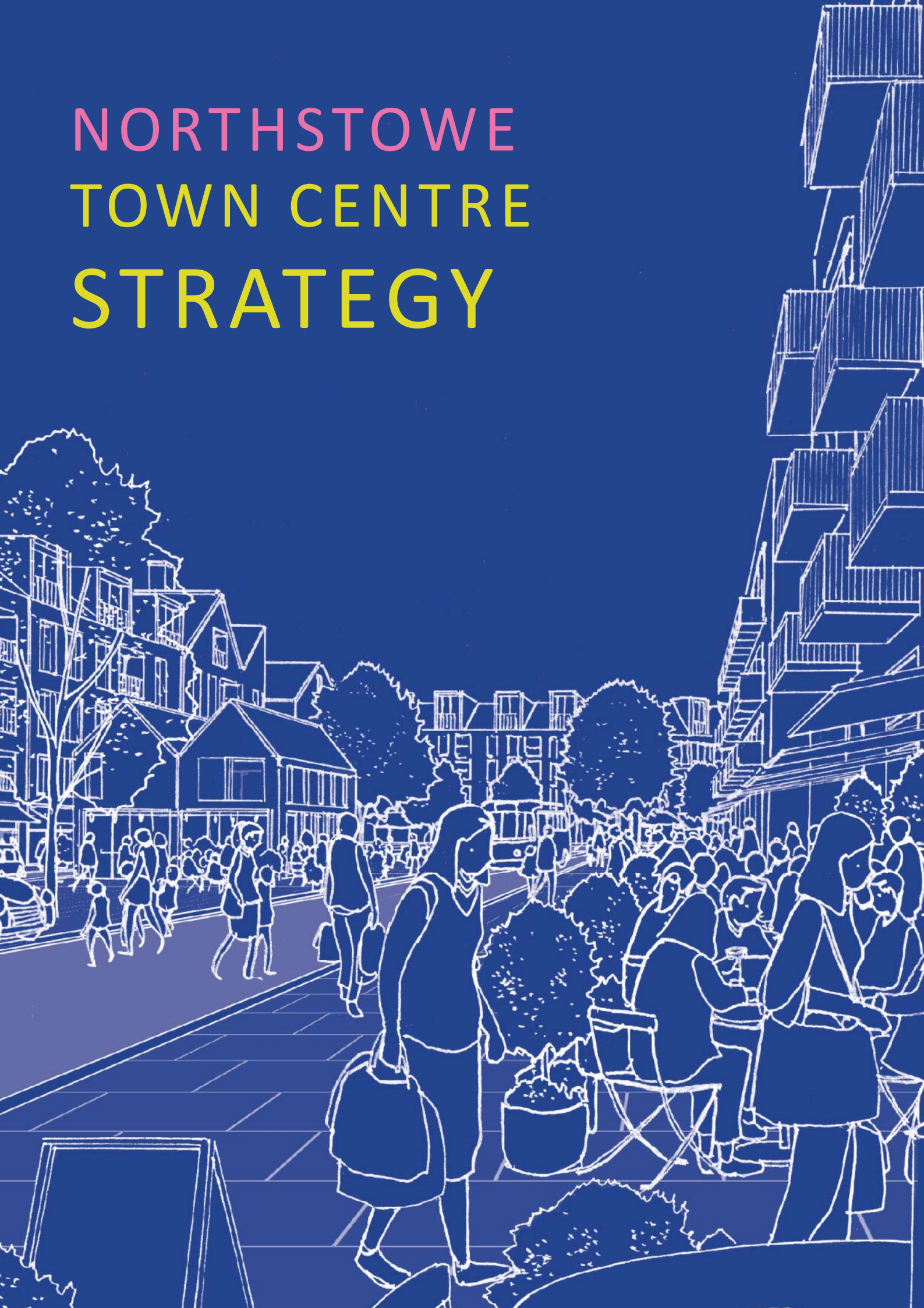


NORTHSTOWE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY



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INTRODUCTION

The Opportunity

Northstowe will be a new kind of new town. One with a keen eye on the future, whilst being grounded in its context and what has gone before.

The town will be well connected physically and economically within its Cambridgeshire context. Providing 10,000 new homes, and with the first phase already under construction, Northstowe will play a vital role in addressing the growing gaps in housing and business space in the Cambridge sub-region.

At its heart will be a new town centre to serve the 25,000 people living in Northstowe, residents in surrounding villages and visitors drawn to the town centre by its dynamic offer.

The town centre will be the focus of life within Northstowe. At each stage of its development it will provide for the needs of its community, embedding early habits and a strong sense of community. The town centre will have inherent ability to evolve and adapt as the town grows and wider needs and lifestyles change.

The planning behind Northstowe has sought to learn valuable lessons from previous new towns. Sustainability objectives have been at the core of the vision for the town from the very beginning. The town centre will be a vital cog in delivering economic, social and environmental sustainability across the town and as such needs to be underpinned by a well-considered and agile strategy. This includes a mixed offering where retail, leisure, open space and play interact to serve all users.

The Northstowe Town Centre Strategy provides a framework for the town centre. It will guide its make-up and layout, the nature of the development that comes forward, the delivery models used and its long term stewardship.

This strategy is both evidence and research based. It learns from past mistakes in new town centre planning and is informed by future trends to ensure the town centre works in the short, medium and long term.

The strategy sets out proposals for the town centre that utilises the routes, fixed assets (such as schools) and a town wide green infrastructure network established in the wider masterplan to underpin the vitality and activity.

The strategy has been shaped by some important questions:

- How do people want to work, shop and spend their leisure time today and how will this change in the future?
- And how should Northstowe be planned in this uncertain context?
- How can Northstowe help meet the needs of Cambridge and diversify the offer?
- How should this shape the identity of Northstowe?
- How do we avoid the mistakes of other new towns?
- How can we make Northstowe stand out?



Purpose of the Strategy

Building on the original 2014 strategy

The Northstowe Town Centre Strategy updates the Strategy originally prepared to support the Phase 2 Planning Application in August 2014 submitted by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

This fully satisfies the requirements of Condition 14 for the Phase 2 planning application to “provide more detail on the layout and distribution of activities and enable the early delivery of the town centre”.

It draws together detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis, technical and design work undertaken by the Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners and Avison Young team, on behalf of Homes England. This evolves the vision for the town centre and establishes a unique and future looking strategy. It promotes a dynamic approach that can secure early delivery and support the evolution of the town centre offer as it grows.

The 2014 Town Centre Strategy to support the Phase 2 planning application by the HCA established the following vision statement for Northstowe Town Centre:

“Northstowe town centre will be distinctive, dynamic and convenient. It will be the place to learn, do business and have fun.”

Building on this vision as a starting point, a researched approach has been undertaken drawing together extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis and technical retail needs analysis to explore this vision in more detail and develop the Town Centre Strategy. This is supported by spatial design work and masterplanning.

Through this analysis it has become clear that the drivers of the town centre’s economy will be distinct from almost anywhere else. Whilst influenced by the context of the wider Cambridge market area, the town centre will be established in a new untested market, evolving over time in response to the phased delivery of Northstowe’s 10,000 new homes.

Defining and shaping a new framework for the town centre

In response to these findings, Northstowe should strive for **distinctiveness**; taking risks and making bold moves relating to the unique character of the town centre’s offer. It’s offer should be **fit for purpose**; meeting the diverse needs of all residents as the town centre evolves and addressing any identified gaps in provision within the wider market area. **Resilience** must also be achieved; striking a balance in the mix of town centre uses that generates and supports footfall from a wide audience, whilst being versatile with the ability to adapt to changing requirements and audience dynamics over time.

With this in mind, the Town Centre Strategy establishes a framework for the town centre that is inspiring, attractive, distinct, but most importantly deliverable over the long term. It determines the nature and mix of uses that should be promoted within the town centre, which respond to the opportunities and challenges facing this new town centre in the context of the wider Cambridge market dynamics, and ensures it can show resilience alongside distinctiveness.

The aspiration for Northstowe town centre is to provide a dynamic and innovative centre that meets

the needs of residents throughout its phased delivery and long into the future, as well as serving residents in surrounding villages and attracting a diverse range of workers and visitors.

This means it must establish itself as a destination and a hub of activity right from the initial development phase, and must grow and evolve as development progresses to continue to meet the wide ranging needs of new residents, workers and visitors.

In order to establish a new framework for the town centre within the Town Centre Strategy, the key priorities for Northstowe have been identified as:

Flexibility – ensuring every piece of the town centre and commercial space can have alternative futures

Destination – establishing Northstowe town centre as a destination for residents, workers and visitors, beyond convenience

Enterprise – supporting and creating local business activity and providing opportunities for small and growing businesses as a core element of town centre activity.

The identification of these priorities is underpinned by a range of detailed evidence and technical analysis, with a detailed evidence based process leading to the approach and solutions that form this Strategy. Relevant elements of this evidence are incorporated within the main body of the document, supported by the full documents which are provided in the Appendix. This relates particularly to the retail modelling work underpinning Section 2d of the Strategy.

What does the Strategy include?

The Strategy encapsulates the following key elements across its four sections:

1: Town Centre Vision

Establishing the key principles and unique selling points of Northstowe and how these shape the town centre:

- An ethos as much as a place
- Meeting a full range of needs
- A destination and departure point
- A place of enterprise and experience, as well as providing places to shop

2: Why this approach?

Exploring the range of factors shaping the approach to developing the strategy for Northstowe Town Centre:

- **Rapidly changing strategic commercial market context** (retail, food & beverage and leisure trends)
- **An opportunity for local distinctiveness** (in the context of the wider offer and hierarchy), reflecting the strength of existing places, gaps in the existing offer in the wider area, and displacement resulting from the increasing pressure on Cambridge
- **A different mix of residents**, accommodating a distinctive population base from the wider area, which drives needs across the income and generational spectrums
- **An opportunity to capture a more diverse range of spending**, rather than relying the core retail offer which is already well catered for in the wider area.

3: A flexible mix and environment

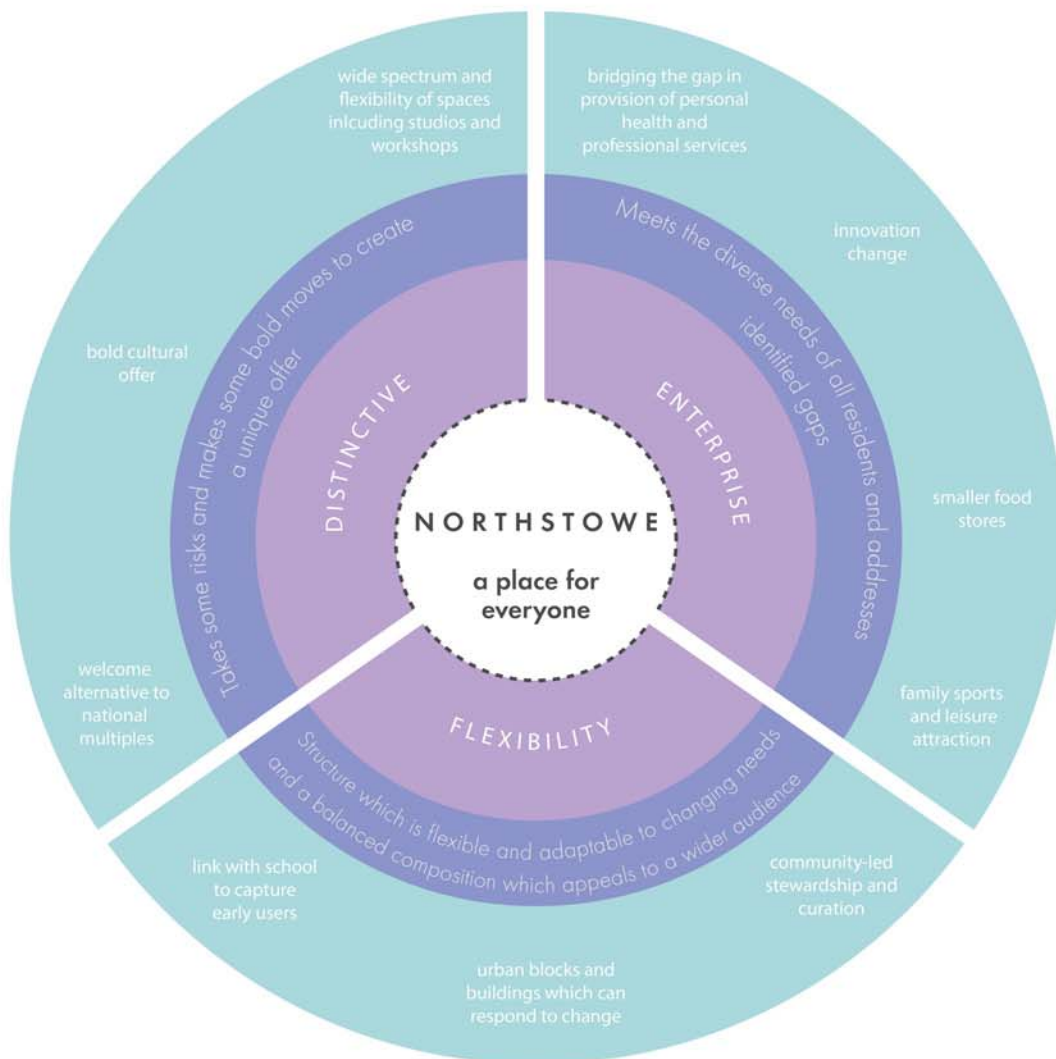
Setting out the proposed mix, scale and nature of the town centre area which focuses on the following key elements:

- Scale of non-residential uses, which establishes the proportional mix of uses, efficiency of the layout and creating the right commercial environment
- Indicative spatial plan, presenting the key masterplan diagrams for the town centre and the flexibility this accommodates for the evolving nature of uses over time
- The high street, providing an appropriate sense of scale and promoting the activity and vibrancy of spaces
- Highlighting the proposed green spaces and their purpose, as part of the wider green network, taking the form of town gardens and a town park
- The scale, nature and timing of parking provision in the town centre

4: Making it happen

Setting out the approach to delivering the strategy over time as housing is delivered and the weight of Northstowe residents increases:

- The fixed elements of the town centre where we know when and where they are coming forward
- Driving forward demand related to the evolution of the town centre audience and the relationship of different uses
- Unlocking the potential of the town centre by tapping into the spirit and nature of the local area
- Actively managing and curating town centre uses and activity across the town over time



1. TOWN CENTRE VISION

A place for everyone

As identified in the Purpose of the Strategy section (page 4), flexibility, destination and enterprise have been established within this strategy as the key priorities for Northstowe town centre. This is steered by the Economic Vision and Strategic Aims established in the Economic Development Strategy, but takes this forward to shape and inform the new framework and set the tone for Northstowe as a vibrant, attractive and deliverable town centre.

Destination: A destination that appeals to as wide an audience as possible (including residents, workers and visitors). It will move beyond functionality to deliver a distinctive mix of uses and activities that drive footfall. This means focusing not solely on delivering the 'essential' elements, but on the range of additional uses and activities that diversify the offer and make it attractive for visitors.

Enterprise: A place for ideas and exchange; starting and growing businesses through supportive range of networks and spaces, pursuing key sector opportunities, and providing a place for creativity and creative endeavour through the integration of building typologies and spaces to work, exhibit and trade.

Flexibility: Providing flexibility for changing needs and future generations. The town centre will secure fixes, but allow for flexibility that delivers resilience and dynamism to meet future needs. This flexibility will be inbuilt, and will reflect the aspiration of continual growth and evolution of Northstowe in response to growing and diversifying audience needs, rather than aiming to reach an 'end state'.

Creating a desirable environment is a crucial cross-cutting element which will support these three town centre priorities, providing a positive sense of place for all users of the town centre throughout its phasing.

For Northstowe this environment comes as much from the delivery of a mix of uses in each stage as it does the quality of the public realm that joins them together. Ensuring both commercial and residential uses are delivered in tandem will help create a dynamism within the town centre throughout the day.

Providing a strong and positive environment complements the structuring of the town centre around a connected network of green spaces, providing safe, active and accessible areas for people to experience and move through.

The town centre environment will support its attractiveness as a destination, reflect the creativity and enterprising nature of its workspaces and activities, and promote flexibility across all aspects; in relation to the built form, uses and occupiers within the town centre.

Destination

Residents working in Cambridge return to Northstowe to spend their leisure time

Non-residents working in Northstowe also choose to spend their leisure time in Northstowe after work

Visitors choose Northstowe, as well as or instead of Cambridge

Broadening the range of uses / spaces available in the wider area

Enterprise

An ethos as much as a place

Promoting an innovative and dynamic way of doing things

Providing space to experiment and test ideas, with a range of workspace supporting start-ups, small and growing businesses

Supporting a creative and experience focused lifestyle

Accommodating a mix of independent and chains that caters to diverse audience needs

Flexibility

Anticipating future needs

Attracting and supporting a diverse audience

Developing and and evolving an on-going meanwhile strategy

Securing fixes, but with flexibility to achieve alternative futures

Providing the functional through to the exceptional

2. WHY THIS APPROACH?

2a: Dynamic strategic context

The traditional activities that have underpinned town centre activity for the past 50 years are facing unprecedented challenges. The retail, leisure, food and beverage (F&B) sectors in the UK are facing increasing pressures as people radically change the way they shop, relax and interact. These fundamental changes are creating a structural transformation in the way 'town centre' businesses operate. This reflects a complex web of influencing factors, particularly changing consumer habits, technological innovations and digital disruption, combined with unprecedented economic factors and pressures on town centre property assets to accommodate a more diverse mix of modern occupiers and to provide positive investment prospects.

The rise of internet retailing and 'click and collect', as well as the change in behaviour towards 'top up shopping' for groceries rather than a weekly shop, is having significant implications for space requirements and retail formats in town centres, with knock-on impacts for occupiers. The full integration of online and physical stores is leading to smaller shop footprints with more nimble and focused stock, and a shift in food shopping habits is being driven by more regular small trips generated by easier access, concern over food waste and irregular working hours.

This sets a dynamic and challenging context for developing the strategy and realising the delivery of Northstowe Town Centre, which leads to the unique approach being taken.

Fewer occupiers in the market for space

The decline of traditional retail and leisure uses in town centres in light of this context has reduced occupier confidence in the market, which means there

are fewer retail and leisure occupiers in the market for space.

Some occupiers are weathering the storm but putting hold on any plans for expansion or new stores, some are entering into company voluntary arrangements (CVAs) and closing stores and reducing staff numbers (such as Prezzo and House of Fraser) and others are ceasing to trade entirely (such as Maplin and Toys R us).

For Northstowe this limits the pool of national chains who would traditionally locate in a town centre, and requires a more flexible and creative approach to creating an attractive opportunity that can draw in the right type of occupiers now, and in the future.

Increased focus on strategic centres for comparison retail

The challenging operating conditions for retailers within town centre and high street environments is seeing the shift of comparison retail occupiers specifically towards strategic centres where there is a critical mass of this type of offer.

This responds to consumer preferences shifting towards shopping in these strategic centres, like Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge Retail and Leisure Parks and Ely Leisure Village, with access to the full comparison retail and leisure offer in one place.

For existing and new town centres and local centres this changes the composition of the retail offer that can be supported, and therefore the approach to attracting footfall and activity.

Increased consumer preference for new forms of 'experience'

One of the major factors driving the significant and on-going changes in the retail and leisure sectors is consumer expectations.

Consumers are turning more and more to online retailing for their convenience and comparison retail needs, and when they do choose to visit a town centre this is in search of the experience.

The role of town centres is therefore transforming into social destinations for experience, rediscovering their role as places of interaction and exchange, and reflected in the growth of co-working spaces, coffee shops, social and community spaces, leisure 'venues' and cultural offers.

Creative solutions are being explored to repurpose underused assets in town centres for a range of different retail and business activities. This includes the accommodation of 'pop-up' and 'meanwhile' spaces (which ideally can evolve to become permanent as required), as well as the rise of a range of workspace facilities which can counteract the loss of traditional office floorspace to other uses through permitted development rights.

Adopting flexibility towards use classes and how land is used over time is becoming increasingly important in this changing context, providing an ability to accommodate the shifting demand for different types of uses and space which can help to promote dynamism within town centres.

The Northstowe town centre offer therefore must be positioned very much towards creating an experience for visitors and residents in order to be a viable centre, alongside the provision of facilities that meet core resident needs.

The physical environment is also vitally important, creating a vibrant environment that is a pleasure to be in, and encourages social interaction. This adds to the experience a town centre provides for its visitors, with the nature and character of public realm and the spaces between uses being as crucial as the uses themselves.

2b: The Evidence

The Case for a Truly Mixed Use Town Centre in Northstowe

The concept of a town centre for Northstowe has been a long term commitment and objective of both Homes England and the wider partners involved in the delivery of Northstowe. However there are legitimate questions to be answered about why this is necessary and how it can be achieved. The Town Centre Strategy seeks to answer both those questions for Northstowe.

In developing the strategy what has become clear is that the town centre is not only needed to meet the retail needs of Northstowe residents, but can play a more strategic role as a new urban centre in the wider region – offering opportunities for new businesses to start, locate and grow in the region in an environment that is different from other developments. Through integrating uses it can create a place where people can both live and work in a new urban centre.

This approach creates opportunities to deliver a town centre that extends beyond a place that meets basic needs (both in terms of scale and breadth of offer) to one that can be a vibrant and dynamic urban heart to the wider town and the villages that surround it. However it has to be recognised that realising this opportunity can't happen based on a traditional approach to development, innovation in development approaches, building typologies and space management will all be required to establish and grow the town centre over time.

Our research suggests that the town centre cannot simply be left in the hands of a traditional development approach. There are a number of large new towns and urban extensions where aspirations for a 'town centre' have not been fully realised, locations

such as Cambourne and Cranbrook are still yet to deliver their centre despite significant housing growth. Our detailed analysis of the opportunity for Northstowe (presented in the accompanying Baseline Report) provides the evidence and rationale for retaining an ambitious vision for Northstowe town centre, however we summarise some of the key elements here to provide a context for the strategy approach set out in the rest of this report.

The Strategic Needs

The Cambridge sub-region is one of the UK's leading economy success stories, its economy has seen unprecedented levels of growth, driven by its world class education and research capabilities which has placed its businesses at the cutting edge of the economy, enabling them to drive innovation and technological advances.

However as the economy has forged ahead growth has not benefitted everyone equally. Whilst many science and technology businesses have thrived there is increasing evidence that their success, coupled with the ongoing expansion of the University Colleges, has led to an over-heating commercial property market.

This has had a number of impacts for small and start up businesses that operate outside of these sectors – including independent retailers, creative and arts based businesses, the general service sector and even cultural/leisure operators. On the one hand space has become limited, leading to increases in rents that are pricing out all but the highest value businesses. On the other new development has not provided a diversity of stock, catering to global technology and science businesses or high growth start ups with a range of specialist properties and sites at the expense of more

general workspace typologies.

These issues have now gained strategic recognition through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review, which predicts an acceleration of economic growth in the coming years and therefore identifies a need to enhance the provision of workspace within the Greater Cambridgeshire area in particular to avoid business activity being lost from the region. The success of developments such as the Enterprise Campus at Alconbury or the Bradfield Centre in Cambridge have had in letting space are identified as evidence of unmet demand for different forms of workspace.

The theme is then picked up by the Local Industrial Strategy which, as one of its foundations, argues for “the creation of more places with the ability to absorb economic growth in a sustainable way” to ensure that businesses have “access to the right kind of space at every part of their evolution”. Fundamentally the provision of a broader range of space, in appropriate environments that are also available at more affordable rents are seen as critical to support ongoing economic growth.

The commercial space challenges are further evidenced by a range of market reports that focus on the local market dynamics. Research by Savills (“A City State of Mind”, 2018) suggests that demand for office and lab space in central Cambridge has increased significantly, with c.£139mn of investment channelled into commercial property in 2018 alone, with half of that invested in office stock. The report goes on to suggest that prime rents could reach £45/sqft as a result of ongoing demand and the lack of supply with a likelihood that occupiers will (and already are) seeking greater value elsewhere, seeking to balance

access to the city with the cost of space. Even in these fringe areas (such as the northern fringe) Carter Jonas reported rents around £32.50/sqft in 2017 and more peripheral business parks reaching up to £29/sqft.

Similar issues have been experienced in the retail sector. Despite a fall in Zone A rents in recent months Bidwells report that space in Cambridge is still in excess of £235/sqft demand for space is still strong, reflecting the City’s role as the first ranked retail centre in Harper Dennis Hobbs Retail Vitality Index.

Why Northstowe?

The over-heating commercial market within Cambridge itself is clearly having an impact on the ability of a range of occupiers to be able to locate or remain within the city. That provides an opportunity for other locations to step in and fill the gaps in provision that the city has left, however it is clear that not all locations will benefit.

Research used to inform the CPIER which surveyed a range of young professionals and students in the city revealed that there is a strong desire to be based within urban locations to benefit from the dynamism and mix of amenities that provides. If urban environments are where talented people will live, it follows that it is also where they’ll want to start and grow businesses.

Similarly the CPIER recognises the importance of agglomeration and close supply chain relationships to the success of the Greater Cambridge economy, with businesses relying on a ‘network density’ to thrive. If businesses can’t be within the city itself they will therefore seek out other locations that offer good links within those networks, for some that may mean fringe

science park locations, for others that may mean less proximity but good accessibility in order to be in a more mixed environment.

Ultimately of all the growth opportunities within Greater Cambridgeshire (and indeed the wider Combined Authority area) Northstowe provides a unique opportunity to bring many of these desirable factors together. The more intense urban context that will be created in and around the town centre can create the living environment young, skilled workers crave but cannot afford in the city. Similarly it can also create the range of amenities and networking opportunities for small and start-up businesses that fuelled Cambridge's initial growth.

With the dedicated busway offering direct, uninterrupted, links to the city centre and beyond it also offers the accessibility to wider networks and clients for businesses seeking to be part of or service the burgeoning Cambridge knowledge intensive economy. In the opposite direction it also offers the potential to access from elsewhere the diverse cultural, leisure and retail offer that can cluster in the town centre as a result of more affordable, and more diverse types of, premises.

This focus on workspace and leisure opportunities can help broaden the appeal to residents considering moving to Northstowe. It will also support the early retail offering, when there are fewer residents than needed to provide significant spending power to the town centre.

Making this work in Northstowe will require a range of tactics and approaches to come together. As noted in the latest London Residential Development bulletin by Savills there is need to curate a high quality mixed

retail and leisure offer in new development in order to help residential succeed—the two have to come forward together for places to succeed at each step of delivery. It considers it important for this to be a focus in early phases of large schemes in order to establish a sense of place in locations where the market is weak, needs establishing or perceptions of place need to be changed to attract occupiers and residents.

Our research for this strategy has shown how a wide number of regeneration and development projects have harnessed wider trends and demand by providing a type of non-residential offer that is not provided for elsewhere in a particular economy. Whether the Baltic Triangle in Liverpool, Trinity Buoy Wharf in London or Wapping Wharf in Bristol a mixture of creative workspaces, specialist retail and vibrant leisure offers have been combined with progressive letting strategies to create thriving new centres in formerly peripheral locations.

What is clear, despite these success stories, is that nowhere is like Northstowe in terms of the opportunity and challenges such a 'blank canvas' presents. The scale of ambition is not in doubt and it is the purpose of this strategy to set a direction for how this can be achieved.

This vision for Northstowe is shared by the existing residents, those living around it and even some of those who are considering moving to the town as houses are delivered. An open exhibition held in April 2019 gave people the opportunity to understand the plans and help shape them for the future, some of the key messages were:

The Public's View

In April 2019 two drop-in consultation events were held in Northstowe to allow the public to understand the emerging proposals and discuss their views and priorities. Some key comments are included here grouped by key theme, with a summary contained in **Appendix A6**.

Strategic Approach

"Great proposals of a very important part of Northstowe – so important to get right balance to create a thriving community."

Green Space

"I like the idea of the green corridor through the middle of the town centre, connecting the bigger green spaces either side."

"Make sure planting and green areas are wildlife friendly."

Non-Residential Offer

"The pubs in Willingham want to open a pub in Northstowe – help them to do this!"

"I'd like to see pubs, bars and restaurants."

"We would love a swimming pool in the town centre!"

"Flats for older people in the town centre to help with a mix of population, not all young families."

"Encourage activities spaces e.g. climbing / trampoline / cinema / bowling / dance sports."

Delivery

"Need incentives to attract businesses in e.g. like Letchworth encouraging people and businesses out of London, workers given homes."

"Making sure the business space and retail units are advertised publicly, advertising contact details for finding out about starting something will make local people / independent businesses have access."

Transport/access:

"Connectivity between villages Earith, Over, Oakington, Dry Dryton, Rampton via cycle ways to link up the areas."

"How long each day will the frequent bus service run? It should start "frequent" early in the day and end "frequent" late in the date connecting with the last trains at Cambridge North, Huntingdon"

Business Interest

"We were thinking of having sustainability as one of our main themes for the practice, and this would fit well with the Northstowe ethos we feel."

"Northstowe offers great opportunity it will be a central hub for the surrounding villages. We will offer apprentice scheme opportunities to young people, and a foot on the ladder of employment."

The consultation also generated interest in business space, prompting the creation of a new registration of interest function on the Northstowe website which has seen 8 local businesses register interest in space from a variety of sectors. This adds to the number (c.40) of more speculative enquiries Homes England have received in the last few years.

2c: An opportunity for local distinctiveness

Northstowe sits in a strong strategic context within the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor (LSCC) and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, as one of the key growth and development opportunities alongside Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Waterbeach and Cambourne.

It also lies within a network of existing towns, villages and other centres that play varying roles in meeting local and strategic needs.



Northstowe in context of existing towns and villages

The economic strength of knowledge and innovation within the city-region will shape and influence the economic opportunities for Northstowe town centre and provide a platform for innovation.

However, in order to succeed Northstowe must distinguish itself within its wider context, respond to

weaknesses and gaps in the wider offer, the opportunities from businesses being displaced from Cambridge, and the mix of residents the town centre can appeal to.

Established places have strong roles

There are a clear set of existing places in the wider region which have a strong and well established commercial role, in retail, leisure, office and workspace terms.

Cambridge City Centre is 10km / 6 miles from Northstowe and plays the most significant commercial role in the wider region as a heritage focused regional centre with good public transport links and a wide range of comparison and convenience retail, leisure uses and office and workspace provision. The centre has significant creative and tech clusters with a strong sense of innovation and entrepreneurship underpinned by the university presence and its cultural and creative offer (with museums, galleries, music venues) which attracts and promotes a diverse mix of independents, creatives, start-ups and small businesses.

The comparison and convenience retail offer and F&B offer in Cambridge City Centre is also strong, offering a breadth of comparison retailers on street and within shopping centres, a number of different convenience retailers, and a mix of independent and chain cafes and restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs. The retail and leisure offer is further supported by a number of retail and leisure parks surrounding the centre, including Cambridge Retail Park, Cambridge Leisure Park and Ely Leisure Village.

There are a number of **Science Parks** in the wider sub-region, reflecting Northstowe's location within the Cambridge Compass Enterprise Zone (CCEZ), which provide clusters of high quality, purpose built office, tech and Research & Development (R&D) space. These include; Cambridge Research Park, Cambridge Science Park, Cambridge Innovation Park and Alconbury Enterprise Park. These clusters support the strength of the bio-medical, R&D, high tech manufacturing and professional sectors in the region, providing a very attractive location and environment for the life science sector activities ranging from start-up to space to wet labs and bespoke build packages.

A number of these parks are in the process of being built out so can continue to meet the demands of future occupiers. Northstowe town centre should seek to complement rather than compete with the 5ha **Northstowe Enterprise Zone**, which is likely to attract light industrial and uses requiring larger footprints. There is an opportunity for Northstowe to become a hub for businesses who are seeking great connections to these parks and campuses, without paying the premium of being located within them.

The **surrounding villages** within Northstowe's core catchment area, such as Longstanton, Oakington, Cottenham, Willingham, Over and Swavesey play a strong role in serving local resident needs.

Bar Hill is the exception to this; providing a Tesco Extra store which acts as the first choice for the majority of residents' food shopping in the local area.

However, gaps in the offer exist

Whilst the strength of established places in the wider context for Northstowe is evident, an assessment of the offer in the local area suggests some gaps in the offer which Northstowe can seek to fill:

In the local villages **convenience retail** is reasonably well represented but there is a very limited comparison retail and personal services offer. These type of amenities could be provided in Northstowe town centre as an option for residents in the wider area looking for a more local offer rather than having to visit Cambridge City Centre.

The **convenience retail** offer is well provided throughout the local and wider area, which limits the scope for a significant scale of this floorspace within Northstowe town centre. The purpose of the Northstowe offer is not to act as direct competition for nearby villages, but to provide a scale of offer that primarily services local needs. This is supported by quantitative needs testing (see section 2.d).

Cambridge has an extensive and well established **cultural and leisure offer**, however this is poor in the surrounding villages to Northstowe. There is therefore an opportunity for Northstowe town centre to provide some form multi-use cultural space such as an events space, gallery or destination museum. This would constitute part of its anchor as a 'destination'.

In terms of **business space** the extensive number of business parks support clusters of technology and R&D activity, specifically for businesses specialising in biomedical, pharmaceuticals, electronic and software

engineering, and information technology. This builds on the sector opportunities of being within the LSCC context, and attracts large occupiers, including the likes of AstraZeneca, NAPP Pharmaceuticals and Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. These clusters provide Grade A and bespoke fit out lab space, much of which is leased on fixed terms.

At the other end of the spectrum Cambridge City Centre is an attractive potential location for small business activity, particularly in the creative and cultural sectors, however it does not provide much of the flexible small business space they need. Instead its offer is more polarised towards the very large spaces that support science and tech businesses like Astra Zeneca, and the very small incubator spaces for start-ups. These spaces are high spec and tailored towards either the big corporate occupiers or the tech/science start-ups. SMEs in the professional services, creative and productive sectors struggle to find space here, and what little space is available is experiencing increasing levels of demand, and is therefore becoming unaffordable for these businesses.

Whilst the university presence is a key anchor for the centre which attracts businesses to want to cluster here, it actually compounds the challenges further through the office space it accommodates, which is therefore not available to the general business population

This points to the opportunity for Northstowe town centre to provide a 'middle ground' offer between the current spec and flexibility of the business park and city centre offers. This would counteract the increasing demand, typology and affordability challenges of

accessing flexible workspace within the centre and a shortage of this type of space outside of the city centre. It would also provide lower spec, smaller floorplate 'out of centre' space for businesses who are not looking to pay the premium of a Cambridge business park location, and seek the amenities and connectivity provided by a town centre context.

Increasing pressures on Cambridge

As inferred in relation to business space, the displacement of a number of activities from Cambridge City Centre is rising. The character of the city as a diverse, creative, entrepreneurial centre and the nature of the activities it supports as a result of this identity and the workspace and other commercial spaces it provides (strengthened further by its strong connectivity) is driving the squeeze of activities further out of the centre and beyond it entirely.

This mirrors its housing affordability pressures which is making it increasingly difficult for people to both live and work in the centre. Yet it creates a significant opportunity for Northstowe town centre to capture this displaced activity and position itself as an attractive alternative to Cambridge for both occupiers and visitors.

The squeeze of activities is far-reaching, but is most notably impacting the creative and entrepreneurial activities such as cultural and exhibition spaces, creative workspace, independent retail and start-up, SME and general R&D spaces

2d: A different mix of residents

The Economic Development Strategy (2014) provides a picture of the future socio-economic characteristics for Northstowe to 2040 through the Reference Case, which is essentially based on mirroring current trajectories for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge combined, and therefore follows the performance of the wider Cambridge region and its expected growth trends.

This provides a baseline understanding of the scale and nature of the Northstowe's future population and what this would mean for the town centre audience. However, we have already determined that the drivers of Northstowe's economy will be unique, and this can also be said for the nature of its audience in comparison to the wider area.

We have undertaken additional analysis to better understand the people who are likely to be living, working and spending money in Northstowe, in order to ensure the strategy promotes a town centre mix that fully meets all needs. This draws on the lessons from a range of other examples of new developments in proximity to a dominant city. This reflects the relationship between Northstowe and Cambridge and considers the nature of the audience for the new town and how this compares to the wider city catchment. There has been a particular focus on age/life stage, affluence, disposable income levels, expected spending habits and type and tenure of housing.

By exploring the age/life stage, affluence, disposable income levels, expected spending habits and the type and tenure of housing in a number of examples (including Trumpington Meadows in Cambridge and

Cranbrook in Exeter), it becomes evident that the audience characteristics and spend profile for new towns often differs from the dynamics in the wider audience catchment for the nearby city. This is heavily influenced by the type of homes being provided and the characteristics of residents this accommodates. The greater the diversity of the housing offer, the greater the diversity of the residents and town centre audience and the wider range of activities and levels of affordability to town centre will need to accommodate.

The nature of Northstowe will mean a different population base from the existing wider area

The economic vision for Northstowe sets an ambition to create a unique employment and town centre offer, which complements the wider Cambridge corridor. The socio-economic research undertaken to underpin this Strategy demonstrates the potential diversity of the Northstowe town centre audience, and the opportunity to attract a highly skilled demographic which may have higher disposable income than the average levels in the wider area.

The housing offer of Northstowe and the nature of the 10,000 homes that come forward as the town builds out is the main factor that will shape this, and will help to achieve the diversity in audience supported by the diversity of the town centre offer.

The diversity of the size and type of units proposed for the wider 10,000 homes across Northstowe will shape the diversity of Northstowe residents, and support a mix of town centre uses that cater to all needs. It will

also bring in residents and a town centre audience with a higher spend profile and more disposable income.

The housing mix within the town centre could include starter homes, shared ownership and private sale apartment typologies. This would create a more affordable dynamic that also support residents with a lower income and spend profile (such as junior employees at the science parks, key workers and SME / start-up business owners). This plays into the opportunity to capture some of those priced out of Cambridge, but requiring proximity to the city centre.

The diversity of residents and the town centre offer will ensure it provides a wide range of activities and amenities, which is what will make Northstowe more attractive to businesses squeezed from Cambridge or from further afield who are looking for an opportunity to locate closer to the city, attracted to the connectivity provided by the guided bus route.

Driving different needs at either end of the spectrum

The Northstowe town centre audience will be diverse, in part reflecting the housing mix. This means there will be a focus on meeting requirements for meeting affordable housing and starter home requirements, which needs a certain type of offer. Conversely the wider demographics of Northstowe town and those attracted to private sale units may seek something different and more aspirational. There is therefore a need to cater for both ends of the 'audience spectrum'.

This is not just about residents. It is also about differentiation of this town centre from all the others in terms of its function; driving the opportunity for something different.

This concept of driving needs at either end of the spectrum resonates at a number of levels, relating to generational factors, spend profile levels, and housing affordability.

The variation in the population base for Northstowe compared to the wider area reflects the nature of the offer of Northstowe town centre **from the functional to the exceptional**, making sure it caters for all audience needs. It will become a place for all ages and generations, all backgrounds, all levels of affordability, and all levels of employment.

In terms of our proposals, this translates into providing a mixed offer that meets core needs (in terms of local services, convenience retail and community space), however it is also complemented by a much greater diversity of retail, leisure and cultural facilities. This includes significant opportunities for independent and innovative activity.

2e: Limited core retail 'need' but can capture 'footloose' spend

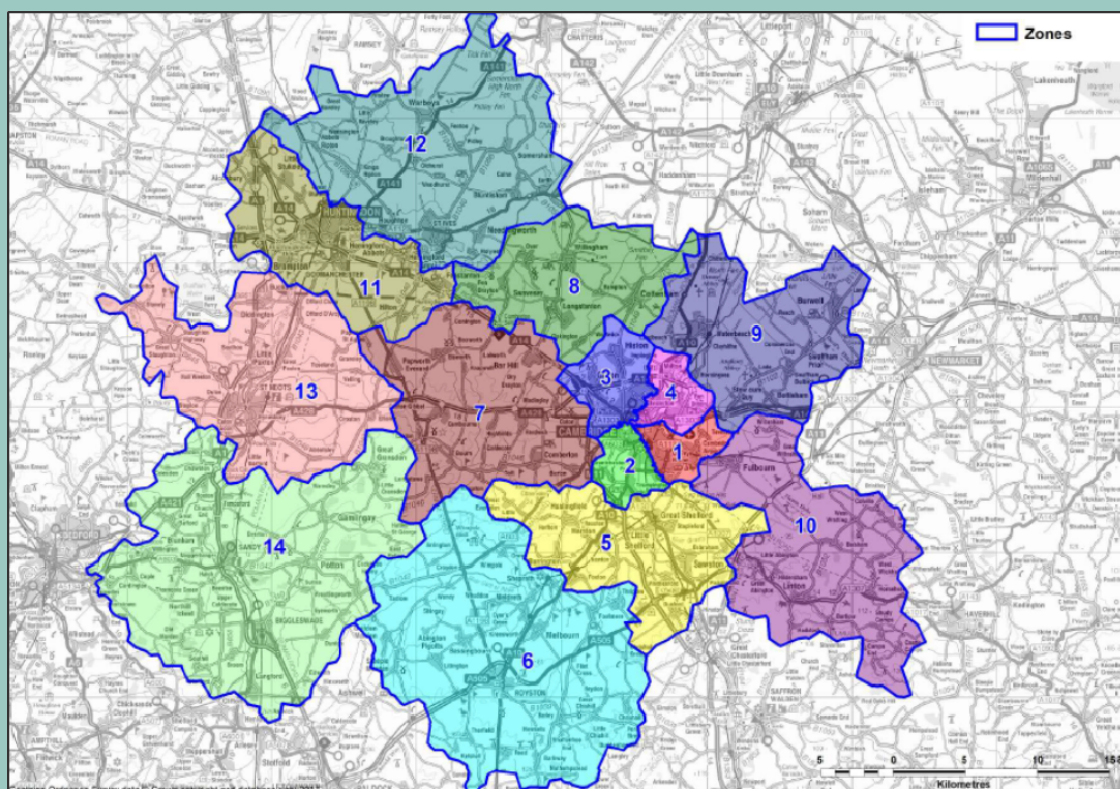
Existing retail context

As already outlined, Northstowe town centre is being delivered in the context of an established set of retail provision. This includes Cambridge city centre, out of centre provision in Cambridge, medium-sized market towns such as Cambourne and Huntingdon, plus Bar Hill and smaller scale provision in the surrounding villages.

In relation to food shopping provision in the local area, the surrounding villages have small scale stores which are orientated towards top-up/basket functions. These include Co-op stores in Longstanton, Cottenham and Willingham, along with local independent stores in

Longstanton, Oakington, Swavesey, Over and Willingham. The closest large scale supermarket is a Tesco Extra at Bar Hill. This store extends to 15,215sq m gross floor area and sells a wide range of convenience and comparison goods.

The latest available data on food shopping patterns around Northstowe can be found in the documentation supporting a planning application for a large scale retail development proposal at Bar Hill. The extent of the survey area is shown in the figure on the following figure, with Northstowe lying in Zone 8. Zone 8 also contains Longstanton, Cottenham, Willingham and Swavesey. Bar Hill lies in Zone 7.



2018 Household Survey Area Map

The main food and top-up food shopping patterns associated with Zone 8 residents are contained in the following table. This shows the dominance of the Tesco Extra store at Bar Hill for main food shopping

amongst Zone 8 residents, although the data also shows that shoppers are willing to travel to other stores further afield for other main food shopping.

Store / Centre	Most Recent Main Food Shop	Other Main Food Shop	Most Recent Top-Up Food Shop	Other Top-Up Shop
Tesco Extra, Bar Hill	55%	41%	4%	7%
Co-op, Willingham	4%	5%	17%	24%
ALDI, Ely	2%	-	-	-
Co-op, Longstanton	-	-	10%	11%
Co-op, Cottenham	-	2%	5%	6%
Waitrose, Cambridge	2%	1%	-	-
Cottenham village stores	-	-	3%	4%
Oakington village stores	-	-	3%	2%
Willingham village stores	-	-	2%	1%
Over	-	-	1%	-
Swavesey	-	-	1%	4%
ALDI, Cambridge	5%	10%	1%	1%
Sainsbury's stores Cambridge	-	6%	2%	1%
Tesco stores Cambridge	3%	4%	-	-
Waitrose, St Ives	2%			4%
ALDI, Huntingdon	5%	3%	-	-
Morrison's, Cambourne	2%	1%	-	-
Internet	12%	8%	2%	3%

For top-up food shopping the data shows that the Tesco Extra store becomes much less dominant and smaller stores, closer to home in the individual villages, are more popular.

For comparison goods shopping, the 2018 household survey shows that Cambridge, followed by Bar Hill, are the most popular destinations. Overall, the city centre has a 54% market share for all comparison goods shopping trips amongst Zone 8 residents, whilst Bar Hill's market share is 15%. In terms of individual comparison goods categories, stores at Bar Hill have the following market share amongst Zone 8 residents:

- Clothing and footwear – 4%
- Furniture, furnishings, floorcoverings – 4%
- Domestic appliances – 6%
- Audio-visual equipment – 10%
- Health and beauty products – 36%
- Toys, games, sports, recreation products – 12%

Expenditure capacity

In order to set the context for the level of retail floorspace which the town centre is able to support, this strategy document has reviewed the level of potential retail expenditure capacity within Northstowe itself (as the new town continues to grow) and also in the wider area.

As a starting point, this considers the level of retail floorspace which could be supported by the spending associated with the residents of Northstowe. This is detailed within the Baseline Report (provided as an

appendix to this document) and is based upon the following data sources:

- The latest estimated completion rates at Northstowe, taken from South Cambridgeshire Council data;
- An assessment based upon year-on-year expenditure growth from 2018-2031 and then a single post-2031 total for the remainder of Northstowe;
- Local per capita retail expenditure levels (from Experian) for convenience and comparison goods, plus expenditure on cafes and restaurants; and
- Testing floor space capacity levels for each type of retail use based on differing levels of retention within Northstowe.

The 'ring fenced' capacity assessment finds that:

- If 40-50% of convenience goods expenditure generated by Northstowe residents can be retained, then this would accommodate the turnover of the foodstore envisaged for the Phase 1 local centre and, overall, between 2,200sqm net and 2,800sqm net convenience goods floorspace for the completed new town.
- The retention of 50% of locally generated expenditure on food and beverage would accommodate 500sqm of Class A3/4 floorspace by 2031 and an additional 1,500sqm post-2031.
- Given the close proximity of Cambridge and Bar Hill, we would expect a lower level of market share/retention of expenditure for comparison goods trips in Northstowe. Should 10% of expenditure be retained, then this would support 860sq m net by 2031 and 2,500sqm net

for the completed settlement. Should the retention increase to 20% then 1,700sqm net could be supported by 2031 and 5,000sqm net for the completed settlement.

Whilst the ring-fenced capacity assessment is a useful indicative exercise to show the level of retail floorspace which residents of Northstowe could support, it is expected that the new town centre will also draw trade from a wider catchment.

This Strategy is therefore supported by exploring the contribution that residents in a localised catchment could make in supporting retail floorspace in the town centre, which again is fully detailed in the Baseline Report.

Convenience goods floorspace

The assessment therefore tests the market share of retail floorspace in Northstowe town centre within Northstowe itself and the surrounding parishes of Longstanton, Willingham & Over, Swavesey and Cottenham. For convenience goods shopping, three scenarios have been tested: market share levels assumed in the supporting assessment for the Phase 1 outline planning application and alternative scenarios which assume that Northstowe is less/more successful in terms of its market penetration rate. The results are as follows:

- Based upon the assumptions used in the Phase 1 planning application – including a 25% main food market share for Northstowe residents and a 15% market share for Longstanton residents – c.2,900sqm of net sales convenience goods floorspace could be accommodated when

Northstowe is complete.

- If the new town centre is less successful in attracting main food shopping trips from Northstowe residents and main and top-up trips from Longstanton residents, possibly because a smaller sized foodstore is provided, then capacity falls to c.2,000sqm net.
- Conversely, if a large store is provided, and exceeds expectations in terms of main food shopping trips from across the catchment, then c. 2,200sqm net could be accommodated by 2031 and c.4,500sqm net in totality.

Comparison goods floorspace

For comparison goods floorspace, two alternate scenarios have also been adopted: one assuming that the Northstowe town centre can achieve a 5% market share for comparison goods shopping across the localised catchment and an alternative assessment which assumes a 15% market share.

The 5% market share scenario results in a localised capacity of c. 2,000sqm net when the whole of the new town is complete, rising to c. 6,000sqm net for the 15% market share.

For food and beverage floorspace our local catchment capacity assessment assumes that 15% of expenditure from Northstowe residents is retained, falling to 10% for Longstanton and 5% across the rest of the catchment. This results in a total capacity, when Northstowe is complete, of c.2,000sqm of A3/4 floorspace.

The above analysis shows that in order to provide the level of Class A retail floorspace allowed for in the

outline planning permission for Phase 2 of the new town, the town centre will be required to draw convenience, comparison and food & beverage from further afield and/or achieve a higher market penetration rate in the local area (i.e. be capable of competing more aggressively against Bar Hill and Cambridge). In addition, in order to achieve these levels of market share it is likely that competition from surrounding retail destinations, such as Bar Hill, cannot intensify.

Northstowe Town Centre retail offer opportunities

Given the surrounding context as outlined above, along with the finite level of retail expenditure capacity in the local area, the opportunity for Northstowe town centre's retail offer will be focused around two areas: **meeting local needs of Northstowe residents** and **providing a distinctive retail offer which attracts visitors from a wider catchment.**

The retail offer, in terms of serving the needs of local residents, is likely to focus on a modest amount of convenience goods floorspace, encompassing a small to medium sized foodstore, in part influenced by the content of the local centre in phase 1. This will be complemented by F&B and other service uses.

The F&B offer may well be combined with workspace uses and should be seen as being attractive for the local workforce and local residents in order to create activity during the day and in the evening. In order to create the best possible circumstances for the success of retail provision in the early phase, retail provision should be located close to the education, health and other main town centre uses so they can take advantage of the vitality/footfall created.

Given that the scale of Northstowe will not, on its own, be supported by local residents, the town centre will also need to be attractive to a wider catchment. The town centre cannot replicate Cambridge city centre and will not be a direct competitor. Therefore, it will take advantage of retail uses which are:

Complementary to Cambridge (i.e. retail businesses which see an opportunity for additional provision), and

Provide a differentiated offer which isn't available in the wider catchment and, potentially, focus upon a leisure-related retail destination.

Such uses, particularly the latter, may require larger site areas and the development of the town centre will need to offer the opportunity to accommodate these as and when demand/proposals arise. This would accord with the current Development Plan Strategy in the 2018 Local Plan which identifies Northstowe as the location which should accommodate retail demand after Cambridge.

However, in order to make Northstowe town centre successful and achieve the objectives in this strategy, all of the main partners involved in its delivery – Homes England, South Cambridgeshire District Council etc. – must ensure that development proposals in the wider area do not threaten its delivery. As a consequence, this Town Centre Strategy is as much about the wider context in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge as it is about the content and design of the town centre. This will include careful examination of planning applications for main town centre uses elsewhere in South Cambridgeshire which may impact upon planned/committed investment in the town centre.

3. The Core Components

3a: Spaces with purpose

The town centre has been designed to be a series of **spaces with purpose**. This goes beyond simply allocating areas of green space and public realm within the masterplan without due consideration. No single space can cater for all people and all occasions. Instead thought has been given to provide multiple types of green space that can cater for all - parents, children, older people, young adults etc..

These spaces will accommodate a flexible mix of activity which promote experience, work, play, learning, movement and curation, as the Northstowe town centre grows and develops. Importantly they also cater for different moods; for exercise, for celebration, for socialising and for contemplation. As well as being visually attractive, these spaces will spark delight and provide experiences that residents and visitors to town centres are searching for.



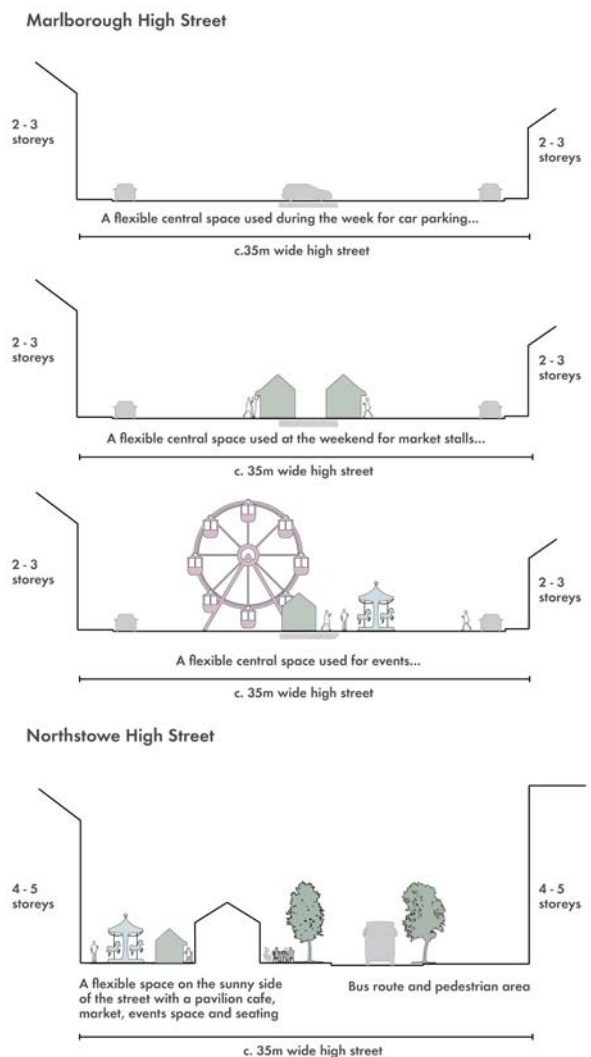
*Range of activities undertaken within Marlborough High Street
(Neil Goodwin copyright)*

High Street

Historically, town centres have taken many forms often determined by the confluence of routes. The alignment of the high street through the town centre and the surrounding street pattern offers the opportunity to introduce a widened high street space between two junctions. The widened high street form can be seen in many historic centres across England, from **Marlborough in Wiltshire** to St. Ives in Cambridgeshire. The space created here offers an opportunity to create a meaningful public space at the heart of the town, a space which can be used differently through year for events and activities, and will define the town centre's role as a place of exchange, drawing visitors and residents to it.

The widened high street section has two elements. In the early phases of development, the southern section will be established first. This will be a narrower space, bringing early non-residential uses close together to support their success, it will have a more formal civic character, reflecting the uses that will cluster around it early on. It will be heavily influenced by the green corridor crossing the high street at this point and will include formal landscape planting and trees.

The northern section will be a wider space overall, creating capacity for activity that enhances and supports the active frontages that will come forward along it. The use of this space will change over time, retaining a dynamism that attracts repeat visits, uses could range from a street market, to a festival, to outdoor performances or community events throughout the year. To appeal to the full spectrum of Northstowe residents we imagine clusters of informal play space, landscaping and water features, within the high street, creating a further focus for families to gather and interact.





Northstowe Town Centre—widened high street looking south

The high street forms a series of differently scaled hard landscaped spaces to serve the town centre, including a civic square and events space. Planting and urban trees and water features will be a vital component of the town centre, creating character and also helping to manage the variations in climate over time. In contrast to the high street, other routes will feel more enclosed and intimate with a creative character, ready to be explored by visitors to the town centre.

The following sketch provides a zoomed in view of the high street public realm network, which uses both the green corridor and the high street itself as primary structuring elements.

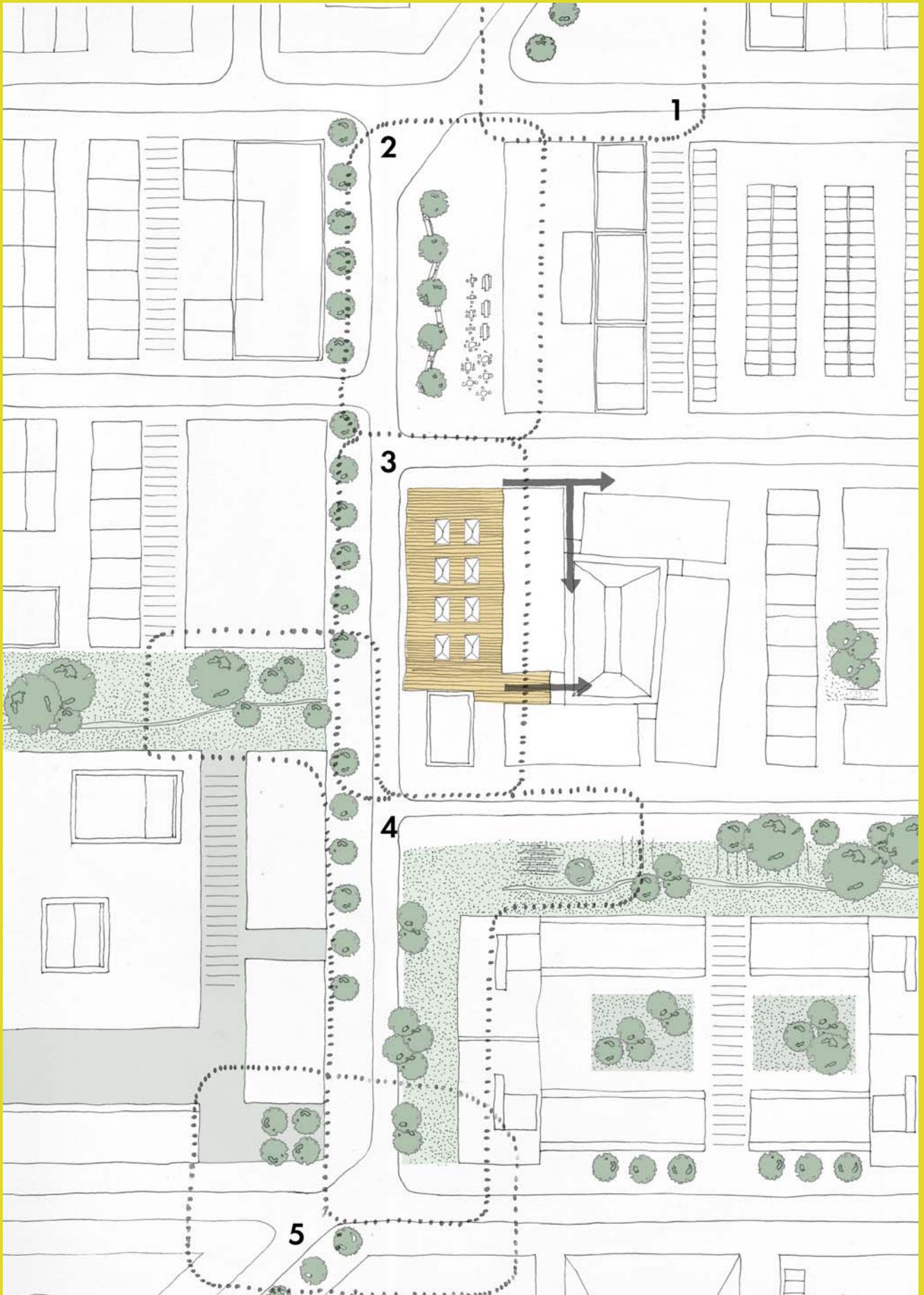
Spaces 1 and 5 are the entry spaces into the town centre. These spaces announce the town centre and facilitate the transition of the route from spine road to high street. They are opportunities to design public spaces with a different identity associated with the important 'book-end' buildings at either end of the

widened high street. **Space 5** faces the civic square at the southern end of the high street, with tree planting, soft landscaping, play equipment, seating to relax and water features including SUDS incorporated into these green spaces.

Space 2 is the commercial end of the high street with shops and cafes, providing space on the sunny side of the street for cafe seating and informal play.

Space 3 is the central space in the town centre, associated with the Market Hall. This provides a flexible space which could be used for temporary market pitches, events or concerts. A pavilion cafe provides activity in the space throughout the year.

Within **Space 4** the Town Gardens connect right through the civic end of the high street, with tree planting, soft landscaping, play equipment, seating to relax and water features including SUDS incorporated into these green spaces, with views through to the Town Park and Waterpark.



Northstowe Town Centre—public realm spaces on the high street

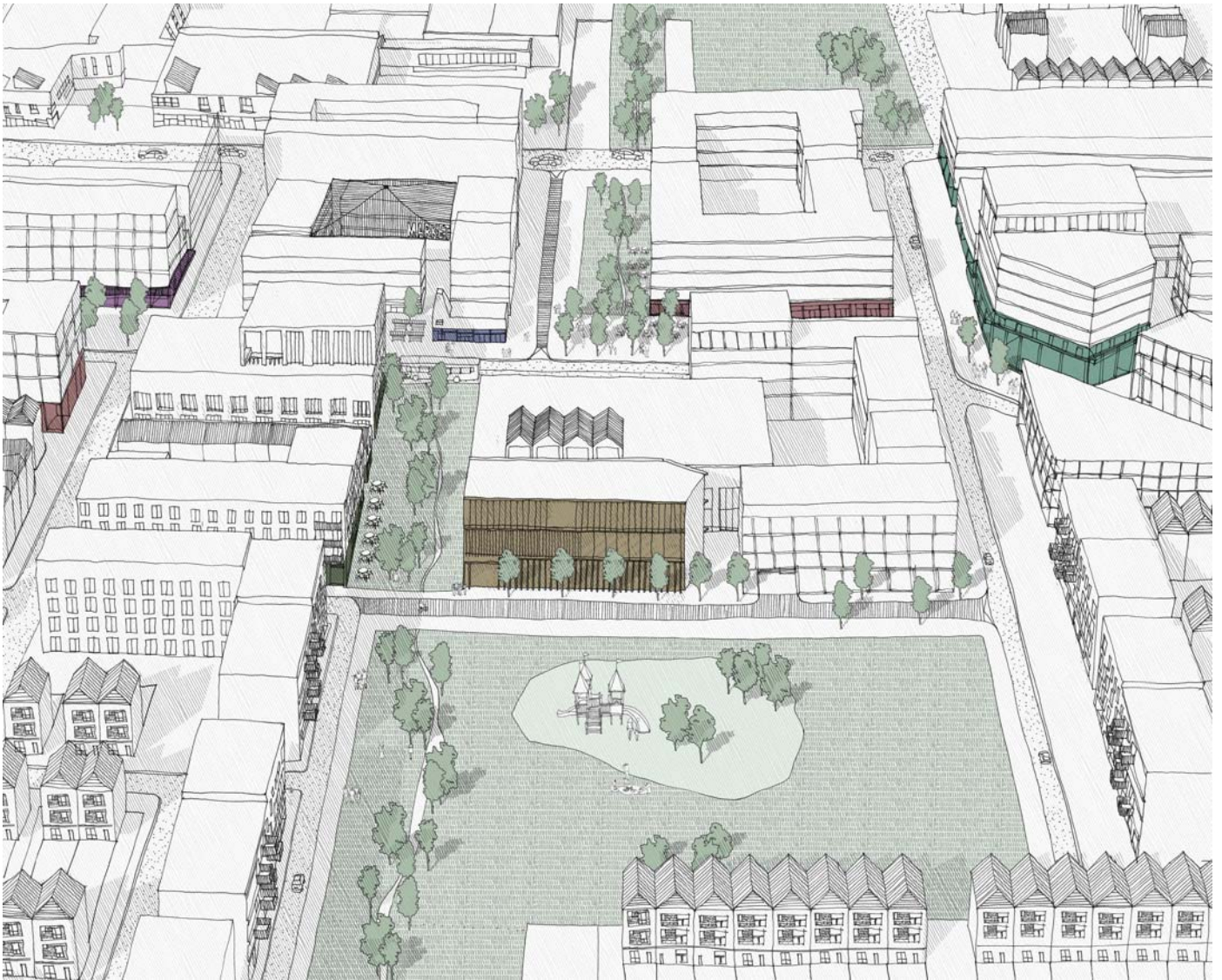
Green Space

The town centre will be structured around a network of green and open spaces, enhancing connections to the wider countryside. Each of these spaces will have a distinct role and function in the town centre, with green spaces helping to shape the future character of Northstowe.

The green corridor forms the focus for a series of green spaces which bring nature right into the heart of the town centre.



Northstowe green spaces sequence in the context of the wider countryside

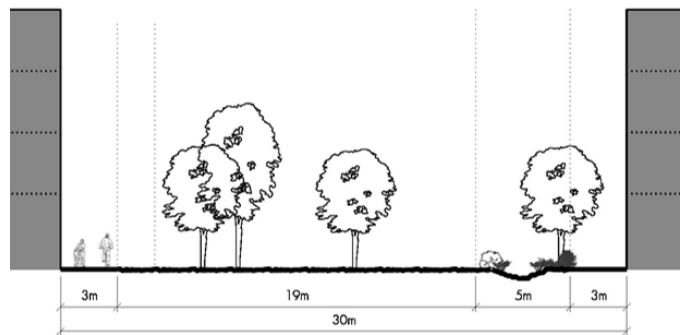


Northstowe Town Centre – birds eye view of the Town Park and Town Gardens, looking across the high street

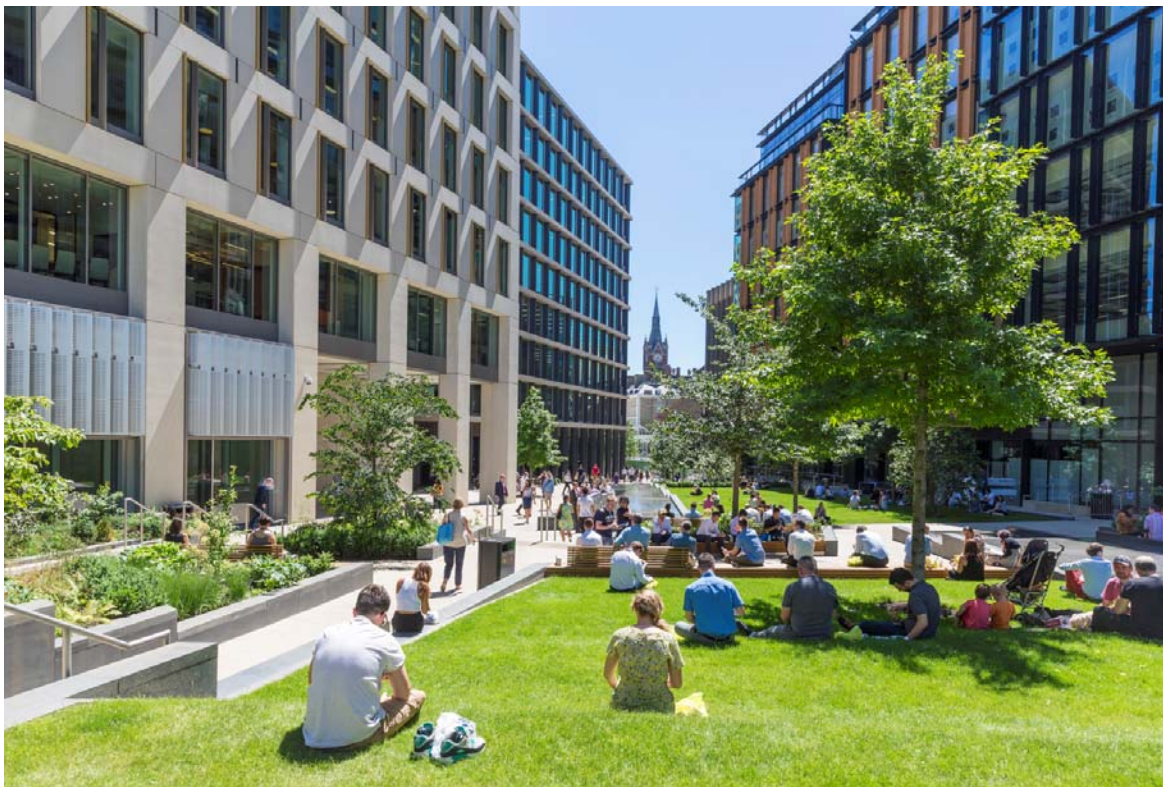
Town Gardens

The focus of the town centre is the design of a safe and active high street environment, with places and spaces to play, places for events and green spaces to relax.

The Town Gardens link this central space to the wider green corridor sequence of the town park, recreation ground and into the wider countryside. The town gardens will have an important role in greening the town centre and will contain swales and rills as part of a sustainable drainage strategy for the town centre. A fine grain block structure will support comfortable streets with generous street tree planting, providing shade and shelter.



Town Gardens cross-section diagram



Town Gardens precedent—Pancras Square

Town Park



Northstowe Town park—Computer Generated Image

The Town Park will form an important resource for both the town centre and the town as a whole. The park is located on the green corridor and linked to the high street via the widened Town Gardens. The park will be framed on all sides by a variety of uses and an active south facing block on the north side spilling out into the space.

The 1.2ha of open space proposed for the town centre has been used to create the Town Garden spaces and the Town Park placing the right spaces in the right location which can best support the overall character and activity in the town centre, bringing useable green space right into and across the high street itself. The additional green space created on the high street provides more diversity and opportunity that had not been present in earlier versions of the Town Centre Masterplan.

The Education Campus

The Northstowe Education Campus will provide the largest facility of its kind within the Cambridgeshire County, bringing together education, community and sporting facilities which will cater for the needs of residents in Northstowe, Longstanton, and the wider area. This offer will be crucial to the community sustainability of Northstowe Town Centre.

More specifically, the Education Campus will provide a secondary school (academy) run by Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT), with a phased opening commencing in September 2019. 600 students will be accommodated at the academy in the first phase, which will increase to 1,200, then 1,800 students in subsequent phases. During a later phase of development there will also be a post-16 facility co-located within the academy which will accommodate 400 students. The phasing has some flexibility to meet growing demand for places as the wider Northstowe Town development progresses.

The first phase of the Education Campus will also provide a sports hall, flood-lit sports pitches, a multi-purpose school hall which can be used as community and theatre space, and a Special Education Needs (SEN) school.

Northstowe already has its first three-form entry Primary School opened (managed by the Diocese of Ely Board of Education).

From September 2019 the Education Campus will be bringing people to the town centre and is therefore one of the key early drivers of the town centre's success, a role that will grow as both the Campus and the town centre evolve.



Northstowe Primary School (<https://www.northstowe.com/content/education>)

Workspace

Northstowe will be a place to have ideas, start and grow a business. A spectrum of employment spaces will serve these varied needs and add activity to the town centre. New spaces will complement the region's sci-tech cluster and create a new place for creative endeavour, with space to create, exhibit and trade that is currently lacking in Cambridge. A strong link will be fostered between Northstowe's businesses and the Education Campus.

The workspace offer is a key component of the town centre composition that should be considered early, providing both office and creative workspace typologies that appeal to a broad range of small business requirements. With in-built flexibility, the typologies provided should meet the current gaps in the wider workspace provision, providing more affordable and accessible space that will attract both creative businesses and those seeking to serve both the local population and wider Cambridge economy. To support and attract economic pioneers and further enforce affordability new forms of live-work development could line some of the mews streets

The workspace offer and other business uses (such as conferencing facilities) will grow and strengthen over time as town centre footfall increases and continues to drive commercial demand, taking advantage of the wide range of town centre activity and supporting amenities that will be established. This will create a range of space that promote the widest possible spectrum of employment within the town centre, and can adapt and evolve to meet changing needs and/or differed economic growth directions.

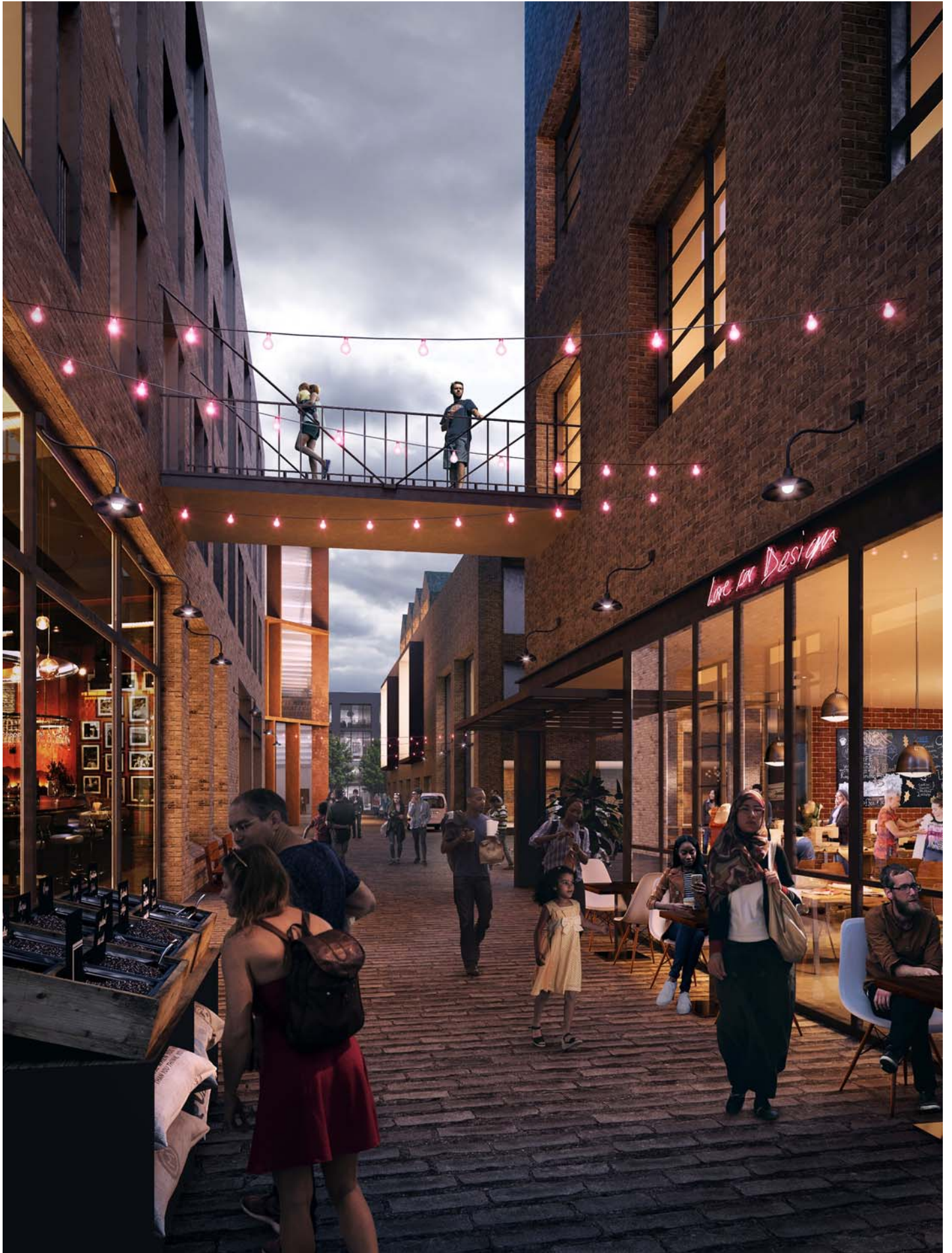
Employment uses will permeate all parts of the town centre. Commercial uses and office space will form

part of the high street frontage and also address the primary road, promoting links to the Education Campus. Workshops and a range of employment spaces will colonise the mews streets, one block back from the high street, reflecting the more intimate and informal nature of these streets. Space will also come forward in the town centres first buildings, the Market Hall and Civic Hub.

A number of bespoke typologies have been considered as part of the DNA of the town centre which can lay the foundations for enterprise and vitality in Northstowe. These will integrate a variety of business space through innovative building types to create places that will foster the seeds of enterprise in the town centre. These bespoke typologies are; Mews Typologies, Standalone Enterprise Space, a Market Hall and Civic Hub.

Activity should not just happen right on the high street. **Mews typologies** create alternative spaces for a range of uses - creating enterprise spaces which could be colonised by creative businesses and 'messier' industries which need direct access to a street. These streets could add vitality to the town centre, encouraging a unique mix of people and activity, focused in the town centre. Upper floors could be workspaces or homes.

Integrating opportunities for enterprise across the town centre will be vital in establishing the culture and ethos of the town centre. However these spaces alone will not deliver against the opportunity available to the town centre. Alongside these a series of **standalone enterprise spaces** will be created which all businesses to start, locate and grow within the town centre.



Northstowe Town Centre Mews CGI

Market Hall

The Market Hall is the most significant of the bespoke typologies - a place of exchange, enterprise and creativity. This will be one of the first places built in the town centre, establishing a dynamic sense of place and character that can be carried forward across the rest of the town. The building will have multiple layers, with an open plan central space, mimicking market halls from many historic towns. This space can be flexible, by day market stalls may fill the ground floor space with tables for eating and drinking, at night these could move to allow for performance or events. On the upper floors small business or retail units overlook the central space with shared circulation encouraging visitors and exchange.

The Market Hall is a crucial element of the town centre mix which draws together creativity, culture and food and drink to provide an exciting focal point for interaction and exchange within the town centre. There is flexibility in the how activities can use the spaces (arranged around some form of central space) to interact and innovate, which will evolve over time as the town centre grows and attracts more activities and visitors.

The most important characteristic of this space is the diversity and flexibility of the space provided to support the full range of local business activities, as well as encouraging growth and evolution of business activities organically on the streets around the Market Hall. This will appeal to pioneering workspace operators and business occupiers, provided there is a relatively basic level of fit out that allows them to customise and adapt spaces to best suit their activities. This will provide an affordable entry point for small businesses to secure the space in Northstowe that they may be unable to access elsewhere (i.e. in Cambridge

City Centre). The entrepreneurial spirit and creative nature of businesses that this space can accommodate will rub off more widely on the town centre and contribute to its sense of place as it grows and evolves.

To ensure the Market Hall is at the heart of the town centre from the beginning Homes England are committed to finding a partner who can curate and manage it over the long term. Contractual commitments to Homes England will ensure the vision is realised and maintained.

There is a range of possibilities for market hall format, some of which are shown by the following four precedent images.



Market Hall precedent: Manchester Craft Centre



Market Hall precedent:
Brixton Market



Market Hall precedent:
Box Park Shoreditch



Market Hall precedent:
Pop Brixton

Civic Hub

Civic and community uses will help to provide activity to the high street. A **civic hub** will be the focus for uses that people need including healthcare facilities, a library and community spaces for parties and events. This central hub should also include shared workspaces.

Other community uses which could be incorporated into the hub or clustered elsewhere include youth

facilities, a place of worship and a gym. It is intended that the civic hub building will be one of two book-end buildings looking over the high street space. As such it will be one of the tallest buildings in the town and could have residential uses at upper floors.

There are many examples of successful civic spaces which Northstowe could take lessons from, as shown in the following precedent images.



Civic Hub precedent: Bethnal Green Mission Church - community centre and residential scheme. This provides a community facilities (basement), two storey church (ground and first floor), charity and co-working spaces (first floor) and private residential above.

Image copyright: Gatti Routh Rhodes Architects (<http://www.grr-architects.com/bethnal-green-mission-church/>) & Jack Hobhouse



*Civic Hub precedent:
Deptford Lounge*

*Civic Hub precedent:
Brent Civic Centre*

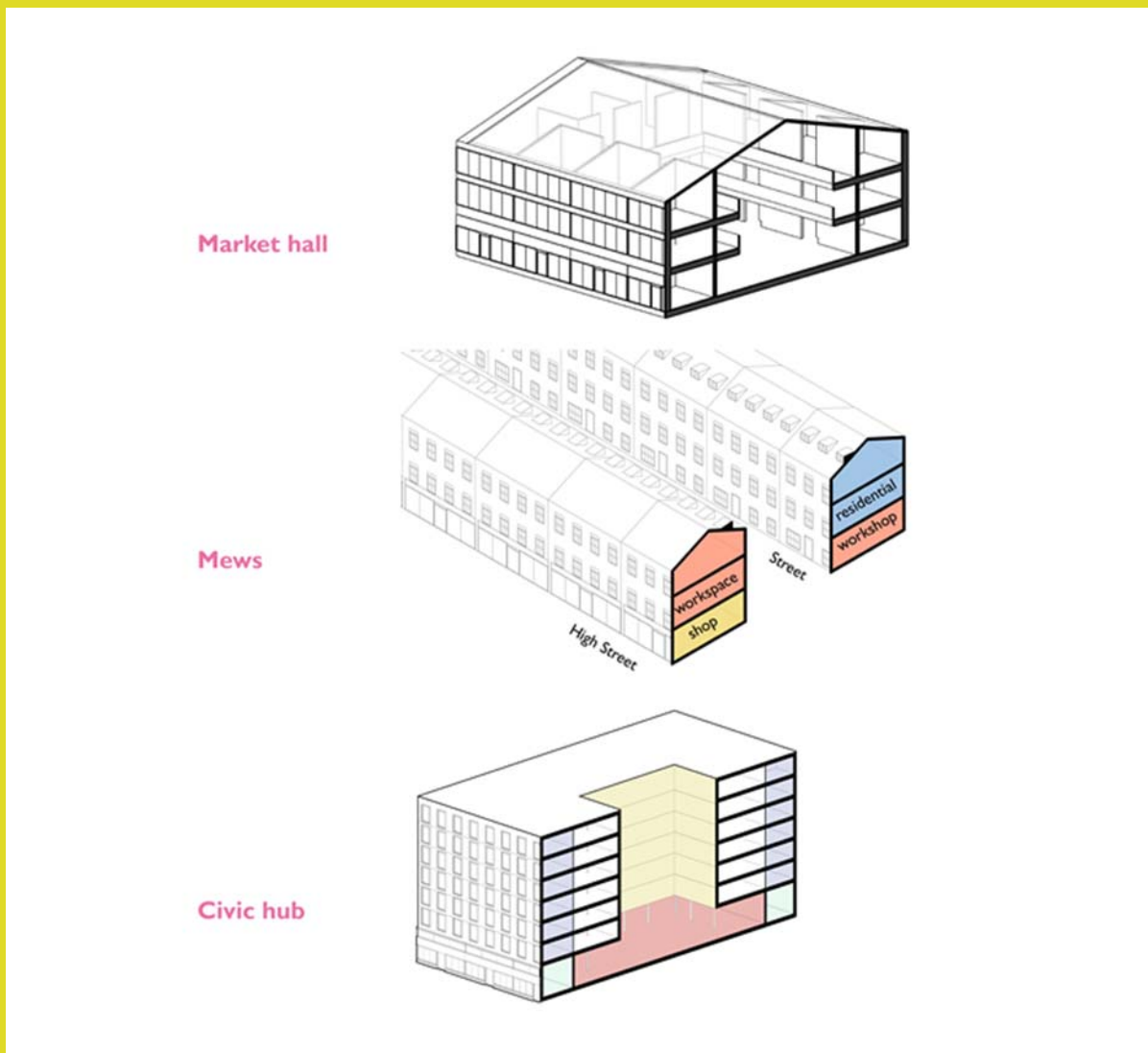


*Civic Hub precedent:
Lambeth Civic Centre*



In summary, the **Market Hall** and **Civic Hub** typologies are particularly crucial town centre components, bringing together employment space with a range of other uses; retail, leisure, community and cultural. As we have shown in this section, a mix of office, light industrial and studio spaces will provide a working

environment that encourages a range of business types and sizes. This space will address the gaps in supply locally and complement the wider employment offer of Northstowe that will come forward in the Enterprise Zone. An illustration of these typologies is shown in the following diagram.



Typology diagrams—Market Hall, Mews and Civic Hub

3b: A focused centre

The framework for Northstowe Town Centre shapes a focused centre, balancing the scale and mix of uses within a well-connected layout underpinned by a high quality public realm and town centre environment.

Scale and share of spaces

The mix of commercial uses promoted within the Town Centre Strategy seeks a true balance between retail, employment, commercial, leisure and civic activity to ensure future vitality. It has the ability to accommodate a wider range of activities, such as a hotel, should the market demand grow for this type of space, however this is an element of the mix which may not necessarily come forward depending on market appetite. The flexibility of the town centre mix allows for its delivery in later phases but is not in any way contingent on it.

As shown in the pie charts on the next page, this evolves the shares of space as presented in the previous masterplan / outline consent. The approach in the outline was about establishing the maximum floorspace that could be accommodated without impacting negatively on local centres, and as such was always intended to be refined at a later date. The mix of spaces in the Town Centre Strategy therefore makes this refinement, and establishes an approach which is deliverable and 'viable' in this market context.

This evolution is therefore partly a response to the challenging retail sector dynamics and the contraction in space demand, but also a reaction to a greater level of understanding of what purpose and role the town centre can play, not just for Northstowe but also in addressing some of the sub-regional gaps and priorities. Ultimately this greater diversity of employment, commercial, leisure and civic uses

alongside residential will attract footfall to the high street and therefore create greater resilience and vibrancy within a town centre.

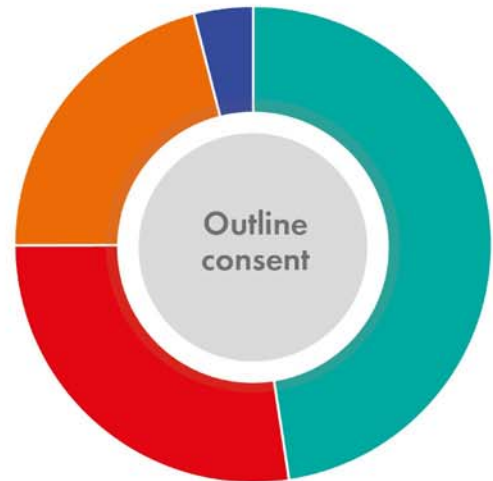
A tighter, more efficient centre

Not only does the framework for the town centre promote a healthy balance in the mix and shares of uses, it also prioritises the relationship between uses to establish strong connections between key anchors. This involves the clustering of similar and related activities around the key anchors of the Civic Hub, Education Campus and Market Hall established in the early phases, in order to create a tighter, more efficient centre.

Emphasis is also placed on guiding footfall between key anchors and maximising the opportunities for uses reliant and high levels of activity passing by. Providing a strong, consistent high street frontage reinforces this, and strengthens the core of the town centre, complemented by the green route and town park that connect directly with it without disrupting the flow of footfall along the high street.

Creating the right environment

High quality public realm forms an important part of the placemaking approach that will help to create an attractive town centre environment where people want to spend time. This is demonstrated by the importance placed on the town centre's green routes and open spaces, plugging into the wider green and open space network leading to Longstanton, the Waterpark and, in time, Oakington. This focus on public realm and open space, combined with the mix and location of different activities in an efficient town centre layout, will drive Northstowe's attractiveness.



The Strategy for Northstowe Town Centre is about creating a place that appeals to a wide audience both today and tomorrow through a distinctive mix of uses and activities. It is a centre that is about more than just retail, with leisure, cultural, employment and civic functions underpinning the strategy. This reflects and responds to the strategic sector trends seeing a shift in focus from the dominance in 'pure' retail in town centres towards a more experience led retail and leisure economy.

Retail

Retail floorspace forms a component of the non-residential mix in the town centre, but it is far from the dominant use. It consists of the functional convenience retail floorspace that is essential to meet the full range of residents' needs, providing an affordable and every day offer from day one, but will also attract the exceptional, providing a differentiated offer that contrasts and complements surrounding centres. This retail floorspace is accompanied by a small proportion of personal/professional services that completes the functional offer of the town centre expected to support all residents.

Commercial

Workspace is commercial in nature, and constitutes a significant proportion of the town centre's floorspace, promoting the aspiration for enterprise and providing the space to support local business activities. As well as the pure workspace provision, it features as a key part of the mix within the Market Hall, as well as providing potential for some provision within the Civic Hub, and within the mews in the form of live-work units.



KEY

- Retail
- Commercial
- Hotel
- Leisure
- Civic

The Market Hall is a crucial element of the town centre mix which draws together creativity, culture and F&B to provide an exciting focal point for interaction and exchange within the town centre through its range of commercial uses. Whilst there must be a certain level of 'fix' for the floorspace within this typology to establish certainty and provide security to early occupiers, there is also flexibility in the how activities can use the spaces (arranged around some form of central space) to interact and innovate, which will evolve over time as the town centre grows and attracts more activities and visitors.

It must be acknowledged that the commercial proposals identified here are somewhat speculative. The alternative is more traditional office and employment floorspace that contributes less to establishing character and identity, and shaping and evolving the nature of the town centre over time, however this alternative is unlikely to come forward in the early development phases in an untested market location such as Northstowe.

Hotel

The hotel floorspace within the town centre supports Northstowe's appeal as a destination for visitors, and would come forward in the medium to long term once the town centre's reputation as a destination for visitors is established. The nature of the hotel could be aligned specifically to business visitors, linked with a conferencing facility, or aligned to the town centre's leisure and destination anchors, depending on the specific types of uses coming forward and what this means for visitor requirements.

Leisure

Destination uses are not a distinct non-residential category, but the term reflects a range of leisure uses, and cultural activities that will attract residents and visitors to the town centre. There is a cross-over here with retail uses, however leisure related retail is focused towards providing an experiential offer, rather than the more traditional retail floorspace already discussed. This mix of uses make up the most significant proportion of non-residential floorspace in the town centre. This floorspace should come forward as early as possible to provide the key anchors for the town centre and create a buzz and excitement around its offer from the outset, however this will obviously be developed and evolved over time. Whilst the Market Hall typology is predominantly a commercially focused offer, this also has some cross-over with the leisure uses and the intention of promoting experience and establishing the town centre as a destination.

Civic

Community uses are a crucial part of the civic offer, meeting core requirements of residents, and promoting the civic and cultural heart of the town centre. Flexibility is retained in the type of uses and how these are clustered, however this will include the library and health facility elements.

3c: Indicative Spatial Plan

The spatial element of the town centre strategy is not a rigid masterplan. It is a flexible framework that allows for evolution and change. It will guide the make-up and layout of the town centre, the nature of the development that comes forward, the delivery models used and its long-term stewardship.

This flexible strategy will help ensure that the town centre is uniquely agile and resilient to a changing and unpredictable economic context.

A framework has been developed that responds to the connections within the wider masterplan and grid pattern of Northstowe. The high street is the identifiable centre of the town - both the key connector and destination.

Learning lessons from resilient town centres

Northstowe must be both brave and cautious. Brave in challenging the norm and breaking out models focused on short-term commercial decision making, but cautious and mindful of mistakes made before within previous new towns. Northstowe's character can learn lessons from successful, traditional and resilient historic town centres, applying the rules that we know work - their form, natural structure and evolution.

Historic towns and villages have not been built all at once but have adapted to the needs of a growing community. We should think of Northstowe town centre in this way - adapting and evolving in response to the phases of development as new homes are built. Similarly, once the planned phases are complete, the town will need to be able to respond to future change or unforeseen opportunities.

This might come in the form of changing retail or employment trends which shift the demand for a certain land use, or a new occupier that requires a different floorplate. These may be trends and changes that are impossible to predict now, but at the same time are highly likely to occur in the life-cycle of a new town.

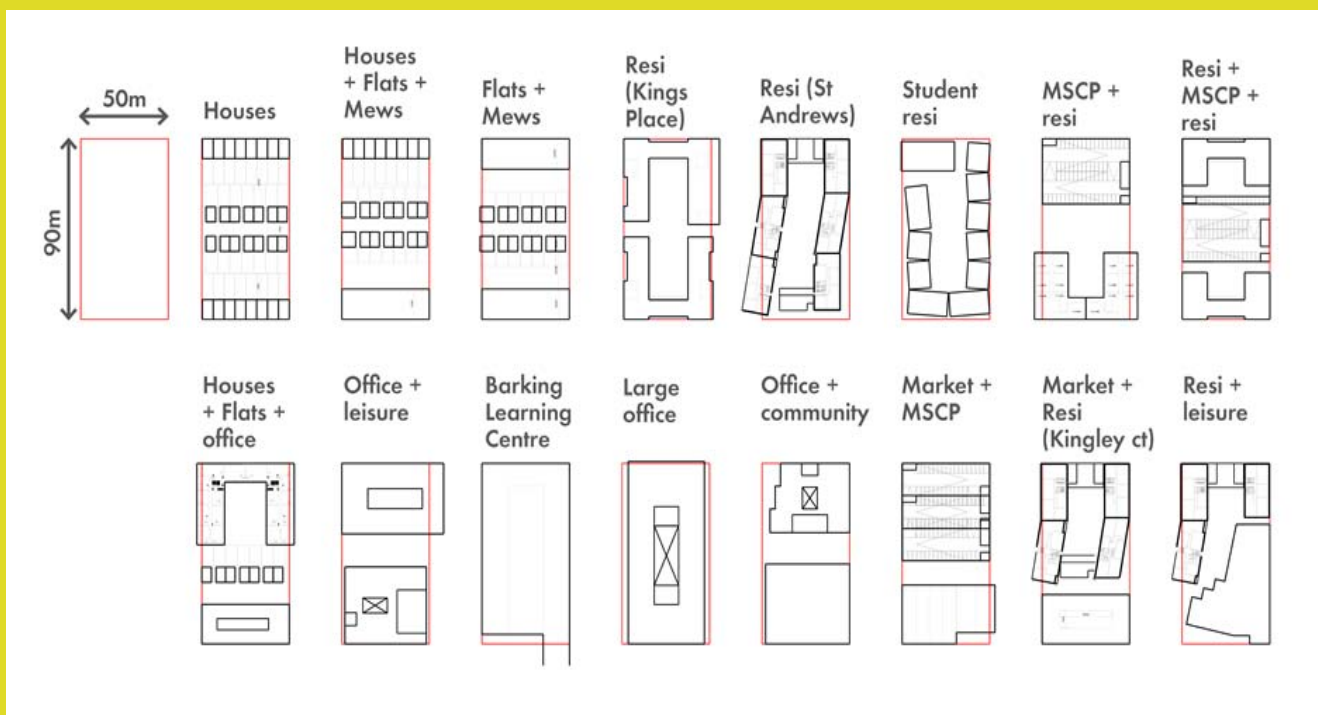
Attracting a creative workforce will be crucial to creating the town centre's character and identity, and establish a strong sense of entrepreneurship. This will add to the diversity of activities taking place in the town centre and its vibrancy and attractiveness as a destination for a wide ranging audience.

The town centre will have a modern market hall that enlivens the town centre early - creating a place for work, leisure and experimentation. There will be destination sport and leisure facilities, public spaces for outdoor events and modern community facilities to serve residents. The centre will also look to attract a significant cultural use to draw visitors.

A block structure to support resilience

The town centre street network will be formed by buildings within a flexible block structure. The sizes of these blocks have been defined to allow for evolution of uses over time. For this framework masterplan Allies & Morrison Urban Practitioners has explored a wide range of building typologies to determine the dimension of blocks, as shown in the image overleaf.

Northstowe will be a uniquely agile town centre that is able to respond to the unexpected through a masterplan that set the essential fixes and allows



Examples of block dimensions

flexibility within these. Northstowe will be a place that evolves as it develops. This is what ‘normal’ places do.

Underpinning the Framework are a series of 50x90 development plots that will enable the Town Centre to have in built flexibility as it is delivered. As shown above these plots can be configured in multiple ways, ultimately allowing a range of uses and characters of buildings to be accommodated.

This flexibility is critical for the town centre in the future, ensuring it has the ability to adapt to demand without having to fundamentally rethink, replan or reprovide key routes, infrastructure or character areas.

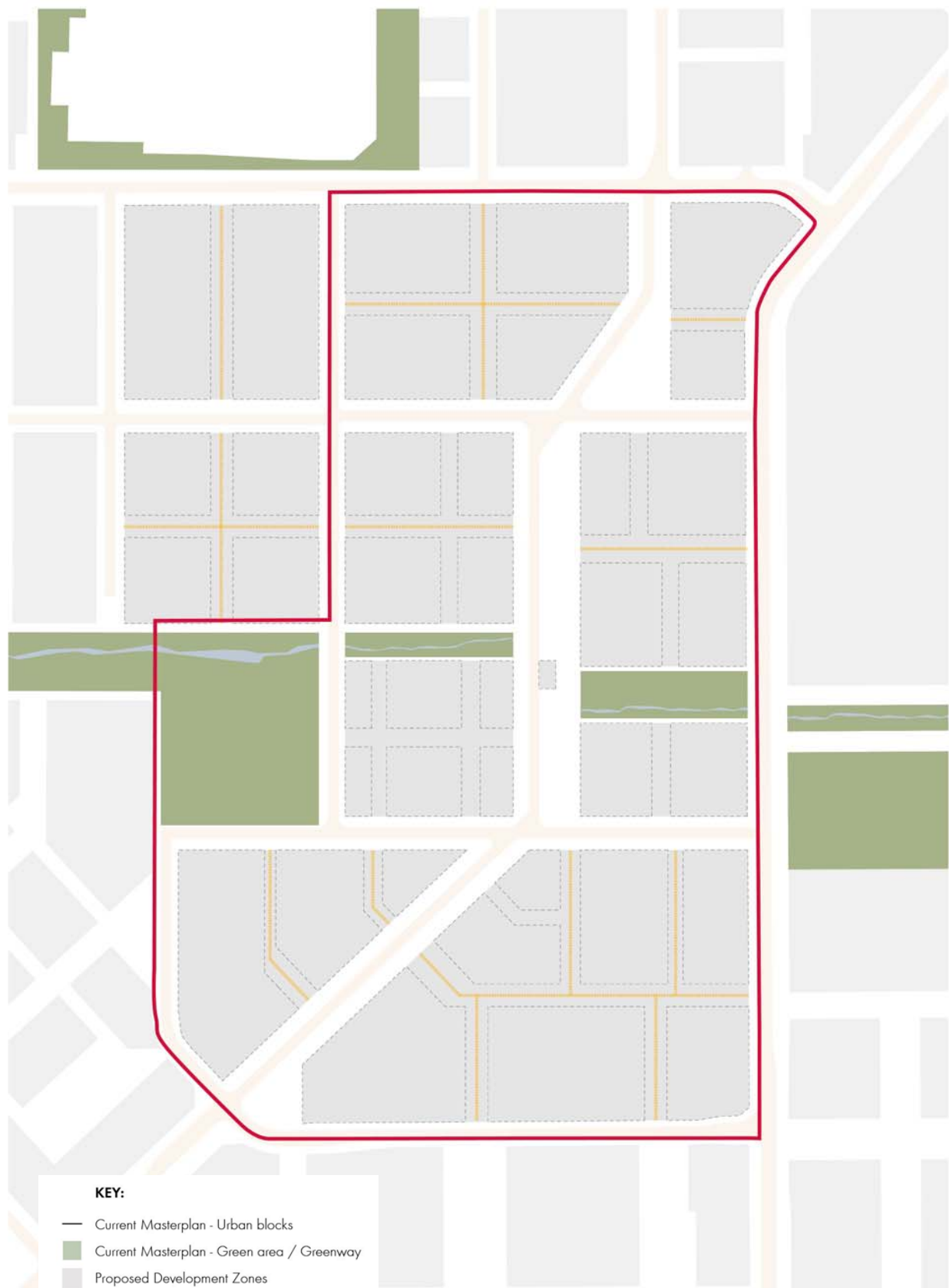
An indicative land use mix is set out later in Strategy utilising these plot structures, however as shown by the range of opportunities above each plot can successfully accommodate a range of alternative futures. As such should one use not be delivered, others can easily be accommodated to ensure the health of the town centre is maintained.

Essential fixes vs. flexible parameters

A block plan has been developed as also shown on the following page. This only controls the essential elements.

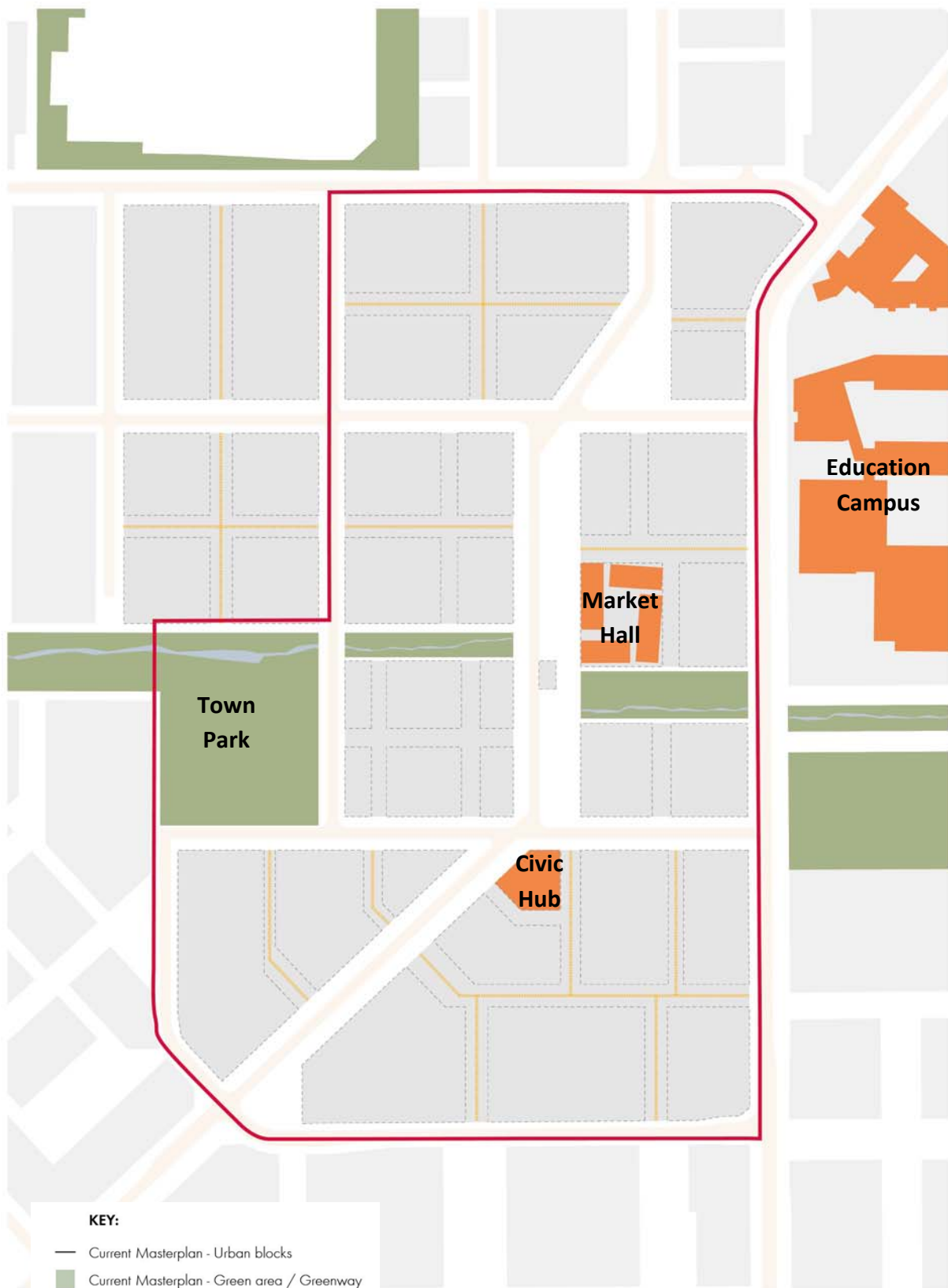
The grey areas on the plan illustrate the idea of ‘super blocks’. These are areas of the masterplan that can be broken down in a flexible way to respond to alternative uses or future adaptations.

The dotted lines illustrate one way that these larger blocks could be broken down to create a logical block structure.



- KEY:**
- Current Masterplan - Urban blocks
 - Current Masterplan - Green area / Greenway
 - Proposed Development Zones
 - Proposed green area / Greenway
 - - - Proposed Illustrative Blocks through Development Zones
 - - - Proposed potential routes through Development Zones

Northstowe Town centre—Block plan showing development parameters for potential implementation of Masterplan framework



Northstowe Town centre—Block plan showing development parameters for potential implementation of Masterplan framework, with core components

Key elements

As shown in the block plan on the previous page, bespoke typologies and land uses are in locations that help to drive activity to the high street, between uses and at different times of the day and week.

Considering these adjacencies and relationships of mutually supporting activities will be key to the future success of the town centre.

A number of these uses and bespoke typologies are important elements which underpin the wider strategy. The following will be early deliverables in the framework:

- Important ‘bookend’ of the Civic Hub. The Civic Hub is located on the eastern end of the high street, forming the centre for a cluster of community uses such as the library, health facilities and community halls.
- A pavilion cafe provides activity and a focal point in the centre of the space.
- The market hall occupies an important central position on the northern edge of the high street.
- The green corridor runs across the high street, providing a direct connection to the Town Park, recreation ground and countryside beyond.

These core uses are planned to be delivered early, alongside the first phases of residential, attracting footfall and meeting residents needs. The anticipated timing of these key elements are shown in the table to the right.

Town centre character

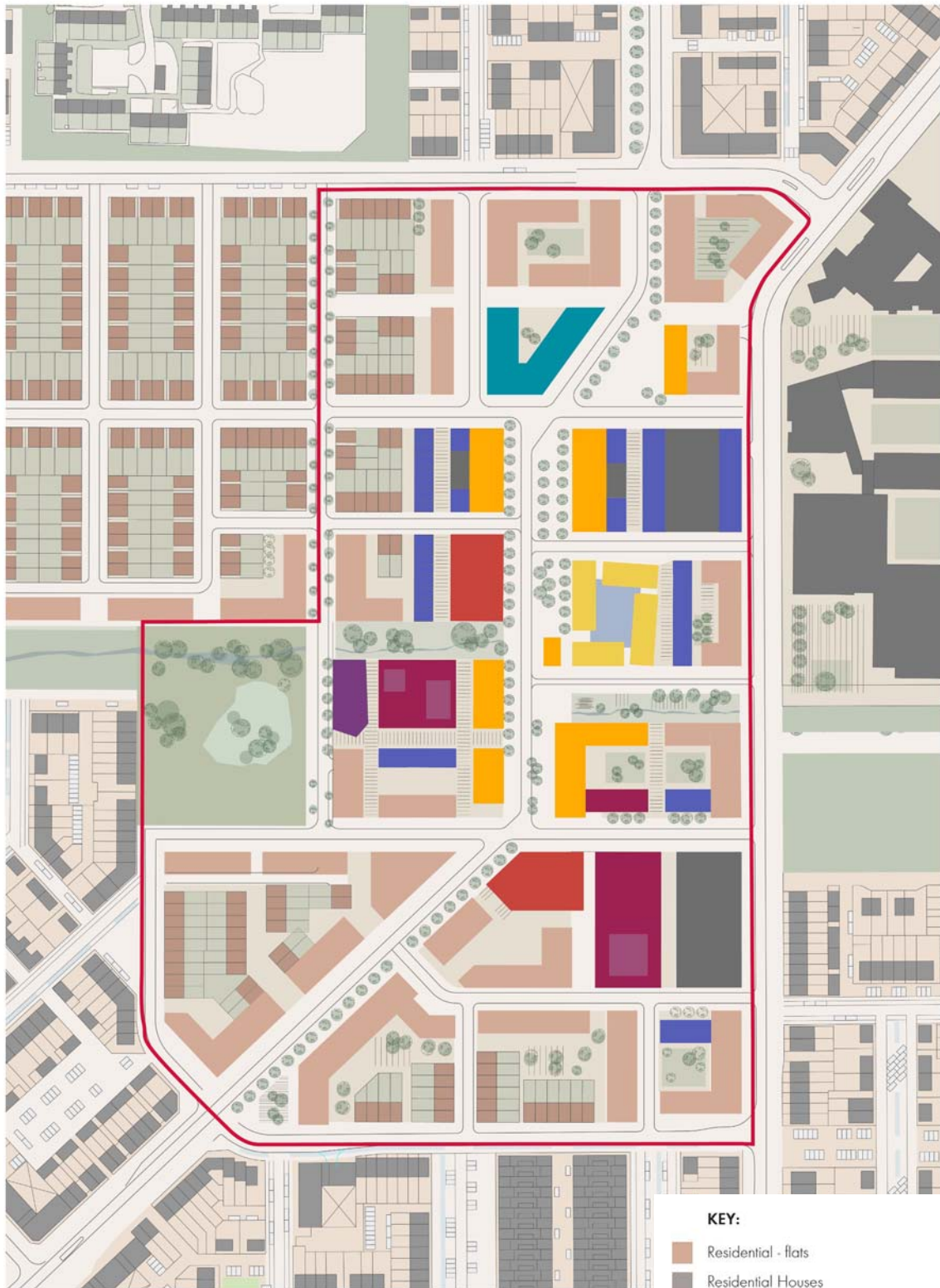
The illustrative masterplan framework is shown on the following page. This embeds a diversity of spaces, both in terms of internal and external space.

The framework takes forward the spirit of the original development framework and vision for the town centre, and draws in the design objectives set out in the Design Code.

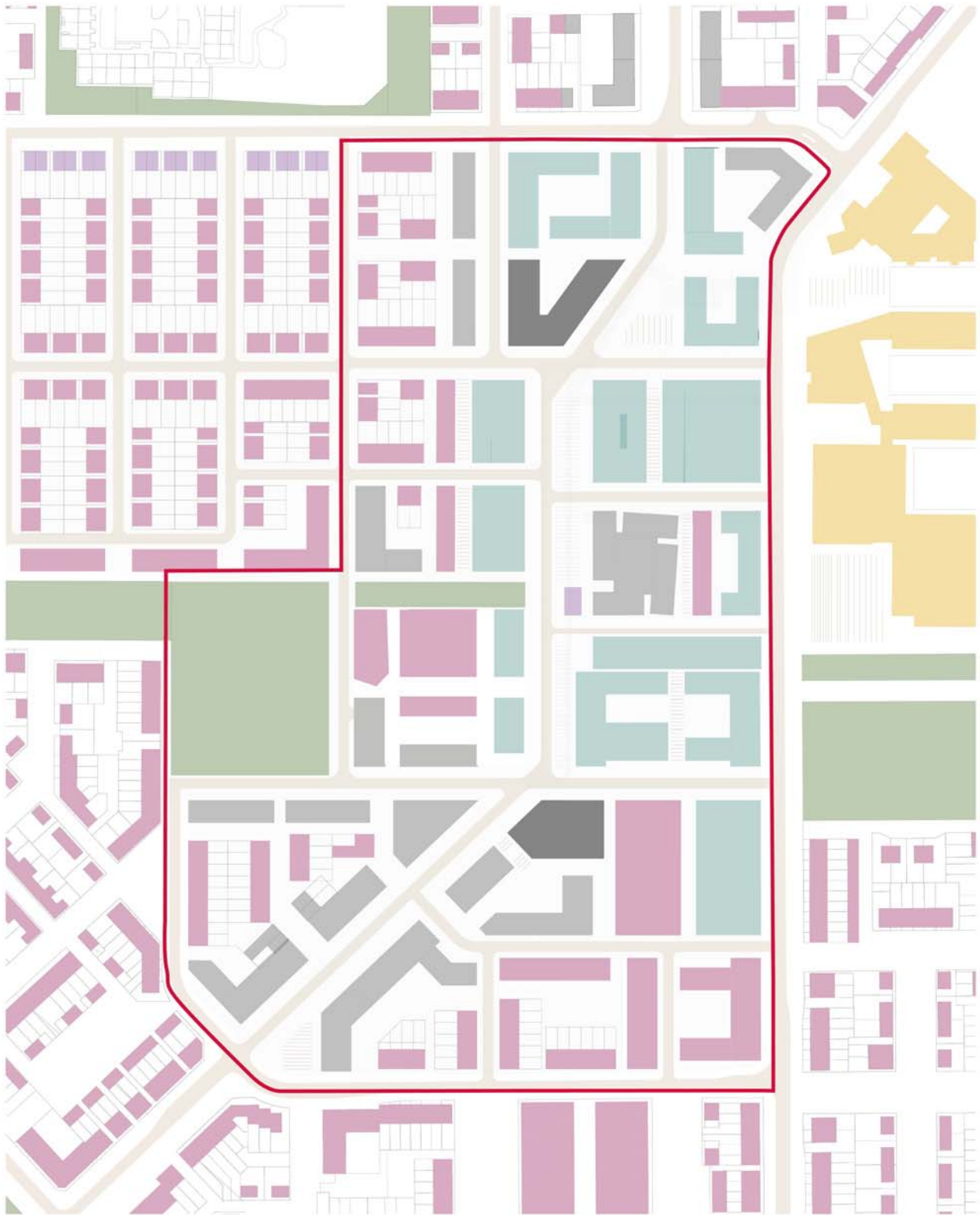
The focus for activity is the high street, and as such the greatest density and height is focused here, particularly around the core piece of widened high street. This is shown in the Massing Plan above.

The scale of spaces and the relationship with building heights have been balanced to create comfortable and attractive streets, squares, gardens and parks.

Element	Indicative Delivery Date	Responsible Partner
Education Campus	2019	CCC / CMAT
Town Park (Phase 1)	2022	Homes England / Developer
Market Hall	2022	Homes England / Developer
Town Park (Phase 2)	2025	Homes England / Developer
Civic Hub	2023	SCDC / CCC / NHS / Homes England



Northstowe Town Centre—indicative land use block plan for potential implementation of Masterplan framework



Northstowe Town Centre—illustrative heights for potential implementation of the Masterplan framework

- 2 Storeys
- 3 Storeys
- 3 Storeys School
- 4 Storeys
- 5 Storeys
- 6 Storeys

3d: Movement & Parking

The Cambridge Guided Busway means the vision for the town will not be shaped by a reliance on and dominance of private vehicles but on sustainable transport modes.

Cycling will be prioritised given the very good cycle connectivity along the Busway into the city, within Northstowe and to Cambridge Science Park.

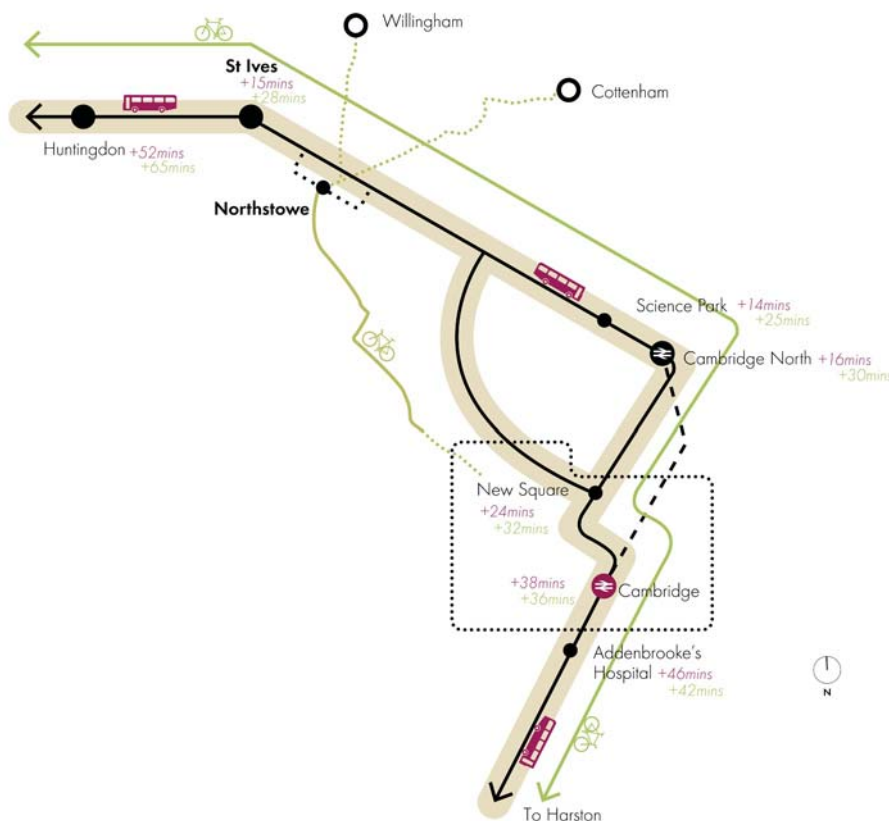
Sustainable Transport Modes

The Town Centre Strategy has been designed with future movement trends in mind, with less emphasis on private vehicles. Sustainable transport modes have

prioritised access to the high street with the majority of users arriving by foot, on bike or by bus.

Although the wider movement strategy for Northstowe has assumed bus only access to the high street the framework has been designed so that all streets could be used by all modes in the future, designing in flexibility and the option to increase all vehicle movements through this space if required. Sustainable transport modes have prioritised access to the high street with the majority of users arriving by foot, on bike or by bus.

This is shown in the Movement and Access diagram.



Movement Routes—Cambridge Guided Busway

Car Parking

Car parking is provided on the edge of the town centre but should be delivered in phases to help encourage more sustainable habits. Initially the car parking will be provided at ground level, but as the town centre begins to near completion, and space becomes limited, multi-storey car parks may be required. Flexibility in the parking provision within the town centre is crucial, with on-going monitoring as the town centre grows and evolves over time - providing convenient and frequent public transport is also key to limiting the need for parking.

This will require collaboration between the County, Homes England and town centre occupiers.

Residential parking

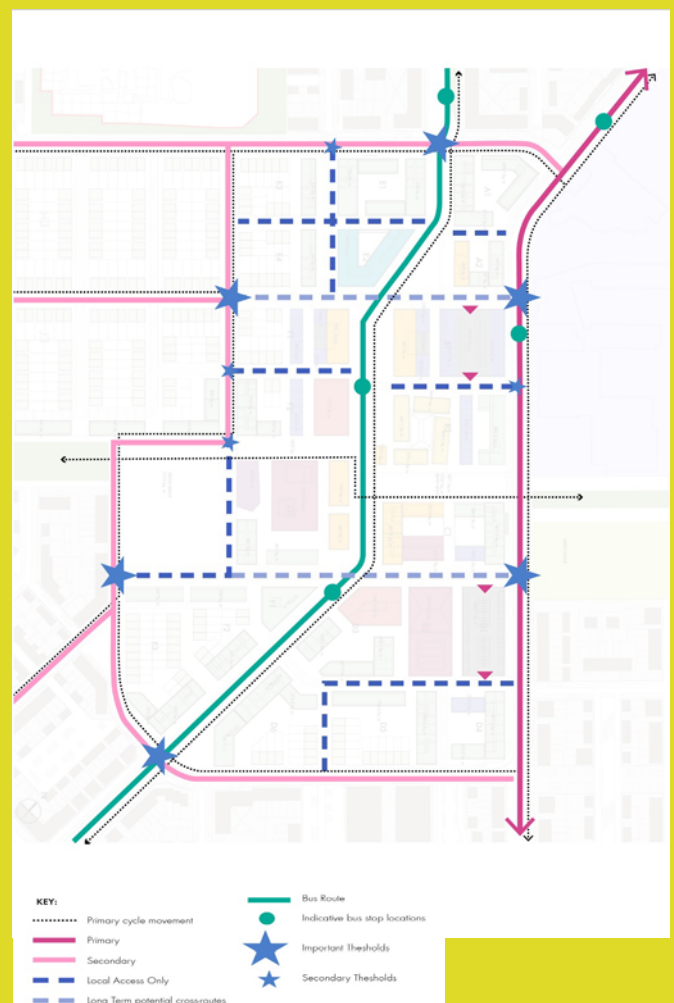
Up to 75% of residential parking demand will be delivered with residential blocks. The remainder will be delivered as part of centralised town centre multi-storey parking.

Commercial parking

The parking strategy looks to deliver non-residential parking in a manner that embeds early sustainable movement habits. Cycle parking will be prioritised first and provided in the most attractive and convenient locations.

Commercial parking demand has been estimated using vehicle trip generation, and the resulting multi-storey town centre car park should be informed by close monitoring of demand in the early phases of development. Parking for the destination leisure use in the south eastern quadrant of the town centre will be

provided on adjacent vacant sites in the early phases until such time as a multi-storey car park is required.



Northstowe Town Centre Movement & Access Diagram

4. MAKING IT HAPPEN

The consented outline planning permission for Northstowe Phase 2 (S/2011/14/OL) secures the following, as outlined in the description of development:

- Up to 3,500 dwellings
- 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school
- Town centre including employment uses
- Formal and informal recreational space and landscaped areas
- Eastern sports hub
- Remainder of Western sports hub
- Cambridge Guided Busway
- Primary road link to the southern access
- Construction haul route
- Engineering and infrastructure works
- Southern Access Road (West)

This determines the planning parameters for Phase 2, which includes the town centre, yet as an outline application there remains flexibility in the exact form and scale of development to be determined through detailed planning applications.

Despite this flexibility of the outline application, a number of 'fixes' for Northstowe town centre exist. These elements reflect more detailed requirements related to the outline application described in the decision notice conditions and/or S106 schedule, as well as aspects that have been fixed through the development of this strategy in order to achieve the important adjacencies that will drive footfall and activity within the early stages of the town centre's development.

Details of when and where the fixes will come forward

within the town centre has already been determined, and forms an important driver for the sequenced approach to town centre delivery.

The combination of fixes identified within the town centre strategy not only confirms the required elements of the town centre in line with the relevant decision notice conditions and S106 obligations. They also prioritise the crucial adjacencies and distances between the education hub, civic hub, market hall and town gardens, with routes to drive footfall between these key anchors.

Unlocking the potential

To unlock the potential for Northstowe town centre there will be a number of strategic delivery challenges to overcome related to commercial occupier demand and the viability of commercial delivery in this untested location.

To better understand how these challenges can be overcome and shape the delivery approach for the town centre, engagement has been undertaken with a number of 'operators' of diverse commercial space portfolios across a range of specialisms.

These conversations targeted operators at varying scales who are understood to implement innovative approaches to commercial delivery, and who have experience in managing, or a relationship to, the key uses for Northstowe. More insight into the 'concept testing' undertaken with these occupiers is provided in Appendix A3.

The conversations identified 9 cross-cutting strategies that would help to ensure the town centre delivers the

on the aspirations of Homes England and local communities:

1. To attract pioneers the town centre should offer opportunities for them to have a positive impact and shape its future;
2. The town centre will need to offer a competitive advantage over established locations, including space typologies, cost and character;
3. Businesses and individuals will have longevity if given a sense of ownership that encourages them to invest time and energy;
4. Flexibility and diversity are key—use classes, programming and development plots should not be prescriptive;
5. Workspace is central to the offer and should be of the appropriate type and quality, not just cheap, if sustainable businesses are to be grown here. An ability to customise is also critical;
6. The town needs to work together as a whole and identity, quality and activity needs to permeate commercial and residential offers to support the overall sense of place;
7. Hands on management and curation is fundamental to the character of the town centre, ensuring all uses work together financially and in terms of character; and
8. Long term sustainable funding /income will be needed to support high quality curation, management and programming.

These cross-sector perspectives has enabled the fine tuning of our thinking about how we can attract activity to Northstowe town centre from day one, how we can support its growth and evolution, and the types of creative and innovative approaches that could be explored to achieve this. In particular it has informed the focus on the sequencing of activity, design and space types, future partnering opportunities, and the motivations underpinning occupier and operator drivers.

Most importantly to support the deliverability of the town centre, the commercial offer should not rely on a single 'traditional' town centre anchor i.e. John Lewis, instead encouraging a variety of activities and smaller tenants, and the components of the town centre should promote flexibility to enable responsiveness to market conditions.

The future nature and prospects for town centre uses is changing rapidly, this Strategy provides a framework for Northstowe to adapt to these but its delivery will need ongoing monitoring and management.

A proactive partnership between key stakeholders will create a mechanism for understanding, reviewing and enabling change over time. The creation of a Town Centre specific group sitting alongside the Economic Leadership Group for Northstowe offers a proactive opportunity for partners to deal with any issues as they arise during the delivery stages. It can act as an 'independent' body to ensure the key objectives of the Strategy are met even if market conditions change.

Delivery & Floorspace

Delivering a new town centre, given the current uncertainty about the future of the High Street, will be challenging. Having the flexibility to respond to emerging trends will be crucial to its long-term success.

The proposed town centre leadership group will have a central role in guiding the priorities for development as it progresses. This group will need to seek constant feedback from residents, workers, visitors, the development market and commercial operators to establish what is required and what is deliverable at each stage of the town centre's formation. With that in mind, the figures below represent the indicative composition of the town centre, following the principles that are laid out in this Strategy.

These figures should be used to guide the town centre towards the type of place this Strategy aspires to create. This should not exclude the ability to accept unexpected but beneficial proposals which cannot be anticipated at the outset, or limit the ability to shift the proportion of each use to respond to new realities.

Indeed, since the Phase 2 Planning Application was submitted in 2014, there has been a significant shift in way we shop. There has been a retraction in the demand for, and development of, retail space across the country. This Strategy is based on the new reality of what town centres will be used for in the future.

The consequence of this that we propose a significantly lower amount of retail space than is allowed for under the Phase 2 Outline Planning Permission. This accounts for the majority of the difference in overall floorspace and predicted jobs compared to the Phase 2 Outline Planning Permission.

Indicative Northstowe Town Centre Floorspace

	Outline Planning Permission (sqm)	Minimum Floorspace (sqm)	Maximum Floorspace (sqm)
B Use Employment			
Workspace (B1)	16,200	10,460	16,200
Market Hall (B1a, B1c)	-	2,270	
Sub-total	16,200	12,730	16,200
Non B Use Employment			
Retail (A1)	35,000	7,375	12,000
Market Hall (non-B uses)	-	4,540	6,810
Leisure	13,500	11,900	13,500
Hotel	-	8,350	8,350
Civic Hub & Other Community Uses*	9,000	5,232	9,000
Sub-total	57,500	37,397	49,660
TOTAL Floorspace	73,700	50,127	67,324
Phase 2 Jobs			
Education Campus and Primary Schools	375	375	375
Town Centre Employment	2,008	1,160	1,522
Homeworking	892	892	892
Total Jobs	3,275	2,427	2,789

* - Civic Hub & Other Community Uses - This represents the total floorspace for the Civic Hub and Community Uses as defined by the Phase 2 Section 106 and D1 use class. Where other uses are co-located e.g. office space on upper floors, these should be counted towards their respective use categories.

4a: Placemaking & pioneer uses

Why is placemaking so important?

In preparing the Strategy we have looked at multiple ways of bringing forward the town centre; reviewing a range of successful regeneration projects and talking directly to those involved in delivering and managing new commercial centres.

What is clear from this work is that pursuing a 'traditional' approach to delivering the town centre will be doomed to failure, given the challenges facing the established retail and leisure operators.

Therefore, a **placemaking led approach** will be crucial to guiding Northstowe town centre's delivery. The analysis underpinning the Town Centre Strategy has made it clear that this type of approach is required in the early stages in order for the town centre to become a commercial success over time and complementing the early residential development in the town centre. In fact it will be the only way to drive commercial demand in this type of unproven market location, which requires 'starting from scratch'.

The sequenced approach to the build-up of commercial activity, alongside new homes, within the town centre will unlock commercial demand by creating early activity and developing this over time as the town centre matures. This will grow the resident base (the captive audience for the town centre who are likely to have the greatest spend levels within the town centre), alongside a more diverse town centre audience that draws in residents from neighbouring areas, people coming to work in Northstowe, and visitors coming to enjoy the retail and leisure offer.

By understanding the implications of audience build-up

for the demand drivers for commercial floorspace from different user groups, the priority of uses for the early delivery trajectory has been established. This aligns floorspace provision with the requirements from the emerging audience dynamics. It reveals the importance of culture and sports related leisure anchors, supported by destination retail and F&B uses, as the key footfall drivers for all audience groups. This is in addition to the school, health centre and community facilities that have been established as fixes for the town centre, and the workspace offer that will support SME business activity.

This can only be achieved by attracting a series of **innovative and pioneering uses**, with occupiers who are willing to take the risk to locate here, which is entirely reliant on creating a place which they can buy into both as a place to live and work. These types of uses can create early vibrancy and develop a unique identity to evolve as the town centre grows, which must be supported by establishing a high quality of place from the outset. This will help to encourage people and businesses to use the town centre throughout the day and evening, which will support commercial viability for businesses despite limited demand in the early phases.

Supporting & attracting pioneer uses

The town centre must therefore instil confidence as a place that meets the unmet needs of the wider area by providing a diverse and exciting mix of activities that will draw people to it, as well as an attractive and high quality place to be in supported by the public realm, open space provision and wider town amenities. Part of its attraction should come back to its complementary position with Cambridge City Centre

and other neighbouring local centres, as part of the wider South Cambs landscape, demonstrated through the nature of the commercial offer and the response to identified gaps in the market such as high quality flexible and affordable business space.

In advance of a critical mass of residents which will come as later residential phases of Northstowe are delivered, this is only possible with a placemaking approach which makes the town centre an attractive destination, driving the required levels of footfall and activity to support the community, civic and commercial uses in the town centre from day one and overcome the market barriers to achieving this.

This approach will facilitate the growth and evolution of the town centre offer over time, which provides the flexibility and dynamism that will be a key selling point for Northstowe, and will help to sell the opportunity to potential occupiers through the ability to shape their offer and test different models and activities in a way that would not be possible in an existing town centre context.

It will also drive and shape the nature of future commercial demand, and help to understand the space requirements for later phases of commercial development, so that these can be integrated seamlessly into the development approach.

The early delivery of commercial uses in the town centre will play a key role in generating demand for the residential phases of development, demonstrating that the location is not only well provided for in amenity terms, but provides an exciting and unique offer that is a real asset for Northstowe and the wider South Cambs area. This will also create long term value across the wider development, therefore benefiting future

residential development phases and marking Northstowe a more attractive proposition for investors and developers, allowing much needed homes to be delivered faster.

From day one the town centre will deliver **new homes**, creating a new community within the town centre that will form the core town centre users. It is critical the town centre meets their needs immediately as well as providing space for the offer to broaden as the population grows.

General and convenience retail uses will provide the fundamental base for the town centre which will cater for early resident's retail needs from the outset, and establish the earliest activity levels and reason to visit the town centre

The **workspace offer** is another key element of the town centre composition that should be considered early, providing flexible office and workspace typologies that appeal to the broadest range of small businesses possible. This should be supported with niche retail and F&B uses from the earliest stage possible, setting the intention for the innovative and diverse town centre mix that will evolve over time.

Critically for the local community the town centre will provide a series of **meeting spaces** where groups can gather. We envisage these spaces ranging from formal community rooms in the Civic Hub and conference rooms with workspace buildings (and potentially the hotel) through to more informal spaces in the Market Hall and any future cultural facilities. Places of Worship will also provide valuable community space. These spaces will ensure the town centre attracts regular visitors beyond shoppers.

The **public open space and public realm** within the town centre will act as the glue that brings everything together, helping to encourage footfall and transition from establishing early uses to bigger more significant forms of similar and related activity. The public realm will play a particularly important role in defining the routes between different anchors and driving footfall between them.

The relationship and physical connections created between these key anchors will allow the town centre uses (including residential) to work together and create a place, with a real sense of innovation and dynamism. As the town centre grows and evolves new supporting and related activities will cluster around the existing anchors to strengthen the commercial offer, as well as diversifying it and responding to the changing requirements of new audiences.

The meanwhile use of spaces and land within the town centre will be critical to its evolution, allowing uses to be established in advance of development and underutilised spaces to contribute positively to the atmosphere of the town centre.

‘Pop-up’ events will generate a dynamic atmosphere and sense of excitement within the town centre, using the public spaces for performance, exhibitions and other activity. Interim structures can be used to reduce start up costs and grow demand for future phases of development. As the town develops meanwhile strategies can be used to populate new commercial spaces by enabling start ups to access space, create space for trial trading or showcase activities prior to their ‘permanent’ home being delivered.

Ultimately the whole town centre will be developed in this spirit, reflecting an on-going Meanwhile Strategy that sees spaces being able to reinvent themselves time and again to reflect trends and consumer demand. This will require a combination of flexible space typologies, plots which can accommodate a range of building types and a hands on management regime to curate and coordinate the occupier and programming activity.

In its first incarnation the Market Hall could be a ‘temporary’ structure akin to Crate St James, BoxPark or Pop Brixton. This would allow quicker lower risk delivery at this crucial first stage and enable the refinement of the concept whilst still delivering the needs of residents.

Further thinking on this placemaking led approach to delivery, including case studies of other regeneration areas where new commercial centres have been brought forward in peripheral market locations, is provided in Appendix A4.

Embedding a pioneer spirit

Northstowe town centre’s pioneers are likely to be as concerned by the wider Northstowe town centre proposition and its audience and their requirements, as they are about the pool of potential commuters to Northstowe as a business location. This reinforces the importance of the placemaking approach for town centre delivery, considering the opportunity beyond the commercial units themselves to the quality of public realm and spaces within the town centre, the nature of the immediate and wider residential offer, and the range of supporting amenities for business activity.

Enabling early occupiers, as well as town centre and wider Northstowe residents, to find a **sense of ownership** of the town centre will be crucial for embedding activity and promoting growth, promoting sustainable economic growth and supporting the longevity of activity.

Allowing the initial uses and users of the town centre to contribute to shaping the nature of the later stages of development can help to achieve this sense of ownership which is intrinsic to embedding a pioneer spirit. This means businesses are more likely to be able to stay in the town centre as it develops, and as their businesses grow, because of their input in shaping its future form.

To enable this, the **defined fixed elements of the town centre must also promote flexibility**, so that businesses have the freedom to shape their spaces and wider environment to respond to new and evolving needs, whilst fitting within the existing framework.

It seems this approach is most successful where the emerging new places provide fairly basic commercial spaces, which are not too specified for particular needs, and can be adapted by occupiers. Ensuring the quality of the connections and environment between these spaces becomes more attractive to occupiers and businesses than the spaces themselves (provided they offer flexibility).

The shaping of spaces could even extend as far as building and self-customising units, including the delivery of temporary structures, allowing pioneers to deliver their own space within an allotted piece of the town centre 'grid'. This could relate to early residents and/or businesses, drawing from examples like Le 56/ Eco-interstice in the St Blaise area East of Paris, an eco-

construction project with a partnership approach (<http://www.urbantactics.org/projects/passage%2056/passage56html.html>).

Again the crucial dynamic here is the balance between the fixed elements of the town centre framework and the opportunity for innovation and creativity to be defined as it becomes established. To achieve this balance and the opportunity for fluidity and evolution of the use mix over time, planning use class flexibility will be a critical requirements.

Creativity at the heart of growth

Another key tool for embedding a pioneering spirit in the town centre is the exploration of early delivery of **events and installations**, which can help to embed creativity at the heart of the town centre's growth.

This could take a variety of forms, such as art installations which spill out from one of the key cultural anchors (i.e. The Market Hall) or provide an early pop-up that generates excitement about a more permanent use to come, interactive performances or other activities related to a theatre or music venue, or a sports/leisure destination. Whilst pop-up activities can have their drawbacks if the activities are unable to progress into more permanent spaces, in the context of Northstowe they constitute an effective method for seeding creative activity into the town centre, which can be embedded from the outset and grow as part of a greater creative cluster and character as the town centre evolves.

A number of types of creative activities that provide successful events and installations often struggle to find flexible space to accommodate their business operations (such as theatre rehearsal and set design).

There is an opportunity that Northstowe could provide more long term space of this kind within the town centre, which could introduce and embed a much broader range of uses and create links and possibilities for other types of creative space, installations and related activities, therefore acting as a cultural anchor. This could fit into numerous components of the town centre, like the Market hall, mews workspace and even within the Civic hub. There is also the possibility that this type of activity could be accommodated nearby in the Enterprise Zone, which would still enable links to the town centre in terms of installations and related activities.

Punchdrunk is an example of an arts organisation (supported by the Arts Council England and The Dr. Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation) which provides *“a unique theatrical experience where the lines between space, performer and spectator are constantly shifting”* involving installations in a whole host of locations throughout the country. This activity needs to be supported by some form of base for business activities, around which installations or clustering is likely to happen. Punchdrunk also foster partnerships with local schools and community groups to support creative learning and education in the arts through their Enrichment programme, showing how this type of activity can support wider community objectives.

Art Angel is another example of an arts organisation (supported by Arts Council England and other trusts and foundations) which supports artists in delivering arts installations and events that aren't confined by a gallery environment. This can happen in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor spaces and sites, which seems well suited to generating activity as part of a

meanwhile approach to enliven the town centre.

Plugged in to local networks

Whilst the nature of Northstowe as an 'un-tested' location makes it distinct from the opportunities where growth can spring from an existing centre, no place is truly created from scratch. There is an existing wider context which accommodates a range of local activities and networks that can be embedded in the delivery of the town centre, and will help to create a sense of place, ownership and uniqueness that will appeal to residents and business alike.

This could be reflected in residential design, providing foodbox receiving areas within each residential block to encourage and enable local food sourcing which connects with the wider South Cambridgeshire food network. Development in locations like Granby in Liverpool show how local production can be featured as part of housing design, where Assemble included bespoke local designs within the properties. These examples both suggest how Northstowe town centre and the wider Northstowe development could find a unique selling point and provide an outlet for wider production businesses to locate here.

The 'Right Approach' for Northstowe

Taken together the evidence used in developing this strategy makes it clear that a different form of delivery approach is necessary if Northstowe is to truly deliver the distinctive, full service town centre that delivers on the needs and aspirations of residents, businesses, partners and other stakeholders.

A 'business as usual' market led approach will limit the

potential of the town centre, both in scale and delivery timeframes. The UK has a number of examples where the delivery of a commercial centre has been left to the private sector, with underwhelming results. The likes of Cambourne and Cranbrook deliver against basic functional needs, but lack the diversity of offer to create true urban town centres.

Critically our consultation activity with residents have highlighted their greater aspirations for this town centre and a stated objective for it to be 'better' than Cambourne in terms of its character and offer.

4b: A sequenced approach

Whilst there is an exciting opportunity for Northstowe town centre to become the vibrant and dynamic new heart of Northstowe, the phased approach to the delivery of the town’s 10,000 new homes means there will be limited indigenous demand in the early phases when few residents live in the town. This creates a significant challenge for establishing commercial demand and attracting occupiers to the town centre, which traditionally relies on high footfall and passing trade to attract commercial occupiers.

The challenge is intensified by the strategic issues facing the retail, leisure and F&B sectors , combined with the commercial competition from Cambridge, and the more locally focused competition from nearby centres like Bar Hill.

As a result the town centre will require a creative and innovative approach to attracting residents and visitors in the early stages to establish a critical mass of people spending time and money in the town centre. This will help to establish a sense of identity and define Northstowe as a destination people choose to use and visit, which in turn will help to provide commercial confidence and attract commercial development, workspace operators and business occupiers.

The response to this need for creativity and innovation comes in the form of **a sequenced approach** to the delivery of town centre elements, including the identified fixes, in order to create early activity within then heart of the town centre and develop and expand this over time as it matures. The success of its phasing relies on having a strong relationship between the physical components, uses and audiences integral to each phase. The sequenced approach consists of four main stages of development.

It is important to recognise that the Stages outlined in the following pages are indicative and show one interpretation of how the aspirations for the town centre can be delivered. They highlight how different types of activity can work together to ensure the town centre is complete at every stage of its evolution and always meets the needs of its users. However, key components are expected to come forward in known timeframes, the current expectations for these are set out in the table below.

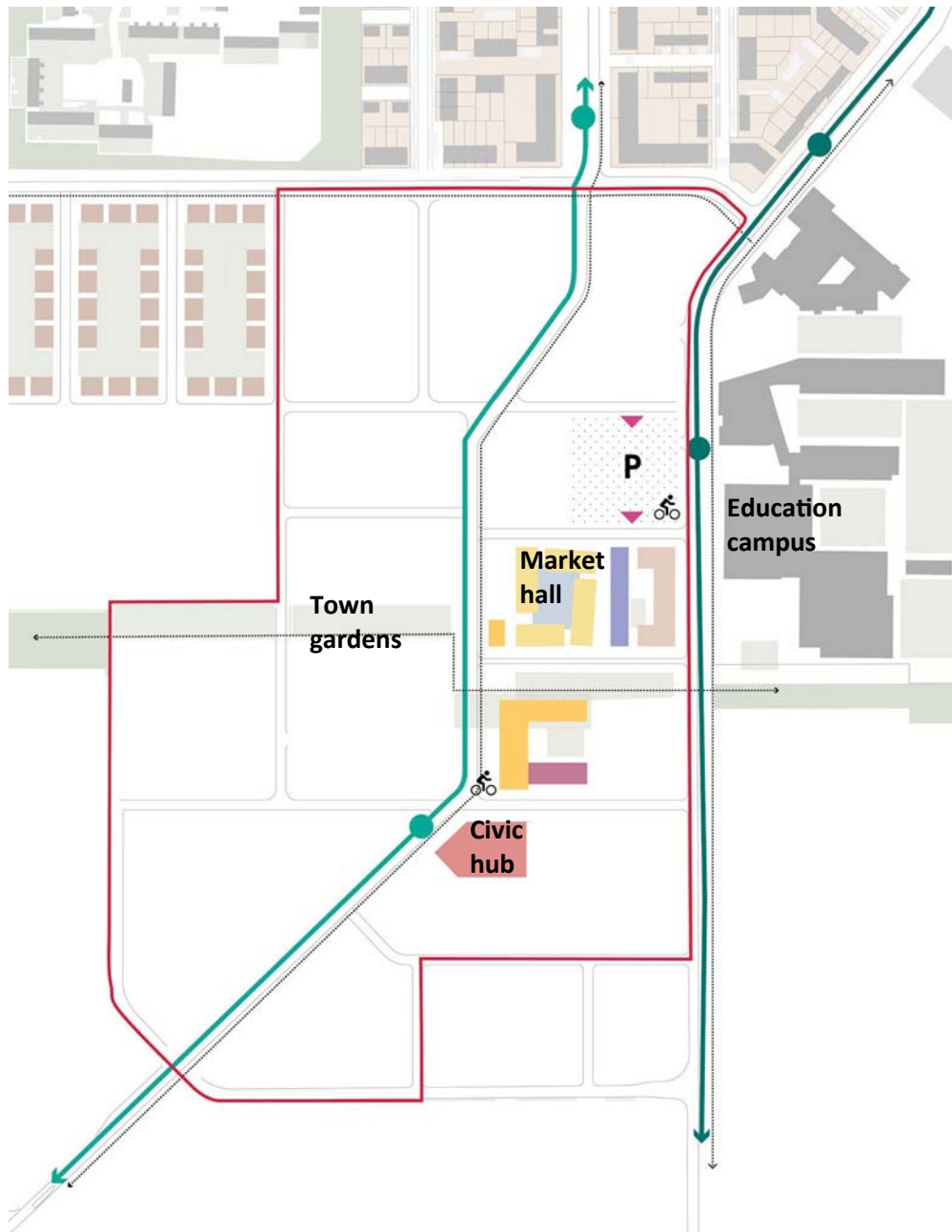
The Ground Floor uses plan should be seen as indicative and a demonstration of how a balanced mix of uses can be secured in each stage.

The town centre could come forward in a different sequence or mix within the same broad framework given the flexibility of each plot. This will ensure the spirit and character of the town centre is enshrined and its structure is capable of responding to changing market demands.

Element	Indicative Delivery Date	Responsible Partner
Education Campus	2019	CCC / CMAT
Town Park (Phase 1)	2022	Homes England / Developer
Market Hall	2022	Homes England / Developer
Town Park (Phase 2)	2025	Homes England / Developer
Civic Hub	2023	SCDC / CCC / NHS / Homes England

STAGE A

Northstowe Town Centre
– Stage A Components



- | | |
|--|--|
| Residential - flats and live/work | Museum/Gallery |
| Residential Houses | Community Uses (civic centre, place of worship and a library building) |
| Retail - convenience, comparison, personal services, professional services and | Commercial uses (workspace/office) |
| F&B Niche retail and F&B with commercial | Hotel |
| above Leisure uses (gym, big leisure) | Multi-storev car park |
| Primary cycle movement | Car parking - |
| Bus Route | Car parking - decked |
| Indicative bus stop locations | Car park |
| Local Bus | Cycle |
| Indicative local bus | |

Stage A

Stage A represents the birth of the town centre, providing the essential facilities and services required by its initial audience/residents which come together to deliver the fundamentals of a town centre offer. The initial components accommodate the diverse range of early uses in the town centre including residential, which caters for and attracts the early town centre audience, and begins to establish a strong sense of place within the town centre from day one.

Components

Alongside new homes the key non-residential components delivered in this first stage are the Education Campus, primary road link and busway, green corridor, market hall, and civic hub.

The **Education Campus** within the north east edge of the town centre is the first element to be delivered, with the busway following shortly after. The **school square** and **recreational green space** also come forward adjacent to it. The provision of this green space links with the **green corridor** which will run through the town centre perpendicular to the high street. The route of the green corridor is designed to fit as part of a wider network of green spaces. It also provides an uninterrupted green connection between the high street and the town park (when it comes forward in Stage B), which is fixed into position one block back from the high street.

The **primary road link** is the next crucial element delivered through the town centre, plugging into the wider town development and its connectivity with the surrounding area. This will provide connectivity to the B1050 and future phases of Northstowe, and will be supported by a primary and secondary road network

that develops following delivery of the primary road link. The **busway** also comes forward in this stage, running directly through Northstowe town centre as part of the wider Cambridge Guided Busway. The route through the town centre has been confirmed.

The **Market Hall** is a crucial element of the first stage, supporting the creation of a new commercial heart within Northstowe Town Centre and the first seeds of the enterprise culture that will underpin the town centres success. As the first commercial building it creates a destination for residents and promotes activity and vibrancy. The concept of the Market Hall and its location in the block between the education campus and the high street has been determined to maximise footfall and link the early sites and activities together. The workspace offer that can sit within the Market Hall could accommodate the first non-public anchors within the town centre if provided well.

The final core component coming forward in Stage A is the **Civic Hub** building, delivering an integral part of the town centre's civic heart. It's positioning in the masterplan is crucial to supporting vibrancy - completing an early area of activity by linking to the Education Campus and Town Park. This provides a civic anchor for Northstowe residents and a further range of reasons to visit the town centre.

As shown in the diagram the initial build-up of components forms a central cluster, without which the functionality of the early phase town centre could not be achieved. The Market Hall and Civic Hub build out from the Education Campus, linked by the road and guided bus route as well as the green route. This maximises the connectivity of these components and enables people to move easily between them. It also

achieves a critical mass of development that supports activity and avoids 'gaps' between different parts of the early built form.

The first element of residential development comes forward in this first stage between the Education Campus and Market Hall, introducing the first residents to the town centre.

Uses & Audience

The key to unlocking early vitality and vibrancy in the town centre around this central cluster is the diverse mix of uses the core components are designed to accommodate, and the range of audience needs these uses cater for. Anchor tenants will be attracted to the town centre through the provision of a flexible and unique range of commercial spaces, where they can see the scale of opportunity Northstowe provides.

The immediate users of the town centre at this early stage are the **Phase 1 Northstowe residents** and those who live in immediately neighbouring villages, as well as proportion of **Phase 2 Northstowe residents** (including town centre residents). This initial audience will create a base level of demand, however it is crucial the offer meets their core requirements for **convenience retail and services** (personal, health and professional) to establish habits early and minimise loss of trade to locations such as Bar Hill. This will require the Market Hall in particular to deliver core and wider offerings to attract residents who may already be going elsewhere.

The **civic and community facilities** are also important to residents, uses such as a public services, library and health facilities will be attractors and provided within the Civic Hub. The flexibility in the Civic Hub space,

learning lessons from successful civic facilities elsewhere, means that places of worship and even workspace could be accommodated. The space also provides a focal point for the community, where a range of local community groups can meet.

Local children will attend the school within the Education Campus and the associated green space will accommodate **leisure activities and play** for students, their **families** and the wider community.

Small businesses and entrepreneurs will be particularly attracted to the possibilities of the Market Hall and the flexible workspace it provides. This will provide them with the opportunity for their activity to grow and develop as part of the wider evolution of the town centre, in some cases helping to shape the nature of the town centre's evolution. The green corridor will enhance the appeal of the town centre by contributing to a positive public realm and quality of space that links its early spaces and encourages people to dwell.

Workers and Visitors can also form part of the Stage A audience mix, drawn to the town centre by the **flexible range of retail and creative workspaces** that will fill the Market Hall, complemented by a **locally focused food & beverage offer**. This will support footfall during the daytime and into the evening, however the scale and nature of **visitors**, and therefore when they are using the town centre, will depend on the form of retail and leisure destinations established in this initial stage.

Complete at every stage:

- The blocks within the first stage are all delivered adjacent to one another and the education campus to form a legible place from day one.
- A small convenience food shop alongside services within the market hall will serve the new community, with a doctors surgery and other community spaces within the Civic Hub.
- The market hall and adjacent high street pavilion will include spaces for flexible meanwhile uses in the early stages.
- The Town Gardens are more than a route and provide a wide green space that connects through the high street providing play areas and spaces to relax from the outset. A small section of the town park will be provided to serve the early town centre community by 2022.

Transport and movement:

- The guided bus has one stop in the early phases within the town centre which stops adjacent to the civic hub which includes the health centre.
- The local bus runs along Primary Road with one stop between the town centre and the education campus.
- Key cycling connections run along these bus routes and along the green corridor.
- Two bike parking areas will be provided. One adjacent to the school and the other on the high street in front of the civic hub.

- Surface car parking will be located within the same parcel of the future MSCP with one way access to this for vehicles from Primary Road.

Timing:

- Stage A is already underway. The secondary school will open in September 2019 and provide a range of wider community facilities that will be accessible to users of the town centre the following year.
- South Cambs District Council, working in partnership with Homes England, the NHS and the County Council have committed to deliver a new Civic Hub which will provide a range of further community facilities. Whilst the full offer is yet to be determined it will provide a health centre and library for the town. Given the acute need for healthcare facilities at Northstowe a small temporary health centre could be delivered first if needed before the Civic Hub is built. The Civic Hub is anticipated to be delivered in 2023.
- The Market Hall will be one of the first elements delivered in the town centre, with Homes England committed to finding the right partner to curate and manage it. The concept of the market hall will evolve over time, and the initial buildings may be delivered in a temporary format. The aspiration is for this to come forward in 2022.

The 'Big Bang' alternative

The Stage A described above shows the logical collection of initial uses which will lay the foundations for organic growth of the town centre, building out from these core components. However, it also provides the flexibility which could accommodate a 'big bang' alternative.

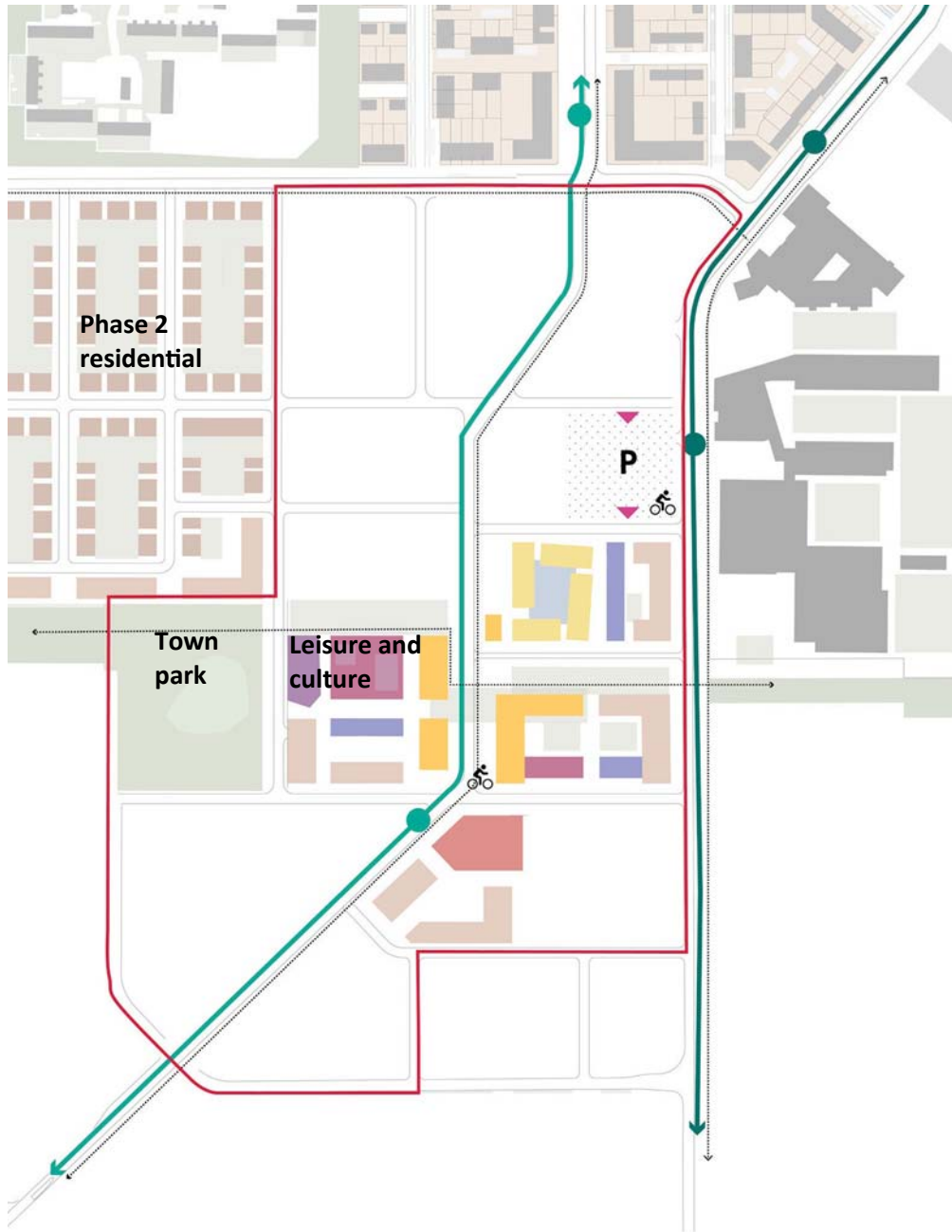
By this we mean a big hit investment into the town centre from a significant key anchor. Whilst Kings Cross has seen this type of move from tech giant Google, it has been suggested that their attraction to this regeneration area was in part a result of the early pre-let from the University of Arts London into The Granary Complex in 2011. Other examples include the introduction of major cultural or institutional offers (such as galleries, museums etc.) to establish a distinct character. Success of these approaches relies on ensuring they integrate into existing networks, or networks are created to embed them locally.

It is likely to be a cultural institution that provides Northstowe's big bang, should it happen, reflecting the strength of South Cambridgeshire's arts and cultural offer anchored by Cambridge University. However, a significant leisure use, exploring the greater creativity and imagination infiltrating the leisure sector, could also provide such an investment opportunity. Think increasingly popular new leisure forms like urban golf, escape rooms and the re-imagining of more traditional experience-focused leisure activities like bowling, cinemas and the health fitness and lifestyle offer.

The flexibility built into Stage A means the town centre is not reliant on the 'big bang' alternative, but allows for it to happen and can welcome it as a completely integrated part of the core town centre.

STAGE B

Northstowe Town Centre –
Stage B Components



- | | |
|---|--|
| Residential - flats and live/work | Museum/Gallery |
| Residential Houses | Community Uses (civic centre, place of worship and a library building) |
| Retail - convenience, comparison, personal services, professional services and F&B Niche retail and F&B with commercial above Leisure uses (gym, big leisure) | Commercial uses (workspace/office) |
| | Hotel |
| | Multi-storey car park |
| Primary cycle movement | Car parking - |
| Bus Route | Car parking -decked |
| Indicative bus stop locations | Car park |
| Local Bus | Cycle |
| Indicative local bus | |

STAGE B

Stage B offers the first expansion of the town centre and begins to broaden its offer in terms of both the scale and mix of residential and non-residential space. It builds out from the intense cluster of activity established in Stage A to link the town centre to the new Town Park and onwards to new residential development to the west.

Components

Stage B will provide the first 'two sided' part of the high street, complementing the Market Hall and Stage 1 convenience offer with further **retail space** to the west. This space will provide the first 'standalone' facilities for retailers and other activities to graduate from the Market Hall into their own units and be joined by other occupiers attracted to growing of the town centre.

A mix of **leisure and cultural facilities** will complement the core commercial offer, providing a new driver for footfall in the town centre.

The **cultural spaces** are flexible and will link strongly to the town centre's leisure spaces, supported by clustering with retail and food and beverage spaces. These spaces seek to address unmet demand for this type of space outside of Cambridge City Centre.

Should a 'big bang' investment happen, this is likely to deliver the core cultural space, which could provide space for creatives and arts uses or re-imagined sports/leisure activity. Alternatively these spaces may evolve and grow over time allowing more grass roots initiatives to populate the area. A strong relationship between these facilities and the Town Park and Gardens will encourage animation and may support **community**

facilities such as a new nursery that can benefit from outdoor space.

The network of green spaces is completed with delivery of the **Town Park** to the west of the high street. Its link to the high street via the Town Gardens and the active frontage along its eastern edge support the appeal of this space for recreation and play, even without the activity of its other frontages at this stage.

The workspace offer will broaden in Stage B, with new mews style **workshops and studios** occupying ground floor spaces on a series of internal and secondary frontages. To the west of the High Street these could provide space for artistic endeavours that are attracted by a new cultural anchor.

Additional residential space will complete Stage B, integrating into plots where additional commercial and cultural space is brought forward. Pure residential development will also be delivered to the south of the Civic Hub, completing this important plot as a gateway/bookend to the High Street. This will complement the first elements of residential to be brought forward in Phase 2 that adjoins the town centre to the west.

Users and Audience

The biggest change in the Town Centre audience in Stage B will be the introduction of a major new residential population on the fringes of the town centre. Phase 2a will be complete and the wider Phase 2 residential area to the south of Rampton Drift will also increase in size, engaging the Town Park and town centre directly for the first time. These **new residents** will increase the demand for a wide range of retail and service facilities in the town centre.

The new culture and leisure facilities will act as an attractor for new **visitors** to the town centre from beyond Northstowe itself. This will support the success of these facilities but also create new levels of spend in the wider retail, F&B and Market Hall offer.

The further expansion of workspace will increase the daytime population of the Town Centre, with workers using the range of amenities throughout the day. This is likely to be a small but important component of the vitality of the Town Centre.

Complete at every stage:

- As more of the residential units within Phase 2 are delivered the town park will connect these neighbourhoods with the town centre. These homes will also provide frontage to the park.
- The block between the town park and the high street is delivered which provides residents with a more significant leisure and cultural offer. This block also completes the other side of the frontage to the high street. The southern section of the high street is therefore completed around a formal square.
- The full Town Park is delivered in Stage B (with a target date of 2025), evolving the Town Garden route established in Stage A into a fully functioning public space.
- The Park will be activated on two sides by development, giving it a sense of enclosure and overlooking that will promote its use and enable it to feel more comfortable for its users.
- Further retail and residential buildings within the

town centre are delivered within this stage.

Transport and movement:

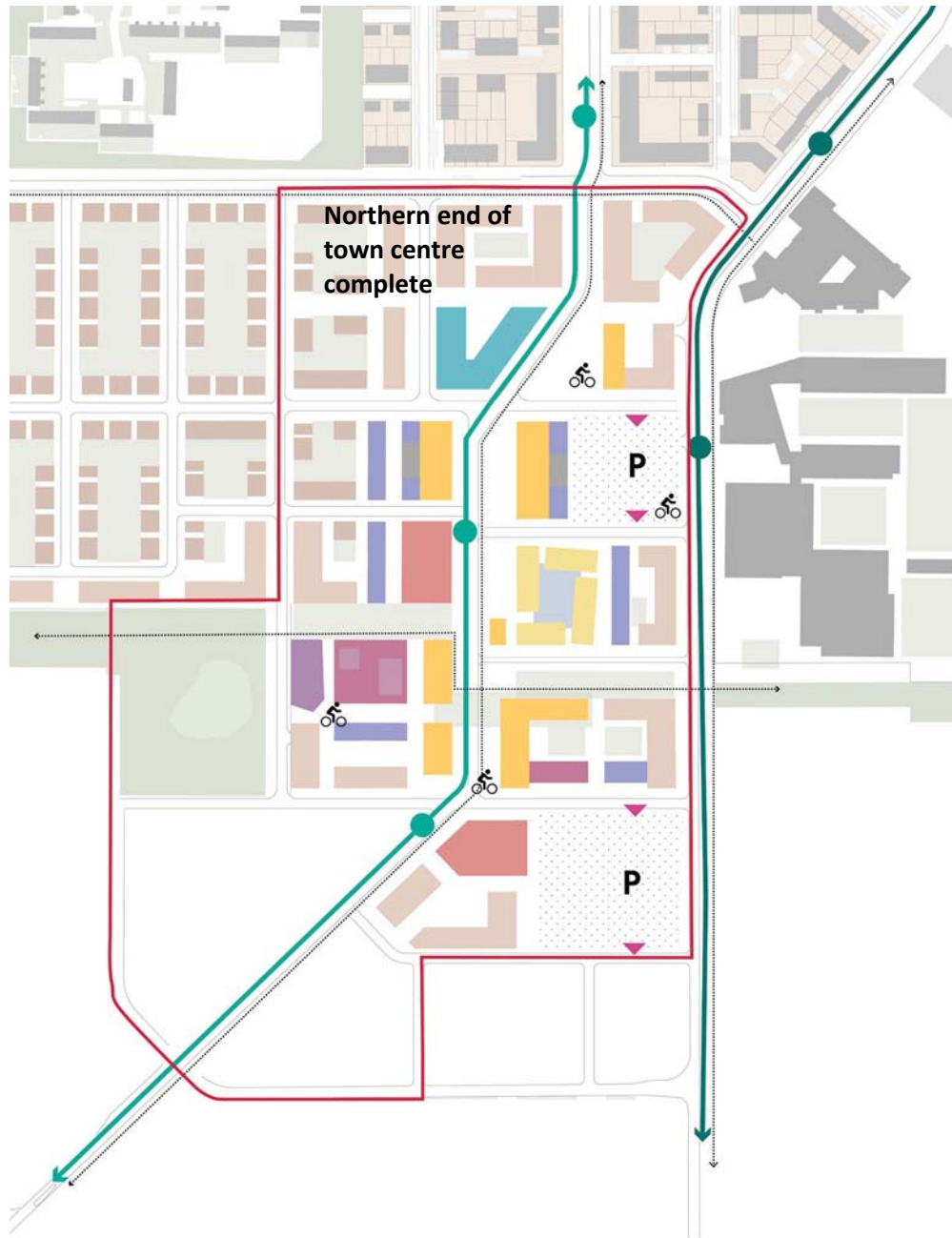
- The fundamental connections are provided in Stage A, with Stage B providing greater life along these.
- The green corridor and streets parallel to this will provide pedestrian and cycle access to the high street from the emerging residential neighbourhoods.
- Surface Parking will continue to be provided within plots identified for later multi-storey formats.

Timing

- Indicative timescales suggest Stage B would be underway by 2023

STAGE C

Northstowe Town Centre –
Stage C Components



- | | |
|--|--|
| Residential - flats and live/work | Museum/Gallery |
| Residential Houses | Community Uses (civic centre, place of worship and a library building) |
| Retail - convenience, comparison, personal services, professional services and | Commercial uses (workspace/office) |
| F&B Niche retail and F&B with commercial | Hotel |
| above Leisure uses (gym, big leisure) | Multi-storev car park |
| Primary cycle movement | Car parking - |
| Bus Route | Car parking - decked |
| Indicative bus stop locations | Car park |
| Local Bus | Cycle |
| Indicative local bus | |

Stage C

Stage C sees significant growth in the town centre, building out from the existing phase 1 components. This diversifies the mix of uses along the high street, catering for a much wider audience base. This town centre growth happens alongside the delivery of a significant number of new homes within the Town's wider phase 2.

Components

The residential units which come forward within the town centre in Stage C are predominantly to the west of the primary road link, completing four more blocks within the town centre framework. The commercial components delivered are the Town Park, more workspace, retail, leisure and cultural spaces.

The **workspace** offer is a key element of the town centre's second phase, providing both office and creative workspace typologies that appeal to a broad range of small business requirements. These will take the form of **mews typologies** and **ground and first floor units** within mixed use buildings.

The workspace offer and other business uses (such as conferencing facilities) will grow and strengthen over time as town centre footfall increases and continues to drive commercial demand, taking advantage of the wide range of town centre uses and supporting amenities that will have been established in Stage A and Stage B.

This will create a range of space that promote the widest possible spectrum of employment within the town centre, and can adapt and evolve to meet changing needs and/or different economic growth directions. Importantly in this phase the workspace

offer in the town centre can begin to work alongside space propositions within the Enterprise Zone and other parts of the area.

Despite the challenges facing the retail and food and beverage sectors and their changing nature as a component of mixed use town centres, there is still a role for these uses collectively to create a destination – albeit in a different (more locally relevant) form to capturing increasing levels of residential expenditure as housing is delivered.

Retail & leisure spaces are therefore a key component of Stage C, increasing comparison, and convenience retail space alongside local services. These spaces could come forward through a curated approach to delivering meanwhile and/or pop up units (with Homes England and local authority support) and subsequently grow into a more established form over time as footfall levels increase, providing more passing trade.

The Stage C components fill most of the key high street blocks west and east of the primary road link, with a particular focus on completing the blocks to the north of the town centre to align with the delivery of the wider Northstowe Town phase 2a residential development. This brings much more retail, leisure and cultural activity to the town centre offer and will draw footfall along the length of the high street.

The block at the north of the high street (shown light blue in the diagram) shows a hotel element within it, however this will need to be considered flexibly in terms of the form, nature and timing of this use. It may initially take a part or full building within the block, but may come forward towards the end of Stage B or moving into the later Stage C.

The key to this element is the flexibility to

accommodate a range of different types of hotel offer depending on how town centre activity and value drives investor and occupier demand, as well as the ability for the block and northern mix to come forward without a hotel.

A new bus stop is introduced in the heart of the High Street to promote access to new retail, leisure and workspace provision.

Uses & Audience

As the wider Northstowe Town progresses Stage B Northstowe residents grow the **town centre's residential audience** in combination with the residential units coming forward within the town centre itself. The **wider Phase 2 residents** will strengthen and diversify the levels of commercial demand and therefore the range of retail, leisure and cultural uses the town centre is able to provide. To capture their spending and embed good habits in terms of town centre usage it is critical services are available in the town to attract them from day one of their life in Northstowe. This will lead to the development of a much more comprehensive town centre offer, growing and evolving the 'exceptional' elements of the town centre (such as small business space within the Market Hall).

Evolving the workspace offer established in the Stage A and B, a greater range of spaces are delivered in Stage C. These have an inbuilt flexibility, with space types directly addressing identified gaps in the wider sub-regional offer. They will provide more affordable space that is attractive to **creative businesses, those in the professional and business services sector and those engaging in less formal R&D activity.**

Spatially workspace will provide an offer that fits as part of the ground floor high street offer, as well as developing more concentrated clusters of employment activity within mews streets that step back from the high street. This can accommodate a greater range of B1 uses, with mews typologies providing more diversity in size of space, and greater scope for productive maker activity.

The greater levels of commercial demand established through the town centre's growing audience mean that it becomes a more enticing and less-risky location for commercial occupiers, increasing the critical mass of **small businesses and entrepreneurs** who are attracted to the town centre because of its unique offer, and where they may be unable to locate in Cambridge City Centre due to increasing unaffordability.

Some **workers** will be drawn to the town centre by these pioneering businesses with entrepreneurial spirit, and the draw will strengthen as the economy of Northstowe town centre evolves to provide a supporting function for Cambridge City and the region's science parks, with small and medium sized enterprises establishing themselves in Northstowe clustered around the anchor occupiers. The town centre's attractiveness to workers will also increase as its retail, leisure and cultural offer develops, establishing itself as a destination in its own right.

The retail & leisure spaces delivered in the second phase accommodate a curated mix of **independents and a niche retail and F&B offer** which maximises the creative character established through the Market Hall and Stage B space. Further 'spill out' from the Market Hall for businesses who arrived in Stage A and B and

are expanding into new spaces will drive demand and free up space for new start-ups in the Market Hall itself. This builds up around the general and convenience core, establishing a sense of destination and drawing in further **cultural, sports and leisure occupiers**, determined to an extent by the audience demand drivers and accommodating activities there are not available elsewhere outside Cambridge City Centre.

Ancillary retail and F&B uses can support this offer to capture audience spend and dwell time within the town centre, as well as the attractiveness of the **play and relaxation** opportunities provided by the variety of green space designed for all audience groups.

This mix is attractive for town centre residents as well as those in the wider area who are not reliant on the convenience retail offer. **Visitors and workers** are also drawn to this mix throughout the day and evening. With more visitors, workers and residents, the vibrancy of the town centre's evening economy will improve significantly.

A greater number of **local children**, from the growing wider Northstowe population, will be using the range of Education Campus facilities as they grow to provide 1,800 places once completed, as well as the SEN school places being delivered. The nature of retail, leisure and cultural activities accommodated in Stage B of the town centre will encourage the dwell time of these children and their families, capturing greater spend levels and boosting high street footfall and use of the formal and informal green spaces within the town centre.

Complete at every stage:

- The northern end of the town centre is completed to create a high street with active frontage on both sides of the widened high street.
- A hotel is shown in this stage, but this plot could also be delivered as a residential block with commercial or retail space at ground floor, if there is no demand for a hotel use.
- It may be that this use remains undetermined until Stage D when the future of that plot will need to be confirmed to complete the town centre. In the interim meanwhile uses could be retained on site.

Transport and movement:

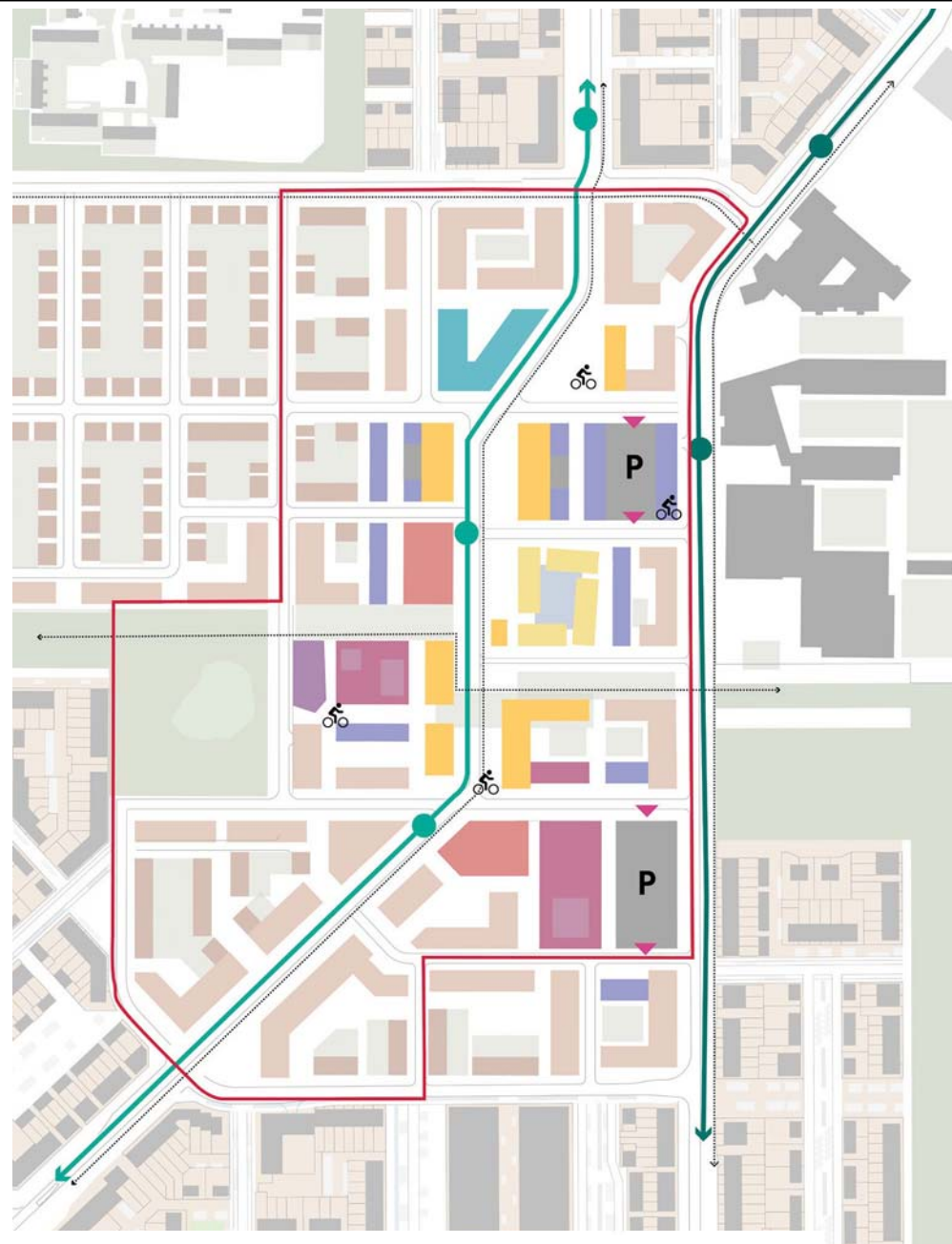
- By this stage a second stop on the guided bus way is opened with further areas of cycle parking provided.
- A second surface car park is opened as required, with one way access from Primary Road.

Timing:

- Indicative timescales would see Stage C underway by 2026.

STAGE D

Northstowe Town Centre –
Stage D Components



- | | |
|--|--|
| Residential - flats and live/work | Museum/Gallery |
| Residential Houses | Community Uses (civic centre, place of worship and a library building) |
| Retail - convenience, comparison, personal services, professional services and | Commercial uses (workspace/office) |
| F&B Niche retail and F&B with commercial | Hotel |
| above Leisure uses (gym, big leisure) | Multi-storey car park |
| Primary cycle movement | P Car parking - |
| Bus Route | Car parking - decked |
| Indicative bus stop locations | Car park |
| Local Bus | Cycle |
| Indicative local bus | |

Stage D

With Stage D comes the strengthening and consolidation of the full range of residential and commercial components. The residential development in the wider town maximises the audience of Stage D residents, and the increased and diversified commercial offer draws more and more workers and visitors to the town centre as it continues to evolve and grow.

Components

The town centre components delivered in Stage D, enhance and further diversify the types of spaces which are already provided, particularly in relation to commercial spaces.

Larger office and workspace components come forward in response the town centre establishing its role as a supply chain location for Cambridge and the wider area. This is only possible due to the increasing commercial confidence in this location, underpinned by the key anchors and commercial mix already established here.

The **hotel offer** in the block at the northern end of the high street is likely to become more formalised during Stage D, supported by the town centres strengthened visitor demand. Alternatively it could be switched to another use that supports the established character and demand profile for the Town Centre.

The other obvious component of the town centre that is completed during this final phase is the **residential development** clustered in the southern and north western parts of the town centre. This completes the activity fronting all sides of the Town Park and brings the residential audience up to peak levels.

The Stage D components complete the town centre blocks and create a fully active high street supporting a dynamic and diverse mix of uses and audience activity. The residential development within the town centre fills the cluster to the west of the high street, increasing footfall and activity levels across the town and bringing the Town Park fully to life.

The commercial mix within the town centres blocks will draw footfall along the high street and the green corridor, underpinning activity throughout the town centre which will contribute to its vibrancy. A core office/workspace cluster forms to the north of the town centre, with ancillary retail and F&B here as well as the retail provision already established at the south of the high street.

Uses & Audience

Once a comprehensive town centre offer is established visitor numbers will increase significantly. **Town-wide and town centre residents, workers and visitors** from elsewhere will come to Northstowe to enjoy its health and lifestyle related leisure opportunities, the unique retail offer boasting independents and creatives (underpinned by a more traditional town centre retail offer), and to use the business meeting / conference facilities.

In the fullness of time, with the full town centre offer established, **commuters** could also be attracted to Northstowe during the morning and/or evening where they are traveling through the town centre to other nearby employment areas.

With the growth and strengthening of all commercial activities in the town centre throughout this phase, the nature of commercial occupiers will diversify to

incorporate more medium sized businesses alongside the SMEs and key anchors who were the town centre's pioneer occupiers.

Whilst there is not a significant increase in the retail & leisure and cultural spaces within the town centre, the nature of these activities will continue to evolve in response to increasing audience spend and demand drivers, as well as the increasing commercial confidence from occupiers in the town centre as a destination. This evolution also reflects the way that pioneer small businesses and entrepreneurs providing the niche retail and F&B offer may have grown and curated the character and offer of the town centre through their own development.

Complete at every stage:

- A medium sized supermarket is delivered under a new MSCP to serve the town centre.
- The remaining residential within the town centre boundary is completed, alongside the delivery of the wider residential hinterland in phase 2.

Transport and movement:

- A new MSCP is delivered above a food store at the northern car park location.
- The southern surface car park is converted to a decked car park, as required.

Timing:

- The surface car parks are converted to multi-storeys as demand increases.

- Indicative timescales –would see Stage D underway by 2031.

4c: Active Management & Curation

Having established the importance of placemaking to guide the delivery of the town centre in a context where development cannot be driven solely by the market, active management and curation must lie at the heart of the Town Centre Strategy.

The 'curator' role will guide an all-encompassing approach towards delivering the town centre and supporting its growth and evolution over time. It will also help to ensure there is in built flexibility with management that guides the direction of growth within the framework of the fixed town centre elements, whilst avoiding being over-prescriptive. The detailed mechanisms for this will be evolved with the delivery partners. At this stage no approach or intervention is considered 'off the table' and all routes will be subject to future consideration by Homes England.

This approach to town centre delivery and management will in itself act as a key selling point for Northstowe town centre, however it may need supplementing with other incentives that encourage occupiers to locate here.

Homes England are committed to working with their delivery partners to consider all options for pump priming the commercial provision within the town centre. Interventions which have been successful elsewhere which could be used at Northstowe include:

- An enhanced level of fit out to be provided in commercial space;
- The use of void space for meanwhile activity or pop up retail at nominal rent;
- The use of innovative (risk sharing) letting models;
- Discounted rents for particular activities or occupiers (e.g. third sector occupiers);
- Flexible leases that are tailored to specific business

needs;

- Extended rent free periods for particular businesses/activities;
- Provision of business support services and advice for start-ups and independents;
- The creation of a recyclable investment pot accessible to local businesses who may struggle for 'market' finance; or
- Early identification of specific operators to help create 'purpose built' spaces.

Each example tactic given above provides an opportunity for stakeholders to influence the offer and bring particular investment support to the town centre in partnership with Homes England.

Co-ordination across the town centre

A key aspect of the curation role for Northstowe will be the co-ordination of activities throughout the town centre in the short, medium and long term. There is a real opportunity for Northstowe to create meaningful connections between uses across the town centre which is possible because of the town centre's unique situation. Commercial operators engaged with as part of the Town Centre Strategy development emphasised the importance of this co-ordination between uses in the town centre, particularly drawing on good quality placemaking, the links developed between the diverse spectrum of town centre activities and the wider programming and temporary uses/events it can accommodate.

Creating co-ordination between residential and workspace typologies is particularly important because it could offer opportunities to co-design space and see some tethering of the housing and commercial space to support entrepreneurs or businesses that may have

of this to provide an affordable package for entrepreneurs to live and work in the town centre.

The use of meanwhile facilities is also critical, enabling a lower cost opportunity for businesses to test operating from the town centre. The Market Hall may be the first such meanwhile use, coming forward in a form that businesses themselves can adapt and ultimately prove there is a need for – a more permanent structure can then be developed based on a better understood set of principles and needs.

The meanwhile approach should be extended across the town centre as necessary, offering opportunities to enliven ground floor spaces, public realm and undeveloped plots as the town centre matures and acting as a pipeline of occupiers for permanent space. Working with its delivery partners Homes England will establish a meanwhile strategy for the town centre that supports/develops its character.

Reinforcing character

Enabling the town centre to develop its own network of business activity that in turn supports business growth and success will be critical to its growth. Curation will not seen filter/select particular tenants to match a specific sector focus, but provide a platform to working with businesses to help them make local connections and also ensure that activities across the town centre (i.e. beyond the businesses themselves) were complementary.

Through this every action and intervention can reinforce a character within the town centre and allow it to be

embedded in the wider area with the ‘curator’ helping to bridge gaps and help integrate Northstowe into the Cambridge economy. Using a mix of space provision, projects and programming that link people together a network of small projects would allow a greater scale and presence to be achieved and reinforced over time.

That is not to say everything should be locally generated. Northstowe shouldn’t be afraid to importing something to help establish/differentiate it and act as a catalyst for other activity. However this needs embedding into wider networks to create benefits that stretch beyond its own activity. The Production Workshop and Costume Centre for the Royal Opera House at Purfleet is a great example. Local colleges have now tailored courses to help grow the local workforce and allied studio space has helped grow a cluster of linked activities.

An entrepreneurial spirit and creative ethos in the town can only be developed by coordination across the whole town centre, ensuring that public realm, commercial space and activity programmes all link to create a consistent place and image.

Long term stewardship & investment

Curation and management will need to be in place for the long term. As such any stewardship model will need to be financially sustainable, particularly if this role is to stretch beyond commercial space operation to the management of public space and town centre programming.

A range of approaches could be used to achieve this long term stewardship and would be embedded in any delivery approach undertaken by Homes England, at

present all approaches are being considered and will form part of the discussions with delivery partners.

Regardless of the approach if management is to be sustainable it will be important to establish the management and curation strategy in the early stages of the town centre delivery, ensuring principles are in place from the start and opportunities are not missed. This can be allied to any of the incentives that can be offered (as outlined above) to attract businesses to the town centre in the first instance.

There must also be flexibility in the long-term approach, as the nature of town centre anchors coming to Northstowe Town Centre in its early phases will shape and influence the curation approach and the share of investment between themselves and Homes England. Opportunities exist for Homes England to collaborate on this long-term approach with the range of relevant actors including; South Cambs District Council, the County, the Combined Authority and the procured delivery partner.

A town centre specific sub-group to the Economic Leadership Group would, for example, allow opportunities for shared intervention and investment to be identified and approaches to delivery agreed – providing all stakeholders with a meaningful input into the future success of Northstowe Town Centre.

