

# CIRENCESTER

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK MASTERPLAN SPD FOR  
CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE: INITIAL IDEAS

Prepared for Cotswold District Council  
December 2023



COTSWOLD  
DISTRICT COUNCIL





This document is an emerging outline of the Cirencester Town Centre Framework Masterplan (the masterplan). The masterplan will be a Supplementary Planning Document that builds upon and provides more detailed advice and guidance on policies in the Cotswold District Local Plan and the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan. Collectively, they will guide and help coordinate future development and infrastructure in Cirencester Town Centre.

The draft is in its early stages and no decisions have been made regarding it. One of the first steps in testing and developing these ideas is to gauge your response and gather your opinions and suggestions.

The draft is partnered by proposed changes to the existing strategy and policies for the town centre in the Local Plan that are also being consulted upon. These policies are intended to support delivery of the masterplan when it is adopted in due course and after further public consultation. Ideally the two – the emerging masterplan and the Local Plan policies – should be read together.

The following key points are addressed:

- Long-term sustainability and healthy place-shaping of the Town Centre and of wider Cirencester, addressing modal shift in transport through high-quality streets, safe routes and public spaces which encourage people to walk, cycle, explore and stay;
- Encouraging and supporting a diverse mix of uses and services to strengthen Cirencester's economy, helping it to be more responsive and resilient in the face of rapid change;
- Encouraging mixed-use communities within the Town Centre as part of a wider diversification and move away from a monoculture/dominance of one particular use within the Town Centre;
- A forward-looking Town Centre which people aspire to live in, work in, study and experience, while providing exciting opportunities to grow new ideas, skills and businesses

To take part in the consultation, go to  
**[your.cotswold.gov.uk](https://your.cotswold.gov.uk)**.

Let us know what you think!

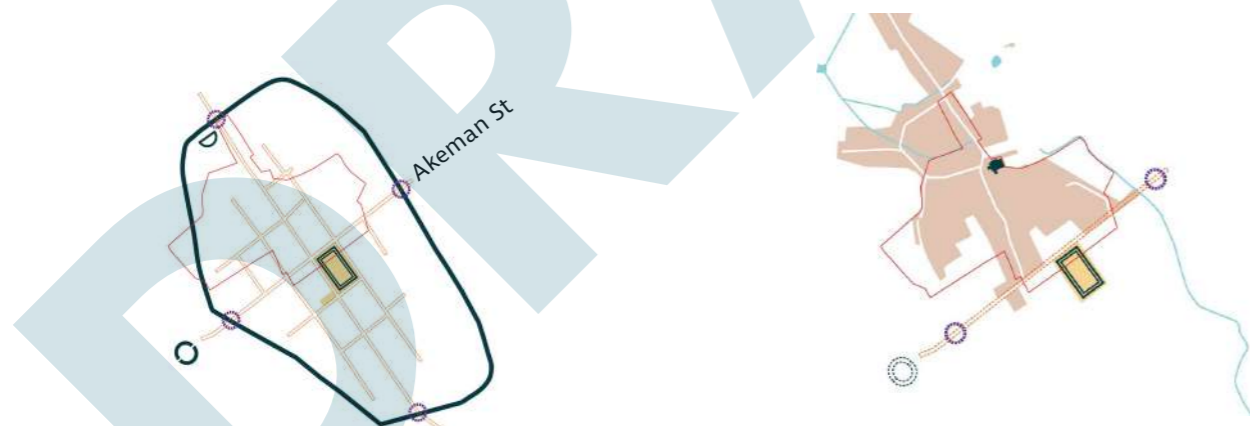


# CIRENCESTER TODAY

# EVOLUTION OF CIRENCESTER

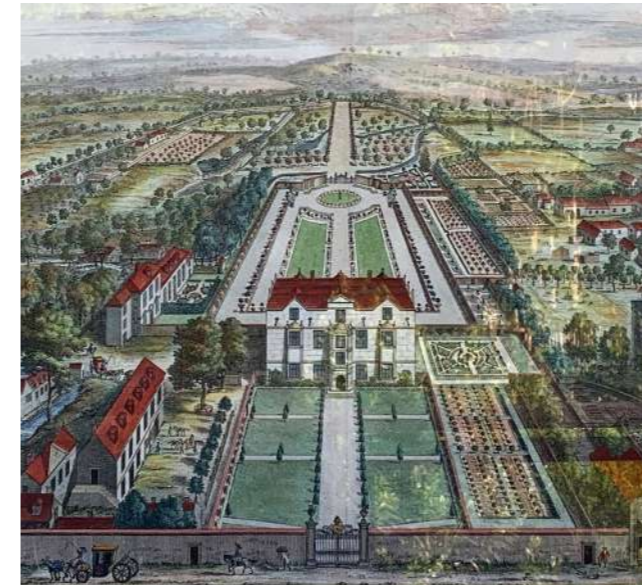
A review of historical mapping illustrates Cirencester's considerable evolution over the last 2,000 years. The diagrams below illustrate Cirencester's evolution from an important Roman settlement through to a medieval market town through to the expansion associated with the dawn of the industrial revolution and the arrival of the railway; through post war industrial decline and more recently the development of the town's retail focus and movement networks which have shaped the town to the present day.

Roman era ————— 1735



Corinium Dobunorum was the Romano-British settlement at Cirencester. After the invasion of Britain by the Emperor Claudius in AD 43, a Roman fort was established at Corinium. Three main Roman roads met in Corinium: the Fosse Way, Akeman Street, and Ermin Way.

By the 12th century the construction of the present Parish Church of St. John the Baptist had begun. Throughout the Medieval and Post-Medieval Period, Cirencester is referenced as the "New Market", which witnessed an increased prosperity based on the wool trade. The market place was at the heart of the town with the principal streets radiating from it towards the sites of the former Roman gateways which still served as entrances of the town. However, most of the core of Roman settlement was lost.



1875 ————— 1920



In 18th century Cirencester, the development of Cirencester Park by Allen, first of Earl Bathurst, was a very important physical change. The 18th century saw the eventual decline in the wool trade and growth of the corn trade together with the market and banking activities needed to support the trading. A branch of the Thames and Severn Canal was created on the south edge of the town and helped maintain some industry based on the coal until the arrival of the railway.

From 1900 a station was built at Watermoor, south-east of the town centre. The town-centre developed outwards towards the railway lines. Small hamlets and farms developed in the surrounding landscape. During the inter-war years there was no significant development, apart from small clusters forming around the outskirts of Cirencester.





1940-1970

Present



Following the ceasing of corn trade and edge-tool manufacture, Cirencester Town station and Watermoor station were closed in 1964 and 1961 respectively. During this period a considerable town expansion occurred. Housing development expanded along almost all approaches to the town. However, the loss of rail links led to total dependence on road transport. An inner ring road system was completed in 1975 in an attempt to reduce town-centre congestion.

Today, Cirencester still functions as a market town and it is marketed as the capital of the Cotswolds. The town serves as a centre for surrounding villages, providing employment, amenities, shops, commerce and education. It is also a commuter town for larger centres such as Cheltenham, Gloucester, Swindon and Stroud.

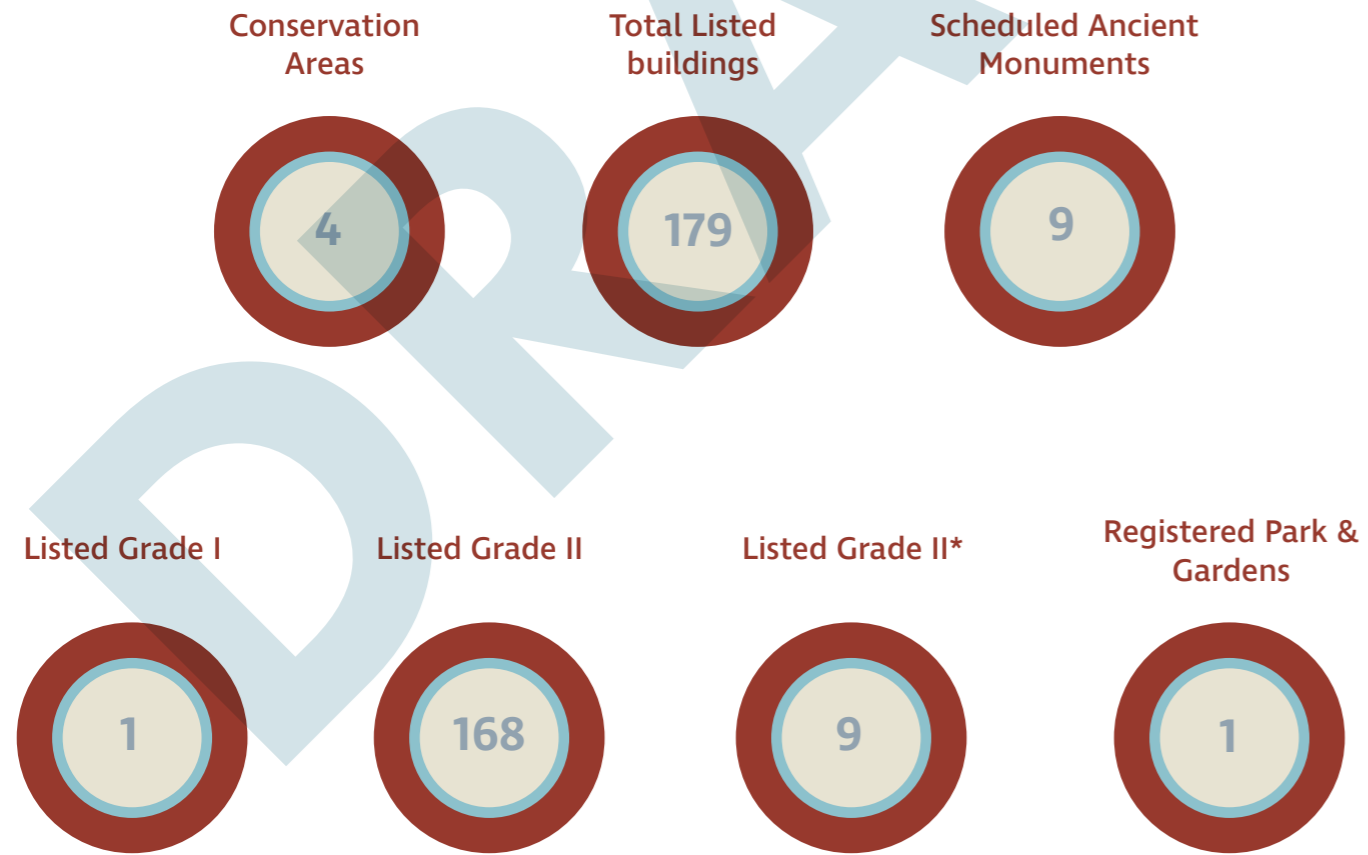


PLAN OF PRESENT-DAY CIRENCESTER WITH ROMAN ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE OVERLAID

- Indicative study boundary
- Remaining parts of Roman wall
- - - Roman Amphitheatre
- - - Roman street
- Alignment of Roman wall
- ⊗ Roman gate

# HERITAGE

Heritage is one of Cirencester's key assets, recognised through the large grouping of Listed buildings and the designation of the Town Centre Conservation Area. Cirencester is the largest town in the Cotswolds, dating back to its importance as a Roman settlement.



Church of St John the Baptist



Sculpture in Woolmarket



Cirencester Park, part of the Bathurst Estate

### Church of St. John the Baptist

The church is Grade I listed and is one of the largest Parish Churches in the UK. It forms a grand background to Market Place. Given the church's size and location at the heart of the town it is highly visible, and acts as a key landmark along most streets. The current Cotswold stone building is medieval, with construction commencing in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. However, the site was home to an earlier Anglo-Saxon building.

### Amphitheatre

Cirencester's Amphitheatre is the second largest in the UK, indicating the significance of Cirencester (Corinium Dobunorum) in Roman times. The earthworks show evidence of tiered wooden seats for around 8000 people placed upon terraces made of stone.

### Roman Walls

The 3<sup>rd</sup> century 6m high Roman defences were constructed in stone, with a walkway at the top protected by a parapet. These walls were later incorporated into the medieval town walls that encircled Cirencester. Only two short sections remain today, 1) a short section within the Abbey Grounds and 2) a short turf-covered length in Watermoor, off Beeches Road, where a footpath runs along the top of the wall by City Bank Playing Field.

### Cirencester Park & Country House

Developed by the Bathurst Estate, this includes the Grade I listed gardens with associated structures and the Grade II\* listed main house.

The main house sits on the edge of the town centre and is a significant landmark due to the large semi-circular Yew tree hedge. At 140m long and 10m wide, it is believed to be the largest yew hedge in the UK.

The park was originally laid out in the 1700s as a deer park and is currently a 3,000-acre woodland and pasture park that is open to the public during daylight hours.

### Conservation Areas

Cirencester has four Conservation Areas. These are the Cirencester Park, Gloucester Street & River Walk, Cirencester Town Centre (encircling the majority of what was the medieval town), and Cirencester South.

### Scheduled Monuments

Cirencester is recognised as being a place rich in archaeological remains of both Roman and Medieval predecessors. The Cirencester Excavation committee undertook a number of significant excavations in the 1960's and 1970's, which led to scheduled monuments being designated.



MAP OF CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE WITH KEY HERITAGE ASSETS IDENTIFIED

- Indicative study boundary
- Identified site allocations
- Grade I listings
- Grade II \* listings
- Grade II listings
- Local listings
- Scheduled monument\*
- Conservation Area
- Roman Amphitheatre
- Remaining wall

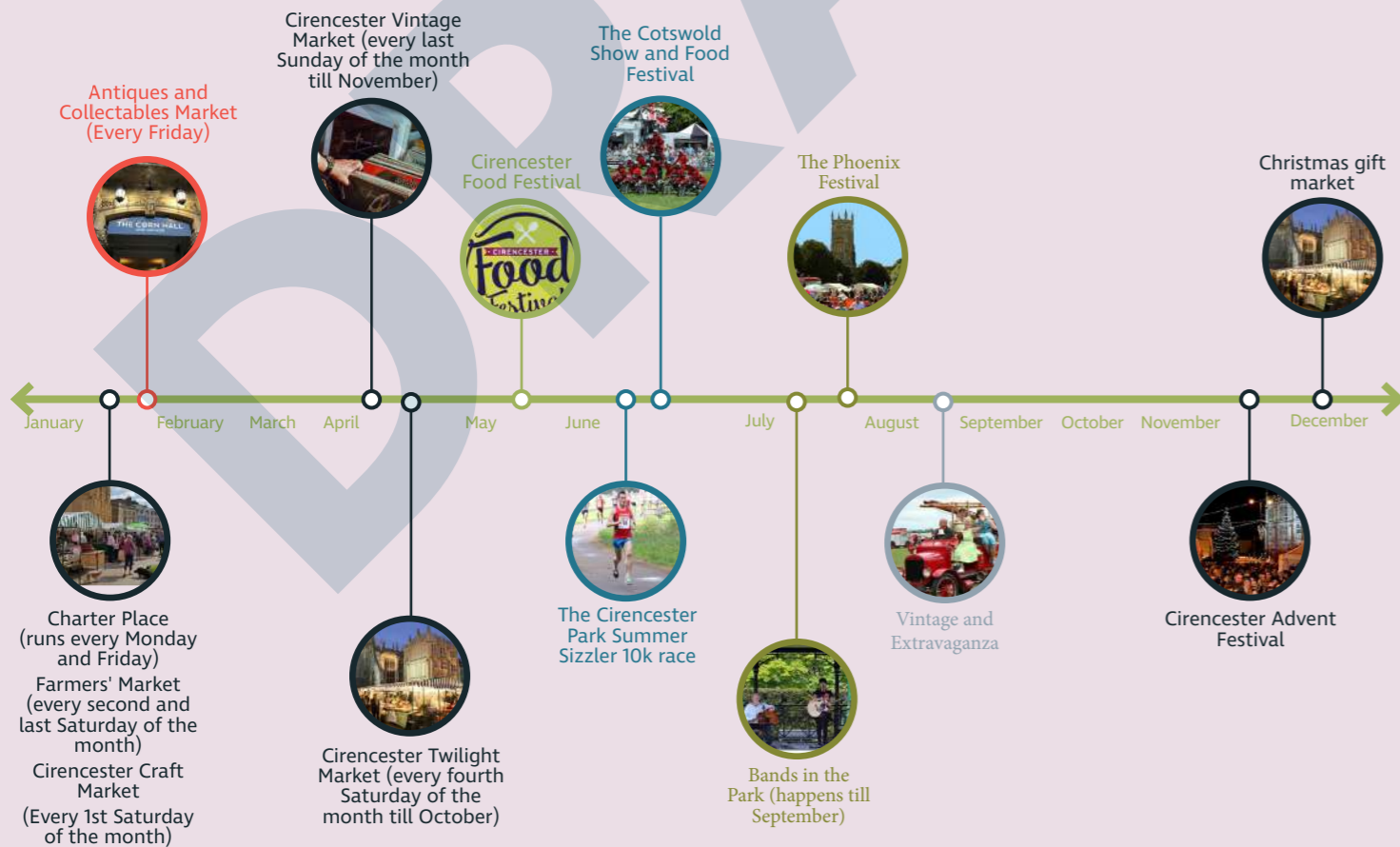
\*largely protecting underground areas

- 1 Section of Roman Wall within Abbey Grounds
- 2 Section of Roman Wall in Watermoor

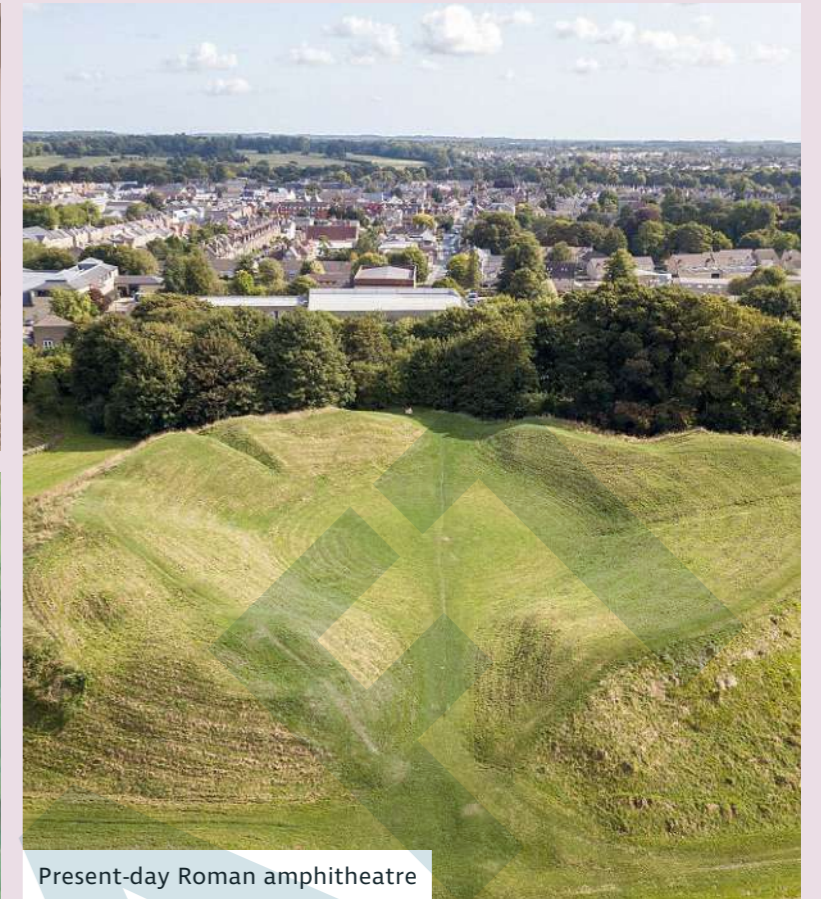
Cirencester's rich and diverse heritage is a key strength and gives the Town its distinct and unique character. It is imperative that this heritage is preserved and celebrated as the Town Centre evolves. Whilst the focus of the majority of the main streets within the Town Centre will be preservation and enhancement, there is an opportunity to introduce new layers of townscape within the designated opportunity sites. The aspiration should be that this development is reflective of it's time, whilst also responding sensitively in terms of design, scale and materiality.

# CULTURE AND VISITOR ECONOMY

Cirencester's uniqueness also comes from its wealth of cultural destinations and attractions, recognised with its designations. There is the opportunity to build upon this and strengthen Cirencester's cultural and visitor economy.



The Corinium Museum



Present-day Roman amphitheatre



Illustration of Roman Cirencester



Performance at The Barn Theatre



The Barn Theatre



Cirencester open air swimming pool



The Corn Hall indoor market



### New Brewery Arts

New Brewery Arts is a converted brewery that now consists of art galleries, artists' studios and workshops, a cafe and shop, as well as guest accommodation. It is an independent, not for profit charity that offers a variety of workshops for children and adults, some at very little or no cost. It offers opportunities for local people to learn new skills, meet new people and buy directly from local, independent artists.

### The Barn Theatre

Formerly a 1940s Nissen hut, The Barn Theatre was initially set up as a charity in 2018 with a vision of building a bold legacy in the arts for the community of Cirencester and the Cotswolds. The Theatre itself consists of a 200 seat auditorium, offering high-quality performances to South Gloucestershire without having to travel to London's West End. The Barn Theatre also hosts many social events, offers guest accommodation, and has an award-winning bar and restaurant, making it a cherished landmark within Cirencester's Town Centre.

### Corinium Museum

The Corinium Museum houses a collection of highly significant Roman finds. The majority of found objects were found in and around the locality, reinforcing the importance of Cirencester's heritage and the significance of Cirencester's Roman and medieval history.

In addition to the galleries, the museum also offers a flexible space to hire for evening events, talks, dinners, drinks receptions, product launches, and film screenings.

### The Churn Project

The Churn Project is a Cirencester charity that works with local older people, vulnerable families and unemployed people. Working alongside other local companies, the Churn Project runs a variety of low-cost activities for the more vulnerable people of the community from antenatal classes, to work clubs, to memory clubs. The Churn Project provides a valuable resource for the community, helping to improve the wellbeing and feeling of isolation of people who may struggle with their mental health.

**The key assets within the town centre, including the town's unique architectural heritage and cultural offer, could be represented more positively through enhancing the public realm and spaces, and more appropriate consideration of wayfinding and permeability.**

**Some of the key attractors could be further enhanced by improving the appearance of key buildings, improving their visibility (through scale, massing, wayfinding) and undertaking physical improvements to the public realm. This includes creating greater opportunity to dwell and for people to want to spend time in key spaces and squares.**

**The amphitheatre has been isolated from the Town Centre by the imposition of the A429. Even the visual connection along Lewis Lane/ Querns Lane has been further broken by the employment land around Phoenix Way. Opportunities should be explored to better link it with the Town Centre.**



**KEY**

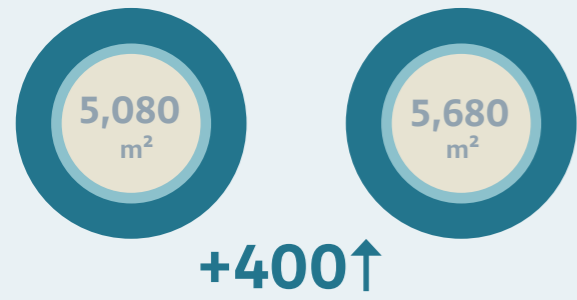
- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- Residential
- Retail
- Comparison
- Convenience (large)
- Civic
- Religious
- Education
- Leisure
- Commercial/office
- Accommodation
- Infrastructure
- Vacant

- 1 St. John Baptist Church
- 2 Roman Ampitheatre
- 3 Corinium Museum
- 4 Abbey Grounds Park
- 5 Cirencester Park
- 6 Bathhurst Estate
- 7 Open Air Pool
- 8 Market Place
- 9 Barn Theatre
- 10 New Brewery Arts
- 11 The Woolmarket
- 12 Swan Yard
- 13 Bishop's Walk Market
- 14 Corn Hall Market
- 15 Cirencester Antiques Centre

# RETAIL AND LEISURE

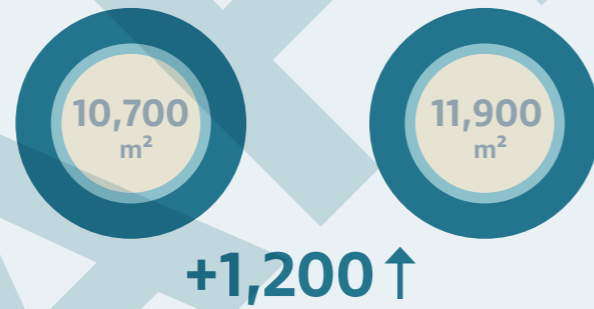
## RETAIL SERVICE

Existing floorspace (2021) Potential floorspace (2041)



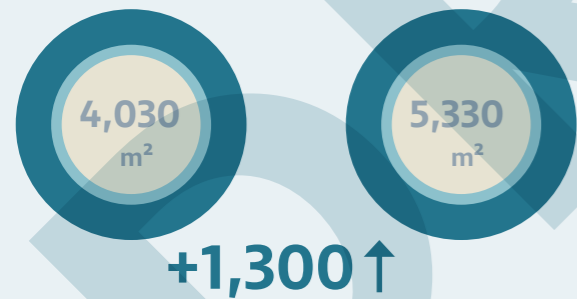
## LEISURE SERVICE

Existing floorspace (2021) Potential floorspace (2041)



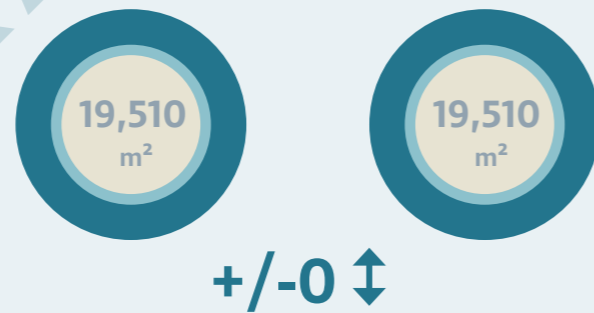
## CONVENIENCE

Existing floorspace (2021) Potential floorspace (2041)



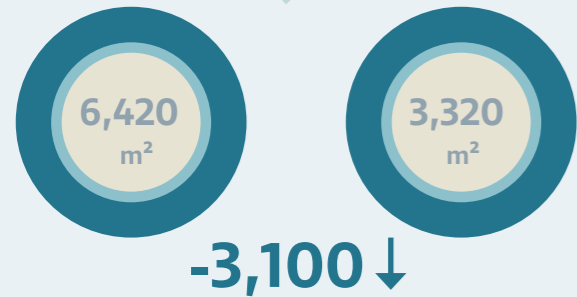
## COMPARISON

Existing floorspace (2021) Potential floorspace (2041)



## VACANCY

Existing floorspace (2021) Potential floorspace (2041)



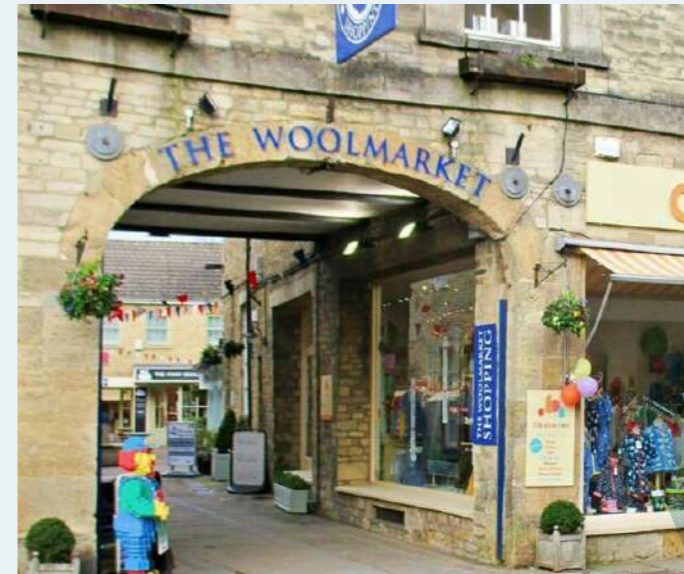
\* Reference in the Nexus report



Deli in the Corn Hall indoor market



Christmas market at Market Place



The Woolmarket shopping centre



Deli in the Corn Hall indoor market



Bishops Walk Shopping Arcade

### Black Jack Street

Black Jack Street is one of Cirencester's oldest streets and is located opposite the side entrance of the Church of St. John Baptist. This historical street is full of independent retail shops. Several coffee shops can be found, as well as two pedestrian shopping mews: Stable Yard and Templar Mews.

### Corn Hall

Built in the 19th century and re-opened in 2014, the Corn Hall provide a number of indoor markets open all year round. These markets are the Indoor Market, the Antiques & Collectables Market, the Cotswold Craft Market, The Vintage & Artisan Fair. The Antiques & Collectables Market is one of the oldest affairs and has been held in the Corn Hall in Cirencester every Friday for more than four decades.

### Market Place

Dominated by the impressive Parish Church of St. John Baptist, the Market Place is at the heart of Cirencester town centre. The Market Place hosts a number of community events and regular and speciality markets through the year. The majority of traders are locally based small business enterprises.

### Cotswold's Leisure Centre

Cotswold's Leisure provides the local community with facilities that include a hi-tech gym and a programme of group fitness classes. There are also squash, indoor cricket, badminton and basketball courts.

### Open air swimming pool

The pool offers a wonderful swimming experience, fed by natural spring water and heated 27°C. There is a children's paddling pool and sunbathing patio.

### Bishops Walk Shopping Arcade

Cirencester's only covered shopping centre, having opened in 1990. It hosts a variety of retail stores and acts as a pedestrian link between Brewery Car Park and Cricklade Street.

### The Woolmarket

The Woolmarket is a shopping square that sits between the Waterloo and Forum Car Parks and hosts a variety of retail stores, bars and restaurants, fitness spaces, commercial spaces, and medical spaces.

**The Covid-19 pandemic and the wider structural changes in shopping habits (e.g. the rise of e-commerce) have affected the comparison goods role of the centre, by reducing its number and substantially leading to an increase of the vacancy rate in UK's town centres. This is compounded by the 'rush' of out-of-town centres in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and their subsequent decline, locally affecting Gloucester Town Centre and Cheltenham Town Centre. However, Cirencester Town Centre has not been affected as much as other centres around the country and is still considered vital, viable, and of particular importance to Cotswold District and the wider Study Area, responding to the majority of retail and service sector needs.**

It is worthy to mention that the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated a number of trends such as the localisation trend and experience retail, as remote working replaced commuting and shopping was largely limited to local high streets.

There is a great opportunity for Cirencester Town Centre to preserve and enhance its distinctive localised retail character in order to meet the growing demand for authenticity and locally sourced products.



KEY

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- Retail
- Comparison
- Convenience (large)
- Leisure
- Civic

- ① Cirencester Park
- ② Abbey Grounds
- ③ St. Michaels Park
- ④ Corinium Museum
- ⑤ Open Air Pool
- ⑥ Market Place
- ⑦ New Brewery Arts
- ⑧ The Woolmarket
- ⑨ Swan Yard
- ⑩ Bishop's Walk Market
- ⑪ Corn Hall Market
- ⑫ Cotswold Leisure - Cirencester

# HOUSING

Like many centres, house prices have increased substantially over past few years, with low-income households being priced out of the market. Increasing the residential offer within the Town Centre, including affordable housing, will help address the affordability issue and draw more people to the centre.

- KEY
- Indicative study boundary
  - - - Identified site allocations
  - Residential
  - Upper-floor housing



Upper floor apartments in Market Place



Terraced houses along Coxwell Street



Age exclusive apartments at the Waterloo



Townhouses along Dollar Street



Retirement apartments next to Old Station Car Park

# OFFICE & EMPLOYMENT

Cirencester is the Cotswolds destination for retail. It has a highly active independent food and beverage sector which has grown significantly in the last few years, particularly around the outskirts of the town centre.



St. James Place Wealth Management



Black Jack Street independent retailers



Cotswold District Council offices



KEY

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- Commercial/office
- ▨ Other employment land
- Public Sector employment

- ① St James's Place Wealth Management
- ② Phoenix Way
- ③ Cotswold District Council offices
- ④ Cirencester Hospital

The 2021 Nexus Report forecasting change in uses to 2051 estimates that Cirencester's financial and business service sector offerings will remain static and will therefore require no change in current employment floorspace in the Town Centre. Employment uses play an important role in Cirencester, providing footfall into the centre from the wider region, enhancing the Town Centre's vibrancy and viability of service industries. It is important that this employment is accessible and supported by modern infrastructure (i.e. improved public transport, electric car charging, ultra-fast broadband and 5G mobile coverage) to create a resilient Town Centre.

# MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

Cirencester to Gloucester



Cirencester to Kemble



Cirencester to Tetbury



Cirencester to London



Cirencester to Cheltenham



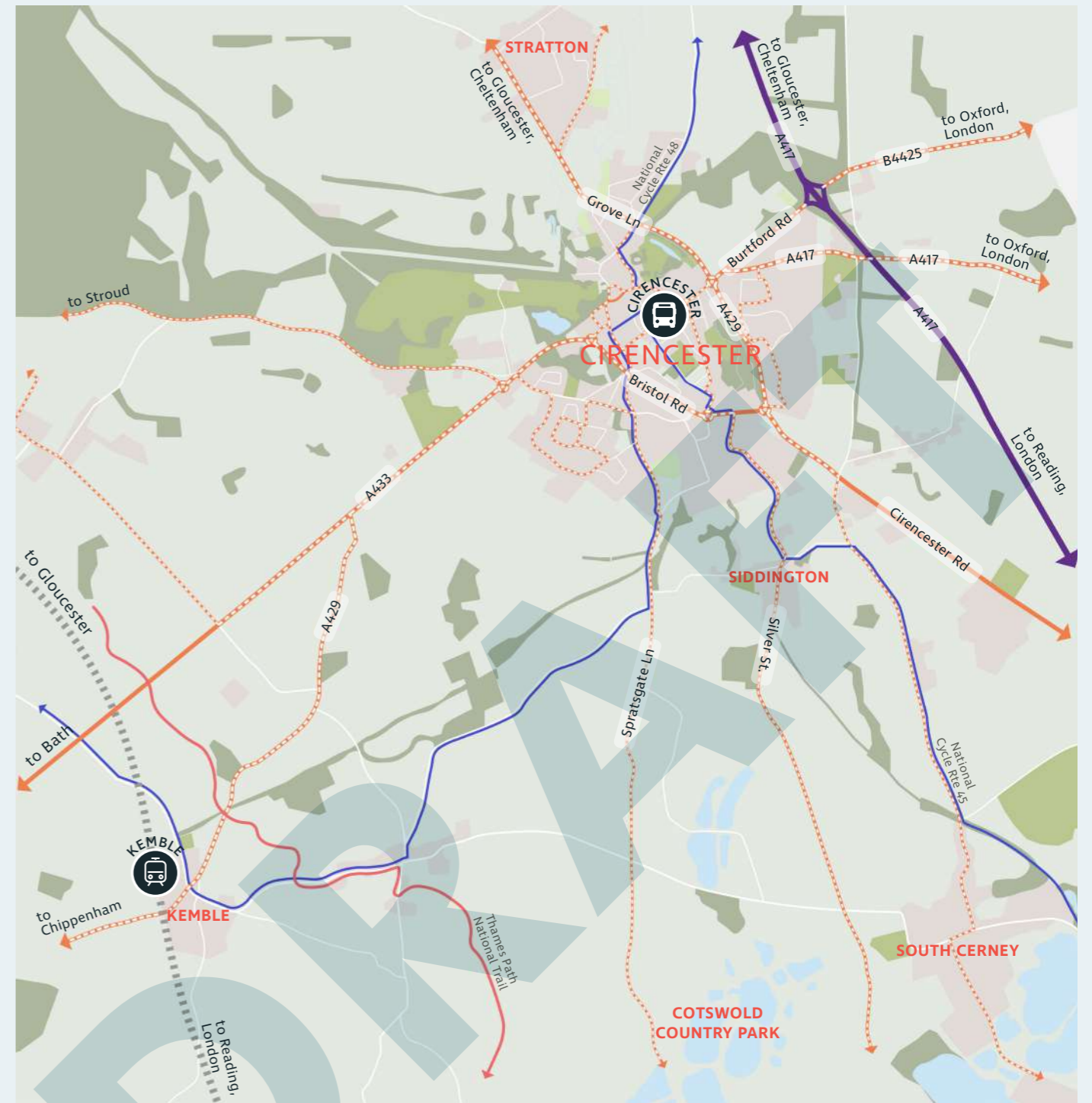
Cirencester to Swindon



Cirencester to Northleach



National Cycle Routes



MAP OF CIRENCESTER'S WIDER CONNECTIVITY

- National cycle route
- - - Bus and coach routes
- | | | | Train tracks
- Thames Path National Trail
- Major Road



Bus stop outside the parish church on West Market Place



Grade II Listed former Cirencester Town Station closed in 1964



National Express coach route from Cirencester to London

### National Cycling Route

The National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 45 runs through the southern part of the town centre – along Sheep Street and Watermoor Road. Route 45 connects the Town Centre with southern neighbourhoods, as well as onwards to Kemble Rail Station (via a series of rural lanes). Further afield, NCN Route 45 provides a long distance cycle route serving a number of settlements including Gloucester, Cirencester and Swindon.

National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 48 runs through the northern part of the town centre – along Dollar Street and Spitalgate Lane. This 74-mile route runs between Cirencester and Northleach, Moreton-in-Marsh and Southam.

### Existing Road infrastructure

Cirencester is well connected by both the local and strategic highway networks, including the A417/A419/A429, with direct links provided to Gloucester, Cheltenham, Stroud, Tetbury, and Swindon.

### Parking

Cirencester has a number of centrally located car parks, including long and short stay parking, which are provided by Cotswold District Council.

These car parks are Abbey Grounds, Beeches, Brewery Car Park, Forum Car Park, Leisure Centre, Old Station, Sheep Street, Waterloo.

On Street parking is available in the Market Place and Castle Street.

### Public Transport

The nearest train station is Kemble (4.5 miles from Cirencester), from which there are hourly services to a number of destinations including London Paddington, Swindon, Stroud, Cheltenham and Gloucester.

A number of bus services operate and serve both Cirencester and destinations including Swindon, London, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Kemble and Tetbury. Bus services are run by National Express Coaches (London to Gloucester), Stagecoach West, CoachStyle, Cotswold Green, Pulhams Coaches.

### Potential transport hubs

A transport study examined potential transport hub locations in the Town Centre. The study examined six locations in the town to provide easy access to public transport, such as buses and coaches, as well as access to active transport, such as bicycles and scooters. The Forum and Brewery car parks scored well in terms of accessibility. The Masterplan will alight on a preferred location for a new transport hub.

**A key component of the '20-minute Neighbourhood' is a network of attractive, direct, convenient, connected and safe walking and cycling routes. The team have been looking at the options and have produced this potential network diagram.**

**The town centre is accessible by both the local and highway network. Even though the town centre core is compact and permeable as a result of a network of corridors and pathways, it lacks connectivity with the wider context. There is an opportunity to establish a better network of walking and cycling routes that connects the surroundings with the town centre.**

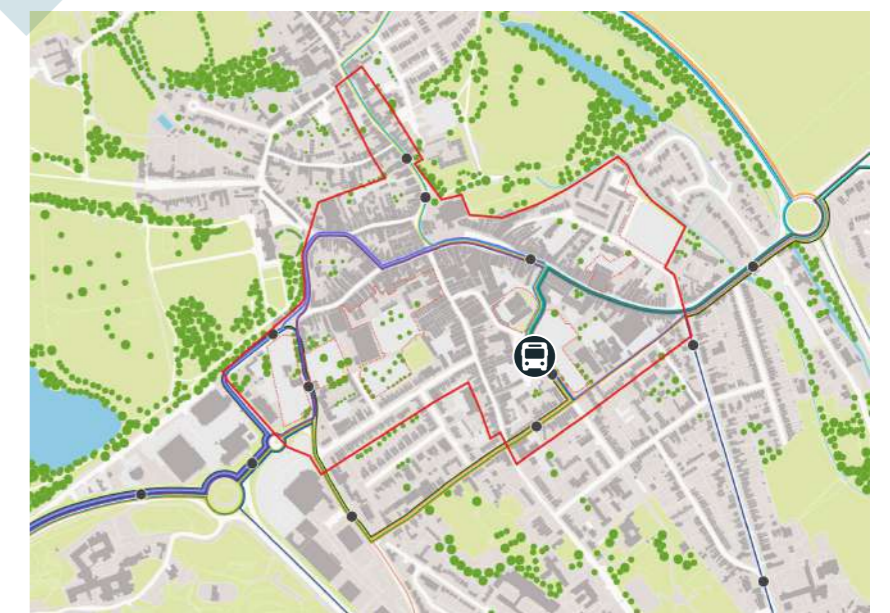
**The town centre is dominated by cars and car parks, which disrupt the pedestrian movement and create an poor quality urban environment. Although in recent years pedestrianisation improvements have been made in the Market Place, proposed strategies should seek to reduce the number and frequency of vehicular movement in the centre and enhance the pedestrian experience. Cirencester have plenty of bus connections, but both the location of the current bus station and National Express stop does not allow a convenient and easy access to the bus services. The potential transport hubs should provide better accessibility.**



CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE VEHICULAR MOVEMENT MAP

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- Arterial street
- Main street
- Local/residential street
- Places
- Gateway
- Parking court
- P Car park

- KEY
- Bus station
  - Bus stop
- Local bus routes
- |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 50  | c50 | 51  |
| c51 | 54  | 54A |
| X54 | 58  | c65 |
| c67 | 77  | 78  |
| 93  | 94  | 128 |
| 882 | 855 | 444 |



CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE BUS ROUTES



National Cycle Route



Rentable bicycles



Public courtyards offering quiet places to eat and drink



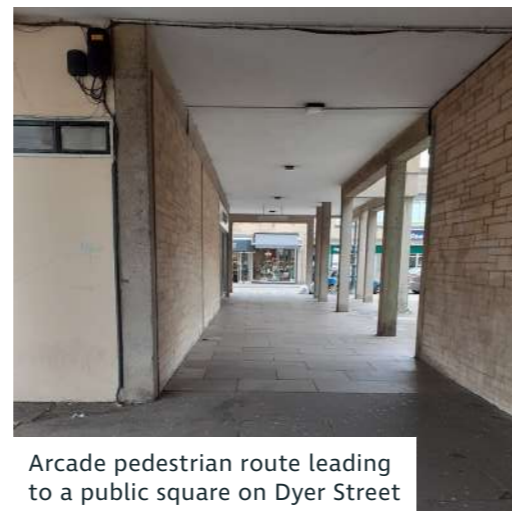
Pedestrian route through the urban block leading to a small courtyard



Pedestrian route through the urban block leading to a small courtyard



Pedestrian route through the urban block



Arcade pedestrian route leading to a public square on Dyer Street

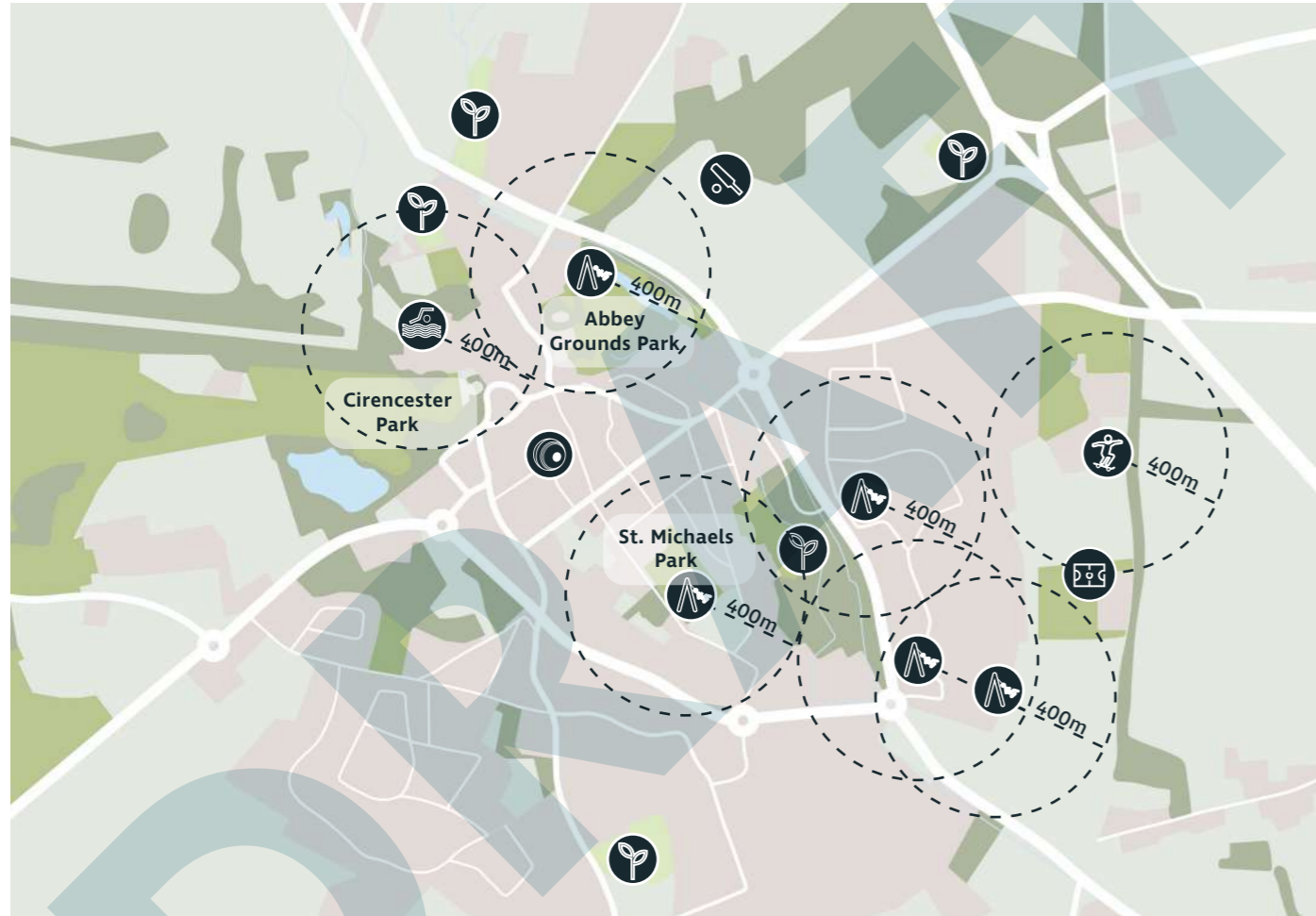


CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT MAP

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- - - Pedestrian route
- - - National Cycle Route
- Squares and courtyards



# PUBLIC REALM, OPEN SPACE & PLAY



## CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACES

-  Playground
-  Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool
-  Kings Hill Skatepark
-  Cirencester Bowls Club
-  Tarbarrow Cricket Club
-  Cirencester Town Football Club
-  Allotment



Cirencester Park



St. Michael's Park



Abbey Grounds



St. Michael's Park



New Brewery Arts



Kings Hill Skatepark

The Town Centre is surrounded by a significant amount of Open Space, in particular the Abbey Grounds and Cirencester Park. However, there is a perceived lack of open space. This could be attributable to two issues. Firstly, there is a lack of wayfinding and no obvious visual links from the Town Centre to either of the key open spaces. However, the fact that the open spaces aren't immediately revealed and leave themselves to be discovered is part of Cirencester's charm and character.

Secondly, there are minimal green or soft spaces directly within the Town Centre in which to pause and relax. Whilst the quality of the public realm is exquisite, there is a lack of street trees and planting along the Town's main streets and yards.

The key Open Spaces in and around the Town Centre are described briefly below.

### Abbey Grounds

The Abbey Grounds is concealed from Market Place by the Parish Church and built form to the south and west. The Abbey is long since demolished and the only remaining buildings are the Norman Arch and a portion of ancient Roman wall.

The open grounds, lake, wildfowl, trees and greenery form an impressive pastoral respite away from the Town Centre. A bandstand was introduced as a millennium project and performances take place throughout the summer months on Sunday afternoons.

### Market Place

Market Place sits at the heart of the Town Centre with principal streets radiating out from it in all directions. Market Place is the towns main open urban space and provides for markets and community events throughout the year.

### Cirencester Park

Accessed from gates at the end of street, Cirencester Park was originally laid out in the 1700s as a deer park by the first Earl Bathurst. The park is currently open to the members of public although access is controlled by the Bathurst Estate and there is a concern that ongoing access to the public isn't guaranteed.

### St. Michael's Park

To the south of the Town Centre, St. Michael's Park has been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme and provides a variety of formal and informal sports and recreation facilities, as well as large open lawns. The main facilities include BBQ Hire, boules, Crazy Golf, cricket net, croquet, Pitch and Putt, a playground and adventure play, refreshments, table tennis and tennis courts.

### Kings Hill Skate Park

Designed in consultation with local skateboarders, Kings Hill Skatepark is state of the art and caters for skateboards, scooters, bikes and roller blades. Youth events and activities are held during school holidays.

### Cirencester Bowls Club

Adjacent to the Brewery Car Park is the Cirencester Bowls Club. This was founded in 1930 and is owned and maintained by the Club Members. There is an outdoor bowling green and an indoor bowls section to enable people to play all year round.



CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM, OPEN SPACES AND PLAY

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- Park and garden
- Abbey grounds
- Green space
- Allotment and orchard
- Squares and courtyard
- Orchard
- Cirencester Bowls Club
- Playground
- Allotment
- Cirencester Open Air Swimming Pool

**There is an opportunity to strengthen connections between the Town Centre and the existing open spaces that surround it, whilst being mindful of Cirencester's medieval character of intrigue and reveal.**

**As well as strengthening connections and improving way finding with existing open space, there is also an opportunity to introduce smaller pocket parks as soft oasis of green space. These spaces could be activated and overlooked by a new program of uses including residential, retail or leisure. Such an intervention also provides an opportunity to introduce play space for a range of ages within the town centre, widening exclusivity and broadening the Town's appeal to children.**

# VISUAL ANALYSIS



Visible service areas detract from the charm of the town



Fine, intricate street grain within the Town Centre

Cirencester's town centre benefits from a hierarchy of landmark buildings which are located legibly and create nodes of interest. The majority of these are listed buildings, whose scale and architectural grandeur provide a prominent reminder of Cirencester's heritage.

The majority of the frontage in Cirencester's town centre is positive, with the car park sites relatively undefined and blank.

The town centre however has a relatively fine grain, with good permeability which largely follows the historic street network.

Overall, there is a positive arrival experience into the Town Centre with the opportunity to strengthen certain gateways and arrival points including Hammock Way between Waitrose and St James's Place and the eastern arrival point to the centre on the crossroads of London Road and Victoria Road.

There is a dominance of 'visible' service areas which detracts from the overall look, feel and ambience within the town centre, which are not overlooked and are of poor quality. This includes areas around Tesco, Brewery Car Park, Waterloo Car Park and Forum Car Park.



CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY ANALYSIS

- Indicative study boundary
- Identified site allocations
- Active frontage
- Positive frontage
- Poor quality edges condition
- Green edge
- Positive building
- Listed building
- Negative building

**The town centre benefits from brownfield land and potential opportunity sites for redevelopment, including those at key gateways. Positively, a number are also within Council ownership and control, which will assist with coordinating development. There is an opportunity for development and creating more positive public spaces that people want to spend time in.**

## Views and Vistas

The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist and in particular its tower is the major landmark of the Town. It is especially important within the Town Centre Conservation Area where there are few directions from which a view of the tower is not possible.

Views of importance of the Parish Church are the following:

1. The long view from St. Michael's Park aligned with Tower Street and South Way to the Church tower, a route which happens to follow a principal road of the Roman Grid, and passes the west of the Roman Basilica and the crossroads of the Fosse Way and Ermin Street;
2. From Black Jack Street, views east are dominated by the Church tower;
3. Views across Abbey Grounds towards the Church.

There are 3 views of the Church that could be vulnerable to development of the Forum area and the redundant House of Fraser building:

1. The long view from St. Michael's Park aligned with Tower Street and South Way to the Church tower. It is considered that the Police Station building, with its horizontal emphasis, currently adds a visually unsettling element to its important view and is subject to redevelopment;
2. The view rear of House of Fraser building from Cirencester Library;
3. The view across Forum Car Park towards the magistrates court.

There are also views of local points within and outside the Conservation Area. Several buildings provide focal points within the Town Centre Conservation Area, most of them located at crossroads or arrival points.



Tower Street towards police station



Rear of House of Fraser approach from library



Looking across forum car park towards Magistrates Court



### CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE VIEWS AND VISTAS ANALYSIS

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- The Parish Church of St John Baptist
- Focal point
- ← Views to Church
- ☛ Panoramic view
- 1 St. Michael's Park
- 2 Tower Street
- 3 South Way
- 4 Black Jack Street
- 5 Abbey Grounds
- 6 House of Fraser building
- 7 Magistrates Court
- 8 Amphitheatre viewing point
- 9 Old Tetbury Road
- 10 Dollar Street

\* Reference in Cirencester Conservation Appraisal

# OVERALL CONSTRAINTS

## Barriers to views

The town-centre is dominated by views towards the tower of St.John the Baptist with shorter views towards focal points. However, poorly proportioned, mostly identified as large-scale, bulk-massing and uneven roof-scape, create visual disruption towards the Church. In particular, the Tesco superstore and the adjacent development fronting Castle Street, the Police Station building, undermine the quality of these views.

This environment undermines the quality and visual continuation of the view corridors as well as the vertical emphasis of the townscape.

## Poor quality buildings and edge conditions

As mentioned above, there are a number of late twentieth-century buildings, most of them are poorly proportioned and contradict with the high historic building quality in the Town Centre. The majority of these are located around the Forum Park area and fronting Castle Street.

Backland sites with exposed edges is a common issue, undermining the sense of enclosure and attractiveness. An example is the Brewery Yard where the space is defined on its northern side by the rear Service Areas of commercial properties facing Cricklade Street.

Another issue is the pathways between buildings with no active frontages that appear both oppressive and unsafe. A characteristic example is the pathway, adjacent to Argos store, that connects Dyer Street with the Waterloo Car Park, giving the impression of a poor sense of arrival to the Town Centre.

The lack of evening economy is another concern, as it leaves many frontages closed after 6pm. If the leisure and commercial activities were further diversified, it would help to revitalise

the Town Centre, enabling streets to feel safe during both the day and night through natural surveillance.

## Movement & connectivity

There is currently an abundance of car parking and vehicles in the Town Centre, most notably in the Market Place, the Forum Car Park, and Brewery Car Park. There are a considerable number of parking courts in the southern half of the Town Centre. These spaces provide minimal levels of enclosure and do not contribute to the pedestrian experience nor general quality of place, although do have a function.

One of the main issues is the accessibility to the centre. The bus station is located far from the centre and the closest railway station is in Kemble. Public transport seems not to be preferred by locals. This is also demonstrated by the generous number of parking courts in the centre.

The centre has very good permeability allowing for a good level of pedestrian movement as a result of a network of active streets and pathways. However, some of these pathways can be very narrow - i.e. some areas of Cricklade Street, Castle Street, Black Jack Street and some areas close to Market Place, such as Silver Street. This compromises the safety and comfort of a large proportion of the population - i.e. people with buggies, people with disabilities and elderly people.

## Flooding

Part of the town-centre, in particular the Eastern edge including the Abbey Grounds, the Waterloo parking area and the housing development belong to flood risk zones. None of the other identified site allocations belong to Flood Zone 3b or 3a, which are of high (or 1 in 100 year) probability.



CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

- Indicative study boundary
- - - Identified site allocations
- The Parish Church of St John Baptist
- Scheduled monument
- Visual barrier
- Views to Church
- Barrier to movement
- Poor quality edges condition
- Negative building
- Roman Amphitheatre
- Flood Zone 3b
- Flood Zone 3a
- Flood Zone 2
- 1 Brewery Yard
- 2 Cricklade Street
- 3 Castle Street
- 4 Black Jack Street
- 5 Silver Street

- 01 Car dominated central space
- 02 Bus station far located from centre
- 03 Poor quality edges condition
- 04 Poor connections to the river
- 05 Lack of access to key Roman sites
- 06 Lack of arrival from west
- 07 Bound by concrete collar
- 08 Town centre sites dominated by parking



# OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## More multi-functional green and blue infrastructure

The Cirencester town centre health check identified a lack of greenspace/green infrastructure within the Town Centre. This is key to deliver biodiversity net gains and better connect the wider ecological network. The masterplan should therefore seek to draw green infrastructure in to the historic core of the town

to cool and provide shade, thereby attracting more visitors, which in turn will help to sustain the Town Centre.

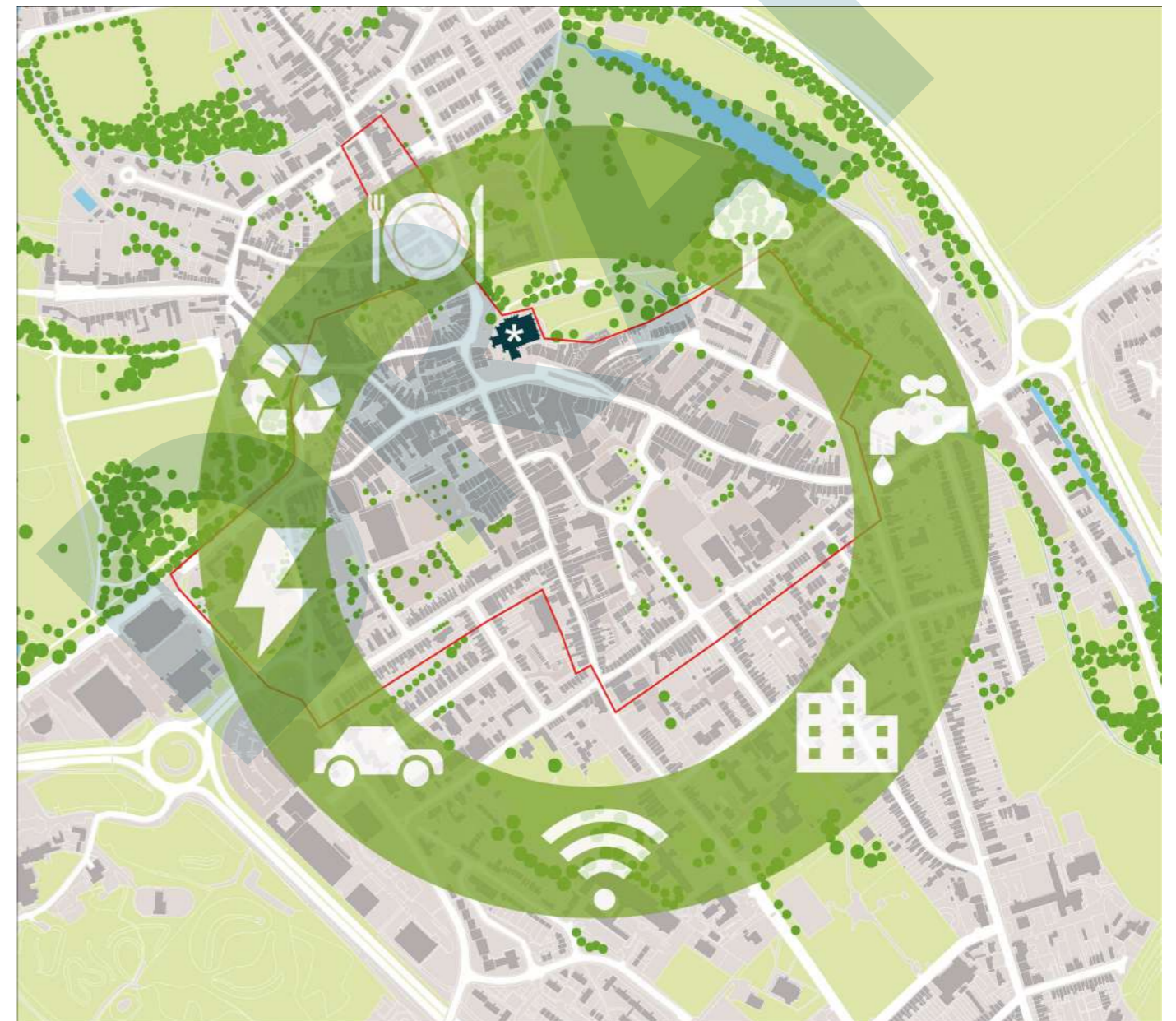


### Principle 2

# DEVELOPMENT = NET ZERO CARBON

The Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency and is committed to making its Local Plan "Green to the Core", on top of the legal and moral duty to address climate change.

Sustainability must be considered in all aspects of future development, from its conception through to its occupancy, including EV charging, addressing modal shift, and sustainable energy harvesting.



Principle 3

# HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

## Better connecting people with Cirencester's past

The framework masterplan should seek to build upon Cirencester's charming character of streets and lanes to introduce new routes, places and spaces. The Masterplan should seek to reintroduce historic street patterns and strengthen former historic gateways into the town, enhancing the arrival experience.

There is the opportunity to create a strong east-west route, encompassing the pivotal crossing of Fosse Way and Ermine Street, linking the Town Centre to the Roman amphitheatre, potentially via a bridge link across Bristol Road (A429).

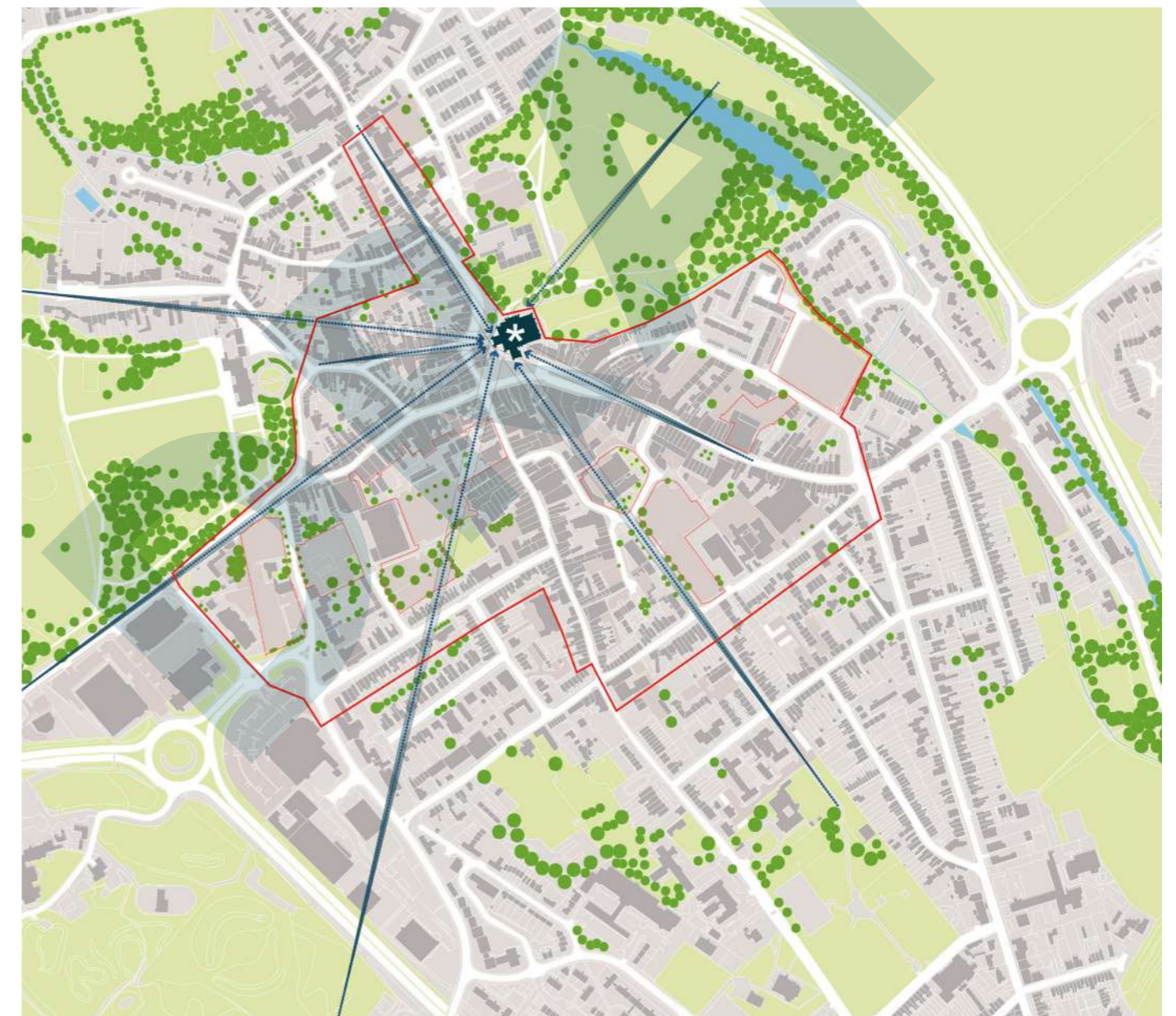


Principle 4

# TOWNSCAPE & ENHANCED VIEWS

The Masterplan must ensure that existing important views are not obscured by redevelopment and that, where possible, new or better views to key town landmarks can be revealed, enhanced or maintained.

This particularly includes maintaining or re-establishing positive vistas towards the key landmark of Cirencester - the tower of St John Baptist Church on Market Place, which will contribute to a renewed sense of place in the Town Centre.





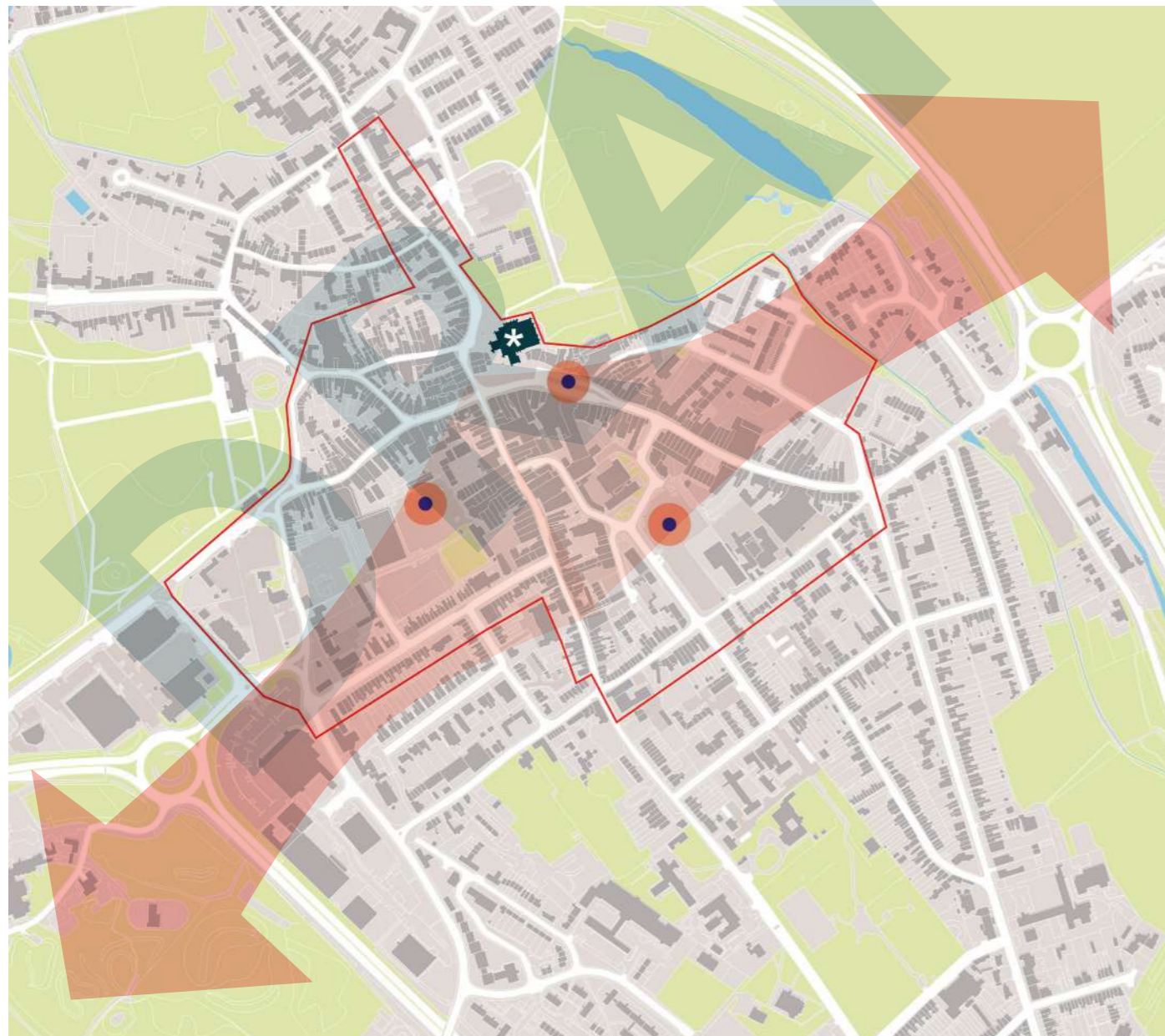
Principle 5

# TRANSPORT

## 21<sup>st</sup> century mobility

Being able to move freely and safely through the town centre offers a wide range of community, health and wellbeing, environmental, business and tourism benefits. Therefore, consideration should be given to creating a new or enhanced mobility hub and increasing active travel measures to supplement and, where possible, offset the demand for parking in the Town

Centre. Parking will still need to be a feature of the town centre but consideration should be given to relocating car parking on the periphery and/or in facilities such as Park and Ride/Stride, to reuse space in the Town Centre to create a thriving urban community with placemaking and sustainability at its heart.



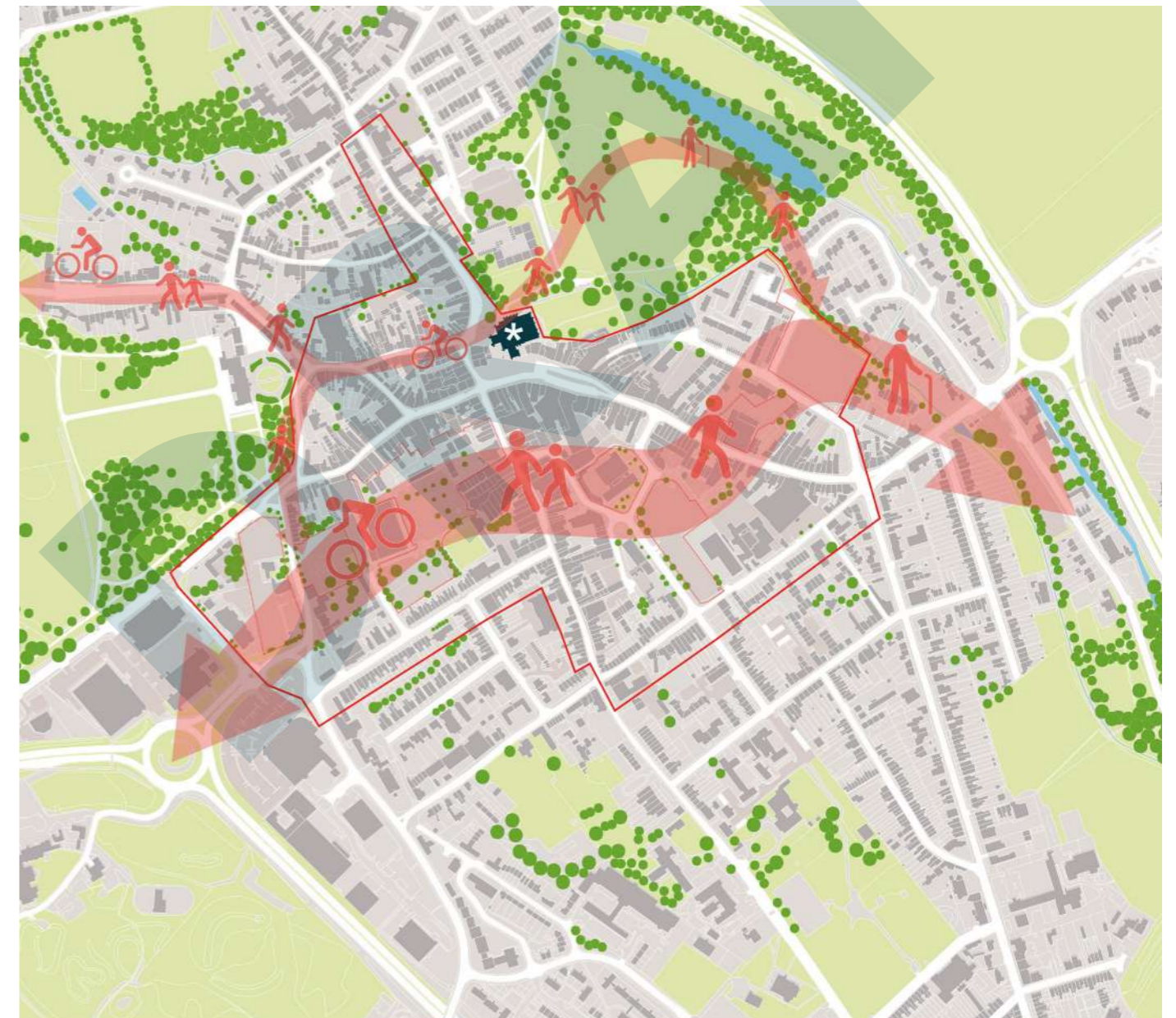
\* This is subject to 2023 Transport Study results

Principle 6

# PERMEABILITY & BETTER CONNECTIONS

The grain of the Town Centre gives the opportunity for a new east-west pedestrian/cycle route from Old Station car park through to Waterloo car park. This will then be activated through a series of new spaces and uses to form a new animated route, encouraging active travel across the Town Centre.

On top of this, there is the potential for a layer of 21st century townscape that interprets the Roman heritage. This could form a new pedestrian/cycle 'trail' that could be based upon the existing cultural uses in the town, such as heritage, art or sculpture.





# FRAMEWORK MASTERPLAN

# ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

## Walking and cycling

In order to address modal shift and 21<sup>st</sup> century mobility, active travel must be encouraged in and around the Town Centre. In order to encourage walking and cycling, development proposals should incorporate the following principles:

- Safe, secure walking routes, with good natural surveillance;
- Adequate and appropriate surface-level crossings;
- Dedicated pedestrian footpaths and cycle lanes;
- Improved way-finding and legibility across the Town Centre;
- Strengthening of east-west connection to the Roman amphitheatre;
- Provision of seating and shade in appropriate locations on walking routes to support all abilities;
- The quality of cycling provision should be improved between Kemble Station and Cirencester Town Centre;
- Provision of cycle hub parking at key, strategic locations;
- Provision of public cycle parking with good natural surveillance.

## Public transport

It is proposed that a new mobility hub is located within the Framework Masterplan. This would bring together shared transport (i.e. car clubs), public transport (i.e. coaches and buses), and active travel (i.e. bicycles and scooters), in to one central location, improving the public realm and accessibility to the town for everyone.

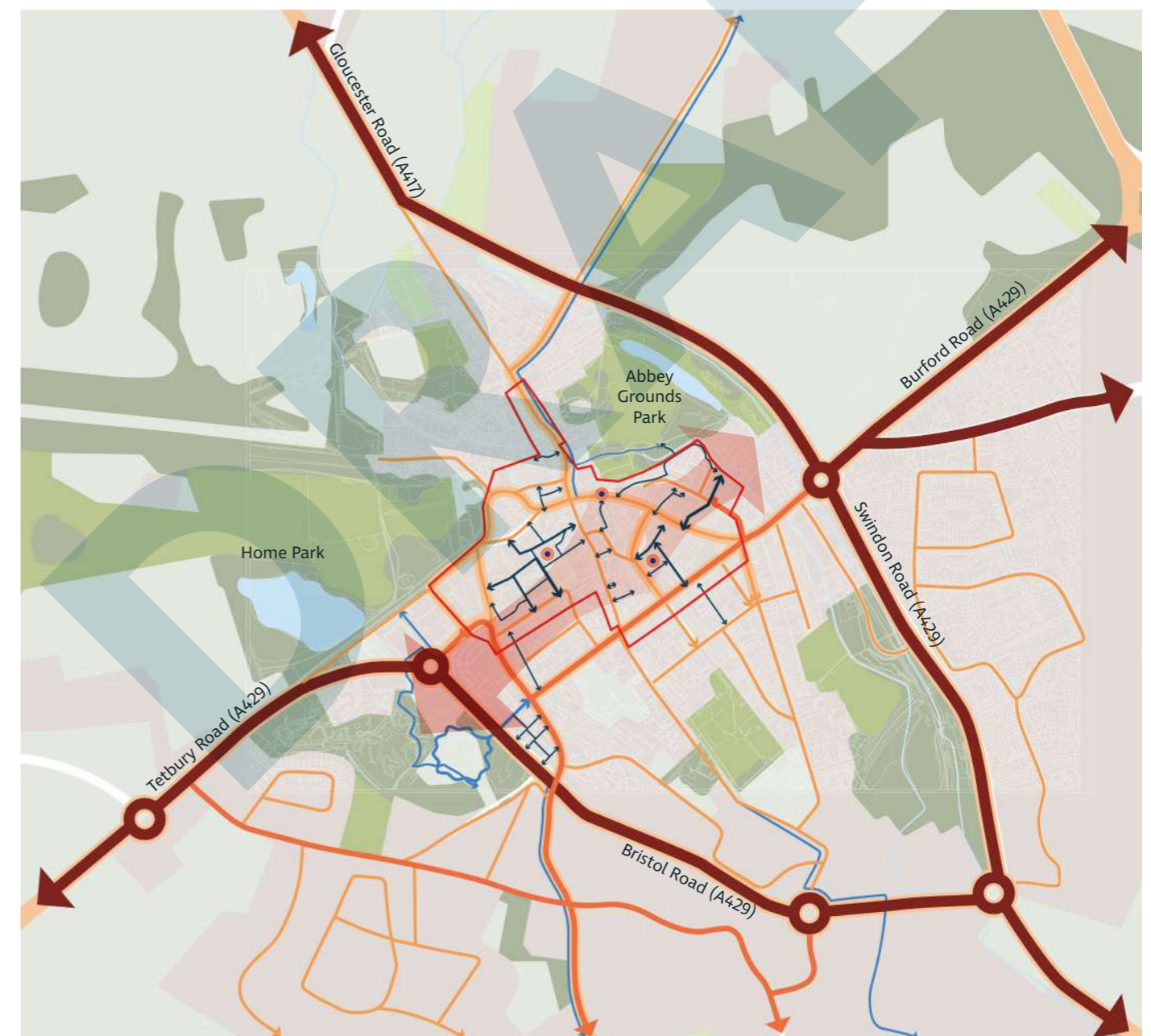
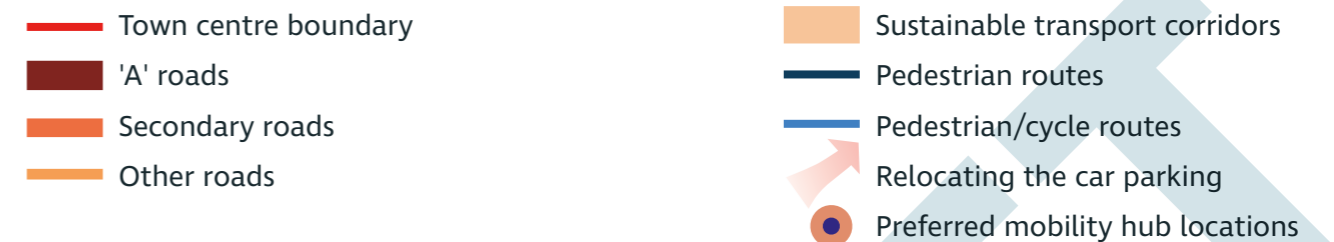
## Inclusive Access

The Town Centre should be accessible for people of all ages and abilities. This includes providing accessible dwellings, commercial space, cultural space and public realm.

## Car parking

There are several surface car parks located in key locations through the Town Centre, which vary in levels of occupancy throughout the day and week. This demand for parking must be addressed whilst promoting modal shift to promote the sustainability aspirations of Cirencester.

The Council is in the process of commissioning a study that will assess how people access and move around the town centre, which will ultimately underpin the Framework Masterplan over the next year. This study will examine how many town centre car parking spaces are required now and in the future. It will investigate the issues, risks and benefits of relocating Town Centre parking to the periphery, introducing facilities such as 'Park and Ride' or 'Park and Stride'. It will also investigate opportunities to better connect the suburbs with the town centre through active travel measures.



\* This is subject to 2023 Transport Study results

# HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

## Designated and non-designated heritage assets

Designated heritage assets are identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as having a degree of significance due to their heritage interest. This can include:

- A World Heritage Site
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed Building
- Protected Wreck Site
- Registered Park and Garden
- Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area

Non-designated heritage assets are other spaces or buildings identified by the local planning authority as having local interest. They may be of archaeological interest; architectural interest; artistic interest; an/or historic interest.

## Heritage protection legislation and policy

Most of the Cirencester Town Centre lies within the designated Cirencester (Town Centre) Conservation Area. Therefore, in accordance with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); The Cotswold District Plan 2011-31; and the Cotswold Design Code, the Framework Masterplan is obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and/or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and of designated heritage assets in an appropriately sustainable manner.

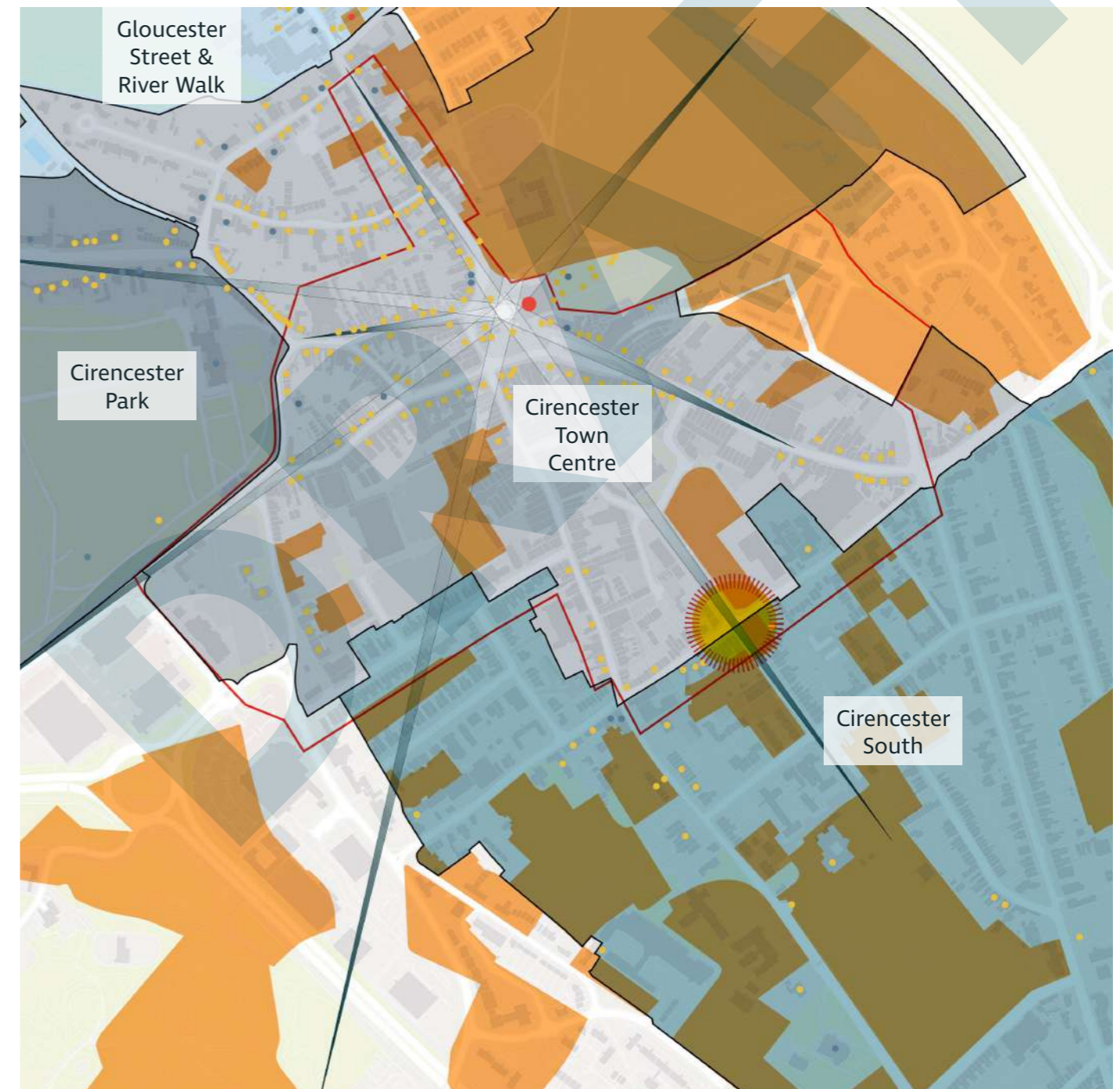
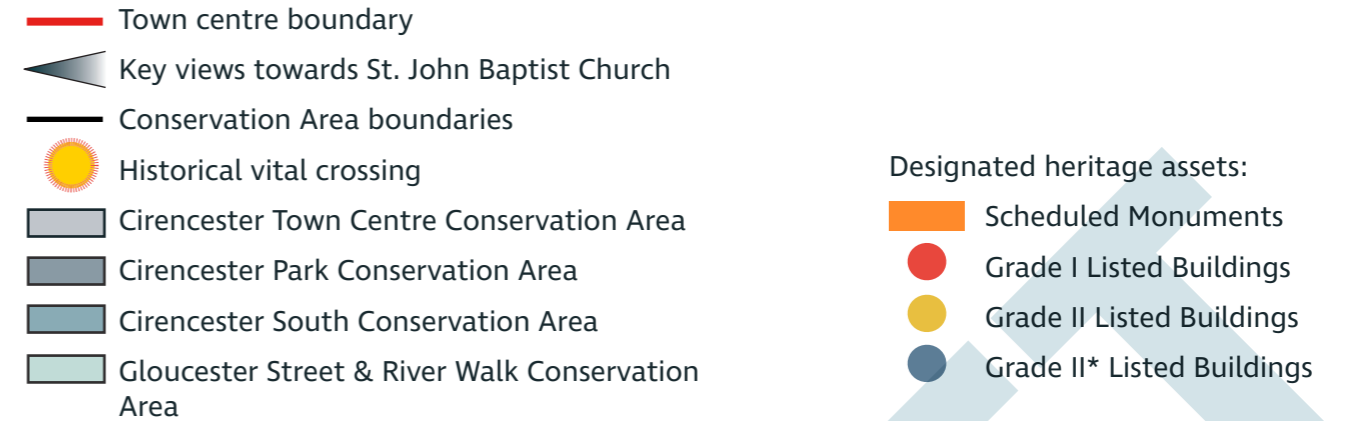
Simultaneously, the Cotswold Design Code states that it is important that the development, whilst respecting local character, develops a sense of place in its own right alongside individuality of design and identity of character either for the whole development or with a larger scheme, also for areas within that development.

The plan opposite demonstrated the carefully-considered interrelationship with the existing historic built environment, as well as the existing building heights across the Town Centre, which will inform the heights of any proposed new development.

## Cirencester - a town of two characters

Cirencester is really a town of two quite different and potentially contradictory characters, both of enormous significance: the Roman settlement, with the characteristic layout of a planned Roman town, and the irregular post-Roman town.

The historical vital crossing of the north-south Ermine Street (Gloucester Road, South Way and Tower Street) and the east-west Fosse Way (Quern's Lane, Lewis Lane) are the reason for Cirencester's existence, with the forum characteristically positioned adjacent to the crossing. There was a post-Roman shift of the Town Centre to the north of this junction. There is therefore the opportunity to allow the Roman town to be better interpreted in areas such as the Forum and the Phoenix Way site, without impacting upon the medieval plan of the post-Roman town.



# LAND USES

## Mix of uses

A rich mix of uses in the Town Centre will be supported to enhance and build upon the existing successful retail and cultural uses on offer. A diversification of uses in the Town Centre is required to include a wide range of functions and services, including business and employment, education, leisure and entertainment, culture, community and health.

New residential dwellings will be introduced in the Town Centre, along with associated amenity spaces and new public spaces, making the Town Centre a desirable place to live. This will be important to give an uplift in both the daytime and the evening population, which will help support the viability of all the other uses, particularly evening entertainment.

To avoid 'zoning', the blurring of boundaries, particularly through the growth of Town Centre living on upper floors, will play an important role in enhancing the resilience and vitality of the Town Centre. Flexibility in block design will be encouraged to establish greatest flexibility for alternative future uses.

## Frontages

At street level, buildings should have a successful human-scale interface, which should be active and engaging. High-quality public realm will be addressed with ground floor active frontages, promoting natural surveillance. Positive frontages will then complete the new urban blocks, defining the hierarchy of streets and spaces across the Town Centre sites.



# A RE-IMAGINED EAST-WEST ROUTE

Through many years of change, some historic routes through the Town Centre have become disconnected. This includes the historic Roman route along Querns Lane/Lewis Lane which once connected the Roman amphitheatre with the Town Centre, and is now dissected by Bristol Road (A429).

The intention is to re-imagine this connection with the amphitheatre via a bridge link across the A429, providing a safe, attractive connection to re-instate a version of the Roman east-west route across the Town Centre. This will then be activated through a series of new spaces and uses to form a new animated route, encouraging active travel across the Town Centre.





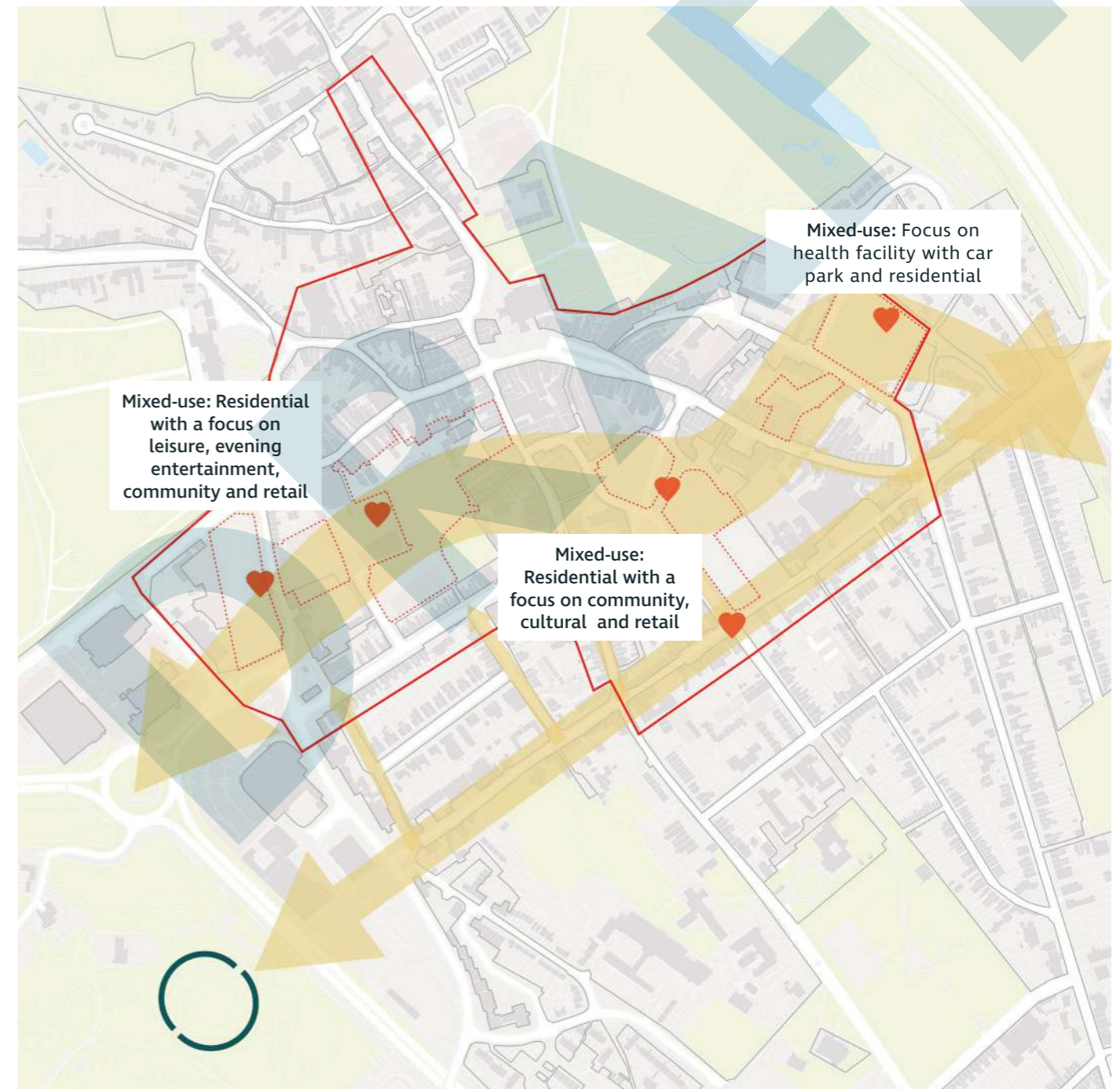
Cirencester Amphitheatre

## Hierarchy of spaces

The Town Centre presents opportunities for comprehensive redevelopment, the completion of urban blocks, and public realm interventions to establish greater clarity to the hierarchy of spaces within the Town Centre.

Creating a cohesive network of well-designed public spaces spanning from the western to the eastern parts of the Town Centre will help establish a new and inviting east-west route, promoting active travel through the Town Centre. Augmenting this experience is the potential integration of a trail, such as a heritage, sculpture, or art trail) to captivate and engage visitors.

-  Special places
-  Pedestrian/cycle routes

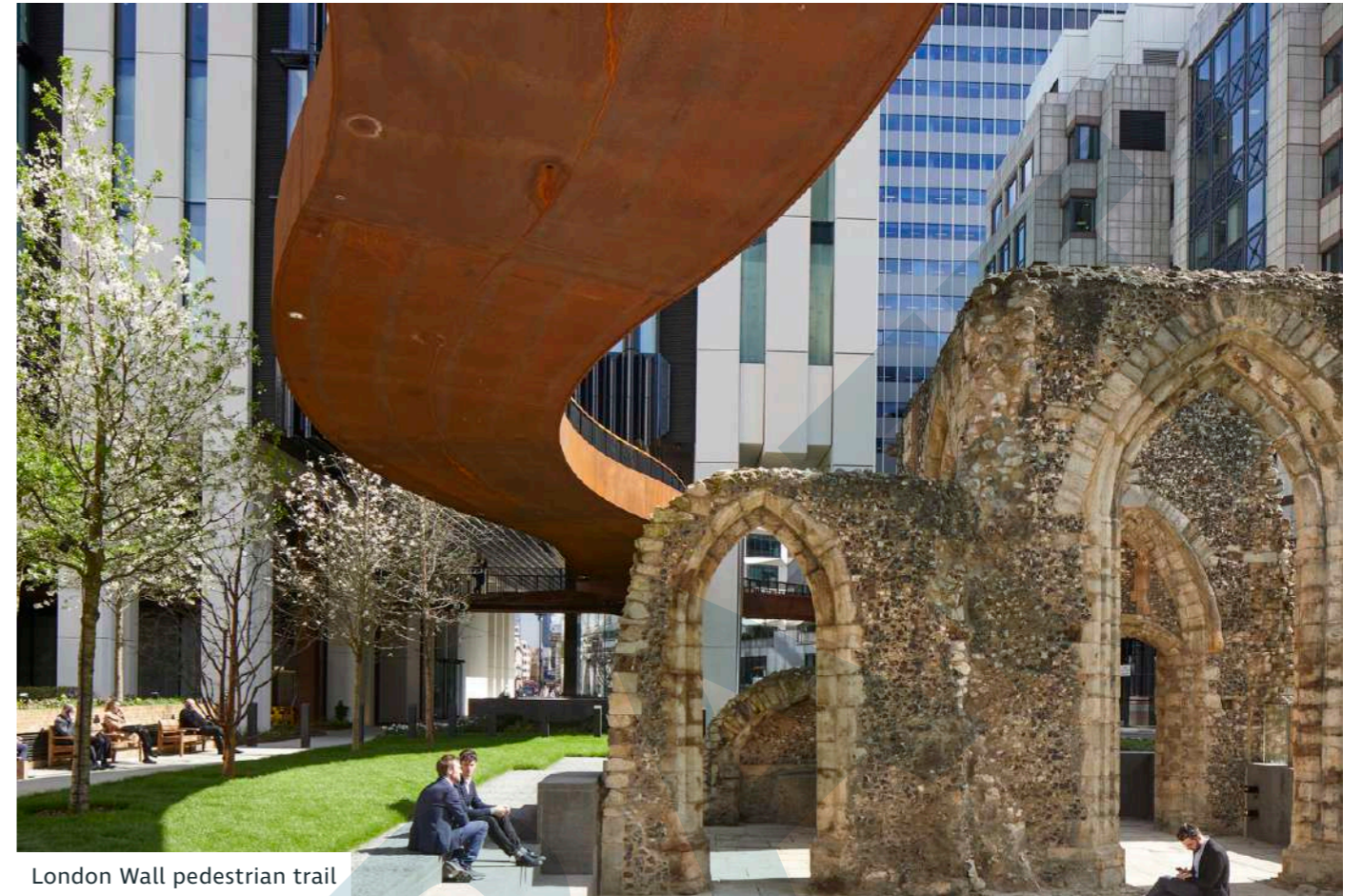


# CONNECTING THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

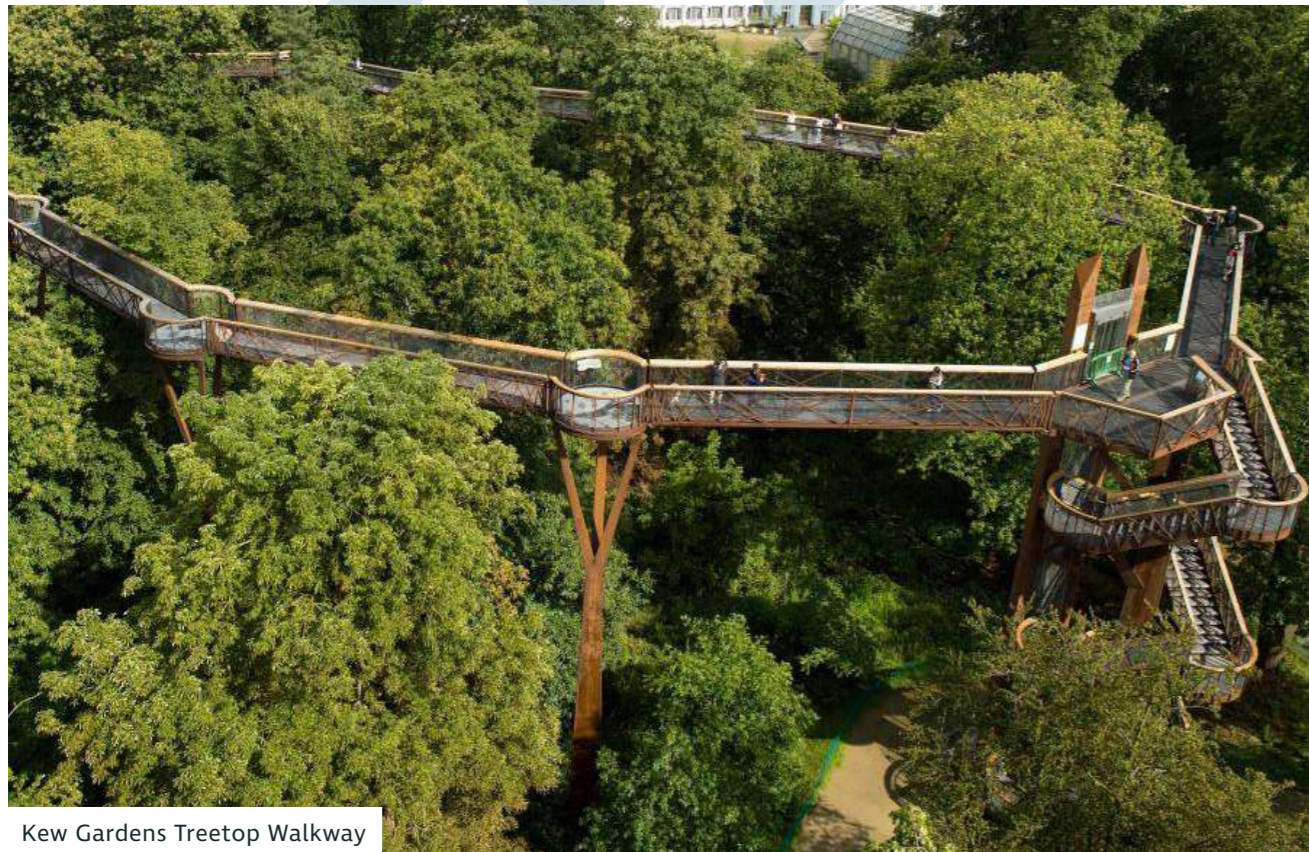
Improving the permeability east-west through the Town Centre to enable pedestrians and cyclists to move freely and safely between the Roman amphitheatre and the Waterloo area will offer a wide range of well-being, environmental and tourism benefits.

There is the opportunity to build on the existing Roman grain of streets in the Town Centre, particularly the strong historic east-west route along Querns Lane/Lewis Lane, which connected the Roman Verulamium Gate to the east and the Roman Bath Gate to the west. To address the severance that currently exists between

the Town Centre and the Roman amphitheatre due to Bristol Road/A429, this route could be continued via a pedestrian and cyclist 'Bridge link'. This would provide a safe, accessible route to the amphitheatre, encouraging sustainable travel, which could form the western portion of the wider east-west heritage/art/sculpture trail, shown in Principle 6.



London Wall pedestrian trail



Kew Gardens Treetop Walkway



National Arboretum Treetop Walkway, Gloucestershire

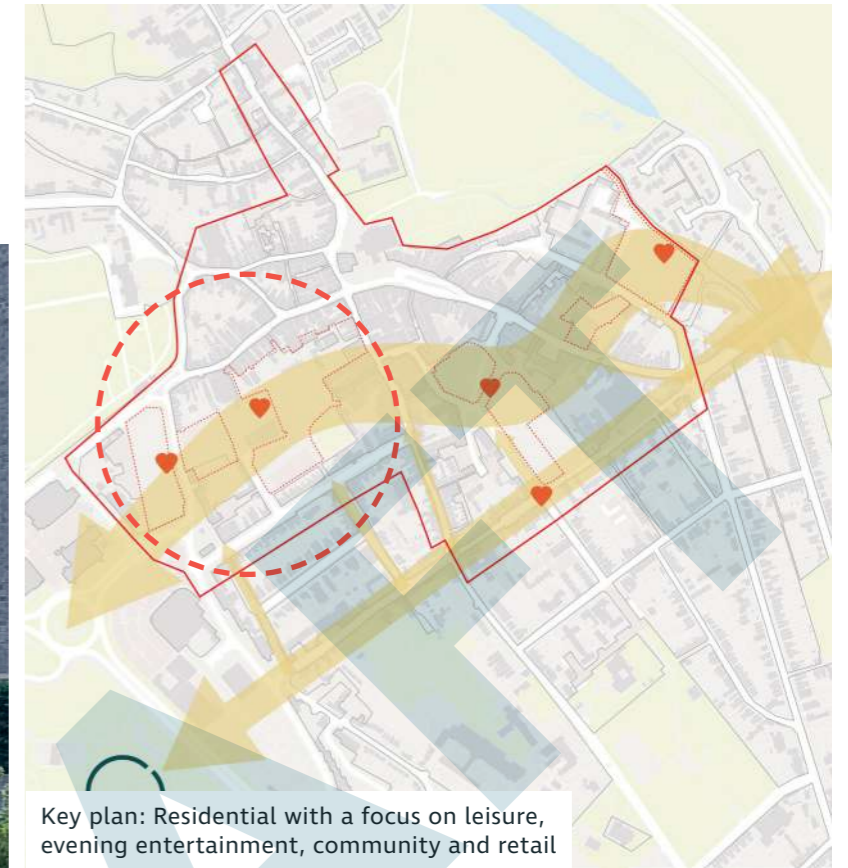
# OLD STATION, SHEEP STREET & BREWERY



Bishopsgate Goodyard



Catford Green, Lewisham



Key plan: Residential with a focus on leisure, evening entertainment, community and retail



Parkway, Newbury - active frontages



Altstadtquartier Büchel - uses spill out into public realm



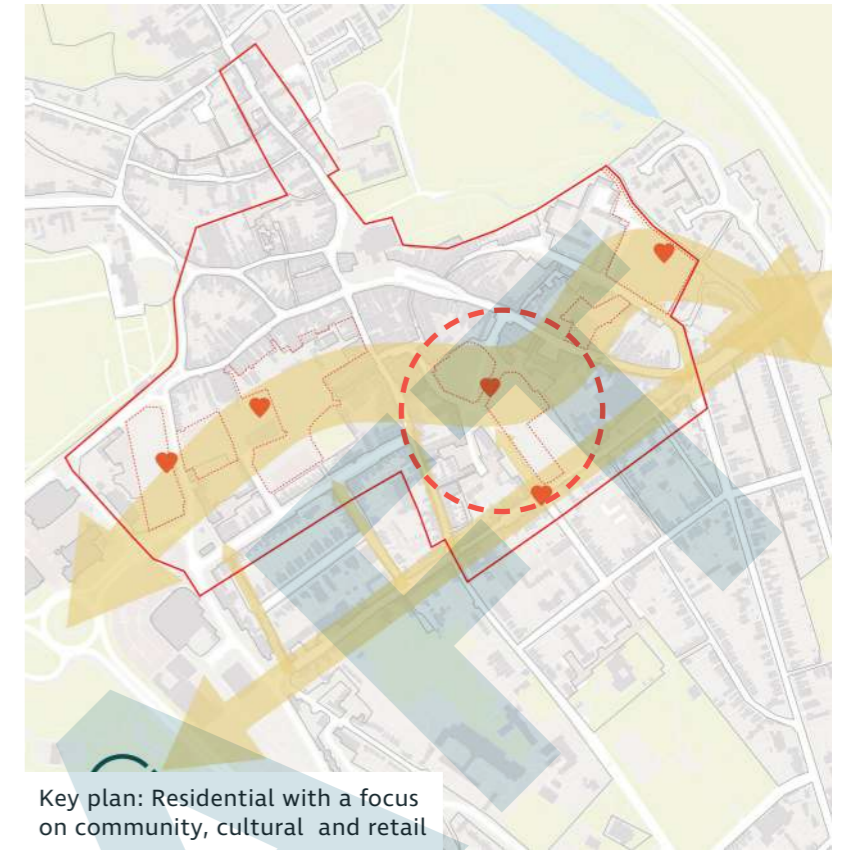
# THE FORUM



Plymouth Mobility Hub



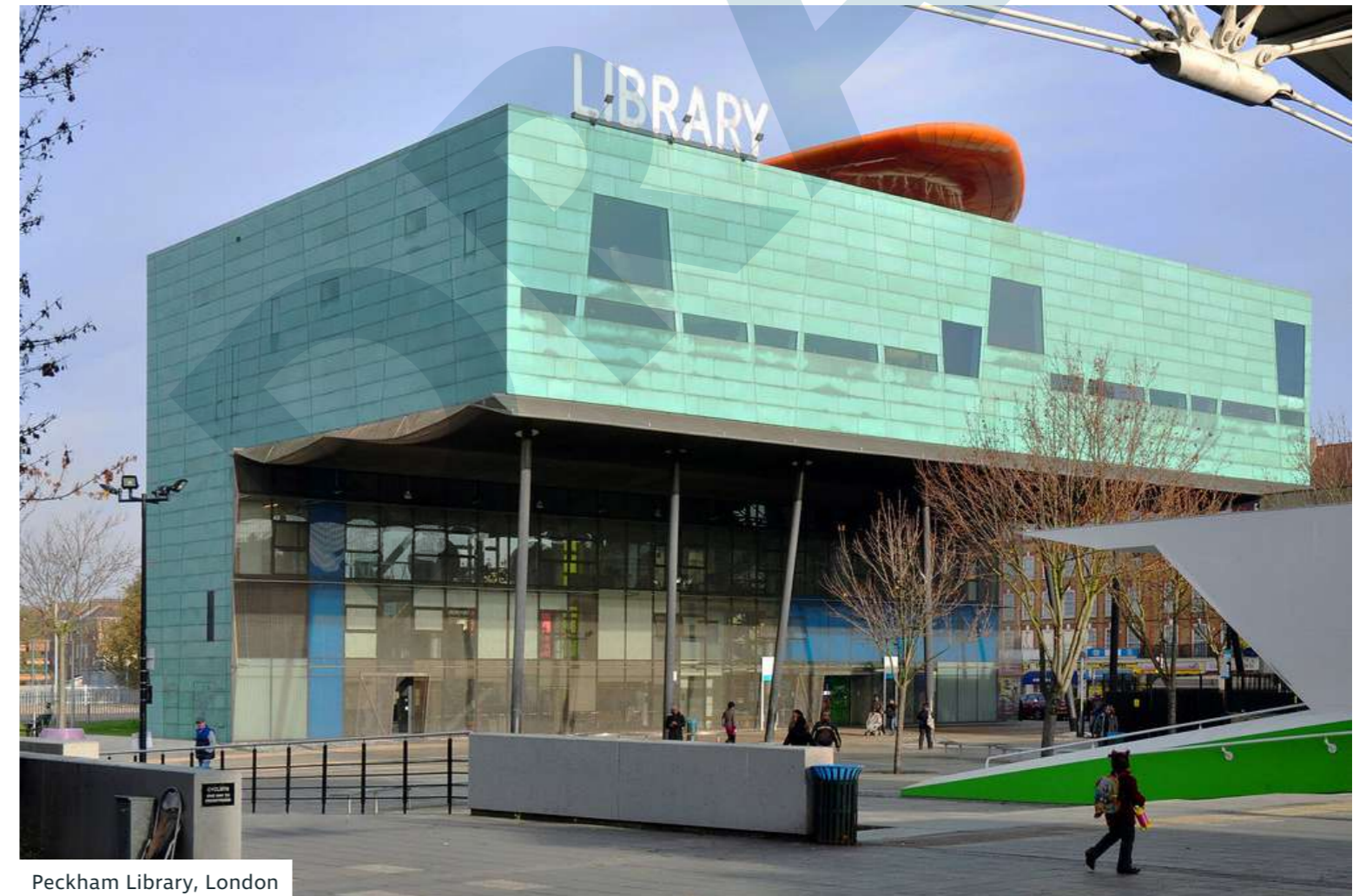
Ebury Edge - affordable spaces for start-up businesses, a community centre and a cafe



Key plan: Residential with a focus on community, cultural and retail



Idea Store, London - a community centre providing a library, dance and health facilities, and continuing education services



Peckham Library, London

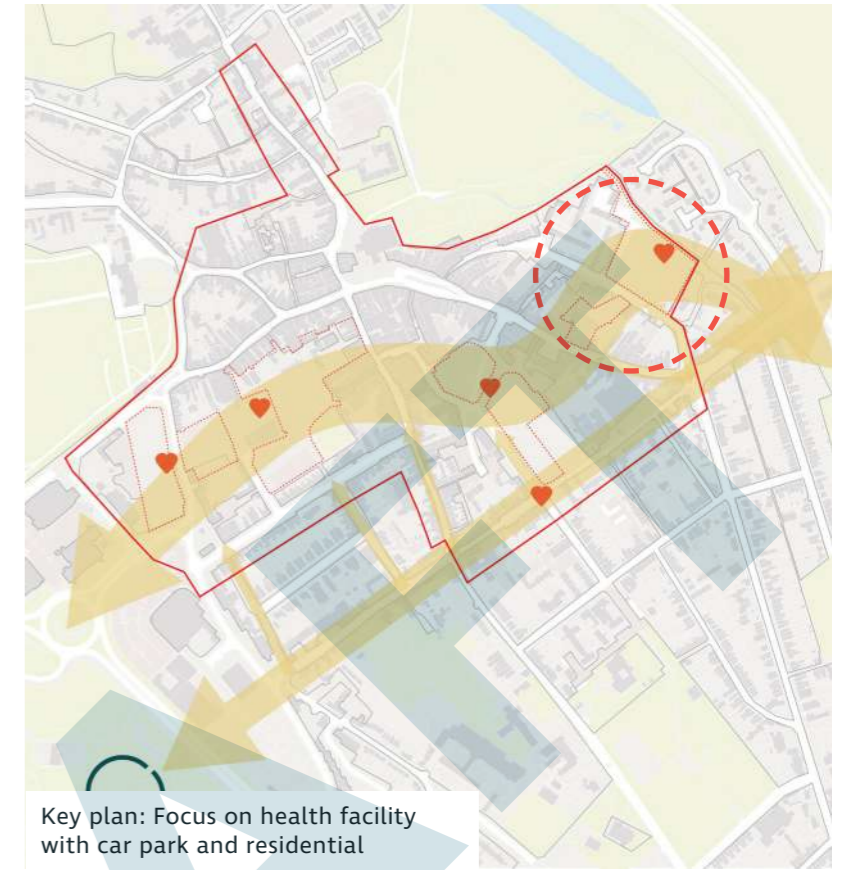
# LINKING DYER STREET TO WATERLOO



Marmalade Lane - co-housing project with a car-free community-based central lane



Hofgarten & Cappelaue Landscape Park



Key plan: Focus on health facility with car park and residential



Park n Play Car Park Copenhagen - integrated green facade and an attractive public realm on the roof, including a children's playground



Car Park in Bordeaux - deck car parking site between ground-floor shops/community/health uses and rooftop housing

DRAFT

December 2023

