

Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration Strategy Final Report

Submitted to:

Stevenage Borough Council
English Partnerships

by:



Donaldsons
Alan Baxter & Associates



January 2002

table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	STEVENAGE TODAY
3	VISION
4	REGENERATION STRATEGY
5	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
6	PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK
7	PROGRAMME & NEXT STEPS

APPENDICES

ECONOMIC DRIVERS KEY PLAYERS

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINESS

executive summary

INTRODUCTION

Stevenage today, like most other new towns, is in need of re-juvenation. Much of its original infrastructure is looking tired, and the urban realm shabby. Competing centres have benefited from significant investment in modern retail and leisure facilities, whereas Stevenage has not kept pace. There has been some quality investment in Stevenage centre since its original construction, such as The Plaza, Westgate and The Forum, but this has not been sufficient to overcome the depreciation of the rest.

Stevenage though has a number of advantages and attractions, and considerable potential. This regeneration strategy has been commissioned and prepared to show the way forward for Stevenage, so that it is once again a leading example of a high quality town centre.

DRIVERS & OPPORTUNITIES

Stevenage town centre has all the key requirements and drivers of success:

- An increasingly wealthy and growing catchment population
- Good transport links, particularly by road and rail
- A well used centre with low vacancy rates
- A well designed, flexible urban form
- Potential to exploit trends towards the leisure economy and town centre living
- Development sites in appropriate locations which are comparatively easy to bring forward

To capitalise on these opportunities Stevenage needs to improve and diversify its retail offer, with emphasis on providing more up-market shopping, and in particular a department store. Leisure should be expanded, with more quality restaurants, cafes and bars. There is demand for more hotel accommodation, and a potential market for high density housing in the town centre.

The main challenges facing Stevenage are a need to change perceptions and attract investment. Once a critical mass of change has been achieved the town centre will be well positioned to continue on a virtuous spiral of increased competitiveness and success.

VISION

Our vision for the town centre builds upon the existing vision, and is:

To create a vibrant town centre that is a home to a complementary spectrum of retail, leisure, office, civic and residential uses. The centre will have a high quality public realm and significantly improved transport services. It will capitalise on its unique new town history and will be a safe, sustainable and successful place at the forefront of competitiveness and good practice.

THE REGENERATION STRATEGY

The regeneration strategy draws on the opportunities, and translates the vision, to create a co-ordinated, integrated framework for the transformation of Stevenage. Key elements of the regeneration strategy are:

- A department store, packaged with quality retail and leisure units, to provide a broad range of town centre facilities. This development is proposed on the sites between the Leisure Centre and the Town Square, including the existing bus station and surface level car parks. It would be focused on a new pedestrian street connecting the Leisure Centre with the Westgate Centre and Town Square.
- A sustainable transport infrastructure, including:
 - relocation of the bus station adjacent to the train station, together with improved bus services to all sides of the town centre. As a second phase, development could include multi-storey car parking north and south of the station to accommodate an expanded commuter park and ride service
 - breaking the ring road collar, with narrowed carriageways on Lytton Way, at grade pedestrian crossings, and outward looking new development around the ring road (implications for car, pedestrian, cycle and public transport journeys will be the subject of separate transportation modelling and assessment)
 - a car parking strategy which gradually increases car parking charges to the point at which multi-storey car parking becomes viable. (This assists the viability of schemes such as the department store development)
 - improved pedestrian and cycle links to and through the town centre, improved pedestrian and bus links to the Old Town and Roaring Meg, and enhanced disability access
- Substantially improved and modernised civic facilities located in a flagship building, for example next to the Council offices on part of the bus station site
- New opportunities for high density town centre living, initially focused in the south of the town centre
- Enhanced office space as part of a longer term strategy
- An improved public realm, with quick hits in the Town Square and Queensway North

In order to achieve this agenda the regeneration strategy will need to avoid the piecemeal development of the past. New proposals for the town centre need to be focused and placed in a clear development framework. If necessary and appropriate public sector statutory powers and funding should be used.

PHASING AND FUNDING

The development timeframe for the complete strategy is likely to be around 20 years. Within this context specific development proposals need to be realistic, deliverable and well defined. The elements are divided in to three potentially overlapping phases:

- **Quick hits (1-3 years)** principally relating to improvements to the public realm and existing buildings in the Town Square and Queensway
- **Medium term (4-8 years)** focusing on the department store development and relocating the bus station next to the train station
- **Long term (6+ years)** covering development of a residential and leisure focused southern quarter, expansion of the multi-modal interchange and associated multi-storey car parking and mixed uses along Lytton Way, and outward looking development along the ring road

An extension to the prime shopping area is potentially commercially attractive and viable. Outline design analysis suggests it could integrate well with existing retail, parking and servicing facilities in the Westgate Centre, with potential marriage value.

The associated package of infrastructure and public realm works linked to the department store scheme, including the new bus station and narrowing of Lytton Way, would contribute to substantially improving transportation infrastructure and the public realm in Stevenage. Funding for this package could come from a range of sources including Section 106 contributions, land receipts and through the Local Transport Plan process.

In the longer term other elements of the regeneration strategy, including the residential quarter and civic hub, have the potential to become commercially viable, as the centre becomes more successful and valuable. These elements will also depend upon the County Council's position on and business case for modernising its existing civic facilities in Stevenage.

PLANNING POLICY

The Regeneration Strategy is generally consistent with the Stevenage 2nd Deposit Draft District Plan. With adoption of the Regeneration Strategy work can proceed on preparation of supplementary planning guidance (SPG) for key elements of the strategy, including the extension to the prime shopping area and the new transportation proposals and development on Lytton Way.

1. introduction



The historic Stevenage Clock Tower.



The site of Stevenage New Town, 1946.

1.1 CONTEXT

The original plan for Stevenage new town was inspirational and robust. It recognised that the centre, as the main focus of the town, would need to satisfy commercial requirements and also provide civic and social functions. The centre when first built was a model of good practice (the first planned pedestrian shopping centre in Britain), attractive and successful – the envy of surrounding towns. National multiples were drawn in and people were proud to shop and visit there.

Stevenage today, like most other new towns, is in need of re-juvenation. Much of its original infrastructure is looking tired, and the urban realm shabby. Other competing towns have benefited from significant new investment and modern retail and leisure facilities whereas Stevenage has not kept pace. There has been some quality investment in Stevenage centre since its original construction, such as The Plaza, Westgate and The Forum, but this has not been sufficient to overcome the depreciation in the rest of the centre. The investment has also not had the impact that might have been achieved if it had been in the context of a clear vision and development strategy.

Stevenage needs to rise to the challenges of its role and opportunities in the 21st century. Towns and cities are constantly in flux and key elements of their character are derived from this change. The need is to retain the best of the past, and complement it with inspirational and valuable investment for the present and future. Town and city centres in today's service-orientated economy have an increasingly important role in presenting the image of a successful place, and attracting new investment. Businesses no longer just want suitable sites – they are also looking for diverse and exciting civic centres and amenities for their employees and visiting clients. Similarly, local residential and visitors want a centre which offers a diverse range of activities and attractions and which is active and lively for a significant part of the day. More may also want the opportunity to live in the centre.

Stevenage also has its own more specific requirements, such as accommodating expansion of at least 3,600 additional homes in the Stevenage West proposals. The town centre needs to address all these issues, for its own survival and the wider benefit of the whole town and surrounding areas.

1.2 PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the regeneration strategy is set out in the brief to this work. It is to:

- Create a robust development strategy
- Create confidence within both the public and the private sector in the potential development opportunities and their commercial viability
- Identify which development opportunities should be public sector led and/or involve public sector investment
- Raise the profile of Stevenage
- Provide the basis for marketing the individual development opportunities within the strategy
- Enable Stevenage Borough Council to prepare supplementary planning guidance, defend the strategy at any Inquiry and provide a clear basis for the delivery of new development and regeneration

1.3 STATUS OF THE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

This Regeneration Framework has been prepared by EDAW, together with Donaldsons Chartered Surveyors (giving commercial and market advice) and Alan Baxter & Associates (giving transportation advice), for Stevenage Borough Council and English Partnerships. It is the culmination of five months work developing the strategy and consulting with a wide range of stakeholders. It follows on from a baseline report (June 2001), and summarises rather than repeats analysis and processes covered in the baseline. Key elements of the work have included:

- Local area analysis, including urban form, transportation, market review and site appraisal
- Technical research, including economic drivers, competitors analysis, and policy review
- Cost assessment and viability appraisal
- Consultation with stakeholders including developers, retailers, land owners, the general public and groups such as the elderly, community groups and young people.

Separate confidential appendices cover management, delivery and financial appraisals of key proposals.

2. stevenage today

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Stevenage centre needs to improve its competitiveness, redefine its civic focus and become an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable centre. Standing still, or piecemeal development, will not serve the town well. The opportunity is for co-ordinated activities within the regeneration framework to guide Stevenage in rising to the challenges of becoming a modern 21st Century competitive and vibrant centre.

2.2 ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Increased household incomes and population growth

Retail expenditure is driven by household incomes, and both have been rising for a number of years. The South East in particular has been at the forefront of national economic growth and prosperity. This has allowed town and shopping centres to expand and develop. Stevenage town centre has access to a large, wealthy catchment population with the opportunity to capture its retail and leisure expenditure.

This core catchment is likely to expand. Hertfordshire as a whole is currently experiencing population growth which is planned to continue. In particular the proposals for Stevenage West will expand Stevenage's population by 3,600 households by 2011, with potential further expansion to 5,000 households and an ultimate aim of 10,000 households. The multiple benefits of this catchment population are very attractive to many developers for leisure, retail and residential opportunities.

Quality of life

Companies, employees and investors are becoming both more footloose and more discerning in where they choose to locate, live and contribute to the local economy. Quality of life, the environment, retail offer, civic and leisure facilities and education are all becoming increasingly important. Towns and cities need to market their full range of assets. Providing development sites for business on its own is not good enough. For Stevenage to remain competitive and successfully attract new business to the area, it must build an image as a desirable place to live, work and play. A key element of this offer is a successful, diverse town centre.

Leisure economy

A particular manifestation of increased disposable incomes on town centres has been their evolution towards leisure locations. People expect shopping to be a leisure experience and town centres to offer other facilities such as restaurants, cafes and bars. Successful town centres increasingly focus on

fashion and non-bulky comparison shops, packaged with leisure services. Stevenage needs to respond rise to this trend.

e-commerce

The growth of the e-commerce sector will not result in the death of the High Street but will provide different opportunities. The traditional prime retailing pitch will remain a strong draw as many consumers prefer to physically visit properties and see products before making their purchases. Even in areas where e-business develops a niche, smaller service-based retail units will usually be part of a package of services. They will act as shop window interfaces and retail collection points. Global multiple retailers are increasingly seeing their high street premises as showrooms to complement on-line channels to market. Smaller prime and secondary pitch units allow for larger distribution centres or call-centres to be located further a field at more strategic locations.

Small business

In parallel with the market dominance of big business global companies, self-employment and flexi-employment is also growing; with corporate downsizing, outsourcing, spin-outs and corporate venturing underpinning this expansion. In addition, advances in ICT mean that the start up and entry costs for many types of smaller businesses are lower. Such businesses fit well in town centres. To capture this emerging market, Stevenage needs to respond with the creation and promotion of smaller offices and flexible workspaces.

Flexible working

The greatest number of jobs created over the next decade will take the form of non-standard employment, i.e. part-time work, flexi-hours, and by contracts for services. To allow for the access and flexibility demanded by these services, Stevenage will need to be well-served by public transport – possibly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Moving towards a 24-7 public transport offer would provide Stevenage and the town centre with a significant competitive advantage for a wide range of back office functions and be an important part of a strategy to reduce social exclusion.

Telecommunications

E-businesses are keen to locate in buildings which have access to the information superhighway. This therefore requires properties with advanced telecommunications infrastructure. There is a large demand within the e-commerce sector for co-located facilities with properties offering shared resources and services to businesses working in the same sector. Stevenage town centre will need to keep under review its telecommunications infrastructure provision and meet the changing business needs of occupiers .

Merging of manufacturing and services

Manufacturing will remain an important part of the economy but the differentiation between manufacturing, technology and services will increasingly blur as successful manufacturers adopt new ways of working and organise production among networks of companies. Stevenage has a strong manufacturing base. To capitalise on the gradual shift towards outsourcing and a service sector for the core manufacturing base, Stevenage town centre will need to provide appropriate quality office space.

Policy context and public sector support

Stevenage has six economic development priorities, as outlined in the Borough's Economic Development Strategy (2000-2003):

1. Business support
2. Inward investment
3. Education, training and employment
4. Sustainable economy
5. Community regeneration
6. Research and intelligence.

Economic drivers not directly relevant to the physical regeneration of the town centre, such as a need for a skilled workforce, are addressed in the Economic Development Strategy.

A full list of programmes and players in Stevenage is given in **Appendix 1**. There are a number of key players, such as the Town Centre Management Company, Stevenage Business Initiatives (SBI), the County Council and the Chamber of Commerce & Industry which are already involved in regenerating the town centre and can contribute towards the implementation of the regeneration framework.

2.3 PROPERTY MARKET FRAMEWORK

The buoyancy of the local property market is a manifestation of wider economic trends, and Stevenage's success in competing with rival centres and capturing these opportunities.

Retail

Stevenage has a well used retail centre, with low vacancy rates and a large number of multiples. It also contains a significant amount of secondary space. However demand from high street operators for retail space in Stevenage town centre is affected by the town's poor image, the lack of the draw of a major department store, and the nature of the existing retail stock. This is characterised by a large number of units ranging from 150 square metre to 250 square metre with irregular configurations, especially within the Westgate Centre. This picture might change if retailers were offered the opportunity to take better space in a radically upgraded shopping environment.

Stevenage is described as 'Mister Average' when considering the breakdown of the fashion retailers in the town. A high proportion of the fashion based retail offer within Stevenage is aimed at the middle to lower-middle categories with a limited representation of upper-middle retailers and no upper level retailers. This profile contrasts significantly with many neighbouring centres that enjoy a greater representation in the upper retailer categories. The current retail offer might be characterised as relatively down market, with discount retailers over represented. The overall image of the town needs to be improved if new quality retailers are to be attracted.

Recent developments, including improvements to the Westgate Centre, The Forum and the Plaza have all enhanced the central shopping area to a degree. However, none of these have been successful in creating an integrated modern town centre, with each having some shortcomings, generally



Poor quality secondary retail in the heart of Stevenage town centre.



The Plaza, a higher quality new leisure development.

resulting from decisions to develop available sites quickly rather than developments which have tackled the structural problems of the town centre.

Whilst several of the neighbouring centres have maintained a constant or increased level of demand from retailers, Stevenage has, in contrast, generally declined as a location sought by key retailers throughout the last four years. Further new retail and leisure developments are currently in the pipeline for several competing town centres within Stevenage's wider catchment area. Infrastructure and strategy frameworks are also in the process of being developed to consolidate and strengthen several neighbouring town centres.

As noted previously, Stevenage currently lacks a department store. The benefits of such a store are anticipated to be significant, acting as an anchor for a number of up market fashion and national multiple stores. Such a store would also significantly improve Stevenage's attractiveness in comparison with competing centres such as Welwyn Garden City and Watford.

To overcome its shortcomings and compete with its rivals Stevenage needs a major injection of vitality and quality, through improvement of existing facilities and co-ordinated new development.

Commercial Leisure

Although Stevenage has a 22 acre Leisure Park, including a 12 screen multiplex, located a quarter of a mile east of the town centre, this facility relates poorly to the centre. Existing leisure facilities in the heart of the town centre remain fairly limited but have improved with the recently opened 7,000 metre square Plaza development.



Stevenage Leisure Park and pedestrian link.

Over the latter half of the 1990s the bar and restaurant sector of the leisure market has rapidly expanded with national operators such as Bass, Whitbread and Scottish & Newcastle investing heavily in developing a range of trading formats. In addition to some national multiple operators expressing an interest in leisure units ranging up to 500 square metre within Stevenage, we expect demand to follow from local independent operators seeking expansion as well as from smaller niche/specialist operators. This could assist in varying the mix of offer in new development within the town.

There is significant room for new high quality leisure facilities in the heart of the town centre. New leisure facilities will help to attract additional retail to the centre as complementary services, enhance the night-time economy and make the town centre a more vibrant place.

Office

There are a number of national companies with offices in Stevenage and the importance of having good rail access into London should not be underestimated in maintaining their presence and attracting new companies. However the speculative office market in Stevenage town centre still remains weak. There is a high level of long-term vacancies and the quality of office space on offer is unsuitable for the modern economy. The current market rent levels for spaces in close proximity to the town centre is around £15-£16 per square foot. In the case of office suites above shops within the central core demand is more limited, and typical rent levels are of the order of £6-£8 per square foot.

It is not anticipated that the demand for larger office space in the town centre will increase substantially in the short term. However, as suggested by the economic drivers review, there may be a demand for specialist office space for small businesses whilst in the long term, sites around the station, close to a more vibrant town centre may be attractive to office users.

Hotel

Presently there is a limited supply of quality hotel accommodation to complement the existing conference facilities within Stevenage. Given the changing requirements of businesses to e-commerce and globalisation there is the potential for additional hotel development opportunities included in the regeneration strategy.

Residential

Residential accommodation within the central area of Stevenage is limited primarily to a Council owned tower block located on Southgate and various residential flats located above retail units, predominantly along the southern reaches of Queensway. Residential sites within Stevenage and surrounding areas which are built to a high quality design and specification remain in demand. There is the possibility to capitalise on this existing demand.

There is also the potential to capitalise on new sectors of the market. Town centre residential accommodation targeted at young professionals is becoming more widespread, with many towns and cities offering a variety of new build, centrally located, residential developments. Such a development could be part of a new mixed-use scheme.

2.4 TRANSPORTATION

One of Stevenage's key assets is its accessibility by road and public transport. Road connections are good, there is little congestion and car parking is affordable and readily available. Stevenage railway station is on the East Coast Mainline with frequent services to London and the north. The town centre is the hub for local bus services. As the first planned pedestrian town centre in Britain, Stevenage has a generally well laid out and attractive pedestrian shopping environment. It also has a network of cycle paths, linking the town centre with the rest of Stevenage.

However, transport facilities in Stevenage are increasingly coming under pressure. Specific characteristics and issues relating to Stevenage's transport infrastructure are summarised below.

Pedestrians & cyclists

An extensive network of segregated pedestrian and cycle routes exists. However the ring road acts as a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists and also discourages the town centre from facing outwards and relating to surrounding land uses. All walking routes into the town centre either bridges or underpasses to cross the dual carriageways, giving the feeling of priority to car users.



Stevenage's existing bus station.

Public transport

At present, Stevenage is struggling to meet the demand placed on its public transport system. The rail station is in need of significant investment and the bus station is unsuitable for modern buses designed for mobility impaired and is operating over capacity. Without securing a larger site, the bus station will continue to serve residents of Stevenage in a substandard fashion and will be unable to expand its services to meet growing demand from new residential developments, such as Stevenage West.

Stevenage railway station is on the East Coast Mainline. However, it is believed that GNER proposals include the option of downgrading Stevenage station and providing a parkway station at Hadley Wood if they retain the long term franchise of the East Coast Mainline. Recently, their existing franchise was extended by two years. Stevenage Council commissioned Brown & Root to look at the benefits of constructing a multi-modal interchange at the station, together with significantly increased commuter car parking. The study forecast substantial net benefits of such a scheme. Over the next two years Stevenage Borough Council will need to continue to proactively pursue the retention of Stevenage as a major stop on the East Coast Mainline with GNER and other potential train operating companies.



Six lanes of traffic along Lytton Way.

Private vehicles

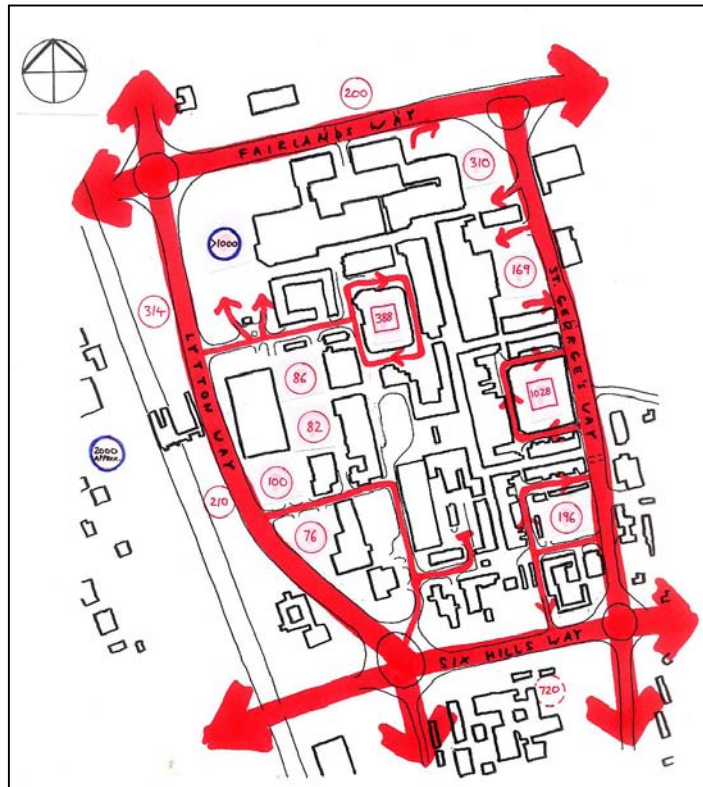
The town centre is easily accessible by road, congestion is limited, and car parking relatively plentiful with the exception of peak demand periods. It is enclosed by a ring road of dual carriageway standard. This is part of a wider grid pattern which disperses traffic around the town centre.

Although efficient, the ring road restricts future development opportunities within the centre and acts as a major physical barrier to surrounding areas and services such as the rail station, swimming pool and North Hertfordshire College. In particular Lytton Way, the western section of the ring road, carries only around one-third of its theoretical link capacity yet still forms a hostile barrier to the town centre. There may be scope to change the nature of this road. The Brown & Root study, supported by more recent research by Baxters, suggests it would be possible to narrow the road from three to two, or even one, carriageway in either direction. However, before this option could be brought forward, a more detailed traffic impact study would need to be undertaken.



Expansive surface car parking.

There are approximately 6,200 car parking spaces serving the town centre area, of which about 3,000 are private. Most of the available car parking is long stay, and is at-grade. There are 867 short stay spaces (around 25% of the current total of public spaces), located in the north-east areas of the town centre. 1,416 spaces are provided in multi-storey car parks. At present, the provision of designated handicapped car parking spaces is inadequate.



Existing car parking provision.

Summary

Transportation issues and requirements are constantly changing and Stevenage needs to ensure it is at the forefront of the shifting agenda. In particular it needs to strike an appropriate balance between the needs of increasing car ownership and usage and the commercial town centre requirements for adequate car parking and accessibility, and sustainable transport policy favouring non-car travel. The relation of land uses and transport infrastructure, particularly the ring road, should be reviewed. It also needs to effectively respond to potential threats to downgrade the role of Stevenage station on the East Coast Mainline. Pedestrian and cycle links and facilities can also be enhanced, particularly to neighbouring hubs, such as the Old Town and Roaring Meg.

2.5 URBAN FORM

Stevenage, as a new town, has a well designed underlying urban form of streets, public spaces and buildings. Although this has become tarnished and tatty at the edges in recent years, with under-investment and developments that have not fully realised potential synergies with the rest of the town, the centre still retains substantial assets and opportunities. The negative perceptions of the centre have however tended to hide and obscure its potential, and this needs to be addressed in the regeneration framework. Urban form issues are summarised in **Figure 2.1** and described below.



Stevenage Town Square.



The Queensway shopping mall.

The retail core

The retail core is generally well contained and attractively laid out for shoppers in a loose pedestrian grid pattern. The principle shopping area of Queensway North and the Plaza links through to the Town Square and secondary retail areas to the east and south. However many of the older buildings are in need of investment to smarten and tidy their facades. The resultant shabby appearance detracts from the image of a vibrant successful centre. Secondary areas suffer from being located on streets with little reason for through movement.

Leisure and civic

Stevenage has a range of good quality leisure and civic amenities, but these suffer from being randomly dispersed and not relating to each other or the rest of the centre. The Leisure Park is poorly designed, with unattractive pedestrian links through a large area of surface level parking to the train station and town centre. The library and museum are both isolated in areas with low footfall. The Plaza scheme, on the south side of the Town Square, is reasonably well designed and related to the centre. New development needs to complement this, to allow an evening economy to expand further.



Library and health offices.

Public realm

The core areas of public realm are mostly well conceived. The Town Square includes the well known Clock Tower and is a conservation area. Recent improvements include children's play areas in Queensway South and canopies on one side of Queensway North. However, there are faults in the original town centre plan and subsequent development. The image gained from the internal ring road is relatively poor, mainly consisting of the rear service areas retail units. Within the ring road, pedestrians are too often aware of service yards, surface level car parking, and backs of buildings. The bus station in particular detracts from the public realm and is difficult for pedestrians to negotiate. The public realm, like many of the buildings in the centre, suffers from under-investment and has a dated feel.

Accessibility and connectivity

The attention to detail in the design of the pedestrian environment in the central area contrasts with poor links across the ring road in all directions, with uninviting subways and bridges. The key link from the railway station to the centre, across Lytton Way, through the Leisure Centre and by Swingate and Danesgate car parks, is particularly poor as a gateway statement for people arriving and visiting Stevenage.



Walkway between station and leisure centre.

Development areas

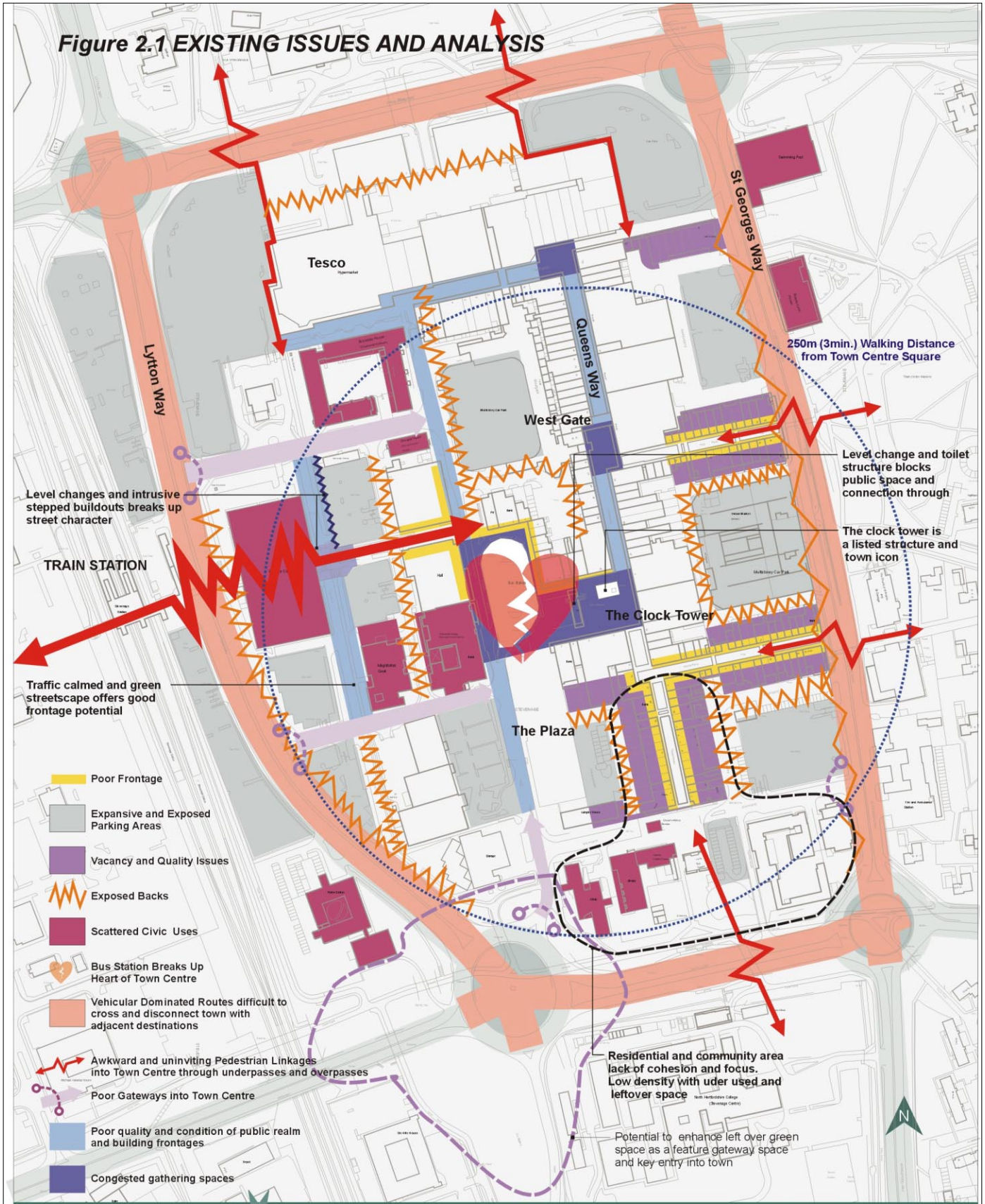
Stevenage's urban form allows the flexibility needed to bring forward significant new town centre development. The relatively large areas of surface level car parking, much of it Council owned, together with older, less valuable properties and the possibility of releasing land from potentially narrowing Lytton Way, offer a number of potential development packages. These are highlighted in Stevenage's District Plan 2nd Deposit Draft and shown in its supporting Proposals Map, and listed below:



Subways under the ring road.

- Land to the north and south of the railway station, including Lytton Way and car parking south of the Leisure Centre
- Land to east of the Leisure Centre extending to the bus station square
- Town Centre South, including the library, health centre and offices, and Eastgate surface level car park
- Marshgate car park and Park Place
- Ditchmore Lane

Figure 2.1 EXISTING ISSUES AND ANALYSIS



Stevenage town centre regeneration

EDAW

2.6 STAKEHOLDERS

Stevenage is fortunate in having a pro-active Council with significant political will to take forward the regeneration of the town centre. In addition English Partnerships and the East of England Development Agency are supportive of the need to regenerate the town centre and are potential investors and/or partners in this process.

There are also a range of partners and players committed to a positive future for the centre. These include: the town centre manager, retailers, facilities managers, the County Council, land owners, users and occupiers.

Residents and users of the centre have been involved and consulted on their concerns and aspirations for the town centre. These largely correspond with issues and opportunities summarised in this section. In addition, the public were consulted on the evolving regeneration strategy proposals, which were widely supported. A summary of consultation feedback is given in **Appendix 2** and a separate report on consultation events and outcomes has been drafted as a separate stand alone document.



A high quality active public space in Stevenage Town Centre.



A town centre that can be used by all for a variety of activities.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The initial issues analysis detailed above is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 2.1. Stevenage town centre has all the key requirements and drivers of success:

- An increasingly wealthy and growing catchment population
- Good transport links, particularly by road and rail
- A well used centre with low vacancy rates
- A well designed, unique but flexible urban form
- Potential to exploit trends towards the leisure economy and town centre living
- Development sites in appropriate locations and comparatively easy to bring forward

The main challenges facing Stevenage are a need to change perceptions and attract investment. Once a critical mass of change has been achieved the town centre will be well positioned to continue to attract investment and maintain its increased competitiveness.

Key elements in achieving this critical mass of change that the regeneration strategy needs to take forward include:

- Accommodating a department store, together with an appropriate mass of associated quality retail and leisure to provide a broad range of shopping and leisure facilities
- Substantially improved and modernised civic facilities located in a flagship building
- New opportunities for high density town centre living
- Enhanced office space
- An improved public realm
- A sustainable transport strategy, covering:

- improved public transport and the roles and relationships of the train station and bus station
- the role of the ring road
- improved pedestrian and cycle links across the town centre and ring road
- enhanced links (public transport, cycle and pedestrian) with surrounding areas, including Roaring Meg and the Old Town
- a car parking strategy.

In order to achieve this agenda the regeneration strategy will need to avoid the piecemeal development of the past with proposals for the town centre placed in a clear development framework.

3. vision



The future: A vibrant, active, inclusive and prosperous town centre



Our vision for the town centre builds upon the existing vision¹, and is:

To create a vibrant town centre that is a home to a complementary spectrum of retail, leisure, office, civic and residential uses. The centre will have a high quality public realm and significantly improved transport services. It will capitalise on its unique new town history and will be a safe, sustainable and successful place at the forefront of competitiveness and good practice.

New **retail and leisure** developments will be introduced in the heart of the town to enhance and invigorate the existing offer. Stevenage will become a prime shopping destination, home to up market retailers. New retail will be a catalyst for the town centre to evolve into a distinct, vibrant and high quality mixed-use centre. Leisure activities and a vibrant evening economy will grow.

Residents, as well as those working and visiting Stevenage, will benefit from an enhanced public **transport** system. There will be better accessibility for buses, pedestrians and cyclists through and to the town centre. A new integrated rail and bus station will be built to allow services to be expanded. Enhanced public transport networks will improve connections to the wider area and emerging new developments, such as Stevenage West. A well-managed, private car access and parking regime with good models for pedestrian and cycle use will complement improvements.

A good quality, well-managed and maintained **public realm** will set the context for daytime visitors and the night-time economy. A renewed and strengthened heart will be defined by an enhanced town square and the provision of new retail, civic and community facilities. Urban spaces will be safe to use by all ages and social groups at all times of the day and night.

With local support and participation, new **sustainable communities** will be created and integrated with existing communities to provide a high quality, higher density living environment. The neighbourhoods will feel urban, but will be sensitively designed to create a high quality urban form. The mix of tenure will be varied, creating balanced communities.

Redevelopment of **key sites** in Stevenage Town Centre will enable new opportunities for work, shopping and other activities for the local population, making the area a more attractive place to live, work and visit. Stevenage's ideal is for **all sectors of society** to share and work towards improving common interests including the environment, local services, employment opportunities and education.

¹ 'A thriving, competitive and lively town centre, with a clean, safe and attractive environment, meeting the shopping needs of Stevenage and surrounds, and with a range of social, cultural, leisure and employment uses', adopted by the Council in August 1999.

4. regeneration strategy

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The regeneration strategy draws on the opportunities, and translates the vision, to create a co-ordinated, integrated framework for the transformation of Stevenage.

Key elements of the strategy are:

- Dynamic retail, leisure and commercial development
- Sustainable transport and land use
- Quality public realm
- The opportunity for a new civic hub
- Town centre living.

The regeneration strategy is illustrated in **Figure 4.1** and described below.

4.2 DYNAMIC RETAIL AND LEISURE

An expanded and improved range and quality of retail and leisure facilities in the town centre will increase its appeal to a wide variety of users – including people who live, work and visit Stevenage Town Centre. It will act to reinforce Stevenage’s role as a regional centre and nurture its development as a shopping and leisure destination. Bringing more people into the centre and capturing their spend is fundamental for ensuring the longer term health of Stevenage.

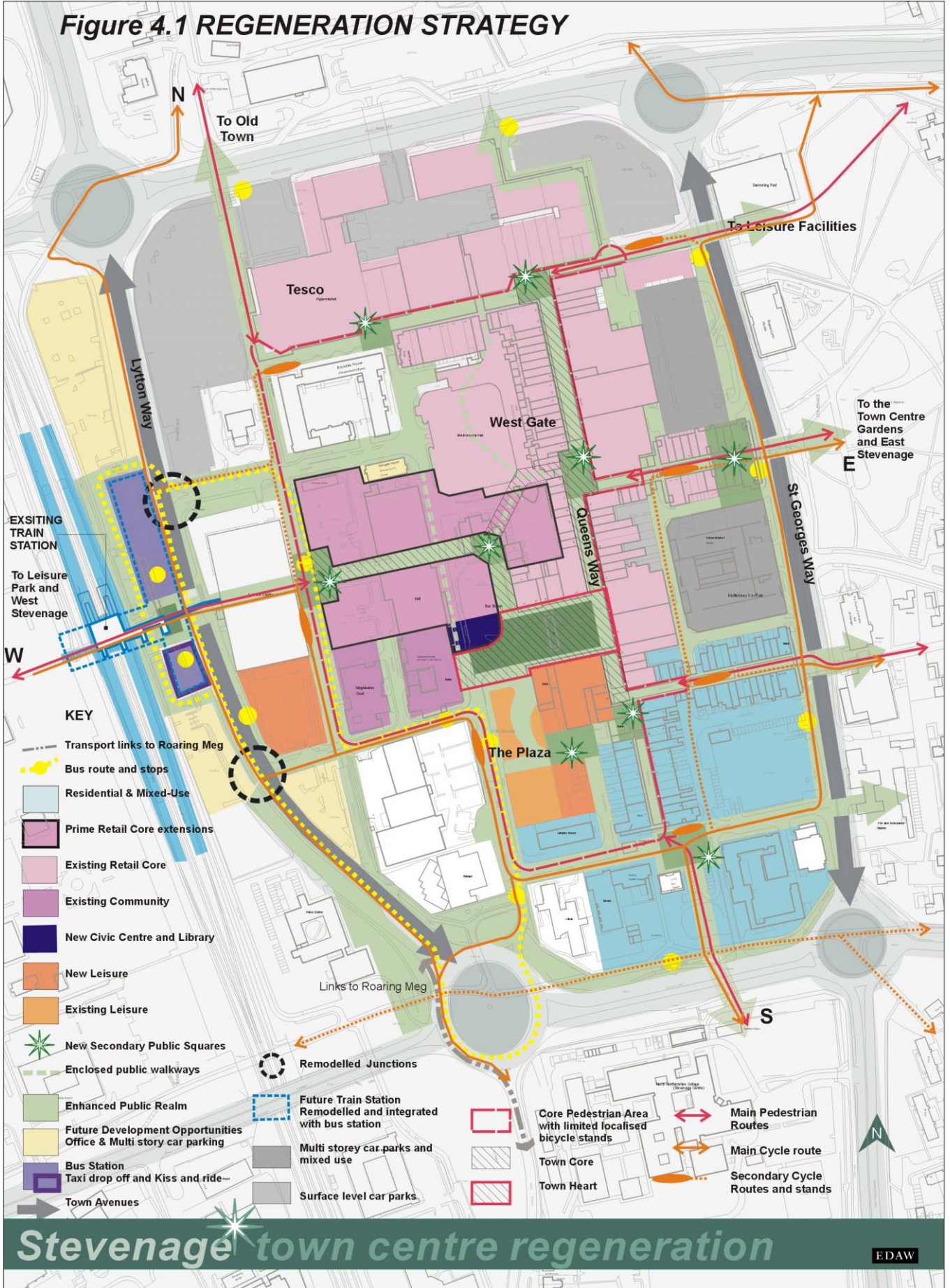
This step change in Stevenage’s retail offer can be achieved with a substantial new retail-led scheme. This should be anchored by a new department store and include a range of shop units for quality retailers and leisure operators. Such a development could incorporate the refurbishment and reshaping of existing facilities.

A number of locations for new retail based developments in the town centre were considered before concluding that the best opportunity would be developing over part of the existing bus station and those properties to the west of this site (**see Figure 4.1**). The principal features which, in combination, will differentiate this area from the others considered are as follows:

- The overall size of the site which could be assembled, allowing the opportunity to develop a department store together with a substantial element of smaller unit shops, providing a range of new shopping facilities.



Figure 4.1 REGENERATION STRATEGY



- The relative ease and cost of site assembly as compared to the other opportunity sites considered. The Council already has extensive ownerships in this area, and relatively few third party acquisitions would be required.
- The prospect that a financially viable development solution might be achieved here, giving regard to factors such as comparative site assembly costs and the scope for incorporating a reasonable element at least of unit shops in a scheme in this area.
- The proximity of this area to the existing prime shopping positions in Queensway, and the scope for linking new development to Queensway and the Westgate Centre. This characteristic would be crucial in seeking to attract support from retailers for any new scheme in the town centre.
- The potential to extend existing car parking and servicing facilities in the Westgate Centre to serve the new development, assisting in scheme design and layout and giving some potential for cost savings.
- The central location and complementary fit with existing uses and urban form.

Once developed, the new high quality retail development would act as the main gateway to the town centre linking the rail station and proposed new bus station to the prime retail pitch. All new developments will be accessible to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

The successful implementation of such a project should itself significantly upgrade the centre, and would foster the wider modernisation of existing facilities, both in the retail and non-retail sectors. This in turn could lead to further refurbishments by private interests in adjacent units in a bid to compete with the new retail centre. For example it should lead on to the refurbishment of the retail core, focusing specifically on Queensway North.



A successful and vibrant mixed-use centre.

In addition to an element of A3 restaurants, cafes and bars in the department store scheme, the strategy proposes the longer term development of a mixed use leisure quarter on the south side of the Town Square (**see Figure 4.1**). This would build upon the Plaza development and extend it to the Town Square and Queensway South. Small office units and a hotel might potentially form elements of this quarter. This area would integrate with a new residential quarter proposed to the south.

Public events and markets can also potentially play a role in enhancing the retail and leisure offer. The future of the Indoor Market is subject of a separate study, whilst implementation of the strategy will require decisions to be taken on the appropriateness of relocating the outdoor market. Potential locations for public events and quality markets include a new square next to the railway station and a remodelled Town Square.

4.3 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND LAND USE

A town centre highly accessible by public transport, on foot and by bicycle to all people living, working and visiting the area will ensure that Stevenage remains attractive to all users and meets sustainable development policy objectives. This can be achieved through:

- Enhanced public transport, with a new multi-modal interchange, allowing for better accessibility by bus to the town centre and surrounding areas, including Roaring Meg and the Old Town.
- Breaking the ring road collar.
- An integrated parking and land use strategy.
- Improved pedestrian links within the town centre.
- Improved cycle links and facilities.

It important to note that in order to ensure that the above proposals are responsive and realistic, an in-depth transport study will need to be undertaken before any plans can be implemented.

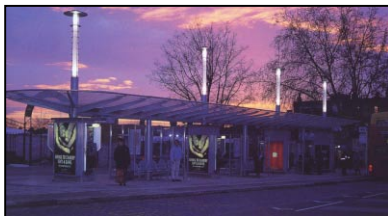
Multi-modal interchange

Relocation of the bus station and combining it with the rail station would allow expansion of the bus station, integration of public transport services and the creation of a new transport focus with strong links through to the department store scheme and town centre. This accords with the Brown & Root transport interchange findings.



A new multi-modal interchange containing rail, bus and taxi services.

Although the bus station will not be so centrally located as at present, access to the heart of the town centre will be retained through the introduction of additional bus stops – both in the central core area as well as strategically located around the ring road. The enhanced bus stop network will help to improve movement around the town centre and improve access to more isolated sections of the centre. Design will allow use and facilities for the mobility impaired.



Innovative, high profile bus stops.

Development of the interchange is proposed in two complementary phases. (This differs from the Brown & Root proposals). The first phase would cover relocation of the bus station next to the train station, and new bus stops in the town centre. New bus stops on the ring road would be linked to new at grade pedestrian crossings. This stage could include the creation of a new public square in front of the train station. The second stage, subject to funding, would cover remodelling of the train station to create an impressive modern facility, attractive to users, together with development of multi-storey commuter car parking north and south of the interchange.

The integrated transport services will help to reinforce the importance of Stevenage as a key transport interchange along the East Coast Mainline. This development will contribute to securing Stevenage's position as a major satellite town serving London as well as a destination in its own right.

Breaking the ring road collar

Changing the nature of the ring road so that it becomes a pedestrian friendly environment will allow more convenient access to the town centre, and opportunities for the centre to face and expand outwards. The space would no longer be dominated by the car. People would be encouraged to walk and cycle here, bringing more activity to the area and, in the longer term, potentially allowing future developments to front onto the roads. This would improve impressions and awareness of the town centre from road and rail. The ring road would be changed from a motorway environment to a more user-friendly, vibrant urban street environment.



A democratic and effective street.

The following measures could achieve this change:

- At-grade signal controlled, non-staggered pedestrian crossings at key points
- Introducing environmental improvements, including cycleways, footpaths, lighting, street furniture and planting to establish a stronger streetscape character
- Bus stops at key points adjacent to road crossings and with priority over cars
- Traffic management measures, including lanes that give priority to buses, taxis and cyclists
- Encouraging a built frontage to the roads, with active uses to provide surveillance and vitality
- Buildings of a scale that relate to the size of the roads.

This would allow the train station and proposed multi-modal interchange, swimming pool, Town Centre Gardens, North Hertfordshire College and the proposed Asda superstore all to relate better to the town centre. It will also allow improved links to be developed with the Old Town and Roaring Meg. In the longer term the car park sites along St George's Way could be re-developed with outward facing, active and attractive land uses.

There is the potential to narrow Lytton Way from three lanes to two lanes in either direction. As well as allowing at grade pedestrian crossings, this would release space for a new bus station next to the train station and allow buses to turn into the town centre. It would also release extra space north and south of the new transport interchange area, to relocate surface level car parking lost by the development of new bus station.

Once Stevenage has enjoyed the benefits of its town centre regeneration and is in a better position to attract new commercial enterprise, new high density mixed-use development of the area around Lytton Way could become commercially attractive. Appropriate uses could include offices, leisure, a hotel and multi-storey car parking.

Traffic flow data supplied by Hertfordshire County Council indicates that the narrowing of Lytton Way to four lanes is possible, while still accommodating local and through traffic on the ring road and surrounding road network. A more detailed transportation assessment will need to be carried out as a separate study and modelling exercise to confirm the transport viability of these proposals and the specific measures that can be put in place.

An integrated parking and land use strategy

The key to bringing forward much of the development opportunities in Stevenage town centre will be a parking strategy (including charging strategy) that encourages a transition from surface level to multi-storey car parking. It is critical that any new multi-storey car parks introduced to the centre are well integrated with both existing and proposed developments.

The town centre has a substantial amount of surface level car parking and this land represents the principal opportunity for new, higher density development. Fundamental elements of the regeneration strategy, including the department store scheme and new transport interchange, rely on being able to develop on surface level car park sites and re-provide car parking elsewhere.

A car parking strategy needs to be in place that allows multi-storey car parking to be self-financing. The viability of any town centre development will inevitably be strained if it has to cross-subsidise the cost of providing new multi-storey car parking. For example, this is a key issue for the department store scheme and the multi-modal proposals. A car parking strategy is currently being prepared. If it can move towards a charging regime that allows multi-storey car parks to be financially self-sustaining this will be of considerable assistance to the regeneration strategy.

Care, however, will be needed to balance the deterrent of high car parking charges with potential benefits. Much will depend upon relative pricing policies in comparison with competing centres. Central government sustainability policy may increasingly help develop an appropriate pricing strategy. It is likely that over time policy tools will increasingly be used to push up car parking charges across the country.

Pedestrian links

Improved pedestrian links will create a more attractive and inviting experience for movement within the town centre, and will cement connections across the ring road. Enhanced linkages integral to proposals to break the ring road collar and include:

- At grade pedestrian crossings in place of subways and bridges, including between:
 - The Leisure Park and train/bus station and the department store scheme,
 - the swimming pool and the northern end of Queensway
 - North Hertfordshire College, the Asda development and the southern quarter including Roaring Meg
 - the Old Town and the town centre
 - Town Centre Gardens and Park Place
- A new pedestrian street between the Leisure Centre and the Town Square, as part of the department store scheme
- A new atrium through the Leisure Centre with a ground level pedestrian link from the multi-modal interchange to the department store scheme and town centre



At grade crossings create more vibrant streets and allow greater access for all.

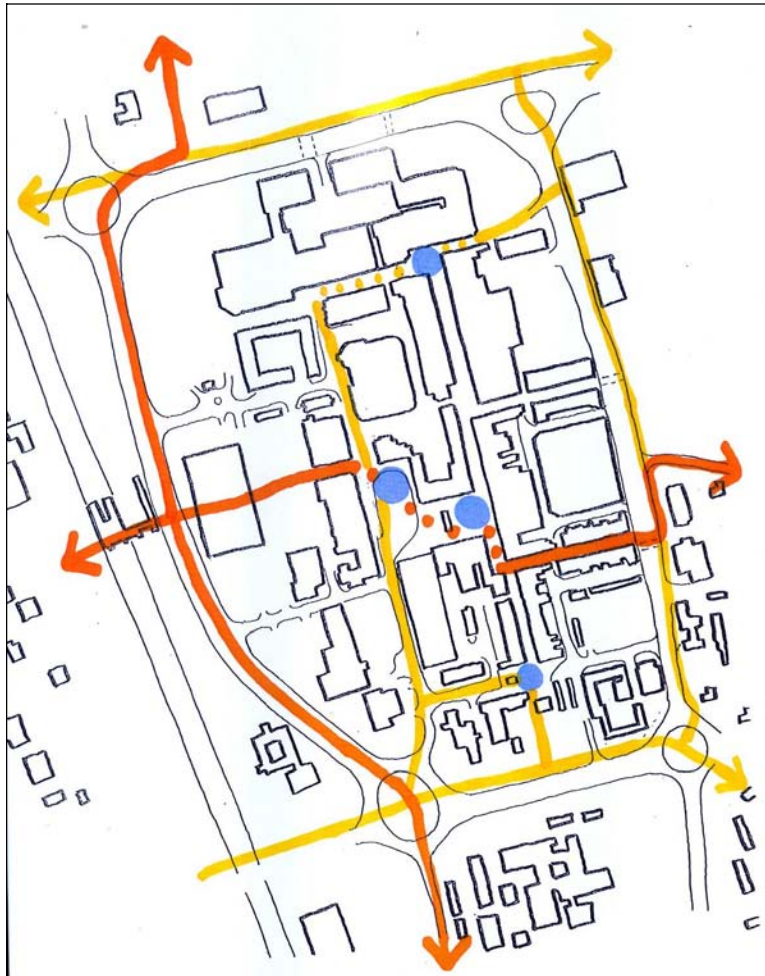


Sheltered and secure cycle facilities help to promote more sustainable transport.

Cycle facilities

Access for cyclists to and through the town centre would be improved, with new east-west and north-south links through the centre, and cycle parking strategically located in the town core.

A conceptual plan for suggested cycle links is provided overleaf as **Figure 4.2**.

Figure 4.2: Conceptual plan for cycle links to and through town centre.

4.4 QUALITY PUBLIC REALM



A high quality public realm attracts users and contributes to a positive town centre experience.

An enhanced public realm will make the town centre a more pleasant and enjoyable experience for people living, working and visiting Stevenage, to the benefit of businesses in the centre. The public realm should be robust, visually exciting and of a high quality. It should be accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities. If the town centre is to become more attractive to both future users and investors, greater emphasis needs to be given to the quality of the environment, the streets and malls and the existing network of sequential pedestrian realms. This will be achieved by providing a co-ordinated townscape, which is safe, accessible, interesting and legible for all users.

In addition to proposals to break the ring road collar and improve pedestrian links, an enhanced public realm can be achieved through changes including:

- Re-development of the central bus station
- An enhanced Town Square
- A network of new public spaces
- Improvements to buildings and facades
- High density development in place of surface level car parking
- Public art

Redeveloping the existing bus station site as part of the new retail scheme could potentially allow the existing historic Town Square to extend westwards. This would help to open the core area up, make the town centre more legible, create a better first impression of the town centre from visitors and add significant value to the retail, civic and leisure units fronting onto the new site. Ideas for improvements to the Town Square include a new café piazza in place of the public toilets.

Introducing a network of open spaces that link through from east to west and north to south will complement existing and proposed buildings and existing spaces. The proposed new retail street and expanded town square acts as an important link in this network. Proposed new squares, each of differing scales and character, will help to draw people through the town centre. This network of spaces will help to make the centre more legible and will provide different areas of the town centre each with a clearly defined character.



Existing active street square in Stevenage.

Existing facades and buildings, particularly in the Town Square and Queensway, should be refurbished to present a cared for, clean and attractive image.

The redevelopment of surface level car parks with high density development will help fill in void areas in the town centre and create a more intimate streetscape, allowing complementary land uses for a more attractive centre.

Arts and cultural vitality supports social inclusion, diversity and learning, and provides the basis of an exciting offer that will attract new businesses, residents and visitors. Activities include street performances, markets, public gatherings and informal recreation. The Town Square and proposed leisure quarter could be the focus for such activity.

Urban design guidelines are outlined in **Appendix 3**.

4.5 A CIVIC HUB

Raising the civic and community profile within the town centre will help to reinforce the importance of both community and Council functions. This can perhaps most effectively be achieved through development of a new civic hub.

This offers the opportunity to:

- Create a high profile asset for the town centre
- Develop new synergies between existing and modernised facilities
- Provide a valuable resource for the local community, and
- Demonstrate a commitment to latest thinking and best practice.

Potential elements could include a relocated library, re-focused as a learning resource centre, the town museum (already recognised as a high quality venue, and the second most popular museum in Hertfordshire), health centre and fitness, and meeting space. Examples of comparable schemes include Peckham Library and Hackney's new Technology Learning Centre, with a learning resource centre, museum, bars and restaurant units, fitness suite, and Council offices (under construction).



New high profile civic buildings can contribute significantly to the regeneration of town centre spaces.

Potential locations for a new civic hub include:

- part of the bus station site
- upper floors of the Department Store scheme, or the
- re-development of the existing library and health centre sites.

All of these locations are potentially suitable. The County Council is unable at present to identify potential funding sources to finance any new library or health centre.

4.6 TOWN CENTRE LIVING

A high-density residential-focused quarter can complement other uses, add to the attractiveness and interest of the centre, and create viable new uses for peripheral locations. It would build on the trend towards city centre living established across the country and create a new local market for wealthier small households looking for convenient access to a dynamic town centre and train station.



An active and successful combination of leisure, retail and residential.

A residential mixed-use area is proposed for the southern quarter of the town centre. Development could be solely residential, or could include civic and office uses, and possibly a hotel. The quarter would complement and merge with the proposed leisure area on the south side of the Town Square and the existing residential to the south-east. Development could start around the library and health offices sites and, over time, extend to cover parts of Queensway South and the Eastgate car park.

The development of new housing in this part of the town centre could also have the benefit of bringing additional life and activity to the central shopping area outside shopping hours – which has helped to improve security and reduce vandalism in other towns that have brought a wider mix of uses, including new housing, into their central areas.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Development of a new retail scheme anchored by a department store, a new multi-modal interchange at the train station, and the breaking of the ring road collar with pedestrian friendly space offer the potential to transform Stevenage town centre. Success will lay the way for investment in improved existing retail space, a new civic hub, creation of the leisure and residential quarters in the south of the centre, and outward looking development along St George's Way and Lytton Road. The town centre will have complemented its assets with high quality, integrated new uses, and established a virtuous circle of improvement and competitive advantage.

5. development proposals

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The regeneration framework is ambitious and comprehensive. It proposes substantial investment in the town centre. The development timeframe for the complete strategy is likely to be around 20 years. Within this context specific development proposals need to be realistic, deliverable and well defined. The elements are divided in to three potentially overlapping phases:

- **Quick wins** principally relating to improvements to the public realm and existing buildings
- **Medium term (4-8 years)** focusing on the department store development and relocated bus station next to the train station
- **Long term (8+ years)** covering development of a residential and leisure focused southern quarter, expansion of the multi-modal interchange and associated multi-storey car parking and mixed-uses along Lytton Way, and outward looking development along the ring road

An indicative timetable for realising the short, medium and long-term proposals is given in **Section 7**.

The schemes and ideas, particularly those outlined for the short and medium term, are designed to be self contained, viable and cost effective. The medium term proposals, described in some detail in this chapter cover the following package:

- Extension to the prime shopping area
- The new bus station
- Bus access to the town centre
- Narrowing of Lytton Way
- Public realm works

Commentary on feasibility, funding and financial viability is included, and specific details are given in confidential appendices.

The longer term proposals are unlikely to be feasible and/or viable at this stage, but have the potential to be so, particularly with the successful implementation of the short and medium term proposals and transformation of the town centre. Proposals are briefly outlined, including a commentary on financial viability.

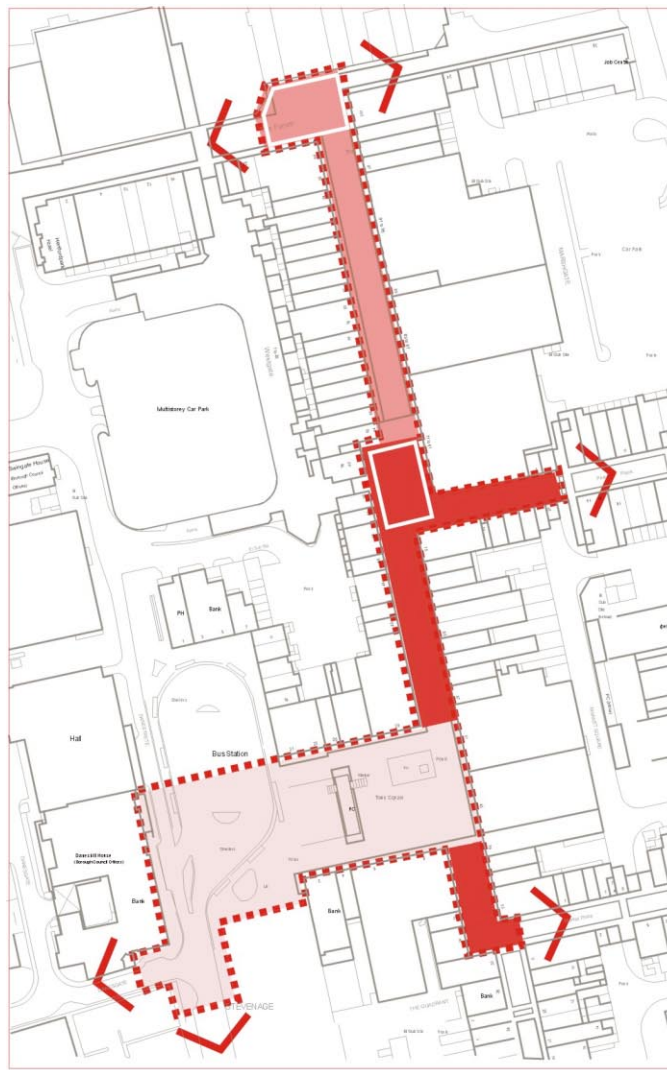
5.2 QUICK WINS

Quick Wins should be focused on temporary works that can be removed, upgraded or replaced when the town centre is redeveloped in the longer term. At this early stage, key priority projects that have been identified as potential Quick Wins are:







- Strategy development
- Strategy implementation plans
- Façade treatments
- Public realm improvements

The area designated as the Quick Wins Zone is illustrated below in **Figure 5.1**.

Figure 5.1: The Quick Win Zone and Phasing Plan



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|---|
|  | Detailed Design Vision |  | Phase 3 Review and Implementation when Bus Station is relocated |
|  | Phase 1 Implementation |  | Focal public Squares |
|  | Phase 2 Implementation |  | Character to inform future public realm redevelopment |

As it is important to spend the limited funding available for Quick Wins in a manner that will add the greatest value to the central area, it is essential that spending is well planned and resulting projects fit with the longer-term goals of the Regeneration Strategy as a whole. To ensure that this occurs, a priority for the Council should be to develop a Public Realm Improvement Strategy and resulting Detailed Design Plans for the town centre.

The Public Realm Improvement Strategy and Detailed Design Plans should outline how the available monies will be allocated to individual projects, when and where each should be introduced and what the entire core area will look like (in detail). Critically, the strategy will ensure that there is no duplication between long-term and short-term projects within the core area and ensure that those projects which are introduced can be built upon and further improved when additional funding is secured. To ensure that a comprehensive strategy is introduced, we suggest devising a Public Arts Strategy in partnership with the Public Realm Improvement Strategy.

Once the Strategies have been completed (and in light of their recommendations) we suggest investing as a priority in public realm improvements and façade treatments.

As the treatments to the facades are the more minor tasks and will show immediate positive results, we suggest undertaking this project prior to the more capital intensive and disruptive public realm improvements. Improvements to the façades of town centre buildings can include:

- Lighting
- Improved security
- Rendering
- Minor remodelling
- General repairs

As the council building façade offers the best potential for immediate improvements, we have used **Figure 5.2** to illustrate how such improvements might be undertaken.

Key aspects of public realm improvements that will need to be undertaken include:

- Lighting
- Paving
- Planting
- Public art

The more significant public realm improvements should be focused around the malls of Queensway North and South. Due to the need for more extensive public realm improvements around the Plaza area, works here can be undertaken at a later date.

Improvements should focus on new paving street furniture, lighting, public art work and planting. Refitting or replacing the canopies over the street would greatly enhance the protection of the space from the elements and improve the image of the area. Streetscape improvements would set precedence for the other malls, secondary squares and streets.

Works to the ring road include improving the environments of the underpasses (for example as part of the Asda planning gain commitments). The longer term strategy will be the development of at-grade pedestrian crossings (see 'Breaking the ring road collar' and 'Pedestrian links' in Section 4.3 above).

In addition to the physical works, it is important that a workable and realistic maintenance strategy be developed prior to, or in parallel with, the improvements. This will ensure that then investment made to the town centre environment will be suitably preserved.

The table below outlines a breakdown of the Quick Wins projects, highlighting indicative costings for each element. A timetable for completing each activity has also been provided.

Element	Task	Cost (£000)	Duration
Strategy Development	Public Realm Improvements (including detailed design)	50	12 weeks
	Arts Strategy	15	6 weeks
	Maintenance Strategy	5	4 weeks
Public Realm Improvements	Façade improvements	120	24 weeks
	Work to Council Offices	30	16 weeks
	General public realm works	380	48 weeks
TOTAL		600	110 weeks

EDAW estimate that the development and implementation of a high quality public realm will cost a minimum of £300 per square metre.

Figure 5.2 ILLUSTRATIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE QUICK WINS ZONE



Existing view of Queensway North

Potential integrated improvements with quality street furniture, paving lighting and canopies to create an inviting shopping environment



Existing view of Council Building

Potential art work treatment to facade of Council Building



Elements of Improvement

Comfortable Bench Seating



Informal seating/table plinths



Recycling Bins



Street Lighting



Paving



Planters



Artwork Signage and graphics

Stevenage *town centre regeneration*

5.3 EXTENSION TO PRIME SHOPPING AREA

Scheme description

A detailed development sketch of the proposed scheme is provided in **Figure 5.3**. A more general massing of the development is shown in **Figure 5.4**. These are of a preliminary nature and intended solely to test the general scope for new retail development in this area, the probable land take, and as a basis for preliminary financial appraisals. The principal features are as follows:

- A Department Store of approximately 9,300 square metre. (100,000 square foot), with accommodation on three levels. This is located at the western end of the new scheme, close to the Leisure Centre, in a position designed to encourage pedestrian flows through the whole of the new scheme. Those pedestrian flows should also be reinforced by the position of the new retail malls in relation to the railway station and new bus stops adjacent to the scheme. At the next stage consideration should be given to raising the prominence of the department store when viewed from the new main mall.
- Accommodation for smaller unit shops of varying sizes to meet market requirements, with a total floor area of approximately 10,600 square metre (115,000 square foot.). These would provide the main revenue earning element of the development. Ideally a larger element of unit shopping than this is preferable to assist the financial viability of the scheme. There may be scope to incorporate further accommodation in the area at the western end of the Town Square, possibly for A3 type uses, and for a limited element of first floor shopping in part of the scheme.
- The new retail elements are arranged along a main east-west pedestrian mall, with links through to the existing Westgate Centre and Queensway beyond, and to the Town Square. The treatment of this mall would need to be considered further, but it could be weather protected through glazed canopies. The connecting mall to the Westgate Centre would probably be covered.
- At first floor level there could be scope to extend the existing Westgate Centre car park above the shops on the north side of the new main mall. Our initial study suggests that approximately 350 spaces might be provided on two decks.
- To the south of the new main mall there could be scope to extend the first floor level deck, from which the existing Westgate Centre shops are serviced, so as to serve the shops in this part of the proposed scheme. There would also be scope to provide additional retail/storage space in some areas at first floor level, or small elements of leisure and office space, subject to demand. In either case, such space would serve the secondary function of helping to screen service activity at first floor level.
- Servicing for the new shops to the north of the main mall, including the department store, is likely to be via a new ground level service yard at the rear of those elements.

- The outline plans show the potential to retain a north-south pedestrian link into and across the new main mall. Donaldsons have some reservations in commercial terms as to the merits of this link, as it impacts adversely on the financial viability of the proposals and has the potential to divert pedestrian flows through an area where significant vehicular movements will be occurring for both servicing and parking. However, this is a pedestrian desire line, for example from Tesco and the western end of the Plaza down to the Town Square, and this should probably be retained.

Figure 5.3 ILLUSTRATIVE PROPOSALS FOR EXTENTION OF RETAIL AREA

Quality Retail Environment with overlooking uses



Service Yard

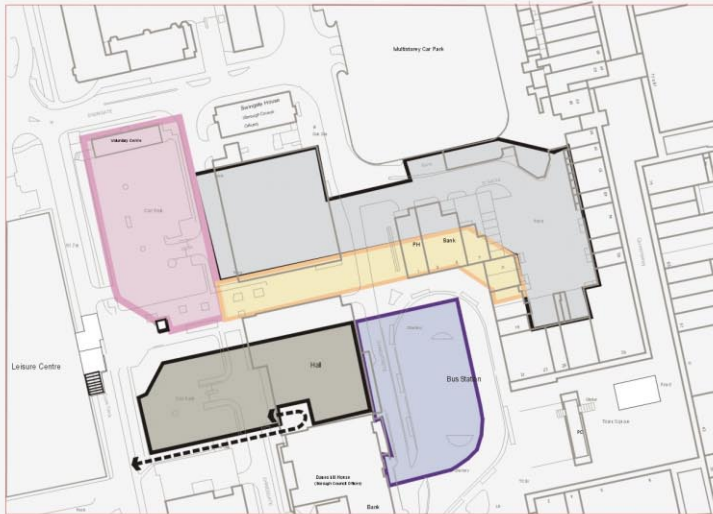


Ground Floor

Reconfigured entry

Interactive facade and access to square

Potential access to first floor servicing



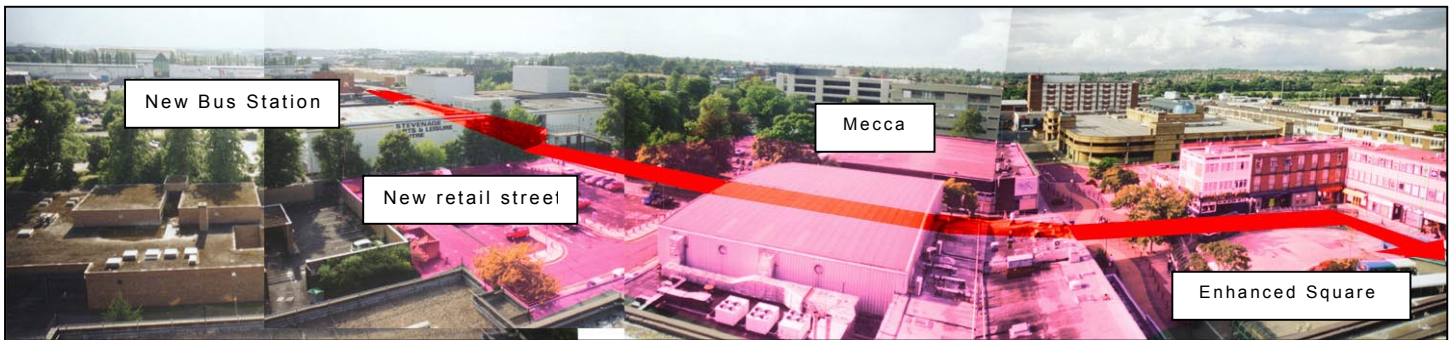
First Floor



Second Floor

- Retail
- Civic and Community Uses
- Servicing
- Car Parking
- Potential Office
- Major entry points
- Lifts
- Connection across to station linking bridge
- Potential light weight canopy cover over space

FIGURE 5.4: An expanded retail centre with new shopping street and direct links to rail and bus services.



Site assembly

Substantial parts of the site are already within the freehold ownership of the Borough Council. These include the Swinggate and Danehill surface car parks to the east of the Leisure Centre, the Renaissance Nite Club building and the existing bus station.

A number of additional properties in the ownership of other parties would also be required to complete the development unit. These include the Mecca Bingo Hall, existing shops with offices over at 1-15 Town Square, and some kiosk accommodation within the Westgate Centre.

In the case of the Town Square and Westgate Centre properties, the properties shown are likely to be the minimum necessary to facilitate the creation of the essential shopping link through to the Westgate Centre and Queensway beyond. Careful consideration would need to be given to establish whether existing occupiers could be relocated within the scheme itself, or to other acceptable positions within the town centre.

In the case of the Mecca Bingo Hall a possible opportunity for relocation might be on what is currently the Arts and Leisure Centre surface car park.

Relationship to current commercial demand

If there is a reasonable prospect of a viable scheme attractive to retailers, developers will usually be prepared to invest the time and effort required to explore the opportunity fully and to implement the development. This is provided that they can be assured of support, should it prove necessary to, seek compulsory purchase powers to complete site assembly. These conditions should also enable the developer to secure long term funding for the scheme from external sources.

Donaldsons maintain regular contacts with the leading department and variety store groups and have reviewed the likely demand from such retail groups for representation in Stevenage. The presence of one or more such retailers in any major scheme, to act as a main retail anchor, is usually a prerequisite to the successful implementation and letting of the scheme. The leading store operators are offered many opportunities to take new or improved stores in town centre schemes in all parts of the country and can afford to be highly selective in deciding which to pursue. Often their final Board decisions take a long time to emerge, and the financial terms on which they are willing and able to proceed can often impose a significant cost burden on the remainder of the development. The uncertainty is often aggravated by the lengthy lead in periods for most major schemes,

particularly where a public inquiry is necessary into planning, highway or site assembly aspects. Market conditions can change appreciably during the currency of such a project.

Whilst potential demand from anchor and other prospective tenants can be assessed at any particular time, this can change fundamentally as matters progress and needs to be kept under review.

Interest has been expressed by at least one leading department store group in Stevenage. They might provide the necessary shopping anchor for a scheme in this area. At the next stage, and following the completion of more detailed study, it would be necessary to reconfirm this initial interest based on the evolving plans.

If a scheme along the lines envisaged is to be promoted successfully, it will be necessary to encourage and foster retail demand carefully as matters progress – one of the principal tasks being to convince prospective occupiers that a major upgrading of the centre and its present image is intended.

Financial Viability

Initial financial appraisals indicate that there is a prospect that a viable scheme might be promoted in due course. There is also some potential for the scheme to cross-subsidise some elements of the associated medium term package, mainly through receipts from sale of the Council's land assets. At the next stage this can be assessed with greater certainty after further work has been undertaken to refine and hopefully extend the commercial content, re-confirm the demand from occupiers, and establish the scope to support cost burdens such as decked car parking and the north-south pedestrian link.

Our initial financial appraisal is not included in this report, but is provided in a separate confidential appendix.

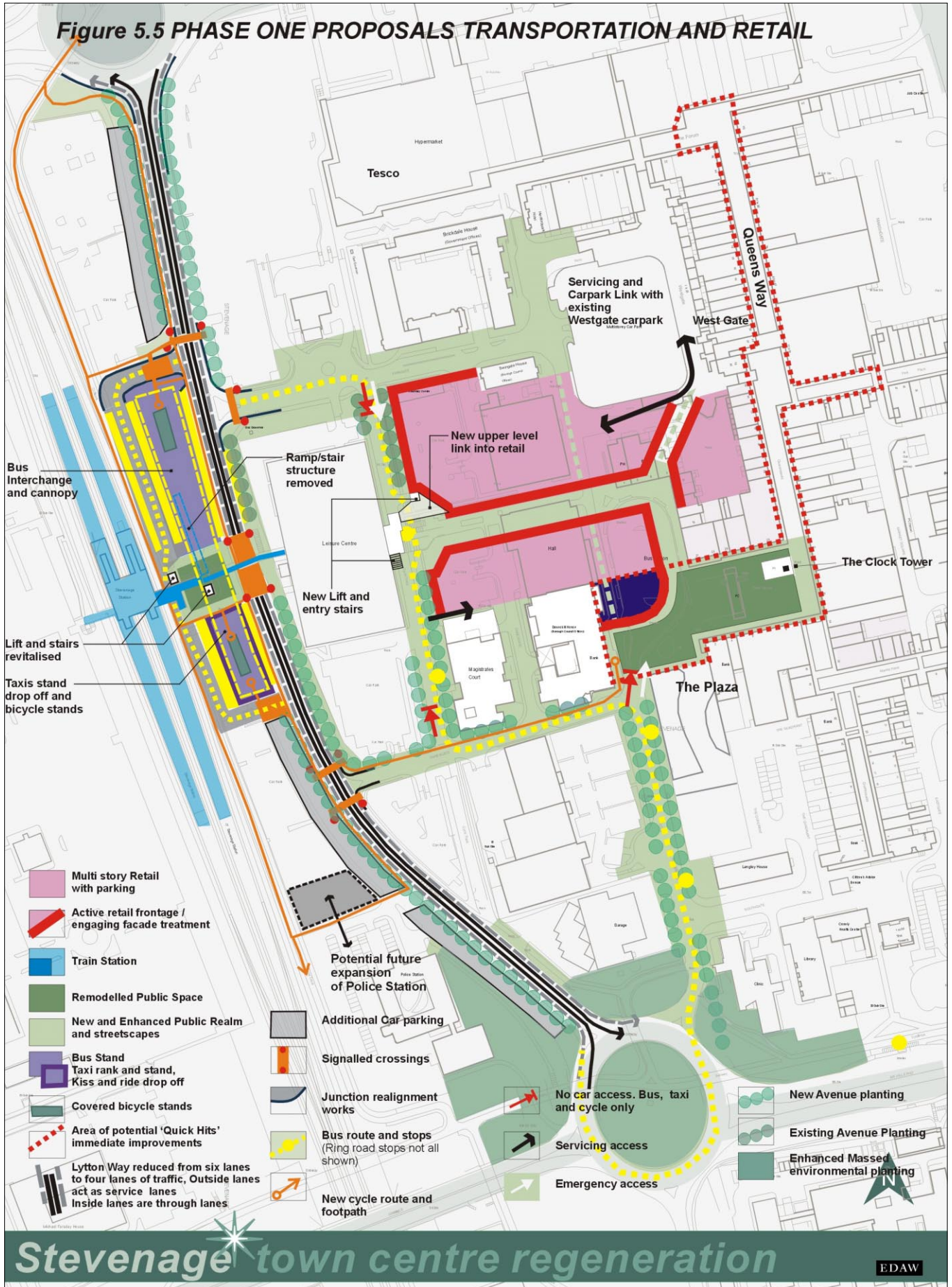
5.4 NEW BUS STATION, NARROWING OF LYTTON WAY AND ASSOCIATED PUBLIC REALM WORKS

The department store proposals are the anchor of the town centre regeneration strategy. Associated with the department store scheme are the following infrastructure and public realm works:

- Relocation of the bus station to the train station
- Provision of new and improved bus access to and within the town centre
- Narrowing of Lytton Way to two lanes in either direction
- Improvements to, and possible extension of, the Town Square

These transport proposals and the retail proposals for context are illustrated in **Figure 5.5**.

Figure 5.5 PHASE ONE PROPOSALS TRANSPORTATION AND RETAIL



Bus Station

The bus station needs to be relocated because the space it currently occupies is essential to create the critical mass and links through to the Westgate Centre for the department store scheme. Independently of the department store proposals, there is a need to relocate the bus station as its capacity is constrained and is unsuitable for modern buses designed for mobility impaired.

The proposed new bus station is located immediately to the north of the train station (**Figure 5.5**). Elements include:

- A high quality canopied bus station with space for and expanded number of bus stops
- Space for standing buses
- An attractive new public square in front of the train station
- New/improved lifts and stairs to connect the first floor station concourse and walkway over Lytton Way with the bus station
- Covered cycle parking, for example in the new station square
- Drop off parking space south of the train station
- A taxi rank immediately south of the train station, including mobility ride facilities
- Signal controlled junctions on Lytton Way to allow buses to enter and exit the station, and pedestrians to cross between the station and town
- Design and facilities compatible with access for the mobility impaired

These proposals are for a well designed, high profile facility that will be a flagship project for Stevenage, of a national standard, and providing a valuable interchange facility. Comparable examples include new covered stations and interchanges at Stratford in East London and Walsall in the Midlands.

Lytton Way

The narrowing of Lytton Way is included in the department store development package as it:

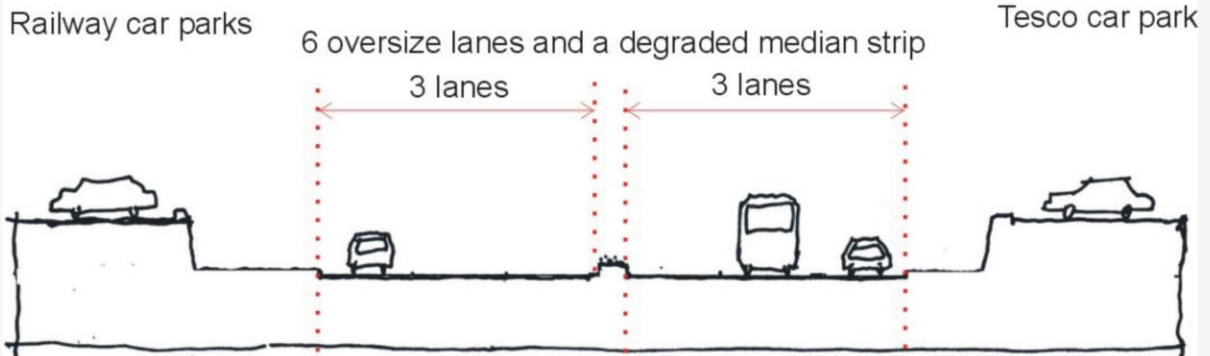
- provides space for the new bus station next to the train station and allows pedestrians and buses to cross Lytton Way at ground level signal junctions; and
- releases extra space for additional car parking north and south of the new transport interchange area, allowing car parking currently around the train station to be relocated to the north and south, potentially with *no net loss of station car parking*.

Initial transport modelling by Baxters indicates that the narrowing of Lytton Way is possible as through traffic can be displaced and accommodated onto the surrounding road network and town centre traffic can carry on using Lytton Way at reduced speeds with traffic management.

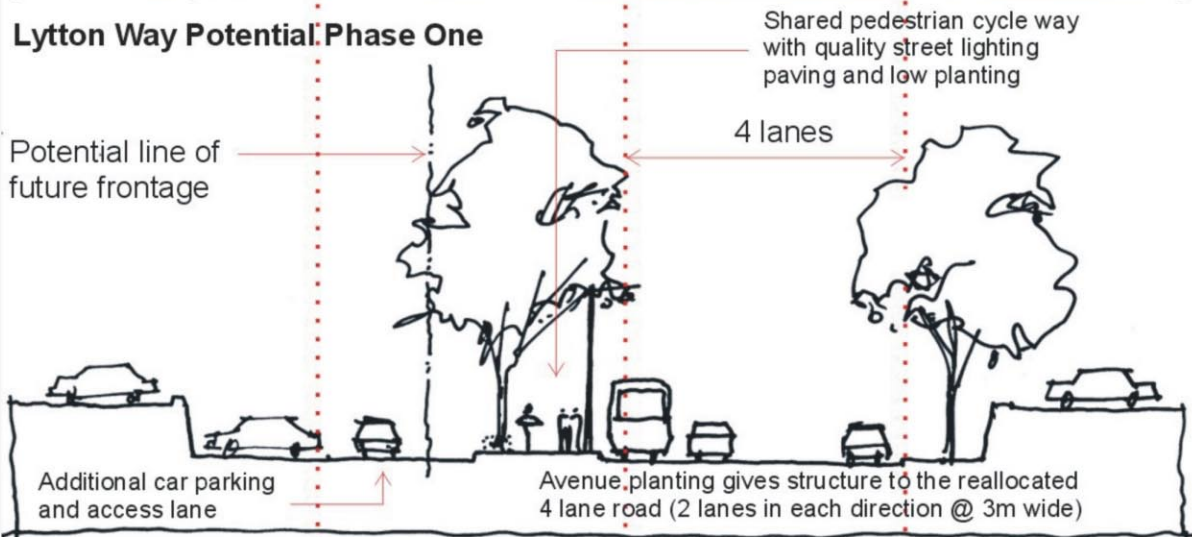
Our proposals are to remove the three north bound lanes on the west side of Lytton Way, and to narrow the remaining carriageways to provide two carriageways in either direction (**Figure 5.6**). However, before this can be implemented, more in-depth transport analysis will need to be carried out.

Figure 5.6 EXISTING, SHORT TERM AND LONG-TERM PROPOSALS FOR LYTTON WAY

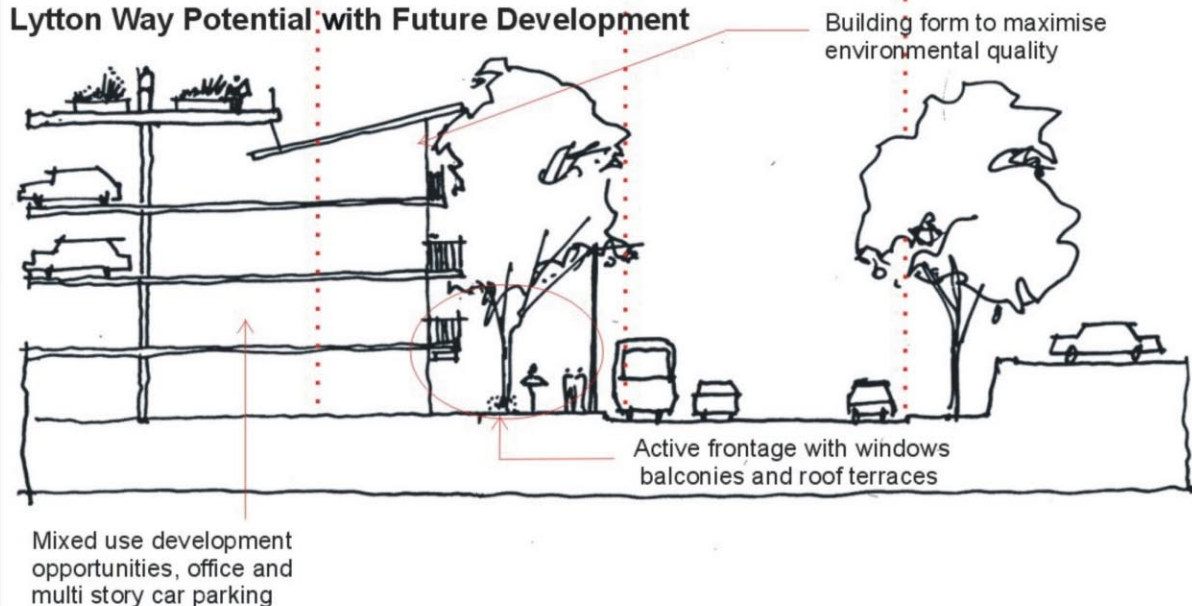
Lytton Way Existing



Lytton Way Potential Phase One



Lytton Way Potential with Future Development



Bus Access to the Town Centre

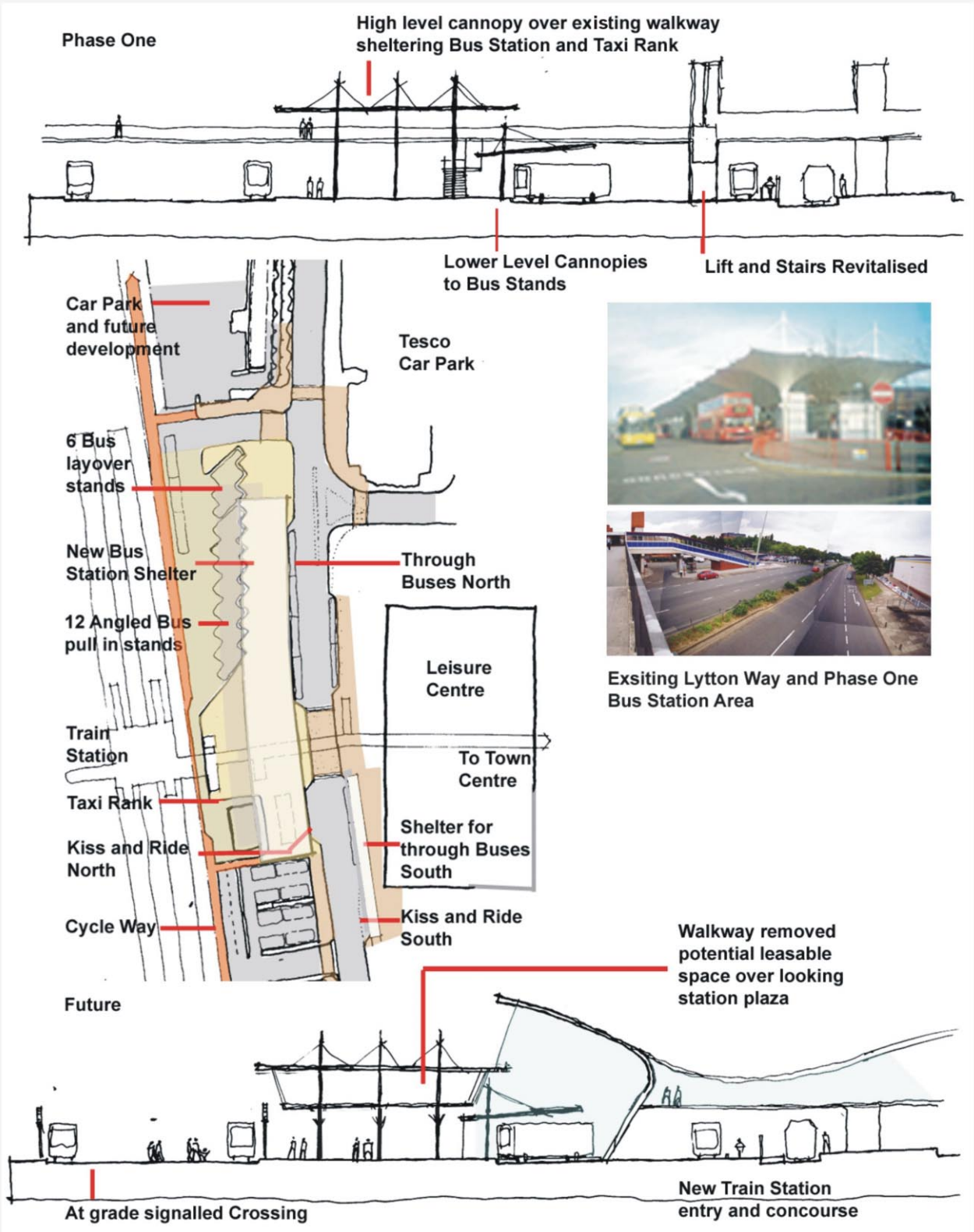
A clear message from public consultation on the town centre regeneration strategy is the need to continue to provide good bus access to the town centre. The elderly in particular felt that a new bus station at the train station would be too far from the centre. To address these concerns the package of measures associated with the department store scheme would include:

- A bus loop from the new bus station in to the town centre, for example running down the old High Street and from other key centres, such as Roaring Meg, with bus stops in front of the department store
- Expanded and improved bus stops and links into the town centre around the ring road.

These proposals would give increased accessibility to the town centre over current arrangements. In particular there is the opportunity to improve access to the north eastern and eastern areas of the centre, with new and expanded bus stops. These stops would also serve the new swimming pool and Town Centre Gardens.

Details of the proposed new bus station are illustrated overleaf in **Figure 5.7**.

Figure 5.7 DETAILS OF THE NEW BUS STATION



Town Square

The removal of the bus station from the town centre provides an opportunity to create a high quality public space. The department store scheme proposes buildings on the northern section of the bus station, with possible extension to include the southern section in front of the Council's offices. Depending upon the exact details of the final scheme there will be a need to either:

- design an attractive, contemporary public space in front of the Council offices, or
- design a sympathetic building and associated public realm which relates well to the Town Square and Council offices.

Either option should be packaged together with associated work to integrate them with, and improve, the existing Town Square around the clock tower. In particular the space where the existing public toilets and raised platform are located could be much more effectively used. For example, these structures could be demolished and new quality cafés built, in a similar way to the design of Brindleyplace in Birmingham.

Financial Viability

Potential funds to cover the package associated with the department store scheme include land receipts and planning gain from the department store scheme and funding through the Local Transport Plan process. There may also be the opportunity to use Section 106 contributions from the Roaring Meg and Asda developments, though these would need to be spent on elements of the package that correspond with the conditions of the Section 106 agreements. Further funds could be secured from the Stevenage West development, if it proceeds to an appropriate timescale. There is potentially a good case for English Partnerships and the East of England Development Agency to invest in the package along with funding from the Local Transport Plan. We recommend that English Partnerships and EEDA work with Stevenage Borough Council on taking forward the Regeneration Strategy and consider potential contributions to facilitate development.

5.5 LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT

Multi-modal transport interchange

A multi-modal transport interchange could be built as a second phase following on from the new bus station. The need for phasing would be subject to availability of funding. The scheme could include a remodelled station, multi-storey car parks to the north and south, and the creation of an atrium through the Leisure Centre with a ground level pedestrian walkway connecting the station with the department store scheme. Funding for such a scheme could come forward through the Local Transport Plan process and in collaboration with the future rail franchise.

These proposals provide the same transportation facilities but differ from the split level interchange scheme with associated office and retail proposed in the Brown & Root study. This is because we have reservations about the commercial attractiveness and viability of the Brown & Root proposal, and believe that our proposals are a more deliverable solution.

Civic hub

Options for a new civic hub include locating a multi-purpose centre in front of the Council offices, over the new retail scheme, or in the south of the town centre. No finance has yet been identified for such a development.

Preliminary discussions with the County Council suggest that finance would need to come from outside the County Council. Further work is needed looking at the business case for such a centre, and potential funding such as lottery and PFI. If health is a significant element of a new centre then funding from the Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) programme may prove fruitful.

Residential and mixed use southern quarter

Proposals are for a high density residential quarter in the south of the town centre. Donaldsons have reviewed the market and believe there is demand for such development. However the up lift in land value from existing uses is not significant enough to cover the cost of re-providing existing civic facilities, including the library and health offices. Development of a residential quarter would be dependent upon a separate business case being taken forward by the County Council for the modernisation of its facilities and re-provision either in this location or elsewhere.

5.6 CONCLUSION

An extension to the prime shopping area is potentially commercially attractive and viable. Outline design analysis suggests it could integrate well with existing retail, parking and servicing facilities in the Westgate Centre, with potential marriage value.

The associated package of infrastructure and public realm works linked to the department store scheme, including the new bus station and narrowing of Lytton Way, would contribute to substantially improving transportation infrastructure and the public realm in Stevenage. Funding for this package could come from a range of sources including Section 106 contributions, land receipts and through the Local Transport Plan process.

In the longer term other elements of the regeneration strategy, including the residential quarter and civic hub, have the potential to become commercially viable, as the centre becomes more successful and valuable. These elements will also depend upon the County Council's position on and business case for modernising its existing civic facilities in Stevenage.

6. planning policy framework

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section:

- considers the regeneration strategy within the context of the 2nd Deposit Draft District Plan and other relevant planning policies, and
- outlines a policy framework for preparation of supplementary planning guidance.

The aim is to ensure that the regeneration strategy fits well with the emerging planning policy context, and that the principles of the regeneration strategy are followed.

6.2 STEVENAGE DISTRICT PLAN 2ND DEPOSIT DRAFT

The latest planning policy framework for Stevenage town centre is set out in the 'Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011, 2nd Deposit Draft May 2001'. Chapter 6, on town centre and retail developments, generally provides an appropriate and consistent planning policy framework for the regeneration strategy. In particular it:

- includes an appropriate vision and aims
- protects the town centre as the Borough's prime comparison retail location (Policies TR5, TR8 and TR9)
- encourages redevelopment in areas given priority in the regeneration framework (Policy TR4)
- identifies a preference for relocating the bus station between the railway station and Lytton Way
- sets the context for sustainable transport and appropriate car parking provision
- seeks to promote and protect office development in the centre (Policy TR10)
- encourages residential development in the centre, and
- provides an appropriate framework for conservation and the Town Square (Policy TR16).

Policy TR6 designates prime and secondary retail frontages, with retail use (A1) only being permitted in the prime frontages. These include the Westgate Centre. With the successful development of the regeneration strategy's department store scheme, and its integration with the Westgate Centre, it may be more appropriate to allow the Westgate Centre more flexibility to bring forward A3 units to complement the combined facilities. Similarly in the longer term the regeneration strategy suggest leisure uses for the south

side of the Town Square, currently proposed as a prime retail frontage. Policy R6 could be reviewed, now or at a later stage, in the light of these aspirations.

Policy TR10 on protecting office use appears ambiguous. Is it saying that offices that are redeveloped need to be replaced as part of a new scheme, even if it has been demonstrated that the existing accommodation is no longer suitable for office use? A policy consistent with the regeneration strategy would be to allow conversion of redundant offices to residential, retail, civic and/or leisure uses within the ring road. Larger offices, designed to meet modern user requirements, could come forward as part of the regeneration framework, particularly in sites around the train station.

Policy TR12 on town centre car parking requires parking in new development to be in accordance with policies T16 and T17. These in turn refer to Environmental Safeguards guidance and the Council's forthcoming Car Parking Strategy. Drafts of these documents should be reviewed to check consistency with the regeneration strategy and its proposals, particularly the department store scheme. The proposals for the extension to the prime retail core include provision of additional car parking at a standard below those suggested by the Council's current guidelines. Donaldsons believe that this provision is commercially sufficient as it links in to existing car parking in the Westgate Centre. Policy implications need to be reviewed.

The section on conservation and the environment in the town centre is generally positive and appropriate. In particular careful redevelopment of the toilets and raised platform on the west side of the Town Square conservation area would be welcome as this offers the opportunity to create a space, such as a small café pod, which can make a more valuable contribution to the town centre.

6.3 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Policy TR2 of the Draft Deposit District Plan states that Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) will be prepared for town centre regeneration. The areas in which SPG could complement the Local Plan and regeneration framework include:

- setting an appropriate framework for good quality design and urban form
- ensuring convenient and attractive public transport, pedestrian and cycle access
- encouraging appropriate relations between land uses
- setting more detailed parameters for development in and adjacent to the Town Square conservation area.

Particular issues that could be covered in SPG relating to the regeneration strategy's proposals for the department store scheme include:

- scale, siting, form and massing of development in relation to buildings and public realm around the existing bus station and Town Square
- architectural style and building materials
- guidelines on development within/adjacent to the Town Square conservation area
- accessibility and quality of new public transport facilities in the town centre, including improved access for disabled people

- quality and nature of pedestrian links from the Leisure Centre through to the Town Square and Westgate, including vertical relationships
- accommodation of north-south pedestrian and vehicular movement, and
- appropriate car parking standards.

Matters that could be addressed in SPG relating to proposals for development around the train station include:

- relation of different land uses and protection of appropriate development parcels for longer term development
- quality and nature of pedestrian links and public realm between the train and new bus stations and the town centre and department store scheme, and
- quality of new car parking provision.

Issues that could be covered in SPG relating to the regeneration strategy's proposals for residential and mixed use development in the south of the centre include:

- residential development densities
- relation and links through to the Queensway South, the Town Square and the rest of the town centre
- relation and links across the ring road to North Hertfordshire College and the proposed Asda development
- appropriate, and
- car parking standards.

7.3 NEXT STEPS

Once agreed by Stevenage Borough Council, English Partnerships and EEDA this Final Report should be presented to a wider audience.

The framework should be adopted by Stevenage Council and English Partnerships and form a basis for future planning and action:

- With agreement on the principles and proposals in the development framework a more detailed implementation and action programme should be prepared for the next 12 months.
- The delivery mechanisms should be put in place. This will involve working up the Town Centre Development Trust initiatives.
- A detailed transportation study of the opportunities for downgrading the key roads should be commissioned.
- Discussion on the opportunities for progressing the prime retail opportunities should be pursued with key partners.
- In parallel discussions should be continued with all stakeholders who could assist in delivering the multi-model transport proposals.
- Consider any attractions to emerging Local Plan Policy and begin the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance

appendices

- 1** *LIST OF RELEVANT PROGRAMMES, PLAYERS AND POLICIES*
- 2** *SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK*
- 3** *URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINESS*

appendix 1

LIST OF RELEVANT PROGRAMMES, PLAYERS AND POLICIES

- Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategy developed to help promote social inclusion and provide opportunities
- Learning & Skills Council
- SRB 5 Scheme (£2.63 million over seven years in Bedwell, Monkswood and Shephall areas)
- SRB 1 (completed)
- Community Safety Strategy (Beacon Status) – introduce situational measures to prevent crime & disorder, introduce diversionary measures, improve access to leisure facilities for young people.
- RAISE (Raising Achievement in Stevenage Education)
- Local Agenda 21 (SBC)
- Roaring Meg North Planning negotiation gain of approximately £2million to be spend in the town centre within five years.
- Town Centre Management Company
- County Council
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- The Community Plan
- Stevenage Business Initiatives (SBI)
- Hertfordshire Business Link
- Brighter for Business Campaign

appendix 2

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

PERCEPTIONS OF STEVENAGE TOWN CENTRE

The image of Stevenage town centre is mixed. At one level, there is a perception from some that it is suitably serviced with adequate facilities, especially in the retail and leisure sectors. The other, is that the quality of the town centre experience is weak due to a tired public realm, minimal variety of activities, restricted retail mix and few business support services. To improve this perception, it was unanimously agreed that Stevenage town centre is in need of investment to renew its image and place it in a better position to meet the demands of a 21st Century city

The reality is that Stevenage suffers from many of the same image problems of most new towns. It has not yet matured into a strong, diverse and vital place and does not always bear favourable comparison with traditional towns. The majority of consultees felt that the centre was tired and did not provide an inspiring town centre experience. The town centre has not been significantly updated since its original development in the 1950s and consequently suffers from a relatively poor image as a place to live, work and do business.

If Stevenage is to become a healthy, attractive, convivial town in which people would consciously choose to live, work and raise a family, the consultations suggest that a good deal of re-imaging needs to be done to allow it to compete in a sustainable way against more traditional counterparts.

To help achieve this goal, the consultations identified what stakeholders and consultees believe to be the main problems of Stevenage, what strengths could be built upon and what emerging opportunities and challenges exist for the town centre. Summaries of these points are listed below.

From the consultations, many common themes were identified, including:-

- The city centre needs a broader range of shopping, leisure and cultural facilities for people who might live, work or visit Stevenage.
- A new Department Store development linked with the existing offer should anchor new retail developments in the centre.
- A refurbished and expanded town square should be the focus of community activities and form the heart of the town centre.

- Stevenage need to enhance the quality of office space available in the town centre.
- Dedicated parking facilities and a safe environment are a priority for town centre users.
- The public transport system needs to be improved to allow for better access to the town centre.
- Multi-storey car parks should be constructed rather than surface level car parking to serve businesses, shoppers and commuters.
- There is a need for an improved library and other community facilities in the centre.

There is huge potential to successfully regenerate the town and address the identified needs using as a starting point many of Stevenage's original new town principles, such as ease of access, high capacity road networks, robust and adaptable buildings and close proximity to London. These opportunities should not be ignored but more aggressively exploited to the benefit of future redevelopment. During the consultation, several other key opportunities were clearly identified as priorities to be pursued in order to ensure that the Regeneration Strategy provides for the immediate and future needs of the town centre. Key opportunities identified:-

- Introduce new quality retailing to the centre, anchored by a Department Store
- Enhance access to the town centre and allow room for future expansion by breaking down the ring road barrier
- Improve the image of the town centre by enhancing the quality of the public realm through the development of an expanded town square and more clearly defined public spaces
- Add vibrancy and diversity to the town centre experience with the introduction of new non-retail developments, such as leisure activities, community facilities and new urban housing
- To meet future transport demand and increase the sustainability of Stevenage town centre, the viability of new multi-modal transport interchange should be explored.

appendix 3

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

This section identifies the general urban design concepts which underpin the Development Principles put forward in the previous section. The design concepts presented here are robust and work to support more than one Principle.

These design guidance, in partnership with the Development Principles, should be used to inform and guide the future physical redevelopment of Stevenage town centre.

Streets, Parking & Transport

- A hierarchy of streets should be managed within the town centre to promote maximum connectivity and safe invigorating movement for pedestrian, cycle and public transport
- Improve access to public transport by encouraging higher quality waiting facilities and more numerous stops in central areas
- Increase permeability of town centre by improving links to and through the centre
- Pedestrians will enjoy greater priority at road junctions through the promotion of surface level pedestrian crossings as opposed to subways or raised walkways
- The quality and proportion of space for pedestrians and cyclists will be increased by reducing the land dedicated to traffic and parking in the central areas
- New car parking should be accommodated at the rear, side or inner core of developments or in multi-storey car parks where feasible
- Parking in new residential areas should be visible from residences
- Where multi-story car parking are required, they must be sensitively designed to contribute to the street scene with structures wrapped or concealed with active frontages
- When surface car parks are required, provision for high quality soft landscaping using trees and a mix of permeable surface materials should be used to soften the visual and environmental impact on the townscape
- Streetscape character is to be integral with public realm improvements

The Built Form

- Mixed-use developments accommodating an appropriate mix of retail, leisure, residential, civic and community functions should be encouraged where feasible, particularly in the heart of the town centre
- Retail development must make active frontages
- Design of built form must be, promote a long life, loose fit and low in energy use and resource efficiency
- All built form must be equally accessible for people of all ages & abilities
- The density of residential development must be high and encourage a mix in the form scale, massing and frontage to the street and rear and strive for a mix in housing type and tenure
- New buildings should be built using suitably durable materials and efficient systems of fabrication and quality in construction
- In central areas, new developments should have ground floor activity to enliven streets and other public spaces
- New buildings should be innovative in design and of high architectural quality Residential Buildings must be well integrated with landscape
- All new developments should have clearly defined public frontages and private rear areas
- All loading and servicing areas of buildings should be located at the rear rather than the street side of the building, consideration must be given to timing and management of servicing
- Buildings with the strongest character should be located at main gateways to the centre

Public Realm

- Public realm improvements should be focused around the ring of secondary squares, town centre gateways and core activity streets such as Queen's Way
- The secondary squares should have a distinctive character
- Quality public art, signage, lighting, street furniture and water features should be designed into public space where appropriate
- Durable materials and efficient systems of fabrication and quality in construction with a view to long term maintenance must be
- The layout of spaces should be inviting, legible and promote energy and resource efficiency while maximising user comfort and place attractiveness
- The benefits of greenery should be brought to the town centre through a programme of planting and environmental improvements
- open spaces should promote flexibility in use
- Ensure all public spaces are accessible to all members of the community
- Publicly accessible open spaces should be overlooked by building frontages to provide natural surveillance and encourage more intensive use throughout the day and night
- Maintenance agreements should be negotiated and implemented with new development at the earliest stage possible