

Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2017

January 2017



Foreword

Foreword by the Leader of Guildford Borough Council, Paul Spooner



I am pleased to be able to present the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. This Strategy has been compiled following the extensive work culminating in the publication of the Town Centre Masterplan in 2015. The Masterplan was well received by the people of Guildford as a bold and imaginative set of proposals for creating a more attractive and dynamic place, in keeping with the successful local economy. This document is intended as an ambitious and aspirational strategy that will evolve over time, as opportunities arise.

This Regeneration Strategy clearly demonstrates the Council's commitment to working with other stakeholders to provide new shops, leisure and entertainment, commercial offices, and particularly housing, in Guildford and injecting new life into an already very successful place. There is an identified need for new market and affordable housing in the borough, and the programme outlined here on redeveloped brownfield sites will not only provide much-needed homes for hard working people in this area, but in doing so, will contribute to taking some of the pressure off the need to use land in the Green Belt for housing purposes. This Strategy is a long-term commitment to invest in growing the economy of Guildford with a range of early wins supporting the Draft Local Plan by demonstrating the interventions necessary to deliver allocations and supporting infrastructure. It gives more detail on the assumptions and resources needed to deliver development on key sites in the town in the short to medium term, and delivering them in a manner that properly respects Guildford's historic character and what makes the town special.

In setting the long-term development objectives for the town, this Regeneration Strategy then outlines the consequential investment strategy in building and infrastructure required to deliver the outcomes. The Council is prepared to lead, with its key stakeholders, in implementing the Strategy and making the forward investment, where appropriate, which will in turn support the Council's wider objectives, and also lever a considerable ratio of other public and private investment. To maximise this investment, the highest standards of design and development must be achieved in new buildings and public realm. The extended shopping and leisure offer in the town centre needs to be set in an attractive, environment which stretches to the river and into the Riverside Park. This will complement the unique historic character of Guildford and attract even more visitors to enjoy it.

The Council acknowledges there are real challenges ahead, including a need to see the severe daily problems caused by traffic congestion on the A3 addressed, as this impacts detrimentally on the performance of local businesses and on the town centre and the public in general. Nevertheless, Guildford is uniquely placed to build on its existing high-performing town centre, strong economy and attractive environment. This Regeneration Strategy therefore seeks to draw realistic boundaries to the very real opportunities that present themselves. Guildford already attracts a very significant level of interest from a wide variety of activities and uses wishing to be present in the town. This Strategy provides a long term, flexible working agenda, which is already in the process of starting to deliver outcomes, and can be adjusted further as the town regenerates. This is an exciting new vision for Guildford soundly based in deliverable place-making changes and I wholeheartedly commend this Strategy to you.



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Purpose of the Regeneration Strategy

This implementation strategy seeks to bring together the experience of years of discussion and master planning relating to the town centre into a shared ambition and structure to deliver a thriving and vibrant forward-looking town centre that embraces innovation to take best advantage of new and emerging technologies whilst respecting the town's history and heritage and preserving what makes Guildford special.

This is an aspirational document that will build on existing and emerging policy through the proposed new Local Plan and the Council's adopted Corporate Plan, also taking into account existing guidance and policy, providing a workable structure for integration of policy strategy and guidance to help deliver a town centre we can all rightly be proud of.

The Council's vision for 2015-2020, as set out in our adopted Corporate Plan is:

“For Guildford to be a town and rural borough that is the most desirable place to live, work and visit in South East England. A centre for education, healthcare, innovative cutting edge businesses, high quality retail and wellbeing. A county town set in a vibrant rural environment, which balances the needs of urban and rural communities alike. Known for our outstanding urban planning and design and with infrastructure that will properly cope with our needs.”

A number of strategic priorities that support this vision under the fundamental themes of Our Borough, Our Economy, Our Infrastructure, Our Environment and Our Society are identified in the Corporate Plan. (see table below).

Our Borough	Our Economy	Our Infrastructure	Our Environment	Our Society
<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractive, competitive, multi-faceted and vibrant town Range of housing to meet need Sustainable rural economy Enhanced shopping and leisure offer Adoption of Local Plan and publication of Town Centre Masterplan promoting high quality urban design Protect green spaces and limit encroachment into countryside Sensitive integration of development in existing communities Improved accessibility and pedestrian environment 	<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic leadership to deliver sustainable and proportionate growth Maintaining and growing our business base Promoting innovation and growth in high value clusters High quality commercial land and buildings Improving skills and employment opportunities Building strong links and leveraging synergies between public, private and third sectors Improving local community facilities Unlocking economic advantages of urban regeneration 	<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable transport – urban and rural Improvements to A3 and borough-wide road network Improved flood protection and green infrastructure High quality cycling and walking network Resilient power, water and drainage services High quality facilities and provision of land for schools and health centres Extension of superfast broadband Improved rail connectivity with new halts Improved parking to meet the needs of the town and villages 	<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance biodiversity and reduce noise, light and air pollution Reduce energy and water use Less waste, more re-use and recycling Clean and attractive borough Protecting and improving our environment Improved resilience through sustainability Improved walking and cycling routes Protecting green spaces sustainably 	<p>Strategic Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every person matters – improving the lives of residents, particularly in areas of less advantage through Project Aspire Improving public health and wellbeing Improving provision for older people Integrating community care services Reducing social inequality Encouraging self-reliant communities, particularly in our less advantaged areas Maintaining our low levels of crime



The Action Plan embedded in the Corporate Plan identifies a number of key projects to ensure the delivery of the Council's overall vision that relate to delivering the vibrant and successful town centre that Guildford and its residents, businesses and visitors deserve. This strategy is aimed at identifying a suitable mechanism for delivering and implementing these, and other beneficial or interlinked, projects.

In this document, we will draw together previous visioning work, including the Corporate Plan and the Town Centre Masterplan (2015) prepared by Allies & Morrison and provide an overall framework for taking forward our ambitious programme for delivering a greatly enhanced and sustainable town centre.

The first section provides a general introduction to Guildford and the background to how the town has developed.

The Strategy document then sets out the shared vision, identified objectives and proposed delivery mechanisms.

The final section outlines the projects, issues, opportunities and Work Programme





How will the strategy help to deliver town centre regeneration?

The Council will support the strategy in three main ways, though Planning, Investment and Influence:

Planning

- Adoption of a new Local Plan that identifies sites for redevelopment and sets the policy framework
- Developing supplementary planning documents and planning briefs to help shape development
- Supporting high quality development decisions and townscape
- Developing a Streetscape guide to ensure enhancements to the public realm in the town centre
- Delivery focused development management that supports suitable sustainable development
- Providing bespoke pre-application advice to provide increased levels of confidence for investors and developers

Investment

- Working with partners to provide new and upgraded infrastructure to support development
- Seeking to improve local connectivity and transport links
- Delivering strategic developments by, or on direct behalf of, the Council on our own land or jointly with partners through releasing and making efficient use of our own portfolio of land and property in the town centre where desirable and in the public interest
- Undertaking strategic land and property acquisition to unlock development sites, deliver housing and jobs, and to add value to regeneration schemes
- Compulsory Purchase (CPO) of sites where needed to deliver regeneration and where it is appropriate to do so.

Influence

- Encouraging and facilitating inward investment through master planning and by clearly identifying development opportunities
- Leading by example and putting our money where our mouth is – early investment
- Clearly articulating and selling the vision
- Identifying current and future infrastructure needs and planning ahead
- Place making and place shaping
- Improving the public realm

How will the strategy be used?

Guildford Borough Council will use the strategy to inform, shape and support the delivery of aspects of the 2015 Town Centre Masterplan. The strategy underpins the Corporate Plan and subsequent investment planning, programme management, place making, planning and communications activities. It is positioned as a statement of ambition and is not a statutory plan for the purposes of formal decision making, but it does include an initial work programme to identify the actions and projects that the Council intends to take forward in the short to medium term. The aim is to consider these projects and actions holistically rather than viewing them in isolation as there are clear interdependencies between a number of the proposed regeneration and infrastructure schemes. New projects and work strands will emerge over time as opportunities present themselves and if barriers to delivery arise.

The implementation strategy has been co-developed with some key stakeholders and landowners with the intention that, where appropriate, active agencies, organisations, companies and people with an interest in Guildford will find support and encouragement for their own contributions to the future growth of the town.



Finally, it is important to recognise that this strategy is intended to be a fluid 'living' document. Whilst the visions, overall aims and priorities will remain unchanged, it is necessary that the regeneration strategy and associated work programme are flexible enough to adapt to changes in the economic, social or natural environment and to respond positively to any opportunities that may arise. As noted throughout the Strategy, delivery of the regeneration schemes envisaged in this aspirational document will be dependent on considerations of viability and will be impacted upon by existing known and, as yet, unknown constraints (for example flooding, severe land contamination) and the Strategy is therefore only as good as the information we have available at the time of its preparation. The Council is actively seeking to establish detailed information and analysis in respect of its own land holdings and the sites being promoted in the Strategy so that resources can be targeted at those developments that are most likely to be deliverable and viable and will provide the best value for money.

Introduction

Over the years, Guildford Town Centre has been the subject of numerous studies, but the 2014 visioning exercise by Allies and Morrison struck the public's imagination and that of Guildford Borough Council. As a result, the Town Centre Masterplan (TCMP) was commissioned and published in 2015. This plan progressed the ideas and proposals that had previously been tested and were broadly accepted as presenting a coherent set of changes for the town. The plan also responded to the requirements of the emerging Draft Guildford Local Plan, which set a variety of development targets for sites in the town. The need for housing in the borough is now widely accepted and, if developed, these previously-developed (so-called 'brownfield') sites could significantly relieve some of the existing development pressure on the Green Belt.

The TCMP draws a vision of a changing Guildford over a period of 20 years, which extends its attractive retail and leisure offer, while maintaining its heritage. It creates a largely pedestrian centre around key anchor sites and promotes a much more attractive place for people to live and work. The extension of the core Town Centre would, for the first time since Edwardian times, enlarge its capacity for new housing in expanded communities. To achieve the desired quality of environment, the Council aims to discourage through traffic, and encourage visitor traffic, promoting a 'travel to and not through' model to reduce intrusive traffic and encourage locals and visitors to adopt other modes of transport.

The Council hopes that the TCMP will act as a guide to developers who are considering bringing forward sites. The Council also has significant land holdings in the town centre itself and we are therefore able to influence development. The Council has devoted significant resources to test and scrutinise the viability and feasibility of the plan, and from those investigations is seeking to bring forward a work plan. This is the key purpose of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. It sets out a range of initiatives and a work programme for regeneration that we are dedicated to delivering for the benefit of the town centre and invites key partners to join the Council on its ambitious journey. This document will also inform bids for resources in the Council's capital programme for the period up to 2021-22.



Current situation

This Regeneration Strategy provides supporting evidence for a range of projects to improve the Town Centre and enhance its economic and development performance and builds on the vision as set out in the Town Centre Masterplan (TCMP).

Working alongside the Council's preparation of the Draft Local Plan, the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is an ambition that the Council is excited to share with residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders. The plan does not harbour any formal legislative planning authority powers or designation, but instead shows our strategic vision for the Town Centre in the short, medium and long term. Its primary objective is to provide an aspirational framework for the Council, third parties and others to work together to transform Guildford.

Seven key ambitions emerged from the TCMP:

- a new Community riverside park
- new pedestrian and cycle routes
- downgrading the gyratory
- sustainable transport modes
- housing sites balanced with other more traditional town centre uses
- a thriving town centre
- protecting and enhancing Guildford's townscape and character.

Other themes, such as pedestrianisation, more sustainable travel provision with modal shift from reliance on the private car, and development of the riverside also attracted support and interest.



Our borough

Guildford has one of the most successful economies in the UK, making a substantial contribution to the national economy. Guildford is one of the top ranked destinations in the 2015 UK Vitality Index¹, but there are early signs that it is starting to lose its competitiveness moving down to fifth place in 2016². Recently the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) commissioned a study on the attractiveness of locations for inward investment and Guildford scored highly, so it is clear there is potential which is currently untapped. However, developers are presently drawn to neighbouring areas such as Woking, Reading and Kingston-Upon-Thames with little new development occurring in Guildford town centre. Despite allegedly strong demand Guildford has struggled to attract development due to a perceived lack of opportunities, environmental constraints and a challenging transport network.



The lack of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of the business community has also discouraged investment and development. The shortage of floorspace in most sectors makes Guildford less competitive and less able to support its sub-regional performance. Shops and offices cannot develop and expand as they can elsewhere. With comparatively high land and property values, financial viability is also a determining factor.

There is a labour shortage in the Borough, caused in part by a lack of local affordable housing. A great number of the workforce travel in from long distances and combined with the congestion and delay on the road network, too often give up and work elsewhere with employers responding by downgrading the size of their workforce. The resulting shortage of skills has a knock-on effect in maintaining services and business activity, with consequences in recruiting staff – for example in the health and education sectors. Increasing competition from other centres and London could leave Guildford behind and failure to diversify may make the local economy vulnerable to any future decline in the service and public sectors. It will also impact on the elite high tech sectors that are currently strongly represented locally.

Although Guildford's geography is complex, opportunities to link public realm and attractive environments through key sites such as Guildford Railway Station, the riverside, and North Street form an attractive opportunity to market the town as a key destination for contemporary shopping, business and commercial leisure as well as providing scope for new housing in the town centre.

Retail contributes significantly to the borough's economy and Guildford Town Centre is ranked as one of the premier shopping destinations in the south of England. The health of the High Street is critical to the Borough's affluence and economic resilience. As the county town of Surrey, Guildford has, to-date enjoyed a prominent position within the South East's retail hierarchy. The retail sector employs around 9,050 people in more than 750 outlets, with many of the leading national and luxury brands well represented and many others failing to get suitable space. An opportunity to grow the retail sector exists.

¹ (Lambert Smith Hampton, 2015)

² (Lambert Smith Hampton, 2016)



Our borough has a very different employment profile to that of its peers. In 2008, there were 70,350 jobs in Guildford for employees across 429 different industry sectors. These employment pools range from the healthcare sector (including NHS Trusts) which employs more than 3,500 people, to specialist individual strands such as stationery manufacturers employing a single person. The small and medium enterprise (SME) community is also vibrant, with 1,285 registered organisations employing over 40,000 employees with a combined turnover of £310 million³. Overall, 30% of jobs in the borough (21,000) are classified as public sector generated. The borough has a much greater reliance on the public sector and manufacturing than that of its comparator economies, and significantly less reliance on commercial business services such as finance and support services. There is also a particular reliance on the commercial sector, high street retail and associated activities, which in combination, provide just over half of all employment in the borough.

The Borough is well-connected by road, rail and air provision, and is only 30 miles from London. Guildford's urban centre is around 12 minutes from the M25, providing umbilical access to all parts of the UK. The town sits adjacent to the A3, a major regional trunk road that connects the borough with Portsmouth and the coast to the West and direct access to central London to the East. The direct rail service to the capital via Waterloo takes less than 40 minutes on a fast service. With four fast services an hour Guildford is a popular commuter hub for the City and Canary Wharf, two of the premiere financial sectors in Europe. Other destinations easily accessible by rail are Reading, Portsmouth and Southampton. The UK's two largest international airports, Heathrow and Gatwick, are only 40 minutes by road and Gatwick is only 40 minutes by rail. The proximity of these main air hubs secures swift access to global markets, and international potential.

Whilst Guildford is generally considered an affluent area compared with the rest of the UK, there are small pockets of disadvantage and deprivation, with inhabitants in receipt of benefits and with few or no educational qualifications. The derivation disparity with the wealth is sharply experienced. Some of these areas are among the most deprived in Surrey.

In terms of housing, the economic profile of Guildford is made up of higher than average incomes together with higher than national average housing costs. The median household wage is £561 per week (versus £420 UK average) with an average home cost of £425,000. On a flat rate, low interest agreement the median income required to service a mortgage of this size is £110,000. With a median wage shortfall, based on a joint ownership tenancy, the gap between local wages and house prices in Guildford is an issue for many people with the housing challenge being comparable with that found in a central London Borough.

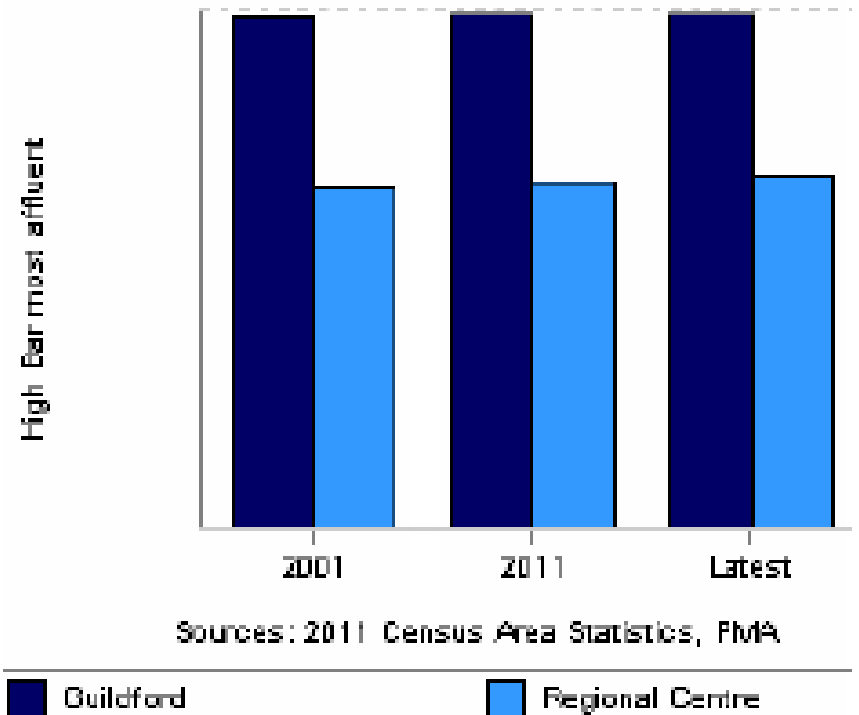
³ Martin Ebbs, Economic Growth Management 2015

The cost and availability of housing is an integral part of the local business environment. The affordability of housing is directly linked to critical recruitment and retention issues, particularly for employees on minimum wage, young people, and other lower paid workers. The housing market also influences commuting patterns. A low provision of affordable homes and homes for key workers, nurses and carers is a major factor in determining the willingness and ability of people to live and work in Guildford. The cost of private housing in the borough is high and there is a shortage of affordable homes, therefore some people working in the area cannot afford to live here and are forced to commute in from neighbouring areas where more suitable affordable housing may be available. The role of the rental housing sector also needs to be factored in.

The general affluence of the Borough is not only reflected in high house prices but also high proportions of vehicle ownership and use. Much of the Borough of Guildford is rural and transport from the villages is poor, hence there is a strong reliance on the private car as a main mode of transport. Home ownership obstacles, coupled together with commuting activity results in high levels of traffic congestion in the Town Centre and on major arterial routes during peak hours, particularly the A3. This is a major concern for local businesses and residents and has significant detrimental economic impacts.

Establishing a clear, coherent and robust framework for change is critical for the Council's vision of the Town Centre. The Council is committed to establishing a positive and sustainable environment for Guildford's key private and public sector partners to affect a lasting and significant change for residents, businesses and visitors.

PMA Affluence Indicator Rank



Linkages with other Council Plans

Supporting the Council's Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan is the over-arching element of our strategic planning framework. It sets out both our vision for the borough and the priorities that will guide our future strategies and plans. The plan includes a number of important regeneration and development projects. These projects will make a significant contribution to delivering our vision for the borough by improving our infrastructure, providing housing that people can afford and enhancing our town centre. Infrastructure is one of our greatest challenges and improvements to the A3 and local road network, increased rail capacity and new stations, better bus services and cycling and walking networks all form part of our plans to tackle congestion, delays and unreliability of journeys.

Several important projects within the Corporate Plan have already been completed, such as the formation of a new housing company, the production of the Town Centre Masterplan and replacement of the High Street setts. This Regeneration Strategy sets out the proposed approach for delivering against other Corporate Plan commitments on town centre regeneration, housing, infrastructure and public realm improvements.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Budget



In order to deliver the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, including the regeneration and development projects referred to above, we need to allocate the necessary resources through our financial planning and Budget processes. In planning our future budgets, in an increasingly challenging financial environment, the Council has adopted an entrepreneurial model, by seeking to deliver our priorities and services through a variety of commercial and non-commercial vehicles.

Part of our transformation programme includes undertaking major regeneration projects and economic development projects to generate an increase in business rates, capital receipts and revenue rental income.

We are also committed to pooling a share of the future revenue generated from council tax and business rates growth arising from regeneration and development projects to finance future investment in infrastructure.

Guildford's Draft Local Plan

The Council is progressing its Draft Local Plan and following feedback to the latest public consultation, the Council intends to embark on further targeted Regulation 19 consultation in 2017, prior to formal submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State.

The new Local Plan, when adopted, will formally replace the 2003 Plan and will clearly set the direction of travel over the coming years for the period up to 2034. Through this process, interventions and opportunities have already emerged, identifying clear opportunities across housing, transport, infrastructure and other areas.

The Draft Local Plan identifies sites around the Borough, which could potentially come forward for a variety of uses although due to the stringent controls around Local Plan preparation and the need to demonstrate soundness, only sites that are objectively assessed as being deliverable within the plan period can be allocated within it.

As an aspirational document, rather than part of the development plan this Regeneration Strategy is able to take a longer term and less constrained view than necessitated by the Draft Local Plan, and looks toward an ambitious, place shaping process alongside development formally proposed through the Local Plan. Through this process, a framework will emerge, giving a clear vision for the town's development. However, it is important to note that the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy will not have any status as part of the Development Plan covering the Borough.

Supporting the Draft Local Plan and beyond

The Local Plan, once adopted, will be a key document within the Development Plan. The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, as an aspirational plan incorporating emerging projects, does not have the same status in planning terms. The Strategy will have a fluid lifecycle that is continually monitored and adjusted in alignment with market performance locally, within the key themes – the performance of the housing market for example - with an initial lifecycle of 15 to 20 years. Although it is an aspirational document, the Strategy, nevertheless, still needs to properly consider the reality of delivery and must not conflict with the Local Plan.

The evidence base behind the Draft Local Plan has identified potential for new residential, retail and employment space across the borough and the floorspace requirements are listed in a table below. The aim of the TCMP was to identify the capacity of the Town Centre to take a variety of different uses which the Regeneration Strategy has considered may be generally viable, desirable and deliverable.

The TCMP identified floorspace is listed here next to the Draft Local Plan site allocations and suggests that there is considerable potential for additional development in the town beyond that proposed to be allocated at present, which can now be fully evaluated and then, if found sound, incorporated in development briefs and if necessary an early roll forward of the Local Plan and an Area Action Plan. It should be noted that TCMP sites are all on previously developed (brownfield) land which is consistent with National Planning Policy Framework objectives, but which will be a challenge to redevelop.

Use	Local Plan requirement Borough wide	TCMP aspirational delivery
Residential	13,860 homes	2,807 homes
Retail (comparison) A1	46,955 sq m	49,577 sq m
Food and beverage A3/A5	7,043 sq m	11,007 sq m
Office (Use class B1a)	37,000 – 47,000 sq m	12,098 sq m net (30,350 sq m gross)
Leisure	2 gyms and 5 cinema screens	7,966 sq m net (12,566 sq m gross)



Town Centre Masterplan – Key concepts



The Town Centre Masterplan built on the extensive consultation and analysis carried out for the Guildford Vision report and the Draft Local Plan in 2014. It considered the key topics arising, alongside a broader assessment of wider planning objectives and key technical constraints. This process led to the identification of place-making concepts, which were considered central to improving the setting and workings of Guildford town. These can be summarised as:

1. Replacing the concrete collar and the dominance of traffic with shared surfaces and an extended Town Centre down to a new riverside park which becomes a dominant feature of the town;
2. A healthy approach to movement which encourages a modal shift from the car to the other more sustainable forms of transport with less environmental impact on the town's environment and air quality;
3. A new riverside park which takes the attractive River Wey valley and extends the informal landscaped area through the town, making its uses serve flood mitigation where practical;
4. Growing a more successful Town Centre with developments to accommodate leisure, entertainment and retail space in an extension towards the river and railway station;
5. Development of new housing (both market and affordable) to help meet demand across a range of tenures and sizes;
6. Developing a more coherent and legible historic centre to compliment this in the balance of the place;
7. Planning sustainable development with new planning, environmental and management standards to ensure that the town is environmentally healthier for visitors and locals alike.

Vision & objectives of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy aims to shape the Council's role in assisting and encouraging development and change. The most probable developments and schemes likely to be delivered in the early years, such as housing sites, have also been incorporated in the Draft Local Plan, which in turn will be strengthened by this statement of commitment and delivery. At a corporate level the economic, social and environmental objectives and drivers of the Regeneration Strategy are as follows;

Economic

- enhance the vibrancy of Guildford Town Centre
- promote and create an investment friendly environment
- improve traffic flow and infrastructure provision
- ensure schemes are sustainable and do not lock future development potential

Social

- link the Town Centre to the train station
- improve on the existing leisure offer, appealing to younger generations
- assist in meeting Guildford's housing demand
- promote sustainable developments and activity
- a 21st Century town

Environmental

- open up the River Wey and improve connections to the river
- create an enhanced and more positive public realm
- reduce the concrete environment atmosphere
- ensure schemes are sustainable and do not lock future development potential
- create and foster high quality design
- protect the town's heritage and overall feel
- respect existing townscape at both the street and roof level



Town Centre SWOT analysis

Strengths

- A competitive place that attracts inward investment from multinational brands and has comparatively high levels of business investment and activity potential
- Established retailers that demand larger units and a contemporary shopping environment
- An attractive, historic Town Centre with strong character and ambience
- Excellent connectivity by road, rail and air to European and global markets
- Strong track record in economic performance based on a high disposable income
- A strong growing tourism and leisure economy

Opportunities

- Major Town Centre sites with potential for transformational anchor schemes to provide offices, shops, leisure and entertainment and flexible units to cater for changing retail demand
- Compact catchment area with key infrastructure to encourage greater use of sustainable transport modes, which can change modal share and visitor behaviour while building customer base
- Sufficient, organised parking and Park and Ride facilities to make the customer trip attractive relative to other centres
- Only half the catchment population shops in town and therefore potential growth in market share with provision of the right offer
- Reduce NO2/CO2 emissions attributable to borough's businesses arising through energy changes and reduced traffic intrusions
- Catchment area with diverse population skills and qualifications which can service Guildford
- Providing appropriate and effective business support to local businesses to support SME growth in key sectors.

Weaknesses

- Traffic congestion during peak hours and uncertain travel conditions significantly interfere with business and private life
- Limited supply of homes
- Low supply of affordable housing not meeting the needs for Town Centre living or the Town Centre share of housing supply
- Lack of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of the business community and end-users
- Economy based around the service and public sector employment which needs to be diversified and start up space provided
- Vacant and historic areas of the town not offering marketable accommodation and inadequate floorspace provision for shops and offices deterring users

Threats

- Insufficient affordable housing provided to meet local need and demand potentially having a detrimental impact upon local businesses, local economy and resident population
- Lack of development guidance and promotion of viable land discourages investment and development;
- Lack of investment in infrastructure, particularly in the A3, leads to businesses relocating elsewhere
- The skills mismatch in the borough continues to widen resulting in greater numbers travelling into the borough from long distances creating a shortage of economical employees
- Increasing competition from other centres and London, may leave Guildford behind;
- Failure to diversify the borough's economy may make the local economy vulnerable to future decline in service and public sectors.
- Physical constraints – e.g. flooding, ground contamination

Managed change is required

To encourage development, we will commit resources and stakeholder engagement with the local property and development industry representatives as well as with potential end users in generally promoting Guildford and its assets. Working with the development industry Guildford will ensure that the property products developed for the town meet the highest standard and fully integrate with the quality of place emerging.

The effective delivery of property projects across the UK has relied on a range of methods, from direct development to joint venture to help stimulate the market with the majority of the investment levered being private. Marketing the town in regional and international markets is also important, along with a supportive and customer friendly planning and development service. We will promote a clear statement of what Guildford requires through detailed and site specific documents, following the adoption of the Local Plan, to facilitate appropriate development.



Strategy for prosperity

Guildford is a medieval town with a significant area of nineteenth century and Edwardian housing and industry situated at its core. The Allies and Morrison Masterplan suggests that, in selecting character areas, we can establish the hierarchy for any development graded against the potential for change and relative sensitivity. Three areas are identified in the historic centre, which require protection alongside the river corridor where there is considered maximum opportunity for change.

There are significant areas of the town, such as North Street, Bedford Wharf and the Walnut Tree Close area, which could be considered for significant change and offer opportunities for new contemporary schemes which will enhance the townscape. Design and conservation guidance is critical to minimise potential conflict between conservation and the sensitive introduction of new designed buildings essential for the creation of a more active and attractive place.

North Street is an ideal location for a large retail led development scheme component that can also provide greater diversity of the type and arrangement of floor space available in the Town Centre. This site is proposed to be allocated for mixed-uses in the emerging Local Plan. Enhancing housing provision, a key Council objective in the short, medium and long term, can also be integrated into a mixed development as well as in stand-alone developments along the river valley. The TCMP proposal to reinvigorate land uses along the riverfront can only be achieved with the reconfiguration of the dominating road network, which should be the aim of a progressive transport strategy to reduce traffic and provide for pedestrians. Potentially, the east bank could offer a significant new area for commercial leisure and entertainment uses and this will be considered as a seed component of the comprehensive re-imagining of the centre.

The River Wey valley, running from the centre to the A25, is a dramatic but underplayed feature in the town. It represents opportunities for the most radical area of change for Guildford with some real choices to be made about the shape and character of the town. The station area offers a very significant, unifying, development opportunity, potentially on both sides. The river corridor is generally more sensitive than the station area, except for Woodbridge Meadows, which potentially provides a renewal area that can accommodate large footprint development schemes. A decision



needs to be made to consolidate and enhance employment uses or to move to redevelopment for a large new residential community. The river valley is more suited to consolidating the ad-hoc redevelopment of blocks for residential uses but left uncontrolled, this can be a negative factor. The key exception here is the east bank from Bedford Wharf, north to the Crown Court and across to Woodbridge Road. This could accommodate a significant leisure and entertainment hub around the current cinema, with potential for an office/residential area on Mary Road, serviced with improved pedestrian environment and expanded parking – although part of the site lies within zones at high risk of flooding, so this important constraint will need to be properly taken in to account in master planning.

The Draft Local Plan allocates some sites within the Town Centre as being deliverable in the plan period. However, it is believed the full potential of the Town Centre for residential, leisure and offices footprints could exceed these performance targets with an appropriate promotional and development strategy, over a longer and carefully designed delivery period. Subject to unlocking sites and overcoming existing constraints, Guildford can potentially deliver more and in doing so consolidate the current distribution of uses, making for a much more active and economically viable town, comparable to any other in the UK or Europe. This Regeneration Strategy sets the framework for the creation of a better place by guiding the process and allowing key objectives and decisions to be set and delivered.

Regeneration Strategy - drivers and key themes



Approach to the riverside and land uses

The broad approach to the riverside has received significant support including and will be pursued in the final plans for regeneration, but as significant areas lie within the zone at greatest risk of flooding, proposed uses in these areas need to be properly considered. Analysis of flood risk, sequential and exception testing, the potential for mitigation and river crossing point locations will be considered in more detail as the proposals move forward.



Vehicle network, public transport and parking

This topic received significant feedback through the consultation process. The key principles and objectives of creating a more sustainable transport system was strongly supported and will be maintained in the final work plan. We continue to recommend a phased approach to the improvement of the gyratory, associated feeder roads and in the creation of an extensive pedestrianised area for the centre. However, a number of important queries were raised and it is recommended that the Strategy acknowledges these challenges and defines a clear way forward in terms of a coherent movement network. The TCMP identified the need for a comprehensive transport study to consider traffic modelling, public transport enhancement and parking strategy together.



Town Centre expansion and uses

Some feedback queried evidence in the Masterplan in relation to non-residential floorspace. It is important that the Masterplan highlights the specific evidence based studies which have informed the expansion and development of these uses. Wider evidence material such as socio-economic impact and infrastructure provision will be considered and will be progressed as part of the Local Plan process.



Building heights and design guidance

Historic England and other consultees made the case for greater prescription in relation to building heights and controls. We recommend that simple general guidance and criteria are provided for context at the outset in considering development schemes. At this stage, it would be inappropriate to be overly prescriptive on individual sites and more detailed guidance will be provided in individual Development Briefs for key sites in due course which will be endorsed by the Council before being used as promotional or supporting tools. We consider drawings, 2D and 3D visualisations and models provide an appropriate means of communicating design principles and guidance. The Council will develop these where appropriate to assist coherent planning and developers promoting sites within the town centre will be encouraged to do the same.

Planning Development and Design Guidance - Guildford's development capacity

Guildford is developed on a natural ford over the River Wey at the point where it cuts through the chalk ridge of the North Downs. The Mount, on the western bank of the River Wey, follows the line that travellers have long used to descend from the Hogs Back to the ford and river. Its origins as a Saxon town are still evident in the layout of the High Street, North Street and the connecting alleyways. The town's rich architectural history reflects all stages of Guildford's development from the remains of the Castle dating from 1066 to the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre (1963-65). There are four Grade I listed buildings and two Grade II* listed buildings in the High Street alone. There are six conservation areas within the Town Centre and all have conservation appraisals that describe the particular special interest of the areas they cover. Any new development should seek to compliment this historic townscape in its very attractive setting, and continue the tradition of well-designed buildings using good quality materials that will add to the rich architectural history of the area.



Principles for good design

We are committed to the highest standards of planning and design. We plan to refresh our current guidance, with all the necessary supplements covering the contemporary planning and regeneration market. Our guidance will include (but not be limited to) the following principles for good design:

- All new building must take into account the unique context and local distinctiveness of Guildford. The topography of the town plays a huge part in its development and long views across the town are equally important as shorter views.
- The height and scale of any new development must sit well with the surrounding townscape. Guildford is predominately a low-rise town and proposals for buildings that are substantially taller than surroundings will need to ensure that they do not impact negatively on views of historic buildings and respect urban grain and the skyline.
- Views of Guildford Cathedral are particularly important and should be protected, as are the views of the Castle.
- Height to width ratios are important to ensure that building heights are in proportion to the width of streets. Many parts of the town have a very tight urban grain and this should be reflected in new development.
- Rhythm, scale and proportions of existing areas should be analysed and translated in some form into new developments. This could mean anything from continuing an existing building line, replicating the bay width of late Victorian terraces or repeating a modern interpretation of a historic detail found in the buildings nearby.
- The use of high quality materials is imperative, both in terms of the relationship with the surrounding built form and the elevations. The choice of material is often an essential component in providing a connection between the old and new in historic areas.
- New places should reflect existing urban form, strengthening connections to aid integration of the new and existing pieces of townscape.
- Public and private space should be well defined in new developments. Boundaries and public realm should be incorporated into any large scheme.
- Landscaping for new developments should not be an afterthought and careful consideration must be given to integrating parking into the design as a whole.

The TCMP provides a general planning design framework for how the town could be developed, and this Regeneration Strategy is intended as a vehicle for promoting and taking forward some of these ideas. Site development briefs, supplementary planning and design guidance, and Area Action Plans will ensure more inclusive and explanatory guidance for new development going forward.

To encourage the use of town-centre appropriate, high quality surfacing materials, street furniture and a significantly improved public realm, the Council intends to produce a Streetscape Design Guide, which, following public consultation, could be formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Document to guide future town centre development. These principles will be enshrined in the development of key sites, such as North Street and Bedford Wharf.

Sites identified in the TCMP

In order to test the TCMP viability, the Council carried out initial appraisals to examine the financial viability of each site and its schematic proposal. The figures used were based on current market values, and a detailed appraisal for each scheme including forecasted values is programmed once the development stage is approached. The analysis includes core elements such as site coverage, existing footprint, use mix, design and density, planning obligations, land availability and suitability. However, it is important to note that the sites were not analysed in detail at the Master Planning stage in terms of any other physical constraints to development, such as contamination or flood risk. These crucial factors would need to be fully assessed and taken in to consideration on a site-by-site basis as specific projects are taken forward.



The sites were further evaluated and changes included alteration of site boundaries, change in development height, change of use and initial examination of other related issues such as contamination and flooding. However, it's accepted that they will be further refined when development briefs are generated. The development value assumptions were revised and based on current market rental values and yields for each use type - office (B1a), retail (A1), food and drink (A3 and A5).

The site boundaries were altered to reflect land freehold ownership, site suitability and current use. We also propose the merger of some plots when moving through the various phases of evolution and assessment, in order to obtain more comprehensive, attractive and deliverable schemes. A significant opportunity for office development lies in the heart of the Town Centre near the railway station at Bedford Road and Mary Road, where such uses are proposed, potentially anchored by a redeveloped integrated courts building and civic complex. There is also a potential opportunity to incorporate contemporary office space for start-ups and other space related to the digital industries.

The TCMP included 33 sites that are grouped into one of two compositions - deliverable entirely by the market (13 sites) and Guildford Borough Council led (20 sites). Financial appraisals were conducted on the second groups of 20 plots.

In reviewing each of the sites the Council has sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Sites located in proximity to the river such as Bedford Wharf, Woodbridge Meadows, Millmead and Portsmouth Road car parks should create and promote parkland and open up the River Wey for public use and enjoyment.
- Sites such as North Street, Bedford Wharf and Portsmouth Road should aim to create a more positive public realm. They should also contribute to the ambition of a more vibrant and dynamic Town Centre, with significant development of the current retail and leisure offer.
- Dismantling the gyratory and reconfiguring Friary Court and Friary Shopping Centre to allow the retail scheme to front the river making for a more positive appearance, and would diminish the concrete environment atmosphere and link the Town Centre with the river and train station.
- The core Town Centre area needs unifying and it is important that housing stock is distributed correctly taking into account the future of the town area, mixed use requirements, and a broad constellation of uses which contribute to a vibrant and diverse sense of place. The redevelopment of sites for a mix of uses, including housing, offers an opportunity in this regard.

Viability

The TCMP considered viability, feasibility and deliverability as part of its brief. The high level analysis demonstrated that the development proposed in the Masterplan should be viable overall, with some projects and sites requiring adjustment to achieve this. Across all sites together there was a surplus of development value above the benchmark land value, hence sufficient returns would be generated to ensure profitable delivery of all. In the preparation of the Regeneration Strategy, we have checked this again, and the overall conclusion remains that Guildford can be modified in the manner proposed as an overall commercial proposition. However, when individual sites are considered they might not be viable and their uses might need to be modified to ensure viability and deliverability, particularly when taking into account the impact of current unknowns, such as the extent of land contamination and the limitations imposed by flood zoning – especially in respect of riverside sites. The process can be driven by normal commercial considerations and with a more structured and planned approach than in the past.

Not all sites and proposals considered for inclusion in the Regeneration Strategy are economic and therefore deliverable. Forward funding from the public sector or other sources, may be required to deliver advanced infrastructure improvements and non-commercial changes such as public parks and spaces.

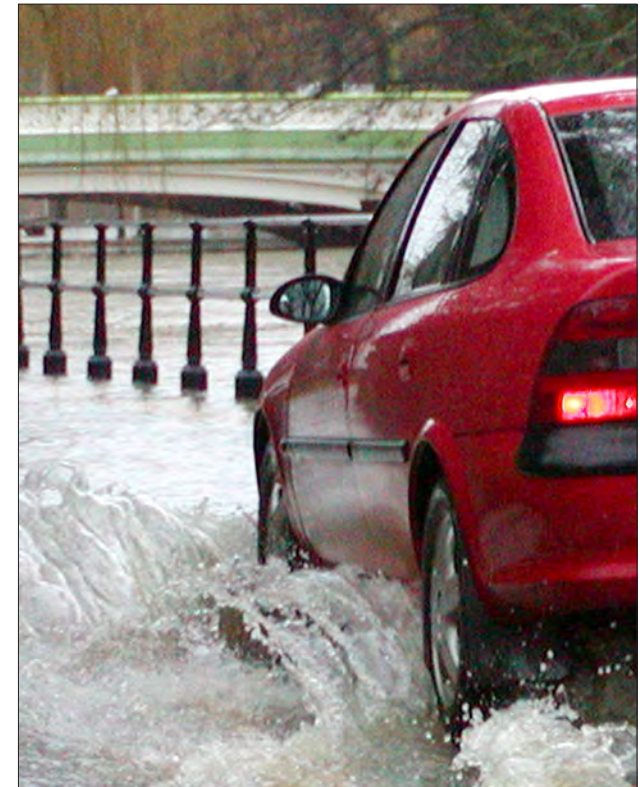
Operational business relocation is often attached to redevelopment, and has to be included as a part of the project costs and therefore finding alternative accommodation adds to the site assembly costs. Some plots may pose a challenge due to smaller footprints and others will become available over longer periods of time.

The TCMP set out a delivery framework, which acknowledged (with market analysis) that there was a strong demand for representation in the town from all sectors, if development sites are organised and of the quality to produce attractive schemes. Therefore, the focus needs to be on organising the major development sites so they are taken to market with confidence that the proposition will be well received. Through this strategy, we anticipate keen market interest for the major schemes.

Enhanced Amenity and Flood Protection

Key sites in the Town Centre, such as Bedford Wharf, lie within areas identified as having a high risk of flooding. Alternative riverside park land will be identified, in order to off-set the cinema site and generate more flood capacity in amenity green space setting surrounded by strong urban uses. There is an opportunity for some sites in Walnut Tree Close to be changed from industrial to residential, supplementing an enlarged riverside park. The area opposite Dapdune Wharf is currently commercial and services industrial buildings with no green space. This is prominent from the east bank, well located on the west bank and near new residential schemes. It has the potential to become an amenity space and part of the continuous west bank park. The creation of a riverside park should be a priority due to the opportunity of reducing the general ground level, potentially creating more flooding capacity and to protect buildings on the west side of Walnut Tree Close and lower down in the Town Centre. Detailed engineering survey work to inform this will be pursued.

North of the railway, Woodbridge Meadows is an important economic area for the town. It already accommodates a riverside park, which could potentially be increased to about a third of the total site area. This would be possible by either an upgrade and progressive redevelopment of the estate, or through eventual relocation of the businesses for residential development. Woodbridge Meadows would offer a large area of land, potentially serving a residential community, for a riverside park with extensive recreational potential, while also enhancing significant capacity for extensive flood reserve. This will also be in contrast to the character of Dapdune Wharf, the historic area of former boat building yards, workshops and river related managed heritage space.





Creating a continuous footpath on both banks is an ambition of the Council and we aim to work together with the National Trust to achieve this. The network of routes to and from the river to activity centres in the town need to be mapped and pedestrian studies completed to help identify potential crossings and meeting places. River users and casual walkers would benefit from access to all sections of the river on a continuous basis. At present this is restricted on the east bank, where the only section is in the Bedford Road area, and its 'motorway' features on the west bank offer virtually no soft play or open areas to enjoy. Both sides have 'hard', interrupted routes through the town with buildings designed to frustrate any riverside walk. On the west side, the path needs to be widened where possible and high cycle usage managed.

Critical sites along the river need to be identified for early relocation, purchase and redevelopment for a riverside park. A full study of the potential for the park is needed. A landscape plan for the Town Centre, covering public realm and pocket parks also needs to be commissioned. There are a number of older buildings and smaller parks plus the Castle Grounds, where larger open spaces might be possible.

Further evaluation and constraints related to flooding, use mix, boundaries, cost, site contamination, legal and other restrictions are briefly considered in the work programme at the end of this Strategy document. As a next step, these should be investigated further and either promoted for development by small firms where plot size is limited, or planned for major development in the future where the site constitution is complex. These sites should be approached early as their challenges may take much longer to resolve. Often a solution to sites that require relocation or continued operation is to carefully verify, plan and phase development. Brownfield land will require more time and resources to deliver as robust individual schemes. Further phasing can be used to scope individual development sites that are occupied and await relocation.

As sites and schemes are investigated in more detail, viability issues will invariably come in to play and decisions will need to be made as whether to progress certain major projects. This is one of the reasons that the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and its associated Work Programme are intended to be 'living', flexible documents.

Commercial property

General office market trends

New occupier trends transform the way contemporary office space is being used across the UK. With wireless technology, remote working and video conferencing facilities, business can concentrate on more efficient use of their property assets and physical requirements, including density, location, leasehold costs and emphasis on quality working environments. Within the business community further attention has been placed on employees' wellbeing and work/life balance in order to attract and retain the most promising and productive talent.



Broadly speaking, tenant expectations have changed with occupiers demanding more from their buildings and the environment in which they work. The average occupancy levels of 1 worker per 8 sq.m and reduced workstation ratios per employee are having a material impact on the quantum of space required. The office is also seen as part of the corporate identity and public face of the business, with an emphasis on facility design and fit out to distinguish themselves from the competition. In the current market landlords are viewed as contributors to this experience rather than just being a space provider, and development or refurbishment activities should encompass these expectations in order to remain commercially viable.

Landlords need to move away from simply maximising the building's net lettable area towards enhancing its appeal in order to achieve higher rent yields and stronger tenant covenants. Popular space improvements include impressive receptions, atria with a 'wow' factor, flexible seating areas, on-demand space, leisure/lunch spaces, high speed Wi-Fi access, real or virtual garden roof terraces, state of the art conferencing facilities and 'break out areas'.

Guildford town centre is not an established office centre but is at the centre of a vibrant office economy. The commercial office market in Guildford currently lacks a supply of Grade A office stock. Whilst there have been office developments on various fringe locations and at the University Research Park, there has been no significant development of new offices in the Town Centre since the 1970's. There is a lot of vacant space of Grade B composition (227,000 sq.ft.)⁴ due to its unsuitability for the modern office occupier. The supply of commercial space in Guildford is at a 10-year low, with almost all of the stock conforming to a Grade B standard. Potential tenants with the operational flexibility prefer Woking or Reading where the market is stronger and offers a higher yield of facilities for a certain financial commitment. Guildford does not accommodate many large corporate office occupiers and is more popular among the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) community, of which many of its 5,400 number are located in the Town Centre⁵.

⁴LSH Thames Valley Office Market Report 2015

⁵Economic Growth Management, May 2016

The current main focus of supply is in the out of town market, which provides 73% of overall available stock and is the main source of sites with larger floorspace footprints.

Guildford's office market is currently valued at £30 per square foot (psf) for prime space although is forecast to grow. To contrast it with other comparable regional cities Reading for example achieves £33.50 psf. The occupancy portfolio in Guildford will be driven by small and medium size companies mainly relocating from London, seeking to retain the commercial links but downsizing the overheated rental thresholds in the capital. With escalating London rents and a rating revaluation due in 2017 Guildford is a key town that demonstrates excellent value for the space in comparison to London. While availability remains low, the take up has reached a 10-year high. Due to a limited offer in the Town Centre many businesses target peripheral location lettings.

Attractive office developments are needed in the town in order to support economic growth. With current rental levels office developments are proven to deliver robust financial returns. The forecasted rent increase will contribute to the commercial sector viability not increased supply. The low provision of modern stock does not create adequate competition among landlords who attempt to let their secondary stock rather than redevelop and improve their portfolio, driving potential tenants to other rival economic centres. The Town Centre office space offer is on the whole poor and lacks new provision while existing Grade B units remain vacant. To encourage redevelopment of vacant unsuitable stock landlords should be made aware of the potential investment opportunity and the Council should actively promote this with their stakeholders.

Developers tend to see office development as less attractive than housing, whereas any cursory examination of the financial models reveal that the commercial market yields a higher viability threshold. The main difference is in the demand for housing vs office. The 'lower demand' from the office occupiers results from the low provision of space rather than lack of commercial interest.

We will research options around the promotion of mix types of office provision within a Town Centre environment, encouraging tenants and developers to look at Town Centre occupation rather than distant office parks and a focus of the strategy is to take opportunities to provide and deliver new Grade A office space in sustainable locations within the centre.



Government / Public Sector offices

Guildford's principal administrative and civic hub is at Millmead. This area is populated by buildings planned and constructed in the 1970's and although refurbishment has been sporadically delivered these buildings are now in need of a refresh. There is potential for consolidation of the various civic entities into one centre to rationalise costs and delivery efficiency to the public purse.

Existing office provision

Guildford requires regeneration of its existing stock and a step-change provision of new space in order to encourage and develop a thriving and sustainable economy. Hi-tech offices have developed in new space on the Research Park and on the various business parks out of town. Due to market failures the old fashioned accommodation in town is underused and difficult to let.



Number of floor space requirements from expansions (by size)

	B1a General	B1a Business Park	B1b	B1c	B2	B8 General	B8 High Bay
< 100 sq.m.	19			2	2		
100 to 200 sq.m.	21			2			
201 to 500 sq.m.	12	2		4	2	3	
501 to 1,000 sq.m.	3	1				5	
1,001 to 2,000 sq.m.	19		1	1		2	
2,001 to 3,000 sq.m.							
3,000 sq.m. +					3		
Total No. Businesses	74	3	1	9	7	10	0
Total Floor Space (sq.m.)	9,952	1,430	1,200	2,892	15,336	7,700	0

NB: Some businesses may require more than one use class

Floorspace Requirements from Expansions by Size of Business (sq.m.)

	B1a General SQ.M.	B1a Business Park SQ.M.	B1b SQ.M.	B1c SQ.M.	B2 SQ.M.	B8 General SQ.M.	B8 High Bay SQ.M.
Large 250+ employees	120	700	1200	1,200	10,800	0	0
Medium sized 50 to 249 employees	2,400	450	0	0	3,600	1,960	0
Small 10 to 49 employees	7,432	280	0	1,692	936	5,740	0
Total	9,952	1,430	1,200	2,892	15,336	7,700	0

Source: Guildford Business Survey

The town has a long tradition of hosting critical Surrey administrative functions such as the Police, Magistrates and Crown Courts, with a wide range of business uses. However, it lacks good quality modern offices in the Town Centre and this can be addressed in the redevelopment of the Mary Road area where the potential for re-provision of a range of civic functions could extend to a Town Centre office park with speculative office schemes to meet the needs of the professional service industries. This scheme could lead Guildford office market redevelopment, promote Town Centre locations and draw interest of many new investors.

Our offices at Millmead are predominantly situated in 1970's pavilions but have been subject to an extensive refurbishment, which will provide some additional years of service. However, changes in the organisation of local government and the shift to more flexible working practices may drive a requirement for new integrated offices on an alternative site, thereby releasing the Millmead site to be redeveloped for residential uses, although the current intention is that the Borough Council will continue to occupy the buildings for a further 5 to 10 years, reflecting recent investment and the need to identify alternative suitable premises moving forward.

As many old offices are converting to residential use under permitted development rights it is important to maintain a healthy balance and promote office development to increase the current low level of office supply. An isolated office market in the Town Centre will struggle to achieve a rental increase if surrounded by vacant Grade B floorspace. Guildford can take advantage of its current situation and provide high specification office space to the SME community who are seeking convenient access to the M25. With strong yields the office market is likely to become an attractive investment asset in the town. The new Town Centre office market would be able to compete with its neighbouring rivals like Woking, Redhill/Reigate or Reading, attracting new investors and long-term occupational tenants.

There is a demand for new accommodation suitable for starter units to meet the demand from the hi-tech sectors which is not necessarily being met by the market. This drives the need, appetite and investment potential for the Council to extend its own activities as a landowner in this area, by either refurbishing existing office accommodation or building new provision. This will be taken into consideration in future master planning and taking forward of town centre sites.



Employment overview

The PROMIS Retail Report 2015 notes:

“As the county town of Surrey, Guildford is home to many public sector organisations. Key office occupiers include Guildford Borough Council. Education, too, is well-represented with The College of Law, Guildford College and the University of Surrey, whilst AQA Association (examination board) is also a major employer in the town. The largest Finance employer in Guildford is Allianz Cornhill, which has its HQ to the north of the Town Centre. Other major Professional and Business Services include Clyde and Co (solicitors), Sanofi, and Electronic Arts Limited (computer software).”

“Between 2000 and 2011 total employment increased at a faster rate than the Retail PROMIS average; growth in total employment to 2017 is forecast to be slightly above average.”⁶

Guildford has a requirement for quality office space, identified in the Draft Local Plan as 45,000 m² borough wide. A key opportunity for office development lies in the heart of the Town Centre near the railway station at Bedford Road and Mary Road where an office park could be realised, potentially anchored by a redeveloped integrated courts building and civic complex. It may be possible to consolidate the existing civic services



with the possible provision of additional high spec Grade A office. The proposal for its redevelopment into an office park would create new and improved office facilities for the accommodation of SMEs and other businesses. The development will promote break-out areas, step backed buildings, green space and riverside park. The office park would encourage and stimulate economy in Town Centre creating additional jobs and promoting growth.

Mary Road development will require a joint approach with Police and Ministry of Justice participation. Both will have an opportunity to act as a pilot scheme for their organisations and demonstrate efficient space consolidation. Further redevelopment and refurbishment of existing vacant offices should be strongly encouraged, to improve the local economy, create more jobs and a vibrant centre. The initiative coming from the Council in a form of promotion and engagement as well as development of Bedford Wharf would demonstrate a commitment to create more investment opportunities in Guildford.

Conclusion

The Strategy proposes encouraging and facilitating the refurbishment of existing office space and facilitating the delivery of a significant amount of new Grade A office space within this sustainable Town Centre location, close to the Train Station and other services. The sites proposed to be taken forward under the work programme support this aim and will help to improve the local economy, create more jobs and a more vibrant town centre.

Retail

Market requirement

Guildford is not only a popular shopping destination, it is also recognised one of the strongest high-end retail centres outside London. Many quality brands are represented on the town's historic High Street. The retail floor space is estimated at over 1 million square feet. The Town Centre has been without any substantial new shopping since the completion of the 8,175 m² Tunsgate Square in 1989. Other regional centres such as Reading, Crawley, Kingston or Cambridge have attracted major new retail schemes in the intervening period. The TCMP identified the strong demand for Guildford representation from traders that are not currently present in town, and from current occupiers wanting larger space. The Draft Local Plan has identified a need for additional 500,000 sq.ft. of retail space in the core Town Centre. The core town centre area should be significantly improved with the main emphasis on the redevelopment of North Street and new flexible units provided to future-proof the town centre as retail trends and demands change over time.

“The whole town suffers as a result of there being no retail development on that site [North Street]. Meanwhile other towns move forward. Guildford not only has a bleak, open-air bus station, but also boarded-up secondary shops once occupied by hairdressers and electrical retailers in anticipation of development that never took place” (Property Week, 2016)⁷.



Catchment area

Guildford's shopping population in its primary catchment area is currently below the Regional Centre average. Only 241,000 out of 502,000 people regard the town as their main shopping destination - clearly there is a scope for improvement with a larger and more diverse retail offer. Guildford could draw shoppers beyond the primary catchment area. The spending habits of Guildford's catchment area are significantly above the average of the PROMIS index, indicating that the retail sector has the capacity for expansion and growth. Redevelopment of the core Town Centre would encourage shoppers to remain in town and increase catchment area spend. As the town is densely occupied with high spending groups the retail offer should be addressed to target these consumers, and concentrate on quality retailers and designer brands that cater to this population. The current retail offer is described as a strong fashion offer with good provision of upper middle class retailers.



⁷(Property Week: What's in store for the Friary shopping centre?, 12.02.2016)

Market performance

Retail investment in Guildford is very viable, achieving ITZA at £280 psf and 4.5% yield in the High Street (2015-16). Maximum rental value recorded reached at £320 psf in 2012-13. To compare: the City of London is at £260 psf and Croydon at £170 psf.

According to Cushman & Wakefield's recent MarketBeat Report, Guildford rents are forecast to grow and yields will compress (Cushman & Wakefield Research, UK Qtr MarketBeat Dec 2015). Guildford market is relatively stable and secure for investors yielding 4.5% - 5% on investment. The TCMP assumes major new retail provision will be delivered on North Street, in line with the proposed allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

Town Centre retail floorspace is estimated at 1.03 million sq ft, which is below the Regional Centre average and ranking the town 92nd of the 200 listed in PROMIS listing⁸. With prime yields significantly stable and low, the retail market is the most sought after investment in town. The yield analysis indicates they are not only below PROMIS average but also exhibit a stability and reaching maximum of 6% in poor market conditions. The retail investment is perceived as attractive and operates within a stable environment.

Guildford is projected to see above average growth in population over the period 2015-20. Given the breadth of the retail offer in Guildford and the attractive character of the Town Centre, the town could draw a significant number of additional shoppers. The area also attracts tourist expenditure having a number of popular attractions such as RHS Wisley and various National Trust properties. A 2009 study estimated that visitor spending amounted to some £204 million, supporting just under 5,000 jobs. The Guildford catchment population is one of the most affluent of the PROMIS catchments, ranking 2nd of the PROMIS centres on the PMA Affluence Indicator at 2011. However, Guildford understates its position as a retail centre and only captures half the available retail spend within its catchment area. The proposed North Street development represents the best opportunity to produce a very attractive enhancement to the current retail offer, enhancing a more balanced and attractive town and meeting the need for retail space identified in the Draft Local Plan.

The redevelopment of North Street as an expanded retail centre has been a long held ambition of the Council, and continues to be so. This development could generate over 48,000m² of floor space in larger unit dimensions in an arrangement which would be very attractive to shoppers. Besides removing the current gap, the scheme would consolidate the Town Centre bringing Waitrose into the main shopping area. The scheme offers a mixed use content with a substantial residential component. M&G Real Estate – the owner of Friary Shopping Centre – has recently entered into an Exclusivity Agreement with the Council to produce a Development Agreement to implement a cohesive redevelopment of this part of the Town Centre. The parties will work together to progress the redevelopment of this area involving a network of independent buildings, open streets and squares and a high quality public realm that will link with adjacent Friary Shopping Centre; and a department store that will anchor the scheme.

⁸ PROMIS Retail Report 2015

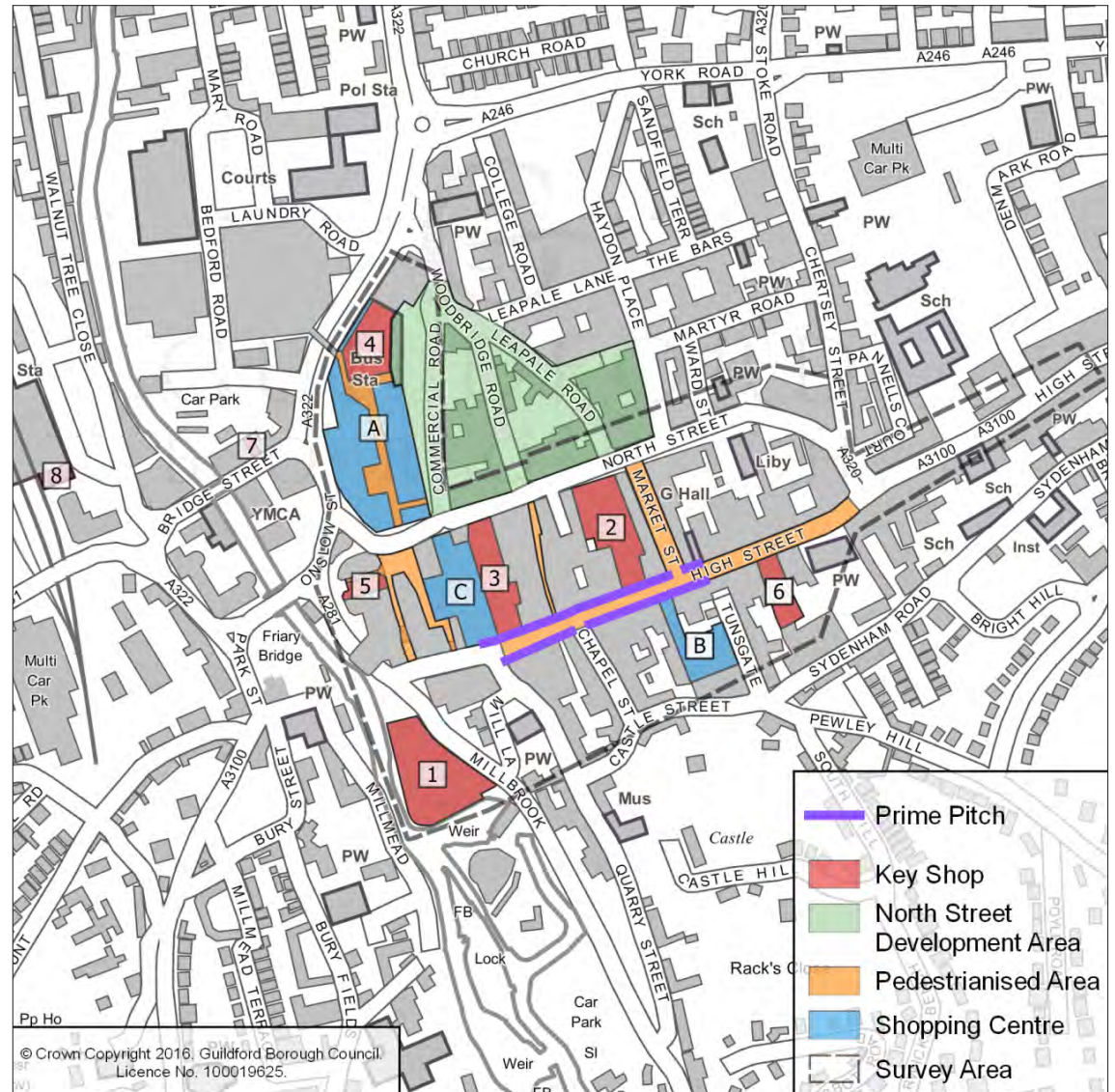
Conclusion

One of Guildford's primary attributes is its high quality retail offer, set in a very attractive historic town. This area has enormous potential for expansion, maintaining and growing a vibrant Town Centre that attracts visitors from nearby hubs such as Reading, Farnborough, Woking or Kingston.

The core Town Centre area could be significantly improved and the main emphasis on the redevelopment of North Street. It would complement the boutique style small units on the High Street and enhance the Town Centre retail offer while making room for a range of other outlets. Guildford's retail catchment area has potential to attract many more visitors and shoppers boosting its local and seasonal economy. New retail schemes could ignite the creation of public open space and the pedestrianisation of the High Street and North Street, laying the foundations of a positive and safer public realm.

As well as North Street, we recognise the need to regenerate and improve existing shopping areas such as Tunsgate (where Queensberry are currently undertaking a £10m refurbishment), Phoenix Court, White Lion Walk and Debenhams, where the existing retail offer could be enhanced to more successfully appeal to shoppers.

The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy seeks to support the corporate ambition of Guildford being a key Regional Centre where further retail growth is an important determining factor.



Source: PROMIS Retail Report 2015

Housing

Market overview

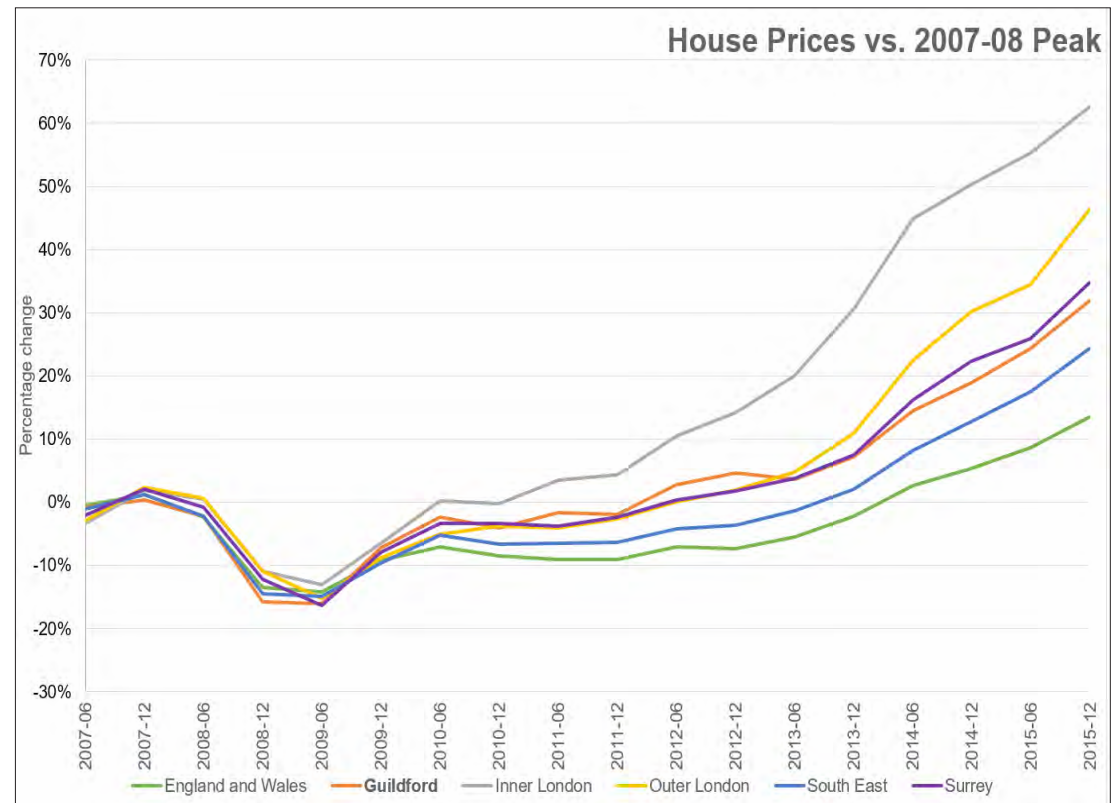
Guildford's housing market is often compared to London as they both exhibit similar characteristics. The strong demand and shortage of supply has driven the prices above the Thames Valley average at £459,700⁹. Around 66% of housing stock in Guildford is occupied by its owners.

Guildford is popular due to the town's natural economic buoyancy and its attractiveness and very high demand among London commuters. This is driving up house prices and is making it unaffordable for many locals. Guildford businesses and public institutions such as hospitals, local authorities and similar institutions often struggle to find and retain staff as there is a shortage of affordable accommodation.

Family buyers traditionally consisted of people moving up the ladder, but recently this has been supplemented by buyers moving out from London, who now make up a key component of local demand. Not only is a typical three bedroom family home in Surrey approximately 35% cheaper than an equivalent in West or South West London, but it is likely that off-street parking and a larger garden will also be available.

The Home Buyers Survey indicated that London buyers feel that their quality of life will be enhanced by a move out of the capital. This was given as the number one reason for moving - over 90% of buyers mentioned this as a primary factor according to Savills¹⁰.

New housing schemes are, in part, filling the gap between supply and demand that has built up due to the reduced number of "home mover" transactions following the recession. Historically there has been a divide between prospective buyers who are looking for traditional homes and those who would consider a newly built property, but there is recent evidence that this line is blurring. The former group have been moved to expand their search criteria as the supply of existing homes becomes more limited.



⁹PROMIS Retail Report 2015

¹⁰Spotlight on Guildford & Elmbridge Residential Development Sales 2014

Demand

The TCMP shows potential to accommodate some 2,800 residential units in the long term depending on the type of intervention in the property market and the success in developing the difficult brownfield sites. Given the commuter belt and transport links, Guildford's housing market is perceived as very attractive among commuters therefore meeting the high threshold of demand is even more challenging. The housing market's positive performance is not only due to the town's natural economic growth but also Guildford's historical aesthetics, low crime environment and perceived quality of life when compared to the capital's range of perceptions.

In order to manage the growing demand we need to analyse the town's potential for commercial growth and its impact on the housing market. The market should promote affordable housing while nurturing a developer friendly environment. The Council is committed to promoting affordable housing to meet the needs of local residents.



The West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (September 2015) indicates that Guildford has a higher than average proportion of private renting (15.8%) compared to elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, linked to its younger age structure and in part to the students renting locally. However, private renting currently remains below the regional average. Market trends indicate that demand for rental property is likely to increase as house price inflation ahead of wage growth serves to push homeownership further out of reach for many.

Site analysis

The Draft Local Plan proposes a level of housing to meet the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) with sites allocated throughout the borough. It is also possible to identify Town Centre sites beyond the Draft Local Plan allocation that could add to the housing stock if development potential is unlocked. More brownfield land could potentially be brought forward for housing in the Town Centre so that it can make a bigger contribution to overall housing supply.

Planning and design

The design of any future housing stock should promote sustainability in line with prevalent governmental and wider concerns, and be composed of high quality natural materials that compliment Guildford's heritage. Our corporate priorities, the emerging Local Plan and the Regeneration Strategy will embrace high quality architecture with green space around buildings, break-out areas and an organic mix to foster a blend of aesthetics and openness.

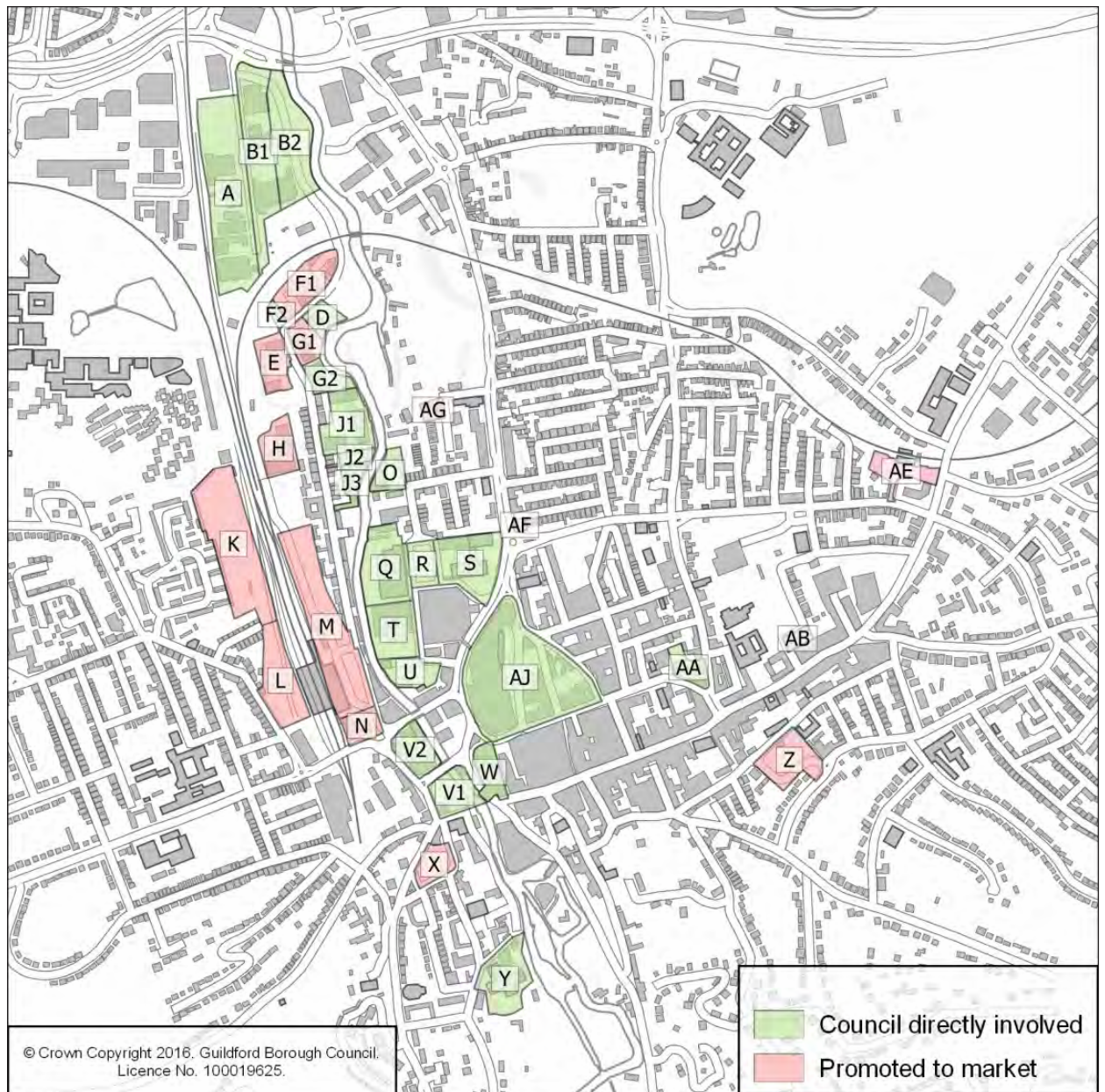
To guide and influence development, we will produce area specific design policies and general planning guidance in order to stimulate market appetite. A comprehensive and coherent design statement for specific areas, new communities and developments will provide attractive sustainable housing schemes.

Site identification

The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy proposes investigation of sites to provide up to 2,800 dwellings. This will include an appropriate mix of housing sizes and tenures. This ambitious programme depends on commitment from many stakeholders and active involvement of the development industry. Our current Draft Local Plan objective is to deliver 693 dwellings per year, over a 20-year time frame, in order to meet Guildford's housing need.

Constraints

The Regeneration Strategy potential of 2,800 new homes includes 45% already highlighted in the Draft Local Plan as being deliverable. Delivery of housing on the remainder of the sites is aspirational and would require additional input and resources to unlock their potential and relocate current tenants. Key issues to address are: future uses, site assembly, contamination, plot size and site availability. Some sites are not owned by the Council or have long-term leases. Flood risk will also significantly influence the regeneration of the Town Centre, with many sites being located along the river. The mix of site use must be considered in tandem with flood alleviation and mitigation and any planning applications on sites within zones at greatest risk of flooding will need to be subject of sequential testing, and potentially exception testing also. This could impact on deliverability.



Potential for early wins

The proposal sorts the schemes in to five year phases, with the first being classified as early wins. These prospects could be situated on sites such as Bright Hill, Guildford Park Car Park, The Plaza, Wey Corner and Kernel Court. The regeneration of North Street could provide new retail floor space as well as a significant number of new residential units. Further transition of Walnut Tree Close from industrial to residential with certain land parcels could also provide new housing accommodation. A potential Bedford Wharf mixed use scheme could deliver office and leisure options, as well as housing. There is also potential for housing on the Woodbridge Meadows site but a decision will need to be made on employment versus residential uses. Proposed residential development schemes should encourage small/medium size developers and builders who would be able to deliver swift bespoke schemes without any of the unwieldy assembly and delivery timescales of some larger players.

Mixed use schemes create active, vibrant and diverse centres, but there may be other constraints related to height and density of schemes. The general principle of mixed development with residential on the upper floors should be considered which would assist in achieving the spatial distribution of the housing numbers required as well as maintaining a high quality character of place and design.

Delivery mechanism

At the beginning of 2016 the Council set up a Wholly Owned Local Authority Housing Company (WOLAHCo). Through this mechanism we intend to deliver housing throughout the Town Centre and beyond, in alignment with the proposals expressed in the Draft Local Plan:

- a. To meet local housing need and increase provision in the borough
- b. Generate returns to the General Fund
- c. Accelerate development on brownfield land

However, the above delivery mechanism is only one of a number of options available to the Council. We have a range of delivery alternatives for residential development, which can be used to accelerate the housing market in Guildford, and these would need to be properly analysed and evaluated on a case by case (site by site) basis.



Affordable Housing and Specialist Sectors

Affordable housing



Current Council SPD on affordable housing requires 35% of homes on qualifying sites to be affordable, with a general split of 60% rented and 40% shared ownership applied. The emerging Draft Local Plan proposes increasing affordable housing provision on qualifying sites to 40%. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 generated a review of provision and set new parameters, including the replacement of a proportion of affordable housing with starter homes sold at least a 20% discount from market value. This may increase the pressure and demand for affordable housing as it would fail to meet the need for rental accommodation. Such change in policy may worsen the difficulties faced by employees on lower incomes. If government assistance is reduced, public organisations may consider investing in development of residential property and creating their own 'key worker housing'. The Council, Police, hospital, schools and other institutions will struggle to find

employees to maintain services as many would not be able to afford to live in Guildford. The commute to Guildford by car is difficult and discourages recruitment. 'Key worker housing' should take into account employees' needs – whether that is a flat or a family house requirement. This will add pressure to scheme delivery and cost. However, it should benefit employers who will have committed staff and income stream on their investment.

Student housing

The University of Surrey is one of the UK's top professional, scientific and technological universities with a world class Research Park. The University contributes over £1bn GVA annually to the Surrey economy, and attracts thousands of students to Guildford. The emerging Local Plan aims for the University to accommodate around 60% of its full-time resident students on site with the remainder serviced by the private market and there has been an increased level of interest shown for PBSA (Purpose Built Student Accommodation). However, any off-campus student accommodation should be closely monitored and C3 use prioritised over it, where possible, as it is able to accommodate both self-contained tenants – private residents as well as students.

The University's growth plan has considerable expansion and redevelopment within the Manor Park Campus approved for implementation and the Royal Surrey County Hospital is also intensifying development. At Blackwater Farm, the University is proposing a large residential development of 1,800 dwellings and associated development.



In addition to the University Of Surrey, there are a number of other higher education establishments generating demand for student accommodation. The danger of overproviding student accommodation may result in additional pressures in the general housing market. The Guildford market has recently seen new student accommodation developed or in progress along Walnut Tree Close, in close proximity to the University and there are particular Wards within the Borough (such as Onslow and Westborough) with significant numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation. The proposed Yorkies Bridge renewal to allow public transport will improve access links and this area will become increasingly desirable among students.

Town Centre living

We will investigate the option of incorporating a sustainable housing model for future schemes, to explore the potential in promoting and utilising methods such as car sharing and clubs to support the concept of Town Centre living.

We will also explore the concept of flexible accommodation, where different shared mix tenants can combine with communal space, in particular for student and young professional housing designs.

The aim of the Regeneration Strategy is to promote sustainable Town Centre living with flexible professional workers, so it should actively propose measures such as car clubs and green travel plans for new housing development, allowing easy access to means of transport. Off-street parking and reliance on the private car as a means of travel should be reduced wherever possible and where development viability allows.

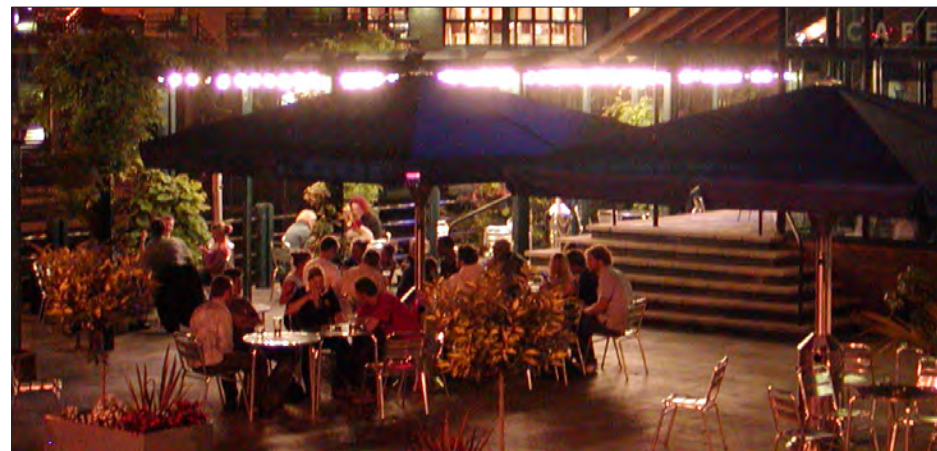


Conclusion

The Town Centre Regeneration Strategy is predicated around delivering the best and most appropriate mix of uses for Guildford's core. This necessarily includes the delivery of both market and affordable housing in the most sustainable urban locations, thereby helping to meet identified need whilst taking some of the pressure of the Green Belt.

Leisure

Guildford has a disparate leisure and entertainment offer, which is driven by demographics and current spend. The age profile of the Guildford primary catchment population includes a relatively low proportion of young adults aged 15-24, despite a significant number of students. The representation of other age groups is broadly in-line with the Regional Centre average. Between 2001 and 2011, Guildford saw a significant increase in the retired demographic quadrant, identified as aged 65 and over. These two sectors could welcome a modern food, beverage and leisure offer that is currently modest, and alongside the anticipated growth in the student population would service the lifestyle priorities of a younger generation. With plans for new leisure and entertainment facilities located in Bedford Wharf, Guildford could enhance its popularity among young adults, providing a night-life economy offer beyond current shopping and retail.



Bedford Wharf

Guildford has only one cinema operator located in the prime location that, due to lack of development around it, is underused. The proposal is to improve the development mix, enhance public realm and encourage improved use of this riverside area. Current food and beverage offer concentrates around Guildford High Street, with its major shopping centres and North Street. However, the proposal is to strengthen and improve this offer in the currently underused Bedford Wharf and Portsmouth Road car park. A strong café and bar representation is the main driver of the night-time economy and enhancing it together with other uses will strengthen the town's entertainment offer. This leisure component could also include currently unrepresented lines in Town Centre, such as a national gym operator.

A contemporary market assessment indicates there is an undersupply of good quality hotel accommodation in Guildford, signalling the potential for a new boutique style hotel in the town centre with proximity to the station and a pedestrianised, leisure friendly environment.

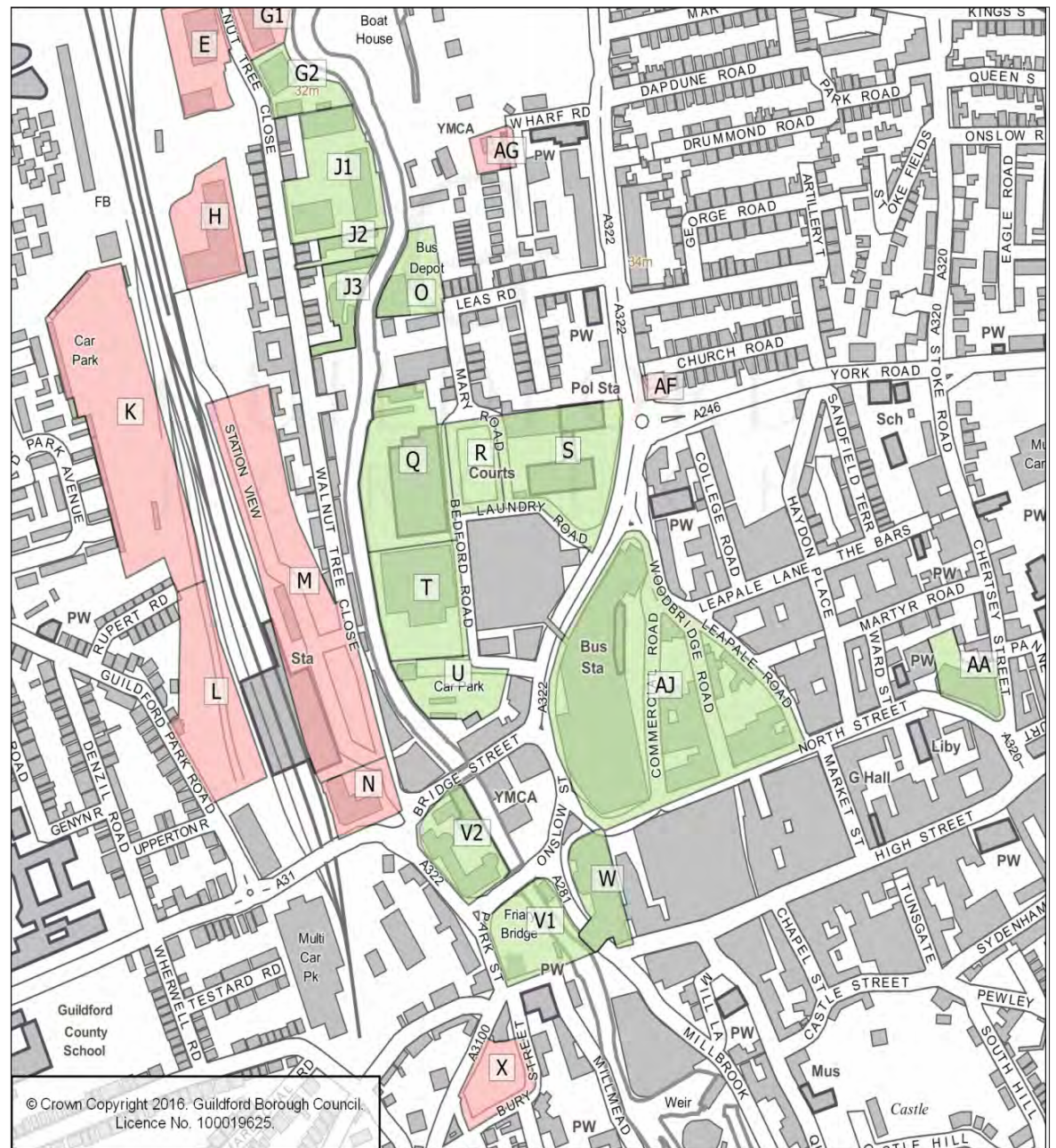
The cinema site is dated as well as divided from Bridge Street, which has some of the most popular commercial leisure facilities in the town. Bridge Street and The Electric Theatre provide a focus for performance art, which could be developed further as recent research has shown.

With Bedford Wharf, we have the potential to develop an attractive enhancement to the current leisure provision. Its potential for a high footfall sitting on the main route between the station and Town Centre makes it an attractive location. The expansion would meet the needs of the local residents and assist in growing the visitor economy, which is a goal of the Corporate Plan.

It is proposed that with the cinema site, Bedford Wharf could be comprehensively re-planned for a contemporary range of leisure and entertainment uses. This would be set back from the expanded Riverside Park area but taking its scale from the multi-storey car park and the Bridge Street and Riverside Wharf warehouses to create a concentrated feel to the walk through from the river to Onslow Street.

All of those leisure uses could be nested around an attractive public space in order to foster a spacious experience at Bedford Wharf which runs into the riverside park. Quality public realm, a strong leisure offer in its own right and potential linkages to cultural amenities could transform Bedford Wharf into a popular place-making destination in Surrey. It would improve the catchment area spend and keep residents local rather than pushing them out to rival centres and retail hubs.

Additional pedestrianised spaces will increase opportunities for informal performances such as busking and street performers. During festivals, these spaces can be used to help animate the Town Centre, bringing the town to life and broadening the festival's appeal and audience. Any new riverside park will add an important social space for performances and could become the focus for new events as well as adding visibility to existing programmes.



Portsmouth Road Car Park

The Portsmouth Road site dominates the centre of the town in a way no other open space does, sitting in the middle of the gyratory and is recognised as one that could be utilised in a much more community friendly way. The existing use does not promote the river or complement our historic Town Centre. The proposal is to transform this space into a park with food and drink and smaller retail units to create opportunities for small operators and a vibrant new dimension to Guildford's offer. The site, would become community owned with many performances and pop up cinema for sport and other events. This community and leisure space is currently missing in our town. This soft element with flexible use will complement the proposals for Bedford Wharf, with its strategic and central location at the bottom of the High Street, it is perceived as an early win development that will improve the quality of Guildford's leisure offer and signal regeneration. However, displaced car parking has to be considered and planned for.



The Electric Theatre

Located in close proximity of Bedford Wharf, this has an opportunity to improve its outdoor space and germinate the continuation of the Riverside Park. The building and its surroundings harbour an enormous opportunity for the reconfiguration of the area into a vibrant and popular public space with pop-up activities and street art facilities. It would open up the River Wey, create more green public space and aid in reducing the compact built environment.

A new lease has recently been entered in to with the Academy of Contemporary Music, which preserves the longer term future of this important facility.



Conclusion

Successfully enhancing the attractiveness of the town centre and its offer is reliant on delivering enhanced opportunities for leisure and recreation. The Strategy and associated Work Programme rightly acknowledges this.

Public realm

The analysis of the townscape by the Allies & Morrison Masterplan identified the River Wey valley as a green spine to the town and catalyst for related activities. This green spine, centrally located geographical feature could seed pocket parks, shared streets and open spaces where visitors could rest and enjoy the calm atmosphere of Guildford. The river also provides a geographical cradle to balance diverse environments, with the urban atmosphere of the town and its retail core balanced against wider leisure and open space.

The quality of public realm in Guildford does not match that on the fringes and in the river valley – there is a disconnect between the quality and extent of the built environment, the Castle Car Park and Allen House Grounds. Walking is a real choice in the town but is a challenge due to the lack of suitable footpaths, the quality of the route often being shared with cars, signage provision and key routing from points of interest. This could be addressed with a planned programme of pedestrianisation works as traffic access is reduced, and needs to be informed by the realigned planning for vehicles and access, in balance with the need for play and relaxation.

Enhanced connections between the riverside and the surrounding communities, including the Town Centre, would improve permeability and access for the public. A primary aspect of this proposed Community Park would be the new linkage with the High street and North Street, eventually framed by a public esplanade fronting the river between the arms of the gyratory. Guildford could front the river like Bath, Kingston or Richmond.



There is a shortage of green space including parks and gardens within the Town Centre. The proposals for the extension of the pedestrian areas westward and to the riverside will radically change the perception of the town and its character. This will support residential development and retain intensification. The riverside has the biggest potential for the creation of a green artery of parkland through the Town Centre. This parkland can also potentially serve as a floodwater storage zone.

A key ambition in achieving the objective of opening up the river banks for a landscaped environment is the removal of the remains of the previous redundant uses, while being sensitive to industrial heritage. The navigable river has an important heritage role protected by the owner of the navigation, The National Trust.

Equally important is the quality of space provided, its relationship to the surrounding buildings and views, and the character of the floor-scape. An early test piece could be the Chapel Street and Castle Street area, which would integrate Castle and town with a more attractive environment than the current car lined tarmac. However, this needs to test the type of surfacing and street furniture to ensure the materials, colours and ironwork coordinate and are of a quality which will stand the test of time and can be applied throughout the Town Centre. To encourage the use of town-centre appropriate, high quality surfacing materials, street furniture and a significantly improved public realm, the Council intends to produce a Streetscape Design Guide, which, following public consultation, could be formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Document to guide future town centre development. These principles will be enshrined in the development of key sites, such as North Street and Bedford Wharf.



Public art and intervention

It is important to view arts and public art as part and parcel of the whole Town Centre vision rather than a separate element or project. The arts can contribute towards the aims and ethos of the Regeneration Strategy as well as visually enhancing the new spaces that are planned. Our public art strategy is in tune with the Regeneration Strategy ethos and states: *“We aim to encourage creative and innovative work in the future while conserving, celebrating and promoting Guildford’s rich cultural heritage.”*

Temporary installations, performances, workshops and demonstrations within the Town Centre will provide an easy and immediate way to engage the public, help them imagine how the future Town Centre will look and assist with consultation on the planned improvements. Temporary art installations can also be used to screen building sites and areas that are planned for change. Some of these interventions can lead to more permanent public art, which will enhance the space, bringing character and local distinctiveness to the overall scheme. Areas that could lend themselves to more permanent pieces include the proposed pop-up site on North Street, within any potential new riverside park or as part of any redevelopment around Bedford Wharf. Public art can also be used to enliven the River Wey corridor as is already the case with projects in the Woodbridge Meadows area, such as ‘Silver Shoon’, an extension of the reed bed entwined with native species of fish.

Public benefits with traffic management

The provision of other space in the town needs to be considered on a needs and opportunity basis. There are private spaces associated with churches, the castle and school which are open to the public any may benefit from planned management and maintenance. The beautifully maintained Castle Grounds could be extended as shared space up to the back of the High Street with the use of hard landscaping and shared surfaces, removing the current road as a visual and physical barrier.

The Masterplan identifies a number of potential public realm projects in the town. The key element to link these is the proposal for an extension to the current semi-pedestrianised section of the High Street and North Street. With the recent replacement of the setts in the High Street to a high standard, the marker has been set and the opportunity to considerably extend the car free area. However, the bulk of the area shown in the Regeneration Strategy as potentially pedestrianised has to be fully assessed as sensitive sections need to provide access to frontages, while others need to provide vital links within the highway network. In approaching the re-planning of the centre to create an extensive car free zone, there is an opportunity to significantly extend the existing character of place into the new shopping areas off North Street and towards the Castle and river.



Clearly, the extension of the shared surfaces in the centre of the town will enhance the sense of place and attractiveness to visitors. There could be priority areas around the North Street development site and between the Castle and High Street. Other areas, which fit in with the enhancement of the riverside, would include candidates such as Millmead. The transformation of the riverside car park into a riverbank parkland and the displacement of the parking behind the British Inn would achieve a significant improvement in a key part of the town.

The extended pedestrianised area shown in the TCMP has to be fully investigated and assessed for viability and feasibility. The principle of extending the quality of urban realm in the Town Centre would create a more pedestrian dominated area than at present, where even on High Street parking is allowed after 6pm. However, a careful assessment has to be carried out to consider frontage road access for servicing and parking off street, and locations for displaced on and off-street parking displaced. There are various compromise arrangements from 100% pedestrianised, to limited access, to full access with a controlled environment where, for example, the road is needed 24/7 for circulation and access to a public car park.

Key crossing points along the gyratory can be considered for widening as part of a progressive transfer of public realm to pedestrians as part of network changes.

Conclusion

Enhancing the physical environment through interventions and guidance to create a significantly improved public realm in those areas outside the historic core is an essential measure in delivering the regeneration eschewed in this Strategy document.

Infrastructure

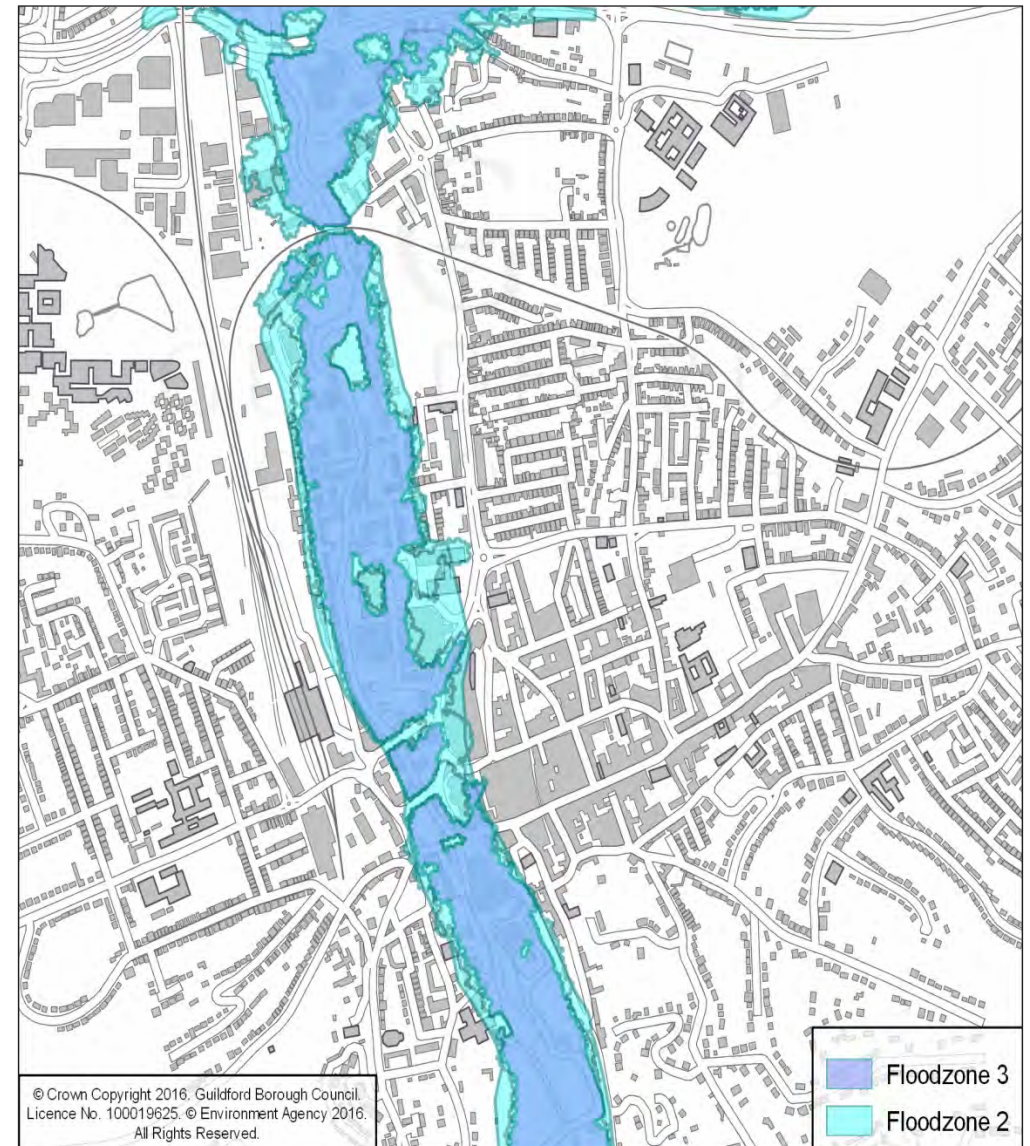
Guildford has not experienced significant levels of major development in recent years and therefore service providers have not been stimulated to either upgrade the plant and equipment nor their estimates of demand.

The Surrey Infrastructure Study, highlighting a general “infrastructure deficit” alongside scoping work by the Council has exposed the infrastructure issues which affect the current activities of the town and could curtail future development. These revolve around power shortages and potential for flooding which would affect key development sites and the centre of the town.

In designing the approach to the work programme it will be essential to ensure that the respective agencies are engaged and that the technical process meets their requirements and that of regulators and other key stakeholders.

Sustainability

We have an ambition to ‘future-proof’ Guildford in response to the changes that are predicted as a result of the key societal and environmental challenges of the 21st century. The World Economic Forum Risks Report 2016 has identified the biggest risk in terms of impact is the failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Resilience to the impacts of a changing climate, as well as other societal changes, has to be a key part of how development shapes Guildford. So much of Europe and the UK’s current energy and sustainability policy is focused on 2050 so we already know quite a lot about what 2050 should look like.



Development taking place now is likely to still be in the first half of its life cycle, so we should look to the 2050 requirements for energy and sustainability at the very least.

This could include:

- zero carbon homes
- an almost completely decarbonised power supply
- much more locally generated power from renewables sources
- decarbonised surface transport
- driverless vehicles
- energy storage within buildings
- heat networks providing heat to homes and businesses
- greater use of the river for energy generation (both hydro and water source heat pumps)
- resilience against projected weather pattern changes e.g. flooding, heatwaves, pest and disease migration
- green and natural space protection
- building flexibility, which allows occupancy over more phases of a person's life and the integration of home and work environments



The pace of change in technology, especially smart technologies, is also set to increase. We need to anticipate this changing environment as best we can, and at the very least we should avoid development that includes aspects that will clearly be outdated in the near future.

One of the key findings from the Infrastructure Baseline report (July 2013) published by Surrey County Council was that:

'The provision of appropriate transport infrastructure and services is one of the most pressing issues facing our borough. Traffic congestion on the local and strategic road networks and overcrowding on rail services are symptoms of transport demand being densely concentrated on certain parts of the road and rail networks at certain times of day.'

The Surrey Infrastructure Study (February 2016) also found that the biggest funding gap for required infrastructure in Guildford was for transport, specifically for highways and for rail. Improvements to the A3 and the gyratory were similarly identified as key requirements. These elements are confirmed and mirrored in the Draft Local Plan – Infrastructure Plan, and borough Transport Strategy for projects in the plan period.

The proposals within the Town Centre Masterplan may act as a key driver for changing how people will travel to Guildford and encouraging more sustainable trips. The land use proposals for the Town Centre will intensify the level of parking and therefore traffic generation. Without a radical change in reduced parking standards, this would exacerbate the current position. Major new shopping and leisure developments are proposed within the town, with current aspirations for around 47,000 square metres of A1 use and nearly 7,500 square metres of additional A3/A5 use, which are likely to increase the number of off peak trips and time spent in Guildford. A further 2,800 homes are likely to generate additional vehicle movements. As well as considering reducing through traffic it will be important to discourage trip generation from new development, other than that which is public transport based.

As well as the mix of physical interventions laid out below, softer measures to embed behavioural change towards new patterns of travel will also be required. These are laid out further in this document.

Transport

Guildford needs to be moving, working and growing more successfully than currently. Upgrading the transport provision will play a key role in shaping how Guildford evolves in the future, and in supporting the emerging Draft Local Plan proposals.

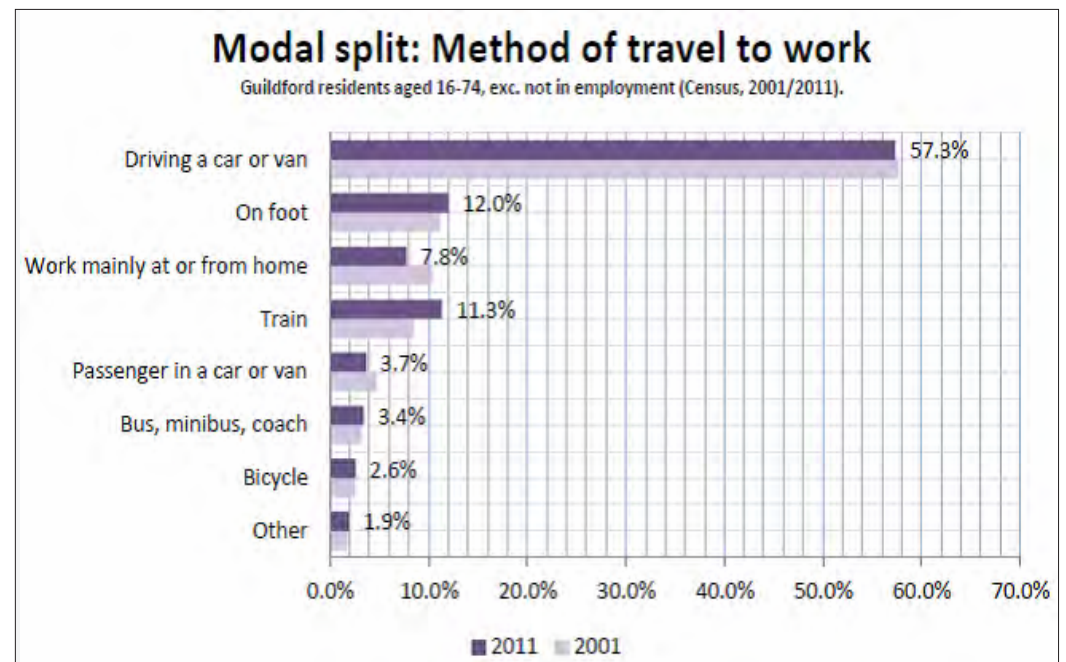
Continued transport investment within the Borough will assist with meeting all of the five themes listed with the Corporate Plan (2015-2020). In particular, a transport strategy that focuses on transport investment will assist with key corporate themes related to infrastructure, economy and the environment and generally enhancing the regional role played by Guildford.

Current patterns of travel

Borough specific data with regard to travel to work is available from Census 2011. This does not however include travel for other purpose e.g. for leisure or study.

Currently, there is a heavy reliance on travel by car or van, especially to get to work. We are keen to encourage and facilitate a modal shift of these journeys to more sustainable forms of transport. Nationally, 16.4% of the working populace used public transport to get to work. This compares against a figure of 14.7% for Guildford.

Although the cycling to work percentage at 2.6% is slightly below the national average at 2.8% and the South East region at 2.9%, it is considered that substantial progress can be made in improving this rate within Town Centres, by developing new and upgrading existing cycling infrastructure. The same ONS data shows that in the period 2001-2011, the percentage cycling to work nationally increased from 2.3% to 3.9%. There is no reason why we cannot aspire to a similar increase for the Town Centre area.



Town Centre congestion and the gyratory

Anyone who has travelled on the road network in Guildford Town Centre, especially during the peak periods, can be in no doubt that the road network is frequently saturated. This was noted within the Surrey Congestion Programme report (2014), where highway modelling was used to look at where current and future congestion bottlenecks are and will occur. This led to the identification of Guildford Town Centre and the A3 as it runs through the town of Guildford as being amongst the six most severely congested junctions and corridors within the County.

There have been numerous studies to form Guildford's evidence base for improving transport infrastructure in Guildford

Adopting a 'do-nothing' approach is not an option if Guildford is to grow and continue to thrive. The Guildford Business Survey (August 2015) of 200 businesses determined that only nine of these businesses experienced no problems with traffic congestion and accessibility. The biggest impact from congestion experienced by the surveyed businesses were staff lateness, access from the A3/A320 and general Town Centre congestion. Congestion is a negative aspect of doing business locally.



Our approach to managing congestion mirrors that of the Surrey Congestion Programme, which is as follows:

- delivering a more efficient road network and managed traffic system
- addressing infrastructure gaps and managing bottlenecks on our transport network
- alternatives to car travel and behavioural change

The gyratory represents a significant challenge to Guildford's future development. Whilst congestion remains an issue, there is a need to reduce the amount of traffic to enable phased removal of the gyratory to achieve a more pleasant environment. This traffic reduction will be in conjunction with other changes around the network, and will be key to improving the public realm environment and enabling more pedestrianisation.

Air quality

Traffic in the centre of the town contributes to pollution and air quality. We have measured the annual mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at sites in the town for 15 years. The principal source of NO₂ is vehicle emissions. Reducing the number of vehicles using the gyratory system will have a significant benefit in reducing the emission of pollutants, in particular NO₂, and therefore improving air quality in this area.

Town Centre accident analysis

The Guildford Road Safety Working Group have identified two main locations of concern for the safety of pedestrians in Guildford Town Centre. These are North Street and the gyratory (with a particular focus on Bridge Street, especially the crossing of Onslow Street at the eastern end of Bridge Street). It is expected that a major scheme within the vicinity, involving a redevelopment of North Street, would provide the opportunity to address the casualty record on this street.

The gyratory, and particularly Bridge Street and its junction with Onslow Street has long suffered a history of pedestrian collisions. It is expected that a major transformation scheme for Bridge Street would provide the opportunity to redesign the urban environment to improve the facilities for pedestrians. Short term measures will also be carried out.



School run

Surrey County Council has been working through a number of initiatives with schools, businesses and the community in the Guildford area to try to encourage the uptake of “Smart Travel” - use of more sustainable modes and reducing reliance on private motor vehicles. However, these initiatives face financial challenges and are at risk going forward. It is critical that these initiatives should continue to form an important part of future development, as we must reduce unnecessary car journeys through the centre and switch those that could be made by other modes to be able to accommodate existing and future demand.

Existing public transport provision



The key public transport providers within Guildford are a number of bus companies including Stagecoach and Arriva for bus services; and South West Trains and Great Western Railway for rail services. It is critical that upgrades to public transport provision are delivered in tandem with the investment in physical infrastructure, in order to deliver the mode shift from private to public transport.

Bus services in Guildford are managed by Surrey County Council. Routes have a commercial focus, with subsidies being provided by the County where appropriate to meet social inclusion and sustainable travel targets. Cuts in central Government grants have led to reductions in the subsidy available, which has in particular affected rural communities in Guildford. The frequency of services in rural areas are far from ideal, particularly for off-peak services, so travel is either restricted to the car or prevented from taking place. This has clear implications for both social inclusion and the rural economy.

Rail services are a key part of the transport system that serves our borough. Rail plays an important part in serving the Town Centre and the local economy, and the need to improve services and facilities are crucial for the evolution of Guildford. There are twelve rail stations in the borough at which there were over 11.1 million estimated entries and exits in 2014/15, including 8.1 million at Guildford railway station, a hub recognised in the Wessex Route Study as an important regional centre. Of residents in the borough who travel to their place of work, 12.6 per cent travelled by train in 2011 (2011 Census), compared to 9.5 per cent in 2001. This represents an absolute increase of over 1,900 people per day using the train to get to work.

South West Trains and First Great Western provide services through Guildford. Investment in the infrastructure lies in the hands of Network Rail. There are currently no major station upgrades planned for Guildford mainline railway station but the Council is working with Network Rail to consider a comprehensive station scheme. Associated development alongside the station could provide the source of funding required to provide the station upgrade. Possible new stations at Merrow and Guildford West (Park Barn) will provide opportunities for new trips and patronage level increases, to complement frequency upgrades.



Cycle infrastructure in the Town Centre suffers from route discontinuity, particularly at difficult to manage locations such as junctions. Alongside investment in cycle infrastructure, investment in cycle training particularly for school children and businesses can help to increase cycling levels. Negotiating the gyratory is a daunting challenge even for experienced cyclists. Any plans to reduce traffic levels in the Town Centre, and upgrade cycle routes which upgrade alternatives to traveling through the gyratory such as the Guildford College + link, will assist with boosting cycling numbers.

Traffic management and encouraging modal shift

One of the five key themes considered by the Allies & Morrison Masterplan, was 'a healthy approach to movement', as it was recognised that a reduction in the impact of traffic on the main streets and spaces in the Town Centre was necessary to nurture a healthier and more sustainable Town Centre. A key concept promoted by the Masterplan was the 'driving to not through' positioning of Guildford. This would promote a transport strategy that focused on the Town Centre as the main attraction and origin or destination point for journeys, with through traffic being discouraged.

The key driver for the Masterplan was to assist with the economic regeneration and expansion of the Town Centre. The Masterplan considers options to re-prioritise the streetscape to give priority to pedestrians and sustainable modes of transport, including buses, walking and cycling. Additional benefits to air quality and road safety would also be fostered as a result of these proposals.

The dominant theme of the responses from the consultation of the TCMP was that a more pedestrian friendly environment was required over a larger area of the town centre and down to the river. The 'drive to not through' theme with visitors parking on the edge of town in car parks on their route in, would reduce the need for high volumes of traffic circulating round the centre. Traffic management to deter through traffic and to reduce volumes will facilitate improved journey times.

The reduction of traffic brought about by the proposed downgrade of the gyratory and associated roads, will allow the growth of local traffic to replace through traffic and the extension of former road space for pedestrians. The Guildford mainline station and Bedford Road car park development sites, will be well served with good local roads and the Sustainable Movement Corridor. The Town Centre will become less reliant on the car as modal shift takes place. Through traffic is diverted to other routes while long stay parking is attracted to use the expanded Park and Ride supported by express bus services. Road travel speeds are reduced, as are fumes and noise. This is necessary to facilitate the quality of place and sustainable growth within the Town Centre as envisaged in the Allies & Morrison Masterplan.

The Regeneration Strategy offers alternative scenarios for traffic management with either a sharp radical change or a progressive change with respective growth of town scape benefits.



It is apparent from the consultation on the TCMP that whilst residents and businesses accept that the current 'status quo' is not acceptable and that they want to see a reduction in traffic, there is a balance of benefit to be achieved. Real challenges will remain with significant change to the current operation of the gyratory, with a loss in capacity for general motor traffic, leading potentially to unacceptable delay and congestion at peak travel times.

As well as the mix of physical interventions laid out below, softer measures to embed behavioural change towards new patterns of travel will also be required. There are environmental and health benefits in meeting Corporate Plan objectives on sustainability. Improvements to air quality from reduced congestion and health benefits from new and improved walking and cycling routes both contribute towards making Guildford a more pleasant place to live, work, play and study. It is recognised that change has to be managed and credible, and the measures that are outlined in the remainder of this section illustrate the strategy to achieve this change.

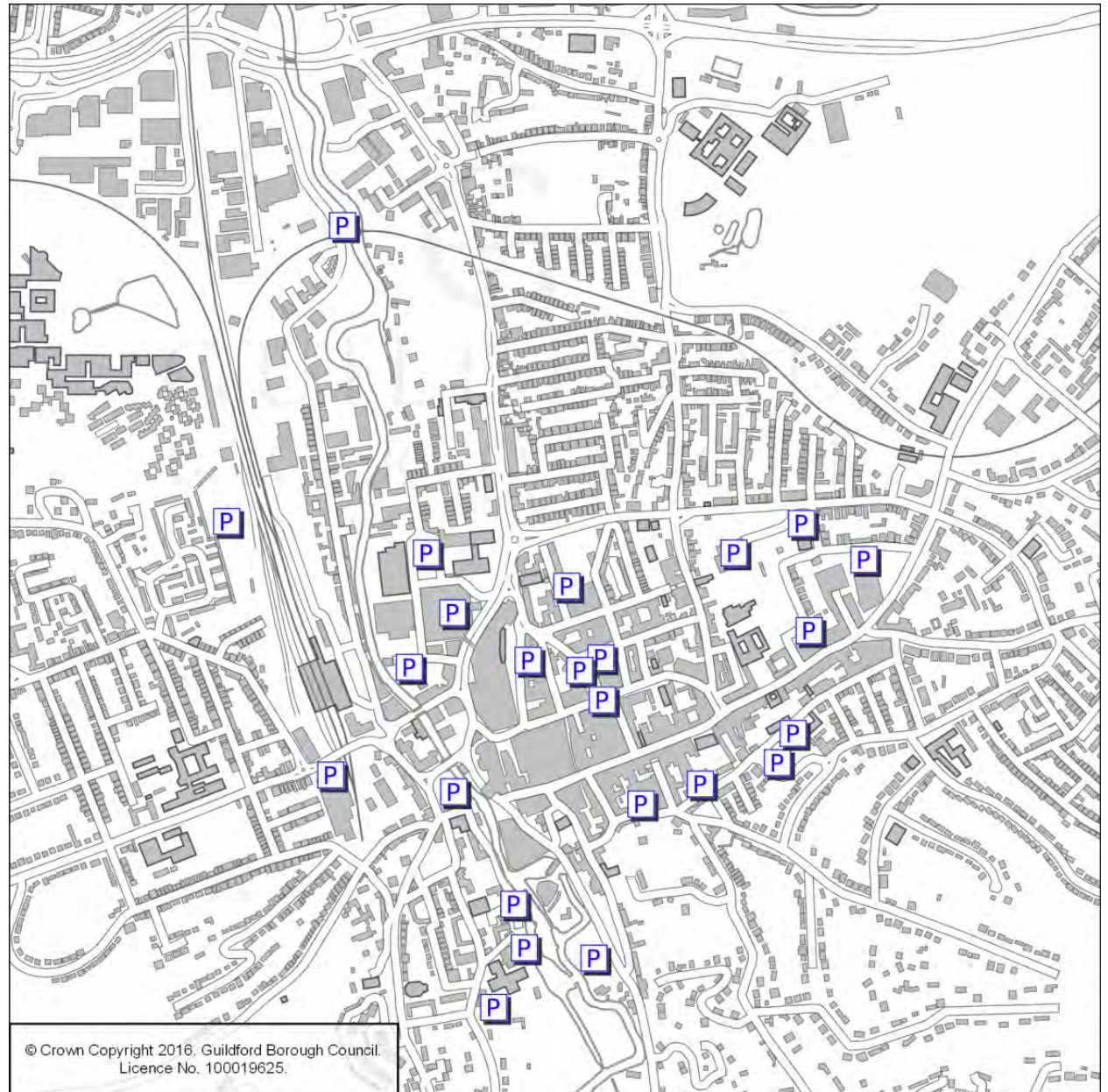
Parking

The Council is in direct control of the majority of parking provision in the Town Centre, assets which provide us with valuable leverage to control the infrastructure and evolution of town sites and associated parking provision. Strategic control of the assets also enables the Council to influence where people park.



The Parking Business Plans over the last few years have been promoting a 'drive to not through' strategy. This approach requires parking at interceptor car parks on the routes into the town and means parking will be further than it currently is from the centre. Users will spend more time getting to and from the car parks.

The Town Centre Masterplan sets an exciting vision for the future of the town with less traffic and congestion in the centre and the development of a number of existing surface car parks into open spaces and some for development, with displaced parking being relocated to the fringe locations. Greater pedestrianisation could reduce on-street parking. There are proposals for higher density housing and this can create a greater demand for on-street parking for residents. The Parking Strategy for Guildford sets out measures that address these issues.



The mechanics of achieving a behavioural shift of visitors driving to, not through the centre, is to make it easier by managing the traffic on the main roads and improving ease of access to car parks on the same side as the journey, avoiding the need to cross town. Among other measures, detailed in the Parking Strategy for Guildford, these behavioural shifts will require coordinated management and real-time information on where to park. It will place an emphasis on encouraging the use of car parks on the fringe as well as Park and Ride provision, with the associated bus services becoming faster and having a priority over other road users. Clearly this has to be considered as part of a comprehensive traffic management plan which manages traffic from surrounding towns and settlements so it is diverted on adequate roads to bypass Guildford.

We will undertake a study of existing town centre car parks to identify the potential for directing traffic to the most appropriate location (in line with the “drive to not through” principles) thereby discouraging vehicles from entering the gyratory where this is avoidable.

It will also be assisted by better public transport serving the surrounding communities in order to encourage the decision to leave the car and take alternatives. The phasing and timing of changes to bring about this change in use of the car is an important issue to be dealt with going forward and it will be a challenge to see how quickly a major shift can be made at the same time as maintaining and increasing the town’s attraction to visitors.

Park and Ride

The purpose of Park and Ride is to reduce congestion in the Town Centre, particularly from long-stayers. It is recognised that not every journey is feasible by public transport, and that journeys by car must be supported. The draft Parking Strategy focuses on the use of Park and Ride, which gives people the option of driving to the edge of town and using parking provision, and then using other means of transport to travel to the town and their final destination. As demand for access to the Town Centre park increase, park and ride facilities will require further investment to facilitate new journeys.

Deliverables

Implementation of the Parking Strategy, which will increase the efficiency and use of Park and Ride operations. This may include but is not limited to: new park and ride sites with new bus network links, expansion of existing Park and Ride sites, engineering solutions to improve access and egress of sites from the road network, and introduction of cashless bus operations to improve speed and efficiency of services.

We are committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of existing Park & Ride facilities serving the town centre and to enhancing the patronage and convenience of these.



Historic quarter: traffic free

The consultation on the TCMP demonstrated that people want to remove the gyratory and replace it with a less traffic dominated environment for the Town Centre. With the aid of good design and sympathetic materials in the new development there is enormous potential for a better centre to be created with limited opportunities for segregation and permeability similar to that of North Street and the High Street. Traffic accessing this managed space would be restricted to access only, or strictly limited by other factors such as the availability of timed parking spaces and type of trip, such as some bus routes which need to serve both ends of town.

Phased traffic reduction

A phased change in traffic and traffic reduction is required for a healthy economy. While the desire to manage and reduce the traffic is the aim, it can only be carried out with acceptable disruption to trade and commerce, carefully and sensitively phased over a period of time. This process of 'managing down' is considered in some detail elsewhere but here we need to consider the consequential changes which can be made.



Integrated transport planning and finance

An integrated approach to delivery is required from a range of transport operators and providers in order to deliver the projects required to create a more sustainable Town Centre. Leveraging funding and demonstrating benefits will become an even greater priority when setting out the case for investment. Many delivery partners are also under considerable financial strain, which places a much higher requirement on collaborative working from the Council. We will need to work closely with Surrey County Council (SCC). SCC are the highway authority for the local road network, and also manage the bus service contracts. SCC are key partners when lobbying regional and national bodies for further investment in transport infrastructure, such as for the rail network and A3.

The A3 route is under the management of a strategic highways company, Highways England. It is classified as a strategic route network (SRN) route, being a distributor of national significance. The A3 cuts through the heart of the borough, and therefore is a key driver of local movements. Conflicts arise between facilitating movement to and through Guildford on the national road network with particular emphasis on the A3. Measures that seek to reduce traffic levels through Guildford Town Centre could further add to capacity problems on national routes and local roads around the Town Centre. Without the early upgrade of the A3 this route will continue to distribute traffic on adjacent local roads and restrict longer journeys. As a result, the Council will need to work closely with both SCC and Highways England to ensure an integrated approach and vision for the local road network.

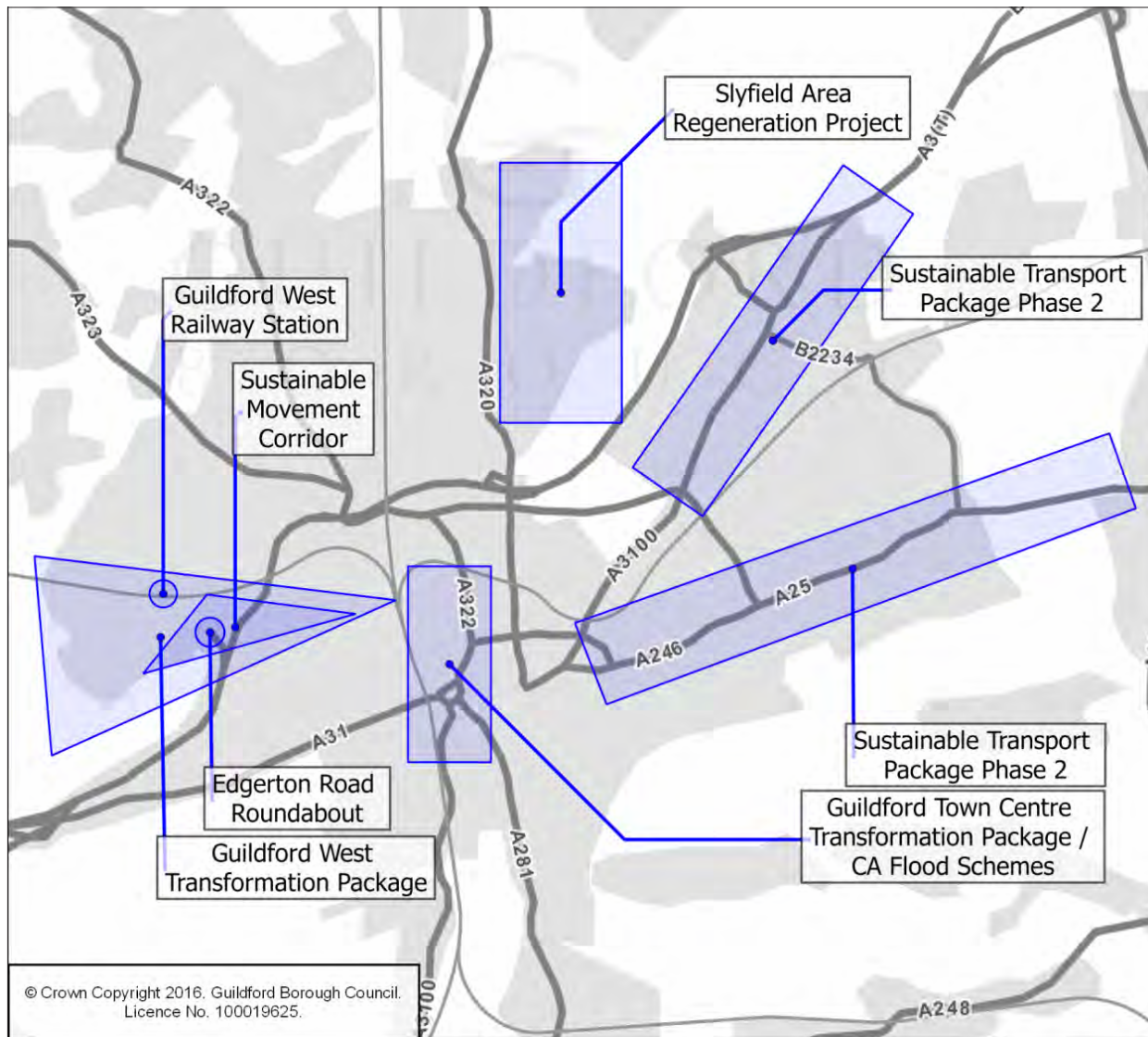
Network Rail manages the maintenance and upgrades to the rail network. Collaborative working including finding cost effective and staged interventions to facilitate infrastructure funding in the current financial climate, will be key to ensuring Guildford continues to receive the required investment. The Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership (LEP), is responsible for managing funding allocations from the Government for major infrastructure projects. Open dialogue to understand the evolving selection and qualification criteria for the Council's projects will be required to access such funding.

The further development of transport policy to find mechanisms which release further third party investment - e.g. via the Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106 agreements - will also be required where negotiation has failed to find a solution. As CIL is dependent on the adoption of the Draft Local Plan and then an adoption of a CIL tariff structure, it will be some years before it has accumulated a significant roads fund.

The impact of closing surface car parks and removing on-street parking in the town centre has to be considered in financial terms particularly as the income from on-street parking helps to fund Park & Ride facilities. A more sustainable funding basis for the latter needs to be found and generally pricing policy for parking needs to be set at a level to attract visitors and to encourage dwell time, working with the overall objective of reducing traffic movement in the town centre.

It is clear that the public sector is coming under increasing budget pressure, which in turn impacts on the ability to provide services, such as supporting non-profitable bus routes. However, improving the town centre retail, business, housing and leisure offer in line with this Strategy would, itself, be likely to increase bus and other public transport patronage to help support such services.





Public transport

The Council will continue to work with both SCC and bus operators to make the case for investment in service provision to maintain and extend, where possible, routes and frequencies. Investment within the fleet is also crucial to encourage mode shift. Ticketing strategies may also need to be reviewed to move towards a 'cashless' system as operated within London, to improve the speed and efficiency of services. In particular, the provision of a sustainable movement corridor will create a transport spine to support bus services, which will be provided in an efficient manner, raising patronage levels and sustainability of routes. Bus service connections with Park and Ride sites are also important.

Encouraging a shift towards more walking and cycling will considerably add to the creation of a sustainable Town Centre. Walking and cycling routes require considerable enhancement, to increase the appeal. There are a number of 'gaps' in the existing walking and cycling network. Movement through the Town Centre relies heavily on the need to travel through the car dominated gyratory system. Enhancements particularly to short journeys to/from key trip generators and attractors such as the Town Centre and the railway station, separation from other types of traffic and the provision of secure cycle parking at key destination play a key role in facilitating modal transfer.

Action is currently being taken to develop a more sustainable and liveable Guildford Town Centre. The business case for the Guildford Town Centre Transport Package (GTCTP) was approved by the EM3 LEP in March 2016. This package is aligned with both the emerging Local Plan and includes the following package of measures:

Deliverables

Scheme 1: experimental closure of Walnut Tree Close

Scheme 2: replacement of Walnut Bridge

Scheme 3: Guildford College and cycle link

Scheme 4: Millbrook car park access: creation of a right-turn facility

Scheme 5: A25 cycle corridor: schemes to address gaps in the network, which includes

Scheme 6: Stoke crossroads: improve efficiency of junction and new pedestrian facilities on two arms of junction

Scheme 7: Off route cycle route along A3001 linking London Road station with residential areas.

The projects focus on changes to the road layout to reduce through-traffic, improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists including a replaced Walnut Bridge and an enhanced cycle route to Guildford College from Guildford railway station. It also focuses on the A25 business corridor, linking up existing walking and cycling routes to businesses in this area and improving bus priority and bus stop facilities.



Sustainable movement corridor and bus facilities

The existing bus station sits within the Friary Shopping Centre, and adjoins the popular Commercial Road and North Street area. The facility is tired and requires a radical overhaul, including a review of both the locational, operational and usage requirements. Options being investigated include the closure of the bus station, and the provision of on-street replacement facilities in a range of convenient locations. In particular, options to consider bus routing as part of these plans which will consider commercial bus services and those loss making services for park and ride. More effective integration of services could lead to improved services at less cost which also attract higher patronage.

Public transport plays a key role in facilitating movement through the Town Centre to the University of Surrey and employment areas. The recommendation for a Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC) through the heart of Guildford would allow for more efficient and sustainable movement through Guildford, connecting key trip attractors and employment areas. The SMC would act as a spine along which both residents and visitors can travel in order to travel to live, work, play and study.

Guildford mainline train station and the Town Centre will lie at the heart of the proposed SMC route. Connections to the west will include the Surrey Research Park, University of Surrey, Royal Surrey County Hospital and the Onslow Park and Ride sites. Connections to the east will include Ladymead Retail Park, the Slyfield Industrial Estate and the existing Park and Ride site at the Spectrum Leisure Complex. A further option to extend the SMC to the east to connect with a potential Park and Ride site at Gosden Hill, promoted in the Draft Local Plan, will also be considered. A number of key residential areas would also be served along the route.

Revisions to the road network along the SMC will include new or upgrades to bus, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Interventions may include but are not limited to new footways, pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at junctions, new bus and cycle lanes, and bus priority at traffic signals.

Guildford mainline station

The railway station requires further investment to improve its capacity and facilities that are showing signs of age, and both expansion and reconfiguration of space in order to accommodate commuter growth. Network Rail is likely to continue to face significant budget pressures moving forward, and there is a high possibility that a lack of action from both SCC and the Council could see the station upgrade plans being pushed further back. We will continue to work with the County and other parts of the Council to lobby Network Rail for increased funding and accelerated investment within Guildford. In particular, we will seek to work with Network Rail to pursue options to enhance investment in new operational rail improvements and passenger facilities.

It is vital for the coherent development of the station area that the development of the operational car parks and other space is considered as part of a comprehensive scheme. A residential development on the east side with upgraded ticket hall and offices needs to be phase one of a planned expansion of platforms and customer facilities together with public route across the station which will lead eventually to a west side development. A mini hub for buses and taxis needs to be developed as a priority for the on-street bus stopping scheme and then extended to the west side as soon as practical with a bus bridge provided to replace the pedestrian bridge and to complete the Sustainable Movement Corridor. We will work with Network Rail to produce an operational plan which encompasses the long-term station upgrade required, together with the development and planning brief needed to provide the supporting residential and associated development.



Communicating sustainable and healthy living

Walking and cycling



A 'behavioural change' and communications programme is required to facilitate the necessary shift towards the use of more sustainable means of travel as set out in the Guildford Transport Strategy. This will involve the dissemination of information on healthy living and training such as walking and cycling maps, and cycle training. The perception of public transport will need to be improved, alongside its relative economic merits, environmental strengths and the speed and reliance of services. Key messaging as part of an overall communications plan will include statements on how journey time speed and reliability for bus services will be improved thanks to the upgraded sustainable movement corridor. This may also include messages on the quality of the bus fleet, commercial bus services, the overall Park and Ride experience. Sustainable travel and route options should be considered by local groups and businesses as part of their travel plans aimed at considerably improving the quality of travel in Guildford.

Other measures

Other measures to be looked at could potentially include:

- bus and train operating companies to be engaged and encouraged to invest and upgrade the existing fleet and vehicle types, and prepare for the anticipated modal shift.
- a roll out of a sustainable network of electric charging points, to facilitate an increase in travel by electric cars.
- a roll out of an electric bicycle hire scheme. This is particularly pertinent for 'hilly' areas, and where distances between origin and destination points are beyond those that can be comfortably cycled. This could also be combined with electric charging points for vehicles.
- continuation of policies to encourage the attraction of car club companies to Guildford, as well as encouraging and promoting their use. This could include prioritisation of parking spaces at development sites for users that are car sharing.
- pollution monitoring and traffic management

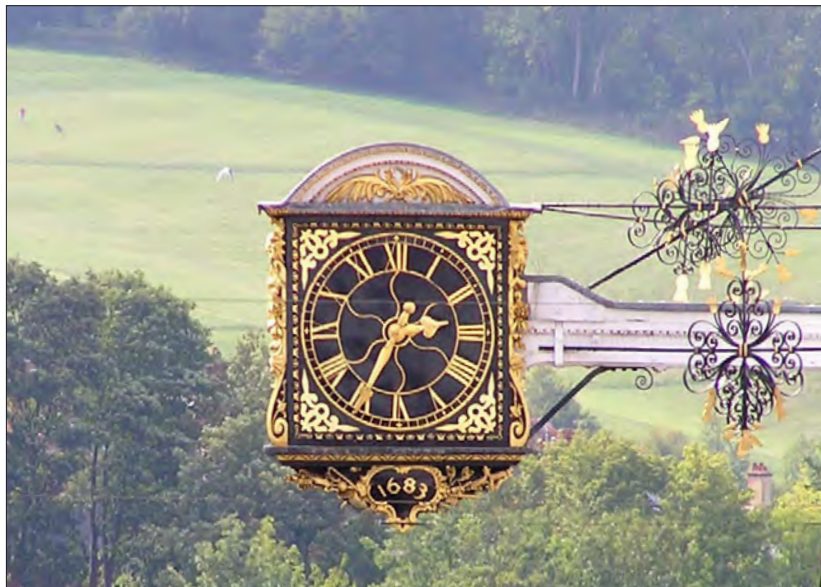
Conclusion

Delivering significant and sustainable town centre growth must go hand in hand with planned improvements to existing infrastructure, Guildford's road network and access to alternative means of travel to the private car, whilst ensuring that visitors needing or wishing to travel to the town centre are still well catered for. The Regeneration Strategy is therefore dependent on us working closely with key stakeholders and operators to make these visions a reality.

Delivering the Strategy

To effectively manage, monitor and coordinate the programme of projects, stakeholders and inter-relationships the Council has established a Major Projects Team (MPT). The MPT, and its associated governance, will ensure a unified approach to taking Guildford's ambitions forward.

During the final quarter of 2015 we undertook a scoping exercise to capture the breadth and volume of projects it was either directly managing, monitoring or would significantly impact its operations. These activities were then integrated into the findings of the Allies and Morrison Town Centre Masterplan, where the context, statistical modelling and recommendations and findings of the consultancy were stress tested and subjected to independent audit. This validation, running in alignment with establishment of the new governance and Major Projects Portfolio Board, brought forward the various sites for potential development and further validation.



In order to place controls and clear definitions around the various schemes and initiatives, the portfolio of activities is divided into two strands – the property programme and the infrastructure programme. The former refers to specific property schemes and initiatives which have arisen from the evolving process of site analysis, stakeholder consultation and financial constitution. The second, infrastructure, is primarily concerned with those projects which activate and support physical development and regeneration – transport schemes, public realm enhancements and wider strategic planning and information gathering related to the Town Centre.

With numerous projects identified for potential delivery, and with a complex web of interrelationships across technical and departmental borders, a clear and concise structure of governance is critical to ensure successful delivery and change. The Major Projects Portfolio Board is the main oversight and scrutiny body, where projects and schemes are peer tested and strategically considered. This Board oversee project briefs and initiatives when first brought forward for scrutiny, before reporting to the Executive Committee.

Delivery models

The Council is investing in Guildford and its historic Town Centre. The Town Centre Masterplan has provided a confident framework which has been generally tested for viability and feasibility and provided the ground work for this Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. The Council is creating a range of high quality development products across the town which together will represent a very significant investment in the town over the life of the Strategy.

Given the scope, scale and complexity of the projects in the Town Centre there are a number of potential models, which we could adopt, all with their own particular strengths and weaknesses. Given the combination of programmes hybridised and bespoke delivery models can and should be considered to master the competing range of delivery. The general principle is that the Council will wish to maintain a reasonable overall level of control when deciding on the most appropriate delivery method, on a project by project basis, to ensure it meets its own corporate objectives and those outlined in this Strategy.

At this stage the Council has identified a number of delivery options for proactive investigation including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Active estate management and development** - A property investment programme which also develops strategies for purchasing back long leases with a view to renewing underused assets and expanding business and economic opportunities.
- The generation of a **strategic property development programme** which consists of several sites which are important to the development of the town such as Bedford Wharf or North Street.
- The Council has set up its own **housing company** to achieve particular housing objectives to supplement its role as housing authority.
- The setting up of a **regeneration company** to carry out the development programme on behalf of the Council, off-setting the risk, with the expertise and focus to deliver development objectives in partnership with third parties.
- Entering into **Joint ventures** with the private sector or other public or third sector partners.
- Entering into **Development Agreements** with third party developers.
- Preparing and adopting **Development Briefs** to guide sustainable development
- **Selling Council land** to third party developers to bring forward development – such disposal being either with or without planning permission in place.

Decisions on each individual site will be taken once the relative advantages and disadvantages (risks/benefits) have been properly explored having taken appropriate expert legal, financial and procurement advice.

It is envisaged the Major Projects Unit would usually act as the co-ordination and delivery focus for these potential delivery vehicles, serving as the key stakeholder and partnership centre across the Council. They will be supported by strategic property advisors in delivery of the elements of agreed capital programme linked to the Town Centre.

Private developers and investors

The economy in the Guildford area is comparatively strong but depends on maintaining this position with infrastructure improvements and enhancements to the town. Guildford offers a very strong brand and within an established historic Town Centre, boasting a fertile portfolio of development opportunities for all ranges of the industry. The growing market for housing, retail and leisure in a highly sought after location is generating considerable market interest from major developers and pension funds as well as a wide range of end users.

The systematic production of design and development briefs for the key sites around the Town Centre, which address the key planning and environmental issues will shorten and de-risk the process of getting permissions for appropriate development. Careful estate planning will ensure that the appropriate type and mix of development is aligned with other uses to enhance and support a vibrant and attractive Town Centre.

The Council is promoting a range of sites suitable for Town Centre living in an initiative to encourage house building that meets the current needs of the Guildford market, which is for lower cost homes for people living and working locally. To further encourage building rates that meet the needs of the area for more housing, a wide range of builders, developers and other providers are being mapped as potential stakeholders, and encouraged to look at Guildford as an investment.

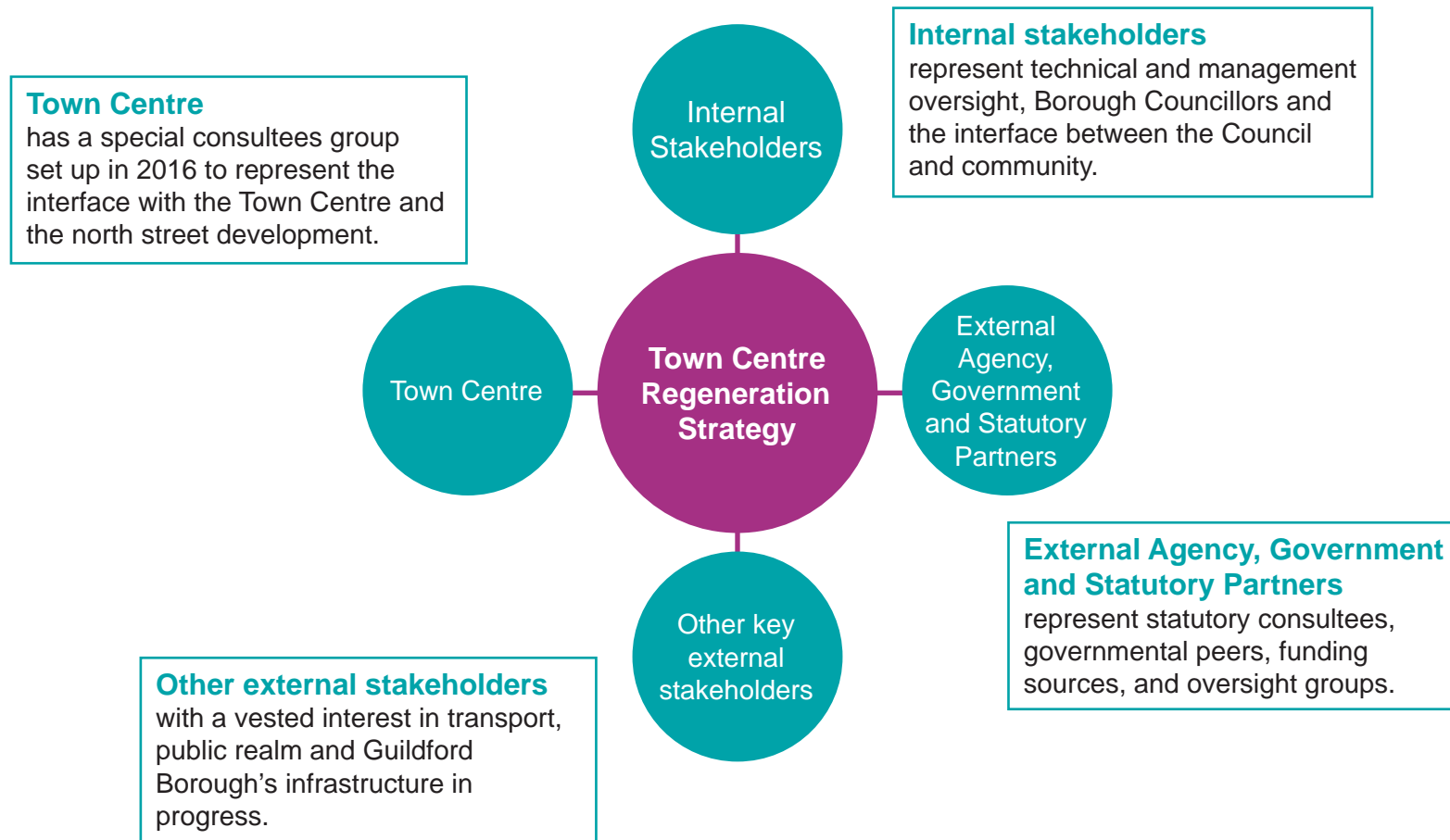
EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership

Guildford is designated a 'Growth Town' in the EM3 sub-regional economic strategy. A key aspect to the restricting of the local economy to align with the growth sectors supported by the LEP is the provision of new serviced sites which will attract development in the centre of the town. EM3 has been supportive of the Council and Surrey County Council's infrastructure projects which assist in the development of more sustainable transport solutions for linking the town's employment hub with the University and other strategic nodes. This agenda is supported by an extensive range of transport projects that will require a high level of public sector front-end resource to carry through and lead private investment. The programme of work outlined here and supported by Surrey County Council as Highway Authority needs a continuing commitment from the Department for Transport, but also from EM3 as the principal source of funding for radical highway changes.

Redevelopment in the River Wey valley as it passes through the town requires an extensive programme of soft and hard drainage control works throughout its length which is being carefully planned by the Council with the Environmental Agency and the National Trust. Only with an agreed plan and these works in place can the development of key Town Centre sites such as Bedford Wharf proceed. EM3 will be asked to help support this programme of works together with the River Thames Conservancy and other partners. The advantage to the EM3 of a long-term commitment to joint funding of infrastructure in the centre of Guildford is that the performance of the town centre will increase and its economic activity will be more aligned with that of the very productive local economy.

Key stakeholders

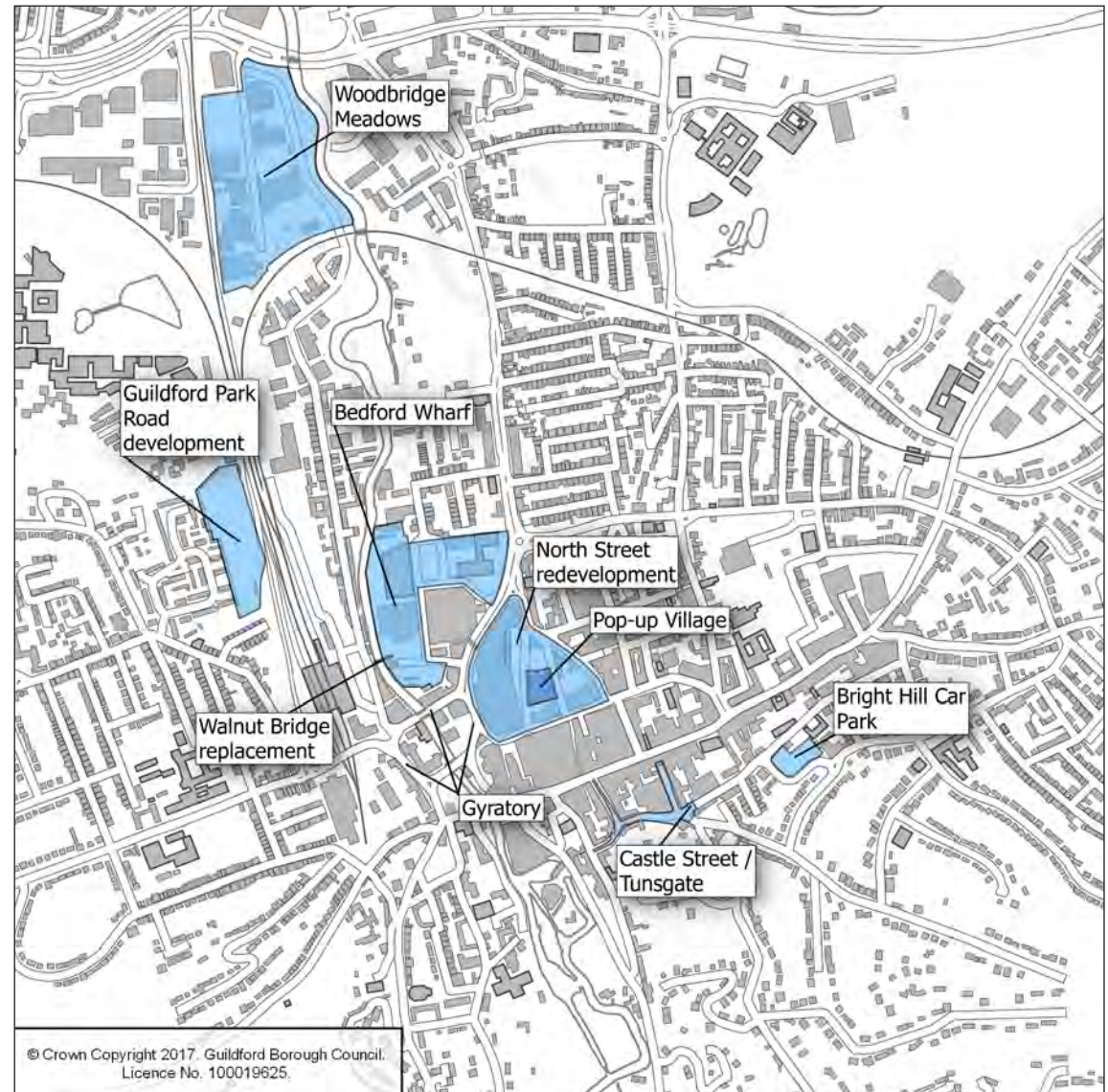
We recognise that we have a range of partners who are also stakeholders in the key projects to be taken forward. These partners need to be fully engaged and integrated with the delivery process. For this Regeneration Strategy, a complex web of consultees and partners has been identified and needs to be nurtured to ensure the Town Centre grows and evolves in the months and years to come. Stakeholders have been identified for mapping, maintenance and engagement, following the findings of the preceding Vision Statement and consultation of the October 2015 Town Centre Masterplan.



Regeneration Work Programme

Through examination of the Town Centre Masterplan proposals and their evaluation and viability, feasibility and deliverability assessment by the Council since October 2015 a matrix of possible interrelated schemes has been identified. This work programme is intended to be flexible and will be revisited on a regular basis as a 'living' document.

This provides an approach to maximise the regeneration objectives for housing, growth, and infrastructure development. This work programme has been phased into increments, each building on the previous achievements in a coherent and considered development programme. Taking into consideration appropriate allocation of resources, capital commitments and potential disruption to the transport network, and as such will be a fluid programme designed to react to funding opportunities and movements in the private market and central government. The main concentration is on the schemes with direct Council involvement.



Phase 1: 2017 – 2020

Bright Hill

This HRA site has submitted a provisional bid for the potential for up to 60 new residential units and the associated provision of car parking. The scheme will need to be balanced against the many ambitions relating to extensive public car parking in the locality. This is a well-located and attractive residential site but the need for maintaining car park numbers on the southern side of the Town Centre, means that the brief should include re-provision of convenient public parking elsewhere.

Guildford Park Road

This is a committed housing scheme being promoted by Guildford Borough Council on land in its ownership and which is now the subject of planning permission granted in late 2016. The approved scheme will provide 160 new residential units and the re-provision of existing parking facility with a Multi-Storey car park containing an additional 100 spaces totalling to 493 public spaces. This is a significant increase over the existing level of at grade parking in this very convenient town centre location close to local shops and services. The scheme also includes the creation of 64 new affordable homes in a sustainable location.

Phase 2: 2020 – 2025

Millmead

The Council's offices at Millmead have recently been refurbished and will provide suitable office accommodation for the next few years until alternative office opportunities are made available. This could potentially be a new civic centre shared with other agencies. The Millmead site is suitable for a housing development and restoration of the historic house and gardens alongside the river.

North Street

As part of the ambitious North Street mixed-use development corresponding viability work is being conducted. The scheme has a potential for retail led development with Town Centre housing. The Council owns a significant part of the land allocated for the scheme with second majority owned by M&G Real Estate. Several frontages are owned by various third parties. Linking into the Council's promotion of the Town Centre living, this may be a key opportunity in developing 400 residential units within Guildford's historic Town Centre. The Council has recently entered into an Exclusivity Agreement with M&G aimed at delivering a Development Agreement for a high quality, comprehensive, mixed use development.

Bedford Wharf

This leisure and entertainment development promoting the River Wey will also aim to accommodate residential use with convenient access to Town Centre and Guildford Station. The scheme is currently being evaluated and development brief outlining the use allocation and development boundary will be finalised in Autumn 2016. The major difficulty in delivering residential units in this area is river flooding. The Council is currently working with the Environment Agency to unlock this area's development potential if feasible and viable.

Woodbridge Meadows

The site is currently used by the industrial market and allocated as employment land in the draft Local Plan. However, the Council recognises the need for improvement and effective land use. At present, the options include retention of existing use with improved, intensified employment use to retain jobs within the town centre.

With many plots of land vacant or underused, the site has an opportunity for improvement and investment into existing use or residential use which could potentially accommodate circa 700 residential units and a park fronting the river that would create an attractive community space and flood mitigation.

Commercial Property and Retail

Phase 1: 2017 – 2020

Refurbishment of existing office space

The Council will be committed to promote upgrade of existing Town Centre offices to Grade A quality. Most of the existing stock can potentially be upgraded and returned to the market at a higher rent, enabling further employment and stimulating the local economy. New House has been identified as a temporary business incubator unit prior to redevelopment of Bedford Wharf. The offices located on Park Street and many others in the Town Centre have potential to stimulate town's economic growth and set benchmark for the core Town Centre.

Mary Road / Laundry Road – Civic Hub

The Police and Courts currently occupy this area, together with a surface public car park. It is being considered within the Bedford Wharf planning and development brief for the redevelopment of the site for new integrated court building and possibly a civic hub. The location and configuration of the site also presents a unique opportunity for a small office park and to accommodate a riverside park, flood prevention measures and road access to the extended Bedford Road MSCP and Town Centre residential scheme on the river frontage.

North Street Pop-Up Village

A temporary pop up village has recently been provided on the North Street site pending its permanent redevelopment in the future. Vendors are accommodated in converted shipping containers offering a variety of food and drink alongside more traditional retail products, in a shared space encompassing performance areas and events facilities. This first phase in the Town Centre development is intended to utilise a neglected site in the Town Centre, stimulating the retail and tourism sector through an innovative use of space and an exciting new economic driver for the town.

Portsmouth Road Pocket Park

The Council has also identified the Portsmouth Road Car Park as a location with significant potential for a temporary pocket park given its approximate position at the bottom of the High Street overlooking the River Wey. This could potentially include a pop-up retail hub. Enhanced public realm will fully exploit the riverside location as an open space for refreshments and relaxation.

Phase 2: 2020 – 2025

Wey House and YMCA

The site is located in the centre of the gyratory and the proposal for its improvement is to open it up towards the river with restaurant and quality public realm. The site could potentially further accommodate residential or office uses.

Mary Road Office Park

Phase two of Bedford Wharf development is creation of modern office park by the civic hub in Mary Road. This would stimulate an office market in Guildford Town Centre and provide much needed Grade A stock. A development brief will consider this use and its extent comprehensively.

North Street

The Council as a major land owner together with M&G Real Estate are currently working on a retail led scheme that would infill this currently derelict land and improve shopping quality and offer in Guildford. The proposal includes 48,000 sq.m. of retail space and approximately 400 residential units. A key challenge for the scheme is the relocation of the bus station or equivalent facilities on-street. Joint efforts with SCC are being undertaken to find viable alternative solution for buses. The scheme is currently being evaluated with an emphasis on viability and planning.

Friary Court

This scheme is a long-term plan to regenerate the back of Friary Court and open up towards the river with retail and food and beverage offer to replicate Portsmouth Road Pocket Park and compliment High Street. The major obstacle is Onslow Street traffic that currently detaches High Street from the river. The purpose of this development would be to open up the river and link it with the core Town Centre.

Leisure and Public Realm

Phase 1: 2017 – 2020

Bedford Wharf Phase 1

Phase 1 of the scheme could involve construction of a new leisure and entertainment building in place of Bedford Rd surface car park (subject to re-provision of public parking elsewhere). This would accommodate restaurants and bars as well as gym and other leisure uses. It has strategic location in the town and with Walnut Bridge being replaced in 2019, it will become main route from the train station to the core Town Centre bringing significant footfall.

The site lies in the functional floodplain and therefore its development is subject to flood mitigation measures and sequential/exception testing through a Flood Risk Assessment. The potential for land contamination from previous uses may also impact on viability and deliverability and needs to be fully assessed.

Riverside Footpath

The current open space bordering the river requires a continuous footpath down each bank to complete the current route. The current east bank footpath has a semi-completed section from A25 south to the railway viaduct which needs completing as a project.

River Wey Park

A comprehensive development, management and business plan needs to be produced for the extended River Wey Park. This needs to consider the new boundaries proposed by the TCMP and the outputs of the EA flood modelling. However, the additional land could include productive uses which need to be relocated and replaced with managed parkland and this needs careful development and financial planning. The development and then the management of this space would be a significant capital outlay and therefore an acquisition strategy needs to be generated in the context of a fully funded development and management model.

Town Centre Pedestrianisation – Castle Street

As part of the interlocking studies and consideration of Town Centre development and schemes that come forward, the Council will explore potential for further pedestrianisation alongside potential for carriageway improvements, highway widening, road closures, testing with close scrutiny of the County Council as the Highway Authority. Following the successful completion of High Street setts, the creation of a shared surface at Castle Street/Chapel Street has been considered as phase two. This scheme is aimed at complementing the upgrade of the Museum and the redevelopment of the Tunsgate Shopping Centre. Other phases such as North Street need to be planned to coordinate with new development but can only be linked with an access and traffic scheme if the centre is considered as a whole.

Phase 2: 2020 – 2025

Bedford Wharf Phase 2

This represents the cinema site which can only be developed once the present operator has been successfully relocated and the site becomes vacant. The site would promote leisure and entertainment activities in town and boost night-life economy. The detailed make up of the scheme needs to be determined but could include food and beverage, leisure, hotel and parking. The scheme will be considered within the Bedford Wharf Development Brief.

York Road

This would follow the creation of the car park extension and the provision of a natural roof to extend the current outdoor and recreational uses at the high level above the quarry wall on a level with the new car park roof. It would also be necessary to replace the play facilities at ground level as part of the development.

River Wey Park

A comprehensive development, management and business plan has to be produced for the extended River Wey Park. This needs to consider the new boundaries proposed by the TCMP and the outputs of the EA flood modelling.

Town Centre Pedestrianisation – Phase 2

Following the successful completion of High Street setts, the creation of a shared surface at Castle Street/Chapel Street has been considered as phase two. This scheme is aimed at complementing the upgrade of the Museum and the redevelopment of the Tunsgate Shopping Centre. Other phases such as North Street need to be planned to coordinate with new development but can only be coordinated with an access and traffic scheme if the centre is considered as a whole.

Infrastructure and Transport

Phase 1: 2017 – 2020

Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC)

The SMC will provide a priority pathway through the urban area of Guildford for buses, pedestrians and cyclists, serving the new communities at Blackwell Farm, Slyfield and Gosden Hill Farm including the new Park and Ride site, the new Guildford West (Park Barn) and Guildford East (Merrow) rail stations, the Onslow Park and Ride, both of the University of Surrey's campuses, the Town Centre and Guildford rail station. Journeys on the SMC will be rapid and reliable by bus and safe and direct on foot and by bike.

Further work will now be undertaken to identify the likely interventions along each section of the SMC and establish more accurately the costs and benefits that the SMC will bring and funding opportunities.

Gyratory

In order to dismantle the gyratory and pedestrianise at least one part of it, there will potentially be a negative impact on traffic flows through the town so it is important that the objectives of the gyratory project are clearly understood and that the benefits anticipated from the project can be realised.

A number of options are being considered.

Walnut Bridge

A major new investment in the borough's infrastructure will be the replacement of Walnut bridge, a pedestrian and cycle bridge that connects the railway station with the Town Centre. The existing bridge is narrow and has a western entrance that is 'hidden' within a building, so that its use is often limited to those with local knowledge. A new bridge structure will also act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the Bedford Wharf site. This project is part-funded by the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership. The bridge is currently programmed for delivery by 2019.

Guildford West and Merrow Railway stations

A feasibility study is currently underway to examine the potential of building a new station near the Park Barn area of the borough. This station is indicatively known as Guildford West. The study is expected to complete by April 2017. The planning and build of a new railway station is a long process requiring a significant level of approvals. A similar approach is being taken to the provision of a new rail halt to the East at Merrow, but this project has not yet been advanced as far as that for Guildford West. If a new railway station design(s) is/are approved and the funding made available, it is considered that the earliest these stations could be delivered would be in 2024 to 2029.

Phase 2: 2020 – 2025

Sustainable Transport Corridor Phase 2

The western leg running from the Research Park through the University Campus is the most developed section and this is capable of further development as the University and the Hospital grow, including the Blackwell Farm and Research Park extension sites. This could be an early first phase and a model for the network.

Gosden Hill urban extension is likely to drive the eastern route along London road and this could be initiated soon but unlikely in the first five-year period.

An interim route to serve the Slyfield Employment area prior to the full implementation of the regeneration area is being investigated.

Gyratory – Phase 2

The phased dismantling of the gyratory will end a first stage with the pedestrianisation of Bridge Street and the improved crossing facilities for Onslow Street. A later phase will consider the eastern leg and how this can be replaced with the retail area extended to the new riverside.

Guildford Main Railway Station

The Council are looking to work with Network Rail to coordinate a comprehensive scheme for the operational and property development for the station. This would provide for new operational capacity including new platforms and customer facilities as well as new residential development.

Infrastructure and Transport (cont.)

Phase 1: 2017 – 2020

Flood Defences

The Environment Agency is working with the Council and Surrey County Council in respect of their duties as the Lead Local Flood Authority. Together the Council and partners have made funding applications to the Local Enterprise Partnership EM3 in order to develop a joint strategy for flood defences in the River Wey for its length either side of the town and then for the detailed development and management through the Town Centre. This will show mitigation measures for individual sites and the Town Centre as a whole, which will incorporate measures to make the river through the centre more attractive and softer in appearance, fully integrated with adjoining buildings. The emerging flood defence scheme will need to be implemented progressively as it will involve land purchase and relocation of businesses but will need to be sequenced with the site development programme.

The wider scheme needs planning and agreeing with the Environment Agency and then the phased introduction with mitigation measures for particular development areas as the presence of flood zones will direct more vulnerable uses (e.g. housing) to specific sites further from the river.

Phase 2: 2020 – 2025

Parking

Phase 1: 2017 – 2020

Bright Hill

This HRA site has submitted a provisional bid for the potential for new 60 new Housing units. As a designated vehicle parking site the Council is conscious of examining the volume of appropriate units while balancing the constraints of parking provision and income as part of the wider Parking Strategy. Viability will be a key issue for the development and may need to be balanced against the any ambitions relating to extensive public car parking in the locality.

Bedford Road

The Parking Strategy and the resulting commission for a report on the potential for car parking sites improvement with increased capacity, provides for Bedford Road as a priority. The site needs to accommodate additional parking for the North Street and Bedford Wharf development. There are options for providing this additional capacity and for improving the access and circulation of the car park from the Northern end. When final report received, a decision needs to be made in anticipation of the North Street and Bedford Road development, to contract this parking extension and modification.

Guildford Park Road

The scheme proposal is to expand existing parking into multi-storey car park with additional 100 spaces for public use and 55 residents' spaces. The project is due to commence shortly now that planning permission has been formally granted.

Leapale Road

The Council is reviewing the capacity, location and occupancy rates of its parking assets across the borough, in alignment with a host of strategic plans and initiatives. In tandem, the potential for further housing is also being explored on a number of sites, as part of wider infrastructure, transport and development planning. Leapale Road is one of the sites identified as land with early improvement potential, directly related to the development of North Street for retail and housing purposes, warranting further analysis and consideration in the near future.

Phase 2: 2020 – 2025

Artington Car Park

The potential for increasing the capacity of this P&R site will be assessed.

Millbrook Car Park

There is a marked shortfall of public town centre parking from the southern approach and Millbrook (off the A281) is the only edge of Town Centre car park. It is proposed to provide a right turn out of the car park to avoid traffic using this facility from having to join the gyratory upon exit. The potential for decking the car park to provide additional capacity will be assessed.

York Road Car Park

Other capital schemes for parking development will be prioritised before York Road, but additional capacity may be needed in this period and the feasibility of increasing this at York Road car park will be assessed.