



Harrogate District
LOCAL PLAN

Harrogate
BOROUGH COUNCIL
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Harrogate Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan



Working for you



Adopted May 2016

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Foreword

Foreword

Harrogate town centre plays a pivotal role in driving the local economy. It is the district's largest retail, leisure, business and tourist destination, a major conference and exhibition venue, and an important source of local employment.

Town centres around the country are facing a number of challenges such as the growth of online shopping, pressure from out of centre retailing and supermarkets, and reduced town centre footfall. It is crucial that we do all we can to ensure the future of Harrogate town centre – and part of this must be the design of the town itself and how we can improve upon the visitor experience and encourage more people to visit.

In preparing a town centre strategy and masterplan for the centre the council is acknowledging the significance of the centre to the district's economy and the importance of maintaining a thriving centre that continues to compete strongly with its regional and national competitors.

To this end, the document sets out the following vision for Harrogate town centre:

'By 2025 Harrogate town centre will be a leading UK destination for culture, shopping, leisure and business tourism. The unique qualities of the town centre will be enhanced to provide a distinctive visitor offer that differentiates Harrogate from its regional and national competitors. This distinctiveness will be characterised by an exceptional town centre environment, the key components of which will be:

- public realm of an outstanding quality;*
- a special blend of retail, leisure and cultural uses;*
- unique facilities for conferences and events; and*
- integrated and sustainable transport infrastructure.*

The realisation of this vision will ensure that important economic benefits are delivered for local residents and businesses, and that opportunities for the sustainable development of the town centre are fully exploited.'

The strategy and masterplan has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, as such it is capable of being a material consideration when making decisions on future planning applications in the town. It will also play a key role in delivering town centre improvements and attracting inward investment to the centre.

Councillor Rebecca Burnett, Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Transport



Purpose of the Masterplan

The Harrogate Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan (HTCSM) Supplementary Planning Document sets out Harrogate Borough Council's strategy for the development of Harrogate town centre in the period to 2025. The masterplan seeks to deliver town centre improvements, attract inward investment and inform development management decisions within the town centre. It seeks to provide a co-ordinated approach that will ensure that the future development of the town centre enables it to compete effectively with other destinations and delivers the borough council's wider objectives for the improvement of the environment and the local economy. The preparation of the HTCSM reflects the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework for local planning authorities to plan positively for sustainable development and produce evidence-based plans and policies that are aspirational but also realistic.

The production of the HTCSM has been informed by two other documents that should be read alongside the town centre strategy and masterplan. These are:

- the Baseline Report that provides the evidence base for the development of the town centre strategy and masterplan; and
- the Future Options and Emerging Approaches paper which sets out and evaluates the strategic options for the future development of the town centre, based on the evidence presented in the Baseline Report.

Both of these documents can be accessed at www.harrogate.gov.uk

Relationship with the Development Plan and Other Strategies

The HTCSM has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by the Borough Council, supporting policies contained within the development plan, and specifically the Harrogate District Core Strategy. The strategy and masterplan is not part of the development plan but is capable of being a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications. In particular, it will assist with the implementation of the following Core Strategy policies:

- Policy JB2 which seeks to support conference and business tourism by increasing hotel provision in the town centre, and supporting the expansion and re-development of the Harrogate International Centre.
- Policy JB4 which states that Harrogate's role as a sub-regional town centre will be reinforced through the expansion of its retail offer, transport improvements, enhanced office, hotel and residential provision, and environmental improvements.

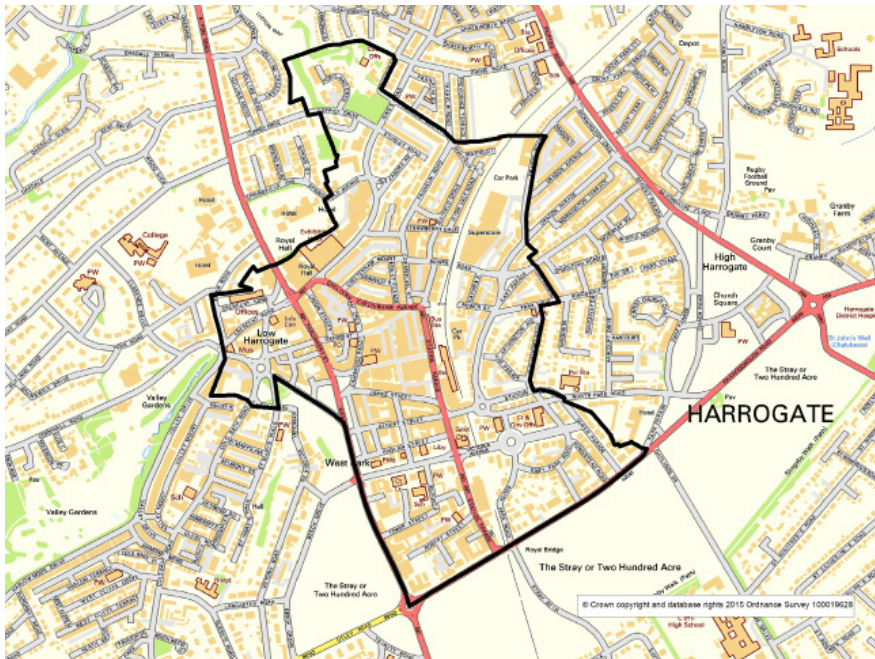
The HTCSM also supports the corporate strategies of the borough council and the economic development strategies of both the borough council and the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The district also falls within the Leeds City Region LEP. The borough council's Corporate Plan (2014-2017) has four priorities including supporting a strong local economy and creating a sustainable environment within the district, whilst the borough's 'Strong Local Economy Action Plan' (2015-2020) places an emphasis on tourism including developing the local tourism offer, maintaining the quality of the visitor experience, and encouraging the development of new events. The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP's Strategic Economic Plan also seeks to create successful and distinctive places, unlock major growth opportunities and address environmental quality and community needs.

The strategy and masterplan does not contain local planning policies, nor does it allocate land for development. It does, however, include a number of policy recommendations and identifies potential development opportunities within the town centre that will be taken forward in the emerging Local Plan where appropriate, and tested through the required sustainability and equality appraisal process.

Structure of the Masterplan

The remaining sections of the masterplan set out:

- a summary of the current performance of the town centre including its offer to shoppers and other visitors, the quality of the environment and its accessibility;
- the town centre's existing assets and areas for improvement;
- the overall vision for the future development of the town centre, explaining how this responds to Harrogate's existing strengths and weaknesses;
- the strategic objectives that will underpin the vision and identify the key action areas;
- the strategy that will be implemented to achieve the strategic objectives and deliver the vision;
- details of the specific projects that make up the masterplan and how they will fit into the overall strategy for the town centre; and
- an implementation plan that provides recommendations in terms of the delivery of the masterplan and the phasing of projects over the period to 2025.



Above: the HTCSM study area, reflecting the town centre boundaries identified by the Harrogate District Local Plan.

2 Baseline Summary

Current Performance of the Town Centre

In this section we present a summary of existing conditions within Harrogate town centre based on the findings of the Baseline Report, which considers the performance of:

- the town centre's retail and leisure sectors that play a crucial role in attracting visitors (both local residents and visitors from outside of the district) and trade to Harrogate;
- the local property market, the performance of which is key to the viability of future development in the town centre;
- the town centre environment, which has an important role in making Harrogate a distinctive and attractive destination;
- transport infrastructure in the town centre, including ease of access for visitors; and
- the views of businesses within, and visitors to, the town centre - collected as part of telephone and pedestrian surveys.

The baseline evidence collected in respect of these issues forms the basis for setting out a coherent vision for the future of the town centre and identifying issues that need to be addressed by the strategy that will help deliver the HTCSM's vision.

Retail and Leisure Performance

Harrogate town centre currently performs strongly as a shopping destination with an estimated turnover of £300 million per annum. It has improved its position in national retail rankings over the last ten years (see table below), despite the negative effects of the economic recession. This is partly due to the strength and quality of its independent retail offer and its ongoing ability to attract premium comparison retailers.

| Centre | Javelin Venuescore Ranking | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------|------|
| | 2006 | 2010 | 2013 |
| Leeds | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| York | 26 | 30 | 26 |
| Harrogate | 73 | 51 | 55 |
| Royal Tunbridge Wells | 61 | 58 | 51 |
| Cheltenham | 20 | 30 | 39 |

Harrogate's town centre offer also differentiates it from the competing local destinations of Leeds and York. All three have a strong market orientation towards tourism but Harrogate's overall retail offer is more traditional, upmarket and appealing to older people. It is notable that over 40 per cent of existing leisure visitors to Harrogate are people over 55, and that spend per head is higher than elsewhere in Yorkshire.

Tourism and leisure clearly play an important role in the economic performance of the town centre and the wider area. The Baseline Report found that Harrogate has a strong core of loyal customers, a good stock of hotel beds, a national role in terms of business tourism, a good events programme and a distinctive mix of operators. However, there are opportunities to diversify the hotel stock, provide a family visitor attraction within the town centre, create outdoor spaces for events, and for additional commercial leisure facilities.

Local Property Market Review

The baseline analysis of the level and nature of demand for land and property in the town centre found strong levels of activity for retail and other high street property within the town centre over the past five years. In the future, demand for new floorspace will probably comprise a small number of units of between 500 and 1,000 sq. m and a larger number of units between 100 and 300 sq. m. Good rental values and yields could be achieved from any such development.

Overall demand for office accommodation in the town centre is stable but limited. Yields are relatively high and rental values relatively low, meaning that speculative office development is unlikely to be commercially viable under current market conditions. This is likely to be exacerbated by the relative strength in Harrogate of competing uses such as retail and residential development for which the market is much stronger.

Environmental Review

The high quality environment of Harrogate town centre is one of its key strengths and is characterised by attractive historic architecture of a consistent style, an established historic urban grain with interesting streets, alleys and squares, and unique open spaces including parkland, formal gardens and floral displays.

However, there are features of the town centre that detract from its environmental quality, including unattractive buildings around the railway station, on-street parking that visually obstructs the street scene and limits pedestrian movements, and the limited use of local or natural materials within the public realm that is so important to the setting of the town centre's fine architecture.

Transport Infrastructure Review

The railway and bus stations are well located to serve the town centre although pedestrian links to and from these facilities are unattractive and poorly signed. The town centre is served by frequent bus services with the A61 serving as the main bus corridor, and regular rail services to Leeds and York are available throughout the week. On-road cycling routes pass through the town centre and there has been recent investment in cycle parking facilities.



Above: Entrance to Harrogate Station and cycle hire facilities at the station forecourt.

There is a considerable amount of on-street parking throughout the town centre with a maximum stay of 3 hours. This can act as a barrier to walking and cycling. Occupancy data for town centre car parks shows that they are generally well used and comfortably meet demand (except for 15 to 20 days a year). However, the three largest multi-storey car parks are often significantly below capacity and could accommodate additional demand associated with any reduction in on-street parking.

Traffic modelling work undertaken by the borough council indicates that there are congestion issues in several locations with a number of junctions within the vicinity of the town centre operating above or near capacity, including at Parliament Street/King's Road and the Prince of Wales roundabout.

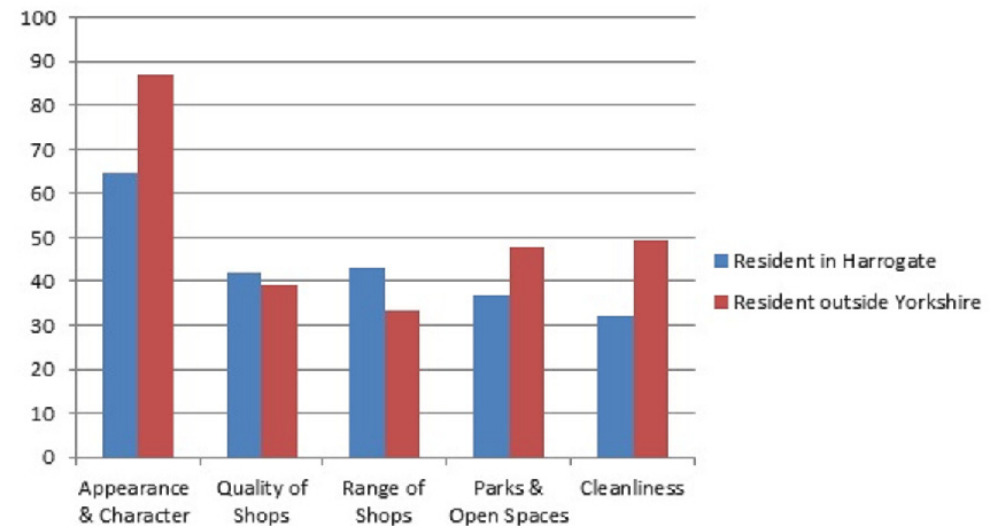
Visitor and Business Perceptions

Surveys of visitors and businesses within the town centre were undertaken in July 2014. The survey of visitors found that whilst the town centre has an important local catchment of regular users, a large proportion of visitors are from outside Harrogate. The main reason to visit the town centre is to shop and most visitors spend more than two hours in the town centre, with a significant proportion spending more than four hours.

Visitors generally have very positive views of the town centre and the quality of the town centre environment is the main reason for this, especially for long distance visitors and tourists. The range and quality of shops is also an important factor in influencing positive views. Visitors perceive the comparative advantages of the town centre (when compared to other destinations) to be its architecture, floral displays and ambience. Where visitors do think the town centre can be improved they point to improved shopping and car parking facilities.

The survey of businesses within the town centre found that a significant majority are well established and are satisfied with their existing premises, mainly due to their location. Only a small number of businesses are looking to relocate in the next five years. Businesses identified improved car parking and reduced town centre congestion as priorities for the improvement of the town centre.

Below: Most commonly identified visitor 'likes' from the pedestrian survey (%)



Assets and Areas for Improvement

In summary, the baseline work identified that the town centre benefited from the following key assets:

- the attractive and well preserved nature of the town centre's distinctive architecture;
- its large and well maintained green spaces and floral displays that provide the town centre with a unique setting;
- the strength and diversity of its retail offer, especially in terms of independent and premium retailers;
- the conference centre and business tourism which makes a significant contribution to the local economy;
- the good levels of car parking within the town centre, and the location of the railway and bus stations in the heart of the town centre; and
- the low vacancy rate and relatively small number of derelict or underutilised sites requiring redevelopment.

These strengths provide a number of opportunities to further enhance the performance of the town centre and deliver additional economic benefits, including:

- the redevelopment of the transport hub on Station Parade to greatly enhance this gateway to the town centre and provide improved transport facilities;
- opportunities to build on business tourism to offer additional visitor attractions and attract a greater number of staying visitors;
- significant improvements to the public realm to reduce the dominance of traffic and parking, and improve the town centre environment; and
- opportunities to improve the leisure offer of the town centre, including family activities and the food and drink offer, allied to public realm improvements.

In the remaining sections of the masterplan we demonstrate how the full potential of the town centre's existing assets will be realised and how opportunities can be seized to further improve the town centre's performance.

Below: Images of existing public realm within the town centre



3 A Vision for Harrogate Town Centre

Having established the town centre's baseline position, a Future Options and Emerging Approaches paper was prepared to consider the strategic objectives for its future development. This section summarises those options and presents the preferred option which has been used to create an overall vision for the town centre and the HTCSCM.

The Strategic Options

The Future Options and Emerging approaches paper identified three key options for the future development of the town centre. Each requires a different level of intervention and carries different opportunities and risks. The three options are set out below.

Strategic Option 1 - Managed Growth

This option would seek to encourage the continuation of the town centre's recent growth and place it on a sustainable footing so that any competing pressures could be 'managed'. The HTCSCM would focus on addressing issues that currently detract from the performance of the town centre to ensure that they are not exacerbated by future town centre development.

The existing strengths of the town centre would be developed but this would largely depend on prevailing market conditions and levels of private sector investment. Recent trends such as investment from premium retailers, the diversification of Harrogate's hotel stock and the development of festival-based tourism would be encouraged. Measures would be taken to protect the town centre's existing environmental assets and address problems associated with its future growth such as traffic and congestion.

The HTCSCM would comprise limited interventions in terms of both physical projects and policy initiatives, thus requiring relatively low levels of public sector investment at a time when public sector spending faces further restraint. However, the risks of this approach are that the town centre will not 'raise its game' and that it will lose ground to both regional and national competitors. Furthermore, opportunities to secure additional economic, social and environmental benefits will not be fully realised.

Strategic Option 2 - Enhanced Growth

The second strategic option would aim to build on the town centre's existing success to ensure that its strengths are developed and integrated whilst existing causes of underperformance are addressed more comprehensively. The HTCSCM would assume a higher level of intervention and will seek to do this by targeted investment that will help to organically and intelligently diversify the town centre's offer.

The existing strengths of the town centre would be encouraged and exploited through key investments that seek to address several strategic objectives. These focused interventions would be designed to encourage and guide private sector investment. This would include development proposals for key sites and environmental improvements that help to better connect the various component parts of the town centre.

The HTCSCM would comprise a range of physical projects that would be used to deliver wider, integrated strategies to boost the visitor economy and to overcome some of the factors that may be limiting investment in the town centre and the realisation of greater long term benefits.

Strategic Option 3 - Strategic Reorientation

The final option would see a more significant change in the role of the town centre facilitated by significant levels of intervention. It would recognise the current strengths of the town centre and would seek to develop other strengths that might serve different markets or open up new opportunities for town centre development. In order for it to be achieved this option would require higher levels of investment.

The HTCSCM would be framed within an ambitious long-term vision that would be delivered by significant projects that would change the town centre environment and its existing mix of uses more dramatically. This would carry greater risks as it is possible that these interventions could not be delivered or that their delivery might have unforeseen consequences in terms of undermining the town centre's existing strengths.

The Preferred Option

The preferred option for the future development of the town centre is 'Enhanced Growth'. This option would strike an appropriate balance between exploiting the existing strengths of the town centre and addressing existing weaknesses. Interventions at this level are considered to be realistic and to be likely to deliver the greatest benefits to a range of town centre stakeholders, including residents, local businesses and visitors. The town centre is already strong in many areas and so there is no overwhelming need for wide-ranging strategic interventions of the sort that might be required to address market failure in weaker centres.

The 'Managed Growth' option is not considered to be sufficiently ambitious and could leave the town centre vulnerable to future market changes as well as competition from other destinations. These other destinations include regional competitors such as Leeds and York, but also national and international competitors in the business tourism market. We consider there to be limited evidence to support the option for 'Strategic Reorientation' and that this approach would also carry significant risks for the ongoing success of the town centre and its future development. The HTCSM should build on Harrogate's many existing strengths rather than undermine them. Furthermore, a more limited reorientation of the town centre offer could be achieved by the careful diversification envisaged as part of the option for 'Enhanced Growth'. Indeed, the strategic options are not mutually exclusive and the preferred option should still take account of the need to manage the future growth of the town centre.

The evidence gathered at the baseline stage that would support the preferred option of 'Enhanced Growth' includes:

- opportunities to improve the town centre's offer, particularly in the tourism and leisure sectors which could grow further to reinforce the town centre's strong retail offer;
- opportunities to further enhance the town centre's environment through targeted interventions, particularly relating to public realm and transport. This would recognise the high regard visitors have for the town centre's special environmental qualities, but also the need to upgrade the existing transport infrastructure; and
- recognition that the identified areas for improvement are often interlinked and that a higher level of intervention, over and above existing strategies, would allow more effective co-ordination that would leverage greater benefits for the town centre and the local economy.

The preferred option is also considered to support national and local planning policy, together with local economic strategies and the borough council's Corporate Plan. It would respond to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework for local planning authorities to proactively plan to meet the needs of business and support existing business sectors, to promote competitive town centres and to prepare plans that are aspirational but realistic. The 'Enhanced Growth' option would also support the strategic objectives of the Harrogate District Core Strategy to focus growth in the town of Harrogate, promote a robust and varied economy, protect and enhance the district's town centres, and its built and natural environment.

Town Centre Vision

The vision set out below seeks to articulate the preferred approach to the development of the town centre in a short statement, which highlights key objectives and the priorities for achieving those objectives. It also recognises that the realisation of the vision should provide important economic benefits for local people and local businesses. The end-date for the delivery of the vision is 2025, providing a masterplan period of ten years. It is considered that this is an appropriate timeframe for the delivery of the masterplan's projects and proposals, and for the implementation of the town centre strategy's objectives.

'By 2025 Harrogate Town Centre will be a leading UK destination for culture, shopping, leisure and business tourism. The unique qualities of the town centre will be enhanced to provide a distinctive visitor offer that differentiates Harrogate from its regional and national competitors. This distinctiveness will be characterised by an exceptional town centre environment, the key components of which will be:

- ***public realm of an outstanding quality;***
- ***a special blend of retail, leisure and cultural uses;***
- ***unique facilities for conferences and events; and***
- ***integrated and sustainable transport infrastructure.***

The realisation of this vision will ensure that important economic benefits are delivered for local residents and businesses, and that opportunities for the sustainable development of the town centre are fully exploited.'

Realising the Vision

In this section we set out the strategy that will guide the masterplan for Harrogate Town Centre. The strategy explains how the various masterplan projects, set out in detail in Section 5, will be co-ordinated to support the strategic objectives that will deliver the vision for the town centre.

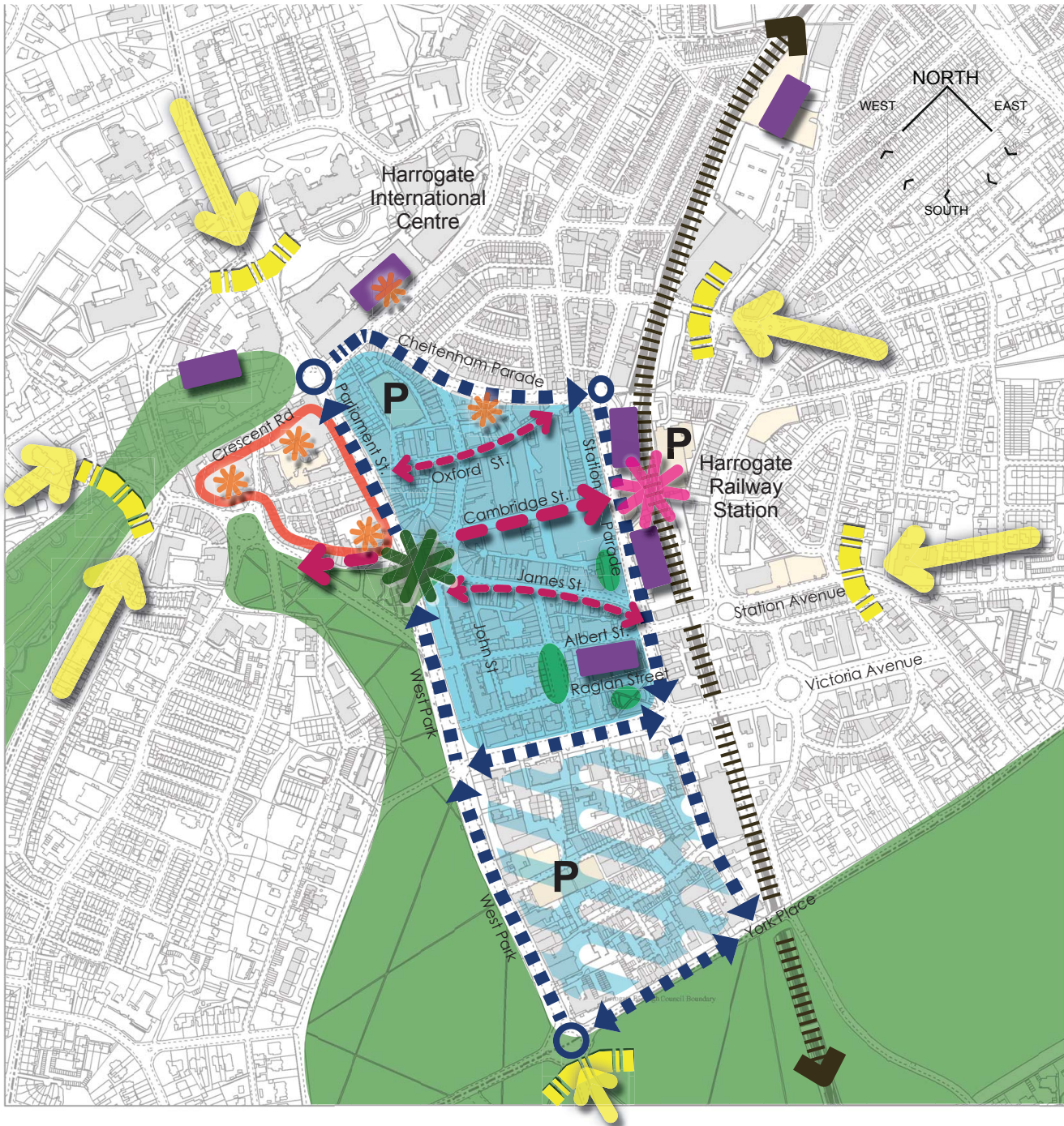
Strategic Objectives















The strategic objectives for the enhanced growth of the town centre and the realisation of the HTCSM's vision are as follows:

1. Preserving and enhancing the elements of the town centre environment that make a key contribution to its current success.
2. Addressing those elements of the town centre environment that detract from the visitor experience and therefore its economic performance.
3. Differentiating Harrogate's offer in the key areas of retail, leisure and events so that it can compete more effectively with regional and national competitors.
4. Growing Harrogate's visitor economy by better integrating its existing strengths, broadening its appeal and raising its profile.
5. Managing the future growth of the town centre to ensure that existing weaknesses are not exacerbated.

The implementation of the strategic objectives will be achieved by projects and initiatives falling under four key approaches. These approaches are explained in the remainder of this section. It is important to note at the outset that the four approaches are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Many of the masterplan's projects will contribute to the delivery of more than one of the identified 'sub-strategies'.

Masterplan Context



-  Development opportunities
-  Multi-storey parking
-  Railway line
-  Visitor destinations
-  Open space focal point
-  Transport hub
-  Pedestrian desire lines
-  Vehicular circular route
-  Thresholds & gateways
-  Retail core
-  Mixed use area, Residential, Hotels, Office
-  Montpellier Quarter, focus of leisure and independent retail
-  Green Space
-  The Stray /Valley Gardens

4 The Town Centre Strategy

Public Realm Strategy

The public realm strategy seeks to respond to Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3. There are three key elements to the public realm strategy; reinforcing visitor appeal, integrating key destinations, and providing new opportunities to enhance the town centre's leisure offer.

Reinforcing Visitor Appeal

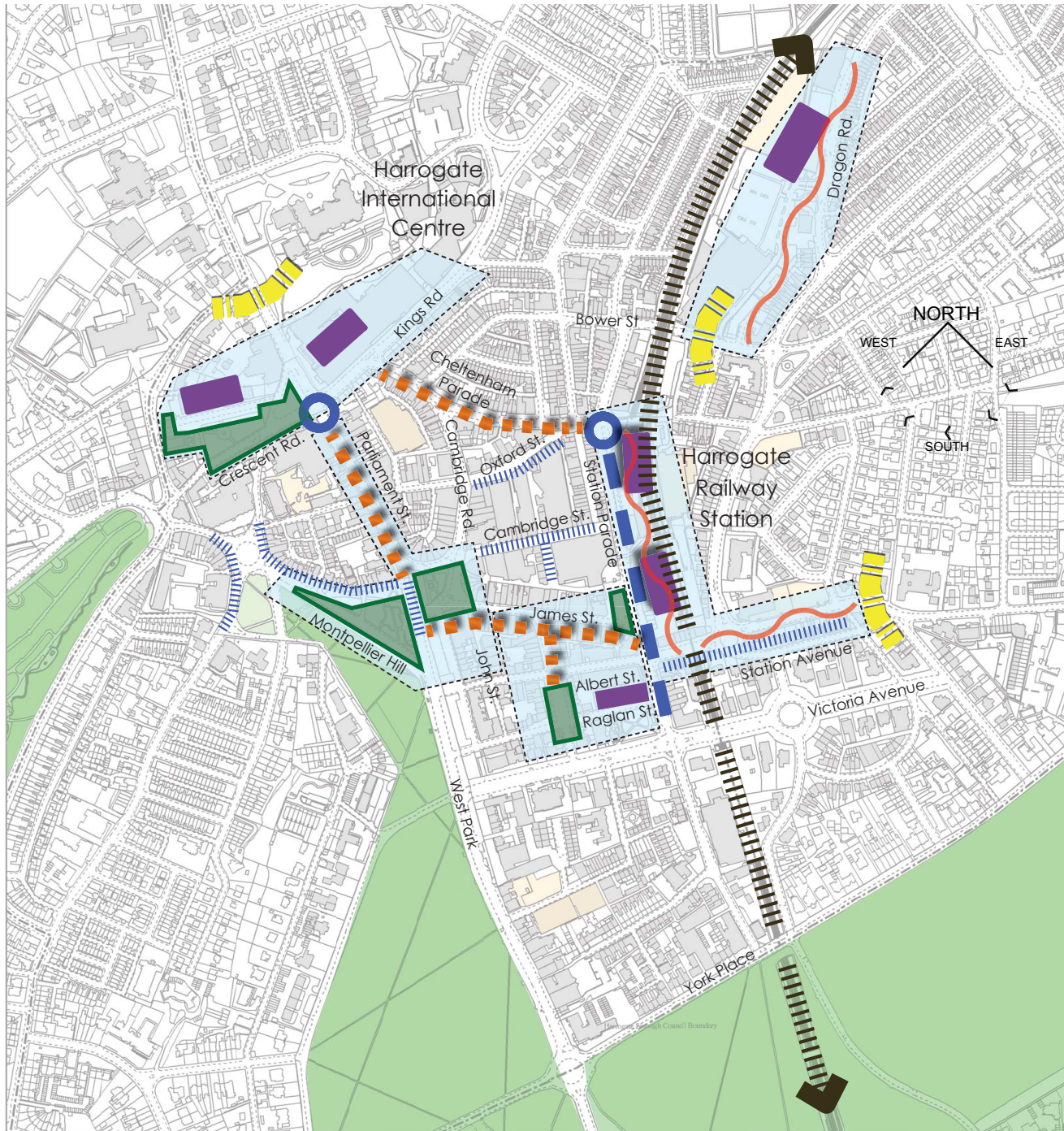
The high quality of Harrogate's environment is key to its success as a visitor destination. Both local residents and visitors from further afield value the town centre environment and recognise that this makes Harrogate a distinctive place to live, shop and relax. The public realm within the town centre is an important component of this environment, alongside its architecture and heritage. The public realm strategy will:

- reinforce the visitor appeal of Harrogate by showcasing the town centre's architecture and complementing its special green spaces; and
- create desirable urban spaces that reflect the aspirational values of key operators and investors.

The table below sets out some of the public realm projects and proposals that will help to reinforce Harrogate's distinctive appeal to visitors.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Prospect Gardens & Prospect Gardens | Creating a revitalised focal point for the town centre that showcases the surrounding architecture and improves physical and functional linkages with The Stray. |
| Station Square | An integrated public space that provides a new gateway to the town centre. |
| James Street & Princes Street | Pedestrianisation to reduce visual clutter and create a high quality street scene that complements the existing architecture. |
| Princes Square | A restored square which complements James Street and the surrounding area. |

Physical Enhancement Masterplan



-  Development Opportunity
-  Open Space Enhancement
-  Gateway Enhancement
-  Junction Improvements
-  Station Parade Vehicular/Pedestrian Improvements
-  Reduction in On Street Parking & Pedestrian Improvements
-  Facade & Streetscape Enhancement
-  Road Corridor and Streetscape Enhancement

Integrating Key Destinations

There is scope to better integrate key destinations within the town centre such as the railway station, conference centre and the Montpellier Quarter. All three are affected to varying degrees by the barrier effects of the A61. There is scope for public realm improvements to reduce these negative effects including through lessening the impacts of traffic and congestion, and providing clearer and more attractive pedestrian routes. By integrating these destinations with the retail core we will improve the overall functioning of the town centre.

The table below sets out some of the public realm projects and proposals that will help to integrate key destinations within the town centre.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Prospect Square & Prospect Gardens | Enhanced routes linking Cambridge Street and James Street to the Montpellier Quarter where a new gateway will be created around Montpellier Parade and Prospect Gardens. |
| James Street | Improving east-west pedestrian routes and connecting the new public spaces at Station Square and Prospect Square. |
| Parliament Street | Pavement widening to help reduce the impacts of traffic and better link the HIC with the Montpellier Quarter, Prospect Square and the retail core. |
| Cheltenham Parade | Pavement widening to encourage its use as the most direct link between the proposed Transport Hub and the HIC. |



Left: Existing view east along James Street.

New Spaces for Events and Leisure

Part of the public realm strategy will include creating new spaces for holding outdoor events. This will complement Harrogate's existing strengths as a nationally important destination for events and festivals, and will provide further opportunities to enhance its retail offer, including providing alternative spaces for outdoor markets in locations that are well related to the existing retail core. The various public realm projects will also create spaces for outdoor dining that will add vitality to those parts of the town centre when the weather permits.

The table below sets out some of the public realm projects and proposals that will create new spaces for leisure activities in the town centre.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Station Square | New multi-functional space for use for events and markets. Improved spill-out spaces for adjoining food and drink uses. |
| Prospect Square & Prospect Gardens | A new tiered performance space at Prospect Gardens and spill-out spaces around the war memorial and on Montpellier Parade. |
| Oxford Street | Space for small street markets and a new performance space outside the entrance to Harrogate Theatre. |
| Various | New spill-out spaces for adjoining food and drink uses at Princes Square, Parliament Street and Cheltenham Parade. |



Left: The existing Station Square looking towards the Victoria Shopping Centre.

Visitor Strategy

The visitor strategy will help to deliver Strategic Objectives 3 and 4 and has two key elements that seek to provide support to business tourism, and improve and integrate the various strands of the town centre's existing and future visitor offer.

Supporting Business Tourism

Business tourism, centred around the facilities of the Harrogate International Centre (HIC), is very important to the overall economic performance of the town centre and the district as a whole. The additional visitors and expenditure drawn to Harrogate by business tourism help to support the town centre's excellent retail offer, as well as other services and local employment, to the benefit of residents. There are several elements to supporting business tourism in the town centre including improvements to facilities at the HIC, providing a range of high quality hotel accommodation and ancillary facilities, such as a comprehensive food and drink offer.

The table below sets out some of the masterplan projects and proposals that will help to support business tourism within the town centre.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|---------------------|---|
| HIC | Improved servicing arrangements to enhance capacity and the introduction of new facilities to serve visitors to the HIC. |
| Crescent Gardens | The preferred location for a new high quality hotel that would be well placed to serve visitors to the HIC and provide premium accommodation for conference guests. |
| Transport Hub | Enhanced transport facilities that create an improved gateway to the town centre for business visitors. |

Improving and Integrating the Visitor Offer

The baseline work has identified the potential to differentiate the town centre's visitor offer, including through the provision of a family-orientated visitor attraction and efforts to recover and promote Harrogate's heritage as a spa town. Such initiatives would help to increase the number of staying visitors and provide the town centre with recognisable advantages over competing destinations, both at a regional and national level. In addition, there are opportunities to combine the various elements of the visitor offer (heritage, shopping facilities and conference/ event programmes) to broaden and maximise its appeal.

The table below sets out some of the masterplan projects and proposals that will help to improve and integrate the town centre's visitor offer.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|---------------------|---|
| HIC | A new, all-weather family-orientated visitor attraction to complement existing town centre attractions and provide an additional 'hook' for the HIC. |
| Crescent Gardens | The preferred location for a spa-themed hotel in close proximity to the HIC, Royal Baths, Pump Room and Turkish Baths which would provide a high-quality modern link to Harrogate's spa heritage. |
| Various | New retail and leisure development at Exchange Tower and Station Bridge and also, potentially, Dragon Road. Public realm schemes that will provide a range of spaces for outdoor events to complement and expand existing events programmes and enable the integration of shopping activity and entertainment. Schemes to also incorporate floral displays, and water features that reference the town's spa heritage. |

Movement Strategy

The Movement Strategy seeks to respond to Strategic Objectives 2 and 5. It focuses on a key development site at Station Parade and a series of other measures that seek to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and complement the public realm strategy.

The Transport Hub

Harrogate's railway station and adjoining facilities, including the town centre's bus station, have long been identified as an area for improvement. The current buildings and infrastructure detract from the overall quality of the town centre environment and provide a poor gateway for visitors. The comprehensive redevelopment of the site is complicated by various land ownerships and the need to maintain flexibility over the future operation of the railway line and its capacity.

However, various recent developments suggest that the comprehensive redevelopment of the site may now be a more viable prospect and could be delivered in the masterplan period. These developments include the proposed electrification of the Leeds to York railway line and renewed developer interest in parts of the site. The HTCSM therefore sets out the key principles for the future development of this area. These principles should help to deliver a high quality transport interchange that provides an appropriate welcome to Harrogate for visitors, promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport, and improves the appearance of this part of the town centre.

A site-specific masterplan/development brief will be prepared in due course to support the comprehensive development of the site. The HTCSM schemes that are relevant to the Transport Hub are set out below.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|---------------------|---|
| Transport Hub | Main proposal for the comprehensive redevelopment of land to the east of Station Parade to integrate improved public transport facilities with car parking, cycle facilities and new retail, office and/or residential development. |
| Station Square | Public realm scheme that will support the development of the Transport Hub and create a gateway to the town centre. |

Promoting Sustainable Transport

The popularity of Harrogate as a visitor destination, and the significant constraints on any re-routing of the A61, mean that the impacts of traffic and congestion on the town centre environment are difficult to manage. However, measures to promote sustainable transport will be incorporated throughout the masterplan's projects to help reduce demand for travel by car and to encourage a modal shift to walking, cycling and the use of public transport. This will help to reduce the impacts of car-borne traffic and help to manage future demand for parking within the town centre.

| Project or Proposal | Relevant Components |
|----------------------|--|
| Transport Hub | Integrated facilities allowing for passenger transfer between all available forms of sustainable transport making these modes a more convenient, viable and attractive option for travellers. |
| Pedestrian Movement | Various public realm improvements that seek to improve linkages between key town centre destinations, to be supported by an updated town centre signage strategy. |
| Cycle Infrastructure | Improved cycle infrastructure delivered through public realm schemes, new development, and improvements around the railway station including a new cycle hub within the redeveloped Transport Hub. |



Right: Existing cycle route signage in the town centre

Town Centre Management

Controlling the Mix of Uses

The masterplan's projects will deliver some additional commercial floorspace within the town centre, whilst changing the character of some areas through interventions in the public realm. As a vital and viable town centre, there is no pressing requirement to make use of policy tools to proactively manage the mix of uses, beyond current measures. However, it will be important to ensure that in the future there continues to be a healthy and complementary mix of town centre uses.

In recent years the government has revised the General Permitted Development Order and Use Classes Order to extend permitted changes of use to cover a much wider number of retail, leisure, office and residential uses. The full implications of these changes are yet to be realised but the council will consider the use of Article 4 directions to restrict permitted changes of use where this is considered necessary to protect the vitality and viability of the town's primary shopping frontages and the supply of office accommodation in and around the town centre. There is also a current concentration of drinking establishments to the west of the town centre around the Montpellier Quarter. Such uses should be managed in the line with the approach to the evening economy set out below but could be brought within the scope of future Article 4 directions.

Proposals to reuse vacant space above shops in the town centre for residential or other suitable uses will be encouraged, to bring these spaces back into active use and to add to the vitality of the town centre. In order to support the town's strong independent sector, and provide suitable space for business start-ups, the Council will encourage developers to provide a mix of unit sizes, including smaller units, in new retail and leisure developments.

The Evening Economy

The management of the evening economy is important to the overall economic performance of the town centre and the positive perceptions of visitors to Harrogate. Such management extends well beyond planning policy and development control to include licensing, policing and environmental health. A co-ordinated strategy should be prepared in due course but the following actions should be considered to support the town centre strategy and take account of the changes to the town centre's composition that may occur as a result of the HTCSM's implementation:

- avoiding the over-concentration of drinking establishments, particularly in areas where new spill-out spaces are to be created.

Development management and planning policy should take account of the need for a balanced mix of food, drink and other uses;

- encouraging, where appropriate, the late opening of retail and service uses in the town centre to support the diversification of the evening economy. Harrogate's strong complement of independent operators may have an important role in affecting a transition to later opening;
- improving the range of night-time activities and entertainments. This will include attracting more families into the town centre through the development of new commercial leisure facilities and a programme of family-orientated events in the evening; and
- ensuring that the detailed design of public realm schemes takes account of the need to maintain public safety, including through the use of the town centre's CCTV network.

Future Management and Monitoring

In addition to the above measures, it will be necessary for enhanced management of the town centre including:

- A destination management plan to help achieve the integration of the town centre's various assets and ensure effective promotion of the town centre, including Harrogate's spa heritage.
- Providing the capacity for effective event management. Events are already an important component of the town centre's visitor offer and the masterplan's public realm projects provide new outdoor spaces to complement existing indoor facilities. There should be a co-ordinated approach to the management of these assets to ensure that they reinforce the attractiveness of the town centre as a destination for events, conferences, festivals and markets.
- Together with the county council and town centre stakeholders, the borough council should review the on-street and off-street parking regime within the town centre. It is recognised that some on-street parking will be lost as a result of various public realm projects, though it is expected that this will only be a small proportion of the existing provision. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that on-street parking facilities are used efficiently - in a manner that supports trade within the town centre - and meets the needs of vulnerable groups.
- Considering the potential for new technology to support the visitor experience. This could be used to provide visitor information, promote events and create virtual attractions such as heritage trails.

The implementation of the town centre strategy and the various components of the masterplan will be monitored by the borough council to enable it to respond to unforeseen changes that may have impacts on the overall strategy, including delivery and phasing.