

South Shields Town Centre Vision

Masterplan Vision Document



South Tyneside Council

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SOUTH
TYNESIDE**

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01 Executive Summary

1.1 Executive Summary

The Masterplan Vision for South Shields sets out a framework for the future of the Town Centre over the next 10 years. It seeks to deliver a **vibrant, attractive, and healthy town with a secure and sustainable future. A place where people want to live, work, study and socialise.**

South Shields is a town with a rich and vibrant history, having been at the forefront of the industrial revolution helping to drive the economy of the North East of England and Britain for over 200 years.

There is a strong sense of pride and passion running through our communities and we have much to be proud of. We occupy an enviable location between the River Tyne, the historical heart of industry, and our Foreshore with its award-winning beach and attractions. We have invested in our buildings, infrastructure and public realm to create areas of exceptional quality whilst hosting events ranging from local food festivals to the internationally renowned Great North Run which help us attract 7m visitors a year.

Despite this, the Town Centre is facing the same challenges as others up and down the country. The retail landscape that we knew previously has changed fundamentally over the last decade, impacted particularly by the rise of online shopping reduced footfall on the high street. This change was accelerated further by COVID-19 which acted as a catalyst for changing the way many of us work, commute and spend our free time.

We know that technological advances and cultural changes mean the world is constantly evolving. The challenges and opportunities of today will be different to those 5-10 years from now. We are providing a masterplan and vision for the Town Centre that provides a blueprint for future development but is flexible enough to respond to these changes.

Underpinning the overarching vision are the strategic objectives which will allow it to be achieved:

- Diversifying the Town Centre
- Close working with local businesses and property owners
- Facilitating residential and commercial development
- Providing opportunities for local retailers
- Re-developing under-utilised sites
- Bringing empty properties and floor space back into use
- Enhance public realm, green space and linkages
- Attract funding and investment

The Town Centre must evolve, and we acknowledge that this will take time. It will also require us to maximise funding opportunities and work collaboratively with our residents, businesses and partners.

By doing this we can bring forward investment and development needed to realise our vision.

02 Introduction

2.1 Supporting the South Tyneside Vision

Having listened to our communities and reviewed the evidence, in late 2022 we published Our South Tyneside Vision 2023- 2043.

This 20 year vision has the overarching aim of making

**South Tyneside a place
where people live healthy,
happy, and fulfilled lives.**

To make this Vision a reality we have developed a series of 'Ambitions' – the things we need to achieve over the next 20 years to deliver this.

The South Shields Masterplan & Vision Document has been shaped by the 20 year South Tyneside Vision (2023-2043) and supports the delivery of a number of the key ambitions, in particular connecting people to jobs and creating strong communities.





The Word

Ambition	Measure of success:	The masterplan will support this by:
Financially Secure	Residents will have what they need for a good standard of living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities for public and private sector investment. • Improving business sentiment leading to increased and diverse employment opportunities for residents.
Healthy & Well	Residents to enjoy good mental & physical well-being through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in good quality public realm to promote pedestrian use. • Exploring opportunities to expand the cycle network.
Connected to Jobs	Residents to have access to good quality jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a modern college campus and marine school in the heart of the Town Centre. • Increasing footfall within the Town Centre and providing opportunities for business.
Part of Strong Communities	Residents are living in clean, green, connected communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in our public spaces. Increasing the residential population in the town. • Embedding sustainability into the design and decision making process. • Investing in our cultural assets.
Targeting Support to make things Fairer	Support residents and parts of the Borough that need it most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with residents, partners and community groups to ensure that the investment brought forward meets their need.

2.2 The Story So Far

Over the last 10 years South Shields Town Centre has undergone a period of significant investment with new developments delivered including:

- A new transport interchange making bus and Metro connectivity around and beyond the Borough easier for residents and visitors.
- The Word, providing important cultural, education and library facilities at the western end of the Town Centre (and attracting over one million visitors since its opening)
- Investment in our historic Market Place, providing an attractive public space, which retains its historic function whilst creating opportunities for markets, events and the wider community.
- New bus routes established through the Town Centre, creating the space for a new College and Marine School
- Site assembly for future developments with demolition work ongoing.
- Construction of a new riverside park at Mill Dam linking the Town Centre to Holborn Riverside where a major civil engineering scheme is seeing former industrial land transformed into a new residential neighbourhood.
- Investment in Ocean Road highways and public realm



South Shields Transport Interchange



The Word



Market Place



New housing, Holborn



Ocean Road



Harton Quays Park

2.3 The Study Area

Masterplan Vision sub areas plan. This plan shows the boundary of Town Centre area which this masterplan relates to.



Town Centre study area

03 Developing the Vision

3.1 Our South Tyneside Conversation

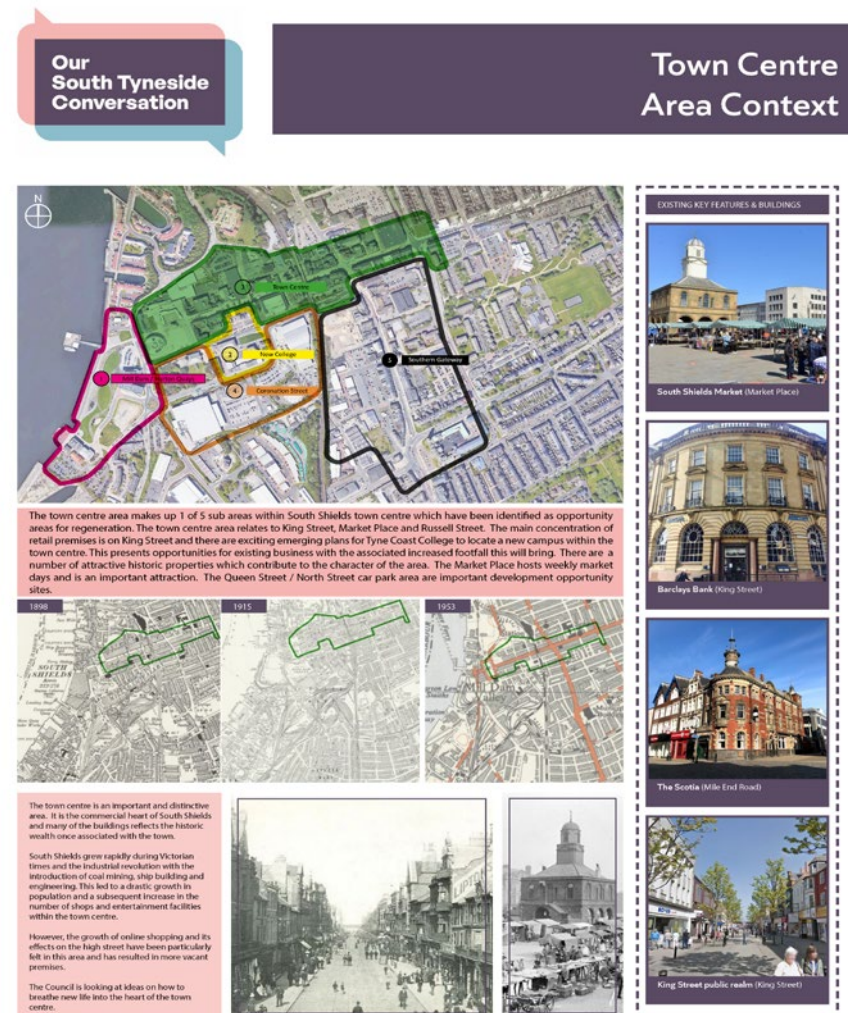
In 2021 South Tyneside Council engaged with local architects IDPartnership Northern to review the previous Town Centre masterplan and consider opportunities across the Town Centre, taking into account significant changes in retail demand and best practice guidance.

This culminated in a series of consultation events, facilitated by Gardiner Richardson, to gather the views of residents and businesses and understand how they view the Town Centre.

The campaign 'Our South Tyneside Conversation' generated a total of 1300 responses. A full consultation report can be found at www.ourconversation.co.uk. Various different options for future development and changes in the Town Centre were presented as part of this campaign including the opportunity for a new college campus on King Street.

The main issues identified within the Town Centre by members of the public during this public consultation included:

- The importance of high quality public spaces and landscaping throughout the Town Centre
- The desire for an improved retail offer
- Support for a Town Centre college campus
- A better food and drink offer across the Town Centre



Example public consultation boards

This Masterplan Vision has therefore taken into account these views, community involvement and key stakeholders' views. Critical objectives include increasing footfall in the Town Centre, improving the quality of public realm and increasing the overall number of people living within the Town Centre.

The aim is to create a Masterplan Vision that is robust enough to ensure that it will be viable and deliverable, whatever changes are ahead.

The Masterplan Vision provides a flexible and strategic framework that will guide economic growth and the physical development of the Town Centre for the next 10-15 years. It is not intended as a rigid blueprint for future development as wider societal and economic changes will influence what specifically is brought forward across the Town Centre.

The Masterplan Vision is intended to:

- Support the Council's overarching vision of making South Tyneside a place where people live healthy, happy, fulfilled lives
- Build on regeneration initiatives to date
- Focus on building on the unique quality of the area to create a great place where people want to live, communities thrive and businesses prosper
- Create and encourage additional local economic activity to stimulate the long term sustainability of the Town Centre
- Build new homes
- Ensure the proposals are deliverable and achievable

Our South Tyneside Conversation

Town Centre Current Challenges



KEY

- Study area
- The Flood
- Existing pedestrian route (King Street)
- Primary vehicle route (A163)
- Key vehicle route (B1344)
- Market Place
- Market lane
- South Shields Interchange
- Existing residential area
- Vacant buildings
- Existing mature trees
- Key route towards River Tyne
- Existing car parking
- Vacant ground floor retail unit
- Watkinson Square retail park
- Harrison Quay Park
- Opportunity site
- Pedestrian Walk to waterfront
- Town centre facilities (retail, leisure, etc.)
- Additional town centre facilities along Ocean Road
- Watkinson Supermarket

CHALLENGES


- Unused space and buildings located within the town centre
- Growth of online shopping and changing shopping habits reducing footfall in the town centre
- Lack of variety in offer within South Shields town centre - i.e. little variety in high street shops and food and drink offer
- Low levels of footfall towards western end of King Street
- Existing trees retained and servicing which may restrict opportunities for further landscaping
- No consistent approach to landscaping and the public realm
- Surface car parking to the south of King Street adjacent to River Tyne which is convenient located but does not present attractive edge
- The number of vacant ground floor retail units along King Street indicate lack of demand for shopping opportunities
- Market Place is a large space which is not well utilised on other than market days

STRENGTHS

- Well connected via public transport (trains, bus and ferry) and new airport interchange
- Good vehicular connectivity including the B1344 which borders the north / west of the study area and provides links throughout South Shields
- Provision of local facilities and amenities including retail and leisure uses
- Close proximity to additional local facilities such as Watkinson Square retail park and The Ward
- Pedestrianised route along King Street provides good, safe access to facilities for pedestrians
- Market Place provides a public space and nearby markets are an important attraction

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to enhance existing heritage / public realm along King Street and its surroundings
- New college campus located on King Street can be a catalyst for change and attract new businesses to the area whilst supporting existing businesses
- Opportunity to reutilise town centre to create a vibrant retail / leisure offer
- Under utilized upper floor space that should be encouraged to be brought into use
- Identifying King Street away from retail to other uses such as food and drink



Example public consultation boards

3.2 Retail & Residential

Retail

Following an increase in occupancy levels in the second half of 2022, the latest retail occupancy survey conducted in May 2023 shows minimal changes in the number and distribution of vacant units since the measured improvements of the previous year.

The town centre also remains consistent in the concentration of use types and the presence of both national and local retailers, with 64% of the key areas occupied by National retailers, and the remaining local and regional businesses.

However, external market forces impacting the national economy may weaken the retail market over the next 12 months, with inflationary pressures impacting spending habits and the viability of new store openings. Nevertheless, the retail market has shown resilience in the face of market shocks experienced over the past 24 months. Additionally, ongoing regeneration efforts and the relocation of the college are expected to increase footfall and spending in the town centre, further tightening the supply of retail spaces and improving the retail landscape of the town.



Residential

This Vision document is being published at a time when interest rates are being increased to counter high levels of inflation. This has in turn increased the cost of new and variable rate mortgages across the board which is also increasing rental costs. As a proportion of average household income, English housing is the most expensive it has been since the Office for National Statistics started recording the data in 1999. Then the average home cost 3.55 times average earnings. In 2021, the latest year for which the ONS has data, and that ratio reached 8.93.

In South Shields we will work with the private sector to provide residents with:

- A range of tenures and affordable options which can offer flexible living
- Developments that are in keeping with the location
- Communities where people want to live
- An enhanced housing offer to rebalance the housing market in the town centre

There is also a high proportion of council (and previously council-owned) accommodation around the town centre; many of which are mid-rise flats and maisonettes which are non-traditionally built. The levels of fuel poverty within many of these properties is high and significant levels of investment will be required in order for these homes to meet the Government's target of EPC C, therefore the future investment options will need to be considered carefully. These properties remain popular due to the location and communities that lives there, however in order for these homes to remain sustainable significant investment will be required over the next 10 years. Following stock condition surveys, work is on-going to develop investment options.



3.3 Sub Areas

The Masterplan Vision identifies five sub areas within South Shields Town Centre as follows:

- Mill Dam
- New College
- Town Centre
- Coronation Street
- Southern Gateway

These sub areas were used during the 'Our South Tyneside Conversation' campaign and will be applied to the proposals set.



New College

The New College area makes up 1 of 5 sub areas within South Shields Town Centre which have been identified as opportunity areas for regeneration. This area sits between King Street and Coronation Street. The job centre has been cleared to create the site of the new campus for South Tyneside College and South Shields Marine School. The Grade II Listed no. 16 Barrington Street building will be integrated within the development.

The proposed new college campus will be located on a key site in the heart of the Town Centre. Located close to the Transport Interchange with frontage to Barrington Street and King Street, this sub area has the potential to be transformed, bringing an important new use to the Town Centre that will increase footfall.

This will help to support existing retailers and traders in the Town Centre. Buildings along Chapter Row have been demolished in preparation for the new college campus development, for which a planning application is expected to be submitted in Summer 2023.





16 Barrington Street



Redundant highway to be redeveloped

History and Heritage

This area of the Town Centre was historically characterised by terraced properties including Barrington Street with a mix of uses.

A number of shops were located within this area however general decline in retail and the high street has been reflected here as these terraces have generally been demolished, leaving vacant space and disused buildings.

The Grade II Listed no. 16 Barrington Street was originally built for the South Shields Poor Law Union after the opening of their new workhouse, however is currently under utilised.

Opportunities, Strengths and Challenges

Challenges

- Impact of construction work for new college campus on existing traders and businesses, particularly along King Street
- Creating a frontage to King Street from the new college campus development
- Current lack of green space / landscaping provision within the area

Strengths

- The area is well-connected via public transport (metro, bus and ferry) with the Transport Interchange located less than 400 metres to the east of the new college campus site
- Close proximity to local facilities and amenities including shops on King Street and The Word



Waterloo Square Retail Park

Opportunities

- Opportunity for the new college campus to create active frontages to the surrounding streets and for passers-by to see activity and teaching at ground floor level.
- Greater footfall within the Town Centre as a result of the new college campus will help sustain existing local businesses and support new businesses, with potential to revitalise the high street in the Town Centre
- Opportunity to increase activity along King Street, Barrington Street and Chapter Row
- Opportunity to provide a high quality townscape and public realm which will contribute to the overall character of the Town Centre
- Grade II Listed no. 16 Barrington Street can be integrated within new development and brought back into use to contribute to the wider proposals
- Younger demographic coming to the Town Centre to use the college and other Town Centre facilities



View of college campus site and King Street

Mill Dam

The Mill Dam site makes up 1 of 5 sub areas within South Shields Town Centre identified as opportunity sites for regeneration. The Mill Dam area is located along the riverside to the west of the Town Centre and lies directly north of the Holborn Riverside area.

The office building next to the Mill Dam has signalled change and improved the appearance of the area. The Customs House and food and drink premises on Mill Dam, within historic premises, also add to the unique identity of the area.





Historic image of Riverside

History and Heritage

Mill Dam is a distinctive location within the history and heritage of South Tyneside.

South Shields grew rapidly during Victorian times and the industrial revolution, with the introduction of coal mining, ship building and engineering with many members of the community working as seamen in British merchant vessels.

However, the effects of de-industrialisation were particularly felt along the waterfront and resulted in several areas of unused, informal space due to site clearance, disused buildings and general inactivity along the riverside.



Customs House

Challenges, strengths and opportunities

There are opportunities for new proposals which tie in with the town's rich heritage context, whilst building upon key new developments in the area, to contribute towards a wider regeneration programme to create a sustainable future for South Shields Town Centre.

Challenges

- Inactivity along the waterfront and underused public spaces
- Large area of surface car parking adjacent to Customs House which is also important to the operation of the theatre



Mill Dam



View from Dalton Lane

Strengths

- Well connected via public transport (metro, bus and ferry)
- Good vehicular connectivity including the B1344 which runs north-south through the study area and provides links throughout South Shields
- Prominent, vacant waterfront sites with opportunity for redevelopment
- Close proximity to local facilities and amenities
- Existing Harton Quays Park provides leisure and recreational space alongside a pedestrian link along the riverside
- Existing community facilities within and surrounding the study area including the Customs House.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to increase activity along the waterfront by maximising pedestrian links and encouraging other uses such as food and drink
- Opportunity to connect riverside walkways with residential development at Holborn Riverside, linking this development with existing public spaces
- Opportunity to maximise and enhance key views towards the River Tyne

Town Centre

The Town Centre area makes up 1 of 5 sub areas within South Shields Town Centre which have been identified as opportunity areas for regeneration. The Town Centre area relates to King Street, Market Place and Queen Street. The main concentration of retail premises is on King Street and there are exciting emerging plans for Tyne Coast College to locate a new campus within the Town Centre. This presents opportunities for existing business with the associated increased footfall this will bring.

There are a number of attractive historic properties which contribute to the character of the area. The Market Place hosts weekly market days and is an important attraction. The Queen Street / North Street car park areas are important development opportunity sites.





Historic image of Market Place



King Street

History and Heritage

The Town Centre is an important and distinctive area. It is the commercial heart of South Shields and many of the buildings reflect the historic wealth once associated with the town. South Shields grew rapidly during Victorian times and the industrial revolution, with the introduction of coal mining, ship building and engineering.

This led to a drastic growth in population and a subsequent increase in the number of shops and entertainment facilities within the Town Centre. However, the growth of online shopping and its effects on the high street have been particularly felt in this area and has resulted in more vacant premises.

Challenges, strengths and opportunities

Challenges

- Unused space and buildings located within the Town Centre
- Growth of online shopping and changing shopping habits reducing footfall in the Town Centre
- Lack of variety in offer within the Town Centre
- No consistent approach to landscaping and the public realm
- Vacant ground floor retail units along King Street
- Market Place is a large space which is not well utilised other than on market days



Retail premises on King Street



Market Place

Strengths

- Well connected via public transport (metro, bus and ferry) and new transport interchange
- Provision of local facilities and amenities including retail and leisure uses
- Close proximity to additional local facilities such as Waterloo Square Retail Park and The Word
- Pedestrianised route along King Street provides good, safe access to facilities for pedestrians

Opportunities

- Opportunity to enhance existing landscape / public realm along King Street and its surroundings
- New college campus located on King Street can be a catalyst for change and attract new business to the area whilst supporting existing businesses
- Opportunity to revitalise Town Centre to create a vibrant retail / leisure offer
- Underutilised upper floor space that should be encouraged to be brought into use
- Diversifying King Street away from retail to other uses such as food and drink

Coronation Street

The Coronation Street area makes up 1 of 5 sub areas within South Shields Town Centre which have been identified as opportunity areas for regeneration. Coronation Street is located to the west of the Transport Interchange and east of the Mill Dam.

The sub area includes St Hilda's Church and the green space around the Church. The Asda Superstore is located on the corner of Station Road and Coronation Street, which is an important gateway location to the Town Centre where the Riverside, Mill Dam and Town Centre areas converge.

There is a large surface car park adjacent to the Asda Superstore alongside additional car parking at the Oyston Street car park.

Next to Forest Road and Garden Lane is a gas storage chamber which is being decommissioned. There are several modern high quality retail premises east of Waterloo Square with a public space to the front of these. The mix of retail premises provides an important offer for the Town Centre, complimenting other national and local retailers on King Street.



History and Heritage

St Hilda's Church is a Grade II Listed, historic chapelry located on the site of a chapel founded by St Aidan, and is historically the most notable building within the sub area. The other developments are more recent buildings such as the large Asda Superstore.

The gas storage chamber has been a historic part of the skyline within this sub area and the Town Centre and is being demolition. The historic gas holder dates back to Victorian times however is now redundant and hasn't stored gas for over 10 years.

Challenges, strengths and opportunities

Challenges

- Underused green space adjacent to St Hilda's Church
- Large amount of surface car parking in this sub area has negative impact on the streetscene appearance
- Poor quality frontage to built form along Coronation Street



St Hilda's Church



Waterloo Square Retail Park

Strengths

- Existing retail premises including King Street and Waterloo Square Retail Park surrounding the area which provide local facilities
- Close proximity to the Transport Interchange which makes the site easily accessible via public transport
- The area lies adjacent to proposed Tyne Coast College campus site



Oyston Street car park

Opportunities

- Decommissioning of the gas storage chamber will allow for creation of a new green space / public open space
- The Oyston Street car park is a development opportunity site
- Existing retail surrounding the area is a major draw for the Town Centre
- Opportunity for improved pedestrian routes through green space adjacent to St Hilda's Church with lighting to aid security and improve the setting of the church
- Opportunity for public realm enhancements to Coronation Street including street furniture, lighting and soft landscaping.

Southern Gateway

The Southern Gateway area makes up 1 of 5 sub areas within South Shields Town Centre which have been identified as opportunity areas for regeneration. The Southern Gateway relates to the area south of King Street and north of the Town Hall. The eastern extent of the area is defined by the A183 and the western extent by the metro line and Transport Interchange.

Fowler Street has a mix of commercial premises and several attractive historic properties. The relocation of the library from Prince Georg Square has left a large vacant building which will be demolished this year. Fowler Street is an important route for buses entering the Town Centre, however landscaping along this route is currently limited. Set behind the buildings on Fowler Street are several large surface car parks which provide a significant amount of parking close to the Town Centre.

At the northern end of Fowler Street is the Denmark Centre which provides an enclosed shopping mall and ground floor commercial premises fronting onto the corner of Fowler Street and Burrow Street.





Historic image of Fowler Street



Fowler Street

History and Heritage

This area was once characterised by a significant number of Victorian terraced properties. Fowler Street historically was a thriving retail dominated street, however general trends of high street decline have been reflected in this area which has slowly been in decline for the last 10-15 years. As a result, a number of vacant units in the area are facing demolition as part of the Council's regeneration plans.

Challenges, strengths and opportunities

Challenges

- Over supply of retail units on Fowler Street and unsustainable number of commercial premises resulting in vacant properties
- Large, underutilised surface car parks which do not present a build frontage to surrounding streets
- Lack of soft landscaping along streets
- Varied quality of public realm
- Limited food and drink offer
- Vacant former library building following closure and relocation



Fowler Street

Strengths

- Buildings along Fowler Street have been refurbished by the Council and will provide a high quality space for a food and drink operator alongside office space
- Transport Interchange is a key nodal point providing access to public transport
- Attractive Victorian properties within the area
- Development opportunity sites including the former library site and Winchester Street car park
- Important gateway into the Town Centre from the west and east
- Council is targeting key locations for acquisition and redevelopment



Opportunities

- Public realm improvements including tree planting and other soft landscaping
- Conversion of upper floors of commercial properties for residential use
- New residential development on some surface car park sites which would boost the Town Centre's residential population
- Attract new food and drink operators to Fowler Street
- Introduce public art within the public realm
- Potential student accommodation to support new Town Centre college campus
- Opportunity to enhance this important gateway into the Town Centre from the west and east
- Opportunity to reduce the number of vehicular movements along Fowler Street to create a more attractive pedestrian route

3.4 Movement

The Masterplan Vision has considered opportunities to improve connectivity between the Town Centre and beyond to outlying areas alongside improvements through the Town Centre, which will encourage walking and cycling.

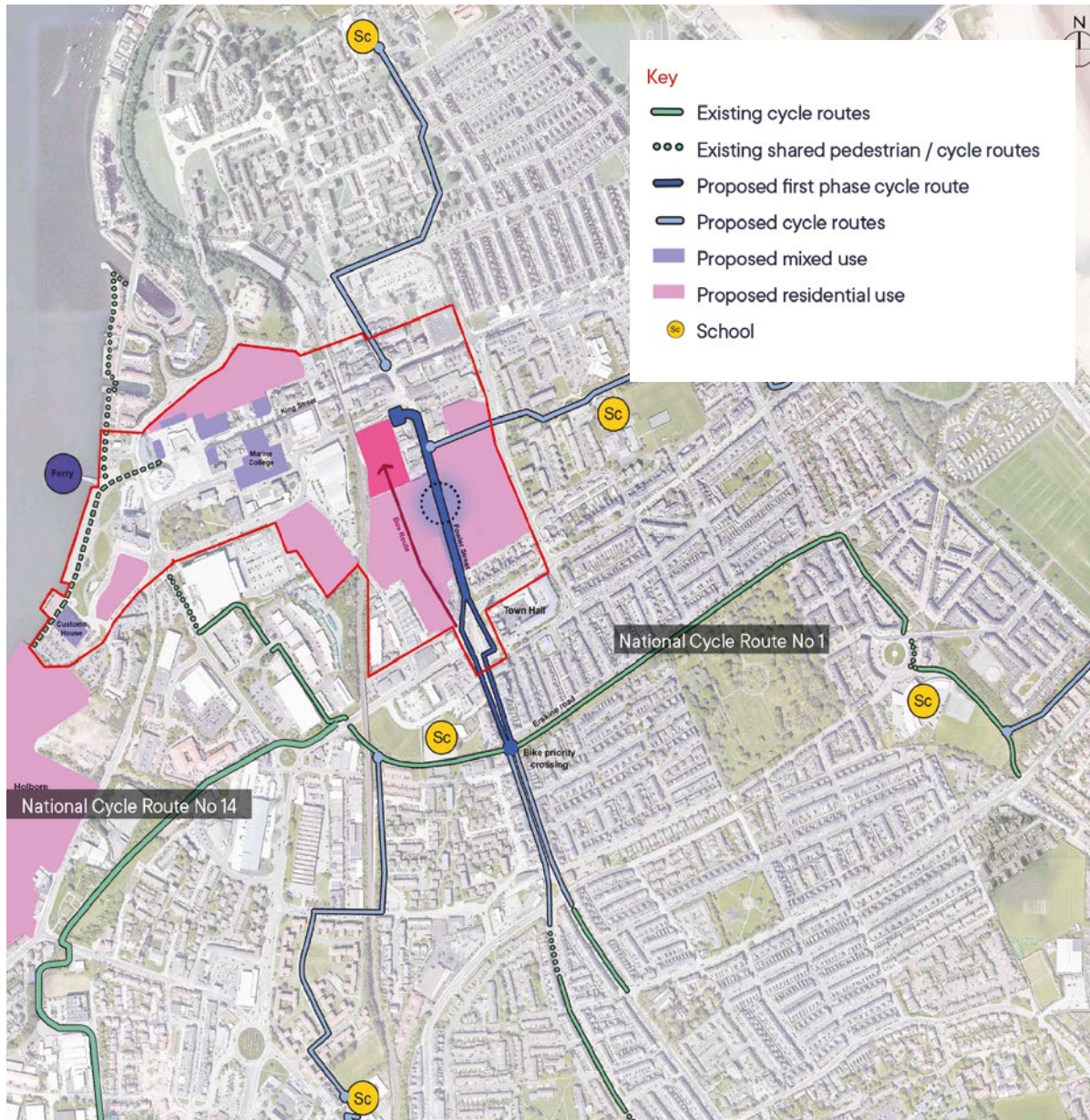
Development of Holborn Riverside will create new homes with a significant new residential population. It is important to encourage these residents to walk and cycle along the waterfront edge past the Customs House and towards the Ferry Landing, The Word and King Street to increase footfall. Likewise to the east, south east and north east of the Town Centre there are established residential neighbourhoods.



Key

- Holborn Riverside site
- Metro line
- Transport Interchange
- Market Place
- Chapter Row
- Fowler Street
- King Street

Wider connectivity plan



Existing and proposed cycle connectivity

Walking and Cycling

Improvements to the public realm including to open space, pedestrian crossings and cycle routes connecting into Fowler Street, Chapter Row, the Market Place and King Street can assist in encouraging greater accessibility between adjacent residential areas and the Town Centre.

This includes public realm improvements along King Street, pedestrian crossing improvements at key locations within the Town Centre, an expanded riverside walkway and improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes along Fowler Street.

These works will link in with existing cycle routes including National Cycle Route 14 and National Cycle Route 1

Public Transport

The Transport Interchange is located close to King Street, in the heart of the Town Centre.

Mobility

The Masterplan Vision identifies opportunities for mobility hubs where e-bikes and e-scooters can be hired, for example at the Ferry Landing, which is a centrally located node where several cycle routes will come together. Mobility hubs bring together shared transport with public transport and active travel in spaces designed to improve the public realm for all.



Sustainable movement precedents



Mobility Hub

Car Parking

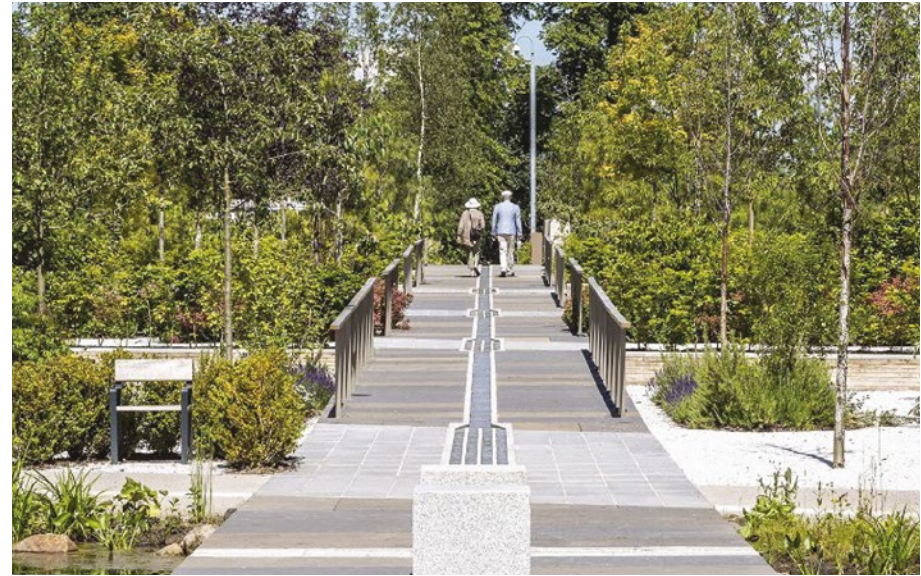
Whilst the emphasis is on encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport, there is recognition that parking is important in respect of the long term future of the Town Centre. At present, there are a number of surface car parks dispersed across the Town Centre. The Masterplan Vision suggests the rationalisation of car parking which is underutilised in some cases. Consideration will be given to expanded parking provision in different locations to best serve the Town Centre.

The proposals to rationalise car parking in the Southern Gateway, with residential development on the Winchester Street and Charlotte Street car parks, are important to unlock land for new housing and a new neighbourhood. Parking to serve these homes will be provided either on street or on plot. This strategy will require the Council to consider where displaced parking can be located as part of a wider Town Centre parking strategy.

3.5 Green Space and Public Realm

‘Our South Tyneside Conversation’ identified the quality of public spaces throughout the Town Centre as variable and something that could be improved. Improving public spaces will enhance existing conditions and create new open spaces. The Masterplan Vision shows how the following can be introduced:

- A greener Town Centre with formal green space
- An improved street network with attractive streets that promote walking and cycling
- Public realm enhancements throughout the Town Centre
- Green living walls
- Public realm enhancements and upgraded shop fronts will create an attractive and safe environment for the improved retail offer throughout the Town Centre
- Neighbourhood green spaces and pocket parks to promote healthy and active communities
- Low maintenance street trees and additional planting
- Improved public space at St Hilda’s Square



Green spaces and public realm

3.6 Climate Change

South Tyneside Council is committed to protecting and enhancing our natural environment, with focus on halting biodiversity loss and building resilience to the effects of a changing climate.

We aim to secure a future that sustains and supports our wellbeing, economy, and environment by:

- Advancing towards a climate-positive Borough.
- Enabling nature to recover and thrive.
- Enhancing resilience through adaptation and responding to environmental challenges.
- Promoting sustainable choices and behaviours and inspiring positive change.
- Supporting connection to the natural environment.

Green blue infrastructure – the green and blue spaces that exist within and between urban areas – is an essential part of creating a successful, sustainable and liveable location. Parks, gardens, street trees, green roofs, roadside verges and waterways along with many other components all form part of a rich network that is integrated with the built environment. It helps connect people, wildlife and nature providing many different functions and benefits to communities and the economy.

It provides space for nature to thrive, encouraging intergenerational interaction with nature through education and access, improves residents, and visitor health and well-being, reduces the risk of flooding and water pollution, provides active travel opportunities such as walking and cycling, keeps urban areas cool and shaded, increases climate resilience, provides opportunities for social interaction, and improved air quality and aesthetic value.

We are committed to the development of a low carbon, sustainable and resilient Borough. New development will avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and manage the risks through adaptation measures. Through its location, orientation, layout and design, new development will minimise energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat plans by identifying and incorporating suitable areas for renewable energy generation and its supporting infrastructure.

South Tyneside benefits from a range of natural sources of renewables, clean and sustainable energy. Solar, wind, tidal, wave, hydroelectric all present opportunities to harness our Borough's natural resources to generate clean, sustainable electricity. In addition, ground, minewater and river heat sources can be taken advantage of to produce low carbon heat.

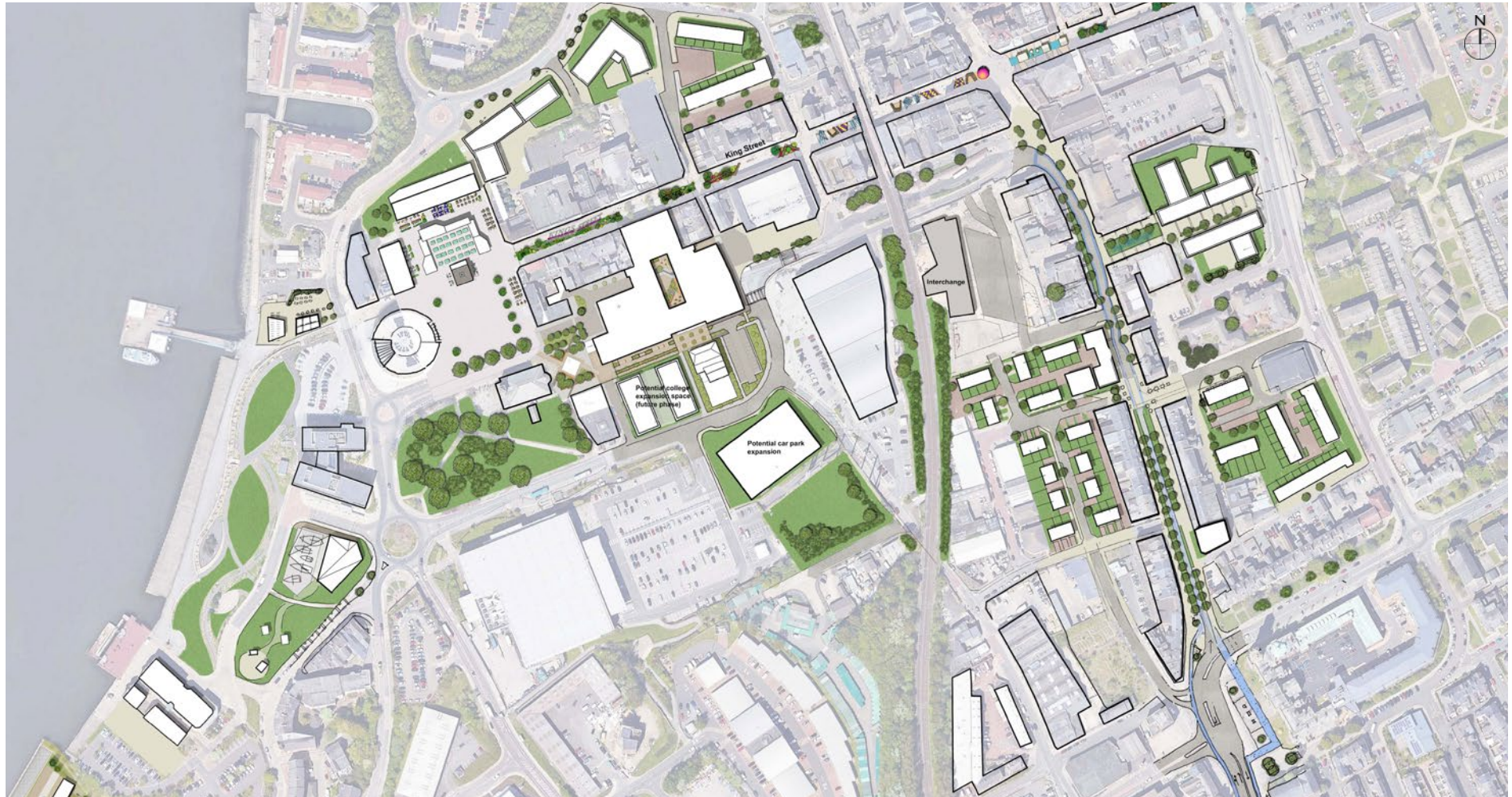
We will promote low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings and consider future climate risks from site allocation through to development promoting climate adaptation approaches in development and public realm designs, integrating mitigation and adaptation actions.

We will drive forward the retrofit of existing buildings to maximise their overall efficiency by improving the heat retention, minimising energy consumption through efficient appliances, maximising their potential for on-site renewable generation through measures which are complementary with the aesthetic of the building in question and the surrounding area.

Green blue infrastructure that improves adaptation, biodiversity and amenity is required, which builds in flexibility to allow future adaptation, considering the potential vulnerability of a development to climate change risk over its whole lifetime.



04 The Masterplan



The Town Centre Masterplan Vision is based around the five sub areas introduced earlier. These are: Mill Dam, Town Centre; Coronation Street; New College and Southern Gateway.

4.1 Placemaking

The Masterplan Vision is underpinned by the aim of making South Shields an attractive place with spaces and buildings that make it an inviting place to be in, for visitors to experience and for local people to be proud of.

The Masterplan Vision seeks to encourage uses that will draw more people to the Town Centre and improve the overall offer, particularly around culture, hospitality and driving footfall between our award winning beach (Sunday Times Beach of the Year 2022) and the riverside (home to the Word and the Customs House). Improving these linkages and capturing more of this footfall will be critical and the relocation of the College campus providing a real boost and extra vitality to South Shields Town Centre.



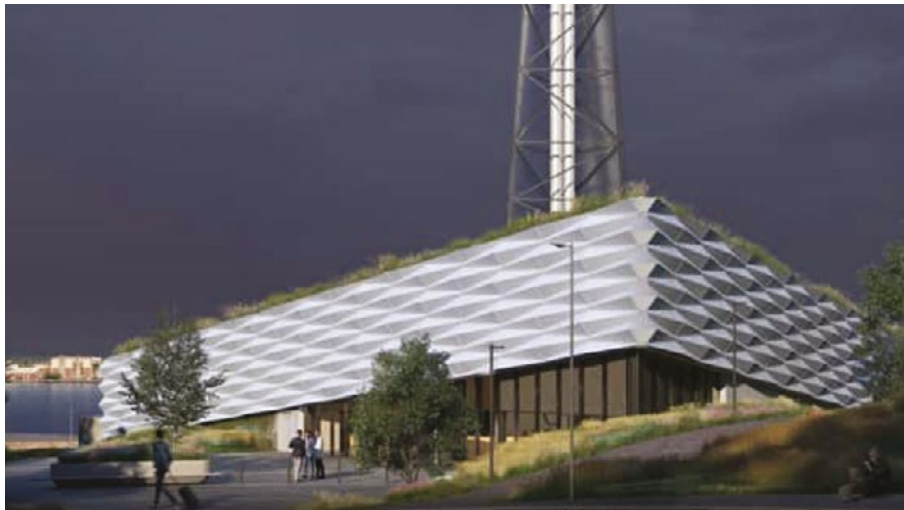
South Shields Market Place

4.2 Uses

The Masterplan Vision encourages many different uses including retail, residential, food and drink, cultural and educational. The new Tyne Coast College campus proposals will establish a significant further education presence in the Town Centre which will complement the arts and cultural offer provided at The Word and the Customs House.

Encouraging a wider food and drink offer will be important to diversify the Town Centre and increase footfall given the decline in retail over recent years. Space for semi-permanent food and drink stalls within the Market Place is shown within the Masterplan Vision alongside other opportunities such as a new cafe / food and beverage premises adjacent to the ferry landing.

Public realm improvements will be designed to try and encourage more activity in the Town Centre. 'Meanwhile' uses will be encouraged in vacant buildings along King Street and Fowler Street, and there is scope for further expansion of the college campus in the future.



Holborn Energy Centre

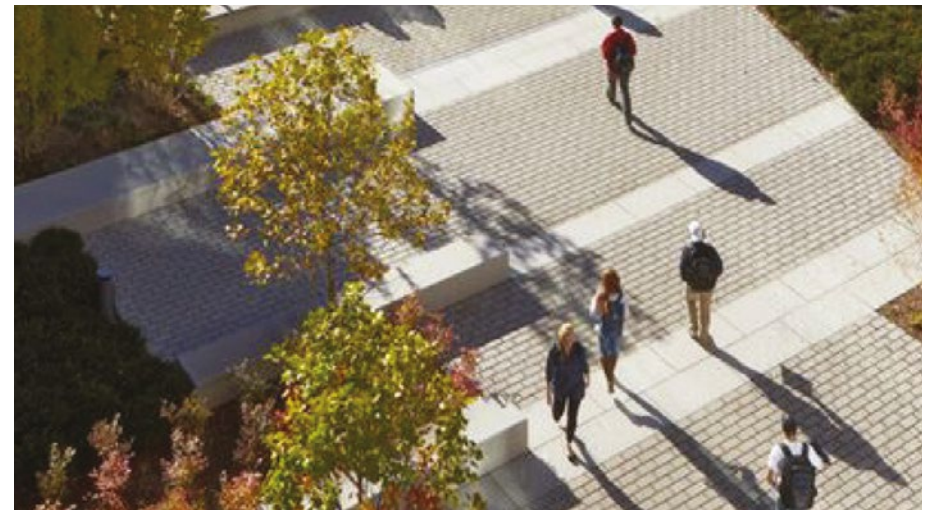
4.3 Zero Carbon

Achieving net zero carbon will require the reduction of energy use and meeting demand from renewable resources. Retrofitting buildings in the Town Centre will assist with meeting net zero alongside opportunities to increase the amount of local renewable electricity generation, with the deployment of rooftop, integrated or ground mounted PV installations to be investigated.

The use of localised networks to connect heat producers and users and to utilise shared heat pumps will also be explored.

Nature based solutions that support the delivery of a wider green / blue infrastructure strategy will be introduced as part of wider public realm proposals.

New development such as the college campus will be designed to have a high efficiency external fabric, whilst the nearby Transport Interchange will encourage the use of public transport.



Outdoor green spaces

4.4 Health and Well-being

The Masterplan Vision aims to encourage real change of the wider community by creating a vibrant Town Centre, opportunities for a healthy and prosperous lifestyle, new homes and more jobs. The Town Centre is deficient in terms of both quality and quantity of green space and high quality public realm. The Masterplan Vision aims to create welcome streets and spaces, improve existing ones and make streets greener.

The public realm will be designed to encourage exercise by making it easy and pleasant to walk and cycle. It will also be designed to encourage sociable spaces where people want to spend time. Generous planting of street trees and other landscaping will mitigate air pollution, provide urban cooling and improve biodiversity and seasonal interest. More importantly, this will give people more contact with nature, an important element in reducing stress and improving mental well-being.

4.5 Market and Enterprise

Commercial activity within the Town Centre is not operating as strongly as it has in the past due to many economic and social reasons. Better designed public realm, upgraded shop fronts and an improved food and drink offer will attract more custom. The Masterplan Vision aims to bring more activity including evening vitality in targeted locations with a covered market hall, 'pop up' food and drink area and enhanced Market Place options to be explored.

4.6 Homes

The Masterplan Vision identifies several new residential sites across the Town Centre. These sites will be delivered incrementally over time but the Southern Gateway area will be a housing growth area with new homes located on space currently utilised as surface car parks. Residential development is also encouraged to the north of Market Place.

Providing a wide range of new housing within and around the Town Centre will help increase the overall Town Centre population.

The Masterplan Vision aims to deliver:

- High quality new homes
- A range of homes to suit every age and income level
- Improved quality and increased diversification of housing
- Diversity in design to achieve an appropriate density for each site
- Energy efficient and low carbon homes
- Micro energy grids for the Town Centre

4.7 Connectivity

The Masterplan Vision seeks to encourage connections and linkages across the Town Centre, linking together different sub areas and key local attractions. Strategic connections and linkages are identified on the plan opposite and can be summarised as follows:

- Holborn and Mill Dam - an improved riverside walkway linking new housing at Holborn, the Customs House and Mill Dam
- Westoe to Fowler Street
- Mill Dam to Sea Road



Proposed connectivity improvements

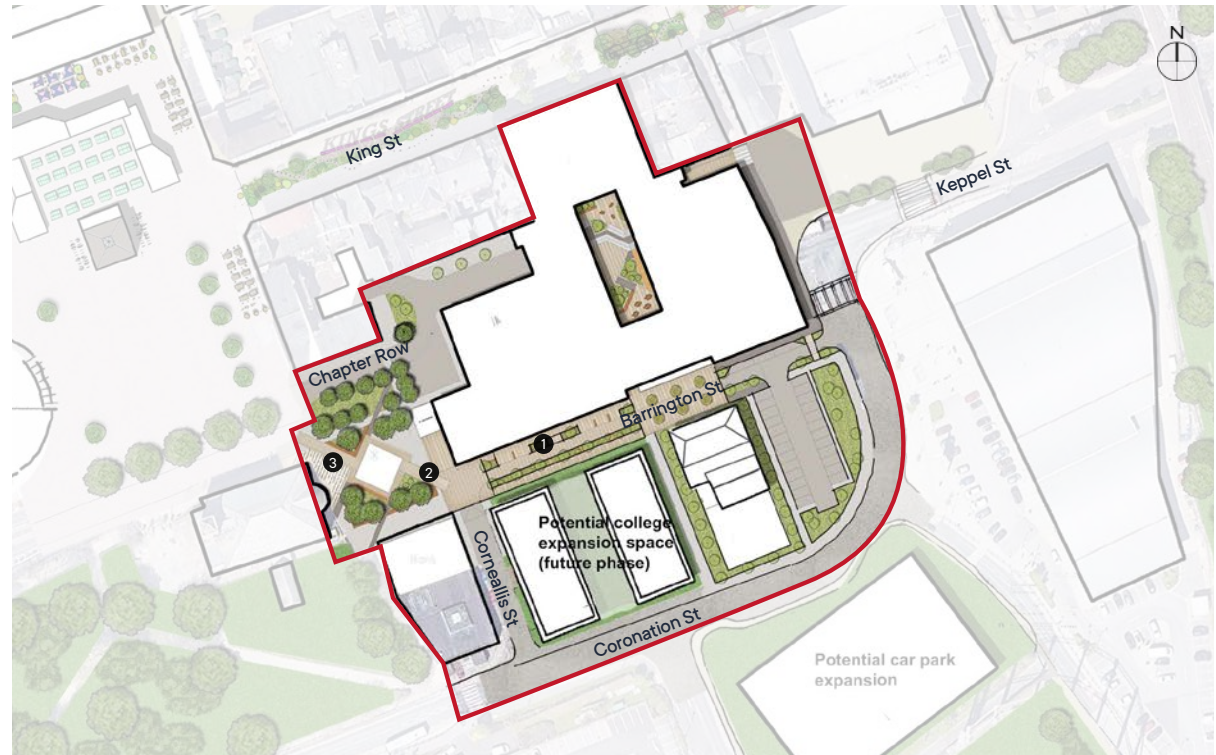
4.8 New College

Design Approach

The 11,500m² New College site is bound by Coronation Street to the south and King Street to the north, connecting to the high street via a small pedestrian link. The site will play a key part in improving the Town Centre; increasing footfall and perception of the area and providing a modern campus for the college.

The new college campus will provide a new focal and social hub for the Town Centre for students, residents and visitors alike. The campus will have a primary frontage along King Street with commercial ground floor uses such as cafe and salons to animate the high street. The main entry point is also located on King Street and a double height atrium is used to create an impressive frontage to the college. Teaching and working areas will overlook this entrance and encourage further interaction.

Along Barrington Street a campus feel is proposed, which will be achieved through a considered use of materials, where shared surfaces and landscaping will be utilised. A set back in the building line and large glazing areas will help frame the setting of the Listed Building and create a dynamic refractory space for students. A secondary access point to the main college will be provided along Barrington Street, whilst a dedicated marine simulator access will also reinforce the connection between the listed building and marine facilities within the main campus.



Potential design approach



Proposed new college visualisations'

Design Principles

- Create a strong frontage to King Street
- Respect and respond to listed no. 16 Barrington Street
- Improved public realm around the proposed new campus buildings
- Take into account requirements for servicing and access for existing businesses

Landscape and Public Realm

- Grassed space adjacent to Cornwallis Street with tree planting - allows for temporary events
- Barrington Street to become a shared surface space with appropriate surface materials
- Opportunity for rain gardens, street trees / landscaping - improves biodiversity and drainage
- Public square at the western gateway / connecting point to Market Place - an improved, attractive setting to St Hilda's Church and domestic-scale space in contrast to Market Place
- Central courtyard to the new college building - provides opportunity for contact with the external environment both physically and visually.



Proposed new college visualisations fronting no. 16 Barrington Street

Movement and Circulation

- Primary access to campus from King Street; secondary student access from Barrington Street
- Servicing arrangements to adjoining businesses to be maintained

Land Use

- Education with café
- 3 to 4 storey for new college building; maximum height of 4 to 5 storeys

Future Expansion Space

The area to the west of the listed building could temporarily become a flexible grassed space for recreation / events that could enhance the student experience and overall Town Centre offer. In the long term this may be used for future expansion by the College.

4.9 Mill Dam

Design Approach

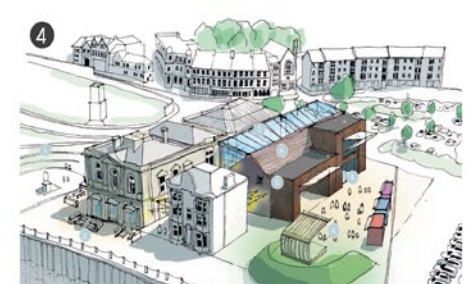
The Masterplan Vision proposals for Mill Dam are focused around the Customs House, which provides a major regional cultural offer and the Mill Dam development site to the north. The Masterplan vision illustrates how a mixed use development could come forward on this site.

Reconfiguration of the Customs House and internal works with an extension to the south west will increase the size of the practice areas and provide an opportunity for a glazed link between the auditorium and rehearsal areas.

An upgraded food and drink premises across two floors is proposed, taking advantage of river views.

The glazed atrium will provide a new entrance and hub to the building.

A series of alternative development options were identified through the 'Our South Tyneside Conversation' campaign for the former Mill Dam development site, including reflecting the opportunity of this site with riverside views. The proposed vision for the Mill Dam development site is to redevelop it as part of the town's cultural offer with a marine centre / attraction.



Potential design approach

Design Principles

- High quality extension and alteration to the Customs House to enhance the town's cultural offer
- Support and encourage patronage of pubs on Mill Dam and explore opportunities for outdoor seating
- Culture-led development on former Mill Dam redevelopment site
- Outdoor performance space linked to the Customs House
- Respond to historic chimney and wall to Mill Dam
- Design proposals to reflect historic riverside location

Landscape and Public Realm

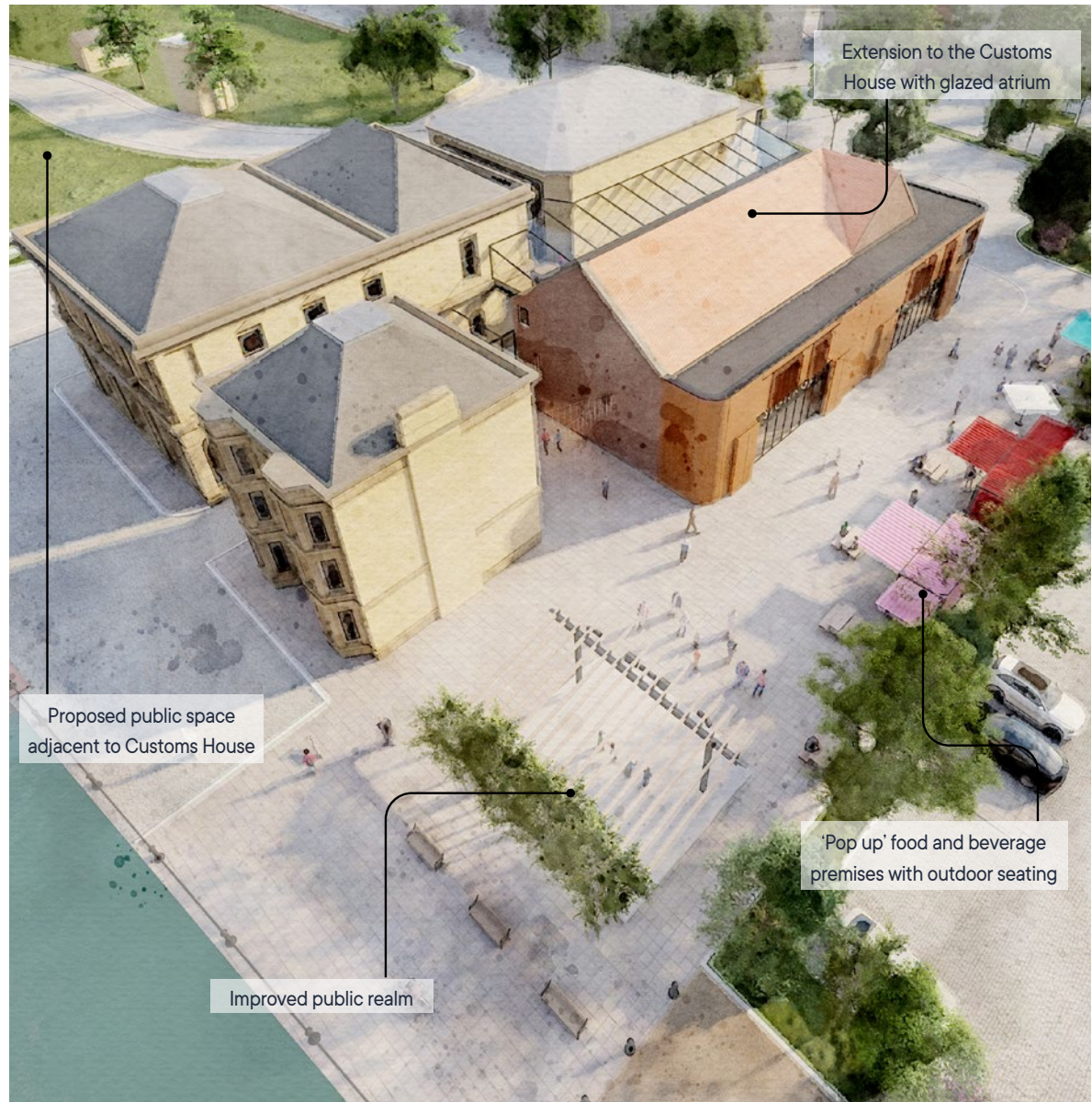
- New public space adjacent to the Customs House

Movement and Circulation

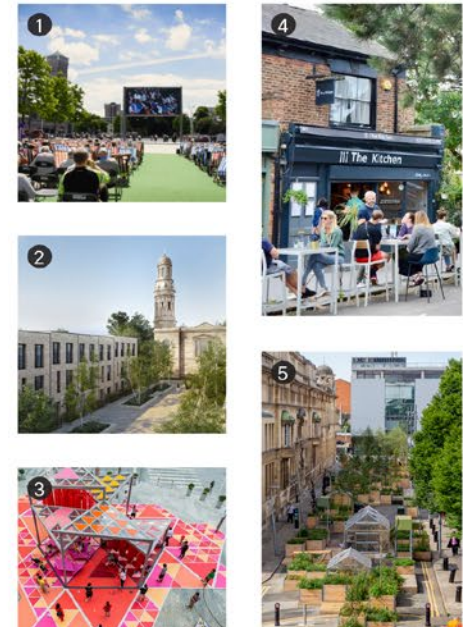
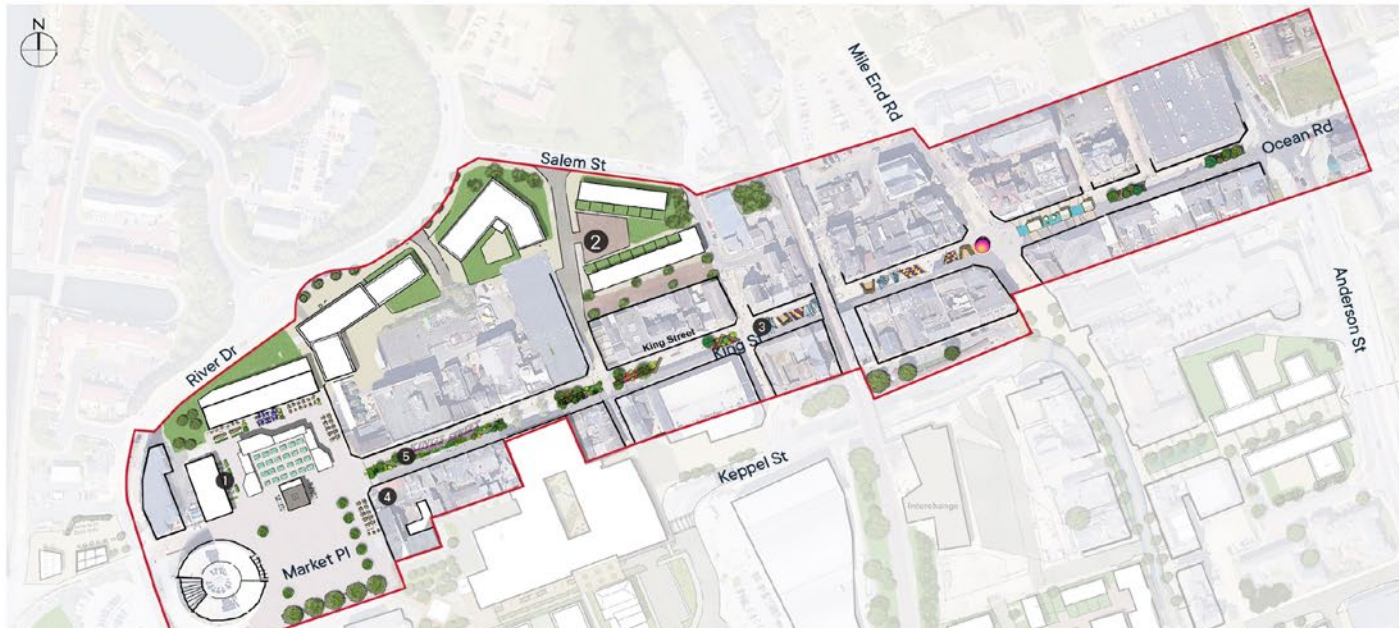
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity along waterfront between Holborn and Harton Quays
- Improved cycle and walking routes

Land Use

- Leisure and culture – marine attraction on Mill Dam redevelopment site; public space adjacent to the Customs House
- Food and beverage- extension to the Customs House and opportunities adjacent to the Ferry Landing
- Mobility Hub – maximising Ferry landing location and sustainable travel opportunities



Potential improvements and extension to Customs House



Potential design approach

4.10 Town Centre

Design Approach

King Street and Market Place are key spaces and movement corridors within the Town Centre. The Masterplan Vision proposes public realm improvements to King Street relating to surface materials, additional planting, new seating, lighting and public art. Detailed proposals will tie in with works to construct the new college campus. The intention is for public realm improvements to create a series of zones along King Street including play, seating / rest and art. These zones will combine robust tree planting, raised planters and improved lighting to radically alter the appearance of King Street.

Opportunities to create space for small local retailers will be explored as will an indoor or partially sheltered space within the vicinity of the Market Place.

Additional proposals include improved food and drink around Market Place, a food hall within prominent empty buildings and mixed-use redevelopment of the northern end of the space. An open air theatre/ performance space and café could be introduced within St Hilda's Square, providing opportunities for activity and links to the new college campus.

North of King Street, longer term proposals include residential redevelopment which takes advantage of views with 3 to 4 storey development over Long Row towards the River Tyne, likely to be formed of apartments. At ground floor level, commercial / food and drink premises will create an active frontage.

Design Principles

- Redevelopment of the northern end of the Market Place
- Repurposed building around Market Place to create covered food hall
- Respect and consider Grade II Listed Old Town Hall and St Hilda's Church
- Outdoor theatre / performance space and cafe within St Hilda's Square to enclose the space
- Residential redevelopment to the north of King Street

Landscape and Public Realm

- Upgrades to Market Place including more soft landscaping, tree planting, rain gardens
- Improvements to King Street including seating, art and soft landscaping

Movement and Circulation

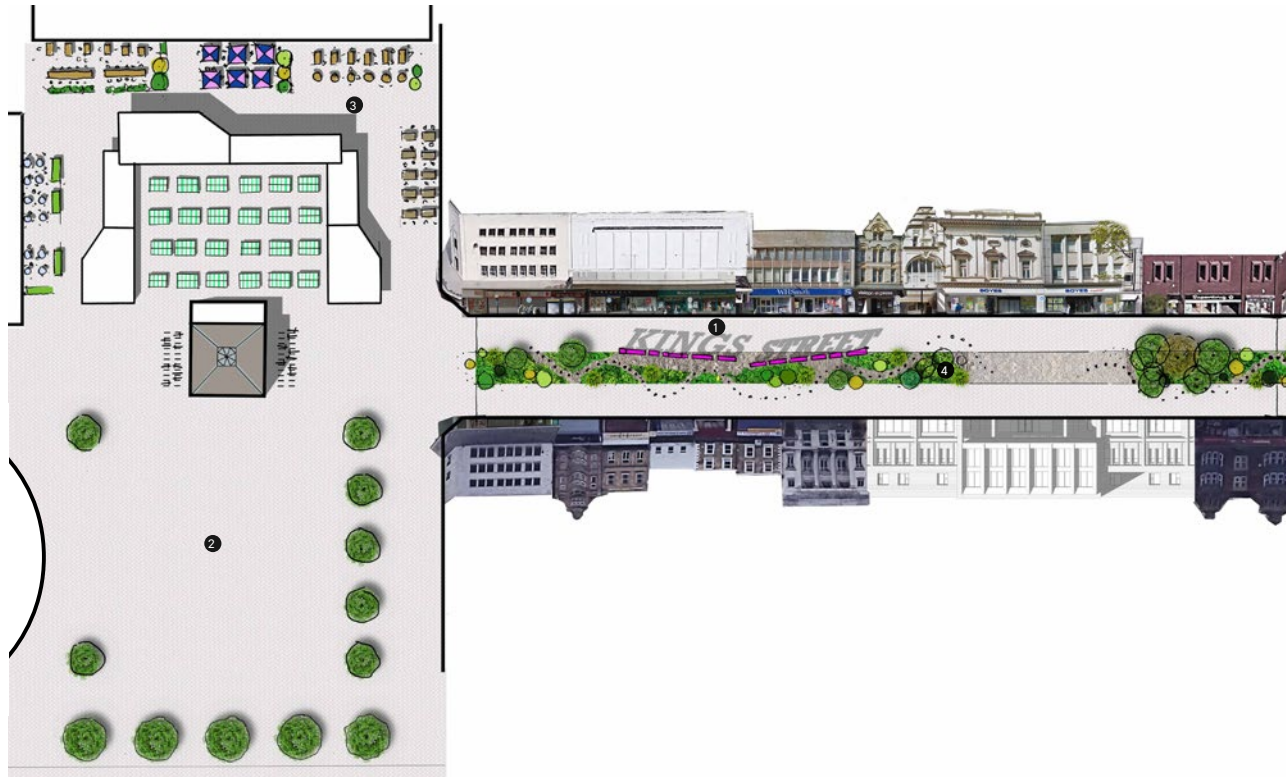
- Market Place to restrict access / servicing between specified hours
- Church Way downgraded for vehicular traffic - access / servicing only
- Maintain servicing for existing businesses on King Street

Land Use

- Regular events programme in the Market Place
- More locally focussed retail offer
- Residential
- Food / drink



Precedent images



Potential public realm improvements at Market Place King Street

King Street Public Realm

The public realm on King Street has huge potential to create a vibrant array of activities and installations to make it a destination in its own right and make the Town Centre into an exciting family day out.

The adjacent images propose that the central 5m strip could be used to create a linear public space whilst preserving emergency vehicular access on either side of the street.

The landscape design could be sub divided into portions with different themes (highlighted below) that act together to create a journey along the length of the street. As people move along the street there are opportunities for surrounding businesses to pick up upon the increase in footfall and encourage people to visit their shops or to dwell outside cafes and bars.



Precedent images



Gather



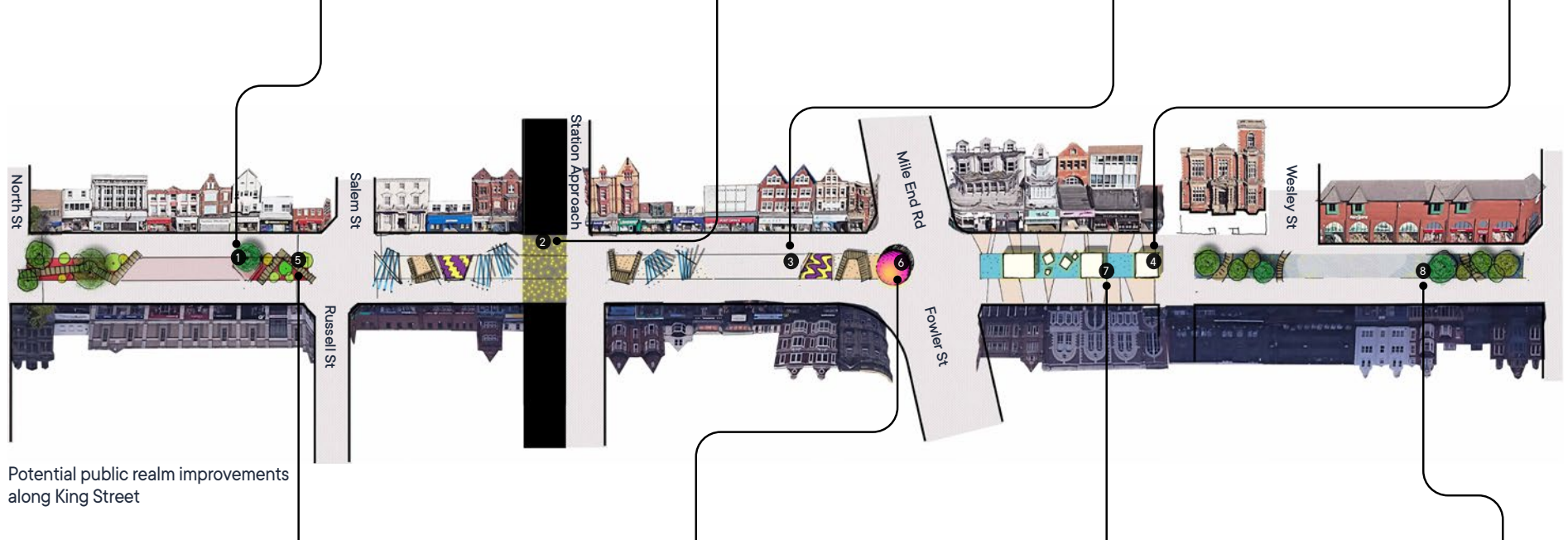
Light



Music



Culture



Potential public realm improvements along King Street



Play



Art



Perform



Water

4.11 Coronation Street

Design Approach

A large part of this area is taken up by the Asda Superstore and adjacent car park. Areas of change are related to the former gas holder site and Oyston Street car park to the east of the Asda. Garden Lane is an important link to the Southern Gateway sub area, providing pedestrian and vehicular connections. To the north of this sub area is the New College area which will improve the character and townscape of the wider area.

The Masterplan Vision indicates how the Oyston Street car park could accommodate car parking with potential for further expansion of this use. As re-development of car parks across the wider Town Centre is brought forward demand will evolve and the Council will review in the future.

Other moves suggested by the masterplan include additional lighting within the green space adjacent to St Hilda's Church, and public realm enhancements to Coronation Street including street trees and rain gardens.

Design Principles

- Decommissioning of gas storage chamber would allow for creation of green space
- Development opportunity site on Oyston Street car park
- Existing retail is a major draw for the Town Centre
- Improved pedestrian routes through green space adjacent to St Hilda's Church with lighting to aid security and improve setting of the Church
- Public realm enhancements to Coronation Street

Landscape and Public Realm

- Creation of multifunctional green space for residents and improved biodiversity
- Public realm enhancements to Coronation Street with tree planting and raised planters where feasible

Movement and Circulation

- Improved linkages between Garden Lane, Mount Terrace and Waterloo Square with lighting underneath metro line
- Opportunity to reinforce connection between new college and college workshops on Franklin Street with improved wayfinding, lighting and consistent public realm
- Maintain access / servicing requirements for Asda Superstore

Land Use

- Surface car parking with potential expansion
- Green space



Potential design approach

4.12 Southern Gateway

Design Approach

The Masterplan Vision envisages substantial change within the Southern Gateway. Fowler Street will be remodelled increasing the width of footways and to make the area more appealing to cyclists and pedestrians.

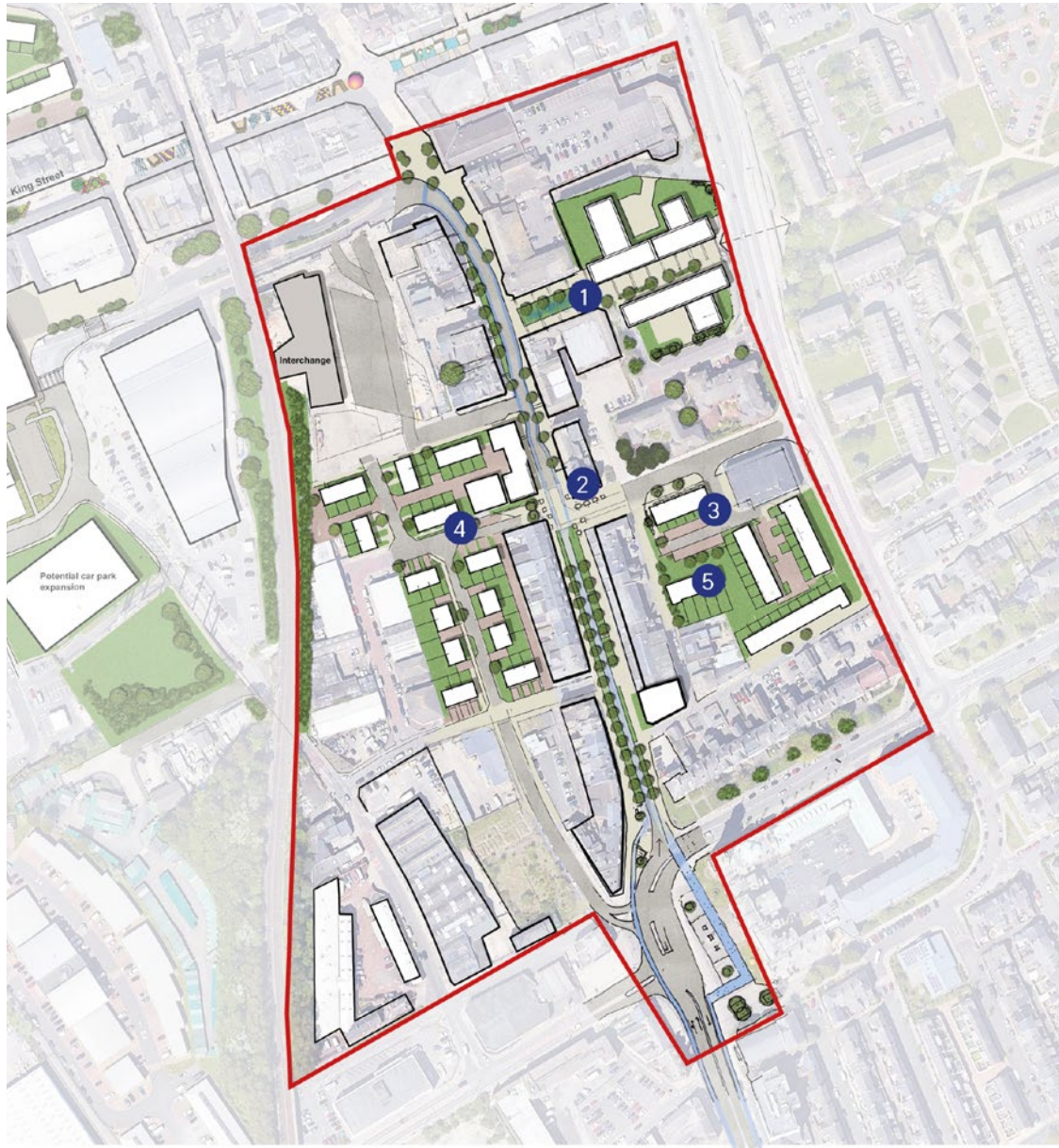
To the east and south of Winchester Street, terraced housing will further reinforce the idea of an exemplar residential neighbourhood.

On Fowler Street, public realm works with soft landscaping, rain gardens and trees will transform the appearance of the street. There will be a general consolidation of retail with the opportunity for conversion to residential use.

Convenience retail servicing new housing will also be encouraged. The Masterplan Vision aims to create a distinctive urban village feel along Fowler Street which is different to the retail core on King Street. This will be achieved through public realm works and a wider shift in emphasis with more residential development east and west of Fowler Street, with local services and facilities located on Fowler Street and the new residential offer helping to sustain this.



Precedent images



Potential design approach



Precedent images

Winchester Street / Fowler Street

The Southern Gateway area of the masterplan aims to create a sense of identity and community to encourage residential development and investment in the area. This can be achieved by making the following changes:

- Consolidation of retail along Fowler Street into key areas such as the junction of Winchester St and Fowler Street.
- Encouraging incremental conversion of properties to residential.
- Widening pavements in key areas to encourage outdoor use by neighbouring businesses.
- Greening up of public realm to create an attractive backdrop for surrounding properties and businesses.
- Reducing traffic to encourage pedestrians and cyclists along Fowler Street and make the space safer and more family friendly.





Potential design approach along Fowler Street

Design Principles

- Residential development of surface car parks to provide high quality housing for a broad range
- 2 to 3 storey housing with opportunities for innovative plan forms including amenity garden space above gardens, duplex housing and back to back homes
- Transform Fowler Street through soft landscaping and tree lined boulevard, rain gardens and improvements to the public realm



1 Proposed Front Elevation
1:100



2 Proposed Side (West) Elevation
1:100

Potential elevations of new college student accommodation which could be located within this sub area

Landscape and Public Realm

- Cycle lane along Fowler Street
- Opportunity for pocket parks within residential areas
- Widened footway and tree lined boulevard along Fowler Street
- Reinforce key nodes such as Winchester Street, Thomas Street and Fowler Street junction with change in surface materials

Movement and Circulation

- Cycle lane along Fowler Street
- Improved pedestrian crossings along Fowler Street
- Cycle connection to Fowler Street from the corner of Erskine Street to A1018
- Minimise vehicular traffic on Fowler Street at strategic locations to assist with the creation of pedestrian and cycle friendly streets

Land Use

- Residential - 2 to 3 storeys in height
- Opportunity for an increase in height north of Thomas Street and on prominent corners / gateways
- Conversion of existing properties to residential use
- Rationalisation of retail
- Opportunity for food and drink including cafe around key nodes
- Reduce surface car parking



05 Delivery Approach

5.1 Funding, Viability & Partnership Working

The Masterplan and Vision have been developed to provide deliverable interventions which will generate footfall in the Town Centre whilst creating the environment and confidence for others to invest. By doing this we will secure a sustainable future for our Town Centre with a vibrant high street at its heart.

We know that the world is changing and our Town Centres continue to be subject to much volatility as the way we shop, socialise and spend our free time continues to evolve. We need our Masterplan to be able to respond accordingly and it is not intended to be a fixed plan of how every part of the Town Centre will change. Instead, it is a live document, one that allows for flexibility and variation, adapting to changing economic and cultural circumstances prevalent at the time.

It is a blueprint for the delivery of infrastructure and development allowing the council, partner organisations, landowners, investors and developers to work together to bring about further meaningful change. Cross-cutting infrastructure investment such as public realm, highways, landscaping and certain works will be Council led but there is no 'one size fits all' approach. We cannot do this on our own and will work with others to deliver bespoke solutions where needed.

Development viability will be a challenge to achieving the Masterplan Vision. Even for non-complex sites and schemes, development viability and feasibility in the town and wider region can be a barrier. This is the consequence of relatively modest revenues set against increasing construction costs.

To deliver the ambitious scale of change outlined in the Masterplan Vision, significant investment will be required including land acquisition, demolition, site preparation, engineering, public realm works and delivery of high-quality buildings. The cost and complexity of each of these elements must be considered when defining suitable funding and delivery arrangements. But, as each investment is made or site is redeveloped, the context for the next development opportunity will improve bolstering viability.

For some projects it will be appropriate for the Council to take the lead funding work through our Medium-Term Financial Plan or grant funding opportunities where the Council has a strong track record. There will also be opportunities that flow from the Mayoral Combined Authority should this be formally established by Government. Elsewhere it will be more appropriate for the private sector to take the lead and our role will be to facilitate development or to dispose of sites that we have assembled.

The Council recognises that regeneration and development is a complex and risky process with programmes of work that often span multiple years. Recent high-profile schemes have demonstrated the benefits of working with our partners to deliver such projects. By combining land, expertise and funding whilst sharing risk we have delivered the Transport Interchange with Nexus and are now working with the College to bring them into the Town Centre.

There is a limit to what the Council can do to initiate development of privately owned buildings and land so want to hear from owners, investors and developers who are keen to explore opportunities to invest in the Town Centre. This doesn't have to be large scale, high profile investment, we're keen to hear your ideas and how we can help facilitate them.



Precedent images

5.2 Areas of Focus

As set out in this document, we must reposition the Town Centre to ensure it is a place where people want to live, work, study and socialise. There are overarching areas of opportunity and challenge where we must focus our efforts in order to diversify the Town Centre.

Underutilised floor space and empty buildings

Vacancy rates on the high street have still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. In the Town Centre there is too much empty floor space, particularly at upper floor levels. Over the next 5 years this space will need to be repurposed with a shift away from traditional retail dominated model. We will work with existing owners to explore ways of bringing about this change with the relocation of the college to the Town Centre acting as catalyst for the initial opportunities.

Subject to funding and where appropriate, we will carry out strategic acquisitions of buildings that are unlikely to be brought back in to use to create development sites for viable alternative uses.

Concentrate retail with a local focus

Many national retailers are scaling back their high street presence in line with their individual business objectives. Linked to the above, there is an oversupply of retail space on our two main high streets of King Street and Fowler Street which must be distilled to a sustainable core. Despite the challenges at a national level, there is a strong sense of entrepreneurship within South Tyneside and we will explore ways of supporting local businesses who want to have a high street presence.

Residential development

The Masterplan indicates a relatively substantial quantity of new residential development within the Town Centre across multiple sites. This development will be predominantly led by the private sector and come forward gradually over time on a phased basis. We are also keen to facilitate opportunities for residential conversion of upper floor units around the Town Centre.

Site Assembly

We recognise that, as a local authority, we have opportunities to carry out site assembly that others do not. We will continue to bid for grant funding and, where appropriate, consider the use of compulsory purchase powers to redevelop key sites within the Town Centre.

Public Realm, Green Space & Management

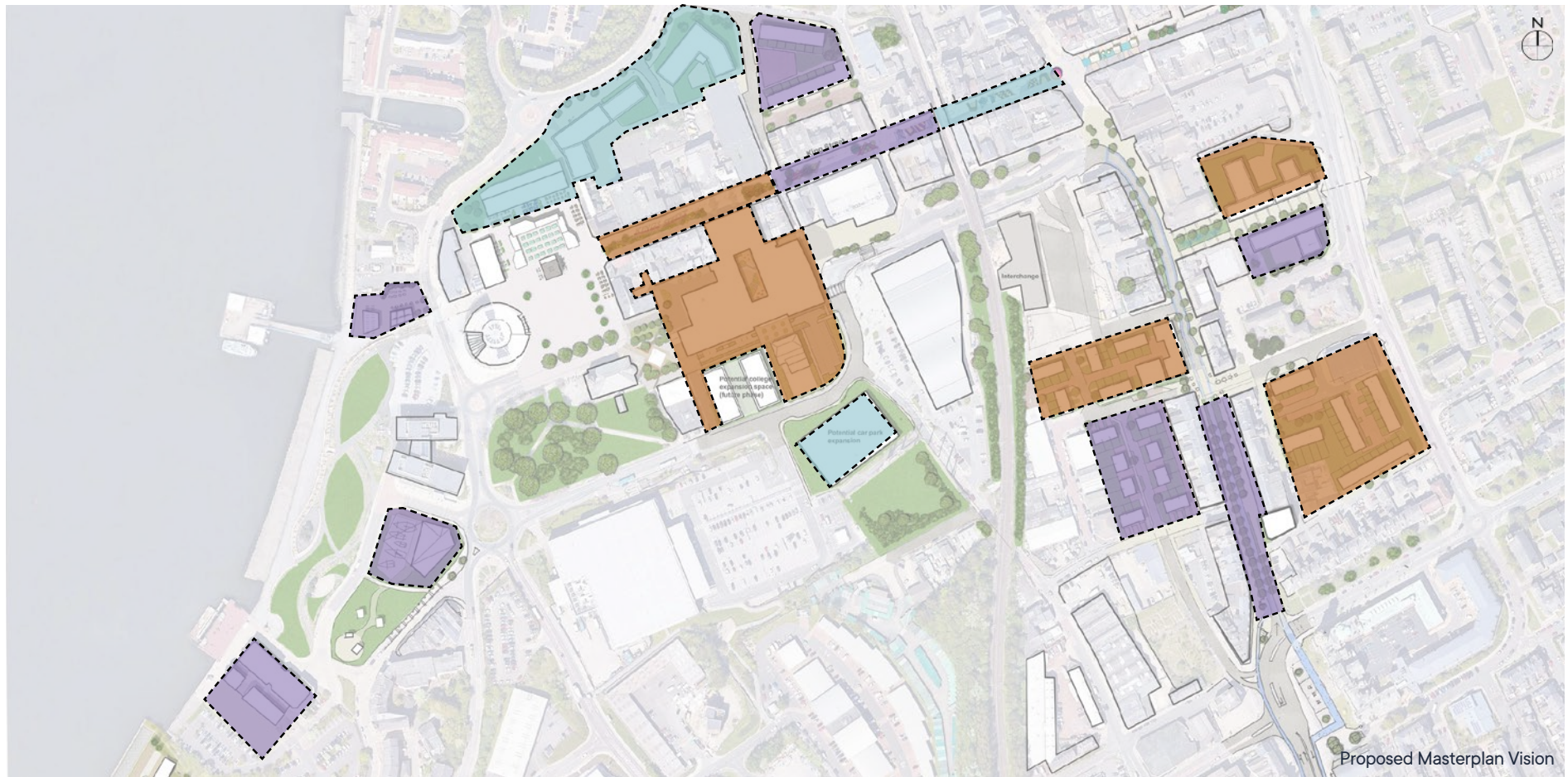
Creating a good first impression and maintaining a welcoming setting will be critical to the future success of our Town Centre. We will continue to invest in our public realm and green spaces to create a high-quality environment where people feel safe and want to spend their time. We know we can't just focus on new projects and that the small details make such a difference. Low-cost interventions like painting street furniture and planting will compliment the more high profile changes.




We will also work with local businesses and partners to develop a programme of activity and events to generate footfall and help enhance the sense of community amongst Town Centre businesses.



Precedent images

5.3 Indicative Phasing Plan



-  0-2 years
-  3-5 years
-  5 years +

“

South Tyneside Council continues to invest to make South Tyneside a place where people live healthy, happy and fulfilled lives.

”

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