

Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan

This document is available in Welsh

An evidence base for the Local Development Plan
and a framework for decision making
within the Masterplan area

Adopted April 2016

housing | open space | employment | community | transport | education



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Executive Summary

0.1 Introduction

This Masterplan was prepared by Wrexham County Borough Council to provide an evidence base for the emerging Local Development Plan and a framework with which to market the town and encourage investment.

0.2 Wrexham Town Centre Today

Wrexham has much to be positive about, as the largest town in North Wales serving an important sub-regional role Wrexham town centre has a strong and healthy mid-market retail offer supported by a wide range of significant sub-regional services including Glyndwr University, Coleg Cambria and Wrexham Maelor Hospital. Its accessibility, countryside, industrial estate and tourism attractions are real assets. The town's strategic position as a driver of the sub-regional economy, projected population growth, an attractive historic core and public sector regeneration investment provide confidence that the town has great potential for growth and assets that can be harnessed.

While the town centre is relatively healthy and has seen significant growth over the last 20 years there is a sense the town lacks identity, the centre is dominated by discount retailers, lacks an evening economy and is beginning to look tired and at times unattractive. Identified gaps in the restaurant sector and in higher quality retail have been identified.

However, the previous model of retail continually driving town centre growth has broken, changes in modern retail, the way people shop and wider economic changes mean that town centre regeneration needs a different model, future growth will come from a greater diversity of town centre uses.

0.3 Wrexham Town Centre Vision

Through extensive evidence gathering and partnership working a vision for the town centre responsive to its challenges emerged. Central to this vision is the need for a new town centre heart with a diverse range of accessible shopping, leisure uses such as family restaurants, arts and cultural attractions, niche speciality retail in a quality public realm and environment that is identifiable as being 'Wrexham'.

Actions to deliver an improved shopping and visitor experience need to be supported by improvements in accessibility, the public realm, housing and work opportunities to provide a mutually supportive and holistic response to the town centres issues.

The Masterplan identifies opportunities for actions and interventions that will help deliver these within a framework that will help shape and prioritise investment.

The document is organised in 4 parts;

- Section 1 Introduction; provides contextual background with key opportunities and challenges;
- Section 2: provides a vision, objectives and strategy overview for the town centre;
- Section 3: provides the main themes for action points and interventions based on core town centre functions and issues, shopping, visitors, accessibility, attractiveness, housing and work.
- Section 4: details how the Masterplan will be delivered including phasing and priorities.

Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan

Section 1: Introduction and Background

1.1.1 The masterplan is an exciting opportunity to help drive Wrexham to a bright successful future. A future that will see Wrexham a town where people will want to live, work, learn, relax, invest and visit.

1.1.2 It sets out the direction we want to move in. Wrexham has many strengths and opportunities but cannot afford to be a town standing still.

1.1.3 It is action focussed and will drive a programme of public and private investment and developer activity into Wrexham Town Centre over the next 15 years. It will grow and evolve with us – just as our town did in the past and will in the future.

1.1.4 The Masterplan sets out the future development and management framework for Wrexham town centre. Its purpose is to ensure that Wrexham builds on its many strength's, so that alongside recent investment there is a catalyst for future growth that ensures the town centre is a vibrant and viable place.

1.1.5 Why a Masterplan? The masterplan has the following key roles, it:

- helps guide investment to and within the town centre by illustrating the potential opportunities;
- acts as a vehicle to raise the profile of the town centre, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- provides guidelines on how that potential should be realised to contribute to the quality of the centre as a whole; and
- informs and supports the statutory policy framework through the emerging Local Development Plan (2013-2028) and Our Wrexham Plan (2013 – 2024).

1.1.6 There is a need for a comprehensive strategic approach to planning and attracting investment into Wrexham town centre. The delivery of the Masterplan will be achieved through four channels as illustrated in figure 1 below. Key to this process has been engagement of the local community, organisations, businesses and wider stakeholders across the town centre and its suburbs providing their perspective on town centre issues, the priorities and the future. Their continued involvement is critical in the development of the Masterplan.

Figure 1; Delivery



1.1.7 The rest of this chapter provides the background context to the masterplan with the remainder of the document set out as follows:

Section 2: Vision, Objectives and Key Spatial Diagram

Section 3: Masterplanning Themes

Section 4: Delivering the Masterplan

Appendix 1: Key Site Development Guidance

Appendix 2: Background Studies, Evidence Base and Policy Context

Appendix 3: Key LDP Preparation Stages

Appendix 4: Masterplan Engagement

Appendix 5: Relationship with the Council Plan

Appendix 6: Summary of Evidence Base

Appendix 7: Streetscape Analysis

Appendix 8: High Street Proposals

Appendix 9: Chester Street Proposals

Appendix 10: High Street 2020, 25 Priorities for Action and relationship with Masterplan

1.2.1 Wrexham is the largest town in North Wales. The area abuts the national boundary of England to the east, Flintshire and Denbighshire, to the south are the counties of Powys and Shropshire (Figure 2). The County Borough has a population of 134,844, with the town accommodating approximately 47,000.

1.2.2 Wrexham is just 50 minutes' drive from major airports in Manchester and Liverpool and 90 minutes from Birmingham. It is well connected to most of the UK, through road and rail links, including train services direct to and from London. The Bidston railway corridor provides a sustainable link between Wrexham and Deeside and also provides connections to the Wirral and Liverpool. Wrexham General also provides a direct train link to Cardiff and Chester, with Chester Station linking to Manchester and London.



Figure 2: Regional Context

The Study Area and Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP)

1.3.1 Wrexham County Borough Council were successful in gaining £10.5m of regeneration funding from Welsh Government to revitalise the Town Centre of Wrexham and surrounding communities by investing in a package of measures that will provide the catalyst for longer term sustainable social, economic and environmental regeneration. The package includes investment in a new assisted living care facility at Grosvenor Road for 60 residents, empty properties to homes loans scheme, and investment in a Creative Industries and Arts hub. Part of the VVP funding is supporting this Masterplan. The VVP project identified a wider regeneration area within which is a smaller VVP Masterplan area, for context these are identified in Figure 3

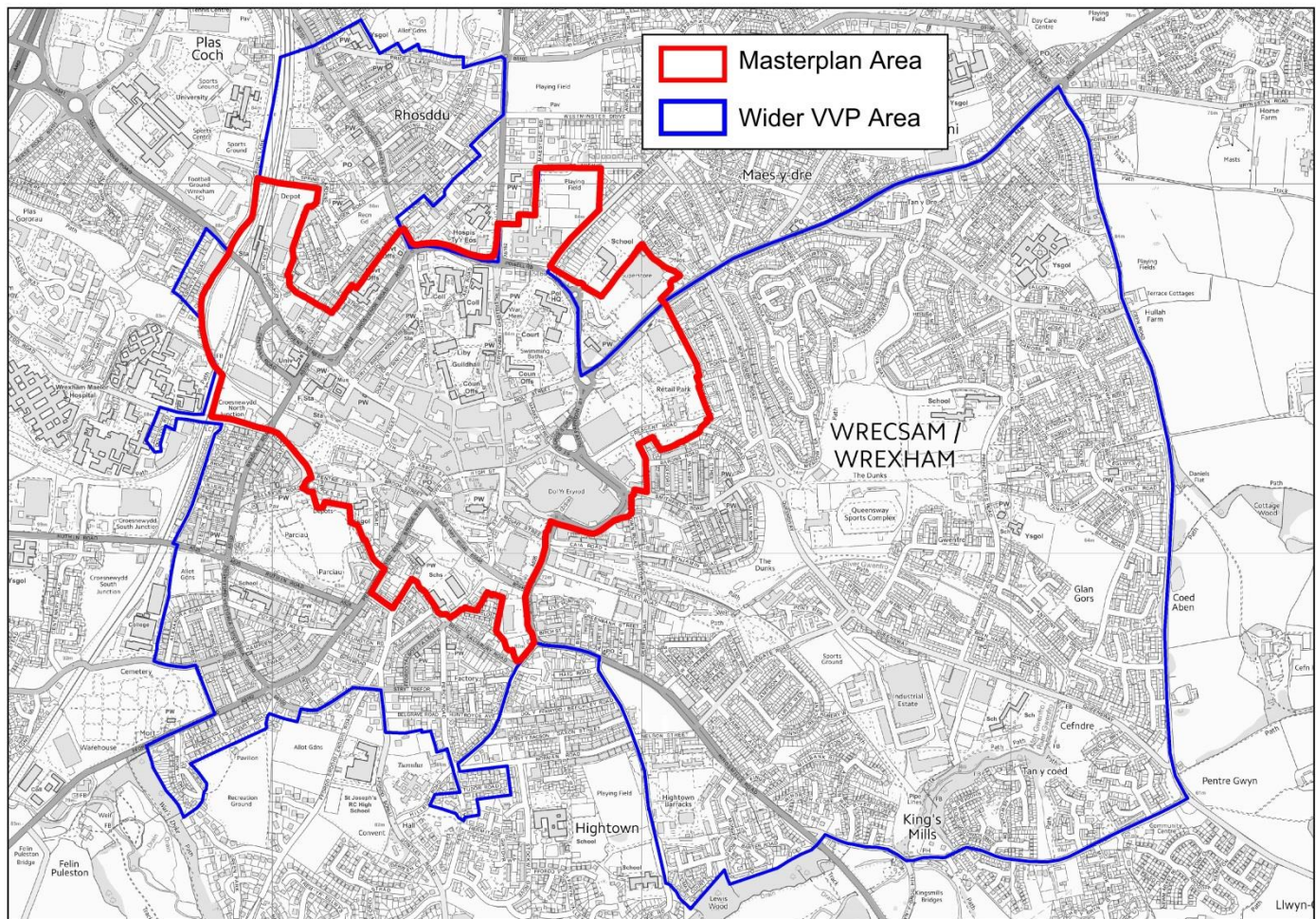


Figure 3: VVP and Masterplan Area

Masterplan Engagement

1.4.1 There has been a full and comprehensive stakeholder engagement of the Masterplan (see Appendix 4) including key stakeholder workshops to ensure it is robust and to provide confidence to invest in the town. This engagement is crucial in ensuring the deliverability of the sites identified in the Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan area, deliverability is critical to ensure that the LDP is planned on a sound and robust evidence base. Engagement on the town centre strategy and policies will continue with the emerging LDP as detailed in Appendix 3.

Evidence Base

1.5.1 Opportunely the gathering of evidence for the LDP and Masterplan overlap so both can share a common evidence base (Appendix 2). Evidence for the LDP (black in figure 4) and evidence commissioned for the Masterplan (red in figure 4) can be used to inform both the Masterplan and emerging LDP.

1.5.2 As part of the evidence gathering officers considered a number of town centre sites for development opportunities. Site owners and agents were approached, met where appropriate, site/owner/agent intentions discussed and site constraints and deliverability identified. This has informed the choice of key opportunity sites promoted by the Masterplan.

Masterplan and Local Development Plan

1.6.1 An important aspect in the delivery of the Masterplan is how it shapes development proposals in the land use planning system. The statutory planning framework is set by the development plan but the current Unitary Development Plan has passed its end date (2011) until the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP) is adopted in March 2018 (Appendix 3). In the absence of an in-date development plan and in the interim period before the LDP is adopted the Masterplan can, with the evidence base and national policy, help fill the policy gap.

1.6.2 In due course the Masterplan will help inform the emerging LDP strategy, allocations and policies and shares much of the same policy context and evidence (see Appendix 2). An adopted LDP will put the Masterplan on a firmer statutory footing.

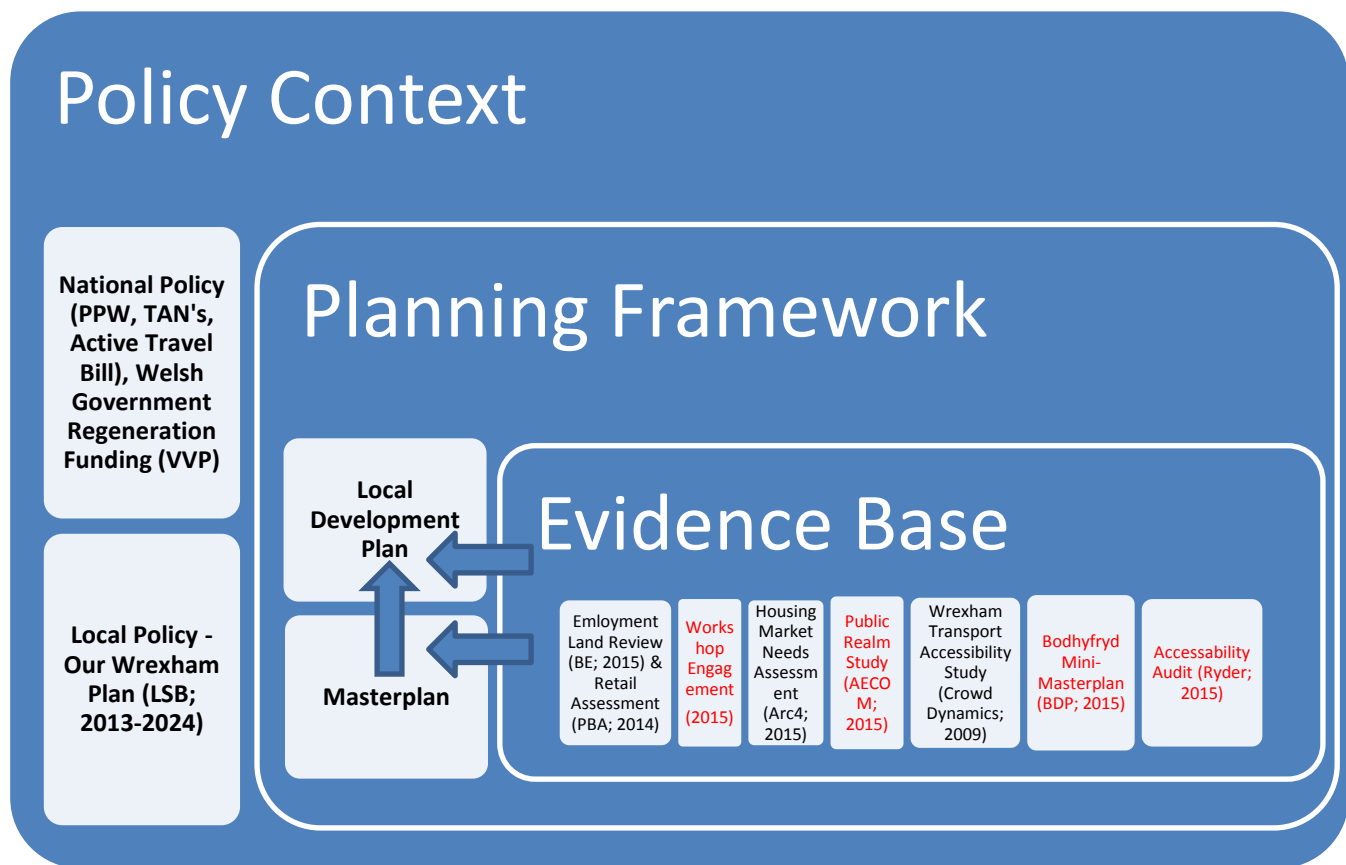


Figure 4: Planning Framework

Opportunities and Challenges

1.7.1 In providing context for the Masterplan it is important to understand the opportunities that currently exist in the County Borough and the town. The following opportunities and challenges have been identified from evidence collected, review of policy and workshop feedback;

1.7.2 Opportunities

A) Retail Capacity¹; Wrexham has a strong retail core with potential for improvements in the quality and scale of provision. Eagles Meadow has significantly increased the provision of comparison

¹ Retail Floorspace Assessment (RFA) was conducted in 2014 by Peter Brett Associates

goods floorspace and attracted new retailers like Debenhams and H&M, supported by food operators such as Pizza Express, Frankie & Bennies to the town, boosting the town's position within national retail rankings. There is a good diversity of uses and in quantitative terms there is a strong offer. However, there are gaps in the restaurant, café, and coffee bar sub-category with weaknesses in the quality of comparison offer. Retail in the town centre is now focussed on the value sector with a lack of quality comparison retailers.

- B) The historic core of the town centre and the markets have been identified in both the RFA and the Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Study as attractive assets that are underutilised but lend themselves naturally as places that could be attractive for restaurant, café and good quality independent retailers;
- C) Retail Position; Wrexham's retail position is threatened by retail trends, traditional high streets with relatively high prices (i.e. against internet) and low to moderate service are struggling. Wrexham, a mix of successful discount retailers and traditional high street has two options to secure success, it could move closer to the discount model or closer to a higher service model. From the workshops there is an aspiration to move away from the discount model. A move towards a centre which provides enhanced service (in its wider sense of shopping as a leisure activity, quality environment, experiential shopping experience, enhanced WiFi, greater engagement with staff) with strong independents and niche retailers can provide an alternative and sustainable town centre model².
- D) Population & Housing; Wrexham County Borough is forecast to have population growth higher than all the other authorities in North Wales combined³. There will be a need for between 10-13,000 new homes over the period 2013-2028 (LDP Vision, Objectives and Spatial Options 2015⁴). A significant demand for smaller 1 and 2 bed properties have been identified (Housing Market Need Assessment, 2015⁵). A start has been made on delivering town centre living through the Vibrant and Viable Wales regeneration project which is supporting residential projects in the town centre with extra care living at Grosvenor Road and through the Empty Properties to Homes Loans Scheme.
- E) Planning Policy; national policy clearly reinforces the importance of regenerating town centres and recognises that their role needs to be based on creating destinations for retail and shopping based activity but also a wide range of services and leisure facilities to support the surrounding community⁶.
- F) Local Policy⁷; Our Wrexham Plan sets the following local priorities for the County Borough and the town, the priorities are;
1. Making Wrexham a place where people can live independently and are healthy and active.
 2. Making Wrexham a place with a strong, resilient and responsible economy
 3. Making Wrexham a place that's safe and where everyone feels included.

² Centre for Retail Research; Retail Futures 2018; 2013

³ Statistics for Wales SDR 116/2013

⁴ <http://wrexhamldp.wrexham.gov.uk/portal>

⁵ <http://wrexhamldp.wrexham.gov.uk/portal>

⁶ Planning Policy Wales (Ed. 7; 2014) Chapters 4 and 10

⁷ See Appendix 1

- G) Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) Regeneration Funding; just under £11m of Welsh Government regeneration funding, supported by approximately £14m of match funding has been secured for the town centre for the period 2014-2017. This will be used to support, amongst other things, an Arts and Cultural Hub at the Peoples Market, an assisted care elderly living accommodation and an empty properties to homes loans scheme.
- H) Potential Development Sites; through consideration of sites, opportunities, constraints and stakeholder engagement five key development opportunities have been identified at Bridge Street (2 sites), Bodhyfryd, the area around Queens Square/Henblas Street and the current (2015) Fire Station site. These sites have the greatest potential to deliver the Masterplan with an opportunity to create a new town centre destination.
- I) Wrexham is home to a strong education sector with Glyndwr University, Coleg Cambria and the Wrexham Maelor teaching Hospital, all within a short walk of the town centre. This generates a regular stream of visitors to the town and helps add a sense of vibrancy to the town through the demand for retail, arts, culture and evening activities. In addition they create a skilled and well paid workforce while also generating a demand for land and services.
- J) Wrexham Prison; in 2013 Wrexham Industrial Estate (5 miles from the town centre) was the chosen location for the North Wales prison a £212m investment by the Ministry of Justice. The prison has secured full planning permission, construction is underway and it is planned to be fully operational in 2017. Once operational, the prison will boost the regional economy by £23m a year and provide up to 1000 jobs.
- K) Tourism Hub; Wrexham is seen as an emerging hub⁸ with potential to attract visitors to the area and offering services, attractions and connections to the other main tourist hubs in the County Borough, Erddig Hall, the combined area of Chirk Castle, Chirk and the Glyn Ceiriog Valley and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site.
- L) Wrexham is well connected to most of the UK, through road and rail links just 45 minutes' drive from major airports in Manchester and Liverpool and 90 minutes from Birmingham. The Bidston railway corridor provides a sustainable link between Wrexham and Deeside and also provides connections to the Wirral and Liverpool. Wrexham General also provides a direct train link to Cardiff and Chester, with Chester Station linking to Manchester and London.
- M) Digital High Street & Information; the challenges presented by the growth of internet shopping and mobile devices has already had a significant and often negative impact on our high streets. But technology has the potential to breathe new life into our streets, recapturing a sense of vibrancy and face to face interaction. Funding to upgrade the towns CCTV network as a conduit for public 4G connectivity and mobile applications like 'Wrexham Says Hello' provide opportunities to bridge the gap between physical and online shopping e.g. daily high street deals direct to mobile phones, real time availability of restaurants or parking, navigation aids for visitors. Much of this is work in progress but the infrastructure is being installed now.

1.7.3 Challenges

- A) The Economic Climate; national economic changes and the recent recession have significantly restricted access to finance for both the public and private sectors. With government austerity there are very limited public funds to underpin development schemes; this puts the onus on the

⁸ Destination Management Plan 2012-2017

private sector to deliver but with restricted funding and an increased aversion to risk developers are cherry picking opportunities⁹;

- B) Retail Trends; trends within the retail sector mean that the previous model of town centre growth based on a growing retail sector has broken¹⁰. Out of town retail, growth of internet trading, polarisation trend of fewer but larger centres and fewer but larger stores, and changes in the convenience goods sector with the growth of value retailing have had profound impacts for the retail sector¹¹;
- C) Quantity of Stores: nationally it is predicted there will be a significant reduction in the quantity of retail stores, with forecasts predicting a fall in store numbers of between 22%-40% by 2022¹². Half of all retail leases are due by 2015 (Jones Lang LaSalle);
- D) Diversity; shopping areas need the greatest range of retailers and services or they will die¹³;
- E) Fragmentation; the town centre has two major retail draws, Island Green and Eagles Meadow, these, combined with edge of centre retail parks draw footfall out of the traditional town centre. The poor integration of these developments into the town centre, in terms of ease of walking movement around the town and between developments exacerbates this issue. Fragmentation is further exacerbated by the inner ring road which acts as a barrier¹⁴ between the town centre and many of the towns attractions that lie beyond it such as the hospital, university and retail parks;
- F) Car Parking & Transport; car parking is essential to attract and retain visitors. A balance needs to be struck between competing priorities for making the most efficient use of land, car parking utilisation, number of spaces, revenue control, ease of availability, proximity of parking and the need to encourage footfall and more sustainable forms of travel. Promoting sustainable forms of transport, public transport, walking and cycling are important considerations in deriving a parking strategy and need to be considered in a comprehensive approach; and
- G) The High Street 2020 Research Study is currently being undertaken by Manchester Metropolitan University, with Wrexham as a case study. The research identifies 25 priority actions for the regeneration of town centres. Notable priorities in order of ranking are; increasing activity hours (opening hours, evening economy), appearance, retail offer (retailer representation), vision and strategy (Masterplan), experience (centre image), necessities (car parking, amenities), networks (partnerships), diversity (attractions, non-retail offer, retail diversity), walkability, entertainment and leisure, attractiveness, accessibility, recreational space, chain v's independent, safety, liveability and store development¹⁵.

⁹ Beyond Retail: Redefining the Shape and Purpose of Town Centres; Colliers 2014

¹⁰ Centre for Retail Research; Retail Futures 2018

¹¹ Retail Floorspace Assessment, PBA 2014 <http://wrexhamldp.wrexham.gov.uk/portal>

¹² High Street UK2020; IPM 2014

¹³ Centre for Retail Research; Retail Futures 2018

¹⁴ Wrexham Transport Accessibility Study, Crowd Dynamics 2009

¹⁵ High Street UK2020; IPM 2014

Section 2: Vision, Objectives and Key Spatial Diagram

2.1 It is important to establish a vision and objectives for the Masterplan, it will be against these that options for the Masterplan will be considered and the success of the Masterplan judged. These and the ranking were developed following two local member and key internal stakeholder workshops in April 2014 and were further tested with key stakeholder workshops in March 2015¹⁶.

Vision: “*Wrexham will be an attractive, distinctive and accessible 21st century town centre where people want to live, learn, work, visit and invest.*”

Objectives: The following objectives will help ensure the vision for Wrexham is realised:

Objectives
1. Improve the identity of the town centre <i>The town centre needs a unique selling point with a rounded mix of attractions to become a strong and attractive destination with a positive identity. Important elements in achieving this are heritage, local distinctiveness, local culture and arts, good design/built environment and place making.</i>
2. Improve the visitor experience <i>Increase the vitality and viability of the town centre through improved visitor attractions such as arts and culture, events, leisure, facilities for families and through an attractive, safe, vibrant, high quality, clean and well maintained environment.</i>
3. Improve town centre accessibility, both into the town and circulation within the town. <i>The town centre needs to be accessible to all visitors and residents by a range of transport options that support sustainable development. The town centre should be accessible by walking and cycling by residents living adjacent to the centre. Once within the town people should be able to move around safely and pleasantly by using the most sustainable modes of transport, with walking, cycling and public transport taking priority. Navigation around the town should be legible through good design of buildings and of the public realm and through signage.</i>
4. Improve the evening economy <i>An active town centre beyond the daytime shopping hours will improve the town's vitality and viability, help stimulate investment, increase footfall and improve perceptions of safety. Improving the diversity of evening and night-time uses such as leisure, restaurants and small local convenience stores can make the town more attractive to a wider audience including families, couples, elderly, professionals etc.</i>
5. Provide opportunities for town centre living <i>Provide a range of attractive housing choices within the town centre through the re-use of vacant or underused land and the conversion of vacant office space above retail units.</i>
6. Accommodate the needs of a growing population <i>Provide a range of facilities within the town centre needed to sustain a diverse community within an environment in which it is desirable to live and play e.g. health, schools, nurseries, sustainable transport options, multi-functional recreational spaces and leisure facilities.</i>
7. Provide opportunities to improve green infrastructure <i>Green infrastructure such as parks, gardens, trees and landscaping are important for people's health and wellbeing, mitigating the impacts of climate change, encouraging walking and cycling and thereby increasing footfall, reducing the causes of global warming and providing attractive places to live and visit. Ways to enhance existing infrastructure and provide new will be supported, as will improved connections and linkages into residential town centre urban populations.</i>

¹⁶ See Appendix 4: Report of Consultation

Town Centre Strategy

2.2 The vision and objectives will be delivered by establishing the town centre as a thriving destination by encouraging a wider diversity of uses. This will be achieved by:

- building on its strong sub-regional position as a major shopping destination, diversifying the offer and developing complementary leisure, cultural and arts attractions in an attractive environment;
- developing an attractive and distinctive environment with high quality buildings, streets and spaces to enhance the character of the town and support the town centre strategies for retail, visitors and attracting residential development;
- ensuring high quality access to and through the town centre by a range of modes, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, but maintaining high quality road access to the centre;
- making Wrexham town centre a great place to live with a wide variety of new homes attractive to a diverse range of people with supporting social infrastructure for offices and vacant office space to make a positive contribution to the role and function of the town centre as a place with a wide and diverse range of attractions; and
- improving the quality of the public realm to improve places for people to meet, use and enjoy underpins the delivery of Improvements in the quality of retail, visitor, housing and office provision.

Figure 5: Strategy Concept

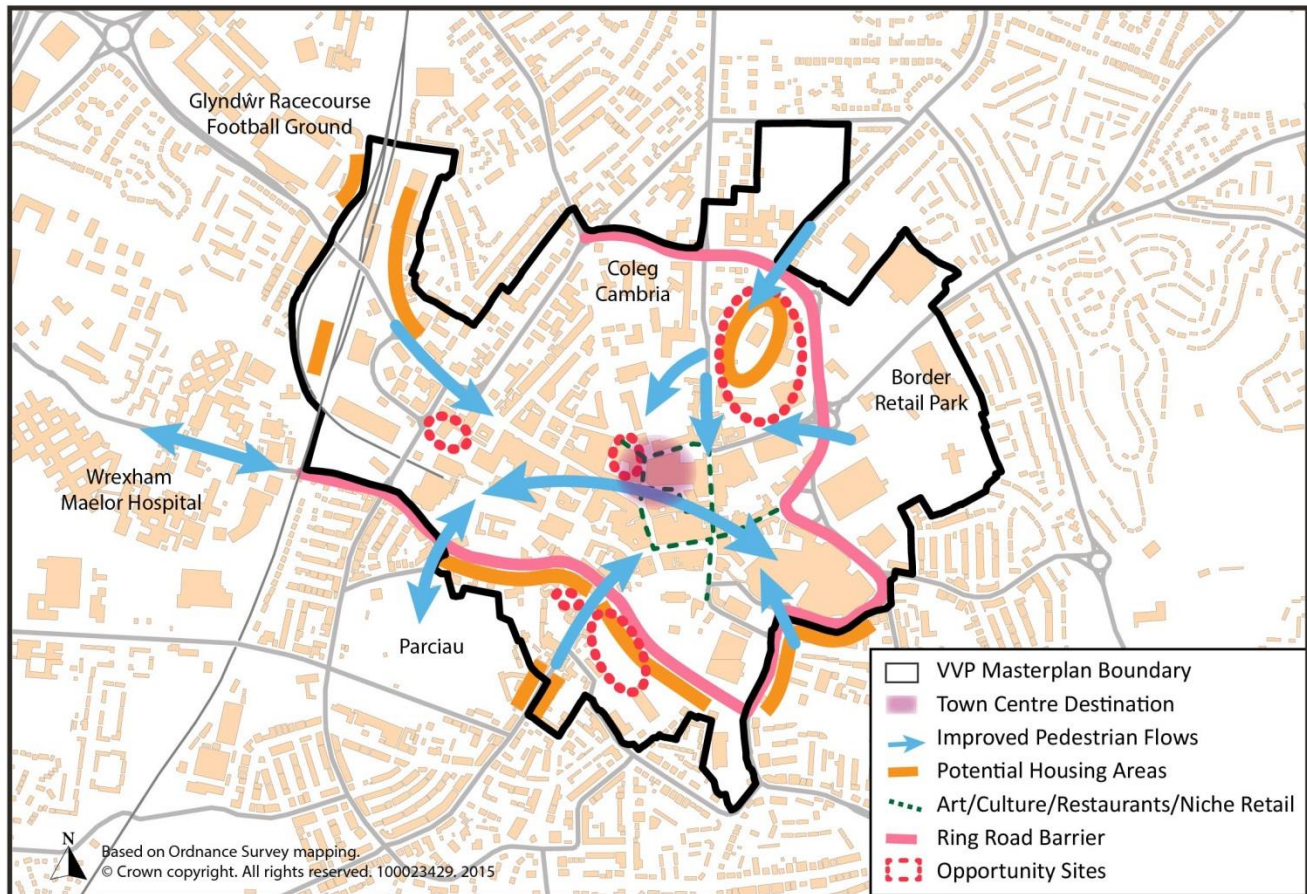


2.3 The strategy recognises that the objectives are inter-linked, with an improved town centre identity, visitor experience and evening economy being delivered by many of the same actions. The delivery of an improved town centre destination is further supported by housing, access and commercial development.

Key Spatial Diagram

2.4 The town centre strategy is represented spatially by Figure 6 below. The creation of a town centre destination, improved public space and a diversified mix of leisure, arts and culture supported by development of niche and specialist retailing will help draw footfall through the town centre from and to key edge of centre destinations such as Eagles Meadow and Island Green. This will be supported by the delivery of key development sites, access improvements, public realm works, design improvements and the delivery of residential development.

Figure 6: Key Spatial Diagram



2.5 The focus for the Masterplan will be facilitating the delivery of a new heart for the town centre loosely around the historic core, Queens Square and Henblas Street with other developments e.g. Bodhyfryd and Bridge Street supporting the town centre's heart.

Section 3: Masterplanning Themes:

3.0.1 To deliver the Masterplan vision and objectives six cross cutting, complementary themes have been developed. Each theme represents a significant town centre function or complementary element required to support the functions, the themes are;

- A Place to Shop;
- A Place to Visit;
- A Place to Live;
- A Place to Work;
- Attractive and Distinctive; and
- An Accessible Town;



Figure 7: Complementarity of Themes

3.0.2 The themes provide a framework in order to guide development proposals and investment within the town centre. For each theme an aim, actions, interventions and guidance for development envisaged over the Masterplan lifetime have been developed to drive its implementation.

3.0.3 Each theme is cross linked to the overall Masterplan vision and objectives to demonstrate how the theme contributes to the wider purpose of the Masterplan.

3.0.4 Figure 13 pulls together the Masterplan vision, objectives, themes and actions together into a single page providing an accessible overview of the Masterplan approach.

3.1 A Place to Shop (Masterplan Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5)

3.1.1 ***How ‘A Place to Shop’ can contribute to the Masterplan Vision and Objectives*** – A strong and vibrant retail centre is important in creating an identity for the town (objective 1), attracting visitors (objective 2). It is an anchor around which other complementary uses can build such as leisure, arts, and residential (objective 5). Encouraging pedestrian access and flows through the town can reduce the need to travel by car (objective 3).

3.1.2 Wrexham has a strong retail offer and performs an important sub-regional function. The opening of Eagles Meadow has significantly expanded the quantity and quality of retail offer strengthening the town’s regional position. But this success masks issues, the retail offer in the traditional town centre has a discount feel, the town centre is fragmented and there are gaps in the provision of retailers particularly in service uses such as restaurant, café and coffee bars. Such food and drink uses are increasingly important in attracting visitors to retail destinations¹⁷.

3.1.3 Furthermore, the role and functions of town centres are under increasing pressure to adapt to changes within the retail sector and wider economy. A greater diversity of uses is seen as an important strategy in the future sustainability of town centres¹⁸.

3.1.4 The cumulative impact of out of town and edge of town centre retail development has led to a fragmented town centre spread over a wide area. Consequently there are streets which were formally serving the function of primary streets that no longer do so with long term vacancies in prime retail areas such as Henblas Square, Hope Street and other parts of the town centre that are in need of regeneration.

3.1.5 Aim; ‘for Wrexham to build on its strong sub-regional position as a major shopping destination, diversifying the offer and developing complementary leisure, restaurant, cultural and arts attractions in an attractive environment’

3.1.6 The shopping actions and Interventions are to:

- **Attract a more rounded mix of shops, leisure/arts/cultural uses and restaurants that support the retail attractions; and**
- **Develop niche, specialist offers, including higher quality independents;**

¹⁷ Wrexham Retail Assessment 2014, Peter Brett Associates

¹⁸ See section 1

Retail Actions and Interventions

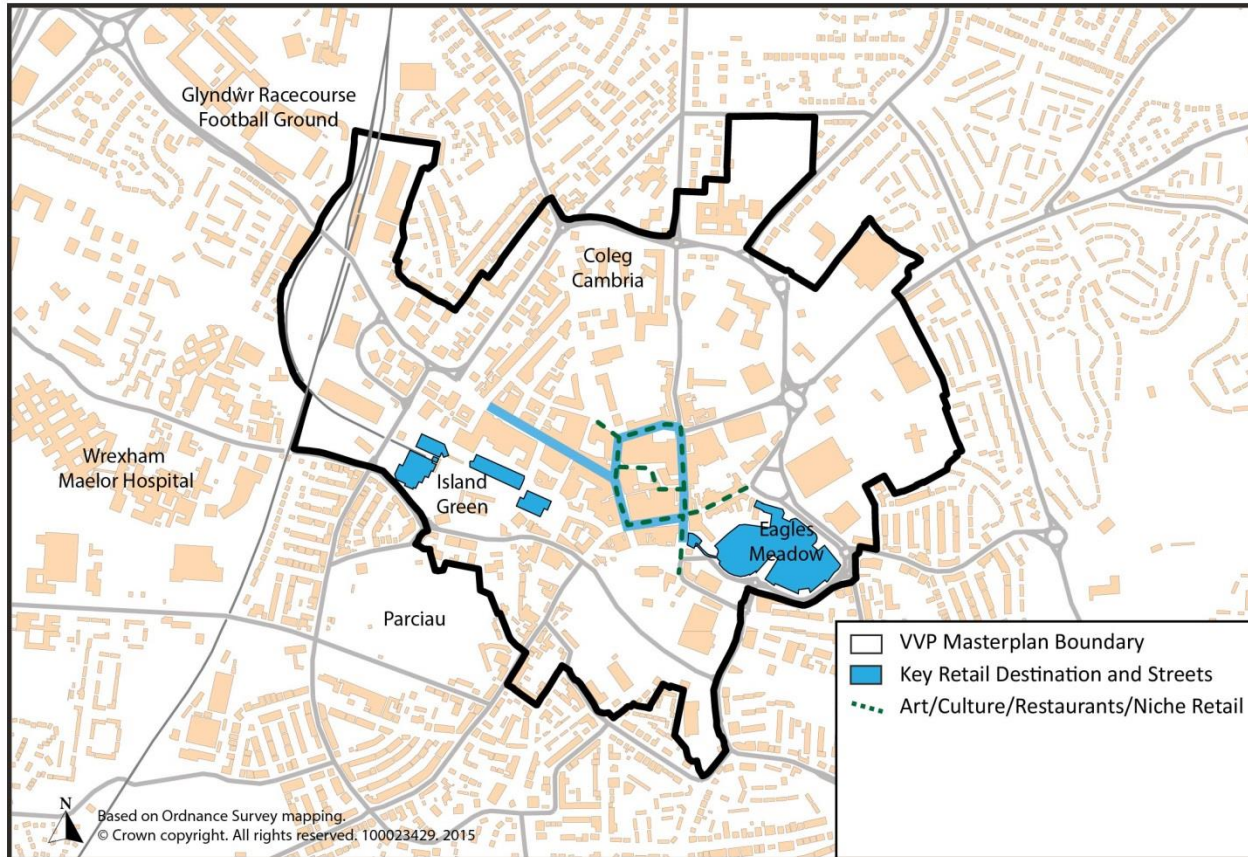


Figure 8; Retail Actions and Interventions

Retail Core Uses and Non-Core Uses

3.1.7 The main retail areas are identified in blue in Figure 8, this core area will be where future retail is directed. Likewise, to strengthen the retail circuit and improve linkages with Eagles Meadow, retail development on High Street, Yorke Street, and Chester Street (part) should be supported and encouraged.

3.1.8 Recognising that retail opportunities may be limited and not wishing to see vacant properties sterilised by holding them for retailers that may never come, a diversity of uses which support the vitality and vibrancy of the core area would be supported subject to retaining its primary retail function. Uses such as leisure, nurseries, gyms, cafés and restaurants and medical facilities which need to be accessible to large numbers of people and can drive footfall through the town centre during the daytime and evening will contribute to the streets vitality and viability. An over-concentration of such uses can have a detrimental impact on the retail function of the street and will not be permitted, nor will ground floor uses that do not contribute to driving footfall.

3.1.9 Outside the retail core the loss of retail space or active ground floor frontages would not be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the town centre and alternative uses could be supported. While the preference would be to continue to encourage uses that are accessible to large numbers of people and may contribute to the streets vitality and viability in these areas, it is acknowledged that these weaker areas may no longer be attractive destinations for such uses. The non-retail core

area is suitable for a wider range of uses that include ground floor residential and other uses that may not contribute to footfall. The cumulative impact of such uses is a concern, an over concentration of uses which do not contribute to vitality and viability would not be supported.

3.1.10 The RFA and Masterplan recognise that Lord Street and Rhosddu Road no longer serve the function of primary shopping streets as defined as such in the UDP. Consequently change of use to non-retail would not be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the streets and a wider range of uses would be appropriate as outlined in 3.1.9.

3.1.11 Encourage Speciality Retailing & Quality Restaurants in the historic core

There is an opportunity to use the towns attractive and historic core (identified in Figure 8 with a green dotted line) to attract investment from speciality and quality independent retailers and quality restaurants in the town's. The good quality public realm, heritage features, historic buildings and markets, distinctive character, proximity to Eagles Meadow and the emerging Arts and Cultural hub make the area an ideal environment for shoppers to spend time. Management of the town's heritage assets, integration of new high quality design schemes and public realm interventions will be important in supporting development in this area.

3.1.12 Public Realm & Design; Improving the quality of the public realm and how development interacts with the public realm will create a pleasant environment in which to shop and can help diversify the range and quality of retail in the town, this is discussed in more detail in the Attractive and Distinctive theme section.

3.1.13 Convenience Shopping Needs

There is an identified need for additional food shopping with market interest from value retailers for new stores in Wrexham and the County Borough. Opportunities for these to contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre will be further explored through the LDP.

3.1.14 There may also be opportunities to provide additional top-up food shopping facilities in the town centre retail core, while Bridge Street and Bodhyfryd sites could accommodate small scale local need convenience shopping.

3.2 A Place to Visit (Masterplan Objectives 2, 3 and 4)

3.2.1 *How ‘A Place to Visit’ can contribute to the Masterplan Vision and Objectives* – This theme impacts on the visitor objective (objective 2) and is closely related to the objectives for access (objective 3) and night time economy (objective 4) and the theme for retail, which are form part of the visitor experience.

3.2.2 Wrexham functions as a visitor destination with a sub-regionally important retail centre, University based arts/culture offer at William Aston Hall, Catrin Finch Centre, Oriel Wrecsam, Un-De-Gun, sports offer at the Racecourse Stadium and science education offer at Techniquist Glyndwr. There are also a variety of town centre attractions including St Giles Church, an art and music scene, Wrexham Museum and a series of special events held throughout the year including the Tour of Britain cycle race and Wrexham Food Festival. As an emerging destination hub the town centre also supports visitors to attractions elsewhere in the County Borough such as the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site¹⁹.

3.2.3 The opportunity exists to build on the current offer and encourage new draws particularly with regards to the acknowledged weakness in the retail sector (higher quality stores and restaurant, cafes and coffee bar category) and the emerging Arts and Cultural hub at the Peoples Market.

3.2.4 The importance of appearance, visitor experience, walkability, entertainment and leisure and place attractiveness are identified as key priorities for town centre regeneration²⁰ with clear benefits for improving the attractiveness for visitors. The Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Strategy (AECOM; March 2015) identifies great potential to improve the visitor appeal through the public realm.

3.2.5 Aim is ‘to make Wrexham a great place to visit with a wide range of diverse retail, leisure, arts and cultural attractions’

3.2.6 The actions and Interventions for visitor attractions are:

- **Develop the town centre as an attractive place to visit and enjoy with new and enhanced attractions to encourage people to visit more frequently and stay longer when they visit;**
- **Create opportunities for a diverse evening economy;**
- **Attract a more rounded mix of complementary shops, leisure/arts/cultural uses and restaurants;**
- **Develop niche, specialist offers, including higher quality independents;**

¹⁹ Wrexham Destination Management Plan 2012

²⁰ High Street UK2020; IPM 2014

Visitor Action Overview

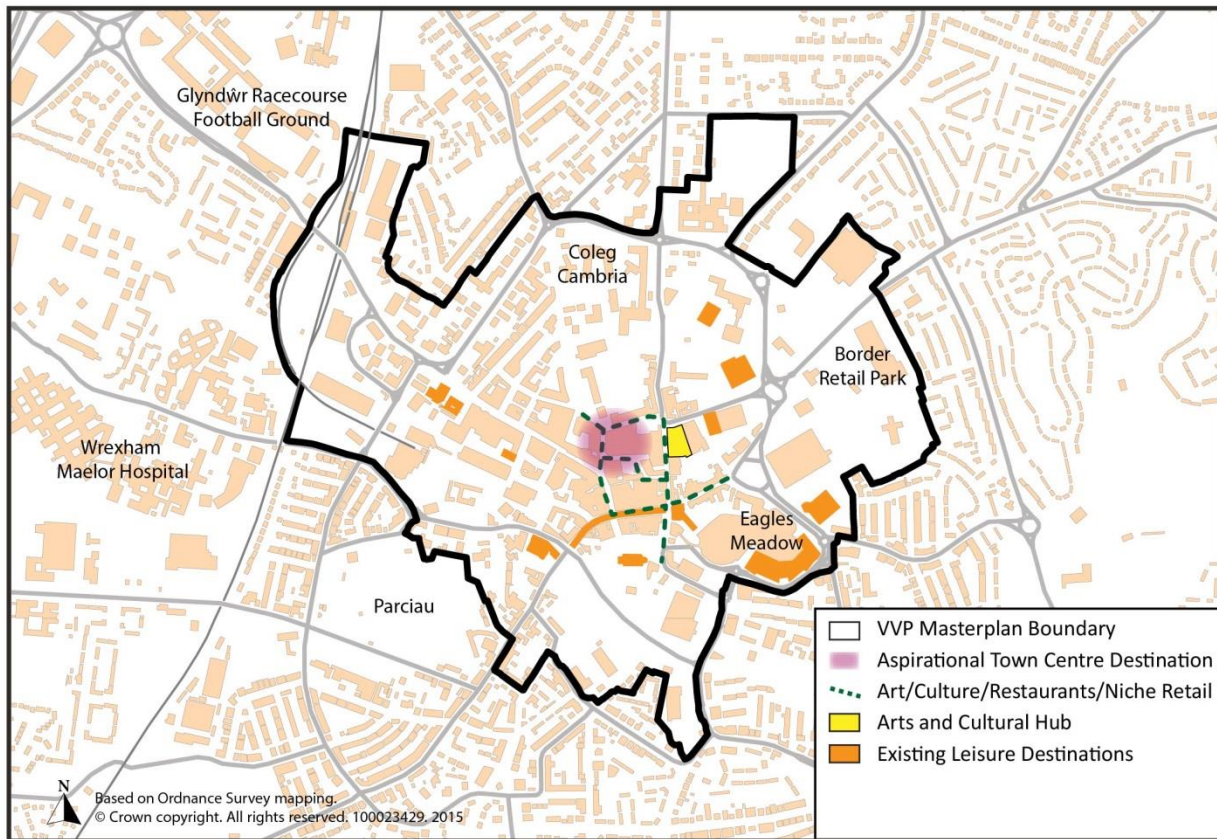


Figure 9: Visitor Actions and Interventions

3.2.7 Wrexham needs a balance between day and night visitors. Increasing dwell time in the town is a key priority to generate greater spend in the local economy.

3.2.8 Arts/Cultural Hub, Leisure Uses and evening economy - An Arts and Cultural hub is progressing at its preferred location of the Peoples Market. This will provide an opportunity for enhanced gallery space, market stalls, spaces for education and learning, workshops, creative workspaces and restaurants. This can become a focal point for a currently vibrant but low profile and dispersed arts scene.

3.2.9 The hub can become an attraction point for other leisure, arts and culture based operations providing a critical mass of complementary attractions which will help support an evening economy. The area around Chester Street (part), Henblas Square, Queen's Square will be supported as locations for leisure, culture and arts.

3.2.10 The hub will be closely located to the historic core of the town which is the preferred location to support niche independent and specialist retail. These uses will be complementary offers and attract people into the town during hours in which it is currently quiet.

3.2.11 Uses which complement the core retail circuit and can help drive footfall through the town and encourage visitor dwell time such as leisure, arts, culture, restaurants will be supported in the town centre.

3.2.12 Retailing - The town's retail offer is an important attraction for visitors, the strategy for retail therefore has complementary benefits for visitors.

3.2.13 Residential - The objective of encouraging more people to live within and on the edge of the town centre creates a vibrancy that is attractive to visitors. Increased town centre residents will bring life into the town throughout the day, evening and weekends supporting existing businesses and create a demand for evening economy services such as small convenience stores, cafes and leisure. It will also give rise to passive surveillance thereby helping make the town feel safer.

3.2.14 A resident population and evening economy uses will help create active streets and provide natural surveillance making the town centre feel safer.

3.2.15 Access - The objectives for accessibility are also complementary to making the town attractive to visitors, see access theme.

3.2.16 Facilities – *Quality and attractive visitor toilet facilities in the town centre are supported.*

3.2.17 Opportunity Sites - Bridge Street and Bodhyfryd will be promoted as a mixed use development sites (Appendix 1) which could accommodate a mix of uses that support the visitor economy, this could mean provision of visitor attractions on site such as hotel accommodation or pub/restaurant.

3.2.17 Public Realm – Improving the quality of the public realm and how development interacts with the public realm will create a pleasant environment in which to visit and spend time and can help diversify the range and quality of attractions in the town, this is discussed in more detail in the Attractive and Distinctive theme section.

3.3 Is Attractive and Distinctive (Masterplan Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7)

3.3.1 *How ‘Attractive and Distinctive’ can contribute to the Masterplan Vision and Objectives*

– This theme underpins all of the Masterplan objectives; an attractive town centre will improve the identity of the town centre (objective 1), improve the visitor experience (objective 2), aid accessibility (objective 3) by encouraging walking and cycling, improve the night time economy (objective 4), provide opportunities for town centre living (objective 5) and support enhanced green infrastructure (objective 7).

3.3.2 The quality of development and public spaces is currently an issue for Wrexham and contributes to a sense of lack of identity. The disjointed public realm, segregated heritage and amenity space, vehicular dominance, lack of green space and public squares are all contributing factors. Recent developments in the town centre, with an influx of new shopping outlets have been in stark contrast with the historic heart of the town both in scale and style. This has disjointed and diluted large areas of the centre and impacted on the sense of place, identity and orientation. It is also difficult to understand where the true centre of the town lies and therefore what ultimately defines its identity²¹.

3.3.3 There are also perceptions that the town has a limited range of attractions, a strong retail centre dominated by discount retail and little else of significance. The diversity and quality of attractions in the town are often missed along with the rich tapestry of architectural and cultural heritage.

3.3.4 Aim is ‘support the Masterplan vision and objectives by developing an attractive and distinctive environment with high quality buildings, streets and spaces that enhance the character of the town, help contribute to a sense of identity and improved visitor experience’

3.3.5 The Actions and Interventions for an attractive and distinctive place are:

- **Create a vibrant and distinctive identity for the town centre that supports the aims for retail, town centre living, visitors and accessibility;**
- **Celebrate local character and diversity that reflects the local area, architecture, materials, art, culture and history;**
- **Create a network of attractive pedestrian routes to encourage mobility through the town;**
- **Use Green Infrastructure to strengthen the town’s sense of identity, develop character and create a network of desirable routes through and into the town;**
- **Enhance the role of existing public spaces so they realise their full potential in supporting the residential, visitor and retail aims and objectives.**

3.3.6 Actions for an Attractive and Distinctive Place

²¹ Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Strategy, 2015 (AECOM)
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3.3.7 A Diversity of Uses

The Masterplan supports the diversification of town centre uses, arts, culture, leisure, that can give the town opportunities to create a positive identity. The strategies for retail, visitors and residential development underpin this element of the strategy and are discussed in more detail in other sections. The principle actions are;

- Supporting an arts and cultural hub at the Peoples Market subject to a feasibility study;
- Encouraging food and beverage operators;
- Supporting leisure uses in the town centre;
- Capitalise on the town's heritage features to encourage use of the town's historic area as a location for independent operators;
- Conserve and enhance the town's heritage features and streets as places in which it is desirable to spend time and encourage higher value independent operators.

3.3.8 Design

The design of the town centre is important in articulating a sense of identity, in creating good quality of life and in promoting a positive image of the town. Planning Policy Wales (supported by Technical Advice Notes and other guidance such as Manual for Streets) already provides a framework for design issues, the role of this theme of the Masterplan is to look at local town centre design issues.

3.3.9 At a local level there are a number of studies and evidence sources which provide important context and guidance in the consideration of design issues within the town centre. In bringing forward proposals in the town centre it will be important to demonstrate that development acknowledges and responds to these studies;

- Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Study (AECOM;2015);
- Wrexham Town Centre Access Audit (Ryder Landscape Consulting; 2015)
- Developing Wrexham's Sense of Place (Angharad Wynne; 2007);
- Bodhyfryd mini-masterplan (BDP; 2015);
- Wrexham's Town Centre Building and Streetscape Analysis (WCBC, 2014);
- Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan (January 2009);
- Grosvenor Road Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan April (2009)

3.3.10 **Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm;** This study provides an assessment and analysis of the current public realm, a public realm strategy and concept plan, indicative design options and a materials palette for future public realm in the town centre. Proposals for the town centre need to reflect the Public Realm Concept Plan detailed below, the broad principles of which are supported by the Masterplan with key extracts in the following paragraphs;

3.3.11 *A new heart to the town centre;* there is a need for a town centre attraction to draw footfall through the town. An indicative redevelopment to create an enlarged public and event space, improved quality of public realm and create opportunities for new town centre uses such as restaurant and café uses and improved daytime offer could be centred around Queens Square and/or Henblas Street;

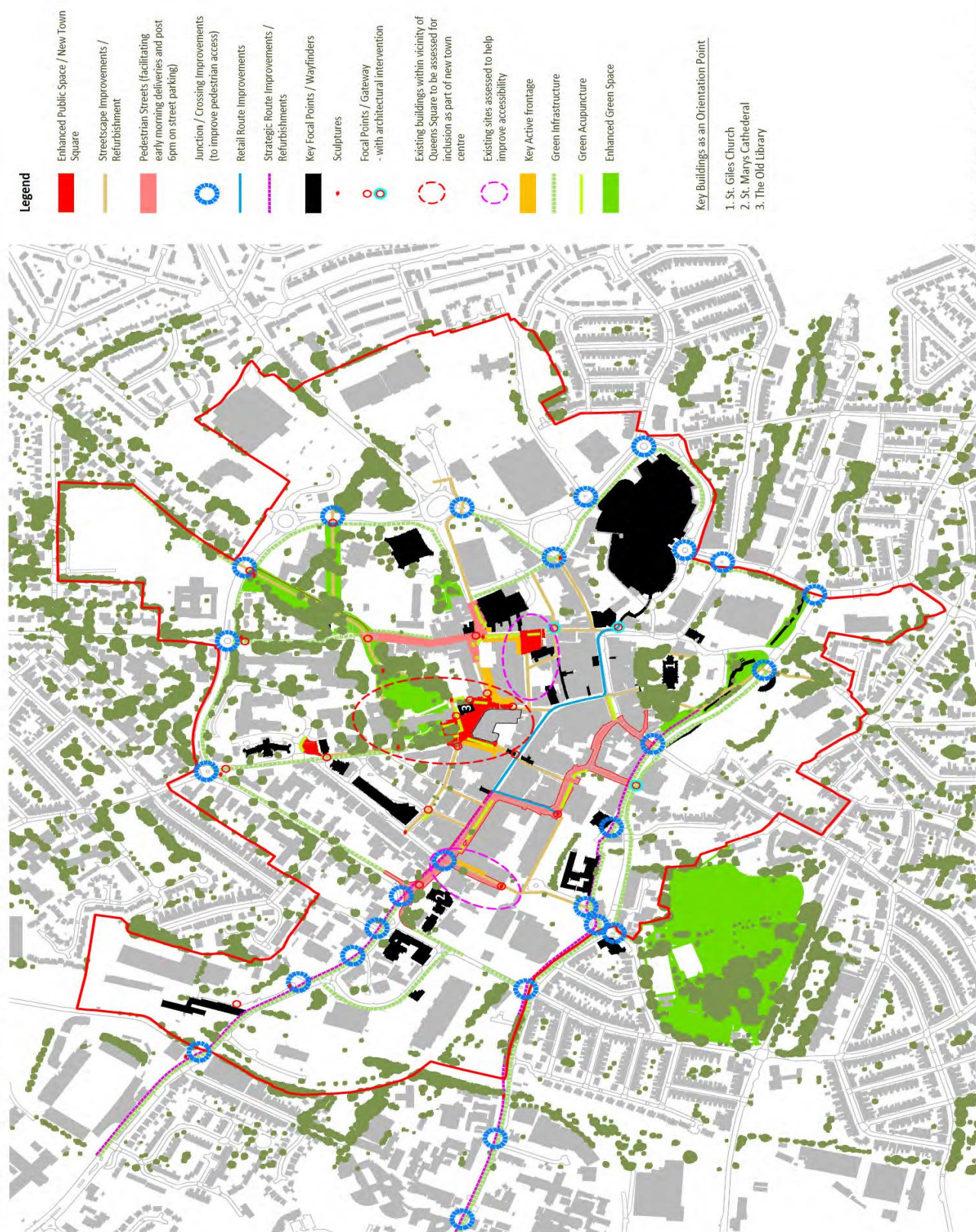


Figure 10: Public Realm Concept Plan

3.3.12 Increased Pedestrian Priority: Barriers to pedestrian movement created by traffic make it difficult or uninviting for pedestrians to move through town. A fundamental principle of good public realm design and improved connectivity is a greater priority for pedestrians, potential interventions include;

- Extending the town's extensive network of pedestrianised streets, these could include Chester Street from Holt Street northwards, Hill Street and Vicarage Hill, Rhosddu Road. This can help link Bodhyfryd with the town centre and support the proposed Creative Industries hub at the Peoples Market. It can also help create an extended multi-functional space in which arts based activities can spill out into;
- Similarly pedestrian routes could be extended to include Trinity Street and Regent Street between Bradley Road and Hill Street;
- Increasing pedestrian priority in High Street will encourage a greater flow of footfall from Eagles Meadow and provide space for shops/restaurants and cafes to spill into the street;
- The principles of increased pedestrian priority are accepted by the Masterplan subject to demonstration of suitable bus services, disabled parking impacts, access servicing arrangements and traffic impact;
- Figure 10 identifies a number of potential junction/Crossing and strategic route enhancements to improve connectivity with the main transport arrival points (such as General Railway Station), University, Maelor Hospital, football ground, edge of town centre retail parks and nearby residential areas which are aimed at making it more attractive and safe for pedestrians to access the town centre;

3.3.13 Architecture and focal points; Figure 10 identifies key buildings, way-finders and listed buildings that give identity for the town and act as a series of focal points, navigation aids and gateways. Viewpoints and settings of key buildings should be protected and enhanced through new development and public realm works;

3.3.14 Attractive and Accessible Town Centre; de-cluttering, rationalisation of street furniture and resurfacing streets will help draw attention to existing architectural features and aid accessibility for pedestrians. Level and shared access streets would create an accessible town centre without kerbs and barriers to movement;

3.3.15 Arts and Culture; Public art in key locations can help create local distinctiveness and act as focal points to draw people into and through the town centre addressing problems of navigation and movement. In Figure 10 key routes and focal points have been identified.

3.3.16 Lighting Strategy²²; The Public Realm Strategy contains a lighting strategy which is endorsed by the Masterplan. Its purpose is to create a sense of vibrancy, enhance local distinctiveness, improve safety, aid navigation, draw people into the town and support an evening economy. It details the approach to lighting of key destinations, major routes, night time destinations, landmarks, façade lighting, heritage, culture and artwork. It also considers the use of more natural lighting, increased light levels, coloured lighting, light projections and filters;

3.3.17 Improved Retail Core; Create a strong physical and visual link between the town centre core, Eagles Meadow and Island Green with enhanced public realm on the key retail route and improved active frontages in the town centre in defined locations;

²² For consideration of lighting and bats Refer to Bats and Lighting (Stone, University of Bristol, 2014)

3.3.18 Enhanced Gateway; An enhanced entrance to Eagles Meadow from Yorke Street will give greater prominence to a key destination and can make the entrance more accessible for those with physical mobility restrictions;

3.3.19 New Public Spaces; the town has limited public spaces, opportunities to create additional spaces as part of a new development would be encouraged. The strategy identifies two opportunities (see Figure 10) that with intervention could improve connectivity and provide public spaces;

3.3.20 Green Town Centre; The multifunctional benefits of Green Infrastructure, trees, planting, green spaces, green roofs etc., offer many potential benefits for the town which include; creating an attractive environment, encourage pedestrian movement, aid navigation, create a sense of identity and increased resilience to climate change. Opportunities have been identified to implement Green Infrastructure at a strategic scale along the inner ring road and other key routes such as Park Avenue, along strategic routes (Regent Street), around the town centre and through key streets. It also identifies smaller scale green acupuncture to create focal points and screen facades to supplement the strategic work;

3.3.21 Wrexham Town Centre Access Audit; this study considers town centre accessibility for people with restricted mobility reflecting the requirements of Planning Policy Wales and the Equality Act. It considers accessibility in terms of access into the town centre, arrival and orientation, movement around the town centre and facilities that aid accessibility. The report identifies a number of policy recommendations and specific public realm design issues. The specific public realm design issues cover a wide range of issues (path width, cross fall, A-Frames, tactile paving surfaces, drop-kerbs etc.) that impact on accessibility, for each issue there are general design principles and identified intervention areas where improvements can be made. The design of public realm and town centre development would be expected to have regard to this reports policy and specific recommendations.

3.3.22 Developing Wrexham's Sense of Place²³; This marketing document contains useful information on local people and history, Welsh language and culture, buildings, food and drink, creativity and arts that can be used to help define a sense of place. These can be used to help generate ideas to inform the arts and culture strategy and the public realm.

3.3.23 Wrexham's Town Centre Building and Streetscape Analysis; this study considers town centre buildings for their contribution to the streetscape, categorising them simply as making a positive, neutral or negative to streetscape (see Appendix 7). This can be used to identify opportunities for development that enhances streetscape and identify opportunities for conservation and enhancement.

3.3.24 Effective use and integration of green and blue infrastructure is encouraged. It will be important to enhance biodiversity in the town centre, features such green and brown roofs and walls in new buildings are encouraged (where appropriate). The delivery of new shared green spaces and an increase in tree planting provide valuable wildlife habitats, natural shade, and water run-off and will also be encouraged.

²³ See Developing Wrexham's Sense of Place (A, Wynne, 2007) for further inspiration for local identity

3.4 An Accessible Town (Masterplan Objective 3)

3.4.1 *How 'An Accessible Town' can contribute to the Masterplan Vision and Objectives –*

This directly supports the accessibility objective and helps support actions for retail, visitors, and residential.

3.4.2 High quality access to and within the town centre is central to sustaining investment and underpinning growth. Wrexham enjoys high levels of accessibility by car, train and buses. It is well served by the strategic A483 bypass that provides quality access to the A55 and the Welsh Coast, Chester, Liverpool and Manchester; is the central hub for the local bus network; has railway links to Chester, Liverpool, Shrewsbury and Birmingham; and has great potential to encourage walking and cycling with a compact and largely pedestrianised town centre.

3.4.3 The increase in density of development in the town centre i.e. more leisure uses, more shops, offices, tourism and general activity will result in the need to cater for more people who will want access and movement around the town centre in a sustainable way with a real choice in mode of travel.

3.4.4 The aim is 'to ensure high quality access to and within the town centre by a range of modes, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, but maintaining high quality road access to the centre'

3.4.5 Accessibility Actions and Interventions

- **Support a modal shift of transport to help deliver growth by supporting development that encourages the use of public transport, walking and cycling;**
- **Overcoming the barriers created by the inner ring road and railway line that inhibit connectivity to key destinations in particular the hospital, University, railway and residential suburbs;**
- **Develop a network of attractive, pedestrian friendly routes and spaces which connect across the town centre helping bind the various parts of the town together;**
- **Manage parking in scale and use to ensure its provision is sufficient;**
- **Ensuring that development interacts and respects public spaces in positive ways which enhance their attraction to pedestrians and enhances pedestrian mobility**

3.4.6 Transport and Access Approach

The approach to transport and access is underpinned by Planning Policy Wales (supported by Technical Advice Notes and other guidance such as Manual for Streets), Wales Transport Strategy, National Transport Plan Draft 2015 and the Active Travel Act. Key local reports are the Wrexham Transport Accessibility Study (2009) and the Wrexham Town Centre Access Audit (2015). It would be expected that development would accord with the approaches from these policy documents and the evidence contained within the two local studies.

3.4.7 There are two elements to the strategic approach; firstly, ensure that the strategic highway network, A483 and junctions 3-6, A5156 (Llan y Pwll link road), and the arterial routes in to the town (Mold Road, Ruthin Road, Ruabon Road) operate efficiently and are able to support growth in the

town centre; secondly encourage greater pedestrian priority within the inner ring road with an attractive and accessible walking network with enhanced links across the ring road and into adjacent key destinations and residential suburbs.

3.4.8 With regards to the first element of the strategy, the strategic highway network, the Wrexham Transport Accessibility Study identifies a range of principles, options and schemes to improve accessibility which would be supported by the Masterplan. The options include; schemes to improve accessibility for general traffic; efficiency and safety of network schemes; improve walking/cycling and to improve the use of the bus. While most of these options and schemes lie outside of the Masterplan area they are of benefit to town centre accessibility.

3.4.9 With regards to the second element of the strategy, greater pedestrian priority within the town centre, this is closely related to the first element; both elements will require a modal shift in transport away from the car towards more sustainable modes of transport, walking, cycling, and public transport.

3.4.10 Supporting Choices in Transport

Supporting shifts in transport from private cars to more sustainable transport options will help relieve pressure on the strategic highways network, it can also aid the release of town centre development land that would otherwise be allocated for parking or be constrained by parking requirements. To enable this, public transport, walking and cycling must be encouraged. From the centre of the town almost all essential services lie within 10-15 minutes' walk including the hub of the County Borough's bus service and two train stations. Furthermore the town centre is largely flat. This offers great opportunities to encourage a modal shift in transport.

3.4.11 Walking – The town centre needs to be designed in a way that is attractive to walk including for those with physical disabilities and non-visible disabilities. Pedestrians will be given priority within the town centre. Connectivity between key destinations must be enhanced to encourage walking as a viable transport mode and to help create footfall that can drive regeneration.

3.4.12 To encourage walking the following elements of the Public Realm Strategy (AECOM; 2015) are supported:

- improvements to drive footfall and improve connectivity; improved quality of key pedestrian routes; increased pedestrian priority of Holt Street and Chester Street (parts); Making High Street a shared space; similar improvements along Regent Street/Hill Street/Vicarage Hill; Junction/Crossing and strategic route enhancements to improve connectivity with the University, Maelor Hospital, Racecourse Ground, edge of town centre retail parks and nearby residential areas;
- interventions to improve navigation and movement; use of public art as focal points; A lighting strategy to improve safety, attractiveness and encourage movement; Preservation and enhancement of key focal points, way-finders, setting of listed buildings;
- specific site interventions to aid connectivity and address mobility restrictions; An enhanced entrance to Eagles Meadow from Yorke Street; Strategic opening of routes from Island Green to Regent Street and through the former TJ Hughes site; and
- using green infrastructure and planting to make the town more attractive and encourage pedestrian movement.

3.4.13 Cycling - The extensive network of town cycling routes are to be enhanced and extended with necessary infrastructure needed in the town centre to encourage modal shifts to walking and cycling such as secure cycle storage is supported in principle.

3.4.14 Public Transport – Bus travel in particular is a significant mode of transport. Improvements to bus routes, bus shelters, bus stops with raised kerbs, bus priority at junctions and routes and information will be encouraged.

3.4.15 Trains – This is an increasingly popular mode of transport, the towns two railway stations are an important arrival point, access to these facilities shall be protected and enhanced when considering development that affects Central and General stations. The experience of bus and rail users of the routes from the stations into the town centre should be enhanced with information, legibility and easy way-finding, improved access conditions particularly at crossings and enhanced visitor appeal (e.g. quality of development, public realm, safety) to create a positive impression and enhance identify/visitor experience.

3.4.17 Parking – Ensure there is sufficient parking to meet the needs of town centre users, including those with mobility restrictions, and to ensure that alternative modes of transport are promoted where they represent a suitable alternative. For major developments the approach is to use Transport Assessments and Travel Plans to assess the requirements and potential of individual developments. This will require flexibility in the application of parking standards to reflect the nature of the use, its location, accessibility by alternative means and any special requirements that arise²⁴.

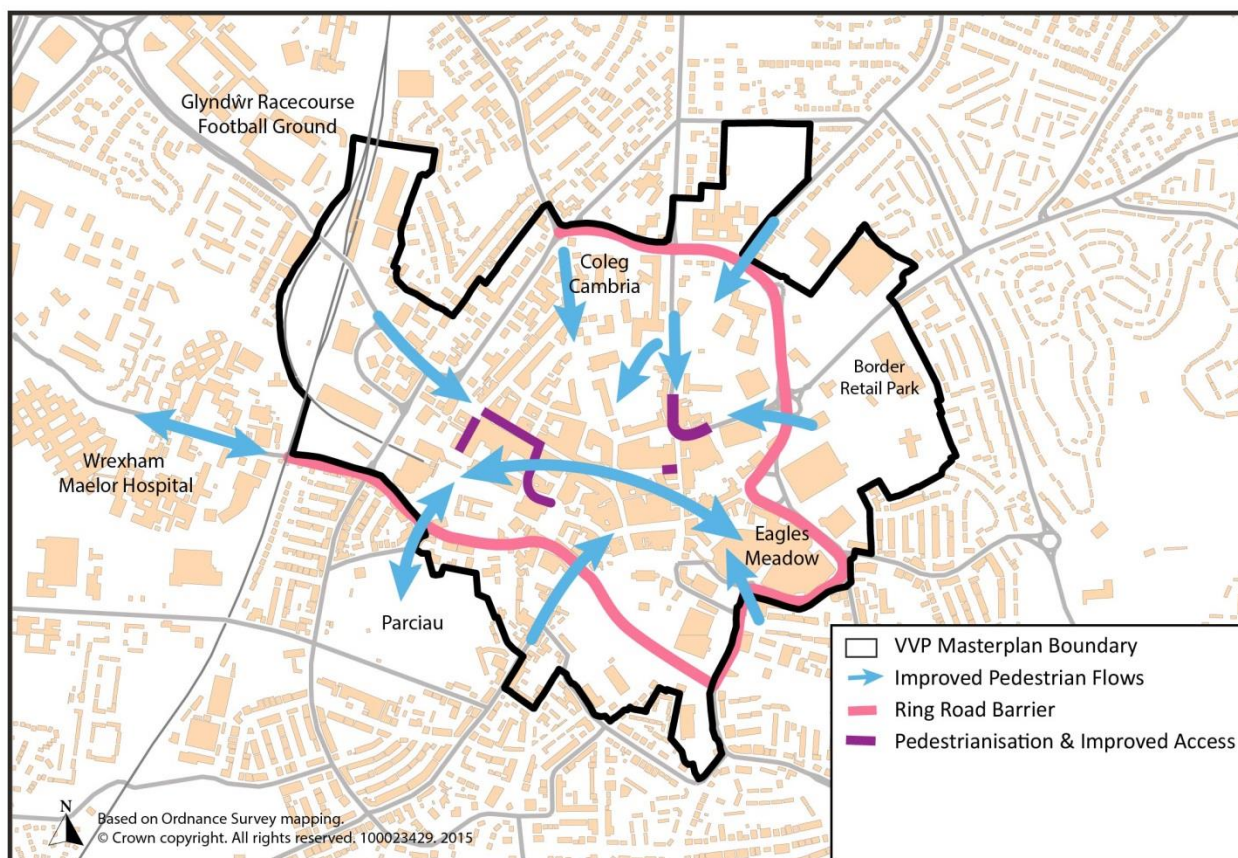


Figure 11: Access Actions and Interventions

²⁴ This approach is supported by LPGN16: Parking

3.5 A Place to Live (Masterplan Objective 5)

3.5.1 *How 'A Place to Live' can contribute to the Masterplan Vision and Objectives* – This theme directly contributes to the town centre living objective by delivering new homes. By increasing the town centre population and edge of centre population this creates a demand for retail, leisure, restaurant uses and other services that link into the objectives for visitor attractions, evening economy and the needs of a growing population while also supporting retail. There are also opportunities to enhance the town's sense of identity through design and place making.

3.5.2 The town centre currently has very few residential properties directly within it yet town centre living can be an attractive and sustainable option for a wide range of people including young professionals and an ageing population. With a number of vacant and underused buildings in the town centre there are opportunities for alternative uses. A diverse town centre population can help bring life into the town, create passive surveillance, support exiting businesses, an evening economy and new town centre uses that can help add vibrancy to the town.

3.5.3 The aim is **'to make Wrexham town centre a great place to live with a wide variety of new homes attractive to a diverse range of people with supporting social infrastructure'**.

3.5.4 The Actions and Interventions for residential development are:

- **Make the town centre an aspirational, attractive and desirable place to live.**
- **Increase the number of people living within and on the town centre;**
- **Increase the number of people living on the edge of the town centre & improve accessibility to the centre;**
- **Provide a diverse range of housing types and tenures attractive to a diverse population;**
- **Support the provision of facilities and services needed to sustain an increased residential population in the town centre;**

3.5.5 Residential Actions

The approach encourages residential development in the town centre, supports residential development on the edge of the centre and supports the delivery of infrastructure needed to support an increasing population.

3.5.6 Residential Development within the Town Centre

Key sites where residential uses could form part of a mixed use development are, Bodhyfryd, Bridge Street and the current Fire Station, see Appendix 1 for further details.

3.5.7 Conversion of vacant upper floor office space to residential uses such as at Centenary Buildings, Trinity House, Halkyn House, Queens Square, Regent House is supported in principle. Currently these spaces don't have development value to interest the market but the strategy for business, retail, living and visitors will help make the town centre an attractive and desirable place to live which will help support an increase in development values and encourage investment in

conversion schemes. Conversion of other smaller vacant units to residential is supported subject to satisfactory details.

3.5.8 Residential Development on the Edge of the Town Centre

Housing development which is accessible to the town centre can help support the town's retail and leisure uses. At present sites haven't been identified where deliverability of housing can be demonstrated but the Masterplan supports the principle of residential development (subject to details) to encourage longer term supply. e.g. Rivulet Road, Penybryn, Pentre Felin, Brook Street, Regent Street and Mount Street areas. Issues of land owner intention, site constraints and other deliverability issues need to be considered in greater depth either as part of a planning application or as part of the emerging LDP, but it is hoped the Masterplan can start to shape future development in these areas. Further opportunities will arise as existing sites will become vacant or underused as a result of changing economic patterns.

3.5.9 Density and High Storey Development

Higher density development and high rise development is supported in and adjacent to the town centre where appropriate e.g. Bodhyfryd, Bridge Street, Rivulet Road/Cambrian Place, Pentre Felin and along Regent Street, with an emphasis on high quality design encouraged.

3.5.10 Infrastructure Needed to Support a Town Centre Population

To support a town centre population a range of infrastructures would be required e.g. GP's, health centre, recreation spaces, convenience stores, leisure uses and community facilities. These are encouraged outside the core retail area and could be acceptable in the core retail areas where they would not dilute the principal retail function.

3.5.11 To support a residential population the town centre must be attractive to visit and provide opportunities for recreation. This will be achieved by:

- develop a strategy for the public realm to enhance identity, access, safety, make attractive places. The strategy will consider the design of spaces, materials, local character, lighting etc.
- using Green Infrastructure (GI) to provide a pleasant environment, enhance the value of development, encourage people to walk streets and spend time in them. GI includes green networks, tree planting, parks and green spaces. The provision of these will be encouraged and connections to existing GI enhanced;
- improving accessibility and connectivity; removing barriers to access, improving the design of streets, creating a safe environment; aiding navigation through the town through design, signage and technology; aiding pedestrian movement across the inner ring road; and
- creating spaces for recreation and play.

3.5.12 The town centre is a sustainable location and arguments for reduced parking requirements can be made. With close proximity to the bus station which serves as a transport hub for the County Borough, close proximity to the railway stations which have seen significant growth in usage and with great accessibility to a full range of essential services within walking distance there are excellent opportunities to reduce the reliance on cars and promote sustainable transport modes thereby reducing the car parking requirements.

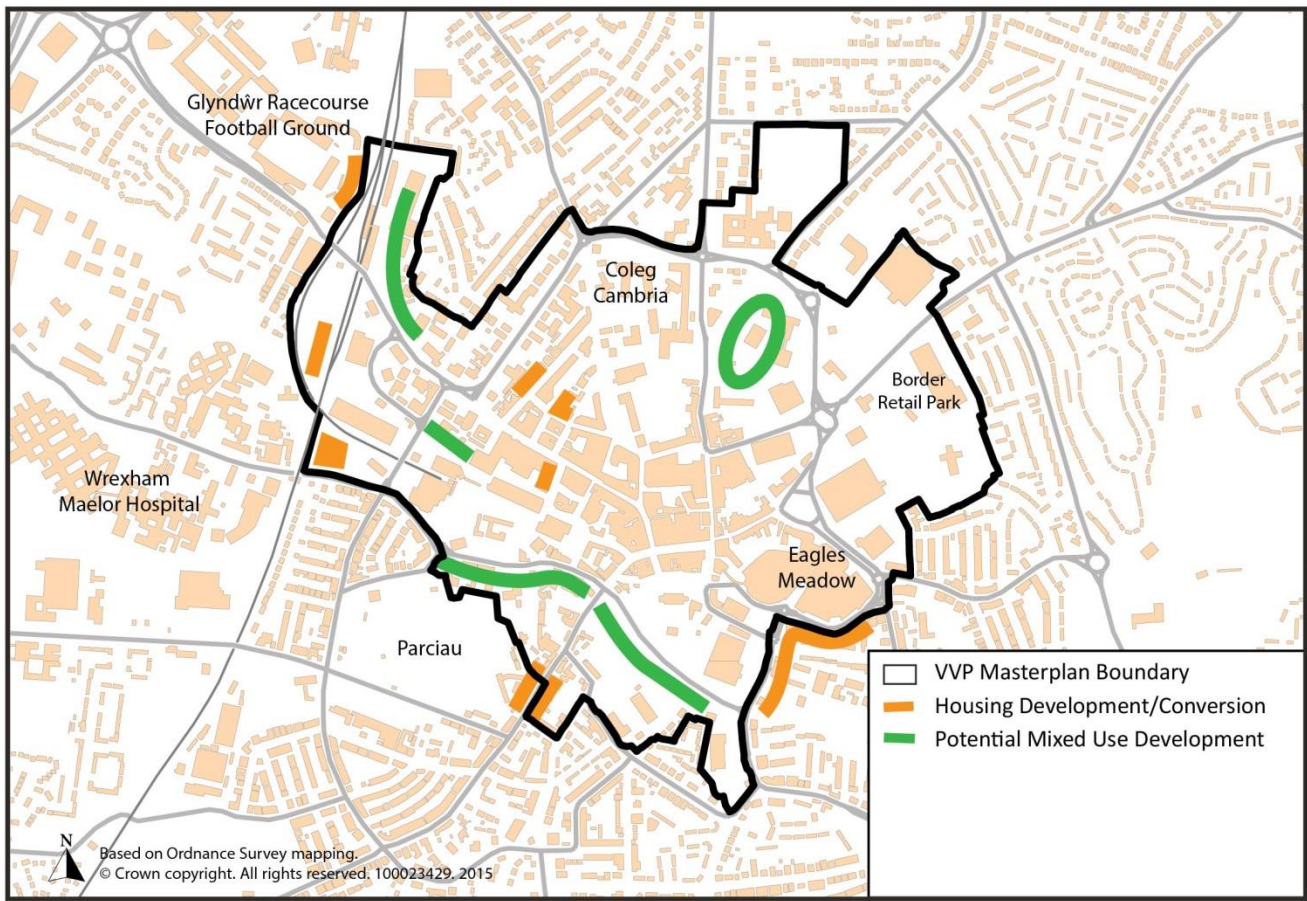


Figure 12: Housing Actions & Interventions

3.6 A Place to Work (Masterplan Objective 2, 4 & 6)

3.6.1 *How 'A Place to Work' can contribute to the Masterplan Vision and Objectives -*

Occupied town centre office space can drive footfall through the town centre during the daytime supporting the retail functions and provide a market for developing an evening economy.

Conversion of vacant office space into residential can help deliver new homes while also supporting the retail market and evening economy.

3.6.2 Wrexham has been identified as a key settlement of national importance, a key regeneration area and key business sector area. The town should be at the heart of innovation, business and networking across the County Borough.

3.6.3 Wrexham town centre has a significant amount of vacant office space, mainly above retail stores and largely of a form, scale and quality that is not in demand by modern office users. The majority of occupied office space lies outside of the Masterplan area at Wrexham Technology Park and The Western Gateway Business Park. Development opportunities for office uses may come forward and the town centre is an accessible and sustainable location for such development.

3.6.4 The aim is 'for offices and vacant office space to make a positive contribution to the role and function of the town centre as a place with a wide and diverse range of attractions'.

3.6.5 Actions & Interventions for A Place to Work are;

- **Upgrade the quality, type and range of office sizes/tenures available in the town centre;**
- **Facilitate the re-use of long term vacant space to more productive use;**

A Place to Work Actions & Interventions

3.6.6 It is not anticipated that there will be significant office developments within the town centre but should applications for such development or the upgrade of existing spaces come forward then these can make a positive contribution to the town centres role and function and would be supported.

3.6.7 Opportunities for office development could arise on the Bodhyfryd site, either refurbishment of existing space or rebuild/extension. This is detailed further in Appendix 1.

3.6.8 Within the core retail centre, ground floor uses which support the retail function and contribute to the streets vitality and viability, for example by driving day time footfall and encouraging linked trips are supported, subject to these restrictions, office development may be appropriate.

3.6.9 Conversion of vacant office space above retail to residential uses will be supported in principle and particularly at Centenary Buildings, Halkyn House, Roxburgh House and Trinity House.

Figure 13: Summary of Masterplan Actions



Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan - Timescale for Actions				
	SHORT TERM 0-3 YEARS	MEDIUM TERM 4-9 YEARS	LONG TERM 10-15 YEARS	
SHOPPING	<p>Priority Sites (Owner engagement and facilitation of development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Henblas StreetQueens squareHalkyn HouseBodhyfrydIsland Green <p>Targeted marketing (operators missing from the town centre)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gap in restaurant and leisure sectorsNiche and speciality retailLocal businessesOperators with expressed local interestLocal convenience stores	<p>Evidence Base informing LDP Strategy-issues to be progressed through the LDP;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Town Centre BoundaryCore retail areaHistoric core assetPromote diversity of uses and evening economyInfrastructure strategyIntegrate with housing, employment and transport strategiesInvestigate use of LDO's <p>LDP adopted 2018</p>	LDP Town Centre Strategy shapes development	
VISITOR	<p>Bridge Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Take to marketPotential leisure and local retail <p>Creative Industries Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Progress to design stageFeasibility study <p>Target sectors which can drive footfall with potential for growth and can attract ancillary related developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Education/Health/Leisure	<p>Deliver Bridge Street</p> <p>Deliver Creative Industries</p> <p>Deliver diversity of town centre</p>		
IDENTITY	<p>Develop Public Realm Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Detailed, costing/design <p>Public Realm-Short Term Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lighting and signageArtsGreen infrastructure	Implementation of Public Realm Strategy		
ACCESS	<p>Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify opportunities to promote more sustainable transport <p>Strategic Highways Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Capacity of A483 junctions and main arterial routes into town	<p>Lighting and art as navigation aids</p> <p>Pedestrian Priority Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Detailed appraisal, feasibility and costingCommunity Buy-in	<p>Pedestrian Movement Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Junction and road crossingsRoute improvements	
HOUSING	<p>Promote conversion of vacant spaces to residential use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bridge Street and PenybrynRoxburgh House, Trinity House, Centenary Buildings, Regent House <p>Bridge Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Take to marketPotential residential opportunities	<p>Bodhyfryd Option Refinement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial viabilityConstraint appraisalOffice accommodation review <p>Develop potential of key edge of centre sites to delivery new residential and mixed use development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regent Street areaRivulet roadBridge Street and Pentre Felin	<p>Bodhyfryd-Site Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Longer term residential, leisure, local retail and community facility opportunities.	
WORK	<p>Bridge Street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Take to marketPotential employment opportunities			

Section 4: Delivering the Masterplan

4.1 Delivery; The Masterplan will be delivered through four inter-related channels illustrated in figure 1;

- Integrating the Masterplan into the Local Development Plan:
- Council Actions;
- National Government and
- Private Sector

4.2 Integrating the Masterplan into the Local Development Plan

The planning framework set by the LDP is a critical mechanism for delivering the Masterplan. It puts the vision and objectives for the town centre on a formal statutory footing giving strength and certainty to the town centre strategy set out within the Masterplan. It is this strategic steer that will give investor's confidence that WCBC will support their investment and reduce investor's exposure to risk. This is critical because in the reality of restricted public funding, it will be the private sector that will be central to the delivery of the Masterplan.

4.2.1 Until the LDP has been adopted the Masterplan will sit as evidence to support planning applications and it will be used to inform the emerging LDP. The LDP will work up the Masterplan strategy into detailed policies, for example, town centre boundary, acceptable town centre uses, planning obligation strategy, allocated sites, retail strategy, design policies and make linkages with other elements of the LDP such as transport, housing and employment strategies. Once the LDP has been adopted it can give the Masterplan added weight as a statutory document.

4.2.2 The LDP will review the provision of town centre infrastructure in a strategic and cohesive way that can enable appropriate infrastructure to be provided while also unlocking development that could be constrained by the cost of infrastructure provision. It may not be possible to viably deliver town centre regeneration and provide all infrastructures needed to support development. The LDP will set out the approach to planning obligations, payments in lieu of on-site provision, identify priorities and possibly set out a Community Infrastructure Levy if this is a viable and deliverable option. The benefits of a strategic approach could be; transport infrastructure related projects are identified that could justify reduced parking provision; the provision of open spaces in the town centre is made strategically and not in piecemeal; the need and provision of education spaces is clear; and the approach to affordable housing is understood.

4.3 The Role of the Council

The Council's key roles in driving the delivery of this framework include:

- Leadership - the Council will lead the delivery of the masterplan;
- Integrate - the Masterplan will be embedded into the emerging LDP which in turn is a vital tool in delivering development, infrastructure and place making;
- Align – the Council can align its services to reflect the Masterplan - Streetscene (cleaning, maintenance, public realm, lighting, signage, materials), Highways and Transport (Local/Regional Transport Plan, parking strategy, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, public transport strategy, Active Travel Bill), Housing (Housing and Affordable Housing Strategies) and Economic Development and Assets Management (Destination Management Plan, Assets Review, Town Centre Management, regeneration strategy, safety);
- Use of appropriate tools – the Council can seek to apply various regulatory tools where they are deemed appropriate such as Local Development Orders or Business Improvement Districts;

- Partnering - the Council should work closely with the private sector and public sector estate managers to support appropriate development and to look at innovative ways to drive forward investment in Wrexham such as Community Interest Company. The Council will work closely with its Local Service Board (LSB) Partners who represent the health, education, emergency services and voluntary sectors, to ensure LSB partner services reflect the Masterplan;
- Accessing Funding - there are a number of critical ways in which the Council can access funding. These include using their assets to drive forward delivery; fronting bids to funding partners; and ensuring appropriate levels of planning gain are obtained from development schemes to support delivery of the framework; and,
- Communicating - to ensure local residents, businesses and investors are consulted on the Masterplan before it is agreed, and importantly, regularly updates on progress made towards delivery. In order to achieve this there will be regular consultations and partnership working with the relevant stakeholder and town centre bodies, together with ongoing input from the Town Centre Manager as a key link with local businesses.

4.4 National Government

Wrexham is recognised within the Wales Spatial Plan as a key settlement of national importance and a key regeneration area. Economic ambitions for North East Wales are intrinsically linked to the development of the County Borough and Wrexham Town within it. Consequently it is critical that the Welsh Government support the regeneration strategy for the town and ensure that national strategies and funding for transport, regeneration, housing, arts etc. reflect the significance of Wrexham. Partnership working with the Welsh Government (and where appropriate Westminster) is required to identify strategic and investment priorities and align these with the Masterplan and LDP. Current and future government funding in transport, arts, health, environment and regeneration need to have regard to the Masterplan.

4.4.1 The current three year Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme is currently supporting the Masterplan through direct funding for the following projects; the Masterplan; Creative Industries; Empty Properties into Homes Loans; Affordable Housing; Private Rental Sector; Housing Renewal; ECO Project; Affordable Childcare and Skills and Employment. Additional Arts Council funding is also supporting the Creative Industries project.

4.5 The Role of the Private Sector

It is important that the masterplan and associated planning policy can guide the form of development and drive those interventions that can help achieve the overall vision and objectives of the town centre. The Council will have a key leadership, communication and partnership role with the private sector while the private sector directly invests in the town centre retail, offices, leisure and housing offers. Private sector utility companies will play an important role in delivering the infrastructure needed to support development.

4.6 Priority Actions and Phasing

The delivery of a new heart for the town centre is a key outcome for the Masterplan, aspirationally this would involve a significant intervention in a town centre site with associated supporting public realm works creating a vibrant and exciting location attracting an enhanced quality retail and evening economy. However, the current practical barriers to this, funding and site owner intentions, mean that opportunities to deliver an aspirational development are currently limited. While efforts to deliver this scale of intervention will continue, for practical reasons a complementary but more practical approach will be pursued.

4.6.1 Lower scale interventions within the Council's control, with more realistic funding opportunities will be the most likely route forward. The town's historic core area as identified in Figure 6; Key Spatial Diagram, offers the most realistic opportunity to deliver a step change in the town's leisure and retail provision. The area is ripe for restaurant and speciality retail, it is an attractive area with strong local identity and heritage features, reasonable quality and walkable public realm, space for outdoor cafes, vacancies, a flexible range of retail units in various sizes and configurations; it is centrally located with close pedestrian proximity to Eagles Meadow and other destinations; and the planned Creative hub could be a catalyst for regeneration. In particular, the area around Henblas Street, the General and Butchers Markets present the best opportunities for intervention and potential impact in delivering the Masterplan objectives.

4.6.2 Consequently Masterplan actions will centre on interventions within the historic core area, with the aim of creating a new heart for the town centre. To ensure that implementation is effective and makes the most efficient use of resources, actions need to be prioritised with the following elements providing the rationale;

- Contribution to the Masterplan; how significant is the action in delivering the aims and objectives of the Masterplan; does it contribute to tackling priority Masterplan objectives and the priority historic core area; does the action enable other interventions to be delivered; will the action leave a long term legacy for the Masterplan area;
- Deliverability; is the action viable; does it have resources in staff, revenue and capital; is the action dependent on other activities being delivered; is there stakeholder and community buy-in: and
- Consistent: is the outcome of the action consistent with the Masterplan approach, priorities of the Council, the Community Plan and National priorities; does the action provide opportunities to achieve multiple benefits in meeting Local and National priorities;

4.6.3 It is also important to recognise that over time the priority of actions may change as finance and development opportunities arise.

4.6.4 The Masterplan objectives listed in section 2 are ranked in order of stakeholder priority from the workshops, in particular the top four had the most significant support, these are; sense of identity, visitor experience, accessibility and improving the night-time/evening economy. The ranking of these objectives will have weight in prioritising and phasing actions and interventions.

4.6.5 Before any initiatives can be delivered, a number of immediate, high priority actions need to be undertaken by the Council. These immediate actions should be commenced within the short term in order to pave the way and build/maintain the momentum for the delivery of the masterplan and those proposals of a longer term nature, see Figure 14.

4.6.6 Short Term Initiatives (0-3 years)

The initiatives below follow from the rationale discussed above;

- review Council departmental and officer responsibility for the delivery of the Masterplan; ongoing responsibilities to include reviewing actions, priorities, funding, identifying barriers to delivering key Masterplan actions, identify delivery opportunities and co-ordinating and monitoring the delivery of Masterplan actions;
- review involvement of key stakeholders and how best to engage them in the future delivery of the Masterplan, where appropriate integrate stakeholders into the Masterplan delivery;

- short term actions that are necessary to deliver future interventions; these can include such things as additional technical studies that can assist marketing, identify costs, risks, identify Masterplan priorities and mitigation;
- short term actions that can make potential development sites more readily available, de-risked and attractive to developers, so that when the market improves the right conditions will be in place to enable the private sector to get involved;
- embed the Masterplan into the operations of the Council, Council strategies and operational plans including the Local Development Plan;
- review appropriate management tools that may help delivery e.g. Local Development Orders; and
- bring Council owned sites to market;

4.6.7 Medium Term to Long Term Initiatives (3-15 years)

Medium to long term initiatives will build on the short term actions and comprise activities that take longer to come forward for reasons which could include; dependence on other activities being delivered first; have constraints that will require time to mitigate or avoid; have pre-planned time scales for delivery e.g. LDP; and need time to secure funding.

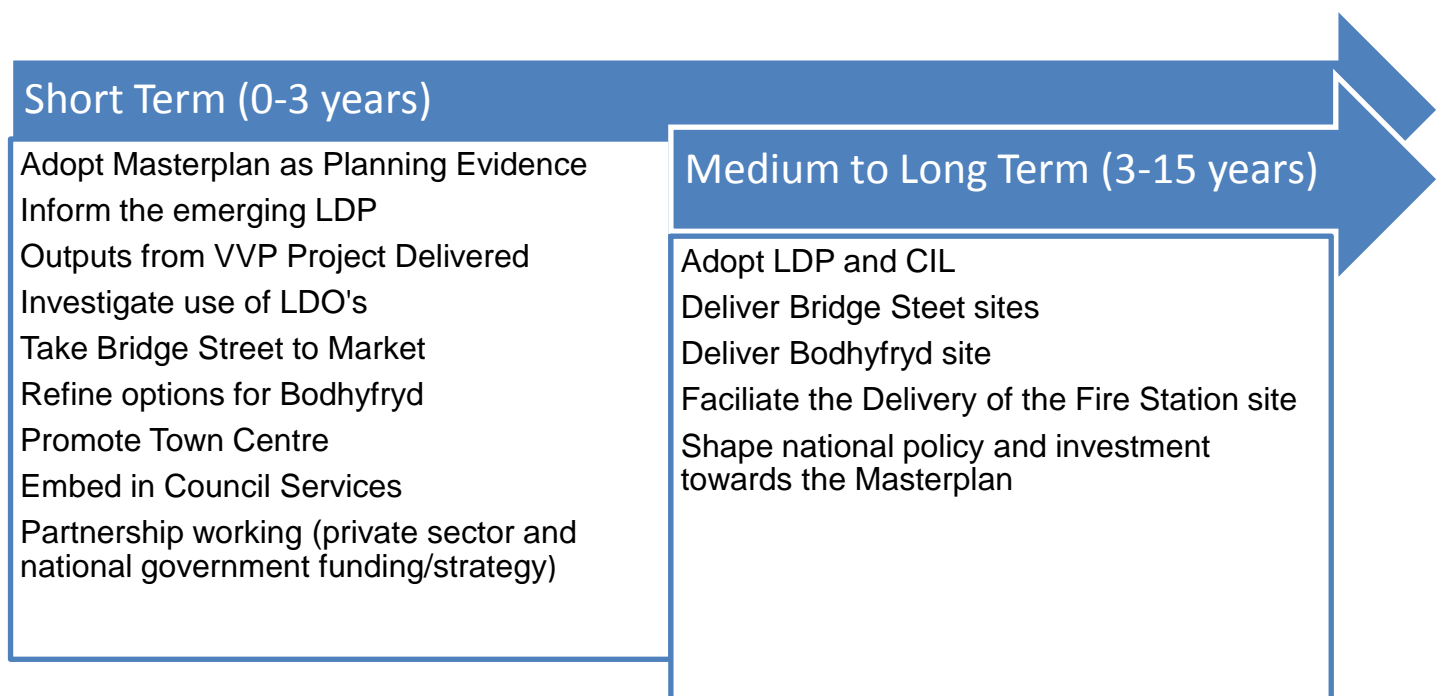


Figure 14: Delivery Plan

4.7 Funding

The plan has been prepared at a time of public spending austerity and at a time of low private sector investment thereby significantly reducing the potential for mainstream funding availability. Consequently funding to support the Masterplan will be challenging and will require innovation in combination with other sources, partners and mechanisms. Traditional mainstream sources are unlikely to make a significant contribution to funding the Masterplan alone. Mainstream funding resources include;

4.7.1 Mainstream Funding

- Capital Programme identifies agreed capital schemes for funding by the Local Authority, though currently this will have a very limited role;

- Capital receipts from the sale of land and buildings, however these receipts are currently earmarked to support the Council's school capital programme and affordable housing priorities;
- Planning Obligations (section 106 agreements); these are received in order to provide for additional facilities and infrastructure demands generated as a result of new development, but must be directly related and relevant to those developments. Current UDP policies allow for the collection of money to provide affordable housing, education capacity, open space contributions and highways/transport infrastructure;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Setting tariffs for infrastructure to help serve and unlock developments. These can be pooled together to fund a wide range of identified infrastructure requirements, this does not yet apply in Wrexham and will only do so after a successful examination of the proposed CIL Schedule that will emerge after the LDP is adopted in 2018;
- Prudential Borrowing – Authorities are allowed to borrow to invest in capital infrastructure and development works and assets, termed prudential borrowing;

National Funding

- The current Welsh Government regeneration funding source is Vibrant and Viable Places which WCBC has been successful in gaining nearly £10.5m of funding in a 3 year programme. However, all funding has been allocated. But the Masterplan can act as a vehicle for identifying priority actions for future Welsh Government regeneration funding;
- The current VVP programme in Wrexham has funding available for the Empty Properties to Homes Loans Scheme;
- Arts Council Wales is part funding the emerging Arts and Cultural Hub.

4.7.2 These will help support development but the Masterplan must generate self-sustaining investment by creating confidence amongst investors and occupiers in the future success and prosperity of the town centre.

4.8 Outcomes & Measuring Success

The plan is a 'live' document, the programme is flexible over time and with the changing economic circumstances timescales and projects are likely to change. The plan does not resist alternative development from coming forward but does provide a clear steer towards the type of action, investment and development that would be most suited to different areas of the town.

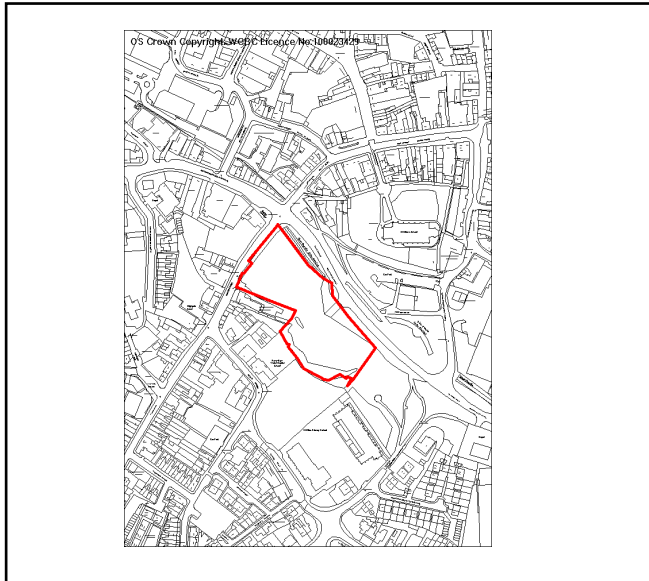
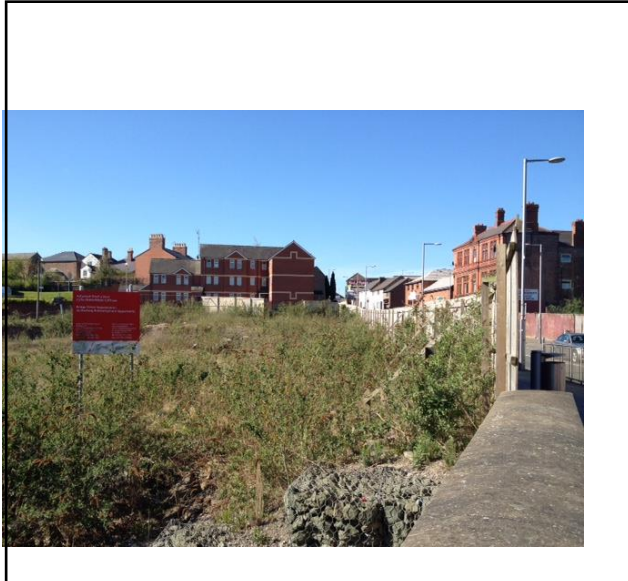
4.8.1 Successful delivery of the masterplan should result in the delivery of the objectives outlined in the Masterplan. As these outcomes are complex a series of indicators will be derived and monitored as part of the emerging LDP and monitoring of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme. The choice of indicators will emerge from annual town centre health checks and other market data to assess the success of the town centre.

Appendix 1: Development and Design Guidance

For each of the key sites specific guidance has been prepared which relate directly to the Masterplan objectives. They give an indication of acceptable proposed uses, design guidance and information on the phasing, deliverability and infrastructure requirements needed for each site. The frameworks also provide key site facts such as ownership, site area, current uses, nearby uses, site history etc. and are correct as of May 2015.

They are designed to give a high level framework for the future development of more detailed plans for each site.

KEY SITE 1 - BRIDGE STREET 1 WREXHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Name of Site/Building

Bridge Street Site 1 (Eastern)

Address of Site/Building

Bridge Street, Wrexham, UK

Ownership

WCBC

Site Area

Total: 1.035 ha

Current Use(s)

Vacant Site, cleared for development

Site History

P/2008/0349 – Variation of condition relating to P/2003/0962 (Outline permission for residential, office, retail and A3 uses), permissions lapsed.

Site Constraints

Partially within TAN15 C2 Flood Zone along northern edge; adjacent to Salisbury Road Conservation area to south, Wrexham Town Centre Conservation area to north; potential presence of contaminates; highway capacity restricted, archaeological interest, neighbouring uses, river ecology and covenant issues (restricted sale of alcohol on part of site).

Proposed Uses

Mixed Use development site including any combination of residential, small scale local need retail, office, community facility and leisure uses

Nearby Uses

Brook Street and Town Hill (to the north and north-west) are characterised by night time economy uses - A3 (pubs, takeaways), night club, taxi uses. Bridge Street is mixed use, retail, services and residential. Residential and education uses lie to the south and the town's retail centre is a short walk away.

Contribution to Masterplan Vision and Objectives

Sense of Identity; this is a key gateway site on main routes into the town adjacent to a historical landmark (St Giles Church) and Conservation Areas, development of the site needs to be sensitive to its location and be of high quality design. Views of the Church should be considered in the design of the site. There are opportunities to promote a local sense of identity perhaps reflecting the sites previous uses and medieval history.

Visitor Experience; the site could be an appropriate location for a mixed use development incorporating evening economy uses such as restaurants, leisure uses and family friendly pubs. This could also be a suitable location for a hotel. Small scale local need shopping (approximately in the region of 300m²) could also be part of the development mix.

Accessibility: The site lies adjacent to the town centre within 10-15 minutes' walk of main town centre functions including bus and train station. The site lies on a bus route with a stop adjacent and a cycle route along the northern side. Design and use of the site should exploit opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes, reduce the need to travel by car and reduce the need for car parking. Opportunities to enhance pedestrian linkages across the inner ring road are to be considered.

Night Time Economy; the site could be an appropriate location for a mixed use development incorporating evening economy uses such as restaurants, leisure uses and family friendly pubs. Office development could help support an evening economy.

Town Centre Living; Residential development will be a significant part of the development mix such uses could include student accommodation, extra care/older person's accommodation and market housing.

Needs of a Growing Population; Community facilities such as a GP surgery, crèche/nursery would be acceptable on the site.

Green Infrastructure; Opportunity to provide strategic Green Infrastructure along St Giles Way (strategic tree planting and use of River Gwenfro as a multi-functional element of Green Infrastructure) encouraged and could be an important element in creating a sense of identity.

Phasing & Key Delivery Agents, Funding Availability & Infrastructure Requirements

Phasing & Delivery Agents - The site is in single ownership (WCBC) and is cleared ready for development. Planning permission needs to be gained for the site. The target is to deliver the site within 5 years. WCBC are the site owners but its anticipated delivery would be via the private sector.

Funding – There is potentially Social Housing Grant available to support the delivery of affordable housing.

Infrastructure Requirements – General market housing is likely to generate a need for affordable housing, education payments (primary school) and public open space provision in accordance with relevant Local Planning Guidance Notes.

Design & Development Guidance

Design Overview; This is a key gateway site into the town centre sitting astride Bridge Street and fronting St Giles Way. Redevelopment of the site should consider the following aspects in the design process:

Heritage Assets - The site is bounded to the south by the Salisbury Park Conservation Area and directly to the north is the southern edge of the Town Centre Conservation Area. St Giles Church, a grade I listed building forms the prominent landmark within the immediate area and there are several other grade II listed buildings in close proximity (e.g. Burton Buildings, Cambrian Vaults). The impact upon the essential setting of these buildings, which includes the impact upon views and the way in which the buildings are experienced within the existing context, will need to be considered as part of the design process.

Materials – The predominant building materials in the area are brick, stone and render. Brickwork is typically red in colour and stone is the local yellow Cefn sandstone. Terracotta is used to provide decoration and adornment to brick buildings. Welsh Slate is the prevalent roofing material. Boundary detailing consists of stone or brick which in some instances is surmounted within painted metal railings.

New building materials should complement the existing palette either through use of similar or matching materials and detailing, by modern interpretation or through their use in combination with the sensitive use of contemporary structural elements such as glazed walls, aluminium frames etc. Surfacing materials to private and public spaces within the site should consider those highlighted within the materials palette section of the Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Strategy.

Historic Street Pattern – This area of the town was historically densely settled with terraces lining either side of Bridge Street. Behind the street frontage the site accommodated industrial buildings including a tannery and several breweries. There is opportunity to reflect the historic street pattern through designing a strong, consistent building line to Bridge Street. Active frontages, especially at ground floor will add vibrancy and create enclosure to the street.

Given the close proximity of the sites to the historic medieval core of the town and given the previous uses within the site there is high archaeological potential of the area. An understanding of how the site has developed historically could be used guide and inform the subsequent pattern of development.

Bridge Street, leading onto Pen y Bryn has a strong built rhythm created through the height and width of buildings. The existing vertical emphasis is enhanced through window patterns, chimneys etc. The rhythm this creates should be carried through but not necessarily by use of such traditional elements/detailing, subject to the design approach adopted.

Building Heights – Buildings within the area typically range from 2 to 3 storeys in height however architectural features on Liquid Nightclub on Brook Street and the turret on 34 Brook Street increase the sense of scale. St Giles Church is the dominant feature of Skyline, its elevated position enhancing its scale and presence within the locality. The topography of the site and the surrounding area should be utilised to support increased building heights. The retention of views across the site towards St Giles from Salisbury Park Conservation Area should be protected - development of the site could enhance these views by channelling views of the church and by creating new focal points.

River Gwenfro - The site is bounded to the north by the River Gwenfro which is culverted under St Giles Way. This natural asset has the potential to provide enhanced Green Infrastructure that connects with existing routes at Madeira Hill whilst aiding water management, enhancing ecological habitats and being utilised as distinct public realm design feature of the site.

Design & Development Guidance

Adjacent Uses; The siting of residential development will need to be sensitive to the potential for conflict with the adjacent night-time economy and any uses proposed on the site that could also conflict; layout, design and siting will be important tools in mitigating adverse impacts.

Highway Capacity: The local highway capacity is constrained therefore the design of the site should reflect the need to avoid overloading highway capacity; opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car are encouraged; the town centre location and easy accessibility to services by foot can promote walking; uses which do not impact on peak traffic flows are encouraged and on-site parking and turning will be required (notwithstanding local accessible short stay parking is available that could support development on the site, especially in the evening).

Ecology; The River Gwenfro is a tributary of the River Dee, a SAC site, development will need to be sensitive to its designation and wildlife features.

Flooding; The site lies partially within zone C2 (TAN15), a Flood Consequence Assessment will be required detailing flood investigation and mitigation works.

Contamination; Past uses of the site may have resulted in contamination of the soils, sub-soils and groundwater, site investigation works are required to determine the nature and extent of any possible contamination and propose remedial actions.

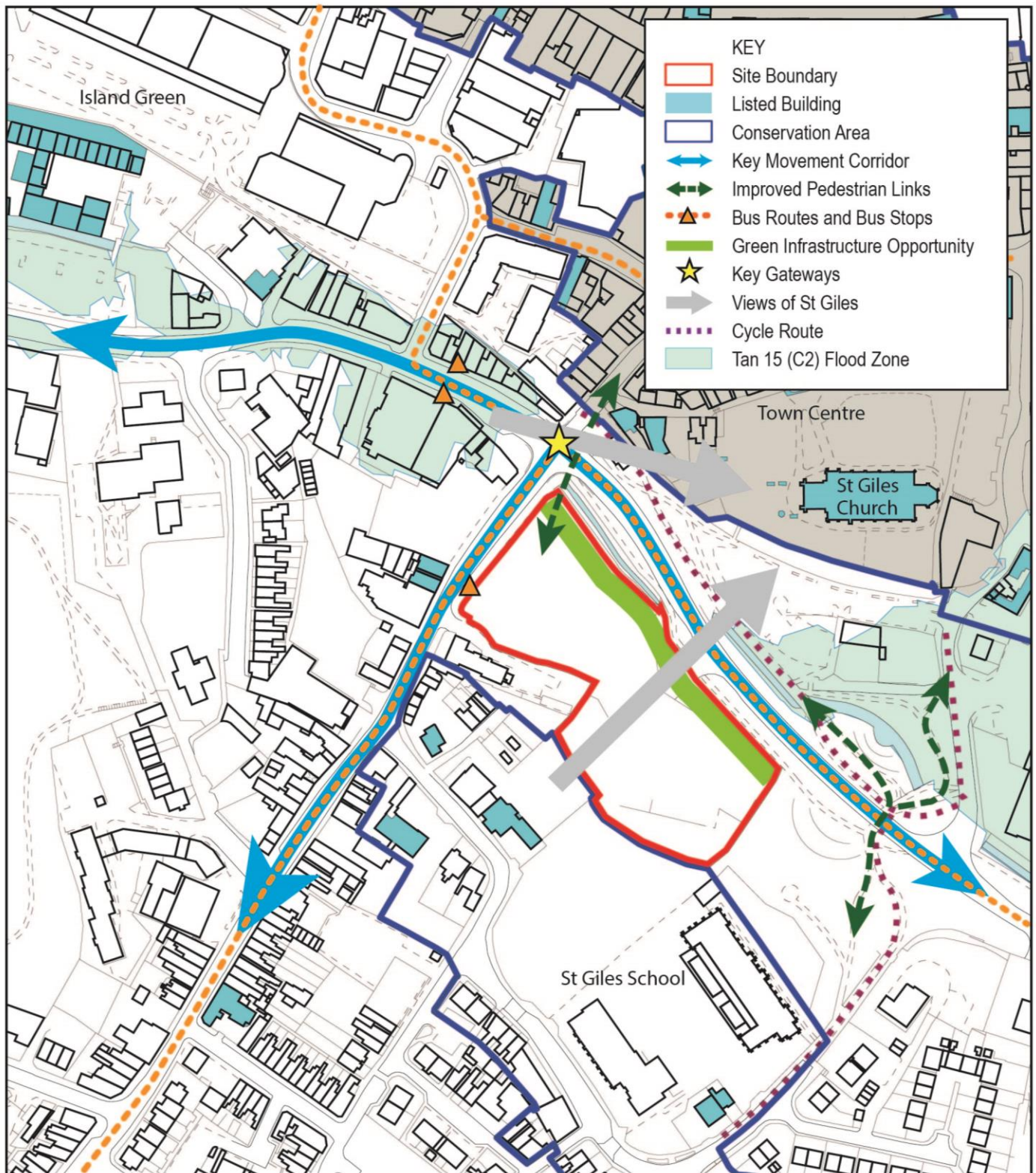
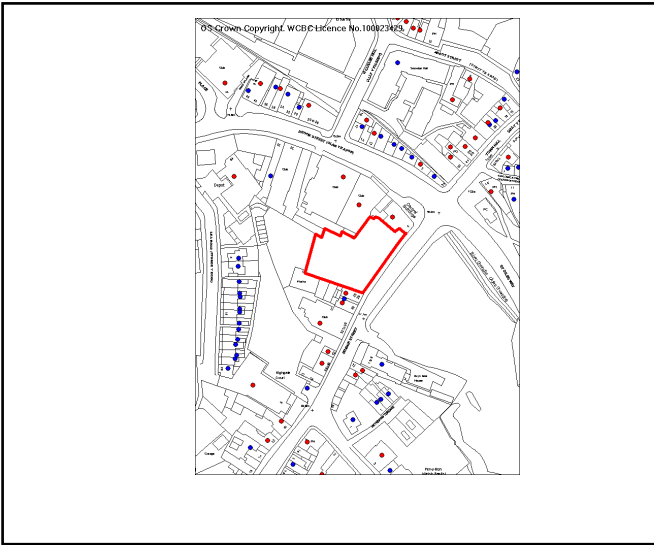
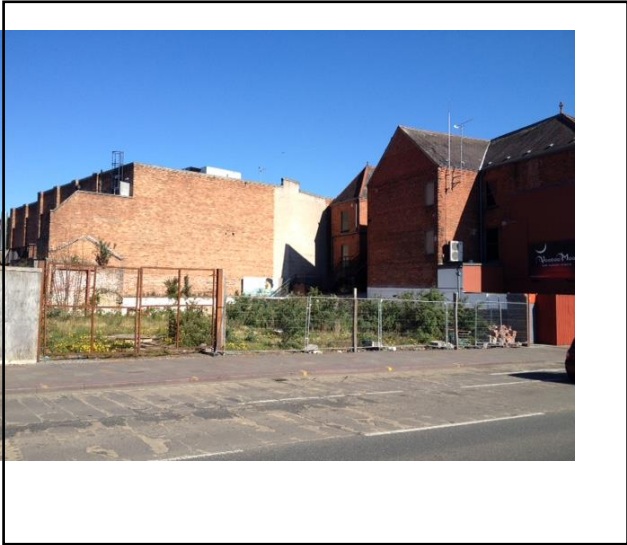


Figure 15: Bridge Street 1

KEY SITE 2 - BRIDGE STREET 2
WREXHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Name of Site/Building
Bridge Street Site 2 (Western)
Address of Site/Building
Bridge Street, Wrexham, UK
Ownership
WCBC
Site Area
Total: 0.149 ha
Current Use(s)
Vacant Site, cleared for development
Site History
P/2008/0349 – Variation of condition relating to P/2003/0962 (Outline permission for residential, office, retail and A3 uses), permissions lapsed.

Site Constraints
Potential presence of contaminants; limited frontage with Bridge Street restricts access options; highway capacity constrained; limited scope to provide off road parking; development will almost certainly abut Burton Buildings, Listed building consent would be needed and the design would have to have regard to the Listed Building; neighbouring night-time uses; partial C2 flood zone;
Proposed Uses
Mixed Use development site including any combination of residential, small scale local need retail, office and leisure uses
Nearby Uses
Brook Street and Town Hill (to the north and north-west) are characterised by A3 (pubs, takeaways), night club, taxi uses. Bridge Street is mixed use, retail, services and residential. Residential and education uses lie to the south and south-east and the town's retail centre is a short walk away.

Contribution to Masterplan Vision and Objectives

Sense of Identity; the site is on a key town centre route, near to a historical landmark (St Giles Church) and next to the listed Burton Building, development of the site needs to be sensitive to its location and be of high quality design. There are opportunities to promote a local sense of identity perhaps reflecting the sites previous uses and medieval history.

Visitor Experience; the site could be an appropriate location for a mixed use development incorporating evening economy uses such as restaurants, leisure uses and family friendly pubs. Small scale local need shopping (approximately in the region of 300m²) could be part of the development mix.

Accessibility: The site lies adjacent to the town centre within 10-15 minutes' walk of main town centre functions including bus and train station. The site lies on a bus route with a stop adjacent and a cycle route nearby. Design and use of the site should exploit opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes, reduce the need to travel by car and reduce the need for car parking. Opportunities to enhance pedestrian linkages across the inner ring road are to be considered.

Night Time Economy; the site could be an appropriate location for a mixed use development incorporating evening economy uses such as restaurants, leisure uses and family friendly pubs. Office development could help support an evening economy.

Town Centre Living; Residential development will be a significant part of the development mix such uses could include student accommodation, extra care/older person's accommodation and market housing.

Needs of a Growing Population; Community facilities such as a GP surgery, crèche/nursery would be acceptable on the site.

Phasing & Key Delivery Agents, Funding Availability & Infrastructure Requirements

Phasing & Delivery Agents - The site is in single ownership (WCBC) and is cleared ready for development. Planning permission needs to be gained for the site. The target is for the site to be delivered within 5 years. WCBC are the site owners but is anticipated delivery would be via the private sector.

Funding – N/A

Infrastructure Requirements – General market housing may generate a need for affordable housing, education payments (primary school) and public open space provision in accordance with relevant Local Planning Guidance Notes.

Residential development would need to conform to UDP policies regarding community infrastructure payments – namely education (mainly primary schools), affordable housing and provide open spaces.

Design & Development Guidance

Design Overview; This is a key gateway site into the town centre sitting astride Bridge Street and fronting St Giles Way. Redevelopment of the site should consider the following aspects in the design process:

Heritage Assets - The site is bounded to the south by the Salisbury Park Conservation Area and directly to the north is the southern edge of the Town Centre Conservation Area. St Giles Church, a grade I listed building forms the prominent landmark within the immediate area and there are several other grade II listed buildings in close proximity or bounding the development site (e.g. Burton Buildings, Cambrian Vaults). The impact upon the essential setting of these buildings, which includes the impact upon views and the way in which the buildings are experienced within the existing context, will need to be considered as part of the design process.

Materials – The predominant building materials in the area are brick, stone and render. Brickwork is typically red in colour and stone is the local yellow Cefn sandstone. Terracotta is used to provide decoration and adornment to brick buildings. Welsh Slate is the prevalent roofing material. Boundary detailing consists of stone or brick which in some instances is surmounted within painted metal railings.

New building materials should complement the existing palette either through use of similar or matching materials and detailing, by modern interpretation or through their use in combination with the sensitive use of contemporary structural elements such as glazed walls, aluminium frames etc. Surfacing materials to private and public spaces within the site should consider those highlighted within the materials palette section of the Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Strategy.

Historic Street Pattern – This area of the town was historically densely settled with terraces lining either side of Bridge Street. Behind the street frontage the site accommodated industrial buildings including a tannery and several breweries. There is opportunity to reflect the historic street pattern through designing a strong, consistent building line to Bridge Street. Active frontages, especially at ground floor will add vibrancy and create enclosure to the street.

Given the close proximity of the sites to the historic medieval core of the town and given the previous uses within the site there is high archaeological potential of the area. An understanding of how the site has developed historically could be used to guide and inform the subsequent pattern of development.

Bridge Street, leading onto Pen y Bryn has a strong built rhythm created through the height and width of buildings. The existing vertical emphasis is enhanced through window patterns, chimneys etc. The rhythm this creates should be carried through but not necessarily by use of such traditional elements/detailing, subject to the design approach adopted.

Building Heights – Buildings within the area typically range from 2 to 3 storeys in height however architectural features on Liquid Nightclub on Brook Street and the turret on 34 Brook Street increase the sense of scale. St Giles Church is the dominant feature of Skyline, its elevated position enhancing its scale and presence within the locality. The topography of the site and the surrounding area should be utilised to support increased building heights. The retention of views across the site towards St Giles from Salisbury Park Conservation Area should be protected - development of the site could enhance these views by channelling views of the church and by creating new focal points.

River Gwenfro - The site is bounded to the north by the River Gwenfro which is culverted under St Giles Way. This natural asset has the potential to provide enhanced Green Infrastructure that connects with existing routes at Madeira Hill whilst aiding water management, enhancing ecological habitats and being utilised as a distinct public realm design feature of the site.

Design & Development Guidance

Adjacent Uses; Residential development will need to be sensitive to the potential for conflict with the adjacent night-time economy and any uses proposed on the site that could also conflict; layout, design and siting will be important tools in mitigating adverse impacts.

Highway Capacity: The local highway capacity is constrained therefore the design of the site should reflect the need to avoid overloading highway capacity; opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car are encouraged; the town centre location and easy accessibility to services by foot can promote walking; uses which do not impact on peak traffic flows are encouraged and on-site parking and turning will be required (notwithstanding local accessible short stay parking is available that could support development on the site, especially in the evening). Any new access would need visibility splays of 2.4m x 33m, this appears achievable.

Flooding; The site lies partially within zone C2 (TAN15), a Flood Consequence Assessment may be required detailing flood investigation and mitigation works.

Contamination; Past uses of the site may have resulted in contamination of the soils, sub-soils and groundwater, site investigation works are required to determine the nature and extent of any possible contamination and propose remedial actions.

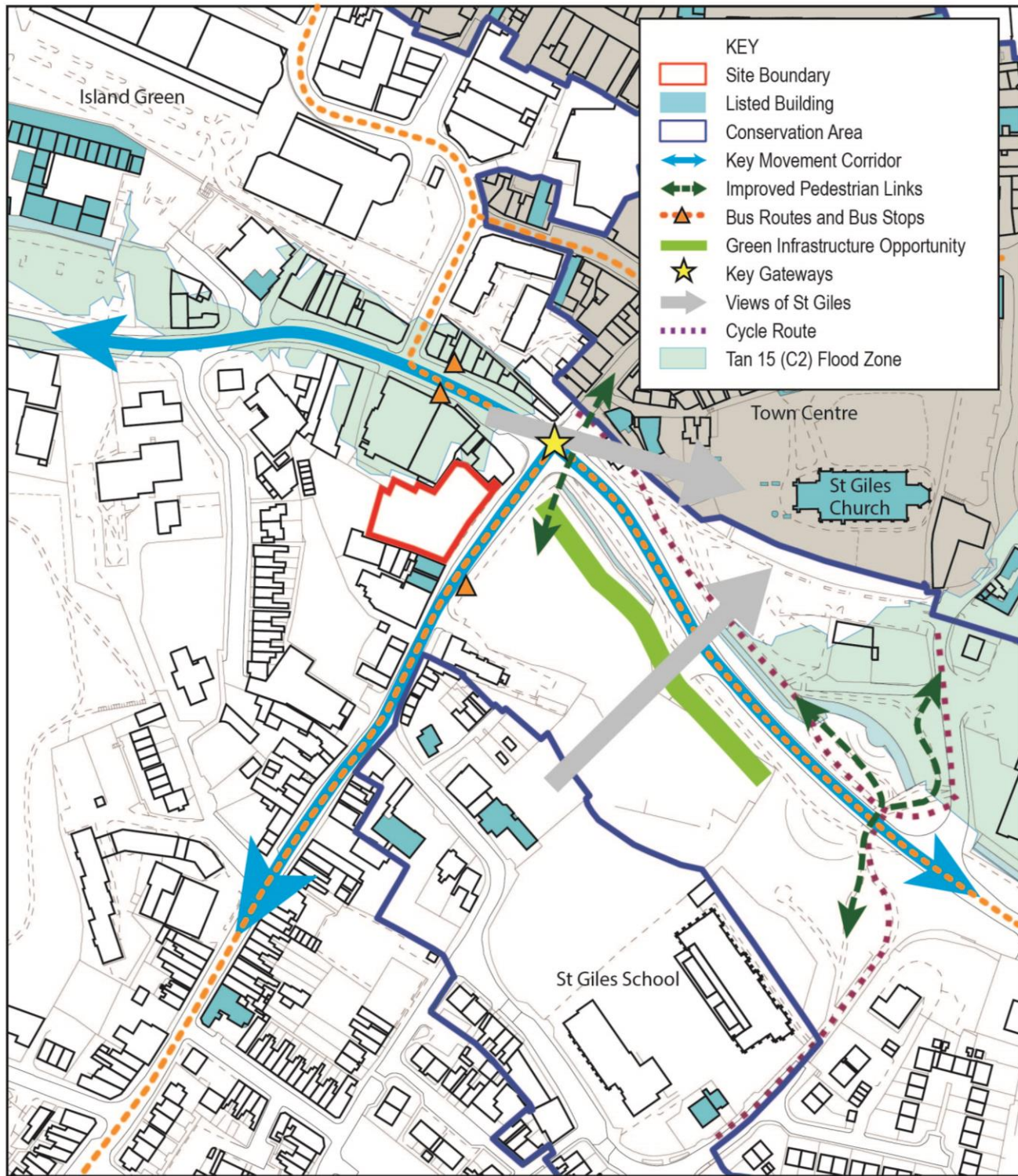
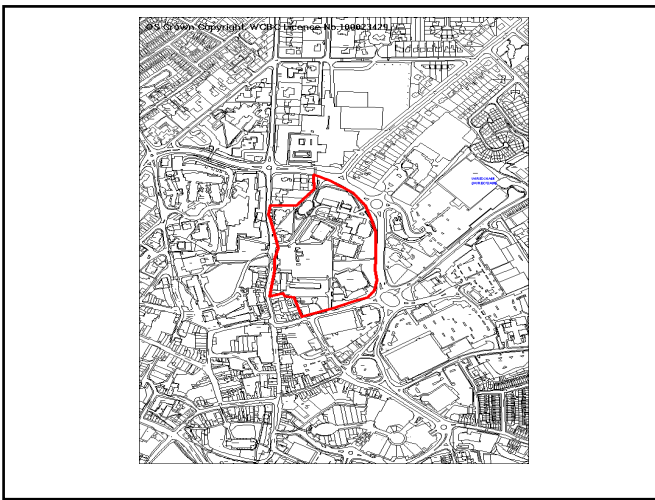


Figure 16: Bridge Street 2

KEY SITE 3 – BODHYFRYD

WREXHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Name of Site/Building
Bodhyfryd
Address of Site/Building
Chester Street, Wrexham, UK
Ownership
WCBC, North Wales Police Authority, Ministry of Justice & Trustees of Capel Ebenezer
Site Area
Total: 5.3 ha
Current Use(s)
Office (B1), leisure (D1 & D2), Police Station (sui generis), Magistrates Court (sui generis), public car park
Site History

Site Constraints
Highway network capacity constraints; pedestrian movement across the inner ring road limited; existing car park use will need management (serving town centre, Courts and Waterworld); Memorial Hall and memorials sensitive, access required for Courts onto inner ring road; compatibility of existing uses may constrain, mature trees, ecology (Police Tower)
Proposed Uses
Residential (between 260-290 units), hotel (c.2,000m ²), multi-storey car park (c.8,000m ²), hot food (pub/restaurant), offices (4-7,600m ²) community uses and retail (convenience)
Nearby Uses
Coleg Cambria Campus lies to the west, land for education to the north, modern retail parks to the east and south-east, civic functions to the south-west and the town centre to the south. The site is also in close proximity to residential estates.

Contribution to Masterplan Vision and Objectives

Sense of Identity; As a large edge of centre site bordered by the inner ring road and key routes the opportunity to make an impact on sense of place is significant. The quality of design, orientation, scale and mix of uses has the potential to make a significant contribution to this objective.

Where the former alignment of Park Avenue joins Chester Street there is an opportunity to create a public space that relates well with Llwyn Isaf and the Coleg Cambria campus. The opportunities for Green Infrastructure described below also have potential to enhance sense of identity.

Visitor Experience; The site can make a positive contribution to the visitor experience by bringing new uses (hotel, family pubs/restaurants) into close proximity with the town centre and by enhancing connectivity through the site to the centre of town it can drive footfall. This is particularly relevant in supporting the Arts/Cultural Hub at the Peoples Market and the area identified as a location for leisure, arts, culture, niche retail and restaurant uses around the historic core and Queens Square areas. The area currently occupied by Crown Buildings is the best location to deliver these benefits and in helping to create a mutually supportive critical mass of operators in close proximity to each other. Office uses would also help support an evening economy and the town centre.

Accessibility: The site lies adjacent to the town centre within 10-15 minutes' walk of main town centre functions including bus and train station. The site lies on bus routes with stops adjacent; there are also cycle routes nearby and through the site. Design and use of the site should exploit opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes, reduce the need to travel by car and reduce the need for car parking.

The retention of the historic alignment of Park Avenue through the site should be retained and enhanced as an opportunity to encourage pedestrian movement through the site from the adjacent former Groves School and Park Avenue estate. Opportunities to enhance pedestrian linkages across the inner ring road and then through the site are also supported.

Pedestrianisation of lower Chester Street and Holt Road (part) would enhance linkages with the town centre and enhance the above visitor experience benefits.

Night Time Economy; As per visitor experience. Office uses would also help support an evening economy and the town centre.

Town Centre Living; The site has significant opportunities to provide residential development to support the town centre functions.

Needs of a Growing Population; Community uses could be met on the site e.g. health facility

Provide Green Infrastructure; There are opportunities to provide strategic green infrastructure along the inner ring road and along the route of the former Park Avenue. There is also potential for a district heat network subject to deliverability and detailed appraisal.

Phasing - The Police Station is due to be fully vacated by Jan/Feb 2017 at which point the site would be free for demolition and re-development.

Magistrates Court; There is no intention for the Ministry of Justice to vacate their property and re-location in Wrexham is likely to be impractical for service and costs reasons, therefore it is assumed that the Magistrates Court will be retained as part any regeneration scheme.

Waterworld; The Council resolved (April 2015) that the existing facility will be retained therefore it is assumed that Waterworld will also remain as part of any site regeneration scheme.

Crown Buildings; All council operations could be relocated from this building making it available for regeneration.

Ebenezer Chapel; The site is currently (April 2015) being marketed for a quick sale and re-development. This may mean that the site is developed separately from the other parts of Bodhyfryd.

Memorial Hall; While the hall could be considered as part of a wider re-generation scheme, the hall is home to war memorials, regeneration would need to be sensitive and there has been no decision to include this site as part of the wider regeneration scheme.

Car Parking; any development scheme would need to justify the loss of surface parking (e.g. comprehensive town centre wide transport strategy to reduce the need for surface level parking, general oversupply of on-site parking, replacement with multi storey car parking) to gain Council support.

Therefore in terms of phasing, the Police Station and Crown Buildings present short term opportunities which could be supported by development of the car parks.

Delivery Agents – The sites available for delivery are owned by WCBC and the Police Authority.

Funding Availability – N/A

Infrastructure Requirements – Residential development would need to conform to UDP policies regarding community infrastructure payments – namely education (mainly primary schools), affordable housing and provide open spaces.

A regeneration scheme would need to replace facilities lost when the adjacent Police station is vacated, provision would be needed for court (and Waterworld) parking, potentially there is a need for holding cells (decision on the need for such is due by autumn 2015) and revised access arrangements would also need to be made.

There is sufficient gas and electricity capacity serving the site to accommodate additional growth.

Design & Development Guidance

Design Overview; This is a high profile and visible town centre site where the quality of design will need to be high. Deliverability is constrained by viability, a mix of high value generating uses including high density housing, good quality serviced offices and retail are needed to support development. As mentioned above, there is potential to increase these values if the right mix of uses and the right environment can be created, to this effect a comprehensive and planned approach to redevelopment of the site is required.

There are a number of site specific principles;

- Respecting and enhancing the strong north-south axis of Chester Street, by ensuring development fronts this street and that where possible these are active frontages;
- Create strong east-west linkages from the bus station, through the college site and across the Bodhyfryd site to the Border Retail Park to enhance pedestrian connectivity and ensure a permeable development. This link should connect key open spaces and where possible active frontages to development should be created;
- Recognising a heart space where the north-south and east-west routes intersect. The resulting 'place' may be focused west or east of Chester Street as the options for the site emerge;
- Respecting the historic alignment of Park Avenue, currently a pedestrian route running north-east from the intersection described above;
- Shared surface streets on the southern section of Chester Street and the western section of Holt Street to improve connectivity with the town centre.

Highway Capacity: The local highway capacity is constrained therefore the design of the site should reflect the need to avoid overloading highway capacity; opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car are encouraged; sustainable transport options promoted; uses which do not impact on peak traffic flows are encouraged and on-site parking and turning will be required (notwithstanding on-site accessible parking is available that could support development, especially in the evening). Some specific highways design considerations;

- Left-in, left-out access to Magistrates court from the ring road required;
- Retain north eastern access from the ring road into the site;

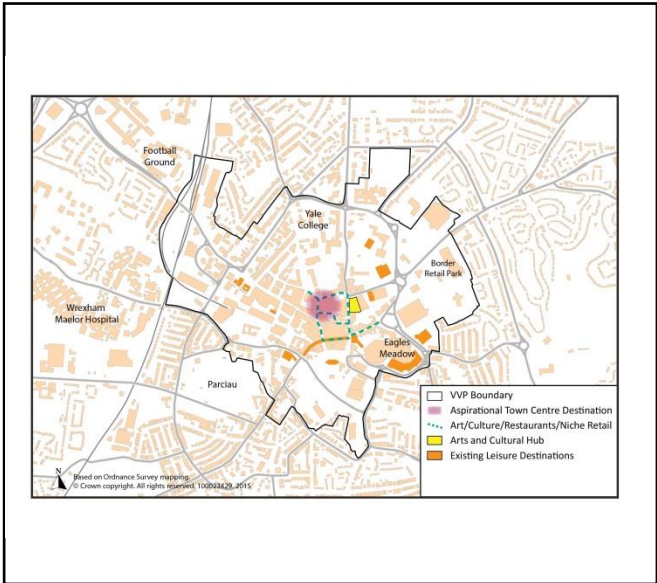
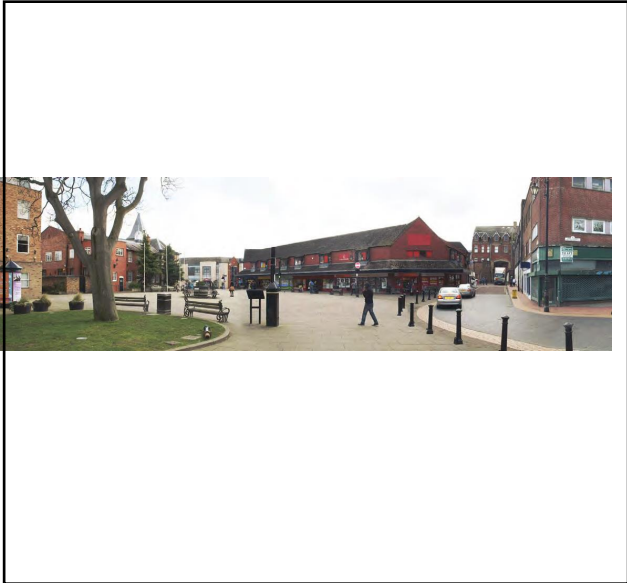
Parking; Bodhyfryd provides a large surface level car park supporting the town centre and adjacent users, any development of the parking site requires a phasing strategy and comprehensive town centre wide transport strategy to justify reducing the need for surface level parking. A multi storey car park could be an appropriate solution and could be combined with community facilities, energy hub, pool car, cycle storage etc.;

District Energy – Once a development option for the site has been agreed a CHP feasibility study will be required.



Figure 17: Bodhyfryd

KEY SITE 4 – ASPIRATIONAL TOWN CENTRE DESTINATION WREXHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Name of Site/Building
Indicative Idea Only
Address of Site/Building
Indicative Idea Only
Ownership
Indicative Idea Only
Site Area
Indicative Idea Only
Current Use(s)
Indicative Idea Only
Site History
Indicative Idea Only

Site Constraints
The concept is aspirational therefore ownership and deliverability are the main constraints.
Proposed Uses
Retail (A1) and restaurant (A3), leisure uses, office (B1), upper floor residential and community uses.
Nearby Uses
The town centre typically has a mix of town centre uses, largely retail (A1), A2 (Bank) A3 (restaurant, café) and civic functions.

Contribution to Masterplan Vision and Objectives

Sense of Identity; see below for details of an indicative scheme; the town centre has the opportunity to make a significant impact on sense of identity with the potential creation of a new town centre changing the nature of uses in the town by attracting restaurant and leisure operators, an enlarged public space capable of hosting regional events, improved quality of development and improved public realm. A scheme sensitive to the town's heritage and architectural features e.g. St Giles church, archway on Argyle Street, Old Library, chimney pots on Queen Street will allow these features to take greater prominence and add to sense of place. The public realm lighting strategy is also significant here for creating identity and aiding navigation.

Visitor Experience; a new town centre destination as described above would significantly enhance the visitor experience and provide a step change in the function and attraction of the town.

Accessibility: The location of the site in the town centre with nearby bus station lends itself to development that can minimise the need to travel by private car. The design and use of the site should exploit opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes, reduce the need to travel by car and reduce the need for car parking. A new town centre destination would encourage pedestrian footfall through the town centre and help link the centre with the edge of centre developments and the Arts & Cultural hub. The use of public art combined with using existing heritage/architectural features and a lighting strategy will assist navigation through the centre.

Night Time Economy; the site is an ideal location for a mixed use development incorporating evening economy uses such as restaurants, leisure uses and family friendly pubs. Office development and dwellings above the ground floor could help support an evening economy and the retail core.

Town Centre Living; Residential development could be a part of the development mix.

Needs of a Growing Population; Community facilities such as a GP surgery, crèche/nursery would be acceptable on the site.

Green Infrastructure; Strategically placed green infrastructure could help improve the quality of the square and provide climate change resilience.

Phasing & Key Delivery Agents, Funding Availability & Infrastructure Requirements

This is an aspirational scheme that could be delivered in a number of town centre locations centred around Queens Square, Henblas Street and Lambpit Street. The delivery of this scheme is aspirational and indicative of the principle of scheme that would be supported in the town centre. Owner buy-in, finance and delivery are uncertain, consequently delivery is long term.

Design & Development Guidance

Design Overview; the creation of a new and attractive town centre with high quality and contemporary designed buildings and public realm has the potential to make a striking destination attractive to restaurant and leisure operators currently missing from the town and it could enable an enlarged public space capable of hosting regional events.

The following principles of the Public Realm Strategy are all important design considerations for an enhanced town centre;

New Public Spaces; Opportunities to provide enhanced and multi-functional public spaces are encouraged;

Attractive and Accessible Town Centre; de-cluttering, rationalisation of street furniture and resurfacing streets and help draw attention to existing architectural features and aid accessibility for pedestrians. Level and shared access streets would create an accessible town centre without kerbs and barriers to movement.

Architecture as focal points; Sensitivity to the town's heritage and architectural features e.g. St Giles church, archway on Argyle Street, Old Library, chimney pots on Queen Street will allow these features to take greater prominence and add to sense of place.

Pedestrian Priority; Improving linkages through the town for pedestrians is a key to the concept, giving pedestrians priority, making it easy and desirable to move around by foot by de-cluttering the public realm, aiding navigation by improving signage, lighting and art will all be important elements in achieving this.

Green Town Centre; Opportunities for strategic green infrastructure (e.g. significant tree planting, play and recreation spaces) and more targeted green acupuncture (individual tree planting and screening, green walls) are encouraged.

Improved Retail Core; The historic core has potential as a location for niche retail, leisure and restaurant operators, improving the setting, visual links and physical links of this area will be important design considerations;

Arts & Culture; The use of art reflecting the town's rich history is encouraged, particularly where strategically positioned to aid navigation and to assist de-cluttering the public realm;

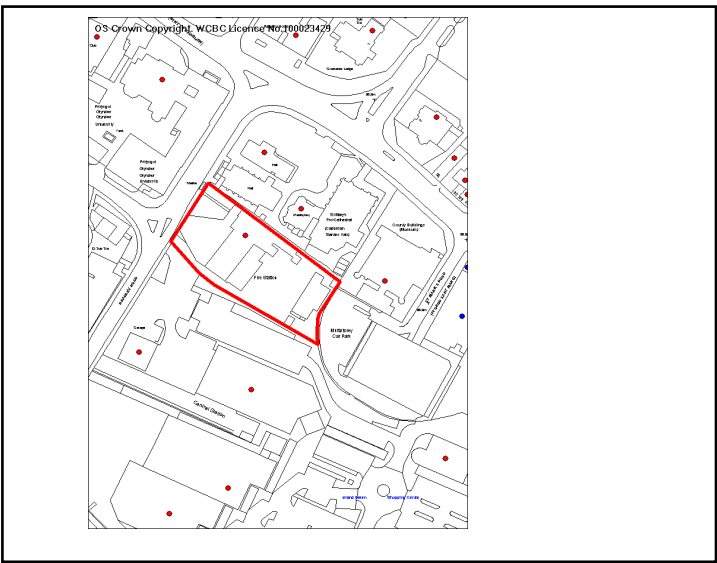
Lighting Strategy; Opportunities to enhance the public realm through applying the principles of the lighting strategy are supported;

Strategic Demolition; Within the town centre there are opportunities to improve pedestrian flow and footfall through opening or strategic demolition, opportunities to improve connectivity through such an approach are to be considered in the design stage of applications.

Queens Square; As Existing / Proposed During the Day/Evening



KEY SITE 5 – FIRE STATION
WREXHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



Name of Site/Building

Wrexham Fire Station

Address of Site/Building

Bradley Road, Wrexham, LL13 7SU, UK

Ownership

North Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Site Area

Total: 0.32 ha

Current Use(s)

Fire Station

Site History

None

Site Constraints

Adjacent to Grosvenor Road Conservation Area and adjacent to Listed Buildings (St Mary’s Church, Wrexham Museum) and opposite Art College (Listed) and access and egress constrained.

Proposed Uses

The site could be suitable for a range of uses including retail, leisure, pub/restaurant, offices and residential.

Nearby Uses

The site adjoins Island Green Retail Park, St Mary’s Cathedral, Wrexham Museum and a multi-storey car park. Adjacent are Central Retail Park and Glyndwr University Art School. The site is in close proximity to the town centre, hospital and public transport stations (train and bus).

Contribution to Masterplan Vision and Objectives

Sense of Identity; The site is on a strategic link road adjacent to a cluster of listed buildings, significantly St Mary's Cathedral and Wrexham Museum, development will need to be sensitive to these. Opportunities to enhance the setting of these buildings and enhance the contribution they make to sense of identity is encouraged.

Visitor Experience; The site lies adjacent to the town centre boundary, there could be opportunities to enhance the town centre retail, leisure and restaurant offer on the site.

Accessibility; The location of the site in the town centre with nearby bus and railway stations lends itself to development that can minimise the need to travel by private car. The design and use of the site should exploit opportunities to encourage sustainable transport modes, reduce the need to travel by car and reduce the need for car parking.

There could be opportunities to enhance pedestrian connectivity through the site from the adjacent Central Retail Park and to link into desired pedestrian connectivity enhancements from Island Green into the town centre and Belle Vue Park.

Night-time economy; This could be a suitable location for leisure and restaurant uses. Office uses could help support an evening economy.

Town Centre Living; The site could be a suitable location for town centre living.

Needs of a Growing Population; There could be opportunities to meet community needs by providing services and public spaces.

Green Infrastructure; Green acupuncture, the strategic placement of trees, is encouraged on the site.

Phasing & Key Delivery Agents, Funding Availability & Infrastructure Requirements

Site is in single ownership, North Wales Fire Service are due to vacate to a new combined ambulance/fire station, the new station is under construction (spring 2015) and is due for occupation by summer 2016, after which this site will be empty and ready for development.

Design Overview; The site is on a strategic link road adjacent to a cluster of listed buildings, significantly St Mary's Cathedral and Wrexham Museum, development will need to be sensitive to these. Opportunities to enhance the setting of these buildings and enhance the contribution they make to the town's sense of identity is encouraged.

Highway Capacity: The local highway capacity is constrained therefore the design of the site should reflect the need to avoid overloading highway capacity; opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car are encouraged; the town centre location and easy accessibility to services by foot can promote walking; uses which do not impact on peak traffic flows are encouraged and on-site parking and turning will be required (notwithstanding local accessible short stay parking is available that could support development on the site, especially in the evening).

Access/egress is constrained by the ring road where there is currently a left in/left out arrangement, there could be opportunities for improved access arrangements with the adjacent Island Green.

Pedestrian Flows; Opportunities to enhance pedestrian flows through the site from the adjacent Island Green, Central Retail Park and into the town centre are supported.

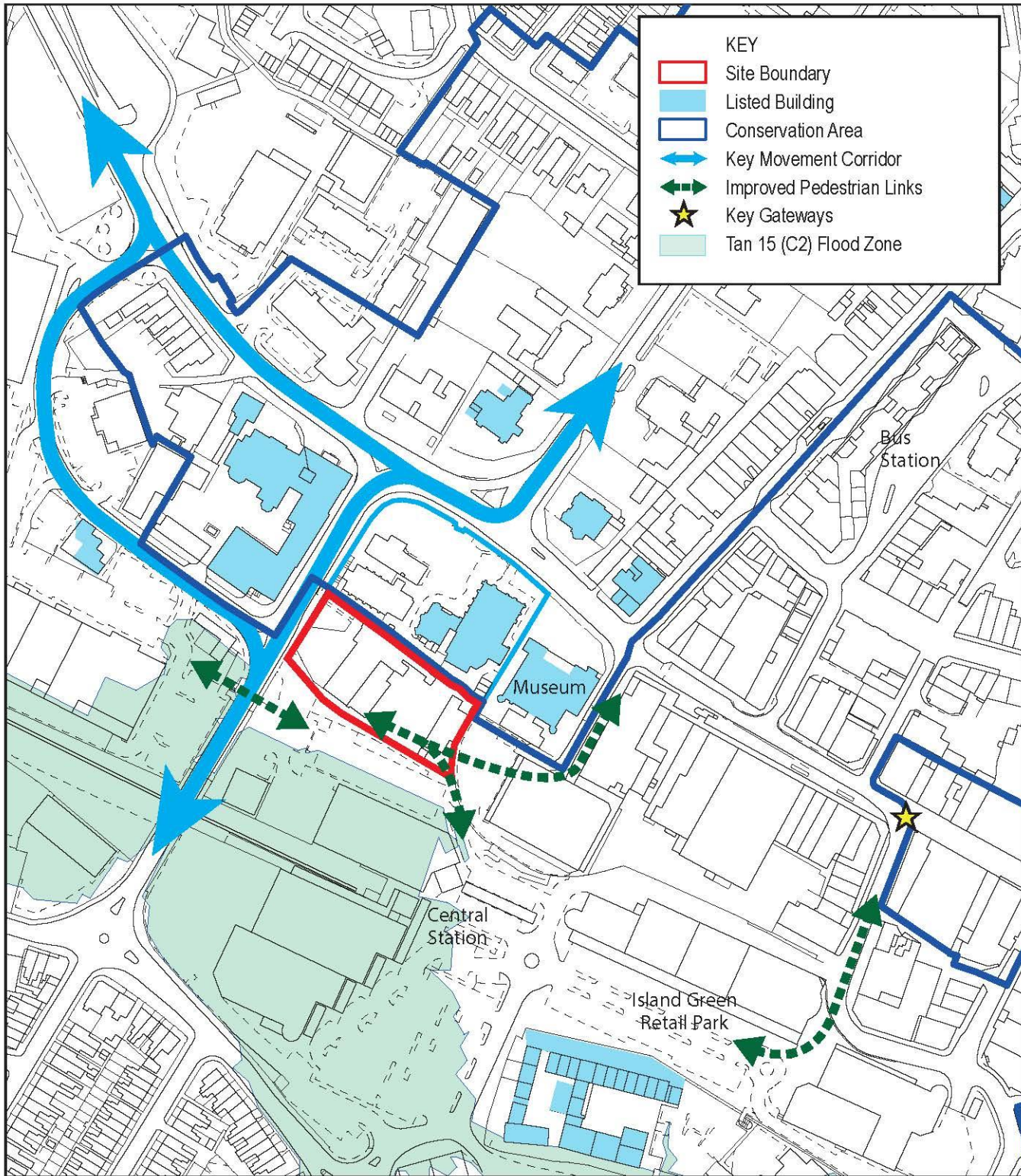


Figure 18: Fire Station

Appendix 2

Studies and Evidence Base

Bats and Lighting (Stone, University of Bristol, 2014);
Bodhyfryd Mini-Masterplan (BDP, 2015);
Employment Land Review (BE Group, 2015);
High Street 2020; Priorities for Action (MMU; 2014)
Housing Market Needs Assessment (Arc4, 2015);
People's Market Feasibility Study (Ash Sakula, 2014);
Valuing Wrexham's Urban Forest (Forest Research, 2014);
Wrexham Retail Floorspace Assessment (Peter Brett Associates, 2014);
Wrexham Town Centre Building & Streetscape Analysis (WCBC, 2014);
Wrexham Town Centre Accessibility Study (Ryder Landscape Consulting, 2015);
Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan; Report of Findings from Stakeholder Workshops (Planning for Real: 2015)
Wrexham Town Centre Public Realm Study (AECOM, 2015);
Wrexham Transport Accessibility Study (Crowd Dynamics, December 2009); and
Wrexham Urban Area Bus Frequency Map, (WCBC 2014)

National and Local Policy

Active Travel Act 2013;
Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Government, ed. 7 July 2014);
Technical Advice Notes 4: Retailing & Town Centres; 12 Design; 15 Development and Flood Risk; 18 Transport; 22 Sustainable Buildings and 23 Economic Development (Welsh Government);
Vibrant and Viable Places New Regeneration Framework (Welsh Government, March 2013);
Economic Prosperity Strategy 2012-2016
Destination Management Plan (WCBC 2012 – 2017);
Developing Wrexham's Sense of Place (Angharad Wynne; 2007)
North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan 2015 (Taith);
Older Person Housing Strategy (WCBC, 2012);
Our Wrexham Plan (Local Service Board 2013 – 2024);
Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (WCBC 2012);
Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015);
Wrexham County Borough Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2013;
Wrexham Green Network Strategy (TEP, 2008);
Wrexham Play Sufficiency Assessment (Abridged, 2013);
Wrexham Play Sufficiency Action Plan (October 2014 – March 2016);

LDP Issues and Options Paper (February 2015);
Wrexham Town Centre Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan (January 2009);
Grosvenor Road Conservation Area Assessment and Management Plan April (2009)

Appendix 3 - Key LDP Preparation stages

Stage	Local Development Plan Steps	SA/ SEA Steps	Start/completion Dates
A - Definitive Stages			
Revised Delivery Agreement (Regulations 9 and 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare, amend (if appropriate) and agree/ approve WG Approval of Delivery Agreement 		<p>October 2014</p> <p>December 2014</p>
Evidence Base (Regulation 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and consider the implications of the evidence base (includes Call for Candidate Sites) 		<p>March 2012 Ongoing</p> <p>November 2012 – Feb 2013</p>
Pre-deposit participation (Regulation 14/15) Issues and Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategic vision and objectives Identify critical issues and alternative strategic growth and spatial options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the context and establish the baseline Prepare methodology, objectives and indicators Decide on the Scoping Report 	January – March 2015 <i>(Indicative dates for public consultation February -March)</i>
Pre-deposit public consultation (six weeks) (Regulations 15 and 16) Preferred Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate alternative strategic spatial options Select preferred spatial strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appraise the Plan's strategic alternative options Assess the effects of the Plan Assess policies or proposals that may have significant environmental effects 	May – 2015 -February 2016 (10 months) <i>(Indicative dates for public consultation October- November)</i>
Deposit Local Development Plan (six weeks) (Regulations 17, 18 and 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory consultation on the full Plan and related documents to allow for formal representations to be made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and publish the Sustainability Appraisal (including the Environmental Report) 	April – Dec 2016- (10 months) <i>(Indicative dates for public consultation November - December)</i>
B. Indicative Stages			
Consultation on submitted new or alternative site proposals (six weeks) (Regulations 20 and 21) Alternative Sites Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the potential contribution of submitted new or alternative site proposals (including those requesting the removal of allocations or changes to site boundaries) Consider representations received and responses thereto 		January –March 2017 (3 months)
Submission to Welsh Government for Examination (Regulation 22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will formally submit the LDP and supporting documentation (including representations) to the Welsh Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the Sustainability Appraisal (including the Environmental Report) 	June 2017
Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Inspector will independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and publish 	(dependent on

Examination in Public (Regulation 23) Public Examination	Test the "soundness" of the Plan	a statement of how sustainable development is considered in the Plan	Planning Inspectorate)
Publication of Planning Inspector's report (Regulation 24) Inspector's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Inspector will present to the Council his/her report which will be binding on the Council. 		(dependent on Planning Inspectorate)
Adoption (Regulation 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making the Plan operational 		March 2018
Monitoring (Regulation 37)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will review the Plan and submit annual monitoring reports to Welsh Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the significant environmental effects of the Plan's implementation 	Annually

Appendix 4 – Masterplan Engagement

Period	Engagement Method	Who Engaged With	Commentary
1 st April 2014	Workshop	Local Members and representative staff from WCBC services	Town Centre Visioning
3 rd June 2014	Workshop	Local Members and representative staff from WCBC services	Town Centre Visioning
Sept 2014-May 2015	Private meeting, letter and email	Significant site/estate owners and agents, developers	Evidence gathering - soft market testing and dialogue
4 th March 2015	Workshop	Key Town Centre Stakeholders – Business Groups	Vision, objectives and Strategy Testing
11 th March 2015	Workshop	Key Town Centre Stakeholders – Community Groups	Vision, objectives and Strategy Testing
During 2013-2015	Various	Various – businesses, residents	LDP evidence gathering for Employment Land Review, Housing Market Needs Assessment
Public Consultation	Various	Public	Invite Comment on Draft Masterplan

Appendix 5 – Relationship with the Council Plan

The Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan supports the 3 interlinked objectives of Our Wrexham Plan (Wrexham Local Service Board, 2013 – 2024)

1. Making Wrexham a place where people can live independently and are healthy and active;
2. Making Wrexham a place with a strong, resilient and responsible economy; and
3. Making Wrexham a place that's safe and where everyone feels included;

Each of these objectives have a number of associated objectives but it is only the land use implications of the objectives identified in Our Wrexham Plan which can be influenced by the Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan. The relevant objectives for each priority identified above are as follows

1. More people will:

- feel good about themselves, and life in general;
- exercise! Make use of leisure opportunities;
- say their home meets their needs; and
- get the help they need to live in their own home.

2. More people will:

- feel Wrexham town centre is a happening place. Modern. Full of energy;
- have confidence in Wrexham County Borough. As a place to live, work, learn and visit;
- visit here and spend money;
- achieve their potential;
- have a Certificate of Higher Education or equivalent. and;

There will be more:

- new businesses starting up or locating to Wrexham County Borough;
- quality, long-term jobs;
- Households in Wrexham County Borough with sufficient income;
- access to learning and well-paid jobs;
- graduates living and working here; and
- support to help businesses adapt to economic change.

3. More people will:

- feel safe in Wrexham; and
- feel they belong in their neighbourhood and Wrexham County Borough.

Appendix 6 – Summary Review of Evidence Base

Wrexham Retail Assessment, Peter Brett Associates, 2014

- The opening of Eagles Meadow has significantly expanded the quantity and quality of retail offer strengthening the town's regional position;
- Wrexham has a strong retail offer and performs an important sub-regional function. The diversity of uses is good and in quantitative terms there is a strong comparison and convenience offer;
- The town centre has a strong retail core with a diverse range of retailers and retail sectors present. But there is an identified gap in the retail provision of quality independent retailers, restaurants and cafes;
- Discount and value retailers play an important function in the town but dominate areas of the town and perceptions of the towns offer;
- Weaker parts of the town centre no longer serve the function as primary shopping areas and some areas no longer function as shopping areas; flexibility of uses in these weaker areas to be supported;
- There is a requirement for additional comparison and convenience floorspace during the plan period (2013-2018);

- The recommended strategy is to concentrate additional comparison provision within the shopping area of Wrexham Town Centre, in particular, Island Green Retail Park and the area around St Giles Church. Island Green offers opportunities for higher density development and the area around St Giles provides opportunities for improvements in the quality of retail offer;
- There may be opportunities for additional top-up convenience shopping to support improvements in the quality of the town centre offer;
- Recommend the existing boundary of the shopping area to be amended to include Eagles Meadow and the commercial units on Smithfield Road and Mount Street;
- Recommend changes to principal shopping streets to include linking sections of High Street, Yorke Street and Chester Street to connect Eagles Meadow with Hope Street, Bank Street and Henblas Square thus strengthening the retail circuit and the town centre;
- Food and beverage (F&B) operators are a significant growth market across the country and Wrexham has an identified weakness in this sector;
- Vacancy levels are 15.6% against a national average of 12.6% (July 2013); and
- There are national structural changes in the retail industry which are impacting on the demand for retail space in Wrexham; a polarisation trend leading to fewer but larger stores in fewer centres; growth of internet challenging the high street; growth of value retailing; and changes in convenience shopping habits.

Wrexham Public Realm Strategy (AECOM, 2015)

- The public realm is disjointed, has vehicular dominance and lacks green space and public squares. Recent retail development contrast starkly with the historic heart of the town both in scale and style. This has disjointed and diluted large areas of the centre and impacted on the sense of place, identity and orientation as well as drawing away key stores and revenue. It is also difficult to understand where the true centre of the town lies.

Masterplan Workshop Report of Findings (Planning for Real, 2015)

- There is a sense that the town is 'Anywhere Town', lacks a 'Unique Selling Point' and lacks a sense of identity. Developing retail, leisure, cultural attractions, public realm and development that reflects local character and culture will help address this;
- The town centre is stretched with Island Green at one end and Eagles Meadow at the other with a number of edge of centre retail parks, these contribute to a spread out retail areas which thinly spreads shoppers across the town and poor linkages;
- After daytime hours there is no evening economy in the traditional town centre;
- Attractive public realm is important in encouraging visitors into the town and encouraging them to stay;
- Value and discount retailing dominate parts of the town centre, leading to a perception that these types of retailers dominate the town, enhancing and developing an independent retail sector (of which the town has a gap in the provision) will help address this;
- There are a number of positive attributes that have low visibility but could with a higher profile have a significant and positive impact on the perception of the towns identity, e.g. a strong musical and visual arts scene, a long history of local market trading, conservation and heritage assets, a cultural identity as a Welsh border town with an industrial legacy, and a record of innovation;
- The town has significant nationally and locally important heritage and conservation features that are unique to Wrexham and its sense of place, e.g. St Giles Church and the historic core. Local culture and history can be used to reinforce a sense of identity in a sense of civic pride the town;
- There is a palette of materials, colours and architectural styles and details that could be used to reinforce a sense of identity;
- Key gateways and routes in to the town are important in establishing identity;

- Green infrastructure can be used to provide a positive environment in which to live, shop and visit and help differentiate the town from competing destinations such as Chester and Shrewsbury;
- It can be difficult to find a way around the town centre, this is especially difficult for visitors and a barrier to drawing people into the town;
- Accessibility to regional and national transport links are excellent;
- There are areas and vacant properties within the town centre that are weak in terms of contributing vitality and vibrancy to the town that could find more productive uses without compromising the towns retail and service functions;
- There are buildings in the town centre that could be re-developed to improve the towns character;
- This would support existing businesses in the town and support the proposals to diversify the role and function of the town centre with an improved leisure, retail and evening economy;
- Similarly to the points above, more people living on the edge of the town centre can help support the diversification of the town's retail and leisure offer;
- There are areas and sites around the town centre that could deliver housing;
- Bringing people into the town centre to live will bring a demand for services and facilities that perhaps previously would not be present e.g. doctors surgeries, medical facilities and places to spend leisure time including parks and gardens. These will be required to make the town an attractive place to live;
- These can help provide productive use for vacant and underused sites;
- Some of these facilities could have value in driving footfall through the town centre and primary shopping areas;
- The design and quality of development needs to have a softer and more human scale to provide a pleasant environment in which it is desirable and aspirational to live;
- Highways need to be less dominated by traffic movement and more pedestrian focussed making it an accessible place for pedestrians to visit and get around;
- The provision of green networks and green infrastructure needs to improve to provide opportunities for residents to relax and walk;
- Making the town an attractive place to live can give investor's confidence that there is development value to provide housing;
- The town has to be perceived to be safe and the impact on residential uses with disturbances such as noise arising from deliveries, traffic, and evening/night time economies needs to be managed;

Peoples Market Feasibility Study (Ash Sakula, 2014)

- Welsh Government view arts and culture as a key driver for renewal;
- Wrexham Destination Management Plan identifies Wrexham as a key destination to grow its offer;
- The Arts Council recognises Wrexham as a strategically important location for the Arts;
- There is a promising local art scene hampered by limited facilities; Oriel Wreccsam is not fit for purpose;
- There is a strong visual arts and music background with University courses, pop-up events and exhibitions/conferences;
- There is audience demand with room to grow;
- Wrexham is well located with a significant catchment area, there is a good road network and easy access from major population centres, particularly North West England. It is also en-route for visitors to other parts of Wales, especially Snowdonia;
- Wrexham is the largest town in North Wales;

Wrexham Transport Accessibility Study (Crowd Dynamics, 2009)

- The strategic highway A483 junctions 3-6, and the arterial routes into the town are operating at or beyond capacity;
- Generally the town centre is readily accessible by all key modes;
- Wrexham is fortunate in having both a high quality western bypass (A483) and northern bypass (A5156). These routes carry large volumes of traffic and reduce traffic volumes on the less suitable urban roads;
- Car travel into and out of the town centre is still relatively uncongested when compared with other towns and cities of similar size but continued growth will add pressure to local networks;
- There are several 'hotspots' of congestion in particular along Grosvenor Road and Mold Road, Plas Coch Roundabout and the A541 and A525 interchanges. However the duration of this congestion is limited;
- As a consequence Wrexham Town Centre is less 'sustainable' than for example Chester City Centre, 11% more people drive to work in Wrexham Town Centre than to Chester City Centre;
- Existing bus services into Wrexham Town Centre are comprehensive with approximately 60 buses per hour serving the town centre. However evening and Sunday services are poor;
- Considerable effort has been put into cycling facilities. However the cycle network remains fragmented. Crossings of the rail line and Inner Ring Road for both cyclists and pedestrians are very poor;
- Walking access to many of the town's key destinations is impeded by designing highways around vehicular movements rather than pedestrians. In particular access from the town centre to the Railway, University, hospital, Groves Campus for Coleg Cambria, edge of centre retail developments at Asda, Tesco and Central Retail Park is difficult and unattractive for pedestrians;
- Walking and cycling access from the edge of town residential suburbs into the town is difficult and unattractive for pedestrians e.g. from Acton, Maesydre, Caia Park, Penybryn, Rhosddu;
- Significant population and household growth is predicted over the LDP Plan period of 2013-2028;
- There is a need to provide accessible housing to meet the identified needs of the local population including the needs of an ageing population, providing affordable and market housing;
- Wrexham is the dominant town in the County Borough and the largest in North Wales and acts as the main social, retail, office, leisure, residential and education centre. Within the emerging LDP it has been identified as the most sustainable location for development;

Wrexham Housing Market Needs Assessment (Arc4, 2015)

- Analysis through the needs assessment model reveals that there is an annual shortfall of 157 affordable dwellings across Wrexham County Borough;
- The preferred affordable housing tenure split (based upon existing households in need and newly-forming households) is for 70% social/affordable rented and 30% intermediate tenure;
- The analysis clearly suggests a need for smaller one to three bedroom properties for both under and over 65s with some three bed general needs (under 65s);
- Around one quarter of all households in need can afford an intermediate affordable house priced at £100,000 or less (or the equivalent total housing costs);
- Around 13% of all households in need are older people (65+ years), and further variation and choice within the housing market (market and affordable) is recommended.

Destination Management Plan (WCBC, 2012)

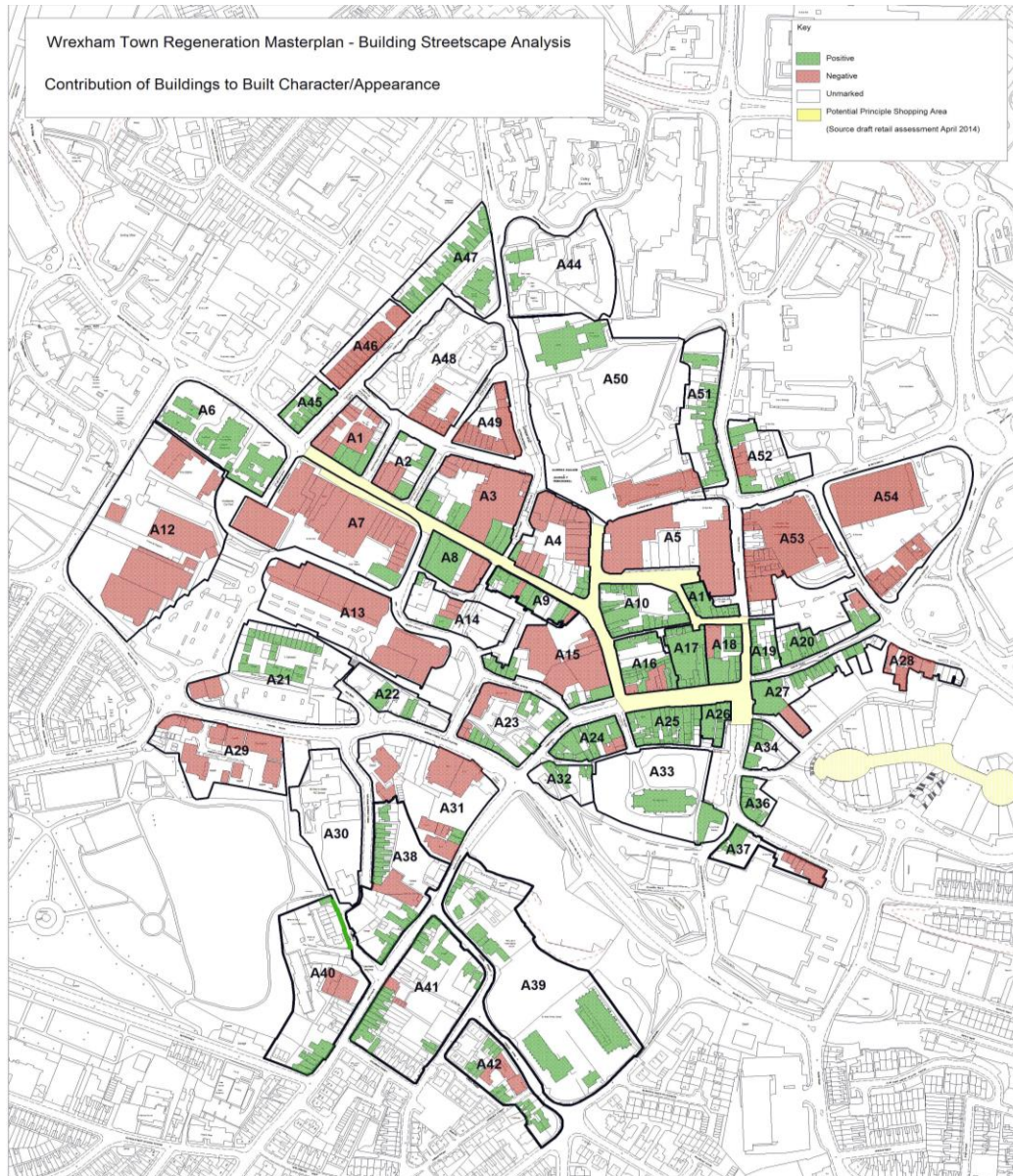
Wrexham benefits from a reasonably well maintained town centre, where investment has been put into the townscape infrastructure and a number of new retail developments over the last ten years.

Functionally the town centre works well. However, the big issue is creating a strong reason to make a discretionary visit from any distance. The retail offer is fine for a town of its size but not exceptional. Other points of interest (like the museum, St. Giles, and St Mary's) have a limited pull in the market place and short average dwell time. The St. Giles / High Street area has a nice architecture / spatial ambience and has the potential to act as a visitor hub but needs considerably more specialist retail to fulfil that function.

Employment Land Review (BE Group, 2015)

- In Wrexham, around 46 percent of the existing stock is located in, and around, Wrexham town. Another quarter is in Wrexham Industrial Estate. Almost three quarters of enquiries received by WCBC for the years 2009-2014, was for smaller suites of 0-93 sqm;
- This is reflected by property agents who note that requirements across the study area rarely exceed 464 sqm and larger suites can struggle to find occupiers. The bulk of enquiries are for 93-186 sqm units. This partly reflects proximity to Chester, the major office centre for the sub-region;
- Demand for offices is often linked to demand for industrial/warehouse space as larger manufacturing and logistics firms seek associated office space for their expanding operations;
- Wrexham Town Centre and the Technology Park are the main office market locations in Wrexham. The supply of space is (in relative terms) limited here but it is felt to match the comparatively low level of demand;
- Around 20,093 sqm of office space is currently vacant in Wrexham – 16.9 percent of the total floorspace 16 percent by premises numbers. This is quite a high vacancy rate and may indicate an element of oversupply in the current stock;
- Wrexham town has the greatest supply of vacant office space with 52.5 percent of the available floorspace and 38.1 percent of the available units. This is accounted for by the availability of units across the entire size ranges, and more specifically units larger than 1000 sqm;
- The evidence base suggests the current supply of town centre office space (often above shops) is unlikely to be suitable for current demands; the current supply is of moderate quality, un-serviced units often in too large a format while market demand is for quality, smaller units;
- One of the largest town centre vacant sites, Roxburgh House is being marketed for residential development; this may signify the weakness of the current office supply in meeting modern demands;
- An improved office offer in central Wrexham may boost local demand. For this reason it is suggested relatively small scale office schemes should, subject to other policy considerations, be supported;
- In, and around, Wrexham Town Centre demand may support modest new developments for B1(ii) offices. These may be in the form of individual premises for owner occupation or larger multi-let (serviced or un-serviced) schemes, possibly linked to larger town centre regeneration programmes. It is recommended that provided such schemes remain of a comparatively modest scale, and do not significantly add to the supply of employment land in the County Borough, that they be considered on their individual merits.

Appendix 7 – Streetscape Analysis



Appendix 8 – High Street; As Existing / Proposed During the Day/Evening



Appendix 9 - Chester Street (Indicative Ideas)

Wrexham Site 3 RIBA Stage 2



Legend



Semi mature street tree planting.



New shrub and perennial planting designed for impact, colour and seasonality supplemented with local shrubs, flowers and vegetables with flowers and seed heads.



New turf on 100mm raised platform.



New stone sett paving extending throughout square and into surrounding streets in a stretcher bond pattern.



New slab paving in stretcher bond pattern.



Timber seating with under lighting.



Sculpture - local identity and focal point

Legend

- a. New green wall and climbing plants.
- b. New glass facade and green wall in line with Arts Hub Strategy.
- c. Outdoor seating terraces.
- d. Outdoor table/chairs for outdoor eating.

Wrexham Design Options

Chester Street; As Existing / Proposed Daytime / Evening



Appendix 10 – High Street 2020, 25 Priorities for Action

Ranked in order of priority;

Priority Group	Component Factor	How the Masterplan Addresses These
ACTIVITY HOURS	Opening hours; shopping hours; evening economy	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail and visitor.
APPEARANCE	Visual appearance; cleanliness	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail, visitor and attractive and distinctive. Delivery section.
RETAILERS	Retailer offer; retailer representation	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail, visitor and attractive and distinctive. Delivery section.
VISION&STRATEGY	Leadership; collaboration; area development strategies	Masterplan vision, objectives and strategy. Delivery section.
EXPERIENCE	Service quality; visitor satisfaction; centre image; familiarity	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4.
MANAGEMENT	Centre management; shopping centre management; TCM; place management	Largely an issue outside scope of the Masterplan
MERCHANDISE	Range/quality of goods; assortments	Largely an issue outside scope of the Masterplan
NECESSITIES	Car-parking; amenities; general facilities	Masterplan objective 2 & 3; Themes for retail, visitor, access and attractive and distinctive.
Anchor stores	Presence of anchor stores - which give locations their basic character and signify importance	Largely an issue outside scope of the Masterplan
NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS WITH COUNCIL	Networking; partnerships; community leadership	Masterplan delivery and engagement - Stakeholder Engagement in Production of Masterplan
DIVERSITY	Attractions; range/quality of shops; non-retail offer; tenant mix; tenant variety; retail diversity; availability of alternative formats	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 Themes for retail, visitor, living, needs of a growing population and offices
WALKING	Walkability; pedestrianisation/flow; cross-shopping; linked trips	Masterplan vision and objective 3. Themes for retail, visitor, access
ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE	Entertainment; leisure offer	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail and visitor.
ATTRACTIVENESS	Place attractiveness; attractiveness	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail, visitor and attractive and distinctive. Delivery section.
PLACE ASSURANCE	Atmosphere; BIDs; retail/tenant trust; store characteristics.	Masterplan delivery section .
ACCESSIBLE	Convenience; accessibility; public transport	Masterplan vision and objective 3, theme for access
PLACE MARKETING	Centre marketing; marketing; tenant/manager relations; orientation/flow; merchandising; special offers	Masterplan delivery section.

Comparison/convenience	The amount of comparison shopping opportunities compared to convenience (usually in percentage terms)	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail. Delivery of Masterplan in section 5.
RECREATIONAL SPACE	Recreational areas; public space; open space	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7. Themes for attractive and distinctive and living.
Barriers to Entry	Refers to obstacles that make it difficult for interested retailers to enter the centre's/High Street's market	Masterplan delivery – partnership working
Chain vs independent	Number of multiples stores and independent stores in the retail mix of a centre/High Street	Masterplan vision and objective 1, 2, & 4. Themes for retail. Delivery of Masterplan in section 5.
Safety/crime	A centre KPI measuring perceptions or actual crime including shoplifting	Masterplan vision and objectives 1, 2, 5. Themes for retail, visitor and living. Delivery of Masterplan in section 5, partnership working.
LIVEABLE	Multi/mono-functional; connectivity; liveability	Masterplan vision and objectives 5, 6 & 7, theme for living.
ADAPTABILITY	Retail flexibility; retail fragmentation; flexibility; mixed-use; engagement; functionality; store/centre design; retail unit size	Masterplan vision and objectives 1, 2, 3 & 4. Themes for retail, visitor and attractive and distinctive
Store development	The process of building, upgrading, remodelling or renovating retail stores	N/A