

shaping the heart of **Stroud**



Stroud Town Centre

Neighbourhood Development Plan

2015–2035

(Adopted October 2016)

*'Stroud Town centre is a
welcoming, healthy, thriving place'*





Bank House, now occupied by Lansdown Clinic, at the intersection of Lansdown and High Street.



'Tour of Britain' passing through Stroud.

Foreword by Mayor of Stroud

Over the years Stroud has seen numerous blueprints and plans for the future of the town centre, but sadly most of these have failed to deliver. The *Localism Act 2013* provided us with the opportunity to bring together this work and create a co-ordinated, statutory plan. Harnessing the energy of the people of Stroud, *Shaping the Heart of Stroud* is that plan. Its legal status will give the Town Council the power to influence and guide future change to allow Stroud town centre to realise its potential. It must not be allowed to gather dust on a shelf, we must seize the opportunity it presents to shape the heart of Stroud for the foreseeable future.

The Plan emerged from extensive public consultation; it was prepared by an independently chaired steering group of volunteers representing a range of interests in the town centre. The steering group set up thematic groups involving other volunteers who helped with identifying issues and developing ideas for the Plan.

The Town Council wishes to thank all of those involved in the preparation of the Plan and I would like to specifically thank my fellow members of the steering group and thematic groups. Particular thanks are due to Leonora Rozee and Hugh Barton who tirelessly lead the steering group to produce this excellent Plan.

Steering Group

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Overview of the plan

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Stroud town centre has been prepared by a volunteer team on behalf of Stroud Town Council (STC). The process of preparing the Plan has involved extensive public consultation, involving in the region of 2,500 people. Discussions with official bodies and interested parties have helped shape the policies and proposals.

The Plan looks 20 years ahead to 2035. It recognises that the town centre is changing and will change further. The key issues facing the town centre, highlighted by public participation, include concerns about the long term viability of the shopping centre, about the quality of the town centre environment, about poor and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, difficulties in finding parking space, and the lack of green spaces.

People see the town centre performing vital social and cultural roles as well as being the biggest retail and business centre in the district. The restoration of the canal and the doubling of the railway line to Swindon, give opportunities for improvement. Current vacant and underused sites offer potential for new business and housing.

The Plan operates in the context of government policy and *Stroud District Local Plan*. The vision is realised through policies, promotions and projects:

- Policies for new development across the Plan area.
- Policies for the development of specific sites.
- Promotions by STC, trying to influence other organisations.
- Projects planned by STC in collaboration with others.

The summary of the Plan given here draws on all these elements. It is important to recognise that achieving the policies and proposals relies on investment in the town centre by private, public and voluntary agencies. Many of the specific proposals will only happen through partnerships and co-operation. Part of the purpose of the Plan is to give the sense of direction and momentum which will build confidence and commitment. ■

The vision for the town centre: 'Welcoming, healthy and thriving'

Making the town centre more welcoming!

- Improving the appearance of the 'gateways' to the town centre, where people gain their first impressions of the character of the place – all the main roads into town, plus the station forecourt.
- Progressively upgrading the quality of streets and spaces in the town centre to improve pedestrian experience and safety and enhance the setting of the historic buildings. The most significant proposal is for the Subscription Rooms square and Four Clocks area.
- Transforming the convenience, safety and attractiveness of access to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists, including:
 - A new bridge across the railway, linking Cheapside to the shopping centre and providing access for all users, pedestrians, wheelchair users, cyclists.
 - A new connection from the London Road car park avoiding the narrow main road pavement.
 - New links from the Brunel Goods Shed to the town centre.
 - A protected direct route from Cainscross Road.
 - A new route, 'Stratford Parkway', across Beeches Green, linking town centre with Leisure Centre, Museum, College and Tesco.
 - Reviewing the location of the bus station.
- Creating an attractive canal frontage accessible to the town centre at Cheapside, and a welcoming canal basin with essential facilities at Lower Wallbridge for boaters visiting the town.
- Promoting better directions to car parks, user-friendly parking tariffs, and real-time information about car park spaces and also bus services. ■

Making the town centre healthier!

- Encouraging greater physical activity in order to promote physical health and mental wellbeing for all, including disabled people, and reduce car reliance – through the progressive improvements to the pedestrian and cycling environment.
- Reducing the exposure of pedestrians and cyclists to damaging air pollution and danger along Merrywalks, by creating a new parallel route back from the road and improved/new crossing arrangements, for example, at the bottom of The Hill.
- Greening the town centre and environs, through:
 - Safeguarding Frome Banks, Chapel's Mill area, Bank Gardens, St. Laurence churchyard and Wallbridge open space for public enjoyment during the lifetime of the Plan.
 - Preserving other important tree belts from development.
 - Encouraging living green walls and biodiversity throughout the centre.
- Providing opportunities for more housing, for a variety of households, in close proximity to the town centre, thus making the town centre more lively. Town centre housing with good accessibility by foot, offers a potential alternative to greenfield development with high reliance on car use. Sites include Cheapside waterfront, where 35 dwellings are already planned. ■

Making a thriving town centre!

- Planning Stroud as a distinctive 'canal market town', and capitalising on the potential improvement in rail services, to attract more businesses, visitors and local customers.
- Making the town centre more welcoming to visitors by car, bus and train, enhancing the pedestrian experience within the town centre, and improving pedestrian routes into the town centre.
- Increasing the number of people living within easy walking distance of the town centre, likely to support local shops and services.
- Encouraging investment in good quality retail, service, office and social facilities – for example:
 - The 'Market Tavern' site in Cornhill.
 - The railway arches/former bowling alley site in Merrywalks.
 - The Fromeside Industrial Estate. ■





High Street, Stroud.



'Four Clocks' near the Subscription Rooms.



St Laurence Church and Bank Gardens: peaceful havens in the centre of the town.

A: Scope and purpose

1.1 Formalities

- 1.1.1 Stroud Town Council received approval from the local planning authority, Stroud District Council, to prepare a *Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)*. A *Neighbourhood Area* was designated on 18th July 2014 for this purpose, covering the town centre as defined on Map 1. The Plan covers the period 2015–2035.

**Refer to Map 1 (pages 12–13)
Designated Neighbourhood
Development Plan Area**

Purpose

- 1.1.2 This Plan together with *Stroud District Local Plan* will form the statutory development plan for Stroud town centre. Planning applications have to be decided in line with the development plan unless there is a very good reason not to do so. This means that the policies in this NDP will apply to any planning applications for development in the town centre. The Plan will also be used by the Town Council to guide and influence change within the town centre. The Plan is consistent with, and adds to, the policies in the Local Plan and should be read with it. The relevant policies in the Local Plan are cross referenced in this Plan. As a formal statutory plan it is complex and may not be easily fully understood for those not experienced in planning matters. The overview at the beginning of this document explains what are the key aims and the measures in the Plan which will help to meet these aims.

Consultation

- 1.1.3 The production of the NDP was supported by significant and extensive local consultation. Three major public consultation events were held in September 2014 (identifying issues), November 2014 (considering the vision and objectives) and March 2015 (considering options). Other consultation activities included seminars with different interest groups and one-to-one meetings with individual interests directly affected by proposals in the Plan. The Consultation Statement, which supports the NDP, provides a comprehensive summary of who was consulted and how, along with evidence of how comments were considered and taken into account in the making of the Plan.

Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment

- 1.1.4 A *Sustainability Appraisal* has been independently prepared. The NDP will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by ensuring that its development policies and proposals will meet the needs of people living and working in the town centre, while at the same time helping to ensure that any adverse environmental impact is minimised. Consideration of the sustainability objectives of the Plan has enabled alternative options for the policies to be compared and evaluated. Stroud District Council issued a screening opinion statement of reason on 2nd November 2015 which concluded as follows: 'Following analysis of likely significant effects, Stroud District Council considered that the NDP was unlikely to have any significant effects on the environment, and therefore determines that *Strategic Environmental Assessment* of the Stroud Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan is not required.'

A: Scope and purpose continued

1.2 Why Stroud town centre needs a neighbourhood plan

Location and characteristics

- 1.2.1 Stroud town centre forms the heart of the town of Stroud which lies at the convergence of five valleys.

Refer to Map 1 (pages 12–13) which compares the Plan area to Stroud Town Parish

It is an historic former industrial centre, located on the A46, about five miles from Junction 13 of the M5. It has a railway station providing direct services to London Paddington. It also has the contiguous Stroudwater Navigation and Thames & Severn Canal (collectively known as the Cotswold Canals) which linked the rivers Severn and Thames. Considerable investment has been made in upgrading the railway and restoring the canal. The retail core is characterised by a large number of independent traders as well as national chains and it has a highly successful, nationally recognised Farmers' Market. There is a lively social and cultural life within the town centre.

Characteristics of town centre and its environs:

- Historic centre with around 95 listed buildings.
- Wide range of small retail and commercial businesses.
- Pioneer of the Farmers' Market initiative.
- Diverse range of social, cultural, leisure and sporting festivals and activities.
- Unique location embraced by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Location of head office of leading renewable energy company, Ecotricity.

- Valuable community/social assets in the Subscriptions Rooms, Lansdown Hall and Gallery, Library, Old Town Hall, St Laurence Church, Stratford Park, the Museum in the Park and Stratford Leisure Centre, Stroud Valleys Artspace and Brunel Goods Shed.
- Excellent primary, secondary and tertiary education, including South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.
- An active charitable and volunteering community.

The town centre was described by one of our consultees as 'the place where craft and tradition meet innovation'.

- 1.2.2 The Cotswold Canals would, if fully restored, provide a critical missing link in the national inland waterways network. At least £20 million has been invested to date with finance being provided by, among others, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and the Cotswold Canals Trust. A further £20 million is being sought to provide a link with the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. More detail about the restoration proposals is set out in Appendix 2 (page 92).

- 1.2.3 Stroud District Local Plan notes that 'as the District's principal commercial centre it underperforms' and the centre 'faces fierce competition from Cheltenham, Gloucester, Cirencester, Bristol and Swindon'.¹

Planning initiatives

- 1.2.4 Stroud has a history of community action to bring about change and a number of initiatives have been implemented in the past 20 years.

- 1.2.5 The 1996 *Community Planning Conference* led to many improvements in the town centre, particularly in relation to the public realm.

- 1.2.6 The *Public Realm Strategy* (PRS), commissioned by Stroud Concordat, was adopted in January 2009 by both the town and district councils. It 'seeks to improve the key streets and spaces in Stroud town centre to attract more visitors and better serve the local community'.²

- 1.2.7 Following their visit in 2011 *The Academy of Urbanism* noted that the PRS 'is not adopted as statutory planning policy, or as supplementary guidance, and there seems not to be the necessary commitment to implementing its recommendations by the district council, or by the county council as local highway authority'.³ That same report noted the 'unusual level of activism and creativity among its population and the energy this generates for local activity' but concluded that 'this could still be more efficiently directed and used with a better prioritisation and co-ordination of projects and issues'.⁴

- 1.2.8 The *Cheapside Neighbourhood Opportunities Report*, produced at the request of the Town Council, looked at land adjacent to Cheapside, Wallbridge, the canal embankment, Cheapside car

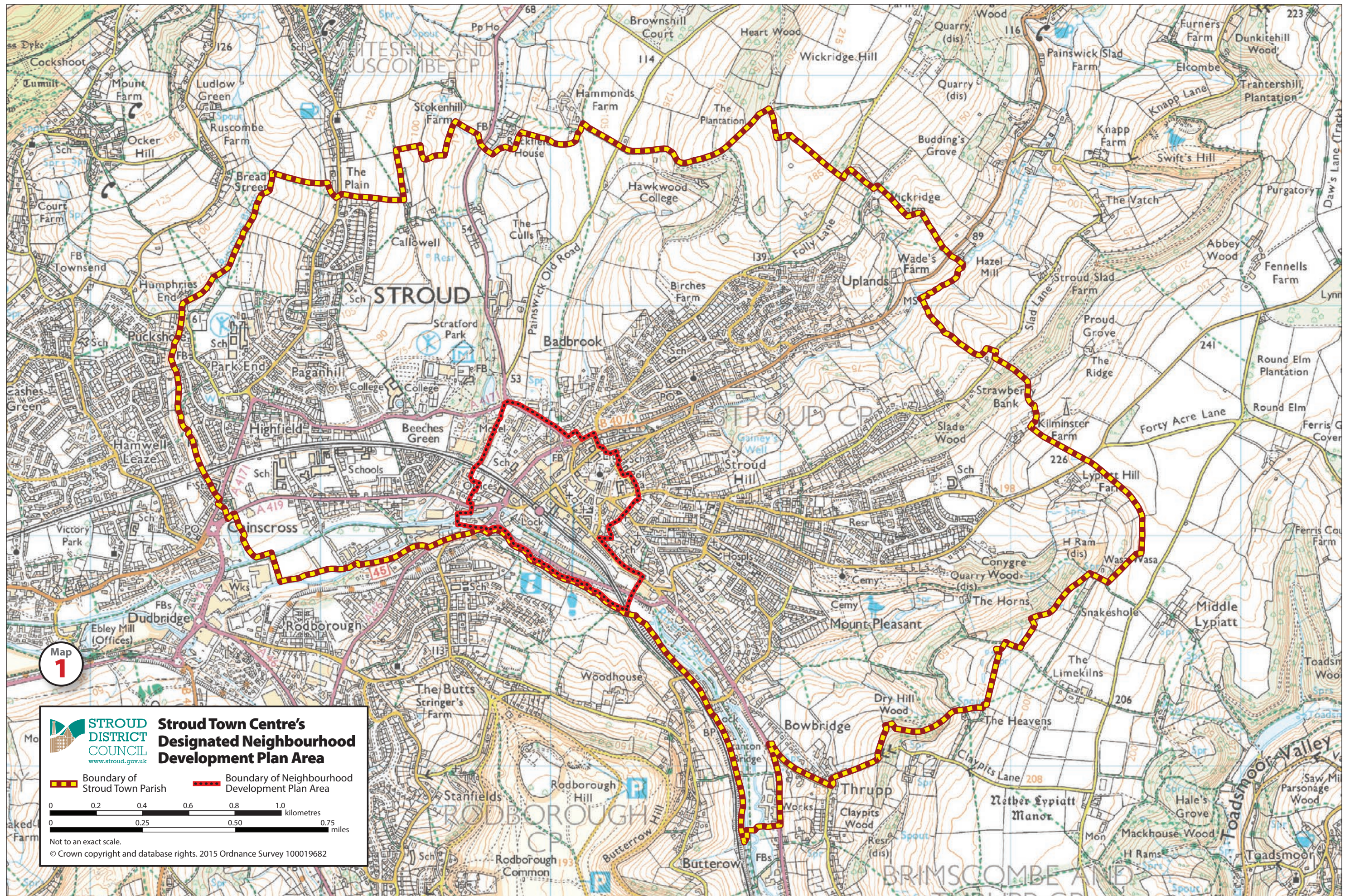
park, the station areas, the car parks around the Brunel Goods Shed, Brunel Mall multi-storey car park and the Fromeside Industrial Estate, all in the context of the opportunity presented by the progressive restoration of the canal. The report concluded that 'The Cheapside neighbourhood, linking canal, railway and town centre, is critical to the future prosperity of Stroud'.⁵ If the potential of the Cheapside neighbourhood is to be realised, both Councils will need to take a pro-active stance: promoting, co-ordinating, assisting land assembly and seeking high quality design.

Shaping the heart of Stroud

- 1.2.9 The non-statutory Cheapside report led the Town Council to consider how it and the people in Stroud might have more influence in shaping the future development and regeneration of the town centre, where there is a lot of unused and underused land in both public and private ownership. This Plan, which has a statutory basis and therefore carries considerable weight within the planning system, was prepared as a result.

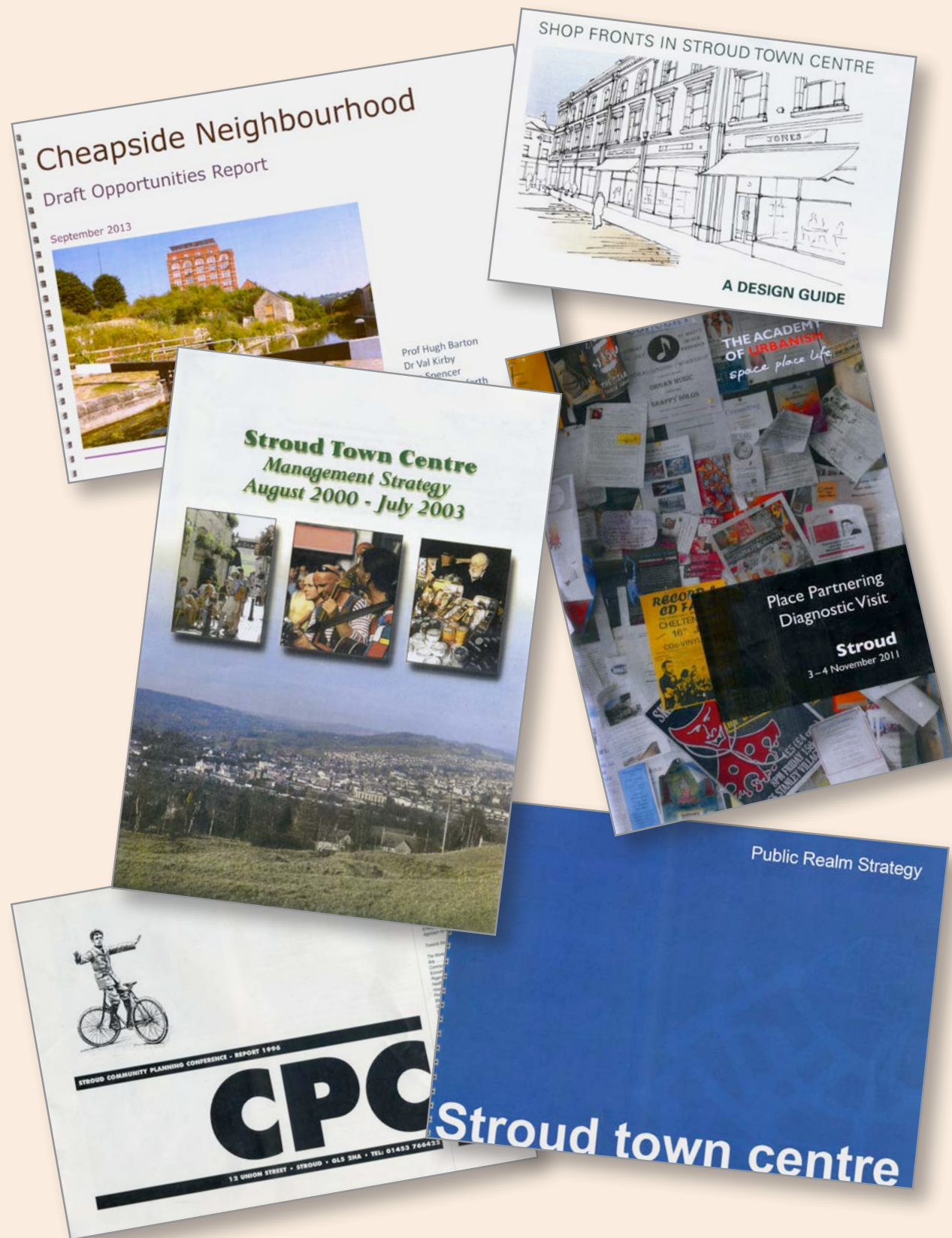
The Shambles and Stroud's medieval Old Town Hall.





A: Scope and purpose continued

Some previous reports and publications on strategies for development of the town centre.



1.3 An overview of the town centre

1.3.1 The designated Neighbourhood Development Plan area for Stroud Town Centre was defined against the following criteria:

- Town centre uses and activities.
- Important pedestrian connections.
- Potential areas of change.

The area includes a wide mix of uses as shown on Map 2. In the region of 68% of the properties in the area are in retail or commercial use with the remaining being in other uses including residential, cultural, educational and service use.

**Refer to Map 2 (pages 16–17)
Current land use around Stroud's NDP area**

Key facts

See Appendix 2 (page 92) for greater detail.

People and homes

1.3.2 There are comparatively few people living in the designated area (in the region of 500), but about two-thirds are male and a third are below 30 years of age. Only a small proportion of households (11%) have children. Unemployment is relatively high (9%) compared to the town as a whole (4%) and nearly half of households do not have a car although over a third travel to work by car. The accommodation in the town centre is mainly flats (78%), privately rented (56%), and predominantly one-bed (52%) and two-bed (21.5%).

Shops, business and jobs

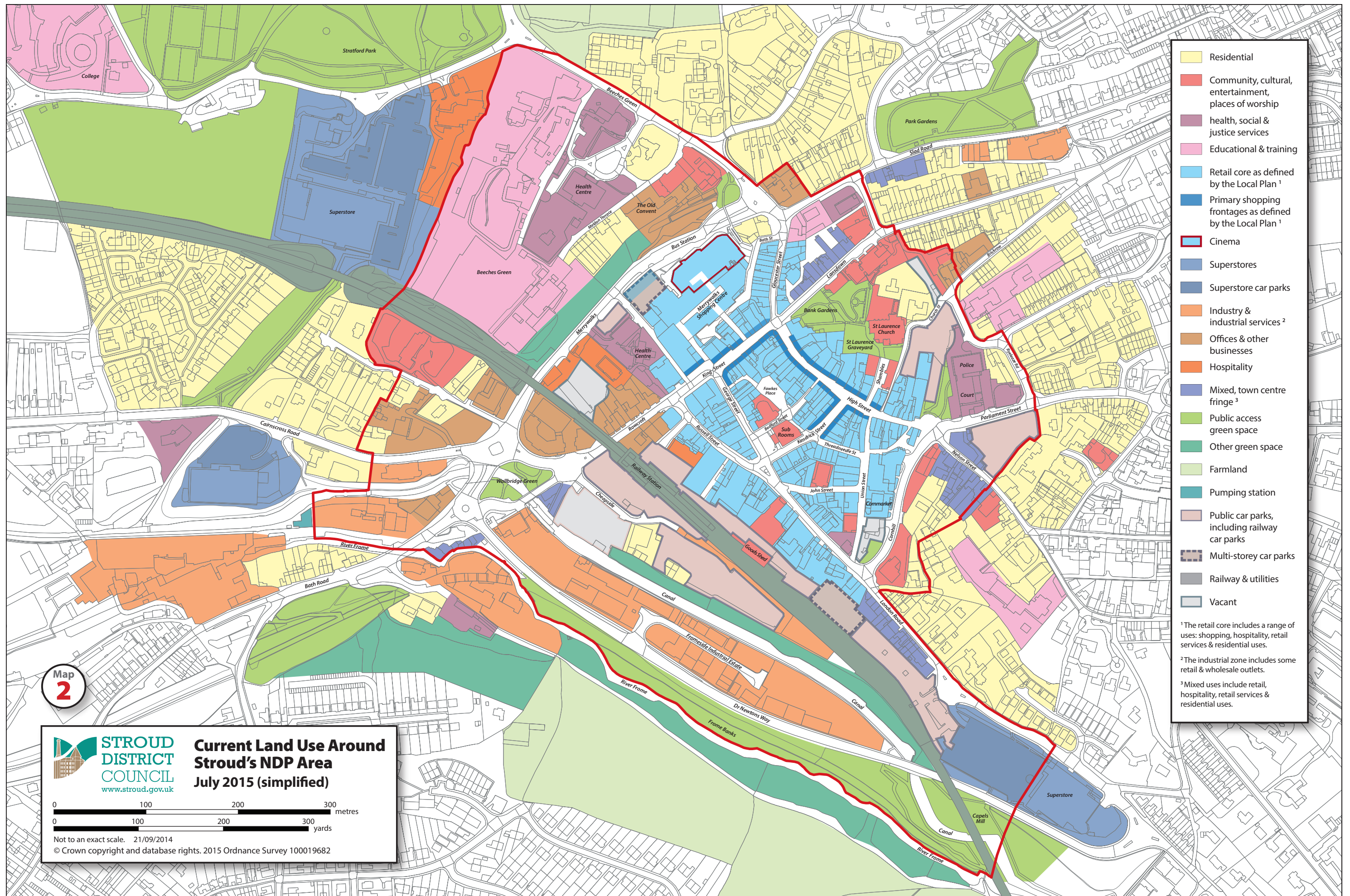
1.3.3 The shopping area of the town, as defined in the Local Plan, is shown on Map 2. In this area there are 234 units occupied by shops and services such as cafés/coffee shops, banks, building societies and estate agents. The vacancy rate in the town centre has been relatively stable for some years at around 10%.

1.3.4 Ecotricity is an important expanding company which employs about 500 people in three of the main office buildings in the town centre – Unicorn House, London Road; Imperial House, Station Road; Lion House, Wallbridge. Proposals by Ecotricity for 'Eco Park' at Junction 13 of the M5 are for the further expansion of the company. Ecotricity has confirmed that they have a long term commitment to providing employment in Stroud town and that the former tax office in Merrywalks will accommodate a further 250 employees.

1.3.5 The Exchange, in Brick Row, provides shared office space for community enterprises, and The Old Convent in Beeches Green offers accommodation for small businesses. Fromeside Industrial Estate is a key employment site in the Local Plan which houses various national and local retail (mainly trade) and non-retail commercial uses.

1.3.6 In total there are in the region of 500 businesses of all kinds operating in the town centre. Approximately 2,000 people have their normal place of work in the NDP area, including the town centre and Fromeside Industrial Estate.





Transport and access

- 1.3.7 Merrywalks forms part of the A46 main highway. It creates a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists between the main retail area of the town centre and key edge of centre locations such as Stratford Park, the Leisure Centre, Stroud College and Tesco's superstore. Bus laybys on each side of the road outside the cinema provide the main destination for the two bus companies who operate in the area – Stagecoach and Cotswold Green. Traffic flows on this road are high and the road is subject to severe congestion on a daily basis. A bridge provides access for pedestrians crossing at the northern end but the route from the bridge into the main shopping area is steep. There are three pelican crossings on Merrywalks. They are well used but add to the congestion.
- 1.3.8 Dr Newton's Way forms part of the A419 main highway linking the town centre with the M5 at Junction 13. It is the main route round the south side of the town centre from the east. Another well-used and regularly congested main traffic route, it has one pelican crossing outside Waitrose. At its western end the two roundabouts at Wallbridge are difficult to cross for pedestrians and cyclists approaching from the west side of Bath Road and from Cainscross Road.
- 1.3.9 The railway provides a significant barrier to access on foot from Cheapside car park and the newly restored canal. Its only bridge is not accessible by those with mobility issues and the alternative route is lengthy, sloping and involves awkward crossings of Rowcroft to use the one footway under Rowcroft railway bridge.

Refer to Map 3 (pages 20–21)
Pedestrian movement context

- 1.3.10 Access into the town centre from the east and, in particular, from London Road car park is poor along a very narrow footway. The approach to the town centre from the west for pedestrians is hindered by the lack of a convenient pedestrian crossing point directly into Rowcroft. This is a particular issue of concern to residents of The Hill and to Ecotricity employees expected to occupy the former tax office in Merrywalks.
- 1.3.11 A footpath has been created along the south side of the canal but there is limited access along the north side and no direct access into the town centre from the canal other than via the road network.
- 1.3.12 Cycling is not only inhibited by the steep topography of the town centre but also by the width of the roads and the traffic conditions.
- 1.3.13 The central shopping area (King Street, High Street, north part of Kendrick Street, Union Street, Threadneedle Street) is pedestrianised with access by delivery vehicles. There are 1081 car parking spaces (including 26 for disabled users) in the main car parks serving the centre – London Road surface and Brunel mall multi-storey to the east; Cheapside to the south; Merrywalks multi-storey and surface to the west; Parliament Street to the north; and Church Street in the centre. A further 150 spaces are available for the railway station. All the car parks operate a pay and display charging system. About 64 short-stay (30-minute and one-hour) free-parking spaces (of which 20 are for disabled users) are available in various locations within the central shopping area. The station car parks offer an additional four disabled spaces.

Heritage and setting

- 1.3.14 The town centre boasts 95 grade II listed buildings including 3 grade II* listed buildings – St Laurence Church, The Old Town Hall and the Brunel Goods Shed. It includes three conservation areas covering Stroud town centre, Stroud station and part of Stroud industrial heritage as shown on Map 4. The Conservation Area boundaries shown on Map 4 are as at December 2015. Check the SDC website for any changes www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/planning/developmentmanagement.asp#sectioncontent3.

Refer to Map 4 (pages 22–23)
Heritage

- 1.3.15 There are extensive views both ways between the town centre and the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town centre is bounded to the south by the Stroudwater Canal and River Frome valley and meadows. Adjacent to the station, Hill Paul is a notable landmark building.

Green space and environment

- 1.3.16 Whilst the town centre has a very green setting there is comparatively little green space within the designated area, the largest being Bank Gardens and the Fromeside nature reserve (see Map 5). Other valuable green areas are along the west side of Merrywalks and at Wallbridge. A few green patches exist such as that at Saint-Ismier corner at the bottom of Cornhill and south of the Magistrates' Court. Stratford Park is an important, large area of public open space lying close to, but outside, the Plan area. For pedestrians and cyclists the route from the town centre to the Park along Beeches Green Road, is indirect and unattractive.

Refer to Map 5 (pages 24–25)
Green space and setting of town

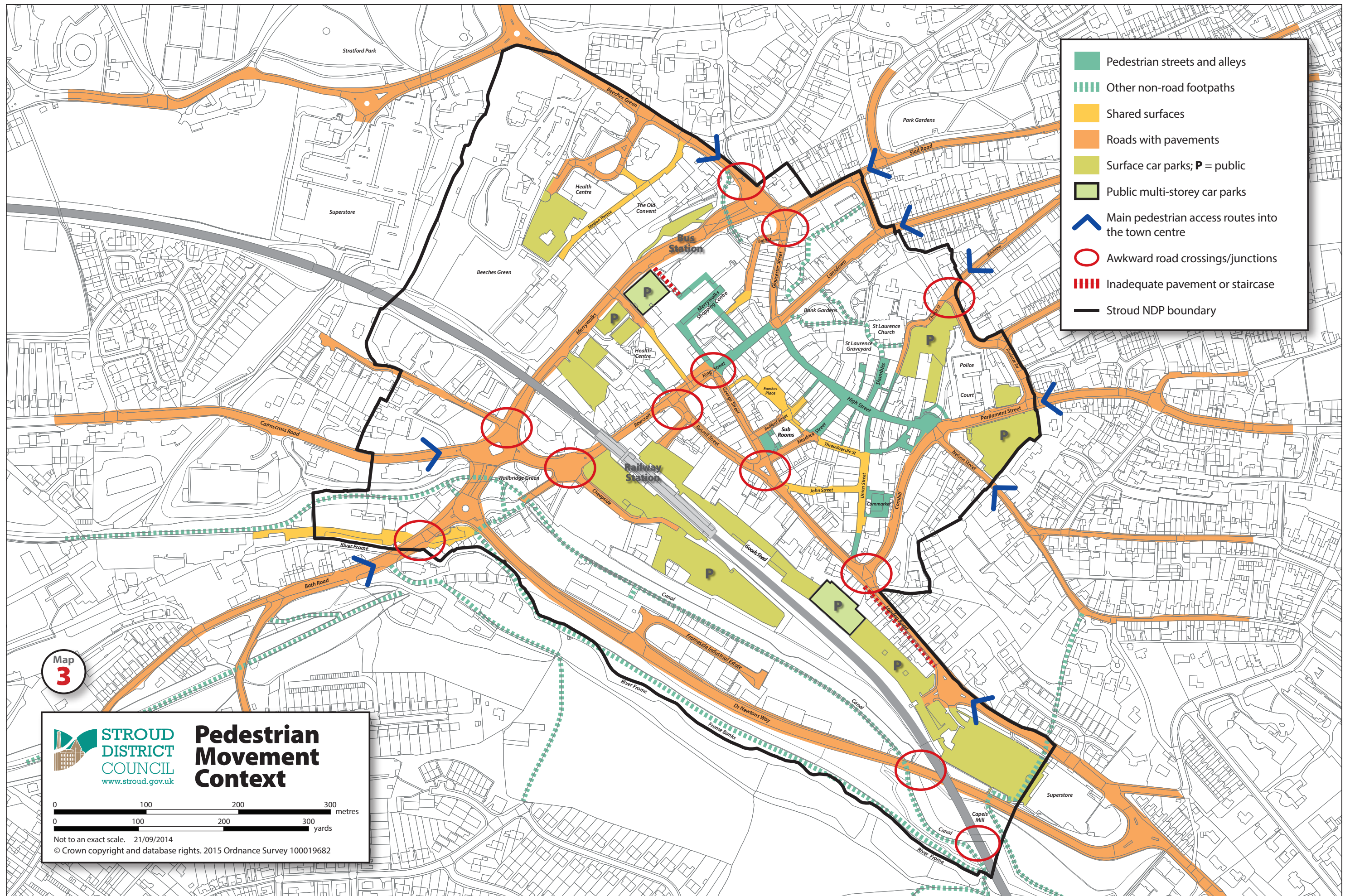
Social, culture and leisure

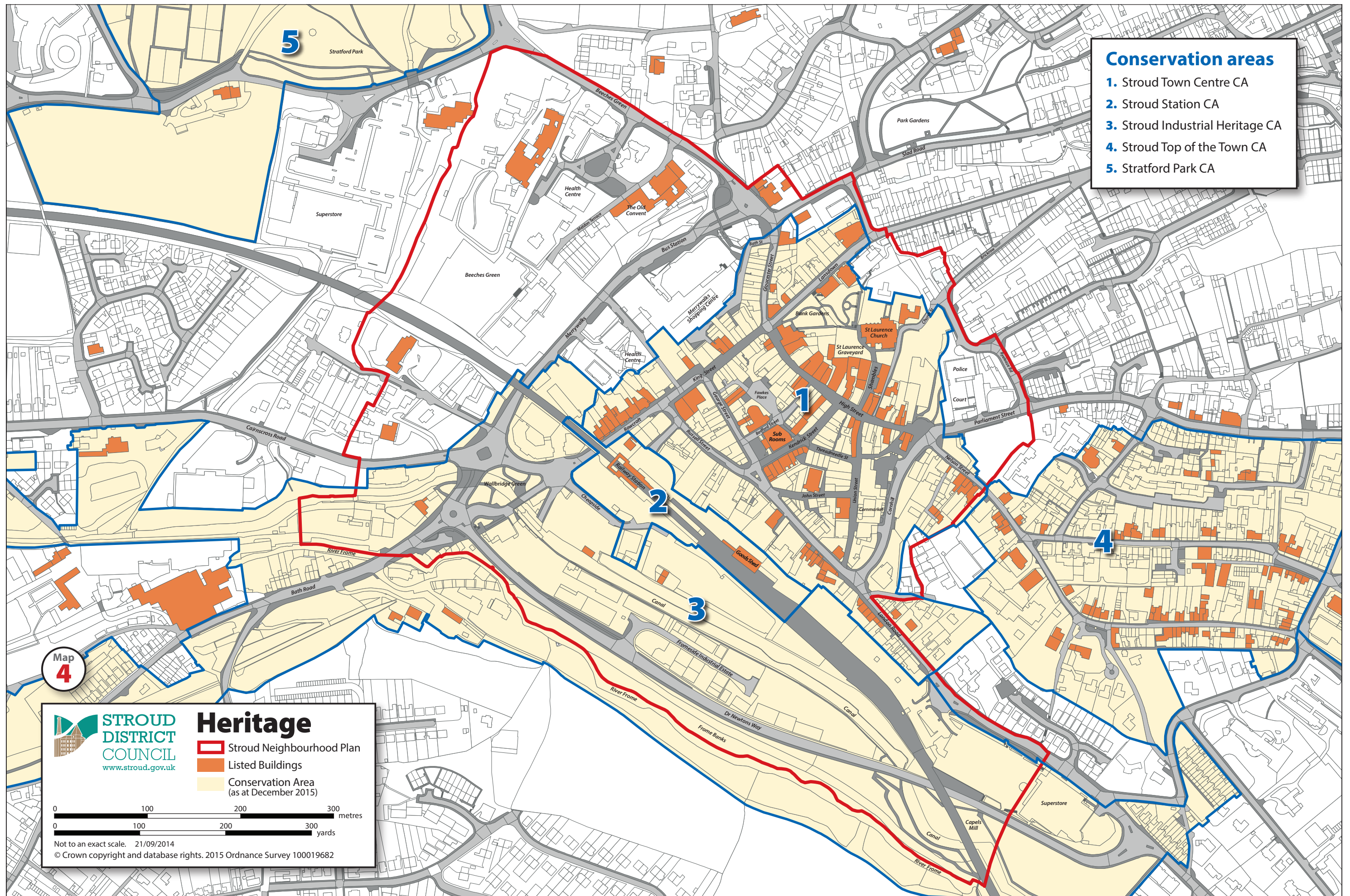
- 1.3.17 Stroud town centre has a lively social and cultural life with numerous leisure facilities such as: the cinema, Stroud Subscription Rooms, Stroud Library, Lansdown Hall and Gallery, Stroud Valleys Artspace and Brunel Goods Shed. A wide variety of festivals are regularly held both within the town centre itself and at Stratford Park.

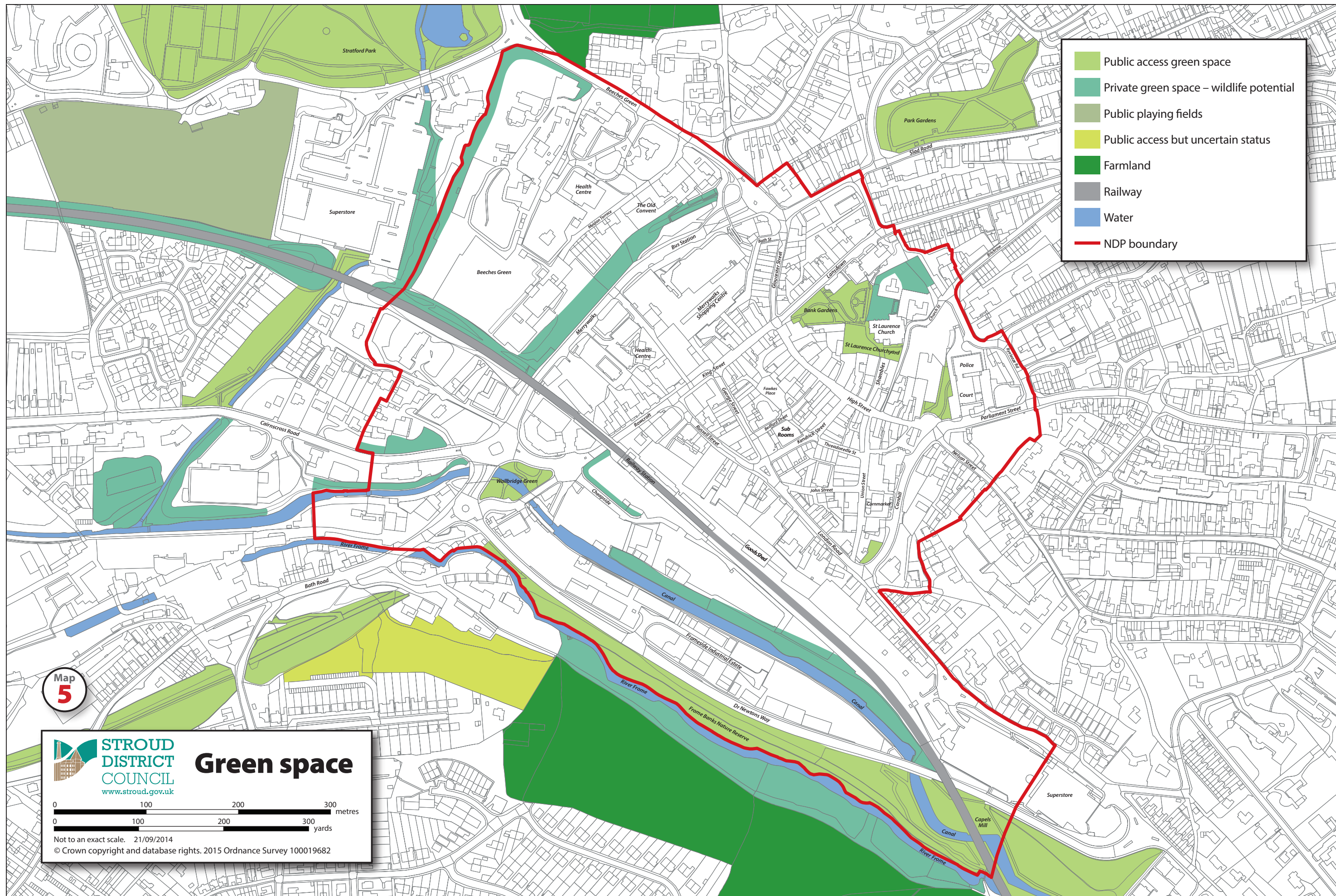


A colourful parade through Stroud streets.









A: Scope and purpose continued

Town centre zones

1.3.18 For the purposes of the Plan the designated area has been subdivided into seven zones. These zones are shown on Map 6.

Refer to Map 6 Town Centre Zones

Z1 Core

The heart of the shopping area comprising King Street, High Street, Merrywalks shopping centre, Four Clocks and the Market area. Opportunities exist here for making better use of empty space above shops; improving the public realm and accessibility; 'greening' the centre; enhancing the retail offer by making effective use of development opportunities; developing the evening economy; making the most of the heritage assets.

Z2 Canal

Includes the river valley, the Fromside Industrial Estate. Opportunities exist to make more effective use of land; make better use of the canal frontage; create improved access to the canal from the town centre; enhance the biodiversity and accessibility of the river valley; significantly improve the Wallbridge area which is an important 'gateway' into the town centre.

Z3 Railway

Land either side of the railway, much of which is owned by Network Rail and Stroud District Council, including Cheapside and London Road car parks. Opportunities exist for making better use of the land; improving the appearance of the views for people entering the town by rail; improving access to the centre on foot, by mobility vehicle and by cycle from the south; improving access to the listed Brunel Goods Shed.

Z4 Merrywalks

Part of the A46, a key route through and into the town centre, including the bus station, bounded by an indoor shopping development, multi-storey car park and cinema, doctors' surgeries, parking and assorted other development. Opportunities exist to address conflict between pedestrians and cyclists; improve the appearance of the buildings; make more effective use of land; improve the Slad Road/Gloucester Street 'gateway' into the centre; improve access for pedestrian, mobility vehicles and cyclists between Stratford Park and the town centre.

Z5 Beeches Green

A mixed area including Beeches Green health centre, St Rose's school for children and young people with disabilities, Rosary Primary School and the Grade II listed Old Convent. Opportunities exist to intensify the use of land in this area for health and social related uses, for residential development, and to improve access from the town centre to Stratford Park, the Museum and the Leisure Centre.

Z6 Lansdown/ Nelson Street

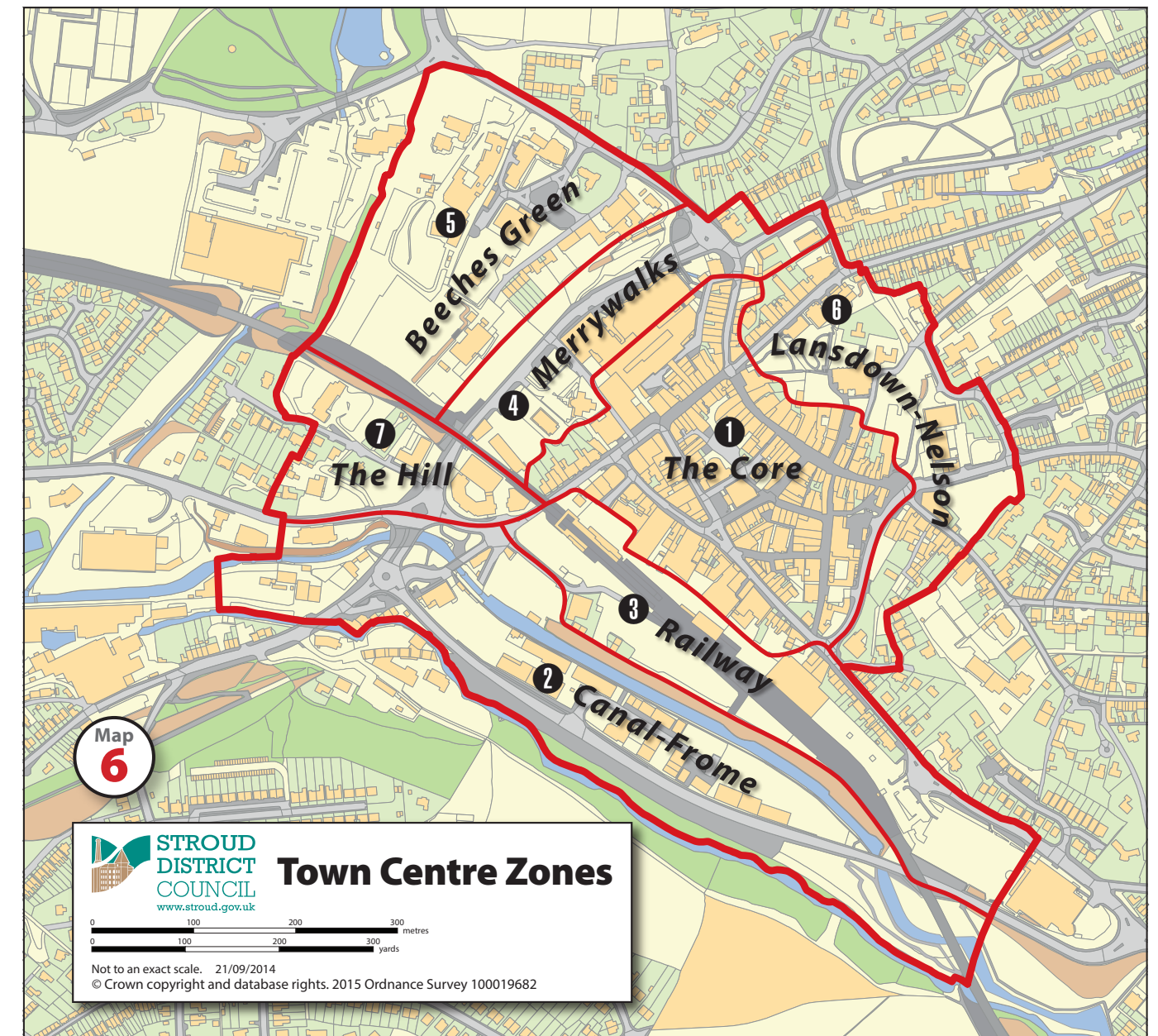
A mixed area of residential, cultural and commercial development including the Library, the Centre for Science and Art, St Laurence Church, the Police Station and Magistrate's Court, Parliament Street and Church Street car parks and shop and leisure/café/restaurant uses. Opportunities exist to enhance this 'gateway' into the town from the north and make better use of land and buildings to provide both residential and commercial/business space.

Z7 The Hill

A mixed area of housing and commercial use, including head-office buildings occupied by Ecotricity. Opportunities exist to make more effective use of land, especially for residential use and to improve pedestrian/cycle access into the town centre from Cainscross Road/The Hill.

SWOT analysis

1.3.19 The diagram at Appendix 3 (page 95) summarises the strengths/weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to the town centre, based on the results of a week long community consultation process involving over 500 people.



B: What the plan aims to achieve

2.1 Aim of the plan

2.1.1 The aim of the Plan is to provide a framework for sustainable development which will help the people of Stroud to address the weaknesses of the centre and to make the most of the opportunities which exist. The Plan builds on national policy as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* and on the strategy in the *Stroud District Local Plan*. This Plan does not repeat what is in either of those documents but adds detail which will strengthen the planning of the future of the town centre.

2.2 Issues

2.2.1 The schedules at Appendix 4 (pages 96–98) set out a summary of the issues raised in the first consultation process. These responses, which identified what people liked and disliked about the town centre and what three things they would like to change, informed the approach to the preparation of the Plan and, in particular, helped the development of the following vision and objectives.

Looking down on Stroud town centre from Rodborough Fort.



2.3 Vision

2.3.1 The vision for Stroud town centre is that it should be ‘a welcoming, healthy, thriving place’. It should be attractive and make the most of its heritage and its diverse cultural character; it should be accessible to all and have a vibrant feel; and it should be an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable place which reflects its bohemian and ‘green’ personality.

2.4 Themes and objectives

2.4.1 To achieve the vision the Plan focuses on five cross-cutting themes and 15 objectives as set out in the table opposite:

Theme	Objectives (Some objectives relate to more than one theme)
1. Sustaining the economy of the town centre	Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, including evenings and at weekends. Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high-quality accommodation in which businesses, including social and cultural enterprises, can establish and grow. Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings. Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time. Improve the appearance of the town centre.
2. Improving access to the town centre	Encourage walking and cycling. Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport using safe, convenient, well-designed and signposted routes. Improve the links between the town centre, the canal and Stratford Park. Mark the main entry points to the town centre (gateways) and provide a sense of ‘arrival’.
3. Strengthening the social and cultural fabric of the town centre	Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high-quality accommodation in which businesses, including social and cultural enterprises, can establish and grow. Provide more high-quality dwellings to increase the number and diversity of people who live in the town centre. Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time. Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.
4. Enhancing the environment of the town centre	Improve the appearance of the town centre. Protect and enhance important spaces including green spaces. Enhance biodiversity. Respect the setting of the town centre by protecting important views. Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal. Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise from traffic.
5. Creating a healthier town centre	Encourage walking and cycling. Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport using safe, convenient, well-designed and signposted routes. Protect and enhance important spaces including green spaces. Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise from traffic. Provide more high quality dwellings to increase the number and range of people who live in the town centre.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This part of the Plan sets out the *development policies* (sections 3.2 and 3.3) and *promotional statements* (section 3.4) which are intended to deliver the vision over the 20 year time period of the Plan.
- 3.1.2 The development policies are divided into two groups. *Area policies* (AP) relate to the whole Neighbourhood Plan area, unless otherwise specified, and *zonal policies* (ZP) relate to the individual zones which have been described in para 1.3.18.
- 3.1.3 The Plan incorporates the key principle from the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The box at right sets out the role the planning system has in delivering sustainable development according to the NPPF.

The Victorian Centre for Science and Art in Lansdown, part of Stroud's 'built and historic environment'.



There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and co-ordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.
- An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Source: Paragraph 7 National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1.4 The policies in this NDP are in accord with the principles of sustainable development, including making best use of existing urban sites, supporting the viability and vitality of the town centre, reducing the need to travel, promoting healthy forms of travel, promoting accessible green space and carbon-neutral development.
- 3.1.5 The policies are cross referenced, in the table "How the plan fits together" (page 88), to the relevant Local Plan policy, as at December 2015, for which the NDP provides more detail. All of the policies must be read together and alongside the Local Plan. All policies must be complied with where relevant to the proposed development.
- 3.1.6 As part of the deregulation agenda, government periodically amends the planning system to remove the requirement for planning permission for various changes of use. Such amendments may continue through the life of this Plan. Where planning permission is not required for a change of use developers are encouraged to have regard to the key aims of this Plan especially in relation to accessibility and design and the public realm to help support the delivery of the vision.



Three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.





The Hill Paul residential building (top left), the Brunel-designed Goods Shed (lower left), Stroud railway station (top right) and car parks.

3.2 Area development policies

Jobs and business

3.2.1 Introduction:

There are important office, industrial, service and creative workshop uses in the Plan area. For example the rapidly growing company, Ecotricity, occupies much of the main office accommodation in the town; Stroud Valleys Artspace occupies a rehabilitated industrial building in the heart of the town and runs the Grade II* listed Brunel Goods Shed as an arts venue; two national builders merchants trade in the canal zone. Improvements to rail services, the restoration of the canal and the low intensity of current usage on some sites could incentivise entrepreneurial activity and diversify job opportunities, strengthening the town centre.

Objectives:

- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, in the evenings and at weekends.
- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation for businesses, including social and cultural enterprises to establish and grow.

Policy AP1

Jobs and businesses

New or intensified employment development or changes of use will be permitted where they support the economy of the town centre by retaining or increasing the number of jobs in the plan area and they:

- Enhance the vitality and viability of the designated core zone by utilising vacant upper floorspace and/or
- Form part of a mixed use development including some residential development where viable and where the requirements of *Policy AP4* can be met and/or
- Provide opportunities for skills development especially for young people.

Explanation:

The Plan area offers the biggest concentration of jobs in the Stroud Valleys and its future vitality is key to the prosperity of the area. Upper floorspace can provide valuable space for small scale employment uses such as offices and small workshops for creative industries, as well as storage for retail uses on the ground floor. Delivering mixed uses, including residential, within town centre developments adds to the diversity and vitality of the centre. The town centre is home to a relatively high proportion of young males and unemployment is relatively high, so job opportunities for young people through which they can develop skills will help support the economy of the town centre.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued



Clockwise, from top left: Two views of Stroud's award-winning Saturday Farmers' Market; 'Cornflower & Calico' and other shops on the High Street; The Greyhound café and bar on the corner of Gloucester Road and Lansdown; the interior of Lansdown Hall; and the Subscription ('Sub') Rooms, the town's largest event venue, built by public subscription in 1833.

Retail and social

3.2.2 Introduction:

The town centre acts as the main retail, social and cultural centre for the Stroud Valleys and it has a diverse business economy which includes many small businesses.

Objectives:

- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, at weekends and in the evening.
- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation for businesses, including social and cultural enterprises to establish and grow.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy AP2 Retail and social

Changes of use of buildings or redevelopment which will enhance the retail viability and social vitality of the town centre will be permitted provided the use will:

- Retain or increase footfall in the Core Zone; and
- Retain or enhance the continuity of lively shopfronts in the Core and Lansdown/Nelson Street Zones; and
- Offer services to the public in the Core, Lansdown/Nelson Street Zones.

Within the Primary Shopping frontage shown on Map 2, uses outside Class A will not be permitted.

Explanation:

The mix of retail, social, cultural and business activities in the town centre is changing and will change further in ways which are not necessarily predictable. This policy seeks to ensure that all the prime central functions, including the independent and creative sectors which are a particular feature of the town, have an opportunity to flourish, and allow continued evolution as innovation occurs and tastes and habits change.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

Access and movement around the town centre

3.2.3 Introduction:

Access into and around the town centre as experienced by pedestrians is a major concern of residents, shoppers, workers and other users of the town centre and has been long recognised by the Town and District Councils. Problems of poor connectivity were highlighted in the *Public Realm Strategy* (PRS) as well as in the *Cheapside Neighbourhood Opportunities Report*. Either side of the railway are long culs-de-sac. The railway, canal, A419 and A46 Merrywalks conspire to segment the town. The *NPPF* states that the ‘transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel’.⁶

Objectives:

- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient, well-designed and signposted routes.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.
- Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise from traffic.

Merrywalks, a major traffic route: ‘Stratford Parkway’ is an ambitious proposal to reduce congestion and link major areas of Stroud.



Policy AP3 Access and movement

Over the Plan period, opportunities will be sought to make movement within and on the approaches to the town centre progressively safer and more convenient by seeking to deliver the following measures:

- Giving greater priority to pedestrians over traffic within the core zone.
- Creating a visually integrated, uncluttered and fully accessible streetscape for the main retail streets in the town centre taking into account necessary resting places, pedestrian safety, access for those with mobility issues and the needs of people with disabilities.
- Reducing barriers to movement by improving pedestrian and cycling connections into and within the Plan area to encourage more people to walk and cycle.
- Creating ‘Stratford Parkway’ – a new link between the town centre and Stratford Park, the Museum in the Park, the Leisure Centre and Stroud College, as shown broadly on the proposals map.
- Creating a new link over the railway to improve access into the town centre from the south and provide improved disabled access to the railway platforms.
- Protecting and improving the routes for pedestrians and cyclists seeking to cross the various junctions at the Wallbridge gateway, including that from Cainscross Road/The Hill.
- Improving access for pedestrians using London Road.

New development proposals that affect access and movement will be expected to show how they can mitigate their own impact and where appropriate contribute to meeting this policy and any specific requirements set out in any relevant zonal policies.

Explanation:

The PRS provides the basis for the Town Council to work with others to continue to deliver a better balance between pedestrians and traffic in the central area where the PRS proposals remain supported by the community. This will help ‘to encourage more people to explore the town, stay longer and spend more money in local businesses’.⁷ This policy is not intended to prevent the necessary access to business by delivery vehicles. In the wider town centre area there is strong community support for a better connection over the railway, a more pleasant and clearer route linking the town centre to Stratford Park, the Museum, the Leisure Centre and Stroud College, and easier ways to cross the roads at the Wallbridge junctions.

Stratford Parkway is an ambitious proposal that has the potential to make a very significant improvement to the operation of Merrywalks as a major traffic route and to reduce some of the congestion caused by the pelican crossings.

Consultation responses repeatedly referred to badly maintained and dirty town centre streets, full of trip hazards and lacking visual integration to link all the main shopping streets together. There are limited resting places, myriad bollard designs and too much signage in the streets. The PRS provides design principles to establish visual integration. This is given effect for the Core Zone in *Policy AP9b* of this Plan. Maintaining safer, cleaner streets will help to encourage more use of the town centre both during the day and into the evenings, thereby supporting its vitality and viability.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

Homes

3.2.4 Introduction:

There are relatively few people living in the designated area and a comparatively high proportion (relative to the town as a whole) are under 30 years old, male and living in privately rented, mainly flat-type accommodation.

Objectives:

- Provide more high quality dwellings to increase the number and diversity of people who live in the town centre.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Relatively few people live in the designated area: policies can be put in place to encourage the number and diversity of residents.



Policy AP4 General Housing

Residential development which will add to the range and type of stock within the Plan area, including the provision of custom built, self build or co-operative housing, will be encouraged and supported.

Any schemes shall provide:

- A good range of dwelling types, sizes and design appropriate to their location and
- Access to some form of outdoor space for each dwelling, where feasible.

Where dwellings are provided using vacant upper floor space in the Core Zone separate access from the ground floor should be provided where possible

Opportunities for custom, self-built or co-operative housing should be provided on sites exceeding 0.5 ha, subject to viability.

Any new development should be located in Flood Zone 1 (outside the flood plain).

Explanation:

The aim of *Policy AP4* is to create new good quality living accommodation over and above that allocated in the Local Plan in order to boost the overall population and diversity of people living near the town centre. This will be achieved by offering new and attractive options for households to encourage an increase in owner occupation, to strengthen local demand for shops and services and reduce the pressure for greenfield development. Potential opportunities for new housing are identified in the zonal policies. Energy efficiency is of particular importance to the Town Council as shown by *Policy AP13*.

The opportunity for residents to be able to enjoy some form of outdoor space is considered important to their health and wellbeing. Proposals for residential development will need to show how this aim can be met. Outdoor space can be provided in the form of private or communal gardens, by balconies, or by immediate access to a public park.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

Green spaces

3.2.5 Introduction:

There is widespread community support for preserving and enhancing green spaces and recognition of the importance of green spaces for wildlife habitats, active recreational activities, mental well-being, and public enjoyment.

Objectives:

- Protect and enhance important spaces including green spaces.
- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Enhance biodiversity.

Explanation:

National policy allows for the designation of Local Green Spaces which provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to the community. Such designation can only be made in specified circumstances and the designation has a similar effect on the management of the land to Green Belt policy. The five areas identified in *Policy AP5a* meet the relevant criteria.

Appropriate development which would enhance the enjoyment of the identified Local Green Spaces may be permitted. At Wallbridge and Capel's Mill such uses may include café/ice cream kiosk, bicycle hire and information centre. Commercial workshops, storage or housing are not likely to be an appropriate form of development in these locations.

Policy AP5a Local Green Spaces

The following open spaces are designated *Local Green Spaces*, as shown on the proposals map:

- Frome Banks nature reserve.
- Capel's Mill area.
- Bank Gardens.
- St. Laurence churchyard.
- Wallbridge open spaces on either side of the canal.

Policy AP5b Amenity Spaces

The following spaces are identified as having amenity and biodiversity value, which is of importance to the local community:

- The canal embankment, below Hill Paul and Cheapside car park.
- Merrywalks green strip – along the west side of the road.
- Tree belts around St. Rose's School.

Any development proposed for these areas should seek to ensure that the amenity value and any biodiversity interest of the relevant land is preserved and where possible, enhanced.

The areas referred to in *Policy AP5b* are those for which their amenity and biodiversity value has been identified in consultation as important to local people. Although they do not meet the criteria for designation as Local Green Spaces they should nevertheless be preserved as valuable open spaces in the town centre. The tree belts round St. Rose's School also assist in carbon capture. The policy does not prevent development so long as any such development is consistent with the aim of the policy.

The designation does not confer the right to public access of land which is not currently accessible to the public. In the case of the canal embankment and the Merrywalks green strip there is community support to create public access where possible (see *Policies ZP2a* and *ZP4b*).

Setting of town centre

3.2.6 Introduction:

The setting of the town in the Cotswold valleys, with views of the commons and hills visible from various parts of the town centre, is an important characteristic of the town centre which is highly valued by the community.

Objective:

Respect the setting of the town centre by protecting important views.

Policy AP6 Setting

The following views of surrounding landscapes provide an important setting to the town centre:

- Down Nelson Street, Parliament Street and the High Street towards Stratford Park and beyond.
- Down Cornhill and Union Street towards Butterow.

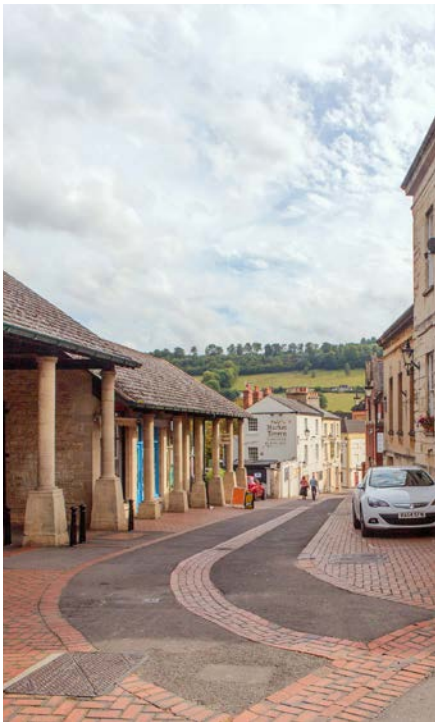
Any development which could have an adverse impact on any of these views will be expected to show how the view is to be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

Elsewhere within the Plan area views of the countryside should be carefully considered and enhanced where possible when any development takes place.

Explanation:

The defined views are framed by streetside development and capable of being preserved without limiting development options in a way which would be unreasonable. Views of the countryside setting of the town from other parts of the centre, notably from Ryeleaze Road, are more panoramic and not capable of being defined in a similar way but it will be important for development to have regard to the importance of such views to the setting of the town centre.

Union Street looking towards Rodborough.



Nelson Street looking towards Ruscombe.



Ryeleaze towards Callowell and Whiteshill.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

Gateways to the town centre

3.2.7 Introduction:

The *Public Realm Strategy* highlighted the desirability of creating a strong sense of arrival, with attractive buildings and spaces. The consultation responses have reinforced the importance of this, particularly in relation to both ends of Merrywalks (Gloucester Street and Wallbridge) and also the Station forecourt. The main routes into the town centre contribute to whether or not the town feels welcoming.

Objectives:

- Mark the main entry points to the town centre (gateways) and provide a sense of 'arrival'.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

Policy AP7 Gateways

The following important 'gateways' to the town centre have been identified, as shown on the proposals map:

- Wallbridge.
- Gloucester Street and bus station.
- Nelson/Parliament Streets.
- London Road/Cornhill.
- Station forecourt.

Any development which bounds any of the defined gateways will be expected to show how the scheme will enhance the sense of arrival provided by the 'gateway' through:

- The scale, design and character of building(s).
- Public realm improvements, including use of soft/hard landscaping.
- Public art which reflects the town's character.

Explanation:

First impressions are important to encourage shoppers and visitors to spend time in the town centre and the gateways offer an opportunity to both signpost and emphasise its presence. It is important that any development makes the most of these locations.

Wallbridge: The importance of 'gateways', creating a strong sense of arrival with attractive buildings and spaces.



Town centre heritage

3.2.8 Introduction:

Historic buildings and conservation areas make up a large part of the town centre providing a link with the past life of the town. They give the area character and distinctiveness, making Stroud town centre an interesting place to live, work and visit. Past losses or near losses of many fine buildings in and around the town centre demonstrate the continuing need to take an active approach to the protection and enhancement of its historic fabric.

Objective:

Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.

Policy AP8a Conservation areas

Any development proposed in the Stroud Town Centre, Station, and Industrial Heritage conservation areas which are identified on Map 4 should have regard to the policy guidance set out in the *Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Advice* and *Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document* respectively and any subsequent revisions thereto.

Policy AP8b Local heritage assets

Non designated local heritage assets will be defined against the criteria set out in Appendix 5 (page 99). Planning applications for demolition, development or substantial alterations of buildings or structures defined as local heritage assets will be expected to show what consideration has been given to retaining:

- The asset itself.
- Its most distinctive and important features.
- The positive elements of its setting and immediate surrounds.
- The contribution the asset and its setting makes to the character of the local area (whether in a Conservation Area or not).

Explanation:

It is important that all development respects the historic character of the town centre which is reflected in the three conservation areas. The district council documents referred to in the policy elaborate on what makes these areas special and how they should be preserved and enhanced.

There are a number of buildings of local heritage interest which add to the attractiveness of the town centre but which are not protected by statutory listing. There is considerable local support for the identification and protection of such assets, where practical, as recognised in the proposed changes to the Local Plan. Stroud Town Council will hold and maintain any Non Designated Heritage Assets list and all entries will be approved by resolution of the Town Council's Consultations Committee.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued



Statue of George Holloway, MP and town benefactor, in Rowcroft.

Design and the public realm

3.2.9 Introduction:

The vital importance of achieving good quality design of buildings and the streets and spaces that they frame has been emphasised by the approved *Public Realm Strategy* and by the consultation responses. Furthermore, good design is seen in the *NPPF* as ‘a key aspect of sustainable development’ which ‘should contribute positively to making places better for people’.⁹

Objectives:

- Enhance the appearance of the town centre.
- Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

Policy AP9a

Design: general principles

All new development within the Plan area should be designed to meet each of the following :

- The location and scale of buildings respect the setting of the site and the character of the area.
- The materials of buildings are sympathetic and complementary to their context.
- Design or landscape features are incorporated to provide habitat for insects and birds nesting.
- Buildings are designed for minimal use of energy and natural resources.
- Sustainable drainage schemes are used for surface water run-off.
- External lighting uses renewable sources.
- Trees and natural planting are used where possible to enhance the greening and biodiversity within the plan area.
- The design delivers best practice accessibility.

Policy AP9b

Design: public realm

Development shall have regard to the design principles set out in the *Public Realm Strategy*, where applicable and as summarised in Appendix 6 (pages 100–101).

Explanation:

This policy builds on the design checklist in the Local Plan and will be supported in due course with more detailed general design guidance as well as that in relation to specific areas, notably those areas subject to zonal policies. Good quality modern design is welcomed. It is important that the energy efficiency requirements set out in the Local Plan are met and in this context *Policy AP13* of this Plan is relevant. *Policy NP4* recognises the particular value of greening the town centre both in terms of aesthetics and biodiversity. Applicants are advised to ensure that designs take into account the views of the community and attention is drawn to SDC’s *Pre-Application Community Involvement Protocol*.

The *Public Realm Strategy* contains spatial proposals not all of which are now relevant. Accordingly, for clarity, the specific parts of the strategy which relate to this policy are set out in Appendix 6 (pages 100–101). At the first review of the Plan these principles should be reviewed to ensure that they remain up to date.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

Buildings of cultural importance

3.2.10 Introduction:

Part of what makes Stroud town centre distinctive is its strong cultural tradition which relies on a few key buildings which are mainly in public ownership. There is very strong support for recognising the importance of these buildings in safeguarding that cultural tradition.

Objectives:

- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.
- Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.

Policy AP10 Buildings of cultural importance

Over the Plan period the following buildings of cultural importance will be safeguarded for public enjoyment and community use:

- The Subscription Rooms.
- St Laurence Church.
- The Old Town Hall Meeting Room.
- Lansdown Hall and Gallery.
- Brunel Goods Shed.

Explanation:

The cultural life of the Stroud community, the identity of Stroud and the character of the centre are strongly linked to key buildings in public use. The Subscription Rooms, St Laurence Church and the Old Town Hall are of great historic cultural importance. Lansdown Hall and Gallery and the Brunel Goods Shed are more recent additions to artistic and community activity that have helped to give focus to the distinctive creative life of the town. The buildings are identified on the proposals map.

The safeguarding of the identified buildings for 'public enjoyment and community use' embraces a wide range of potential uses which can include cultural, recreational and sporting uses.

Lansdown Hall and Gallery, a hub of artistic and community activity.



Car parks

3.2.11 Introduction:

There is widespread support for the current level of parking from both users and businesses in the town centre and at peak times all car parks are well used. Problems occur because drivers cannot always find spaces, and this is addressed in *Promotional Statement NP1*.

Objectives:

- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient and well-designed and signposted routes.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy AP11 Car parks

Any proposals to develop on existing car parks within the Plan area will need to demonstrate that the overall number of car parking spaces available to the public and their ease of use is adequate to meet the needs of the town centre and railway station.

Explanation:

Whilst the Plan seeks to improve accessibility by modes other than the car the current public parking facilities are important to the economy of the town centre. They are well located to minimise the time taken to reach town centre shops, services and facilities. With improved access to, for example, London Road and Cheapside car parks as proposed under *Policy ZP3* and a stronger, more attractive town centre there should be less reason for local people to drive to shop elsewhere. Any proposals to develop on existing car parks, as for example that allowed for under *Zonal Policy ZP3* (Cheapside car park), will need to show that any loss of parking space will not harm the economy of the town centre. The *Stroud Retail Study Update 2013* raised the possibility of development on Church Street and Parliament Street car parks. There are no proposals in the Plan for these latter locations, but this policy will provide a framework for any such proposals should they arise over the Plan period.

Brunel Mall multi-storey and Cheapside car parks.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

Public transport

3.2.12 Introduction:

The main points of entry to the town centre by public transport are via the bus station located along Merrywalks and railway station. Early consultation issues identified concerns about the location of the bus station and the quality of the bus services and, in particular, the shelters, facilities, signage and information provision.

Objectives:

- Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre using safe, convenient, well-designed and signposted routes.
- Mark the main entry points to the town centre and provide a sense of ‘arrival’.

Policy AP12
Public transport – general improvements

Improvements to the quality of the public transport serving the town centre will be promoted and encouraged to make public transport safer, more attractive and more convenient to users. Major development within the town centre or development which will have a significant impact on public transport services will be expected to show how it is contributing to meeting this policy.

Explanation:

Improving the facilities and environment of the bus and train stations will help to encourage increased usage. Elsewhere in the Plan there are proposals to improve the station forecourt (Policy ZP3). This policy is aimed at ensuring that bus services are as attractive to users as they can be in terms of comfortable, informative, waiting places, with good signage into the town centre and accessible, convenient facilities such as toilets.

Stroud Railway Station.



Energy

3.2.13 Introduction:

The Town Council wishes to emphasise the importance it attaches to improving energy efficiency in the town centre, promoting renewable sources of energy generation and encouraging the use of electric cars.

Objectives:

Reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and traffic noise.

Policy AP13
Energy

Energy efficiency and small scale and community-based renewable energy generation will be promoted and encouraged for both existing and new development. Charging plug-in facilities for low emission vehicles should be provided where practical, or contributions made towards the provision of such facilities within public car parks. Where cycle parking is provided this should include secure facilities for charging batteries for electric bikes.

Explanation:

Delivering a step change in lowering CO₂ emissions will require existing development to significantly improve energy efficiency. The policies in the Local Plan provide a framework for new development. Provision of charging facilities is supported by the NPPF which states ‘development should be located and designed where practical to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other low emission vehicles’.¹⁰

Domestic photovoltaic panels in Stroud.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – core zone (Z1)

Shop fronts

3.3.1 Introduction:

The shop fronts guide has been adopted by STC. The design principles therefore provide the basis for delivering public realm improvements through this Plan.

Objectives:

- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

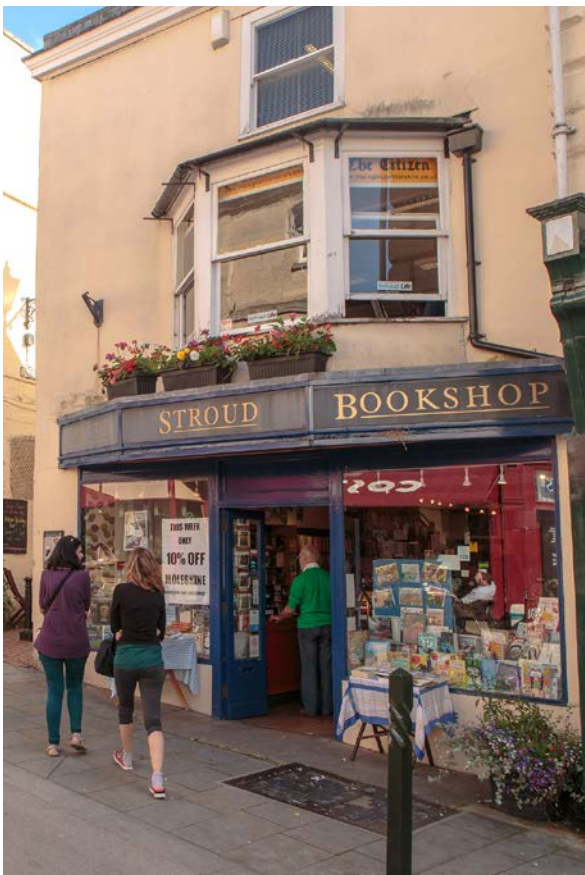
Policy ZP1a
Shop fronts

Development proposals within the core zone shall be guided by the design principles set out in the *Shop Fronts in the Town Centre Guide*, or any subsequent approved revisions thereto.

Explanation:

Shop fronts have a major impact on the visual environment of the main shopping streets which form the core zone. Consistent application of the guidelines will help to retain the character of these historic streets.

Stroud town centre shop fronts: Top left, Gloucester St; top right, corner King and Russell Sts, bottom, Kendrick St. Opposite page: top, corner High St and The Shambles; left middle and bottom, High St; right, corner Kendrick and Threadneedle Sts.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – core zone (Z1)

Cornhill/Market Tavern development site

3.3.2 Introduction:

Following the closure of The Market Tavern public house an opportunity has opened up for a new major development in the heart of the town. The site is in an important location at the junction of London Road, Cornhill and Union Street opposite Brunel Mall multi-storey car park.

Objectives:

- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, at weekends and in the evening.
- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation for businesses, including social and cultural enterprises to establish and grow.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy ZP1b Cornhill/Market Tavern site

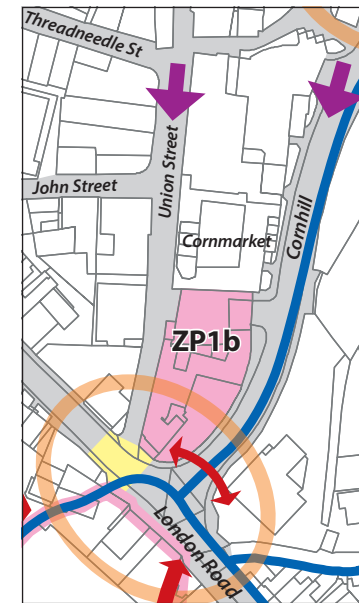
Any scheme for the redevelopment of The Market Tavern and adjoining land as shown on the proposals map that provides the following will be supported:

- Retail use on the ground floor fronting Union Street, incorporating window displays along Union Street and access from Union Street.
- Protection and enhancement of the markets located in and adjacent to Cornhill.
- A high quality ‘landmark’ building creating a striking frontage to the London Road/Cornhill ‘gateway’, which recognises and respects the important heritage assets and related contextual considerations associated with the site.
- Improved pedestrian accessibility at the London Road/Cornhill junction and to the Brunel Mall car park.
- Contributions to the improvement of pedestrian accessibility from London Road car park where relevant to the development.
- Contributions to improvements to the public realm within the area of the Core Zone impacted by the development.

The site is suitable for a significant addition to the retail floor space in the centre and some residential and/or commercial use on upper floors.

Explanation:

This is a good location for increased retail floorspace in the Core Zone close to the Brunel Mall car park which normally has significant spare capacity serving the town centre. The site has the capacity to accommodate a medium-sized retail unit which would enhance the attractiveness of the centre, increase footfall and boost the role of the centre. Development of the site would also offer the opportunity to integrate the market square, which is currently underused, with the main network of streets in such a way as to enhance the operation of the Farmers’ Market, and the potential for other markets during the week. Residential or commercial accommodation in this area would add to the vitality of the town centre.



Extract from the proposals map.



Cornhill/Market Tavern development site; an opportunity for a new major development in the heart of the town.



Improved pedestrian accessibility at the London Road/Cornhill junction would be a necessity for any redevelopment of the site.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – core zone (Z1)

Important town spaces

3.3.3 Introduction:

There are four town spaces which are an important part of the fabric of the town centre. The Subscription Rooms square is the main civic space which provides a setting to this important historic building as well as a valuable meeting point and activity space in the heart of the town. The Shambles is a unique market space and oldest part of the town. Cornmarket square is the location of the Farmers' Market. Fawkes Place, whilst providing parking and service access to the surrounding businesses and dwellings, provides a route through the heart of the town and forms part of its historic character. It has also from time to time been used for public events.

Objectives:

- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.
- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.



Left: Subscription Rooms forecourt.
Bottom left: View towards Fawkes Place.
Below: Four Clocks.



Policy ZP1c Important town spaces

The following important town spaces will be protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of the public:

- Subscription Rooms town square.
- The Shambles.
- Fawkes Place.
- Cornmarket Square or any equivalent replacement which may be provided under *Policy ZP1b*.

Proposals to integrate the Four Clocks with the Subscription Rooms Square to form an enhanced space that is visually integrated will be supported. These spaces will be kept open.

Any development adjacent to these spaces will be expected to contribute to their enhancement through the quality of their own scheme, and make a financial contribution to the improvement of the public realm, if appropriate. .

Explanation:

Currently the Four Clocks is isolated from the Subscription Rooms Square by the road network. This creates a barrier to free movement by pedestrians and reduces the visual value of the structure which is a characteristic feature in the town centre townscape. Visually integrating the Four Clocks with the Subscription Rooms Square by creating a shared surface with pedestrian priority whilst maintaining the traffic route along George Street will significantly enhance its townscape value as well as offer improved pedestrian accessibility in this location. The enlarged civic space will also add to its potential for social and cultural activity.

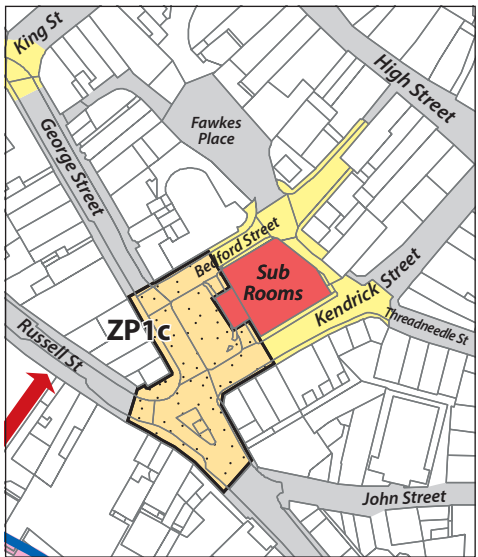
The Shambles is already a very attractive space. Its value could be further enhanced by opening to St. Laurence church as a community hub. The

buildings around Fawkes Place have been allowed to evolve in a haphazard fashion, and higher quality is essential to complement the space. Cornmarket Square as currently configured does not necessarily provide the most valuable public space except when it is in use by the Farmers' Market. Inclusion in this policy does not prevent the possible relocation of the square in association with development under *Policy ZP1b*. Contributions to the enhancement of the public realm will be expected when new development has a direct impact on one of these spaces for example through increased usage.

The Shambles market.



Extract from the proposals map.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – canal zone (Z2)

Cheapside development site

3.3.4 Introduction:

A substantial parcel of vacant land lying to the west of Hill Paul and with a frontage to the canal has been acquired for residential development. It has considerable potential to provide high quality housing and deliver enhanced public access to the canal.

Objectives:

- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.
- Provide more high quality dwellings to increase the number and range of people who live in the town centre.
- Improve the links between the town centre, the canal and Stratford Park.

Policy ZP2a Cheapside site

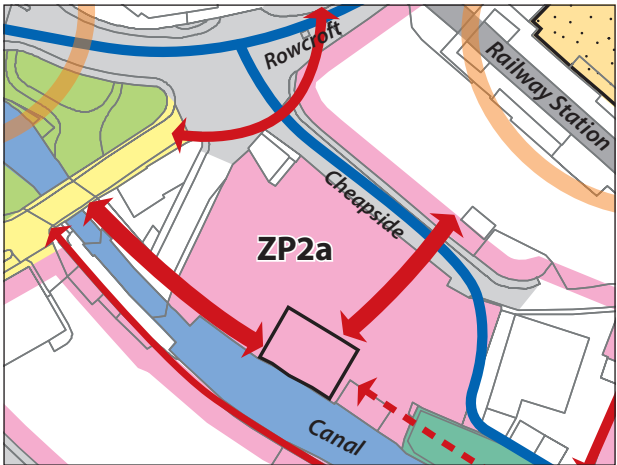
Development of land at Cheapside as shown on the proposals map that provides for each of the following (in addition to the requirements of *Policy SA1* of the Local Plan) will be supported:

- A mix of residential accommodation.
- A new pedestrian path along the canal from Wallbridge, leading to a public square on the waterfront.
- Safeguarding potential future pedestrian access along the north side of the canal.
- Renovation of the existing canal warehouse.
- Moorings for canal boats.
- Opportunities for social and commercial uses on the waterfront.

Explanation:

The policy sets out what the site should provide to enhance the public realm and create a new link to the town centre, drawing on the recommendations of the *Cheapside Neighbourhood Opportunities Report*. The site may have capacity for more than the 30 dwellings allocated in the Local Plan provided all other requirements of the Local Plan and this Plan are met.

Extract from the proposals map.



Cheapside development area and Upper Wallbridge quay.



The canal above Wallbridge Upper Lock.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – canal zone (Z2)

Canal Basin opportunity site

3.3.5 Introduction:

The Lower Wallbridge area is the site of the original canal basin for the Stroudwater Canal. It is mainly occupied at present by a builders' yard and a sewage pumping station (which itself lies just outside the NDP area). The future of the Severn Trent pumping station is under review and it may be removed by 2020. The site represents the best opportunity for a daytime and overnight mooring place for canal visitors to Stroud town centre.

Objectives:

- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, at weekends and in the evening.
- Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.
- Mark the main entry points to the town centre (gateways) and provide a sense of 'arrival'.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy ZP2b Canal Basin site

No new permanent buildings or extensions will be permitted in the hatched area shown on the proposals map to safeguard the opportunity to re-create a canal basin close to the town centre as part of the canal regeneration. The remainder of the site is suitable for mixed uses, including potentially residential uses. Any development will need to be accompanied by a site specific flood risk assessment to demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk on or off site, and will reduce and manage flood risk. The uses should include tourist and leisure uses focused around the canal basin and provision should be made for footpath access to link with the remainder of the canal footpath.

Explanation:

The stone walls of the original canal basin are still in situ. A number of canal narrow boats could be accommodated within a basin reduced in size from the original, with provision of essential facilities for moored boats. A basin of about 1400m² approximate area (part of which will lie outside the boundary of this Plan) would allow for the potential development of canal-based recreational/ tourist/leisure facilities and supporting enabling development within the remaining area. The site lies within *Flood Zone 3* so any development must be in conformity with both the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan. The canal owners, Stroud Valleys Canal Company and the Cotswold Canals Trust will need to be consulted about the appropriate area to be safeguarded and facilities to be provided. Severn Trent Water and Western Power will also need to be consulted on any proposals to develop the canal basin. That part of the site shown on the Proposals Map as enclosed by a dashed line lies outside the NDP boundary. It is shown for indicative purposes only.



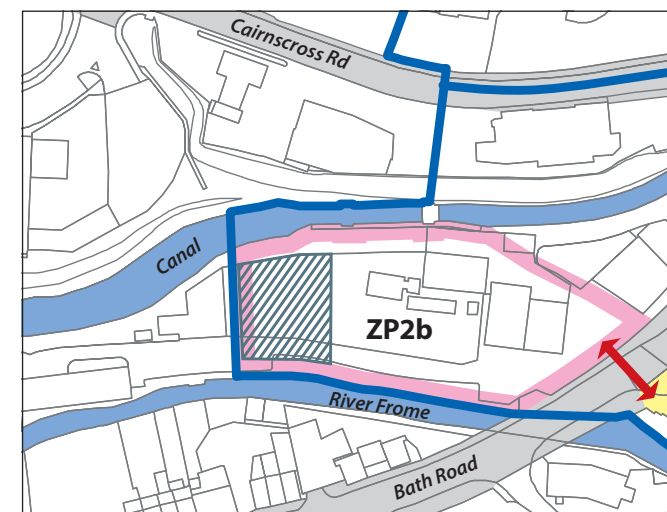
Canal Basin opportunity site beside Wallbridge lower lock.



Severn Trent sewage pumping station – under review.



Nearby original headquarters of the Stroudwater Navigation.



Extract from the proposals map.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal Policies – canal zone (Z2)

Fromside Industrial Estate opportunity site

3.3.6 Introduction:

The Fromside Industrial Estate (including Travis Perkins) provides useful services to the community and to building trades, but utilises town centre land for quite low-intensity uses, and fails to enhance the setting of the restored canal at a critical location for the development of Stroud as a canal town.

Objectives:

- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation for businesses, including social and cultural enterprises to establish and grow.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.
- Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.
- Improve the links between the town centre and the canal and Stratford Park.

Policy ZP2c Fromside Industrial Estate

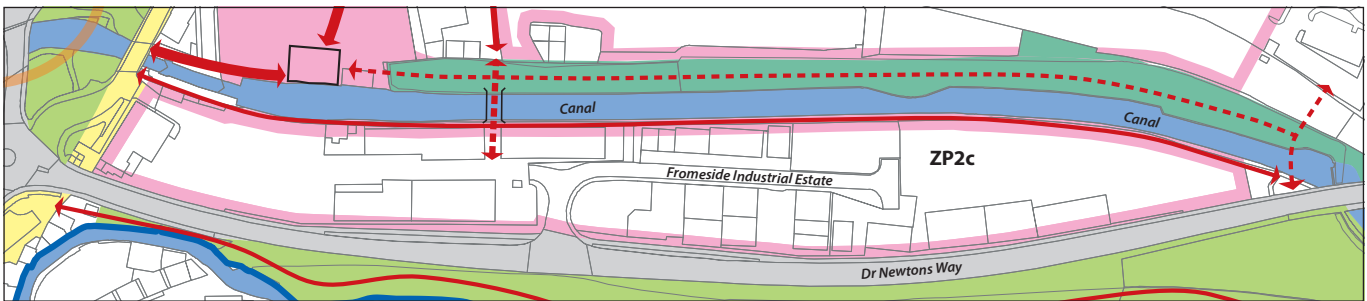
Any proposals for the development, redevelopment or intensification of employment uses on the Fromside Industrial Site as shown on the proposals map where the site abuts the canal will be supported, where any new building(s) provide a well designed frontage onto the canal and enable the canal towpath to be widened to a minimum of two metres.

Contributions to improving pedestrian access to the town centre from the site and from Dr Newton's Way will be sought, subject to viability. Where relevant to the site the pedestrian/cycle underpass which gives access to the town centre from Rodborough should be protected.

Explanation:

This is a key employment location on the edge of the town centre with good access by road but cut off from the town centre by the canal and railway. It is important that opportunities to intensify employment use in the future should improve links to the town centre and make use of the valuable canalside location. Where there is direct access onto the footpath more space should be provided than the two metres minimum set out in the Policy to ensure safe and convenient use. Any proposal to bridge over the canal will need to ensure that boat movement is not impeded and should be discussed with the canal owners, Stroud Valleys Canal Company and the Cotswold Canals Trust. Any development within 8 metres of the river will require a Flood Defence Consent from the Environment Agency.

Extract from the proposals map.



Fromside Industrial Estate opportunity site.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – railway zone (Z3)

Railway land/Cheapside car parks area

3.3.7 Introduction:

The railway zone includes land on either side of the railway and station most of which is currently in use for parking. As a key entry point into the town centre it has a poor overall visual appearance and it provides a poor setting for the Grade II* listed Brunel Goods Shed. The railway acts as a significant barrier to pedestrian movement and cuts off the canal from the town centre. There is a large amount of land in this location which is underused, including unused railway land.

Objectives:

- Improve the links between the town centre, the canal and Stratford Park.
- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, at weekends and in the evening.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.
- Enhance the historic fabric and identity of the town centre, including the relationship to the restored canal.
- Mark the main entry points to the town centre (gateways) and provide a sense of 'arrival'.

The Brunel Goods Shed east end.



Policy ZP3

Railway land/Cheapside car parks

Any development proposals for the land on either side of the railway as shown on the proposal map in the context of a development brief which will help co-ordinate each of the following will be supported:

- Creation of a new bridge across the railway to provide improved pedestrian, and particularly disabled, access into the heart of the town centre.

North side:

- Redesign and upgrade of the station forecourt and Station Road to create an attractive pedestrian and cycle friendly entrance to the town from the station.
- Reuse and/or redevelopment of undeveloped, unused railway land, subject to no prejudice to the long term operational needs of the railway.
- Creation of a more attractive public space between the listed Brunel Goods Shed and the Brunel Mall multi-storey car park, with improved surfacing, more planting and better access, enhancing its ability to host social and cultural events while retaining its usual function as a car park.
- Creation of new pedestrian links to the town centre from London Road car park and Brunel Goods Shed.

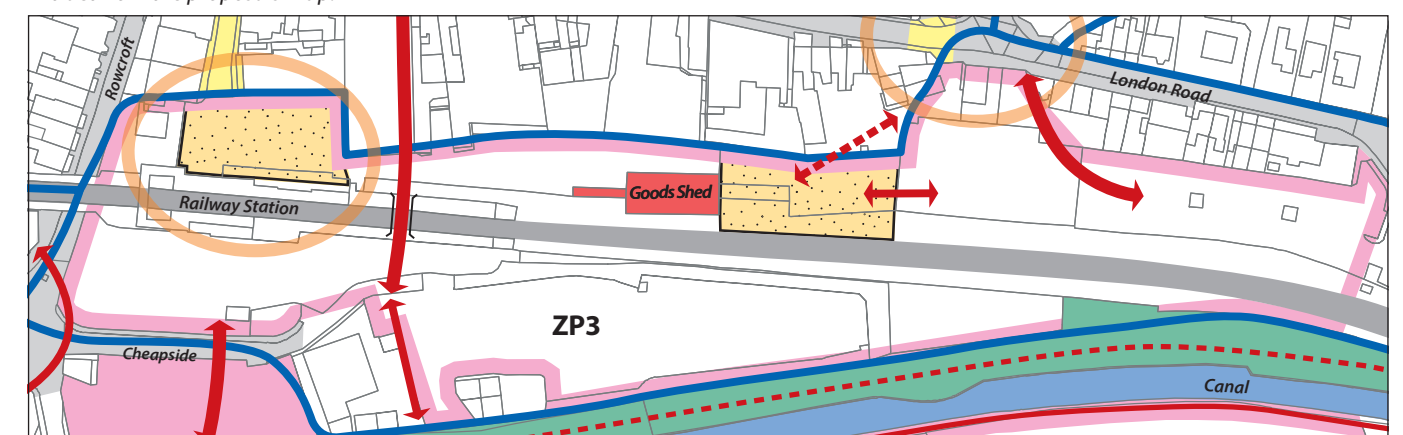
South side:

- Development of the car parks on the south side of the railway for mixed uses, including residential, subject to meeting the aims of Policy AP11.

Explanation:

Development in the railway area and improvements to the appearance and usability of the station 'gateway' has the potential to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre, boost its tourist appeal and make more efficient use of land, including derelict railway land. A new bridge (as shown indicatively on the proposals map) is needed to link Cheapside to the town centre and incorporate disabled access to the platforms. There is an opportunity to give the listed Brunel Goods Shed a much improved setting with the creation of a new public square and new routes into the town centre which avoid the narrowest part of London Road.

Extract from the proposals map.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – Merrywalks zone (Z4)

Railway arches development site

3.3.8 Introduction:

The derelict warehouse, adjacent land and the arches represent a significant development opportunity adjacent to the heart of the town.

Objectives:

- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation for businesses, including social and cultural enterprises to establish and grow.
- Provide more high-quality dwellings to increase the number and diversity of people who live in the town centre.
- Maximise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy ZP4a Railway arches site

Land on the southeast side of Merrywalks adjacent to the railway arches and including a derelict warehouse as shown on the Proposals Map has the potential to be redeveloped/reused for mixed use commercial and residential development. Any development scheme which ensures delivery of the following will be supported:

- The design responds to the scale and character of the listed railway arches and the location of the site in the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area.
- An attractive frontage is provided to Merrywalks.
- The design allows for the route from Merrywalks to the lower end of Rowcroft via the railway arches to be re-opened.

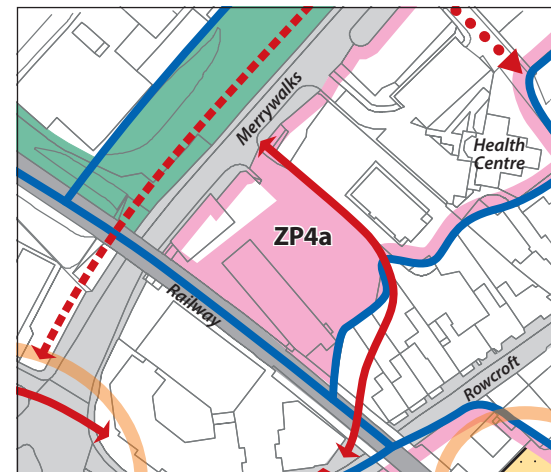
Explanation:

Development of this site has the potential to significantly improve the appearance of this part of the town as well as supporting the economy and, potentially, adding to the residential stock. Any proposal needs to take account of the long term possibility of redeveloping the whole of the east side of Merrywalks in the context of *Policy ZP4c*.

Railway arches development site.



Extract from the proposals map.



3.3 Zonal policies – Merrywalks zone (Z4)

Pedestrian and cycle access in Merrywalks

3.3.9 Introduction:

Merrywalks is the most important traffic connection in the town, and serves as a key route for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. The green strip on the west side of the road offers the opportunity to create a safer and more attractive route for pedestrians and cyclists away from the traffic. Routes from the bus stops and from Beeches Green all need improvement to make it easier for people to access the town centre from the northwest, having regard to the topography.

Objectives:

- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient, well-designed and signposted routes.
- Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise from traffic.

Policy ZP4b Pedestrian/cycle access in Merrywalks

Over the Plan period proposals for the improvement of access for pedestrians and cyclists to/from Merrywalks will be supported:

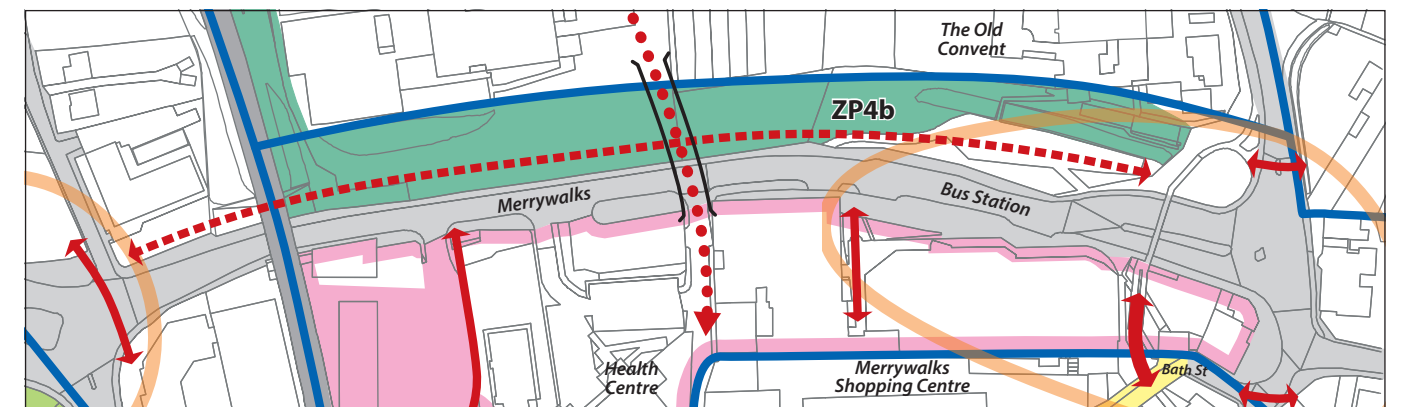
- Creating a new pedestrian and cycle route along the northwest side of the road in a manner compatible with the aims of *Policy AP5b*.
- Improving the staircase route from the street into the shopping centre.
- Creating a new direct connection from the pedestrian bridge into Bath Street.

Any development which will have an adverse impact on, or will benefit from these improvements will be expected to contribute to their provision, subject to need and viability.

Explanation:

The current routes along the A46 are intimidating for cyclists and inconvenient for pedestrians. The pedestrian routes to the shopping centre deter approaches from the west. The proposed pedestrian and cycle route through the privately owned green space will need to be negotiated as a permissive route. The staircase route requires improvements to signage and lighting.

Extract from the proposals map.



C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – Merrywalks zone (Z4)

Merrywalks area

3.3.10 Introduction:

Merrywalks is seen as a key gateway into the town but one which lacks quality buildings and the general environment is dominated by traffic.

Objectives:

- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, including evenings and weekends.
- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation in which businesses, including social and cultural enterprises can establish and grow.
- Make the town a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.
- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Mark the entry points to the town centre (gateways) and provide a sense of 'arrival'.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy ZP4c Merrywalks area

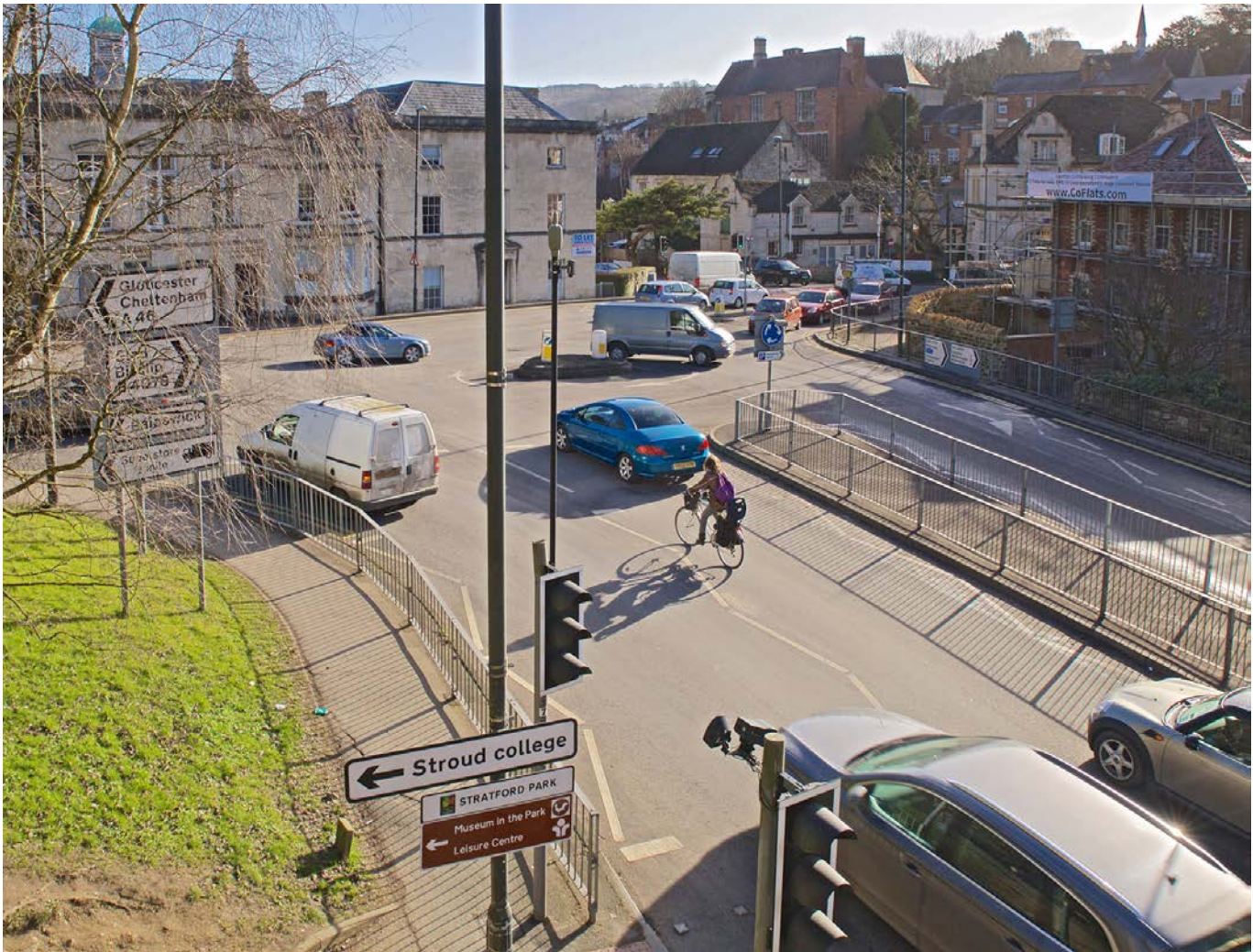
Any redevelopment of the land and buildings in Merrywalks as shown on the Proposals Map should provide for all of the following:

- A building or buildings which will enhance the Gloucester Street/bus station gateway into the town identified under AP7.
- An active and coherent frontage to Merrywalks.
- A mix of uses including retail, leisure, commercial and residential.
- Contributions to the provision of the proposed Stratford Parkway bridge over Merrywalks, subject to viability.
- Opening up of Slad Brook to public access, where practical.

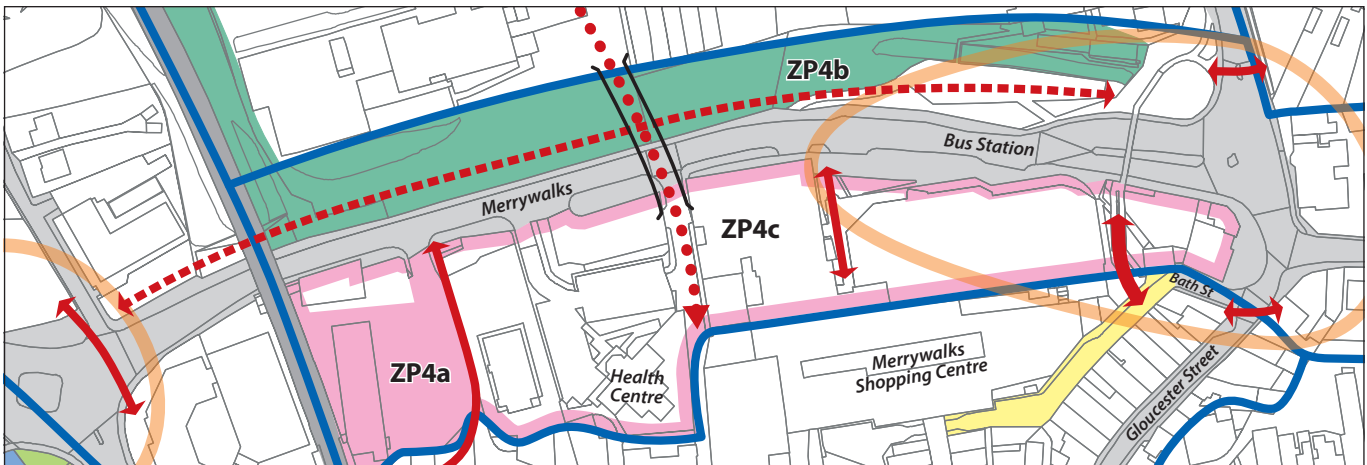
Any loss of car parking is in accordance with the aims of Policy AP11.

Explanation:

There are no plans for development or redevelopment of any of the Merrywalks buildings at the time of the preparation of this plan. Nevertheless this plan is looking over a 20-year time horizon during which circumstances may change. In addition to seeking to address the conflict between the bus station and the through traffic (see *Statement NP8*) this Plan needs to set out a framework for any future development of this area to ensure that the opportunity is not missed to make a radical improvement to this important entrance to, and part of, the town centre.



Merrywalks roundabout.



Extract from the proposals map.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – Beeches Green zone (Z5)

Beeches Green area

3.3.10 Introduction:

Beeches Green provides an important concentration of social, health and educational facilities. There are also extensive areas of grounds and playing fields. This area is very well located lying between the shopping area and key facilities to the west: Stratford Park and the museum; the leisure centre; South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and Tesco supermarket. Access to all of these facilities, however, is indirect and unsatisfactory, via Beeches Green Road.

Objectives:

- Improve the links between the town centre, the canal and Stratford Park.
- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.
- Provide more high quality dwellings to increase the number and diversity of people who live in the town centre.
- Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise from traffic.

Policy ZP5 Beeches Green

Development at Beeches Green within the area shown on the proposals map will be supported where it involves:

- The intensification or redevelopment of the education, health and social uses on the site.
- Residential development on open land where no longer needed for operational purposes.

Any schemes shall provide each of the following:

- Enhancement of the open spaces related to the site identified in *Policy AP5b*, including the green strip alongside Merrywalks.
- Provision of, or contributions to the significant improvement of pedestrian and cycle access from the west via 'Stratford Parkway', as proposed under *Policy AP3*, subject to viability.

Explanation:

There are no plans for the closure of any of the facilities on the Beeches Green site at the time of the preparation of this plan. Nevertheless this Plan has a 20-year time horizon during which circumstances may change. This policy identifies the opportunities which potentially exist in such an event. The central location of this area makes it attractive as a potential location for residential development in addition to the health, educational and social facilities for which this area is ideally located. The idea of a new pedestrian/cycling route across the zone, creating a much more attractive and efficient route from the town centre to Stratford Park, the leisure centre, museum, college and Tesco, is one which has received very strong support from the community and it is a key proposal in the Plan.

The Stratford Parkway route shown on the Proposals Map is indicative. The precise line of the path will be determined as part of a development brief which will need to be prepared in consultation with landowners and SDC. The Beeches Green area has historic character with 5 listed buildings in the area defined on the Proposals Map. Future plans for the site will need to have regard to the historic and landscape character of the area.



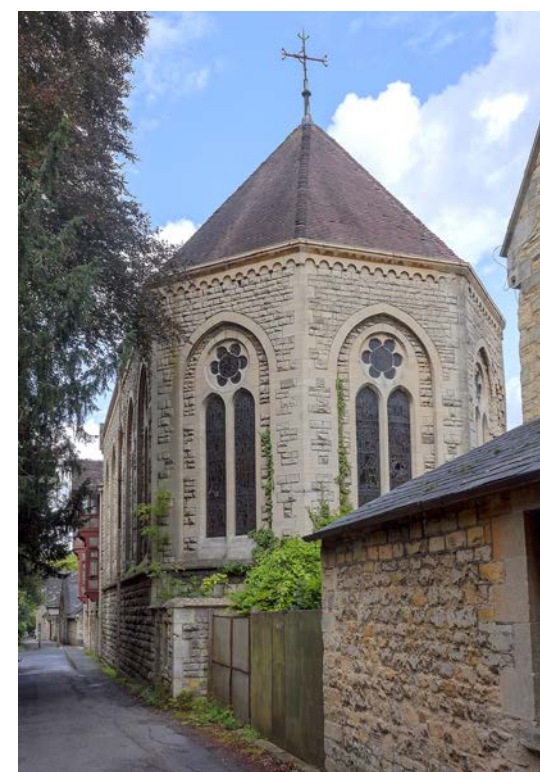
Beeches Green Health Centre.



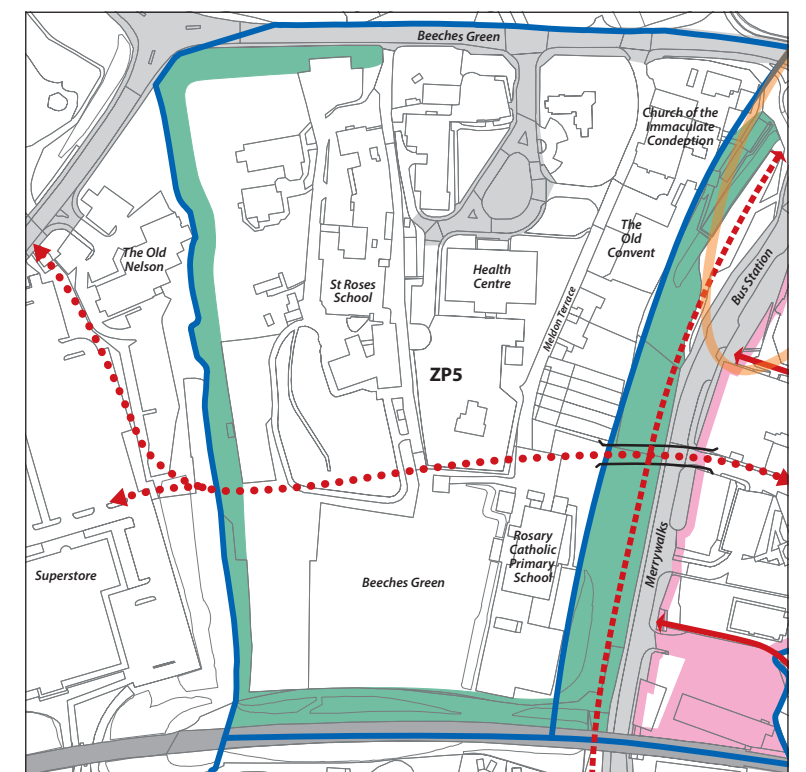
Rosary Catholic Primary School.



Church of the Immaculate Conception.



The Old Convent.



Extract from the proposals map.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision continued

3.3 Zonal policies – Lansdown/Nelson Street zone (Z6)

Police Station/Magistrates’ Court opportunity site

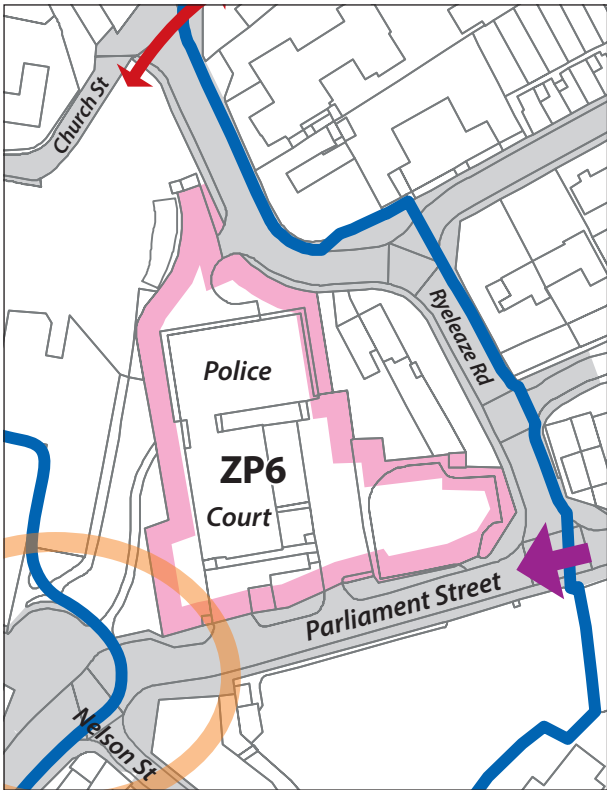
3.3.11 Introduction:

The police and court buildings occupy an important gateway site at the top-of-town and next to car parks.

Objectives:

- Optimise opportunities to develop or redevelop land within the town centre to meet the needs of the town and make the most efficient use of land and buildings.
- Provide more high quality dwellings to increase the number and diversity of people who live in the town centre.
- Mark the main entry points to the town centre (gateways) and provide a sense of ‘arrival’.

Extract from the proposals map.



Policy ZP6
Police Station/Magistrates’ Court

Redevelopment of the police station and court within the area shown on the proposals map will be supported where it provides each of the following:

- A landmark building which will enhance the gateway into the town identified under Policy AP7.
- The opportunity to make better use of the sites and neighbouring land to improve the retail/social/commercial facilities in this part of the town.
- Retail uses and/or public service office uses at ground floor.
- Residential, hotel and/or office uses on upper floors.
- Retention of the trees and the incorporation of some public open space to maintain some openness in this top of town location.
- Enhancement of the public realm in the vicinity of the site through design and landscape measures and/or financial contributions, subject to viability.

Explanation:

There are no plans for these buildings to be vacated at the time of the preparation of this plan. Nevertheless this Plan is looking to a 20-year time horizon during which circumstances may change. In that event redevelopment would be welcomed by the community. Any such redevelopment should not be considered in isolation, but seen in the context of the adjacent spaces and buildings, which could together offer the possibility of transforming the character and facilities at the top of town.



An important gateway site at the top-of-town and next to car parks.

D: How the Town Council will help deliver the plan

3.4 Promotional Statements

These promotional statements are included in the Plan to show the Town Council’s commitment to bringing its influence to bear on matters which lie outside the direct control of the planning system, but which are of considerable importance to the achievement of the vision.

Car parking

3.4.1 Introduction:

The District Council has responsibility for, and controls, most of the car parking in Stroud. It is a priority for the District Council to enhance and develop parking to bolster growth, culture and opportunity in the town. Consultation responses suggest that some motorists have difficulty finding free parking spaces even though the number available should be more than adequate.

Objectives:

- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient, well-designed and signposted routes.
- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, in the evening and at weekends.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

Statement NP1 Car parking

Stroud Town Council will support and encourage Stroud District Council to ensure that there is sufficient quality public parking close to the town centre to support the economy. The Town Council will advocate changes to tariffs to maximize ease of use, provide short-stay off-street car parking, extra and improved signage and real-time information about spaces.

Explanation:

It is a key aim of the Plan to promote walking and cycling to encourage more people, including disabled people, to access the town centre by modes other than the private car. Nevertheless, the town centre requires sufficient car parking for those who are unable to visit, shop or work in the centre by other means. Information which informs people of where there are spaces, including signage and real-time information systems can encourage better use of available spaces. Use of car parks is variable possibly due to poor signage. There is a need to manage traffic regulations and parking tariffs so that there is provision for some short-stay ‘pop and shop’ parking to support businesses and time limits so that spaces are available throughout the day. Car park charges should seek to encourage local shopping and town centre visits and help make Stroud competitive with neighbouring towns.

Over time and as modal shift is achieved through other measures in the Plan such as improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, progressively increasing pedestrian priority and improving public transport facilities the amount of car parking serving the town centre may be reduced. This is a matter which needs to be kept under review.



Street level and multi-storey car parks in Merrywalks.



Parliament Street car park.

D: How the Town Council will help deliver the plan continued

Town centre promotion

3.4.2 Introduction:

The cultural life of the town centre is fundamental to its distinctive character and it helps to support its vitality and viability.

Objectives:

- Welcome and support new and existing businesses and provide a good range of high quality accommodation for businesses, including social and cultural enterprises to establish and grow.
- Diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, in the evening and at weekends.
- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

Statement NP2 Town centre promotion

Stroud Town Council will promote a sustained programme of events and activities in the town centre to encourage its use by local residents and visitors, including families, children and young people.

Explanation:

Stroud is renowned for its street life, markets and creative sectors which attract visitors and generate business. These attributes are valued by residents, visitors and businesses and are integral to the vitality and viability of the town.

Crowds enjoying Stroud town centre during the 2015 Fringe Festival.



Pedestrian priority in core zone

3.4.3 Introduction:

Encouraging more people to use the town centre and to walk to it lie at the heart of many of the development policies in this Plan.

Objectives:

- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient, well-designed routes.
- Make the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

Statement NP3 Pedestrian priority

Over the Plan period Stroud Town Council will promote the prioritisation of pedestrian movement over other forms of transport throughout the core zone, whilst ensuring that access is provided for public transport services, cyclists, delivery vehicles, taxis and those who need to access the town centre by car.

Explanation:

The benefits of adopting a pedestrian priority approach, including the reduction of accidents, have been demonstrated in other towns throughout the UK and in Europe. The consultation responses showed a small majority support for extending pedestrian priority in the town centre. Under the Plan the extension of pedestrian priority will be taken stage by stage and the impact monitored. The first stage is set out in *Project P3* in Table 1, pages 83–86; this is in Section E under 4.2 *Projects*.

John Street – shared use, pedestrian priority.



High Street – fully pedestrianised.



D: How the Town Council will help deliver the plan continued

Greening the town centre

3.4.4 Introduction:

Greening the town centre will help to improve its appearance and encourage insects and wildlife.

Objectives:

- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Enhance biodiversity.

A Parisian example of living green wall ingenuity.



Statement NP4 Greening the town centre

Over the Plan period Stroud Town Council will promote the progressive enhancement in the appearance of, and biodiversity within, the town centre by encouraging:

- Increased tree planting within the Plan area.
- Planting of wildflowers/vegetables on derelict land or land pending development.
- Creation of 'pop-up' parks on derelict land or land pending development which has the potential to be enjoyed informally by the public.
- Planting of living green walls to soften the impact of extensive areas of hard surfaces and improve their potential insect and bird habitat.
- Greening of footpaths and cycleways where appropriate.

Explanation:

Greening the town and planting unused land will help improve both the appearance of the town centre and its biodiversity. 'Pop up' parks offer the potential to provide increased leisure and recreational space where owners are willing to permit public access on a short term basis. Buildings which have expanses of blank walls, such as those at Merrywalks, could improve their appearance and contribute to the greening of the town with the use of living green walls.



A magnificent living green wall in Cornhill, Stroud.



The greening of footpaths and recreational areas softens the impact of large areas of hard surfaces.

D: How the Town Council will help deliver the plan continued

Land and buildings in Merrywalks

3.4.5 Introduction:

The appearance of the land and buildings in Merrywalks, traffic congestion and the operation of the multi storey car park are matters of particular concern to the community, as this is an important gateway into the town centre.

Objectives:

- Improve the appearance of the town centre.
- Ensure people are able to move easily into and around the town centre.
- Reduce the experience of air pollution and noise from traffic.

Statement NP5

Land and buildings in Merrywalks

Stroud Town Council will promote the:

- Improvement in the appearance of the land and existing buildings in Merrywalks.
- Review of the configuration of the Merrywalks car park.
- Review of the traffic management in Merrywalks.

Explanation:

The Town Council will work with key partners including Gloucestershire County Council, the bus companies and landowners to deliver improvements where practical to the existing land and buildings in Merrywalks.

Bus station, cinema and multi-storey car park in Merrywalks.



Cycle access

3.4.6 Introduction:

Consultation responses have shown that cycling is a popular way of accessing the town centre despite the topography of the town.

Objective:

Ensure people are able to move easily into and around the town centre.

Statement NP6

Cycle access

Over the Plan period Stroud Town Council will promote the progressive improvement of access into and around the town centre by cyclists by seeking contra flows and well-marked cycle lanes and the provision of additional open and covered cycle racks, all where practical.

Explanation:

There are a range of measures which can be promoted which will make it easier for cyclists to get into and move around the town centre. Encouraging people to cycle into the town centre where possible, will help achieve one of the aims of the Plan to make the town centre more healthy.

Cycle contra flow in Lansdown.



Bike racks in King Street.



D: How the Town Council will help deliver the plan continued

Statement NP7 Affordable Housing

In addition to the requirements for affordable housing set out in Local Plan *Policy CP9*, arrangements will be made to promote the delivery and control of affordable housing by a community land trust, or equivalent body, in respect of housing schemes, where this is viable.

Explanation:

Statement NP7 seeks to ensure that some affordable housing is provided within the town centre where required by the Local Plan but also that a mechanism exists for developing schemes which will remain affordable.



Statement NP8 Public transport – bus station

Stroud Town Council will review the options for the relocation of the bus station in partnership with the bus companies and Gloucestershire County Council, having regard to the need for any new location to provide:

- An attractive and less-polluted environment for travellers.
- More level access into the town centre.
- Better relationship to the rail station.
- Efficient bus operation.

Explanation:

A priority issue for many people in Stroud is the relocation of the bus station to relieve the conflict between buses and other traffic using Merrywalks – a major through route – and to provide a more convenient place for people to arrive and leave the town centre by bus. The review will consider the opportunities to provide convenient access between the trains and buses to encourage modal shift from cars to buses to access the station.



E: How it will happen

Introduction

- 4.1.1

This part of the Plan sets out how the policies and proposals in this Plan will be delivered to help achieve the vision of making Stroud town centre a ‘welcoming, healthy, thriving place’ over the next 20 years.
- 4.1.2

This NDP is a key consideration for those who wish to promote new development or renewal in the designated area. It will help the district council decide any subsequent planning applications, through the development management process, and this will be a key way in which the NDP will be implemented.
- 4.1.3

The Town Council will use the NDP to help it stimulate and respond positively both to the changes which the Plan is seeking to bring about through the area and zonal development policies, and also to unforeseen changes that may occur over time.
- 4.1.4

The Town Council will develop partnerships to help establish the viability and design criteria for the specific development projects identified in the zonal policies and to encourage change which meets the objectives of the Plan. Other changes will be brought about by the Town Council working with others to make things happen through specific projects, taking advantage of any CIL money which derives from development within the Plan area.
- 4.1.5

Initial viability testing supports the broad concepts set out in the Plan policies. The study concludes that ‘Based on the findings of this Viability Study, the proposals in the emerging NDP would not subject development to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that
- its ability to be developed is threatened. Furthermore the cumulative impact of the policies will not put implementation of the District’s Local Plan at serious risk, and will in fact help to facilitate development beyond the levels envisaged in the submitted draft Local Plan.’

4.1.6

The projects are based on an *Infrastructure Plan* which sets out the infrastructure requirements arising from the policies and proposals in this Plan. The infrastructure plan is at Appendix 7 (page 102). It has been developed following viability testing of the Plan which has provided broad costs for the specific items of infrastructure identified. The implementation of the Plan will rely on partnerships between public and private organisations.
- 4.2 Projects

4.2.1

Stroud Town Council will work with partners, landowners and developers on the projects set out in Table 1 (opposite and pages 84–86).

Timescales for the projects are estimated as:

• *Short-term*: within 5 years

• *Medium-term*: within 10 years

• *Long-term*: within 20 years

4.2.2

It is anticipated that many of these projects will be funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or s106 developer contributions.

Table 1: Projects

Project reference and name	Policy statement	Project	Partners and consultees	Timescale
P1 a–d Station forecourt	AP3	Undertake enhancements of the station forecourt to:	Network Rail, First Great Western, APCOA, The Imperial Hotel, SDC, GCC, Chamber of Commerce, taxi companies, Ecotricity, neighbouring businesses, rail users, pedestrians and cyclists	Short
	AP7 ZP3 NP6	a. Improve its appearance as a gateway into the town centre.		
		b. Establish pedestrian and cycling priority.		
		c. Enhance signage.		
		d. Increase cycle parking, including secure arrangements for electric recharging points.		
P2 Access over railway	AP3 ZP3 NP6	Build a new bridge across the railway, linking Cheapside to the shopping centre and providing disabled access to the station platforms.	Network Rail, First Great Western, APCOA, The Imperial Hotel, SDC, GCC, Chamber of Commerce, taxi companies, Ecotricity, neighbouring businesses, rail users, pedestrians and cyclists	Medium
P3 a–h Pedestrian priority	AP3 AP7 AP9b Appendix 6 ZP1c NP3 NP6	Progressively upgrade the quality of streets and spaces in the town centre and promote pedestrian priority by extension of shared surfaces or equivalent design measures:	GCC Highways, SDC, Chamber of Commerce, Subscription Rooms, neighbouring businesses, pedestrians and cyclists	
		a. Visually integrating Four Clocks and Subscription Rooms, Bedford Street into a Subscription Rooms Square.		Medium
		b. Along full length of Kendrick St.		Short
		c. At the junction of Station Road and Russell Street.		Short
		d. At the junction of George Street and King Street.		Medium
		e. At the crossing of London Road from car parks to Union Street and the market areas.		Medium
		f. Along the full length of Bath St.		Medium
		g. At the junction of Church Street, Brick Row and Ryeleaze Road.		Medium
		h. At the junction of High Street and King Street.		Medium

D: How it will happen continued

Project reference and name	Policy statement	Project	Partners and consultees	Timescale
P4 a–g Pedestrian and cycle access	AP3	Improve access by:		
	ZP3	a. Creating a new pedestrian crossing from Cainscross Road to Rowcroft	GCC Highways, Ecotricity	Short
	NP5			
	ZP4b	b. Extending the Merrywalks pedestrian bridge towards the shopping centre	GCC Highways, SDC, landowners	Medium
	ZP2c			
	ZP4c			
	ZP5	c. Negotiating a new pedestrian/cycle route through the Merrywalks green strip	GCC Highways, St. Rose's School, Old Convent	Medium
	NP6			
		d. Making visual improvements to the Rowcroft railway bridge	Network Rail, First Great Western, SDC, GCC, Chamber of Commerce, Ecotricity, neighbouring businesses	Short
		e. Opening and improving the access from Brunel multi-storey car park towards the station and Brunel Goods Shed	Network Rail, First Great Western, SDC, GCC, Chamber of Commerce, Ecotricity, neighbouring businesses	Short
		f. Creating a new bridge over the canal at Capel's Mill to join up the towpaths and link with the footpath from Rodborough and Butterow	SDC, GCC, Cotswold Canals Trust, Rodborough PC	Long
		g. Creating a new pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Bath Road at Wallbridge.	GCC Highways, Ecotricity	Short
		h. Create a new route, 'Stratford Parkway', across Beeches Green, linking town centre with Leisure Centre, Museum, College and Tesco.	GCC Highways, St. Rose's School, Old Convent, Leisure Centre, Museum, College and Tesco.	Long
		i. Make a new connection from the London Road car park avoiding the narrow main road pavement.	Network Rail, First Great Western, SDC, GCC, Ecotricity, neighbouring businesses	Medium

Project reference and name	Policy statement	Project	Partners and consultees	Timescale
P5 Local Heritage assets	AP8b	Identify buildings of local heritage interest	Stroud Preservation Trust, Civic Society	Short
P6 a-h Development briefs	AP1	Prepare development briefs for the following locations and promote them for development:		Short
	AP4			
	AP3			
	ZP1b	a. Canal Basin	Landowners, STW, Wales and West Utilities, Cotswold Canals Trust	
	ZP2a			
	ZP2c			
	ZP3	b. Fromeside Industrial Estate	Cotswold Canals Trust, SDC, landowners, developers	
	ZP4a			
	ZP4c			
	ZP5	c. Railway Zone including car parks on the south side of the railway	Network Rail, First Great Western, SDC, developers	
	ZP6	d. Railways Arches	Landowners, neighbours, developers	
		e. Beeches Green/Stratford Parkway	St. Rose's School, Old Convent, GCC, NHS	
		f. Police Station/Magistrates' Court	Police and Crime Commissioner, Ministry of Justice, SDC	
		g. Market Tavern	Landowners, neighbours, developers	
		h. Canal frontage	Cotswold Canals Trust, SDC, landowners, developers	
P7 Design	AP9a AP13 NP4	Develop more detailed design guidance relevant to each zone, including guidance on sustainable buildings and greening of the town centre.	Civic Society, SDC, SVP	Short
P8 Car Parking	NP1	Promoting better directions to car parks, user-friendly parking tariffs, and real-time information about car park spaces.	SDC, Chamber of Commerce, GCC, bus operators	Short
P9 Energy generation	AP13	Provide plug-in charging facilities for low emission vehicles in public car parks.	SDC, APCOA	Short

D: How it will happen continued

Project reference and name	Policy statement	Project	Partners and consultees	Timescale
P10 a-e Gateways	AP7	Improve the appearance of the gateways to the town:	SDC, Chamber of Commerce, GCC, property owners and neighbours	
		a. Gloucester Street		Short
		b. Nelson/Parliament Streets		Medium
		c. London Road/Cornhill		Medium
		d. Wallbridge – <i>see also P3 above</i>		Short
		e. Bus Station		Long
P11 Public Transport	AP12 NP8	Promoting improved facilities for bus users including enhanced bus shelters, real-time information about bus services, signs to key destinations including town centre facilities and accessible toilets.	GCC	Short
P12 Bus Station	NP8	Review the options for the relocation of the bus station having regard to the need for any new location to provide: a. an attractive and less polluted environment for travellers b. more level access into the town centre c. better relationship to the rail station d. efficient bus operation	Bus companies, Gloucestershire County Council, neighbouring businesses, landowners	Long
P13 Cycle Access	NP6	Promote the progressive improvement of access into and around the town centre by cyclists by seeking contra flows and well marked cycle lanes and the provision of additional open and covered cycle racks, all where practical.	Cycle user groups, Gloucestershire County Council, neighbouring businesses, landowners	Long
P14 Merrywalks	NP5	a. Promote improvement to the appearance of the land and existing buildings in Merrywalks b. Review of the configuration of the Merrywalks car park c. Review traffic management in Merrywalks	Bus companies, Gloucestershire County Council, neighbouring businesses, Stroud District Council, landowners	Long

4.3 Management

- 4.3.1 The Town Council has set up a Working Group tasked with managing the delivery of the projects set out in Table 1.
- 4.3.2 Membership of the Working Group will include representatives from Stroud Town Council, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and other key stakeholders.
- 4.3.3 It is anticipated that separate project teams will be formed to deliver larger projects involving as necessary: community groups, landowners and other interested parties. The working group will oversee and report on the work of these project teams. A detailed project brief will be prepared for each project.

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 This is an ambitious Plan which seeks to make the most of the opportunities which exist to re-shape the town centre by building on the investment made in the canal and railway. Success of the Plan will depend on the extent to which the Town Council is able to influence and deliver the changes needed to deliver the vision. By monitoring the Plan the Town Council will be able to assess this and be alerted to where changes may need to be made to the Plan when it is updated.
- 4.4.2 As part of the monitoring process the Town Council Working Group will produce an annual progress report on its projects. Particular attention will be paid to progress in delivering the projects to timetable and to the level of co operation being achieved with partners. A key measure of success will be the extent to which planning permissions granted in the town centre reflect the policies in the Plan.
- 4.4.3 Regular audits of the progress on delivering the Plan will inform any review and will use the evidence base supporting this Plan as the base line for measuring the following:

Table 2: Monitoring

Measure	Unit	Source	Frequency
Projects completed	Yes/no	NDP WG	Annual
Net increase in residential accommodation	Number of properties/ number of bedrooms	SDC Planning log	Annual
New employment development	Number of new jobs created on developed sites	SDC Planning log	Annual
Employment intensification	Overall change in number of jobs in NDP area	NOMIS	Annual
Number of car parking spaces	Net change	Count	5 years
Number of disabled car parking spaces	Net change	Count	5 years
Change in population profile in the town centre	Male/female, age groups	Mid-year population estimates	5 years
Accessibility	Count of access issues	Repeat access audits	5 years

How the Plan fits together

as at December 2015

Vision	Themes	Objectives	Local Plan policies as at December 2015	Policies/statements
Making the town centre more welcoming	- Improving access. - Strengthening the social and cultural fabric. - Enhancing the environment.	Make the town centre a welcoming place.	SO4; EI12	AP3 Access and moving around the town centre
		Ensure people can move around easily.	SA1; CP3; CP8; CP9; ES1, ES4	AP4 General housing
		Improve the appearance.	SO6; ES13; ES6	AP5a Local green spaces
		Protect and enhance important spaces.	SO6	AP5b Amenity spaces
		Enhance the historic fabric and identity of town centre.	SO6	AP6 Setting of the town centre
		Reduce level of greenhouse emissions and experience of air and noise pollution.	ES10	AP7 Gateways to the town centre
		Respect setting of town centre.	CP14; ES12	AP8a Conservation areas
		Mark main entry points of the town centre.	ES12	AP8b Local heritage assets
			None	AP9b Design – Public realm
			SA1b	AP10 Buildings of cultural importance
			ES11	AP11 Car parks
			EI1	ZP1a Shop fronts
				ZP1c Important town spaces
				ZP2a Cheapside
				ZP2b Canal Basin
				ZP2c Fromeside
				ZP3 Railway land/Cheapside car parks
			SO4; EI12	ZP4a Railway arches site
			SO4; CP3	ZP4b Pedestrian/cycle access in Merrywalks
				ZP4c Merrywalks area
				ZP5 Beeches Green
				NP1 Car parking
				NP2 Town Centre promotion
				NP3 Pedestrian priority
				NP5 Land and buildings in Merrywalks
				NP7 Affordable Housing

Vision	Themes	Objectives	Local Plan policies	Policies/statements
Making the town healthier	- Improving access. - Enhancing the environment. - Creating a healthier town centre	Encourage walking and cycling.	SO4; EI2	AP3 Access and moving around the town centre
		Reduce level of greenhouse emissions and experience of air and noise pollution.	SA1; CP3; CP8; CP9; ES1 SO6; ES13; ES6; ES4 CP14; ES12	AP4 General housing
		Provide more high quality dwellings.	SO4	AP5a Local green spaces
		Protect and enhance important spaces.	ES1; ES2	AP5b Amenity spaces
		Enhance biodiversity.		AP9a Design – general principles
			EI1	AP12 Public transport – general improvements
				AP13 Energy
				ZP2c Fromeside
			SO4; EI12	ZP3 Railway land/Cheapside car parks
			SO4; CP3	ZP4b Pedestrian/cycle access in Merrywalks
				ZP5 Beeches Green
				NP3 Pedestrian priority
				NP4 Greening the town centre
				NP6 Cycle access
				NP8 Public transport – Bus station

Vision	Themes	Objectives	Local Plan policies	Policies/statements
ing a thriving town centre	- Sustaining the economy. - Improving access. - Strengthening the social and cultural fabric.	Diversify the economy.	CP11	AP1 Jobs and business
		Welcome and support new and existing businesses.	CP12	AP2 Retail and social
		Maximize opportunities to develop/redevelop land.	SO4; EI12	AP3 Access and moving around the town centre
		Ensure people can move around easily.	SA1; CP3; CP8; CP9; ES1; ES4	AP4 General housing
		Improve links between town centre, canal and Stratford Park.	CP14; ES12	AP9a Design General Principles
		Provide more high quality dwellings to increase number and range of people living in town centre.	ES12	AP11 Car Parks
				ZP1a Shop Fronts
				ZP21b Cornhill/Market Tavern
				ZP2a Cheapside
				ZP2b Canal Basin
			SA1b	ZP2c Fromeside
			ES11	ZP3 Railway land/Cheapside car parks
			EI1	ZP4a Railway arches
				ZP4c Merrywalks area
				ZP5 Beeches Green
				ZP6 Police Station/Magistrates' Court
				NP1 Car parking
				NP2 Town Centre promotion
				NP3 Pedestrian priority
				NP7 Affordable Housing
			SO4; CP3	NP8 Public transport – Bus station

Definitions

Word/phrase	Definition
Access	Usually used to describe the physical access issues of a space or road or building – well-designed accessible spaces ensure that disabled people, young people, older people, people with buggies etc can all enjoy the town centre and public buildings equally.
Accessibility	Ensuring that all public spaces are easy to get into and all services can be used to ensure that everyone in society is welcomed without barriers.
Affordable housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. District Council policy sets out the requirement for the provision of affordable housing.
Biodiversity	Short for biological diversity the term used to describe the variety of life and all of the natural processes found on earth, or in a specific area.
Brownfield Land	Land which has been previously used for any type of permanent buildings and can be reused.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. It came into force on 6 April 2010 through the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.
Conservation areas	Areas designated by the Dstrict Council as special for their architectural or historic interest. There are three conservation areas in the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.
Cotswolds AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designated in 1966. Stroud as a town is not inside the AONB area but is surrounded by it.
Custom, self build housing.	Custom built housing means that the new owner has a significant say in the design of the future new build house. Self-build is when people either individually or as a group build houses for themselves.
Designated Neighbourhood (Plan) Area	The geographical area covered by this Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Development	Development includes: • building operations (e.g. structural alterations, construction, rebuilding, most demolition); • material changes of use of land and buildings; • engineering operations (e.g. groundworks); • mining operations; • other operations normally undertaken by a person carrying on a business as a builder. • subdivision of a building (including any part it) used as a dwelling house for use as two or more separate dwelling houses as defined by section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Examination	The assessment by an independent inspector to ensure the Neighbourhood Development Plan is legal in all respects relevant to planning law and consistent with the Stroud Local Plan and the NPPF.

Word/phrase	Definition
Footfall	The numbers of people passing through a measured place, e.g. Merrywalks Shopping Centre, often counted to check shopping trends.
Gateway	The main entry points to the town centre to provide a sense of ‘arrival’.
Listed buildings	Buildings which have been recognised by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as having special architectural or historic interest.
Local Plan (LP)	Stroud District Council’s statutory planning document which will guide and determine development within the whole of the Stroud District Council area and to which the Neighbourhood Development Plan must generally conform.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The Government’s policy on all matters affecting the planning system and to which the Neighbourhood Development Plan must generally conform.
Pedestrians	Pedestrians and the pedestrian experience is used throughout this Plan to include all those who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters and buggies.
Policies	Those parts of the Plan which must be taken account of by anyone proposing development in the town centre and which will be used by the District Council to help them decide planning applications in the town centre.
Projects	Specific activities that the Town Council will undertake to help make things happen in the town centre to meet the aims of the Plan.
Promotions	Concepts for the Plan’s vision that lie outside the planning system and need the Town Council to support and move forward.
Public Realm Strategy (PRS)	Commissioned by Stroud Concordat and adopted in 2009 by Stroud Town and District Councils ‘to improve the key streets and spaces in Stroud’. The public realm includes all the areas open and available to the public both inside buildings and outdoors.
Real-time information	Up to date, visual information, e.g. about car parking spaces or when buses are to arrive.
S106 developer contributions	Section 106 agreements (based on that section of The 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
Statutory development plan	A plan which has legal status.
Strategic environmental assessment	A formal statutory process of assessing the environmental impacts of policies and proposals.
Stroud	Stroud Town and Stroud Parish are one and the same geographically defined areas.
Sustainability appraisal	A formal process of assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts of policies and proposals in any plan.
Topography	The natural and artificial surface shapes and features in the town and surrounding landscape

Key facts about the town centre¹²

People¹³

427 people live in the town centre.
33% are in the age range 16-29; 50% are between 30 and 64.
63% of residents are male.
11% of households have children.
09% are unemployed.
48% of households do not have a car.
35% travel to work by car.
75% have good health.

Homes

78% of dwellings are flats.
56% of dwellings are privately rented.
52% of homes are one-bedroom units; 21.5% are two-bedroom; 10% are four-bedroom or more.

Jobs and business

There are approximately 210 retail units in the town centre with 160 of these in its core zone (*NDP*).
29 retail premises were vacant in the town centre in 2013 (*Planning Prospect Ltd*).
10 shops and two public houses currently vacant in the core zone (2015). Vacancy rate is currently six per cent in the core zone (*NDP*) (national average 11.8 per cent, *Local Data Company, 2015*).
Approximately 290 offices and non-retail businesses are in the town centre (*NDP*).
Ecotricity occupies three office buildings within the town centre and employs 500 people.
1,971 people have their normal place of work in the NDP area, including the town centre and Fromeside Industrial Estate (*Census 2011*).

Transport and access

Merrywalks forms part of the A46 main highway.
1,081 spaces are available in town centre public car parks together with 150 spaces in railway station car parks.
49 designated disabled parking spaces are available, of which 20 are on-street and 29 off-street.
There is capacity for 64 on-street parking spaces, of which 44 are short-stay and 20 for disabled parking.
4,650 vehicles a day enter the town centre from

Rowcroft and 4,350 from London Road, compared to 11,720 travelling westwards along Merrywalks and 10,300 westwards along Dr Newton’s Way.¹⁴
Streets with the greatest pedestrian footfall are King Street, Merrywalks Centre and High Street with peaks on Fridays and Saturdays.¹⁵
15% of journeys to work by town centre residents are made by foot and 6% by public transport (compared to 11% & 4% in the whole town and 6% & 3% in the whole district).
Stroud Railway Station usage increased by 133% from 199,000 entries and exits in 2001/2 to 464,000 in 2011/12 (*LTP Evidence Base Review, 2014*) which includes an unknown number of people coming to and from Cheapside car parks.
Significant on-street commuter parking in Stroud has been identified as leading to environmental and safety problems on the streets affected, which can be a deterrent to cycling (*LTP Evidence Base Review, 2014*).
Swindon to Kemble railway redoubling will increase capacity of the Stroud Valley line to four trains per hour in each direction, as well as offer improvements in reliability (*LTP Evidence Base Review, 2014*).
Heritage
95 Grade II listed buildings.
Three Grade II* listed buildings – St Laurence Church, the Old Town Hall and the Brunel Goods Shed.
Three Conservation Areas – Stroud Town Centre CA (No. 18), Stroud Station CA (No. 28) and part of Stroud Industrial Heritage CA (No. 29).
Conservation Area Statement No. 18: Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area Statement was adopted as *Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA)* by the District Council in April 2008. The adoption of this statement enacted a boundary change: ‘The Shambles Conservation Area’ (No. 17) merged with what was formerly called ‘Stroud Central Conservation Area’ (No. 18) to form ‘Stroud Town Centre Conservation Area’. In addition, part of the Stroud Station conservation area (No. 28) – Rowcroft/Station Rd/ Russell St – was incorporated into this renamed ‘Town Centre’ Conservation Area. The boundary changes/transfers are mapped on Map 7 at the back of the *CAS*. The document on SDC website is the

version used for development management purposes. (<http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/planning/developmentmanagement.asp?s=sectioncontent3&p=appraisals,sc>)
‘Stroud Station Conservation Area’ (No. 28) covers the station and forecourt in front of it, the Brunel Goods Shed, the station car park and Hill Paul. The Station CA map shown on SDC’s website pre-dates the boundary change and is therefore out of date: (<http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docsplanning/developmentmanagement.asp?s=sectioncontent3&p=appraisals,sstation>)
Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area’ – or ‘IHCA’ – (No. 29) extends well beyond the NDP boundary, but within the relevant area it covers: Bath Place / Cheapside car park; Cheapside, Wallbridge and Stroud’s ‘waterfront’ (upper and lower locks); the canal; Fromeside Industrial Estate / Travis Perkins; the Ecotricity building, roundabouts, viaduct and area around The Maltings (currently ‘Ciao Eatalia’) on Merrywalks; Fromebanks and the river corridor; the new canal channel and viaduct south of Waitrose; Waitrose car park and the London Rd / multi-storey car park. The Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Statement (No. 29) was adopted in November 2008. The Station CA was reviewed alongside seven other existing conservation areas which abut the enormous IHCA and which are associated with the Stroud Valleys’ industrial heritage (including Ebley Mills CA, Dunkirk Mills and Watledge CA, Lodgemore & Fromehall CA, Stanley Mills CA) – these are all covered by the IHCA Conservation Area Statement.
The entire conservation area statement consists of several elements (separate documents/volumes):
1. The ‘character appraisal’ was adopted as *Supplementary Planning Advice (SPA)* in November 2008.
2. The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Management Proposals, was adopted as a *Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* in November 2008:
http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/planning/planning_strategy.asp?s=sectioncontent4&p=spd,ihcamp
3. The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Design Guide was adopted as *SPA* in November 2008:
http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/planning/planning_strategy.asp?s=sectioncontent4&p=spa
In contrast, ‘some of the buildings erected in the

1960s and 1970s, such as the police station and multi-storey car park, have done nothing to enhance the character of the town centre’.¹⁶
Green spaces
Four areas are managed by the Town Council: Bank Gardens, High Street play area, St Laurence Churchyard and Sim's Memorial Clock (commonly known as the Four Clocks).¹⁷ Designated green spaces have been proposed for land at the Old Convent / Rosary School, by Merrywalks Footbridge, Bank Gardens, High Street / Police Station area, Saint-Ismier Corner, Cheapside, Fromebanks, canalside to Capel's Mill and land off Bath Street by Smartworks.¹⁸
Nine potential green spaces and planters scattered about Stroud’s town centre have been identified as part of the NDP process as having potential to enrich the urban fabric and encourage birds, bees and butterflies.
Fawkes Place is a hard-surfaced town centre space enclosed by the rear of buildings used as a service yard and car park and in multiple ownership.
The western side of Merrywalks is well vegetated for the whole of its length (with no public access) whilst on the eastern side, from the Merrywalks footbridge, Slad Brook runs through culverts.
There are 63 Public Rights of Way in or on the boundary of Stroud Town being monitored by the Town Council with 10 recommendations for action in the most recent audit.¹⁹
The minimum distance that an urban resident should be from a natural green space is 280 metres. They ‘contribute much to people's health and well-being and thereby contribute to sustainable communities’.⁹
Thick belts of vegetation can reduce noise levels by two to three decibels per 100m.²¹
Culture and leisure
Stroud is strongly represented in the creative industries of visual and performing arts, crafts, architecture, audio-visual and publishing.²² Stroud Subscription Rooms, opened in 1833 by public subscription and sold to the local authority in 1962, now provides a varied arts programme and is fronted by the town’s main public square for festivals and gatherings.²³
Nominations as assets of community value have

Appendix 2

Key facts about the town centre (continued)

been made by the Town Council in respect of the Subscription Rooms, Centre for Science and Arts, the Cornhill Market Square (created in 1990 and used by Stroud Farmers’ Market), the Old Town Hall and Brunel Goods Shed.²⁴

Stroud Valleys Artspace, initiated in 1996 as an artist-led collaboration, completed regeneration of its town centre site in 2014 and has leased the Brunel Goods Shed as an events space since 2011.

Lansdown Hall and Gallery and the nearby Centre for Science and Arts are cultural assets owned by Stroud Town Council and the Stroud and Rodborough Educational Charity respectively.

Other cultural assets include the public library, the British School Hall, churches and church halls used for worship and performances (the Congregational Church, the Baptist Church and Church Hall, St Laurence Church and Church Hall and the Church of the Immaculate Conception and Parish Hall are all in the designated NDP area)

Commercial cultural assets within the NDP area include two nightclubs and five operating public houses. Merrywalks Centre accommodates a cinema, a ten-pin bowling alley and a 24-hour fitness gym.

There are two vacant former public houses occupying key town centre sites, namely The Market Tavern (formerly The Pelican) on Union Street and the nearby Swan Inn at the Union Street/ Swan Lane junction.

Canal

The current phase of the canal restoration, from Stonehouse through Stroud and on to Brimscombe, is nearing completion. The Cotswold Canals Trust, with Stroud District Council and other partners, is applying in November 2015 to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funds to complete the canal from Stonehouse to Saul, linking up with the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. The decision by the Heritage Lottery Fund will be in Spring 2016. If approved, the work would be done in the following five years. Stroud then becomes a real canal town. All the signs are that the UK canal boat community would be keen to explore the new connection up to Stroud. In the future a new canal basin located west of Brewery Bridge could facilitate these visits and be a further tourist attraction.

Further restoration of the canal east of Brimscombe over the Cotswolds is not programmed. It is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future, unless partly funded by Thames Water. They are investigating replenishing the River Thames with water from the River Severn. ■

Appendix 3

Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis

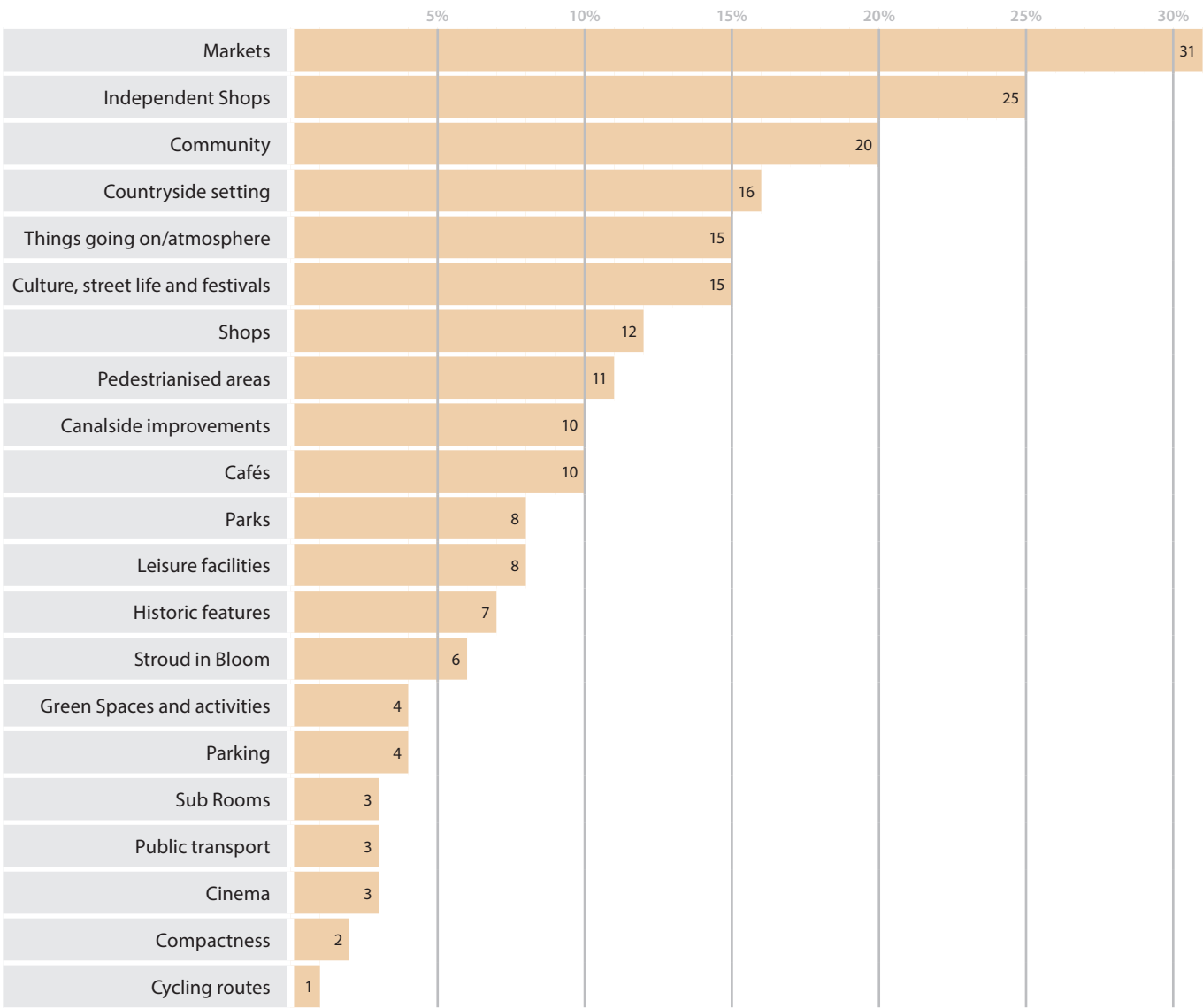
Strengths		Opportunities	
Markets. Independent shops. Canalside improvements. Pedestrianised areas. Parks. Cultural street life and festivals. Countryside setting. Cafés. Historic features. Subscription Rooms. Community expertise, experience, energy and enthusiasm.		Ongoing investment in the canal regeneration. Significant amount of undeveloped and underused land close to the town centre. Successful Farmers’ Market bringing shoppers into the town centre. Popular festivals and cultural activities bringing people into the town centre. Growth of Ecotricity in the town centre. Redevelopment of Market Tavern. Improved rail links. Stroud defined as ‘Principal Town Centre’ in Local Plan.	
Weaknesses		Threats	
Quality of the shopping facilities. Appearance of the streets. Appearance of key buildings such as Merrywalks multi-storey car park and the cinema. Traffic congestion. Parking charges. Anti social behaviour. Pedestrian/vehicle conflict. Condition of roads and pavements. Empty shops. Barriers to ease of movement between canal and town centre. Poor ‘legibility’ into and around the town centre. Lack of effective delivery on plans and projects.		Out of centre retail developments take shoppers and investment away from town centre. Competition from other centres such Gloucester, Cheltenham and Cirencester. Growth of internet and phone shopping. Congestion discourages people from coming to the town centre to shop, enjoy cultural and leisure activities. Historic character continues to deteriorate. Lack of connectivity between canal and town centre undermines regeneration.	

Appendix 4

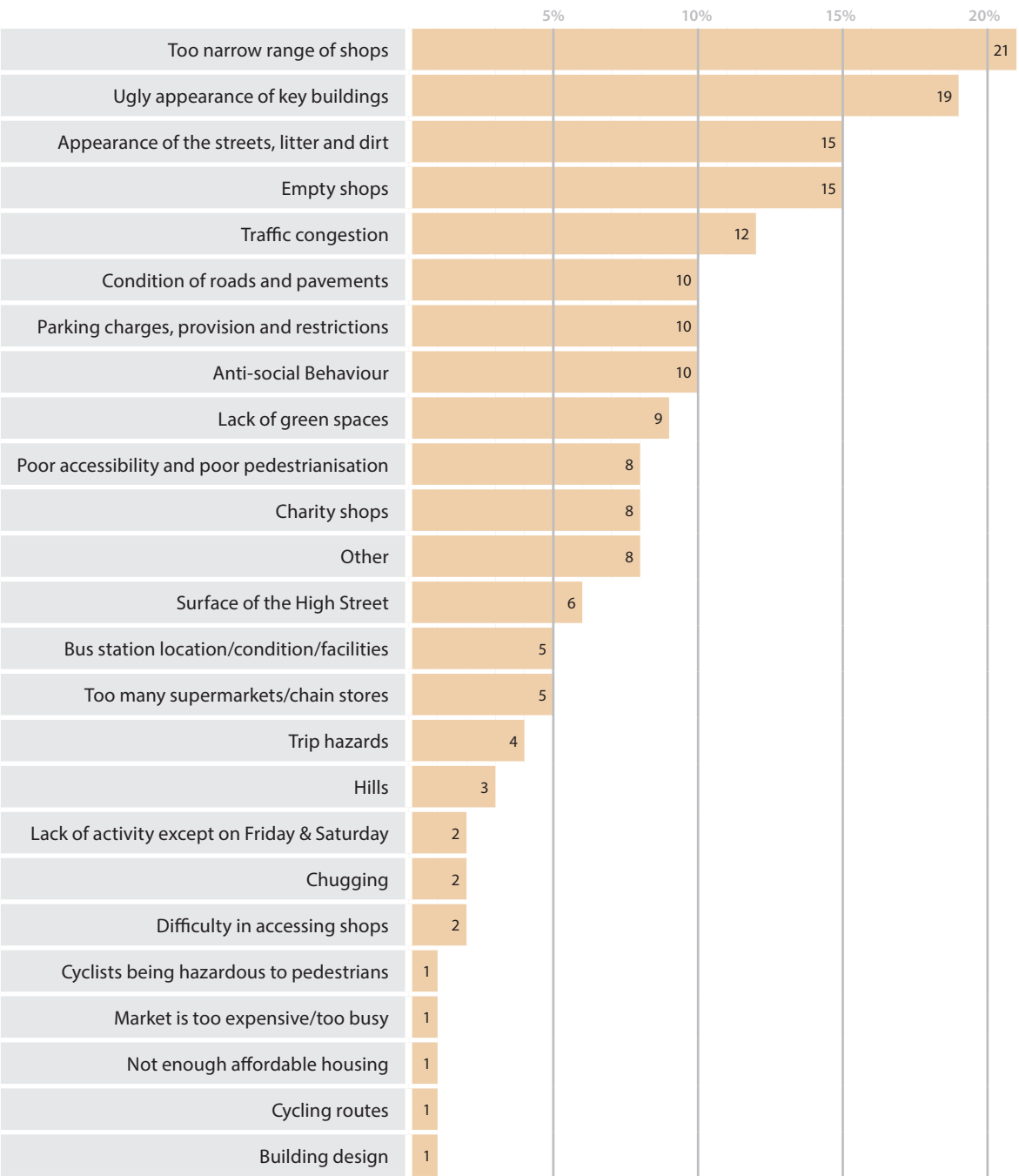
Issues identified in consultation

The three graphs in this appendix show the results of the first NDP consultation process held in September 2014 in which things that people most liked, most disliked, and most wanted to change in the town centre were identified.

Things people like most about Stroud



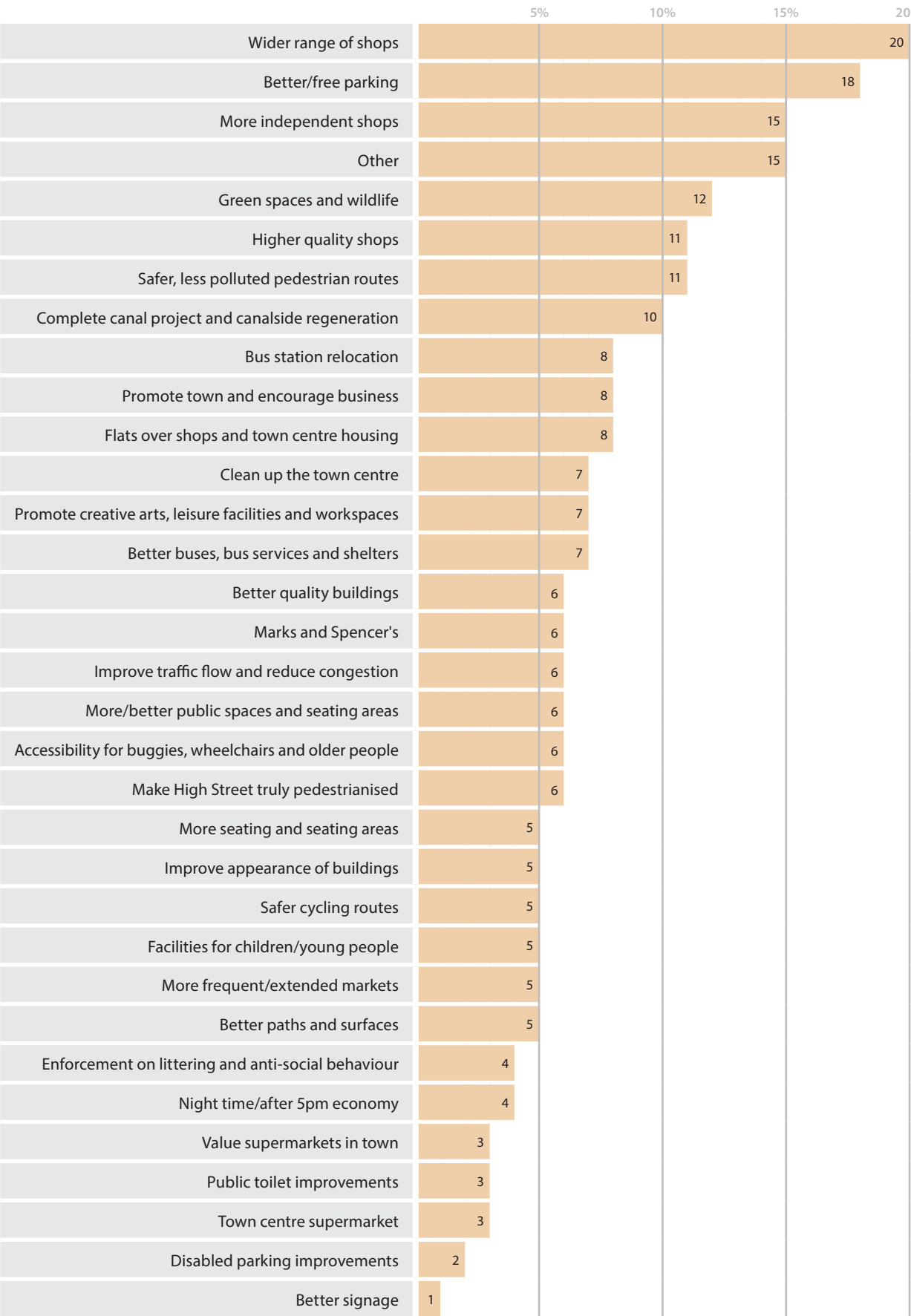
Things people don't like about Stroud



Appendix 4

Issues identified in consultation (continued)

Things that it is most important to change in order to improve Stroud



Appendix 5

Local heritage assets criteria

Criterion	Description
Age	Generally, the older a building, site or feature, the more likely it is that this criterion will apply.
Rarity	The rarer a structure is, the more important its survival.
Architectural and aesthetic value	The intrinsic design value of an asset relating to local styles, materials or any other distinctive local characteristics. The visual contribution an asset makes to the character of Stroud. Architectural value may include detailing, materials, craftsmanship and plan form. This criterion can include the best works of architects who were active locally. In some cases altered buildings may still be worthy of inclusion, especially if by an architect of importance.
Group value	Groupings of assets with a clear visual, design or historic relationship.
Evidential value	Where a building or site may contain, or be associated with, important evidence about its past history and use, the particular neighbourhood or the town as a whole, or about the lives of former residents and citizens. This evidence can be in the form of historical documents, historic fabric and features lying hidden behind more recent building façades and internal finishes, or buried remains.
Historic association	Where there is a clear association of a building or site with an important local person or community in the past, or with important local events, activities and industries.
Archaeological interest	This may be an appropriate reason to designate a locally significant asset if the evidence base is sufficiently compelling and if a distinct area can be identified.
Designed landscapes	Includes parks and gardens, and the landscape or garden setting of buildings, that are individually important or are important in relation to the buildings they relate to and to the local areas they are part of.
Landmark status	This can include assets that have a strong association with a historical event or a particular community, and others that stand out within an area because of their visual distinctiveness or prominence, and/or location. Both types can be an important part of the particular character and identity of an area or neighbourhood.
Social and communal value	This can include where an asset is seen as being of value to the local community, or to particular communities, or where it figures strongly in residents’ memories and life experiences.
Degree of completeness	The asset should be reasonably complete, or at least should retain, or have the potential to retain, enough fabric and features for its character and importance to be understood and appreciated, either now or more fully in the future.

At least one criterion must apply to a local heritage asset.

Public Realm Design Principles applicable under Policy AP9b

Introduction

The PRS identifies 3 main street types (PRS pages 70–74):

- Alleyways and lanes which are narrow traffic free routes that feed into the wider connecting streets. Examples include Church Street, The Shambles, the start of Union Street, Swan Lane and Bedford Street.
- Historic centre streets the dimensions of which vary but all share a consistent character, dominated by pedestrian activity. These streets are designed to accommodate deliveries and some disabled parking in clearly defined parking bays. Examples include: High Street, Kendrick Street, George Street and the one way circuit of John Street, Union Street and Threadneedle Street.
- Approach and edge of centre streets which are wider approach streets to the edge of the historic centre which provide entry and exit for vehicles and pedestrians, accommodating on street parking in some locations. Examples include: Rowcroft, Russell Street, London Road, Cornhill, Lansdown and Gloucester Street.

The detailed guidelines set out for each of these street types on PRS pages 70–74 does not reflect recent changes and will be updated.

Guidelines

The following guidelines for detailing the streetscape set out on pages 85-93, however, will apply to development in all of the above street types under *Policy AP9b*:

Ground surfaces: it is important for the ground-surface materials to be appropriate to their surroundings and respectful of local character. Stroud’s built form is defined by:

- Natural Cotswold stone
- Light-coloured render
- Detailed brickwork (red, orange and brown)
- Strong accent colours

The ground surfaces in Stroud must support, not compete with these qualities.

- **Furniture:** street furniture covers a range of public items that appear in the streetscape including benches and seats, litter bins, cycle racks and bollards. When considering the selection of new furniture, simple elegant and contemporary items should be selected that are appropriate to a wide range of architectural and spatial settings. Furniture

should not seek to imitate historic styles. Items should be sited to increase visibility in the street and create a safe environment. Consistency of style and material should be applied to ensure visual continuity and ease of maintenance.

- **Cycle Racks:** should be positioned at key entry points to the historic centre. A simple design in stainless steel offers an elegant, robust and practical option for cyclists. Consideration should be given to the impact on ground surfaces – narrow, rectangular supports rather than rounded tubes can help to reduce the need to break and fill the surface.
 - **Seats and benches:** should follow a traditional form with a contemporary design. Positioning should take account of microclimate, ensuring protection from the wind and maximizing sunlight. Careful positioning can enhance use of spaces and assist with maintenance.
 - **Litter bins:** Smart, unfussy and contemporary design which is functional and meets the requirements of those responsible for cleaning and emptying should be selected. Litter bins should be carefully sited.
 - **Bollards:** should only be installed where strictly necessary and where there is no viable alternative. They often impede pedestrian movement, are visually intrusive and require reinstatement of surfacing when nudged over. Where used they should be carefully placed and a simple stainless steel design used which will not be chipped or need repainting.
 - **Planting:** existing trees should be assessed on their contribution to the townscape and retained wherever possible. In general there should be a presumption against introducing lines of trees into historic areas where none have existed previously. Where new trees are introduced they should be considered as part of a detailed design, ensuring that key views and linkages are not interrupted. The specific location of new trees may be guided by the position of underground services.
- Individual specimen trees can be used to mark special areas, bring colour and texture to the street, complement architecture and emphasise important views. Generally the use of gravel at the base of the tree combined with a level grille is preferred as it provides a porous, flexible surface that accommodates wheelchairs and pushchairs whilst preventing the collection of rubbish.
- The use of vertical tree guards should be avoided where possible as they often collect and trap litter.

The use of isolated ground level planters should be avoided as they can impede pedestrian flow. Baskets or hanging floral displays can bring seasonal colour to the street. They should be wall mounted to reduce the need for additional poles or columns.

A regular maintenance programme should be established to ensure regular inspections, feeding, pruning and replacement where necessary and the regular clearance of leaves to avoid potential slipping hazards.

- **Signage:** Signage in the public realm generally takes three forms: street name plates, pedestrian orientation signs and traffic signs. Signage is designed to convey directional and orientational information (particularly for visitors) and to provide reminders for an update of information (particularly for residents). The number of new signs in Stroud town centre should be minimized to reduce visual clutter but where older street signs remain they should be retained and restored to reinforce local character. Where new posts are required a simple elegant and contemporary style should be chosen that complements the street furniture and does not compete with the built form. Town centre identity can be achieved through typeface, colour, shape and use of logos and symbols.

Where possible street nameplates should be fixed to walls, buildings or railings or placed at the back edge of footways to minimize obstruction and visual intrusion. Other signs such as information boards or finger posts should be mounted where possible on existing furniture.

Traffic signs should be kept to the minimum necessary to convey essential information to drivers and located to ensure appropriate notice and improve navigation around the town centre. Such signs should where possible be affixed to existing poles, columns, railings or buildings to avoid the need for additional poles.

- **Lighting:** Lighting is fundamental to any pedestrian street or space and has a key role to play in helping to provide greater safety and clarity for visitors to Stroud particularly at night. Historic lighting fixtures should be retained and restored where possible, particularly in the historic areas and conservation areas. Where new lighting is introduced the design should be in a simple and complementary style to the street and other furniture elements. Pastiche lighting columns should be avoided.

Street lighting should be considered in conjunction with other light sources, including shop windows and floodlit buildings. It should be designed to minimise light pollution and be energy efficient. In general building or ground fitted lights are preferred pole mounted to minimise clutter.

Lighting should conform to any current standards relating to safety and security.

A lighting strategy incorporating the role of strategic or feature lighting should be provided for areas where substantial evening activity is to be encouraged and for substantial or prominent development sites.

- **Public Art:** Enhances orientation and identity and helps to reinforce a sense of place. Stroud’s rich industrial heritage and interesting topography provides an exciting and challenging context for the commission of public arts.

Public art should be site specific, have a clear relationship to the local geography, features and local community in which it is to be placed. It should represent the highest standards of quality in both design and materials and there should be a clear economic, social and environmental benefit associated with its commission.

Artists should be involved at the earliest opportunity in the design process and participation by the community, including local artists through consultation and, where appropriate, practical contribution to the process will be essential to engender a sense of ownership.

Different forms of procurement should be explored including open competitions (particularly useful for engaging the local community) selected invitation or specific invitations to a single artist for prestigious or difficult commissions. ■



Infrastructure requirements from the draft NDP

Policy	Type	Detail	Cost*	Timing
AP3/ZP5	Stratford Parkway Foot/cycle link	a. Foot and cycle path approx. 200 metres in length (within Plan area). b. Bridge over Merrywalks 40 metres in length.	a. £16,800 @ £42m ² b. £288,000 @ £3,600/m ²	Long term
AP9b /ZP1c	Public Realm Improvements/ Town Squares	Visual integration of Four Clocks with Subscription Room square, with pedestrian priority. General improvements to pedestrian priority through core zone.	Information not yet available – will depend on design.	Medium term Medium term
AP12	Public Transport	Upgraded: a. Bus shelters. b. Signage. c. Real-time information.	Information not yet available.	Short term
AP13	Energy	Plug in facilities for low emission vehicles. Secure recharging points for electric cycles.	Information not yet available.	Long term
ZP2a	Canalside improvements	Pedestrian path along canal from Wallbridge to the public square on Cheapside Waterfront.	Information not yet available (but likely to be funded by development of Cheapside site).	Short term
ZP2b	Canal Basin	New canal basin and moorings approximately 1400m ² in area of which about 690m ² is within the Plan area.	£500,000–£750,000 based on Shropshire Union Canal costings.	Medium term
ZP2c	Canalside improvements	a. Widened pedestrian path along south side of canal. b. Bridge over canal at Fromeside. c. Bridge over canal at Capel’s Mill.	a. £18,480 @ £42/m ² b. £216,000 @ £42/m ² c. £72,000 @ £3,600/m ²	Long term Long term Short term
AP3/ZP3	Railway area improvements	a. Upgraded station forecourt. b. New pedestrian railway bridge. c. New public square (Brunel Plaza). d. New pedestrian route from London Road car park into town centre.	a. £42,000 @ £42/m ² b. £252,000 @ £3,600/m ² c. If repaved £45,000 @ £42/m ² d. £5,460 @ £42/m ²	Short term Medium term Long term Medium term
ZP4b	Pedestrian/ cycle access on Merrywalks	New pedestrian/cycle path through green strip north side of Merrywalks.	£25,200 @ £42m ²	Medium term

* Cost based on assumptions made in *Stroud Neighbourhood Plan Viability Study*.

A: Scope and purpose

1. Stroud Local Plan submission draft page 42
2. Stroud Town Centre Public Realm Strategy page 2 “Introduction”
3. Report on “Stroud Place Partnering Diagnostic Visit” 3-4 November 2011 para 3.4.6
4. Ibid para 3.3.
5. Summary and recommendations Cheapside Neighbourhood Opportunities report.

C: How the plan will deliver the vision

6. National Planning Policy Framework para 29.
7. Description of the PRS on Stroud DC website
8. Figure amended by Stroud District Council in July 2015 during Examination of Local Plan
9. Paragraph 56 National Planning Policy Framework.
10. Paragraph 35 National Planning Policy Framework.

D: How it will happen

11. Stroud Neighbouhood Plan Viability Study Aecom September 2015

Appendix 2: Key facts about the town centre

12. Data for the town centre is that for *Census Area E00113686* which has the best fit to the designated area for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
13. Source: 2011 Census.
14. Stroud Town Centre 24-hr 5-day average flows 2013 and 2014, *Network and Traffic Management Data, GCC*.
15. Pedestrian Flow Counts, *Stroud District Market Towns Study 2004–06*, and *Stroud Town Centres and Retailing Study, 2010*.
16. *Stroud town centre environmental audit*, 1999.
17. *Stroud’s Green Spaces Management Strategy*, 2011.
18. *Living Spaces Strategy*, 2004.
19. *Stroud’s Public Footpaths Condition Audit*, 2012.
20. *Accessible natural greenspace in towns & cities*, English Nature Research Report, 1995.
21. *Greenways Report*, 1996.
22. *Creative Industries in Gloucestershire 2005*, Fred Brookes and Deborah Harrison, Comedia, 2006.
23. *Stroud Subscription Rooms 1832–1950*, Marion Hearfield. 2015
24. http://www.stroud.gov.uk/PLO/community_asset.aspx

