

Local Development Framework

Hockley Area Action Plan – Issues and Options



Rochford District Council
Hockley Area Action Plan: Issues and Options
Consultation Draft
January 2009

This document has been produced in conjunction with Urban Initiatives

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS AN AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP)?

1.1.1 An Area Action Plan creates the framework for development sites and planning policies in a specific area. It acts as the focal point for the coordination of other public policies and programmes and guides public and private investment in the area.

1.1.2 Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) is Government guidance which explains what local spatial planning is and how it benefits communities. It also sets out what the key ingredients of local spatial plans are and the key government policies on how they should be prepared. It should be taken into account by local planning authorities in preparing development plan documents and other local development documents. As set out in PPS12 (published June 2008), Area Action Plans should be used to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. PPS12 states that Area Action Plans should:

- Deliver planned growth areas;
- Stimulate Regeneration;
- Protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
- Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures; or
- Focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives

1.2 WHAT DOES THIS AREA ACTION PLAN COVER?

1.2.1 This Area Action Plan covers the area that is defined as Hockley Town Centre through the Local Plan Proposals map (adopted 2006) and adjoining areas where appropriate. Town centres play a key role in providing for local people's everyday needs in terms of shopping, healthcare and leisure. An AAP can provide a framework to ensure that these needs are met. In addition, having regard to the objectives of an Area Action Plan as set out in PPS12, there are a number of reasons that an Area Action Plan is appropriate for the Hockley Town Centre.

1.2.2 First, National Planning Policy Guidance (PPS6) stresses the importance of town centres in terms of promoting sustainable development and seeks to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for growth in existing town centres. Therefore Town Centres are often areas in which significant change is planned.

1.2.3 Secondly, in terms of Rochford district specifically there is pressure on land because of the need to provide additional housing in the

area. By March 2021 the district is required (by the East of England Plan) to accommodate 4,600 new homes.

1.2.4 Thirdly, it has been identified through our analysis and public consultation that there are a number of aspects of Hockley that would benefit from regeneration, for example the shopping area, retail offer and employment area. As set out in PPS12, AAPs can play a role in stimulating this regeneration and in addition, an AAP would have the power to redesignate the employment area for other uses should it be decided that this was desirable.

1.2.5 This AAP will set out a vision for how growth and change can be managed within Hockley and how regeneration of the area might be stimulated through this development. It is hoped that through the evolution and delivery of this AAP a contribution can be made to the Council's vision of making the district 'the place of choice in the county to live, work and visit'.

1.3 WHAT IS THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT?

1.3.1 This document forms the Issues and Options report for the Hockley Area Action Plan. The process of preparing an Area Action Plan can be divided into a number of stages. The first stage involves gathering an evidence base to identify the issues that need to be addressed by the AAP. This baseline work has been carried out through town centre studies for Rochford and Hockley, which have formed the basis of this AAP. The second stage is the preparation of the Issues and Options report that sets out the initial issues and options for the area in question and seeks the views of the public on them. Once the views on this Issues and Options report have been taken into consideration the Council will progress towards submission of the AAP in line with the guidance contained within PPS12.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE AREA AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

1.4.1 The focus for the Area Action Plan is the defined town centre boundary as illustrated on the current Local Plan proposals map.

1.4.2 Hockley has a relatively linear town centre, which gently climbs up the hill from the railway station to the junction of Spa Road and Southend / Main Roads where some town centre uses turn either corner to form an inverted 'T' shape. The retail offer in the town centre is relatively limited and there are few high-street multiples located here. To the south of the study area is a collection of community uses, comprising a library, surgery and the old Fire Station.

1.4.3 The town centre is quite compact and rapidly merges into surrounding residential areas. There is little in the way of gateway features to define the central area. Between the main town centre area and railway station there is a relatively recent development of apartments and town houses. To the rear of this and the town

centre is the Eldon Way employment area. This has seen some recent approvals for conversion of employment units to leisure use.

1.4.4 The opportunities presented in this report sit within the framework of regional and local policy documentation which guides future change and development in the area. A detailed policy context section can be found in appendix A, however the key points are outlined below.

1.4.5 At a regional level the East of England Plan (RSS14) highlights the potential of Town Centres in helping to achieve the development objective of making more use of previously developed land. In addition, The Plan aims to foster mixed use economies throughout the region, with town centre development playing a key role in improving economic opportunities and quality of life for local people.

1.4.6 The Rochford District Local Plan (adopted 2006) seeks to promote sustainable development patterns that minimise land take and reduce the need to travel. The Councils Core Strategy (which will eventually replace the Local Plan) is currently at Preferred Options stage and sets out its preferred option for Hockley Town Centre (policy RTC5) as delivering:

- A safe and high quality environment for residents;
- Enhanced retail offer for Hockley;
- Additional opportunities for town centre living through the provision of residential development;
- A public space within a defined centre;
- Improved connectivity between retail focus and train station;
- Redevelopment of industrial uses for retail, leisure and residential development; and
- Green landscaping along Main Road, Spa Road and Southend Road to enhance the visual amenity.

1.4.7 Alongside the regional and local planning policy documents, there are a number of other documents (Rochford Futures Study; Annual Monitoring Report; Urban Capacity Study; Employment Land Study; Conservation Area Appraisal) that explore the issues that Hockley is facing. These documents have fed into this Area Action Plan and are also summarised in Appendix A.

1.5 GETTING YOUR VIEWS

1.5.1 Your views are needed to help us to assess whether we have fully considered all the issues and opportunities facing the study area and have adequately assessed the potential future options for development of the area (Please see Section 4 for details).

1.5.2 In order to encourage discussion and consideration of the matters in this report we have presented questions throughout this report. These questions are meant to be thought provoking and there is no

need to answer all the questions. Your responses to these questions and any other submissions will be taken forward to the preparation of the document.

Figure 1: The AAP area

Image source: Google



2 THE ISSUES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 In preparing this Area Action Plan consultation was undertaken with the public via the Council's website and through a Placecheck Initiative where members of the Citizens Panel were invited to participate in a workshop event to explore issues and opportunities for the Town Centre. The feedback from these exercises has helped to shape and inform the vision and strategy to the future planning, development and regeneration of the town centre. The main points raised are presented in the sections below.

2.2 WHAT YOU TOLD US

Interactive web-based consultation

2.2.1 The web based consultation highlighted a number of key points which are summarised below:

- Parking regulations are disregarded (they should be more clearly marked) and there should be more free parking (suggested site was on the Plumberow Avenue side of the Railway Station)
- There is litter on the streets and many aspects of the town environment are in a poor state of repair including bus shelters and seats, open space near the railway bridge, the pavements, the shop car parks and shop fronts,
- There is not a wide range of shops: too many charity shops / take away shops / closed down shops, not enough family restaurants, cafes and clothes stores
- There could be improvement of the station forecourt
- A youth meeting place is needed and it was suggested that Spa Pump rooms could be used for a community use
- CCTV cameras are needed
- There is a need to improve traffic issues in Hockley - Traffic congestion at Spa Road roundabout and the junction of Spa Road, Station Road and Station Approach – and there should be more cycling facilities
- Development should take place through infilling existing sites / replacing houses with flats rather than encroaching into the greenspace. In addition if development were to take place, infrastructure should match the housing development.
- Development should be environmentally friendly

Placecheck Initiative

2.2.2 The Placecheck events were held to help inform ideas and options for future change and improvement in the town centres of Rochford and Hockley, ensuring that the views and opinions of local residents help generate these options. Placecheck is a method of assessing the qualities of a place, showing what improvements are needed, and focussing people on working together to achieve them.

Placecheck asks questions about the processes of change and the potential for improving the area physically (more details of the place check process can be found in appendix B). The findings are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of Placecheck consultation responses

Questions	Comments
What do you like about Hockley?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has a village feel – is known locally as ‘the village’ - Feeling of community – people know each other - Flowers in the summer - Christmas lights and ceremony - People stay once they have moved in
What do you dislike about Hockley?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rubbish - Traffic - Lack of good shopping - Lack of restaurants - Too many take-away restaurants and charity shops - Poor quality public space at junction of Spa Road and Southend road - Spa building empty - No heart of the village - Inadequate maintenance of buildings – civic pride
What can be changed / improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new heart is needed for the town centre – is currently the main road junction - Join the RC Church garden to the High Street – a new green link - A new square on Eldon Way to rear of Somerfield - Facilities and activities for the youth – youth centre / playground - Cheaper and more frequent public transport - More bike racks - Better community facilities – multi-functional buildings - Better security – CCTV - New leisure and youth uses in Eldon Way, with better links to the town centre - Possible redirection of traffic through one-way system - Toll road! - Proper planted areas around station bridge and steps - Traffic management between station access and road opposite - Car parking to supermarkets and service access

2.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

2.3.1 To properly understand how both town centres work we have undertaken a survey and analysis of both areas in terms of physical development, scale, character, legibility and permeability. This has been based upon the seven objectives of urban design as established through the Government guidance document; 'By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice'. The seven objectives of urban design are:

- Character: A place with its own identity;
 - To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture
- Continuity and Enclosure: A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished;
 - To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas
- Quality of the Public realm: A place with attractive and successful outdoor spaces;
 - To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people
- Ease of movement: A place that is easy to get to and move through;
 - To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport
- Legibility: A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand;
 - To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around
- Adaptability: A place that can change easily;
 - To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions
- Diversity: A place with variety and choice.
 - To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs

2.3.2 In addition to national guidance it is important to recognise that presented within the Essex Design Guide. Originally published in the early 1970s, the Guide was updated in 1997 and again in 2005. It provides guidance for designing within the context of market towns and for lower density schemes. The latest version also provides links to the new Urban Place Supplement (UPS).

2.3.3 The UPS provides a design framework for the delivery of compact, mixed-use sustainable urban development. The guidance emphasises design quality while ensuring the improvement of infrastructure and the sustainability of existing urban places. The UPS is being adopted as a supplementary planning document by most district and borough councils in Essex. The urban design analysis undertaken as part of this baseline report is thus mindful of the advice contained within both the Essex Design Guide and UPS.

2.3.4 This analysis is summarised in the table below, with more detail provided in subsequent plans, images and associated text.

Table 2: Summary urban design assessment of Hockley town centre

Urban Design Objective	Analysis
Character	Hockley town centre is linear, running along Spa Road to the junction with Southend / Main Roads. These are primary traffic routes and have relatively high volumes of traffic along them. The main historic focus of the centre is at the junction of these roads. This is however traffic dominated, buildings are a mix of scales and typologies and it suffers from a lack of coordinated public realm.
Continuity and Enclosure	Development in the town centre is a mix of scales: it is incoherent and uncoordinated. There are many single storey retail units along Spa Road and an ill-defined building line, which undermines the quality of public space.
Quality of the Public Realm	A mass of street furniture and other clutter diminishes the quality and attractiveness of space. This is a particular problem at the junction of Spa Road and Main Road, but also continues along Spa Road where guardrails, on-street parking and some level changes between the road and pavement reduce the enjoyment of the town centre.
Ease of Movement	Given the size of the town centre, it is very walkable. However, better definition of the public realm and enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities may assist local movement. The employment area to the north of the town centre is accessed via one main route which is used by both pedestrians and vehicles. Improving the quality of this and providing additional routes might encourage greater movement and enhanced connectivity.

Legibility	Hockley town centre is poorly defined and there are few clues as to the historic role and development of the town. Gateway features are lacking and the centre rapidly blends into the surrounding residential areas.
Adaptability	The town centre has some good examples of historic buildings, although these are interspersed with more recent purpose built development which may not lend itself to reuse. Leisure uses are beginning to locate in the employment area, although redevelopment is likely to be required to accommodate an enhanced town centre retail offer / community facilities.
Diversity	The mix of uses within the town centre is relatively limited. The retail offer is lacking, although the viability of this is supported by the presence of the neighbouring employment area. The town centre has a cluster of community uses, although this could be better integrated with the centre.

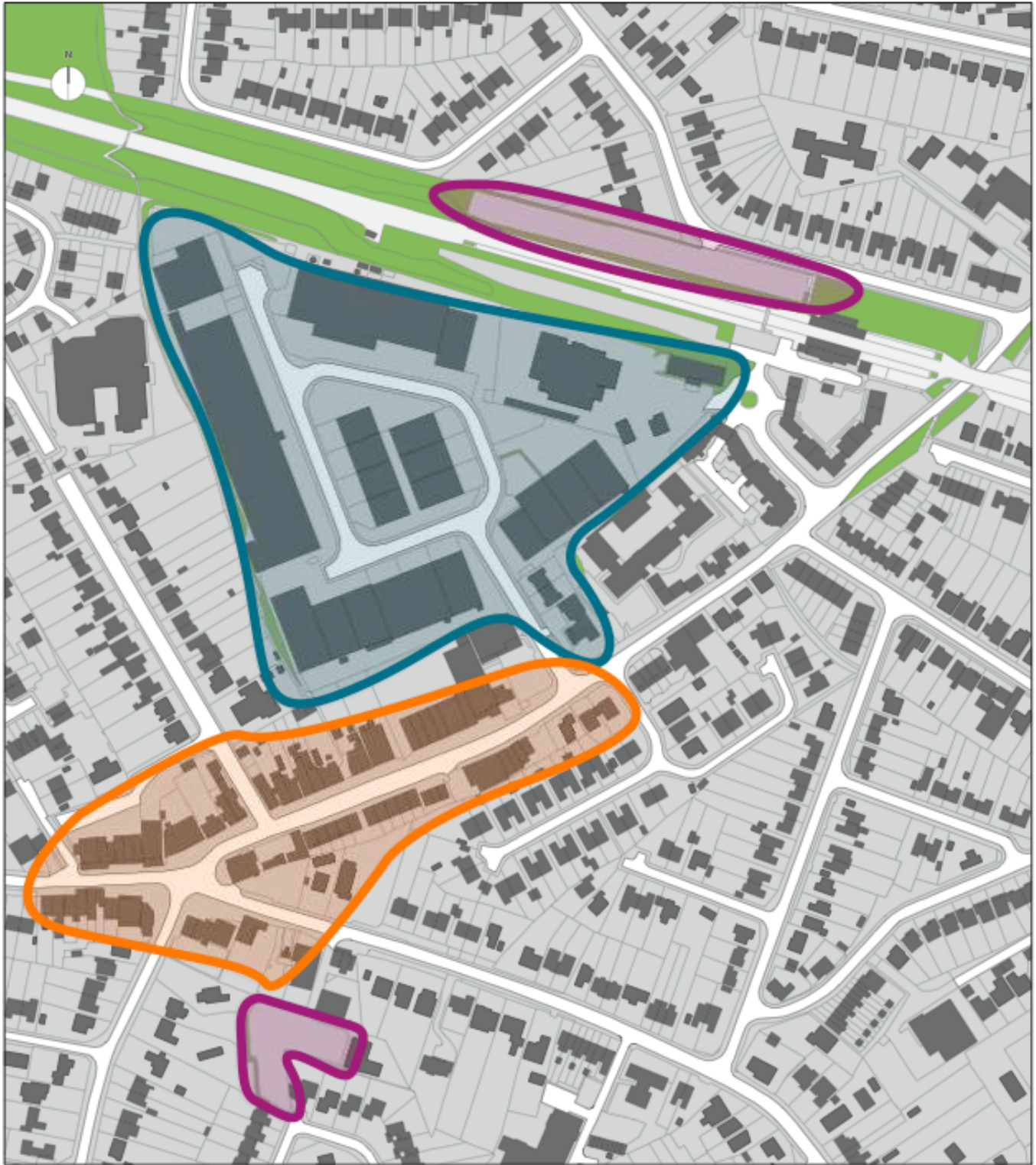
2.4 LAND USES

- 2.4.1 The core retail area in Hockley is along Spa Road and the junction with Main Road and Southend Road. Although primarily retail in nature, this core area also includes a number of commercial activities and community uses, including a cluster of such buildings on Main Road / Southend Road comprising a library, doctors and dental surgery. These are served by a small car park.
- 2.4.2 The largest retail units are found to the north of Spa Road, although the largest recognisable high street chain store is Somerfield. The retail offer mainly comprises convenience goods. Some of the units here have residential or office space above, although these two-three storey buildings are interspersed with a number of single storey units. Along the southern side of Spa Road, retail units are accommodated on a relatively narrow strip of land and all are single storey. Opportunities may exist to explore how larger retail units might be created and how more efficient use of the land can be encouraged.
- 2.4.3 The other main land use within the study area is the employment / industrial area to the north of Spa Road. There have been a number of permissions for leisure uses within this area recently and thus improved links between the employment area and retail area may need to be provided. Although these employment uses might not represent the most attractive neighbouring use for the retail core, they do ensure a customer base for the town centre uses. It may thus be desirable to retain these activities in close proximity to each other, although improvements to the quality and attractiveness (in terms of the built form and environment) of these areas could help enhance the overall vitality of the town centre. The 2008

Employment Land Study stated that this employment site was strategically well placed and, if reallocated for alternative uses, provision should be made for office use within Hockley town centre.

2.4.4 The centre of Hockley blends quickly into the surrounding residential areas to the north and south of Spa Road. The majority of the units are detached and semi-detached inter war houses or bungalows. Other residential units are situated above the retail units on Spa Road

Figure 2: Broad land use plan

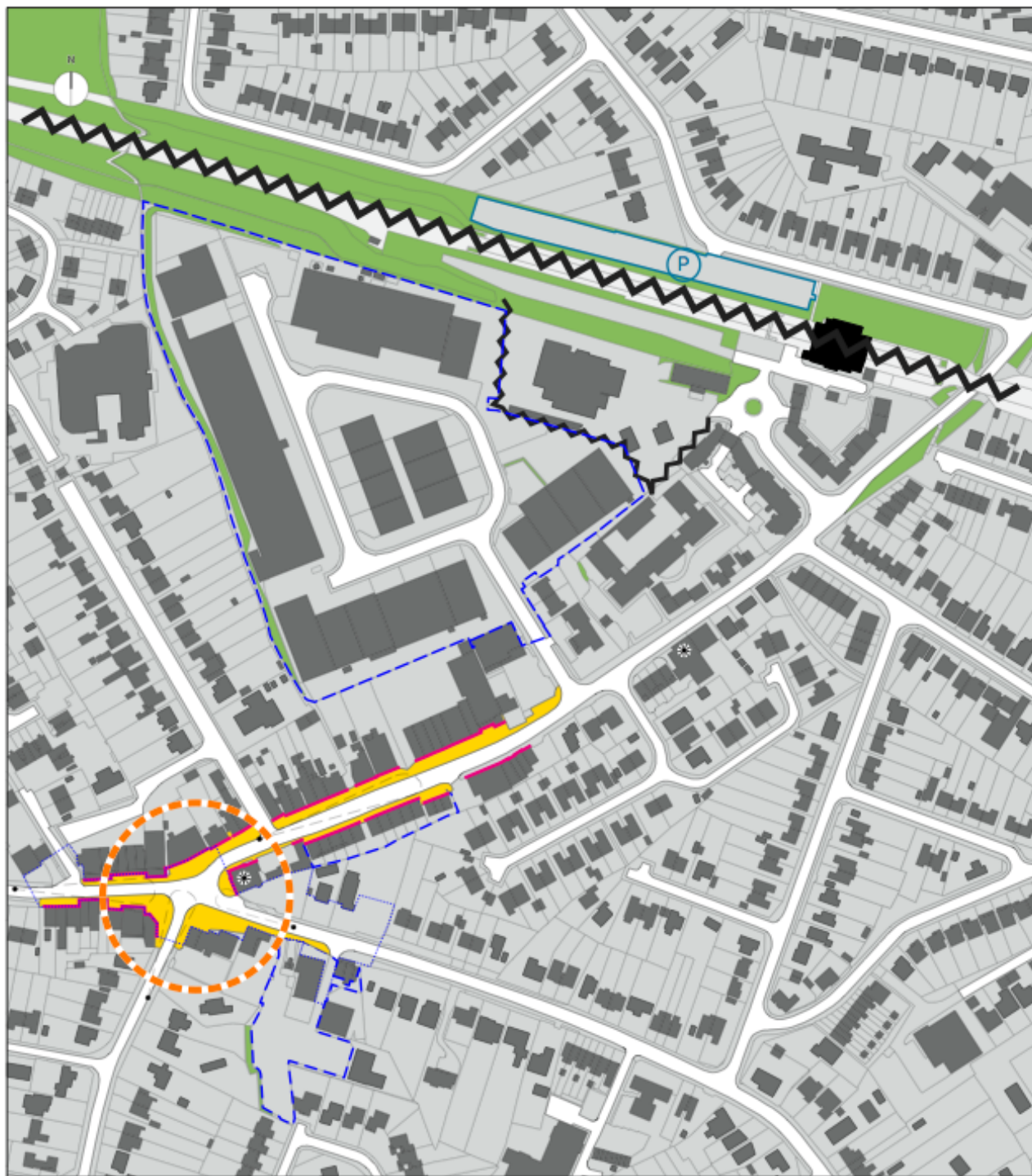


- Business
- Retail, banks, catering
- Car parking

2.5 FORM AND STRUCTURE

- 2.5.1 The main focus of the town centre is the junction of Spa Road and Main / Southend Roads. This is an important node point and gateway for the town centre, where the topography of the town means there are local views to and from this point. However, it suffers from a poor quality, uncoordinated and cluttered public realm. Further, save for the refurbished pub on the junction (which is a local landmark in its own right), buildings here do little to address this important junction. They are a mix of scales and are set back at different distances from the road. The building line is relatively weak. This all results in a space that lacks a sense of place, character and distinctiveness.
- 2.5.2 Elsewhere, Spa Road is relatively well addressed through the presence of active shop frontages and a relatively strong building line. However, the scale of buildings here varies from one to three storeys which do not help to enclose the space: the result being that Spa Road feels wide, which may hinder pedestrian movement and thus undermine the natural retail circuit. Opportunities to improve the quality of the public realm, the scale of buildings and their relationship to the street should thus be explored.
- 2.5.3 Overall, the town centre is of a relatively fine grained scale. The counterpoint to this is the employment area to the north of Spa Road. This is a land hungry resource poorly related and integrated with surrounding uses and where there are some 'left over' spaces. Opportunities may exist to restructure some of this space and to better integrate it with uses on Spa Road. Opportunities may also exist to restructure the cluster of community uses along Main Road, to better link to the town centre and address exposed 'backs' around the car park.

Figure 3: Form and Structure of Hockley town centre



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  Station |  Important view |  Public realm |
|  Key node |  Severance |  Parking |
|  Landmark / important building |  Active commercial frontage |  Opportunity site |
| | |  Undefined area |

2.6 STREET NETWORK / MANAGEMENT

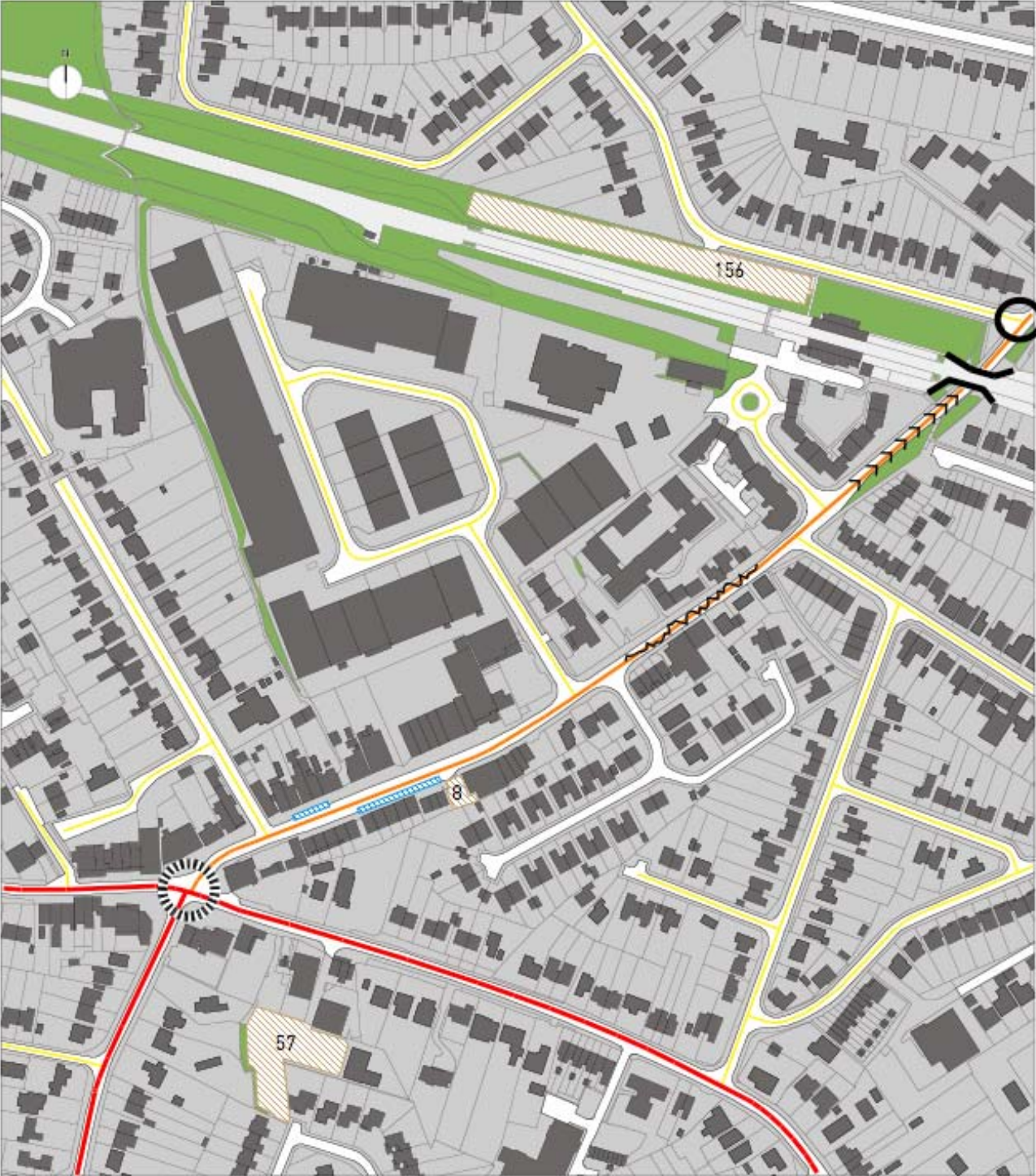
Existing Network of Streets

- 2.6.1 The main highway route through Hockley is along Southend Road and Main Road, linking Hockley with Rochford to the east and Rayleigh to the west. This road is relatively busy rural highway with approximately 15,000 vehicles per day counted on Main Road in September 2007 (sourced from Essex County Highway Improvements Department).
- 2.6.2 Spa Road heads north from the junction of Main Road and Southend Road to Ashingdon and Canewdon. The southern end of Spa Road intersects with Southend Road and Main Road, and is the primary focus of movement in the town centre. Further north, Spa Road is particularly narrow, with approximate carriageway widths in places of 5m. This is an issue given that Heavy Goods Vehicles use this route. Great Eastern Road is a collector road to the east of Spa Road, with Mount Crescent serving a similar role and providing access to the railway station car park to the north of the railway line.
- 2.6.3 The junction of Main Road, Southend Road and Spa Road is controlled by a roundabout. This is a busy junction in the heart of Hockley's mainstreet. To the north, the junction of Mount Crescent and Spa Road/Greensward Lane is controlled by a signalized junction. There are safety issues with this junction due to the downhill slope heading towards the signal, combined with the rail bridge blocking sightlines to the signal lanterns.

Parking

- 2.6.4 The Hockley railway station is served by a car park – a pay and display parking lot with 156 spaces. Observations showed that the car park was approximately 70% occupied after lunch (a Thursday in late January). Public pay and display parking is also provided behind the library where there are 57 available spaces in close proximity to Main Road / Southend Road. A small free off street parking lot is provided along Spa Road, although this only has space for eight vehicles.
- 2.6.5 The on street spaces were well patronised during site visits. An important point to note is that the on street parking spaces serve a critical function in supporting the local economy through enabling retail and small business premises to capture passing trade. In looking at the design of the public realm, on street parking will be a critical issue.

Figure 4: Street network plan



- Distributor roads
- Collector roads
- Local roads

- Gradient and sight line issues to signal
- Roundabout
- Signalised intersection
- Carriageway width issues

- Off street parking
- On street parking

2.7 PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE NETWORK

2.7.1 The street network provides the majority of Hockley's pedestrian network. The existence of cul-de-sac and the railway line limit pedestrian permeability. Off Street connections are provided in places, and ill-defined route links Spa Road to north of the railway line to Marylands Wood. Spa Road has reasonably spaced pedestrian crossing facilities along the mainstreet, although these could be improved. Traffic speeds are low and carriageway widths are narrow, assisting in informal crossings. There are a number of incidences where pedestrian crossings are poor, particularly with the two pairs of 'T' junctions of Eldon and Meadow Ways with Station Road and Station Approach. The station approach roundabout affords a decidedly poor entrance to the station, although volumes are not to the level where pedestrian journeys are hampered. The roundabout of Main Road and Southend Road also warrants some improvements to the pedestrian environment. Cycle parking is provided by the station, although lacking elsewhere. The layout of streets, the volume and speed of traffic on these acts as a deterrent to cycle use.

Figure 5: Pedestrian and cycle network



- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | Pedestrian street network | | Bridge | | Railway line |
| | Pedestrian off street network | | Formal pedestrian crossing facilities | | Intersections with poor pedestrian crossing f |
| | | | Informal pedestrian crossing facilities | | |

2.8 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Rail Network

2.8.1 Hockley Station is served by the National Express line, running from London Liverpool Street Station through to Southend Victoria in Essex and is located between Rayleigh and Rochford Stations. Trains run on a twenty minute headway in peak periods and a 30 minute headway in off-peak periods from Mondays to Saturdays. A 30 minute service operates on Sundays. Hockley is approximately 46 minutes travel time from Liverpool Street station. The station is a well maintained facility that is manned during the day. The platforms are both sheltered. Seating is only provided on the eastbound platform. A pedestrian overbridge provides access between platforms.

The Bus Network

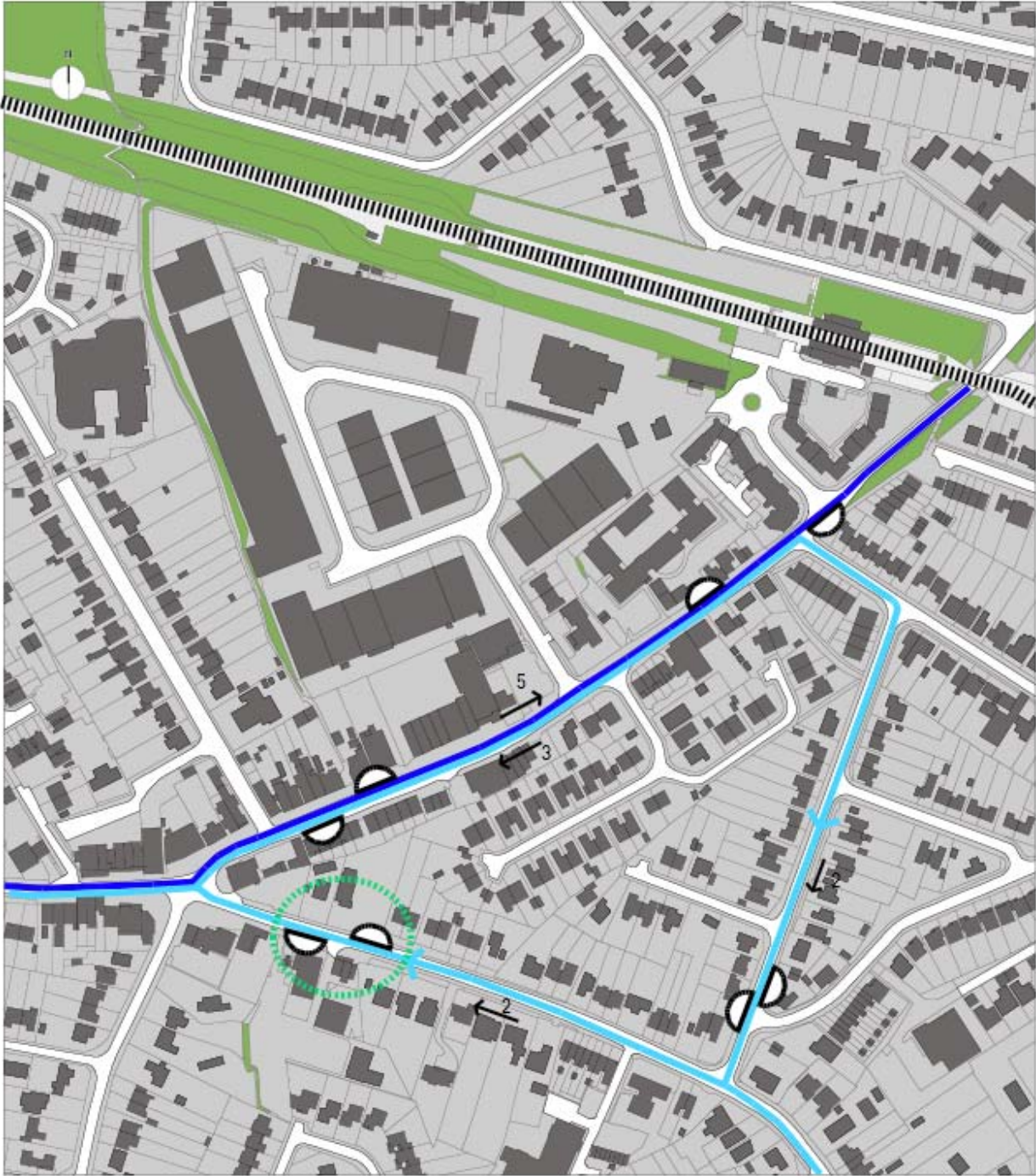
2.8.2 Only two bus routes pass through Hockley, the 7 and the 8 which run from Shoeburyness through Hockley on the way to Rayleigh. The 7 service runs from Spa Road through to Main Road. The 8 service uses Southend Road and Main Road in the westbound direction and circulates through Hockley Mainstreet along Spa Road, and returning to Southend Road via Great Eastern Road.

2.8.3 Hockley has a legible layout of bus stops through the centre with stops on the mainstreet close to the roundabout, two stops close to the station – although the design could be greatly improved – and a bus stop pair on Great Eastern Road. The final bus stop pair on Southend road adjacent to the library is not in use. This poses some issues for passengers seeking to access the mainstreet from the 8 east bound service.

Taxis

2.8.4 A taxi booth and waiting area is provided at the southern station entrance. Another rank is located on Mount Crescent to the north.

Figure 6: Public transport provision in Hockley



-  v
-  Bus route 8: Shoeburyness - Southend - Rochford - Hockley - Rayleigh
-  Railway Line
-  Rail or bus direction and approximate frequency per hour
-  Bus stops
-  Disused bus stop pair

2.9 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

2.9.1 The key issues that face Hockley are summarised in the table below:

Table 3: Summary of issues for consideration in Hockley Town Centre

Theme	Summary of the main issues
Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor range of retail with a need for a wider and more diverse retail offer - Employment area occupies a lot of land, has a lot of exposed 'backs' and is poorly related to the rest of the town centre and therefore potential exists for the release of employment uses allowing re-use of the site to be explored
Form and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor quality, uncoordinated and cluttered public realm at the Junction of Spa Road and Main / Southend Road (which is the focus for the town) in which buildings do little to little to address the importance of the junction - At the Spa Road / Main Road / Southend Road Junction, the building line is weak and the space lacks a sense of place, character and distinctiveness - Buildings along Spa Road are a mix of scales and set back different distances from the road and therefore do not give Spa Road a sense of enclosure - Some buildings also represent an inefficient use of the land
Street network / management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The northern end of Spa Road is relatively narrow (carriageway width of 5 metres in some places) which is problematic for the Heavy Goods Vehicles that use the route - The signalized junction of Mount Crescent / Spa Road / Greensward Lane is hazardous because of the downhill slope to the junction and sightlines being - On street parking spaces are well used and when considering the design of the public realm on street parking will be critical because it enables small businesses and retail to capture the passing trade - The roundabout on Station approach provides a poor entrance to the station
Pedestrian / cycle network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is limited permeability in Hockley because of the railway line and cul-de-sac which create barriers to movement - A number of the pedestrian crossings are poor - The pedestrian environment at the Spa Road / Main Road / Southend Road roundabout needs

	<p>improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cycle parking is only provided at the station and the layout of streets in addition to the volume and speed of traffic acts as a deterrent to cycling
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bus routes in Hockley are legible in terms of where they are positioned, however the design of the stops and the information provided could be improved - The bus stops on Southend Road opposite the library are not in use

Question: Do you agree that these are the main issues facing Hockley Town Centre? Are there any other issues that you think should be considered?

3 THE OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 VISION

3.1.1 Our vision for Hockley is best encapsulated in the following statement:

“A reinvigorated town centre with an attractive and varied shopping offer, providing a high quality of life with a strong community focus. Transformation and improvements in the town centre will ensure that forward thinking is balanced with traditional values, providing opportunities for all in a place that is a pleasure to live and work in”.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

3.2.1 The vision will be delivered through a set of strategic objectives, which are:

- To create opportunities for new retail space that improves the quality and offer of the shopping experience;
- To provide a mix of uses and facilities which support the local community;
- To ensure that new development respects and draws on the town’s identity and character;
- To enhance the public realm and create a new square at the heart of the town centre;
- To improve transport and reduce highway congestion;
- To provide, safe, attractive and direct routes that encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport; and
- To provide new homes, making efficient use of the land, increasing vitality, diversity and choice for all.

3.2.2 One of the main aims for Hockley is to create a heart for the town that combines the appropriate uses for a town of this scale. The current layout of shops and small businesses along Spa Road is extended and lacks focus. It should be more concentrated and set within a well designed and maintained public realm using higher quality materials.

3.2.3 The industrial uses on Eldon Way occupy a large amount of land in close proximity to the town centre and station. This land should be reconsidered for more valuable and appropriate uses within this location. This would of course need to be considered within the wider context of the availability of employment land within the District, but nevertheless, the location’s accessibility and surrounding character strongly suggests that industrial use only is not appropriate.

3.2.4 The existing community uses opposite the old fire station on Southend Road would benefit from further development

concentrated at that location thus providing updated and expanded services such as a primary care centre facility.

Do you agree with the vision and objectives for Hockley town centre?
What would you suggest?

3.3 POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY SITES

3.3.1 The analysis has identified a range of opportunities related to transport and movement and the public realm. We have also identified a number of sites where opportunities may exist for redevelopment. The potential sites and our initial ideas are set out below. These are then explored through the development options presented in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

Sites A1, A2 and A3

3.3.2 These sites are on the northern side of Spa Road and are currently occupied by diverse shops and small businesses – all of a different size and quality. Given the size of these sites, there is an opportunity here to allow for the creation of a mixed use hub and a new focus for the town centre (possibly including a new town centre square), potentially consisting of a new foodstore and other retail units, residential and leisure.

3.3.3 Site A3 also includes the Royal Mail Depot on Spa Road. Relocating this to a rationalised Eldon Way Industrial Estate could allow the development of further ground floor retail units with residential above and in turn would help strengthen the street frontage along Spa Road.

3.3.4 Taken together, this is a relatively large site with potentially complex land ownership issues, but it may offer the greatest potential for change within the town centre. It may require Compulsory Purchase Order powers to be used.

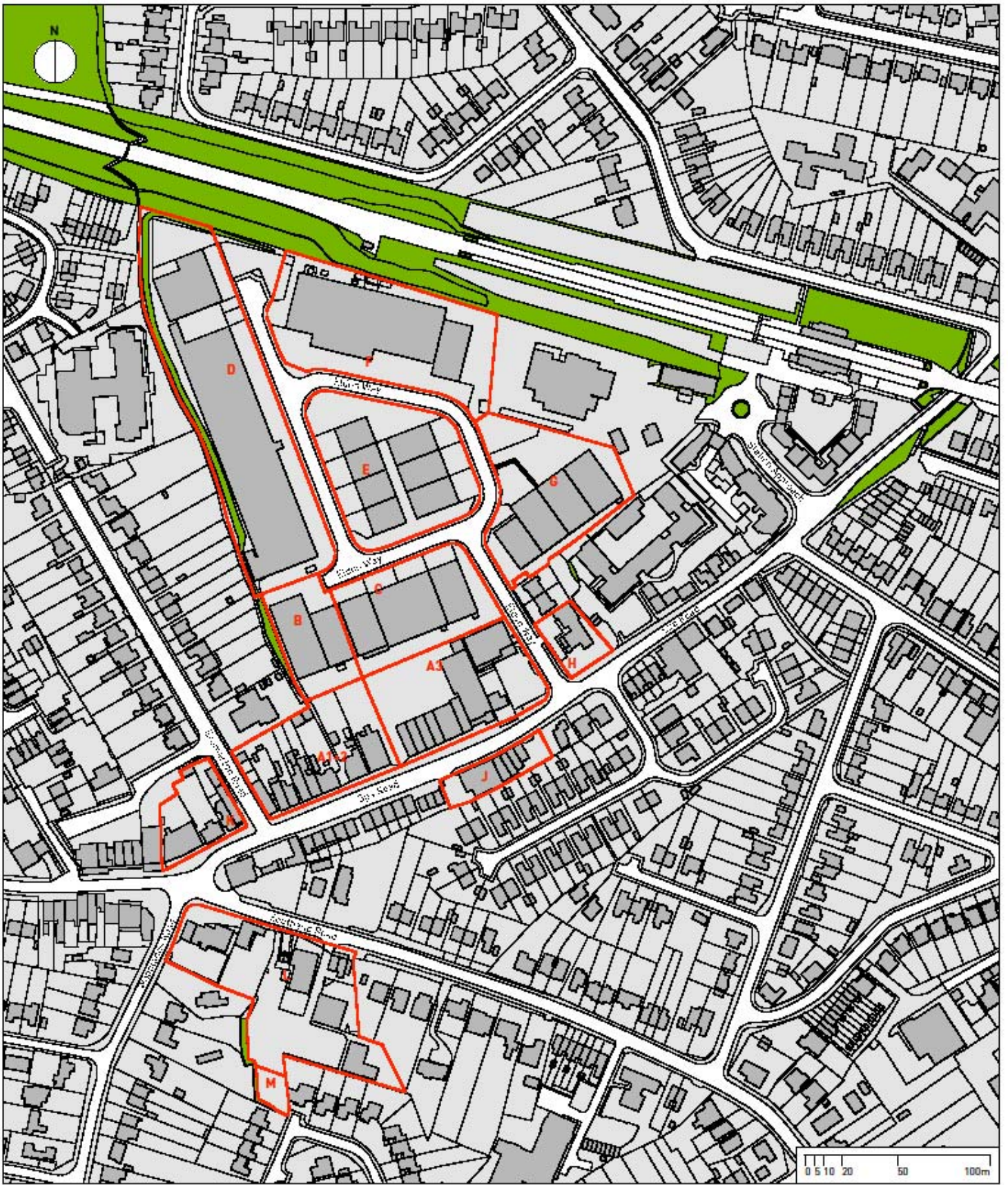
Sites B to G

3.3.5 These sites are currently occupied by the Eldon Industrial Estate. The industrial uses on Eldon Way occupy a large amount of land in close proximity to the town centre and the station. This land should be reconsidered for more valuable and appropriate uses within this location. This will of course need to be considered within the wider scope of the availability of employment land within the District, but nevertheless, the location's accessibility and surrounding character strongly suggest that industrial use only is not appropriate. There is therefore a possible opportunity to redevelop the sites, potentially including residential and leisure uses.

Site H

3.3.6 This site is currently occupied by a primary care centre. There is potential for this site to be released for redevelopment and for the health uses to be concentrated at site L1, which lies at the junction of Woodlands Road and Southend Road. In order to establish whether this proposal is achievable in the short, medium or long term, it would be necessary to establish how the primary care centre that currently exists is funded and whether it is willing to relocate.

Figure 7: Potential Opportunity Areas



Sites J and K

- 3.3.7 These sites are currently occupied by a variety of shops and small businesses of varying quality. These areas lack focus and could be of higher quality. There is potential for refurbishment and redevelopment for retail, residential and commercial uses.

Sites L and M

- 3.3.8 These sites comprise the cluster of community uses to the south of Main / Southend Roads, the car park to the rear and the buildings fronting the junction with Spa Road. The potential exists here to create a new and improved community hub in a purpose built facility (possible incorporating a primary care trust), where benefits may arise through the sharing of space. As part of this, the layout of the buildings and the car park could be investigated, addressing the issue of exposed 'backs' of properties to the rear of the library. Taking the corner plot into consideration will also allow for improvements to the quality of the public realm to be explored. Currently this space is cluttered and uncoordinated: opportunities exist through redevelopment to enhance this public space.

Transport Opportunities

- 3.3.9 The junction of Spa Road with Main Road / Southend Road (Site N) is a key area for attention. Opportunities for change and improvement will need to be balanced with the need to manage the volume of traffic in the town.

Other Opportunities

- 3.3.10 In addition to these sites, a range of other opportunities are identified. Across the town as a whole, improvements to the quality of the public realm are required.
- 3.3.11 Outside of the core area, opportunities may exist in the vicinity of the railway station and land to the rear of the industrial estate. Land could potentially be utilised here to provide parking space for the town centre and employment uses. This could potentially enable the existing car park on the north side of the railway line to be moved to the south, creating space for new residential development fronting existing properties here.

Question: Do you agree with the options identified for these sites? Can you suggest any other opportunities that may exist for Hockley town centre?

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS 1.1 and 1.2

- 3.4.1 Having considered the issues surrounding Hockley and the potential sites for development, this AAP sets out six development options: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1 and 3.2.
- 3.4.2 Development Options 1.1 and 1.2 set out options for Hockley town centre that leave the majority of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate intact and deal primarily with the main shopping area in the town. The difference between the two options is in the way that they treat sites B and C. Further details of the options are set out below.

New town centre square and retail / commercial core

- 3.4.3 Both options propose a new town centre square fronting onto Spa Road to the south of site A3 (Marked 1 on figure 8). Sites A1, A2 and A3 would also be redeveloped for retail and commercial uses and the town square and retail / commercial hub would therefore provide for a new focus for Hockley town centre with an improved retail offer. In addition, to allow for access to the supermarket proposed for site A1, servicing space and surface car parking are proposed to the north of site A2 (marked 2 and 3 on figure 8).

Residential and Leisure development at sites B and C

- 3.4.4 Development Option 1.1 proposes residential development for sites B and C which would be adjacent to the new town centre area (on part of the Eldon Way employment area). Development Option 1.2 however proposes leisure uses for sites B and C with residential uses above. This reflects the recent changes that have taken place within the Eldon Way employment area where some units have been converted for leisure uses. Therefore option 1.2 would provide a larger number of facilities for the town centre but would provide for fewer residential units than through option 1.1 (This is the only difference between options 1.1 and 1.2). In both the options, further residential development is proposed at sites H and M. The Employment Land Study (see Appendix A) notes that any reallocation of the Eldon Way employment area should only be allowed if commercial opportunities are provided in the town centre. Sites A1, A2 and A3 provide the scope for this development.

New community hub

- 3.4.5 A new community hub is proposed through all options at sites L1 and L2. This could include facilities such as a youth club, a hall, improved health provision (possibly a primary care centre) and a library (already existing). It is proposed that opposite the community hub there would be new landscaped footway link between the community hub and town centre (marked 4 on figure 8). To the rear it is proposed that surface car parking be provided to enable easy access (marked 5 on figure 8).

3.4.6 It is also proposed that site J is redeveloped to provide retail and commercial uses and that site K is redeveloped to provide commercial uses with residential above. This would result in an improved frontage to Spa Road and improved retail offer.

Refurbishment of station and extensions of station car park

3.4.7 All options propose to extend the station car park for long stay needs, incorporating the currently unused land to the south of the railway tracks (marked 6 on figure 8). In addition it is proposed to refurbish the station itself making provision for the refurbishment and installation of public toilets, newsagent, café and real time travel information (bus and train) (marked 7 on figure 8)

Public realm improvements

3.4.8 Public realm improvements are proposed for the stretch of Spa Road leading from Eldon Way to the junction with Southend Road and Woodlands Road (with a particular focus on this junction). This would deal with issues such as the quality of pavements and the improvement of street furniture.

Figure 8: Development Option 1.1

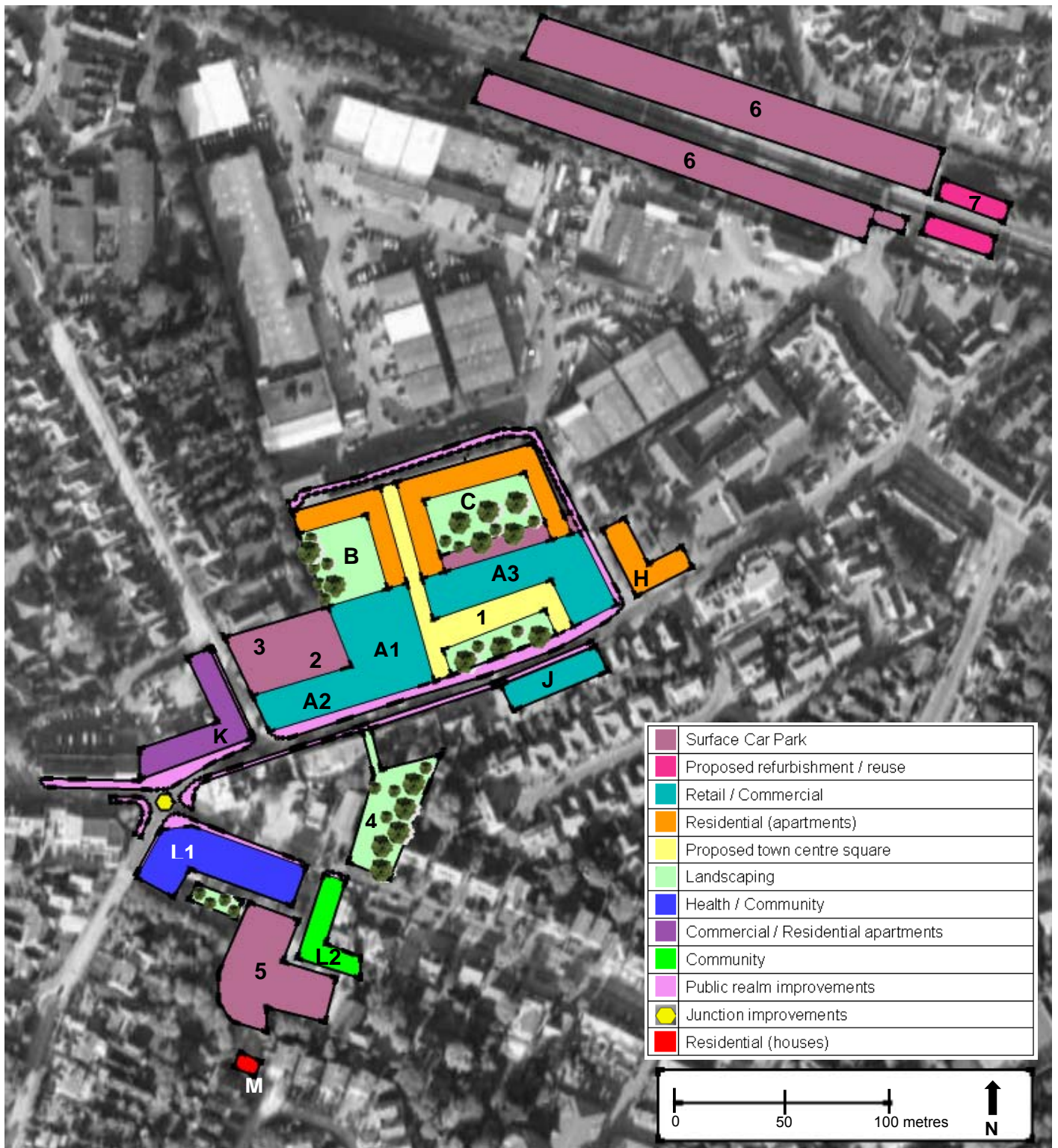
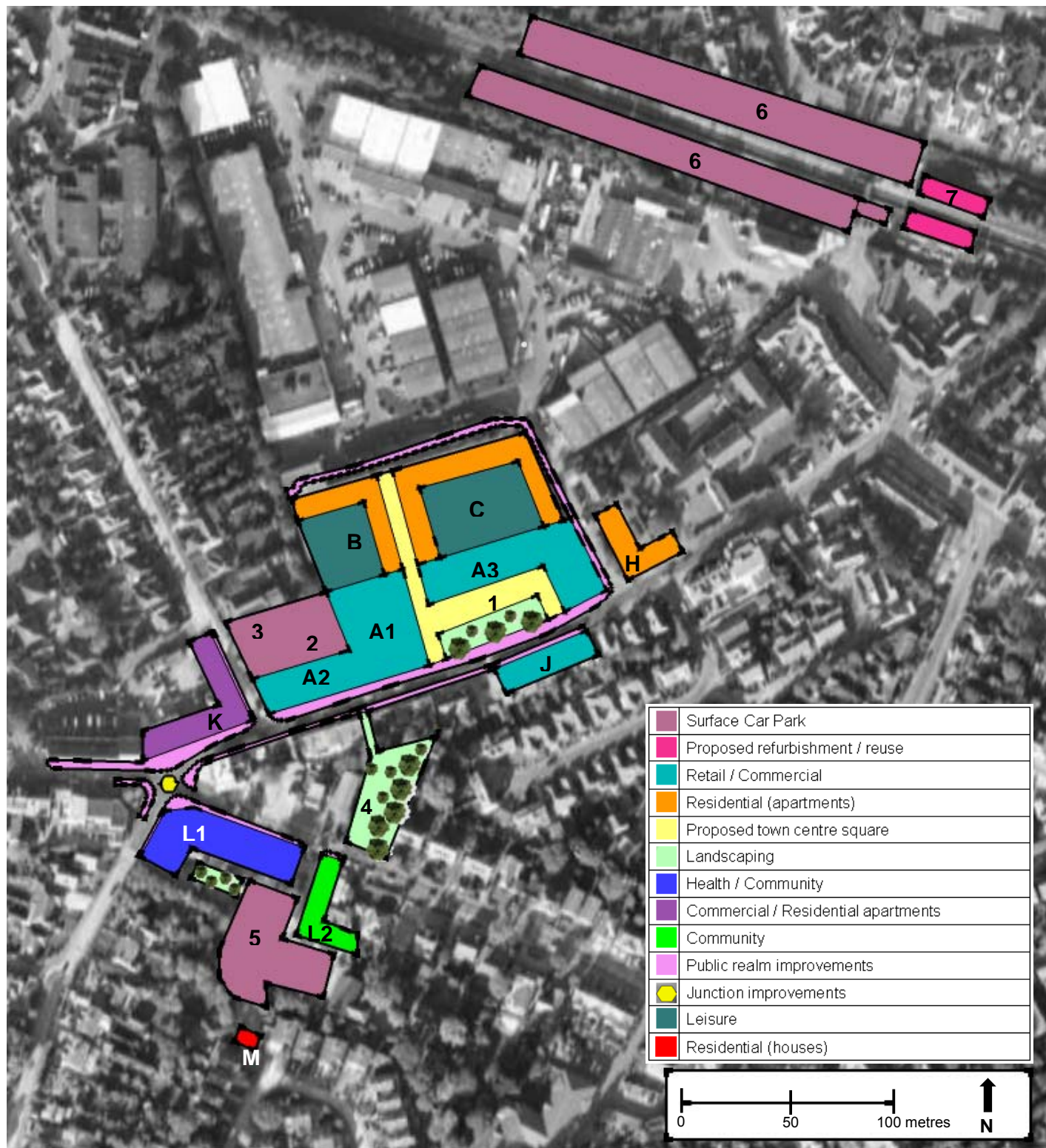


Figure 9: Development Option 1.2



3.5 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS 2.1 and 2.2

3.5.1 Development options 2.1 and 2.2 propose changes for Hockley that incorporate large scale redevelopment of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate, expanding upon changes proposed within Options 1.1. and 1.2 which incorporate part of the employment area to the rear of the retail units on Spa Road. The way in which these two options treat the town centre core area are the same as development options 1.1 and 1.2 respectively (set out in section 3.4), except at Sites B and C. Therefore the section below only describes the treatment of the Eldon Way industrial Estate and Sites B and C.

Sites B and C

3.5.2 Sites B and C are proposed to comprise leisure uses with no residential development in Option 2.1 and 2.2. Option 2.1 proposes less leisure development than Option 2.2, but provides a greater area for surface car parking and landscaping.

Redevelopment of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate

3.5.3 Whilst at present the site is allocated through the Replacement Local Plan 2006 for employment uses, there is a possibility that this area of Hockley could be released for alternative uses particularly given its proximity to the town centre and to the railway station.

3.5.4 The Employment Land Study (see Appendix A) notes that any reallocation of the Eldon Way employment area should only be allowed if commercial opportunities are provided in the town centre. Sites A1, A2 and A3 provide the scope for this development. It is therefore proposed through development options 2.1 and 2.2 to redevelop the Eldon Way Industrial Estate for alternative uses.

3.5.5 Two different options are suggested for the redevelopment of Eldon Way Industrial Estate here. One proposes a mixture of leisure and residential (Option 2.1) while the other suggests solely residential uses for the site (Option 2.2). In both options, open space would be provided at the eastern corner of the development and a landscaped area would separate the residential uses from the railway line.

3.5.6 A new pedestrian link would be formed between the residential development and the station to enable easy access. The new town centre hub proposed at sites A, B and C would form the southern edge of the new residential area creating a strong link with the new houses / apartments and the town centre, including potential new retail and leisure uses.

3.5.7 The potential for this redevelopment to take place depends on obtaining vacant possession. Should the owner of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate not wish to sell or if any tenants are on long leases, it may be necessary to use Compulsory Purchase Order powers.

Figure 10: Development Option 2.1

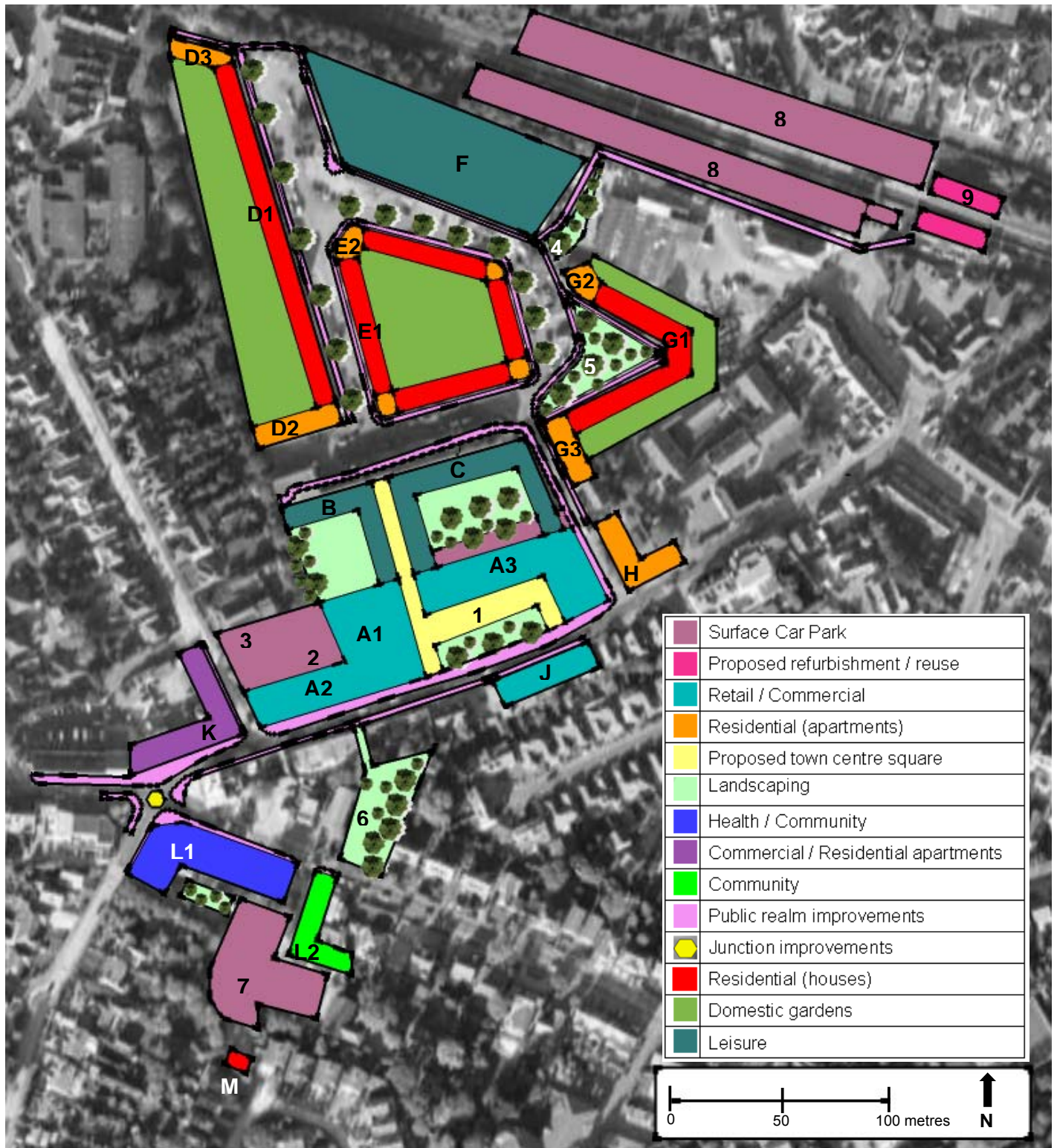
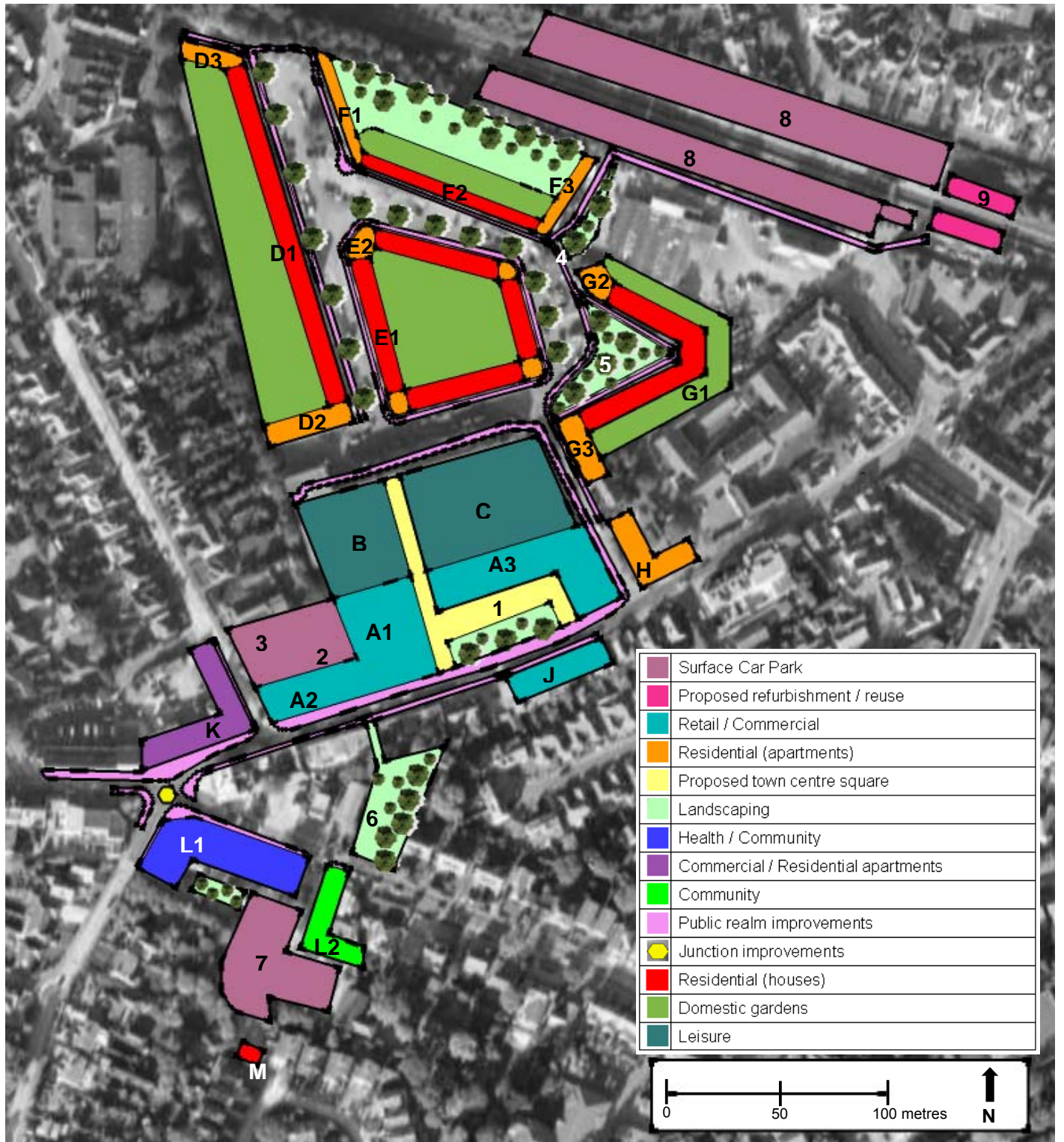


Figure 11: Development Option 2.2



3.6 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS 3.1 and 3.2

3.6.1 Development options 3.1 and 3.2 propose changes for Hockley that incorporate alternative large scale redevelopment of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate, but which again are expanding upon changes proposed within Options 1.1. and 1.2. The way in which these two options treat the town centre core area are the same as development options 1.1 and 1.2 respectively (set out in section 3.4). Therefore the section below only describes the treatment of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate.

Alternative Redevelopment of the Eldon Way Industrial Estate

- 3.6.2 Two alternative options to the treatment of Eldon Way Industrial Estate are proposed here to that proposed in Options 2.1 and 2.2. Option 3.1 proposes that the central area of the redevelopment of Eldon Way (site E) comprises a village green, introducing a significant area of green public open space into the town centre. Alternatively, Option 3.2 proposes that site E be developed for a mix of retail / commercial and leisure, with residential apartments above.
- 3.6.3 Options 3.1 and 3.2 both include the use of site F for leisure (as per Option 2.1) and a revised layout to the landscaped area around site G.
- 3.6.4 Options 3.1 and 3.2 also differ from 2.1 and 2.2, in their treatment of Eldon Way in that 3.1 and 3.2 both involve no surface car parking (only underground car parking and drop off points) and site G comprises apartments (in the style of those recently developed to the east of the site, on Station Approach) as opposed to houses.

Figure 12: Development Option 3.1

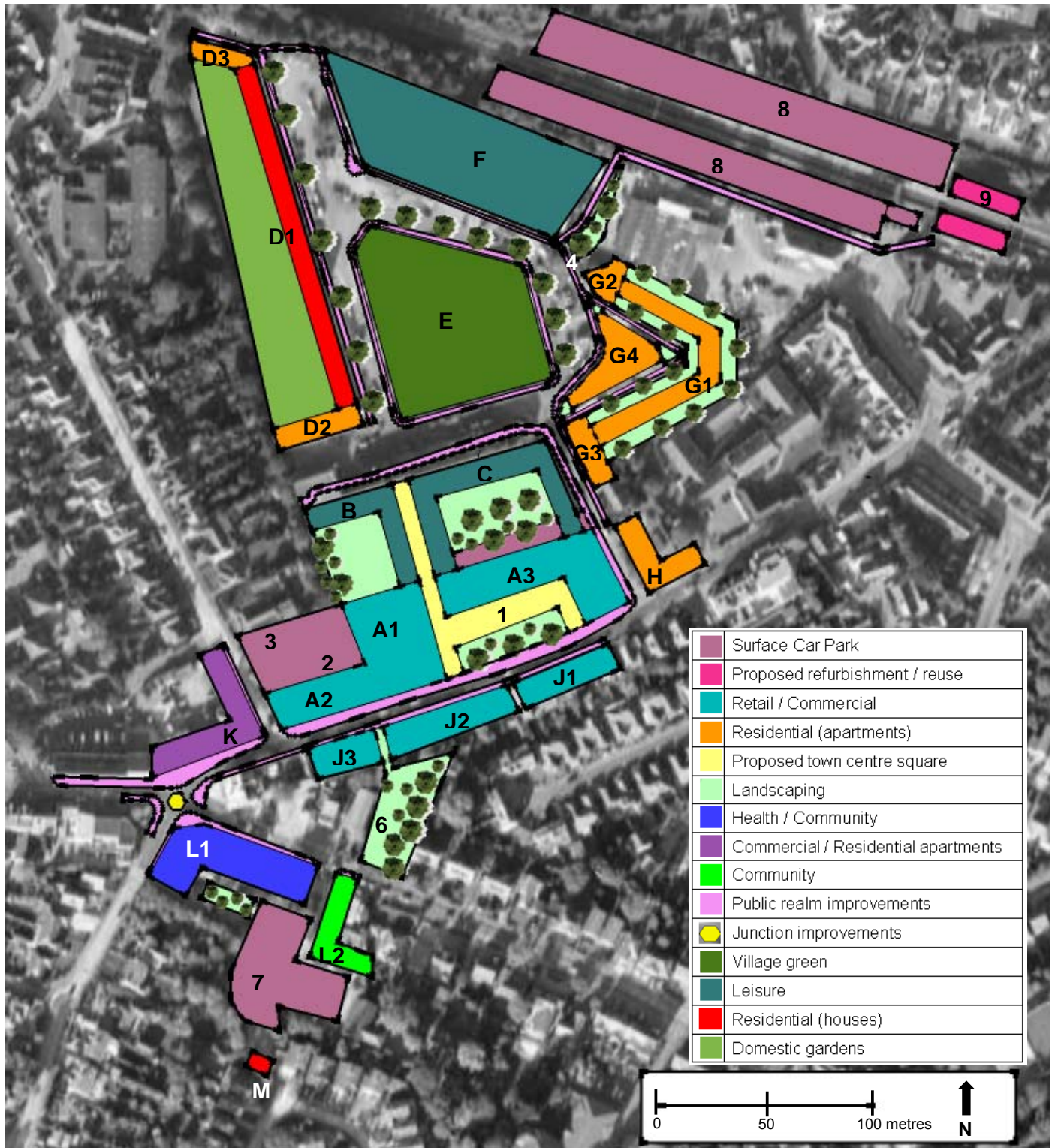
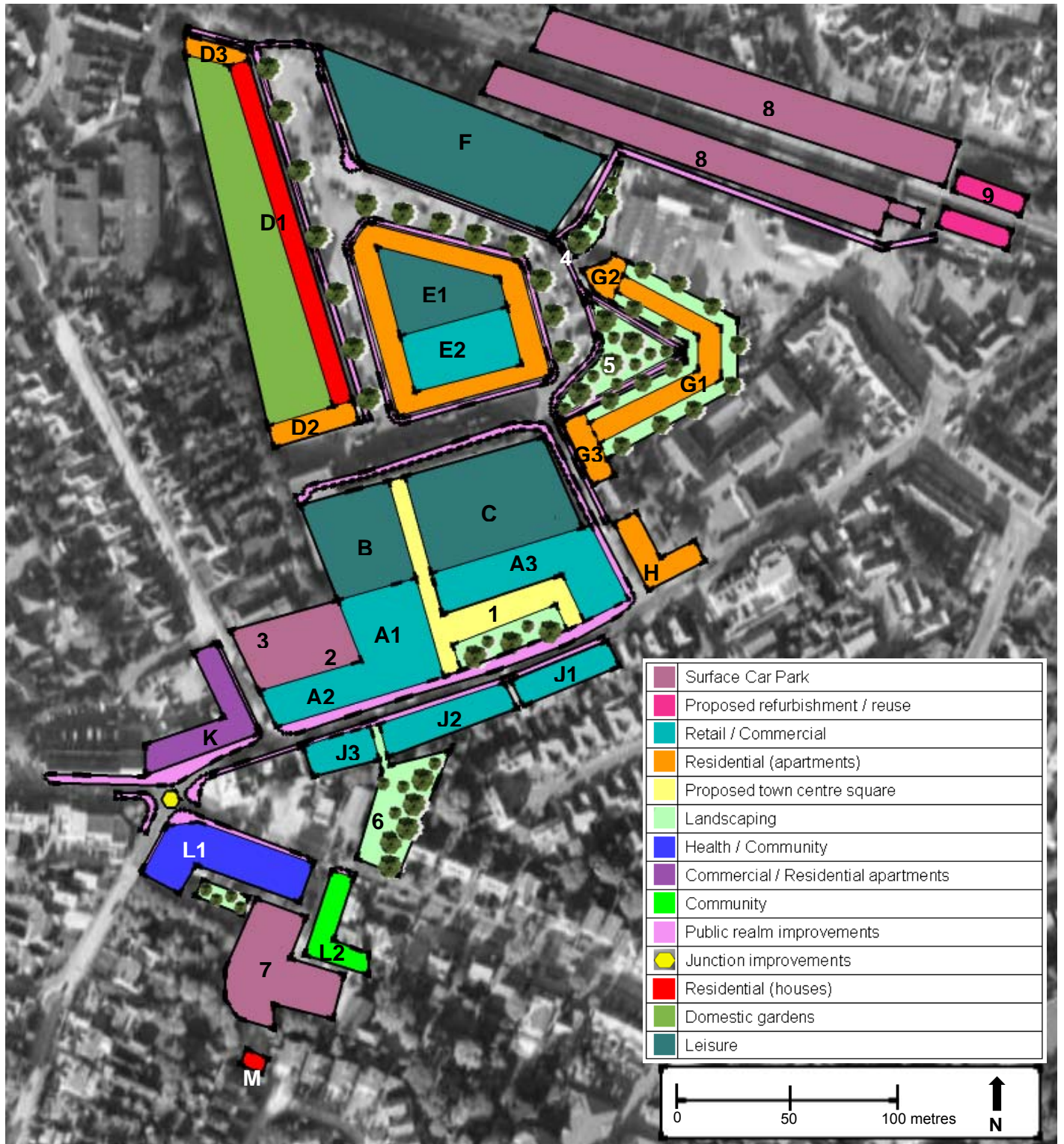


Figure 13: Development Option 3.2



3.7 SUMMARY COMPARISON OF THE OPTIONS

- 3.7.1 The key difference between the options is whether or not the Eldon Way Industrial Estate is redeveloped. Through Options 1.1 and 1.2 the majority of the Estate is left as existing (other than possible new development immediately behind the properties on Spa Road and fronting onto Eldon Way, forming part of the redevelopment of the core town centre area). Through Options 2.1 it is proposed that the Estate be redeveloped for a mix of residential and leisure uses. Option 2.2 proposes the Estate is redeveloped purely for residential use, with additional leisure uses provided elsewhere within the town centre.
- 3.7.2 A further key difference is the treatment of the town centre hub. In options 1.1 and 2.1 the proposed land use at sites B and C is residential whereas in 1.2 and 2.2 the proposed land use at these sites is for leisure uses with residential uses above.
- 3.7.3 Options 3.1 and 3.2 also propose the redevelopment of Eldon Way Industrial Estate, but with alternative uses to site E, greater redevelopment of the south side of Spa Road, and the provision of residential development primarily in the form of apartments.

Question: Which option do you prefer? Are there aspects in the different plans you prefer? What are your views on the future for Eldon Way Industrial Estate? Is the balance between different uses right? Are there any other options that should be considered? Let us know why.

3.8 SCALE / QUANTUM

Scale

3.8.1 Hockley is predominantly a town of two storey developments, however more recent developments have increased the scale of building and new developments of three and four storeys can easily be accommodated and give greater variety to the streetscape in the town. In particular, should the Eldon Way industrial area come forward for development, the size of this estate and its location in terms of proximity to the railway station and retail core would allow for a variety of building forms and types to come forward, creating character and interest.

Quantum

3.8.2 The main difference in the options relates to the degree of change that might be possible within the Eldon Way industrial area. The potential here needs to be reconciled with the emerging employment land study being prepared for the Council. However, given the location of the estate, there would be wider benefits for the town if it could be released.

3.8.3 All options propose a quantum of residential development for the town centre. The provision of dwellings will not only aid the vitality of the town centre, but will also have wider sustainability benefits particularly by reducing the need to release greenfield sites elsewhere within the District in order to meet housing requirements. The quantum of total residential development varies between the different options.

3.8.4 The following tables below outline the quantum of uses that are provided by the various options.

Table 4: Development Option 1.1 quantum of floorspace

Site	Gross Floorspace sqm	Retail Floorspace sqm	Leisure Floorspace sqm	Commercial Floorspace sqm	Healthcare Floorspace sqm	Community Floorspace sqm	Number of houses units	Number of apartments units
A1	4372	1457		2914				
A2	2733	683		2050				
A3	6864	1716		5148				
B	2745							37
C	4856							65
H	1343							18
J	1429	714		714				
K	2168			723				19
L1	5247				1749	3498		
L2	1587					1587		
M	132						1	
Total	33476	4570	0	11549	1749	5085	1	139

Table 5: Development Option 1.2 quantum of floorspace

Site	Gross Floorspace sqm	Retail Floorspace sqm	Leisure Floorspace sqm	Commercial Floorspace sqm	Healthcare Floorspace sqm	Community Floorspace sqm	Number of houses units	Number of apartments units
A1	4372	1457		2914				
A2	2733	683		2050				
A3	6864	1716		5148				
B	3813		3813					27
C	6565		6565					49
H	1343							18
J	1429	714		714				
K	2168			723				19
L1	5247				1749	3498		
L2	1587					1587		
M	132						1	
Total	36253	4570	10378	11549	1749	5085	1	113

Table 6: Development Option 2.1 quantum of floorspace

Site	Gross Floorspace Sqm	Retail Floorspace sqm	Leisure Floorspace sqm	Commercial Floorspace sqm	Healthcare Floorspace sqm	Community Floorspace sqm	Number of houses units	Number of apartments units
A1	4372	1457		2914				
A2	2733	683		2050				
A3	6864	1716		5148				
B	2745		2745					
C	4856		4856					
D1	4553						26	
D2	995							13
D3	794							11
E1	4980						29	
E2	953							13
F	5570		5570					
G1	2763						16	
G2	395							5
G3	515							7
H	1343							18
J	1429	714		714				
K	2168			723				19
L1	5247				1749	3498		
L2	1587					1587		
M	132						1	
Total	54994	4570	13171	11549	1749	5085	72	86

Table 7: Development Option 2.2 quantum of floorspace

Site	Gross Floorspace sqm	Retail Floorspace sqm	Leisure Floorspace sqm	Commercial Floorspace sqm	Healthcare Floorspace sqm	Community Floorspace sqm	Number of houses units	Number of apartments units
A1	4372	1457		2914				
A2	2733	683		2050				
A3	6864	1716		5148				
B	3813		3813					
C	6565		6565					
D1	4553						26	
D2	995							13
D3	794							11
E1	4980						29	
E2	953							13
F1	2282						13	
F2	1621							22
F3	1171							16
G1	2763						16	
G2	395							5
G3	515							7
H	1343							18
J	1429	714		714				
K	2168			723				19
L1	5247				1749	3498		
L2	1587					1587		
M	132						1	
Total	57275	4570	10378	11549	1749	5085	85	124

Table 8: Development Option 3.1 quantum of floorspace

Site	Gross Floorspace sqm	Retail Floorspace sqm	Leisure Floorspace sqm	Commercial Floorspace sqm	Healthcare Floorspace sqm	Community Floorspace sqm	Number of houses units	Number of apartments units
A1	4372	1457		2914				
A2	2733	683		2050				
A3	6864	1716		5148				
B	2745		2745					
C	4856		4856					
D1	4553						26	
D2	995							13
D3	794							11
E	0							
F	5570		5570					
G1	3070							40
G2	395							5
G3	515							7
G4	1355							17
H	1343							18
J1	1429	714		714				
J2	406	203		203				
J3	282	141		141				
K	2168			723				19
L1	5247				1749	3498		
L2	1587					1587		
M	132						1	
Total	51411	4914	13171	11893	1749	5085	27	130

Table 9: Development Option 3.2 quantum of floorspace

Site	Gross Floorspace sqm	Retail Floorspace sqm	Leisure Floorspace sqm	Commercial Floorspace sqm	Healthcare Floorspace sqm	Community Floorspace sqm	Number of houses units	Number of apartments units
A1	4372	1457		2914				
A2	2733	683		2050				
A3	6864	1716		5148				
B	3813		3813					
C	6565		6565					
D1	4553						26	
D2	995							13
D3	794							11
E1	2623		2623					24
E2	3310	3310						32
F	5570		5570					
G1	3070							30
G2	395							5
G3	515							7
H	1343							18
J1	1429	714		714				
J2	406	203		203				
J3	282	141		141				
K	2168			723				19
L1	5247				1749	3498		
L2	1587					1587		
M	132						1	
Total	58766	8224	18571	11893	1749	5085	27	159

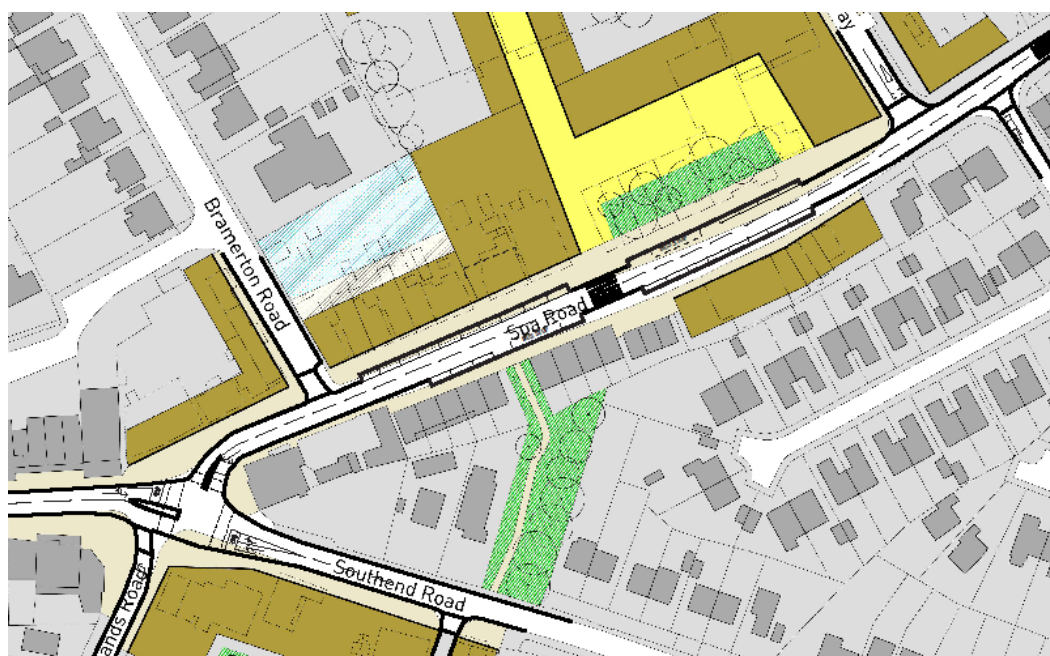
3.9 TRANSPORT OPTIONS

3.9.1 This transport and movement section focuses on the key projects that will assist in the delivery of the wider regeneration proposals put forward in this report.

Southend Road / Main Road junction

3.9.2 Hockley's existing commercial heart is centred at the intersection of two important distributor roads of Spa Road and Southend Road/Main Road, with the dominant route being the latter. The existing junction is designed as a small mountable round-about with particularly poor pedestrian crossing facilities. Congestion and associated hostility around this junction has resulted in buildings being set back from the street. Public realm improvements have attempted to ameliorate the impacts of this, although the disjointed nature of these has to an extent worsened the quality of the public realm.

3.9.3 **Option:** In response there is potential for the roundabout to be removed in favour of a signalised junction. A proposal is illustrated on the plan below for consideration, although no traffic counts have been collected, nor has any modelling of the impacts been undertaken to justify this. Many other design options are possible that will need to be worked through as part of a separate, more detailed commission.



3.9.4 The proposed signalised junction would provide pedestrians with quality crossing facilities that would make this place an interesting and pleasant place to be, as well as improving the crossing efficiency. Dominant traffic flows could also be better managed

under a signalised arrangement, potentially leading to improved queue management and less overall delay.

3.9.5 A negative is that to keep the junction running as efficiently as possible, and to keep the junction size down it may be necessary to restrict traffic access to Woodlands Road to left out only, although again, this has yet to be determined. An alternative route is available for vehicles to access Southend Road via Kilnwood Avenue and Hockley Rise.

3.9.6 A number of alternative options are outlined below:

Option: Woodland Road access removed and signalised arrangement at new junction.

Option: Signalised junction with Woodland Road access retained. Right-turns between 07:00-09:30 hrs and 16:00-17:30 hrs prohibited.

Question: What is your preferred approach to this junction? Are there any other options with regard to the Southend Road / Main Road junction that you would like to be considered?

Southend Road

3.9.7 Spa Road generally speaking functions well as a small scale mainstreet. however there are a number of problems requiring some attention, for example the narrow footpaths opposite Bramerton Road and the level changes outside the retail premises just to the north. The lack of a pedestrian footpath on Spa Road to the east of Meadow Way is also a significant cause for concern, albeit much more difficult to resolve.

3.9.8 The regeneration proposals outlined in detail above, provide the opportunity to remodel the street into a more coherent and successful mainstreet than that which currently exists. The overall long term vision can be delivered in smaller steps as development occurs. A number of options are outlined below

Option: Potential exists to realign and straighten the street to provide additional footpath space on the southern side of Spa Road

Option: A bus stop pair could be provided outside the new proposed square

Option: A new pedestrian crossing could be created that would provide a connection to the new retail / shopping area

Option: There is potential to install new side road entry treatments

Option: Potential exists to provide indented parking bays

Option: Cycle racks could be incorporated into the new Square

Question: Which options do you agree with / disagree with? Are there any other options regarding Southend Road that you would like to be considered?

Station Approach/Spa Road

- 3.9.9 The existing entrance to the station is problematic given the offset alignment of Station Road with Station approach and associated complex crossing movements for pedestrians. Sightlines to the signal heads at the junction of Plumberow and Greensward Lane are also obstructed by the rail overbridge for vehicles heading northbound on Spa Road. Bus interchange with the station could also be improved. Further, for Station Approach, the existing roundabout provides a less than ideal arrival point to the town.
- 3.9.10 **Option:** Given traffic flows and the junction's prevailing residential context, there is an opportunity for low level intervention in the form of side road entry treatments. This will afford pedestrians with a measure of comfort when crossing side roads due to slower vehicle entry/exit speeds and by shifting side road stop lines further back from the junction.
- 3.9.11 Whilst it would be desirable to move the bus stops on Spa Road closer together, it is not proposed to do so due to the need to ensure that buses can still enter Station Road and Great Eastern Road. Linked to this issue, consideration was given to moving the pedestrian crossing to the west of Station Road to provide for pedestrians crossings at this location given the lack of a pedestrian footpath on this side of Spa Road. However the lack of sufficient room and bus tracking requirements have meant that this was taken no further.

Question: Do you agree with this option? Are there any other options with regard to the Station Approach / Spa Road junction that you would like to be considered?

Bus routing and facilities

- 3.9.12 There are no proposals at present to change the existing bus route structure, however additional services should be provided as and when required. As discussed previously in relation to Spa Road, a new bus border facility is proposed outside the new urban square, providing a central focus for passengers.

3.10 DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- 3.10.1 For any proposed development it is important to consider the question of delivery and whether or not the scale of change proposed can be delivered by the market or whether other interventions will be required.
- 3.10.2 The proposed uses for potential development sites suggested above considered to be commercially sound in principal. However, financial viability and delivery will depend upon many issues including the ability to obtain the sites and the cost of obtaining vacant possession.
- 3.10.3 Furthermore, some of the more strategic development opportunities (e.g. The redevelopment of Eldon Way Industrial Park) are unlikely to happen in the short to medium term (and possibly the long term) without more direct public sector support and involvement. Although this support might include the use of CPO powers, it is not restricted to such matters. The Council may seek to enter into partnership arrangements with other public sector bodies such as EEDA (East of England Development Agency) and Homes and Communities Agency (HACA) to bring forward change in the town centre. Further discussion will also be required with the Primary Care Trust to realise development opportunities in the town.

4 MOVING FORWARD

4.1 THE AREA ACTION PLAN PROCESS

4.1.1 As a statutory Development Plan Document, the AAP is being prepared in accordance with regulations set by Central Government. The process is as follows:

- Issues and options
- Formal consultation
- Submission document
- Submission to the Secretary of State
- Examination in Public and adoption

4.1.2 The first stage in the process above is the culmination of a period of research and analysis that has involved evidence gathering and working with key stakeholders within the AAP area.

4.1.3 We are at the stage of seeking your views on the Issues and Options report to feed into future work. There will be further consultation as the Area Action Plan develops.

4.2 SENDING IN YOUR VIEWS

4.2.1 The feedback received from this Issues and Options draft will play an important role in the development of the Hockley Area Action Plan.

4.2.2 An online facility has been created that enables comments to be submitted quickly and easily, as well as providing the respondent with instant confirmation of receipt. The facility can be found at the web address below:

Views may be submitted at <http://rochford.jdi-consult.net/ldf/>

4.2.3 We recognise that not everyone has access to the Internet and that it is important that no one is excluded from participating. If you wish to submit your views but are unable to do so online, please contact the Planning Policy team on 01702 318165.

4.2.4 The consultation period will last until 30th April 2009. Please ensure that any comments that you have on the document are received before this time.

APPENDIX A: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

East of England Plan

The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14) provides a spatial development framework for the East of England. The strategy aims to deliver a more integrated pattern of land use, movement and activities that achieves a balanced mix of housing and employment. New development should sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres throughout the region, being places with high levels of service provision. Development plans within the region will make more use of previously developed land and buildings to protect Greenbelt lands, though in some districts a reassessment of such designation is needed.

Town centres, such as Rochford and Hockley, play a vital role in attracting investment and enhancing the environment through regeneration. The Plan aims to foster mixed-use economies throughout the region, with town centre development playing a key role in achieving brownfield development objectives and improving economic opportunities and quality of life for local people.

The region will see an overall growth in households largely through indigenous growth. Of the region's housing target of 421,500, the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region has been allocated 55,000 dwellings from 2001-2021, with 4,600 allocated to Rochford District Council. New housing should be high quality and high density (where appropriate) to make most efficient use of land.

Rochford Futures Study 2007

This document conducts a baseline analysis of Rochford District's economic, social and environmental performance, identifies future drivers of change and challenges for the future.

The report notes that Rochford's economic performance is mixed, being a very small local economy with very limited growth. The district is 'well-off' socially, with relatively low social isolation and inequality. However, it has poor local services and amenities. Rochford's economy is relatively static and will need to grapple with globalisation and deindustrialisation more effectively in the future. The population is aging, with a large expansion of the elderly population expected. House prices are high and development restraints are equally high. There has been a decrease in employment workspace and the local infrastructure is overloaded.

Key agents of change in the future will be deindustrialisation, globalisation, stimulating enterprise growth and new migration and social cohesion. The study notes that the local authority will need to engage more effectively with the private sector to deliver economic growth in the face of public sector funding cutbacks. The aging population should be used as an asset rather than a burden, and there needs to be additional community facilities.

In terms of housing growth, there needs to be greater variety of housing types and more housing generally. Car dependence is problematic and is causing problems throughout the region.

Rochford District Replacement Local Plan

The Rochford Local Plan was adopted in 2006 and is valid for three years after which the Local Development Framework, including the Core Strategy, should be in place. Through the Plan, the Council seeks to promote sustainable development patterns that minimise land take and reduces the need to travel, especially locally. The Plan supports town centres and industrial estate enhancement throughout the District. Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley are the three designated town centres that are the primary retail areas of the District. Retail development outside these centres is not favoured.

Particular attention is given to the area's character and ensuring that new development respects the heritage and character of place throughout the District. The density of new development will range between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare, with higher levels permitted in town centres or places with good service provision. In developments of 25 units or more than one hectare in size, 15 percent of units must be affordable housing.

Rochford Core Strategy Preferred Options

Under the new Local Development Framework procedures, work on the Council's Core Strategy is now underway and the draft Preferred Options has been issued. The emerging Core Strategy sees a vital role for its town centres in accommodating new growth. The retail strategy outlined in the Preferred Options report seeks to strengthen the role of the District's town centres. A sequential approach to the development of new retail provision is promoted as a means of ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of town centres.

The emerging Core Strategy seeks to improve the quality of the built environment as a result of growth. New development is expected to make a positive contribution to local character and all major applications will require a design brief. Key planning objectives set out in the Core Strategy are:

- To work towards sustainable development by making the most effective and efficient use of land.
- To improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the District by providing the best possible environment, and satisfying social needs by making accessible provision for the necessary health, housing, educational, community and leisure facilities in the interests of the total well being of all groups within the population.
- To ensure the availability of land in appropriate locations for housing, commercial and industrial uses.
- To retain, conserve and enhance the built and natural environments, including the architectural and historical heritage, flora, fauna and their habitats, throughout the District.
- To make provision for transportation improvements to effect the most environmentally sustainable, efficient, convenient movement of goods and people.

- To define and protect the Metropolitan Green Belt, the undeveloped coast and areas of ecological interest by directing development towards the District's established settlements.
- To enable the existing business community to function as efficiently as possible and to support economic and regeneration development throughout the District

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2006-2007

The AMR confirms much of the evidence presented in the above documents. There is expected to be a dramatic increase in the population of people over 85 years of age in Rochford, local service provision is low, and there is a need for more "quality of life" services.

The monitoring shows that 795 dwelling units are in various states of planning or completion. In 2006-07, 72% of new dwellings were built on previously developed land. The AMR states that the District has met housing targets recently, but that it is unlikely to do so in future unless additional land is allocated for housing.

Urban Capacity Study (2000 & 2007)

Two urban capacity studies have been conducted for Rochford District Council. The 2000 study found that intensification was unlikely to yield many housing units, that employment sites were generally too far removed from town centres to be suitable for housing and that car parks are of mixed quality and potential for housing because of the economics of structured.

The updated 2007 study generally found less scope for housing capacity than the 2000 study. The earlier projections for housing through intensification, subdivision and above shops did not materialize as expected.

Employment Land Study (2008)

In parallel to the Area Action Plan the Council has also commissioned an employment land study. This was published in September 2008, addressing current supply and quality, future need and demand. The employment land study will form a technical background report to the Councils emerging LDF. It will be used to help understand what and how much employment land is required in the borough and whether there is any potential to release existing land supplies. The relevance for the Area Action Plan is the Eldon Way Employment Area in Hockley, the findings of which might impact upon the potential for change and development in Hockley.

Given the need for additional employment land in the District the Employment Land Study recommends that the Council adopts strong policies to protect existing employment land. On a strategic level it is recommended that land to the west of the District is considered as viable to be developed as employment land. It is strategically best placed to house such uses due to its relatively good connectivity to Southend and London.

The eastern parts of the District, on the other hand, are not strategically good locations for employment land. The Employment Land study recommends that Rochford District Council consider the east as a more appropriate location for housing and other uses when planning for future land use requirements.

Of particular relevance to the Hockley Town Centre AAP the Employment Land Study has assessed the Eldon Way employment area (referred to in the study as the Hockley Trading Centre). It notes that the employment area is a strategically well placed employment location and that reallocation should only happen if provision is made for office use within Hockley Town Centre as part of a mixed-use scheme.

Retail and Leisure Study (2008)

The Retail and Leisure Study undertaken for the District states that Hockley is performing poorly in terms of expenditure retention. It is not considered to meet the definition of a 'town centre' as set out in PPS6.

However, the study notes that the town centre benefits from a strong comparison goods sector and a good mix of independent traders. It has a well maintained pedestrian environment and exhibits a low level of vacancies compared with the national average.

The study identifies a number of opportunities for Hockley, building upon its existing strengths and designed to remedy identified weaknesses. The study considers there is significant scope to enhance the frontages along Spa Road, Main Road, Southend Road and Woodlands Road junction, to create a high quality core. The study notes that Hockley lacks suitable larger retail premises for prospective traders and is unlikely to attract national multiples due to its size and proximity to larger centres. It is suggested that encouragement of niche and specialist businesses could assist in the creation of a 'boutique' town centre. However, redevelopment and investment is required to achieve this and success is dependant on the broader economic situation.

APPENDIX B: PLACECHECK INITIATIVE

Purpose of the Placecheck

The options presented in this report were informed by consultation with local representatives. On Saturday 23 February 2008 two Placecheck events were held in the district: one in Rochford town centre and one in Hockley town centre.

Placecheck is a method of assessing the qualities of a place, showing what improvements are needed, and focussing people on working together to achieve them. Placecheck asks questions about the processes of change and the potential for improving the area physically.

Placecheck involves a series of questions, starting from the basic about what people like or dislike about the place and what needs to be improved, to over a hundred more specific questions. Not all of these questions need to be asked; a series of questions and prompts can be used that are more specific to the place. For the purpose of the Rochford and Hockley Placechecks we used the basic questions for the purpose of generating wider discussion.

The Placecheck events were held to help inform ideas and options for future change and improvement in the town centres of Rochford and Hockley, ensuring that the views and opinions of local residents help generate these options. The Rochford Placecheck took place in the morning and Hockley in the afternoon. Invitations to participate in the process were sent to all residents on the Council's Citizens Panel who had expressed an interest in planning for the town centres.

Each event convened with an introduction to Placecheck. Participants were then split into two groups for the purposes of a walking tour around the town centres. During this tour questions were asked about issues and opportunities, likes and dislikes. Following the walking tour a group feedback session was convened, during which participants were asked to report back on their thoughts.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

Note: this glossary of terms used in planning is intended to provide a simple guide. It is not a statement of the law nor does it claim to be an authoritative interpretation of the law.

Adoption - the final confirmation of a plan as a statutory document by the local planning authority.

Affordable Housing - low cost housing for sale or rent, often from a housing association, to meet the needs of local people who cannot afford accommodation through the open or low cost market, or subsidised housing.

Amenity - the pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location which contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors.

Backland - land which is behind existing development with no, or very limited, road frontage. Usually applied to describe land previously or currently in use as rear gardens to existing residential properties.

Brownfield Site - land which has been previously developed, excluding mineral workings or other temporary uses.

Change of Use - more correctly referred to as a 'material change of use'. A change in the use of land or buildings that is of significance for planning purposes, often requiring planning permission.

Comparison Goods - 'non perishable' goods for retail sale which are often stocked in a wide range of sizes, styles, colours and qualities, including furniture, carpets, televisions etc.

Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) - notice issued by the government or a local authority to acquire land or buildings for public interest purposes.

Conditions - stipulations attached to a planning permission to limit or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.

Conservation Area - an area designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, by the local planning authority, as an area where it is desirable to preserve or enhance the character of its special architectural or historic interest.

Conservation Area Consent - consent required from the local planning authority before demolishing an unlisted building in a conservation area.

Consultation - procedures for assessing public opinion about a plan or major development proposal, or in the case of a planning application, the means of obtaining the views of affected neighbours or others with an interest in the proposal.

Density - in the case of residential development, a measurement of either the number of habitable rooms per hectare or the number of dwellings per hectare.

Design Brief - a statement prepared by the Local Planning Authority indicating the preferred way in which the Authority envisages the development may be accommodated.

Design Statement - a document provided by applicants to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their development proposals.

Development - the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or land.

Development Brief - document providing detailed information to guide developers on the type of development, design and layout constraints and other requirements for a particular, usually substantial, site.

Development Plan - the Local and Structure Plans are both development plans. The development plan for the District is comprised of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (adopted April 2001) and the Rochford District Local Plan First Review (adopted April 1995) [or the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan, when adopted].

English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England) - a national body funded by the government to promote and give advice on building conservation matters.

English Nature - a national body funded by the government to promote and give advice on the conservation of England's wildlife and natural features.

Essex Design Guide - prepared by Essex County Council, the Design Guide forms the basis for the design of housing development in the District.

Green Belt - specially designated area of countryside protected from most forms of development in order to stop urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements, preserve the character of existing settlements and encourage development to locate within existing built-up areas.

Greenfield Site - an area not previously used for built development.

Infrastructure - permanent resources serving society's needs, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, railways, communication networks etc.

Intensification - increasing densities within existing residential areas through the bringing forward for development of unidentified

Listed Building - building or other structure of special architectural or historic interest included on a statutory list and assigned a grade (I, II* or II).

Local Plan - statutory development plan prepared by a local planning authority setting out detailed policies for environmental protection and development.

Local Planning Authority - the local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions. This is normally the local borough or district council, but in National Parks and some other areas there is a different arrangement.

Planning Control - the process whereby a local planning authority decides whether a planning application meets the requirements of planning policy, particularly as set out in development plans.

Proposals Map - an obligatory component of a local plan showing the location of proposals in the plan on an Ordnance Survey base map.

Public Open Space (POS) - land provided in urban or rural areas for public recreation, though not necessarily publicly owned.

Residential Land Availability - the annual statement indicating all sites available for housing and their development status for the next 5 years, in order to ensure that an adequate housing land will be made available.

Structure Plan - a plan produced jointly by Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, mainly comprising a written statement setting out the strategic policies and framework for development throughout the County. The Plan is approved by the Secretary of State following an Examination in Public, and District Councils then put the flesh on the framework with their Local Plans.

Sustainable Development - environmentally responsible development, commonly defined as "development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Town Centre - describes city, town and traditional suburban centres which provide a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus for a community and for public transport.

Town Centre Management - partnership of local organisations, businesses and individuals to promote the common good of a town by developing, managing, promoting and improving facilities, the useful resources, the economy and the environment of a town centre.

Townscape - the appearance and character of buildings and all other features of an urban area taken together as a whole.

Urban Regeneration - the re-use or redevelopment of decaying or run-down parts of older urban areas to bring them new life and economic vitality.