

**Hartlepool Borough Council/One NorthEast**

## Central Area Investment Framework

Stage 2 Report - Investment Framework

July 2008



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## Central Area Investment Framework

Stage 2 Report - Investment Framework

July 2008

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and purpose of the report

The project team has been commissioned to develop an Investment Framework for Hartlepool Central Area that will identify key regeneration priorities and set out a mechanism for their implementation. The Central Area extends beyond the core Town Centre (as defined in the Local Plan) and is identified in Appendix I. The work will also support the development of the Local Development Framework, identifying key opportunities to attract both public and private sector investment development activity.

The project team comprises the following mix of disciplines, which reflect the key issues to be addressed within the framework strategy:

- GENECON LLP – lead consultant focusing on economic and regeneration drivers and leading development of overall strategy;
- Drivers Jonas– providing specialist property market advice;
- Gillespies – providing urban and landscape architecture design advice;
- JMP – providing specialist transportation consultancy support; and,
- JK Property Consultants LLP- advising on local market issues and strategic delivery options.

This Stage 2 report develops the findings of the Stage 1 Key Issues paper (May 2008) and an overview of the Stage 1 report is presented in Section 2. It identified a range of emerging projects which could underpin policy and strategic objectives set out in the Investment Framework. The consultancy team has developed and refined these projects further in Stage 2 with a view to establishing a clear framework/action plan to guide future public and private sector activity in the Central Area.

## 1.2 Summary progress to date

Stage 1 comprised an intensive period of consultation, information and market analysis and site assessment. This research has been developed in Stage 2 focusing on key stakeholder consultations and development of the projects which had emerged and been agreed with the client team in Stage 1. A brief outline of the Stage 2 methodology is presented below:

- *Consultations* - a full list of consultees for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 is presented in Appendix II, reflecting the range of key public and private stakeholders agreed with the client team. Where appropriate the team has followed up stage 1 consultations with a subsequent discussion in Stage 2;
- *Site visits and physical/urban analysis* - the project team has visited Hartlepool on a regular basis to consider key sites and potential investment opportunities;
- *Site option analysis:*
  - *Design analysis* – a number of designs have been developed and considered for key sites in the Central Area including key aspects of public realm;
  - *Market analysis* – the market potential of key sites has been assessed taking into account the potential for attracting key occupiers/end users and the potential for public sector intervention/investment in the sites.
- *Steering Group consultations* - a number of steering group team meetings have taken place to review and discuss the issues emerging, and analyse potential project



options for identified sites, drawing together the design and market option analysis; and,

- *Action Plan development* – the team has developed a schedule of actions required to move forward the identified projects, to assist the client team in prioritising activity.

### 1.3 Report structure

An outline of the report structure is presented below. The report focuses on the development and analysis of the key overarching projects which emerged from Stage 1.

- Section 2 – *Summary of Key Issues Paper* – provides an overview of the headline findings of the Stage 1 report including key drivers and objectives for the Investment Framework from an economic, property market, design and access perspective;
- Section 3 – *Strategic Approach* – summarises the underlying approach adopted in developing the Investment Framework reflecting the scale and ambition of Hartlepool;
- Section 4 – *Innovation and Skills Quarter* – building on the findings of Stage 1, this section develops the concept of a distinctive new quarter in the Central Area;
- Section 5 – *Town Centre Retail and Commercial* – analyses town centre retail policy, providing recommendations for protecting the retail core and identifies issues relating to the Middleton Grange shopping centre;
- Section 7 – *Marina and Harbour* – identifies potential options for bringing forward key sites in this priority area;
- Section 8 – *Connections* – identifies the opportunities for enhancing legibility across the Central Area and ‘stitching together’ the priority projects described above; and
- Section 9 – *Next Steps* – provides a clear schedule of actions required to take forward the projects identified in the earlier sections.

## 2 Summary of Key Issues paper

### 2.1 Introduction

This section provides an executive summary of the findings from the stage 1 report, which established the key challenges, drivers and objectives underpinning the emergence of key projects. Briefly, Stage 1 comprised:

- ❑ an intensive period of consultation with a series of public and private sector stakeholders;
- ❑ document/information and strategy analysis;
- ❑ a commercial property market review to establish the demand and supply position of the Central Area;
- ❑ site visits and physical/urban analysis;
- ❑ project team assessments to review and discuss the findings, to draw these together into a composite strategy /approach and agree on priority projects;
- ❑ client group meetings culminating in a presentation by the project team and completion of the draft Stage 1 report; and
- ❑ detailed consideration by the Council's Executive Management team, culminating in agreement to progress to Stage 2 on the basis of the agreed Stage 1 report.

#### 2.1.1 *The Central Area context*

Hartlepool is one of five key urban centres within the Tees Valley sub-region and therefore has an important role in driving economic growth and enhancing GVA at the regional level. The Regional Economic Strategy identifies the Tees Valley City Region as underperforming against national and regional performance, making it a strategic priority for regeneration investment.

Hartlepool is the key urban centre (population - 91,400<sup>1</sup>) within the 'Coastal Arc' sub-regional strategy. This identifies Hartlepool's regeneration focus as the Quays area which comprises the Marina, the Central Area, the Headland and the flagship regeneration site at Victoria Harbour. Victoria Harbour is one of five transformational projects in the sub-region, being progressed by the URC Tees Valley Regeneration immediately to the north of Central Area, and is a hugely significant proposition for the town, which will have a range of major impacts. Current proposals include over 3,000 new homes and 57,000 sqm of office floorspace. To the south of the Central Area, the Southern Business Zone (SBZ) is the industrial corridor and major employment generator for Hartlepool, incorporating fifteen of the nineteen industrial/business parks in the Borough. It comprises an area of 170 ha and is the location for a diverse range of business types ranging from heavy industry to retail and office accommodation. A plan illustrating the location of the town centre with the adjacent major economic drivers is presented in Appendix III.

The Central Area therefore has a key spatial role and responsibility - it not only incorporates the core commercial and retail area of the town but also represents the link between the largely industrial/employment investment proposed for the SBZ by the public sector and the 'flagship' mixed use opportunities being promoted by the URC at Victoria Harbour.

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<sup>1</sup> Nomis, 2007 mid-population estimates

### 2.1.2 **An overview of the local economy**

Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) commissioned ERS to undertake a comprehensive economic analysis of the town (March 2008). A summary of the headline findings are presented below:

#### **ERS 2008 headline findings**

- ❑ The visitor economy and the retail sector show potential to be a major economic driver for the town and wider sub-region. The value of the visitor economy has more than doubled since 1997 from £22m to £44m.
- ❑ Distribution, hotels and restaurants have seen large increases in numbers employed. Hotels and restaurant sectors have been strong drivers of employment growth.
- ❑ Growth in GVA and employment is expected across the service sector with Distribution, hotels and restaurants showing particularly positive trends.
- ❑ The growth in retail has been strong in both specialised and non-specialised retail activity and further growth is projected forward.
- ❑ Human health activities have consistently employed large numbers within Hartlepool with upward trend projected forward.
- ❑ The financial sector is underrepresented in Hartlepool but has shown strong growth since 2003 and strong growth is projected forward.
- ❑ Within the Central Area a combination of further retail, leisure and education investments offer the prospect of accelerated growth if certain barriers related to such factors as land assembly, limited accommodation and poor connectivity can be overcome.

The economic analysis provides important rationale when developing a role and function for the Central Area. It clearly highlights the importance of the tourism sector to the local economy and suggests that alongside the visitor economy, wider service sector related employment including retail and financial services represent the key growth sectors in Hartlepool. In spite of these positive economic attributes, ERS note that Hartlepool faces significant socio-economic challenges - ranking as the 23<sup>rd</sup> most deprived of England's 354 Local authorities according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007) and has the highest rate of working age population without qualification in the sub-region.

## 2.2 **Key property market issues**

Drivers Jonas undertook a review of the local property market which indicated that Hartlepool sits within a 'sub-market' comprising Stockton on Tees, South Durham and Middlesbrough. One of the key challenges for the Hartlepool property market is how to attract investment from outside the sub-region and complement larger centres such as Middlesbrough and Darlington. Key market conclusions/recommendations from Stage 1 include:

- ❑ there is a distinct lack of quality business space or quality retailing opportunities within the centre of Hartlepool, which is diverting investment/demand to other competing locations. In recent years within Hartlepool, the overwhelming majority of investment has been made at the Marina or in the SBZ;
- ❑ in particular, there is a shortage of supply of good quality office space for SMEs. There is an opportunity for the provision of high-quality, small-scale office floorspace to encourage growth of indigenous businesses and attract SMEs;
- ❑ a key constraint in the Central Area is a lack of available viable development sites. The viability of development could be significantly improved by public sector

investment in enabling works, such as site assembly and public realm improvements or remediation of ground conditions;

- work will be required to create a favourable planning framework to allow such sites to come forward and provide confidence to the private sector of the regeneration priorities and potential focus of public investment. This could include a 'Central Area' Area Action Plan as part of the Local Development Framework process;
- the fragmented retail offer generated by the edge of town retail parks also undermines the performance of the primary shopping area. Although a number of the retail parks lie within the Central Area it is important that the town centre/primary shopping area is better protected through strengthening planning policy. A strong retail core will help to underpin a sustainable Central Area; and,
- the need for improved linkages for both vehicular and pedestrian flows throughout the Central Area is clear, in order to improve access and marketability. This could include enhancements to Stockton Street to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment and improvements to linkages and the public realm more widely, in a co-ordinated way.

## 2.3 Key design and access issues

The economic/market aspirations for the Central Area, identified in the previous section, need to be underpinned by urban design and access considerations. Resolving environmental issues and capitalising on environmental assets will be critical to creating an environment which is attractive to all Central Area users – residents, businesses/employees and visitors.

Given the importance of the visitor economy to the town and therefore the Central Area, as set out in the ERS analysis, access, movement and design/aesthetics are absolutely fundamental to attracting visitors and repeat visitors. These issues must therefore not be viewed in isolation but as integral to developing the local economy and attracting private sector investment.

The key design/access issue relates to the connectivity across the Central Area. Hartlepool has a compact Central Area and the main transport hubs, the shopping areas, the employment zones, the tourist attractions and the educational facilities are generally grouped together in and around the Central Area. To take maximum advantage of these physical characteristics, connections between the various land uses therefore should be good and should promote a cohesive sustainable transport system, easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. However, **connectivity within the Central Area is poor** despite the fact that it is a relatively compact area. Stockton Street and York Road form formidable barriers due to the volumes of traffic they carry, and the railway line forms an east-west barrier dividing the Marina from the town centre.

Additional design/access issues identified in Stage 1 include:

- **Gateways** – there is major shortage of gateway features at the entry points to Hartlepool. Hartlepool United Football Club and the Millhouse Leisure Centre site is a key gateway from the north, while Stranton Roundabout is considered as the gateway to the Central Area when approaching from the south. At Stranton, there is an opportunity to create a high quality gateway with an increased element of public realm focusing on the Church and stretching up to the Co-op building, incorporating the Fire station and the Burbank Street land. This could incorporate any proposals that may emerge for redevelopment of the Stranton Fire station frontage. The streetscape along this arterial route will also be improved through the firm proposals

for redevelopment of the current Hartlepool College building and the potential improvements that could be made to the Middleton Grange shopping centre façade.

- ❑ **Car Parks** – as car parks are often a visitor's first and last experience of Hartlepool, it is imperative that they are attractive, well lit and have good pedestrian facilities within and to them; and,
- ❑ **Signage** - navigation in and around the Central Area is essential for people unfamiliar with Hartlepool to encourage link trips within the Central Area, thus avoiding unnecessary additional vehicular movements.

## 2.4 Summary of drivers and objectives

### 2.4.1 *Economic and property market drivers*

The Central Area Investment Framework (CAIF) is being developed to support the growth of the priority sectors identified in the ERS report and to capitalise on the town's asset base.

#### *Overriding objective*

- ❑ diversify and enhance the Central Area's economic base by attracting and retaining a range of 'higher value' employers which will generate sustainable employment opportunities for local people. This would contribute towards improving sub-regional and regional GVA levels, and will also encourage the formation and growth of small businesses indigenous to this town.

#### *Key challenges*

- ❑ capitalise on planned and potential investment in new education facilities to help enhance and diversify the local skills base;
- ❑ target small businesses/SMEs and growing the indigenous business base through provision of appropriate office premises and business infrastructure and support provision;
- ❑ develop key sectoral strengths, in particular the visitor economy, by reinforcing the existing asset base and enhancing service provision (The Marina; Retail; and Leisure/hotel uses) and Town Centre indoor shopping improvements;
- ❑ generate private sector development activity through enabling investment in key sites and the utilisation of the public sector asset base; and,
- ❑ capitalise on continued business activity/investment in the SBZ and emerging proposals at Victoria harbour.

### 2.4.2 *Design and access drivers*

#### *Overriding objective*

- ❑ create an attractive and integrated Central Area which will improve the experience for all users and assist in attracting businesses and visitors to support the development of a diverse and sustainable economy.

#### *Key challenges*

- ❑ focus regeneration initiatives around the Church Street/Surtees Area by reconnecting and revitalising the historic core and developing the existing urban grain and high quality public realm to create a new niche quarter within the Central Area;

- ❑ ensure ongoing development activity including the FE College; the Transport exchange, Victoria Harbour and Trincomalee Wharf; is embedded and fully integrated within the wider Central Area;
- ❑ enhance pedestrian linkages across the Central Area including addressing key severance issues generated by Stockton Street and the railway line. Connectivity across the Central Area needs to be improved and particular focus should be given to better integrating the Marina with adjoining areas;
- ❑ prioritise the development of key gateway sites, including Stranton roundabout, to enhance the visibility and image of the Central Area and help to create a sense of place; and
- ❑ explore a range of potential transport/access initiatives relating to non-pedestrian movements focused on cycle routes, public transport and Central Area parking provision.

These key drivers and challenges were discussed and agreed with the steering group at the end of stage 1 and have formed the basis for the work set out in the following sections.

## 3 Strategic approach

### 3.1 Strategic policy objectives

An important element in preparing regeneration and investment strategies for an area such as the Central Area of Hartlepool is the need to ensure that the opportunities emerging will assist the public sector in achieving policy objectives. It is also essential to continue to attract and grow private sector investment and to encourage partnership with the public sector. Without this, there is little rationale for investment and therefore limited scope for implementation. Public sector investment in Central Hartlepool is likely to be predominantly led by One NorthEast and the Borough Council, although projects may be identified which are appropriate for other agencies to support. It is important therefore that the Investment Framework has a strong resonance to the national policy objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy and the Sub Regional Investment programmes, to enable ONE in particular to be clear on the added value and impacts of the potential investment projects.

In this context, there are a number of key policy objectives which have provided the framework for the emerging Investment Framework.

At a national level, the DCLG document, 'Transforming places; changing lives: A framework for regeneration' identifies three key criteria which drive a successful regeneration strategy: improving the physical environment; improving prospects for people; and, improving the wider economy. The relevant elements of the document are discussed below and have been reflected in the development of the Investment Framework:

#### 1. **Improving the physical environment- enhancements are linked to wider economic improvements that reduce worklessness and support those living in the most deprived areas to progress in the labour market.**

- ❑ **reclamation of derelict and contaminated land** – the document recognises the need to address 'environmental dereliction' and the important role of the public sector in unblocking redevelopment through resolving constraints;
- ❑ **rehabilitation of housing and other run-down buildings** – it is recognised that poor quality housing and poor residential locations impact on a range of wider socio-economic issues which can lead to abandonment and demolition. The Framework recognises that addressing these issues goes beyond simply whole scale demolition;
- ❑ **creating an attractive, safe, clean and vibrant public realm** – linked closely to the point above, the Framework identifies the importance of the quality of the surrounding environment as a means to enabling communities to 'thrive'. New schemes which focus on quality of space, as well as conserving the best heritage assets, are key elements of successful regeneration;
- ❑ **better transport infrastructure and other external links** – sustainable transport links are important for locations to maintain economic relationships within their broader city-regions. High quality public transport can not only improve access to employment opportunities but also provides opportunities for visitors to access places such as Hartlepool in an efficient manner. The Framework identifies that these are important in terms of enhancing competitiveness; and
- ❑ **image improvement and place branding** – the requirement to enhance image and branding is set out in the Framework, recognising its key role in developing and diversifying the economy. Culture and Sport is set out as offering the



opportunity to play a key role in the development of a 'place brand', which should focus on the city/town level, not individual neighbourhoods;

**2. Improving the prospects for people – building on skills, capacities and aspirations of residents to enable them to take advantage of wider opportunities.**

- ❑ **educational participation and attainment** – low educational attainment is identified as having a significant influence on the economic well-being of a place, through influencing the decisions of business and also migration and settlement patterns. Enhancing educational performance is a key element in regeneration strategy and the Central Area of Hartlepool will be strongly influenced by this, given the two colleges located close to the town centre; and,
- ❑ **Vocational skills and employability** – linked to the above, programmes that enable people to improve their skills and retrain is identified as a key part of regeneration and developing new economic strategy. This is important in the Hartlepool context given its previous focus on heavy manufacturing and shipping;

**3. Improving the wider economy- to strengthen the sub-regional economy in a sustainable manner that assists local communities.**

- ❑ **self employment and small business development** – to assist the Government's business support simplification programme, and make it easier for all elements of the community to access the intensive support they need to start a business;
- ❑ **inward investment and industry distribution** – the Framework recognises that it is important to create the conditions that will retain and support indigenous businesses, in addition to considering inward investment opportunities . This is particularly important in Hartlepool's Central Area, with the large sites for major users elsewhere in the Borough and sub-region; and,
- ❑ **retail, culture, tourism, sporting and leisure developments** – the Framework identifies the benefits of this activity in areas of high unemployment, particularly if accompanied by pre-development training schemes. The quality of employment is however questioned and this type of employment should therefore not be the main focus of regeneration strategy in an area such as Central Hartlepool.

The **Regional Economic Strategy** (RES) focuses on the three themes of *Business, People and Place* and all are relevant to the Central Area of Hartlepool. The Place theme is particularly important in this context of this work, in that investment in the Central Area needs to be focused on addressing 'quality of place', in addition to wider socio-economic issues.

**Place** recognises that, within the polycentric Tees Valley City Region, the potential of the Coastal Arc needs to be developed alongside the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative and the Darlington Gateway. The Coastal Arc, which incorporates Hartlepool, is therefore important to the Agency's objectives and has led to it supporting the development of the **Coastal Arc Strategy**. The Vision of this strategy has visitors and tourism at its core, recognising the role that this can play as a strategic economic driver and to increase the vitality of local businesses. The strategy also recognises the importance of 'Renaissance, Revival and Regeneration' in its widest sense, referencing the need for brownfield site redevelopment and enhancing the 'sense of place'. The town centre of Hartlepool is identified as a key component of the Arc, with key actions including improving sites and buildings, connectivity, enhancing public space, supporting employment growth and development of the education and skills quarter.



**Business** places a strong focus on the promotion and encouragement of entrepreneurship, and significant investment is being made by the Agency and its partners in seeking to improve the number of small business start ups, survival and growth. The Central Area Investment Framework can assist that through ensuring that the *physical* components of such an approach are in place within the town centre – there are already successful small business centres at Brougham and on the Southern Business Zone, but neither is well located in relation to the Central Area. Delivering a high quality business accommodation portfolio and accompanying business support infrastructure is also important if the Agency is to support higher value add business growth and competitiveness.

**People** reflects the need for the region to improve its skill base, to increase the proportion of higher value add and knowledge sector businesses. Increasing educational performance and also the supply of graduates is a key element of this approach, with the region lagging significantly behind other areas in terms of higher education participation. This is important in the Hartlepool context – the rate of working age population without qualification is the highest in the region, but the town also has a Further Education College and a Higher Education establishment. These institutions represent strong opportunities to support the objectives of the RES.

## 3.2 Alternative intervention approaches

To underpin the development of the Investment Framework, it is important to consider the alternative 'strategic' approaches that could be adopted for the regeneration of the Central Area. This provides the context for the 'way forward' and also the rationale for the emerging projects. The alternative options that have been considered are set out below.

### 3.2.1 The 'do nothing' reference case

For a strategy of this nature, consideration of the 'reference case' enables all parties to be clear on what the likely outcomes could be if there is no direct intervention by the public sector to address the key issues identified. This would largely reflect the fact that the public sector continues its current regulatory role and progresses initiatives where resources permit, but largely is a reactive as opposed to a proactive participant in the regeneration of the Central Area. Potential outcomes from this approach could include:

- ❑ there remains little cohesion and little improvement in connectivity between a number of discrete areas. In particular, the marina area is largely separate to the core retail and commercial area and private sector pressure remains to invest in new facilities in this area as opposed to within the core Central Area;
- ❑ the opportunity to reconnect the east and western areas of the town centre, through physical improvements to Stockton Street, is diminished, with the loss of the 'strategic rationale' for doing so, resulting in the Central Area remaining fragmented;
- ❑ as a result, the area to the east of Stockton Street continues to decline with the private sector unlikely to invest in the absence of a clear approach to the area that could promote value enhancement;
- ❑ the redevelopment of Hartlepool College (HCFE) would take place with no associated measures to embed the project into the town centre. Opportunities to develop an education/small business quarter would be lost and the catalytic impact of the new college potentially not realised;

- ❑ in the absence of suitable alternative premises/site in the town, funding support being identified and a lack of resources to coordinate and invest in improvements in the Central Area, the Cleveland College of Art and Design (CCAD) could potentially relocate elsewhere;
- ❑ PPG, the owners of Middleton Grange Shopping Centre, do not commit to any long term investment proposals for the site and facilities, in the face of an uncertain policy future for the Central Area and the potential for an ongoing approval of additional retail facilities outwith the retail core;
- ❑ the redevelopment of Jacksons Landing, a key site within the marina area, awaits the private sector owner identifying a scheme that can both work commercially and also meet the requirements of the planning authority. In this context, the site could potentially remain undeveloped for an uncertain period of time;
- ❑ the lack of small business space within the town and the impact of this on entrepreneurship and competitiveness remains a key gap – it is challenging for the private sector to deliver projects of this nature; and
- ❑ the continued decline of the Central Area, as opposed to its 'renaissance', provides major challenges to the public sector in its promotion and redevelopment of Victoria Harbour. The main route to the marina and the Harbour passes through the Central Area and for most visitors, is the first impression of the town.

### **3.2.2 A 'town wide' focus**

This approach would adopt a wider regeneration focus for a settlement, and is arguably appropriate where the core area is strong and its benefits are being offset by the negative impacts of other areas. This can often be apparent in larger settlements, where the city centre is strong and vibrant but outer lying areas are in decline. In these instances, the greater good of the 'place' could be best served by delivering a series of interventions around the core area which improve its image, provide key expansion opportunities and offer social benefits.

The disadvantage of this approach in Hartlepool is that this would detract from the key issues in the Central Area. A town wide strategic approach could result in the identification of uses that should be located in the Central Area being spread around the wider town and diluting the impacts. There is a need to enhance and sustain the Central Area and that should be the key 'regeneration' focus. In this context, the spatial definition of the Central Area should be kept relatively tight, with careful consideration of the priority that should be attached to potential investments that are outwith that Central core and threaten its vitality.

### **3.2.3 A Central Area focus (preferred option)**

The renaissance agenda considers that a strong, vibrant town or city centre is key to the regeneration of a 'place' and, in reality, Hartlepool town centre is struggling in that respect. The development of the marina commercial park and other retail projects to the North and South of the town centre have led to a dispersed 'town centre offer', which given the size of Hartlepool results in areas competing for what is a limited level of private sector investment. The principle behind an option that focuses on the Central Area is to recreate that core strength and establish a successful and quality centre that then drives value add investment in other locations around the town. The approach would be to identify key investment opportunities within a core area that can enhance the town's trading environment, its visitor offer and wider 'standard of living', and act as the catalyst

to higher quality products emerging on other locations such as Victoria Harbour. The key objective is to 'get the town centre right, and that will strengthen the wider town as a whole'.

The advantage of this approach is the ability to focus on a core area of a settlement and deliver a series of a key interventions aimed at addressing its issues. This is largely the approach adopted by spatially established regeneration special purpose vehicles, where a dedicated team identifies and then addresses a series of interventions in a defined area. This recognises the importance of that area to a local/regional economy and for the future economic and social sustainability of that settlement, above all other priorities.

### **3.3 Preparing the framework for a focused Central Area strategy**

The approach to preparing the framework has been to identify the key socio-economic issues facing the town and to then consider, spatially, a series of interventions that could assist in addressing those issues. As an overriding principle, the focus has been to create a quality 'core' central area, as a driver for attracting private sector investment and to act as the catalyst for the wider renaissance of the town of Hartlepool. A strong, vibrant town centre is key to this and our objective has therefore been to identify opportunities that will strengthen that core, as opposed to diluting the opportunities around a wider area.

The current position and proposals emerging for other areas of the town are particularly important in this context. The Council and its partners are progressing initiatives at the Southern Business Zone and also Victoria Harbour and it is critical that these opportunities are sufficiently 'different' to the proposals for the Central Area to ensure that there is no competition for the similar types of private sector investment. It is important that the respective roles and functions of each of these areas is clear, to ensure that collectively they create a 'better Hartlepool', rather than a series of competing projects.

Hartlepool is one of five key urban centres within the Tees Valley sub-region and has an important role in driving economic growth and enhancing GVA at the regional level. Hartlepool needs to develop a role and function which complements its larger sub-regional neighbours. The town is the key urban centre (population – 91,400) within the Coastal Arc Programme which represents a comprehensive approach to the regeneration of the coastal communities of the Tees Valley. Alongside the Stockton/Middlesbrough initiative and Darlington Gateway, the Coastal Arc represents one of three spatial priorities which, together with the five Tees Valley Regeneration (TVR) flagship projects, provides the focus for regeneration activity in the sub-region. The Coastal Arc Programme identifies that Hartlepool's regeneration focus is on the Hartlepool Quays regeneration zone which comprises the marina, the Central Area, the Headland and the flagship regeneration site at Victoria Harbour.

The Victoria Harbour proposals will significantly enhance Hartlepool's asset base and strengthen its role within the sub-region. An enhanced Central Area will support Victoria Harbour and these two initiatives will help to reposition Hartlepool's economic potential. The town has a range of key assets upon which to build including the marina area, the attractiveness of the Headland, the FE/HE educational opportunities and the scale of retailing. In addition, the Queens Meadow and Wynard developments have successfully retained/safeguarded existing businesses and attracted new businesses to the area, helping to underpin the wider sub-regional economy. Furthermore, the Tees Valley Metro proposals represent a significant opportunity for the Town to become better integrated within the Tees Valley and increase its contribution to wider sub-regional economic growth.

Reflecting this approach and the key principles, the Central Area can be considered as three component elements, which need an enhanced level of connectivity. These are summarised below with greater detail provided in the following sections:

- ❑ **the priority regeneration area** - this is the former town centre, the 'old town', which has struggled to find a role since the relocation of the main retail core to Middleton Grange Shopping Centre and surrounding area. The area has a mixed quality but has a number of opportunities, driven by the rebuilding of Hartlepool College at the western end and the potential relocation of the Council depot at the eastern end. The objective is to create an 'anchor attractor' at either end, which would lead to greater footfall and use of the area providing other commercial opportunities. This has been branded the 'Innovation and Skills Quarter'. Community Business and living activity would then spread and coalesce into the vacant central area;
- ❑ **the town centre and commercial area** - Middleton Grange, the area around Victoria Square and also the Mill House/Football Club sites are key elements of the Central Area and all require consideration to assist in enhancing the performance of the core town centre. This relates to policy as well as physical considerations, to create the policy protection for the core town centre that key landowners seek prior to considering future investment;
- ❑ **the marina and harbour area** - the Marina and the waterside areas are key assets for the town and there are a number of opportunities for their role to be enhanced. In particular, key sites such as Jacksons Landing and potential benefits from the hosting of the Tall Ships Race in 2010 are key considerations. The progress of the Victoria Harbour development is also a key project in this area of the town, particularly the types of uses proposed and how this will link into the Marina area; and
- ❑ **connectivity** - an overarching theme for the Central Area is the need to enhance connectivity. This part of the town is characterised by disconnection - through significant highway routes, the railway or boundary treatments, and the preparation of the Framework has considered how these can be addressed. A key challenge is Stockton Street which effectively splits the core town centre area and arguably acts as a barrier to investment in the Priority Regeneration Area. A number of alternative approaches to this have been considered in further detail.

## **4 An Innovation and Skills Quarter**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The Stage 1 analysis identified that the Central Area lacks a distinct 'quarter' that targets and supports the development of new, small businesses in niche high value added sectors. Such areas are an increasingly common feature of the urban environment comprising finer grain, low scale quality development and present an opportunity to generate a cluster of target businesses such as creative, digital and media companies in close proximity to town centre amenities - namely the public transport and retail uses, and in the case of Hartlepool, its marina. Physical development is critical to achieving this ambition however, a comprehensive approach is required, underpinned by 'softer' services such as the provision of focused business infrastructure support to facilitate the growth of small and new business.

This concept has been developed further in Stage 2 and is described in detail within this section. Hartlepool's Central Area is considered to represent an appropriate location for a new quarter as this is currently a gap in the town's asset base. Critically, the strategy seeks to capitalise on the presence of two adjacent and prominent educational institutions – HCFE and CCAD – and the area's proximity to Hartlepool's retail offer, the high quality environment of the marina and the centrally located (proposed) public transport interchange. It forms the key component of the wider Central Area regeneration strategy, providing a focus for public sector resource and investment.

### **4.2 Overview of Innovation and Skills Quarter Strategy (ISQ)**

Prior to setting out the detailed proposals, it is useful to consider an overview of the proposed strategy. The Innovation and Skills Quarter (ISQ) is intended to redefine Hartlepool Central Area's economic asset base and the 'Priority Regeneration Area' identified within the wider Central Area, provides the most logical location to support the development of a new mixed use quarter in the town centre. This is identified by the red boundary in Figure 4.1 below.



**Figure 4.1 Innovation and Skills Quarter context plan**

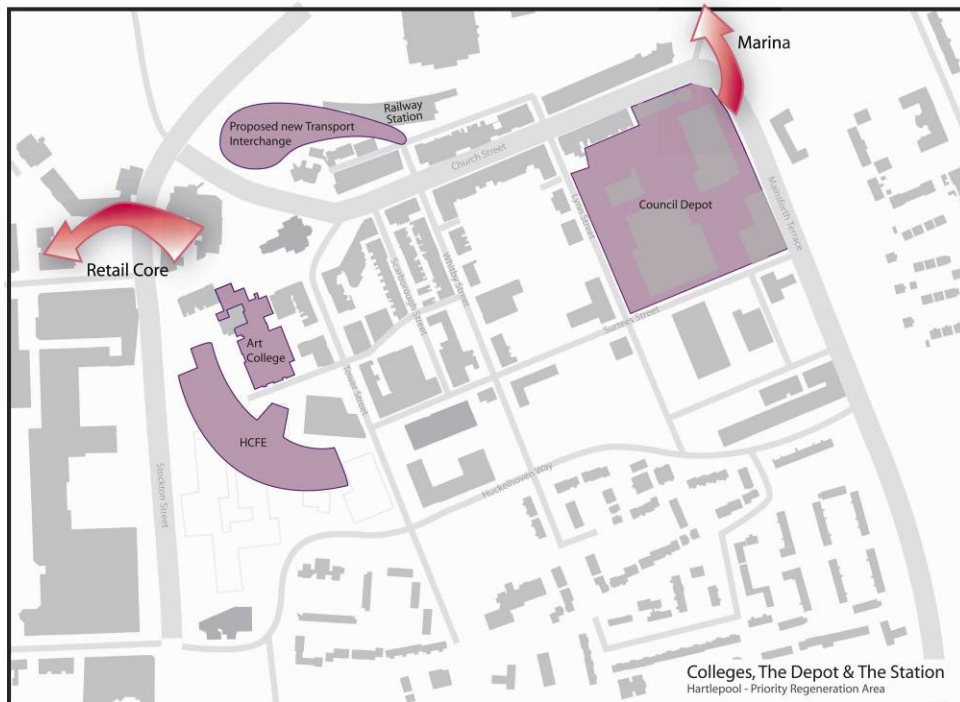


The area comprises the following locational attributes and physical characteristics/assets which underpin its importance:

- ❑ pivotal location between the retail core and the marina providing the opportunity to ‘tie together’ the key features of the Central Area;
- ❑ proximity to the Central Area’s key assets (retail and marina) representing a potentially attractive location for businesses/employees and other users;
- ❑ location for Hartlepool’s College of Further Education (HCFE) and the Cleveland College of Art Design’s (CCAD) Higher Education campus;
- ❑ site of the railway station and the proposed new public transport interchange providing excellent, sustainable public transport access;
- ❑ scale/quantum of potential development sites to support the delivery of a mix of uses and both large and small scale users; and,
- ❑ remnants of fine grain architecture and heritage assets which provide character upon which to develop a distinct quarter of the town.

Figure 4.2 below identifies the location of both colleges to the west of the site and the transport interchange to the north.

**Figure 4.2 Key components of Innovation and Skills Quarter (ISQ)**



The approach to the ISQ has three key drivers:

- ❑ it prioritises the potential role of the educational institutions in shaping the economic future of Hartlepool and role of both colleges in driving the physical regeneration of the Priority Regeneration Area. HCFE is in the process of a £63m redevelopment on its existing site, and CCAD is currently reviewing its property and space requirements to accommodate the steep growth in projected student numbers in the short-medium term. HBC is fully committed to supporting CCAD's expansion aspirations and is prioritising working alongside CCAD to facilitate its growth. This approach aligns with the Council's aspiration to increase HE provision in the town which will help to diversify its economy, enhance local skills levels and generate potential economic development opportunities through partnership working;
- ❑ building on the success of incubation/small business units across the town, this area is considered to provide an excellent opportunity to promote high quality small and new businesses. These proposals should integrate with, or at least complement, the activities of both colleges; and
- ❑ urban design and public realm enhancements, building on existing assets and heritage character to create a distinct and well connected central quarter.

A number of potential key development sites have been identified across the ISQ, however the Council depot site, identified in Figure 4.2 above in regeneration terms, represents the area's primary strategic development site and is critical to underpinning the proposed regeneration strategy. Subject to a successful relocation of the existing Council depot facility the site is sufficient in scale to accommodate a range of target uses including the potential relocation and expansion of CCAD, a Business Innovation Centre, office floorspace, leisure uses and public space. The site is strategically located at the eastern end of the Innovation and Skills Quarter, in close proximity to a proposed new major mixed use development (Trincomalee Wharf - see Figure 4.10 later in this report).

### 4.3 Context of the existing area

As illustrated in Figure 4.1 above, the area is bounded by Church Street to the north, Stockton Street to the west, Huckelhoven Way to the south and Mainsforth Terrace to the east. The historic context of the wider town has been considered from an urban design perspective, which provides a useful insight into potential future uses and priority areas:

- the emergence of York Road as a new retail focus through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century started the process of pulling trade away from the original town centre;
- Church Street and Lynn Street were the town centre's main thoroughfares historically, with Lynn Street forming the key spine road for the genuine 'Central Area' of the town. The Grand Hotel and the War Memorial began to shift the civic and cultural grain west over Stockton Street with more expensive residential suburbs being developed west of York Road;
- the decision to create Middleton Grange shopping centre in the 1970's coupled with the decline of port related industry severely reduced the vitality of the old central area (Lynn Street in particular) and with no implemented forward planning, together with the economic issues of the 1960's-80's, accelerated decline in the area;
- a further key influence was the decision to service the Marina and Victoria Harbour via Stockton Street. Whilst this dual carriageway has clearly facilitated the development of the marina, it effectively creates a by-pass for the Central Area and severs Church Street and the eastern area from the rest of the town to the west; and,
- Church Street still has a good quality urban grain and the public realm has been upgraded in the vicinity but it finds itself cast adrift from the rest of the town hierarchy of streets. This is due largely to the severance caused by Stockton Street, the railway line to the north and perhaps more fundamentally, the lack of commercial and civic purpose now vested in the area as a whole since the decline of the port related industry.

Historically, therefore, this area was the vibrant centre of the town with a fully functioning port area to the north and east and the rest of the town wrapping around to the south and west. It still has the remnants of the Victorian street pattern although only a few of these streets still contain the original buildings and functions. Most of the older properties have been demolished and the urban grain and high density that created footfall and energy has been largely lost. Lynn Street in particular, which contained the old Market Hall and by the 1890's surpassed Church Street in importance and grandeur, suffered an almost complete loss of building stock and is unrecognisable as a pivotal street today. The main footfall from the town is to upper Church Street via Victoria Road and Middleton Grange. The railway station generates some footfall but the rest is generally derived from car parking within the area.

The deterioration of the area is concentrated in the south and east which are the furthest points away from the current town centre. The area includes a mix of cleared sites, and dilapidated buildings. Figure 4.3 below illustrates the poor quality environment which exists across a large proportion of the proposed ISQ.



**Figure 4.3 Existing low quality environment**



## 4.4 Regeneration drivers

### 4.4.1 Introduction

The Innovation and Skills Quarter concept is underpinned by three fundamental drivers of economic and physical regeneration:

- **Education and Skills** - capitalising on the major redevelopment proposals for HCFE to enhance the built environment and help set new standards of design across the area. The strategy is also geared towards facilitating the retention and expansion of CCAD;
- **High growth business accommodation and business support services** - developed to integrate/complement college activity and build on the success of existing flexible, small business space within the town; and
- **Urban design and public realm proposals** - capitalising on the area's locational attributes and existing characteristics to create a distinct new town centre quarter and an environment attractive to private sector investment.

These drivers are described in further detail below. The strategy is reliant upon a joined-up approach across key stakeholders including Hartlepool Borough Council, the colleges, public funding agencies such as ONE NorthEast, the Homes and Communities Agency and the private sector. The delivery of educational and employment uses across the site, alongside enhancements to the physical environment will increase footfall across the area and significantly increase its vibrancy. This should help to attract new users including leisure, restaurants and cafe facilities which will diversify the town centre's leisure/commercial offer and make it a more attractive business and tourist location.

### 4.4.2 Education and skills

Hartlepool College of Further Education (HCFE) and the higher education campus of the Cleveland College of Art and Design are located adjacent to each other in a key gateway location to the western side of the proposed ISQ (see Figure 4.2). The education providers underpin the ISQ concept and will play a lead role in shaping the economic future of the town. Integrating the college uses within the ISQ is therefore critical and will require a partnership approach across all stakeholders. The role and aspiration of each of the colleges is treated separately below.

### **Hartlepool College of Further Education**

HCFE provides a hub for the National Manufacturing Skills Academy<sup>2</sup> and is a Centre of Vocational Excellence in a range of important subject areas:

- Technical & Design Engineering
- Building Services
- Health
- Art and Design.

HCFE is proposing to redevelop its existing facility, funded through the LSC, to provide new high quality facilities on its existing site. The £63 million development has received in principle LSC approval with the preliminary work due to commence in December 2008, the building work in April 2009, and completion due in February 2011. The proposals will increase capacity by 15% from current 2,000 FTEs (circa 8,000 students overall).

From a design perspective the new HCFE development is highly visible and occupies an extremely important gateway site. The architectural style is contemporary, high quality and will set a benchmark for future developments in the area. Plans have already been produced for the design, form and massing of the building based on a phased approach constrained by the need to occupy existing college buildings on the site during construction. Due to these restrictions the building footprint is set back to the north east of the site with parking to the southern part of Stockton Street. This approach has limited the options for creating a desirable strong frontage along the length of the Stockton Street boundary. The new building has a defined frontage onto Stockton Street with a rear elevation to Tower Street and Albert Street. The rear of the new building has been designed flexibly enough to allow a frontage to the east, however this is currently designed principally as a service area/entrance.

In addition to providing a wide range of further education courses, Hartlepool College also offers a number of degree level (Higher Education or HE) courses in association with University of Teesside and the University of Sunderland. HE at the college is mainly for part-time study for people already in employment. HCFE's publication "The Way Forward for Hartlepool" states that, "*there is an opportunity for Hartlepool to become a beacon town for high level skills*". Establishing a university presence in Hartlepool, in a Centre for Higher Education and Advanced Skills, is identified as a priority action. HCFE is considering incorporating a floor of Higher Education facilities into the proposed college redevelopment. In association with the University of Teesside, HCFE would specialise in the higher value added research area of Aeronautical technologies, which could represent an important initial step in establishing a new HE facility within the town.

A dedicated HE facility in Hartlepool would significantly enhance the education/skills offer and help to address the future profile of the adult skills base in the town. At present, new university provision across the country is the subject of the 'University Challenge' scheme being operated by central government<sup>3</sup>. Whilst the provision of a dedicated HE facility within the town could underpin a number of regeneration objectives, discussions with HCFE have identified that the College and University of Teesside have no plans to respond to the 'University Challenge' prospectus at this stage. HE provision is intended to form part of the new HCFE building, through collaboration with the University of Teesside, as set out above.

HCFE incorporates a Business Development Area (BDA) within the college facility which focuses on delivering one-off bespoke courses for external businesses, but not as an incubation facility to develop student's business ideas and start-up companies. However,

<sup>2</sup> Hartlepool College of Further Education – Skills Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – The Way Forward for Hartlepool

<sup>3</sup> 'A new "University Challenge"- unlocking Britain's talents' (2008) sets out the Governments objectives to create 20 new University campuses in selected areas of Britain, with the aim of unlocking the potential of towns and people, and driving economic regeneration.

there is likely to be a significant overlap in the skill sets and specialist facility requirements of the BDA and any emerging small/flexible business space proposals across the ISQ. The potential for any synergies should be fully explored as part of the Central Area's regeneration strategy.

### ***Cleveland College of Art and Design***

Cleveland College of Art and Design is the only specialist art and design college in the North East and has been established for over 100 years. It is one of four specialist art colleges in the country. Hartlepool's Church Square campus is one of three College campuses (with the other two campuses being based in Middlesbrough). The Church Square campus accommodates CCAD's higher education facility.

The campus currently accommodates 350 degree students. The College's HE component is growing fast with numbers expected to more than double in the next 5 years. The College has recently appointed a new principal and it is understood that estates issues are a high priority for CCAD to address in the coming months. CCAD is currently considering its options for expanding its HE facility to accommodate the anticipated growth. The College have expressed a requirement for up to 8-9,000 sqm of specialist floorspace. The options include:

1. *'Do nothing'* – remain within the existing facility which will curtail the growth in student numbers with the college campus anticipated to be at capacity in two years. This approach does not deliver a satisfactory outcome and all parties agree that every effort should be made to facilitate the growth of the college.
2. *Consolidate all three college campuses in Middlesbrough* – from an estates perspective it is logical for the college to consider consolidating its facilities within a single campus in Middlesbrough. One difficulty for the College is that the HE element falls between the two principal funding streams. The LSC will only fund FE facilities with up to a maximum of 20% of HE provision. Also HEFCE will not fund the redevelopment of the HE campus as their funding needs to come through a HE not FE institution. On this basis the HE element would need to be accommodated into existing FE building in Middlesbrough.
3. *Retain and expand HE campus in Hartlepool* – this will require either the expansion/extension of the existing facility or the relocation of the campus on to a larger alternative site. Given the College's funding predicament (outlined above) the development of a new facility may require an innovative funding approach and the viability of such an approach needs to be fully explored across all stakeholder including detailed discussion with the new College principal.

Retaining the HE campus within Hartlepool's Central Area and facilitating its expansion is a key priority for HBC. The specialist and prestigious nature of the college position it as a key stakeholder/partner in underpinning and driving forward the ISQ concept.

Alongside its growth expectations, CCAD has also expressed an interest in partnership working to deliver additional workspace units to facilitate the development of its entrepreneurial students. This is not a wholly innovative proposition for the Central Area. HBC commissioned New Media Partners Ltd to provide a Creative Industries Feasibility Study (2003) which proposed that a Cultural Industries 'studio' should be developed within the Church Street Area in vicinity of CCAD. Unfortunately the building initially identified was redeveloped for residential use and the proposals have subsequently not moved forward. This Investment Framework provides the opportunity to reinvigorate these proposals. This would help to develop a cluster of design-based and creative industries within the town and aligns with the vision for the ISQ and could play an important role in developing a cluster of creative businesses and help to change the image of the area.

#### **Priority Actions - Education and Skills**

- ❑ The Council to meet with CCAD Principal and discuss 'Estate' issues and opportunities – establish requirements, timescales, funding options and programme further meeting for further discussions;
- ❑ Hartlepool College planning application – the Council to influence the design proposals to maximise benefits to the ISQ and also progress a s106 package as appropriate;
- ❑ Explore potential for expanding HE provision; and
- ❑ Explore potential for partnership working/linkages in bringing forward new workspace units - establish level of demand, type of space etc.

#### **4.4.3 High growth business floorspace**

The Stage 1 analysis concluded that it is possible to differentiate between the nature and scale of businesses which could be attracted to the Central Area rather than one of the alternative neighbouring employment locations at Victoria Harbour or the Southern Business Zone. In terms of business type, creative industries – digital and media – and niche service sector businesses are more likely to prefer a central location which provides access to amenities including public transport hubs. In terms of scale, the Central Area should target smaller size businesses, which through their businesses cycle, may 'move-on' to larger scale premises in other locations. This would provide Hartlepool with a 'spectrum of accommodation' to attract and retain businesses of all sizes.

Within the Stage 1 analysis Drivers Jonas identified the lack of quality business space for SMEs and the challenges of identifying viable alternative development sites.

The ISQ is an appropriate location to bring forward new high quality employment floorspace in the town. It is anticipated that the delivery of small business space will, initially at least, require public sector investment and support to be brought forward. Any emerging proposals should seek to capitalise on and integrate with the education providers in the town and build on the success of existing workspace facilities.

Hartlepool Enterprise Centre located on Brougham Terrace (edge of town centre) forms a key component of a network of start-up/incubation facilities across the borough. It was subject to a comprehensive refurbishment in 2005/06 and is fully occupied. A new incubation facility has recently been delivered at Queens Meadow, in the SBZ, which provides high quality flexible floorspace. DTZ produced '*Business Incubation in Hartlepool: A Feasibility Study (2003)*' on behalf of HBC, which identified sufficient capacity to bring forward incubator facilities in the Borough. The two core facilities have been delivered at Hartlepool Enterprise Centre and Queens Meadow. The success of the new/refurbished facilities, together with Drivers Jonas' advice, indicates that further provision of this type of property product would be of benefit and would help to support/improve Hartlepool's business stock.

Further feasibility work will be required to determine the most appropriate scale and nature of new workspace facilities. A new specialist facility could target specific business sectors or a less specialist, less exclusive facility could be developed aimed at high growth/value add business sectors. **Digital City** is one example of a successful specialist approach. DigitalCity is a regeneration project core funded by the regional development agency One NorthEast. Grounded on the University of Teesside's expertise in digital media and digital technology, DigitalCity's objective is to create a vibrant, successful and self-sustaining super cluster in the Tees Valley based on the digital technologies, digital media and creative sectors. The vision is that by 2010 this cluster will have a world reputation and a brand that is a byword for innovation and excellence. The scheme is

regarded as one of One NorthEast's most successful regeneration schemes and has benefited from committed investment of over £36m. It has achieved this through a partnership approach to nurturing talent, developing businesses, attracting investment and linking the University to business.

DigitalCity is expanding and is currently inviting expressions of interest (for ERDF investment) from each of the Tees Valley Local Authorities to develop 'satellite' facilities to complement the DigitalCity hub in Middlesbrough's BOHO district. A DigitalCity facility would fit well within the ISQ concept and there could be strong synergies with CCAD which need to be fully explored.

The Business Innovation Centre (BIC) at the Sunderland Enterprise Park is another good example of a successful facility aimed at facilitating the growth of new and small businesses. BIC places significant emphasis on the provision of support services and infrastructure required to nurture and grow businesses providing a focus/forum for business support activity including service providers such as business link and sector specific bodies. The ISQ represents an appropriate location for the development of a similar facility which could be based on the Sunderland BIC model.

<b>Priority Actions – High growth business floorspace</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore viability of DigitalCity satellite, and express interest as appropriate;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore starter unit space requirements with both colleges; and,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Undertake feasibility study for new incubator facility identifying anticipated capital and revenue costs.</li> </ul>

#### **4.4.4 Urban design, public realm and accessibility**

The vision for the ISQ is underpinned by urban design and access considerations. Resolving environmental issues and capitalising on existing assets will be critical to creating an environment which is attractive to all users – residents, businesses/employees and visitors. Indeed one of the key drivers identified within the property market analysis is the importance of environmental improvements to attracting private sector investment. This component of the ISQ is based on the following four key principles:

- Design quality and existing assets** – capitalising on the existing public realm around Church Square and heritage asset of the area;
- Connectivity** – across the ISQ, recognising its pivotal role within the wider Central Area, and in particular the role of Church Street;
- Containment** – defining the physical boundaries of the ISQ and developing an enhanced sense of place. Further details of potential projects and interventions are described in Appendix IV: 'Design principles and design guidance'; and
- Accessibility** – identifying key transport and access issues requiring consideration to support the ISQ.

Each of these key principles is described in greater detail below.

##### **Design quality and existing assets**

The area of the site that can still be considered as town centre is now restricted to Church Street, Church Square, Upper Church Street and the northern ends of Tower Street, Scarborough Street and Whitby Street, where the old street pattern and grain remains.



Church Street is recognised as a high quality street with an good quality public realm as illustrated in Figure 4.4 below:

**Figure 4.4 Existing public realm around Church Square**



Together, the existing buildings form a strong urban fabric and the street is well contained with focal points to the west and east. It used to be part of a hierarchy of streets and spaces extending throughout the site but is now reduced to the North West area around Church Square, Tower Street and Whitby Street. The high quality nature of this component of the area demonstrates the potential for creating attractive urban environment and provides a starting point/benchmark from which to roll out further public realm improvements to underpin the area's regeneration.

The last refurbishment of Church Square set the right tone for the mix of pedestrians and vehicles. However, the materials used were of inferior quality to the aspirations set. The concrete flags are also proving difficult to maintain with bitumen infill replacing damaged areas. A new scheme for the square, based on the principles of pedestrian priority and connectivity, maximising the linkages to the transport interchange, Shopping Centre and Innovation and Skills Quarter, could build on the urban design ideas currently in place and also set the tone as a high quality scheme for the town.

An exemplar quality standard has been set on Church Street which would be greatly augmented by a reworking of Church Square and Upper Church Street. It will be difficult to roll out this level of quality across the wider area and it may well need to be focused on defined key areas. All town centres need a quality hierarchy of public realm, exemplar, high and standard levels of materials and furniture need to be established and co-ordinated for implementation.

### **Connectivity**

Church Street has become a linear place and this lack of width and penetration into the rest of the area is further exacerbated by the severance, to the retail core, created by the widening of Stockton Street. The original rationale to connect the port and industry to the north and east with the rest of the town disappeared with the decline of the port related works leaving the eastern end of the street vulnerable to decline.

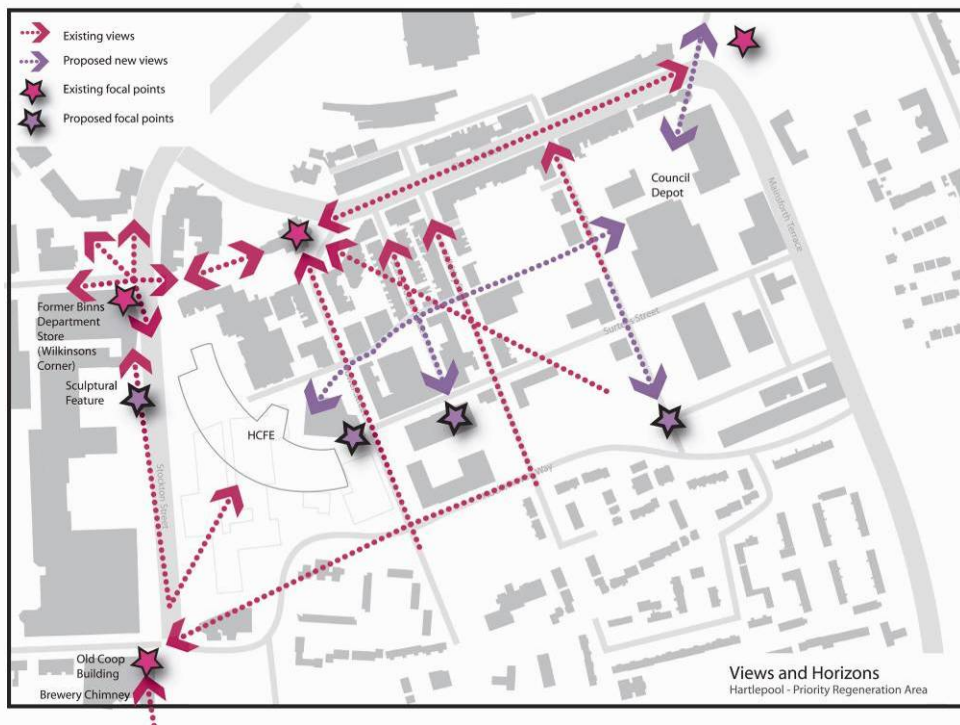
It is essential to visually and physically connect Church Street and its surrounding area to the rest of the town. It is also vital that the streets and spaces within the area south of Church Street are properly integrated so that Church Street can regain its 'hub' role.

The quarter should form a strong link from the marina sites to the north through to the retail/civic functions to the west. It will then once again become the key central area upon which the town centre was originally predicated. It should also connect strongly within and create the sense of place between the various streets and any new squares and

gateways. In order to achieve this, it is important to establish the key views both through the site and to significant landmarks outside. Figure 4.5 shows a number of significant existing and proposed views and focal points that, if they were able to be formed or maintained, would add legibility to the area. It is important to safeguard potentially important views through the site such as the view from Albert Street to the depot area.

Perhaps one of the most significant views in this part of the town is on the corner of Stockton Street and Victoria Road where it is possible to stand in one spot and see most of the significant views of the town.

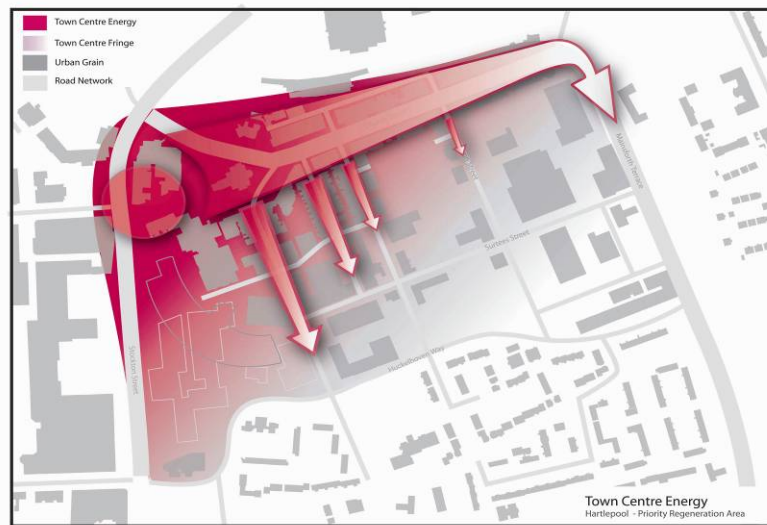
**Figure 4.5 Views and Horizons**



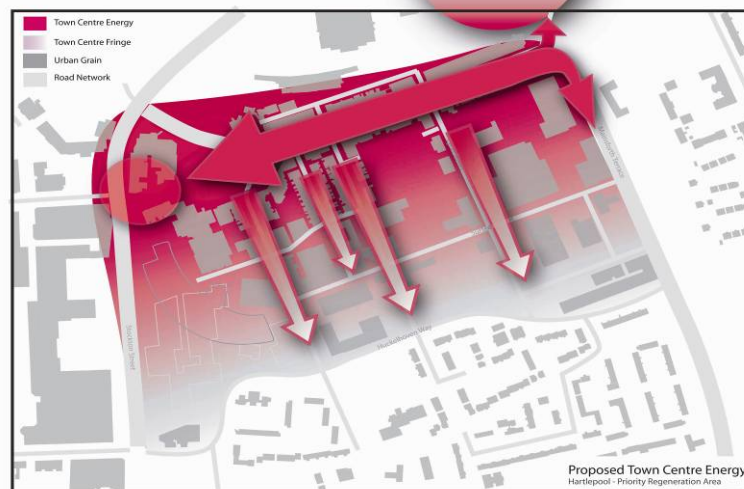
### **Containment**

For any place to function effectively there needs to be a series of principles set down to provide boundaries, gateways and edges. From an urban design perspective the strongest areas of the site are demonstrated on figure 4.6 below. This “energy” plan articulates in red the areas generating the most footfall combined with the highest quality urban grain. It is not a great surprise that the existing hot spots are to the north and west with a general deterioration to the south and east. The main footfall from the town is to upper Church Street via Victoria Road and Middleton Grange. The railway station generates some footfall but the rest is generally derived from car parking within the area, as shown on plan below.

**Figure 4.6 Existing town centre 'energy'**



Potential regeneration activity to the west (HCFE redevelopment) and the east (Trincomalee Wharf and potentially the Council's depot site) could dramatically increase the energy levels and create 'hot spots' to the eastern end of Church Street and the depot. This would lead to a future plan depicting a far stronger sense of 'energy' across the whole area, as shown on the plan below.



It will be critical for the ISQ not only to create enhanced levels of 'energy' but to retain it by containing it through urban design initiatives. The loss of the building stock has led to a lack of containment and the loss of a clearly definable quarter of the town centre. The energy that a built up area can generate has dissipated with the wide open empty spaces, dilapidated buildings and lack of uses. Historically, streets such as Tower Street and Lynn Street were contained by focal points to the south and imposing anchor buildings which have subsequently been cleared. These urban design characteristics are illustrated in the photographs presented in Figure 4.7



**Figure 4.7: Photographs illustrating the lack of containment**



In contrast it is an altogether different story from these same streets looking north.

Both Tower Street and Whitby Street have very strong vistas, they are contained by the Church and the railway station respectively and it is possible to imagine the bustle of their heyday at the turn of the last century. Church Street itself is the best example in the area of a strong urban grain, and containment by the use of focal points.

**Figure 4.8 Examples of existing containment.**



A new series of focal points need to be developed to augment the urban grain and allow a visual connection to the edges and gateways of the site. Figure 4.9 shows how this might be achieved, although it is not definitive.

**Figure 4.9 Key containment points**



**Accessibility**

Upper Church Street is currently the main gateway to the area and Stockton Street is a major severance point. Section 7 covers the options for improving links from Middleton Grange and Victoria Road. The objective being to create a more pedestrian friendly way to access the area and Church Street in particular.

The railway station is relatively well used and this will increase with the new interchange. The location of the interchange is regarded as a key asset within the ISQ proposals providing sustainable public transport access.

The provision of bus / cycle / taxi priority on Church Street between the junction with Tower Street and Stockton Street should be considered. This is to further embed the new public transport Interchange, and provide an improved pedestrian and cycle route to the Interchange from Church Square / new crossing on Stockton Street. It will also discourage traffic from using Stockton Street, as people wishing to access the south of the Marina, the regenerated depot site, and the Council Offices will use either Hucklehoven Way in the south, or the Lanyard.

Church Square should have the parking removed from it; however there is still a requirement for access by loading vehicles to the shops that exist in that location and the Tourist Information Centre. Access to the Car Park for the Council Officers is also via this route, and an alternative entrance should be considered from Church Street.

<b>Priority Actions - Urban design, public realm and accessibility</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify a lead officer within the Council, with responsibility for developing the public realm investment programme for the Central Area;
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete a detailed condition survey of the area;
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and confirm key sites for containment focal points and stipulate their use i.e. buildings, public art (further details of the containment points can be found within Appendix IV: Design Principles and Design guidance);

- Consult Highways authority re- possible road closures / openings and potential shared surface schemes;
- Check and confirm the current planning status of sites containing possible new vistas and views; and,
- Complete the parking strategy in line with the proposals.

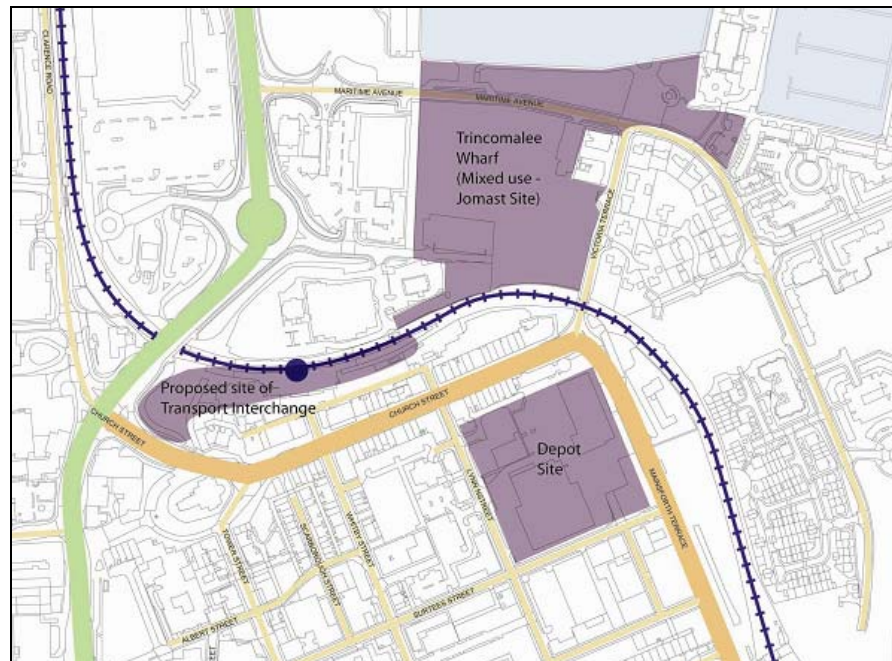
## **4.5 Strategic development site - Lynn Street Depot**

### **4.5.1 *The opportunity***

The Lynn Street Depot site has been identified as the strategic site for intervention that will have the maximum catalytic impact to drive forward the Innovation Skills Quarter concept. In Council ownership, the site is currently used as a depot facility. The strategy is predicated on the successful relocation of this facility to an alternative location. The current use is considered to be inappropriate for the town centre and is not compatible with creating a new, high quality mixed use environment. The site is of sufficient scale to accommodate a range of potential uses - described in greater detail below - and to generate sufficient critical mass to have a catalytic impact across the surrounding area.

Strategically located at the eastern end of the ISQ, the redevelopment of the site would play a pivotal role in strengthening the connection of Church Street (and the wider town centre) with the marina area. Indeed, the creation of active and animated uses to the Church Street frontage of the depot is regarded as a critical component of any development proposals that may come forward on the site. The redevelopment of HCFE will anchor the western end of the ISQ area and the depot site provides the opportunity to balance this by providing an anchor development at the eastern end. Furthermore, Figure 4.10 illustrates the context of the depot site in relation to a major mixed use scheme – Trincomalee Wharf – being promoted by local developer Jomast. Outline planning approval has been given for the Jomast scheme subject to conditions, s106 agreement and referral to GONE, for a mixed-use scheme which includes 18,500 sq m office floorspace and retail and hotel floorspace. It is understood that the office component will target medium to large floorspace requirements in Business Park style accommodation. The scheme is the only private office scheme coming forward within the Central Area at present.

Figure 4.10 The context of the depot site



The key principle is that the proposed developments at either end of the ISQ area create a sufficient draw to generate increased footfall and help to establish the ISQ as a high quality mixed use environment. The gateway impact of the HCFE development and the scale and pivotal location of the depot site should significantly enhance the image of the area and clearly demonstrates that the ISQ is the focus for regeneration activity within Hartlepool's Central Area.

#### 4.5.2 Site background

The Lynn Street Depot site was originally constructed as a purpose built workshop and garaging facility for buses. It is now used by HBC's Neighbourhood Services Division for a wide range of uses related to Highways, Parks and Gardens, Refuse and other services. Approximately 90-100 office based staff are located at the depot, with a far higher number being based out of the depot who are engaged in service delivery throughout Hartlepool.

The facilities provided by the Lynn Street Depot have been revised as far as possible to meet the changed use of the depot, but overall, it is no longer fit for purpose, specifically:

- the vehicle maintenance pits were designed for buses which have low chassis heights. Different vehicles are now serviced, many of which have higher chassis, necessitating servicing personnel to stand on steps whilst in the pits under vehicles. This is a significant potential safety issue; and
- many of the office based staff at the depot are working in converted industrial premises which provide poor quality office space. It is understood that one of the offices is situated in a former paint spraying booth.

Following a meeting with officers responsible for Property and Neighbourhood Services, it is understood that HBC is likely to be open to considering a potential relocation of the

depot to enable regenerative redevelopment of the current depot site subject to resource availability.

### 4.5.3 Alternative uses

An analysis of uses for the depot site was undertaken by the consultancy team. The following alternatives for the site were considered:

1. Do nothing – remain as a Council depot
2. H<sub>2</sub>O Centre (a proposed flagship leisure facility – see Section 6.4 for more detail)
3. College of Art and Design
4. Commercial offices
5. Digital or Cultural Industries

The team discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the above uses at the depot site, as follows:

<b>Do nothing</b>	
<b>Advantages:</b>	<b>Disadvantages:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> No disruption to the depot function	<input type="checkbox"/> Land intensive
<input type="checkbox"/> No funding required	<input type="checkbox"/> Not a town centre use
	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak use at the end of Church Street
	<input type="checkbox"/> Continued substandard depot facility

<b>H<sub>2</sub>O Centre</b>	
<b>Advantages:</b>	<b>Disadvantages:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Would provide anchor use for this area of the town centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Not a town centre use
<input type="checkbox"/> Would encourage visitors to the town centre for reasons other than retail	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely to be unattractive due to the functionality (scale and massing) of the facility
<input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke depot facility developed in an appropriate location elsewhere.	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors are likely to arrive by car and leave immediately therefore not increasing dwell time in the town centre
	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased traffic movement.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Would divert this facility from the Victoria Harbour location
	<input type="checkbox"/> Securing public sector funding would be challenging and the facility would be expensive, both short and long term



<b>College of Art &amp; Design</b>	
<b>Advantages:</b>	<b>Disadvantages:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Modern premises for college	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding would need to be identified.
<input type="checkbox"/> Secures colleges commitment to remain in Hartlepool for the foreseeable future	<input type="checkbox"/> Would probably only occupy part of the site
<input type="checkbox"/> Would provide anchor use for this area of the town centre and daytime footfall.	<input type="checkbox"/> No clear use identified for the current site.
<input type="checkbox"/> Would leave an opportunity site adjacent to the Hartlepool College of Further Education, fronting onto Church Square	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke depot facility developed in an appropriate location	

<b>Commercial offices</b>	
<b>Advantages:</b>	<b>Disadvantages:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Would provide anchor use for this area of the town centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Large floor plate offices to be provided in the Jomast and Victoria Harbour schemes which are likely to be at the front of the supply pipeline coming forward and satisfying any latent demand.
<input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke depot facility developed in an appropriate location	<input type="checkbox"/> It is likely that public sector funds would be required to finance a gap in the commercial viability.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Long delivery period

<b>Digital City Satellite Site or Cultural Industries</b>	
<b>Advantages:</b>	<b>Disadvantages:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Would provide anchor use for this area of the town centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Would have to bid and compete with other centres in the northeast region for the opportunity to have a Digital City Satellite
<input type="checkbox"/> Would be a pre let of any scheme.	<input type="checkbox"/> Would not occupy the whole site
<input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke depot facility developed in an appropriate location	
<input type="checkbox"/> Would create an alternative market in the town centre	
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding potentially available for a Digital City Satellite	

<input type="checkbox"/> Could take advantage of students at both colleges within the town centre	
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#### 4.5.4 Preferred approach

From the analysis documented above, it is unlikely that a single user would be identified for the whole site but that a combination of educational, creative industries and start-up business units use should be progressed to create a vibrant hub within the town centre. Such development on this site would provide a much needed link between the town centre and the marina, rejuvenate Church Street and kick start regeneration within the priority regeneration area.

The relocation of the CCAD and the Digital City Satellite scheme would be a strong blend of uses in this area and would compliment the redevelopment of Hartlepool college of Further Education. It is highly unlikely that either the CCAD or the Digital City Satellite would solely occupy the whole depot site; however, location of both occupiers together would be a complimentary blend. This would create an opportunity for the two to work in tandem and provide a focus to this end of Church Street. A stronger educational hub in this area which attracts students to the centre of Hartlepool is likely to also bring benefits to the HFCE too, along with the creation of additional student amenities such as coffee bars and bespoke student accommodation.

In addition to these occupiers there is a gap of good quality start up office space within the Central Area and what is provided is well occupied and out of town. These uses along with the provision of 'grown on' space which may indeed still offer a range of support services would fill the gap in the market. The proposed scheme at Trincolmalee Wharf will provide good quality space for established business and Victoria Harbour will target the larger occupier.

#### 4.5.5 Implementation process

With regards to delivering a scheme on this site and the relocation of the depot, it is to be noted that HBC is a major employer and provider of services in Hartlepool. The Council's strong aspiration is to remain directly involved in service delivery. As a result, it is likely that depot relocation would only be considered if it was for an alternative freehold facility. This reduces the options for re-providing the depot by excluding: out-sourcing the services provided from the depot; leasing an alternative facility; and entering a joint venture with a private operator (that had use of suitable facilities).

The accommodation requirement for a new depot is unusual in that it requires a disproportionately large secure yard and amount of office space. Initial estimates of the space required are:

- 3 acre (12,140m<sup>2</sup>) site ;
- 50,000 sq ft (4,645m<sup>2</sup>) GIA industrial workshop type building; and
- 12,000 sq ft (1114.8m<sup>2</sup>) NIA of office space.

If a site was to be purchased in the open market and suitable buildings were designed, built and equipped, it is anticipated the overall cost would be £8.5m to £9m. A saving could be made by purchasing an existing industrial building and constructing only the offices, initial estimates suggest an overall cost of £6m-£6.5m.

In both instances, the cost of the office space is very significant at around £3.8m. HBC is currently progressing an accommodation review to produce an accommodation strategy.

If the number of office staff based at the depot could be reduced by locating them elsewhere in the Council's office portfolio identified through this review, without adversely impacting effective service delivery, significant savings could be made.

The early analysis here of depot relocation costs has assumed that there is not a suitable hybrid office/industrial building available in Hartlepool. If such a building existed and was available, it might enable the depot to be re-provided at the lowest cost.

Given that it will cost a significant amount to relocate the Lynn Street Depot in its entirety, it might be worth considering an alternative option of the Depot remaining in situ but releasing the strip of land and buildings that front Church Street. This strip of land could provide the space for a catalytic development to link the town centre and marina without requiring significant investment in land assembly.

The merits of partial relocation of the depot site and reconfiguration of the remaining functions on the present site have been considered. If this option was to be pursued, ideally it would be the office function that was retained on site with the depot operation relocated. The site would have to be reconfigured in a manner that ensured the Church Street frontage was made available for development. However, this option is not ideal given that the operations would be on a split site with the accommodation on the existing site likely to become obsolete in approximately 10-15 years time. This may lead to a further review of the site and possible relocation of the remaining functions. The depot could also be seen as a bad neighbour for town centre uses on adjacent sites, therefore affecting the potential redevelopment of this area.

HBC commissioned Ecotec Consulting, to produce 'An Action Plan for the Hartlepool Southern Business Zone' and discussions between the Central Area and SBZ teams have taken place. In relation to the Depot site, the SBZ Action Plan states:

- six potential sites have been identified that could sufficiently accommodate the depot which would not generate conflict with neighbouring uses; and
- relocating the depot will be beneficial to the SBZ. It would bring back vacant sites into use and the resultant increasing numbers of employees in the area would have a positive impact on local businesses that rely on passing trade.

This analysis supports the relocation proposition, however detailed feasibility assessments of the sites identified would be required in order to establish the operational and financial viability of each site and identify a preferred option.

#### **4.5.6 Key challenges/risks**

The key challenges regarding relocation of the depot site would include ensuring jobs are safeguarded and public opinion sees the move as a positive step.

A suitable site for the depot would have to be found that would allow the same functions to be performed and ideally should be accessible for current employees. Movement of the depot would require careful handling from a political perspective, however, the provision of modern facilities and better working environment of the HBC could only be welcomed.

Before movement of the depot, the Council would have to be sure that a scheme on the Church Street site will come forward. All parties to the development would have to be in agreement, with required funding granted before the depot is relocated. The site at this end of Church Street does not want to be blighted - with either a scheme that does not come forward or a scheme where there is no demand - as it is a key location in rejuvenating the town centre and marina area.



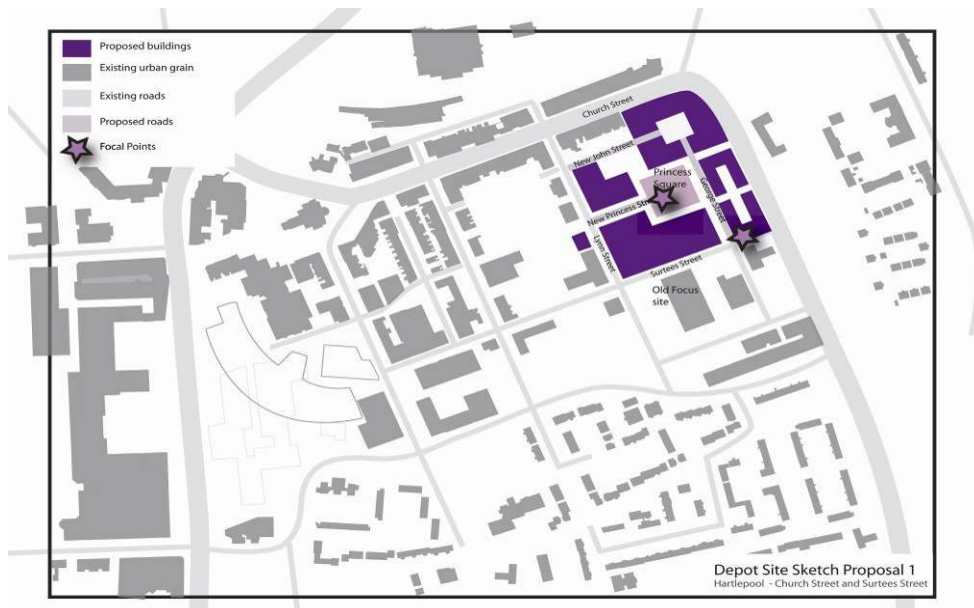
The Church Street frontage on the northern side of the depot site must have an active ground floor use to ensure footfall is encouraged towards this end of the street. Ground floor possibilities include an entrance to an office building with ancillary small scale retailers such as café bars or a local convenience store.

Furthermore, there would also need to be a scheme in place for the present CCAD site. This is a key site, providing frontage to Church Square and adjacent to the new HCFE Building. This is an opportunity site that would become available in a prime location within Hartlepool Town Centre with good connections to the public transport network. Consultation with the college and inspection of the premises would have to be undertaken to understand whether it would be beneficial to refurbish the property or redevelop the site. It is understood that the college own the freehold for the site.

#### 4.5.7 **Design and access considerations**

In terms of urban design the Lynn Street Depot site is too large as a single entity and would benefit greatly from sub-division. At the turn of the last century this area was a significant corner connecting the port to the town and the junction of Lynn Street and Church Street was one of the most vibrant in the town for trade and footfall. A new mixed use area will provide the opportunity to interpret the site in a way that restores the tighter grain and urban fabric of its more dynamic past whilst catering for contemporary demands and uses. Figures 4.11 and 4.12 show how this might be accomplished.

**Figure 4.11 Proposal 1**



**Figure 4.12 Proposal 2**



Sketch proposal 1 shows how a range of footprints to suit a mixed use scheme can be designed around the original street pattern. The key building will be on the Church Street corner and will connect the area to the Trincomalee Wharf scheme.

Focal points can be created in the form of a new square with a strong visual link to Albert Street and the reinstatement of George Street providing a potential gateway to Surtees Street. John Street could be reinstated perhaps as a pedestrian street allowing a vista to Whitby Street. The objective is to transform the site into a new piece of town centre.

Sketch proposal 2 is a reduced version of sketch 1 with less floor space and a greater emphasis on public realm.

#### **4.5.8 Priority tasks**

We have set out a series of stages to illustrate how this scheme could be brought forward. Some stages would have to run concurrently. It is difficult to be prescriptive with timescales and the order of stages maybe subject to alteration depending on the outcome of others.

<b>1. Gain backing from key stakeholders</b>
<p>Fundamental to this scheme's delivery is the desire of the main partners involved to drive this concept forward in Hartlepool. A project champion will need to be appointed in the first instance.</p> <p><i>Consultation with key stakeholders</i></p> <p>Initial consultation has been undertaken as part of this study but more in-depth discussions with the following partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> College of Art and Design; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Digital City Business.</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, consultations with other stakeholders in a confidential capacity would be advised, such as Hartlepool College of Further Education.</p> <p><i>Expression of interest to Digital City Business</i></p>

As part of the Digital City Business initiative, a bid would need to be prepared to gain their backing for locating a Digital City Satellite in Hartlepool.

## **2. Ensure the correct funding mechanisms are in place and the scheme is viable**

Once commitment from the stakeholders has been secured it would be necessary to establish the funding requirements and the mechanisms available to deliver the required finances including any 'gap' funding.

This will involve a series of smaller stages such as scale and massing of site, scheme design and appraisal, the likely cost of relocating the Lynn Street Depot, further consultation with appropriate public sector bodies and the development of the opportunity site left if the project included the relocation of the CCAD.

### *Scheme Design and Appraisal*

As part of the funding stage, it would be necessary for a masterplan for the site to be drawn up and the scheme appraised. This would be essential to establish whether there is a gap that would need to be financed by public sector funds.

### *Establish cost of relocating the Lynn Street Depot*

Coupled with the funding for the scheme, details on the funding for the relocation of the council depot would be required. The amount required would be dependent on issues such as whether the depot is relocated to a public or private owned site.

### *Establish end use for the current College of Art and Design Site*

The use of the opportunity site created if the CCAD relocated would need to be addressed and a plan for the building will need to be provided, to ensure the continued beneficial occupation of this site. Further discussion is required with the stakeholders to establish any existing or potential viable requirements for this building and ownership issues.

## **3. Planning Policy**

In promoting such a scheme it will be necessary to remove any obstacles and risk before offering the opportunity to the market. This will include providing confidence that the suggested uses will be appropriate in planning terms. There are many ways to secure this, depending upon the time frame available and the mix of uses proposed, including the preparation of:

- ❑ Area Action Plan;
- ❑ Supplementary Planning Document; and
- ❑ Approved Planning and Development brief.

The scale of 'change' proposed for the wider Surtees Street and the Lynn Street Depot site will dictate what will be required to cement the proposals in planning policy. A Planning and Development brief may be appropriate. This is a relatively expedient method which, following approval at local level, provides guidance on the scope of development, appropriate uses and mix and sets out any requirements the Planning Department may have such as connectivity.

#### **4. Procurement of a development partner**

It is difficult to provide guidance on this element of delivery, at this stage. Much will depend on the outcomes of tasks 1-3 above.

The identification of the tenure mix and the funding arrangements will have a critical impact on the most appropriate approach to procurement. Any agreement should establish minimum requirements and leave the developer some scope for design and some mix of the uses. The most effective strategy for leveraging investment and delivering regeneration objectives will need to be established and this could include consideration of special purpose vehicles such as Local Asset Backed structures.

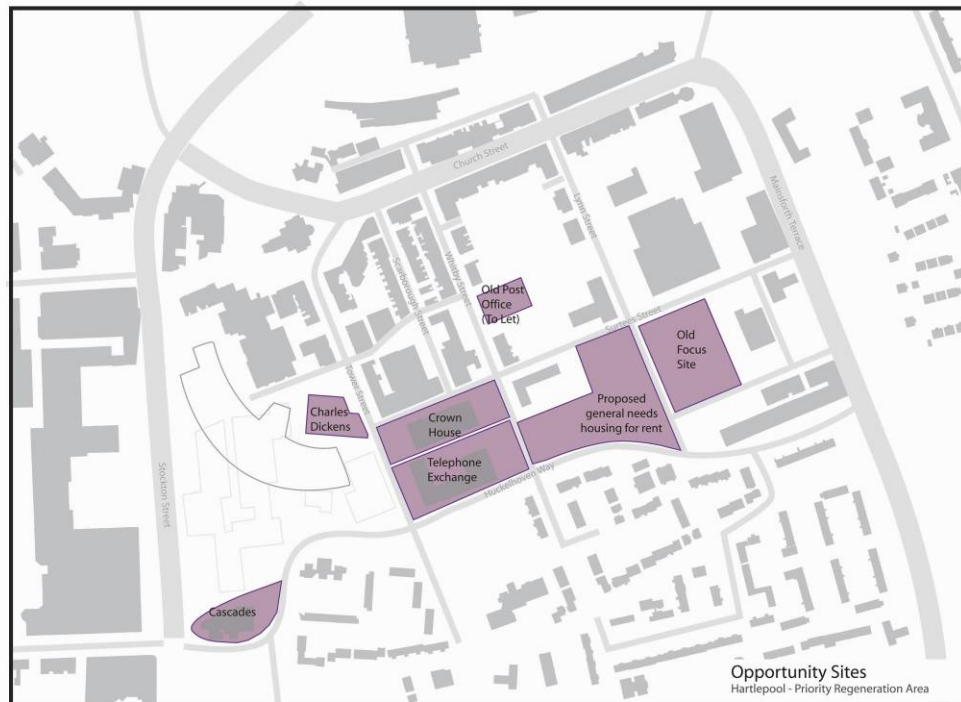
## **4.6 Strategic Acquisitions/Investments**

### **4.6.1 Introduction**

Within the Priority Regeneration Area, the consultancy team has identified a number of key sites and properties, which currently contribute significantly to the area's underperformance and/or other opportunities to be refurbished/redeveloped to support the key principles set out for the ISQ. Whilst the Lynn Street Depot site is a primary focus, the following properties have been identified as additional potential strategic acquisitions/investments for the public sector. These sites are identified on Figure 4.13 below.

1. Charles Dickens, Tower Street
2. The Old Post Office, Whitby Street
3. Crown House, Surtees Street
4. Former Focus Building, Surtees Street
5. Cascades Showroom, Andrew Street
6. BT Building, Hucklehoven Way

Figure 4.13 Opportunity sites plan



#### 4.6.2 Site details

##### ***Charles Dickens, Tower Street***

The Charles Dickens site has been identified as a key site/building that will detract from the new HCFE development, once constructed. However, the property is fully operational and a popular business serving local needs and it is therefore difficult to justify an acquisition of this property at this stage. The building is single storey and is located in an obvious area for a new public square or signature building that 'connects' the new college to its neighbouring area to the east.



Promotion of the site for a complimentary use in the longer term may be a more appropriate action at this stage than acquisition. This could be achieved through planning policy and also monitoring of the site to ensure that if an acquisition opportunity arises then there is sufficient time for the public sector to consider the merits of purchase at that time.



### ***The Old Post Office, Whitby Street***

This property is an example of the ‘character’ that was once in abundance around this area of Hartlepool. The property is vacant but is on the market for the assignment/sub-let of an existing lease.

It is important that this property is brought back into beneficial use – it offers the opportunity for refurbishment to a use that supports the ISQ concept or alternatively as a higher quality A3 which would support the area’s renaissance. Should the Lynn Street Depot opportunity be progressed this property will benefit from its location between the depot and the redeveloped HCFE building.



The team is not promoting acquisition at this stage as there is not a specific use in mind, but this could emerge as the Framework is implemented. Whilst we have not accessed the building it may lend itself to a small business location (perhaps DigitalCity accommodation) given its prominence and architectural quality and its proximity to HCFE, CCAD and the town centre. The marketing of this building should be monitored and any opportunities explored as appropriate.

### ***Crown House, Surtees Street***

Discussions have been held with the current owner of Crown House. The long term intentions are to redevelop the property but only once it has secured an end user and potentially some public sector funding to meet any development gap. It is the view of the team that any strategy for the priority regeneration area needs to see this building addressed as a priority. It is also a potential expansion site for the HCFE and would benefit from being within public sector control.



Crown House is currently an eyesore and blights the area surrounding it. It would be in the Council’s interest to try to address this site, potentially with the neighbouring BT site, see below. HBC currently own an adjacent plot of land on the corner of Surtees Street/Tower Street. It is considered that a commercial scheme for this site would be appropriate such as small scale office and workshops.

### ***Former Focus Building***

It is understood that HBC own the freehold for the former Focus site which is adjacent to the Lynn Street Depot. There are two long leasehold agreements in place to Blestarde Holdings Ltd, however the building is now vacant. Each lease is for a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum for a term of 99 years commencing at 1979 and 1987. The site could be identified for future development expansion land and if so the Council will have to seek extinguishment of the existing ground leases.





Expansion of a development on the Lynn Street Depot site could be constrained by existing buildings and proposed uses, including the former Focus building. Thought should be given to the potential for phase two expansion land and the anticipation of possible development by the private sector. Potential expansion could accommodate uses such as small workspace units, educational facilities, live-work units or educational-residential facilities.

**Cascades Showroom**

The Cascades Showroom site presents a gateway site to the centre of Hartlepool and would have been a significant opportunity to acquire and relocate as part of the HCFE redevelopment. The property fronting Stockton Street is on the market for sale and the title information demonstrates that the properties to the rear of the showroom are in different ownerships. For a scheme to come forward here and provide the opportunity for a gateway development it would be appropriate to acquire all titles.

There is not an established end use for this site and it is difficult to advocate a proactive acquisition on this basis, at this stage. However, if other titles did come onto the market and funds are available, then acquisition, perhaps in association with HCFE to create a 'signature' opportunity on this key corner would be of great benefit to the Central Area.

**BT Building, Hucklehoven Way**

This is an operational exchange building currently owned by BT. Advancing technology means that there is a reduced requirement for space, however, the costs associated with replacing/relocating and exchange means that BT intends to maintain the building in its current form and use for the foreseeable future.

**4.6.3 Proposed approach**

The property market advisers consider that public sector resource should be focused on delivering the major transformational impact that could be achieved through the redevelopment of the Lynn Street Depot site. In terms of the additional sites, described above, it is recommended that the Former Focus building and Crown House are the most integral sites to driving the ISQ concept. The Focus building provides the best opportunity to expand the proposed depot site development and Crown House is currently an eyesore that has a detrimental impact on the surrounding area. The strategic location of the old Cascades Showroom on Andrew Street makes it a prominent site which could represent an important gateway to ISQ, should the opportunity arise to acquire the site.

Other sites in and adjacent to the Central Area would benefit from treatment and redevelopment, which would assist the regeneration principles of the Investment Framework. It must be recognised however, that there are not unlimited resources to acquire and address all these sites and HBC/ONE need to be practical and pragmatic regarding investment priorities. At this stage, the sites set out above are the teams' recommendation on priority, but clearly this could change in the future and any acquisition strategy needs to be flexible.

<b>Priority Actions – Strategic Acquisitions</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree priority sites with partners and establish timeframe and process for acquiring interests in sites;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure appropriate commercial rates are being charged on all vacant buildings;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact leaseholder of the Focus Building with a view to buying back their interest; and
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase pressure on owners of Crown House to improve appearance of the building. Begin negotiations to acquire the site.

## 5 Town Centre retail and commercial

### 5.1 Introduction

Middleton Grange is the key retailing area for the town and a key asset within the Central Area. It is the 3rd largest shopping centre in the North East with over 140 shops and a large indoor market. The Centre is centrally located and represents the current primary retail circuit. The Stage 1 analysis concluded that the Town's retail offer is currently fragmented with an extensive 'out of town' offer. This undermines the role of the town centre and in turn also undermines the confidence of the town centre investors.

The Shopping Centre's external appearance is of poor quality, particularly given its prominent location and gateway status. It is wholly within private ownership and opportunities to improve/enhance the facilities are limited to an influencing role. Discouraging the further proliferation of non-Town Centre retailing is likely to hold the key to strengthening the Central Area's retail offer and this could be achieved through the implementation of appropriate planning policy.

This section provides specialist retail planning advice from Drivers Jonas. In addition, a number of potential design issues/proposals have also been identified for this area.

### 5.2 Town Centre planning policy

The Hartlepool Local Plan was adopted in April 2006. Town centre and retail policies are contained within the 'Retail, Commercial and Mixed Use Development Chapter'. Although the local plan is largely reflective of national planning policy/guidance, there are a number of areas where it is discordant with the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 6 'Planning for Town Centres' March 2005 (PPS6). In order to best protect the town centre and its service offering, it is recommended that local plan policy, and emerging Local Development Framework Policy should be reviewed to align fully with PPS6. These issues along with integrating the CAIF advice within the existing planning framework are described below.

#### 5.2.1 *Implementation of advice*

The advice provided in this CAIF must be integrated within the Planning framework to ensure that its recommendations are meaningful and implementable.

The Council is in the early stages of preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF). The Hartlepool Local Development Scheme (LDS) provides a brief description of those Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that will be produced over the next three years, the content and geographical area to which they relate and an indication of the timescales involved with producing each. The most up-to-date LDS (March 2008) indicates that the Council will produce a Core Strategy DPD, Housing Allocations DPD, Affordable Housing DPD and the Proposals Map. The Council also has the authority to produce other DPD documents provided that these are identified and approved in future versions of the LDS. This could include for example, an Area Action Plan DPD.

#### **Procedure**

The Government recently published updated guidance on the preparation of Local Development Frameworks in the form of PPS12 *Local Spatial Planning (2008)*. The document replaces the 2004 version of PPS12 and provides clearer guidance on the role of the Core Strategy and further emphasis on its importance in local spatial planning. In

particular, it states that a Core Strategy should make clear spatial choices about where developments should go in broad terms. In addition, where it is considered central to the achievement of the strategy, it may allocate strategic sites for development.

The preparation of the Hartlepool Core Strategy has been delayed due to a need being identified to strengthen the evidence base that supports the document. The LDS states that consultation on the preferred options and sustainability report should have commenced in May 2008. However, this is now scheduled to take place in Spring 2009. The LDS targets the adoption of the Core Strategy for March 2010. However, this has already slipped due to the delays outlined above and it is therefore unlikely that the document will be adopted before 2011 unless significant time savings are secured as a result of the recent changes to the preparation process.

The procedure for preparing a DPD has altered as a result of the publication of the updated PPS12. The 2004 version of PPS12 prescribed specific stages of preparation and formal consultation periods at, for example, the Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages. The 2008 version instead provides greater emphasis on early and continuous engagement with key stakeholders. Greater flexibility is also given to each Local Authority to determine the length of time that is assigned to the early stages of the DPD's production, which is intended to speed up the preparation process. The key stages associated with the production of a DPD are:

1. Pre-preparation consultation
2. Evidence gathering
3. DPD preparation (with ongoing consultation)
4. Submission of DPD
5. Public Examination
6. Inspector's Report
7. Review of Inspector's Comments
8. Adoption

### **Area Action Plan**

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a formal Development Plan Document (DPD) which is subject to independent-testing. PPS12 states that AAPs should be produced when there is a need to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. AAPs should:

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

An AAP therefore seems to be an ideal route to follow in respect of implementation of the CAIF's recommendations.

Should this be agreed by all key stakeholders, the procedure for achieving this is firstly through a revision to the LDS. The Council will need to prepare an updated LDS which details the need for the AAP, what it will cover and the broad timescales for its delivery. This would then have to be approved internally and by Government Office North East.

The benefit of preparing an AAP is that it will legitimise the key recommendations of the CAIF and integrate it into the statutory planning policy framework.

### **Recommendations**

In accordance with their most up-to-date LDS, the Council is in the process of preparing their Core Strategy. Although significant work has already taken place gathering evidence and undertaking consultation, the document is not scheduled to be adopted until 2011. Subsequently, there is the opportunity to contribute to this process and feed the broad messages of the CAIF into future versions of the Core Strategy so that on adoption, they are ingrained in this strategically most significant local planning document.

In addition, we recommend that the case is put forward to Hartlepool Borough Council and other important stakeholders that where appropriate, the key recommendations in the CAIF are translated into a formal Area Action Plan DPD. This would be prepared in accordance with the new procedures set out in the revised version of PPS12 where an emphasis is placed on speeding up the DPD preparation process. We would strongly suggest this to be adopted in parallel with the Core Strategy and an update to the LDS progressed accordingly as soon as possible.

### **5.2.2 Overview of Planning Policy Statement 6**

National Planning Policy on town centres and retailing is set primarily by PPS6. PPS6 advocates a town centres first approach – which allows for the vitality and viability of town centres to be promoted through planning for growth and development of existing centres; and promoting and enhancing existing centres by focusing development in such centres.

As such, any proposal for development of town centre uses in an edge or out of centre location, and which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan document, must be able to demonstrate the following:

- quantitative and qualitative need for the development;
- that the development is of an appropriate scale;
- that there are no more central sites for the development ('the sequential approach');
- that there are no unacceptable impacts on existing centres; and
- that locations are accessible.

PPS6 is currently under review and formal consultation on the proposed changes closed on 3 October 2008.

The Consultation draft PPS6, in the words of the Secretary of State, seeks to revisit how specific parts of the 2005 Statement are working in practice and to refine and improve the effectiveness of its policies. Whilst the principles of the sequential approach to site selection and the assessment of a proposal's impact on existing centres are maintained and strengthened, there are some significant policy changes proposed.

The Statement continues to support the well-established town centres first approach and is clear that town centre development planning is not just about the larger towns – clear, robust strategies for centres of all sizes should be prepared.

The proposed changes would allow town centre proposals to be assessed in terms of their impact rather than the need for them. The key proposed change is the removal of the requirement for applicants of proposals in edge and out-of-centre locations to demonstrate quantitative need.

Responses to the Consultation draft PPS6 are scheduled to be published in January 2009, with adoption of a revised PPS6 later that year (subject to the outcome of review of the consultation responses).

It will therefore be essential to keep the progress of Consultation Draft PPS6 under review into 2009. However the starting position for proposals for town centre uses at the present time is adopted PPS6 (2005), as detailed above.

At a local level, the Hartlepool Local Plan was adopted in April 2006. Town centre and retail policies are contained within the 'Retail, Commercial and Mixed Use Development Chapter'.

### 5.2.3 **The Sequential Approach**

With regard to the sequential approach to retail development, the Hartlepool Local Plan details the following in order of preference:

- The primary shopping area where land is allocated for further retail development;
- Other sites within the town centre;
- Edge of centre areas readily accessible to the primary shopping area;
- Victoria Harbour, a regionally important regeneration area offering opportunities for increased accessibility and integration with the Marina edge of town centre area; then
- Other out of centre locations within the limits to development which are accessible by a choice of means of transport, particularly public transport, and which offer significant regeneration opportunities

<b>Recommendation</b>
<p>The sequential approach should be in line with national planning policy guidance as set by PPS6, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Locations in appropriate existing centres where suitable sites or buildings for conversion are or are likely to become available within the development plan document period, taking account of an appropriate scale of development in relation to the role and function of the centre; then</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> edge of centre locations, with preference given to sites that are or will be well-connected to the centre; then</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> out of centre sites, with preference given to sites which will be well served by a choice of means of transport and which are close to the centre and have a high likelihood of forming links with the centre.</li></ul> <p>PPS6 defines edge of centre for the purposes of retail development as a location that is well connected to and within easy walking distance (i.e. up to 300 metres) of the primary shopping area, and account should be taken of local circumstances, for example the barriers enforced through the primary shopping areas being surrounded by heavily trafficked roads, particularly to the north and east.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Council approaches the sequential test in accordance with national guidance to ensure that the aims of this policy are not diluted or confused in any way. It is understood that the Council wishes to give precedence to major regeneration areas in relation to out-of-centre locations accessible by all means of transport. The sequential approach outlined in PPS6 does allow such development to come forward, but only after a thorough assessment of available town and edge-of-centre sites.</p>

#### **5.2.4 The Town Centre boundary**

PPS6 defines town centres, at Annex A, as the second level of centres after city centres which in many cases will be the principal centre in a local authority's area. The Hartlepool town centre boundary is currently too widely drawn to properly support the function of the town centre as the focus for the community and for public transport. It is too extensive, particularly to the north and north east insofar as retail planning is concerned.

The Drivers Jonas Retail Study Update March 2005 found there to be zero capacity for additional convenience floorspace, and extremely limited capacity for comparison floorspace (subject to improved market share and inflow of expenditure), through the period to 2011. With this in mind, and given that much of the area to the north and north east included within the town centre boundary lies up to 450/500m from the identified primary shopping area, the boundary should be drawn more tightly to reflect the role of the town centre, capacity for future floorspace and also the sequential approach advocated by PPS6.

We do acknowledge that Hartlepool, by the very nature of its historic development, has a town centre of 'two parts' – the 'retailing town centre' and the 'old town centre', comprising the Church Street area. This is a relatively unique feature of the town and one which will require careful thought in the re-setting of the town centre boundary given that the Church Street area accommodates much of the town's administrative functions and night-time economy (bars, restaurants etc.), all of which are valid components of the town centre's role.

This will need to be given careful consideration in due course.

However, with regard to retail planning matters, the Drivers Jonas Retail Study Update 2005 suggests that Victoria Road and Stockton Street form strong barriers to the town centre to the north and east and recommends at recommendation (q) that further retailing extending beyond these roads should only be permitted after careful consideration of retail capacity, their contribution to qualitative improvements and any other regeneration benefits they may offer, as well as the impact of development on the town centre.

<b>Recommendation</b>
<p>Drivers Jonas' key concern in relation to the town centre boundary as currently drawn is grounded in the potential effects of the extensive boundary on retail planning applications. However, we understand the need to maintain a town centre which is based not just on retail uses, but also on the other town centre uses detailed in PPS6.</p> <p>In light of this, it is recommended that the town centre boundary be reviewed with a view to emphasising a retail core, without encompassing the surrounding mixed use areas, the majority of which are divorced from the primary shopping area by Victoria Road or the dual carriageway Stockton Street.</p> <p>As important as redefining the town centre boundary, if not more so given the unique characteristics of the town, will be the policies that accompany the proposals map, which will need to be explicit in defining the Primary Retail Area of the town and those other areas of the town centre which, whilst still 'town centre' in PPS6 terms, are not considered appropriate as first choice for retail development.</p>

#### **5.2.5 Edge of Town Centres**

Although the edge of town centre areas allocated within the Hartlepool Local Plan each has designated uses that are and are not acceptable in the context of that particular site,



and a number of these exclude retailing from the permitted uses, experience has shown that the terminology of 'edge of town centre area' implies an edge of centre retail location, which is not the case in the majority of situations. COM4/8 South of Maritime Avenue is a good example of this where the applicant for retail development (as part of a wider mixed use development proposal) initially agreed with the Council that the site was edge of centre in retail terms given its 'edge of town centre area' status.

### Recommendations

With specific regard to the current Hartlepool Local Plan, the following sites are not considered to be edge of centre in terms of the PPS6 definition for retailing:

- East of Stranton - it is separated from the primary shopping area, and core town centre, by the dual carriageway Stockton Road. Confusion over its sequential status is added to by the wording of policy Com4.a.6 which states that A1 retail development will not be allowed unless it demonstrably serves the local area. Such loosely defined terminology could cause significant confusion and could lead to retail development being promoted on this site, which would otherwise be inappropriate.
- Lynn Street North/Mainsforth Terrace North - by virtue of its distance from the primary shopping area and the difficulties in accessing the site from what could be described as the core town centre, to the west of the dual carriageway Stockton Road.
- South of Maritime Avenue - by virtue of its distance from the primary shopping area and the difficulties in accessing the site from what could be described as the core town centre, to the west of the dual carriageway Stockton Road.
- Mill House - by virtue of its distance from the primary shopping area and the difficulties in accessing the site from what could be described as the core town centre, to the west of the dual carriageway Stockton Road.
- The Marina - by virtue of its distance from the primary shopping area and the lack of accessibility to what could be described as the core town centre.

It is recommended that these areas be redefined in a more appropriate way, perhaps as 'areas of opportunity', to avoid any future confusion regarding town centre uses. However, the intended uses behind each site should not be compromised, if the Council is still of the view that the areas should be promoted for the uses detailed under existing policy COM4. The suggested change in definition merely gives a clearer position in terms of third parties reviewing allocations, removing any possible connection with the PPS6 definition of 'edge of centre'.

### 5.2.6 Development Control Approach

The policy based approach detailed above should ensure consistency with national and regional policy with regard to town centre uses and specifically retailing. However, it is essential that these policies are applied at local level through the development control process when applications for town centre uses in non-town centre locations are received by the Council.

To assist this process, and given the significant changes that have occurred in the retail market since Drivers Jonas undertook an update of the Hartlepool Retail Study (in 2005), *it is recommended that this Retail Study be updated.*

This would also support advice set out within PPS6 which states that "Need assessments for the development plan document period should be carried out as part of the plan

*preparation and review process, and updated regularly. This will provide the basis for identifying the need for additional development and the appropriate scale of such development in the centres within an authority's area, bearing in mind their role and function. It will also enable the local planning authority to test alternative options and make choices about where growth should be accommodated."*

<b>Recommendation</b>
<p>It is recommended that Hartlepool's Retail Study 2005 is updated to present an accurate picture of the retail capacity position in the Borough, so that the Council is clear on their stance when faced with applications for planning permission which may present contrary evidence to the Drivers Jonas Study.</p>

### **5.3 Shopping centre enhancement**

Middleton Grange is the key retailing area for the town, however its external appearance is of poor quality, particularly given its prominent location and gateway status. Consultations have been undertaken with PPG, the owners of Middleton Grange Shopping Centre, and their appointed architect Ian Sutherland from CDA Architects to understand further the current proposals for improvement of the centre and their long term aspirations.

#### **5.3.1 Proposed works**

PPG is currently pursuing works to the shopping centre in terms of reconfiguration of the car park and improvements to signage and external elevations. The car park works will be undertaken by PPG to improve the traffic flow and increase the number of spaces available by an approximate 100 space net gain. These works will be undertaken at PPG's own cost whilst the revenue from this additional space will be received by HBC under the lease of the shopping centre car parks. In exchange for these works it is understood that HBC has agreed to relax a covenant within the lease which required PPG to extend the floor space of the shopping centre.

The external improvement works which PPG is also progressing with a planning application comprise of works to improve the signage and external appearance of Middleton Grange. These works are aesthetic only and come from a rebranding exercise recently undertaken. PPG will be using a three sails logo which reflects Hartlepool's maritime legacy.

PPG with its architects continue to progress the potential long term redevelopment plan of the existing market hall on the western mall with the ultimate goal of securing an end user who would occupy circa 50,000 sq ft over one floor. In addition to this the existing market would be reconfigured to provide more efficient space within the western mall. This proposal however will not come forward until the occupier is secured.

#### **5.3.2 Potential to enhance the Stockton Street frontage**

Middleton Grange was originally designed so that the rear servicing and parking area of the centre fronts onto Stockton Street. This eliminates any chance of achieving a sense of arrival in the town centre from the south and exacerbates the role of this part of Stockton Street as a town centre bypass rather than a destination.

There is limited scope for radically altering this situation in terms of building frontage but the following ideas would significantly enhance the sense of town centre arrival at this point and should be pursued in partnership with PPG:

- ❑ the closure of the subway and associated ramps would remove blight to the public realm and create valuable space;
- ❑ this space could be used to build a new extension to the 'corner site' (described below) with an active frontage facing south using subway land. A high quality frontage here would have a very favourable impact on the sense of arrival from the south;
- ❑ this extension could be augmented by the creation of a false lobby at the shopping centre entrance to the north. In this case a false lobby will consist of entrance doors positioned on the pavement line to create the impression that the shopping centre entrance starts before it actually does. This takes away the existing tunnel effect and creates a stronger frontage to Stockton Street;
- ❑ a major sculpture feature to the south of the subway site could be designed to act as a "postcard" feature and major arrival point to the town centre;
- ❑ a new pedestrian crossing scheme (see section 7.2) at Stockton Street /Victoria Road junction extending south as far as the shopping centre entrance would improve legibility and cater for easier crossing into the high priority site and the HCFE; and
- ❑ new cladding proposals to the existing elevations including the multi-storey car park could add a quality veneer to the existing tired elevations.

### 5.3.3 **Potential for refurbishment of key corner site**

The former Binns Store is a grade II listed building which occupies a prominent location at the junction with Church Street and currently accommodates Wilkinsons on the ground floor. Stage 1 identified this as a key site for the promotion of connectivity of Church Street and the primary shopping area.



However, there are significant constraints in bringing this part of the Shopping Centre back into active use. This building has inherent structural problems which restricts its use without undertaking substantial redevelopment. Such redevelopment has to date proven financially unviable as no economic use has yet been identified. In addition, addressing the structural issues would require relocation of the existing Wilkinsons store. CDA advise that relocation of Wilkinson should be achievable, subject to finding appropriate space within the shopping centre. Given the prominence of the building, opportunities to assist PPG should be explored.

From a transport perspective, one of the schemes to support the embedding of the new public transport Interchange and to complement the proposed bus priority measures on York Road, is bus /taxi and cycle priority on Victoria Road. This allows for reduced turning movements at the junction with Church Street and therefore allows for more time within the signal phasings to be dedicated to pedestrians. Public realm improvements could also be incorporated allowing for a more pleasant environment and potentially increase pedestrian footfall. This should assist in making the Binns Store a more desirable site, potentially encouraging Wilkinsons to make more of an effort to improve

the aesthetic appearance of the store and PPG to promote active re-use of the upper floors potentially as a small business space. Any alterations will still have to allow for access to certain properties and loading by vehicles.

#### **5.3.4 Car parking**

The car parking areas to the west and south of the Middleton Grange shopping centre are considered to be in a poor state of repair and do not offer a pedestrian friendly environment. They should be rationalised to improve dedicated pedestrian routes and public realm improvements, however this will need to be at the expense of some parking capacity. If York Road becomes bus priority then the car park will need to be realigned to accommodate the loss of access onto York Road.

### **5.4 Next Steps**

- incorporate retail planning policy recommendations set out above and the wider Investment Framework Strategy into the emerging Local Development Framework process;
- through negotiations with PPG, facilitate improvements to Middleton Grange's Stockton Street frontage as an early action. This should initially focus on the subway/corner site, as part of proposals for Stockton Street (see Section 7); and
- progress the redevelopment of the Wilkinsons corner building as the next phase of frontage improvement. This needs to include close liaison with PPG to establish the extent of structural issues, assist with options for relocating Wilkinsons and the potential uses for the upper floor spaces to bring the floor space back into use. Public sector funding assistance may be required to encourage PPG, and this could be justified if a viable employment/business space use can be proven for the upper floors.

## **6 Marina and Harbour**

### **6.1 Context**

Hartlepool's marina area has seen significant investment over the last few decades and has developed into the principle 'leisure' focus for the town, including indoor 'big box' facilities together with the boating activity located around the waterside. Further proposals currently progressing through the planning system by Jomast include an additional hotel together with commercial and residential facilities. The marina itself is a successful product within the East Coast sailing market, offering permanent and visitor berths which are close to key facilities such as shops and other supply requirements. The area is also home to the Historic Quay and Museum and the impressive HMS Trincomalee, all of which offer the key visitor attraction in the town at present.

In this context, the marina and harbour area are significantly important to the town – it can provide the uniqueness that places need to be attractive to visitors and has the potential to provide that within a quality environment. In terms of the harbour, we refer to 'Victoria Harbour' which is currently an operational port largely under the ownership of PD Ports. The harbour creates a physical barrier between the marina and the Headland area – an attractive and historic settlement located on peninsula that forms the natural shelter for the harbour – and is subject to comprehensive regeneration proposals promoted by Tees Valley Regeneration. The content, timing and approach to the regeneration of the Harbour are not for review as part of this project, but the key principles need to be understood and their impacts on the Central Area established. It is significantly important to the town that the marina and harbour proposals do not provide a competing product to that that should be provided within the Central Area and HBC and One NorthEast, who are also partners in the Victoria Harbour project, need to be clear whether the implications are significant and how this influences the long term proposals for the harbour.

Set out below are a number of key interventions and issues prevalent within the marina and harbour area which require further consideration as part of the Central Area framework. These include a number of key sites and also potential tourism related products.

### **6.2 Jacksons Landing**

#### **6.2.1 Background**

Jacksons Landing is a prominent building on a prominent site that protrudes into the marina water area. The nature and scale of the site provides the opportunity for a transformational, flagship development to be brought forward which could support a wide range of uses. Subject to the identification of appropriate partners/end users, the strategic location of the site, adjacent to the Historic Quay and over looking the marina, could include employment/tourism uses which could help to diversify and underpin the Town's economy and increase the vibrancy of the Central Area.

The building has had a troubled past as a commercial entity and has been vacant since 2004. There has been a delay in bringing forward the redevelopment of this site due to the difficulties in achieving vacant possession but the current freeholder, Schrodgers, is now considering the future of the building and/or potential redevelopment of the site. Drivers Jonas has undertaken discussions with Schrodgers and it is understood that the owner is in discussion with local developers to jointly bring forward a scheme but would also consider disposal of the site.

Drivers Jonas has established that Schroders is currently working with its architect Broadway Malyan to prepare proposals for the site which relate to a primarily residential scheme with active ground floor uses, including retail provision to the southern elevations. The scheme's content is driven by development economics and it is clear that Schroders will only bring forward this scheme once it has proven financial viability. Such a scheme is highly likely to be phased.

### 6.2.2 **Next steps**

Following discussions with HBC, it is likely that a scheme of the nature proposed by Schroders does not reflect the aspirations of the Council. The Council has aspirations that the site would provide a 'value added' development, including elements of employment and tourism uses building on the unique Marina location, instead of simply a high quality residential/retail outlet product. Further discussion with Schroders is key to the redevelopment of Jackson's Landing to align with HBC's aspirations, securing a viable solution to meet its planning and regeneration objectives.

The Council has three options in bringing forward a solution to Jacksons Landing:

- **Option 1 – influence the planning application.** This proposes that the Council chooses to work with Schroders and to influence the residential scheme through the planning process. The key input would be to ensure that the quality of the proposal creates something different in Hartlepool, a use that the town currently lacks but which will also strengthen its image and market attractiveness. The proposition of a high quality residential scheme, closely associated with the marina and not just a normal 'waterside' development, together with the provision of a pontoon, could be appropriate. In this context, design quality and also public realm, to create clear public areas around the edge of the marina, would be key areas for the Council to secure in any scheme coming forward;
- **Option 2 – planning application +** In addition to the above, the public sector could seek to secure additional elements to be included within the scheme through providing 'gap' funding, subject to conformity with State Aid regulations. The principle to this is that commercially unviable but policy desirable components could be secured through public sector investment, such as raising the specification of the building, higher quality public realm or provision of business space. Clarity will be required on whether the additional elements are desirable on that site (for example, the provision of business space should arguably be supported within the Central Area not at the marina) and the value for money of that investment when offset against other funding priorities and the reference case; and
- **Option 3 – acquisition.** In order to secure full control over the site, subject to available resources, HBC could strategically acquire Jackson's Landing. Under this scenario HCB would seek to appoint a private sector development partner to bring forward HBC's preferred mix of uses on the site. The final use mix and prevailing market conditions would determine the scale of any land receipt that may be generated, or indeed any additional gap funding that may be required. A clear vision/strategy for the site would need to be developed (supported by planning policy) in order that the viability of any proposed scheme could be assessed (through development appraisal) prior to the acquisition of the site. A critical component of this approach will be to identify potential project partners (i.e. end users) to reduce uncertainty and ensure the redevelopment of the site can be brought forward quickly.

It is clear that in order for HBC's aspirations for the site to be fulfilled public sector intervention will be required. This can, in part, be addressed through the development of clear planning guidance for the site, however, the preferred approach will hinge on the scale and nature of public investment available and/or the willingness of Shroders to



enter into a joint venture/partnership agreement, to bring forward non-residential uses on the site.

The next steps can be summarised as follows:

- ❑ One NorthEast and Hartlepool Council to establish the merits of acquiring and then investing in the redevelopment of the site. The emerging view from this work is that, if public sector funding needs to be prioritised carefully, then other projects have greater merits on the basis that the private sector is seeking to bring forward proposals for Jacksons Landing;
- ❑ As a principle, the public sector partners to establish whether they may be prepared to provide 'gap' funding to support alternative uses/qualitative improvements to the scheme; and
- ❑ The Council to be clear on the uses/standards that it wishes to see on this site, as a precursor to discussions with Schrodgers regarding its reuse of this site. The Council to work closely with the Schrodgers team to agree an acceptable scheme which delivers the appropriate benefits.

### **6.3 Victoria Harbour**

The Victoria Harbour project is being led by Tees Valley Regeneration and is currently undergoing a review and re-appraisal based on a number of significant factors relating to landowner aspirations and funding issues. The Council has also appointed consultants to prepare a supplementary planning document for the site, to provide a robust planning policy context that will support future planning applications and decisions at the site. It is not appropriate to comment on the outcome of the process or the timescale for this significant project coming forward, but it will be critical to ensure that uses proposed at the Harbour site compliment the proposals for the Central Area and that connectivity/linkages between Victoria Harbour and the Town Centre are optimised and seek to reduce existing severance issues. The Victoria Harbour proposals are transformational in scale and nature and would be underpinned by a stronger Central Area, that could provide enhanced employment opportunities and services to support the proposed new residential population.

### **6.4 The H<sub>2</sub>O project and Mill House Leisure Centre**

#### **6.4.1 Context**

In 2004 the Tourism Resources Company prepared the 'Hartlepool Tourism Strategy and Action Plan' which set out a number of investments that should be considered within the town to assist the development of the visitor economy. The H<sub>2</sub>O project was included within this strategy, given its prominence within the masterplan for Victoria Harbour. The project is a water based visitor attraction that also includes a replacement for the Mill House municipal swimming pool. The Mill House Leisure Centre site, located adjacent to the northern edge of the town centre adjacent to Hartlepool United Football Club, includes a public swimming pool which is rapidly approaching the end of its economic life.

In 2005, the Council commissioned work by Capita which looked at the feasibility of replacing the Mill House pool with the H<sub>2</sub>O centre, to also provide a significant water based regional scale visitor attraction for the town. The positive results of the feasibility study subsequently informed the 2007 Indoor Sports Leisure Strategy, prepared by

Capita on behalf of the Council, which embedded the H<sub>2</sub>O facility as a key project to deliver the preferred option.

The project has several key challenges as set out below:

- there is uncertainty in relation to the timescales for the delivery of Victoria Harbour as set out above, and at this point in time there is no allocation of public sector funds to support the development of H<sub>2</sub>O within the funding package currently envisaged for Victoria Harbour;
- the project has a c£26m capital cost (based on 2005 prices) and there is uncertainty of significant public sector funds to assist in its delivery subject to the outcome of wider Victoria Harbour funding considerations - the private sector is therefore key to implementing the project; and,
- the dilapidated condition of Mill House pool will require the Council to make strategic investment decisions in the short-mid term. These decisions are challenging to make in the absence of progress of H<sub>2</sub>O.

#### **6.4.2 Next steps – Mill House leisure centre**

In light of the uncertainty over Victoria Harbour's delivery timescale and the deterioration of the Mill House pool, the Council's Cabinet has instigated investigation of the feasibility of replacing the Mill House pool within the remodelling of the Mill House area as a whole, rather than as part of the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre concept.

The remodelling will also seek to integrate the needs and aspirations of Hartlepool United Football Club and Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Club within a leisure-themed mixed use masterplan for the Mill House area.

Key tasks moving forward are therefore:

- through discussion with stakeholders , establish the potential component parts of a new Mill House masterplan including replacement pool and ancillary facilities, enhanced Football Club and indoor bowls club facilities, commercial leisure development and public car parking;
- produce a land use masterplan incorporating new and retained facilities;
- establish estimated capital costs;
- establish ongoing revenue costs for the pool;
- explore funding and procurement options, including review of comparators and market testing;
- envelop overall 'Business Plan' setting out project components, funding and procurement proposals; and
- define "Action Plan" detailing tasks and responsibilities to progress proposals.

#### **6.4.3 Next steps – H<sub>2</sub>O centre**

It is not practical to progress further investigation of the feasibility of the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre concept until there is greater clarity about the form and timing of the overall Victoria Harbour project and also the emerging findings from the Mill House leisure centre investigations referred to above. Given such clarification, key tasks would be:

- re-assess the definition of the project content, with or without a swimming pool replacement for Mill House; and
- undertake market testing of either H2O Centre at Victoria Harbour or modified H2O Centre (without pool) at Victoria Harbour or potential alternative regional visitor attraction(s) at Victoria Harbour or elsewhere in Hartlepool.

## 6.5 The Tall Ships Race

The consultancy team has considered the opportunity to identify investments that could be made through the Central Area Framework, which would also be required or would benefit the Tall Ships Race to be held in August 2010. Discussions have been held with the Council and the Tall Ships Director and the following conclusions reached:

- the Tall Ships event represents a major tourist attraction and is an excellent opportunity to market Hartlepool and secure repeat visitors to the Town;
- improvements to key gateways, and connection routes would assist in enhancing the image of the town to visitors (this is discussed in the following section) and encourage visitors to access parts of the Central Area (i.e. the Shopping Centre) not directly associated with the Tall Ships event;
- alongside improved connectivity, Public Art installations could play an important role in enhancing the town's image and changing visitor perceptions of the area. Potential investment in 'artwork' should be given early priority to ensure exhibits are in place prior to the Tall Ships event. HBC should consult with both CCAD and HCFE and develop a comprehensive public art programme to align with the timetable of the Tall Ships event;
- the Tall Ships Race is a significant opportunity for marketing the town, including inviting investors to view the work carried out and the opportunities available. This would demonstrate that HBC is committed to partnering with investors/developers, to assist both parties to achieve strategic objectives;
- there is a strong opportunity for business support/improvement legacy, particularly within the hospitality sector and it could be that some of the measures set out in this framework would assist that; and
- a post evaluation of the event could determine land requirements and uses which could be taken into account in any future masterplan for subsequent bids. The potential to keep in place a permanent infrastructure to host the tall ships would be a great asset.

## 7 Connections

### 7.1 Introduction

The Stage 1 analysis identified that a lack of connectivity is a challenging constraint across key areas of the town centre. The severance created by Stockton Street coupled with the poor legibility and access afforded by the Middleton Grange shopping centre creates a barrier to genuine connectivity west to east. As new regeneration proposals emerge, Church Street will increasingly act as both a key destination and a major connector between the marina and the retail area. The new interchange at the rail station needs to be suitably integrated so that improved connectivity is achieved across the Central Area. The current railway acts as an east-west barrier, segregating the marina from the centre of Hartlepool and the proposed interchange scheme includes proposals for a new footbridge across the railway, which would address this problem.

This section provides recommendations for enhancing connectivity across the wider area, focusing on potential options for addressing the Stockton Street severance issue. This section also considers wider connectivity issues including the two gateway sites – the Odeon and Stranton Roundabout – identified in Stage 1.

### 7.2 Stockton Street

Hartlepool has a fairly compact town centre, and therefore should be easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. However, connectivity within the town centre, particularly between Middleton Grange shopping centre and Church Square, the rail station and the marina is considered to be poor. This is predominantly due to the busy nature of Stockton Street dual carriageway that effectively severs the town centre. The prominence of the car is intimidating and has a negative effect on the attractiveness of the area and its user friendliness.

A range of potential solutions have been considered to address this problem. Following discussions with the client, two potential solutions, described below, are being investigated further, an aspirational option and a preferred option.

#### 7.2.1 Aspirational Option

The aspirational option is to reduce the Stockton Street dual carriageway to single carriageway between its junctions with Park Drive and Victoria Road. This will allow for substantial improvements in east west connectivity; provide substantial space for public realm improvements and allow for improvements to the façade of Middleton Grange. It is perceived that this reduction in capacity on the main north south route through the town will have a substantial impact on congestion, thus producing a more car dominated environment, and stifling economic growth.

Working with the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, a series of scenarios have been run through the existing Tees Valley TRIPS model. The output from the model will show how traffic would be rerouted following interventions i.e. reducing Stockton Street to single carriageway, and the effect can then be assessed. The modelling exercise has indicated that during the peak hours there would be transference of traffic to existing routes parallel to Stockton Street such as Mainsforth Terrace and York Road and that congestion at the Stockton Street/Victoria Road junction would increase. Furthermore, when York Road becomes a public transport only link, the displaced traffic will relocate further west again, into residential areas.

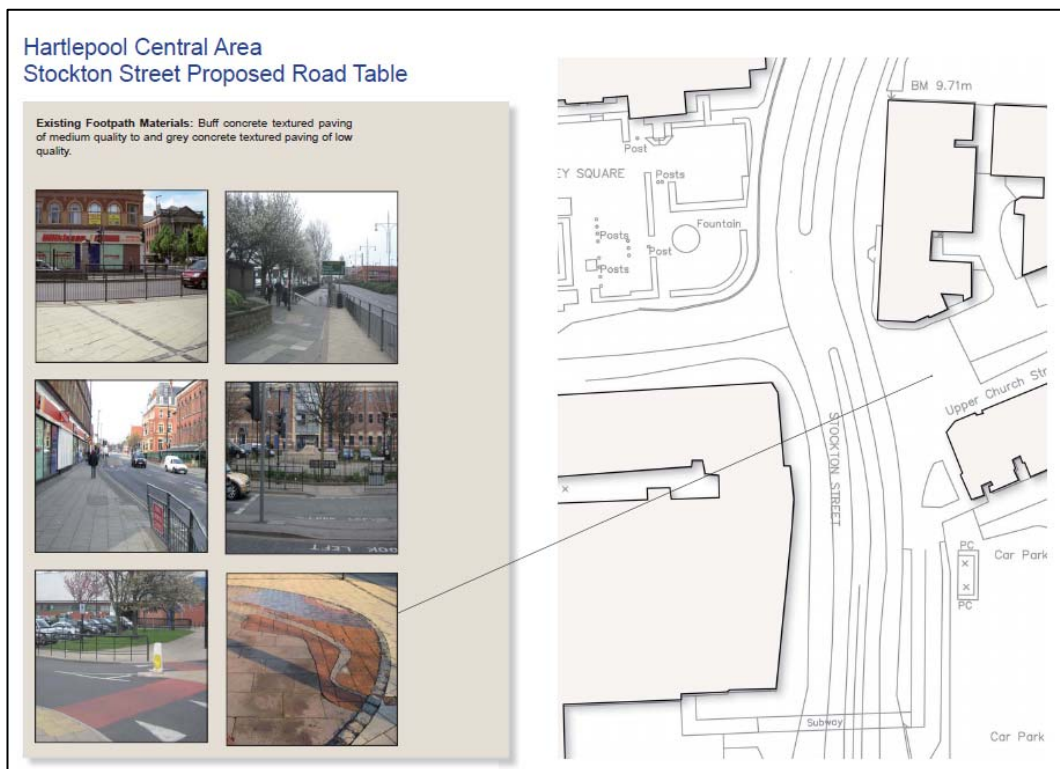
The modelling does not, however, take account of modal shift to more sustainable modes, as a result of the reduced capacity but also as a result of the increased public transport linkages and pedestrian/cycle connectivity.

Irrespective of the outcome of this exercise, it is anticipated that this option would need to be supported by substantial measures to encourage a modal shift from private motor vehicles. These measures could include improvements to bus routes around the centre, park and ride schemes, a strengthened pedestrian and cycle network, and a revised parking strategy. Based on JMP's advice, this is a medium-long term aspiration, which would accompany other modal shift interventions.

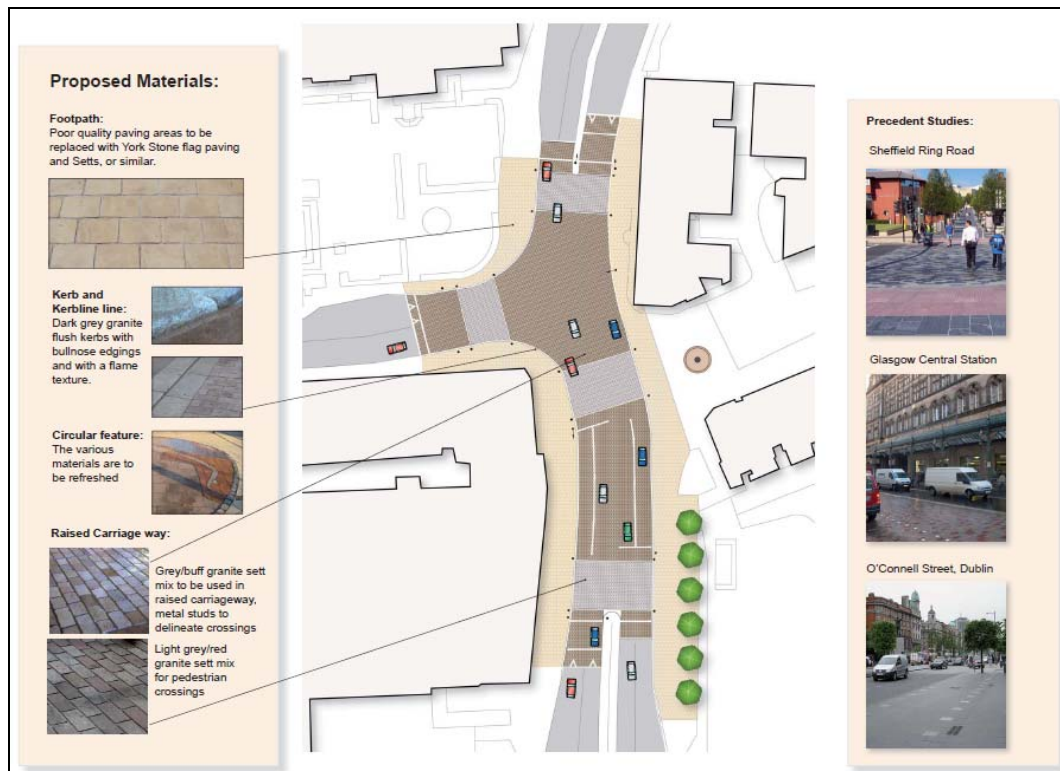
### 7.2.2 Preferred Scheme

The preferred scheme is a more easily deliverable approach, which still addresses the poor east west connectivity between Middleton Grange shopping centre and Church Street. It also allows for some improvements to be made to access and the appearance of the shopping centre. The possible proposals are illustrated in Figure 7.1 and described in greater detail below.

Figure 7.1 Preferred junction improvements







The key elements of the scheme include:

- ❑ the provision of a raised plateau over the extents of the *Stockton Street/Victoria Road Junction*, extending as far south as the entrance into Middleton Grange shopping centre. This plateau will be raised to full kerb height and will physically force vehicles to slow down, whilst also giving the perception to users of a pedestrian friendly environment. It is understood that this route is the main route through Hartlepool, and is used by buses and emergency service vehicles. The ramp gradients have therefore been designed in line with the 'Middlesbrough Council Design Guide and Specification'. The junction will have a pedestrian crossing on all approaches and will include a full pedestrian phase. The southern approaches of the junction will incorporate two crossings to address the two obvious desire lines across Stockton Street from Victoria Road and Middleton Grange to Church Square and the College;
- ❑ to further encourage vehicles to slow down, and to make the crossing distance shorter for pedestrians, the carriageway will be narrowed and the central reserve and barrier will be removed. Pedestrians will therefore be able to cross in one phase as opposed to the staggered junction currently in place. Puffin technology should be introduced to give sufficient time for all pedestrians to cross safely;
- ❑ in association with the new crossing fronting the exit from Middleton Grange shopping centre, it is intended to fill in the existing subway and ramps. The subway is considered to offer an unpleasant environment for its users and is a haven for anti-social behaviour. Whilst upgrade schemes to underpasses have proved to be successful elsewhere, for Stockton Street it is felt essential that a statement is made about the predominance given to the pedestrian at the expense of the car at this key location. The space afforded by the closure of the subway and associated ramps could also allow for a much improved frontage to the shopping centre, subject to the PPG (the centre owners) aspirations (see section 5); and,



- ❑ the detailed design has to be agreed and appropriate maintenance budgets established for the new Stockton Street crossing. It is intended that the new crossing together with the filling in of the subway/ramps, the improvements to the shopping centre and the refreshing of Church Square will create a series of quality integrated spaces which will enhance the sense of arrival and connectivity within Hartlepool. All of these improvements will augment the Church Street spine and help connect the new transport interchange, Trincomalee Wharf, the HCFE and the ISQ.

The reconfiguration of the junction and the introduction of the full pedestrian phase will undoubtedly have some impact on the capacity of the junction. However the impact is not perceived to be substantial, and the connectivity and public realm benefits are considered to outweigh any negative impacts. It is anticipated that the costs of the scheme, not including any reconfiguration of Middleton Grange shopping centre could be in the region of £750,000 not including design fees, contingencies or the relocation or protection of utilities.

Key tasks to implement this scheme are therefore:

- ❑ undertake detailed design work – including the preparation of an accurate cost estimate, preparation of a bill of quantities, collection of utility information and modelling of the traffic signals; and
- ❑ further discussions with PPG with regard to the reconfiguration of the Middleton Grange entrance to build on the opportunity provided by the closure of the subway and its ramps.

### 7.3 Wider connectivity projects

Tees Valley Metro is a significant project for promoting connectivity across the Tees Valley and integrating Hartlepool within the sub-region. It comprises rail infrastructure works to increase provision of high quality, fast rail services throughout the Tees Valley. The regional scheme will have a direct impact on Hartlepool through improvements to the existing rail station, the creation of additional track capacity, and enhanced rail connections throughout the district and the region. The Metro proposals and the CAIF are mutually re-inforcing, promoting both a stronger and better connected sub-region. The CAIF focuses on enhancing the town's economy through prioritising skills and innovation opportunities and creating a more attractive business location. The ISQ proposals are located within the immediate vicinity of the railway station and the proposed Metro link underpins the attractiveness of the area by increasing the accessibility of the ISQ to businesses and residents (i.e. potential employees/students) across the sub-region.

As stated previously Hartlepool is a relatively compact town centre, surrounded by residential areas, is predominantly flat and the land use patterns provide the opportunity for extensive pedestrian movements. The existing environment however does not encourage walking and cycling and permeability is hindered by the main vehicular routes. There is a lack of priority at numerous locations, existing facilities are outdated and do not cater for the mobility or visually impaired. There is the opportunity to provide considerable pedestrian and cycle improvements; however these will often need to be at the expense of road capacity.

A range of projects could include the following:

- ❑ the potential for pedestrian and cycle routes to outlying areas such as Hart, Elwick, Dalton Piercey and Newton Bewley, should be investigated;

- ❑ improvements to National Cycle Network (NCN 14), to provide a national recreational connection that could potentially attract numerous tourist trips;
- ❑ consideration of an enhanced and extended pedestrian signage scheme around the town centre;
- ❑ improvements to the cross town connections, particularly the A689, with consideration for signalised puffin or toucan crossings;
- ❑ the marina area is also almost completely severed from the rest of the town with a similar situation at Victoria Harbour and the Headland. The potential to connect all of these areas via a coastal path is still a possibility. The continuation of coastal route, including investigation of a route via Navigation Point and widening of the existing lock gates, should be explored;
- ❑ pedestrian and cycle improvements that were proposed as part of the Victoria Harbour transport assessment would aid connectivity from the marina to the town centre, particularly on Marina Way and Middleton Road;
- ❑ this would be underpinned by the proposed landmark cycle and pedestrian bridge from Victoria Harbour to the headland. This major infrastructure project is an important component of the wider Victoria Harbour regeneration strategy and warrants careful analysis over the viability/funding for the bridge in the context of the wider Victoria Harbour regeneration proposals;
- ❑ a tourist walking route around the marina to be investigated, which will require consent from private landowners and should be considered as part of a planning proposal for Jacksons landing. This could include tourist information and interpretation boards;
- ❑ the undertaking of an audit of existing pedestrian routes around the town centre, with an emphasis on the mobility impaired and visually impaired; and
- ❑ the new public transport interchange at the station will incorporate a secondary bridge over the railway (as part of the phase 2 works) in the location of the existing bridge, as a segregated pedestrian route into the new interchange. This will facilitate access from the marina area to the station. Furthermore, the removal of turning movements at the Stockton Street/Church Street junction will allow more time to be apportioned to pedestrians accessing the station.

The majority of these schemes could be implemented as and when funding becomes available, or as part of a rolling programme. The costs are unlikely to be excessive and all would offer benefits for the Central Area, particularly if they were provided in advance of The Tall Ships Race in 2010.

Key initial tasks can be identified as:

- ❑ ensure that the proposed transport interchange addresses key connectivity issues created by the existing railway line and station;
- ❑ support and champion the Metro Link proposals in Hartlepool;
- ❑ identify a comprehensive pedestrian and cycle network connecting outlying areas to the town centre, and connecting key points within the town centre. An audit of these routes needs to be carried out to allow for the preparation of a priority list and the allocation of funding for the foreseeable future; and,
- ❑ build on the existing pedestrian signage network to incorporate new facilities e.g. the Public Transport Interchange. The potential to provide a signed route around the marina incorporating historical information boards would compliment the more formal pedestrian signage. Provision would be invaluable in advance of The Tall Ships Race as so many visitors will be arriving in Hartlepool.

## **7.4 Gateway sites**

### ***Odeon***

The Odeon site is a gateway site to the north of the Central Area and has been subject to sporadic private sector interest; however no viable schemes are currently being promoted. Options for this site are limited with residential use representing the most obvious option for bringing the site back into active use. However, within the context of the Central Area this site is not considered a priority for public sector intervention at this stage.

### ***Stranton Roundabout***

Stranton roundabout is the southern gateway to the town centre. On approach from the south the church tower is clearly visible as a focal point but the lower foreground is taken up by serviceable but poor quality retail units. To upgrade the urban design quality these units would be replaced by a public realm scheme and possible new retail commensurate with the quality environment of Stranton. However, taking account of the complexity of the existing interests in the site and the need to prioritise other areas of the town centre this is not considered to be a priority scheme at this stage.

## 8 Delivering Hartlepool's aspirations – strategic delivery principles

The future economic success of Hartlepool will depend on the ability of the town to meet its aspirations and potential as a sub-regional centre in the Tees Valley. The delivery of an improved Central Area 'offer', with a step-change in the quality and range of facilities and assets is critical to realising the town's economic potential. Whilst improvements could be made in the near future, there is no short-term 'fix' and the approach to delivery must combine early project development actions with long term strategic planning. Key principles to drive forward the Framework are considered below.

### 8.1 Robust policy as a delivery tool

The emphasis in the Investment Framework is the reinforcement of the Central Area as the town's core commercial and 'value add' business location. This will require the application of improved/more robust policy mechanisms to re-enforce the primacy of the Central Area, and particularly the core town centre, as the location for key economic activities – higher education, retail, commercial leisure, knowledge-based business, civic service delivery etc. This provides the foundation on which project delivery activity can be built. Without a clear policy framework, the ability of the public sector to influence, either directly or indirectly, the scale, nature and location of private sector investment will be limited. It is the policy framework that gives legitimacy to both decisions and actions by the public sector to support implementation of the Investment Framework.

Key roles for the public sector will include:

- ❑ demonstrate delivery capability in the Central Area – short term actions by the public sector, to act as a catalyst to long term investment prospects for the town, are critical;
- ❑ engaging with key stakeholders to demonstrate the 'investability' of the Central Area and to secure commitment to long term proposals for the town centre; and
- ❑ championing the Framework for the Central Area and ensuring the public sector delivers its obligations.

### 8.2 Reducing investment risks

Ultimately the aim of the Investment Framework is to set out how the public sector can increase the scale, rate and, perhaps most importantly, the quality of private investment in Hartlepool's Central Area. This requires a delivery framework that:

- ❑ gives clarity to investors on the spatial/policy emphasis for different uses in different sub-areas of the town centre;
- ❑ offers a degree of certainty regarding key public realm investments;
- ❑ reduces investment risk by minimising competitive threats, particularly from proposals outside of the core town centre; and
- ❑ demonstrates effective and competent co-ordination of public sector enabling activity.

It is important to note developers and investors value policy certainty and credible public sector interface as much as direct financial support.

### **8.3 Narrowing the focus for delivery – ‘Doing a few things really well’**

The rationale for the Investment Framework has been to focus on a number of key locations/projects that the team consider would 'make a difference' in the Central Area. The approach has been to avoid too many initiatives, which dilute discernable impact, and focus on a clear set of priorities. Successful strategy delivery requires focus on a narrow range of key projects with best prospects for sustainable impacts and which can be delivered to the highest quality thresholds. 'Doing a few things really well' must be the starting point to transformational change in the role and profile of Hartlepool.

### **8.4 Leadership**

The delivery issues associated with the Investment Framework should not be underestimated and all parties are fully aware that progressing feasibility studies and strategies has proved challenging for the public sector in the recent past. Greater focus and coordination within the local authority will be required to achieve delivery of the projects set out in the Framework and it will be critical to ensure dedicated and experienced resource is made available.

'Delivery' in the context of the long-term ambition for Hartlepool is also more than finding many sources of public sector funding. The level of change envisaged within the Framework will require significant investment. Moving forward, the fundamental change in the form proposed requires a delivery approach based on 'strategic management' not just 'project management'. The delivery of the masterplan therefore requires an enhanced form of 'delivery management' – one that:

- places the Investment Framework at the heart of local economic, planning, transport and all aspects of public policy making that can support the delivery process;
- is driven by a strong political will and leadership;
- embraces the widest set of stakeholders within and beyond the town;
- gives the highest level of confidence to the private sector and reduces, or at least is perceived to reduce, investment risks; and
- is led by strategic planning not opportunism.

### **8.5 Key components of a delivery strategy**

The key components of the delivery strategy are as follows:

- achieving status for the Investment Framework;
- championing and marketing its principles and the key development opportunities; and,
- co-ordinating delivery activity.

#### **8.5.1 Achieving status for the Investment Framework**

The Framework needs to become an embedded feature of local and sub-regional planning and economic development policy. Coherent alignment between the Investment Framework proposals and the Local Development Framework is a pre-requisite for delivery, including public sector intervention. The following will be key to ensuring that the proposals can become embedded in both planning and economic policy:

### ***Stakeholder support***

The Framework has been developed through discussions with key stakeholders and there is an understanding of its rationale and objectives within the project partners including One NorthEast. The Framework has sought to reflect sub-regional and regional economic / spatial policy objectives and to this extent it is effectively aligned.

Given the market context and location of Hartlepool, it is reasonable to consider that changing perception/image will be a key element of the Investment Framework and this will require public sector investment in a range of 'renaissance/place making' projects, in addition to direct economic interventions. A key role of the Framework is therefore to promote the importance of this to funding bodies. In practical terms, it will therefore be critical that specific funding bids need to demonstrate their contribution to the overall strategy as set out in the Framework.

### ***Achieving materiality in decision-making***

Delivery of the Framework relies fundamentally on a long-term commitment from the Borough Council to its principles. This may require difficult decisions to be made – delivery can be as much about proposals that are resisted as well as those that are delivered. The Framework needs to become a material consideration in decision-making, particularly planning decisions which provide a degree of certainty to other stakeholders and confidence to the private sector about the commitment of the Council to the Central Area. It should ensure that short-term variations in political complexion do not unnecessarily undermine long-term strategy delivery.

### ***Supporting key regional and sub-regional policy***

Development of the Investment Framework has given full consideration to the range of policy objectives, particularly relating to economic and competitiveness, that provide the context for public sector interaction within the sub-region. That context is clear at this stage - there is a priority focus on enhancing the skill base, providing new 'value add' employment opportunities and addressing the disconnected/dysfunctional nature of the Central Area. This needs to be kept under review if the Framework is to maintain its status and adapt to evolving policy instruments and objectives.

## **8.5.2 *Championing and marketing the Framework***

Creating 'status for the framework' is principally about 'internal' governance arrangements within Hartlepool and the sub-region. The critical step involves projecting the strategy beyond local interests and promoting its principles to external private sector investors. This requires a high profile and well co-ordinated approach that highlights priority development opportunities and potential within the Central Area.

### ***Branding***

An effective 'branding' strategy should emphasise the ambitions and opportunities being created through the Framework. 'Place' branding has become a key feature of many urban strategies and its importance should not be under-estimated – a poor branding strategy can have long-term negative implications while a successful approach to branding can serve to transform external perceptions of a place. The key assets for Hartlepool are the marina and its nautical heritage, which together with the Tall Ships Race in 2010, is potentially the concept through which to brand the town. The key message to get across is that Hartlepool is 'open for business', and will work with the private sector to achieve objectives.

### ***A Central Area 'champion'***

Effective delivery requires a 'champion' to provide drive and focus. Leadership will be



crucial in maintaining and increasing momentum on delivery. This is a high profile role requiring well developed political and strategy skills as well as core expertise in property development management. Early efforts should be made to confirm an individual with the appropriate seniority, influence and skills to act as the 'champion' or Director for the Framework, acting as the Executive lead for the Council. Subject to resources, it may be necessary to build an executive 'delivery team' around the Director as the intensity of delivery activity increases.

### **8.5.3 Co-ordinating delivery activity**

In the immediate delivery phase the focus of effort should be upon generating momentum and profile for the Framework and development opportunities. A balance of effort is required between strategic planning / policy alignment and project development – both are critical to securing funding whether public or private sector. Certainly, the skill set required in the delivery team in advancing the Framework at the outset will go beyond project management skills only. Specifically, activities will include the following:

- co-ordinate ongoing stakeholder engagement and act as the principal advocate. Critical in this regard will be the need to develop strong working relationships with third parties; such as the HCFE and CCAD, key private sector landowners and economic investment bodies;
- define the investment priorities based on a targeted approach towards the Central Area and its opportunities;
- develop a branding and marketing strategy and a prioritised 'development/investment prospectus' for the Central Area;
- refine the level of information on each development site in terms of development capacity, infrastructure requirements and site assembly needs;
- through representations, ensure the alignment of key policy tools to the Framework, including planning, transportation, economic and environmental policies, particularly through the LDF;
- co-ordinate the necessary inputs to work up detailed design proposals for key public realm proposals, including transport and environmental works;
- prepare preliminary development briefs for each of the priority opportunities;
- work with owners / occupiers of key sites to advance development projects;
- engage with private sector developers to promote development opportunities in the town centre, including through competitive processes; and
- co-ordinate bids for public sector resources to advance priority public realm works.

A key element in coordinating delivery will be a clear strategy for the acquisition and disposal of land assets. This could take a number of forms including:

- the structuring of an appropriate vehicle, using the assets of the Council and the private sector. This would require a private sector party with funding, expertise and experience in regeneration and development to partner with the public sector, undertake development activity and recycle receipts. This could be challenging in the short to medium term given current market issues but would be a beneficial step that prepared Hartlepool for 'market improvements'; or
- to progress individual sites or groups of sites on a single basis, within an overall managed Central Area Framework. This could result in a number of projects progressing at the same time with different parties therefore having a lower risk profile.

## 8.6 Key early tasks

In summary, the key short term tasks and challenges can be identified as:

<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> establish contact with CCAD and proactively address their retention within the town - potentially through supporting an Accommodation Strategy;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop relationship with the Digital City Director and progress Hartlepool's funding submission;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> engage with Schroders regarding Jacksons Landing and establish an agreed way forward; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop a strong working relationship with PPG, regarding the improvements to the Shopping Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Project development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare the detailed design and procure the improvements to Stockton Street;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> engage with Middleton Grange owners PPG, to progress the subway closure and new centre unit/entrance;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop the Depot relocation project within the Council - in particular the location of a new site;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> commission a high-level review of tourism objectives and potential regional scale tourism project for Hartlepool;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> progress the Mill House financial feasibility study and masterplan; and,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop a strategic acquisitions programme for the Central Area.</li> </ul>
<b>'Championing'</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> establish principal contact and 'lead' individual for the Central Area; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> adopt the Framework as 'strategy' and ensure its inclusion with emerging LDF documentation.</li> </ul>

## **Appendix1 – Plan of Central Area**

# 1 Site Plan



## **Appendix 2 – List of consultees**

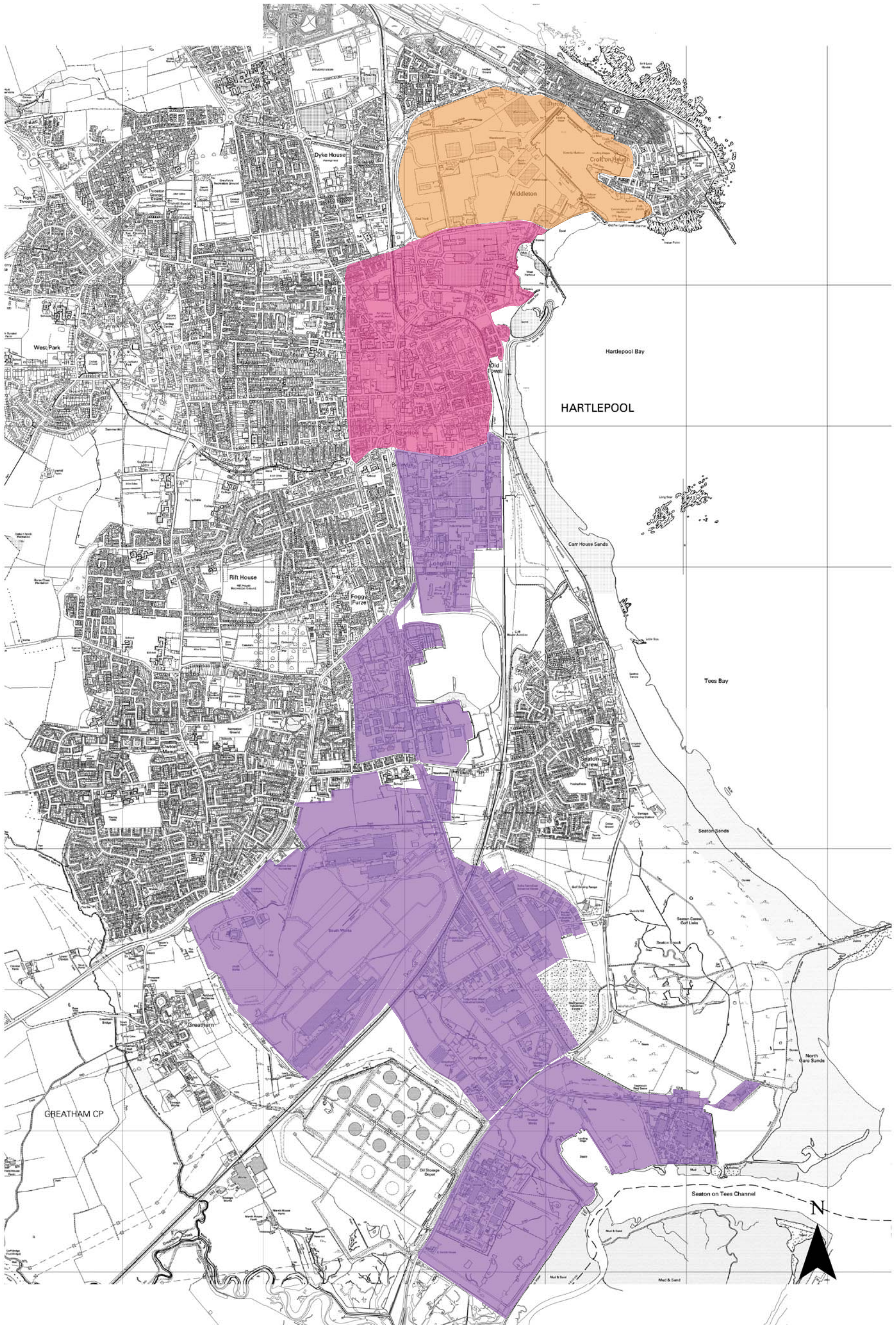
Stage 1 & 2 Consultations		
Name	Position	Organisation
Alastair Howarth	Development Director	ONE
Tim Watts	Senior Urban Design Advisor	ONE
Julia Histon	Development Manager	TVR
Colin Horsley	Coastal Arc Co-ordinator	Hartlepool Borough Council & Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Stuart Green	Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)	Hartlepool Borough Council
John Mennear	Assistant Director Community Services (Hartlepool Maritime Experience)	Hartlepool Borough Council
Julia Pinchen	Business Liaison Manager	Hartlepool Borough Council
Antony Steinberg	Economic Development Manager	Hartlepool Borough Council
Ian Jopling	Technical Services (Highways Issues)	Hartlepool Borough Council
Peter Frost	Traffic Team Leader	Hartlepool Borough Council
Philip Hepburn	Parking Services Manager	Hartlepool Borough Council
Alastair Smith	Head of Technical Services	Hartlepool Borough Council
Mike Blair	Technical Services (Highways Issues)	Hartlepool Borough Council
Sarah Scarr	Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager	Hartlepool Borough Council
Keith Lucas	Asset and Property Manager	Hartlepool Borough Council
Tracey Lax	Property Information Officer	Hartlepool Borough Council
David Dockree	Property Services	Hartlepool Borough Council
Ian Bond	Ecology Officer	Hartlepool Borough Council
Steven Wilkie	Landscape Architect Team Leader	Hartlepool Borough Council
Michelle Daurat	Project Manager	Hartlepool Tall Ships 2010
Lynn Philips	Asset Manager	PPG Land, Edinburgh
Alistair Smith	Asset Manager	PPG Land, Edinburgh
Kelvin Jacobs	Asset Manager	Urbanism (Crown House)
Russ Green	Chief Executive	Hartlepool United FC
Allan Henderson	Director	Hartlepool Marina Ltd
David Stubbs	Neighbourhood Services Manager	Hartlepool Borough Council
Graham Frankland	Head of Procurement and Property Services	Hartlepool Borough Council
Mark Elliot	Director	Digital City
Sandra Cartilage	Head of Economic and Community Regeneration	Middlesbrough Council
David Laughton	Head of Estates	Cleveland College of Art and Design
Andrew Steele	Assistant Principal	Hartlepool College of Further Education
Adam Jones	Principal Architect (Architect for HCFE)	Bond Bryan
Tim Fox	Principal Consultant (Advising HBC on SBZ strategy)	Ecotec
Peter Olsen	Chairman	Chamber of Commerce
Leo Gillen	Chairman	Hartlepool Economic Forum
Ian Sutherland	Architect	CDA Architects
Kelvin Jacobs	Development Manager	Urbanism- Owners of Crown House
Greig Cavey	Estate Agent	Commercial Agents for Cascades Showroom and The Old Post Office Building
David Petitt		Telereal (managers BT Building)



## **Appendix 3 – Context of town centre**



# 16 Town Centre Context



Key

- Victoria Harbour Development Boundary
- The Town Centre and Marina
- Southern Business Zone

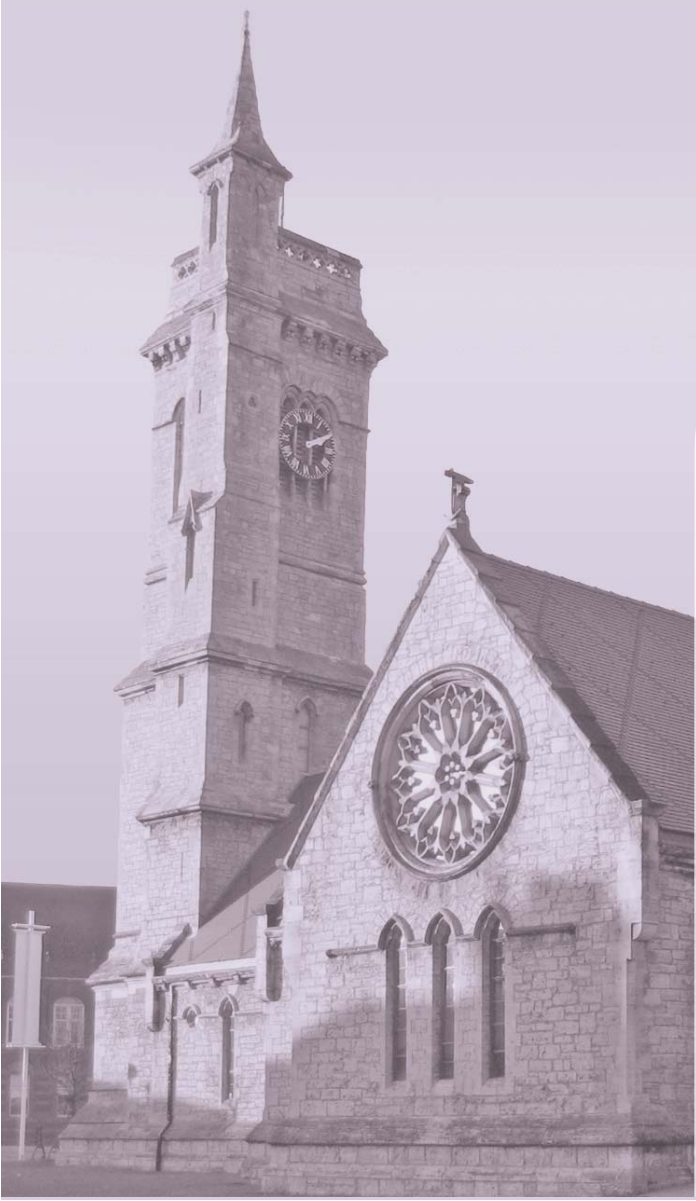


## **Appendix IV – Design Guide**

# Hartlepool

Design Principles  
and Guidance

Appendix IV



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# 1 Purpose of Document

The purpose of this appendix document is to provide an Urban and Landscape Framework for Hartlepool Town Centre. This sets out overarching design principles and guidance for future improvements and brings together various projects identified within the Central Area Investment Framework & Action Plan.

## Why invest in public realm?

Quality, vibrant public realm forms a key component of any successful town or city centre. By improving layout, reducing the dominance of private vehicles and by making the centre more accessible, pedestrians feel more comfortable. Creating a distinctive environment helps to attract new footfall, provide a new sense of focus for the community and in turn create a platform for investment. Rolling out a programme of streetscape enhancements and improving levels of maintenance will help complete redevelopments already proposed and will encourage new investment.

Locally, investment in Newcastle, Darlington and Middlesbrough has shown that public realm enhancement can improve an area's competitive position whilst enhancing its heritage value. There are literally thousands of other examples in Britain and abroad where recent public realm improvement has been effective. It is vital that Hartlepool not only keeps up, but overtakes place rivals.



*Darlington Pedestrian Heart*



*Grainger Town*



# 1 Context

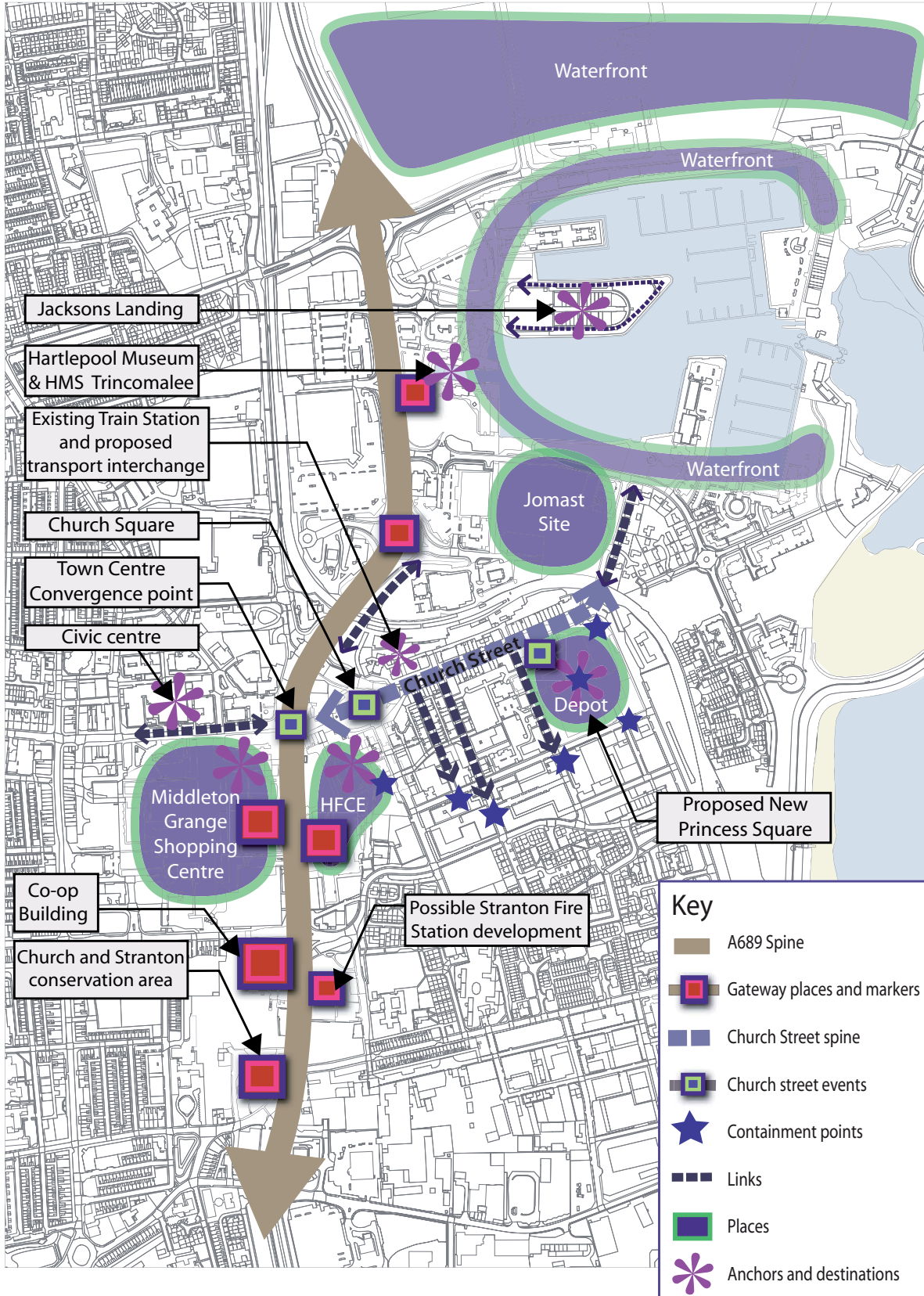
## WIDER CONTEXT

Hartlepool is situated in the north east of England with Middlesbrough to the south, Durham to the north-west and both Sunderland and Newcastle to the north. The study area is focused on Hartlepool town centre and the A689 passes through the centre on 'Stockton Street' and Stranton road.



## 2 Urban & Landscape Framework

### CONCEPT DIAGRAM





## 2 Principles

The diagram (opposite) sets out general principles for exiting assets, new development and public realm improvements. The following themes have been identified:

### DEFINING THE TOWN CENTRE:

- Extend the Town Centre's energy all the way along Church Street into the Information Skills Quarter to reinvigorate it as the main street. Insulate this energy by anchoring either end with new development (HCFE /College and Depot Site).
- Beyond the Church Street Spine a series of locations act as containment points to prevent the town centre energy escaping.
- Along the A689 a series of gateway places and markers should announce the journey into the Town Centre culminating in the convergence point with Church Street.

### CREATING AND LINKING PLACES:

- Emphasise a series of places and anchors to create destinations, landmarks and busy pedestrian routes.
- Create a proper active spine extending from Middleton Grange Shopping Centre through to the waterfront and Marina (continue to develop a continuous marina walk anchored by development).
- Break down the A689 barrier for pedestrians between Middleton Grange and Church Square. This location should become the Town Centre convergence point, where vehicles travelling along the A689 truly arrive in the Town Centre and pedestrians are treated to a showcase route along the Church Street Spine.
- Provide a series of high quality events or happenings along the Church Street Spine. These take the form of public spaces including the existing Church Square and proposed Princess Square.
- Emphasise views and horizons to showcase existing masts, towers, steeples and future features.



### SETTING A QUALITY BENCHMARK:

- Upgrade the public realm creating a network of high quality streets and spaces.
- Demonstrate intent along Church St and Church Square to raise the bar.
- Introduce more natural materials that will stand the test of time

This framework identifies that the key drivers for change in terms of urban and landscape intervention are the **Church Street Spine** and **A689 Spine**. The following pages set out overarching principles and guidance for these.

## 3 I.S.Q. Anchors Sites

### ANCHORS

- The creation of two anchors or 'bookends' at either end of the Church street spine will begin the process reinvigorate the length of the street.
- The anchors will provide destinations at either end in the form of the new Hartlepool College of Further Education and the Depot Site (which could potential become the new art college base).
- New development on the Depot site should demonstrate design quality and promote further investment along the spine.

#### 1 College & HCFE Proposals:

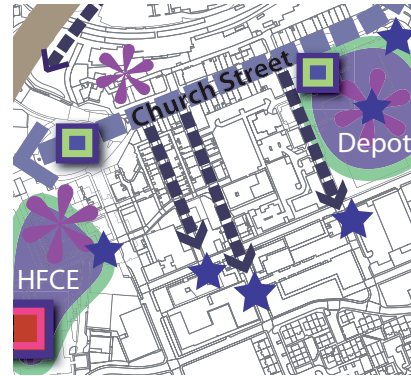
- The new college building will be a new landmark off Stockton Street.
- The front of the building is a curved glass facade that faces onto a new landscaped car park and Stockton Street.
- On the eastern side of the building there will be a small plaza area and a strong facade that will be seen in the vista down Albert Street.

#### 2 Depot Site Proposals:

The Depot Site offers an excellent opportunity to provide a strong addition to Church Street's urban form. Development must create a landmark ending to the vista along Church Street as well as from the Marina and down Victoria Terrace.

A proposal and strategy has been developed to the recommended type of development that would suit this site (refer to Central Area Investment Framework & Action Plan for further details).

Within the depot site development, Princess Square will become an additional event along Church Street and should be designed with a visual and physical connection. This creates a new public destination off the main spine. The square should be inspired by arts and innovation and it could celebrate the Cleveland College of Art and Design through public art and events. It should be a surprising, futuristic space to provide a purposeful contrast to the simple understated approach appropriate to Church Square.



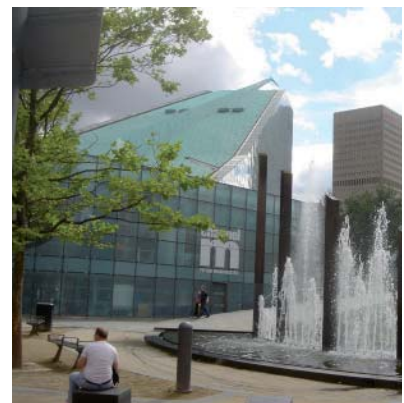
HCFE & the Depot act as anchors



Bond Bryan's Proposal for the HCFE



Brewery Wharf, Leeds



Cathedral Gardens, Manchester

## 4 Church Street Spine Principles

### ANALYSIS

- Good buildings and urban enclosure
- Recent improvements have lifted the environment (Church Square and gateway arches), however public realm materials and furniture generally undersell the street.
- A689 forms a actual and perceived barrier to pedestrians
- Too focused on nightlife and the evening economy
- Lack of daytime footfall moving along Church Street towards the Marina

### VISION

*“To create a diverse street that encourages natural footfall throughout the day and evening by creating destinations at either end of the street and by encouraging a mixture of offers.”*



Church street looking west



Church street looking east



Church street looking west



## 4 Church Street Spine Principles

### 1. ENERGY & CONTAINMENT

#### ANALYSIS

- Church street is an attractive street with good enclosure.
- It is a spine that supports the I.S.Q. area.
- The town centre 'energy' is strongest near Church Square and it loses its 'energy' towards the east.
- The Church Street economic activity is strongly focussed around an evening leisure economy.



#### PRINCIPLES

- Pulling the established town centre energy eastwards along Church Street bringing with it people, development, activity and high quality public realm.
- Create a network of public spaces that create events and happenings along Church Street
- Insulate the energy by placing containment points off Church Street to visually end vistas.
- Create clarity and definition on the town centre boundaries/edges
- Existing arch features frame vistas



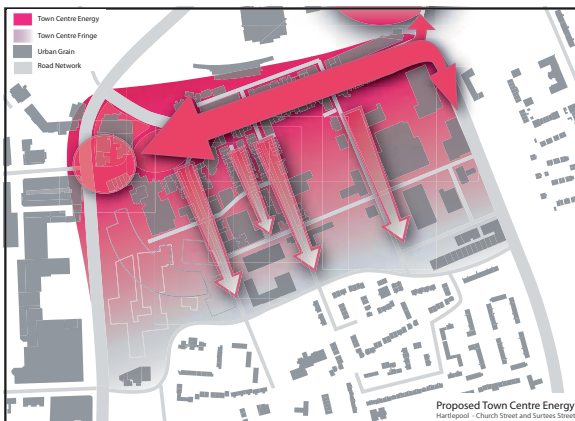
Typical example of incomplete vista



Option A - Building to end vista



Option B - Feature or canopy to end vista



Proposed town centre energy

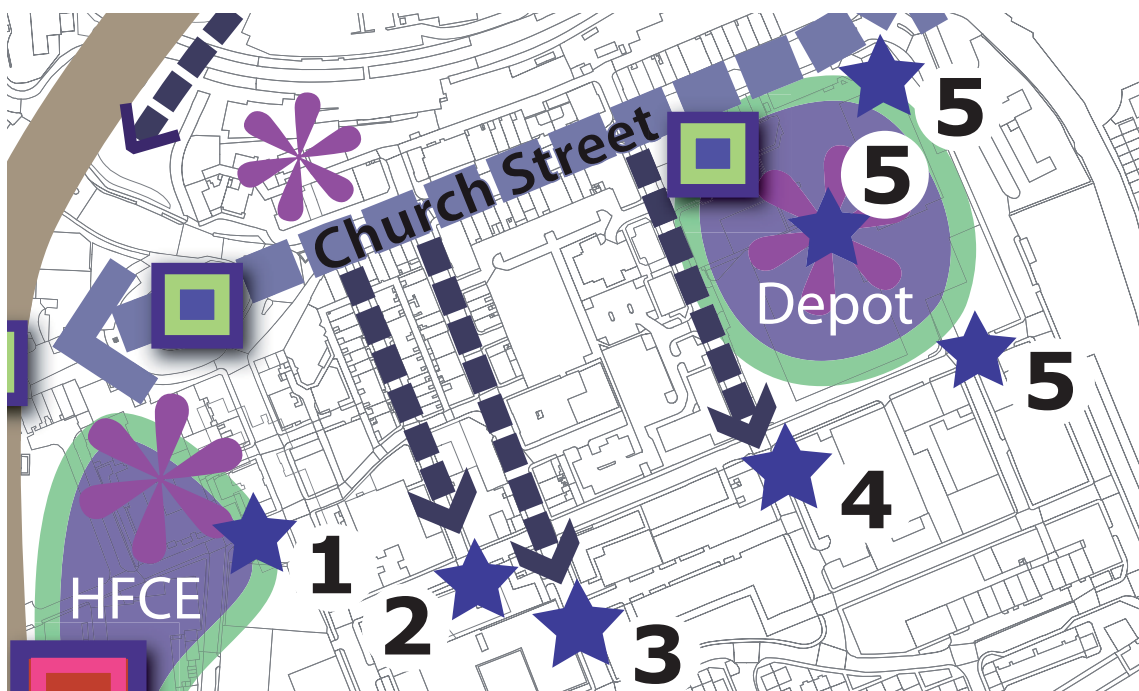


Proposed town containment points

## 4 Church St Spine Principles - Containment Points

### PROPOSED APPROACH:

1. Hartlepool College of Further Education (HFCE) requires a façade detail or sculptural form that creates an interesting focal point at the end of Albert Street. It is imperative that the 'back' of the new college building has an appropriate design feature within this important vista to enhance the 'town centre' feel.
2. Crown House is visible as the 'backdrop' to Scarborough Street from Church Street. This new development should have an outstanding façade detail which provides an attractive, town-centre-scale backdrop to Scarborough Street.
3. Whitby Street is a long street with a weak vista. It is one of the most important 'containment point' opportunities as it helps to form the first impression of the town as you exit the train station. The current impression is one of urban decline and lacks a strong and enclosed town centre feel. Looking towards the south, there is no focal feature to enclose the streetscape (see the opposite page). The horizon drops down close to the road and the urban scale of a town centre is lost. There is an opportunity for the new housing development adjacent to Hucklehoven way at the end of Whitby Street to incorporate a sculptural element within the façade celebrating a town centre scale.
4. Lynn Street could be an extremely modern attractive street with the new depot development enclosing it on the east edge. The old 'Focus' compound is a large development site which holds many opportunities for urban design. Any new building line must front onto Lynn street and must be located right up to the pavement. A horizon or façade detail on the corner of a new development here would be seen from Church Street. This plot is visible along a few different vistas and future development should honour this opportunity.
5. The depot site development presents a fantastic opportunity for 3 new containment points. These can either be free standing sculptural features (recommended for the centre of Princess Square) or strong building form at the corners. The Church Street/Mansforth terrace corner is especially important as it will be seen along Church Street and also along Victoria Terrace and a high quality landmark building is recommended here.



## 4 Church Street Spine Principles

### 2. TOWN CENTRE CONVERGENCE POINT

#### ANALYSIS

- This dual carriageway cuts through the heart of the town centre and severs the natural lateral pedestrian movement between Church street spine (including Church Square, the proposed interchange, the ISQ and towards the marina) and Middleton Grange shopping centre area (including the civic buildings and York road).
- There is currently an underpass that is of poor quality and it gives a poor impression of Hartlepool.

#### PRINCIPLES

- Improving the connection between York Street and Church Street by making a super crossing that gives a higher priority to the pedestrian.
- Using better materials.
- Forming a cluster of activity and destinations to create a bustling place of pedestrian priority which links the Transport Interchange, Church Square, Church Street and the shopping Centre.
- Upgrade Church Square building on the successes of the previous scheme.
- Mark the arrival in the town centre for vehicles travelling along the A689.



Sheffield ring road crossing



Sheffield pedestrian crossing



Left: Existing Stockton Street crossing

Below: Photomontage of the proposed Stockton Street super crossing



#### VISION

*“The creation of a wide welcoming route and vista towards Church Square to be a showcase for Hartlepool in the same way as Sheffield’s innovative scheme creates a bold ‘Gold Route’ linking its station and Peace Gardens.*”



## 5 A689 Spine Principles



Stockton Street and Church Street junction looking north

### ANALYSIS

- A wide and functional road servicing the town and beyond.
- Lacks pedestrian scale.
- The dual carriageway carves Hartlepool Town Centre into two.
- Lack of a sense of arrival – ‘you have left the town centre before you know you have arrived’.
- Portrays the town centre as a place for vehicles – it lacks welcoming pedestrian crossings and there are large areas of car parking.
- Many large scale buildings that lack active frontages.
- A number of quality landmarks pepper potted along the spine.
- Quality glimpses into town centre and towards marina.



Stockton St and Victoria Rd Junction

### VISION

*“Giving the Stockton Street corridor a character that tells the drivers that they have arrived in Hartlepool Town Centre and creating a distinctive journey through the centre of Hartlepool.”*



Looking north from Middleton Grange Shopping centre


# 5 Stockton Street Crossing Principles

## PROPOSALS


### Hartlepool Central Area

#### Stockton Street Proposed Shared Surface Treatment


**Existing Footpath Materials:** Buff concrete textured paving of medium quality to be retained and grey concrete textured paving of low quality to be replaced with buff coloured saxon or similar flag paving.



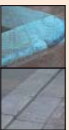
**Circular feature of various materials to be refreshed**




**New Footpath Proposed Materials:** 'Saxon' or similar flag paving to match existing paving




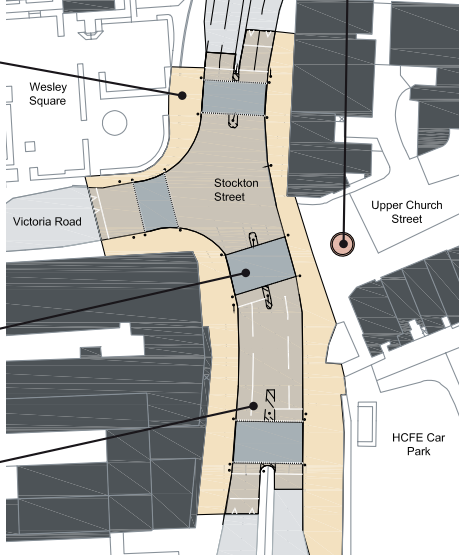
**Kerb and Kerbline line proposed Materials:** Granite Bullnose Kerbs  
Colour: Classic grey (or similar) Hardscape's stardust or G684 (or similar) flame textured and with a bullnose.



**New crossing points:** Granite setts




**New Raised Carriage way:** Block Paving - Rialta Setts or similar





**Precedent Studies:**


Darlington Town Centre




Brighton and Hove




Kensington High Street



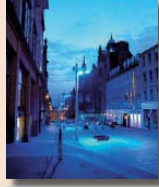
O'Connell Street, Dublin



Grainger Town, Newcastle



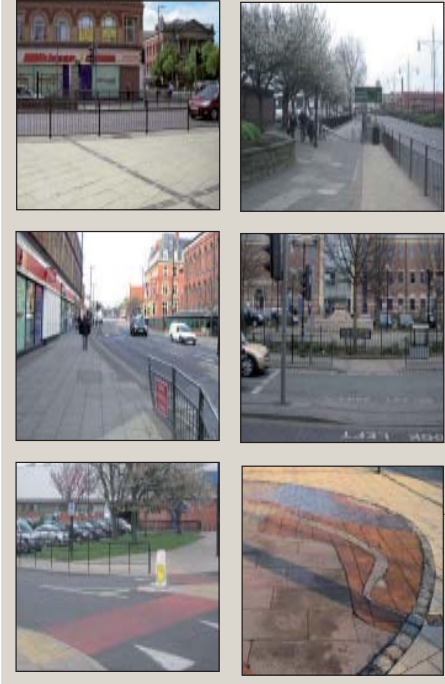
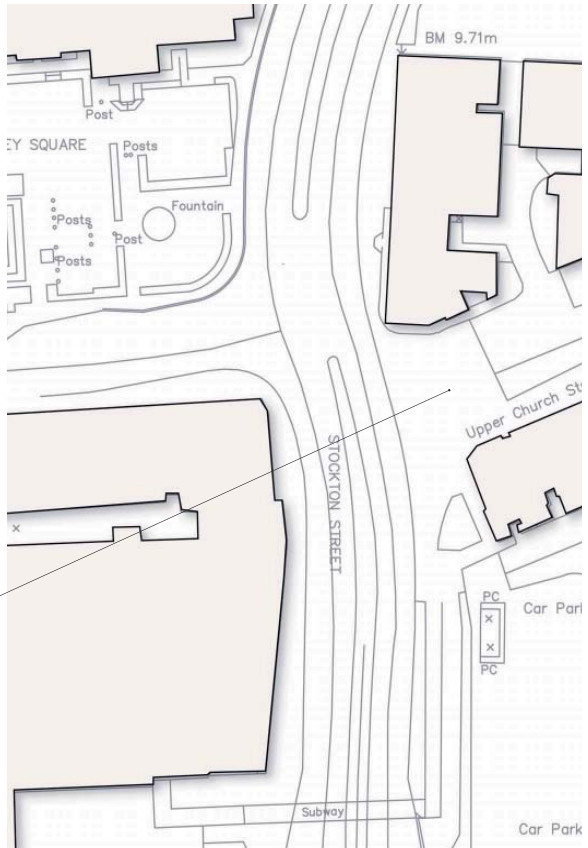
Buchanan Street, Glasgow



### Hartlepool Central Area

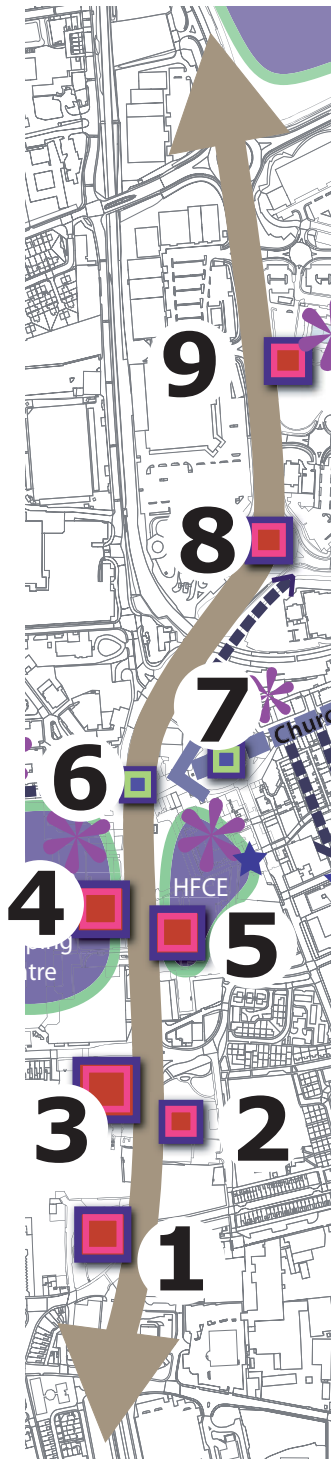
#### Stockton Street Proposed Road Table

**Existing Footpath Materials:** Buff concrete textured paving of medium quality to and grey concrete textured paving of low quality.

## 5 A689 Spine Gateways and Events

### GATEWAY PLACES AND MARKERS:



1. **Stranton Church:** Opportunity for feature lighting and possible redevelopment of the 'Allied Carpet/ Comet' site.
2. **Stranton fire station**  
Possible opportunity of PFI funding to redevelop station and improve the frontage.
3. **Co-op building** This grade II listed building has a strong facade and tower which could be artistically lit.
4. **Middleton Grange:** Infill of the ramp and underpass together with the creation a new active facade.
5. **HCFE** The Hartlepool College of Further Education Building is to be redeveloped.
6. **Stockton street crossing:** Proposal to create a supercrossing which removes the clutter and makes the pedestrian link the priority.
7. **New transport interchange:** Next to Church Square this proposed interchange will provide a hub for busses next to the train station
8. **Roundabout improvement**  
Proposed improvements such as planting, sculpture and lighting.
9. **Museum, Marina and Trincomalee Wharf.** The existing views to these assets should be enhanced wherever possible.





## 5 A689 Spine Gateways and Events

### GATEWAY INSPIRATION

#### Sculptural Elements

Art and sculpture can be used to make a gateway feature, bringing a new character to a place or enhance an existing gateway.



Sculptural elements

#### Planting

Using strong swathes of planting colour, form or texture can create an event or emphasise a change in a journey.



Sculpture on a roundabout

#### Feature Lighting

Using lighting to highlight a particular feature or building such as Stockton Church, the Co-op building and Church Square Art Gallery would showcase some of Hartlepool's best qualities whilst creating beacons to help with enforcing a sense of arrival and navigation.



Dramatic colour, texture and scent



St George's Square, Luton

