

06/10/23

ISSUED

Northwich Town Centre

Development Framework



Contents

A selection of images within this document are sourced with permission from Northwich BID (including photos commissioned by the BID from Karl Brooks Photography), Northwich Town Council, Northwich Townscape Heritage project, Cheshire Image Bank and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

This document is copyright protected and may not be reproduced in whole or part without written authority from the owner.

© 2022 Planit I.E. Limited

1 Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose	5
1.2 The Scope	10
1.3 Vision	14
1.4 <i>Sustainability</i> A Holistic Approach	18
2 Northwich evolving through time	23
Celebrate Northwich's History	24
2.1 Heritage Assets	26
2.2 Northwich's History	27
2.3 Evolution of Urban Form	30
3 Consultation Feedback	32
3.1 Consultation Approach	33
3.2 Stakeholder Engagement <i>Place Standard</i> <i>Tool</i>	35
3.3 Key Findings	36
4 Opportunity for Change	37
4.1 The Challenges	38
4.2 What makes a good Town Centre? <i>Assessing Uses</i>	41
4.3 Identifying the Assets	44
4.4 Street Character	52

5 Evidence Base Key Findings	58				
5.1 GPS Data Summary	59				
5.2 Overarching Observations	63				
5.3 Summary of Opportunities	64				
6 Spatial Framework	66				
6.1 Spatial Design Principles	67				
6.2 <i>Movement Strategy</i> The Overarching Approach	70	6.12 <i>Landscape Strategy</i> River Enhancements	89		
6.3 <i>Movement Strategy</i> Arrival Improvements	72	6.13 <i>Public Realm and Landscape Strategy</i> Defining Public Spaces	90		
6.4 <i>Movement Strategy</i> Chester Way	74	6.14 <i>Public Realm and Landscape Strategy</i> Animate the High Street	91		
6.5 <i>Movement Strategy</i> Improve connections to the Railway Station	75	6.15 <i>Way-finding, Street Furniture, Lighting</i> Creating an Engaging Environment	92		
6.6 <i>Movement Strategy</i> Car Parking	76	6.16 <i>Way-finding, Street Furniture, Lighting</i> Creating an Engaging Environment	93		
6.7 Development Principles	78	6.17 <i>Public Art and Branding</i> Capture the Essence of Northwich	94		
6.8 <i>Public Realm Strategy</i> Overarching Approach	82	7 Focus Areas	97		
6.9 <i>Public Realm Strategy</i> Overarching Approach	84	7.1 Key Objectives Plan	98		
6.10 <i>Landscape Strategy</i> Overall Flood Risk Strategy for Northwich	86	7.2 The Focus Areas	100		
6.11 <i>Landscape Strategy</i> River Enhancements	88	8 Barons Quay Riverside	103		
		8.1 Barons Quay Riverside	104		
		8.2 Illustrative River Weaver Vision	106		
		9 Lower Witton Street, Weaver Way	109		
		9.1 Lower Witton Street and Weaver Way	110		
				10 Upper Witton Street, Tabley Street	113
				10.1 Upper Witton Street and Tabley Street	114
				11 The Bull Ring	117
				11.1 The Bull Ring (and River Dane banks)	118
				12 Weaver Square	121
				12.1 A snap shot of Weaver Square	122
				12.2 Revive the historic streets	124
				12.3 The Challenges	125
				12.4 Design Principles	126
				12.5 Development Principles	130
				12.6 Appearance	136
				12.7 A liveable, mixed-use community	143
				13 Conclusion	147
				13.1 Conclusion	148
				13.2 Delivery and Implementation	150

Cheshire West and Chester Council has commissioned the Northwich Development Framework.

This is a unique opportunity to consider how Northwich's distinctive assets and heritage can be enhanced to form a comprehensive vision and spatial framework to shape future regeneration and growth, where environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, health and well-being, and accessibility contribute to liveability and creating a sense of place in which to live, play, learn and work.

01

Introduction

Northwich is an industrial town born from the salt mining industry. Located in the county of Cheshire, at the heart of the Cheshire Plains and at the confluence of the River Weaver and River Dane. A network of green infrastructure, parks and countryside surround the town.

Northwich Town Centre has seen significant investment over the last 10 years as part of the Northwich Vision. This includes: public realm improvements on **Witton Street and the Bull Ring** that were completed in 2014; the £15 million **Memorial Court leisure complex** managed by Brio which was completed 2015; the £80m **Barons Quay shopping and leisure destination**; the £20m **Hayhurst Quay scheme** including the Waitrose supermarket; and the Northwich Townscape Heritage Project which saw private finance plus capital grants from Cheshire West and Chester Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund invested into the restoration of heritage buildings along Witton Street and High Street. **Northwich Library** is undergoing a major £2m refurbishment that will preserve the building for years to come.

The high street market trends are changing throughout the UK and following the Covid-19 pandemic, Northwich seeks to redefine its role, function and future.

The Northwich Development Framework (*hereafter referred to as the NDF*) has been prepared to set out a comprehensive vision for regeneration and future growth over the next 10 years and beyond, see Appendix for the NDF Study Area.

Cheshire West and Chester Council has recognised that there is a need for immediate action to ensure that Northwich fulfils its potential as a thriving and vibrant town.

The Northwich community of today and the future deserve an attractive Town Centre for modern living where people aspire to live, work, learn and play.



Crown Street



Northwich Witton Street

1.1 Purpose

The NDF will be a toolkit for all stakeholders involved in shaping Northwich's future regeneration. Defining a clear and ambitious vision for the future will generate momentum and motivate action, leading to regeneration, growth and prosperity.

The NDF will provide a toolkit as below:

- Comprehensive design guidance for developers to ensure that development is joined up in its approach, avoiding piece-meal development.
- An action plan and framework for The Council to implement to drive forward investment opportunities.
- A strategy for Northwich and its wider context, providing a 'joined-up' approach to the vision.
- A vision to encourage investment and facilitate growth, from investors, businesses and developers.
- A vision for Northwich that is shaped by the distinctive and unique assets that capture the essence of Northwich.
- The NDF is underpinned by the challenges and opportunities identified through robust analysis.

Northwich has many distinctive qualities and assets that can be celebrated. It's already great. It's time to make it even better.







Focus of the study

The NDF is evidence-led and robust in its approach. It builds on previous stakeholder engagement and data collection, as well as recent stakeholder engagement, local GPS data, baseline place analysis and research undertaken as part of this document. See Appendix for further information of all work undertaken.

The approach identifies the town's challenges, opportunities, and assets. It combines the findings into a framework that identifies interventions and actions to focus a plan for regeneration. The framework is a catalyst for regeneration, which sets out the next steps, recommendations and strategies.



Team

This document has been prepared by Planit-IE. The consultant team is local to the town and long-term residents of Northwich. We are invested in its future and recognise the potential; Northwich has the potential to create an amazing Town Centre.

Celebrating Northwich's assets

Northwich already has many great assets that are worth celebrating including its location at the confluence of the River Weaver and River Dane which is unique to Northwich. It is also surrounded by an abundance of countryside and green infrastructure, an asset that was truly appreciated by residents during the pandemic for its recreational and health and wellbeing purposes.

It has an abundance of industrial history, a traditional high street, and attractive walking routes through the streets of Northwich. Visitors are always welcomed by the friendly community.

There is a reason why Northwich was voted as one of the happiest places to live in the UK in the 2022 Rightmove survey. It's a great place for families, with some of the highest performing schools in the country and its low crime rate offers a safe and secure environment. It's strategically located and within easy reach of three successful north-west cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Chester. The town has an engaged and active community, including a Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) which aims to make Northwich a location where business and the community can thrive. Northwich has countless valuable assets and now is the time to draw upon these strengths in order for the town to reach its full potential and become a vibrant, successful location, and a great town to live, work and visit.

Northwich challenges

Northwich isn't without its challenges. Barons Quay is a significant development of large retail and leisure units which was built at a time that coincided with changes in shopping habits, leaving many units vacant. Despite this, Barons Quay has become a key destination and has helped in activating the northern area of the Town Centre.

The Weaver Square shopping precinct is a 1960s development that is in need of redevelopment to complement the regeneration of the Town Centre.

The outdoor market on Weaver Square suffered from a fire in 2020 which has resulted in many small local businesses closing down or relocating into the indoor market. Despite this, the former location of the outdoor market currently acts as temporary open space for the enjoyment of Northwich's community, where shops are able to spill out and events from the town's vibrant calendar take place.

Flooding has impacted on the Town Centre, and this could be a barrier to investment and may be a contributing factor to long term voids in some areas.

Food and beverage uses are lacking in Northwich, particularly the night time offer. Footfall within the town, as well as reduced public transport within late hours don't currently support these night time uses.

Inflation, increases to energy costs and landlord mortgage rates are also contributing factors in the high street challenges.

High Street challenges

High streets across the UK have suffered as a result of changing habits in how we shop and spend our free time, partly due to online shopping and large out of town retail parks.

These changes in shopping habits have been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic which has left many Town Centres with businesses struggling to survive due to lockdown and stay at home recommendations. Businesses have folded and left the high street.

In more recent months, the cost of living crisis including inflation, increases to energy costs and landlord mortgage rates have also become contributing factors to the high street challenge.

Why change now?

Northwich can now reach its full potential, focussing on its assets and working on its challenges, in order to become a vibrant place to live, work and visit.

The ambition is for the challenges to drive future regeneration within the Town Centre.

The combination of the reasons explained previously, including Barons Quay, the vacant units at Witton Street, buildings in disrepair at Weaver Square and the loss of the outdoor market, has been recognised by CW&C as challenges.

Like other towns around the country climate change is a major concern and Northwich will play its part in providing an end point net-zero vision.

Northwich needs to diversify its offer; the Town Centre can no longer rely on retail to attract footfall. The high street needs to adapt to the market changes and needs of the community.

All high streets need to adapt and move away from retail or single-land dominant land uses. A broad offer of linked uses would help to stimulate organic growth and encourage footfall and dwell time within the town.

Northwich needs to respond to the demographic in the Town Centre and provide experiences for young people and families, who are leaving the town at weekends to more attractive destinations.

Northwich needs to be well connected and sustainable. Transport is an issue with the majority of visitors travelling by car. By improving public transport it would reduce the reliance on the car, resulting in less traffic and congestion. Further, it has been highlighted that promoting active travel in the town can help make Northwich even better.

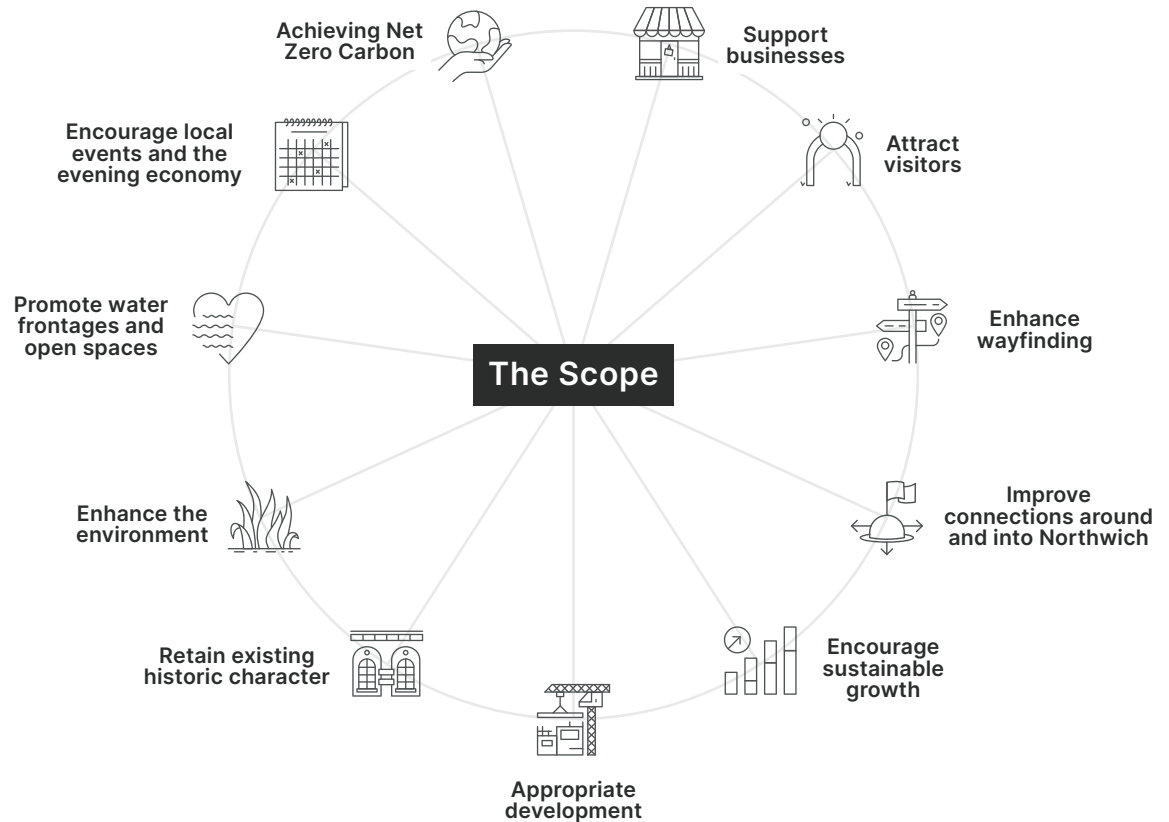
Northwich needs to consider how people move around the town and connect people to the wider countryside and river. The countryside is accessible from the Town Centre but it is difficult to make the connection due to obstructions and severances of roads. A network of pedestrian and cycle connections would help to encourage recreation routes through the Town Centre and into surrounding spaces, including Winnington Village. Making the most of its Town Centre public spaces as functional usable areas would allow people to dwell and spend time in the town.

The public realm strategy is where focus and attention should be directed, in the next steps to create a sustainable Northwich Town Centre.



1.2 The Scope

Cheshire West and Chester Council's scope includes 11 toolkit objectives which have informed the vision, spatial framework strategies and recommendations included within in this document. The objective for sustainability is in accordance with the ambitions of the United Nations, to address the global climate emergency.





Support businesses

Support Northwich Town Centre's existing shops and businesses.



Attract visitors

Harness the potential of Barons Quay to attract visitors to a vibrant Town Centre.



Enhance wayfinding

Establish better linkages / wayfinding between key areas of the town to make it function as one Town Centre rather than its component parts.



Improve connections around and into Northwich

Seek ways to make movement around and into the Town Centre better for people travelling on foot, by bike or public transport.



Encourage sustainable growth

Bring opportunity sites forward for development to deliver sustainable growth and investment that will support and complement the Town Centre.



Appropriate development

Ensure that the scale and massing of new development is appropriate to the centre's role and function.



Retain existing historic character

Ensure that investment proposals retain and complement the historic character of the area, existing heritage assets are protected, and a high-quality historic environment is promoted.



Enhance the environment

Enhance the Town Centre environment by promoting high quality, inclusive and sustainable design, improvements to public realm, urban greening, and enhancements to the key gateways.



Promote water frontages and open spaces

Make the Town Centre a place to dwell, ensuring the water frontages and open space become a focus for business and leisure activity for residents and visitors.



Encourage local events and the evening economy

Build on the busy events calendar in the Town Centre, grow the 'evening economy' and support the town's growth as a tourist destination.



Achieving Net Zero Carbon

All objectives set as part of the framework and the commitment of Cheshire West and Chester's Place Plan will tackle the climate emergency through local action, however is deemed suitable.

Northwich, a
welcoming, vibrant
and sustainable Town
Centre that offers
both the convenience
of modern living and
access to nature, parks
and countryside.



To Anderton Boat Lift

To Marbury Park



To Lion Salt Works Museum

WINNINGTON VILLAGE

NORTHWICH WOODLANDS

CAREY PARK

THE FLASHES

To Wincham

RIVER TAXI

RIVER TAXI

Barons Quay



LEISURE HUB

Northwich Library

The Plaza

TO NORTHWICH TOWN CENTRE

WINNINGTON HILL

VICTORIA INFIRMARY

The Bull Ring

VERDIN PARK

LIVE/CO-WORK

Weaver Square

WITTON STREET

Brio Leisure

WELCOME!



NORTHWICH STATION

RIVER WEAVER

RIVER DANE



Hayhurst Quay

VICKERSWAY PARK

To Hartford

To Davenham

BRITISH WATERWAYS

1.3 Vision

Neighbourhood Plan 2018

The Northwich Neighbourhood Plan 2018 included a vision statement as below:

"Northwich will become a thriving town where people want to live, work and visit.

The extensive river frontage along with the newly built Barons Quay development will be harnessed as a vibrant focus of attraction for shopping and leisure in a daytime and evening economy.

New developments in the Town Centre will be sympathetic to the existing heritage so that the character of a market town with black and white buildings will be retained".

Developments out of the Town Centre will complement the features and character of the areas and will protect and preserve the many green spaces the town enjoys".

We have created a framework with recommendations for the Town Centre for the following reasons:

- The Northwich Neighbourhood Plan 2018 focusses on a wider area than the Town Centre, including the residential neighbourhoods and suburbs. A vision that focusses on the Town Centre is needed.
- Consideration of developments and events over the last years, including the pandemic and critical climate emergency have changed the shape of the Town Centre.
- Recent collation of evidence, GPS data and an audit of the Town Centre has identified the key challenges and opportunities. See Appendix for further detail.
- 2022 Stakeholder Engagement Considerations can shape the vision for the Town Centre. See Appendix for further detail.



A future vision

Evidence gathering and stakeholder consultation has shaped the vision for Northwich Town Centre, and complements the principles stated in the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan.

Northwich Town
Centre will be:



Accessible and inclusive

A place that welcomes everybody, regardless of background, ability, or community involvement, whichever way you wish to travel, we want Northwich to be the destination for you!

The vision is to transform the accessibility in the Town Centre for everyone, including those with restricted mobility to ensure inclusivity. Future plans are rooted in improving mental health and well-being and supports the governments aim, to adapt existing public spaces to be more inclusive and accessible for neurodivergent people and design new developments with neurodiversity in mind.



Sustainable and green

A place that is ambitious and innovative in its response to the climate and biodiversity crisis. Northwich will deliver sustainability through a holistic approach to achieve net zero commitments, reverse nature's decline, and combat social inequality. It should encourage new innovative technologies to reduce carbon emissions.



Innovative and resilient

A town that is resilient against environmental and economic shocks, builds community wealth, mitigates against and adapts to a changing climate, and promotes diverse uses to encourage footfall to the high street. Adapt to change and growth through collaboration and partnerships.



Connected

Creation of a safe and accessible network of streets and spaces that offer spill out and dwell time to encourage footfall and activity to the Northwich high street. Connecting to the wider surroundings through improved footpaths and cycle routes. Promoting active travel and use of efficient and reliable public transport options, with reduced reliance on the car.



Distinctive and independent

Encouraging independent business including a variety of food and beverage to support the evening economy.

A habitat for local artists, makers and crafts people to thrive, involving community artists to help shape the public realm to capture the essence of Northwich.

A destination that promotes a variety of seasonal events unique to Northwich, attracting locals and visitors, encouraging footfall to the high street.

Delivering a local and vibrant market, offering stalls for independent traders, makers and crafts people, and becoming a place for the community to gather.

Celebrating Northwich's history and heritage assets to create place-making value. Providing a legacy through educational and interactive public realm.

Developing a strong brand identity that reflects the essence of Northwich and promotes the Town Centre and the unique offer.



Liveable and compact

Provides community facilities and amenities that are required for a residential neighbourhood. Maximising the core through dense development, encouraging footfall to the high street. Repairing the historic street pattern and voids with appropriate development that responds to its context.

Provide an affordable, diverse and inclusive housing mix encouraging families and young professionals to live in the heart of the Town Centre.



Healthy and social

A place that cares for people's mental health and well-being, fostering a sense of belonging and community spirit. A place that supports the community with a choice of facilities, leisure and play to meet the needs of everyone. Public realm spaces encourage social interaction and connection to help reduce mental illnesses, loneliness, isolation and depression.

The Town Centre offers an abundance of outdoor recreation facilities, located within easy access to the countryside and water based recreation. Exercise will be part of everyday life with enhanced walking and cycling routes to the parks, countryside and waterways.



Diverse

A place for everyone with a range of uses, facilities and events offered for the very young to the elderly. Accommodating the needs of visitors through a range of tourist attractions and supporting the needs of the local community.

Offering sustainable workspaces for start up businesses, independent businesses and co-working.

Encourage a mix of residential, retail, leisure, cultural, civic, commercial, health and community facilities to diversify the Town Centre.



Ashton's Flashes

Carey Park

Furey Woodland

RESIDENTIAL & OFFICE

co-working and business start-ups

NEW WARRINGTON RD

WINNINGTON LN

& RETAIL LEISURE

INDEPENDENTS

TOWN ARRIVAL

Victoria Infirmary

food and beverage

RESIDENTIAL-LED mixed-use

CHESTER WAY

STATION RD

Verdin Park

RESIDENTIAL

marina

St Helen's Church

CASTLE ST

Chinkers Field

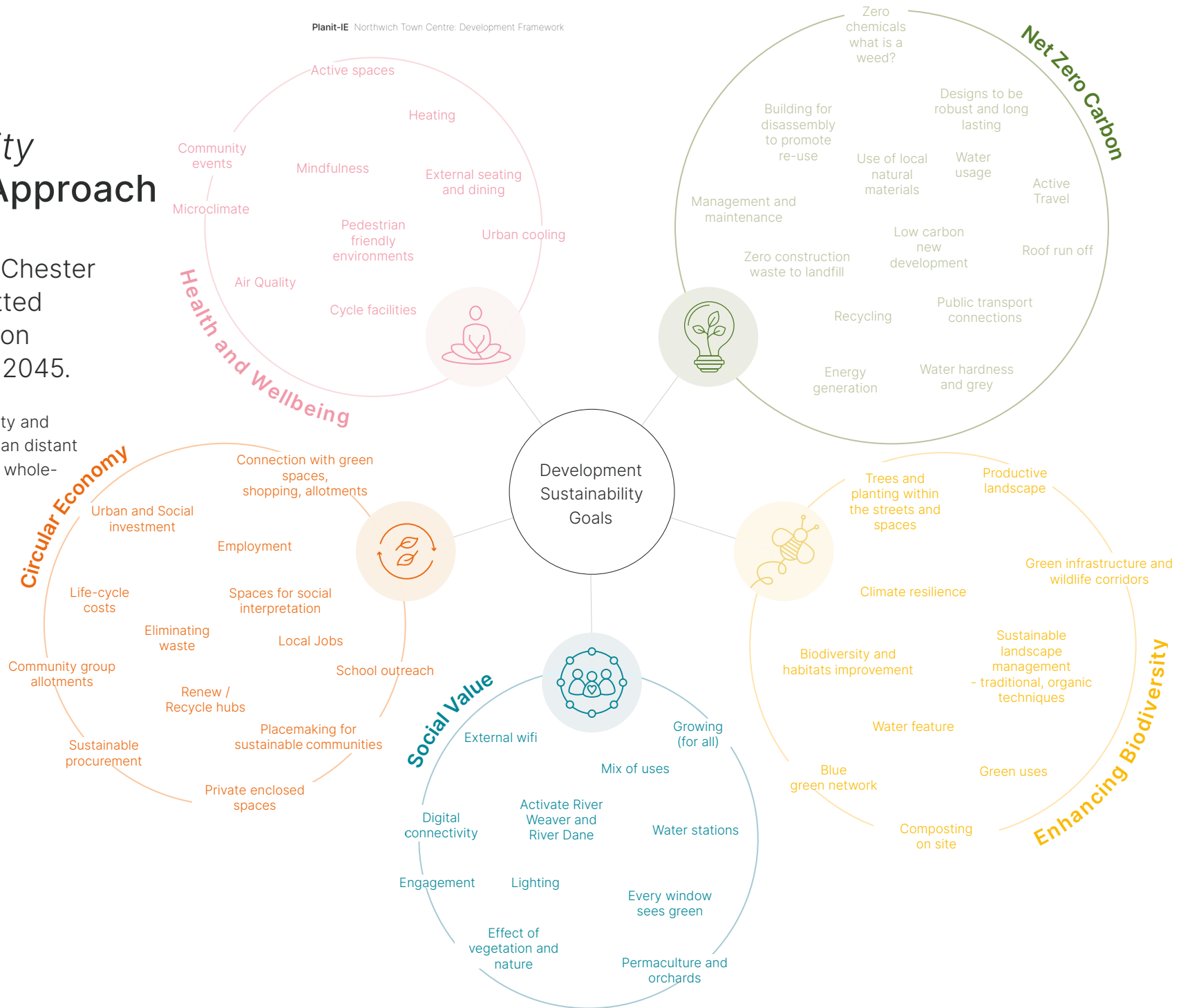
LONDON ROAD

Vickersway Park

1.4 Sustainability A Holistic Approach

Cheshire West and Chester Council has committed to becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2045.

However, ensuring sustainability and resilience depends on more than distant carbon targets, and requires a whole-systems holistic approach.





Net Zero Carbon

- Promote active travel
- Create streets for people and not cars.
- Reduce parking to reduce emissions and improve air quality
- Incorporate Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in streets and public spaces.
- Accommodate electric vehicles within parking areas

Pedestrian and cycle friendly streets encourage active travel



Enhancing biodiversity

- Integrate green infrastructure within the urban areas
- Retain healthy and attractive hedges and trees and using them to create ecological corridors
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitats
- Provide a Sustainable urban Drainage Strategy of swales, sponge parks

Incorporating SuDS improves drainage and enhances wildlife habitats



Plant NOMA, community activator project

Social value

- Nurture the Town Centre to become inclusive and resilient.
- Opportunity to define socio-economic impacts and value creation within the surrounding communities.
- Community Activator Projects to draw people into the Town Centre, drive economic activity and supports social inclusion and vibrancy.
- Community spaces that welcome everyone.
- Local artists, educators and community builders to bring people together through crafts and making.



The Pilcrow Pub, Manchester

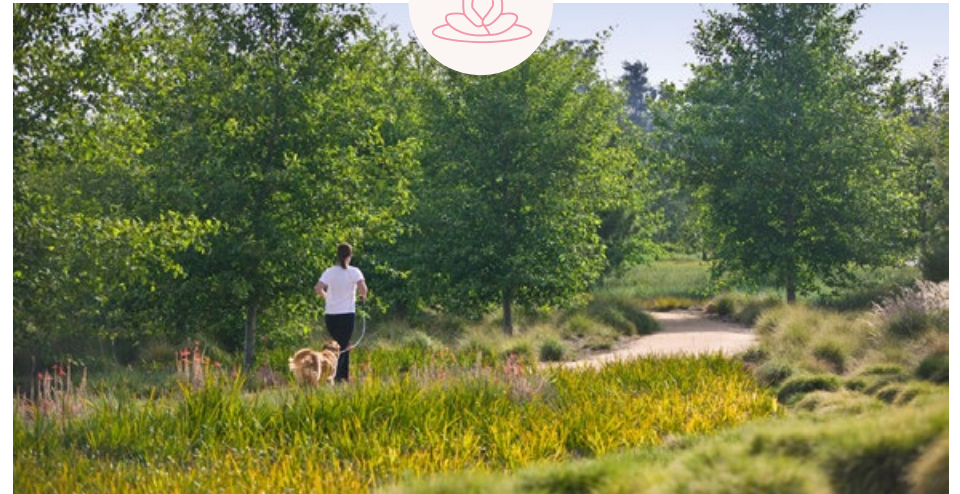
Circular economy

- Eliminate waste and improve resource efficiency through circularity.
- Source responsible materials, procuring from local suppliers.
- Plan a sustainable outcome, return on investment to maximise through better property values, improved yields and more satisfied tenants.
- Use local labour where appropriate which helps boost the local economy and gives the community a greater sense of ownership of a scheme.
- 'Renew' hubs encourage circular economy by re-purposing and up-cycling items (e.g. furniture, technology and clothes) for sale, preventing pre-owned items to go to waste.



Health and wellbeing

- Community groups and projects that aim to improve experiences for people with mental illnesses, such as the Northwich Dementia Action Alliance.
- Aim to either adapt existing public spaces to be more inclusive for those with disabilities or design new developments with inclusivity, accessibility and neurodiversity in mind.
- Encourage healthy lifestyles in Northwich by making it easier for residents and visitors to adopt a healthier way of life on a daily basis.
- Public realm spaces to encourage social interaction. Design buildings and the spaces in between cohesively, creating a network of vibrant streets that support a variety of activities.
- Improve access to existing play facilities to encourage physical activity, including the new play provision at Marbury Park and the skate park at Vickersway Park.
- Provide and enhance inclusive play opportunities and promote physical activity, in accordance with the Council's play strategy.
- Footpaths and cycle networks that are accessible for all, enabling families and individuals to walk.
- Promote outdoor events such as the dragon boat race and Piña Colada festival, along with additional events.
- Provide opportunities to grow food in allotments and leisure gardens close to the Town Centre, encouraging outdoor activity and healthy eating while reducing the environmental impact associated with food transportation.



Pedestrian routes through natural habitats for running and dog walking



Outdoor play in pockets of spaces along the street, creating interaction with surrounding businesses



Outdoor activities for children and adults for learning and interaction



COVID-19
Keep
your
distance

1
4

BRISNET PUBLIC LIBRARY
MUSEUM & ARTS CENTRE
1809

Northwich
Library

This chapter describes how Northwich has evolved through time and its industrial past. To create a better future, it is important to understand the key events and innovations that have shaped the Town Centre that exists today.

02

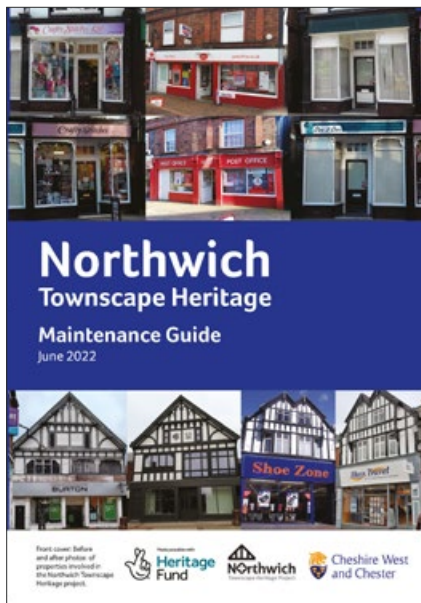
Northwich evolving through time

Celebrate Northwich's History

Northwich's history contributes to the character of the Town Centre today. Heritage assets, both listed and locally listed, are a distinctive asset which will continue to be protected and celebrated as part of future regeneration.

The Northwich Townscape Heritage Project promoted the restoration of the unique traditional timber-framed buildings on Witton Street and High Street. Whilst this has now closed, the principles of the project will continue to be encouraged in line with the Northwich Conservation Area Management Plan (<https://www.northwich-th.co.uk/buildings/northwich-conservation-area/>) and the Northwich Townscape Heritage Project Maintenance Guide. (<https://www.northwich-th.co.uk/building-maintenance/>)

Investment in the restoration of traditional shop fronts, shop signs and heritage features will help to preserve the heritage of Northwich town centre for future generations.



Northwich Townscape Heritage, Maintenance Guidance, June 2022



Ghost Sign, Christmas Extravaganza, 2017



Grade II listed statues of Sir John Brunner and Ludwig Mond



Historic architectural details at The Penny Black, former Post Office, Witton Street



Grade II listed, Town Bridge and locally listed buildings contribute to the historic character of the Bull Ring, Northwich



Building restored, Witton Street



Grade II listed, Plaza building restored, Witton Street



Grade II Town Bridge, Spanning the River Weaver and built by the Weaver Navigation Trustees in 1898-99



Grade II listed Brunner Public Library, Witton Street, Northwich. In 1909, this stunning building was donated to the town by Sir John Brunner, the local MP for the periods 1885-86 and 1887-1910

2.1 Heritage Assets




Northwich Town Centre Conservation Area covers a significant part of the town from Barons Quay to Leftwich, from Castle Hill to St. Helen's Church.

It concentrates on High Street / Witton Street, the river banks, the Verdin Park area, Castle Hill, St. Helen's Church and London Road / Leftwich. Several Grade II Listed buildings are located within the Town Centre boundary, mostly on Witton Street. There are also locally listed buildings, including the Bull Ring and Witton Chimes Pub. See Appendix for further information on the Built Form constraints for Northwich Town Centre.

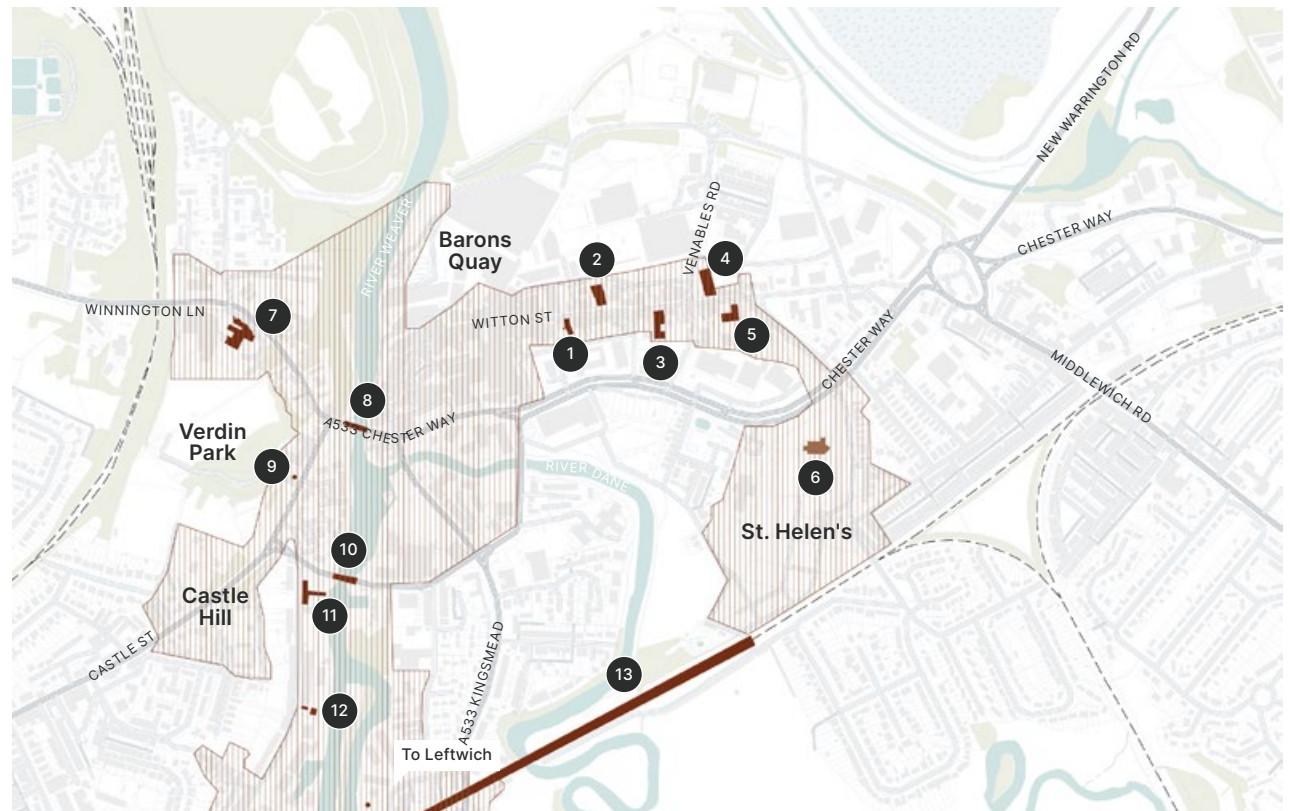
The form of the Town Centre is essentially of a linear development of narrow plots with a rich network of cross routes. Chester Way was built in the 1960s, redirecting traffic away from the Town Centre, which led to the loss of substantial parts of this historic street pattern of Northwich and isolated the south of the town. Furthermore, most modern development differs from the historic grain and has created wider frontages with different rhythms and horizontal emphasis.

There is potential to create interventions in Chester Way to improve connections to the south of Northwich. There is opportunity to revive the historic street pattern and grain of the Town Centre.

Key

-  Grade II Listed Buildings / Monuments
-  Grade I Listed Buildings / Monuments
-  Northwich Town Centre Conservation area

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. R.A.O.B Hall | 6. Church of St. Helen | 11. British Waterways Board Area Office |
| 2. Brunner Public Library | 7. Victoria Infirmary, old wing | 12. Navigation House |
| 3. Northwich Post Office | 8. Town Bridge | 13. Weaver Railway Viaduct |
| 4. Plaza Bingo Club | 9. Verdin Park Gates | |
| 5. Church of St. Willfred | 10. Hayhurst Bridge | |



Heritage assets plan

2.2 Northwich's History

1. Salt-mining origins

Northwich is one of the three local salt towns of the Cheshire plain – ‘wyche’ meaning salt; the two other towns being Nantwich and Middlewich. Salt has been produced from the area since Roman times. By the 1620s, over 200 ‘wyches’ or salt houses were busily producing salt in the town of Northwich, and by the 19th Century it was considered "salt capital of the world".

The extraction of this resource has shaped the both the urban form and the landscape surrounding the town, and resulted in significant ground instability and subsidence. Collapsing salt mines and subsequent infilling with water has created the iconic 'flashes' endemic to the area. The presence of salt has led to the development of chemical industry which now characterises the industrial landscape of Northwich's hinterlands.



Plan of the historic waterways in the UK



Salt works



The working river



Flooding in Northwich

2. A town where two rivers meet

Northwich lies in the heart of the Cheshire Plain, at the confluence of the rivers Weaver and Dane.

The River Weaver rises from its source in the hills of West Cheshire, winding its way for 71 miles across the Cheshire plains, before it meets the Mersey. Improvements to the river to make it navigable, which included installing eleven locks, was completed in 1732.

The salt trade was bolstered by the arrival of the Trent and Mersey Canal at Anderton in 1773, and improved access to the Mersey at low tide in 1810 by the Weston Canal.

This connection with the Mersey, and ultimately global trade across the Atlantic, shaped Northwich's fortunes during the industrial revolution.

Significant engineering of waterways around Northwich enabled the expansion of the salt industry and intensified the extraction.

Changes in the landscape and management of the river catchment has decreased the capacity to capture and store rainfall, and resulted in flooding of the Town Centre. There is still a risk of flooding in Northwich. Nevertheless, flood mitigation measures and action plans are now in place.

3. Northwich's unique timber framed buildings

Due to the rampancy of subsidence and the prevalence of houses sinking and collapsing, a by-law was passed in 1881 to ensure that a timber-framed style of construction was used for all new buildings. The timber frame gave flexibility to the buildings, allowing them to withstand subsidence, and to be jacked up and respond to changes in ground level. As a result, Northwich is characterised by half-timbered buildings, with many local landmarks lining Witton street.



Subsidence in Castle Street, 1890 - 1899



Anderton Boat Lift



Anderton Boat Lift



Timber framed buildings on Witton Street

4. Industrial Revolution in Northwich

Steel was significant during the industrial revolution in creating the infrastructure of industry, trade, and travel. Many iconic structures still stand and form an integral part of the townscape and the towns infrastructure, as well as being a tourism draw.

The railway network, connecting Northwich with surrounding cities and towns, was hugely significant, and continues to be an important asset for the town.

The first railway to reach the town was the Cheshire Midland Railway route from Knutsford in 1863. The West Cheshire Railway opened from Northwich to West Cheshire Junction in 1869, with further local lines completing the network of routes serving the area, with Chester Northgate being served from 1875.

This network greatly increased the ability for people to travel during the Victorian era, boosted trade, and brought tourism to the area to witness the notorious subsidence.

5. Victorian Era brick and neighbourhoods

Mechanisation came to the brickmaking industry in the 1820s and with improved transport infrastructure – first canals and then railways – the production of brick and rate of urban development intensified significantly.

The iconic North West red brick has shaped the expansion and development of Northwich in the 19th Century, and the ubiquity of the material (though no longer locally produced) continues to define the development of Northwich's suburbs and satellite villages to this day.

Contemporary housing development in Northwich is characterised by low-density sprawl which fail to create walkable communities, locks in car dependency and puts pressure on road infrastructure and the Town Centre as a drive-to retail hub.



Typical low-density sprawl that characterises the suburbs

6. Discovery of Polythene

In 1933, Eric Fawcett, Reginald Gibson and a team of scientists, first discovered Polythene during an experiment at the ICI Wallerscote plant near Northwich.

By 1938, ICI finally perfected the technique to allow production of this versatile plastic on an industrial scale. It proved a timely breakthrough. By the start of World War II, large plants were busy producing large quantities of this new substance which proved invaluable to the war effort and saved countless lives.

7. Post-War Northwich

The postwar era brought a period of construction with a new kind of architecture. The concrete buildings of this time have a strong influence on the townscape, and define key parts of the town.

During the 1960's the Town Centre underwent substantial redevelopment and a number of prominent buildings date from this time. The old market hall was replaced and surrounded by a new shopping precinct: Weaver Walk and Market Way.

New civic buildings were built including the new Police Station and Council Offices.

Many examples of this style of urbanism in Northwich have not stood the test of time. The large footprint buildings stand in contrast to the fine-grain townscape of Witton Street.



Weaver Square, 1969



Barons Quay, 2021

2.3 Evolution of Urban Form



- In early 1721 the urban form was predominantly along Witton Street, the main access into Northwich from the east and west. Meadows, fields and farmland surrounded this street and St Helen's Church. A couple of bridges across the River Weaver and River Dane provided access from the south. Significant green open spaces surround the town.
- In the late 1800's Northwich's urban form is defined by works along the rivers, brickworks and Northwich's main industry, the saltworks. A fine grain of terraced streets is within the urban core, fringed by mills and other industrial buildings, creating a coarse grain towards the edges and along key transport routes.
- The industrial railway runs along the western edge of Northwich and the main route into Manchester, along the south and east edges. The historic core centres along Witton Street, running towards the Town Swing Bridge, the crossing over the River Weaver.



- Plans from the 1940s show replacement of some of the coarse industrial urban grain with residential areas, particularly to the south and west, and the expansion of the town along key roads and to the east.
- The historic routes of Witton Street and London Road, along with Middlewich Road, Winnington Lane and Castle Street, remain key axes within the town's structure.
- While the town encroached into its rural setting, green spaces were preserved, including the edges of Marbury Country Park, Moss Farm and the areas along the edges of the River Dane. Blue infrastructure was preserved despite the heavy industrialisation of the land.



- In the 1960s there was a significant increase in development of residential and industrial areas. Chester Way and Weaver Square were built in the 1960's.
- Town Bridge, Hayhurst Bridge, Dane Bridge and Victoria Bridge remain the primary connections across the Rivers Weaver and Dane.
- Residential development developed on the periphery of Northwich Town Centre, particularly around Hartford Hill and around St Helen's Church.
- The TATA Chemicals site saw a lot of industrialisation in the 60's with warehouses and green spaces taken up by industry.
- Industry developed along the railway lines, taking over green spaces and fields.



- The figure ground of today reveals the extent of post-war urban sprawl, detailing suburbs that radiate out from the urban core. Much of the historic urban form has been replaced, though some significant local landmarks remain.
- It is also clear to see how Chester Way and London Road sever the neighbourhoods to the south from the Town Centre.
- The key north-south footpath routes out towards the surrounding green spaces have been lost during industrialisation of the centre of Northwich. Key footpaths within the Town Centre have been lost and de-activated with backs of houses and new development.
- In 1989 the Land Regeneration Unit of Cheshire County Council started a strategic reclamation programme of former industrial land, creating the Anderton Nature Park and reclaiming Ashton's and Neumanns' Flashes, now part of the Northwich Woodlands.

A comprehensive consultation process has taken place. This chapter describes the key feedback and messages from stakeholder groups.

The key messages shape the proposals and play an important role in the future regeneration of Northwich Town Centre. See Appendix for further detail and findings on the consultation feedback undertaken as part of the NDF.

03 Consultation Feedback

3.1 Consultation Approach

Consultation took the form of workshops, briefings and meetings.

The objectives of the consultation were to engage with key stakeholders and a wide variety of user groups, organisations and businesses across the local area to develop a clear local picture and to gain an insight into the future aspirations for Northwich, to ensure that the Development Framework is tailored to the needs of the local community.

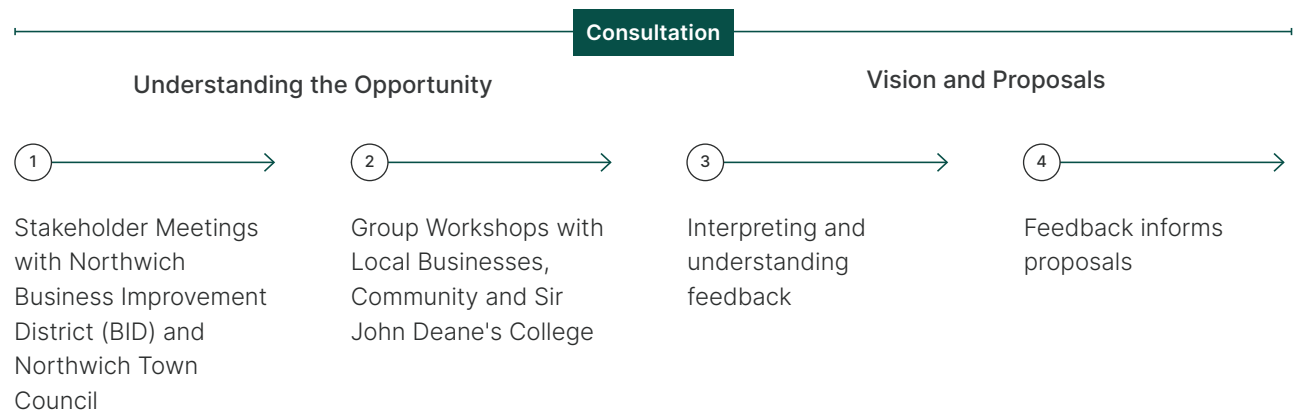
Importantly, the process was also able to capture the views from previous workstreams and consultation events in Northwich over the years.

The consultation undertaken to date has informed and shaped this Development Framework. See Appendix for further detail and findings on the consultation feedback undertaken as part of the NDF.

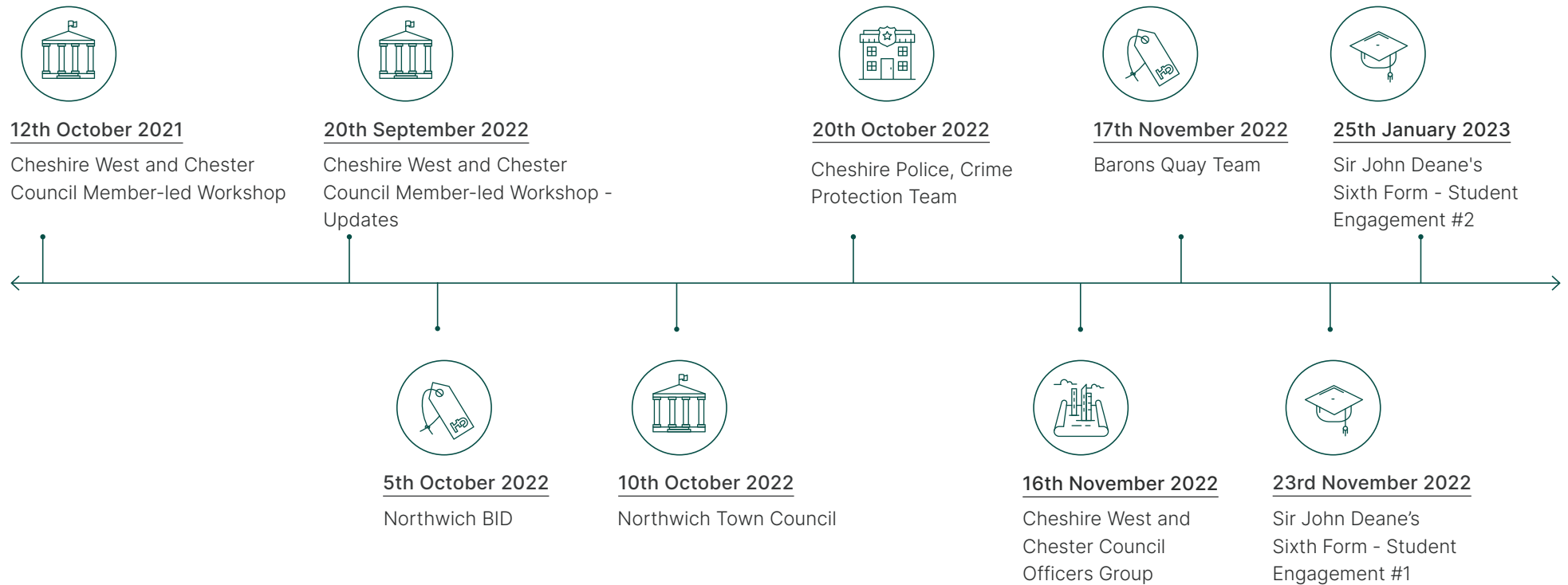
Following this process a number of amendments have been undertaken to the consultation draft version of the Development Framework.

Consultation is an ongoing process and further engagement will continue as the core interventions and strategies are implemented.

- A stakeholder mapping exercise identified key groups to consult with as below.
- Elected political representatives
 - Chester West and Chester Council Officer Group
 - Local Businesses and Organisations
 - Cheshire Police
 - Students and Teachers from Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College



Consultation timeline -

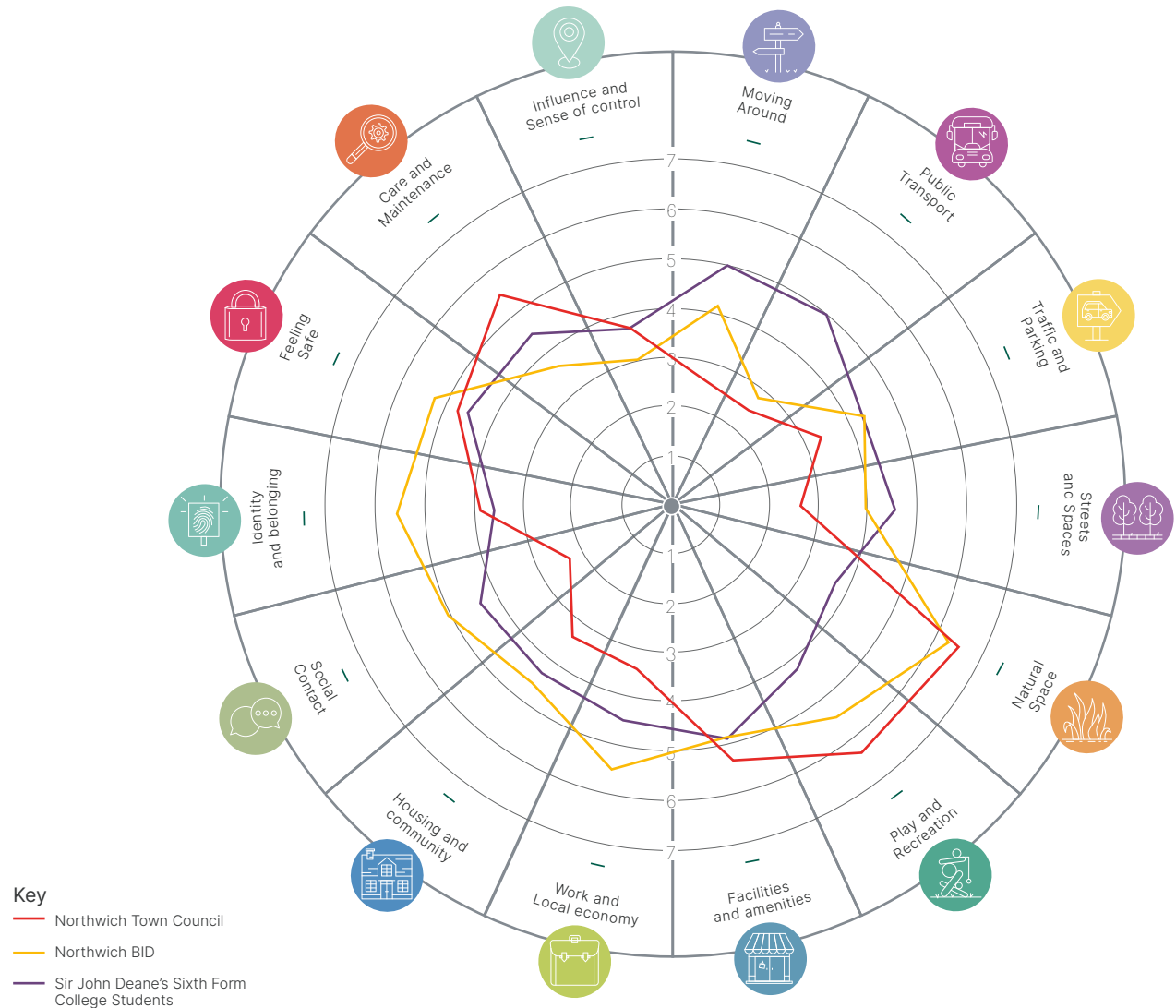


3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Place Standard Tool

During the stakeholder engagement, the Place Standard Tool was used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Northwich as a place.

The tool is composed of 14 different categories, covering both the physical elements of a place (such as buildings, spaces and transport links) as well as the social aspects (such as identity and belonging).

Town councillors, Northwich BID members and students from Sir John Deane's Sixth Form were asked to score Northwich on each of the components from 1-7 (where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement). The results can be seen on the adjacent diagram, with further analysis provided on the next page. The outcomes helped to reveal the assets of Northwich as well as where there is room for improvement and where priorities should lie, which has helped to inform the proposals within this development framework.



3.3 Key Findings

Please refer to the information in the Appendix which sets out consultation feedback in more detail. These key findings are the perceptions gathered from the consultations undertaken.

Positive takeaways



Natural Space

Good quality green spaces exist in close proximity to the Town Centre. The relationship between Northwich Town Centre and its green spaces needs to be enhanced, improving cycling and walking connections.

There is an opportunity to activate and improve access to the rivers, improve frontages to the river and incorporate water taxis. Flooding must be considered within proposals.

Play and Recreation

Northwich already offers successful events all through the year, this can be expanded to provide recreational events.

Play and recreation areas and activities could be improved on, providing more accessible and inclusive opportunities around the Town Centre. Play in the Town Centre needs to be complementary to the existing offer (e.g. Marbury Park and Vickersway) and needs to be developed in accordance with the existing Play Strategy and in consultation with the Town Council.

Identity and Belonging

An existing community exists in Northwich, with proud residents. Events are a big part of the community and there's opportunity to create more of these for a vibrant Town Centre.

Northwich's history is very rich but not acknowledged enough, and there is opportunity to celebrate, educate and interpret this heritage throughout the Town Centre.

Room for improvement



Public Transport

Students highlighted the poor and unreliable existing bus routes, with few rail connections, and lack of walking / cycle connections to the train station from the Town Centre. The issues with bus services include bad accessibility, unreliability and punctuality, lack of night hours service and poor arrival. These transport links need to be improved to increase footfall, employment and night activity.

Job Creation

Young people feel strongly that there are reduced opportunities for part time 'starter' jobs, which is further enhanced by the public transport issues during the day and evening.

Social Contact / Inclusivity

Currently there are not enough spaces for children's play and young families. Accessible spaces for people and families with disabilities are required.

Students felt there is a lack of inclusivity and provision for youths in the Town Centre. There is a lack of spaces for informal children's play, and not enough meeting places that are inclusive, free of charge, safe and vibrant.

Streets and Spaces

The public realm in lower Witton Street appears tired. Crossings and streets could be more walkable and greener. The Town Centre needs active, safe, clean and well-lit spaces and streets.

Attractive street furniture and signage / wayfinding are needed in the Town Centre. Currently it is either poorly maintained, inaccurate or unattractive. More thought should be given to the street furniture as a whole, in terms of location and materiality.

A thorough baseline analysis of Northwich Town Centre and its surrounding context has highlighted the challenges, assets, existing street and built form character and the overall opportunity. Please see the Appendix for full details of this baseline analysis, constraints and the Opportunity and Key Project Sites in Northwich which highlights areas for development potential.

04 Opportunity for Change

4.1 The Challenges

Several issues and challenges have been identified to understand Northwich's strengths and weaknesses better and recognise where attention is required for the Town Centre's regeneration.

The arrival experience to Northwich lets the Town Centre down. Big box buildings, supermarkets and large areas of windswept car parks create a severance and disconnect to the historic core of the town. Chester Road is a predominant severance, restricting north south connectivity.

Please see the Appendix for full details of the baseline analysis and constraints information for Northwich Town Centre. The following SWOT Analysis identifies further challenges:

Wayfinding



Barons Quay wayfinding

- A mix of signage within Northwich, more modern signs are for Barons Quay. The signage needs to be consistent with replacement of the tired signage in the Town Centre.
- River access and connections to green assets needs to be enhanced from the Town Centre.
- Lack of wayfinding elements to the Town Centre from Northwich station. This needs to be enhanced and accessible to activate the high streets and encourage sustainable movement.

Barriers to Movement and Crossings



Poor pedestrian crossing at Venables Road

- Poor crossings and heavy car traffic isolates pedestrian movement. Key crossings need to be improved to encourage flow.
- Chester Way is not pedestrian-friendly, with low quality public realm, clutter on sidewalks, lack of green areas and planting, and unattractive crossing points. This needs to be improved to encourage north-south pedestrian and cyclist movement.

Fragmented built form and inactive frontages



Exposed backs and blank frontages

- There is a lack of active frontages where backs and service areas are exposed. These need to be addressed, with clear active frontages where main routes are required and screening with attractive public art and infill sites in inactive areas.
- Key routes need to be legible and intuitive to pedestrians and cyclists.

Urban blight



Weaver Square indoor market, dilapidated building, vacant retail units

- Buildings are no longer fit for purpose or dilapidated such as Weaver Square, the police station, Northwich Business Centre and Northwich Post Office sorting. This edge along Chester Way needs to be attractive as it acts as a gateway into the Town Centre. New development needs to be historically sympathetic and modern to create an attractive edge.

Street furniture



Clutter of street furniture

- Existing furniture is tired and dated, and creates cluttered streets. Mix of materials, including brick, metal. A street furniture strategy needs to create attractive streets and be consistent with the branding and identity of Northwich.
- The streets need to be clutter free to provide easy access for those travelling on foot or by bike and less able bodied persons.
- The Urban Design and Public Realm Strategy for Northwich Town Centre dates back to 2010 and would benefit from an update. Nevertheless, principles in the document are still relevant and are a good starting point when considering proposals for new streets and spaces.

Public Realm Surfaces



Mismatch of surface materials and street furniture

- Mix of treatments for public realm areas, including; brick, concrete, and tarmac. The materiality needs a consistent and thoughtful approach.
- Kerb up stands and steps restrict accessibility. The public realm needs to be accessible for all, enhance spaces and provide attractive spaces.

Vista and Views



Blocking of Views to the river

- Barons Quay blocks key streets and views to the River Weaver.
- Views to green assets and the watercourses need to be retained and accentuated where possible.

Car Parking



Surface car parking in the heart of the town

- Surface car parking is extensive in the area, creating urban voids and inactive frontages.
- Northwich needs to be a walkable, compact town with quality public realm, supporting the vibrant community.

4.2 What makes a good Town Centre? *Assessing Uses*

Retail and businesses



Witton Street is the historic shopping street for the Town Centre and homes a variety of small scale retailers and speciality shops. Large scale retailers, including various supermarkets, are located in Barons Quay and to the north of Leicester Street.

The market at Weaver Square is an asset to Northwich but currently does not provide the fresh, modern and vibrant offer expected for consumers and visitors. Northwich Outdoor Market was destroyed by a fire in 2020. There is potential to relocate the market offer from Weaver Square to Barons Quay, and the business case is currently being developed by the Council.



Weaver Square, green space where the outdoor market used to stand

Mobility and public transport



Northwich is strategically well-located in the North West for transport, and the train station is located within a 15 minutes walk from the Town Centre. Public transport is an issue in Northwich, particularly with the regularity of the bus and train services which does not support the evening economy.

The train station and bus hub area do not currently give a sense of arrival to Northwich, and it's improvement is crucial to improve the streetscape to entice visitors and residents into the Town Centre through way-finding signage and more attractive linkages.



Lack of sense of arrival and wayfinding from the train station

Leisure



The leisure centre located at the Memorial Court site offers fitness, swimming, sports, entertainment and well-being services.

A paddling pool and children's play area is located in Chester Way / Percy Street junction.

There is potential to explore introducing an outdoor leisure hub in the Town Centre, offering cycle and water sports equipment rental, to encourage active travel and improve the relationship with Northwich's green and blue infrastructure. Decisions around this would be subject to commercial interest, feasibility and funding.



Brio Memorial Court Leisure Centre

Green and blue infrastructure



The River Weaver and the River Dane are key water assets in the Town Centre.

Northwich benefits from its close proximity to the large green assets of Carey Park, Vickersway, Anderton Nature Reserve, and Marbury Park, which are all in walking distance of the Town Centre.

Northwich Woodlands were reclaimed from former industrial and derelict land, and now provide a green environment in close proximity to Northwich Town Centre.

Access to green and blue infrastructure is crucial to promote active lifestyles, and in turn improve the leisure offer and wellbeing of the residents.



River Weaver course

Housing



There is a variety of housing within Northwich Town Centre. The older terraces are located within the core of the town, off Leicester Street, as well as near the train station.

There has been more recent housing developments being completed within the Town Centre, including the Waters Cross retirement living apartments.

Potential to densify the Town Centre to further activate the retail, leisure and night-time economy.

Offer a new residential neighbourhood at Weaver Square that is affordable to young professionals and families in order to increase footfall in the Town Centre. Flooding issues need to be considered.



Residential neighbourhoods within the Town Centre

Events and community



An active events calendar has been established by Northwich Town Council and Northwich BID, providing entertainment for residents and visitors of all ages. Events ranging from the arts and theatre, children's events, festive celebrations and local festivals including: Northwich Festival of Arts, Christmas Extravaganza, Northwich Piña Colada Festival and Artisan Markets.

Opportunity for community groups to integrate students and their families within the Town Centre activities and events. There is opportunity to create an overarching placemaking strategy that includes way-finding, public art, lighting and street furniture, and supports the vibrant Town Centre and its events.



Mural and Public Art in Northwich

Education



Northwich benefits from a range of Ofsted 'Outstanding' and 'Good' Primary and Secondary Schools including those catering for special educational needs. It is also well provided in terms of Colleges, including the Ofsted 'Outstanding' Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College which is within a short walk of the Town Centre. This helps to make Northwich an attractive place to live, supporting residential growth.

There is a lack of adult education, further education and leisure provision in Northwich and there is a clear need for additional provision. This presents an opportunity to deliver a college campus and/or adult education training facilities at locations across the Town Centre.



Outstanding education facilities attract families to Northwich

Health



Northwich Town Centre benefits from some surrounding medical centres, this includes Riverside Medical Centre and Danebridge Medical Centre. Victoria Infirmary is partly Grade II listed and in the process of being modernised and extended to provide further medical facilities. Investment in additional health facilities in the Town Centre would be supported, to meet the needs of new residential neighbourhoods.

Access to green space for well-being and active lifestyle is fundamental for the residents of Northwich. Benefiting from the River Weaver, River Dane and Trent and Mersey Canal, future proposals in the Town Centre need to open up to these blue and surrounding green assets.



Northwich Woodlands and the River Weaver

Culture and civic



Northwich's current cultural and civic offer includes; The Plaza, Northwich Library (currently undergoing renovation) and the Weaver Hall Museum and Workshops. Art and cultural exhibitions are also hosted in Barons Quay, as meanwhile uses in vacant units, to generate footfall and interest and there is an events calendar which includes art and cultural activities. Opportunities to further enhance the civic and cultural offer in Northwich would be welcomed.

There is a need for a usable community space in the Town Centre. The renovated building of Northwich Library will act as a community hub and offer classroom / learning space in the heart of the Town Centre.



Northwich Library

4.3 Identifying the Assets

Northwich already has many unique qualities and assets that sets the place apart from other Town Centres.

The future regeneration plans will capture the essence of Northwich Town Centre and its unique character to shape a distinctive modern Town Centre for both locals and visitors.

The following pages distil the key assets and describe what makes Northwich special.

Differentiators

Strategic Location

River Weaver and River Dane run through the Town Centre

Market Town

Artisan Markets

Industrial and Salt mine heritage

Independent businesses

Access to green space and parks

Unique Quality

Strong community spirit

Distinctive identity

Events calendar

Community groups

Town Centre Open Spaces

Heritage Buildings

Barons Quay

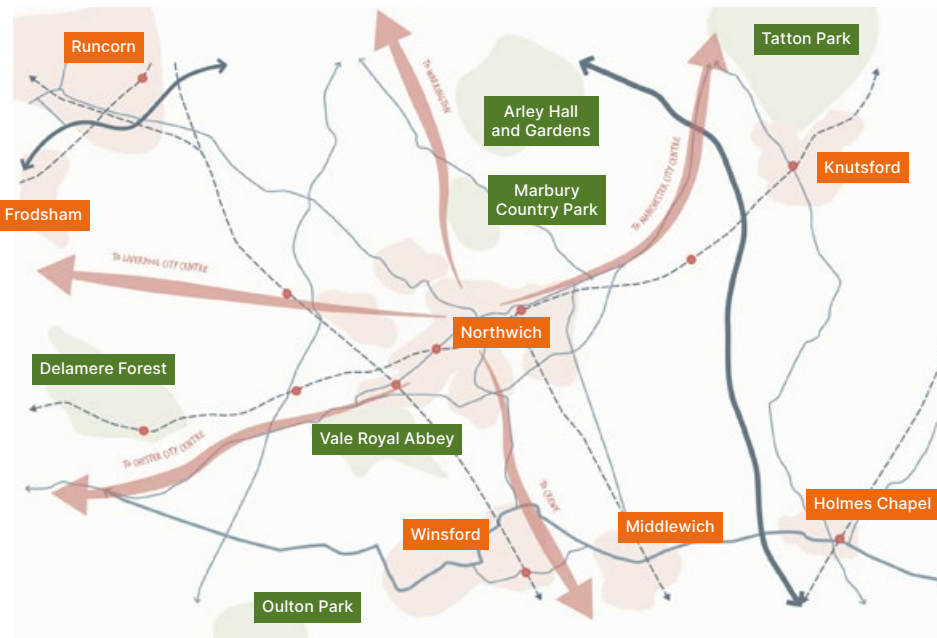
Water courses make up 1.3% of total land cover in Mid-Cheshire.



A place that's well connected

Residential growth presents an opportunity for regeneration and growth in the Town Centre.

- The town has become a desirable place to live and a perfect base for commuters.
- It has good access to two airports, in Liverpool and Manchester.
- It is within easy reach of Crewe, Chester, Manchester and Liverpool, all accessible via the motorway and rail network.
- The strategic location has led to residential growth in recent years, such as the Winnington Urban Village development.



A place built on rivers and a canal

Northwich sits on the confluence of the River Weaver and the River Dane. The waterways are its greatest historic and cultural asset. There is an opportunity to maximise the towns greatest asset, although challenges with flooding in the Town Centre need to be addressed.

- Historic and cultural connection to the River Weaver and River Dane.
- Anderton Boat Lift is a nearby visitor attraction.
- Trent and Mersey Canal forms part of the waterways network.
- The marina is located close to the Town Centre.
- Opportunity for water-focused businesses to become more visible in the Town Centre.





A place connected to green space

Northwich is surrounded by large country parks and green open spaces. The future pattern of the Town Centre development has the ability to facilitate better access to these spaces for residents.

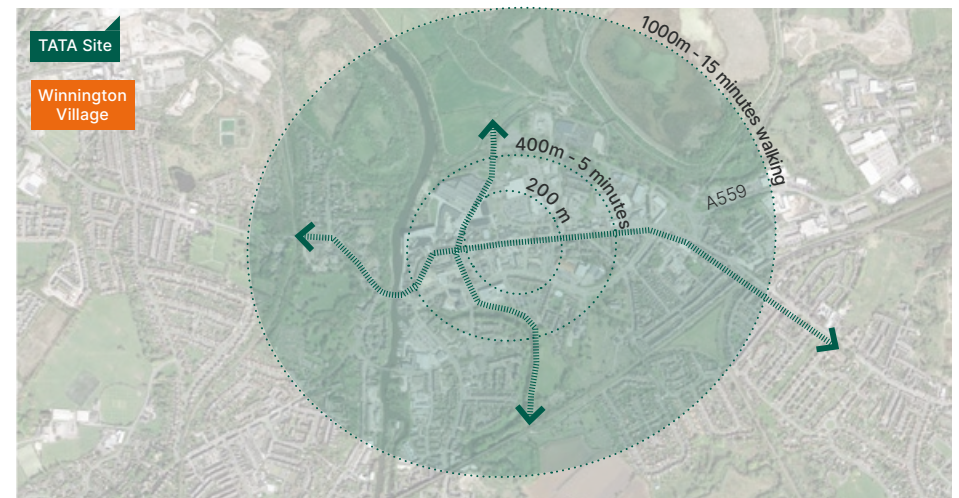
- The town is surrounded by country parks and green open spaces such as Marbury Park, Anderton Nature Reserve and Delamere Forest.
- 85% of the area in Mid Cheshire, is green infrastructure.
- Swathes of natural green space along the Rivers Weaver and Dane.
- Opportunity to improve and promote pedestrian and cycle access to surrounding green spaces.
- Opportunity for sports academies, water sports including Northwich Rowing Club, Marbury Park.
- Potential for Leisure Hub celebrating outdoor pursuits.



A town that's walkable and compact

Potential to bring back the heart of the town by giving streets back to pedestrians and cyclists

- Encourage movement from the train station to the Town Centre.
- Encourage active travel through Northwich.
- Terraced historic urban grain encourages views out to the surrounding area.
- Potential for mixed-use neighbourhoods which encourage a 15 minute Town Centre.
- Support modern and sustainable residential living to create a vibrant and compact Town Centre.



Over 289 independent businesses (circa 2011)



A place rich in historic and industrial character

Northwich has several museums, including; the Weaver Hall Museum, Lion Salt Works and the spectacular Anderton Boat Lift. The British Waterways site is a historical asset within easy access to the town.

The Northwich Conservation Area encompasses a large proportion of the Town Centre. Northwich has distinctive architecture which can be celebrated within new, modern developments.

Brunner Mond, which became ICI and now Tata Chemicals Europe has been influential in Northwich's status. Roberts Bakery was established in 1887, in Northwich.

The town sits on the confluence of the River Weaver and the River Dane.



Historic Witton Street



Lion Salt Works Museum



A place with distinctive character

The people of Northwich are welcoming and friendly. Northwich can be defined by emerging character areas which help drive positive development.

There is opportunity to build on the Town Centre's vibrancy while supporting the needs of local residents and businesses, also incorporating public arts and crafts into the public realm which are distinctive to Northwich and its context.

New developments have the potential to incorporate mixed-uses to support the community and 15 minute neighbourhood.



Events in Barons Quay



A place with independent businesses and local events

Northwich already benefits from a strong and successful events calendar.

- The Plaza Northwich is an events hub and can be further celebrated in future strategies.
- There is opportunity for further investment in the empty properties along Witton Street and High Street to encourage new independent business start ups.
- Work with businesses in outer areas, including Gadbrook Park, to improve connections with and usage of the Town Centre.
- Support the already rich events calendar in Northwich; Artisan Markets, general markets and seasonal events.
- Opportunity to put meanwhile uses into vacant buildings to support events and provide information hubs.
- Opportunity to encourage micro businesses which support sustainable objectives (renew, recycle and reuse).
- Opportunity to use Council assets such as the library or the market as an information point to promote events, activities and tourist information.



Witton Street and the Library

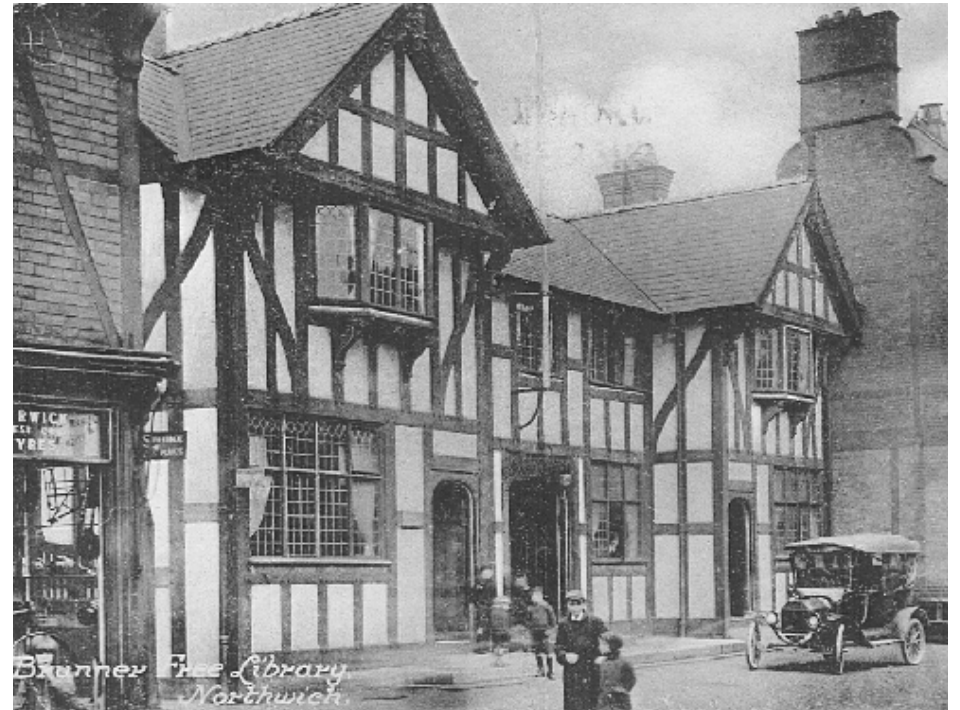


Barons Quay events



A place for learning

- Sir John Deane's Sixth Form College rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted 2022.
- 'Outstanding' and 'Good' Primary and Secondary Schools in Northwich.
- Opportunity to retain young workforce by delivering appropriate and attractive housing options in the Town Centre.
- Opportunity to provide small 'starter' units/co-working space for new businesses.
- Opportunity for improvements to Northwich Library.
- Opportunity to educate young people about the surrounding natural environment and wildlife.
- Potential opportunity to offer adult education and further education such as sector specific training and leisure provision in Town Centre venues.



Historic image of the Library

Northwich benefits from a strong and successful events calendar. Enhancing the visibility of such events will promote community spirit and togetherness, and further boost the Town Centre and local economy.





RADIO NORTHWICH

Listen now at radionorthwich.co.uk

RADIO NORTHWICH
Your love your music
Listen now at radionorthwich.co.uk

RADIO NORTHWICH
Your love your music

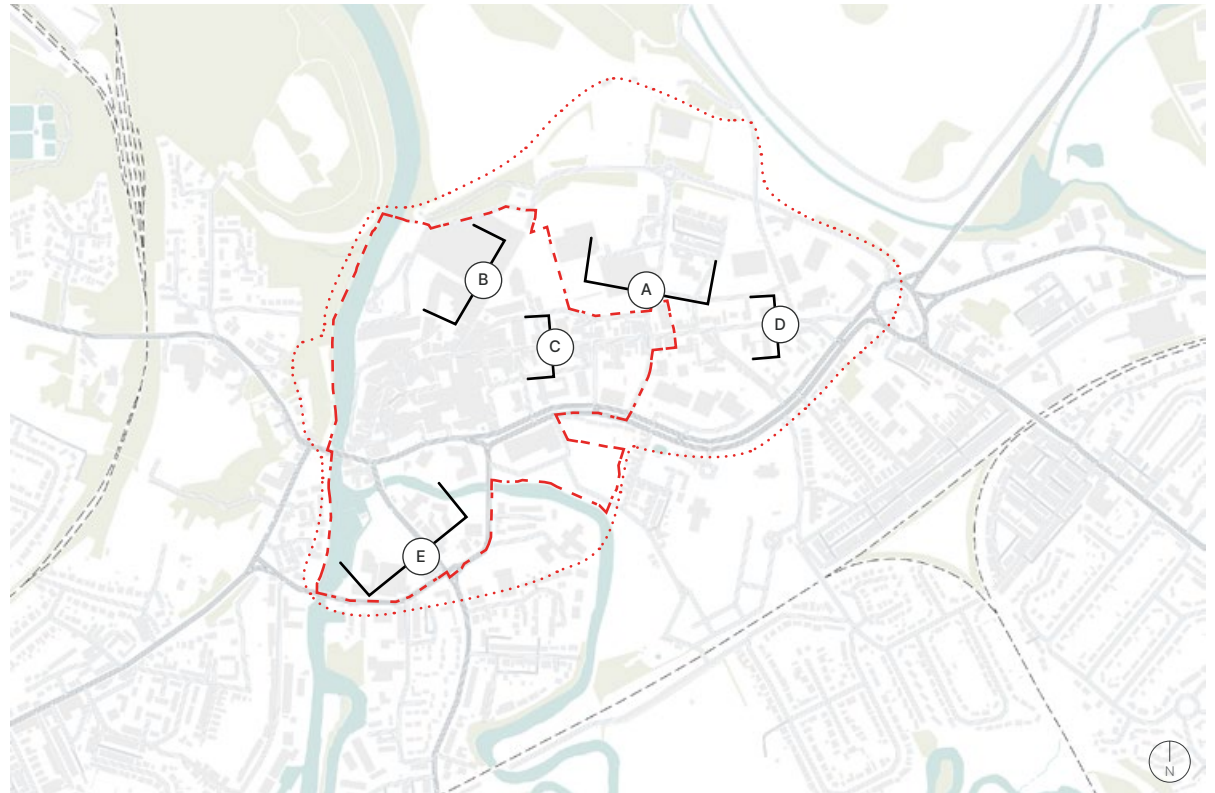
the
CAFFEEHOUSE

Victory

4.4 Street Character


An analysis of the townscape has identified a distinct street typology and building typology within Northwich Town Centre.

Many of the streets in Northwich are fragmented or lack poor frontage and human scale due to modern intervention and developments.



Street Typology Plan

Key

 Northwich Development Framework study area

 Northwich Town Centre core

A. Venables Road

B. Barons Quay

C. Witton Street (Pedestrianised)

D. Witton Street

E. London Road

A Venables Road

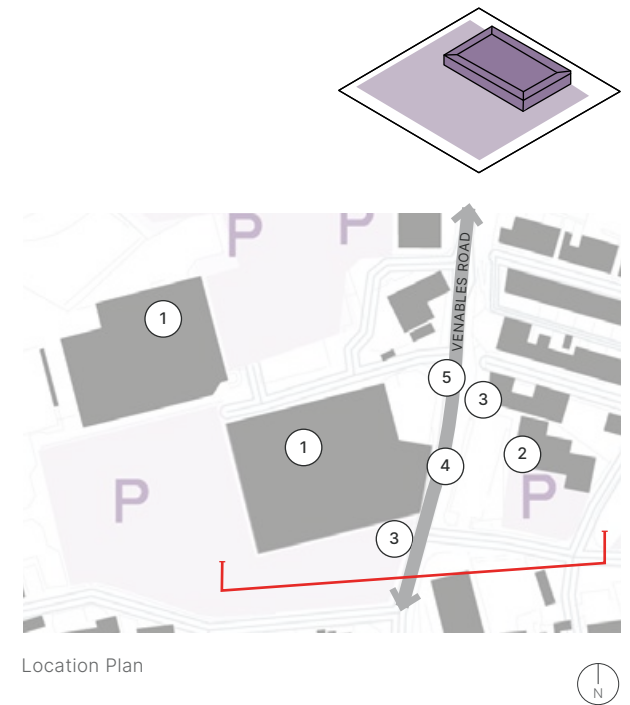
Venables Road is heavily used by vehicles to access the Town Centre and Supermarkets.

The dominance of cars sever the town from the northern part of Witton Street, the supermarkets and car parks create voids in the frontage resulting in a lack of human scale.

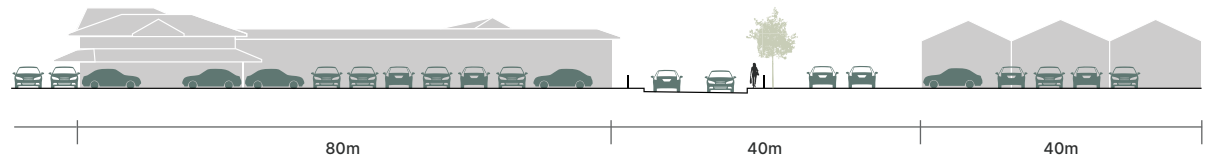
1. Single storey, large footprint supermarkets and warehouses. *Potential to reduce areas and densify the Town Centre.*
2. Buildings with 16m depth and rear access. Up to 2-3 storeys high.
3. Large areas of surface car parking fronting Albion Road and Leicester Street. *Potential to utilise the areas for new development and high quality public realm.*
4. Inactive frontages along Albion Road, Venables Road and Leicester Street. *Potential to improve the poor pedestrian experience with increased footpaths and more green infrastructure.*
5. *Potential to improve the streetscene with trees and planting and good quality surface materials.*



Venables Road pedestrian crossing point



Location Plan



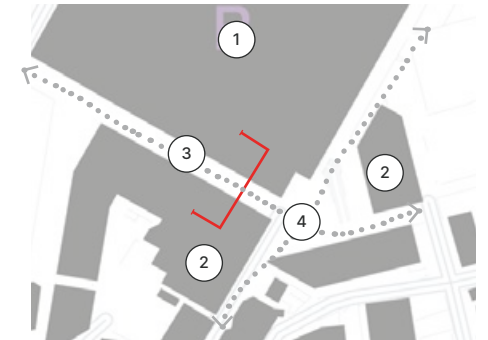
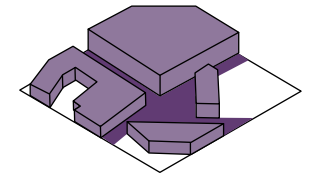
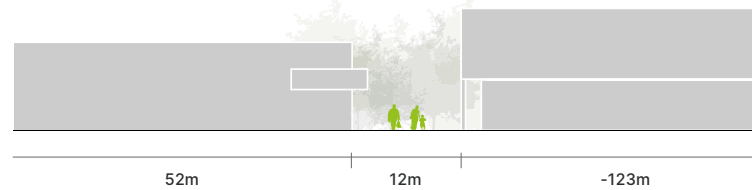
B Barons Quay

Barons Quay is a modern addition to the Town Centre.

The character contrasts with the Northwich historic character. The aesthetic appearance, scale, massing, streets pattern, street widths and building widths and depths vary from the tighter grain of the historic Witton Street.

Analysis of Barons Quay was undertaken to assess the townscape character:

1. Shopping centre with large footprints. 144x123m footprint main structure with ground floor large retail units a 2 levels of multi storey car park.
2. Chain, large-scale retail and food offer, primarily 2-3 storey high. *Potential to sub-divide units to create smaller spaces to meet current demands.*
3. Street width 10-13m. *Potential to integrate wayfinding elements in the street with branding distinctive to Barons Quay and Northwich.*
4. Network of pedestrian priority streets with a central space. *Potential to activate these streets with ground floor uses.*



Location Plan



Barons Quay



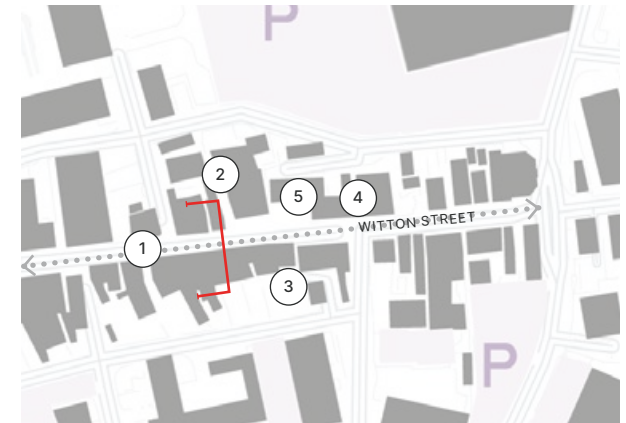
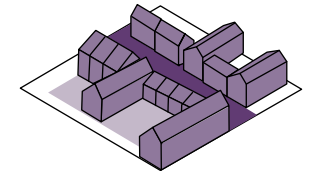
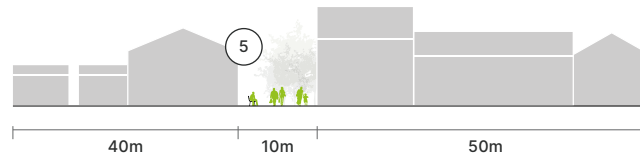
Barons Quay, River Weaver edge

C Witton Street (Pedestrianised)

The historic core and the traditional high street of Northwich Town Centre.

The street captures the best qualities of Northwich, with pedestrianised areas encouraging footfall and spill out for cafés and bars.

1. Pedestrian priority street, width 7-14m. *Potential to extend this pedestrianised area to connect to Northwich train station.*
2. Up to 2-3 storeys high. A 'human scale' height along a main high street in Northwich, potential for new development to follow this building height.
3. Historic tight grain. 8-10m frontages create rhythm. 40m deep plots with service access to the rear. *Potential to create double frontages and infill development to activate rear streets.*
4. Local and / or small scale retail offer. *Vacant units likely to suit new start-ups and independent businesses.*
5. *Opportunity for spill out from businesses and, street furniture and greenery / tree planting.*



Location Plan



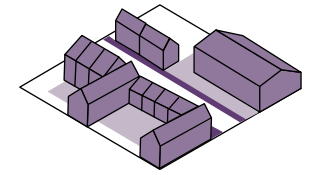
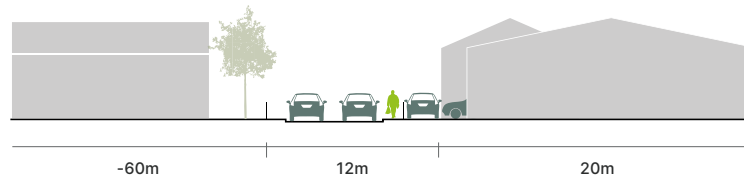
Witton Street

D Witton Street

The upper end of Witton Street, retains its historic character.

Towards Chester Way this is replaced with large scale buildings and poor frontages, creating an uninviting arrival from the station.

1. 6.7m wide road with through traffic and on-street parking pockets. *Potential to add landscaping to soften impact of parking areas.*
2. Poor pedestrian experience, reduced footpaths and lack of green infrastructure. *Potential to reduce road width and widen the pavement to create a better quality pedestrian route.*
3. Historic tight grain typology closer Venables Road. Up to 2-3 storeys high. *Potential to encourage the existing mix of local and / or small scale retail offers.*
4. Some single storey development with inactive frontages, including warehouses with surface car parking. *Potential for infill development with active ground floor uses to activate the street.*
5. Residential areas located towards Church Road. *Potential to further define these pedestrian routes as alternative routes to and from the train station.*



Witton Street (East)



Access from Chester Way towards Witton Street

E London Road

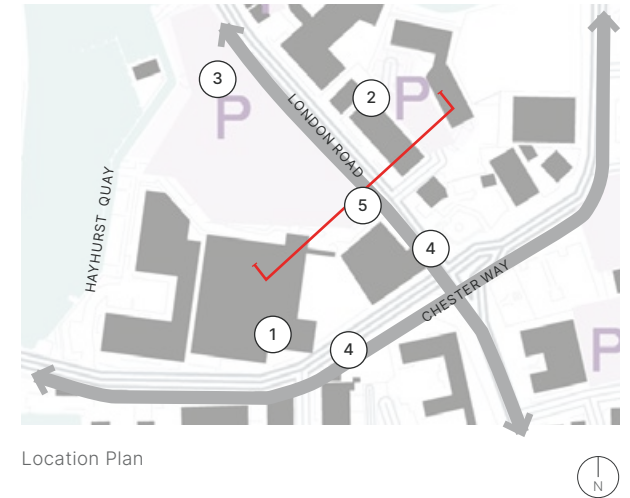
London Road is a historic connection to the centre of Northwich.

The majority of the roads length retains its historic Victorian character, the street becomes fragmented with big box buildings and car parks as it connects to the Town Centre.

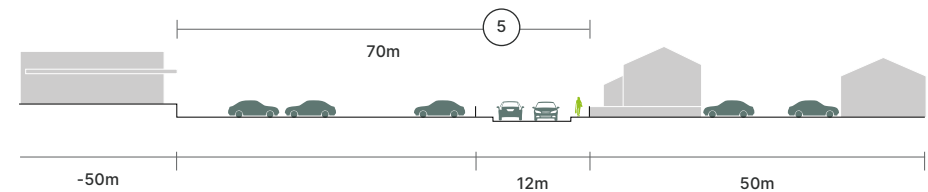
1. Single storey, large footprint supermarkets and warehouses with surface car parking. 47x57m footprint Waitrose. *Potential to reduce areas and densify the Town Centre with pockets of development.*
2. Buildings with 16m deep plot, rear access. Up to 2-3 storeys high.
3. Surface car parking fronting London Road and Hayhurst Quay. *Potential to utilise the areas for new development and high quality public realm.*
4. Inactive frontages on London Road and Chester Way. *Potential to improve the poor pedestrian experience with increased footpaths and more green infrastructure.*
5. Frontage to frontage distance of around 50-90m. *Potential to improve the streetscene with trees and planting and good quality surface materials.*



London Road, Waitrose car park and job centre



Location Plan



05 Evidence Base Key Findings

See Appendix for the baseline analysis for Northwich Town Centre and it's surrounding context, undertaken for the NDF.

GPS data was undertaken in September 2022 to establish the movement and activity of people within Northwich Town Centre, following the pandemic. These findings have been summarised in this chapter.

The data was collected by Place Informatics, who use GDPR compliant GPS signal data from mobile phones. Across the UK, Place Informatics processes 4,000 million GPS events per month, captured from 12 million unique phones, from 200+ different app types. Using geolocated app data originating in Northwich, plus algorithms and data extrapolation, Place Informatics built up a picture of the movement within the town, looking at where journeys originate

from (defined by postcode) and how people travelled (extrapolated from whether a signal is present in a bus station or car park). Assumptions around demographics are made using Census data.

It is important to note that GPS technology may not be accessible to different population groups, such as older adults, and those on lower incomes and it presents a challenge in analysing the results of this study.

Key findings from the baseline analysis has been summarised on the following pages, highlighting the objectives to be considered in proposals.

It is important to note that:

Although precise figures will be cited in this section, they will represent trends rather than true figures. It is recommended that additional survey work is completed and footfall counters continue to be monitored in the future to supplement the findings of the data.

It should also be stressed that GPS data only ever presents a snapshot of how a place is used and patterns will change depending on the time of year. September is, however, considered to be a neutral month for survey work as the summer holiday season is largely complete, children are back at school and the busier Christmas shopping period has not yet commenced.

5.1 GPS Data Summary

Mobile phone GPS data was interrogated for the entire month of September 2022.

The GPS data collected for Northwich Town Centre, during a post-pandemic neutral month, enabled the capture of high-level footfall, trip origin, mode of travel and dwell time in the town, as well as providing some demographic information relating to the age of the visitors to the town. This information contributes to the formulation of the Development Framework, particularly highlighting the high reliance on the use of private cars to access the town.

Relevance to the Development Framework Recommendations

Travelling by bus is not a popular mode of travel for visitors into the Town Centre.

Conversely, the use of cars is particularly high.

Need to increase dwell-time – increasing the use of public transport could be a key to encouraging longer stay in the Town Centre.

Need to increase the overlap of people visiting in the day, staying into the evening.

More people living or studying in the Town Centre would have the potential to stimulate evening activity.

The data further shows how that reliance is linked to the matters raised in relation to the town's car parking provision and the low levels of bus patronage. The key findings of the analysis are summarised below:

Footfall

From the available mobile phone GPS signatures, a total of just over 615,000 people visited the town during September 2022. Approximately three quarters of those visitors travelled in from locations less than 8 miles from the Town Centre. Just over two thirds of the population living within a ten minute drive of the Town Centre, made at least one visit to the town during September 2022.

Demographics

Children from the 0 to 17yrs age group made the highest number of visits to the town. Conversely, young adults from the 18-24yrs age group made the fewest visits to the town, followed by the 25-34yrs age group with the second lowest level of visits for an adult age group.

Purpose of visit

Just under 30% of all visitors to the town included grocery shopping. Whereas almost 60% of shopping trips to the town included groceries as part of their shopping spend.

Time and duration of visit

Almost 87% of the observed visits to the town occurred during the day (i.e. departing before 6pm). Less than 3% of the daytime visitors remained in the town until after 6pm (note: this figure includes staff working in the town).

Of the trips recorded to arrive after 6pm, approximately 57% travelled in from the CW9 postcode area.

The average duration of stay (dwell time) in the town for those evening visitors was just under 1 hour, consistently so for Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The hours of 6pm-7pm and 7pm-8pm were the most popular, representing 47% and 66% of the total evening visits respectively.

Mode of travel

Just over 70% of visitors to the town were recorded to arrive at one of the town's car parks, implying that they either drove or travelled as a car passenger. 27% of the town's visitors represent a combined proportion of walking, cycling and train passenger trips. This leaves just 2% of visitors which were recorded as arriving at the linear bus interchange on Chester Way.

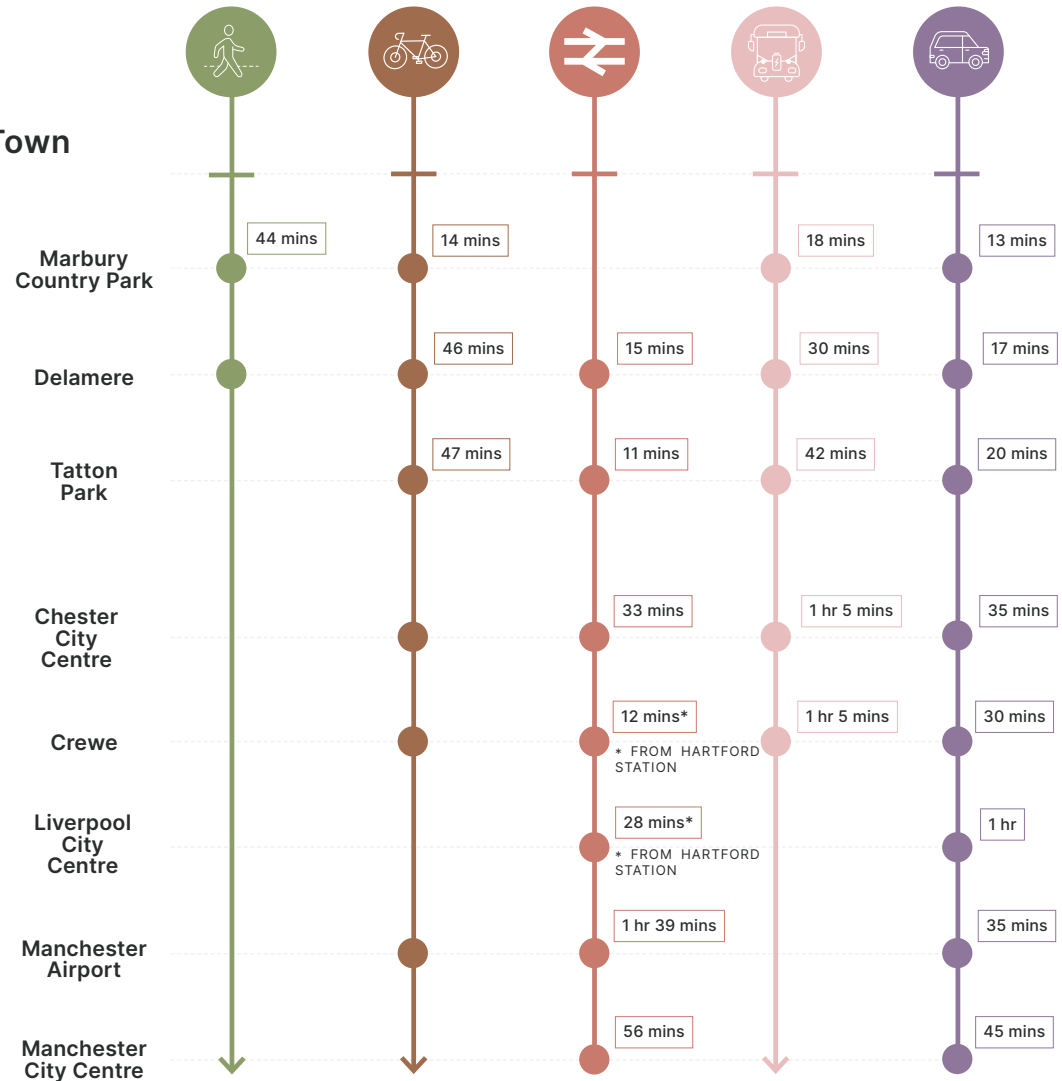
Northwich is strategically located in a desirable location for commuters accessing large City's in the North West of England and Cheshire's desirable green assets.

Local green assets, including Marbury Country Park, Delamere and Tatton Park are accessible by car and train from Northwich Town Centre, within 10 - 20 minutes. At present, the bus services and cycling routes could be improved to provide sustainable options to access these natural green spaces.

Northwich benefits from good motorway access and train connections to four large City's in the North West, including international airports and Crewe City Centre which is expecting an HS2 connection. At present all of these urban areas are accessible within a 1 hour commute by car from Northwich Town Centre.

Train journeys times are between 15 to 1hr 30 minute commute, however services to Liverpool and Crewe only operate from Hartford station, outside of the Town Centre. The interchange between the Mid-Cheshire train line and the West Coast Main Line is Hartford and Greenbank Station, connections need to be enhanced for pedestrians and cyclists between these train stations.

Northwich Town Centre to:




15mins 


walk from the Town Centre to Northwich Train Station

Connections are not obvious, and the arrival and wayfinding experience from the train station into the Town Centre should be improved.



2% 


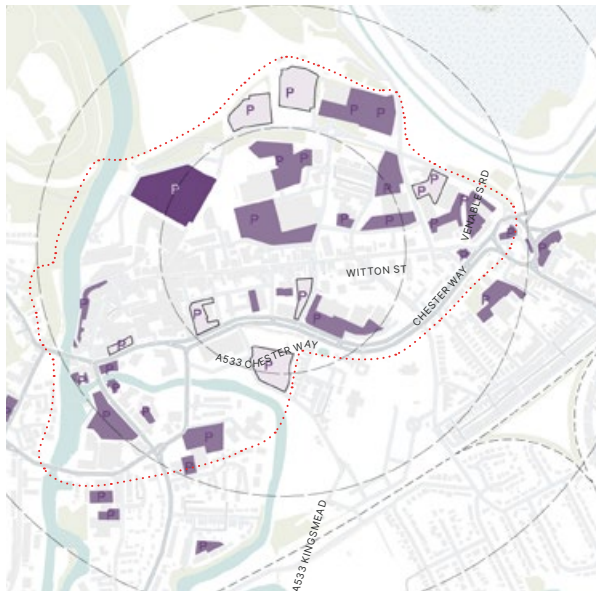
of journeys into Northwich are by bus*


27% 

arrive by train, walking or cycling*

There is a need for an improvement to public transport, particularly during night time hours, and active travel infrastructure to sustain a growing Town Centre.

* of those visitors captured by GPS analysis (September 2022)

8.3 ha 

surface car parking in the Town Centre equates to 12 football pitches

Only 68% of car parking spaces in the Town Centre are occupied during peak times on Fridays and 75% on Saturdays

There is potential to consolidate surface car parking and create more walkable and vibrant streets for pedestrians, while increasing density in the Town Centre core and creating high quality development.

Six 

green open spaces in 15 minute walking distance from the Town Centre

Access and wayfinding to surrounding green assets should be enhanced.

375 ha 

of publicly accessible countryside





615,567



people visit Northwich each month

Anderton Boat Lift, the Salt Museum and Weaver Hall Museum are key tourist attractions in Northwich

There is opportunity to create a vibrant Town Centre with walkable and human scale spaces that attracts residents and visitors alike. Northwich has the potential to become a key riverside tourist destination connected by river water taxis.

Flooding



has affected the Town Centre in 1946, 2000, 2012, 2019 and 2021

Need for a flood mitigation strategy for new development incorporating SuDS. This could be as part of the public realm or in sponge parks with surface water alleviation. Refer to pages 84 - 85 in the NDF, for Flood Risk Strategy.

A sequential test should be applied in relation to new development on any Zone 3a site.

Six
super
markets



One
civic
building



One
business
centre

There is a need to diversify the retail, healthcare, cultural and hospitality offer in Northwich, particularly during night-time hours.

47%

of people are aged 30-64



60%

of households consist of families

Four

special education schools in Northwich

Northwich should be a healthy, inclusive and accessible Town Centre for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.



There is opportunity to provide good quality, future-proof and sustainable housing for young professionals and families, as well as flexible working spaces in the Town Centre.

≤ 1 hour



commute from Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington, Chester and Crewe

Need for improvements to public transport to attract the working population and increase footfall in the Town Centre during night-time hours and on weekends.



An events Town



Extensive events calendar in Northwich Town Centre, including the Piña Colada festival, Krazy races, Christmas extra, and the artisan markets.

Attracting residents and visitors.

5.2 Overarching Observations



Natural space

- River Weaver and Dane are key assets but need to be more accessible.
- Lots of public space in the Town Centre which needs to be attractive and accessible.
- Potential to link up green spaces along the edge of the Town Centre with improved connectivity, cycle routes, walkways and wayfinding.



Work and local economy

- Lack of office / co-working space for professional services - loss of local skills to nearby towns.
- Northwich has some unique businesses - opportunity for more independents, F&B.
- Potential for green tech hub to develop new skills - link to existing excellent education offer.
- Take advantage of strategic location - support co-working and start up businesses.



Identity and belonging

- Strong local spirit and community groups.
- There is a lack of formal and informal space for community groups to meet. There is an opportunity to provide a dedicated space for community groups within the Town Centre.
- Events and artisan markets calendar - such as NOW Northwich, Crazy Races, Festival of Arts, a monthly artisan market and the Piña Colada Festival.
- Potential to expand on the active events calendar throughout the Town Centre and surrounding areas.
- Opportunity to promote Northwich's identity with branding for future marketing and events.



Care and maintenance / feeling safe

- Needs social surveillance and activity on the streets.
- Improve wayfinding and lighting for daytime and night time movement.



Public transport

- Access to Northwich and Hartford Train Station should be improved for pedestrians, cyclists, taxis and bus services.
- Parking - excess of surface parking areas which dominate arrival points into the Town Centre. Potential to consolidate and infill with modern development and public realm spaces.
- Bus Station is an asset but access and safety of routes to and from the bus station could be improved.



Facilities and amenities

- Some great facilities and amenities - Library, Market etc. - need to celebrate these more.
- Needs more events and facilities for young people.
- Need pull factors to get people into the Town Centre - places to go after work, school pick-up, during the evening and weekends.

5.3 Summary of Opportunities

The plan illustrates a summary of the key opportunities which could be achieved to create a holistic Northwich Town Centre for new residents, visitors and existing communities.

Recommendation

Investment that comes forward in the future should respect the townscape character and be contextually appropriate. This isn't about aesthetic or style, its about having regard to street pattern, building scale, width and depths and proportions.

Benefits

This would avoid further fragmentation and windswept voids in the of the Town Centre. It would create an attractive welcoming, vibrant environment and safer streets and spaces for people

The opportunities have been summarised and illustrated following collation of the extensive baseline analysis for Northwich Town Centre undertaken for the NDF. For full details of the baseline analysis please refer to the Appendix chapters, a summary is in this NDF, chapter 'Evidence Base Key Findings'.

Cheshire West & Chester have highlighted the Opportunity and Key Project Sites for Northwich, reference should be made to this for all new development coming forward, see Appendix for further detail.

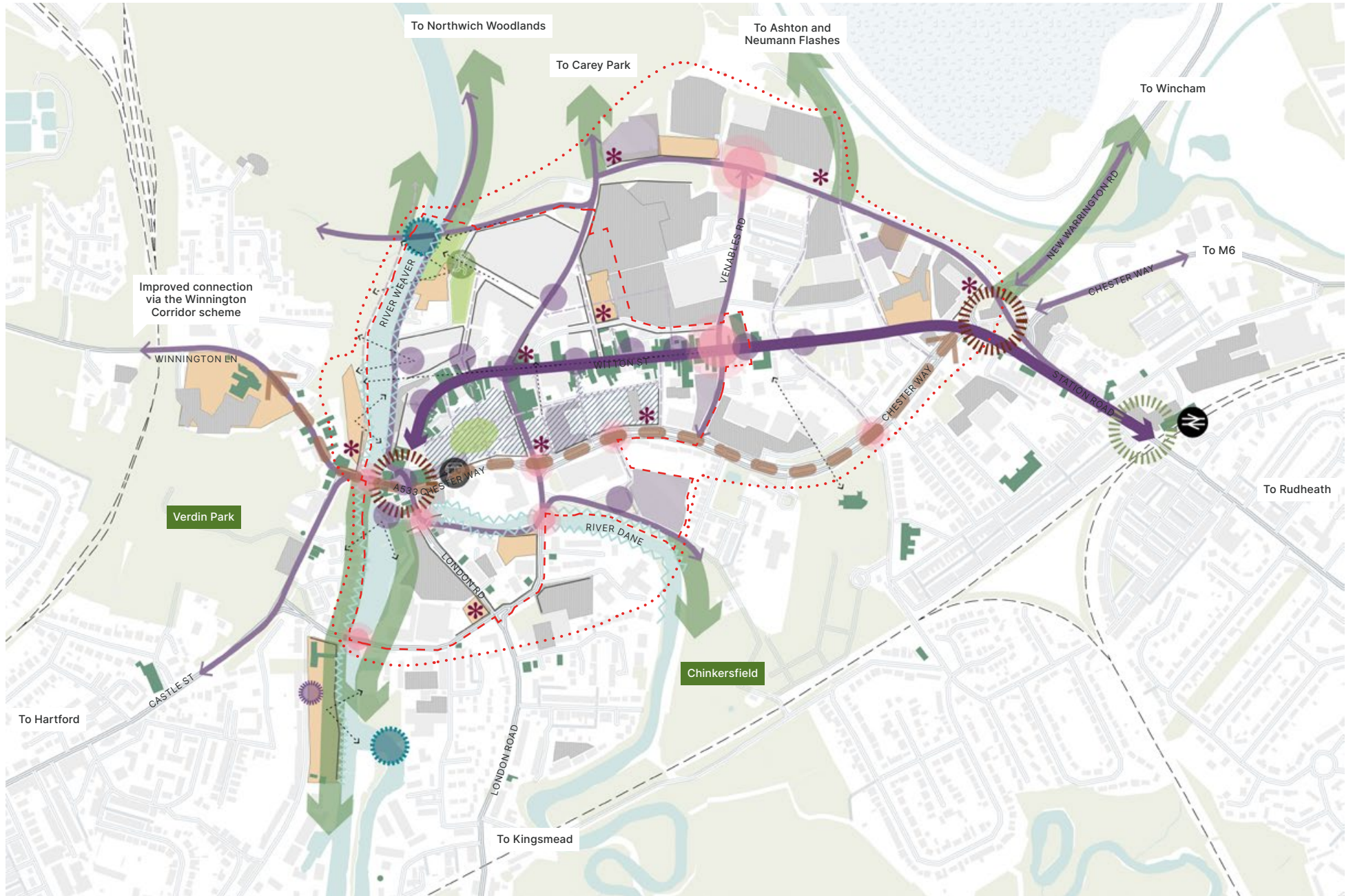
The opportunities illustrated have been distilled into overarching strategies, to guide new development which comes forward, these are in the following chapter 'Spatial Framework'.

The overarching strategies include;

- Movement Strategy
- Development Principles
- Public Realm Strategy
- Landscape Strategy (including Flood Risk Strategy)
- Public Realm and Landscape Strategy
- Wayfinding, Street Furniture and Lighting
- Public Art and Branding

Key

-  Northwich Development Framework study area
-  Northwich Town Centre core
-  Water
-  Green space
-  Opportunity to improve arrival experience and pedestrian / cycle routes to and from Northwich train station
-  Opportunity to improve arrival experience at Bus station
-  Opportunity to retain, celebrate and improve built heritage assets, including nationally listed and locally listed buildings (subject to further detail surveys)
-  Opportunity for landmark building
-  Opportunity to permeate across Chester Way barrier
-  Opportunity for improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists
-  Opportunity to define key gateway into the Town Centre
-  Opportunity to further define Witton Street connection to and from Northwich train station
-  Opportunity to define Key Active travel routes (indicative)
-  Opportunity for secondary through-routes to be activated and improved with public realm interventions
-  Opportunity to improve relationship with the water
-  Opportunity for connections to surrounding neighbourhoods
-  Opportunity to improve access to green space (indicative)
-  Opportunity for key green spaces
-  Opportunity for active leisure uses connected to the River Weaver
-  Opportunity to retain views
-  Opportunity to define key public space / urban nodes
-  Key opportunity sites
-  Existing surface car-park
-  Cheshire West and Chester Council owned surface car parks. An opportunity for future development
-  Opportunity for mixed use development at Weaver Square
-  Opportunity for active frontages
-  Opportunity for future development that celebrates and preserves its heritage assets, enhances waterfront activity and enhances the waterfront setting



Illustrative summary of Northwich's assets and opportunities



The spatial framework presents the design principles and the overarching spatial strategy that supports the future regeneration for Northwich Town Centre.

The framework is divided between the spatial design principles, movement strategy, development principles, public realm strategy, landscape and open space strategy.

These strategies underpin the design principles shown in the focus areas in chapter 07.

Please refer to the Appendix for full details of the baseline analysis, constraints information and the Opportunity and Key Project Sites in Northwich which highlights areas for development potential.





06

Spatial Framework

6.1 Spatial Design Principles

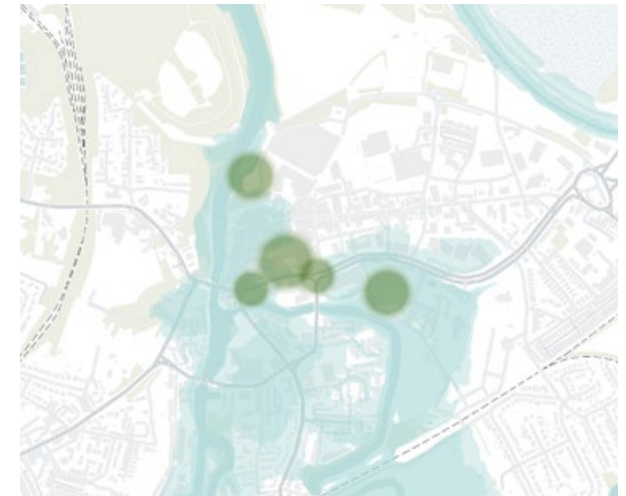
The following diagrams illustrate the design principles and key moves that underpin a cohesive spatial framework for Northwich. The design principles have been developed following our analysis, identification of assets and opportunities. The design principles must be incorporated within future development plans.





-  Improve movement along the rivers
-  Enhance views of the rivers
-  Activate the river frontage with improvements to landscape and public realm
-  Potential for east west connection

1. Enhance the water experience

The rivers are Northwich's unique and natural asset which needs to be celebrated through a series of interventions to encourage interaction and activity along the river and out towards historic assets. Initiatives such as a leisure hub, board-walks, landing jetty's, bridge connections and re-wilding along the River Weaver could be explored to encourage activity through recreation and active frontages and river walks, while enhancing views out and into Northwich Town Centre.



-  Areas impacted by flood risk
-  Potential development areas where flood risk will need further consideration

2. Flood Risk at the heart of all investment decisions

Defining a flood risk alleviation strategy for Northwich, which can integrate exemplar solutions and support future development and investment decisions. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.



- Improve movement along the rivers
- Open up views of the rivers
- Enhance and encourage connectivity between green spaces
- Enhance the network of green spaces accessible from the Town Centre

3. Celebrate the green spaces, in and around Northwich

Enhance access and connections to the surrounding green space. Create a leisure hub in the town to encourage outdoor lifestyle. Open and frame glimpse views of the surrounding countryside. Draw landscape into the town through urban greening.



- Opportunity to improve arrival experience at key gateways into Northwich
- Opportunity to improve connectivity between the Town Centre and the Station

4. A distinctive arrival experience by public transport to enhance connections to the Town Centre

Enhancing and improving public transport connections from Northwich and Hartford train stations into the Town Centre and improving the bus hub entrance for pedestrians and cyclists into Northwich Town Centre.



- Potential to improve Careys Park Gateway
- Potential to enhance River Weaver arrival gateway
- Transport arrival gateways
- Potential to enhance connections to Carey Park
- Potential to enhance connections along the River Weaver
- Potential to enhance connections to Transport

5. Distinctive gateways mark the arrivals into Northwich

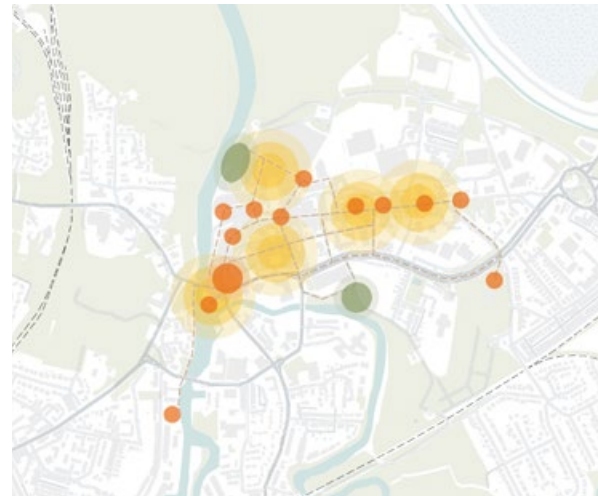
Identifying the gateways around Northwich Town Centre and providing opportunity for new landmarks to define these and create a way-finding strategy.



- ← Improve north south movement connections
- Opportunity to improve movement intersections along Chester Way

6. Repair the Chester Way severance to encourage movement north and south

Improving pedestrian and cycle crossings along Chester Way will encourage north-south routes into and out of Northwich Town Centre. Repairing the fragmented street pattern through activating frontages and ground floor uses.



- Key spaces
- Destinations
- Public realm hot spots
- Revive the historic grain of streets to encourage exploration and discovery

7. Discover and explore human scale streets and spaces

Reviving a finer, historic grain to create a compact town with defining 'moments / hot-spots' along the route to draw interest, interaction and dwell. Encourage footfall and dwell time by creating and providing cultural and civic destinations to accommodate events to encourage interaction with visitors and local residents.



- ← Opportunity to improve arrival experience at key gateways into Northwich
- Opportunity to improve connectivity between the Town Centre and the Station
- Listed historic buildings and assets
- Buildings of historic value

8. Celebrate history and heritage

Celebrate heritage assets and the history of Northwich through art and public realm initiatives. Local artists to be involved in public art strategy. Statues / historical / culture could provide landmarks at key arrival points to the Town Centre. See Appendix for further information on the Built Form Constraints in Northwich Town Centre.

6.2 *Movement Strategy*

The Overarching Approach

Network of streets

The historic core is the existing Witton High Street.

Connections moving north and south through the core of the town are poor and require improvements. Large areas of surface car parking and lack of active frontages discourage pedestrian and cycling along streets that run north south.

There is a need to improve connectivity along Timber Lane, Crum Street and Crown Street, as pedestrian friendly streets and spaces.

Northwich's Waterways

Enhancing connections to the waterways

There are opportunities for the town to engage more with the rivers which run through it. The waterways are a significant asset and interventions, particularly alongside Weaver Way and Barons Quay Road. There is an opportunity to bring people closer to and onto the water.

River Weaver water taxis

Northwich is planning to improve transport to support the success of its events and celebrate its rivers and country parks. Water taxis could provide transport along the beautiful River Weaver.

Northwich's population is set to grow, the government plans to reduce emissions and become carbon neutral by 2030. Water taxis could be beneficial for the reduction of carbon emissions.

Water taxis support sustainable transport and active travel modes, encouraging more people to travel more sustainably. A water taxi would provide recreation and fun activity on the water.

Water taxis have been adopted by cities such as Glasgow and within the rest of Scotland.

Connection between Witton Street and Barons Quay

Links between these two areas of the town should be enhanced to promote greater circulation for pedestrians. The connection between Bratts and Wildwood could have meanwhile or permanent attractions along the link to promote this circulation route.

Cycling

The town's network of streets should offer greater priority for cyclists, identifying leisure routes which engage more with the waters edge and the surrounding network of green spaces, along with on-street measures to encourage shopping and commuter trips by cycle.

Car parking

The recommendation following a high-level review of data outlining the use of the town's car parks is that a strategic approach to car parking provision and car parking policy is required as part of the future regeneration plan for Northwich. See pages 74-75 for the Movement Strategy for Car Parking.

Access

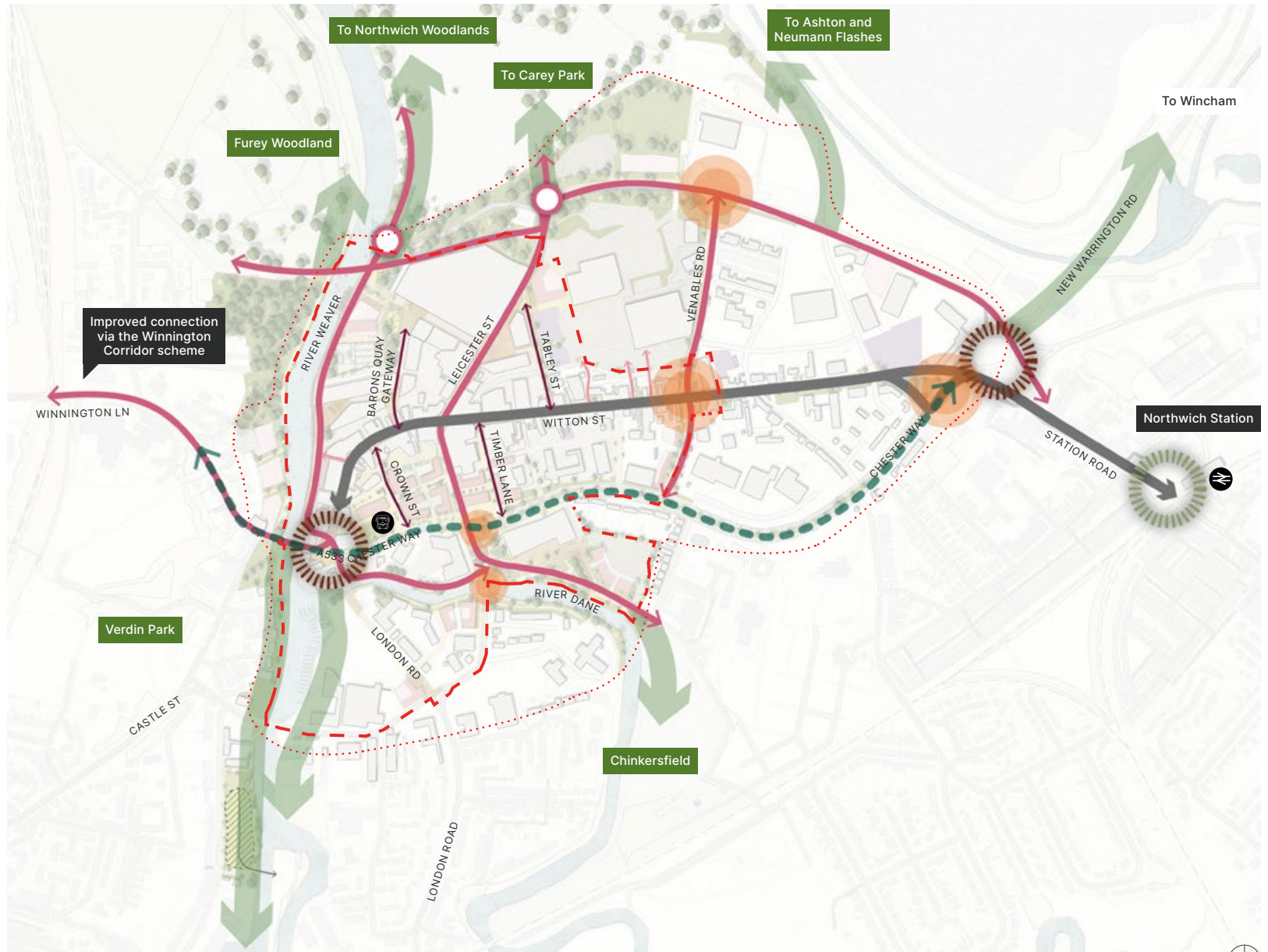
Vehicular movement within the town remains essential, whilst the key streets ought to be less of a barrier to active travel. This can be achieved by reducing speeds, improving crossings and materials, creating a feeling of an altered hierarchy within the streets.

Servicing

The need to bring large goods vehicles into many parts of the Town Centre, from various directions creates undesirable conflict points with pedestrian movement, particularly along Weaver Way, Crown Street and the Bull Ring. Opportunities exist to reduce and remove these interface points, especially with the potential re-configuration of Weaver Square.

Key

- ⋯ Northwich Development Framework study area
- Northwich Town Centre core
- Improve arrival experience at Bus station
- Improve arrival experience from train station and information on Town centre and what it has to offer.
- Potential for improvement to arrival experience at Northwich Train Station
- Weaver Way - Primary Route (including existing bus and vehicular movement with potential for permeating the barrier and introduce greenery and tree planting, and pedestrian and cyclist designated routes)
- Proposed Active Travel Corridors (pedestrian and cycle priority with potential for exemplar SuDS strategy, indicative location)
- North-south streets with exemplar SuDS strategy (prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, with restricted vehicular movement)
- Potential for improvement to gateways into Northwich Woodlands
- Potential for improvements to access and connectivity to green open space (indicative location)
- Potential for pedestrian and cyclist priority crossing points
- Potential for improvement to gateways into Northwich
- Potential for improvements to Active Travel route from Northwich Train Station and the Town Centre through Witton Street (indicative location)
- Opportunity for future development that celebrates and preserves its heritage assets, enhances waterfront activity and enhances the waterfront setting



The Movement Framework Plan

6.3 Movement Strategy Arrival Improvements

Northwich Town Centre core is situated within a ring of large scale, big box buildings and car parks which are letting down the arrival experience when approaching the Town Centre.



Altrincham transport interchange establishes a strong sense of place, incorporating heritage and landscape features to create an attractive gateway and welcoming arrival experience to the Town Centre.

→ The best of Northwich's heritage assets are hidden from view. A series of improvements at key gateways will create an attractive arrival experience.



Bus shelter is well integrated into the public space, which creates an attractive and inviting pedestrian environment at a key movement node, whilst enabling cycle movement.

An improved bus terminal

The linear bus hub on Chester Way is unattractive and unwelcoming and creates a negative image of the Town Centre. There is a need to enhance the point of arrival to encourage more people to travel by bus.

The re-development of Weaver Square presents an opportunity to reconfigure and enhance this key arrival point. Whilst from an operational perspective it is agreed that the bus hub should be retained on the highway, there is significant scope to improve the look and feel of the area around it delivering improved shelters, better wayfinding and a greener, safer environment. There is also a key opportunity to explore lane widening around the bus hub, cutting into the Weaver square site, and the re-positioning of bus stands to reduce incidents of buses blocking lanes on Chester Way.

Any plans for the future of the bus hub need to be informed by a review of the current network of bus routes and in consultation with bus operators. Consideration also needs to be given to the future management and maintenance of any future bus hub designs.

Improvements to the Bull Ring

This is a key arrival gateway into the Town Centre from the west, and therefore a point to signal pedestrian and cycle priority within the Town Centre. Creating a more balanced streetscape will moderate driver behaviour and encourage active travel, whilst also creating a more attractive arrival point.

Improve pedestrian connections from Barons Quay to Carey Park

The current connection between the Town Centre and Carey Park takes pedestrians through a low-quality and unappealing environment that is designed for cars and servicing. This creates a perceived barrier to movement, and fails to celebrate the natural asset on the doorstep. Improving the pedestrian experience at this gateway zone will heal this disconnection and draw the park closer to the Town Centre, thus increasing the enjoyment and benefit of Carey Park as a verdant extension of the Town Centre.

Railway Station improvements

For many visitors, the railway station is Northwich's front door. This is the first opportunity to set the tone and build an image of Northwich, creating a welcoming arrival with wayfinding into the Town Centre and celebrating its natural and heritage assets.



Example of a tree lined street



Example of a balanced street with raised crossings

Recommendation

Heal the severance effect of the concrete collar of big-box development surrounding the Town Centre.

Creating appealing arrival experience and signalling primacy of pedestrians and cyclists within the core zone. Thinking beyond the Town Centre to provide a web of strategic linkages that reach out.

Benefits

Promotes active travel to improve reduce emissions and improves air quality. Health benefits of walking and cycling.

6.4 Movement Strategy Chester Way

Chester Way is a severance within the Town Centre.

A 1960's modern addition that was designed at a time that prioritised the car, not pedestrians or cyclists. As with many 1960's developments, the design interrupts the historic fabric of the Town Centre. The road severs connections between Northwich Memorial Court, Church Walk Paddling Pool, Percy Street and Witton Church Walk Primary School.

Bull Ring improvements

The Bull Ring is a key node along the Chester Way. It is a challenge due to the amount of vehicles that pass through the Town Centre. The historic character is a defining characteristic of the Town Centre that should be protected. Improvements to the junction could improve the pedestrian experience.

Pedestrian crossings enhancements

Improvements to the crossings located along the Chester Way (A559) would promote walking and cycling and north south movement to the Town Centre. All existing poor quality 'at grade' crossing points across hazardous routes to schools in and around Northwich Town Centre, need to be improved for safety and to enhance pedestrian and cyclist connections.

The locations of the suggested crossing improvements would benefit connections between:

- Percy Street, Chester Way and Venables Road.
- Brockhurst Street, Chester Way and Crum Hill.
- Chester Way and Apple Market Street (improving connections between the residential apartments and Kanya Restaurant).



Example of bus movement along a balanced street with high quality materials

Recommendation

Repair the severance of Chester Way to enhance North South Connections from areas south of Chester Way and Northwich Memorial Court.

Benefits

A safe environment for pedestrians, encourage walking and cycling to the Town Centre will promote active travel.

6.5 Movement Strategy

Improve connections to the Railway Station

The first impression of Northwich by rail is the Tesco car park and petrol station.

Northwich Railway Station requires improvements to create an attractive and safe arrival into the town from the station. There is an opportunity to create a distinctive and modern arrival space through public realm, public art, way-finding and lighting.



Example of how the underpass could have trees and planting to create an attractive environment at the junction of Northwich memorial Court. Image of Grey to Green, Sheffield

Northwich Railway Station improvement

Improve the arrival experience for pedestrians and cyclists at the railway station to create a clear and legible route from the platform to Station Road.

Enhance the pedestrian crossings at Manchester Road, Station Road and the junction at Station Road and Middlewich Road, to create an attractive arrival to Northwich Railway Station, encouraging pedestrian movement to and from the Town Centre.

Venables Road improvements

A new pedestrian priority crossing at the junction of Venables Road and Witton Street to enhance the pedestrian connection from the station to Witton Street and the Town Centre.

Station Road and Chester Way crossing

Improvements to the crossing located along the Chester Way (A559) and Station Road to create a clear pedestrian and cycle connection from the station to Witton Street, encouraging and promoting active travel.



Bath railway station, an example of a welcoming arrival that captures the essence of bath within the materials, pedestrians are prioritised over cars.

Recommendation

Improve the arrival experience at Northwich Railway Station through public realm interventions.

Implement active travel route(s) from the station to Northwich Town Centre through Witton Street.

Benefits

A safe and accessible environment for pedestrians, encourage walking and cycling to the Town Centre. Encourages use of public transport has sustainability benefits

6.6 *Movement Strategy*

Car Parking

An initial review of the town's car parking capacity identified that some car parks are underutilised on the Town Centre's busiest days and times such as the weekends.

This suggests that there is an over supply of surface car parking which is passively promoting the use of cars for trips into the town. Please see the Appendix for full details of the car parking baseline analysis for Northwich.

The recommendation is that a strategic approach to the car is required for Northwich, utilising prime areas of the Town Centre place-making value or development, which will create a more compact and walkable Town Centre. The approach needs to consider strategic thinking to the car-parking charges, supporting active travel initiatives, making the Town Centre more accessible by cycling or walking which will reduce the need for the car.

The immediate term approach to car-parking in the Town Centre should support the modal shift, but there is also a case for rationalisation of some of the more central car parks. In the future, a focus on short stay drop off/collection spaces and disabled provision as per recommendations to support local businesses.

This would need to be supported by a robust review of car parking in the Town Centre which would need to consider capacity, displacement and the financial implications of any loss of provision.

Car parking capacity review

The recommendation following a high-level review of data outlining the use of the town's car parks is that a strategic approach to car parking provision and car parking policy is required as part of the future regeneration plan for Northwich.

Although car parking is underutilised in the Town Centre presently, consideration of future development and uses of parking as part of new development needs taking into account

Strategic approach

The strategy proposes a more strategic approach to parking provision, with an increasing capacity or use of the northern and eastern car parks, allowing for removal of parking in the core of the town, instead providing at priority locations.

Under-utilised car parking in Northwich Town Centre has the potential to support future development, any decisions need to be informed by the existing car parking capacity and the future development opportunity.

The car parking approach in Weaver Square will have consequential impacts on the southern edge of the Town Centre and requires further analysis.

Car parking interventions

- Encourage long stay parking to be located at car parks at the edges of the Town Centre.
- Re-purpose some existing car parks at prime locations at the Core of the Town, for either high quality public realm or for re-development.
- Improve accessibility to the Town Centre with integrated on-street parking, disabled parking and drop-off facilities close to key destinations, to support local businesses.
- Improve lighting and accessibility to all car parks.
- Improve the rear boundaries of properties at Memorial Court Car Park and improve frontages adjacent to the river.
- Improve pedestrian access from Barons Quay car park to Carey Park.
- Attractive and legible pedestrian routes from the car parks to the Town Centre will be important as well as way finding to support a walkable Northwich Town Centre.

Recommendations

- Review of the use of the Council's car park sites, to assess the potential of re purposing priority locations for new development.
- Transport review to consider the need for car parking and reliance on the car, especially at night time.
- A review of car parking standards for residential developments in Town Centre locations to support a modal shift.
- Review car parking pricing and create a strategy for short and long stay car parking.
- Car parking policy for the Town Centre, to support appropriate levels of car parking.
- Investment in active travel modal shift and public transport use.
- Enhancement of wayfinding routes to car parking from the Town Centre.

Benefits

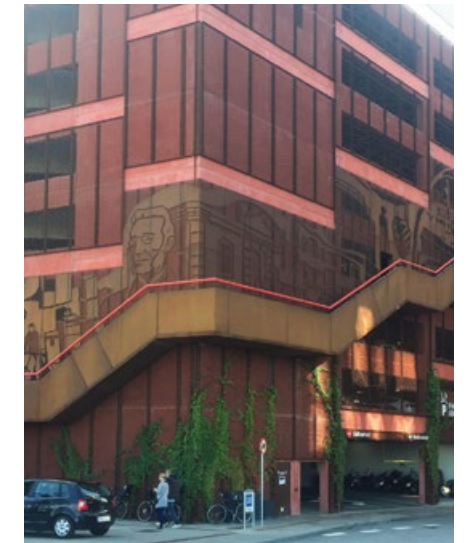
- A rationalised approach to car parking within Northwich. Better use of prime sites within the Town Centre core.
- Clear tariffs to promote appropriate durations of stay at the appropriate locations, improving the visitor experience, avoiding passive promotion of car use for trips into the town.



Car parking is overlooked by development, tree planting is integrated between parking to avoid cars dominating the street



Cars integrated within rear courtyards and planting



An example of mobility hub with roof top amenity to consolidate car parking in Copenhagen.

6.7 Development Principles

The future regeneration of Northwich's Town Centre must adhere to a set of established guidelines, to promote and support the development of a cohesive and sustainable Town Centre.

Development must deliver the following principles:

Contextually appropriate

- A high standard of design quality.
- A sensitive approach to heritage, integrating with the surrounding context. Consideration of the surrounding street pattern, street dimensions, building dimensions, scale and massing and architectural detail and roof-scape must be considered.
- Evidence of heritage and townscape character analysis that is demonstrated within the design proposals.
- Materials must be complementary to the surrounding townscape character.

- Interpretation of heritage, not only through replication of traditional aesthetics, but also through complementary modern interpretation where appropriate (to be discussed and agreed with CW&C).

Active frontages

- Promote a safe environment for visitors and users of the Town Centre.
- Development should be orientated at every opportunity to provide access and activity to positively address with the waterfront.
- Layout and organisation should be designed to activate key pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Residential development must include active ground floor uses where possible. Front doors onto the street must be incorporated within residential schemes.

Scale and massing

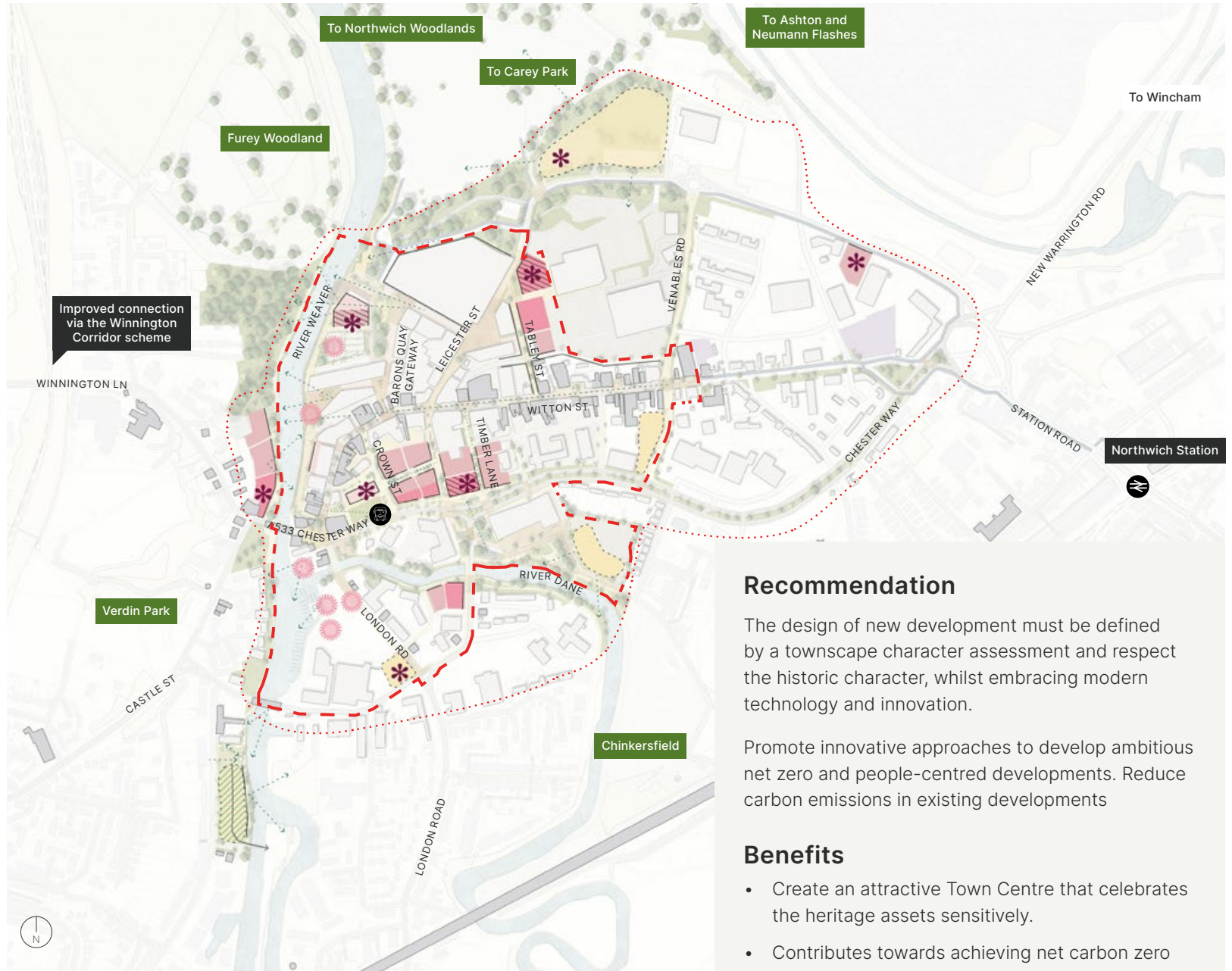
- A sensitive response that considers proportion, scale and heights will ensure a cohesive and appropriate design solution that knits to the surrounding buildings.
- Proposed building heights must incorporate variety to ensure a rich roof-scape, avoiding 'blanket heights'.

- Heights and massing must consider local and long range views of the rivers and countryside, the heritage assets, landmark buildings and frame vistas.
- Built form and massing must be appropriate and consider existing building lines, articulation and addressing corners and junctions.
- Buildings must be designed to allow for flexibility of change of use in the future.

Flood risk

The Local Plan and National Policy approach is to avoid putting future occupiers at flood risk rather than provide mitigation, therefore a sequential test should be applied in relation to there being alternative sites. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.

- Key**
- Northwich Development Framework study area
 - Northwich Town Centre core
 - Improve arrival experience at Bus station
 - Improve arrival experience from the Train Station and provide information on Northwich Town Centre and what it has to offer.
 - Opportunity for active frontages on key routes
 - Future Development Potential
 - Views to landscape, vistas and landmark buildings
- Scale:
- Up to 2 storeys
 - Up to 3 storeys
 - Up to 4 storeys
 - Potential location to increase heights above the existing height datum, (subject to appropriate design and agreement with CW&C)
 - Opportunity for landmark building
 - Opportunity to regenerate the British Waterways site to celebrate its heritage features, incorporate green connections and provide access to and views along the River Weaver and Weaver Navigation
 - Opportunity to reinstate and protect historic connections to the historic Weaver Navigation lock
 - Temporary over pumping arrangement locations



Recommendation

The design of new development must be defined by a townscape character assessment and respect the historic character, whilst embracing modern technology and innovation.

Promote innovative approaches to develop ambitious net zero and people-centred developments. Reduce carbon emissions in existing developments

Benefits

- Create an attractive Town Centre that celebrates the heritage assets sensitively.
- Contributes towards achieving net carbon zero ambitions.
- Active, safe and thriving streets and spaces.

Drawing the surrounding landscape and nature into the heart of the Town Centre to attract nature and wildlife creates a place that promotes health and well-being.





Productive
Gardens 
WHERE VOLUNTEERS GROW FOOD FOR OUR CAFE

6.8 Public Realm Strategy Overarching Approach

Northwich is located within a privileged area with astounding recreational and natural green spaces and an intricate network of water courses.

The green and blue infrastructure in Northwich are elemental assets that need to be capitalised as a unique destinations in the Town Centre. There is potential for the following interventions:

Accessible and activated open spaces

There is a need to increase the accessibility to the River Weaver and River Dane, as well as green areas situated further away from the Town Centre (Carey Park, Furey Woodland, Marbury Park, the Flashes) for various population groups via secured public access, active travel corridors and restoration. This will strengthen leisure routes and activate open spaces, and improve health and well-being by promoting active travel and outdoor activities for social engagement, events and people watching..

The ambition is to plant more street trees and greenery to create an attractive environment, help mitigate the effects of climate change and increase Town Centre biodiversity.



Green wall creates an attractive facade and improves the street environment



Tree canopies providing shade and cooling the area

Urban greening streets and spaces














Regeneration of the Town Centre will create mutually beneficial relationships between dwellers and the environment to make urban streets and spaces green.

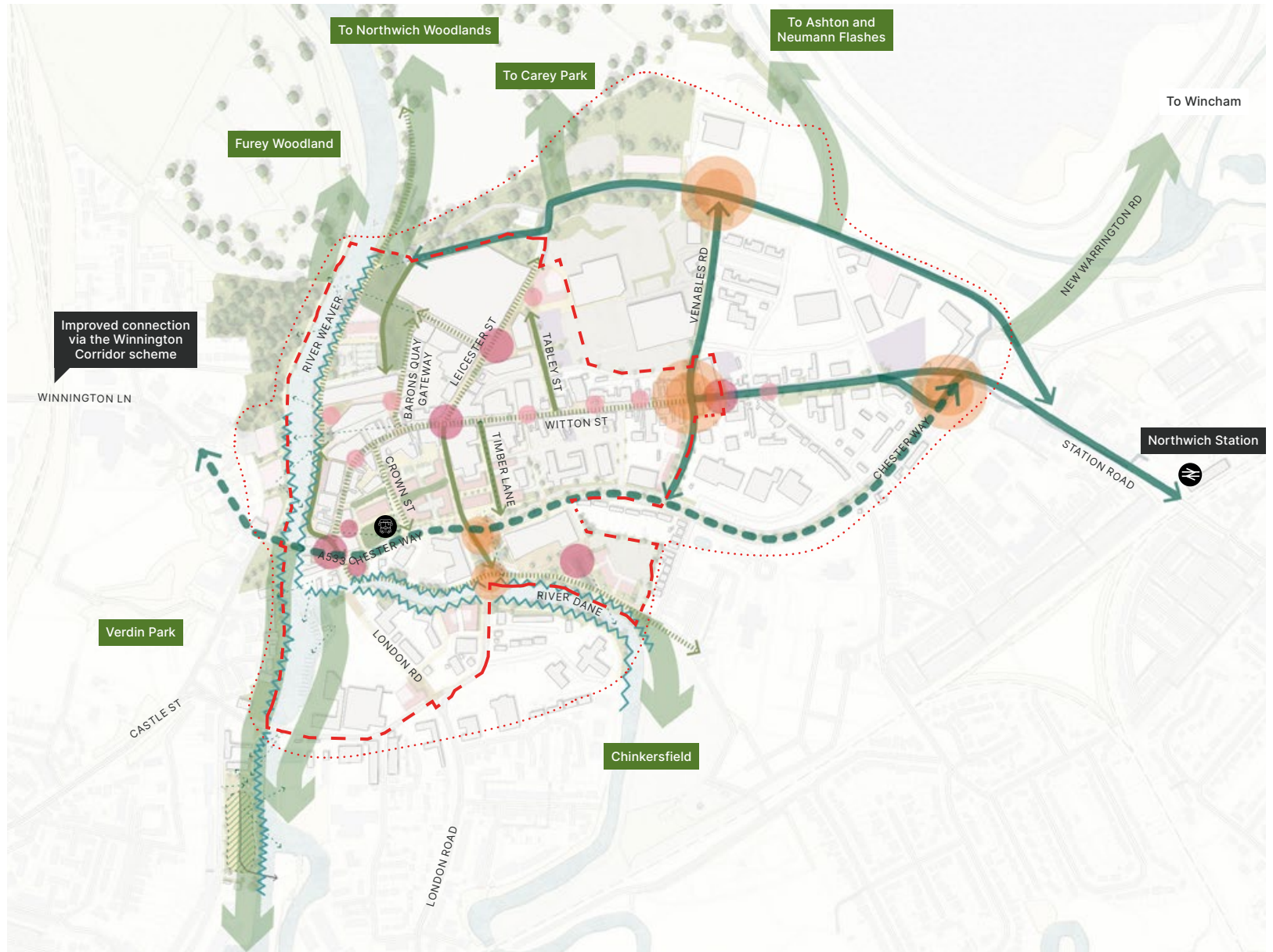
A variety of green infrastructure interventions such as living walls and green roofs, raingardens and re-wilding could be incorporated. Benefits include improving pedestrian experience, soaking up rainwater, creating a habitat for local wildlife, calming traffic, offsetting carbon emissions in the local area, improving air quality and health and well-being benefits.

Urban gardening

In the future there is potential to build on the allotments that are located close by to create areas for urban gardening. This will encourage social connection and create a sense of community, especially for people living in apartments.

Key

- ⋯ Northwich Development Framework study area
- Northwich Town Centre core
-  Improve arrival experience at Bus station
-  Improve arrival experience at Northwich Train Station
-  Potential for improvement to arrival experience at Northwich Train Station
-  Weaver Way - Primary Route (with potential for permeating the barrier and introduce greenery and tree planting, and pedestrian and cyclist designated routes)
-  Potential for balanced green streets with exemplar SuDS strategy (indicative location)
-  Proposed green streets within streetscene, potential to include SuDS. Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists with a clear change in material surface to encourage slow and considered movement through the routes
-  Potential for primary pedestrian and cyclist priority route with clear wayfinding
-  Potential for improvement to "hot-spots" to create a network of primary and secondary public open spaces within the Town Centre
-  Potential for pedestrian and cyclist priority crossing points
-  Proposed public open spaces (indicative location)
-  Views to landscape
-  Potential to enhance the relationship with the River Weaver and River Dane (Potential to improve pedestrian experience, including active frontages and orientating development to overlook the waterside, and incorporating pedestrian and cycle routes with clear wayfinding were possible)
-  Potential for improvements to access and connectivity to green open space (indicative location)



The Landscape and Open Space Framework



6.9 Public Realm Strategy Overarching Approach

Flood alleviation surface run-off

Incorporating requirements in policy for the introduction of SuDS and flood resilient design, can address increasing environmental challenges.

Making space for water is another example of flood alleviation measures. Promote the use of surface water conveyance and SuDS, and existing green infrastructure to re-create functional floodplains. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.



Raingardens adjacent to road to capture run-off

Encourage play

The vision is to encourage playful activities throughout the Town Centre via both permanent and temporary informal play elements. Aiming to create an environment that encourages children and adults alike to play and interact.

Playful elements can be designed to be non-prescriptive play, within sculptural pieces of street furniture. Integrating water within play elements will engage children and reinforce the connection to water.



West Gorton Sponge Park - An example of a neighbourhood park with floodable areas and SuDS

Embrace heritage

Northwich's heritage is rich with many listed buildings and structures, the aim is to celebrate this heritage through materials, furniture and way-finding.

The story of the town's industrial past can be interpreted within public realm elements to leave a legacy within the Town Centre and an education for children and visitors. Please see the Appendix for the Built Form constraints for Northwich Town Centre.

Recommendation

- Improve connections for pedestrian and cyclists to surrounding parks.
- Reduce flood risks to and from new development through location, layout and flood resilient design.
- Ensure spatial planning supports flood risk, river basin and surface water management policies and plans, and emergency plans.

Benefits

Benefits businesses, increase activity and access to the river. Promoting health and wellbeing and accessibility.

Interactive Elements



Potential to incorporate water elements within interactive sculptures, to promote the connection to water in Northwich

Celebration of Heritage



Etchings and inlay could convey history and location

Meanwhile Uses



Meanwhile use / activities can provide valuable opportunities for play

Social Seating



Social, linear seating along routes

Playful Furniture and Art



Seating and art could be combined with a playful element

Materiality



Reuse of existing materials adds character and texture

6.10 Landscape Strategy

Overall Flood Risk Strategy for Northwich

Flood Risk is a key issue for Northwich, having flooded in 1946, 2000, 2012, 2019 and 2021. The strategy requires careful consideration to preserve and support the Town Centre and its businesses, and the surrounding area, for years to come.

Cheshire West and Chester Council are currently updating their SuDS handbook to reflect specific changes in planning policy, climate change allowances, brownfield development discharge rates, developers SuD'S checklist and recommendations.

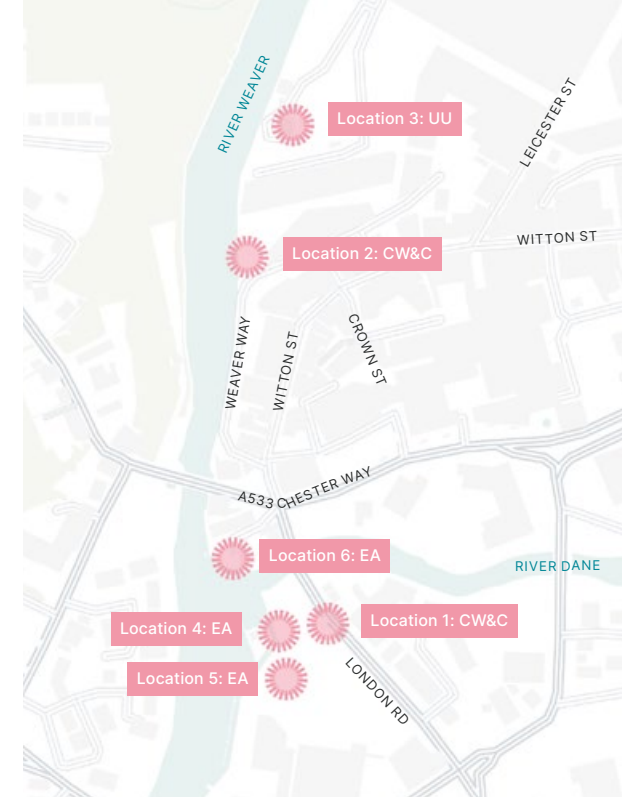
Northwich is at the confluence of the River Weaver and River Dane, the River Weaver has been made navigable (Weaver Navigation). The River levels on the Weaver and Navigation are controlled by a series of sluice gate and lock assets owned and operated for navigation purposes by the Canal & River Trust (the Trust). The Trust confirmed in February 2023 that all assets and sluice gates are fully operational. There are also several ordinary watercourses in the area where the LLFA (Lead Local Flood Authority) are the statutory regulator of these.

Northwich has a historic record of flooding spanning several decades. The Environment Agency carried out a flood scheme in 2017 to raise flood defences in Northwich Town Centre. During the Storm Christoph event (2021) the flood defences for the River Weaver and River Dane were not overtopped. Surface water flooding and the surcharging of drainage systems was observed within the affected areas of, London Road and Theatre Court; Bull Ring and Northwich Quay; Weaver Way, High Street and Castle Street and Witton Church School.

Please see the Appendix for full constraints and baseline analysis information.



Grey to Green in Sheffield, example of attractive SuDs planting



Over pumping location plan (7 in total, including Dock Road location, not shown in plan)

Long-term solutions to minimise flood risk in Northwich Town Centre are currently being investigated by CW&C, through the development of an integrated catchment model. This is a collaborative exercise between all RMA's (Risk Management Authorities). During the period of development of the catchment model and implementation of any outcomes of this, there are currently temporary over pumping arrangements in place at 7 locations (shown above), within Northwich Town Centre, to effectively discharge any land locked surface water back into the main river at Multi-Agency pre-agreed discharge rates.



Green roofs with sedum planting to mitigate surface flooding

It is imperative that any future development and planning within Northwich Town Centre should undergo a policy and restraints review in relation to sites at risk of flooding if not already in the Local and Neighbourhood Plan, particularly those proposed for residential development. The sequential test should be applied in relation to there being alternative sites and only if this test is passed the exception test would be applied for residential on any Zone 3a site.

Future development and planning will have SuDs features at the forefront of proposals for both a flood risk, water quality and environmental strategy. There are several SuDs that could be integrated into plans going forward which 'slow the flow of water'. There are many options to SuDs designs and ideas (but not limited to) for utilisation within Northwich Town Centre, some of which are listed:



Grasscrete - incorporating turf into parking areas and / or shared spaces to alleviate flooding

- Utilising vegetation within built up areas/green roofs utilising a low maintenance grass (this could be retrofitted into large areas of existing hardstanding)
- Reusing rainwater - storing into harvesting tanks and water butts, there are a range of rainwater harvesting tanks available for large and small-scale developments.
- Utilise SuDS within tree pit designs. Not only does this solution provide attenuation and environmental benefits, it also allows trees to mature to their projected tree growth with sufficient space and without detriment to utilities, services or surfacing.
- Permeable paving e.g. incorporating turf 'Grass Crete' into parking areas or shared spaces, this can be made from partially recycled precast concrete products.
- Filter drains have benefit not only for conveying flow with a perforated pipe surrounded by clean stone/gravel wrapped in geotextile but they also have environmental benefits in trapping pollutants in a relatively cost effective way if they are maintained appropriately. They can easily be incorporated into a landscape design. It is also important to design out the risk of vehicle overrun and pipe damage.
- Opportunity to create sponge parks which absorb rainwater and reduce the risk of flooding, while creating an attractive, informal play park.

Recommendation

- Finalise CW&C's Flood Risk Strategy and the catchment model for Northwich, this will identify where the key areas for flood mitigation will need to be to provide a permanent solution to flooding.
- Incorporate flood mitigation into all new development.
- Incorporate modern SuDs and improve existing flood mitigation (where required) to improve the public realm, support longevity of buildings, heritage assets, local businesses and connectivity within and through the Town Centre.
- Sources for Flooding Guidance;
 - [The Flood Hub](#)
 - [The interim Section 19 report for the 2021 Storm event](#)
 - [Guidance on the construction of SuDS](#)

Benefits

It is important that Northwich builds a flood resilient community and environment, with the community and developers liaising and developing their knowledge of flood resilience to preserve and support Northwich Town Centre during periods of severe flooding.

6.11 *Landscape Strategy* **River Enhancements**

The Rivers are one of Northwich's greatest assets that needs to be capitalised as a unique destination for Northwich.

There is potential for the following interventions:

Natural green corridor

The River Weaver can be opened as a green pedestrian / cycle link from the Town Centre to Carey Park, and beyond to Marbury Park and Anderton Boat Lift. The river edge can create ecology areas, re-wilding, planting, recreational space, informal play and picnic areas. The focus should be promoting and enhancing the natural qualities of the river and referencing the former heritage of the river.

The River Dane can be opened as a green pedestrian / cycle link to the Town Centre from Northwich Memorial Court, residential areas to the south and Vickersway Park. The river edge can create ecology areas, re-wilding, planting, recreational space, informal play and picnic areas.

Walkways and jetty

There is potential to create a walkway along the river edge at key points where the access is currently restricted to connect the pathways to allow full access along the length of the River. A canopy and kiosks could offer a unique food and beverage offer, spilling out onto the River Edge. This will increase footfall to the River Weaver and countryside beyond.

Activate the Water at Barons Quay

The open space at Barons Quay is an environment that is currently under utilised and lacks footfall. There is potential to promote new leisure uses which will activate the river with water based recreational activities such as paddle-boarding and canoeing. A cycle hub will encourage cycling along the river and to the parks to the north.

Community access

Visitors should have the opportunity to enjoy access to the River Weaver at key points and through dedicated footpaths. There is potential to enhance access along the edges of the River Weaver at Barons Quay, to connect to Carey Park, leading to Neumann's Flashes, Anderton Boat Lift, Marbury Park. There is opportunity to promote the full route from the Bull Ring to Carey Park. Connections for pedestrians and cyclists should be enhanced to the service road area to the rear of Asda which is currently poorly overlooked.



Riverside walk which helps control flow rates of rivers. Nursery Street Pocket Park, Sheffield.



Connection across the river activating spaces

Education and interpretation

There is opportunity for interactive and educational elements within the landscape design, creating a legacy of Northwich's rich heritage and past. Where the ecology permits, access to the water can allow the local community to enjoy the river and learn about wildlife, bio-diversity and heritage.

6.12 *Landscape Strategy* **River Enhancements**

The River Dane is under-utilised, there is potential at Northwich Memorial Court to enhance the relationship with the water

Northwich Memorial Court

Improve access and views to the edge of the river at the rear of Northwich Memorial Court and car park. A new public space and informal play could be included to activate this area of the river. Improvements to create an attractive edge to the car park and to the rear of dwellings that back onto the car park could create an attractive environment.

In the future, there is potential to consider utilising part of the car park to activate this part of the river.



A balance of recreation, planting and bio-diversity areas create an active and attractive water edge at Liverpool Festival Gardens.



Water based leisure uses encourage activity at Albert Dock, Liverpool



Jettys and walkways activate the water edge

Recommendation

- Develop a river activation and improvements strategy.
- Partner with relevant groups including Canals and River Trust to input into the strategy.
- Active travel plan to promote the river as a movement corridor and recreation corridor.

Benefits

Promote health and well-being and improving connections for pedestrian and cyclist to and from the surrounding parks This would benefit businesses, increase activity and access to the river.

6.13 *Public Realm and Landscape Strategy* **Defining Public Spaces**

The development of Barons Quay has created areas where the rear of buildings and development plots are exposed, including to the rear of Witton Street

Define public and private areas to the rear of blocks

As a result, service areas, parking areas, back of house uses, refuse areas and large areas surfaces are visible with no clear definition between public and private use.

The rear of the blocks can be accessed at several points, either through narrow pedestrian cut-through, or larger, very wide vehicle access points. Accessibility to these areas can have advantages for practical servicing and access. However there are opportunities to subtly suggest that these spaces at the rear, are less 'public' in nature, and a private in their character.

This can be achieved through interventions through narrowing of the carriageway, change in material, obstructing direct views in or signage, the character of those entrances can be enhanced.

The benefits of this, are a greater sense of ownership for the occupiers of the spaces at the rear, defined public spaces and a more attractive public environment.



Use of moveable planters to layout and create spaces free of traffic; Olympic Park, London.



Example of exposed service area at Barons Quay

Recommendation

- Differentiate between public, communal and private areas of the Town Centre.
- CW&C to implement in partnership with the owners.

Benefits

- A greater sense of security at the back of the blocks. To engender a deeper sense of ownership of the spaces at the back of the blocks from occupiers.
- Improve connections for pedestrians and cyclists.

6.14 Public Realm and Landscape Strategy

Animate the High Street

Northwich already benefits from a variety of open spaces and an historic high street.

Further enhancements to the public realm within the streets and spaces will encourage social interaction, meeting and gathering. Public realm performs a vital role in gathering communities and increasing footfall.



Ground floor uses spill out onto the street in London

Witton Street

Positively enhance the existing poor quality public realm, particularly towards the end of Witton Street / High Street and the approach to Weaver Square by the Bull Ring, which is prone to flooding and needs to create an attractive approach and arrival to Northwich and it's active high street.

Encourage initiatives aimed at activating vacant units and diversifying the offer. Enhance connections and activity through alleys and ginnels to Witton Street through public art, lighting and surface treatments.

Weaver Way activation

The rear of Witton Street is currently underutilised, with service areas and the rear of businesses exposed. There is potential in the future to activate this area to create a vibrant urban space that spills out onto the river edge, especially during events such as the River Festival. This would benefit the businesses, increase activity and access to the river

Blank surfaces and walls

Many of the ground floor surfaces in Weaver Square have little or no relationship to the street. There are a variety of ways one can animate these surfaces and these include the use of murals, interactive art and installations and sculpture. These should be organised and implemented as part of a wider art and digital strategy.



Art incorporated within the surfaces to create fun and vibrant streets

Weaver Square

Public realm and open space will continue to be an important part of Weaver Square, especially given its new role as a town centre living quarter. Any space provided as part of that development should be both usable and purposeful.

The town centre will continue to host events and so event spaces at Barons Quay and in front of Northwich library will also be vital. Connections to these spaces will also be key.

Recommendation

- Allow and encourage existing and new cafés / restaurants to spill out on to the high street.
- Create spaces that encourage social interaction, dwelling and entertainment activities.
- Future public realm design should allow for flexibility of events that can be carried throughout the streets and spaces.

Benefits

- Increase footfall to the Town Centre, improving spend within local business.
- Create vibrant and lively streets and spaces. Encourage social interaction and meeting.

6.15 *Way-finding, Street Furniture, Lighting* Creating an Engaging Environment

Way-finding and the visitor experience

Understanding users is key to implementing an effective way-finding strategy. In the Northwich context, the Town Centre feels disconnected from the wider town due to a belt of car-dominated space encircling the heart of the town, creating a barrier and meaning many arrive by car.

It is important that any Town Centre improvements create a legible environment and enhance way-finding for people walking, wheeling, cycling and driving. It is important to encourage walking, and to inspire exploration of the Town Centre. Way-finding can play a significant role in making the town feel accessible via active travel and micro-mobility, in reconnecting the Town Centre to the wider town and key movement nodes, and in changing behaviour to enable more sustainable, engaging and enriching ways of moving around the town.

The primary means of way-finding should be through the creation of an intuitive landscape curated through arrangement of active building frontages and landmarks, street furniture and features, landscape elements and materials, used to guide users through the different streets and areas of the town.

In addition to the intuitive landscape, some consistent signage will be required to guide people from key arrival points, such as car parks and the train station, to key destinations within the town.

Good way-finding should do more than provide effective information and direction for people to find their way around town. It can also encourage learning experiences; create and maintain an image for a place; and provide a sense of place and local pride by incorporating history or cultural details.

There is opportunity to create cohesion throughout the Town Centre with high quality and accessible street furniture that is consistent with the branding and offers various arrangements for people with different levels of mobility. Street furniture should also consider bike parking and could incorporate playful elements.



High quality and accessible street furniture that is consistent with the branding and offers various arrangements for people with different levels of mobility



Strong brand identity within way-finding at Saddler's Yard, Manchester



Street furniture is consistent with the overall brand identity, image of cycle storage at Altrincham Town Centre

6.16 *Way-finding, Street Furniture, Lighting* Creating an Engaging Environment

Lighting

Although its primary purpose is night-time visibility for security and safety, successful street lighting takes into account the human users of the street, and curates a sense of place or atmosphere. The type, placement, and wattage of street lighting affects how a street is perceived and used.

For instance, one way to emphasise pedestrian activity over automobile traffic is to replace standard overhead street lights with smaller-scale, more frequently spaced fixtures geared to pedestrians

Lighting design needs to celebrate the distinctive identity and history of an area, for well-lit townscape details draw attention to the uniqueness of an area.

Lighting key functions:

- Increase safety in high-use spaces and movement corridors, such as walkways and bus stops.
- Aid in geographic orientation, as people can use well-lit focal points as landmarks to help them find their way.
- Celebrate the distinctive identity and history of an area, for well-lit townscape details draw attention to the uniqueness of an area.
- Create a sense of intrigue and drama. Accentuate character and sense of place
- Curate distinctive atmospheres and encourage particular uses.



Lighting of Town Bridge in the Town Centre accentuates and celebrates an important heritage asset, Northwich



Rochdale Riverside incorporates lighting within the surfaces of the floors and walls to highlight key routes at night-time



Lighting accentuates the public space, street furniture and way-finding at Sadler's Yard, Manchester

Recommendations

- Develop a way-finding, public art strategy, and lighting strategy that is linked to the heritage interpretation, rediscovering the river, is accessible to all, strengthening pedestrian and cycle connections (nature trails, sculpture trails and heritage trails).
- Review Northwich's current street furniture.
- Invest in high quality and accessible street furniture designed for Northwich, rather than off the shelf standard street furniture products.
- Develop a way-finding strategy that is unique to Northwich and incorporates a strong brand identity.

6.17 *Public Art and Branding* Capture the Essence of Northwich

Through the regeneration of Northwich, there is a need and opportunity to curate a positive image of place for Northwich, celebrate cultural and heritage identity, accentuate local character and distinctiveness, and enliven public places with the use of public art and place branding.

Engaging with both artists and the community early in the planning process for public spaces is crucial to developing successful public art and place making strategies. There is an opportunity to build community cohesion and create a sense of community ownership through their early participation.

Landmark artworks can help to develop a positive visual identity for Northwich, creating enriching experiences and sensory stimulation in public places. Historical artworks, including sculptures, statues and other public art, positioned in gateway locations could help create sense of arrival into the Town Centre.

Exploration of neglected streets which suffer from low footfall and a poor pedestrian experience, as well as rediscovery of the river, should be encouraged through the use of art.

A public art strategy is required to effectively achieve the following recommendations.



Grade II listed Sir John Brunner and Ludwig Mond statues, Northwich

Recommendations

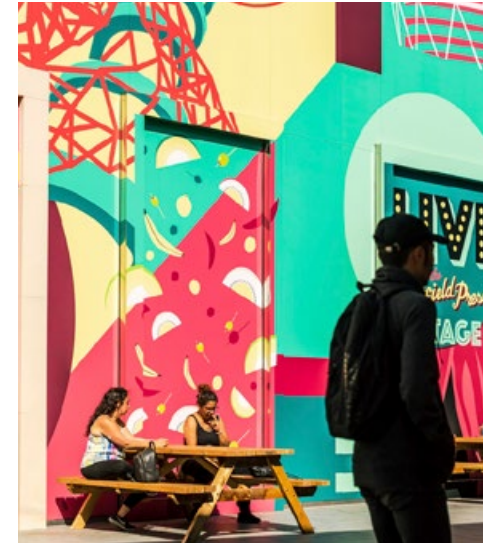
- Develop a strong brand identity and toolkit to be implemented within the Town Centre as well as marketing.
- Public art should be location specific, context sensitive and respond and contribute to a 'spirit of place'.
- Celebrate heritage in original and thought-provoking ways.
- Curation is key and arts programming is required. Partner with cultural organisations when delivering projects to ensure quality, integrity and authenticity.
- Use art to help deal with blank walls and inactive streets and spaces; encourage rediscovery of the river; and strengthen pedestrian and cycle connections - this could be conceptualised as an arts trail through an al fresco gallery.
- Prioritise interventions which facilitate year-round activation and promote both temporary and permanent interventions with a rolling project programme.



Landmark artworks can help to develop a positive visual identity. Blackburn Cathedral.



Branding can tie together different areas of Northwich. It can be used in wayfinding totems, lighting, street furniture and in paving.



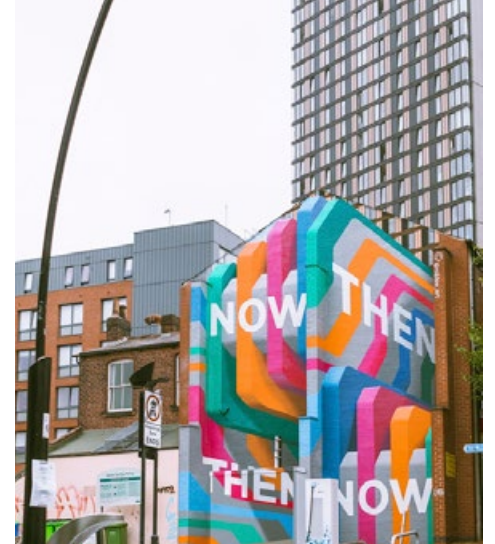
Murals by local artists creates a fun environment to the rear of development to activate under utilised areas at Olympic Park.



The Plaza, Northwich



Temporary art installations activate spaces and encourage interaction and dwell time for visitors, Chester Market.



Murals by local artists creates a distinctive landmark and gateway within Sheffield City Centre.



Illustrative design principles have been prepared for focus areas within the Town Centre. The plans are illustrative and show how the spatial framework could potentially be delivered. The plans are intended to provide guidance and recommendations, for all stakeholders involved in the delivery of the regeneration of the Town Centre. The focus areas are shaped by the overarching spatial frameworks in Chapter 06 to ensure a comprehensive approach.

07

Focus Areas

7.1 Key Objectives Plan

A comprehensive illustrative spatial framework for the whole of Northwich that ties together the focus areas.

The 11 toolkit objectives have been applied within the Key Objectives Plan, considering the opportunity and key projects sites and baseline analysis (please refer to Appendix for further detail), and pulling together a cohesive framework for the Town Centre, with the following key principles.

Cheshire West and Chester Council has committed to becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2045. All objectives described will need to be sustainable and low carbon. The Sustainability, A Holistic Approach section of this document, pages 18 to 21, describe the development sustainability goals.

1. Enhanced connections to the River Weaver and Dane.
2. Improved access to Furey Woodlands, Carey Park and Northwich Woodlands.
3. A new Market and leisure facilities at the heart of Barons Quay to attract footfall.
4. Activation of the River Weaver edge around Barons Quay. Opportunity for new development to create active frontages to the river and potential to include leisure facilities to support sports and recreation that activates the river (e.g. kayak, paddleboarding etc.)
5. A new residential-led mixed-use sustainable and low-carbon development in Weaver Square.
6. Enhanced active travel connections and wayfinding from Northwich train station into the Town Centre.
7. Improved arrival experience at Northwich train station.
8. Improved bus hub and arrival space into Northwich.
9. Improved gateway at the Bull Ring.
10. Opportunity to re-purpose heritage buildings to support the cultural and civic offer in Northwich.
11. Opportunity to sensitively regenerate the British Waterways site respecting the heritage assets and allowing for public waterfront amenity and connections.
12. Flood risk and mitigation to be at the heart of all investment decisions. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.
13. Opportunity and Key Project Sites - Any development or investment proposals on the opportunity sites identified should be informed by a thorough policy and constraints review if not already allocated in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Please refer to the Appendix for a full list of all Opportunity and Key Project Sites.
14. Potential to create an improved interface for the United Utilities site, to provide an attractive environment in Barons Quay and the riverside (e.g. planting, trees, green walls, green roof, etc.)
15. Renovation of the Northwich Library will act as a community hub and offer classroom / learning space in the heart of the Town Centre.

Key

- ← - - Landscape Views
-  Potential for green space with opportunity for informal play
-  Potential for development such as a flexible canopy to infill existing back of house on Weaver Way
-  Opportunities and key projects site (see Appendix for further detail)
-  Proposed new development as per NDF objectives and strategy (indicative building layout)
-  Planning permissions
-  Potential to create an improved interface to provide an attractive environment (e.g. planting, trees, green walls, green roof, etc.)
-  Indicative public open space
-  Indicative squares or 'hot-spots'
-  Indicative active travel routes
-  Opportunity for future development that celebrates and preserves its heritage assets, enhances the waterfront setting
-  Indicative access to waterfront



The illustrative Key Objectives Plan



7.2 The Focus Areas

The illustrative proposals on the upcoming pages demonstrate design principles for each of the Focus Areas and how they link with the vision principles and 11 toolkit objectives identified in earlier chapters.

The five Focus Areas identified, include;

1. Barons Quay Riverside
2. Lower Witton Street and Weaver Way
3. Upper Witton Street (The Plaza) and Tabley Street
4. The Bull Ring
5. Weaver Square



Lower Witton Street and Weaver Way



The Bull Ring



Barons Quay Riverside



Upper Witton Street (The Plaza) and Tabley Street



Weaver Square

- Key
- Focus Area
 - Proposed key active travel links (indicative location)
 - Pedestrian connections



The Focus Areas



08

Barons Quay

Riverside

8.1 Barons Quay Riverside

Barons Quay Riverside has the potential to be an exciting space for Northwich. A place to celebrate the waterside edge of the River Weaver.

The vision is a list of ideas for further exploration by the Council and its partners, subject to further feasibility work and funding. Please refer to the Appendix for constraints information. The illustrative spatial framework plan illustrates the potential interventions and opportunities to and for:

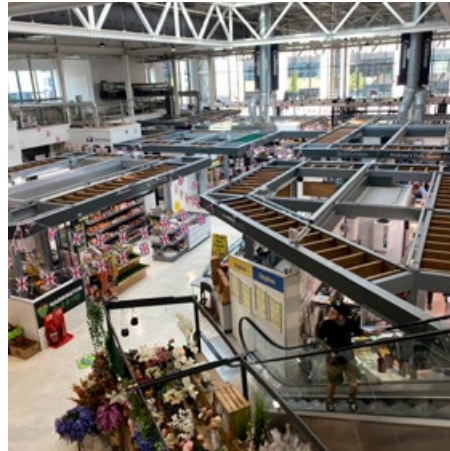
1. A riverside walkway, potentially including a boardwalk, to connect north-south, along the River Weaver, linking Carey Park, Barons Quay Riverside and The Bull Ring, with potential for waterside moorings.
2. A prominent and accessible entrance into Carey Park with clear wayfinding and potential for playful trails to connect the Town Centre with the surrounding existing green assets.
3. Potential linkages to strategically connect Winnington Village and wider green spaces (including Furey Woodland and Anderton Nature Reserve) to Northwich Town Centre.
4. Improve the public realm to provide cycle and pedestrian routes.
5. Create a bio-diverse nature corridor.
6. Potential to enhance the existing riverside park with recreational spaces (e.g. for play, events and urban growing) to encourage footfall and dwell time. The existing amenity space in this location is important as it is a key point for visitors to connect with the water.
7. Potential for river taxis from and to Anderton Boat lift, and surrounding riverside cultural destinations, from Barons Quay Riverside. Opportunity to deliver water-based leisure activities such as leisure cruises along the River Weaver. There is a need for dredging in the river to make this happen, a partnership approach will be required to find solutions.
8. Opportunity to open up views of the river and bring footfall to the waterfront. This area could potentially accommodate leisure facilities, providing a destination for sport activities, hire and storage, if a suitable commercial operator could be found.
9. Attractive public realm spaces 'hot-spots'.
10. A network of pedestrian streets for main routes and through-routes / ginnels.
11. Active frontages along main routes.
12. Possible uses within the vacant Barons Quay units; modern health facility, adult education, flexible office space (co-working) and leisure uses. Explore potential to sub-divide units to create more active frontages and activate sight lines towards the river.
13. Potential location for Northwich indoor market and spill out area to make the most of the riverside setting.
14. Potential to create a jetty into the River Weaver that connects to the walkway/boardwalk and promotes activities in the river, such as kayak and paddle-board.
15. Opportunity to incorporate SuDS to help with surface water and slow runoff down, as part of a wider flood risk strategy. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.
16. **Recommendation for Opportunity Site:** New development should retain and enhance views towards the river Weaver through an appropriate massing response. Potential to create a low scale mass with a higher set back mass to allow for views into the landscape. Please refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for further detail on building heights. Opportunity for active frontages and ground floor uses that activate the riverfront and public spaces in Barons Quay. Refer to Appendix for Opportunity Sites plan.

Key

-  Landscape Views
-  Potential for green space with opportunity for informal play
-  Opportunities and key projects site (see Appendix for further detail)
-  Proposed new development as per NDF objectives and strategy (indicative building layout)
-  Planning permissions
-  Potential to create an improved interface to provide an attractive environment (e.g. planting, trees, green walls, green roof, etc.)
-  Indicative public open space
-  Indicative squares or 'hot-spots'
-  Indicative active travel routes
-  Active frontages
-  Key connections (indicative)



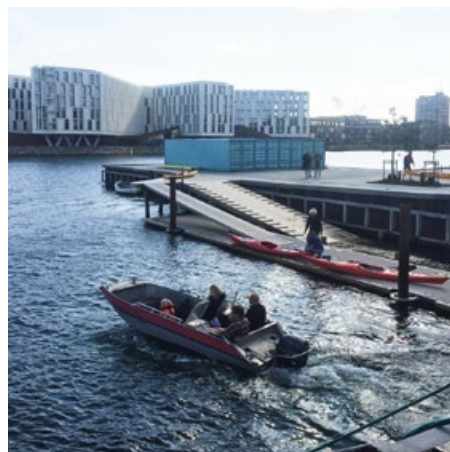
Example of a jetty and boardwalk



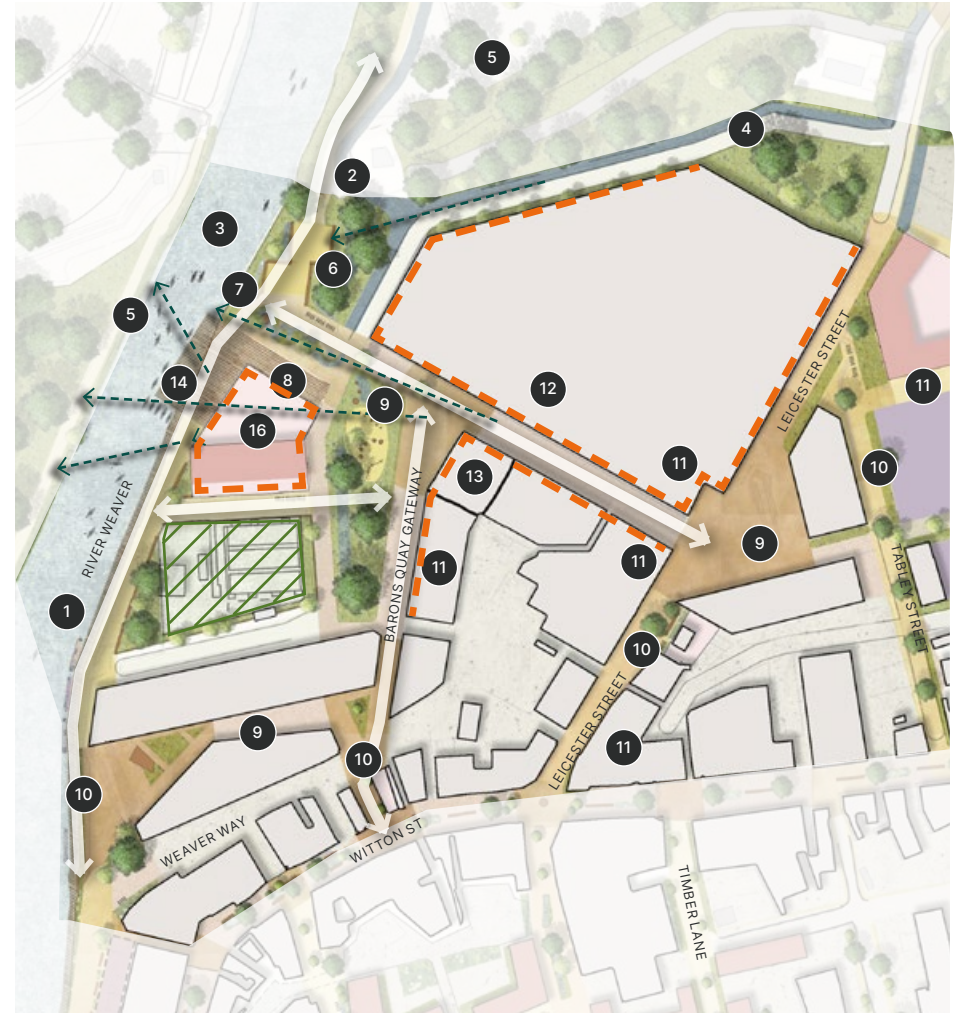
Example of a contemporary market building



Example of rewilding the river edge



Example of an active river edge



Design Principles Plan for Barons Quay Riverside. Refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for framework plan.



8.2 Illustrative River Weaver Vision



An artist's impression of the potential look, feel and activities on the River Weaver Waterfront

**ACTIVATED
WATER'S
EDGE**

ODEON

**WATERFRONT LINK TO
THE BULL RING**





ROTARY IN NORTHWICH
Information | Telephone: 01827 511111

Corporate & Youth Dragon Boat Racing Events

RADIO NORTHWICH
Proudly supporting
Rotary in Northwich

09

**Lower Witton
Street and
Weaver Way**

9.1 Lower Witton Street and Weaver Way

As the historic part of Northwich, Lower Witton Street has the potential to become an area for smaller, sensitive interventions and public realm enhancements to encourage connections into the Town Centre.

The River Weaver frontage along Weaver Way also has the potential to become interactive. Due to the flooding issues in the area, a flood risk strategy is key.









The vision is a list of ideas for further exploration by the Council and its partners, subject to further feasibility work and funding. Please refer to the Appendix for constraints information. The illustrative spatial framework plan illustrates the potential interventions and opportunities to and for:

1. A network of pedestrian streets for main routes and through-routes / ginnels, with a wayfinding, green walls, and public art strategy.
2. Create active frontages along main routes, uses such as food and beverage, with activated frontages and routes to encourage footfall and dwell time.
3. Provide attractive public realm 'hot-spots' within the network of pedestrian streets, which may include street furniture, informal play and / or leisure.
4. Key landmark buildings along main routes and by spaces, terminating views and vistas.
5. A riverside walkway, potentially including a boardwalk, to connect north-south, along the River Weaver, linking Carey Park, Barons Quay Riverside, Weaver Way and The Bull Ring.
6. Opportunity to activate Weaver Way with attractive frontages, improved public realm and spill out space. There is a requirement to improve the appearance of the rear of the existing buildings to address the river. The rear of the facade will need to be clean and tidy to create an attractive and inviting environment.
7. Opportunity to create a landmark within the Winnington Hill opportunity site, with active frontages and a route along the river edge for pedestrians. Flood risk will be a key consideration in developing this site, as it sits within the flood zone.
8. Conserve and celebrate the distinctive historic character at the heart of the town, particularly along Witton Street. This would help to encourage investment in the area and bring vacant units back into use.
9. Opportunity to incorporate SuDS to help with surface water and slow runoff down, as part of a wider flood risk strategy. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.
10. Improvements to the public realm are required to Witton Street, especially at the lower end, with potential to replace hard surface materials, new street furniture and seating, new trees and planting, to create an attractive and healthy environment for pedestrians.



View of River Weaver from Weaver Way

Key

-  Landscape Views
-  Proposed new development as per NDF objectives and strategy (indicative building layout)
-  Active frontages
-  Potential for development such as a flexible canopy to infill existing back of house on Weaver Way
-  Indicative public open space
-  Key connections (indicative)
-  Opportunities and key projects site (see Appendix for further detail)
-  Indicative squares or 'hot-spots'



Example of street furniture integrated into SuDS



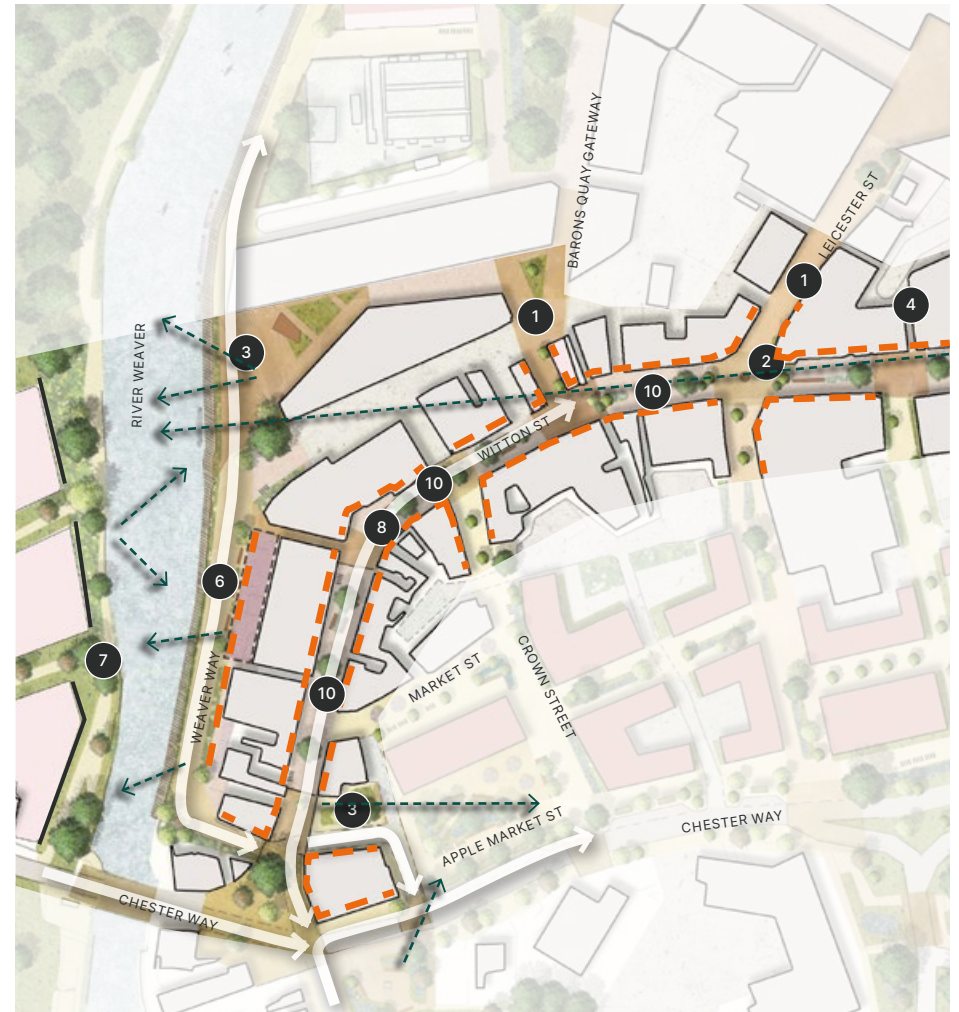
Example of leisure activating blank façades.



Altrincham Lower Market activates back of buildings



Example of attractive planting for a Sustainable urban Drainage System in Sheffield



Design Principles Plan for Lower Witton Street and Weaver Way. Refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for framework plan.



10

Upper Witton
Street and
Tabley Street

10.1 Upper Witton Street and Tabley Street

The junction at Venables Road and Witton Street marks the start of Northwich Town Centre.

The Plaza and Library are two iconic buildings within Northwich and define the cultural and civic hubs. There needs to be life and activity spilling out from these buildings to create vibrant and unique places. Investment in the library building and service is welcomed.

The vision is a list of ideas for further exploration by the Council and its partners, subject to further feasibility work and funding. Please refer to the Appendix for constraints information. The illustrative spatial framework plan illustrates the potential interventions and opportunities to and for:

1. Reuse of existing heritage buildings for civic uses and cultural events with improved pedestrian environment to encourage walking. Bring vacant historic buildings back to life, while conserving and celebrating the distinctive historic character. Opportunity to integrate sustainable principles into renovation of historic buildings.
2. Public open space animated by surrounding retail, restaurants, and cafés creating activity through the day and evening.
3. Retention of historic courtyard form to provide destinations to dwell, with attractive street furniture and planting to provide seasonal interest.
4. Integration of green infrastructure with vertical green walls, green roofs on buildings, and street trees.
5. Opportunity for improvements at Witton Street / Venables Road junction, to create a safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle crossing and spill out from The Plaza. Addition of wayfinding elements to and from Northwich train station will assist in activating the area.
6. Opportunity infill development to be designed sustainably to support the CW&C initiative to become net-zero carbon.
7. Opportunity for the development sites on Tabley Street to create active frontages to the road and attract footfall into Barons Quay through secondary linkages, and further encouraging connections to the wider green assets.
8. Opportunity to incorporate SuDS to help with surface water and slow runoff down, as part of a wider flood risk strategy. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.
9. **Recommendation for Opportunity Site:** New development should enhance pedestrian connections. Opportunity for active frontages to create attractive pedestrian experience in secondary linkages and increase footfall into Barons Quay. Please refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for further detail on building heights. Refer to Appendix for Opportunity Sites plan.



Liverpool Philharmonic Hall provides with an improved pedestrian environment that allows for spill out

Key

-  Landscape Views
-  Potential for green space with opportunity for informal play
-  Potential for development such as a flexible canopy to infill existing back of house on Weaver Way
-  Opportunities and key projects site (see Appendix for further detail)
-  Proposed new development as per NDF objectives and strategy (indicative building layout)
-  Planning permissions
-  Indicative public open space
-  Indicative squares or 'hot-spots'
-  Active frontages
-  Key connections (indicative)



Example of a cultural building and a pedestrian crossing points



Example of an attractive ginnel routes



Example of a pedestrian and cyclist crossing point



Example of a pocket seating area with planting



Design Principles Plan for Upper Witton Street and Tabley Street. Refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for framework plan.



Residential Sales, Lettings
& Mortgage Services

Curtain Magic
Professional curtain design
Telephone: 01606 48883
www.curtainmagic.com
@curtainmagic
Curtain Magic

PEDESTRIAN
AND CYCLE
ZONE
No motor vehicles
except for
buses

L LEADERS

NORTHWICH



11

The Bull Ring

11.1 The Bull Ring (and River Dane banks)

The Bull Ring is a key destination with many of the town's unique timber-framed buildings, and has the potential to be an exciting gateway to Northwich's thriving Town Centre.

The vision is a list of ideas for further exploration by the Council and its partners, subject to further feasibility work and funding. Please refer to the Appendix for constraints information. The illustrative spatial framework plan illustrates the potential interventions and opportunities to and for:

1. Town Swing Bridge improvements, enhancing pedestrian and cycle experience into Northwich.
2. Watling Square, at the 'Elbow' of the River is a key vantage point. Future opportunity to exploit its key view over the rivers.
3. Improvements to The Bull Ring public realm, to create better connections to Weaver Way and Witton street, consolidating the street clutter and providing an attractive streetscene with pedestrian and cycling priority.
4. Improvements to the pedestrian routes along Dane Street / London Road with active frontages.
5. Improvements to the pedestrian and cyclist connections along the River Dane.
6. Potential for improvements to provide a landmark at the Bull Ring junction such as historic statues (e.g. the listed Brunner and Mond statues) or public art at this key gateway.
7. Potential to enhance the linear bus interchange with a clean, safe environment that will encourage more people to travel by bus.
8. Opportunity to incorporate SuDS to help with surface water and slow runoff down, as part of a wider flood risk strategy. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.
9. **Recommendation for Opportunity Site:** New development should retain and enhance pedestrian connections alongside the river Dane. Opportunity for active frontages to enhance the river and to create attractive views to the riverside. Please refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for further detail on building heights. Refer to Appendix for Opportunity Sites plan.











Town Bridge, River Weaver



Historic buildings at the The Bull Ring

Key

-  Landscape Views
-  Potential for flexible green space with opportunity for informal play
-  Opportunities and key projects site (see Appendix for further detail)
-  Proposed new development as per NDF objectives and strategy (indicative building layout)
-  Indicative public open space
-  Indicative squares or 'hot-spots'
-  Active frontages
-  Key connections (indicative)



Example of floodable green spaces



An example of an arrival gateway into town with raised pedestrian crossings



Example of active uses within an historic courtyard setting, improved public realm with spill out and tree planting, Goose Green, Altrincham



Example of pedestrian and cycle priority crossings



Design Principles Plan for The Bull Ring (and River Dane banks). Refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for framework plan.





INDOOR
MARKET

Northwich Market
Shop Local. Eat Local.

CHESHIRE MOBILE & CIGARETTES
WORLD'S BEST CIGARETTES
CIGARETTES & CHARITIES

Ka

This chapter sets out the recommendations for the development of an ambitious, and sustainable new neighbourhood at Weaver Square.

12

Weaver Square

12.1 A snap shot of Weaver Square

Historically Weaver Square played a vital role in the community. Weaver Square was a hub of activity at the core of the town. Years ago hundreds of shoppers would visit large retailers such as Woolworths and Argos.

This area has, however, declined in popularity and no longer has the footfall needed to support businesses. Weaver Square lost its outdoor market to a fire in 2020, which has since been demolished and many shops now lay vacant creating unattractive streets.

There is potential to create a vibrant and lively neighbourhood at Weaver Square, introducing residential and other appropriate ancillary uses, with building layouts that overlook, and frontages that activate streets and public spaces will help create a new thriving part of the Town Centre.



Empty retail units towards Witton Street



Outdated structures on Weaver Square



Poor condition of the indoor market



Inactive street and tired public realm



Public space on the former site of the outdoor market



Mix of materials and street furniture



Underutilised public space with blank frontages from vacant units



Current situation of the indoor market

Key Considerations

Current open space is well used, new proposals at Weaver Square must include an open space offer that serves both as an arrival into Northwich and as amenity for residents and visitors and flood mitigation.

New development has to implement a cohesive and complementing public realm materials palette.

Recommendation

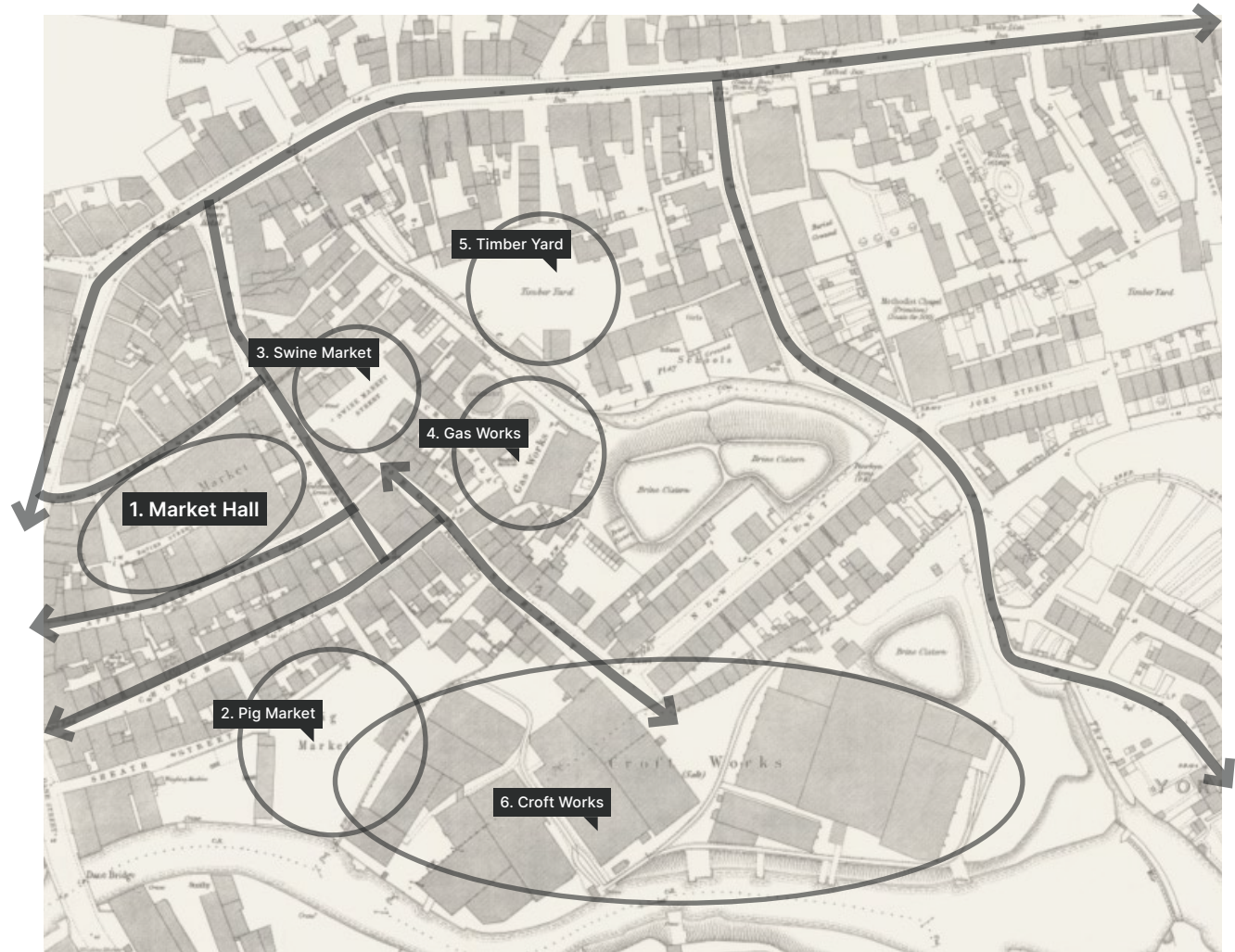
Avoid big box development and revive the historic streets and spaces within proposals designed to human scale. Revitalise Weaver Square as a thriving residential-led mixed use community hub that brings people together.

12.2 Revive the historic streets

The Market Hall was the heart of Northwich, with the Swine Market and Pig Market located within close proximity. Industrial uses, the Timber Yard and Gas Works were located alongside residential homes to create a truly mixed-use community.

A series of meandering pedestrian streets led to the markets, creating a sense of enclosure and reveal, connecting to Witton Street. The map illustrates the historic market hall and streets at Weaver Square and places including;

1. Market Hall
2. Pig Market
3. Swine Market
4. Gas Works
5. Timber Yard
6. Croft Works



Historic plan from 1875

12.3 The Challenges

Weaver Square has challenges that require further consideration and technical advice to ensure design proposals are deliverable.*

Flooding

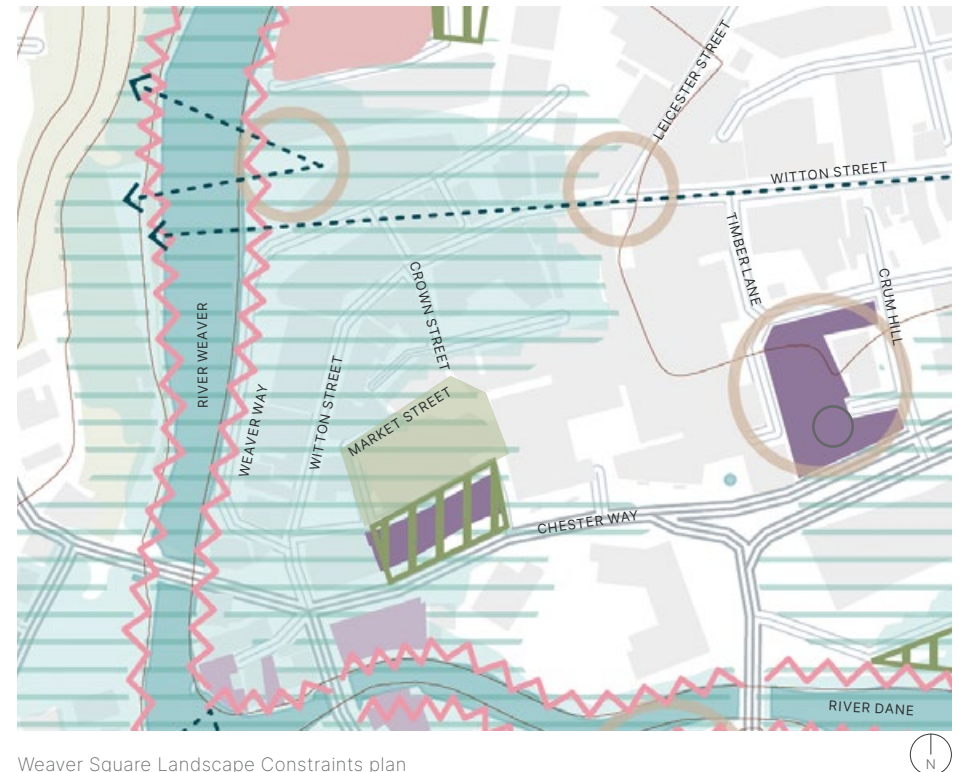
- Weaver Square is partly located within flood zone 2 and 3. It is key for development to include a flood mitigation strategy to respond to climatic events.

Public Realm

- A temporary open space sits in the site of the former outdoor market, which has been a popular addition to the town.
- Mix of different materials and styles of street furniture has resulted in tired, cluttered streets.
- There is a subway access to Weaver Square from across Chester Way.
- Surface car parking on Chester Way is underutilised and could become an inviting arrival.

Built Form

- Weaver Square is low rise, light-weight shopping precinct from the 1960s with numerous vacant shops and blank frontages. Further site investigations will be key to understanding what can be built on site, especially given the town's salt mining legacy.
- It also hosts Northwich's indoor market, but this no longer provides the offer expected by today's shoppers, with a dated built form, vacancies and restricted opening hours.
- Although Weaver Square is largely vacant, the market is currently operational as are a number of businesses in the shopping precinct. A vacant possession strategy needs to be progressed to retain and relocate as many businesses as possible to other locations within the town centre.



Weaver Square Landscape Constraints plan

Key

Northwich Development Framework study area	Flood zone 3	Urban void
Water	Poor quality public realm	Lacking interface with river edges (backs of buildings)
Green space	Underutilised space	Views
Contours	Existing surface car parking	Chester Way underpass
Flood zone 2	Existing surface car parking (council owned)	

*Please refer to the Appendix for constraints information.

12.4 Design Principles

Weaver Square

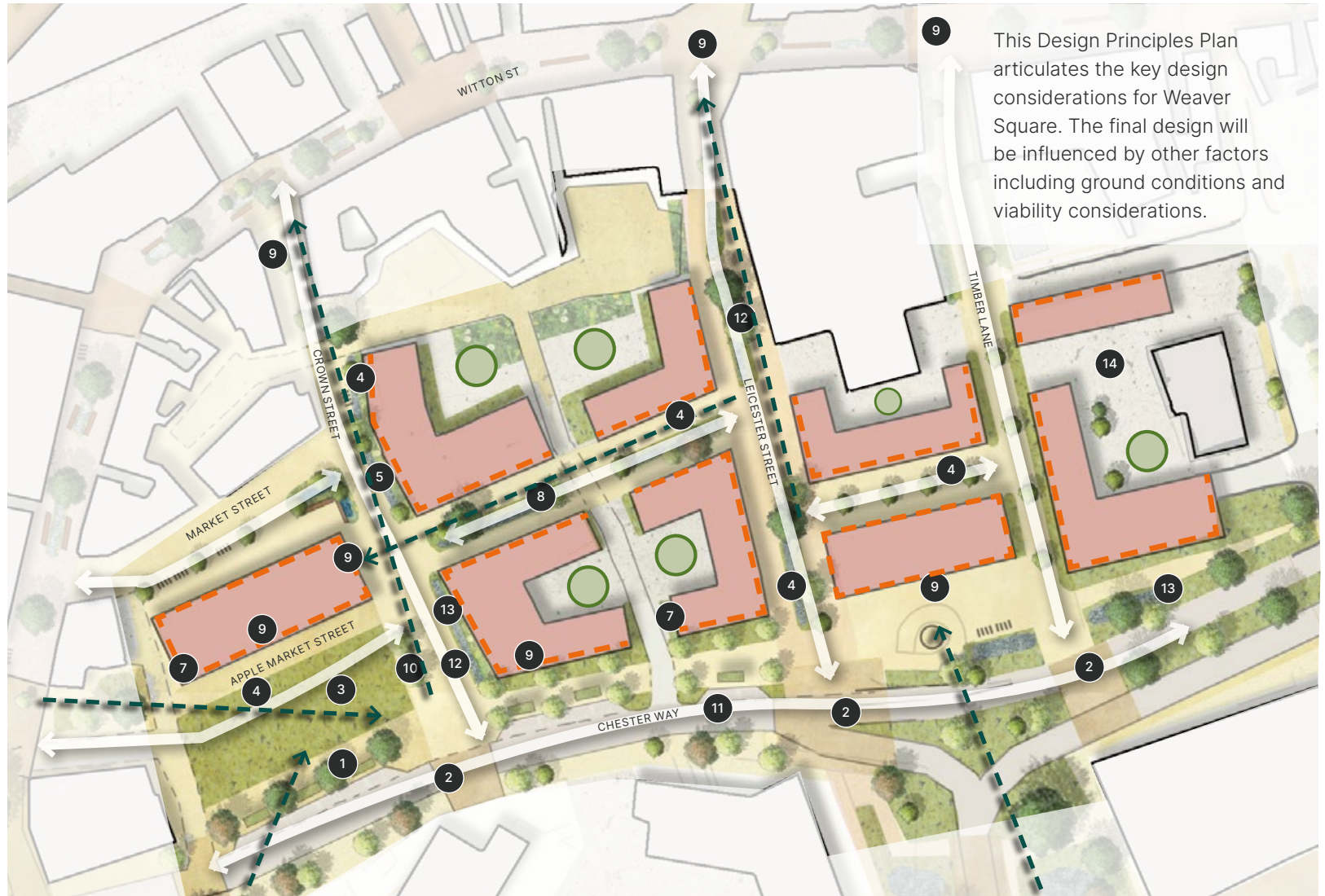
Weaver Square will become a legible, distinctive, vibrant and residential-led destination that welcomes visitors at this important gateway into Northwich Town Centre. An experience and journey to discover streets that lead to spaces of a human scale.

The illustrative Design Principles plan summarises the recommendations for the future regeneration of Weaver Square:

1. **Reconfigure and enhance the existing bus hub** to improve the look and feel of the area around it, delivering improved shelters, better wayfinding, and a greener, safer environment.
2. **Repair the severance of Chester Way** with improved pedestrian crossings and cycle connections, to connect north-south routes, from and to surrounding green spaces through Northwich Town Centre.
3. **A welcoming arrival** will define this important gateway into the Town Centre. This can be created with public realm interventions, and feature buildings.
4. **Create attractive green streets** that provide amenity and informal play, and encourage dwell-time, increasing footfall to Weaver Square. Opportunity to incorporate public art and branding to create a sense of identity.
5. **Revive the historic streets**
Revive historic street patterns and spaces to create streets for people, not cars. Scale of streets must be designed in context with the historic townscape of Witton Street to ensure human scale.
6. **Encourage pedestrian connectivity** through a clear street hierarchy of main routes and through-routes, including Market Street, Apple Market Street, Crown Street, Timber Lane and Leicester Street.
7. **Frame spaces and streets** with new high quality development.
8. **Activate frontages** at ground floors to encourage spill out, animating spaces and promoting safety.
9. **Terminating vistas and framing views** of historic buildings and new, modern landmark built-form.
10. **Incorporate public art and branding** to create a sense of identity, specific to Northwich.
11. **Urban greening and tree lined streets** incorporates planting and SuDs, combating air and noise pollution. Opportunity to encourage bio-diversity and reduce carbon emissions in the local area.
12. **Carbon Net Zero** Weaver Square presents the ideal case to support a 15-minute Town Centre, a neighbourhood-based approach to achieving net-zero. There is potential to establish a sustainable, residential-led mixed-use development that prioritises active travel and public transport, and supports the circular economy and local businesses.
13. **Incorporate SuDS** to help with surface water and slow runoff down, as part of a wider flood risk strategy. Refer to 'Overall Flood Risk Strategy' pages 84-85 for further information.
14. **Potential location for Town Centre car parking**, subject to the planning process and if provision of Town Centre car parking is determined to be retained as part of the Weaver Square proposals. The benefits of this location would minimise urban voids and dead frontages, particularly to Chester Way, and to provide convenient access to shops and businesses on Witton Street. Please refer to Section 6.6, Movement Strategy, Car parking in this document for further details on the strategic approach required, describing interventions such as improving accessibility with on-street parking, disabled parking, drop-off and collection facilities.

Key

- ← - - Landscape Views
- Potential for flexible green space with opportunity for informal play.
- (Design proposals to be developed at detailed planning stage)
- Potential for development such as a flexible canopy to infill existing back of house on Weaver Way
- Opportunities and key projects site (see Appendix for further detail)
- Proposed new development as per NDF objectives and strategy (indicative building layout)
- Planning permissions
- Indicative public open space
- Indicative squares or 'hot-spots'
- Indicative active travel routes
- Active frontages
- Key connections (indicative)
- Potential for amenity courtyards and parking.



Design Principles Plan for Weaver Square. Refer to 'Development Principles' pages 76-77 for framework plan.



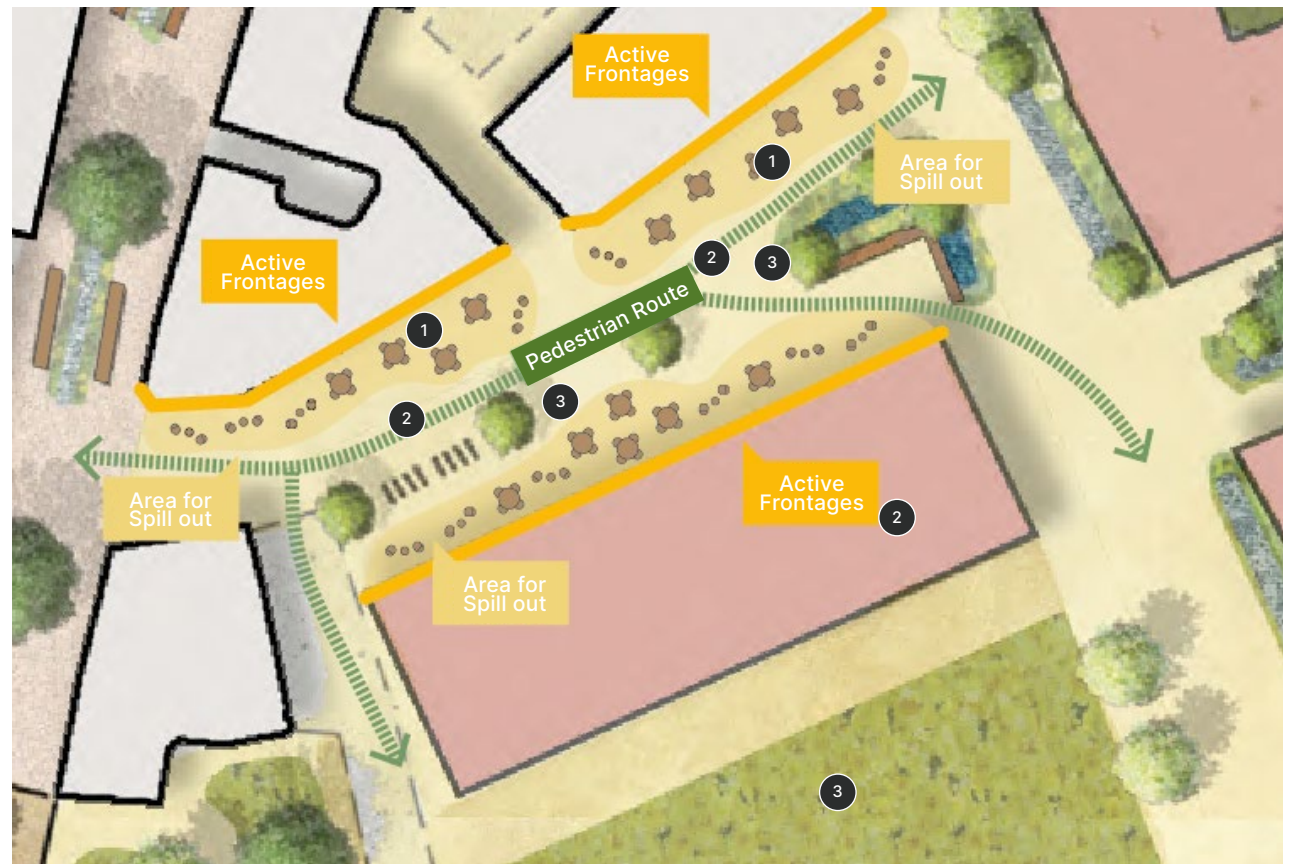
Market Street

Where it is necessary to build on the site of Apple Market Place, consideration should be given to the interface with existing businesses on Market Street.

1. The businesses located on Market Street are a key consideration in the design proposals at Apple Market Place. Proposals must give consideration to the need of businesses to continue to spill out onto the pavements with an al fresco offer.
2. Clear pedestrian routes should be provided to ensure footfall continues to be directed past the existing businesses and between the bus hub and the town centre.
3. Provision of open space will need to be an integral part of the Weaver Square scheme to support the new community being created in this location. The preference is for an area of usable open space to be retained between the new building and the bus hub to create a welcoming green environment in this gateway location.



Location of Market Street



Design Principles at Market Street, Weaver Square



Local businesses activate the space at Apple Market Square



Businesses spill out onto green street at Elephant Park, Elephant Castle, London

Market Street will be retained and improved to provide an attractive spill out space for existing local businesses, creating a lively and vibrant atmosphere.



Example of informal and natural play in green streets



Green Streets create an attractive environment at Oldham Town Centre

12.5 Development Principles

This section translates the vision and expectations for Weaver Square into a series of illustrative development principles that are key for the future successful development of Weaver Square:

1. Public realm and landscape

In order to be a sustainable and successful new neighbourhood, Weaver Square requires a coherent public realm and landscape strategy.

Public Space

Weaver Square will become a new residential neighbourhood. Community spaces will provide opportunities for socialising and play to support residents.

Public open space plays an important role in the quality of life for community. Therefore, several elements can be introduced to ensure Weaver Square becomes a liveable and thriving neighbourhood:

- Weaver Square will retain space for informal play, spill-out and recreation with connecting green streets which could include playful elements.
- Opportunity to provide space for shops as well as food and beverage businesses to spill out onto public realm to create interest and activate the streets (e.g. existing shops in Market Street).
- High-quality public realm with appropriate and attractive materials, street furniture, lighting, and wayfinding.
- A network of legible pedestrian and cycle streets that promote active travel between Weaver Square and the rest of the Town Centre, nurturing the 15-minute neighbourhood.
- Enhance views to landmarks and protect views to green assets.
- Introduce new green streets and increase the amount of carbon-sequestering trees, shrubs and grasses, which will help with climate change mitigation.
- Public spaces and streets that contribute to flood mitigation and prevent flooding through integrated SuDS, rainwater conveyance, floodable areas, and storm water collectors. Please refer to pages 84-85 for further detail.



Playful elements integrated with SuDS



West Gorton Sponge Park - An example of a neighbourhood park with floodable areas and SuDS

Play and Recreation

Informal play can be interactive, fun and sculptural. There is opportunity for play to be educational and tell the story of the Old Market and industry as a legacy.

Identity and branding

- New development in Weaver Square must feel rooted in the unique and distinctiveness of Northwich. Weaver Square needs to be accessible and legible for anyone, creating a clear network of streets and spaces to dwell.
- A successful branding for Weaver Square should integrate into Northwich's overall brand identity, the design must ensure that the branding efforts are for the benefit of the community. Community groups can become actively involved by managing community-led events such as growing and planting, murals and public art.
- Interactive and informative sculptural elements within the street can educate about the surrounding green assets of Northwich and the history of the area.
- Consideration needs to be given to the role of the salt mine wheel in future Weaver Square design. This heritage asset is important to many people in Northwich. A strategy needs to be agreed to either restore and retain on the Weaver Square site or to relocate locally.

Key

- ◀ - - Views to key landmarks
- █ Potential for green space with opportunity for informal play
- ◀ Chester Way - Potential to introduce SuDS and tree planting
- ◀ Pedestrian and cycle-only route with tree planting and SuDS
- ◀ Potential for streets with exemplar SuDS strategy (prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, with restricted vehicular movement)
- ◀ Potential for neighbourhood-scale pedestrian and cycle-only route with clear wayfinding, tree planting and SuDS and opportunity for spill out from ground floor uses



Landscape Development Principles



Example of interactive and informative sculptural elements in the street

2. Movement

Servicing

The means of servicing the various parts of the Town Centre contain a number of compromises, each due to existing physical constraints. For example, when Barons Quay was delivered, the former Marks & Spencer's site could not be serviced from the north, otherwise HGVs would need to run along the newly pedestrianised streets. Instead, the compromise solution was to enable HGVs to reach the current B&M Store from the south via the Bull Ring and Weaver Way.

To facilitate access and egress of these large vehicles onto the strategic road network, a one-way system was created at the Bull Ring / Apple Market Street, which now results in HGVs passing through the heart of Weaver Square in order to exit onto Chester Way.

Another current area of compromise where goods vehicle access conflicts with pedestrian and cycle movement is the junction of Crown Street and Witton Street. Witton Street is one of the main traffic-free streets within the Town Centre, however this vehicular crossing which interrupts the pedestrian flow is essential to serve the rear of a section of premises along Witton Street between the Swinging Witch public house and the Pound Bakery. These premises could not be accessed from the south because Weaver Square Shopping Precinct creates a significant obstacle for vehicular movement.

Service vehicle movements are a key issue for the redevelopment of the Weaver Square site and the opportunity to rationalise the current arrangements and reduce severance should be at the forefront of design. Careful consideration should be given to restricted servicing hours to ensure safety, improve accessibility and support businesses

An illustrative Movement Development Principles diagram is provided which highlights one potential solution, but it is recommended that further options should be explored in finalising designs for Weaver Square. The preferred option(s) would need to be fully modelled to understand the impact on the highway before a decision can be made on the suitability of the proposals. The preferred solution should consider other road users and key movements including pedestrians and cyclists. Placemaking considerations will also be key and the solution should be practical, maintainable and sustainable.

Taxi Rank

- There is an existing taxi rank within the Weaver Square site which is likely to need relocating as part of any scheme. Engagement with the Council and the taxi operators will be necessary to agree a suitable solution within the Town Centre.



An example of pedestrian and cycle priority neighbourhood streets.



An example of an improved bus station with green roof in Leeds

Streets

There is potential to create a network of legible and connected streets that promote active travel and public transport in Weaver Square including;

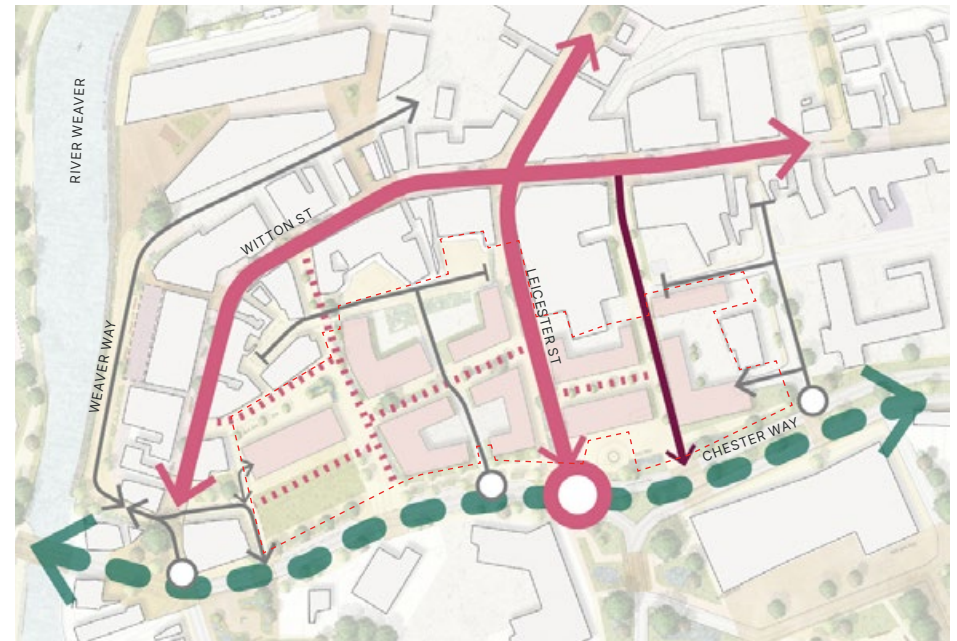
- Key pedestrian and cycle-only routes with appropriate lighting and street furniture that is attractive and supports a vibrant high street character at Leicester Street and Witton Street.
- Green streets with SuDS that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists with restricted vehicular movement for resident and servicing access.
- Pedestrian and cycle connections with clear wayfinding around the Town Centre, with appropriate lighting and street furniture that is attractive and promotes active travel for a healthy neighbourhood.
- Opportunity to permeate the barrier of Chester Way by introduction of pedestrian and cycle designated routes, as well as greenery and pedestrian raised crossing at the junction with Leicester Street.

Bus Hub

- New development should explore the facilitation of a 'land grab' to prevent the bus lane blocking on highway and potential relocation of stops.

Key

- ← Potential servicing routes
- ← Chester Way - Potential for permeating the barrier and introduce pedestrian and cycle designated routes
- ← Pedestrian and cycle only route with clear route for cyclists, clear wayfinding, street furniture, lighting, and opportunity for ground floor spill out from businesses
- Potential for raised pedestrian and cyclist priority crossing to improve N-S connections
- ← Potential for green streets with exemplar SuDS strategy (prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, with restricted vehicular movement)
- ← Potential for neighbourhood-scale pedestrian and cycle-only route with clear wayfinding, tree planting and SuDS and opportunity for spill out from ground floor uses



Movement Development Principles

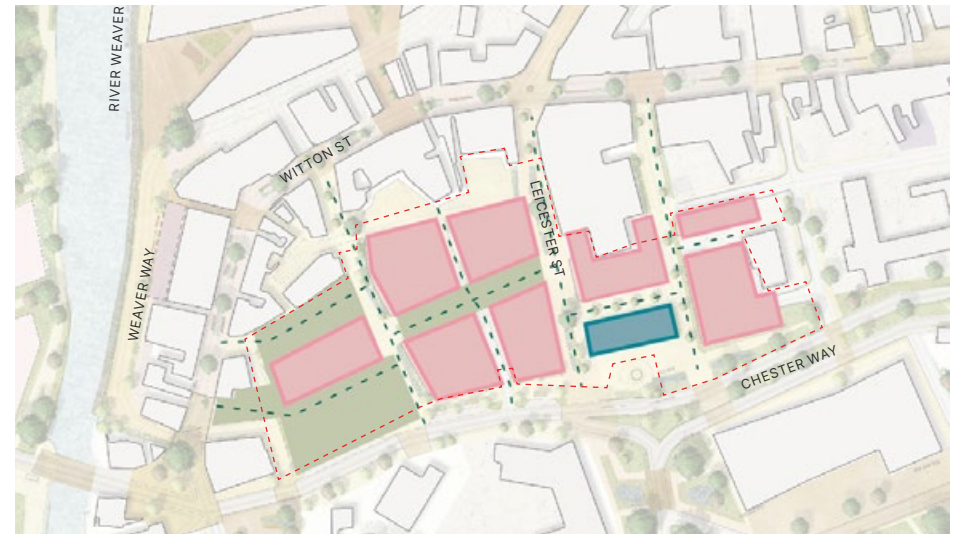
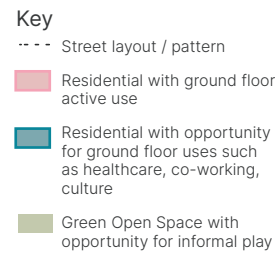
- Treatment of interface between bus hub and Weaver Square will be key (public and private)
- Opportunity to enhance the bus environment, including the improvement of the bus shelters and the arrival experience into Northwich.
- Potential for artwork within the bus hub to help create sense of arrival.

Car Parking

- In bringing the Weaver Square site forward for development, the impact of the loss of car parking spaces will need to be considered.
- If there is a need to retain spaces within the scheme, then these should be directed to locations within the site that avoid urban voids and dead frontages, particularly to Chester Way.

3. Land use

- Weaver Square will become a modern residential-led mixed-use development. It has potential to provide new Town Centre living, with a network of legible streets.
- There is an opportunity to provide active ground floor uses in key locations; including co-working, community, healthcare, and cultural uses, but it is recognised that there is no need for additional retail floorspace.

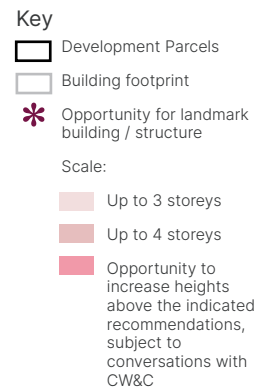


Land Use Development Principles



4. Scale and massing

- A contextually appropriate approach must be taken to respect the historic character of Witton Street. Large scale, big box development and large areas of surface parking should be avoided.
- A thorough townscape appraisal must justify heights, scale, plot depths and widths and street widths.
- There is opportunity to introduce landmark buildings and to increase heights at key corners and along Chester Way.
- Appropriate scale and massing to provide an environment that creates walkable and human scale spaces and streets.



Scale and Massing Development Principles



5. Frontages and thresholds

- Primary windows of buildings should overlook streets and public spaces.
- Building entrances should open onto the streets with opportunity for ground floors to provide active uses with windows and doors onto the street to create interest and activity.
- Vehicular traffic should prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, and access to homes should be provided through communal courtyards where possible.

Key

- Building / structures footprints
- Active frontages
- ← Views activating streets
- Potential for amenity courtyards and parking
- ↔ Access to development parcels
- ~ Neighbourhood pedestrian green streets



Frontages, Access and Thresholds Development Principles



Active groundfloor with spill out to open space

Recommendation

Ensure new development continues the local scale, form and materials, thereby reinforcing the distinctive architectural character of the immediate context.

New development should respect the scale of existing buildings in terms of height, overall massing, roof-scape, floor levels and sizes of window and door openings.

12.6 Appearance

New development within Weaver Square must respect the appearance, character and setting of the historic Witton High Street. New buildings within Weaver Square must be sensitively designed and complement the existing heritage buildings.

Guidance for new development in heritage and conservation areas is available in the "Northwich Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2030" made July 2018 and the "Northwich Conservation Area Management Plan". Please refer to the above documents for more detailed guidance.

Townscape character

Weaver Square is located within the Northwich Town Centre Conservation Area and within the historic core of the town of Witton Street. Witton Street and High Street incorporate black and white timber framed buildings that were specifically designed to cope with the unusual ground conditions and subsidence caused by the salt extraction in the area. Collectively these buildings represent an important aspect of the story and heritage of the town. The distinctive architectural design of the buildings in the town centre incorporates attractive heritage detailing that gives the area its particular character and identity.

Materials along Witton Street and the Bull Ring area to the western edge of Weaver Square are typically white render with black timber detailing. Buildings must be designed in context with the scale of the historic townscape. New buildings must complement the existing material palette either using a similar palette of white render and black timber or with complementary materials.

There are some examples of late 20th century infill development within Weaver Square which is inappropriate design quality, materials and detailing, these buildings fail to integrate with either adjacent heritage buildings or the townscape overall. New development must avoid inappropriate and / or poor-quality design.

Existing heritage buildings are predominantly close to the back edge of the footpath, the roof-scape consists of pitched roofs interspersed with gables, dormers and corner turrets. The common theme is richness of design and detail. At ground floor entrances and porches are recessed. Buildings are, generally, physically separate (to allow independent movement in the case of subsidence), together they combine to create attractive streetscapes throughout the town centre.

Focal buildings provide legibility and locational context to the conservation area. They tend to be the larger buildings of architectural interest on key sites, such as street corners.



Mix of apartments and family housing



Mix of apartments and family housing with active ground floor



Modern development in a heritage context



Green residential streets in an urban setting



Active ground floor at key intersections



Mixed use within residential development



The Bull Ring looking into Witton Street



Listed timber-framed buildings at The Bull Ring



Apple Market Place



Locally listed buildings fronting Market Street



Rear of NatWest building from Apple Market Place



Apple Market Place

New development within the conservation area

Where new development is proposed it is important that it is guided by good urban design principles, as well as sympathetic detailing in relation to its historic context, requirements to preserve and enhance the character and the appearance of the conservation area and setting.

New development must preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, and have regard to nationally and locally listed buildings, and other non-designated heritage assets. In order to do that, all new development in Northwich Conservation area should:

- Integrate with heritage buildings considering design quality, materials and detailing.
- Consider the proportion, articulation of buildings and architectural detail and the overall roof-scape of the town centre.
- Consider the street to in which development is situated, the appearance and detailing of buildings should be sensitively designed.
- Closely match in either a traditional approach or be a contemporary interpretation of the architectural character, where buildings are closely related.
- Complement the existing material palette either with a similar palette of white render and black timber or with complimentary materials, particularly along Witton Street and the Bull Ring where materials are typically white render with black timber detailing.
- Where buildings are detached and there is existing variety in the street scene then there is more scope for variation if working within the overall palette of materials style and detail.
- Propose high quality architecture and design that is contemporary and addresses issues of sustainability and energy use in its design or is of outstanding architectural merit is also encouraged, this must be sympathetically designed and must blend in with the surroundings.
- Where a contemporary approach is taken the design must relate across the other range of reserved matters categories of layout, scale, landscaping and access.
- Materials and details across this area do vary according to era and include the following, various brick and render, clay tiles, concrete, painted details. Buildings must include design detail, generous proportions and openings to promote daylight within the interior. Buildings must not copy or replicate design interventions of an era when design was not a priority, or reference this as a justification for poor design quality.
- The appearance and detailing of new buildings should sympathise with the predominant characteristics in which development is situated.

New development adjacent to the conservation area

Where new development is proposed for areas that are adjacent to the conservation area, it will be equally important for care and consideration of the impact of the design, detailing, and siting.

Where appropriate, all forms of new development should respect the principles listed on the previous page, as well as the following:

Layout

- Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area.
- Have regard for existing building lines and the orientation of existing development.
- Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of traditional development, including street patterns, open spaces and trees, plot boundaries and boundary treatments.
- Respond to the particular rhythm and articulation of the subdivision of the streetscape and individual buildings in terms of bays and openings that break up the façade.
- Consider the impact of new development on key streetscapes, views and vistas, and that these will be evaluated by contextual street scene drawings; visual impact assessments, and virtual and / or physical models.

Architectural detail

Reinforce the distinctive character and grain of the area through an informed understanding of the forms, styles, features and materials of its buildings. Pastiche forms of development and the superficial echoing of historic features in new buildings should be avoided.

Parking

Where possible, minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles and the provision of parking areas on the streetscape and landscape setting of historic streets and buildings.

Sensitive layout, designs and landscaping are required to reduce the areas of tarmac and lines of parked cars.



Sensitive design of new development next to heritage buildings



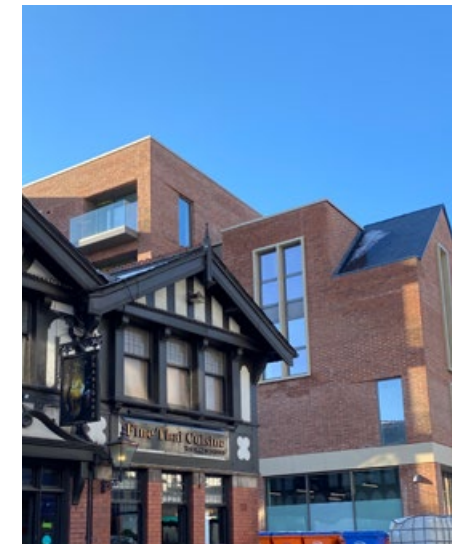
An example of a new development integrating modern features with design elements from the character buildings in the area

Recommendation

- Within conservation areas, good quality, contemporary designs can be appropriate, however it is imperative to avoid incongruous and low-grade development, or development which appears promising at the application stage, but fails to deliver quality materials and detailing once on site.
- A comprehensive design and access statement, visual impact assessment, contextual drawings and models will be required for new development, and close attention will be paid to the satisfactory discharge of any conditions attached to planning approvals for the purposes of ensuring quality outcomes.



Mix of heritage building with new development



New development incorporates design features from heritage buildings and is set back from the street to increase height



Mix of heritage buildings with sensitive modern development in Chester



Development Appearance Strategy Diagram

Key

- Locally Listed Buildings
- Listed Buildings
- Townscape Heritage Project
- Conservation Area
- Historic Witton Street
- Development moving away from the rear of Witton Street
- Transition from historic character to contemporary architectural style from Witton Street towards Chester Way

↑ Development moves away from the rear of Witton Street towards Chester Way. A graded approach to appearance in Weaver Square uses materiality and design to create a transition between the heritage and new modern neighbourhood. The gradient arrow represents the transition from the historic timber-framed character to a contemporary architectural style that respects Northwich's character.



Chester Market Square



Heritage timber-framed buildings mixed with modern development in a high street in Chester

12.7 A liveable, mixed-use community

Weaver Square will become a mixed-use development with potential for liveable modern Town Centre living, and active ground floor uses. Identifying a new arrival point into Northwich with a modern, sustainable neighbourhood that respects and enhances the local distinctiveness and character of Northwich.

The regeneration of Weaver Square into a green, sustainable neighbourhood provides a new focus to the urgency of the global climate emergency programme in Northwich and for CW&C Council.

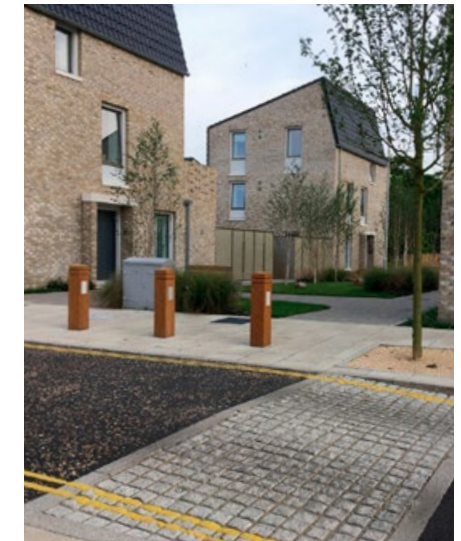
New development at this key area of the Town Centre must support active living through residential-led mixed-use development, support a vibrant and resilient local economy to build community wealth, improve the walkability and cycleability of the area to enhance connections within Northwich, and to improve the safety and usability of the public realm.



A new sustainable neighbourhood that attracts young families and professionals.



Sustainable and engaged community, promoting local and circular economy.



An example of a sustainable housing scheme

Neighbourhoods provide an opportunity to experiment with innovative approaches to develop ambitious net-zero and people-centred environments.

A sustainable neighbourhood

Weaver Square must be planned and designed to minimise emissions throughout the development process, and to provide a high-quality and resilient neighbourhood for its residents. Therefore, a green and prosperous new neighbourhood in the heart of the Town Centre must focus on an integrated approach to address carbon emissions, and to promote quality of life for the future residents and users. By addressing these, Weaver Square will become an attractive place for visitors and residents alike. It will become a green and thriving example for future development in Northwich Town Centre.

Achieving net-zero in Weaver Square

There is opportunity to reduce carbon emissions in new buildings and utilise local materials to reduce emissions from material and construction processes. Weaver Square should be a 15-minute residential neighbourhood with mixed-uses and people-centred mobility - including high quality pedestrianised streets and public transport - promoting a circular economy and local businesses.

High-quality development

The neighbourhood layout of Weaver Square must be designed to positively influence the climate, minimising the use of energy and utilise renewable energy. The design must include high-quality, sustainable and locally sourced materials, and follow reduced carbon design principles, where the building standard is energy efficient, comfortable, affordable and ecological at the same time, with excellent insulation and with options for solar panels and low carbon heating systems.

Creating a sustainable community involves meeting social needs, promoting the local and circular economy, and protecting and enhancing the environment. A new Weaver Square neighbourhood at human scale, that protects diversity and highlights Northwich's distinctiveness will strengthen the local community and cultural identity.

Promoting economic success at the neighbourhood entails supporting the local vibrant economy of Northwich Town Centre and encouraging access to facilities and services through active travel and the new bus hub. Improved bus experiences in hand with a network of public spaces and new pedestrian and cycle priority streets create a neighbourhood in the Town Centre that is connected and accessible for all.

New development in Weaver Square should consider its location within the flood zone and aim to reduce flood risk. The implementation of flood resilient materials, and raising floor levels above the flood zone / levels is advised, as well as introducing non-residential uses at ground floor, as explained in the 'Recommended Uses' section.

Health and wellbeing

Greener urban environments improve connectivity and encourage physical activity, improve air quality, enhance social cohesion, and noise screening. Access to good quality natural greenspace, will provide amenity for residents and improve mental health.

A green neighbourhood, with high quality public spaces, trees, and integrated SuDS would not only provide green amenity for the community, but also help with flood mitigation, and contributing to the biodiversity and ecological value of Weaver Square.

Successfully targeting these approaches will help in delivering a green and thriving neighbourhood in Weaver Square that promotes a healthy lifestyle that benefits resident's wellbeing.

Recommended uses

Weaver Square is considered to be suitable for a mix of uses, supporting a growing residential population.

A mix of tenure will be appropriate, providing high quality development for a variety of demographics, such as young families and young professionals.

The new neighbourhood in Weaver Square will benefit from the close proximity to Witton Street and High Street and to several supermarkets and gyms. However, as the residential population continues to grow in Weaver Square, it is likely to need to be supported by improvements to the existing community and social infrastructure, such as an NHS hub and community hub, daycare, flexible offices and co-working space. These types of uses could be incorporated in the scheme at ground floor level to activate key frontages.



13

Conclusion

13.1 Conclusion

The NDF is a data led piece of work that takes a holistic approach to the future regeneration of Northwich town centre.

It articulates the long-term place ambitions for Northwich town centre around which the policies, plans, projects and budgets of Cheshire West and Chester Council services, partner organisations and private developers and investors can be aligned to ensure joined up and successful placemaking.

The NDF will empower stakeholders to take a positive role in delivering change and realising common goals, providing a foundation to attract external funding and market interest.

Whilst the NDF is not a statutory planning document, it has been informed by a targeted engagement exercise, and the views collated in relation to previous workstreams and consultation events in Northwich over the years have been captured in making recommendations.

The NDF has also been endorsed by the Council's Cabinet as vision for Northwich.

The NDF will be monitored over time and, where appropriate, updated to reflect changing market, economic and environmental conditions to ensure a fit for purpose and robust framework for investment and change is in place at all times.

Council Members will provide local accountability to the delivery of the NDF and form an important link to engage with local groups, networks, and grassroots organisations to ensure the voices of communities continue to be heard and engaged with.



13.2 Delivery and Implementation

Partnership Working

The Council has a key role as an enabler and facilitator of positive change. It will instil a 'can do' attitude to drive decisions and investments, creating the right conditions for growth and delivery. The Development Framework will be a way of conveying the vision for the town and the individual development opportunities.

The Council will not be able to deliver the recommendations of the NDF on its own. Delivery will depend upon strong multi-sectoral collaboration to identify priorities, unpick the complexity of issues within the town centre, take full advantage of emerging opportunities and unlock creative approaches to delivery. Private sector developers and investors likely to be significant leads.

Northwich benefits from a variety of active town centre stakeholders including the Northwich Town Council, the Northwich Business Improvement District (BID), the Northwich Rotary, Barons Quay Management team and the Police, who work together alongside the Council to deliver events, environmental improvements and other initiatives to drive footfall, increase spend and improve safety in the town centre. It is recognised that these partners will also be key to the success of the NDF.

The Council is also committed to engaging with private landowners and investors as development propositions emerge to ensure that they are aware of the aspirations of the NDF to help the Council to deliver on the vision.

Funding

Council funding is constrained and the majority of the schemes set out in the Northwich Development Framework are not identified in the Council's Capital programme. Where capital funding is not already in place, project delivery will be dependent on private stakeholder finance and/ or successful external funding bids.

Key sources of funding that could and should be considered in the future to deliver aspirations for the Northwich town centre include (but are not limited to) the Local Enterprise Partnership, Arts Council England, Active Travel England, the National Lottery, UK Shared Prosperity, Space Hive and Homes England. There may be other local environmental or other private funds that can also be explored.

Phasing

The NDF is a long-term vision and delivery will need to be phased. Phasing and delivery will also be dependent on external factors such as market and environmental conditions, and the availability of funding as referenced above.

There are potentially a number of short-term 'quick win' projects within the NDF that can be harnessed to enable incremental change and improvement whilst longer term more challenging phases of the vision are progressed. The Council will work with its partners to identify deliverable projects.

The Council has already committed resource to deliver on many of the medium to longer term capital investment projects for the town centre that are included within the NDF. In terms of its current priorities, the Council has a clear focus on Barons Quay and the need to fill vacant units with an offer that meets local needs and complements the existing businesses in the town.

It has also committed to deliver a town centre living offer in Weaver Square, to reduce the amount of poor quality retail floorspace in the town and increase footfall to help sustain the emerging evening economy and to create a sustainable live/work balance. As part of both of these key projects, there is also a commitment to invest in a new market offer for Northwich, with options in Barons Quay being explored.

The Council will also work with its partners/ investors to realise the development potential of other vacant sites within or on the edge of the town centre to make a positive impact on the town centre offer and to generate additional footfall in the town. From an active travel perspective, there is a funding allocation from Active Travel England to improve the connection between the train station and the town centre and options are currently being explored.

As most of these priority projects are either at the feasibility or options appraisal stage, the Council will continue to work with and communicate its project plans to relevant partners and key stakeholders as more information becomes available and will provide details around delivery timeframes as soon as they are known.

Governance

It is proposed that the Northwich Regeneration Working Group, will oversee the implementation of the Northwich Development Framework. Officers from the Council's Economic Growth team will lead on coordination and monitoring of the programme with partners and will provide updates to the Northwich Regeneration Working Group at its quarterly meetings.

Updates on key projects will also be provided on the Council's regeneration website:

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/regeneration-of-west-cheshire>

Leeds

+44 (0)113 824 6413

Liverpool

+44 (0)151 363 1230

London

+44 (0)207 253 5678

Manchester

+44 (0)161 928 9281

Standish

+44 (0)145 360 7080

