

Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Bridge Meadow

for Central Bedfordshire Council



think place



March 2012

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Foreword

This document was adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council as Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes on 27 March 2012.

Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Bridge Meadow

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1. Introduction



Introduction

1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council has endorsed the Luton and South Bedfordshire Core Strategy which plans to deliver significant development in the period 2011-2026. This is to include the delivery of around 5,000 new homes within the urban areas of Leighton Linlade, Dunstable and Houghton Regis; urban extensions to the east of Leighton-Linslade (2,500 new homes) and to the north of Houghton Regis (5,150 new homes); and around 600 new homes in the district's rural areas. At the time of writing (September 2011), six planning applications have been submitted for a total of circa 2,640 homes at East of Leighton Buzzard.

1.2 These new homes will increase the resident population of Leighton Buzzard and its surrounding villages significantly over the next 15 years. In order to ensure that this housing growth results in the creation of successful sustainable communities, the Council is also planning for new jobs, infrastructure, schools, social/health services, shops, services, and leisure facilities to meet the needs of the growing population, and this includes the improvement / enhancement of Leighton Buzzard town centre.

1.3 Key to these growth plans is the redevelopment of the land lying to the south of Leighton Road, known as Bridge Meadow, as outlined in red in Figure 1.1, right. This brief has been prepared in parallel to the development brief for the Land South of High Street site

1.4 The redevelopment of the site offers the opportunity to unlock the town's waterside assets, enhance the gateway to the town centre, and deliver much needed community infrastructure alongside new housing and recreational uses.

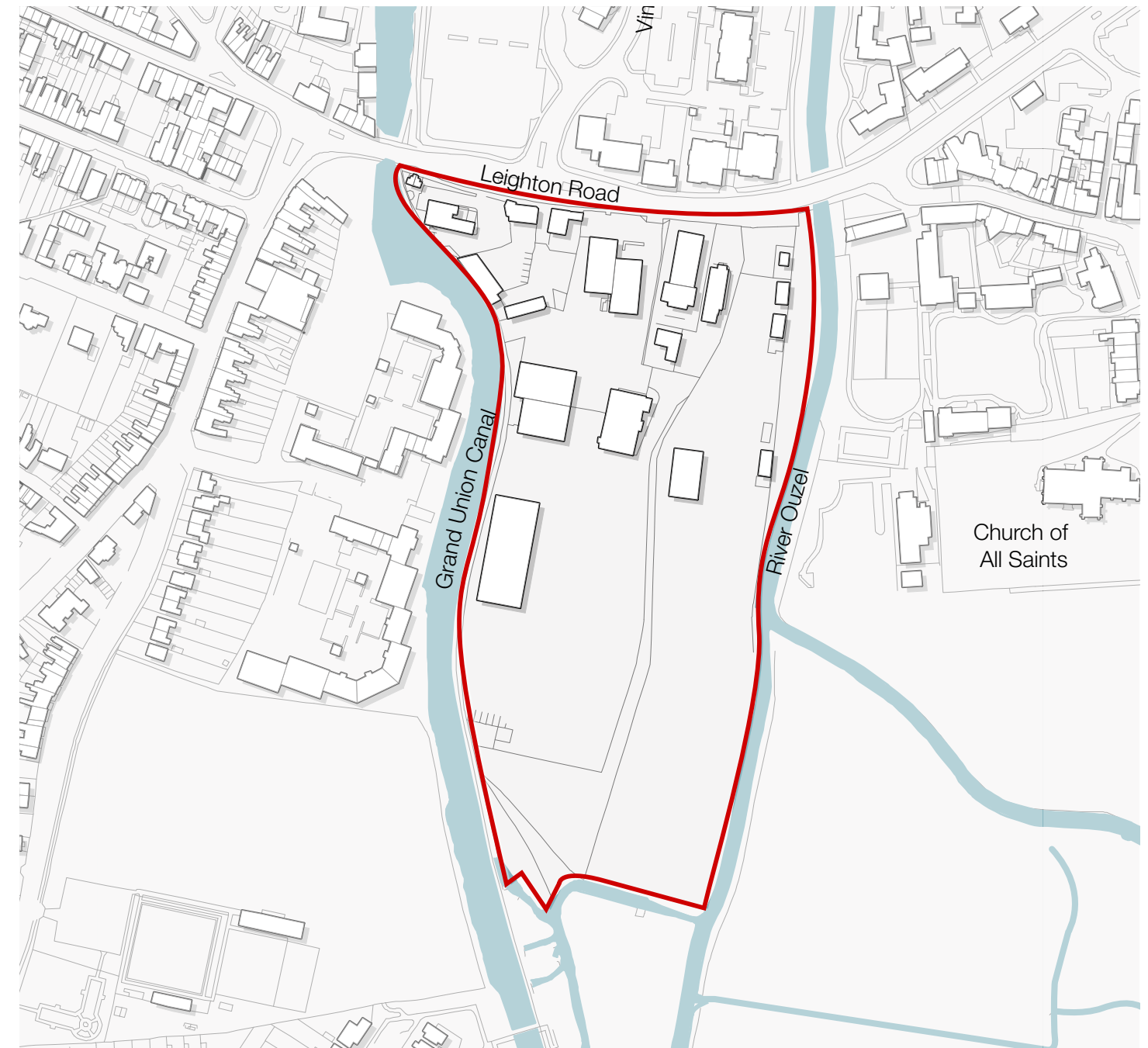


FIG. 1.1 The Bridge Meadow site

Purpose of the Brief

1.5 The purpose of this brief is to showcase this development opportunity and to set out a written statement of the Council's development aspirations for the site. It establishes a package of guiding planning principles that form a framework for the preparation of development proposals, and will be used as the basis to determine future planning applications affecting the site (alongside the Development Plan and other considerations).

Community and Stakeholder Involvement

1.6 This development brief has been prepared following public and stakeholder consultation on the initial development proposals and options in February 2011. There was further subsequent public consultation on the draft brief in November 2011.

1.7 These consultation exercises were undertaken in parallel to similar consultations on proposals for the Bridge Meadow site.

1.8 On both occasions, members of the public were able to visit the centre and review display boards setting out the initial proposals for the sites. Members of the public were encouraged to fill in questionnaires which aimed to capture the local community's views and preferences regarding the options and proposals being consulted on

1.9 The feedback received through consultation has influenced the proposals set out in this document, alongside further technical work. Full details of the responses can be found in the separate Consultation Statements.

Scope of the Development Brief

1.10 This brief is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the site and surrounding area;
- Section 3 provides an overview of the planning policy context that underpins the proposals;
- Section 4 outlines the Council's overarching Vision and objectives for the site;
- Section 5 proposes suitable land uses;
- Section 6 sets out urban design principles;
- Section 7 considers landscaping;
- Section 8 outlines the proposed access and movement arrangements; and
- Section 9 sets out proposed delivery arrangements.

Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Bridge Meadow

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2. The Site and Surrounding Area



The Site and Surrounding Area

Size

2.1 The site extends to approximately 5.6 hectares (13.7 acres).

Location

2.2 The site lies immediately to the west of Leighton Buzzard town centre. Leighton Buzzard is located in Bedfordshire, approximately 23km (14 miles) south of Milton Keynes 12km (8 miles) west of Dunstable, and 70km (44 miles) north of London.

2.3 Leighton Buzzard railway station is located approximately 700m to the west of the site (London Midland services to London Euston in 34 minutes and Milton Keynes in 9 minutes). The M1 (Junction 11) is approximately 16km (10 miles) to the east.



FIG. 2.1 Context plan

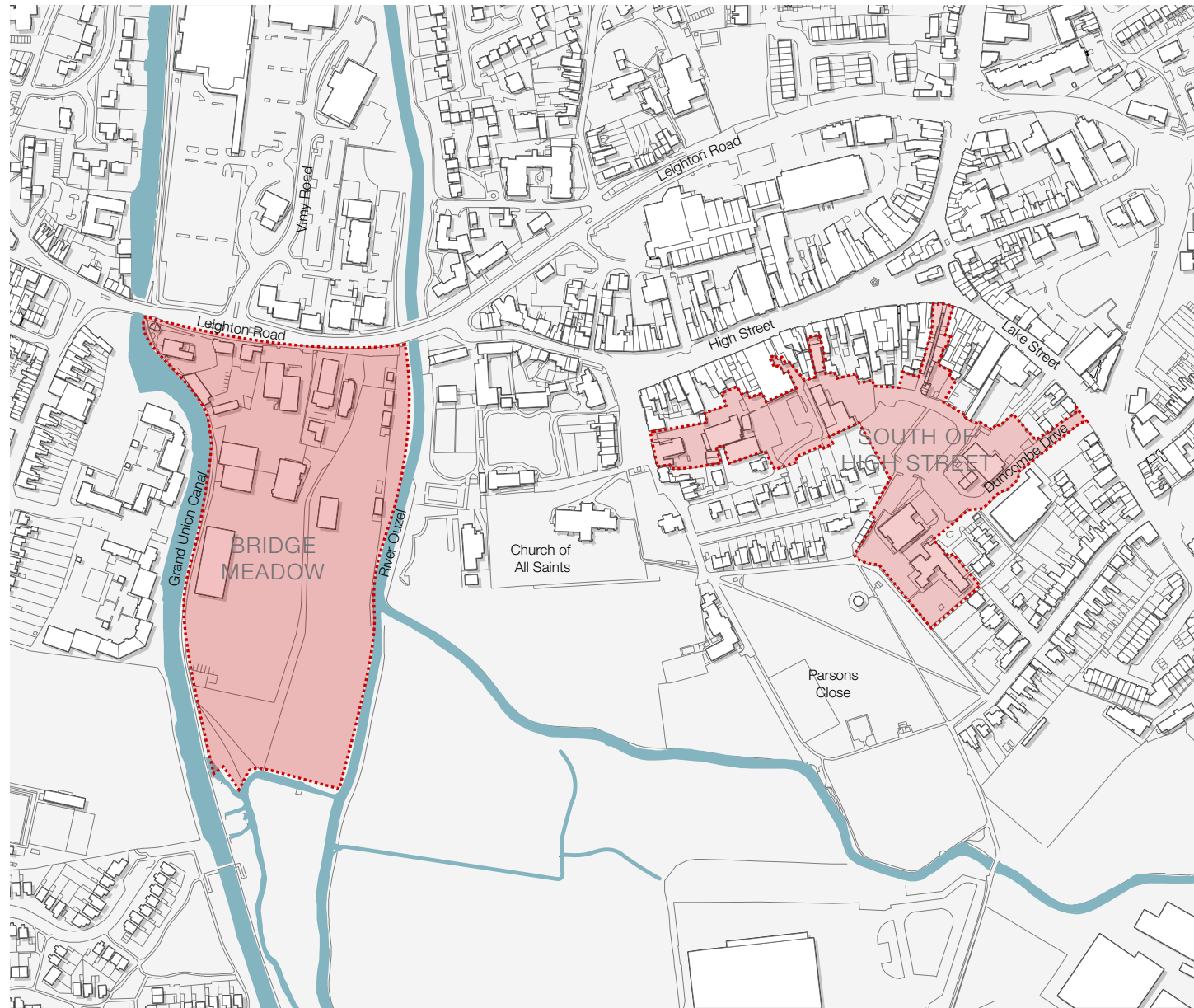


FIG. 2.2 Sites location plan



FIG. 2.3 Aerial Photograph

Existing Development and Land Ownerships

2.4 Bridge Meadow is located on an island formed between the Grand Union Canal and the river Ouzel. The island is bisected by Leighton Road, which bridges across at a raised level. The historic use of the island is for canal wharfage and its location in the flood plain has meant that it retains a light-industrial character today, which acts as a break between the centers of Leighton-Linslade and Leighton Buzzard. Buildings within the site are generally located to the north and the west, out of the highest risk flood areas.

2.5 The site currently accommodates a range of uses and buildings, as follows (refer to Figure 2.4):

Area 1 – Commercial, retail and waterside (0.42 ha)

This area accommodates a four-storey post-war office building (Lombard House), which includes surface and undercroft car parking which is accessed directly from Leighton Road. This land also includes a single storey Victorian building (formerly in use as a paint shop) and Grade II Listed Grand Union House which both front Leighton Road. Towards the rear of this area is a two storey brick building backing on to the Grand Union Canal and open surface storage space. This land is subject to a number of freehold and leasehold interests.

Area 2 – Jewsons and Retail Area (3.2 ha)

This area includes a number of buildings that front Leighton Road and are accessed directly off Leighton Road. These include a gym and a retail/trade counter operated by Jewsons which are accommodated in single storey industrial sheds, plus a petrol station and a two-storey building accommodating a GP surgery. The land to the rear of these buildings is occupied by Jewsons (construction materials supplier) and includes four single storey industrial sheds and a large expanse of hardstanding.

Area 3 – Residential and Storage (1.99 ha)

This land is occupied by travelling showpersons. It accommodates a number of mobile homes and is used for storage of fairground vehicles/machinery. There are also a number of sheds towards the middle of the site. The southern part of the site is largely overgrown with vegetation.

2.6 The site is subject to a complex pattern of freehold and leasehold interests, however circa 70% is controlled by 2 principal parties.

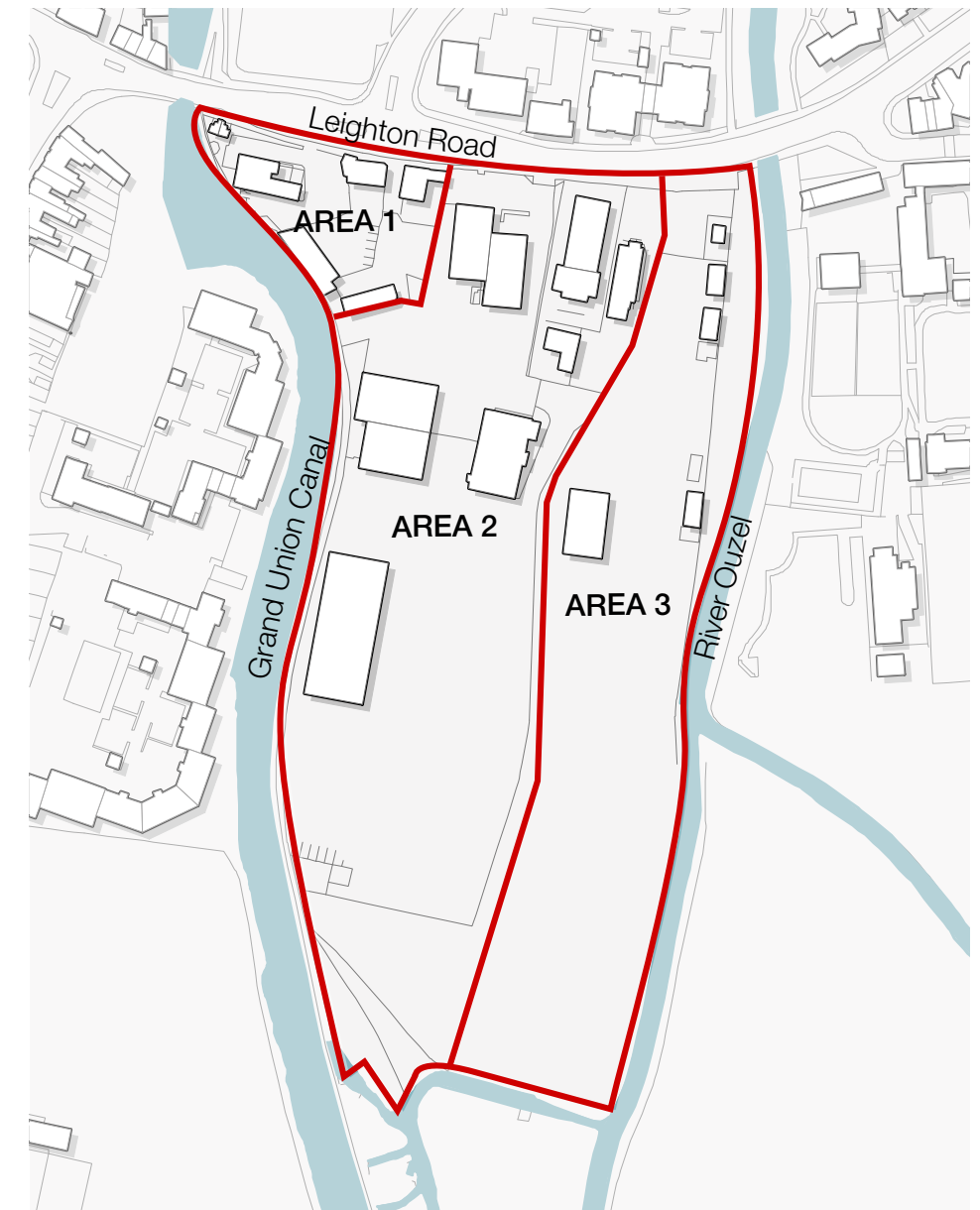


FIG. 2.4 Existing development areas

Surrounding Area

2.7 The site is bounded to the west by the Grand Union Canal which is now used largely as a leisure resource beyond which lies the predominantly residential area of Linslade. The majority of the housing stock comprises 2-storey Victorian terraces, although there are some more modern developments including 4-5 storey recently constructed canal-side apartments. The Linslade Conservation Area has recently been extended and the Bridge Meadow site is situated between this and the Leighton Buzzard Conservation Area in close proximity to the east, but currently does little to connect the two.

2.8 To the east of the site, the river Ouzel is contained by steep banks which are unmaintained and impassable at present. Beyond the river lies All Saints Church, primary and middle schools and Leighton Buzzard town centre beyond. Leighton Buzzard has a traditional market town centre with the main shopping area focussed along the High Street and surrounding streets (including Lake Street, Hockcliffe Street, and North Street) plus the Waterborne Walk Shopping Centre (to the north of the High Street). The Waterborne Walk centre was originally constructed in 1973 and is anchored by a Waitrose. There is also an Iceland store on the High Street. These stores compete with Morrisons and Tesco superstores located in out of centre locations.

2.9 Leighton Buzzard town centre is an attractive environment due to the diversity and quality of its



FIG. 2.5 Petrol station on the site off Leighton Road with All Saintes Church spire in the background



FIG. 2.6 Lombard House, office building on the site off Leighton Road



FIG. 2.7 Approaching the site from Leighton Linslade, the church spire is visible from a distance



FIG. 2.8 Site occupied by travelling showpeople

historic buildings and high quality public realm. There are approximately 105 Listed Buildings within an 800 metre radius of the High Street. The shopping experience in the town is enhanced and diversified by Leighton Buzzard Market which trades around the Market Cross in the centre of the town.

2.10 Land to the south of the Bridge Meadow site is undeveloped green fields.

2.11 The northern boundary is defined by Leighton Road, beyond which lies a retail park accommodating 2 supermarkets, a bulky goods/homewares store and a petrol station. In July 2011, Tesco was granted planning consent for an extension of the existing store of circa 2,850 sqm. Development fronting the north side of Leighton Road includes an M.O.T, tyres, and exhaust centre; and modern 3-4 storey flatted residential development.

2.12 The built form along Leighton Road is typical of ad-hoc light-industrial and commercial development, with a variety of building forms and functions, oriented towards passing vehicular traffic. This presents a poor street frontage to Leighton Road and gives the sense of being out of town, hence severing the connections between Linslade where the train station is located and the main shopping area of Leighton Buzzard.



FIG. 2.9 Retail park opposite the site off Leighton Road



FIG. 2.10 The Grand Union Canal borders the western edge of the site



FIG. 2.11 The Victorian, terraced pattern of Leighton-Linslade west of the site contrasts with the medieval pattern of the High Street to the east.



FIG. 2.12 Leighton Linslade's terraced pattern is crossed by alleyways and paths that allow more direct walking routes from the station to the High Street



FIG. 2.13 Grade II Listed Grand Union House on the site, off Leighton Road



FIG. 2.14 Recent residential development overlooking the canal opposite the site

Access and Accessibility

2.13 There are numerous vehicular access points from Leighton Road onto the site, however there are no further vehicle or pedestrian access points (to the south, east or west boundaries).

Car

2.14 Vehicle access to the site from the surrounding residential areas is via Hockliffe Road, Billington Road, and Leighton Road which feed into the wider A/B road network. The A5 is approximately 5km (3 miles) to the east of the town centre and connects the town to Milton Keynes approximately 23km (14 miles) to the north and Dunstable approximately 12km (8 miles) to the south.

2.15 There are four public car parks in the town centre in addition to the out of centre car parks located at Tesco and Aldi, as detailed in Table 2.1:

Train

2.16 Leighton Buzzard has a train station on the Linslade side of the town approximately 1 km (0.6 miles) to the west of the town centre, providing local connections to stations including Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Cheddington and Tring as well as more strategic destinations including London Euston and Birmingham New Street. Services to London Euston take from 34 minutes with 15 minute frequency at peak times, while Milton Keynes is 9-12 minutes away with 10 to 15 minute frequency at peak times.

Bus

2.17 The town centre is served by 13 regular bus routes which provide services to the surrounding suburbs and towns including Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Dunstable and Luton. Of these, 9 bus services regularly pass the site along Leighton Road.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

2.18 A number of traffic signals were recently removed from Leighton Road in order to ease congestion. These works were to the junctions onto Bridge Street, Vimy Road and Wing Road.

Physical

2.19 The site is broadly flat. Part of the site lies within the functional flood plain of the River Ouzel (Flood Zone Grade 3b – refer to Constraints Plan in Section 3 for indicative extent of floodplain). The site could potentially suffer from contamination due to its historic storage and distribution industrial uses, although no studies have yet been carried out confirming this.

Location	Type	No. of Spaces
West Street (Waterborne Walk shopping centre)	Multi-storey	266
Hockliffe Street	Surface	126
Baker Street	Surface	42
Duncombe Drive (within the site)	Surface	140

(Source: parkopedia.com)

FIG. 2.15 Town Centre Car Parks

Urban Design context: Historic Assets

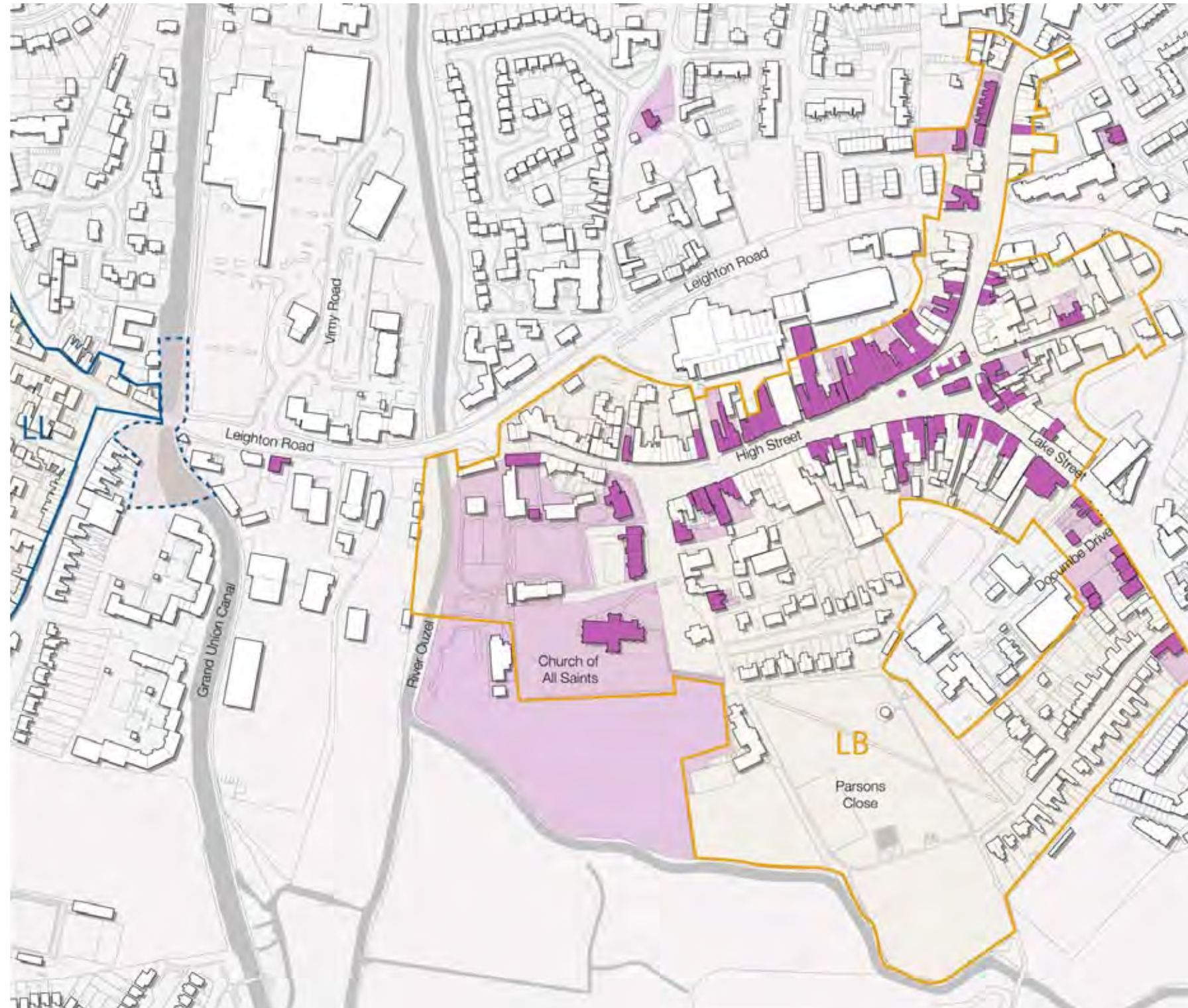


FIG. 2.16 Plan showing listed buildings and conservation areas, taken from the Baseline report

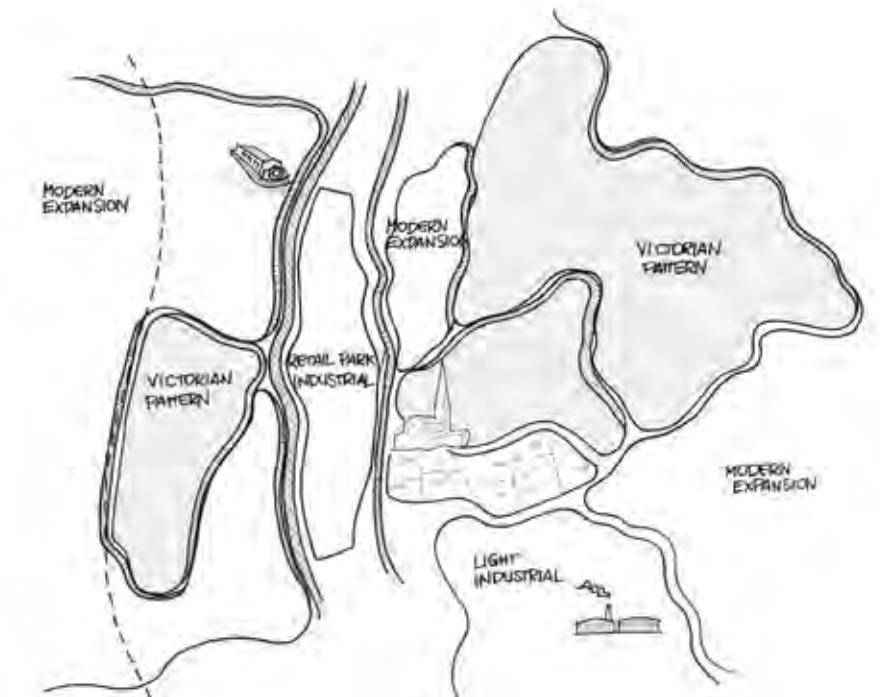


FIG. 2.17 Sketch showing the distribution of historic patterns of development in Leighton Buzzard, taken from the Baseline report

Key

- Listed buildings
- Curtilages of listed buildings
- Leighton Buzzard Conservation Area
- Linslade Conservation Area
- Linslade recent extension Conservation Area

Urban Design context: Linkages and integration



FIG. 2.18 Existing linkages between Leighton Lincolne and the High Street and its surroundings, taken from the Baseline report

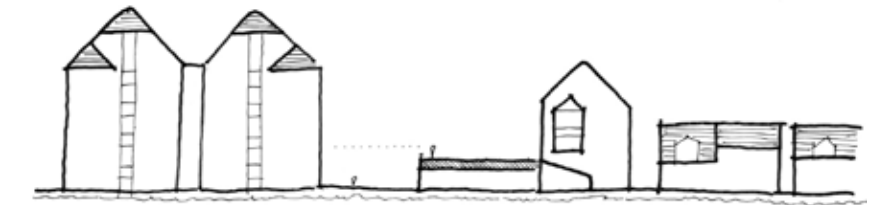
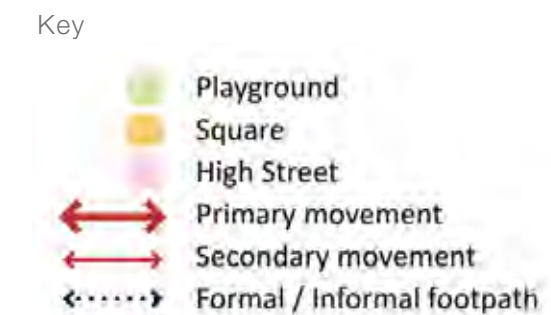


FIG. 2.19 Sketch section showing the level difference between the banks of the canal and Leighton Road as it passes over, taken from the Baseline report



Urban Design context: Scale and Massing



FIG. 2.20 Figured-ground drawing highlighting the different development patterns in Leighton Buzzard, taken from the Baseline report

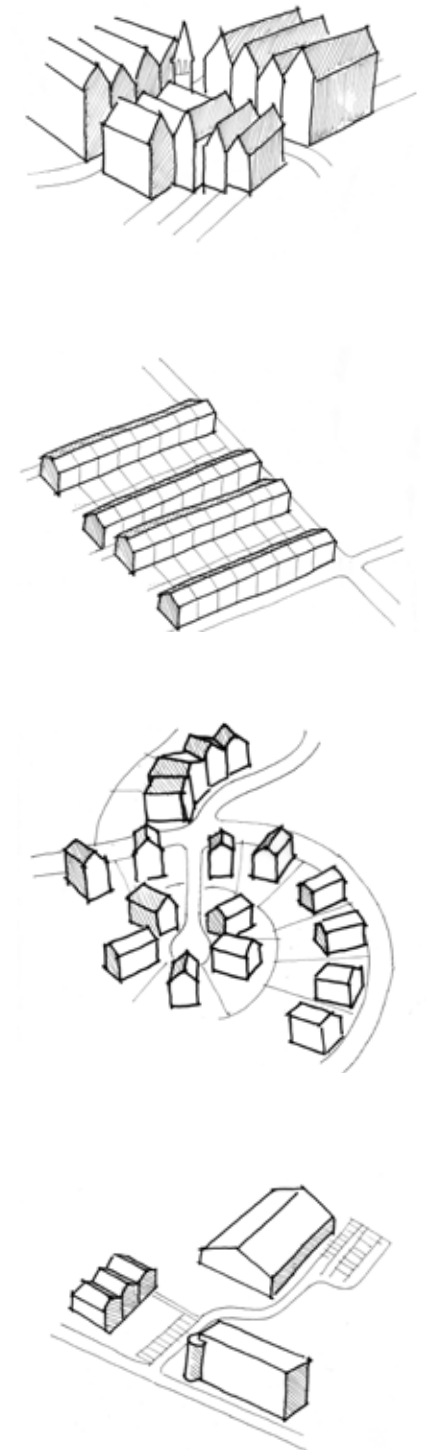


FIG. 2.21 Sketches of the typical development patterns of each era, from top: Medieval; Victorian; 20th Century residential; Light Industrial; taken from the Baseline report



Planning Policy Framework

3.1 Figure 3.1, right provides an overview of the planning policy framework affecting the site.

3.2 The joint Core Strategy and all relevant documentation were submitted for Examination on the 8th March 2011 and an Exploratory Meeting was held on the 18th May 2011. Following the Exploratory Meeting and the agreement of the proposals to amend and take forward the Core Strategy by the Joint Committee on 24 June 2011, the appointed Inspector formally agreed to a six month deferral of the Examination process.

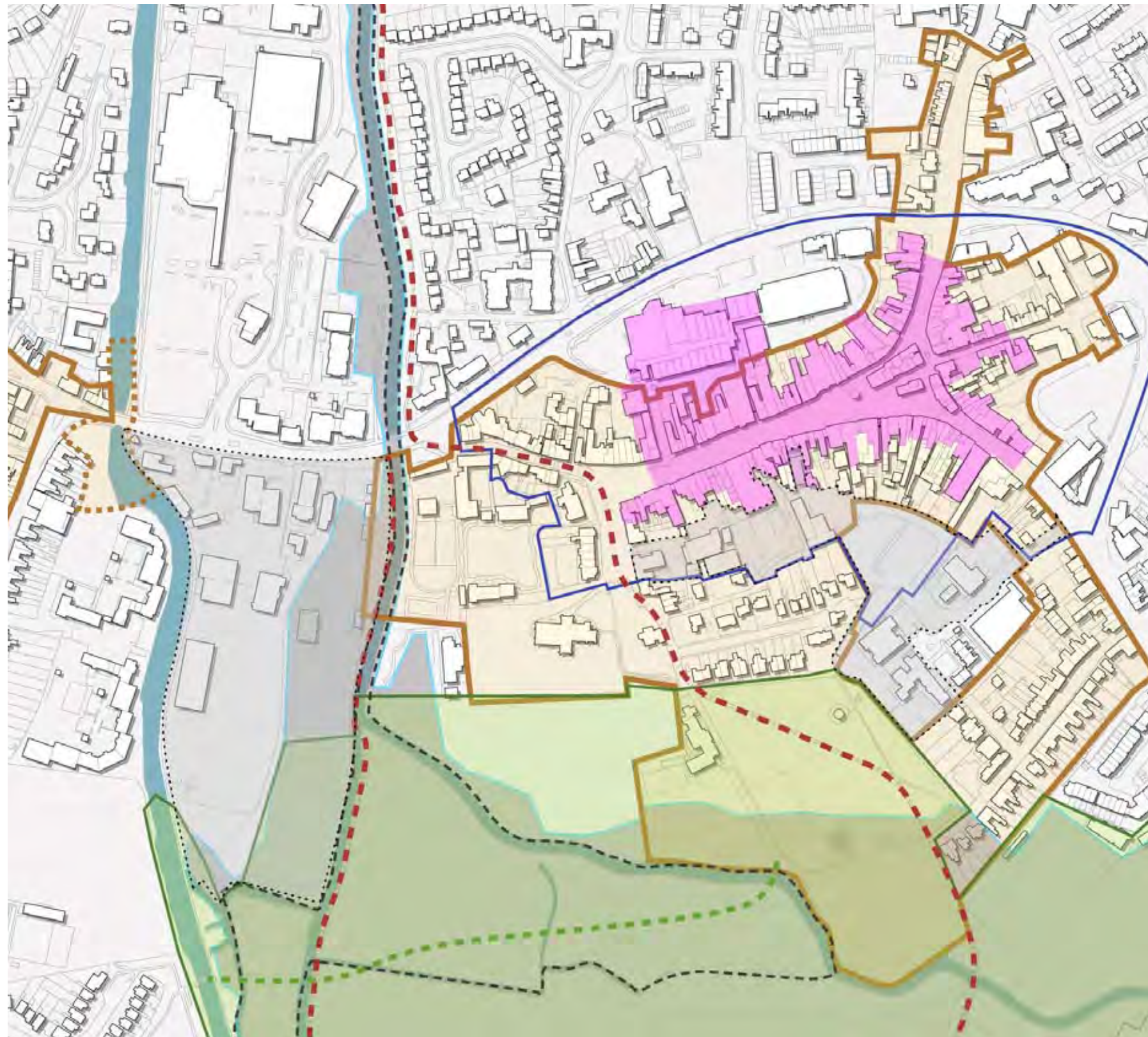
3.3 However, following a decision by Luton Borough Council not to support part of the Core Strategy, the Joint Committee on 29th July 2011 resolved to seek its withdrawal. The withdrawal was confirmed by the Secretary of State in a letter dated 7th September 2011.

3.4 Nevertheless, Central Bedfordshire Council remains fully supportive of the proposals contained within the joint Core Strategy and on 23rd August 2011 the Council’s Executive resolved to endorse as guidance for Development Management purposes the Core Strategy and its underlying evidence base and technical studies.

3.5 On 27th May 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the Government’s intention to rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. The Localism Act 2011 grants the Government the legislative powers to remove the East of England RSS. However, it has yet to do so and so the RSS will remain part of the statutory development plan affecting the sites until it is abolished (although material consideration will be given to the Government’s intentions, particularly where conflicts arise with local policy).



FIG. 3.1 Planning Policy Framework



Policy Designations

3.6 Figure 3.2, left, illustrates the policy designations affecting the site and surrounding area.

Key

- Site boundaries
- Recent extension Conservation area
- Conservation area
- Main shopping area
- Town centre
- Town centre regeneration site
- Greenbelt
- Cycle route
- Proposed Ouzel Valley route
- County wildlife site
- Indicative floodplain

FIG 3.2 Planning Policy Designations from the Baseline report (information derived from Local Plan)



Vision and Objectives

4.1 The Council’s Vision and Objectives for the site are set out in Figure 4.1 right.

4.2 An overarching framework plan is provided at Figure 4.2 overleaf, which underpins the more detailed guidance on land uses, urban design, landscaping, and access set out in subsequent sections.

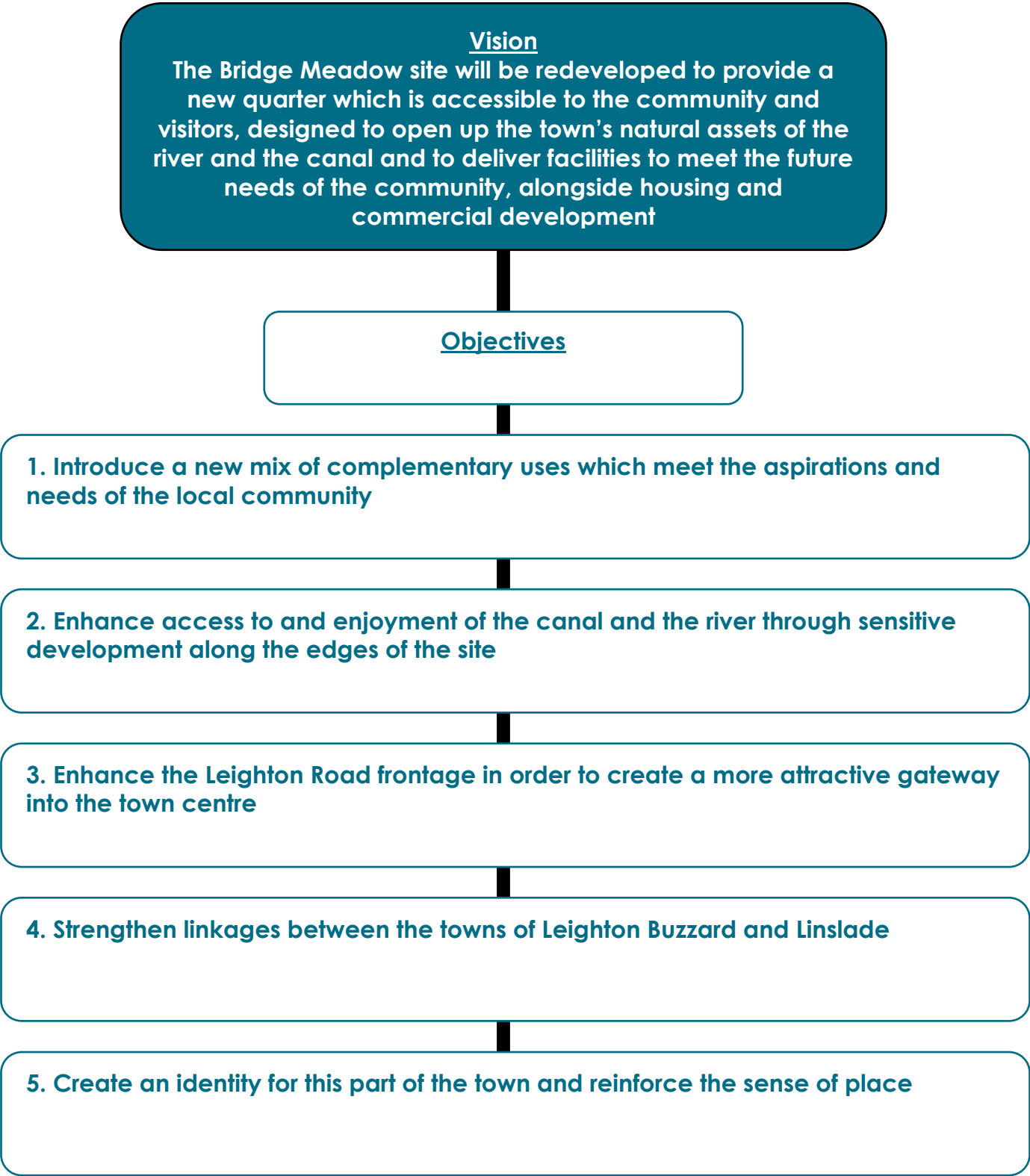


FIG 4.1 Vision and objectives for the Bridge Meadow site

Indicative Overarching Framework Plan

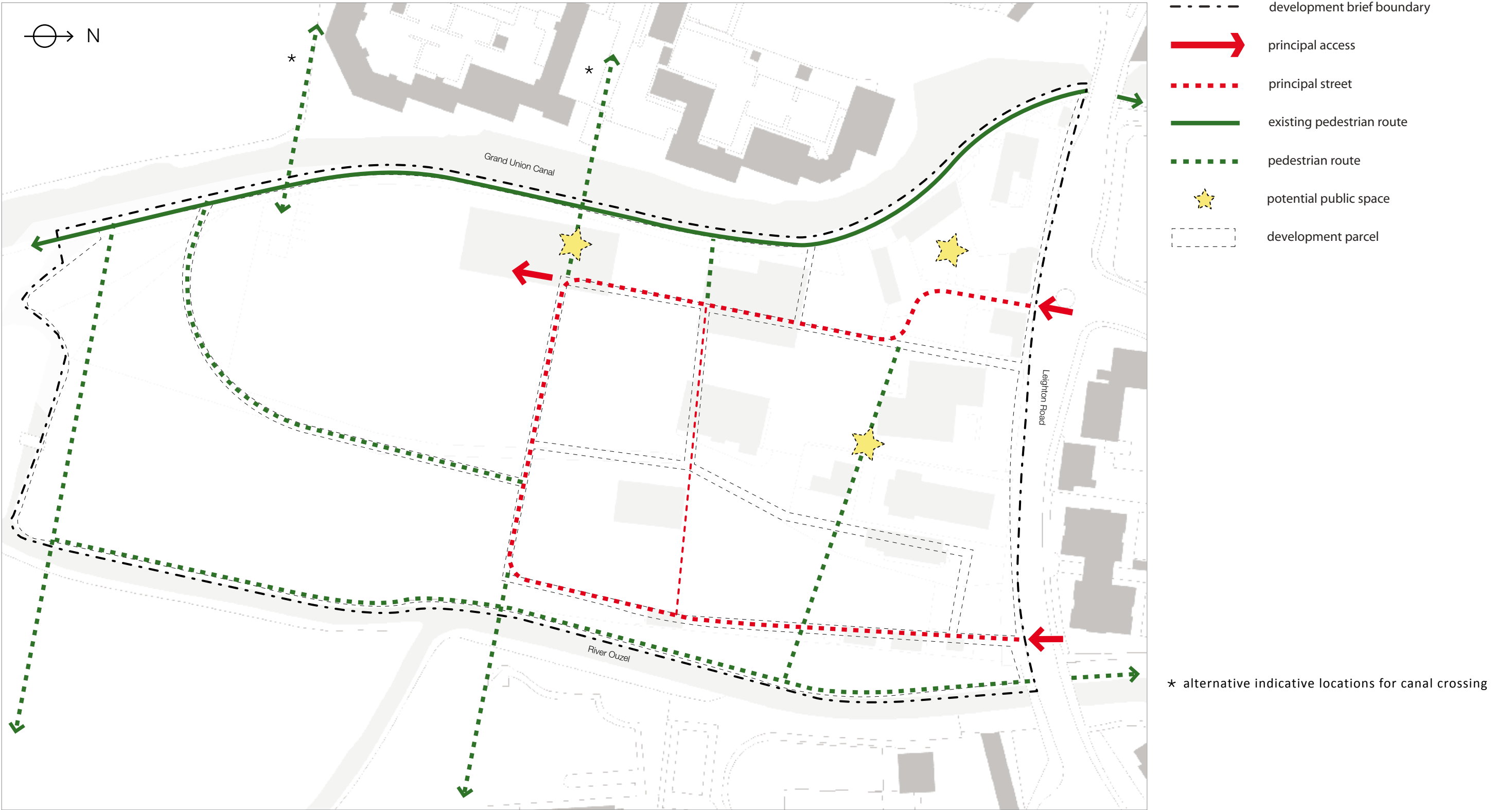


FIG. 4.2

Illustrative exemplar images



FIG. 4.3 Accordia, Cambridge



FIG. 4.4 Skipton Marina



FIG. 4.5 Stoke Bruerne, Towcester



FIG. 4.6 Union Wharf, Market Harborough



FIG. 4.7 Cleadon Park Health Centre, South Shields



FIG. 4.8 Queen Mary University, London



Land Uses

5.1 This brief proposes to unlock this site to provide a new edge-of-town centre waterside quarter for the town which could accommodate a mix of uses including Further Education, health, recreation and residential and link to other green infrastructure and open space where possible.

5.2 The development principles set out below divide the site into a series of complementary land use parcels which should underpin the preparation of development proposals.

Parcel A: Canal Quarter

5.3 Redevelopment of this part of the site should seek to create a mixed use canalside quarter, with an intensive mix of land uses clustered around a new public space including a new canal boat marina or enhanced canalside mooring facilities. The following land uses will be supported:

- Retail (Use Class A1). This is an edge/out of centre location in national planning policy terms and is therefore not an appropriate location for significant retail development. Retail development of up to 1,000sqm floorspace (gross) that forms part of mixed use development will be acceptable. Retail floorspace should be spread across a number of units as opposed to a single store (maximum unit size of 250sqm).
- Financial and professional services (Use Class A2).
- Food and Drink (A3, A4 and A5). The Council supports

the provision of a waterside food and drink offer, potentially including a family style pub and restaurants.

- Offices (B1).
- Outdoor leisure/recreation and community uses.
- Residential (Use Class C3).

Parcel B: Residential Quarter

5.4 Redevelopment of this part of the site should seek to create a new residential quarter comprising a mix of typologies including higher density apartments and town houses. Residential development fronting the canal should seek to enhance the canal environment and improve activity along the canal (the towpath must remain publicly accessible).

5.5 Ancillary leisure and community-type uses that complement the predominant residential use of this area will be welcomed.

Parcel C: Further Education / Healthcare Quarter

5.6 This land is to be safeguarded for a new Further Education and healthcare campus (Use Class D1).

5.7 The Council will accept alternative uses on this land if it can be demonstrated that health and/or Further Education

uses will not be deliverable over the plan period.

Parcel D: Residential Care Quarter

5.8 The Council supports the provision of care facilities on this land, which could include a residential care home (Use Class C2). C3 (Use Class) will be supported if it can be demonstrated that there is unlikely to be demand for additional care home space.

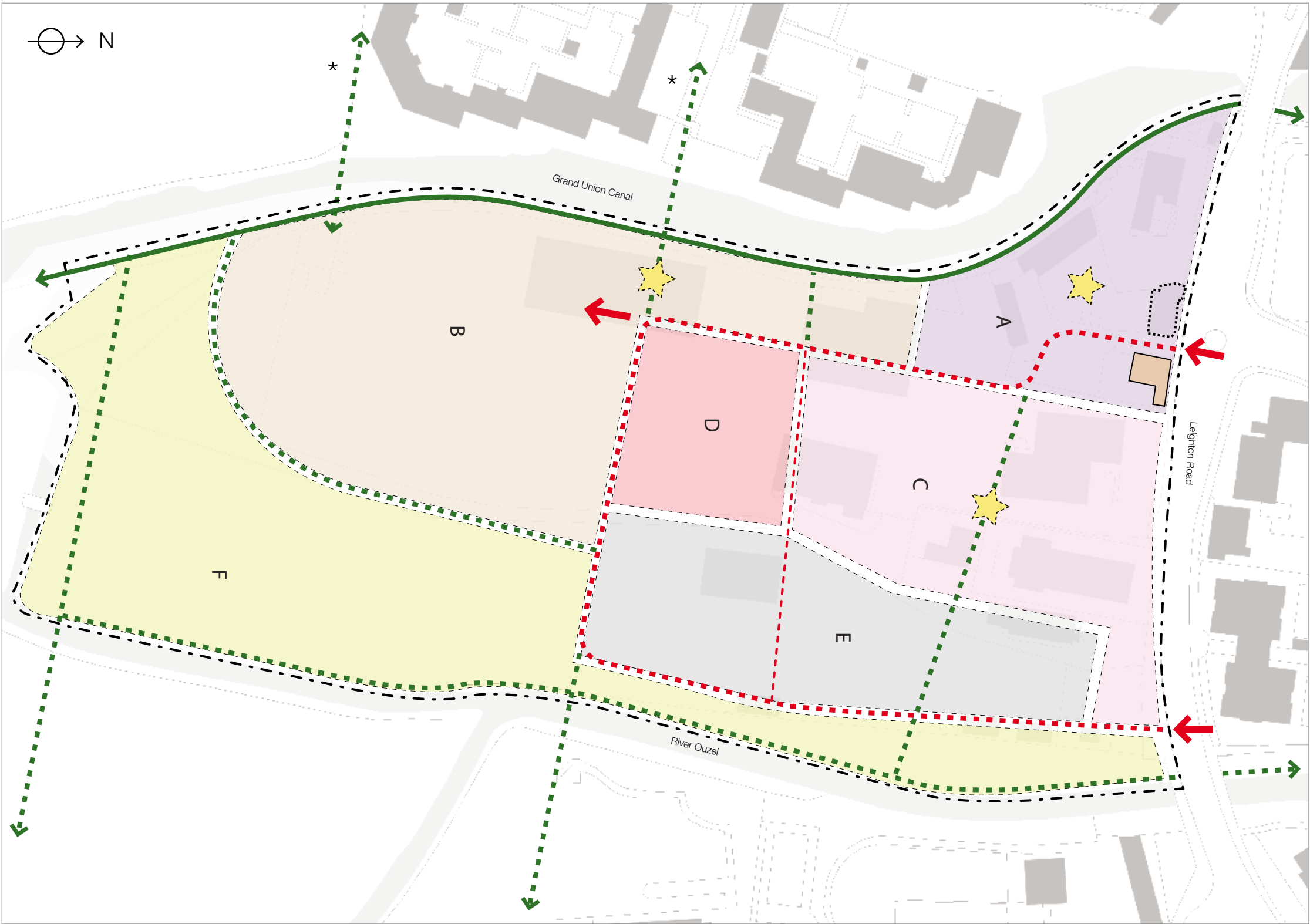
Parcel E: Car Parking

5.9 This part of the site lies within the functional flood plain which places significant constraints on development. This part of the site should be developed to provide car parking to support the uses on Parcel C.

Parcel F: Open Space with Public Access

5.10 Redevelopment of this part of the site should seek to provide an area of green open space to be enjoyed by the whole community. It should be landscaped in such a way so as to provide differing character areas which encourage a range of activities including sports, children's play and relaxation. It should relate sensitively to the River Ouzel and canal.

Indicative Land Use Framework Plan



- Key
- development brief boundary
 - principal access
 - principal street
 - existing pedestrian route
 - pedestrian route
 - historic building to be retained
 - building to be retained if appropriate
 - public space
- PARCELS (indicative uses below, see draft development briefs for full details)
(existing buildings shown below for reference)
- A ancillary retail and food and drink (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) / office residential (C3) / outdoor leisure, recreation and community
 - B residential (C3) / ancillary leisure and community
 - C education / Healthcare
 - D residential care (C2) / residential (C3)
 - E parking to serve parcels C and D
 - F open space with public access
- * alternative indicative locations for canal crossing

FIG. 5.1

Illustrative exemplar images



FIG. 5.2 Local retail centre near the waterside in Stratford



FIG. 5.3 Health Centre, Hounslow



FIG. 5.4 Canalside pub



FIG. 5.5 Lower Mill Estate, Cotswolds



FIG. 5.6 Waterfront housing, Chichester



FIG. 5.7 Watersports centre, London Docklands

Credits

Fig. 5.2 Google images

Fig. 5.3 Penoyre and Prasad Architects

Fig. 5.4 Heather Greene



Urban Design

6.1 The Council seeks the highest standards of urban design which should complement the town centre's existing high quality character.

Layout and Integration

6.2 The layout of the development should seek to provide several distinct character areas linked via streets and pedestrian paths which should successfully integrate into the surrounding urban context. Development should reflect the following:

- A new road linking two access points from Leighton Road and looping through the site should be provided, allowing vehicular and pedestrian circulation into and within the site (as the site is within the flood plain, the design of the road should take into account the flood risk gradient across the site). This should set the principal structure from which development should follow.
- A new, robust and legible frontage to Leighton Road should be provided. Hard and soft landscaping should be provided to reinforce well designed buildings to improve the pedestrian environment and provide an attractive gateway/ approach into the town centre.
- In order to help stitch the site into the surrounding context and to improve pedestrian accessibility to and from the railway station and town centre, a new east-west

pedestrian route should be provided along the centre/ southern part of the site to include new pedestrian bridges over the river and canal.

- Pedestrian and cyclist accessibility onto the canal tow path should be improved so as to better integrate this natural asset into the development. Active or effective frontages should be provided onto the towpath in order to improve legibility and passive surveillance.
- The layout should be designed so that key vistas to All Saints Church spire should be protected and framed by routes and development, in particular from a main public square in the centre of the site.
- The character of new development should seek to complement the Linslade and Leighton Buzzard Conservation Areas so as to effectively integrate into the existing streetscape.

Scale and Massing

6.3 The site offers the opportunity to create its own distinct character in terms of architectural style, scale and massing, while complementing the surrounding urban context. Development should respond to the following principles:

- The site is at a lower level in comparison to the surrounding context and is considered suitable to

accommodate slightly taller buildings than the surrounding context.

- The buildings along the Leighton Road frontage should be of a scale appropriate to define the higher-order role of this street, aid legibility, reverse the existing out-of-town character of this area, and to provide an appropriate approach into the town centre.
- There is an opportunity for a taller building on the northwestern corner of the site, taking account of views of the church spire, with building heights of 4-5 storeys along the canal considered appropriate.
- Larger plots can be accommodated on the site in order to accommodate bulkier buildings – however, care should be taken to provide street legibility, active and effective frontages, and definition of edges and squares.

Character, Appearance and Historic Assets

- Development should ensure that Grand Union House (a Grade II Listed Building) and its setting is preserved and enhanced wherever possible.
- The large footprint structures anticipated along the Leighton Road frontage should be sensitively designed so as to achieve complementarity with the existing character of the town. Key to the success of this approach will be

sensitively designed roofscapes and architectural detailing to new external facades and shopfronts. Views across to All Saints Church spire should be safeguarded.

- Active frontages, front doors and effective frontages should be carefully considered to support legibility, passive surveillance and accessibility throughout the public realm. Blank walls and unattractive facades (including those associated with multi-storey car parks) should be avoided (via the provision of active frontages, green walls or other attractive solutions).
- Development should seek to complement the existing architectural forms in the town, which are varied and lend the town its sense of place. Buildings should be articulated to achieve the principles of legibility outlined above. Development should respond to local characteristics and seek to complement the settings of the Linslade and Leighton Buzzard Conservation Areas.
- Development should seek to provide positive frontages on both western and eastern sides in order to link positively to the town centre and to Linslade.
- The siting, configuration and orientation of buildings should optimise views of the water, generate natural surveillance of water space, and encourage and improve access to, along and from the water.

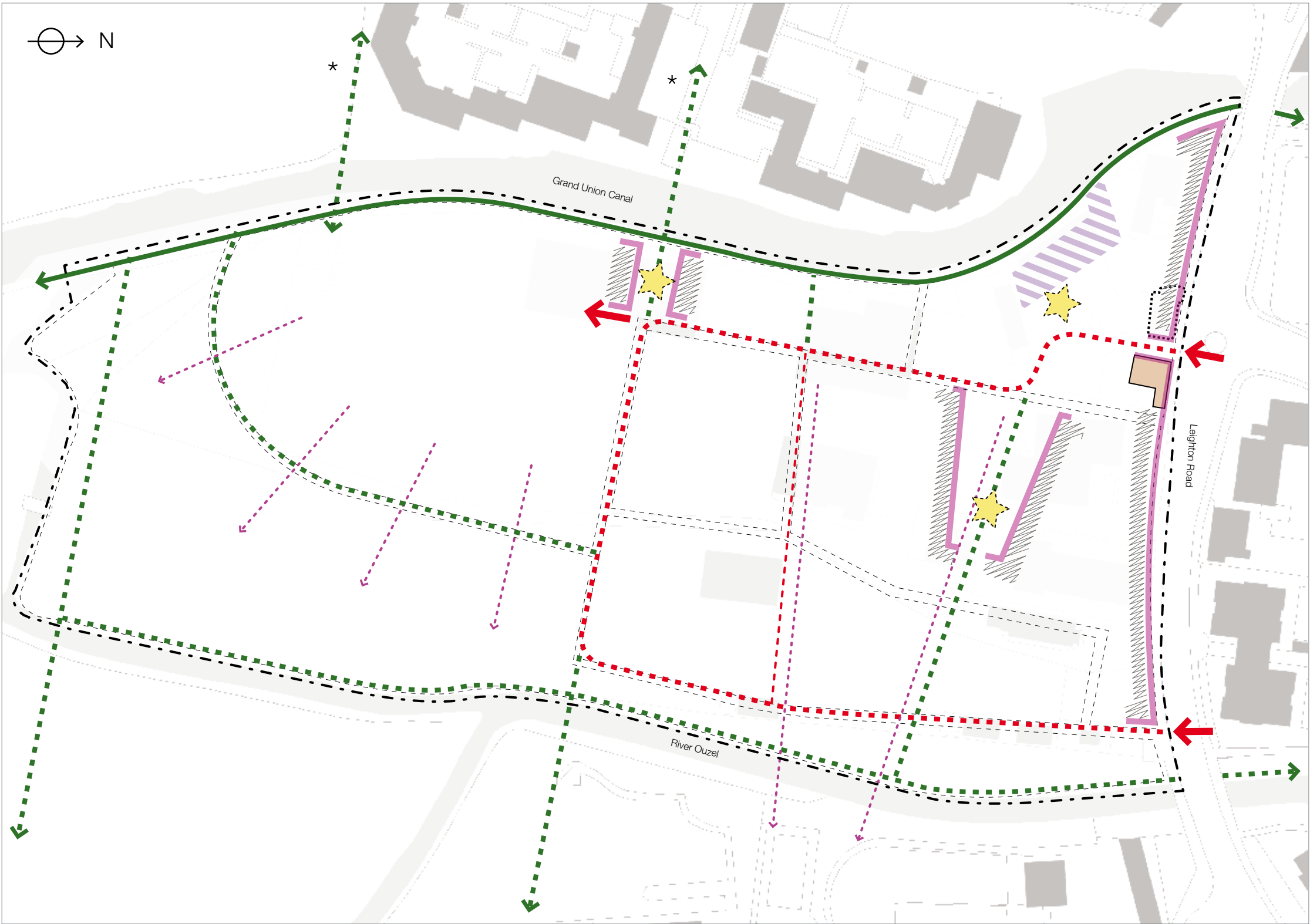
Sustainable Design and Construction

- The development should be designed to use less energy by adopting sustainable design and construction standards. It should also seek to supply energy efficiently by incorporating decentralised energy generation technologies and a site-wide heating/cooling network where feasible. Renewable energy sources should be used wherever practicable.
- Development should be adaptable to the effects of a changing climate by designing in natural shading, water efficiency technologies and infrastructure, and measures for sustainable drainage as well as green/brown roofs to reduce water runoff rates. Sustainable development principles should apply to both new-build and refurbishment works.

Digital Infrastructure

The Council believes that new developments should be served by a high quality digital infrastructure, ensuring local residents and business are able to access the latest online services. The Council wishes to see the necessary on-site infrastructure put in place at the time of construction, to ensure connectivity to superfast broadband services. This means that the development will seek to put in place an appropriate network to deliver services. Detailed proposals will need to consider the necessary conduits /ducting to be incorporated into the development and consideration for relevant telecommunications infrastructure, including exchanges and or cabinets, to ensure accessing / maintenance requirements and minimal environmental / visual impact in line with the adopted Central Bedfordshire Local Broadband Plan.

Indicative Urban Design Framework Plan



Key

- development brief boundary
- - - - - link / view
- principal access
- - - - - principal street
- existing pedestrian route
- - - - - pedestrian route
- ▨ active / effective street frontage to define streets, routes and public spaces
- ▨ historic building to be retained
- ▨ building to be retained if appropriate
- ★ public space
- ▨ development parcel
- ▨ potential location for marina / mooring facility
- ★ alternative indicative locations for canal crossing

FIG. 6.1

Illustrative exemplar images



FIG. 6.2 Typical canal footbridge



FIG. 6.3 Princesshay quarter, Exeter with framed view of the Cathedral



FIG. 6.4 An iconic footbridge at Castleford



FIG. 6.5 Atrium in Hounslow Health Centre



FIG. 6.6 Townhouses at Accordia, Cambridge

Credits

Fig. 6.2 Phil Rowbothom

Fig. 6.4 McDowell+Benedetti Architects

Fig. 6.5 Penoyre and Prasad Architects

Fig. 6.6 Feilden Clegg / Maccreanor Lavington

Illustrative exemplar images



FIG. 6.7 Re-inforced grass car parking for attenuation



FIG. 6.8 Solar panel roof tiles



FIG. 6.9 Queen Mary University Campus



FIG. 6.10 A swale for rainwater attenuation



FIG. 6.11 A green / brown roof for habitat and attenuation

Credits
Fig. 6.9 Neasan O'Neill

Illustrative sketches

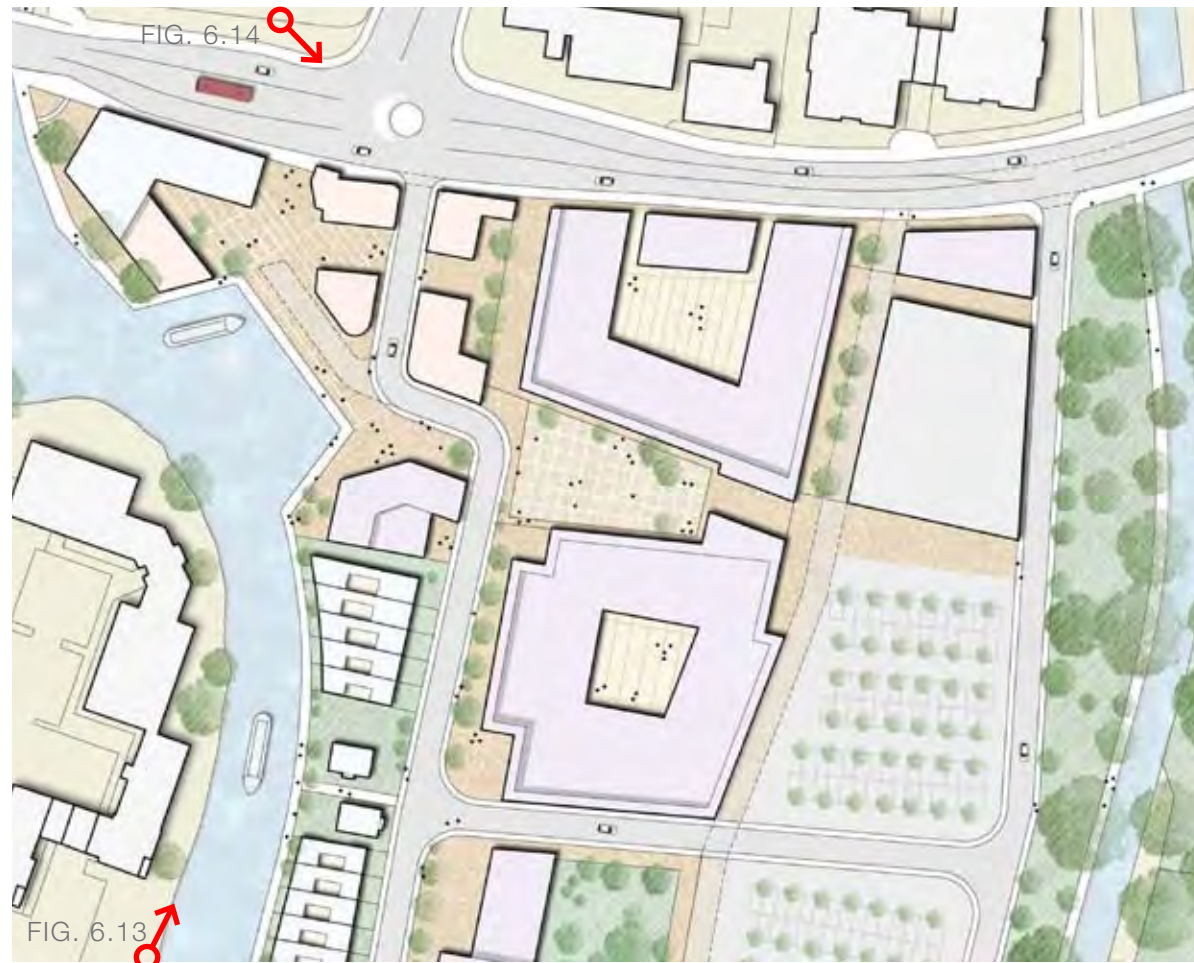


FIG. 6.12 Illustrative vision for how the northern part of the site could be developed



FIG. 6.13 Illustrative sketch perspective of canal



FIG. 6.14 Illustrative sketch perspective of Leighton Road

Illustrative sketches

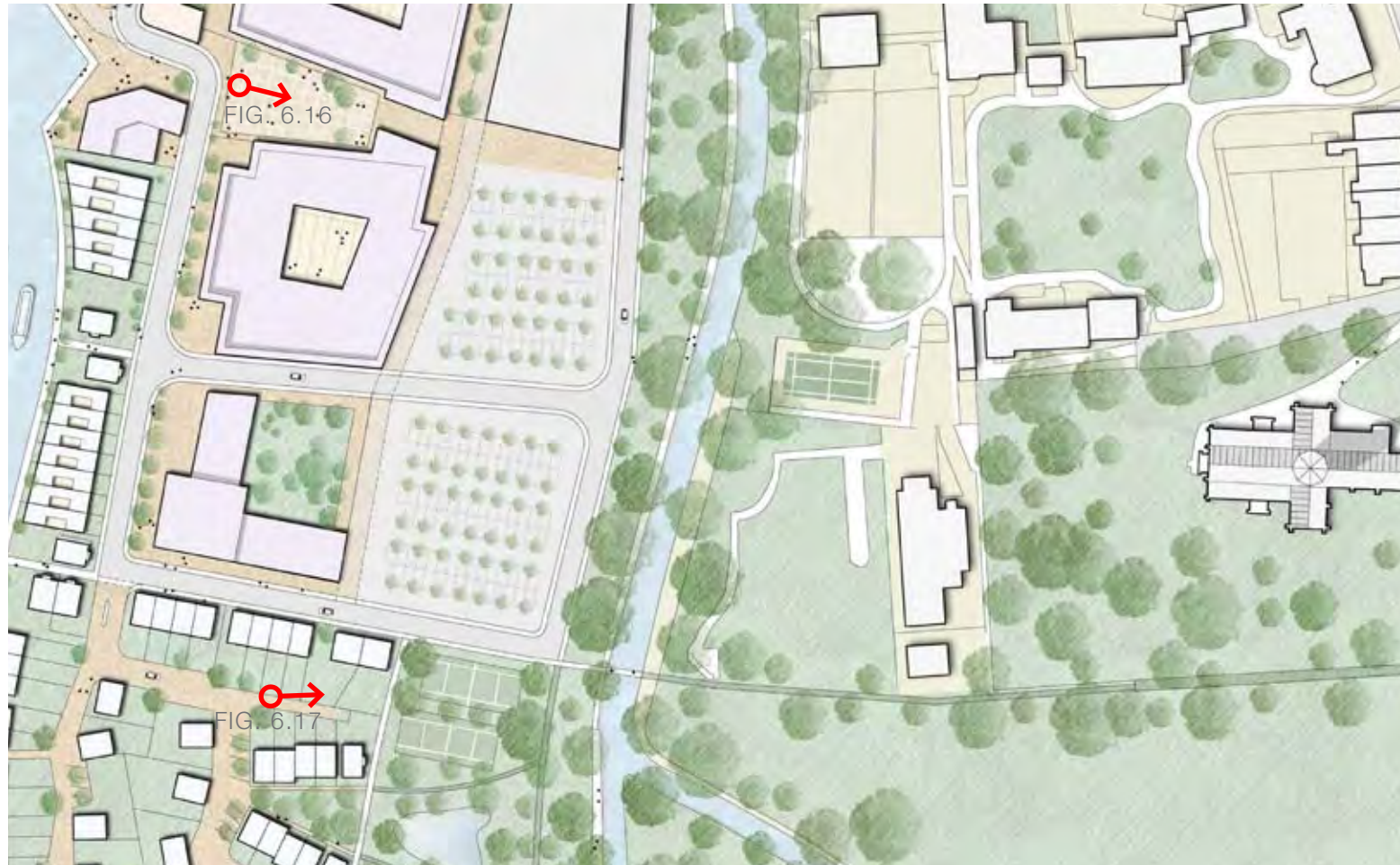


FIG. 6.15 Illustrative vision of how views of the church can help to structure the site



FIG. 6.16 Illustrative sketch of framed view of the church from the site

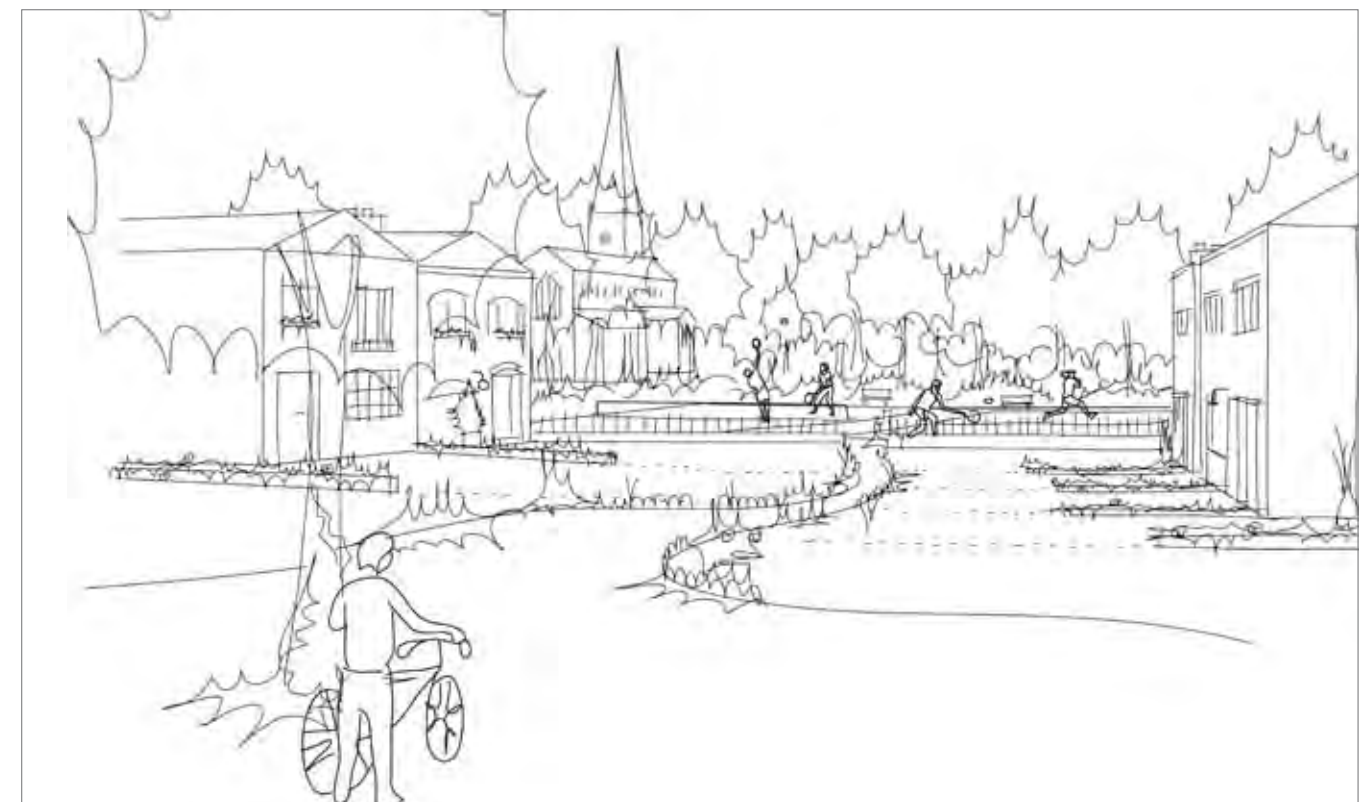


FIG. 6.17 Illustrative sketch of view of the church from the south of the site



Landscape

7.1 The Council will expect a comprehensive landscape strategy to be incorporated into development proposals in order to generate the high quality sense of place that is required. Development proposals should reflect the following principles:

- The site is relatively large and flat and could therefore be disorientating for pedestrians and cyclists. Public spaces should be located at key points (indicative locations are shown on the framework plan) in order to help structure the site and provide focuses for activities relating to the buildings.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes should be considered together with the street layout to ensure effective integration.
- Choice of materials and furniture should be considered holistically and within the wider context, to complement the existing and to support the activities provided by the development.
- Streetscaping and tree planting should be provided throughout the development, which should complement the surrounding urban context.
- Street furniture and wayfinding should be combined and minimised (where possible) a measure which can be facilitated through legible and accessible landscape design.
- Appropriate lighting should be carefully considered to provide a safe and pleasant environment at all times of day and should be kept at a low level close to the waterway where possible.
- Legibility and accessibility are key to the success of the public realm and the streets and spaces should be designed together with the buildings that front onto them to achieve these objectives.
- The southern part of the site should be redeveloped and landscaped so as to provide an area of green open space to act as a green lung for the expanding town, and which can be enjoyed by the whole community in line with the aspirations of the Ouzel Valley Park Project. More information on the Ouzel Valley Park Project can be obtained from The Greensand Trust.
- Any new development should incorporate flood mitigation measures as appropriate.
- Public realm improvements should be extended up to the water's edge where practicable, and should not form a barrier to the canal.

Indicative Landscape Framework Plan

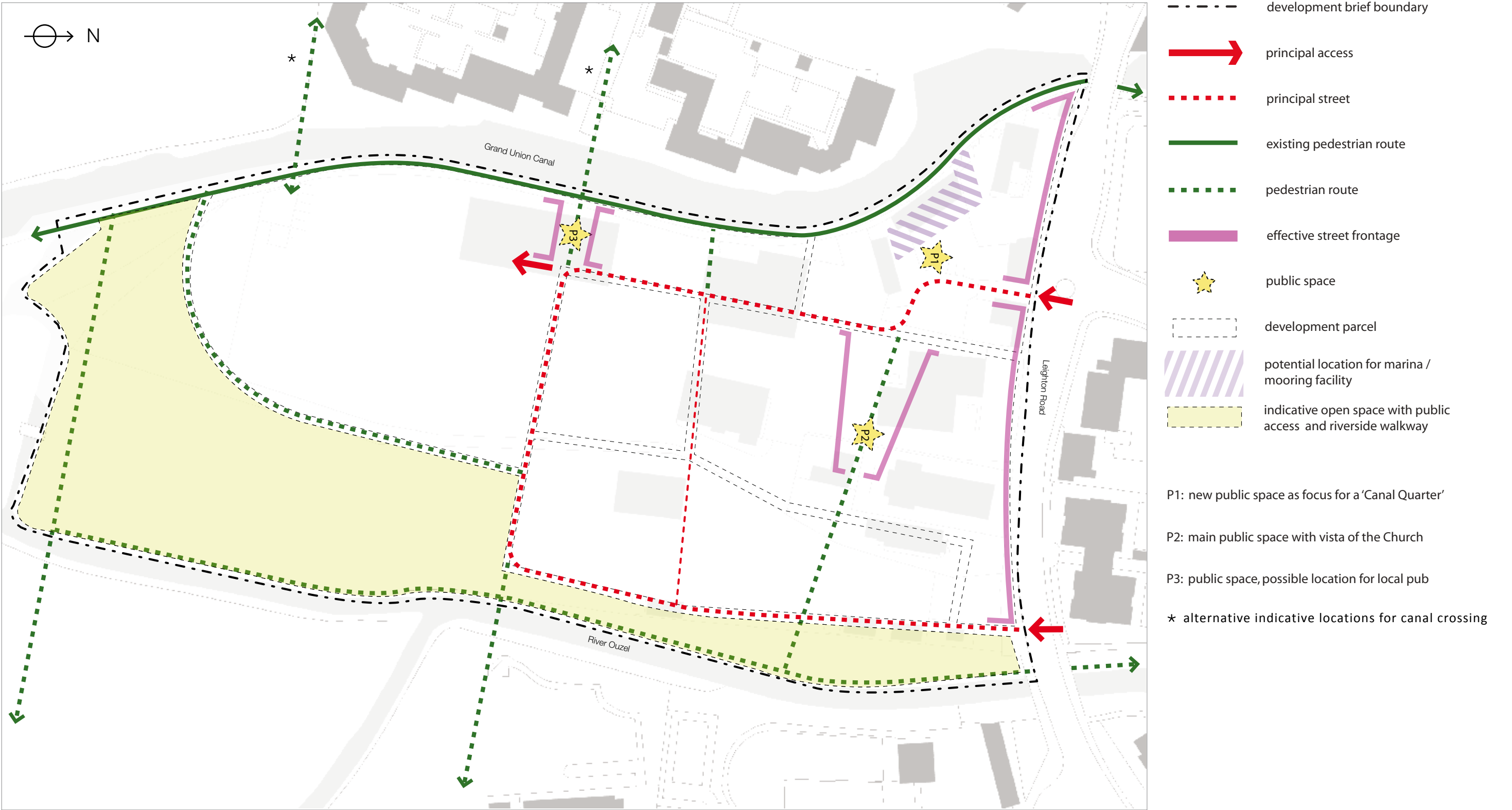


FIG. 7.1

Illustrative exemplar images



FIG. 7.2 Shared surface, Brighton



FIG. 7.3 Rudimentary footbridge



FIG. 7.4 The Lakes, Kent



FIG. 7.5 Tree-shaded pavement

Credits:

Fig. 7.3 Steve Bell
Fig. 7.2 Gehl Architects
Fig. 7.6 Bill Tam
Fig. 7.7 Google images



FIG. 7.6 Walkway along the River Tweed



FIG. 7.7 Campus streetscape at Chiswick Park, London



Access and Movement

8.1 The existing Bridge Meadow site forms the southern end of an island between the canal and the river.

8.2 Leighton Road provides the primary access route for both vehicles and pedestrians from the residential areas to the west of the town into the town centre. There presently exists a proliferation of access points from the site onto Leighton Road, borne of piecemeal developments providing direct access to this principal route.

8.3 Development proposals should be in line with the following principles:

- A permeable network should be created that enables pedestrians and cyclists to move freely within and through the site to the canal and beyond, and to improve the pedestrian environment along the Leighton Road boundary. These will help encourage walking and cycling as part of any development proposals, and reduce the dependence upon the car.
- Development should consolidate the existing number of vehicle access points onto Leighton Road from eight to two (maximum of three), greatly increasing the uninterrupted pedestrian footway and reducing vehicular conflict. The reduced number of vehicular access points affords the opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment by providing a wider pedestrian central reserve in the middle of Leighton Road. This could take the form of kerbed and/

or flush central islands which would offer flexible crossing points for pedestrians.

- Linked with the new primary access points should be a loop route around the site, which would serve the principal development areas on the site, providing clear access to the car parking and servicing facilities (indicatively shown on the framework plan). Local bus services should be encouraged along this route so as to adequately serve the site. This route should be supplemented by a street hierarchy, designed to help manage the amount and speed of traffic, and indicate the relative importance of each street. The width of streets will vary according to the importance of the route in the street hierarchy, for which guidance should be sought from Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2.

- To keep traffic speeds low, the uninterrupted length of the streets between junctions should be kept to around 60 metres on the primary route. The aim of the design should be to create a naturally traffic calmed environment, through the use of events, rather than introduce additional hard speed control measures such as speed humps. The 'events' could include junctions, creating horizontal shifts in the street, changes in vehicle priority, informal crossings and the provision of planting in and around the highway.

- A pedestrian link east-west across the site should be included in any layout to enable the potential for more direct crossings of the canal and river. The creation of a route which connected Mentmore Road (and the residential areas

and train station to the west of the town) to the High Street would have the potential to create an attractive pedestrian connection with significantly reduced walk distances.

- To ensure legibility, the route towards the town centre should be clearly signposted.
- Physical constraints permitting, any new access to the towpath should be accessible to those with wheelchairs.

Servicing

- Servicing for the non-residential uses on the site should be undertaken from dedicated or shared areas next to the individual buildings, whilst keeping pedestrians in mind.
- Residential servicing could be provided on-street directly outside the buildings, subject to the design of the parking facilities.

Parking

- The development of the site should provide an appropriate number of car parking spaces based upon Central Bedfordshire parking standards. The level of car parking provided should reflect a desire for the development site to achieve vehicle trip generation numbers that broadly result in nil detriment when compared with the existing site uses. Car parking numbers should be reviewed as part of

a town centre car parking study, and the ability for weekday commercial spaces to be used for town centre weekend parking should be provided.

- Streets throughout the site should be physically designed to accommodate parking where required and prevent adhoc car parking in other locations, to avoid the need for rigorous enforcement of yellow line restrictions. It is envisaged that dedicated car parking areas may be accommodated on those parts of the site at higher risk from flooding.

- Disabled car parking should be provided in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire parking standards. Consideration should be given to the location of these bays so as to provide convenient access throughout the site for the mobility impaired. Therefore these spaces could be provided through a combination of dedicated bays within any car park provided, or through the use of on-street bays within the streetscape design.

- The provision of Car Club bays and car charging points should be investigated in discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council and locations where these could be introduced identified.

- Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire standards. On-street bays should be provided convenient to the community and commercial facilities proposed and positioned so as to be in secure overlooked locations.

Indicative Access and Movement Framework Plan



FIG. 8.1



Land Assembly

9.1 A comprehensive approach will be required to the delivery of the site to ensure a high quality of design and successful integration with the surrounding urban context.

9.2 Accordingly, the preferred option will be to assemble a single development site. However, the Council will accept the phased delivery of the development, as long as the development principles outlined in this brief are met and it can be demonstrated that phased development would not prejudice the comprehensive development of the whole site in due course.

9.3 Principal landowners have been consulted in the preparation of this draft brief and have expressed a general willingness to bring their land forward for redevelopment, subject to viability considerations and the ability to overcome the barrier presented by the complex pattern of existing freehold and leasehold interests. The ideal scenario will be to assemble the site via private treaty, however the Council's compulsory purchase (CPO) powers may be necessary to complete site assembly which will be subject to achieving a viable development solution.

Development Viability

9.4 The development brief has been prepared in the period 2010-11 during which time the UK was recovering from one of the deepest recessions since the 1930's. These recessionary conditions have been accompanied by

a collapse in residential and commercial property values in some parts of the UK, together with rationing of developer and mortgage finance. These conditions mean that viability is a serious challenge at the current point in time in all but the most exceptional of locations/schemes.

9.5 This brief has been informed by high level appraisals and commercial advice, including soft market testing with developers. This has concluded that the proposals set out in this brief are likely to be attractive to the market and viable in the medium term subject to overcoming existing landownership constraints.

Implementation

9.6 The Council recognises that major developments have significant lead-in times and that their delivery is dependant on favourable economic conditions. Accordingly the Council anticipates that the development will come forward over the next 10-15 years.

9.7 The Council consider it inappropriate to apply rigid phasing or sequencing requirements to the delivery of the development. The development should come forward in a comprehensive manner – the Council will accept a phased delivery as long as proposals are able to demonstrate that they will not give rise to any adverse planning impacts.

9.8 Private sector developers will be responsible for delivering the development alongside existing landowners and the Council (as Local Planning Authority). The Council will work with existing occupiers to find appropriate alternative accommodation where appropriate. Existing occupiers, including the Travelling Showpeople, will need to be relocated prior to development.

Planning Application Requirements

9.9 Planning applications should be supported by the following package of documents:

- Design and Access Statement
- PPS4 Statement (town centre uses)
- PPS5 Statement (heritage assets)
- Environmental Statement (if determined to be EIA development)
- Transport Assessment and Green Travel Plan
- Sustainability/Energy Strategy
- Other supporting documentation (as necessary).