potentially be undertaken in the short-term, subject to any further feasibility testing, as well as statutory measures e.g. changes to traffic regulation orders – Substantial works to the old Town Hall are likely to be a medium-term opportunity, particularly given the need for more detailed feasibility testing, potential exploration of grant funding and the opportunities for extension of the building etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding highways works and, in particular, more detailed feasibility testing and design, and availability of funding streams – Undertake Feasibility Study for the old Town Hall site – Identify preferred market option

Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
5	East Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existing tertiary nature of East Street with low pedestrian footfall, limited commercial uses and vacant shop units – Poor quality street environment and narrow road/pavements – We assume that the existing buildings will be in a multitude of freehold ownerships, making land/site assembly and a comprehensive approach difficult to achieve – As a result of the above, low property values on East Street offer no incentive for development/regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low values, small shop premises and limited pedestrian flows make this area of limited commercial attractiveness – Potential opportunity to find new use for old Post Office, benefitting from new development on site of Dents factory, now the Waitrose supermarket. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explore opportunities for potential new uses for Post Office with Post Office Counters/Post Office Property Holdings. Potential to identify relocation site for sorting office? – Explore opportunities for paving enhancements with Wiltshire Council as highways authority – “Managed decline” of eastern end of East Street, and conversion to wholly residential use, via the planning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Re-use of the old Post Office could be a short to medium term opportunity. This would strengthen the commercial attractiveness of and pedestrian flows along Station Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding extension of paving improvements and traffic priority – Discuss the reuse of Post Office building
6	Morrisons & Civic Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current car parking provision requires rationalisation – there are currently a number of different regimes – The area currently functions very much as “a backland”, apart from of the Morrisons store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Values for new commercial uses – e.g. fronting passageway alongside former Woolworths unit – likely to be very low, as off pitch and unproven location. May appeal to small scale retail/A3 uses e.g. café, heel bar, dry cleaners etc – Morrisons likely to experience pressure to improve the existing store/“offer”, once Waitrose opens – Opportunities for infill residential development on backland sites, as market improves/values rise. NB need to ensure appropriate vehicular access/parking, sufficiently high standard of residential amenity etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Key partner likely to be Morrisons (assuming they own the freehold of the existing store) and Warminster Town Council as owners of the Civic Centre. – Other proposals likely to be brought forward by individual site owners, as and when land becomes available/the market improves – Local/regional housebuilders likely to be involved with new residential opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development likely to occur on an incremental basis, as and when values improve/confidence returns to the market – In theory, a number of the proposals are relatively short-term “wins”, subject to demand/funding, e.g. extension of the Morrisons supermarket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Open dialogue with Morrisons – Open dialogue between all relevant parties with regard to rationalisation of car parking

Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
6	South of Market Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The proposed development will take the form of a number of cul-de-sacs or through routes, situated to the south of Market Place, with little in the way to “anchor” these. These proposals are likely to be implemented organically in the long-term – In addition, the values associated with such developments are likely to be very low, and therefore the viability of individual elements may be marginal, and/or require significant cross-funding through residential elements on the upper floor – The market for town centre flats in Warminster is relatively untested, and therefore again, the development is likely to be a relatively long-term prospect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In order to ensure that viable development can be brought forward, there needs to be a flexible approach to the uses considered acceptable e.g. small scale A1 retail uses, A2 financial and professional services, A3/ A4 eating/drinking premises as well as residential uses and D1 uses such as crèches, consulting rooms etc. Some of the individual development blocks may be wholly residential in use e.g. mews style residential development – Any development will need to ensure that adequate servicing can continue to be provided to the existing retail/other uses. Creation of the new route to the rear of Chinns Court will facilitate this, but again this may be a relatively long-term proposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development likely to be undertaken by individual landowners or developers – on an incremental basis – It may be appropriate to explore the preparation of a more detailed Planning Brief for this area, in conjunction with the Wiltshire Council, looking in particular at the scope to create the new route proposed to the south of Chinns Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Given the need to resolve issues of land ownership, maintenance of access to existing retail uses etc, and given also the current economic climate, this is likely to represent a medium to long term opportunity, with development being undertaken on an incremental basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possible Planning Brief – Explore potential for traffic management measures, to discourage creation of through route

Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
7	Waitrose Redevelopment Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The individual development sites (B) and (C) are in different ownerships, separate from the Waitrose site. Development is therefore likely to be brought forward on a “piecemeal” basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation of the Waitrose foodstore led proposals are likely to have a major positive impact on the town centre as a whole, and on this part of the town centre in particular. They are therefore likely to act as a catalyst for additional development – It is important to ensure that the positive benefits of this new development are captured for the wider town centre, and that the Waitrose development does not become simply a stand alone/car orientated development. – A new mixed use development immediately to the west of Waitrose may need to wait for this to become an established retail destination within the town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delivery is likely to be undertaken by the individual landowners, potentially in conjunction with private sector development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development likely to become attractive/viable and deliverable, once the Waitrose store has opened, generating additional activity and footfall in this part of the town centre, and creating improved occupier/ investor perceptions. This is likely to coincide with a wider improvement in the economic climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possible preparation of Planning Briefs for individual sites, and/or initial discussions with relevant landowners

Area	Location	Constraints	Commercial Issues	Delivery mechanisms and partners	Potential timescales	Next steps
8	Central Car Park – Options 1 & 2	<p>Constraints to this development are likely to comprise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Potential need for a comprehensive approach to car parking across the town centre as a whole, before a firm view can be reached – Constraints as to the acceptability of the proposed loss of car parking – The need to deal with the existing occupational interests in Three Horseshoes Walk, either awaiting lease expiry or a need to buy out the relevant interests – Likely also to require improved confidence both in Warminster (e.g. following implementation of Waitrose scheme), and in the wider national economy – Given the relatively low retail values involved, it may well be appropriate to explore a hybrid option which retains the existing library, rather than incur the resultant relocation costs, but which includes most or all of the retail floorspace shown in Option 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Need to identify an optimum option which delivers appropriate new retail accommodation, and minimises land acquisition/relocation costs. May be appropriate to consider a hybrid of Option 1 and Option 2 which retains the existing library, even if this has an impact on car parking numbers – Need to provide limited number of relatively large retail units to the east of block (D) – Need to provide a small number of relatively large retail units of a size not readily available in the town centre, ideally for comparison retailers, “plugging into” pedestrian flow through Three Horseshoes Walk to the car park, and also potential pedestrian flows from Three Horseshoes Walk/car park to the Waitrose site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development likely to be undertaken by owners of Three Horseshoes Walk or their successors. Wiltshire Council and Warminster and Villages Development Trust (as owners of the library and tenants of the WIC respectively) will also need to be involved in the process, if relocation of the existing facility is required. – Definite need for Planning Brief for the Central Car Park site as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This is a medium-term opportunity, following on from the opening of the Waitrose development. However, the timescale may also be dictated by the need to facilitate relocation of the library/WIC (if required), and also the need to deal with the affected existing tenants within Three Horseshoes Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More detailed feasibility/ viability testing, including options with/without relocation of library/WIC – Potential discussions with Wiltshire Council with regard to library/WIC – Review in context of Wiltshire Council town centre wide parking study – Discussions with bus and coach operators with regard to potential new bus interchange facility

Appendix I - consultees

Stakeholder interviews

Melvin Davis - Davis and Latcham
 Chris Montagu - Warminster Civic Trust
 Sam Shaw - Warminster Youth Development Centre
 David Bell - Cooper and Tanner Estate Agents
 Lt Col Bill Common - Deputy Garrison Commander
 Rev Harvey Gibbons - Minster Church
 Warminster School

Walking Audit Attendees

Title	First name	Surname	Representing
Mr	David	Bell	Cooper and Tanner Estate Agents
Mr	Melvin	Davis	Davis and Latcham
Mr	Chris	March	Warminster & Villages Development Trust
Mr	Ray	Sims	Warminster Table Tennis Club
Mr	Brian	Wilde	Warminster Table Tennis Club
Mr	Michael	Heaton	Warminster Civic Trust
Mr	Chris	Montagu	Warminster Civic Trust
Mr	Richard	Haes	Warminster Civic Trust
Mrs	Christine	Dyer	Ryde Mobility Products
Mr	Cristopher	Dyer	Ryde Mobility Products
Mrs	A	Kenward	University of 3rd Age
Mrs	J	Jones	University of 3rd Age
Mrs	V	Davis	University of 3rd Age
Ms	Sam	Shore	Youth Centre
Mr	Tony	Nicklin	Warminster Town Council

Title	First name	Surname	Representing
Mrs	Heather	Abernethie	Warminster Town Council
Dr	Andrew	Murrison MP	
Mr	John	Pearce	Police Station
Mr	R	Rice	Warminster Probus
Mr	J	Derham	Warminster Probus
Ms	Jackie	Turner	Wiltshire Council
Mr	Andrew	Frostick	Warminster Athenaeum Trust
Mr	Alan	Merrills	Warminster Community Services
Mr	David	Prior	The Rotary Club
Mrs	Peggy	Prior	Warminster Inner Wheel
Mr	Phil	Howard	Feoffees of St Lawrence Chapel
Mr	Colin	Zimmerman	Feoffees of St Lawrence Chapel
Mr	Simon	Hoad	Stockland
Rev	Harvey	Gibbons	Rector of the Minster
Mrs		Ede	Women's Institute
Mrs		Jenkins	Women's Institute





