WOKINGHAM PUBLIC REALM
DESIGN & DELIVERY STRATEGY

LDĀDESIGN

WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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CONTENTS

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STAGE 1 BASELINE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Wokingham in Berkshire is a relatively intact medieval market town with a population of around 154,400 people. It is located 7 miles south east of Reading, 3 miles west of Bracknell and has regular trains to London (which take approximately an hour). A recent survey cited Wokingham as the best place in England and Wales to bring up a family due to its good exam results, high quality of childcare provision, parks and low levels of crime 1.

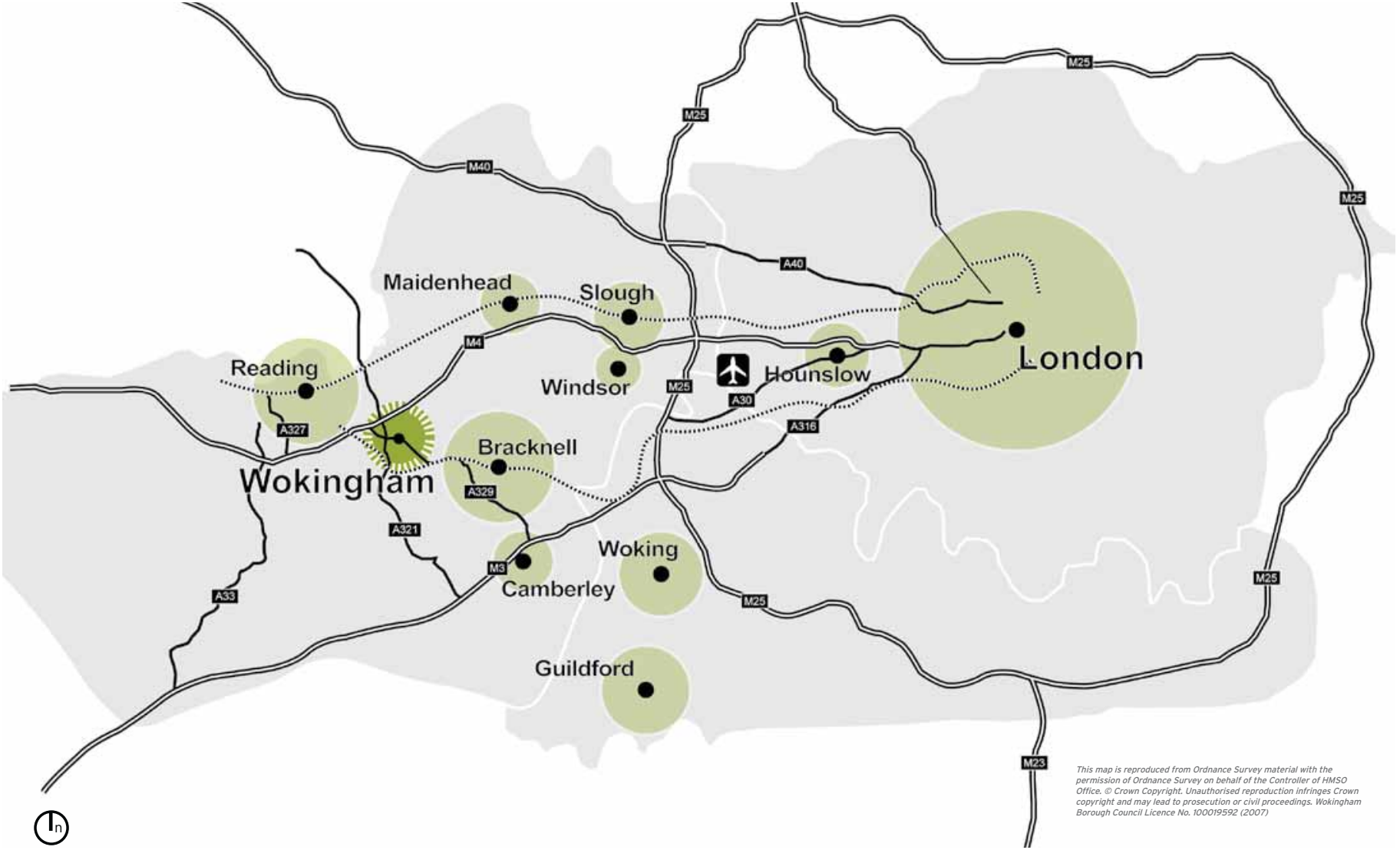
It is an exciting time for Wokingham, the adopted South East Plan requires Wokingham Borough to deliver 12,460 dwellings by the year 2026 and a vision for the town centre has been developed. The Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in June 2010, it seeks to provide a coordinated, distinctive and deliverable vision for the Town Centre to 2026 and its first projects are currently underway. The masterplan hopes to deliver major improvements to the public realm in Wokingham. Central to this vision is the investment in place quality, including the provision of a high quality network of streets and spaces to improve quality of life and encourage social and economic regeneration of the town.

Wokingham has many positive aspects that support the implementation of a high quality, coherent and people-orientated public realm. The town has a good quality, historic building fabric. It has a legible network of different streets with good spatial containment and a mix of uses within a compact, walkable core. With new development planned at Elms Field and Peach Place, new and improved open spaces are to be delivered. Yet, the town competes with popular regional destinations, including the retail centres of Reading, Bracknell, Basingstoke and Slough and the historic draw of Windsor and Henley.

There are a number of key issues pertinent to the existing public realm. Car ownership in the Borough is some of the highest in the country and the A329 runs right through the town centre; therefore one of the biggest challenges for the town is the detrimental impact of traffic congestion at peak hours. The quality of paving, street furniture and lighting is poor in relation to the towns built heritage and lacks coherence. The town lacks the variety of places for people to socialise and relax and has few street trees and other planting.

It is in this context that Wokingham Borough Council has commissioned a Public Realm Design and Delivery Strategy. The aims of the study are to establish an overarching framework for the public realm and to identify key projects, priorities and design guidelines that can be taken forward to deliver this strategy in a co-ordinated way and enables the town centre to be appreciated as a totality. This Strategy intends to inform and guide public realm improvements within the town centre.

SOURCE 1: FAMILY INVESTMENTS, OCT 2012



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

SOURCE: WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN SPD, JUNE 2010

PUBLIC REALM IN WOKINGHAM

Public Realm is defined as 'the space between buildings' – the streets, spaces and movement corridors which form the framework for our use and perception of a town. Public realm should accommodate the full range of human activity: as a place for socializing, children's play, exercise, shopping, eating, entertainment; a place to work and a place to relax. It should tempt people to slow down, to stop, to chat, to provoke thought, to move through easily, or simply to watch the world go by. The success of the public realm depends on a clear role for the spaces and streets so that people can use the town in comfort and safety. The quality of the public realm is determined by the arrangement of buildings, how well the spaces are overlooked and enclosed and the character, quality, design and arrangement of its paving, lighting, signage, planting and street furniture.

One of the defining features of the town is its relatively intact medieval street pattern; Rose Street in particular is a good example of a preserved mediaeval street. At the heart of Wokingham Town Centre lies the Market Place and Town Hall, dating back to 1612, this is the point at which the principle shopping streets - Broad Street and Peach Street/ Denmark Street converge. Elms Field is within easy walking distance of the town centre and is planned for extensive re-modelling to create an attractive and varied sequence of spaces for a wide range of uses and events. This study will focus on this historic core of the town centre, the study area is broadly the same as Town Centre Masterplan SPD area.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document will be to guide the design, implementation, management and maintenance of a high quality public realm in Wokingham. The work is split into four sections:

Stage 1 Baseline Report:

A concise summary of the planning context, existing public realm issues and opportunities and consultation undertaken.

Stage 2 Framework and Guidance:

This section will outline the public realm vision and a strategic town wide plan for how alterations to the highways network and design of the public realm could evolve over time to better serve the needs of the town.

Stage 3 Potential Projects:

This section will provide indicative layouts for a number of the key streets and spaces in Wokingham.

Stage 4 Delivery:

This section of the report will begin to describe how the recommendations of the strategy can be achieved.

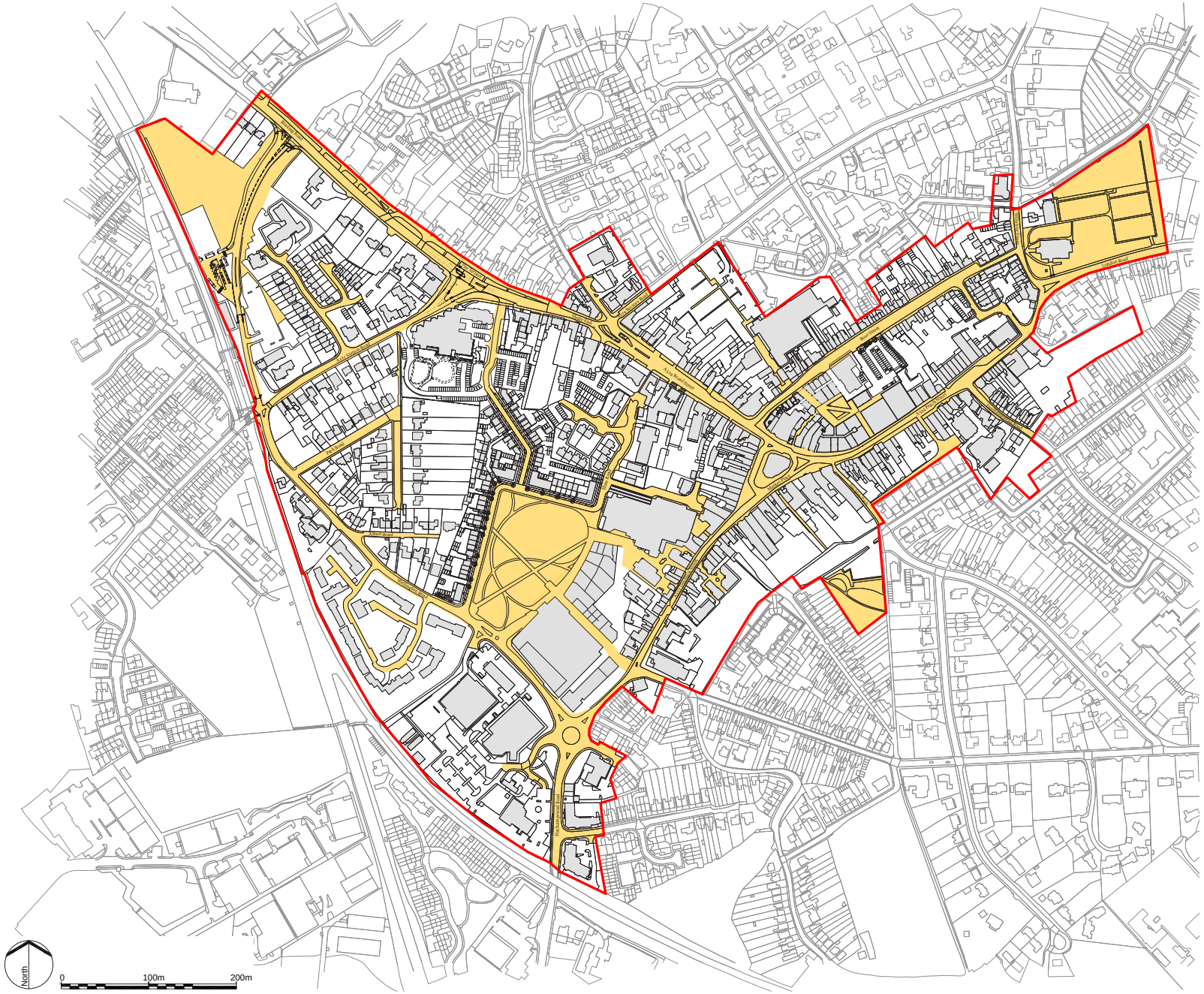
It will provide a common point of reference for those both proposing and evaluating development proposals that impact on the public realm, whether initiated by the public or private sector. It is intended to build on, rather than replicate all the work carried out to date in relation to public realm in the Masterplan SPD.
The anticipated users of this document are as follows:

Those proposing new developments:

- Council departments proposing public realm improvements, landscape design, engineering (streetscene, traffic management, highways, and maintenance); estate regeneration
- Council departments whose decisions have an impact on the public realm, for example through licensing of uses, advertising, and other consents;
- Other bodies proposing new developments, e.g. Wokingham Town Council
- Private sector developers, planners, transport planners, urban and landscape designers, architects, arboriculturalists, transport engineers, waste management and public realm management professionals.

Those evaluating new development proposals:

- Local amenity groups and other stakeholders, e.g. Conservation Area Advisory Committees, Friends of Parks, other groups,
- Statutory consultees, e.g. English Heritage, Highways Agency, Environment Agency,
- National, regional, and municipal public sector bodies funding or partnering public realm projects and Council planning officers with responsibilities in development management, Section 106 agreements, policy, urban design, landscape, engineering (streetscene, traffic management, highways, and maintenance).



THIS PLAN INCLUDES TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECTS AT ELM'S FIELD AND PEACH PLACE WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL AND THE STATION LINK ROAD SCHEME.

PUBLIC REALM IN WOKINGHAM

1.2 REGENERATION

It is important that the public realm design and delivery strategy is delivered in the context of other initiatives taking place in and around the town centre, in particular the Local Development Framework, Town Centre Masterplan and other specific guidance and developments that relate to public realm and regeneration.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) – CORE STRATEGY

The LDF will be the guide for future development within Wokingham Borough. As part of the suite of LDF documents the Core Strategy sets out the long term 'spatial vision' up until March 2026. This includes policies and strategies to provide new housing, schools, roads, places to work and other services. The Core Strategy has the status of a Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework and was adopted by the Council on 29 January 2010. The Core Strategy identifies four new communities which will be created to accommodate the majority of the approximately 13,000 new homes that should be built in Wokingham before 2026.

WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

The Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan, adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), provides detailed guidance for the redevelopment of Wokingham Town Centre. The document advocates a number of opportunities, objectives and design principles that should be adhered to in delivering a vibrant town centre.

The Masterplan identifies character areas and provides a broad assessment of the public realm and green spaces within the town centre. It divides the public realm in to the following categories:

- Primary Network,
- Secondary Network,
- Incidental Spaces,
- Backland Areas, and
- Green Spaces

To avoid repetition, the pertinent issues and opportunities for the public realm are included later in this report and build upon the masterplan study.

All drawings are for illustration purposes only. The accompanying plan for Elms Field is indicative of a mixed landscape strategy including hard and soft landscape and built form to be determined through a public engagement exercise.

SOURCE: WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN SPD, JUNE 2010

TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

STATION LINK ROAD (SLR) AND RE-DEVELOPMENT AT WOKINGHAM RAILWAY STATION

The SLR scheme currently under construction includes a new section of highway link between the A321 Wellington Road /Barkham Road level crossing. It also includes a new junction on the A329 Reading Road as well as improvements to the following junctions:

- A329 Reading Road / Shute End / Station Road
- A321 Wellington Road / Barkham Road / Station Road
- Barkham Road / Oxford Road

As well as highway alterations, the scheme includes improvements for pedestrians and cyclists and facilitates the provision of a new public transport Interchange at the Wokingham Railway Station. This is in line with changes being proposed by Network Rail as part of its redevelopment of the railway station. The scheme is due to open Summer / Autumn 2014.

STATION LINK ROAD - SCHEME OVERVIEW (PLANNING DRAWING 5049-1338-A APPENDIX F).
SOURCE: DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT, WSP, JULY 2012

DEVELOPMENT AT PEACH PLACE

Located between Market Place / Peach Street / Rose Street, the proposed development at Peach Place includes the erection of mixed use development, which alongside proposed development at Elms Field forms part of a comprehensive town centre redevelopment scheme. Proposed development at Peach Places comprises:

- Retail (A1 – A5) to be arranged over ground and first (mezzanine) floor levels.
- Residential (C3) with four new town houses, two new apartments and the refurbishment of two existing apartments, including external alterations.
- New public toilets.
- Associated reconfigured car parking area and alterations to on-street parking.
- New public realm and landscaping works including a new high quality public square providing a much needed high quality, public space as a respite away from the busy trafficked streets.
- All necessary demolition to include:- 34/35 Market Place and 1 – 16B Peach Street; 18 and 18A, Peach Street; 20 -22, Peach Street; The Redan Public House; 26, Peach Street; the public toilets and the M&S Store.

DEVELOPMENT AT ELMS FIELD

Located between Wellington Road and Shute End, proposed development at Elms Field includes the erection of mixed use development as part of a town centre redevelopment scheme comprising:

- Retail (A1 –A5), including food store; arranged over basement, ground and mezzanine levels.
- Hotel (C1) approximately 80 bedrooms including reception and restaurant areas at ground level.
- Community use (D1), but with the flexibility, in the alternative, for this floorspace to be used as mezzanine space associated with the retail units.
- Residential: (C3) approximately 153 residential units in total, including apartments above the retail and community uses and other residential units north of the hotel and framing the new Elms Field.
- Associated roads and access provisions including car parking. (including approximately 350 basement parking spaces accessed from Wellington Road), servicing areas.
- Remodelled town park at Elms Field and new public realm and landscaping associated with the development.

Proposals for both Peach Place and Elms Field have been carefully prepared in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Both schemes have been the subject of extensive public engagement and the designs for each site have evolved through an iterative design process.

1.3 CONSULTATION

OVERVIEW

Stakeholder, technical and public Consultation has been an integral part in all stage of developing the Public Realm Strategy for Wokingham Town Centre. This consultation builds on the workshop carried out as part of the Town Centre Masterplan SPD and the Public Realm issues and opportunities workshop held on 15th June 2011. It has included the following:

TECHNICAL MEETINGS WITH WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICERS

A number of focused meetings were held on 28th November 2012 to provide an open forum for Wokingham Borough Council Officers to share their technical knowledge. The purpose of the sessions was to introduce the project and then listen to the officers to understand the specific strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities of the public realm in Wokingham in the context of the early Public Realm Strategy work. The topic areas that were covered are listed below and a full record of these meetings is included in Appendix B.

- Heritage and Conservation
- Town Events
- Traffic and Safety/ Maintenance and Management
- Regeneration
- Development Management: Planning and Highways
- Planning
- Landscape, Trees and Open Space

MEETING WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL

A useful meeting was held on 18th December with the Town Council to share knowledge pertinent to the study. A record of this meeting is included in Appendix C.

OPEN WORKSHOP

The consultation exercises have been undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure ideas raised at the events could be integrated into the vision, framework and guidance. The open workshop was arranged on 16th February during the preparation of the public realm framework and guidance; invitations were extended to all local members of the public. The workshop was planned in the context of the public realm issues and opportunities workshop undertaken in June 2011, after an introduction from the design team the group was set tasks which were structured to gain feedback on the vision and initial design ideas for the town centre public realm. A detailed summary of this event is provided in the appendices.

MEETING WITH MARKET TRADERS

An informal meeting was arranged with representatives of from market traders and retailers to understand their thoughts on the issues and opportunities and receive feedback on initial design ideas.

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

An informal manned public exhibition was held in Wokingham Town Hall over two days at the beginning of May, the exhibition was also available to view on the council website for one month. The exhibition comprised a series of presentation boards which described all aspects of the work and was supplemented by video footage to support the highway feasibility work. Members of the consultant team and Wokingham Borough Council were available to discuss the proposals and answer any questions. Feedback was gathered from the event through a questionnaire. Overall there was a positive response from the exhibition, a full breakdown of the responses and the issues raised is provided in the appendices of this report.

The next stages of this work will involve turning this work into SPD, this will include a formal consultation period, feedback from this informal event will inform the preparation of the SPD.

1.4 TOWNSCAPE

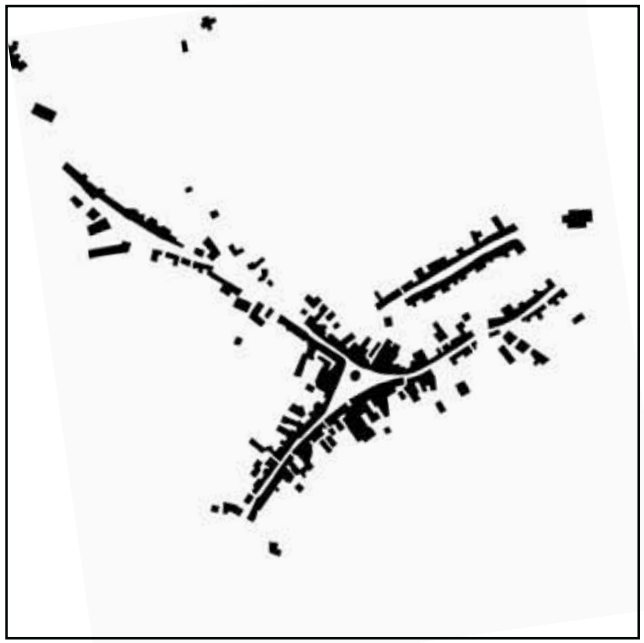
HISTORY

The first documentation of Wokingham was in 1146 and the name derives from 'Wocca' believed to be a Saxon Lord who owned land in Wokefield and Woking. In Victorian times it changed to Oakingham, meaning the "town of the forest" and consequently this is where the acorn and oak leaves on the coat of arms, granted in 1953 are derived. It is also reflected in the town's motto – "E Glande Quercus" meaning "from the acorn, the oak."

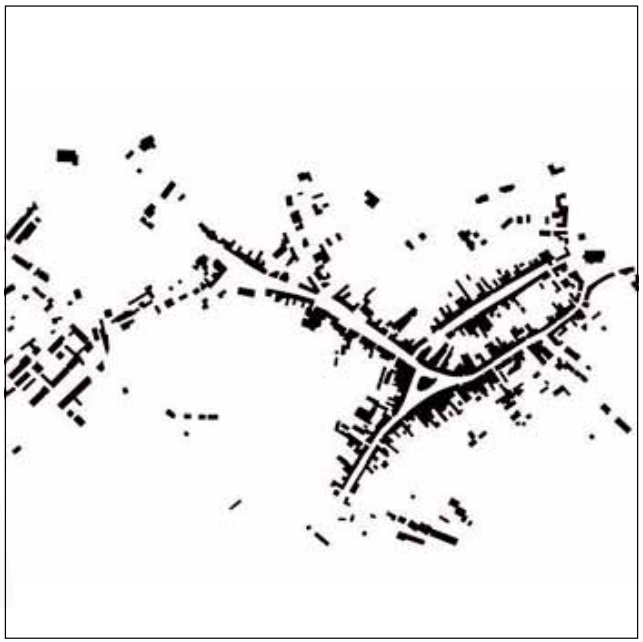
The development of Wokingham town dates back to 1219, when the town's principal streets began to develop and Market Place and Rose Street were mentioned. Wokingham's public realm has always been central to life in the town. It received a Market Charter in 1227 which enabled it to hold a market every Tuesday and it is this focus for trade that stimulated the development of the town and the Bishop of Salisbury was largely responsible for growth during this period. He set out roads and plots making them available for rent. There are records showing that in 1258 he bought the rights to hold three town fairs every year, again evidence of its social roots. During the 14th century the town consisted of Le Rothe Street (Rose Street), La Schete (Shute End), Peach Street, Le Don Street (Denmark Street). The High Street was where Broad Street and The Terrace can be found today. Queen Elizabeth granted a town charter in 1583.

Wokingham has historically been reputed as a place for public celebration, revelry and tradition. People travelled from miles to see its bull baiting, whereby bulls were paraded around town, then baited by dogs in the market place and then destroyed for meat and leather, on St Thomas' day (21st December) every year. Cock fighting was also a popular sport in Wokingham, and there used to be a famous cock-pit at the end of Cock Walk which is known as Cockpit Path today. In the 16th century the term cockpit was also used to indicate a place of entertainment. Both of these sports were banned by Act of Parliament in 1833. Wokingham was also reputed to have a large number of inns and public houses and its town fairs were a big draw.

The town is also famous for two Molly's, the first being Molly Millar, reputedly the town witch and remembered today by the Lane which bears her name. The second was Molly Mogg, daughter of the landlord and barmaid at the Rose Inn, which once stood in the market place. She was immortalised in the 1726 poem 'Molly Mog, or the Fair Maid of the Inn'.



URBAN FORM 1812



URBAN FORM 1900

URBAN FORM 2009

What hath been the cause of your woes,
Why you pine and you whine like a lover?
I've seen Molly Mog of the Rose.

Oh, nephew, your grief is but folly,
In town you may find better prog;
Half-a-crown there will get you a Molly,
A Molly much better than Mog.

I know that by wits 'tis recited
That Women at best are a clog,
But I'm not so easily frightened
From loving my sweet Molly Mog.

The School Boy's delight is a play day,
The School Master's joy is a flog.
The Milkmaid's delight is a May day,
But mine is on sweet Molly Mog.

Will of wisp leaves the traveller gadding
Through ditch and through quagmire and bog.
But no light can set me a-madding
Like the eyes of my sweet Molly Mog.

For guineas in other men's breeches
Your gamester will palm and will cog,
But I envy them none of their riches,
So I may win sweet Molly Mog.

The heart when half wounded is changing,
It here and there leaps like a frog.
But my heart can never be ranging,
'Tis so fixed upon sweet Molly Mog.

Who follows all Ladies of pleasure
In pleasure is thought but a hog.
All the sea cannot give so good measure
Of joys as my sweet Molly Mog.

If I would not give up the three Graces
I wish I were hanged like a dog,
And in court all the drawing-room faces,
For a glance of my sweet Molly Mog.

Those faces want nature and spirit
And seem as cut out of a log;
Juno, Venus and Pallas's merit
Unite in my sweet Molly Mog.

Those who toast all the family Royal
In bumpers of hogan and nog,
Have hearts not more true or more loyal
Than mine to my sweet Molly Mog.

Were Virgil alive with his Phillis,
And writing another eclogue,
Both his Phillis and fair Amaryllis
He'd give up for sweet Molly Mog.

While she smiles on each guest like her liquor,
Then jealousy sets me agog,
To be sure she's a bit for the Vicar,
And so I shall lose Molly Mog.

I feel I am in love to distraction,
My senses all lost in a fog,
And nothing can give satisfaction
But thinking of sweet Molly Mog.

A letter when I am indicting,
Comes Cupid and gives me a jog,
And I fill all the paper with writing
Of nothing but sweet Molly Mog.

THE BALLAD
OF MOLLY MOG
THE FAIR MAID OF THE INN

CIVIL WAR

In the years 1643-44 Wokingham was regularly raided by both sides in the Civil War. These raids would involve the looting of livestock and trading goods, and over thirty buildings were burnt down, accounting for nearly 20% of buildings in the town at that time. It was not until the early 18th century that Wokingham had fully recovered.

TRADE AND TRANSPORT

Apart from agriculture and its supporting trades, there were a number of other industries in the town. From the 14th to the 16th centuries, Wokingham was well known for its bell foundry which supplied many churches across the South of England. During the 16th century Wokingham became famous for its silk production. Due to cheap imports and the arrival of knitting machines in the 19th century the Wokingham silk trade rapidly declined and the last silk mill, located in South Place off Peach Street, closed down after a fire in 1831. Local tradition states that one of the original Mulberry bushes (favourite food of the silk worm), still remains in one of the gardens in Rose Street. The production of wool in Wokingham led to the trades of wool weaving and sorting and at that time leather trades and shoe making also flourished. Production of malt for London breweries also began around this time. Up until 1849 there was a stage-coach service which ran between London and Reading and stopped at Wokingham. After this time, the railway line from Guildford to Reading via Wokingham was completed. This was of great importance for the growth of the town and also coincided with the expansion of the local brickmaking industry. Maps show numerous brickworks around Wokingham. The brick industry exploited the clay soils, and fuel from heath and woodland, and provided the main building material from the late 17th century. From the mid-19th Century paper and metal workings also appeared. Since 1945 changes in industrial and social life of the country brought about great change in the town, the industries were replaced by new light industries and by 1930, Wokingham was the county's fifth largest town, the growth continuing in the post-war period with the construction of the A329(M) motorway which bounds the area to the north.

THE TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1996, under Section 69 (10) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Act. Accordingly, it is defined as an area of special or historic interest, which it is 'desirable to preserve and enhance'. The conservation area description is as follows:

The building styles are generally modest, predominantly of red brick with tiled clay roofs. The buildings tend to be of a small scale and offer the characteristics of a traditional Berkshire market town. Although the town has no dominant building types, the scale, colouring and variation in detailing make it rich in texture and character

VERNACULAR

The vernacular of Wokingham Town Centre contains an assortment of styles and materials reflective of the organic growth of the town over time, largely during the Industrial Revolution. Traditional vernaculars are focussed around the historic core of Rose Street, Broad Street, Peach Street and Denmark Street where the earliest of buildings date from circa the late 14th century onwards. Materials such as red brick, tiled roofs and white, lime washed facades and mock Tudor frontages are characteristic of smaller cottage dwellings, having undergone alteration and modification over the years. Many buildings reflect Georgian influences with large sash windows, symmetrical white fenestrations and mansard roofs with small windows.

Larger local vernacular buildings tend to be civic buildings from the Victorian era, a notable example being the Grade II* listed Town Hall, a striking Victorian Free Gothic building of red brick with distinct cream and red voussoirs, black string courses, large pointed arch windows and tall brick corbelled chimneys with terracotta chimney pots.
More recent development has seen the addition of modern building materials such as concrete, glass, brick and hanging tiles notably manifest in the modernist 'The Arcade' and 'The Plaza' shopping precincts, Carnival Leisure Park and recent housing development at the periphery of the town centre. These more recent developments have been unsympathetic to the existing built fabric, and although not overly intrusive, have degraded the overall historic integrity of the urban form.

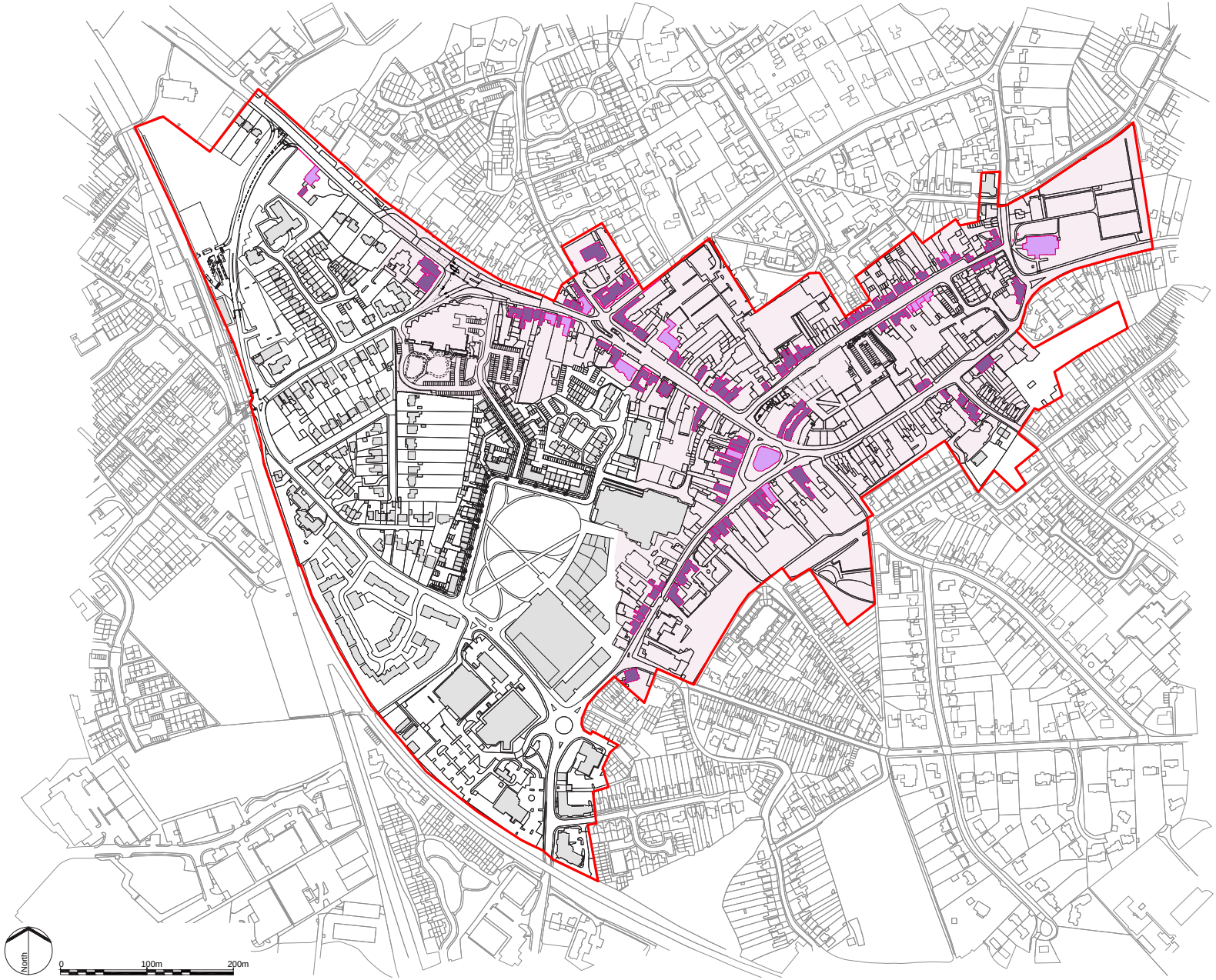
SOURCE: EXTRACT FROM THE TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (TVIA) FOR PEACH PLACE AND ELMS FIELD.

BOROUGH DESIGN GUIDE

General design guidance for the Borough as a whole is set out within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Document). Generic design principles and character types are identified.

The 'Urban Centre' Character type that applies to the town centre is described as follows:

- Historic core;
- Buildings adjoin one another, giving a 'walled' sense of enclosure to the streets;
- Tightly defined junctions;
- Buildings are set at the back edge of pavement;
- Building heights are a mix, generally of 2 and 3 storeys (with some basements), with heights decreasing towards the edge of the centre and residential streets being predominately 2 storey;
- Eaves heights and roof forms vary, although eaves parallel to the street or parapets predominate;
- In the central area, buildings generally form groups or terraces, rather than being a collection of individual buildings;
- Fine grain of development plots, which are deeper than they are wide; and
- Parking generally in car parks or at rear of plots, accessed from rear.



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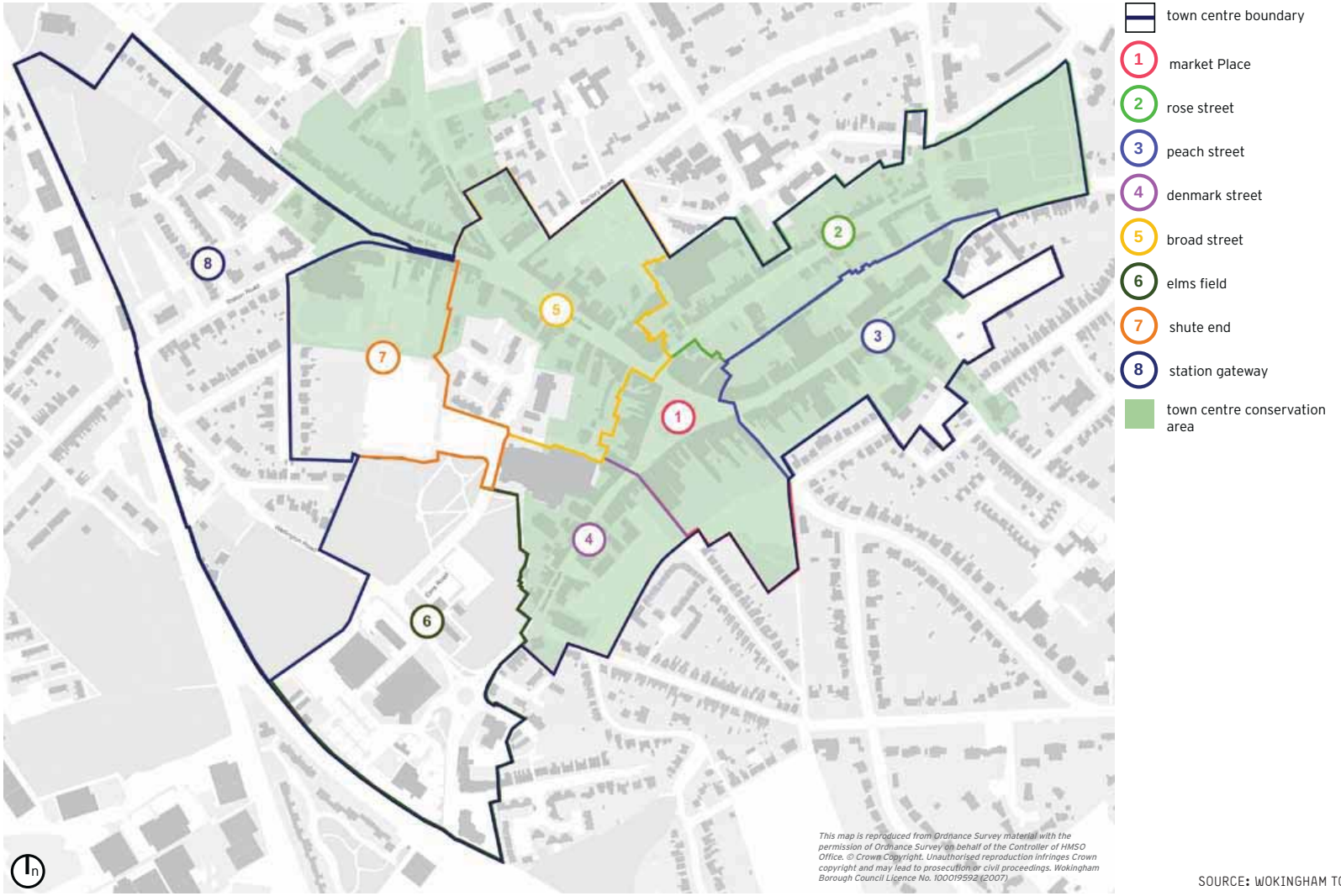
CONSERVATION AREA AND LISTED BUILDINGS

TOWNSCAPE STUDY

The Town Centre Masterplan SPD includes a Townscape Character Assessment (TCA) identifying distinct areas of character within the urban form building upon the Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Area Study, 1996. The findings of the TCA have been used to inform this strategy, the Town Centre Masterplan SPD should be referred to for full details. The TCA identifies the following distinct character areas in the town:



CHARACTER AREAS

SOURCE: WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN SPD, JUNE 2010

PUBLIC REALM AND THE TOWNSCAPE

OVERVIEW

Wokingham Town Centre has a distinctive urban form with an intact historic street network which offers potential for a clear, compact and easily understood structure to the town centre. The principal streets within the core town centre area all converge on Market Place which lies at the heart of the town. The streets are well defined and enclosed by an assortment of buildings which reflect the organic growth of the town over time, each of the streets have a distinct character as set out in the Townscape Character Assessment. The quality and historic character of the urban form including the variation in architecture and the detailing in the individual buildings offers a rich, attractive and unique setting for the town centre environment.

The Town Centre Masterplan SPD identifies the opportunities to preserve and enhance the town's historic form and architectural character. However, the existing public realm is one of the principle obstacles in improving the overall character and quality of the town centre environment. The quality of the public realm does not match that of the surrounding architecture, the mismatch of materials, furniture, lighting and planting in the town centre detract from surrounding buildings by adding unnecessary clutter and visual distraction.

The market town status is a historically significant aspect of the town and Wokingham maintains regular and successful market days. Public realm plays an important part in the town's ability to accommodate these and other events by providing an attractive place to visit and spend time in turn encouraging a busy and vital town centre environment. However, in places, the public realm provides an uncomfortable environment for pedestrians through the dominance of traffic and traffic oriented design and does not make the most of the town's historic assets. There are also a number of specific issues within Market Place which limit the potential of the market days; these are covered in more detail in the following sections.

PAVING:

The quality of paving materials in the town centre does not match that of the surrounding built form. There is no overall coherence to the use of paving materials in the town centre, with considerable variation in types of material used. Typical materials include concrete slabs of varying size and finish, tarmac and red brick paving which is used to large areas of Market Place, Rose Street and Shute End. The red brick paving typically includes bands of blue brick which appears dated, can prove to be slippery when wet and which neither match nor contrast the surrounding buildings sufficiently and therefore visually clash. All carriageways within the town centre area are tarmac with the exception of the access street and bus contraflow lane in Market Place.

Although there is a general absence of historically significant public realm materials appropriate for use today, there is a predominance of large granite kerbs to the carriageway along Peach Street, Market Place, Broad Street and Denmark Street. Historic carriage entrances to Broad Street and Denmark Street are also paved in granite setts.

There has been an inconsistent treatment of service covers with relatively few recessed covers either infilled with paving to match surrounding paving or aligned with the coursing of the paving. There are many instances of poor standard to pavement repairs and replacements which result in uneven paving with patches which do not match the surrounding areas of paving. This adds to the uneven and untidy appearance of the pavements.

The overall effect of the paving on the town centre environment is to add visual distraction; it does not provide an appropriate setting for the surrounding buildings. The haphazard use of materials does not reinforce the character areas of the town centre and therefore fails to contribute to improving understanding and legibility of the urban structure of the town.

TOO MANY PAVING MATERIALS, POOR REPAIRS, UNEVEN SERVICE COVERS

EXISTING GRANITE KERBS

POOR QUALITY MATERIALS

POOR QUALITY MATERIALS

COBBLE VEHICLE CROSS OVERS

PAVEMENT HEAVE CAUSED BY TREE PLANTING

PAVING COLOUR CLASHES WITH SURROUNDING BUILDINGS

STREET FURNITURE:

Street furniture includes seating, bollards, lighting columns, signage, litter bins, cycle racks, tree grilles, bus shelters and railings. There is considerable variation in the type and quality of street furniture in Wokingham. There is predominant style of 'heritage' furniture, however this does not translate into a common appearance due to varying interpretations of the theme and the range of materials used in the furniture. The effect is an array of different types of litter bins, cycle stands light columns and benches, this inconsistency does little to reinforce a distinctive identity for Wokingham which is unique to place.

There appears to be too much street furniture which is quite often poorly located or not part of a coordinated layout which result in obstructions in footways and an adverse effect of visual clutter which detracts from the quality of the surrounding townscape. This in part is explained by the presence of signage and traffic controls associated with the A roads which run through the town. However, any design proposals should thoroughly audit whether all the furniture is required.

There are a number of memorial benches within the town centre area which will need to be incorporated and coordinated with any plans for the town centre public realm.

WAYFINDING:

As described above the street network in Wokingham lends itself to a clear and easily understood structure. However, the town centre lacks a coherent signage strategy. Inconsistent furniture exacerbates the issues described in the street furniture section above. There is an absence of orientation signs at arrival points in the town such as train stations and car parks and an inconsistent distribution to fingerpost signs.

INCONSISTENCY IN FURNITURE ITEMS

FURNITURE OBSTRUCTING DESIRE LINES AND RESTRICTING THE USE OF KEY SPACES

EXISTING FINGERPOST SIGN

STREET FURNITURE DETRACTING FROM KEY BUILDINGS

OBSTRUCTED FOOTPATHS

PLANTING:

Many of the streets in Wokingham are too narrow to accommodate tree planting. Where the streets and spaces widen sufficiently opportunities to plant trees have been taken. Broad Street, Market Place and junctions at the edge of the town centre all contain street trees. Broad Street in particular contains a significant number of trees, however, the variety in size and species and irregular distribution does not make best use of the space available for planting or reinforce a consistent character for the street. Tree planting in Market Place also make a significant contribution to this part of town and provide an important antidote to some of the effects of traffic in the space.

Rose Street is perhaps the exception, where the absence of trees is conspicuous given the width of this street. Historical photographs do not show history of tree planting in this street. In fact one of the defining features of the street through its history is its width coupled with the low buildings which enclose both sides and ends of the street which give a distinctive open character.

Permanent ornamental planting is limited to relatively few places within the town centre such as the junction between Shute End and Station Road, The Plaza and the parks at Elms Field and Howard Palmer Gardens. There are also a number of hanging baskets which provide temporary ornamental planting around Market Place. Hanging baskets are currently located in areas which contain significant amount of other street furniture and highways signage and therefore do not provide the desired impact.

There are opportunities to improve the structure and impact of planting in the town through a clear planting strategy which can reinforce the variation in townscape character across the town centre. Opportunities for maximising the amount of permanent rather than temporary ornamental planting should be explored.
Technical consultations and site visits also make it clear that there are a number of maintenance issues with the street trees in Wokingham, trees have been positioned too close to carriageways and trees are causing significant pavement heave due to inappropriate tree pit design and pavement protection measures.

TREE PLANTING TO BROAD STREET

ROSE STREET

TREE PLANTING IN MARKET PLACE

PUBLIC ART:

There is a general lack of public art in Wokingham town centre, there are a few items of bespoke and commissioned furniture such as benches and cycle stands in Market Place and the columns of the arcade along Peach Street have been painted. Given the rich history of the town, there is potential to incorporate public art which is distinctive to place. Future pieces should be considered as an integrated piece of the public realm rather than adding to an already cluttered public realm.

BESPOKE BENCH AND CYCLE STAND WITHIN MARKET PLACE

LIGHTING:

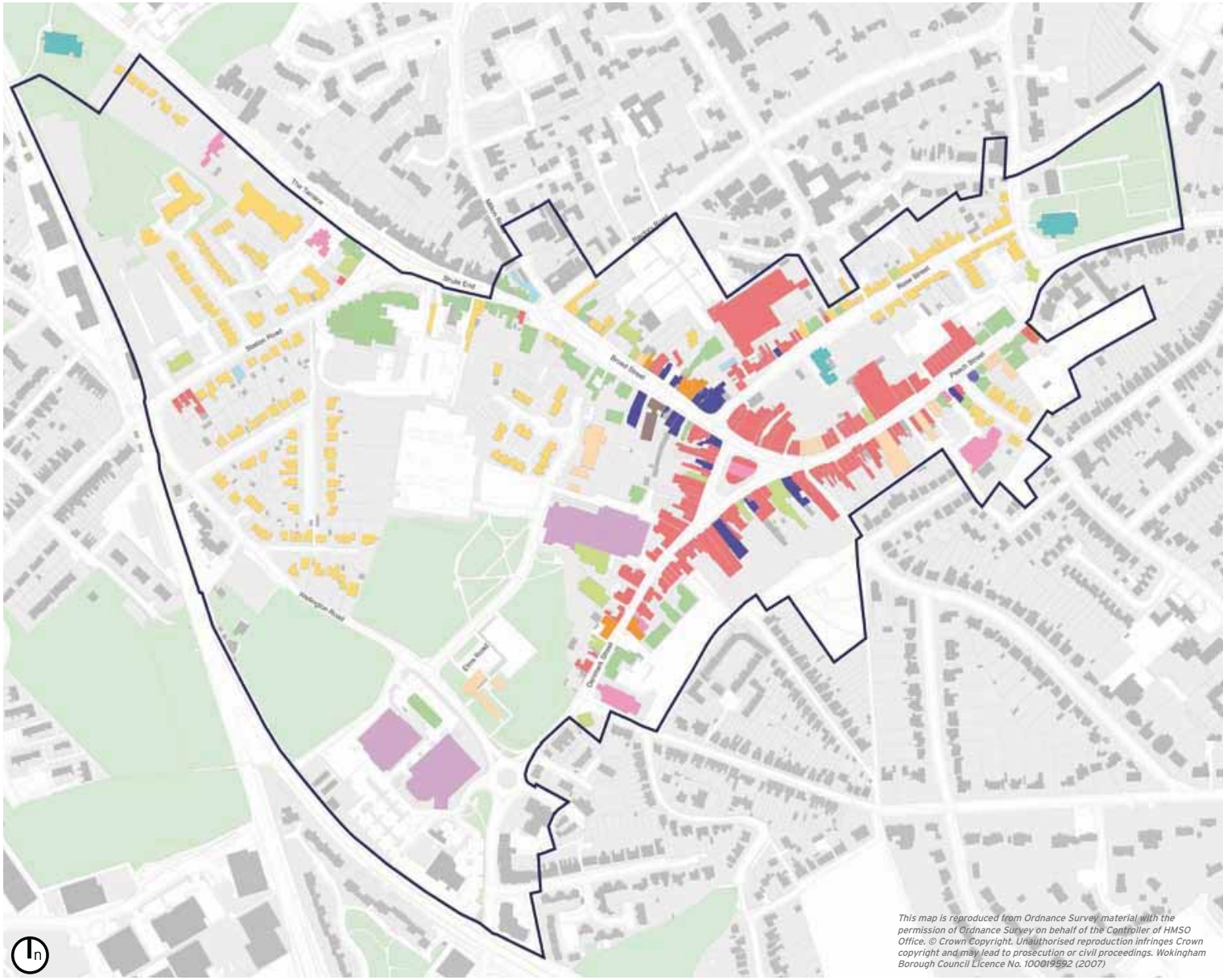
The existing street lighting in Wokingham is outdated and inefficient. A large amount of sodium lamps are used which produce an orange light with a very poor colour rendering. Some buildings are illuminated with a mix of colour temperatures creating a lack of continuity.

The highway luminaires are glary due to the bowl glass of the fittings.
The lighting is very vehicle oriented and does not provide a inviting pedestrian environment.

There is potential here to create a more inviting space by night encouraging people into the area and increasing the night time economy. This can be done by putting the emphasis back on to the pedestrian by uplighting furniture, trees and key buildings. Also replacing highway lighting with new, less glary, more efficient fittings with a better colour rendition and consistent colour temperature will help. A well implemented, consistent lighting design would be transformational for the image of Wokingham in the evening due to the towns architectural assets and burgeoning evening food and drink economy.

MISMATCHED LIGHTING FURNITURE

LAND USE



SOURCE: WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN SPD, JUNE 2010

1.5 MOVEMENT

Much of Wokingham's central area historic built form remains relatively intact. Centred around its compact core, the built environment of the town is of a scale that allows reasonably direct linkages across the town, particularly between the town centre and outlying residential and employment areas. The town's topography is generally flat providing good opportunities to facilitate the development of sustainable travel links, particularly pedestrian and cycle networks.

The historic built form of the town and existing highway configuration imparts constraints on the movement of motorised traffic. The town centre accommodates thriving retail and service functions and consequently demand for access and pedestrian activity remains high. There are few routes available that allow through-traffic to bypass the town centre consequently central area streets remain heavily trafficked throughout the daytime period, notably during the AM and PM peak hours. Existing width constraints coupled with the level of traffic demand have required the introduction of a number of one-way streets and other manoeuvre restrictions in and around the town centre meaning cross town routes tend to be quite convoluted.

Frequent, direct rail services to destinations including London Waterloo, Reading, Guildford and Gatwick Airport operate out of Wokingham station located approximately 700 metres north-west of the town centre. The town also benefits from regular daytime bus services connecting all suburban areas to the town centre and onward to regional destinations including Reading, Bracknell and Crowthorne.

EXISTING OBSERVATIONS

Substantial daily in and out migration of commuters, coupled with the lack of alternative routes to bypassing the town results in a significant level of traffic passing through the town centre on a daily basis, notably during the AM and PM peak hour periods. Many routes, notably connections between the south-western suburbs of the town and A329 London Road and A329(M) are convoluted, requiring through-traffic to route to the north of the town centre. This situation is exacerbated by existing height restrictions on two rail bridges that span Finchampstead Road to the south of the Wellington Road / Denmark Street roundabout. This requires HGV traffic originating from the A329(M) destined for the Molly Millars Lane industrial estate and vice versa to utilise the Station Road / B3349 Barkham Road corridor to gain access.

Traffic conditions within the town centre network vary across different time periods. Flows during both the AM and PM peak hour periods are heavy, notably along the Peach Street / Denmark Street corridor and approaching Broad Street from Shute End. This volume of traffic within a constrained network inevitably results in some congestion and the formation of rolling queues along these routes. Between the peak hours during the daytime period, vehicular traffic flows are lower however a combination of high demand placed upon the existing pedestrian crossing facilities in the vicinity of Market Place and along Broad Street coupled with some slightly chaotic loading activity typically perpetuates a rolling queue of traffic back along Peach Street.

Figures 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 provide a plan illustrating the major traffic routes through and around the town together with a summary of the broad scale of traffic movements during both AM and PM weekday peak periods respectively.

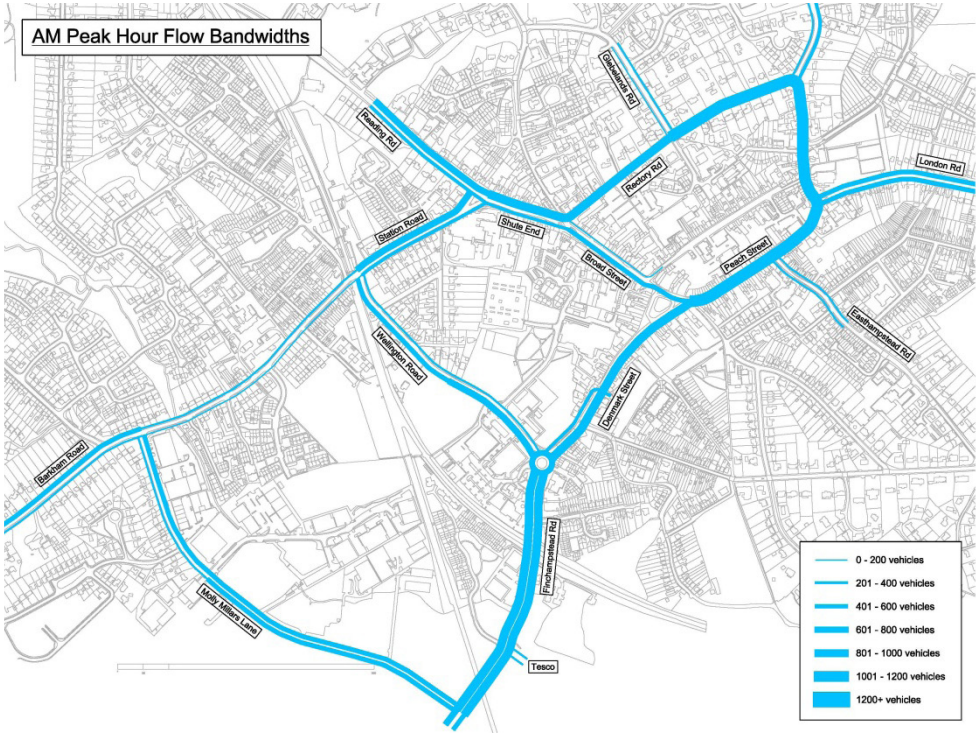


FIG. 1.5.1 - AM PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC FLOWS

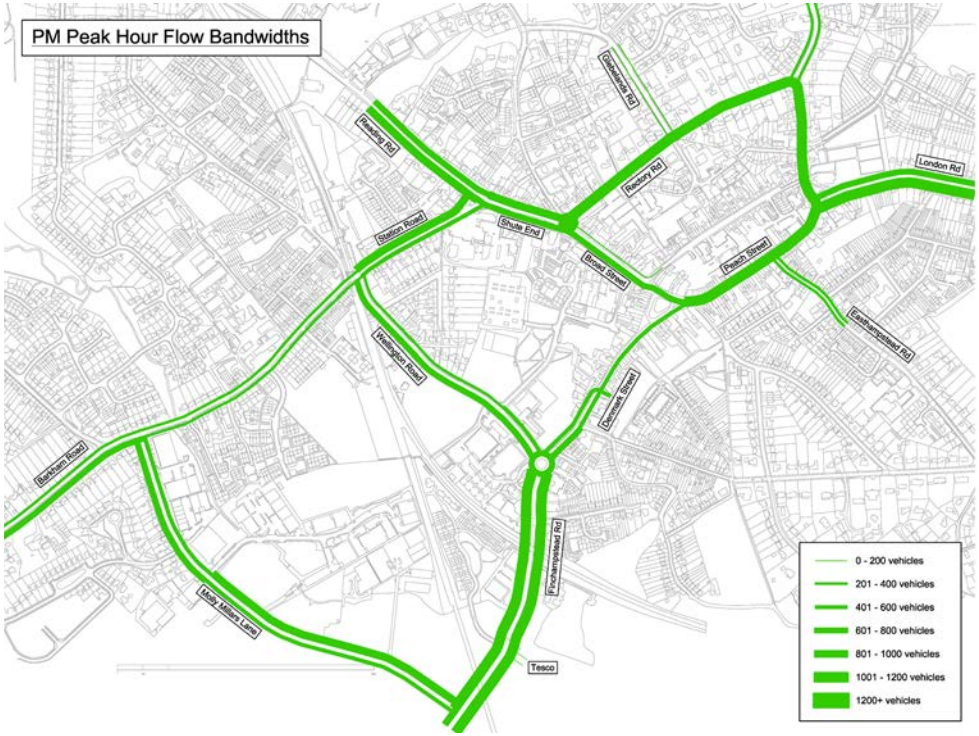


FIG. 5.2 - PM PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC FLOWS

Much of the town's central area highway network is constrained due to a combination of restricted corridor widths, competing demand for space resulting from pedestrian, parking and loading activity and existing junction arrangements. Existing physical constraints on the network mean that congestion, whilst an issue, displays a tendency to be self-regulating. The constrained width of many of the highway corridors within the network coupled with key gateway features act as "pinch points" at a number of key entrances to and locations around the town centre, including a number associated with existing junctions, at level crossings and imposed by the historic built form of the town centre environment itself. These existing pinch points effectively regulate access into and through the central area network, consequently, traffic flow conditions within the central area of the town tend to remain reasonable even during peak periods; slow rather than static with traffic flowing through the system reasonably rapidly.

A number of the town's central area roads (including Peach Street, Rectory Road and Wiltshire Road) were originally designed with sufficient width to accommodate two-way traffic flows within a conventional single carriageway alignment. These routes have subsequently been converted to one-way operation however, their existing two-lane carriageway width has been retained. Analysis of existing traffic turning counts data (surveyed in March 2012) provided by

WBC indicates that existing peak hour traffic flows on each of these links is not sufficiently high to require the operation of dual lanes and that in stand-alone terms, each of the corridors would be capable of accommodating existing demand if it were reconfigured as single lane operation.

The retention of dual-lane one-way streets provides a number of amenity advantages for vehicular traffic flows within the central area by allowing traffic to bypass existing queues and by providing a buffer space to allow traffic pulling out from side roads into the main traffic flow space to integrate more efficiently. This is particularly notable along the Peach Street corridor where traffic originating from the A329 London Road corridor destined for Broad Street is able to utilise the offside lane provided along the length of Peach Street to bypass queuing traffic extending back from Denmark Street during AM and PM peak periods. During the daytime period, when queues extend back along Peach Street from Broad Street, traffic destined for Denmark Street is able to utilise the nearside lane in order to bypass queues.

It is though important to note that the benefit of providing slightly better amenity for motorised traffic through retention of a multi-lane operation should not be misinterpreted to infer that the second lane provides significant or indeed necessary additional capacity over and above that which would be provided by a single lane route. It is considered that queues are largely the consequence of existing traffic management arrangements elsewhere on the network and not simply due to the existing traffic demand on Peach Street in isolation. As such, much of the queuing could be alleviated by implementing alternative traffic management arrangements further downstream, largely eliminating the need to retain dual lanes in such locations. Furthermore, retention of multi-lane operation comes at a price: namely the significantly detrimental impact of the resulting traffic dominated environment on amenity for pedestrians and cyclists and associated degradation of the local environmental quality.

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE NETWORKS

During busy peak periods, the pedestrian environment is dominated by motorised traffic. At the busiest times, traffic speeds within the town centre tend to be low however, the existing form of the highway environment is not conducive to encouraging an appropriate balance between the needs of motorised and non-motorised forms of traffic.

Existing pedestrian and cycle networks in and around the town centre are variable in quality. Footways run adjacent to virtually all major road corridors within the town centre and along key radial approaches. Generally speaking, such routes are in a reasonably good state of repair and are reasonably well proportioned in most areas being a minimum of 3m wide. Despite this, there remain a number of locations where existing footway widths are constrained and below the ideal minimum of 2m. Such locations include:

- Immediately outside the Ship Inn adjacent to the A329 London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street junction;
- Immediately outside The Overhangs historic timber framed house on Peach Street;
- Along Denmark Street directly outside Elton Travel Agency and further to the south-west directly outside Wokingham Tandoori;
- Along Denmark Street between its junctions with Langborough Road and Wellington Road;
- Directly adjacent to the HSBC branch on Broad Street where the presence of bollards impinges on the existing footway width;
- In the vicinity of existing bus stops located on Broad Street where the 3.0 – 3.5m widths are insufficient to accommodate passengers waiting to board and through movements of pedestrians;
- Wellington Road (in vicinity of the tennis courts opposite Albert Road);
- Along the northern side of Rose Street in the vicinity of its junction with Broad Street;
- Towards the north-east extremity of Rose Street in the vicinity of its junction with Wiltshire Road.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

The vast majority of pedestrian crossings within the town centre are signalised arrangements with a handful of zebra crossings located in more peripheral locations (including Station Road in the vicinity of the WBC offices). Existing signalised crossings provide effective crossing opportunities for pedestrians along key desire lines within the town centre and are beneficial in calming traffic speeds during periods of heavy traffic flows however, their existing operation tends to have quite an onerous impact on the smooth operation of the network.

Signalised crossings coupled with the existing road layouts tend to result in pedestrians being directed to a handful of formal crossing points and do not provide good interim opportunities for pedestrians to cross away from signal controlled locations. This is because drivers tend to assume priority whilst driving in “conventional” highway environments unless specifically instructed otherwise

(i.e. told to cede priority by a red light or similar). Consequently pedestrian demand at signal controlled crossings during the daytime period tends to be extremely high resulting in a detrimental impact on the smooth flow of traffic. This is particularly notable at crossings in the immediate vicinity of the Market Place, where delays are exacerbated by unnecessarily long pedestrian green times, and at the signalised crossing on Broad Street adjacent to the northern side of Rose Street where the volume of pedestrian demand is increased by the lack of informal opportunities for pedestrians to cross Broad Street in alternative locations due to the excessive width of the carriageway.

CYCLE AMENITY

A combination of dedicated on and off-road cycle routes provide good connections between the town centre and outlying residential areas. Routes are particularly well developed towards the north-west and south-west of the town centre with good quality connections between residential suburbs to the north-west of the town and the Molly Millars Lane industrial area to the south-west. Cycle routes serving the eastern suburbs of the town are less well developed than those to the west.

Provision for cyclist movements both within and through the town centre is not so well developed. In part this is a function of both the physical constraints on the space available to accommodate dedicated cycle infrastructure and the existence of a number of one-way streets that makes formal designation of cycleways difficult to implement safely.

Despite the lack of dedicated cycle infrastructure, existing traffic conditions within the central network are reasonably conducive to safe cycling within the carriageway. Ironically, this is perhaps most apparent during the busiest peak periods where high traffic volumes keep speeds low and allow cyclists to integrate appropriately with other forms of traffic. Outside of peak periods, at times when traffic volumes are lower, observations indicate traffic speeds are significantly higher and therefore would not be as conducive to safe cycling.

BUS / TAXI FACILITIES

Accommodation for bus and taxi stops and layover areas is primarily provided for along both sides of Broad Street. Two off-line bus-stop / layover facilities are provided along Broad Street, one inbound, one outbound providing capacity to accommodate one vehicle each at a given time. Further on-line stops within the central area are provided towards the southern end of Denmark Street serving the town library, along Wellington Road northbound in the vicinity of the Elms Road junction, along both sides of Station Road near to Alderman Willey Close and along Rectory Road in the vicinity of the Waitrose car-park.

Whilst the locations of both inbound and outbound stops on Broad Street are reasonably convenient for access to the town centre, the general on-street waiting environments of both are inadequate. Shelter facilities and some timetable information is provided on both sides of the road however, the inadequate width of adjacent footways (approximately 3m on the inbound side and 3.5m – 4.0m on the outbound side) leads to footway congestion and an uncomfortable waiting environment for passengers, particularly during peak periods.

It is understood that the bus operators have expressed concerns regarding the inadequacy of capacity and general arrangements of stops, notably on the outbound side of Broad Street where it is not possible for two buses to align with the kerb satisfactorily in order to load passengers simultaneously. These operational problems are exacerbated by vehicles regularly parking illegally in designated bus stop / layover areas.

Well over 100 services run through the town during the course of a typical weekday, the majority of which operate cross / through town routes. A minority of services originate / terminate within the town centre using Broad Street as a terminus.

An existing bus contra-flow lane is positioned on Broad Street, through Market Place between its junctions with Rose Street and Denmark Street. This facility allows inbound buses along Broad Street to make a right-turn into Denmark Street without needing to loop around via Rose Street / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street. It is understood that this facility was implemented to both reduce the running distance of the affected services and to allow them to avoid incurring delays as a result of queues along Peach Street.

It is understood that a number of concerns have been raised regarding the safety of the existing contra-flow arrangement (including representations from Wokingham Town Council Members). As the contra-flow is so infrequently used, it is considered possible that pedestrians attempting to cross Market Place in the vicinity may step out in front of an oncoming bus, mistakenly believing the road to be a one-way arrangement. Analysis of accident data indicates there have been two recorded accidents in this location over the past five year period both of which resulted in slight injury to pedestrians crossing the road. One of the accidents involved a pedestrian being struck by a bus using the contra-flow lane. The second involved a pedestrian being struck by a car which, from the data available, appears

to have been illegally using the bus contra-flow lane to make the right turn into Denmark Street.

Analysis of existing bus route information indicates that a minority of existing services (approximately 30 per day) utilise the contra-flow facility however it is understood that the bus companies have requested its retention due to the operational benefits delivered. At this stage, it is unclear how much of the operational benefit the bus companies attribute to the reduced distance services have to travel than if they utilised Rose Street / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street as an alternative and how much they attribute to the avoidance of queues along Peach Street. In light of these unknowns, and mindful of the potential the town centre works has to alleviate queues along Peach Street, it is recommended that further consultation engaging both representatives of the bus operator companies and relevant WBC Officers be undertaken to discuss whether or not retention of the contra-flow arrangement is required.

Two taxi stands are provided within the town centre, one along each side of Broad Street, each of which has capacity to accommodate approximately three vehicles.

PARKING, LOADING AND SERVICING ACTIVITY

Parking and loading / servicing control restrictions apply to the Wokingham central area street network (broadly defined by the boundaries of the Town Masterplan Area) in their entirety. A mix of limited waiting, disabled and residents' parking restrictions coupled with various specific restrictions relating to loading, public transport and taxi services cover areas of the highway where such activity is permitted.

Areas of the highway where parking and / or servicing activity would cause an operational or safety issue are generally marked by no waiting at any time parking restrictions supplemented by peak hour (AM & PM) loading bans, indicated by way of yellow line markings and associated signs.
A mix of parking and servicing activity is accommodated along both the major shopping streets within the town centre and within adjacent residential side-streets. In general terms parking activity is restricted to 30 minutes limited waiting within the very centre of the town (along Peach Street, Denmark Street and Broad Street). Along nearby side streets, lined by a mix of residential and commercial properties, the majority of available parking spaces are covered by either residents' parking or 30 minute limited waiting restrictions.

There is little evidence of pavement parking along central area streets. Bollards preventing vehicular access onto the pavement have been positioned in areas where narrow road widths and high parking demand might make such activity prevalent.

A total of three on-street disabled parking bays are located throughout the central area street network (one each on Peach Street, Broad Street and within Market Place). It should be noted that disabled blue badge holders are entitled to park within restricted areas demarcated by yellow line restrictions for a period of up to three hours provided there is no loading ban in place.

A total of approaching 2,300 publically available spaces are provided within off-street car-parks within the vicinity of the town centre.

AM and PM peak hour loading bans are in place along both sides of Peach Street, Denmark Street and Broad Street and within the vicinity of Market Place although anecdotal evidence indicates enforcement is currently poor. There are currently no designated loading bays on any of the major central area streets. Instead vehicles undertaking loading / unloading activity stop on yellow line restrictions which, outside of peak hour periods, they are entitled to do. Observations undertaken throughout the day indicate that existing loading activity within the very central area of the town (principally within the vicinity of Market Place) is somewhat chaotic and poorly managed. Loading vehicles tend to stop on both sides of the road simultaneously, partially blocking the carriageway and giving rise to safety concerns for pedestrians. This is particularly notable on market days where a combination of servicing requirements for market traders and nearby shops partially block the upper end of Denmark Street leading to knock-on queues forming along Peach Street.

Loading and servicing arrangements along Broad Street generally appear much better, as vehicles tend not to obstruct the free flow of traffic due to sufficient width within the carriageway. Nevertheless, some existing loading activity was observed to interrupt the smooth operation of signalised pedestrian crossing facilities by interfering with the on-street sensors that govern their operation. This is a particularly notable issue on the approaches to the signalised crossing on Broad Street adjacent to the north side of Rose Street where stationary vehicles affect the sensors. This in turn causes the crossing to respond immediately to all registered pedestrian demand thereby failing to provide an appropriate balance of capacity between motorised and pedestrian traffic. This inevitably leads to queues of vehicles building back through Market Place and onto Peach Street during busy periods.

Vehicles servicing properties along Peach Street stop in the carriageway blocking

one of the two lanes leading on to Denmark Street and Broad Street respectively. Whilst the volume of traffic carried by Peach Street indicates that this should not be problematic in capacity terms in its own right, such servicing arrangements do tend to exacerbate congested conditions back towards the London Road / Wiltshire Road junction, the principal causes of which are the problems caused by poorly managed loading activity further downstream along Denmark Street and Broad Street, as discussed above.

MANOEUVRE RESTRICTIONS

A number of existing manoeuvre restrictions are in force along the majority of the town's central area streets including:

- A one-way traffic restriction along Peach Street between its junctions with Wiltshire Road and Market Place running in that direction;
- A one-way traffic restriction along Denmark Street between its junctions with Market Place and the Denmark Street car-park access running in that direction;
- A one-way traffic restriction along the northern side of Market Place between its junctions with Peach Street and Rose Street with the exception of a bus contra-flow lane that permits south-east bound buses to access Denmark Street;
- A right-turn ban on north-west bound traffic on Market Place / Broad Street into Rose Street;
- A right-turn only restriction out of Rose Street into Broad Street;
- A one-way traffic restriction along Rectory Road between its junctions with Broad Street / Shute End and Wiltshire Road running in that direction;
- A one-way traffic restriction along Wiltshire Road between its junctions with Rectory Road and Peach Street / London Road running in that direction;
- A no-entry into the north-east end of Rose Street from Wilshire Road (effectively making the north-east extremity of Rose Street one-way between its junctions with Cross Street and Wiltshire Road running in that direction);
- A bus only gateway restriction towards the junction of Milton Road / Rectory Road.

Despite its function as the site of the regular town market, the north-west side of Market Place remains adopted highway. Although restrictions are in place to operate the space as a pedestrian zone, it should be noted that normal highway regulations relating to access (both motorised and non-motorised) and buried utilities continue to apply. It is understood that Wokingham Town Council have been working with retailers to implement servicing arrangements to the rear of adjacent properties in order to facilitate possible implementation of a stopping up order to expunge the highway in this location. Whilst it is understood that progress has been positive thus far, it should be noted that there can be no guarantee at this stage that such an order can be made in due course.

ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Existing parking and loading / servicing restrictions remain policed and enforced by Berkshire Constabulary as WBC has not taken over legal powers to implement Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). It is understood that the Authority makes an annual financial contribution to the Police to provide resources however enforcement remains slightly sporadic. It is understood that WBC has undertaken an initial feasibility study to evaluate the benefits of introducing CPE that established a broadly favourable business case for implementation that elected Members are currently in the process of considering.

ANALYSIS OF FIVE YEAR ACCIDENT DATA

Analysis of recorded accident data over the past five year period covering key streets within the town centre environment has been undertaken. The results of the analysis indicate a total of 64 injury accidents were recorded between 2007 and 2012. A total of 80 casualties were recorded, six of whom sustained serious injuries (four pedestrians, one motorcyclist and one car driver) with the remaining 74 recorded as slight.

A notable cluster was identified at the Reading Road / Station Road junction where ten accidents were recorded during the period, one of which resulted in serious

injury, the remaining nine recorded as slight.

Minor clusters were also identified at the A329 London Road / Peach Street / Wiltshire Road junction (one serious, three slight), the Wellington Road / Elms Field junction (four slight) and at the Station Road / Wellington Road / Barkham Road junction (four slight). The reasonably high incidence of recorded accidents along Station Road was also noted.

Details of the location and a brief description of each of the six accidents resulting in serious injury is provided below:

- Pedestrian seriously injured as a result of having been struck by a vehicle on Barkham Road in the vicinity of Havelock Road;
- Pedestrian seriously injured as a result of having been struck by a vehicle in the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing outside the Molly Millars pub on Station Road;
- Driver of a car seriously injured as a result of having been struck by another car at the Reading Road / Station Road junction;
- Pedestrian seriously injured as a result of having been struck by a vehicle whilst attempting to cross Denmark Street in the vicinity of Market Place;
- Pedestrian seriously injured as a result of having been struck by a vehicle whilst attempting to cross Peach Street in the vicinity of Cross Street, and,
- Motorcyclist seriously injured having been knocked from bike by car attempting to change lanes on Wiltshire Road approach to junction with London Road / Peach Street.

Of the serious injury accidents listed above, speed or the lack of awareness of speed is listed as a likely contributory factor in three cases and reckless lane changing behaviour is listed as the probable cause of another. Obstruction of a crossing by a parked vehicle and alcohol impairment are listed in the remaining cases.

ANTICIPATED ALTERATIONS TO THE NETWORK

A number of proposed alterations to the central area highway network are currently at various stages of development.

The Station Link Road will connect Station Road in the vicinity of its existing junction with Wellington Road / Barkham Road level crossing round to the A329 Reading Road north. Development of this route is underway as part of the wider station redevelopment. Route implementation will facilitate the introduction of a one-way traffic restriction along Station Road between its junctions with Reading Road and Wellington Road running in that direction.

Elms Field Link Road is proposed as part of a mixed-use retail / residential development centred around the Elms Field public park. Predominantly delivered in order to provide access to the new development itself, the new link will connect Wellington Road through to Shute End. To reflect that the route is not meant for through-traffic, the proposed alignment together with its design character have been so designed to discourage motorists from using it as a cut through to Reading Road. To further discourage use by through-traffic, a right-turn only restriction is proposed out of the junction with Shute End.

Over the medium to long-term planning horizon (to 2026) aspirational proposals are in place to develop two new routes (northern and southern relief roads) that will both bypass the town centre and facilitate development of new areas of housing on vacant land to the north-east and south of the town. The Northern Relief Road is proposed to run on an alignment to the north-east of the town connecting the A329 Reading Road in the vicinity of its junction with Old Forest Road to the A329 London Road in the vicinity of its junction with the A329(M). Development of the route will facilitate and progress alongside delivery of approximately 1,500 residential units on adjacent land parcels.

To the south of the town, the proposed alignment of the Southern Relief Road will provide a connection between the A329 London Road in the vicinity of its junction with the A329(M) round to Finchampstead Road in the vicinity of the existing Tesco store / Molly Millars Lane industrial area. Delivery of this route will be accompanied by construction of some 2,500 residential units on land adjacent to the route.

The eventual delivery of both Northern and Southern relief roads will doubtless bring about some improvements to conditions for highway users within the central area of the town by allowing for removal of some unnecessary through-traffic, notably HGV's. It would however be mistaken to conclude that the new routes will result in a substantial reduction in motorised traffic within the town centre network. Essentially this largely because any diversion of existing traffic onto the two new routes is likely to be substantially off-set by new traffic demand within the town centre generated by development of the 4,000 newly constructed residential units.

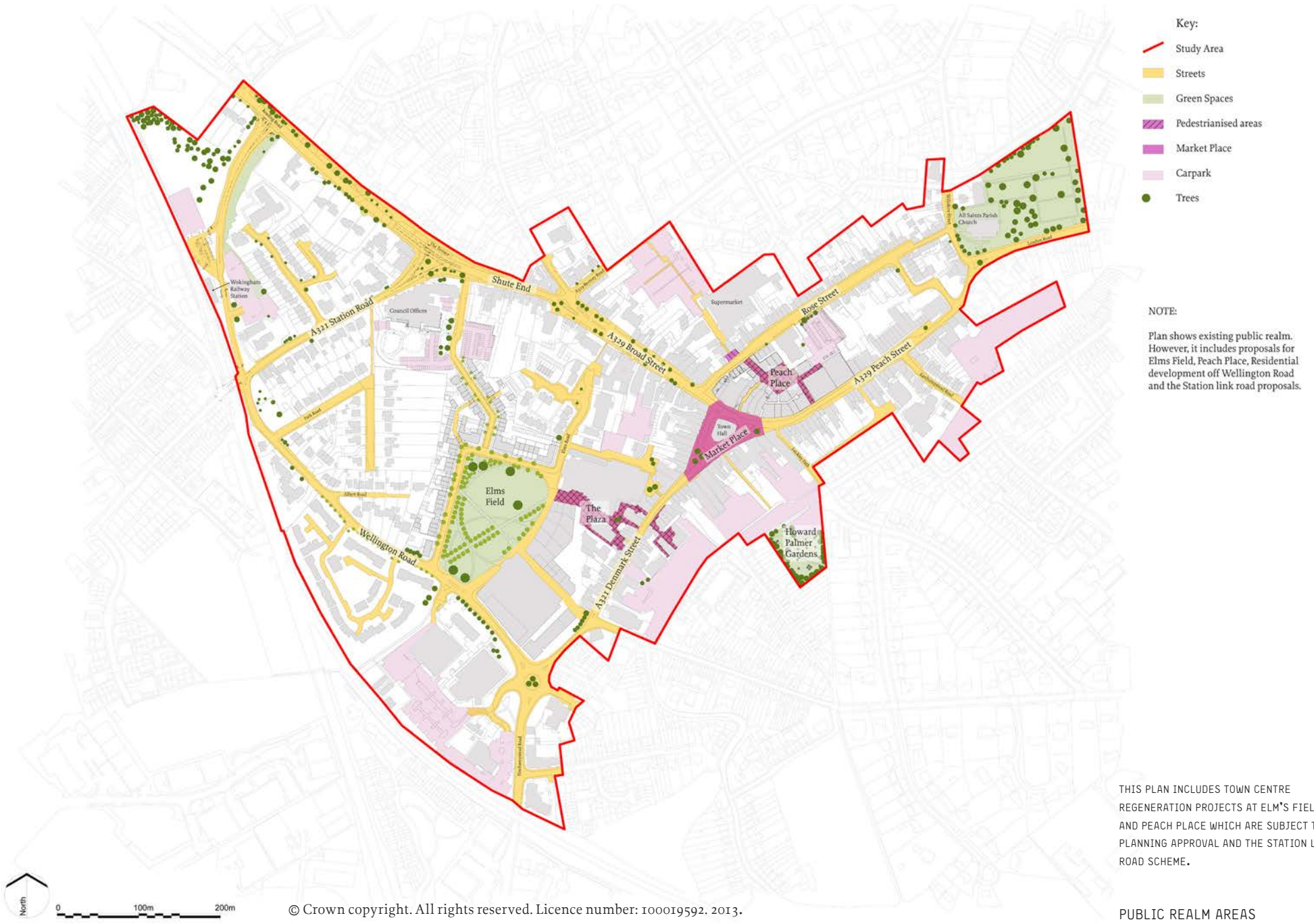
The strategic SATURN transport model specifically designed to assess the future impact of proposed developments within Wokingham town centre currently remains under development. To provide an indicative, high level assessment of both the impact of additional traffic brought about by future development within the town and delivery of the two new relief roads, data has been taken

from the North Wokingham Highway Study (NWHS) using output from the interim SATURN transport model (2026 Scenario C). This model run includes consideration of both the additional developments and anticipated highway alterations together with background traffic growth anticipated. It should be noted however that the model does require refinement.

High level analysis of the data provided by the NWHS run indicates that as a whole, traffic across the town centre network is predicted to rise from its existing level by 2026. However, the predicted rise is not uniform across the entire area. In a number of cases (including along Peach Street, Denmark Street and Wellington Road) estimates of future predicted traffic demand in 2026 are broadly comparable to existing levels. In the case of Station Road, delivery of the new Station Link Road will facilitate removal of north-east bound traffic and is actually likely to result in a significant reduction in traffic both on Station Road itself and through the existing Reading Road / Station Road / Shute End junction.

Elsewhere on the network, where traffic growth is predicted (for example along Rectory Road and Broad Street) it is considered that there is likely to remain ample spare capacity in the existing system to comfortably accommodate future demand.

1.6 EXISTING PUBLIC REALM AREAS



THIS PLAN INCLUDES TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECTS AT ELM'S FIELD AND PEACH PLACE WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL AND THE STATION LINK ROAD SCHEME.

PUBLIC REALM AREAS

MARKET PLACE

HISTORY

The Market Place and the Grade II* listed Victorian Town Hall are at the very heart of Wokingham. They remain the social centre of the town and historically are where the growth of Wokingham began. A market was granted charter here by Henry III in 1227 and early records suggest there has been a Clock-house or Guildhall here since well before 1583 when Queen Elizabeth I granted the town a Charter. The old Guildhall in the Market Place, with its pillared under croft, was built in 1612 and was replaced with the current Town Hall in 1858 after falling into disrepair.

It originally housed a police court and prison and beneath the Town Hall are the old police cells and Police Constable's quarters. Built in Victorian gothic style, the Town Hall is a tribute to the skilled craftsmanship of the Reading builders, Wheeler & Woodroffe. From the outside it looks much the same as it did in the 1860s but the courtyard has been covered and a number of changes made to the internal structure.

Public events and gatherings have been well documented in Market Place over the years. These have been diverse as annual bull baiting, ox roasting, fox hunting meets, election announcements, a wartime assembly point for troops, the Peace Day celebrations on 22nd July 1919 and The Proclamation of Kings and Queens.

ROLE AND FUNCTION

The Market Place lies at the point where the principal streets converge, it functions as a flexible multi-purpose space for markets, events (such as the May Fayre), carnivals, remembrance parades and street performance. It also provides an opportunity for informal seating and a pedestrian through route. The Town Hall houses an information centre, main hall and meeting rooms. Dinners, concerts, lectures, displays, meetings, bazaars, sales and civil ceremonies are held in the main hall, with the smaller rooms being used for meetings and other functions.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The Town Hall is an attractive landmark building built in Victorian gothic style.
- The Market Place provides a flexible space for informal seating, events, larger markets and outdoor cafes, however its full potential is constrained by limited space and a disjointed layout.
- Peach Street to the east of Market Place comprises two lanes of one way traffic, on street parking (principally disabled) and a shared bus route. During peak hours there are often 3 lanes of traffic to this boundary which has a profound impact on the pedestrian quality of the space in terms of noise, air pollution, safety and visual clutter.
- Regulatory road signs and street clutter proliferate at the pedestrian crossing at Peach Street and detract from the distinctive architecture of the Town Hall and the built environment.
- The paving materials comprise red and blue clay brick pavers. The quality of paving is poor, they are slippy when wet and the red colour clashes with the adjacent buildings. A chamfered upstand kerb delineating the access road in the space has been cited as a trip hazard.
- A road is un-necessarily delineated to the north, north east and west of the Town Hall in blue pavers.
- Three large mature trees are located in the Market Square. They provide an attractive green foil and counter to the busy road. The existing tree roots however have caused pavement heave, causing a considerable trip hazard.
- The street furniture is un-co-ordinated in appearance and is located in a haphazard cluttered arrangement. A number of timber benches have been donated by private individuals.
- Unsightly large refuse bins are located to the east of the Town Hall and detract from its appearance
- There is no high quality architectural feature lighting to the Town Hall.
- In general the combination of poor quality paving, street furniture and traffic dominance do not provide a high quality setting for the town hall or reflect the importance of this central town space.


COSTA

MARKET PLACE – EXISTING

BROAD STREET

HISTORY

The early 14th-century town consisted of only six streets and Broad Street appears to have been the last street to be developed of these. It contains a varied mix of building styles with some notable buildings, including the large detached buildings of The Elms, Montague House and Tudor House that forms a visual stop to the street. Historically Broad Street had trees along its length and apart from the loss of most of these trees and the increase in traffic and regulatory signs and barriers; the street itself has changed very little since the earliest known photograph of the street taken in the 1850s. The width of the street is not well understood from a historical standpoint.

ROLE AND FUNCTION

One of the most prominent features of Broad Street is its width, which varies from 15m to 29m (from built edge). It is framed by large scale two to three storey historic buildings of varying appearance and layout. Broad Street forms part of the A329 that connects Wokingham with the Reading Road and the A329 (M) in the east and the London Road to the west. It is a primary route that is heavily trafficked by cars, buses and taxis and provides a key southeast/northwest pedestrian link for the town. In particular, it connects the Market Place to the east and with the Council Offices and route to the Railway Station in the west.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- It is a combination of its width; strong built enclosure and architectural visual stops east and west, that combine to create a prominent street with good legibility,
- A disproportionate amount of space has been given over to vehicles and their management, which includes elements such as large 'sheep-pen' style arrangement to the west.
- The width of street makes informal pedestrian crossing very difficult and there are general user conflicts between buses, cars, commercial loading, taxis and pedestrians. This is exacerbated by the narrow pavements, in particular around bus stops and taxi areas.
- There is a collection of un-attractive and un-co-ordinated public realm materials. The seating and litter bins are plastic and paving concrete pavers. This is incongruous with the adjacent historic buildings.
- Points of access from the carriageway are demarcated distinctively using stone cobbles. In places these have been replaced with concrete pavers which are un-coordinated and unsightly.
- There is tree planting along Broad Street, however there is no clear rationale for the location and it does not strongly reinforce the character of the street.
- Architectural feature lighting along Broad Street is poor.

TYPICAL STREET SECTION – BROAD STREET

ROSE STREET

HISTORY

Rose Street or as it was formerly known - Le Rothe Strete, 'the Street of the Clearing' is the first street in Wokingham of which there is any known record. Although the very earliest buildings have disappeared, it is a rare surviving example of an enclosed medieval street and has a large number of listed buildings.

ROLE AND FUNCTION

Rose Street runs north east/south west from Broad Street to Wiltshire Road where it terminates at All Saints Church. The uses along Rose Street are predominantly retail (to the west), office and residential (to the east) and due to the scale of architecture, character and land use it has a distinctly residential feel and is a secondary route.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Rose Street has a distinctive character, it is well enclosed and overlooked and highly legible.
- Rose Street has a relatively consistent wide cross section (typically 16m) with a disproportionate amount of space given over to road. This width is further accentuated by the two storey buildings that frame its edge.
- There is on-street parking to both sides of Rose Street; therefore there is considerable negative visual impact of parking that detracts from the historic character of the buildings.
- The historic vernacular of Rose Street has been eroded, particularly to the south, where development in the form of car parks, high perimeter brick walls and the taller retail buildings of 'The Arcade' that back onto to the street exposing utilitarian fire escapes and unattractive bin storage areas. The building and public realm proposals for Peach Place should address some of these issues.
- There are utilitarian highways lighting along Rose Street and no architectural feature lighting.
- There are little opportunities for social gathering or seating along Rose Street.
- Paving along Rose Street is red clay brick pavers which aesthetically clash with the traditional red brick buildings and detract.


ROSE COURT

TYPICAL STREET SECTION – ROSE STREET

PEACH STREET

HISTORY

Peach Street forms part of Wokingham's original historic layout and was one of the earliest streets documented, however little remains of the original medieval structures. The most notable buildings are the 15th Century overhangs cottages. At the Peach Street end of Cross Street stood an iron marker. This defined the boundary of a parcel of land enclosed in Berkshire that was owned by a Wiltshire estate. The old marker can still be seen at the foot of the building, which is opposite All Saint's church.

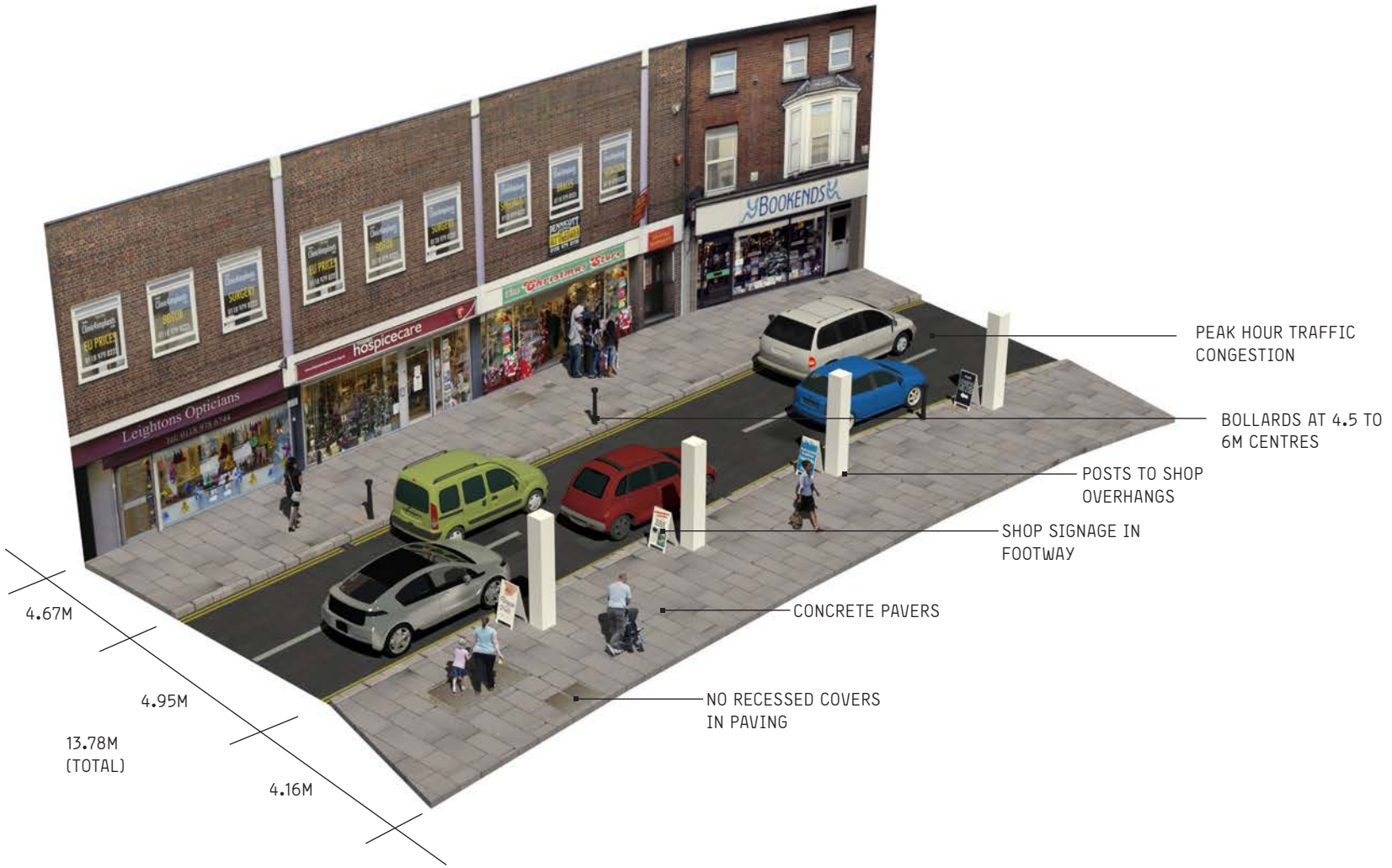
ROLE AND FUNCTION

Peach Street runs north east to south west connecting London Road and the A329 (M) in the north with Broad Street and the A321 Denmark Street in the south. It forms a key gateway into Wokingham town centre and a crucial first impression for visitors. Peach Street forms part of the busy A329 and provides a one way, two lane route for traffic into town. Land use is predominantly retail with some residential above.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Peach Street feels dominated by traffic; this is compounded by the single way traffic flow and building containment.
- The pavement to the south of Peach Place in the area of the Overhangs near Wiltshire Road is very narrow (approximately 1m).
- There are conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles at Easthampstead Road and Luckley Path junctions, exacerbated by narrow footways and poor sightlines.
- In general, the public realm is of a poor quality and in a poor condition. Cast iron bollards run the length of the majority of the street and paving is concrete pavers.
- There have been traffic collisions with the Overhangs because of the proximity to the road.
- There is a small area of on-street parking to a retail arcade to the north of the street which lends itself to a more local residential context.
- The quality of the built form is weaker compared to other areas of the town.

TYPICAL STREET SECTION: PEACH STREET EAST



TYPICAL STREET SECTION: PEACH STREET WEST

DENMARK STREET

HISTORY

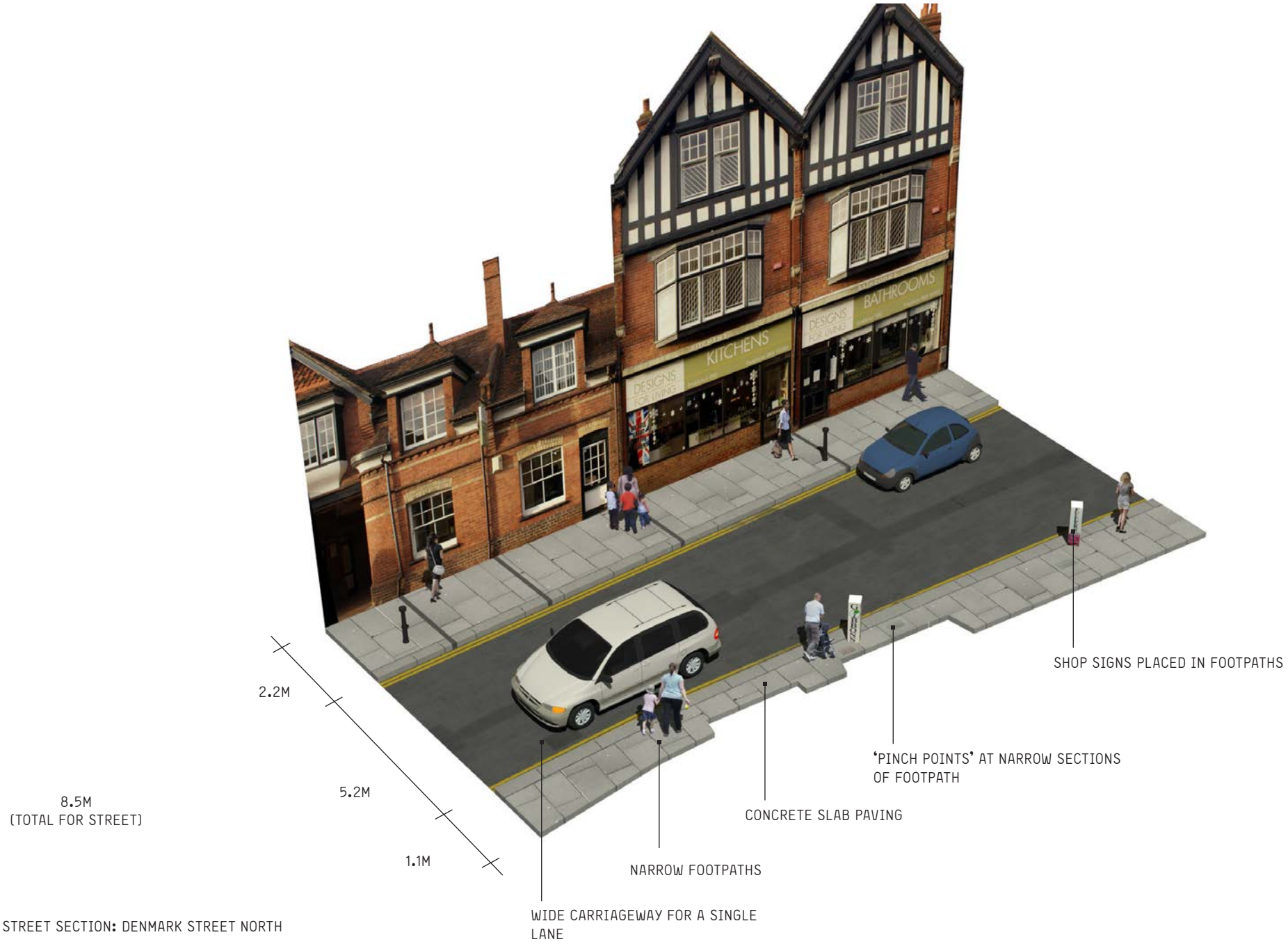
Denmark Street forms part of the original medieval plan for Wokingham and was known as Le Don Strete and later Down Street before it was renamed in honour of the Princess of Denmark (Queen Alexandra) when she married Edward, Prince of Wales. There are a number of notable listed buildings along Denmark Street. Among the 16th and 17th century buildings is number 22 which is believed to be the site of the old Wokingham workhouse which housed up to 50 inmates

ROLE AND FUNCTION

The A321 Denmark Street runs north east to south west connecting Peach Street in the north with Finchampstead Road in the south. Its character changes slightly from north to south as it moves away from the retail core towards the existing Elms Field Park boundary. The road is two-way in the south and one way/two lane in the north. To the south the roundabout with Finchampstead Road and Wellington Road forms a key town centre gateway

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

- Denmark Street provides a consistent character along the majority of its length and is well contained.
- For a town centre retail street, the pavements along Denmark Street are generally very narrow, being as little as 1m in places and further compounded by the cast iron bollards that line both sides of the street and advertising boards. Also, the carriageway feels un-necessarily wide for a one way route.
- There are no pedestrian crossing points.
- The paving is concrete pavers to the north and tarmac to the south.
- Denmark Street is principally a through route because there are few opportunities for pedestrians to stop. Collection areas are provided via the Plaza to the west and a small courtyard to the east.
- The roundabout to the south currently provides a weak sense of arrival; this will hopefully be strengthened by the built development planned for Elms Field.



TYPICAL STREET SECTION: DENMARK STREET NORTH


be someone amazing, adopt a child
SHOP TO LET


THE PLAZA
DESIGNS FOR LIVING


OFFICES
TO LET
376 - 1,728 sq.ft
WINDOWS, DOORS


Eton Travel Ag
Rossini

TYPICAL STREET SECTION: DENMARK STREET SOUTH

THE PLAZA

ROLE AND FUNCTION

To the north west of Denmark Street a pedestrianized area known as 'The Plaza' lies adjacent to a large multi-storey car park and forms a series of quite intimate courtyards (known as Alexandria Court) connecting a variety of retail, food and beverage outlets. The Plaza will become an important pedestrian link between the town centre and the proposed development at Elms Filed.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The plaza buildings and public realm comprise rather featureless dated red brick facades and paving and raised planters with no planting.
- The public realm is sunken, dark and un-inviting.
- The red brick paving is dated, clashes with the buildings and slippery when wet.
- The plaza provides a crucial east west link between Elms Field and the town centre retail areas.
- The plaza has the right uses with cafes and bars and location to potentially provide a high quality, vibrant town centre space.
- To the east of Denmark Street a series of small residential courtyards are also relatively nondescript peripheral environments.


THE
Sue Ryder
PREZZO


with parking
fryer commercial.com
01344 741033
Alexandra House


HUDSON BAY

PEACH PLACE

Located between Market Place / Peach Street / Rose Street, the proposed development at Peach Place includes the erection of mixed use development, which alongside proposed development at Elms Field forms part of a comprehensive town centre redevelopment scheme. Proposed development at Peach Places comprises:

- Retail (A1 – A5) to be arranged over ground and first (mezzanine) floor levels.
- Residential (C3) with four new town houses, two new apartments and the refurbishment of two existing apartments, including external alterations.
- New public toilets.
- Associated reconfigured car parking area and alterations to on-street parking.
- New public realm and landscaping works including a new high quality public square providing a much needed high quality, public space as a respite away from the busy trafficked streets.
- All necessary demolition to include:- 34/35 Market Place and 1 – 16B Peach Street; 18 and 18A, Peach Street; 20 -22, Peach Street; The Redan Public House; 26, Peach Street; the public toilets and the M&S Store.

Proposals for both Peach Place and Elms Field have been carefully prepared in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Both schemes have been the subject of extensive public engagement and the designs for each site have evolved through an iterative design process.

EMERGING PROPOSALS SUBJECT TO PLANNING CONSENT

VISUALISATION OF THE PROPOSED PUBLIC SQUARE AT PEACH PLACE

SOURCE: IMAGE PROVIDED BY WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

EMERGING PROPOSALS SUBJECT TO PLANNING CONSENT

SHUTE END AND THE TERRACE

HISTORY

Shute End was once known as La Schete. One of the earliest houses in Wokingham dating from the early 14th century is said to be at 15 The Terrace. The distinctive building and clock tower of St Paul's Elementary School lie at the junction with Station Road

ROLE AND FUNCTION

Shute End forms part of the A329 linking Broad Street to its east and the Reading Road to the west. Running parallel to the north is an elevated access road called The Terrace lined with elegant Georgian buildings. As well as providing a primary through route Shute End and the Terrace form an important town gateway for people arriving at the town centre from Reading, Twyford and walking from the railway station.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Shute End and the Terrace have a strong identity and at the junction with Station Road form an important town gateway characterised by the elegant Georgian buildings, painted railings and topography of the terrace and green 'village' feel of the area which is quite distinct from the rest of the towns streets and spaces.
- At the junction of Station Road and Shute End there is a large triangular piece of land and verges with planting and grass. As part of the Station Link Road proposals new junction improvements are planned here, as part of these there is the potential to create a higher quality gateway to Wokingham at this intersection.
- The pedestrian stepped links between the Terrace and the A329 arrive directly into the road providing no safe refuge from the traffic.


Z6
LOOK RIGHT

WELLINGTON ROAD

ROLE AND FUNCTION

Wellington Road runs northwest to southeast connecting Wokingham Railway Station and the level crossing at Station Road in the west with Elms Field, Carnival Pool Leisure, the new residential areas and town centre to the east.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Wellington Road provides a key pedestrian and vehicular link from Wokingham Railway Station yet it provides a poor public realm experience with stretches of blank back garden fences, narrow pavements, weak built edges and few active frontages.
- It has a greener character to the southeast where it runs adjacent to Elms Field Park and there is an opportunity to exploit this.
- Given the potential for this route to link key town centre areas from the Railway Station it has poor legibility and does little to reinforce this connection. New housing at the Pavilions currently being built to the south of Wellington Road and the development at Elms Field, has the potential to improve this and make Wellington Road a key connection between the Station and town centre in the future.

STATION ROAD

ROLE AND FUNCTION

Station Road runs from Wokingham Railway Station and level crossing to the Shute End/Reading Road junction adjacent to the Council offices. It provides a link for people travelling from the town centre south and south east and . A new Station link road is imminent between the station forecourt and the A329 Reading Road to the north which should relieve some traffic off this road. Station Road has a small number of independent local retail adjacent to the station, however is predominantly residential.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The junction of Station Road, Wellington Road and B3349 Barkham Road at the level crossing currently provides a weak sense of arrival for Wokingham town centre. Legibility is very poor and there is no indication which direction the town centre is from the station and vice versa.
- The public realm outside the station is poor quality, paving is concrete pavers and setts and tarmac, signage and street furniture is cluttered and there are no opportunities for seating.
- The pedestrian route along Station road to Shute End comprises a narrow tarmac footway through a residential main road. The residential is set back and the edges comprise garden boundaries.

ELMS FIELD

ROLE AND FUNCTION

Elms Field Park provides a strategic green resource in Wokingham. It is currently equipped with play areas and tennis courts in the west and smaller areas of grassed public open space in the southeast.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Elms Field is a well-used recreational facility for the town centre.
- As identified by the development masterplan for this area the present form and arrangement of the park fails to maximise the potential of Elms Field and as such the park suffers from poor connectivity through an enclosed boundary and a lack of variety in the size and type of spaces available.
- The park contains a number mature trees both as individual specimens and as tree belts (some of which are recorded as veteran trees) that form attractive features and contribute positively to the amenity of the area.

PROPOSALS

- As part of the wider development proposals for Elms Field the park is planned to be extensively re-modelled to create a varied, attractive and dynamic sequence of spaces able to provide for a wide range of events and uses. Play areas, an interactive water feature, gardens, performance spaces and treed avenues are planned to ensure that the park is vibrant, attractive and welcoming
- The park design also provides a series of flexible spaces so that it may host a variety of events such as fairs, markets, concerts and festivals. The park design also comprises a diversity of play experiences including wet play and natural play, and a variety of garden spaces.
- The park will feature a coordinated range of furniture with feature lighting being used to create an attractive and welcoming place after dark. New park entrances will also be created.

EMERGING PROPOSALS SUBJECT TO PLANNING CONSENT

VISUALISATION OF THE PROPOSED ELMS FIELD SCHEME

SOURCE: IMAGE PROVIDED BY WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

EMERGING PROPOSALS SUBJECT TO PLANNING CONSENT

LDĀDESIGN

WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE

Elms Field Masterplan

ISSUED BY Peterborough
DATE Jun '12
SCALE@A1 nts
STATUS Planning

T: 020 7467 1470
DRAWN bwt/ph
CHECKED kp
APPROVED ac

DWG. NO. 3107_100C

HOWARD PALMER GARDENS

ROLE AND FUNCTION

Howard Palmer Gardens provide a small pocket park, located in an area to the south east of Market Place adjacent to Cockpit Path car park.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The location of the gardens is dislocated from the town centre with access via a narrow footpath through car parking, with poor signage.
- The gardens provide a pleasant environment, well-used in the summer lunch hours by town centre workers and local residents predominantly.
- The gardens are the site of the annual Children's Fun Day.
- They feature a sundial designed by the pupils from the Emmbrook School.

1.7 SUMMARY

The images on the following pages summarise the key issues and opportunities identified during the Stage 1 Baseline work.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES


DISCORDANT CHARACTER


OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE ARRIVAL SPACE


TOO MANY BOLLARDS AND OBSTRUCTIONS IN THE FOOTWAY


POOR QUALITY INCIDENTAL SEATING SPACES


MISMATCHED AND INAPPROPRIATELY LOCATED STREET FURNITURE AND PAVING


OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSLATE THE SUBTLETIES OF THE RICH DETAILING IN THE BUILDINGS TO THE PUBLIC REALM


OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM THE PARK

OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS

STAGE 2 FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In response to the issues and opportunities identified during Stage 1, this section of the report outlines the vision for the public realm. The vision should be seen as the overarching, long term aspirations for Wokingham's public realm and should be used as the starting point and the measure of success of any projects planned in the town centre which affect the public realm. The framework and guidance which follow the vision outline how the vision can be achieved through alterations to the highway network and approach to public realm design appropriate to the local context.

The framework and guidance provides a strategic, town wide plan for how the streets and spaces could be reconfigured and evolve over time to better serve the needs of the town. The framework and guidance takes a long term view of the town centre, in recognition that projects will come forward over many years. However, it is an exciting time for Wokingham, change is already under way in Wokingham with projects such as the Station Link Road under construction and a number of other public realm projects linked with town centre regeneration already planned. The framework and guidance should be used to provide the overarching structure for all public realm projects planned in the town centre to ensure a consistent approach.

The framework and guidance will comprise:

- Movement framework which shows proposed changes to the vehicle, pedestrian and cycle network in the town centre area. The movement framework effectively sets the parameters for the public realm framework and guidance and the design of the Priority Projects
- Public realm framework and guidance; including public realm typologies which show how the public realm treatment can improve legibility and coherence through the town centre by promoting consistent approach to the design of key streets and spaces with the same role and function. The guidance section makes recommendations specific to Wokingham on the role materials, furniture, planting, public art and lighting play in achieving the vision.

2.2 PUBLIC REALM VISION

Wokingham is an attractive market town with a rich history but it also remains forward looking. The Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD and emerging Town Centre Regeneration proposals which seek to deliver the aspirations of the masterplan point to a resilient and exciting future based on an investment in place quality. The public realm has played a central and lively role in the rich history of this market town and this should continue to be the case. In order to acheive this, it is crucial that the character and quality of Wokingham's public realm is enhanced to match that of its built surroundings reinforcing to local residents and businesses that the town has a strong future encouraging them to promote and have pride in the town.

A key part of the vision for the public realm is to work with what Wokingham already has. It aims to promote the rich architectural heritage of the town providing a complimentary public realm which encourages the enjoyment of Wokingham's beautiful and diverse setting, build on the success and popularity of events and market days by providing coordinated and uncluttered streets and spaces capable of accomodating a range of activities. The vision also accepts the role of the town centre in accommodating strategic traffic routes.

The vision has been summarised in a number of clear aspirations which are intended to provide a clear direction to any public realm projects planned in Wokingham town centre. The vision aims to ensure that Wokingham's public realm is able to enhance the identity of the town and play a central role in the life of the town. The framework and guidance sections which follow provide more detail on how these points can be achieved. The vision for Wokingham is to:

- CREATE STREETS AND SPACES THAT BALANCE THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS & VEHICLES
- PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY SETTING FOR WOKINGHAM'S HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT
- SIMPLIFY THE RANGE OF PAVING MATERIALS & FURNITURE TO REFLECT THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF WOKINGHAM
- REMOVE UN-NECESSARY STREET CLUTTER
- CLEARLY DEFINE THE ROLE AND IDENTITY OF EACH OF THE STREETS
- IMPROVE THE IMPRESSION OF WOKINGHAM AT KEY TOWN GATEWAYS
- MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MARKETS & EVENTS
- ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT THROUGH LIGHTING
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW TREES & PLANTS
- USE HIGH QUALITY, ROBUST & TIMELESS MATERIALS

2.3 MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK

From the commencement of developing the Public Realm Strategy, the design team was keen to adopt an ambitious design philosophy consistent with the Strategy Vision that, crucially, remained pragmatically grounded and practicably deliverable on the ground.

To inform the development of conceptual design options within the core area of the town in line with the Vision, a movement framework was developed in parallel with the emerging design work, each informing the other.

Key objectives of the movement framework included:

- Identifying and categorising the key operational functions of the streets likely to be affected by proposed works in order to guide and inform the preparation of emerging design concepts in line with the Vision;
- Assessing how key functions of individual streets interact with one another to identify how proposed changes to one would likely impact on other streets, some of which are not necessarily located within the core area covered by the Strategy;
- Identifying and undertaking high level feasibility assessment of opportunities for network alterations (particularly in relation to traffic carrying functions / capacity) to facilitate significant improvements within the core area in line with the Vision; and,
- Identifying key projects relating to the operational functions of the streets and areas requiring further assessment to facilitate delivery of the Strategy.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

Since publication of Manual for Streets in 2007[1] , a number of town centre highway reconfiguration and improvement schemes have been completed within the UK. Our team's knowledge and experience of work in this field, including direct technical input in a number of cases, provided the initial basis for early ideas concerning feasible options for highway reconfiguration and public realm improvement in Wokingham town centre.

On-site observations of the key operational functions of the network were undertaken throughout December 2012 and January 2013, the findings of which are set out within Chapter 1.5 of the Stage One report. These observations were supplemented with detailed discussions with WBC Officers, elected Members of both WBC and WTC, the WBC Executive leadership group plus a number of local stakeholders (including an open public workshop held in February 2013). The results of this preliminary consultation identified a number of key constraints requiring consideration including:

- The need to maintain appropriate access to the town centre for drivers and for buses and taxis. This includes appropriate provision for parking, loading and bus / taxi layover, pick up / drop off;
- The need to maintain suitable network capacity to for the substantial existing and predicted future level of traffic that will, due to a lack of available alternative routes, continue to use the town centre as a through-route.

[1] HIGHWAYS DESIGN GUIDANCE PUBLISHED BY THE DFT IN 2007 EMPHASISING A SIMPLER, MORE CONTEXTUALLY APPROPRIATE APPROACH TO HIGHWAY DESIGN WITHIN URBAN AREAS TO FACILITATE A BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN THE MOVEMENT NEEDS OF ALL HIGHWAY USERS, BOTH MOTORISED AND NON-MOTORISED.

The consultation process undertaken to date allowed the design team to form a background understanding of the Town's priorities and planned alterations to the existing transport network (particularly associated with the Station Link Road, Elms Field plus the proposed northern and southern distributor roads planned in the longer-term horizon). This allowed further identification of potential to develop options specific to Wokingham including:

- Simplification of traffic management arrangements at key junctions including:
  - London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street;
  - Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road; and
  - (possibly) Reading Road / Station Road including the area in the vicinity of the proposed Reading Road / Elms Field link junction.
- Such measures to include consideration of using junctions as gateways to the town centre to establish and reinforce cognitive signals to drivers demanding adoption of appropriate speeds and driving behaviour upon entry;
- Improving the suitability of the general highway environment within the town centre to cater for the safe and convenient movements of non-motorised users, notably pedestrians and cyclists, through effective management of traffic speeds. Enhancing legibility of pedestrian and cycle routes through and within the town centre;
- Removal of unnecessary carriageway width along Broad Street, Denmark Street and Rose Street to substantially increase the space available for pedestrian movement whilst retaining required vehicular capacity and, where appropriate, parking and loading amenity;
- Reconfiguration of the Market Place to reduce current traffic dominance and reconfigure as a pedestrian friendly heart to the town whilst retaining suitable through capacity for vehicular traffic flows and provision for servicing activity;
- Replacing existing signalised crossings with more frequent courtesy crossings to improve pedestrian connectivity within the central area, reduce traffic dominance and raise status of pedestrians by improving their visibility and priority whilst simultaneously reducing existing onerous impact of signalised crossings on traffic flows through the town;
- Reconfiguring Peach Street to a single lane operation along its length whilst retaining suitable vehicular capacity for traffic movements through and into the town centre;
- Simplifying and improving management of parking and loading activity within the core central area together with improvements to existing public transport and taxi provision; and,
- Potentially reconfiguring Rectory Road to allow two-way traffic flows between its junctions with Wiltshire Road and Broad Street / Shute End.

Having identified outline options considered worthy of further attention, indicative assessment was undertaken to assess the operational performance and viability of the future network incorporating the proposed network alterations in combination. Two broad scenarios were developed for indicative testing based on a series of high level sketches incorporating the following:

PACKAGE ONE

- Minor amendments to the existing London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street junction alignment to facilitate its quality treatment as a key entry "gateway" to the town centre;
- Implementing a single lane operation along Peach Street between its junctions with London Road / Wiltshire Road and Market Place;
- Reconfiguring the Market Place to reduce traffic dominance and provide an appropriate, pedestrian friendly heart to the town;
- Reducing unnecessary carriageway widths along Denmark Street and Broad Street;
- Reconfiguring the existing Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road signal junction as a mini-roundabout style layout;
- Simplifying and improving management and enforcement of parking and loading activity within the central area of the town;
- Broad retention and improvement of existing public transport and taxi infrastructure; and,
- Replacing existing signalised crossings with a greater frequency of non-signalised courtesy crossings to improve pedestrian amenity and provide a more appropriate balance between the movement needs of motorised and non-motorised users of the highway.

PACKAGE TWO

As per Package One plus:

- Introduction of a two-way traffic flow along Rectory Road between its junctions with Wiltshire Road and Broad Street / Shute End to test the potential to reduce through-town traffic movements along Peach Street and

Broad Street;

- Reconfiguration of the existing Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road signal junction as a mini-roundabout style layout accommodating traffic flows approaching along Rectory Road; and,
- Reconfiguration of the Rectory Road / Waitrose access, Rectory Road / Glebelands Road / Palmer School Road and Rectory Road / Wiltshire Road junctions to accommodate two-way traffic along Rectory Road.

Additionally outline sketches of a simplified Station Road / Reading Road junction based upon a mini-roundabout type layout adjacent to the WBC offices plus an indicative mini-roundabout at the planned Shute End / Elms Field link were included for indicative assessment. It is understood that an alternative consented scheme covering the Station Road / Reading Road junction has been prepared and is currently being progressed. The precise layout and operation of the proposed Elms Field link / Shute End junction have yet to be determined. In both cases there would appear to be scope to incorporate the area within the coverage of the emerging Public Realm Strategy if the Authorities were so minded.

INDICATIVE ASSESSMENT

Traffic counts data covering the town centre area collected during both weekday AM and PM peak periods in 2012 was provided to the Study team by WBC. The data was used as a baseline to provide an indicative assessment of and commentary concerning the key operational implications of both reconfiguration packages as set out above. Counts data was supplemented by real world observations taken from a number of locations around the UK with comparable link and junction flows in order to provide relevant data sets for comparison. Such locations include:

- The Elwick Road / West Street corridor in Ashford, Kent;
- The A453 Clifton Lane between its junctions with the Crusader Island and Green Lane in Nottingham;
- The A6004 Epinal Way in Loughborough, Leicestershire;
- Poynton town centre, Cheshire, notably the A523 London Road / Chester Road / Park Lane junction (see image below);
- The Station Road / Market Street / Anson Street / Wolesley Road double mini-roundabout junction in Rugeley, Staffordshire; and,
- The Ibstock Road / Midland Road / Beveridge Lane / Whitehill Road double mini-roundabout junction in Ellistown, Leicestershire.

EXAMPLE OF A SIMPLIFIED JUNCTION ARRANGEMENT IMPLEMENTED IN POYNTON, CHESHIRE

ILLUSTRATION OF A POTENTIAL SIMPLIFIED JUNCTION ARRANGEMENT AT BROAD STREET/SHUTE END JUNCTION

Additionally indicative traffic microsimulation models were prepared using Vissim that covered the key streets and junctions affected by proposed works (a screenshot of which is provided below). Whilst it should be noted that the modelling work undertaken to date is only indicative, the output provided has been useful in informing high level assessment of the feasibility of various design options, notably at key junction locations.

EXAMPLE OF A TRAFFIC MICROSIMULATION MODEL SCREENSHOT

Key conclusions drawn from the assessment of existing network conditions as informed by on-site observations together with the 2012 AM and PM weekday peak traffic counts data and indicative Vissim assessment include:

- Existing traffic flows / demand along Broad Street, Denmark Street, Rectory Road, Reading Road and Shute End are currently satisfactorily accommodated within standard single lane carriageways. Subject to suitable management of parking and loading activity along each, reducing the existing carriageway width would likely have negligible operational impact in each case;
- Existing traffic flows / demand along Peach Street and Wiltshire Road are comfortably within the theoretical maximum capacity of a free-flowing, single lane carriageway. However, this theoretical maximum capacity is reduced by delays to the free-flow traffic imparted by a combination of factors, particularly affecting Peach Street, including:
  - existing parking and loading activity;
  - unnecessary weaving and lane changing behaviour;
  - unnecessarily onerous signalised pedestrian crossing arrangements both along Peach Street itself and further downstream in the vicinity of Market Place and along Broad Street;
  - heavy pedestrian crossing movements that are currently channelled into single crossing locations; and,
  - traffic turning into and out of both Easthampstead Road and Luckley Path; and,
  - occasional traffic queues blocking back from the Finchampstead Road corridor along Denmark Street back into Peach Street.

Within the scope of the assessment undertaken to date, there is insufficient information to allow a precise determination of the level of capacity reduction that would be imparted on the theoretical free-flow maximum by the above factors. Nevertheless, initial conclusions drawn from site observations and indicative microsimulation modelling output suggest that it would be broadly feasible to accommodate the current mix of motorised and non-motorised traffic movements following reconfiguration of Peach Street to single lane operation without causing the loss of capacity required for motorised traffic. This would be achieved through: significantly improving management of parking and loading activity in dedicated off-line bays;

- replacing existing signalised pedestrian crossings that have an unnecessarily onerous impact on traffic flows through the town with an increased number of non-signalised courtesy crossings. In combination with a proposed reduction in the carriageway width to a single lane operation, this should significantly reduce the time taken for pedestrians to cross the road by reducing the crossing distance, the delay imparted by unnecessary pedestrian green time at the existing signals and by allowing greater percolation of pedestrians by increasing the frequency of opportunities for pedestrians to cross the road during incidental, naturally occurring breaks in traffic; and,

- Simplifying the layout to reduce unnecessary traffic weaving and lane changing behaviour;
- The existing London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street junction operates smoothly during both AM and PM peak periods (where traffic conditions along Peach Street remain relatively free-flowing). Observations of the junction indicate that although traffic streams from both London Road and Wiltshire Road into Peach Street are directed into separate lanes, a significant majority of traffic actually filters in turn and effectively merges as it enters Peach Street. Together with site observations, indicative microsimulation assessment suggests it may be feasible to reduce both the entry arm along Wiltshire Road to a single lane, merge the exit along Peach Street into a single lane and slightly rationalise the overall size of the carriageway in the junction vicinity to facilitate improvements to adjacent pedestrian footways and implement an appropriate gateway treatment to the junction;
- Replacement of the existing Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road signal junction with a mini-roundabout style arrangement would be operationally feasible in terms of capacity provided. Such an arrangement would offer significant opportunity to rationalise unnecessary carriageway space, increase space available to allow improvements to pedestrian footways and allow implementation of pedestrian crossings on key desire lines;

Indicative assessment of options to reconfigure the Station Road / Reading Road junction as a simplified mini-roundabout style layout was undertaken, the results of which demonstrated such an approach would very likely prove operationally feasible. Similarly, from assessment of an indicative layout for the Elms Field link / Shute End junction based on similar design principles, it is concluded that such an approach would also prove feasible.

FUTURE YEAR ASSESSMENT

Output from the Wokingham Strategic Transport Model (WSTM) was used to provide predicted traffic flow data covering the central area of the town for 2026. This data was used in order to undertake outline assessment of the future operational implications for the network incorporating the proposed alterations as set out by both Package One and Two. The future model runs also included:
The predicted additional traffic impact of proposed residential development to the north and south of the town;

- The impact of traffic redistribution that is anticipated as a result of delivering both the proposed northern and southern distributor roads; and,
- The proposed SLR, Station Road one-way restriction and Elms Field link road.

MODEL ANALYSIS

Following the predicted addition of traffic growth by 2026, it is concluded that Peach Street is likely to be operating at or very close to its theoretical free-flow capacity. This is backed up by indicative microsimulation analysis which indicates that a single lane operation is likely to have insufficient capacity to accommodate the predicted traffic demand coupled with pedestrian crossing and parking / servicing activities during peak hour periods.
A second WSTM model run was undertaken to assess the broad operational implications of introducing a two-way traffic flow on Rectory Road between its junctions with Wiltshire Road and Shute End / Broad Street with the intention of easing demand through the town centre. This would be achieved by allowing traffic movements currently originating in the north-east area of the town, destined for areas to the north-west to cut across to the north of the town centre via Rectory Road thereby reducing demand along Wiltshire Road, Peach Street and Broad Street. The results of the model run indicate that a substantial proportion of traffic would reassign from Wiltshire Road / Peach Street / Broad Street to Rectory Road. The predicted scale of reassignment would broadly be sufficient to reduce the predicted demand along Peach Street in 2026 to its existing 2012 level and it is therefore concluded that this would allow its reconfiguration to single lane operation whilst retaining suitable capacity across the central area network.

Additional conclusions drawn from high-level observational assessment of introducing a two-way traffic flow along Rectory Road include:

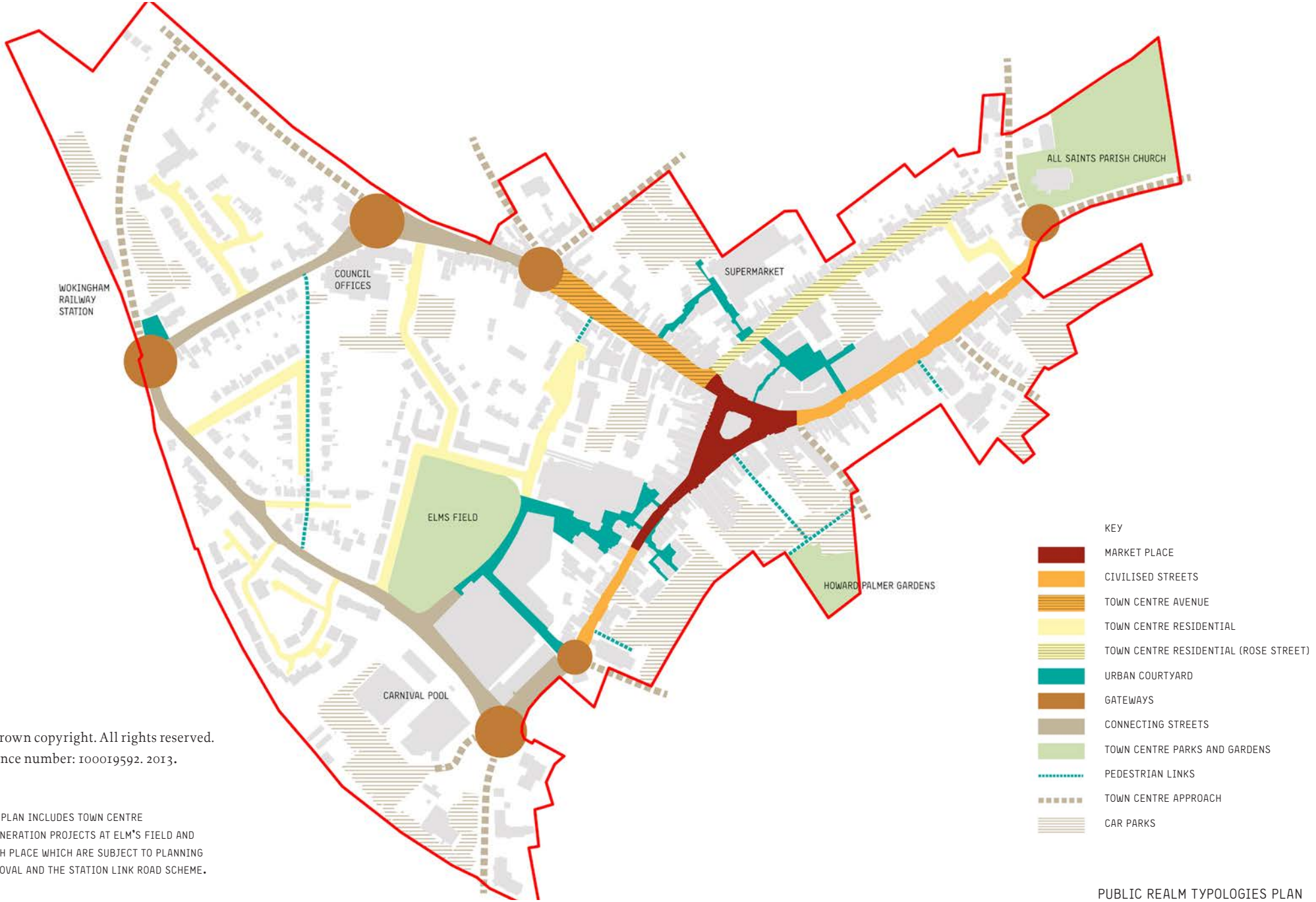
- Weekday peak hour flows through the London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street junction would be broadly reduced to their existing 2012 / 13 levels;
- The accommodation of additional traffic on Rectory Road (notably at the junctions with Wiltshire Road, Glebelands Road / Palmer School Road and the Waitrose access) would likely be feasible in operational and safety terms;
- The overall operational impact on the Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road junction would be minimal as a significant proportion of traffic entering the junction from the new approach via Rectory Road would simply be reassigned from the Broad Street approach.

2.4 PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

Within the parameters set by the movement framework above the public realm framework and guidance outlines a structure which seeks to secure the improvements to the town centre environment referred to in the vision. The public realm typologies plan sets a clear town centre wide structure which defines the role, function and character of public realm areas within Wokingham to ensure any proposals for individual streets and spaces are set within a coherent plan for the whole of the town centre.

This section goes on to set the performance criteria and guiding principles for key components of the public realm. It is intended that the recommendation below should be applied to any public realm proposals coming forward in the town centre. This section includes guidance on:

- Paving materials
- Street furniture
- Planting
- Public art
- Street lighting
- Sustainability
- Accessibility



THIS PLAN INCLUDES TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECTS AT ELM'S FIELD AND PEACH PLACE WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL AND THE STATION LINK ROAD SCHEME.

PUBLIC REALM TYPOLOGIES PLAN

PUBLIC REALM TYPOLOGIES

The typologies plan shows how the public realm treatment can achieve improved legibility and coherence through the town centre by promoting consistent approach to the design of key streets and spaces with the same role and function. Fundamentally this approach helps people to understand and read the structure of the town centre through subtleties in the layout and appearance of their surroundings. The typologies have been drawn to reinforce the positive aspects of the existing character and formalise them into a distinctive, coherent and memorable town centre structure.

The principle aspects of the public realm typologies are:

- Market Place: Defined in its own right to reflect the importance of this space at the heart of the town and central to events and activities in the town. Further details of the proposals for Market Place are provided in the following guidance section.

- Civilised Streets: These streets have a common role in accommodating both strategic transport routes and the town centre's commercial activity. The layout of these streets must balance the needs of both vehicles and pedestrians in order to perform both of these roles effectively. These are streets where pedestrians are more likely to spend time an meander.

- Town Centre Avenue: Similar in their role and function to the Civilised Streets, however, the width of the street allows for the reinstatement of a more formal avenue of trees which is present in historic images of this street. This will set a variation in character from the other Civilised Streets forming a distinctive and memorable feature of the town centre environment.

- Town Centre Residential: Defined to distinguish them from surrounding commercial streets. They should have a character and identity of their own where appropriate but the public realm treatment to Residential Streets should be common in reinforcing an inherently domestic character compared to surrounding streets.

- Urban Courtyard: The Urban Courtyards include predominantly pedestrian spaces which connect commercial areas and contain commercial activity within them. Proposals for Peach Place are being produced as part of the town centre regeneration proposals. The Plaza is an important link between Elm's Field and the town centre, proposals should be prepared to draw people into The Plaza and encourage movement between the Park and the town centre. Further details of the proposals for The Plaza are provided in the following guidance section

- Gateways: Have been identified at each of the major approaches into the town centre core area and demarcate the town cente thresholds. Although referred to as Gateways, these represent the beginning or transition from traditional highways arrangements found on the approaches to the town into the proposed public realm environment outlined in the framework and guidance which runs throughout the town centre core.

- Connecting Streets: Streets which connect the train station with the town centre, pedestrian activity along these streets will be less intensive and operate predominantly as through routes rather than streets to linger and meander, which distinguish them from Civilised Streets. A consistent high quality appearance to these streets through application of similar materials and furniture to the commercial parts of the town centre will help highlight the route to the town centre and create a comfortable, pedestrian friendly environment to encourage movement between the town centre and the train station. The guidance section below provides more detail on how this can be achieved.

Market Place, Civilised Streets, Urban Courtyards and Town Centre Avenue represent the main body of the commercial area of the town centre. A consistent approach to the use of materials should be taken to these streets to clearly display the extents of the commercial area of the town centre to encourage pedestrians to walk through the entirety of the town's retail area.

As regeneration proposals are prepared for Carnival Pool, consideration should be given the how the public realm links into this town centre structure. The current public realm in this area is car dominated and inward looking. The urban design

and public realm approach should be to:

- Link to other town centre commercial areas through Denmark Street and across to Elms Field including appropriate opportunities for pedestrians to cross conveniently
- Link to Elm's Field Park with potential to introduce planting along the frontage to Wellington Road to mirror the park on the opposite side of the road
- Improve the balance the needs of the pedestrians and vehicles
- Apply the public realm guidance below to ensure continuity in materials, finishes and furniture to ensure the area becomes a part of the Wokingham town centre area and reinforces the overall character and identity of the area
- Provides positive overlooking of Wellington road

Common throughout all of these areas is the need for a consistent approach to the design of the public realm and in the character of materials, use of furniture, lighting and planting to ensure an overall continuity and overarching identity is achieved within Wokingham's public realm. How this can be achieved is set out in more detail in the guidance below.

PAVING MATERIALS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

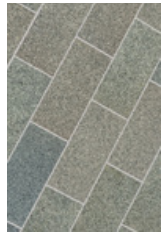
Paved surfaces should be simple, robust, easy to clean and compliment adjoining historic architecture. Over the years there has been a piecemeal approach to materials, evident in the existing array of different materials and patterns, as highlighted in chapter 1. Wokingham has a rich diversity in architecture and styles. Therefore, we propose a really simple approach to materials using a restrained palette of paving material throughout town to unify the streets and provide an appropriate backdrop that does not compete or clash with the architecture. This backdrop however will have a richness and use changes in material carefully to either demarcate a change in use or in response to a local variation in the character of the townscape.

The colour and the texture of materials shown has been informed by the variation in architectural styles, resulting in a neutral palette of materials which will not compete with the architecture and are light in colour. Avoiding red, purple and orange colours in the paving will be particularly important in achieving this given the high proportion of brick buildings in the town. A palette of high quality materials has been selected intentionally; it is felt that quality of the public realm materials must be raised to match the quality of the town's built form to rectify one of the current failings of the town centre public realm. Natural materials should be used as far as possible which are capable of weathering and adding richness over time. The use of high quality and natural materials will require substantial investment upfront, but the durability of these materials will reduce the long term maintenance costs and will not need replacing as frequently. Confidence in supply chain and flexibility in sourcing should inform specification and sourcing of materials, where natural stone is used quarry life expectancy should be stated to ensure availability of the stone over time, this will be particularly important as individual projects in Wokingham will be phased over many years.

As part of the development of this Strategy we consulted with street cleansing and Highways and it was felt that a limited number of materials would be much easier from a maintenance perspective. The type of materials suggested below comprises a limited palette of non/specialist materials which should be readily available from major public realm suppliers, performance criteria for each of the materials are provided rather than specific products to ensure that consistency can be acheived through implementation over time without relying on a availability of a single product.

Materials

Granite – Chosen for its versatility and durability, it is suggested to form part of all the main commercial streets and spaces. It is a high quality material which has been selected to raise the quality of the public realm to the surrounding built form. Specified in neutral colours granite will not detract from or clash with the surrounding built form, it will tie together the variety of architecture and looks equally at home against historic buildings and more contemporary architecture. Granite offers tremendous versatility in application, available in a range of finishes, sizes and subtle variations in colour can be specified to define distinct areas of the public realm. The images shown include granite sourced from Northern Ireland.



GRANITE

Pennant – Suggested as an alternative to granite, it provides a robust surface material appropriate to the intensive use of the town centre public realm, offers flexibility in size and finish of units and is sourced from the UK. However, is generally is more limited in choice of colour and is darker grey with strong buff bands running through and is therefore felt it may be less universal in complementing the range of surrounding buildings.


PENNANT

High quality concrete block paving. E.g. Stonemaster from Charcon, Kellen from Hardscape - Selected to provide a similar appearance to granite used in the commercial areas but is a more cost effective alternative in less intensively used areas of the town.



CONCRETE BLOCK

Hot rolled asphalt – using consistent aggregate with surrounding stone paving to provide improved continuity in materials through the street and higher quality appearance to the street cross section.

HOT ROLLED ASPHALT

Bound Gravel –Bound gravel is available in a range of colours and has been selected to provide a more domestic look and feel to the residential streets. If specified correctly bound gravel can be used to pedestrian and trafficked parts of these streets.

BOUND GRAVEL

Mastertint – Essentially a coloured asphalt, proposed as an alternative for the carriageways areas in Residential Streets. Mastertint uses specially formulated pigment with a complementary aggregate to give the asphalt its final colour. This ensures that the colour is retained throughout the aggregate and not just on the surface.

MASTERTINT

Clay Pavers –Selected to provide a more domestic look and feel to the residential streets when compared to surrounding commercial streets. As described in the text above red, purple and orange pavers should be avoiding due to the number of and colour range of brick buildings. Blue or grey pavers are considered more appropriate.



CLAY PAVERS

Paving design

The size and orientation of paving will be subject to detail street design, performance criteria of the surface in question and the method of construction. However, it is crucial that a common approach is taken to detailed specification of materials, consultation should be undertaken with the Local Authority to ascertain whether additional details are available to ensure tie in with surrounding streets.

A piecemeal replacement of public realm materials has resulted in poor continuity and few remaining paving features of historic significance. However, it should be noted that a number of historically significant carriage entrances remain and are delineated in cobbles, these have been partially replaced with concrete pavers in the town where the original surface has become too uneven or slippery. These entrances should retained or reinstated by demarcation in an alternative material, if the existing cobbles cannot be relaid satisfactorily then a material with similar appearance and qualities should be used, for example a small size granite sett. Also, the existing wide stone kerbs in Peach Street, Market Place, Denmark Street and Broad Street seem in reasonably good condition and the possibility of lifting, reconditioning and relying these using replacements only where necessary should be explored.

For public realm areas of such high profile the quality of the materials being used should be matched by the detail and the quality of the workmanship. The following principles should also be applied to the detailed pavement design to ensure a consistent high quality finish to the town centre streets and spaces.

- The material should be well suited to provide easily accessible surfaces for everyone
- Material finish, colour or size should be used to vary the appearance of carriageway, loading/parking bays and footpaths to clearly define trafficked parts of the street
- Changes in paving colour and texture should be restricted and meaningless patterns in the floorscape avoided
- Opportunities for using recessed infill service covers throughout the town centre area should be explored. Where used the material within the covers should match the surrounding paving in terms of material, finish, size and laying pattern.
- All service covers, whether recessed or not should be lifted and re-aligned to run parallel to the coursing of the surrounding paving wherever possible.
- Consideration should be given to the use of drainage channels which

EXAMPLE OF A RECESSED INFILL SERVICE COVERS

EXAMPLE OF A SLOT DRAIN

EXAMPLE OF AN INFILL CHANNEL DETAIL

minimise visual intrusion use of slot drains, recessed infill covers to channels.

- The lines and levels of finished surfaces should be smooth and even with gradual falls to prevent ponding without creating a trip hazard.
- Details of any cutting and laying around furniture items, building thresholds and be around radii should be provided as part of a fully detailed design package
- Control samples should be used to gain approval of materials on site and to ensure continuity with other areas of paving
- The use of a pavement protection treatment should be considered to all paving to offer additional protection from graffiti and dirt. The selected product shall be UV stable and not a sacrificial coating. The selected pavement protection product should not change the colour or tone of the materials or diminish the inherent anti-slip properties of the surface finish.
- Consultation exercises undertaken have also highlighted an issue surrounding penetrating damp and surface water run off effecting historic buildings due to gradual raising of public realm levels over time. In particular this affects buildings at the eastern end of Peach Street, Market Place, Rose Street and some cottages along Broad Street and Shute End. Consideration should be given to lowering the footpath levels around the threshold of these buildings and whether drainage can be incorporated which diverts water away from these buildings.
- The document 'Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces' published by the Department for Transport in 2007 should be referred to for details of the appropriate use and layout of tactile paving. Part of this guidance covers materials and colours for tactile paving and states that in conservation areas and in proximity to listed buildings, relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable. Detailed design should therefore explore the opportunity for using matching material for the tactile paving, subject to further consultation with local groups representing visually impaired, rehabilitation and mobility impaired user groups.
- One of the key aspirations of the public realm in Wokingham is to establish a balance between the needs of vehicles and pedestrians. A measure which has consistently applied in the movement framework is to minimise the width of carriageways to town centre streets. Surface materials used in the carriageway can further, visually reduced the width of the carriageway by using a wide channel line at the base of the kerb. This can be achieved through use of a contrasting material such as sett paving.

TACTILE PAVING IN MATCHING/COMPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

EXAMPLE OF WIDE CHANNEL LINE AND HOW HOT ROLLED ASPHALT CAN BE USED TO IMPROVE CONTINUITY IN MATERIALS ACROSS THE STREET

WIDE CHANNEL LINE

Courtesy crossings

The movement framework proposes the replacement of signalised crossings with a greater frequency of non-signalised courtesy crossings to improve pedestrian amenity and provide a more appropriate balance between the movement needs of motorised and non-motorised users of the highway. The design of the crossings will be subject to detailed design and further consultation with specific user groups. However, they should adopt the following principles.

- Minimal carriageway widths at crossing locations to keep traffic speeds low and minimise time taken for pedestrians to cross the road;
- Continuation of footway material within crossing to maintain integrity and continuity of the pedestrian environment whilst simultaneously reducing the conventional dominance of motorised traffic in the environment (I.e. psychology is that vehicles cross pedestrian routes rather than pedestrians crossing vehicular routes);
- Frequent crossings help to disrupt the linear continuity of the vehicular routes and encourage pedestrian permeability and accessibility. Frequency of crossing locations helps to reduce vehicle speeds and increase status of pedestrians;
- Transition between footway onto pedestrian crossing would be level. Detailed design undertaken in consultation with groups with specific mobility needs and impairment (likely to include, but not limited to, sight impaired, disabled, elderly and children). We would suggest inclusion of a clear colour / shade distinction between the crossing and carriageway to make as visible as possible without impacting on design integrity. Consistency of material between crossing and footway will help ensure understanding of designation as specific crossing points requiring adoption of suitable behaviour from users, particularly drivers (this is experience in Poynton). Crossing locations would also be indicated by placement of tactile paving to guide sight impaired.

EXAMPLES OF A NUMBER OF COURTESY CROSSINGS FROM HIGH PROFILE PUBLIC REALM SCHEMES

PAVING MATERIALS STRATEGY

The strategy below references the public realm typologies plan. The strategy has been prepared to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the specification of materials which combine to achieve a strong overarching identity to Wokingham's public realm appropriate to the role of the streets and character of the surrounding built form. This does not mean absolute uniformity in the surface materials, variations in laying pattern, sizes, finish or alternative materials are proposed in recognition of the range of typologies identified in the public realm framework above.

Market Place

Market Place, Civilised Streets, Town Centre Avenue and Urban Courtyards are the most intensively used streets and spaces in the town centre, a common material should be used to these streets to signify the extent of the main commercial area of the town.

Natural Stone is proposed as a suitable material for all parts of Market Place including footways, loading/parking bays, carriageways and kerbs and channels. Variations in the colour, size or laying pattern should be applied to these areas to ensure trafficked parts of the space are clearly defined but the overall impression should be of a unified paving surface across the whole space from building edge to building edge. Existing wide stone kerbs appear in reasonable condition; existing kerbs should be lifted, reconditioned and reused wherever possible in Market Place. Replacement of existing signalised crossing with a greater frequency of courtesy crossings (as highlighted in the movement framework) should be considered in this area. Natural stone is also considered appropriate to wide channel lines to the base of the kerb within the carriageway referred to above.

Civilised Streets

Natural Stone is proposed as a suitable material for footpaths, loading/parking bays and kerbs and channels in Civilised Streets to offer consistency with Market Place above. Asphalt is suggested for the carriageway areas. Existing wide stone kerbs appear in reasonable condition; existing kerbs should be lifted, reconditioned and reused wherever possible in the Civilised Streets. Replacement of existing signalised crossing with a greater frequency of courtesy crossings (as highlighted in the movement framework) should be considered in this area. Natural stone is also considered appropriate to wide channel lines to the base of the kerb within the carriageway referred to above.

Town Centre Avenue

Natural Stone is proposed as a suitable material for footpaths, loading/parking bays and kerbs and channels in Town Centre Avenue to offer consistency with Market Place above. Asphalt is suggested for the carriageway areas. Existing wide stone kerbs appear in reasonable condition; existing kerbs should be lifted, reconditioned and reused wherever possible in the Town Centre Avenue. Replacement of existing signalised crossing with a greater frequency of courtesy crossings (as highlighted in the movement framework) should be considered in this area. Natural stone is also considered appropriate to wide channel lines to the base of the kerb within the carriageway referred to above.

Town Centre Residential

Residential Streets should be paved in a material appropriate to the domestic character of these streets to differentiate them from surrounding commercial area of the town centre. Final colours and finishes must be specified to complement the surrounding architecture. Clay pavers or resin bound gravel are suggested to footways and parking bays, coloured asphalt (such as mastertint) or resin bound gravel is suggested to the carriageway. Natural stone is also considered appropriate to wide channel lines to the base of the kerb within the carriageway referred to above.

Urban Courtyard

Natural Stone is proposed to the Urban Courtyard areas to provide consistency with the surrounding Market Place and Civilised Street areas and to emphasise these routes as a continuation of principle commercial area of the town centre. The paving design should be developed to create a uniform paved surface from building edge to building edge. High quality concrete block pavers as used in the Connecting Street could be used as more cost effective means of achieving a similar appearance to natural stone in Market Place and Civilised Streets. This may be possible particularly when the spaces will not be trafficked and therefore less intensively used.

Gateways

A consistent approach should be taken to all of the simplified junction arrangements proposed in the movement framework including:

- London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street;
- Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road; and
- (possibly) Reading Road / Station Road including the area in the

vicinity of the proposed Reading Road / Elms Field link junction.
- Denmark Street / Langborough Road

The specification of suitable materials for these junctions will be part of the detailed design exercise developing a suitable detailed design for the junction, the final selection of materials will need to meet the performance criteria of the junction and carriageway design. However, it is suggested that as far as possible these junctions should offer continuity and quality of appearance in keeping with the Civilised Streets and Town Centre Avenues and achieve the aspiration of balancing the requirements of the highways design with providing an attractive and pedestrian friendly environment.

Connecting Streets
The Connecting Streets are slightly peripheral to the town centre core area and function as connecting routes rather than places which people will inhabit and spend time. Nevertheless Connecting Streets should be paved to create a more pedestrian focussed environment, high quality material similar in appearance to the Civilised Streets and Town Centre Avenue to encourage through flow of pedestrians between the town centre and the train station. Given the lower intensity of pedestrian activity it may be more appropriate to retain the use of signalised crossings in these streets.

High quality concrete block paving. E.g. Stonemaster from Charcon, Kellen from Hardscape are considered appropriate for footpaths and parking/loading bays in the Connecting Streets. These have been selected to provide a similar appearance to granite used in the commercial areas but are more cost effective alternative in less intensively used areas of the town. Asphalt is considered to be appropriate for defined carriageway areas within the Connecting Streets. Natural stone is considered appropriate to new kerbs and to wide channel lines to the base of the kerb within the carriageway referred to above.

Town Parks and gardens
A detailed design process is underway for a comprehensively revitalised park at Elm's Field. Once complete, and an agreed materials palette is in place, consideration should be given to whether aspects of this palette can be applied to the Howard Palmer Gardens in the future to ensure better continuity between the principal open spaces in the town.







MATERIAL PALETTE SUGGESTED FOR WOKINGHAMS PUBLIC REALM

STREET FURNITURE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Street furniture includes seating, bollards, lighting columns, signage, litter bins, cycle racks, bollards and barriers, drainage covers, tree grilles and protection, bus shelters and railings. The points below detail a number of specific guidelines that should guide selection and specification of any street furniture proposed in Wokingham.

A simple palette of street furniture should be applied across Wokingham to give unity to the image of the town centre. This should comprise limited number of benches, lighting columns, litter bins and so on. In special instances, as detailed in the framework, there are opportunities to deviate from this standard palette and use bespoke furniture to address a particular design challenge or in implementing public art.

Site appraisal and consultation work have emphasised the importance of the historic character of Wokingham. Selection, design and positioning of street furniture must respect the unique qualities and identity of the town. The built form of Wokingham dates from a wide range of time periods, it is therefore suggested that the street furniture should be timeless rather than attempting to mimic a style from a particular period. Richness in detailing and quality of materials is also important in surrounding built form and should be reflected in street furniture. Street furniture should be used which is elegant and timeless, in practice this will mean materials with a more traditional appearance used in a functional way avoiding overtly contemporary finishes and either over simplified or elaborate detailing.

Street furniture specification and selection should be informed by Product Environmental Profile and Life Cycle Analysis. For example using timber in lieu of metal alternatives where possible can have lower embodied energy and produce fewer harmful waste materials during manufacture.

There are a number of memorial benches within the town centre, these should be incorporated into any detailed scheme. Where possible these may be retained in their current form in situ but some will need to be relocated to accommodate the reconfigured street layout.

Materials

Materials which are considered most appropriate include:

Steel or aluminium; aqua or bead blasted stainless steel, anodised aluminium and powder coated finishes to steel should be considered which achieve a matt finish in a consistent dark grey colour to ensure that furniture recedes and does not detract or clash with surrounding architecture but does contrast with surrounding surfaces and is therefore clearly visible. Highly polished finishes or brightly coloured materials which create a distinctly contemporary feel should be avoided. Aqua or bead blasted stainless steel is preferred as this infers least maintenance, can be repaired and is robust enough to withstand life in the public realm.

Timber should be used as far as possible in all furniture. Timber will be an important natural material which if specified correctly will add warmth to the public realm which can weather and richness over time requiring minimal maintenance. Furniture should be constructed from FSC approved Hardwood that can be left untreated.

These materials should be applied consistently even if the form of the furniture varies, a common approach to the specification of materials will ensure continuity in the public realm. Street furniture should not need painting for maintenance and sustainability reasons. Therefore, cast iron should be avoided. The suggested palette of street furniture materials is selected to be robust enough to withstand life in the public realm, easily maintained and replaced.

As detailed design work is undertaken on highways and public realm projects in Wokingham an audit of all existing traffic signage, barriers, bollards and furniture should be undertaken to ensure a balance between the statutory requirements for traffic signs and avoidance of visual clutter which detracts from the quality of built form of Wokingham.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR STREET FURNITURE

- It should be placed with care and restraint in order to respect civic character and avoid excessive clutter.
- All fixings should be vandal resistant
- It must be robust which means long lasting and vandal resistant.
- It should infer minimal maintenance.
- Individual items should be arranged in simple lines and organised to reduce clutter.
- It must be user friendly – for example, a seat must be comfortable, inviting and warm, a litter bin must be easily emptied, have sufficient capacity and hold litter without blowing it around.
- It should be carefully placed so that conflicts with pedestrian desire lines are minimised. There must be adequate movement zones around and between items of furniture for both pedestrians and wheelchair users.
- The placing of street furniture must respect Highway Authority requirements such as minimum distances from carriageway kerbs, avoiding obscuring sight lines etc.

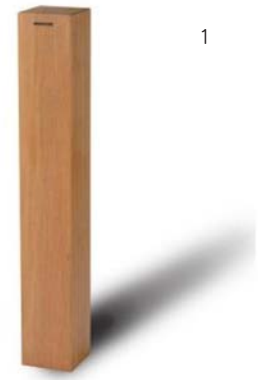
SEATING

- Seating should be introduced in areas that are well used by pedestrians and should be sited at locations and destination points where people would naturally desire to stop.
- The positioning of seats and benches should not create an obstruction to pedestrian movement, entranceways or street cleansing.
- On pavements and in narrow streets they should only be provided where there is sufficient room.
- Seating areas should be positioned where there are sufficient levels of natural surveillance.
- A range of seating should be offered throughout the town centre, including seating with back and arm rests.
- The seat section should be FSC certified timber for comfort.
- Seating should drain well to minimise the time it is unsuitable after rain.
- There should be a preference towards backless designs to maximise flexibility (i.e. multi-sided seating). Where backrests are incorporated, the position of the bench should be carefully considered to avoid restriction of pedestrian use.

EXAMPLES OF BENCHES WHICH MEET THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES: 1: BESPOKE BENCH DESIGNED TO RESPOND TO HISTORIC CONTEXT. 2: VEKSO ROYAL TIMBER BENCH. 3: COMUNITARIO TIMBER BENCH.

BOLLARDS

- Bollards should only be introduced where absolutely necessary. In certain circumstances, a well designed layout of a street and the use of street furniture and/or trees can negate the need for bollards.
- The spacing and the size of the bollards should be appropriate to the situation and the number of bollards should not exceed the number that is essential for the specific use and they should not impede pedestrian movement.
- Where individual bollards need to be replaced, the style of bollard must stay consistent throughout the scheme.
- Bollards to be root fixed. Base plate fixing only permitted if underground excavation is not possible
- Bollards should comprise a single unit - avoid detachable elements
- Bollards to meet relevant Highways Authority requirements
- Height and diameter of bollard to be selected for purpose.



1

2

EXAMPLES OF BOLLARDS WHICH MEET THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES: 1: WOODSCAPE SQUARE PROFILE TIMBER BOLLARD. 2: DW WINDSOR JUNO BOLLARD.

SIGNAGE AND WAY MARKING

- A detailed signage and way-marking strategy should be carried out for the town centre and approaches to the town centre. Resultant designs should adhere to the recommendations of the wayfinding guidance section below
- Way marking should be clear, logical and user friendly. A consistent type of signage should be adopted for the entire public realm to develop a cohesive and distinctive graphic style.
- The positioning of signage should not create an obstruction to pedestrian movement, entranceways or street cleansing, and must not impede highways visibility splays.
- All text should be clearly legible, and Braille and embossed text should be included where possible.
- To avoid street clutter, traffic signage should be kept to minimum and only show essential information. Minimum standards should be discussed with the Highways Authority.
- Where possible, multiple signs should be fixed to individual poles to avoid street clutter.

1

2

EXAMPLES OF SIGNAGE WHICH MEET THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES: 1: WOODHOUSE CAMPUS MONOLITH. 2: WOODHOUSE CAMPUS FINGERPOST.

LITTER BINS

- Litter bins should not be left in isolation and should be grouped or aligned with other street furniture to ensure that clutter along the street is minimised and that pedestrian movement is not impeded.
- Bins should be located near to communal areas such as bus stops and seating areas.
- All bins should be mounted on a flat / level surface and attached to the floor.
- Bins should be resistant to staining and easy to clean.
- Design to allow for simple clearance and have a galvanised liner
- Litter bins should have covers to prevent raiding from birds or litter being blown out
- Litter bins should have a minimum capacity of 60 litres
- Possibility of including recycling bins should be explored further

EXAMPLES OF LITTER BINS WHICH MEET THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES: VOSS TIMBER, STEEL AND POWDER COATED LITTER BINS

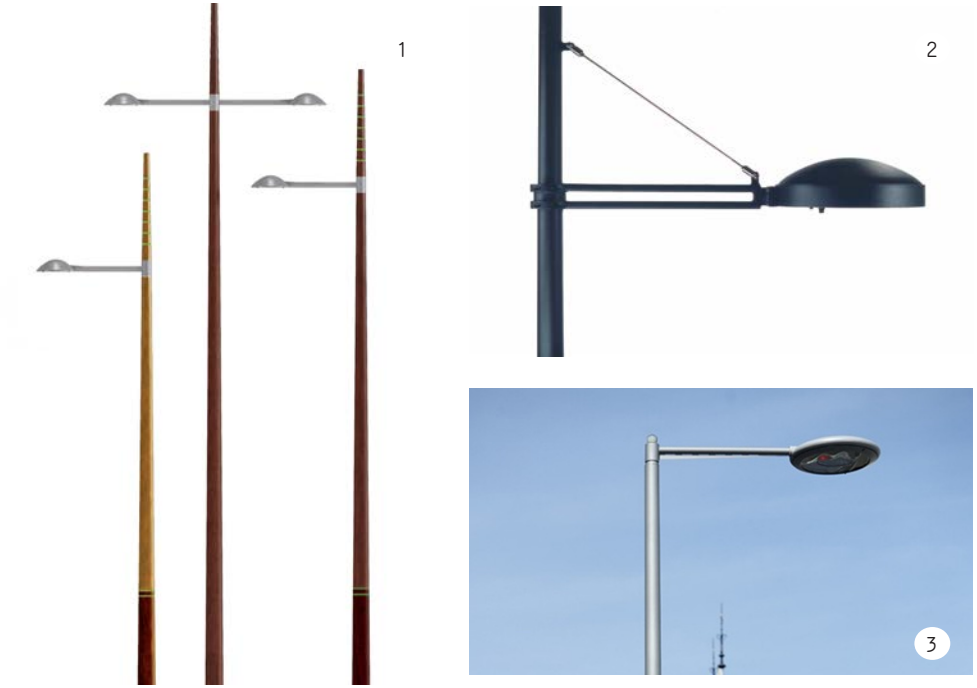
CYCLE STANDS

- Cycle stands should comprise of a simple hoop design which is most practical for cyclists as it enables both wheels to be locked to it.
- Provision for cycle parking should be accommodated in convenient locations for cyclists, subject to an evaluation of the impact it will have on pedestrian movement and on the street scene.
- Stands should be located at places with natural surveillance, such as in public spaces or places which are overlooked, to improve security. Cycle stands should not be placed in isolation, but grouped to ensure that clutter along the street is minimized and pedestrian desire lines are not impeded.
- Preferred method of fixing stands is root fixed. Where this is not possible due to underground obstructions, stands can be surface mounted

EXAMPLES OF CYCLE STAND WHICH MEET THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES: SHEFFIELD STEEL OR POWDER COATED CYCLE STAND

STREET LIGHTING

- Refer to lighting strategy below
- Lighting furniture should be selected to complement all other street furniture items.
- The current mixture of highways centric lighting columns should be replaced with a coordinated suite of columns which fit with the principles of the lighting strategy above and provide a comfortable and attractive environment for pedestrians as well as meeting the functional requirements of highways lighting.
- In order to acheive the points above timber lighting columns are suggested to the town centre area. Timber column can offer a more sustainable alternative than traditional steel or aluminium columns, which if specified correctly will infer minimal maintenance. However, if steel or aluminium coloumns are used the finish should be specified in accordance with the principles above and to match other furniture items.



EXAMPLES OF LIGHTING COLUMNS WHICH MEET THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES: 1: WOODHOUUSE AUBRILAM TIMBER LIGHTING COLUMNS. 2: URBIS PASEO ALUMINIUM LIGHTING COLUMN. 3: WOODHOUSE GEO LIGHTING COLUMN

CCTV

- Where CCTV is considered necessary:
- Where possible, CCTV cameras should be fixed to existing structures and buildings.
- Where standalone CCTV poles are used, care must be taken to ensure that clutter along the street is minimized and pedestrian movement is not impeded.
- The use of photovoltaic and/or other renewable power supplies should be considered to contribute towards the sustainability targets.

PAY AND DISPLAY MACHINES

- If pay and display machines are required they should be located at the back edge of pavements (possibly wall mounted) or aligned with other street furniture to avoid disruption to pedestrians and avoid creating clutter.
- The use of photovoltaic and/or other renewable power supplies should be considered to contribute towards the sustainability targets.

UTILITY BOXES

- It is important that boxes are successfully integrated within the public realm. They should be suitably aligned with the direction of the pavement and be sited at the back of the pavement. Care needs to be taken not to create a rubbish trap between the box and a building.
- Utility boxes should be painted to match the colour of the surrounding furniture (i.e. Dark grey) wherever possible.

BUS SHELTERS

- A single model of bus shelter should be selected for use throughout the town centre to help to create a cohesive public realm. All bus shelters must satisfy highways requirements.
- Bus shelters should be located where they intrude as little as possible upon pedestrian movement space in the street. Shelters should not be positioned in front of building entrances as this can obstruct pedestrian desire lines and impede legibility. The use of advertising panels should be avoided, however, if required they should be incorporated on the side of the shelters, rather than at the rear.
- Simple and robust cantilevered design with clear glazing to be preferred
- Quarter end or half end panel design to be preferred to safeguard pedestrian movement along footpaths
- To provide sufficient weather protection and include seating, or a leaning rail element.

STREET FURNITURE STRATEGY

Generally it is considered appropriate to have a consistent type of furniture to all streets within the town centre area rather than providing variety through the various street typologies. This will help to build a clear and strong identity to the town centre public realm and avoid the need for multiple types of furniture to be held in storage. In addition to the general guiding principles on street furniture above the following specific principles can be applied to each of the public realm typologies.

Market Place

Market Place is the principal town square in Wokingham, as such it is the focus to many of the events in the town it also hosts market days. It is at the centre of the town's commercial area and in contrast to the majority of the surrounding streets offers a degree of refuge from the busy roads in the town centre. For these reasons it is suggested that seating opportunities should be maximised in this area. Litter bins should be provided at regular points through Market Square.

Furniture in this area currently obstructs pedestrian desire lines, therefore seating in Market Place should be carefully positioned to avoid obstructing desire lines through the square or unnecessarily restricting space available for events and markets. Seating should be positioned around the trees in the space and against the Town Hall building (away from windows and doors) so that people can sit in shade and look into the space. Bespoke furniture including seating could be considered in this location to reinforce the character of the space and the role of the square at the heart of the town centre.

Opportunities for including cycle stands within Market Place should be explored. Discussions with market stall operators and event organisers also highlighted the importance of pop up power in the space. Potential for inclusion of recessed market stall anchor points should also be considered.

EXAMPLES OF HOW BESPOKE SEATING CAN BE INCORPORATED AROUND TREES (WHARF GREEN, SWINDON)

Civilised Streets

These streets are generally quite narrow so space for non-essential items of furniture will be quite limited. Opportunities for seating should be carefully considered, avoiding placing seating where it will obstruct pedestrian movement or result in unattractive places to sit for example in close proximity to carriageways. The most appropriate opportunities for including seating will be at the back of the footpath against unanimated facades or walls where the streets widen sufficiently. Opportunities for including cycle stands and litter bins within Civilised Streets should be explored, particularly where additional width of this street would allow stands to the located in line with tree planting, for example at the southern end of Denmark Streets and eastern end of Peach Street.

Town Centre Avenue

The implementation of a complete avenue of trees to both sides of the street and the additional width available on this street make it an attractive place for people to spend time and therefore seating should be provided in accordance with the guiding principles set out above. Opportunities for including cycle stands and litter bins within Town Centre Avenue should be explored, particularly as the additional width of this street would allow stands to the located in line with tree planting.

Town Centre Residential

The residential nature of this street would suggest that this street is less suitable for seating. Seating should generally be kept away from private residential properties out of respect for the privacy of the residents.

Urban Courtyard

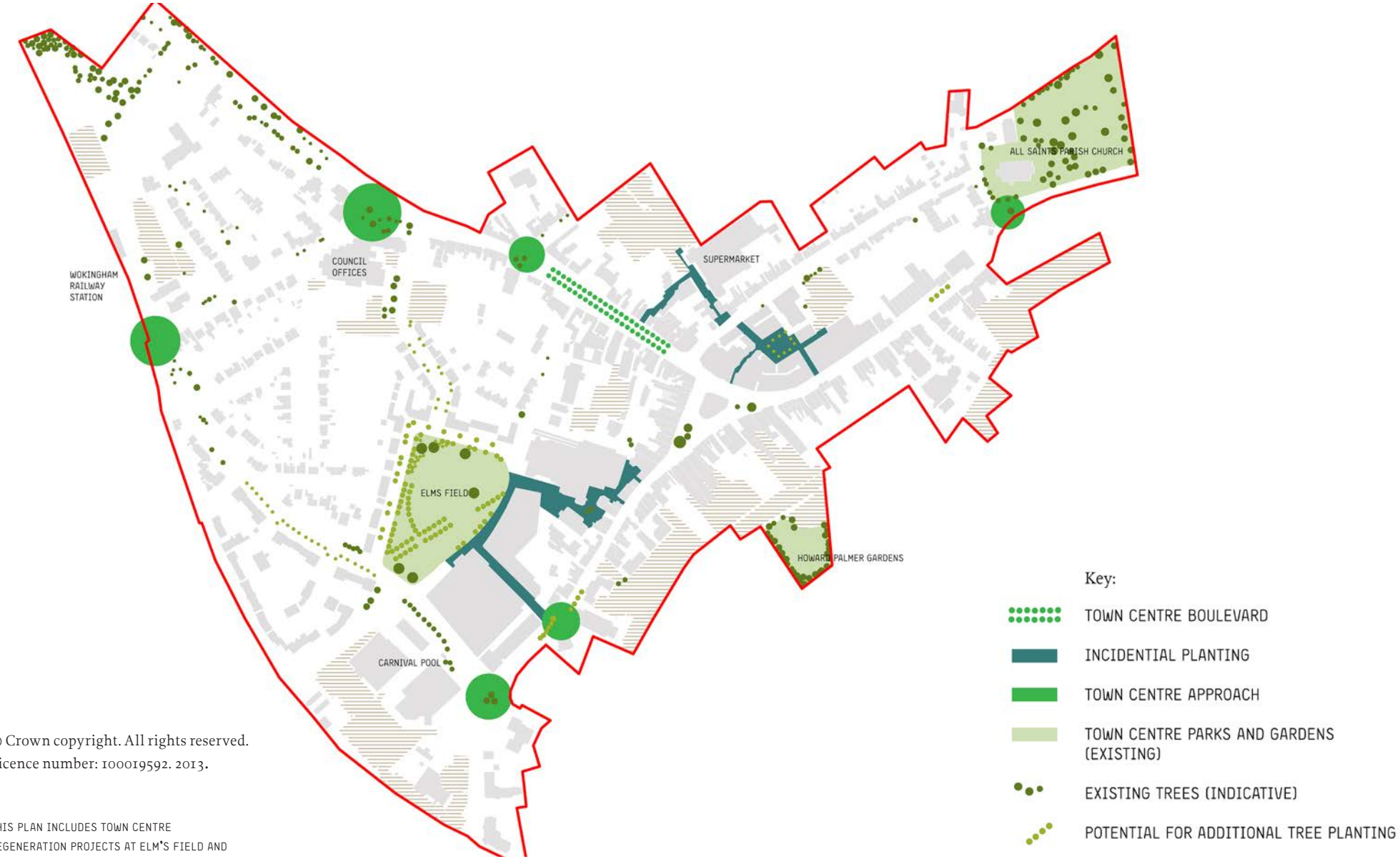
Urban Courtyards will be predominantly pedestrianised areas offering refuge from main roads through the centre. Seating should be provided wherever possible to encourage people to populate these areas for longer. Consideration should be given to integrating seating into the planters within the space so that people can sit against these and look into the space. Opportunities for including cycle stands and litter bins within Urban Courtyards should be explored.

EXAMPLES OF HOW SEATING MAY BE BUILT INTO PLANTERS IN THE PLAZA. EXAMPLES FROM STREETLIFE

Gateways
The movement framework suggests the implementation of simplified junction arrangements at a number of key Gateways into the town centre. A result of these junction alterations will be to reduce the dominance of the carriageway in these areas and to create more space for planting. As a consequence, there may also be opportunities to incorporate more seating at these points. Seating should be incorporated as far as possible in the station forecourt alongside information points as set out in the wayfinding guidance below.

Connecting Streets
As with Commercial Streets above, there is generally a limited amount of space along these streets, particularly along the footpaths. The streets function more as linear routes and have more residential uses along them, they are not envisaged as places where people will spend time. Opportunities for providing seating will therefore be limited.

Town Parks and gardens
These are green and attractive spaces which offer refuge from the busy town centre environment, opportunities for seating should be maximised. Litter bins should be provided in these areas.



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PLANTING STRATEGY PLAN

PLANTING STRATEGY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Tree selection and Provenance

Trees can enhance streets and spaces, complement architecture and emphasise important views. The planting of larger and long lived native tree species which can provide seasonal interest and biodiversity value is encouraged; however trees must be of an appropriate scale to the context of the site. If planting in avenues is desirable the same species should be used throughout to create a consistent streetscape. Advanced procurement of tree stock should be considered to ensure successful supply. Minimum requirements for street tree specification will require the use semi-mature trees with an overall height in excess of 5 metres and/ or stem girth measure of 25-30cm or larger. A clear stem of 2m will be required to safeguard movement and reduce potential vandalism. Lower branches (to 2.5 metres) should be removed prior to planting to prevent vandalism. Local nurseries should be used where appropriate to ensure that trees are accustomed to local conditions. Consideration should be given to the form and mature size of the trees, all trees planted in the town centre will be spatially constrained by adjacent buildings and highways. Use of upright forms of tree can be advantageous in planning street trees as these will still be able to reach a mature size without impacting on neighbouring buildings or highways.

The town's motto – "E Glande Quercus" meaning "from the acorn, the oak." and the recent Jubilee Tree Planting scheme, which involved 60 Oaks throughout the borough may be used to inform tree selection. A variety of Oak species are available commercially including evergreen and fastigiate forms which may be appropriate as street trees in Wokingham.

Tree positioning

Street tree planting to be in accordance with BS5837:2005 Trees in relation to construction or any amendments that subsequently update this document. Locations of street tree planting are constrained by shade, services / basements, ease of pedestrian movement, leaf litter, vandalism, and soil type. Where possible, trees and street furniture should be grouped or aligned to ensure that minimum impact is made on pedestrian movement. Trees should not obstruct sightlines, views, signage, building entranceways and the views from CCTV cameras. Trees should be positioned sufficient distance back from the carriageway minimising the extent to which canopies overhang the carriageway. This may be aided by the use of upright specimens which have minimal canopy spread into maturity.

Season of planting

Street trees should be planted during the dormant period between mid October to March. Early planting, before the end of the year is preferred.

Tree pit details

Technical consultation undertaken as part of this work has highlighted that there are a number of issues regarding existing mature street trees, particularly relating to pavement heave around Market Place. Where there is potential for conflict between roots of proposed new tree planting and underground services or potential for root damage to paving areas, suitable preventative methods such as root barriers and root deflectors should be used to encourage roots to grow down, away from the surface therefore avoiding pavement heave issues in the future. Tree Pits should be excavated either in trench or square form and provide a sufficient growing medium for the species of tree.

Consideration should be given to the use of a modular rooting system, there are a number of proprietary systems available which are commonly specified to tree pits, particularly in urban areas. A modular rooting system can be used to allow the rooting zone to extend beneath footpaths , potentially providing a substantially larger volume of soil for the trees to encourage healthy growth. Subject to suitable detailed design, the modular system is capable of providing support for the pavement above. Tree pits should be of a suitable size to ensure future healthy growth. This may be specific to tree species. Topsoil to be to BS3882:2007. All trees are to be underground guyed and fitted with approved irrigation system. Adequate and natural irrigation and drainage should be incorporated within the design of tree pits. Future root growth should be accounted for by identifying suitable locations for planting.

Tree Surrounds

Should maximise potential for natural irrigation and allow for the future growth of the trees. Self binding gravel is suggested in the public realm framework, which if maintained can retain a large permeable surface area around the base of the tree.

PLANTING STRATEGY

The plan below shows the proposed town centre planting strategy. Many of the streets and spaces within Wokingham are too narrow or small to accommodate mature trees. The strategy proposes that street trees are only included where there is sufficient space under and above ground for them to grow to a mature size without causing issues with adjacent buildings and pavement heave. The overarching structure to the planting strategy is to maximise opportunities for planting at the gateways to the town centre, implement a town centre Avenue, and improve opportunities for incidental planting.

Existing trees should be retained where possible; however it is acknowledged that there are a number of issues with the existing trees in Wokingham, particularly relating to pavement heave, blocked drains, proximity to buildings and poor condition of the trees themselves. During detailed design work it may be necessary to remove trees within the town centre area for these reasons or where design involves alterations to levels, these should be replaced wherever possible. The following planting opportunities have been identified within each of the Street and Space Typologies.

Market Place

Tree cover in Market Place forms a distinctive element of this space and should be retained in any proposed public realm designs for this space. The existing trees in Market place should be retained where possible, significant mature trees offer distinctive image to this town square and offer shade in the summer. However consultation and site observations have identified that the 3 mature trees to the south west of this space are causing significant problems with pavement heave, detailed design work should explore whether these issues can be resolved and the trees retained. Furthermore, consultation with market traders has highlighted that the northernmost of these 3 trees is located quite centrally in the space. Opportunities for removing this tree and replacing it with a semi-mature tree in line with the other two trees in the south west corner of the space adjacent to the carriageway should be explored to free more space for markets and events.

Civilised Streets

Generally considered too narrow for a continuous avenue of planting, however the recommendations of the movement framework identify potential for the narrowing of the carriageway in these streets. This will provide more space for tree planting in wider sections of the streets. In particular, at the eastern end of Peach Street between Cross Street and Easthamstead Road where there may be potential to reduce the carriageway to single lane operation. Additional tree planting in this location would make use of the additional street width and offer a green approach to the town centre area. Opportunities for tree planting are also identified at the southern end of Denmark Street, again where the street is wider and there may be possibility to use Langborough Road rather than Denmark Street to access the Denmark Street car park which would have the added benefit of freeing more space for tree planting again providing a green approach to the town centre area.

Town Centre Avenue

The width of Broad Street along with the presence of existing trees and history of avenue planting along this street offer a great opportunity to introduce lines regular spaced trees of common species to form a formal avenue of tree planting along this street. This will form a distinctive and memorable feature of the town centre. The significant narrowing of the highway highlighted in the movement framework also offers much more space for a continuous avenue. Many of the existing trees are of poor quality and located too close to the carriageway, which coupled with the aspiration for a consistent, formal avenue of trees may require the removal and replacement of existing trees along Broad Street.

Town Centre Residential

Any tree planting should be of an appropriate scale and character to reinforce the domestic character of these streets, perhaps with the opportunity to include more flowering species. The possibility of including tree planting along Rose Street was considered. The street is possibly wide enough to accommodate tree planting, however, it is the width of Rose Street and the enclosure created by the distinctive built form which set the character of this street and it was therefore felt that tree planting would alter the existing character of the street in an inappropriate way. There is already a distinctive green look and feel to this street created by the number of properties with climbing plants on the front elevations of the building made possible by narrow private thresholds. Tree planting was also not evident on historic photographs of the street.

Proposals are being prepared separately for the Town Centre Residential street at Elm's Field, if possible tree planting would be encouraged in this area to increase the impact of planting in the adjacent Elm's Field Park.

Urban Courtyard

Urban Courtyards offer the opportunity to create more areas of incidental low level planting in pedestrian dominated areas offering areas of refuge from the busy town centre environment. Planters are already present in The Plaza although they are underused for planting, planting proposals for these areas should seek to add colour and movement into otherwise hard spaces and offer a more inviting surrounding to spend time. There are also existing trees located within these areas, again subject to condition surveys at detail design stages this should be

retained wherever possible.

EXAMPLE OF LOW LEVEL PLANTING WHICH COULD BE INCORPORATED IN THE URBAN COURTYARDS

Gateways

The planting strategy plan shows that each of the Gateways to Wokingham should maximise opportunities for planting including street trees to offer a green approach and first impression of the town centre. This is partly a reflection of the fact that a number of these Gateway locations are already characterised by the presence of tree planting and ground level planting and therefore start to establish this pattern. In particular the Shute End / Reading Road / Station Road junction where the verges, low level planting and mature trees set a distinctive arrival point to the town centre.

The recommendations of the movement framework suggest a simplification of traffic management arrangements at key junctions including:

- London Road / Wiltshire Road / Peach Street;
- Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road; and
- (possibly) Reading Road / Station Road including the area in the vicinity of the proposed Reading Road / Elms Field link junction.
- Denmark Street / Langborough Road

Such measures include consideration of using junctions as gateways to the town centre, these changes would have the added benefit of creating more space for planting which was previously taken up by more complicated signalised junctions and wider carriageways. In addition separate plans are being prepared for the public space in front of Wokingham Station, opportunities to include tree planting here should be considered to reinforce this planting approach.

Connecting Streets

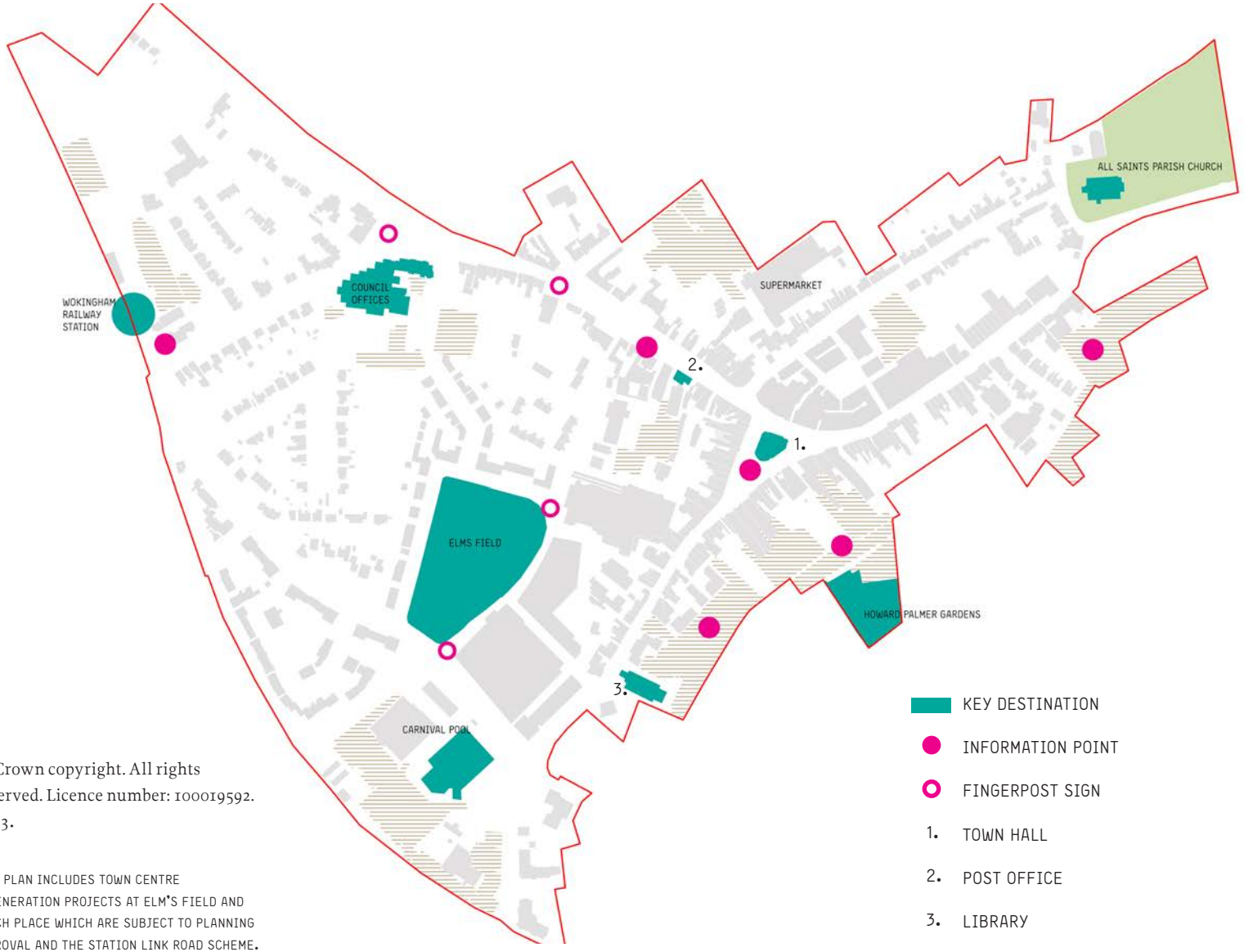
The Connecting Streets are generally fronted by buildings with larger private setbacks/gardens which often include planting within them. This creates a green look and feel to these streets without any substantial planting within the public realm. Pavement widths are generally quite narrow along these streets which precludes the possibility of tree planting in many locations, however, tree planting would not be considered inappropriate along these streets where regeneration proposals allow for appropriate space.

Town Parks and gardens

These areas provide valuable green space within the town centre environment, low level and tree planting should be maximised in these areas to ensure they continue to provide refuge from the built area of the town centre. Separate plans which include planting proposals are being prepared for Elm's Field Park. Howard Palmer Gardens is maintained by Wokingham Town Council and includes a variety of well maintained, grass, tree and shrub planting. The entrance to the park is via Cockpit Path Car Park and may benefit from the thinning or removal/ replacement of shrub planting at eye level to improve visibility in the Gardens to make them more inviting.

EXAMPLE OF GRAVEL TO SURFACE OF TREE PITS

POTENTIAL STREET TREE SPECIES, FASTIGIATE OAK



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EXAMPLE FINGERPOST SIGN

EXAMPLE INFORMATION POINT

OUTLINE WAYFINDING STRATEGY

WAYFINDING GUIDANCE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A full signage strategy for a town centre is an extensive and specialised piece of work. This section highlights the main principles and objectives that a detailed signage strategy should look to deliver as a framework for Wokingham. This strategy should be open to discussion and refinement with a specialist signage and wayfinding consultant as detail of the wayfinding strategy including content, graphic design, as well as the design of the signs themselves is progressed. The following guiding principles should be applied to the wayfinding strategy:

Consistent:
A consistent approach should be taken to wayfinding. This should include the replacement of the variety of types of fingerpost sign and information boards with a small number of wayfinding information points and single type of fingerpost. The design and positioning of the wayfinding furniture should follow the same principles of the street furniture highlighted above and should be of a high quality, robust design.

Clear and legible:
The signage designed for Wokingham needs to be clear in getting the information across to visitors and written in a form and size that is appropriate to the needs of the visitor. An over arching principle for the detailed design of the signage and wayfinding for Wokingham should be that only enough information should be given on a sign to get the visitor to their destination.

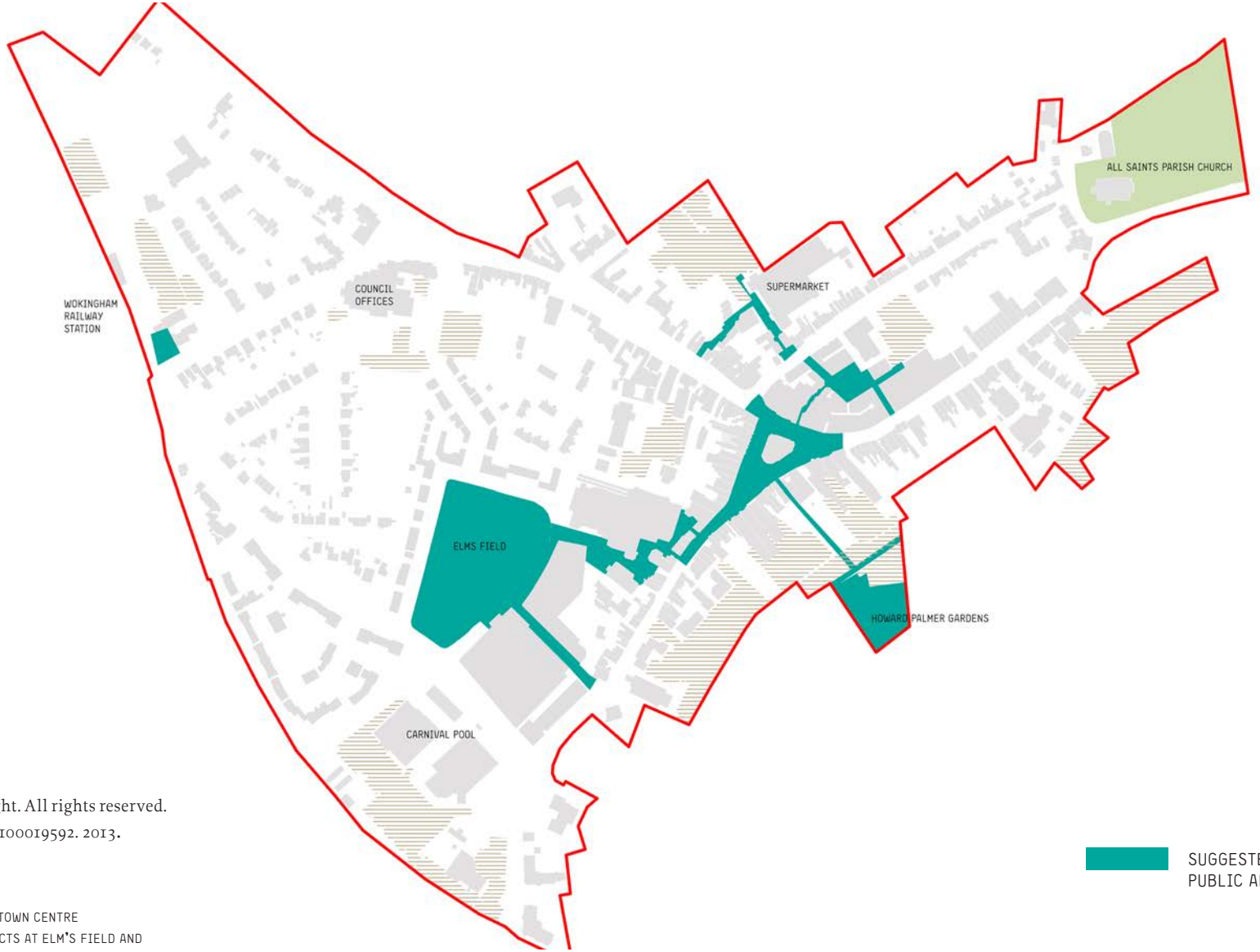
Clutter free:
The approach should be to keep the amount of furniture to a minimum, especially along the town centre streets where spaces is constrained. The overall legibility of the town is enhanced by ensuring that signs are placed correctly and have the right level of information on them according to their location. Too much information and furniture will only serve to add confusion rather than clarity in choice of route. There is a logical street pattern in Wokingham where all the main streets lead to the centre, which coupled with the small scale of the town centre lends itself to this approach. Subtle orientation cues are also provided through the consistent use of materials and lighting as described in the public realm typologies and lighting strategy sections.

Distinctive to Wokingam:
Signage in Wokingham should be of a distinctive style appropriate to the character of the surrounding built form. The signage and wayfinding site information should adopt a distinctive design based on the principles in the street furniture section above to reinforce the unique character and image of Wokingham. Opportunities for linking to heritage trails/Blue plaque tour may also be possible.

Integrated and flexible:
The signage and wayfinding information needs to be fully integrated and based on a centrally managed strategy. Wokingham will be an evolving place for some time, so the signage and information system design needs to be designed to allow information about occupiers or events to be updated easily and cost effectively. A modular construction for all signage should be used to allow the destination information to be updated or adjusted easily without having to replace the whole unit.

OUTLINE WAYFINDING STRATEGY

One approach may be to have a limited number of information points at key arrival points such as parking areas, bus stops and the train station supplemented by fingerpost signs at key junctions, the role of the Town Hall as the principal information point with more detailed visitor, tourist and events information should be retained. The plan opposite shows suggested locations of fingerpost signs, information points and some of the key desinations that are likely to be included in the signage and wayfinding network. Information points would commonly carry detailed street maps displaying key destinations and amenities as well as directional signage. The Wayfinding plan illustrates this potential approach, picking out some of the key destinations and potential locations for signage and information points.



SUGGESTED LOCATIONS SUITABLE FOR PUBLIC ART

THIS PLAN INCLUDES TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECTS AT ELM'S FIELD AND PEACH PLACE WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL AND THE STATION LINK ROAD SCHEME.

PUBLIC ART LOCATION PLAN

PUBLIC ART

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Public art is best appreciated when it is a fully integrated part of the design, rather than a bolt on. The aim is to avoid the cliché of a succession of sculptures set down in left-over spaces; artist collaboration is about a creative approach rather than anything else.

This creative approach involves getting under the skin of a place, understanding its essence to be able to integrate art in a meaningful way that is distinctive to place. Appropriately integrated art can bring about innovation, reveal histories, marry form and function, challenge perceptions and bring a smile.

Wokingham is blessed with a number of assets including high quality built form and Elm's field. Part of its appeal is that all these things are contained within a well-defined area. Wokingham also benefits from a successful events program and regular markets but more should be done to enable people to appreciate all that the town has to offer.

Public art can play its part in the regeneration of Wokingham, by helping the town to assert its individuality, with bold design and high quality materials. Overt reference to the past should be avoided in favour of an imaginative and forward looking interpretation of local history which helps to forge a new and distinctive identity for the town. This for example may include reference to less well known aspects of the town's history such as events which took place in Market Place for example bull baiting or ox roasting or the town's reputation in bells, leather and lace industries.

It is important that all public art in the town centre is relevant and has meaning for Wokingham. To help emphasise the connection between the town and the park and integrate the two an interpretative path is may be appropriate from Market Place to Elms Field.

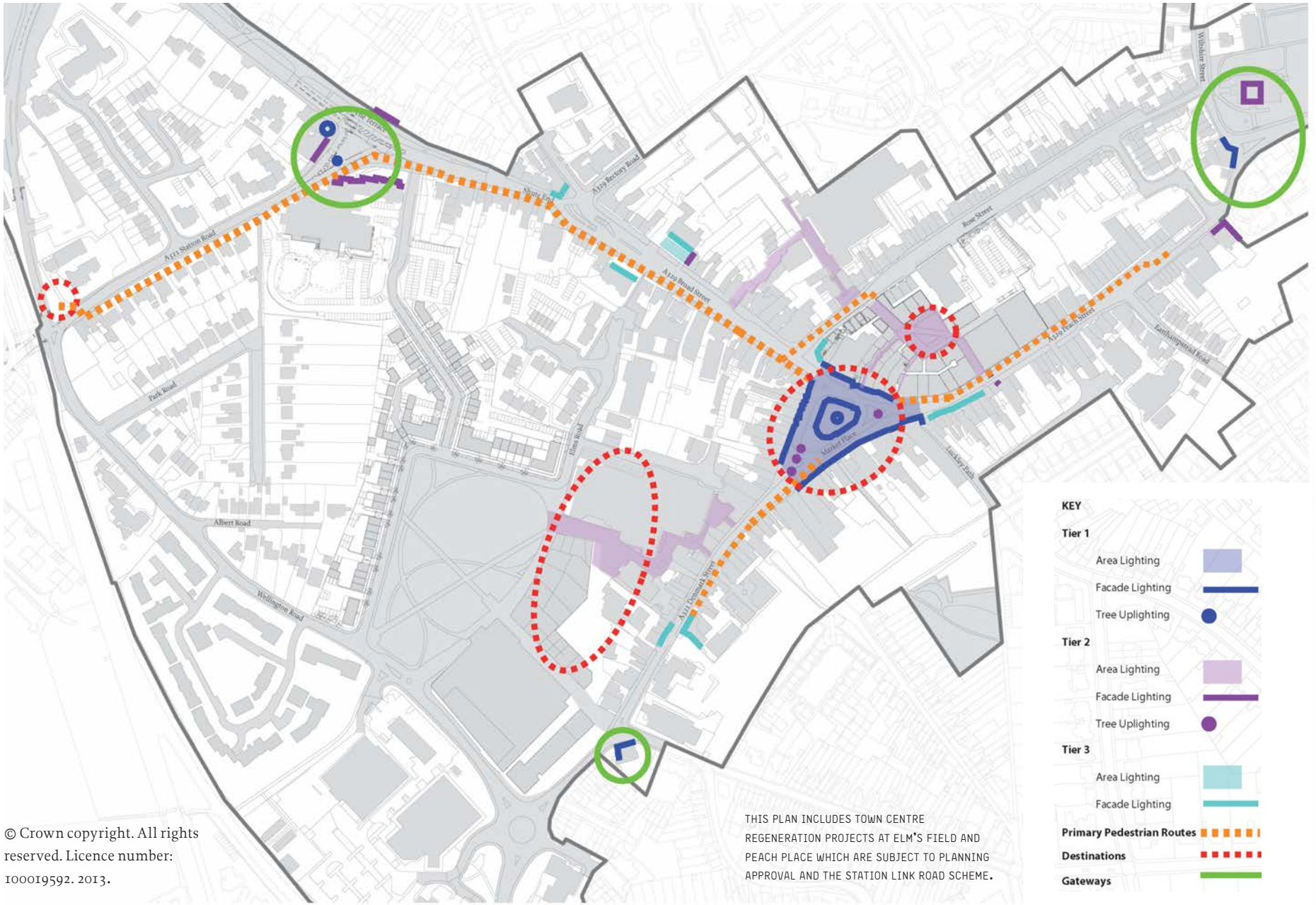
Wokingham does not have many large public spaces, and so artists' contributions are more likely to be embedded elements that are a part of the urban landscape. This is particularly true of the Plaza which could be transformed with light, cladding and well integrated public art.

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC ART WHICH ARE DISTINCTIVE TO PLACE AND WELL INTEGRATED INTO THE PUBLIC REALM

PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

In order to achieve the above principles of integrating public art, the following locations are suggested for the possible integration of public art:

- The Plaza
- Peach Place
- Market Place
- Station Square
- Elms Field and Howard Palmer Gardens



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A TIER SYSTEM HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY. TIER 1 IS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO TIER 3 BEING OF THE LOWEST IMPORTANCE.

PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE LIGHTING STRATEGY

LIGHTING STRATEGY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The lighting strategy shown has been developed to take into account the following principles:

Wayfinding
Lighting can be hugely beneficial when aiding wayfinding for both pedestrians and vehicles after dusk. It can encourage people to gravitate to the brightest area therefore reinforcing central areas and destinations of the town centre e.g Market Place and Urban Courtyard areas. This will help to encourage the night time economy in these areas.

Character and historical features of the town
Illuminating key historical features and buildings to bring out the character and historical feel of the town will help to create an interesting and inviting space. Buildings of key historical importance and buildings that reflect the strong food and drink offer of the town should be illuminated.

Crime and Antisocial Behaviour
There are various areas in the town centre that do not encourage a high volume of people to walk through due to the eerie and dim lighting. This therefore can encouraging antisocial behaviour. This can be reduced by ensuring the space is appealing and ensuring people do not feel vulnerable when they walk through it. Creating an inviting and exciting space by transforming a route using projections, colour or light art can help. e.g route through from Rose St to Peach Place.

Safety
Lighting can help to ensure people feel safe. This is not just about high light levels, it is about the perception of the space. Utilising architectural decorative lighting in trees, buildings and furniture can help to ensure people do not feel surrounded by dark spaces and the space is given depth. Light levels will be set out by the Highway engineer for the Council and the lighting design must adhere to these, unless there is strong justification for not doing so.

Environmental Concerns
The energy consumption of new highway lighting should be less than that of the existing. This can be done by replacing the existing lamps with LED lamps, Cosmopolis or Ceramic Metal Halide for example. Light spill will need to be kept to a minimum to reduce the amount of light pollution.

Maintenance
The maintenance of the lighting will be considered when selecting the fittings. The maintenance schedule of the Town will need to be considered for lamp replacements. LEDs should be considered due to their long lamp life of 50,000 hours. Ensuring vandal resistant fittings are used is important as is ensuring fittings are positioned at an appropriate height out of reach of vandals. (e.g 4.5m-5m minimum)

Clutter Free Environment
The Public space will be kept clutter free where possible relocating highway columns to ensure they are in line using facade mounted fittings where appropriate

Unique Icon
An icon or symbol that is unique to Wokingham could be projected onto various facades throughout the town centre. This would create continuity throughout the spaces and could be used as a wayfinding tool. This would be projected from a building or window opposite the facade.

Light fittings
In order to ensure consistency the same colour temperature should be used throughout the town for all lighting. This should be around 3000K. The colour rendering of the lighting for public Realm Areas should be high enough to give good colour rendition to architecture, people and features. This ideally should be no lower than 80Ra. Flat glass rather than rounded glass should be utilised where possible as this is much less glary. Cowls for fittings could also be utilised where appropriate to reduce glare.

Facades of specific buildings could be uplit using fittings that are mounted to the facade of the building. Often these are mounted at first storey height between the

windows so as not to cause glare for the occupants. If the buildings are residential then as long as the fittings are directed onto the facade and not into the windows, utilising cowls where necessary, then the lighting should not affect the occupants. Some buildings may be listed and in this case listed building consent will need to be obtained, the fittings should ideally be positioned within the mortar so as not to interfere with the structure and also RAL colour matched to the building to have minimal visual impact if possible.

Wayleave Consent:
Wayleave agreements will need to be obtained from the owners of all buildings to ensure they are happy with lighting being attached to their building. This can often take a number of months and should be allowed for within the project programme.

LIGHTING STRATEGY

Peach Street (Civilised Streets)

The majority of the street is currently lit using high highway column lighting that is outdated and vehicle orientated.

The aim is to create a comfortable and welcoming route through to the central Market Place encouraging people to wander through the street enjoying their surroundings. It must feel safe and encourage pedestrian movement.

The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:
Remove and replace all existing street columns with 10m highway columns with a pedestrian level lantern attached at around 5m. This will keep the functionality required for the highway whilst creating a more pedestrian friendly space.

All Saints Church and the The Ship Inn could be illuminated to act as a Gateway to the Town Centre. Illuminating the pub will reinforce the idea of the strong food and drink feel throughout the town. The building facade above Sorrento's (67 Peach Street) could be illuminated, again to direct people along Peach Street once they get to the 'Ship Inn Pub' creating a welcoming entrance to Peach Street and the Town Centre. The facade above Leightons Opticians to Subway (15-1 peach Street) could be illuminated as this is a prominent building in a pedestrian's view line on the approach to The Market Place. This will draw people into the central core.

EXAMPLE OF SUCESSFULLY UPLIT BUILDING

VIEW DOWN PEACH STREET TOWARDS MARKET PLACE SHOWING FACADE THAT COULD BE ILLUMINATED

Station to Shute End (Connecting Street)

The street is currently lit using high highway column lighting that is outdated and vehicle orientated. Wayfinding is difficult and it is not obvious which way to walk to get to the town centre. Pedestrians feel vulnerable and unsafe.

The aim should be to encourage people in to the town centre from the Station. To draw them down Station Road feeling safe and comfortable. Emphasising key buildings and enhancing the pedestrian environment.

The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:
Light the facade of the white building near the Terrace and the facade of Wokingham Borough Council building, this will draw people towards them encouraging people to gravitate to and from the town centre. Light the bell tower and uplight the trees at the Shute End / Station Road junction to aid wayfinding and help to create a more interesting space at this imporatnt town Gateway.

EXAMPLES OF LIGHTING DESIGN THAT COULD BE APPLIED HERE

TREE AND BELL TOWER THAT COULD BE UPLIT

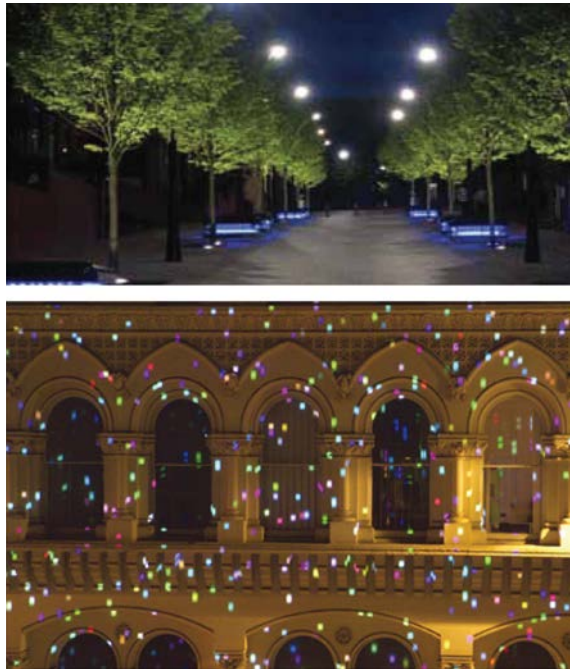
PROMINENT BUILDING THAT COULD BE UPLIT

Broad Street (Town Centre Avenue)

Existing Lighting comprises mainly tall decorative lighting columns mostly located along the central reservation are outdated and inefficient. Some buildings are illuminated currently which demonstrate a mix of colour temperatures.

The aim is to create a comfortable and welcoming route through to the central Market Place, encouraging people to wander through the street enjoying the stroll. It must feel safe and encourage pedestrian movement.

The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:
Remove and replace all existing street columns with 10m highway columns with a pedestrian level lantern attached at around 5m. This will keep the functionality required for the highway, whilst creating a more pedestrian friendly space.
New and existing trees that create the proposed formal avenue of trees could be uplit to create a more pedestrian friendly route. This would be done using inground uplights. Some buildings are illuminated currently which show a mix of colour temperatures. The buildings that are currently illuminated should be re-lamped with new efficient 3000K fittings. Possibilities for illuminating Tudor House should be explored as this is a prominent building and focal point as pedestrians walk from the town centre to the station subject to agreements with the owner/occupier. Uplight the building facade of Prezzo and possibly light the area outside increasing the cafe culture feel of the road.



EXAMPLES OF LIGHTING DESIGN THAT COULD BE APPLIED HERE

COULD BE ILLUMINATED.

Market Place

The area is currently lit using facade mounted floodlights. These are out of date and glary creating a flat, uninviting environment. The lighting contributes to that area feeling as if the cars own the space rather than the pedestrian.

The aim is to create a welcoming destination space that will encourage people to gather and settle at night. This will help to increase the night time economy and reinforce the role of Market Place as the towns' Central Core. To ensure that people feel safe when walking through from Peach Place to the Market Place.

The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:
Uplight surrounding facades to create a bright exciting central space where people are aware of their surroundings. Create a focal point for the town by uplighting the Town Hall. This building acts as a wayfinding aid to draw people into the central core area. It would need to be illuminated from both inground and facade mounted uplights to ensure the full extent of the facade and the spire is illuminated. The detail and texture of the building should be highlighted. It would be preferable for the highway light level requirements to be relaxed for highway surrounding the Market Place to ensure that the pedestrian remains key and the contrast of the lit buildings is higher, however this would need to be discussed further.

Light the alleyway and Bush Walk in an innovative and exciting way to ensure people are happy to use them and they do not get used for antisocial behaviour. e.g. Coloured light, projections, inset linear lights etc.

TOWN HALL EXISTING LIGHTING

EXAMPLES OF LIGHTING DESIGN THAT COULD BE APPLIED HERE

Rose Street (Town Centre Residential)

Existing Lighting is characteristed by a mixture of low pedestrian level lantern type columns with a variety of colour temperatures. A small flood light illuminates the alleyway route through to the carpark. It is eerie and pedestrians do not feel safe walking through at night.

The aim is to create a pedestrian friendly street that people feel safe and comfortable to walk through.

The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:
Remove and replace existing street columns with 6m pedestrian columns. As this is predominantly residential it is important the light does not affect the residents therefore glare into bedrooms and other rooms will need to be addressed and positioning of columns is essential. These could be lantern type fittings to give a soft, ambient glow.

EXISTING LIGHTING

Denmark Street (Civilised Street)

There is a lack of lighting at the top end of Denmark Street towards Market place, creating a dark and uninviting space. The existing lighting utilises decorative tall highway fittings that are inefficient and outdated. The routes through to the carpark look uninviting, it is important these are is lit to a higher level and existing fittings are replaced.

The following proposals are made by the lighting strategy:
Explore opportunities for removing existing highway lighting columns. Due to the narrow nature of the road, utilise building facades to mount fittings where possible that will illuminate the road and pedestrian pavement, this will reduce clutter. They should be mounted at around 8m and must not interfere with any residential
houses or flats therefore positioning must be carefully considered.

Remove and replace existing facade lighting with new more efficient light. Illuminate the facade on the entrance to the carpark, possibly utilising projections (of the Unique Icon), as this is a prominent facade when walking down towards Market Place.

EXISTING FACADE LIGHTING SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH NEW MORE EFFICIENT FITTINGS.

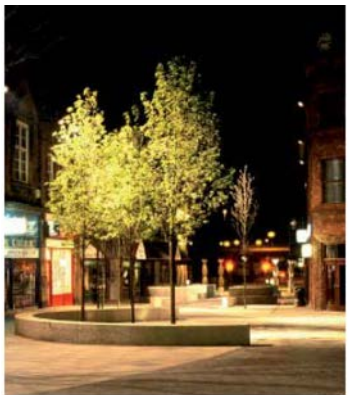
IMAGE TO SHOW ENTRANCE TO CAR PARK AND POSSIBLE FACADE TO ILLUMINATE

Urban Courtyard

The Plaza Areas, currently have basic functional lighting. As many of these spaces are going to be redeveloped or linked to regeneration projects lighting will be of key importance to ensure these are spaces used after dark.

The aim is to create pedestrian friendly spaces that people feel safe and comfortable to settle. Create an exciting vibrant space encouraging the cafe culture and increasing night time economy.

This could be done by removing the existing lighting and introducing more decorative pedestrian level lighting. Uplighting trees, underlighting furniture and creating different levels of light to encourage people to settle in these areas. There are a large number of flat facades that would be perfect opportunities for projections. Utilising a Unique Icon that is then projected onto various facades around the town is a good way to keep continuity and help with wayfinding.


EXAMPLES OF LIGHTING DESIGN THAT COULD BE APPLIED HERE

MAINTENANCE

Introduction
The implementation of a new public realm will constitute a substantial investment into Wokingham town centre. It is imperative that new schemes are designed to be readily maintainable and that a management structure is in place to guide and protect investments.

It has been accepted within this public realm guidance that budgets for maintaining the public realm are often tight and in response to this a lower maintenance strategy has been adopted. This is reflected through the appropriate and simple application of materials and street furniture and omission of 'expensive to maintain' features (e.g. water features.). However, it does need to be accepted that all public realm needs a certain amount of maintenance, especially if Wokingham is to achieve the vision as set out in this document.

Management
Currently maintenance and management responsibilities of Wokingham's public realm are split between the Town Council and Wokingham Borough Council Highways Maintenance and Management Team. To maintain an attractive, high quality and clean environment and encourage economic success throughout Wokingham both of these organisations are responsible for ensuring that the public realm is managed working closely with each other. Their role should include the following:

- Ensure that once implemented, responsibilities and roles are clearly defined and that the public realm is managed and maintained properly;
- Monitor cleansing operations, and review the appropriateness of street related procedures, including making officers aware of deficiencies in reinstatement by statutory authorities and maintenance work required;
- Monitor and co-ordinate management and maintenance activities with other agencies, and ensure that new developments adopt Council's guidelines.
- Raise public awareness of the value of the public realm.
- Ensure that all future developments adhere to and adopt the Public Realm Guidance

The role of the newly formed Town Team should be promoted and supported to ensure the Borough and Town Council work with shopkeepers, business and the general public on the particular issues that effect the town centre public realm and its effective management.

The Environmental Health Department should support the role of the Council through proactively monitoring and enforcing the responsibility of owners keeping their property and land clean and tidy.

Maintenance
The maintenance of the public realm is twofold:

1. Maintenance of the materials in the streets including:
- Reinstatement of paving surfaces to the standard and specification of the original works;
- Co-ordination of public utilities - both in the design process to promote creative resolutions to the integration of services and access points, and in the programming of services renewal;
- Responding immediately to failures in the materials to ensure the safety of users of the space is maintained, and that the problem does not spread;
- A stockpile of paving materials must be set aside to ensure that stock is available for reinstatement work and repair.

2. General upkeep of the environment including:
- Litter and refuse collection, both from the streets and from the bins;
- Removal of flyer postings;
- Cleaning of the street (washing, specialist steam cleaning for chewing gum on pavements, removal of oil staining);
- Removal of graffiti.
- Maintenance of planting beds.
- Cleaning street furniture (inc. bus shelters).

Procurement of Materials
As one of the aims of these guidelines is to promote the long-term sustainability of projects and interventions there needs to be an approach to material procurement which ensures availability of products in the long term. Continuity of supply of frequently used, non-bespoke man-made and natural products from large national suppliers has been evaluated to ensure that there is a long lifespan of materials. It may also be appropriate to retain 5% paving stock from new schemes for future use.

Reinstatement
To ensure that reinstatement is carried out to a similar specification as the original works a maintenance manual should be prepared by the designer before works are completed. The maintenance manual should incorporate:

- 'as built' drawings; .
- Procedures for maintenance works;
- The materials used;
- The names and contact information of all suppliers;
- Procedures for reinstatement.
- A cleaning and maintenance regime, inspection regime and response times for cleaning and repair works (including a chewing gum removal regime).

Street Cleansing Regime
The use of high quality paving will create a robust and beautiful streetscene which if appropriately maintained will last for many years ahead. To protect this investment a cleansing regime should be in place which:

- Provides cleansing of all street pavements and carriageways;
- Where any street and outdoor cultural event takes place, suitable cleansing regimes will be employed so that the public realm will be maintained to acceptable safety and cleanliness.
- Regularly removes stubborn stains and chewing gum to prevent the paving becoming permanently stained;
- Takes into account the construction of surfaces including sub-bases, bedding layers, materials and joint types and fillers;
- Ensures the construction and detailing of the surfaces, particularly around and below street furniture, is developed with maintenance operations in mind;
- The 1990 Environmental Protection Act contains a Code of Practice for Litter and refuse which can be used as a minimum standard for cleanliness.

The impact of cleaning methods must be considered when establishing a cleansing regime for the streets. Many materials and laying methods need time for the joints to seal and for the pavements to become more impervious. Vacuum suction and high pressure hoses should not be used in the initial months of a project's life, with operations restricted to manual sweeping

Service Providers
Public utilities underground such as sewers, electricity, gas, water, television and telecommunications cables often present significant challenges for the design and maintenance of the public realm. Designers of schemes must ensure that they are aware of all services within project areas, especially if considering alterations to surface levels. It is also important to establish an appropriate mechanism to manage excavation works for repairs and new services once a scheme is completed. The works are permitted under the New Roads and Street Works Act and the public utility companies have a statutory right to dig up the highway, to lay and maintain their equipment. Increasingly, they are using contractors to carry out the work and it may not be possible to immediately identify on whose behalf the works are being carried out. The following recommendations highlight possible ways to safeguard public realm investments from public utility company's activities:

- Involve service providers at the earliest possible opportunity in order to give sufficient notice of works
- Encourage any repairs or implementation works to be carried out in advance of or as part of major public realm works.
- All repair works taking place are regulated and monitored by Wokingham Borough Council in accordance with the New Road and Street Works Act to ensure reinstatement of the surfacing to the original quality.
- All utility companies undertaking work on high quality public realm areas should be provided with a full set of construction information to enable successful reinstatement.

A close working arrangement with companies responsible for public utilities is essential if a quality environment appropriate to Wokingham's historic status is to be delivered. Officers at Wokingham Borough Council can assist in providing weight and support to further the effort made to deliver quality public realm works, and hence the need to maintain this environment to high standards. The Public Realm Design and Delivery Report should be used as a means to build relationships between other organisations and groups with an interest in, and/or who helped shape its development. The role of these groups and in some cases individuals should be embraced so as to infuse civic pride in the local community.

SUSTAINABILITY

Detailed public realm designs should be developed in accordance with the sustainability objectives of Wokingham Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

At the heart of the approach to the Wokingham Public Realm Strategy is the creation of a sustainable place. This does not merely mean using UK sourced materials or re-use of existing materials but it is also a philosophical approach that affects the way the place is designed and evolves. 'Securing the future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy' sets out the Government's strategy for delivering a better quality of life through sustainable development. Five guiding principles are identified that the Government will use to achieve sustainable development:

1. Living within Environmental Limits;
The Strategy promotes a philosophy of 'design as little as you can'. Most places have an existing character and quality. At Wokingham the Strategy works with what the place already has. It aims to capitalise on and celebrate the rich architectural heritage, the success and popularity of events and market days and accepts the role of the town centre in accommodating traffic. A sustainable Public Realm accepts the opportunities and constraints a site's context places on design. It avoids the temptation to reshape everything with reference to the full catalogue of the international market in materials and goods and works with the constraints and opportunities of the particular locale.

- The Strategy aims to raise awareness and improve setting of rich and historic built form to encourage the enjoyment of Wokingham's beautiful and diverse setting.
- The Strategy aims to enhance links between the town centre and Elms Fields Park.
- The strategy aims to provide more flexible spaces capable of hosting markets and events
- It proposes a simple materials palette for paving and street furniture to unify the rich variety of materials and designs used on buildings.
- Robust materials are proposed and design details will be encouraged that enable street furniture to withstand damage from vandalism or due to activities such as skateboarding to minimise the maintenance regime required.
- The strategy encourages walking, designing attractive environments for pedestrians balanced against vehicles requirements.
- Public art is proposed that draws on Wokingham's local distinctiveness, creating a place that is distinct from other towns and looks to the future.
- The strategy proposes to source material from the UK where possible.
- The strategy promotes the re-use of existing material such as natural stone kerbs where possible, particularly in Peach Street, Broad Street, Denmark Street and Market Place.
- Timber street furniture and lighting columns are proposed that, unlike conventional columns and furniture, will not have to be re-painted; and are inherently from a renewable source.
- Where timber is used it will be from certifiable sources.
- Street furniture that requires power, such as CCTV, lighting, car parking meters etc. should be minimised and where required investigate the use of photovoltaics.
- The Strategy encourages the use of public transport by exploring opportunities for additional bus stops.
- Opportunities to increase biodiversity in the town centre have been promoted by opening up additional opportunities for street tree planting.
- New public realm should be designed to minimise resource use and maximise energy efficiency during construction, operation and maintenance. This avoids the need to remove from site to landfill.

2. Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society;
It is often the idea behind a public realm and its relevance to an evolving community that determines how sustainable it will be. A sustainable public realm has to be one that is guided by a strong idea; a concept of how it will be used by a community over time and how it will accrue value and richness. The idea needs to respond to social, economic and environmental objectives. Its materiality may change over the decades, but the idea that guides its form can last generations. At Wokingham it is acknowledged that the town centre will need to evolve and adapt. The materials used will be re-laid or replanted, and renewed many times over. Communities of the future will decide to make use of town centres in ways that

are unimaginable to us today. The implemented design is but one point in time. To be sustainable a public realm has to be adaptable and capable of evolving over time. To this end the Public Realm Strategy for Wokingham proposes a place that will be simple, flexible, uncluttered and provide an attractive environment to spend time.

It also means that any design proposals that close-off future possibilities will be avoided. Single-use landscapes that have to be fundamentally reworked to accommodate a different use are by definition not sustainable. In light of this, the key points considered include:

- The Strategy promotes a simple approach to the streets and a flexible layout for spaces within which different activities can occur (e.g. cultural events and markets).
- The Strategy aims to provide an attractive place that will increase the people using the town centre both day and night and reduce the need for people to travel to other destinations.
- The role and function of the different spaces has been defined, for example The Plaza public space allows for moving through, sitting and eating lunch, watching a street performance or reading the newspaper. Market Place proposals remove street clutter and allow the space to be used for bigger community events, street markets or sitting in the sun and watching the world go by.
- The Strategy promotes streets and spaces that will encourage people to spend more time in, and promotes the use of street furniture in arrangements that are comfortable (for example sheltered and south facing) and sociable.
- The strategy proposes a safe and accessible place that encourages use for all sectors of the community.
- The strategy aims to improve legibility so that people can orientate around and use the town centre easily.
- By increasing the use of the town centre spaces, it will increase natural surveillance and hopefully deter antisocial behaviour.
- Improved lighting and attractive streets and spaces will encourage people to stay in the town throughout the day and into the evening, bringing life and activity into the town and build on the growing food and drink offer of the town centre.
- The Plaza provides a flexible space that allows the incorporation of kiosks/ stalls at a later date if and when a business case has been determined.

3. Achieving a Sustainable Economy;
A crucial aim of the Public Realm Strategy and the suggested physical improvements is to bring the image of the public realm up to the quality of the built form and reinforce to local residents and businesses that the town has a strong future, encouraging them to invest in, promote and have pride in the town. This will give investors the confidence that things are happening in the town and that it is a place in which to invest and move to. It will also help make Wokingham a place where more people will want to live and work, with a wider range of facilities, improved environment, better business prospects, etc. As well as physical improvements the Strategy promotes streets and spaces that will encourage people to spend more time in, thus increasing the footfall and potential for retail spend and benefitting the economic regeneration of the town.

4. Promoting Good Governance;
The delivery and management of public realm will need to be coordinated so that all stakeholders are pulling in the same direction. On a practical level the Strategy aims to improve cleanliness and good maintenance of the town centre. The proposed street design is simple and uncluttered and surfaced in natural stone setts and slabs that can be lifted and re-laid for ease of maintenance and to accommodate utilities or other street works. A limited palette of furniture and materials is proposed to reduce the amount of material needing to be stored therefore making replacement easier.

Engendering pride and confidence in the town public realm is essential in Wokingham. The Vision for the public realm has been derived from local views – it is Wokingham's vision and should be promoted locally as such.

Wokingham is in a strong position to ensure governance and ownership of the public realm with the Borough Council, Town Council, locally active Societies, and recently formed Town Team already working together to promote quality in Wokingham's built environment.

5. Using Sound Science Responsibly.
The Public Realm Strategy has been prepared in conjunction with WBC Officers and the framework proposed takes a pragmatic approach with the information available at this stage, it is acknowledged that this framework form a long term aspiration for the town centre public realm and that further detailed studies and design work will be required in due course. The strategy has been written with recognition that some projects are dependent on other interventions either in the highways network or town centre regeneration. As individual projects are procured they must be assessed against quantitative sustainability criteria, such as BREEAM ratings and the Green Specification Guide.

ACCESSIBILITY

The quality of the buildings, streets and spaces of Wokingham affects the quality of life for all groups in society. Therefore, the design of any development must be sensitive to the needs of users with disabilities, parents with young children, people with temporary impairment and the elderly. The public realm of Wokingham needs to be developed to ensure clarity and safety of movements between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The design requirements of the public realm throughout the town are as follows:

- The use of tactile and hazard warning paving will be proposed in compliance with British standards The document 'Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces' published by the Department for Transport in 2007 should be referred to for details of the appropriate use and layout of tactile paving. Part of this guidance covers materials and colours for tactile paving and states that in conservation areas and in proximity to listed buildings, relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable. Detailed design should therefore explore the opportunity for using matching material for the tactile paving, subject to further consultation with local groups representing visually impaired, rehabilitation and mobility impaired user groups.
- In a traditional street arrangement with a raised kerb, pedestrian walkways must provide a dropped/sloping kerb to ensure easy and safe crossing points or form courtesy crossing as defined below
- Courtesy crossing are suggested in the public realm framework in order to redress the balance between pedestrians and vehicles. Integration of these will require further detailed design to ensure they are implemented in an appropriate environment where drivers and pedestrians are both made aware of other users. They must also be tested and designed to meet the needs of all pedestrian user groups.
- Pedestrian pavements will take into account roughness of material and adequate slip resistance to ensure comfortable and safe walking experience. However, the finish must be smooth cut and workmanship policed to ensure an even surface for walking.
- Street furniture should not reduce the width of the pavement to a degree that the movement of wheelchair users and pushchairs is impeded.
- Street furniture should be strategically placed at regular intervals in order to provide a degree of legibility for the visually impaired. Street furniture should also be clearly visible and contrast surrounding surfaces.
- Vehicle trafficked parts of the street should be clearly identifiable.
- Nosings of all steps should be highlighted using a contrasting band.
- A range of seating should be offered throughout the town centre, including seating with back and arm rests.
- Signs should consist of clear text and pictograms which contrast with the background to ensure clarity and legibility.
- Stepped areas must ensure that a suitable alternative is provided for disadvantaged users in the form of a ramp.
- Lighting should ensure Visual Acuity and provide security for all users. (VA is acuteness of vision, it is a quantitative measure of the ability to identify black symbols on a white background at a standardized distance as the size of the symbols is varied).
- Any manhole covers should be flush with adjoining surfaces.
- Disabled car parking spaces should always be provided. Parking spaces should be on level ground as close to facilities and amenities as possible.
- Access to new buildings should comply with building regulations 'Part M'. This sets down certain minimum standards for disabled access for such items as steps and ramps, door widths, accessible toilets etc.,
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) requires building owners/occupiers to provide dignified access for disabled users. It is essential that new developments integrate such access at the design stages.

STAGE 3 POTENTIAL PROJECTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following pages outline a number of potential public realm projects for Wokingham Town centre. The purpose of the priority projects is to:

- Support the aspirations of the Public Realm Vision.
- Coordinate improvements to the town centre's existing streets and spaces in accordance with clear guidance.
- Provide a clear brief to inform detailed design process.
- Provide a basis to cost and coordinate potential sources of funding.

Indicative layouts have been prepared to convey the potential look and feel of the environmental improvements proposed. They have been prepared within the parameters set by the public realm and movement framework and should be read as strategic illustrations rather than detailed designs. Proposals shown to any of the streets or spaces are subject to further testing, detailed stages of design and funding.

Potential projects have been shown in the following locations:

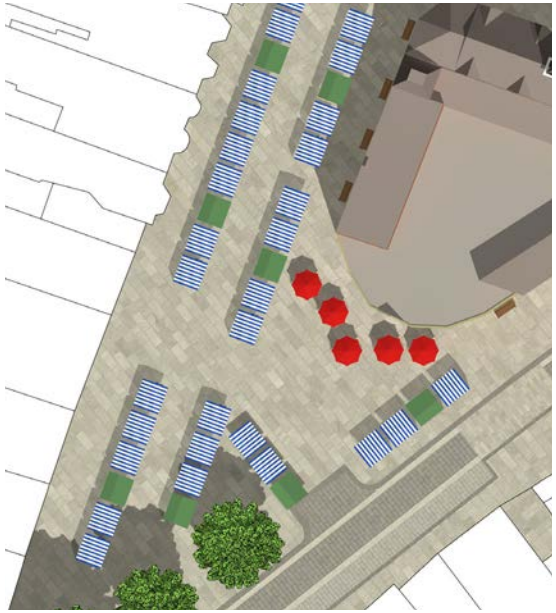
- Market Place
- The Plaza
- Broad Street
- Rose Street
- Peach Street
- Denmark Street

3.2 MARKET PLACE

LOCATION PLAN

1. Market Place will remain the main civic space within the town, continuing to host markets and important civic events. The following changes are proposed to maximise the quality and flexibility of the space.
2. Carriageway to the A329 and A321 reconfigured to maximise pavement space while maintaining capacity for vehicles, to reduce the dominance of traffic in the space.
3. Carriageway to remain clearly defined and kerb upstands retained.
4. Consistent paving material shown from building edge to building edge so Market Place appears as a unified space and in turn makes drivers more aware of their surroundings encouraging them to slow down and to be aware of pedestrians.
5. Dedicated loading/parking/taxi bays provided adjacent to carriageways.
6. Signalised crossings and associated furniture removed (e.g. traffic lights) in favour of more frequent courtesy crossings for improved pedestrian accessibility.
7. Seating positioned around the base of mature trees in the space to provide a sheltered place to sit and look into the space without obstructing pedestrian desire lines or limiting the flexibility of the space.
8. Unnecessary street furniture removed from the space to provide more flexible space for the operation of markets and events.
9. Functional highways lighting provided from adjacent buildings (as per the current arrangement) additional feature lighting provided to key buildings and within the public realm (e.g. uplighting to trees) to reinforce the historic identity of the town and the importance of Market Place as the heart of the town centre.
10. Opportunities to reduce the pavement height in the area to help resolve issues with the damp proof course in the Town Hall building to be explored at detail design stage.
11. Existing cafe spill out space retained.
12. Existing bus lane retained to the north east of the Town Hall building.
13. Existing trees retained with the exception of the exising tree in the main body of the space which could be replaced with a new semi-mature tree adjacent to the A321. This would make more space available for events and market stalls.
14. Vehicle access to main body of space provided via a drop kerb.
15. Pop up power supply to be provided to the space to enable events.

PROPOSED SEATING TO BASE OF EXISTING TREES



MARKET STALL INSET PLAN

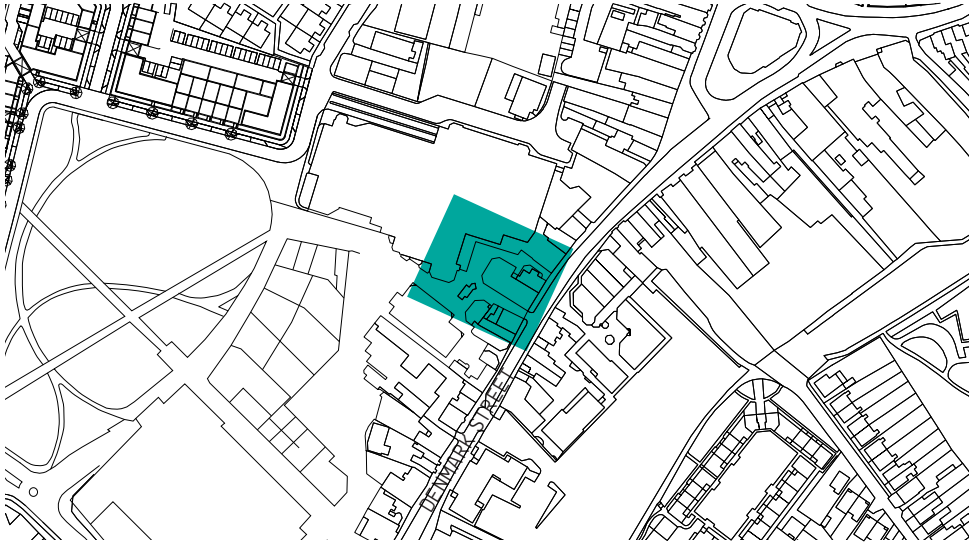
N

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

MARKET PLACE – EXISTING

MARKET PLACE – PROPOSED

3.3 THE PLAZA



LOCATION PLAN

1. Dark, slippery pavers which visually clash with the surrounding brick buildings replaced with light coloured, high quality materials to provide continuity with the proposed Elm Field retail development and town centre and brighten The Plaza.
2. Low level planters which block pedestrian desire lines reconfigured to draw people through the space.
3. Timber seating added to low planters at the edges of the spaces to provide more seating opportunities within the Plaza.
4. Walls of retained low level planters to be rendered or re clad to compliment the proposed public realm materials.
5. Evergreen planting replaced with more colourful planting and ornamental grasses to add colour and interest to the space.
6. Step and ramp access between The Plaza and Denmark Street retained.
7. Feature lighting added.
8. Outdoor café spill out space retained.
9. Opportunities for pop up shops and stalls to be explored.
10. Opportunities for incorporating public art and lighting to be explored to make the space more inviting.
11. Contemporary stainless steel railings and ballustrades removed and replaced with more appropriate design.

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

THE PLAZA – EXISTING

THE PLAZA - PROPOSED

3.4 BROAD STREET

LOCATION PLAN

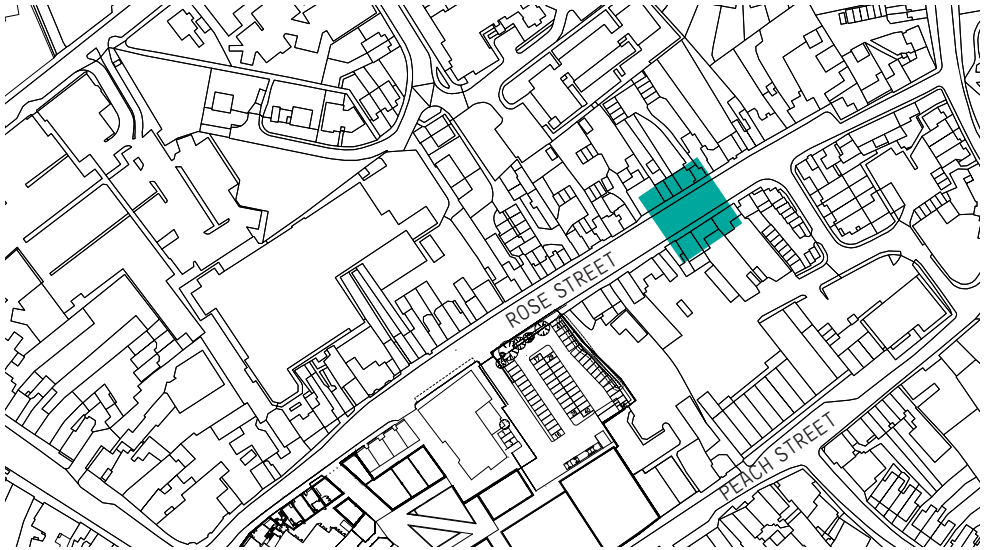
1. Carriageway potentially reconfigured to maximise pavement space, while keeping capacity for vehicles. Carriageway area to remain clearly defined.
2. Wider pavements allow for a formal avenue of street trees of consistent species to be planted along the length of Broad Street.
3. Signalised crossings and associated furniture removed (e.g. traffic lights) in favour of more frequent courtesy crossings for improved pedestrian accessibility.
4. Inconsistent paving materials replaced with high quality materials to provide better continuity through the town centre.
5. Historically significant vehicle cross overs to private plots and parking areas retained and clearly delineated.
6. Loading, taxi, parking bays and bus stops provided in designated bays located parallel to the carriageway.
7. Unnecessary clutter removed and remaining street furniture (i.e. lighting, signage, litter bins etc.) located in single organising strip to the carriageway side of the footpaths to avoid cluttered and obstructed footpaths
8. Generous channel line provided to base of kerb in contrasting material to reduce the perceived width of the carriageway and provide a high quality and distinctive look and feel to the street.

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

BROAD STREET – EXISTING

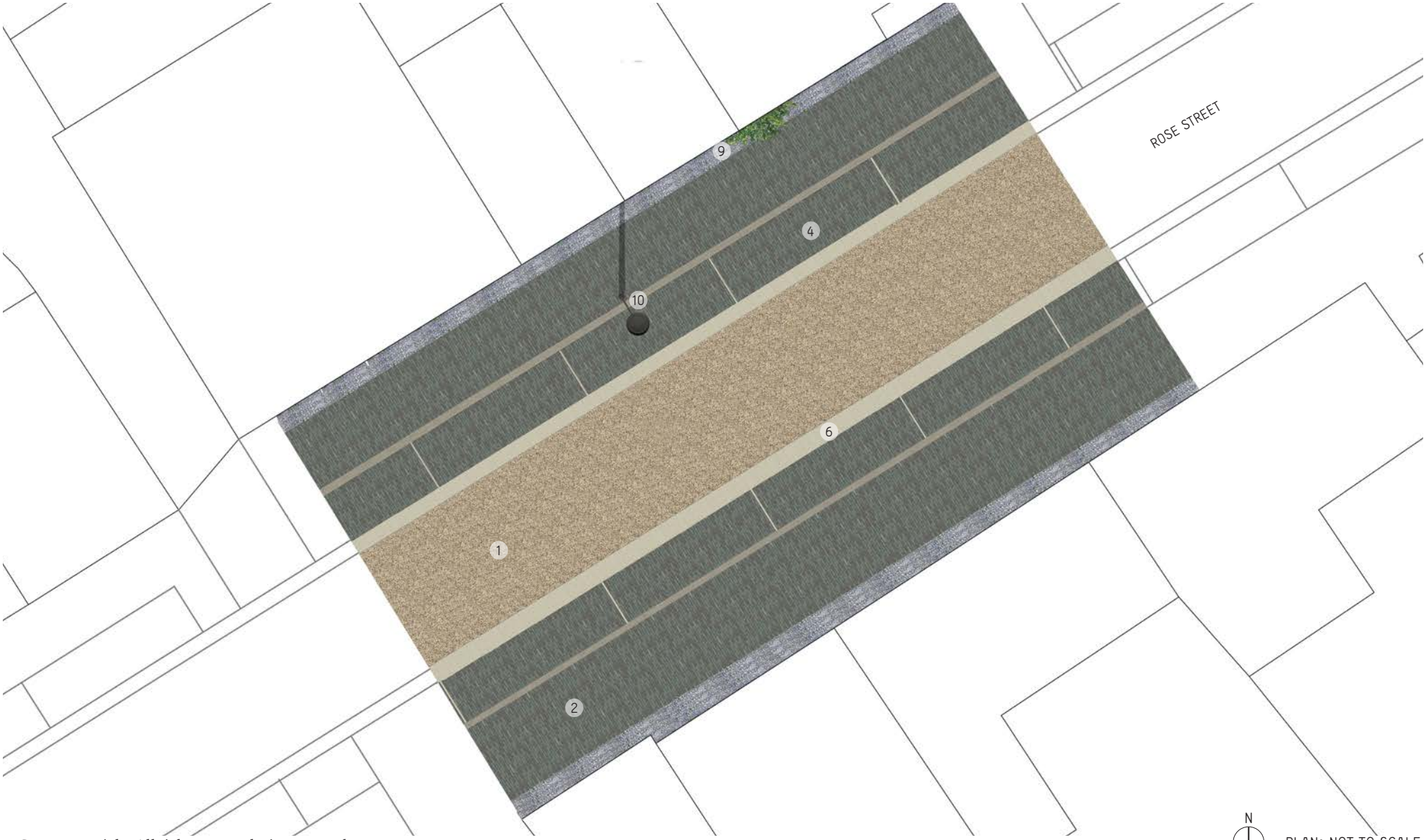
BROAD STREET - PROPOSED

3.5 ROSE STREET



LOCATION PLAN

1. Carriageway potentially reconfigured to maximise pavement space, while keeping capacity for vehicles. Carriageway area to remain clearly defined.
2. Wider footpaths remove the 'pinch points' at narrowest sections of the street.
3. Narrower carriageways and wider footpaths result in vehicles being positioned further away from building facades allowing improved visibility of attractive buildings.
4. Clearly defined parallel on street parking retained as per the current arrangement, paving material in parking bays to match the adjacent footways to reduce the visual dominance of the carriageway in the street.
5. Slippery pavers which visually clash with the colour surrounding brick buildings replaced with a high quality, slip resistant paver which is more sympathetic and does not detract from the adjacent buildings.
6. Generous channel line provided to edge of carriageway in contrasting material to reduce the perceived width of the carriageway and provide a high quality and distinctive look and feel to the street.
7. Proposed paving materials to be unique to Rose Street to reflect the predominantly residential character of Rose Street.
8. Opportunities to reduce the pavement height in the area to help resolve issues with surroung building thresholds to be explored at detail design stage.
9. Private building thresholds retained.
10. Lighting columns to be located to consistent line between parking bays and footpaths.



PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

ROSE STREET – EXISTING

ROSE STREET – PROPOSED

3.6 PEACH STREET EAST

LOCATION PLAN

1. Carriageway potentially reconfigured to single lane to improve pedestrian amenity whilst maintaining capacity for vehicular traffic. Carriageway area to remain clearly defined.
2. Footpath underneath the Overhangs building significantly increased in width to protect building from large traffic and remove narrow sections of footpath.
3. Signalised crossings and associated furniture removed (e.g. traffic lights) in favour of more frequent courtesy crossings for improved pedestrian accessibility.
4. Potential to add bus stop to the eastern end of Peach Street.
5. Echelon parking removed to minimise vehicle manuovering obstructions to traffic on carriageway.
6. Loading/parking formalised into designated bays adjacent to the carriageway.
7. Generous channel line provided in contrasting material to reduce the perceived width of the carriageway and provide a high quality and distinctive look and feel to the street.
8. Inconsistent paving materials replaced with high quality materials to provide better continuity through the town centre.
9. Width of street allows opportunities for additional street tree planting to this important gateway to the town centre.
10. Unnecessary clutter removed from streets and remaining street furniture (i.e. lighting, signage, litter bins etc.) located in single organising strip to the carriageway side of the footpaths to avoid cluttered and obstructed footpaths.
11. Opportunities to reduce the pavement height in the area to help resolve issues with surroung building thresholds to be explored at detail design stage.

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

PEACH STREET EAST – EXISTING

PEACH STREET EAST - PROPOSED

3.7 PEACH STREET WEST

LOCATION PLAN

1. Carriageway potentially reconfigured to single lane to improve pedestrian amenity whilst maintaining capacity for vehicular traffic. Carriageway area to remain clearly defined.
2. Signalised crossings and associated furniture removed (e.g. traffic lights) in favour of more frequent courtesy crossings for improved pedestrian movement in the town centre.
3. Loading and parking formalised into designated bays adjacent to the carriageway.
4. Inconsistent paving materials replaced with high quality materials to provide better continuity through the town centre.
5. Generous channel line provided in contrasting material to reduce the perceived width of the carriageway and provide a high quality and distinctive look and feel to the street.
6. Unnecessary clutter removed from streets (such as bollards) and remaining street furniture (i.e. lighting, signage, litter bins etc.) located in single organising strip to the carriageway side of the footpaths to avoid cluttered and obstructed footpaths.

N

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

PEACH STREET WEST – EXISTING

PEACH STREET WEST – PROPOSED

3.8 DENMARK STREET NORTH

LOCATION PLAN

1. Carriageway potentially reconfigured to maximise pavement space, while keeping capacity for vehicles. Carriageway area to remain clearly defined and kerb upstands retained.
2. Reduced carriageway width provides more space for pedestrians therefore removing the 'pinch points' at narrowest sections of the street.
3. Consistent paving material shown from building edge to building edge to provide the impression of a unified space. This approach effectively extends the Market Place down to the entrance to the Plaza strengthening the link between the town centre and Elms Field.
4. Unnecessary clutter removed from streets and remaining street furniture (i.e. lighting, signage, litter bins etc.) located in single organising strip to the carriageway side of the footpaths to avoid cluttered and obstructed footpaths.
5. Loading/parking/taxi bays provided in designated bays adjacent to the carriageway where width of the street permits.
6. Courtesy crossings provided for improved pedestrian accessibility.
7. Generous channel line provided in contrasting material to reduce the perceived width of the carriageway and provide a high quality and distinctive look and feel to the street

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

DENMARK STREET NORTH – EXISTING

DENMARK STREET NORTH – PROPOSED

3.9 DENMARK STREET SOUTH

LOCATION PLAN

1. Carriageway potentially reconfigured to maximise pavement space, while keeping capacity for vehicles. Carriageway area to remain clearly defined and kerb upstand retained.
2. Carriageway potentially reduced to single lane, single direction to reduce the dominance of traffic along Denmark Street and provide improved opportunities to cross the carriageway, this is made possible by providing access to Denmark Street Car Park via Langborough Road to the south.
3. Space made available for street tree planting at this important gateway into the town centre.
4. Generous channel line provided in contrasting material to reduce the perceived width of the carriageway and provide a high quality and distinctive look and feel to the street.
5. Street furniture (i.e. lighting, signage, litter bins etc.) located in single organising strip to the carriageway side of the footpaths to avoid cluttered and obstructed footpaths.
6. High quality materials to be used to the length of Denmark Street providing better continuity to the town centre streets and spaces.
7. Loading/parking/taxi bays provided in designated bays adjacent to the carriageway where width of the street permits.

N

PLAN: NOT TO SCALE

DENMARK STREET SOUTH – EXISTING

DENMARK STREET SOUTH – PROPOSED

STAGE 4 DELIVERY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Design and Delivery Strategy sets out visionary aims for the public realm of Wokingham. The Stage 2 Framework and Guidance section covers the whole town centre area and aims to ensure that all future work, whether these are major projects or minor alterations, will comply with a coherent plan and support a consistency of design, quality and appearance. It is anticipated that all projects planned in the town centre area will be informed by the recommendations of this overarching guidance.

Stage 3 Potential projects outlines conceptual designs for a number of the key streets and spaces in Wokingham.

This section of the strategy starts to prioritise these town centre projects which will in turn inform a phasing strategy for a logical sequence of delivery. This section will also summarise potential funding and delivery mechanisms and set out the next steps required to deliver the aspirations of the public realm vision.

4.2 PRIORITISATION

The public realm strategy sets an aspirational level of change which should be seen as a long term vision for Wokingham. Part of the strategy has been to develop designs for a number of projects to a conceptual level in order to convey the potential scale and nature of change in the town centre environment. The following streets and spaces have been identified as potential projects:

- Market Place
- The Plaza
- Denmark Street (including junction with Langborough Road)
- Broad Street (including Broad Street/Shute End/ Rectory Road junction)
- Peach Street (including junction with Wiltshire Road & London Road)
- Rose Street

While it is acknowledged that there are significant obstacles in delivering projects of the scale shown, they have been identified because they make the greatest contribution to achieving the public realm vision and provide the greatest benefit to the town centre. These projects focus on areas within the town centre core area where there are no existing proposals. They also aim to prioritise investment in the most intensively used and commercial streets and spaces as well as those which are of historical significance. These projects have also been selected because of the role they play in connecting the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Projects into the rest of the town centre.

Promoting the designs for these projects should be seen as the chance to communicate how the vision can be achieved through specific interventions and demonstrate the opportunities they present, to gather consensus and to start coordinating and sourcing funding. The potential projects are strategic and high level. They will be subject to a detailed design process, further highway testing and consultation before any aspect of them can be built.

Given the scale of transformation, potential delivery challenges and cost of implementing these projects it is acknowledged that a phased approach will be essential.

4.3 PHASING

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Phasing will depend on a range of factors including overall benefits to the town and opportunities presented by the private sector balanced against delivery challenges such as implications on wider transport network, availability of funding, planning, effects on trading activities and coordination with regeneration projects. Each of the potential projects have been considered in turn in order to develop a better understanding of how these issues may influence the phasing strategy. A summary of this exercise is provided below:

Market Place

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
• Sits at the historic heart of the town and at the centre of the town centre regeneration projects • Plays a fundamental role in achieving the vision • Central to life of the town hosting events and market days and containing Town Hall • Improves one of the key commercial spaces in the town • Provides the opportunity to achieve the vision to balance pedestrians and traffic. E.g. Offers the opportunity to apply principles such as dedicated loading bays, courtesy crossings and change of surfacing to encourage safety. • Can fundamentally alter perceptions of the town and improve the identity of the whole town centre • Sequentially is most appropriate • Implements measures intended to remove obstructions for the highway and facilitating potential improvements to Peach Street • Potential to reduce long term maintenance needs through the introduction of the new materials and furniture palette. • Opportunity to interpret Wokingham's historic identity through integrated artwork.	• Major project with high outline cost • Potentially disrupts the A329 and A321 routes through the town centre during construction although there may be space for temporary routes through the space to minimise disruption • Alternative location for events and market days required during construction • Reliant on more thorough parking/loading enforcement • Further work required to test options for removing the bus contraflow lane • Potential disruption to businesses during construction including access for both customers and servicing • Further work needed to assess the location of any underground obstacles such as utilities and chambers.

The Plaza

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
• Will form a crucial link between the Elm's Field development and the town centre area • Improvements to one of the key commercial spaces in the town • Could potentially be completed as part of the Elm's Field regeneration scheme • Tackles one of the more underused and uninviting parts of the town centre public realm • Does not disrupt strategic highways routes • Opportunity to incorporate artwork to provide a new identity. • Plays a fundamental role in achieving the vision	• Land is owned by third party • Potential disruption to businesses which 'spill out' into this space during construction • If delivered after the Elm's Field scheme construction works in The Plaza could significantly disconnect the Elm's Field development from Denmark Street and Market Place • Major project with high outline cost • Further work needed to assess the location of any underground obstacles such as utilities and chambers.

Denmark Street

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
• Improves one of the key commercial streets in the town • Offers the potential to enhance a distinctive and historically significant street within the centre of Wokingham; • Plays a fundamental role in achieving the vision • Implements measures intended to remove obstructions for the highway and facilitating potential improvements to Peach Street • Completes the pedestrian 'loop' around Denmark Street, Market Place, The Plaza and Elms Field • Offers the opportunity to alter the access arrangements to Denmark Street Car Park via Langborough Road.	• Involves disruption to the strategic highways network during construction • Reliant on more thorough parking/loading enforcement • Potential disruption to businesses during construction including access for both customers and servicing • Major project with high outline cost • Further work needed to assess the location of any underground obstacles such as utilities and chambers.

Broad Street

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
• Plays a fundamental role in achieving the vision • Improvements to one of the key commercial streets in the town • Offers potential to enhance a distinctive and historically significant street within the centre of Wokingham • Implements measures intended to remove obstructions for the highway and facilitating potential improvements to Peach Street • Offers the opportunity to make improvements to the junction with Rectory Road to enable potential for two way running along this street • Improves the link between the train station and the town centre	• Involves disruption to the strategic highways network during construction • Reliant on more thorough parking/loading enforcement • Potential disruption to businesses during construction including access for both customers and servicing • Further work needed to assess the location of any underground obstacles such as utilities and chambers. • Major project with high outline cost

Peach Street

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
• Offers substantial improvements to pedestrian amenity due to scale of change to the highways arrangement • Improvements to one of the key commercial streets in the town • Offers potential to enhance a distinctive and historically significant street within the centre of Wokingham • Completes the pedestrian 'loop' around Peach Street, Market Place and Peach Place	• Subject to further investigation on highway feasibility • Possibly requires alteration to the wider highway network to facilitate proposed changes • Involves disruption to the strategic highways network during construction • Reliant on more thorough parking/loading enforcement • Potential disruption to businesses during construction including access for both customers and servicing • Major project with high outline cost

Rose Street

Key Benefits:	Principal Delivery challenges
• Offers potential to enhance a distinctive and historically significant street within the centre of Wokingham	• Major project with high outline cost • Potential disruption to residents and businesses during construction

TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME

The public realm strategy has been prepared in the context of the town centre regeneration proposals for both Elm's Field and Peach Place. These schemes are in planning stages. It is understood that the construction phase for the Elm's field project is planned to commence in the summer of 2014 completing in 2016 and followed immediately by the Peach Place project in 2016 completing in 2017. The programme for these projects is a key influence on phasing for the public realm projects, these issues are covered in detail below.

PHASING STRATEGY

Based on the issues and opportunities highlighted above and an understanding of the programme for the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Project, four broad implementation phases have been identified for the town centre public realm projects, as well as a number of potential 'quick wins'. Given the likely timescale of implementing the list of projects there should be a logical sequence to how they are implemented so that the most prominent parts of the town and the projects which offer the greatest benefit to the town are delivered first.

Phase 1

Projects focusing on the heart of Wokingham - this will include a new public realm for Market Place and The Plaza. Market Place is the most prominent and high profile public realm project in Wokingham and both Market Place and The Plaza are crucial in the context of their changing role as part of the regeneration projects. These two projects offer a critical connection between the Elm's Field and Peach Place regeneration projects. Sequentially these projects offer a logical starting point for the public realm improvements, and should be seen as an opportunity to set the benchmark for the quality in the public realm. The Market Place scheme will also offer the opportunity to implement a number of the interventions to the movement framework, including provision of offline loading and parking bays and substitution of signalised crossings for more frequent courtesy crossings.

Phase 1A:

Of these two projects The Plaza has been shown as the first town centre public realm project, possibilities for implementing proposals alongside the Elm's Field development should be explored further. Due to its role in connecting the Elm's Field development with the rest of the town centre streets and spaces, these improvements should be in place when Elms Field opens to capture maximum value from the Elm's field investment.

Phase 1B:

Implementation of Market Place is dependant on identifying a suitable alternative site for market days during construction. It is suggested this alternative is likely to be either within the pedestrian areas of the Elm's Field retail development or Peach Place meaning it may only be possible to implement Market Place proposals on completion of part of the regeneration projects. It is proposed that Implementation of Market Place should therefore take place alongside or following the implementation of the Peach Place regeneration project.

Phase 2

Medium term projects focusing on improvements to key retail streets and spaces starting with Denmark Street (including junction with Langborough Road) and Broad Street (including Broad Street/Shute End/ Rectory Road junction).
These streets have been identified as a priority for their role in transforming the commercial area of the town centre core. In highway terms, there is more certainty over the operational feasibility of these projects. Improvements to these streets and their associated junctions will theoretically improve the feasibility of later phases, particularly Peach Street by ensuring obstructions in the highways network beyond Peach Street are removed as far as possible.

Phase 3

Long term focusing on projects remaining retail streets including Peach Street (including junction with Wiltshire Road & London Road)
These projects require more detailed work to assess viability and are also dependent on alterations to the wider highways network. This phase includes implementation of two-way running on Rectory Road, reduction to single lane operation to Peach Street and simplification of London Road/Wiltshire Road/Peach Street junction. This phase will have been facilitated by the work to Market Place, Denmark Street, Broad Street and Broad Street/Rectory Road junction in earlier phases.

Phase 4

Other streets which have a central role in defining the historic identity of the town. This phase includes Rose Street.

QUICK WINS

There are a number of individual public realm projects which could start to help to achieve the aspirations of the vision but are flexible enough to potentially come forward earlier.

- It may be possible for a number of Arts Projects could come forward early, for example treatment to the blank walls or installations within The Plaza.
- It may be possible to implement an enhanced, coordinated lighting scheme to the town centre area, perhaps focussing on key buildings such as the Town Hall, gateways to the town centre or key historic buildings to improve the appearance of town in the evening and help economic activity extend into the evenings including longer operation of the markets and the emerging food and drink offer in the town.
- A de-cluttering exercise that audits existing traffic and other signage to remove or rationalise unnecessary signs, barriers etc. is also a potential early win. There may be potential to improve the ability of Market Place to host market days and events. For instance altering the layout of the furniture, trees, pop up power, parking facilities for market stall operators.

There are also a number of potential quick wins which could help to implement some of the recommendations of the movement framework subject to further investigation:

- Replacement of the existing Shute End / Broad Street / Rectory Road signal junction with a simple mini-roundabout type arrangement;
- Consider implementing kerb build-outs along Peach Street as a low-cost, perhaps experimental method of rationalising the carriageway to single lane operation, establishing off-line loading & parking bays and removing signalised pedestrian crossings. Simultaneously introduce two-way running along Rectory Road to maintain network wide capacity whilst alleviating traffic flows through the very centre of the town. Implementation of two-way running along Rectory Road should only be considered where Peach Street is rationalised to a single lane operation in order to avoid inadvertently encouraging traffic growth by providing undesirable additional capacity.

4.4 FUNDING MECHANISMS

The purpose of preparing and costing outline designs for the potential projects was to set out clearly Wokingham Borough Council's plans for the town centre public realm and to establish the level of funding required for the phased implementation of the potential projects.

The capital works programme of the Council is usually where these types of projects would be funded. If there is any budgetary scope the potential projects and phasing strategy can be used to establish whether the town centre public realm improvements are a priority.

There may be potential for developer contributions secured through Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to contribute to the delivery of the potential projects to help the town centre accommodate the level of growth forecast in the town. This funding will be predominantly linked to the regeneration projects planned in the town centre area and development planned in Wokingham's Strategic Development Locations (SDLs). The SDLs are areas within the Wokingham Borough that have been identified as being able to accommodate new development in the Borough, sustainably. The SDLs were formally allocated in the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. If the public realm projects outlined above are prioritised in the Wokingham Borough Councils strategic plans then Community Infrastructure Levy has the potential to contribute to the delivery of a number of the potential projects.

In addition, a preliminary search of other potential funding mechanisms and grants has been undertaken. More detailed investigation and report of potential external funding grants can be produced as individual projects are brought forward. Funds and grant programmes tend currently to open for very short windows and to relate to quite specific opportunities e.g. the DCLG - Portas Pilot Town Centre scheme. In reality there may be very few grant funding schemes currently suitable/available, but the Heritage Lottery Fund might be a potential source worthy of further investigation.

1. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) – the Heritage Lottery Fund has a number of programmes possibly the most relevant for Wokingham Town Centre would be the Townscape Heritage programme. The fund is for schemes which improve the built historic environment relating to conservation areas in need of investment. First round of application should be made by 31st August 2013.

It should be noted that the potential projects are all town centre based and are focussed on environmental improvements which would enhance historically significant and commercial areas of the town. So funding applications/searches should focus on these areas.

4.5 NEXT STEPS

All of the proposals illustrated by the potential projects will be subject to further investigation, detailed design, testing and modelling. In addition the following further studies could be undertaken to begin to achieve the aspirations of the public realm vision:

- Investigate design options for Reading Road / Station Road to look at options to reconfigure the area as a high quality gateway entry to the town centre.
- Investigate options to incorporate a solution for the proposed Elms Field link / Shute End junction;
- Investigate feasibility of implementing decriminalised parking enforcement as a priority to permit better management of parking and loading activity. Study should include investigation of feasibility of introducing area wide, zonal parking restrictions to avoid need for signs and lines that would be inappropriate in a quality public realm environment;
- Investigate options to make time savings in existing bus timetables through use of proposed new road infrastructure (including northern and southern distributor roads, SLR and two-way running along Rectory Road) that might in turn allow removal of Bus contra-flow through Market Place;
- More detailed assessment of implications of reducing Peach Street to a single lane operation that takes a greater account of pedestrian desire lines to inform design, location and frequency of pedestrian crossings required; and
- Opportunities to allow servicing of properties lining Peach Street, Denmark Street and Market Place from rear in order to reduce pressure on on-street activity.

The next step in ensuring the delivery of the Public Realm Design and Delivery Strategy is to convert the recommendations of the strategy into a Supplementary Planning Document. This will ensure the key messages are enshrined in planning policy and that any planned development relating to the public realm are undertaken in line with an overall strategy.

LDĀDESIGN