

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CABINET ROOM, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 6 MAY 2004** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

  
**Contact**  
**(01480)**

### **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2004.

**A Roberts**  
**388009**

**2. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR LAND AT CHEQUERS COURT HUNTINGDON** (Pages 5 - 70)

To consider the Urban Design Framework for land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon and to approve it as a basis for consultation and further discussion.

**R Probyn**  
**388430**

(A copy of the Urban Design Framework has been appended separately to the Agenda).

**3. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK, PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON** (Pages 71 - 74)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services providing a framework for the re-development of the Castle Hill House/Pathfinder House site.

**R Probyn**  
**388430**

(A copy of the Urban Design Framework has been appended separately to the Agenda).

**4. DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN FOR LAND AT PRINCES STREET AND PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON** (Pages 75 - 116)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services seeking approval of the masterplan for the re-development of Princes Street and Pathfinder House

**R Probyn**  
**388430**

**5. DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER OFFICE ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS' ADVISORY GROUP** (Pages 117 - 118)

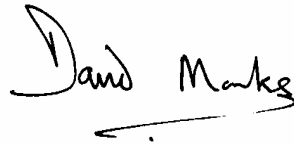
To receive a report of the meeting of the District Council Headquarters and other Office Accommodation Members' Advisory Group held on 7th April 2004.

**A Roberts**  
**388009**

**6. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT** (Pages 119 - 130)

- To consider a report by the Head of Operational Services on the implications of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. **Mrs E Wilson  
388301**
- 7. ENTERTAINMENT ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND** (Pages 131 - 132)
- To consider a report by the Head of Administration on the issuing of public entertainment licences for musical entertainment on privately owned land. **R Reeves  
388003**
- 8. SUNBEDS** (Pages 133 - 138)
- To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) following its study on the use of sun beds. **A Roberts  
388009**
- 9. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN-OFF** (Pages 139 - 140)
- To note a summary by the Head of Revenue Services of debts written off during the quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. **J Barber  
388105**
- 10. SAPLEY SQUARE, HUNTINGDON: PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT: - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES** (Pages 141 - 142)
- To consider a report by the Director of Operational Services seeking approval for securing the necessary professional services for phase 1 and 2. **R Preston  
388340**
- 11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- To resolve:-
- that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed in the course of negotiations for the acquisition/disposal of land or property.
- 12. ACORN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE, SAPLEY SQUARE WEST - PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTUAL ISSUES**
- Further to Minute No. 03/187 and in the light of the Council's decision at its meeting on 7th April 2004 confirming its willingness, subject to appropriate conditions, to fund the Acorn Community Health Centre, to consider a report by the Head of Financial Services (TO FOLLOW) on contractual and other issues reserved to the Cabinet. **S Couper  
388103**

Dated this 5 day of May 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Mankes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Executive

**Please contact Mrs H Lack, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388006 if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Cabinet.**

**Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.**

**Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.**

[Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website –  
www.huntsdc.gov.uk.](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk)

#### ***Emergency Procedure***

*In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.*

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Cabinet Room, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon on Thursday, 22 April 2004

PRESENT: Councillor D P Holley - Chairman

Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler,  
R L Clarke, Mrs K P Gregory, N J Guyatt,  
T V Rogers and L M Simpson

**187. ACORN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE, SAPLEY SQUARE WEST - CONTRACT ISSUES**

The Chairman announced that no report had been published on this matter since the Agenda for the meeting had been circulated and that the item had been withdrawn from the Agenda.

**188. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25th March 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**189. PFI WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE - CONTRACT GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

Consideration was given to a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on progress in relation to the possible procurement of waste collection and disposal services via a Private Finance Initiative. Having considered the issues involved and the suggestion that alternative arrangements for addressing these issues might emerge in conjunction with research yet to be completed, it was

RESOLVED

that consideration of the matter be deferred pending the submission of further information to a future meeting.

**190. RAMSEY NORTHERN GATEWAY: DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

A report by the Head of Planning Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft Urban Design Framework relating to the potential future development of land to the north of Ramsey.

Having noted the content of the framework proposals, the comprehensive nature of the consultation on which it was proposed to embark and the potential outlined by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy for the proposed food store to be located nearer to the town centre, it was

RESOLVED

that the Development guidelines be approved as a basis for further discussion and consultation.

**191. OXMOOR ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT ON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a joint report by the Heads of Community Services and of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the development of a Huntingdon community park at the junction of Coneygear Road and Buttsgrove Way, together with a number of neighbourhood gardens and doorstep greens at Oxmoor, Huntingdon.

It was reiterated that the facilities were to be financed by way of the sale and development of other areas at Oxmoor and a contribution from the S.106 Agreement negotiated with the developers of a housing site at Kings Ripton Road. On the understanding, therefore that detailed budgets for the schemes would be prepared in due course and that staffing proposals would require approval from the Employment Panel, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the creation of a community park for Huntingdon at the junction of Coneygear Road and Buttsgrove Way be approved; and
- (b) that the proposals for funding the development and management of the community park, neighbourhood gardens and doorstep greens as outlined in the report now submitted be approved.

**192. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS - GOVERNANCE PROTOCOL**

*(Councillor L M Simpson declared a prejudicial interest as an employee of Cambridgeshire Constabulary and left the meeting for the duration of discussion and voting on this matter.)*

Pursuant to Minute No. 03/180, the Cabinet gave further consideration to a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a draft Governance Protocol for the development of 18 new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Huntingdonshire.

Having been reminded of the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) on the matter, the Leader reported that the police had agreed to provide the Council with a monthly report on the activities of the PCSOs, which would be circulated to all Members; to deploy PCSOs in such a way as to ensure their visibility in smaller communities; and to continue holding liaison meetings with the Council on a monthly basis. In those circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

that the PCSOs Governance Protocol between the Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary Central Division be approved.

**193. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY**

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the adoption of an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy proposed by the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Huntingdonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy as appended to the report now submitted be approved.

**194. COUNCIL FUNDING OF MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which outlined the implications for the Council of the Government's decision to cap its contribution towards Disabled Facilities Grants. Members noted the numbers of DFGs processed since 2001/02 and the likely future trends which it was anticipated would require the release of £99,000 from the remaining budget for the year. Against that background and the pressure which the Government's decision was likely to place on District Council budgets for the foreseeable future, the Cabinet agreed that monitoring reports should be presented on a quarterly basis for the remainder of the financial year.

In discussing the potential options for a combined approach with the Primary Care Trust to the provision of facilities for the disabled, Members expressed their concern at the timing of the announcement so soon after the start of the new financial year and in the context of the range of additional responsibilities imposed on local authorities without additional funding. In that context, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the release of the budget provision for Disabled Facilities Grants in the current year be approved;
- (b) that applications for Disabled Facilities Grants be dealt with as expeditiously as possible and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting on the projected financial implications arising from the determination of applications with a view to monitoring developments on a quarterly basis; and
- (c) that representations be made via the Local Government Association to convey the Council's extreme disquiet with regard to the Government's decision to cap its contribution towards the cost of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, its timing in

terms of local authority budgeting processes and its impact on local Council Tax payers.

**195. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms for the disposal of property.

**196. 13 CROMWELL ROAD, ST NEOTS**

Further to Minute No. 02/47, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding terms proposed for the sale of a factory premises at 13 Cromwell Road, St Neots.

RESOLVED

that the sale of 13 Cromwell Road, St Neots on the terms set out in the report now submitted be approved.

Chairman

**CABINET**

**6<sup>th</sup> MAY 2004**

**URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR LAND AT CHEQUERS COURT  
HUNTINGDON  
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The land between the High Street and Nursery road was identified as an area of opportunity in the Civic Trust's Vision statement for Huntingdon Town Centre. The Hillier Parker Shopping Study 2001 identified a need for additional shopping floorspace in Huntingdon and confirmed that the best location would be in the Chequers Court area.
- 1.2 Recent enquiries including an application on sites adjacent to the town centre for considerable amounts of floorspace have prompted the urgent need to provide a planning and design framework for the Chequers Court area. This is in order to ensure the proper regeneration of the area and to maintain the viability and vitality of the town centre in accordance with Government advice.
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to consider the Framework and approve it for consultation purposes. Once representations have been received and considered, the guidelines will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance and used when considering the development proposals.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The owners of Chequers Court have recently carried out a modernisation project of their units that run from the High Street to link with the recent development of St Germain Walk and are keen to start the second phase of the redevelopment of Chequers Court. Their intention is to complete the modernisation programme with a facelift of the units fronting the High Street in order to create a main entrance that will lead into the rear part of Chequers Court. This is the part to be redeveloped and includes the large square fronted by the three storey government offices and buildings containing existing retail units on the east and south side.
- 2.2 An agreement has been reached with the District Council ( owners of Trinity Pace Car Park ) and the owners of the car park serving the most recent shopping development to include additional land as part of the new proposal that will complete and complement the existing St Germain Walk development.
- 2.3 The site will be accessed via the existing entrance from the Nursery road adjacent to the Sainsbury store and from a new link close to ATS. This new link will be for traffic from the east and west being

served by the contra flow road along Nursery Road as proposed in the Market Town Strategy.

- 2.4 Initial work on the design of the junction, the contra flow lane and on the impact on the ring road of traffic generated by the proposed development indicate that it will work satisfactorily.

### 3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This framework has been produced through close co-operation with the District Council's Consultants acting as estates, planning and urban design advisers and an agreement on a shared vision. It is considered to be realistic and implementable within the near future although there is an option to carry out a further phase on land outside the control of the District Council and the owner of Chequers Court.

- 3.2 The framework recognises the opportunities that the site provides to improve the quality of built form of the town, to create a better destination for shoppers and visitors to the town and one that adds to the retail offer available to the people of the Huntingdon area by :-

- Increasing the amount of car parking spaces in line with the needs recognised in the car parking study
- Integrating the new development with the existing High Street with better and safer pedestrian links
- Allowing bus penetration into the site and creating bus facilities
- Increasing the variety of shops
- Allowing the downgrading of Hartford Road within the conservation area to access only for residents and businesses in the area

- 3.3 A preferred option is illustrated in the framework . It envisages a total of 10000 sq metres of new retail development on two levels facing Chequers Court and the Sainsbury car park. The surface car park will be reduced in capacity (250spaces) to accommodate the development and to allow a more satisfactory, and safer layout for pedestrians with additional planting. The loss of car parking will be made up with the creation of a multi-storey car park ( 650 spaces) above the retail element. The total height of the building is not to exceed the adjoining retail development.

- 3.4 Active frontages are envisaged for all sides of the development. It is particularly important that the southern face the development retains interest and attracts pedestrian traffic leading to and from Newtons Court and the High Street. Care must also be taken to reduce the conflict between pedestrians, service vehicles and cars using the multi storey car park on this side of the development.

- 3.5 The preferred option is capable of development in phases. The redevelopment of the ATS site and land to the rear of properties in

Hartford Road would form a second phase that would complete the enclosure of the at grade car parking area and be in accordance with the overall design approach.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Discussions will be held with local Members , the Town Council and the Town Centre Partnership on the future shape of this document and to share in its ownership. In addition there will be a consultation process with the usual statutory bodies. Any comments or changes will be brought back to the Cabinet before it is adopted.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 That Cabinet approve the Framework as a base for further discussion and consultation.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A Vision for Redevelopment- Development Guidelines February 2002.  
Planning Guidelines produced by Shillam and Smith October2001

**Contact Officer: Richard Probyn**  
**☎ 01480 388430**

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*Urban Design Framework*  
**Land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon**



*April 2004*

Operational Services - Planning

**Huntingdonshire**  
district council

[www.huntsdc.gov.uk](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk)

Land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon

Urban Design Framework

April 2004

Produced by  
Donaldsons

For

**Huntingdonshire**  
district council

## Report

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Chequers Court v3i

# Contents

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# Contents

# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Planning Brief in draft seeks to bring forward a major high quality, high profile scheme in Huntingdon Town Centre. This new proposed environment will integrate existing Town Centre components, particularly the retail offer along St. Germain Walk, Chequers Court and Newton's Court with the High Street on its western edge and the residential environments to its southern edges.
- 1.2 Once this draft has been the subject of consultation it will be considered by the Cabinet and adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

## **The Site**

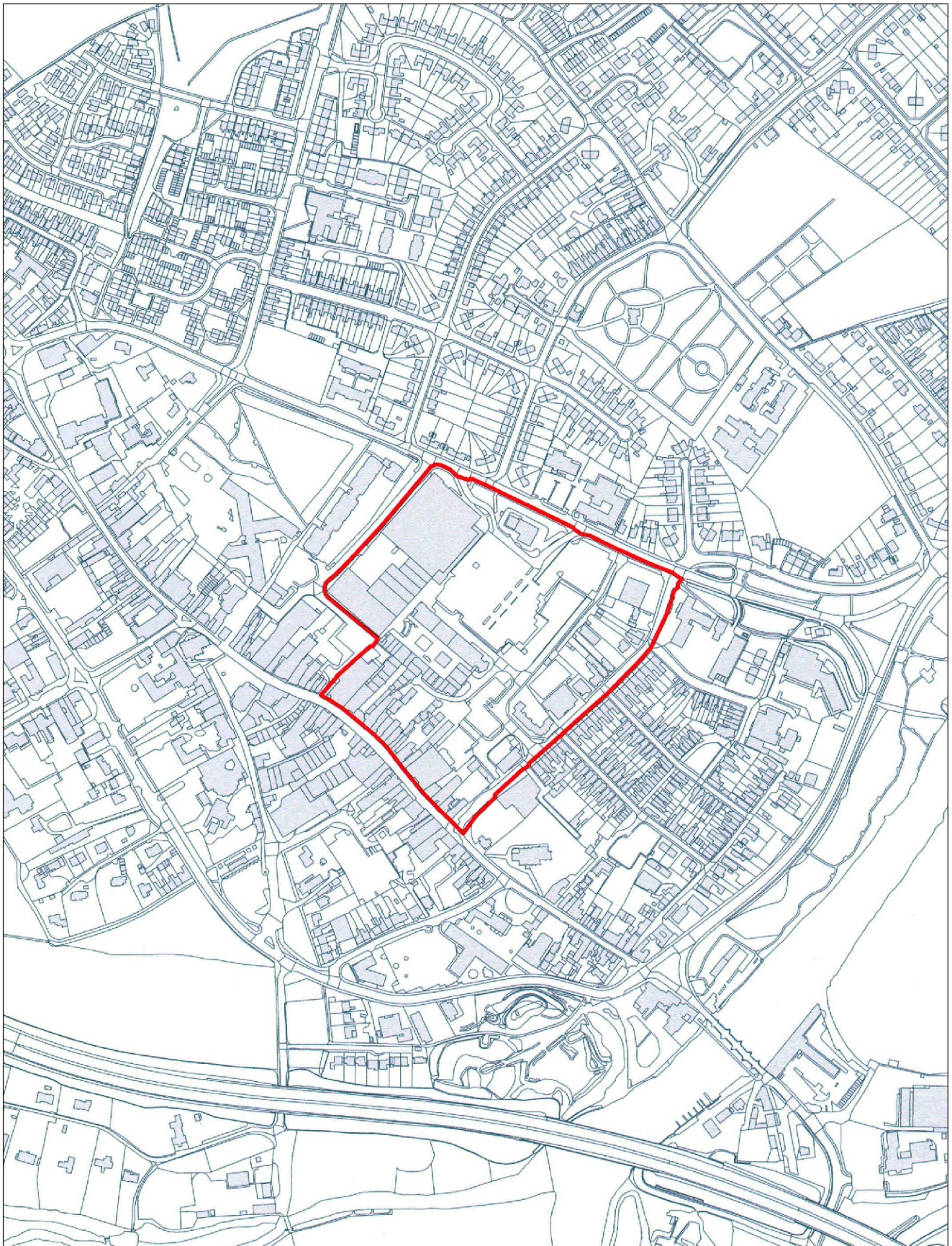
- 1.3 The area covered by this Planning Brief, shown in Figure 1.1, is an important component of the Town Centre and includes the main Town Centre car park and key pedestrian routes from the east into the High Street. The site lies within the ring road, and is the location of several retail units including the Chequers Court shopping area, comprising a range of smaller units, a large proportion of which are occupied by local traders. This links into the more recent St Germain Street scheme, comprising larger, multiple retail units such as Sainsbury's and Wilkinsons, to the Town Centre. Major proposals for the redevelopment of this area is the main focus of the Brief.
- 1.4 A number of office uses are also present on the site, the Government offices (Inland Revenue) being the largest of these. It is understood that the Inland Revenue are re-locating shortly, leaving this space vacant. Car parking spaces are provided on the site, within a Council controlled car park – this being the largest car park in the Town Centre. Two other car park areas are located here, one utilised by the Government office workers, the other, Trinity Place, is located at the rear of the shops fronting the High Street. The houses and offices off Hartford Road back onto this area. The neighbouring ATS site is also included within the red line plan illustrated at Figure 1.1 below.

## **Area Covered by the Planning Brief**

- 1.5 The area covered by the planning brief is identified in Figure 1.1. it is contained to the north by St Germain St. to the west by the High Street, Hartford Road to the south and Nursery Road (ring road) to the east.



**Figure 1.1 - Land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon - Location Plan**



Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.



## **Brief Context**

- 1.6 Huntingdon Town Centre is currently the focus of a number of transport, economic, environmental and retail lead policy initiatives. These initiatives are in response to the recognised need for improvement to the vitality and viability of Huntingdonshire Town Centre in terms of its operational efficiency, retail capacity and quality. The successful redevelopment of the Chequers Court site will significantly contribute to the realisation of many of the strategies' objectives and help challenge both external and internal threats to the future success of the town.
- 1.7 Huntingdonshire District Council commissioned the Civic Trust to prepare an overall vision to guide and stimulate investment in the Town Centre. The final study, published in October 2000, highlighted the need to improve the image and identity of the Centre as the overall environmental quality was considered weak. One of the key areas identified by the study was the need to improve the Chequers Court area and help build a strengthened east-west 'commercial axis'. The key findings of the study and how any new development within the site boundary should respond to this are reviewed below.
- 1.8 In this context, the Council is keen to ensure that the redevelopment of this high profile area benefits from the highest standards of architecture and urban design. Pedestrian movement patterns across the site in an east-west direction from the car park area to the High Street are particularly important and improvements to these routes will be crucial to the success of a comprehensive scheme.
- 1.9 This Planning Brief summarises the relevant urban design, planning, transportation and development issues associated with the implementation of a comprehensive new development on the site. Development principles have been applied to a number of different development concepts on the site as part of the initial process of refining a 'Development Framework' for the area. It is envisaged that a justified masterplan that responds to the framework established in this Planning Brief will form the basis of a future planning application.

## **Stakeholder Involvement**

- 1.10 The Planning Brief has evolved through a process of consultation with Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and key landowners and tenants within the Centre.
- 1.11 The Planning Brief reflects the diversity of views of the District Council and the main consultees. The Brief seeks to broker between the differing priorities to create a common base from which a detailed masterplan can be established.

## **Development Principles**

- 1.12 The Brief envisages a Huntingdon Town Centre of the future to be a mixed-use sustainable area that provides a strong retail core with housing, offices and leisure development adding to the diversity of use, with quality public transport facilities and safe and secure car parking provision.
- 1.13 The vision is to create the opportunity for development that substantially enhances the retail capacity and quality of the Chequers Court retail offer, improves the links to other Town Centre components, improves both the quantum and quality of the car parking offer, and significantly improves the urban environment. It involves creating a lively, contemporary, high quality retail environment that will integrate improved car parking with existing businesses and neighbourhoods in and around the Town Centre. The future of this area is to be seen as an exemplar of sustainable development which will result in an urban environment of which the local community can be proud.

## **Purpose of the Brief**

1.14 The purpose of the Planning Brief is to:

- Set out a clear Development Framework that establishes the key components which will underpin the comprehensive redevelopment of the area;
- Provide clear direction of the type of development required by potential developers – focusing on redeveloping the Chequers Court buildings facing onto the car park and main pedestrian routes and achieving improved townscape quality and pedestrian priority both within and beyond the site;
- Establish a design philosophy that promotes a high quality retail environment which will further enhance the existing retail uses of the site, such as Sainsbury's and Wilkinsons;
- Improve the car parking, taxi services and accessibility by bus and provide easy pedestrian movement through the area and beyond;
- Reflect the key aspirations of the main landowners and statutory bodies and to gain their support for the vision of the Chequers Court site; and
- Provide the statutory planning policy framework which will assist in any necessary land acquisitions via Compulsory Purchase Order, if necessary.

1.15 In order to achieve the aims set out above, the Planning Brief has the following objectives:

1. *Regeneration objectives*:- to promote the revitalisation of the Chequers Court retail development area, to act as a successful link between the Town Centre car park, Sainsburys and the High Street and act as a catalyst for regenerating the surrounding areas;
2. *Development objectives*:- to create a commercially viable development that enhances the prime commercial/retail east-west axis, making Huntingdon Town Centre a desirable commercial and residential destination as well as a lively and attractive place to experience;
3. *Urban design objectives*:- to create a distinctive and memorable retail quarter in Huntingdon. The retail units should be designed to the highest quality in order to attract new retailers to Chequers Court and create a pleasant environment for shoppers in Huntingdon. Development should also adhere to the wider sustainable development principles; and
4. *Access objectives*:- to develop a strong fine-grained, permeable network of routes that maximises the east-west links between the car park and the High Street along Chequers Court and Newton's Court. Improvements to the northern access to the site from St Germain St. and southern approach from Hartford Road should also be considered. Enable buses and taxis to pick up and set down passengers within the development.

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

1.16 The following characteristics are important in considering the future development of this site:-

### *Site attributes*

- High profile area forming an eastern gateway into Huntingdon Town Centre;
- Identified in the Local Plan and 'Civic Trust Vision' as a key development opportunity;
- Substantial car parking provision which could be improved;
- Key stores such as Sainsbury and Wilkinsons are present in strategic locations;

- A regeneration opportunity of strategic importance for Huntingdon;
- Key opportunity to enhance the east-west retail axis in the Town; and
- Good road connectivity, being on the inner ring road - opportunity to exploit new road layouts, traffic management initiatives and be better served by public transport.

#### *Site Constraints*

- Poor physical and commercial linkages between the car park and the Town Centre retail core;
- Ring road layout reduces ease of access to the site by car;
- Significant barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement - poor environmental quality and site levels;
- Insufficient car parking and poor parking layout;
- Poor traffic management arrangements on site - pedestrian/vehicle conflicts arise, in particular service access arrangements need to be reviewed and separated where possible from service cores;
- Part of the existing area suffers from a negative image and problems of vandalism, crime and fear of crime;
- Poor physical environment – environmental assets such as open spaces are poorly defined and not properly highlighted;
- Poor enclosure of pedestrian routes - some open into service cores and blank facades - level changes poorly treated;
- Food supermarket not trading as well as it should primarily due to the fact that there is poor site accessibility. The car park is currently congested, with cars waiting for spaces, making the environment currently unattractive to shoppers coming to Huntingdon. In addition, there is limited pedestrian flow between the High Street and Chequers Court, possibly due to the limited range and mix of units. The ability to modify car park layout will be influenced by requirement to ensure sufficient capacity during construction phase; and
- Proximity of residential properties on southern edge of site will have to be considered in respect of new developments on this site.



## **2 Policy Context**

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2.1 The relevant statutory planning framework for the area is set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, adopted in 1995. In addition to this the material planning considerations that need to be taken into account include:

- National Planning Guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's);
- Regional Planning Guidance including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Structure Plan Deposit Draft 2002; and
- Market Town Transport Strategy for Huntingdon and Godmanchester.

### **National Planning Guidance**

2.2 Relevant guidance is found in PPG1, PPG6, PPG13 and PPG3.

### **PPG1: General Policies and Principles**

2.3 PPG1 puts sustainable development, mixed-use and urban design at the heart of the Government's approach to planning. Guidance states that urban regeneration and the re-use of previously-developed land are important supporting objectives for creating a more sustainable pattern of development. Emphasis is placed on concentrating development for uses which generate a large number of trips in places well-served by public transport, especially town centres.

2.4 In stressing that mixed-use development can help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel, Guidance states that major mixed-use developments which would attract a significant number of trips should be in locations which are well served by public transport, have adequate infrastructure and are properly integrated, in terms of land use and design, with surrounding areas. In considering the importance of good urban design, PPG1 states that it can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.

### **PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Development**

2.5 One of the key features of PPG6 is its promotion of mixed-use development and the retention of key Town Centre uses. The importance of good urban design is also emphasised. Central to this is the need to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. The important role that can be played by the evening and leisure economy is emphasised.

### **PPS6: Draft Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning For Town Centres**

2.6 The Government has now published a draft consultation of a document intended to replace PPG6 and its clarifications under Caborn (1999) and McNulty (2003). The update of this document seeks higher density, diversity and mixed use within town centres and will have potentially significant impact to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), developers, investors and other key stakeholders in property.

### **Key policies and proposed changes**

2.7 The Government emphasis, in the draft PPS6, that the core policy framework of PPG6 should be maintained with key considerations ensuring:

- The need for the development;
- That the development is of an appropriate scale;
- That there are no more central sites for the development;
- That there are no unacceptable impacts arising to centres from the development; and
- That locations are accessible;
- Scale and format of operators is also recognised.

### **PPG13: Transport**

- 2.8 The guidance contained in PPG13 seeks to promote more sustainable transport choices, to promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure uses and services by sustainable modes and to reduce the need to travel. PPG13 seeks to integrate planning and transportation. Local authorities are urged to seek to make the best use of the most accessible sites, such as those in town centres. Guidance also sets out the benefits of mixed-use development, in terms of promoting vitality and diversity, and in promoting walking as a primary mode of travel.

### **Regional Policy Guidance 6 (East Anglia) (November 2000)**

- 2.9 Regional Policy Guidance for East Anglia (November 2000) (RPG6) advises that town and local centres should continue to be the main focus of social and economic life and should be the preferred location for development. RPG6 sets out the growth potential of the main urban areas and the Cambridge sub-region, which includes the area surrounding Cambridge as far as the market towns of St Neots and Huntingdon in Huntingdonshire.

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

- 2.10 The Structure Plan has recently been adopted in late 2003. The new Structure Plan is proposed at a time of major growth in the economy needs of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. The Plan rolls forward to the period 2016. The following are key policy areas which have been considered in relation to Chequers Court.

#### **Places for Work**

- 2.11 Policy P2/1 addresses the strategic employment strategy for the region. Economic growth will be supported in Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire by securing investment in physical infrastructure and supporting social, environmental and community initiatives which will assist economic regeneration and taking full advantage of the range of existing land allocations and vacant or under-used sites in the area.

#### **City, Town and Rural Centres**

- 2.12 Under **Policy P3/1** the vitality and the attractiveness of city and town centres will be promoted and enhanced through the development and implementation of integrated City and Town Centre Strategies. This includes:
- Supporting the role of the city and town centres as the primary locations for shopping, employment, leisure, culture and entertainment;
  - Seeking to diversify and enhance the local economy through the provision of a wide range of services and facilities;
  - Encourage a high quality environment; and
  - Reducing the impact of traffic on centres.

#### **Movement and Access**

- 2.13 **Policy P8/1** establishes the link between land use and transport and new development will not be permitted unless it:
- Is located in areas that are highly accessible by public transport, cycle and foot;
  - Is designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car;
  - Provides opportunities for travel choice;
  - Provides for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and bus users; and
  - Provides appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.
- 2.14 New development will be required to make provision for integrated and improved transport infrastructure through financial contributions and direct improvements to transport networks, to increase the ability to move by cycle,

public transport and on foot (**Policy P8/2**). Travel Plans will be required to accompany new non-residential developments and the expansion of existing non-residential developments as a means of reducing car dependency and promoting alternative modes of travel.

- 2.15 In Cambridge, Peterborough and the Market Towns, parking standards for non-residential development should not exceed the standards specified in PPG13.

### **Local Plan Context**

#### **Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan (adopted December 1995)**

- 2.16 The Local Plan comprises the Huntingdonshire Local Plan adopted in 1995. Alterations to the adopted Local Plan which amends settlement strategy, promotes new housing allocations and provides new policies on housing and planning obligations was adopted on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002. The review of the adopted 1995 Local Plan is due to begin in June 2003 when issues papers will be published. The review of the adopted 1995 Local Plan has begun with the publication of an issues report, and will feed into the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.
- 2.17 In view of the nature and scale of development envisaged on the Chequers Court site, most areas of Local Plan Policy are relevant. However, in putting forward a Development Framework for the area, this Brief outlines chiefly those policies relevant to the proposal site falling within the Town Centre boundary area together with other key policies.

### **Site Allocations**

- 2.18 Part of the subject site is allocated as a Town Centre Redevelopment Commitment. The Local Plan does not detail proposed uses for this site in policy. Rather the written justification indicates the District Council's wish to secure the implementation of a town centre redevelopment scheme on and around the area of Chequers Court.

### **Site Designations**

- 2.19 Frontages along the High Street and Chequers Court are designated as frontages to be protected for retail use. Sections to the east of the site are designated as Conservation Areas, further constraining development. Each of these designations will be addressed in turn.

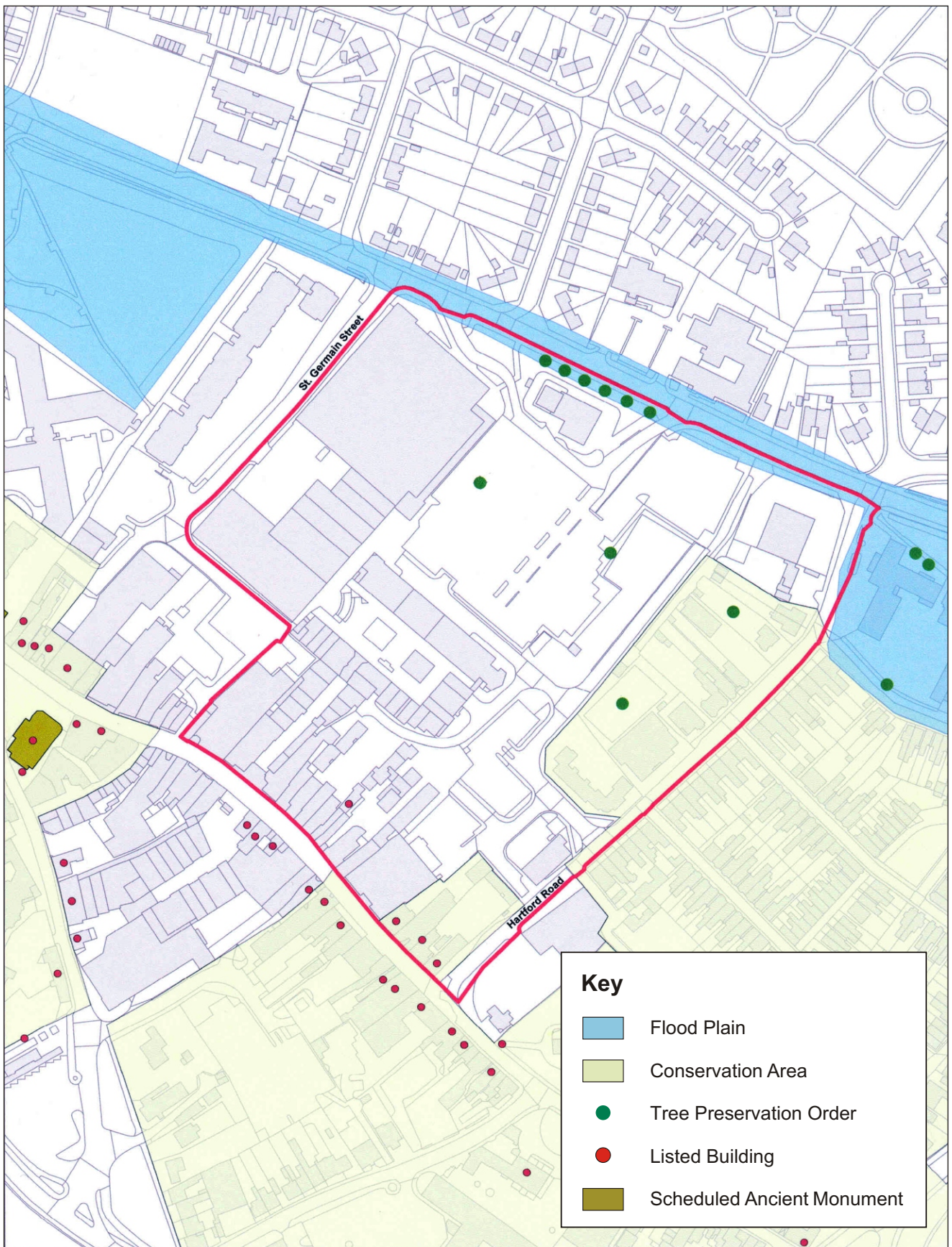
### **Conservation Areas**

- 2.20 Part of the subject site, as shown in Figure 1, is designated as a Conservation Area. **Policy En5** states that development within or directly affecting conservation areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance.
- 2.21 Furthermore, under **Policy En6** the District Council will require high standards of design in Conservation Areas with careful consideration being given to the scale and form of development in the area and to the use of sympathetic materials and appropriate colour and texture.
- 2.22 If demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, conservation area consent may be withheld until acceptable plans for the new development have been approved (**Policy En8**).

### **Huntingdon Town Centre and Shopping Policy**

- 2.23 The general town centre policies of the Adopted Plan provide a good summary of the Council objectives for Huntingdon Town Centre (**Policies S1 and S2**). These policies state that new development, which is not likely to have an adverse effect on the established shopping centres, will be permitted. However, proposals will be assessed taking into account the likely effect of the new proposals on the overall viability and vitality of these established centres and their effect on traffic movements.

**Figure 5.0 - Context and Constraints Plan**



Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.

- 2.24 Furthermore, individual shopping proposals will need to be satisfactory in terms of siting, design, car parking, servicing, accessibility by car, foot, cycle and public transport, environmental impact and conservation.
- 2.25 Turning to major convenience shopping development, proposals for 15,000 square feet of sales floorspace or over, will normally be located within or immediately adjacent to the established town centre shopping areas (**Policy S3**).

### **The Shopping Environment**

- 2.26 A number of policies within the adopted Local Plan refer to the shopping environment. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the vitality of established town centres by carrying out environmental improvement schemes, providing adequate car parking, and maintaining an appropriate mix of commercial, retail and residential uses (**Policy S10**).
- 2.27 **Policy S12** must also be addressed which seeks to retain existing retail units within the town centres. This policy aims to minimise the loss of retail units to other uses and hence retain the viability and vitality of the town centres.
- 2.28 Proposals for A3 uses will have to be determined against **Policy S14** where criteria will be considered including the effect on adjacent and nearby residential properties, car parking facilities and general highway implications and the proposed hours of opening and whether they can be controlled by restrictive planning conditions.

### **Transport Policy**

- 2.29 As a result of the nature and scale of the change envisaged through the Development Framework, there are very significant implications in terms of transport policy, particularly in terms of access, movement and parking. Relevant policies can be found throughout the transport section of the adopted Local Plan. As indicated above, the improvements put forward in this Planning Brief are considered to supplement many of the policies seeking to improve provision for pedestrians and public transport.
- 2.30 Under **Policy T9** the District Council will press for a new road scheme to relieve congestion on the Huntingdon ring road and approach roads to the Town. The District Council considers that a third crossing of the River Great Ouse is required to relieve the Huntingdon Ring Road and Godmanchester. The Market Town Strategy considered this bypass but rejected it at this stage as being outside the scope of the present strategy.

### **Bus Travel**

- 2.31 The Council will support proposals which maintain or improve the present level of public transport services (**Policy T21**). There is currently no direct bus access into the Chequers Court area.

### **Car Parking**

- 2.32 The Council in accordance with the recently adopted Structure Plan state that parking standards should not exceed the standards specified in PPG 13. Parking provision is an important element in making Huntingdon a successful town centre, this is a particular area that needs addressing as the lack of high quality parking is acting as a deterrent to potential shoppers coming to Huntingdon. A recent report conducted by The Transportation Consultancy (TPI), on behalf of the Council, notes that due to the major growth in Huntingdon, and its importance as a retail and employment centre leads to a shortfall of around 430 spaces by 2016. Parking will be reviewed further at paragraph 4.10 of this report.

### **Environment Policy**

- 2.33 Key policies concerning the conservation area designation of part of the site are set out in sections 2.24 – 2.26. In addition to these policies it is important to address Policy En20. This states that wherever appropriate, the grant of



planning permission for development will be subject to conditions requiring the execution of an approved landscaping scheme.

- 2.34 Access for the disabled is addressed in **Policy En24** where the Council will encourage the provision of access for the disabled in the design of new development and where necessary take account of the adequacy of provision in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.35 Turning to design new development should generally respect the scale, form, materials and design of established buildings in the locality of the application site and where appropriate make adequate provision for landscaping and amenity areas (**Policy En25**).

### **Local Transport Plan**

- 2.36 The Transport Strategy for Huntingdon and Godmanchester forms part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The aim of the strategy will be to provide a five-year programme of integrated transport initiatives up until 2008 that supports the LTP objectives.
- 2.37 Huntingdon is one of the most accessible market towns in the country due to its road and rail links. Huntingdon has a range of transport services including rail and bus in addition to major road links with the A1 and A14.
- 2.38 Six main proposals are set out in the Transport Strategy:
- i) *Making Travel Safer:-* the Strategy identifies locations for safety improvements including the Huntingdon Inner Ring Road and Hartford Road;
  - ii) *Huntingdon Ring Road:-* the Strategy proposes a new link road through the proposed west of Town Centre development site between Ermine Street and George Street; removing traffic between St Mary's Street and Hartford Road (except for buses, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians) and creating a new lane on the ring road between the Bridge Hotel and Hartford Road and along Nursery Road to this development site running in the opposite direction to the ring road;
  - iii) *Walking and Cycling:-* Proposed improvements include a comprehensive cycle network; new cycle parking in the Town Centre; introduction of new signage to reinforce the existing pedestrianisation and production of a comprehensive cycling and walking map;
  - iv) *Bypass Improvements:-* The provision of additional capacity at the four roundabouts on the A141 bypass is proposed;
  - v) *Public Transport:-* Proposed measures include an extension to the Town Centre services to provide an additional loop through Hinchingsbrooke residential areas; improved rail/bus interchange at Huntingdon Rail Station; provision of integrated information and a number of bus lanes including contra-flow bus lane on the ring road between George Street and the bus station and an extra lane for the Guided Bus along Nursery Road from the development site in the St. Ives direction.
  - vi) *Car Parking:-* The Study will consider ways of ensuring there remains sufficient parking places to serve shoppers and short stay users within the Town Centre whilst balancing this with providing adequate facilities for other users, such as long stay, all day parking. This is discussed further in Section 6 of this report.

### **The Design Guide**

- 2.39 In preparing a development scheme for this site the basic consideration set out in part 1 of the Design Guide need to be taken into account.

### **3 Land Use Consideration**

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#### **Retail Assessment**

- 3.1 In August 2001 CB Hillier Parker produced, on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, a Retail Study for Huntingdonshire. The report undertook both a qualitative and quantitative assessment of retail in Huntingdon.

#### **Qualitative Assessment of Huntingdon**

- 3.2 The report concludes that in terms of qualitative assessment Huntingdon has a good choice of convenience provision, with three Town Centre main foodstores, an out of centre superstore, some smaller multiple and local food retailers and a twice weekly market. The report goes on to state that the Centre does, however, lack food provision at the discount or value end of the market.
- 3.3 Comparison goods provision in Huntingdon is mainly middle market and the Centre lacks clothing and footwear provision and gifts and luxury goods. The report stresses that the Chequers Court scheme is in need of refurbishment/redevelopment.
- 3.4 The report goes on to comment on the commercial leisure offer in Huntingdon which it concludes is limited, particularly for eating and drinking out, with a lack of wine bars, pubs and restaurants.

#### **Quantitative Assessment of Huntingdon**

- 3.5 Convenience goods retailers in the Town Centre are currently under-performing. The report comments that this is likely to reflect the poor performance of Sainsbury's on the Chequers Court Site, rather than Waitrose and Tesco at other locations within or out of the centre. Some convenience goods capacity in Huntingdon has been forecast by virtue of the overtrading of the out of centre Tesco, however, this is balanced by the under-trading of the Town Centre stores.
- 3.6 Overall, the report concludes that in quantitative terms there is not considered to be scope for further large scale convenience retailing over the Replacement Local Plan period. There may however, be capacity towards 2011 sufficient to support a smaller supermarket, such as a discount food retailer, but the priority is to improve the performance of the existing foodstore anchors, in particularly Sainsburys.
- 3.7 Huntingdon is trading adequately in terms of comparison goods, both in-centre and the out of centre retail warehouses. It is estimated that there is capacity to support further comparison goods floorspace in Huntingdon Town Centre over the Replacement Local Plan period. The CB Hillier Parker Retail Capacity Study, notes a requirement of over 5,000 sq m of additional comparison floorspace required in Huntingdon town centre by 2011. In addition, a further 4,370 sq m net of additional bulky durable goods retailing by 2011, based on the current market share.
- 3.8 Potential opportunity for the redevelopment and further expansion of the Chequers Court scheme is also identified in the report and it is recommended that the site should be allocated as a redevelopment opportunity within the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.9 A number of significant potential benefits are indicated in the report through the redevelopment of Chequers Court including:
- i) the potential to enhance the turnover of existing Town Centre retailers through increased footfall;
  - ii) the extension and improvement of existing primary shopping frontage within the Town Centre;
  - iii) the considerable enhancement of the existing Chequers Court scheme and a more seamless integration within the remainder of the Town Centre;

- iv) the potential to improve the number of car spaces in this important town centre location; and
- v) the improvement of pedestrian linkages to the Town Centre.

1.17 A need has therefore been identified within the report for further retail floorspace, and the opportunities to and the benefits of that need at Chequers Court has been identified.

### **Demand**

3.10 The Churchmanor Estates development at St Germain Walk has increased the quality of convenience and comparison shopping in the Town Centre, as well as providing a greater range of units in terms of size. The offer of larger units would undoubtedly attract investment from comparison goods retailers.

3.11 The development of new units within the Town Centre to accommodate the size requirements of key comparison retailers is vital to ensure that Huntingdon retains a respectable proportion of comparison goods relative to the nearby regional centres of Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford. Further developments at Chequers Court and other centre sites will enhance, the Town's appeal as a comparison goods destination.

3.12 Initial discussions with Churchmanor Estates have shown that there is considerable interest from national and single operators for all the proposed units. Operators are likely to be new to the Town rather than relocation from the High Street, thus strengthening the retail mix.



## 4 Highways & Movement

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### Movement

- 4.1 The site borders the ring road which travels around the Town of Huntingdon. This road is two lanes, one-way flow of traffic from northwest to southeast.
- 4.2 Vehicular access into and out of the Town Centre car park is off the ring road at two points, both controlled by traffic lights. Another vehicular access onto the site is off Hartford Road via Trinity Place.
- 4.3 Service routes to the retail units on and around the site are provided by both Trinity Place to the Chequers Court shopping area and St Germain Street to the Sainsbury's supermarket and adjacent retail units. Due to the size and number of retail units being served, these routes and areas are busy with regular deliveries made by large lorries.
- 4.4 The Town Centre car park is linked to the High Street, the adjacent shopping area of Chequers Court and the surrounding residential area by a number of pedestrian routes.
- 4.5 The primary route from the car park to the High Street is past the St Germain Walk retail development and through Chequers Court. This route is pedestrianised and therefore provides a safe and convenient access to the High Street and beyond. Another 'undesignated' route by Wilkinsons has now been blocked off in order to increase pedestrian safety.
- 4.6 Huntingdon bus station is located within the ring road, on the opposite side of the High Street to the site, and can be reached via the pedestrianised route through Chequers Court, St Benedict's Court and Princes Street. Buses travel frequently along the ring road and Hartford Road, to and from the bus station, to many of Huntingdon's estates and outlying villages as well as nearby settlements of St Ives and Cambridge. However, no buses penetrate the Chequers Court area directly, making the area less inviting to potential shoppers/visitors.
- 4.7 From the surrounding area outside the ring road, pedestrian access is achieved via a light controlled crossing over the ring road, adjacent to the petrol station. This provides, along with the other routes mentioned above, a pedestrianised link from one side of the ring road to the other, travelling through the heart of the Town Centre and across the High Street.
- 4.8 There are no specifically designated cycle routes in the area. This area is currently been addressed as part of the Council's Cycling Strategy.
- 4.9 The Town Centre car park on the site is particularly congested as it is the closest and most convenient parking area for the High Street, Chequers Court and the large supermarket within the St Germain Street development.

### Parking

- 4.10 Transportation Planning (International) Ltd, (Tpi), was appointed by Huntingdonshire District Council in July 2002 to undertake a parking study and identify options for a future strategy for the four towns of Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey.
- 4.11 In this study, Huntingdon shows the largest shortfall with a requirement for nearly 430 additional spaces by 2016 and 200 by 1011 on a peak weekday. The current surplus of spaces will be fully taken up in the next few years. Unless additional space is provided, the shortfall could produce negative affects for the town centre, such as:
- Trips are made to other centres; and
  - Fewer, longer trips are made to the town centre.

- 4.12 The consultants carrying out this study were aware of the proposals for redevelopment at Chequers Court, which envisages larger units than are currently provided and noted the possible inclusion of a multi-storey car park.
- 4.13 The provision of 430 additional spaces in Huntingdon to cater for the unconstrained demand to 2016 is a difficult task for the Council. In order for Huntingdon to maintain an attractive destination for residents and visitors this additional parking must be found.
- 4.14 Therefore, in light of the severe shortage in car parking spaces it is advisable that the Council take a pro-active stance in recognising Chequers Court as the most appropriate site for additional town centre car parking to compliment the existing and proposed retail facilities.
- 4.15 This is inline with the District Council who recently approved a car parking strategy that recognised the need to meet the parking needs of existing and planned development, provide an appropriate mix of public car parking and ensure that the majority of spaces within the town centre are short term serving the needs of shoppers for the benefit of the economy.

## 5 Urban Design Approach

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### Site Description

- 5.1 St Germain Walk is the main pedestrian route from Sainsburys to the High Street. There has been some improvements in recent years in order to maintain the overall environment, however, the 1960's architecture still dominates Chequers Court and detracts from the overall area.
- 5.2 Around Chequers Court and leading up to the Square and around Chequers Court, there is an awkward change of level of about 1.5m. Rather than climb the steps or use the ramp provided, many shoppers have preferred in the past to use the short cut of the St Germain Street service yard at the rear of Argos, and did not pass the shops in Chequers Court. This route has now been closed off in order to secure the safety of passers-by and direct pedestrian movement through Chequers Court.
- 5.3 The square itself has been refurbished but still appears run down and not an attractive space. The marginal trading of the shop units on the north-east side illustrates that the space is too large and not sufficiently well used.
- 5.4 There have however, been some recent improvements to the area, for example, the corner buildings forming the opening in the two-storey retail frontage on the south-west side of the square have been refurbished to form a matching gateway. In addition, Churchmanor have carried out enhancement to some of the shop units along the north-west side of the Court. The District Council is currently giving consideration for plans to replace the oppressively low archway to join the High Street.
- 5.5 The Sainsbury's Store encloses the north-west side of the car park comprising a 1-2 storey timber framed structure supporting a red tiled-pitched roof. The south west side is enclosed by the flat roofed bulk of the 4 storey brick Chequers Court building which is both too large and too bland to make a positive contribution to the space. There is no activity on the ground level as the internal ground floor is below Chequers Way road level.
- 5.6 The north-east side of the car park is partially open to the domestic scale building fronting the one way system along Nursery Road, and partially obscured by the PFS which occupies a strategic location between the car entrance and exit points leading to an inefficient use of space.
- 5.7 A line of trees and bushes encloses the fourth side of the car park. This hides a service lane that provides access to the garages of the houses fronting Hartford Road. The view is completed by the cluttered service area at the rear of the Inland Revenue building and the exposed rear service yards of the High Street shops and the unattractive Job Centre office building. The overall impression is of an untidy collection of backs and undefined edges that present a poor impression of the town centre as seen from the Ring Road.

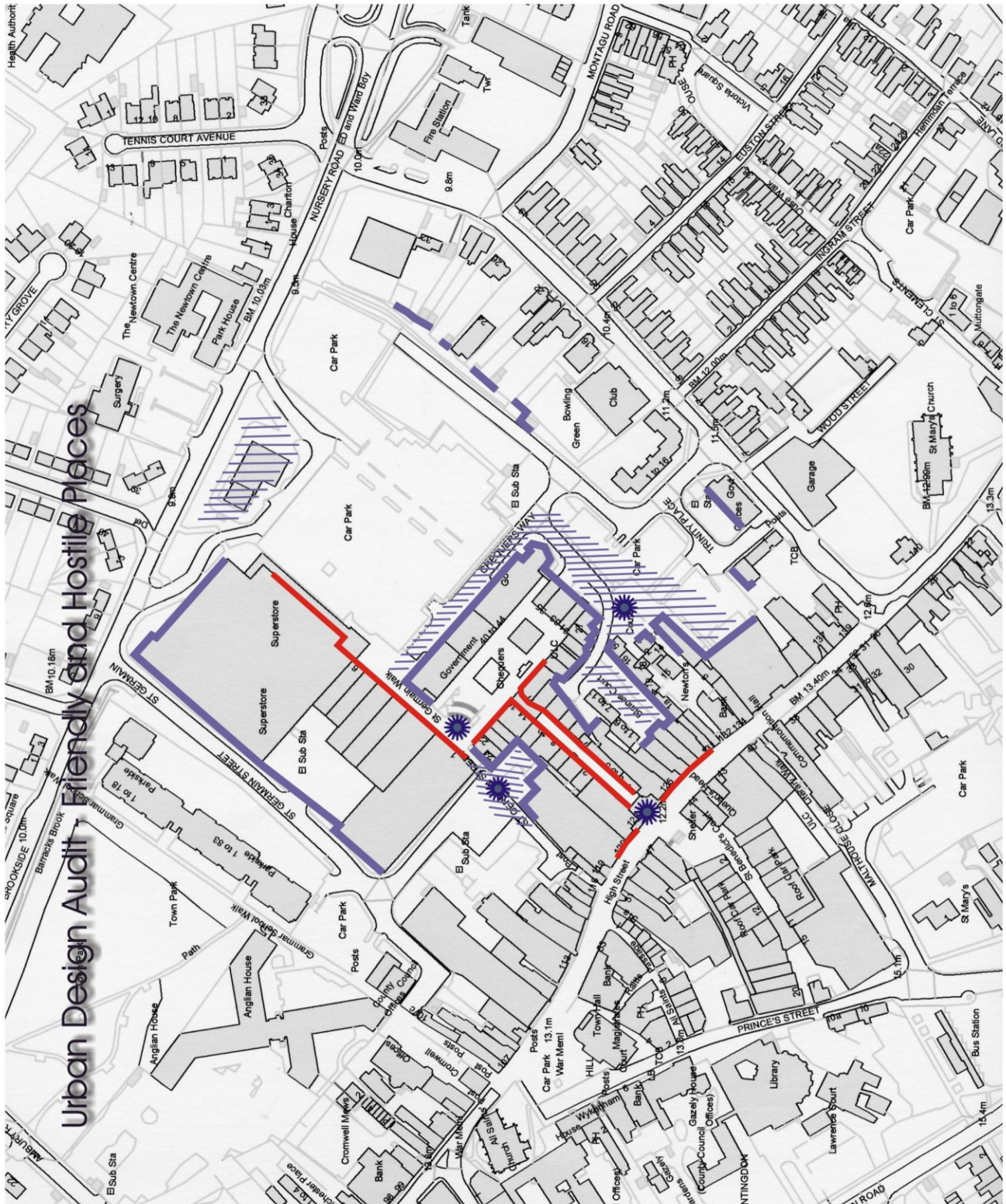
### Urban Design Audit

- 5.8 The Urban Design audit exposed a number of issues that the new Development Framework must seek to resolve. These include:
- Chequers Court is an unsightly building block that makes a negative contribution on all four sides, both to the immediate pedestrian environment, and within the overall townscape scene. The large and bulky flat roof does not disguise the 4-storey height and clashes with the grain and roofscape of the rest of the town.
  - Chequers Court Square is too large to support active frontages on both sides and suffers from the poorly designed change of level that discourages use by shoppers;

- This results in there being an ambiguous choice of pedestrian routes that link the Sainsburys retail cluster to the High Street to the detriment of shops in both locations;
- The main pedestrian link into the High Street emerges below an oppressively low and dark gateway and does not present an inviting face to attract shoppers to the Sainsburys side of the Town Centre;
- The large car park is unattractively laid out with insufficient planting to screen the cars and provides insufficient spaces to meet projected demand;
- Newton's Court leads down a narrow alley from the High Street and provides a useful location for small retail units but users must pass through inhospitable service areas and past blank walls to reach the car park;
- The whole area is bounded by one-way streets on two sides and feels cut off from adjacent areas; and
- Links from the Victoria Square conservation area bounded by Hartford Road must cross a wasteland of service areas to reach the shops.

5.9 The Urban Design Audit Plan. 'Friendly and Hostile Spaces' (Figure 5.1) summarises these aspects.

Fig. 5.1



Based on the Orance Survey Mapping (c) Crown Copyright.

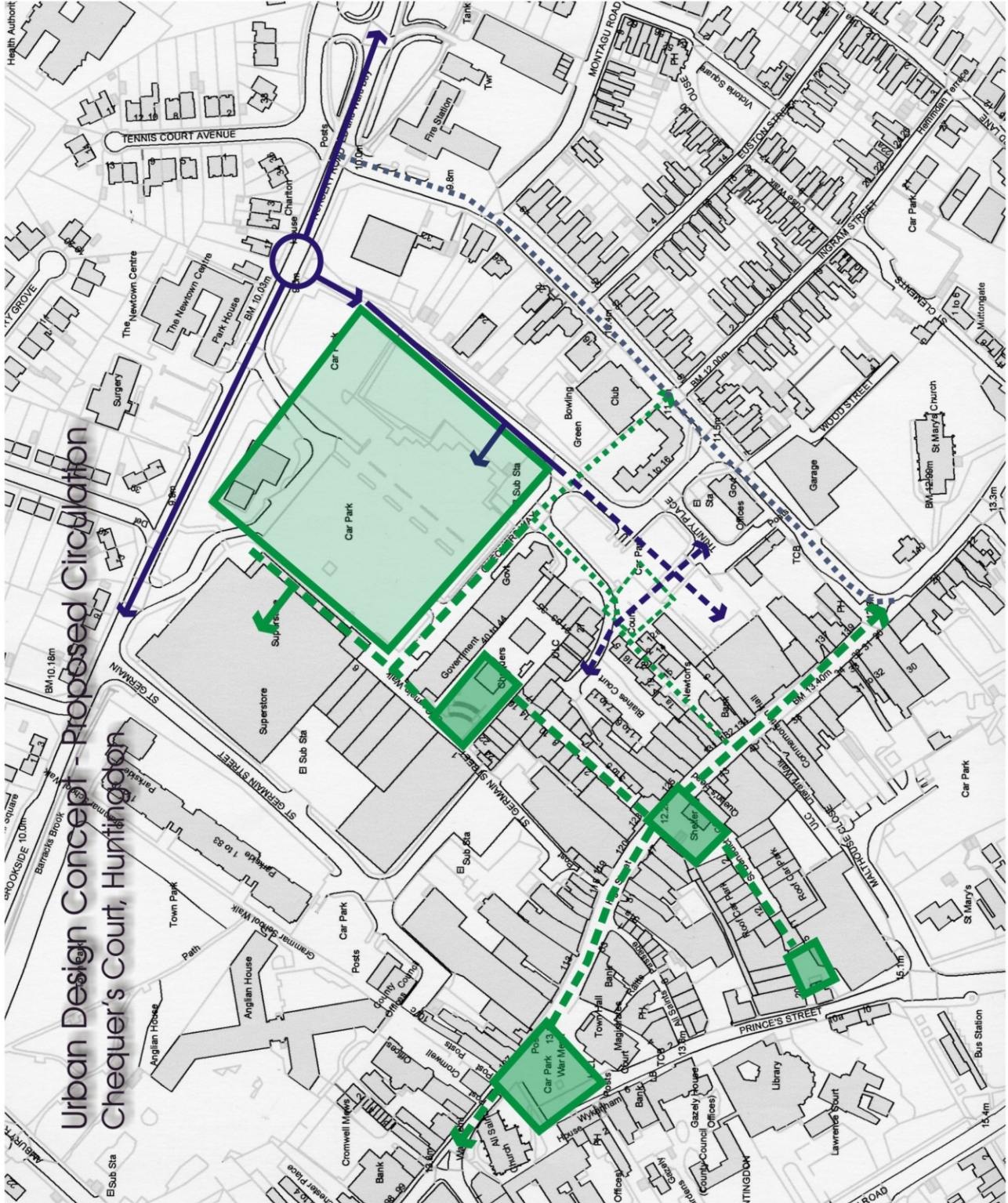
## Urban Design Objectives

5.10 Following on from the Urban Design Audit a number of objectives can be formulated which the framework plans and redevelopment schemes must seek to achieve.

- The urban design approach needs to reflect the Town Centre location rather than an out of town ethos. This will determine the architectural design of buildings to create street frontages, the design of street furniture and landscape, highway layouts must be urban and pedestrian friendly and signage should be coordinated and discreet;
- The existing Sainsbury's retail cluster should act as a catalyst for future high quality retail units in order to strengthen retail and car parking provision;
- There needs to be one clear principal pedestrian route to link to the High Street through Chequers Court, which attracts shoppers and casual users along a strengthened east-west axis through the Town Centre.
- A secondary route through Newton's Court can provide variety to building scale and space for small-scale uses. This would also connect to the main pedestrian route without passing through threatening service areas;
- New buildings need to provide for the large retail spaces required by potential occupiers;
- Pedestrian links to the Victoria Square and the Riverside need to be improved to encourage more people to walk to the Town Centre;
- Shoppers given a choice of better access from St Germain Walk to Chequers Court,
- Improve level changes around the Square to make easier access for the elderly, young and disabled;
- Provide an increased number of convenient located car parking spaces.
- Buses to be accommodated within the site.
- New access to Nursery Road to allow Hartford Road to be traffic calmed.



Fig. 5.2



Based on the Ordnance Survey Mapping (c) Crown Copyright.

## 6 Suggested Development Framework

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### Urban Design Options

6.1 A number of urban design layouts have been generated which respond to the Urban Design Audit and Objectives based on the Shillam & Smith Report (April 2001). Two of the key aims of the proposals are to encourage 'active' frontages and to foster a night-time economy with the introduction of possible A3 units into the Chequers Court area. Two out of the four options have been dismissed due to financial feasibility, but the others are considered in greater detail. A summary of options 1 & 2 are detailed below. Both options have the remaining common themes:

- Enclosing a central service court servicing all units with continuous retail frontages to a remodelled Chequers Court. Entrance to the service area via a gateway adjacent to the retained Newton's Court;
- Ensuring genuinely 'Active' frontages;
- A new service access street links to a new all movement junction at the proposed two way section of Nursery Road allowing Hartford Road to be traffic calmed as a two way residential street;
- Introduction of an evening economy including A3 units;
- A significant increase in parking provision in a town centre location.
- Additional car park provision;
- Maintain the Petrol Filling Station where it is;
- Allowing busses to penetrate the development

#### **OPTION 1**

##### Advantages

- Ease of implementation, no change to PFS;
- Clear pedestrian routes;
- Open prospect from new residential blocks; and
- Flats and offices over retail add vitality to town centre
- Access for busses

##### Disadvantages

- Retail facing Newton's Court may be marginal due to lower pedestrian flow and
- M/S car park visually dominant and blocks views of shops from Nursery Road

<b>Retail:</b>	Ground Floor 5,600m2 gross plus 1,000 m2 Blaines Court site
<b>Residential:</b>	First and Second Floor 4,400 m2
<b>Offices:</b>	First and second Floor 900 m2 Blaines Court site
<b>Car Parking:</b>	310 spaces at grade 250 spaces in 4 level parking structure
<b>Total:</b>	560 spaces



## OPTION 2

### Advantages

- Ease of implementation
- No change to position of PFS
- Provides more car parking spaces than option1
- Access for busses

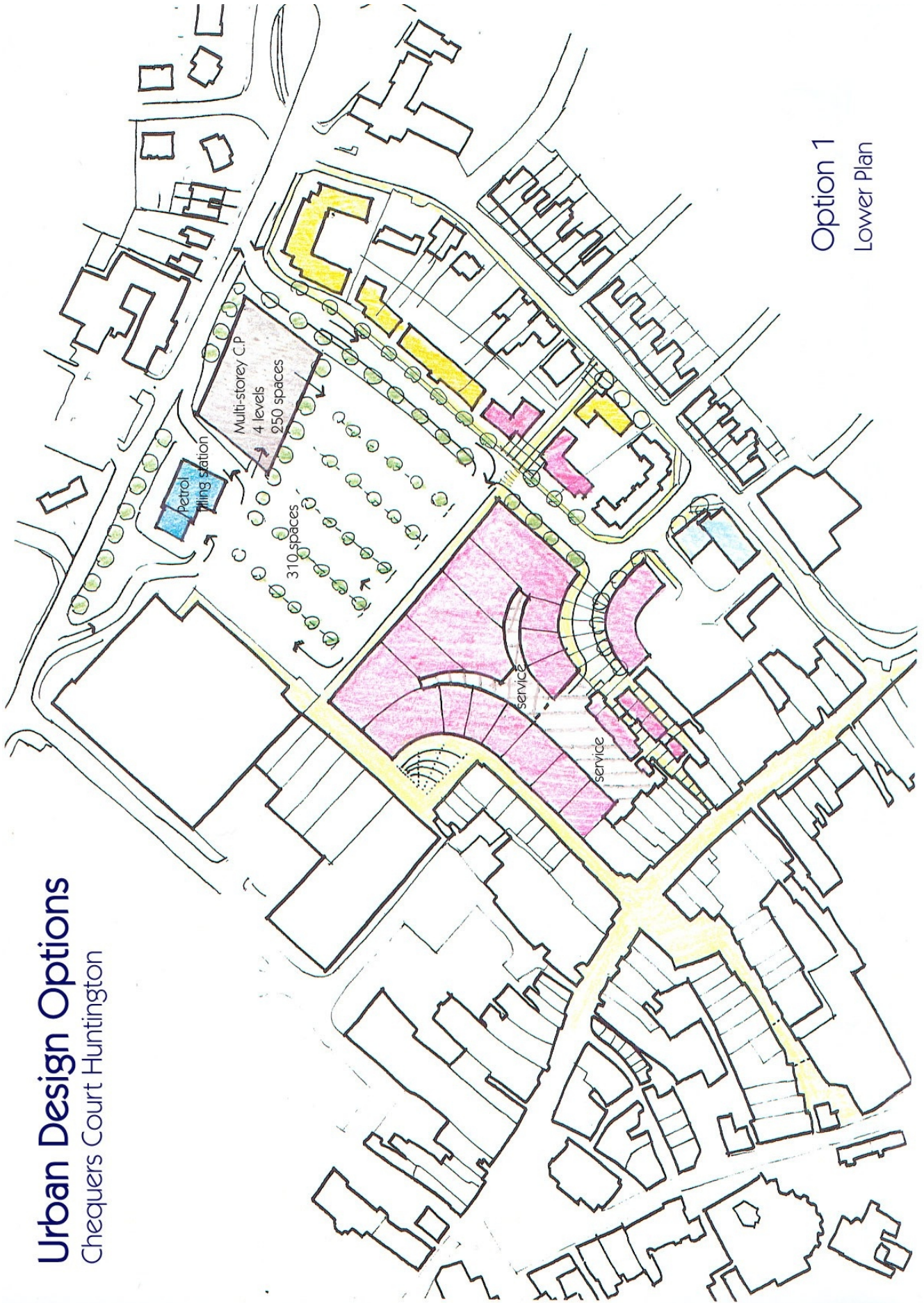
### Disadvantages

- Loss of convenient car spaces at PFS site and
- Programming issues, more existing car spaces could be lost during construction of parking structure

<b>Retail</b>	Ground floor 5000m2
<b>Car</b>	260 spaces at grade 440 spaces in 2 level parking
<b>Parking:</b>	structure
<b>Total:</b>	700 spaces

# Urban Design Options

Chequers Court Huntington



Option 1  
Lower Plan

#### Advantages

- Ease of implementation, no change to PFS;
- Clear pedestrian routes;
- Open prospect from new residential blocks; and
- Flats and offices over retail add vitality to town centre
- Access for busses

#### Disadvantages

- Retail facing Newton's Court may be marginal due to lower pedestrian flow and
- M/S car park visually dominant and blocks views of shops from Nursery Road

**Retail:** Ground Floor 5,600m2 gross plus 1,000 m2 Blaines Court site

**Residential:** First and Second Floor 4,400 m2

**Offices:** First and second Floor 900 m2 Blaines Court site

**Car Parking:** 310 spaces at grade  
250 spaces in 4 level parking structure

**Total:** 560 spaces

**[Insert Plan of Option 1]**

## **OPTION 2**

#### Advantages

- Ease of implementation
- No change to position of PFS
- Provides more car parking spaces than option1
- Access for busses

#### Disadvantages

- Loss of convenient car spaces at PFS site and
- Programming issues, more existing car spaces could be lost during construction of parking structure

**Retail** Ground floor 5000m2  
**Car** 260 spaces at grade 440 spaces in 2 level parking  
**Parking:** structure  
**Total:** 700 spaces

**[Insert Plan of Option 2]**



# Urban Design Options

Chequers Court Huntington



Option 2

Based on the Ordnance Survey Mapping (c) Crown Copyright.

### **Preferred Option**

- 6.2 Options 1 and 2 are mixed schemes containing approximately the same amount of retail floorspace (around 5000 sq metres). They also include land outside of the control of the proposed developer and the District Council. However in arriving at a preferred option it was considered that a balance needed to be made between the Shillam and Smith vision of an enclosed 'square', the most suitable access arrangements for the site, additional car parking in a form that does not impact adversely on the adjoining conservation area, traffic calming in Hartford Road within the Conservation Area, and the achievement of a successful retail scheme meeting the demands for larger spaces within the next five years.
- 6.3 The conclusion is that due to the demand for improved parking facilities in the town, the need for a larger retail offer and the problems that could be associated with having to deal with additional land owners it would be more beneficial to the town to create a high quality retail environment which will compliment the existing High Street. In turn this would then facilitate sufficient car parking for residents and visitors to be able to stay and shop within Huntingdon town centre and with an all purpose new access onto the ring road that will allow only limited traffic along Hartford Road.
- 6.4 Therefore the preferred option for Chequers Court is a predominantly retail-led development. With buildings of high quality design and which will compliment the existing scale and heights of the buildings already established at Chequers Court.
- 6.5 A further phase of development could take place in the future to include land to the rear of properties in Hartford Road and on the ATS site.

### **PREFERRED OPTION**

#### Advantages

- More retail development than option 1 or 2
- Eliminates cost of moving PFS
- Provides more car parking spaces than option 1 or 2
- Clear pedestrian routes through car park and links to Newton Court
- Minimises use of land outside of control of HDC and developer

#### Disadvantages

- Majority of car parking is in multi-storey
- More conflict between cars /servicing and pedestrians on route to Newton's Court

**Retail:** Ground and first floor 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>

**Car Parking:** 250 spaces at grade 650 spaces

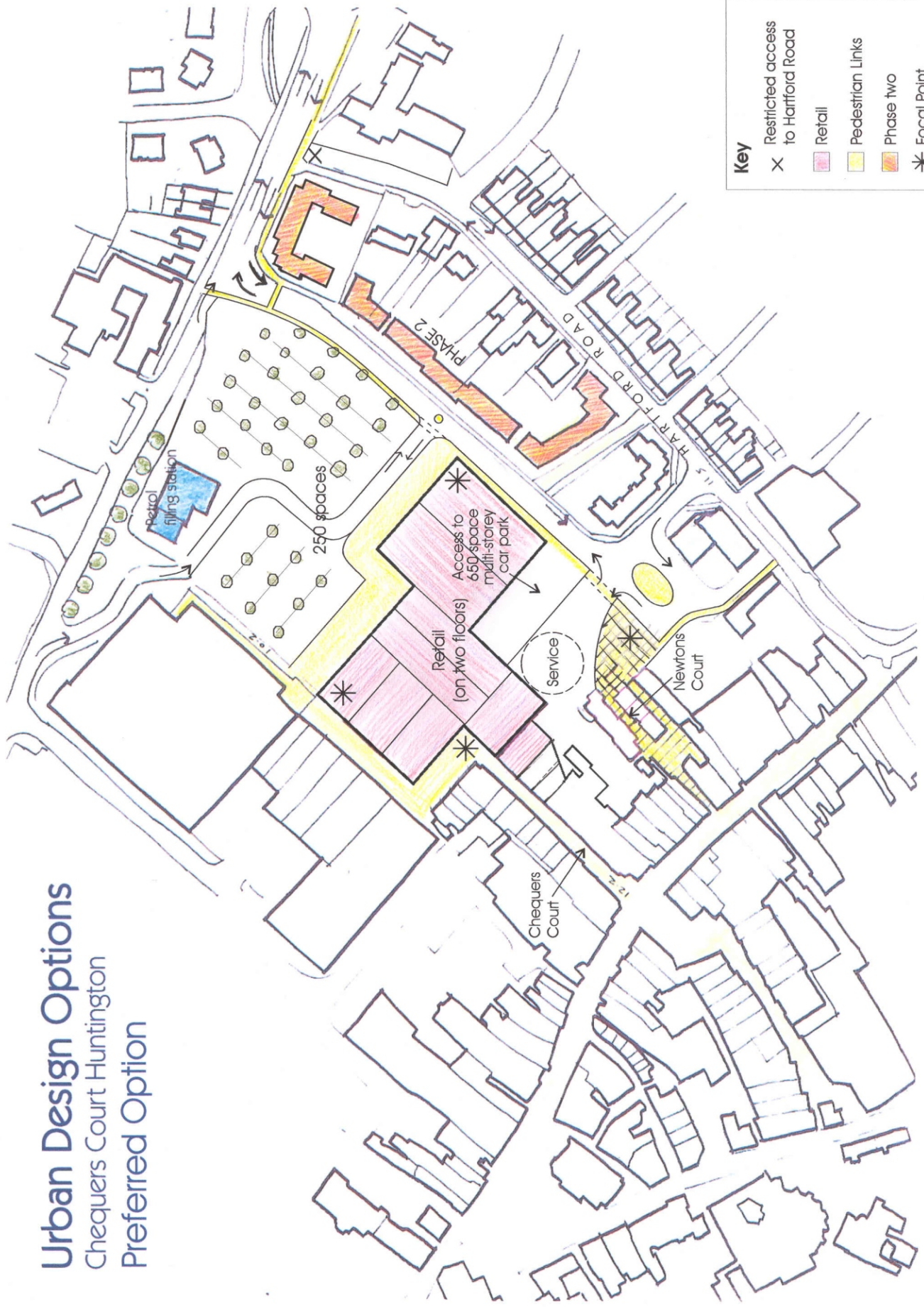
**Total:** 900 spaces



# Urban Design Options

## Chequers Court Huntington

### Preferred Option



**Key**

- × Restricted access to Hartford Road
- Retail
- Pedestrian Links
- Phase two
- \* Focal Point

## 7 Summary of Development Issues

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- 7.1 In the preparation of this Planning Brief both national and local planning guidance have been considered, to ensure a high quality, high profile development.
- 7.2 The vision is to create the opportunity for development that substantially enhances the retail capacity and quality of the Chequers Court retail offer, improves the links to other Town Centre components, and improves the quality of the car parking offer and will significantly improve the urban environment. It will also provide the opportunity for busses to enter and leave the site and become a principle setting down and picking up area in the town centre.
- 7.3 Chequers Court has enormous potential to become a key retail destination in Huntingdon, and already has the benefit of being anchored by two key stores in Sainsbury's and Wilkinsons. In association with Churchmanor (the developer and owner of most of the land) the Council have already established that there is considerable interest from sole and national traders looking for units in Huntingdon.
- 7.4 The redevelopment of this strategically located site in a town centre will inevitably be complex involving a co-ordinated approach from a number of agencies as well as the developers. The Chequers Court redevelopment provides Huntingdon with the opportunity to make major improvements to the range and scale of retail offer and provide more convenient car parking for the Town Centre. Implementation of this redevelopment together with the provision of two way traffic up to a new junction to access the site from the ring road will lead to the alleviation of some traffic bottlenecks and increased choice for car drivers.
- 7.5 It is financially viable, with operators already in advanced discussions for units. In terms of design the proposals should respect, the scale, form and height of the existing Sainsbury's store in order to bring a balance back to the urban form. Through this development the range and scale of units that will be provided will attract new operators to Huntingdon, and add an additional dimension to the current retail offer.
- 7.6 The preferred option provides the Council with the opportunity to contribute in a substantive way to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. It will put Chequers Court on the map as a 'destination', whilst aiding Huntingdon in its wider role to claw back some of the comparison shopping lost to competing centre such as Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford.
- 7.7 The rich mix of retailers proposed for this area, will strength the retail core, whilst acting as a catalyst for the comprehensive regeneration of the area, and ensure that Huntingdon remains a place for people to live, work and visit.

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*Urban Design Framework*  
**Land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon**



*April 2004*

Operational Services - Planning

**Huntingdonshire**  
district council

[www.huntsdc.gov.uk](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk)

Land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon

Urban Design Framework

April 2004

Produced by  
Donaldsons

For

**Huntingdonshire**  
district council

## Report

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Chequers Court v3i

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# Contents

# Contents

# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Planning Brief in draft seeks to bring forward a major high quality, high profile scheme in Huntingdon Town Centre. This new proposed environment will integrate existing Town Centre components, particularly the retail offer along St. Germain Walk, Chequers Court and Newton's Court with the High Street on its western edge and the residential environments to its southern edges.
- 1.2 Once this draft has been the subject of consultation it will be considered by the Cabinet and adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

## **The Site**

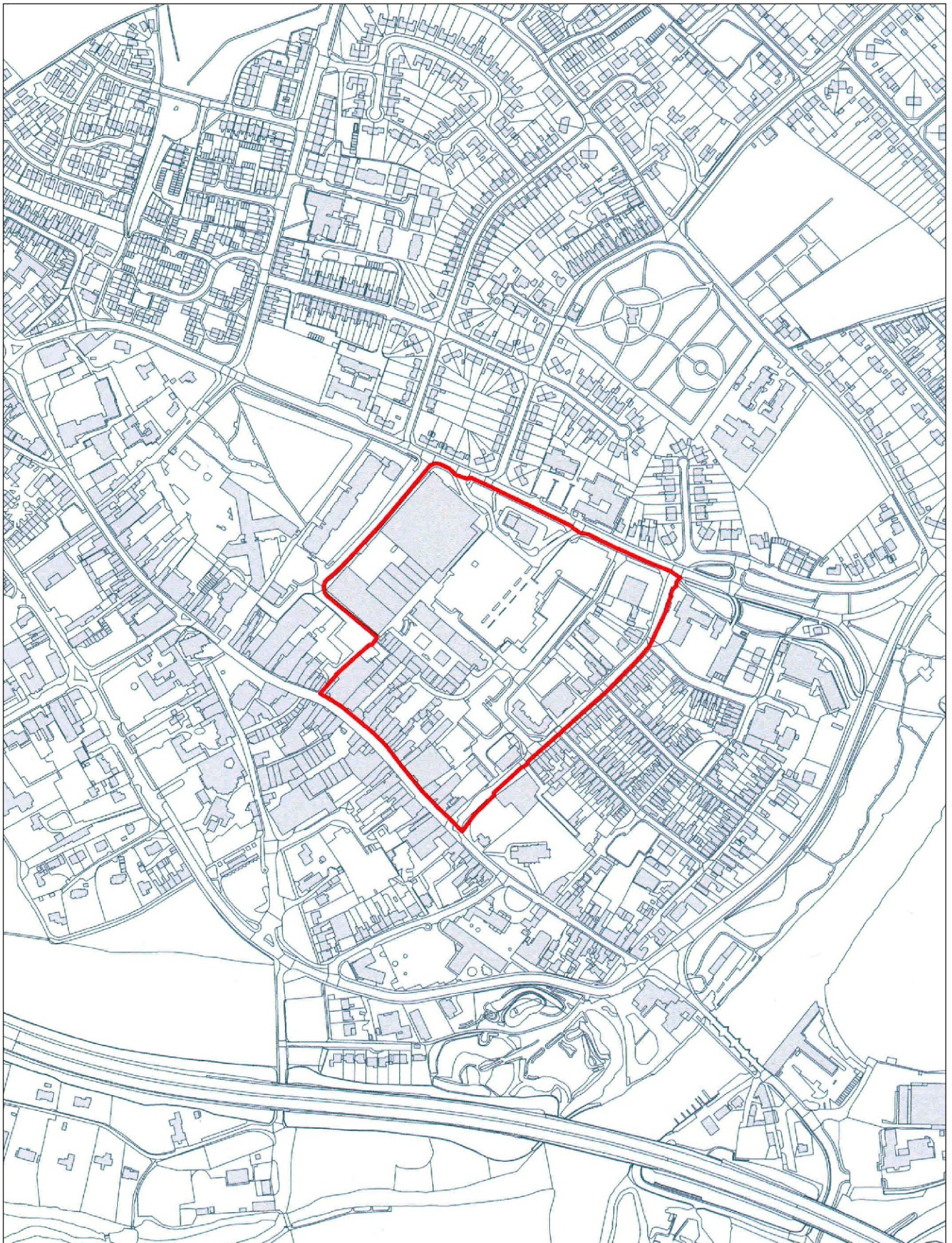
- 1.3 The area covered by this Planning Brief, shown in Figure 1.1, is an important component of the Town Centre and includes the main Town Centre car park and key pedestrian routes from the east into the High Street. The site lies within the ring road, and is the location of several retail units including the Chequers Court shopping area, comprising a range of smaller units, a large proportion of which are occupied by local traders. This links into the more recent St Germain Street scheme, comprising larger, multiple retail units such as Sainsbury's and Wilkinsons, to the Town Centre. Major proposals for the redevelopment of this area is the main focus of the Brief.
- 1.4 A number of office uses are also present on the site, the Government offices (Inland Revenue) being the largest of these. It is understood that the Inland Revenue are re-locating shortly, leaving this space vacant. Car parking spaces are provided on the site, within a Council controlled car park – this being the largest car park in the Town Centre. Two other car park areas are located here, one utilised by the Government office workers, the other, Trinity Place, is located at the rear of the shops fronting the High Street. The houses and offices off Hartford Road back onto this area. The neighbouring ATS site is also included within the red line plan illustrated at Figure 1.1 below.

## **Area Covered by the Planning Brief**

- 1.5 The area covered by the planning brief is identified in Figure 1.1. it is contained to the north by St Germain St. to the west by the High Street, Hartford Road to the south and Nursery Road (ring road) to the east.



**Figure 1.1 - Land at Chequers Court, Huntingdon - Location Plan**



Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.



## **Brief Context**

- 1.6 Huntingdon Town Centre is currently the focus of a number of transport, economic, environmental and retail lead policy initiatives. These initiatives are in response to the recognised need for improvement to the vitality and viability of Huntingdonshire Town Centre in terms of its operational efficiency, retail capacity and quality. The successful redevelopment of the Chequers Court site will significantly contribute to the realisation of many of the strategies' objectives and help challenge both external and internal threats to the future success of the town.
- 1.7 Huntingdonshire District Council commissioned the Civic Trust to prepare an overall vision to guide and stimulate investment in the Town Centre. The final study, published in October 2000, highlighted the need to improve the image and identity of the Centre as the overall environmental quality was considered weak. One of the key areas identified by the study was the need to improve the Chequers Court area and help build a strengthened east-west 'commercial axis'. The key findings of the study and how any new development within the site boundary should respond to this are reviewed below.
- 1.8 In this context, the Council is keen to ensure that the redevelopment of this high profile area benefits from the highest standards of architecture and urban design. Pedestrian movement patterns across the site in an east-west direction from the car park area to the High Street are particularly important and improvements to these routes will be crucial to the success of a comprehensive scheme.
- 1.9 This Planning Brief summarises the relevant urban design, planning, transportation and development issues associated with the implementation of a comprehensive new development on the site. Development principles have been applied to a number of different development concepts on the site as part of the initial process of refining a 'Development Framework' for the area. It is envisaged that a justified masterplan that responds to the framework established in this Planning Brief will form the basis of a future planning application.

## **Stakeholder Involvement**

- 1.10 The Planning Brief has evolved through a process of consultation with Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and key landowners and tenants within the Centre.
- 1.11 The Planning Brief reflects the diversity of views of the District Council and the main consultees. The Brief seeks to broker between the differing priorities to create a common base from which a detailed masterplan can be established.

## **Development Principles**

- 1.12 The Brief envisages a Huntingdon Town Centre of the future to be a mixed-use sustainable area that provides a strong retail core with housing, offices and leisure development adding to the diversity of use, with quality public transport facilities and safe and secure car parking provision.
- 1.13 The vision is to create the opportunity for development that substantially enhances the retail capacity and quality of the Chequers Court retail offer, improves the links to other Town Centre components, improves both the quantum and quality of the car parking offer, and significantly improves the urban environment. It involves creating a lively, contemporary, high quality retail environment that will integrate improved car parking with existing businesses and neighbourhoods in and around the Town Centre. The future of this area is to be seen as an exemplar of sustainable development which will result in an urban environment of which the local community can be proud.

## **Purpose of the Brief**

1.14 The purpose of the Planning Brief is to:

- Set out a clear Development Framework that establishes the key components which will underpin the comprehensive redevelopment of the area;
- Provide clear direction of the type of development required by potential developers – focusing on redeveloping the Chequers Court buildings facing onto the car park and main pedestrian routes and achieving improved townscape quality and pedestrian priority both within and beyond the site;
- Establish a design philosophy that promotes a high quality retail environment which will further enhance the existing retail uses of the site, such as Sainsbury's and Wilkinsons;
- Improve the car parking, taxi services and accessibility by bus and provide easy pedestrian movement through the area and beyond;
- Reflect the key aspirations of the main landowners and statutory bodies and to gain their support for the vision of the Chequers Court site; and
- Provide the statutory planning policy framework which will assist in any necessary land acquisitions via Compulsory Purchase Order, if necessary.

1.15 In order to achieve the aims set out above, the Planning Brief has the following objectives:

1. *Regeneration objectives*:- to promote the revitalisation of the Chequers Court retail development area, to act as a successful link between the Town Centre car park, Sainsburys and the High Street and act as a catalyst for regenerating the surrounding areas;
2. *Development objectives*:- to create a commercially viable development that enhances the prime commercial/retail east-west axis, making Huntingdon Town Centre a desirable commercial and residential destination as well as a lively and attractive place to experience;
3. *Urban design objectives*:- to create a distinctive and memorable retail quarter in Huntingdon. The retail units should be designed to the highest quality in order to attract new retailers to Chequers Court and create a pleasant environment for shoppers in Huntingdon. Development should also adhere to the wider sustainable development principles; and
4. *Access objectives*:- to develop a strong fine-grained, permeable network of routes that maximises the east-west links between the car park and the High Street along Chequers Court and Newton's Court. Improvements to the northern access to the site from St Germain St. and southern approach from Hartford Road should also be considered. Enable buses and taxis to pick up and set down passengers within the development.

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

1.16 The following characteristics are important in considering the future development of this site:-

### *Site attributes*

- High profile area forming an eastern gateway into Huntingdon Town Centre;
- Identified in the Local Plan and 'Civic Trust Vision' as a key development opportunity;
- Substantial car parking provision which could be improved;
- Key stores such as Sainsbury and Wilkinsons are present in strategic locations;



- A regeneration opportunity of strategic importance for Huntingdon;
- Key opportunity to enhance the east-west retail axis in the Town; and
- Good road connectivity, being on the inner ring road - opportunity to exploit new road layouts, traffic management initiatives and be better served by public transport.

#### *Site Constraints*

- Poor physical and commercial linkages between the car park and the Town Centre retail core;
- Ring road layout reduces ease of access to the site by car;
- Significant barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement - poor environmental quality and site levels;
- Insufficient car parking and poor parking layout;
- Poor traffic management arrangements on site - pedestrian/vehicle conflicts arise, in particular service access arrangements need to be reviewed and separated where possible from service cores;
- Part of the existing area suffers from a negative image and problems of vandalism, crime and fear of crime;
- Poor physical environment – environmental assets such as open spaces are poorly defined and not properly highlighted;
- Poor enclosure of pedestrian routes - some open into service cores and blank facades - level changes poorly treated;
- Food supermarket not trading as well as it should primarily due to the fact that there is poor site accessibility. The car park is currently congested, with cars waiting for spaces, making the environment currently unattractive to shoppers coming to Huntingdon. In addition, there is limited pedestrian flow between the High Street and Chequers Court, possibly due to the limited range and mix of units. The ability to modify car park layout will be influenced by requirement to ensure sufficient capacity during construction phase; and
- Proximity of residential properties on southern edge of site will have to be considered in respect of new developments on this site.

## **2 Policy Context**

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2.1 The relevant statutory planning framework for the area is set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan, adopted in 1995. In addition to this the material planning considerations that need to be taken into account include:

- National Planning Guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's);
- Regional Planning Guidance including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Structure Plan Deposit Draft 2002; and
- Market Town Transport Strategy for Huntingdon and Godmanchester.

### **National Planning Guidance**

2.2 Relevant guidance is found in PPG1, PPG6, PPG13 and PPG3.

### **PPG1: General Policies and Principles**

2.3 PPG1 puts sustainable development, mixed-use and urban design at the heart of the Government's approach to planning. Guidance states that urban regeneration and the re-use of previously-developed land are important supporting objectives for creating a more sustainable pattern of development. Emphasis is placed on concentrating development for uses which generate a large number of trips in places well-served by public transport, especially town centres.

2.4 In stressing that mixed-use development can help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel, Guidance states that major mixed-use developments which would attract a significant number of trips should be in locations which are well served by public transport, have adequate infrastructure and are properly integrated, in terms of land use and design, with surrounding areas. In considering the importance of good urban design, PPG1 states that it can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.

### **PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Development**

2.5 One of the key features of PPG6 is its promotion of mixed-use development and the retention of key Town Centre uses. The importance of good urban design is also emphasised. Central to this is the need to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. The important role that can be played by the evening and leisure economy is emphasised.

### **PPS6: Draft Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning For Town Centres**

2.6 The Government has now published a draft consultation of a document intended to replace PPG6 and its clarifications under Caborn (1999) and McNulty (2003). The update of this document seeks higher density, diversity and mixed use within town centres and will have potentially significant impact to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), developers, investors and other key stakeholders in property.

### **Key policies and proposed changes**

2.7 The Government emphasis, in the draft PPS6, that the core policy framework of PPG6 should be maintained with key considerations ensuring:

- The need for the development;
- That the development is of an appropriate scale;
- That there are no more central sites for the development;
- That there are no unacceptable impacts arising to centres from the development; and
- That locations are accessible;
- Scale and format of operators is also recognised.

### **PPG13: Transport**

- 2.8 The guidance contained in PPG13 seeks to promote more sustainable transport choices, to promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure uses and services by sustainable modes and to reduce the need to travel. PPG13 seeks to integrate planning and transportation. Local authorities are urged to seek to make the best use of the most accessible sites, such as those in town centres. Guidance also sets out the benefits of mixed-use development, in terms of promoting vitality and diversity, and in promoting walking as a primary mode of travel.

### **Regional Policy Guidance 6 (East Anglia) (November 2000)**

- 2.9 Regional Policy Guidance for East Anglia (November 2000) (RPG6) advises that town and local centres should continue to be the main focus of social and economic life and should be the preferred location for development. RPG6 sets out the growth potential of the main urban areas and the Cambridge sub-region, which includes the area surrounding Cambridge as far as the market towns of St Neots and Huntingdon in Huntingdonshire.

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

- 2.10 The Structure Plan has recently been adopted in late 2003. The new Structure Plan is proposed at a time of major growth in the economy needs of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. The Plan rolls forward to the period 2016. The following are key policy areas which have been considered in relation to Chequers Court.

#### **Places for Work**

- 2.11 Policy P2/1 addresses the strategic employment strategy for the region. Economic growth will be supported in Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire by securing investment in physical infrastructure and supporting social, environmental and community initiatives which will assist economic regeneration and taking full advantage of the range of existing land allocations and vacant or under-used sites in the area.

#### **City, Town and Rural Centres**

- 2.12 Under **Policy P3/1** the vitality and the attractiveness of city and town centres will be promoted and enhanced through the development and implementation of integrated City and Town Centre Strategies. This includes:
- Supporting the role of the city and town centres as the primary locations for shopping, employment, leisure, culture and entertainment;
  - Seeking to diversify and enhance the local economy through the provision of a wide range of services and facilities;
  - Encourage a high quality environment; and
  - Reducing the impact of traffic on centres.

#### **Movement and Access**

- 2.13 **Policy P8/1** establishes the link between land use and transport and new development will not be permitted unless it:
- Is located in areas that are highly accessible by public transport, cycle and foot;
  - Is designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car;
  - Provides opportunities for travel choice;
  - Provides for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and bus users; and
  - Provides appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.
- 2.14 New development will be required to make provision for integrated and improved transport infrastructure through financial contributions and direct improvements to transport networks, to increase the ability to move by cycle,

public transport and on foot (**Policy P8/2**). Travel Plans will be required to accompany new non-residential developments and the expansion of existing non-residential developments as a means of reducing car dependency and promoting alternative modes of travel.

- 2.15 In Cambridge, Peterborough and the Market Towns, parking standards for non-residential development should not exceed the standards specified in PPG13.

### **Local Plan Context**

#### **Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan (adopted December 1995)**

- 2.16 The Local Plan comprises the Huntingdonshire Local Plan adopted in 1995. Alterations to the adopted Local Plan which amends settlement strategy, promotes new housing allocations and provides new policies on housing and planning obligations was adopted on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002. The review of the adopted 1995 Local Plan is due to begin in June 2003 when issues papers will be published. The review of the adopted 1995 Local Plan has begun with the publication of an issues report, and will feed into the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.
- 2.17 In view of the nature and scale of development envisaged on the Chequers Court site, most areas of Local Plan Policy are relevant. However, in putting forward a Development Framework for the area, this Brief outlines chiefly those policies relevant to the proposal site falling within the Town Centre boundary area together with other key policies.

### **Site Allocations**

- 2.18 Part of the subject site is allocated as a Town Centre Redevelopment Commitment. The Local Plan does not detail proposed uses for this site in policy. Rather the written justification indicates the District Council's wish to secure the implementation of a town centre redevelopment scheme on and around the area of Chequers Court.

### **Site Designations**

- 2.19 Frontages along the High Street and Chequers Court are designated as frontages to be protected for retail use. Sections to the east of the site are designated as Conservation Areas, further constraining development. Each of these designations will be addressed in turn.

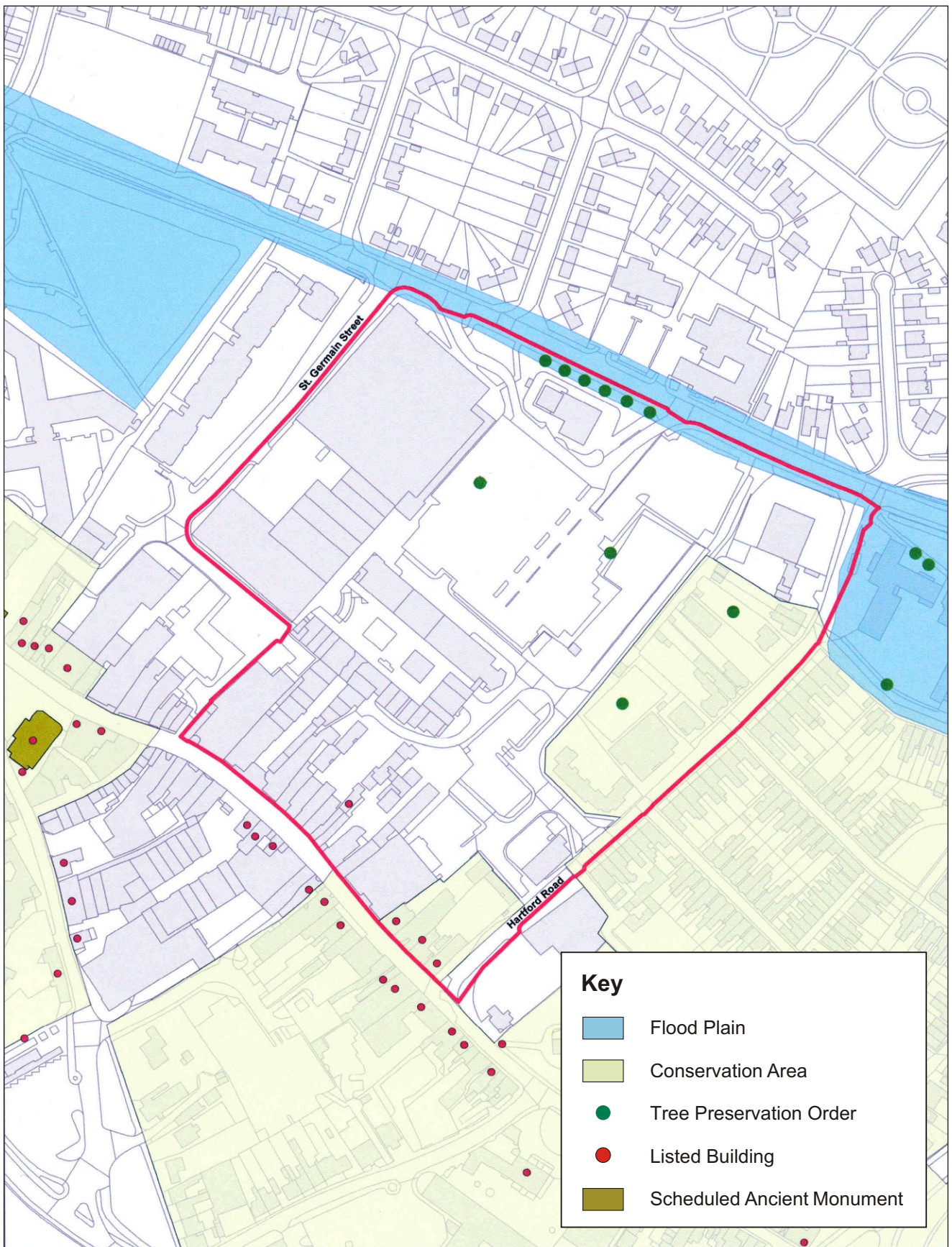
### **Conservation Areas**

- 2.20 Part of the subject site, as shown in Figure 1, is designated as a Conservation Area. **Policy En5** states that development within or directly affecting conservation areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance.
- 2.21 Furthermore, under **Policy En6** the District Council will require high standards of design in Conservation Areas with careful consideration being given to the scale and form of development in the area and to the use of sympathetic materials and appropriate colour and texture.
- 2.22 If demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, conservation area consent may be withheld until acceptable plans for the new development have been approved (**Policy En8**).

### **Huntingdon Town Centre and Shopping Policy**

- 2.23 The general town centre policies of the Adopted Plan provide a good summary of the Council objectives for Huntingdon Town Centre (**Policies S1 and S2**). These policies state that new development, which is not likely to have an adverse effect on the established shopping centres, will be permitted. However, proposals will be assessed taking into account the likely effect of the new proposals on the overall viability and vitality of these established centres and their effect on traffic movements.

**Figure 5.0 - Context and Constraints Plan**



Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.



- 2.24 Furthermore, individual shopping proposals will need to be satisfactory in terms of siting, design, car parking, servicing, accessibility by car, foot, cycle and public transport, environmental impact and conservation.
- 2.25 Turning to major convenience shopping development, proposals for 15,000 square feet of sales floorspace or over, will normally be located within or immediately adjacent to the established town centre shopping areas (**Policy S3**).

### **The Shopping Environment**

- 2.26 A number of policies within the adopted Local Plan refer to the shopping environment. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the vitality of established town centres by carrying out environmental improvement schemes, providing adequate car parking, and maintaining an appropriate mix of commercial, retail and residential uses (**Policy S10**).
- 2.27 **Policy S12** must also be addressed which seeks to retain existing retail units within the town centres. This policy aims to minimise the loss of retail units to other uses and hence retain the viability and vitality of the town centres.
- 2.28 Proposals for A3 uses will have to be determined against **Policy S14** where criteria will be considered including the effect on adjacent and nearby residential properties, car parking facilities and general highway implications and the proposed hours of opening and whether they can be controlled by restrictive planning conditions.

### **Transport Policy**

- 2.29 As a result of the nature and scale of the change envisaged through the Development Framework, there are very significant implications in terms of transport policy, particularly in terms of access, movement and parking. Relevant policies can be found throughout the transport section of the adopted Local Plan. As indicated above, the improvements put forward in this Planning Brief are considered to supplement many of the policies seeking to improve provision for pedestrians and public transport.
- 2.30 Under **Policy T9** the District Council will press for a new road scheme to relieve congestion on the Huntingdon ring road and approach roads to the Town. The District Council considers that a third crossing of the River Great Ouse is required to relieve the Huntingdon Ring Road and Godmanchester. The Market Town Strategy considered this bypass but rejected it at this stage as being outside the scope of the present strategy.

### **Bus Travel**

- 2.31 The Council will support proposals which maintain or improve the present level of public transport services (**Policy T21**). There is currently no direct bus access into the Chequers Court area.

### **Car Parking**

- 2.32 The Council in accordance with the recently adopted Structure Plan state that parking standards should not exceed the standards specified in PPG 13. Parking provision is an important element in making Huntingdon a successful town centre, this is a particular area that needs addressing as the lack of high quality parking is acting as a deterrent to potential shoppers coming to Huntingdon. A recent report conducted by The Transportation Consultancy (TPI), on behalf of the Council, notes that due to the major growth in Huntingdon, and its importance as a retail and employment centre leads to a shortfall of around 430 spaces by 2016. Parking will be reviewed further at paragraph 4.10 of this report.

### **Environment Policy**

- 2.33 Key policies concerning the conservation area designation of part of the site are set out in sections 2.24 – 2.26. In addition to these policies it is important to address Policy En20. This states that wherever appropriate, the grant of

planning permission for development will be subject to conditions requiring the execution of an approved landscaping scheme.

- 2.34 Access for the disabled is addressed in **Policy En24** where the Council will encourage the provision of access for the disabled in the design of new development and where necessary take account of the adequacy of provision in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.35 Turning to design new development should generally respect the scale, form, materials and design of established buildings in the locality of the application site and where appropriate make adequate provision for landscaping and amenity areas (**Policy En25**).

### **Local Transport Plan**

- 2.36 The Transport Strategy for Huntingdon and Godmanchester forms part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The aim of the strategy will be to provide a five-year programme of integrated transport initiatives up until 2008 that supports the LTP objectives.
- 2.37 Huntingdon is one of the most accessible market towns in the country due to its road and rail links. Huntingdon has a range of transport services including rail and bus in addition to major road links with the A1 and A14.
- 2.38 Six main proposals are set out in the Transport Strategy:
- i) *Making Travel Safer:-* the Strategy identifies locations for safety improvements including the Huntingdon Inner Ring Road and Hartford Road;
  - ii) *Huntingdon Ring Road:-* the Strategy proposes a new link road through the proposed west of Town Centre development site between Ermine Street and George Street; removing traffic between St Mary's Street and Hartford Road (except for buses, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians) and creating a new lane on the ring road between the Bridge Hotel and Hartford Road and along Nursery Road to this development site running in the opposite direction to the ring road;
  - iii) *Walking and Cycling:-* Proposed improvements include a comprehensive cycle network; new cycle parking in the Town Centre; introduction of new signage to reinforce the existing pedestrianisation and production of a comprehensive cycling and walking map;
  - iv) *Bypass Improvements:-* The provision of additional capacity at the four roundabouts on the A141 bypass is proposed;
  - v) *Public Transport:-* Proposed measures include an extension to the Town Centre services to provide an additional loop through Hinchingsbrooke residential areas; improved rail/bus interchange at Huntingdon Rail Station; provision of integrated information and a number of bus lanes including contra-flow bus lane on the ring road between George Street and the bus station and an extra lane for the Guided Bus along Nursery Road from the development site in the St. Ives direction.
  - vi) *Car Parking:-* The Study will consider ways of ensuring there remains sufficient parking places to serve shoppers and short stay users within the Town Centre whilst balancing this with providing adequate facilities for other users, such as long stay, all day parking. This is discussed further in Section 6 of this report.

### **The Design Guide**

- 2.39 In preparing a development scheme for this site the basic consideration set out in part 1 of the Design Guide need to be taken into account.



### 3 Land Use Consideration

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#### **Retail Assessment**

- 3.1 In August 2001 CB Hillier Parker produced, on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, a Retail Study for Huntingdonshire. The report undertook both a qualitative and quantitative assessment of retail in Huntingdon.

#### **Qualitative Assessment of Huntingdon**

- 3.2 The report concludes that in terms of qualitative assessment Huntingdon has a good choice of convenience provision, with three Town Centre main foodstores, an out of centre superstore, some smaller multiple and local food retailers and a twice weekly market. The report goes on to state that the Centre does, however, lack food provision at the discount or value end of the market.
- 3.3 Comparison goods provision in Huntingdon is mainly middle market and the Centre lacks clothing and footwear provision and gifts and luxury goods. The report stresses that the Chequers Court scheme is in need of refurbishment/redevelopment.
- 3.4 The report goes on to comment on the commercial leisure offer in Huntingdon which it concludes is limited, particularly for eating and drinking out, with a lack of wine bars, pubs and restaurants.

#### **Quantitative Assessment of Huntingdon**

- 3.5 Convenience goods retailers in the Town Centre are currently under-performing. The report comments that this is likely to reflect the poor performance of Sainsbury's on the Chequers Court Site, rather than Waitrose and Tesco at other locations within or out of the centre. Some convenience goods capacity in Huntingdon has been forecast by virtue of the overtrading of the out of centre Tesco, however, this is balanced by the under-trading of the Town Centre stores.
- 3.6 Overall, the report concludes that in quantitative terms there is not considered to be scope for further large scale convenience retailing over the Replacement Local Plan period. There may however, be capacity towards 2011 sufficient to support a smaller supermarket, such as a discount food retailer, but the priority is to improve the performance of the existing foodstore anchors, in particularly Sainsburys.
- 3.7 Huntingdon is trading adequately in terms of comparison goods, both in-centre and the out of centre retail warehouses. It is estimated that there is capacity to support further comparison goods floorspace in Huntingdon Town Centre over the Replacement Local Plan period. The CB Hillier Parker Retail Capacity Study, notes a requirement of over 5,000 sq m of additional comparison floorspace required in Huntingdon town centre by 2011. In addition, a further 4,370 sq m net of additional bulky durable goods retailing by 2011, based on the current market share.
- 3.8 Potential opportunity for the redevelopment and further expansion of the Chequers Court scheme is also identified in the report and it is recommended that the site should be allocated as a redevelopment opportunity within the emerging Local Plan.
- 3.9 A number of significant potential benefits are indicated in the report through the redevelopment of Chequers Court including:
- i) the potential to enhance the turnover of existing Town Centre retailers through increased footfall;
  - ii) the extension and improvement of existing primary shopping frontage within the Town Centre;
  - iii) the considerable enhancement of the existing Chequers Court scheme and a more seamless integration within the remainder of the Town Centre;

- iv) the potential to improve the number of car spaces in this important town centre location; and
- v) the improvement of pedestrian linkages to the Town Centre.

1.17 A need has therefore been identified within the report for further retail floorspace, and the opportunities to and the benefits of that need at Chequers Court has been identified.

### **Demand**

3.10 The Churchmanor Estates development at St Germain Walk has increased the quality of convenience and comparison shopping in the Town Centre, as well as providing a greater range of units in terms of size. The offer of larger units would undoubtedly attract investment from comparison goods retailers.

3.11 The development of new units within the Town Centre to accommodate the size requirements of key comparison retailers is vital to ensure that Huntingdon retains a respectable proportion of comparison goods relative to the nearby regional centres of Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford. Further developments at Chequers Court and other centre sites will enhance, the Town's appeal as a comparison goods destination.

3.12 Initial discussions with Churchmanor Estates have shown that there is considerable interest from national and single operators for all the proposed units. Operators are likely to be new to the Town rather than relocation from the High Street, thus strengthening the retail mix.

## 4 Highways & Movement

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### Movement

- 4.1 The site borders the ring road which travels around the Town of Huntingdon. This road is two lanes, one-way flow of traffic from northwest to southeast.
- 4.2 Vehicular access into and out of the Town Centre car park is off the ring road at two points, both controlled by traffic lights. Another vehicular access onto the site is off Hartford Road via Trinity Place.
- 4.3 Service routes to the retail units on and around the site are provided by both Trinity Place to the Chequers Court shopping area and St Germain Street to the Sainsbury's supermarket and adjacent retail units. Due to the size and number of retail units being served, these routes and areas are busy with regular deliveries made by large lorries.
- 4.4 The Town Centre car park is linked to the High Street, the adjacent shopping area of Chequers Court and the surrounding residential area by a number of pedestrian routes.
- 4.5 The primary route from the car park to the High Street is past the St Germain Walk retail development and through Chequers Court. This route is pedestrianised and therefore provides a safe and convenient access to the High Street and beyond. Another 'undesigned' route by Wilkinsons has now been blocked off in order to increase pedestrian safety.
- 4.6 Huntingdon bus station is located within the ring road, on the opposite side of the High Street to the site, and can be reached via the pedestrianised route through Chequers Court, St Benedict's Court and Princes Street. Buses travel frequently along the ring road and Hartford Road, to and from the bus station, to many of Huntingdon's estates and outlying villages as well as nearby settlements of St Ives and Cambridge. However, no buses penetrate the Chequers Court area directly, making the area less inviting to potential shoppers/visitors.
- 4.7 From the surrounding area outside the ring road, pedestrian access is achieved via a light controlled crossing over the ring road, adjacent to the petrol station. This provides, along with the other routes mentioned above, a pedestrianised link from one side of the ring road to the other, travelling through the heart of the Town Centre and across the High Street.
- 4.8 There are no specifically designated cycle routes in the area. This area is currently been addressed as part of the Council's Cycling Strategy.
- 4.9 The Town Centre car park on the site is particularly congested as it is the closest and most convenient parking area for the High Street, Chequers Court and the large supermarket within the St Germain Street development.

### Parking

- 4.10 Transportation Planning (International) Ltd, (Tpi), was appointed by Huntingdonshire District Council in July 2002 to undertake a parking study and identify options for a future strategy for the four towns of Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey.
- 4.11 In this study, Huntingdon shows the largest shortfall with a requirement for nearly 430 additional spaces by 2016 and 200 by 1011 on a peak weekday. The current surplus of spaces will be fully taken up in the next few years. Unless additional space is provided, the shortfall could produce negative affects for the town centre, such as:
- Trips are made to other centres; and
  - Fewer, longer trips are made to the town centre.

- 4.12 The consultants carrying out this study were aware of the proposals for redevelopment at Chequers Court, which envisages larger units than are currently provided and noted the possible inclusion of a multi-storey car park.
- 4.13 The provision of 430 additional spaces in Huntingdon to cater for the unconstrained demand to 2016 is a difficult task for the Council. In order for Huntingdon to maintain an attractive destination for residents and visitors this additional parking must be found.
- 4.14 Therefore, in light of the severe shortage in car parking spaces it is advisable that the Council take a pro-active stance in recognising Chequers Court as the most appropriate site for additional town centre car parking to compliment the existing and proposed retail facilities.
- 4.15 This is inline with the District Council who recently approved a car parking strategy that recognised the need to meet the parking needs of existing and planned development, provide an appropriate mix of public car parking and ensure that the majority of spaces within the town centre are short term serving the needs of shoppers for the benefit of the economy.

## 5 Urban Design Approach

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### Site Description

- 5.1 St Germain Walk is the main pedestrian route from Sainsburys to the High Street. There has been some improvements in recent years in order to maintain the overall environment, however, the 1960's architecture still dominates Chequers Court and detracts from the overall area.
- 5.2 Around Chequers Court and leading up to the Square and around Chequers Court, there is an awkward change of level of about 1.5m. Rather than climb the steps or use the ramp provided, many shoppers have preferred in the past to use the short cut of the St Germain Street service yard at the rear of Argos, and did not pass the shops in Chequers Court. This route has now been closed off in order to secure the safety of passers-by and direct pedestrian movement through Chequers Court.
- 5.3 The square itself has been refurbished but still appears run down and not an attractive space. The marginal trading of the shop units on the north-east side illustrates that the space is too large and not sufficiently well used.
- 5.4 There have however, been some recent improvements to the area, for example, the corner buildings forming the opening in the two-storey retail frontage on the south-west side of the square have been refurbished to form a matching gateway. In addition, Churchmanor have carried out enhancement to some of the shop units along the north-west side of the Court. The District Council is currently giving consideration for plans to replace the oppressively low archway to join the High Street.
- 5.5 The Sainsbury's Store encloses the north-west side of the car park comprising a 1-2 storey timber framed structure supporting a red tiled-pitched roof. The south west side is enclosed by the flat roofed bulk of the 4 storey brick Chequers Court building which is both too large and too bland to make a positive contribution to the space. There is no activity on the ground level as the internal ground floor is below Chequers Way road level.
- 5.6 The north-east side of the car park is partially open to the domestic scale building fronting the one way system along Nursery Road, and partially obscured by the PFS which occupies a strategic location between the car entrance and exit points leading to an inefficient use of space.
- 5.7 A line of trees and bushes encloses the fourth side of the car park. This hides a service lane that provides access to the garages of the houses fronting Hartford Road. The view is completed by the cluttered service area at the rear of the Inland Revenue building and the exposed rear service yards of the High Street shops and the unattractive Job Centre office building. The overall impression is of an untidy collection of backs and undefined edges that present a poor impression of the town centre as seen from the Ring Road.

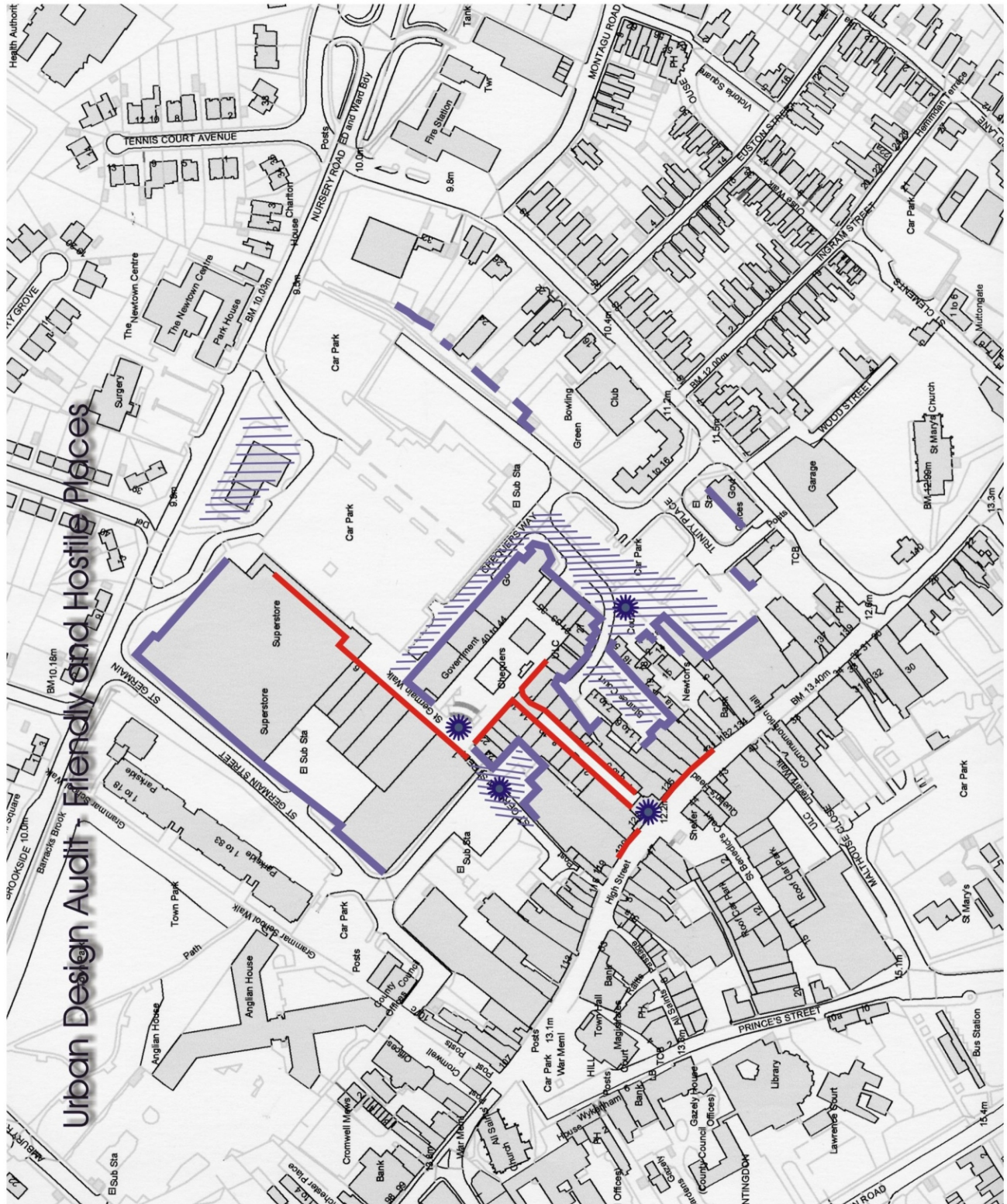
### Urban Design Audit

- 5.8 The Urban Design audit exposed a number of issues that the new Development Framework must seek to resolve. These include:
- Chequers Court is an unsightly building block that makes a negative contribution on all four sides, both to the immediate pedestrian environment, and within the overall townscape scene. The large and bulky flat roof does not disguise the 4-storey height and clashes with the grain and roofscape of the rest of the town.
  - Chequers Court Square is too large to support active frontages on both sides and suffers from the poorly designed change of level that discourages use by shoppers;

- This results in there being an ambiguous choice of pedestrian routes that link the Sainsburys retail cluster to the High Street to the detriment of shops in both locations;
- The main pedestrian link into the High Street emerges below an oppressively low and dark gateway and does not present an inviting face to attract shoppers to the Sainsburys side of the Town Centre;
- The large car park is unattractively laid out with insufficient planting to screen the cars and provides insufficient spaces to meet projected demand;
- Newton's Court leads down a narrow alley from the High Street and provides a useful location for small retail units but users must pass through inhospitable service areas and past blank walls to reach the car park;
- The whole area is bounded by one-way streets on two sides and feels cut off from adjacent areas; and
- Links from the Victoria Square conservation area bounded by Hartford Road must cross a wasteland of service areas to reach the shops.

5.9 The Urban Design Audit Plan. 'Friendly and Hostile Spaces' (Figure 5.1) summarises these aspects.

Fig. 5.1



Based on the Orance Survey Mapping (c) Crown Copyright.

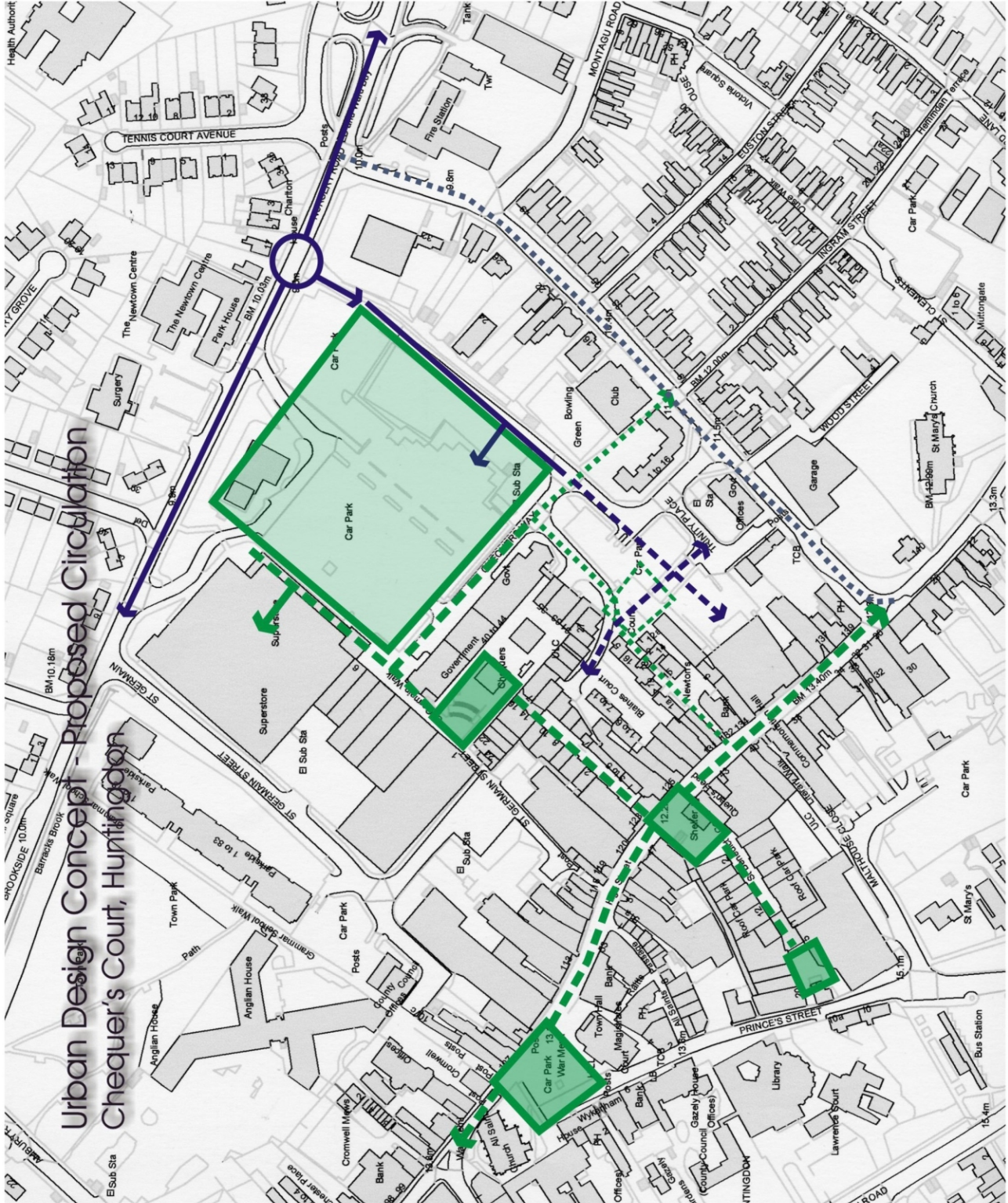


## Urban Design Objectives

5.10 Following on from the Urban Design Audit a number of objectives can be formulated which the framework plans and redevelopment schemes must seek to achieve.

- The urban design approach needs to reflect the Town Centre location rather than an out of town ethos. This will determine the architectural design of buildings to create street frontages, the design of street furniture and landscape, highway layouts must be urban and pedestrian friendly and signage should be coordinated and discreet;
- The existing Sainsbury's retail cluster should act as a catalyst for future high quality retail units in order to strengthen retail and car parking provision;
- There needs to be one clear principal pedestrian route to link to the High Street through Chequers Court, which attracts shoppers and casual users along a strengthened east-west axis through the Town Centre.
- A secondary route through Newton's Court can provide variety to building scale and space for small-scale uses. This would also connect to the main pedestrian route without passing through threatening service areas;
- New buildings need to provide for the large retail spaces required by potential occupiers;
- Pedestrian links to the Victoria Square and the Riverside need to be improved to encourage more people to walk to the Town Centre;
- Shoppers given a choice of better access from St Germain Walk to Chequers Court,
- Improve level changes around the Square to make easier access for the elderly, young and disabled;
- Provide an increased number of convenient located car parking spaces.
- Buses to be accommodated within the site.
- New access to Nursery Road to allow Hartford Road to be traffic calmed.

Fig. 5.2



Based on the Ordnance Survey Mapping (c) Crown Copyright.

## 6 Suggested Development Framework

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### Urban Design Options

6.1 A number of urban design layouts have been generated which respond to the Urban Design Audit and Objectives based on the Shillam & Smith Report (April 2001). Two of the key aims of the proposals are to encourage 'active' frontages and to foster a night-time economy with the introduction of possible A3 units into the Chequers Court area. Two out of the four options have been dismissed due to financial feasibility, but the others are considered in greater detail. A summary of options 1 & 2 are detailed below. Both options have the remaining common themes:

- Enclosing a central service court servicing all units with continuous retail frontages to a remodelled Chequers Court. Entrance to the service area via a gateway adjacent to the retained Newton's Court;
- Ensuring genuinely 'Active' frontages;
- A new service access street links to a new all movement junction at the proposed two way section of Nursery Road allowing Hartford Road to be traffic calmed as a two way residential street;
- Introduction of an evening economy including A3 units;
- A significant increase in parking provision in a town centre location.
- Additional car park provision;
- Maintain the Petrol Filling Station where it is;
- Allowing busses to penetrate the development

#### **OPTION 1**

##### Advantages

- Ease of implementation, no change to PFS;
- Clear pedestrian routes;
- Open prospect from new residential blocks; and
- Flats and offices over retail add vitality to town centre
- Access for busses

##### Disadvantages

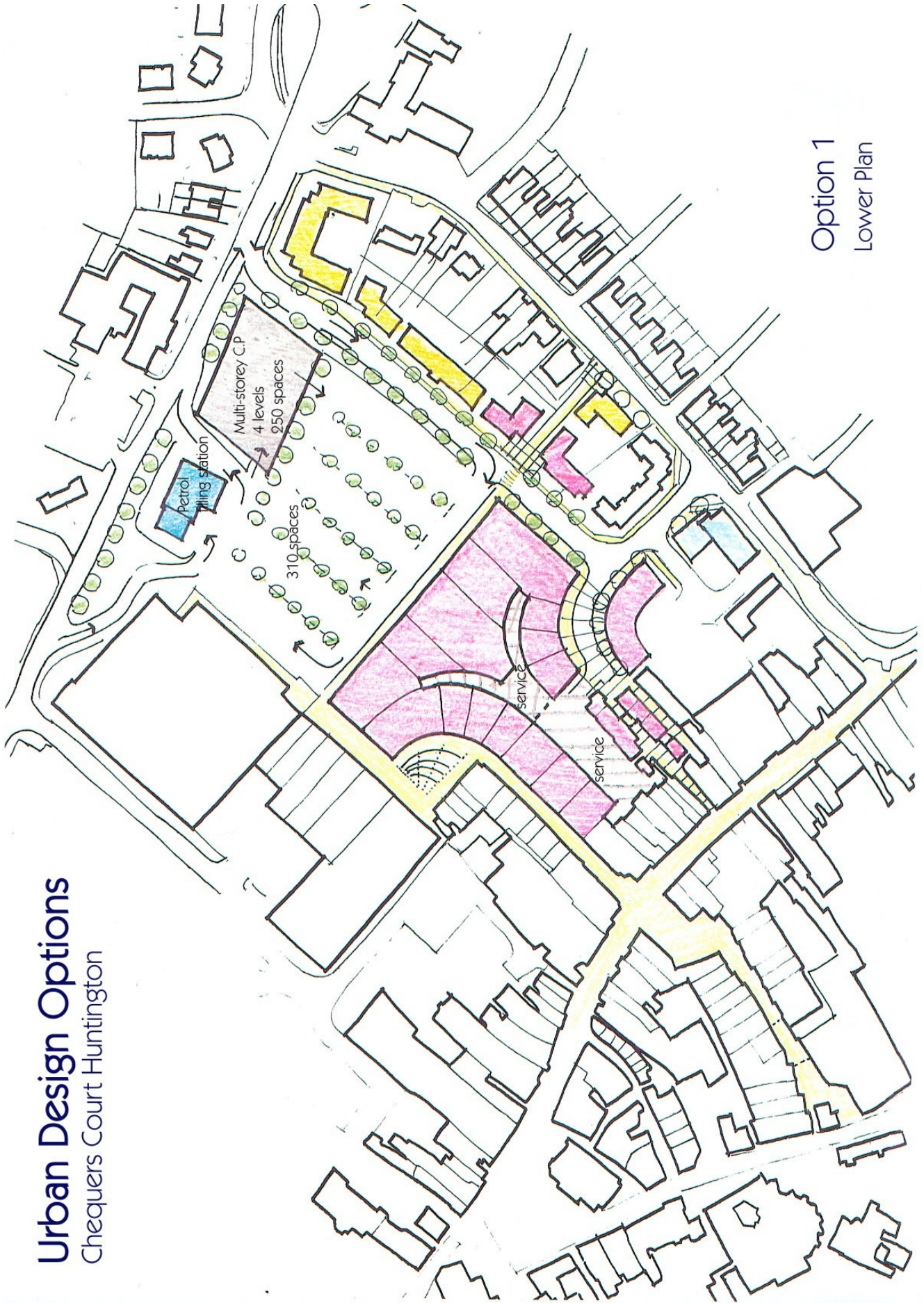
- Retail facing Newton's Court may be marginal due to lower pedestrian flow and
- M/S car park visually dominant and blocks views of shops from Nursery Road

<b>Retail:</b>	Ground Floor 5,600m2 gross plus 1,000 m2 Blaines Court site
<b>Residential:</b>	First and Second Floor 4,400 m2
<b>Offices:</b>	First and second Floor 900 m2 Blaines Court site
<b>Car Parking:</b>	310 surface spaces 250 spaces in 4 level multi storey structure
<b>Total:</b>	560 spaces



# Urban Design Options

Chequers Court Huntington



Option 1  
Lower Plan

## OPTION 2

### Advantages

- Ease of implementation
- No change to position of PFS
- Provides more car parking spaces than option1
- Access for buses

### Disadvantages

- Loss of convenient car spaces at PFS site and
- Programming issues, more existing car spaces could be lost during construction of parking structure

<b>Retail:</b>	Ground Floor 5450 m2 Plus 1000m2 Blaines Court First Floor 5450 m2 Plus 1000m2 Blaines Court
<b>Car</b>	260 surface spaces
<b>Parking:</b>	440 spaces in 2 level multi storey structure
<b>Total:</b>	700 spaces



# Urban Design Options

Chequers Court Huntington



Option 2

Based on the Ordnance Survey Mapping (c) Crown Copyright.



## Preferred Option

- 6.2 Options 1 and 2 are schemes that include land outside of the control of the proposed developer and the District Council. In arriving at a preferred option it was considered that a balance needed to be made between the Shillam and Smith vision of an enclosed 'square' (the urban design aspects), the most suitable access arrangements for the site, additional car parking in a form that does not impact adversely on the adjoining conservation area, traffic calming in Hartford Road within the Conservation Area, and the achievement of a successful retail scheme meeting the demands for larger spaces within the next five years.
- 6.3 The conclusion is that due to the demand for improved parking facilities in the town, the need for a larger retail offer and the problems that could be associated with having to deal with additional land owners it would be more beneficial to the town to create a high quality retail environment which will compliment the existing High Street. In turn this would then facilitate sufficient car parking for residents and visitors to be able to stay and shop within Huntingdon town centre and with an all purpose new access onto the ring road that will allow only limited traffic along Hartford Road.
- 6.4 Therefore the preferred option for Chequers Court is a predominantly retail-led development similar to option 2. Buildings will be of high quality design and will compliment the existing scale and heights of the buildings already established at Chequers Court.
- 6.5 A further phase of development could take place in the future to include land to the rear of properties in Hartford Road and on the ATS site.

## PREFERRED OPTION

### Advantages

- More retail development than option 1
- Eliminates cost of moving PFS
- Provides more car parking spaces than option 1 or 2
- Clear pedestrian routes through car park and links to Newton Court
- Minimises use of land outside of control of HDC and developer

### Disadvantages

- Less retail development than option 2
- Majority of car parking is in multi-storey
- More conflict between cars /servicing and pedestrians on route to Newton's Court

**Retail:** Ground and first floor 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>

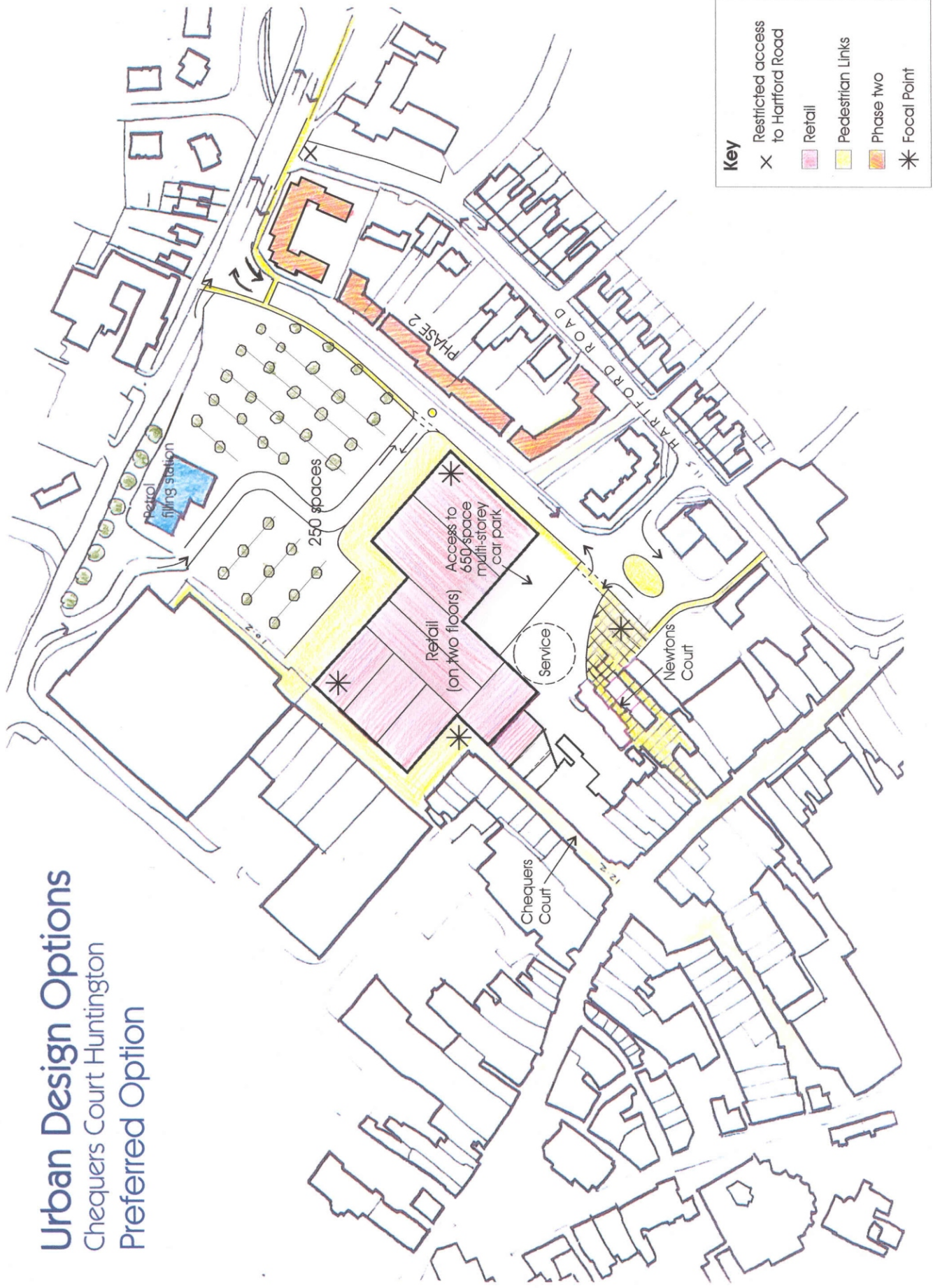
**Car Parking:** 250 surface spaces , 650 spaces in 7 level multi storey structure

**Total:** 900 spaces

# Urban Design Options

## Chequers Court Huntington

### Preferred Option



Key	
X	Restricted access to Hartford Road
[Pink box]	Retail
[Yellow box]	Pedestrian Links
[Orange box]	Phase two
[Asterisk symbol]	Focal Point

## 7 Summary of Development Issues

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- 7.1 In the preparation of this Planning Brief both national and local planning guidance have been considered, to ensure a high quality, high profile development.
- 7.2 The vision is to create the opportunity for development that substantially enhances the retail capacity and quality of the Chequers Court retail offer, improves the links to other Town Centre components, and improves the quality of the car parking offer and will significantly improve the urban environment. It will also provide the opportunity for busses to enter and leave the site and become a principle setting down and picking up area in the town centre.
- 7.3 Chequers Court has enormous potential to become a key retail destination in Huntingdon, and already has the benefit of being anchored by two key stores in Sainsbury's and Wilkinsons. In association with Churchmanor (the developer and owner of most of the land) the Council have already established that there is considerable interest from sole and national traders looking for units in Huntingdon.
- 7.4 The redevelopment of this strategically located site in a town centre will inevitably be complex involving a co-ordinated approach from a number of agencies as well as the developers. The Chequers Court redevelopment provides Huntingdon with the opportunity to make major improvements to the range and scale of retail offer and provide more convenient car parking for the Town Centre. Implementation of this redevelopment together with the provision of two way traffic up to a new junction to access the site from the ring road will lead to the alleviation of some traffic bottlenecks and increased choice for car drivers.
- 7.5 It is financially viable, with operators already in advanced discussions for units. In terms of design the proposals should respect, the scale, form and height of the existing Sainsbury's store in order to bring a balance back to the urban form. Through this development the range and scale of units that will be provided will attract new operators to Huntingdon, and add an additional dimension to the current retail offer.
- 7.6 The preferred option provides the Council with the opportunity to contribute in a substantive way to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. It will put Chequers Court on the map as a 'destination', whilst aiding Huntingdon in its wider role to claw back some of the comparison shopping lost to competing centre such as Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford.
- 7.7 The rich mix of retailers proposed for this area, will strength the retail core, whilst acting as a catalyst for the comprehensive regeneration of the area, and ensure that Huntingdon remains a place for people to live, work and visit.

**CABINET**

**6<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2004**

**URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK  
PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON  
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The recent structural report on the condition of Pathfinder House found significant defects in the existing structure. The demolition and replacement of the building is therefore one of the options that the Council is considering. If Pathfinder House is to be demolished, this document provides a framework for the re-development of the Castle Hill House/Pathfinder House site.
- 1.2 The Urban Design Framework presents the planning policy context but also important design parameters that should lead any re-development proposals, whether for replacement office accommodation or alternative solutions.
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to consider the Framework and approve it for consultation purposes. Once representations have been received and considered, the document will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance and used when considering development proposals.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The site to which the Framework applies includes the offices currently occupied by the District Council and all associated land/car parking.
- 2.2 Pathfinder House was built as a speculative office building in the grounds of Castle Hill House in the late 1970s. By modern standards, it is a poorly-designed building and recent structural reports have raised concern over its condition. If the existing building is to be removed and replaced, it is important that re-development acknowledges the merits of the site and creates buildings of more appropriate form and scale.
- 2.3 There are important features on the existing site, including Castle Hill House (a Grade II\* listed building) and its associated walls and outbuildings. A number of mature trees also exist, some of which survive from Castle Hill House's original garden area. The whole site is included within the Huntingdon East Conservation Area.
- 2.4 In terms of land use, site conditions will influence proposed uses, including the impact of the ring-road on the south side and existing residential properties on the north side of St Mary's Street. It is

envisaged that the main use will be residential, or offices if the Council remains on the site.

- 2.5 In the interests of addressing the town's overall transport strategy, it may be necessary to locate a bus stop/station facility on part of the Pathfinder House site for a limited period of time. Any such facility would be of limited size and its impact on neighbouring properties minimised. The Framework allows for the phasing of re-development to take account of this eventuality.

### **3. THE PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The Framework recognises the opportunities that the site provides to improve the quality of built form by:-

- demolishing Pathfinder House
- enhancing the setting of Castle Hill House
- preserving the majority of existing trees
- creating visual links between Castle Hill House and the Castle Hill
- improving the streetscene along St Mary's Street and the ring-road
- creating attractive new buildings and spaces
- ensuring discrete parking
- enhancing pedestrian links with the town

- 3.2 Indicative layout plans are illustrated in the Framework.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Production of an Urban Design Framework is best practice and will help to secure the most appropriate form of development if the Pathfinder House site is to be re-developed. If Cabinet approves the document, there will be a period of consultation with the local and statutory bodies. Any comments or changes will be brought back to the Cabinet before it is adopted.

- 4.2 A masterplan showing three possible options for the re-development of this site is the subject of a fuller report to Cabinet. One option will show the re-development of the site for mainly residential purposes. Another will identify offices as the main use (including a replacement District Council headquarters). A phased development that includes part of the site used temporarily for a bus station whilst the other part is re-developed for offices and residential use is the third option.

### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 That the Cabinet approves the Framework as a basis for further discussion and consultation

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

'A Vision for Redevelopment - Development Guidelines' Civic Trust February 2002.

**Contact Officer: Richard Probyn**  
**☎ 01480 388430**



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**CABINET**

**6<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2004**

**DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN FOR LAND AT PRINCES STREET AND  
PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON  
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to approve a masterplan for the re-development of Princes Street and Pathfinder House for its use as part of future consultation exercises on these two sites and to assist in the processing of applications for the land at Princes Street.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Planning Guidelines for the land at Princes Street/George Street were approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2002. The guidelines provided a framework for development of the County Council-owned site and also included the bus station, owned by the District Council. It allowed for phasing of development taking into account the different ownerships involved.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that an application will be made shortly on part of the site to the rear of Walden House but any proposals for that area also need to be seen in the wider context. This masterplan presents this context and begins to indicate relationships between new buildings and their uses.
- 2.3 It is considered that the development of the bus station could provide an alternative location for Pathfinder House. Alongside replacement County Council services, the opportunity would then potentially exist for District and County Council services to be linked in a one-stop-shop.
- 2.4 If development takes place on the bus station site, it would be necessary to find an alternative location for that use. The Urban Design Framework for the Pathfinder House site is the subject of a separate item on this agenda. As one of the development options, it shows a possible site for the temporary relocation of the bus station. Until a study on the best location and most appropriate bus facility within the town is concluded, a temporary location on the Pathfinder House site would be needed if the re-development of the existing bus station was to proceed.

**3. THE PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The attached masterplan for both Princes Street and Pathfinder House indicates the following:

- Phase 1 – the development of replacement County Council offices and new Magistrates and County Courts. Existing listed buildings fronting Market Hill are renovated and maintained in viable use.
- Phase 2 – the development of a residential scheme incorporating affordable units. The masterplan shows a replacement library building. Again, existing buildings fronting Princes Street are incorporated into the overall scheme.
- Phase 3 – the development of District Council offices on the existing bus station site. Proximity with the library enables a one-stop-shop facility.

Phases 1 and 2 can be developed without the development of phase 3.

- 3.2 Three additional plans are attached that illustrate separate options for the Pathfinder House site. The first is a re-development of the site for mainly residential purposes. The second incorporates a replacement District Council Headquarters. The third is a phased development allowing for the temporarily relocated bus station.
- 3.3 In all cases, parking provision would be achieved discreetly, either underground or within courtyards. Pedestrian access into the site would be maximised and vehicular routes would be restricted. Existing trees of merit would be retained where possible, together with proposals for replacement planting.
- 3.4 The masterplan shows how the areas of re-development could inter-relate and demonstrates the vast scope for the potential improvement of these large town centre sites.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Further justification of the masterplan will be included in a document to be produced as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). A draft of the SPG will be produced for public consultation at the end of June with a view to full adoption in the autumn.
- 4.2 Discussions and consultations will then be held with local Members, the Town Council, the Town Centre Partnership and the general public on the ideas and opportunities that the masterplan presents. In addition there will be a consultation process with the usual statutory bodies. Any comments or changes will be brought back to the Cabinet before the masterplan is adopted.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

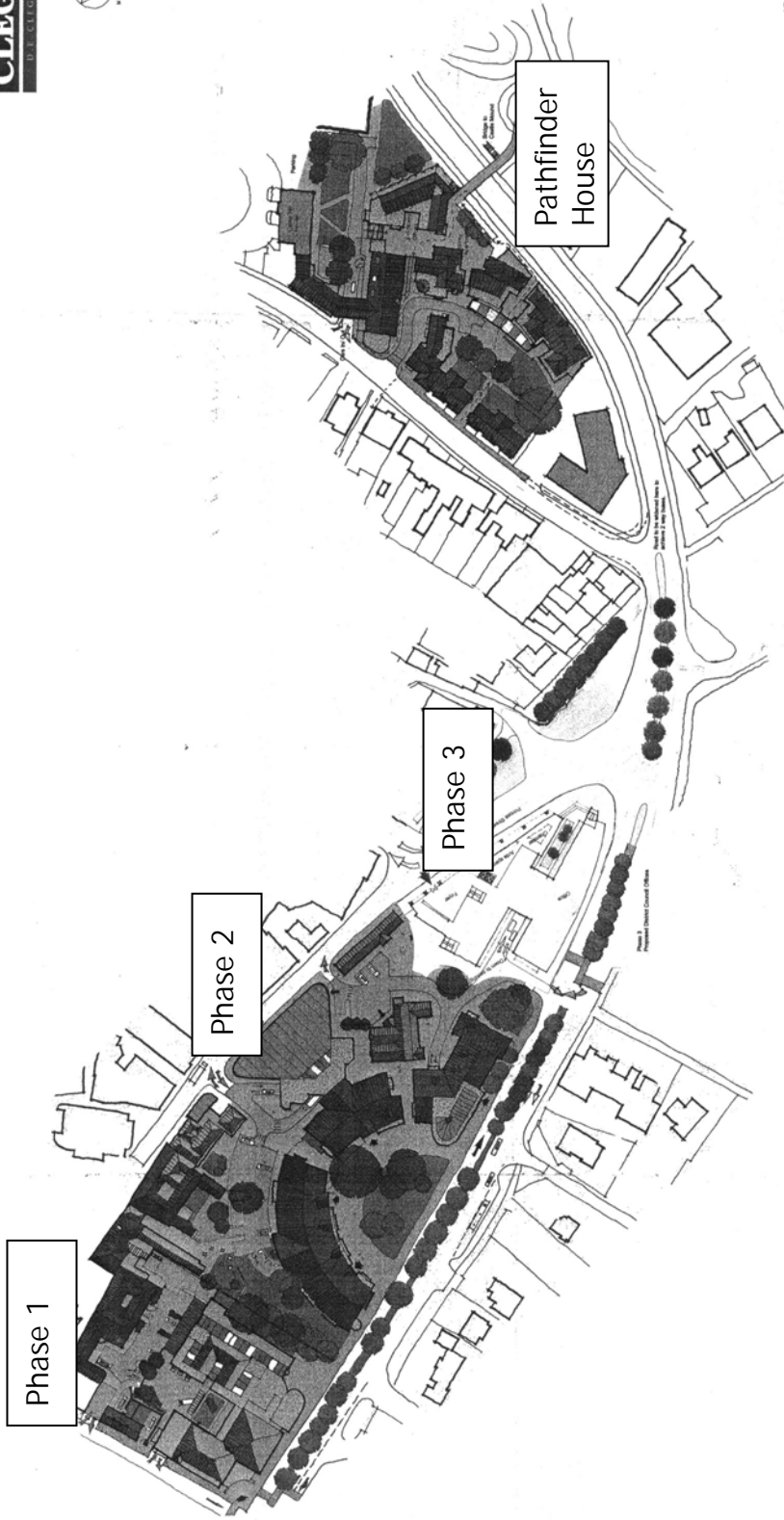
- 5.1 That the Cabinet approves the masterplan and associated options as a basis for further discussion and consultation towards the production of a draft SPG.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

'Land at Princes Street/George Street, Huntingdon – a Vision for Redevelopment' CCC July 2002  
'A Vision for Redevelopment - Development Guidelines' Civic Trust February 2002.

**Contact Officer: Richard Probyn**  
**☎ 01480 388430**

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(SK) 404

Pathfinder House Site

D.C. Relocation  
Phase 3  
(Including Masterplan)

Scale 1:500

# PRINCES STREET AND PATHFINDER HOUSE MASTERPLAN



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(SK) 403

Pathfinder House Site

D.C. Relocation  
Phase 3

Scale 1:500

6176 Huntingdon Town Centre Development © CPMG ARCHITECTS

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# PATHFINDER HOUSE 1 - RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

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- Notes:
- Blocks A, B & C:
  - New Huntingdonshire District Council Offices
  - Semi- Basement Parking beneath Blocks B, C, E & F

(SK) 410

**Pathfinder House Site Redevelopment**

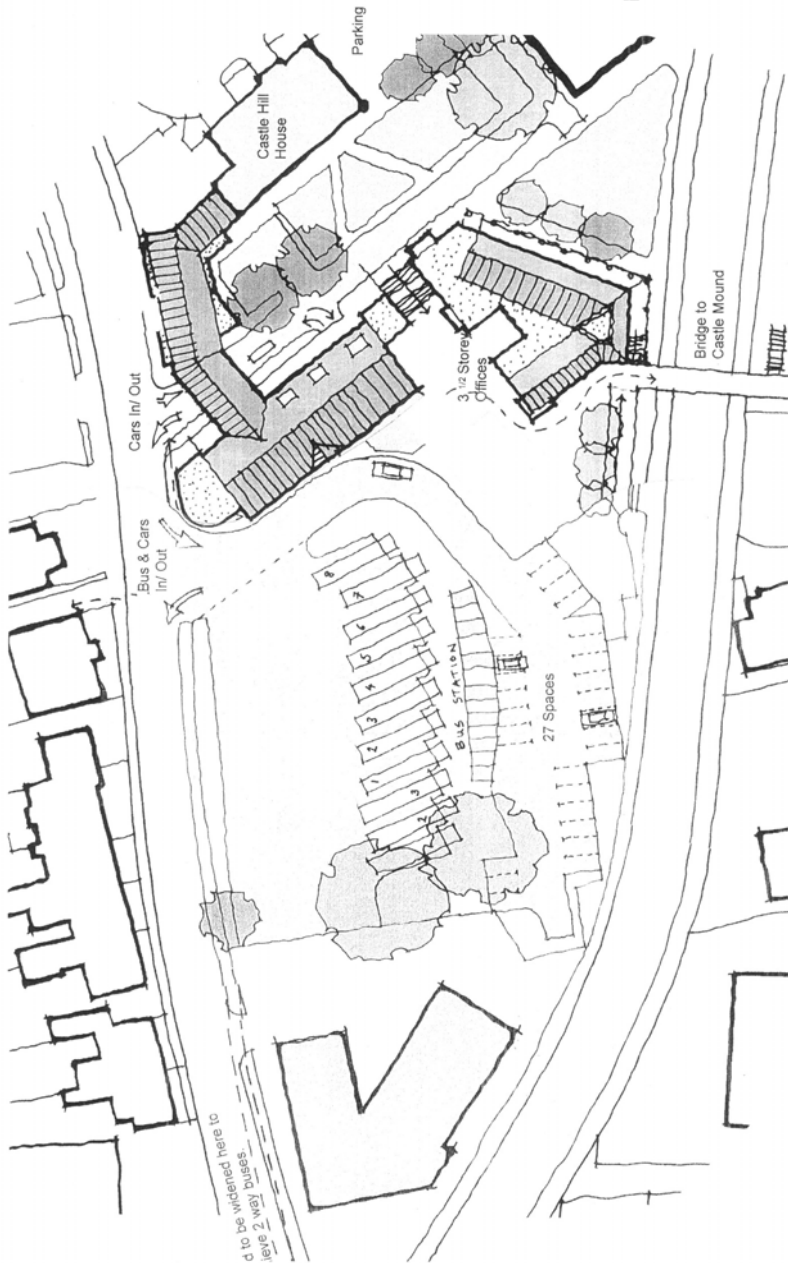
Option 1

Scale 1:500



**PATHFINDER HOUSE  
2 – REPLACEMENT COUNCIL OFFICES**

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(SK) 401

Pathfinder House Site

D.C. Relocation  
Phase 2

Scale 1:500

# PATHFINDER HOUSE 3 - PHASED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING TEMPORARY BUS STATION



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LAND AT PRINCES STREET/GEORGE  
STREET, HUNTINGDON  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING  
GUIDANCE

## A VISION FOR REDEVELOPMENT

For  
Cambridgeshire  
County Council

In partnership with  
Huntingdonshire  
District Council

## Part 2: Development Guidelines

**JOHN MARTIN**  
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 These guidelines have been produced to assist prospective developers in submitting proposals for the physical, economic and social regeneration of this part of Huntingdon Town Centre. It sets out ideas for the potential redevelopment of the site, and highlights the potential demand for particular uses of it. It provides an appraisal of the theoretical capacity of the site to accommodate new development, and broad concepts as to how this could be achieved.

1.2 This document follows on from Part 1 of the Planning Brief for this site, dated August 2001, and should be read in conjunction with it. The scope of the Guidelines covers a larger area than Part 1 in that the whole site of the Bus Station, should it become available or appropriate to redevelop, is included for overall consideration of the potential of the street block (see paras 4.6 – 4.8 for more details). The bus station introduces a further ownership interest to the Study Area, although the majority is still in the ownership of the County Council. Every attempt will need to be made to involve the various owners in a redevelopment scheme.

1.3 The Guidelines do not set out to provide a prescriptive basis for the redevelopment of the site. The Guidelines embody work undertaken by Shillam & Smith on behalf of the District Council. Shillam & Smith concentrated upon analysing the site, considering its opportunities in relation to its environs and its meaning for the whole of Huntingdon. This understanding is believed to be essential for a successful redevelopment of the area.



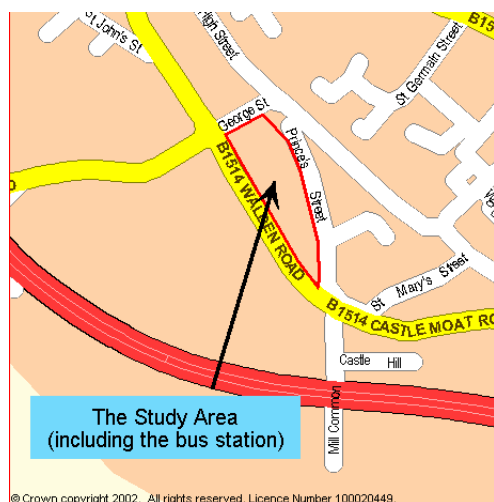
## Background

1.4 Current plans for the town centre focus on enhancing retail provision on the High Street and Chequers Court and adjacent street and malls. Availability of floor areas and quality of the shopping environment are key components of these plans. The report from Hillier Parker<sup>1</sup> states that after the redevelopment of Chequers Court there is unlikely to be additional demand for primary retail space in the town centre.

1.5 The Civic Trust has produced a Vision for the town centre, in which they have identified three main areas. These include this Study Area, together with the area adjacent to Chequers Court and George Street/Ermine Street. Each area has unique characteristics, and separate action plans are therefore being produced for each.

1.6 The west part of the town centre, including the site, is therefore in the position to augment and complement the supply of uses in the town centre. It has the potential to supplement the town's facilities. The centre of Huntingdon lacks speciality shops and cafes, cultural, educational and leisure facilities, and quality hotel accommodation, which would encourage longer-term visits keeping shoppers in the town centre longer and attracting more visitors to Huntingdon. It could also be considered appropriate for elements of residential and office use dependant upon demand.

## Context



1.7 At the moment there are already improvements to the Market Square which will enhance the historic environs of the town. This initiative could be reinforced by the new developments on the Princes Street / George Street site. More could be made of the interaction between facilities

Hillier Parker August 2001



and activities on the eastern borders of the study area. The Market, library and Bus Station lie on a line and at present there is very little made of the spaces between them. Uses such as cafés and small-unit shops along Prince's Street, both sides, would be appropriate. With prime retail activities shifting to the north east of the town centre St. Benedict's Square is becoming more "off centre" and requires a boost. This has been highlighted in the Civic Trust report<sup>2</sup> and their conclusions are supported here. The west end of St. Benedict's Court and All Saints Passage would benefit from a new or improved magnet on or to the west of Prince's Street. The Library could be strengthened, particularly if redeveloped within a new building. The use of libraries in other towns for much more than book lending and research has increased the number of people using them dramatically.

1.8 Other building uses which would attract large numbers would be speciality retail, entertainment, leisure and tourism based users. An intensive teaching/training facility in a new library may also generate large number of visitors, but this doesn't compare with retail for generating the constant stream of people coming and going on foot.

1.9 The area around Market Hill is becoming established as a visitor attraction with its historic setting and connections with Cromwell and the Civil War. There are buildings in the study area which are in many ways ideal recipients of this heritage and tourist opportunity. Walden House, 4 George Street, and Wykeham House could all be used for leisure, entertainment, restaurant, cafes or speciality retail or other purposes to enhance and build upon on the existing tourist attraction. The District Council shares this vision.

1.10 Strengthening the magnets in the north eastern and south eastern corners of the study area would help to draw more people across the town centre along Grammar School Walk, All Saints Passage, St. Benedict's Court and Literary Walk towards the west side of the town centre to the overall benefit of the whole of that part of the centre. It would be important to ensure that this re-balancing of the activity within the town centre would indeed be a balance, and not detrimental to the regeneration agenda for St Germain Walk being promoted by the District Council.

<sup>2</sup> Huntingdon Town Centre, A vision and Strategy for Growth and Quality CTRU October 2000





## 2.0 THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AIMS

2.1 The strategy is guided by the following aims which consider the site in the broader context of the town centre.

- **To create a coherent quarter of quality befitting an important market town centre**

2.2 The intention is to use the opportunity of re-development to create a coherent quarter, which has a clear design identity of its own, but which complements and adds to the quality of other parts of the town. The most important factor is that development on this site should be considered as a whole and planned comprehensively, rather than piecemeal. It is acknowledged that there may be phasing, particularly given the different ownerships involved, but co-operation will be expected, so that each phase fits into the comprehensive plan.

2.3 Such a prominent site should be able to attract high market interest, especially if it is considered as a whole. There is the potential to provide a critical mass of high quality development here, which will have its own momentum and produce a step-change in the types of accommodation on offer in the Town Centre.

- **Enhance and revitalise the existing character of the site**

2.4 New development should respond to the historic buildings and landscape environment but at the same time it should enhance the identity of the site and by generating new uses and activities contribute to a revitalisation of the area.

- **Contribute to a balanced town centre by complimenting facilities that already exist in the town. The site should offer new facilities and strengthen**



## connections between them

2.5 The prime location of the site, adjacent to the town centre and major routes, offers potential for a wide variety of mixed town centre uses. Because this site is easily visited by public transport, by cycle and on foot it should be able to accommodate facilities which require public access. A wider mix of uses on the site will attract greater diversity of people into the area contributing to the attractions of Huntingdon Town Centre. It is important that the primary pedestrian connections, between this site and the retail core, are improved. The amount and type of retail use should take account of the focus upon St Germain's Walk, and the need to achieve an appropriate balance of uses across the town centre.

- **Improve pedestrian accessibility creating a welcoming, attractive and secure site**

2.6 The possibility and quality of pedestrian permeability to the site and to the town centre through the site, is important to the vitality of the area. Welcoming, attractive and secure pedestrian routes should be encouraged through the site, which should be permeable. Measures, such as including some residential accommodation within the site, should be viewed in the light of the improvement they can bring to security and surveillance particularly at night.

- **Offer attractive transport alternatives for people living, working and visiting the area and minimise car parking provision on site**

2.7 It is an important aim to reduce car dependence in the area offering attractive transport alternatives to future residents, workers and visitors. These alternatives should include retention of a taxi rank and bus stop facilities if the bus station is relocated. Considering many facilities proposed are complementary to the existing facilities in the town centre it would be convenient to make use of the parking facilities already available,



where possible. A development of this scale should be accompanied by a green transport plan.

- **Provide sustainable buildings which in environmental, social and economic terms can continue to flourish**

2.8 We would expect to see buildings designed for low energy systems, for flexibility and for robustness. New buildings should be able to adapt easily to future trends.

- **Provide diversity of accommodation**

2.9 There is an opportunity here to provide a wider diversity of accommodation, by for example offering different types of dwellings or offices than are not available elsewhere within the town. There should be opportunity to design for a mixture of cultural, social and physical needs.

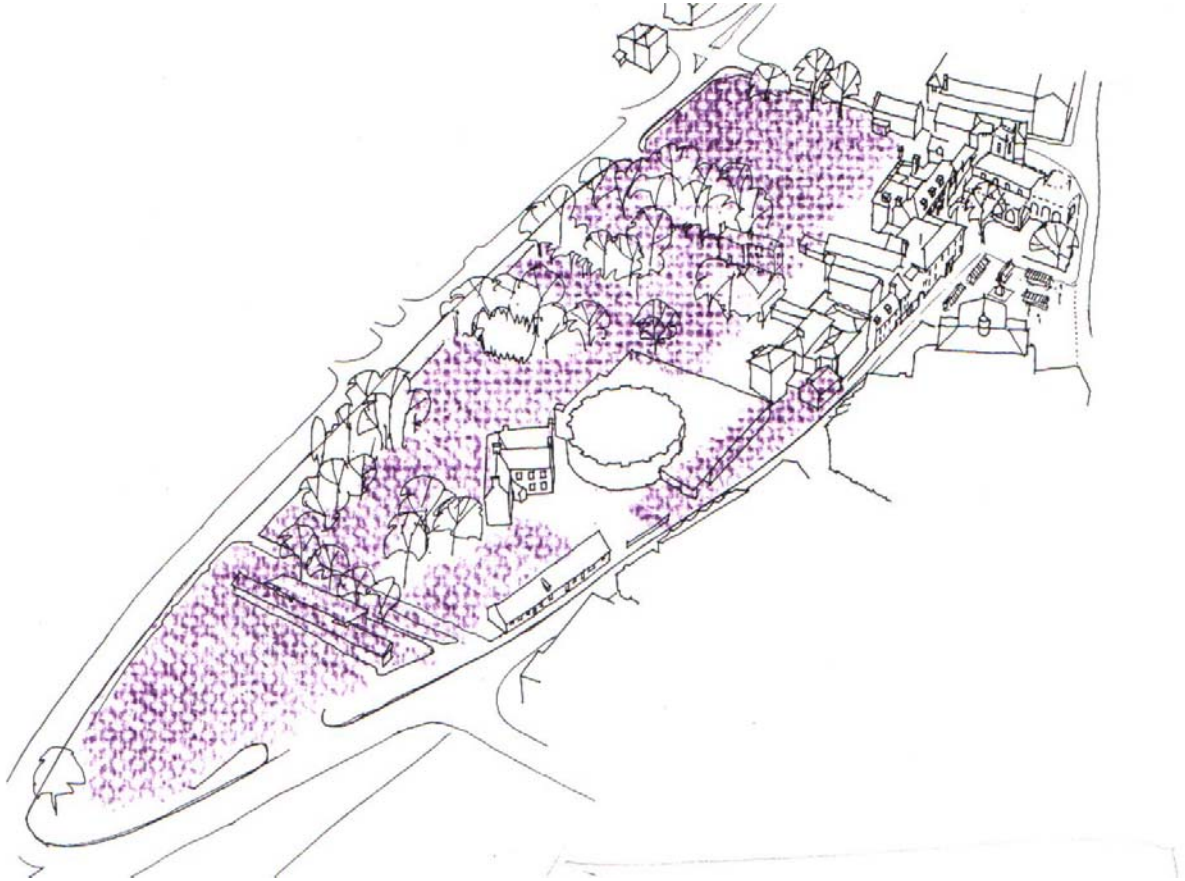
- **Provide leisure and cultural facilities for the town**

2.10 This site is the most suitable to provide wider cultural and tourism facilities to make the town more attractive.



### 3.0 BUILT FORM

#### Indicative Developable Areas



3.1 The existing built and landscape features within the Study Area have qualities of architectural, townscape, economic and aesthetic value which have been assessed for their worth. The removal of all the temporary buildings from the land behind the street frontages will provide opportunities to enhance both the appearance of this part of Huntingdon and its economic viability. There are a large number of trees within the site most of which contribute to the character of the Town Centre and about which there is a presumption of long term retention. With these factors in mind “hard and soft” areas have been identified which give an indication of development potential.

3.2 All Listed Buildings, other attractive buildings are to be retained together with space adjacent to provide suitable settings. All large and significant trees are retained. If the library is retained in the current building this results in a developable area, in three



awkwardly shaped blocks, of about 0.81ha in total. In addition there is a small individual plot of land on Prince's Street.

3.3 If the Library is demolished and relocated within the development and a small number of less prominent trees are removed, a developable area of 1.0ha would be available. This document gives no presumption in favour of removing trees – this will be considered at planning application stage. There are no utility mains within the study area constraining development. All services including, drainage and sewerage are available although capacity levels have yet to be determined and are probably best assessed when proposals are more advanced. As far as amenity/environmental pollution is concerned the only factor of concern is traffic noise and hazard related to Walden Road and to a lesser extent the Bus Station. Traffic is heavy and relatively noisy on Walden Road although the proportion of heavy goods vehicles is not thought to be above average. The one-way character of the road increases its apparent impact.

### **Pedestrian Access**

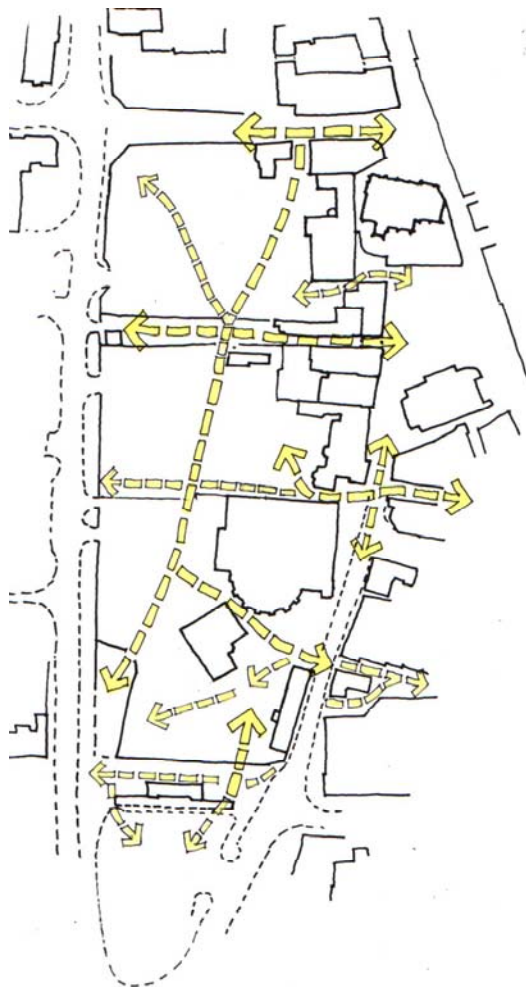
3.4 Pedestrian “permeability”, good and extensive pedestrian access, is an important asset in Town Centre locations and is becoming increasingly important as the emphasis swings from the car to alternative modes of travel.

3.5 Pedestrian links should connect the urban environment on the east with the rural on the west as well as increasing north-south connectivity. Block sizes are relatively small in Huntingdon; this scale of development should be respected. The green spine to the west should provide natural permeability allowing people to walk through the park rather than along the road. This will increase accessibility to the site and through the site.

3.6 It is important to bear in mind that Walden Road is one of the primary vehicular entry routes to the town. The railway station also brings pedestrians to this edge of the site. By creating greater permeability and glimpses through towards the historic core, the attractiveness of the town can be enhanced.



3.7 Creating new landmarks on the north and south west corners of the site will help in orientating and attracting people into the area. Access to the Lawrence Court parcel from



Prince's Street is good and there is potential to provide further entrances from The Walk and Walden Road in the south west corner of the plot. The Gazeley House plot has pedestrian access only from Walden Road apart from through the house. There is a gap in the frontage on Prince's Street which could be exploited to give access to the rear.

At Walden House and Wykeham House there is a narrow gap between the two Listed Buildings which would be very useful in providing a link between Market Square and the rear courtyard areas. North to south pedestrian movement through the middle of the site would be valuable and is only prevented by the Falcon Inn parcel which separates Walden from Gazeley House.

A joint scheme with the Falcon Inn owners that includes this as one of the elements should be vigorously pursued.

### **Vehicular Access**

3.8 The developable area has existing vehicular and pedestrian access points all of which, at this stage can be assumed to be available for future use. In considering future arrangements for vehicular and pedestrian access, it will be important to ensure there is no conflict between these modes. Cycle links and any opportunities to enhance links between this Study Area and the rest of the town centre will be considered as part of the Market Town Strategy, taking account of this Brief.





3.9 The Walden parcel has two access points for vehicles and is the only part of the study area with relatively easy access from George Street (west). The existing entrance from George Street may not be suitable for access to the main part of the area if a courtyard format is selected for development of the rear part of Walden House Annexe. An additional entrance only access would be a useful addition to the site just to the west of No. 4 George Street. The existing access/egress from Walden Road should be retained although its exact position could be varied.

3.10 The existing entrance to Gazeley House should be retained as it provides fairly direct access to the rear yards of 5-8 Market Hill, which have a licence from the County Council. This access is close to that of The Falcon and in the interests of traffic safety could be given up if alternative provision could be made from the Lawrence Court or Walden parcels. The latter would necessitate a joint arrangement with the owners of the Falcon Inn.

3.11 The Lawrence Court parcel has one access from Walden Road and one from Prince's Street which are not connected. There is no physical barrier to linking the circulation and parking areas. Access must be provided from Walden Road, either directly in the current position or via the Gazeley House parcel. The removal of vehicular access to Lawrence Court would make a contribution to the Town Centre pedestrian environment especially if the redevelopment of the Lawrence Court parcel improves pedestrian activity in this corner. The link with St. Benedict's Court would also be enhanced.

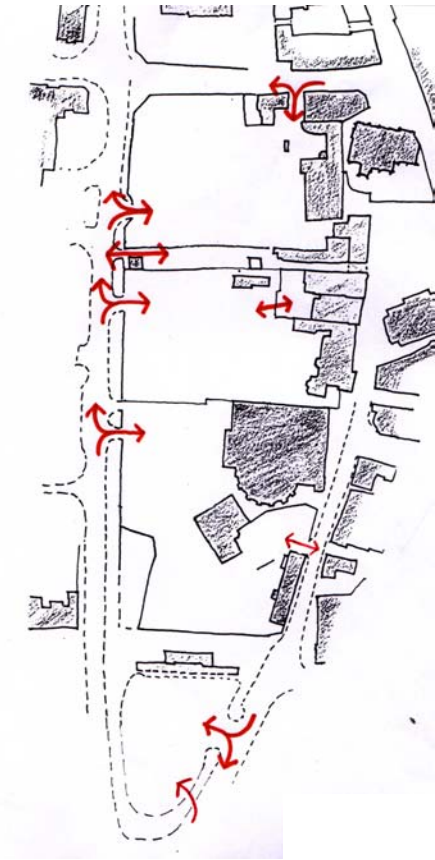
3.12 Access to the bus station site is best provided from Princes Street as existing.

### **Possible Access Arrangements**

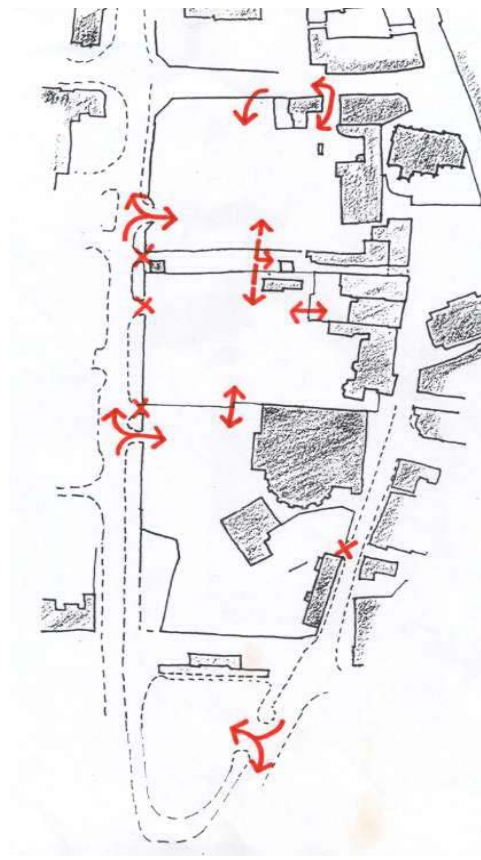
3.13 Two approaches to access provision for vehicles and pedestrian are possible, depending on the agreements reached with adjoining landowners. One approach is to make no change, the other involves reducing connections to the main road network to a minimum and utilising internal link roads. An example of how this might be achieved is shown below. The more comprehensive the redevelopment scheme, the more that can be achieved.



Vehicular Access – no changes



Vehicular Access - changes



### Car Parking

3.14 The provision of car parking will obviously have an impact upon viability. However, an imaginative redevelopment scheme should avoid visual dominance of car parking.

3.15 Every opportunity should be taken to minimise car parking given the town centre location, for example through dual use of spaces. However, there will remain a requirement for some car parking in the redevelopment. This could fall into three categories: public, customer and operational. There is potential for public and customer parking to be combined, for example as it is at Sainsburys. Parking for employees is more appropriately located on the outer side of the inner ring road. Parking within the Study Area should be limited to short term and jointly linked with residential uses.



3.16 The District Council's car parking standards are appended.

#### **4.0 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS/OPPORTUNITIES**

4.1 The architectural heritage of the area, the large number of mature trees and the location in the town centre creates a range of constraints and opportunities have been developed into three dimensional guidance which in scale and massing fit the requirements of the Brief.

4.2 The scheme achieves a number of important enhancements;

- Increased accessibility
- More visitors
- More employment
- Greater diversity of activities/uses
- More evening activity
- Better links to surrounding areas
- Enhanced townscape

4.3 The visual impact of car parking will be minimised and a series of new courtyards with different functions would be provided. The groups of mature trees are to be brought together to form useable areas of urban park accessible to the courtyards and existing streets.

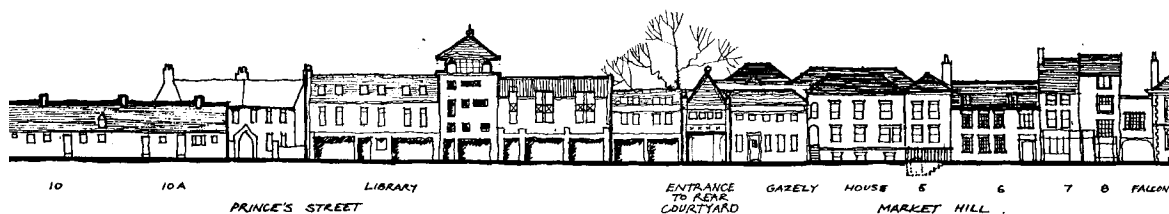
4.4 The frontage buildings to Market Hill are of fine quality, but now that the square has been re-paved more could be done to exploit the potential of this part of the town. Tourism appeal could be tapped by introducing or encouraging new uses in Walden House, its annexe and Wykeham House. The originality of the facades is a vital part of the character of these buildings and it must be assumed that no major changes can be made. This will mean that uses such as restaurant, retail, public house or any activity requiring access for the disabled may encounter problems. Ways of accommodating ramps, and lifts to the street frontage, alternative rear access and linking adjoining buildings need to be explored



in more detail to establish the feasibility of a wider range of uses for the Market Hill buildings. Gazeley House, although Listed, is not of a single period. The 1930s cottage in the

south east corner could potentially be removed to achieve permeability. The gap in the building frontage which could be used to provide pedestrian access to the site and rear of the building which would increase the flexibility in use of Gazeley House and improve the 'permeability' of this part of the Town Centre.

4.5 The library frontage is an unsatisfactory area. The intimate proportions of Prince's Street are lost here through the setting back of the single-storey element of the library. The design of paving and landscaping could be of better quality. A great enhancement to the street scene would be achieved by rebuilding the frontage on the old building line with a three-storey unit including a new entrance to the library. The ground floor could comprise retail units serviced from the street. The upper levels would be ideal for Library uses, or Offices.



4.6 The bus station occupies a large and prominent site which would benefit from radical redevelopment. However, the location here and all the pedestrian activity it generates is a valuable component of this sector of the Town Centre. If the bus station were relocated elsewhere, it would remain important to provide bus stops within the study area. Its relocation elsewhere will follow an extensive study of travel patterns and alternative sites and is unlikely to be activated in the short term. Possible redevelopment of the bus station is to be considered as a medium to long term possibility. This requires further study before a final decision can be taken. The Market Town Strategy currently being undertaken could clearly affect any decision on the future of the bus station at this location as could the



future implications of the Rapid Transport System between Huntingdon and Cambridge.

4.7 The site could accommodate a large building or series of connected structures to provide a “landmark” at this important gateway to the Town Centre. The form, scale and design of the building would have to be carefully handled, and if the achievement of an

appropriate urban form dictates it, the building may need to be constructed at less than 5 storeys. Several uses could be considered appropriate here; residential, offices, hotel and library would all be acceptable in principle. Combinations would be welcomed.

4.8 Should the outcome of the Market Town Strategy be that the bus station should remain in this location there will be the opportunity for it to be remodelled and attractive opportunities would open up as highlighted in the CTRU Vision Report. The idea suggested there of creating a better “gateway” to the town centre is feasible. It could include an improvement to the vehicular approach gateway on Walden Road where it crosses the Walk. A building placed opposite No 2 The Walk (south) would create the desired townscape effect necessitating the loss of a small number of ornamental trees and shrubs. The building could extend eastwards to create a new public square incorporating the east elevation of Lawrence Court, a new library entrance and a remodelled rear elevation of 10/10a Prince’s Street. This “square” could remain open on its south side or enclosed by a rebuilt bus station building which itself may be largely open sided.

4.9 There may be scope here to reduce the land take of the bus station opening up the opportunity to build on the residual land.

4.10 To those passing the site along Walden Road, the general image is created by trees, surface car parks, and rear elevations of both modern and older buildings and flat roofed temporary structures. However, the older buildings tend only to be glimpsed, and more could be done to enhance their contribution in the street scene.

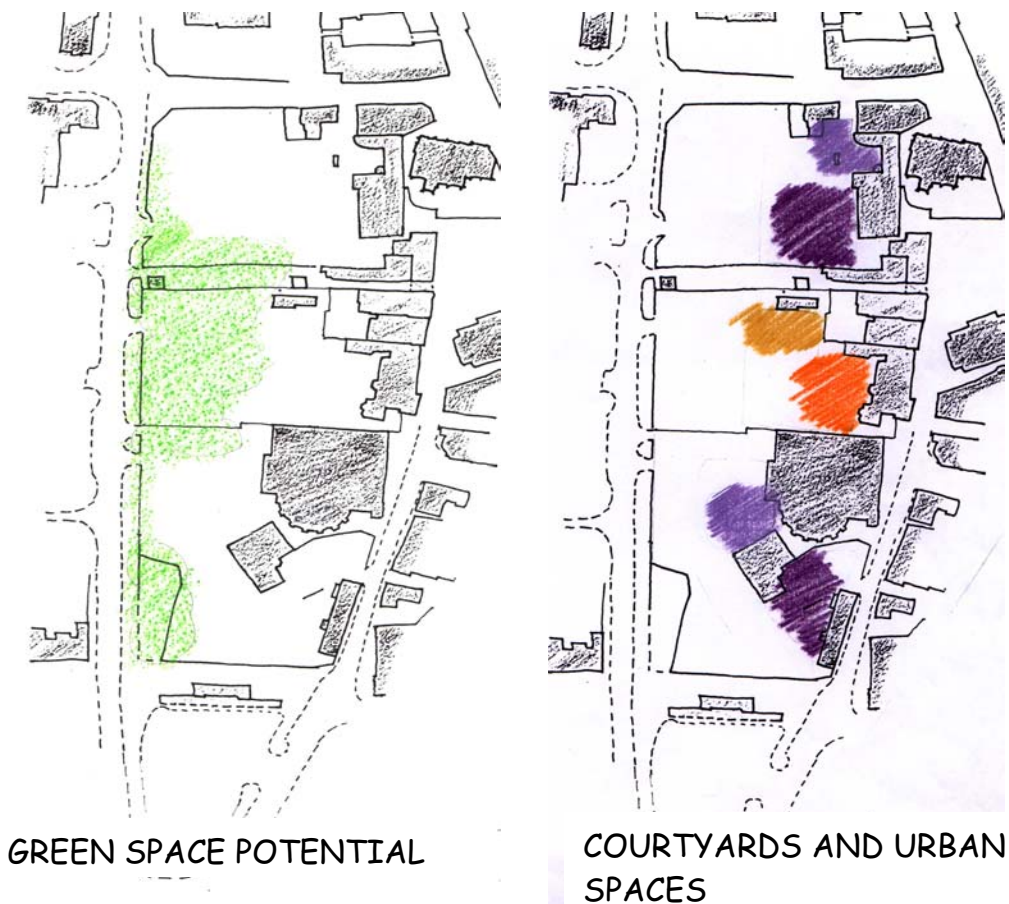
4.11 The removal of most if not all of the temporary offices and some of the poor quality extensions from the former gardens of the four houses will clearly be a positive change, and present a number of opportunities to create interesting urban spaces, of both a “hard” and



“green” characters.

### Trees, Lawns, Courtyards & Urban Spaces

4.12 There are five or six opportunities to create new urban spaces, courtyards of varied size and character, behind the historic frontages.



4.13 The rear facade of Walden House will be exposed when the old timber scout hut and more modern two-storey office structures are removed. The former arrangements of windows and doors with central steps up from the garden should be re-instated. The west





façade of Walden House will become a positive feature to be enjoyed. Perhaps a small urban garden could be laid out here.

4.14 Just to the north is a small hard surfaced courtyard formed by the Victorian annexe. This could be used as the basis for creating a small enclosed courtyard development with additional single and two-storey buildings on the south and west sides linking the annexe with 4 George Street.

4.15 The rear elevation of Gazeley House is largely intact and represents a lively mix of early and late C19 plain classical architecture. There are some mature trees here and an attractive space could be created by adding 2 or 3 storey buildings on an 'L' shape to the west and south of the house. There is a long blank wall of dull grey brick, which could be covered by new buildings to overall visual benefit. A pedestrian way through to Princes Street should be provided.

4.16 The fine Georgian garden elevation of Lawrence Court should be exploited in creating a meaningful space at the rear of the library. The service yard to the library should be enclosed with a 2m wall and a small single-storey building added to fill a corner at the rear of the library. This assumes that the library remains.

4.17 Should the Library be relocated (see paras 5.4 and 5.18) the site area released could be redeveloped with a building more in keeping with the scale and architectural character of Prince's Street and Lawrence Court. A large ground floor would be provided with 2 or 3 floors above, giving a floor space of about 2,800 sq m. (30,000 sq ft).

4.18 Pedestrian movements from the north towards the library entrance (SE) and to the small amenity garden on Walden Road (SW) should be accommodated. If a frontage block of offices or flats were laid out on Walden Road its rear elevation would complete the definition of a potentially attractive space here. The Yew tree avenue should be retained as an access and the entrance to the library yard offset to block views straight into the garden.

4.19 The new courtyard spaces should be linked by footpaths running from George Street to the Bus Station. East-west links between Walden Road and Prince's Street should be



provided at Falcon Yard, Gazeley House and the Library. This will bring pedestrian activity through the area adding to its potential for a wider range of uses for proposed and existing buildings, and enhancing vitality.

4.20 At the junction of George Street and Walden Road buildings of 2 or 3 storeys on the north east and south east corners of this junction would provide a more appropriate setting for this significant crossroads. The clutter of street furniture; crash barriers etc. could be

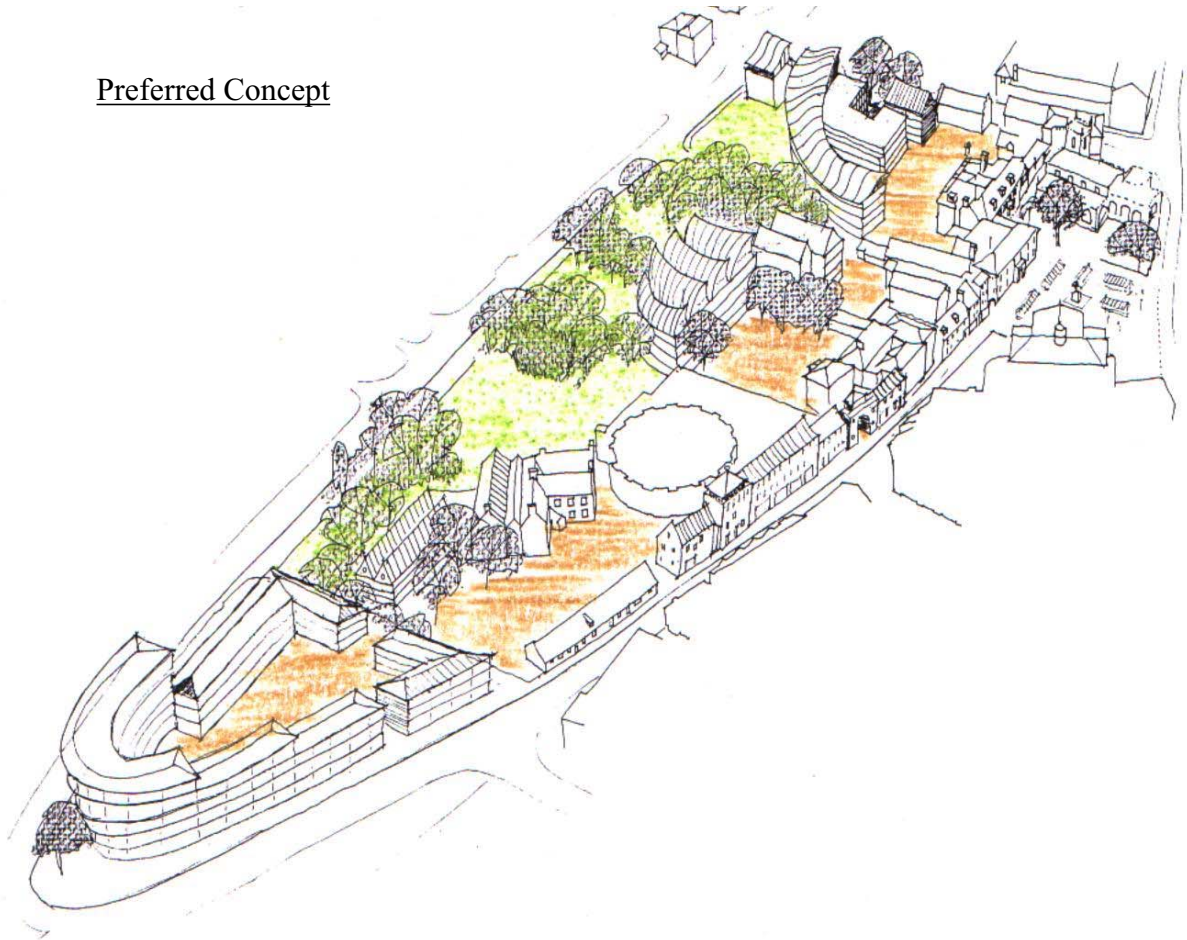
rationalised in creating an urban space of more positive character. A building on the site could be designed to ‘turn the corner’ providing a minor focal point at the apex.

### **Redevelopment Concept**

4.21 The District Council’s preferred redevelopment concept is based upon the principle of retaining the open character to Walden Road, and enhancing the character and appearance of this green edge to the study area. This can be achieved through sensitive treatment of new and improved pedestrian links, and generally careful handling of hard and soft landscaping to create a small urban park. An example of how this form might be achieved is shown below.



### Preferred Concept



4.22 The District Council considers that this parkland approach offers the greatest potential for striking the right balance between maintaining and enhancing the positive aspects of the study area, whilst accommodating new built development.

### **Projected Building Floorspace**

4.23 The parkland concept results in the following building areas:-



Total new buildings	24,200 sq m
Cambridgeshire County Council buildings retained including library	4,300 sq m
Privately owned buildings retained	2,400 sq m
<b>Total area</b>	<b>30,900 sq m.</b>

**Building Areas**

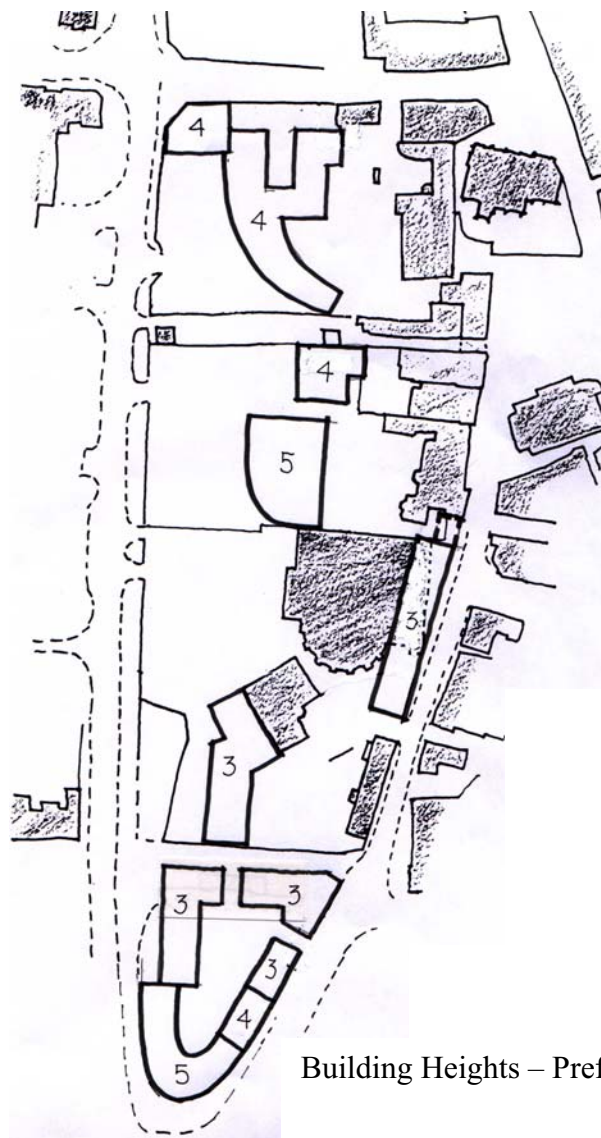
Walden parcel	6,700 sq m
Gazeley House parcel	4,000 sq m
Lawrence Court parcel	4,500 sq m
Bus station site	9,000 sq m
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,200 sq m.</b>

**New Buildings**

4.24 If the library were redeveloped, it would add 1,500 sq m to the total floorspace figure.

### Building Heights

4.25 The building floorspace areas have been calculated on the basis of the number of storeys indicated in the parkland concept.



Building Heights – Preferred Concept



## 5.0 DEMAND AND ACCEPTABLE USES FOR BUILDINGS

5.1 Although the Study Area offers a range of opportunities for enhancement through redevelopment, it is fundamental that this is considered in the context of the likely attractiveness of the redeveloped site to new occupiers. In short, the redevelopment must not only enhance the vitality of the town centre, but it must also be viable.

5.2 The District Council's own commissioned work will help inform the likely demand for additional uses in the town centre. In particular, Hillier Parker have undertaken a retail study of the market towns. The CTRU report itself drew upon a report by Chestertons of May 2000, commissioned by the District Council. Ultimately, market conditions will influence the final mix of land uses.

5.3 The initial comments relating to the demand-side, given here, are based upon the above background studies and knowledge of the local property market.

5.4 For the purposes of this document, it is assumed that the County Council would be relocating all of its existing offices to purpose-designed premises elsewhere in Huntingdon. However, the County Council is committed to the retention of the Public Library within the town centre, be it in its existing form or incorporated within a new building, say at first floor level. The Library apart, however, there is no fundamental requirement to maintain County Council office space on the site.

5.5 The following list represents the potential uses that might be candidates for incorporation within a redevelopment scheme. Comments are provided on each.

### **Retail (A1)**

5.6 The Hillier Parker report identified Huntingdon as being the largest shopping centre in the District and the third largest in Cambridgeshire. It has around 300,000 sq ft of net retail floorspace. However, the town centre has a below average score for vitality. An increase in retail uses within the town centre, particularly on and around Market Hill, can only add to





its vitality and redress this position. Princes Street currently suffers from having no retail users, and consequently a lack of vibrancy. Whilst it forms part of a through route from car parks and the bus station to the town centre, it is part of the route rather than a destination in its own right. The town centre may also be regarded as being a little off-balance, with Sainsburys representing a significant magnet to those using the High Street.

5.7 These characteristics suggest the need for some element of retail floorspace on the Site, probably at its southern end in the approximate position of the Library. This would encourage pedestrians to access Princes Street from High Street. A suitably sized retail provision in this location (small in relation to the total retail provision in the Town Centre), might represent an important draw for pedestrians. The right blend of brand and location is likely to represent a viable proposition to potential developers, if supported by associated improvements in the environment of Princes Street and appropriate complementary uses.

5.8 Specialist retail stores of modest size would benefit in viability from knock-on trade, and could be provided in a combination of new build and re-use of existing buildings such as 10/10a Princes Street. The Chestertons and Hillier Parker reports highlighted the limited range of specialist shops present in the town centre.

5.9 Overall, retail use is likely to be the most viable option for the southern end of the site, but would be likely to entail the removal of the existing library and its replacement, perhaps at first floor above the retail element. Such replacement would clearly not assist the financial viability of the redevelopment, so retention of the library with some visual enhancement remains an option. However, with the right combination of retail uses a redevelopment scheme incorporating a new library may be a real and viable option. Spending within the town centre is projected to increase to support about 7,000 sq m gross retail floorspace by 2011 (based on Hillier Parker estimate of 5,100-5,300 sq m net), and there will be the need to plan for this increase in the Town Centre. A gross retail floorspace of around 1,500 sq metres may be provided within the Study Area.

5.10 Whatever size and type of retail use is introduced, it will be important to ensure that it is not prejudicial to the District Council's strategy for new retailing in Huntingdon, as derived from the Hillier Parker study.



### **Food and Drink (A3)**

5.11 A further element in enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre would be the introduction of additional A3 uses, whose opening times include the evening hours. The Chestertons report indicated a below average representation of A3 uses. The report also recognized that the now enhanced Market Hill represents a good opportunity for the introduction of good quality A3 uses, probably within the ground (and possibly first) floor of Walden House and Wykeham House. Market Hill represents an attractive environment to attract new A3 occupiers.

5.12 There is no doubt that the right brand of A3 use could be viable in this location, although much would depend upon the costs associated with any necessary alteration and maintenance of the Listed Buildings. A3 occupiers could potentially make use of the historical associations of the town and in particular of the Falcon Tavern.

5.13 A pedestrian route from the north western corner of the Study Area has been highlighted as an opportunity. This could link with the existing pedestrian route passing the Falcon Tavern, which should enhance the viability of the Tavern itself.

### **Offices (A2 and B1)**

5.14 Other than the County Council's own use, there are existing office uses within 6, 7 and 8 Market Hill. These would not be part of the redevelopment, but do nonetheless confirm that office use would be potentially viable in the Study Area. Office uses falling within Class A2 are provided principally to visiting members of the public. They therefore generate a need for such characteristics as shop fronts. Whilst there may be scope to accommodate some A2 uses as new build, the Listed status of the buildings fronting Princes Street and Market Hill represents a clear limitation. Nonetheless, there would be a demand for A2 uses were they to be accommodated.



5.15 It is likely that office uses would be principally limited to Use Class B1, probably within Gazely House and the upper floors of Wykeham House and Walden House. The presence of office workers would help to offset any net loss in workers within the town centre as a result of the relocation of the County Council offices.

5.16 It is likely that small suites of B1 offices would be the most viable in this location, again subject to the constraints on alteration represented by the Listed Buildings. Small office suites, perhaps specialising in property or legal services would be an appropriate use, although others related to speciality/quality retailing and tourism/leisure could be considered.

### **Hotels (C1)**

5.17 The introduction of a hotel use at the site is a possibility that should be considered, but viability will be a key factor.

### **Leisure (D2)**

5.18 As already indicated, the public library is to remain in the town centre, possibly in a different form if a suitable ground floor use can be achieved. In addition, there is the potential to introduce other small-scale leisure uses, such as a private gymnasium/fitness club. There is limited choice of such uses within Huntingdon town centre at present, as the Chestertons report also found, and it is felt that there would be potential occupiers for such a use within the Study Area. It would be well located relative to existing and proposed places of work, and occupy a good strategic position relative to the railway station and bus station.

5.19 A fitness club could potentially be located at first or second floor above any new retail development.

### **Residential (C3)**

5.20 There is the potential for the Study Area to provide for high density residential development. In light of Government guidance in PPG3, there is likely to be great interest



from developers in high density residential development in this location. This is particularly so given its proximity to the railway station. An element of affordable dwellings would be a requirement, but the precise percentage and nature of the provision will be a matter for negotiation with Huntingdonshire District Council.

5.21 There is no reason to think that residential development would not be viable.

### Summary of Acceptable Uses and Floorspace

5.22 These uses are considered acceptable in principle in any redevelopment and refurbishment scheme:

Offices (B1 Use & A2)	No upper limit on floorspace is necessary, but at least 4,500 sq m should be provided.
Residential (C3)	To be provided in a mix of new build and conversions. Around 200 units should be achievable.
Library	Use to be retained. If in a new building should be approx. 2,000 sq m.
Retail (A1)	Around 1,500 sq m.
Food & Drink (A3)	No upper limit but at least 3 or 4 outlets should be included.
Hotel/Conference Centre/Leisure	No specific requirements.
Arts Centre/Gallery	No specific requirements.



## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 In conclusion these planning guidelines seek to achieve a scheme that is in harmony with its environs. They provide for an adequate amount of development by allowing high densities in certain areas whilst protecting green areas and providing pleasant courtyards that add to the attractiveness of Princes Street and serve to draw people through the scheme.

6.2 The scheme will only be able to realise its potential if all parties work together to achieve agreed common objectives. These should include maximising value in the development itself and in the value to Huntingdon of the resulting scheme. The enhancement, through redevelopment of this site will be one of the crucial elements in the continued health and vitality of Huntingdon town centre.

6.3 The site needs a magnet to draw more people across the town centre from the main retail core to the east of the High Street. Some additional retail, including speciality types is part of the solution for the success of this area in the long term. However, retail development of too large a scale may unduly compete with other shopping developments already in the pipeline, or existing shops which at the moment require support for their continuing vitality. It is crucially important to the town centre to have the High Street, Chequer's Court and St Benedict's Court consolidated as a quality shopping area.

6.4 Office employment, educational, cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities with some retail are potential uses considering the demand and actual facilities already available in the town centre. These facilities are more viable if employment opportunities remain and residential areas are created. More people living and working in the area will help to



support local facilities and services.

6.5 Huntingdon Town Centre may be in some danger of becoming a “single-use” part of the town. There are pressures to reduce the quantity of office space in the town centre and for business to relocate to the outskirts. This trend should be resisted to ensure the continuing vitality of the town centre.

6.6 Hotel use and other uses, where viable, would be welcomed.

As part of the Market Town Strategy, a traffic model has been created which will test the implications of the redevelopment of the Study Area on the town centre road network. Future detailed proposals for the site will be assessed against this model.

6.8 In architectural terms the site offers opportunities for landmark buildings, especially at the northern and southern edges. Both these positions would provide a focus and a point of reference for visitors to the town centre.

6.9 The quality of development would allow for a profitable and marketable project. Its excellent location offers the opportunity to produce a high density mixed use scheme in a development of high design quality.

**John Martin & Associates**

**June 2002**





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## **DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER OFFICE ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS ADVISORY GROUP (Report of the Advisory Group)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 7th April 2004 and Councillors I C Bates, P J Downes, N J Guyatt, D P Holley, P G Mitchell and B F C Wallis were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were Messrs D Monks, A Roberts, M Sharp and P Watkins and Mrs E Wilson.
- 1.3 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 22nd January 2004 was received and noted.

### **2. HEADQUARTERS AND DEPOT FEASIBILITY STUDY**

- 2.1 The Advisory Group received and noted a report by the Director of Operational Services on progress with the appointment of consultants to undertake a feasibility study into the Council's options for future accommodation and other incidental work.

### **3. PROJECT PROGRAMME**

- 3.1 The Advisory Group gave consideration to a project programme and proposed timetable to the end of the year for the procurement by the Council of future accommodation. Having received assurances as to the achievability of the proposals, it was agreed -

that the Cabinet should be recommended to adopt the budget programme and timetable for the feasibility study and decision on the procurement of future accommodation as set out in the annex to the report.

### **4. CORPORATE ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Advisory Group received a report by the Director of Operational Services drawing attention to a range of issues to be resolved prior to commencement of the feasibility study. Having noted the work streams that had already been initiated, Members registered their support for the approaches outlined in the report to address issues of facilities management; car parking and a staff travel plan; organisational structure; office space configuration, including "hot desking"; and employee liaison.
- 4.2 The Advisory Group went on to discuss Members' accommodation. In order to inform their decisions in this area the Director of Operational Services was requested to arrange for a paper on the options available to be submitted to the next meeting and for site visits for the Advisory Group to observe how similar authorities had sought to deal with accommodation issues

**5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

5.1 The Advisory Group agreed -

that future meetings be held at 8.00am on 19th May and at 6.00pm on 23rd September 2004.

**Councillor D P Holley  
Chairman**

**CABINET**

**6<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2004**

**LICENSING & PROTECTION PANEL**

**12<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2004**

**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003  
(Report by Director of Operational Services)**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To consider the implications of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In March 2003, the Government published a white paper outlining its proposals for tackling anti-social behaviour. "Respect and Responsibility – Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour" focused on providing local authorities and the police with a wider, more flexible range of powers to meet their existing responsibilities and respond to the needs of their local communities.

- 2.2 The Act also provides powers for local authorities and those working with them to tackle anti-social behaviour in local communities. It extends landlords' powers to deal with anti-social behaviour in social housing, including developing the use of injunctions and demoted tenancies. It also includes provisions aimed at dealing with noise nuisance. It develops the sanctions that are available for use against those who engage in anti-social behaviour and extends the range of agencies that can use them. It provides a means for schools, local authorities and youth offending teams to work with the parents of children who are behaving anti-socially and creates the mechanisms for enforcing this work. The Act extends local authorities' powers in relation to cleaning land. It extends the measures that can be taken to remove graffiti, and restricts the sale of aerosol paint to children. The Act also gives local authorities powers to intervene in disputes over high hedges.

- 2.3 The annex to this report sets out in more detail the parts of the Act which have relevance to or require action by the local authority.

**3. COMMENTS ON THE ACT**

- 3.1 Some of the relevant Sections of the Act have already come into force. The others will come into force at different times during 2004, but it is already apparent from contact with communities that their expectations are rising concerning active involvement by the Local Authority in resolving issues covered by this Act.

- 3.2 The particular implications for the Local Authority include:

- (a) Part 1 relating to the closure of premises where drugs are used unlawfully requires the Police to consult with the Local Authority for the area in which the premises are situated. The Cabinet is recommended to delegate this power to the Chief Executive. Part 1 has several other sub-sections where the Local Authority is involved including closure order discharges, serving of

notices and appeals. It is recommended the Chief Executive deals with all these matters, or in his absence the Head of Legal Services.

- (b) Part 4 relating to dispersal of groups, requires the Police to consult the Local Authority before an authorisation is made or withdrawn of the authorisation. It is recommended that the Director of Operational Services as part of her community safety work, is delegated to exercise those powers.
- (c) The need for a co-ordinated approach to the reporting of and response to complaints of anti-social behaviour by individual agencies and across agencies to ensure there is both an elimination of duplication of effort and also a cross-agency approach to those cases that require more than one agency to be involved. The Community Safety Partnership is currently addressing this issue, and will use case workers to undertake the work generated by the more complex Anti-Social Behaviour issues.
- (d) Part 6 of the Act allows the Chief Executive of a Local Authority the powers of closure of premises (that have been granted a license or where a temporary events notice has been serviced under the Licensing Act 2003) because of noise. This overcomes the anomaly created by the Licensing Act whereby only a Police Officer and not an Environmental Health Officer could close licensed premises. As the Act provides the power specifically to the Chief Executive (and other Officers to whom he delegates the power) there is no need to seek any further delegations.
- (e) Part 6 also amends the Noise Act 1996 regarding dealing with noise affecting domestic premises at night and enables the Local Authority (but does not require it) to arrange for an Officer to take reasonable steps to investigate the complaint. The new powers were designed to be complementary to the existing nuisance powers but which the Council had not adopted due to the requirement to provide a 24-hour night noise service. These general provisions of the Noise Act 1996 (as amended by the ASB Act 2003) can now be adopted by the Local Authority but Members need to be clear that this does not mean that a 24 hour service can be provided. If the Members wish this service to be on a 24 hour basis then there are resource implications which will need to be assessed.
- (f) Part 6 also provides the Local Authority with powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for graffiti, fly-tipping and fly-posting. It also provides powers for authorised Local Authority Officers to serve graffiti removal notices and recover expenditure. The Council does not currently issue fixed penalty notices for these offences and will need to consider the staff resources required as well as the possibility of a Service Agreement with PCSOs. It is suggested that a report on this issue be brought to Cabinet in due course.

- (g) Part 6 also amends the Town and Country Planning Act Display of Adverts in Contravention of Regulations. As this is already covered by delegation to the Head of Planning, it is recommended that the delegation is extended to cover Part 6 of this Act.
- (h) Part 7 regarding powers to move trespassers – the Police may direct a person to leave property/land/remove vehicles, if they are trespassing and they have at least one vehicle and intend to reside for any period and if there is a pitch available on a caravan site. The Police must liaise with the Local Authority to determine if a pitch is available. This liaison can be undertaken with the Head of Environmental Health.
- (i) The new powers in Part 8 relating to high hedges have been enacted but not yet been implemented and there is government consultation paper out at present. It will require a procedure to be developed and implemented. It is recommended that the powers when available be delegated to the Director of Operational Services, and in her absence either to the Head of Planning Services or Head of Operations Division. This will enable further work to be undertaken as to the exact way that the work will be done.

3.3 The need to review our approach to Fixed Penalty Notices will be undertaken in the next 6-9 months as part of a 'street-scene' review.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 The new Act requires Local Authorities to be much more pro-active in dealing with matters classed as anti-social behaviour. The impact of this in terms of staff time will need to be carefully reviewed.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

5.1 That delegated authority be given to:

- (a) The Chief Executive or in his absence the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment under Part 1 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act relating to the closure of premises where drugs are used unlawfully.
- (b) The Chief Executive or in his absence the Director of Operational Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment under Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to respond to requests to designate areas for the purposes of dispersal of groups.
- (c) That the powers of the Noise Act 1996 (as amended by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) be adopted by the District Council and that the Chief Executive, and in his absence, the Director of Operational Services be delegated to appoint Officers to investigate complaints of night-time noise and to issue warning or fixed penalty notices. The Chief Executive or in his absence the Director of Operational Services after



consultation with the Chairman of Licensing and Protection Panel be delegated to institute legal proceedings.

- (d) The Director of Operational Services or in her absence the Head of Operations Division, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment under Section 48 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to issue Graffiti Removal Notices and recover expenditure.
- (e) The Director of Operational Services or in her absence the Head of Operations Division, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment under Section 56 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to enter land to clear litter and recover expenditure.
- (f) The Director of Operational Services or in her absence the Head of Planning Services or Head of Operations Division, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment under Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to issue Orders to remedy problems associated with high hedges, to enter neighbouring land to carry out functions under this Act and to undertake any other subsequent works necessary to implement this part of the Act.

5.2 A further report is submitted to Cabinet related to the implementation of Fixed Penalty Notices.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

❖ Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

**Contact Officer: Mrs E Wilson, Director of Operational Services**  
**☎ 01480 388301**

## ANNEX A – ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003

### 1. PART I – PREMISES WHERE DRUGS ARE USED UNLAWFULLY (Implemented in January 2004)

- 1.1 This part took effect on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and grants the police the power to close down premises being used for the supply, use or production of Class A drugs where there is associated serious nuisance or disorder. Service of a notice temporarily closes the premises to all of the public except the owner or those who habitually reside there, until a magistrates' court decides whether to make a closure order. The court must consider the notice within 48 hours. If it is satisfied the relevant conditions are met, the court can make a closure order which closes the premises altogether for a period of up to 3 months, with possible extension to a maximum of 6 months.
- 1.2 *Subsection (1)* sets out the test which must be met before a police superintendent (or officer of higher rank) can authorise the issue of a closure notice. *Subsection (2)* requires that the superintendent must be satisfied that the local authority has been consulted and that reasonable steps have been taken to identify those living on the property or with an interest in it before the authority for the issue of the notice is given.
- 1.3 *Subsection (4)* sets out the contents of the closure notice. These must include details of the time and place of the court hearing in relation to a closure order and a statement that access to the property during the period of the notice is prohibited to anyone other than someone who is usually resident in or the owner of the premises. It must also contain information about local sources of housing and legal advice.
- 1.4 *Subsection (6)* allows a constable, the local authority, persons on whom the closure notice was served under section 1 and any other person with an interest in the closed premises to apply for the order to be discharged at any time.

### 2. PART 2 - HOUSING

- 2.1 This part gives local authorities (with landlord functions), housing action trusts and social landlords registered with the Housing Corporation new powers to deal with anti-social behaviour. The Bill also introduces a new duty on social landlords to publish their anti-social behaviour policies so that tenants and members of the public are informed about the measures that social landlords will use to address anti-social behaviour in their stock.
- 2.2 Section 12 introduces a new section 218A into the Housing Act 1996. This requires social landlords to prepare and publish policies and procedures on anti-social behaviour, and to make them available to the public. This section repeals sections 152 and 153 of the Housing Act 1996 and introduces new provisions allowing social landlords to apply for injunctions to prohibit anti-social behaviour which relates to or affects their management of their housing stock.

2.3 New section 153A(2) to (5) sets out the conditions that have to be met before an injunction against anti-social behaviour can be granted. An injunction may be granted against any person whose behaviour could cause nuisance or annoyance to anyone in any of classes of people listed in S153A(4). These include:

- ❖ Anyone who has a right to live in property owned or managed by the landlord (for example, tenants, licensees, long leaseholders and their families).
- ❖ Anyone who has a right to live in any other property in the neighbourhood (for example owner occupiers, tenants of other landlords).
- ❖ Anyone else lawfully in such property or in the neighbourhood. This could include anyone visiting family or friends, using local facilities, passing through, or working in the neighbourhood.
- ❖ Staff employed in connection with the management of the landlord's stock.

The conduct need not cause any such nuisance or annoyance to any specific individual. It is sufficient that it is capable of having that effect.

### **3. PART 3 – PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

3.1 This part relates to Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices for parents in cases of truancy.

### **4. PART 4 – DISPERSAL OF GROUPS**

4.1 Section 30 contains new police powers to disperse groups of 2 or more and return young people under 16 who are unsupervised in public places after 9pm to their homes.

4.2 These new powers will only be available where an authorisation has been made by an officer of at least the rank of superintendent regarding a designated area. *Subsection (1)* sets out the conditions which need to exist before this authorisation can be made. Before giving an authorisation, the officer must be satisfied that significant and persistent anti-social behaviour has occurred in the locality and that intimidation, harassment, alarm or distress has been caused to members of the public by the presence or behaviour of groups in that locality. *Subsection (2)* provides for an authorisation to be given for a period which does not exceed 6 months.

4.3 Section 31 sets out the process by which an authorisation can be made to designate an area for the purposes of the powers outlined in section 30. *Subsection (1)* sets out that the authorisation must be in writing, signed and specify the locality, the period of the authorisation and the grounds for giving it. *Subsection (2)* ensures that the local authority must agree to any authorisation before it is given by the relevant officer. *Subsection (3)* details the publicity arrangements for the authorisation and *subsection (5)* ensures that it is published before the beginning of the authorisation period. *Subsections (6) to (9)* deal with withdrawal of an authorisation.

## **5. PART 5 - FIREARMS**

- 5.1 This part of the Act introduces a number of changes to the Firearms Act 1968 with a view to tackling the misuse of air weapons and imitation firearms, and introducing stricter controls over especially dangerous air weapons.

## **6. PART 6 – THE ENVIRONMENT – NOISY PREMISES**

- 6.1 This part of the Act took effect from 20<sup>th</sup> January 2004.
- 6.2 *Subsection (2)* sets out the process by which the chief executive officer of a local authority can authorise environmental health officers to issue closure orders. *Subsection (3)* defines terms used in this section and in section 40.
- 6.3 Section 42 amends the Noise Act 1996, which currently gives powers to deal with noise at night (by way of warning notices, fixed penalties etc.). These powers have previously only applied to a local authority (in England, Wales or Northern Ireland) that adopts to apply them in its area. *Subsection (2)* removes the adoptive nature of the powers in respect of England and Wales, thereby bestowing these powers on all English and Welsh local authorities. *Subsection (3)* removes the previously associated duty (once the powers had been adopted) to take reasonable steps to investigate a complaint, and substitutes a discretionary power to take such steps in response to a complaint. *Subsection (4)* removes a provision that applied to the situation where one authority had adopted powers under the Act but a neighbouring authority had not, as this will no longer apply. *Subsection (5)* makes provision as to what local authorities can do with penalty receipts.

### **Graffiti & Fly-Posting – Part 6**

- 6.4 Sections 43 took effect on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and gives authorised local authority officials the ability to issue fixed penalty notices to offenders who have perpetrated acts of graffiti or fly posting as an alternative to prosecution. The intention is to levy the penalties only on the persons actually committing these acts, and not in the case of fly-posting on the person (unless he is one and the same) whose goods or services are advertised on the poster. The fixed penalty notice does not apply to religious or racial hostility offences.
- 6.5 *Subsection (3)* restricts the possibility of being issued with a fixed penalty notice in lieu of prosecution for an offence under s.224(3) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to the person personally affixing or placing the unlawful advertisement in question. *Subsection (4)(a)* provides that offenders have 14 days in which to pay the penalty, after which prosecution for the offence may be initiated. *Subsection (4)(b)* sets out that no proceedings may be brought where payment of the fixed penalty has been made within the 14 day period. *Subsection (5)* provides that in issuing a fixed penalty a local authority officer must provide a written statement setting out the particulars of the offence. *Subsection (6)(a), (b) and (c)* sets out that the notice setting out the particulars of the offence must state that legal proceedings will not be initiated until after 14 days, the amount

of the fixed penalty and details of where and to whom the penalty should be paid.

- 6.6 *Subsection (1)* of Section 46 amends Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 to include powers for a community support officer to issue penalty notices in respect of graffiti and fly posting (as they currently have for issuing penalties in respect of littering and dog fouling). *Subsection (2)* amends Schedule 5 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in respect of powers of accredited persons to issue fixed penalty notices to include being able to do so in respect of graffiti and fly-posting.
- 6.7 Section 48 enables a local authority to serve a "graffiti removal notice" on the owners of street furniture, statutory undertakers and educational institutions whose property is defaced with graffiti that is either detrimental to the amenity of the area or offensive. *Subsection (3)* sets out that the notice will require them to remove the graffiti within a specified period of time, a minimum of 28 days. *Subsections (4)* and *(5)* state that if the person responsible for the property fails to remove the graffiti, the local authority can intervene and clean up the graffiti. *Subsection (6)* requires that the notice should detail the consequences of non-compliance and *subsection (7)* sets out the process for serving a notice. *Subsection (8)* allows that the local authority may affix a notice to the offending surface if they are unable to locate the person responsible. *Subsections (9)* and *(10)* define the surfaces covered, *subsection (11)* sets out whom the notice should be served upon and *subsection (12)* provides the definition of remaining terms.
- 6.8 Section 55 gives waste collection authorities (as defined in section 30(3)(a), (b) and (bb) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) in England and Wales a strategic role for dealing with the illegal deposit or other disposal of waste (or "fly-tipping"), facilitates the definition of this role further to the receipt of statutory directions and extends the range of powers available to them. This should lead to better enforcement of current legislation, a significant increase in investigation activity, better detection of the perpetrators of the crime and, eventually, a reduction in levels of unlawfully deposited waste.
- 6.9 *Subsection (5)* amends section 71 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 so as to provide that any of these authorities may be required to supply the Secretary of State with such information as he shall specify in relation to the categories and quantities of waste that they have dealt with whether under section 59 or under any other enactment in respect of any unlawful deposit or disposal of waste in contravention of section 33 of the 1990 Act. *Subsection (10)* provides that this power and the power under subsection (5) is exercisable by the National Assembly for Wales in Wales. *Subsections (6)* to *(9)* amend section 108 of the Environment Act 1995 to give waste collection authorities certain powers relating to the investigation of incidents of unlawfully deposited waste.
- 6.10 Section 56 amends section 92(10) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to remove the barrier which currently prevents local authorities from entering relevant land (Crown land or land owned by a Statutory Undertaker), clearing that land of litter, and recovering its

costs through the courts. Exceptions will still apply to land occupied for naval, military or air force purposes.

## **7. PART 7 – PUBLIC ORDER AND TRESPASS**

7.1 Section 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 gives a senior police officer power to impose conditions on public assemblies. Before doing so, he must reasonably believe that serious public disorder, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the life of the community might result, or that the purpose of a demonstration is the intimidation of others with a view to compelling them to act in a particular way. Conditions include the location of the assembly, its maximum duration or the maximum number of persons who may constitute it. At present these provisions only apply to groups of 20 or more persons.

7.2 Section 58 amends section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (the 1994 Act) to extend it to cover raves where 20 or more persons are present. At present, section 63 of the 1994 Act only applies to raves where 100 or more persons are present.

7.3 Section 59 amends sections 68 and 69 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (the 1994 Act) to extend provisions relating to the offence of aggravated trespass to cover trespass in buildings, as well as in the open air. The result is that the offence of aggravated trespass will be constituted where a person trespassing, whether in a building or in the open air, does anything which is intended to intimidate or deter persons from engaging in a lawful activity, or to obstruct or disrupt that activity.

7.4 This section inserts a new section 62A into the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 so as to create a new power for a senior police officer to direct a person to leave land and remove any vehicle or other property with him on that land. *Subsection (2)* sets out the conditions that the senior police officer must believe to be satisfied before he can give a direction to leave the land to a person. At least two persons must be trespassing on land; they must have between them at least one vehicle; they must be present on the land with the intent of residing there; and the occupier of the land must have asked the police to remove them. In addition, it must appear to the senior police officer, after consultation with the local authority, that there are relevant caravan sites with suitable pitches available for the trespassers to move to. *Subsections (6) and (7)* enable the Secretary of State to make an order subject to the negative resolution procedure to change the definition of 'relevant site manager'.

## **8. PART 8 – HIGH HEDGES**

8.1 Part 8 gives local authorities the powers to deal with complaints about high hedges which are having an adverse effect on a neighbour's enjoyment of his property. Such a system was favoured by the majority of respondents to the 1999 consultation paper 'High hedges: possible solutions'. Complaining to the local authority would always be a last resort and neighbours would be expected to have made every effort to resolve the issue amicably. If the local authority, having taken all views into account, found that the hedge was having an adverse effect it could order the hedge-owner to take action to



remedy the problem and to prevent it recurring. Failure to comply with such an order could result in a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale in the Magistrate's Court. The local authority would have the power to go in and do the work itself, recovering the costs from the hedge-owner.

- 8.2 Complaints must be made by the owner or occupier of a domestic property, on the grounds that his reasonable enjoyment of that property is being adversely affected by the height of a high hedge situated on land owned or occupied by another person (the "neighbouring land"). Even if the property is currently unoccupied, the owner may still bring a complaint under the amendments (subsection (2)). Complaints about the effects of roots are specifically excluded (subsection (4)).
- 8.3 A "high hedge" is defined as so much of a barrier to light or access as is formed wholly or predominantly by a line of two or more evergreen or semi-evergreen trees or shrubs and rises to a height of more than two metres above ground level.
- 8.4 Complaints must be made to the local authority whose area contains the land on which the hedge is situated. Complaints must also be accompanied by any fee set by the authority. The level of such a fee must not exceed the amount specified in regulations made under this section (subsection (7)).
- 8.5 The local authority may reject the complaint if they consider that the complainant has not taken all reasonable steps to resolve the matter without involving the authority, or if they consider that the complaint is frivolous or vexatious (subsection (2)). If the local authority decide, on this basis, not to proceed with the complaint, they must inform the complainant as soon as is reasonably practicable and must explain the reasons for their decision (subsections (5) and (6)).
- 8.6 Where the local authority proceed with the complaint, they must decide in the first place whether the height of the high hedge is adversely affecting the complainant's reasonable enjoyment of his property. If so, the authority must then consider what, if any, action to require to be taken in relation to the hedge in order to remedy the adverse effect and to prevent it recurring (subsection (3)).
- 8.7 The authority must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, inform the parties of their decision and the reasons for it. If the authority decide that action should be taken, they must also issue a remedial notice (under section 69).
- 8.8 This section sets out rights of appeal against the local authority's decisions under sections 68 and 70, and against any remedial notice issued by them. The appeal authority is the Secretary of State in respect of appeals relating to hedges situated in England, and the National Assembly for Wales in respect of appeals relating to hedges situated in Wales.

- 8.9 This section gives local authorities and the appeal authority powers to enter the neighbouring land in order to carry out their functions under the Bill. They must give 24 hours' notice of their intended entry and, if the land is unoccupied, leave it as effectively secured as they found it. Intentionally obstructing a person exercising these powers is an offence punishable on summary conviction by a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

**9. PART 9 – MISCELLANEOUS POWERS**

- 9.1 *Subsection (4)* of Section 85 inserts new subsections (10A) and (10B) into section 1 of the 1998 Act. Section 1(10A) will allow a local authority to prosecute for breach of an order where it is the relevant authority which obtained the order or where the person subject to the order resides or appears to reside in the authority's area. The Crown Prosecution Service will retain discretion to prosecute in relation to breach of an ABSO; this section confers a concurrent power on local authorities.
- 9.2 *Subsections (3) and (6)* of this section amend the Police Reform Act 2002 by adding to the powers that can be conferred on community support officers and accredited persons. They have already been given the power to issue fixed penalty notices for cycling on the pavement. This amendment makes it easier to enforce this power by conferring power to stop cyclists. It only applies when the community support officer or accredited person believes that an offence of cycling on the pavement has been committed. Failing to stop a cycle when required to do so is an offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and is liable to a fixed penalty notice of £30.

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## **ENTERTAINMENT ON COUNCIL-OWNED LAND (Report by the Head of Administration)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A public entertainment licence is required for musical entertainment on private land. However a licence is not required for similar entertainment on public land on the basis that the relevant public body which owns the land will act in a responsible manner in either promoting the event or letting the land for that purpose.
- 1.2 Licensing now is a non-executive function dealt with by the Licensing and Protection Panel which comprises a process of consultation with statutory consultees and an opportunity for nearby residents to comment or object to an application. To ensure that similar arrangements apply to events on Council-owned land, the former Leisure and Amenities Committee agreed to a parallel consultation process with, in the event of adverse comments being received, an application being determined by a Panel comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and the relevant Ward Members.

### **2. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS**

- 2.1 Although consultation continues to be undertaken where events of this nature are promoted, the arrangements for a Panel hearing were not reproduced in the Council's new constitutional arrangements. As the decision to let land or promote an event is an executive function, this cannot be dealt with by the Applications Sub Group of the Licensing and Protection Panel. Nevertheless a suitable forum is required if a comparable opportunity is to be extended to statutory consultees and the public to raise any concerns regarding an event.
- 2.2 In the absence of a suitable mechanism currently, it is therefore

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- (a) that the promotion of musical events on Council land or the letting of land for this purpose continue to be subject to the same process of consultation and consideration as a public entertainments application;
- (b) that the Director of Central Services (or in his absence the Head of Administration) be authorised to determine an application; and
- (c) that where adverse comments are received, the Applications Sub Group of the Licensing and Protection Panel be authorised to formulate recommendations to the Director of Central Services (or in his absence the

Head of Administration) as to the determination of the application.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Council Constitution.

Minutes of Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting held on 15th December 1992.

**Contact Officer: Mr R Reeves, Head of Administration**  
**☎ (01480) 388003**

CABINET

6TH MAY 2004

**SUN BEDS**  
**(Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Services Delivery and Resources))**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint the Cabinet with the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) following its study on the use of sun beds.

**2. EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 At its meeting held on 6th April 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) took evidence from a number of sources on the use of sun beds, which is summarised below

**(a) Director of Public Health**

- 2.2 The Huntingdonshire Director of Public Health, Dr Christine McCleod, addressed the Panel. She drew extensively on a publication by the Health Development Agency (HDA) entitled "Cancer Prevention: A Resource to Support Local Action in Delivering the NHS Cancer Plan" a chapter of which is devoted to the prevention of skin cancer. The advice contained in that chapter was that local authorities should consider diversifying away from providing sun beds. This advice was endorsed by Dr McCleod.

- 2.3 Dr McCleod reported that the incidence of malignant melanoma is rising and that there is evidence that exposure to sunlight has a cumulative effect on the skin.

- 2.4 To put the issue into context Dr McCleod reported that smoking represents a far greater threat to public health and that local authorities should consider prohibiting smoking from their premises. She also recommended that where they are used providers of sun beds should adhere to the relevant health and safety guidance.

**(b) Leisure Centres Health and Safety Co-ordinator**

- 2.5 Mr P Corley, the Leisure Centres Health and Safety Co-ordinator, outlined the Council's procedures relating to the use of sun beds. He covered the criteria against which the leisure centres judge individuals' suitability to use their sun beds. He also outlined the induction procedure, the measures taken to inform customers of health and safety guidance and the emergency procedures. Finally, he described the measures taken to discourage individuals from using the sun beds more often than is recommended.

- 2.6 Dr McCleod expressed the opinion that the policies and procedures relating to sun beds adopted by the Council are satisfactory and appear to comply with national health and safety guidance.

### **(c) Executive Councillor**

- 2.7 The Executive Councillor with responsibility for leisure, Councillor Mrs J Chandler, informed the Panel that the use of sun beds has been discussed by the Leisure Centre Management Committees and, whilst they acknowledge the concern associated with the health risks, all have concluded that they are minimised at the leisure centres owing to the modern high quality of equipment and the high levels of supervision.

### **(d) Head of Community Services**

- 2.8 The Panel reviewed a report by Mr P Jones, the Head of Community Services. A copy of the report is attached as an appendix.

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 Members of the Panel made the following observations

- ◆ they noted recent public concern at the adverse health effects of sun beds;
- ◆ they acknowledged the perceived psychological benefits of having a suntan;
- ◆ they recognised importance of not fettering personal choice;
- ◆ they reiterated the Council's role in providing modern, high quality sun bed facilities in an environment where health and safety are highly important, and
- ◆ they expressed concern at the Council's inability to enforce standards of operation at other facilities where sun beds are provided.

## **4. REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE**

- 4.1 Members reviewed the evidence presented and concluded

- ◆ they are satisfied with the sun beds health and safety policy and procedures in place at the leisure centres;
- ◆ that, on balance, in order to provide the public with high quality facilities, they do not consider that sun beds should be withdrawn from the leisure centres;
- ◆ that, in the light of the increasing public awareness of the dangers of sunbeds and the associated decline in their usage, in advance of them ceasing to be financially viable, consideration should be given to replacing the sunbeds with other uses, and
- ◆ that consideration should be given to prohibiting smoking in all Council owned or operated public premises.



## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet is

**RECOMMENDED**

- i) to endorse the continued provision of sun beds at the Council's leisure centres in an environment where national guidance and health and safety are strictly adhered to;
- ii) to request the Leisure Centre Management Committees to consider, as they cease to be financially viable, providing alternative facilities to sun beds, and
- iii) to consider prohibiting smoking in all Council owned or operated public premises.

### **Background documents**

Reports of Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) – 6th April 2004

Cancer Prevention: A Resource to Support Local Action in Delivering the NHS Cancer Plan

**Contact Officer: Mr A Roberts**  
 **01480 388009**



**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
(SERVICE DELIVERY & RESOURCES)**

6 APRIL 2004

**THE USE OF ULTRA VIOLET (UV) TANNING EQUIPMENT  
IN DISTRICT COUNCIL LEISURE CENTRES  
(Report by Head of Community Services)**

**1 SUMMARY**

This report outlines procedures regarding the operation of UV Tanning Equipment in four of the Leisure Centres operated by the District Council.

**2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Council owns and operates UV tanning equipment in four of the Leisure Centres it operates. Plans are advanced to install equipment in its fifth Centre early in the new financial year. During 2003, 2,785 members of the Leisure Centres made 18,572 visits to use the tanning equipment. This is 18% down on 2002, but the exceptionally fine weather last year will have had a significant impact on use.

**3 HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES**

3.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issue guidance in controlling risks arising from the use of UV tanning equipment. The guidance covers both operators of equipment and customers of it. The Council adheres strictly to the HSE guidance, which includes ensuring that:

- customers are aware of the potential risks;
- operators carry out pre-screening health questionnaires to screen out those groups of people who are at greatest risk;
- customers use sunbeds in the correct way;
- records are kept of each and every sunbed exposure; and
- after 20 sessions customers are advised by a competent member of staff of the situation, reminded of the risks and provided with the industry guidance on the risks of exceeding the number of sessions.

3.2 As with all situations in Leisure Centres where there is a health and safety risk, the requirements outlined above and more specific operational issues are embodied in documented operating procedures. In addition, the Council is a member of the Sunbed Association which operates an additional Sunbed Code of Practice. The Code covers:

- the installation and maintenance of the equipment to the prescribed levels of performance and safety;
- the training of staff in operational and safety matters;
- the requirement to inform customers of the necessary steps to ensure their comfort and safety; and
- the need to submit to regular independent monitoring.

3.3 Through the Council's membership of the association, the Centres are thus inspected annually and monitored regularly to ensure that they comply with the Code.

3.4 In addition to all of the normal procedures to control risk, the Council's membership system enables it to track the usage of all of its equipment by all of its members.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

The Council operates its UV tanning equipment within well established and strict health and safety guidelines.

#### **5 RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 That the Panel notes the contents of this report.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Leisure Centre Operating procedures held in all Leisure Centres.

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CABINET

6 May 2004

## QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN-OFF (Report by the Head of Revenue Services)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Head of Revenue Services, or in her absence the Head of Financial Services is authorised to write-off debts with an individual value of up to £2,000, or of a greater amount after consultation with the Executive Councillor, having taken appropriate steps to satisfy herself that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs. A summary detailing debts written-off shall be submitted to the cabinet quarterly.
- 1.2 The summary of debts written-off during the quarter ended 31 March 2004 and during the financial year, is shown below with the comparative amount for the same period last year shown in brackets.
- 1.3 Whilst these amounts have been written-off in this period of the current year, much of the original debt would have been raised in previous financial years as the table at 4 demonstrates.

### 2. WRITE-OFFS UP TO £2,000

Approved by the Head of Revenue Services

Type of Debt	In Quarter		Financial Year Total		
	No. of Cases	Amount £	No. of Cases	Amount £	Previous Year (£)
Council Tax	1036	73,388.55	1460	138,013.46	(237,846.24)
NNDR	11	4014.87	34	16,299.81	(28,637.47)
Sundry Debtors	38	8,375.19	226	41,817.12	(55,005.46)
Excess Charges	87	3,475.00	417	16,540.00	(16,296.00)

### 3. WRITE-OFFS OVER £2,000

Agreed by the Executive Councillor  
Approved by the Head of Revenue Services

Type of Debt	In Quarter		Financial Year Total		
	No. of Cases	Amount £	No. of Cases	Current Year Amount £	Previous Year (£)
NNDR	8	142,970.84	14	166,388.13	(359,261.56)
Sundry Debtors	2	32,588.90	5	40,624.20	(76,167.23)

- 3.1 In this quarter one Sundry Debtor case, valued at over £2,000, was deemed unenforceable due to its age. The other Sundry Debtor case and four NNDR cases were written-off because the debtors were in liquidation, receivership or bankruptcy. A further two NNDR cases were subject to a voluntary arrangement and, with a reduced dividend declared by the administrator, were partially written-off. Two further NNDR cases were written-off because the debtor could not be traced.

### 4. DATE ANALYSIS

Year	Council Tax (£)	NNDR (£)	Sundry Debtors (£)	Excess Charges (£)
Pre 95/96	18.30	0.25	2,334.65	0.00
1995/96	46.10	0.00	1,639.12	0.00
1996/97	259.88	2,869.47	7,086.43	0.00
1997/98	2,516.47	0.11	4,721.35	0.00
1998/99	3,792.73	0.00	5,514.67	0.00
1999/00	10,398.76	1.60	3,277.66	0.00
2000/01	22,611.48	3,052.78	7,346.39	0.00
2001/02	44,635.41	13,487.62	6,498.13	345.00
2002/03	42,091.28	59,137.67	25,325.31	12,840.00
2003/04	11,643.05	104,138.44	18,697.61	3,355.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>138,013.46</b>	<b>182,687.94</b>	<b>82,441.32</b>	<b>16,540.00</b>

### 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Cabinet members are asked to note the content of this report

Contact Officer: Julia Barber, Head of Revenue Services ☎ [01480] 388105

**CABINET**

**6 May 2004**

## **SAPLEY SQUARE – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (Report by Director of Operational Services)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Cabinet previously has considered reports on contractual and financial matters relating to the Acorn Community Health Centre (Phase 1) and Sapley Square West (Phase 2) projects.
- 1.2 This reports seeks approval for securing the necessary professional services for Phase 2.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Prior to the District Council becoming involved with the delivery of Phase 1 the intention of the project's promoters were to –
  - (a) transfer the existing contractual relationship with their Architect (Macmon), Structural Engineer and Mechanical and Electrical Engineer to the successful 'design and build' contractor;
  - (b) to maintain the services of their Quantity Surveyor (Dudley Smith) as employer's agent;
  - (c) appoint a project manager to look after the interests of the building's eventual occupiers; and
  - (d) appoint a Clerk of Works to superintend the construction
- 2.2 Because of the closeness of the locations of the two phases it would be impractical to construct them concurrently using different contractors. This principle has been accepted by ODPM who would not oppose a negotiated contract for Phase 2 being secured with the contractor engaged for Phase 1.
- 2.3 The District Council already has established a relationship with the Phase 1 Architect and Quantity Surveyor for initial preparatory work in respect of Phase 2.
- 2.4 Subject to a decision to run Phases 1 and 2 concurrently using the same contractor a single Clerk of Works only would be required.
- 2.5 The District Council has advertised for a Project Manager (2 year contract) to manage its client-side interest in the projects. This is separate from, and will perform a different task to, the Project Manager referred to at 2.1(c) above and is being financed through the Planning Delivery Grant.

### **3. CODE OF PROCUREMENT**

- 3.1 At the time of writing this report there is some uncertainty regarding the Council undertaking both Phases 1 and 2 based on the tendering



procedure that has been completed. A requirement to re-tender would alter the timing of the construction but would not alter the proposed arrangements for securing professional services described in the following paragraphs.

- 3.2 Both the Architect, Macmon, and Quantity Surveyor, Dudley Smith already have an extensive knowledge of Phases 1 and 2 and their retention to complete the projects is recommended. Clause 2.2 of the Code of Procurement provides for the use of 'single tenders' where –

“Specialist consultants, agents or advisers are required and ... it is in the Council's best interest to engage a particular consultant, agent or adviser”

- 3.3 The caveat to this is that the relevant Head of Service shall “... retain records to demonstrate that the best price or value for money has been obtained from the negotiations with the tenderer.”

- 3.4 Following the award of the 'design and build' contract the services of the Architect (and associated engineering consultants) would be transferred to the principal contractor, thereby terminating the relationship with the District Council.

- 3.5 With regard to the Clerk of Works there are three options:-

- (a) to secure the service from the Quantity Surveyor;
- (b) to enter into an arrangement with Cambridgeshire County Council to make use of their service; or
- (c) employ directly on a fixed term contract.

- 3.5 Direct employment is not favoured as it would not be possible to provide cover for absences through sickness and holiday.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Cabinet are recommended to:-

- (a) authorise the Director of Operational Services to secure using the 'Single Tender' procedure the services of Messrs. Macmon and Dudley Smith in connection with the Sapley Square project; and
- (b) authorise the Director of Operational Services to secure the necessary Clerk of Work services using an approach that delivers best value for money for the Council.

#### **Background papers**

Nil

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