

5 THE MASTERPLAN



THE FRAMEWORK

A FLEXIBLE MASTERPLAN

The masterplan for Guildford is a flexible framework which provides a clear structure but still allows the evolution of proposals as schemes come forward without compromising the overarching vision. The fundamental elements in defining a flexible approach can be summarised as follows:

- A positive response to existing assets, constraints and context including land ownership patterns, flood risk zones, the historic environment and landscape;
- An emphasis on the creation of streets and spaces which are well-enclosed;
- A connected, pedestrian oriented hierarchy of routes;
- A sustainable shift in transport and movement patterns; and
- A people-focused approach which places social and community priorities at the top of the agenda.

WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Council has contacted businesses and landowners within the masterplan area inviting them to participate in the preparation of the town centre and hinterland study. The Council envisages an ongoing process of engagement and consultation to review options with interested parties - initially through the masterplan, but subsequently in relation to the Local Plan preparation and policy review, potentially beyond the Plan period.

CHARACTER-LED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - PROTECT, MANAGE, CHANGE

In assessing Guildford's context and character, the masterplan establishes a hierarchical development strategy which reflects the potential level of change and relative sensitivity of three principal geographical areas in central Guildford.

The historic town centre represents the area of greatest historic sensitivity and the masterplan seeks to **PROTECT** and enhance the existing assets and prevailing character of streets, spaces and buildings, and sensitivity to historic fabric.

The wider town centre offers opportunities for new development, but a careful approach is required in **MANAGING** impact on the setting of the town centre, particularly building heights in the context of views and surrounding landscape within and across town.

The final strand relates to **PROMOTING CHANGE** along the northern river corridor. This area is an under-used and under-utilised asset, poorly connected to the town centre and adjacent neighbourhoods and constrained by flood risk zones.

MASTERPLAN STRUCTURE AND GUIDANCE

This section identifies a masterplan framework for each area, including a simple summary of key issues such as flooding and potential placemaking / commercial opportunities which have informed key principles and the illustrative masterplan. Each area benefits from an illustrative masterplan layout accompanied by a summary of potential development capacity, and relevant artist impressions to illustrate the vision for key areas and the indicative form and character.

Guidance is provided for the following areas - these are logical geographical groups of sites to describe the proposals. It should be noted that the extents of each area are not intended to directly match the drawing on the adjacent plan which is a diagrammatic representation of the broad development strategy.

- Core town centre;
- Bedford Wharf;
- Millmead;
- Station area;
- Walnut Tree Close; and
- Woodbridge Meadows.

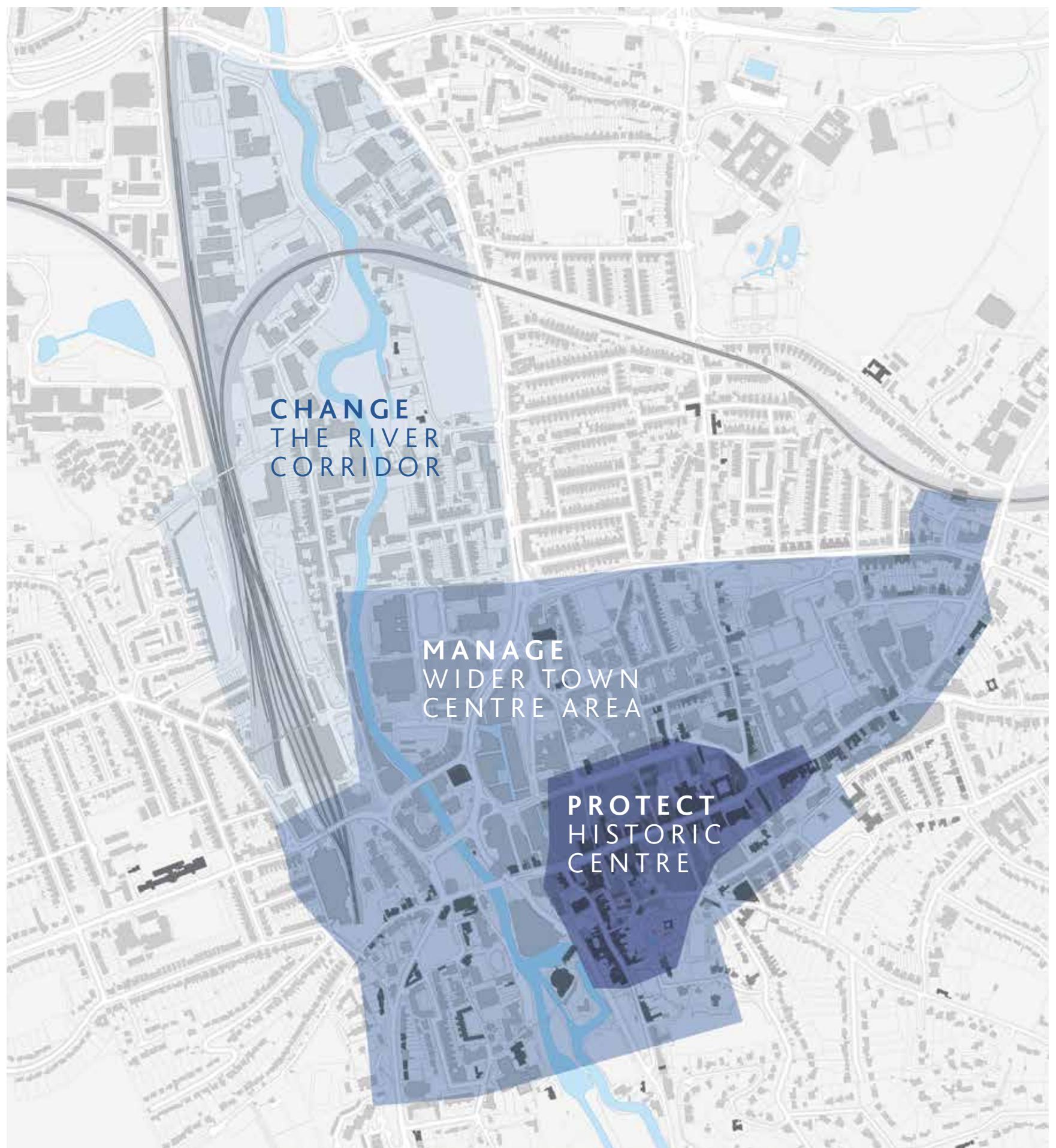
The proposals for each area include an existing site plan which highlights flood zones, listed buildings and buildings which could be affected by the masterplan proposals.

The framework plan identifies the key urban design principles for each area. The framework drawings define the relationship between routes, development blocks and spaces. Although the illustrative masterplan and accompanying development schedules assume a specific preferred potential use from a masterplanning perspective, the framework identifies sufficient flexibility to accommodate alternative uses subject to wider policy and evidence base considerations. The process of preparing the Local Plan will assist in defining a criteria-based approach to the designation of uses and consideration of permissible alternative activities.

In some cases, potential development sites are subject to live development proposals and have been submitted as planning applications. Planning applications would be encouraged to have regard for the principles that sit above the illustrative proposals and the proposals themselves (see section on the "catch and steer" approach in chapter 5). Detailed schemes would usually supersede the illustrative masterplan if they benefit from a planning consent.

CAPACITIES

Indicative development capacities for gross new floorspace have been identified in the illustrative masterplan (expressed as Gross External Areas for the whole building). The number of dwellings will vary depending on the housing mix for each site. For example, a greater proportion of 1 or 2 bed homes would see a reduction in average dwelling size and a corresponding increase in capacity.



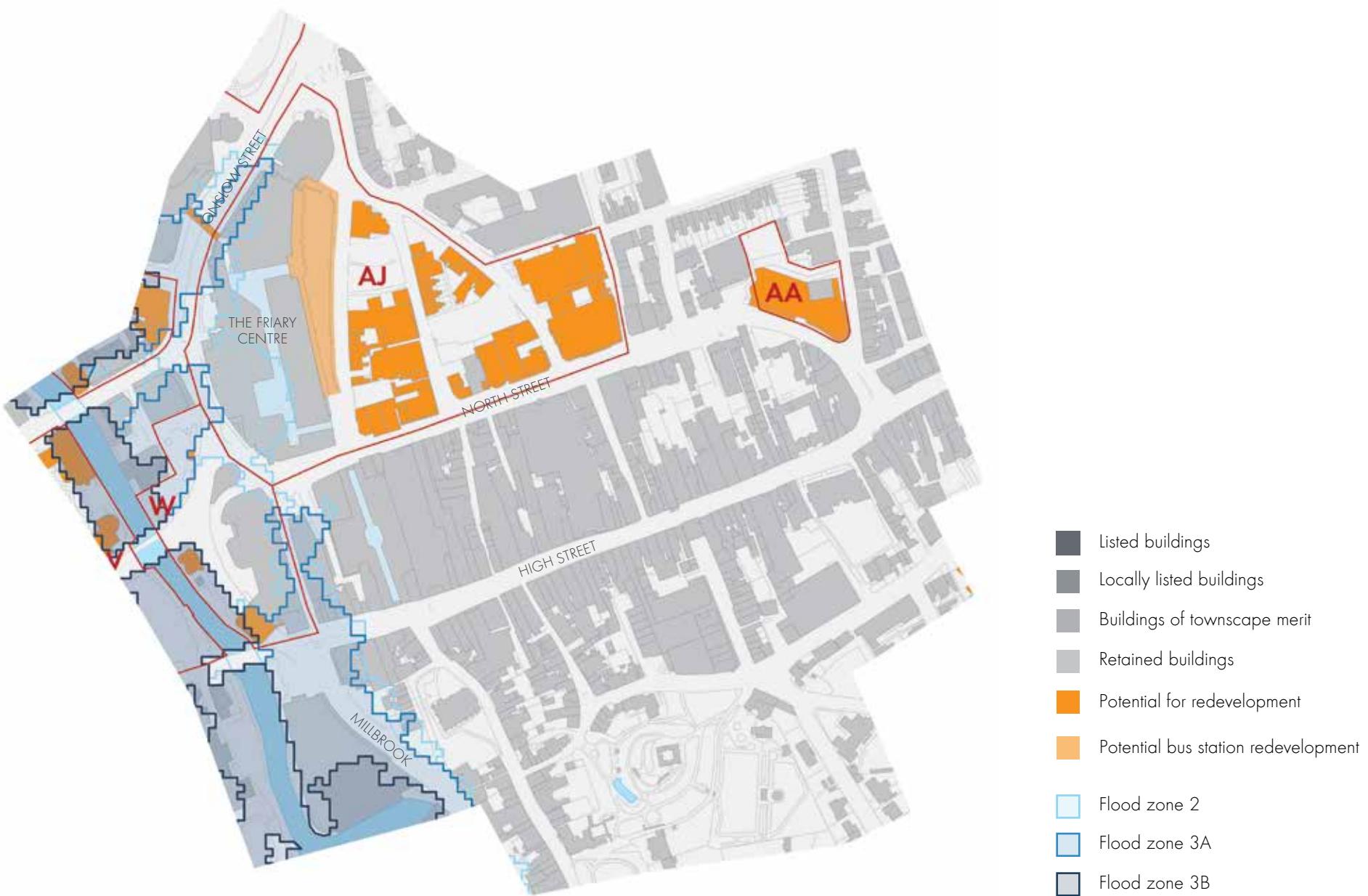
Approach to guidance and the overall scale of change

CORE TOWN CENTRE

CONTEXT

The core town centre is the primary focus for the masterplan in terms of retail and commercial activities. The High Street runs east west, rising up from the River Wey and forms the heart of the town centre.

The two gyratory scenarios outlined on page 40 would result in some variations in the approach to key sites in the vicinity of the gyratory (for this area, site W). In that context, two versions of the existing site plan, framework plan and illustrative masterplan drawings have been prepared.



Existing context (flood zone 2 represents medium risk, flood zone 3B is highest risk) - the drawing highlights the buildings affected by redevelopment proposals in gyratory scenario 1. The principal difference between the drawings relates to site W where the gyratory options are likely to imply different extents of impact on existing buildings subject to more detailed work.

CONSTRAINTS

- Onslow Street and the gyratory system create a negative setting and poor quality public realm, forming a barrier to the river.
- The Friary Centre reduces permeability in the area and has a poor frontage to Onslow Street.
- The topography of North Street presents attractive views of the landscape beyond the town which should be protected.
- Listed buildings should be protected and their setting enhanced.
- The topography of the High Street presents attractive views of the landscape beyond the town which should be protected.
- The western end of the site is within floodzones 2, 3a and 3B.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Redevelopment of the North Street site has potential to improve usage and appearance of the area.
- The High Street includes 10 grade I and grade II* Listed Buildings. Guildford High Street is of national historic importance in our view.
- Improve connections through the Friary Centre to the train station beyond.
- There is scope for a comprehensive public realm project to help lift the quality along North Street, using historic materials.
- Enhance and look for ways to signpost the connections to the High Street, supporting the businesses along these connections.
- Opportunities to signpost the connections to North Street and Castle Street, supporting the businesses along these routes.
- Improve the quality of the public realm at the northern and southern end of the high street.
- The sites at the western end of the study area have potential to improve the relationship of the high street with the river.
- Current plans to refurbish the Tunsgate Shopping Centre present an opportunity to improve links from the High Street to the castle and its grounds, and to enhance frontages to the castle grounds.



Existing context (flood zone 2 represents medium risk, flood zone 3B is highest risk) - the drawing highlights the buildings affected by redevelopment proposals in gyratory scenario 2. The principal difference between the drawings relates to site W where the gyratory options are likely to imply different extents of impact on existing buildings subject to more detailed work.



Proposals should respond to the special historic character of the town centre

KEY PRINCIPLES - GYRATORY SCENARIO 1

1. The core town centre will be protected and enhanced as Guildford's retail heart, maintaining the scale and grain of the High Street and adjacent streets. Opportunities to enhance the public realm, improve shop fronts and undertake sensitive infill development will be promoted.
2. The existing prime retail core of the lower High Street will be extended to North Street, integrating carefully with the existing network of streets and spaces. Larger footprints will be carefully integrated with the existing historic fabric, and framed by high quality streets and spaces. The illustrative framework and masterplan allow for the potential redevelopment of the bus station, but include the retention of the Leapale Lane multi-storey car park. Bus stops could be provided in an alternative location, for example, as on-street stops.
3. Improve connections and way-finding between North Street and High Street to support smaller units on side streets.
4. Promote connections to G-Live as a key anchor for cultural activities and events. Establish better east-west connections to new leisure activities at the river and across town.
5. Potential to explore an integrated approach to North Street including the Friary Centre.
6. Potential to provide an additional edge of development to the rear of Friary Street subject to the potential highways interventions identified in chapter 4.
7. Encourage an area of pedestrian priority streets and spaces from Castle Grounds to Onslow Street with Castle Street enhanced as a shared space.



KEY PRINCIPLES - GYRATORY SCENARIO 2

The principles remain largely as set out for scenario 1. However, in gyratory scenario 2, Onslow Street will be retained as a key vehicular route with two way movements across Friary Bridge. Implementation would necessitate impacts on existing buildings at Friary Street and Friary Court, with the new layout of Onslow Street / Millbrook creating opportunities for new development footprints west of the reconfigured road.



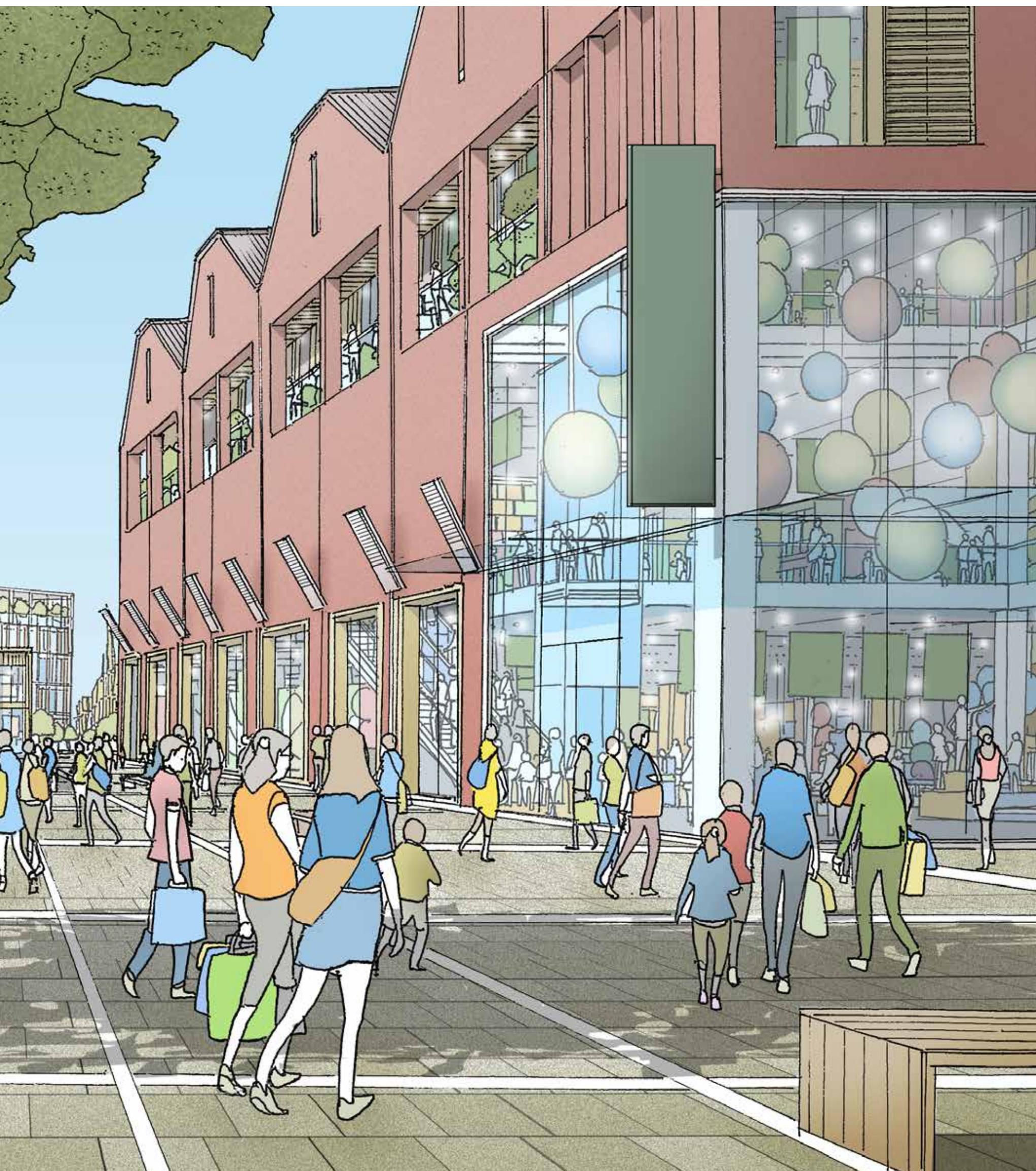


The High Street facing east from Millbrook. The High Street has many assets – subtle improvements such as shop-front enhancements, minor infill projects and improved public realm with a reduction in clutter will help to showcase the historic town centre to best advantage





North Street. North Street has major potential for a retail-led mix of uses, new public spaces and homes





The junction of North Street and Chertsey Street (in addition, see overleaf). The site at the top of North Street can be improved with the introduction of new buildings which form a sympathetic backdrop to the historic fabric, particularly the tower of the Old Cloth Hall. Redevelopment of the block will also allow a new route to be opened up, better integrating the shops on Chertsey Street with the rest of the town centre and improving links to the York Road car park





The junction of North Street and Chertsey Street. This view complements the image on the previous page



THE MASTERPLAN

The following drawings illustrate the potential layout of the town centre, drawing on the analysis and principles identified in this report. Two versions of the drawing have been prepared - one for each gyratory scenario. For ease of reference, the approximate capacity of key sites is identified in the following capacity table.

COMMENTARY ON LAND USES

New A1/A3 retail floorspace is proposed at site W reflecting the established use in this area and the opportunity to maximise engagement with the river, which in turn will maximise the value of proposals. The exact form varies according to the gyratory approach. Residential use would not be appropriate due to flood constraints and this is a sub-optimal location for offices due to access constraints and layout. There is potential for replacement office floorspace on the upper floors of plot W2 in gyratory scenario 2.

Residential use is proposed at site AA in line with the principle of encouraging town centre living where appropriate. This site is suitable as residential is already an established use at the site. Retail is proposed at ground floor in order to maintain an active frontage along the top of North Street.

Retail extensions to the Friary Centre are likely to be longer term propositions to capitalise on the pedestrian-friendly environment to be created through transport interventions. This will not only generate significant value but will assist in extending visitor movements around the centre, stretching footfall and prime rents.

It is anticipated that North Street (site AJ) would include a significant retail-led mixed use scheme with potential activities including a new department store and residential development. Please see the note on site AJ in the adjacent table for further details on North Street (which includes the potential Friary Centre extension).



Illustrative masterplan
Gyratory scenario 2

INDICATIVE CAPACITY

The illustrative masterplan for the town centre identifies a number of potential development opportunities which could account for a significant development capacity as estimated below.

SITE AJ

ILLUSTRATIVE SCHEME

Discussions are ongoing for the North Street site and in that context, an illustrative approach is still under consideration. High level indicative principles are set out in the framework plan on pages 68-69 which provide an overview of key guidance and aspirations alongside the artist impression on page 72.

RETAIL CAPACITY IDENTIFIED FOR SITE

The Council previously identified a core 2.56 ha site for the North Street site. For the purposes of the masterplan, the site redline has been expanded to 4.64ha to include the existing Friary Centre to encourage a more integrated approach to development.

In the Expression of Interest for the Site document (2012), potential was identified for 32,500 to 37,000 sqm of retail including a department store of c. 18,500 sqm arranged on three or four levels.

The Guildford Retail and Leisure Study Update (2015) finds a gross capacity of 46,000 sqm for the whole of the borough to 2033. It is anticipated that this will predominantly be accommodated on the North Street site. Further updates will be incorporated as proposals for the sites are discussed in due course..

SITE W		
Plot area (ha)	1.12	
	Gyratory scenario 1	Gyratory scenario 2
Gross non-residential area GEA (sqm)		
• A3 / A5 uses (scenario 1 only - W2)	1,647	
• A1/A3/A5/office uses (scenario 2 only - W2)		8,640
• Potential cultural building (W1 in both scenarios)	2,262	2,664

SITE AA

Plot area (ha)	0.34
Gross non-residential area GEA (sqm)	
• A1 uses	1,484
• Other non-residential uses	1,170
Gross residential area GEA (sqm)	2,163
Approximate number of dwellings	21

TOTAL

Gross non-residential area (sqm)	49,563 (scenario 1) to 56,958, (scenario 2)
Approximate number of dwellings	21 (excluding North Street)

