



**A Vision for Stanley 2021 - 2035**  
Durham County Council

**Masterplan Report**

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## Introduction

This report has been produced on behalf of Durham County Council by Ryder Architecture, Lichfields, SAJ Transport Consultants, The Mackinnon Partnership, and Tourism UK.

The Stanley Masterplan Steering Group has been involved throughout the process, and engagement has also taken place with the local community, businesses and schools.

The masterplan sets out the vision, recommendations and an implementation plan for Stanley town centre and the surrounding area. The aim of this is to guide development, facilitate investment, and transform Stanley into a thriving town for local people, businesses and visitors.



# Executive Summary

## Introduction to Stanley

Stanley is a small market town with a population of over 33,735 (Community Insight Profile, The Coalfields Regeneration Trust, January 2019) and is one of the largest settlements in north west Durham and one of the largest parishes in terms of population in England.

Stanley is located on the hilltop between Consett and Chester-le-Street, with the A1 and East Coast Mainline to the east. The popular visitor attractions Beamish 'The Living Museum of the North', and Tanfield Railway are close by. The civil parish of Stanley was created in 2007 and includes Stanley town centre the surrounding villages which make up the seven parish wards.

Although the local economy was historically based on coal mining and other heavy industries, most of these industries have disappeared and the town largely functions as a commuter settlement.

Stanley Town Council are based in the Civic Hall and there are several active community organisations in Stanley, including PACT House and The Venue. There is also an established business network, Love Beamish and Stanley.

## Key challenges, strengths and opportunities

The **analysis** section on **page 10** introduces the challenges faced by Stanley, along with the area's strengths and opportunities. Full details of the analysis undertaken can be found in **Appendix 1: Desktop Assessment Report**.

Stanley's key challenges, strengths and opportunities are set out in the tables opposite. As detailed in The Coalfields Regeneration Trust's Community Insight Profile (January 2019), 32% of people in Stanley have no qualifications (22% across England). Health issues are also prevalent in Stanley, with 25% of people having a limiting long-term illness (18% across England). There is low housing demand and a poor mix of housing in Stanley, with terraces making up 57.3% of housing stock in the area (England average is 24.5%).



High unemployment and low skills base compared to County Durham



Health problems prevalent in the local population



Weak housing offer (low demand and lack of diversity)



Severance caused by A693, forms barrier between communities



Declining town centre (rising vacancies and falling rents)



Poor connections and infrastructure to local attractions such as Oakey Park



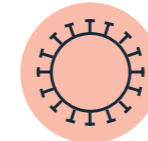
Poor quality built environment, public realm and arrival points



Difficulties in drawing locals and visitors into the town centre



Limited food & drink, leisure and cultural offer and capacity in the town centre



Social, economic and labour market impacts of COVID-19

Key challenges in Stanley



Local green spaces such as Oakey Park and surrounding countryside



National and local cycle network, footpaths and modern town centre bus station



Community assets such as PACT House and The Venue



Visitor attractions such as Beamish Museum and Tanfield Railway



Build upon existing leisure/cultural assets such as The Louisa Centre and Civic Hall



Repurposing and redeveloping key vacant building and sites



Improving education provision, training, skills, and employment opportunities



Establish a focal point and improve the town centre environment



Enhancing gateways into the town through public realm and connectivity



Promote town centre living, boosting footfall and expenditure

Key strengths and opportunities in Stanley

Whilst Stanley's population has grown in recent years, partly as a result of development of new housing in the area, this growth has not been matched by the level of retail and other service provision in the town and immediate surrounding areas. **Vacancy rates** in the town centre (17.9% in October 2020) are significantly higher than the national average (around 12%). These buildings tend to be in poor condition and in prominent locations.

The town centre has faced significant competition from larger retail and leisure destinations elsewhere, including the Metro Centre and Newcastle and Durham city centres. Another competitor has emerged in the form of Internet shopping over the last 10 years, exacerbated as a result of the recent **Covid-19** pandemic which has had an even greater impact on shopping patterns. This is compounded by the **poor quality built environment**, connections, gateways and public realm throughout the town. There is a **lack of 'things to do'** in Stanley both for local people and visitors, particularly in terms of the evening economy.

The nature and extent of these challenges mean that a **radical new approach** is required to help re-invigorate the centre. It is also important, however, that the wider strategy for Stanley seeks to increase the number of higher skilled jobs in the local area, in order to boost incomes, and thereby increase demand for local retail and leisure facilities over time.

Although Stanley faces challenges, it benefits from proximity to **countryside, green spaces, allotments**, and the national **Coast to Coast cycle route** which skirts around the town centre, offering opportunities for improved active travel and healthy lifestyles throughout the study area.

Stanley and the surrounding villages also have a **strong sense of community**, which came to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic, with several charities and community groups coming together to support local people.

There are regionally and nationally significant **visitor attractions** close by, at Beamish and Tanfield. Within the town centre there are also existing **leisure and cultural assets** including the Louisa Centre, Civic Hall, and Indoor Bowls Centre, all of which offer opportunities for improved utilisation, linked trips, and supporting the growth of an evening economy in Stanley.

**Recent investment** in the town centre has seen the development of Home Bargains and McDonalds at Clifford Road, and ALDI off Front Street. Further retail / food and drink development is planned at Agnes Street. The Louisa Centre will also benefit from Durham County Council's leisure transformation programme, and the Council are also investing in improvements to the public realm at Clifford Road.

#### Masterplan brief

Durham County Council commissioned Ryder Architecture, Lichfields, SAJ Transport, The Mackinnon Partnership, and Tourism UK to produce a Masterplan for Stanley, building on the work of the 2012 Stanley Masterplan and 2016 Update.

The purpose of the masterplan is to develop a shared vision for Stanley town centre and its surrounding settlements, that is meaningful and locally distinctive, and is agreed by key partners and residents of Stanley. This plan should challenge current use, target change and inspire action from key partners to guide future investment and activity. The different needs of the resident, trader, visitor and investor should be balanced to ensure that projects create a lasting impact and benefit.

The main focus of the masterplan is **Stanley town centre**, with housing, environment and employment consideration given to the surrounding areas which make up Stanley civil parish.

The masterplan is intended to be **long term and deliverable**, and covers the period up to 2035.

#### Engagement

The vision and masterplan have been steered by extensive public and stakeholder engagement. Stanley Masterplan Steering Group, local Councillors and Council officers have been involved throughout the process. Due to restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, this has taken the form of online workshops, interviews and surveys.

Local residents, businesses, community groups and schools were consulted between December 2020 and February 2021, with 678 responses in total. A summary of **engagement** is included on **pages 19 - 21**, and full details can be found in **Appendix 2: Consultation Report**.

#### Vision

The vision for Stanley by 2035 is to be a **thriving, healthy town** with a vibrant, welcoming, and distinctive town centre which local people are proud of, and which appeals to visitors. The full **Vision** statement is included on **page 22** in this report. The graphic on the next page illustrates the key **masterplan objectives** which will help to deliver this vision.

#### Masterplan recommendations

**Options** for the town centre were developed and appraised by the consultant team with input from the Steering Group. This process is described on **pages 24 - 26**.

#### Recommendations for the town centre and study area

are detailed on **pages 27 - 43**. These recommendations cover the following key elements:

- Town Centre
- Culture, Leisure, and Tourism
- Business Space
- Education and Employment
- Housing
- Transport and Connectivity
- Digital
- Planning Policy

These recommendations are brought together in the **study area and town centre masterplan diagrams** on **pages 44 - 45**.

There is a need to **re-focus the town centre** by creating a more compact retail/food and drink quarter on the southern end of Front Street. A new residential/mixed use quarter at the northern end of the centre would provide more scope for **diversification of uses**, and a leisure/civic quarter created around existing uses at the southern end, including Asda, the Louisa Centre and the Civic Hall. A **rejuvenated Front Street** will include new public space, food and drink, leisure, retail and services, housing, and healthcare. **Improved connectivity and facilities** will mean that local residents and visitors will be able to enjoy Stanley's fantastic walking and cycling trails, parks, countryside and surrounding villages.

In addition to this, placemaking principles have been developed for **character areas** within the town centre, as described on **pages 46 - 51**. The aim is to create an attractive, welcoming town centre which promotes health and wellbeing through landscape, growing, social spaces, and active and sustainable travel. Key to this is bringing vacant buildings back into use, and creating flexible, high quality public realm which can support the evening economy, markets, events, and play. The masterplan also seeks to celebrate the area's heritage and community spirit. Providing greater housing choice in the surrounding areas, and facilitating well designed town centre living will help to support businesses and services within Stanley.

The **healthy towns strategy** on **pages 52 - 53** outlines how the masterplan supports health and wellbeing.

#### Implementation and delivery

In February 2021 the Council announced its Towns and Villages Investment Plan. Stanley Area Action Partnership's current investment total is £10.4m. In March 2021 the UK Government launched its £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund. These potential funding sources, amongst others, are outlined in the **Implementation Plan** on **pages 54 - 60**. This section also covers potential timescales and delivery partners to take projects forward.



A transformed **Front Street** which is enjoyable to visit and provides an attractive environment to spend time.



Create opportunities to respond to any future demand for **new anchor retail** or leisure uses



Improve key arrival points and wayfinding in the town, creating a **good first impression** and encouraging people to explore Stanley



Empty buildings to be **redeveloped or brought back into use** as high quality and sustainable developments which add to the vibrancy of the town centre



Strengthen our **culture, leisure and heritage offer** to draw visitors and residents into the town throughout the year including the coordination of events and markets



Encourage **active and healthy lifestyles**



Support **local businesses and start-ups** in Stanley, including through networking and town centre business testbed and meeting space



Improved food & drink offer, including new bars and restaurants, which help to create a **genuine evening economy**



A **renewed sense of pride in Stanley**, based on its strength of heritage, new positive perceptions of the town, and a collective aspiration for the future



A wider variety of **interesting and good quality shops and services**, including independent and specialist operators, meeting the needs of local people, showcase local produce and attract visitors into the town



Improve **housing mix and quality**, and encourage town centre living



Digital solutions will support these objectives across **commerce, culture, public services, and wellbeing**



Improve **connectivity and accessibility**, including fast and frequent bus services, better walking and cycling routes, and enhanced links throughout the study area



Raise local people's aspirations through **continued improvement in education and training** and increased visibility of skills and employment opportunities

# Location and Study Area

## Location

Stanley is centred on a hilltop between Chester-le-Street (approximately 4 miles to the east) and Consett (approximately 4.5 miles to the west). Stanley lies 7 miles south west of Gateshead, and 8 miles north west of Durham. Chester-le-Street station is on the East Coast Mainline. The A1(M) is just to the west of this, and is linked to Stanley via the A693.

The civil parish of Stanley (indicated with the red line on the map opposite) was created in 2007 and includes Stanley town centre and the villages of Annfield Plain, Tanfield, Craghead, Catchgate, Tantobie, Tanfield Lea, South Moor, White-le-Head, Bloemfontein, Clough Dene, Greencroft, Harelaw, Kip Hill, The Middles, New Kyo, No Place, Oxhill, Quaking Houses, Shield Row, and West Kyo.





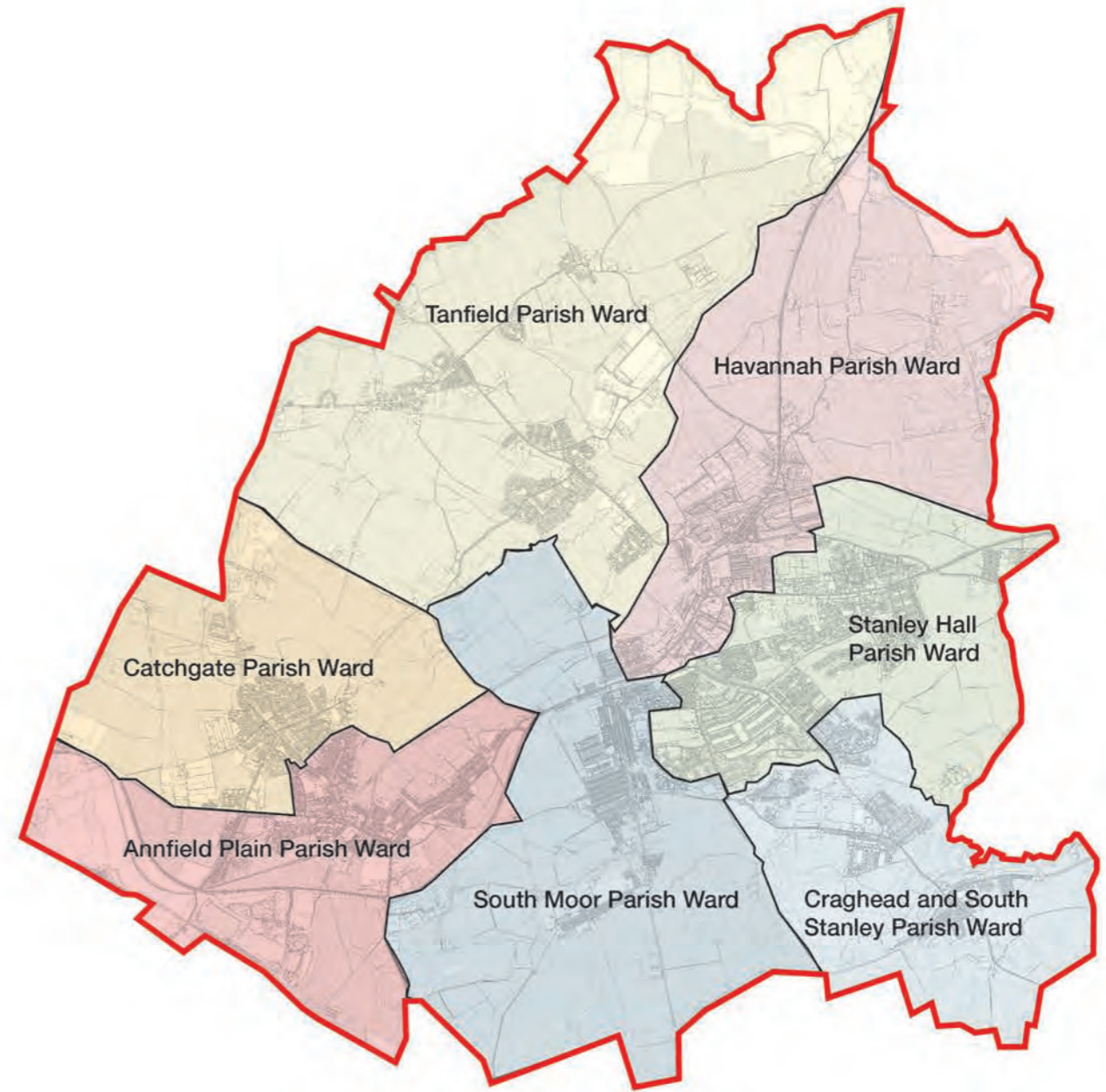
**Study area**

The study area for the masterplan is Stanley Civil Parish, made up of seven parish wards as shown on the map opposite. The masterplan considers housing, environment and employment themes within this wider area.

The main focus of the masterplan is Stanley town centre, shown on the plan below. The town centre is broadly defined as the area lying to the west of the A693, bounded by the woodland to the west. Front Street runs through the centre of Stanley town centre, with Asda at its southern end, and Station Road and Church Bank to the north.



Stanley Masterplan - Town Centre Area



Stanley Masterplan - Study Area

# Analysis Summary

## Introduction

This section highlights the key challenges and opportunities within the town centre and study area. Full details of the analysis undertaken can be found in **Appendix 1: Desktop Assessment Report**.

## Town Centre Health Check Challenges

Based on the review of the health, and vitality and viability, of Stanley Town Centre, it is currently facing a number of challenges:

- the core of the centre along Front Street has seen a weakening in both its retail offer and levels of footfall in recent years, with the centre of gravity shifting towards Clifford Road Retail Park
- the comparison goods retail offer is focused upon smaller, independent and / or specialists, with a limited choice of national multiples – resulting in a significant level of expenditure leakage (83%) out of the Stanley catchment in this sector
- the very limited commercial leisure offer in the centre - aside from McDonald's and a small number of pubs / social clubs, there are no restaurants, or indeed any other facilities, which help to attract visitors on an evening
- the current unit vacancy rate (which is around 18% - albeit reducing to 13% when excluding first floor uses), and number of prominent empty buildings, which are a blight on the centre and, along with other uses, such as offices, residential and community facilities, are creating large stretches of dead frontage. This is represented in the diagram shown on the following page

- the generally poor quality of the shopping environment throughout the centre which, in addition to the above vacant buildings, includes a number of properties which are unattractive and / or in poor condition, and is therefore in need of an uplift
- the length and width of Front Street, which exacerbates perceptions of quietness, with pedestrian flows being particularly low at the northern end
- limited operator demand, with the retail and leisure sectors facing significant challenges nationally
- Covid-19, which has further depressed footfall in the centre, and the fact that the full effect of current restrictions upon retailer operators has yet to be felt

## Opportunities

In addition, however, there are also a number of opportunities for the centre. These opportunities include:

- the scope to build on recent investment, including the new Home Bargains, Aldi and McDonald's outlets, by generating linked trips
- the need to 'brighten up' the centre, improving the quality of the built environment, and complementing the public realm works recently undertaken along Front Street
- the potential for existing 'physical' businesses to develop and enhance their online presence, to compete more effectively with online only (and other) retailers
- the scope to attract new restaurants and other commercial leisure facilities to the centre, subject to operator demand, as well as other, non retail, uses which contribute to the centre's vitality and viability

- the scope to hold events and activities, which help to drive footfall on Front Street and generate more regular visits to the centre
- harnessing the power of community groups, in terms of both the usage of existing space/buildings and organising events/activities

## Leisure, Culture and Tourism Challenges

Based on the review of leisure, culture and tourism in Stanley, it is currently facing a number of challenges. These include the fact that:

- aside from the Louisa Centre and Civic Hall, leisure and cultural facilities within the town centre are currently limited, with the food offer comprising a number of cafes plus McDonald's
- most national leisure chains' expansion plans are currently on hold, making it difficult to deliver enhancements to the existing offer
- demand for overnight accommodation is currently limited, with just one small hotel on the edge of the town centre, and strong competition from Tyneside and Durham, where there is a wide range and choice in facilities
- although there are some tourist attractions in the local area, most notably at Beamish, there are no compelling reasons for this market to visit Stanley
- whilst the town has some other assets – including the indoor bowls centre, South Moor golf club and previous music festivals - more is needed in order deliver a step change in the town's offer

## Opportunities

In addition, however, there are also a number of opportunities for the centre. These opportunities include:

- the need to create better linkages between attractions in the surrounding area, such as Beamish, which capture more of the benefits generated
- the scope to generate more visits from those using the Coast to Coast (C2C) cycling route
- the scope to capture more of the spending associated with events at Stanley Indoor Bowls Centre, through a better choice of accommodation and eating out facilities
- build on the existing leisure and commercial use at Stanley Civic Hall, including the cinema, theatre, community uses, with opportunity to expand food and drink uses
- the potential to build on previous music festivals held in Stanley by holding new events, ideally within / in close proximity to the town centre and again, capturing more of the economic benefits
- the potential to develop the retail offer on Front Street through the introduction of speciality markets (eg showcasing local food producers)
- the scope to provide more activities for younger people in Stanley which bring more vibrancy to the town centre



### Vulnerable and Vacant Buildings

As described on the previous page, there are several vulnerable or vacant buildings within Stanley town centre. These are described in more detail in **Appendix 1: Desktop Assessment Report**.

Key sites include the listed former Customer Access Point building, the Old School Board building adjacent, the vacant Store 21 unit, and former Bertie's Bar, all on Front Street, as well as the former Elite buildings site at the junction of Front Street and Station Road.

These prominent vulnerable buildings in the heart of the town centre create a poor first impression of Stanley. The refurbishment / repurpose / redevelopment of these sites will improve the appearance, vibrancy, and economy of Stanley, as well as celebrating its heritage.



Key vacant buildings in Stanley town centre

### Business Space Challenges

- Stanley is located in a market area that is generally attractive to local occupiers only – this limits the scale of demand for land and premises in the area. In addition, it means that employment growth needs to be stimulated by supporting business start ups / growth of indigenous businesses, rather than being able to ‘import’ jobs through inward investment.
- The provision of two serviced office centres on industrial estates a little outside the town has drawn demand from Stanley town centre; but with a lack of offices of comparable specification in the town centre, these businesses might well have relocated outside the masterplan area. Given the current capacity within these serviced office centres, it would be inappropriate to provide competing office accommodation in the town centre.
- The supply of modern industrial premises has tightened as older stock has been demolished, but speculative development of new industrial units remains unviable. Whilst inspection identified a range of units on the market, in the foreseeable future some modest further provision will be required. Private sector industrial development is not viable without some form of public sector gap funding.

### Opportunities

- There is serviced land available for development and this is likely to be more than sufficient to meet employment needs over the plan period. This includes sites on established industrial estates (such as at Greencroft Industrial Park) which perform well against a number of key criteria as assessed in the Council’s ELR.
- Business Durham manages a handful of office units on Tanfield Lea South Industrial Estate; these are fully occupied. Provision of additional Council owned units at Tanfield Lea South should be considered. This industrial estate adjoins housing on the northern edge of the Stanley and is closer to the town centre than the other six estates in the masterplan area.
- Old vacant buildings in the town centre that are considered worthy of retention may provide opportunities for conversion. Given current levels of vacancies LSH would recommend adopting a flexible approach to end uses, which could include offices, but allow for a range of alternative uses.
- Build on the existing workspace and conference space at the Civic Hall

### Education and Employment Challenges

- High unemployment
- High risk of higher unemployment still as furloughing ends
- Lower levels of educational attainment than County Durham as a whole
- Weak aspirations by schoolchildren to go on to further study

### Opportunities

- A good range of colleges and universities within striking distance, all keen to engage
- Create a new means of putting those opportunities in front of people, through an annual Stanley Jobs and Careers Fair in the town centre

### Housing Challenges

- Stanley’s housing market is characterised by: small, older terraced properties with high proportions of private rented and low proportions of owner occupation. This is particularly evident in Annfield Plain, South Moor and Catchgate.
- High vacancy rates are coupled with low house prices which suggest weak housing demand across the study area (although house price growth has been strong in recent years).

- The above issues translate into a high concentration of households in lower socio-economic categories, who typically have lower levels of disposable income. This impacts on levels of expenditure in the town centre, particularly given the localised nature of the catchment.
- As a consequence of the age of properties many are of poor quality with low energy efficiency, particularly in Annfield Plain and South Moor.

### Opportunities

- There is an opportunity through the delivery of new homes to diversify the housing on offer and alter the socio-economic profile of the study area. This would be particularly through the delivery of larger properties. Delivery of smaller homes is likely to exacerbate the existing issues of low demand.
- Delivery of new housing provides an opportunity to attract more spending into Stanley, helping to support a more vibrant town centre, whilst S106 payments can be used to deliver improved community and leisure facilities. The former Ever Ready site and various allocations in south Stanley provide opportunities for new housing delivery.



**Transport and Connectivity Challenges**

- Little activity on Front Street
- No passby traffic trade due to the bypass.
- Lack of sense of arrival
- Legibility
- Severance due to the A693 and wayfinding
- Quality of environment
- Traffic enforcement / parking
- Active travel desire lines not met

**Opportunities**

- Activity on a Saturday could be increased like other areas (Stanley peak is on a Friday).
- The Market (Thursdays and Saturdays) should generate additional trips/activity (not shown in the data).
- Consider introduction of traffic to Front Street to maximise passby trips and passive supervision.
- Destination retail introduced to west of Front Street to increase footfall.
- Evening uses to extend duration of stay and spend for local residents.
- Maximise the opportunities for extending local visiting (Beamish, Bowls, C2C, Tanfield Railway) for linked trips.
- Create a destination, a reason to visit. A cycle hub for national route users as well as local leisure and utility journeys. Improved access to Stanley from the surrounding areas increases personal mobility without the reliance on motor vehicles.
- Cycle club meeting place

- Cycle Hire
- Cycle recycle (links with NHS)
- Facilities (showers, cycle washdown, repair)
- Catering
- Repair, advice and maintenance.
- Gateway features at key arrival points including the two roundabouts and the links from the C2C
- Improved links from the parking areas, subways and bus stations to be improved.
- Inviting, clear, legible routes including lighting and activity.
- Improve crossing facility at the ASDA roundabout to provide at grade facilities. The northern subway to be improved with increased passive supervision and activity, enhancing its importance as a route.
- Review the provision, destinations and location of the wayfinding provision in the centre but also from the C2C (potential for information boards)
- Surfacing and road markings could be improved to enhance the appearance of the environment
- Demands for parking may increase to exceed provisions, car park management may be required to ensure vehicle turnover.
- Review of suitability of TROs to ensure that areas are used as intended and vehicles do not encroach in to areas where they should not be
- Improved routes to the C2C and inclusion on the definitive PROW plan.

**Digital Challenges and opportunities**

- At a high level there would appear to be a good level of broadband and mobile coverage across most of Stanley which can facilitate the enablement of digital technologies to improve and enhance the experience for residents, businesses and visitors to the area, the town and the high street.
- The level of superfast connectivity is in line with national averages and whilst it lags behind adjacent councils, it does not do so at a level that will have a negative impact when competing against them for investment or new businesses. More concerning would be the lower levels of ultrafast broadband and this would imply that Stanley is not currently perceived by the market as a place to invest in fibre and other means of ensuring high speed (Gigabit) broadband.

- Local market stimulation is required to ensure that Stanley is not left behind. This is a larger issue in the context of 5G mobile which will rely on fibre to support local deployment and any further use of IOT across the region and within the high street.
- More work is required to understand the infrastructure availability across the region at a lower level and to create a more citizen specific map for connectivity for both a fixed and mobile. This will be useful for the Council and supplier market alike.



Bus Station accessed from Front Street



C2C cycle route signage



Scott Street car park



Digital high street precedent

# Study Area

## Introduction

This section summarises the character of the surrounding settlements within the wider Stanley study area. The diagram on the next page summarises the challenges and opportunities. Full details of the analysis undertaken can be found in **Appendix 1: Desktop Assessment Report**.

## Annfield Plain

Annfield Plain lies to the south west of Stanley town centre and is connected to Stanley via the A693 and the Coast-to-Coast cycle route which runs through Annfield Plain and continues onto Consett approximately 3 miles to the west. Annfield Plain grew from a small village, and as the mining industry continued to expand in the 1900s there was further development in the area with parks and new schools. Annfield Plain Co-operative Store also grew to a large multi-department enterprise and when it closed a large part of it was dismantled and exhibited at Beamish Museum.

Green space, Annfield Plain Park, and Morrison Road allotments separates the settlement from Greencroft Industrial Park, which includes The Greenhouse and Karbon Homes headquarters. To the north of the A693 at Annfield Plain is Greencroft Heath local nature reserve. Annfield Plain Cricket Club is in the west of the area, opposite Croft Community School.

The village is centred around the convergence of New Front Street, Station Road and West Road where there are several historic stone fronted properties, including the grade 2 listed Annfield Plain Library which is located further north on the B6168. There are a number of shops, pubs and services, including Annfield Plain Community Centre, and a Tesco Superstore to the east, but also several vacant units. There has been recent investment via the Towns and Villages 'Spruce Up' project.

## Catchgate

Once separate villages, Catchgate and Annfield Plain now merge into one another along the B6168. Catchgate is located north west of Annfield Plain. Its shops and services line North Road, and there are several historic stone properties. However, several of these are vacant including former pubs, social clubs and shops. At the northern gateway to Catchgate, there is a small green space and artwork depicting the area's mining heritage. There were several collieries around the village and the Annfield Plain Urban District Council offices were located here. Durham Police Catchgate Section Office is also located along the B6168.

Catchgate is separated from Hare Law to the north by open space and the grade 2 listed St Thomas' Church and churchyard. Carrmyers Burn runs to the north. Hare Law Industrial Estate lies just to the north of this. Kyo Bogs local nature reserve is located between Catchgate and New Kyo.

## New Kyo

East of Annfield Plain, New Kyo is a small settlement running from South View to Shield Row Lane. The southern gateway includes Welcome to New Kyo feature signage. The area is characterised by Victorian red brick terraced housing, which is bounded by green space and the C2C-Oxhill pathway to the north, and further green space and the A693 - leading to Stanley town centre - to the south. South of the main residential area are several car dealerships, garages and repair centres and to the south, the Morrison Road industrial area including Durham County Council facilities.

## Oxhill

Oxhill is a small village, historically the site of a major level crossing, just to the west of Stanley town centre. To the west it meets New Kyo on Kyo Lane where Oxhill Youth Club and The Ox Inn are located, just off the A693. Victorian red brick terraced housing lines the A693, and at the eastern end, Oxhill meets Park Road, providing access to South Moor.



Annfield Plain Community Centre



New Kyo



Annfield Plain



Oxhill Youth Club



Greencroft Industrial Park



Memorial Park, South Moor



Catchgate



Park Road, South Moor

### South Moor and Quaking Houses

South Moor is located south west of Stanley town centre, with the A693 to the north, New Kyo to the west, South Stanley and Beamish Football Centre to the east, and Quaking Houses to the south, separated by Stanley Burn.

South Moor is centred around Park Road, a long, linear terraced street which slopes steadily down from the A693 in the north towards the Stanley Burn, with views to the hills beyond. The historic Victorian terraces run north-south (for example Rose Avenue to Standish Street), and east-west (William Street to Elm Street). Later housing has infilled the pockets of land between these areas. In the middle of Park Road is the main high street, including several shops and services, including the Haven Community Centre (home to South Moor Partnership) and Little Acorns Nursery and After School Care. There are some historic stone properties in this area, as well as several vacant buildings and sites.

South Moor and Quaking Houses were typical colliery villages that developed before and just after the First World War, around four collieries of William Hedley's South Moor Colliery Company. In the early 1900s a Mine Rescue Station was established and located here, as was a hospital to serve the miners and their families known as the Holmside and South Moor Welfare Fund Hospital and was largely funded by the miners themselves.

South Moor Heritage trail is a five mile circular walk around key eight heritage sites of South Moor and Quaking Houses. Between the two villages is Memorial Park, given to the Town by South Moor Colliery Company in 1920 as a memorial to the men of South Moor who fell during World War 1. South Moor Sports and Community Club is also located near here. To the south of South Moor and Quaking Houses is an abundance of open space, including Chapman's Well Nature Reserve and South Moor Golf Club.

### Craghead

Situated around 1.5 miles south east of Stanley town centre, along the B6532, is the small village of Craghead. Two well known colliery owners, the Musgrave and the Hedley families were largely responsible for the development of the mining industry around which the village grew. During the early 1800s the village saw a period of rapid expansion, including churches, hotels, cinemas and shops including the Craghead Co-operative Store. Craghead Colliery Band, a well known brass band is still active in the area.

South Stanley Woods wrap around to the north and east of The Middles. The land rises up from the Stanley Burn and Twizell Burn, and Craghead is characterised by steeply rising banks and Victorian terraces. The cross roads at the B6532, Wagtail Lane and Front Street is a focal point, with the Punch Bowl pub, the grade 2 war memorial behind it, and the memorial sculpture to Craghead miners set in green space on the corner, with spectacular views back towards Stanley. There are several high quality, characterful historic buildings within Craghead.

Front Street contains a small number of shops, takeaways and pubs, including Craghead Victory and Social Club. Behind the main residential terraces around Railway Street is a small industrial area, Craghead Play Park and St Thomas' Church, surrounded by woodland. Fox and Parrot Wood lies to the east along Craghead Lane.

### Tanfield

Tanfield Village to the north of Stanley is the oldest of the settlements in the Stanley Town Council area, and was for many years the commercial and religious centre of the area. There are a number of listed buildings in the village, including the parish church, St. Margaret's which was built circa AD900 by the monks of Chester-le-Street and predates Durham Cathedral. Tanfield historically had its own council covering Tanfield Village, Tanfield Lea, Tantobie and White-le-Head.

These communities thrived with the development of the coal industry. The first deep mine is believed to be Tanfield Moor Colliery which opened in 1769. Tanfield Lea Colliery opened in 1829 followed by East Tanfield in 1844. The Tanfield area had a very large Methodist congregation and Charles Wesley visited the area on several occasions. Tommy Armstrong, a resident of Tanfield Lea, was well known for the poems he wrote about life in the area and became known as 'the Pitman's Poet'.

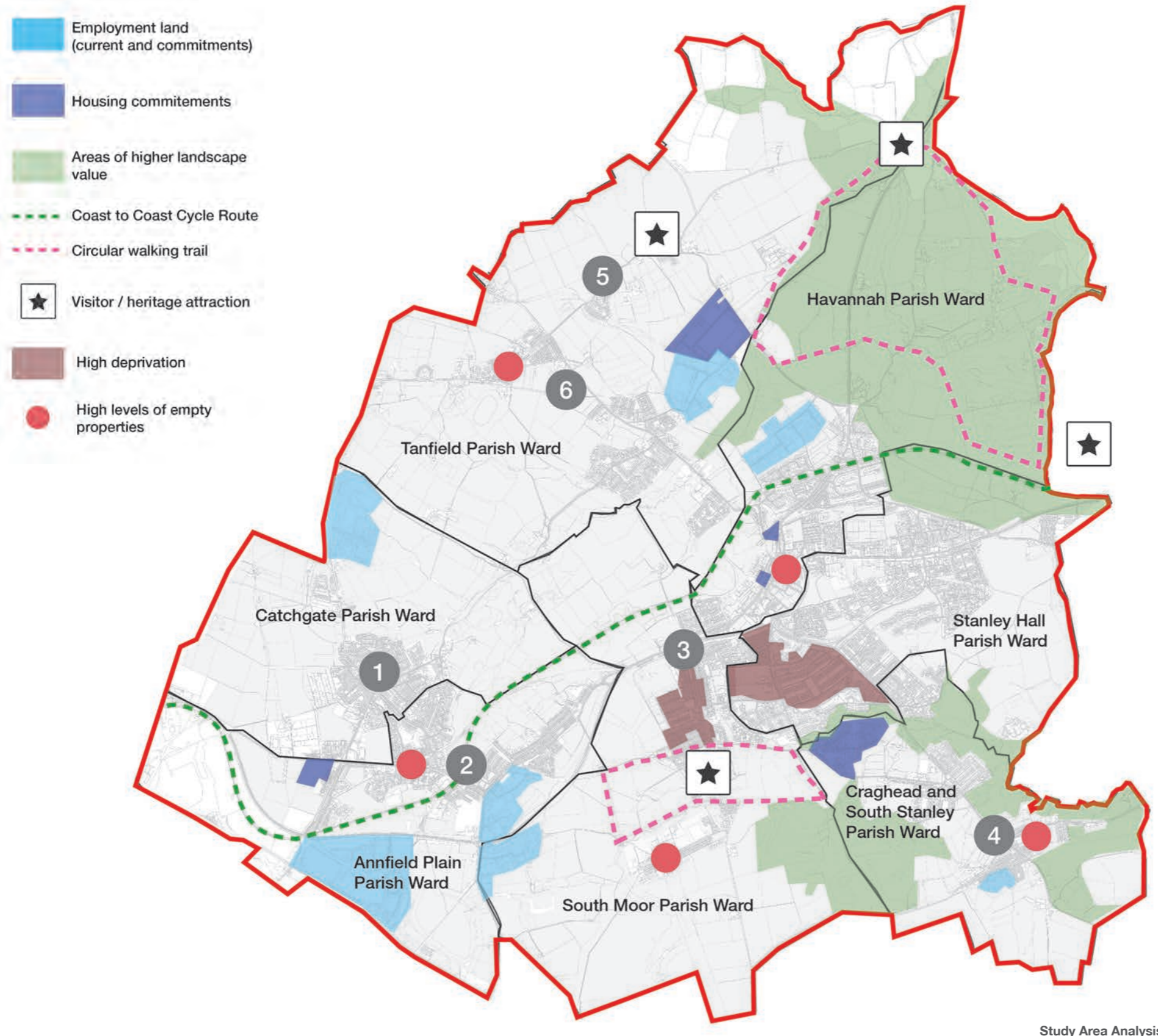
Tanfield Railway and Causey Arch are to the north east of the village, and East Tanfield heritage station which now includes the Waiting Room cafe is a 10 minute walk to the south east. The village itself is home to Bayberry Hollow, a popular gift and coffee shop, and the Peacock pub.

To the south of the village is Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate, with Houghwell Burn and the Tanfield Lea Marsh local nature reserve running between the north and south estates. Tanfield Lea North was previously home to the Ever Ready factory, and is now allocated for housing. Tanfield Lea residential area sits to the south west of this, including the wooded Tanfield Lea Park. To the south of Tanfield Lea are Harperley and Pea Woods.

### Tantobie

Tantobie is a former colliery village 2 miles to the north west of Stanley town centre. It is surrounded by fields with Clough Dene to the north, and Tanfield Lea to the south. To the east is a small housing estate named Sleepy Valley, towards Tanfield. Front Street, the B6311, runs through Tantobie. There are several attractive stone terraces and a converted church, shops, the Oak Tree Inn, and the Olive Stone Italian bakery. Tantobie Community Centre and Sports Pitches are located between South View and the disused railway path which connects to Tanfield Lea Road.





- 1 Catchgate**  
To the North West is Catchgate - mainly residential and community facilities such as a library, schools and churches. To the North of the settlement is Harelaw industrial estate
- 2 Annfield Plain and New Kyo**  
Annfield Plain has a cricket club, community centre, park with tennis courts, Tesco superstore and industrial estate south of A693. Recent investment for 'spruce up' through T&V funding. To East is New Kyo, a small settlement of mainly residential. Both Annfield Plain and New Kyo have future proposals for selective licensing to regulate private landlords
- 3 Oxhill and South Moor**  
Oxhill is a small village to the West of Stanley which used to be the site of a major level crossing. Very small settlement, mainly residential. South Moor is to the South of Ox Hill and South West of Stanley. Land uses are residential, community facilities and shops, as well as a large golf course and new housing developments. There are future proposals to tackle empty properties and selective licensing to regulate private landlords.
- 4 Craghead**  
Craghead is South East of Stanley, and is mainly residential with some community facilities. There are future proposals for selective licensing to regulate private landlords
- 5 Tanfield**  
Tanfield is a small semi-rural village North of Stanley with a few community uses including a church and popular cafe / gift shop Bayberry Hollow. To the South of the village is the visitor attraction East Tanfield Station
- 6 Tantobie and Tanfield Lea**  
Tantobie is a small village to the North West of the town centre with residential and community facilities including sports pitches and allotments. To the South East is Tanfield Lea with similar community facilities, a park and two industrial estates to the East of the settlement, Tanfield Lea North and South

Study Area Analysis



# Stanley Town Centre

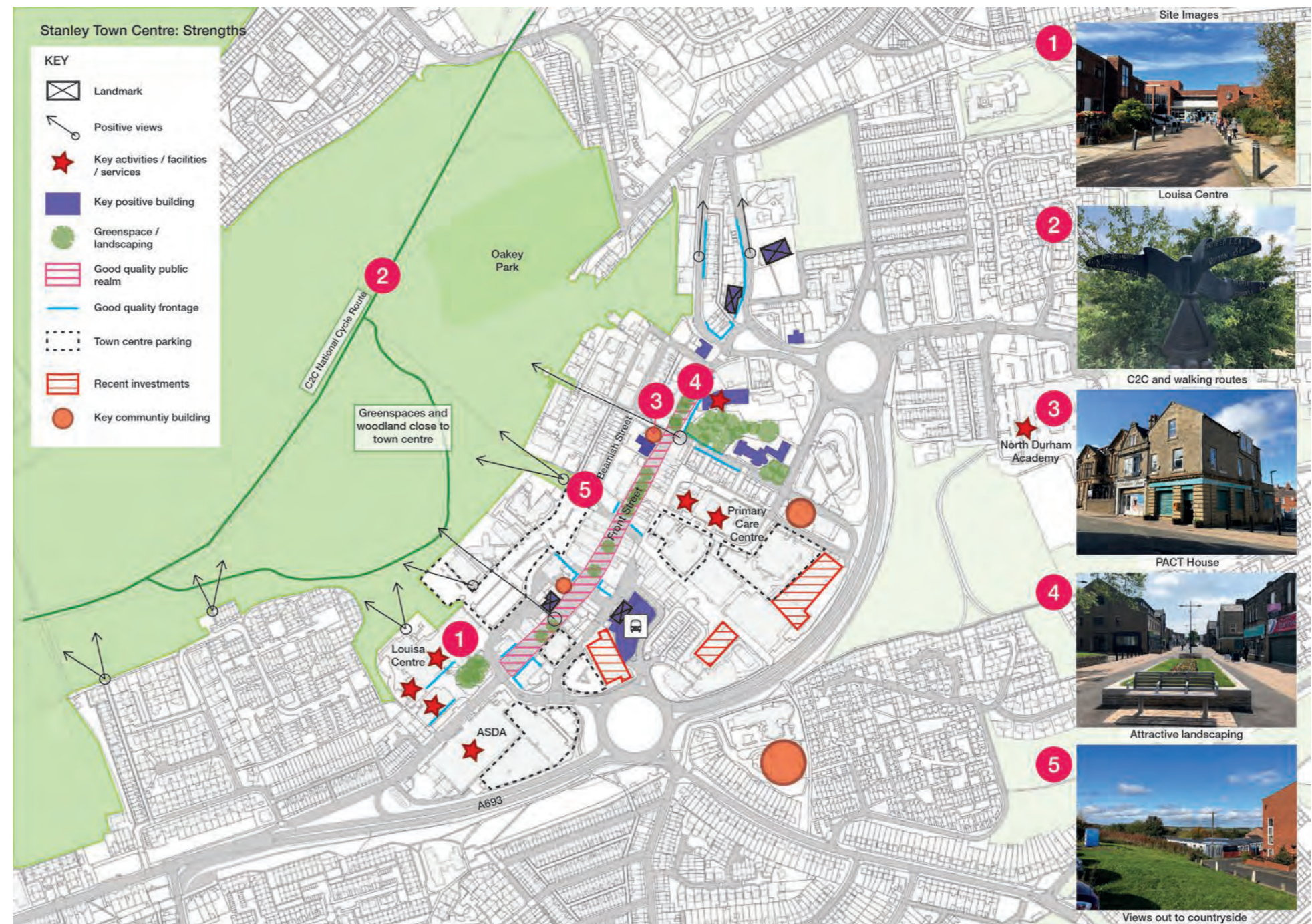
## Introduction

This section summarises the strengths, challenges and opportunities within Stanley town centre from an urban design perspective. This is illustrated on the diagrams on the following pages. Full details of the analysis undertaken can be found in **Appendix 1: Desktop Assessment Report**.

## Strengths

Strengths within Stanley and the surrounding area include:

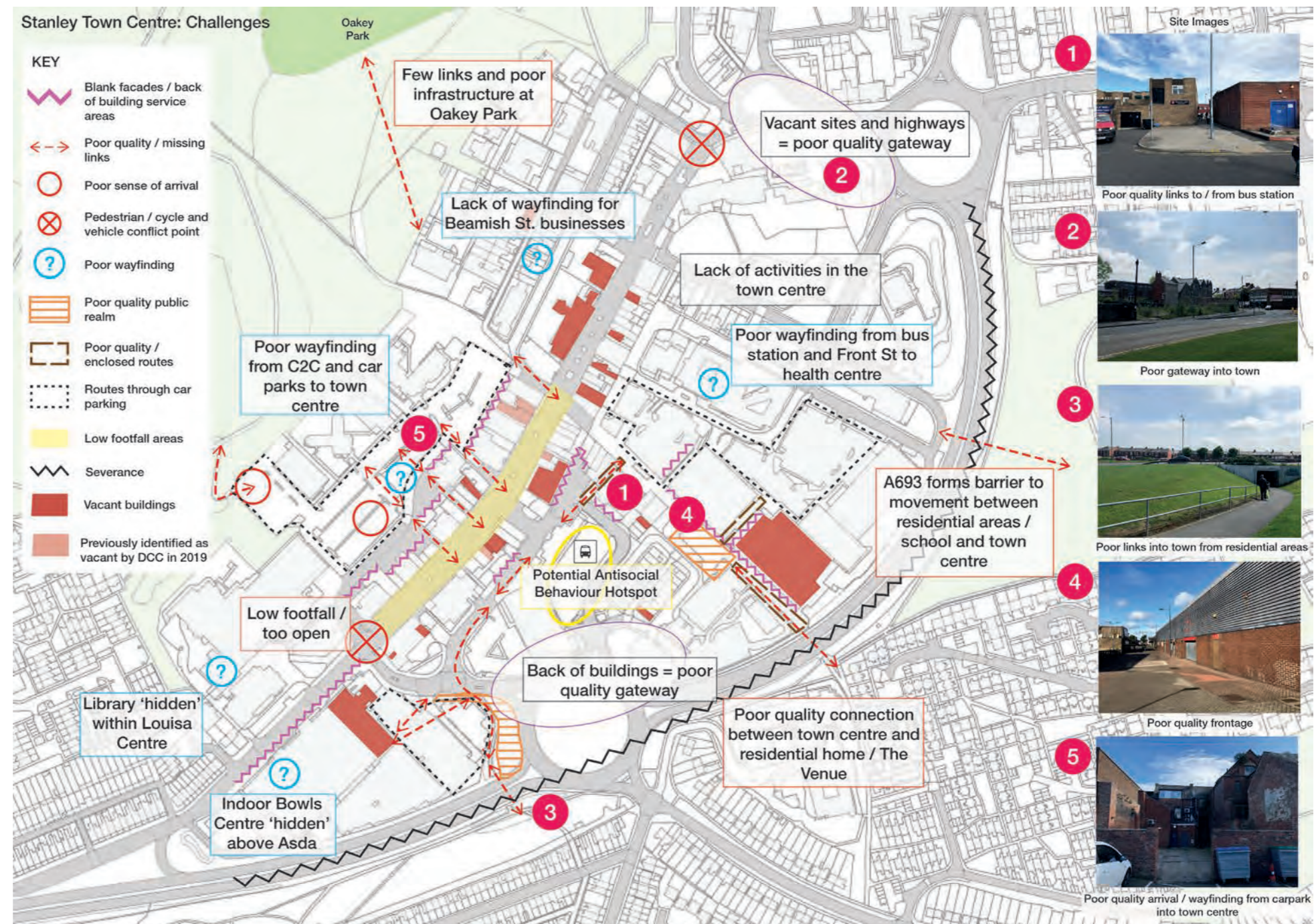
- Community assets and organisations such as PACT House and The Venue, as well as several other community assets in the surrounding area
- The Louisa Leisure Centre, Stanley Civic Hall and the Indoor Bowls Centre, as well as several community sports organisations in the surrounding area
- The national and local cycle network and footpaths
- Green spaces such as Oakey Park
- Views to the surrounding countryside from points within the town centre, such as the rear of the Louisa Centre, Anthony Street and Beamish Street
- Recent public realm and landscape improvements to Front Street, particularly the northern end of Front Street is attractive
- Some high quality and landmark buildings including St Andrew's Church, the Imperial Hotel, St Joseph's School
- The town centre contains Asda and Aldi foodstores, as well as recently constructed Home Bargains and McDonald's outlets, and a popular street market
- Convenient town centre car parking and a well located, modern bus station
- Stanley, Annfield Plain, and Tanfield are well served by industrial estates which provide a wide range of sites and premises in terms of age and quality
- A number of small local shopping areas away from the town centre, such as South Moor, integrate successful independent retail and food offers. Located within residential areas these provide a valuable neighbourhood resource for the community



### Challenges

There are a number of challenges which need to be addressed. These include:

- The length of Front Street as a retail core and lack of footfall which is an issue at both ends of the street but is more acutely evident at the southern end due to the width of the street
- Gateways into the town centre at either end of Front Street suffer from poor pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and at the north end a poor impression of the town is presented due to the vacant sites
- Other prominent vacant sites and buildings within the town centre, for example the old School Board building and Bertie's Bar
- Providing a retail and leisure offer which is both attractive and a good fit with the local demographic
- The need for the town centre to accommodate a broader range of uses which drive footfall and activity
- Improving the quality of the environment in the centre, including a number of poorly maintained shop premises
- Back of house, blank façades and service areas at key arrival points and links, for example car parks, bus station and routes between these and Front Street
- Severance caused by the A693 large scale uses and surface parking at the edge of the town centre, making pedestrian and cycle movement between the town centre and surrounding residential areas more difficult
- Very poor quality public realm and routes along Clifford Road
- Poor wayfinding within the town centre and into the wider area, particularly between car parks and the retail core, and towards the C2C and green spaces
- Creating a meaningful evening economy, which is not solely public house and hot food takeaway orientated, and expanding the range of restaurants
- Reducing instances of anti social behaviour in the centre and making it more family friendly
- Creating a programme of events which bring people into the centre on a regular basis



## Opportunities

Initial opportunities identified include:

- Concentrating the retail core on the southern section of Front Street and Clifford Road
- Exploring opportunities for other large format retail to locate within this retail core, acting as another anchor to the south and drawing footfall between the popular Home Bargains retail park area and Front Street
- Promoting a mixed use quarter around the northern section of Front Street (north of Clifford Road) including building on the existing community uses here and additional residential
- This could include relocating existing businesses to more prominent locations on Front Street, as well as attracting new start ups and businesses
- Repurposing and redeveloping key vacant buildings and sites, including Bertie's Bar, the old School Board building, the Elite buildings site and the Customer Access Point, as well as smaller vacant units along Front Street
- Some of these could be repurposed as business start up units or skills and training 'shopfronts'
- The potential to tie in Stanley's heritage by using some of the vacant unit space on Front Street for a heritage display, and creating a vintage tea room similar to the successful Fifteas Tea Room in Bishop Auckland
- Improving gateways into the town through improved public realm, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, new uses and active frontages
- Creating a legible, high quality network of pedestrian and cycle routes, based on the key north south and east west routes illustrated on the diagram opposite
- Improving connecting routes between the car parks and bus station and Front Street
- Better integrating the leisure and cultural uses around the Louisa Centre into the town centre
- Improving town centre public spaces, including the green space adjacent the Louisa Centre, Clifford Road square, and the space between Front Street and Beamish Street



- This could include providing new market space as part of an initiative to encourage specialist markets, and events space as part of an ongoing programme
- The potential to use undeveloped brownfield land as a temporary community allotment, similar to the successful scheme in Todmorden called Incredible Edible
- The possibility of utilising Oakey Park as an events venue by upgrading the existing facilities, to attract out of town visitors;
- Better accessibility and use of surrounding woodland and green spaces, potentially as a 'wild play trail'

# Engagement

## Introduction

This section summarises the engagement which has taken place during the masterplan process. Full details can be found in **Appendix 2: Consultation Report**.

The people who live, work, play and visit Stanley will be impacted on and will benefit from the opportunities the masterplan will bring, and should therefore be central to the plan. Local people are in a unique position to inform the Stanley Masterplan and this engagement helped the consultant team to understand the wider community's thoughts and experiences of Stanley and share ideas.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in person engagement could not be undertaken. Therefore interactive workshops / design sprints, one to one interviews, and online surveys were used.

The results of the consultation have been used to help shape the vision and draft masterplan for Stanley.

## Methodology

Key stakeholder groups to be engaged were identified. The Consultation Report describes the data collection and respondent population, and includes analysis of the responses provided by local residents, businesses and community groups to the survey which was carried out during December 2020 and January 2021. The report also describes the data collection and respondent population, and includes analysis of the responses provided by local students at North Durham Academy and Tanfield School to the survey which was carried out during February 2021.

## Feedback

### Local residents, businesses and community groups

Results are comprised from a total of 515 respondents. When asked to describe current perspectives of Stanley is three words, the most frequently mentioned word, which made up almost a quarter (23 percent) of all mentions, was "Rundown / Derelict". This was followed by "Sad / Depressing" at 13 percent, whilst "Forgotten / Neglected" and "Unattractive / Dirty" each made up 10 percent of the total suggestions. More positive words included "Friendly" (four percent) and "Potential" (three percent).

Looking ahead respondents were then asked to use three words in order to describe how they would like Stanley to be in five years' time. From this, a total of 1,482 words were generated and words with very similar meanings were grouped together to illustrate key themes. The most frequently mentioned theme was "Vibrant / Thriving" which made up approximately one quarter (26 percent) of all responses. "Attractive / Desirable" and "Developed / Developing" were each nine percent of the total, with "Clean" and "Friendly / Welcoming" closely following at eight and seven percent respectively.

When asked how Stanley could be improved in the future, respondents referred mainly to the improved quality and variety of shops, as well as using or demolishing the vacant buildings within the town centre.

Business owners were also consulted, and when asked if the southern section of Front Street was attractive to them over half said it was not. The main reasons behind these responses were around lack of accessibility for traffic as well as a general poor appearance of the areas.

## Students

North Durham Academy and Tanfield School was also consulted, and data was gathered through an online survey which was promoted to students during COVID-19 restrictions via the school's email. Results are comprised from a total of 163 respondents, with results from Tanfield School and North Durham Academy combined.

To determine the students' current perceptions of Stanley they were first asked to use three words that best describe Stanley now. From this, a total of 420 words were generated. Words with very similar meanings were grouped together to illustrate key themes. The most frequently mentioned word, which made up almost one fifth (18 percent) of all mentions, was "Boring / Lack of things to do". This was very closely followed by "Dirty / Scruffy" at 17 percent. "Good / Nice / Fun" (11 percent), "Antisocial / Unsafe" (11 percent) and "Rundown / Derelict" (nine percent) each made up around one in ten of the total. Other less frequently cited words included "Busy" and "Sad / Depressing" which each represented around five percent of the total.

Looking ahead, students were asked to use three words in order to describe how they would like Stanley to be in the future. From this, a total of 390 words were generated and words with very similar meanings were grouped together to illustrate key themes. The two most frequently cited words were "Clean" (12 percent) and "Fun" (nine percent). Following this, "Safe", "Vibrant / Bustling" and "Attractive / Desirable" each made up seven percent of words cited.

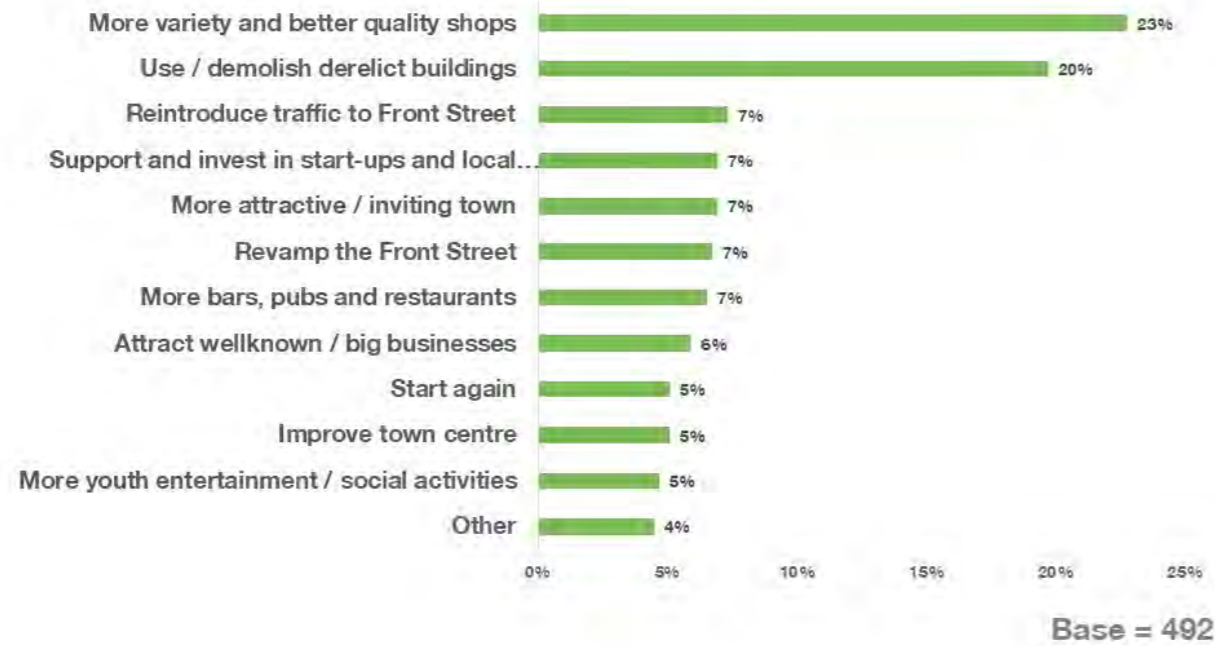
Students were then asked to select up to a maximum of three from a list of nine options: What are your least favourite things about Stanley? The single most cited factor was "Antisocial behaviour / crime" (68 percent), mentioned by over two thirds of all students. "Poor range / quality of shops" and "Not much to attract visitors to the town" closely followed, both being mentioned by just under half of all students at 44 percent each. Additionally, "Poor quality green spaces and parks" (24 percent) and "Lack of art, music and cultural venues" (22 percent) were factors. When asked to expand on the reasons behind their responses, common themes emerged around high rates of crime, lack of facilities and an overall poor appearance of the town.

Students were then asked an open ended question: If there was one thing you could do to improve Stanley town centre, what would it be? This generated a range of responses with the most frequently cited improvement being "More variety and better quality shops" (27 percent), which was mentioned by over one quarter of all students. This was closely followed by "Safer / reduce antisocial behaviour" and "More youth entertainment / social activities" which were both mentioned by one fifth of all students (19 percent). Other reoccurring themes were around "Cleaner" (10 percent) and "More greenspace" (nine percent), which were mentioned by one in ten students.

# Local Community and Business Responses

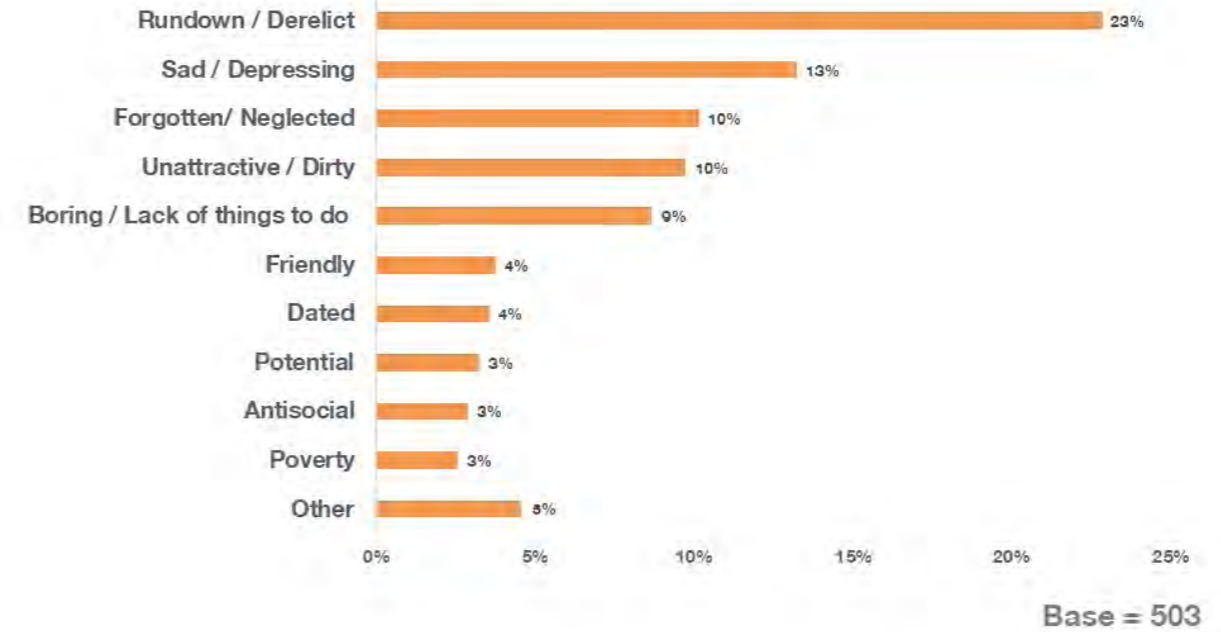
## Future Development Of Stanley

How would you improve Stanley town centre? (Verbatim response)



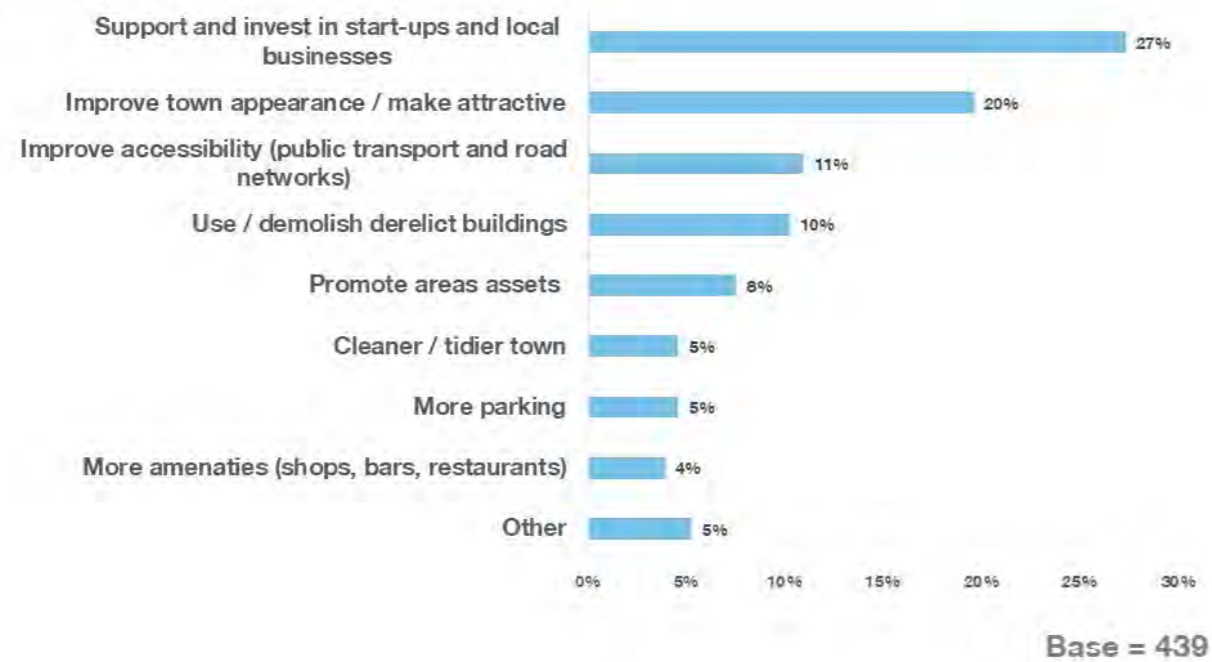
## Perception Of Stanley

What words would you use to describe Stanley now? (Verbatim response)



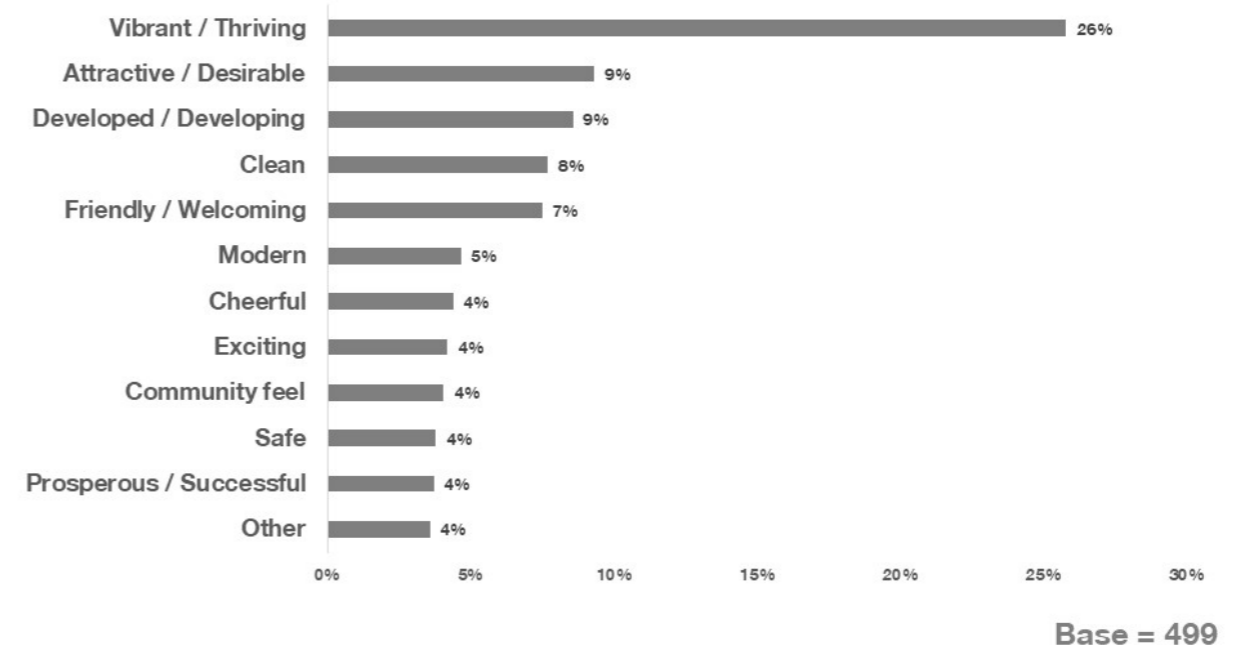
## Future Development Of Stanley

How would you make Stanley and its surrounding area more attractive to business? (Verbatim response)



## Future Of Stanley

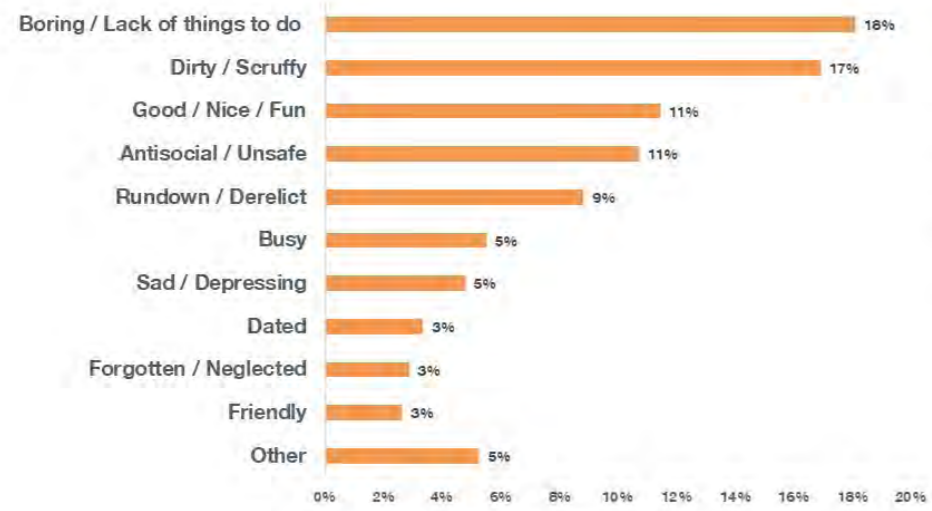
How would you want to describe Stanley in five years time? (Verbatim response)



# School Students Responses

## Perception Of Stanley

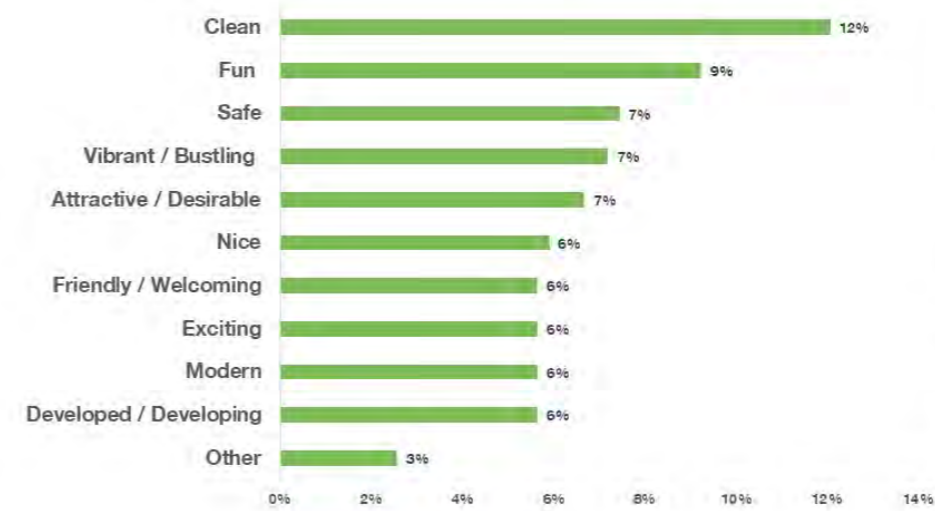
What words would you use to describe Stanley now? (Verbatim response)



Base = 156

## Future Of Stanley

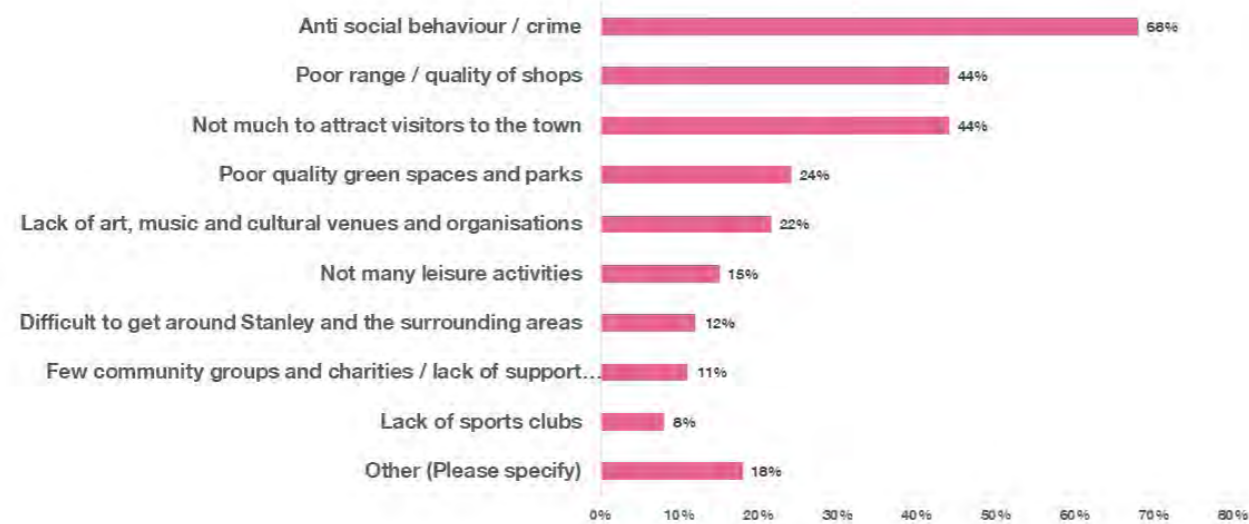
How would you like to be able to describe Stanley in the future? (Verbatim response)



Base = 154

## Stanley's Constraints

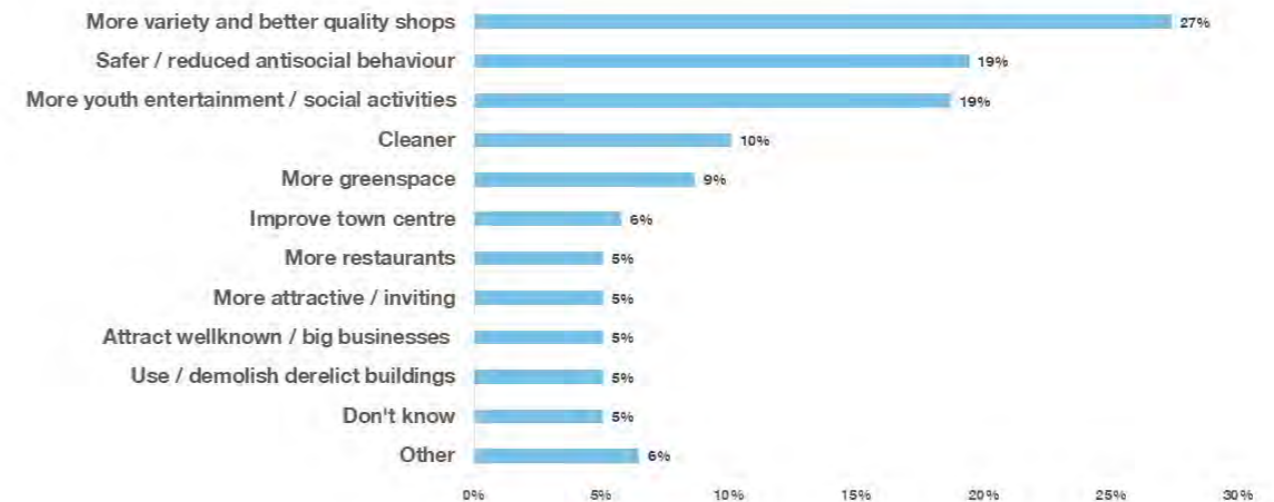
What are your least favourite things about Stanley? (Select up to three from the list)



Base = 158

## Future Development of Stanley

If there was one thing you could do to improve Stanley town centre, what would it be?



Base = 139

# Vision and Masterplan Objectives

## Vision for Stanley in 2035:

Stanley is a thriving, healthy town with a vibrant, welcoming, and distinctive town centre which local people are proud of, and which appeals to visitors.

The town centre lies at the heart of a strong, resilient, and supportive community, encouraging people to buy local, and providing an attractive and desirable place to live.

Stanley's success reflects both its proud heritage and its rebirth as a sustainable 'living industrial town', on the doorstep of Beamish Museum and Tanfield Railway, and with fantastic walking and cycling trails, parks, countryside, and villages, all well connected to the town centre.



**Masterplan objectives**

The following objectives set out how the vision will be delivered through the masterplan.

A wider variety of interesting and good quality shops and services, including independent and specialist operators, which meet the needs of local people, showcase local produce and also attract visitors to the town.

An improved food & drink offer, including new bars and restaurants, which help to create a genuine evening economy.

Other leisure attractions, potentially including a virtual County Durham Heritage attraction.

Building on the high quality establishments in the surrounding area and bringing this quality into the town centre.

A transformed Front Street which is enjoyable to visit and provides an attractive environment to spend time.

Empty buildings have been redeveloped or brought back into use as high quality and sustainable development.

Creating opportunities to accommodate new anchor retail or leisure uses, should operator demand exist.

A coordinated programme of cultural attractions, including live music festivals and other events.

Specialist markets in the town centre (e.g. local food produce, farmers markets etc) which help to bring people in on a regular basis.

Local businesses and start-ups are supported in Stanley, including town centre meeting space.

Improved housing market demand, brought about by an increase in the diversity and improvement in the quality of the housing stock, including at the northern end of the town centre.

Improved connectivity and accessibility, including fast and frequent bus services, and improved walking and cycling routes enabling residents to access employment, education and services in the town centre and surrounding area.

Encouragement of active lifestyles, including through new cycle hub on Front Street and potential new Parkrun.

Gateways to the town centre are attractive and welcoming whether you're arriving on foot, bike, bus or by car, and signage has been improved.

People's aspirations have been raised, through continued improvement in education and training provision, including mentorship, and increased visibility of training and job opportunities (including jobs and careers fairs, and jobs and training hub).

A renewed sense of pride in Stanley, not only based on its strength of heritage, but on what Stanley is like now, and with a collective sense of aspiration for the future - the town is perceived positively, both within and outside of the area.

Digital solutions support these principles across commerce, culture, public services, and wellbeing.



Precedent images



# Options

## Initial Options

### Introduction

Based on the analysis work undertaken, and with reference to the towns strengths, challenges and opportunities, a series of options were created, which are shown in the following 4 diagrams on the next page. Each option has a slightly different focus, as detailed below.

### Option 1

This option focuses around two retail anchors either side of Front Street to draw people along Front Street, with the retail core being focused in the southern section of the town centre. The northern section of the town centre is shown as a residential and community-led mixed use area. There is new public space linking the Scott Street car parks to Front Street.

### Option 2

This option has very similar principles, but with a new focal point around the bus station which would be a public space / pocket park located on the Bertie's Bar site. This space could be used for markets and events to increase footfall.

### Option 3

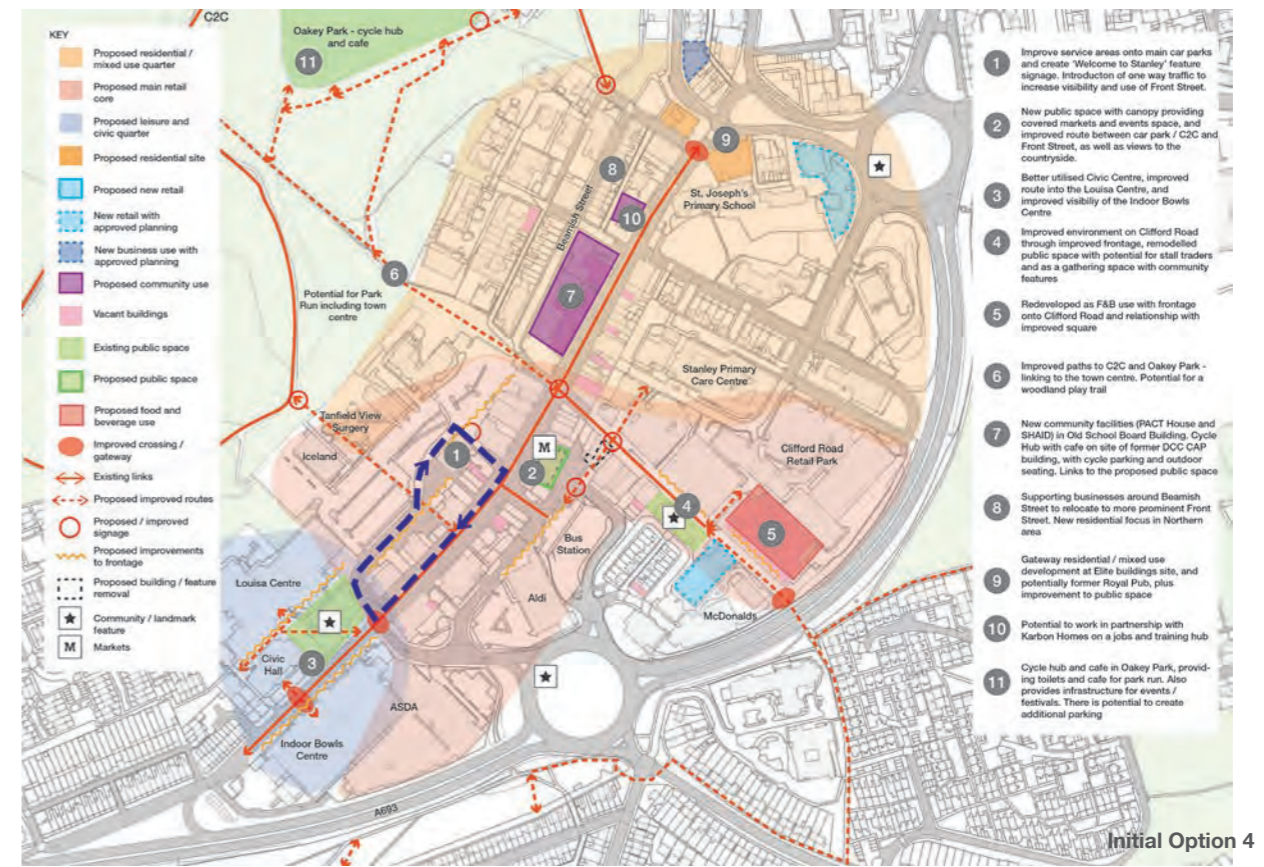
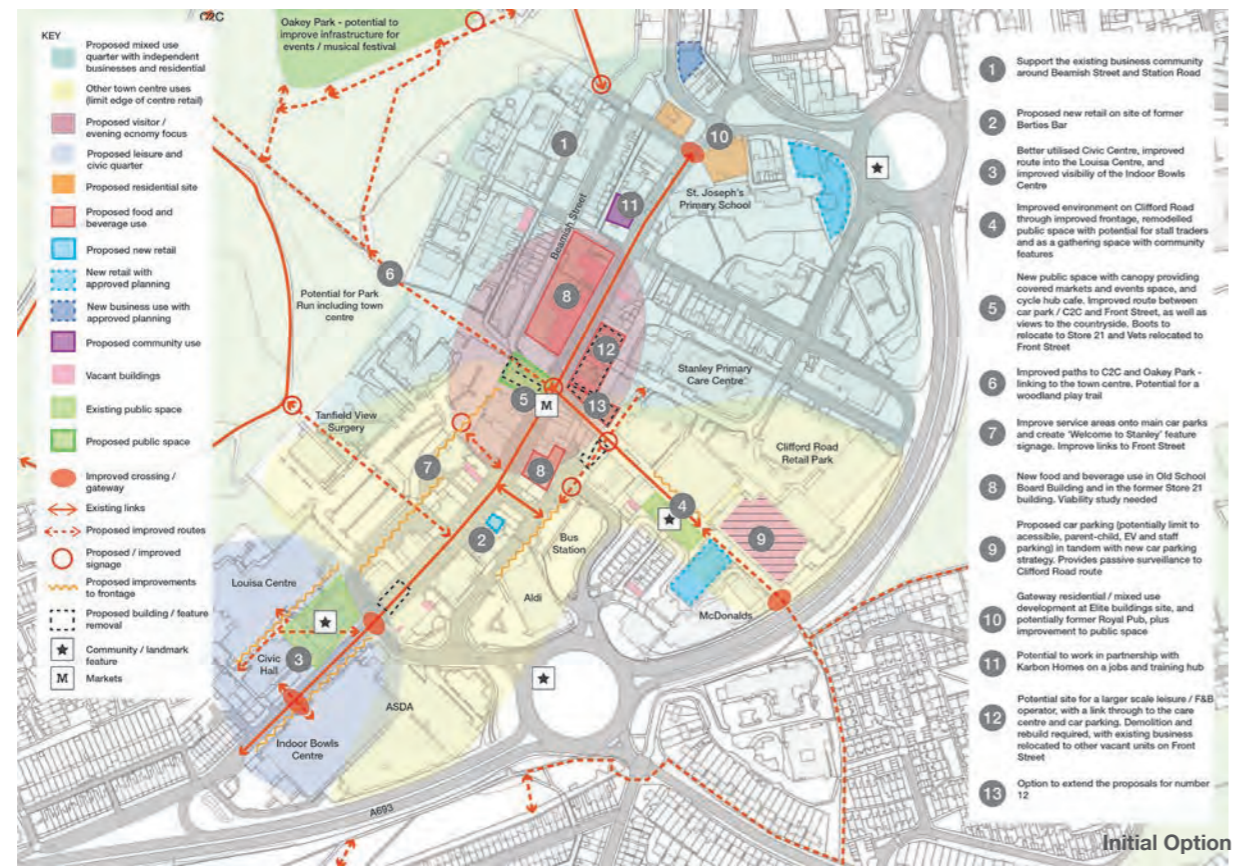
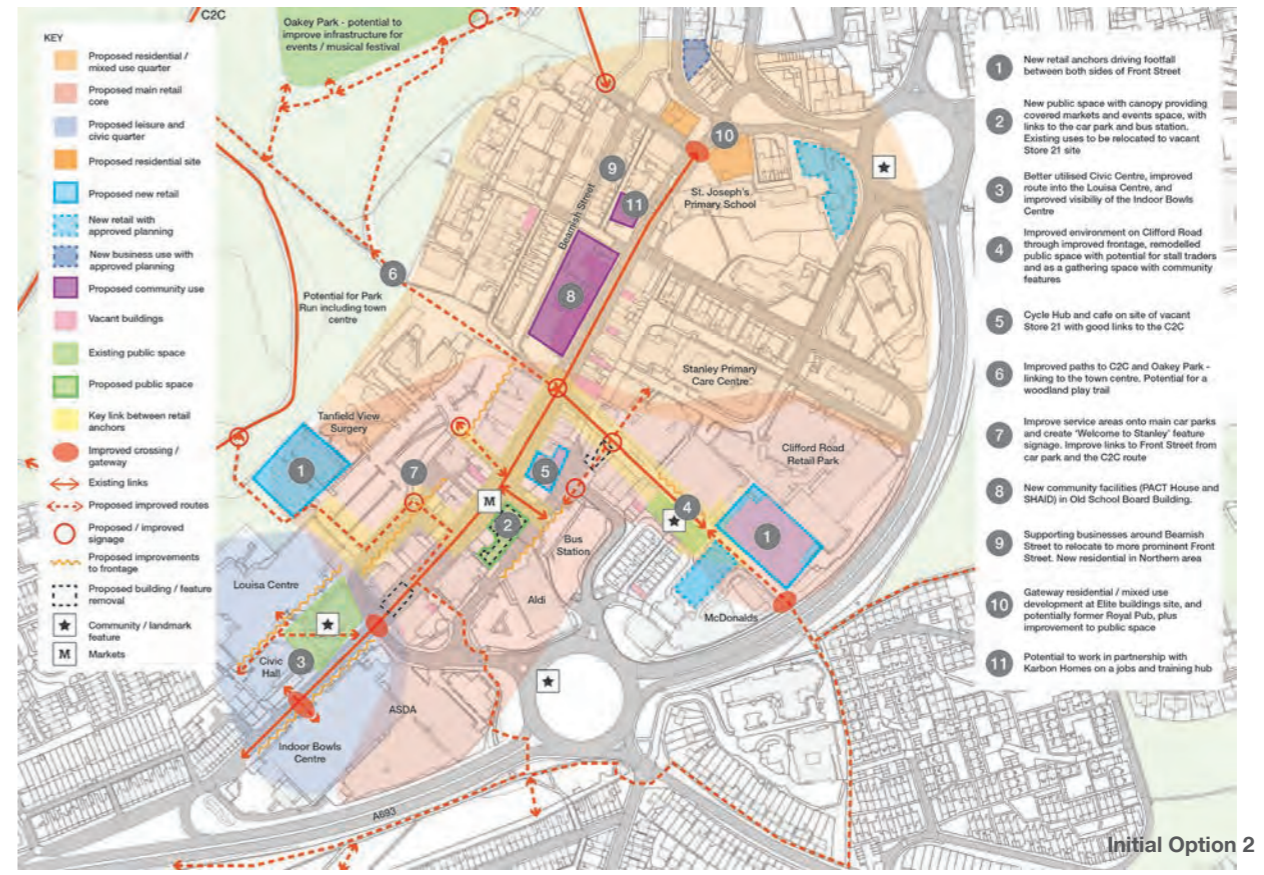
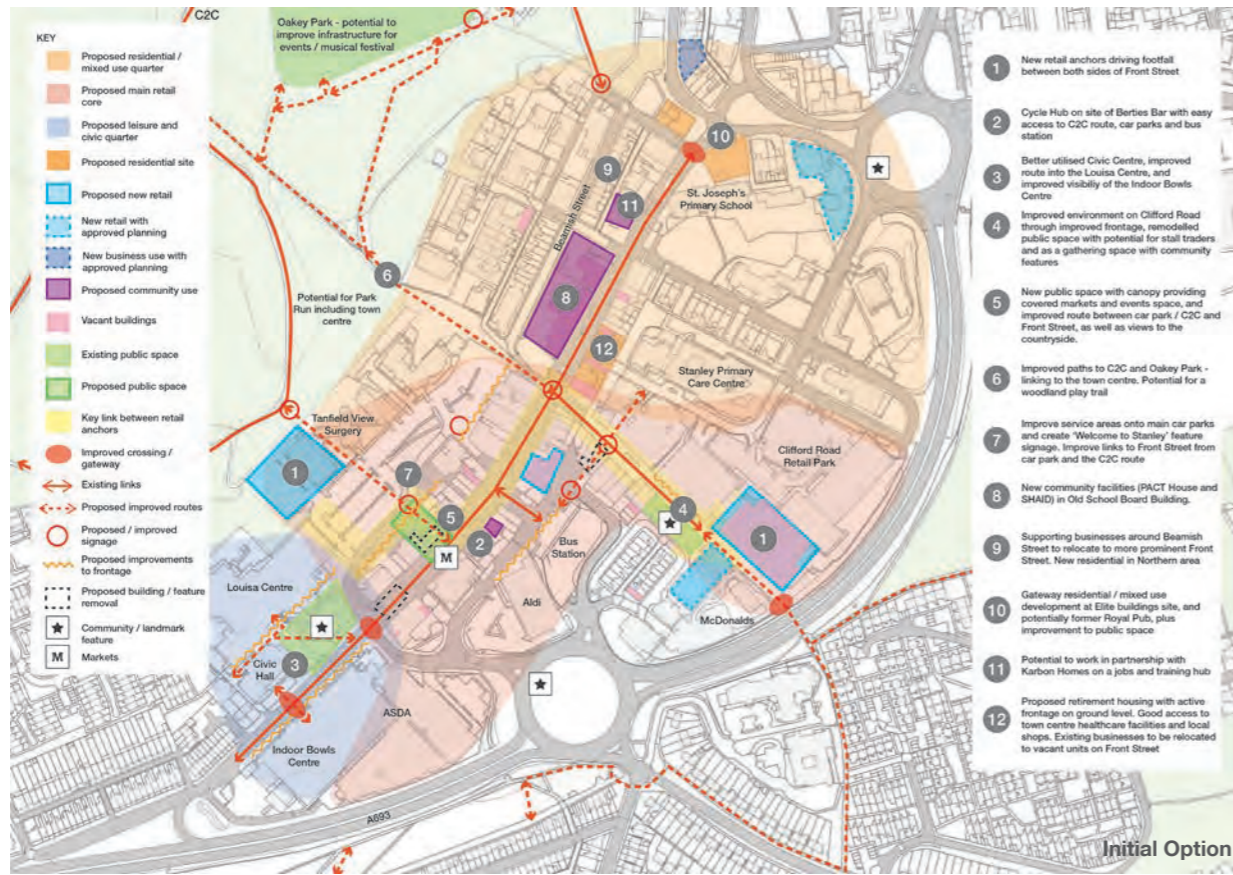
In Option 3, uses within the town centre continue largely as they are in the previous options, with better signage to the businesses in the north end of Front Street. The main difference from Options 1 and 2 is an evening economy and visitor focus in the centre of Front Street. This ties in with a new public space opening up the route towards the C2C and Oakey Park. There is the option to provide additional town centre car parking on the former Tommy Armstrong site.

### Option 4

This option focuses around the introduction of one way traffic on the southern section of Front Street, with on street parking for easy access to shops. There is a new covered public space, which could be used as a market hall, on the site of the former Store 21.



Precedent images



# Preferred Options

## Introduction

The following summary is a high level appraisal of the initial options, with input from the Steering Group, including risks, constraints, additional survey requirements, potential barriers to the overall viability and deliverability, and potential funding and mechanisms to deliver the masterplan.

## Elements taken forward into the preferred options include:

- Retail anchors in Options 1 and 2, order to draw people through Front Street, with the potential to extend sites to accommodate
- Residential and other uses to the north as shown in Options 1 and 2
- Public space / pocket park with the ability to support markets, events
- New food and beverage in central/southern area
- Walking and cycling route improvements, including a more direct link to C2C
- Improve connections to Scott Street car parks
- Improve public realm, gateways into the town and unsightly buildings including the two large units on Clifford Road, and Asda
- Space for start-ups / business networking
- Repurpose / redevelop vacant buildings

## Potential issues identified with the initial options:

- Relocating existing businesses and how this is best approached in future proposals
- Viability of other uses in the former School Board Building, including food and beverage – new evening economy in this area could also be limited by the existing school and retirement housing
- Providing additional parking on the Tommy Armstrong site is not viable. However, generally it is less about providing more parking, but better managing the existing parking and ensuring it is convenient for different users
- Scale of public space, particularly thinking about how wide Front Street already is in the south, which can currently feel quite windswept.
- Limited economic benefit from re-opening Front Street to traffic

## Assessment of the reintroduction of vehicular access to Front Street

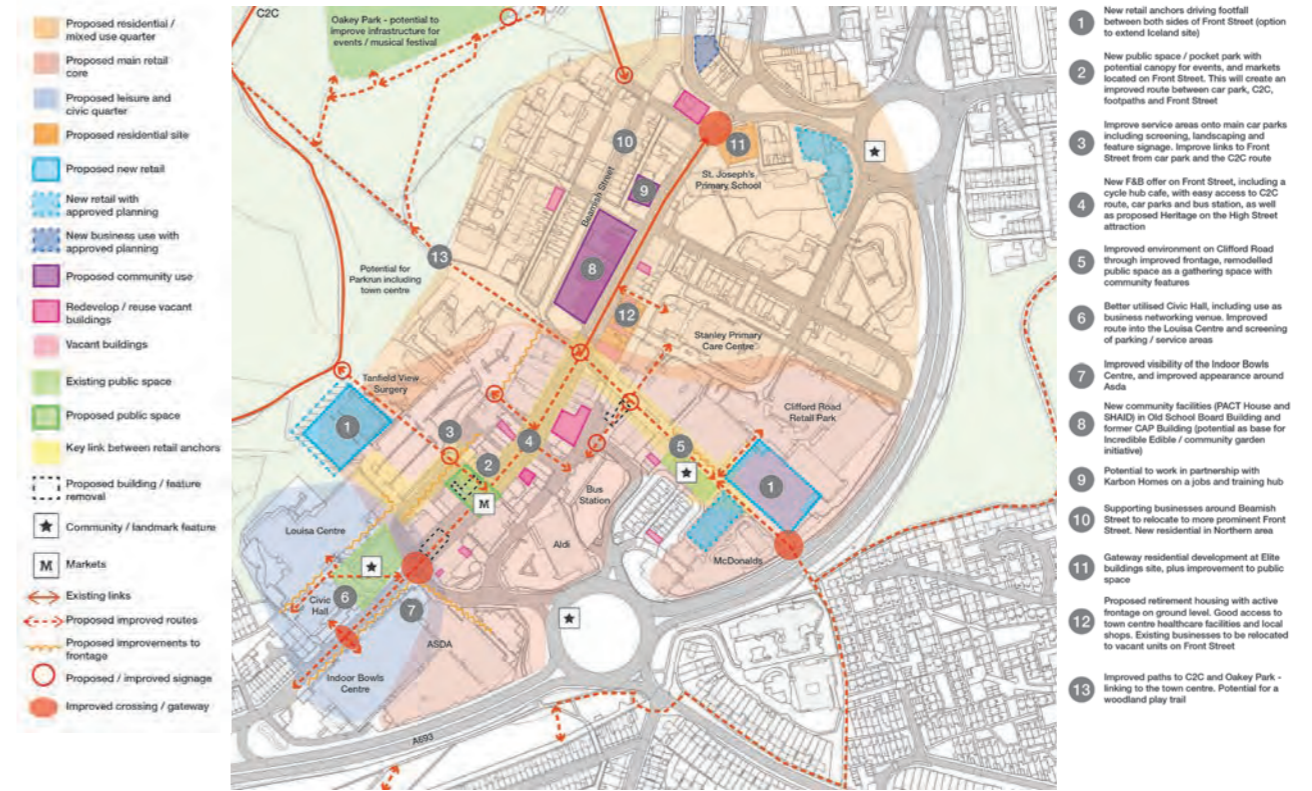
Traditionally Front Street was the main thoroughfare for traffic movement. The introduction of the A693 bypass and pedestrianisation of Front Street removed traffic to the benefit of the pedestrian environment. However, it also removed pass-by trade.

A planning application was submitted to re-open Front Street to traffic at the northern end of the town. The opportunity was rejected following a Public Inquiry. Despite the outcome of the Public Inquiry, the extent to which the reintroduction of traffic could assist in revitalising the town centre was considered. In this instance, the focus was on the southern section of Front Street, accessed via the Scott Street car park, and not the full re-introduction of traffic along the full length of Front Street. It was felt that this could provide a localised change in the available movements in and around the town centre that could be more convenient for some people, enabling direct access from vehicle to shop door.

Such an arrangement would not give rise to the re-introduction of pass-by trips as it would not be aimed at the bypass traffic. The only way to divert drivers from the bypass is by having suitable attractions and activities to make Stanley a desirable destination. It is anticipated that the costs of engineering works to remove the recently installed public realm in this location would be significant. Improving the retail offer and existing connections is considered an initial priority to enhance the town centre. The reintroduction of traffic along Front Street is not ruled out. However, there are clear and tangible benefits in resolving and improving pedestrian movements between the existing car parks and the town centre. After all, the travel distance is less than 80m from the parking to Front Street.

## Preferred options

Preferred Option 1 was developed following this appraisal. This was refined further as Preferred Option 2 with input from the Steering Group.



Preferred Option 1



Preferred Option 2

# Masterplan Recommendations

## Town Centre

### The Need for a Radical Approach

The assessment of Stanley Town Centre, set out above, identifies that the town centre faces a number of significant challenges. These challenges include the length of Front Street and lack of footfall, the existence of a number of prominent vacant units and buildings, the poor quality of the retail and leisure offer, the need for a broader range of uses, limited operator demand, and the quality of the environment. They also include Covid-19 which, along with wider trends in the retail and leisure industry, has further depressed footfall in the centre.

The nature and extent of these challenges mean that a radical new approach is required to help re-invigorate the centre. It is also important, however, that the wider strategy for Stanley seeks to increase the number of higher skilled jobs in the local area, in order to boost incomes, and thereby increase demand for local retail and leisure facilities over time. These elements of the wider strategy are set out elsewhere within this report.

### Re-Focusing the Town Centre

The length and width of Front Street, the various prominent vacant buildings, and the general lack of major retail and leisure attractions, all combine to leave Stanley Town Centre feeling very quiet, even at traditional 'peak' times. There is therefore a need to re-focus the town centre, by creating a more compact retail/food and drink quarter on the southern end of Front Street. A new residential/mixed use quarter at the northern end of the centre (past Clifford Road), where footfall is lowest, would provide more scope for diversification of uses, and a leisure/civic quarter created around existing uses at the southern end, including Asda, the Louisa Centre and the Civic Hall.

Encouragement – and potentially financial support - could also be provided to help existing shops and services relocate from Beamish Street/Anthony Street – which is slightly divorced from the wider town centre - to Front Street. This would strengthen the town centre in overall terms by concentrating the retail offer on Front Street.

### Assembling Sites for New Anchor Units

Although demand from retail and leisure operators for new representation in Stanley is weak, it is understood that there are unmet requirements from discount retailers not currently found in the town. If suitable and available sites, capable of accommodating these requirements, are not identified within or on the edge of the town centre, then the likelihood is that such development will take place on out-of-centre sites. This could have a damaging effect upon the town centre, drawing more people away from the centre and impacting upon existing retailers, and would represent a missed opportunity for Stanley.

It is therefore proposed that a number of sites be identified which could potentially accommodate such requirements. These include:

- The existing Iceland supermarket at Scott Street and land in the vicinity; and
- Land and buildings at Clifford Road.

Initial feasibility studies have been undertaken in relation to these sites. However, whilst further work would be required in order to confirm their suitability to accommodate known requirements, there may be scope to reconfigure and/or redevelop the Iceland site in order to accommodate additional large format retailing. This may also involve redevelopment of areas of car parking or the existing surgery site to the east, subject to a suitable alternative location being identified for the latter.

In relation to Clifford Road, this could include the redevelopment of the former Tommy Armstrong Centre and/or potentially also the existing Argos Clearance store, again, subject to a suitable alternative site being identified for the latter. The former may also have potential for a new indoor activity centre/soft play centre in Stanley, which would help to enhance the existing range of facilities catering for families and extend dwell time (subject to further work in order to establish whether commercial demand exists for such a facility).

As well as attracting more visitors to Stanley Town Centre, the creation of new anchor stores to either side of Front Street would help to generate more footfall on Front Street itself, as visitors walk between the two locations. This would be subject to creating attractive and convenient pedestrian linkages linking the two, including appropriate signage.

### Creating a New Public Space

Whilst the proposed strategy looks to re-occupy existing vacant units and attract new uses, and recent public realm works have helped to improve its appearance more generally, it will also be essential to bring more life and activity to Front Street itself. Although this street is long and, at the southern end, relatively wide, there is no obvious focal point to the town centre which could be used for markets, music and other events/festivals.

A new area of public space is therefore proposed on the eastern side of Front Street, towards its southern end. This could include a tree lined pavilion on Front Street itself, and other covered areas, which provide space for food and drink uses and help to create a sense of enclosure. The new space would also help to create better links to the existing Aldi supermarket and bus station, which lie to the east of – but are largely hidden from – Front Street.

The proposed public space would also link to recommendations within the Culture, Tourism and Leisure section of this masterplan. These seek to develop a regular programme of music events and festivals. Although some may be too large to take place in the town centre, it is important that space is provided to allow some events to be held, and therefore maximise the spin-off benefits for existing businesses in the centre. Such events would also help to reinforce the sense of community in Stanley and the role of the centre at the heart of the town.



Precedent images

### Bringing Vacant Buildings Back to Life

Empty properties in Stanley have a significant impact upon the appearance and attractiveness of the centre. The masterplan strategy proposes that these properties being re-purposed and re-occupied by a range of uses - helping to add vibrancy to the centre and improve the visual amenity of the area.

As described in the Analysis section, these properties include, amongst others:

- The former Board School and CAP buildings (which have potential for range of uses, including community facilities, food and beverage and/or residential);
- The former Store 21 unit (which could help to create a new food and drink offer in the centre); and
- Former Elite buildings site

It is recommended that the Council maintain a register of vacant units, in order to help identify potential opportunities for businesses with requirements for new or improved space in Stanley. This role would be performed by a Town Centre Management function with the Council, who could also administer any financial support offered to new/existing businesses.

Further work would be required in order to confirm the suitability of these units for re-occupation and what, if any, physical alterations may be required to help accommodate the above uses. Overall, however, it is recommended that a flexible approach is taken, given the overriding need to reduce the quantum of vacant floorspace and bring more vibrancy to the centre.

Alongside the register of vacant units, in order to turn what is currently a problem into a potential opportunity, and introduce more vibrancy into the town, the Council may also wish to develop a temporary uses, also known as 'meanwhile uses', strategy for Stanley. This would involve the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings until they fall back into more permanent use, working with both landlords and local organisations. It could also involve instructing third parties to work in partnership with the Council, and to develop and operate the meanwhile uses themselves, in a way which delivers what the town needs.

Meanwhile uses already form part of the Council's wider Towns and Villages programme, which seeks to support pop-up shops/services and local entrepreneurs/small businesses. An example of this is the Sacriston Enterprise Workshops project, which has involved the restoration of the former Co-op buildings in the town and their leasing to a group of social entrepreneurs called The Sacriston Enterprise Workshops Community Interest Company (CIC). The workshops are currently home to four social enterprises - Sacriston Youth Project, Woodshed, RecyclLD, Live Well North East - with plans to attract more. It is possible that a similar concept could be beneficial in Stanley Town Centre.

Although meanwhile uses can often comprise community resources, such as spaces for training and meetings, or arts/cultural hubs, they can also help to support new start-up businesses, providing a platform for their initial growth, before moving onto more permanent premises. Alongside changes to the planning system, which have created the new Use Class E - which includes a range of town centre uses previously found in separate classes, removing the need for planning permission to change between them - the flexibility provided by these temporary spaces, along with the reduced overheads, can provide an environment in which small businesses can flourish. The existence of these small businesses and other community facilities also helps to create more positive perceptions of a town, driving footfall and generating repeat visits.



### Other Key Projects

A range of other projects are proposed which look to improve both the appearance of the town centre and connectivity between different areas. Whilst these projects are covered in more detail elsewhere, they have the potential to create an uplift in the feel of the centre and its ease of accessibility and are therefore also briefly referred to here.

Properties on the southern end of Front Street, on its western side, back onto the Scott Street car park, creating a negative impression of the centre. The rear of these properties, including both the buildings themselves and any yards/ servicing areas, could therefore be improved, through new landscaping, screening and feature signage. The Scott Street car park itself would also be reconfigured, in order to create additional spaces which help to support any new anchor retail units developed in the area. Although this could result in the loss of some existing mature trees this could be offset through new tree planting/soft landscaping on Front Street, which is currently limited, supplemented by new community/landmark features on Clifford Road and adjacent to the Louisa Centre.

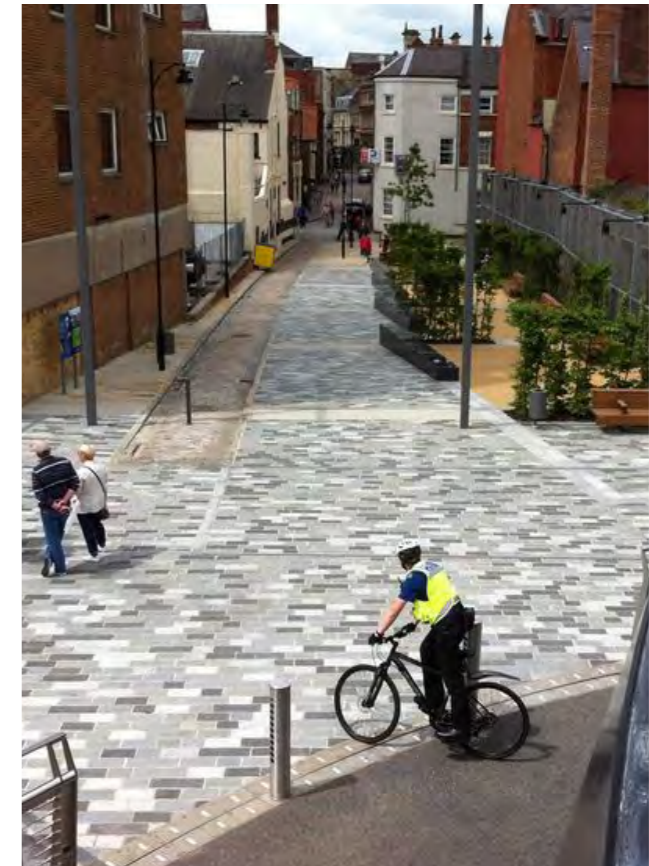
There is also scope to improve pedestrian routes into and around the town centre. Whilst the proposed improvements are covered in more detail elsewhere, they could include the widening of the existing direct route from Clifford Road to bus station (although this is likely to require the relocation of an existing retail use), with shared surfaces over the existing service road here. They could also include improved links between the pedestrianised part of Front Street and the Asda superstore, and in between Asda and the Civic Hall/Louisa Centre, at the southern end of the centre.

The existing pedestrian route underneath the A693 bypass road, at the eastern end of Clifford Road, is unappealing and should be enhanced as a key gateway into the centre. To the west, there is potential to capitalise on the proximity of Stanley to the C2C cycle route and Oakey Park, through better linkages and signage which help to draw people into the centre and use existing facilities. As part of this, more attractive linkages could be provided between Front Street and the Scott Street car park – particularly if new anchor retail stores are to be developed there.

Although covered in more detail in the Culture, Tourism and Leisure section, there could, over time, be scope to broaden the range of food and drink uses in the centre – which is currently limited - in order to help extend dwell time, make the centre more family-friendly and help to create some form of evening economy. As with other measures set out above, this could help to reduce the unit vacancy rate, potentially involving the re-occupation of the former Store Twenty One unit, the creation of a cycle hub café, linked to the C2C route.

It is understood that, whilst the Primary Care Centre (PCC), in between Clifford Road and Thorneyholme Terrace, is likely to play a role as a children's hub going forwards, including mental health services, it is currently under-utilised. There may, therefore, be scope to accommodate other uses and community facilities there, whether healthcare related or otherwise. Any additional facilities it incorporates will help to increase footfall within the wider town centre and be complemented by improvements to the environment and accessibility in the centre – including in between the PCC and Front Street, the bus station and proposed new public space.

There are other uses which could contribute towards the vitality and viability of the town centre, providing additional reasons for people to visit and creating spin-off trade. These could include a new jobs and training hub (working in partnership with Karbon Homes) or other accommodation for other community organisations based on Stanley. They could also include new residential development on selected sites (albeit the latter will be subject to demand from housing providers, which has yet to be established).



# Culture, Leisure and Tourism

## Developing Reasons to Visit Stanley

The review of the existing cultural, leisure and tourism offer in Stanley identified a lack of a compelling reason to visit the town and limited facilities available there for those that currently do. While there are reasons to visit the wider area, including popular attractions such as Beamish Museum and Tanfield Railway, there are few elements of Stanley itself that would motivate day visitors or tourists spend time in the town. A step change is therefore needed, in terms of both what Stanley can offer both residents and visitors.

## Creating an Events Programme

A key recommendation of the masterplan is to help to deliver this step change through a regular programme of music events and festivals. Such events will help to attract visitors from outside of the local area and to change perceptions of the destination. They are also able to target specific market segments, at specific times of the year, creating new opportunities for tourism and leisure businesses throughout the calendar. Several events already take place, organised by various groups, including Stanley Town Council and Love Beamish & Stanley. These require coordination as part of a funded events programme.

Stanley has some experience in the music events market, including through the Stanley Blues festival previously held in the town, and is home to the Reg Vardy Band, who have for many years been one of the leading brass bands in the region, and who compete on the national/international stage. However, it is recommended that a new, year-long programme of music events/festivals be created - including the re-instatement of the Blues Festival, a folk festival, and potentially also some form of brass festival, linked to that already established in Durham. The events would make use of existing infrastructure in Stanley, including Oakey Park, the Civic Hall and local public houses, although some investment in the facilities at Oakey Park may be required alongside this (in terms of access, toilets and catering, for example).

The aim would be to differentiate Stanley from other locations, and change perceptions of the town, by creating a place known for its grass roots music. A cultural events organiser will be required to develop the strategy and programme,

working with the music sector and promoting the various events, in order to ensure that the programme is a success. This requires funding in order to be sustainable and bring maximum benefits to Stanley town centre. While initially it is likely that most visitors will come from across the region, as the programme grows, it is possible that music tourists from further afield will be attracted to Stanley. In the short term, a review of potential locations for camp sites might be necessary to provide accommodation for those attending festivals/events. However, as more people visit these events, local shops, pubs and accommodation providers could see business grow, thereby helping to simulate demand for new and enhanced provision, in terms of places to eat and drink, and overnight accommodation.

## Markets and Community Garden Initiative

Throughout the country, markets are a vital cornerstone of town centres. There are almost 1,200 markets in Britain, including traditional and specialist markets, which were estimated to have a collective turnover of around £3.1 billion in 2017-18. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 32,400 market traders and 9,000 events traders.

A study by the University of Leeds 'Understanding and enhancing the community value of traditional retail markets in UK Cities' demonstrated that markets distribute their economic profits locally and add footfall and vibrancy to high streets. They build local wealth and promote a more sustainable economy and society, by reducing waste, shortening supply chains and reducing car-based consumption. Markets are also social hubs and are important for the development of community ties and trust between people of different ages, and ethnic and social backgrounds.

The town already hosts an existing market on Thursdays and Saturdays, on Front Street. However, in order to broaden the town centre's appeal to visitors, it is recommended that Stanley develops a year-long programme of quality local markets, including themed events (for example, farmers markets, food, crafts etc). The inclusion of a local produce market, in particular, would tie in with the tradition of the north-east for vegetable shows, and would create another

reason for people to visit the town.

These markets would be held in the town centre, potentially within the new public space proposed on the south-east side of Front Street, adjacent to the bus station. The programme of food markets could also be tied in to an 'Incredible Edible' initiative, making Stanley the best 'edible' place in the North East. This initiative, which started in Todmorden in West Yorkshire, seeks to show how people can transform their own landscapes and turn disused plots into sources of healthy food. The ethos of the Incredible Edible initiative is that people have the power to create places they are proud of, where anyone can be involved, creating powerful connections through food.

An Incredible Edible project in Stanley would involve local community groups and be supported by the council, helping to transform public spaces into opportunities for community growing. Linking in with schools, local businesses the initiative would create partnerships around the central theme of growing and learning about local food. As the project grows, a map of locations and places selling local produce could be developed, helping visitors to the area to learn more about Stanley and to purchase local produce.

Whilst a worthwhile community and education initiative in its own right, this project would also help differentiate Stanley from other locations. In doing so, it would improve perceptions of the place and increase local pride, both in the town generally and the town centre in particular. Along with the other recommendations set out in this section, it would generate further reasons to visit the town centre, again, creating additional footfall and stimulating demand in other new shops and services.

## A Virtual Heritage Attraction

Stanley and the surrounding area has a rich history, shaped by coal mining and the railways. This is evidenced through events, marches and memorial services, artwork, sculptures, and memorials, both in the town centre and surrounding villages, including the Louisa Morrison pit disaster memorial near the Louisa Centre, the West Stanley Colliery memorial near



Precedent images

North Durham Academy, and the Flower Mine public artwork commemorating the 1909 Burns pit disaster, along the C2C path. Within the town centre, there are several historic buildings with stories to be told, including the former Imperial Hotel, the Old School Board building and the former Derwentside Area Council Offices on Front Street, Christ Church, the Church of St Andrew and Stanley's First World War Memorial.

County Durham arguably possesses more than its fair share of heritage attractions - including Beamish, Causey Arch and Tanfield Railway on Stanley's doorstep, Durham Cathedral, Bowes Museum, Durham Miners Hall, and Raby Castle, among others. However, Stanley does not currently benefit from these attractions to any significant extent. Building on these attractions, this project would therefore create a Virtual Reality centre in Stanley, showcasing behind the scenes and iconic elements of this heritage. Using new technologies, this heritage would be brought to life, enabling locals, day visitors and other tourists to the area to access elements of these attractions from Stanley itself. As an example, a virtual tour of the roof space of Durham Cathedral might be possible, a trip down a mine, a flight around Beamish, or a virtual tour of part of Bowes Museum.

This attraction should also include content relating to Stanley's own history, from its origins to its mining heritage. Each of the sites listed above will have an outreach policy which aims to engage with hard-to-reach audiences. This project would therefore help each of the attractions achieve this objective, while at the same time allowing residents of Stanley to benefit from the heritage of the county and attracting day visitors and tourists into the town. As well as the links to existing attractions, the centre could include stories relating to the heritage of the Stanley area itself. This would engage both residents and visitors, helping to raise aspirations and local pride.

Whilst it is likely to be run by the Council, in partnership with other existing attractions, such a project might be attractive to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, which could provide capital and revenue support for a certain period (e.g. five years). The attraction should be

located on Front Street in order to maximise the benefits for existing businesses, in terms of spin-off trade, and increase footfall more generally. There may be scope to hold events in the town centre linked to the Tanfield Railway, whether as part of the virtual heritage attraction or otherwise. Tanfield Railway, which is billed as the oldest railway in the world, will be celebrating its tricentenary in 2025. The Waiting Room cafe is a recent addition at East Tanfield Station and there is potential for further development at this end of the heritage railway, with improved links to the town centre.

### **Making Better Use of Existing Assets Civic Hall**

Whilst the existing Civic Hall in Stanley is popular and well-used, there is scope to make better use of this facility and, in doing so, generate more benefit for the wider town centre. The existing facility includes cinema, theatre, office suites, and the main hall which can be used for a variety of events. Opportunities include the commercialisation of the existing offer, in terms of events, films and other productions. It could also involve creating an enhanced food and beverage offer, building on the existing facilities, which attracts other visitors (i.e. those not already attending productions there), as well as better use of other space/rooms there by businesses and community organisations – for example, for meetings and networking events.

By increasing the range and choice of productions held at the Civic Hall, it should be possible to generate more linked trips to other uses within the wider town centre, and reduce the need for residents to travel elsewhere for similar events. Any enhancement in the food and beverage offer would also help to improve the range of facilities available in this sector – which are currently limited, as set out above - to visitors to the town centre and, over time, contribute towards the creation of a genuine evening economy in Stanley.

### **Indoor Bowls Centre and Asda**

As with the Civic Hall, it should be an aspiration to make better use of the Indoor Bowls Centre in Stanley for functions and events. As part of this, it is recommended that the appearance of the entrance to this facility, on the north elevation

of the building which also contains the Asda superstore, is improved, in order to make it more inviting and improve the visual relationship between this/Asda and the Civic Hall. Coupled with improvements to pedestrian linkages, more people using this facility for events could result, over time, in increased footfall within the wider town centre.

### **Developing a Food and Drink Offer**

The baseline review undertaken as part of this work concluded that the existing food and drink offer in Stanley Town Centre is limited. Existing facilities in the centre include a small number of cafes and a McDonalds drive-through restaurant, as well as two public houses and two social clubs. There is no real evening economy in the town centre and a limited range of facilities which would help to attract and retain spending by visitors in Stanley.

It should therefore be an aspiration to improve the existing food and drink offer in the town centre. Whilst such improvements would be subject to operator demand (which may be limited in the short term) and will take time to come forward, the other recommendations set out above could – by generating more regular visitors and footfall to/in the area – help to create the conditions where new facilities are viable. New uses could potentially be accommodated in existing vacant units on Front Street (including the former Store Twenty One unit), thereby helping to reduce the number of empty units in the town centre.

As well as enhancing the existing range and choice of uses in the centre, an improved food and drink would help to extend dwell time in the town centre, creating a greater sense of vibrancy, and make it more family friendly. A new cycle café hub would link to the C2C cycle route, which runs from east to west, a short distance to the north of the town centre, drawing more people in and reducing the number who are currently bypassing Stanley. By introducing restaurants, and higher quality bars, it could also help to develop an evening economy, in the longer term, and provide more locations for people using other key attractors – such as the Civic Hall, Louisa Centre and Indoor Bowls Centre – to spend their money when visiting the town centre.





# Business Space

## Introduction

Supporting the future economic prosperity of Stanley will play an important role in influencing the success of the Masterplan proposals.

- Creating more higher value, better paid jobs in the town and the surrounding area will help to:
- Increase local levels of prosperity – providing residents with more money to spend in the town centre
- Attract more families and young people to live in the area – addressing issues of low housing demand and increasing town centre footfall/expenditure

Ensuring that the right type of space – in the right locations – is available for new and existing businesses will help to position Stanley to deliver economic growth. It should, however, be supported by a wider package of measures (including: skills and employment support; business growth and start-ups; and the identification of targeted support for key sectors) many of which are beyond the ambit of this study.

## Town Centre

### Introducing new employment uses

There are a number of vacant, historic buildings located in the town centre with the potential for redevelopment and reoccupation. In many locations, the conversion of such premises to provide town centre office floorspace would present an opportunity to create new jobs, increase footfall and expenditure.

The former Hibernian Club in Stanley has recently been converted to office premises for a commercial hygiene provider. Beyond this, however, local market dynamics (specifically the need to avoid competing with/displacing demand from modern, good quality office space available at Tanfield Lea Business Centre and The Greenhouse) make it difficult to justify public sector intervention to deliver new speculative development.

Consultees have expressed a desire to see some space in the town centre made available for start-up businesses. This would comprise of small units available on a cost-competitive basis and with flexible terms – allowing individuals and organisations to trial new business ideas in a low risk environment. It offers an alternative approach to introducing new employment uses to the area, albeit one that is less likely to be focussed on occupiers of traditional business space (with a greater emphasis on retail and food and beverage operations anticipated). This could be achieved by utilising vacant town centre space as part of a ‘meanwhile use’ strategy and would help to encourage greater levels of innovation and entrepreneurialism in the Stanley economy.

### Responding to Demand for Meeting Space

Stanley benefits from a vibrant network of business groups which are active in promoting the town and the interests of its business base. This includes organisations such as: Stanley and Beamish Group; Love Beamish & Stanley; and Do Business Network.

It is understood that business interactions currently take place in informal settings due to the absence of a dedicated space for such organisations. This could be used to help facilitate more and better networking amongst local firms, strengthening the business environment and supporting the growth of the business base.

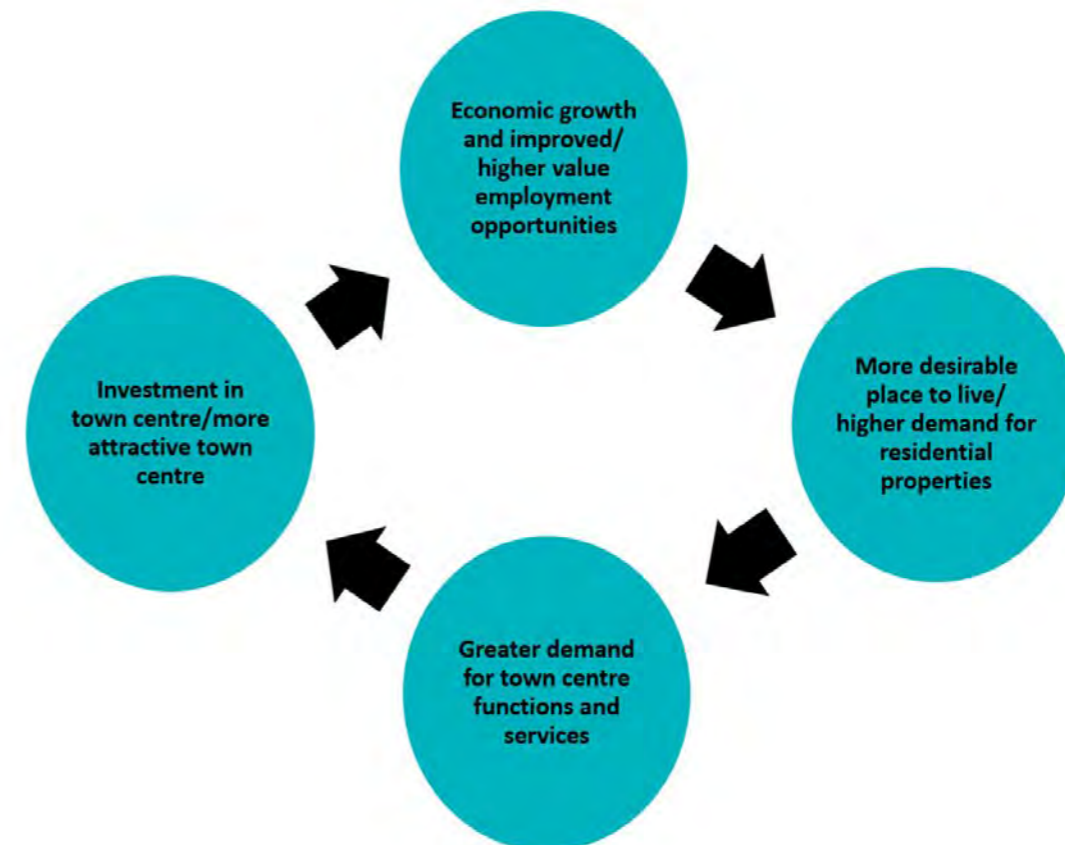
It is therefore recommended that opportunities to make a formal meeting space available to businesses should be considered in taking forward proposals for mixed-use/community use developments in the town centre (through the redevelopment/reoccupation of vacant buildings). Introducing such a facility to the town centre would help to create a focal point for businesses -drawing entrepreneurs and employees into the centre and benefiting local shops and services.

## Wider Study Area

### Creating drivers of prosperity

As referenced above, measures to create more jobs and greater prosperity in Stanley and the surrounding area will play an important role in underpinning the success of the masterplan proposals. Increasing the number of residents in employment and levels of disposable income across the wider study area could help to support initiatives to enhance the retail, leisure and cultural offer of the town.

In addition, new employment could act as a pull factor, drawing new households to Stanley to live – addressing issues of low housing demand and helping to diversify the socio-economic characteristics of the local population. These factors will, collectively, help to establish a virtuous circle that will underpin the regeneration of Stanley. This is illustrated in the figure below:



Consultation to inform the masterplan identified an ambition amongst local residents to attract more inward investment to Stanley. This would help to bring new and higher value jobs into the town and it is recommended that Business Durham and Durham County Council continue to actively pursue opportunities as they emerge. Improvements to the town centre offer and public realm will help to support these efforts.

It is also important, however, to recognise that demand for employment space in Stanley is primarily localised. As such, efforts to grow the indigenous business base would appear to offer a more realistic route to delivering higher levels of employment and growth.

This should be through initiatives to encourage both:

- Business start-ups and entrepreneurial activity
- Business growth/scaleup activity.

The support offered by Business Durham will be important in supporting indigenous growth. Masterplan proposals – such as the provision of meeting space for business networking and using vacant premises as a ‘test bed’ for trialling new business ideas – are also expected to have a positive impact

**Delivering employment space**

The supply of available industrial floorspace across the wider study area is tight and this should be addressed, through new development, to ensure that the future economic growth of Stanley is not unnecessarily constrained. New provision should focus on small premises/starter units to meet the needs of local occupiers in the first instance. Over the medium to long-term, however, there may be a need to pivot towards the delivery of larger premises to support a more ambitious growth strategy underpinned by measures to:

- Grow the indigenous business base
- Attract inward investment to Stanley

It is anticipated that speculative development of industrial space is likely to be unviable (as is the case across much of the North East) and that public sector gap funding will therefore be required.

Land to accommodate such development is available on various established employment locations in the wider study area. This includes:

- Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate (North and South);
- Greencroft Industrial Park; and
- Harelaw Industrial Estate.

Tanfield Lea South is located in closer proximity to Stanley town centre than any of the other employment areas and should therefore be considered as the preferred location for the provision of any new industrial floorspace. Focussing any new development on Tanfield Lea South should help to maximise the town centre’s ability to benefit from any new business investment/growth that is unlocked by the delivery of new floorspace.



Precedent images



Greencroft Industrial Park



Tanfield Lea South and cycle path

# Education and Employment

The initial Desktop Assessment showed that Stanley and district face a number of inter-related challenges in education and employment. The main elements of the story are widely understood and can be summarised as follows:

- Higher levels of unemployment than Co. Durham or the North East as a whole, or England
- Lower average wages than Co. Durham or the North East as a whole, or England
- Lower levels of business start-ups than Co. Durham or the North East as a whole, or England
- More people on benefits than Co Durham or the North East as a whole, or England

With the pandemic doing considerable damage to the economy, there will almost certainly be higher unemployment when furloughing ends.

## Qualifications

Qualification levels are worth particular attention. Despite some gloomy commentary to the contrary, there are jobs still for people who have no formal qualifications. And there are graduates who struggle to get a job or to get a job commensurate with the effort they put into their studies. But there is no doubt that our modern economy requires people with more qualifications, and higher level qualifications, than in the past. Individuals, and localities, with a poor qualification base will not do so well.

Stanley and district has notably more people in the workforce with no qualifications than Co. Durham, or the North East as a whole, or England, and Stanley has fewer people with Level 4 qualifications (such as an HNC, or HND) or above, including degrees.

The data comes from the 2011 Census and is only updated every decade (equivalent data from the 2021 Census is unlikely to be available until 2022). There is more up-to-date data on qualifications at county level and above, and that indicates that good progress has been made. Very probably that good progress is also reflected in Stanley, but is also probable that the patterns evident above persist.

## Schools and colleges

There is work to be done in getting more school-leavers in Stanley qualified at A Level, and then going on to college, university or to an apprenticeship for further study. And there is work to be done, too, with the existing workforce in helping those who want to add to their qualifications.

There are two secondary schools which serve Stanley and district:

- North Durham Academy, in Stanley itself.
- Tanfield School, just to the north.

Both face internal challenges. Ofsted uses a four-point scale to rate schools, assessing North Durham Academy as “Requires Improvement” in 2018 (it had been “Inadequate” at the previous inspection), and Tanfield School as “Inadequate” in 2019 (where it had been “Requires Improvement” previously, one step up). Both schools have relatively new leadership praised by Ofsted.

No college or university has a base in Stanley, and none operates any classes from Stanley. Students therefore go on to a range of local colleges across the county and beyond, for academic sixth form studies, for technical education and apprenticeships, and for university. Data on destinations is not readily available. Schools and colleges tell us however that young people from Stanley go on to study at the following:

- Derwentside College
- Gateshead College
- New College Durham
- Newcastle College
- Houghall campus of East Durham College
- St Bede’s Catholic School and Sixth Form College.

Some individuals also travel further for particular specialisms, but with small numbers. That range is very positive to the extent that it means that young people in and around Stanley have a good range of quality options open to them, but it is also a challenge as schoolchildren sift their options to work out what is best for them.

That is daunting for most people at the best of times and in the best of circumstances, but all the more so when the choice is wide, and when relatively few can look to role models amongst family and friends who have gone on to further study. The need is to help young people make the most of this range of options, rather than to add to that range.

The heads at both secondary schools, and their senior colleagues who lead on careers matters, all agreed that many of the pupils have only weak aspirations to go on to further study. The schools are doing what they can to address the problem, for example by getting employers in to talk about career options to broaden pupils’ understanding, and through wider work to tackle cultural barriers which get in the way of promoting learning, but it is not one which lends itself to easy answers.

We heard anecdotal evidence of young people who have dropped out of a college course within a few weeks of starting. That happens across the country, but college staff see a more complex challenge where young people have no family member, or friend, helping them to stick with it, and praising the benefits which are likely to flow if they do. New College Durham runs courses which start half way through the Autumn Term, to help those who made a wrong turn to start on a better course and catch up. The college also runs other courses which start in the New Year for those who make a second choice a bit later, and too late to start a full programme, so that they stay in the college fold and are fully prepared to make a good go of it the following September.

In our survey of pupils in both secondary schools a minority reported some concerns about transport issues, with the comment from one person: “It is quite hard to get places, especially when you don’t have a car”. In comparison with other concerns, however, young people gave a low priority to transport – though there is little sign that they were looking ahead to post-school college options.



North Durham Academy



Tanfield School



Derwentside College



St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College

### Adult education

The community consultation showed that there is some interest in “adult education”. As things stand the County Council runs adult education provision across the county, though most of it is online, and where the service offers classroom-based courses (eg introductory IT courses) it does not use any venue in or near Stanley. (Despite its name Stanley Education Centre at Shield Row Primary School is primarily used for internal training by the County Council).

The term “adult education” is rather ambiguous, covering both classes which people attend for leisure reasons, and also to improve their chances in the labour market. Both are relevant to a healthy, thriving, community, but the economic geography is different. Where people are looking for courses which will give them real help in the labour market, both the adult education service and Stanley Area Action Partnership, point them to courses run by local colleges, and also to apprenticeships (though it would be helpful to make clear that apprenticeships are not just for school-leavers, despite widespread assumptions to the contrary).

We have identified only modest interest in running more courses in Stanley itself, whether for adults or for those still in full-time education. While there may be an opportunity there in due course, running classes outside main premises poses quite a challenge for colleges, which have little scope in financial terms to try more experimental locations where they may not be able to cover costs. Our advice is to focus instead on improving access to the courses and other opportunities, including jobs and apprenticeships, already available within striking distance, in particular improving access to good quality information about those opportunities.

### Summary of challenges and opportunities

#### Challenges

- High unemployment
- High risk of higher unemployment still as furloughing ends
- Lower levels of educational attainment than County Durham as a whole
- Weak aspirations by schoolchildren to go on to further study

#### Opportunities

- A good range of colleges and universities within striking distance, all keen to engage
- Create a new means of putting those opportunities in front of people, through an annual Stanley Jobs and Careers Fair in the town centre.

### Recommendations

#### Annual Jobs and Careers Fair in the town centre

An annual event would provide a recurring focal point for everyone interested in jobs and careers, both school-leavers and adults. The secondary schools could use that annual focus to help shape their careers work with pupils, and they should be involved in the planning so that they could help identify exhibitors the pupils want to meet.

Many towns run something like this, bringing in all the local colleges (who would come), plus local universities and employers. They typically run on a Friday and a Saturday, maximising the range of people who can attend, with a simple, cheap and easy-to-manage format of a range of stands in a large hall, offering a deliberately non-threatening environment so everyone feels free to talk. It is common for local authorities to host such events, and to pick up the associated venue costs.

Running costs are typically very low. A fair like this can be managed wholly passively with stands which people move between, or supplemented with a series of presentations. Once a pattern is established the exact shape and nature can change over time. Success breeds success, so a company hesitant to attend one year can be tempted again the next by telling them about the numbers attending.

Stanley could accommodate a fair like this in the town centre, which would support the ambition to increase footfall. Probably a few hundred people would attend, a mix of school-children and their parents, plus older people looking to improve their circumstances, many of whom would at least pop into one of the shops while they were in town.

#### A jobs and training hub, offering continuing support through the year

Annual events are good at highlighting topics, but people look for help all the year round; an important complement to the annual jobs and careers fair would be to have a jobs and training hub, conveniently located, offering a service all through the year.

Just as the exact shape of the annual jobs and careers fair can change each year, so the exact mix of services in the jobs and training hub can vary. The core would ideally be someone who people can talk to about their own circumstances; many people don't know whether to press on to find the job they really want, or to look at a college or university course, and what the implications would be if they chose that route. They need to talk to someone who knows their way round.

Once established a hub would also be a good place for experts to attend from time to time to offer advice and support which generalist advisers could not, and a good place to run short courses. Both expert advice and courses could be provided for start-up businesses as well as for job-seekers.

Karbon Homes has indicated their interest in making space available in their offices on Front Street, which would be a good location, readily accessible to all. And the association with Karbon Homes, already offering support to its tenants, would be a good one, helping to set the right, positive, tone for the services offered.



Houghall Campus



Gateshead College



Jobs and careers fair



Karbon Homes

# Housing

## Introduction

Stanley and the surrounding area currently suffer from a lack of diversity in the housing stock, as well as issues of low demand. It is vital that these issues are addressed to reverse the current trend of residents moving out of the area. Stabilising and growing the population of Stanley will help to create and sustain a successful town centre, as well as essential local services (including schools and healthcare). Stanley should look to welcome new residential development from the private sector and Registered Providers. This could help to address the challenges outlined above, whilst also:

- Drawing additional residents into the study area and – subject to the type of stock delivered – attracting a broader mix of households (including those characterised by higher incomes). This would help to support increased footfall and expenditure in the town centre
- Creating opportunities to deliver improvements to community facilities and infrastructure in Stanley and the wider study area via S106 payments (subject to the viability of development).

In addition, residential development within the town centre itself could:

- Result in empty properties/vacant sites being repurposed or redeveloped to provide new homes. This would reduce vacancy rates and/or improve the environmental quality of the town centre. It would also support a greater diversity of uses, helping to animate the area
- Create a strong ‘sense of place’ by reinforcing the clearly defined character areas/quarters proposed within the masterplan (most notably the residential/mixed-use quarter to the north/north east of the town centre)

## Town Centre Development opportunities

Opportunities to introduce more residential development to the town centre should be identified and pursued. Activity should focus on key gateways and pedestrian routes to improve environmental quality of – and footfall within – strategically important locations. Development opportunities could take the form of vacant sites or historic vacant buildings (which could be redevelopment to provide new flats/apartments).

It is understood from discussions with Karbon Homes, however, that previous schemes delivering flats/apartments in the town centre (such as The Hub on Stanley Front Street) have suffered from low demand. In addition, viability has been challenging on such sites, reflecting the costs of converting an older property.

Initial discussions with Registered Providers active in Stanley and the wider North East have suggested that, in the short term, town centre development sites are likely to be best suited to older persons accommodation.

The reasons put forward by Registered Providers for this are summarised below:

It is likely to be necessary to implement some of the masterplan interventions – particularly those focussed on improving the town centre offer and the physical appearance of Front Street – to provide a platform to attract younger residents and families to live in the town centre. With this in mind, there may be merit in Durham County Council exploring opportunities to work in partnership with Registered Providers to deliver new developments on less risky, greenfield sites in the wider study area in the short-term. This will help to ensure that Registered Providers have a deep understanding of – and confidence in – the Stanley housing market when the time comes to offer town centre sites to the market.

New residential development would need to be at a reasonable scale to have a material impact on the town centre. The opportunity sites identified are relatively small and consequently the delivery of flats/apartments offers the best chance of achieving the requisite critical mass. Consultees have indicated that development of this type for younger people/residents has struggled to attract demand in Stanley previously (see above), whereas a larger scale, well designed older persons accommodation development is likely to be well received by the market.

It is recommended that further analysis, including soft market testing is undertaken before any final decision is made regarding the type of housing to be provided within the town centre. In the event that a decision is taken to deliver a product targeted at families and young people, it may be necessary to pursue this as a medium-term aspiration. This would allow the implementation of the masterplan to focus on making the town centre a more attractive place for this market in the short-term.

In addition, soft market testing should consider the potential to deliver larger (3/4 bedroom+) homes within the town centre to help diversify the local housing stock. This may need to be in the form of a townhouse-type product, given the likely size of opportunity sites. Alternatively, it could be achieved by extending or reconfiguring existing properties whilst retaining original frontages (where appropriate). Such an approach has been successfully adopted by Place First on developments including The Welsh Streets in Liverpool and The Green in Hartlepool.



**Wider Study Area**

**New housing commitments**

As outlined in the Baseline Report, there are a number of housing development opportunities located across the wider study area – particularly in South Stanley. It is important that new developments are positioned to diversify the housing stock. This will help the town appeal to different household typologies and reduce the risk of new development displacing demand from existing properties (where demand is already low). In addition, developing a more diverse housing offer will reduce the risk of local families leaving the area in search of larger (3 and 4+ bedroom) properties.

Mindful of the above, it is recommended that Durham County Council works with the development industry to encourage the delivery of semi-detached and detached properties with parking and gardens on housing opportunity sites.

It will be important to ensure that new housing delivered in the wider study area benefits from excellent connections to Stanley town centre by active and sustainable travel links. This will help to maximise the extent to which population growth from new residential development translates to increased footfall and expenditure in Stanley town centre.

**Selective licencing**

The Towns and Villages Programme Investment Plan, published by Durham County Council, sets out a number of priority interventions for the Stanley Area Action Partnership. This includes the introduction of a Selective Licencing Scheme to regulate private landlords and raise standards in the private rented sector. This will help to support the wider aims of the masterplan.

It is understood that Durham County Council plan to introduce Selective Licencing to areas based on four designations: low housing demand; anti-social behaviour; deprivation; and low demand, anti-social behaviour and deprivation (meeting all three conditions).

Within the wider study area, a number of areas are proposed for designation, including:

- Low demand designation: Havannah South
- Anti-social behaviour designation: Catchgate North
- Deprivation designation: Annfield Plain, Stanley Hall North, Stanley Hall West and Craghead North
- All three designations: New Kyo, South Moor Central, South Moor North and South Moor South

**Tackling concentrations of empty properties**

The Towns and Villages Programme Investment Plan also identifies the need to tackle concentrations of empty properties as a key priority of the Stanley Area Action Partnership. It is understood that this activity is to be focussed on the following areas:

- Annfield Plain
- Quaking Houses
- South Moor
- Stanley
- Tantobie



Precedent Images

# Transport and Connectivity

## Introduction

This section discusses the opportunities to improve transport and connectivity in and around Stanley.

## Pedestrian Environment

The A693 bypass carriageway creates severance between the residential areas to the east and south and the town centre. There are existing segregated crossing facilities in the form of two subways, located immediately east and west of the A693, ASDA roundabout and there is also a zebra crossing on the A6076, Station Road/High Street to the north of the town centre.

An application for Pinch Point funding has been made by DCC to signalise the A693, ASDA roundabout and to introduce at grade pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction as an alternative crossing to the subway. This will assist those who may have difficulty negotiating the ramps linked to the subways and provides a greater level of passive supervision and therefore perception of safety from the passing traffic.

It may be that both subways could remain in place as segregated crossing facilities.

The eastern subway, located between Clifford Road and The Venue, is a key desire line and connection to the town centre.

The existing building form alongside Clifford Road, between the subway and Front Street, has little active frontage. Whilst the space is wide, the environment feels remote and unfriendly.

It is unlikely that an at grade signal-controlled pedestrian crossing of the A693 could be introduced along the line of Clifford Road due to the impact of delay on the traffic using the bypass.

The eastern subway itself is wide, well-lit and direct. Increasing activity and by association passive supervision in and around Clifford Road is the key to improving perceptions of pedestrian safety in this location.

Within the centre of Stanley there are many key services and amenities. Front Street provides an active travel spine linking all of these. The majority of Front Street is pedestrianised, but the section south of Scott Street is trafficked.

The existing situation provides a degree of severance in and around some of the key services and amenities (The Civic Hall, Asda, Bowls Centre and The Louisa Centre), which would benefit from better connectivity and formal crossing facilities at Scott Street.

North Durham Academy is located to the east of the A693 on High Street. There are sustainable transport links towards the town centre utilising the Clifford Road subway. A desire line by usage is denoted across a soft landscaped area. Providing adequate active travel links for school travel can assist in reducing car journeys and establish patterns of sustainable travel.

Improving connections to the wider surrounding areas would also benefit the North Durham Academy community.

The bus station is a key transportation node and a desirable asset for the town centre. The approach from Front Street is wide, welcoming and active. However, connectivity to the north and south of the bus station is poor.

Parking, servicing and narrow pedestrian routes create poor legibility.

The approach and view from a bus approaching the station towards the centre could be made more attractive, creating interest and appeal for people to visit rather than pass through.

Car parking is located in two main areas, south and north of the Clifford Road corridor and served off the primary and secondary access points to the south of the town centre and the primary access to the north.

The car parking is free across the whole of the town centre and is a mix of private and public car parking.

The primary public car park is accessed via Scott Street, which is located to the north-west of Front Street. The pedestrian links from this car park to Front Street are via a number of passageways. Some are relatively narrow and do not include street lighting. As such the legibility between the car park and Front Street for people who are not familiar with the area is poor. The proximity of this car parking is considered to be undervalued.

The links from the Clifford Road retail area westbound towards Front Street and the bus station are also considered to be narrow, passing service areas and not pedestrian friendly.

The retail area at Clifford Road has pulled the commercial centre of gravity eastwards. Direct, legible connectivity between the two parking areas across Front Street would strengthen passing trade for the prime retail frontage.

This again highlights the importance of Clifford Road and the connections from Front Street to the surrounding areas.

Improving the pedestrian routes from the parking areas to Front Street is paramount and therefore this must be prioritised along with improving active travel connections to the west.



**Activity**

At the northern end of Front Street, close to St Joseph’s School, planting beds and seating have been used to soften and break up the space. Toward the southern end of Front Street the corridor is wider between the buildings. Although street furniture, seating and planting has been introduced and is a benefit to the area, the width of the corridor can make the area feel rather desolate. The street market operates on a Thursday and a Saturday which provides an alternative atmosphere.

Existing pedestrian data from Digital High Street illustrates the variation in pedestrian activity across an average week. During the pandemic pedestrian activity reduced significantly. The pedestrian activity is reasonably consistent across the whole week, except for a Sunday where the number of visitors reduces by around 50%; both pre and post lockdown. Increasing activity on a Sunday could easily be accommodated. The pedestrian activity builds over the morning period 09.00-12.00, is sustained into the early afternoon, before dropping-off sharply from around 15.00/16:00. The duration of stay could be extended by focusing on the activities/attractions of interest throughout the afternoon and into the early evening. It may be that the target audience is a different demographic to the existing visitors.

**Public Rights of Way**

There are a number of routes which could benefit from improvement and these have been identified as part of the Pinch Point funding application. Improving the routes from the town centre to the west would not only benefit leisure trips but could also assist commuter and utility trips from the surrounding settlements.

There are numerous footpath links serving the town centre and the surrounding area. The connections from the town centre to the National Cycle Route need to be improved as a sense of arrival and onward legibility is severely lacking. Linking new residential areas such as the Eveready site at East Tanfield will increase the Stanley catchment, this would also improve links to attractions such as Tanfield Railway and Causey Arch.

Improved links to the C2C would be beneficial for the wider catchment area and could bring other user groups into play for the town centre (for commuting, utility trips and for leisure eg walking the dog, walks, cycling and Parkrun). There are substantial gaps in the early evening and on a Sunday that could be targeted without sacrificing the existing visitors/users to/of the town centre.

The wider PROW network also includes South Moor Heritage Trail, Causey and Beamish Circular Walk and the Tyne and Wear Heritage Way. The sense is that these destinations are likely to be most active at weekends and could be used to build activity on a Sunday, for example, if complementary activities/attractions are available within the town centre.

Existing information boards and wayfinding fingerpost signs are present in and around the town centre to assist visitors unfamiliar with the area. The relevance of the information and the locations which they are cited should reflect the volume of movement.

There could be opportunities to introduce information boards on the National Cycle Route to encourage connectivity to access Stanley. Walking and cycling as a leisure activity or as a utility journey such as a commute will determine how far people travel. The Isochrone illustrates the walking catchment areas of 2000m and 3200m. The Isochrone illustrates the cycling catchment areas of 4300m and 7250m. These catchment areas include surrounding residential, leisure and employment sites.

Cycle parking is available at a number of locations within the town. These tend to be short stay (open) parking. Stanley could be promoted as a destination for cyclists by creating a cycling hub, with café/ toilet facilities as well as secure cycle parking, lockers and facilities such as a communal pump. The hub would not be limited to those completing the more challenging C2C, but aimed at the greater opportunities associated with the promotion of local cycling from within the existing surrounding areas. This links with other themes such as active travel, health, school travel, travel to work cycle scheme, bikeability and local cycle clubs

**Bus Access**

The bus station is a significant asset to Stanley and the surrounding areas. This is borne out by the number of radial bus services accessing the numerous settlements within the surrounding area. It provides a public transport hub, with the local services connecting to services to the centres of regional significance including Durham, Sunderland, Gateshead and Newcastle.

The frequency and journey times travelling to Stanley from the surrounding local areas has to compete with other destinations such as Consett and Chester le Street.

The offer at Stanley needs to create a destination that is seen as an alternative to the other centres, so that passengers will not simply pass through the bus station on route to another destination.

Recent changes in bus routing has seen an increase in the requirement to interchange at Stanley Bus station when travelling from surrounding settlements to key employment and service centres such as Durham, Metro Centre and Newcastle.

This is likely to adversely impact on employment opportunities, particularly within communities with low car ownership. The interchange is a deterrent to bus use however may marginally benefit Stanley as destination in its own right or an interim stop.

The North East Combined Authority’s ambition, as set out in its Transport Manifesto is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment. Where physical access is reduced this places increased importance on digital connectivity to reduce the disadvantage caused. Integrated bus provision (for example timing, ticketing and direct routing) in rural and semirural areas is essential in delivering an Enhanced Partnership for the region.



Precedent Images



### Car Parking

All parking areas are busy throughout the day and parking near the food stores (Aldi, Asda and McDonalds) tends to extend into early evening.

The primary care centre is a private car park and is underutilised on a Saturday whereas other parking areas are strained.

The Scott Street car park has no limitations on duration of stay or costs therefore it is extremely busy during the week. Again, there are opportunities for greater utilisation on a weekend. This could provide parking facilities for events such as the popular Parkrun activity without detriment to existing use and in turn provide additional visitors to the town. This is a common theme with a need to focus on broadening the attractions for reasons to visit Stanley.

There are existing Traffic Regulation Orders in and around the area. This includes the allocation of Front Street as a pedestrianised area. It is understood that there are some enforcement issues that surround the existing TROs.

As activity increases, parking demand and pressures are likely. To better manage this asset, DCC should seek to comprehensively review the TROs, updating the restrictions on Front Street to be fit for purpose.

This would also give opportunity to discuss and secure a comprehensive parking strategy for public and private parking.

### Changes to Movement

The centre of gravity of movement has moved east, pulled by the activity created around the newer shops at Clifford Road and Aldi. The introduction of a new anchor retail located to the west of the Scott Street car park would help to rebalance the retail offer within the town centre, with the potential to induce movement between the various areas via Front Street.

There is scope to reconfigure parts of Scott Street car park, designating accessible parking bays in key locations to reduce travel distances to the retail and services. Along with the cycle hub, such reconfiguration and improved legibility for pedestrians could also target cyclists to make use of the town centre.

### Sense of Arrival and Wayfinding

There are key arrival gateways to the town centre. By car, the northbound slip road access to the south of Stanley is utilised equally along with two roundabouts. The southern roundabout allows access to Scott Street car park, Asda, Aldi and the Louisa Centre, the majority of people leave this side of the town centre via the roundabout. The northern roundabout leads toward the Clifford Road shops and car park and the Primary care centre.

From the car parking areas, the pedestrian routes are vital to guide and attract pedestrians into the core of the town centre. Improving these will benefit access for all. There are notable gaps in the usage of the town centre, with a distinct drop off in the recorded pedestrian movements after 3pm, and a substantial reduction on Sunday.

Targeting attractions/activities to lengthen the stay and to attract a different demographic during these quiet periods would be beneficial. Some of these changes should focus on Front Street, but also the activity along Clifford Road and balancing out the offer in and around the town centre.

A clearly defined and legible hierarchy of pedestrian routes should be created throughout the town centre, intersecting within the central area to maximise pass-by trade and activity, linking to the car parks and the bus station. Connections to the local active travel routes, including the local cycle routes either side of Stanley are important to provide residents in surrounding local settlements with the opportunity to choose to travel by walking and cycling so that the lack of suitable infrastructure is not the barrier to active travel modes. For those familiar with the town, legibility is often focused on convenience (the shortest) and/or preference (lighting, safety, experience). For those unfamiliar with an area, legibility is important to guide them through and around an area and can significantly influence the visitor experience, which is important for first time visitors in particular. Noticeboards can be useful providing current information communicating future events or key contact details. Often overlooked are the more subtle information sources such as clocks.

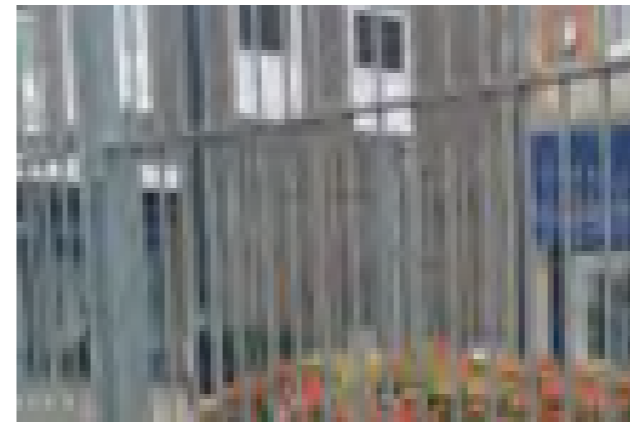
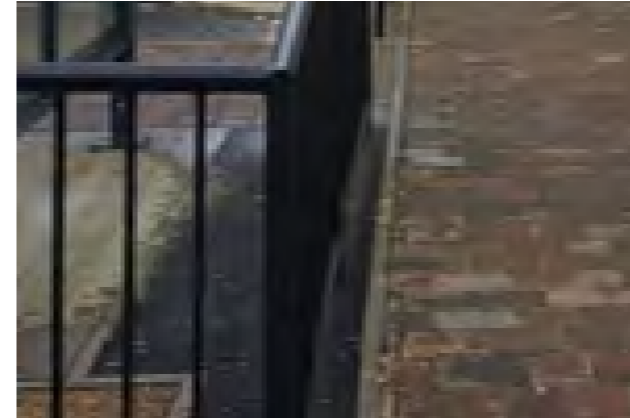
The A693 as a bypass serves the town very well, but it also provides a potential source of visitors if the town centre as a destination is sufficiently attractive and is suitably signposted.

The two roundabouts provide opportunity for introducing new gateway features to increase the presence of Stanley to the traffic on the A193. They could be linked to local attractions such as Beamish or Tanfield Railway or to promote the offer available within Stanley. The exits from the roundabouts which lead to the Town Centre should be welcoming and differentiated to the other exits. This could be through planting, signage, for example 'Welcome to Stanley' or a combination to enhance the arrival experience.

The bus station is significant asset for the town centre, being a focal point for local services and acting as a hub for connecting to services to the larger regional centres of Durham, Newcastle, Sunderland and Gateshead. There are opportunities to target some of the passengers into the town centre, even if just for a short stay in between connecting services, but this requires a clear, obvious and attractive offer at the bus station.

The street furniture within the town centre is ad hoc as areas have been developed over time. This fragmented approach presents contrasts of new and old street furniture rather than a cohesive and unified sense of belonging for the town centre. There are a mixture of materials and colours used for railings / barriers and a vast array of different types of lighting columns, cycle racks and bollards. Incremental development with their range of materials further detracts from the streetscape. The photographs on the next page illustrate the lack of coherency in the public realm within Stanley.

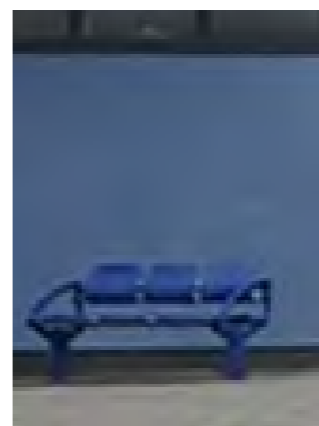
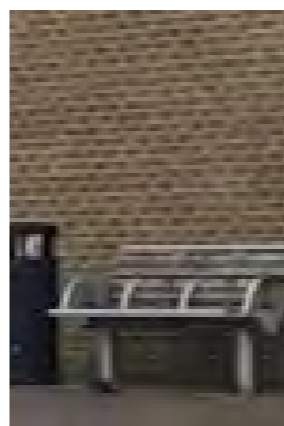
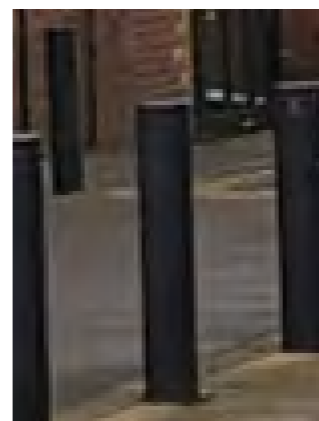
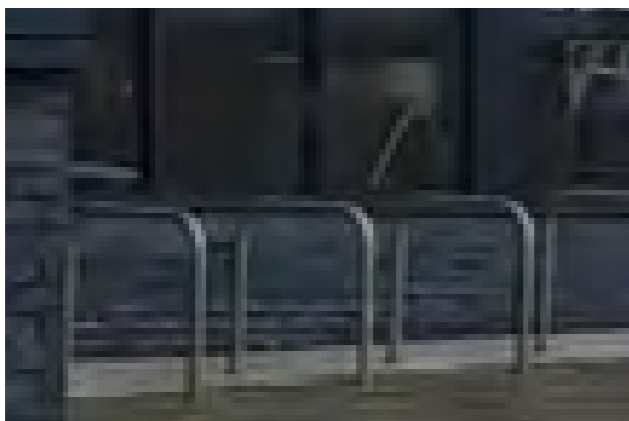




Existing arrival into Stanley



Existing access and public realm



Existing cycle parking, information, signs and lighting

Existing lighting, bollards, bins and seats

## Digital

Much of what is recommended within the Masterplan for Stanley can be further elevated by the use of existing digital solutions. The recommendations can be summarised into the following categories: commerce; culture; public services; and wellbeing, all of which can use and promote digital solutions.

The interoperability of the recommendations, for example improvements in retail and leisure spaces can come together to change the experience of shopping within the town. The multiple opportunities for, and increasing footfall and time spent in, Stanley will drive economic benefits. The ability to weave together the different recommended actions sits naturally within the digital space. Something as simple as coordinating a single shopping, eating and leisure experience within the town is enhanced by making each activity a little easier to organise and synchronise through the real-time use of digital devices.

The current infrastructure footprint for Stanley is sufficient to meet the recommended actions for the Masterplan, but further work is needed to fully understand the next steps for digital infrastructure. For example, 5G technologies rely on fibre infrastructure to ensure backhaul of data and to connect 5G small cell infrastructure. This fibre infrastructure can also be used to connect buildings and sites making it easier for services, commercial and public, to evolve at low cost.

If there is a desire for Stanley to keep pace with the evolution of digital services, then changes in roads, property and land use should take into account the potential to embed digital infrastructure at the same time. It is almost always easier to deploy infrastructure while building and civil works are being prepared rather than retrofitting onto a new urban landscape.

Construction, activity to remodel (for example, the service areas of Front Street), improving car parking, and ensuring that electric vehicle charging points are available throughout the town, are projects that all offer the opportunity to embed a digital element in the construction and remodelling activity from the ground up. Even if the end result is the deployment of empty ducting along the roadside, or under the pavement/pedestrian walkways, the availability of this simple infrastructure will cut time and cost from any subsequent requirement to deliver digital infrastructure to the town.

Making it easier for providers to deliver digital infrastructure should increase competition and in turn drive down the price. Driving down the price will make it easier for more residents in Stanley to benefit from the solutions on offer, which will also help the Council to deliver some of its services virtually. Whether it is sharing forms, billing or delivering support services, this virtuous circle approach gives the residents and businesses in Stanley a greater opportunity to benefit from the recommendations made in the Masterplan which in turn makes them more likely to succeed.

The example of a virtual, or augmented, reality (AR/VR) cultural/heritage experience will require access to digital devices underpinned by access to digital infrastructure. The required investment is perhaps not wholly supported by a single infrastructure use-case, but when the same infrastructure is used across all the themes of culture (in this case), commerce, public services delivery, and wellbeing then the incremental cost of an AR/VR solution is easier to justify.

WiFi access for market traders may also be a consideration to facilitate card payment transactions and could be factored within the rental of a market stall plot or could be provided free by the Council. Additionally, WiFi could also “unlock” consumers who perhaps don’t have sufficient data plans such as low-income earners or young adults.

Footfall and patterns of movement can also assist in planning specific improvements and enhancements to the high street.



Precedent images

# Planning Policy

## National Planning Policy Framework

The most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021. It includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which requires that plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change.

It confirms that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. In doing so, they should retain existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, as well as encouraging residential development on appropriate sites.

The proposals set out in this masterplan document, and recommendations in respect of future local planning policies, take these requirements of national policy into account.

## Local Plan

The objectives of the masterplan should ideally be incorporated into planning strategy through the development plan. However, the County Durham Plan (CDP), which covers the Stanley area, was adopted in October 2020 and no firm timetable has yet been set for any review of this plan.

As with the existing CDP, any new replacement plan is likely to cover the whole of the county and, whilst it will include site specific allocations and designations (including centre boundaries and primary shopping areas), its strategic nature is likely to limit the level of detail it contains in respect of individual town centres. Although there is potential to include objectives for town centres such as Stanley, it is also unlikely to contain specific development management guidance.

Notwithstanding this, however, there are a number of areas where any new local plan which comes forward could help to support the objectives of this masterplan for Stanley. In particular, it could:

- Define the Retail/Food and Drink, Leisure/Civic and Residential/Mixed Use quarters, within the overall Stanley Town Centre boundary, in order to confirm how the centre will be re-focused, and explain the types of uses which would be encouraged in each area.
- Allocate sites within the town centre which are capable of accommodating new anchor retail or leisure units, potentially including the existing Iceland supermarket and adjacent land, and land at Clifford Road.
- Allocate sites to accommodate new residential development, including the Elite buildings site and land at Clifford Road, in order to both increase the range of accommodation in/around the town centre and delivery environmental improvements in these key gateway areas;
- Identify a site in between Front Street and the bus station, which would be redeveloped in order to create a new public space of a size which is capable of hosting markets, events and festivals, and acts as a focal point for the wider centre;
- Provide encouragement for proposals for new uses and redevelopment schemes which would help to reduce the unit vacancy rate in Stanley Town Centre, taking a flexible approach to such proposals;
- Support improvements to pedestrian connectivity, both within the centre - including between areas to the east and west of Front Street – and from the surrounding residential areas and C2C route; and
- Support enhancements to the physical environment within the centre, including both along Front Street and to the rear of exiting commercial properties (e.g. those which back onto the Scott Street car park).

## Other Areas

More generally, it will be important for planning policies to support the future economic prosperity of Stanley, helping to create higher value, better paid jobs in the town. Such policies should support the creation of accommodation which encourages start-ups, as well as growing businesses and, in the longer term, helps to attract inward investment to Stanley. They should also encourage the diversification of the existing housing stock in the town, in order to attract more families and young people to live in Stanley.

The above measures, which are specific to Stanley, should sit alongside more general development management-type policies. The latter would include those which set out criteria to be satisfied by proposals for new main town centre uses outwith existing defined centres. They would also include policies which deal with uses which could have a harmful effect upon local amenity, such as hot food takeaways and bookmakers/pay day loan shops.

## Other Planning Tools

There are other documents which could potentially be prepared by Durham County Council in order to help deliver the various measures identified for Stanley. These include:

- An Area Action Plan; and/or
- A Supplementary Planning Document.

Area Action Plans (AAPs) are Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that focus on a specific location or an area subject to significant change. An AAP for Stanley could therefore sit alongside the new CDP, providing more detail on how the masterplan would be delivered and identifying the various non-planning actions required to deliver these objectives. However, the timescales associated with the preparation of the document mean that it would be likely to take around two to three years for any AAP to become adopted.

Although it would not form part of the development plan, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) could build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on the policies in the CDP. However, it would not form part of the development plan itself and there are currently no specific policies relating to Stanley which would form an appropriate basis for its preparation.

Furthermore, whilst it could provide more detailed guidance on the form of development considered acceptable in specific parts of the centre, it is considered that a more pro-active, flexible and less prescriptive approach is needed for Stanley. There also is still a significant amount of time required in the preparation of such an SPD (although less so than an AAP).

Whilst both of the above documents could help to deliver some of the masterplan's objectives, there are clearly significant implications in terms of both resources and timescales. By the time they are adopted, the need for intervention may have become even more urgent.

# Study Area Masterplan

- Study area boundary
- Vacant sites for redevelopment identified in DCC vacant sites register
- Towns and Villages Investment Plan Funding
  - Neighbourhood Retail Improvements - South Stanley and Annfield Plain
  - Community Housing - Craghead Development Trust
  - South Moor Improvement Programme (Improving key problem sites and vulnerable properties)
  - Spruce Up – Annfield Plain and Shield Row
  - Housing & Community: Targeted Delivery Plans for Stanley Hall West and New Kyo
  - Selective licensing to regulate private landlords - New Kyo, South Moor, Annfield Plain, Craghead, Stanley Hall
  - Tackling empty properties – concentrations in Annfield Plain, South Moor, Stanley, Tantobie, Quaking Houses

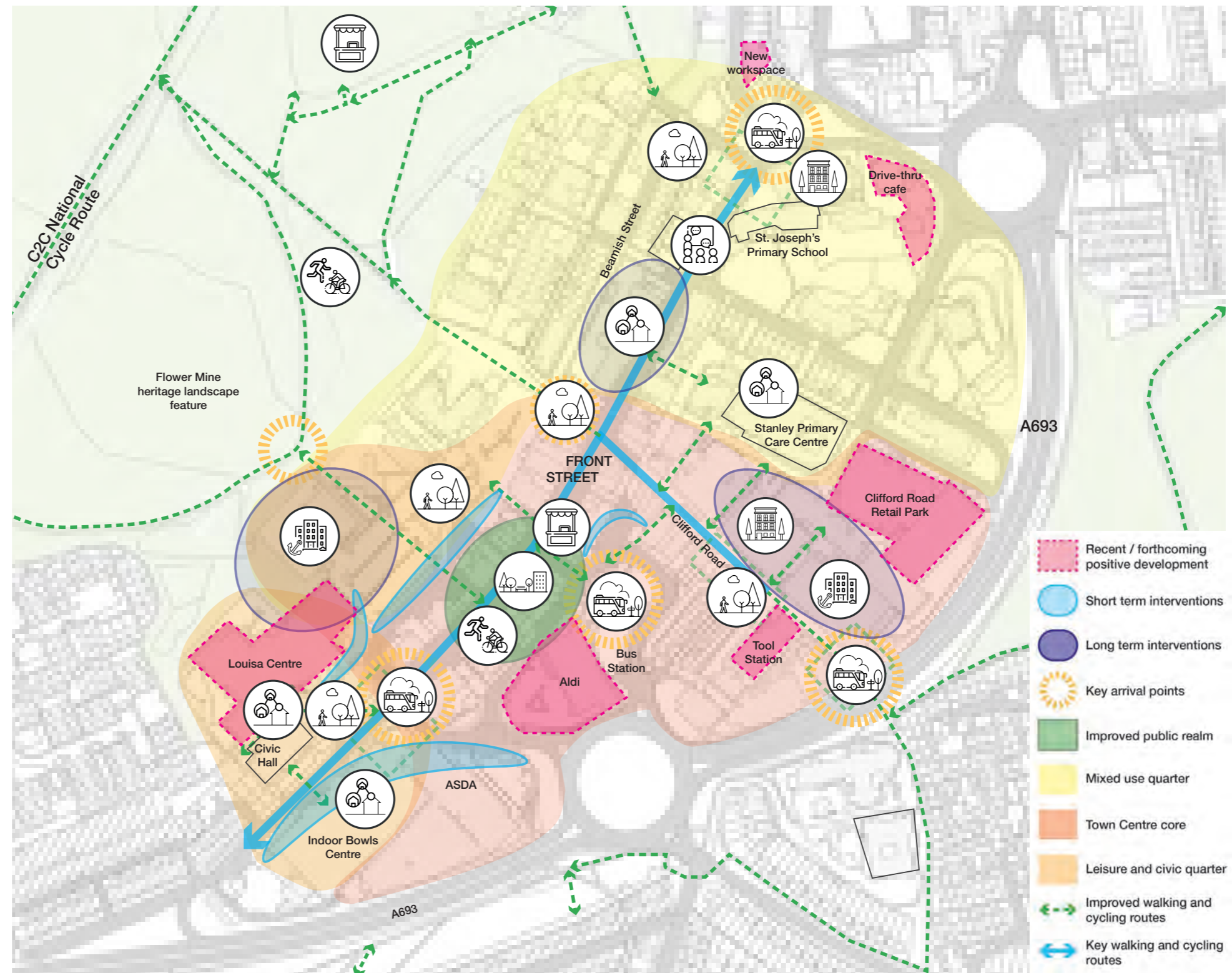
- Housing commitment
- Employment land allocation
- ↔ Strengthen active travel links
- Main road
- Cycle route
- Footpath
- Bus route

- 1** Ensure good links to Stanley town centre from housing commitments, employment land, Causey Arch / Tanfield Railway, and East Tanfield Station to encourage movement into town centre
- 2** Causey and Beamish circular walk
- 3** Introduce a bike cafe / break stop / info point where the C2C meets the town centre to encourage C2C users to visit Stanley
- 4** South Moor heritage trail - 5 mile route with 8 key heritage sites including information boards
- 5** National Coast to Coast (C2C) cycle route - improved signage to town centre and heritage features with information boards
- 6** Improved active / sustainable travel links between town centre, employment sites and surrounding villages, for example Greencroft industrial park, Annfield Plain, and Craghead
- 7** Ensure good links between the town centre and attractions such as Bayberry Hollow and the proposed St Cuthbert heritage project
- 8** Tanfield Railway and heritage walk. Advertise heritage assets in town centre here to create a link. Incentives e.g. free tickets or coffee



# Town Centre Masterplan

-  New public space, enabling events, markets, play and green space
-  Retail / leisure anchors to attract footfall along Front Street
-  Bring vacant buildings back into use and improve utilisation of existing facilities
-  Improve arrival points, connections, crossings, wayfinding and signage throughout the town
-  Strengthen training and skills
-  Establish food and drink offer, celebrate heritage, music, local growing and markets
-  Potential for Parkrun, improved access to Oakey Park / C2C, and Cycle Hub cafe
-  Improve housing mix, quality, and encourage town centre living
-  Improve public realm, street furniture, service areas and car parks





Town Centre Illustrative Impression



**Character areas and key sites**

**Area 1 - Front Street Public Space**

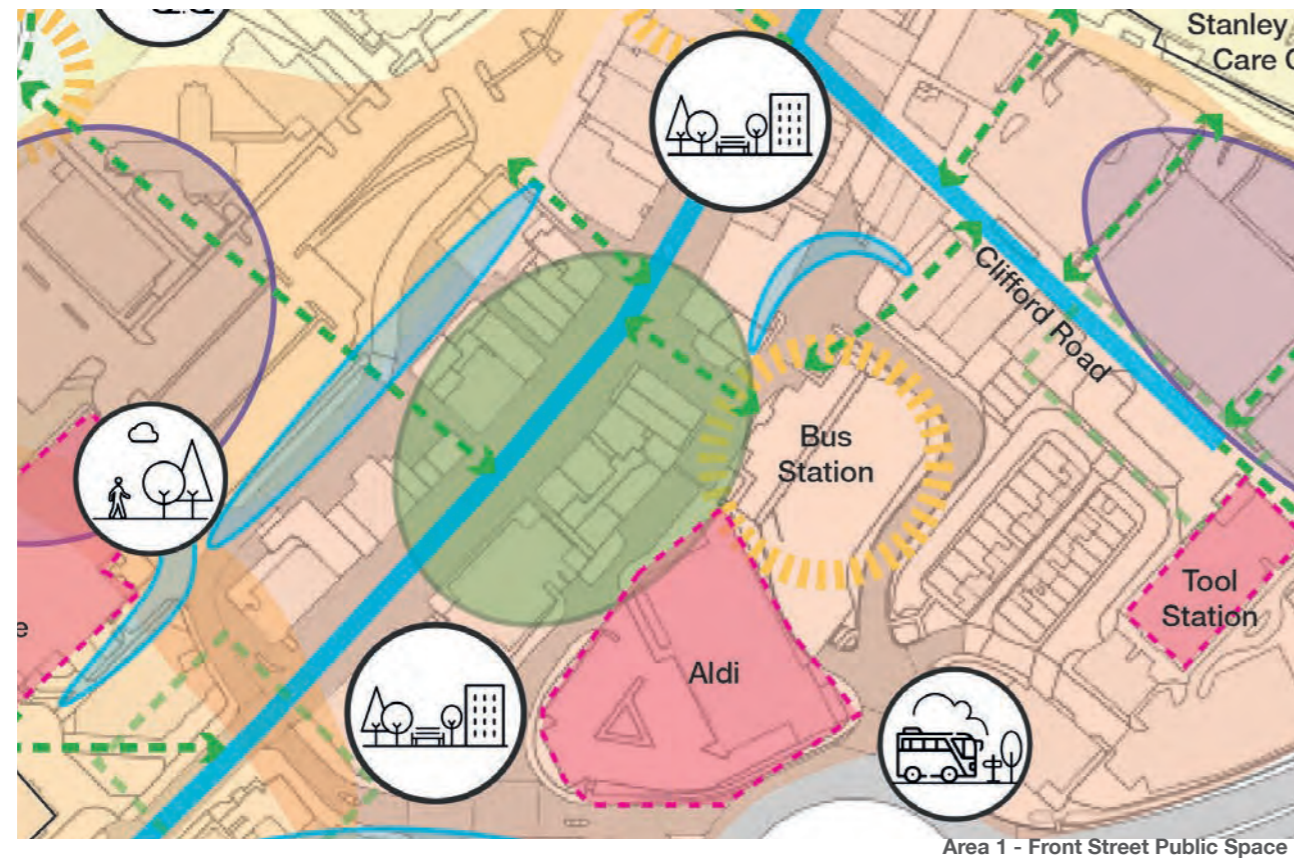
A new public space on Front Street could redevelop the Bertie's Bar site and create an improved central focal point at the heart of the town, with activity around the bus station, ALDI, and footfall from the Scott Street car parks and C2C arrival point. The new public space should bring much needed greenery into the town centre and could incorporate soft landscaping (eg flexible lawn and trees), play, seating, cafes/stalls and space for events and performances. Linked to this, there is the opportunity to build on Stanley's reputation for grass roots music throughout the town, for example, brass bands, the folk festival and blues festivals which were held in the town.

Key will be to ensure this space is as flexible as possible for different types of events and markets, and that infrastructure and servicing are considered. A pavilion building would help to give additional enclosure to the space provide a food and drink offer.

The new public space and pavilion could also provide an opportunity to build on Stanley's existing outdoor market, by developing a series of specialist markets including craft / food / local produce, and tie this in with Incredible Edible initiative making Stanley. Developing a programme of markets, music events, and festivals will help to draw visitors, increase spend in the local economy, instil local pride, and change perceptions of the town. Views towards the grade 2 listed Imperial Hotel and the bus station clock tower, both local landmarks, should be retained.



Indicative sketch of public space



Area 1 - Front Street Public Space



Precedent images

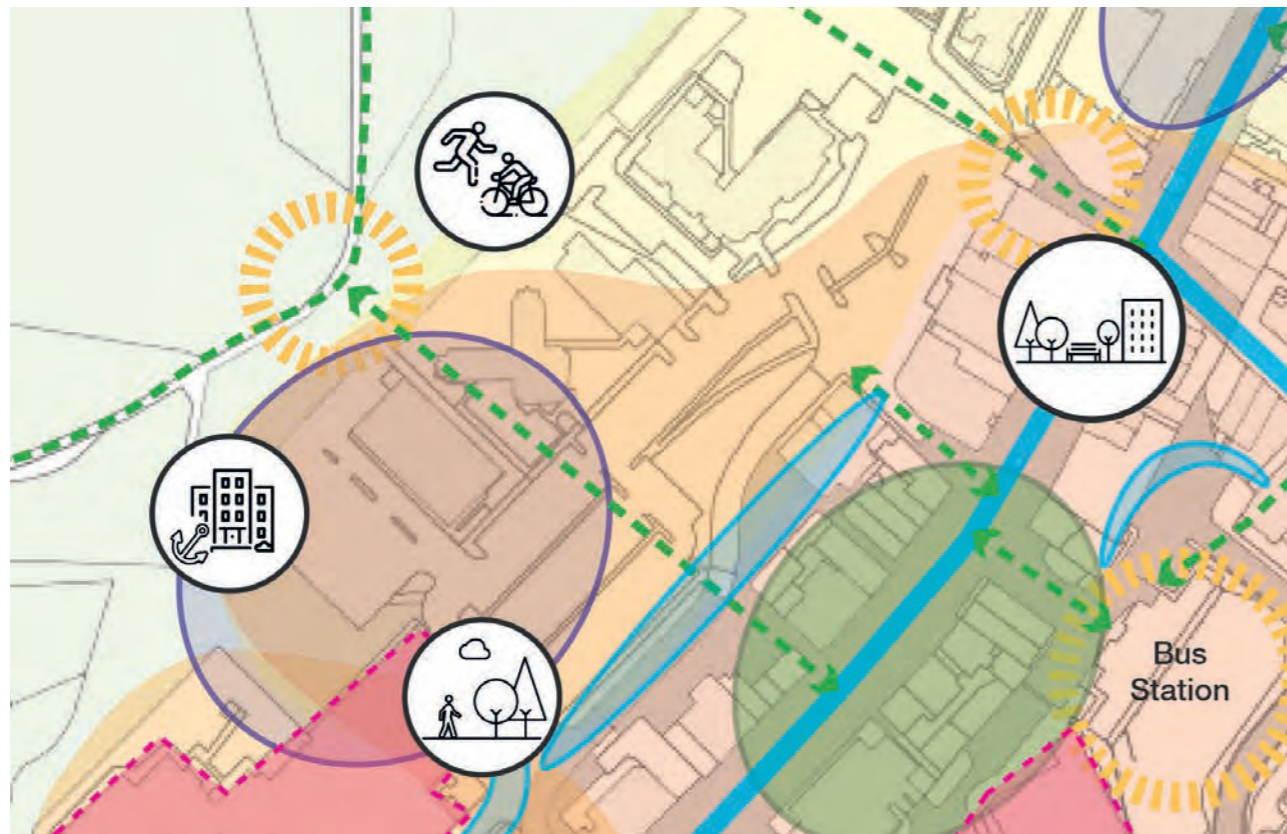
**Area 2 - Scott Street Anchor and C2C links**

New anchor development, for instance a large format retail unit, could be accommodated in this location and should front onto the Scott Street car park, continuing the existing building line. Any scheme in this location should promote active frontage along these public routes, with servicing to the rear, and create safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes and landscaping.

Currently the Scott Street car park features grassed areas, trees, and various paths with poor signage. The strategy would be to reprovide the green space and trees as part of a more useable public space on Front Street, and create a more efficient car park with increased capacity to support new uses, improved EV charging/parking and cycle parking, and improved signage and wayfinding. As part of this, a new direct route from the C2C cycle path links is proposed, leading through into Front Street and the new public space.

This will be clearly signed and demarcated, and will be promoted as the main route connecting these arrival points with Front Street. There are significant gradients to the north of Scott Street car parks and a feasibility study will be required. Improvements to the appearance, public realm, and signage of secondary routes from the car park through onto Front Street are also proposed.

Existing public rights of way leading from the town centre towards Oakey Park and the C2C should be improved. This could incorporate play-along-the-way and woodland trails with improved signage. A Parkrun using these green links in and around the town, and a Cycle Hub/Café on the high street, could attract people into Stanley, and also bring health and community benefits.



Area 2 - Scott Street Anchor and C2C Links

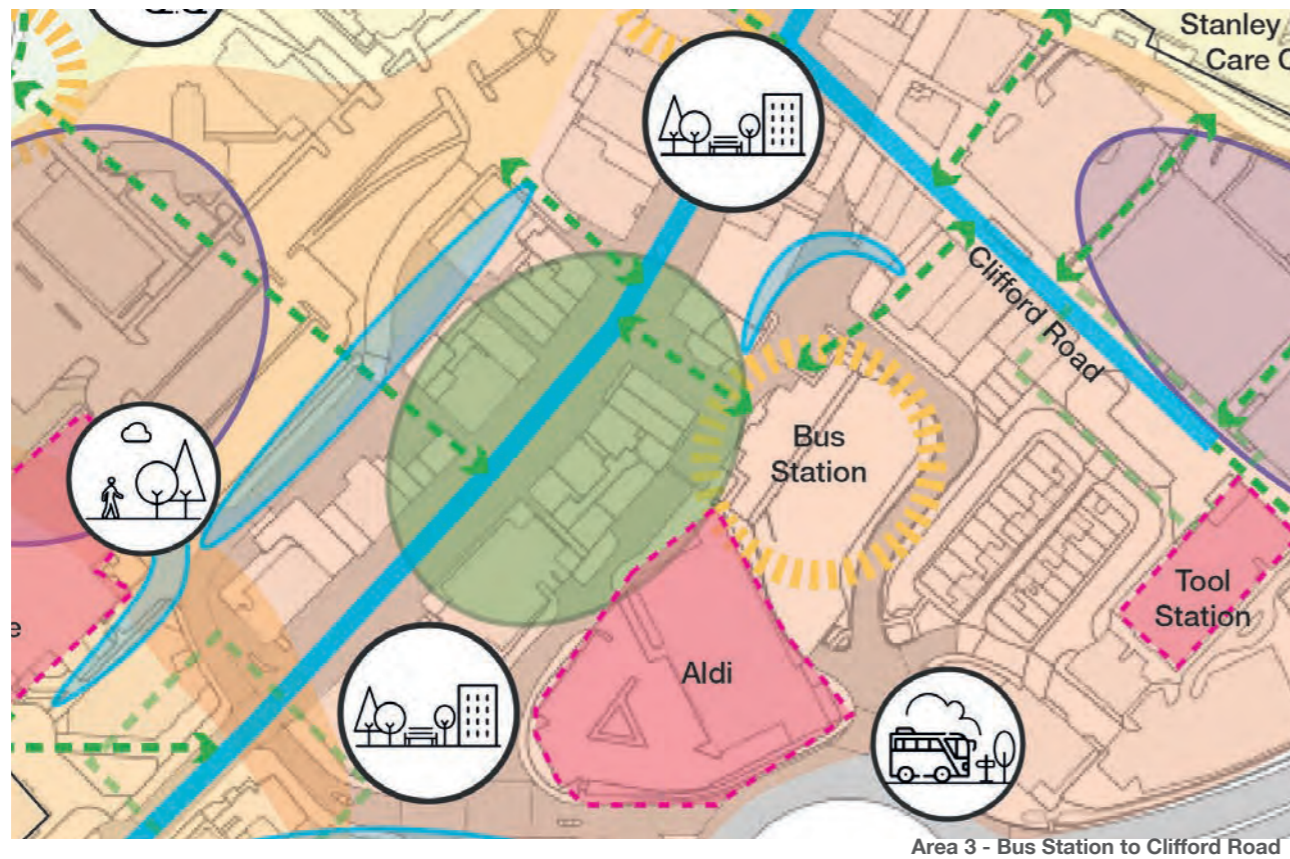


### Area 3 - Bus Station to Clifford Road

This area will be opened up to create a greater sense of arrival to those entering the town centre through the bus station. Currently, the bus station pedestrian arrival point is to the back of house service areas of Front Street buildings. These will be screened through murals or artwork, and the potential for new units / pavilions to create an arrival courtyard.

The link onto Clifford Road will be widened and accessed via an improved raised table crossing directly into the bus station entrance, to make the route more legible, attractive and inviting to pedestrians.

Signage will guide pedestrians towards Front Street, through the new public space. This will provide a greater sense of arrival into the town.



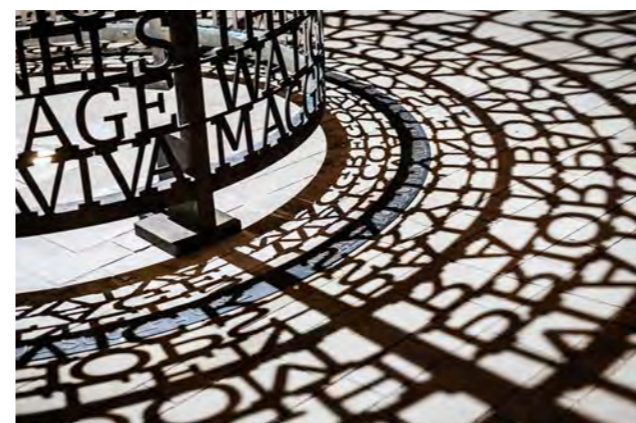
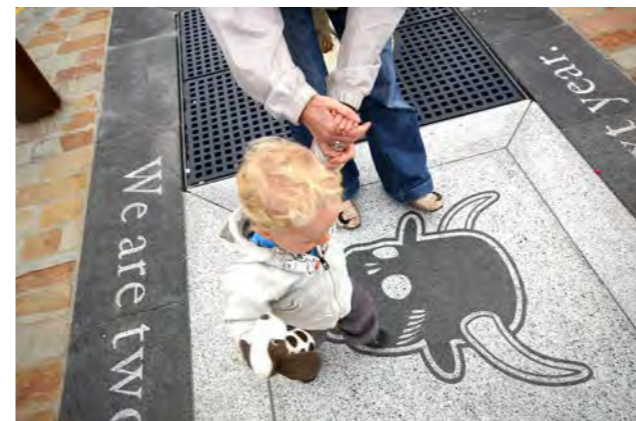
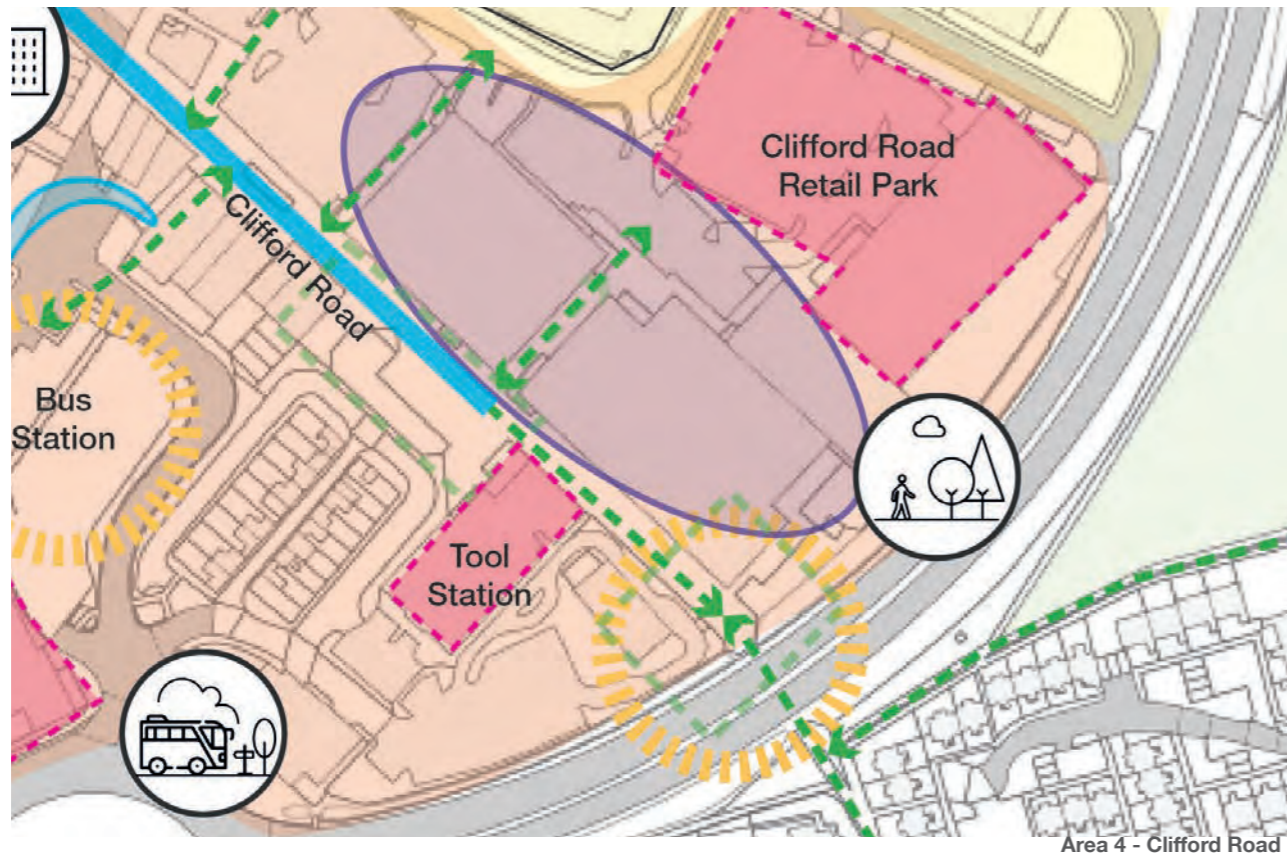
**Area 4 - Clifford Road**

This area will be rejuvenated through improved public realm and active uses fronting onto Clifford Road and the square, including bringing the vacant Tommy Armstrong building back into use. There are various options for repurposing or redeveloping the existing buildings along Clifford Road. As a general principle, any development adjacent the subway entrance should step back and allow some breathing space to this route which currently feels enclosed. Black façades should be avoided and there should be animation and overlooking to Clifford Road.

There is an opportunity for housing fronting onto Clifford Road square, potentially around 3-4 storeys in scale, which would help to provide this active frontage, and give vibrancy to the square at different times of the day and night, as well as turning the corner to help to animate the route towards the Primary Care Centre.

This could be further enhanced by encouraging further small businesses such as cafes to locate around the Clifford Road square, and exploring opportunities to enclose the square and provide additional frontage with small units or housing along its southern edge.

Within the square, there is the potential to remove the small grassed bund creating a more flexible space with better visual and physical connections. The public realm, soft landscaping and street furniture should also be improved as part of an overall coherent public realm strategy for Stanley. The Beacon could also be permanently located within the square, giving it a focal point and a function as a gathering space for memorial services etc.



Precedent images

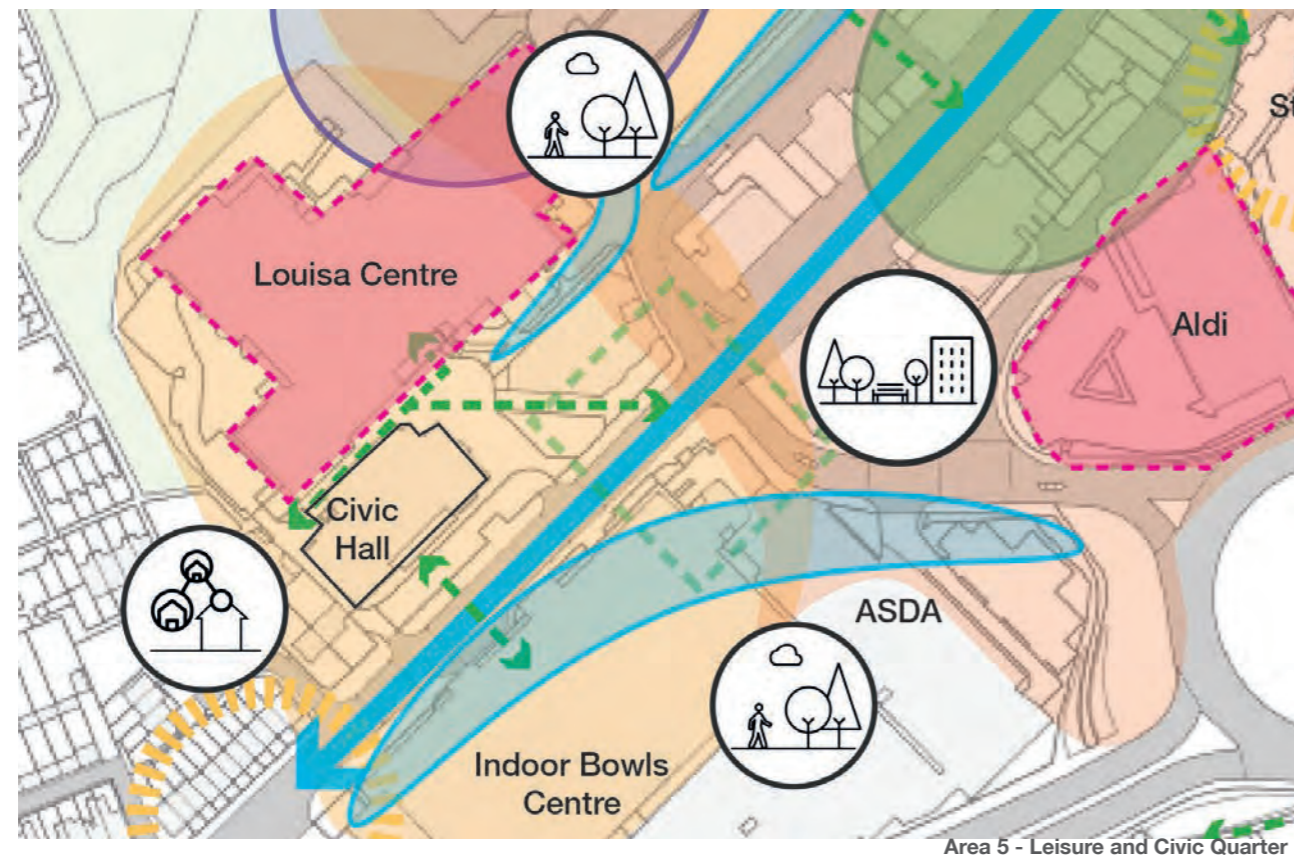
### Area 5 - Leisure and Civic Quarter

This area will be the hub of the leisure and civic activities in the town. Landscaping will be used to improve and make better use of the green space in front of the Louisa Centre, possibly including levelling works, whilst respecting the Louisa Morrison Pit Disaster Memorial currently within this space. This space could potentially be utilised by the improved offer within the Civic Hall, for instance bar/cafes, outdoor cinema/events.

Accessibility will be improved through the creation of pedestrian and cycle crossings at the Front Street / Scott Street junction, and between the Indoor Bowls Centre and the Civic Hall entrance.

Screening will be used to make the area more attractive, with the Louisa Centre parking and bin storage area being hidden from sight on the approach to the Scott Street car park, the main vehicular entrance to the town centre. This could be done through artwork or sculptures which reference the areas heritage, for example one approach could be miners' banners created by the community or local artists.

Screening and welcome signage should also be used in Scott Street car park where there are service areas to the rear of the buildings, in order to provide a better sense of arrival in Stanley. The blank façades, level changes, and unattractive appearance to the front of the Asda store should also be improved as a first impression for many people arriving via the A693 roundabout.

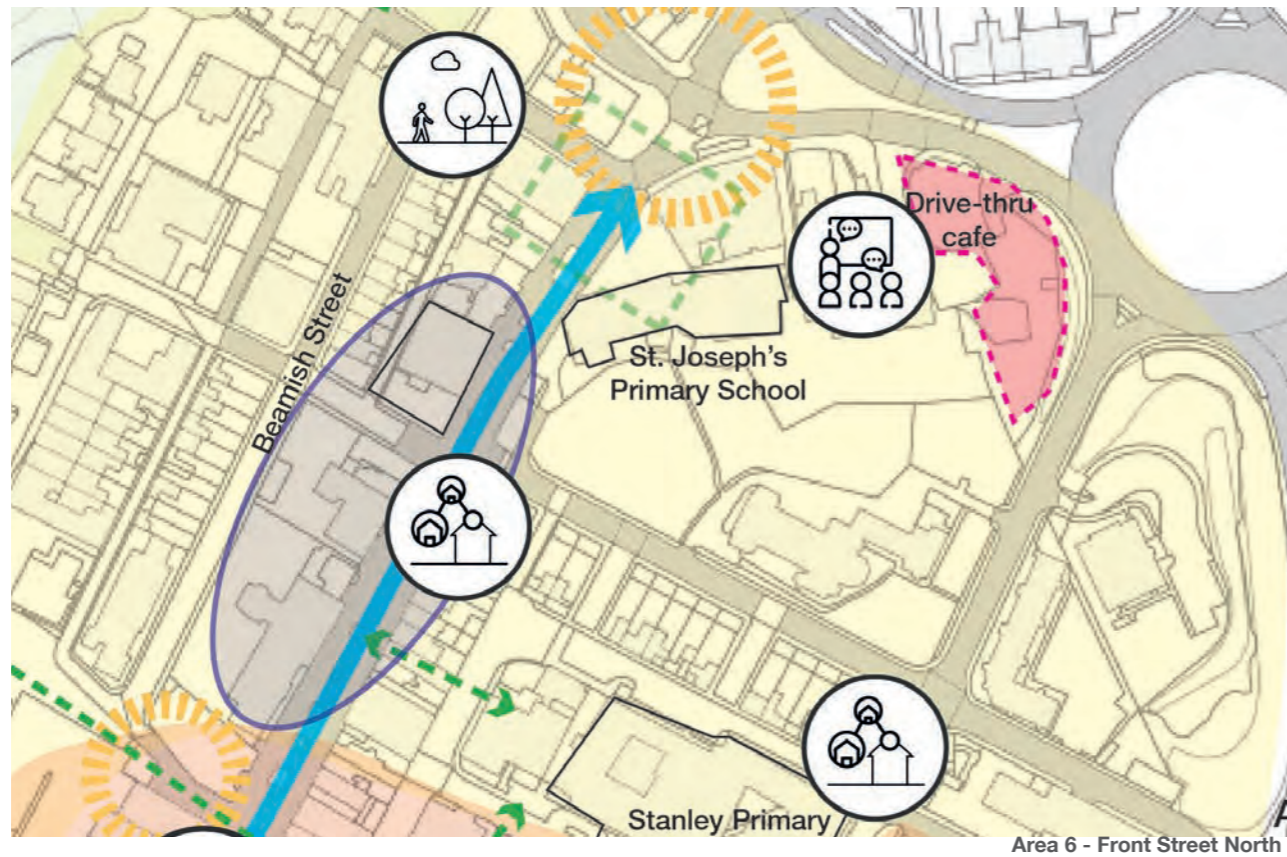


Precedent images

**Area 6 - Front Street North**

The northern section of the town centre will be promoted as a residential-led mixed use quarter, with existing and new housing, a better utilised Primary Care Centre, the existing St. Joseph's primary school, Karbon Homes and their skills and training hub, community uses, and the old Board School and CAP buildings refurbished and repurposed, bringing vibrancy to this part of the town and celebrating these heritage assets. This could include a range of uses, for instance commercial, food and drink, residential or community, and viability of uses will need to be established. Opportunities for a mix of residential new build, infill and refurbishment should be assessed, and any new housing should be sustainable, high quality, contemporary and respond to the local context.

Any alterations or new development should respect the building line of Front Street and the scale of the surrounding buildings. The more enclosed nature and domestic scale at the northern end of Front Street should be continued, and the character of the historic stone properties and well maintained landscaping in this area should be celebrated, with new development responding to this context. Views towards the grade 2 listed St Andrew's Church, a local landmark, should be retained.



# Healthy Towns Strategy

## Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) highlights the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and the roles that planning has to play in each dimension. It highlights that health is intrinsic to sustainable development and interacts with each of the three strands of sustainability.

Chapter 8 ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’, in particular, sets out how the planning system should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and support healthy lifestyles. Paragraph 92 states that: “to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should... take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community...”.

Paragraph 001 of the Healthy and Safe Communities section of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that: “The design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population)”

Furthermore, paragraph 003 sets out the Government’s vision of healthy communities, stating that: “A healthy place is one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages. It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing. It is a place which is inclusive and promotes social interaction. The National Design Guide sets out further detail on promoting social interaction through inclusive design including guidance on tenure neutral design and spaces that can be shared by all residents. It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.”

## Healthy Towns

There are a number of themes (“determinants”) of health which, amongst others, including the following:

- Sustainable Travel and Transport
- Community Cohesion and Social Interaction
- Access to Green and Open Space
- Housing
- Access to Healthy Food
- Employment and Economy
- Community Safety
- Culture and Heritage

This section helps to demonstrate how the masterplan aims to support health and wellbeing in the following key ways.

## Sustainable Travel and Transport

Transport is an integral part of daily lives and sustainable modes of transport, including walking / cycling increases peoples’ opportunities for education, employment, housing, leisure, social interaction and leisure, whilst supporting the environment. Keeping physically active has been shown to benefit mental and physical health.

The masterplan supports this through proposals for new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure, better access to parks and green spaces, a more attractive town centre, and improved connections between the bus station and Front Street / Clifford Road, and the Coast-to-Coast cycle route and the town centre.

Gateway projects also aim to improve pedestrian crossings and cyclability at key arrival points in the town centre. Opportunities for bike hire and bike hub facilities, as well as a Parkrun within Stanley will also support both visitors and residents in being more active.

## Community Cohesion and Social interaction

The masterplan includes proposals for new and improved public spaces, and a rejuvenated and festival/event ready Front Street. By creating space for a regular programme of events in the town centre, the proposals will help to draw people into the centre on a regular basis, reinforcing its role at the heart of the community.

The masterplan also proposes facilities such as a cycle hub/café, new food and drink offer, and Heritage exhibition, all of which encourage positive social interaction, which in turn aids good mental health. The Covid-19 outbreak has brought into focus challenges around social distancing, whilst enabling businesses to utilise external space, and the development of detailed proposals must consider this.

## Access to Green and Open space

Green space and natural environments have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. The proposed improvements to Front Street, and other areas in the town centre include new areas of planting, trees and landscaping. Improved walking and cycling routes will also better connect people with their local parks, such as Oakey Park, woodland, and surrounding countryside. This extends into the wider study area with opportunities for improved walking and cycling routes connecting key green spaces and trails such as the South Moor heritage trail.

Objectives to increase green infrastructure throughout the town centre will increase community connections with the natural environment. In addition, the proposals include the creation of new public space in the town centre will help to improve the quality of the environment more generally – encouraging more people to travel to the centre on a more regular basis, including on foot/cycle.



Precedent images

**Housing**

The masterplan aims to improve the mix, quality and appearance of housing within the town centre and study area. This includes measures to attract a more diverse range of households to Stanley, through the delivery of a more varied housing product. Taken together with proposals to introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme to address issues of anti-social behaviour and deprivation, this should help to develop a greater sense of community cohesion.

Town centre residents will benefit from a more attractive streetscape and new amenities in the centre, which is associated with better mental health. In addition, residents from across the study area will have access to an improved network of walking and cycling links, which will encourage more active lifestyles.

**Access to Healthy Food**

The masterplan proposes that the town develops a year-long programme of quality markets, including theme events – which could include farmers markets and other specialist food produce. This programme could also be tied-in to an ‘Incredible Edible’ initiative, which encourages people to transform their own landscapes and turn disuse plots into sources of healthy food through community growing. This would help to increase access for the local population, including children, to healthy food and encourage healthy lifestyles more generally.

**Employment and Economy**

The wider proposals in the masterplan seek to increase employment and wage levels in the local area by creating opportunities to support career and skills development, supporting business growth and, in the longer term, looking to attract more outside investment in the town. Over time, as local enterprises grow and new ones are created, the local economy will improve, with more jobs being available in the Stanley area. Residents will, in turn, have more disposable income, a proportion of which will be spent in local shops and services, thereby creating an upward cycle of economic growth.

**Community Safety**

As set out above, the masterplan proposes new/ improved walking and cycling infrastructure, including improved connections between the bus station and Front Street / Clifford Road, and from the surrounding residential areas, as well as a more attractive town centre more generally. Improving the attractiveness and visibility of pedestrian and cycle routes in and around the town centre should increase perceptions of safety in the area, and make the centre a more welcoming place more generally. By attracting more people into the centre on a regular basis, other aspects of the masterplan – including the events programme, virtual heritage attraction and cycle hub – would also help to improve perceptions of safety through enhanced natural surveillance.

**Culture and heritage**

Culture and heritage also benefit mental health. Facilities such as the new public space, events and markets, and virtual heritage attraction, along with better utilisation of facilities like the Civic Hall and Indoor Bowls Centre, will be beneficial. People will also feel more connected to Stanley’s heritage and green spaces, with improved connections to Oakey Park, the C2C, countryside, and heritage interpretation and artwork at key gateways.

**Future project development**

As proposals within the masterplan are developed, the following factors should be taken into account:

Engage with people and place to understand health and wellbeing



Be aware of research, guidance and best practice on health and wellbeing



Consider health and wellbeing factors in site location and uses



Provide high quality, well managed and affordable housing in well connected neighbourhoods with a sense of place



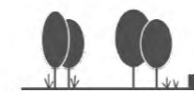
Design for active travel and physical activity



Include opportunities for social interaction



Provide access to green space and nature



Ensure there is access to healthy food



Precedent images



# Implementation and Delivery

Durham County Council is actively exploring funding streams, and working in partnership with the private sector, to ensure the sustainable development and delivery of projects within Stanley. The Implementation and Delivery section includes:

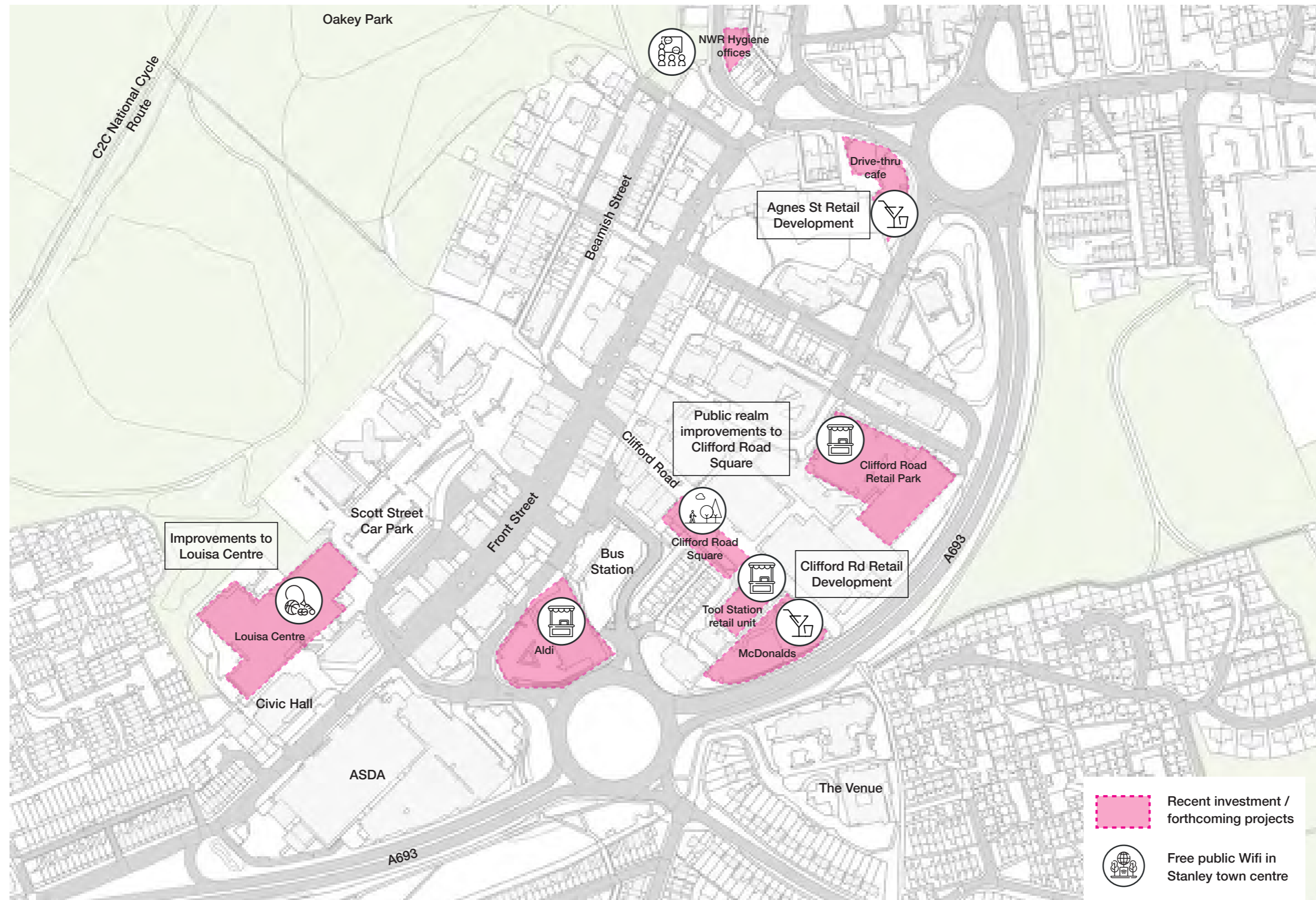
- Outline of the proposed masterplan projects
- Timescales for delivery of the masterplan to 2035 (short term: 0 - 5 years; medium term 5 - 10 years; long term 10 years +)
- Analysis of likely external funding support from public and private sectors
- Phasing plans which illustrate the delivery of the masterplan over this timeframe, including recent and forthcoming projects

# Masterplan Implementation Framework

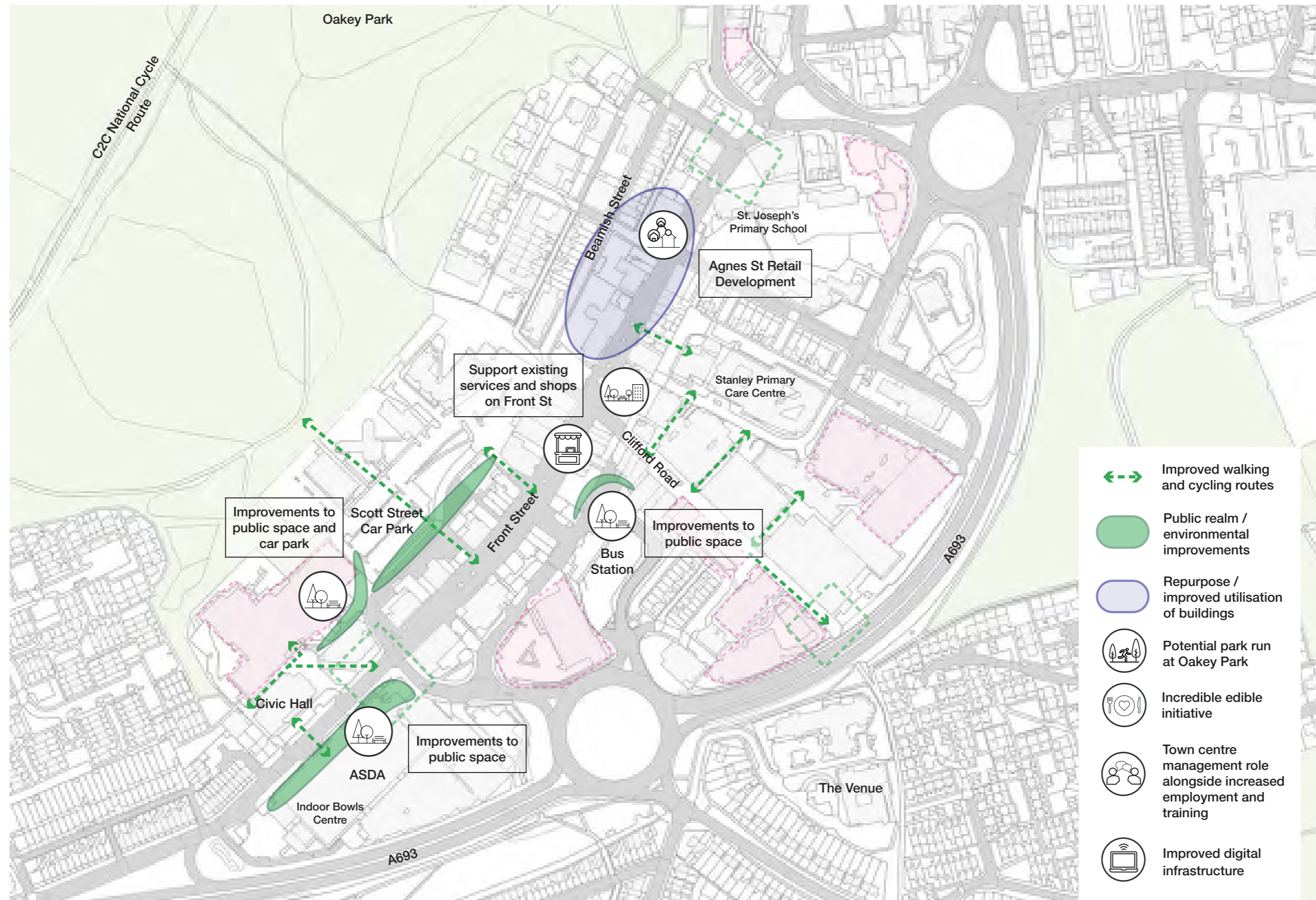
| PROJECT   | PHASING      | FUNDING & DELIVERY  |
|---|--------------|---|
|  Agnes St Retail Development   | Current term | Towns and Villages Investment Programme (2021-2023) - Stanley AAP   |
|  Improvements to existing public spaces including Louisa Centre and Clifford Road, including potential for community features  | Short term   | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme?   |
|  Support existing shops and services on Front Street   | Short term   |   |
|  Improvements to buildings/yards/servicing areas to rear of Front Street backing onto Scott Street car park  | Short term   | Private investment? DCC grant to improve properties?<br>Towns and Villages Programme - Stanley AAP "Improve key problem sites and Vulnerable properties"?   |
|  Improvements to parking servicing area at the Louisa Centre fronting onto Scott Street  | Short term   | DCC?  |
|  Park run  | Short term   | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP - "Identify opportunities for addressing climate change emergency and building community resilience and health and well-being for our communities."? |
|  Develop a year long programme of quality local markets  | Short term   |   |
|  Incredible Edible initiative making Stanley, the best 'edible' place in the North East - Town Centre / public buildings / schools   | Short term   |   |
|  Town centre management role   | Short term   |   |
|  Building on and strengthening the existing business networks in Stanley so that local businesses and start-ups are supported  | Short term   |   |
|  An annual jobs and careers fair held in the town centre   | Short term   | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP "Identify opportunities for improving community resilience"?   |
|  Jobs and training   | Short term   | Liaise with Karbon Homes re: access to Foundations Skills Hub   |
|  Assembling New Anchor Units   | Short-Medium | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme?   |
|  Creating a New Public Space   | Short-Medium | Levelling Up Fund? TBC  |
|  Bringing back into use the former Board School and CAP buildings (which could help to create a new food and drink offer in the centre)  | Short-Medium | Towns and Villages Programme - Stanley AAP "Improve key problem sites and Vulnerable properties"? NHLF?   |
|  Making better use of existing asset: Stanley Civic Hall. This could include the commercialisation of existing offer, in terms of events, films and other productions. It could involve creating an enhanced food and beverage offer, building on existing facilities. | Short-Medium | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP - "Identify opportunities to drive and support regeneration activities within towns and villages across the AAP"?                                    |

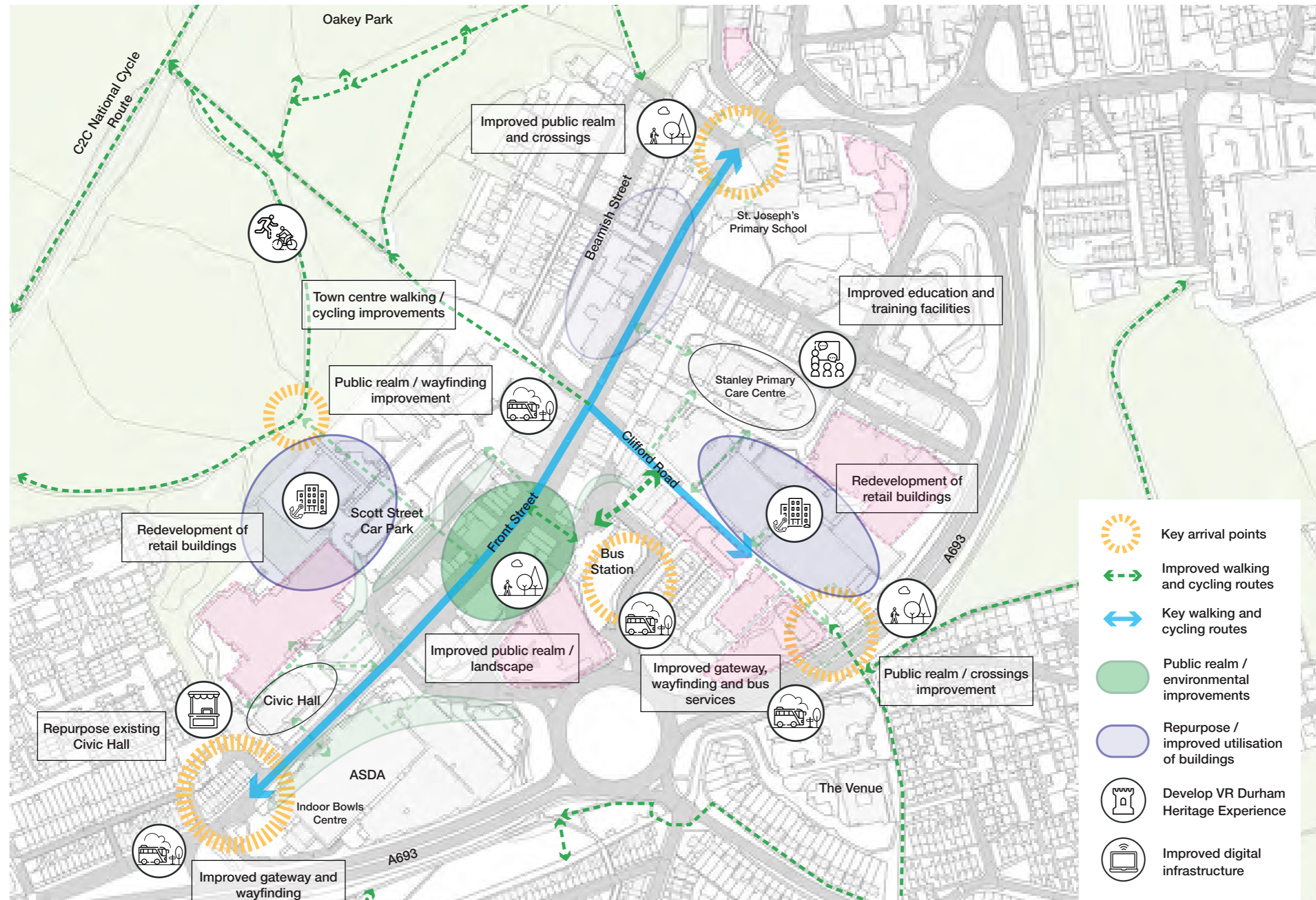
|   |   |              |   |
|---|---|--------------|---|
|    | Improvements to external appearance of Asda in order to make it more inviting and improve its visual relationship with the town centre  | Short-Medium | Asda would need to fund this privately?   |
|    | Town centre walking and cycling improvements  | Short-Medium | Levelling-Up Fund? Government's recent walking and cycling infrastructure fund? Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP "Identify opportunities to ensure connected communities through excellent connectivity." |
|    | Improvements to woodland trail connecting town centre / Oakey Park and C2C, including signage and potential for 'natural play' facilities   | Short-Medium | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP - "Identify opportunities to drive and support regeneration activities within towns and villages across the AAP"?  |
|    | Cohesive public realm strategy including street furniture, lighting, signage etc  | Short-Medium | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP - "Identify opportunities to drive and support regeneration activities within towns and villages across the AAP"?  |
|    | Develop a year long programme of music events / festivals including reinstatement of Blues Festival, folk festival, brass festival tying in with Durham. Mostly uses existing infrastructure including Oakey Park, Civic Hall, Local pubs | Short-Medium |   |
|  | 'Improved utilisation of Stanley Primary Care Centre, including as a children's hub, and opportunities for other services to be co-located here   | Medium term  | Opportunities to be explored by NHS Estates, Derwentside Primary Care Network, Durham County Council and other potential providers  |
|  | Bringing back the use the former Store 21 unit (which could help to create a new food and drink offer in the centre)  | Medium term  | Towns and Villages Programme - Stanley AAP "Improve key problem sites and Vulnerable properties"? NHLF?   |
|  | Develop a VR County Durham Heritage Experience  | Medium term  | NLHF?   |
|  | Cycle Hub / Cafe  | Medium term  | Possibly - Future Years Towns and Villages Programme Stanley AAP - Identify opportunities for addressing climate emergency and building community resilience and health and well-being of our communities?                                |
|  | Scott Street car park reconfiguration   | Medium term  |   |
|  | Fast and frequent bus services  | Medium term  |   |
|  | Introduce town centre residential opportunity sites   | Long term    | Brownfield Land Release Fund?   |
|  | Refocused town centre with smaller retail core and increased diversity of uses  | Long term    | To be delivered through the proposals and planning mechanisms   |
|  | Stanley's improved digital infrastructure will support changes in the way the town centre is used, for example e-commerce, the experience economy, and EV, and ensuring that access to digital is inclusive                               | All phases   |   |

# Phasing Plans

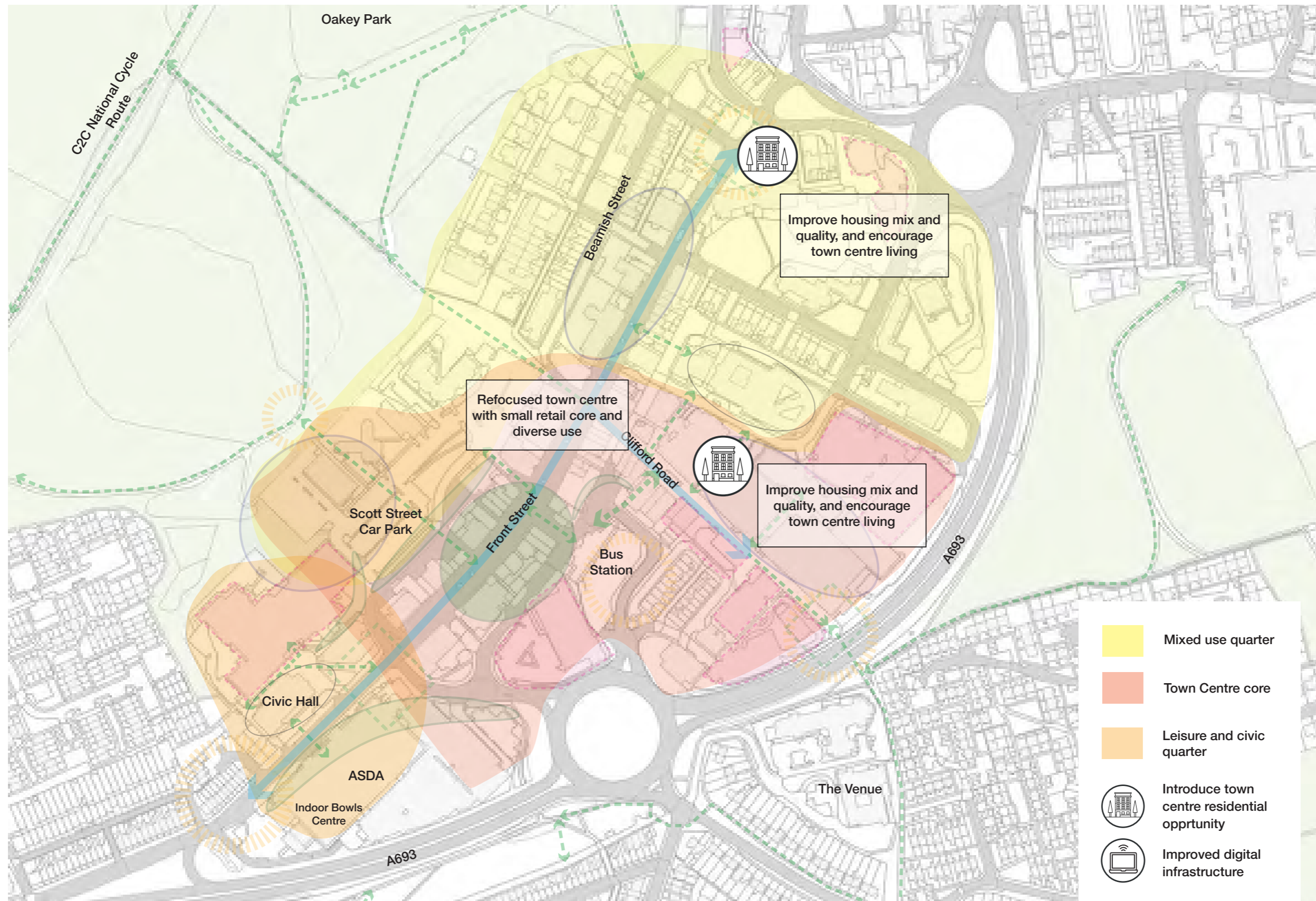


Phase 1 - Recent Investment and Forthcoming Projects





Phase 3 - Medium Term



Phase 4 - Long Term

# Appendix 1

## Desktop Assessment Report



# Appendix 2

## Consultation Report

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