

Kingswood Masterplan



Setting a framework for future change

March 2022

This document has been developed by South Gloucestershire Council with support from the West of England Combined Authority.

www.southglos.gov.uk/kingswoodmasterplan

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Foreword

Investing in Kingswood's future

The role of town centres has been evolving over the last 10 years, and further challenges have been raised by the Covid-19 pandemic. The way we shop is changing as more goods and services are purchased online. This has had an impact on the viability of many retail businesses, and there has been a rise in vacant shop units on the high street. Nationally there has been an ongoing debate about the role of town centres. Whilst it is considered that there remains a significant need for shops and services within town centres, there is agreement that there are opportunities to increase other sectors and land uses that will also benefit from being centrally located and easily accessible to local communities. As such we need to plan for a more diverse mix of uses including places to work, leisure and health facilities, and types of housing which are suited to being centrally located.

To maintain the relevance and attractiveness of town centres for all visitors and residents there is a need to consider environmental factors such as reduced traffic congestion, better air quality, opportunities to enhance green open spaces and improve the quality of our streets and the energy efficiency of our buildings.

South Gloucestershire Council has been successful in attracting significant funding to improve Kingswood town centre, but there is an ongoing need to develop the vision, and plan for how best future investments will help the area to thrive.

The Kingswood Masterplan considers what opportunities exist, and how the area could evolve. The development of the plan, in consultation with local stakeholders, has helped to evaluate the potential of the town centre, build a consensus about what is needed, and better communicate the ambitions for the area. The process has supported bids for funding, securing vital resources for key projects. These will bring longer term benefits, as we build toward a more resilient, successful and inclusive town centre.



1

Introducing the Masterplan

The starting point for any strategy for regeneration is to gain a proper understanding of the area's strengths and weaknesses. Success often depends on integrating initiatives from existing investors and community groups as well as generating new ideas with stakeholders.

A masterplan for Kingswood provides an opportunity to express what we value, identify the potential for change, and consider how we might use the area in the future.

The history of Kingswood town centre

Kingswood has a rich history which contributes to its local character and distinctiveness. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the town centre, and is evident in its street pattern, historic buildings and green spaces. The original settlement developed along the main route from Bristol, through the royal hunting grounds or Kings Chase. The forest area was mined extensively, and by 1670 there were 72 recorded coal pits. The demand for coal largely came from industrial activities within Bristol and the nearby Warmley Brassworks. The village known as Kingswood-on-the-Hill dates from the mid 17th Century and developed along with the mining industry. The colliers were poorly paid, and the area had an unruly reputation, with notorious gangs taking advantage of travellers on route between Bristol and London.

The notoriety of the area attracted early Nonconformist religions such as the Baptists, Methodists and Moravians. George Whitfield started preaching at open-air venues such as Hanham Mount in 1739, and inspired others such as John and Charles Wesley. The many chapels and school buildings that were established over the following 200 years are still prominent within the town centre, and buildings such as the Whitfield Tabernacle have an historical importance that outweighs their current condition.

During the 18th century Kingswood became a centre for manufacturing, incorporating numerous boot and shoe factories, Douglas Motorcycles, and various clothing and food producers. A few of the distinctive factory buildings remain and contribute to Kingswood's industrial character. The town centre, connected to Bristol by electric tram, developed a vibrant mix of shops and banks to serve the growing population, and by the middle of the 20th century was home to a cinema, a fine park and allotment gardens. In 1974 the Kings Chase shopping centre was developed at the heart of the town, and a new Civic Centre was built for the newly formed Kingswood District Council. Whilst Kingswood was merged with Northavon in 1996, the refurbished building is still used by South Gloucestershire as its main venue for council meetings.

Today the town centre has a diverse mix of retail, residential, and employment uses. Like many urban centres it has seen a downturn in high street shopping but has maintained much of its retail function serving its local catchment. The area to the south is protected for employment uses but has seen a reduction in the traditional industries with the closure of Douglas Motorcycles and the Lucas Works. The area contains several under-used sites with a pressure to replace the employment sites with single use residential developments.



1.2

Introducing the Masterplan

The purpose of the masterplan

The masterplan is a tool for considering the future of the town centre, and will establish a positive strategy for regeneration, reinforcing the value and role of the area. It should not be seen as a rigid blueprint for development but will set the context within which individual projects can come forward in a co-ordinated and complementary way. The success of the masterplan is dependent on establishing a common vision with broad appeal and support from the wider community.

The masterplan promotes an integrated place-making approach that puts sustainable urban lifestyles at its core. The approach is founded on strengthening the identity of Kingswood established through its rich history and traditions as a way of instilling a strong sense civic pride. The masterplan has five key functions:

- to establish a vision for the area that will simplify, direct and give confidence to future decisions
- to co-ordinate and integrate investment whilst remaining robust and flexible
- to promote and inspire, to raise ambitions and engage stakeholders in revealing the potential of key sites for bold and imaginative transformation
- to maintain a distinctive and high-quality network of streets, spaces and mixed-use development, and reinforcing the value of a unique historic environment
- providing a resilient and adaptable low carbon and sustainable environment

The Kingswood masterplan aims to further develop key issues contained within the emerging Local Plan including the need to diversify our town centres, build local economies and respond to the climate emergency. In addition, it responds to the need to develop strong and healthy communities and rebuild social wellbeing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The additional consideration given to the masterplan helps to provide a clearer picture of what emerging Local Plan policies mean for Kingswood, and further explore the regeneration of the area. To be effective the masterplan not only needs to align with the broader policy context but consider delivery mechanisms and viability associated with key proposals.

Figure 1. The wider planning policy framework



Guiding principles

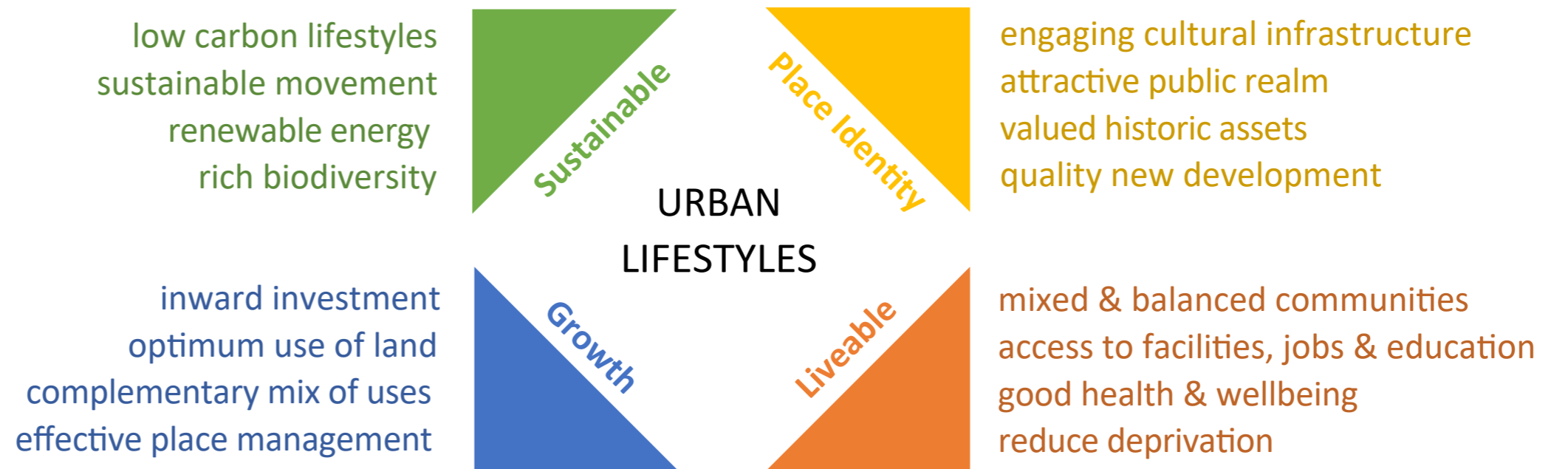
The need to regenerate Kingswood town centre has come about due to the economic, social and environmental factors that have led to a decline in the current performance and quality of the area. Our lifestyles are changing as technology affects the way we shop, communicate, and are able to work. Old industries are being replaced and homes need to respond to different ways of living.

Our response to climate change will affect the way we travel, giving increased importance to local services and facilities. There are opportunities to reduce traffic congestion by making it more attractive to walk, cycle and use public transport, which alongside investing in streets and parks will help to improve air quality and increase our enjoyment of outdoor spaces.

The goal is to ensure that the town centre remains a focus for communities and is a pleasant and safe place where we come together to socialise, shop, work, seek support, and enjoy our leisure time. For many it will also be a good place to live. The town centre must be adaptable and resilient to future changes, but retain its strong identity and attractiveness. A destination of choice.

Figure 2 outlines the essential ingredients of sustainable and successful urban centres against which we should test the future outcomes of this masterplan.

Figure 2. The ingredients of successful urban centres



Defining the masterplan area

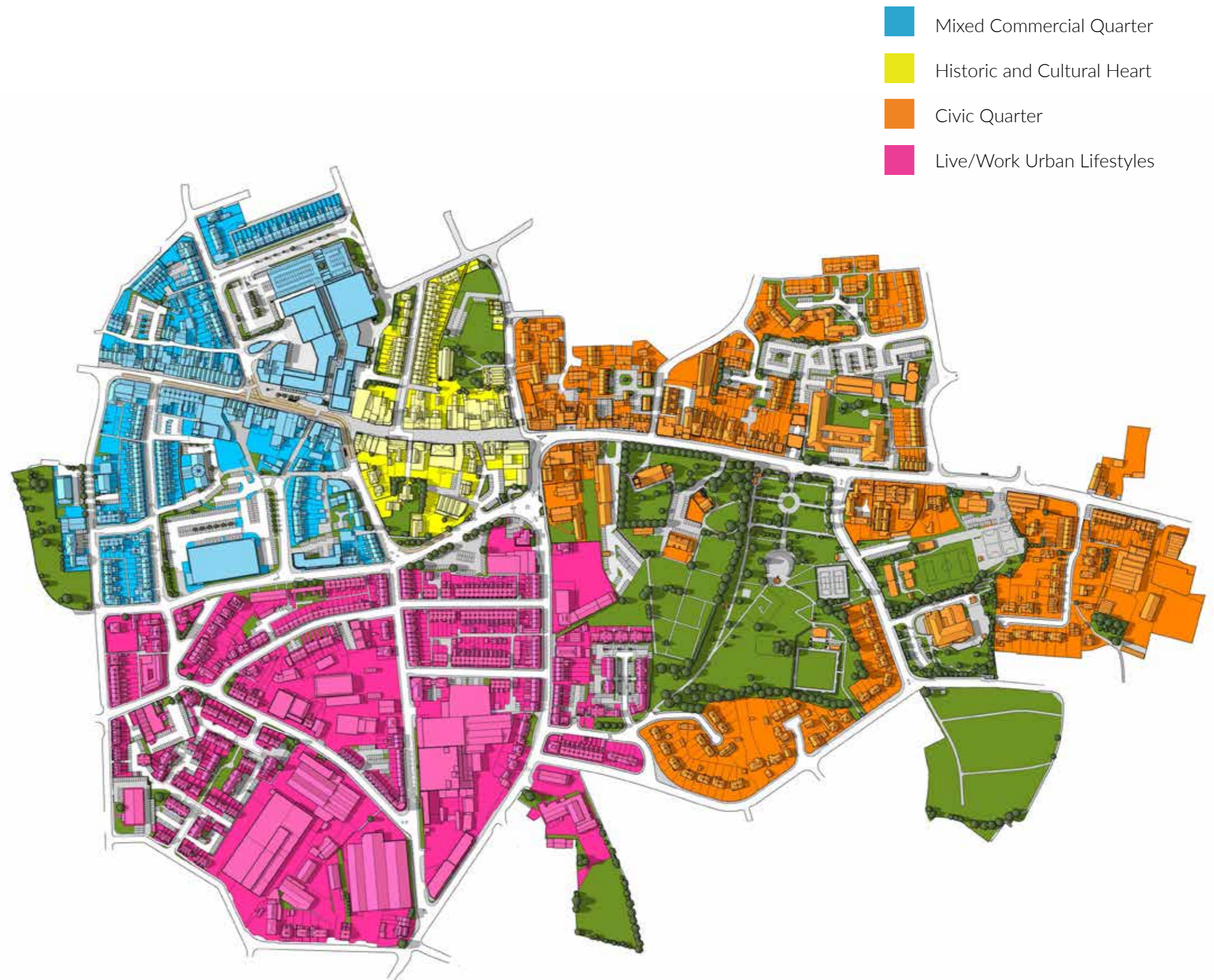
The starting point for defining the masterplan area was the traditional high street functions located along Regent Street which were the focus of the successful 'Love our High Street' bid for WECA regeneration funding.

This area comprises two distinct character zones. Firstly, the focus of retail activity between the Kings Chase Shopping Centre and the Lidl store on Halls Road, and secondly the area directly to the east centred on the Jubilee Clock Tower which includes a group of distinctive historic buildings. Whilst these sub-areas face similar issues with regard to retail decline, both have distinct but complementary opportunities for regeneration, i.e. accommodating innovative ideas and respecting and enhancing the old traditions.

Including the area further east, which contains several civic functions, provides an opportunity to integrate the role of Kingswood Park and other facilities with the town centre.

Finally, the area to the south is identified as having great potential for change. There has been a trend of replacing underused commercial sites with new residential development. However, there is also an opportunity to seek a genuine mix of uses incorporating, housing, employment and community uses and significantly improve green infrastructure and access to public space.

Figure 3. Kingswood Masterplan - Character Zones



1.5

Introducing the Masterplan

Consultation and next steps

This document has been developed as part of an ongoing focus on the regeneration of Kingswood town centre. It has been initiated through the successful funding bid from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) 'Love our High Streets' initiative. Many of the ideas incorporated within this document were first introduced to local people as part of the consultation related to the FHSF bid in May 2020. During the summer of 2021, a 12-week formal public engagement took place, utilising an exhibition within the King Chase shopping centre. Whilst the consultation received support for the principles within the masterplan, there is value in ongoing stakeholder engagement through the creation of a Town Centre Steering Group to help guide future decision making.

As a long-term strategy, the final outcomes of the masterplan are likely to evolve, although it is intended that the underlying aims and principles will remain to steer positive change. The masterplan will be adopted alongside the Local Plan to help inform decision making about future development and other initiatives. The new Local Plan is currently at an early stage of preparation, the work on this masterplan and will influence the approach to sites and policies that effect Kingswood.

The initial stages of implementation will be made up of specific projects involving South Gloucestershire Council and key stakeholders. Due to the success of the WECA Love Our High Streets funding and the Future High Streets Fund some projects have started, such as the restoration of the Whitfield Tabernacle. Other projects identified in this document will need to be developed further, and the council will pursue feasibility studies, and additional design and planning work to ensure successful delivery. Regarding the pedestrianisation of part of Regent Street, the project was widely supported, however consultation raised a number of questions related to the impact of diverted traffic, both in terms of vehicle flows and air quality. As such this project requires some ongoing investigation of further options and measures to reduce any impact on the wider area.

The council will work with landowners and investors on private sites, to ensure that the priorities and opportunities raised through the masterplan are fully understood, and work using other planning powers to influence the outcome of themes for the wider benefit of the area and the community.

1. Have Your Say

public consultation for the Future High Street Fund, May 2020

2. Online consultation

reaching a wider range of local people

3. Dialogue with local people

Kings Chase shopping centre Consultation Hub, Summer 2021



2

Establishing a Shared Vision

For any vision to be successful and help steer positive change for the future, it is essential that it is founded on sound ambitions that are shared by investors, stakeholders and the local community.

Establishing a vision for Kingswood begins with fully understanding the area and recognising the qualities and elements that contribute to the area's positive identity. The vision seeks to enhance and balance the environmental, economic and social wellbeing of Kingswood.

The vision promotes initiatives that will strengthen the vitality of the town centre to increase its attractiveness as a place to shop, work, visit and enjoy. Increasingly the town centre will also be a good place to live for a greater number of people who will benefit from the close proximity of many facilities and services within the area.

A masterplan model has been developed to provide an in-depth understanding of the physical attributes of the study area and help test future design proposals

The masterplan approach

Masterplanning brings together a wide range of issues. Balancing the needs, opportunities, and pressures for change into a clear strategy.

To fully understand the interrelationships of land uses, patterns of movement and the ways in which an area is changing, it is necessary to study not only the physical and environmental context but also gain an insight into the economic and social factors that are influencing the concerns and ambitions of local communities, businesses and investors. Wider trends impact upon the local area such as the decline of retail within town centres or the need to provide good standards of affordable housing.

Masterplans assess which aspects are desirable to protect and maintain, where positive attributes can be strengthened and where change will be beneficial. This assessment will help to develop strategic aims and objectives for an area and confirm or challenge existing policies that are impacting on schemes that are coming forward.

Underused sites are appraised to test how best to develop the area in the future. Sketch designs aim to be flexible and fluid, seeking to establish options for optimising land, establishing clear and convenient patterns of movement, and reinforcing the positive identity of an area through aspects such as appropriate scale, arrangement of buildings and the incorporation of green infrastructure.



Overarching themes

In developing the masterplan, a number of core values have been identified that underpin the work and will be used to test the appropriateness of ongoing initiatives.

1. Distinctly Kingswood

The masterplan will recognise the positive characteristics of Kingswood town centre. New development will seek to reinforce and strengthen four distinct quarters and establish a strong sense of place.

2. A Town Centre for All

Kingswood town centre will be accessible and attractive to all members of the community. Improvements within the public realm will aim to foster social inclusiveness and will be safe and welcoming.

3. Diversity and Vitality

Whilst continuing to support the retail elements of the town centre, it is important to encourage a broader range of uses such as business, leisure, residential and community based to drive a more active local economy.

4. Promoting Quality

Change that will be of benefit over the longer term will be determined by the quality of both new development and other interventions. Existing buildings, spaces and facilities that are high in quality should be cherished and retained.

5. Sustainable Living

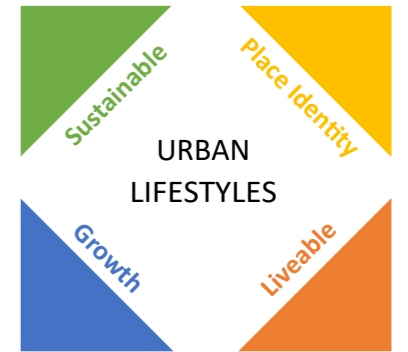
Decision making relating to both the built and natural environment will be made with regard to long term benefits, and to reduce any adverse impacts on climate change.

6. Attracting Investment

The masterplan will promote ideas for change that are beneficial to Kingswood town centre, achievable and attractive to investors both in the public and private sectors.

1. Regent Street
conserve and enhance to strengthen identity

2. Kingswood Park
providing enhanced green infrastructure



1. Strengthening the cultural and historic heart

The area identified within this masterplan as the historic heart of Kingswood contributes a great deal to the wider identity of the town centre. It potentially provides a high quality enhanced setting to attract people, combining specialist shopping, food and drink, a focus for evening activities and cultural destinations, along with distinctive and complementary homes.

Funding has been secured for two key projects: the removal of through-traffic, and the restoration of the Whitfield Tabernacle. These together with other initiatives seek to inspire further improvements, reuse, and restoration of this distinctive and unique historic townscape. Extending the conservation area allocations will help to better protect the qualities of this area and steer the ambition of future investment.

Catalysts for change

- restore the Whitfield Tabernacle
- develop cultural destinations
- pedestrianise Regent Street (East)
- invest in high quality public realm
- extend conservation area status
- incentivise historic building repairs
- establish an events programme



2. Enhancing and connecting green space

Optimising development opportunities and introducing more businesses and homes within Kingswood town centre will increase its vitality, attractiveness and economic resilience, but also reduce the potential for private outdoor space, and increase the demands made upon public parks, playing fields and nature reserves. Recent consultations have highlighted a lack of awareness of public green spaces, and what they have to offer the wider community. The Covid-19 pandemic has however increased the use of open spaces and demonstrated their value to our health and wellbeing.

Initiatives to enhance Kingswood Park and create a new park at Park Road cemetery are underway, but there is also significant potential to invest in Southey Park, Magpie Bottom and the linear park incorporating the Woodstock play area. Improved resources for management, better signing and engaging activities will add value to these local communities.

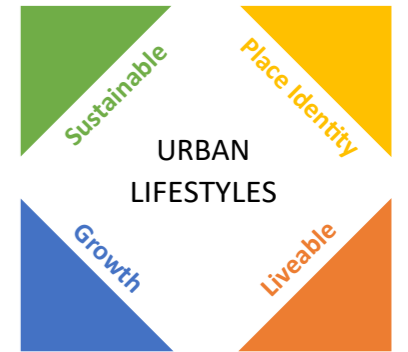
Catalysts for change

- funding bid for Kingswood Park
- improved links to public green spaces
- co-ordinated identity at entrances
- further support for friends groups
- management of events and activities
- initiatives to increase biodiversity
- promotion of health and wellbeing
- development sites to contribute to existing green space enhancements



3. Kings Chase Shopping Centre
opportunities for mixed use intensification

4. Lucas Works, Moravian Road
establish an urban living quarter



3. Creating a mixed commercial quarter

Town centres are the driving force of the local economy. Changing patterns of retail may have reduced the current demands on the high street but provide an opportunity to rebalance retail dominance by reintroducing uses that meet community's needs. A strategy for growth should improve the quality of the retail core alongside additional employment spaces, training and education facilities, leisure uses and residential schemes that sit well in an active and commercial setting.

There is scope for a more diverse evening economy by introducing leisure and cultural destinations and increase the food and drink offer. More people using the centre during the evening will provide a safer environment and help to deter anti-social behaviour. Investment within the retail and business core begins with looking at the physical identity of the centre. Enhancing the attractiveness of the place by improving or replacing poor quality buildings, enriching the public realm with planting, public art, improved lighting and clear signage, alongside improved facilities for public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists.

Catalysts for change

- Kings Chase acquisition and investment
- vacant stores back into use
- co-ordination of public parking
- improved public transport facilities
- increased space for small business
- additional leisure facilities
- improved pedestrian space
- public art



4. Creating opportunities for urban living

The creation of new residential developments should include types of housing that complement those that already exist in the Kingswood area. There is an opportunity to promote urban regeneration with enhanced public realm which integrates services and employment opportunities. Available land will be developed more efficiently with good quality housing of a higher density. Homes will be designed to be energy efficient, conform to national internal space standards, and have access to high quality communal spaces, as well as generous private terraces and balconies.

A balanced approach to accommodating private car parking will recognise the availability of improved public transport and shared vehicles as well as proximity to town centre facilities and high quality public green spaces all within comfortable walking distance.

Catalysts for change

- new policy standards for urban sites
- reassessment of employment zone
- promotion of mixed-use regeneration
- public realm investment
- improved legibility and connectivity
- increase green infrastructure
- create flexible business workspaces
- incentivise creative industries



Preserve and enhance

Heritage plays a significant role in the identity of a place. Well maintained historic buildings and spaces hold stories, not only of the distant past, but about the places that we recognise and have experienced, increasing a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Kingswood benefits from a rich history with clues held within its built environment. From the modest bay windowed terraces that surround the retail centre, to the chapels and factories that punctate the streetscape, and civic parks and spaces for people to enjoy. The quality of place that these assets provide should be the standard by which we measure new development and make decisions about retaining or replacing existing features.

The successful refurbishment of the listed Wesleyan Chapel to residential use demonstrates the benefits of retaining prominent historic buildings. However, the value placed upon unprotected historic places can be as important. Even recently a number of significant buildings have been lost through redevelopment, which may have been suitable for reuse or adaptation. As such, there is a need to better promote and protect those features which should be maintained in order to strengthen the identity of the area.

This masterplan recognises the contribution of historic assets to future placemaking and highlights the need to reassess the extent of protection currently in place, particularly as increased investment and development pressure is likely to put some historic buildings under threat. With additional formal protection, decisions about whether to incorporate historic features are more likely to be supported through creative design solutions and financial planning.

Further work is required to assess the suitability of extending the existing conservation area, which focuses on the immediate environment around the Masters Church, to include the area to the south which contains the highest concentration of locally listed buildings in Kingswood. In addition, there is scope to further assess sites that have development potential, to consider whether historic assets should be retained and adapted. For example, to the east of the masterplan area there are modest chapel and factory buildings containing traditional detailing and materials which should be retained given their visual contribution.

The plan on page 17 includes suggested additions to those features currently recognised through listed building, locally listed and conservation area status.

1. Former Linden Hotel, High Street

much of the historic heart of Kingswood remains

2. Moravian Chapel






religious building add to the identity of Kingswood

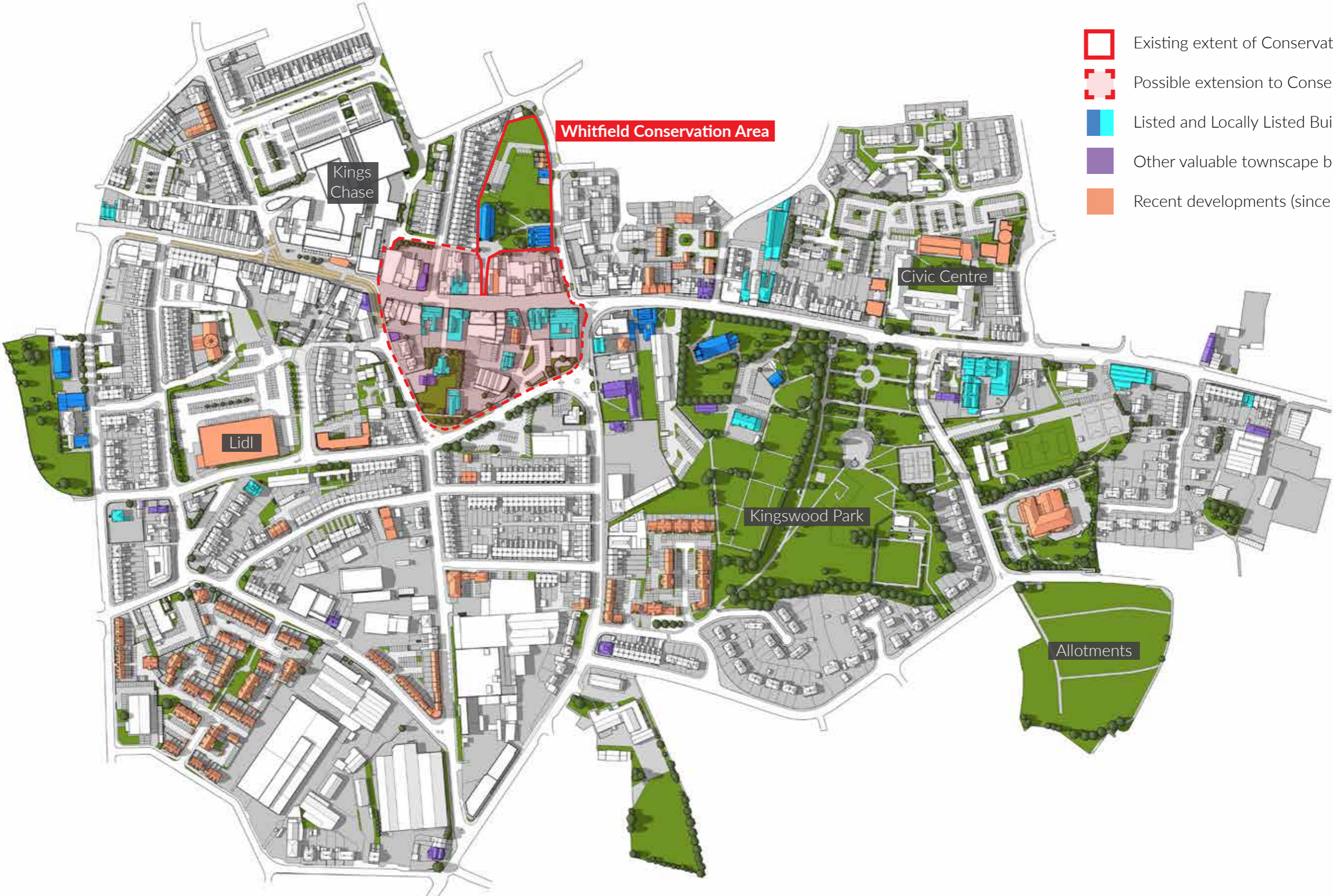
3. Former Printworks, Church Road

many buildings of industrial character have been lost



Key Strategy 1 - Preserve and Enhance

-  Existing extent of Conservation Area
-  Possible extension to Conservation Area
-  Listed and Locally Listed Building
-  Other valuable townscape buildings
-  Recent developments (since 2000)



Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure is an essential component of the wider placemaking agenda and refers to natural, semi-natural and cultivated land, both publicly and privately owned. Together these areas contribute enormously to the urban landscape, providing a network of green space to balance the built environment. Well considered green infrastructure not only provides people with places to relax, exercise and socialise outdoors, but provides space for nature to thrive, creates a healthier environment that is more resilient to climate change, provides opportunities for local food production, and adds to the attractiveness and identity of a place.

Kingswood contains a diverse range of green spaces within walking distance of the town centre, although studies have shown that many local people have not always been aware of these resources. The Covid-19 pandemic has however led to people making better use of parks and other public green spaces, with Kingswood Park alone registering around 270,000 visits.

As the town centre becomes more intensively used, both for business and as a place to live, the pressure on green space will increase. There is a current shortfall in open space within the area. New developments should aim to add new green spaces where possible, delivering tree planting, be innovative in the use of green roofs and walls, and accommodate biodiversity. Larger schemes will be required to contribute to the improvement of existing green space through local plan policy CS24.

The conversion of the Masters Church to residential includes transfer of part of the Park Road cemetery to the council to manage the previously overgrown and inaccessible space for public use. Within the Masterplan area there are pockets of underused green space which could be enhanced and make a more positive contribution. These are identified on the plan on page 19, but there may be others that local people would wish to see improved.

Making existing spaces more accessible through better signage, entrances and interpretation will help to increase their use. In addition, a clear and connected network of routes passing alongside or through green space will help to encourage more walking and cycling to access local facilities and link the neighbouring communities of Staple Hill, Warmley and Hanham. Supporting existing friends groups at Kingswood Park, Southey Park, and Magpie Bottom will encourage greater participation in the management and investment of these key spaces.

1. Magpie Bottom

a focus for Nature Conservation and Historic interpretation

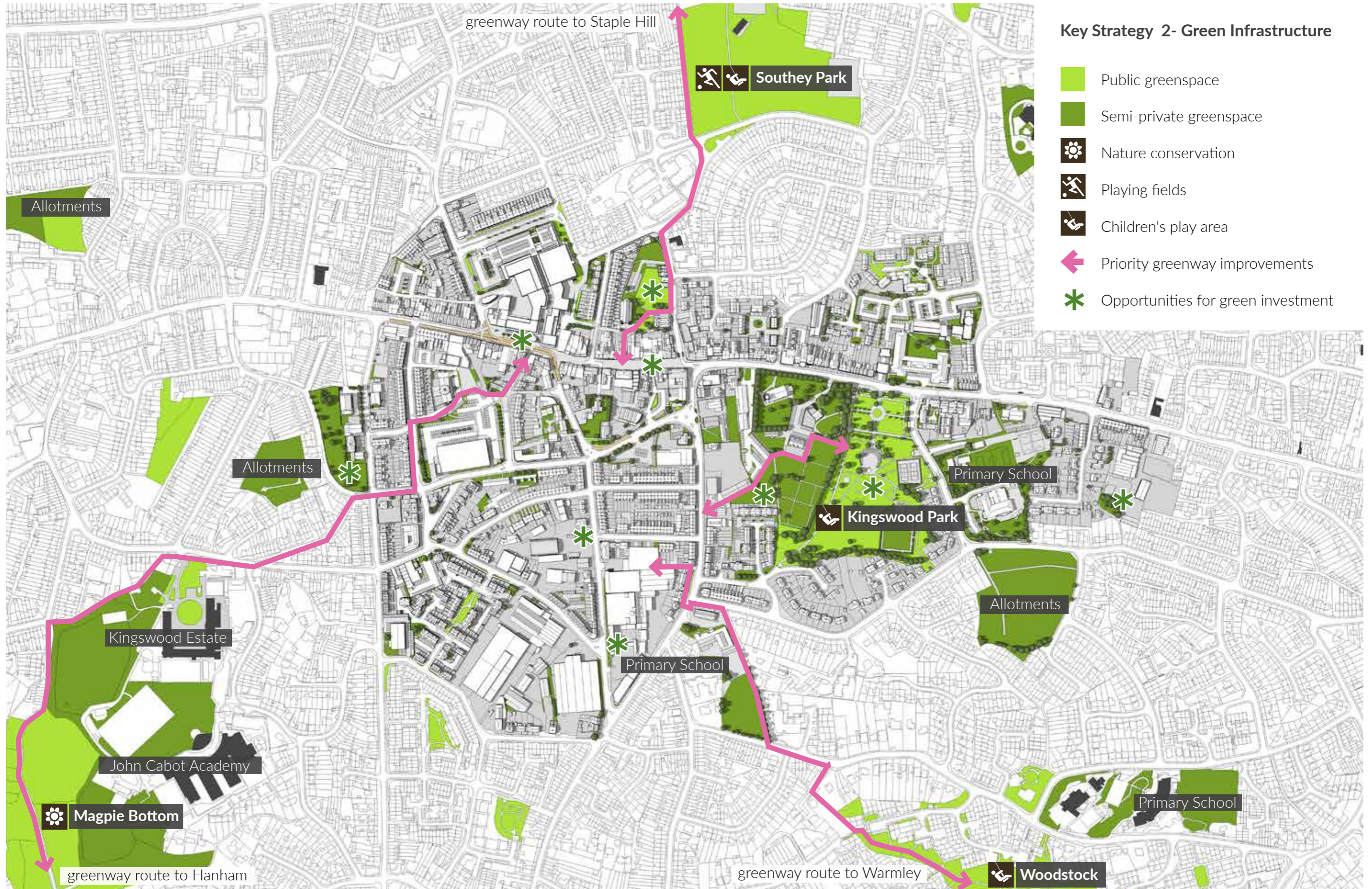
2. Southey Park

a focus for outdoor sports and community activities

3. Kingswood Park

an elegant greenspace at the heart of the town centre





1. Traffic congestion

Regent Street, Kingswood

2. Safe cycle routes

encouraging cycling for all ages

3. Improved bus passenger facilities

Regent Street, Kingswood

Movement

The way in which people move around, through and achieve access to the town centre is a key issue in establishing an environment within which business can thrive and people choose to live and work.

Kingswood straddles the main A420 arterial road into Bristol, and as such can experience high volumes of traffic, increasing congestion and poor air quality. Whilst there may be some benefits related to passing trade, high volumes of through-traffic create a poor environment for pedestrians making the centre less attractive to visitors, shoppers, and people who live and work close to the town centre. Works to divert the A420 to the south of the shopping core have helped to disperse traffic flows, however, it is important to consider further initiatives to reduce unnecessary vehicles, attract investment, create spaces for people to gather, increase the use of local facilities, and create places to hold events that attract both residents and those from outside the area.

The strategic approach to traffic within the town centre is indicated on page 21. This approach received significant support from local people during two rounds of consultation. As such the removal of traffic within part of Regent Street indicated here and on page 26 is being progressed to a detailed scheme including additional consideration given to mitigating any impact of diverted traffic, and controlling vehicle speeds in the wider area.

To achieve a balanced approach to movement that will benefit the town centre, it is important to improve access to more sustainable forms of movement, such as walking, cycling and public transport, as well as restricting vehicles. Many people live close to the town centre and walking routes need to be made more attractive, using improved lighting and surfacing as well as maximising space. Where flows of pedestrians and cyclists are expected to be high, such as Halls Road and Regent Street, the design of the streets should be clear to encourage segregation and avoid conflicts between users.

The move towards more sustainable movement will take time and will depend on investment as well as restrictions. Future trends are likely to see a reduction in the use of cars particularly for shorter journeys and day to day activities, however, there remains a need to maintain access and manage parking to encourage the use of the town centre by people who do not have the choice of other modes of transport. There is also a need to maintain capacity for operational vehicles, taxis, servicing and deliveries.



Routes via New Cheltenham

- 1. Kings Chase Shopping Centre
- 2. Whitfield Tabernacle
- 3. Jubilee Clock Tower
- 4. Lidl Supermarket

Key Strategy 3 - Movement

Proposed through-traffic loop

➔ Northern outbound route

➔ Southern inbound route

■ Pedestrianised zone

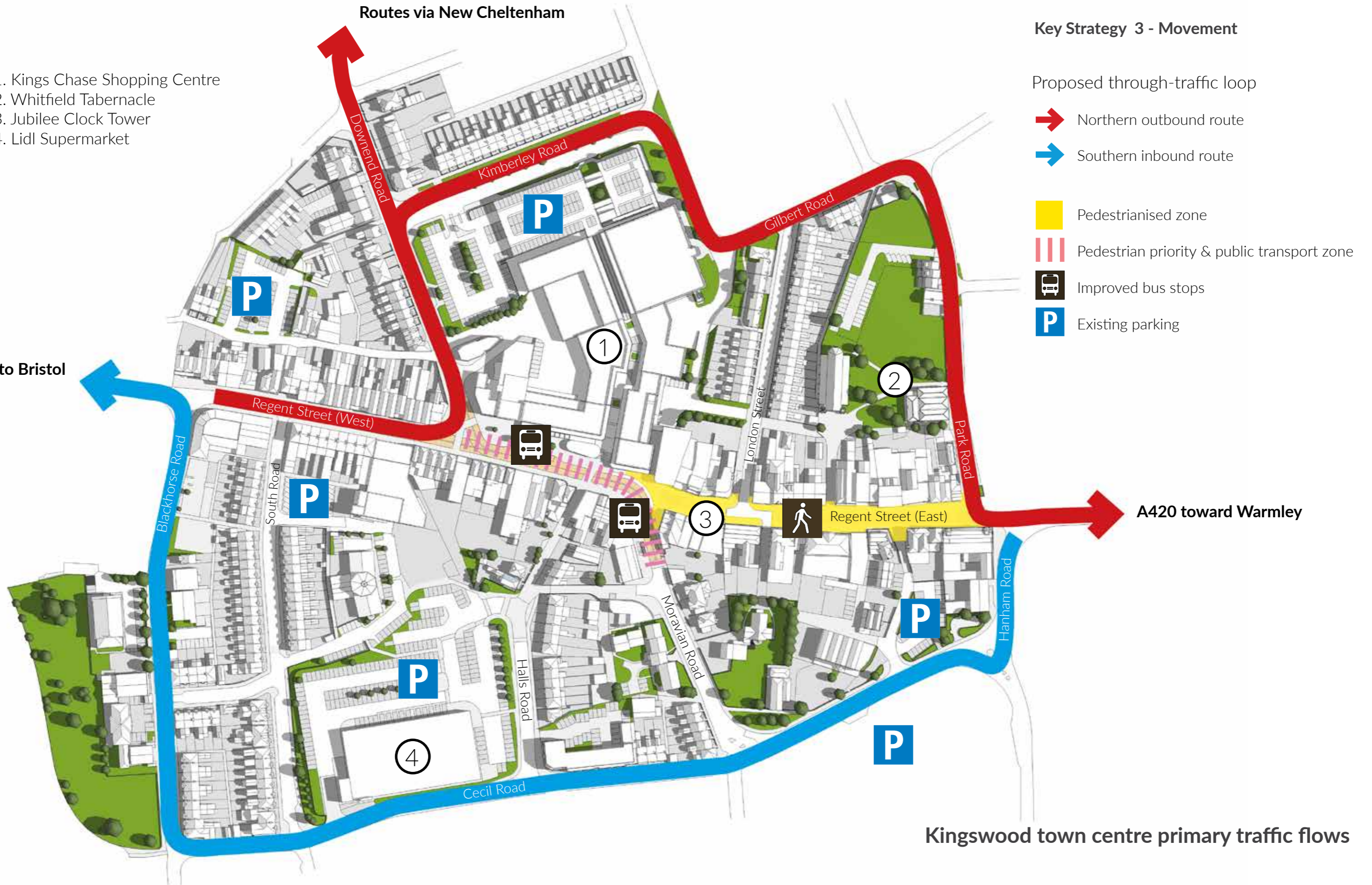
▨ Pedestrian priority & public transport zone

🚏 Improved bus stops

P Existing parking

A420 to Bristol

A420 toward Warmley



Kingswood town centre primary traffic flows

Development potential

Significant improvements can be achieved through appropriate development. The changing nature of the town centre creates opportunities to reinforce and renew existing character, introduce a richer mix of land use, and provide additional places to shop, work and live. Inward investment can be used to create more sustainable buildings and make it easier to walk and cycle by better connecting and enhancing routes.

A full assessment has been made of sites with development potential. These include sites previously identified for development, as well as those currently vacant or underused. Some are high profile, and their condition has had a negative effect on the surrounding environment. Others are less neglected and are currently in use, for car parking or more transient businesses. However, these also have longer term potential to use land more productively even where existing uses are incorporated.

In assessing development potential, it is important to have realistic assumptions about density. This can have an impact on the existing character and identity of the area, and increase demands on existing services, open spaces and the highway network. Optimising land for development in town centres requires balancing these factors, as well as ensuring high standards of design and building performance, and an appreciation of the contribution that development will bring to existing businesses and communities.

Many of the potential sites have previously provided jobs and other services. Recent developments have delivered new homes at higher densities, however, often these schemes are dominated by residents parking areas, smaller gardens and less generous internal space. Most have not delivered complementary non-residential uses or standards of public streets and spaces associated with urban centres. Whilst such schemes have met planning requirements there is a need to consider if current standards are suitable to ensure developments are more aligned to town centres and respond to a location that is well served with public transport and close to essential services, schools and green spaces.

The plan and associated table indicate potential development sites and the number of homes and non-residential floorspace that might be achieved. This has been informed by design testing as part of the masterplan process. These ideas are not intended as fixed proposals but aim to raise the debate of what might be possible if a more urban approach is considered.

1. Store 21, Regent Street

long term vacant property

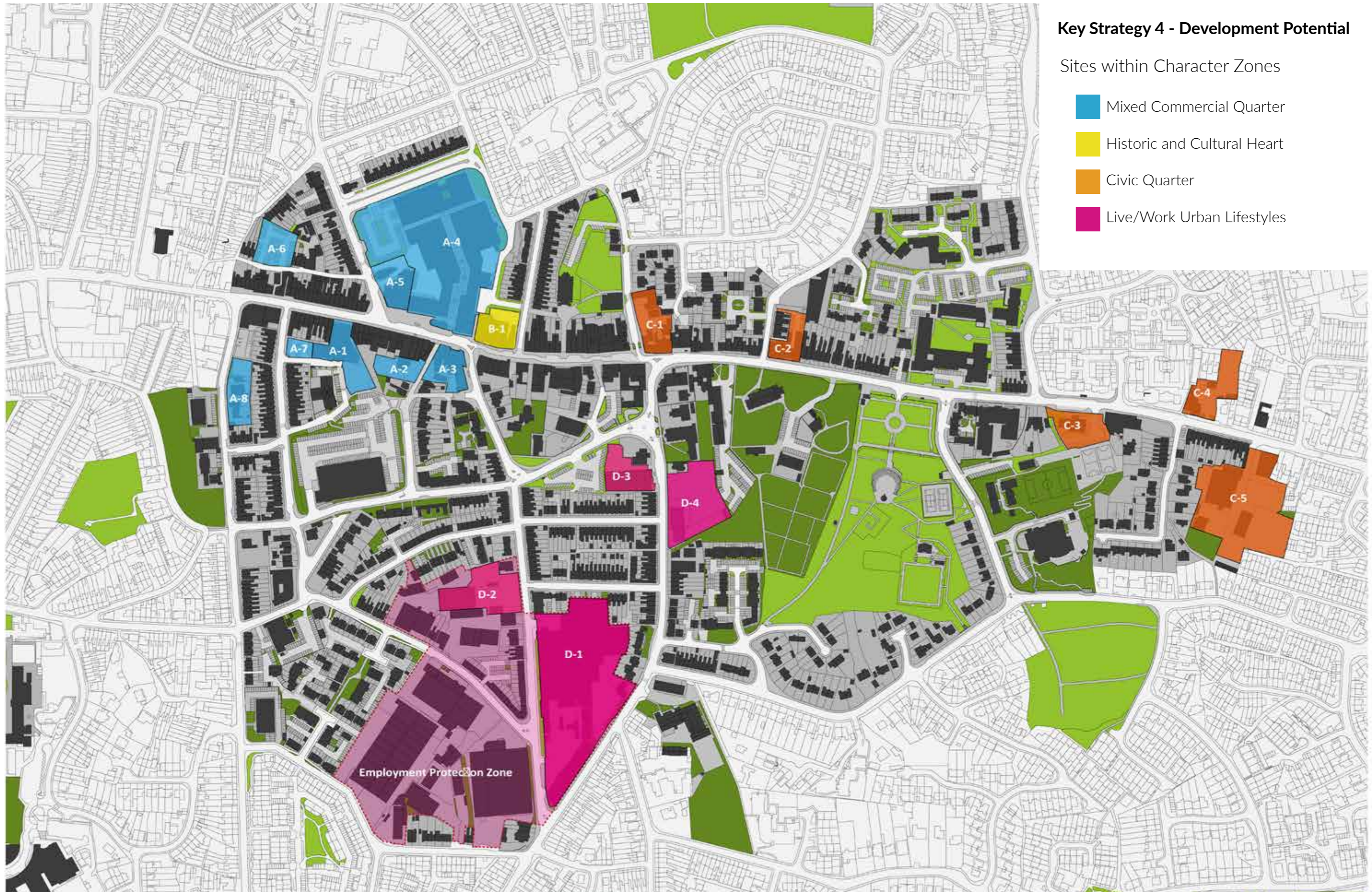
2. Existing car uses off High Street

sites identifies with potential in the future

3. Vacant Lucas factory, Moravian Road

a significant mixed-use development opportunity





Key Sites	REF	Size (Ha)	Existing / Previous Use	Promoted Mix of Uses	New non-Res Floorspace Est. (m2)	New Homes Est.	Character Zone	Notes
Store 21	A-1	0.23	retail	business / community / housing	1,000	35	Mixed Commercial Quarter	site advertised for purchase
Halls Road Block (East)	A-2	0.16	retail / housing	retail / public realm	1,000	20	Mixed Commercial Quarter	complex mixed use / ownership
Halls Road Block (West)	A-3	0.12	retail	retail / public realm	500	10	Mixed commercial Quarter	underutilised site with poor frontage
Kings Chase	A-4	1.80	retail	retail / business / leisure / housing	5,300	86	Mixed Commercial Quarter	significant mixed use intensification
Iceland Corner	A-5	0.18	retail	retail / housing	1,500	30	Mixed Commercial Quarter	prominent corner potential for increased scale
Boulton's Lane	A-6	0.17	car park	Further Assessment Required	tbc	tbc	Mixed Commercial Quarter	longer term potential for intensification
Blackhorse Road	A-7	0.18	business	business / housing	500	20	Mixed Commercial Quarter	housing approval on part of site
South Road Car Park	A-8	0.06	car park	Further assessment required	tbc	tbc	Mixed Commercial Quarter	longer term potential for intensification
Regent Street	B-1	0.17	leisure / bank	retail / leisure / housing	1,500	20	Cultural Heart	prominent site with potential for intensification
Pharmacy Block	13-C	0.24	retail	retail / housing	100	16	Civic Quarter	planning permission for mixed use retail and housing
Linden Hotel	15-C	0.13	housing	business / housing	100	20	Civic Quarter	long standing enforcement case
Former Library	16-C	0.19	community	community / business	100	20	Civic Quarter	SGC owned site
Caravan Sales	17-C	0.24	business	housing	-	30	Civic Quarter	significant underused site with future potential
Car Sales - High Street	18-C	1.00	business	housing	-	100	Civic Quarter	significant underused site with future potential
Lucas Works	D-1	1.48	industrial	business / housing	4,000	100	Urban Living Quarter	2019 pre-application for housing led scheme
Old Bus Depot	D-2	0.30	industrial	business / housing	150	25	Urban Living Quarter	2019 pre-application for housing led scheme
Car Sales - Hanham Road	D-3	0.42	business	business / housing	500	50	Urban Living Quarter	potential future site with access to Kingswood Park
Post Office Depot	D-4	0.19	business	business / housing	500	20	Urban Living Quarter	underused site with long term potential
TOTALS		9.01			16,850	700		

3

Key Initiatives

The Kingswood masterplan sets out a vision for future change that achieves improvements to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the town centre. It is essential however, that the principles and ambitions contained in the plan begin to be realised on the ground to help achieve positive change.

A small number of focused projects can act as a catalyst for change and help to reinforce messages that an area is changing. This will help attract further investment, build confidence and establish quality thresholds.

The project initiatives set out here are largely led by the public sector using funding set aside for regeneration. They have been chosen in order raise the profile of Kingswood, fix some long-term challenges and to inspire ongoing investment and debate. They aim to make Kingswood town centre a better place to live, to work, and to visit.

Pedestrianising Regent Street (East)

Key to the re-energising of the town centre is the creation of places to hold events and activities that attract both local residents and those from outside the town. These external 'rooms' can support a wide range of functions throughout the year from markets to parades, local festivals and family days. In addition, the space can be dressed to celebrate the changing seasons giving added interest all year round.

The pedestrianisation of part of Regent Street is not a new idea. Investigations into the impacts of diverted traffic and the ability to adequately service existing properties have suggested that removing through-traffic is a realistic option. Funding to ensure a high-quality scheme has now been secured following consultation which indicated a public support for the concept.

The pedestrianisation of Regent Street is a key initiative to improve and enhance Kingswood town centre as it will provide the following opportunities:

- provide for a transformational and attractive public space
- create a high-quality public space to establish events, markets and other activities
- provide opportunities for street trees, seating, improved lighting and paving
- create a more pleasant environment on Regent Street with cleaner air, less noise and improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- support the visibility, improvement and prominence of attractive historic buildings in Kingswood
- facilitate improved public transport and active travel initiatives
- promote the introduction of increased family leisure destinations and evening food and drink venues

1. Regent Street (east)
creating space for people within the historic core of the town centre

2. Street view looking westward
artist impression of the new space



3. Potential use of pedestrianised space

individual zones and their use



Zone 1

Given existing servicing and access arrangements there is the potential to fully pedestrianise the section of Regent Street between Moravian Road and London Street. There is an opportunity to invest in the building plots to the north. The public space may provide a focus for active travel services linking directly with adjacent buses and taxis.

Zone 2

A space at the top of London Street is required to access properties that do not have rear service yards. It also helps to bring vehicles to the centre of the pedestrianised area to support events and markets. Although effectively a road the space within zone 2 needs to be designed to a high specification to match the adjacent zones.

Zone 3

The central zone will serve as a key focus for intensified evening activities, as well as a location for daytime markets and events. Servicing requirements mean that the space will need to accommodate controlled access by vehicles at certain times between London Street and Bank Road.

Zone 4

The space at the eastern end of Regent Street is enclosed by some of the finest historic buildings in the town centre. There is potential to fully pedestrianise this space and create a high-quality public space as a relaxing setting for daytime and evening food and drink uses.

Restoring the Whitfield Tabernacle

In 1741 George Whitfield, an Anglican cleric and one of the founders of Methodism and the nonconformist movement, commissioned the construction of a meeting room. The recent decline of the Whitfield Tabernacle building has been associated with the economic downturn of Kingswood town centre. The Tabernacle is recognised as a Grade 1 listed building, a status reserved for the most historically important buildings in the country.

A change in ownership of the wider site, including the associated Masters Church and cemetery, provided an opportunity to establish a charitable trust for the Tabernacle in 2017. The aim of the Trust is to conserve and improve the Tabernacle for public benefit, and to educate the public about the history and heritage of the building. The focus of the work has been around the stabilisation of the building and its ongoing repair, with the ultimate ambition of establishing a public use such as a centre for the arts.

The Kingswood Masterplan considers the role of the building within its immediate and wider context. The opportunity to strengthen a defined historic quarter at the heart of the town centre is an effective way to establish a strong identity for the town, and provide a setting that complements the building and its reuse. The masterplan promotes the Tabernacle as a key component of a wider visitor experience, in order to ensure its long-term economic viability.

To date the Trust has been central in stemming further decline of the building fabric, removing vegetation and carrying out urgent works to the remaining structure. In 2020, supported by the Love Our High Streets funding, work has begun to repair the shell of the building, including the reinstatement of the roof. The masterplan process has run alongside the work of the Trust in supporting South Gloucestershire Council's bid for Future High Streets Funding, which has now been secured to fully restore the building for public use.

1. Whitfield Tabernacle model
the current state of the building without its roof

2. Whitfield Tabernacle interior
many of the interior features have been lost

3. Whitfield Tabernacle new roof under construction

January 2022



Enhancing Kingswood Park

The Covid-19 pandemic has made many of us more aware of how much we rely on outdoor spaces to support our health and wellbeing. Kingswood town centre benefits from its proximity to a number of significant green spaces, none more so than Kingswood Park which lies at the heart of the civic quarter.

Kingswood Park was first laid out in 1934 by Kingswood District Council and has played a key role in hosting public events, fun days as well as providing a space for day-to-day relaxation and activities. Recent surveys have suggested that many local residents are not aware of what the park has to offer. Within the masterplan there is a need to strengthen the relationship of the park with the retail centre and promote shared visits, and to explore new links and routes from residential areas.

Following extensive consultations, the council developed a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for resources to improve the park, and in 2021 was awarded initial funding to develop the detailed plan, to enhance the landscape and provide additional facilities. Following the development phase, a full delivery phase plan will be submitted in 2023 and is likely to include the following:

- restoration of gates, railings, boundary treatments and paths
- provide upgraded and consistent identity at all entrances
- improve accessibility and facilities
- enhance and improve existing features - toilets, play area, bandstand
- new features - refreshment concessions, drinking fountain
- opportunities for public art
- enhanced landscape including opportunities to increase biodiversity



Enhancing Southey Park

Southey Park lies a short walk to the northwest of the town centre and provides a significant green space at the heart of the adjacent New Cheltenham community. The park benefits from an active Friends Group who promote ongoing improvements and maintenance. The park contains playing fields with a clubhouse, play facilities for younger children and an area with ramps for scooters, skateboards and bikes.

The park provides a focus for the local community, a place for exercise, events, and is associated with the New Cheltenham community centre which is located on its northern boundary. The pitches are managed by the football club, however there is significant potential to improve the landscape on the edges of the park to improve the appearance of the park and increase the visibility of the green space.

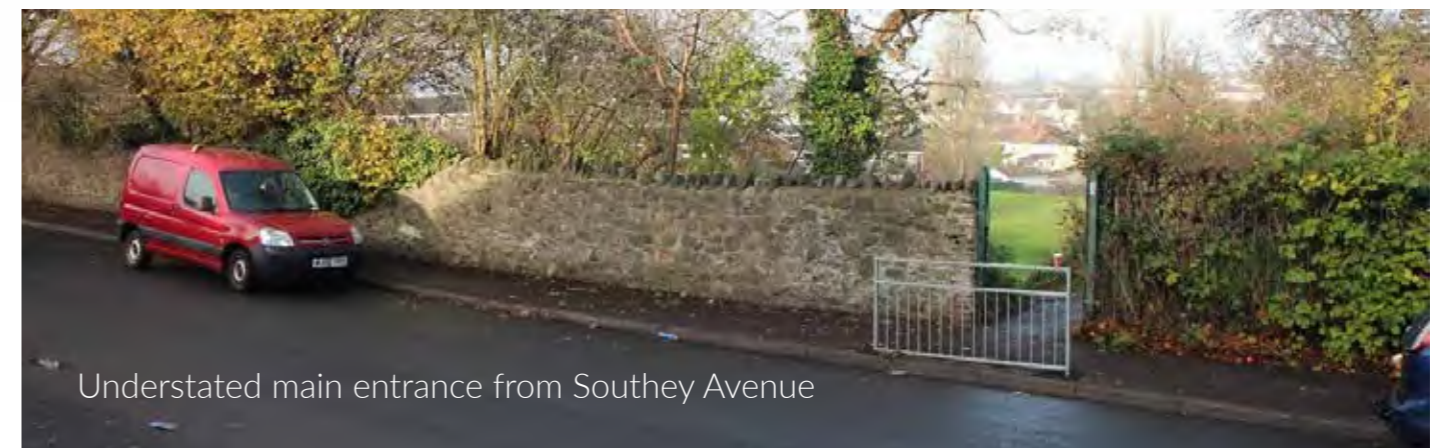
The park is an important stepping stone between New Cheltenham and Kingswood town centre. Routes through and on the edges of the space can be made more attractive with better surfaces and lighting to encourage walking and cycling.

The Friends of Southey Park have identified a number of priorities. These include:

- Improved entrances, signage and mapping. The entrances from Southey Avenue in particular need to be more open and attractive, providing views into the park
- More coherent, open and attractive boundaries particularly to the east and along Quarter Mile Alley. A safer enclosed boundary adjacent to the children's play area
- Wooden steps to help with some of the steeper slopes and changes in level
- An increase in the number of benches
- Improved lighting for entrances and paths
- Consideration for introducing CCTV around the main entrance areas
- Reinstatement of the higher walking routes within the southern boundary to incorporate a gravel path and woodland planting / nature trail
- natural play area focused on the slopes around the rock
- Incorporation and improvement to existing community allotments



1. main pedestrian entrances
2. car park
3. community centre
4. sports clubhouse
5. skate park
6. hard play area
7. rock outcrop
8. community allotments



Understated main entrance from Southey Avenue

Improving and connecting routes

Making public green spaces, as well as other facilities within the town centre, accessible to all regardless of age or ability is a key priority of the Kingswood Masterplan. These resources will only be successful if people can find them. As such there is a need to create a memorable, connected and clear wayfinding strategy in addition to ensuring that routes are attractive, safe and convenient, and entrances are prominent and welcoming.

There are a number of existing entrances into Kingswood Park, Southey Park and Magpie Bottom that are either understated or create barriers to access because have changes in level or are too narrow. In some cases, this has been done to deter motorcycles or other users that have caused a nuisance. Entrances, however, offer an opportunity to promote the use of the space and should fully represent the attractiveness and identity of the space.

Linking greenspaces together to create safe, convenient and attractive routes will help encourage people to walk or cycle for shorter local trips. There are a number of potential routes within the area and some of the key ones have been included within the Green Infrastructure strategy diagram (page 19) as 'greenways'. There is a need however to ensure that these routes are better signed, legible and well-lit if they are to be better used. In many cases the existing routes are fragmented and too narrow to accommodate cyclists or even groups of pedestrians comfortably. Opportunities to widen or find alternative paths is critical if these routes are to become better used.

Kingswood town centre will significantly benefit from better information to help link key destinations and highlighting walking and cycling routes, and public transport stops. This would help strengthen local identity and give people to confidence to further explore the area. This can take the form of on-street signage and digital resources, however it is essential that any system is maintained, up-to date, and reliable.

1. **Understated secondary entrance into Southey Park**
improved entrances help to promote increased use
2. **Existing public right of way linking to Woodstock**
narrow routes can deter pedestrians and exclude cyclists
3. **Initial concept for town centre wayfinding monolith**
developed as part of the FHSF bid 2020



Kings Chase Shopping Centre

Developed in 1974 the Kings Chase Shopping Centre remains the focus of Kingswood's retail core. In recent years the centre has demonstrated its resilience, experiencing relatively few vacant units, and with a focus on convenience shopping, has remained a vital resource during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Whilst the shops and services continue to attract regular customers, issues related to the Centre's dated appearance, unwelcoming approaches and poor image have failed to attract significant investment, despite recent planning approvals. The overall site has potential for additional development, but it is essential that this is used to deliver improvements to the whole Centre rather than just develop underused spaces to the rear. The masterplanning process has explored opportunities for a complementary mix of additional uses that together could be used to transform the site, providing a more diverse offer for visitors with improved accessibility and vitality.

The benefits of a more successful Kings Chase have wider implications for the town centre, and it is important that investment decisions are not only led by financial gain. For this reason, the Future High Street Fund included resources to bring the Centre into public ownership, so that it can be managed in a way that will help to realise wider opportunities and attract different sources of funding.

The main objectives of the masterplanning with regard to Kings Chase include the following:

- intensify and diversify uses with complementary residential, leisure and employment
- explore the potential for community-based activities and services
- upgrade the physical condition of Kings Chase
- enhance the attractiveness and offer of Kings Chase both during the day and evening
- enhance public transport connectivity and passenger facilities
- improve accessibility and entrances into Kings Chase
- better integrate Kings Chase with adjacent streets and spaces
- better consolidate and manage deliveries and servicing

1. Kings Chase Shopping Centre

Ideas for adding a mix of uses alongside the existing centre

2. Street view looking eastward

Image showing potential additions onto Regent Street



1



2

3. Prioritising investment into pedestrian areas

improvements to public routes and spaces will help reinforce the centre as a retail destination

Following the purchase of the Kings Chase Shopping Centre in May 2021 by South Gloucestershire, the council has been working to evaluate the potential for the shopping centre. There is a need to prioritise actions which will help to reinforce Kings Chase as a primary destination for the wider town centre and one that helps to improve the overall attractiveness of Kingswood town centre.

The existing mix of retail and service uses within Kings Chase has proved to be resilient throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and despite changes to shopping habits. As a result, the centre has experienced relatively few vacant units and has maintained its popularity for local people for convenience shopping. Consultation on the draft masterplan, introducing the potential of developing additional uses within the site, provoked a lot of interest and discussion. Ideas to develop additional leisure uses proved have proved popular, and further work is being carried out to refine and develop the feasibility of relocating the Kingswood Leisure Centre to Kings Chase as a development priority.

In the shorter term there is a need to improve the centre and ensure the ongoing presence of existing retail and service uses. Following on from cleaning the existing buildings in 2021, improvements to the public realm, including decluttering the entrance onto Regent Street and upgrading pedestrian areas are being developed along with proposals to improve lighting and signage. Further improvements to the appearance of buildings, and facilities including toilets and information are being progressed. Opportunities to increase community facilities and cultural events play a key part in maintaining visitor numbers

In realising the full package of ambitions set out in this masterplan it is important that the shopping centre can operate and continue to maintain Kingswood as a retail destination particularly as this has an impact on surrounding business and services. As such additional developments will need to be carefully phased over time, beginning with the rationalisation and improvement to shoppers parking alongside the development of the leisure centre. Other additional uses such as commercial leisure, workspace and residential are longer term aspirations to be developed in an incremental way to limit any adverse impact or loss of services.



Better accessibility

The key aim to increase the mix and intensity of uses within Kingswood town centre means it is vitally important to improve accessibility without adversely adding to traffic congestion and the negative effects on the environment. As such there is a need to invest in the quality and attractiveness of walking and cycling routes and improve public transport and taxis with regard to passenger experience.

The pedestrian environment at the heart of the town centre, both in terms of available space and quality, discourages movement on foot and leaves visitors with a poor impression of the area. To encourage more people to cycle, secure cycle parking needs to be provided as well as facilities such as lockers, changing and cycle repair.

Whilst bus usage has reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the bus remains a convenient way to access Kingswood town centre for many people where walking and cycling is not an option. Improvements to buses in 2019 has made journeys more comfortable, but there is a need to increase bus priority within the town centre and improve the facilities for people waiting at stops.

Within the town centre, current eastbound traffic arrangements along Regent Street cause a pinch point. This slows buses and general traffic and resulting in congestion and poor air quality. The rerouting of traffic, and a split in terms of buses and general traffic is intended to create a smoother flow of traffic, and prioritise buses within the town centre. These arrangements will also critically allow for increased pedestrian flows and more space for people waiting for buses and taxis.

Presently the bus stop on the south side of Regent Street opposite Kings Chase does not have sufficient space for passengers and pedestrians to pass comfortably. As a result, the decision has been made to combine this stop with the one at the top of Moravian Road. In reviewing the bus stops, there is an opportunity to upgrade the waiting facilities and improve real-time information for passengers.

1. Entrance to Kings Chase from Halls Road

pedestrian route is unattractive and cluttered

2. Route from shoppers car park to Kings Chase

poor quality approach for shoppers

3. Improved bus facilities on Moravian Road

artist impression showing potential



1. Space for play

balancing highway and social spaces

2. Space for markets and events

bringing visitors to the town centre

3. Space for community

maintaining traditions and identity

Improved streets and public spaces

The way in which we use and design public spaces can have a dramatic effect on our lifestyles, the way we move around an area, the opportunity to meet and interact people in a public setting, and our perceptions of safety and security.

Many of the streets within Kingswood town centre are currently dominated by vehicles, either through traffic or for on-street parking. While there are high demands for parking, both for existing residents and to serve local business, there is a need to consider where streets can be used for other functions, either on a temporary or permanent basis. If we are able to balance the demand for on-street parking by reducing the reliance on the private car, and make other forms of transport more attractive and convenient in urban centres, then there is potential to increase the use of certain streets for outdoor activities such as children's play, social spaces, community events and markets. In addition, greater community value placed upon the use of streets and spaces will help to facilitate improved design and landscape treatments and street management.

When creating new public streets and spaces in association with larger development sites, the uses to which the space will be used should be fully evaluated for those living and visiting the area. Appropriate routes through larger development sites will encourage greater use by pedestrians to support complementary non-residential uses, such as small businesses, cafes and community uses. This will help discourage anti-social activities and help prevent the privatisation of these spaces.

The masterplan promotes the potential for a live/work urban lifestyles quarter to the south of the retail areas, where there has been an ongoing trend of replacing traditional industrial sites with housing developments. Recent schemes have not delivered significant areas of high-quality public realm, provided enough greenspace, or incorporated a complementary mix of uses. A more comprehensive approach to consider potential sites in the context of the changing urban lifestyles agenda is required.



1. Approach to integrated mix of uses

artist impression from density case study (4)

2. Improving the quality of communal green spaces

artist impression from density case study (4)

Improved residential developments

A key ingredient of regenerating urban areas is the way in which we take opportunities to introduce residential development. Housing within our town centres has a number of benefits. It allows for an increase in the number of homes at a time when there is a shortage in the supply, particularly of affordable housing. It provides an opportunity to diversify the local housing stock, to better meet the needs of smaller households, younger residents, supported living and people wishing to downsize. It increases the choice of homes for people looking for more urban lifestyles, with greater access to town centre facilities and less reliance on private cars. In addition, new homes within declining town centres enable the regeneration of under used land, support mixed communities, and deliver sustainable and energy efficient housing solutions.

Delivering town centre housing can, however, bring a number of challenges. Using previously developed land can bring additional costs associated with decontamination and site preparation. Construction can be difficult on sites that are harder to deliver materials, operate heavy machinery, and avoid disturbance to neighbouring properties. Optimising sites and building at higher densities require innovative design solutions to ensure that developments complement the local area and reinforce the distinctive character of the town centre.

To attract people to the town centre as a place to live, we need to ensure that providing new homes will support the health and wellbeing of residents and respond to the changing nature of the way we live, work, and spend our leisure time. Aspects such as private and communal spaces need to be well considered to ensure that they are safe, accessible, inviting and well used. The design of individual homes need to respond to higher density living by ensuring that aspects such as comfort, natural light, privacy and peace are not compromised.

The masterplan considers the design opportunities for the key development sites and helps focus on what urban lifestyles and new homes mean for Kingswood town centre. It allows consideration to be given to scale of buildings, balancing private car parking requirements, connecting routes, and opportunities for enhancing green infrastructure.



3. Site design using existing approach to traditional planning standards

the one hectare site provides for a maximum of 66 homes

4. Site design using urban lifestyle principles

showing 100 homes with reduced private parking and increased communal greenspace

Residential density case study

The masterplan work has been progressed alongside local planning policies to consider appropriate actions to optimise the use of land within urban areas. The objective is to provide high quality residential environments but to take opportunities for locations where dependency of private cars can be reduced and find design solution that promote a balance of housing types alongside supporting facilities, communal space and increased green infrastructure.

Using the potential site on High Street, currently used for car sales, provides a theoretical one hectare site to test design options and evaluate the numbers of homes and other facilities that can be accommodated. This work has challenged the existing standards that are required of development, as well as explored innovative approaches to providing more sustainable housing areas close to town centres.

A key aspect is the amount of land used for private car parking. Traditionally in South Gloucestershire the same requirements for car parking spaces are applied to rural and urban areas. By recognising greater proximity to services and the availability of sustainable transport options, one approach might be to reduce car parking to one space per dwelling or even lower where access to car clubs is available. This frees up land and by also considering terraces, maisonettes or apartments means that more homes can comfortably be accommodated on valuable sites. Reduced space for car parking also allows for increased greenspace and tree planting to enhance residential environments.

In recent years new housing developments in Kingswood have generated around 50 homes per hectare. Using an urban lifestyles approach it is considered that developments should aim to provide between 60 and 120 homes per hectare.



Design testing and assumptions

As part of the masterplanning process a three-dimensional computer model has been created to test development scenarios. The model covers the whole masterplan area and can be extended where required as proposals develop. This enables individual sites to be fully assessed in terms of the physical impact they have on important views and vistas, and to fully consider how they relate to the overall surrounding context. A number of working assumptions have been made about the height, scale and massing appropriate for individual sites, taking into consideration the location, scale of existing buildings, opportunities to enhance the urban townscape and respond to the positive aspects of identity found within character zones.

Residential uses have been modelled using a target density of 100 dwellings per hectare, and tested with a mix of two bed houses and apartments that meet the requirements of the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard. This is not intended to exclude one or three bed units in the future development of sites. It is assumed that integrated parking will be delivered at maximum standard of one space per dwelling. This is below the current general planning standards which are currently under review within urban contexts. Non-residential floorspace is included on sites that would benefit from a mix of uses and to maintain employment potential within the town centre. In all cases buildings that contribute to the area with regard to their appearance have been retained.

Mixed Commercial Quarter

There is a significant opportunity to invest in the Kings Chase Shopping Centre and wider site by increasing the scale of development and adding to the mix of uses. This could include additional retail, leisure, and business space, whilst also exploring the potential for residential. There is scope at this central location to increase the scale of development to medium rise, although overall building heights need to be tested to reduce any adverse impact on the neighbouring historic quarter.

Historic and Cultural Heart

The approach here is to strengthen the historic identity by repairing and reusing many of the existing buildings. During the process of developing the Masterplan, the Masters Church and associated Tabernacle have made significant progress with regard to bringing these valuable buildings back into use. There is limited scope for redevelopment although the block closest to Kings Chase does provide an opportunity to introduce new buildings that sit more comfortably alongside existing historic buildings and provide a better transition into the historic core.

Civic Quarter





Development within the Civic Quarter will be aimed at restoring a small number of key vacant and underused sites in order to improve the approach into the town centre. Sites to the east of the area have been identified previously as longer-term development potential, and provide an opportunity to establish a comprehensive mix of sustainable homes with easy access to community facilities, Kingswood Park, and local schools.

Live/Work Urban Lifestyles Quarter

The area to the south of the retail core has been in transition, with sites previously protected for employment use being developed for residential. There is an opportunity to promote a refined model of development, which retains spaces for business and develops a more urban and integrated design approach to delivering homes. There will be a greater emphasis on mixed use, communal amenity space and usable public spaces. The existing scale of buildings such as the former Lucas factory, illustrate the potential for exploring medium rise development rising to five or six storeys, in order to create a vibrant mixed-use focus for the live/work neighbourhood.



Key

-  Mixed Commercial Quarter
-  Historic and Cultural Heart
-  Civic Quarter
-  Live/Work Urban Lifestyles

Kingswood **Masterplan**