

FLITWICK TOWN CENTRE

Planning Framework and Indicative Masterplan

June 2008



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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 co-ordinated 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.
- 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 help to deliver the wider community and infrastructure benefits and improvements to Flitwick town centre, which would include substantial improvements 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 help 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 new and enhanced community facilities, including the library, village hall, and accommodation for other new community uses (eg. young persons community centre, police)

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
- 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, including the area east of the railway.
- 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 footbridge to facilitate better movement between both sides of the railway, linked to improved road crossings on the east side (High Street), 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, safe road crossing points for pedestrians 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, ensuring the car parking areas do not become the visual 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.
- Ensure that the highway network and main junctions are designed to cater for the additional forecast traffic arising from the development

Railway

- Provide sufficient parking for the station taking account of growth forecasts, opportunities to provide car parking at other stations on the line, planning and highway capacity constraints, the need to promote sustainable travel and the overall viability of the development
- Provide improved access to the station for pedestrians (including mobility impaired access), via a new bridge with lift access to the platforms
- Create a new transport interchange adjacent to the station with provision for taxis, buses and private car pick up and set down
- Explore with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company the opportunity to provide a new main station building

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 and Weatherbreak – landowner and developer
- Network Rail/First Capital Connect – responsible for railway station and station car park
- Tesco – landowner and retail operator
- Folview – landowner

- 2.2 Together the partnership have developed these new proposals for Flitwick town centre, which were the subject of public consultation in the autumn of 2007.
- 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.

Public Consultation November/December 2007

- 2.8 This Planning Framework and Masterplan were subject to a six-week public consultation period running from 5th November to 14th December 2007. A questionnaire giving details of the proposals was prepared, and a staffed public exhibition was held at Flitwick Library on 8th, 10th, 16th, and 17th November. The exhibition was available to public view at other times during normal library opening hours until 7th December. National and local groups and organisations were also contacted about the proposals and invited to comment.
- 2.9 A total of 236 questionnaire responses were received from members of the public. These are summarised in the Flitwick Town Centre Development Public Consultation Report (January 2008). Whilst many people supported aspects of the proposals, recognising that the town should be enhanced and that the station in particular needs improvement, there was concern

about the scale and impact of the development, the impact of traffic, the proposed location of the petrol filling station, and the size and dominance of the new Tesco store and its impact on the viability of other new retail units.

2.10 Whilst 60 groups and organisations were invited to comment on the proposals, only 6 responses were received (Bedford Commuters Association, Beds CC Planning, Center Parcs, Cyclists Touring Club, Flitwick at the Crossroads Residents Action Group (FATCRAG), and Sport England).

2.11 In response to the consultation a number of further studies have been carried out to feed into the development proposals. These are:

- A transport and traffic assessment to fully understand the impacts on the local highway network, which has led to a refinement of the

highway proposals, focusing on capacity at the main junctions, and incorporating facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and servicing.

- An assessment of market opportunities for the smaller retail units.
- A review of alternative locations for the petrol filling station
- A review of the approach to the design, scale and massing of the new buildings, particularly adjacent to Steppingley Rd and Coniston Rd.
- An independent appraisal reviewing the overall viability of the development
- A review of the overall indicative masterplan taking account of the above

2.12 In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (February 2007), the next stage of public consultation will take place by the developers prior to the submission of planning applications.

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, Franklin House 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.

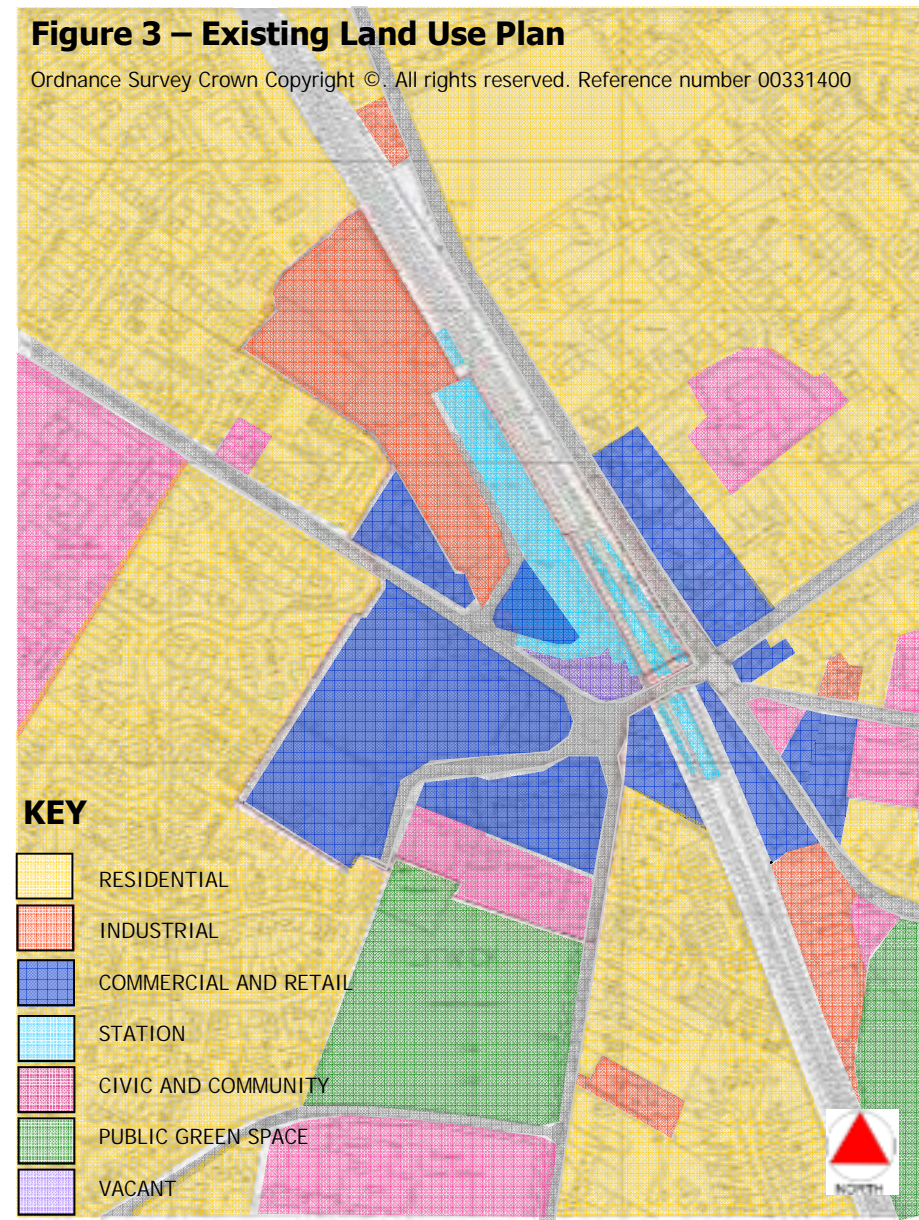
Retention of Buildings

3.6 Within the area covered by the Planning Framework and Masterplan there are a number of parcels of land in different ownerships and particular land uses and buildings 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 does not, however, preclude their incorporation at a later stage.

3.7 The train station building is considered to be of local historic importance, although it is not statutorily listed. As the building is not listed, a replacement building

Figure 3 – Existing Land Use Plan

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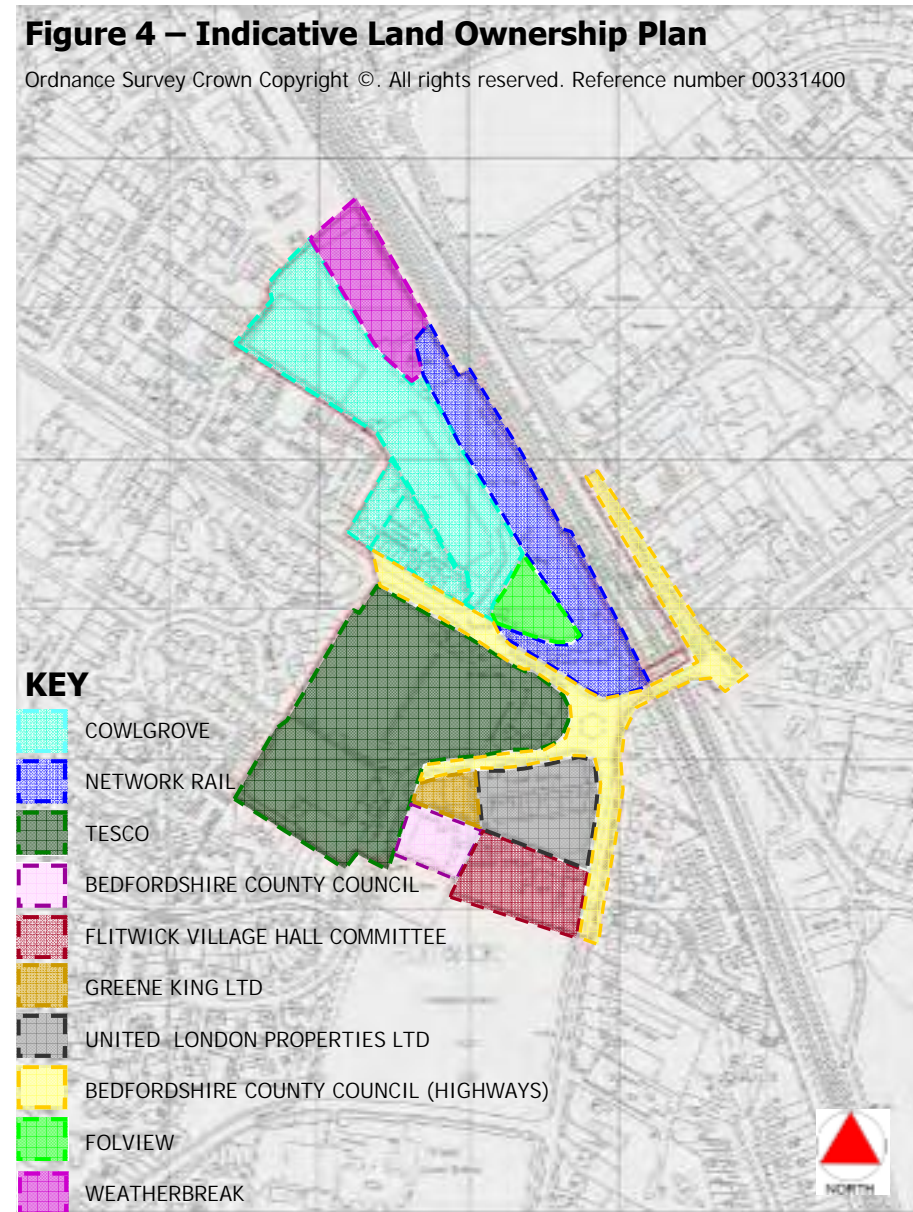
could be considered if Network Rail and the Train Operating Company felt there was an opportunity to further enhance and improve the operation of the station, or assist the delivery of the overall scheme.

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 Network Rail's and the Train Operating Company's (ToC's) standards and to provide an accessible station for all. This must encompass vehicular access and transport interchange
- The train station car park must be of sufficient size

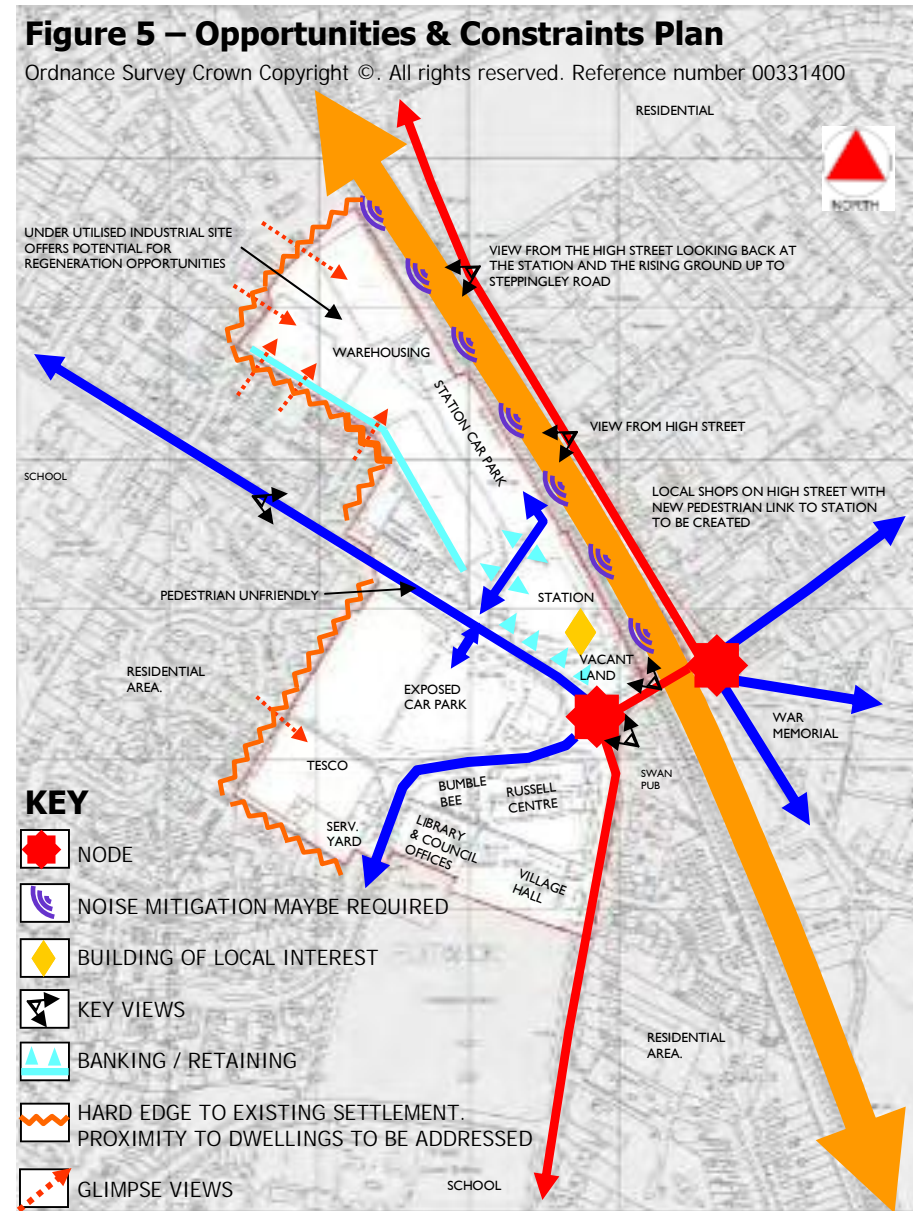
to accommodate current demand and possible future growth in the context of Network Rail's forecasts, other opportunities and proposals at other stations on the line, planning and highway capacity constraints, the need to promote sustainable travel and the overall viability of the development

- 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 is fundamental to its delivery

3.11 The above constrains 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 constrains the development, but also acts as an opportunity 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 at the planning application stage.

Other Relevant Consents & Proposals

- 3.16 Whilst not technically a constraint, the development would also need to give full consideration to a number of major proposals 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 1st December 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. 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. The County Council's Development Control Committee on 19 October 2007 resolved to grant outline permission to NIRAH subject to a Section 106 Agreement.

Center Parcs Limited, Site at Warren Wood, Millbrook

Planning permission was granted on appeal by the Secretary of State in September 2007 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. The anticipated opening date is 2010.

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

Mid-Beds District Council have 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 opportunities that would be realized through this development. These include:

- To provide a town centre with a new heart which focuses upon providing commercial and community facilities alongside residential

development and key infrastructure improvements.

- The lower lying land adjacent to the railway provides an opportunity for some higher density development
- 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 and cycle 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 a very 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 additional dedicated station car parking that would significantly help to reduce on-street commuter car parking within the town combined with additional on-street restrictions.
- The opportunity to significantly improve the station facilities, particularly access or the mobility impaired
- The creation of enhanced and improved community facilities, specifically the Library, village hall and accommodation 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 throughout the town centre, including areas to the east of the railway.
- Significant improvements to the retail offer through the provision of increased retail floorspace within the town with the addition of

smaller retail units and a more modern larger supermarket. This would improve the retail offer and help to lessen trade leakage outside of the area, thus having an additional sustainability benefit in reducing the need to travel.

- Enhancement of the High Street and other areas of the town centre east of the railway.
- The opportunity for further sites such as The Russell Centre, the Bumble Bee Public House and the Billingtons site on Station Road to the east of the railway to be brought forward as further stages of the regeneration of Flitwick Town Centre.
- The opportunity to provide a new foot/cycle bridge across the railway providing enhanced links between the east and west parts of the 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 the East of England Plan (RSS 14), which was approved by the Government in May 2008

and will form part of the Development Plan for the area in Spring 2008. Relevant policies are:

- SS 4 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 has consulted separately on its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD Preferred Options. 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
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning Obligations (2008)

- Council's Retail Study for the LDF (2007)
- Mid Beds Cycle Route Mapping Project Report (2001)

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 – CABI (2003)
- Design Reviewed Masterplans – CABI (2004)
- Creating Successful Masterplans: A Guide for Clients – CABI (2004)
- Design Reviewed Town Centre Retail – CABI (2004)

- The Use of Urban Design Codes: Building Sustainable Communities – CABE
- Beds County Council Developer Contributions for Education Facilities in Bedfordshire
- The Beds Community Safety Design Guide (May 2005)
- Local Transport Plan - BCC (2006/7-2010/11)
- Manual for Streets – DFT (2007)
- Managing Waste in New Developments SPD – BCC & LBC (2006)
- Cycle Parking Guidance – BCC (2006)

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 station square. Added visual interest in the streetscene can be created by the inclusion of smaller retail units fronting Steppingley Rd and Coniston Rd, together with the accommodation for a new youth facility of the town.

Car parking 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 with residential above would be provided on the opposite side of Steppingley Road and alongside the railway and the transport interchange 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. These new buildings would not only provide mixed-use activity in the heart of the town centre but would also become Flitwick's defining landmarks. The inclusion of a new library for Flitwick (relocated from Coniston Rd) within the development would further add to the mix of uses and variety of activity.
- 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 and 12 car trains at the station by 2012 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. 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 while traffic management would be necessary to prevent shoppers and commuter's 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 station square framed by new buildings, providing a new public space in the town centre.

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 part of the town and mobility impaired access to the station platforms.

Strategic Aim Four – A Quality Place

5.13 The Council places great importance upon achieving a high quality urban environment and believes that there

are opportunities here for a mix of design approaches including high quality contemporary design and high quality more traditional designs taking references from traditional Bedfordshire market towns. The traditional approach to design is sought for development on the main road frontages. Commercial buildings and mixed use buildings should be indistinguishable by scale, materials, and architectural treatment. A high quality contemporary approach could be considered in the relatively self contained residential quarter.

- 5.14 The junction of Steppingley Road/Coniston Road is currently framed by a petrol filling station, left over greenspace and shoppers car park. There is an opportunity to redesign the area with new focal buildings on Coniston Rd/Steppingley Rd and the formation of the new station square at the lower level. A centrepiece needs to be incorporated as a key public feature to act as a local landmark.

- 5.15 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

- 5.16 The town needs to be accessible to all users and should provide a stimulating and interesting environment.
- 5.17 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 stopping-up of a short section of the roads and may require some diversion to services.

- 5.18 With traffic speeds restricted within the central area to 20mph, 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.
- 5.19 The main east-west pedestrian axis would be significantly improved with the provision of the new pedestrian bridge over the railway.
- 5.20 By rationalising car parking in the town it should be possible to create more spaces on less land, 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 long stay rail passengers, and the other linked to the proposed large

retail unit and mixed-use development close by available for shorter stay town centre shoppers, but not commuters.

- 5.21 A transport interchange in the station square would provide a new 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 Center Parcs development at Warren Wood. 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.

5.22 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

5.23 As part of the development new community facilities would be provided. This would include:

- Either a new library as part of the new development on Steppingley Rd or improvements to the existing library on Coniston Rd
- Either a new village hall located adjacent to the existing library on Coniston Rd or improvements to the existing village hall on Dunstable Rd
- Accommodation for a new facility for young people in the town
- Accommodation of the Town Council and Police linked to the provision of a new or improved library

- A new petrol filling station located on either Dunstable Road (site of existing village hall) or Coniston Road (site of existing library).

6.0 MASTERPLAN — PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN FORM

6.1 The Masterplan contained within this Planning Framework is not finalised, but represents work in progress. It is indicative and will not be finalised until the next planning application stage. In particular further work has to be undertaken with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company to finalise the form of development in the Station Quarter adjacent to the railway. This will consider whether a new station building is to be incorporated into the scheme, review the design, layout and capacity of the transport interchange, review the relationship to the new foot/cycle bridge where movement between levels is critical, and consider the extent and form of any new development that backs onto the railway. There will also need to be further discussion with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company about the new station car park and how this relates to the adjoining new development. The Residential Quarter will be

subject to further reviews where the relationship to the railway is of critical importance, and where noise mitigation will impact on the layout.

6.2 The indicative 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 levels and gradients 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.

6.3 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 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 – Indicative Masterplan

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Alternative PFS layout with existing village hall retained.

Key

1. New lower level Station Square providing public realm focus and transport interchange
2. Step 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.
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.
26. Alternative position for PFS with Library relocated to Station Quarter
27. Existing Flitwick Village Hall retained

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 in 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 opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

6.9 This approach, in particular, should extend to provide active building frontages along Steppingley Road, Coniston 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.

Figure 7–Indicative Floorspace Schedule (Provisional)

	Retail Floorspace (Gross Internal sqm)	Tesco Retail Floorspace (Gross/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	9,438/6,503	1,626	1,126	17			522
CIVIC QUARTER						857	682	61
TOTALS	3,457	9,438/6,503	28,096	21,573	323	857	682	1,521

6.10 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 are critical to achieving a 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 higher 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 take advantage of changes in ground levels 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. Storey heights to buildings fronting Steppingley Road and Coniston Road could be up to 3.5 stories, stepping down to 3 and 2.5 stories where development adjoins existing buildings. At the lower levels of the Station Square and Residential Quarter 4 to 4.5 stories could be considered, but again buildings should be stepped down to lower levels where development is adjacent to existing lower buildings. The

building height assumptions assume that upper floors are of domestic rather than commercial dimensions, and where upper floor commercial space is to be introduced the number of stories that would be considered acceptable are likely to be less. Building heights and roofscape would be critical facing the railway where wider views are glimpsed when travelling 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

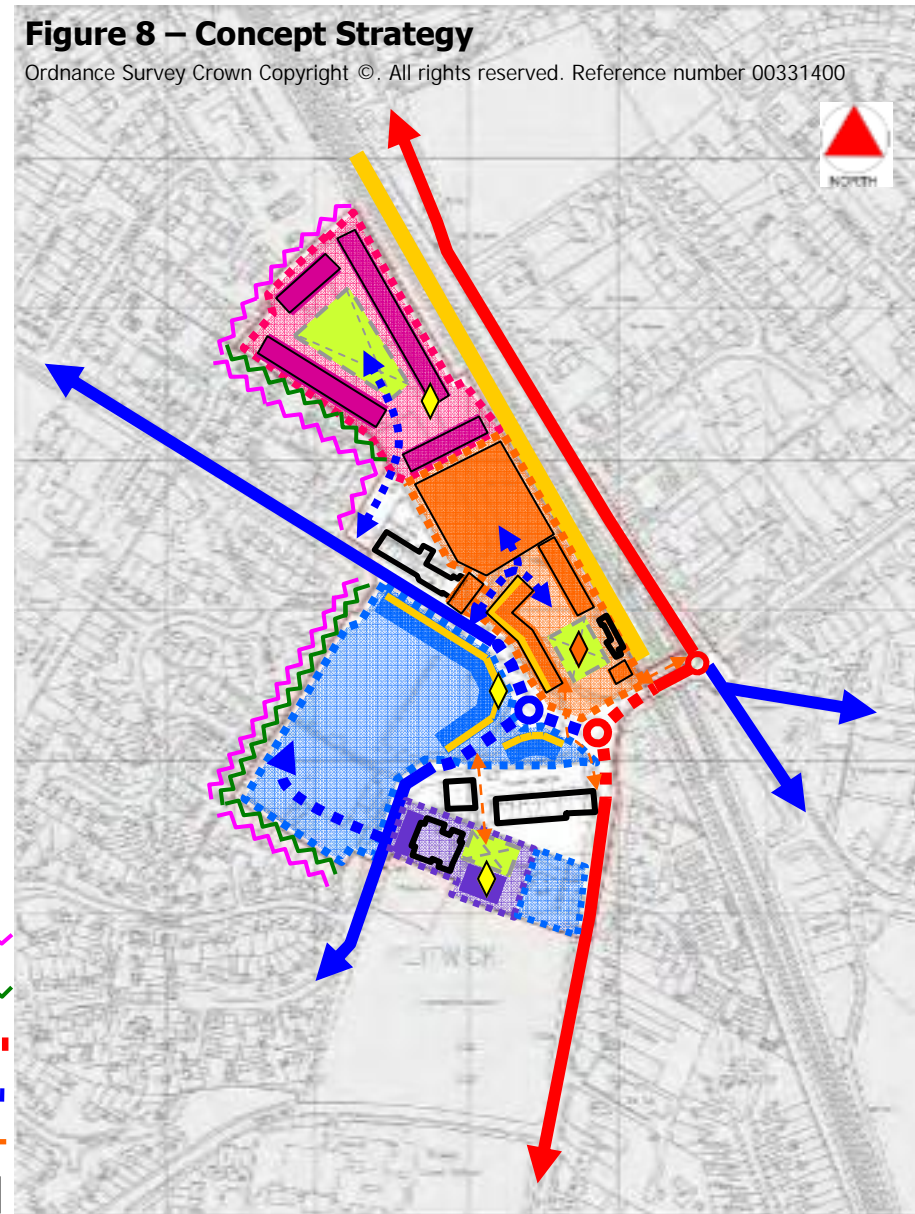
complement its predominant use or mix of uses.

- 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 should 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

Figure 8 – Concept Strategy

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- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 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 | |



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 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 Within the town centre area, streets should be designed for all road users, that is as much for pedestrian and cycle 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 (Steppingley Road and Coniston Road)

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. New mixed-use developments would also be provided on the opposite (east) side of

Steppingley Road, with retail on the ground floor and residential above.

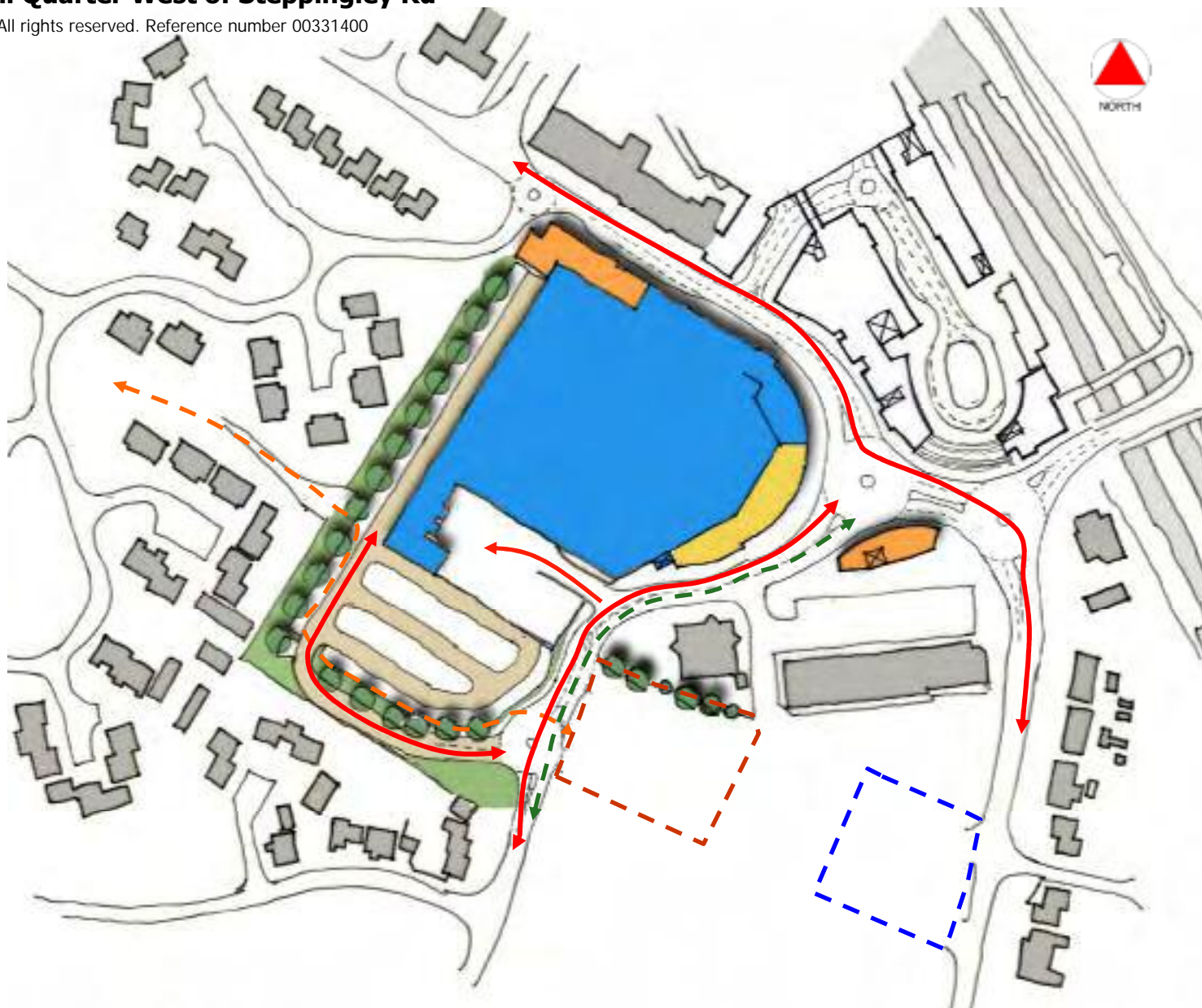
6.21 The built form of the anchor store will need to respect the local heritage and integrate the building mass and shell with adjacent traditional building forms. There may be scope to incorporate modern architecture within a local heritage setting, however there would need to be an imaginative approach to building massing, scale, and use of materials without compromising the vernacular design concept. In general large areas of glazing should be avoided unless sensitively incorporated within a heritage context.. Buildings should be designed to terminate views up the street to contribute to a sense of enclosure. Buildings would be back edge of footpath with generous footways and opportunities for street trees. The degree of setback between buildings and footway can vary to create a subtle building line. Entrances and windows would provide activity and overlooking. In general shop fronts

Figure 9 – Plan of Retail Quarter West of Steppingley Rd

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KEY

-  MIXED USE
-  RETAIL
-  PUBLIC REALM
-  LEISURE/ COMMUNITY
-  STATION
-  GREEN SPACE/ LANDSCAPING
-  TREES
-  VEHICULAR ROUTES
-  PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  BUS ROUTES
-  PFS SITE OPTION 1
-  PFS SITE OPTION 2



should be traditionally designed with key architectural elements incorporated. Buildings should generally be up to 3 stories, and where this is exceeded the accommodation should be in the roof (3.5 stories). The heights should be stepped down adjacent to residential buildings. The streetscene should consist of continuous but irregular frontages, with a traditional hierarchy in storey heights and a vertical symmetry in window detailing.

- 6.22 Off Coniston Road, using the backland, car parks and service areas would be provided for the buildings fronting Steppingley Road. The car parking would be mostly covered by the new store at Steppingley Road level. Such a building would need to provide active frontage to Coniston Road, with the 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.

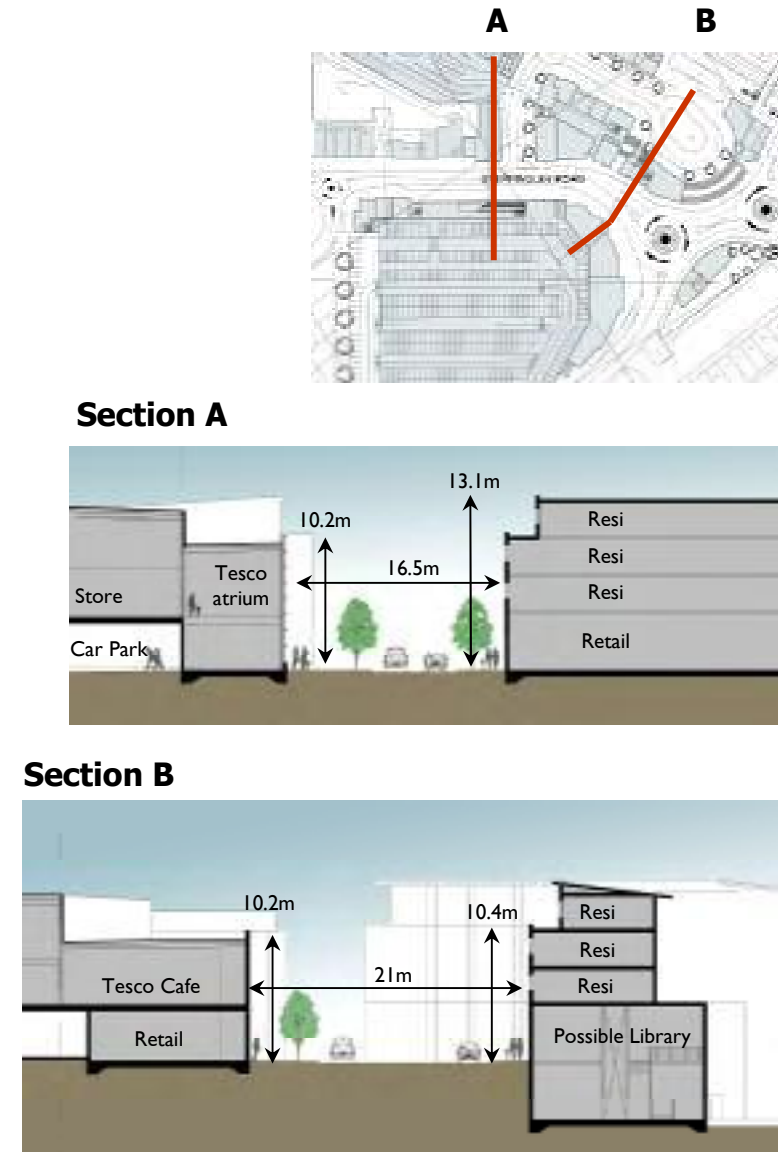
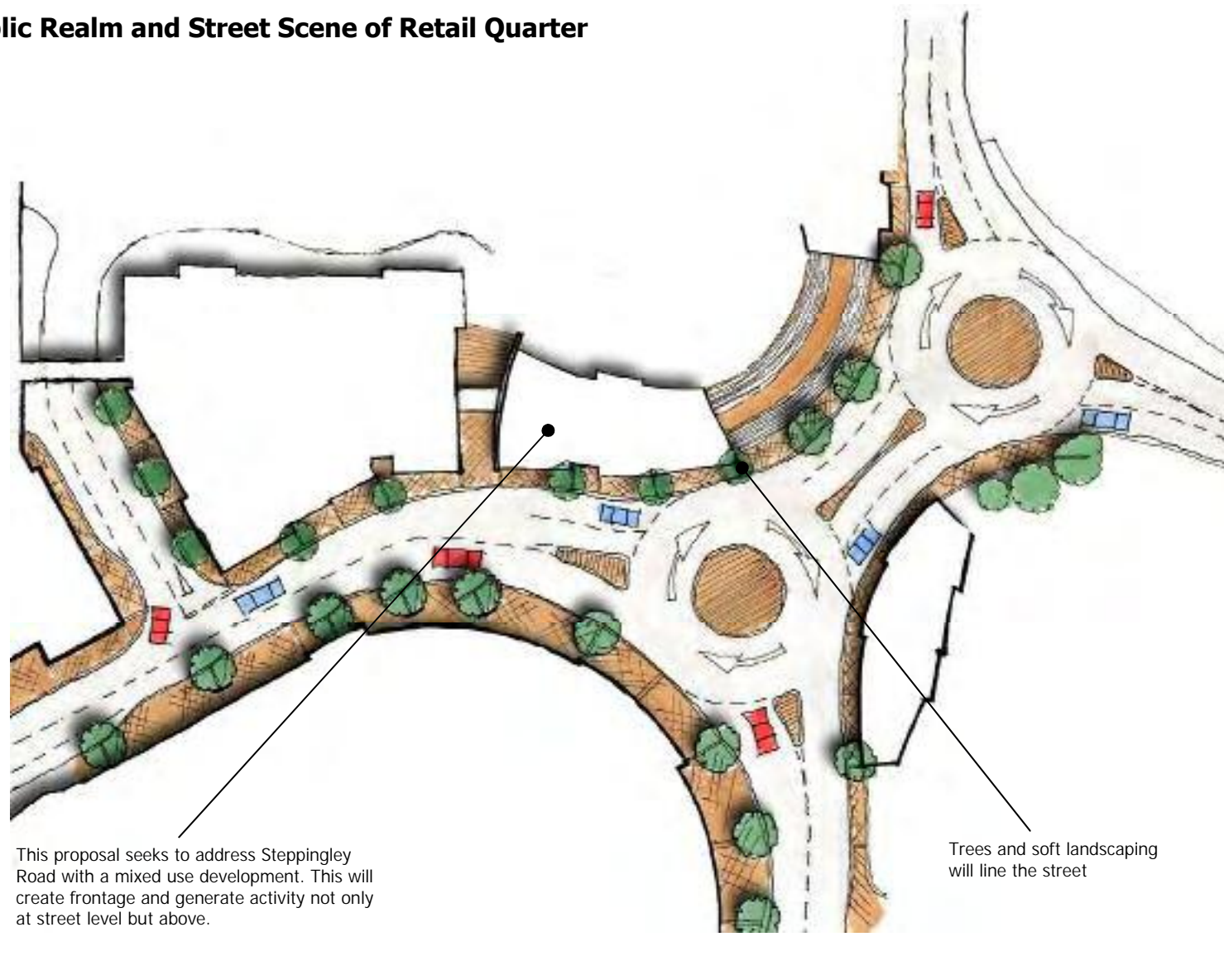


Figure 10 – Indicative Sections through Steppingley Rd

Figure 11 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Retail Quarter



- 6.23 The roofscape of the building could 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 part of the car park would have careful attention to surface detail, with trees and shrub planting interspersed to break the mass of car parking spaces. Tree planting could 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 Using the space created by the re-alignment of the highway, there exists an opportunity to provide a new building in front of the Russell Centre car park. This would help to screen the Russell Centre car park and provide visual termination looking along Steppingley



Buildings should convey an imaginative approach to massing, scale, and use of materials without compromising the vernacular design concept

Road. Possible uses for the building include community use, and offices on upper floors.

- 6.26 The new buildings on the east side of Steppingley Rd would comprise a higher density mixed use development framing the new station square and a separate extension to Franklin House. Building heights would be up to 3 stories (or 3.5 stories with the top floor in the roofscape) fronting Steppingley Road, and up to 4.5 stores fronting the lower level Station Square. A traditional approach to design is again sought with these buildings, drawing on the same guidance and principles outlined above. The restructuring of this area would allow the opportunity to provide new landmark developments, some 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. 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 on the upper levels. If the petrol filling station is located on Coniston Road at the site of the existing library, the new library could be located within this new development.

Station Quarter

- 6.27 The railway station gives many visitors their first impression of Flitwick and must be treated as one of the town's most important gateways.
- 6.28 A new square and transport interchange would be laid out on the western side of the station. This would be framed by new developments containing shops and residential and/or offices above. There would be landmark buildings substantial enough to terminate the views of the site from Coniston Road and Dunstable Road. From the station there needs to be a visual link to Steppingley Road.

6.29 If the existing station building is to be retained, any adjoining development should take account of its simple classical proportions, and respect its scale and height. If a new station building is to be provided (subject to Network Rail and the Train Operating Company), this needs to form part of an overall development approach adjacent to the railway, and must address the levels differences and means of access to the station platforms, and the relationship with the proposed new foot/cycle bridge which would give lift access to the platforms. A contemporary or traditional design approach could be considered. The new square would








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.



Figure 12 – Plan of Station Quarter

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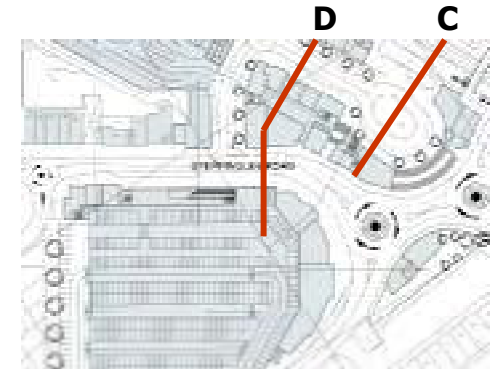
KEY

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

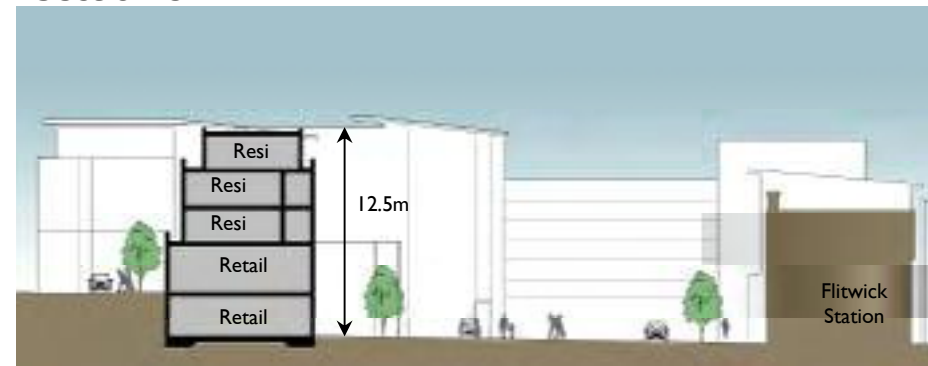


be designed with pedestrians in mind but would allow access to the station for all other modes of transport. In particular the square would be designed with room for buses, and taxis to drop off and collect passengers as well as private cars, and enough space for taxis to wait. Convenient and covered cycle stands would also be provided. The transport interchange and developments at and adjacent to the station, including the new foot cycle bridge and potential new station building have to

Figure 13 – Indicative Sections through Station Quarter



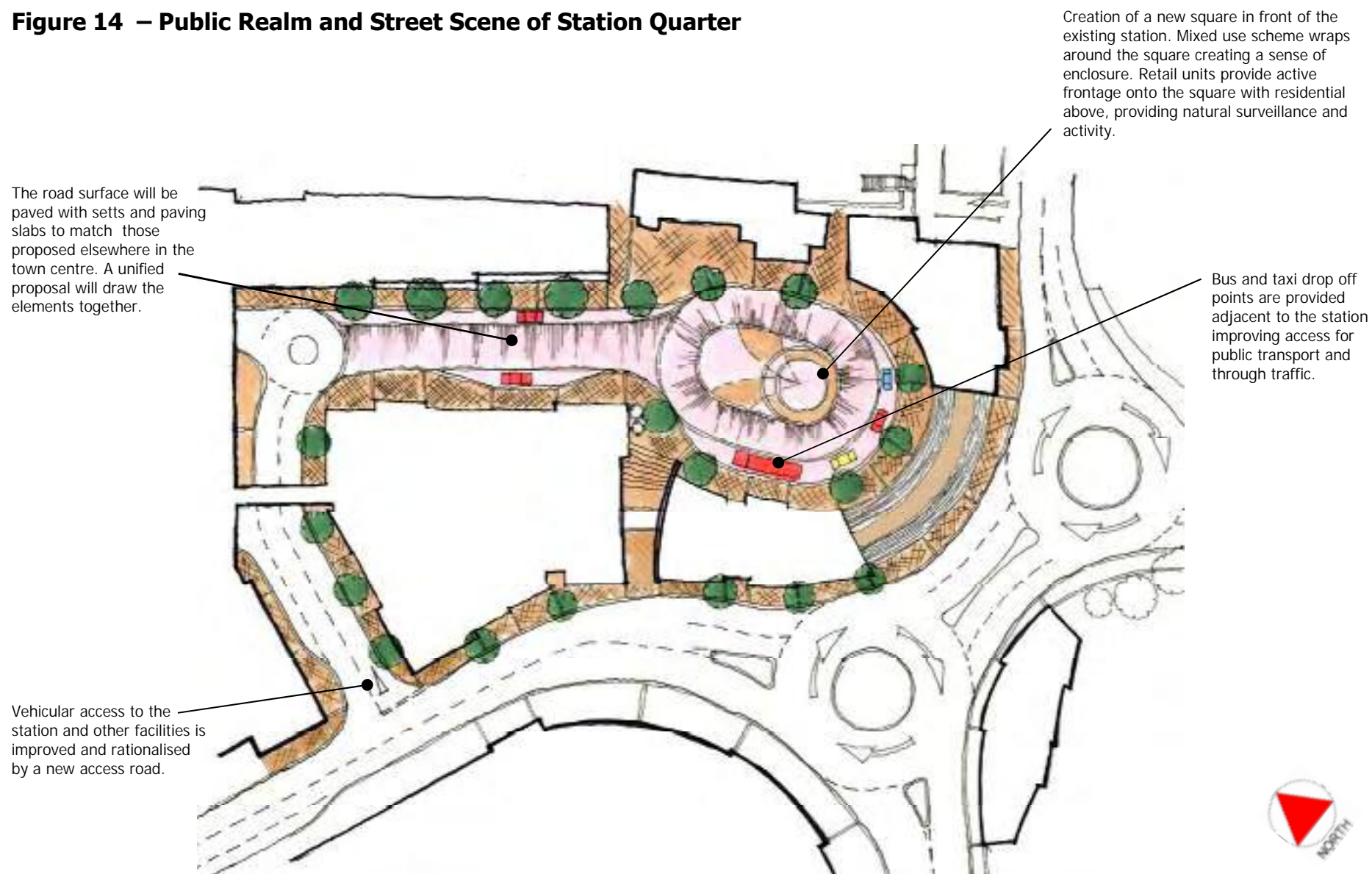
Section C



Section D



Figure 14 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Station Quarter



be the subject of more detailed discussion with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company.

6.30 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 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. More work is needed to ensure that adequate servicing is provided.

6.31 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

screening the development on the north and south of the site with new single aspect penthouses and offices that would be easily reached by train-borne workers.

Residential Quarter

6.32 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:

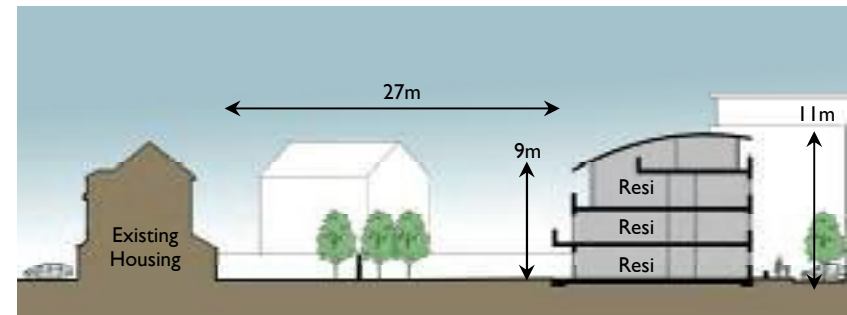
6.33 Firstly, the introduction of housing and new overlooked streets would open up a side of the town which is currently under-utilised.

6.34 Secondly, new housing would mean more people using the shops and services of the town centre, helping to

bolster customer numbers.

- 6.35 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.
- 6.36 New development would be accessed from a new link to Steppingley Road. The layout could be based around an open square and communal green space employing perimeter block forms of development to enclose the

Figure 15 – Indicative Sections through Residential Quarter



Section E

Section F

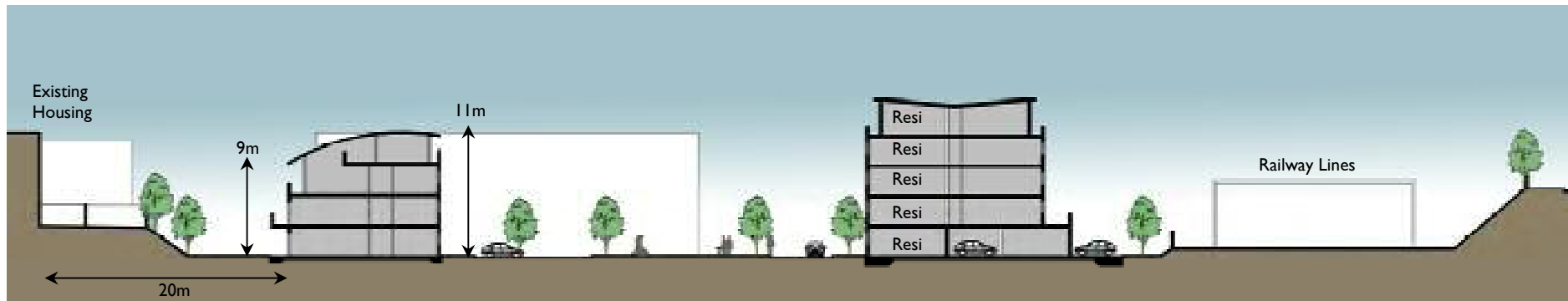








Figure 16 – Plan of Residential Quarter

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KEY

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



spaces. This would create a pleasant setting for new residents as well as acting as a visual and noise buffer with the railway.

6.37 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 have to be incorporated in the design, and may require a different approach from that shown in the indicative masterplan.

6.38 The terraces on the northwest and southwest boundaries should have private amenity space on their



High quality and distinctive design with well defined public and private spaces

Figure 17 – 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.



southern and westerly sides. All fronts should face the central public green space.

- 6.39 Blocks adjacent to the railway could have a greater number of storeys than those on the southern and western side. Storey heights could range from 4.5 stories to 3.5 stories. 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 imaginative way. A high quality contemporary architectural approach could work well in this relatively self contained quarter.

Community & Civic Quarter

- 6.40 If a new petrol filling station were to be located on the site of the village hall on Dunstable Road, proposals for this area can be 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.

- 6.41 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.
- 6.42 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.

Figure 18 – Plan of Civic Quarter

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KEY

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



- 6.43 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 fronting these approaches must have a high proportion of active frontages and passive surveillance.
- 6.44 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.
- 6.45 As the town grows it is hoped that the north-south axis route linking the town square and civic square would be developed.
- 6.46 If the petrol filling station is located on the site of the library on Coniston Rd, and the library is relocated as part of the new development on Steppingley Rd, the

Village Hall would remain on its current site. Under these circumstances the scope for a new Community and Civic Quarter would be much more limited.

Figure 19 – Public Realm and Street Scene of Civic Quarter

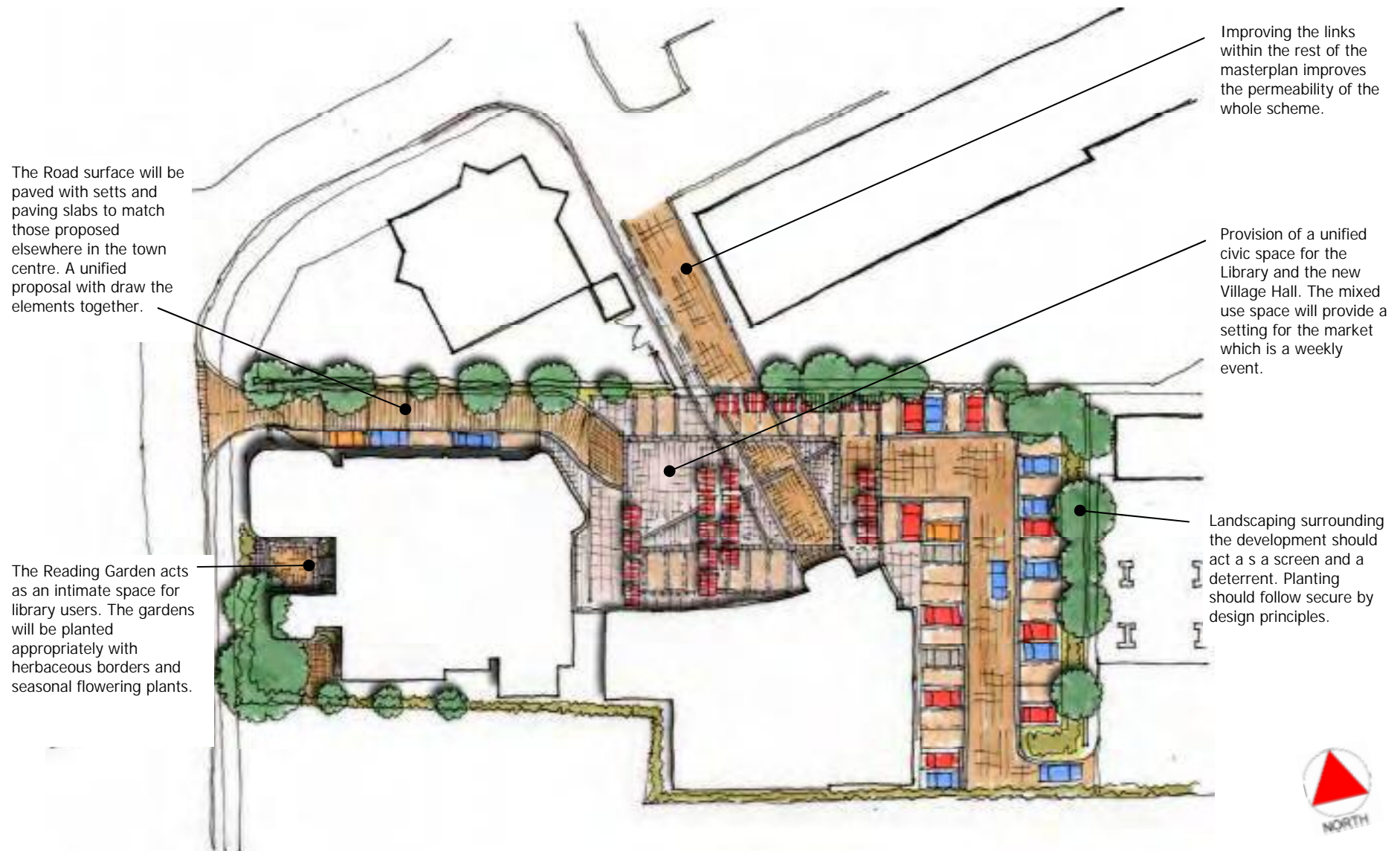


Figure 20 —Axonometric View of Proposal



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. A co-operation agreement is needed between the main developers and landowners. It is anticipated that several separate but compatible planning applications for the development will be submitted following approval of the Framework & Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document. It is however essential given the need to ensure delivery of the whole development that if separate applications are submitted they must be linked together through a Final Masterplan, Environmental Impact

Assessment, Transportation Assessment and Phasing Plan, agreed between the main parties and applicants.

Format of Planning Application

7.2 One application is likely to be a full application for the land to the south of Steppingley Road, which would include the proposed supermarket and car park, the diversion of Steppingley Road and Coniston Road, highway works, the new foot-cycle bridge (required to enable the widening of the carriageway on the road bridge), the relocation of the petrol filling station and library and village hall works as appropriate. This would be promoted by Tesco Stores Ltd. Another is likely to be a full application for the land to the north of Steppingley Road, which would include the Station Square and the transport interchange. A separate application is likely to be promoted for the multi-storey station car park and a further separate application for the residential quarter.

Planning Application Requirements

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

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Transportation Assessment
- Design & Access Statement
- Car Parking & Accessibility Strategy
- Phasing Plan
- Final Master Plan
- Planning Statement
- Travel Plan
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Landscape Statement
- 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

7.4 The Final Masterplan, EIA, the Transportation Assessment and Phasing Plan should be comprehensive documents that cover the whole development (all applications).

7.5 This Planning Framework and Masterplan seeks the regeneration of an established town centre. Whilst the location of the new retailing in the town centre of Flitwick accords with the town centre first approach of PPS6 Planning for Town Centres, the scale needs to relate to the role and function of the centre within the wider hierarchy and catchment served, to ensure that it is of an appropriate type and scale, and fits into the centre and complements its role and function. The planning application will need to provide evidence that the scale of the retailing proposed, in particular the new Tesco store, is appropriate.

Conditions/Legal obligations

7.6 Conditions would be attached to the planning permission and 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 a contribution to 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 Plans for each main element of the new development
- 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 throughout the town centre, including to the east of the railway
- Provision of accommodation for youth facilities
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan
- Use of Tesco car park as short stay car park for all

- town centre users
- A contribution to improvements to the village hall (if new village hall not required)
- Use of the new Tesco Store car park in connection with the Safer Routes to School Initiative

Funding & Viability

7.7 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 station building (subject to Network Rail and FCC)
- A new village hall or improvements to the existing building
- Improvements and extensions to the library or a new library, both to include accommodation for the Town Council and Police
- Accommodation for a youth facility in the town centre

7.8 Creating a viable development to deliver all of the above community benefits will be very challenging. Network Rail is able to contribute in part to the funding for the provision of the new Multi Storey Car Park for Station commuters, providing additional car park spaces. They have put forward funding options, but they leave a major funding gap to be bridged. It is unlikely that Network Rail can fund the transport interchange or the DDA Step Free access at the station via the new foot/cycle bridge, though bids will be made

at the appropriate time for funding from the DfTs Access for All programme. Network Rail will facilitate the development through a land swap.

- 7.9 The Council has secured Growth Area Funding Round 3 towards gap funding for the new development. This could contribute towards meeting the funding gap for the new station car park.

Phasing –continuity of uses and access

- 7.10 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.
- 7.11 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. Temporary accommodation would need to be identified for the

station car park, and for Tesco to provide a temporary store and car park, and for the library (if a new library is to be provided).

- 7.12 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.
- 7.13 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

- 7.14 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

- 7.15 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 proposed for redevelopment, 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 on 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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