

EPSOM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

AUGUST 2024

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INTRODUCTION & VISION

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MASTERPLAN

- I.1** Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has committed to preparing an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan to set out the vision for the Town Centre up to the year 2040, and to provide a framework of development principles to help guide decisions within Epsom Town Centre. The Epsom Town Centre Masterplan (the 'Masterplan') will function as key evidence to inform EEBC's Local Plan (2022 — 2040) by identifying development options for specific Epsom Town Centre sites and outlining how the wider Town Centre could be improved through a focused approach to placemaking.
- I.2** Epsom Town Centre is a characterful and popular destination for local residents, and benefits from many important assets which can provide a foundation for future regeneration. The town centre is busy, with activity taking place within an attractive heritage setting. Landlords, including the Ashley Centre, work hard to ensure units are occupied and the mix of independent and multiple retailers, along with regular markets, continues to attract shoppers despite the draw of online shopping and competing destinations. Nonetheless, the town centre faces some inherent challenges in the period ahead, and EEBC will work to implement the Masterplan, through either direct intervention or by working closely with key partners, stakeholders and other landowners to deliver improvements. Our aim, in summary, is to ensure the continued vibrancy and viability of the town centre as a key service centre for the growing borough.

1.3 Regeneration and improvement will take place within the context of accelerating climate change which is forcing us to reconsider how we approach the use of land and the built environment. Additionally, the legacy of COVID-19 means changes to working patterns, lifestyles and the demand for good-quality open spaces are unlikely to abate for the foreseeable future.

1.4 EEBC committed to their [Climate Change Action Plan](#) in 2020, which involved setting an ambitious target of securing carbon neutrality by 2035. This 4-year plan relies on a range of measures to help reduce the Council's own emissions as well as promoting good practice throughout the borough. This commitment is a cornerstone of the Town Centre Masterplan.

1.5 The Masterplan has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA) on behalf of EEBC. Transport and mobility inputs have been addressed by Latcham. Several work stages have been completed as part of the masterplanning process:

- **Stage 1 Baseline Report** – background analysis of the local context.
- **Stage 2 Engagement Strategy** – creation of consultation materials and initial studies.
- **Stage 3a Engagement** – hybrid (digital and in-person) public consultation held in summer / autumn 2022, collation and interpretation of responses.
- **Stage 4 Masterplan Design Evolution** – technical and landscape-led design iterations and draft Masterplan report.
- **Stage 3b** – landowner and elected member workshops, and engagement with the local highway authority.
- **Stage 5** – Draft Town Centre Masterplan.
- **Stage 6** – Public Consultation on Draft Masterplan.
- **Stage 7** – Finalisation of Masterplan.

1.6 This report sets out clear and comprehensive guiding principles for development of the Epsom Town Centre, centred around a holistic Masterplan, to address:

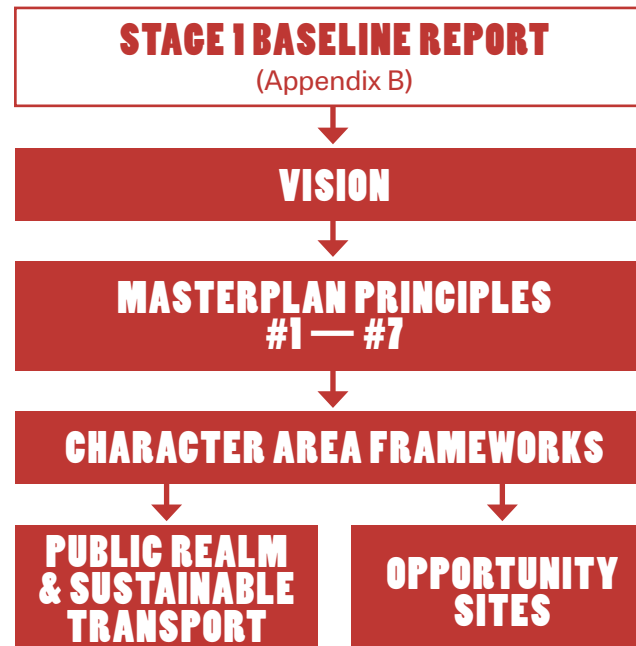
- the parameters for development of the key sites (the Ashley Centre/Global House, Southern Gas Network/Hook Road site, Depot Road car park, and the Town Hall/Hope Lodge car park and Epsom Ambulance Depot site);
- the placemaking objectives that would support the development of key sites;
- environmental and travel improvements to the town centre that could be facilitated through development proposals (through development itself, CIL and S106); and
- key principles for retention, enhancement, or repair of those parts of the town centre that would not be subject to major development proposals.

1.7 This Masterplan report should be taken in its entirety. It is intended to guide and assist in the planning, design and delivery of change within the town centre by establishing a vision and a common set of principles, along with site specific recommendations. Development proposals should respond positively to each of these to achieve consistency and cohesion across the centre.

- 1.8** The *Vision* captures the overall development strategy and long-term intentions for the Epsom Town Centre, as reflected in the Masterplan, in order to enable the sustainable development of new homes and of a thriving retail and business environment, bolstered by an enhanced cultural and recreational offer.
- 1.9** Seven *Masterplan Principles* (**Section 1.0**) expand on the *Vision* by articulating the guiding principles for future development, taking account of the local context and the increasing prevalence of environmental and sustainability agendas. The principles can be used to assess any future development proposals within the Epsom Town Centre.
- 1.10** The town centre area is divided into ten distinct Character Areas responding to place-based analyses of specific local characteristics and challenges. The *Character Area Frameworks* (**Section 3.0**) describe the principal strategic development opportunities and strategies for each respective Area to enhance its functionality and distinctiveness.
- 1.11** Studies and guidance for individual sites is provided in two forms – *Public Realm* (**Section 4.0**) and *Opportunity Sites* (**Section 5.0**). *Public Realm* covers the integrated landscape- and transport-led strategies to augment public experience of the town

centre. The latter section comprises capacity studies for each Town Centre Opportunity Site, with optioneered designs for future development.

- 1.12** The Stage 1 Baseline Report forms the background document for this Masterplan and provides the contextual details and considerations underpinning this document's proposals. The Stage 1 Baseline Report can be found at Appendix B should be read in conjunction with this Masterplan.



VISION STATEMENT & COMPREHENSIVE MASTERPLAN

- 1.13** Epsom Town Centre will be a place that attracts, connects and inspires people, with a strong sense of community, commerce and creativity.
- 1.14** In Epsom's town centre buildings, activities and users will be brought together through public realm improvements which will to create a distinctive sense of place as a backdrop to public life.
- 1.15** The town centre will realise its potential to deliver an optimum level of housing and social infrastructure alongside enhancements to the built, historic and natural environments.
- 1.16** Green infrastructure and good active travel connections will help to prioritise sustainable and accessible links both within the town centre and with the wider Epsom.
- 1.17** Changes to Epsom Town Centre will reinforce efforts to combat the Climate Emergency through a comprehensive approach to transport, low carbon development, green infrastructure and human health.

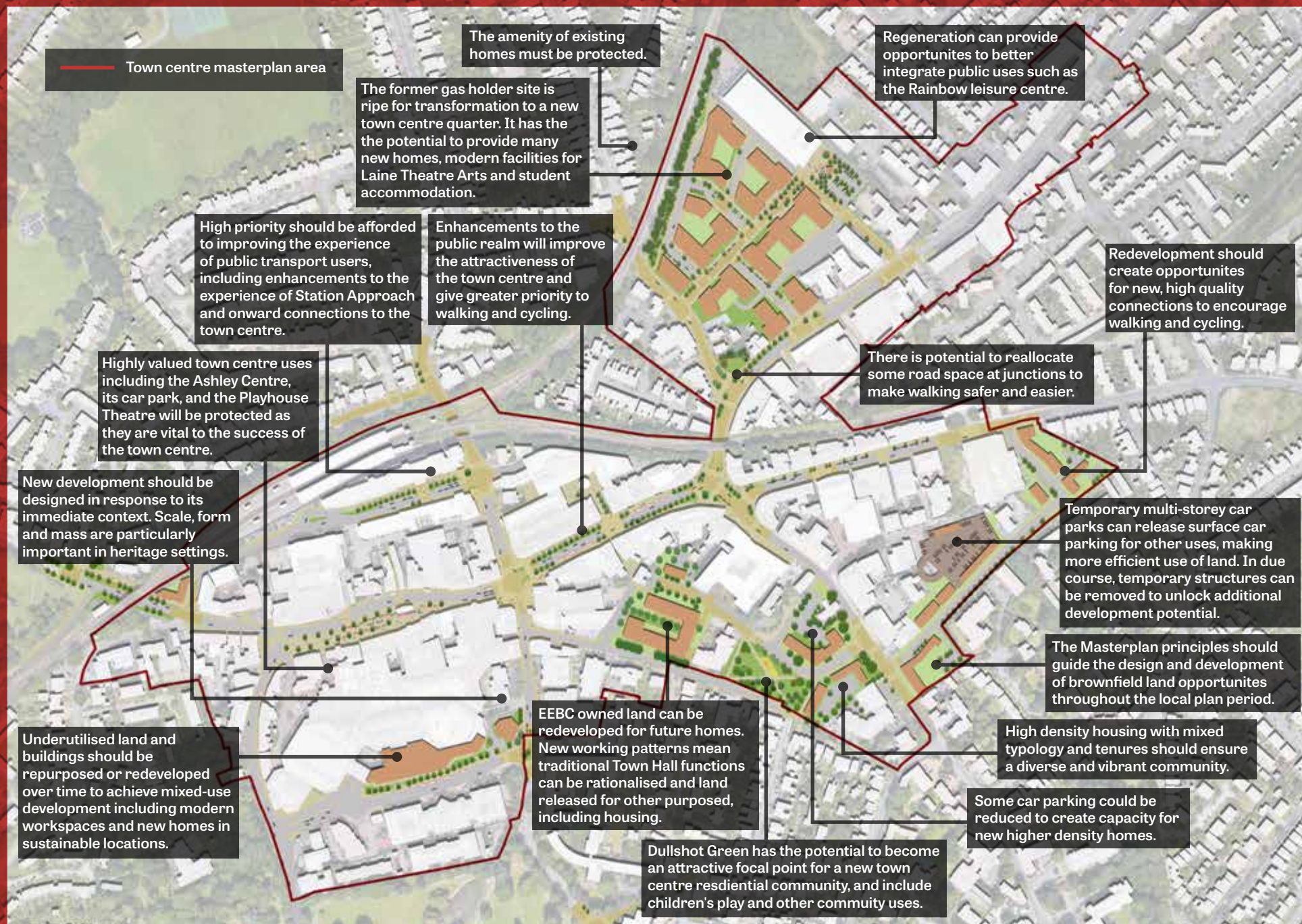


Figure 1: Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

THE MASTERPLAN

MASTERPLAN PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE #1 Adopt a context-led design approach to guide the development, regeneration and repair of the town centre. Having particular regard to the impact of building heights, building design, materials and land uses will ensure new development contributes to an improvement in the quality of the town centre. Pursue mainly low- and mid-rise, high-density housing which afford excellent levels of residential amenity and complement the character of the town centre whilst using land efficiently. Justify proposals for taller buildings using heritage and townscape impact assessments, and ensure tall buildings are positioned where they can make a meaningful contribution to townscape and placemaking, without undermining current residential amenity.



PRINCIPLE #2 Ensure development maximises opportunities to connect and enliven streets and spaces to create the conditions for vitality and liveability. Design so that people can delight in their surroundings, with enhanced public realm as the setting for the life of the town centre. New development should positively address public streets and spaces, with frequent entrances and overlooking of the public realm.



PRINCIPLE #3 Aim to deliver diverse and vibrant communities. Plan and design for an evolving demographic and socio-economic context, recognising trends and challenges in the housing, employment, retail and leisure markets. Delivering flexible spaces that can be easily repurposed over time, or cater for homeworking, or can be adapted for later-living will ensure their longevity and reduce future carbon.



PRINCIPLE #4 Give priority to pedestrians and cyclists in order to better balance movement within the town centre and to transform Epsom's arrival experience. The Masterplan will support the transition towards zero-carbon transport, recognising that for the time being, some car access will be necessary, but this should not be to the detriment of the growth in walking and cycling.

PRINCIPLE #5 'Green' the town centre and to create climatically comfortable, clean and attractive streets and spaces. Properly considered landscape schemes should form part of development proposals, demonstrating how planting and surface treatment has considered the needs and health of people, nature and climate change.

PRINCIPLE #6 Utilise land under Council control to actively drive regeneration to meet the needs of all residents of the Borough over the life of the Plan period and beyond. Ensure all EEBC service delivery is aligned to promote the attractiveness and regeneration of the town centre. Seize the opportunity to demonstrate how the Masterplan principles should be applied by delivering exemplar, affordable and sustainable schemes.

PRINCIPLE #7 Deliver a zero-carbon ready town centre, and ensure buildings are constructed to a standard that can be easily adapted to meet the requirements of zero carbon. Adopt a fabric-first approach to ensure homes are warm in winter and cool in summer, as well as being energy and water efficient.



2 MASTERPLAN EVOLUTION



Figure 2: Masterplan Area and Opportunity Sites

- 2.1** This section provides an overview of the considerations behind the Masterplan's evolution.

MASTERPLAN AREA AND OPPORTUNITY SITES

- 2.2** As illustrated in figure 2 the Masterplan Area encapsulates key areas that define Epsom's town centre. Specifically, the redline boundary includes sites in and around the High Street / Market Square, East Street / Hook Road and Upper High Street, extending on to the train station and the Town Hall / Depot Road.

23 The Masterplan Area also includes a number of Opportunity Sites. These sites were initially identified through a call-for-sites exercise led by EEBC but have since been subject to further discussions with the respective landowners where possible as part of the masterplanning process. These discussions, coupled with various technical studies of site capacity and development potential, enabled the selection of the following opportunity sites for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan.



Ashley Centre & Global House – creating opportunities to retain and enhance this popular attraction, being mindful of heritage sensitivities intrinsic to this town centre location, whilst realising the potential for new town centre homes.



Hook Road Car Park & the Southern Gas Network site – consolidating the Hook Road Car Park, former Southern Gas Network site and the Laine Theatre Arts ('LTA') school into a mixed-use development that responds to housing need and enlivens East Street.



Town Hall – unifying the current Town Hall, Hope Lodge and Epsom Clinic to create a new residential area centred around the high quality Dullshot Green.



Depot Road – making more efficient use of well located town centre land by reprovinding existing car parking in a decked structure, releasing land for new homes.

BASELINE ANALYSIS

24 The Stage 1 Baseline Report examines the historical growth and current uses and composition of Epsom's town centre in addition to the future town centre trends post-pandemic. The Baseline Report identified thematic implications for the Masterplan, summarised here, which in turn informed the Masterplan Principles and Masterplan recommendations.

Heritage & Building Heights

- 25** The structure of the town centre has proved adaptable to change over time. Even where architectural responses have detracted from the overall character, the town centre is still recognisable. Many historic buildings remain, and there are areas where the traditional fine-grained pattern of development remains strong.
- 26** In response to prevailing development pressure, which includes pressure to build upwards, it is critical for the Masterplan to consider whether the potential exists for taller buildings in and around the town centre without consequent detrimental impacts on the immediate surrounds, including recognised heritage assets.
- 27** Therefore, a heritage and townscape view analysis has informed the options for some of the opportunity sites where some scope for increased height has been proposed by site promoters. The priority of the Masterplan is to ensure a context led approach (Principle #1), which safeguards the historic environment and the townscape character of the town centre, without overly constraining reasonable opportunities for height where they exist. This comprises appropriate responses to scale and massing and rational consideration of the role of taller buildings in placemaking and townscape quality. This does not negate the need for future development proposals from undertaking the relevant impact assessments, but rather acts as a further level of refinement to inform the Masterplan and the site options.



Many historic buildings remain, and there are areas where the traditional fine-grained pattern of development remains strong

Current Land Use and Activity

- 2.8** In general terms, land in Epsom has been used efficiently, with infilling of blocks and land parcels adding to the intensity of the town centre.
- 2.9** The Masterplan needs to identify and create opportunities to deliver a more diverse mix of uses in the town centre. In considering what might be appropriate, regard should be had to post pandemic trends including increased home working, as well as changes in the way people shop and spend their leisure time (Principle #3). Further, the Masterplan should look to capitalise on the town's specialist uses to distinguish Epsom from competing locations. The planned expansion of the University for the Creative Arts ('UCA') for example brings with it an opportunity to develop the creative economy.
- 2.10** To maintain a healthy retail offer, the Masterplan should also identify those locations where retail should be prioritised. Beyond the core area, additional residential development can help to support the vibrancy of the town centre. Ensuring high standards of residential amenity is likely to be key to the success of this approach.



UCA Business School

Active Fronts and Building Entrances

2.11 The nature and design of the built form is crucial to the future success of the town centre. The Masterplan should include a general presumption towards continuous active frontages (Principle #2), where visual and physical interaction between the inside of the building and the public street can be maintained. In addition, the Masterplan should identify future destinations where concentrations of activity will help to bring new life to the Town Centre. Here, particular regard should be given to achieving the right mix of uses within a flexible built form which can support varied activity (Principle #3).



Animated street scene on the High Street

Public Realm, Connectivity and Green Infrastructure

- 2.12** Highway interventions in the 1950's to accommodate traffic contributed to the loss of some historic fabric and paved the way for a car dominated environment, to the detriment of the pedestrian experience. Nevertheless, the Town Centre remains mostly compact and walkable. Further, the Town Centre has grown towards the station, but links between the two are weak. Recent development has failed to secure better connectivity.
- 2.13** The Town Centre Masterplan is a once in a generation opportunity to establish a deliverable ambition to improve the public realm (Principle #2). This can bring wide reaching benefits, and it will be crucial to understand both what makes a good space and how any planned improvements can be achieved.
- 2.14** From research carried out by the Project for Public Spaces¹ on measurable factors that make a great place, it is evident that 'uses and activities' (i.e. shopping, working, living) count for only a small part of what makes a place successful. Consideration also needs to be given to sociability, access and linkages, and comfort and image.

- 2.15** Public realm enhancement schemes, when designed sensitively and delivered effectively, can have a transformational impact on the attractiveness of a place and the opportunity for new activities and public life. It stands to reason that places that are perceived to be attractive generate increased footfall, and this in turn increases their attractiveness. The Masterplan should place an emphasis on the importance of good design, on 'quality over quantity' and the need for a tenacious approach.

- 2.16** Opportunities to improve connections should be identified in the Masterplan. For the opportunity sites, the Masterplan will need to attentively demonstrate how people will access and move through those areas, and where the wider town centre connectivity can be enhanced through the design of these areas. New connections should be safe, attractive and lined with active fronts. To be meaningful, they should connect to the next area (i.e. they should not function as dead ends), and the design should be legible for pedestrians to recognise that onward connectivity is possible.

- 2.17** Finally, the Masterplan can identify opportunities to introduce street trees, green areas and other green infrastructure features. To improve amenity for new residents, it will be desirable to provide opportunities which mirror those available in residential locations, for example: opportunities for green circular walks that promote exercise and dog walking, and places of calm for relaxation.

¹ a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping cities improve their public spaces for the community's benefit

Public Ownership & Role of the Council

- 2.18** In order for the Masterplan to be effective in its role, support for the town centre vision will need to be entrenched within EEBC since delivering the Masterplan will cut across several service areas (Principle #6).
- 2.19** It may be helpful for EEBC to regard itself as a 'proactive curator' of the town centre, having regard to a range of factors that can influence future outcomes. In particular, ensuring visitors' experience of the town centre is a positive one will help the centre's continued use and vibrancy. This overlaps with, but goes beyond, the need to enhance the public realm to include initiatives from rigorous street cleansing regimes to initiatives to bring that public realm alive with events and entertainment. This will all help to drive footfall, which in turn will support local businesses.
- 2.20** In addition, close collaboration with Surrey County Council will be needed to ensure a joined-up approach. The county council employs officers responsible for a place based approach to service delivery, which should ensure that the collaborative approach is effective.

Town Centre Trends & Development Viability

- 2.21** While the pandemic did exacerbate the decline of some aspects of town centre economies, it also shone a light on the trends and characteristics that made town centres / high streets vibrant, attractive, healthy and perhaps most importantly, resilient. Epsom's town centre seems to have admirably weathered the pandemic storm, but its continued resilience can only be secured by anticipating and responding to changing market trends (Principle #3).
- 2.22** Pre-pandemic, 'successful' town centres relied on a high share of office workers within a wide and affluent catchment area. However, it is now abundantly clear that low footfall levels and consumer spending power cannot sustain high street amenities in the long term and, as such, town centres should diversify their offer from exclusively retail/food/drink consumption towards being places of production. Establishing town centres as attractive and viable spaces for entrepreneurship and investment is key to ensuring that the demand for high street retailers will follow.

- 2.23** Research² by Centre for Cities highlights an important distinction inadvertently made by the pandemic that the performance of the high street reflects the wider economic strength of the town centre, but it does not drive it. Therefore, it is prudent to consider means to holistically strengthen the town centre economy in order to:
- facilitate opportunities for highly skilled, highly paid jobs in the town centre and intensify income generation (including by providing the 'right' variety of commercial and residential spaces);
 - respond more acutely to changing customer demands (town centres must be able to adapt and to provide a unique experience); and
 - support mental and physical health of residents and visitors (enhanced access to nature, support for cycle and walking, expanding public transport etc.).
- 2.24** EEBC's updated Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (2021) underscores that the overall strategy for Epsom is not one of growth but of consolidation. This assessment also makes specific recommendations for the Epsom Town Centre, as detailed in the Stage 1 Baseline Report.

² Cities-Outlook-2022-2.pdf (centreforcities.org)

2.25 EEBC's recent Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA, January 2023) also highlights that the demand for future employment floorspace will be influenced by the post pandemic working patterns and the latest changes to the Use Class Order. The HEDNA identifies industry sectors that are considered most likely to adopt permanent homeworking (including education and entertainment), noting that the quantum of demand for office spaces could remain unchanged. The type of demand could change, however, towards more flexible and interaction led spaces. The effects of Use Class E, and associated permitted changes of use, on the employment areas remains unclear at this stage.

2.26 The Masterplan should also be mindful of development viability, particularly in light of uncertainty in the UK's property market although the recent change in Government and a new NPPF could help instill confidence in the market and provide certainty for investors. The data reviewed for Epsom indicates a strong sales and rental market overall, but with weakening demand for flats. This may reflect the nature of the stock on offer but supports a trend where the demand for flats is less certain than that for houses. It is also worthwhile considering the role that students play in the rental market, where demand is highest during term time and lowest over the summer period.

STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2.27 Public engagement played an integral role in the development of the Masterplan proposals. A Hybrid consultation strategy was developed to invite local residents' views on the initial proposals both at an in-person consultation in the Ashley Centre and on a virtual platform. This consultation was undertaken between 25 July and 31 August 2022 and a total of 1,979 unique responses were received.

"Epsom town centre is fundamentally flawed as it is treated as an arterial route into London. The high street is essentially just a dual carriageway with frequent speeding traffic and pedestrian unfriendly junctions. Despite the wide roads, cycling infrastructure is limited to bike gutters, where it exists at all."

"Please **do something** as Epsom could be amazing."

"This is good, first time I've been asked for my opinion. We moved to Epsom because of the town centre and transport links. It's a lovely town but needs to **fight to stay relevant** with online shops."

2.28 All in all, the responses highlighted local residents' interests, attachments and aspirations for the Epsom Town Centre. However, it also uncovered some inconsistent sentiments which the Masterplan sought to thoughtfully address in order to deliver a suitably ambitious and practical framework for managing change over the local plan period. The responses and masterplanning reflections are summarised below.



Public engagement played an integral role in the development of the Masterplan proposals – members of the public viewing the in-person display in the Ashley Centre

2.29 Consultation on the draft masterplan took place from the 24th of November 2023 to the 22nd of December 2023. During the consultation period 1,979 responses were received which have been considered during the finalisation of this Masterplan. Core changes include revised schemes for the town hall, Hope Lodge and Epsom clinic sites, emphasising that the schemes detailed in the masterplan are illustrative and will require further assessment and updates to the Townscape and Heritage Report.

Economic Development & New Homes

- 2.30** Epsom's Town Centre is not, generally, considered a 'destination' for employment, education or tourism. This may be explained by the fact that currently these uses have a limited profile within the heart of the Town Centre (LTA, UCA and the Epsom racecourse are all in relatively peripheral locations). However, there is support for a growing university presence, and employment / business uses are identified as appropriate uses at the Southern Gas Network / Hook Road and the Town Hall / Depot Road opportunity sites. This indicates support for a greater variety of activities within the Town Centre.
- 2.31** The delivery of more housing within Epsom Town Centre is not widely supported, although there appears to be a local partiality for standard (family) rather than student / later living forms.
- 2.32** However, given the support expressed in response to the consultation for 'a growing university presence' and the stated aspiration of both LTA and UCA to grow their current student numbers, the practical matter of ensuring those additional students are appropriately housed must be tackled. To not seek to provide student accommodation would have a disruptive impact on the housing market, with a potential increase in family homes being given over to student rentals, bringing new pressures to housing affordability and availability within the district.

- 2.33** In addition, an increase in student numbers indicates a related increase in teaching staff, many of whom might aspire to live within the borough (indeed this is desirable to reduce commuting). These factors highlight the inextricable links between economic growth and housing provision, and if Epsom Town Centre is to develop its education and employment base, additional housing is a necessary pre-requisite. Therefore, while there appears to be a general reluctance to housing, and student housing in particular, the Masterplan needs to test options for its delivery, nonetheless.

Retail and Commercial Activity

- 2.34** Epsom is seemingly very well regarded and well used, primarily for its convenient retail offer and access. This indicates that the Masterplan should look to measures that will support the continued resilience of shopping opportunities, particularly considering the shift towards more online shopping. The lack of local support for a balance between chain and independent stores is difficult to explain, as a broad-based retail offer with greater amounts of choice and variety will add to the resilience of the town centre.
- 2.35** Epsom's outdoor markets, and its evening economy, support the appeal of the town centre now. In the future, local residents expressed a strong desire for more evening activities, again suggesting more diversity of uses would help to attract more interest and custom.

- 2.36** In terms of the opportunity sites, enhancing the Ashley Centre, and its current offer, is generally preferred over any wholesale redevelopment whereas redevelopment (to varying extent) is seemingly accepted on all other opportunity sites.

Environmental Quality

- 2.37** Current green spaces and heritage assets are valued, and Epsom is regarded as a safe and welcoming place. In the future, additional (integrated) green infrastructure and measures to help combat climate change, including more recycling opportunities, would be supported. Epsom Town Centre should be clean and safe.
- 2.38** Respondents would not like to see taller buildings in and around the High Street but may accept the principle of such development at East Street. This indicates that there is an underlying desire to retain the character of the heart of the town centre, but potentially some flexibility beyond for a more contemporary built form. Accordingly, the Masterplan sought to test options which align with this set of preferences, being mindful of the potential impact of those options on conservation areas and listed buildings.

Access & Movement

- 2.39** Vehicular (e.g. car) travel to the town centre is popular, and car parking is valued by visitors. However, there is also a large group of people who walk to the town centre, indicating that routes between residential areas and the centre are conducive to more sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.40** In the future, respondents would like to see the existing car parking retained, particularly at the Ashley Centre. However, they would also aspire to have a town centre which is inclusive and gives priority to pedestrians.
- 2.41** To realise these aspirations, the Masterplan examined opportunities to retain good levels of car parking acknowledging that, for the plan period, many visitors will likely arrive by car. However, it also considered ways in which greater priority can be given to pedestrians, which chimes well with other stated aspirations for a clean, safe and green town centre, and points to possible streetscape enhancements to deliver these outcomes in a coordinated manner. These aspirations are consistent with future sustainable transport outcomes.

Councillor Workshop

2.42 EEBC Councillors were also invited to comment on the initial ideas during a dedicated workshop in October 2022. Councillors discussed four relevant themes:

- **Town centre offer** – Councillors expressed support for increased diversification of the town centre offer including the evening economy and support for the growing student population. The market is recognised as very important to the town centre, with Councillors expressing a desire to do more to ensure its future attractiveness and success.
- **Access & Movement** – Participating Councillors voiced agreement that improvements should support a better experience for pedestrians and cyclists, and opportunities for pedestrianisation should be examined. Barriers to pedestrian movement and better crossing points were seen as essential.
- **Green & Open Spaces** – Councillors expressed a desire for a more cohesive landscape design approach to the town centre and indicated support for more events within public spaces.
- **Opportunity Sites** – Councillors took a favourable view of mixed use development, stressing the importance of co-working opportunities, affordable housing, family homes and good design which responds positively to the character and heritage assets of the town centre.

DESIGN RESPONSE

2.43 The Masterplan, therefore, considered the town centre as a whole when developing the integrated strategy for future development within the plan period, supported by place-based assessments and recommendations for identified component parts and/or Character Areas. This holistic consideration of the town centre means that the Masterplan places a crucial emphasis on the enriching the qualitative experience of the town centre, rather than merely focusing on the opportunity sites.

Opportunities and Constraints

- 2.44** Combined, the aforementioned stages of research and analysis revealed the factors behind the success of Epsom Town Centre, but it also identified opportunities for future development (and where this is hindered by physical or market constraints). In order to provide effective place-based solutions to these challenges, the Masterplan identified distinct Character Areas and examined the role of the opportunity sites and public realm within that context.
- 2.45** These Character Areas (see **Section 3.0**) represented areas of the town centre with similar distinct attributes and local identity. Here, the Masterplan considered appropriate land uses, their distribution and the capacity of these areas to accommodate new uses, bearing in mind which uses could bolster footfall in specific locations.

2.46 For the Opportunity Sites (**Section 5.0**), the masterplanning work endeavoured to explore their development potential by not only testing their capacity to accommodate a mix of uses, but also examining the sites' specific constraints and opportunities in greater detail. This helped generate a range of design configurations which, when weighed against each other, were used to inform the town centre policies for the emerging Local Plan.

Heritage & Building Heights

2.47 Building heights were an integral consideration for the Masterplan, given the potential impacts on sensitive heritage assets in Conservation Areas both within and around the town centre. To inform the Masterplan's recommendations on building heights, DLA carried out further heritage and townscape view analysis using three-dimensional modelling to assess the general appropriateness of certain building heights and massing for some of the individual opportunity sites. This assessment was not intended as a formal impact analysis but was used as a design tool to support the Masterplan principles and to inform the site-specific options.

2.48 As detailed in **Appendix B**, this testing incorporated an element of townscape analysis to consider the impact of taller building heights at the 'Ashley Centre & Global House' and 'Hook Road & Southern Gas Network' sites, using a number of identified key viewpoints (figure 3).



Figure 3: 3D model viewpoints (Appendix B includes the view analysis used to inform the Masterplan)

2.49 A 3D model enabled a better understanding of the existing and potentially changed views having regard to the following:

- **Existing views**

- » quality, experience, type and condition of existing townscape;
- » important groups of buildings with consistent architectural treatment;
- » focal points;
- » heritage assets and their settings;
- » negative features – i.e. traffic, gap sites, poor townscape;
- » type of view – i.e. short or longer view, filtered etc.; and
- » sensitivity to change.

- **Proposed views**

- » height, scale bulk and massing/compatibility with existing townscape;
- » form and layout;
- » permeability and legibility;
- » removal of existing harmful elements;
- » potential to enhance townscape character, public realm/landscape, active frontages etc.;
- » impact on visual amenity – during the day and at night;
- » prominence, who will experience the development; and
- » impact on setting of heritage assets.

2.50 The 'as proposed' model used for assessment purposes only provides an indication of the height, scale, form and massing of potential development schemes but does not go as far as providing full architectural details (e.g. materials, façade treatments, fenestration, etc). A range of buildings heights were modelled and tested within each character area, including up to 17 storeys for the SGN site). This information is crucial when considering the acceptability of a tall building and should be provided in planning applications for such development. A taller building of high architectural quality may have less impact than a lower but less refined building.

2.51 DLA has not undertaken any detailed technical studies for town centre development schemes in respect of their potential impacts on night time illumination, daylight and sunlight, wind, and microclimate in general. This will need to be prepared in support of any future planning application submitted for any of the respective town centre sites.

Public Realm & Parking Strategy

2.52 To achieve an uplifting, welcoming and attractive setting for the town centre, it is critical to ensure a cohesive scheme of public realm improvements could be secured throughout the Masterplan Area (see **Section 4.0**). Key considerations include:

- future connectivity, with particular regard to structuring development and encouraging footfall, and creating a safe and attractive environment;

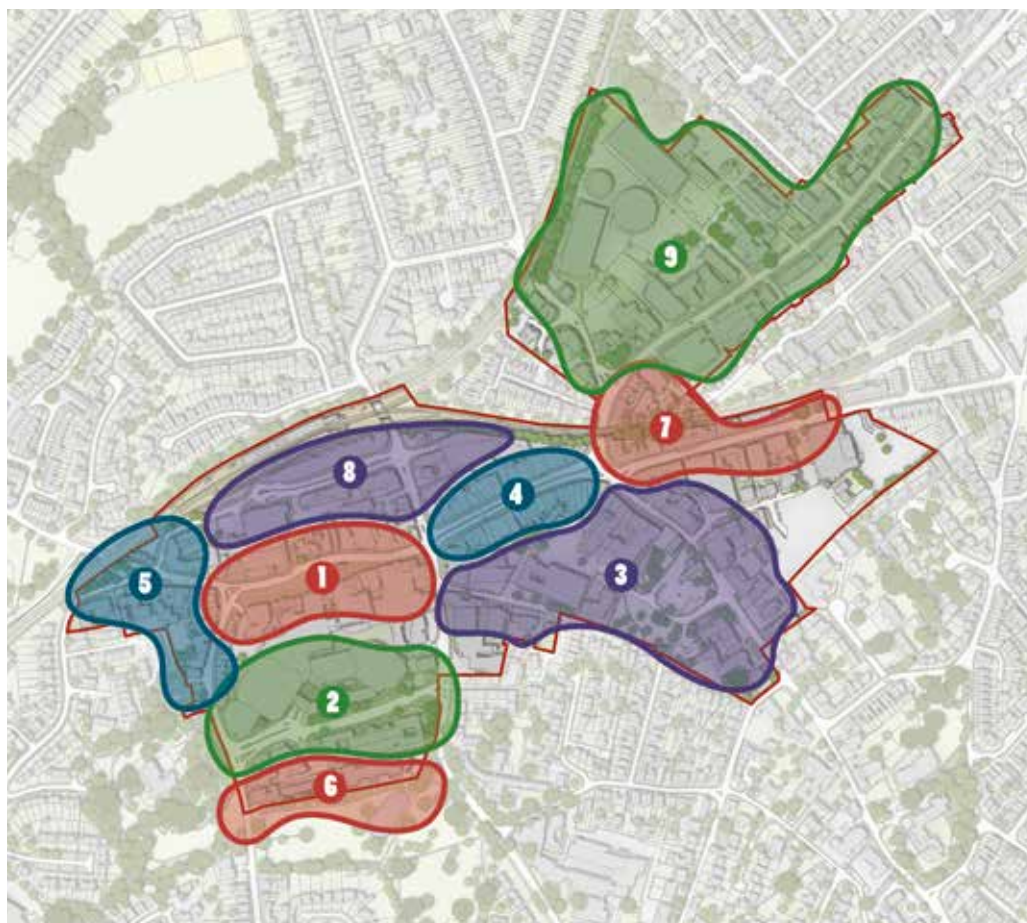
- sustainable travel, particularly Active Travel;
- active fronts, including new development and repair of the existing built fabric;
- key nodes and gateways; and
- scope for new landmarks and other measures to improve legibility.

2.53 Delivering these objectives requires a better understanding of the current highway function within the Town Centre, recognising the critical role of the A24 within the wider conurbation, and recognising that accommodating through traffic will continue to be essential for the duration of the plan period. In this context, engagement with Surrey County Council as the Local Highway Authority formed part of the masterplanning process.

2.54 As a starting point for discussions, all parties support the principles of central government's approach to decarbonising transport and increasing the number of journeys made by active travel and public transport. To deliver this within Epsom, sustainable transport, public car parking and public realm are addressed together so that the Masterplan adopts a joined-up approach, capable of delivering the objectives and desires of local residents and councillors. This work is presented in **Section 4.0**.

3 CHARACTER AREA FRAMEWORKS

3.1 This Section considers the existing character and development potential of each of Character Area, as defined/refined from the Stage 1 Baseline Report. Figure 4 depicts the location of the Areas. Where the opportunity to redevelop land is evident through the Local Plan 'call for sites' Framework Plans have been prepared to illustrate this (Market Square & Ashley Avenue, The Parade & Church Street, Upper High Street and Depot Road Car Park, and Hook Road, East Street and former gas works). Reference should also be made to Section 4 of this report, which explores the potential for public realm enhancements.



- 1 Market Square
- 2 Ashley Avenue
- 3 The Parade & Church Street
- 4 High Street East
- 5 West Street/South Street
- 6 Rosebery Park Edge
- 7 Upper High Street and Depot Road car park
- 8 Station Approach
- 9 Hook Road, East Street and former gas works

Figure 4: Overview map of the nine townscape analysis character areas

1 MARKET SQUARE

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.2** The Market Square is a rich environment, framed by a historic building pattern with a consistent, strong, building line. The space has recently undergone public realm improvements that offer opportunities for spill out spaces, creating vibrancy and attracting visitors even on non-market days. At its heart is the clocktower, which as a local landmark anchors the Square and acts as a central marker for the town.
- 3.3** Building heights vary from 2–4 storeys, with red-brick facades that feature dormer windows and varied fenestrations. Later additions, such as the TK Maxx building, disrupt this continuation and historic quality and are incoherent and insensitive to the character area. Most detrimental is the A24 which severs the High Street, inhibiting pedestrian accessibility and compromising the attractive qualities of the Square.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.4** There are no significant opportunity sites within the Market Square area, but it is probable that piecemeal change will occur during the plan period. This being the case, it is important to emphasise the role of the public realm in binding the component parts to maintain a sense of cohesion and enhance the historic character of this key area of the town centre. Proposals set out in Section 4 provide further guidance on this.



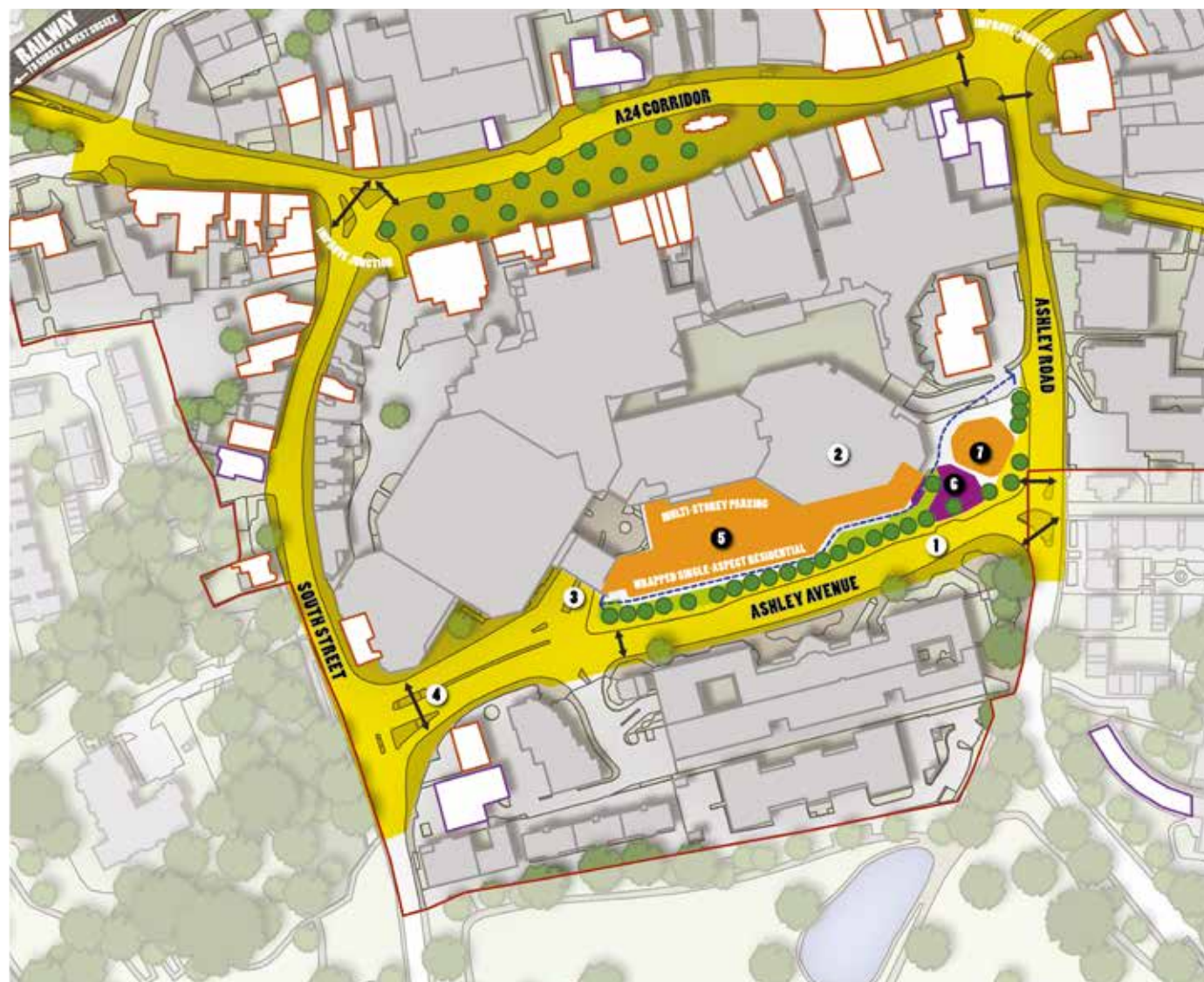
2 ASHLEY AVENUE

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.5** Despite being bounded by late 20th Century buildings that lack human scale and detailing, the pedestrian environment is lifted by mature tree planting and vegetation, and comfortable street proportions. The streetscape and architectural character of this street generates a vehicle dominated environment. There is little to attract or support pedestrian use, with little overlooking or activation of the street scene afforded by the buildings here.



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR MARKET SQUARE & ASHLEY AVENUE



- Improve street layout and public realm
- Railway
- Civic space
- Green verge
- Opportunity sites
- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- Improve pedestrian environment
- Mature trees to be retained
- Pedestrian crossings

Existing Character

- 1** Congested, one-way loop around the town centre.
- 2** Large footprint multi-storey car park creates an unappealing frontage
- 3** Multi-storey car park access
- 4** Few pedestrian crossings

Development Opportunities

- 5** New multi-storey car park, wrapped with single-aspect residences
- 6** Proposed civic space
- 7** Landmark structure at a gateway to the town centre.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.6 There is scope here for some redevelopment of underutilised office space to create new homes within the heart of the town centre. Coupled with the public realm and highway improvements, Ashley Avenue has the potential to become an attractive place. Regard should be had to the height of new buildings, in particular their impact on the adjacent conservation area. These opportunities are explored further in Sections 4 and 5.

Figure 5: Market Square & Ashley Avenue Development Framework

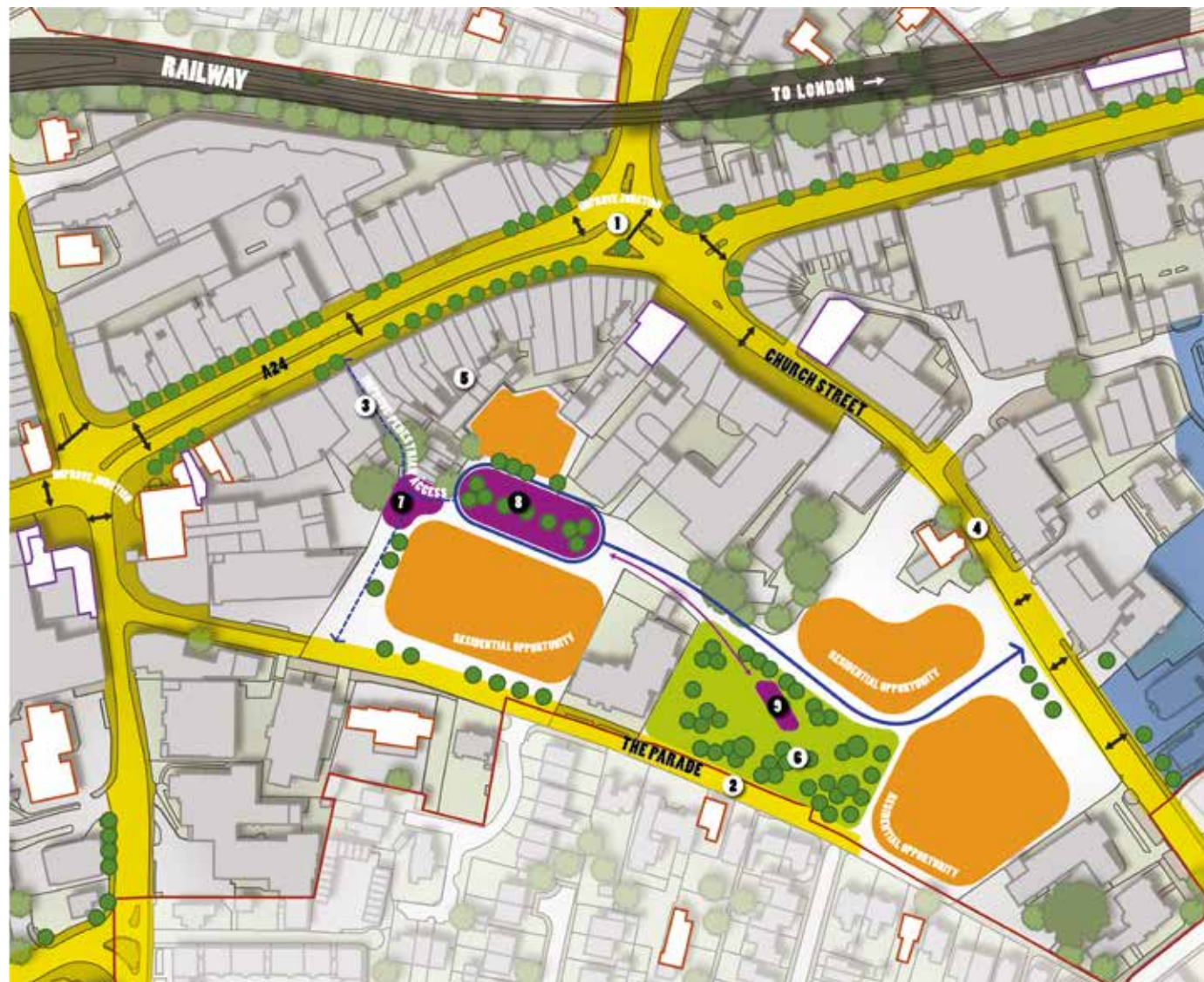
3 THE PARADE & CHURCH STREET

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.7** The Parade acts as an area of transition between the core Town Centre activities and the looser grained, greener residential areas. Buildings along this street are typically three-storeys tall, set back with defined boundaries, and accommodate civic and hotel uses. The relative bulk of the buildings is well mitigated by the pattern of fenestration and sense of overlooking.
- 3.8** Newer developments move away from the typical red brick facades of the town centre, adopting yellow brick and slate coloured roof tiles that appear out of character. Pedestrian footpaths get narrow in places, though this is mitigated by the street's quiet nature.



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK





3.9 Church Street is a gateway to the town centre, yet the approach lacks a distinctive character, with a blend of large footprint buildings of moderate quality and historic buildings of domestic scale. Whilst the latter add pockets of interest, the area would benefit from improvement.

3.10 Towards the town centre, the public realm is defined within a tight boundary of buildings, though the public space 'leaks' where surface car parks fragment the environment. The urban form relaxes southwards towards the greener, residential neighbourhoods.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.11 Development here can play an active role in establishing a more seamless transition between the town centre and residential areas. More generally, public realm and highways enhancements should ensure that The Parade and Church Street are permeable, safe and attractive for pedestrian movement. EEBC own the Town Hall site and intends to relocate to new Town Centre premises, more suited to their needs in the post-pandemic period. This will lead to the redevelopment or re-purposing of the Town Hall, and as such the Council as a landowner is well placed to help drive forward the future success of the town centre. These opportunities are explored in Section 5 (Town Hall, Hope Lodge Car Park, Epsom Clinic/Ambulance Depot sites). In general, development should enhance the residential setting and respect the local vernacular of building typologies and façades, recognising the opportunities presented by the currently underutilised Dullshot Green, and the redevelopment opportunities described above.

Figure 6: The Parade Development Framework

4 HIGH STREET EAST

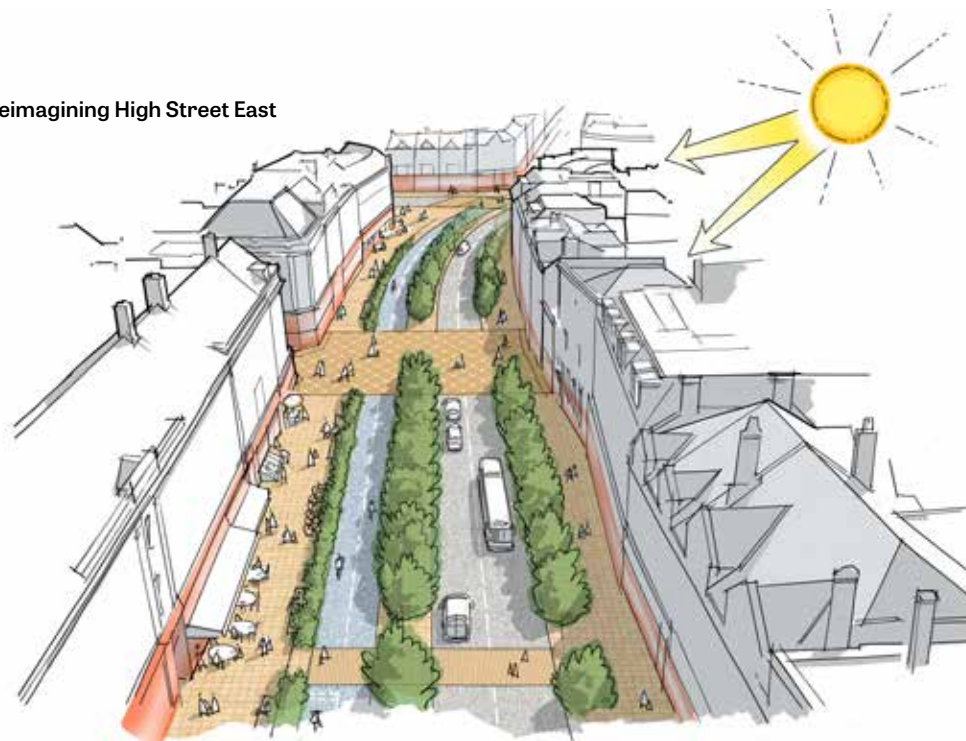
EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.12** Dominated by the A24, the eastern end of the High Street offers little incentive to dwell. The street is severed by the guardrails, traffic junctions and street clutter which reduces pedestrian accessibility, and produces an unattractive, cluttered public realm.
- 3.13** When compared to the Market Square, the buildings that line this street offer less visual interest, though the historic finer grain, particularly to the south, is well activated and clearly defines the street. To the north, the street is lined by a continuous building form dating from the 1950s. While the façade is repetitive, the building reinforces the sense of a well-proportioned street. The street has the potential to be substantially improved, to offer a better pedestrian experience and safer cycling.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.14** Whilst there are no significant opportunity sites within High Street East, development here should focus on streetscape enhancements to improve the pedestrian and cycle experiences. This will likely entail wholesale re-evaluation of the public highway, removal of the guardrails and introduction of more frequent pedestrian crossings to support the 'spilling-out' of local activity. These ideas are explored further in Section 4 of this report.

Reimagining High Street East



5 WEST STREET/ SOUTH STREET

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

3.15 The railway bridge along West Street marks a gateway into the town centre, characterised by a blend of historic buildings, and bulky office buildings dating from the 1980s. The public realm is characterised by a car-orientated street design, with excessive street clutter and road markings detracting the qualities of the historic fabric.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.16 Development should embrace the gateway character of West Street/South Street through improvements to the public realm, in particular the South Street junction, whilst complementing the historic setting of the nearby conservation area. Attention should be given to the scale, height and massing of new buildings, avoiding any form which is unsympathetic to, or does not enhance the arrival experience or conservation area status.



6 ROSEBERY PARK EDGE

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

3.17 Development around Rosebery Park is largely domestic in character, with the exception of UCA. The northern edge, closest to the town centre, is bounded by mixed office and residential developments of 2–3½ storeys. It is hidden by mature trees which are the defining feature of the park edge.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.18 It will important for any development to create strong and active frontages overlooking Rosebery Park. Strengthening active travel connections along Ashley Road will be key to ensuring a well-connected and cohesive Town Centre.



7 UPPER HIGH STREET & DEPOT ROAD CAR PARK

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

3.19 Upper High Street has a mix of architectural styles. Its northern edge is lined with distinct edwardian terraces, with ground-floor retail and upper-floor commercial and residential uses. The southern edge of the street features a mix of mid to late 20th century commercial buildings (including a popular cinema). These buildings are generally bulky, with large footprints and are 3 to 4 storeys tall.

3.20 Depot Road car park is overlooked by a mix of offices and flats. The street environment of the car park and Upper High Street has a poorer quality, with narrow footpaths, excess street clutter, and a sense of being 'back land'.



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



- Improved street layout and public realm
- Railway
- Green space
- Opportunity sites
- Adjacent opportunity site
- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- Residential area
- New vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian throughroute.
- Improved access
- Mature trees to be retained
- Pedestrian crossings

Existing Character

- 1 Large footprint buildings
- 2 Site sits within a heritage context
- 3 Busy street with no cycling provision.
- 4 Residential area
- 5 Underused Dullshot Green

Development Opportunities

- 6 New access route
- 7 Reinforce the green buffer
- 8 Existing street retained for access to a new multi-storey car park

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.21 Strategic development should seek to make more efficient use of this land to enliven the area and to enhance the wider setting. This area can play a pivotal role in linking town centre activity towards adjacent residential areas through an emphasis on good placemaking and well considered building design.

Figure 7: Upper High Street & Depot Road Car Park Development Framework

8 STATION APPROACH

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.22** The character of Station Approach contrasts with the town centre, being a much denser, busier and potentially hostile environment lacking in aesthetic quality. The street width to building height ratio is greater, with 5–7 storey buildings and no setbacks. Development here lacks architectural quality and disregards traditional materials. There is little here to suggest it is 'of Epsom'.
- 3.23** With the railway station, the street is often busy with vehicles and taxis, while the pedestrian environment is hampered by a narrow central reservation, poor quality landscaping, and limited pedestrian accessibility.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.24** There is limited scope for significant built development here, but it is possible that ad hoc changes will occur during the plan period. The Masterplan priority here, and key to the success of Station Approach, will be creating a welcoming atmosphere and using the appropriate wayfinding and public realm enhancements to create a legible transition to the town centre.





Figure 8: Illustrative perspective of potential improvements to the public realm along Station Approach

9 HOOK ROAD, EAST STREET & FORMER GAS WORKS

EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.25** Hook Road marks a transition between the town centre and adjoining residential neighbourhoods to the north-east. There is a mix of land-uses and activities along this street, small-scale offices, a multi-storey car park, and Laine Theatre Arts. At the corner between Hook Road and East Street are several listed buildings of sensitivity that contrast to the late 20th century redevelopment in its surroundings. Their setting is characterised by buildings of contrasting scale and by the large, vehicle dominated junction between Hook Road and East Street.
- 3.26** Development along East Street is characterised by large footplates that lack architectural and visual quality. Some have recently been converted to residential use, indicating the importance of achieving environmental improvements to better residential amenity. Currently, the street is dominated by vehicular movement, particularly during peak hours, creating a hostile pedestrian environment, and deterring bicycle use.
- 3.27** The redundant, industrial land of the former Gasworks sits between East Street and the railway. The site is run down, with two derelict gasholders adjacent to the newer Rainbow Leisure Centre, a popular local leisure facility in an unfortunate and unattractive setting. Hook Road car park is a large concrete structure; whilst it has usefully served as a commuter car park in the past, post pandemic, occupation rates have fallen, and it is an appropriate time to consider the future potential of this council owned land.



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



- Improved street layout and public realm
- Railway
- Civic space
- Green space
- Opportunity sites
- Adjacent opportunity site
- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- New vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian throughroute
- Secondary pedestrian and cycle connections
- Mature trees to be retained
- Street crossings

Existing Character

- 1** Busy junction between East Street (A24) and Hook Road (B284)
- 2** Edge lined with low-rise, listed, buildings
- 3** Street fronted by large footprint office buildings, contrasting with the tight form of the nearby High Street
- 4** Unattractive leisure centre car park
- 5** Well-used mixed sporting facility, hidden from the primary street
- 6** Railway lines sever the town

Development Opportunities

- 7** Potential for new civic spaces
- 8** Reinforcing the green buffer
- 9** Opportunity for convenient and direct access to the leisure centre
- 10** Greened car park and new square

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.28 The scale of the opportunity is such that a comprehensive plan should be explored to ensure the optimum regeneration benefit. As a substantial landowner, the council has an instrumental role to play in driving forward a high-quality scheme in partnership with other land owners.

3.29 The role of the public realm will be critical to ensuring future development not only supports residential amenity but also provides permeable connections to the town centre.

Figure 9: Hook Road, East Street & former gas works
Development Framework

4 PUBLIC REALM & SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



- 4.1 The urban realm of Epsom town centre is like a canvas for public life on which daily activity occurs, accommodating a wide variety of uses and functions such as access and movement, trading, play, and social and community interaction.
- 4.2 The existing public realm within the Town Centre offers significant potential for improvement as part of a successful and vibrant future for Epsom, characterised by excellent opportunities for Active Travel and enhanced public transport as the town transitions towards a lower-carbon future.
- 4.3 The visualisations in this public realm and sustainable transport chapter are illustrative of how the town centre might better prioritise pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and car drivers. Any future design concepts will need to take into account multiple user experiences, including people with physical and mental disabilities, hearing and visual impairments.

EXISTING PUBLIC REALM

- 4.4** The existing town centre public realm exhibits characteristics of the historic built fabric of Epsom, pieced together with more contemporary areas. The quality varies across the Town Centre with some areas such as the High Street's Market Square having received relatively recent investment and refurbishment whilst other areas, such as Upper High Street, appear to have remained unchanged for some time.
- 4.5** The Town Centre is generally a car-dominated environment typified by narrow footways, wide vehicular carriageways, convoluted pedestrian crossings and a general lack of planting and tree cover.
- 4.6** There is a lack of definition to the points of arrival into the Town Centre, including at West Street, Waterloo Road, Hook Road and Church Street. This poor sense of arrival also applies to the train station which is visually cut-off from the Town Centre.
- 4.7** Good quality connected cycling infrastructure (e.g. designated cycle lanes, secure bicycle parking) is also noticeably lacking, albeit that the Town Centre is generally considered 'cyclable' in terms of distances. Pedestrian movements along certain routes are impeded by vehicles parked on already narrow walkways (e.g. refuse trucks / delivery mopeds).

- 4.8** Whilst reasonably vibrant and attractive during the day, the Town Centre has a distinct lack of activity for all ages to support a successful night-time economy. This could be attributed in part to the retail focus of the Town Centre and insufficient security along key routes.



PUBLIC REALM OBJECTIVES

4.9 As highlighted in the Masterplan's Vision and Principles, it is the intention to enrich the Town Centre so that it is a safe, comfortable and greener environment, which prioritises Active Travel and enlivens the streets from day to night. This can be achieved through the following measures.

Safe and Comfortable Environment

- 4.10** To safeguard universal accessibility, the Town Centre will be welcoming during the day and at night. This will be facilitated through:
- the creation of well-overlooked streets and spaces which are also well-lit after dark;
 - the incorporation of seating opportunities at regular intervals;
 - cleanliness and good standards of maintenance and repair;
 - the provision of generous pedestrian crossings; and
 - climatic comfort.

Greener Town Centre

4.11 There are opportunities for increasing the level of tree canopy cover through new planting in streets and spaces within the Town Centre to bring about aesthetic improvements as well as air quality and biodiversity enhancements and mitigation for the urban heat island effect.

4.12 Increased planting within the Town Centre can also provide visual amenity and boost mental health. Such improvements to the Town Centre quality can help to increase the number of people visiting and using the town centre and encourage walking and cycling as a means of arriving there.

4.13 The widening of current pedestrian footways presents the opportunity to reclaim spaces as part of the public realm and to create new areas of quality landscaping and tree planting.

Illustrative perspective showing potential public realm improvements along the B284



Reprioritised Movement

- 4.14** The Masterplan supports the redistribution of space within the streets to improve the quality of the Town Centre environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The narrowing of the current vehicular carriageways provides additional space for movement and circulation. These wider footways can also accommodate spill-out activity from retail units, helping to activate the public realm.
- 4.15** New and improved pedestrian crossings along the A24 and other major routes are proposed to provide wider, more direct, and more convenient crossings. The crossings will be situated at regular intervals within the Town Centre.
- 4.16** Opportunities to provide segregated cycleways should be explored further, such as through the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan. Cycling infrastructure proposals will need to be compliant with the Department for Transport Cycle Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20. Generally, Epsom can support and sustain local cycling activity by providing suitable infrastructure in the right locations (e.g. cycle parking near the shopping centres and train station).
- 4.17** Access to Town Centre parking should be unchanged, although some rationalisation of public car parking may occur as a result of redevelopment and a move towards more sustainable travel.

Enlivened Streets

- 4.18** The Masterplan supports opportunities for an improved after-dark environment to create a more vibrant and attractive night-time economy within the Town Centre. It also embraces the potential for informal play facilities, where little currently exists, to increase the diversity of uses and users within the Town Centre.
- 4.19** Increased planting to provide shade and shelter, visual amenity and increased biodiversity will also

visually attract and support prolonged use of the Town Centre.

- 4.20** The potential for more street-based events and entertainment should be explored by the Council and other stakeholder groups. The public realm should form an attractive and inviting setting for street life. As the regeneration of the Town Centre progresses, engagement with local businesses will be essential to provide a calendar of events and celebrations to draw visitors to the town and help it to compete successfully with other centres.



PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

Wayfinding

- 4.21** Wayfinding within the Town Centre can be substantially improved, using built form, landscape and sensory cues to help people intuitively understand the Town Centre so that they are able to navigate it comfortably and efficiently. An important feature to accomplish this will be the creation of a defined hierarchy of public realm, open spaces and streets – to be achieved through the careful use of materials and urban design.
- 4.22** Wayfinding signage can supplement the public realm design, providing additional navigation assistance. This would likely benefit tourists and seasonal visitors more than residents and regular visitors who would likely be familiar with Epsom. However, high quality, well-designed signage furniture can still play an integral role in ameliorating the urban environment.
- 4.23** New signage should complement the wider street furniture palette within the Town Centre, being consistent in terms of branding, design and materials.
- 4.24** The signage elements should be carefully situated to be visually prominent without becoming an obstruction, whilst providing the right information at the right time. Information content, together with the signage's design, would be the subject of a more detailed design exercise, supplementary to this report.



Examples of Legible London wayfinding signage

Landscaping

- 4.25** Increasing the amount and diversity of soft landscaping within the Town Centre can help to attract a wide variety of benefits for the environment, society, biodiversity and the vibrancy of Epsom Town Centre.
- 4.26** Planting has the potential to act as a valuable resource for food and shelter as well as habitat for breeding a wide variety of wildlife including animals, birds and insects. The selection of plant species should be made to maximise such benefits, considering their year-round contributions. Plant species should also be selected for their suitability to the ground, air and microclimatic conditions found within the urban environment.
- 4.27** The management and maintenance of the soft landscaping should be carefully considered to ensure the plants chosen can thrive without the need for excessive human intervention.



Increasing the amount and diversity of soft landscaping within the Town Centre can benefit the environment, society, biodiversity and the vibrancy of Epsom Town Centre.

Materials

- 4.28** Building materials and façades define the character and experience of Epsom Town Centre. Therefore, the materials palette for future development will need to reflect the history of Epsom with locally-specific and locally-sourced materials where practical.
- 4.29** Materials should be selected to ensure universal accessibility, accommodating the needs of all users of the Town Centre. They should be of a high quality and durability, to withstand the busy environment without significant wear-and-tear. In a similar vein, the materials chosen should be easy to clean, maintain and/or replace so as to ensure the longevity of the public realm quality.
- 4.30** Materials which have low embodied carbon should be prioritised, wherever possible, to minimise the environmental impact.
- 4.31** A rigorous street cleansing regime will be necessary to attract and sustain Town Centre users and improve visitor numbers.
- 4.32** Surrey County Council in partnership with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council are currently preparing a Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which will guide and seek funding for significant walking and cycling improvements across the borough. The LCWIP – Stage 1 has identified substantial opportunities to enhance walking and cycling infrastructure on the approaches and within the town centre area.
- 4.33** The LCWIP will be the primary vehicle through which improvements to active travel infrastructure will be made. In this respect the masterplan and the LCWIP will overlap significantly.
- 4.34** For streets and new building design reference should be made to the Healthy Streets for Surrey design code which can help to devise a sustainable transport approach to new developments as these will be central to the design of any active travel measures.



Materials should ensure universal accessibility, accommodating the needs of all users of the Town Centre, they should be of a high quality and durability, to withstand the busy environment and should be easy to clean and maintain to ensure longevity.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Decarbonising Transport

4.35 The Baseline Report prepared for Stage 1 of the Masterplan outlined the provisions of the Surrey Local Transport Plan 2022—2032 (LTP). It also summarises the key challenges relating to:

- public transport connectivity, including bus and rail services and infrastructure;
- walking routes and road crossings;
- the A24; and
- Town Centre parking capacity and changing demand.

4.36 The Masterplan proposes interventions to achieve new or reconfigured sustainable transport infrastructure that builds on and applies the measures in the Surrey LTP. At a strategic level this responds to:

- **Climate Change and Transport Decarbonisation** – To promote development travel patterns that minimise and mitigate climate change impacts and develop transport systems more adaptable to climate change effects.
- **Better accessibility and connectivity** – To support growth and regeneration opportunity sites and public realm objectives and ensure they are well connected and integrated into the movement network.

- **Encouraging a modal shift** – This is a national and Surrey wide challenge to encourage a significant shift from private car use to public transport with much better choices for people to walk and cycle to and from the town centre.
- **Public transport** – Build on the SCC bus services improvement plan and work with partners to enhance the bus network and public transport connectivity over the short/medium term.
- **New technologies** – Consider the rapid emergence of new transport technologies which is changing how people and goods move around the borough and wider region.
- **Air Quality, Noise and Environmental quality** – The prioritisation of traffic in the town has reduced the amount of ‘effective space’ available for walking and cycling and it detrimentally impacts on urban environmental quality and conditions for a good quality of life. This needs to be redressed.

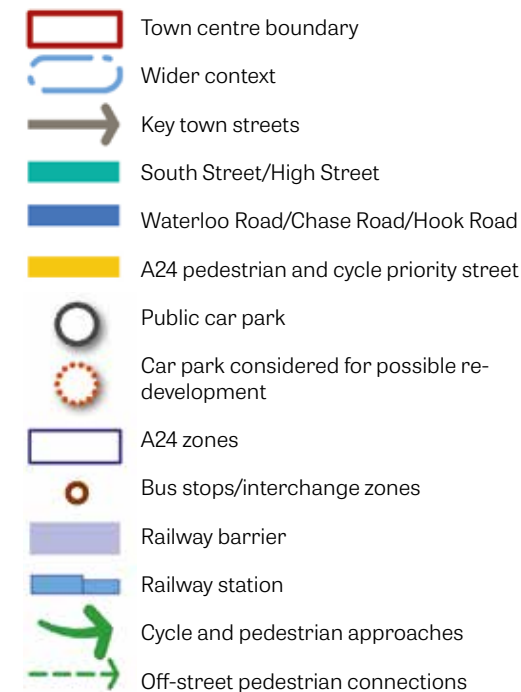
DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

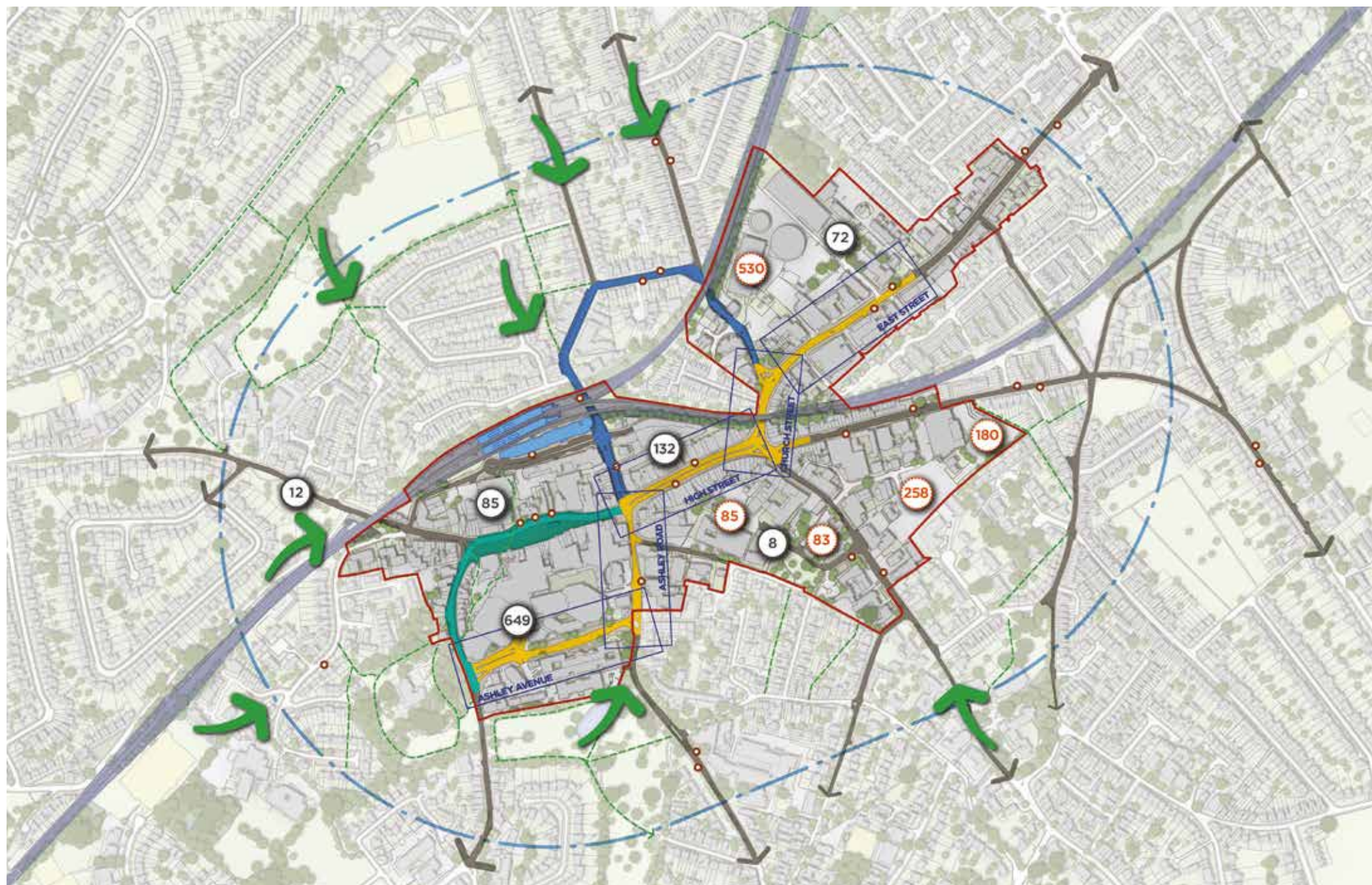
4.37 It is necessary to plan for car use within the Town Centre, particularly given the necessity of accommodating some through traffic along the A24, and the ongoing need for many to access the Town Centre by car for the foreseeable future. However, changes to the overall environmental quality and physical street setting, including subtle but nonetheless important changes to the design of the highway can bring about marked improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, leading to a healthier and more attractive centre. In this regard, 'do nothing' is not compatible with the future prosperity of the Town Centre. Instead, a rebalancing is proposed to be taken forward in the LCWIP and public transport, access and servicing studies.

4.38 Accordingly, the Masterplan has been prepared with input from Surrey County Council as the local highway authority. An overarching review of how movement works within the Town Centre has been undertaken, followed by an analysis of the highway, paying particular attention to space given over to facilitate traffic movement, bus facilities, pedestrian desire lines, and the level of provision (physical space) for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.39 The Draft Transport Strategy Plan (Figure 10) focuses on issues and opportunities to deliver pedestrian and cycle priority. It also identifies those public car parks which, through the masterplanning exercise and the Local Plan 'call for sites' have been identified for possible redevelopment and/or reconfiguration.

Figure 10: Draft Transport Strategy





A24 TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

- 4.40** The A24 travels through the town centre with gyratory system at its heart which going forward will be a key priority area for enhancement. Tackling the gyratory will require a broader movement study to consider circulation for all modes. This is especially important to take forward ideas to enhance walking and cycling in the town centre and to balance these with access and servicing alongside public and private car parking.
- 4.41** Initial reviews have taken place with Surrey County Council who have noted that active travel improvements to the gyratory will likely require a holistic, multi-modal movement strategy, incorporating hopes and visions within the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan.
- 4.42** In the context of this strategy, several Transport and Public Realm Infrastructure Projects have been identified, targeting the component parts of the A24 (Ashley Avenue, Ashley Road, High Street, Church Street and East Street) and the junctions along this route. These are explained in the following panels.
- 4.43** The LCWIP has highlighted that positive interventions for the gyratory will require further reviews and assessments in the next stage of design. These initial ideas are high-level proposals.

Ashley Avenue



- ① Seperate footway link
- ② Open space on staggered levels
- ③ Bus layby/dwell area (6 buses)
- ④ Traffic capacity 2 lanes – westbound only
- ⑤ Car park access
- ⑥ Multiple crossing islands
- ⑦ No bus or cycle facilities
- ⑧ Existing queuing capacity
- ⑨ No pedestrian phase
- ⑩ Restricted crossing movements



- ① Simplified pedestrian crossings
- ② Increased tree planting
- ③ Widened footways and improved pedestrian access

Ashley Road

Aerial photo of existing layout



- ① Two-way traffic throttle. Effective footway less than 1.5m
- ② Narrow pavements, further compromised by bus stop facilities and road signage
- ③ Traffic queuing capacity likely to be needed in peaks
- ④ No pedestrian phase on northern arm
- ⑤ Traffic island used for all crossing movements
- ⑥ Street is one-way westbound

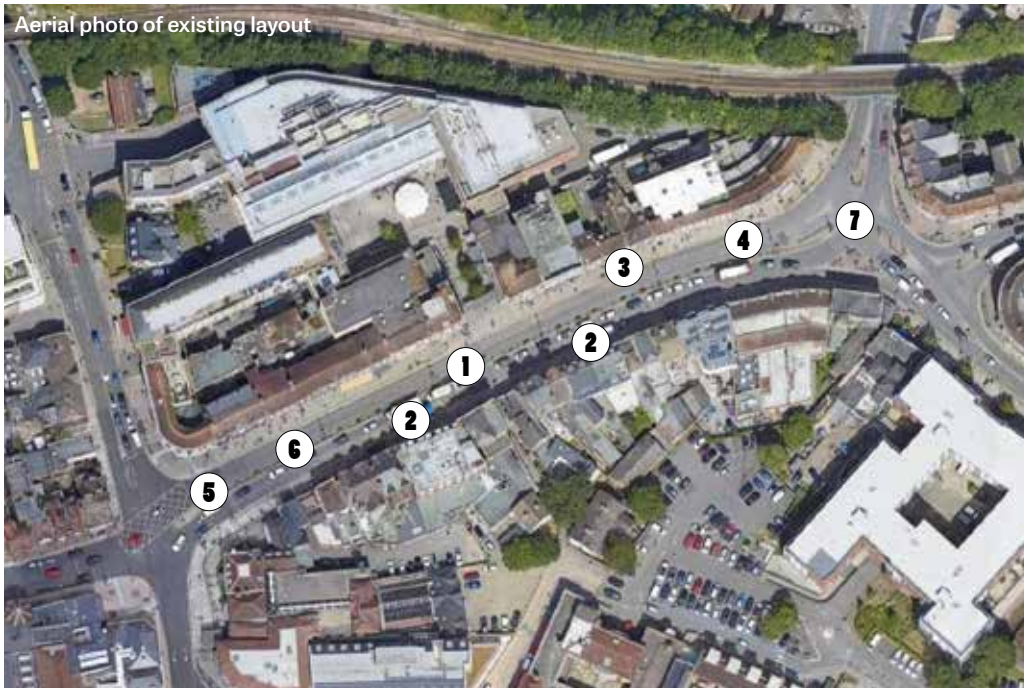
Illustrative plan of potential layout



- ① Widen footway both sides of the road
- ② Tighten junction, reduce to one lane southbound and widen footways
- ③ Widen pavement by bus stop facilities
- ④ Traffic queuing capacity likely to be needed in peaks
- ⑤ Pedestrian phase on northern arm
- ⑥ Widen footway on one side of the road

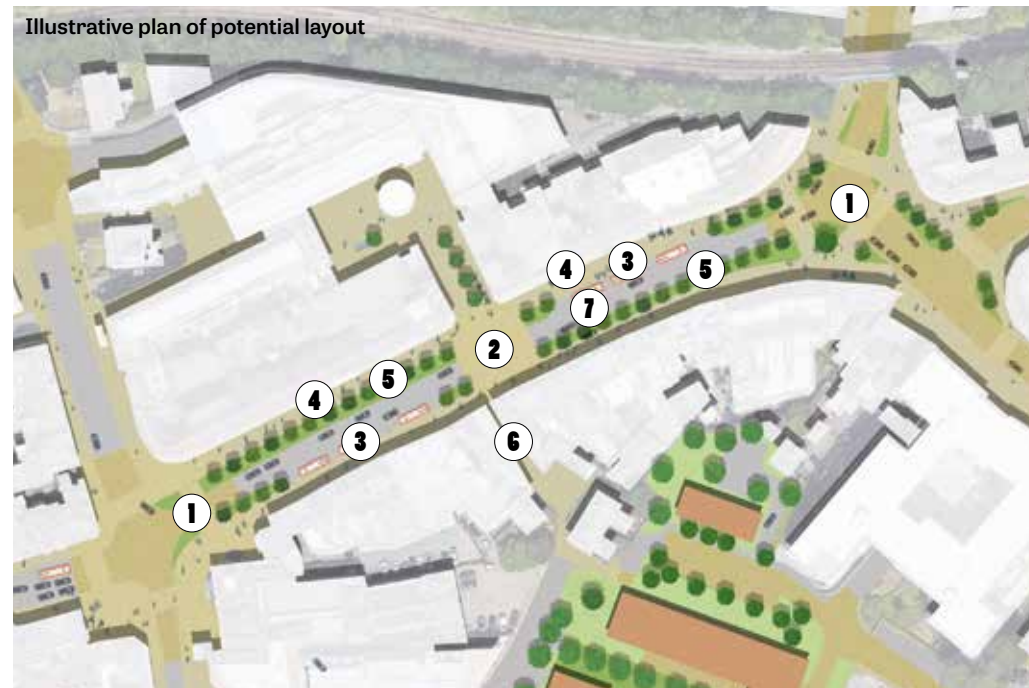
High Street

Aerial photo of existing layout



- ① Central linking pedestrian crossing
- ② Bus stops (2no.) and bus stands (2no.)
- ③ Bus stops (2no.)
- ④ Traffic queuing capacity
- ⑤ Direct pedestrian phase
- ⑥ Guardrail restricting crossing movements
- ⑦ Complex signal junction layout

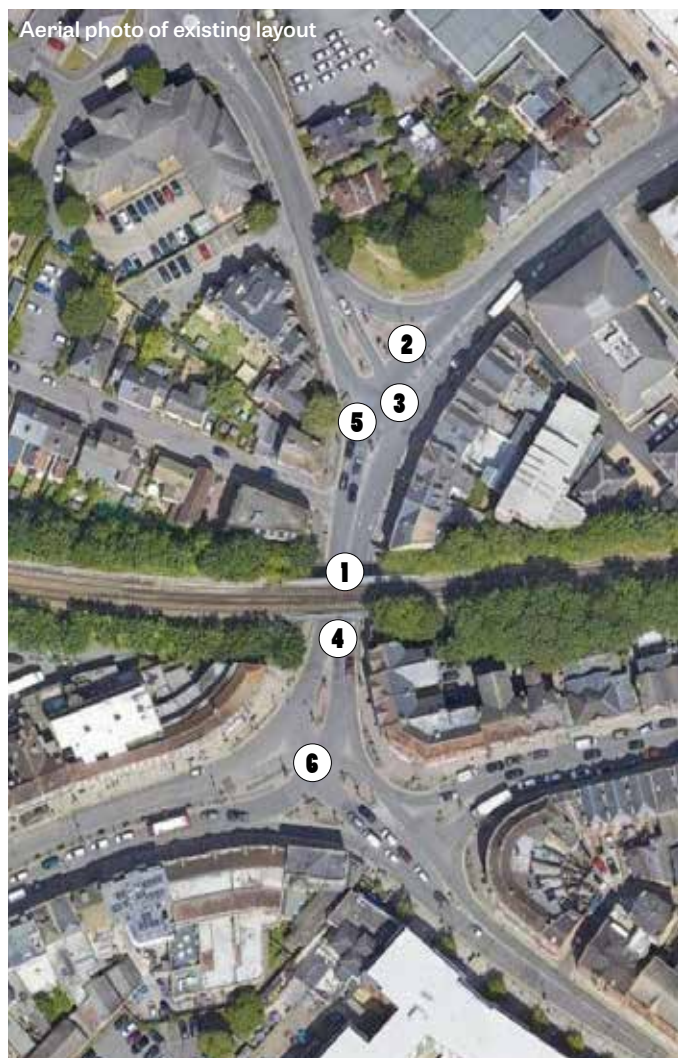
Illustrative plan of potential layout



- ① Pedestrian prioritisation with simplified crossings
- ② 'Super crossing'
- ③ Rationalised and improved bus stops
- ④ Widened footways and 'spill-out' space for retail units
- ⑤ New street planting including trees
- ⑥ Improved walking connections linking town centre
- ⑦ Narrowed carriageway

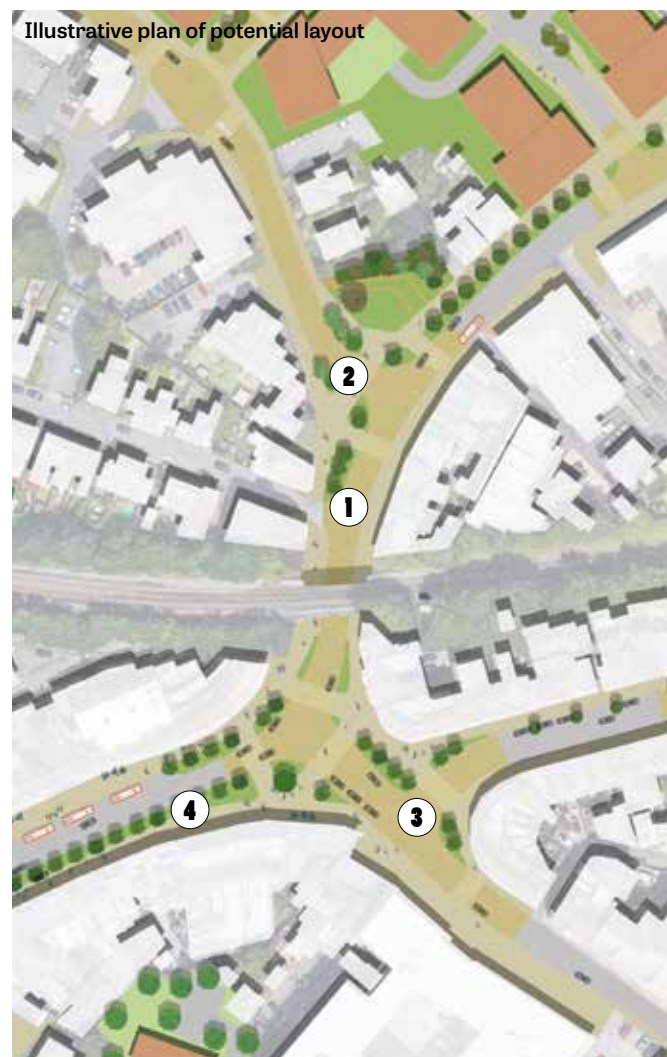
Church Street

Aerial photo of existing layout



- ① Pinch-point under the bridge
- ② Multiple crossing islands
- ③ No bus or cycle facilities
- ④ Limited queuing capacity
- ⑤ No pedestrian phase
- ⑥ Restricted crossing movements

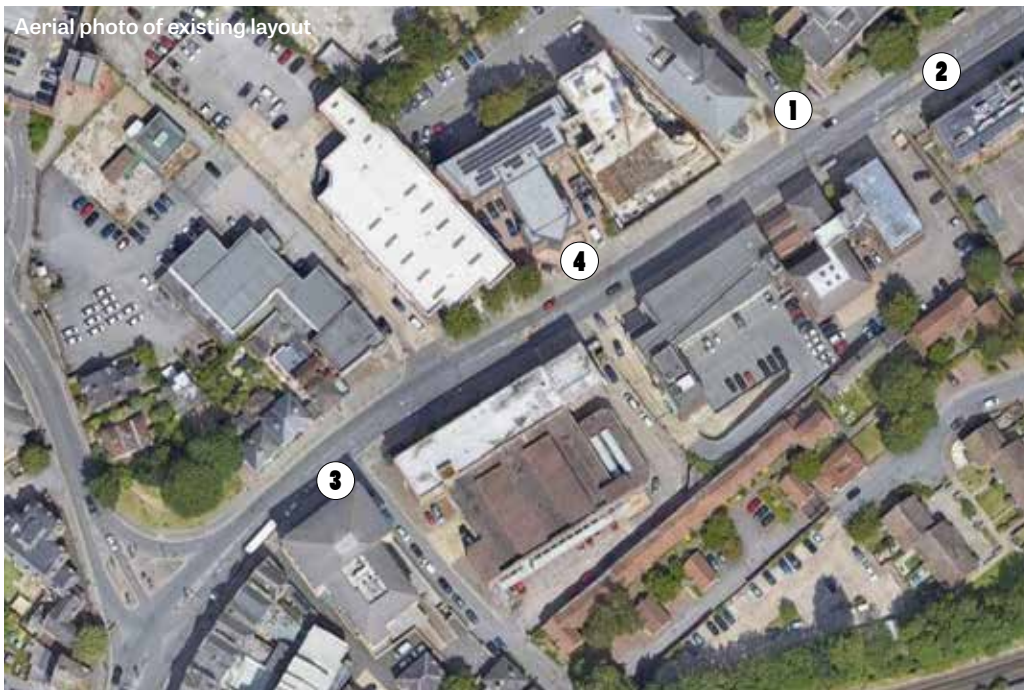
Illustrative plan of potential layout



- ① Pedestrian prioritisation with simplified crossings
- ② 'Super crossing'
- ③ Partial pedestrianisation of Upper High Street with managed vehicular access
- ④ Provision for cycle lanes on High Street

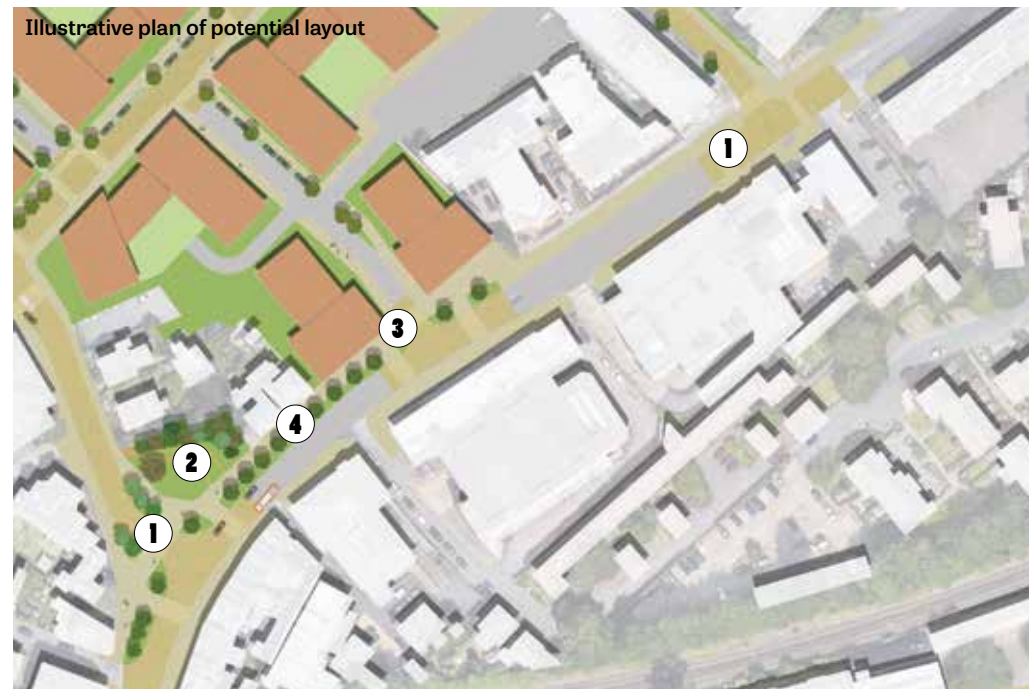
East Street

Aerial photo of existing layout



- ① Car park/side road accesses
- ② Small crossing islands
- ③ No bus priority facilities
- ④ Cycling on shared footway

Illustrative plan of potential layout



- ① Simplified pedestrian crossings
- ② Enhanced green space
- ③ Widened footway and improved cycle connectivity
- ④ New street planting

ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS

4.44 Two other highway projects are proposed. The visuals show high level concept designs of what could be delivered in Epsom Town Centre and that further feasibility work and studies will need to be undertaken by Surrey County Council to determine the scale and nature of interventions in the town centre.

Upper High Street

4.45 Upper High Street acts as a local approach to the town centre, rather than a strategic through route. There is scope here to introduce a greater degree of pedestrian priority through a partial-pedestrianisation scheme. While vehicles would not be prevented from accessing the street (and indeed service vehicle access will be essential for the ongoing operation of commercial businesses) the streetscape could be remodelled to afford free-pedestrian access across the entire street surface, discouraging non-essential traffic at the same time. This is a similar approach to that taken in many urban areas; Exhibition Road in Kensington is perhaps the best-known example, where an innovative and high-quality street design has reduced but not prevented vehicle movement whilst creating a better place for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.46 Visualisations of East Street in the Epsom Masterplan illustrate aspirations for a two-way facility from the Town Centre, and this concept should be extended along the A24, reallocating space from the central hatching of the carriageway.



Illustrative perspective showing potential public realm improvements along Upper High Street



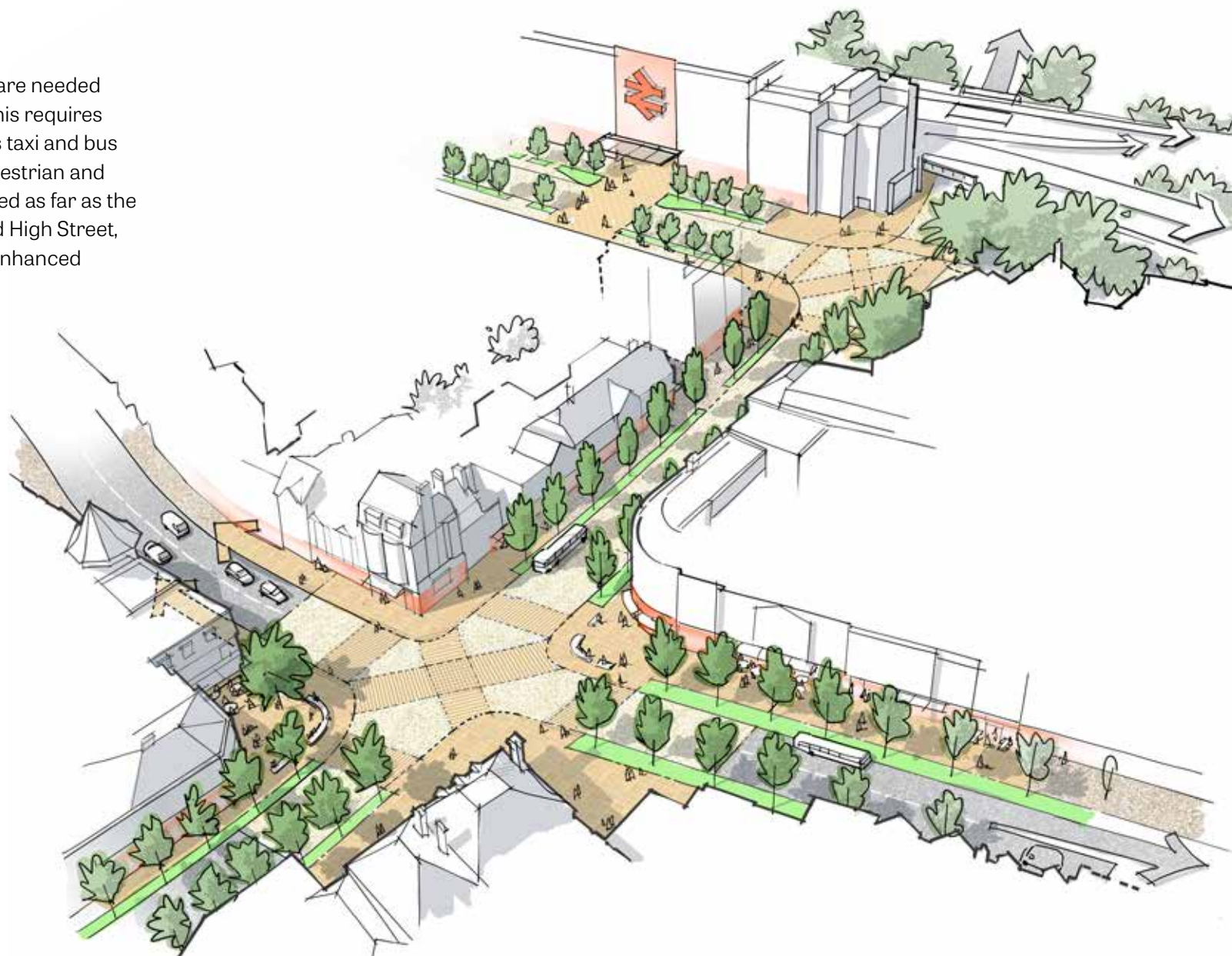
Exhibition Road, Kensington

Waterloo Road / Station Approach

4.47 Improvements to Station Approach are needed to enhance the arrival experience. This requires a public realm scheme that balances taxi and bus movement with the needs of the pedestrian and cyclist. These works could be extended as far as the junction between Waterloo Road and High Street, ensuring seamless integration and enhanced wayfinding.

4.48 The proposals for enhancement of Station Approach will need to be redesigned with careful consideration for people with visual impairments.

4.49 Network Rail support the Council's approach in establishing appropriate routes which promote sustainable and active travel. The inclusion of an approach towards encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport is supported as are the identification of the pedestrian and cycling routes, especially where this makes accessing Epsom railway station easier.



Illustrative perspective showing potential public realm improvements along Station Approach

PUBLIC CAR PARKING

4.50 In 2023 publicly available car parking capacity was about 2,100 spaces, comprising Council managed provision and NCP managed provision. The Baseline report provides usage data on the usage of specific town centre car parks managed car parks over a long time period and reports the findings of car park usage surveys undertaken across nine town centre car parks in July 2023 using Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems. The ANPR surveys demonstrate the varying utilisation of the Car Parks and that overall the peak usage across all nine car parks monitored was recorded as approximately 60% during the summer survey week.

4.51 The Masterplan approach to car parking addresses individual sites and town centre wide. It is possible to increase, reduce or keep the same parking capacity, and any decision must be weighed against the benefits or disbenefits to be derived from planned interventions, and the extent to which change will help to deliver other Masterplan objectives.

4.52 A future parking study to examine overall provision and individual site provision is needed and it must reflect policy approaches in the SCC Local Transport Plan – Demand Management for Cars. At this stage, the Masterplan adopts the following position:

- Under-utilised car parks should be considered for redevelopment to regenerate the town centre with equal or more valuable uses including new homes.
- Wherever possible, lost parking spaces should be re-provided, at least in part, as part of any redevelopment scheme.
- Smart technology should be used to enable multiple users to use the same parking spaces throughout the 24-hour period.
- Changes are only proposed for council owned car parks.
- Popular car parks serving the retail core of the town centre should be retained.

4.53 New car parking should be provided with Electric Vehicle Charging Points, in line with SCC Parking Guidance and cycle parking should also be provided with an electric charging point nearby to any storage area, to support the increase in use of electric bicycles.

4.54 Section 5 provides further thinking on the future of council owned car parks.

5 OPPORTUNITY SITES

OVERVIEW

5.1 Section 3 of this report establishes Character Area Frameworks which are concerned with placemaking, while Section 4 provides further detail for the future redesign of key areas of public realm. This section is focused on the opportunity sites and explores alternative options for their development. This exercise has informed the Local Plan site allocations.

- 5.2** The options set out here represent the consideration of a number of variables including:
- the physical extent of the opportunity sites, including instances where adjoining sites may be planned cohesively in order to achieve an optimum solution;
 - the opportunity to regenerate town centre sites, including the principle of 'brownfield first', for the wider benefit of all users, and to help deliver Local Plan objectives including helping to meet housing needs (including affordable housing), supporting the growth of tertiary education and delivering a vibrant and viable town centre economy;
 - the retention, redevelopment or reprovision of town centre car parks;
 - development mix, i.e. the potential for different land uses, and also the potential for different housing types and tenures including student accommodation; and
 - the influence of the surrounding townscape including any heritage assets, and the degree to which this might influence the built form including building height.
- 5.3** The outputs of this optioneering provide guidance on site capacity, build form, future car parking provision, access, public realm, and development mix. At this stage, there is no recommendation about which option might be 'preferred'; this exercise provides information to inform the draft Local Plan and must be considered alongside other factors such as housing need.

ASHLEY CENTRE & GLOBAL HOUSE

Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.4** A summary of the emerging policy is included in the accompanying table, which also summarises the key design and development considerations for the Masterplan. Two options have been explored for this opportunity site.



SITE INFORMATION

Potential site allocation wording	<p>Ashley Centre & Global House</p> <p>Mixed use development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the retention and refurbishment of the Ashley Centre; the redevelopment of Global House to provide at least 70 homes; building heights between 5–8 storeys; retention of the Playhouse; maintaining existing planting and green verge along Ashley Avenue; and retention of the Multi Storey Public Car Park.
Ownership	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, private ownership
Site Area	3.19 ha
Indicative Capacity	70–125 residential units comprising 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments with 50% car parking
Planning Designations	None. However, the Conservation area lies adjacent to the north.
Site and Development Considerations	<p>A gradual decline in the demand for office space alongside the ongoing housing crisis indicates part of the site may be redeveloped for new homes, with apartments being the most suitable type in this location.</p> <p>EEBC has indicated that the Ashley Centre car park should be retained on the basis that it serves the main retail area of the town centre. Similarly, the Playhouse Theatre should be retained as a valuable contributor to the evening economy and a popular local cultural asset. No alternative locations are available for its reprovision. However, some retail units may be suitable for redevelopment as part of a comprehensive scheme, and there is further potential to incorporate residential property at the corner of Ashley Avenue and Ashley Road to deliver a larger scheme.</p>

Site and Development Considerations	<p>Proximity to the conservation area and several listed buildings indicate the need to test the impact of building heights. The options are informed by the informal heritage and townscape view analysis undertaken as part of the Masterplan exercise.</p> <p>Key planning and design considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing mature trees along Ashley Avenue should be retained. Any new scheme should ensure the operation and commercial viability of the retail centre, car parking and theatre are not hindered or disrupted. Building heights should respond to the surrounding context and a townscape and heritage impact assessment should be prepared to inform the height of the scheme at the planning application stage. New development should be designed to animate Ashley Avenue. Building frontages should include balconies and front doors to bring life and enhance residential amenity. Residential car parking should be limited due to the sustainable location.
Current Use	Retail mall, multistorey car park and offices to the rear
Character Area Framework	Ashley Avenue

Site Options

- 5.5** Option 1 assumes redevelopment of the office buildings fronting Ashley Avenue in an eight-storey form to achieve c.73 residential units in a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments. Residential car parking is provided at a ratio of 1:0.5, recognising the town centre location and proximity of local services and public transport.



Figure 11: Ashley Centre and Global House option 1

- 5.6** Option 2 explores the potential of a larger site, including the redevelopment of the office buildings, the rear section of the former House of Fraser store within the Ashley Centre and two buildings at the corner of Ashley Avenue and Ashley Road. This option anticipates a possible decline in the demand for large format retail units and looks to redevelopment some retail floorspace to assist in the regeneration of the Town Centre. Building heights vary between three to eight storeys to create visual interest and moderate between the bulkier form of the Ashley Centre and the adjacent domestic scale of Ashley Road. Option 2 achieves c.125 units with a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments and car parking at a ratio of 1:0.25 in response to the inherent opportunity to deliver new homes in a sustainable location, on brownfield land.

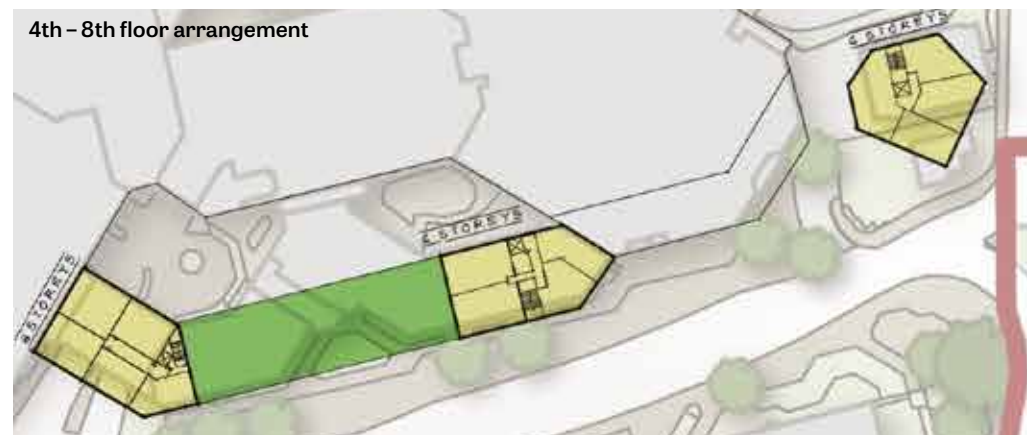


Figure 12: Ashley Centre and Global House option 2

1st – 3rd floor arrangement



4th – 8th floor arrangement

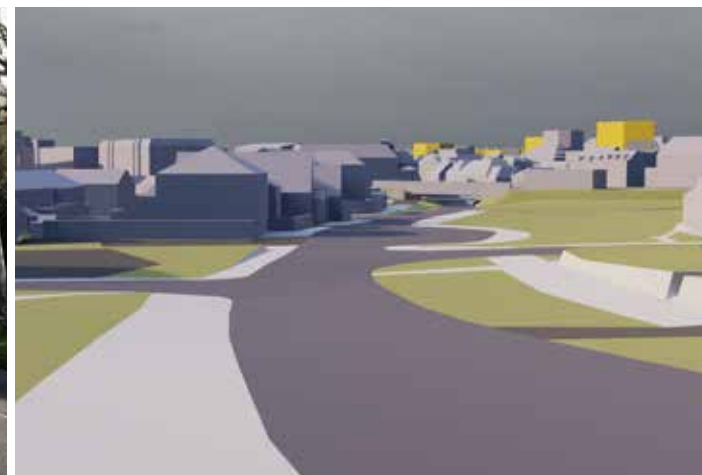


Building Height

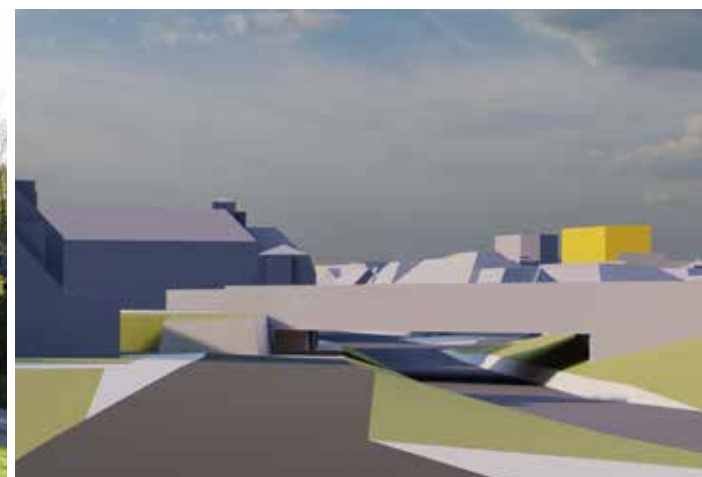
5.7 The bulky form of the Ashley Centre indicates that it is appropriate to explore whether the potential exists for taller buildings in this location. However, any potential may be limited given the proximity of the conservation area and Market Square. Accordingly, an analysis of townscape and heritage views was undertaken from potentially sensitive receptors at Stamford Green Conservation Area (views 1 and 2). Some of the taller elements are marginally visible above the existing roofscape (views 1 and 2) and are likely to appear more prominent during the night when illuminated. However, they do not appear incongruous or harmful in a town centre context. Any application would need to be supported by additional height testing of its impact on longer views.



Townscape and Heritage view 1



Townscape and Heritage view 2



HOOK ROAD & SOUTHERN GAS NETWORK

Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.8** This is the largest and arguably the most complex of the opportunity sites to plan and deliver. Nonetheless, it offers a real opportunity to enhance the appeal of the Town Centre and deliver on several ambitions, including supporting the growth of the UCA and its student population, delivering new accommodation for the Laine Theatre Arts, creating new homes in a sustainable location and remediating a contaminated site. The key considerations are set out in the accompanying table.



SITE INFORMATION

Potential site allocation wording	<p>Hook Road Car Park and SGN Site</p> <p>Comprehensive residential-led mixed-use development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between 400 and 640 new homes (including specialist accommodation); • mixed use ground floor active frontages providing Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) floorspace • Performing Arts Centre; • building heights up to 7 storeys, with further height to be justified; • podium parking with smart technology solution allowing different users to access spaces at different times of the day/evening; • provision of a new public square adjacent to the leisure centre entrance; • a neighbourhood park in the heart of the development with direct connection to the existing Public Rights of Way network; • relocated SGN infrastructure; and • improved public realm and connectivity within the site and to adjoining areas.
Ownership	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Southern Gas Networks, Laine Theatre Arts, Private land owner
Site Area	2.59 ha
Indicative Capacity	The options accommodate a range of residential units numbers between 300 and 500. In addition, 400 student bedrooms can be created. Approximately 1300 square metres of teaching and studio space for a new Laine Theatre Arts facility can be accommodated.

Planning Designations	Adjacent Conservation Area
Site and Development Considerations	<p>The site owners have submitted the former gas holder site to EEBC's 'call for sites'. The site is in a valuable location and would benefit from an appropriate level of decontamination so it can be brought back into active use.</p> <p>The potential to redevelop Hook Road multi-storey car park as part of the re-organisation of Town Centre parking is appropriate given it is no longer used to full capacity; the car park is under-utilised in the aftermath of the pandemic as commuter numbers have fallen. A longer-term view of the potential of this publicly owned land to contribute to the vitality and regeneration of the Town Centre is therefore a logical step forward.</p> <p>Laine Theatre Arts have an ambition to achieve a larger, purpose-built facility, more suited to their current and future teaching requirements.</p> <p>It is understood that these parties are willing to examine the potential to collaborate to allow a cohesive scheme to come forward. This would ensure a development that is greater than the sum of its parts and would enable new buildings to come together around well-designed public realm, which over time could become part of the network of town centre streets.</p> <p>Moreover, there is scope to bring additional buildings into the site plan to realise additional value and benefit. Option 1 therefore considers the opportunity arising from the inclusion of the Majestic Wine site.</p>

...continued overleaf

Site and Development Considerations

Key planning and design considerations include:

- Making a valuable contribution to the town centre offer by delivering a mixed-use scheme incorporating the land-uses set out in the draft Local plan policy, delivering new high-quality active frontages to Hook Road and East Street.
- Improving the setting of the adjacent conservation area at the junction of Hook Road and East Street;
- The importance of mitigating any noise impact arising from the adjacent railway line.
- Protecting the residential amenity to homes to the north-west and north-east. Taller buildings should not lead to overshadowing of homes or private gardens, and should maintain the privacy of the existing homes;
- Ongoing access to and parking at the Rainbow Leisure Centre will be required, although some parking spaces may be relocated within the new scheme in order to deliver a new public square at the front of the leisure centre.
- The reprovision of some town centre car parking should be achieved at an amount to be agreed. Parking should be an integral part of building design, including podium parking, to ensure it has limited impact on the overall quality and appearance of the scheme.
- Smart technology parking solutions should be employed to facilitate a multiple-user parking system to avoid over-provision within a mixed-use scheme.

Site and Development Considerations

- A high-quality public realm will be an important component of the scheme. Buildings should have active frontages overlooking routes and particular care should be taken to the design of ground floors, where there is the potential for small scale commercial, leisure and employment uses (including creative 'maker' spaces).
- High quality homes and student accommodation with dual aspect apartments and outdoor amenity space should form the principal land use.
- New gas infrastructure should be incorporated into the scheme in a safe and discreet manner.

Planning History

Planning Application submitted (reference 24/01107/FUL) for the SGN site consisting for 455 dwellings and a replacement building for Laine Theatre Arts.

A Planning Application for the redevelopment of the 31-37 East Street to provide 8,228 m² of floorspace for self-storage and flexible office uses was granted at appeal (application reference 22/01518/FUL)

Current Use

Public car park, retail units, education establishment, and utilities infrastructure containing redundant gas holders.

Character Area Framework

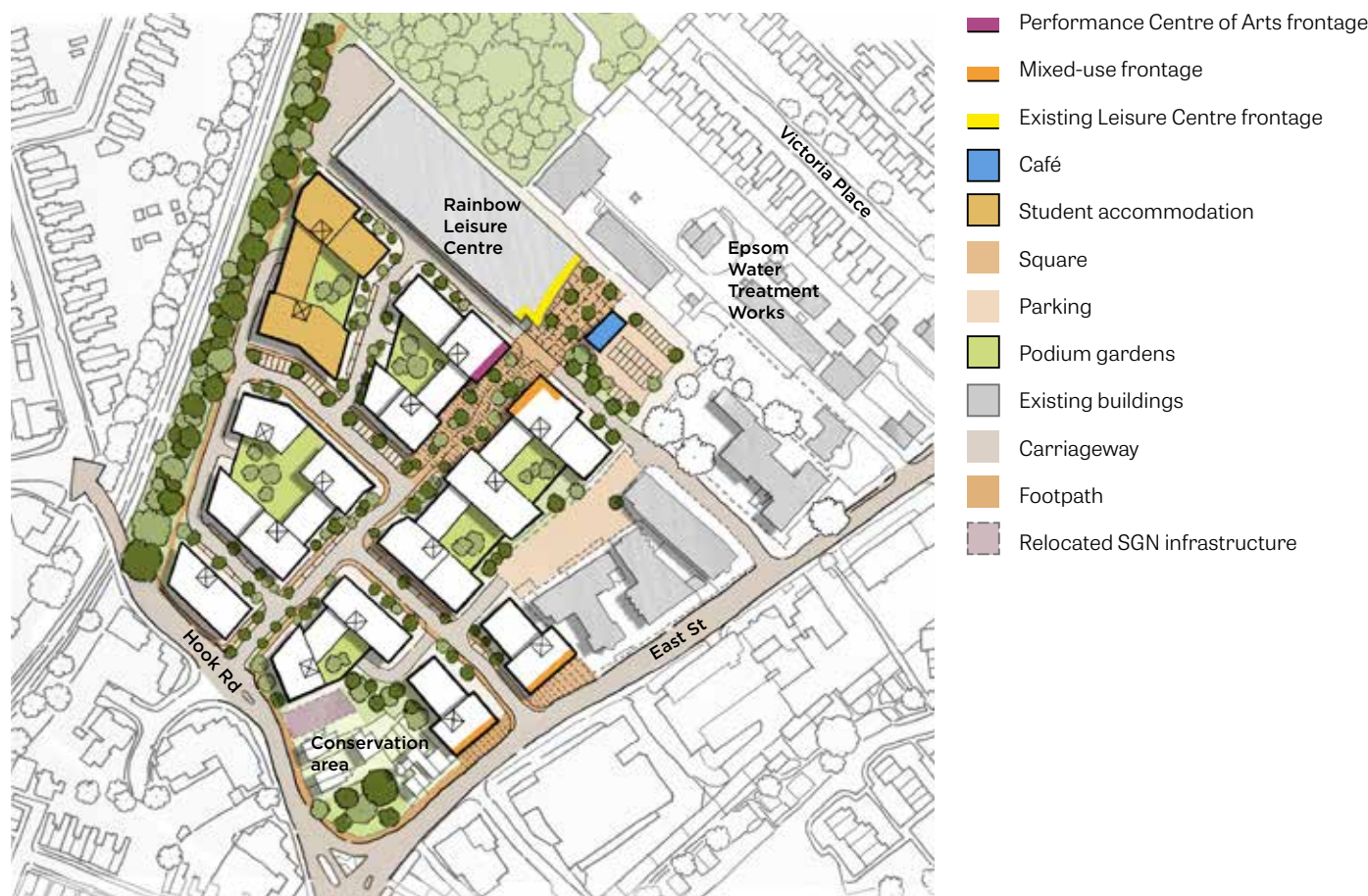
Hook Road, East Street & former Gas Works

SITE OPTIONS

5.9 All options adopt the same efficient Masterplan structure with the following key features:

- Principle routes through the site connecting Hook Road and East Street. The routes meet at a new public space at the front of the Rainbow Leisure Centre. The emphasis is on pedestrian permeability to open up a new part of the town centre. Opportunities for soft landscaping to green the site are assumed.
- An efficient block layout incorporating podium parking, accessed via a network of low-key streets, with roof terraces over to enhance the outlook from dual-aspect apartments.
- Relocated Laine Theatre Arts to the centre of the site; this would enable a larger, bulkier form to be developed without impacting on the conservation area or listed buildings. The current school site is redeveloped for apartments. Student accommodation is to the rear of the new school building to strengthen the feeling of a student / creative quarter.
- Similarly, taller buildings are assumed to be located in the centre of the site to minimise their impact on surrounding land-uses.

5.10 Option 1 incorporates the maximum land area, including the Majestic Wine warehouse site to achieve a higher quantum of residential units. New frontages are created to Hook Road and East Street at a scale and height which is appropriate to the Conservation Area (a mix of 2, 3 and 4 storeys). The capacity of the site will be influenced by the approach to car parking; podium parking on one or two levels would help to achieve greater capacity, with an excess of 500 residential units and 300+ student bedrooms, in addition to ground floor mixed use accommodation and education uses.



5.11 Option 2 excludes the Majestic Wine warehouse site where planning permission has recently been granted on appeal for the development of a self storage facility. The rear of this site would impact on the overall amenity of the redevelopment. However, given the town centre location and the opportunity to improve the area overall, a high-quality mixed-use scheme could be achieved. The site capacity may be tempered as a consequence of a reduced site area, subject to detailed design, building height and the approach to car parking, suggesting closer to 450 residential units would be achieved.



- Performance Centre of Arts frontage
- Mixed-use frontage
- Existing Leisure Centre frontage
- Café
- Student accommodation
- Square
- Parking
- Podium gardens
- Existing buildings
- Carriageway
- Footpath
- Relocated SGN infrastructure

5.12 Option 3 considers the impact on the site's potential if the Majestic Wine warehouse site and the multi-storey car park are both omitted, in order to establish whether a high-quality scheme could still be delivered. Whilst it remains possible to establish a partial pattern of development blocks focused on a new central route, the resulting decrease in residential units would undoubtedly undermine the chance to create a vibrant and attractive new quarter for the town centre. The site capacity would be much reduced by the omission of the multi-storey car park, and will likely drive the residential capacity much closer to 400 units.



- Performance Centre of Arts frontage
- Mixed-use frontage
- Existing Leisure Centre frontage
- Café
- Student accommodation
- Square
- Parking
- Podium gardens
- Existing buildings
- Carriageway
- Footpath
- Relocated SGN infrastructure

Building Heights

5.13 The site already includes taller structures associated with the former gas works together with Hook Road multi-storey car park. The railway line to the north, the road infrastructure, and the leisure centre provide some separation between the site and nearby residential uses. Identified views incorporate heritage assets including listed buildings, and parts of the Epsom Town Centre, Adelphi Road, and Lintons Lane Conservation Areas, so heritage context considerations relating to the scale of development are important. However, investment in the area may provide the opportunity to enhance the setting of the heritage assets, for example through streetscape enhancements or the development of new buildings of a high architectural quality.

5.14 A view analysis (Appendix A : views 8, 9, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 27) has informed the work on the site options. Most of these views show townscape of no or very limited interest. The views typically include road infrastructure such as railings, traffic lights and signage, surface car parking that create gaps in the streetscape as they are devoid of buildings, or existing buildings dating from the post-war period, that do not reflect the finer grain of the surfacing groups of historic buildings elsewhere in the town centre. These views are not particularly sensitive to change and the proposed views, whilst showing

limited detail, indicate new buildings and uses with a form and layout that, following detailed design development, have the potential to create a more attractive and legible environment, and enhance the character of and activity within the local area.

5.15 Given the early stage thinking on the potential of the site, it is appropriate to adopt a conservative position on future building height potential. As noted in the paragraph above, a more considered design exercise would be needed to demonstrate that taller buildings would not be harmful to their surrounding context and could in fact deliver benefits to the town centre, including townscape enhancements. Building heights beyond seven storeys may increase the capacity of the site to deliver more residential units. The benefits and disbenefits of such an increase would need to be thoroughly explored and evidenced through the planning process. However, the views analysis demonstrated that a 17-storey tower located on the former gasworks site would likely appear incongruous with the prevailing character of this part of the town centre, and particularly prominent in and stark in views from and including sensitive visual and heritage receptors. Informed by this assessment, towers have not been incorporated into the master plan recommendations.



There is an opportunity to integrate the Rainbow Leisure Centre with the redeveloped gas works site



Example of higher density, mid-rise development, Eddington, Cambridge



Example of higher density, mid-rise development, Acton Gardens, London

TOWN HALL SITE

Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.16** This site provides an opportunity to create a new residential area in the land now released due to the potential re-purposing of the town hall functions. Its proximity to the town centre provides the opportunity to develop a high-density residential development that is sustainable and efficient in utilising the site.
- 5.17** The site is in public ownership and would deliver new homes on a brownfield site whilst enabling the delivery of services and achieving local authority objectives.



SITE INFORMATION

Potential site allocation wording	<p>Town Hall</p> <p>Residential development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new residential development in the land housing the existing Townhall and associated buildings; • up to 91 new apartments; • the total redevelopment of Town Hall; • building heights ranging between 4 and 5 storeys; and • re-provision of public parking elsewhere.
Ownership	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Site Area	0.74 ha
Indicative Capacity	Approximately 91 units, with a dwelling mix that includes 1 and 2 bed apartments and 88% parking provision.
Planning Designations	Adjacent to a Conservation Area
Site and Development Considerations	<p>The options explored aim to make better use of brownfield land within the Town Centre and achieve sustainable, residential led mixed-use development.</p> <p>EEBC has expressed its intention to relocate to new accommodation which is more suited to post-Pandemic patterns of working. The current Town Hall is increasingly ill-suited to current day needs, and difficult to modernise in line with the Council's Climate Change objectives. Conversion or re-purposing the building is difficult and unlikely to prove viable, so the redevelopment of the site for new homes has been explored.</p>

Site and Development Considerations	<p>Key considerations for the allocated sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating strong frontages onto the public realm to enclose streets and enhance the sense of place. • Reducing level of residential parking provision on the sites would enable additional landscaping / amenity space for future residents. • Accommodating car parking in the rear of the block or integral to the buildings so that streets can offer pedestrian priority. • Retention of the existing trees along The Parade and across the site. • Maintaining height limits that respond to the transitional nature of the sites from the town centre to adjoining residential neighbourhoods (generally five storey building comprising of four full storeys plus a Mansard roof accommodation). • Achieving a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartments. The Town Hall site is suited for this, the existing large footprint of the townhall building is proposed to be replaced by one of similar scale. The scale of the footprint continues on from the Premier Inn at the western end of The Parade articulating its formal character and transitioning to a more domestic scale of the adjoining residential areas to the east. <p>Any redevelopment of the Town Hall site should maintain the pedestrian connection through to the High Street.</p>
Current Use	Town Hall and surface level public car parks
Character Area Framework	Church Street

SITE OPTIONS

- 5.18** The sketch for this site promotes residential development of mid-rise, high density which is considered most suitable for this location.
- 5.19 Option 1** for the Town Hall site explores the redevelopment of the whole of the site for apartments, they are accommodated in two separate blocks, a four-storey small block to the north accommodating 8 units and a large five-storey block accommodating 83 units. The larger block is configured around an internal courtyard, opening on to the pedestrian connection to the high street to its west. Parking has been provided in a mix of open and covered spaces at ground level.
- 5.20** The two blocks in total accommodates 91 dwellings and provides 80 parking spaces at a rate of 88%.
- 5.21** Highway interventions are illustrative only and will be subject to more detailed design.
- 5.22** The Options presented in the previous iteration of the Town Centre Masterplan that was subject to consultation, can be viewed in Appendix C.



HOPE LODGE

Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.23** This site is considered as an opportunity to create a new residential area focused on an enhanced Dullshot Green. The site is in public ownership and would deliver new homes on a brownfield site whilst enabling the delivery of services and achieving local authority objectives.



SITE INFORMATION

Potential site allocation wording	<p>Hope Lodge</p> <p>Residential development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new residential area focussed around Dullshot Green; • approximately 39 new apartments; • the total redevelopment of Hope Lodge Car Park; and • building heights up to 5 storeys.
Ownership	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Site Area	0.4 ha
Indicative Capacity	Approximately 39 dwellings and 69% parking provision
Planning Designations	Adjacent to a Conservation Area
Site and Development Considerations	<p>The options explored aim to make better use of brownfield land within the Town Centre and achieve sustainable, residential led mixed-use development.</p> <p>The Hope Lodge car park is owned by EEBC. Its redevelopment has been explored as part of a potential strategy to rationalise town centre car parking to help revitalise the town centre and prepare to be 'zero-carbon ready'.</p> <p>Whilst very close to the High Street, this site is peripheral to the town centre and represents a transition to adjoining residential areas. Proximity to a large apartment block to the west provides an opportunity to match heights of buildings to the north of Church Street. For efficiency, the site is considered predominantly suitable for apartments.</p>

Site and Development Considerations	<p>Dullshot Green currently lacks a sense of place, and the opportunity exists to bring forward a new landscape scheme capable of enhancing residential amenity. This may include provision for play, informal sports, and community events.</p> <p>Key to the success of Dullshot Green will be its framing and containment through the layout of new development and the delivery of traffic calmed streets that prioritise pedestrian movement over the car.</p> <p>Key considerations for the allocated sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating strong frontages onto the public realm to enclose streets and enhance the sense of place. • Accommodating car parking in the rear of the block or integral to the buildings so that streets can offer pedestrian priority. • Reducing level of residential parking provision on the sites would enable additional landscaping / amenity land for future residents. • Maintaining height limits that respond to the transitional nature of the sites from town centre to residential neighbourhoods (generally four storeys). • Achieving a mix of homes, that includes 1 and 2 bed apartments that are easily accessible to the town centre and green amenity areas. • The scheme would need to have regard to the listed building at 10 Hope Lodge and its setting.
Current Use	Surface level public car parks
Character Area Framework	Church Street

SITE OPTIONS

- 5.24** The design for this site promotes residential development of mid-rise, medium density which is considered most suitable for this location. The proposed building is to be set back from Church Street accommodating the existing trees and open space that forms the setting of the listed building at 10, Hope Lodge. Additional planting must be included along the southern boundary to reinforce and mitigate any impact to this setting. In addition to its function of framing Dullshot Green, the proposal also presents itself as a gateway to the new residential area on Church Street.
- 5.25** The site explores the redevelopment of the whole of the site for apartments. The proposal provides 39 homes with 69% parking provision.
- 5.26** Highway interventions are illustrative only and will be subject to more detailed design.
- 5.27** The Options presented in the previous iteration of the Town Centre Masterplan that was subject to consultation, can be viewed in Appendix C.



EPSOM CLINIC

Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.28** This site presents an opportunity to create a new residential area focused on an enhanced Dullshot Green and provides a transition zone from the denser Church Street edge to the domestic scale along the pedestrian only eastern end of The Parade. The site is in public ownership and would deliver new homes on brownfield land whilst enabling the delivery of services and achieving local authority objectives.



SITE INFORMATION

Potential site allocation wording	<p>Epsom Clinic</p> <p>Residential development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a new residential area focussed around Dullshot Green and transitioning to the domestic scale residential properties along The Parade; approximately 35 new homes; and building heights ranging between 3 and 5 storeys.
Ownership	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, NHS Property Services
Site Area	0.2 ha
Indicative Capacity	Approximately 35 dwellings and 63% parking provision
Planning Designations	Adjacent to a Conservation Area
Site and Development Considerations	<p>The options explored aim to make better use of brownfield land within the Town Centre and achieve sustainable, residential led mixed-use development.</p> <p>There is a proposal for a 96 bed car home on the adjoining ambulance and police station site that will deliver a large building which in physical form scales down from 5-storey height along Church Street to 3-storey near its edge with The Parade. Epsom clinic site is north-west to this and rightly draws clues with respect to building height and building lines from this proposal. There is scope for new homes at the Epsom Clinic site that will complement the proposed use and building form of the adjacent site. This will lend itself to an apartment scheme that presents a strong built edge to the public realm along Dullshot Green and places its parking provision to the rear edge of the site.</p>

Site and Development Considerations	<p>Dullshot Green currently lacks a sense of place, and the opportunity exists to bring forward a new landscape scheme capable of enhancing residential amenity. This may include provision for play, informal sports, and community events.</p> <p>Key to the success of Dullshot Green will be its framing and containment through the layout of new development and the delivery of traffic calmed streets that prioritise pedestrian movement over the car.</p> <p>Key considerations for the allocated sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating strong frontages onto the public realm to enclose streets and enhance the sense of place. Retaining high quality trees. Reducing level of residential parking provision on the sites would enable additional landscaping / amenity land for future residents. Accommodating car parking in the rear of the block or integral to the buildings so that streets can offer pedestrian priority. Maintaining height limits that respond to the transitional nature of the sites from town centre to residential neighbourhoods (generally four storeys). Achieving a mix of homes, that will include 1 and 2 bed apartments.
Current Use	Clinic and surface level car parks
Character Area Framework	Church Street

SITE OPTIONS

- 5.29** The proposal for this site promotes residential development of mid-rise, medium density which is considered most suitable for this location.
- 5.30** Epsom Clinic site explores the redevelopment of the site for apartments, they are accommodated in two separate blocks, a five-storey block to the north accommodating 19 units and a 3–5-storey block accommodating 16 units. The northern block forms a part of a gateway pair along Church Street, southern block scales down to 3 storey height near its edge with The Parade. Together, these blocks form the strong edge that frames Dullshot Green.
- 5.31** The two blocks in total accommodates 35 apartments and 63% parking provision.
- 5.32** Highway interventions are illustrative only and will be subject to more detailed design.
- 5.33** The Options presented in the previous iteration of the Town Centre Masterplan that was subject to consultation, can be viewed in Appendix C.



DEPOT ROAD

Capacity Study & Key Considerations

5.34 Depot Road car park is a large expanse of surface car parking to the rear of Upper High Street, providing 380 public parking spaces. The land is owned by EEBC. Whilst the car park is important for the health of the town centre, the surface car park represents an inefficient use of land. The Masterplan presents an opportunity to explore alternatives.



SITE INFORMATION

Potential site allocation wording	<p>Depot Road and Upper High Street Residential development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 100 new homes; the re-provision of public parking by the provision of a decked car park including 1x basement level and 4x above ground levels on Depot Road; new access road; and Building heights ranging between 2 and 4 storeys.
Ownership	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and private ownership
Site Area	1.51 ha
Indicative Capacity	55–100 homes.
Planning Designations	None
Site and Development Considerations	<p>The site is owned by EEBC and provides an opportunity to deliver new homes on a brownfield site, whilst transforming a backland area to a new place. The adjacent Lidl development, incorporating apartments above a new supermarket demonstrates how well designed mixed use development can contribute to the life of the town centre. The redevelopment of the car park can build on this successful model while enhancing the setting of the Lidl building.</p>

Site and Development Considerations	<p>Moreover, consideration should be given to placemaking and pedestrian permeability. The potential exists to form a new street linking Upper High Street and Church Street in the event that the Epsom Conservative Club building can be incorporated into the scheme. In any event, emphasis should be placed on creating a good street with frontage development.</p> <p>Car parking can be re-provided in a decked structure of four storeys, and potentially with a basement level to achieve five floors of parking. This will enable most of the current parking spaces to be re-provided. In anticipation of future modal shift and decline in demand for parking space, this structure may be dismantlable. To enhance placemaking, parts of the car park could be wrapped with single aspect buildings for a mix of uses including small apartments and work spaces.</p>
Current Use	Surface level public car parks, private members club and vacant church building
Character Area Framework	Upper High Street & Depot Road

SITE OPTIONS

5.35 The options for this site adopt the same layout and place making principles, whilst exploring a different dwelling mix.

5.36 Option 1 includes a majority of townhouses to achieve 53 units (27 four-bed townhouses and 26 one and two-bed apartments) with associated residential car parking at a ratio of 1:1 for townhouses and 1:0.5 for apartments.



5.37 Option 2 includes mainly apartments and achieves 100 apartments with 1:0.6 car parking ratio. Seven townhouses are included with a 1:1 parking ratio.



