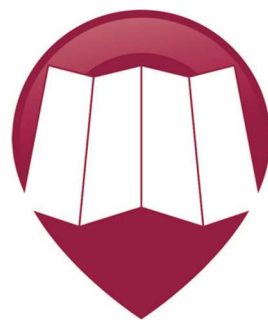

Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038



**RETFORD
TOWN CENTRE**
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP

*Produced by Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Planning Group
on behalf of Retford Businesses and residents*

09/08/2024

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Common Abbreviations

AECOM	Name of national consultancy used to provide technical support through the Locality programme
BDC	Bassetlaw District Council
BLP	Bassetlaw Local Plan
BFHL	Building for a Healthy Life
EA	Environment Agency
EMEC	East Midlands Environmental Consultants
HEDNA	Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment
LAA	Land Availability Assessment
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
RBF	Retford Business Forum
RTCNPG	Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Planning Group (this is the Qualifying Body for neighbourhood planning purposes)
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document

Foreword

Retford has a long and important heritage from when it was established as a Borough in 1105. It has prospered over time by being well connected by major road, rail, and canal links. It benefits from visitors from a range of locations and has a number of historic and cultural references. Its main architectural influence is from the Georgian period, and it benefits from leisure-based retail activity as well as active markets and events.

The Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan will seek to enable appropriate development, whilst retaining and enhancing those aspects of the Town Centre that make it an attractive business, residential and visitor location. The Neighbourhood Plan has been designated a Business Plan reflecting the high concentration of businesses within the plan area.

Addressing the population increases being planned through adjacent housing developments and the STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production – utilising fusion nuclear power) investment on the site of the nearby West Burton Power Station will require positive, and sensitive, responses to ensure transport and facilities requirements are met smoothly in and around Retford Town Centre.

The desire for a consistent agreed view of the development of Retford Town Centre came from discussions at Retford Business Forum (RBF) and so, in consultation with Bassetlaw District Council (BDC), it carried out various informal surveys and consultations during 2019 and 2020 resulting in the formation of The Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Planning Group (RTCNPG) in January 2021 and the approval by BDC of the final version of the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan Area (RTCNPA) in September 2021.

With support from Locality UK, and consultant, Planning With People, and projects conducted by Aecom relating to Design Codes, Masterplan, Housing Needs and Site Assessment the Neighbourhood Plan was constructed. Ecological reports were also carried out by specialist agencies to advise on this important aspect of the Town Centre.

RTCNPG has been keen to carry out as much engagement as possible consultation has included a number of public consultations, leaflet distributions, and drop-in sessions. Local stakeholder groups, including local schools, were engaged through presentations and discussions. The RBF and BDC websites have also made documents publicly available.

Retford Town Centre seeks to enhance its heritage-related character and attractiveness as a leisure-based, retail and service environment, which meets the needs of the growing population whilst positively addressing the issues of the future.

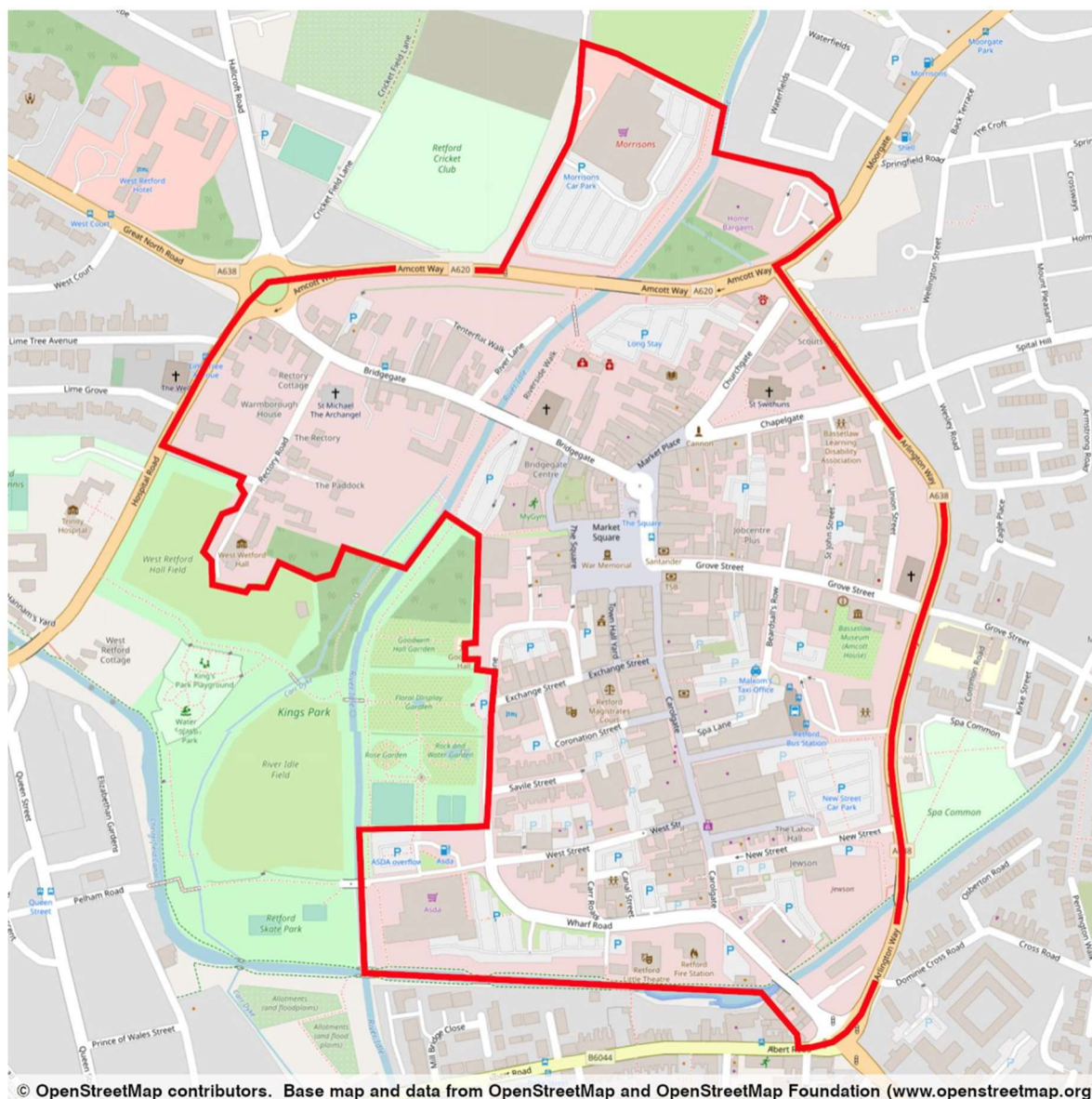
My sincere thanks go to the members of RTCNPG Management Committee for their help and contribution, and for staying the course. The Committee has been supported brilliantly throughout by the Neighbourhood Planning Team at BDC; by Planning With People and Aecom, and our thanks go to everyone involved.

Rick Brand Chair of Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Planning Group

1 The Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan

- 1 The Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter the RTCNP) is a document produced in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 by the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Planning Group (RTCNPG), who are the Qualifying Body.¹
- 2 Once the Plan has been 'made' by Bassetlaw District Council (BDC) it will form part of the Development Plan for Bassetlaw, which also includes the Bassetlaw Local Plan (BLP) and the Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Minerals and Waste Strategy.
- 3 The RTCNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the BLP, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and NCC policies. The evidence base that informs the BLP has been used to support this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4 The time frame for the Plan extends to 2038 to match the time frame of the BLP.
- 5 The Plan will have significant weight in the determination of planning applications. The Plan will be used by;
 - a) developers when preparing planning applications for submission to BDC
 - b) BDC in assessing and determining planning applications
 - c) inspectors in determining appeals.
- 6 The RTCNP policies form a framework of policies and supporting documents that will guide development over the Plan period.
- 7 The Plan area covers the Town Centre and land to the north west up to Amcott Way (see Map 1). This was considered the most appropriate boundary in relation to the issues of relevance to local people and was accepted when the area was designated by BDC in September 2021.

¹ The Forum was designated on 4th March 2021. The Plan Area was designated on the 4th March 2021 and the area modified on 23 September 2021

Map 1 Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area

- 8 A number of District-wide documents that support the preparation of the Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2038 have been used to support the preparation of the Plan. These are:
- Land Availability Assessment June 2021
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment Objective Assessed Need Update 2017
 - Landscape Character Assessment 2009
 - Site Allocations: Landscape Character Study 2019 and Addendums 2020 and 2021
 - Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment HEDNA 2020
- 9 Plan Area based studies have also been commissioned by the RTCNP Forum Neighbourhood Plan these are²:
- Site Assessment AECOM 2022

² The supporting documents are available at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnp/supporting-documents>

- g) Design Guide AECOM 2022
- h) Housing Needs Assessment AECOM 2022
- i) Masterplan AECOM 2022
- j) Two Ecological Reports EMEC 2022

2 The need for a Neighbourhood Plan

- 10 Retford is a popular, attractive market town that serves the needs of the Retford built up area as well as providing facilities for a wide rural catchment. In 2011, the Retford built up area had a population of 23,700 and 11,000 households.³ However, the Neighbourhood Area covers only the centre of the Town and has a population of approximately 750.⁴
- 11 The BLP Policy ST1 defines managed sustainable growth around the built-up area of Retford as a having total of approximately 2,331 additional dwellings by 2038. Whilst no sites are allocated within the Town Centre in the BLP, sites are allocated for 1,402 dwellings in the Retford built up area. Appendix 3 of the BLP shows that the balance of 782 dwellings already have planning permission or are under construction.⁵ This projected growth in the BLP will see a 22.6% increase in the size of the Retford built up area to 2038.⁶
- 12 This expected increase in population looking to be served by the Town Centre will generate more demand for the services in the Town Centre and more people and vehicle movements. Anticipating this impact and making sure the infrastructure of the Town Centre can accommodate this demand was a major driver for the RTCNPG wanting to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 13 The designated area is the Town Centre. The interest of the RTCNPG in preparing a neighbourhood plan reflects the need to focus on the heart of the Town, making sure it is suitable to meet the needs of the growing population of the wider Retford built up area. The RTCNPG wants to ensure that Town Centre businesses are able to adapt and thrive, ensuring that the Town Centre remains attractive for shoppers, residents and businesses. The Town Centre must;
 - a) contain thriving local businesses,
 - b) be attractive to shoppers, businesses and residents,
 - c) provide high quality green spaces and other types of public realm,
 - d) be accessible on foot and cycle,
 - e) support high quality development that enhances the Town's historic character,
 - f) provide high-quality, well-designed housing,
 - g) function as a modern 21st century Town minimising its carbon footprint.
- 14 This Neighbourhood Plan process has provided the opportunity for the RTCNPG to work collaboratively with its membership, BDC, and residents of the Town to help shape how the Town Centre will evolve up to 2038.

³ Census 2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>

⁴ Based on analysis in the AECOM HNA see <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpg/supporting-documents> and the figure is based on census data and the best available proxy see para 2

⁵ See <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/gn1kim1b/adopted-bassetlaw-local-plan-2020-2038.pdf>

⁶ Based on census 2011 data number of dwellings was 10293 and housing growth 2331

3 Consultation

- 15 The RTCNPG recognise that consultation is key to successfully developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Retford Town Centre. The production of a Neighbourhood Plan requires an open process and on-going consultation. It also requires the involvement of a wide range of people from across the area.
- 16 Despite the restrictions associated with Covid in 2021, the RTCNPG engaged with their community from the start. To ensure the Plan focused on the issues that mattered to businesses and local people most, RTCNPG members sought conversation and comment using a variety of engagement methods, including having a market stall, visiting schools (once restrictions were lifted), meetings with local groups and business breakfasts. There was also an effective use of social media and the RTCNPG web site.



Photo 1: Market stall for the early consultation September 2021

- 17 This engagement ensured that it was the community that set the priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 18 Progress on the Neighbourhood Plan is reported to the RTCNPG every quarter with work on the Plan undertaken by a Management Group in collaboration with a planning consultant.
- 19 The key consultation events and activities that shaped the production of the Plan are summarised in the Consultation Statement.

4 Community Aspirations

- 20 The process of producing this Neighbourhood Plan has been a catalyst for a range of initiatives. The RTCNPG wants to undertake all of them relating to the Vision for Retford. Not all are related to land use planning but because they have arisen during consultations and other work they are described as aspirations and are described in detail at Appendix A.

5 Retford in Context

History

- 21 The name 'Retford', was derived from the red colour of the local clay, probably exposed at a ford over the River Idle. The name 'Redforde' is found in a 1086 entry to the Domesday Book. Today, the bridge over the River Idle on Bridgegate has red markings in its foundations, signifying the origins of the town's name when, probably, the site of a ford.
- 22 Retford is one of the oldest market towns in England receiving its charter in 1105 and the market was situated at what is now known as Cannon Square. However, the River Idle could not be developed as a transport route to improve Retford's trade, and wider communication links were required to develop the local economy.
- 23 In the 18th Century, the Great North Road by-passed Retford to the west. As traffic along this road increased it was seen that Retford's economy would grow if it passed through the Town. By Act of Parliament in 1760, the Great North Road was re-routed through Retford, along Bridgegate and Carolgate. With the increased economic prosperity brought by this development a new Square was built alongside the new route. Many fine houses were also built around The Square and along adjacent streets. Coaching inns, like the White Hart, standing at the junction of Bridgegate and Market Street, are testament to Retford's key location on the Great North Road.
- 24 The Chesterfield Canal (which forms the southern boundary of the Plan area) along with the Great Northern Rail Line (outside of the Town Centre Plan area), brought further economic opportunities. Today, the East Coast Main Line provides fast access to London in 1 hour and 44 minutes as well as to cities like Sheffield, Hull, Doncaster and Lincoln.
- 25 This convergence of road, rail and waterways meant Retford remained an important trading point for hundreds of years.

Location and Context

- 26 Retford is the second largest town within Bassetlaw and lies within the eastern half of the District. The Town is approximately 8 miles to the east of Worksop and 20 miles south east of Doncaster.
- 27 The Plan boundary follows the line of Arlington Way on the eastern side and the edge of Kings Park is the western boundary. The Chesterfield Canal forms the Plan area's southern boundary and the northern boundary follows Amcott Way, and extends around the site of Morrisons supermarket.
- 28 Retford Town Centre has buildings with a variety of architectural styles which are generally harmonious and contribute to a strong historic character.
- 29 The Square, with its Georgian origins, is central to the Town and sets the tone for a consideration of visual aspects of its public realm. The Square changes its character as the week passes. It is animated and colourful on its three market days, relatively quiet and restful on others. This contrast in atmosphere is valuable, and the flexibility of this space contributes to the character of the Town. However, the presence of vehicles (the eastern side of the Market Place is a through road and there is associated on street parking) impacts on the amenity of The Square and intrudes on its flexibility to be used as a community space.
- 30 The majority of buildings within The Square and along Carolgate and Bridgegate continue the built form cohesion. With the exception of Home Bargains and Morrisons to the north, the entire Plan area is within the Retford Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 31 The importance of developing and retaining a definite style is underlined by the Retford Design Code 2022 and the Masterplan, both commissioned for this Neighbourhood Plan. These

documents, along with the community consultation, form the evidence base for the policy approach in this Plan.

6 Boosting the Town Centre Economy

- 32 This is a business led Neighbourhood Plan. Its Vision, Community Objectives and policies provide a development framework that anticipate the changes needed in the Town Centre to support these businesses as they adapt to a 20% expansion of the Town. The RTCNP proposals all stem from a focus on boosting the Town Centre economy.
- 33 The diagram below shows how all the different policies in the RTCNP contribute to boosting the Town Centre economy.

Figure 1 How the neighbourhood plan policies boost the Town Centre economy



STEP – Looking to the Future

- 34 In October 2022 it was announced that the UK Atomic Energy Agency (UKAEA) had chosen West Burton Power Station (located approximately 8 miles east of the Town Centre) as the future home of its STEP project. The decision will see game-changing investment for the area with the STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) programme seeking to pave the way for the development of commercial power plants capable of producing a limitless supply of low-carbon, clean energy.
- 35 STEP offers the potential to transform and regenerate the area, creating thousands of jobs, a number of apprenticeships, and supply chain opportunities across a number of sectors, in an area already intimately linked with energy production. This will impact on the infrastructure (roads and rail), housing, health and education services.
- 36 The site is expected to be up and running by 2040. Retford is the nearest Town in North Nottinghamshire and welcomes this investment which will establish it nationally and allow it to

exploit its excellent transport links to support the STEP investment. The development of a relationship with UKAEA and its associated companies, especially UK Industrial Fusion Solutions Ltd (UKIFS) is important and transport and facilities are issues to be addressed early within planning. This, in addition to the expansion of the wider Retford urban area, means that there will be pressure and opportunity for businesses in the Town Centre.

7 Community Vision

- 37 This Vision has been prepared by the NPG and has been endorsed by the community based on the consultation events.

By 2038, Retford Town Centre will be safe, healthy, accessible and sustainable, supporting people of all ages. Its heritage buildings will remain attractive to businesses. It will be a place to grow and prosper, providing a range of employment sites and premises.

Retford Town Centre is future facing, the home of people and businesses looking to reduce their carbon footprint. The value of natural assets will be enhanced and extended, and investment will create a rich mix of shopping, leisure, sports, health, cultural and social facilities making Retford Town Centre appealing as a place to live, learn, develop, work and spend quality leisure time.

8 Community Objectives

- 38 Based on the Vision and through further consultation, the RTCNPG members have identified community objectives.

Community Objective 1: To promote the development of key spaces and vacant or underutilised properties to the benefit of businesses and residents.

Community Objective 2: To protect and enhance the historic character of the Town Centre to ensure that all new development is designed to a high standard in accordance with the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038. All development will:

- a) respect the materials, style and layout of the historic Town Centre and Conservation Area
- b) enhance the character of the Town Centre

Community Objective 3: To support and encourage development of the wide range of community facilities in the Town Centre.

Community Objective 4: To upgrade Retford's landscape and public realm to enhance its attractiveness as a destination.

Community Objective 5: To support the growth of a vibrant and varied daytime and evening economy attracting micro, small and medium sized businesses.

Community Objective 6: To create a well-connected street network, facilitating its harmonious use by all, to promote health and well-being.

Community Objective 7: To promote improvements in public and private spaces that will enhance biodiversity and mitigate climate change and flood resilience measures.

Community Objective 8: To support and promote innovative solutions to accelerate the Town Centre to Net Zero by 2035, including the promotion of solar energy, increasing the provision of electric charging points.

9 Engaging with the Community: A Key Principle

- 39 The Plan reflects the community's need to have greater involvement and influence in development proposals up to 2038. The importance of pre-application engagement is endorsed in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 40 The NPPF recognises the importance of early discussion between applicants and the local community. Para 39 states that *'Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community'*.
- 41 Encouraging consultation between developers and the RTCNPG⁸ at an early stage in the planning process will be of benefit to the applicant as issues can be discussed and resolved at an early stage. The key principle set out below is a voluntary process and is intended to encourage applicants who are submitting plans for new build or replacement buildings to talk to the RTCNPG prior to a scheme being submitted for planning permission. This process should result in a scheme that is more acceptable to the community and, provided it meets the requirements of District policy, is more likely to secure approval by Bassetlaw District Council.

Key Principle: Pre-Application Community Engagement

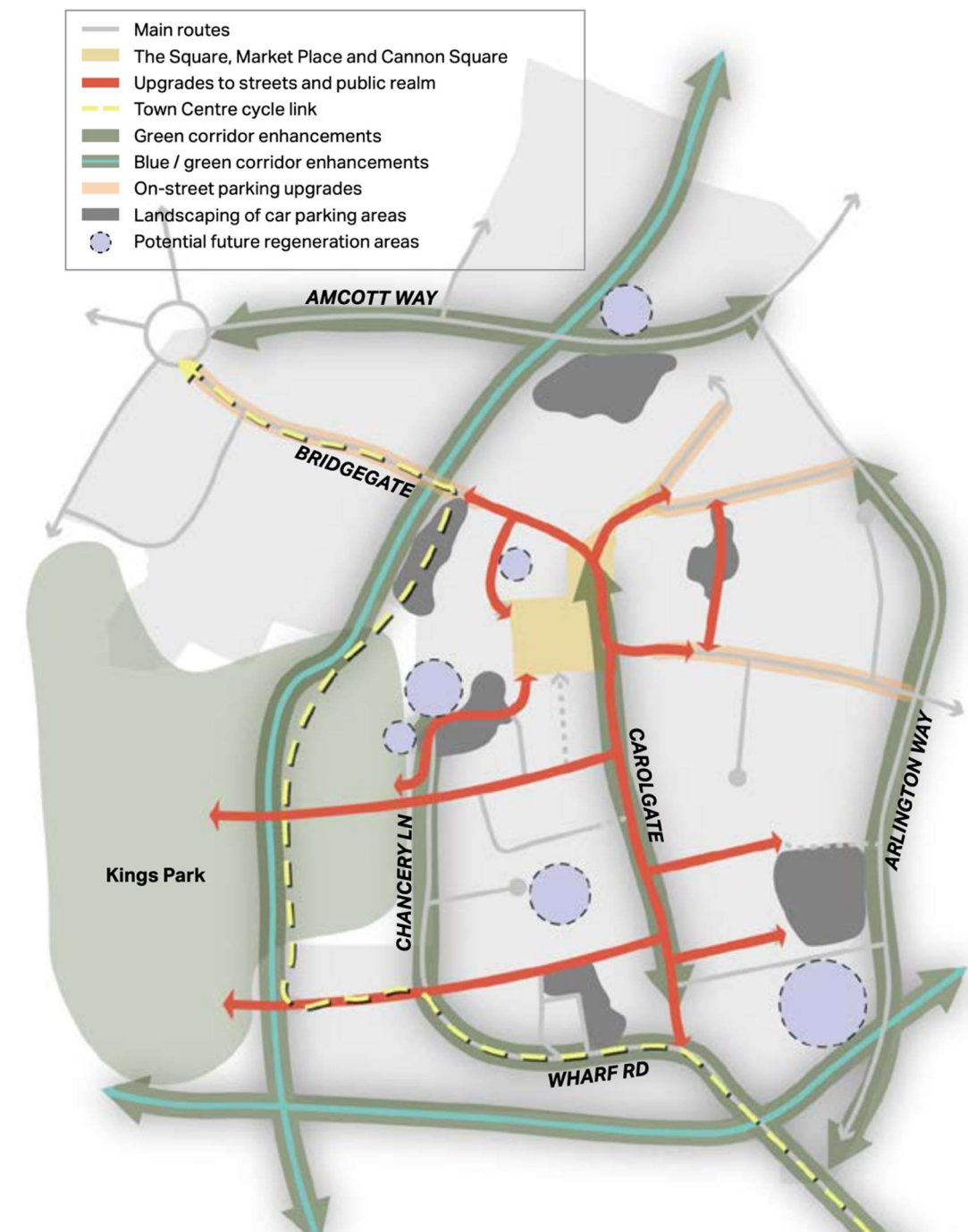
- 1. Applicants are encouraged to actively engage with the RTCNPG or its successor, as part of the design process at the pre-application stage.**
- 2. Applicants are encouraged to provide a short document with the planning application to explain:**
 - a) how the developer has consulted with the RTCNPG; and**
 - b) how issues of concern raised by local people and the RTCNPG have been taken into account; and**
 - c) how the layout, boundary treatment and design of the proposal responds and reinforces local character as detailed in the Retford Design Guide or equivalent; and**
 - d) where the proposals are for housing development, how this meets local housing need.**

⁸ The Retford Civic Society (which is a member of the RTCNPG) is active and well informed and will contribute to this discussion

10 A Masterplan for Retford Town Centre

42 The RTCNPG commissioned a Masterplan for the Town Centre. The document is available at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpng/supporting-documents>. The conceptual masterplan framework covers the following themes, blue (water) and green corridors, public realm, parking, landscaping, cycle connectivity and future regeneration sites. Figure 2 below shows how these themes relate to the Town Centre and each other. Each policy contributes to the delivery of this conceptual framework.

Figure 2 How the themes of blue and green corridors, public realm, parking, landscaping, cycling connectivity and future regeneration sites relate to the Town Centre



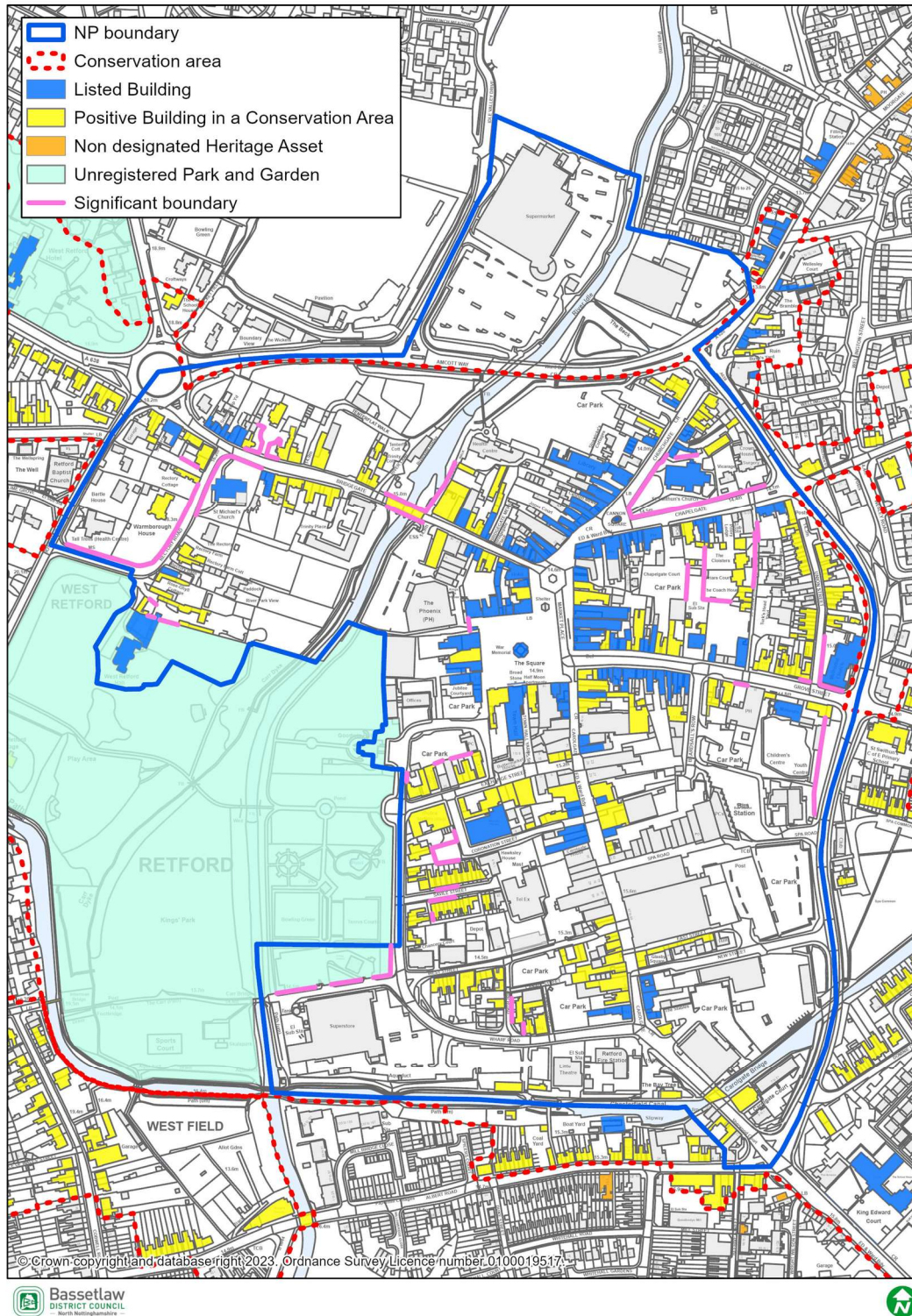
11 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

- 43 Map 2 shows the extent of the Conservation Area boundary and the number of listed buildings⁹. Listed and positive buildings¹⁰ have been identified by BDCs Conservation Team as making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 44 The NPPF requires Local Plans (and neighbourhood plans where applicable) to set out a positive, clear strategy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of securing the optimum viable use for heritage assets consistent with their conservation.
- 45 Historic England provides further guidance in its Good Practice Advice in Planning: 1, where it states that *'a positive strategy is not a passive exercise but requires a plan for the maintenance and use of heritage assets and for the delivery of development including within their setting that will afford appropriate protection for the asset and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*
- 46 The RTCNPG are aware of some listed buildings and positive buildings in the Conservation Area that are under used and/or vacant (e.g., the first floor of some of the shops on Carolgate and some former pubs and clubs).
- 47 It is recognised that the original use of some heritage assets is no longer viable or appropriate and this can be a reason for their lack of use and disrepair. New uses can often be the key to a building's preservation. Generally, the best way of securing the upkeep of heritage assets is to keep them in active use.
- 48 It can be a difficult balance to encourage the use of all buildings in the Plan area whilst protecting the heritage of these buildings. The RTCNPG is clear that the historic character of the Plan area is a major attribute. The renovation of these buildings must be sensitive to their heritage features. Good design will find creative solutions that enables their suitable adaptation.

⁹ For listed buildings see <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results/?searchType=NHLE+Simple&search=Retford>

¹⁰ Positive buildings have a local historic and/or architectural value

Map 2 Heritage Assets¹¹



¹¹ The Identification of significant boundary features like walls and railings may not be exhaustive. The absence of any feature from the above map does not necessarily mean that it is of no interest or that it makes no positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area advice should always be sought from the Conservation Team. Trees also contribute to the character; these are shown on map 6.

- 49 Policy 1 supports the principle of encouraging the renovation, redevelopment or change of use of heritage assets especially any on the heritage at risk register, where this will result in the preservation or enhancement of those assets and their setting. This will help to support a prosperous Town Centre economy.
- 50 The Retford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan¹², published in 2012, provides a detailed analysis of the Plan Area in relation to heritage assets. The maps in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, in particular Maps 27 and 37, identify the listed buildings, positive buildings within the Conservation Area and significant boundaries (walls and railings), all of which combine to create the high-quality historic environment. The identification of significant boundaries is particularly important as the contribution boundary treatment can make to the character of the area can sometimes be underestimated. These boundaries, and the other heritage features, have been reviewed and updated and are shown on Map 2.
- 51 The Retford Design Code¹³ also identifies the contribution boundary treatment (as well as the style of buildings) makes to the coherence and quality of the Plan area. The Design Code identifies those buildings or boundary treatments that are unsympathetic to the character of the area. The Design Code Frontages and Boundaries (4.2.4) provides guidance on how development proposals should ensure boundaries enhance character. (This is also addressed in Policy 2.)
- 52 The Chesterfield Canal is located on the southern edge of the plan area for a stretch of about 500 metres and falls within the Conservation Area. The presence of the Canal contributes to the character of the area. The RTCNPG would support the designation of the Chesterfield Canal as a non-designated heritage asset.

Policy 1 Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

- 1. Development within the Conservation Area¹⁴ should demonstrate an understanding of its history and commercial quality as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2012 and the Retford Design Code 2022.**
- 2. The Chesterfield Canal runs through the Conservation Area. The effect of a proposal on the significance of the Canal, including its setting, will be taken into consideration when determining planning applications.**
- 3. Development should respect the scale, building plots, height, roof line and significant boundary walls and railings¹⁵ and complement existing materials and architectural detailing to reflect the prevailing pattern and design.**
- 4. Development within the Conservation Area should preserve the character and appearance of the Area and/or the significance and setting of Listed Buildings. Development identified as causing less than substantial harm will only be permissible in the Conservation Area if the harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.¹⁶**

(Continued overleaf)

¹² See <https://data.bassetlaw.gov.uk/conservation-area-appraisals/retford/>

¹³ See <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpng/supporting-documents>

¹⁴ It is acknowledged that the NPPF also protects the setting of Conservation Areas but the Plan area only covers the Conservation Area and cannot seek to influence development outside the Plan area and by turn the Conservation Area

¹⁵ As originally identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal see maps 27,39 and 45 where they still exist

¹⁶ In accordance with Para 207 NPPF

5. **Proposals that require a change of use of a heritage asset will be considered favourably where all of the following can be demonstrated:**
- a) **the proposed development would represent a viable use that would secure the future of the heritage asset,**
 - b) **where the proposed use will help to support the Town Centre economy,**
 - c) **the change of use will not be detrimental to the significance of the heritage asset and its setting.**

12 Achieving Well Designed Places

- 53 The NPPF notes that *'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design'*.¹⁷
- 54 The National Design Code 2019 identifies 10 characteristics of good design based on national planning policy, practice guidance. The Design Code states that *'specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set at the local level.'*
- 55 The Retford Design Code 2022¹⁸ has been prepared by AECOM and the local community. It provides a robust local character analysis; this forms the basis for the specific local criteria and a set of design principles. The Retford Design Code 2022 is integral to the formation of the policies in the RTCNP, especially Policy 2.
- 56 The Retford Design Code 2022 divides the Town Centre into 6 character areas – see Figure A below.

¹⁷ See NPPF para 139

¹⁸ The document is available at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnp/supporting-documents>

Figure A Extract from Retford Design Code 2022 showing the Character Areas



57 The Design Code provides an analysis of each area and includes a key diagram show the positive and negative features of each area and how people and vehicles move through them.

Figure A (1) The Square Character Area

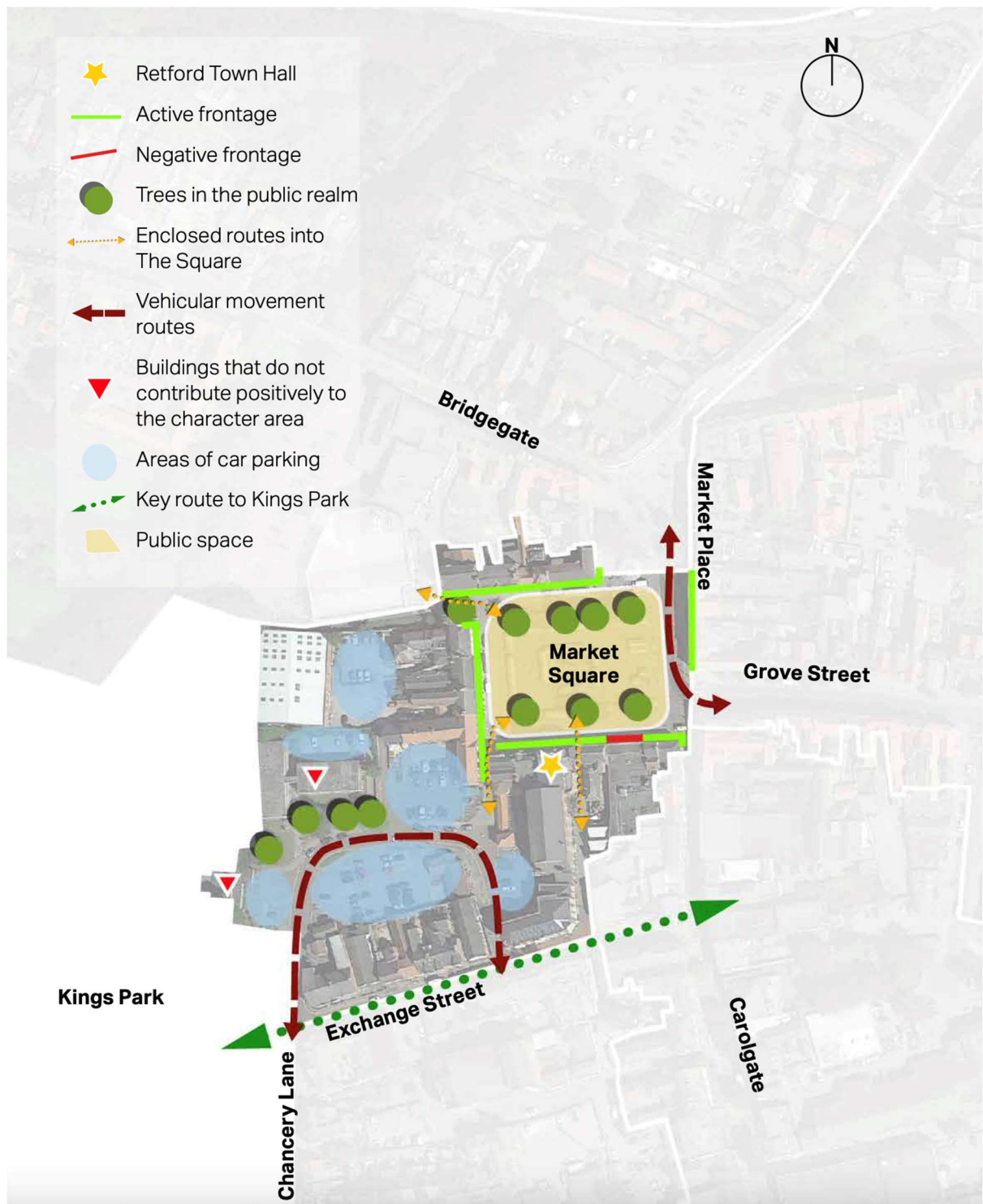


Figure A (2) Bridgegate Character Area



AECOM

25

Figure A (3) Supermarkets Character Area

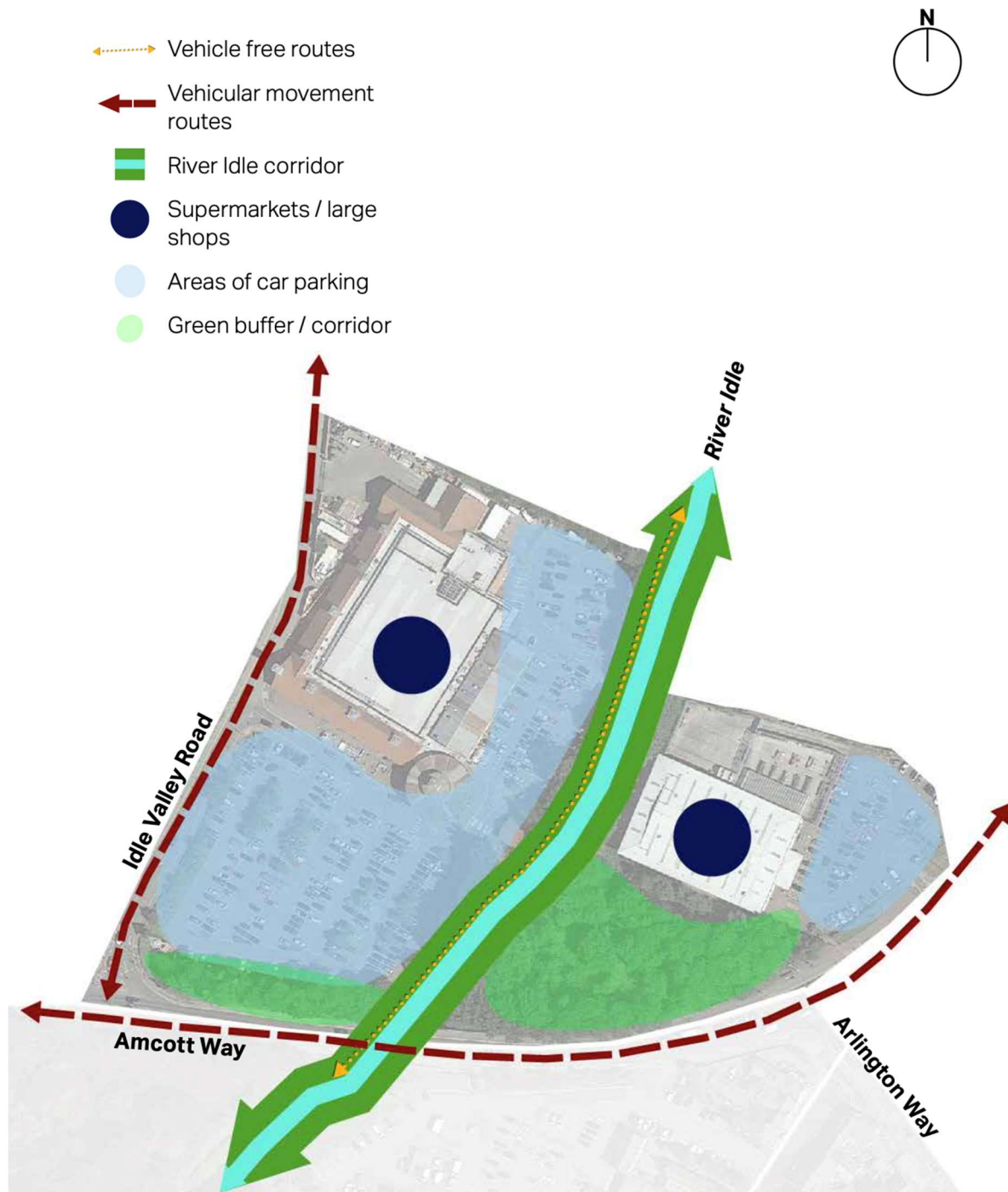


Figure A (4) Cannon Square, Chapelgate, Churchgate and Grove Street

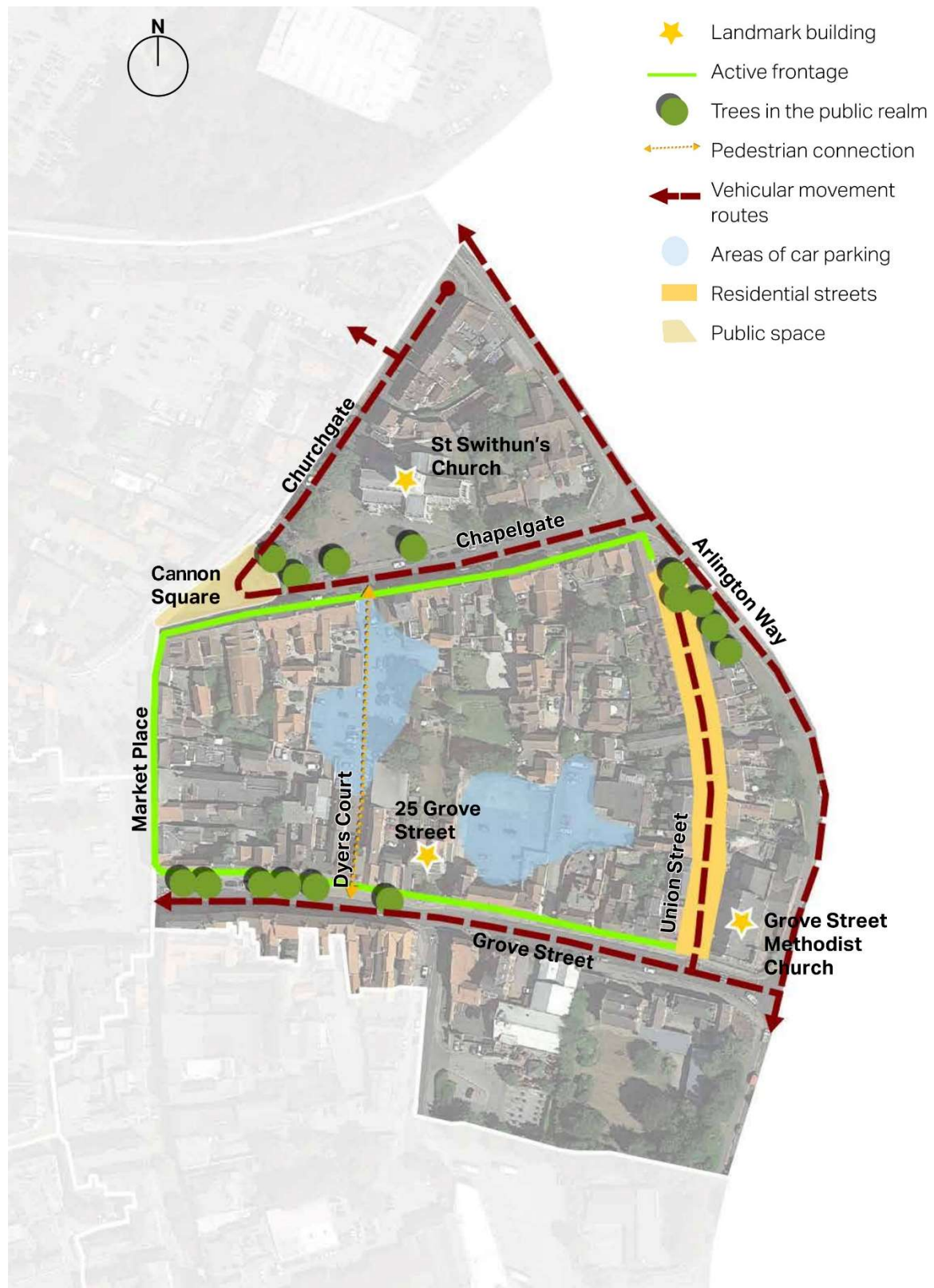


Figure A (5) Carolgate East Character Area

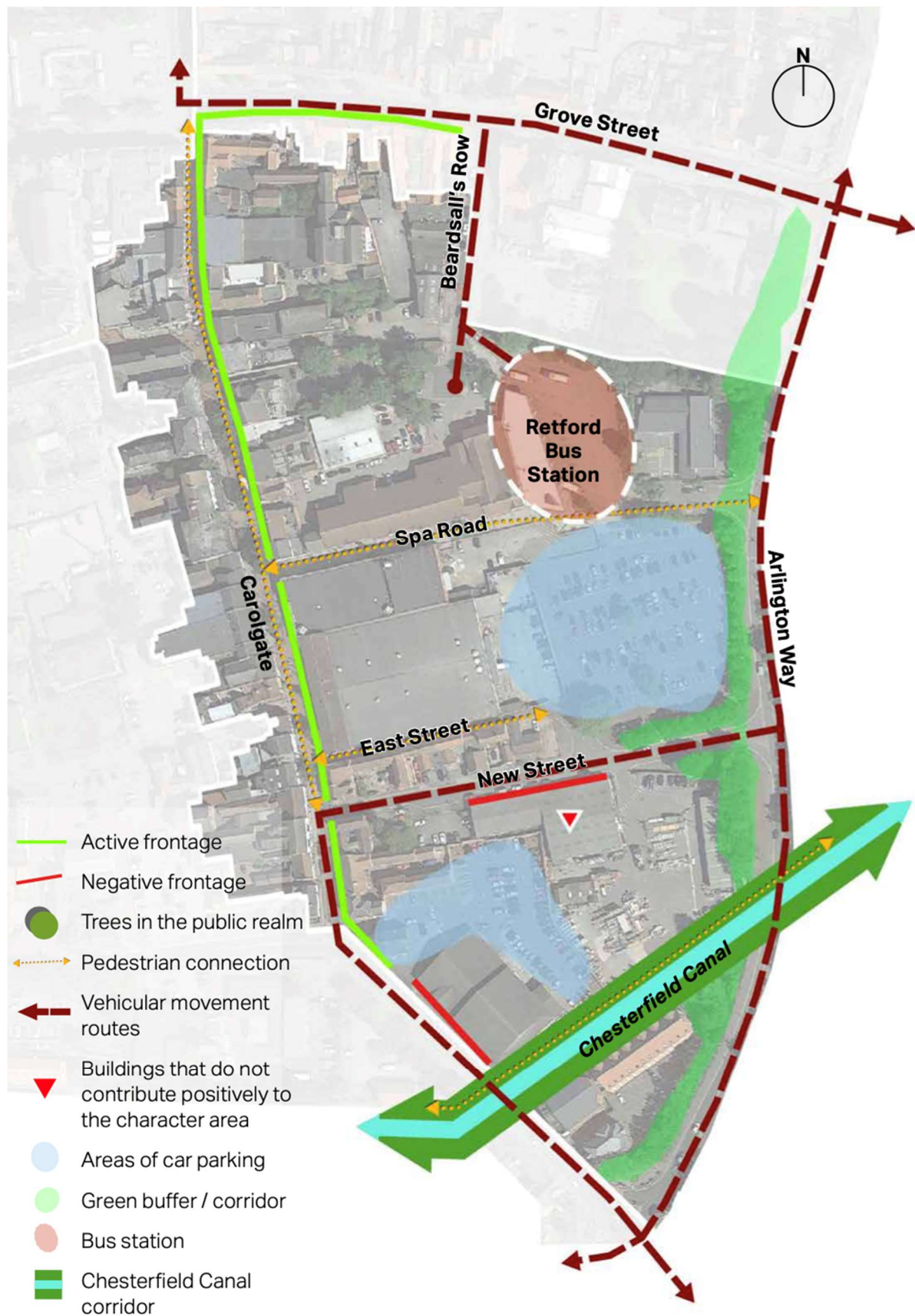
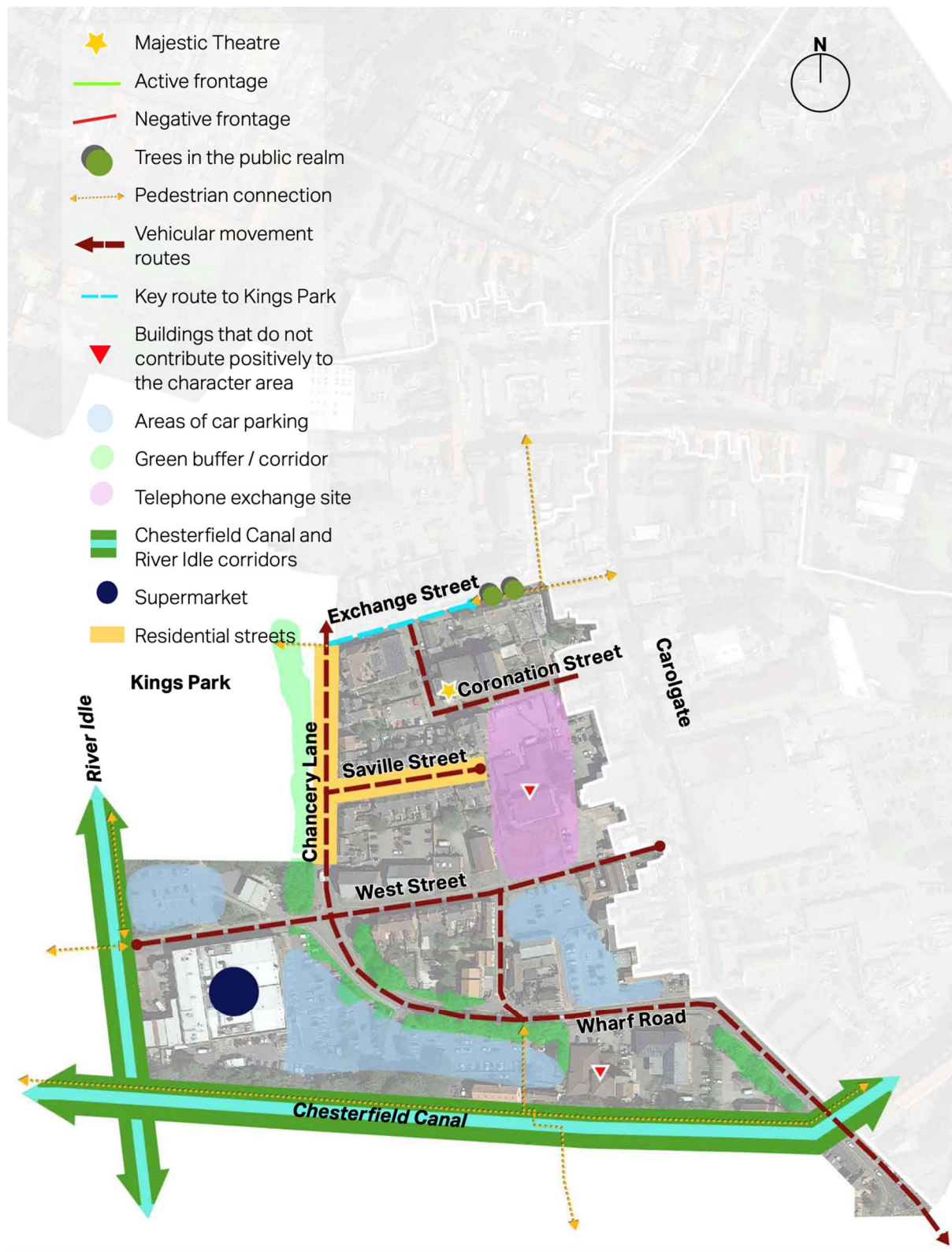


Figure A (6) Carolgate West Character Area



58 Development should reinforce the historic character of Retford Town Centre and proposals should respond to the historic context of the Town. Development should contribute positively to the experience visitors, local businesses and residents have of the Town Centre and be of a sustainable

design which provides measures to mitigate climate change (where possible and proportionate to the scale of development proposed.)

- 59 Visual coherence is a prevailing character, especially around The Square. Moving out of the central core the visual coherence is less dominant but common aspects remain.
- 60 Development along the Canal and River should make the most of this aspect and be orientated to provide active frontages looking onto it. This provides natural surveillance for the tow path and riverside walks making these more appealing walking routes.
- 61 Development in the vicinity of the River or Canal should ensure that gaps between buildings allow for glimpsed views of the River or Canal from within the Plan area.
- 62 A few buildings and boundaries have been identified as having a negative impact on these character areas. This is due to the wrong use of materials and/or a design which is at odds with neighbouring properties. These developments jar and erode the character.
- 63 This highlights opportunities for improvements where planning applications are submitted for development in this location.
- 64 The Design Codes are at section 4 of the Retford Design Code 2022. They are split into the following themes:

4.2 Design Codes

1 Building Heights & Roofs

2 Building Materials and Detailing

3 Frontages & Boundaries

4 Public Realm

5 Parking

Policy 2 Achieving Well Designed Places

- 1. Development proposals should demonstrate a high design quality that will contribute to the character areas as defined in the Retford Design Code 2022.**
- 2. In a proportionate way, depending on the nature of the development, proposals are required to demonstrate, where appropriate, that they have taken into account the Design Codes as set out in Section 4 of the Retford Design Code 2022. Proposals should;**
 - a) respond to the local character of the immediate area and provide a clear rationale for how this is taken into account in the design of the proposals;**
 - b) use street trees suitable for their location,**
 - c) use materials that reinforce the existing character as defined in the Retford Design Code 2022 (clay pantiles, Welsh Slate, Rosemary Tiles, red brick, Staffordshire Blue or yellow brick for detailing, painted render, stone window sills),**
 - d) have a roof form that reflects the existing roofs of adjacent or neighbouring buildings being hipped or gable (unless a flat or single story roof does not erode the character of area),**
 - e) have a scale and massing that reflects neighbouring properties,**
 - f) have window sizes and architectural detailing that reinforces the character area in which they are located,**
 - g) have a boundary treatment (low red brick walls, combined with planting, some railings) that is present between the building and the footway where possible,**
 - h) have a layout that maximises opportunities to integrate new development with the canal, river and public open spaces,**
 - i) use buildings, landscaping and planting to create well defined streets and attractive green spaces,**
 - j) have a landscaping scheme that maximises the use of wildlife beneficial plants and creates ecosystems that support birds and other wildlife,**
 - k) provide direct and safe access points for pedestrians and cyclists, and**
 - l) provide safe access to where off street parking and servicing arrangements have been provided.**

13 Significant Views

- 65 The tight grain of the streets that open out across public spaces, the high skyline of some buildings, the value of distant views of others, the contribution of green areas and trees and the presence of the Canal and River provide a range of key views.
- 66 The long views to impressive historic buildings and structures like the War Memorial in The Square, the Cannon and St Swithun's Church, provide a dramatic backdrop for the day-to-day activity of the Town. This contrasts with the glimpsed views into court yards and down alley ways between buildings that are also characteristic of the Town.
- 67 Members of the RTCNPG have undertaken a local analysis of key views, which form . The significant views are an important part of the historic character and distinctiveness of Retford Town Centre. These views identified on Map 3 and described in Appendix C have been identified due to their importance in reinforcing the historic character of the Town Centre (this includes long views to listed buildings and glimpses around buildings).

Map 3 Significant Views



Policy 3 Protecting Significant Views

- 1 Proposals are required to demonstrate how they will respond to, conserve and enhance the significant views, identified on Map 3 and described in Appendix C, insofar as this will protect the historic character of the Town Centre.**

14 Improving the Public Realm

- 68 The public realm is commonly defined as the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.
- 69 The significant areas of the public realm in the Town Centre are The Square, Carolgate and Cannon Square. Evidence from the public consultation, Design Code and Ecology Study identified multi benefits from improving these areas as follows:
- a) adaptation measures (e.g., planting) will assist in mitigating the effects of climate change,
 - b) providing amenity space for visitors and resident (seating and planting provides places to meet in the shade)
 - c) diversifying the Town Centre’s commercial offer (by creating spaces for more social activities) and
 - d) enhancing the attractiveness of the Town Centre as a destination (increasing dwell time increases visitor spend).

The Square

- 70 The Square is centrally located and the Georgian listed buildings provide a handsome backdrop to the market which is held there 3 days a week. On the other days and evenings, The Square is largely unused. Public consultation supported adaptations to The Square to enable the space to be used for other community activities with seating and places to eat and drink.
- 71 The Retford Design Code 2022 noted that space should be used flexibly and that changes to The Square should not restrict the use of the space.
- 72 A long-standing issue is the impact of vehicular movement along the eastern and northern edge of The Square. Market Place leads to Bridgegate and bisects the pedestrian area around Cannon Square from The Square. However, this is also an important access route that provides good visibility for some businesses and easy access for their customers and delivery vehicles.
- 73 The highway requirements for safe vehicular movement at 30 mph has resulted in
- a) a poor quality hard urban environment in this part of The Square
 - b) a car friendly rather than people friendly space in a prominent part of the Town
- 74 The photos below show the impact car movement has on the significant public space in the Town.



Photo 2: Market Place loops round the edge of The Square

75 The RTCNPG want to explore ways of making this space more attractive for pedestrians whilst providing flexibility for vehicular access. It is feasible that over the lifetime of the Plan the space currently taken up with two-way vehicle movements could be redesigned and incorporated into The Square increasing the opportunity to enhance the social, economic and environmental benefits The Square provides.

Policy 4a Improving The Square

- 1. Development within The Square that supports its use as a place for community events and other social activity suitable for a Town Centre location will be supported where proposals will not be detrimental to the significance of The Square's heritage assets and their setting, or have a significant adverse effect on;

 - a) the sense of openness of The Square,
 - b) residential and business use in the vicinity, or
 - c) the primary function of the space as a market.**
- 2. Proposals that prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement over vehicular movement through The Square are supported.**
- 3. Proposals that significantly reduce vehicular movement along Market Place to the bridge on Bridgegate to the minimum required for residential access and the satisfactory functioning of businesses are supported.**
- 4. Environmental improvements to the eastern and northern edge of The Square to reflect this reprioritisation of vehicle movement should use materials that complement the rest of The Square (York Stone or equivalent) and tree planting in accordance with RTCNP Policies 5 and 6.**

Cannon Square

76 Cannon Square is a triangular public space connecting from Market Place to St Swithun's Church. Vehicular movement through this space currently divides the Church and the public space at Cannon Square. Photo 3 shows that Cannon Square is in fact a cannon in the middle of a roundabout as Chapelgate loops round to Churchgate.



Photo 3: Cannon Square dominated by tarmac

77 Environmental improvements should link to the wider strategy for movement with parking bays interspersed with planting and repaving to reduce the width of the road using materials that reinforce the historic character of the area and reflect the proximity of Cannon Square to the main Square.

Policy 4b Improving Cannon Square

- 1. Proposals that enable safer pedestrian and cycle movement around Cannon Square are supported.**
- 2. Environmental improvements to the junction of Churchgate and Chapelgate (around the Cannon) should reflect this change in priority for cyclists and pedestrians and use paving materials that complement those used in The Square to reinforce the historic character of the area.**

Carolgate

- 78 Carolgate is the primary shopping area in Retford Town Centre. The Retford Design Code 2022 notes that the surfacing scheme along Carolgate is dated and of a lower quality than The Square. There is also a short section of Carolgate that allows vehicular movement to join New Street. *'This section of Carolgate feels disconnected from the main high street and is a less welcoming environment to pedestrians visiting the Town Centre.'*¹⁹
- 79 The photos below shows where the more recent block paving from The Square joins the older paving of Carolgate. The paving of Carolgate is of its time and does not (as effectively) reinforce the heritage quality of the Conservation Area.



Photo 4: Heritage paving off The Square



Photo 5: Lower quality paving on Carolgate

- 80 However, the paved street allows flexibility for cafes to put tables outside increasing the sense of hustle and bustle in this primary shopping street.

¹⁹ Retford Design Code 2022 page 37



Photo 6: Cafes put tables outside to attract trade

Policy 4c Improving Carolgate

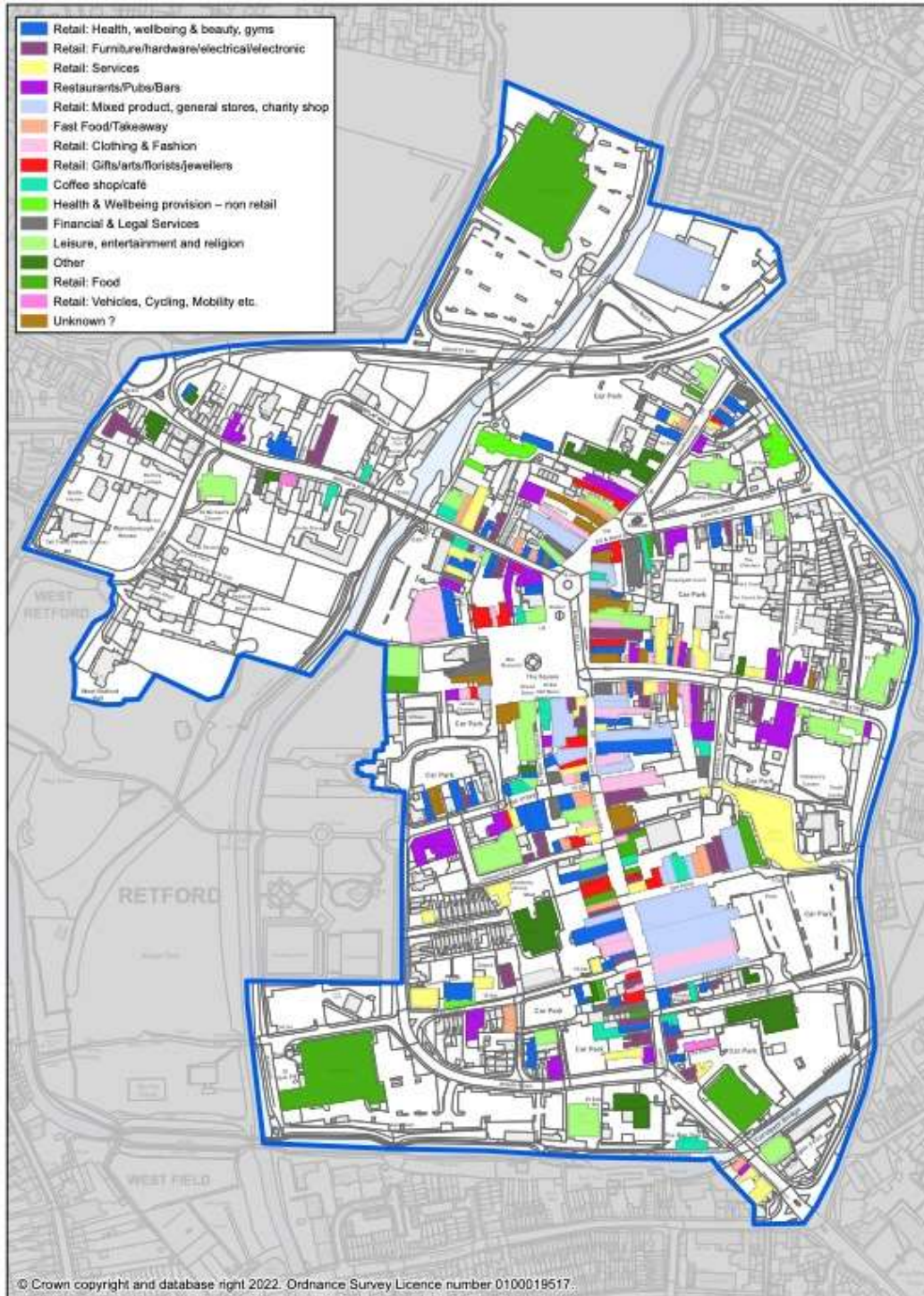
- 1. Proposals that reprioritise pedestrian movement over the vehicle movement at the southern end of Carolgate up to New Street are supported.**
- 2. Where planning permission is required, the paving scheme (and street furniture) should use materials and colours that reflect the historic character of the area. A scheme which extends the paving the whole length of Carolgate to where it joins with Wharf Road is supported.**

15 Maintaining the Vitality and Vibrancy of the Town Centre

Acceptable Uses in the Town Centre

81 Map 4 shows the variety of shops and services within the compact Town Centre.

Map 4 Businesses in Retford Town Centre



- 82 The RTCNPG wants to support businesses to locate and grow in the Town Centre. Map 4 shows the diversity of businesses in the Town Centre.
- 83 The RTCNPG want to ensure that the fabric of the Town is both visually attractive and works for its businesses. Well located, safe public car parks for customers, the ability to receive deliveries and the provision of good quality premises will help these local businesses to thrive.
- 84 The most significant way the planning system can support businesses in the Town Centre is by controlling the change of use from retail to other uses.
- 85 Section 19 on Housing below shows that residential uses also play a specific and important role within the Plan area, creating a mixed-use area with 24 hour natural surveillance. However, it is important that there remains a concentration of uses suitable for a Town Centre especially along Carolgate and along the other streets leading off The Square.
- 86 The BLP policy ST12 defines a primary shopping area for Retford Town Centre. This is shown on Map 5.

- 87 The Bassetlaw Retail and Leisure Study 2017 showed that for a primary shopping area to operate successfully, it is necessary for shops (in Class Ea²⁰) to group together in order to enable shoppers to make comparisons. BLP Policy ST12 aims to direct most retail development to the primary shopping areas in order to retain the existing retail function within easy walking distance, maintain vitality and viability, avoid the area being diluted by too many non-retail uses and contribute to a stronger town centre. It also ensures that other main town centre uses such as leisure, offices and secondary shopping take place within the wider town centre boundary and complement the retail focus within the primary shopping area.
- 88 The RTCNPG support this approach and Policy 5a reflects this policy approach for Retford.
- 89 Policy 5a seeks to ensure that within the Primary Shopping Area, retail uses are promoted and protected. Maintaining the cluster of retail uses should result in fewer empty units. The conversion of retail to other commercial uses within the same Use Class however does not require planning permission (in addition to retail, Use Class E comprises financial services, cafes and restaurants, offices, research and development, and industrial processes).
- 90 The NPPF defines main town centre uses as: 'Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)'..
- 91 Covid saw an increase in the number of premises within the Town Centre changing to non-retail use but within the Primary Shopping Area such changes of uses were not at ground floor level. Policy 5a focuses on protecting ground floor Ea uses (Class Ea is the Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food.)
- 92 The RTCNPG are seeking to protect the retail offer at ground floor level in the Primary Shopping Area. Where planning permission is required, the conversion of ground floor retail units to non-retail uses within the Town Centre is supported only where the proposal increases the provision of services and facilities for the wider community. Across the Town Centre, including land outside the Primary Shopping Area, it is essential to bring vacant properties back into community or commercial use as they have an adverse effect on the visual amenity and commercial viability of the Town Centre as a whole.
- 93 Businesses that open in the evening are important, contributing to activity in the evening for residents and attracting people to the Town Centre to spend money when it might otherwise be quiet.

Policy 5a Acceptable Uses in the Town Centre

- 1. Within the Primary Shopping Area, as defined on Map 5, where planning permission is required, applications for retail development at ground floor level within class Ea will be supported.**

(Continued overleaf)

²⁰ See use classes order at <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes> Class Ea is the Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food

- 2. The design of retail frontages should take into account the Retford Design Code 2022. Proposals within the Town Centre, but outside of the Primary Shopping Area, for non-retail uses at ground floor level will only be supported where they can demonstrate enhancement of the vitality of the Town Centre. These include, entertainment, cultural, leisure and community uses, such as spaces for youth training or community learning or pubs to support the economy.**

Shop Fronts

- 94 The visual coherence of the Town Centre is one of its attributes making it an attractive place to shop and live. The design of shop frontages should make a positive contribution to the sense of place and local character and be in accordance with the Bassetlaw Shopfront and Signage Guide 2014²¹ and the Retford Design Code 2022.
- 95 The Retford Design Code 2022 identified several buildings and shop fronts in the Town Centre that have a negative value in that they do not contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. It is important that all development proposals and especially those for shop fronts and/or within the core shopping area (along Carolgate, Bridgegate and in The Square) reinforce the visual harmony and heritage character.
- 96 The policy below sets out criteria for how new shop frontages should be designed. It includes details of proportion, glazing and street displays as well as how the frontage will be secured when the premises are closed.

Policy 5b Shop Fronts

Where planning permission is required for the refurbishment or replacement of existing shop frontages and the installation of new shop fronts, proposals must demonstrate how they have taken into account the Retford Design Code 2022 and Bassetlaw Shopfront and Signage Guide 2014 and considered and addressed the following design criteria:

- a) consideration of the architectural styles of adjoining buildings and shop fronts and the wider street scene, including where appropriate, contemporary design,**
- b) facias should be of a scale proportionate to the rest of the building; they should not obscure windows and other architectural detailing,**
- c) the subdivision and proportions of windows should relate to the character of the building and its neighbours,**
- d) signage should respect the character of the individual building and adjoining properties,**
- e) solid shutters will not be supported, and security measures should maintain a level of transparency to and from the street, such as laminated glazing, lattice grilles and perforated shutters,**
- f) projecting boxes and external shutters are also considered to be inappropriate and will be resisted.**

²¹ See <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/2122/spd-shopfronts-signage-approved-1st-july-2014.pdf>

Supporting the Creative Industries

- 97 The Town is a growing centre for artists and other creative industries. There are art galleries and art clubs in the Town, a volunteer run Art Hub, a monthly Craft Market and annual music and comedy events as well as two theatres.
- 98 Below are the murals around the Town. The Masterplan (page 30) identified the opportunity to use the wall space under Amcott Way Bridge for art works - this is an aspiration see Appendix A. The execution of further public murals, that depict the history of the area, will be welcomed and supported.



Photos 7-10: Murals showing the history of the Town

- 99 Methods to foster the creation of business start-ups and to help them evolve would be welcomed, allowing students in schools, as well as hobbyist and career changers, to have opportunities to present their talents and sell their produce. This will enable them to start new businesses and careers in the Town helping to enliven the Town Centre.

100 Additional performance spaces within the public realm would be welcomed where this can be safely accommodated within the Design Codes and Health and Safety guidelines. This is an aspiration see Appendix A.

Improving Broadband and Mobile Connectivity

101 The importance of being able to access on line services has increased rapidly for working, for accessing health services and for shopping. The pandemic saw a huge rise in the numbers working from home. Whilst people have returned to the office, hybrid working, with a mix of home and office working is now more the norm.

102 For residents, the growing desire to work from home is being driven by digital technology, an ageing population, a reluctance to commute, increased awareness about the environmental benefits of homeworking and an increase in self-employment generally. The covid pandemic has rapidly accelerated this move to online services.

103 Service within the Plan area is generally good but not everyone can access the broadband speeds they need. Where this is due to a lack of the necessary infrastructure this Plan supports the roll out of technology like up grading the fibre network and the 4G and 5G wireless communication which supports cellular data networks.

104 The Government recently (December 2022) amended Building Regulations to require all new development to be fitted with infrastructure to accommodate gigabit broadband. This is an important step in enhancing future accessibility to broadband but will only apply to new build²².

105 Policy ST55 of the BLP requires all development proposals to enable full fibre broadband connection to the premises or any other technology as may become available and for all development to make provision for the installation of cabling within each dwelling or unit as well as a fully enabled connection of the developed area to the full communications network.

106 Policy 5c reflects the local significance of this matter to the Retford business community and residents. For the Town Centre to continue to thrive full fibre broadband and mobile connectivity is essential.

Policy 5c Improving Broadband and Mobile Connectivity

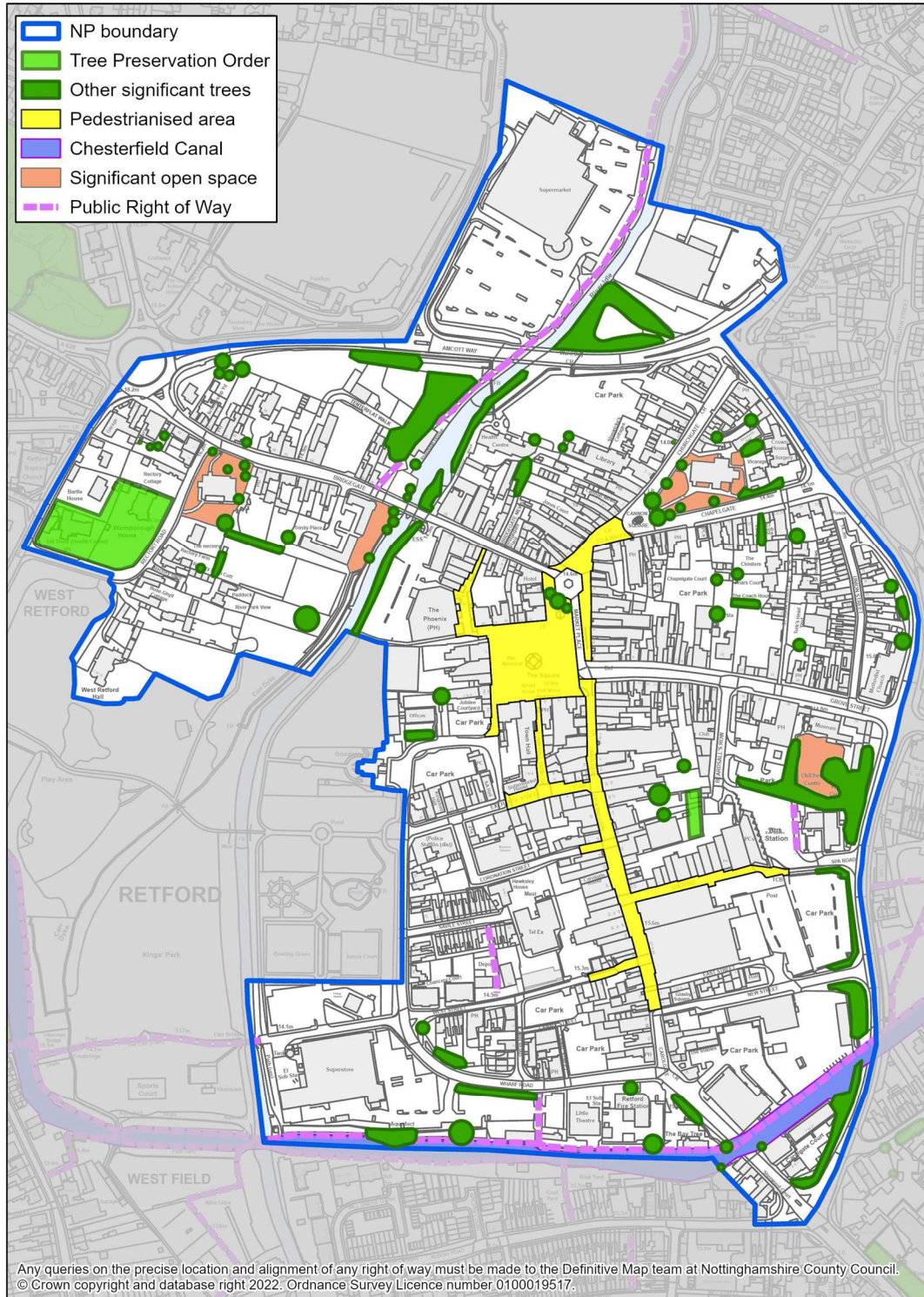
- 1. All new development should enable full fibre broadband connection to the premises. Where it can be demonstrated that full fibre to premises is not practical or viable, then alternative technologies such as super-fast fibre or community-based networks should be provided.**
- 2. Masts and associated infrastructure should be located to minimise impact on the historic character of the Plan area.**

²² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-of-homeowners-and-tenants-to-get-better-access-to-faster-broadband>

16 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

107 Map 6 shows the existing landscape designations within the Plan area.

Map 6 Landscape Designations



108 An important focus of the RTCNP is to encourage a more coherent landscape planting and management regime. This 'Greening of the Town' will increase the number of trees, planting and green spaces and will provide multi benefits. It will:

- a) create a more attractive place to live, work and socialise to attract greater uses to the Town Centre and ultimately support and grow new businesses,
- b) increase habitats for wildlife and create wildlife corridors connecting to the parks and canal and river corridors,
- c) increase areas where water can naturally soak away,
- d) create more places for residents and visitors to dwell,
- e) extend the time visitors want to spend in the Town Centre increases their spend.

Greening the Streets

109 The NPPF highlights the important contribution trees can make to the character and quality of the environment²³. Trees enrich the quality of the Plan area and mature trees have significant biodiversity value. It is important to use the right tree for the right place. For example, smaller-canopied species should be deployed where a tree is desirable but spatial constraints forbid a forest-sized species. Native species are desirable but this is not prescriptive and not all suit this locality – species diversity is important and is a way of building climate change resilience and disease resistance.

110 Policy ST48 of the BLP identifies tree planting as a Council priority to address climate change and proposes 5 trees per new dwelling or 1,000sqm of non-residential floorspace.²⁴

111 Analysis of the existing biodiversity in the Plan area is show graphically in the Ecology Brief. The map below taken from the Ecology Brief²⁵ shows where there are areas of concrete and tarmac only. The Ecology Brief proposed an Eco bridge connecting Kings Park on the West of the Town to Spa Common on the East of the Town.

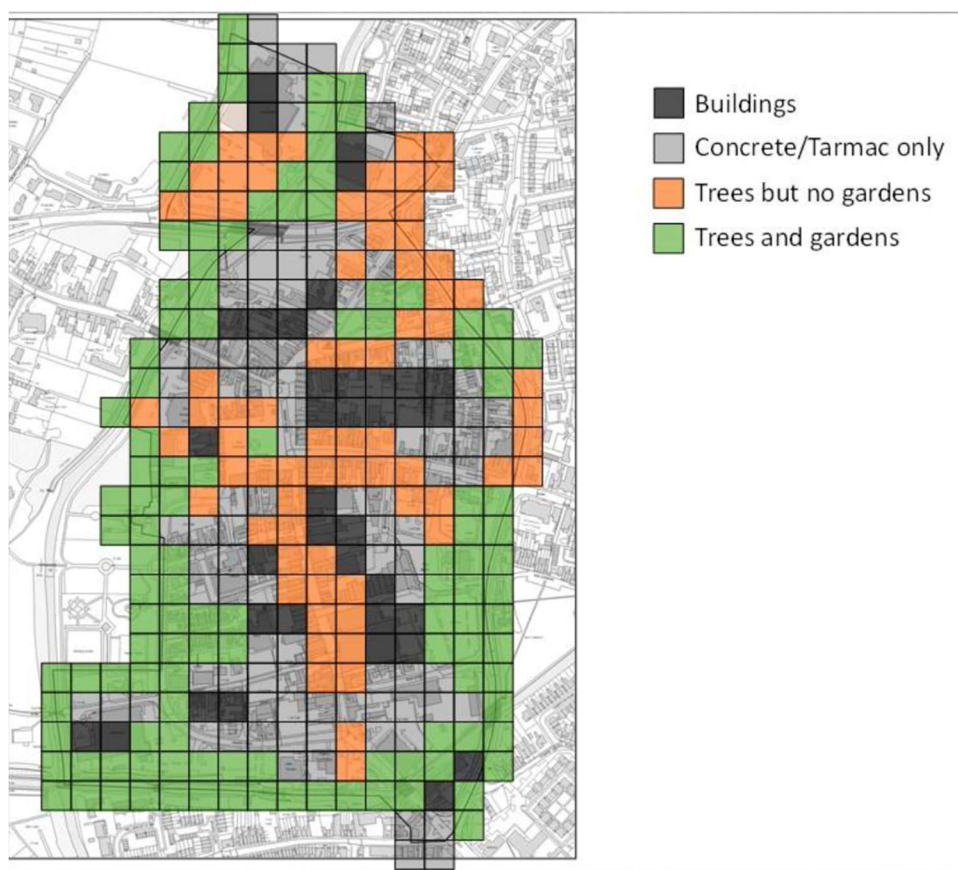


Photo 11: Showing how street trees and green areas soften the urban spaces on New Street

²³ See NPPF para 136

²⁴ See Local Plan paras 10.1.11 to 10.1.14

²⁵ The document is on the RTCNPG web site at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpng/supporting-documents>

Map 7 Showing the concentration of trees and other planting in the Town

112 Based on this initial work EMEC Ecologists were commissioned to provide a detailed analysis of the existing ecological value of the Plan area and to identify the opportunities for significantly enhancing the biodiversity within the Town. These are both on the supporting documents page of the Retford Business Forum web site ²⁶

113 Consideration should be given to the suitability of trees and their location in the Town. Some of the trees on Carolgate block the views from the CCTV demonstrating the importance of planning carefully the location of both. Trees and CCTV are important and necessary to make Retford Town Centre a pleasant and safe place but at present at certain times of the year a conflict exists.

114 The provision of additional street trees is encouraged across the Town. The Retford Design Code 2022 notes that these should be of a species which is tolerant to urban environments. Priority should be given to providing green spaces and planting trees in areas identified as having high levels of hard surfacing. The Retford Design Code also encourages the replacement of some hard surfaces with greener or softer surfaces which work more positively with the environment.

115 There should be a strong tree network across the Town, providing cooling and shade and enhancing biodiversity. Species rich areas of landscaping such as grassland or meadow are also encouraged. Interventions that support nature such as bird boxes, bat boxes and bee bricks is also supported across the Town.

116 There is community, national, District and local evidence to support an approach that ensures there is not a loss of tree canopy and where possible a net gain. This may mean planting more than one tree to replace a mature tree (where it had a large tree canopy). Where trees are

²⁶ For the full report <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpng/supporting-documents>

removed as part of a development scheme they should be replaced in line with the recommendations in this Plan and supporting studies.

117 Over 50% of the Plan area is in Flood Zone 2 or 3, simply increasing the planting of shrubs and trees and increasing areas that are grassed rather than paved, will provide ways to capture the water and let it soak into the ground. This is covered in relation to flood risk in policy 12.

Policy 6a Greening the Streets

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate they:**
 - a) retain existing trees (e.g. the trees on Carolgate and on The Square) and hedges or where this is not possible replace them using species identified in the EMEC Ecology Assessment and the Ecology Study Report;***
 - b) include a landscape scheme that recognises and, where possible, enhances the significance of the existing trees and green/soft boundaries,**
 - c) reflect the need to enhance the greenery along through routes and residential frontages,**
 - d) contribute towards making Retford a Greener Town in accordance with the actions identified in the Ecology Report and Map 8a and 8b.**

***the location of replacement trees may be on site, or elsewhere in the neighbourhood plan area, where it contributes to the street scene in accordance with the Retford Design Code and will be subject to agreement with BDC and the landowner.**

- 2. Any new highway infrastructure proposals should, where feasible:**
 - a) retain existing trees and landscaping and grass verges; and**
 - b) include street trees and grass verges in new streets; and**
 - c) achieve a net gain of tree canopy, as part of the landscaping scheme (of a species in accordance with the findings in the Ecology Assessment and Ecology Study Report).**



Photo 12: Looking Across Market Square the trees provide shade and soften the urban space



Photo 13: Carolgate – the trees soften the pedestrianised street and provide shade but the canopy blocks the CCTV.

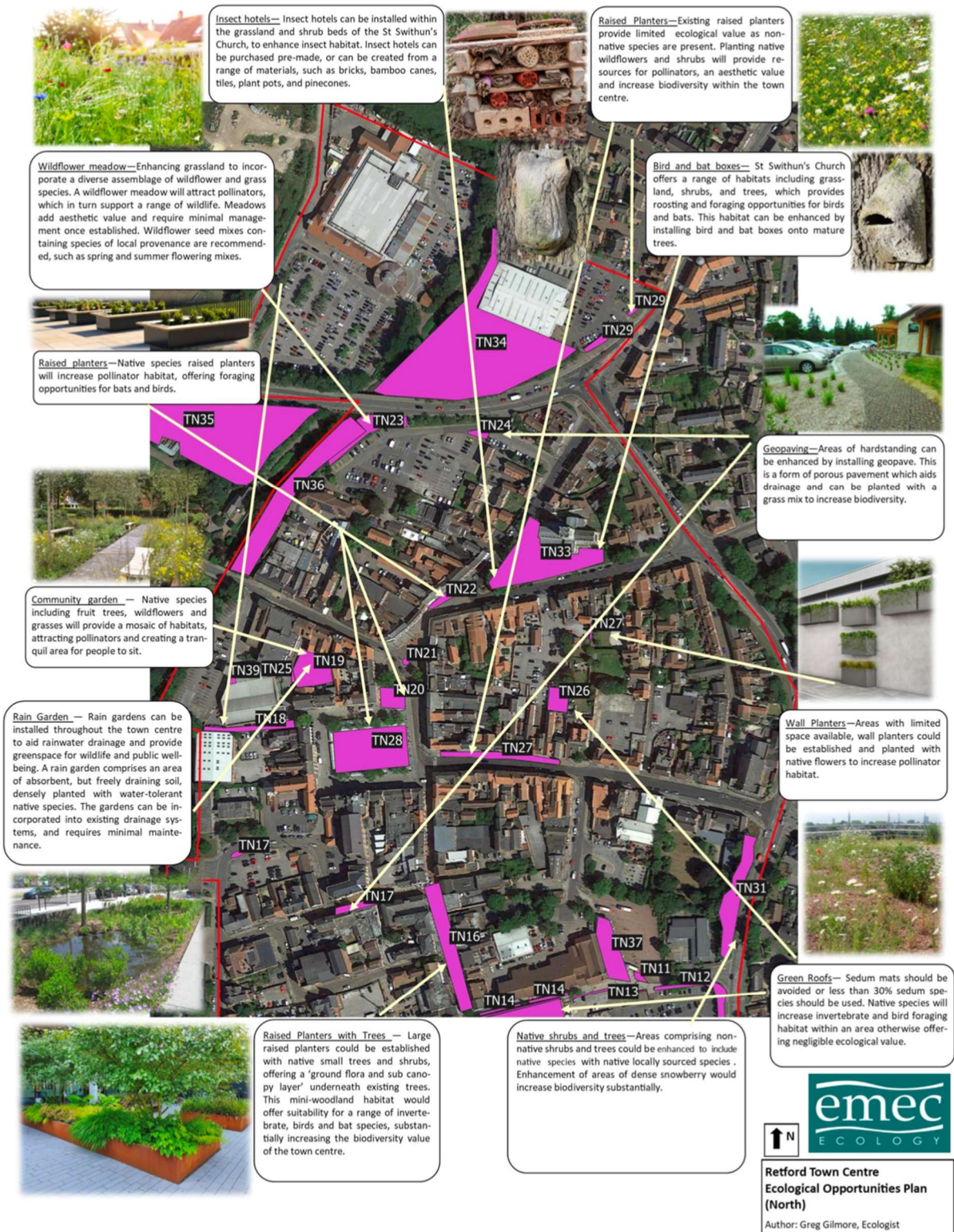
118 Whilst the Plan area is, of its nature, an urban space, the BLP identifies the River Idle and Chesterfield Canal corridors as 'main corridors' with 30m buffer zones reflecting their ecological value (policy ST37). The Chesterfield Canal is a designated Local Wildlife Site. Increasing the opportunity for habitat within the Town Centre will provide stepping stones to these important wildlife corridors.

119 Map 8a and 8b below are from the Ecology Assessment produced by EMEC. Whilst many of the proposals do not require planning permission, they demonstrate the potential that exists for significantly enhancing the biodiversity and climate resilience of the Plan area. The conflict with the trees on Carolgate and the CCTV demonstrates the importance of having a masterplan approach to landscaping to ensure it achieves the intended benefits. An aspiration is to seek funding and to work with landowners and local groups to deliver some of these projects.

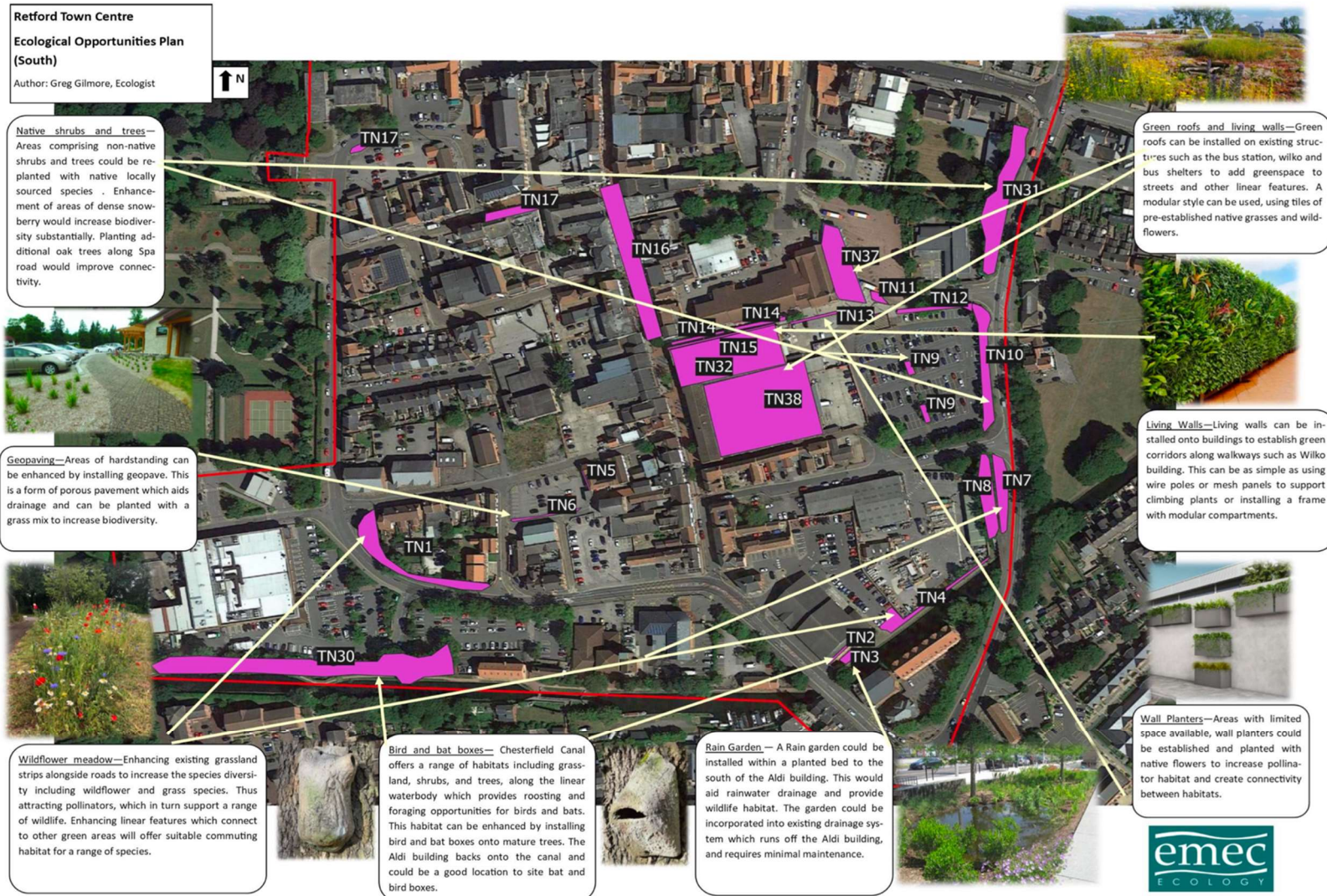
120 The specific initiatives are listed as community actions.

121 A follow up Ecology Study Report provided further detailed analysis of the existing biodiversity in the Plan area. (Both Ecology Reports are on the RTCNPG web site).

Map 8a Ecological Opportunities North



Map 8b Ecological Opportunities South



122 Enhancement measures should contribute to the delivery of the actions in the EMEC Ecology Assessment highlighted in Figure 3 and 4 and may include:

- a) planting wild flower meadows and strips,
- b) planting appropriate trees and shrubs, especially species that provide good berry or nectar sources,
- c) encouraging the creation of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), (e.g., rain gardens, pond and wetland creation and geopaving) in new schemes and 'retrofitting' where appropriate,
- d) the installation of habitat features (i.e. nest boxes) to benefit all bats and bird species of conservation concern, such as swifts, swallow, house martin and house sparrow,
- e) planting and management regimes along the River Idle and Chesterfield Canal corridors that increase biodiversity.

Policy 6b Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should provide at least 10% net biodiversity gain in line with the applicable legislative requirements. Exceedance of this is encouraged. Any such measures should be targeted to benefit local conservation priorities as identified in the EMEC Ecology Assessment.**
- 2. Development proposals which would have significant negative ecological impacts will not be supported unless appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures are incorporated in the overall development package.**
- 3. As appropriate to their scale nature and location, development proposals should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems which enhance biodiversity and that are designed to address the particular circumstances of the site concerned.**



Photo 14: The River Idle from Carr Bridge, West Street

17 Improving the Canal and River Corridors (Blue Infrastructure)

- 123 The presence of water within the Plan area is a defining characteristic affecting how the area has grown and is an important attribute in continuing to attract residents and visitors to the Town. This is the Town's blue infrastructure.
- 124 The Chesterfield Canal runs along the edge of Asda supermarket, Retford Little Theatre, the Fire Station, and Aldi supermarket. The approach to this waterway is unannounced and for the most part visitors would not know it was there. The River Idle runs between Morrisons and Home Bargains and is similarly unannounced. These watercourses could be character defining if future development alongside the canal and river ensured continuous public access (this is not always the case, for example the walk along the River Idle to Kings Park is through Sports Direct Car Park).
- 125 Previous development along the canal and river corridors has not always been sympathetic to their location near an important waterway. For example, Asda backs onto the River Idle and presents a large blank wall to the river. There are other sites along the River and Canal which over time may be redeveloped. It is important that future development within the Plan area assists in the delivery of an uninterrupted and attractive pedestrian and cycle corridor through the Town. This has a range of benefits including encouraging walking and cycling and will enhance the Town as a place to spend leisure time as well as to shop.
- 126 It should be noted that the Environment Agency requires the Retford Beck and the River Idle to have an 8-metre easement from the riverbank.
- 127 Development is required to demonstrate at least a 10% biodiversity net gain. Net gain should occur on the site and only in exceptional circumstances will off-site contributions be appropriate. It is expected that layout and landscaping schemes will take every opportunity to create or enhance connections with the Canal and River corridors.
- 128 Access to and along the Canal and River is important to local people with well used footpaths, and cycle routes along the Canal towpath and part of the River Idle. These routes should be protected and where possible enhanced. Development in the vicinity of the River and Canal may provide opportunities to improve access.

Policy 7 Improving the Canal and River Corridors

1. **To allow access for maintenance as well as providing an ecological corridor, development proposals along the Canal and River corridors should incorporate an 8m easement (a buffer zone free from proposed development and hardstanding.)**
2. **Development adjacent to the River Idle or Chesterfield Canal should demonstrate how it has considered its location next to a waterway and should provide an active frontage to the Canal or River where possible.**
3. **Development adjacent to the River Idle or Chesterfield Canal should contribute to the delivery of a waterside walkway to create a continuous walking/cycling route along the Canal and River through the Plan area. Where appropriate, for example where development increases footfall, this could be secured via developer contributions.**

18 Significant Green Areas

129 Within the Plan Area there are Significant Green Areas that have a variety of important functions. Some have been identified as having a wildlife value (see the Ecology Assessment and Ecology Study Report), others provide an important visual contrast, with the greenery of the trees and shrubs contrasting with the typically red brick of the Conservation Area. Green areas can also make a contribution to climate mitigation by providing drainage and tree planting.

130 These areas vary in size and form from the Cemetery around St Swithun's to the grass verges at the end of West Street and Wharf Road. In combination, they soften the otherwise hard landscaping of the urban built form.

131 These Significant Green Areas were highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal produced by BDC in 2012 and identified as 'landscape features' that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.²⁷

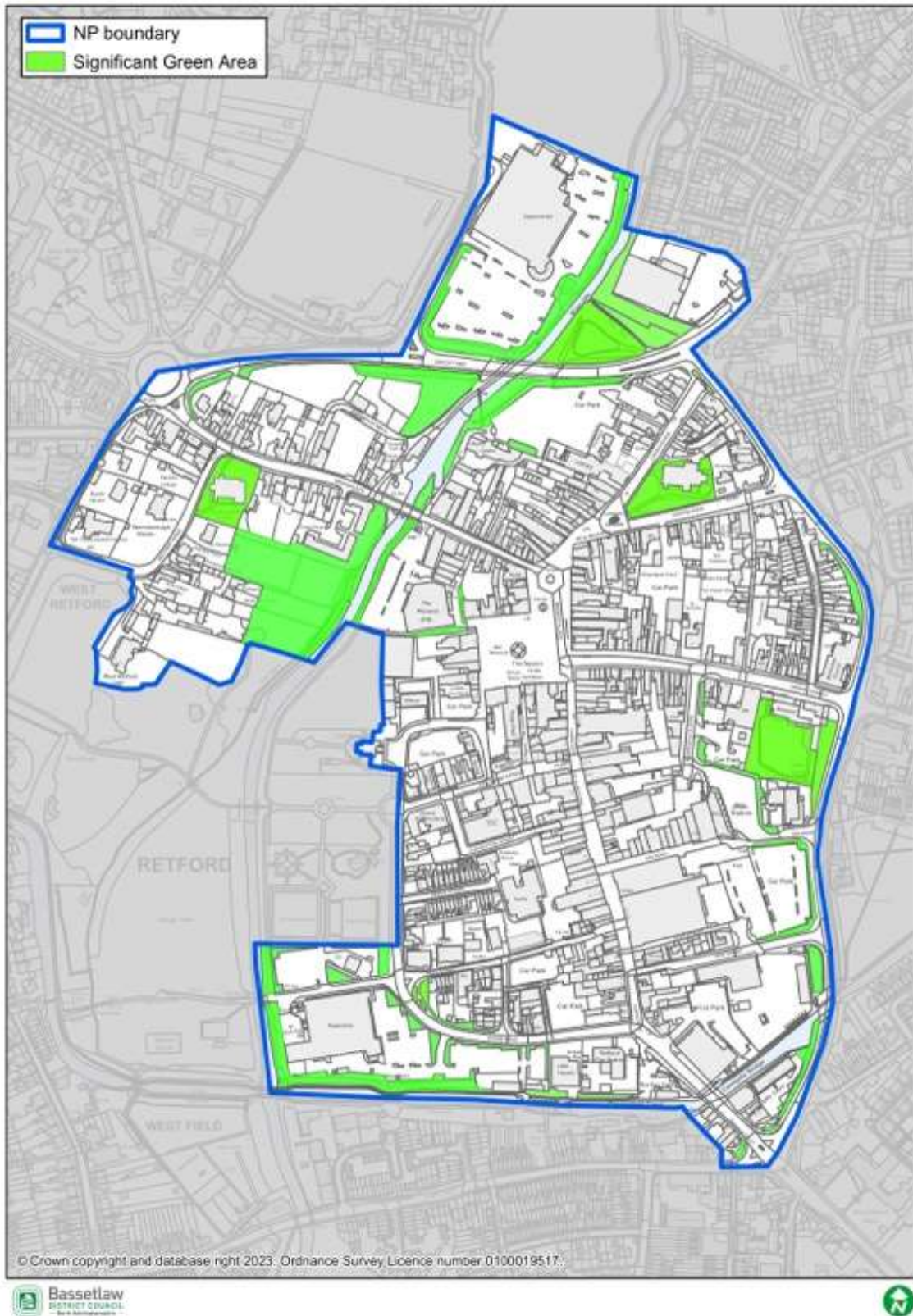
132 Map 9 shows the Significant Green Areas that the RTCNPG consider are character forming and a valued landscape feature within the townscape. The Significant Green Areas provide multi benefits for wildlife, climate change mitigation and contribute to the character of the Town Centre. The identification of Significant Green Areas is not intended to be a bar to development but to provide more information about the variety of the townscape and to identify the pockets of green spaces that are valued by the community. Local people acknowledge that development may take place within them, but where possible the layout of development should minimise its impact on these green areas to demonstrate an understanding of the value of these Significant Green Areas to the wider setting of the Conservation Area.



Photo 15: The Cemetery around St Swithun's is identified as a Significant Green Area

²⁷ See Maps 27, 39, 45, 53 at <https://data.bassetlaw.gov.uk/conservation-area-appraisals/retford/>

Map 9 Significant Green Areas



Policy 8 Significant Green Areas

1. In the Significant Green Areas shown on Map 9 development will be limited to that which maintains the sense of openness and landscape value (visually and ecologically). Proposals will be required to demonstrate how the scheme has minimised the visual and ecological impact on the Significant Green Area.
2. Exceptions will only be considered favourably where the benefits of development to the functioning of the Town Centre significantly and demonstrably outweigh the adverse impacts.

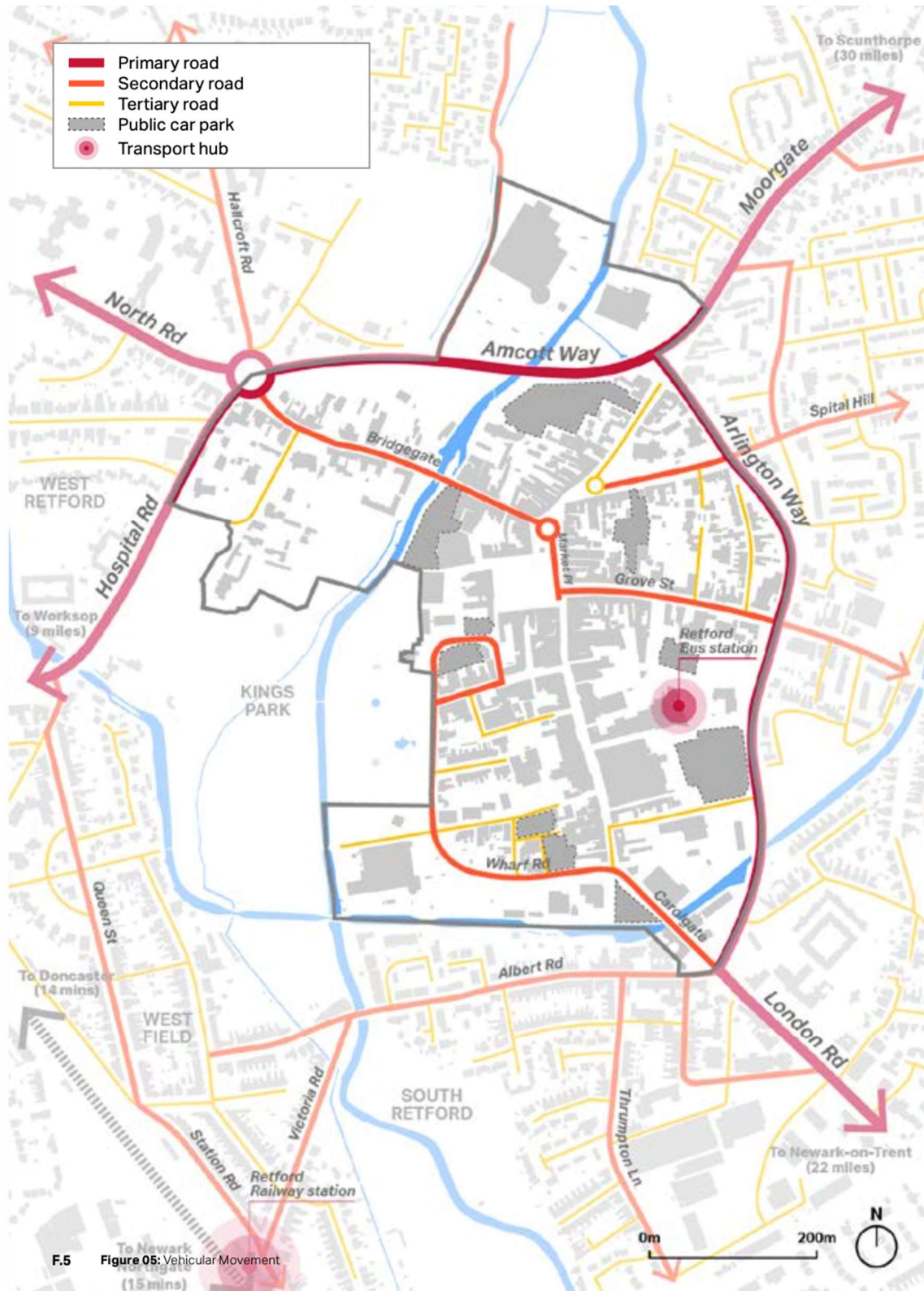


Photo 16: Green spaces along New Street off Arlington Way provide an attractive entrance to the street

19 Getting Around the Town Centre

133 Maps 10a and 10c (extracted from the Masterplan) show vehicular and pedestrian movement around the Town Centre.

Map 10a Vehicular Movement

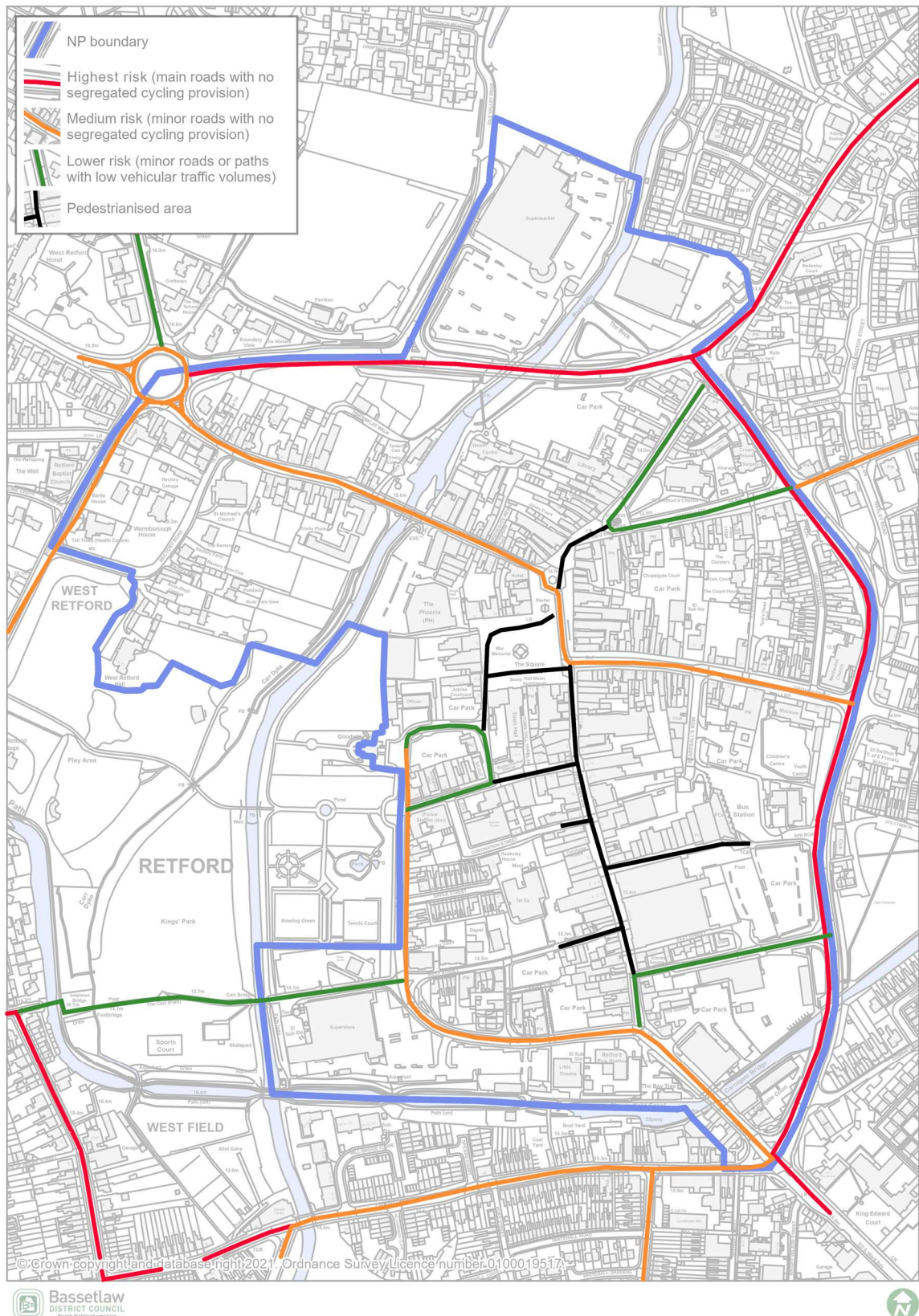


- 134 Much of the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan area is bounded by primary vehicular routes; the northern edge by the A620 (Amcott Way) and Hospital Road and the eastern edge by the A638 (Arlington Way). Together these routes compose a ring road around Retford.
- 135 The Town's radial routes include Spital Hill, Carolgate (southern portion), Grove Street, and Bridgegate. These routes serve the north west and eastern boundaries of the Neighbourhood Plan area due to the location of the River Idle and Chesterfield Canal to the west of the Town Centre.
- 136 The topography of the Town and its compactness means that accessibility is relatively good. However, there are improvements that could be made to texture the paving and repair or replace kerbs that would improve access for those with mobility issues. The RTCNPG are keen to make the Town Centre accessible for all.
- 137 There is now an online accessibility guide for Retford which provides detailed information on the accessibility of car parks, public buildings, health services and community venues. There are 29 entries, this can be found at <https://www.accessable.co.uk/bassetlaw-district>. The web site should help people to plan their visits and feel more confident that they can access a range of services and facilities in the Town. A pdf report of the accessibility of the Retford car parks, public buildings etc has been usefully produced and is available on the RBF web site at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpng/supporting-documents>

Improving Cycling and Walking

- 138 Improving active travel reduces car usage, improves health and well-being and represents sustainable development. The topography of the Town Centre and wider urban area is relatively flat and the Town Centre is compact making it an ideal place to encourage more cycling and walking.
- 139 Map 10b is an assessment of the hazardous nature of the roads within and that bound the Town Centre. Traffic volumes and the speed of traffic make the major roads that run around the Plan area suitable only for the most confident of cyclists.

Map 10b Assessment of Safety of Roads in the Plan Area for Cyclists (produced by a local cyclist and member of the RTCNPG)²⁸



²⁸ See also Grey to Green: Retford Walking and Cycling Audit at <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/6319/retford-walking-and-cycling-audit-r-infrastructure.pdf>

140 Map 10c from the Masterplan identifies existing pedestrian routes.

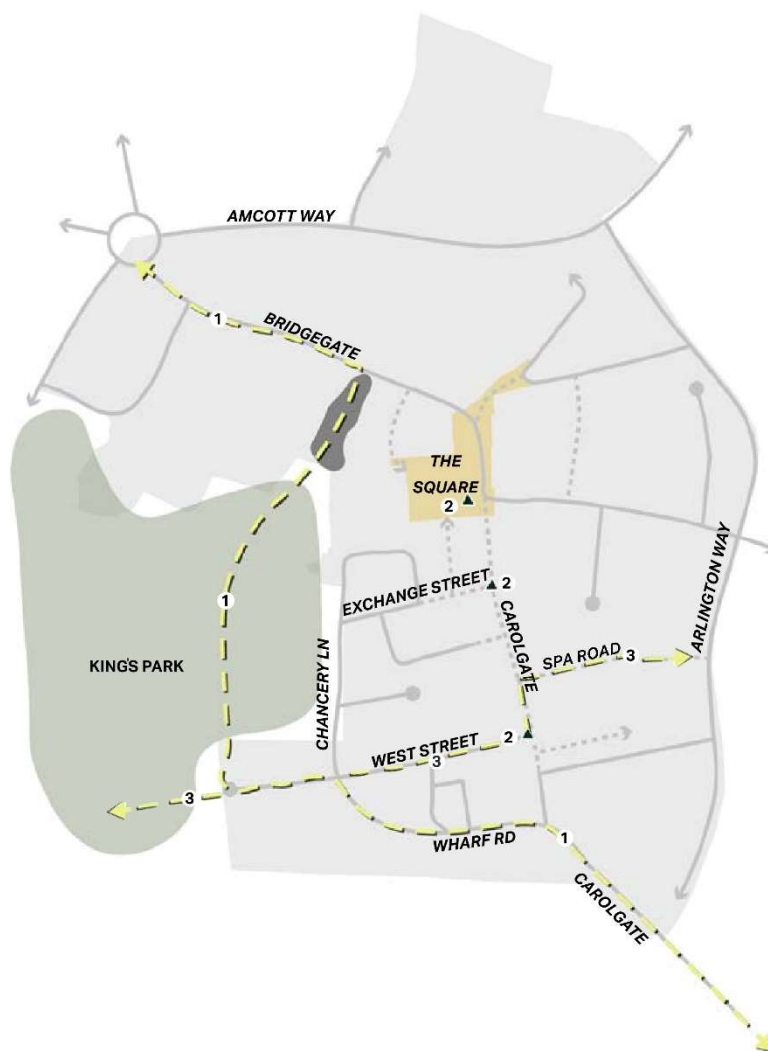
Map 10c Pedestrian Movement



F.7 Figure 07: Pedestrian Movement & Sustainable Transport

- 141 The Square and Carolgate are pedestrianised zones, with the exception of service vehicles and disability access. Carolgate is therefore the Neighbourhood Plan area's principal pedestrian corridor given it is Retford's main retail street.
- 142 There are also several pedestrianised/partially pedestrianised streets that splinter off from Carolgate connecting to nearby areas. These include Exchange Street that provides connections to Kings Park and Spa Road that connects to further retail and Retford Bus Station.
- 143 Other key pedestrian routes include the Chesterfield Canal towpath which lies just within the southern edge of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Unlike the Chesterfield Canal, the River Idle's footpath is somewhat disjointed due to a number of gaps in the path. A short stretch within the Neighbourhood Plan area runs between Bridgegate and Kings Park.
- 144 The Masterplan (page 30) also identifies the opportunity and benefit of providing a pedestrian route on the east side of River Idle underneath Amcott Way Bridge allowing access to Churchgate Car Park without crossing Amcott Way.
- 145 The principal obstacle is the lack of adequate joined-up cycling infrastructure and dedicated routes. Many people are deterred from making the modal shift from motorised travel, even for short distances, by the perceived risks of using busy roads.
- 146 The Canal towpath is not well maintained for cycling and is of limited use as the access points to it are difficult to negotiate on a bike. Encouraging more people to cycle into the Town Centre requires the existing network of cycle routes to be extended.
- 147 The RTCNPG supports the improvement of cycle routes and the reprioritising of some tertiary streets to complement the existing provision and extend it to form a cohesive network within the Town Centre and linking to neighbouring communities.
- 148 The absence of a north-south link is the single most significant obstacle to cycling in the Town as the pedestrianisation of Carolgate, lack of cycle paths along Arlington Way and Prohibition of cycling across The Square and through Kings Park, means cyclists have no alternative but to use Arlington Way (A638), which is a busy road. Nottinghamshire County Council supports the growth of active travel and, along with other highway authorities in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, has adopted the D2N2LEP Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The proposal to create/improve north-south cycle connections in Retford is acknowledged in the LCWIP.
- 149 Representation from the local cycling community advises that a preferred route would be between Bridgegate and Chancery Lane, via the Bridgegate Centre car park and a new path along the eastern fringe of Kings Park to the Sir Stuart Goodwin Hall. The masterplan identified the opportunity to create such a north-south route (which would go through Kings Park which is outside of the Plan area). They would also like to see a reassignment of the space between Chapelgate and the Market Place around the Cannon to designate a cycle route to the Market Place. Map 10c shows an indicative cycle route that would provide this north to south connection.
- 150 It is noticeable that the Public Right of Way network is very limited in the Town Centre, see Map 10c above. An improved pedestrian experience is suggested by extending the east-west green corridor from Spa Road across Carolgate and along West Street. This could also be a valuable cycling route (with a need to dismount along Carolgate.)

Map 10d Suggested non-vehicular routes (extracted from the Town Centre Masterplan, with additions)



1.
The provision of a dedicated cycle way through the Town Centre.

A potential route for this could connect cycle lanes to the north and south of the town centre via Bridgegate, King's Park, Wharf Road and Carolgate. This would require reconfiguration of the car park to the south of Bridgegate.

2.
The upgrading and increased provision of cycle parking facilities across the Town Centre.

3.
The provision of a clear east-west route across the Town Centre connecting to King's Park.

This route is walkable at present but would benefit from improved signage and street design and, if possible, more street trees, to enhance legibility and the user experience. The route could also be appropriate for cycling, subject to the need to dismount in the pedestrianised areas.

Policy 9 Extending the Footpath and Cycle Routes

Development that enables the extension of the cycle and footpath network is supported, in particular;

- a) changes to the road layout, crossing points, pavements and street scene that make active movement routes safer and more direct (for example to access the Market Place from Chapelgate);
- b) the provision of a north south route from Bridgegate to Chancery Lane;
- c) work to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity between Spa Road and West Street,
- d) work to provide a pedestrian route on the east side of the River Idle underneath Amcott Way Bridge allowing access to Churchgate Car Park.

20 Housing in the Town Centre

152 The housing market of the Town Centre is not self-contained but plays a particular functional role in relationship with wider Retford and the surrounding rural area. A Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned for the RTCNP which provides a valuable and unique analysis of the functioning of the housing market in the Town Centre in the context of the wider Retford built up area.²⁹ Retford Town Centre is not expected to contribute to any specific housing target (but there is potential for additional development in the Town Centre)³⁰

Key Facts on the Housing Stock in the Town Centre³¹

- There are approx. 487 dwellings
- This is a 31% increase (115 new dwellings) since 2011
- 86% of these new properties are flats
- 2/3rd of all dwellings in the Town Centre are flats
- 76% of dwellings have 2 bedrooms or less
- In 2011 the Town Centre had a far higher proportion of single person households than wider averages, 75% of single person households are made up of people under 65
- In 2011, 23% owned their own homes (this is one third of the rate across Retford, Bassetlaw and England)
- 44% rent from private landlords 32% from social landlords

153 Map 11 below shows that these dwellings are scattered across the Plan area. Recent increases in business and retail conversions and the popular option of having flats over the shops, ensures natural surveillance in the Town Centre in the evenings and contributes to the vibrancy of the Town Centre's evening economy.

²⁹ The Retford Town Centre Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) produced by AECOM, October 2022, available at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnp/supporting-documents>

³⁰ See site allocations policies 13b and 13c below

³¹ See HNA at

Housing size

154 The housing mix currently on offer in the Town Centre serves a range of groups, but holds particular appeal to single-person households, people of working age without children, and the oldest age groups. When the demographic characteristics of wider Retford have been surveyed for comparison, it is evident that key groups not living in the Town Centre are present in the wider Town, namely families with children, early retirees, and individuals cohabiting in non-family groups. This demographic picture chimes with the features of wider Retford's housing stock, which offers a greater choice of mid-sized and larger homes.

155 The statistics show the dominance of flats that are 1 or 2 bed. The function of the Town Centre means that this need not necessarily be an issue as it complements the housing mix of the wider Retford built up area where there are more 3 bed plus houses.

156 AECOM recommend a dwelling size mix for future development in the Town Centre as follows:

- 20% homes with 1 bedroom
- 30% with 2 bedrooms,
- 35% with 3 bedrooms, and
- 15% with 4 or more bedrooms

157 This is a compromise between diversifying the Town Centre mix and accommodating a broader range of demographic groups, and accepting existing density patterns and improving affordability (because the provision of smaller market homes does increase access to home ownership for most groups, see table 5-6 below).

158 Recent applications in the Town Centre have sought permission for flats that are very small and with limited natural light. This will not create healthy living spaces and the RTCNPG want to support dwellings that confirm to the minimum national space standards.³²

159 Home ownership is relatively uncommon: the proportion of people who own their homes, at 23%, is a third of the rate seen across Retford, Bassetlaw and England in 2011. Correspondingly, a far larger share of the population rent their homes from private and social landlords – at 44% and 32% respectively. The high number of social rented homes suggests ample provision for those in the greatest financial need.

Affordability

160 The AECOM analysis shows that the average household income covering the Town Centre was £36,800 in 2018, and the lower quartile income (per person) for Bassetlaw was £15,379 in 2020. Local households on average incomes (including those with two lower earners) are able to afford most forms of market housing for sale in the Town Centre and some of the entry-level options in the wider town, but not its largest detached properties. Single people on lower quartile earnings, however, appear unable to afford any market purchase options without the advantage of additional savings.

161 Affordable rented housing appears generally affordable to households with two lower earners (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). Single lower earners can afford social rents but not affordable rents. Social rent should therefore be protected as far as possible.

162 The table below from the HNA shows the issues with affordability especially for single lower quartile income earners, but demonstrates that shared ownership products would enable a single

³² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

earner to get on the housing market where the shared ownership is 10% or 25% for the occupier. Access to a home via the first homes route would only be possible if the discount was 50%.

Table 5-6: Affordability thresholds in Retford Town Centre (income required, £)

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £38,600	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £15,379	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £30,758
Market Housing for Purchase						
Retford Median House Price	£148,500	-	£42,429	No	No	No
Retford Entry-level House Price	£114,300	-	£32,657	Yes	No	Marginal
Town Centre Median House Price	£99,225	-	£28,350	Yes	No	Yes
Town Centre Entry-level House Price	£88,875	-	£25,393	Yes	No	Yes
Market Housing for Rent						
Retford 3+ bed Market Rent	-	£9,600	£32,000	Yes	No	No
Town Centre 2-bed Market Rent	-	£9,000	£30,000	Yes	No	Marginal
Town Centre 1-bed Market Rent	-	£6,120	£20,400	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£69,458	-	£19,845	Yes	No	Yes
First Homes (-40%)	£59,535	-	£17,010	Yes	No	Yes
First Homes (-50%)	£49,613	-	£14,175	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shared Ownership (50%)	£49,613	£1,378	£18,769	Yes	No	Yes
Shared Ownership (25%)	£24,806	£2,067	£13,978	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shared Ownership (10%)	£9,923	£2,481	£11,104	Yes	Yes	Yes
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£5,056	£16,836	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£4,603	£15,328	Yes	Marginal	Yes

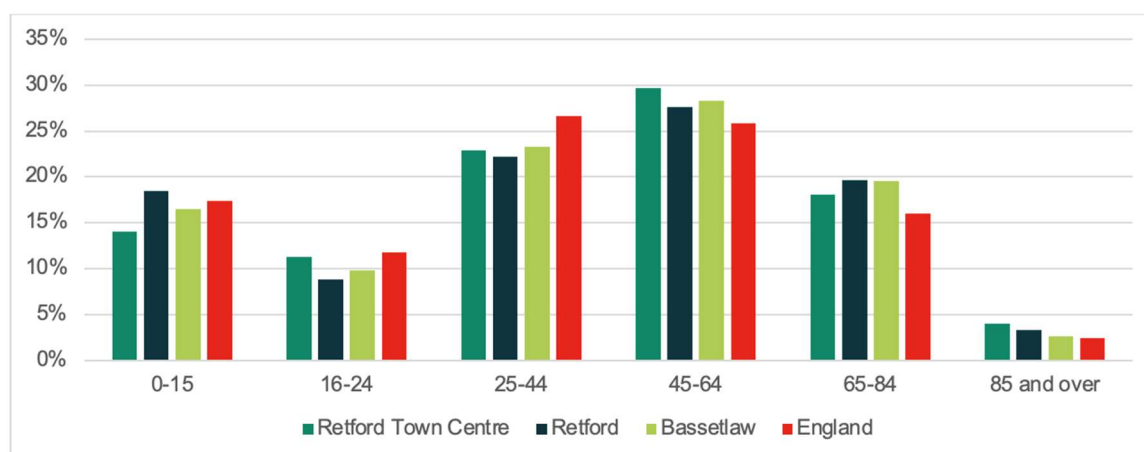
Source: AECOM Calculations

163 Whilst AECOM estimates that there is very little long term unmet need in the affordable rented housing market (because the turnover rate meets the current need) there is a backlog of existing need and homes that come available may not be appropriate to those on the list so a limited amount of affordable rented housing should still be encouraged.

164 AECOM identifies a need for affordable home ownership and notes that there are no shared ownership dwellings available in the Town Centre.

Demographics and Implications for Housing

165 The age structure of the population is a key indicator of the future need for housing. The Town Centre population is estimated to have aged since 2011, with growth in the age groups above 45 (and marginal growth in the number of children), while the population of younger adults has decreased slightly. This broadly aligns with the trends observed in the initial 2021 Census results for Bassetlaw as a whole.

Figure 4-1: Age structure in Retford Town Centre, 2020/21

Source: ONS 2021, ONS mid-2020 population estimates, AECOM Calculations

166A clear majority of households aged 55 – 75 in 2011 are likely to reach the 75+ bracket by 2038. Table 6.2 of the HNA shows that 77.9% of this age group own their own house, 22% rent.

167 There are 41 Almshouses run by Sloswickes Alms Houses which is a charity that provides flats within the area for retired people of limited means aged over 60 who have a strong Retford connection. There is no other specialist accommodation within the designated Town Centre boundary, however, there are 351 units of specialist accommodation across 9 schemes elsewhere in Retford.

168 The HNA notes that the older people who live in Retford Town Centre are healthier and 61% have no disability limits compared to 41% across wider Retford. *‘What is not clear is whether the relatively healthier older population of the Town Centre is a consequence of the lack of specialist provision that would allow relatively less healthy people to live there, or an effect of other factors (such as leisure and community amenities) that attract active older people to this location. Most likely it is some combination of the two.’*³³

169 The 75+ population of the Town Centre is projected to increase from 98 in 2022 to 156, a 59% increase.³⁴ The HNA analysis suggest a projected household growth of 41 and that between 50% and 70% of this will be for sheltered housing with limited support. One way of meeting this need, whilst recognising the limited opportunity for bespoke new build dwellings, is to have higher standards of accessible and adaptable housing.

170 The RTCNPG are encouraged that BLP Policy ST29 requires residential market housing to be designed to meet accessible and adaptable dwelling standards Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment³⁵ also indicated a need to increase the supply of homes built to wheelchair user standards M4(3). The Whole Plan Viability Assessment 2021, (for the Bassetlaw Plan) confirmed this would be unviable alongside other policy requirements. However, where the housing is for older people within the Plan Area, the RTCNPG would support development that could be delivered to this higher standard.

171 Table 6-7 in the HNA provides an estimate of this need.³⁶

³³ See HNA paragraph 291

³⁴ Derived from HNA table 6-3

³⁵ See <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/6855/hedna-addendum-9522.pdf>

³⁶ See HNA page 74

Table 6-7: AECOM estimate of specialist needs in Retford Town Centre, 2038

Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Extra-care	2	5	7
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	2	7	9
Total	4	12	16

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

172 HAPPI3 identifies that 85% of all older people would like to 'age in place'.³⁷ The Site Assessment indicated that the redevelopment of site NP05 the Land registry Office and NP06 Goodwin Hall either separately or in combination, would be a suitable location for such a use subject to mitigation measure in relation to flood risk³⁸. This is covered in more detail in Section 21 below, policy 10c supports this use in principle.

173 ST29 of the BLP supports the provision of specialist housing for older people where the location is able to meet the social and housing needs of the intended residents, so long as there would not be a concentration of similarly uses, where the site is in close proximity to everyday services, and where the needs of rising from the development can be accommodated within the capacity of the public services.

174 The RTCNPG support the provision of sheltered housing with limited support within the Town centre for older people. The topography of the area and the proximity to local services would make provision of this sort of accommodation within the Town Centre appropriate. The HNA noted that 81% of specialist housing for older people was social rented³⁹. There is a gap in provision for other forms of tenure for specialist housing.

175 In principle, Retford Town Centre would be a suitable location for such development. It will be at the planning application stage that an assessment would be made of the capacity of the public services to accommodate any additional needs arising.

Policy 10a Housing Mix

- 1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, major housing development schemes⁴⁰ are required to deliver a housing mix that meets local need in accordance with the findings in the most up to date Housing Needs Assessment, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not viable.**

(Continued overleaf)

³⁷ Housing our Ageing Population: Positive Ideas (HAPPI3), All party parliamentary group on housing and care for older people, June 2016 document at

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Housing-our-Ageing-Population-Positive-Ideas-HAPPI-3-Making-retirement-living-a-positive-choice/>

³⁸ See <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnpng/supporting-documents>

³⁹ See HNA para 320

⁴⁰ Major development is as defined in the NPPF – 10 or more homes or a site of 0.5 hectares or more

2. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, where major development seeks to depart from the mix in policy 10a (1), information accompanying the application would need to justify the departure from this policy based on specific character elements or some other demonstration of suitability.
3. To cater for the needs of less mobile occupants including older people and disabled people, and to deliver dwellings which are capable of meeting peoples' changing needs over their lifetimes, new dwellings should be built to M4(2) standards of the Approved Document M, Volume 1.*
*it is accepted that this may not be achievable in older properties that are being converted
4. Proposals for dwellings that meet the higher M(4)3 standards of the Approved Document M, Volume 1 will be supported.

Policy 10b Housing Tenure

There is a local housing need for affordable home ownership and affordable homes to rent. Subject to viability and feasibility, and in addition to providing First Homes, the affordable housing mix may include other forms of discounted market housing, for example shared ownership housing.

Policy 10c Accommodation for Older People

Proposals for the development of housing for older people, particularly sheltered accommodation with limited support, will be supported within the Plan Area.

21 Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies

176 The government identifies the planning system as having a significant role to play in tackling climate change (NPPF para 157). We must reduce the energy we use to heat and cool our homes as well as shifting to net zero carbon sources of heating and cooling. The design and layout of new development can significantly affect the efficiency of buildings in terms of their energy use and needs. For example, effective passive design maintains thermal comfort by utilising the sun's natural cycles and natural ventilation to reduce the need for activity or cooling systems.

177 Heating in buildings and industry create 32% of total UK emissions⁴¹. A strategy to reduce carbon to heat buildings is a priority area in the 2021 Joint Recommendations⁴². The UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) advocate energy use reduction before the use of renewables, providing evidence that between 19 to 20% of improvement (beyond current building regulations standards) could be delivered entirely through energy efficiency measures including enhanced insulation, glazing

⁴¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy/clean-growth-strategy-executive-summary>

⁴² See <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCC-Joint-Recommendations-2021-Report-to-Parliament.pdf>

and air tightness, high efficiency heating and hot water recovery. For example, a quarter of the heat lost in an uninsulated home is lost through the roof.⁴³

178 Bassetlaw lies within an area of serious water stress concern⁴⁴. The management of water resources is required to ensure that demand for water can be achieved in a sustainable manner. Severn Trent advise that the consumption of water per dwelling should not exceed 110 litres per person per day. This is a requirement in Policy ST48 of the BLP which requires this optional target to be met.

179 Energy efficiency in design should incorporate technology to improve water efficiency. Water efficient design also provides energy efficiency benefits through a reduced need to treat water for consumption and treat wastewater. It also provides savings for managing water within the buildings. Given the issues of drainage in parts of the Plan area, water efficient development would also reduce the impacts that the built environment has on existing infrastructure.

180 The RTCNPG support initiatives to explore the potential of solar energy on the roofs of buildings, and using this to support the Town Centre itself. This may include creating a community renewable energy scheme. Initial work has been undertaken to identify the feasibility of delivering this step change in energy use within the Plan area.

181 Solar powered methods of street lighting and signage illumination will be supported where it's appropriate to do so. This has already provided a beneficial outcome at the Canal Lock where conventional lighting would not be possible but where lighting was needed for safety.

182 The NPPF para 160 c) notes that '*plans should identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.*'

183 Whilst this is an aspiration it has evolved as part of the community engagement on the neighbourhood plan and will be pursued by RTCNPG and partners.

184 The RTCNPG supports the transition to low carbon motorised transport. For example, increasing the provision of charging points in the public car parks would encourage the use of zero emission vehicles in the Town Centre. New development (including but not limited to appropriately sized electrical supplies to developments and also sufficient numbers of charge points) to enable the charging of electric vehicles. This does not require planning permission but will be strongly encouraged as part of the pre application discussions with developers. Similarly, the RTCNPG also encourage the provision of electric vehicles for residents in the Town Centre and the provision of lamppost charging facilities for residents with on street parking.

Policy 11 Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Technologies

- 1. New development should incorporate sustainable design features to maximise energy efficiency due to the importance of this in meeting national climate targets.**
- 2. Innovative approaches to low carbon buildings and construction which demonstrates sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels will be supported where the resultant-built form respects the character of the setting. Examples include, but would not be limited to;**

(Continued overleaf)

⁴³ See <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/roof-and-loft-insulation/>

⁴⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification>

- a) the use of alternative heat sources to natural gas,
 - b) siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,
 - c) passive design principles (where appropriate)
 - d) the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,
 - e) installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double/triple glazing,
 - f) meeting the EPC B target set out by the Committee on Climate Change for all new non-domestic buildings,
 - g) maximizing the installation of solar panels including building integrated panel technology on roofs of all orientations except due north,
 - h) the installation of electrical vehicle, bike and scooter charging points,
 - i) the installation of cycle parking facilities,
 - j) the use of solar power for lighting and other facilities that require power in public spaces.
3. Residential development is required to meet the water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day.
 4. The retrofitting of energy efficiency measures is supported, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, provided that it safeguards the historic characteristics of these heritage assets.
 5. Developments should demonstrate that they are water efficient, where possible incorporating innovative water efficiency and water re-use measures.



Photo 17: Flooded fields behind flat on Bridgegate



Photo 18: River Idle from Bridgegate Bridge

187The NPPF requires all plans to apply a sequential risk-based approach to the location of development taking into account the current and future impacts of climate change. The Exception Test provides a method of managing flood risk while still allowing necessary development to occur. The Exception Test is only appropriate for use when there are large areas in Flood Zones 2 and 3, where the Sequential Test alone cannot deliver acceptable sites, but where some

continuing development is necessary for wider sustainable development reasons, taking into account the need to avoid social or economic blight.

188 BDC will require applicants to undertake site specific flood risk assessment for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In accordance with the NPPF para 173, development in Flood Zone 2 and 3 must be *'appropriately flood resistant and resilient and incorporate sustainable drainage systems'*.

189 Liaison with the Environment Agency (EA) as part of the preparation of the RTCNP identified that the Flood Map for Planning that identifies the flood zones 2 and 3 has not yet been updated with the outputs of the River Idle 2021 (EA) flood risk model. The flood map for planning in relation to the River Idle may therefore change in the coming months as these updates are implemented. In the meantime, it is recommended that interested parties contact the Environment Agency to request flood risk data for the sites/areas proposed for development.

190 The EA also advises that a further modelling project is planned to be complete next summer (2024) which will update the flood zone 3b/functional floodplain map nationally. Later in 2023 the EA also plan to update the Flood Map for Planning with new flood model data for the Retford Beck.

191 Over the Plan period EA also advises that there are potentially opportunities outside the Plan area for the creation of online storage or conveyance improvements here could have the potential to reduce flood risk from the River Idle in Retford Town Centre. Whilst the EA have not undertaken an appraisal of such measures, such provision could change the assessment of flood risk in the Town.⁴⁶

192 Sustainable drainage systems in the context of Retford Town Centre, will include increasing the amount of permeable surface, allowing water to soak away. These can be specifically designed (e.g., rain gardens and using geopaving), but simply increasing the planting of shrubs and trees and increasing areas that are grassed rather than paved, will provide ways to capture the water and let it soak into the ground.

193 SuDs can only be required as part of major planning applications however, implementing Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6a Greening the Streets and Policy 6b Improving Biodiversity will help to alleviate the extent of surface water run off as well improving landscape character and biodiversity.

194 Given the extent of flood risk in the Plan area and the expectation that there will be major development of around 2000 dwellings in the wider Retford area, Policy 12 provides a framework for addressing flood risk.

Policy 12 Reducing the Risk of Flooding

- 1. Development must follow a sequential approach to flood risk management using the most up to date mapping information. For development in Flood Zones 2 and 3, the exception test will be applied in accordance with Table 3 of national planning practice guidance.**
- 2. Proposals for flood management or other infrastructure offering improvements that lower the risk of flooding will be supported subject to the proposal not resulting in an increase in flood risk elsewhere.**

(Continued overleaf)

⁴⁶ Based on email correspondence 8th June 2023 from EA to BDC in relation to the preparation of the RTCNP

3. Surface water management should be undertaken through the utilisation of appropriate techniques which mimic natural drainage patterns and where appropriate achieve net gains for nature including through green infrastructure provision such as the planting of native trees and bushes.

23 Regeneration and Site allocations

195 There are a number of sites within the Town Centre that have been identified as opportunities for future regeneration in the Masterplan (see map on page 39). These are not necessarily potential development sites. Two sites are not available for development at present (5 and 6) but may be brought forward in the future by the landowners.

196 The Masterplan forms part of the evidence base for this Neighbourhood Plan, but an additional site assessment process identified further potential sites that would also see underused sites in the Plan area regenerated.

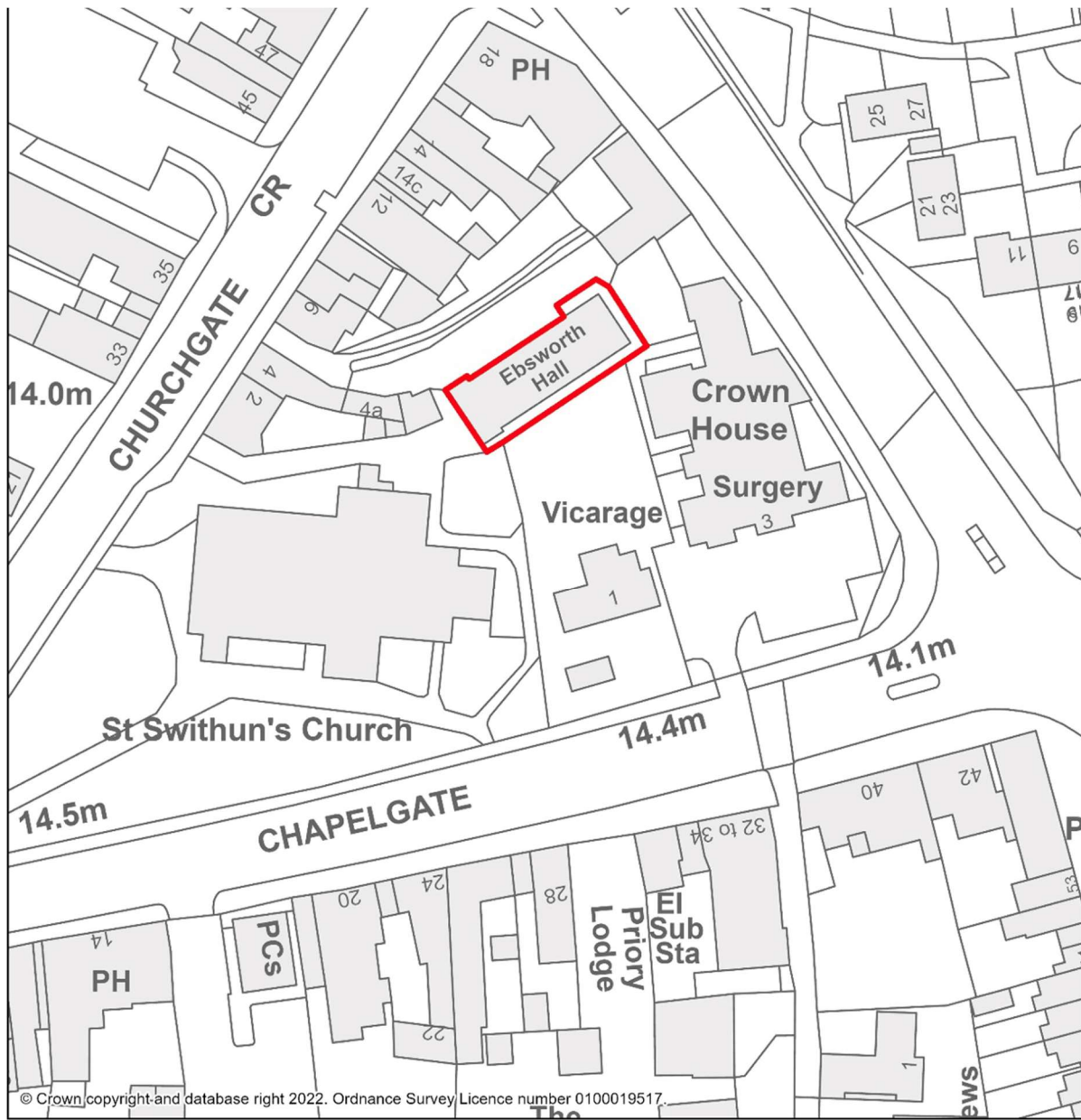
197 The RTCNPG organised a Call for Sites in 2022. In addition, sites put forward in the Bassetlaw Land Availability Assessment (LAA) 2022, were also included. From these two sources six sites were identified within the Neighbourhood Area and assessed by AECOM⁴⁷ using a standard site assessment approach.

198 The Site Assessment Report explains the methodology and shows the site assessment for all the sites. Consultation with the community confirmed that the following sites were supported.

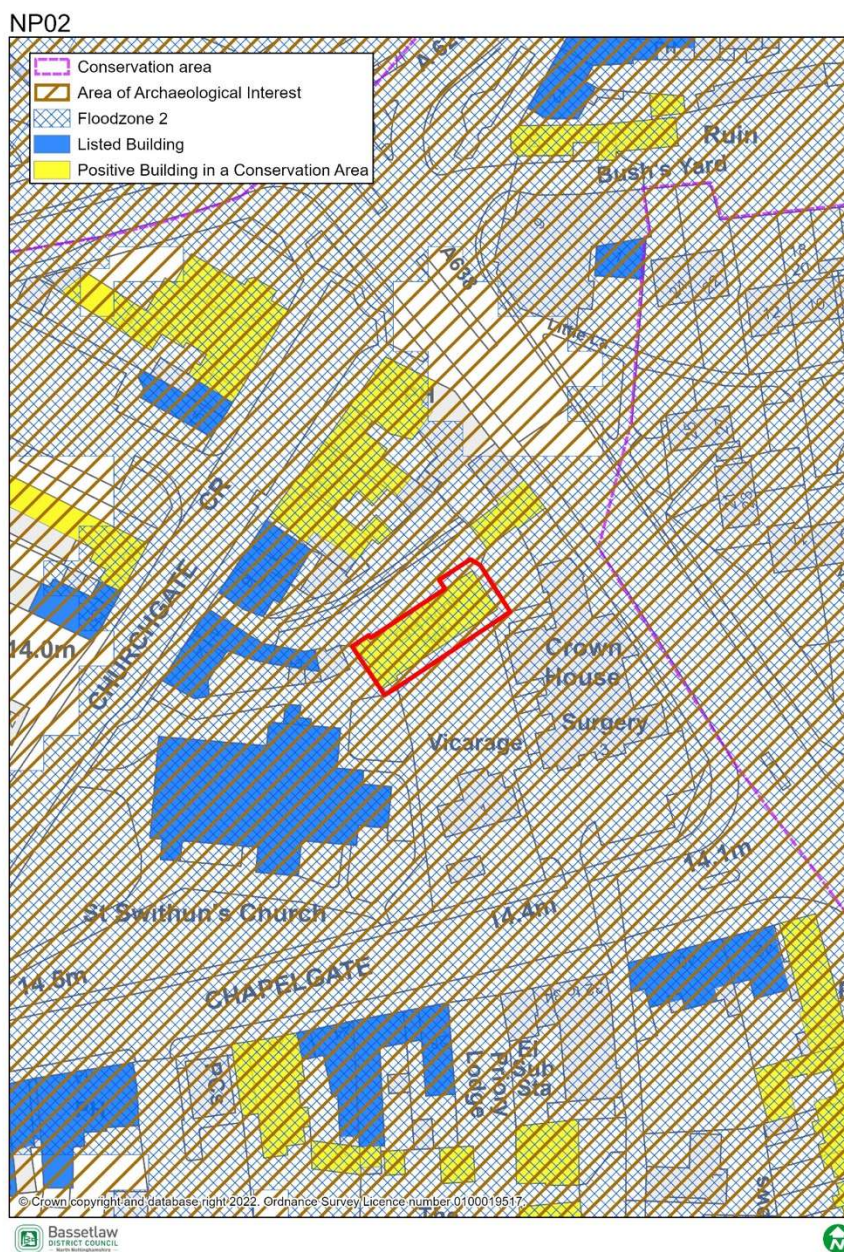
⁴⁷ AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited is a multinational consultancy all technical support packages for neighbourhood planning are delivered by AECOM.

Renovation or redevelopment of Ebsworth Hall

Site Plan



Constraints Map



199 The building was opened in 1923 as a memorial to the late Canon Ebsworth, who had been vicar of St Swithun's for 32 years. The building is owned by the Church, was last used for associated purposes, and is on Church land. It is considered listed by curtilage association to the Grade II* listed Church.

200 The building is vacant and in disrepair. The Rector advises that subsidence at the far South corner has resulted in the insurers insisting that all contents be removed and all usage ceased. The subsidence is such that the wall has moved away from some stairs and windows have broken as their frames have deformed the wooden floor has buckled and plaster has fallen.

201 BDCs Conservation Officer has identified the feature entrance porch, roof-mounted vent, front gable oval-shaped vent and foundation stone as being of architectural and historic interest.

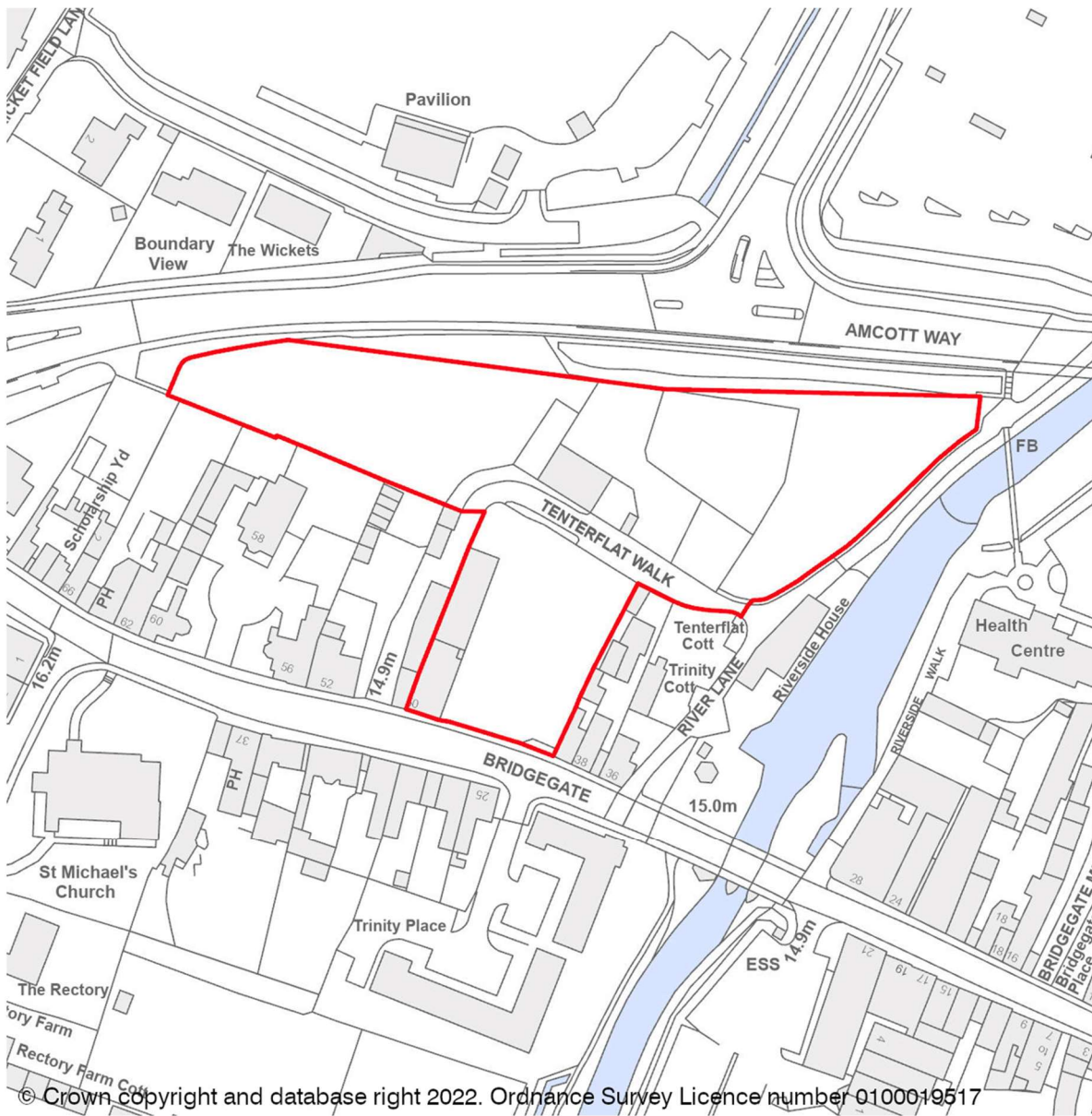
- 202 The Church are keen to redevelop the site to provide a building for community use for young people.
- 203 The site scored amber in the AECOM site assessment (Jan 2023).
- 204 The building is in Character Area 4 of the Retford Design Code (see Section 3 page 30 – 33). The Design Codes for the Plan Area that apply to the site are 4.2.1 Building Heights and Roofs, and 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing.
- 205 BDC have offered to fund a full structural survey from the heritage at risk fund. The outcome of this survey will be critical in establishing the possibility of renovating the existing building. The Rector is committed to integrating the historic features identified to the West of the building.
- 206 The RTCNPG supports the creative redevelopment of the building for community use, valuing the provision of an additional community facility in the Town Centre so long as any proposal protects the identified historic features.
- 207 Given that the site is within the Retford Conservation Area and within the curtilage of a listed building, any new building will need to reflect the prevailing historic character in its use of materials, scale, and design.
- 208 BDC have also advised that the building is in flood zone 2 and a sequential flood risk test would be required.
- 209 Access to the building is down a single width access road and vehicular access would only be suitable for service vehicles, there could be no on-site parking. However, there is on street parking and public car parks in the vicinity.

Policy 13a The Renovation or redevelopment of Ebsworth Hall

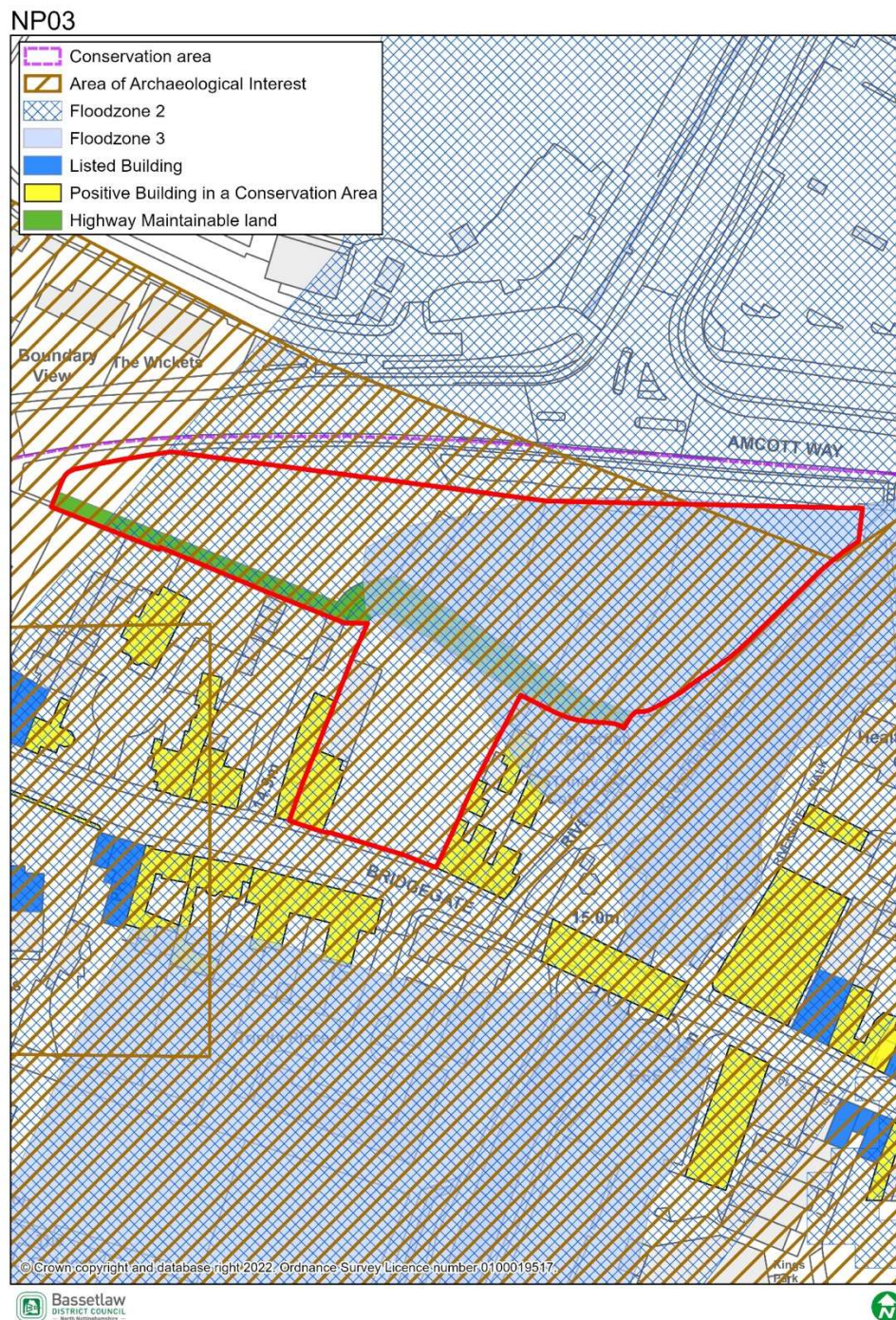
- 1. The renovation or redevelopment of Ebsworth Hall for community uses is supported subject to the provision of a site-specific flood risk assessment and sequential test, using the most up to date flood mapping information to demonstrate the suitability of the site in combination or separately, for the uses proposed.**
- 2. Subject to the above, development proposals will be supported where the proposal;**
 - a) retains the entrance porch, the roof-mounted vent, front gable oval-shaped vent and foundation stone as integral parts of the design,**
 - b) demonstrates how it has taken into account the guidance for Character Area 4, particularly the Design Codes 4.2.1 Building Heights and Roofs and 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing, in the Retford Design Code.**
- 3. The design should reflect the building's location within the curtilage of St Swithun's Grade II* listed Church.**
- 4. Vehicular access will be for service vehicles only.**

Land between Amcott Way, Bridgegate and River Lane

Site Plan



Constraints Map



210 This 0.96 hectare site comprises a former (now demolished) commercial garage and an overgrown area to the north. The area shown as green on the map above is Tenterflat Walk and is still identified as highway maintainable land. Tenterflat Walk provides a connection from the north west to the east of the site, although at present the north western part is not publicly accessible. Tenterflat Walk connects to River Lane which in turn provides access north or south along the River.

211 The Neighbourhood Plan Ecology Survey identifies the site as providing habitat for small mammals especially given its location adjacent to the River Idle.

- 212 The entire site is within the Conservation Area and there are a number of listed buildings and undesignated heritage assets on Bridgegate, which runs along the southern boundary of the site. BDCs Conservation Team advise that a 2019 approval (19/00194/FUL) for the part of the site that abuts Bridgegate, is used as a basis for future proposals, especially for the Bridgegate frontage which is considered the most heritage-sensitive part of the site.
- 213 The entire site is at risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3), and a site-specific flood risk assessment is likely to be required to support proposals for development, as are on-site flood mitigation measures. The northeast (undeveloped) part of the site is in Flood Zone 3 and if there were alternative sites for housing the sequential test would not be met, but it could be allocated for other less vulnerable uses (e.g. retail, commercial or leisure uses).
- 214 There is potential for noise and atmospheric pollution from Amcott Way to the north, which could be addressed through a landscaped buffer and siting of new development away from the northern boundary.
- 215 BDC have commented that a sequential test would be required.
- 216 The site scored amber in the AECOM site assessment (Jan 2023).
- 217 The site is in Character Area 2 of the Retford Design Code (see page 24). The Design Codes for the Plan Area that apply to the site are 4.2.1 Building Heights and Roofs, 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing, 4.2.4⁴⁸ Frontages and Boundaries and 4.2.6 Landscape, Trees and Biodiversity
- 218 The RTCNP consider that the sensitive development of this site for a mixed use could provide a valuable contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Town. However, the scheme would need to demonstrate that it has responded positively to the various challenges of the site.

Policy 13b Land between Amcott Way, Bridgegate and River Lane

- 1. The development of land between Amcott Way, Bridgegate and River Lane for a mixed-use scheme (housing and commercial uses) is supported subject to the provision of a site-specific flood risk assessment and sequential test, using the most up to date flood mapping information to demonstrate the suitability of the site in combination or separately, for the uses proposed, reflecting the site's partial location in flood zone 2 and 3.**
- 2. Subject to the above, development proposals will be supported where;**
 - a) they demonstrate how it has taken into account the guidance for Character Area 2 and, particularly the Design Codes 4.2.1 Building Heights and Roofs, 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing, 4.2.4 Frontages and Boundaries and 4.2.6 Landscape, Trees and Biodiversity, in the Retford Design Guidance and Codes.**
 - b) they reflect (in terms of design, appearance and scale) the site's location within the Retford Conservation Area especially that part of the site that abuts Bridgegate,**
 - c) they reinstate the through route of Tenterflat Walk for pedestrians and cyclists from Amcott Way to River Lane,**
 - d) the biodiversity value of the site is reflected in the retention of existing trees where possible,**

(Continued overleaf)

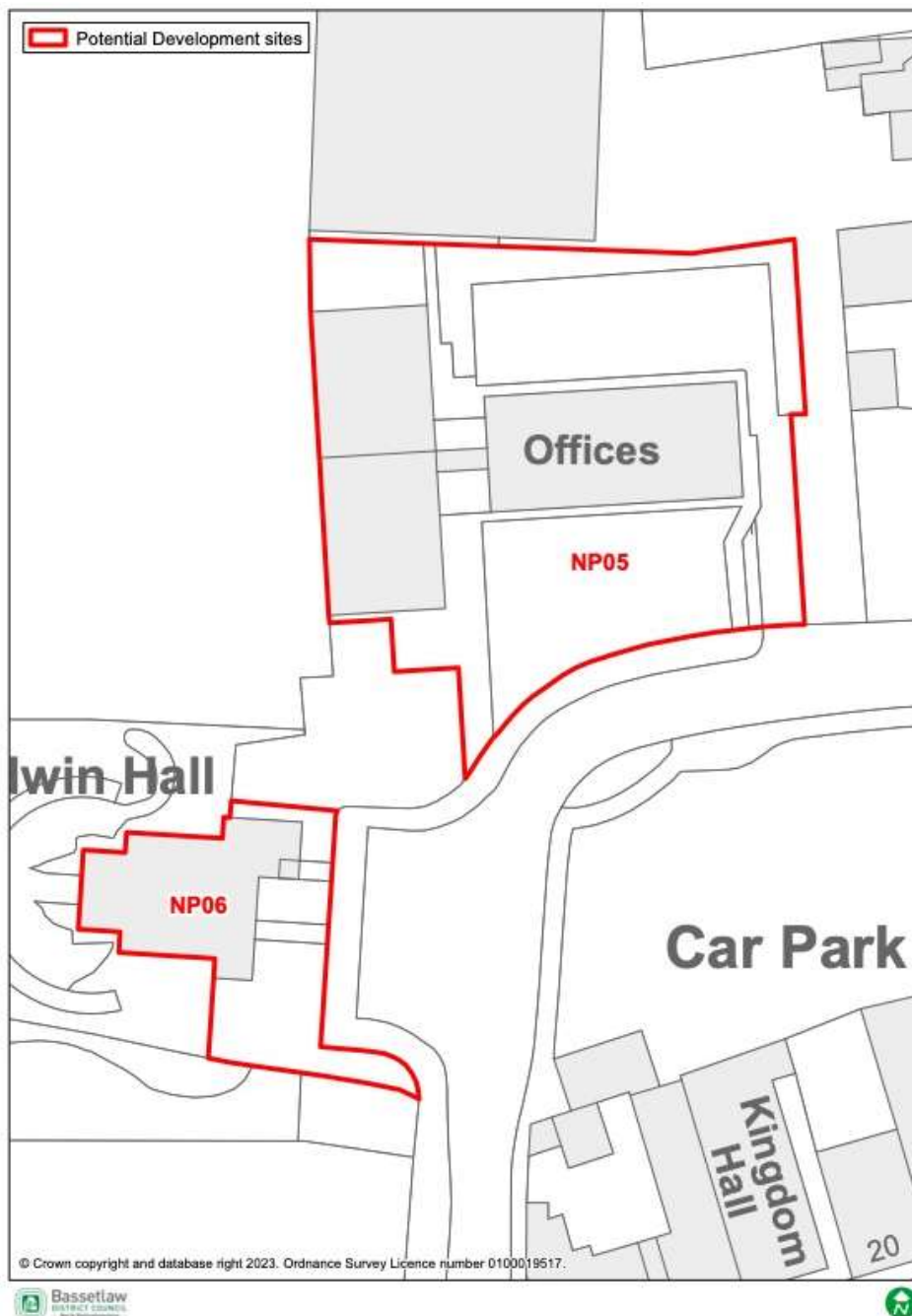
⁴⁸ Note there is no 4.2.3

- e) they secure a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain,
- f) a landscape scheme (including a buffer) and the location of housing (away from the northern boundary) should demonstrate that any issues of noise and air pollution have been mitigated.

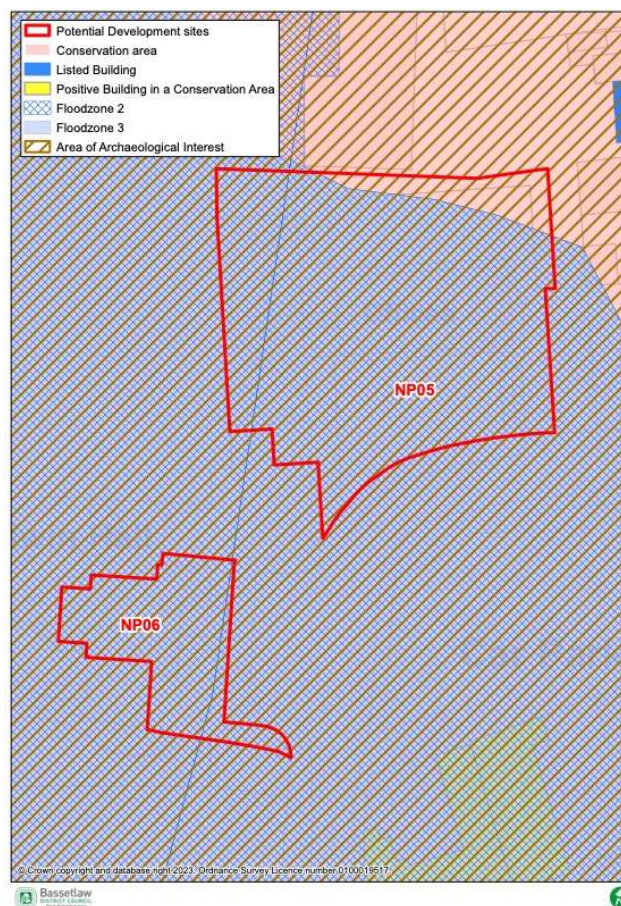
Redevelopment of Goodwin Hall and the Registry Office

219 Goodwin Hall is a well-used community asset, although the fabric of the building (timber clad, single story flat roof) is coming to the end of its useful life. The Registry Office building and car park at the rear formally housed the Registry Office and other County Council Services. It is now largely vacant.

Site Plan showing NP05 the Registry Office and Car Park and NP06 Goodwin Hall



Constraints Map



220 Both buildings are situated close to King's Park, an Unregistered Park and Garden. EA advise that Goodwin Hall is entirely in Flood Zone 3b (a functional floodplain) so there will be limits on the types of development which can take place in this location in accordance with National Planning Policy. More vulnerable uses such as residential development will not be appropriate. No extensions will be permissible and no increase in the building footprint or ground raising, to preserve floodplain storage in this location.

221 The Registry Office site scored amber in the AECOM site assessment (Jan 2023). EA advise that the Registry Office is in flood zone 3a and there should therefore be no extensions, new buildings or ground raising which would occupy floodplain storage.

222 The redevelopment of NP05 or NP06 would be subject to a sequential and exception test. Site-specific flood risk assessment would be required along with on-site mitigation measures. Sensitive/vulnerable uses should be kept off the ground floor to minimise risk to future occupiers.

223 Whilst flood risk is a significant constraint for Goodwin Hall and the Registry Office, the EA also advised that the Flood Map for Planning (which shows the flood zones) has not been updated with the outputs of the River Idle 2021 flood risk model and that further modelling was planned for 2024 which will update the floodplain map nationally.⁴⁹

224 In addition (and outside the Plan area but in the vicinity of Retford Town Centre) the EA advise there is land that could be used for online storage or conveyance improvements that in the long term could reduce the flood risk in Retford Town Centre.

⁴⁹ Based on an email to BDC from EA on 8th June 2023 as part of the preparation of this Plan

- 225 As both buildings are in a good location between The Square and Kings Park, and that Goodwin Hall remains a highly valued community asset, whilst the future of the Registry Office remains uncertain, it was considered appropriate to include them in AECOMs site assessment.
- 226 For the Registry Office, the site assessment noted that there was potential for the existing office block to be converted to residential/mixed-use, with additional storeys adding that demolition of the buildings may increase the cost of development. However, the Registry Office (and Goodwin Hall) are a 1960's design. BDCs Conservation Officer's comments confirmed that the Registry Office and Goodwin Hall contributes little to the historic appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and setting of nearby Listed Buildings. The Conservation Officer supports the replacement, redevelopment of these buildings (subject to the scheme being appropriate in scale, materials, layout and design.)
- 227 The redevelopment of the Registry Office site would provide the opportunity for a new building of a high design quality that reinforces the historic landscape character. It also provides the opportunity to complement or combine the function of Goodwin Hall with uses on the Registry Office site.
- 228 The AECOM site assessment notes the intervisibility of Goodwin Hall with Kings Park given its proximity to the same and that only single-story development would be suitable given this location. The Goodwin Hall building is also in a poor condition. The combination of the two sites would allow for a creative solution to be found that sees the provision of social space and level access living accommodation that would be suitable for older people.
- 229 The HNA identified a need for housing for older people with limited support within the Town Centre and Policy 10c of the RTCNP supports this provision.
- 230 The site assessment also noted the potential benefit of delivering a building that combines the uses of these two buildings. 'Subject to appropriate flood risk mitigation, the site is potentially suitable for residential uses, including specialist or older people's accommodation. It is adjacent to Site NP06 (Goodwin Hall) which is in the same ownership, and there is potential for a comprehensive redevelopment of the two sites, with the existing community use on Site NP06 either being retained in its current location or relocated onto Site NP05.'⁵⁰
- 231 In spite of the above, it is important to note that the Site Assessment Report was completed prior to the more detailed advice on flood zones being provided by the EA. The latter places a particular emphasis on the need to ensure that flood risk is considered as the primary determinant of the suitability of development and / or types of development.
- 232 The sites are in Character Area 1 of the Retford Design Code (see page 20). The Design Codes for the Plan Area that apply to the site are 4.2.1 Building Heights and Roofs, 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing, 4.2.4⁵¹, Frontages and Boundaries, 4.2.5 Public Realm and 4.2.6 Landscape, Trees and Biodiversity.
- 233 Both sites are within the Retford Conservation Area and there are several Listed Buildings in close proximity, including the Grade II listed 18 and 18a The Square, immediately to the east. Any new development on the site would need to be sensitively designed to minimise impact on the historic environment and enhance the existing heritage assets.
- 234 Comments from NCC highways with regard to Goodwin Hall indicate that the large apron in front of the site which is marked on the ground as parking for the Hall is public highway. This area may require stopping-up as part of the proposal. The existing footway would then require replacing to

⁵⁰ See Site Assessment page 24

⁵¹ Note there is no 4.2.3

the side of the carriageway. This will in effect make the site larger than indicated on the submitted plan.

235 It is noted that Policy 13c reflects a longer-term aspiration, the wider ambition of which may not be deliverable until later in the Plan period due to the current constraints based on existing flood mapping.

Policy 13c Redevelopment of Goodwin Hall and Registry Office Buildings

- 1. The redevelopment of both the Registry Office Building and Goodwin Hall for a mixed-use scheme (housing and community uses) is supported subject to the provision of a site-specific flood risk assessment and sequential test, using the most up to date flood mapping information to demonstrate the suitability of the site in combination or separately, for the uses proposed.**
- 2. Subject to the above, development proposals will be supported where they;**
 - a) Demonstrate how they have taken into account the guidance for Character Area 1 and, particularly the Design Codes 4.2.1 Building Heights and Roofs, 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing, 4.2.4 Frontages and Boundaries, 4.2.5 Public Realm and 4.2.6 Landscape, Trees and Biodiversity, in the Retford Design Code,**
 - b) reflect (in terms of design, appearance and scale) the site's location within the Retford Conservation Area and adjacent to Kings Park (an Unregistered Park and Garden),**
 - c) provide the equivalent space and facilities indoors and outside (or better) for older and disabled people as is provided in the existing Goodwin Hall, in accordance with the original purpose of the Hall,**
 - d) show how the biodiversity value of the Goodwin Hall site is reflected in a landscaping scheme that provides a soft boundary to Kings Park and secures a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain,**
 - e) meet the housing needs of local people particularly (but not necessarily exclusively), providing level access homes for older people with limited support needs,**
 - f) reconfigure the highway and footpaths in front of Goodwin Hall to ensure safe and direct access along Chancery Lane and into Kings Park.**

24 Implementation

236 The policies in this plan will be implemented by Bassetlaw District Council as part of their development management process. Where applicable the RTCNPG will also be actively involved, for example as part of the pre-application process as outlined in the Key Principle. Whilst Bassetlaw District Council will be responsible for development management, the RTCNPG will use this Neighbourhood Plan to frame their representations on submitted planning applications.

237 There are several areas of activity which will affect delivery and each is important in shaping the Plan area in the months and years ahead. These comprise:

- a) The statutory planning process; this Neighbourhood Plan will direct and shape developer and investor interest in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, this is also in the context of the wider Bassetlaw District Council planning policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- b) Investment in and active management of public services and community assets, together with other measures to support local services for the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.
- c) The voluntary and community (third) sector will have a strong role to play particularly in terms of local community infrastructure, events and Town Centre life. This sector may play a stronger role in the future.
- d) The role of the RTCNPG in delivering the projects that have been identified as part of this Neighbourhood Planning process.
- e) The Neighbourhood Plan will become part of a hierarchy of planning documents. The RTCNPG will also look to District and County Council investment programmes where a policy can be shown to be delivering District and County objectives.

25 Monitoring and Review

238 The impact Neighbourhood Plan policies have on influencing the shape and direction of development across the Plan area during the Plan period will be monitored by the RTCNPG.

239 If it is apparent that any policy in the Plan has unintended consequences or is ineffective it will be reviewed. It is the expectation of the RTCNPG that there will be a review of the Plan 5 years after it has been made.

240 Any amendments to the Plan will only be made following consultation with Bassetlaw District Council, local residents and other statutory stake holders as required by legislation.

Appendix A Community Aspirations

This separate annex contains a number of community aspirations. Some take the form of projects which will be pursued by the RTCNPG or its successor, others take the form of actions where the RBF will seek to work alongside other organisations and landowners whilst some are expressions of the local community's vision and ambitions for the future of the Plan Area.

All of the community aspirations have resulted from work carried out during the production of the RTCNP but are not subject to planning policies. This annex therefore does not form part of the statutory development plan, but nevertheless is an important element for the community in achieving the Vision set out in the RTCNP.

<p>Aspiration 1 Maintaining Visual Coherence</p> <p>The design of street furniture impacts on the character of the place. In the Plan area the street bins and lighting should add to the character and not detract from it. The NPG consider that the current style and colour of the street furniture and the use of a grey and burgundy colour palette is incompatible with the Georgian townscape.</p> <p>For the visual coherence of the Town Centre, it is important that the colour palette and materials reflect the heritage of the place. Roller shutters and remedial work to shop fronts can have a cumulative effect of eroding this character.</p>	<p>Proposed Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG or its successor will seek to work with owners to secure appropriately sensitive remedial works to ensure there is no further erosion of these heritage assets and to encourage suitable alternative uses to protect these assets. 2. The RTCNPG or its successor will work with BDC to review the design and colour of street furniture.
<p>Aspiration 2 Balancing pedestrian and vehicular movement in The Square</p> <p>Whilst highway matters are not within the purview of a neighbourhood plan, an aspiration is that the RTCNPG will work with NCC and BDC to seek a creative solution to the conflict between traffic and people in the eastern and northern part of The Square.</p>	<p>Proposed Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RTCNPG or its successor to work with NCC and BDC to seek a design solution that enables a better balance of vehicular and pedestrian movement through the eastern and northern part of The Square.
<p>Aspiration 3 Reduce the visual impact of vehicles around Cannon Square</p> <p>Whilst highway matters are not within the purview of a neighbourhood plan, an aspiration is that the RTCNPG will</p>	<p>Proposed Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG or its successor to work with partners (NCC and BDC) to seek ways to reduce the visual impact of vehicular movements around Cannon Square.

<p>work with NCC and BDC to seek ways to reduce the visual impact of vehicular movements around Cannon Square.</p>	
<p>Aspiration 4 Using and improving the Public Areas</p> <p>The Business and Planning Act 2020 streamlined the process to secure a pavement licence to enable bars, cafes and restaurants to put furniture outside to serve their food and drink. The pavement licences extend to September 2022. The RTCNPG support this relaxation of regulations as it has enabled local cafes to continue to trade during covid restrictions. This has been especially beneficial for businesses on the pedestrian area of Carolgate and has improved the sense of vitality where people can safely meet outdoors.</p> <p>There are other small public areas across the Town Centre that could be improved with planting or better maintenance. There are also opportunities to provide more Retford appropriate styles or colours of lamp standards, signage and bins etc. This will not require planning permission but will be an important aspiration for the RTCNPG.</p>	<p>Proposed Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG or its successor to work with BDC to seek ways to support businesses who want to continue to offer space outside at the front of their premises for the consumption of food and drink. 2. The RTCNPG or its successor to work with partners to produce a strategy for the Town Centre that uses more Retford appropriate street furniture and that identifies small environmental enhancements on grass verges and pockets of public underused land.
<p>Aspiration 5 Supporting Independent Businesses</p> <p>The RTCNPG is committed to encouraging independent businesses to locate and thrive in the Plan area. Schemes to encourage the use of local and independent business are a crucial element of the RTCNPG's vision for the Town Centre. Such an initiative falls outside the planning system and so is included under this aspiration.</p>	<p>Proposed Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG supports the role of new and existing independent business within the Town Centre and will work with local business owners to continue to devise campaigns, events and activities that promote locally owned businesses. 2. The RTCNPG or its successor to work with BDCs economic development officers to continue to investigate ways of supporting existing businesses and attracting new businesses to the Town centre.
<p>Aspiration 6 Supporting the Creative Industries</p> <p>There are murals around the Town that depict the history of the place and create visual interest that have been</p>	<p>Aspiration 6 Supporting the Creative Industries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG is supportive of local artists of all sorts who provide community activities as well as being local businesses attracting

<p>painted by local artists. The RTCNPG support the use of murals as they both generate interest in the history of the Town and enliven blank walls and contribute to the tourist offer in the Town. They need to be sensitively located so as not to harm the historic character of the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Town Centre should be a place to foster creativity including the performing arts.</p>	<p>visitors to the Town. The provision of an outdoor space for performing artists is supported where this does not erode the historic character of the Town Centre.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The use of murals creates interest and activity in the Town and is supported. The RTCNPG or its successor will work with landlords and artists to protect the existing murals and will support new murals where they do not harm the historic character of the Town Centre. 3. Input from local schools and colleges will be encouraged (design and function) when improvements are made to the Town Centre
<p>Aspiration 6 Improving the Ecology of the Plan Area Both the Ecology Assessment and Ecology Study Report identified numerous opportunities to improve the biodiversity within the Plan area. These will require funding and maintenance and will require partnership working.</p>	<p><i>Proposed Actions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG or its successor will work with partners (e.g., BDC, Notts Wildlife Trust, landowners and local community groups) and to seek funding to deliver some of the ecology schemes identified in the Ecology Assessment and the Ecology Study Report.
<p>Aspiration 7 Solar Energy Potential on roofs Roofs present an ideal place to install solar panels that will reduce the energy costs for residents and businesses and will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions.</p>	<p><i>Proposed Actions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG or its successor to work with partners to promote solar energy use in the Town Centre. 2. The RTCNPG or its successor to encourage the take up of solar panels by homes and businesses and to explore the creation of a community renewable energy scheme that uses the power from solar panels on the roofs in the Town Centre to provide power to support Town Centre residents and businesses.
<p>Aspiration 8 Establishing a community banking hub With a growing and elderly population, it is recognised that a banking hub within the Town Centre to support people to access banking services would meet a growing need for such provision</p>	<p><i>Proposed Actions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RTCNPG or its successor to explore ways of encouraging the local banks to provide a hands on facility to assist people with digital banking

Appendix B Reports commissioned for the RTCNP

- *Retford Design Code 2022*
- *Housing Needs Assessment 2022*
- *Masterplan 2022*
- *Site Options and Assessment*
- *Ecology Assessment 2022*
- *Ecology Study Report 2022*

These are all separate files due to their size and can be found on the neighbourhood plan tab at <https://www.retfordbusinessforum.org.uk/rtcnp>

Appendix C Key Views (see Map 3)



KV1a: Looking west along Bridgegate important route into and out of the Town Centre shows the historic character of the Town and sense of enclosure.



KV1b: Looking east along Bridgegate important route into and out of the Town Centre shows the historic character of the Town with a sense of enclosure and a terminated view of a neoclassical building



KV2: Looking north east along Rectory Road to St Michael the Archangel – a key landmark building Grade 2*



KV3a: Bridgegate looking north east along the River Idle – a main corridor for wildlife with mature trees that planting – a green ribbon that runs north south and is a backdrop of the urban area



KV3b: Bridgegate looking south west along the River Idle – a main corridor for wildlife with mature trees that planting – a green ribbon that runs north south and is a backdrop of the urban area



KV4: Looking south west from the boundary of the Plan area sense of enclosure across the historic streets towards St Swithun's



KV5: Looking south east across Amcott Way and Churchgate Car park long view to St Swithun's



KV6a: Looking north east from the junction of Market Place and Bridgegate towards the market place – Georgian buildings framing an important gateway to the market place.



KV6b: Looking north east across Cannon Square towards St Swithun's



KV7: Intimate view looking north down Dyers Court important and well used access route from the main shopping area to Chapelgate Car Park, framed by St Swithun's in the distance



KV7a: View beyond the narrow alleyway above opens up with a mural showing women working in the textile industry on the blank wall and St Swithun's beyond



KV8: Looking south west across the market place to the listed Town Hall – square framed by Georgian buildings



KV9a: Looking west along Grove Street important historic route into the centre of Town.



KV10: Looking east along Grove Street traditional shops with the imposing Grove Street Methodist church on the left and Bassetlaw Museum on the right.



KV11: View looking west down Grove Street with the historic buildings providing a sense of enclosure terminated with the view of a neoclassical building in The Square.



KV12: Looking north along Town Hall Yard



KV13: Exchange Street looking West away from the Town Centre terminated view of mature trees in Kings Park award winning park outside the Plan area.



KV14: Looking north from bridge on West Street over the River Idle as it runs through Kings Park shows the contrast of the lush mature vegetation in close proximity to the Georgian red brick urban landscape.



KV15a: Looking west along the tow path of the Chesterfield Canal including the renovated Former Canal Warehouse. This long view shows the dominance of water as a boundary to the Town Centre.



KV15b: Looking east along the Chesterfield Canal. This long view shows the dominance of water as a boundary to the Town Centre.



KV16a: Looking south along Carolgate with a long view to the buildings bounding the Market Place.



KV16b: Looking north along Carolgate sense of enclosure and traditional buildings immediate change of scale after leaving the openness the Market Place.