

FLITWICK TOWN CENTRE



Planning Framework and Masterplan (Draft)

November 2007



**Authors
Mid Beds District Council**

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1.0 PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

Introduction

- 1.1 Town centres are an important focal point for the community, shoppers and businesses. At present Flitwick Town Centre lacks this focus for a variety of reasons but mainly through the sporadic and piecemeal development over the years, the under use of a key town centre site adjacent to the railway and the segregation of the town centre by the railway line and cutting. Accordingly, this Planning Framework and Masterplan provides an opportunity to redefine and improve the arrangement of the town centre and to adopt a holistic approach to the planning and design of the area.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to provide a clear framework for the future development of Flitwick Town Centre focusing on the area to the west of the railway

where the main development opportunity exists. It seeks to unify development proposals to increase the physical coherence of the town centre, maximise development opportunities, tackle perceived deficiencies, improve the perception, image and visual quality of the town centre and achieve a high quality urban environment for everyone to enjoy.

Key Development Principles

- 1.3 There is an opportunity to develop a well-planned, high quality town centre for Flitwick. Existing development pressures need to be shaped and directed to provide a mixed-use development that meets the future needs of the town. The key development principle is to ensure that the various land uses are developed in a coordinated and phased approach to make the best use of existing facilities such as the train station and retail stores.

Overall Vision

- 1.4 The overall vision is to promote the regeneration of land and buildings west of the railway in a flexible manner to the benefit of the residents and businesses in the area and for the town as a whole which is realistic to developers and can create a coherent locally distinctive area. The aim is to create an exciting urban development focused on a key sustainable transport hub – the railway station, its forecourt as a transport interchange point, and a new commuter multi-storey car park.
- 1.5 The major challenge for Flitwick town centre is to ensure that its potential is fully realised. Taking into account its location, its assets and current developer interest there is a unique opportunity to expand the existing and consolidate new town centre activities in a sustainable way.

- 1.6 To achieve this vision, regeneration proposals would have to create a safe, vibrant, walkable and integrated centre. The area would need to be home to new facilities that would be valued by the community. Creation of high quality, well-designed new buildings and public spaces would be of key importance, while all those involved in the regeneration of the area would be required to demonstrate that their proposals reinforce the creation of a coherent town centre with an identity and uniqueness.

Objectives for the Development

- 1.7 To ensure this opportunity is maximised, the following objectives have been set:

General

- To create a high quality environment with a new centre or focal point for the town, with consideration being given to a new public space

and/or landmark building

- To regenerate under-used brownfield land to the benefit of the town centre to achieve a high quality, sustainable, mixed-use development of high density.
- To generate development value necessary to deliver the wider community and infrastructure benefits and improvements to Flitwick town centre, which would include a substantial contribution to the station and its environs.

Land Uses

- To encourage further retail and commercial development to enhance the vitality of the town centre and create new retail opportunities, bringing additional employment opportunities thereby bringing new jobs and prosperity to Flitwick
- To provide for residential development to meet ongoing local and strategic needs for additional

housing

- To identify a suitable location for a petrol filling station, paying particular regard to impacts on amenity of adjoining areas
- Provide a new Village Hall and space for the market (currently operating from the Village Hall car park).

Urban Design

- Provide continuity of street frontage and enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas
- Ensure new development and layout relates well to existing buildings which would remain (e.g., Library, Russell Centre & possibly the train station)
- Ensure that the design and layout discourages opportunities for anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, and an adequate CCTV installation is provided for the whole town centre.
- Ensure that the opportunity is available to improve

and enhance the public realm, including improved street lighting, improved street furniture (to an agreed palette co-ordinated with the proposed High Street Enhancements) and the removal of street clutter.

Movement

- Provide improved linkage between the new town centre development and High St/Station Rd via a new bridge to facilitate better movement between both sides of the railway, linked to improved road crossings on the east side, and ensuring that the new bridge is designed to discourage opportunities for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour
- Ensure layout is legible, and links existing buildings with the new, and provides safe, direct and easily navigable routes, with intersections and landmarks for pedestrians to easily find their way
- Minimise the need for road closures and diversions and the need for CPOs

- Provide sufficient and adequate road crossing points around the town centre
- Provide clear cycle routes to, and secure cycle parking at, all key destinations within the area of redevelopment
- Provide sufficient well laid out, visually enclosed and landscaped car parking for use by all shoppers and visitors to the town centre, whilst ensuring the car parking areas do not become the focal point of the new development
- Ensure the provision of well defined, direct, safe pedestrian routes through the Town Centre to safeguard and enhance the Safer Routes to School initiatives.

Railway

- Provide sufficient parking for the station (based on a robust assessment of need).
- Subject to overarching principles, provide improved access to the station for pedestrians

(including mobility impaired), taxis and pick up/set down by cars, and improved interchange with buses.

- Creation of a new transport interchange.

2.0 PROCESS

2.1 There is a lengthy history of seeking to bring forward development proposals for Flitwick town centre. An informal partnership has been developed between the following main parties to help to bring this about:

- Mid-Beds District Council – planning authority
- Bedfordshire County Council – transport and highway authority and landowner (library)
- Flitwick Town Council – landowner and community representative
- Cowlgrove – landowner and developer
- Network Rail/First Capital Connect – responsible for railway station and station car park
- Tesco – landowner and retail operator
- Folview & Weatherbreak – landowner

2.2 Together the partnership have developed these new proposals for Flitwick town centre, which are now the subject of public consultation. The proposals are set

out in this Town Centre Regeneration Planning Framework and Masterplan document.

2.3 Once adopted by Mid-Beds District Council as Technical Planning Guidance, it will provide a framework for development control against which future planning applications can be assessed.

2.4 This Planning Framework builds upon an earlier Draft Planning & Development Brief (November 2001) which covered part of the current site (between Steppingley Rd and the railway), through which the principle of further retail led mixed-use development had been given Council and public support. The site of the former Development Brief is incorporated within the larger development area now identified within this Planning Framework.

2.5 The outcome of the consultation on the former Development Brief confirmed that although local

support was given to the principle of retail/mixed use development on this site, further work was required to evolve the development proposals contained within the Brief. In particular the following concerns were raised:

- The ability of the existing transportation infrastructure to accommodate the scale of development proposed;
- The location of the development may not have been appropriate in urban design terms; and
- The need for community facilities were not fully identified or addressed.

2.6 Following the consultation on the former Planning & Development Brief, additional town centre land, namely the Tesco site, became available for inclusion within the wider area available for redevelopment. This additional land opened up new possibilities for a more comprehensive town centre re-development.

2.7 As part of the development of new proposals, a local consultation took place in June 2003 in the form of a Planning for Real Exercise. The consensus of opinion voiced during the Planning for Real Exercise was that whilst the desire to see a mix of uses within the town centre (to include retail, residential and community/leisure uses) as advocated in the original brief remained, local residents were particularly keen to see improvements to the existing station, a new transport interchange, a reduction in the pedestrian and vehicular conflict over the railway and significant improvements to the flow of traffic on Steppingley Road. These views have been taken forward into the preparation of this Planning Framework and Masterplan.

2.8 This Planning Framework and Masterplan will be subject to a six-week public consultation period. This will include a public exhibition, an information leaflet with questionnaire, and website to access information on-line and the questionnaire.. Copies of the Planning

Framework and Masterplan are available at the District and Town Council offices, as well as local libraries.

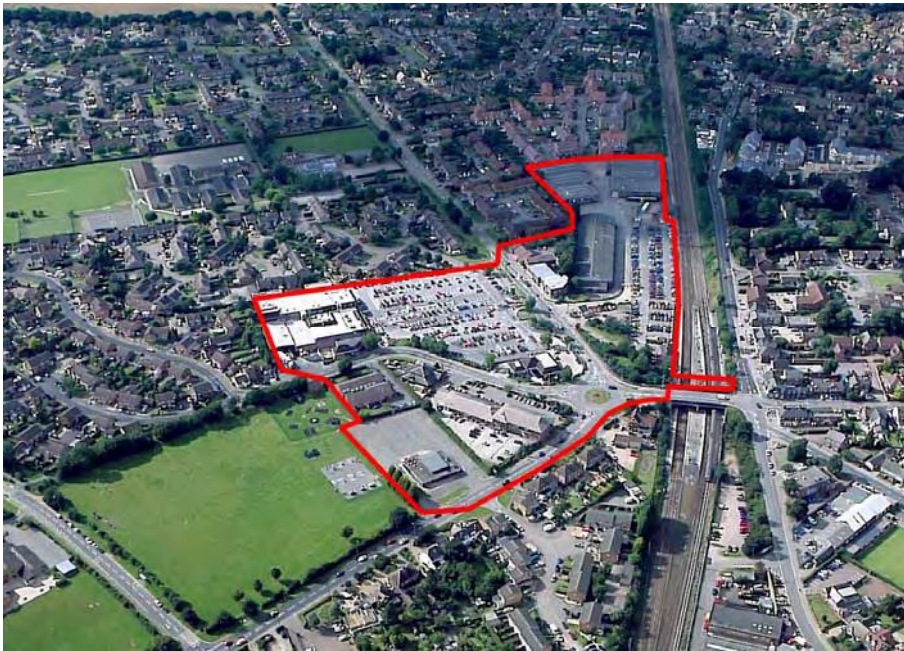
2.9 Following the public consultation period, the responses will be reviewed and consequent amendments made to the Planning Framework and Masterplan. It is envisaged that the revised document will be reported to the Council's Overview Committee, followed by the Council's Executive in March 2008 for final approval prior to being formally adopted as Technical Planning Guidance in the spring of 2008.

3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Context

3.1 Flitwick is the second largest settlement within the District of Mid-Beds. The Aerial Photograph below illustrates the location of the area covered by this Framework and the Masterplan in the context of the town within which it is located.

Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph

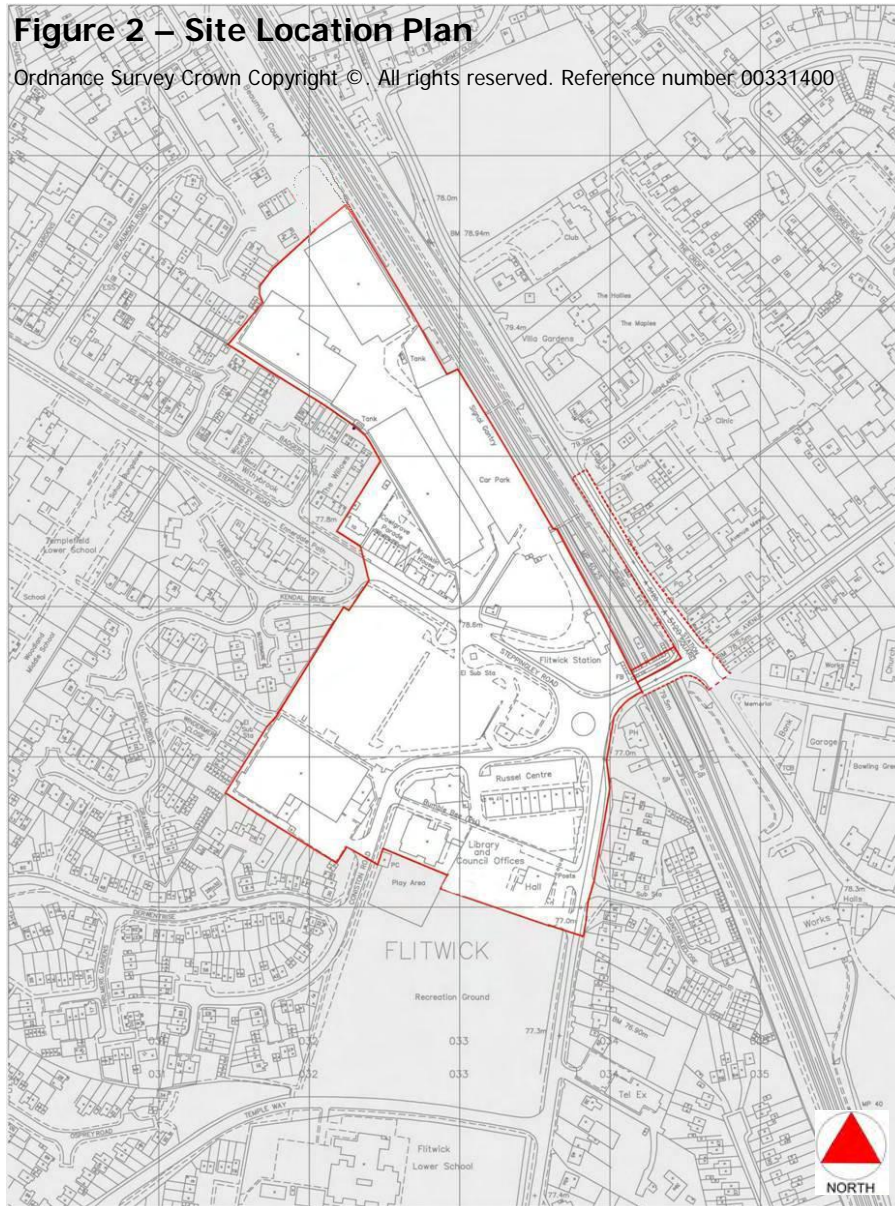


3.2 The town centre of Flitwick currently comprises the High Street, the Russell Centre and Cowlgrove Parade (which are two separate parades of individual shop units, the former fronting Coniston Road and the latter fronting Steppingley Road), an existing Tesco store and associated customer car parking, a number of community uses north of the Millennium Park which include a Library and Village Hall, two Public Houses and shops on High Street, to the east of the railway line.

3.3 Residential development is located to the north and west of the Framework area. The railway is located to the east and the Millennium Park, a recreation facility which includes a skateboard park, informal and formal open space and an equipped play area is located to the south of the Framework area.

Figure 2 – Site Location Plan

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Specifics of Framework Area

3.4 This Framework and Masterplan relates to 6.76ha of land on the western side of the railway (the southern part of allocation TCS7 in the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan First Review). The area covered by the Framework and Masterplan is currently occupied by the following land uses:

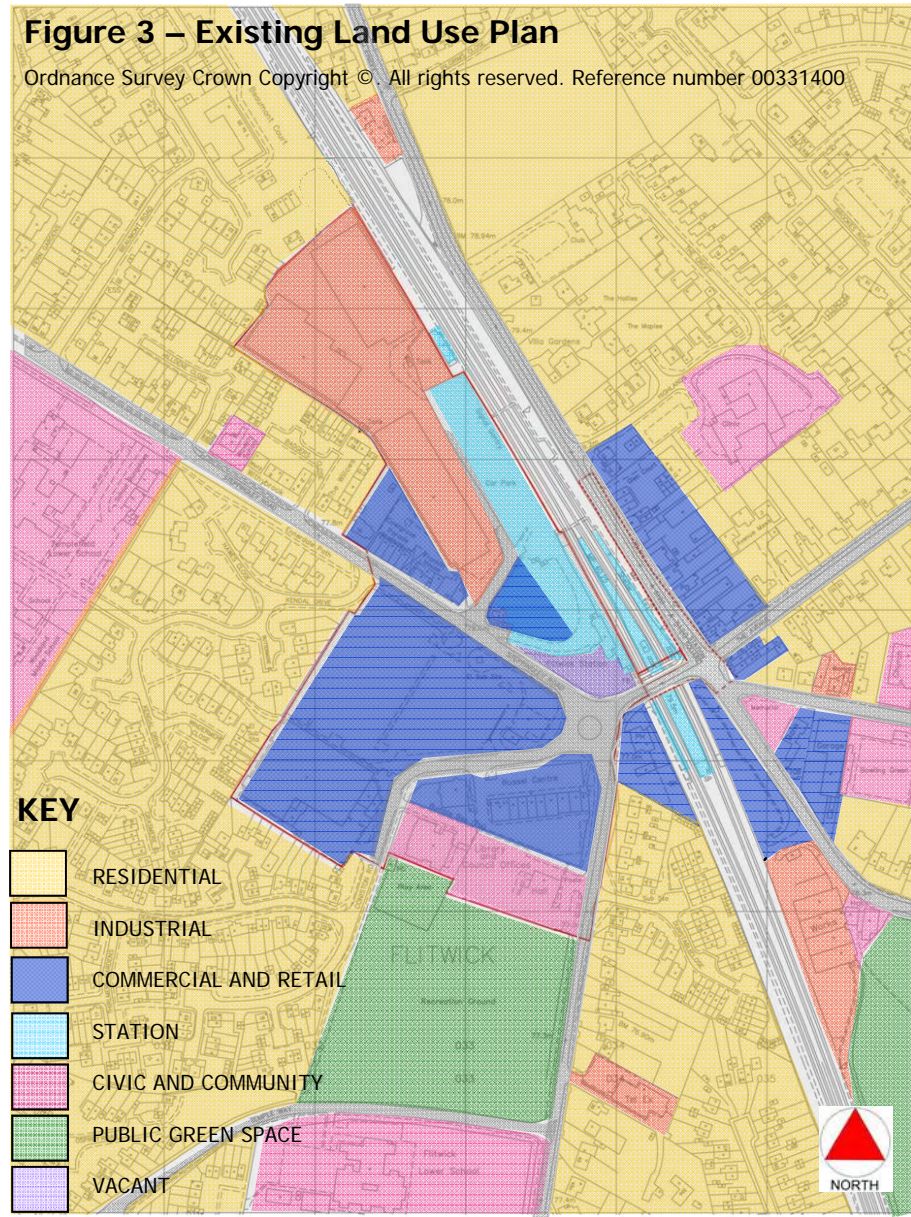
- **Station buildings and access;**
- **Surface level station car parking;**
- **Vacant land fronting Steppingley Road;**
- **Warehouse land to the north of the Train Station;**
- **The Tesco store, car park and petrol filling station;**
- **The Russell Centre and Bumble Bee public house;**
- **The Swan Public House;**
- **Cowlgrove Parade & Franklin House;**

- **No. 10 Steppingley Road**
- **The High Street**
- **Village hall and library**
- **The road bridge over the railway line**
- **A section of Coniston Road, Steppingley Road and Dunstable Road**

3.5 The adjacent plan illustrates the current land uses within and adjacent to the site.

Retention of Buildings

3.6 Whilst the site plan above shows a single site as the area covered by this Planning Framework work and Masterplan there are a number of parcels of land and particular land uses that are, at the moment, to be retained. For example the Russell Centre and the Bumble Bee Public House are not currently proposed to be redeveloped. This is because at the time of writing this Framework and compiling the Masterplan



agreement had not been reached with the landowners of these sites for their inclusion. This does not, however, preclude their incorporation at a later stage.

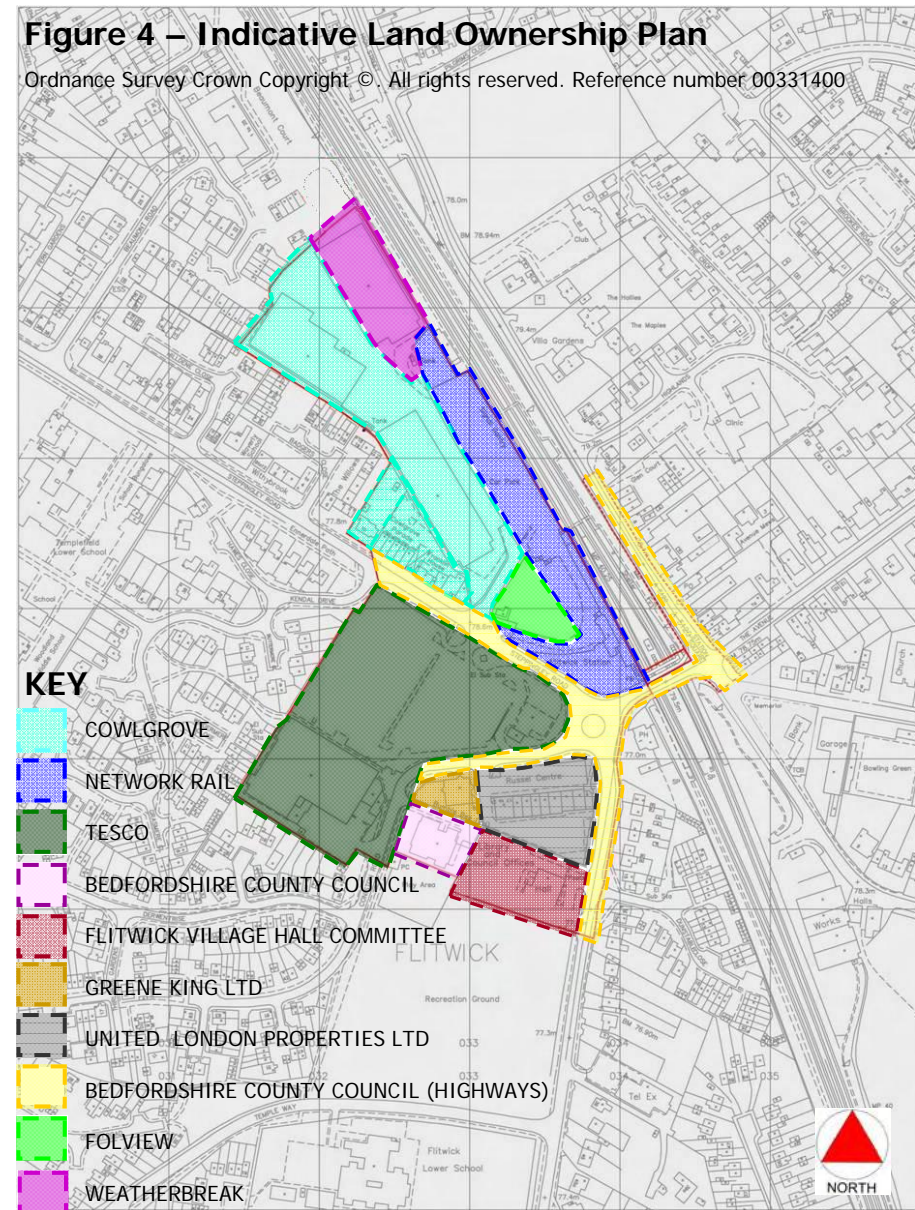
- 3.7 The other specific building proposed to be retained is the train station building. This building is considered to be of local historic importance, although it is not statutorily listed. As the building is not listed, a replacement building could be considered if there was felt to be an opportunity to further enhance and improve the operation of the station, or assist the delivery of the overall scheme.

Land Ownerships

- 3.8 The Framework and Masterplan area falls under the control of a relatively limited number of landowners. The following plan illustrates the main land ownerships:

Figure 4 – Indicative Land Ownership Plan

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3.9 A limited number of landowners, reduces the complexity of bringing forward development proposals and increases the prospects of implementing the objectives of the Planning Framework in the short term. It is however essential that the landowners work together to bring forward coherent development proposals.

Site Constraints

3.10 A number of physical and commercial constraints to development exist within this site. These are as follows:

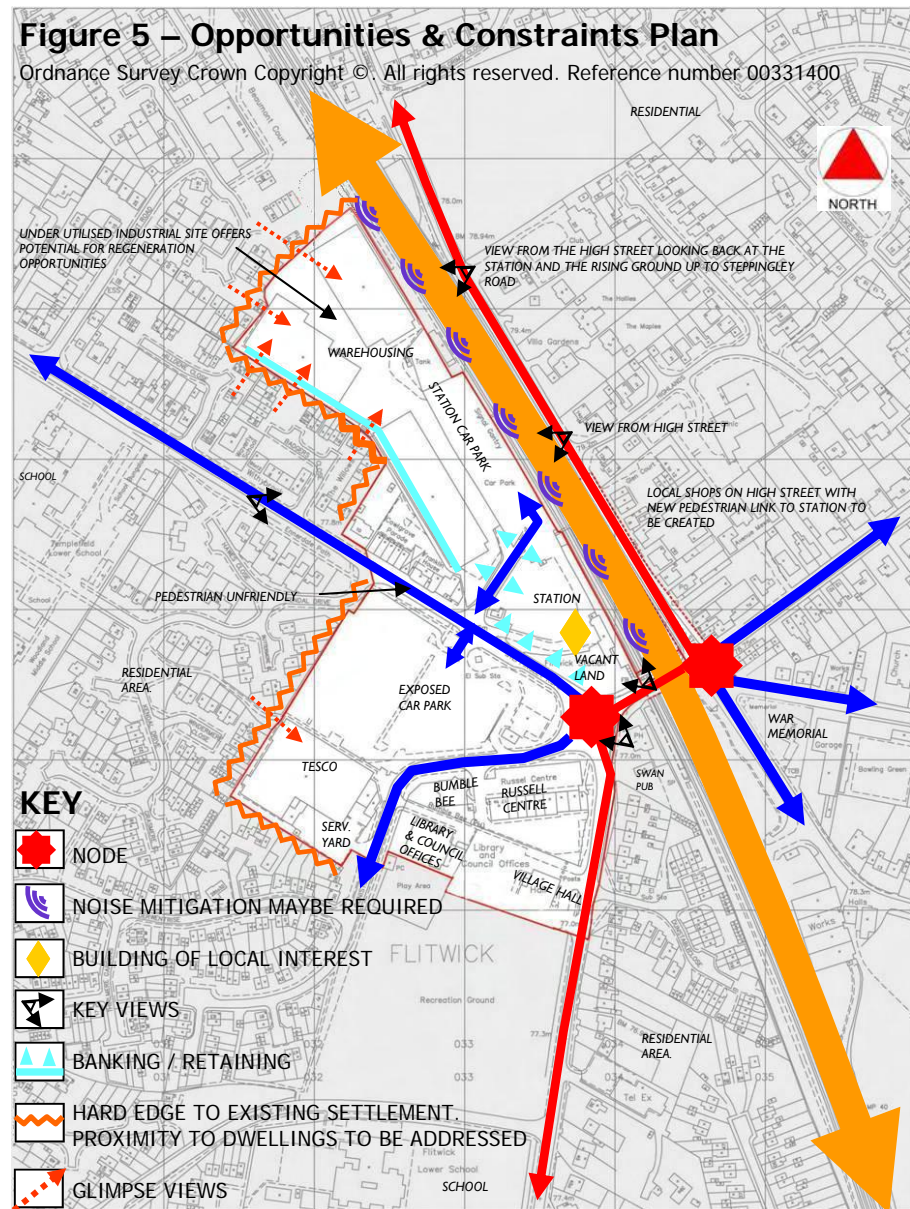
- The train station facilities must be retained and improved if possible to meet the Train Operating Company's (ToC's) standards and to provide an accessible station for all. This must encompass vehicular access and transport interchange, Network Rail standards & TOC's aspirations.
- The train station car park must be of sufficient size

to accommodate current demand and if possible anticipated future growth in demand.

- The development and enlargement of an enhanced Tesco store will act as an anchor for further retailer and developer investment.
- The Highway network must be able to support any net increase in the volume of traffic generated by the new development within the town centre.
- Engineering works would be required through much of the site given the difference in levels.
- Steppingley Road's function as a diversionary route in the event of temporary closure of the M1 Motorway needs to be recognised.
- The impact of the development upon surrounding land uses, in particular existing residential properties, must be given full and detailed consideration.
- The development must fully integrate with the rest of centre, including the High Street, in terms of physical, functional and visual integration.

- Consideration must be given to noise and vibration from the railway. Initial studies undertaken indicate that the dwellings can be successfully engineered to suppress noise and vibration.
- Patterns of land ownership necessitate a joint approach to any development by landowners.
- The commercial viability of the scheme.

3.11 The above constraints have been illustrated on the following plan which also illustrates the key opportunities arising from those constraints:



Residential Amenity

3.12 Whilst all of the opportunities and constraints identified are important, particular consideration would need to be given to the effect that the development would have on the amenity of neighbouring residents given that the Framework Area is situated within the heart of a town that is surrounded by residential areas. This is not only in terms of the design of the development having regard to the issues of privacy, overlooking, noise impact and the aesthetics of the development, but also to the construction process to ensure that disruption in terms of noise and disturbance is kept to a minimum throughout the build period. The Council can control the building programme through conditions attached to planning permissions or via legal agreements, if deemed necessary and appropriate.

Levels

3.13 A key characteristic of this site is the difference in levels. The ground level of the High Street lies at circa 78-79 metres above sea level, which is similar to the ground level of Steppingley Road. The ground level of the warehousing site is 73 metres above sea level and the train station lies at 75 metres above sea level. Accordingly, the central section of the area covered by the Planning Framework is circa 5-6 metres lower than the High Street or Steppingley Road. The difference in levels is not necessarily a constraint as an opportunity exists to utilise the natural gradient of the site within the design of the development.

Utilities & Servicing

3.14 A detailed assessment of any existing utilities or services that are in-situ would need to be undertaken. In particular, there is an electricity sub-station on the

site of the existing Tesco store which would need to be relocated and there is also the possibility of fibre-optic cables and other services running beneath Steppingley Road that may need to be diverted.

Flooding

- 3.15 None of the area covered by this Planning Framework and Masterplan lies within a floodplain. It is therefore unlikely that flooding is a specific constraint of this site but detailed consideration would still need to be given to drainage issues.

Relevant Consents & Proposals

- 3.16 Whilst not technically a constraint, the development would also need to give full consideration to a number of major applications that may have an impact upon the town, particularly in relation to the potential that they may have to increase traffic flows in the area. Namely,

but not exclusively, these are:

National Institute for Research into Aquatic Habitats (NIRAH) Application

An application was submitted on 01/12/2006 for an International Visitor destination and Science Research Park, including tropical biotope, Water Adventure Park, Spa, three Hotels, Conference and Exhibition facilities, 50 seater cinema and associated ancillary retail and food and drink uses. The site is located at Quest Pit, Stewartby, and Elstow North Landfill Site, approximately 4 miles to the south of Bedford along the B530. Flitwick is approximately 5 miles to the south of the application site.

NIRAH is expected to attract approx. 3.5 million visitors per year, once opened in 2011. As well as a Park & Shuttle facility, 4,000 visitor parking spaces would be provided at Elstow North. The applicants anticipate that

10% visitors will access the site via public transport. A decision on this application is due to be made by the County Council on 19 October 2007.

Center Parcs Limited, Site at Warren Wood, Millbrook, Bedfordshire

Planning permission has recently (September 2007) been granted at appeal for development and use of land as a forest holiday village including 700 villas, 75 bedroom hotel, 12 bedroom spa accommodation, 1400 space car park and forest management works together with associated works and activities. The proposed development is located approx. 3 miles to the north west of Flitwick.

Residential Development up to 250 dwellings at, Land West of Ampthill.

Mid-Beds District Council have recently resolved to

grant planning permission for this residential development subject to the signing of a Section 106 legal agreement. The site is located approx. 1.5 miles from the centre of Flitwick. This site is the subject of the West Ampthill Planning and Development Brief published in October 2006.

Opportunities

3.17 Having considered the constraints to development,, there are a number of exciting opportunities that would be realized through this development. These include:

- To provide a town centre with a new heart which centres upon providing commercial and community facilities alongside residential development and key infrastructure improvements.
- The difference in levels provides the ability to create an intensive development while still having

- regard to the land uses at each boundary.
- A modest diversion of Steppingley Road and Coniston Road gives the opportunity to provide a reconfiguration of the road layout to create a more efficient system and provide improved pedestrian facilities.
 - The under utilised and ageing industrial warehouses to the north of the site offer a key area for potential regeneration opportunities which would provide much needed residential accommodation in an extremely sustainable location.
 - The development creates the opportunity to significantly improve the key views into the site, specifically from the approach into the town, both from the north and south and from the High Street.
 - The ability to provide sufficient dedicated station car parking that would significantly help to reduce on-street commuter car parking within the town.
 - The opportunity to significantly improve the station facilities, particularly for the mobility impaired, including the creation of a new transport interchange.
 - The creation of enhanced and improved community facilities, specifically improvements to the Library and new village hall and space for youth facilities for the Town.
 - The ability to ensure that design of the development maximises the potential to improve community safety within the town, with surveillance of public realm areas and the provision of CCTV.
 - Significant improvements to the retail offer through the provision of increased retail floorspace within the town and within the larger, more modern supermarket. This would improve and help to lessen trade leakage to larger towns, thus having an additional sustainability benefit in reducing the need to travel.

- The ability to ensure that the planned improvements to the High Street are complimentary with the design ethos of the proposed regeneration. [These have been put on hold in order to achieve this objective].
- The opportunity for further sites such as The Russell Centre, the Bumble Bee Public House and the Billingtons site to the east of the railway to be included as further stages of the regeneration of Flitwick Town Centre.

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

National, Regional and Local Planning Policy

4.1 Investment and redevelopment proposals for the renewal and regeneration of town centres, particularly those which increase accessibility, improve public transport links and reduce emphasis on the use of the private car, provide more housing and enhance the vitality of town centres are compatible with the provisions of national Planning Guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statement 1 (Planning: Delivering Sustainable Development), Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing), Planning Policy Statement 6 (Planning for Town Centres) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (Transport).

4.2 Regional Planning Policy relevant to the Framework is contained within Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9), and the East of England Plan (RSS

14), the Proposed Modifications for which were published by the Government Office for the East of England in December 2006 will form part of the Development Plan for the area. Final adoption of the Plan is due in the autumn of 2007. Relevant policies are:

- SS 4 Secretary of State changes – development in towns other than key centres and rural areas
- E1 Job Growth 2001 – 2021
- H1 Regional Housing Provision 2001 – 2021

4.3 The Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan First Review (MBLPR) was adopted on 5th December 2005. The MBLPR sets out objectives for development within the District. These are:

- To promote development that enhances diversity, accessibility, range and attractiveness of town and

village centres.

- To promote opportunities for complimentary town centre redevelopment, and
- To encourage greater use of public transport to town centres.

4.4 Within Policy TCS2, the Local Plan supports the initiative of partnership and joint working with those who have a particular interest in town centre areas in order to co-ordinate and implement town centre strategies for improvement and renewal. Policy TCS7 recognises the potential of the Steppingley Road site in Flitwick to be comprehensively redeveloped for a mixed-use scheme. This policy seeks a mix of leisure, retail, office and residential uses on this site to reflect the town centre location and proximity to the train station. Additional car parking for rail commuter use is also encouraged. Under this policy, any proposals that involve the railway station should provide a railway/bus interchange. This Framework provides a more detailed basis for the

development of the site, but following the principles of TC32.

4.5 A raft of other policies in the Local Plan are relevant to this Framework:

- Selected Settlement (LPS1)
- Planning Obligations (DPS1)
- Development Principles and Standards (DPS1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 20A, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27)
- Transport (TP1A, TP1, TP5, TP8)
- Recreation (SR5, 6)
- Housing (HO2, 4, 5)
- Town Centre and Shopping Development (TCS1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14)

4.6 Mid-Beds District Council is currently consulting separately on its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. This consultation will run to 5 November 2007. This

reflects the Council's aspirations for the planning of the District up to 2021.

4.7 In preparing the Planning Framework the following documents and guidance have also been taken into account.

Mid Beds District Council publications

- Flitwick Town Centre Rail Station Site: Planning and Development Brief Consultation Draft (November 2001)
- A Design Guide for Residential Areas in Mid Bedfordshire (October 2004)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing (July 2004)
- Developing Quality Housing Schemes – A Residential Design Guide (2004)
- Landscape Design Guide (September 1998)
- Recreational Open Space Strategy (2005)

- Cycle and Walking Strategy (November 2000)
- Public Rights of Way – A Guide for Developers
- Community Safety Design Guide Draft (2005)
- Wildlife in Development SPG (2003)
- Shop Front Design Guide
- Draft SPG on Planning Obligations (2007)
- Council's Retail Study (2007)

Other publications including

- Sustainable Communities Plan - ODPM
- Safer Places – ODPM (March 2004)
- EcoHomes – BRE (February 2004)
- Urban Design Guidance – Urban Design Group – (2002)
- Better Places to Live – DETR (May 2000)
- By Design – DETR (May 2000)
- Places, Street and Movement – DETR (September 1998)
- Making Design Policy Work – CABE (2003)

5.0 ESTABLISHING DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

5.1 A number of strategic aims have been identified to help fulfil the vision for Flitwick town centre:

Strategic Aim One – A Place to Shop & Enjoy

5.2 It is important that a town centre provides a range of functions and uses to create a strong economic basis for supporting its local community. Accordingly, the Masterplan seeks to strengthen Flitwick's retail offer.

5.3 A major new retail store would be located on the corner of Steppingley Road and Coniston Road. This would provide the opportunity to create a landmark building and create a striking backdrop to a new improved station square. This new landmark development would have a central atrium and corner tower rising above the main development to provide visual interest in the streetscene. Car parking for the new store would be

located under the store and to the rear. This would have the advantage of creating a strong street frontage.

5.4 Additional retail units would also be provided on the opposite side of Steppingley Road and alongside the railway to redress the current open nature of the centre and provide additional choice of retailers to enhance the overall retail offer within the town centre. A development opportunity would also exist in front of the Russell Centre car park which would help give greater townscape enclosure. These new buildings would not only provide intense mixed-use activity in the heart of the town centre but would also become Flitwick's defining landmarks.

5.5 The High Street is severed from Steppingley Road by the railway which acts as a barrier to movement. At the same time, the nature of retail provision on the High Street is limited and does not provide wholly for

the need of residents. For this reason a new pedestrian/cycle bridge is proposed to integrate the High Street with the new retail quarter and station square.

- 5.6 The opportunity also exists to help improve the facilities at the station. The role of the station as a commuter link to London is currently poorly served with lack of car parking facilities and very poor mobility impaired access. A new multi-storey car park for commuters would significantly reduce on-street parking problems in the town centre and would strengthen the patronage in the heart of the town centre through increased use. Network Rail's Thameslink project will result in longer platforms at the station and the new pedestrian bridge would provide lift access to improve mobility impaired access.

Strategic Aim Two – A Place to Live

- 5.7 Providing housing in the town centre would help to support a variety of other uses, including new retail and office facilities. More housing would also help to keep the town lively and busy during the evening when offices and shops are closed, and provide natural surveillance of public spaces.
- 5.8 Sections of the site covered by the Masterplan would provide mixed-use developments at a high density with dwellings as a key component of the mix. This form of development would provide active frontage to areas such as Steppingley Road and would enhance the town's trading role.
- 5.9 The greatest potential for residential development is in the proposed northern residential quarter, where the existing warehousing and storage yards offer a prime opportunity for redevelopment along with the

opportunity to screen the proposed multi-storey station car park. This new Residential quarter would be accessed from Steppingley Road, adjacent to Cowlgrove Parade. Care must be taken to design this housing to minimise the impact of noise and vibration from the railway line. Parking for the residential areas would need to be contained within the new development and while traffic management would be necessary to prevent shoppers and commuters using these spaces. Appropriate scale, built form and level of enclosure would be important to create a coherent legible place and continuity of street frontage, particularly with the significant changes in level on the site. Sustainable design and construction should be incorporated into the design of the residential buildings.

Strategic Aim Three – A Place to Work

5.10 The major new retail store and mixed-use developments in Steppingley Road and in the station

quarter would make a highly sustainable and marketable location and would create a significant number of jobs opportunities, mainly in the retail sector.

5.11 The station forecourt would function as a public transport interchange for all modes of public transport and would be transformed into a showpiece station square framed by new buildings.

5.12 The new multi-storey car park would increase the levels of parking at the station and the footbridge across the railway would provide better linkages within the town creating a new high profile pedestrian and cycle route running from the station to the eastern suburbs.

5.13 The Masterplan provides flexibility for regeneration proposals adjacent to the station.

Strategic Aim Four – A Quality Place

- 5.14 The Council places great importance upon achieving a high quality urban environment and believes that there are opportunities for high quality contemporary design in the town centre. It does not feel that there are any contextual reasons for requiring that the design of new buildings should adopt only a traditional approach, or seek to mimic architecturally other buildings in the town centre. Poor quality pastiche schemes would not be viewed favorably.
- 5.15 The junction of Steppingley Road/Coniston Road is one of the town's busiest pedestrian spaces yet is currently framed by a petrol filling station, left over greenspace and shoppers car park. This space would be redesigned by focal buildings and the formation of the new station square. A centerpiece needs to be incorporated as a key public feature to act as a local landmark.

- 5.16 The Masterplan identifies the need for a permeable pattern of streets and street blocks that is attractive to movement through all parts of the area. The opportunity should be taken to create a people-orientated, accessible environment with rich and diverse streetscapes and other public realm, contributing positively to the wider urban setting. Physical, visual, and functional connectivity to the wider area is important, however community safety must be reinforced through the provision of high levels of natural surveillance and clear and unambiguous distinctions between public and private space.

Strategic Aim Five – An Accessible Town

- 5.17 The town needs to be accessible to all users and should provide a stimulating and interesting environment.
- 5.18 One of the key components of the Vision is the realignment of Steppingley Road (& Coniston Road) to

create areas with development potential. This would require the re-alignment of a short section of Steppingley Road and Coniston Road and may require some diversion to services. New junctions will be provided to the new development from both roads.

5.19 With traffic speeds restricted within the central area, a safe environment for walking and cycling would be created, giving access to all developments and connecting the town centre to the residential areas and wider catchment beyond.

5.20 The main east-west pedestrian axis would be significantly improved with the provision of the new pedestrian bridge over the railway. The station square would be accessed via a series of zigzag ramps and combined steps creating an attractive but functional amphitheatre space.

5.21 By rationalising car parking in the town it should be

possible to create more spaces on fewer sites, freeing up significant land for development. The masterplan identifies the possibility of two new car parks, one multi-storey alongside the railway to cater for rail passengers, and the other linked to the proposed large retail unit and mixed-use development close by available for Tesco and town centre shoppers, but not commuters.

5.22 A transport interchange in the station square would provide a hub for public transport. Improvements to public transport might encourage people without access to a car from the rural hinterland to come into Flitwick more often. Such improvements should include better bus shelters/waiting areas and real time bus information. The growth of the town and hinterland may also mean that it becomes possible to operate more viable bus services. It is proposed that a shuttle bus arrangement would operate between the transport interchange and the approved new Centre Parcs development at Warren Wood (due to open in 2010).

The aim is to ease access for public transport as well as ensuring that pedestrian zones are well maintained and not abused by drivers to ensure maximum pedestrian safety.

- 5.23 Lifts to the station platforms would improve access for all to the station and the station platforms.

Strategic Aim Six – A Place with a Community Focus

- 5.24 The planning framework and Masterplan puts forward the idea of creating a new community quarter, potentially redeveloping the existing southern area with a new village hall, improved and extended library, and civic square. The civic square would have dual function as car park associated with the hall and library, and market place.
- 5.25 A Town Council presence would potentially be relocated

in the town centre with a new Town Council office being located within the development.

- 5.26 As the town grows it is hoped that the north-south axis route linking the station square and civic square would be opened up.
- 5.27 Emerging proposals to develop a new Leisure Facility on the Millennium Park immediately to the south of the Library and Village Hall, provides a further opportunity to building on the community focus in the town Centre. This development does not form part of this Planning Framework and Masterplan.

6.0 MASTERPLAN — PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN FORM

- 6.1 The Masterplan shows the development sites, urban layout and land uses that the Council wishes to see for the town centre core area. The urban layout is based on an exploitation of the different land heights, and or modification of the urban form of the area. This is aimed at primarily linking the new developments with the routes and spaces in the surrounding neighbourhoods, encouraging pedestrian movement, cycling and the use of public transport in the wider context.
- 6.2 The land use strategy is based on the principle of locating the major attractors and generators of movement, such as large retail anchor store, new community facilities and a multi storey car park around the edges of a new core, to ensure even distribution of activity through the town centre.

- 6.3 In order to improve linkages the provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge is sought between the town centre and High Street, together with improvement for mobility impaired access to the station facilities. Access to the station would also be improved by the creation of a new transport interchange with bus, taxi and private car pick up/set down. Residential flats and maisonettes above retail uses would create an appropriate mix of land uses in town centre which would be key to its vitality. Maximizing the residential volume within the town centre is seen as an essential to achieving a 'critical mass' of development that would generate sufficient level of activity on the one hand and contribute to financial viability on the other.
- 6.4 Building on the tradition of our best urban areas, this regeneration strategy would encourage a variety of uses throughout the area. The well functioning mix of active-rich uses would be brought about by market forces and a presence of high quality, higher density

and flexible use developments, with good accessibility, a mix of building types and retain a socially diverse population, to ensure activity and presence in the area throughout the day and week.

6.5 Ultimately, the mix and balance of land uses in the Masterplan strategy would be determined by the requirement for a sustainable, mixed-use development that:

- Makes optimum use of the site;
- Is directed to local needs;
- Is well integrated with surrounding areas;
- Can provide an appropriate balance of different uses;
- Is commercially viable;
- Reflects a very high standard of urban, building and sustainable environmental design that enhances the area;
- Addresses the requirements for maintaining good quality of life standards in high density mixed use

areas, particularly the amenity of residents and high quality public realm, with a planned response to community safety;

- Provides community and other public services and facilities

Figure 6 – The Masterplan

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The Masterplan—Key

1. New lower level Station Square providing public realm focus and transport interchange
2. Step and ramp arrangement forms part of the urban landscape and provides access for all from Steppingley Road into Station Square
3. Mixed use building providing retail frontage to both Station Square and Steppingley Road with residential above
4. Mixed use building providing retail frontage to pedestrian route between station car park and station with residential above
5. Mixed use building framing view into station square and termination to new pedestrian/cycle bridge
6. New pedestrian/cycle bridge to link new town centre to high street with enhanced access to station platform via lifts and stairs
7. Multi storey station car park
8. Franklin House and Cowlgrove Parade to remain
9. Mixed use extension to Cowlgrove Parade with retail to ground and residential above
10. No 10 Steppingley Road removed to provide access to new Residential Quarter
11. Podium deck above residential car park provides some on street parking and amenity. Edge of multi storey station car park hidden
12. Lower level central space provides some on street parking and main amenity for Residential Quarter
13. Main residential blocks enclose amenity spaces and provide undercroft parking at ground level
14. Blocks backing onto adjacent residential areas are appropriately scaled
15. Tesco store at 1st floor with additional residential, retail, community along ground and 1st floor frontages to Steppingley and Coniston Road. Car park is to continue under store at ground floor
16. Tesco store service yard at 1st floor to rear of store with appropriate visual and acoustic screening adjacent areas
17. Mixed use buildings providing enclosure to street scene. Retail to ground and residential above
18. Bumble Bee public house to be retained
19. Russell Centre to be retained
20. Library to be refurbished and extended
21. New village hall to provide focus to new civic square
22. Civic square to support village hall parking and accommodate weekly market
23. Tesco petrol filling station
24. The Swan public house to be retained
25. Millennium Park– Not in the Masterplan, but adjacent and referred to in text.

Principles of Built Form

- 6.6 In the town centre area development should be organised in perimeter blocks (building fronts facing streets, with servicing and amenity space to the rear). This is needed to provide a clear definition between public and private spaces, with the opportunity to provide intermediate levels of privacy where appropriate (such as small front gardens to houses).
- 6.7 Figure 7 below shows the approximate quantum of floorspace that is illustrated on the Masterplan.

- 6.8 There would be active uses on the ground floor where possible to ensure maximum interaction between the buildings and the spaces they front onto, thus maximising natural surveillance, increasing the sense of security and deterring anti-social behaviour.
- 6.9 This approach, in particular, should extend to provide active building frontages along Steppingley Road and the station and multi-storey car park approach, not only to provide activity, but also to provide a visual presence for the town centre to passing traffic. Blank frontages to the railway should be avoided if possible.

Figure 7–Indicative Floorspace Schedule (Provisional)

	Retail Floorspace (Gross Internal sqm)	Tesco Retail Floorspace (Nett sqm)	Residential Floorspace (Gross Internal sqm)	Residential Floorspace (Nett sqm)	Residential Units (numbers)	Refurbished & Extended Library (sqm)	New Village Hall (sqm)	Car Parking Provision
STATION QUARTER	2,150		5,984	4,143	64			16 & 680 (max) MULTI-STOREY
RESI QUARTER			20,486	16,304	242			242
RETAIL QUARTER	1,307	6,503	1,626	1,126	17			522
CIVIC QUARTER						857	682	61
TOTALS	3,457	6,503	28,096	21,573	323	857	682	1,521

6.10 The urban layout of the area around the retained station, pub, Cowlgrove Parade and Russell Centre, is dictated by the desire to reinforce the human scale and increase the richness of the urban environment. This is achieved by establishing Steppingley Road as a street lined with retail units and by creating a new pedestrian route east-west over the railway, thus introducing a new and improved pedestrian route in the town centre whilst respecting the historic station building (if it is to be retained). Thus the new realignment of Steppingley Road and the creation of the enlarged development site for the anchor store/mixed use development, and creation of the station square is critical to achieving this pedestrian friendly, human scale richness in the town centre. It is also an important means of reducing the impact of the larger scale buildings and helping them fit in to the townscape.















6.11 Creating exciting and vibrant urban character and a sustainable mixed-use development is closely linked

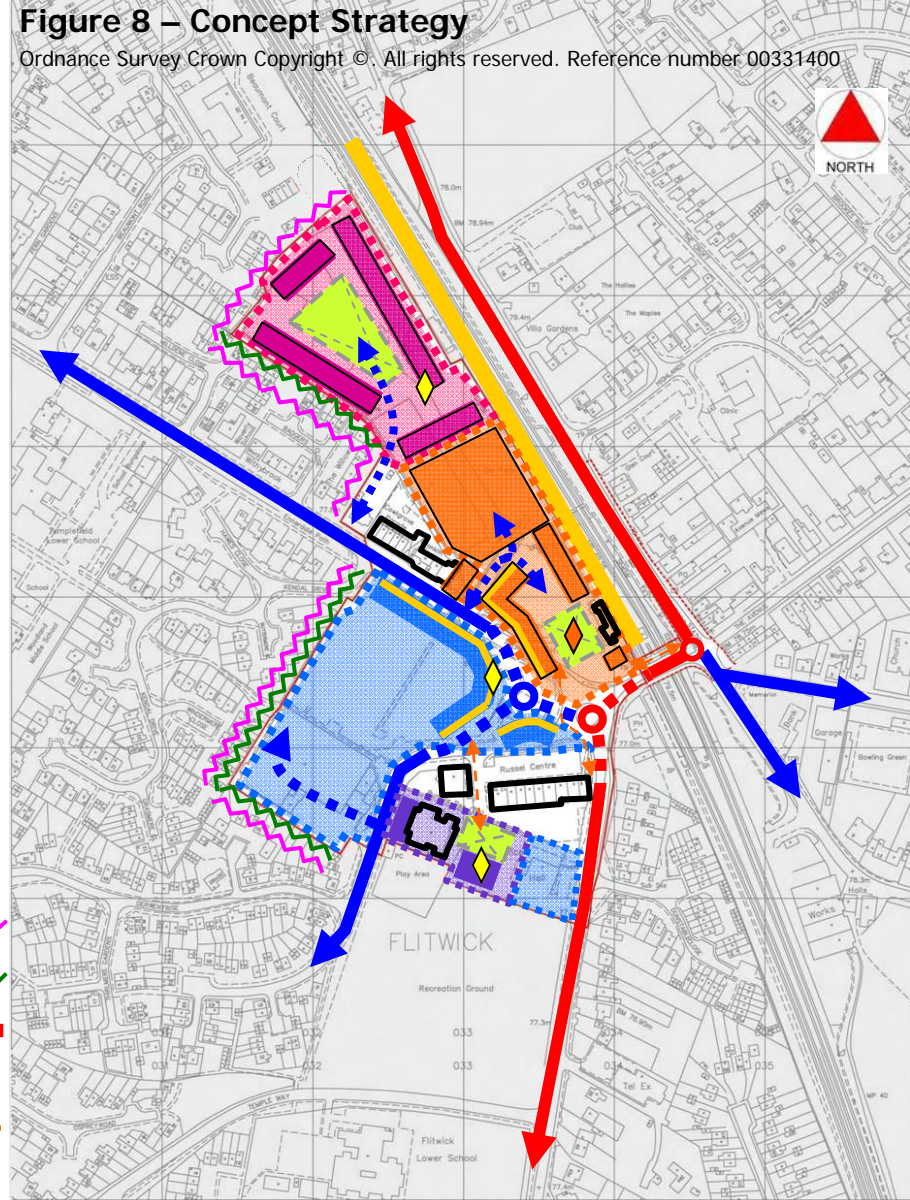
with the issue of high density, which not only increases potential for mixed-use, but leads to more efficient use of land and services. Higher density often brings with it taller buildings (though not always the case). Apart from providing more accommodation, taller buildings can be used to create appropriate enclosure of streets and spaces and ensure more efficient natural surveillance of public spaces from upper floors of buildings. It is important that taller buildings are located to maximize changes in ground height and be balanced with the requirement to respond to the wider areas largely domestic setting. The location and arrangement, both vertically and horizontally, of development is important, especially at higher densities and with a more intensive mix of uses. The development should recognise, and respond creatively to, the varying levels across the site and key views and gateways especially in the creation of streets, squares and public places.

- 6.12 The proposed building heights within the development area would vary from 2 storeys for the new community uses, to a maximum of 6 storeys for the new northern residential quarter. Storey heights framing the junction of Steppingley Road would be a maximum of 4 storeys stepping down to 3 storeys where development adjoins existing buildings. Building heights and roofscape would be critical facing the railway where wider views are glimpsed when traveling along High Street.
- 6.13 The various quarters in the town centre should be a series of distinct, but connected, places, each with their own character. Taken together the quarters would form a series of designed spaces linking together to provide a coherent and legible hierarchy of spaces and routes, i.e. there should be a logical network of major and minor spaces such as squares, principal and side streets, allowing for high levels of permeability. At the extremity of the network, courtyards may be appropriate. Each of these areas should have an appropriate scale, built form and level of enclosure to complement its predominant use or mix of uses.
- 6.14 The public realm should have active frontages, i.e. all entrances and public windows should front the public or semi-public realm. Continuity of Street Frontages should be maintained in the design of the built form, avoiding inappropriate set backs, disruptions of building alignment or gaps. Blank frontages at eye level must be avoided, except for short stretches of boundary walls in residential areas. The space between buildings should be as carefully designed as the internal arrangement of buildings, regarding consideration of the function of spaces. 'Space left over after Planning' should be avoided.
- 6.15 The importance of community safety should be reinforced through the provision of high levels of natural surveillance in the location and design of windows and the avoidance of blank gable walls. There

should be clear and unambiguous distinctions between public and private space. This may be achieved through minor changes of level or boundaries, both solid and transparent.

6.16 Key building groups and corners should be identified and their design quality must reflect their importance. It would be the form and relationship of the group as a

- RESIDENTIAL QUARTER 
- RETAIL QUARTER 
- CIVIC QUARTER 
- STATION QUARTER 
- BUILDINGS TO BE RETAINED 
- SIGNIFICANT FRONTAGE 
- OPEN SPACE/ SQUARE 
- LANDMARK FEATURE 
- SENSITIVE EDGE 
- POTENTIAL VEGETATION SCREEN 
- PRIMARY ROUTE ALTERATIONS 
- SECONDARY ROUTE ALTERATIONS 
- NEW PEDESTRIAN LINK 
- TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE 



whole which would make them stand out as set pieces. The building types and forms that make up the grouping should be designed to have a coherent character that relates to the area in which they are located. Particular attention must be paid to detailing and materials, especially in locations where views along streets should be terminated or landmark buildings should emphasise major spaces.

6.17 The orientation of buildings and spaces should influence layout in order that public areas should be as sunny and sheltered as possible at times when they are most likely to be used. Individual dwellings should be arranged so that some habitable rooms receive sunlight. These considerations would require some reconciliation with other considerations such as noise sources and overlooking. All building entrances and public spaces should incorporate similar design principles, especially where changes of level exist.

6.18 Subject to Government Legislation, the commitment for all new homes to be carbon neutral in 2016 should be incorporated into the design of residential buildings, and wherever possible, other buildings. Thus roofs should incorporate photovoltaic panels, solar panels and the possibility of other forms of carbon neutral energy generation should be explored. Building materials for walls, roofs and windows should be selected for their long life, energy ratings, and sustainable sourcing.

6.19 Streets and vehicular access and servicing - Within the town centre area, streets should be designed as much for pedestrian accessibility, ease of crossing and speed reduction, as the requirements of vehicles. Road alignments and bend radii should be designed to ensure maximum design speeds of 20 mph. Careful consideration should be given to appropriate surface materials and kerb details to achieve these aims. Vehicle tracking and shared surfaces in residential and service areas should be the main design determinants,

rather than conventional parallel kerbs and 'hammerhead' turning areas.

Retail Quarter

6.20 Proposals in this quarter seek to create a new landmark development in the heart of Flitwick. The uses would comprise of a major new anchor retail store, with additional shops on the ground floor. On the upper levels of the building would be offices, leisure uses or residential flats. This building would front on to Steppingley Road and wrap around the corner into Coniston Road.

6.21 The built form would be a series of linked contemporary buildings, with vertical emphasis, a hierarchy of floor heights and a positive frontage. Buildings would be back edge of footpath with generous footways provided and avenue planting. Entrances and windows would provide activity and overlooking. The storey heights would primarily be 3.5 storeys rising to 4 storeys to

provide emphasis on the corner and central atrium but ensuring that the building heights are 'stepped-down' adjacent to the existing residential dwellings. The building would provide not only intense mixed-use activity in the heart of the town centre but would also become Flitwick's defining landmark.

6.22 Off Coniston Road, using the backland, car parks and service areas would be provided of the buildings fronting Steppingley Road. The Tesco store and town centre parking would be partly covered by the new store at Steppingley Road level. Such intensification of this particular retail use is necessary in order to create a critical mass of development. Such a building would also need to provide active frontage to Coniston Road, with the multi storey car park and service areas being screened from public view. The building form facing Kendal Drive and Buttermere Close would need careful consideration to provide visual interest and minimise loss of neighbour amenity arising from the development.

Figure 9 – Plan of Retail Quarter West of Steppindlev Rd

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KEY

- MIXED USE
- RETAIL
- PUBLIC REALM
- LEISURE/ COMMUNITY
- STATION
- GREEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPING
- TREES
- VEHICULAR ROUTES
- PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
- BUS ROUTES



6.23 The roofscape of the building would have a variety of roof slopes and would be orientated to give an interesting silhouette. The roof form would step down to relate to existing neighbouring residential development.

6.24 The open air car park would have careful attention to surface detail, with trees and shrub planting interspersed to break the mass of car parking spaces. Avenue planting would be provided to Coniston Road to give a sense of enclosure to the streetscene. Landscaping buffers would be provided to screen the development from adjacent residential properties.

6.25 New mixed-use developments would also be focused in two further places along Steppingley Road:

6.26 Firstly using the space created by the re-alignment of the highway, there exists an opportunity to provide a new mixed-use development in front of the Russell Centre car park. This would help to screen the Russell

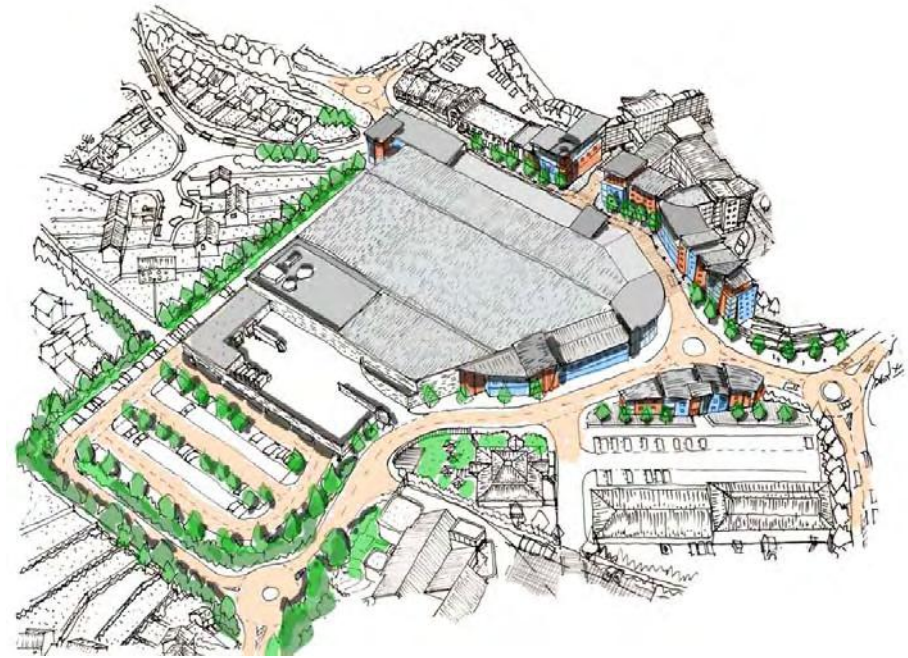
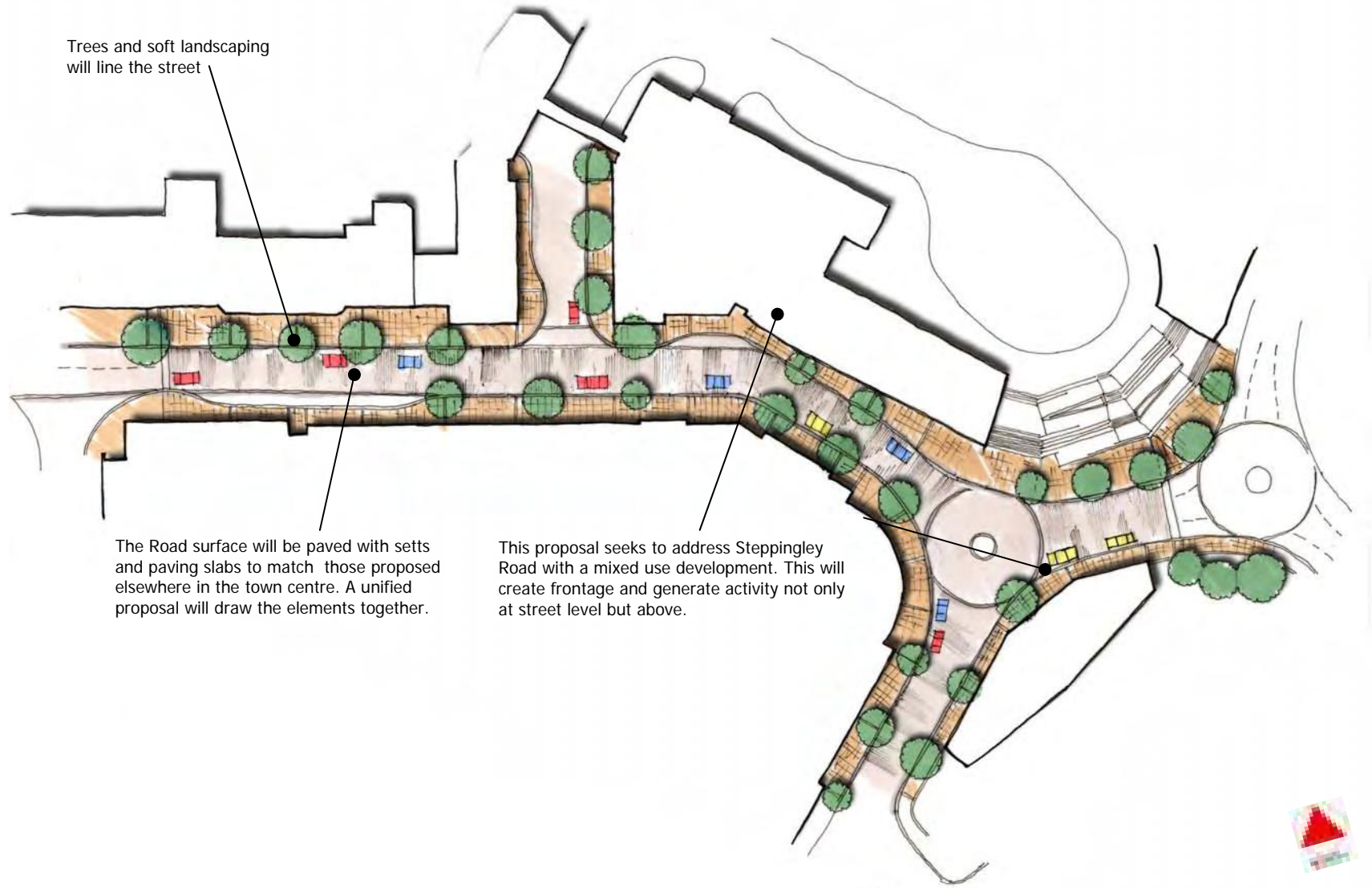


Figure 10 – Axonometric of Retail Quarter

Centre car park and provide visual termination looking along Steppingley Road. This would be up to 3.5 storeys, with active frontages and entrances and windows providing good surveillance.

6.27 The final area of opportunity in this quarter would be the creation of a high density mixed use development in

Figure 11 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Retail Quarter



front of the station and adjacent to Franklin House.

The restructuring of this area would allow the opportunity to provide these new landmark developments, one of which would be dual aspect on to Steppingley Road and the new station square/station quarter, and the other would be a pivotal corner fronting the new access road to station square and the station multi-storey car park. These new mixed-use developments would take advantage of the location and environment and would offer a more intimate shopping experience to compliment the enlarged retail store. The uses would provide shops on the ground floor with residential or offices on the upper levels.

Station Quarter

6.28 The railway station gives many visitors their first impression of Flitwick and must be treated as one of the town's most important gateways.

Figure 12 – View of Steppingley Rd Retail Quarter










6.29 A new square and transport interchange would be laid out on the western side of the station. This would be framed by new development containing shops and offices. At the northern entrance into the square the built form would be pinched down or have a building carrying over the carriageway in order to define the space. There would be landmark buildings substantial enough to terminate the views of the site from Coniston Road and Dunstable Road. From the station there

Figure 13 – Plan of Station Quarter

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KEY

-  MIXED USE
-  CAR PARK
-  PUBLIC REALM
-  STATION
-  VEHICULAR ROUTES
-  PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  BUS ROUTES

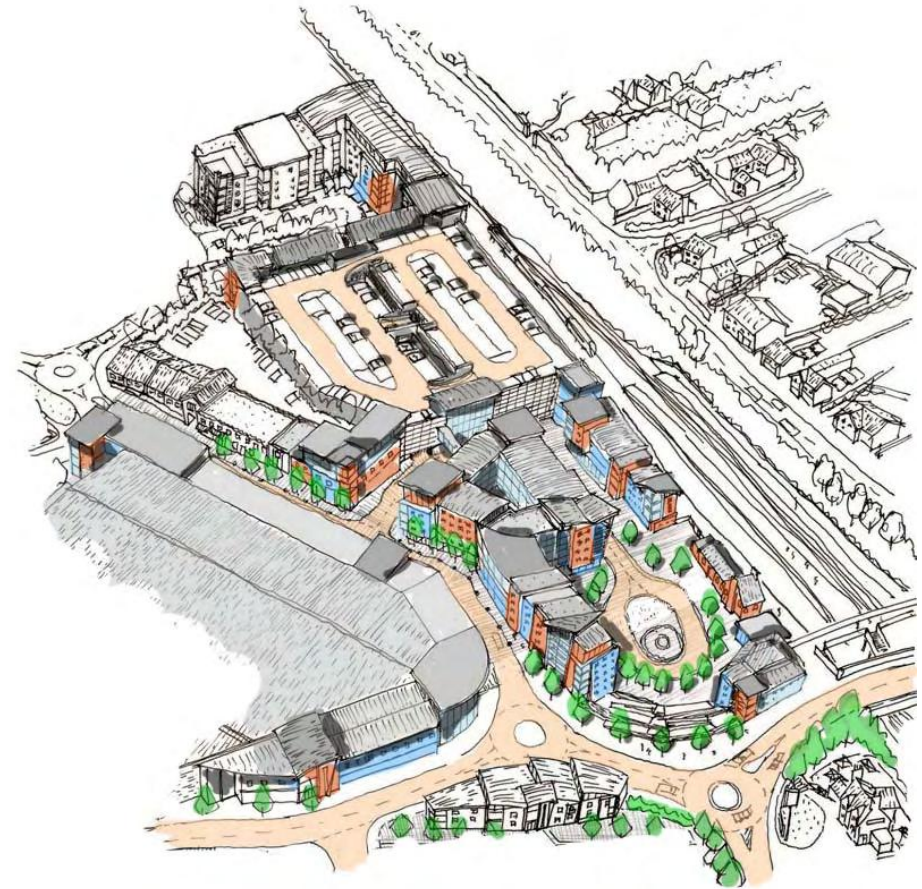


needs to be a visual link to Steppingley Road.

6.30 As the station is an historic building, the surrounding development should take account of its simple classical proportions but should be carried out in a contemporary style of architecture. The new square would be designed with pedestrians in mind but would allow access to the station for all other modes of transport. In particular the square would be designed with room for a bus and taxis to drop off and collect passengers as well as private cars. A shuttle bus service would also be provided to service passengers travelling to the recently approved Centre Parcs development. Convenient cycle stands would also be provided.

6.31 The square and interchange would have a shared surface but a clear distinction, marked by different surface treatment, bollards and well-placed trees, would be drawn between pedestrian and vehicular space. Vehicles moving through the square to service the

Figure 14 – Axonometric of Station Quarter



proposed shop and office developments would be kept at low speed within the shared hard surfacing. Servicing for the developments would be timed outside of peak hours and any service yards concealed from view.

6.32 There is a need for better pedestrian access to the town centre from this area. In between the two signature buildings framing the views of the square, the change of level would be taken up by a zigzag ramp for disabled access within an arc of steps. At the same time a shared surface crossing should be designed at the crossing point to the retail anchor store in order to calm traffic.

6.33 To the north of the square and station building lies an area of undeveloped land currently used as a surface car park. This land would be used more intensively by increasing building densities, consolidating the surface car park into a new bigger multi storey car park and

Figure 15 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Station Quarter

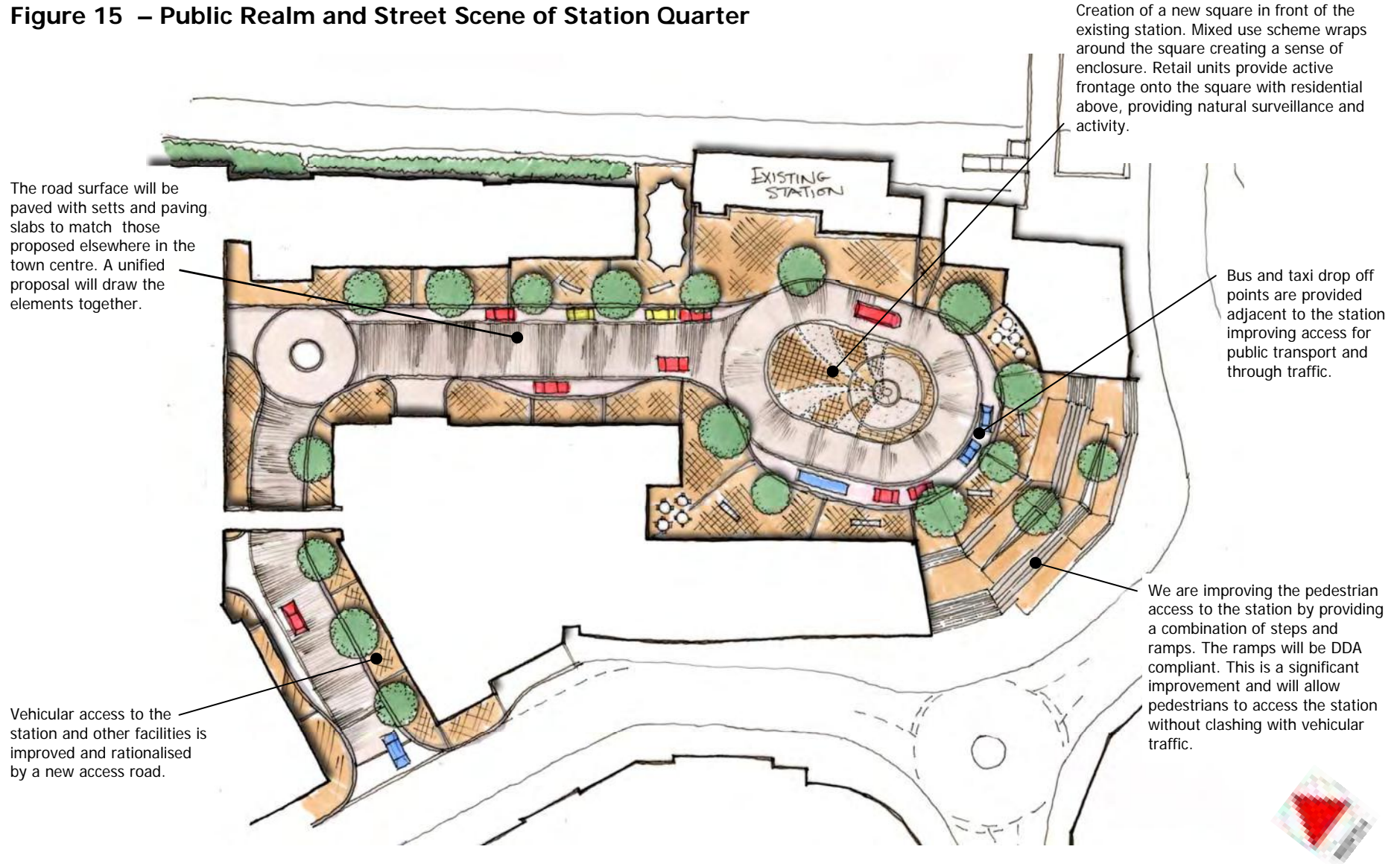


Figure 16 – View of Station Quarter



Residential Quarter

6.33 This area of the town centre presents the best opportunity to create a new residential quarter for the town centre. This fundamental shift in the use of this area would be the promotion of a significant number of well designed apartments and townhouses to replace the existing rundown commercial sheds and underdeveloped sites. This change of emphasis would have a number of objectives:

6.34 Firstly, the introduction of housing and new overlooked streets would open up a side of the town which is currently under-utilised.

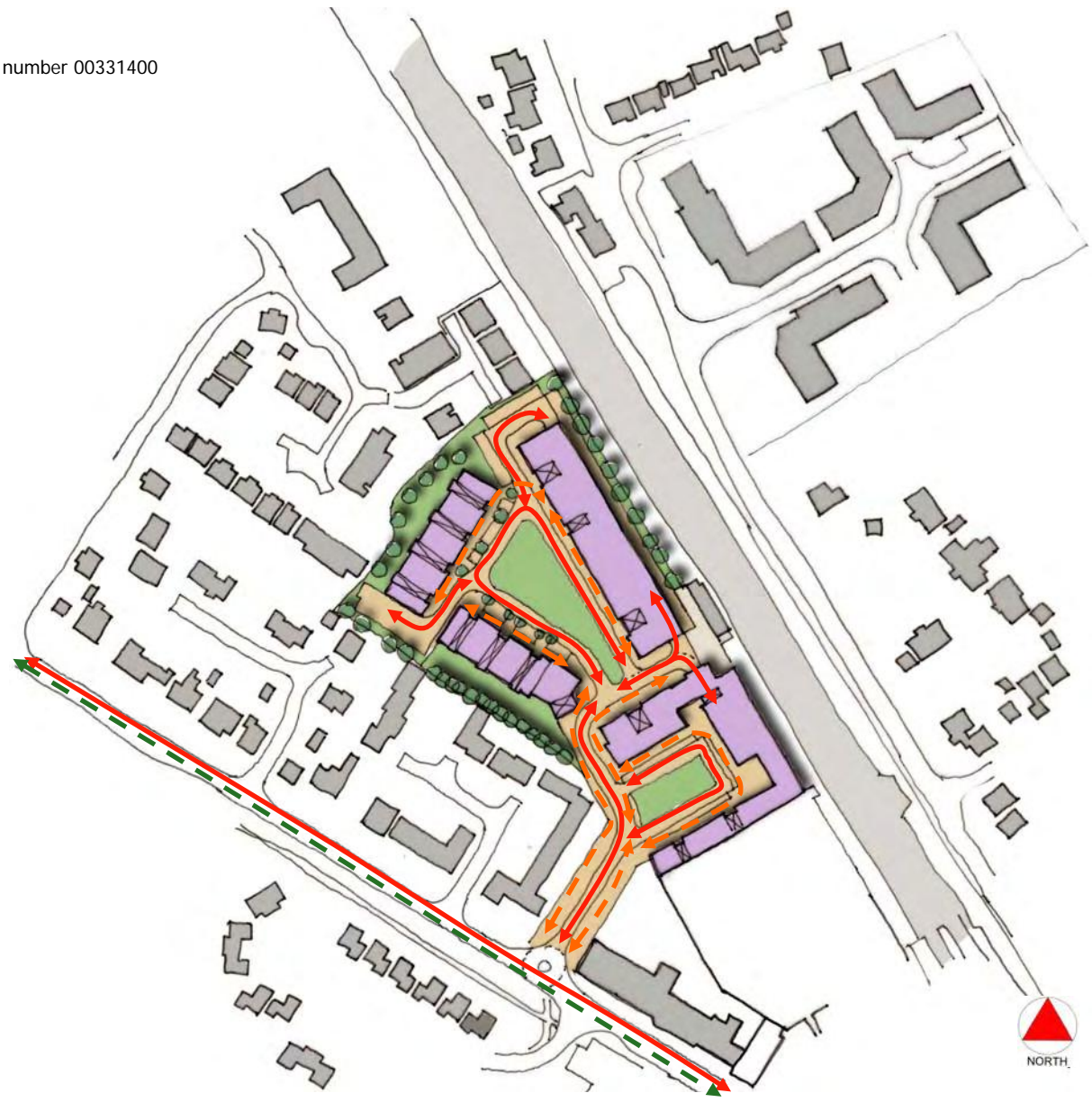
6.35 Secondly, new housing would mean more people using the shops and services of the town centre, helping to bolster customer numbers.

6.36 Thirdly, this new high-density development would create a dramatic backdrop to the railway line and skyline of the town centre. This should be seen as a major opportunity to raise expectations and impressions of the town.







6.37 New development would be accessed from a new link to Steppingley Road. The layout would be based around an open square and communal green space employing perimeter block forms of development to enclose the spaces. This would create a pleasant setting for new residents as well as acting as a visual

Figure 17 – Plan of Residential Quarter

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KEY

-  RESIDENTIAL
-  GREEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPING
-  TREES
-  VEHICULAR ROUTES
-  PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  BUS ROUTES

and noise buffer with the railway.

- 6.38 Whilst initial studies have indicated that the problem of noise generated from the main line railway can be addressed and a solution engineered within the design, the challenge of managing this issue would be incorporated in the design.
- 6.39 The terraces on the northwest and southwest boundaries should have private amenity space on their southern and westerly sides. All fronts should face the central public green space.
- 6.40 Blocks adjacent to the railway would have a greater number of storeys than those on the southern and western side which should be no more than 4 storeys (maximum form 6 storeys). The form and design of the blocks should incorporate the principles of renewable energy generation and the moderation of solar loss and gain through elevational design and roof profile in an

Figure 18 – Axonometric of Residential Quarter



Figure 19 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Residential Quarter

The built form will focus on an attractive central garden space which unifies the development and softens it. The open space will allow residents to breakout and occupy. Appropriate planting choices will be made.

Parking is off-street in bays or hidden in undercroft spaces. This means that the public realm has natural surveillance yet is not completely dominated by the car.



A courtyard style podium deck is created with the U shaped block. Below sits an undercroft car park. Low level planting at the periphery and centre softens the space. The space is not dominated by parking.

The Road surface will be paved with setts and paving slabs to match those proposed elsewhere in the town centre. A unified proposal will draw the elements together.

Figure 20 – Artists View of Residential Quarter



Community & Civic Quarter

6.41 Proposals for this area are focused around creating a new community quarter, through improving and enhancing the existing library and providing a new village hall and associated car parking, including provision for the local market.

6.42 The location for this quarter presents a number of urban design challenges. Its relative isolation from the general flow of pedestrians would be reinforced by the fact that the facilities surrounding this space are likely to be closed during the late evening and night time. The rear service yard of the Russell Centre and to some extent the rear of the proposed petrol station would combine to reinforce a sense of isolation.




6.43 It is therefore essential that in creating a lively and safe civic place that these challenges be addressed in building footprints, heights and active frontages. The use of the market square for the weekly market would undoubtedly enliven it for a short period. There are requirements to park market trader's vehicles nearby which need to be addressed in a sympathetic manner.

6.44 It is also essential that the approach routes from the north and the west are made to be pedestrian priority and therefore attractive, safe and legible. Buildings

Figure 21 – Plan of Civic Quarter

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KEY

-  RETAIL
-  CIVIC
-  PUBLIC REALM
-  GREEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPING
-  TREES
-  VEHICULAR ROUTES
-  PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  BUS ROUTES



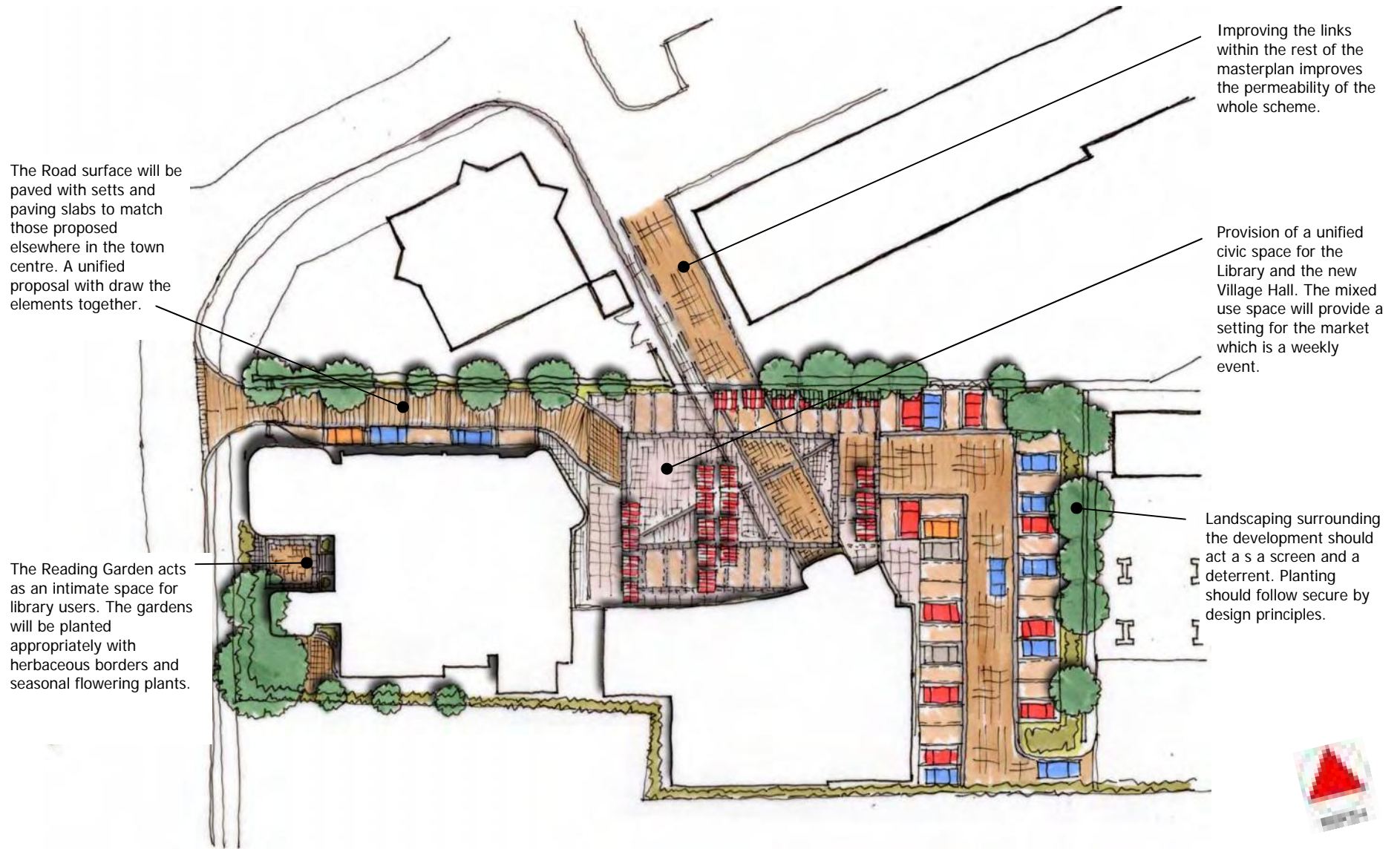
fronting these approaches must have a high proportion of active frontages and passive surveillance.

- 6.45 If the Russell Centre is to be included at a later stage, this would present new opportunities to create a more comprehensive approach to the design of this area and provide improved linkages to the rest of the town centre.
- 6.46 As the town grows it is hoped that the north-south axis route linking the town square and civic square would be developed.
- 6.47 The emerging proposals to locate a new Leisure Centre on the Millenium Park, immedi ately to the south of the Community and Civic Quarter presents an oppor tunity to consider how the uses can be successfully integrated, particularly in relation to the siting and orientation of the buildings and pedestrian linkages between them

Figure 22 – Axonometric of Civic Quarter



Figure 23 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Civic Quarter



7.0 Implementation

Ownership and land assembly – opportunities for partnership

7.1 Given that the area is currently in a number of ownerships, the Council considers that a partnership approach to the development is essential. The different land owners would need to act in a co-ordinated way in relation to the implementation of key elements of the Masterplan. It is anticipated that three separate but compatible planning applications for the development following approval of the Framework & Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Format of Planning Application

7.2 One application would be a full application for the land to the south of Steppingley Road, which would include the proposed supermarket, the new village hall/library, the diversion of Steppingley Road and Coniston Road

and the relocation of the petrol filling station. This would be promoted by Tesco Stores Ltd. Another would also be a full application for the land to the north of Steppingley Road, which would include the Station square, the transport interchange, the multi-storey station car park and the residential development, made by the consortium of landowners at this part of the site. The final is a full application for the bridge over the railway, to be made by Network Rail.

7.3 This is providing that all applications are in full accordance with the overall Masterplan and Development Framework, would not prejudice the implementation of any other element of the proposed Masterplan and have regard to the continuity of uses and access (described below).

7.4 In order to link the development of the east side of Steppingley Road with the west, the Council would be seeking to secure funding for the new bridge link by

way of legal agreement from the developers of the south side.

Planning Application Requirements

7.5 The Council would expect applications to be supported by the following documents:

- An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- A Transportation Assessment
- A Design & Access Statement
- A Car Parking & Accessibility Strategy
- A Phasing Plan
- A Master Plan
- A Planning Statement
- A Travel Plan
- A Sustainability Appraisal
- A Statement of Community Involvement
- A Landscape Statement
- A draft Section 106 agreement (Heads of Terms)

based upon the requirements of this Planning Framework

- A detailed checklist demonstrating how all the principles and requirements set out in this Planning Framework have been addressed

7.6 The EIA and the Transport Assessment should be comprehensive documents that cover the whole development (all three applications).

7.7 This Planning Framework and Masterplan seeks the regeneration of an established town centre. Therefore, in accordance with PPS6, the Council do not require applications for retail development to be supported by evidence of quantitative and qualitative need, impact, scale and the sequential approach.

Conditions/Legal obligations

7.8 Conditions would be attached to the planning permission or alternatively Legal agreements would be secured by the Council to ensure that the principles of this Planning Framework and Masterplan are provided at the required level and time. The following items are likely to be secured by such arrangements, whilst recognising that the development already includes substantial contributions to infrastructure and community facilities:

- Provision of affordable housing
- Off-site highways works, including High Street public realm enhancements
- Pedestrian/cycle links and improvements including a pedestrian bridge crossing over the railway line linking the development with the existing High Street
- Environmental enhancement of the public realm of

the Steppingley Road & Coniston Road

- Public transport improvements
- Travel Plan
- Contributions towards improvements to existing educational facilities in respect of residential development
- Contributions towards improvements to existing health care facilities in respect of residential development
- Provision of off-site recreation/sporting facilities in respect of residential development
- Provision of public art integrated into the development
- Provision and maintenance of CCTV
- Provision of accommodation for youth facilities
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan

Funding & Viability

7.9 The redevelopment of the town centre would be achieved through significant private sector investment. The challenge is to ensure that alongside new retailing and housing, major new infrastructure and community facilities are developed as an integral part of the new town centre. These include:

- A new multi-storey station car park
- A new transport interchange
- A new foot/cycle bridge linking the High Street, Steppingley Road and providing mobility impaired access (by lift) to the station platforms
- A new village hall
- Improvements and extensions to the library
- Space for a youth facility in the town centre

7.10 Thus creating a viable development to deliver all of the above community benefits has been very challenging.

Network Rail is able to contribute in part to the funding for the provision of the Multi Storey Car Park for Station commuters, for additional car park spaces. It is currently seeking agreement for this with First Capital Connect the Train Operating Company, who will operate the car park. It is unlikely that NR can fund the transport interchange or the DDA Step Free access at the station. NR will facilitate the development through a land swap with Cowlgrove Limited.

7.11 A bid has been made to the Government (by Renaissance Bedford) for a funding contribution for the project under the Programme of Development for the Growth Areas. If successful this should help to deal with any outstanding issues regarding the overall viability of the project.

Phasing –continuity of uses and access

7.12 The development of the site would need to be carefully

phased and controlled to ensure the delivery of key elements (works or facilities) at the appropriate time.

- 7.13 A number of the site's existing occupiers may wish to take space in the new development. The Council and the consortium of developers would work together to achieve this aim where appropriate.
- 7.14 Where possible the redevelopment should aim to be phased in such a way as to minimise disruption to the trading patterns of existing occupiers to be accommodated in the new development, including market traders and also to minimise disruption to travel in and through the town.
- 7.15 As the proposed highway improvements would involve the removal of the existing roundabout junction on Steppingley Road and would be replaced by the provision of two mini-roundabout junctions, these works would involve a small re-alignment of Steppingley

Road and Coniston Road.

As a consequence, a Stopping Up Order would be required to close the existing section of Steppingley Road that would become redundant once the diversion is in place.

Management Issues

- 7.16 A public realm management plan will need to be prepared to ensure that all key public spaces, roads and routes are properly managed and maintained.

Further development – additional land

- 7.17 Additional areas have been identified that may, in the future, require further consideration. In particular the Russell Centre (referred to elsewhere in this Framework) and the site known locally as Billingtons on the east side of the railway. Whilst these sites are not currently covered by this Planning Framework and Masterplan, the Council would support the redevelopment of the Russell Centre as a future phase

of the regeneration of Flitwick Town Centre. Similarly, the Council would welcome discussions with the owners of the site on Station Road adjacent to the railway where there may be opportunities for development which could contribute to the role and function of the Town Centre. Furthermore the Council would support redevelopment of existing buildings of adjoining sites that contribute to the regeneration process, where appropriate, such as the High Street area. Refurbishment/rebuilding of adjacent buildings to upgrade their appearance and overall quality are also encouraged.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE WRITE TO

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