

# Part II:

## Area Based Policies



# 7 Swindon Town Centre

## The Role of Swindon Town Centre

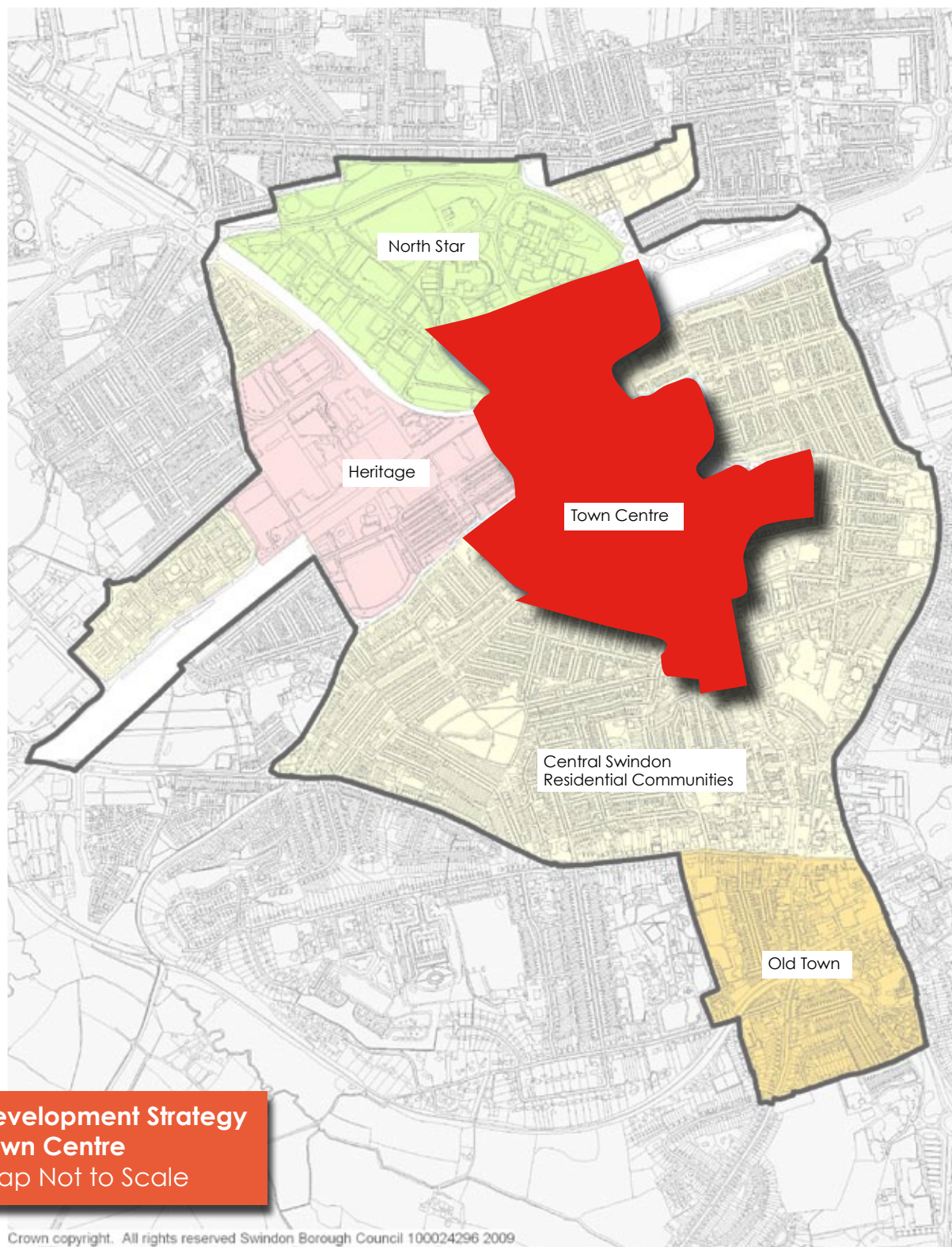
Government Planning Guidance focuses all 'higher order' activities towards town centres in the first instance. The **Central Area Action Plan** echoes this approach by making Swindon Town Centre the first preference in the Borough for the location of higher order civic, cultural, education, leisure, office and retail facilities.

Within the Town Centre, the **Action Plan** identifies four distinctive areas, which will have their own specific but complementary role. These four areas comprise:

- The **Retail Core** - the focus of retail-led development (the Retail Core corresponds with the Primary Shopping Area as defined in the Government's Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) - 'Planning for Town Centres').
- The **Promenade** (Swindon's Cultural Quarter) - the focus for cultural activities, but will also provide civic and leisure facilities.
- The **Commercial Quarter** - the focus for a flagship new office area.
- The **Railway Corridor** - the focus for a vibrant, high density, mixed-use development scheme.







## The Retail Core

### Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area **Action Plan** objectives of:

- ensuring Central Swindon is a destination of choice within the region; and
- the delivery of commercial and employment generating development that contributes to the continued economic prosperity of the Borough.

The Retail Core is the area of the Town Centre where retail development is concentrated. The area is split into Primary and Secondary Frontages. The Primary Frontage includes a high proportion of retail uses, including the major national retailers. The Secondary Frontage provides opportunities for a greater diversity of uses, such as cafes and professional services, and also opportunities for smaller independent retailers to flourish.

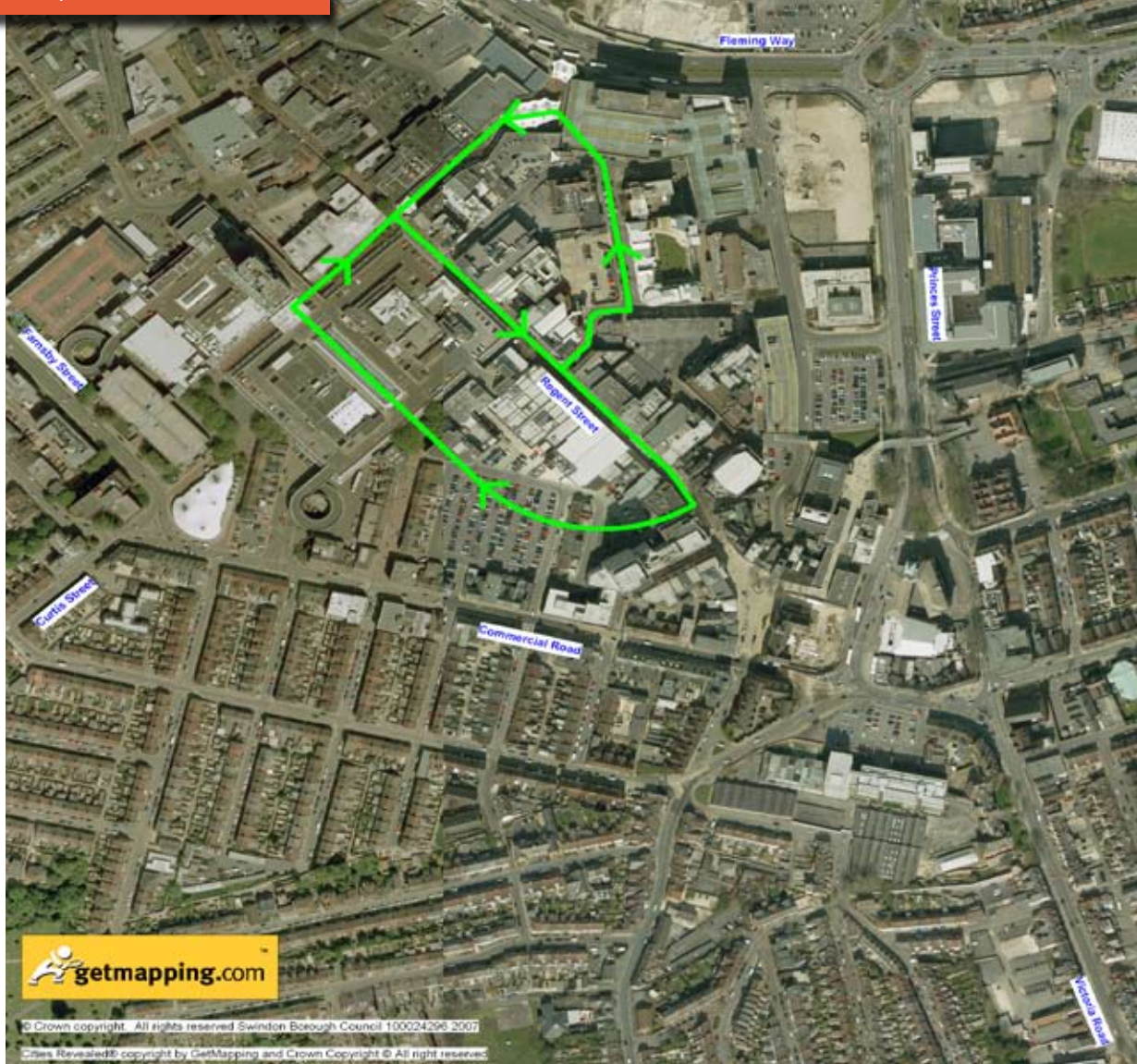
The Council's aim for the Retail Core is to create a concentrated, compact and legible retail centre for the town. New retail development will only be allowed elsewhere in the Town Centre in an ancillary role to assist in delivering greater vitality and vibrancy to the wider Town Centre area.

The Council is keen to create a strong retail circuit that would travel along two primary loops. The first primary loop would travel along Regent Street, along Canal Walk, through the Brunel Centre, through the Regent Place Scheme and back onto Regent Street. A second primary loop would also commence at Regent Street, and would travel east along Edgware Road (in part), along Sanford Street towards the Parade, along the Parade and back onto Regent Street.





## The Town Centre Primary Retail Circuit Map Not to Scale



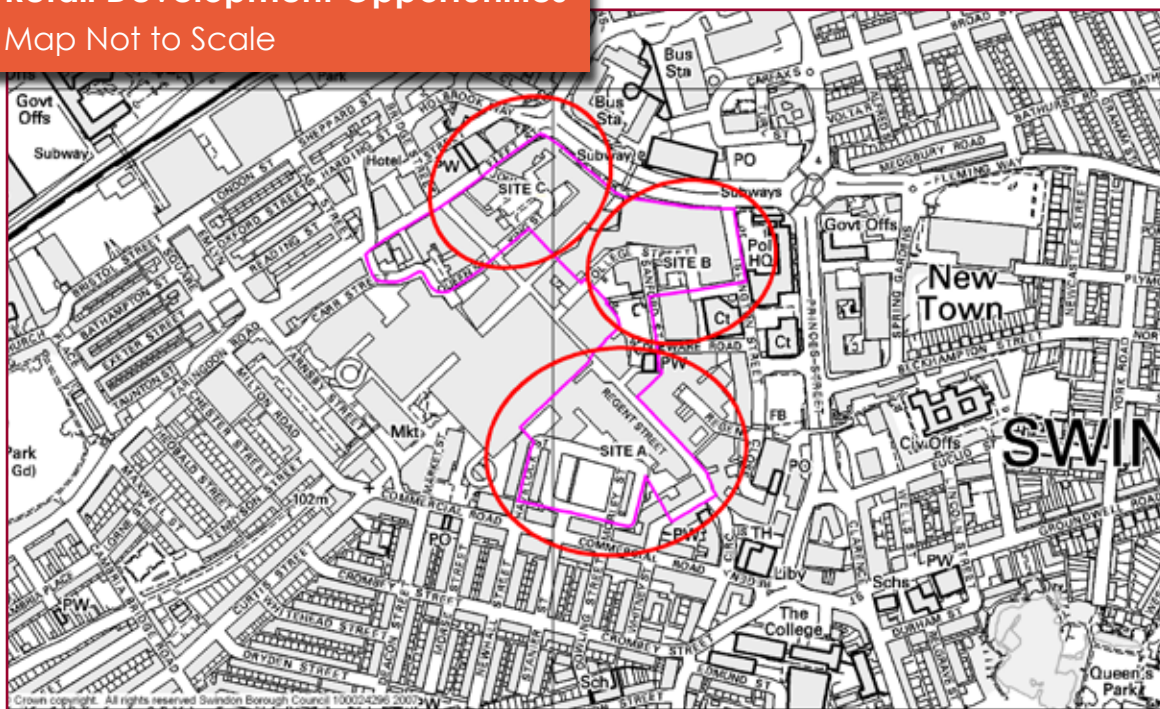
## Proposed Major Enhancements to the Retail Core

The Swindon Retail and Leisure Study (Donaldsons, 2007), indicates a potential for Swindon to accommodate, in spending capacity terms, approximately 65,000 sqm (net) of comparison (i.e. non-perishable goods such as clothing and shoes) retail floorspace by 2021. The Council has defined three areas for the provision of the bulk of this additional floorspace.



## Retail Development Opportunities

Map Not to Scale



### Site A - Regent Place (Area D2 on the Proposals Map)

Regent Place comprises the land to the east of the Brunel Centre, encompassing the Granville Street Car Park and Morley Street. It is envisaged that Regent Place would deliver approx 35,000 sqm of new retail floorspace (net additional).

Regent Place is considered to have the greatest potential for early development to meet a significant part of the identified capacity, and the securing of early development of this site is a high priority for the Council. A development scheme covering this area has already been granted outline planning permission.

### Site B - The Sanford Street Area (Area D3 on the Proposals Map)

This area comprises the properties on the east side of the Parade, Edgeware Road, Sanford Street, and Islington Street. It is envisaged that this area would deliver approximately 12,000 sqm of new retail floorspace.



This development area is capable of integrating well with the existing Primary Frontage but contains a number of existing uses that will need to be accommodated or relocated. The Council therefore expects that the development of this area will not occur until post-2011 and following on from the completion of the Regent Place development. However, the Council would not wish to hold back the regeneration of this area and if a development scheme were to be submitted in the shorter-term, the Council would facilitate its prompt progression, including assisting in land assembly. It will be expected that the redevelopment of this area will be informed by a detailed master plan.

### **Site C - Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area (Area D4 on the Proposals Map)**

This area encompasses the properties on the western side of the Parade, Fleet Street, John Street and the upper end of Bridge Street as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). It is envisaged that this area could deliver approximately 7,500 sqm of new retail floorspace.

This area is home to a number of unattractive buildings and in recent years has become dominated by bars and clubs. Whilst these uses bring commercial benefits, they also have detrimental effects on the remaining retail outlets in the area and detract from the overall image of the Town Centre.

The preferred route for the canal travels through Fleet Street. Constructing a canal through Fleet Street will completely transform the look and feel of the area. However, to maximise the benefits that a canal would bring to the area, the surrounding land would need to be comprehensively redeveloped, in the form of a retail and leisure led scheme, to create an attractive and complementary setting to the canal and canal basin.

The regeneration of the Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street area raises complicated land assembly issues, including the need to ensure that the redevelopment of this area is fully integrated with Union Square, and in particular with the bus exchange and the Green Spine and ensuring that adequate service access is provided for. The canal and the canal basin would also need to be successfully accommodated within the scheme, and should form focal points of the area. The land adjoining the canal and canal basin could then become the focus of cafes and restaurants alongside 'boutique' shops.

Given the major development constraints that exist in the Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street area, the area's regeneration will need comprehensive master planning. A master plan for the area will therefore be prepared as a matter of priority. This master planning approach will allow individual schemes to come forward in the area, in advance of the canal and basin, provided they accord with the principles of the master plan and do not prejudice the delivery of the canal or canal basin.

### **Delivering a Vibrant Retail Core**

The primary role for the Retail Core is as the main retail destination in the Borough. However, the retail offer should be complemented by leisure and entertainment, residential and community uses to add vitality by attracting visitors to the area throughout the day and into the evening. The use of upper floors in particular for residential or commercial use will be encouraged to help create a more vibrant centre into the evening.

## Swindon Market Hall (Area D5 on the Proposals Map)

A redevelopment opportunity exists at the Market Hall on Market Street, which currently fails to deliver a retail environment that meets the expectations of the shopper. Given the location of the Market Hall in the Secondary Frontage, small-scale retail outlets, encompassing Class A1 (shops) uses and supplemented by Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) uses will be expected to form the basis of any development. Any redevelopment of the Market Hall will also be required to deliver public realm improvements in the vicinity to complement the improvements that have been secured at Wharf Green.

### Policy CAAP13

## Development Requirements for the Retail Core

### General

The Retail Core will be the main focus for shopping activity in the Borough. To this end the development criteria set out below must be satisfied to help protect and enhance the retail offer provided in this area.

Within The Retail Core development must:

- Provide active frontages at ground floor level at all points of the development that front onto the main streets and spaces;
- Ensure that within the Primary Frontage Class A1 (shops) uses occupy at least 75% of the relevant occupied ground floor street frontage;
- Ensure that within the Secondary Frontage Class A1 (shops) uses occupy at least 60% of the relevant occupied ground floor street frontage;
- Deliver high quality shop fronts that meet the requirements of the Council's Shop Fronts Coding Guidance; and
- Make use of floorspace above the shops, for residential, office and other uses that would contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of The Retail Core throughout the day and into the evening.

### Sanford Street Area and The Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area

The major new development schemes proposed in the Sanford Street Area and the Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), should be informed by comprehensive master plans. The master plan should demonstrate how the schemes would:

- Help deliver a successful retail circuit through the Retail Core;
- In line with the Public Realm Section of this [Action Plan](#), deliver a high quality public realm, with an attractive mix of streets, boulevards and public spaces;
- Deliver the full integration of the development with the wider Town Centre;
- The Master Plan for the redevelopment of the Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area should demonstrate how the canal and canal basin can be successfully accommodated within the development and how the development can become fully integrated with Union Square. The Master Plan should enable development schemes to come forward in advance of the canal and canal basin, provided they accord with the principles of the Master Plan and do not prejudice the delivery of the canal or canal basin; and
- The Master Plan for the Sanford Street area should set out how development schemes in this area can come forward as individual development parcels.



## Delivering an Enhanced Retail Core

### Key Players

- Swindon Borough Council – Major landowner and has a key role in facilitating the delivery of public realm improvements
- The New Swindon Company – Co-ordinating role to ensure the timely delivery of the redevelopment of the Retail Core
- InSwindon – Key role in the day-to-day maintenance of the Town Centre and delivering operational improvements
- Modus –The Council's development partner for Regent Place
- Resolution Asset Management – owner of The Parade
- PRUPIM – Major landowner of properties on Regent Street
- Wilts and Berks Canal Trust – Key player in implementing the canal

### Land Ownership Issues

Regent Place - The bulk of the land at Regent Place is within the ownership of the Council. Compulsory Purchase proceedings have commenced for the remainder of the land.

The Sanford Street Area - comprises land within multiple ownership. The three largest landholdings in the area comprise The Parade, which is owned by Resolution Asset Management, the retail outlets fronting onto Regent Street, which are predominantly owned by PRUPIM and Sanford House which is within the ownership of the Council.

The Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area: Resolution Asset Management (the Parade) and the Council (John Street Car Park) are major land owners. The remaining land is in multiple ownership.

### Priority

Regent Place - completion by 2011.

The Sanford Street and Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street  
Redevelopment Areas - completion by 2016.

### Delivery Mechanism

Regent Place: The Regent Place scheme benefits from outline planning permission. The Council is using its Compulsory Purchase Order powers to facilitate site assembly.

The Sanford Street and Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Redevelopment Areas: Major development constraints exist in these areas. Both areas are in multiple ownership and many of the existing developments in these areas would need to be relocated to alternative sites in the Town Centre. The canal route through Fleet Street further complicates the Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area redevelopment. Comprehensive master plans will be required to inform the development of both of these areas.

If necessary, the Council will use its Compulsory Purchase Order powers to facilitate land assembly.

InSwindon, The Business Improvement District for the Town Centre, will lead on improving the day-to-day maintenance standards in the Retail Core.

**Quality Assurance**

There will be full public consultation on all major redevelopment schemes that come forward in the Retail Core. Where the Council controls the land, there will be thorough vetting of short-listed developer teams. All major planning applications will be accompanied by a detailed design statement.

**Estimated Development Quantum**

Regent Place - Retail: 35,000sqm. Residential: 300 units (of which 30% are expected to be affordable). Leisure: 15,000sqm

The Sanford Street Area - Retail: 12,000sqm. Residential: 75 units (of which 30% are expected to be affordable)

Upper Bridge Street / Fleet Street Area - Retail: 7,500sqm. Residential - 50 units (of which 30% are expected to be affordable)



## The Promenade - Swindon's Cultural Quarter

### Context

This Section helps deliver the **Central Area Action Plan** objective of:

- securing the creation of a Town Centre that provides a cultural and civic focus as a regional centre.

Encompassing the land to the west of Princes Street and the Regent Circus area, this area is envisaged to be the home of a new cultural centre for Swindon and would include a new central library, and potentially a new art gallery, museum and theatre. To complement these cultural uses this area is also proposed to accommodate a new central civic office campus and smaller-scale accommodation to allow for a diverse mix of cafes, restaurants and specialist shops.

The Promenade is the subject of a master plan which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in November 2006. The master plan sets out development principles and expected development quantum which should guide all development proposals in the area. Further detailed master plans may be required to inform the development of individual land parcels within The Promenade area.

### Proposals

Cultural activities will form the focus of The Promenade. Uses that complement this cultural offer, including leisure and food and drink facilities, will also be supported.

The Promenade comprises a prominent and highly accessible location in Central Swindon. The Council is keen to maximize the development potential of this area. To this end the use of upper floors in this area for a wide range of activities, including hotel, leisure, office and residential, will be actively encouraged.



Improving connectivity between The Promenade and the wider Central Swindon area is fundamental to maximizing its potential. Delivering a permeable and legible built environment in this area should therefore be a key consideration for development proposals.

The Green Spine will become the pre-eminent public realm feature in the area. Development proposals should positively address the attractive setting that the Green Spine will create and aid in its delivery through on-site landscaping in areas immediately adjacent to the Spine or by way of developer contributions.

The Council's wider public realm requirements for The Promenade are detailed in the Public Realm Section of this document.

### Land East of Princes Street

The land to the east of Princes Street is undergoing self-regeneration, with a number of substantial new schemes having recently been completed. The Council does not consider it necessary to include specific policies in the **Action Plan** to assist the regeneration of this area. Any further development proposals in this area will be considered against the policies in Part I of the **Action Plan**, and the guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) – 'Planning for Town Centres'.





## Policy CAAP14

### The Promenade - Delivering a New Cultural Quarter for Swindon

Development proposals that enhance the cultural offer in The Promenade will be supported.

Development proposals should accord with the detailed planning framework set out in The Promenade Supplementary Planning Document and subsequent detailed Master Plans.

Development proposals will be expected to front onto, and positively embrace the Green Spine, the alignment of which is shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Contributions will be sought from all major development proposals in The Promenade area towards delivering the Princes Street / Clarence Street stretch of the Green Spine.

Where practicable active frontages should be created at ground floor level onto Princes Street, Islington Street and Regent Circus. Class A2 (Financial & Professional Services), Class A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), Class A4 (Drinking Establishments), Class D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) and Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) uses will be permitted so long as no single use dominates.

Where Class A1 (shops) uses are proposed, such outlets should be of a scale that complement and do not undermine the shops in the Retail Core.

Note: Major developments are developments of 1,000 sqm (gross) and over and developments involving 10 or more dwellings

## Delivery of The Promenade

### Key Players

- Swindon Dance and Create – Key representatives of the creative sector in Swindon
- Swindon Borough Council and HM Courts Service – Major landowners
- The New Swindon Company – Co-ordinating role to ensure the timely delivery of the redevelopment of the Promenade
- South West of England Regional Development Agency – Assistance in land assembly and funding
- Swindon Cultural Partnership – Key advisory role
- Ashfield Land and Parkridge - Owners of the Swindon College Site

### Land Ownership Issues

The bulk of the land is in the control of the public sector, with the Council being the major landholder. However there are areas in private ownership that will require successful negotiation. There are also properties under Council's freehold that are subject to leasehold.

**Priority**

Princes Street Car Park, Wyvern Multi-Storey Car Park, former Swindon College Site and Victoria Gate (the Victorian buildings on Victoria Road and Byron Street, north of the College) – completion by 2011.

Magistrates Court Site, Crown and County Court Site, Wyvern Theatre/Theatre Square, Regent Crescent, Regent Circus West, Regent Theatre (area encompassing the Mecca Bingo Hall) - completion by 2016.

**Infrastructure Requirements**

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance Note, the Council will expect development to help deliver, either as a part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- New art gallery and museum
- New theatre
- Public realm improvements in the area as detailed in the Public Realm Section, including the stretch of Green Spine that travels through the area
- Transport Infrastructure in the area as detailed in the Transport and Movement Section, including a strategic car parking facility at Regent Circus.

**Delivery Mechanism**

Given the considerable land assembly issues within The Promenade and to ensure that development is not unnecessarily held up, the area will be developed in individual parcels and in accordance with the development framework set out in The Promenade Supplementary Planning Document.

The delivery mechanism will differ from parcel to parcel. However, it is recognised that the proposals for a combined Crown Court and Magistrates Court building (see The Promenade Supplementary Planning Document) represents a significant challenge.

**Quality Assurance**

Full public consultation has already been carried out on the Promenade Supplementary Planning Document. There will be thorough vetting of developer teams appointed to carry out development on the land parcels that The Council or South West Regional Development Agency control. Planning applications for each parcel will be expected to be accompanied by a detailed design statement, showing how the development contributes to the overall Master Plan.

**Estimated Development Quantum**

Retail and Leisure: 25,000sqm (predominantly leisure)

Residential: 650 units (of which 30% are expected to be affordable)

Offices: 15,000sqm



## The Commercial Quarter

### Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area **Action Plan** objectives of:

- securing the delivery of commercial and employment generating development that contributes to the continued economic prosperity of the Borough; and
- ensuring Central Swindon is a destination of choice within the region.

Encompassing a large expanse of land to the north of Fleming Way, The Commercial Quarter is envisaged as a flagship office area, which will be complemented by a mix of residential, retail and leisure facilities, along with cafes and restaurants.

The bulk of the land (The Union Square project area) is the subject of a Master Plan, which is at an advanced stage in its preparation.

### Proposals for Union Square (Area D6 on the Proposals Map)

The Union Square project area should be comprehensively redeveloped as a prime office location. The nature and extent of the scheme should be informed by a detailed Master Plan. The development should ensure that the vitality of the area is maintained throughout the day and into the evening, should radically improve the legibility of the area, in particular between the Railway Station and the Retail Core, and should deliver a public space of the highest design quality as an integral part of the scheme. Ground floor uses must maximise active frontages not only onto the public space within the scheme (The Arena) but also along the route from the railway station to the Town Centre. This will be expected to involve the refurbishment of Tri-centre Two and Three.

It is vital that the Union Square scheme also addresses the role of Fleming Way, which is a barrier to pedestrian movement through the Town Centre. To this end, the development will be required to implement the stretch of the Green Spine that travels along Fleming Way and deliver the transitional public space between Union Square and The Parade as described in the Public Realm Section.

The Union Square project area is currently home to a Swindon Primary Care Trust Walk-In Centre. It is essential that the Walk-In Centre is relocated in an accessible area within Central Swindon and that the new Walk-In Centre has the capacity to meet the anticipated increase in Central Swindon's resident population.

The removal of Whalebridge Roundabout, which should be turned into a pedestrian friendly road system with access for public transportation, will also be a prerequisite of the scheme.

### Existing Office Space in the Commercial Quarter

Given the proximity of the railway station, the Council will seek to retain the existing dominance of high-density office uses on upper floors. More vibrant ground floor uses, such as retail and leisure, will be supported.

### The Commercial Quarter

#### Union Square

The Union Square development opportunity site should be comprehensively redeveloped as a prime-office area, of the highest design quality, which should be fully integrated with the rest of Central Swindon. The development should be informed by a detailed Master Plan.

Class B1 (Office) uses should be the predominant land use within the development. Land uses that will contribute to the vitality of the area will be supported as ancillary components of the development.

The development should facilitate the delivery of the stretch of the Green Spine that lies within the scheme, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), and the creation of a new bus exchange as integral elements of the scheme.

#### Existing Office Space in the Commercial Quarter

The change of use of the ground floor of office buildings to uses that provide active frontages onto the main streets and spaces will be supported. Such uses will include Class A1 (Shops), Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services), Class A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), Class D1 (Non Residential Institutions) and Class D2 (Assembly & Leisure).

Where Class A1 (shops) uses are proposed, such outlets should be of a scale that complement and do not undermine the shops in the Retail Core.

The upper floors of office buildings in the Commercial Quarter outside of Union Square will be protected for Class B1 (Office) use.

## Delivery of Union Square Project

### Key Players

- M.USE Developments – The selected developer for Union Square
- Swindon Borough Council and English Partnerships – Major landowners
- The New Swindon Company – co-ordinating role to ensure the timely delivery of the redevelopment of the Union Square development
- South West of England Regional Development Agency – Assistance in land assembly and funding
- The Swindon Primary Care Trust – Delivery of new Health Centre in the area

### Land Ownership Issues

The Council purchased the old Queenstown School site (south-east corner of the area) in 1999. The Council also owns the bus station, multi-storey car park, and other commercial interests in the area. Thamesdown Transport has relocated its depot to a site beyond Central Swindon. There is excellent scope for achieving the extensive regeneration of the Carfax Street Area, given that Union Square comprises land in predominantly public ownership, principally English Partnerships, South West of England Regional Development Agency and Swindon Borough Council.

### Priority

Phase 1 of the Union Square development, encompassing road re-alignment works, enabling works, construction of some pre-let offices and the redevelopment of the old Police Station site - completion by 2011.

Subsequent Phases - completion by 2016

### Infrastructure Requirements

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance Note, the Council will expect development to help deliver, either as a part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- Public realm improvements in the area as detailed in the Public Realm Section, including the stretch of the Green Spine that travels through the area
- Infrastructure enhancements to the adjoining Broadgreen.
- A new Bus Exchange
- Highway reconfigurations at Fleming Way and Whalebridge Roundabout
- Additional Transport Infrastructure in the area as detailed in the Transport and Movement Section, including a strategic car parking facility at Regent Place

### Delivery Mechanism

A Collaboration Agreement between the principal landowners is in place, which sets a framework through which the proposed development will be secured.

A comprehensive Master Plan for Union Square is at an advanced state of preparation and a preferred developer, M.USE Developments, has been identified.

### Quality Assurance

Planning application to be accompanied by a detailed design statement.

### Estimated Development Quantum

Residential: 450 units (of which 30% would be expected to be affordable)

Retail and Leisure: 15,000sqm

Hotel: 13,000sqm

Offices: 55,000sqm



## The Railway Corridor - Encompassing the Swindon Central Project Area

### Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area **Action Plan** objectives of:

- ensuring Central Swindon is a destination of choice within the region; and
- securing the delivery of commercial and employment generating development that contributes to the continued economic prosperity of the Borough.

The Railway Corridor comprises a substantial area of land centred on the railway station and straddling the London to Bristol mainline. The bulk of the land, with the exception of North Star House and Polaris House, is within The New Swindon Company's Swindon Central project area, which is proposed to be the focus for comprehensive redevelopment as detailed on the next page.

### Swindon Central (Area D7 on the Proposals Map)

The majority of the land within the Swindon Central project area is in the ownership of Network Rail with much of the remainder being owned by the Council. The Mechanics Institute is in private ownership. Currently, the bulk of the land in this area is utilised as car parking for the railway station and local business uses.

There are a number of Listed Buildings and structures within the Swindon Central project area, notably the former GWR Carriage Workshops, former Bristol Street School and Mechanics Institute (Grade II star) and the retaining wall that travels along the southern boundary, adjacent to Station Road.

The successful redevelopment of this area is crucial to linking together the development opportunities that exist either side of the railway line, upgrading the pedestrian and cycling routes and communications through the railway embankment and improving the attractiveness and legibility of the area to visitors to the town by rail.

The railway station is prominently located within the Swindon Central project area, which also lies close to the Retail Core. These factors make Swindon Central an ideal location for a major, high density, mixed-use development, potentially encompassing residential commercial, ancillary retail, leisure and higher education (if required to supplement the allocated university land at North Star). The opportunities provided by the railway station also mean that tourist-related uses such as a hotel, conference centre or potentially some form of performance venue or exhibition space would also be appropriate.

The public realm at the entrance to the railway station is poor. Pedestrians and cyclists vie with taxis, buses and private cars for space. Signage is poor and there is no sense of place. Provision should be made within the Swindon Central scheme for a new railway station entrance and forecourt, along with a new public square, to the south of the railway station. A new entrance and forecourt should also be created to the north of the station. Development principles for these areas are included in the Public Realm Section of this [Action Plan](#).

The preferred alignment of the Green Spine and the canal travel through the Swindon Central development opportunity site. Both the canal and the Green Spine will travel along the railway underpass at the top end of Bridge Street as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Any development scheme will be expected to positively address these proposals. The stretch of the Green Spine that corresponds with the Swindon Central site should be delivered as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of this area.

A new railway crossing of landmark design should be delivered within the scheme, which should provide a highly accessible new link between North Star and the land south of the railway. Enhancements to the subway linking Emlyn Square to the Railway Works area and the creation of a new pedestrian and cyclist railway crossing linking the Railway Village and the former Railway Works area should also be pursued.

The Swindon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies much of the Swindon Central development area as being liable to Sewer Flooding. Any redevelopment in this area will need to demonstrate that the rate of surface water run-off from the site is less than before the development with an additional allowance of 30% for climate change. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required for all development impacting on the area.

### **Land at North Star House and Polaris House**

Given the close location of North Star House and Polaris House to the railway station, continued commercial office use is considered to be appropriate in this area. This highly prominent office location could be further intensified in order to make the most efficient use of the area's excellent accessibility.

## Policy CAAP16

### The Railway Corridor Development Requirements

#### Swindon Central

The redevelopment of Swindon Central, should be delivered in the form of a comprehensive Framework Plan or Master Plan, which could provide for the following elements:

- A mixed use scheme, encompassing commercial, hotel, leisure, residential and/or higher education facilities;
- An attractive new railway station entrance, forecourt and public space to the south of the railway;
- An attractive new railway station entrance and forecourt to the north of the railway;
- The protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Structures in the area;
- Positively address and provide linkages to the Mechanics Institute and the Former Railway Museum;
- Deliver the stretch of Green Spine that travels through Swindon Central, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#);
- Provide for a new railway crossing point under or over the railway at a prominent position within the scheme, which can provide safe and convenient access for everyone; and
- Safeguard land for the canal along the preferred alignment as shown on them [Proposals Map](#).

#### Land at North Star House and Polaris House

Land at and around North Star House and Polaris House is safeguarded for Class B1 (office) use. The further intensification of office uses in this area will be supported.



## Delivery of the Swindon Central Project

### Key Players

- Swindon Borough Council and Network Rail – Major landowners
- The New Swindon Company – Co-ordinating role to ensure the timely delivery of the redevelopment of Swindon Central
- English Heritage – Key advisory role to ensure protection and enhancement of historic environment

### Land Ownership Issues

Land is predominantly in the ownership of Network Rail. Swindon Borough Council also has significant land holdings.

### Priority

Completion by 2016

### Infrastructure Requirements

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance Note, the Council will expect development to help deliver, either as a part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- Public realm improvements in the area as detailed in the Public Realm Section, including improvements to the Railway Station forecourts
- Canal and canal infrastructure as detailed in the Canal Policy Section
- Transport Infrastructure in the area as detailed in the Transport and Movement Section, including a 1,000 space strategic car park
- New and improved railway crossings
- Utility Infrastructure Improvements

### Delivery Mechanism

Discussions are ongoing with Network Rail regarding potential upgrades to the railway station and the redevelopment of the surrounding land within Network Rail's ownership. A Framework Plan, which sets out a self-financing, comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the entire Swindon Central project area is expected.

### Quality Assurance

There will be full public consultation on the Framework Plan. Planning application(s) to be accompanied by a detailed Design and Access Statement.

### Estimated Development Quantum

Residential: 400 units (of which 30% would be expected to be affordable)

Offices: 15,000sqm

Retail and Leisure: 5,000sqm

Tertiary Education: not yet quantified

## 8 North Star

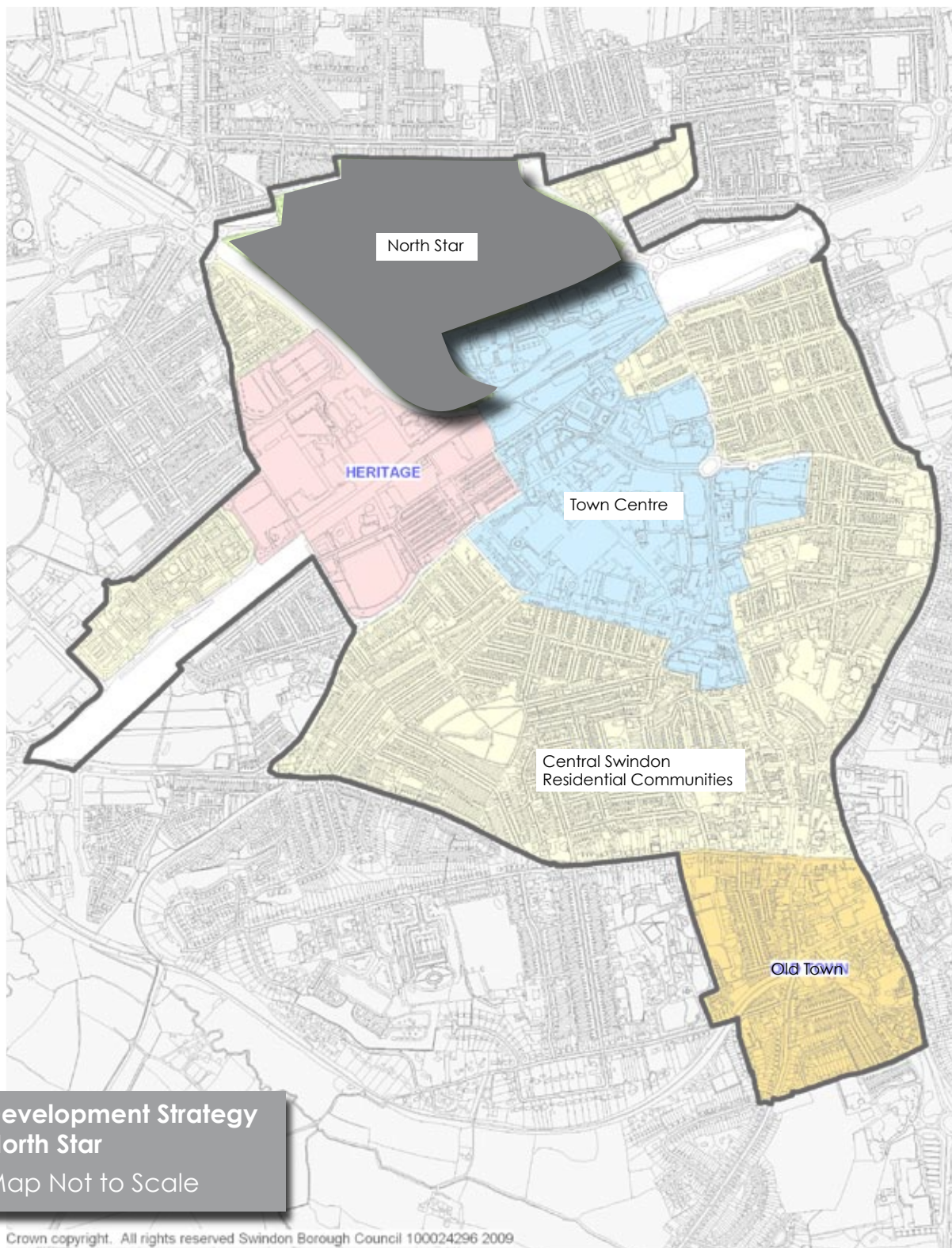
### Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area Action Plan objectives of:

- securing the delivery of a strong and vibrant university presence in central Swindon and
- the co-ordination and delivery of high quality and accessible services and facilities that are needed to support the communities living in or adjacent to Central Swindon.

North Star is located to the north of the Bristol to London and London to Gloucester railway lines. The railway was critical to the development of Swindon, but it has left a significant structural legacy that has severed Central Swindon, isolating development on the northern side of the railway from the facilities and services of the main shopping area. The few crossings that do exist between North Star and the Town Centre are of a poor quality and are not well linked up with other routes.







## Land Encompassing the Clares, Oasis and Swindon College Sites

This area is characterised by low-density development which fails to make the most efficient use of the land given its central location. It accommodates the Oasis, an ageing but enduringly popular strategic leisure facility, Clares Retail Equipment Ltd, a large B2 industrial unit to the north of Hawksworth Way and the Swindon College Campus, at which further education activities have recently been consolidated. Both the Oasis and Clares boast expansive surface car parks.

The Oasis is nearing the end of its operational life. There is a corporate commitment to the retention of a leisure facility at North Star with a view to re-establishing the facility as a regional leisure destination. Work has been commissioned to determine the nature and scale of future operations at North Star. It is likely that the existing facilities will undergo substantial refurbishment, offering upgraded facilities and activities not currently available at the central site. There is potential to consolidate activity over a smaller area and significant scope to expand facilities if necessary, making better use of the surrounding surface car parks. These principles do not preclude the delivery of a new leisure attraction at North Star if the refurbishment and upgrading of the Oasis is not deemed feasible.

North Star also represents the ideal opportunity to deliver a university and achieve a higher and further educational synergy within a campus style environment. This would build on the presence of existing tertiary education at Swindon College. Land is therefore safeguarded at North Star for University Campus accommodation. The university is expected to be in the form of a self-contained campus capable of accommodating approximately 1,000 to 2,000 students but with scope for its expansion to create a 7,000 student campus. The campus should encompass teaching, research, administration and halls of residence.

The successful development of this area will need to take into consideration its proximity to Hawksworth Industrial Estate. The *Green Spine* and canal, which will travel along the eastern boundary of the industrial estate, will therefore be important features that will help buffer the two areas. Noise attenuation methods may also be necessary and this issue will need to be addressed in a Master Plan for the area. Further to this, any redevelopment of the area is likely to encounter contamination and thus remedial works to mitigate the effects of contaminated land on new development is likely. Intrusive site investigations will need to be undertaken to determine the extent of contamination.

The detailed design scheme for the area will be expected to positively address the canal and *Green Spine*. The stretch of the *Green Spine* that travels through North Star should be delivered as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of this area.



New public realm must be designed and delivered as an integral part of new development at North Star in accordance with the palette of materials and development principles set out in the Public Realm Section. Signage is particularly critical here to make people aware of the area's proximity to the Town Centre and to encourage pedestrian and cycle movement between the Town Centre and North Star.

## Hawksworth Industrial Estate

Hawksworth Industrial Estate is currently home to a range of low-density, general industrial and business units. There is an excellent longer-term opportunity to regenerate this area to create a development that better responds to the area's close proximity to the railway station and any future university campus on the land directly to the east. The canal and Green Spine would provide an attractive setting for a new business park type development in this area.

The industrial estate could be developed in a way that offers a direct synergy with the University. An 'innovation park' could be created, which could deliver

research and development units and business incubators units within the estate. New railway crossings linking North Star and the former Railway Works area should be pursued as part of the redevelopment of the Industrial Estate.



## Policy CAAP17

### North Star

#### The Clares Factory and Oasis Leisure Centre Sites

Land currently comprising the Clares Factory Site and the Oasis Leisure Centre Site will be safeguarded for a regional-scale leisure facility. The remaining land in this area will be redeveloped as a University Campus. A Master Plan should be prepared to inform the development of this area.

If government funding for a university is not secured in the 2008-2011 public spending review, the allocation of land for a Higher Education presence in this area of North Star will be reviewed.

#### Hawksworth Industrial Estate

The land at Hawksworth Industrial Estate will be protected for Class B employment uses and other uses that will assist in delivering the Council's long-term ambition to create an innovation park in this area with strong linkages to the university campus.

#### The Canal and Green Spine

New developments within North Star should not compromise the delivery of the canal or the Green Spine along the alignment shown on the [Proposals Map](#) and should positively contribute to an attractive and complementary setting to these features. New developments will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of the Green Spine.

### Delivery of North Star

#### Key Players

- Swindon Borough Council – Major landowner
- University of the West of England – The Council's preferred University Partner
- Swindon College – Has a significant landholding in the area
- The New Swindon Company – Co-ordinating role to ensure the timely delivery of the redevelopment of North Star
- Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership – Co-ordinating role for the university campus
- Network Rail – has a significant landholding in the area
- BT, Nationwide, Research Councils – As major stakeholders in the area, these organizations will have a key advisory role on the future development of the area

#### Land Ownership Issues

The Clares Site and Oasis Leisure Centre Site are within the ownership of Swindon Borough Council. There is also scope to incorporate land around North Star House, where The New Swindon Company/Swindon Borough Council has an option to purchase land up until 2009, within any redevelopment scheme.

Clares Industrial is a long-term tenant of the Council and will be relocated to new premises on vacation of the warehouse at North Star.

Hawksworth Industrial Estate is within multiple ownership.



### **Priority**

New strategic leisure facility and university campus (first phase) - completion by 2011

Redevelopment of Hawksworth Industrial Estate - completion after 2016

### **Infrastructure Requirements**

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance Note, the Council will expect development to help deliver, either as a part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- Public realm improvements in the area as detailed in the Public Realm Section, including the stretch of the Green Spine that travels through the area.
- Canal and canal infrastructure in the area as detailed in the Canal Policy Section
- Transport Infrastructure in the area as detailed in the Transport and Movement Section
- Railway crossings linking North Star with the former Railway Works area

### **Delivery Mechanism**

The University Campus: A University Capacity Study has already been completed, which sets out an indicative layout for the University Campus. A collaboration agreement has been signed between The University of the West of England and the Council. A funding mechanism to deliver the campus is currently being prepared.

New Strategic Leisure Centre: Delivery to be informed by the Council's Leisure Strategy.

Redevelopment of Hawksworth Industrial Estate: This is a longer-term aspiration, the delivery mechanism for which has not yet been determined.

### **Quality Assurance**

There will be full public consultation on all major development proposals in North Star. A detailed Master Plan will be prepared to co-ordinate the redevelopment of the Clares Factory and Oasis Leisure Centre Sites. Thorough vetting of short-listed developer teams. Planning application to be accompanied by a detailed Design and Access Statement.

### **Estimated Development Quantum**

Leisure: 5,000 sqm

Tertiary Education: 1,000 to 2,000 student University Campus by 2011, potentially increasing to accommodate up to 7,000 students by 2021

Hawksworth Industrial Estate: 10,000 sqm (net additional) of employment accommodation (Class B1).

## 9. The Railway Heritage Area

### Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area [Action Plan](#) objectives of:

- securing the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment; and
- securing the provision of wider opportunities for Central Swindon living.

The Railway Heritage Area within Central Swindon is home to a rich and varied historic environment, encompassing The Swindon Railway Works Conservation Area to the north of the railway and The Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area to the south of the railway.

The north-eastern end of the Railway Village Conservation Area (the former GWR Carriage Workshops, former Bristol Street School and the Mechanics Institute) is included within [The New Swindon Company's Swindon Central Project Area](#), the development requirements of which are detailed in the Railway Corridor Section of this document.

### The Swindon Railway Works Conservation Area

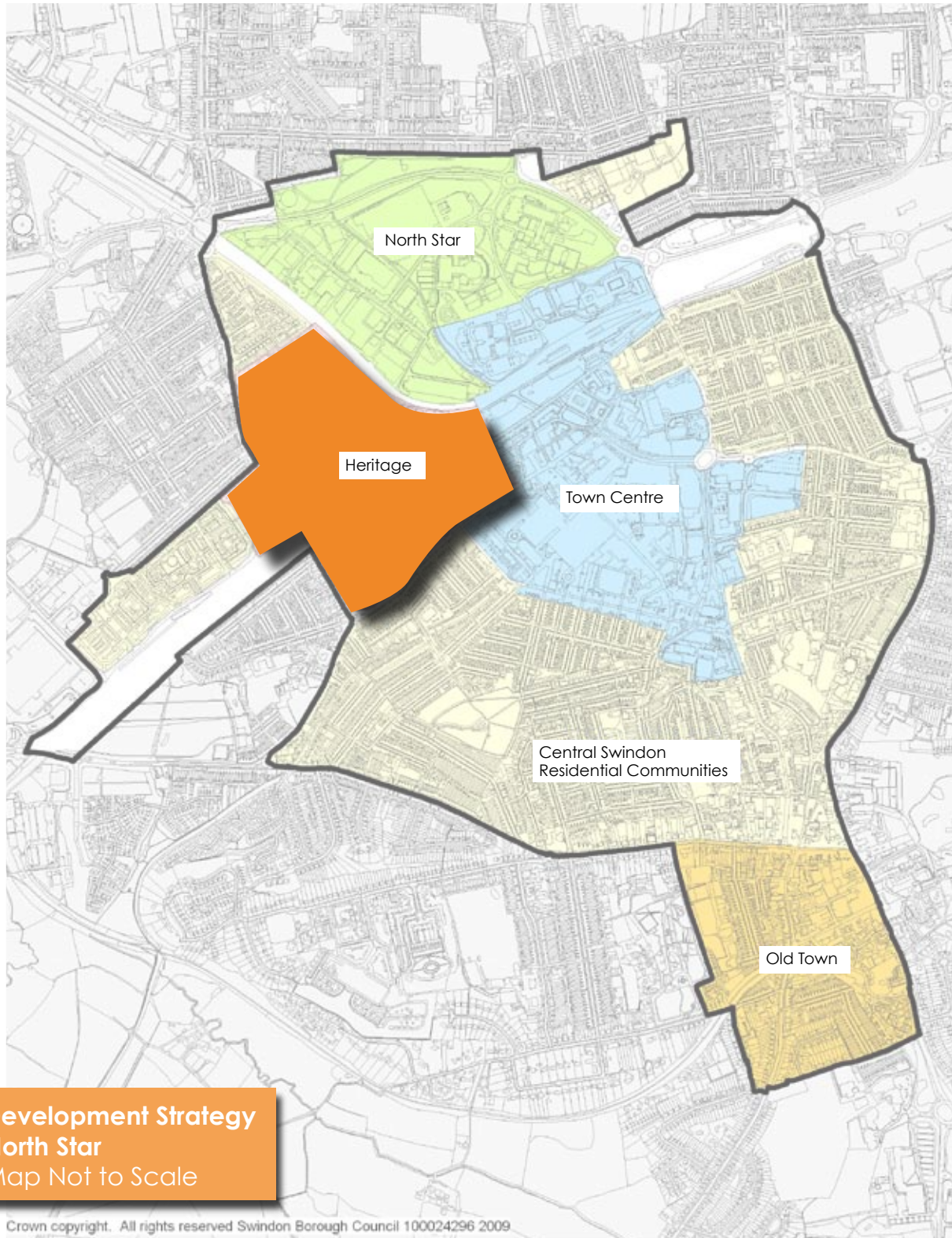
The Swindon Railway Works Area is the most significant surviving railway engineering establishment of its time, in the world. The redevelopment of this area is widely considered to have been a success, in particular the Great Western Designer Outlet Centre. It is also home to STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway and the award winning Heelis building - The National Trust Central Office.

Given the historic interest of the area, the intention has been to retain those buildings of special historic or architectural interest and to enhance their setting with well-designed new development incorporating contemporary buildings that will complement the special interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

There are still vacant sites and unoccupied buildings awaiting redevelopment within the area, and the Council is keen to ensure that their redevelopment is of the same high standard as the rest of the area. Redevelopment in the area should also address features for improvement identified in the Swindon Railway Works Conservation Area Appraisal.

The [Swindon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) identifies the Swindon Railway Works Area as a location liable to both Localised Flooding and Sewer Flooding. Any redevelopment in this area will need to demonstrate that the rate of surface water run-off from the site is less than before the development with an additional allowance of 30% for climate change. A [Flood Risk Assessment](#) will be required for all development impacting on the Railway Works Area.

Within [Swindon's Central Area Public Realm Strategy](#), the area between the Great Western Designer Outlet Centre and STEAM has been identified as a key public space. A new public space will be created in this area, the detailed design of which, will be informed by a Heritage Area-wide public realm scheme.



**Development Strategy**  
**North Star**  
Map Not to Scale

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## The Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area

The Swindon Railway Village is a well-preserved example of an early planned Victorian railway village. The Conservation Area comprises a collection of buildings and open spaces laid out in a planned way to satisfy the needs of the workforce of the GWR Company at Swindon. The area also contains the terraced cottages, pubs and other public buildings of the planned 1840's railway village.

The area is still predominantly residential, with the majority of the cottages and flats being public housing owned by Swindon Borough Council. Whilst the Railway Village has managed to retain its character and identity, and functions as a self-contained community, it faces a number of challenges. Concerns over crime related activities, noise and pollution, appearance of neglect of the street scene and disruption caused by traffic passing through the area have been raised.

The Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Railway Village Improvement Plan identify opportunities for enhancement of the area. The Railway Village Community Centre (Central Community Centre), which comprises an important community asset for the Village, should be protected for community use.

The former Railway Museum, in Faringdon Road, will become the hub for Swindon Borough Council's Youth Service, securing a bright future for this historic Grade II listed building. Securing a viable and vibrant long-term use for the Mechanics Institute that will not adversely impact on the Railway Village residents will be of importance. Before alternative uses are considered, the availability of grant assistance and the option of charitable or community ownership should be explored in order to establish whether it is feasible to reinstate the historic use of this listed building as a centre for learning, cultural and social activities.



Faringdon Park is an integral part of the Railway Village and a major open space within Central Swindon, with a green link proposed to join it to the **Green Spine**. Enhancements to the original formal entrance to Faringdon Park, off Church Place would also promote its status as one of the town's most important green spaces. Opportunities for enhancement of the Park have been identified within the **Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area Appraisal**.

The section of the proposed canal route that travels past the Railway Village is highly sensitive given the area's rich historic character. A comprehensive approach to the design of both the canal and the adjoining public realm improvements identified is vital.

### **Raising the Profile of the Heritage Area's Rich Historic Legacy**

The profile of the **Railway Heritage Area** could be improved by highlighting the area's historic legacy and by creating features whereby pedestrian movement can flow through the area. Key to achieving this is promoting greater links between the Great Western Designer Outlet Centre and the **Retail Core**, which are only 10 minutes apart by foot. This can be achieved through use of better signage and by delivering substantial environmental improvements to the route, which travels through the middle of the Heritage Area past The Mechanics Institute and The former Railway Museum Buildings.

The pedestrian route connecting the **Railway Works Conservation Area** to the **Railway Village Conservation Area** and through to the Town Centre is via subway under the mainline railway. The northern approach to the subway is steep and unsuitable for disabled users and the subway itself is not inviting. The subway requires extensive refurbishment to make it accessible to all and allow for 24-hour access.



## Policy CAAP18

### The Railway Heritage Area

All development proposals within or adjoining the Railway Heritage Area should enhance and protect the area's historic environment.

#### **The Swindon Railway Works Conservation Area**

Development proposals for the vacant plots within the Railway Works Area must be of the highest design quality. Contemporary building designs that will complement the special interest, character and appearance of the Railway Works Area will be supported. Redevelopment in the area should also seek to address features for improvement identified in the Swindon Railway Works Conservation Area Appraisal. A new public space of exceptional design quality should be created in the area between the Great Western Designer Outlet Centre and STEAM.

#### **The Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area**

Development proposals in the Railway Village must preserve the integrity of the Railway Village as a self-contained residential community and should recognise Emlyn Square as the focus of the Village. The provision of community facilities or uses that enhance the Village community will be actively supported at Emlyn Square. The Railway Village Community Centre will be protected for community use.

Development proposals that help implement the improvement measures set out in the Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Railway Village Improvement Plan will be actively supported.

Development proposals affecting the Mechanics Institute should be sympathetic to the historic character and role of this building and should deliver publicly accessible uses of a nature that would not adversely impact on the amenity of Railway Village residents. If it is demonstrated that reinstating the historic use of the Mechanics Institute as a centre for learning, cultural and social activities is not feasible, then other options for the future use of this listed building will be considered. Such uses should be sympathetic to, and compatible with, the historic character and role of the building, deliver public access to, and use of, the building's main rooms as far as possible, and be of a nature that would not adversely impact on the amenity of Railway Village residents.

The delivery of environmental improvements to Faringdon Park will be actively supported. The canal and adjoining public realm should be sensitively designed so as to positively contribute to the character of the Railway Heritage Area.

### **Delivering Improvements to the Railway Heritage Area**

Development proposals within or near the Railway Heritage Area will be required to contribute towards public realm and wider environmental improvements to the area in line with the Conservation Area Appraisals, the Railway Village Improvement Plan and the public realm scheme for the area. Development proposals within or near the Railway Heritage Area will also be required to contribute towards new signage and improvements to the subway under the London to Bristol mainline.

The level of contributions that will be sought will be dependent on the scale of the development proposed and the impact that the scheme will have on the Railway Area.



## Delivering Improvements to the Railway Heritage Area

Note: The Delivery Mechanism for [The New Swindon Company's Swindon Central Project Area](#), which encompasses a large segment of the [Railway Heritage Area](#), is detailed in the Railway Corridor Section.

### Key Players

- Swindon Borough Council – Key role in facilitating the delivery of public realm improvements
- Railway Village Residents and Railway Village Action Group – Key role in prioritizing improvement measures and scrutinizing schemes to ensure quality of delivery
- English Heritage – Key advisory role to ensure protection and enhancement of historic environment
- The New Swindon Company – Co-ordinating role to ensure the timely delivery of the Swindon Central major project
- Network Rail – As a major landowner, key role in delivering the Swindon Central major project
- McArthur Glen, National Trust, STEAM, National Monuments Record Centre – As major stakeholders in the area, these organizations will have a key advisory role on the future development of the area

### Land Ownership Issues

Much of the land within this area is owned by the Council. Network Rail is also a major landowner.

### Priority

Environmental improvements to the Railway Village and Faringdon Park, securing the re-use of the Mechanics Institute and the Old Railway Museum and delivering new signage - completion by 2011.

Public Realm improvements and improvements to subway - completion by 2016.

### Infrastructure Requirements

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's [Developer Contributions Guidance Note](#), the Council will expect development to help deliver, either as a part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- Public realm improvements as detailed in the Public Realm Section
- Canal and canal infrastructure as detailed in the Canal Policy Section
- Transport Infrastructure as detailed in the Transport and Movement Section
- Railway Crossings as detailed in the Railway Corridor Section
- Street scene and other environmental improvements
- Utility Infrastructure Improvements

### Delivery Mechanism

Preparation of a public realm scheme covering the entire Railway Heritage Area to be funded by S106 monies, which in the case of residential development, will be in lieu of the wider Central Area Public Realm contributions normally sought. The Council will consider opportunities to pursue National Lottery Heritage Funding to deliver key elements of the public realm improvements.

Through the Council Housing Department's **Environmental Improvement Programme**, funding to be earmarked to deliver environmental improvements to the Railway Village in line with the aspirations of the Railway Village community and in accordance with the Railway Village Improvement Plan. Funding to be secured through the Council Housing Department's operational budgets and through Funding Submissions to Housing Corporation.

Applicants for new development in the **Railway Heritage Area** will be expected to demonstrate in their **Design and Access Statement** that the new development has been designed with a full understanding of the area's heritage.

### **Quality Assurance**

There will be full consultation with the Railway Village Community on major initiatives impacting on the Railway Heritage Area.

The Railway Village Action Group will be a key sounding board on initiatives impacting on the Railway Village.



# 10 Central Swindon's Residential Communities

## Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area [Action Plan](#) objectives of:

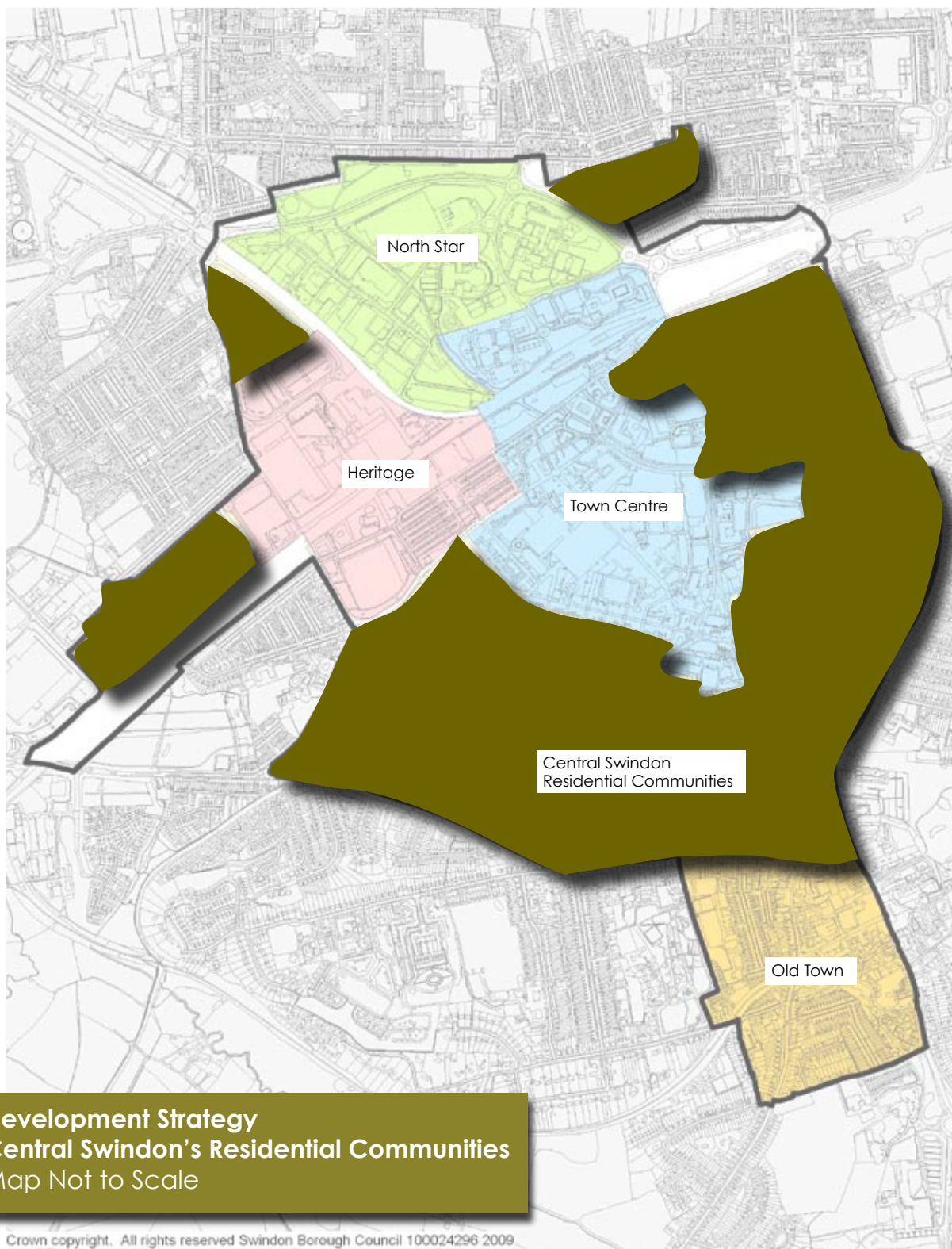
- the co-ordination and delivery of high quality and accessible services and facilities that are needed to support the communities living in or adjacent to Central Swindon; and
- securing the provision of wider opportunities for Central Swindon living

Regeneration of the Town Centre will impact upon Central Swindon's residential communities and add significantly to the area's population with an expected 3,500 additional dwellings being delivered in Central Swindon in the period 2006 to 2026.

Within the [Sustainable Community Strategy - A Shared Vision for Swindon 2008-2030](#), focus is on sustainable communities. Sustainable communities are places in which people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, offering equality of opportunity and good services for all.







**Development Strategy**  
**Central Swindon's Residential Communities**  
Map Not to Scale

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This Section sets a planning framework for delivering improvements to the residential communities in Central Swindon, with particular focus on Broadgreen, within the context of the [Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy](#). This Section also seeks to integrate the new residential developments proposed in Central Swindon with its existing communities.

## Supporting Central Swindon's Residential Communities

Regeneration of Central Swindon should benefit all of Swindon, and in particular it should benefit the households that live in Central Swindon.

[Government Planning Guidance for Housing \(PPS3\)](#) sets an objective 'To create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas'. Key characteristics of a mixed community are a variety of housing, particularly in terms of tenure and price and a mix of different households such as families with children, single person households and older people. Creating a more balanced split in housing mix in Central Swindon will require that a planning framework is put in place that will halt the trend for families to leave the area and that will bring new families into the area to prevent stagnation.

Census data shows that the Central Ward has a substantially smaller proportion of families than would typically be expected in a residential area and that it is home to the second highest proportion of privately rented accommodation in the Borough. A significant proportion of these private rented properties are Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). This high proportion of private rented accommodation is in part a by-product of the exodus of families from Central Swindon.

Families contribute to a balanced community as they have a greater tendency to become involved in community initiatives. They are also more likely to use community facilities such as schools, nurseries and other family orientated services, therefore ensuring their viability and vitality. To retain and attract families to Central Swindon it is therefore vital that the needs of families are addressed to ensure that there is an appropriate provision of facilities and services to meet family needs.

An important consideration for families with children in deciding where they live is the educational provision in an area. Schools within Central Swindon offer improving standards, however a number of schools are reaching or have reached capacity. It is further vital that there is sufficient capacity within health services to meet the needs of the projected increase in Central Swindon's population. GP facilities are currently operating at capacity. The Council is working in partnership with [Swindon Primary Care Trust](#) to help deliver increased capacity.



The new central library and a range of other cultural, leisure, and recreational facilities that will be created as part of the wider regeneration of Central Swindon will assist in making living in the area a more attractive proposition.

Central Swindon has a selection of beautiful parks and gardens such as Queen's Park and Faringdon Park and provides a range of recreational activities at the Oasis Leisure Centre and Health Hydro. In qualitative terms these recreational facilities are of merit, however there is not the breadth of recreational facilities that would be expected at the centre of a town of Swindon's size.

There is an under-provision of open space and recreational facilities in Central Swindon, as noted in the [Swindon Open Space Audit and Assessment](#). An increase in residential population and higher residential building densities proposed in the Town Centre will increase demand on existing recreation resources. The protection of existing open spaces and leisure facilities and the provision of new facilities is therefore needed to ensure that the recreation needs of Central Swindon's residents are met.

To help address the deficiency in open spaces a major new public realm scheme, the Green Spine, is proposed through Central Swindon. The Green Spine, as detailed in the Public Realm Strategy Section, would directly link North Star with the Town Centre and Old Town. Envisaged as a high quality, continuous pedestrian and cycle route, the Green Spine will also provide green links to key open and public spaces and will provide residential communities within Central Swindon with access to key green spaces and recreational facilities.

Major new development in the vicinity of Central Swindon's residential communities will inevitably impact on these communities, whether it be by increasing vehicular movement through the area or by placing an additional burden on existing infrastructure. Such development will be required to contribute toward improvements to the effected communities. The level of contributions that will be sought will be dependent on the scale of the development proposed and the impact that the development will have on the area.



The bulk of the additional 3,500 dwellings being built or which are proposed for Central Swindon will be accommodated within Swindon Town Centre, and in the majority of cases will be in the form of developments above commercial outlets. There is a danger that these dwellings could become focused on, and subsequently occupied by, a narrow section of the community.

The Council is committed to delivering the Government's objective of creating a sustainable, inclusive, mixed community in Central Swindon and to this end would seek that new residential developments maximise the opportunity to create a variety of household sizes, and where practicable a mix of dwelling types. In line with the recommendations of the [Swindon Sub-Region Housing Market Assessment](#), the Council will seek to ensure that provision is made within new residential development for families with children, students, older and disabled people in particular.



As required by the Council's affordable housing policy, where 15 or more dwellings are proposed, 30% of the dwellings should be 'affordable' (as defined in the Council's Affordable Housing policies).

The [Swindon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) identifies the residential area south of the Town Centre as a location liable to Sewer Flooding (as shown on the [Sewer Flooding Map](#) in the Implementation Plan). Thames Water will be consulted on all planning applications in this area. Applicants are therefore advised to consult Thames Water prior to submitting a planning application.

## Empowering Local Communities

Local communities know best what improvements are needed to enhance their area. The Council is keen to empower communities to make key decisions on the nature and extent of improvements to their area.

Local communities groups are encouraged to prepare community or neighbourhood plans to establish, prioritise and help deliver the improvements needed in their area. Where the community or neighbourhood plans are founded on full local consultation and engagement and where they do not conflict with the planning framework within this [Action Plan](#), these Plans will be accorded weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the affected area. These plans will also inform wider Council and public sector initiatives in the affected area.

## The Neighbourhood Renewal Agenda

The need to secure improvements to the residential areas adjoining the Town Centre needs to be considered in the context that some of the neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the Town Centre are amongst the most deprived in Swindon. Much of Swindon's Central Ward has been identified in the [Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy](#) for Swindon as an area of priority.

The purpose of the [Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy](#) for Swindon is to address inequality of life opportunities in Swindon within a framework of positive action. Particular focus is given to the role of public services in reviewing their services to enable these areas to be supported and to have opportunities and standards that are equal with those experienced by most other areas across the town.

## Broadgreen

The Broad Street Community Council and the Police have identified four top issues of concern in the area:

- Prostitution
- Drugs
- Speeding Vehicles
- Houses in Multiple Occupancy

Concerted Police, Street Watch and community efforts have been successful in delivering a reduction in the level of prostitution and drug use/dealing in the area, however problems continue to exist. Whilst there is no easy solution to these problems, the continuing perseverance of the Police and the Broadgreen community, complemented by wider environmental improvements, will provide a potent combination that can overcome these problems.

In relation to speeding, 20mph zones have been introduced along a number of the side roads in Broadgreen as part of the 'Streets for Living' project. In addition, the Police rigorously monitor the area for speeding vehicles.

The growth in the number of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in Broadgreen is a major concern, in particular as a consequence of the further pressure they place on the already stretched residents parking areas. The emerging Swindon Houses in Multiple Occupancy Strategy contains an **action plan** to address a number of wider issues associated with HMOs.

The **Streets for Living Project** worked to enhance the street environment and public realm in the centre of Broadgreen thus providing a catalyst for other improvements. The Project sought to improve community cohesion in Broadgreen through innovative design that has transformed sections of the streets into valued and welcoming public places, designed to draw users out into a shared communal space. Greater use of the streets and alleyways will lead to an increase in natural surveillance and should act as a deterrent to crime. By encouraging more people to use the streets on foot or cycle, traffic congestion and noise pollution will be reduced and air quality improved.

### **A Diversity of Cultures and the Opportunity to Promote and Deliver Community Cohesion**

The issues facing the Broadgreen community cannot be considered without reference to the ethnic diversity of the community. Broad Street already exhibits a real sense of community and cohesion, however building greater community cohesion should be a key goal and the specific needs of all communities in Broadgreen will need to be addressed.

In recent years there has been an increase in businesses selling a wide range of ethnic products in the area. These outlets provide a niche retail offer that is not present anywhere else in the Borough and have contributed significantly to the viability and vibrancy of the area.

This trend will be supported, albeit with the creation of new retail outlets being confined to a designated area in Manchester Road (as shown on the **Proposals Map**), to create a vibrant shopping location that complements the retail offer in the nearby Town Centre. However, it is essential that this extended retail offer does not detrimentally impact on existing residents. All planning permissions for new Class 'A' retail outlets will be subject to conditions restricting opening hours and delivery times.

### Union Square

The eastern boundary of **Union Square** presents a particular challenge and opportunity to Broadgreen. Corporation Street and the western end of Manchester Road form a hard edge between the large-scale commercial uses proposed at Union Square and the terraced streets of Broadgreen.

The Master Plan for **Union Square** identifies a residential transition zone that recognizes the relationship between the different character areas and uses, and which reconnects links severed by Corporation Street. The aim for this transition zone is to create a quality 'urban edge' on either side of Corporation Street with strong building lines and positive facades to the street. It will be important to ensure that the part of **Union Square** fronting onto Corporation Street does not have an overbearing impact on Broadgreen.

The Community Centre in Broadgreen is the most well-used centre of its kind in the Borough and is an essential part of community life, used by a diverse range of people and organisations. The Centre however occupies an unattractive and run-down collection of buildings, which are reaching the end of their operational life. With at least 450 new homes proposed at **Union Square** there is an ideal opportunity to redevelop the Community Centre for both residents of Broadgreen and the new residents at **Union Square**, and thus provide opportunities for community cohesion. The **Union Square** development will be expected to assist in delivering a new Community Centre for Broadgreen.

### Traffic Affects on Central Swindon's Residential Communities

Whilst the regeneration of the Town Centre will have beneficial affects on the neighbourhoods on its fringes, it will bring with it unwanted impacts, most notably from the increased vehicular traffic activity that will inevitably be generated.

Vehicular movement through the Crombey Street and Groundwell Road areas is a problem and any street scene improvement measures, whilst focusing on delivering environmental improvements to these areas, will also need to address the need to minimise the impact of vehicular movements through the areas.

Changes to the road system as a result of regeneration or the proposed reinstatement of the Canal should not compromise the residential amenity of the Central Swindon's residential communities.

The pressure on on-street parking in some neighbourhoods in Central Swindon has reached an acute state, with the number of parking permits granted significantly outnumbering the number of spaces available. The Council is therefore pursuing a 'Permit Free' approach to reducing the demand for on-street parking in Central Swindon, whereby occupiers of new residential developments in Central Swindon's residential parking zones will not be entitled to parking permits. This will be enforced by way of a Section 106 Agreement on new residential planning consents in the residential parking zones.



## Policy CAAP19

### Central Swindon's Residential Communities

In pursuit of creating a balanced community, major new residential development throughout Central Swindon should deliver a mix of dwelling sizes, and where practicable a mix of dwelling types. Where 15 or more dwellings are proposed at least 30% of the dwellings should be affordable.

The provision of educational, health and community facilities will be actively supported within Central Swindon.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a loss of open space or recreational facilities be approved and any such loss should be more than compensated for by the provision of replacement open space or recreational facilities at an accessible location in the vicinity to an improved standard.

Development proposals that directly impact on Central Swindon's residential communities will be required to contribute towards improvements in these areas. The level of contributions that will be sought will be dependent on the scale of the development proposed and the impact that the scheme will have on the area.

### Broadgreen

The creation of new Class 'A' retail outlets in Broadgreen will be confined to the Manchester Road 'Local Centre' as defined on the [Proposals Map](#).

New Class A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) and Class A3 (Cafes) within the Manchester Road Local Centre will only be allowed within outlets that are not adjacent to residential dwellings and where there will be no adverse impact on residential dwellings in the vicinity.

### Traffic and Movement

Changes to the road system as a result of regeneration of the Town Centre or the proposed reinstatement of the Canal should not compromise the residential amenity of Central Swindon's residential communities.

In the residential parking zones under most pressure from a lack of on-street parking spaces, applicants for new residential development will be required to enter into a Section 106 Agreement that removes occupants' entitlement to an on-street parking permit.

## **Delivering Improvements to Central Swindon's Residential Communities**

### **Key Players**

- Swindon Borough Council – Key role in facilitating the delivery of public realm improvements / as Education Authority has a duty to meet the education needs of the community
- Broadgreen Community Council and other local community Groups/ local traders/ residents - key role in prioritizing improvement measures and scrutinising schemes to ensure quality of delivery
- The Police – Key advisory role in delivering community safety improvements
- Swindon PCT

### **Land Ownership Issues**

Improvements will be primarily focused on highways, footpaths and other areas of public realm, which are within the ownership and control of the Council.

### **Priority**

ongoing.

### **Infrastructure Requirements**

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance Note, the Council will expect development within or near Swindon's residential communities to help deliver, either as a part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- New Community Centre for Broadgreen
- Public Realm improvements that extend the Streets for Living Project to incorporate the wider Broadgreen area
- Community Safety measures, including enhanced street lighting in Broadgreen
- Transport Infrastructure as detailed in the Transport and Movement Section, including traffic calming measures where needed
- Additional primary school capacity
- Additional GP surgery capacity
- Sewer Infrastructure improvements in the residential areas to the south of the Town Centre

### **Delivery Mechanism**

There will be a ring fencing of developer contributions secured in Central Swindon to deliver improvements to the communities of Central Swindon. S106 advice will be provided to local community groups through the Council's Community Planning Officer - funding will be earmarked for projects identified by the local community where they are fairly and reasonably related to the development proposal in question.

The Council will invite tenders for the preparation of a public realm improvement scheme that extends the 'Streets for Living' project to incorporate the wider Broadgreen area and will secure funding through S106 contributions and other funding sources to implement the scheme.

### **Quality Assurance**

There will be targeted local consultation throughout the preparation of environmental improvement schemes.

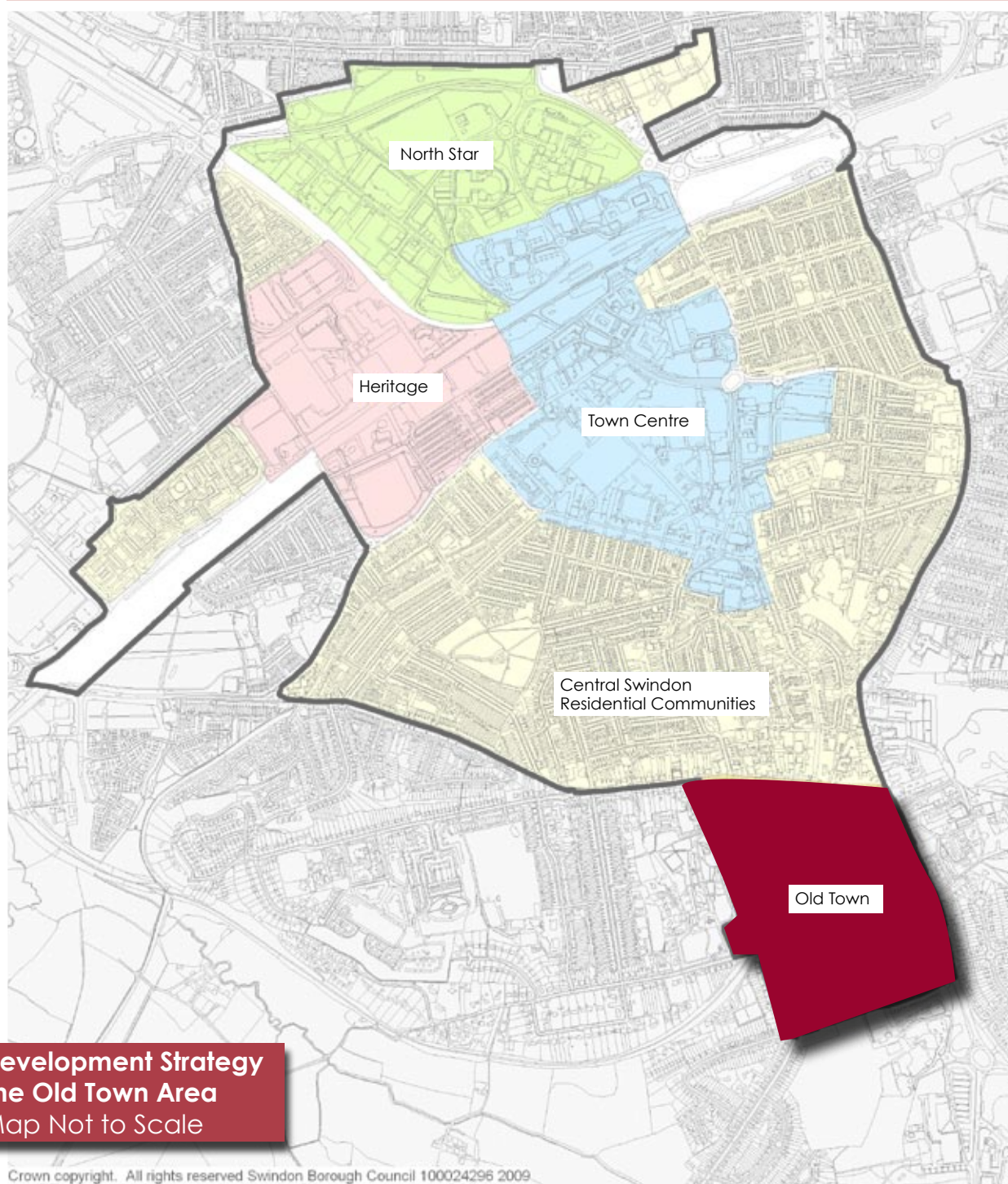
Local communities will be encouraged to prepare Community or Neighbourhood Plans to inform the nature and extent of improvements to their area.

# 11 The Old Town Area

## Context

This Section helps deliver the Central Area **Action Plan** objectives of:

- securing the creation of safe, convenient, user-friendly and attractive routes into, out of and through Central Swindon, to help develop a vibrant and active community; and
- securing the enhancement of existing areas of public spaces and delivery of new public spaces.





## Old Town

Old Town has a distinct personality within Swindon and is characterised by a mix of land uses and a concentration of old buildings of historical and architectural interest. Much of Old Town has Conservation Area status.

The area offers specialist shopping and office uses throughout the day, and several bars, nightclubs and restaurants, which provide a different atmosphere at night. The area also has a large number of public houses and hotels and is home to the Arts Centre.

A comprehensive development of part of the area enclosed within Wood Street, Devizes Road, Newport Street and High Street has recently been completed, which has contributed to the vitality of Old Town.

Old Town is home to a range of independent traders and maintains a niche retail role within the Borough. The Council will support the niche-shopping role of Old Town by protecting and enhancing the historic fabric and pleasant atmosphere that makes this specialist role viable. With its varied and interesting built form, Old Town has considerable potential to attract shoppers from both the local residential catchment and from the wider town to its unique shopping experience within the Borough.

Old Town is generally regarded favourably in urban design terms due to its collection of high quality older buildings. Its historic character merits conservation and enhancement and all new development must respect the existing built environment.

The Council will seek to implement public realm improvements in Old Town which respect and improve its historic fabric, increase legibility, improve linkages to wider Central Swindon and increase recreational potential. It is proposed to greatly improve the pedestrian environment, which, subject to detailed design considerations, could include the introduction of 'spill out areas' for pavement cafes, bars and shops. Further public realm improvements are detailed in the Public Realm Section.

Development proposals within or near the Old Town Retail Area will be required to contribute towards public realm and wider environmental improvements to the area in line with the Conservation Area Appraisals and the Old Town public realm scheme. The [Swindon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) identifies Old Town as a location liable to Sewer Flooding (as shown on the [Sewer Flooding Map](#) in the Implementation Plan). Thames Water will be consulted on all planning applications in this area. Applicants are therefore advised to consult [Thames Water](#) prior to submitting a planning application.



## Victoria Road

Victoria Road is a key route linking Old Town with the Town Centre and is home to a diverse range of uses including residential, guest houses, professional services, bars, restaurants, takeaways and offices.

The experience for pedestrians using the road is poor. In addition to having to negotiate a steep hill on the route up to Old Town, pedestrians must contend with a mediocre public realm and a busy road. The road is particularly busy in peak periods as a consequence of its role as both a main vehicular access route into the Town Centre and as part of a main vehicular route travelling north-south through Swindon.

The regeneration of Central Swindon, and in particular the proposals for **The Promenade** and Regents Circus area, will draw a larger number of people to the south eastern end of the Town Centre than at present. The northern end of Victoria Road will form one of the four primary gateways into the Town Centre at the junction of Victoria Road and Groundwell Road. At the southern end of road where it meets Bath Road, an opportunity exists to deliver a public realm feature alongside wider public realm improvements in the Wood Street area.

The increased importance of Victoria Road will need to be translated into improvements to this route. It is important that the street scene in Victoria Road is substantially improved to make the journey between the Town Centre and Old Town a pleasant experience for all.

Within Victoria Road the Council will encourage properties to offer an active frontage onto the road, which will increase connectivity between the Town Centre and Old Town to their mutual benefit. Facilitating the provision of new Class 'A' uses along Victoria Road will have the added benefit of providing new opportunities for independent traders to flourish in Central Swindon.

Victoria Road also forms part of the proposed **Green Spine** through Central Swindon, which will provide a north-south link through the town. Envisaged as a high quality route with much improved public realm, it will provide a continuous pedestrian and cycle route. The **Green Spine** will also provide green links to key green spaces and recreational facilities in the wider area, such as Old Town Gardens and the Lawns.



## Policy CAAP20

### Old Town and Victoria Road

Proposals for non-Class A1 (shop) uses in the Old Town Retail Area, as defined on the [Proposals Map](#), will only be permitted where the relevant street frontage is occupied at ground floor level by at least 70% Class A1 (shops) uses and where the proposal would not result in less than 70% of the relevant occupied ground floor street frontage being in Class A1 use.

Development proposals within or near the Old Town Retail Core will be required to contribute towards public realm and wider environmental improvements to the area in line with the Conservation Area Appraisals and the public realm scheme for the area. The level of contributions that will be sought will be dependent on the scale of the development proposed and the impact that the scheme will have on the Old Town Retail Core.

### The Section of Victoria Road outside of the Old Retail Area

The change of use of the properties fronting onto Victoria Road to uses that offer an active frontage onto Victoria Road will be supported provided that the change of use does not harm the character and appearance of the property.

Uses that will generally be supported will include Class A1 (Shops), Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services), Class A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), Class D1 (Non Residential Institutions) and Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure).

## Delivering Improvements to Old Town and Victoria Road

### Key Players

- Swindon Borough Council – key role in facilitating the delivery of public realm improvements
- Local Community Groups/ local traders/residents – key role in scrutinising schemes to ensure quality of delivery

### Land Ownership Issues

Improvements will be focused on highways, footpaths and other areas of public realm, which are within the ownership and control of SBC.

### Priority

Completion of public realm improvements and the stretch of the Green Spine along Victoria Road by 2011.

### Infrastructure Requirements

In addition to the contributions required by the Council's Developer Contributions Guidance Note, the Council will expect development to help deliver, either as part of the scheme or by way of developer contributions, the following infrastructure:

- Public Realm improvements as detailed in the Public Realm Section and the Old Town Public Realm Scheme.
- Additional GP Surgery Capacity
- Utility Infrastructure Improvements

### Delivery Mechanism

There will be a ring fencing of developer contributions secured in Central Swindon to deliver improvements to the communities of Central Swindon.

### Old Town Public Realm Improvements

A Public Realm Scheme is in place to guide public realm improvements in Old Town.

### Quality Assurance

There will be consultation with local community/residents groups and Old Town businesses on all major initiatives affecting the area.



# Glossary of Terms

This glossary has been included in the **Area Action Plan** to assist readers in understanding the text, particularly where technical or unfamiliar terms are used. It also includes words associated with the planning system that may assist readers who come into contact with it. It does not, and does not intend to, provide a definitive or legalistic description of such terms.

**Active Frontage** - Refers to a façade of a building that the public can engage in, for example a display area of a shop.

**Area Action Plan (AAP)** - A detailed policy document specific to a particular area. The AAP contains a level of policy detail that would not be appropriate for inclusion in a Local Plan or Core Strategy. It may include information on acceptable development in an area, and the extent and form it may take.

**Biodiversity** - The term used to describe the richness of the living environment around us. It is the variety of life in all its forms. Including richness of species, complexity of ecosystems and genetic variation.

**Central Swindon** - Refers to the area to which this **Action Plan** relates.

**Central Area** - Refers to **The New Swindon Company's** operational boundary. **The New Swindon Company** is Swindon Borough's Council's regeneration partner and has the role of co-ordinating development to achieve the regeneration of the Central Area.

**Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)** - A provision within the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, which allows a local planning authority to compulsorily purchase land for planning purposes. The local planning authority would seek to compulsorily purchase land, which is suitable and required in order to secure the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement; or which is required to achieve for the proper planning of an area in which the land is located.

**Conservation Area** - An area which the local planning authority has designated as being of special architectural or historic interest, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance. In conservation areas, there is special control over certain works to buildings and trees.

**Development** - Defined in section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 as, 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land'.

**Land Assembly** - The bringing together of parcels of land under a common or like-minded ownership in order that it may be more easily developed as a whole.

**Landmark** - Points of reference that assist people in orientating themselves to an area".

**Legibility** - A term used in urban design, particularly relating to large mixed or housing development, measuring the extent to which such a development can be negotiated or understood by its users and visitors.

**Listed Building** - A building that the Government has identified as being of special architectural or historic interest. Altering a Listed Building without having been granted Listed Building Consent for the alteration is a criminal offence.

**Master Plan** - A master plan sets out proposals for buildings, spaces, movement strategy and land use with consideration for long-term impacts.

**Node** - focal places such as junctions of paths, examples include roundabouts and market squares.

**Primary Frontage** - The part of the Town Centre that contains a high proportion of retail uses, including the major national retailers.

**Relevant Occupied Ground Floor Frontage** - The length between breaks in the built street frontage that the proposal lines within. Breaks in the frontage relate to breaks in the building line. For the purposes of measurement, when assessing what percentage of a frontage is within a particular use, the length is determined as a percentage of units that exist in the frontage. For example if the frontage contains 10 units and 5 of the units are in Class A1 use, that would constitute 50% of the frontage. Where a retail outlet occupies a double frontage (i.e. where it consists of 2 address points), the retail outlet would constitute 2 units. Where a unit in the frontage is vacant, the last permitted use of that unit is used for the purposes of measurement.

**Secondary Frontage** – The part of the Town Centre that provides opportunities for cafes, professional services and independent retailers to flourish.

The South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)  
SWRDA is a Government body established in 1999 with the role of ensuring the long-term economic success of the south-west region.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Policy guidance additional to the policies and proposals of a LDD. Replacing SPG, SPD's comprises supplementary material, such as design guides or planning briefs, which set out planning requirements or advice at a greater level of detail than would be appropriate to a LDD.

**The New Swindon Company** - An Urban Regeneration Company with the role of coordinating development to achieve the regeneration of Swindon's Central Area

**Town Centre** - Refers to the commercial centre of the town. Government Planning Guidance requires that all major retail, leisure and office development is focused in the Town Centre in the first instance

**Urban Regeneration Company** - Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs) are promoted by Government and established by local partners, in order to achieve a focused, integrated regeneration strategy for key towns and cities