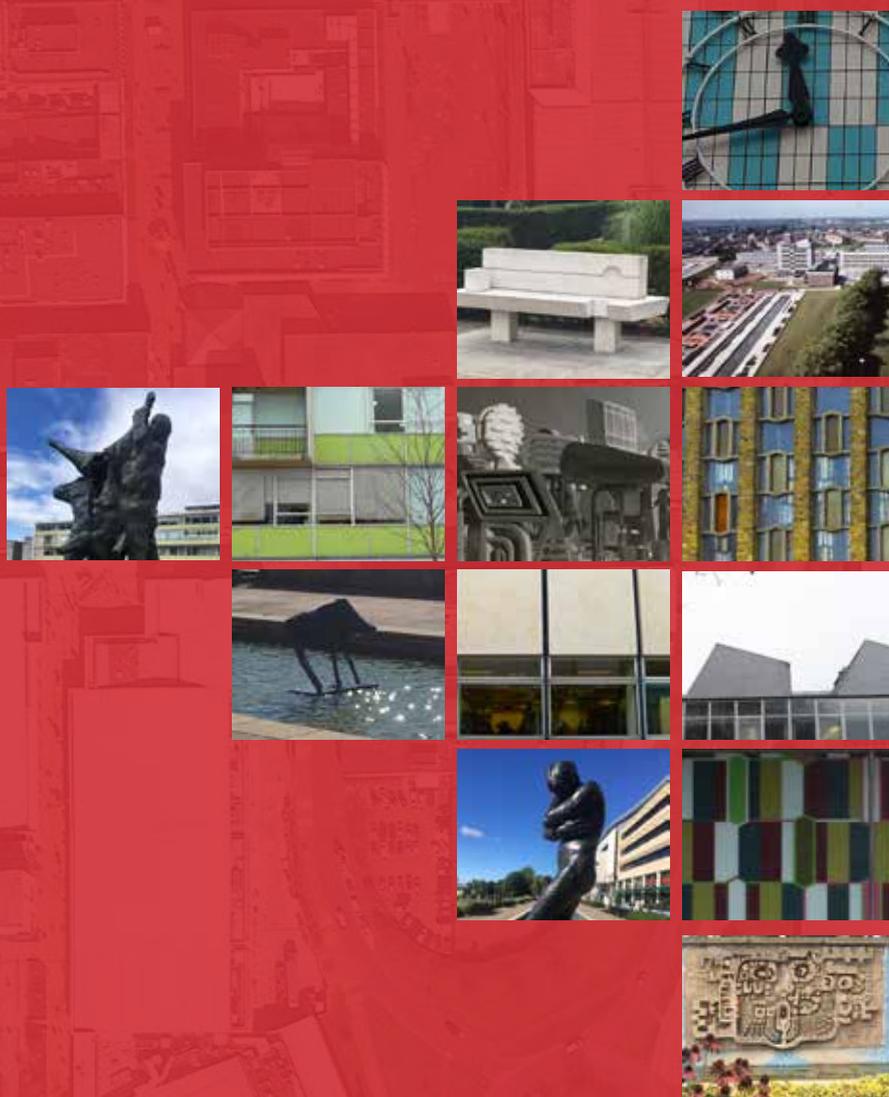


HARLOW TOWN CENTRE

Area Action Plan Issues and options report Consultation final

Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners

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- A. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT**
- B. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

Although it has experienced significant change over the past 65 years, many of the distinctive attributes of Sir Frederick Gibberd's original masterplan remain evident in the structure and character of Harlow Town Centre, as the heart of Harlow New Town.

Similar to many town and city centres across the UK, shifting economic trends have had, and continue to have a profound impact on the performance and prosperity of Harlow Town Centre. The Town Centre has experienced a decline in the retail ranking from 168 in 2012 to 185 in 2017 (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Final Report, May 2017).

Although policies already exist which establish the primacy of the Town Centre and seek to protect and enhance its performance, the planning process has the potential to play a more proactive role in strengthening the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and enabling regeneration. The preparation of a more specific set of planning policies presents an opportunity to create the conditions for a resilient, successful centre. The Area Action Plan (AAP), in combination with the Harlow Local Development Plan (and other guidance) will enable Harlow Council alongside wider stakeholder, landowner and developer partners to plan positively for managed change and a sustainable, coordinated approach to growth.

Broader growth context

The role and performance of the Town Centre requires broader consideration in the context of the proposed growth which is anticipated across the wider area and neighbouring districts.

Harlow Council, alongside Epping Forest District and East Hertfordshire District Councils have identified potential for 16,100 new homes at Harlow and Gilston Garden Town through their Local Plan processes (up to 2033), with an additional c.7,000 new homes identified in the Gilston area beyond this plan period.

This residential growth is part of ambitious plans for Harlow and Gilston's future economy, which is uniquely placed to connect into the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor - one of the UK's fastest growing economies, with jobs growth 2.5 times the national average between 2009 and 2014.

The Strategic Site Assessment (September 2016) identified sufficient suitable sites in and around Harlow to accommodate around 16,100 new homes. These strategic sites fall across all three authorities and form the basis of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

It should be noted, that in addition to the strategic sites, approximately 6,600 new homes will be developed within Harlow District either through completed and granted planning permissions, as well as intensification and urban brownfield sites.

In addition to housing growth, there is also significant economic momentum, with Public Health England relocating to the GSK offices near the Town Centre. Office floorspace and other employment opportunities are also being realised through Harlow Enterprise Zone which includes significant focus on life science, advanced manufacturing and ICT / digital.

What is an Area Action Plan?

The AAP is a Development Plan Document and will sit alongside the Local Plan which is being produced for the District as a whole.

The AAP will provide a spatial planning framework to guide development and secure the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre for the period up to 2033. This will take into account the key role the Town Centre performs across the wider Harlow area, reinforced by the need to accommodate additional retail provision, arising from increased housing growth being brought forward.

Ultimately, the guidance in the AAP, in tandem with the Local Plan will replace all policies relevant to the Town Centre as set out in the Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan July 2006 which have been saved.

The guidance in the AAP will be informed by national policies and guidance which set out the Government's planning policies for England and how it expects them to be applied.

National policies state that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three roles:

- An economic role by contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- A social role by supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
- An environmental role by contributing to the protection and enhancement of the environment.

Purpose of the Issues and Options document

The Issues and Options stage of AAP production represents the first stage of formal consultation on the Area Action Plan for the Town Centre. As set out in the NPPF para 182, the purpose of the document is to set out and consider reasonable alternatives. Building on baseline analysis, emerging evidence base studies and early engagement, this document identifies the key issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the Town Centre and sets out different options for the AAP to consider and explore.

Feedback on these options will help the Council develop policy guidance in response to these issues as the basis of the draft AAP which will be developed following the issues and options process.

Structure of the document

Following the introduction, chapter 2 provides a concise portrait of Harlow Town Centre. An assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) is set out in chapter 3 as a summary of the analysis undertaken in chapter 6. The existing policy context is summarised in chapter 4.

Chapter 5 sets out an emerging vision statement and accompanying spatial principles and economic drivers for the Town Centre.

The main focus for the document is the Issues and Options section in chapter 6 which is set out in two parts - part A, policy themes, and part B, Opportunity Areas and Sites.

The final chapter identifies next steps. A technical appendix detailing additional evidence base research is included in relation to heritage.

Process and programme

The following diagram summarises stages of preparation for the AAP:

- Evidence base and background research including consultation;
- Synthesis of evidence and initial consultation;
- Preparation of Issues and Options report and Sustainability Appraisal;
- Regulation 18 consultation on Issues and Options Report;
- Preparation of draft Area Action Plan;
- Regulation 19 Pre-submission consultation;
- Submission of Final Draft to Inspector and Examination in Public; and
- Inspectors report and adoption of the Plan.



Programme for preparation of the Area Action Plan

How to respond

The new Area Action Plan for Harlow Town Centre will contain Strategic Policies which provide overarching guidance and framework for the Town Centre, supported by Policies which provide more detailed planning guidance. The AAP is being prepared in accordance with national legislation and guidance, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance.

We are now consulting on the Issues and Options stage of the AAP which sets out an emerging direction of travel for the AAP. You can submit comments on this document at www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-policy

All comments must be submitted by 4pm on Friday 10 August 2018. Any comments received after this date will not be considered.

Comments can be submitted in one of the following ways:

- Using the **online consultation portal** - external website (recommended option)
- Complete the **representation form** (pdf) and post it to: **Forward Planning, Place Services, Harlow Council, Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1WG** or email it to **myharlow@harlow.gov.uk**. Copies of the representation form can be found on the website above, and hard copies are available in the Civic Centre reception; or
- Send an email or letter to the Council with the data consent form.

Important Notes

Please note that it is not possible for representations to be considered anonymously. You must include your name and address on any comment in order for it to be accepted.

For more information on how Harlow Council collect, use and protect personal information generally, please visit www.harlow.gov.uk/privacy-notice

**Regulation 19
Pre-submission
consultation**

WINTER 2019

**Submission of
Final Draft to
Inspector and
Examination
in Public**

SPRING 2019

**Inspectors
report and
Adoption
of the Plan**

**SPRING /
SUMMER 2019**

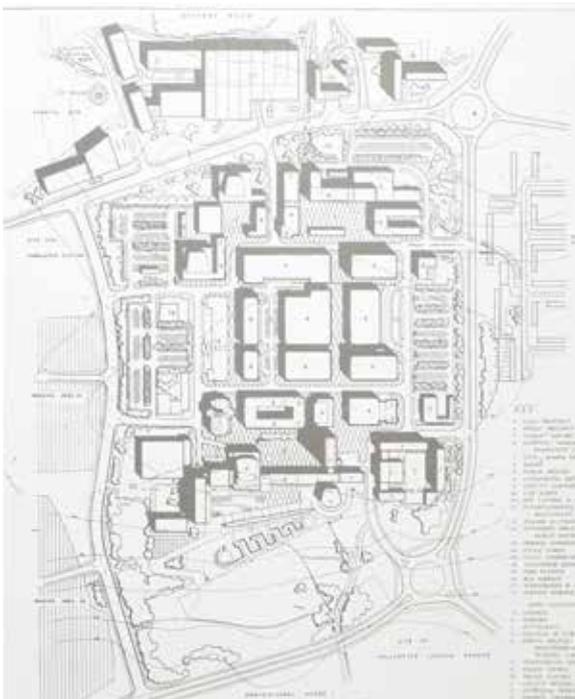
2 HARLOW TOWN CENTRE

Historic overview

Before the planned development of Harlow New Town, the area was largely fields with dispersed farmsteads and manors. The commercial centre grew around Old Harlow's medieval market square and the more informal Churchgate Street to the south-east. The population grew from 1,514 people in 1801 to 3,471 in 1931, small in comparison to the 60,000 people for whom the new town was planned (later this increased to 90,000).

Frederick Gibberd's vision and masterplan for Harlow New Town reflected the New Town ethos of the 1940's, drawing inspiration from the earlier Garden City movement and the drive to provide high quality and spacious homes with access to clean air and open space.

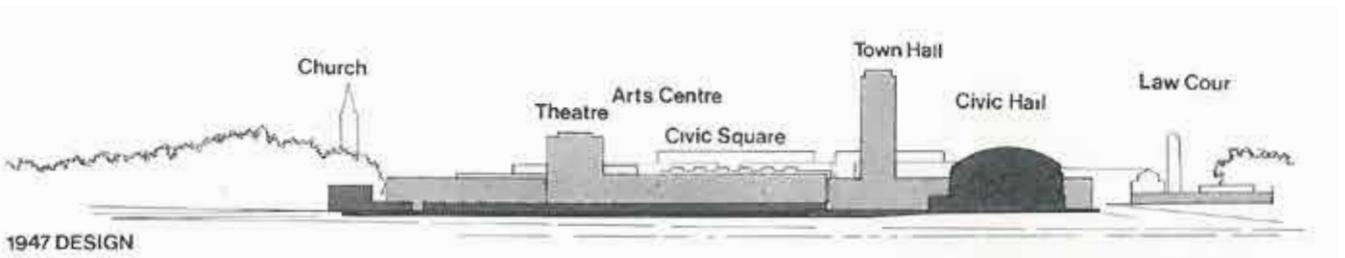
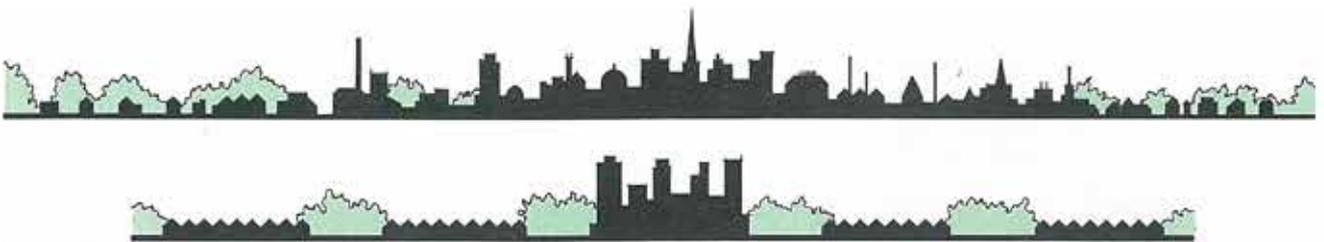
The 1952 masterplan was based on three fundamental principles - an essentially human environment (that the design should be based on the pedestrian); an urban atmosphere; and the principle of evolution. According to Gibberd, "the third predicted a flexible approach. The first two were basic to the concept of new towns."



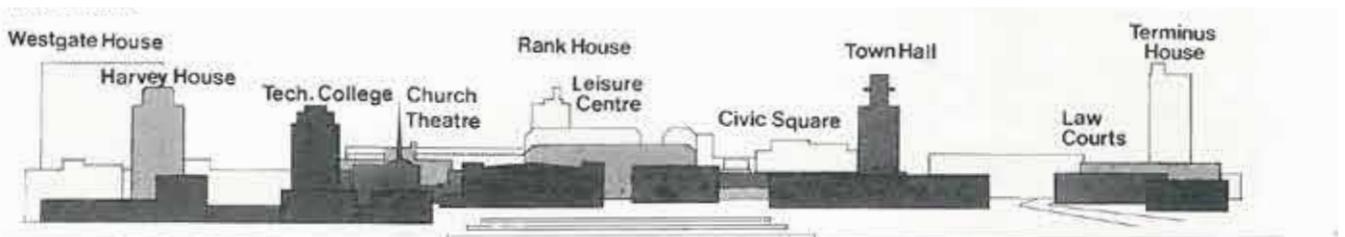
1952 masterplan of Harlow New Town



- Pedestrianised public realm
- Parking
- Green space



1947 DESIGN



1977 DESIGN

Gibberd's vision of rationalising and separating the town and industry from surrounding residential neighbourhoods

Evolution of Town Centre

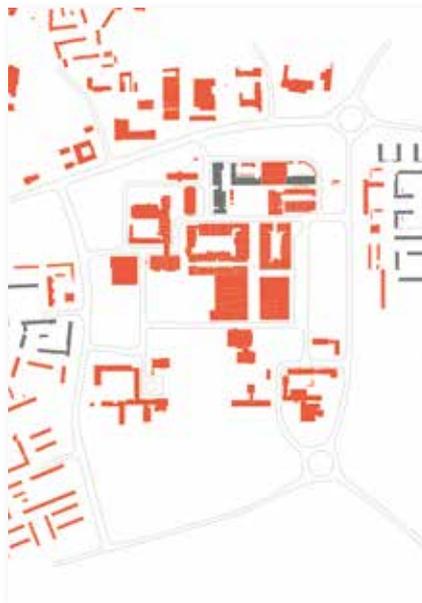
Since the conception of Harlow New Town, the Town Centre has undergone several stages of expansion. The diagrams below show its evolution from 1952 to today. The original plan intentionally separated residential areas from the Town Centre. This now has a negative impact on the current operation of the Town Centre, in contrast to historic market towns which are activated in the evening by people living in the centre.

1952-1960



The first buildings were completed around the Market Square.

1960-1966



The majority of the northern Town Centre is built out including Wych Elm area, Market Square, Town Hall, Library, Police and Fire Station.

Car parks around the perimeter of the centre act as arrival points.

The Water Gardens are completed to the south with a large green area as the setting.

1960-1975



Multi-storey car parks and Joseph Rank House are developed on car park sites.

The Playhouse is built next to the Church.

There is further development of businesses and light industry in the Wych Elm area.

1975-1980



1980 marks the dissolution of the Development Corporation. Harvey Centre is extended to include a multi-storey car park and BHS between the Library and Church.

Redstone House is built opposite the Library to announce the end of the Broad Way, and Sainsbury supermarket is built to the north of the Town Centre.

Vehicular connections across the Town Centre are lost between East Gate and West Gate and from College Square to Crown Gate.

1980-1995



Harvey Centre begins to fill out the area west of the Broad Walk and infill development bridges across North Gate.

1995-2017



More recently there has been a large amount of development to the south of the Town Centre alongside residential development in the centre at Dads Wood including Ocasio House.

The Water Gardens development involved the relocation of the Water Gardens and Harlow College, as well as the addition of a multi-storey car park to the south of the Water Gardens.

Harlow Leisure Zone is built south east of the Town Centre. There is a loss of the majority of green space in the Town Centre.

Town Centre position and context

Harlow Town Centre is positioned in close proximity to major transport corridors, including the A10, M25, A414 and the M11, which stretches from London to Cambridge and beyond towards Peterborough. Stansted Airport is located to the north of Harlow. The Town Centre is served by Harlow Town Railway Station alongside a network of local buses. The integration of transport planning with efficient mixed land uses and improvements to the public realm are essential for the regeneration of the Town Centre. Harlow has a strong relationship with Cambridge which lies just 50km north of Harlow and is part of the 'Core Area' within the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor (LSCC).



Regional context

■ LSCC

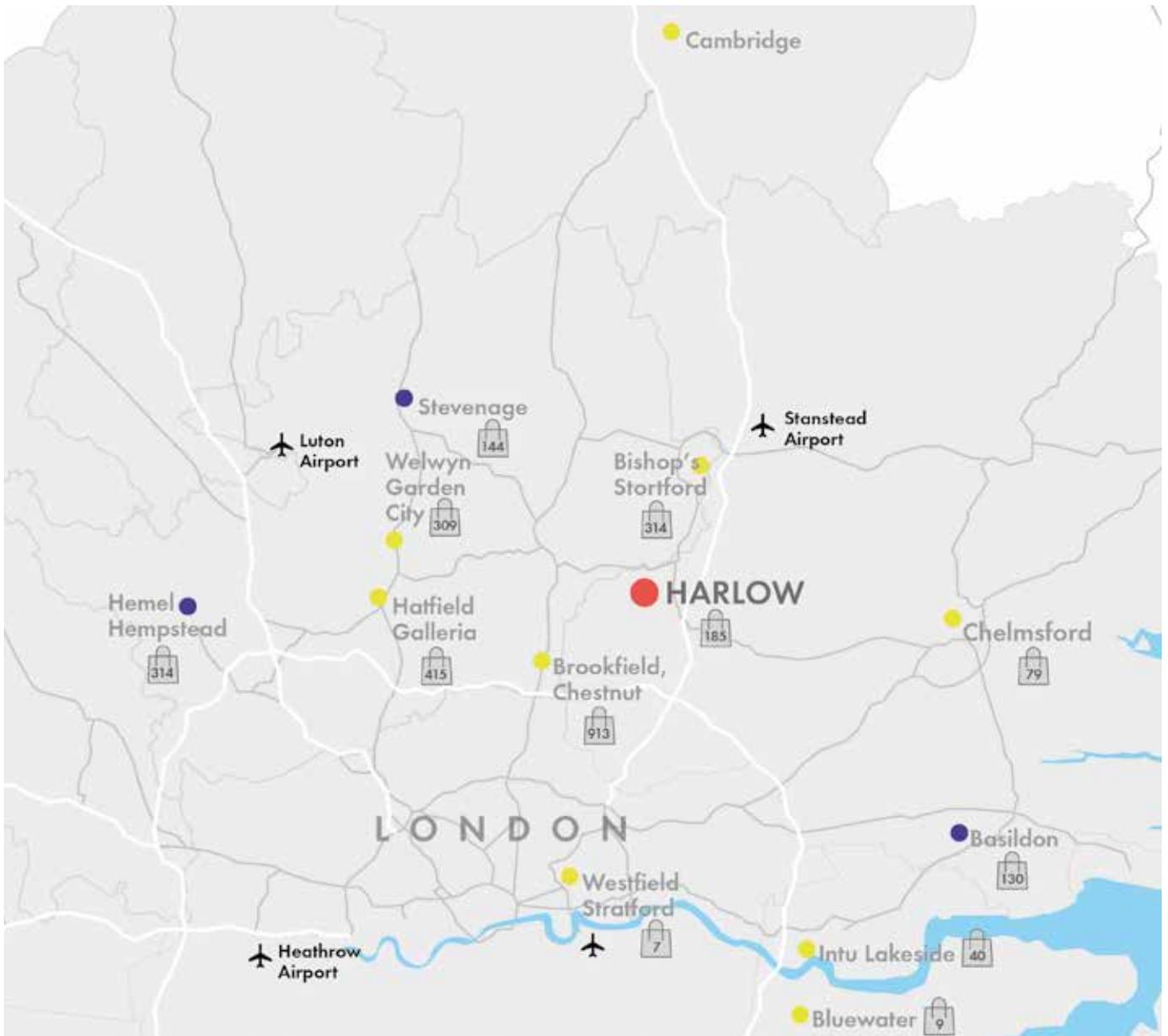
Retail sector context and trends

Harlow has large shopping population in its catchment but the Town Centre has experienced a decline in retail ranking from 168 in 2012 to 185 in 2017 (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Final Report, May 2017). This could be due to a lack of inward investment and changes to the national retail sector and shopping habits, alongside the relative improvement of directly competing centres in the wider area including Bishops Stortford, Brookfield and Welwyn Garden City. Competition from sub-regional shopping centres also has an impact.

As set out in the recent Market Assessment for the Town Centre (2017), recent studies indicate a significant expenditure leakage to competing centres. The centre has a lack of major occupiers and a relatively poor evening economy offer. The proximity of the Town Centre to a strong out-of-town retail offer, notably Queensgate Centre, also affects the performance of the Town Centre retail economy. A number of retail sector trends have affected the town centres and high streets across the UK.

These include the following:

- Online shopping;
- Down-sizing and polarisation of national retailers;
- Importance of scale, flexibility and variety of store sizes;
- Smaller format grocery stores likely to be more common;
- Leisure uses becoming more important with focus on consumer experience;
- Creating right conditions to attract new modern retail e.g. high quality public realm;
- Demand for co-working spaces, homeworking and serviced offices;
- Transport / accessibility;
- Increase of private rental sector; and
- Use of permitted development rights to convert office to residential.



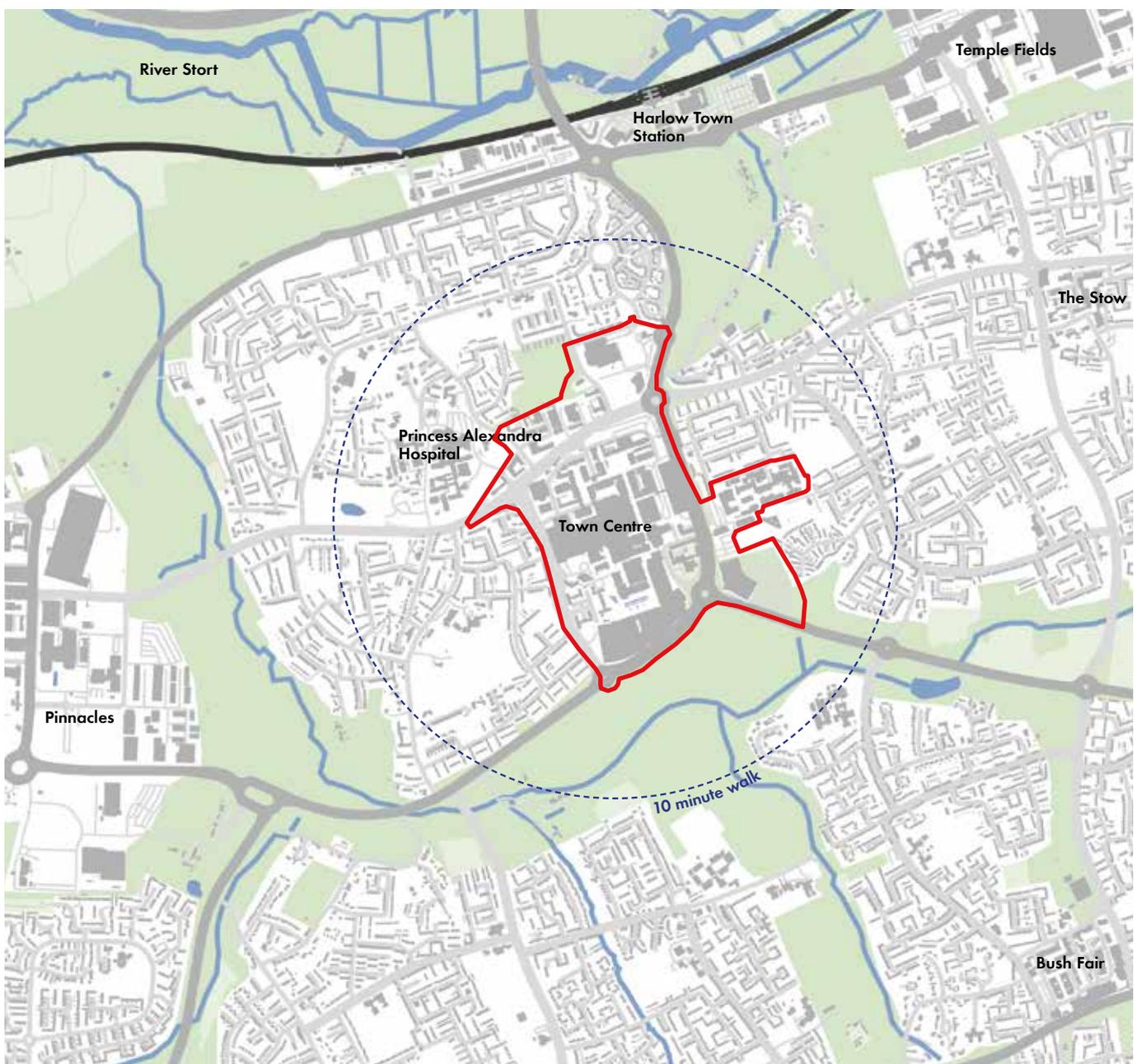
KEY

- **Competing centre**
- **Other New Towns**
-  **Retail ranking**

Town centre performance ranking

Nearby neighbourhoods

The surrounding neighbourhoods are separated from the Town Centre by green wedges and major connector roads.



Wider context - Town Centre location

 AAP boundary

Green infrastructure

Natural landscape and green space can be easily reached by foot from the Town Centre, although the centre itself lacks planting and open spaces. The Green Wedge network was an essential part of Gibberd's vision for Harlow and often accommodates cycling and walking routes.

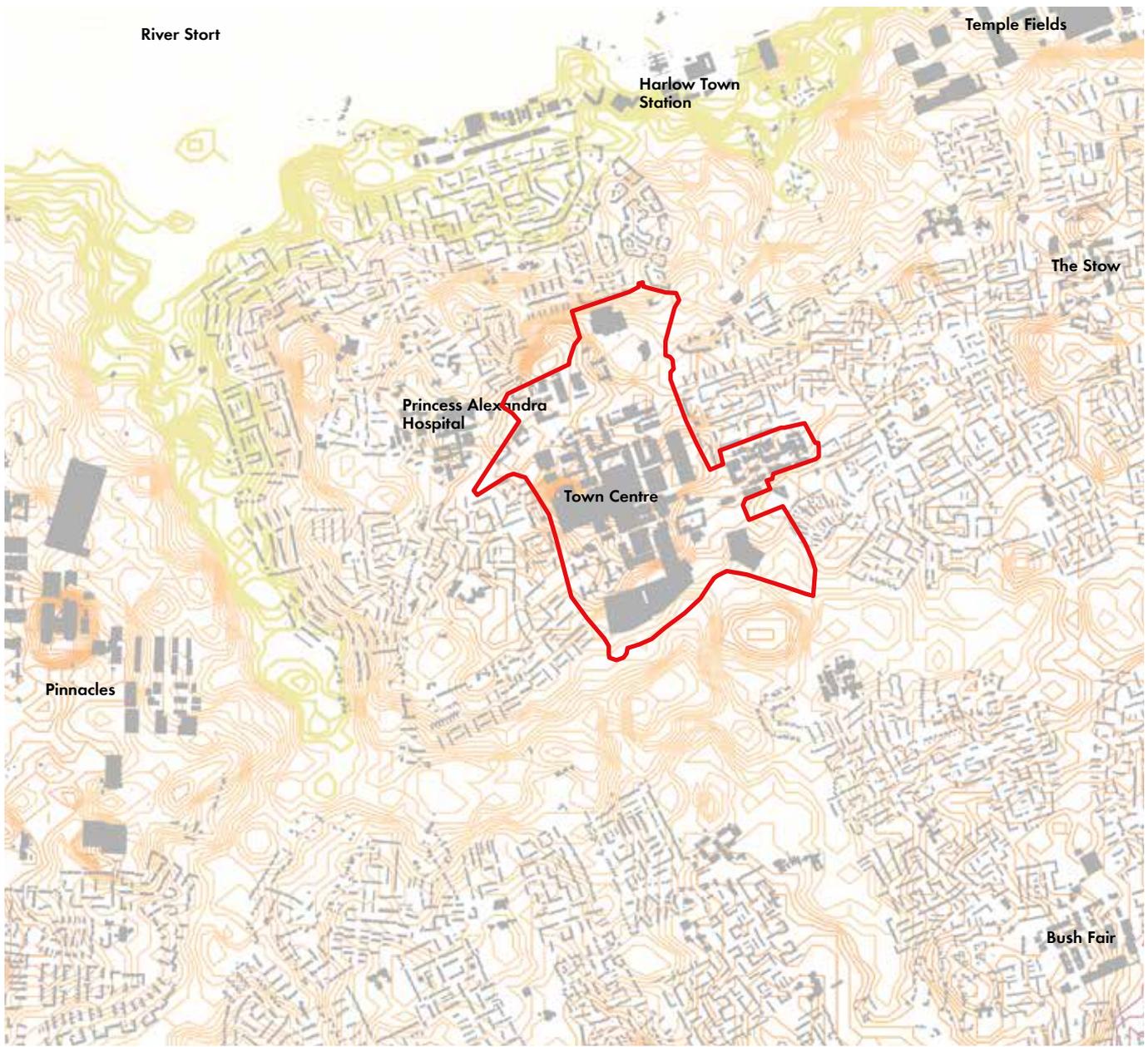


Wider context - Green space

AAP boundary

Topography

The Stort Valley runs to the north with land rising gradually to the south, reaching a ridgeline of about 70 metres above the valley level to the south of existing settlement. Harlow was planned to be contained within the cradle of Rye Hill, with this distinct topography offering expansive views of the surrounding countryside.



Wider context - Topography

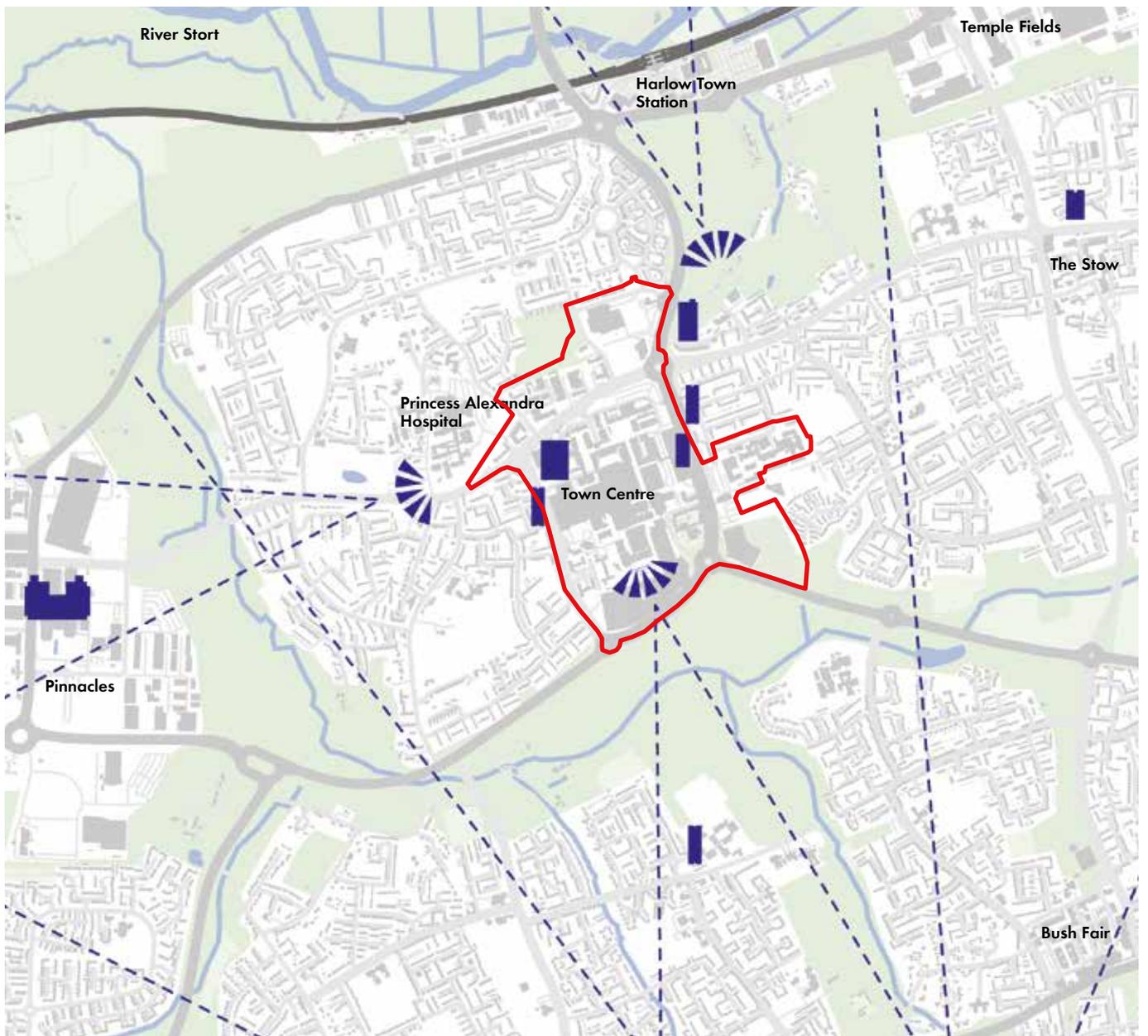
 AAP boundary

Landmarks

Views of landmarks aid legibility across Harlow. A row of poplar trees at the former Woodbridge Farm and the southern water tower are clear features on the horizon and can be viewed from The Water Gardens looking south. The view back is shown in the photo opposite.



View north towards Harlow Town Centre



Wider context - Landmarks

 AAP boundary

Growth potential

Based on the evidence base, demand for housing in Harlow is likely to increase in response to buyers being pushed out of London. This is a general trend in towns close to London, but the existence of employment opportunities associated with Public Health England and Enterprise Zone status have significant potential to establish greater momentum in Harlow. Other positive drivers for growth include the Town's strategic role in the LSCC and investment in sustainable transport modes and an integrated cycle network.

Significant housing growth will be required to support the level of forecast population growth (19.6% increase by 2032). The SHMA identified need for 7,409 new homes in the next 20 years with demand mostly for 2 and 3 bedrooms. The award-winning Newhall development at Harlow offers an innovative approach to accommodating new homes and future developments should take a cue from its form, density, scale and layout.

	Forecasting year			
	2021	2026	2031	2033
Comparison goods floorspace capacity (sq. m net)	4,900	17,200	31,600	37,900
Convenience goods floorspace capacity (sq. m net)	1,600	2,900	4,200	4,700

Existing retail floorspace: 82,000 sq. m net

Forecast Retail Capacity - Medium Housing Growth / 'Baseline' Scenario (figures are cumulative)

Source: Retail Needs Study, GVA.

The Town Centre is not understood to be an established office market due to size, quality of existing stock and high vacancy rates. However, significant growth opportunities exist within the Enterprise Zone for new office space with a focus on Med Tech, Life Science and ICT sectors alongside SME manufacturing space and the emergence of a national science base for Public Health England.

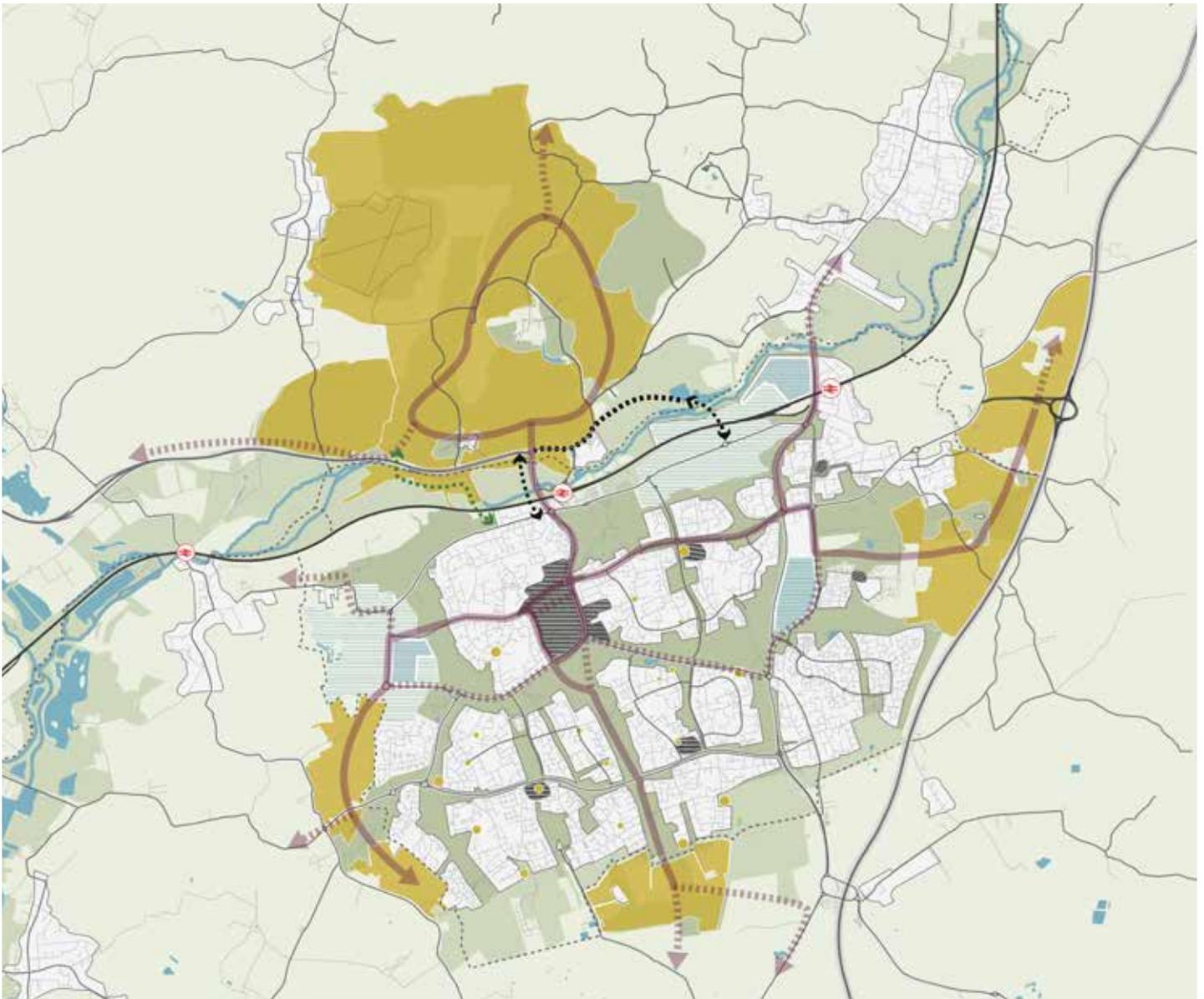
The encouragement of conversion of office to residential within the Town Centre maybe undermining good quality growth and impacting upon the amount of employment space needed to help meet wider economic needs associated with the new homes proposed for the District.

Residential growth and employment generation are expected to go hand-in-hand with a growth in future Town Centre consumer demand for Harlow Town Centre.

The table below illustrates the forecast level of retail capacity over the plan period.

Harlow Town Centre will be impacted if a strategic decision to relocate Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) from its current site is taken. In planning for future population growth and increasing demand, PAH is working with partners exploring relocation options as well as redevelopment on the existing site. The hospital is the largest employer in the district and serves an extended population of up to 500,000; relocation away from the existing site is likely to impact the town centre and daily footfall.

The existing site has been identified for c650 new homes, which will support the town centre. The loss of c2,500 jobs close to the town centre will be a strategic issue for the town and the AAP will consider how some of these jobs may be reprovided.



Growth context showing the number of new homes coming forward in the Plan period within the Housing Market area (Harlow District Council, Epping Forest District Council and East Herts District Council)



AAP boundary

The adjacent drawing illustrates the Town Centre boundary and the AAP boundary. The previous iteration of the Town Centre boundary is shown as a dashed line, which is drawn more tightly to the roads which form an edge to the core Town Centre area.

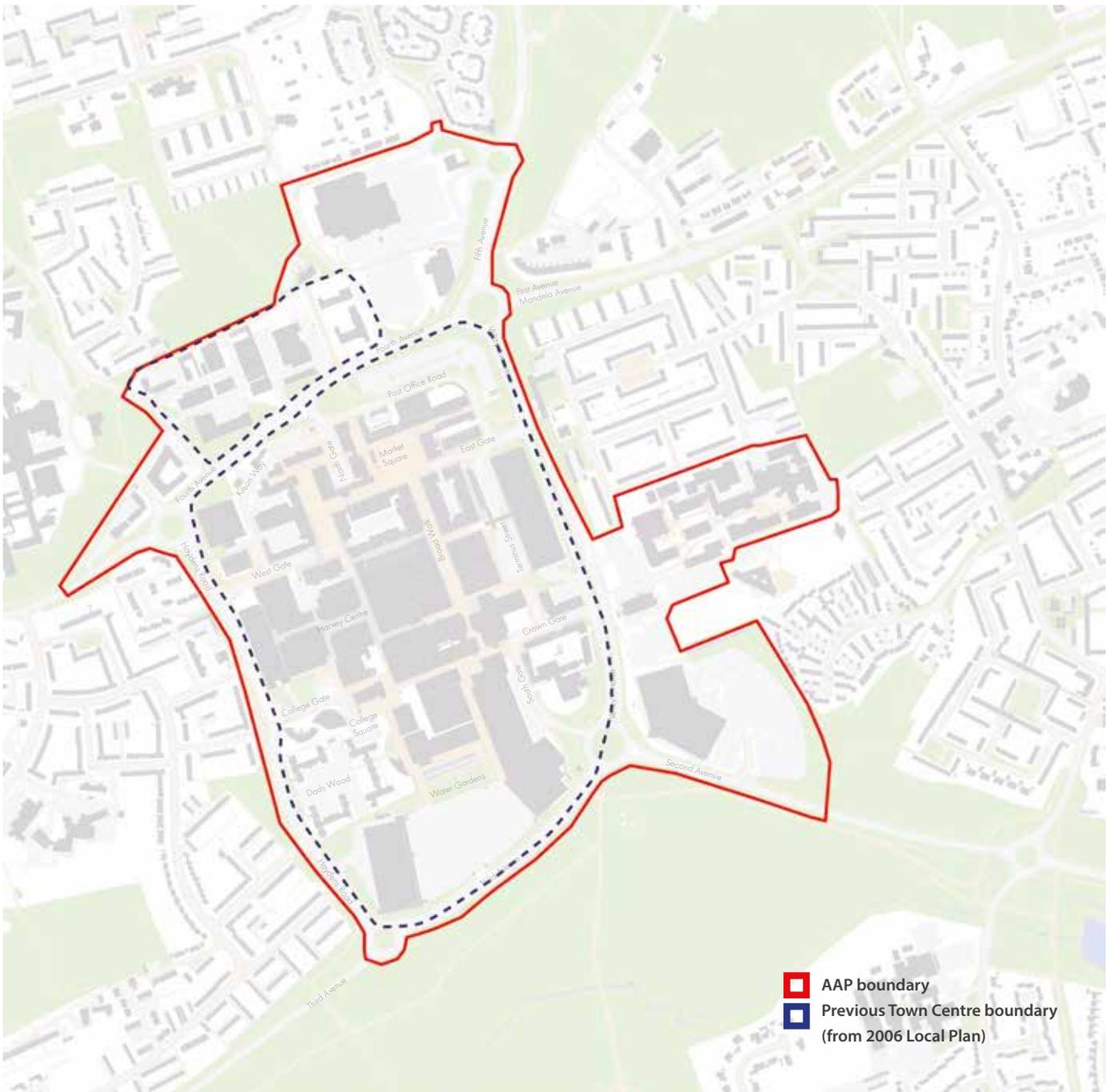
Harlow Town Centre and its environs have changed over the years and the Town Centre boundary has been amended to reflect and align to the natural boundary that exists today but also to take account of potential changes in the future. The new boundary incorporates the contemporary pattern of commercial, civic, leisure and educational uses and recognises sites of future change that are likely to have significant impact on the town centre. There is recognition that Princess Alexandra Hospital has an impact on the Town Centre, however with discussions ongoing regarding the future of the existing site (adjacent to Harlow Town Centre) it has not been included in the AAP boundary. The new areas incorporated within the updated boundary include:

- Harlow College campus, which is an important education site incorporating Harlow College, Harlow Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre and BMAT STEM Academy which is a major trip generator for the town centre
- Harlow Leisurezone, which is both a very popular leisure centre in the town and serves as a town centre car park for many visitors

- Sainsburys to the north of the town centre, which could have a stronger relationship with the centre and could come forward for redevelopment in the Local Plan period, up to 2033.
- The Clarion Housing site which has recently been demolished, has planning permission for residential development and likely to progress within the Plan period.

This expansion is significant as has a number of potential benefits from a planning policy perspective:

- The wider boundary encourages greater emphasis on the potential regeneration opportunities of sites beyond the immediate core Town Centre. By including them within the boundary, there is potential to encourage a more joined up approach which is integrated with the broader direction of travel for the Town Centre as a whole.
- The AAP is likely to include a number of integrated proposals for improvements to the roads such as Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue which form a collar around the Town Centre. The wider boundary might assist in achieving a comprehensive context for movement and public realm projects which could assist from a delivery perspective.



Town Centre and Area Action Plan boundary

3 SWOT ANALYSIS

Drawing on the Market Assessment report (2017), the following analysis assists in distilling the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Strengths

- Strategic location (Harlow)
- Excellent transport connections (Harlow)
- 30 minutes to London by train (Harlow)
- Comparatively large shopping population
- Representation of national mid-range multiples
- Adequate town centre parking
- Private investment e.g. Addington scheme
- Asda forms an 'anchor' alongside the established restaurant offer at The Water Gardens
- Harlow College Campus
- Alternative / hidden offer - Voluntary and community
- Public art
- The Water Gardens Shopping Centre

Weaknesses

- Too much retail floorspace
- High vacancy rates (highest of all comparators)
- Lack of medium - large shops capable of attracting modern retailers
- Lack of higher end retailers
- Lack of quality small independent traders
- Lack of vibrant night-time economy
- Limited commercial leisure offer (i.e. evening)
- Location of train station
- Location and size of bus station (too large)
- Poor quality, under-utilised public spaces
- Poor town centre connections
- Library site (physical/physiological barrier)
- Lack of council-owned town centre sites
- Lowest average income of all comparators

Opportunities

- Potential development sites in northern town centre area (Market Square / Stone Cross and Post Office Road)
- Council role in stimulating regeneration
- Increase the resident population of both the town and within the town centre
- Consolidation of town centre shopping area
- Consolidation of public sector services
- Greater town centre linkages
- Cinema-anchor scheme completed in Harvey Centre, introduction of new restaurants
- Planning permission granted for major redevelopment of town centre west
- Improve and maintain shops along Broad Walk
- Improve accessibility by public transport
- Proposals for the improvement of the library site
- Public Health England and Enterprise Zone (Harlow)

Threats

- Limited town centre development pipeline or certainty of developments
- Minor developments / investment delivered in isolation
- Lack of department store
- Increasing competition from other centres (including Chelmsford)
- Trends in retail sector (polarisation, multi-channel retailing, changing store formats)
- Poor quality office-residential conversions
- Economy uncertainty
- Continuation of lowest average income of all comparators

4 POLICY CONTEXT

Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan (2006)

The Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan (2006) sets out policies and proposals for development up to 2011 and is in the process of being replaced by the new Harlow Local Development Plan.

The document contains a number of relevant objectives for the regeneration of the Town Centre in Chapter 12:

- Sustain and enhance vitality and viability of Town Centre to ensure its continuation as a sub-regional centre.
- Support and promote regeneration of Town Centre through collaboration.
- Promote diversity and quality of uses in Town Centre.
- Assess location of new retail developments in sequential manner, favouring Town Centre sites first.
- Retain and encourage residential development in the Town Centre.
- Manage road traffic and improve access to centre, including public transport, cycling and pedestrians and those with special needs.
- Identify new opportunities for retail and related uses in Town Centre.

A number of policies are set out under these objectives as follows:

- RTCS1 - Proposals for retail developments will be determined on a sequential approach.
- RTCS3 - Proposals should strengthen role of the Town Centre - increasing the range and quality of facilities, managing road traffic, improving access, enhancing character and appearance, providing mixed use development, improving facilities for disabled people.

- RTCS4 - Proposals should improve the environmental quality of Town Centre.
- RTCS10 – Protecting the vitality of the retail offer through the designation of Primary and secondary frontages.

Harlow Local Development Plan: Emerging Strategy and Further Options (2014)

The Council published a consultation document which explored strategic growth options for Harlow in 2014. The document articulates a spatial portrait of the town and articulates the key issues and challenges arising from the evidence base review. Ten priorities have been identified to 2031:

- Delivering a growing, sustainable and regenerated Harlow.
- Met housing needs.
- Delivered Neighbourhood Renewal.
- Secured Economic Revitalisation.
- Renewed Town Centre and other Centres
- Established Quality Streets and Spaces.
- Revitalised Green Spaces.
- Adapted to and Mitigated the Impacts of Climate Change.
- Improved Accessibility and Connectivity.
- Supported Development and Change.

Five development scenarios were developed including “Do Nothing More”, “Meeting Development Needs”, “Jobs Led”, “Growing Centre” and “Transformed Centre” which varied according to the attitude towards the intensity and location of growth, and the balance of uses.

The report identifies a preferred target of between 12,000 and 15,000 new dwellings and 8,000 to 12,000 jobs.

Draft Harlow Local Development Plan (2017)

The new Draft Local Development Plan guides future development in the District to 2033 and replaces the 2006 Harlow Local Plan. The plan sets out a long term planning vision which ensures that development is sustainable and meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in the area. It is the basis upon which planning applications will be determined.

The document includes a number of relevant strategic objectives for the regeneration of the Town Centre in Chapter 3. Specific reference to the Town Centre is made in Objective 10, which is to “provide a range of shopping needs for local residents and the wider sub-region by regenerating the Town Centre and protecting and enhancing Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches.”

The main chapters regarding the redevelopment of the Town Centre are Chapter 9 - ‘Retail Ambitions and Town Centre Redevelopment’, and Chapter 15 - ‘Prosperity’. A number of strategic growth policies are set out within Chapter 9 and are listed below:

- RS1 - Retail Hierarchy: redevelopment must be directed to Harlow Town Centre first (followed by the centres set out in the retail hierarchy).
- RS2 - Future Retail Floorspace: RS2 refers to the emerging Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan which will look to deliver a significant proportion of the retail floorspace requirements through site redevelopment and regeneration opportunities, and which will identify the future retail floorspace capacity of the Town Centre. The HTCAAP will also identify environmental and public realm improvements, alongside access and infrastructure schemes and opportunities

for providing a broader range of uses in the town centre. These include community, leisure, commercial and residential uses.

- RS3 - Protecting and Enhancing Existing Retail Centres: RS3 highlights the importance of retail floorspace which contributes towards the viability, vitality and function of Harlow Town Centre. The policy indicates that this will be protected, subject to the outcomes of the HTCAAP.

Other relevant strategic policies are:

- SD1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development: development that accords with the Local Plan will normally be supported unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- ED4 - Developing a Visitor Economy: a visitor economy will be developed, building upon the district’s arts and cultural attractions, the ‘Sculpture Town’ status, the New Town heritage and natural features such as the River Stort. Proposals will be supported where they provide local economic benefits, are underpinned by appropriate infrastructure and are scale, type and appearance appropriate to the locality.
- WE4 - Heritage: heritage assets and their settings will be preserved and enhanced.
- SIR1 - Infrastructure requirements: a commitment to work alongside groups to deliver the timely provision of infrastructure and to review and update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- SIR2 - Enhancing Key Gateway Locations - includes reference to integrating and improving the vehicular and pedestrian access points to the north of the Town Centre.

The draft Local Development Plan also includes a number of Development Management Policies that were recently consulted on.

Several policies are of specific relevance to the Town Centre including the following:

- PR5 - The Sequential Test and Principles for Main Town Centre Uses: PR5 reiterates the sequential approach to main Town Centre uses – specifically, that these must be directed to the Town Centre first. The policy also includes general principles for main Town Centre uses which encourage active frontages, preservation and enhancement of retail vitality and viability and improvements to public transport facilities.
- PR6 - Primary and Secondary Frontages in Town Centre – PR6 states that Primary Frontages supported where the development is for A1 class use, or development is for use class A2 or A3 and 60% or more of the overall primary frontage length is retained for A1 uses and the site has been vacant and actively marketed for at least 12 months. Main Town Centre uses (except office use), evening and night-time uses will be supported in Town Centre secondary frontages.
- PR7 - Sub-division and Internal Alteration of Town Centre Units: PR7 supports sub-division of Town Centre units if: for units larger than 2,500 sqm, evidence has been provided to demonstrate unit has been marketed to the satisfaction of Council for at least 2 years and sub-division or internal alteration would retain active frontage
- PR11 - Evening and Night Time Economy: PR11 states that evening and night time uses must be directed to Town Centre first locations. Evening and night time uses will be supported if development has positive effect on the vitality and viability of the retail centre, its night-time economy and local area, and mitigation through legal agreements or conditions to minimise negative impacts on the local area.
- H8 - Affordable Housing: H8 supports major residential development where affordable

housing is provided at a rate of at least 30%. Any reduction of this rate will require an independent viability assessment.

- IN1 - Development and sustainable modes of travel: IN1 encourages sustainable accessibility patterns in the Town Centre. Improvements will be required to provide safe and direct cycleways and footpaths (including contributions), safe and convenient cycle storage, other facilities for cyclists where appropriate and electric charging points for vehicles.
- L3 - Development Involving the Provision or Relocation or Loss of Public Art: L3 indicates that public art should be provided within major developments, and that any proposals involving the provision, relocation or loss of public art should be agreed with the Council.
- PR3 - Employment development outside employment areas and neighbourhood service areas: PR3 supports proposals for B1 office uses above ground floor level in the Town Centre and sets criteria for the assessment of their loss.
- L2 - Sporting, Cultural and Community Facilities: Development for the provision of recreational, sporting, cultural and community uses and facilities will be supported if there is evidence of need and if it is easily accessible by all sectors of community by public and private transport. Proposals which result in a loss of facilities will only supported if it meets one or more criteria
- PL11 - Heritage Assets and their Settings: Development will be assessed on harm it causes to significance of heritage. Key factors to be considered include impact of development on character and appearance of the asset, design quality of the development, and the extent to which the development is sympathetically integrated within the area.

Local Development Scheme

Harlow Council is required to prepare a Local Development Scheme under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The Development Plan Documents that comprise the Local Development Scheme for Harlow include the Harlow Local Development Plan and Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan, alongside a number of other Supplementary Planning Documents, strategies, Article 4's and Local Development Orders (LDO's).

Harlow Economic Development Strategy (2017)

The Strategy sets out priorities and ideas for delivery for the next five years that, among other goals, will lead to "a vibrant, creative Town Centre that is an asset to our communities and businesses". 'Priority 4: Transformation of Harlow Town Centre' (within the 'Place' theme) promotes a "high quality, high amenity centre that provides for residents of all backgrounds and aspirations, and provides attractions for the workforce of key employers."

Proposed actions for delivery include:

- Public realm improvements;
- Increase community, leisure and commercial activity;
- Deliver quality residential opportunities;
- Secure longer term investment and regeneration;
- Embed modern working environments into future Town Centre developments;
- Ensure opportunities to deliver space and resources to enable business activity (for example shared/co working space, meeting spaces, access to wifi, live/work accommodation etc.); and
- Support continued space for creative industries and cultural activities.

Harlow Council Corporate Plan 2017 - 2020

The Harlow Council Corporate Plan 2017/18 - 2019/20 sets out the Council's vision in the form of priorities to drive improvement to 2020. The Plan recognises the important role the Town Centre plays as a sub-regional destination and gives goals for the next three years relating to the Council's priority to support improvements to the Town Centre. These include:

- Continue to implement the Town Centre Improvement Plan which includes attracting investment, creating opportunities for residents and businesses, restoring pride and promoting the Town Centre.
- Consider new policy and alternative options for the future of the Town Centre.
- Work with landowners, developers and potential investors to bring forward initiatives to revitalise the Town Centre.
- Review Town Centre Planning and Licensing policies.

The Corporate Plan recognises the role of the AAP in achieving these goals.

Harlow Retail and Leisure Needs Study (2016)

The study forms part of the evidence base which underpins the new Local Plan and informs the retail policies and potential allocation of retail floorspace in Harlow Town Centre. The study considers:

- The national trends in the retail sector;
- The wider study context including key competing centres;
- The composition, role and function of current shopping and commercial leisure provision in Harlow town centre through a health-check assessment;
- Retail capacity;
- The quantitative 'need' for additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace in the District up to 2033;

- A review of commercial leisure provision within and outside of the District; and
- Conclusions, strategic guidance and recommendations on future change and growth within the District's network of centres, including Harlow Town Centre.

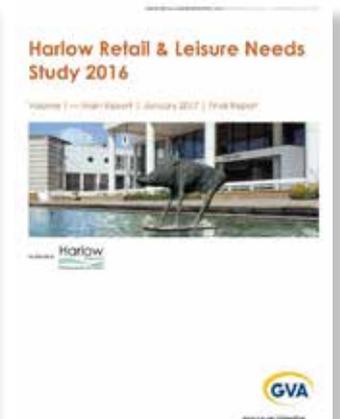
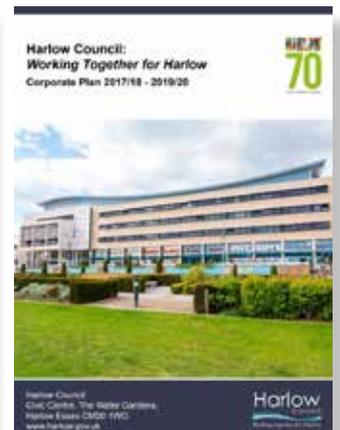
Harlow Retail Frontages Study (2017)

The Retail Frontages Study gives an annual review of the primary and secondary retail frontages in Harlow and has helped to inform the preparation of planning policies set out in the new Local Development Plan. The amount of vacant primary frontage in the Town Centre in July 2017 was 10.5%, a 2% increase since 2013. However, the impact of the closure of BHS unit is clear and excluding the BHS unit from the data reduces the amount of vacant frontage to 5%. The amount of vacant secondary frontage in the Town Centre in July 2017 was 20.5%, a decrease by 2.7% since 2013. The study also gives a table of frontages that require further review and a series of maps with proposals for possible new frontages, as well as the possible removal of frontages within the Town Centre.

Statement of Community Involvement (2014)

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council involves the community in preparing local planning policy and deciding planning applications within the District. The statement outlines the Council's commitment to consult with as many people and organisations as possible, meeting at the very least the required minimum legislative requirements. The SCI gives the various methods for planning policy consultation, with explicit reference made to 'hard-to-reach groups'.

HARLOW RETAIL FRONTAGES STUDY July 2017



Sample of relevant policy documents

5 VISION STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Vision statement

In the future, Harlow Town centre will be a successful, sustainable place which serves as the commercial centre for the existing town of Harlow and the planned Garden Town of Harlow and Gilston. The town centre will play an important part in helping Harlow and Gilston to step up to a more active economic role within the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor.

In order to do this, the town centre will have a strong mix of shops and services; offices and employment space; civic and leisure uses; and a thriving evening economy and cultural offer. The town centre will also have a decent range of homes that can support a mixed and balanced community.

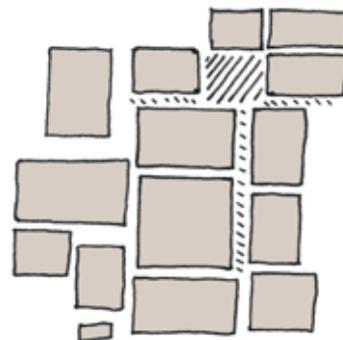
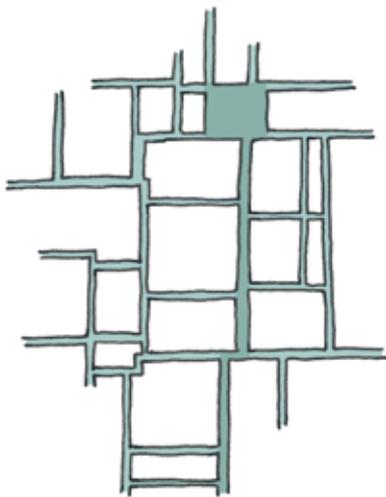
The town centre will be accessible to all, by public transport, cycle, on foot and by car and will help the District to minimise reliance on private cars in the future.

Outcomes

We have defined the following outcomes to help assess whether the proposals and investments will help to deliver the vision.

- A **unified centre** which re-balances the northern and southern areas.
- A Town Centre which supports **wider economic growth** in the District providing shops, services and homes, and a diverse mix of commercial activity in the Town Centre.
- A **retail and leisure offer** which appeals to Harlow's catchment and limits expenditure leakage to competing centres.
- A **high quality public realm** and environment with active public spaces.
- An **inclusive and accessible destination** with excellent transport links capitalising on Harlow's strategic location.
- A **strong cultural offer** which is supported by residents and visitors to the Town Centre.
- **Community facilities** which support the town's population.
- A **cohesive place**, supported by uses and design proposals which complement one another and work towards the overarching vision.
- A **commitment to retain the ethos** and respond positively to the defining elements of the Gibberd masterplan including the plan aesthetic, public art and spaces, heritage assets and positive architectural characteristics.

Spatial objectives (continued)



1 Retain the plan aesthetic

There is a formal composition to the arrangement of the streets and spaces in Harlow.

Buildings and public spaces have been set out on an irregular rectilinear grid, aligning frontages and with clearly defined corners.

Proposals should:

- Reflect the plan aesthetic of Gibberd's original vision
- Provide a rectilinear approach rather than curved or diagonal structure, as far as possible

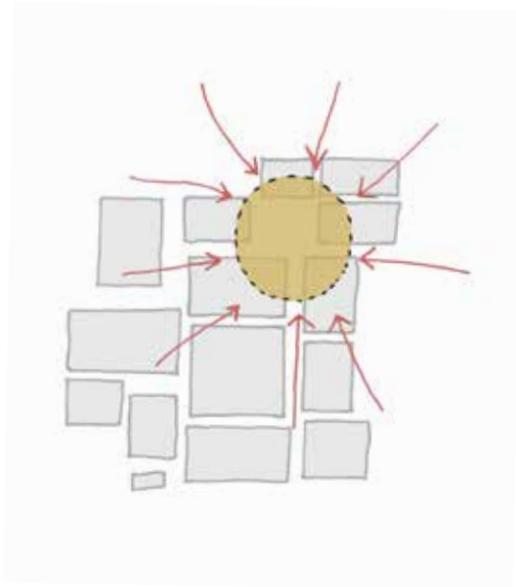
2 Respond to the urban structure

Working with the original bone structure of the town, taking a cue from the network of streets and spaces and the plan aesthetic as well as the original buildings.

Using the masterplan to 'repair' spatial conditions which are not currently working and to support spatial conditions which are currently successful or have potential to be so.

Proposals should:

- Establish perimeter blocks that provide frontage to streets
- Reflect the broad size of block structure that exists in the town centre, avoiding the creation of 'super blocks'



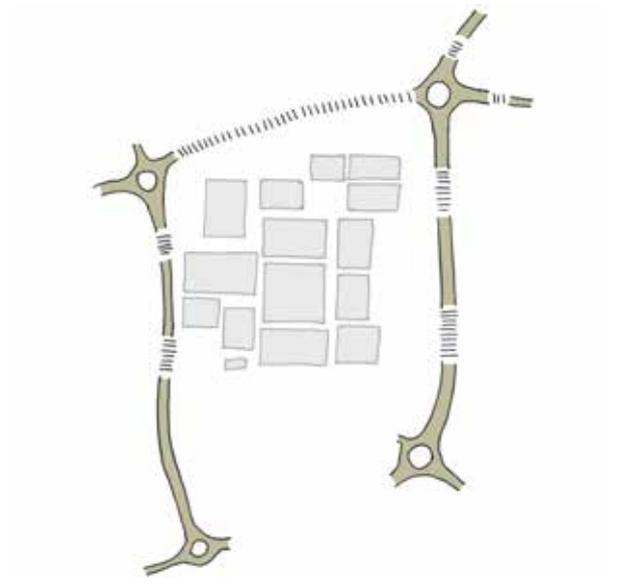
3 Rebalance the focus of gravity northwards

Accommodating uses which can help to shift the centre of gravity within the Town Centre northwards again

This does not mean to make the southern and the western areas less active, but to bring the Stonecross area up to this level.

Proposals should:

- Establish a viable mix of commercial and residential uses in the northern section of the town centre, with active uses at ground floor
- Co-locate and cluster similar uses such as culture or leisure uses, to establish a critical mass



4 Change the street character of the inner ring road

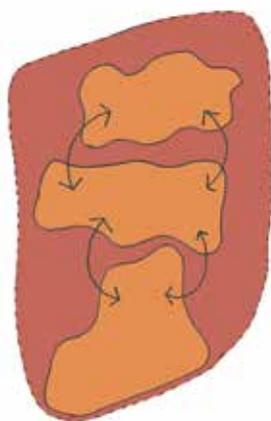
Changing the character of the inner ring road to a fronted boulevard on First Avenue with connections across to shift away from a dual carriageway

Adding at-grade pedestrian crossings on Velizy Avenue and Haydens Road to connect with surrounding areas.

Proposals should:

- Review where the central reservations can be removed to create urban streets
- Identify locations for buildings to front the street
- Improve and increase the number of at-grade pedestrian and cycle connections into the town centre

Spatial objectives (continued)



5 Establish a unified centre

Helping the town to operate as one centre rather than three separate areas

At present, the Water Gardens and the Harvey Centre act successfully as insular areas but have very different characters and do not have a relationship with one another or with the Stone Cross area.

Proposals should:

- Enhance pedestrian and visual links between the Water Gardens area, the Harvey Centre and Stone Cross area
- Avoid insular shopping environments, which look inward rather than integrating with their surrounds

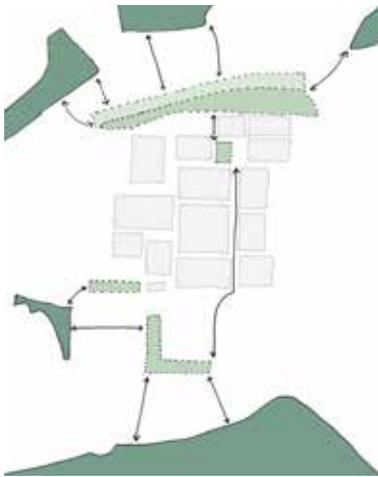


6 Establish street frontages and attractive approaches

Addressing servicing approaches to the Town Centre, where possible, so that people are welcomed to the Town Centre as they approach.

Proposals should:

- Review opportunities to rationalise servicing areas
- Encourage a block structure which keeps servicing within the block rather than being visible on the approach to the town centre



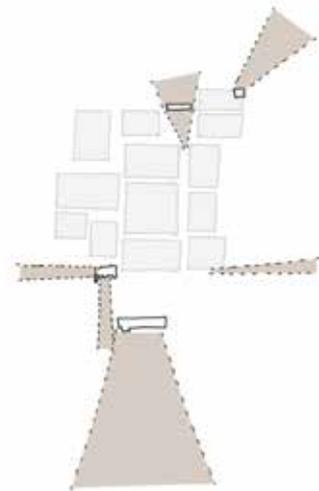
7 Connect to and draw in green spaces

A landscape wedge along the northern edge of the Town Centre reflecting Gibberd's original masterplan principles.

Stronger connections to the green spaces that surround the Town Centre, as intended in the original plan.

Proposals should:

- Improve pedestrian and cycling links, at grade as a priority, to nearby green spaces to the southern green wedge, the town park and to the Stort Valley
- Consider tree planting and other greening measure to bring nature into the town centre



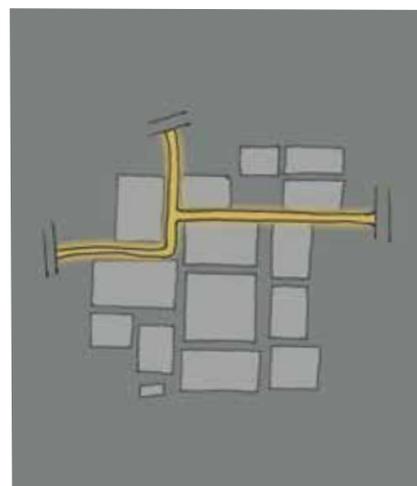
8 Frame views of key buildings and spaces

Improving the visibility of the Town Centre from the surrounding roads and framing views of key buildings such as the church to improve their setting.

Proposals should:

- Consider the impact on views to key buildings and spaces such as the Water Gardens, St Paul's Church and Market Square
- Propose public realm that supports the character of these places

Spatial objectives (continued)



9 Celebrate and reflect design heritage

Celebrating the unique design heritage of Harlow and using this to inform future development proposals

Ensuring that these design cues are followed for future development in the town taking consideration of the qualities of colours, materials and detailing of the original fabric

Identifying buildings and qualities of value which could be transformed through refurbishment

Proposals should:

- Review refurbishment opportunities and retain attractive, original buildings where these remain
- Use these historic buildings as a design cue for new development in the town centre

10 Reinstate access through the town centre

Bringing cars back into the centre to provide a comfortable, safe environment in the evening and to raise the profile of the Stone Cross area.

Proposals should:

- Review opportunities to bring back timed or limited car access to East Gate-West Gate
- Review opportunities for bringing public transport through these streets, such as stops for a Bus Rapid Transit system

Key market drivers

The Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis report (2017) identifies five main market drivers. It is important that these drivers are embedded in parallel with the spatial objectives.

1. Social infrastructure

- The broader Town Centre has strengths in education, and convenient and safe pedestrian links would encourage users to visit the Town Centre more frequently.
- The cultural offer should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- Other community facilities in the centre are disparate in sub-optimal locations. There is scope for co-location of facilities in more convenient locations in more efficient buildings.

2. Quality of environment

- A high quality public realm is important for attracting shoppers seeking a high quality experience
- Positive environmental characteristics will promote development and growth.

3. Accessibility

- The Town Centre has a significant amount of parking but quality and security is generally poor.
- Relative distance between rail station and Town Centre hinders the success of centre. There is a need for better walking and cycling links and a more efficient and frequent bus route.
- There is an opportunity to consider the re-provision of the bus station to release land for development and to provide a safer, better quality facility.

4. Site promotion

- A clear planning framework can assist in encouraging development and growth in the Town Centre. In this context, the AAP will provide coherent framework that sets direction for change in Harlow Town Centre.

5. Place management

- Proactive Town Centre management can improve quality of environment, safety and security and marketing and promotion of Town Centre.
- Town centre management vehicles such as Business Improvement Districts can also improve performance, as well as the possible use of Local Development Orders (LDOs).

AAP Policy theme	Local Plan themes					AAP Vision - outcomes								AAP Spatial objectives											
	Placeshaping	Housing	Prosperity	Lifestyles	Infrastructure	Unified centre	Wider economic growth	Retail & leisure offer	High quality public realm	Accessible destination	Strong cultural offer	Community facilities	A cohesive place	Commitment to retain ethos	1. Retain plan aesthetic	2. Respond to urban structure	3. Rebalance focus of gravity northwards	4. Change street character of inner ring road	5. Establish a unified centre	6. Establish street frontage & attractive approaches	7. Connect to & draw in green space	8. Frame views of buildings & spaces	9. Celebrate & reflect design heritage	10. Reinstate access through Town Centre	
Strategic growth	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Movement				●	●	●	●		●	●			●		●	●		●	●	●	●				●
Public realm	●				●				●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●
Urban design	●				●	●			●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Heritage	●										●		●	●	●	●					●	●	●		
Retail, leisure & evening economy			●	●		●	●	●					●				●		●	●					●
Offices & workspace			●			●	●	●		●			●					●	●						
Public & community infrastructure				●	●							●	●				●	●		●	●				
Homes	●	●					●					●			●	●	●								●
Creative uses				●							●		●	●			●								
Delivery		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●		●				●

Relationships between AAP policy themes and Local Plan / AAP Vision and objectives for reference

6 ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Overview

The purpose of the Issues and Options stage of the AAP is to articulate the direction of travel for the guidance and policies which will ultimately form the spine of the adopted Area Action Plan which will sit alongside the District-wide Local Plan.

The Issues and Options stage seeks to assimilate the key topics which have emerged from the review of the evidence base with a view to distilling the main issues and identifying potential responses. The responses are cast as “options”. Although this terminology might imply the need to select a single option in response to each issue, the options are not mutually exclusive. In that context, the AAP might pursue multiple options to establish a joined-up, holistic strategy or policy position for any one topic.

The NPPF sets out guidance in relation to the preparation of Development Plan Documents which has been summarised in chapter 4. Although the Issues and Options document is not the final AAP report, the options identified are broadly realistic subject to further review and iteration through the plan-making process, including Sustainability Appraisal, consultation and refinement of spatial planning content.

The policy themes and options are cross-referenced with the opportunity areas and their key development opportunities and public realm / movement improvements in chapter 6B.

Structure

The chapter is structured in two principal parts:

- Part A: Policy themes – topics which are thematic in nature, relating to the performance or character of the Town Centre as a whole.
- Part B: Opportunity areas and sites – incremental scenarios for potential opportunity areas and sites in the Town Centre.

Part A includes the following themes:

1. Strategic growth
2. Movement
3. Public realm
4. Urban design
5. Heritage
6. Retail, leisure and evening economy
7. Offices and workspace
8. Public and community infrastructure
9. Homes
10. Creative uses
11. Delivery

Each theme incorporates the following headings:

- Background
- Emerging policy context
- What you’ve told us
- Issue
- Options
- Direction of travel

6A POLICY THEMES

strategic growth

movement

public realm

urban design

heritage

THEME 1: STRATEGIC GROWTH

Background

Harlow Town Centre benefits from a strategic location with a large catchment and significant investments are already planned including the Harvey Centre upgrade which could have a wider catalytic impact. The Town Centre has a distinctive character and an impressive collection of public art and amenities which could be better celebrated. Clear opportunities exist to enhance the public realm and to capitalise on the latent development potential of the area.

Unfortunately, the Town Centre suffers from a mismatch in retail floorspace. Commercial advice set out in Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Report (2017) indicates that there is an excessive provision of retail compounded by a lack of good quality floorspace, a lack of high end operators and high vacancy rates. The area also suffers from a limited evening economy offer and poor accessibility. The absence of a department store and the strong performance of competing centres in the region is a potential constraint to a step change in the strategic performance of the Town Centre.

Harlow's existing urban area is rectangular in form, with the long axis running west-to-east parallel to the river valley. The Town Centre is relatively close to the northern edge of the settlement. However, the development of garden villages at Gilston and elsewhere to the north and south of the town will result in a settlement that is much more evenly distributed around the central core.

The Town Centre's centre of gravity has moved south since the original 1952 masterplan, which was focused on the Market Square at the northern end of the Town Centre. The key attractors are now the more modern Harvey Centre to the south-west, The Water Gardens Shopping Centre to the south, and the Harlow

Leisurezone to the south-east. The traditional centres – Market Square, West Gate and Broad Walk – all lie away from these locations, and do not correspond to any significant walking routes from key arrival points, the most notable being the bus station and car park at Terminus Street, which runs parallel to Broad Walk. Through the Garden Town proposals and the arrival of Public Health England, there is a genuine prospect that the Town Centre could harness the benefits of major residential growth in the immediate vicinity of Harlow (16,100 new homes with a further 7,000 at Gilston).

Emerging policy context

Policies in chapter 12 of the 2006 Local Plan seek to sustain and enhance performance, diversity and quality of uses in the Town Centre using tools such as frontage designations to embed the sequential approach.

The Garden Town proposals set out an agenda for significant growth in the Harlow and neighbouring authorities of up to 16,100 new homes.

Policies in the Draft Local Development Plan (2017) update the existing policy approach in relation to the sequential approach, frontage guidance, sub-division, evening and night time economy, improvements in the sustainability of travel. Broader policies are set out in relation to public art, community and sports facilities and heritage assets.

What you've told us

There is a positive attitude towards development in Harlow, and an optimism about the role that wider growth (Public Health England, Enterprise Zone, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town proposals) will play in strengthening the Town Centre and giving momentum to transport initiatives.

retail, leisure and evening economy

offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

homes

creative uses

delivery

There is a desire to be as positive as possible about development, noting that constraints have sometimes been difficult to overcome in the past.

For some this is balanced against a concern about losing the positive characteristics of the original Gibberd masterplan and other assets such as public art.

Issue

What is the overall strategy for growth in Harlow Town Centre? How will this influence the approach to individual opportunity areas and planning policies for the Town Centre?

Options

Option 1.1 – Baseline scenario

Do nothing over and above the existing pipeline (the Harvey Centre works including a cinema and reconfiguration of the former Marks and Spencer unit) and committed residential investments such as Terminus House and the Circle Housing site.

Option 1.2 – Medium intervention scenario

Opportunities exist to regenerate the Market and Stone Cross area and substantially enhance the environmental quality of the Town Centre, focusing on the Broad Walk between the Market area and The Water Gardens to the south.

Option 1.3 – High intervention scenario

Alongside medium and longer-term opportunities to bring forward other sites for Town Centre uses and residential growth, this scenario would establish a critical mass to consolidate the performance of the Town Centre within and beyond the plan period in combination with wider proposals for the strategic growth of Harlow.

Direction of Travel

It is important to highlight that the options should be interpreted as incremental phases rather than mutually exclusive, separate scenarios. In this context, individual options form a stepping stone towards a high intervention scenario (option 1.3).

The implications of this distinction are important from a policy perspective. Although an individual scenario might be “preferred” or considered more realistic and deliverable for the purposes of the plan period, it is important that the AAP encourages a long-term vision for the Town Centre, and seeks to future-proof transformative interventions which would contribute to these aspirations.

The scale of growth envisaged in the District and neighbouring authorities reflect the need for a proactive approach in planning for growth. It is challenging to predict how the trajectory of growth might alter in terms of timing or the sequencing of development interventions in the wider area.

In that context, it is recommended that a flexible policy position is established which encourages a long-term vision whilst allowing incremental growth and interventions in phases. In the short-term, the policy would encourage sensitive management of proposals, promoting early investment and shaping development which could unlock, rather than preclude a longer-term vision.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives. The specific implications of the three scenarios are considered in more detail in section 6B.

THEME 2: MOVEMENT

Background

The most prominent gateways into the Town Centre in Harlow lie to the east, south and west – at the Bus Station, The Water Gardens Shopping Centre and College Square respectively.

Harlow Town Centre lacks a strong northern gateway, despite this being the arrival point from the railway station and the A414 road. Responding to the analysis of buildings' heritage value, a new northern gateway could be achieved by the demolition of Stone Cross Hall, The Rows and 2 East Gate, which have all been rated as offering poor heritage value. This could allow Bird Cage Walk to be improved as a northern gateway into the Town Centre, perhaps merging the functions of the adjacent North Gate which acts as a service yard and informal kiss-and-ride.

The original street grid appears to have deliberately avoided any internal streets corresponding with external gateways, however this exacerbates the insular feeling of the Town Centre.

As a response to changing travel patterns, cycling and walking routes into and within the Town Centre should be improved to provide better linkages, encourage more sustainable methods of transport and to promote healthy lifestyles. This will be essential for the regeneration of the Town Centre, alongside considering the impact of air pollution caused by the possible re-introduction of vehicular traffic to the Town Centre.

The following background information sets out Phil Jones Associates' baseline analysis of transport and streets in and around Harlow Town Centre and informs the emerging principles of the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP).

Road hierarchy

Harlow is a planned New Town, so has a very clearly defined road hierarchy. Streets in the Town Centre are unambiguous in their function, as either "movement streets" or "activity streets". Movement streets consist of three sub-categories of street:

- The peripheral "collar road" – Velizy Avenue, Third Avenue, Haydens Road, Fourth Avenue
- Internal distributor roads – Kitson Way, Post Office Road, South Gate, West Gate
- Pedestrian walkways and cycle tracks

"Activity streets" are generally the original pedestrianised precincts from the 1952 masterplan. The Town Centre was originally laid out with these precincts forming a rectangle, but this has since been broken by the Harvey Centre on the western side. The principal shopping streets remaining from the original layout are Broad Walk and East Gate, which converge on the Market Square. There are secondary pedestrianised shopping streets, such as Stone Cross and Post Office Walk. These are more intimate than the main precinct streets, and more like arcades in their scale.

The centre of gravity of the Town Centre has shifted to the south and away from the Market Square with the more recent additions of the Water Gardens Retail Park and the Leisurezone. These more modern developments are focused on arrival by the private car, and as such are oriented to face car parking areas that take access off the perimeter roads.

There are a handful of locations where active frontage and movement co-exist, but otherwise the Town Centre is characterised by sudden changes in environment, emphasised

retail, leisure and evening economy

offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

homes

creative uses

delivery



Collar road with adjacent cycleway-walkway leading to subway under Third Ave.



East Gate pedestrianised precinct street



Internal distributor road, Kitson Way.



Northern and Water Gardens Mall, looking into the link to the rest of the Town Centre

by the collar effect of the four roads that surround it. Water Gardens is relatively well integrated with the original street layout, with a pedestrian promenade linking it to the southern end of Broad Walk. However, this connection is disjointed, with a dog-leg along a pedestrianised street with little or no active frontage. The Leisurezone is outside the collar road, with an indirect walking route to and from the rest of the Town Centre.

Despite these recent additions, the Town Centre is inward facing: there is little active frontage along any of the major approaches to the Town Centre, and there are few natural gateways. One natural gateway can be found at College Square, outside the Harlow Playhouse Theatre and St Paul's Church in the western fringes of the Town Centre. However, the striking modernist architecture of the latter is well set back from Haydens Road, with Occasio House partially blocking sightlines.

6A

strategic growth

movement

public realm

urban design

heritage

College Square is one of the few places in Harlow where active frontage and movement co-exist, with the taxi turning circle outside the Theatre providing a focus for activity as well as a sense of place, partially framed by the modernist Playhouse building and the blank, brutalist wall of the Harvey Centre.

At the opposite side of the Town Centre, the intersection of East Gate, Post Office Road and Terminus Road acts as an eastern gateway, with shops fronting onto the junction and overlooking the bus station. This location provides a gradual step down in movement function as you leave the eastern collar road, Velizy Avenue, with an increasing sense of place as you go west down East Gate.

In quite a contrast to East Gate, North Gate provides a very sudden transition from the northern collar road. North Gate serves primarily as a rear service road, but also provides a walking link into the northern part of the Town Centre. It is well-used for informal “kiss and ride”, as one of the closest places to drive into the Town Centre to drop off or pick up passengers. Despite this, it is not “legibly” part of the Town Centre, in that it doesn’t feel like an obvious route. This is probably because the adjacent arcade street, Bird Cage Walk, is intended to be the primary pedestrian route into the Town Centre from the north, although this is less convenient for “kiss-and-ride”.

In addition to the above examples, there is also a small amount of residential land use in the Town Centre, at Dads Wood in the south west.



College Square (Playhouse Square)



St. Pauls Church, College Square



East Gate, looking into the Town Centre with the bus station to the left

- retail, leisure and evening economy
- offices and workspace
- public & community infrastructure
- homes
- creative uses
- delivery

Considering all these example street types, it is possible to classify the entire Town Centre into streets hierarchy, following the “Link & Place” method. We have followed Transport for London’s 3x3 methodology, however we have modified it to reflect the local typology of Harlow. “Place” function increases from left to right, and “movement” function increases from bottom to top.

Core roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Velizy Avenue • Third Avenue • Haydens Road • Fourth Avenue 	Secondary hubs / high roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminus Street • Playhouse Square • West Gate (south east corner) 	Principal hubs / high roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Connecting roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitson Way • South Gate • Post Office Road • North Gate • Cross Street • Hamstel Road • Hodlings Road • NCN 1 cycle track 	Secondary high streets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird Cage Walk • Post Office Walk 	High streets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Walk • East Gate • Water Gardens
Local streets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dads Wood (residential) • Wych Elm (industrial) 	Secondary town squares <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Square 	Principal town Squares <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Square • Civic Square / Water Gardens

Link & Place grid of Harlow Town Centre street types, with examples.



Bird Cage Walk, parallel to North Gate



Looking into the Town Centre pedestrianised area from North Gate

6A

strategic growth

movement

public realm

urban design

heritage

It should be noted from the Link & Place analysis that the traditional heart of the Town Centre, Market Square, does not function as a focal point. While it is situated on a number of traditional walking routes, the relocation of the Town Centre's centre of gravity has resulted in a lower footfall in the Market Square than when it was the hub of the original rectangle of pedestrianised precincts in the original 1952 masterplan. While there are a few focal points identified through this above method, it should be noted that these are not significant areas of footfall, however this analysis has recognised that there is still some movement activity in these places as natural gateways to the Town Centre, although most movement activity is concentrated on the collar roads.

Bus network

The bus network in Harlow is focused on Harlow Bus Station, found within the study area. The network takes a hub and spoke form, the bus station forms the hub from which the spokes radiate.

A plot displaying the routing of frequent and regular bus services in Harlow centre is shown on the diagram opposite.

Feedback has suggested the Town Centre is currently poorly connected to the Edinburgh Retail Park by bus, a particular issue with the recent conversions of office buildings to residential here. Greater demand will come from the growth areas and, in particular, the new site for the proposed Health Campus accommodating the relocated Princess Alexandra Hospital.



Illustration of Harlow Town Centre street types on a base map

retail, leisure and evening economy

offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

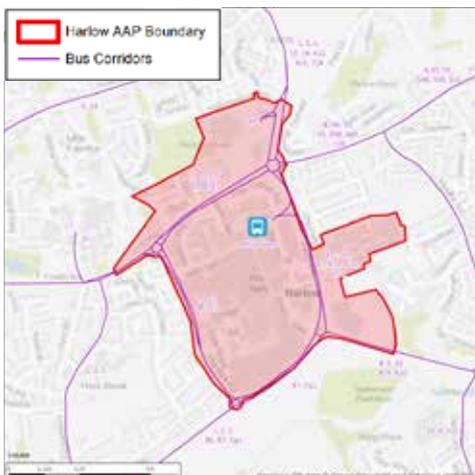
homes

creative uses

delivery

The table opposite contains a summary of the bus routes that serve the bus station. The following timetabling information was valid until 28/11/2017.

There are a number of frequent routes serving the bus station, with several routes running up to every 15 minutes. The urban bus routes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9/91, and 14) all have a frequency no lower than every 30 minutes. However, number 14 only operates at peak hours. A selection of routes serving the bus station only operate on certain days of the week, these are less frequent.



Service	Route	Mon – Fri Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency
1	Summers – Central Harlow	3 per hour	3 per hour	Hourly
	Central Harlow - Summers	3 per hour	3 per hour	Hourly
2 (Circular)	Harlow – Staple Tye	4 per hour	4 per hour	Hourly
3 (Circular)	Harlow – Little Parndon	4 per hour	4 per hour	No service
4	Latton Bush – Central Harlow	4 per hour	4 per hour	Hourly
	Central Harlow – Latton Bush	4 per hour	4 per hour	Hourly
5	Harlow – Summers Farm	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
	Summers Farm – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
6 (Circular)	Harlow – Little Parndon	2 per hour	2 per hour	Hourly
8	Old Harlow – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	Hourly
	Harlow – Old Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	Hourly
9/9A	Potter Street – Central Harlow	3 per hour	3 per hour	No service
	Central Harlow – Potter Street	3 per hour	3 per hour	No service
10 (Circular)	Church Langley – Central Harlow	3 per hour	3 per hour	Hourly
14	Pinnacles – Harlow Town Centre	3 per hour	3 per hour	No service
	Harlow Town Centre – Pinnacles	3 per hour	3 per hour	No service
59	Chelmsford – Harlow	Hourly	Hourly	Every 2 hours
	Chelmsford – Harlow	Hourly	Hourly	Every 2 hours
86 (Circular)	Harlow – Waltham Cross	Hourly	Every 2 hours	No Service
87	Harlow – Epping	3 per hour	Hourly	No service
	Epping – Harlow	3 per hour	Hourly	No service
347	Hatfield Broad Oak - Harlow	3 daily (Tuesday and Thursday)	Once daily	No service
	Harlow – Hatfield Broad Oak	3 daily (Tuesday and Thursday)	Once daily	No service
381	Harlow – Coopersale	Every 2 hours	4 daily	No service
	Coopersale – Harlow	Every 2 hours	4 daily	No service
410	Waltham Cross – Harlow	2 per hour	Hourly	No service
	Harlow – Waltham Cross	2 per hour	Hourly	No service
418/418B	Loughton Station – Harlow	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours
	Harlow – Loughton Station	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours
419	Ongar – Harlow	2 per hour	No service	2 per hour
	Harlow – Ongar	2 per hour	No service	2 per hour
420	Ongar – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
	Harlow – Ongar	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
424	Hertford – Harlow	2 per hour	No service	No service

Bus corridors

Table 1: Summary of bus services

Service	Route	Mon – Fri Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency
501	Harlow – Hertford	2 per hour	No service	No service
	Ongar – Harlow	No service	No service	Every 2 hours
	Harlow – Ongar	No service	No service	Every 2 hours
505	Chingford – Harlow	No service	Every 2 hours	No service
	Harlow – Chingford	No service	Every 2 hours	No service
508	Stansted Airport – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
	Harlow – Stansted Airport	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
509	Stansted Airport – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
	Harlow – Stansted Airport	2 per hour	2 per hour	No service
510	Stansted Airport – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	2 per hour
	Harlow – Stansted Airport	2 per hour	2 per hour	2 per hour
575	Romford – Harlow	Once daily	No service	No service
	Harlow – Romford	Once daily	No service	No service
724	Harlow – Heathrow Airport	2 per hour	2 per hour	Hourly
	Heathrow Airport – Harlow	2 per hour	2 per hour	Hourly
HSB1	Central Harlow – Old Harlow	Every 2 hours (not Tuesday and Thursday)	Every 2 hours	No service
	Old Harlow – Central Harlow	Every 2 hours (not Tuesday and Thursday)	Every 2 hours	No service
LCB1	Kingsmoor – Old Harlow	Hourly (between 9 and 2)	No service	No service
	Old Harlow – Kingsmoor	Hourly (between 9 and 2)	No service	No service
SB12	Toot Hill – Harlow	Once on Wednesday and Friday	No service	No service
	Harlow – Toot Hill	Once on Wednesday and Friday	No service	No service
ZIP 1 (Circular)	Harlow - Kingsmoor	3 per hour	3 per hour	No service

Table 2: Summary of bus services

Rail network

Harlow is served by two railway stations: Harlow Town, and Harlow Mill. Harlow Town station is found around 1km to the north of the Town Centre; whilst Harlow Mill station is around 750m to the north of Old Harlow, approximately 2.8km east of the study area.

Harlow Town has regular direct services to: London Liverpool Street, Bishops Stortford, Stansted Airport, Cambridge North and Stratford.

Harlow Town is within walking distance of the Town Centre; however, the route is severed by a number of main roads. A number of bus services provide access to the station during peak periods, and route 10 offers access outside of peak times. In addition, 52 bicycle parking spaces are available at the station.

The local train operator, Abellio, is part of the Bike-and-Go scheme, but currently does not offer Bike-and-Go bikes at either of the Harlow stations. These are available further up and down the line at Broxbourne and Bishops Stortford, and at other Essex stations.

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Car parking

The following section provides an overview of car parking in the Town Centre, including the location, supply, pricing and quality.

A summary of car parks within the study area is provided in Table 3. In addition to this, a number of alternative car parks are available outside of the study area, but still in walking distance to the Town Centre.

The distribution of the car parks across the study area is shown overleaf.

Residential standards

An analysis of existing car ownership has been undertaken by Phil Jones Associates in the three wards contiguous with the town centre to understand local demand for car parking. This is the approach set out in the DCLG Residential Car Parking Research paper (2007)¹

This method allows parking standards to be considered on local context, i.e. assuming that car ownership of new residents will be similar to those who currently live near the town centre. This is a more informed approach than a blanket district-wide allocation, that may over-provide parking in areas where car-free living may be more practicable, or under-provides it in areas where car ownership is more essential.

The DCLG paper points out that wholly allocated parking can lead to a mismatch between supply and demand, as there is always a proportion of households who do not own a car or own fewer cars than the spaces they have been allocated. Those unused parking spaces that are not publicly-available cannot be used by households whose car ownership exceeds their available allocation. In such a scenario, a developer has paid for parking space that goes unused, while residents suffer parking congestion elsewhere in the same site presenting problems such as blocked footways or access difficulties for emergency services.

¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070604085735/http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510293>

Name	Operator	Spaces	Max Stay	Day Rate (Peak)	Day Rate (Off Peak)	Hourly
Harvey Shopping Centre	The Harvey Centre	720	-	£10	£10 (£0.50p on Sunday)	£1.20
Post Office Road	Harlow District Council	139	-	£7.75	£7.75	£1.25
Linkway	Luminus Group			£6	£6	£1
Terminus Street	UPARK Holdings Ltd.	600	-	£5	£5	£2
The Water Gardens	The Water Gardens Shopping Centre	1200	-	£10	£10 (£0.50p on Sunday)	Min stay 2 hrs: £0.90
Wych Elm	Harlow District Council	120	-	£7.75	£7.75	Min stay 2 hrs: £1.65
Leisurezone Car Park	Leisurezone	550	4 hours	-	-	£2.50 (up to four hours)

Table 3: Car park summary

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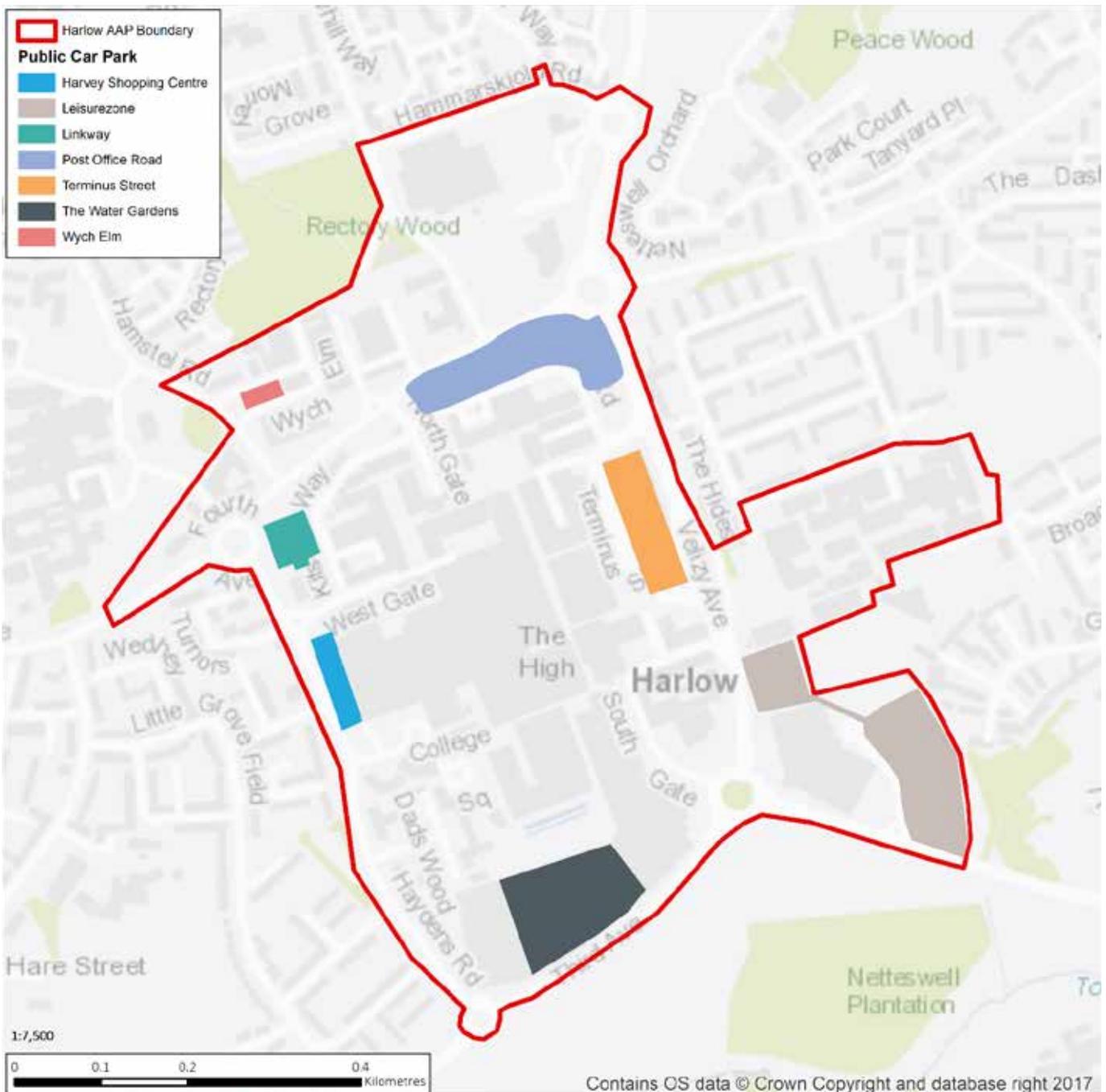
strategic growth

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Public car parks



The DCLG method therefore allows for parking demand to be calculated and an appropriate allocation derived on the basis of a mixture of allocated and unallocated spaces, or one or the other. The most space-efficient approach is generally for all parking to be unallocated – i.e. wholly on-street or in shared parking courts – as this allows the capacity to be optimised for existing car ownership levels which are rarely a whole integer of parking spaces per household. This is essentially what happens in terraced streets built before 1920 that would not have been laid out with any concept of personal car ownership, but happen to be largely suitable for providing for residential parking where extraneous car parking demand can be removed.

However, there may be an advantage in dwellings having at least one space allocated for purposes of marketing and convenience. Therefore, our approach has followed the DCLG method for calculating parking provision based on a mixed allocation – i.e. one or more spaces allocated per dwelling, with the remaining spaces unallocated. As the highest car ownership for any type of dwelling in the three

contiguous wards is 1.9, including TEMPRO growth to 2020, we have assumed an allocation of 1 space per dwelling as the starting point in the calculations, rather than the 2 allocated that it is also possible to calculate in the DCLG method. The raw data and first pass of calculations is set out in the table below.

Dwellings of 1-2 and 3-4 beds have been merged in the above table in the interests of simplicity, with the data for the higher size of dwelling used for the respective type of dwelling. However, despite this simplification, the parking allocation is difficult to understand so further calculation is required to simply it so that a parking standard can be more easily applied by a developer. First of all, these ratios are rounded up to the nearest quarter to provide a degree of uniformity. As the working assumption has been to provide 1 space per dwelling, the calculation is broken down into “allocated” and “unallocated” so the total development-wide allocation can be understood. The 2-space allocation calculation is not expanded, but is retained in the working below for comparison.

	CENSUS DATA (2011) + TEMPRO GROWTH			2 ALLOCATED			1 ALLOCATED			0 ALLOCATED		
	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed
House - owned/mortgaged	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.4	1.7	1.9	2.1	1.4	1.6	1.9
House - rented/shared	1.0	1.2	1.1	2.2	2.3	2.2	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.0	1.2	1.1
Flat - owned/mortgaged	1.4	1.4	1.5	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.5
Flat - rented/shared	1.0	1.1	0.7	2.2	2.2	2.0	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.0	1.1	0.5

Table 4: showing raw data from DCLG-method calculations and source data

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In Table 5 below, the grey highlighted cells show a counter-intuitive result where a larger size of development has a lower parking requirement. This discrepancy maybe explained by 5 bed houses likely being a family home with several non-driving children resident, whereas a 3-4 bed house may be shared by professionals who all own cars. These anomalous allocations are therefore corrected upwards to match their adjacent category.

The allocated spaces for 5+ bed owned/ mortgaged houses, in the solid box, has been corrected down to 1 from 2 so there is some commonality with the same dwelling type in the rented/shared sector, and to make the allocation consistent across all dwelling types. The “unmet” demand is provided in the

unallocated provision instead. Given the Town Centre intensification is unlikely to be delivering many 5+ bedroom houses, the effect of the above simplification is not considered to be significant.

The table is then re-cast with these further simplifications, below, with the corrected cells highlighted (see Table 6).

	2+ SPACES ALLOCATED			MIXED ALLOCATION						ALL SPACES UNALLOCATED		
				Allocated Spaces			Unallocated Spaces					
	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed
House - owned/ mortgaged	2.5	2.5	2.5	1	1	1	0.75	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2
House - rented/shared	2.25	2.5	2.25	1	1	1	0.5	0.75	0.5	1	1.25	1.25
Flat - owned/ mortgaged	2.5	2.25	2.25	1	1	1	0.75	0.25	0.25	1.5	1.5	1.5
Flat - rented/shared	2.25	2.25	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.25	1	1.25	0.5

Table 5: showing DCLG-method calculations rounded to nearest 0.5

	2+ SPACES ALLOCATED			MIXED ALLOCATION						ALL SPACES UNALLOCATED		
				Allocated Spaces			Unallocated Spaces					
	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed
House - owned/ mortgaged	2.5	2.5	2.5	1	1	1	0.75	1	1.25	1.5	1.75	2
House - rented/shared	2.25	2.5	2.5	1	1	1	0.5	0.75	0.75	1	1.25	1.25
Flat - owned/ mortgaged	2.5	2.5	2.5	1	1	1	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.5	1.5	1.5
Flat - rented/shared	2.25	2.25	2.25	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1.25	1.25

Table 6: showing DCLG-method with counter-intuitive results merged with neighbours



Now that simplification and correction has resulted in greater commonality, the allocation ratios can be simplified into something that can be easily communicated in an AAP or other policy document (see Table 7). The total parking allocation for the development could be calculated by addition the number of allocated spaces to the number of unallocated spaces for each dwelling type.

Walking and cycling

This section sets out current infrastructure provision and issues for cycling and walking into Harlow Town Centre from the surrounding districts. Harlow is fortunate that dedicated space for walking and cycling was provided from the outset as an integral part of the design of the new town. This means that unlike many existing towns, providing sufficient space within the highway is generally not a constraint to walking and cycling. Footways and cycle tracks are of generous dimensions and adequate to serve the current levels of demand.

Although every effort was made to blend the new town into the existing landscape, from the early days of Harlow, there have been some concerns about the scale of development and the street scene, which in themselves may be off-putting to walking and cycling. There is a combination of high density, low rise residential terraces and maisonettes set into neighbourhood blocks which are divided by major distributor roads and wedges of green

space. There is little variation in the height or style of buildings and many don't have front gardens, so the streets have little of interest to the pedestrian, and the dedicated footways and cycle paths tend to go around the back of buildings and gardens, with no 'active frontage' whatsoever. Gordon Cullen writing in the Architectural Review in 1951 said:

"It is as though the drive to the country has been undertaken by people all studiously avoiding each other and pretending that they are alone. The result is a paradox, the paradox of concentrated isolation, the direct antithesis of 'towniness', which results from the social impulse...[The] results are deplorable – foot-sore housewives, cycle-wear workers, never-ending characterless streets, the depressing feeling of being a provincial or suburbanite in an environment that doesn't belong to a town or country..."

This study looks at access to the Town Centre, which is surrounded by a ring road comprising Haydens Road (west side), Fourth Avenue (north side), Velizy Avenue/Central Avenue (east side) and Third Avenue (south side). An integral part of the overall design of the town was to retain green wedges of undeveloped countryside, one of which runs along the southern edge of Third Avenue, so this study concentrates primarily on access from the north, west and east.

	Allocated Spaces			Unallocated Spaces		
	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed	1-2 bed	3-4 bed	5+ bed
House - owned/mortgaged		1		0.75	1	1.25
House - rented/shared		1		0.5		0.75
Flat - owned/mortgaged		1			0.75	
Flat - rented/shared		1			0.5	

Table 7: Final table - evidence based approach to parking allocations for review.

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There are two primary issues for walking and cycling. One is crossing the ring road, and the second is passing through the edge of the Town Centre which is typified by large blocks of multi-storey car parks and the service yards for large retail premises. The combination of the busy road crossing and a lack of attractive routes through the edge of town acts as a both a physical and mental barrier to walking and cycling between the Town Centre and neighbouring residential areas. The pedestrian network within the centre is a reasonably coherent series of public squares linked by pedestrianised streets. Cycling is prohibited in the pedestrianised Town Centre although cycle parking is provided.

Existing cycle facilities

Cycle access across the ring road is provided by one subway on each side of the town:

- Linking Sharpe Croft to College Gate on the west side,
- Linking Hodlings Road/Rectory Wood area to Post Office Road on the north side;
- Linking the Hides to Post Office Road on the east side, and,
- Linking areas south of Second and Third Avenue up into South Gate from the south-east corner of the town beneath Third Avenue.
- A link between Harlow College and the Sports Centre to the north of second avenue.

There is no way to cycle from west to east across the Town Centre. It is possible to cycle east to west via Post Office Street, Kitson Way and West Gate. Other movements are described below. Cycling is not permitted in the pedestrianised central streets and squares.



Existing cycle provision in and around Harlow Town Centre

retail, leisure and evening economy

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North to South link – west side of town:

Outside the Town Centre a cycle track runs along the west side of Haydens Road, connecting to Fourth Avenue and Third Avenue. North to South link – east side of town: A north-south link is provided from Post Office St through Terminus St, linking to South Gate including a cycle-contraflow through the bus station. This route passes beneath Third Avenue where it links to cycle tracks towards the south east.

West to East link – north side of town:

A cycle track runs along the northern side of Fourth Avenue and then across Hamstel Road to the rear of industrial area and the fire station, crossing Hodings Road at grade and then over a bridge above Sainsburys car park, under Allende Avenue and then along the northern side of First Avenue.

West to East link – south side of town. A cycle track runs along the south side of Third Avenue, with links to South Gate and Haydens Road.

Existing pedestrian infrastructure

All of the cycle routes crossing the outer ring road as subways as described above are available to pedestrians. In addition to this there are surface level signalised crossings at:

- Haydens Road mid-way between West Gate and College Gate
- Fourth Avenue immediately west of North Gate.
- Central Avenue opposite Harlow College.

There are also some uncontrolled crossings (dropped kerbs and tactile paving) at the junction of Fourth Avenue/Haydens Road; at the junction of Haydens Road and Third Avenue (linking the footway along north side of Third Avenue); and across Allende Avenue (linking footway along north side of First Avenue).



-  grade-separated crossing
-  signalised surface crossing
-  unmet desire line
-  no crossing on desire line

Existing pedestrian accesses into Harlow Town Centre

Zebra crossings are provided where the subway exits meet Post Office Road, and where the path from the signalled crossing crosses Kitson Way.

Issues for cyclists

The cycle infrastructure ends at the edge of the Town Centre. There is no way to (lawfully) cycle into the shopping area although people do. Consequently, there are no 'through routes' that serve useful destinations within the town, they all go around the edge of the Town Centre and at the back of commercial buildings away from entrances.

Existing cycle parking where provided at all is often remote from building entrances or in places that are not overlooked by windows. This makes the official cycle parking locations less convenient and less secure, leading to bikes being propped up in shop doorways or attached to other street furniture that is in more secure or convenient places.

Existing surface level pedestrian crossings are staggered with a narrow central reserve, making them inconvenient for cycling and inaccessible to some types of cycle. This is particularly an issue by Harlow College where the cycle track from the leisure centre leads towards the Town Centre.

Issues for pedestrians

There are two places where pedestrians cross the ring road without formal facilities:

- Fourth Avenue by Sainsburys where people cross the road and climb through a fence to cross the surface car park to get to Post Office Road and the Town Centre.
- Haydens Road near the TKMaxx service yard where a footpath connects to Water Gardens and people cross from the Hare Street residential district.

Within the Town Centre the main issue for pedestrians is that many access points involve crossing service and delivery areas and car park entrance/exit routes. There is a real lack of coherence.

The arrangement of buildings is such that there are very few 'vistas' where it is possible to see through in a straight line, on the approach to the Town Centre. Most of the pedestrian routes into the Town Centre from the outside are relatively narrow and have a lot of blank brick and concrete frontages because the orientation of shops and businesses is 'inwards' to the central streets and squares. This makes the approach routes unattractive and uninspiring. It may be possible to work with businesses to open up window spaces or display public art to make these approach routes more inviting and interesting.

Once inside the central area there are good quality linear routes and public squares, and the wider open spaces make navigation much more intuitive.

There are few steps within the central area and alternative ramp access is always provided.

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Emerging policy context

Policy SIR1 (Draft Harlow Local Development Plan, 2017) outlines a commitment to deliver the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to support development in Harlow, including the North-South Sustainable Transport Corridor. Policy SIR2 identifies key gateway locations which will be integrated within the wider transport and green infrastructure network of Harlow, enhanced by improvements to the public realm. This includes vehicular and pedestrian access points to the north of the Town Centre. Policy IN1 promotes sustainable modes of travel as part of development proposals.

What you've told us

There is keen interest in opportunities to improve transport and movement through the AAP. Participants in the consultation exercise have endorsed the analysis of the key issues and there is broad support for a more frequent and reliable means of public transport which would connect key destinations via the station.

Alongside this, there is interest in more radical proposals to reduce the traffic dominance of Velizy Avenue and Fourth Avenue to create a better environment around the Town Centre and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists. There is also some interest in exploring the managed re-introduction of traffic where this contributes positively to the Town Centre.

Issue

How could the future pattern of streets and movement contribute to the regeneration of the Town Centre? What interventions could be progressed for different modes of transport?

Options

Option 2.1 – Framework of streets

There is considerable merit in creating a strong north-south axis within the Town Centre which would reunite the northern and southern halves of the Town Centre. The Sustainable Transport Corridor could be an extension to Terminus Street, and act as a means of allowing buses to better penetrate the Town Centre and travel away from the collar roads where they share road space with general traffic and thus liable to traffic congestion.

The new urban blocks to the north of the Town Centre could include a new “high road” parallel to Fourth Avenue, fronting Rectory Wood on one site. This additional street could help dissipate traffic flow such that both streets could be laid out as relatively narrow, human-scale streets compared to the existing sweeping dual carriageway of Fourth Avenue.

Option 2.2 – Potential pedestrian and cycle improvements

The creation of a “boulevard” along Fourth Avenue complements the north-south axis concept (see option 2.1) by providing a similarly strong east-west principal street. This street has scope to include cycle tracks alongside. This would provide a shorter desire-line route for NCN1, which currently diverts north around the Town Centre on a cycle track which is hemmed in between the backs of industrial units and heavily planted trees, thus offering a poor level of social safety.

The transformation of Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue into boulevard streets may allow the existing pedestrian subways to be replaced with surface crossings – or at least converted to dedicated cycle-only subways. While the subways offer relatively convenient traffic free routes, the gentle gradients that make for comfortable cycling conditions results in lengthy ramps that lack active frontage and thus offer poor safety for pedestrians who have to traverse them much more slowly.

Along Haydens Road, pedestrians already make use of informal refuges to cross the road in two stages. This practice could be extended and enhanced by laying out the street with a continuous central median, allowing flexible and informal crossing along its length. This central median could also allow right-turn movements for vehicles (see option 2.4).

Option 2.3 – Bus improvements

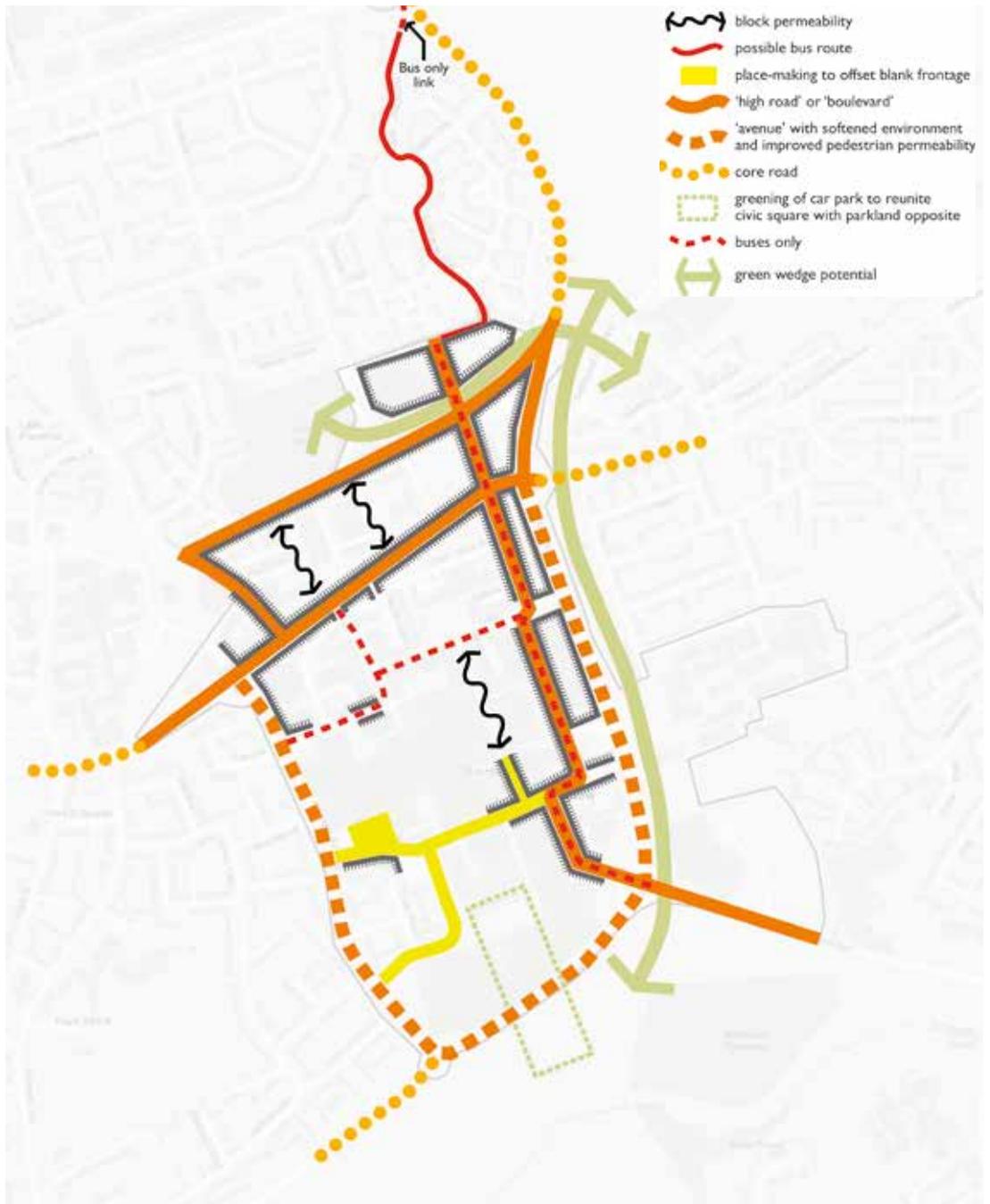
The creation of “boulevard” streets – including a new north-south boulevard corresponding to Terminus Street in the Town Centre – present scope for on-street bus stops, reducing the need for a substantial bus station. East Gate – which used to be open to traffic before pedestrianisation – could also be opened up as a bus street, to allow buses to better penetrate the Town Centre. This approach would work most effectively with the aspirational Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, with a network of routes criss-crossing at the Town Centre. The existing bus network predominantly consists of buses terminating in the Town Centre, which results in the need for substantial layover space in the bus station and other streets.

The same could be said for the new north-south street parallel to Velizy Avenue, however there is benefit in this being a primarily bus and service-



- Town Centre boundary
- Potential corridor option
- Alternative potential corridor option

Indicative Sustainable Transport Corridor



Potential movement proposals - assuming a long-term / comprehensive scenario (option 1.3)

vehicle oriented street. This would allow the BRT system to avoid congestion on the main road network, and thus offer a more attractive service. This philosophy could be extended further north towards the station by routing the BRT via Newstead Way instead of Allende Avenue, with a short section of new bus-only road being constructed to link back to Allende Way south of the Burnt Mill roundabout.

Option 2.4 - Road network

The use of roundabouts around the collar of roads at the edge of the Town Centre allows for many accesses to operate as left-in-left-out, which provides efficient traffic flow but is not necessarily very legible. The breaking of the "collar" around the north and east with the creation of boulevards on Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue would disrupt this pattern and could require the introduction of a series of all-movements junctions. Further design and traffic modelling would be required to fully understand how these streets would operate, but it may be necessary to retain some of the roundabouts.

Roundabouts are generally not pedestrian and cycle friendly because they encourage continuous flow of vehicles, with fast exit speeds of the circulatory carriageway. In locations where the roundabouts have single-lane approaches, these could be made more pedestrian and cycle friendly by being laid out as continental roundabouts. These operate with the same priority arrangement as UK roundabouts, but narrower entry and exit paths coupled with a tighter circulatory carriageway result in slower traffic speeds all round and thus easier conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic modelling could test whether the existing four-lane dual carriageway roads would operate satisfactorily with fewer lanes, and thus being more suitable for continental geometry roundabouts.

Option 2.5 - Rely on emerging planning guidance on parking in Local Plan policy

In this option, the AAP would rely on the District-wide parking policy position as set out in the Local Plan in Policy IN3 which allows for reduced parking in areas of good public transport accessibility.

Option 2.6 – Establish specific town centre car parking policy

The AAP could include a Town Centre specific parking policy in relation to public and general "town centre" car parking and residential standards for new developments to complement Policy IN3. These two elements are set out below:

Public and general town centre car parking

A large proportion of the town centre's parking is already provided within multi-storey car parks, some of which are old structures and might approach the end of their design life during the plan period. However, Post Office Road and newer parking provision including Harlow Leisurezone and Sainsbury's is located in surface car parks.

In order to realise the regeneration potential of the Town Centre, there would be merit in consolidating surface car parking as decked structures or multi-storey car parks to make better use of valuable town centre sites. This could free up space for development of new town centre uses. In many cases, under-used car park sites occupy very visible locations which undermine the overall quality of the street environment and sense of arrival in the Town Centre. Wherever possible, opportunities to create parking facilities which are integrated into the street scene to establish active streets should be taken. Flexibility could be established to future-proof parking buildings to allow conversion to other uses in the event that demand for parking changes in the future.

The more comprehensive scenarios assume some redevelopment and consolidation of car parking facilities including public car parking and parking for specific uses which function as general town centre car parking. In some cases, adjacent uses might consolidate their parking provision to create more efficient, shared facilities.

Residential parking standards

Analysis has demonstrated that a case could be made for a lower town centre specific residential parking standard for new development. This would be justified by the relatively high accessibility of the town centre and the existence of shops and services in close proximity. The precise approach would need to be defined at the next stage of the AAP, but might comprise the identification of a base provision of “allocated” spaces for dwellings supported by an additional provision of “unallocated” spaces depending on the type / size of dwelling. This unallocated provision would be shared between all residents and reflects that there is a varying level of car ownership across households. This is a more efficient approach than providing solely allocated parking, which results in many unused spaces being built, and could be more attractive to developers and residents.

The unallocated parking provision could be accommodated within the consolidated town centre car parks, with the allocated provision forming part of the developments themselves. Alternatively, unallocated parking could be assumed to be on-street parking within the new town centre streets assuming these would not be taken up by evening economy visitors.

Direction of travel

There is a need to progress a wide range of movement improvements which establish better connections for all modes between the Town Centre and other destinations in Harlow including employment areas, the railway station and surrounding neighbourhoods (options 2.2 to 2.4).

A number of catalytic projects will help to establish momentum for these movement proposals including the wider Garden Village development and employment growth through the Enterprise Zone and the arrival of Public Health England. The impetus to deliver improved public transport improvements through the Sustainable Transport Corridor via Bus Rapid Transit system is particularly important in this regard.

In addition, as noted in policy theme 1, the Town Centre itself has significant growth potential across a number of sectors. As set out in the commentary on the approach to strategic growth, the emerging direction of travel should seek to support longer-term development potential as far as possible by future proofing a more comprehensive approach in the context of the overarching vision for the Town Centre (option 2.1).

The AAP is likely to define a town centre specific policy for general town centre / public car parking. A flexible approach will be required to facilitate the regeneration of a number of sites. There is also a strong case for a town centre specific parking standard which reflects the AAP aspirations for a more sustainable town centre which is less reliant on cars (option 2.6).

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.

THEME 3: PUBLIC REALM

Background

Harlow Town Centre has a varying quality of public realm across the main shopping areas. The existence of street clutter, poor quality street furniture and paving create a negative perception. Service yards and associated access severs many central areas of public realm.

Although the wider town boasts an impressive armature of green wedges and landscape, the Town Centre itself has a lack of planting and green spaces. Mature tree planting is often limited to car parking areas rather than public spaces or streets. There is a proud tradition of sculpture in the town – although this remains a feature, it has been delivered with less success in recent years. The setting of these important works of public art is not always fitting or appropriate. Public realm improvements, including landscaped gardens, have recently been made to the south of Harlow Town Centre, as part of The Water Gardens Shopping Centre redevelopment.

Emerging policy context

In the Draft Local Development Plan (2017), Policy PL1 identifies a range of design principles for Harlow which includes reference to public realm improvements. Policy L3 provides guidance in relation to public art and sculpture both new and existing. Other guidance including Policies PL4, PL5 and PL7 set out criteria for the design of other open spaces.

Harlow Design Guide (2011) and Essex Design Guide (2005) set out underlying design principles to guide development and encourage a design-led approach. The reports make reference to general place-making principles, inclusive design, public open space, permeability and legibility.

A Spatial Vision and Design Charter for Harlow and Gilston Town is being prepared in parallel with the AAP which sets out a clear vision and framework that will support the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre by drawing on true Garden Town principles.

What you've told us

Public realm has proven to be a key area of focus through the consultation discussions. Improvements to Market Square and Broad Walk are both identified as priorities. Opportunities to celebrate the town's sculptural heritage and to create more "green" landscape within central Harlow are supported. Feedback highlighted the need to consider public realm and movement proposals in tandem, and to ensure that interventions are deliverable with respect to land ownership and adjacent development proposals.

Issue

How should spaces and connections be improved to support the experience of visiting the Town Centre? Which spaces should be prioritised?

Options

Option 3.1 - Town Centre public realm principles

Identify a general policy which defines key principles and guidance for streets and spaces in the Town Centre that are inclusive and accessible for all. This should make reference to the original elements of the Gibberd masterplan which included a commitment to excellence in relation to public art and sculpture and preservation of existing landscape and natural features.

Options 3.2 - Site specific guidance

Prepare site / area specific guidance including illustrative material for specific streets and spaces in the Town Centre. Incorporate appropriate illustrative material to communicate the opportunities.

Direction of Travel

Policy guidance for the Town Centre should incorporate general principles for the AAP area as a whole (option 3.1) as well as specific areas (option 3.2), particularly where this relates to one or more development sites, or a coordinated approach is needed with respect to integration with movement proposals.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.



- Town Centre boundary
- Public realm
- Secondary public realm
- Boulevard streets
- Green space

Public realm opportunities based on the long-term framework

THEME 4: URBAN DESIGN

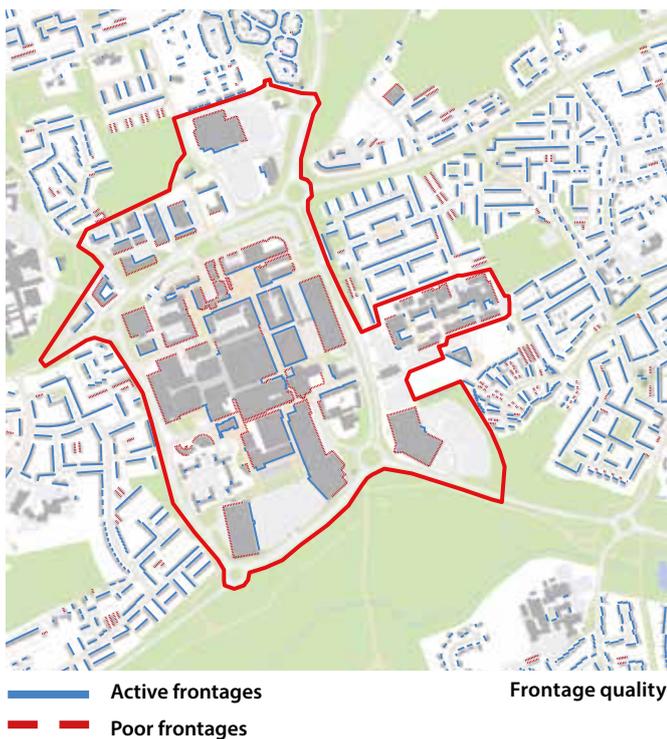
Background

The original plan aesthetic consists of a formal composition to the arrangement of the streets and spaces in Harlow. Buildings and public spaces have been laid out on an irregular rectilinear grid with aligning frontages and clearly defined corners.

Analysis has highlighted a high degree of separation between residential neighbourhoods and the Town Centre. This sense of severance is exacerbated by the ring road which encloses the rectilinear grid. Although a lack of clear hierarchy and absence of a typical structure reduces the overall legibility of the Town Centre from surrounding neighbourhoods, a number of central landmark buildings characterise views from the rural hinterland and act as a marker for the Town Centre.

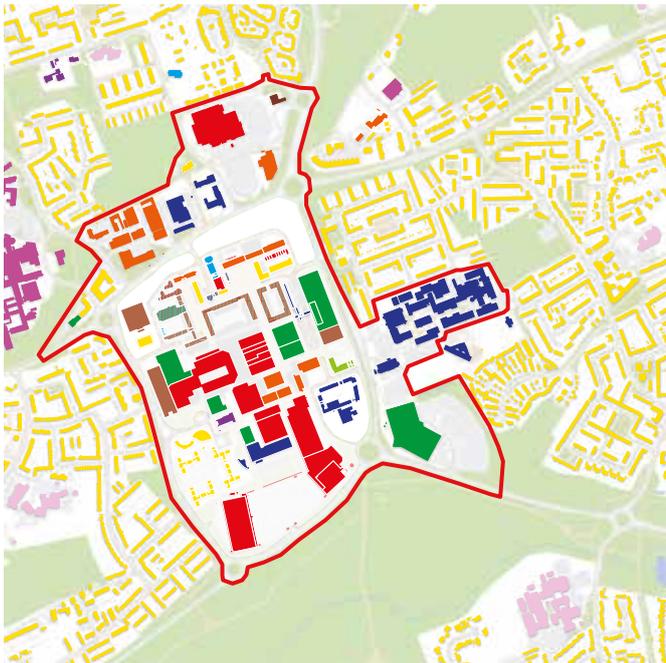
Within the Town Centre, many public spaces lack any sense of night-time or leisure uses which contributes to a significant lack of life and vibrancy in the evenings. Similarly, low quality arrival points, poor legibility and the absence of frontages on some pedestrian routes has a very negative impact on the experience of being in the Town Centre. Building heights and scale also influence the Town Centre experience and can negatively impact the setting of heritage assets if not sympathetically integrated.

Notwithstanding these issues, the original "Plan aesthetic" is still apparent in the northern section of Town Centre and opportunities exist to retain and enhance this grain through the AAP.



- retail, leisure and evening economy
- offices and workspace
- public & community infrastructure
- homes
- creative uses
- delivery

Upper floor uses

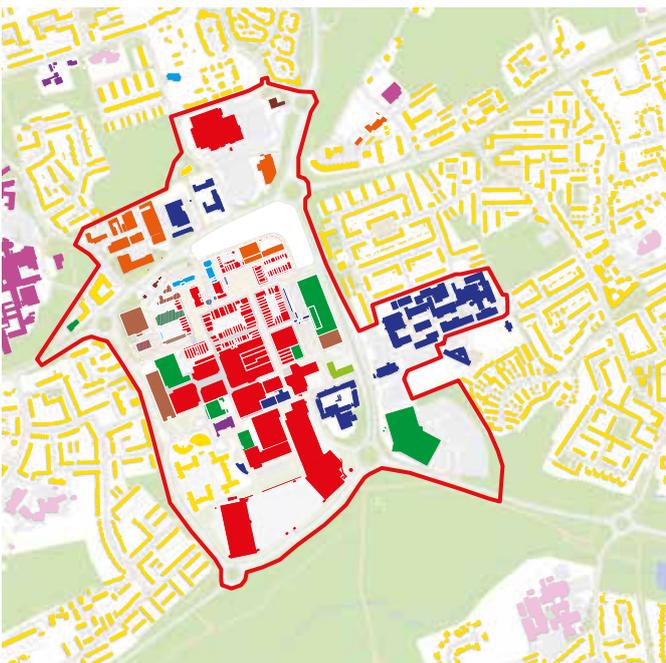


Parking

Car parking

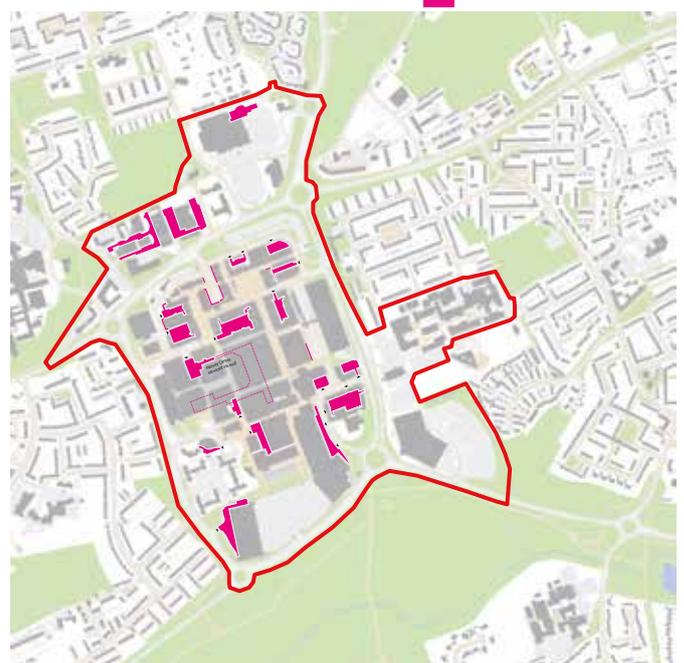


Ground floor uses



Access and servicing

Servicing



Emerging policy context

Good design is a key commitment in the Draft Local Development Plan (2017) with reference to general opportunities to high quality architecture, sustainability, spaces and connections and positive reference to the New Town heritage associated with the Gibberd masterplan. Key emerging policy references in this context are PL1, PL2, PL3, PL4 and PL5.

Harlow Design Guide (2011) and Essex Design Guide (2005) set out underlying design principles to guide development and encourage a design-led approach. The documents make reference to general place-making principles, urban character, building heights, inclusive design, public open space, permeability and legibility.

A Spatial Vision and Design Charter for Harlow and Gilston Town is being prepared in parallel with the AAP which sets out a clear vision and framework that will support the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre by drawing on true Garden Town principles.

What you've told us

Consultation has revealed a significant depth of understanding and appreciation of Harlow's history and the principles behind the Gibberd masterplan.

Some participants have noted the importance of establishing a positive response to the original masterplan, the sculptural heritage and positive elements in the architectural heritage of the Town Centre.

Issue

How should the AAP facilitate high quality design which responds positively to the existing character and context of the Town Centre?



Harlow is visible from the outer edges of the town, shown diagrammatically above.

retail, leisure and evening economy

offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

homes

creative uses

delivery

Options

Option 4.1 - Guidance on character, height, scale and massing

Incorporate Town Centre-wide urban design guidance in relation to key topics such as urban character, urban form and structure, building heights, scale and massing. This is likely to focus on qualitative, criteria-based statements with appropriate reference to illustrative material. The importance of the intact plan aesthetic in the northern part of the Town Centre is likely to be highlighted.

Option 4.2 - Site specific guidance

Define site-specific guidance alongside illustrative proposals for key Opportunity Areas.

Direction of travel

Design quality is a key concern for Harlow Town Centre. Policy guidance is needed to establish a clear framework for proposals and basic parameters for design in relation to layout, the relationship between buildings and streets / spaces and the overall character of development (option 4.1). Although the guidance should avoid unnecessary prescription, the AAP should have conviction in giving a clear steer which reduces uncertainty, supports consistency with the overall vision, and realises the incremental delivery of the main principles within the AAP.

Illustrative material is likely to be helpful on a site or area basis, but this would be indicative in nature with less status than the proposed policies (option 4.2).

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.

THEME 5: HERITAGE

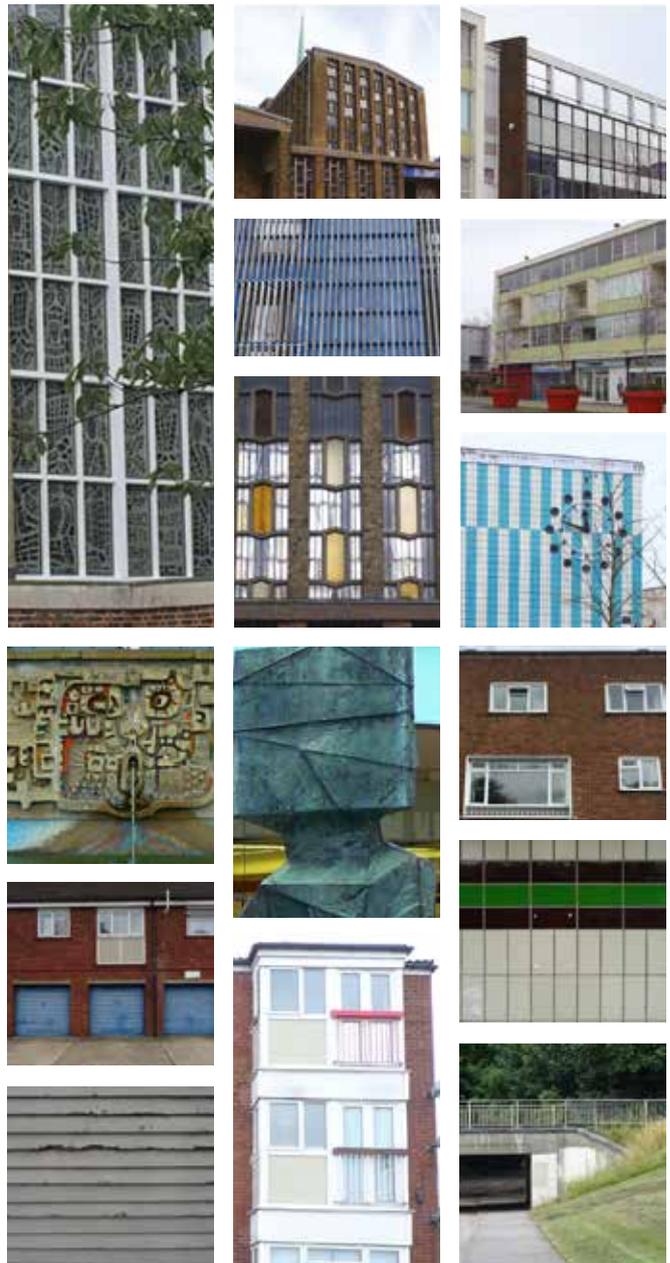
Background

Despite its relatively recent evolution, Harlow Town Centre has an important story to tell in terms of its historic development and heritage. The diagrams opposite show the evolution of the Town Centre since 1966. This narrative relates to the celebration of the plan aesthetic as identified in chapter 5, and to individual buildings or sculptures in the Town Centre.

St Paul's at College Gate is the only listed building in the Town Centre, however, several buildings have distinctive historic character, including a number from the original Gibberd masterplan which are still present. Some of these examples include features which are specific to New Town architecture and Harlow.

The Water Gardens are Grade II listed, built between 1960 and 1963 to the designs of Gibberd, and along with their setting, contribute positively to the heritage of Harlow Town Centre. A number of sculptures also have a special historic character and identity which are an important part of the fabric.

Analysis has identified buildings which negatively impact on the character of the Town Centre and are recommended for redevelopment.



Features and materials specific to Harlow Town Centre

- retail, leisure and evening economy
- offices and workspace
- public & community infrastructure
- homes
- creative uses
- delivery



1966



1980 - 1995



2017



Current Town Centre

Emerging policy context

Policy PL11 of the draft Local Development Plan (2017) sets out draft guidance relating to heritage assets and their settings included Listed and Locally Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeology, and Enabling Development. Strategic policy WE4 'Heritage' gives further guidance on heritage assets and their settings.

What you've told us

There is a genuine interest in Harlow Town Centre's unique design heritage and a desire to see it better promoted. This could include a range of promotional strategies as well as interventions to re-instate features, or design new buildings in a sensitive way. Sculpture is a very important part of the heritage discussion.

Issue

How should the AAP reflect, and better reveal the significance of designated and non-designated assets?

Options

Option 5.1 - Rely on existing Local Plan policies

Policy PL11 and PL12 of the emerging DM DPD provides general guidance in relation to heritage assets and their settings. The AAP could simply cross-reference these policies and provide an overview of the character of the historic built environment as part of the background to any urban design guidance in the AAP.

Option 5.2 - Town centre specific heritage policy

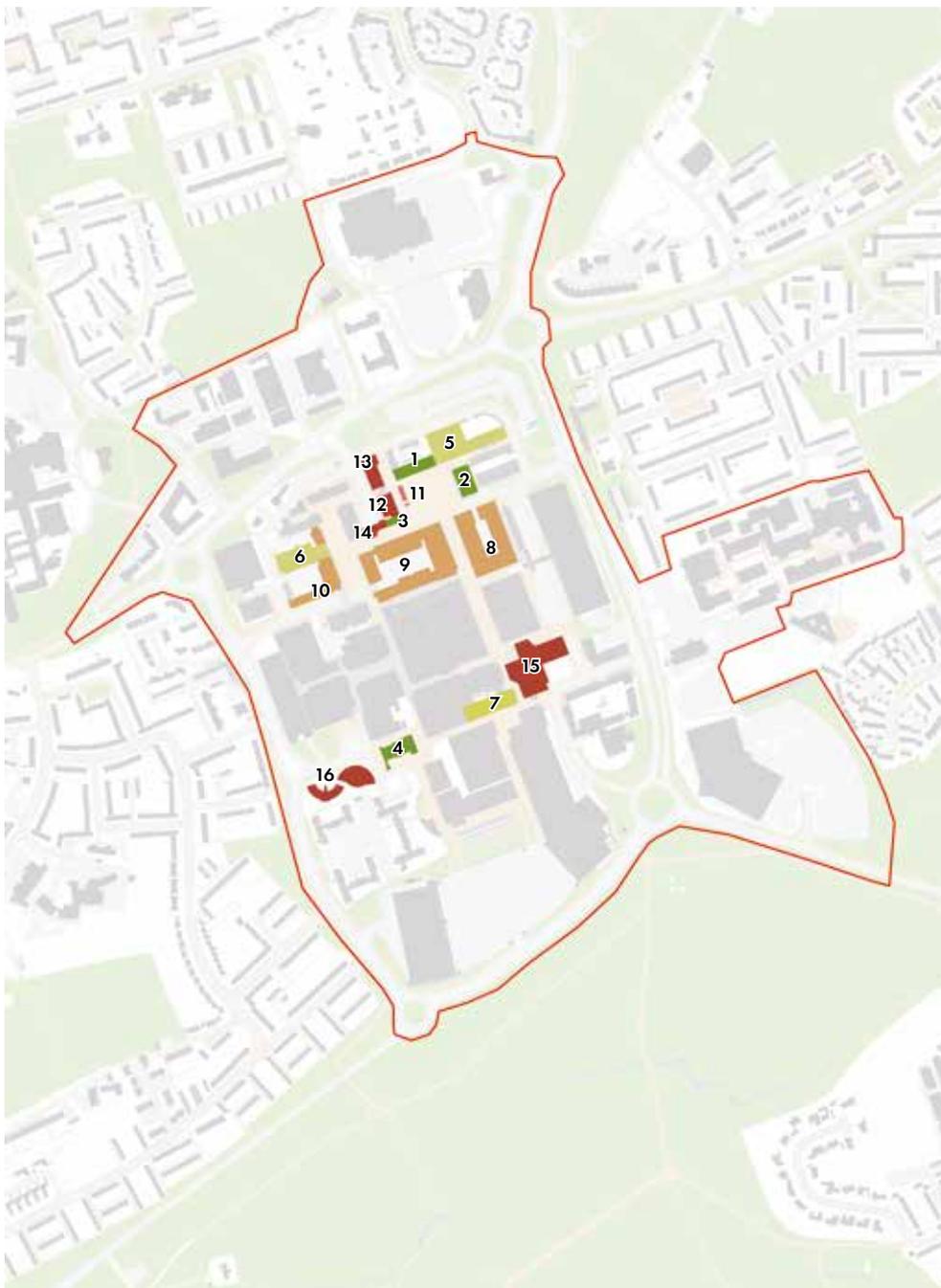
Define specific guidance which seeks to protect and enhance the historic character and setting of Harlow. This could include positive statements to reinforce the importance of designated assets and to highlight the opportunities presented by the retention and re-use of undesignated assets which make a positive contribution. It might also provide criteria-based guidance to assist in the reasoned consideration of comprehensive development proposals.

Direction of travel

In basic policy terms the AAP would need to comply with the guidance as set out in the DM DPD alongside the strategic position established in the National Planning Policy Framework (option 5.1). However, this guidance alone would not provide a sufficiently specific approach for the Town Centre.

A Town Centre heritage policy position would provide an opportunity to celebrate the overarching historic dimension to the Harlow story alongside specific guidance for buildings or other assets which are not formerly recognised. The intention is to establish a richer and more nuanced approach to place-making, stimulating positive reference to heritage and encouraging more imaginative design solutions and opportunities (option 5.2).

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.



- KEY**
- **Positive**
 - 1. Market House
 - 2. Adams House
 - 3. 12 East Gate
 - 4. St Pauls Harlow
 - **Positive / neutral**
 - 5. Harlow Post Office
 - 6. Odeon Cinema
 - 7. Harlow Library
 - **Neutral**
 - 8. Broad Walk NE block
 - 9. Broad Walk NW block
 - 10. Gate House
 - **Neutral / negative**
 - 11. Market Office
 - **Negative**
 - 12. The Rows
 - 13. Stone Cross Hall
 - 14. 2 East Gate
 - 15. Redstone House
 - 16. Harlow Foyer Occasio House

Targeted assessment of historic buildings associated with the original Gibberd masterplan

THEME 6: RETAIL, LEISURE AND EVENING ECONOMY

Background

There is an apparent over-supply of retail floorspace in Harlow (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Report, 2017), potentially due to lack of investment from private land owners or due to future development aspirations. The Retail Frontages Study (2017) highlighted A1 Town Centre primary frontages reduced from 78% in 2003 to 60% in 2017, mainly due to large store closures (e.g. M&S and BHS). 10.5% of primary frontages and 20.5% of secondary frontages in the Town Centre were vacant in June 2017. New permitted developments allowing greater flexibility of changes-of-use appear to have had little impact.

Studies indicate that there is a lack of medium to large shop units suitable for modern retailing requirements. A lack of higher end retailers and limited commercial leisure offer constrains the overall performance of the Town Centre. Despite the presence of the bus station, the Town Centre has a relatively poor level of accessibility by public transport and is characterised by many areas with poor public realm and underwhelming spaces which creates a poor perception.

Investment is underway through the Cineworld scheme and the re-configuration of the former Marks and Spencer's unit. The existence of clear development opportunities alongside the strategic catchment position and a projected trajectory of growth is major advantage for the Town Centre. There is also a sense that the area's distinctive design heritage in terms of public realm and public art could form the basis of positive place-making strategy which would assist in generating the setting for retail and leisure growth.

Emerging policy context

Draft policies in the emerging Local Development Plan (2017) include guidance for retail, leisure and evening economy activities. Strategic policies RS1-RS3 set out the Council's retail ambitions and gives guidance for the redevelopment of the Town Centre with regards to future retail floorspace and protecting and enhancing existing retail centres. Development Management policies include guidance relating to the sequential test and overarching principles (PR5), primary and secondary frontages (PR6) and sub-division and internal alteration of units (PR7). Draft guidance for evening and night time economy activities is included in draft policy PR11.

What you've told us

Consultation discussions have reflected on the need to re-balance the gravity of the Town Centre by strengthening the Market Square area. There is also interest in attracting a more diverse mix of retailers including some smaller footprint units, and establishing a stronger leisure and evening economy offer, including cultural attractions.

Frontages requiring further review:

Retain to allow more active frontage:

1. W and S side of Unit 24, Harvey Centre
2. W Primary frontage of 39 Redstone House
3. N secondary frontage of 37 Redstone House

Retain for partial or whole change of frontage to retail use:

4. Central library frontage

Remove secondary frontage:

5. Mitre House, West Square

Two frontages in Town Centre not mapped with potential for designation as secondary frontage.

retail, leisure and evening economy

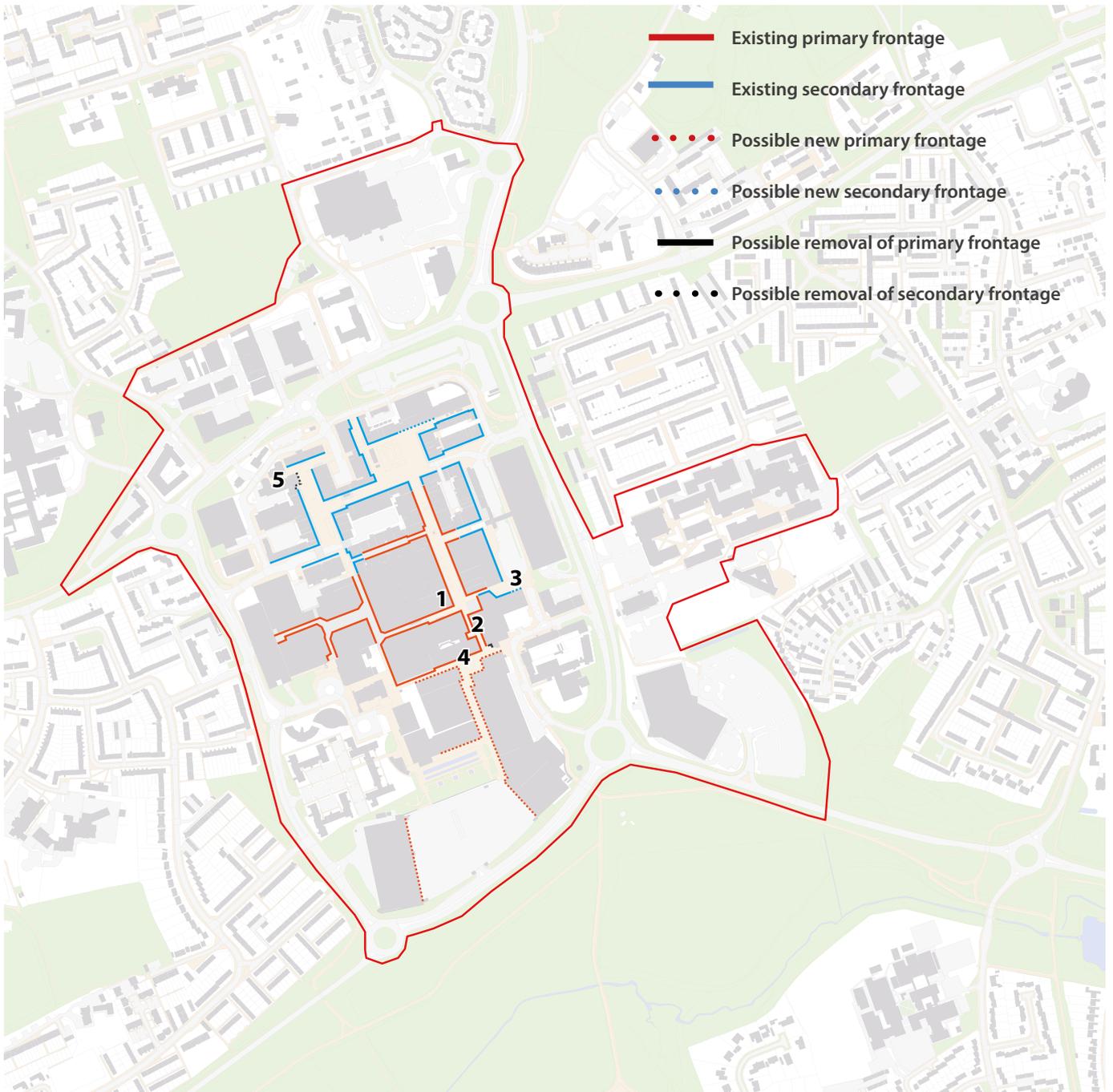
offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

homes

creative uses

delivery



Frontage designations - proposed amendments based on 2017 assessment (Harlow Council), see option 6.1

6A

strategic growth

movement

public realm

urban design

heritage

Issue

How should the AAP meet the identified need for retail floorspace in the Town Centre? How can we make the Town Centre more competitive and viable?

Options

Option 6.1 Existing policies and frontage designation

Rely on existing and emerging District-wide policy position in relation to Town Centre uses and primary / secondary retail frontages. This option would entail the implementation of the recommendations in the Council's retail frontage review (July 2017). This is illustrated in the plan on the previous page.

Option 6.2 – Character / activity-based policy position

Establish a Harlow Town Centre specific policy which seeks to manage and support the overall performance of retail, leisure and evening economy through area specific guidance to complement frontage policies. This would focus on a clear articulation of the geographical priorities for retail and leisure activities, alongside supporting urban design and public realm principles and specific statements of intent for each opportunity area. More qualitative in nature, this policy would seek to respond to the need for an emphasis on visiting and enjoying Harlow Town Centre.

Option 6.3 Site based proposals and illustrative material

Prepare illustrative material to describe the vision for areas of the greatest focus for Town Centre activities and uses. This could form part of site-based policy guidance, and supporting material which communicates how guiding principles could be realised. This material could be used to help stimulate investment, to inspire high quality, contextual design, and as a tool in the development management process.

Option 6.4 – Emphasis on cultural opportunities and creative uses

Establish a clear policy position in relation to cultural activities and features including public art. This is a key strength and asset for the Town Centre which helps to define the distinctive character. This dimension could be better appreciated and celebrated, and would play an important role in securing retail and leisure development which relates back to the original principles of the place.

Direction of travel

A combination of the options identified above is likely to form the basis of the policy position in the AAP. An up to date retail frontage policy (option 6.1) is a pre-requisite in relation to the fundamental approach established through the National Planning Policy Framework and embodied in the Draft Local Development Plan (2017). However, there is a clear sense that the AAP should go further in positively describing the character and geography of the Town Centre, and setting more qualitative guidance which captures the place-making vision and aspirations for the area (option 6.2). This includes the importance of developing the night-time economy, including the theatre and other leisure / entertainment activity.

As indicated in option 6.4, there is an opportunity to broaden the emphasis on retail, leisure and evening uses to facilitate greater reference to cultural activities and features which bring the Town Centre to life.

As noted on other topics, site or area specific guidance could incorporate illustrative guidance which has a less formal status, but helps to capture the vision and sets a high, but realistic bar in terms of place-making aspirations (option 6.3).

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.

retail, leisure and evening economy	offices and workspace	public & community infrastructure	homes	creative uses	delivery
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Character / activity based policy position - see option 6.2
 Ground floor activities - other uses such as residential or office will be promoted on upper floors.

THEME 7: OFFICES AND WORKSPACE

Background

Harlow Town Centre is not considered to be an established office market “owing to its size, quality of existing stock and high vacancy rates” (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis report, May 2017). Some limited provision is located close to Harlow but these units are not fully let and some have been converted to residential use. In addition, a number of Permitted Development conversions of office space to residential have already occurred in the Town Centre which has eroded the supply of workspace in the Town Centre.

The decision for Public Health England to locate a national science base in Harlow is major opportunity and is forecast, alongside Enterprise Zone status, to have positive effects on the office market and values. Significant businesses have signed 15 year lease agreements at Kao Park within the Enterprise Zone. A number of other opportunities exist within the Enterprise Zone including 20,000 sqm of “Grade A” office space and Data Centre development at London Road South, a 14ha design and build site at London Road North for Med Tech, Life Science and ICT sectors, and SME space at Templefields industrial estate.

The Market Analysis report notes that better links are needed between the Town Centre and employment sites are needed to enable Town Centre living for staff in an accessible, well-served location which is close to their work.

The planned relocation of Princess Alexandra Hospital from its current site north west of the town centre to one of two locations in the growth areas to the east and north of the town, will result in the removal of c2,500 from the town centre vicinity. Whilst an increased number of jobs would be supported at the new location (through planned establishment of a

Health Campus), replacement jobs close to the town centre should be considered, to support the health and vitality of shops and services. This also strengthens the requirement for better transport links to/from the centre.

Emerging policy context

The emerging spatial strategy (2014) highlights the target of 8,000 to 12,000 new jobs, although much of this is likely to be associated through the Enterprise Zone areas. The Draft Local Development Plan (2017) sets out policies for employment uses. Policy PR3 identifies support for the provision of B1 office uses above ground floor level in the Town Centre. PR3 also identifies three criteria which must be fulfilled in relation to the loss of existing B1 activities outside of the designated Employment Areas.

What you’ve told us

Consultation discussions have highlighted the role that an attractive, functional and accessible Town Centre will play in supporting the Enterprise Zone and wider economic growth in the District. There were also suggestions about the role the Town Centre could play in providing start-up space and smaller, flexible workspace for collaboration, co-working, business hubs and hot desking. Larger office space is an appropriate Town Centre use but participants acknowledged the impact of Permitted Development Rights in this regard.

Issue

What role will office space and workspace have in the future in Harlow Town Centre? Should the Town Centre be positioned as an accessible location for services and amenities and as a residential location to support the sustained economic position of the District?

retail, leisure and evening economy

offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

homes

creative uses

delivery

Options

Option 7.1 – Promote Harlow Town Centre as an office location

The preparation of an Article 4 Direction for the Town Centre is not a realistic course of action given the number of offices which have already seen Permitted Development Rights exercised. In addition, it would not be appropriate for the AAP to identify this as a policy position. In that context, a more suitable approach would be to establish a positive position towards investment in existing stock or new development of office floorspace in the Town Centre. This could set a context for proactive engagement with existing office owners to understand their priorities and explore opportunities to encourage a longer-term view of the Town Centre’s potential.

Option 7.2 – Focus on enhancing the complementary role of the Town Centre in supporting employment growth throughout the District

This option would seek to promote a broader view of the role of the Town Centre in supporting the wider economic vitality of the District, in particular developments such as Harlow Enterprise Zone and Public Health England. The wider policies in the AAP have the potential to have positive outcomes for business growth in the District. Specifically, the AAP seeks to promote the focus of retail, leisure and residential uses within the Town Centre, to facilitate improved public transport, walking and cycling connections, and also set a context for a greater emphasis on “town centre living”. These broader changes will help to support the District as a more sustainable business destination which is served by a well-rounded, versatile Town Centre, and adaptable buildings.

Option 7.3 – Promote Harlow Town Centre as a location for SMEs and smaller businesses

Linked to option 7.2, the AAP could seek to explicitly promote the Town Centre as a location

for SME’s and small businesses, potentially as part of the Enterprise Zone supply chain. Flexible enterprise space could be identified as part of a broader mix of uses including refurbishment / re-purposing of historic properties on a permanent or temporary basis.

Direction of travel

The Town Centre should continue to be promoted as a location for office uses and other forms of workspace (option 7.1 and 7.3). However, it is recognised that a significant proportion of growth in employment floorspace will be focused around Harlow Enterprise Zone and through the development of Public Health England’s Science Hub at the former GSK site. In that context, the main emphasis of the AAP should be on the reciprocal benefits between an improving Town Centre and the surrounding business areas (option 7.2). The quality of the environment and range of uses in the Town Centre is a key factor in this, but the most direct factor will be the package of improvements to the movement network as outlined under issue 2.

The AAP will encourage a proactive approach to the delivery of the overall vision and objectives to realise sustainable economic outcomes. Landowners and developers will be encouraged to take a long-term view with an emphasis on more comprehensive development rather than piecemeal schemes, particularly office to residential conversions under Permitted Development rights where this fails to deliver the potential transformative benefits envisaged in the AAP.

The policy position could also encourage an adaptable approach to the design of buildings, recognising the need for flexibility in the context of shifting economic trends over the course of the plan period and beyond.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.

THEME 8: PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Background

Harlow Town Centre has clear strengths in education including Harlow College, Sir Charles Kao UTC and Harlow Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Centre. These assets are poorly integrated with the Town Centre and feel isolated from the core of the Town Centre by Velizy Avenue. There is also scope for a more efficient approach to community facilities in terms of locations and buildings across the Town Centre. There are currently various community services that exist within the Town Centre in units on temporary leases yet which provide diverse and added uses. Princess Alexandra Hospital is located to the north of the Town Centre and provides essential health and well-being services to residents.

Emerging policy context

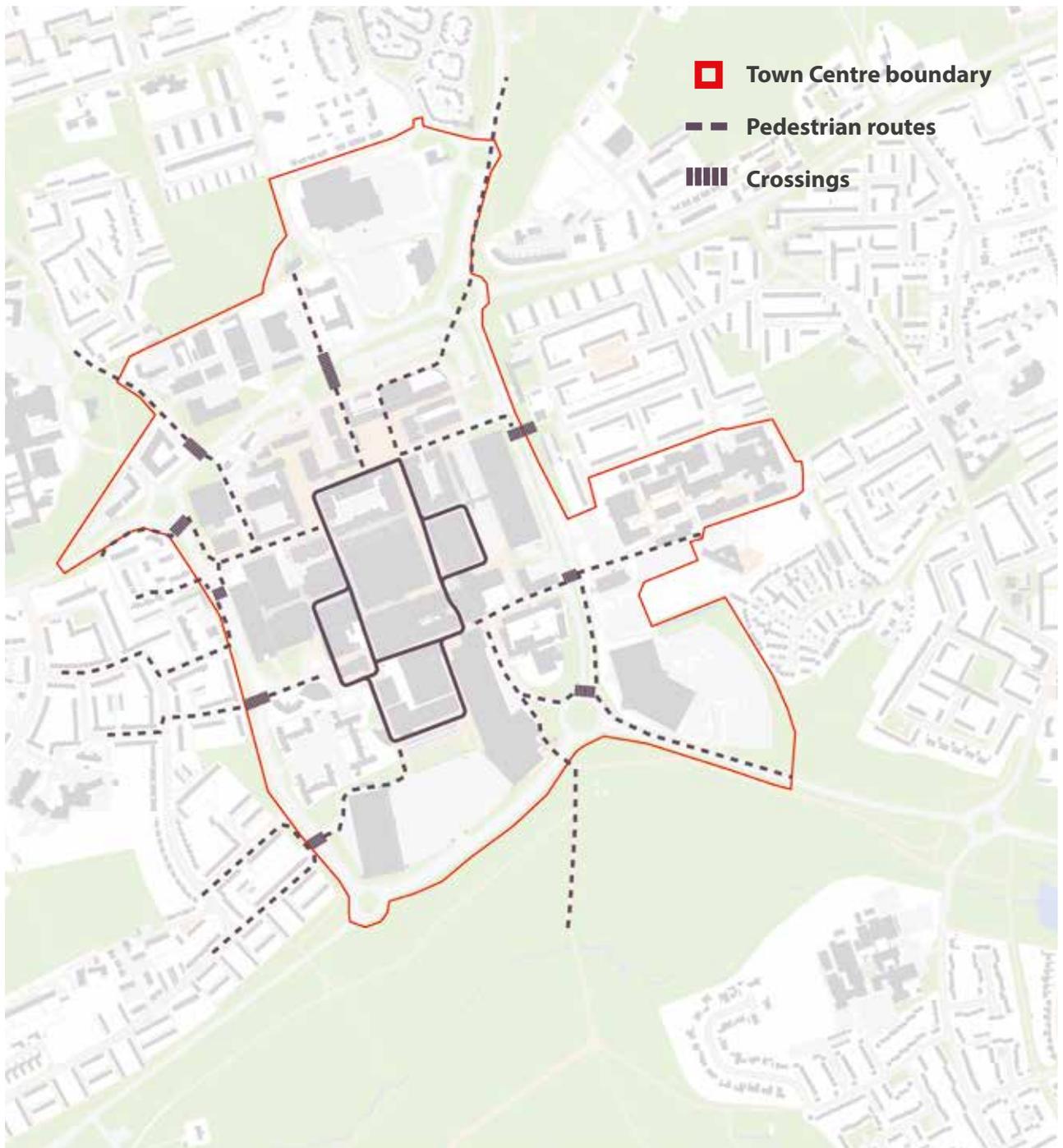
Policy L2 of the Draft Local Development Plan (2017) sets a context for the provision of new recreational, sporting, cultural and community uses and facilities and also identifies criteria to manage their loss resulting from development proposals. Strategic Policy SIR1 gives guidance further guidance on education, healthcare and community facilities.

What you've told us

Community facilities, potentially in the form of a "Civic Hub" were identified as a way of drawing the focal point northwards. Opportunities to relocate some civic functions away from the centre might be appropriate. There is clear support for improved connections from the Town Centre to adjacent community uses.

Issue

What approach should be taken to public and community infrastructure to contribute to the overall Town Centre experience and performance?



Opportunities for improved links

6A

strategic growth

movement

public realm

urban design

heritage

Options

Option 8.1 – Links

Promote the provision of more convenient and safe pedestrian links to encourage more residents from surrounding neighbourhoods, and staff and students from education facilities to visit the Town Centre.

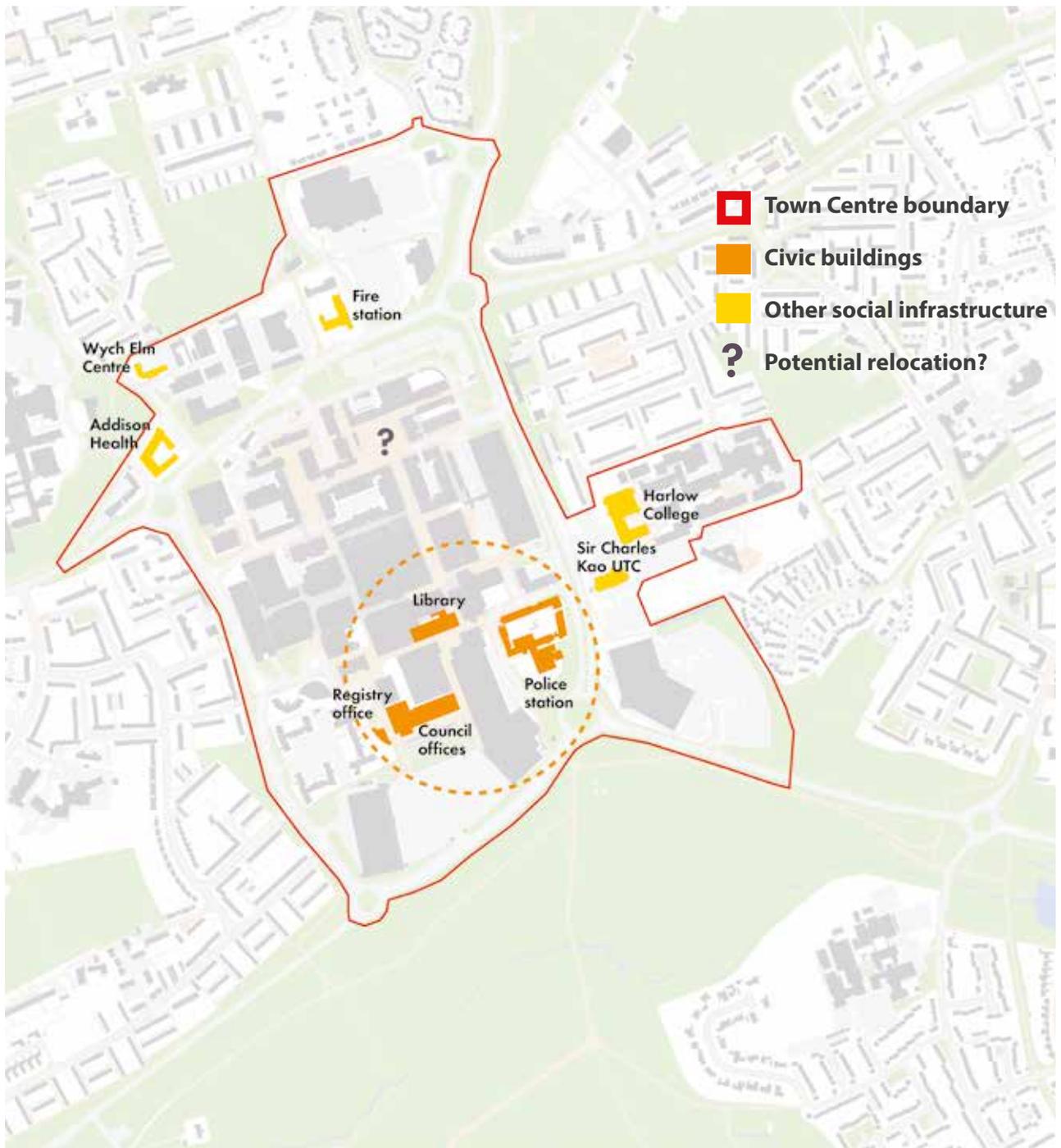
Option 8.2 – Co-location / efficient buildings

Specific policy supporting the co-location of facilities in more convenient locations in more efficient buildings. This would enable wider release of sites and regeneration for other Town Centre uses. This approach could apply to Harlow Central Library (already under review), the Council offices, the Police, Fire Station and Magistrates Court. Greater presence of community or civic functions in the north might benefit the Town Centre as a whole.

Direction of Travel

Both options have an important role to play in the AAP. Option 8.1 is emerging as a key priority in relation to the potential movement options outlined under issue 2. It is recommended that a commitment to greater efficiency and co-location is identified as a general policy position in the AAP. This could play a key role in establishing improvements in the quality of social and civic provision and unlocking development potential in Town Centre sites.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.



Key community buildings

THEME 9: HOMES

Background

The Emerging Local Development Plan sets out a requirement for 12,000 to 15,000 new dwellings required during the plan period. Although significant opportunities exist to deliver new homes in the Town Centre, a significant proportion of growth is likely to come forward in surrounding areas. In that context, other thematic issues, particularly those relating to movement will be important in establishing improved connections from surrounding neighbourhoods and adjacent settlements, and employment destinations to the Town Centre.

New homes in the Town Centre could improve the overall viability of regeneration proposals, bring greater footfall into the Town Centre and also improve the evening economy. The impact of increased residents and a greater evening offer must be considered to ensure a well-managed environment. A number of sites are already being progressed as office to residential conversions under Permitted Development Rights.

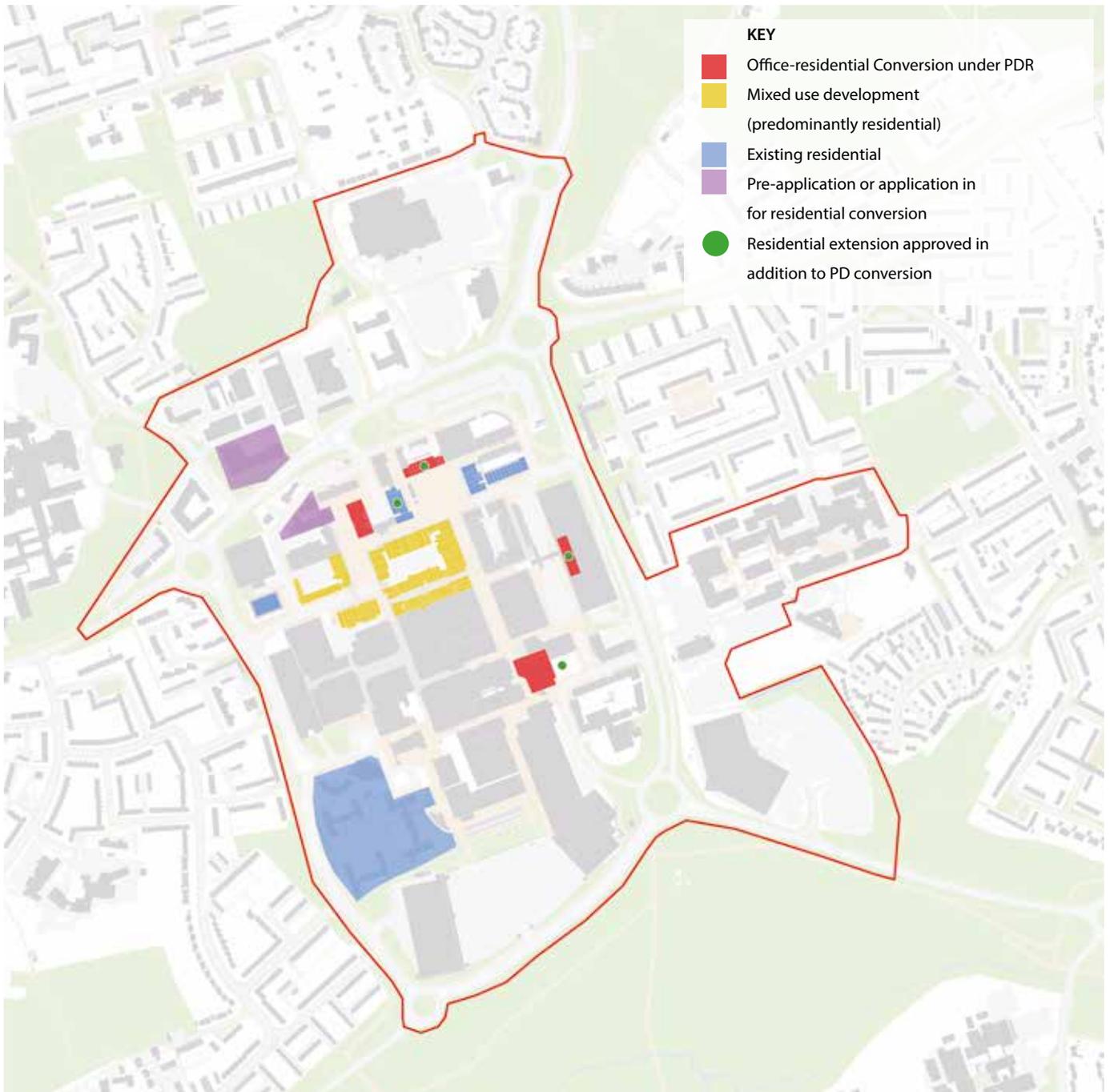
It is understood that the delivery of a policy-compliant level of affordable housing is challenging from a viability perspective on some schemes in the Town Centre. This is a complex issue as the level of affordable housing is a major political priority, as is the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre.

Emerging policy context

The Local Plan sets an agenda for significant growth in the Harlow and neighbouring authorities of up to 15,000 new homes and 20ha of employment space.

The emerging Local Development Plan (2017) identifies a requirement to deliver at least 30% affordable housing (policy H8). Other policies in the housing chapter (policies H1 to H10) outline a number of priorities including guidance relating to a range of housing types and sizes, across a range of tenures in major residential development (Harlow Local Development Plan, H6).

SHLAA (2013) – 9,900 new dwellings have been identified in the SHLA which comprise 4,027 committed units committed, 541 completed dwellings and a further 4,300 homes.



Residential development

THEME 9: HOMES

What you've told us

Consultation demonstrated a broad awareness of the scale of growth which is envisaged in the wider area. There was broad support for a diverse mix of housing types including affordable housing across the area. There is a degree of concern about the extent of office to residential conversions through Permitted Development.

Issue

Should the AAP define a Town Centre-specific policy position in relation to housing?

Options

Option 9.1 – Rely on emerging planning guidance in Local Plan policy

In this option, the AAP would rely on the District-wide housing position as set out in the Local Plan. No specific housing policy would be identified in the AAP.

Option 9.2 - Town centre specific residential policies

Further discussion and debate is required in relation to the preparation of a Harlow Town Centre specific housing policy. It is likely that this would recognise the need for a mix more heavily weighted towards high quality apartment typologies in the context of realising mixed and balanced communities.

In terms of affordable housing, an option exists to provide more explicit criteria for a reduction from the 30% minimum target as set out in emerging DM DPD policy H8. Currently the draft policy refers to the need for an independent viability assessment as justification for any deviation. A Town Centre specific policy might reiterate the minimum target but could also reference the need to consider viability in the context of wider AAP priorities relating to the overall performance and vitality of the Town Centre in relation to design quality, town centre management initiatives, town centre uses, historic setting and public realm improvements as well as other wider S106 priorities such as education.

Option 9.3 – Improved connections to surroundings

Promote improved accessibility and linkages between the surrounding neighbourhoods and the Town Centre (see issue 2).

Option 9.4 - Site specific guidance

The AAP could make reference to residential guidance and priorities as part of specific site guidance and illustrative material (see section 6B).

Direction of travel

Further discussion and review of options 9.1 and 9.2 is required as the resultant policy position would influence the negotiations relating to affordable housing on Town Centre sites. This is a complex issue as the delivery of mixed and balanced communities, including an appropriate level of affordable housing is a strategic priority for the Council.

Option 9.2 is considered to be a positive step as it would set a context for the clear definition of specific Town Centre priorities which are vital to the future prosperity and sustainability of Harlow Town Centre in the round. This option could enable a more nuanced policy position for negotiation purposes which would re-iterate the District-wide affordability targets, but critically strengthen the Council’s hand in realising wider priorities including public realm, movement and landscape benefits which will play a key role in the regeneration of the Town Centre.

Option 9.3 is likely to be progressed under the movement heading (Issue 2). Option 9.4 relates to the identification of illustrative guidance as part of guidance relating to key sites / opportunity areas and is also likely to be taken forward.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.

THEME 10: CREATIVE USES

Background

There is a strong tradition of cultural activities and enterprise in Harlow Town Centre which continues to have a positive impact on the Town Centre offer, creating diversity and bringing a different audience to a Town Centre location. The AAP has a role to play in reflecting this strength and potential as a component in the broader growth of the area.

Harlow Playhouse had a high profile but its small seating capacity compared to other local and regional theatres meant it did not attract some of the higher quality tours. In recent years, consideration was given to the replacement of the Playhouse with a large theatre, but this proved challenging to progress and is not currently being pursued.

Parndon Mill has several small creative businesses in an attractive historic environment on the River Stort. There is also limited creative business space at the Gibberd Gallery and Eastgate Arts. These are both centrally located in the Town Centre but could have a far greater profile. The Square music venue closed a few years ago and has been missed by residents. The venue had a regional reputation and high-profile range performers.

Emerging policy context

Policy L2 sets a positive context for cultural and community facilities in the Draft Local Development Plan (2017).

What you've told us

People would like to see a stronger cultural offer in the Town Centre, particularly in terms of activities for younger people and a replacement music venue.

Issue

With a significant number of new homes planned for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, and the relocation of Public Health England to the town, how can Harlow Town Centre increase its cultural offer and creative industries base to serve the new population?

Options

Option 10.1 - Review existing underutilised sites for possible arts spaces within the town

The AAP could establish a context for a focused review of potential sites for arts spaces in the Town Centre. Possible sites could be identified as part of site specific guidance. A general policy position with a presumption in favour of creative development could be established. Further feasibility studies might be required to develop a clear brief, identification of need and broad business case for new facilities. These could include a gallery, spaces for young people and/or a music venue in the Town Centre - perhaps at the northern end to rebalance gravity.

Option 10.2 - Review funding opportunities for a replacement theatre

The AAP could identify support for a new theatre facility to replace Harlow Playhouse. In doing so it would be helpful to progress a specific project to assess whether the theatre is a viable longer-term proposition.

retail, leisure and evening economy	offices and workspace	public & community infrastructure	homes	creative uses	delivery
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Direction of travel

Both options include positive reference to aspirational projects for the Town Centre which are suitable to include in the AAP, potentially under a single policy statement. It is important that the policy is supported by a clear direction of travel in terms of delivery to maximise the prospect of implementation.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.



Public art in the Town Centre



THEME 11: DELIVERY

Background

The Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis report (Cushman and Wakefield, 2017) identifies a series of key priorities for delivery. Six main areas of potential focus are identified as follows which have been cast as options below. There is a degree of overlap with specific thematic options identified in early sections and these have been identified for ease of reference.

Emerging policy context

The emerging policies in the Draft Local Development Plan (2017) make explicit reference to implementation under each policy heading. This includes specific reference to infrastructure (SIR1, SIR2 and IN1 to IN6).

What you've told us

Consultation discussions have only considered the broad topic of delivery in strategic terms. However there is strong sense that delivery is now a major priority for the Town Centre to maintain a competitive position and offer.

Issue

What are the key priorities for the AAP delivery strategy? Which elements can be used to drive the implementation of the overarching vision and objectives?

Options

Option 11.1 - Public sector led

Explore the potential for consolidation of public sector accommodation requirements across the Town Centre as part of a One Public Estate-type style initiative (see also, option 8.2) or as part of a broader delivery vehicle. This consolidation could help to release surplus land for development and provide new facilities that could benefit occupiers in terms of being more efficient buildings as well as underpinning regeneration more broadly.

Option 11.2 – Land assembly

Produce a land assembly strategy and take a proactive approach in assembling sites in the Town Centre that can provide a more compelling proposition in terms of scale to a potential development partner. The possible use of compulsory purchase powers could help to achieve this.

Option 11.3 – Proactive approach to planning

Develop a clear vision and development strategy for the Town Centre to promote opportunities and guide landowners and developers – this could be through a development framework or an Area Action Plan including a Town Centre specific approach to key planning issues where appropriate.

Option 11.4 – Improving transport and accessibility

Work with the County Council and bus service providers to improve bus, walking and cycling links between the Town Centre and the rail station. Enhance pedestrian links between the Town Centre and nearby facilities that are currently isolated from the Town Centre such as Harlow College and the Sir Charles Kao UTC. This will encourage users of these facilities to use the Town Centre to a greater extent. Improve the quality and safety of car parks in the Town Centre.

retail, leisure and evening economy

offices and workspace

public & community infrastructure

homes

creative uses

delivery

Option 11.5 – Enhancing the quality of the environment

Develop a strategy for the public realm enhancements in the Town Centre and explore funding sources as well as ensuring that development proposals from third parties contribute to improving the public realm in accordance with the strategy.

Option 11.6 – Town centre promotion and management

Work with public and private sector partners and businesses in the Town Centre to develop a Business Improvement District proposal which aims to promote and market the Town Centre, including events.

Option 11.7 - Town centre specific S106 position

The Council could develop a town centre specific policy position in relation to S106 agreements. This might highlight the specific S106 priorities for the town centre. It could also highlight the need to reflect the changing viability of proposals over the lifetime of the Plan Period / development scheme. This could build in a stronger reference to a S106 review mechanism based on the relative viability as a scheme progresses.

Direction of travel

A combination of the options above will set a robust context for the delivery strategy in the AAP. The specific details of particular priorities would be articulated most appropriately in the topic specific policy sections of the document. Option 11.3 is an implicit element in the preferred approach as it relates to the preparation of an Area Action Plan and the identification of Town Centre specific policies.

The table on page 90 illustrates the relative role of each option in realising the AAP Spatial Objectives.

AAP SPATIAL OBJECTIVES

Options summary

This table highlights how each option could help realise the Spatial Objectives in Chapter 5.

AAP OPTIONS

	1. Retain plan aesthetic	2. Respond to urban structure	3. Rebalance focus of gravity northwards	4. Change street character of inner ring road	5. Establish a unified centre	6. Establish street frontage & attractive approaches	7. Connect to & draw in green space	8. Frame views of buildings & spaces	9. Celebrate & reflect design heritage	10. Reinstate access through Town Centre
STRATEGIC GROWTH										
Option 1.1 - Baseline scenario	●	●								
Option 1.2 - Medium intervention scenario	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Option 1.3 - High intervention scenario	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
MOVEMENT										
Option 2.1 - Framework of streets	●	●		●	●	●				
Option 2.2 - Potential pedestrian and cycle improvements	●	●		●	●	●	●			
Option 2.3 - Bus improvements	●	●		●	●	●				●
Option 2.4 - Road network	●	●		●	●	●				
Option 2.5 - Rely on emerging planning guidance on parking										
Option 2.6 - Establish specific town centre car parking policy				●	●	●				
PUBLIC REALM										
Option 3.1 - Town centre public realm principles	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Option 3.2 - Site specific guidance	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
URBAN DESIGN										
Option 4.1 - Guidance on character, height, scale and massing	●	●	●		●			●	●	
Option 4.2 - Site specific guidance	●	●	●		●			●	●	
HERITAGE										
Option 5.1 - Rely on existing Local Plan policies										
Option 5.2 - Town centre specific heritage policy								●	●	
RETAIL, LEISURE & EVENING ECONOMY										
Option 6.1 - Existing policies and frontage designation						●				
Option 6.2 - Character / activity-based policy position			●		●	●				●
Option 6.3 - Site based proposals and illustrative material			●		●	●				●
Option 6.4 - Emphasis on cultural opportunities & creative uses			●						●	

AAP SPATIAL OBJECTIVES

AAP OPTIONS	1. Retain plan aesthetic	2. Respond to urban structure	3. Rebalance focus of gravity northwards	4. Change street character of inner ring road	5. Establish a unified centre	6. Establish street frontage & attractive approaches	7. Connect to & draw in green space	8. Frame views of buildings & spaces	9. Celebrate & reflect design heritage	10. Reinstate access through Town Centre
OFFICE AND WORKSPACE										
Option 7.1 - Promote Harlow Town Centre as an office location					●					
Option 7.2 - Enhancing the complementary role of the TC			●	●	●					
Option 7.3 - Promote Harlow Town Centre as a location for SMEs			●	●	●					
PUBLIC & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE										
Option 8.1 - Links				●	●		●			
Option 8.2 - Co-location / efficient buildings			●		●					
HOMES										
Option 9.1 - Rely on emerging planning guidance in Local Plan										
Option 9.2 - Town centre specific residential policies					●					●
Option 9.3 - Improved connections to surroundings				●			●			●
Option 9.4 - Site specific guidance	●	●	●							●
CREATIVE USES										
Option 10.1 - Review underutilised sites for possible arts spaces			●		●					
Option 10.2 - Review funding opportunities for a theatre			●		●					
DELIVERY										
Option 11.1 - Public sector led	●	●	●		●					●
Option 11.2 - Land assembly	●	●	●		●					
Option 11.3 - Proactive approach to planning	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Option 11.4 - Improving transport and accessibility				●	●	●	●			●
Option 11.5 - Enhancing the quality of the environment	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Option 11.6 - Town centre promotion and management				●	●		●		●	
Option 11.7 - Town centre specific S106 position										

Relationships between AAP Policy themes and AAP Spatial Objectives

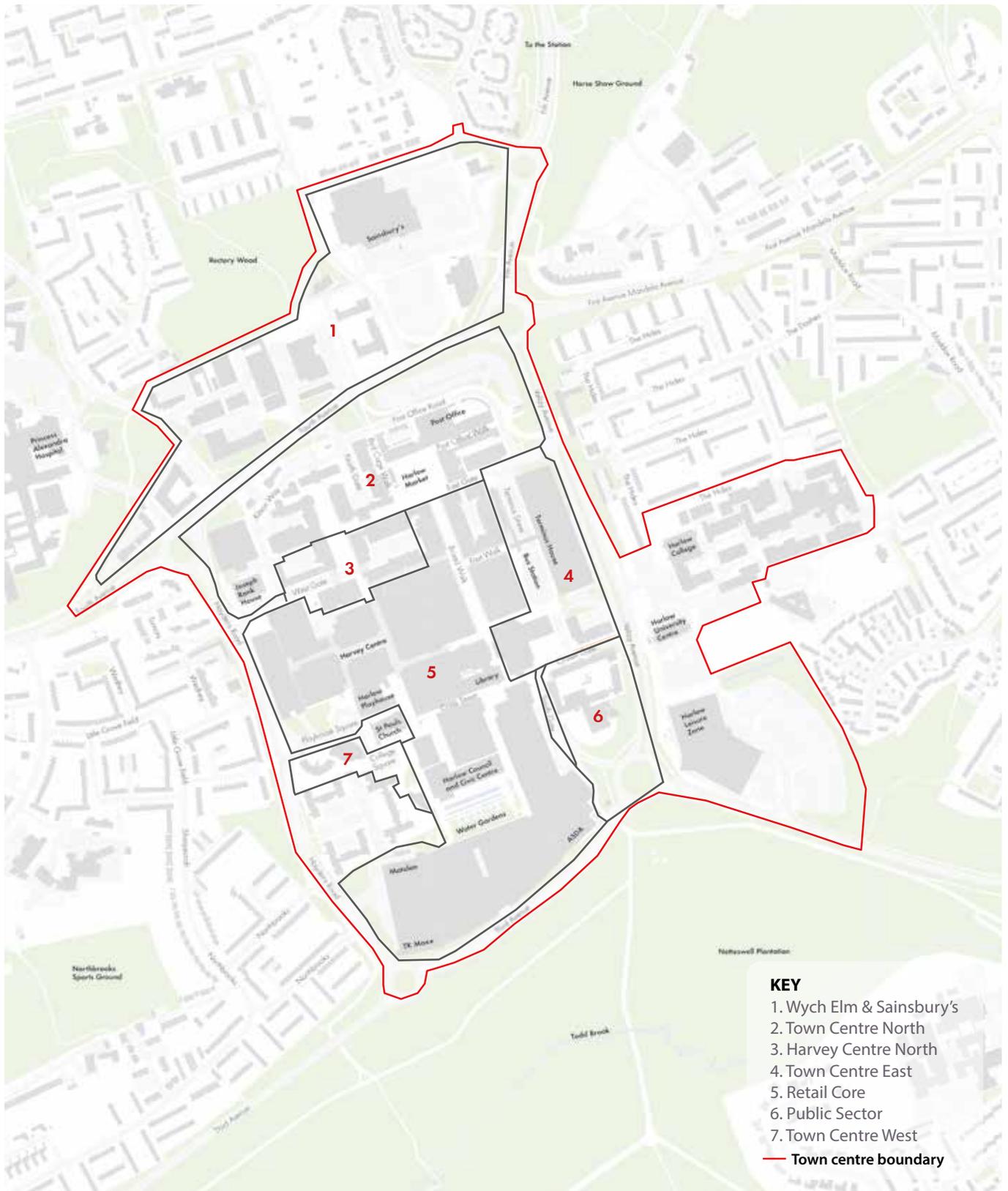
6B OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Overview

Section 6B sets out three spatial scenarios which articulate the emerging direction of travel for area-specific guidance in the AAP. These are linked to the three options set out in policy theme 1 in chapter 6A.

The AAP encourages a long-term vision for the Town Centre, and seeks to future-proof transformative interventions which would contribute to these aspirations. In that context, and as noted in chapter 6A, these scenarios should be interpreted as incremental phases rather than mutually exclusive, separate approaches. These phased scenarios build towards a high intervention scenario (see option 1.3).

The challenge for the AAP is to embed the long-term vision whilst allowing incremental growth and interventions in phases. In the short-term, the policy would encourage sensitive management of proposals, promoting early investment and shaping development which could unlock, rather than preclude a longer-term vision.



Opportunity areas - approximate boundaries (additional opportunity sites might be defined through the process).

BASELINE SCENARIO

Commentary

As set out in option 1.1, this baseline scenario envisages no major interventions over and above the existing pipeline of development proposals in the Town Centre including the Harvey Centre works (a cinema and reconfiguration of the former Marks and Spencer unit) and committed residential investments such as Terminus House and the Circle Housing site. These sites are illustrated in the adjacent drawing.

These interventions are a positive response to current market conditions but do not represent a comprehensive set of proposals which would address some of the more significant structural issues.

The table below shows how the options set out in chapter 6A relate to the opportunity areas.

	Opportunity area	Commentary - potential uses / approach	Key themes / options in 6A
1. Wych Elm & Sainsbury's			
D	Circle Housing scheme	Residential development	9.1
4. Town Centre East			
D	Terminus House	Office to residential conversion	9.1
D	Redstone House	Office to residential conversion	9.1
5. Retail Core			
D	Addington scheme	Interior refurbishment of retail	6.1, 7.2
D	Former Marks and Spencer	Interior refurbishment of retail	6.1, 7.2

D = Development

P = Public realm



Opportunity areas

- 1. Wych Elm & Sainsbury's
- 2. Town Centre North
- 3. Harvey Centre North
- 4. Town Centre East
- 5. Retail Core
- 6. Public Sector
- 7. Town Centre West

 **Town Centre boundary**

 **Interior refurbishments**

 **Mixed use blocks**

MEDIUM INTERVENTION SCENARIO

Commentary

Option 1.2 identifies opportunities to regenerate the Market Area and substantially enhance the environmental quality of the Town Centre, focusing on the Broad Walk between the Market area and the Water Gardens to the south.

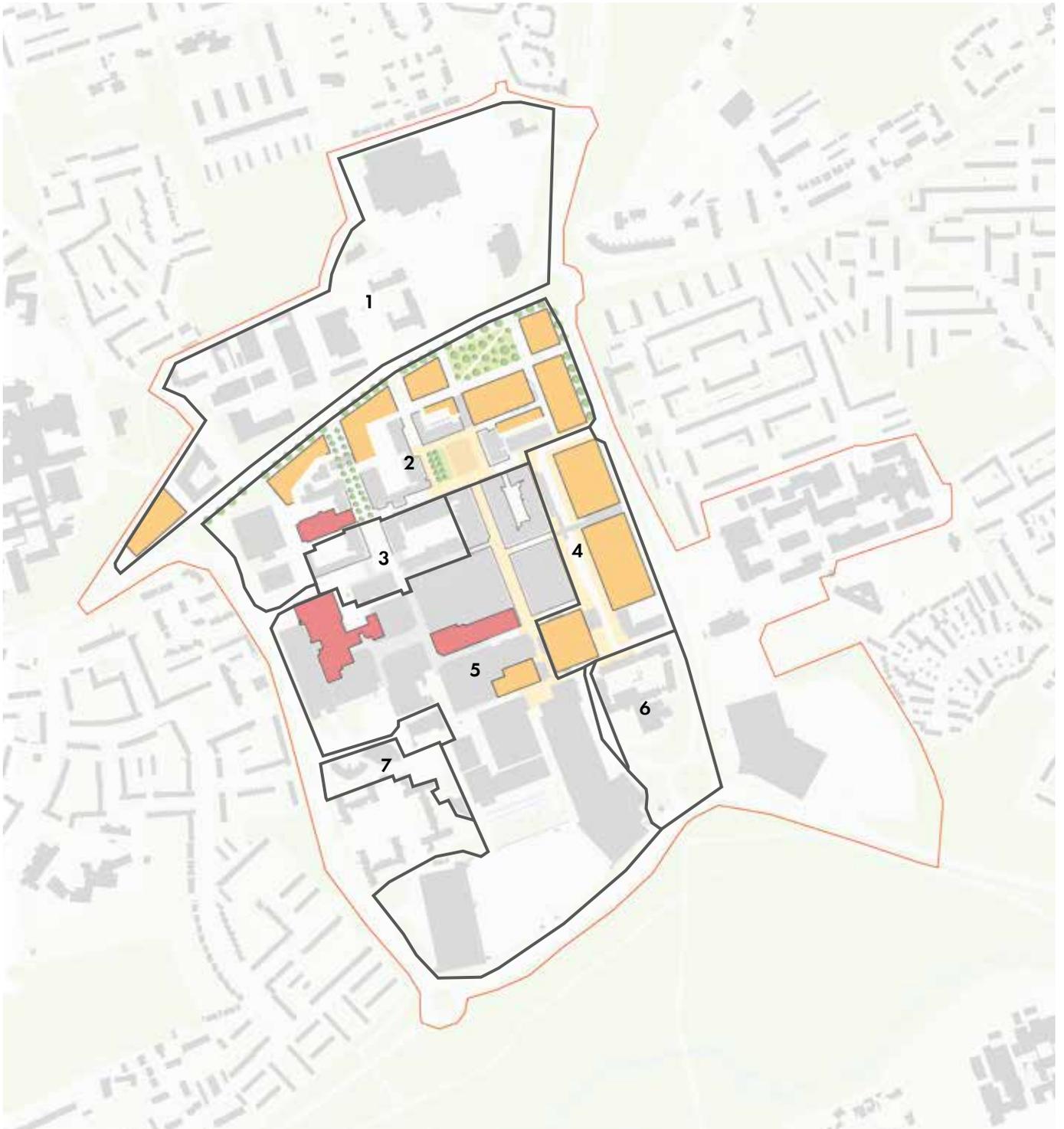
- New development is proposed for the post office site and the sites along the south side of Fourth Avenue, including the car park and the petrol station, to provide town centre homes and to accommodate commercial space (retail/office) to respond to longer term demand. These would present an active front to Fourth Avenue, providing a 'front door' to the town centre on approach from the station.
- A green open space is proposed, making use of the mature trees from the car park which was in Gibberd's original plan

- Replacement of the multi-storey car park on the east edge of the town centre with new development can front Velizy Avenue and change the character of the road. The bus station can be reconfigured with on-street bus stops and better links can be provided between Velizy Avenue and Broad Walk. This could be new homes, with options for commercial space.
- New development is proposed to replace Occasio House and wrap the southern end of the Harvey Centre. This can provide a 'front door' to the town from the west and a far better setting for St Paul's Church.

The table below shows how the options set out in chapter 6A relate to the opportunity areas (these are in addition to the development opportunities and public realm improvements proposed in the baseline scenario).

	Opportunity area	Commentary - potential uses / approach	Key themes / options in 6A
2. Town Centre North			
D	Post office	Ground floor retail, upper residential, fronting new green space	2.1, 4.1, 7.2, 8.2, 11.2, 11.3
D	Car park	Residential blocks fronting space and boulevard	7.2, 8.1, 8.2, 9.3, 11.2, 11.3, 11.5
D	Kitson way	Residential to replace petrol station / car park	7.2, 9.2, 11.2
D	Former cinema	Interior refurbishments for cultural use	6.4, 7.2, 7.3, 8.2, 10.1
P	Public green space	Retention of mature trees and direct pedestrian link	2.2, 3.1, 9.3, 11.5
4. Town Centre East			
D	Multi-storey car park	Mixed use blocks with reversion of some parking	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2, 11.3
D	Boots/New Look	Office to residential conversion, improvements to retail frontage	6.2, 7.2, 9.1
P	Bus station	Improved public realm - reconsider layout to minimise impact	2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 8.1, 11.5
5. Retail Core			
D	Library	Replacement with library/retail/residential uses	2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 7.2, 8.2, 9.2,
P	Broad Walk	Improved public realm	3.1, 6.2, 11.5

D = Development
P = Public realm



Opportunity areas

- 1. Wych Elm & Sainsbury's
- 2. Town Centre North
- 3. Harvey Centre North
- 4. Town Centre East
- 5. Retail Core
- 6. Public Sector
- 7. Town Centre West

-  **Town Centre boundary**
-  **Interior refurbishments**
-  **Mixed use blocks**
-  **Improved public realm**
-  **New green space**

HIGH INTERVENTION SCENARIO

Overview

Alongside medium and longer-term opportunities to bring forward other sites for Town Centre uses and residential growth, this scenario would establish a critical mass to consolidate the performance of the Town Centre within and beyond the plan period in combination with wider proposals for the strategic growth of Harlow.

- New development is proposed for the post office site and the sites along the south side of Fourth Avenue, including the car park and the petrol station, to provide town centre homes and to accommodate commercial space (retail/office) to respond to longer term demand. These would present an active front to Fourth Avenue, providing a 'front door' to the town centre on approach from the station.
- A green open space is proposed, making use of the mature trees from the car park which was in Gibberd's original plan.
- Development to the north of Fourth Avenue is proposed, to front the street and give it a boulevard character. This can provide new homes and possibly commercial space at ground floor. The

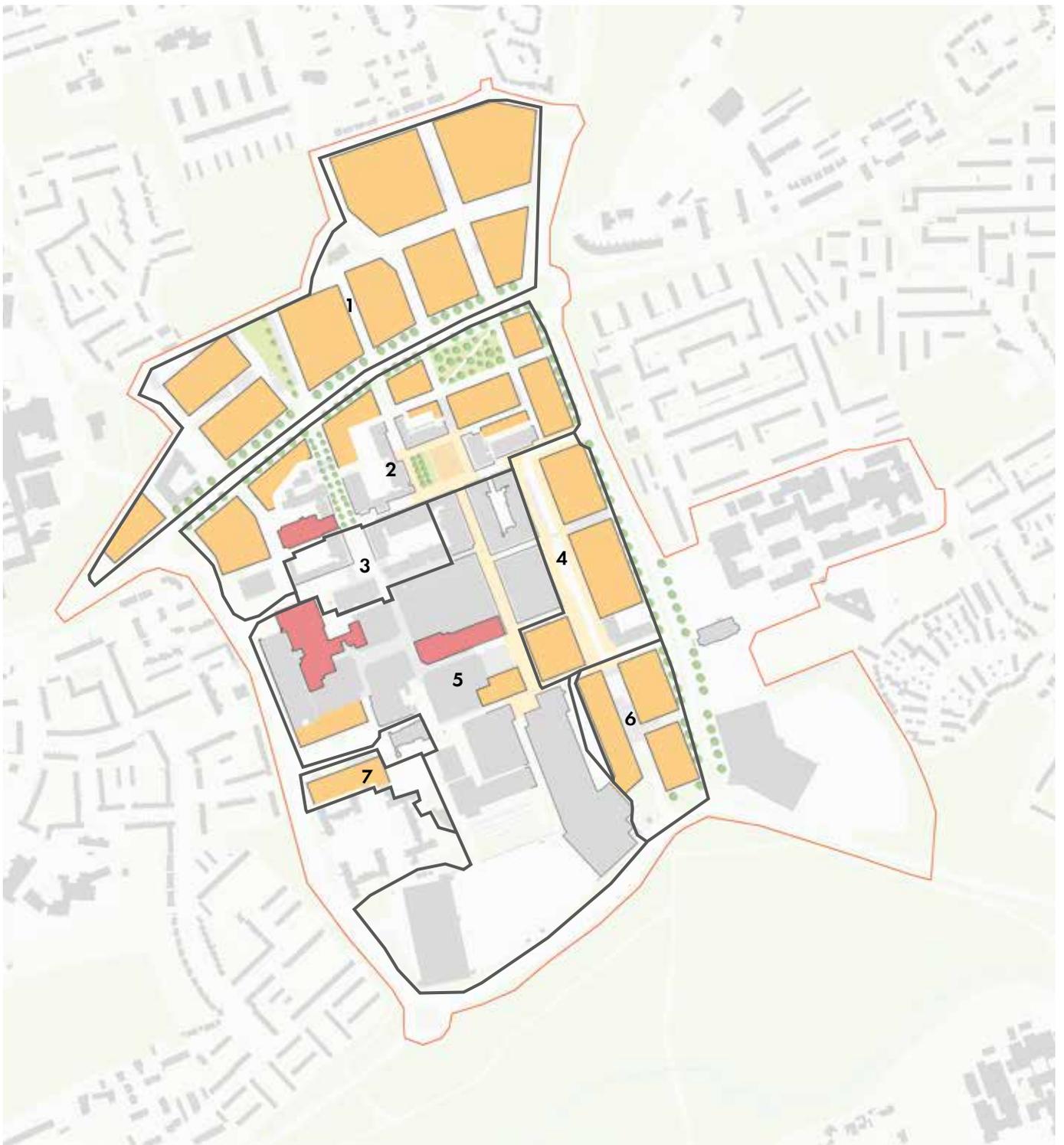
levels could be used here to provide a podium block with undercroft parking. Large footprint commercial space could allow for the supermarket to be reprovided with a footprint that more closely matches supermarket business models (smaller than the existing unit).

- Replacement of the multi-storey car park on the east edge of the town centre with new development can front Velizy Avenue and change the character of the road. The bus station can be reconfigured with on-street bus stops and better links can be provided between Velizy Avenue and Broad Walk. This could be new homes, with options for commercial space.
- New development is proposed to replace Occasio House and wrap the southern end of the Harvey Centre. This can provide a 'front door' to the town from the west and a far better setting for St Paul's Church.

The table below shows how the options set out in chapter 6A relate to the opportunity areas (these are in addition to the development opportunities and public realm improvements proposed in the medium intervention scenario).

	Opportunity area	Commentary - potential uses / approach	Key themes / options in 6A
1. Wych Elm & Sainsbury's			
D	Wych Elm car park area	Mixed use blocks, with reprovision of some uses	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2
D	Bus Depot / fire station area	Mixed use blocks, with reprovision of some uses	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2
D	Sainsburys area	Mixed use blocks	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, 8.2, 9.2, 10.2
P	Fourth Avenue	Boluevard	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
P	North of Fourth Avenue	New green space	2.2, 3.1
2. Town Centre North			
D	Multi-storey car park	Mixed use blocks with some parking reprovision	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2
P	Fourth Avenue	Boluevard	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
P	General area	Improved public realm / trees / greening	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
5. Retail Core			
D	College Gate car park edge	Mixed use blocks with active frontages	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.3, 9.2
6. Public Sector			
D	Police Station/Courts	Mixed use blocks with reprovision of some uses	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2
7. Town Centre West			
D	Occasio House	Residential blocks	2.1, 4.1, 6.2, 7.3, 8.2, 9.2

D = Development
P = Public realm



Opportunity areas

- 1. Wych Elm & Sainsbury's
- 2. Town Centre North
- 3. Harvey Centre North
- 4. Town Centre East
- 5. Retail Core
- 6. Public Sector
- 7. Town Centre West

-  **Town Centre boundary**
-  **Interior refurbishments**
-  **Mixed use blocks**
-  **Improved public realm**
-  **New green space**
-  **New crossings**

7

NEXT STEPS

Overview

Following the formal period of Regulation 18 consultation of the Issues and Options report, the Council will consider comments received in the round. Drawing on this feedback, and building on the “direction of travel” identified under each policy theme in chapter 6, the project team will prepare a full draft of the AAP for review with stakeholders and publication for statutory representations.

This will include more detailed principles and guidance for key sites and areas in the Town Centre including illustrative material as appropriate.

The representations will be collated alongside the AAP for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in advance of the Examination in Public and, subject to the incorporation of any modifications as directed by a Planning Inspector, Adoption.



Programme for preparation of the Area Action Plan

How to respond

The new Area Action Plan for Harlow Town Centre will contain Strategic Policies which provide overarching guidance and framework for the Town Centre, supported by Policies which provide more detailed planning guidance. The AAP is being prepared in accordance with national legislation and guidance, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance.

We are now consulting on the Issues and Options stage of the AAP which sets out an emerging direction of travel for the AAP. You can submit comments on this document at www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-policy

All comments must be submitted by 4pm on Friday 10 August 2018. Any comments received after this date will not be considered.

Comments can be submitted in one of the following ways:

- Using the **online consultation portal** - external website (recommended option)
- Complete the **representation form** (pdf) and post it to: **Forward Planning, Place Services, Harlow Council, Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1WG** or email it to **myharlow@harlow.gov.uk**. Copies of the representation form can be found on the website above, and hard copies are available in the Civic Centre reception; or
- Send an email or letter to the Council with the data consent form.

Important Notes

Please note that it is not possible for representations to be considered anonymously. You must include your name and address on any comment in order for it to be accepted.

For more information on how Harlow Council collect, use and protect personal information generally, please visit www.harlow.gov.uk/privacy-notice

**Regulation 19
Pre-submission
consultation**

WINTER 2018

**Submission of
Final Draft to
Inspector
and
Examination
in Public**

SPRING 2019

**Inspectors
report and
Adoption
of the Plan**

**SPRING /
SUMMER 2019**

APPENDIX

A. Heritage assessment

MARKET HOUSE

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. 1950s design associated with a Festival of Britain aesthetic. Ground floor retail and route through to the carpark. Upper floors office.

Approximate date of construction

1952 to 1960

Significant alterations

Little alteration to the external facade of the building, with the exception of the shopfronts onto the Market Square and service areas facing onto Post Office Road

Heritage significance

POSITIVE

Some heritage significance and significant townscape impact with a key facade onto the Market Square, visible from most of the Broad Walk

Listed Building

Not Listed



Market House, the Post Office and Adams House shortly after construction | *Harlow: The Story of a New Town*



View of Market House from Adams House shortly after construction
Harlow: The Story of a New Town



Facade on the Market Square



View looking south as approach from the underpass



Facade on the Market Square with little alteration to the windows and cladding on the upper floors



Route from the carpark into the Market Square

A. Heritage assessment

HARLOW POST OFFICE

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Royal Mail delivery and sorting office.

Approximate date of construction

1952 to 1960

Significant alterations

Little alteration to the external facade of the building.

Heritage significance

POSITIVE/NEUTRAL

Some heritage significance and neutral townscape impact

Listed Building

Not Listed





Facade and entrance onto the Market Square



Facade on the Market Square with little alteration to the windows and cladding on the upper floors



Sorting office to the rear of the main building, facing onto Post office Road



Original roof structure

A. Heritage assessment

ADAMS HOUSE

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Large clock on facade facing the Market Square with white and blue striped tiles. Ground floor retail upper floors office.

Approximate date of construction

1952 to 1960

Significant alterations

Shop fronts at ground floor pulled in front of colonnade which is visible in older photos

Heritage significance

POSITIVE

Some heritage significance and positive townscape impact

Listed Building

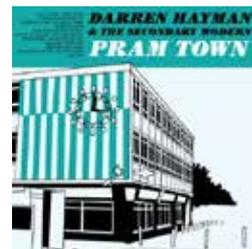
Not Listed



J R James Archive



Harlow: The Story of a New Town

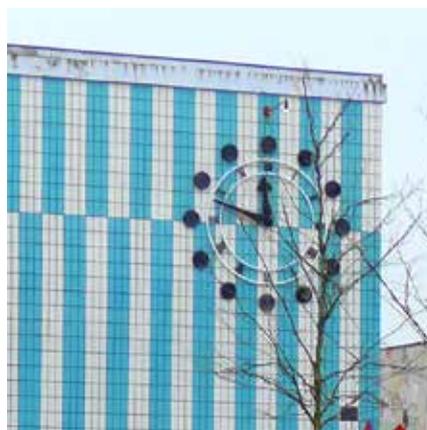




Facade on the Market Square



Facade on East Gate



Original clock face and tiled stripes



Residential building completed in the last 20 years to the rear of Adams House

A. Heritage assessment

12 EAST GATE

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Facade onto East Gate holds four crests. Ground floor bank upper floors residential.

Approximate date of construction

1952 to 1960

Significant alterations

Little alteration to the external facade of the building

Heritage significance

POSITIVE

Some heritage significance and positive townscape impact

Listed Building

Not Listed





Facade on the Market Square



A. Heritage assessment

THE ROWS

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Ground and first floor retail with connection to the roof of the market office. Upper floors residential.

Approximate date of construction

1952 to 1960

Significant alterations

No significant alterations, although generally in a poor state of repair

Heritage significance

NEGATIVE

Low heritage significance and a negative townscape impact

Listed Building

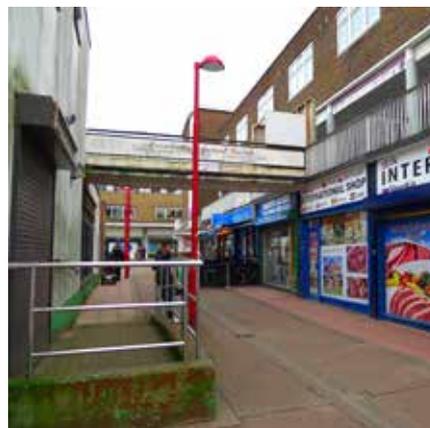
Not Listed



JR James Archive



Facade on the Market Square



View towards the Market Square with ground floor shop fronts

STONE CROSS HALL

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Ground and first floor retail with connection to the roof of the market office. The old Coyote Bar has undergone major renovation and is now operating as a restaurant.

Approximate date of construction

1952 to 1960

Significant alterations

No significant alterations, although generally in a poor state of repair

Heritage significance

NEGATIVE

Low heritage significance and a negative townscape impact

Listed Building

Not Listed



A. Heritage assessment

MARKET OFFICE

Description

Originally the site of a cafe and roof terrace, later replaced by the market office

Approximate date of construction

1960 to 1970

Significant alterations

Significant alterations to facade, steps onto roof removed, although generally in a poor state of repair

Heritage significance

NEUTRAL/NEGATIVE

Low heritage significance and a negative townscape impact

Listed Building

Not Listed



Harlow: The Story of a New Town



2 EAST GATE

Description

Originally housed Harlow Advice Centre, constructed in brown brick with a concrete colonnade

Approximate date of construction

1978

Significant alterations

Generally in a poor state of repair

Heritage significance

NEGATIVE

Low heritage significance and a negative townscape impact

Listed Building

Not Listed



A. Heritage assessment

BROAD WALK NE BLOCK

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Complete block serviced from the central area, shops at ground with office and storage above.

Approximate date of construction

1957 to 1966

Significant alterations

The buildings are generally in a poor state of repair

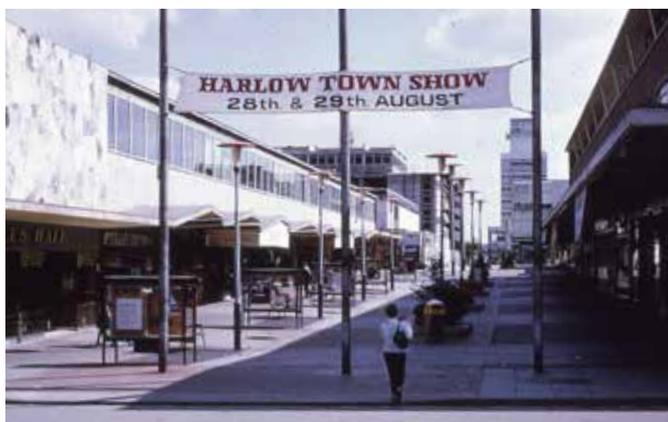
Heritage significance

NEUTRAL

The buildings have some qualities that should be retained if they are redeveloped such as the artistic merit of rhythm, patterns

Listed Building

Not Listed



JR James Archive





A. Heritage assessment

BROAD WALK NW BLOCK

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. Block serviced from the central area, shops at ground with office and storage above.

Approximate date of construction

1957 to 1966

Significant alterations

The buildings are generally in a poor state of repair

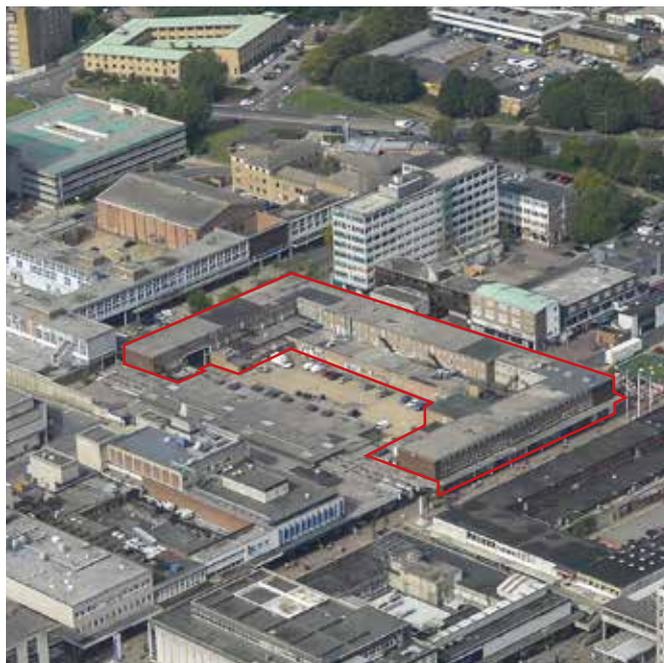
Heritage significance

NEUTRAL

The buildings have some qualities that should be retained if they are redeveloped such as the artistic merit of rhythm, patterns

Listed Building

Not Listed





A. Heritage assessment

GATEHOUSE

Description

Originally housed the head quarters for the Development Corporation.

Approximate date of construction

1963

Significant alterations

The buildings are generally in a poor state of repair

Heritage significance

NEUTRAL

The buildings have some qualities that should be retained if they are redeveloped.

Listed Building

Not Listed





A. Heritage assessment

ODEON CINEMA

Description

First cinema in Harlow

Approximate date of construction

1957 to 1966

Significant alterations

Large amount of internal alterations

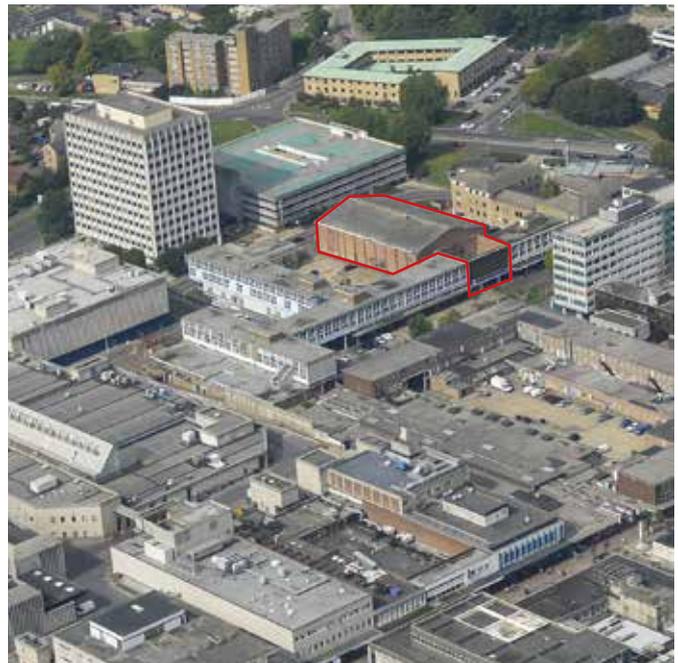
Heritage significance

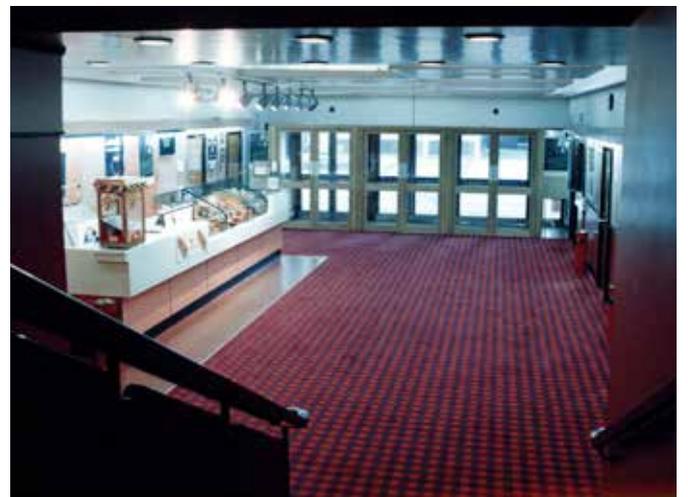
POSITIVE/NEUTRAL

Some heritage significance although in very poor state of repair

Listed Building

Not Listed





A. Heritage assessment

HARLOW LIBRARY

Description

Library on the ground floor, office and snooker club on first.

Approximate date of construction

1957 to 1966

Significant alterations

Extended in 1980 with a snooker club above. Since the building has lost many of the qualities of its original interior, and has also lost its setting which was previously open to the landscape south of the Town Centre.

Heritage significance

POSITIVE/NEUTRAL

Some heritage significance, although negatively impacted by the extent of internal alterations, and the scale and close proximity of adjacent development

Listed Building

Not Listed



J R James Archive



A. Heritage assessment

REDSTONE HOUSE

Description

One of the first buildings completed upon the closure of the development corporation. Retail at ground with offices above and large covered glazed area. Originally conceived to announce the end of the Broad Walk, the space between the building and the Library has now become a bottleneck.

Approximate date of construction

1985

Heritage significance

NEGATIVE

Negative impact on the southern end of the Broad Walk

Listed Building

Not Listed





A. Heritage assessment

ST PAULS HARLOW

Description

One of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan. A church designed by Derrick Humphreys.

"It is notable for its brightly coloured furnishings and a huge mosaic behind the altar by John Piper. An unusual feature of the church is its detached bell tower, which has an open-air pulpit facing a small paved area"

Approximate date of construction

1959

Significant alterations

Addition of block at the back of the church (east side)

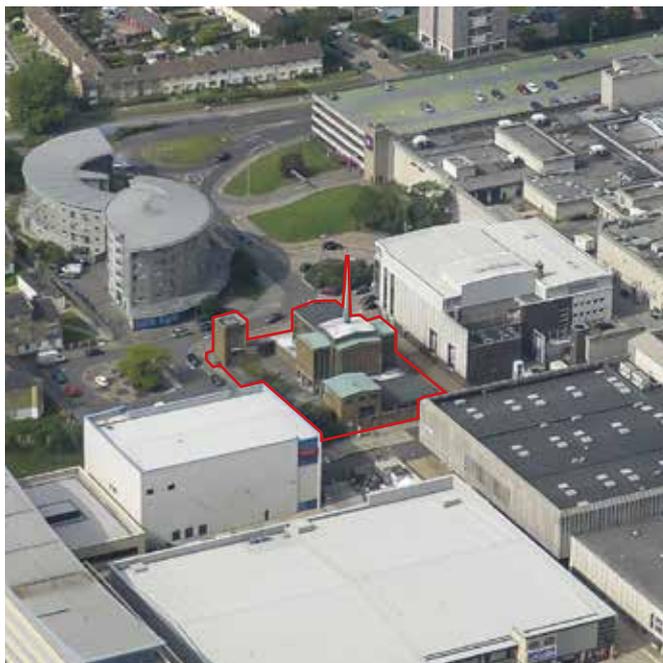
Heritage significance

POSITIVE

One of the most significant buildings in Harlow from a heritage perspective.

Listed Building

Grade II listed, and the only listed building in the Town Centre



Harlow: The Story of a New Town and J R James Archive



J R James Archive

A. Heritage assessment

HARLOW FOYER OCCASIO HOUSE

Description

Accommodation and services hub for young single homeless people with support needs.

Approximate date of construction

2001

Significant alterations

None

Heritage significance

NEGATIVE

Negative impact on the setting of St Pauls Church

Listed Building

Not listed





A. Heritage assessment

FORMER TOWN HALL- NOW DEMOLISHED

Description

The Town Hall was one of the first buildings to be completed from the Gibberd masterplan and was intended to reflect the civic intentions and confidence of the New Town. The building was constructed in 1959 and demolished in 2002.

It is included in the heritage assessment as a cautionary tale for future assessment of new development options and the buildings they may replace.

Whilst Britain's 1950s -1970s architecture has not been regarded with affection in the past, this has been in part due to the quality of materials used in some developments and in part due to the era being too close to view objectively.

Frederick Gibberd's Clock Tower at Chrisp Street Market was Grade II Listed in 2017 and Historic England published a book on the architect, town planner and landscape architect in November 2017.

Approximate date of construction

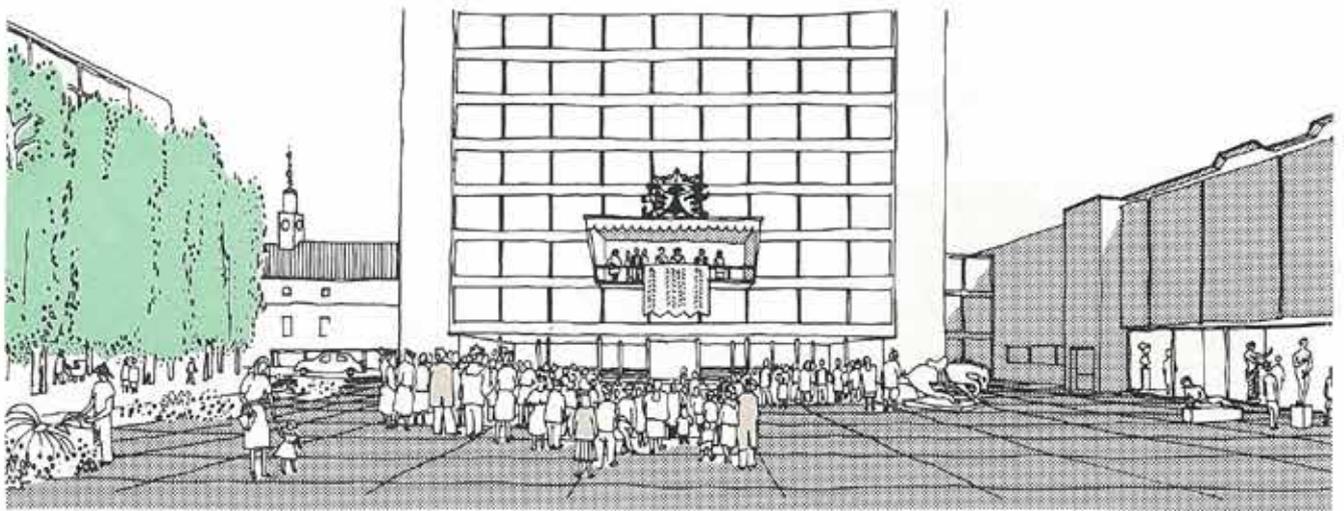
1959, demolished 2002

Listed Building

Not listed



Harlow: The Story of a New Town



Civic Square, sketch 1947

B. Stakeholder workshop summary

Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were commissioned by Harlow Council in July 2017 to prepare an Area Action Plan for Harlow Town Centre. As part of the work, a stakeholder workshop was facilitated in order to discuss opportunities for the Town Centre and to better understand the issues and options relating to its future growth and development. The workshop was held on Tuesday 10th October 2017 from 11-1pm in the Council Chamber at Harlow Civic Centre. 31 people attended, representing 15 organisations and groups.



Photos from the round table discussions

The workshop began with a presentation by the consultant team which provided a background to the work previously undertaken and contextual information about the Town Centre. Round table discussions followed, structured around three questions:

- What are the main issues?
- What approach should the AAP take to the following topics?
- Retail, leisure and evening economy
- Transport and movement
- Heritage and design
- Offices and commercial space
- Public realm
- Homes and community uses
- What are your priorities for key streets, spaces and sites?

Large worksheets were provided with space to write and draw comments. A representative from each table shared the main points discussed with the rest of the group at the end of the workshop. This report provides a summary of the comments made and will inform future work undertaken by the team to develop a set of options of Harlow Town Centre. There will be further opportunities for local people to comment on the Area Action Plan as part of the formal consultation in February and March next year.



B. Stakeholder workshop summary

What are the main issues?

Participants were asked what they felt were the main issues in Harlow Town Centre. These have been grouped and are summarised below.

Youth / evening – participants felt strongly that there are not enough bars and restaurants in the Town Centre to encourage people to go there. The consultant team should look to places like Hertford and Colchester which were given as examples of places with a successful night time economy. Young people aspire to leave Harlow as there is “nothing for them to do except go to the cinema and have McDonalds”. The lack of services and activities for young people may explain why some groups commented on the prevalent anti-social behaviour which impacts on services and should be managed. The aspiration to leave Harlow may be a result of a skills mismatch where the skills of the working population in Harlow do not match the jobs available in the Town Centre. Creating a mix of jobs is considered essential for growth.

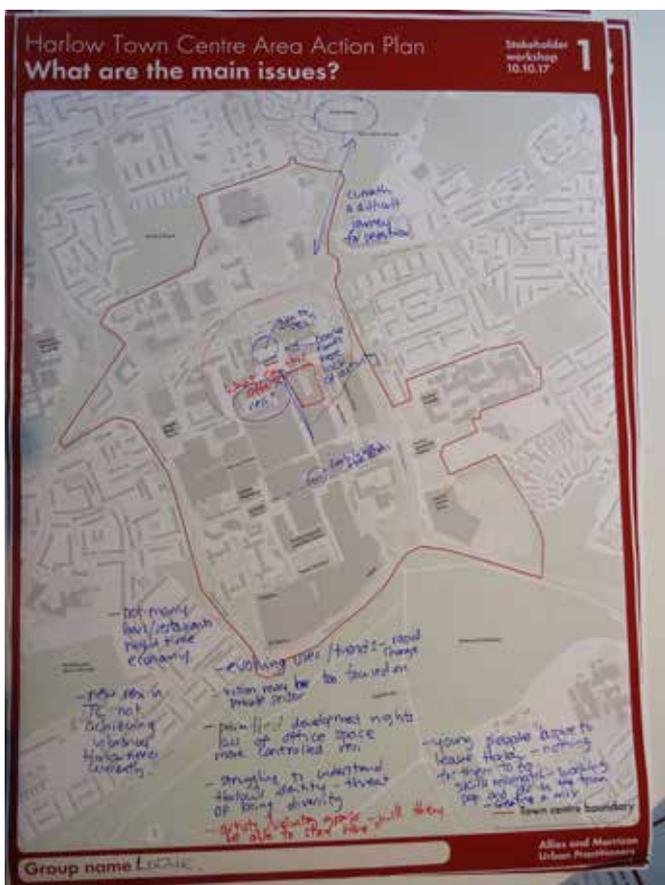
Vacancy – vacant buildings are an issue in and around Harlow and give an impression of an under-used and unloved place. Vacancy around Northbrooks Sports Ground is also an issue as it suffers from an edge / out of town position. Growth in the Town Centre could help with this.



Office and residential – one group felt that new residential developments in the Town Centre are currently not achieving the vibrancy Harlow needs. This is coupled with concerns that permitted development rights have led to the conversion of offices to residential which has often been unregulated and hard to manage. This has led to issues around design quality, the provision of social infrastructure alongside residential development, parking and amenity space. Residential growth is considered necessary but new homes should be delivered in a controlled way.

Public realm and connections – entering the Town Centre from the north and east is currently unpleasant with few connections characterised by a poor environment. The roads around the Town Centre act as a barrier between the Town Centre and nearby neighbourhoods, for example Velizy Avenue to the east feels isolated. One group agreed that the public realm – including structures and streets, as well as historic buildings, need improving throughout. For example, the pathways around the Library should be opened up to improve connections and attendees feel the bus station is currently unattractive and acts as a wind tunnel. There is also a lack of green space in the Town Centre.





Identity – one group discussed the struggle to understand Harlow’s identity and the threat of losing its diversity. There is currently a negative perception of Harlow Town Centre. One group discussed how Gibberd’s mid-century architecture and story needs to be celebrated, but that there should be a review of the areas that are not working to improve the identity and perception of the Town Centre. This review should consider the evolving uses within the Town Centre and future retail trends.

Inclusivity of growth – discussions focused around the north / south divide in the Town Centre and how attention must be turned towards the north of the town which often gets neglected. Another tension is between the private and public sector and how to ensure inclusive growth. One respondent commented that the vision may be too focused on the private sector. There is a concern that artists and voluntary groups may be forced out of the Town Centre as it develops.

Barriers to development – stakeholders are generally enthusiastic about enabling development in the Town Centre. One group mentioned the barriers to development which are often hidden, for example issues around management and conversion of offices to residential use. The different interests of multiple landowners and the Council may also be unnecessarily preventing changes in the Town Centre which could be an issue. There are supposedly 97 land owners in the Town Centre and St. Albans is a good example of how the problems associated with multiplicity of ownerships can be overcome to achieve a successful and thriving town.



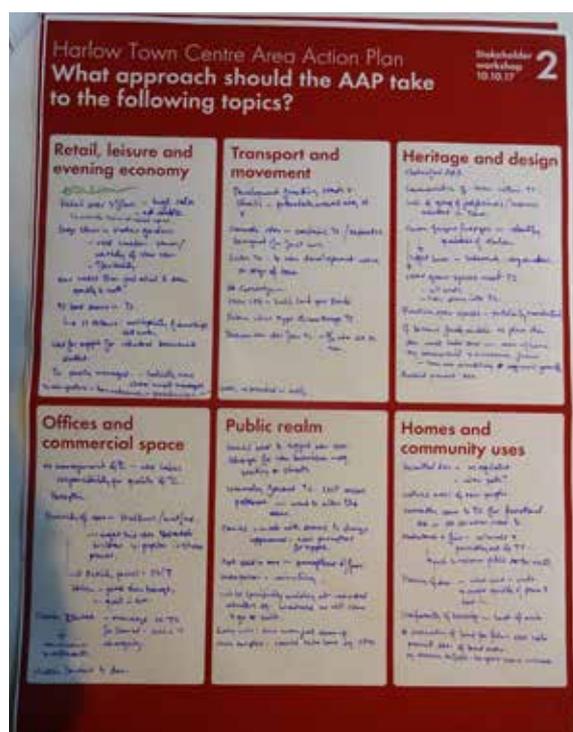
B. Stakeholder workshop summary

What approach should the AAP take to the following topics?

Retail, leisure and evening economy – Currently there are large stores in Water Gardens. The Town Centre AAP should promote a more diversified retail offer that reflects changing trends, for example a variety of store sizes including smaller stores. Support for small independent businesses should also be promoted in the AAP. Flexibility needs to be built into design so that the Town Centre can adapt to future retail trends. Retail that spans across three floors has high rates and offers too much retail space so is considered not viable. Although the retail offer is important for the success of the Town Centre, more is needed to draw gravity northwards to the area around Market Square. The AAP should consider how to rebalance the north with the south of the Town Centre, and it could be that qualities lost in the south at Water Gardens could be reprovided in the north. A farmers market in Market Square could attract people here. The shopping experience could be improved if the Town Centre is better managed and the public realm was clean and tidy. The Town Centre has suffered from the loss of big retailers i.e. M&S and BHS and people are concerned the loss of Asda or Tesco will have a big impact on the Town Centre. Attendees are keen for Sainsbury's to stay.

The leisure offer in Harlow Town Centre could be enhanced. One question that was put forward was whether there is capacity for desirable leisure activities in Harlow, like The Square? Some groups felt that the art and cultural offer in Harlow Town Centre is unclear, and there is a tension with its proximity to the cultural offer in London which could be seen both as a strength of the Town and a hindrance. The culture of Harlow could be better promoted with clear communication of ideas within the Town Centre. St. Alban's is considered a good example of how people are visiting St Albans for its buildings, unsung assets, listed sculptures and buildings.

Currently, the Town Centre is not widely used in the evening and there is a perception of fear that is discouraging people from spending time there. It was felt that evening uses should definitely be encouraged in the AAP to ensure a thriving and safe Town Centre. A greater cultural offer as well as better connections to the Town Centre including access for cars was considered a positive step to achieve this. Some commented that The Square which closed down needs a new home. A recent spin-off to The Square is Club Foot Harlow, which launched in May this year at Burnt Mill Academy. It is a community live performance venue which offers events for all ages. A new Turkish restaurant is opening at Birdcage Walk which also shows a positive sign of investment in the Town Centre's evening economy.



Transport and movement – There was general consensus that better connections to the Town Centre are essential for its success. Priority is currently given to cars, which has resulted in an inward looking Town Centre with a concrete collar which separates it from nearby neighbourhoods. Sustainable transport corridors will be vital to open up the Town Centre and create more integration with surrounding areas, including existing residential neighbourhoods, new development on the Town Centre edge, and links to the rail station. Participants felt that new development should front roads and streets, particularly around the ring road, to create activity.

There was a desire for the AAP to encourage more frequent, reliable and accessible public transport. The quality and frequency of north-south connections are considered particularly poor at the moment and the Post Office buildings are important for considering better connections from the north. An intuitive and frequent (suggested every 10 minutes) rapid bus transit service would encourage more people to use buses. It was also suggested a shuttle bus from the rail station to the Town Centre would be positive. The bus station fulfils an important local and inter-urban role but needs improving. One suggestion is for the bus station to be replaced with a drop off / pick up only set-up.

For improvements to transport and movement in the Town Centre, there needs to be an assumption of pedestrian priority in the AAP. Improved crossings at grade are supported, especially across Velizy Avenue to link the college with the Town Centre, along Fourth Avenue and Haydens Road. Some underpasses do work, but there is support for adequate at grade



crossings which are obvious and clear. Some groups support the idea for timed or limited access for cars through the Town Centre as this is considered positive for the evening economy, making it safer for people to spend time there. However, others were uncertain about opening East Gate and West Gate to cars because of concerns that it will act as a further barrier that divides the north of the Town Centre from the south. As the town grows, parking will become a greater issue and so the AAP needs to consider this. Provision of car parking as well as car parking charges should be reviewed. The AAP should consider car clubs and cycling as a way of reducing car usage. One group raised the issue of inadequate cycle routes to the Town Centre and it is supported that Harlow needs to be more cycle friendly.

B. Stakeholder workshop summary

What approach should the AAP take to the following topics?

Heritage and design – Harlow Town Centre has a unique design heritage that is currently not well promoted. A major asset of Harlow is its identity as a Sculpture Town – this needs to be protected through the management and maintenance of historic buildings. To encourage investment in Harlow, the Town Centre needs ‘sprucing up’ and there is a great opportunity for the refurbishment/retrofit of existing buildings. A sculpture strategy will help bring different art, design and heritage elements of the Town Centre together into a holistic framework for conservation and enhancement. One group spoke of how art must be embedded in design of the Town Centre.

Its mid-century heritage also constitutes the town’s identity – it was noted that there is a tension between the pioneers of the town vs. others from Hertfordshire, for example Bishops Stortford. Other identity threads were suggested, for example media and science.

The AAP should provide information about which buildings might have guidance so land owners know and can be sensitive to the design and heritage of their buildings.

Offices and commercial space – One group spoke about the collaboration potential between private sector and third sector organisations. There was a concern that voluntary organisations need office space in the Town Centre and so it was suggested that businesses could let out space for voluntary groups. Similarly, community buildings (for example Harlow Library) could host and support small start-ups. There should be flexible spaces and solutions for start ups, and the AAP should consider shared spaces, co-working, business hubs and hot desking in the Town Centre.

Collaborative working could also work to improve viability. Viability was perceived to be a significant issue. Questions around achieving viability, how office space will be delivered, and how much intervention from the Council there should be were also raised. The Town Centre needs to be made really attractive to businesses and the AAP should take a positive strategy towards providing office space. Cooperating with the Enterprise Zone is beneficial, as well ensuring management of the quality of the Town Centre so that the perception of the area changes. The AAP should look to positive examples elsewhere, for example Watford and St. Albans, where diversifying uses has led to a thriving Town Centre. There were also questions around a Business Improvement District (BID) for Harlow Town Centre and whether there had been any early discussions about this.

Public realm – Many of the discussions focused around public realm improvements to Market Square and ensuring active uses around it. There were suggestions that it could be a green space with cafés and restaurants around the edge which supports the principle to unify the north with the south of Harlow Town Centre and increase green open spaces within it. Another idea was for a bandstand in Market Square. Other attendees questioned whether Market Square was the right name for the space or whether it was unhelpful and misleading.

It was felt that the public realm along Broad Walk could be updated, and one group discussed how small changes to the public realm could really improve its quality. For example, visual cues such as lighting would help to create a focal point.

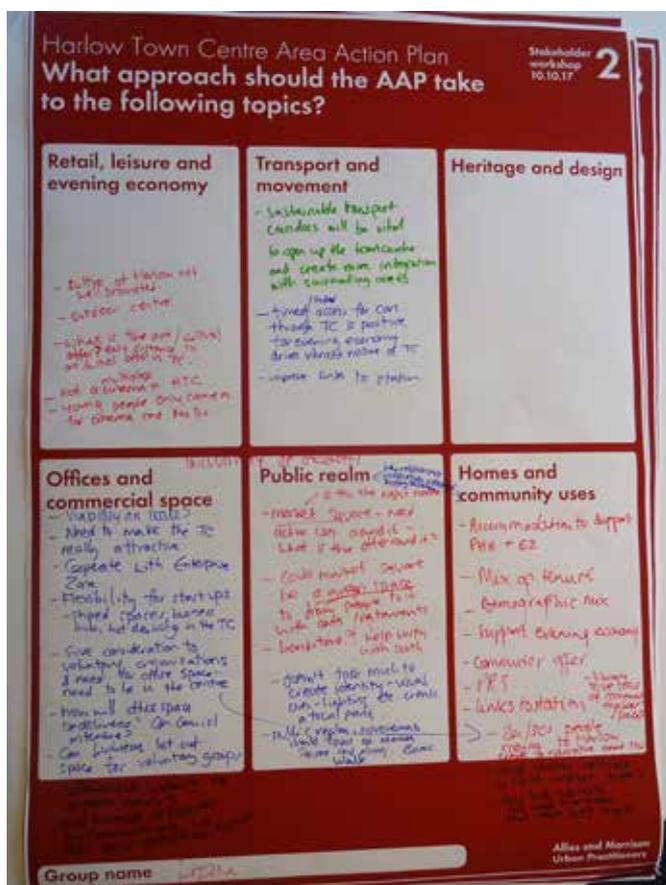
Improvements could be carried out to make better use of the roundabouts. Attendees gave examples of Lea Bridge roundabout and Clapton Pond which has bus stops and trees. Other routes and spaces could also be strengthened - the underpasses are currently uninviting and so opportunities should be sought to improve these. Some areas require small changes, and so the AAP should identify these as quick wins.

It was felt that the Council will need to take the lead on more complex issues, for example compulsory purchase orders (CPOs).

Greening Harlow was also a popular topic of discussion. People felt a special quality of Harlow is its distinct green fringes and wedges and there is a question as to how to draw these green spaces into the Town Centre. One group discussed how residential developments should front open spaces and green roofs should be encouraged. Green roofs provide insulation, are sustainable and give better views from taller buildings.

Improvements to the public realm need to be linked with opportunities to celebrate sculpture; however the costs of maintaining the public realm to a high standard should also be considered. The Council need to support new uses and changes for new businesses to make the Town Centre more attractive e.g. seating on streets. This requires collaboration with owners to change the appearance of the public realm, as well as establishing principles for support. However, it is important that the public realm is not so linked with particular businesses that public spaces are unable to adapt. For example, improvements should not focus on improving the sense of arrival to individual retailers e.g. Waitrose, as retailers come and go as they suit.

Homes and community uses – It was clear from the round table discussions that homes should be of mixed tenure and affordable to encourage a demographic mix. This will contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the Town Centre that emanates from a diverse population. It was suggested that people use the Town Centre solely for functional use and



B. Stakeholder workshop summary

What are your priorities for key streets, spaces and sites?

only when people need to. Accommodation in the centre will support the Enterprise Zone and Public Health England (PHE), as well as enliven the evening economy and support shops. There are already many people in their 20s/30s moving from London to Harlow and this should be encouraged. The Town is well placed to have a commuter draw, and improved links to the train station would help encourage this. Housing should not be uniform but be of the highest quality design that reflects Harlow's best design heritage.

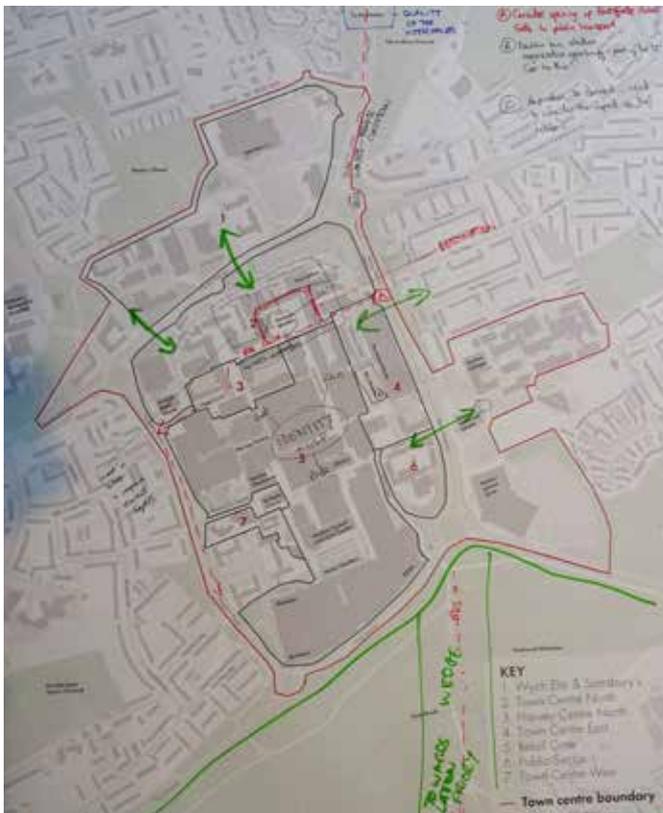
There were concerns about permitted development rights that have led to the conversion of offices to residential in the Town Centre. People are particularly concerned that this is currently unregulated and its management lacks a coherent approach.

Some attendees spoke about the Library and suggested its relocation to Market Square – a focus for the community that could re-balance the Town Centre. This evolved into a discussion about a 'Civic Hub' at the north of the Town Centre which could draw the focal point northwards. However, it was felt that for this to be successful, the Civic Hub would need to be a place that people wanted to go to, rather than needed to go to. It was also suggested that the ambulance and fire services could possibly relocate out of the Town Centre.

Much of the discussion to this question overlapped with the previous two worksheet questions. A key reflection was that sites should not be safeguarded for long periods of time and interventions should be phased so that sites are developed as soon as possible. There was a concern that safeguarding land for future uses could prevent the development of land now, for example Hunsdon Airfield which has been disused for 40 years.

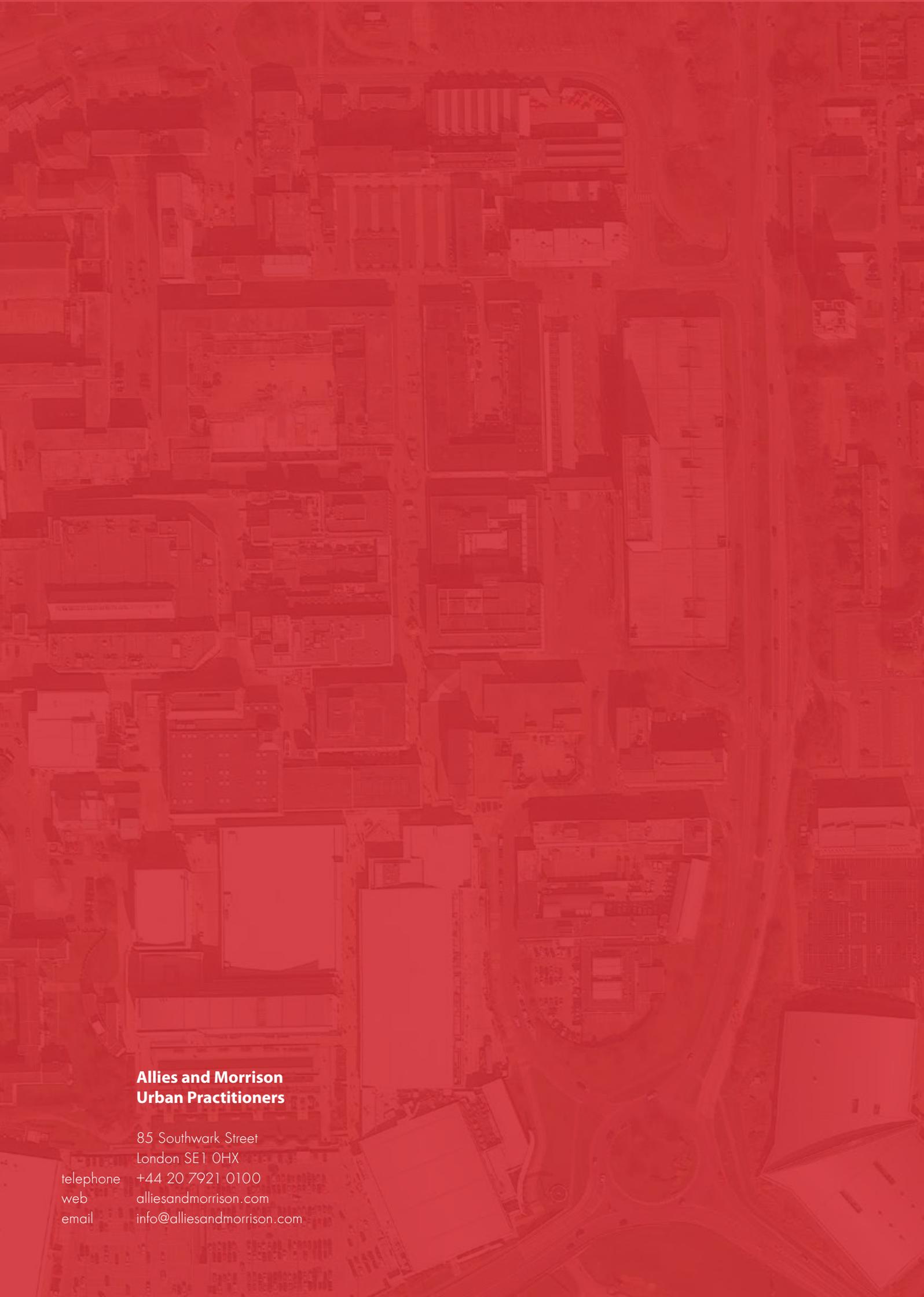
Other points are summarised below:

- Consider opening up East Gate / West Gate to public transport to support the evening economy;
- Review the opportunity to regenerate the bus station and improve the rail station interchange to encourage sustainable modes of transport;
- Aspire to connect Harlow University Centre, Crown Gate and the Town Centre and consider the impact this will have on the road network;
- Invest in sites, for example improve Market Square and make it the destination; and
- Build on Harlow's unique identity and USP – proposals should respond positively to the past, encourage pride in the place as it currently exists and encourage optimism towards future opportunities.



Conclusion – The workshop presented an opportunity for stakeholders to have their say about the issues and options for Harlow Town Centre. The main issues identified related to the lack of evening, leisure and cultural activities; the conversion of offices to residential; poor and infrequent connections to the Town Centre; and a concern that safeguarding land for future uses could prevent the development of land now. It was felt that growth must be inclusive and all-encompassing, taking into account the interests of everyone, including third sector / voluntary organisations. Proposals should build on Harlow’s mid-century design heritage, as well as its identity as a Sculpture Town. There are opportunities to foster a sense of pride in the Town Centre as it exists today and to encourage optimism for its future redevelopment.

The discussions and comments made are of great value and will help to inform the preparation of the draft AAP. There will be further opportunity to comment on the revised document early next year.



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