

V3.0 – 20.06.2022 – Final for Issue

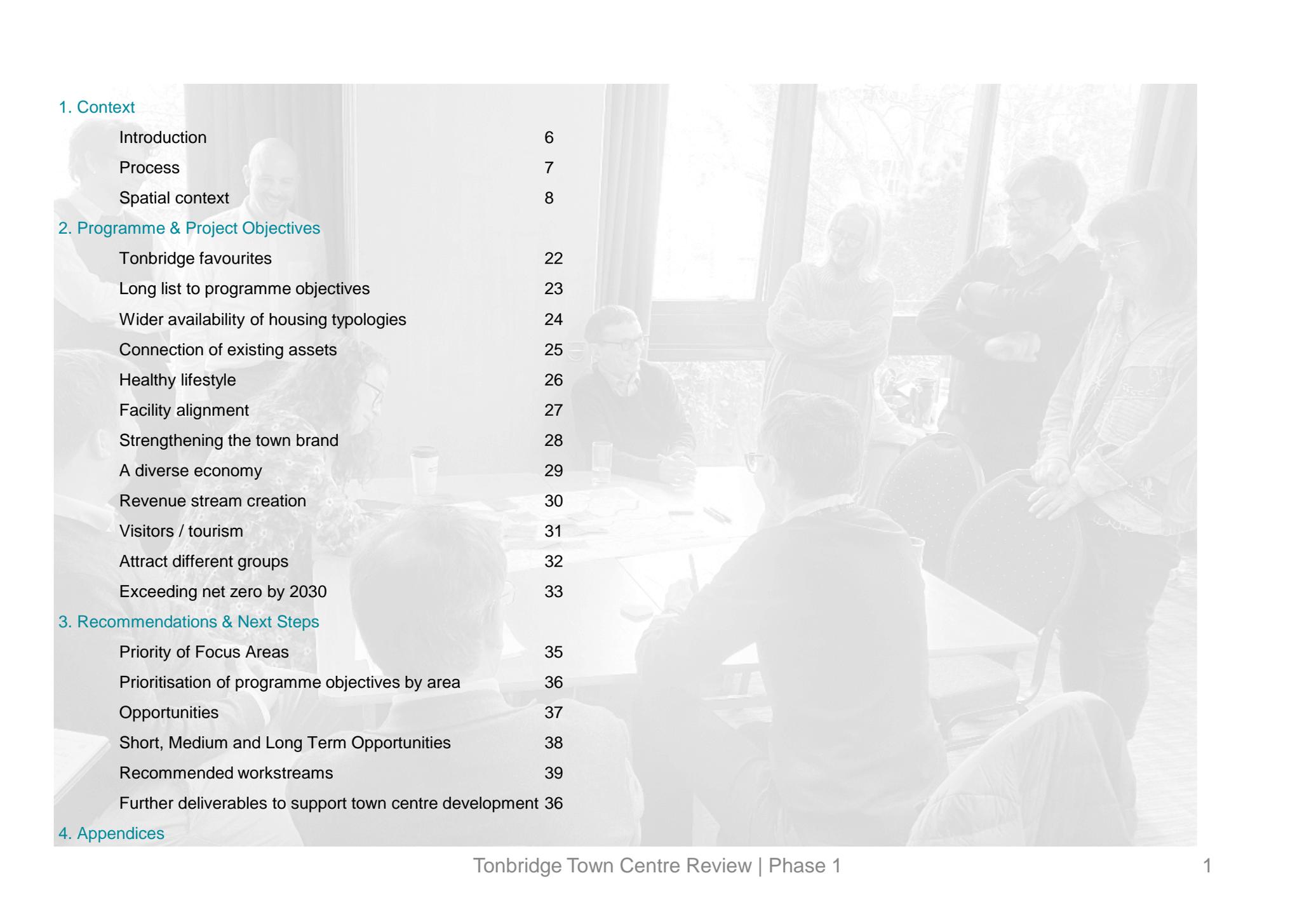
# TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE

ASSETS REVIEW  
PHASE 1



Tonbridge & Malling  
Borough Council





## 1. Context

Introduction	6
Process	7
Spatial context	8

## 2. Programme & Project Objectives

Tonbridge favourites	22
Long list to programme objectives	23
Wider availability of housing typologies	24
Connection of existing assets	25
Healthy lifestyle	26
Facility alignment	27
Strengthening the town brand	28
A diverse economy	29
Revenue stream creation	30
Visitors / tourism	31
Attract different groups	32
Exceeding net zero by 2030	33

## 3. Recommendations & Next Steps

Priority of Focus Areas	35
Prioritisation of programme objectives by area	36
Opportunities	37
Short, Medium and Long Term Opportunities	38
Recommended workstreams	39
Further deliverables to support town centre development	36

## 4. Appendices

# Executive Summary

This report summarises the outputs from the collaborative process that was undertaken by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (the Council) and the Mace team in response to the Councils brief for Phase 1 of the review of Tonbridge Town Centre assets.

As a team, we would like to offer our gratitude to all the stakeholders for their time and enthusiastic engagement in the workshop process. It became immediately obvious that the Council has infectious ambition for the future of Tonbridge and, as Members and officers, are committed to utilising the resources and tools available to build on the town's success and nurture its further growth into a thriving, resilient and sustainable place.

## Outcomes

The outcomes of Mace's engagement are:

- Collaborative agreement of the Council's strategic programme objectives for the town centre
- Weighted prioritisations of these programme objectives
- Identification of opportunities at site or project level that could contribute to the achievement of the programme objectives
- An understanding of how to quantify the benefits of future proposals to the achievement of the objectives
- A high level analysis of the town centre and its context
- Suggested focus of future workstreams

The stakeholders identified three underlying strategic objectives for the town centre that must be a priority for any subsequent development proposal within the town centre:

1. There is a commitment to sustainability and climate change resilience that is promoted by the leadership. The Council has declared a climate emergency and has approved a strategy setting out the route to a Net Zero Carbon (NZC) target in 2030. Alignment with this strategy was confirmed as a mandatory requirement for all developments. A mature understanding of the NZC challenge was evident through the workshops, and it was recognised that promotion of sustainable lifestyles should be recognised as well as the easier to quantify performance of buildings and renewable energy generation.
2. As with most other towns in the South East, the provision of sufficient affordable housing is an ongoing challenge. The Council expects all proposals to target compliance with the affordable housing policy set out in the planning framework.
3. In response to the widening gap between central government funding and the cost of delivering services, it was recognised that the Council's assets will need to play a role in generating revenue income to support a sustainable financial position. This contribution to the Council's revenue target, as well as consideration to the whole life cost and reduction in future asset maintenance costs, must be considered a baseline priority by all future developments.

## Themes

The stakeholder engagement highlighted some clear themes:

- The town already benefits from outstanding assets that should be recognised and built on as the town re-establishes and promotes its brand, in particular:
  - the quantity and quality of the natural environment in close proximity to the town centre, including the river, green spaces such as the Racecourse Sports ground and easy accessibility to the beautiful surrounding landscape and Haysden Country Park.
  - heritage assets, including the castle.
  - the education facilities, including schools that often rank highly on national league tables and attract students and families as residents and commuters.
- There is a desire to understand the current mix of housing types, commercial and community facilities and demographics across the town so that the Council can identify and address any gaps to ensure the town develops as an inclusive and healthy place for living, working, studying and visiting for all.
- The manner in which visitors and residents arrive within the town and subsequently navigate around the town needs to be improved through physical, digital and conceptual interventions. The stakeholders recognise that wayfinding improvements through signage within, and approaching,

# Executive Summary

the town would be hugely beneficial if considered alongside a bold conceptual map of the town centre, perhaps utilising character quarters "brand" areas within the town. The Council's control over car parking can be used as a tool to support the enhancement of connections and active travel modes.

- It is recognised that all interventions must be underpinned by an approach that is financially sustainable and contributes to the NetZero Carbon challenge and climate resilience.

## Pedestrianisation

The town is subdivided by three barriers that run in an East-West direction: the railway, the principal meandering route of the River Medway, and a smaller section of the river. Subsequently the traffic volume and congestion on the two principal vehicular routes that cross these dividers - the High Street and the A26 (Vale Road leading to Cannon Lane) - have an environmental impact in terms of noise and air quality. There is a particular pinch point for traffic at the southern end of the High Street as visitors to the town, and wider local traffic passing through the town, are funnelled across the railway bridge. There has been, and continues to be, a debate about the possible pedestrianisation or partial pedestrianisation (one way traffic) of the High Street to attempt to alleviate some of the impacts of traffic on the town centre and improve air quality

.This report does not seek to address this question as detailed modelling of the transport solution and impacts on traffic would need to be commissioned, however the workshop process did identify the following considerations:

- A fully or partially pedestrianised High Street would improve the experience for people on foot; the quantum of improvement to the local economy and health in comparison to the capital cost would need to be the subject of a detailed study.
- A restriction of traffic along the High Street would likely displace these journeys to other areas in the towns and not create a gross reduction; these displaced impacts would need to be considered.
- The railway crossing points would still be required to manage all traffic moving in a North-South direction and it is difficult to envisage an improvement to air quality around the railway station without a detrimental impact on the attractiveness of the town and local economy.
- Changes to car parking within the town centre was discussed at length and may present an opportunity to create a net positive reduction in journeys if visitors to the town can be persuaded to park in a single location and walk to different parts of the town, rather than drive between destinations.

The town lacks an urban space (e.g. town square) that acts as the focus for activity; whilst the pedestrianisation of the High Street would improve the public realm environment, the linear nature of the space may not fulfil the role that a well-proportioned public space could achieve. It may, therefore, be more cost effective to consider public realm improvements adjacent to the High Street as a mechanism to improve the experience for pedestrians.

## Next Steps

The area to the East of the High Street around Angel West car park was unanimously identified by stakeholders as the preferred focus of any significant development opportunity with the town centre. The Council's ownership of assets such as the Angel Centre and car parks, alongside its strategic location between the traditional High Street and the Cannon Lane retail and commercial areas, support the identification of this area as a practical opportunity for significant improvements. We have captured a number of short term interventions that should be considered. These include: improvements to the arrival experience and wayfinding from the station, connections and wayfinding from the High Street to the leisure facilities to the West and the development of a digital platform to support an enhanced town brand and (potentially) the management of events. An initial route map is included within this report that identifies a number of workstreams to be developed concurrently in order to make progress on the Council's ambitions for the town.

# First impressions of Tonbridge

Before we started the process of identifying, selecting and ranking programme objectives we asked participants to individually write down three statements that describe what you see as the most important objectives for the local authority to achieve in the town. How will these initial individual impressions align with the what the group developed later? This is what they had to say:

*“Encourage Landlords to combine properties (Shops):  
Tonbridge does not have the size of properties needed”*

- quote workshop 1

*“To provide an individual identity for  
Tonbridge as a town”*

- quote workshop 1



*“To support a diverse economy by providing or facilitating sustainable commercial and leisure spaces that residents + visitors want to use”*

- quote workshop 1

*“To utilise its assets to celebrate + enhance the community, providing space + opportunities for organisations to develop + prosper”*

- quote workshop 1

# SECTION 1

## Context

# Introduction

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (The Council) has set out a brief for the review of its assets in Tonbridge Town Centre, split into two stages:

- Phase 1: determining the scope of the review and identifying the aims and objectives
- Phase 2: undertake the review

This report summarises our commission to deliver the Phase 1 services through the Scape Place Shaping framework.

The political membership have highlighted a need to reassess the priorities for Tonbridge Town Centre (TTC) and examine how currently owned assets (and possible future acquisitions) could contribute to improving the town.

In the context of budget constraints, it is anticipated that the Council's assets will need to generate additional revenue in the future to support the delivery of services.

The Council declared a climate emergency on July 9, 2019 and sites must be developed in accordance with the Climate Strategy and aspiration for Tonbridge and Malling to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council has set out its programme for the adoption of a new Local Plan in 2024 – the delivery of this review should help to support the establishment of the new planning framework.

The council adopted a new Asset Management Plan for the period 2020-24; any decision in relation to a proposed land disposal or development upon existing Council owned land should consider the principles defined in this plan.

## Objectives for Phase 1

1. Identify Drivers and Objectives at Town and Programme level
2. Agree prioritisation of Programme Outcomes to inform weighting of evaluation of options in Phase 2
3. Achieve consensus across stakeholders on vision for the town centre
4. Develop and agree a plan for Phase 2 including: aims and objectives, scope, timescales, approach, options, weightings for options analysis, etc.
5. Recommend an appropriate Governance structure that will support the development of sites across the town centre.

## Influences for Phase 1

1. Support the new Local Plan process
2. Promote economic regeneration
3. Support the Council's net zero carbon targets
4. Financially sustainable solutions that support the Council's savings targets



**GUIDING PRINCIPLES.**

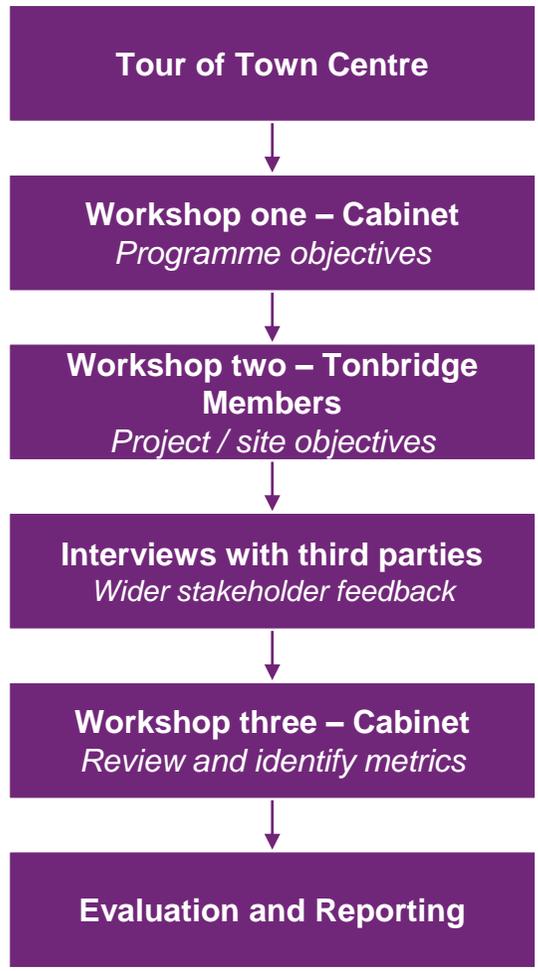
Approach the town centre sites as a programme

Reference best practice Green Book recommendations for Programme Business Case development.

Reference to Mace 7 spheres of influence in relation to good Placemaking

# Process

A detailed breakdown of the activities undertaken in the delivery of the Phase 1 services can be found in the appendices of this report, however the key stages are outlined below:



# Spatial Context

This section focuses on the contextual analysis of Tonbridge town in the context of regional and local surroundings, supported with the range of analysis diagrams.

The wider and local context explains the character of Tonbridge as a town sitting in the heart of Kent.

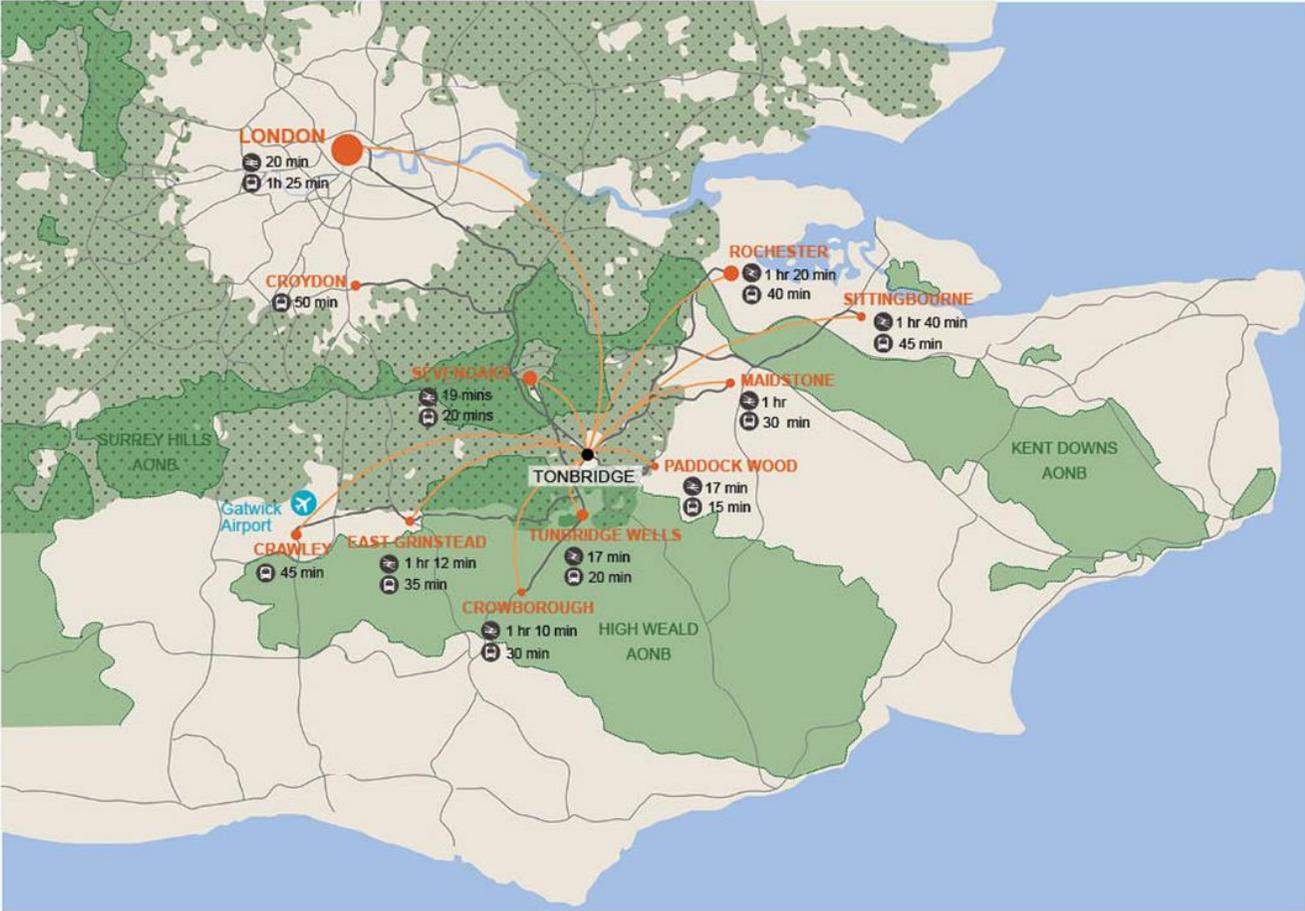
## Regional Location

Tonbridge is a market town, well connected with neighbouring townships and about 47Kms south from London.

The central location makes it accessible to travel in all directions by train and roads to the nearby settlements.

The town is well surrounded by a Green Belt, and then Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) around north and south, holding capacity for natural habitat.

Tonbridge sits at the heart of a beautiful area of Kent, between the High Weald and Kent Downs AONB. All these towns and villages near Tonbridge are within a short drive.



- Settlements
- AONB
- Green Belt
- Main Routes

## Historic Growth

Tonbridge town growth has occurred mainly north-south crossing the River Medway. This route became the centre of trade in the market town. The town was historically well connected regionally along key trade routes.

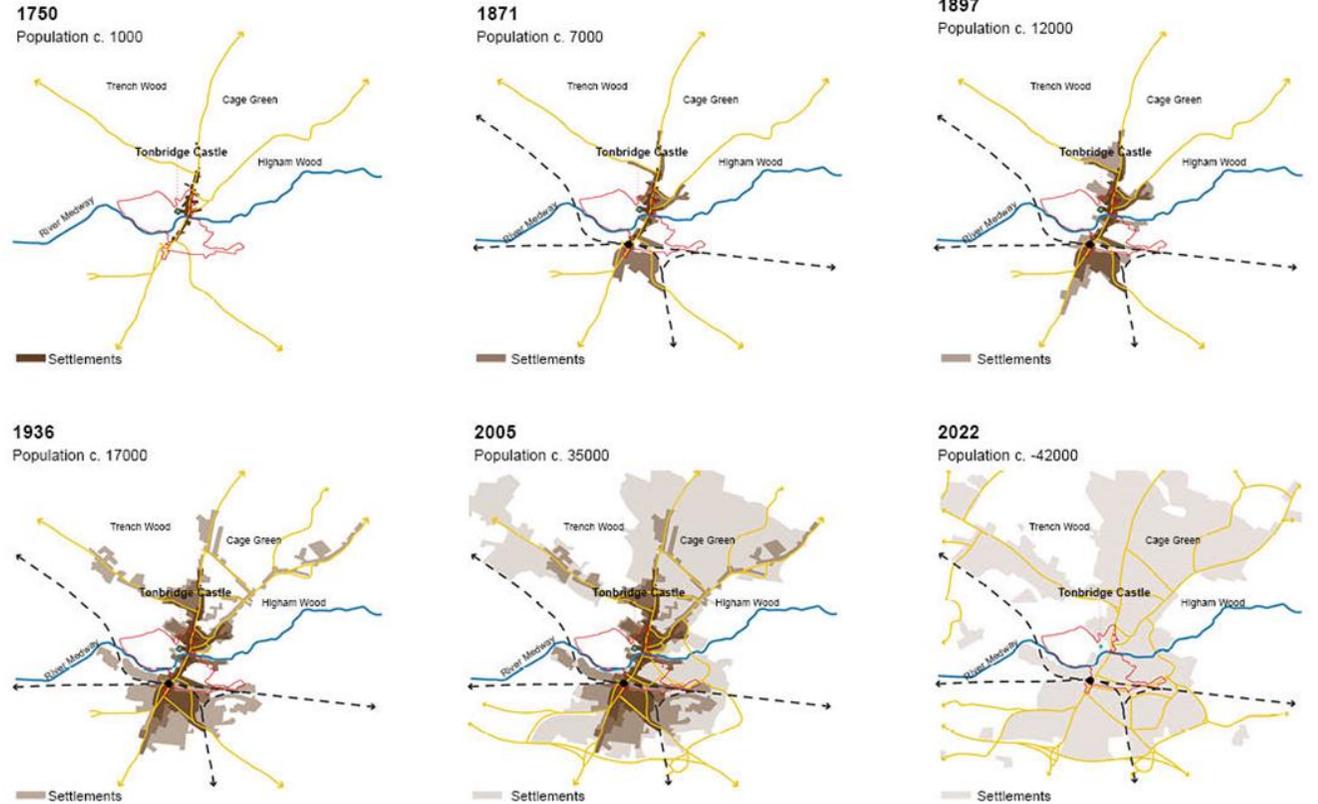
The railway line was installed in 1871, leading to development around the station. The town started to grow since it became connected to London and other satellite cities.

Tonbridge typically represents an hourglass growth with the town being expanded significantly through interwar period to close suburban communities.

The illustrative diagrams represent the growth of Tonbridge along with the railway line.

In early 2000s, the change occurred in strategic road network with the A21 and A26. It led to substantial town expansion.

The current situation for Tonbridge is a largely sustainable and accessible settlement form.



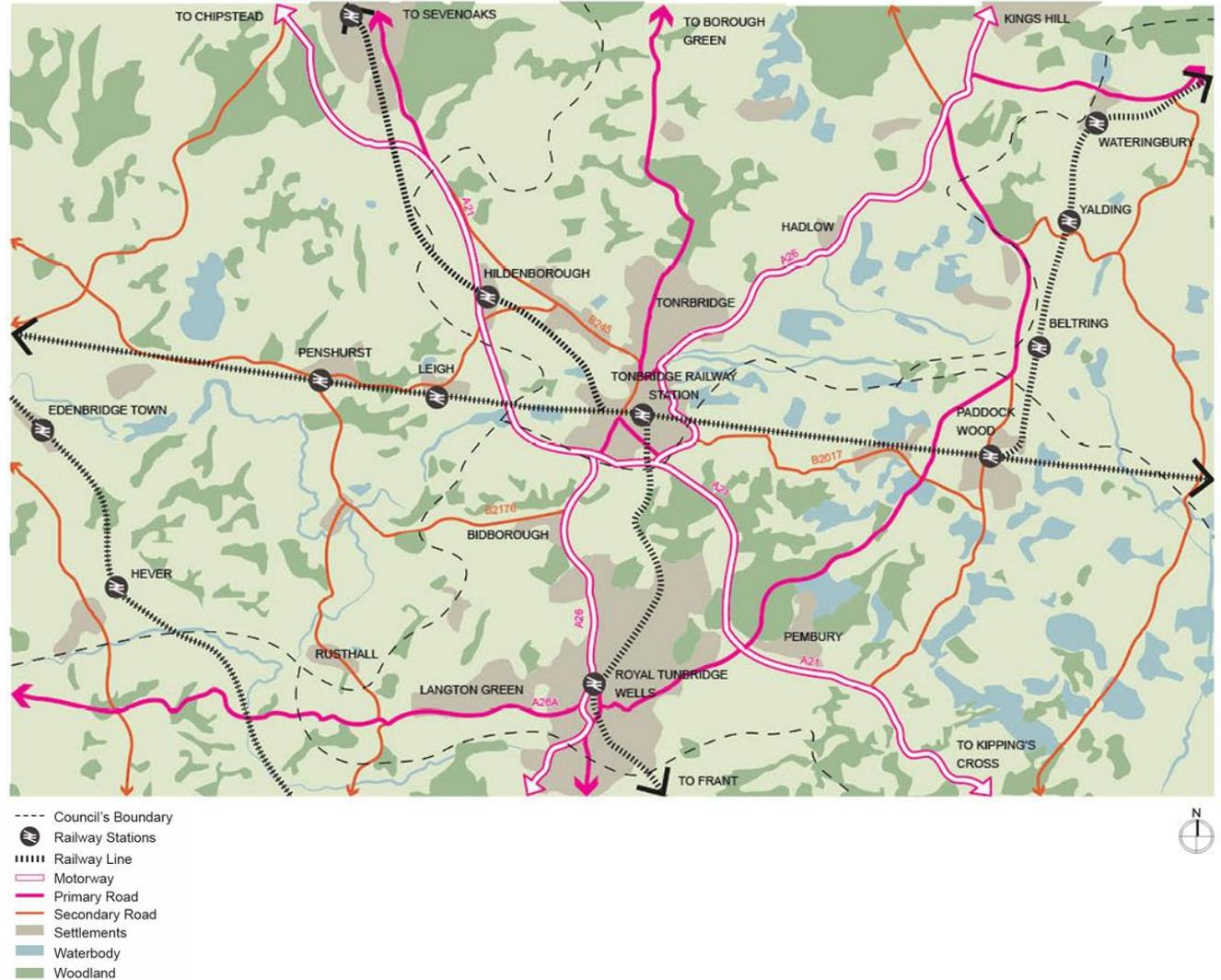
## Wider Context

Tonbridge is very well connected regionally and locally.

The town is served by the A21 between London and Hastings, and the A26 between Maidstone and Brighton.

The railway line is a great opportunity with both north-south and east-west connection at Tonbridge. It is an important railway junction with lines to London, Ashford, Hastings and Redhill.

Tonbridge overall offers a high network and accessibility character which is a key aspect for the town.



## Land Use and Facilities-Town Context

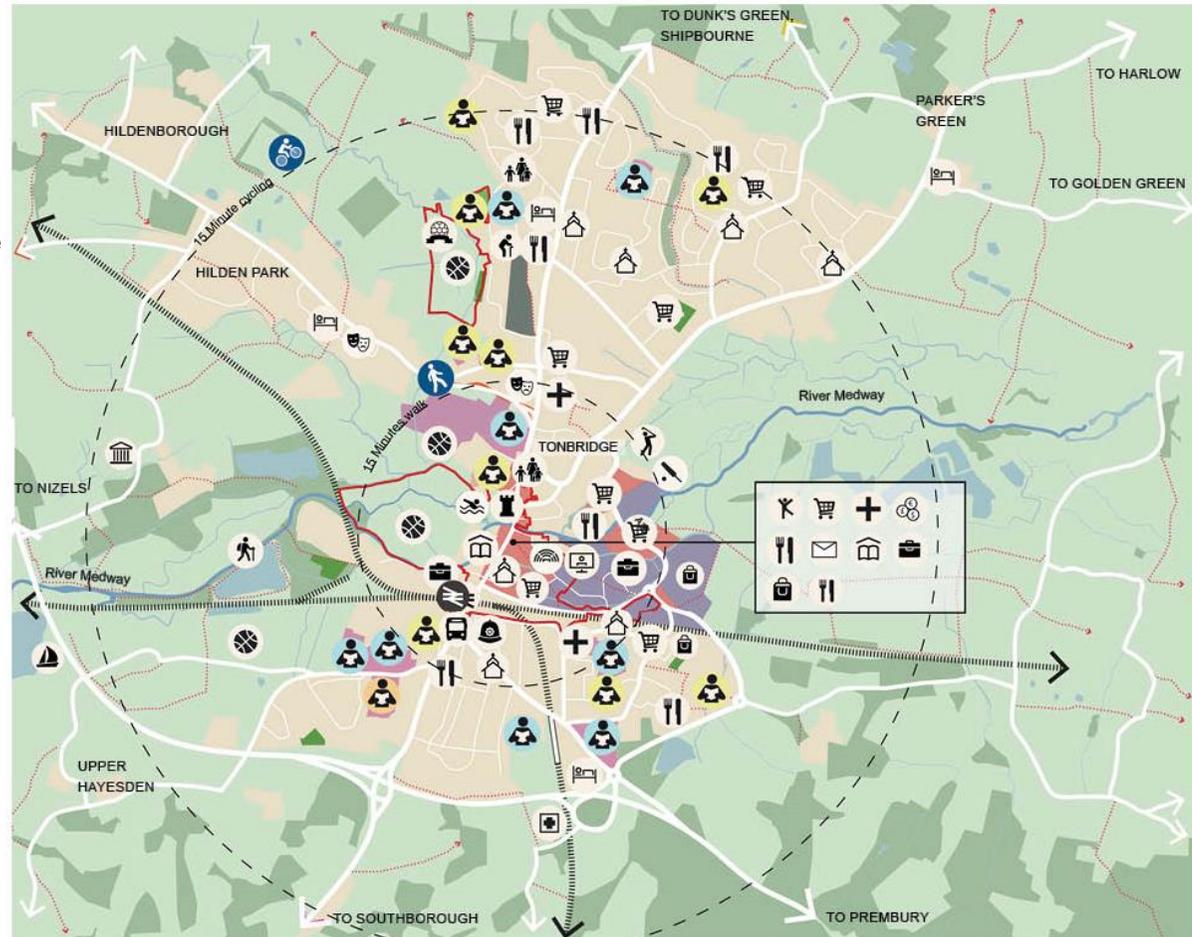
Tonbridge comprises clear land use based character areas.

Residential, towards north and south around the town centre. Commercial, placed at eastern side of the town, wrapped with green spaces.

The town offers good provision of schools with regional reputation. Footfall and facilities for students who travel into the town centre makes the area full of activity. They are however a key cause of congestion through the town to students travel from further afield.

Tonbridge Castle adds historic value around the neighbourhood, and the adjoining high street is retail focused with a mix of leisure centre, library, food stores/restaurants, employment, banks and medical centre.

The town offers a variety of facilities within a 20 minute walking radius.



### Key

Focus area	Primary school	Tonbridge castle	Hotel
Active areas	Secondary school	Museum	Medical centre
Commercial/Employment	College	Restaurant /cafe /takeaway	Place of worship
Predominantly residential	Community centre	Library	Sport pitch
Education	Elderly Day centre	Post office	Tonbridge Swimming Pool
Green space	Conference centre	Office	Sailing club
Cemetery	Tonbridge Football Club	Convenience shop	Golf centre
Woodland	Angel centre	Food store	Cricket club
Allotment	Theater	Bank	Tonbridge Police Station
Waterbodies			Tonbridge Cottage Hospital
			Hiking

## Land Use and Facilities-Site Context

The map illustrates a deeper study into the character of land uses within Tonbridge town centre.

Residential character is mainly observed around the town, with most community facilities and retail uses located on the high street. The high street is spread with retail and commercial buildings.

East end is occupied by the employment and industrial sector, along A26 expanding towards the centre.

The western half of Tonbridge town centre includes Tonbridge swimming pool and sports pitch, and the historic Tonbridge Castle. The town also consists of large areas of industrial/employment and box retail units with car parking.

Overall, surrounded by residential settlements, with town centre running along the high street and employment zone focused towards the east, the community facilities are well located and accessible on foot and car.

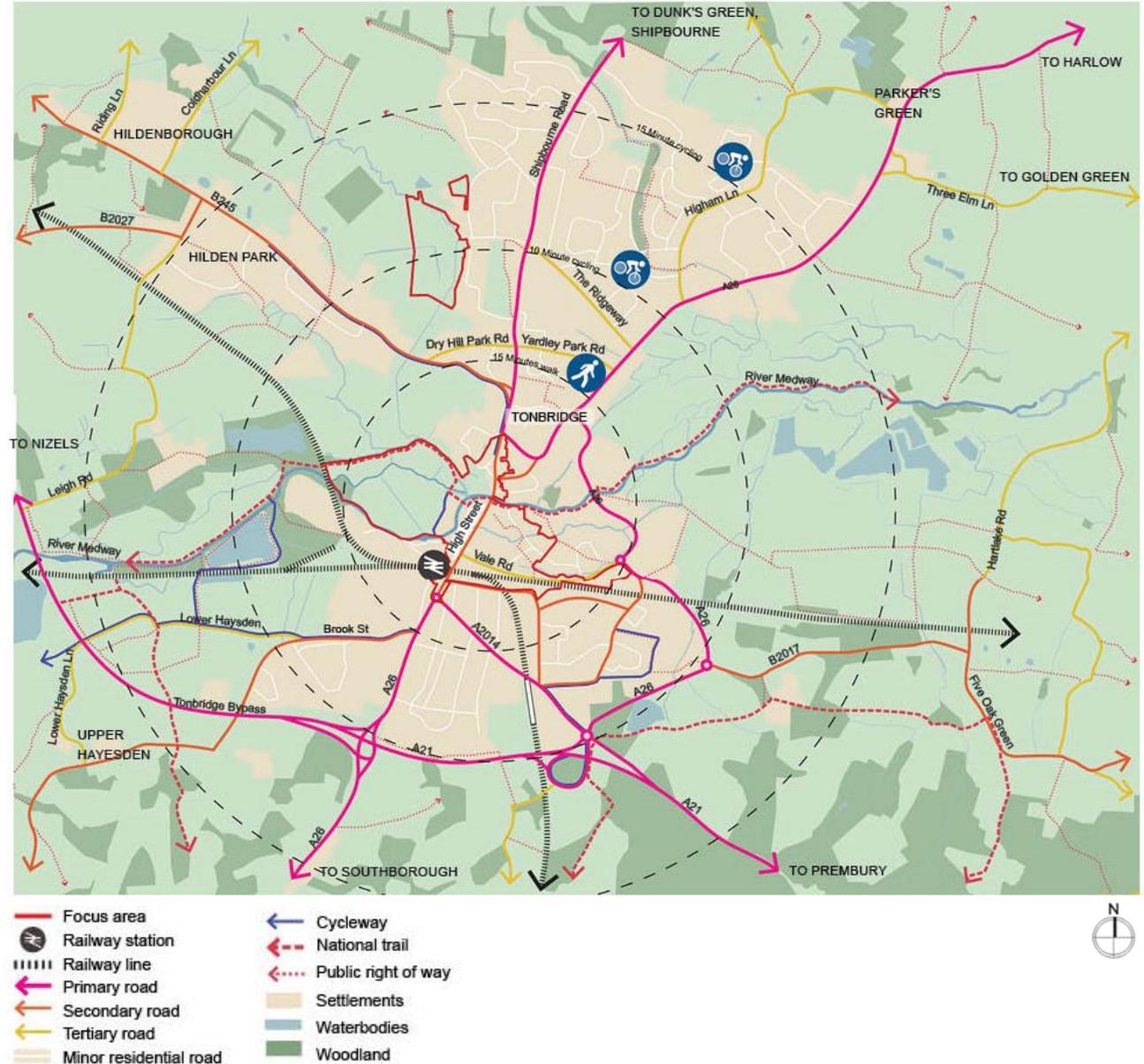


## Town Movement-Town Context

Tonbridge consists of a great movement network with the A21 trunk road between London and Hastings and the A26 between Maidstone and Brighton.

Tonbridge Town Centre is located at the centre of the town with the railway station towards the south (7 minute walk), and has a range of local amenities including shops, leisure facilities, etc.

Essentially, a well connected town with public transport and road infrastructure.



## Town Movement-Site Context

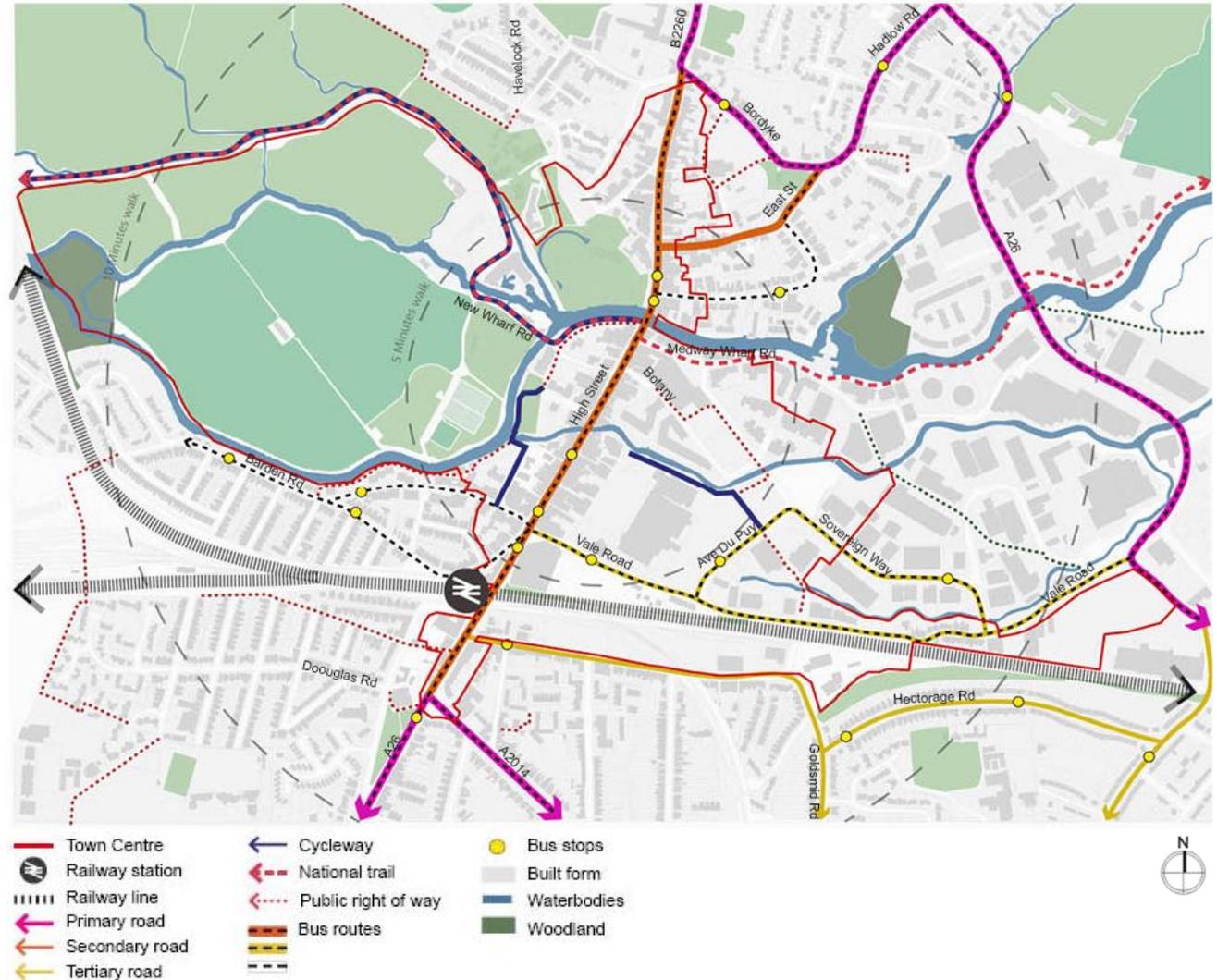
The site is located within the heart of Tonbridge with river Medway running through east-west direction.

The railway station sits at the south of the town centre, adjoining the high street providing central south-north connection. This links to a bus network serving the town and the local area, although there is no co-ordinated transport interchange to support the use of active travel modes and public transport.

The town centre, and High Street specifically, is a walkable 5-10 minute radius from the commercial and Cannon Lane retail areas to the east, leisure areas to the west and station to the south.

A National trail that runs along the river Medway to the east and through open space to the north-west provides a long distance recreational route connecting the countryside on the edges of the town with town centre core.

Generally, the town centre is well connected with scope to enhance walking and cycle routes. However, the public footpaths could be more clearly defined and do not connect key places together with decent wayfinding.



## Landscape and Heritage-Town Context

The character of the Site is strongly influenced by surrounding heritage and landscape assets. The brand of Tonbridge is also tied to its heritage features and leisure assets associated with the natural landscape.

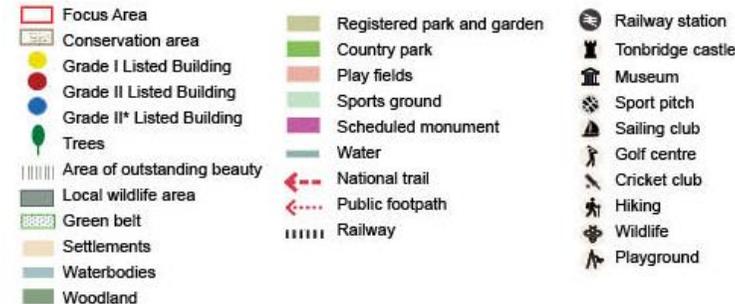
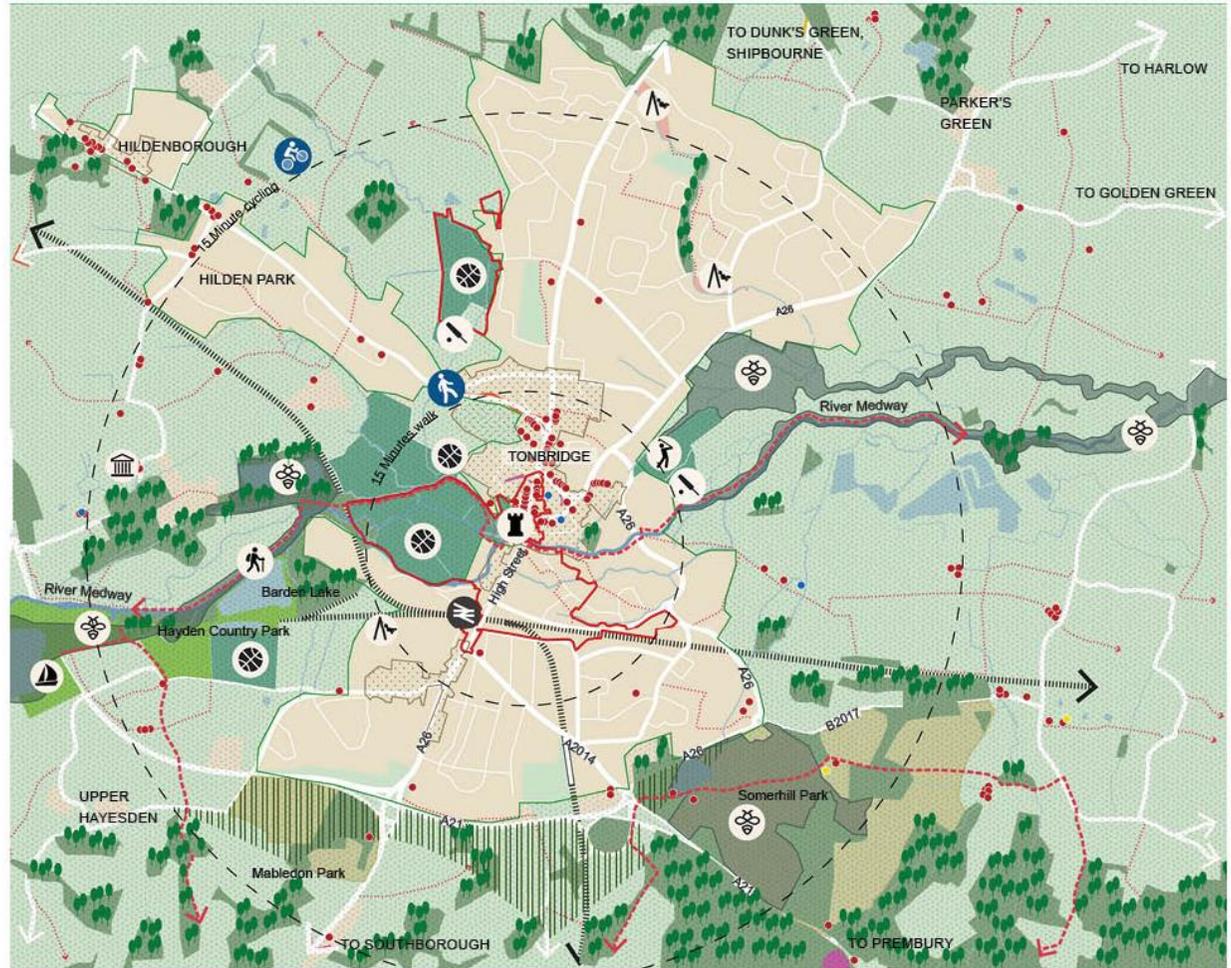
The hiking route, playing fields and local wildlife sites are within a 15 minute walking radius from the Tonbridge High Street.

The High Street which passes through Tonbridge can be a major opportunity to discover connections between the town and the landscape assets.

Tonbridge is rich in historic character, with two conservation areas located within the town centre. The conservation area to the north of the High Street includes many listed buildings clustered around Tonbridge Castle.

In the context of the whole settlement, Tonbridge Castle is perceived to be the centre of the town

There is an opportunity to better connect with the surrounding landscape, community and leisure assets.



## Landscape and Heritage-Local Context

Tonbridge town centre is a pleasant mix of Green Belt and conservation area.

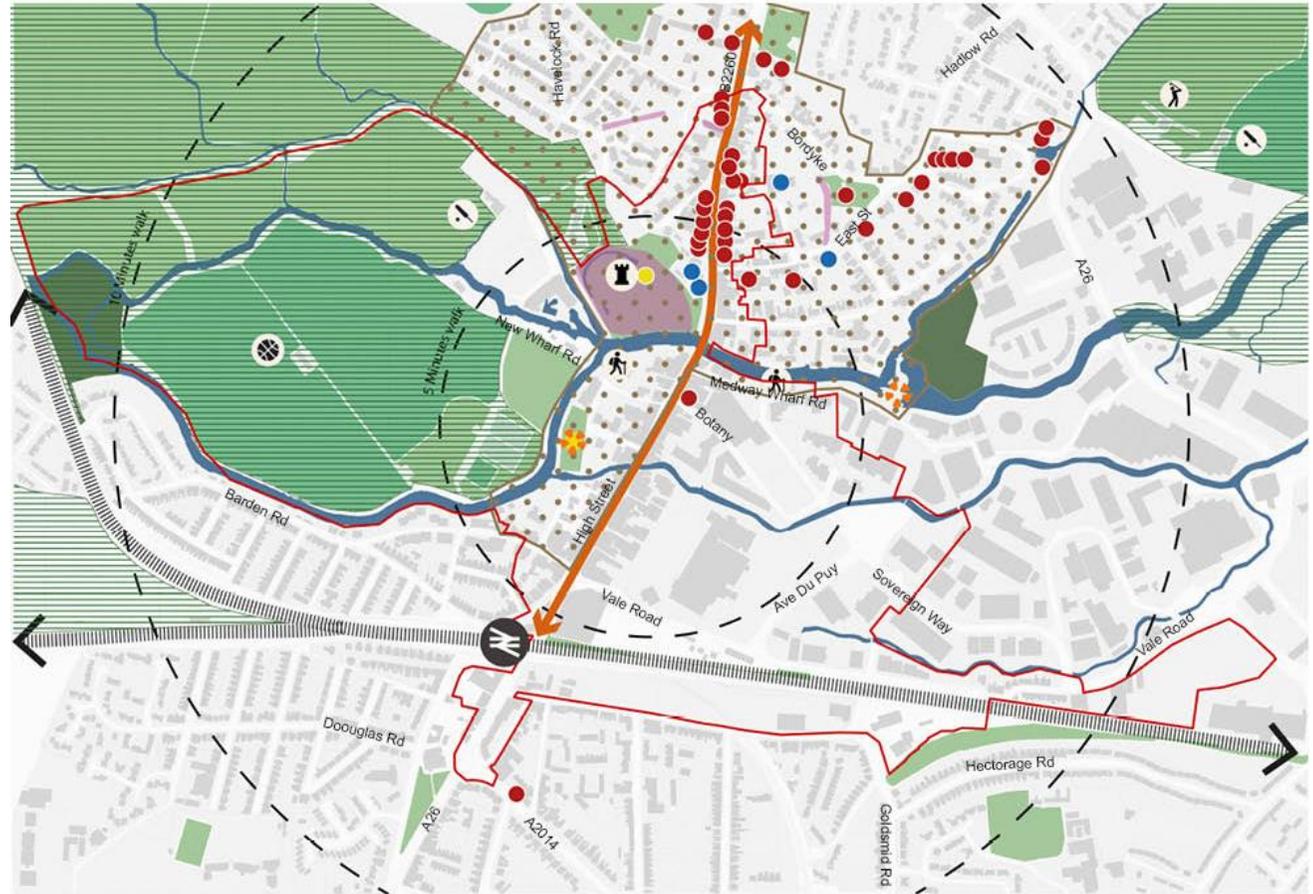
High street is served with Tonbridge Castle being the focus and several listed buildings exist towards the north within the 500m study area.

The majority of the heritage assets are towards north with large areas of open spaces for sports and recreation towards east and west.

The high street connects the northern heritage area to the station, adding value to the Tonbridge Castle accessibility.

River Medway is well located within the centre with the Tonbridge Memorial and Tonbridge Town Lock along the river.

The town has a distinctive character with interesting spread of assets.



Key			
	Town Centre		Railway station
	Conservation area		Tonbridge castle
	Grade I Listed Building		Sport pitch
	Grade II Listed Building		Golf centre
	Grade II* Listed Building		Cricket club
	Scheduled Monument		Tonbridge Memorial
	Green Belt		Tonbridge Town Lock
	Sports pitch		
	Railway		
	High Street		
	Build form		
	Waterbodies		
	Woodland		
	Green Space		



## Longmead Sports Field

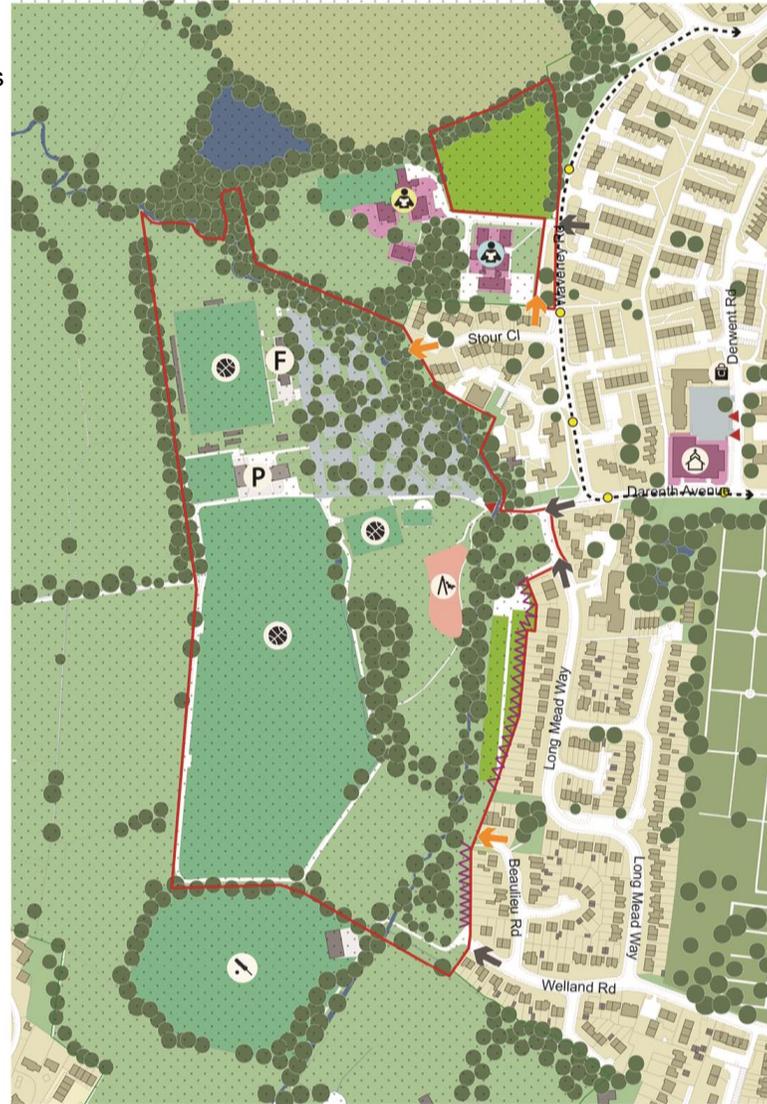
The Longmead Sports Field is about 20 minutes walk from the town centre, located towards the north of the town and is covered by the Green Belt.

The sports and recreation area includes football pitches, play areas, allotments and bowling area, and further extended to schools and Tonbridge Baptist Church.

The field is surrounded by residential development on the eastern edge making the community vulnerable.

The site is fairly connected by bus and provides pedestrian access with the surroundings.

With the public open amenities within the site, there is an opportunity to expand.



## The Tonbridge Farm

The site located close to the Longmead Sports Field, is currently under utilised.

The Tonbridge Farm, surrounded by school and fairly large car park which is used in a fluctuating manner through the week. The farm is accessible by Waverly Road and is served by bus route and public right of way.

Key			
	Focus Area		Primary school
	Bus stop		Secondary school
	Bus route		Convenience shop
	Vehicular site access		Place of worship
	Pedestrian access		Sports pitch
	Parking entrance		Cricket club
	Backs of residential dwellings		Playground
	Car Parking		Sports Pavilion
	Predominantly Residential		Football Club
	Public		
	Play area		
	Green Belt		
	Plant nursery		
	Allotments		
	Cemetery		
	Open space		
	Sports pitches		
	Trees		
	Waterbodies		



## Character Areas Overview

Tonbridge can be categorised in 5 character areas:

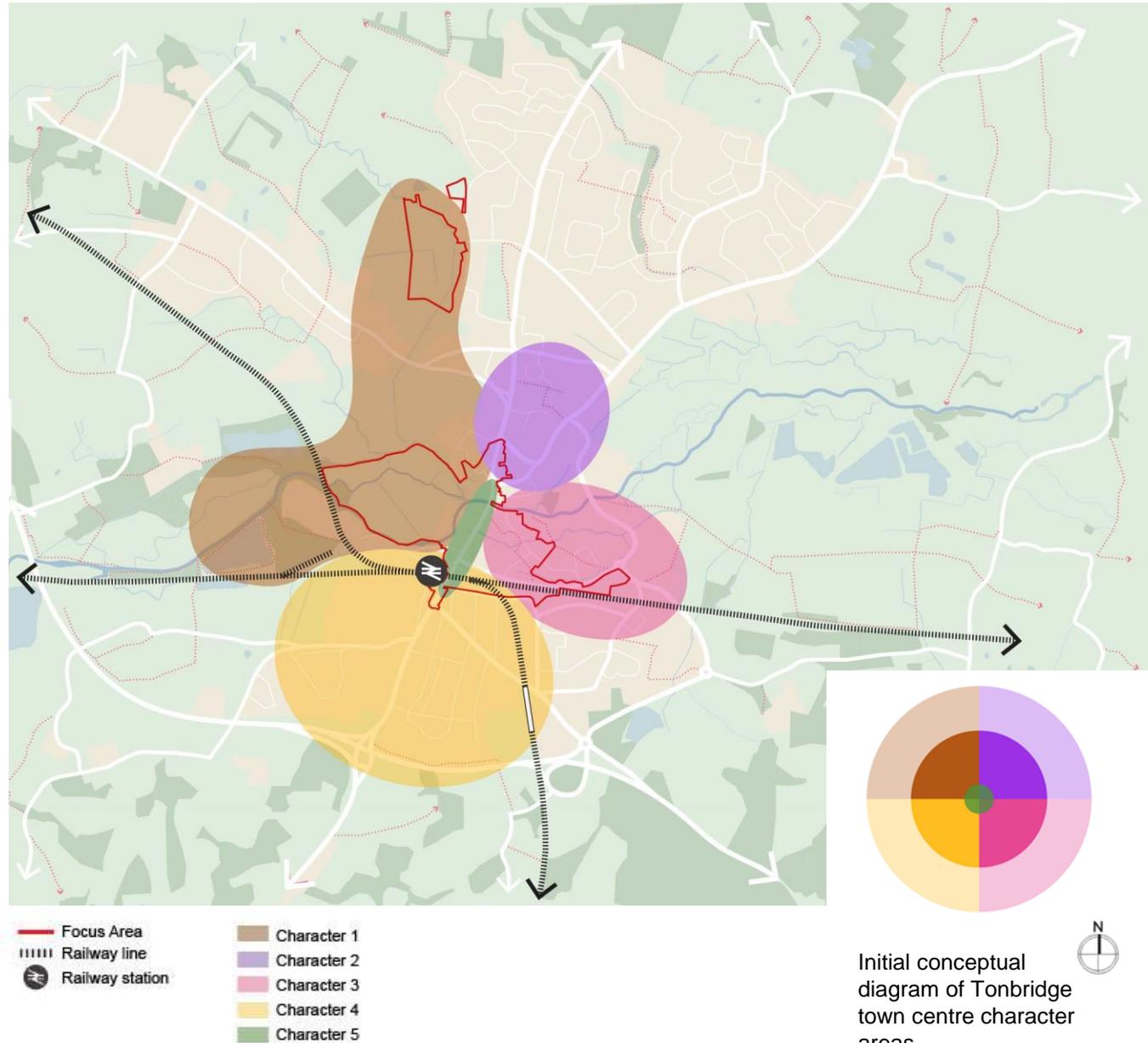
**Character 1** encompasses the area to the west of the High Street and public open spaces with sports playgrounds and leisure facilities. The area is fairly accessible from the High Street but requires improvements for better connections along from the east along the river corridor. The area includes the Tonbridge Farm further north of the sports fields.

**Character 2** focuses on the historic significance of the town within the northern conservation area. The area is also stretching further north to include the development on the northern edges.

**Character 3** includes the area to the east of the High Street with retail, commercial uses and large surface car parks largely occupying most of the land. There is an opportunity to improve east-west connectivity along the river corridor.

**Character 4** includes the area to the south of the railway station and functions as southern gateway to Tonbridge town centre, including residential and education assets.

**Character 5** is the core spine of the town which runs from the south to north of the High Street. Southern part of the high street, including the railway station, and functions as the main arrival space to the town. Central part of the street includes main retail uses and acts as a connection between nearby settlements. Tonbridge Castle, with many listed buildings clustered around the northern part of the high street, forms the northern gateway to the town centre.



## Character Areas- Opportunity Focus

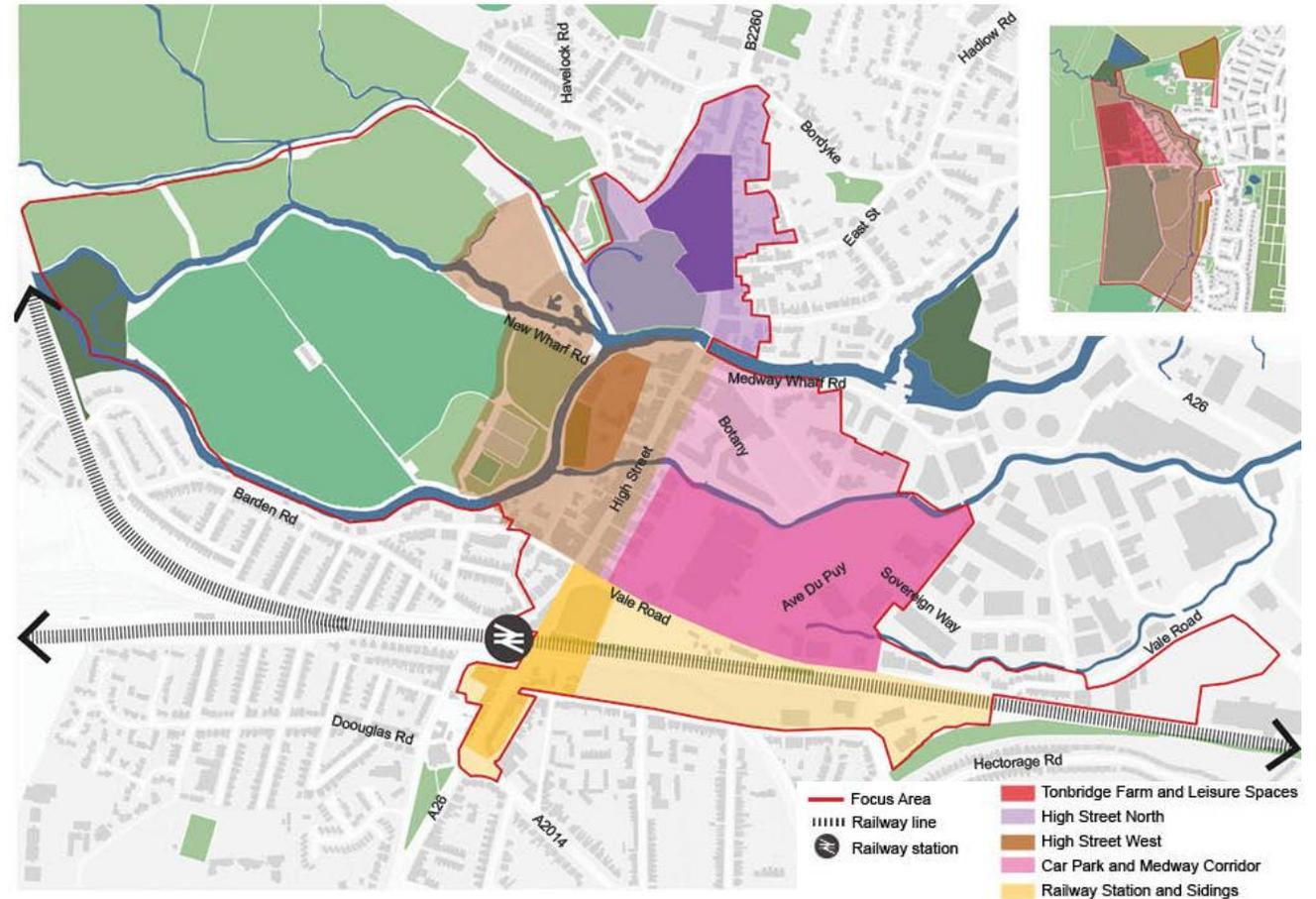
The Tonbridge site is distinctively identified in 5 character/ opportunity focus areas. The assessment focuses on key elements such as existing infrastructure, connectivity and public realm. The diagram on the right indicates the location of each character area and its relationship with the Site.

**Station Arrival and Sidings**, the area consists of the Tonbridge Railway Station, bus terminal and carparks. The arrival into the site from the railway station or the bus depot could be enhanced as it is the main access into the town through the high street.

**Car Parks and Medway Corridor**, the area includes primarily retail and car parks. The character holds potential opportunity asset as the river Medway runs adjacent as a corridor which can serve as an exciting public realm towards the area connecting western town and high street.

**High Street West**, the area between the Racecourse sports ground and (inclusive of) the High Street forms a key character of Tonbridge town centre with opportunities to enhance the connections across it and boost the public realm capacity around the High Street. The River Medway flows through the town centre and is perceived to be an asset, however, was identified by stakeholders as underutilised and could add more value.

**High Street North**, the focal character of the historic High Street is area of least potential for change although can become a focus of character and brand for the town centre.



**Tonbridge Farm**, is an outdoor leisure hub (Longmead Sports Ground) in the North of the town and home to the Tonbridge Angels football club as well as Council-owned sports pitches, a play area and Tonbridge bowling club. As a tenant, the football club is planning significant investment in its own facilities and there is an opportunity for the Council to undertake a review of its own facilities and explore how the hub can provide maximum benefit to residents in conjunction with the football club and the town centre leisure offering. The space is underutilised and could offer an opportunity for some residential development to help fund investment in facilities, however this may be resisted locally.

# SECTION 2

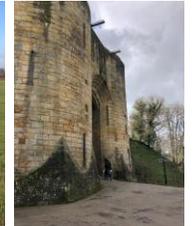
## Programme and Project Objectives

# Tonbridge favourites

In Workshop 2 we asked everyone to think a bit more about what was special to them about Tonbridge and what they thought others valued most about their town.

## What do you think is Tonbridge's best kept secret?

- Town's history apart from the Castle
- Open spaces (West of the high street)
- Sportsground
- Tonbridge Castle-as it is not promoted to visit or invest in town
- Castle and River
- Town lock area- Hidden but close to the high street
- Heritage and medieval walks and paths
- Independent coffee shops
- Tonbridge Walk
- Jane Austen's connections with Tonbridge. (Jane Austin's grandparents are buried in St Paul's Church)
- Castle River
- Independent coffee shops



## Where is your favourite spot to go in Tonbridge (be specific)? What makes it special for you?

- The castle and the river
- Racecourse Sportsground
- Cycling between the garden and TTC play area
- Priory Wood Castle and its history
- Medway Riverside
- Tonbridge Rugby Club
- River walk/area along the river- lovely area, needs to soak into town
- Castle Lawn
- Tonbridge Racecourse

## What do you think our community values most about Tonbridge?

- Green spaces and their facilities
- Landscape and recreation on the doorstep
- Town's open spaces around the river
- History-sets it apart from neighbors and makes it unique
- Sports ground-Park run
- Tonbridge Castle
- Sense of community and belonging (Identity)
- Castle, River and Haysden Park, Open Spaces
- River and Castle
- History-Sets it apart from neighbors and makes it unique
- Proximity to London/Leisure and Heritage-facilities specially Racecourse ground and Castle

# Long list to programme objectives

Through an interactive workshop session with officers and cabinet Members. The aim of the workshop was to confirm the scope of the review, and prioritised the Council's objectives for the town centre. We did not look at solutions for particular sites; more at the outcomes that the Council wishes to achieve to establish a framework for the review of sites in Phase 2.

Long list of objectives

**Housing**  
 Exceed affordable housing policy  
 Attract young professionals  
**Wider availability of housing typologies**

**Health**  
 Connectivity to existing facilities  
 Modern medical facility / health hub  
**Healthy lifestyle**

**Experience**  
 Provision of events  
**Attract different groups**  
**Strengthening the town brand**

**Environment**  
 Setting standards for combined offering  
 Sustainable community  
 Biodiversity net gain (10% baseline)  
**Exceeding net zero by 2030**

**Education**  
 Connection to education offer  
 Provision of further education

**Economy**  
 Hospitality  
 Job creation  
**Revenue stream creation**  
 Reduce asset operating expenditure  
**Visitors / tourism**  
**A diverse economy**

**Connectivity**  
 Digital for navigating physical space  
 Centralising car parks  
 Connection of existing assets  
 Facility alignment

The strategic objectives are high level requirements that any investment decision made might be evaluated against. Drivers were all developed to align with the Mace 7 spheres of influence. The long list of objectives was shortlisted and prioritised to produce a top 10:

- 01 **Wider availability of housing typologies**
- 02 Connection of existing assets
- 03 **Healthy lifestyle**
- 04 Facility alignment
- 05 **Strengthening the town brand**
- 06 **A diverse economy**
- 07 **Revenue stream creation**
- 08 **Visitors and tourism**
- 09 **Attract different groups**
- 10 **Exceeding net zero by 2030**

Net Zero by 2030 – setting an example for private sector to follow which meets the town plan.

Ensure a sustainable positive revenue baseline, net of operational maintenance costs

Meet Affordable Housing Policy; balance of type and tenure to reflect project requirements

**Baseline assumptions identified by stakeholders as essential considerations for any development**

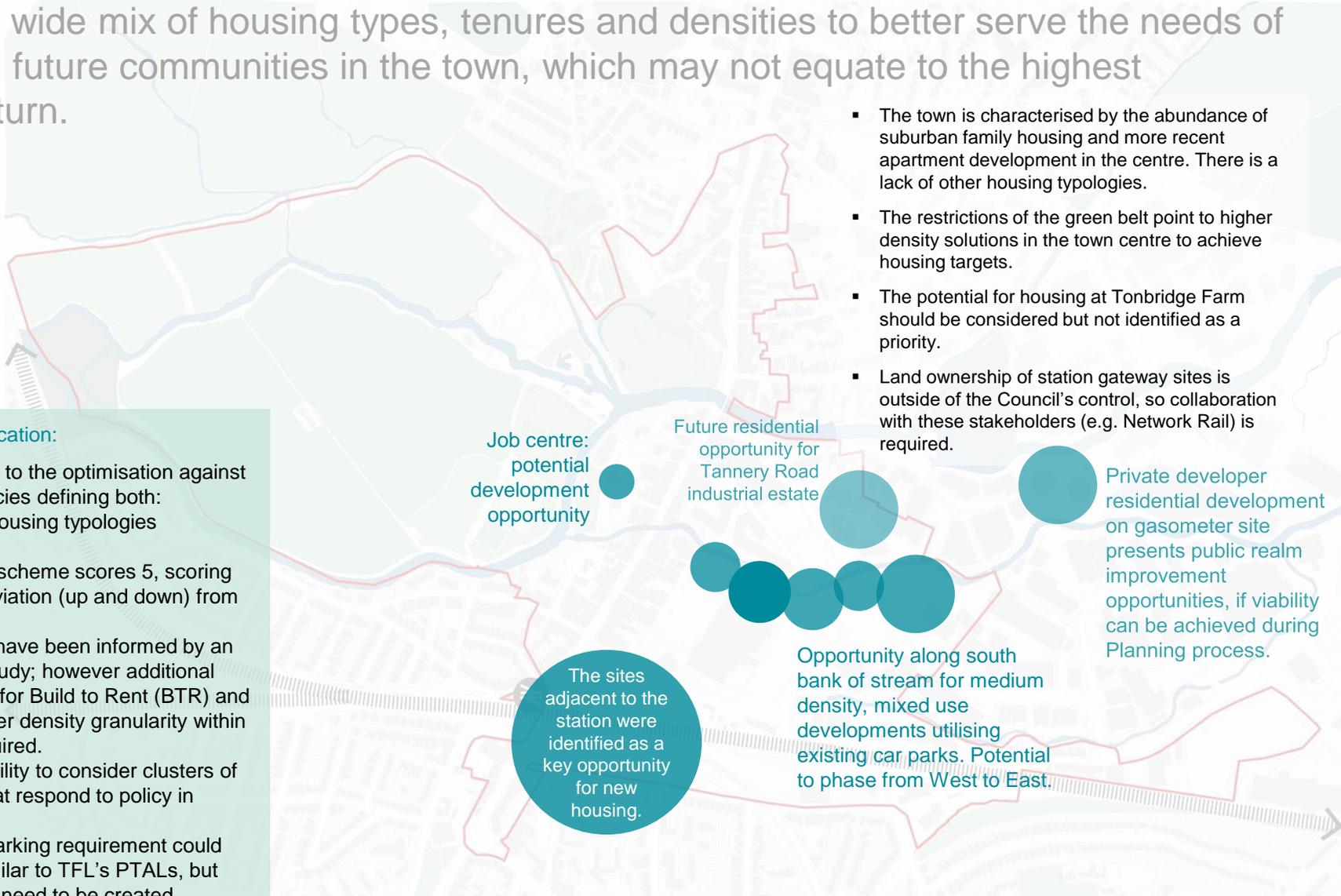
# 01. Wider availability of housing typologies

Providing a wide mix of housing types, tenures and densities to better serve the needs of current and future communities in the town, which may not equate to the highest financial return.

- The town is characterised by the abundance of suburban family housing and more recent apartment development in the centre. There is a lack of other housing typologies.
- The restrictions of the green belt point to higher density solutions in the town centre to achieve housing targets.
- The potential for housing at Tonbridge Farm should be considered but not identified as a priority.
- Land ownership of station gateway sites is outside of the Council's control, so collaboration with these stakeholders (e.g. Network Rail) is required.

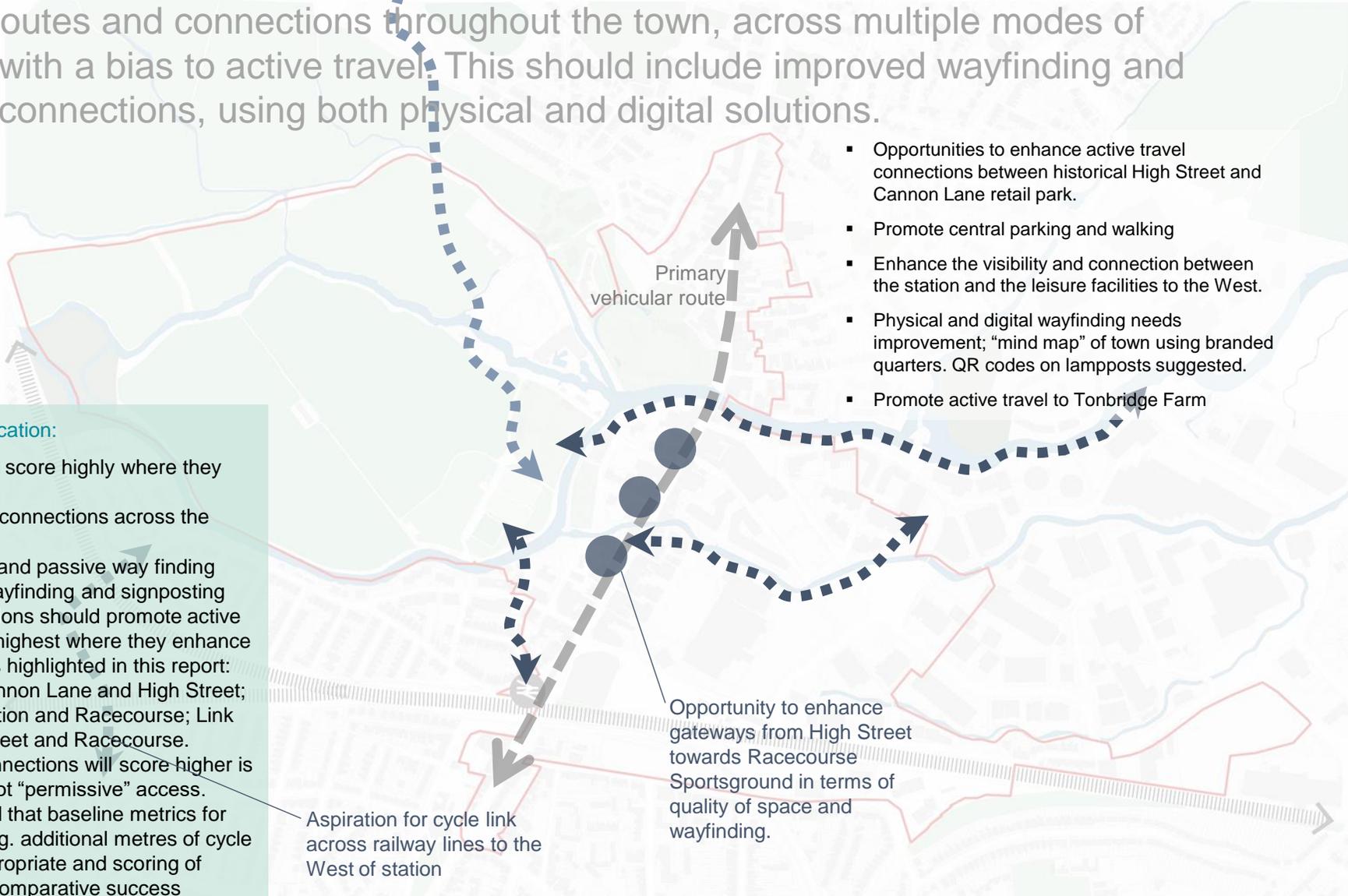
**Approach to quantification:**

- Success to relate to the optimisation against specific TTC policies defining both:
  - a. Mix of housing typologies
  - b. Density
- Policy compliant scheme scores 5, scoring drops off with deviation (up and down) from policy.
- Existing policies have been informed by an urban capacity study; however additional bespoke policies for Build to Rent (BTR) and (potentially) further density granularity within TTC may be required.
- Incorporate flexibility to consider clusters of developments that respond to policy in aggregate.
- Assessment of parking requirement could use a system similar to TFL's PTALs, but this model would need to be created.



# 02. Connection of assets

Improving routes and connections throughout the town, across multiple modes of movement with a bias to active travel. This should include improved wayfinding and legibility of connections, using both physical and digital solutions.



- Opportunities to enhance active travel connections between historical High Street and Cannon Lane retail park.
- Promote central parking and walking
- Enhance the visibility and connection between the station and the leisure facilities to the West.
- Physical and digital wayfinding needs improvement; “mind map” of town using branded quarters. QR codes on lampposts suggested.
- Promote active travel to Tonbridge Farm

### Approach to quantification:

- Proposals should score highly where they actively increase:
  - Physical connections across the town
  - Visibility and passive way finding
  - Active wayfinding and signposting
- Physical connections should promote active travel and score highest where they enhance the priority routes highlighted in this report: Link between Cannon Lane and High Street; Link between station and Racecourse; Link between High Street and Racecourse.
- New physical connections will score higher if fully public and not “permissive” access.
- It was recognised that baseline metrics for measurement (e.g. additional metres of cycle lane) are not appropriate and scoring of should relate to comparative success between options against this guidance.

Aspiration for cycle link across railway lines to the West of station

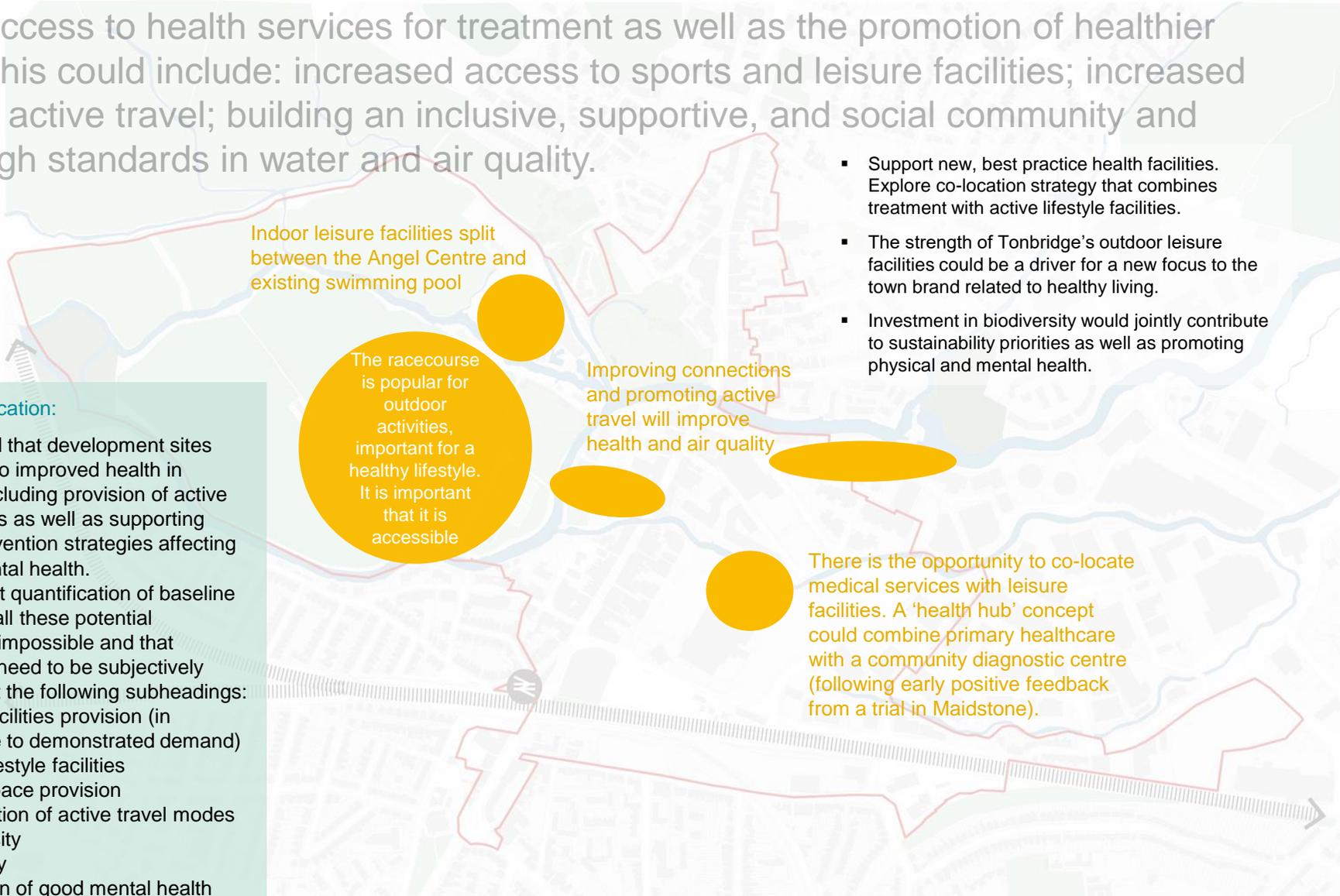
Opportunity to enhance gateways from High Street towards Racecourse Sportsground in terms of quality of space and wayfinding.

# 03. Healthy lifestyles

Improved access to health services for treatment as well as the promotion of healthier lifestyles. This could include: increased access to sports and leisure facilities; increased adoption of active travel; building an inclusive, supportive, and social community and ensuring high standards in water and air quality.

**Approach to quantification:**

- It was recognised that development sites could contribute to improved health in multiple ways, including provision of active treatment facilities as well as supporting public health prevention strategies affecting physical and mental health.
- It was agreed that quantification of baseline metrics to cover all these potential approaches was impossible and that proposals would need to be subjectively assessed against the following subheadings:
  - Health facilities provision (in response to demonstrated demand)
  - Active lifestyle facilities
  - Green space provision
  - Prioritisation of active travel modes
  - Biodiversity
  - Air quality
  - Promotion of good mental health
  - Accessibility for All



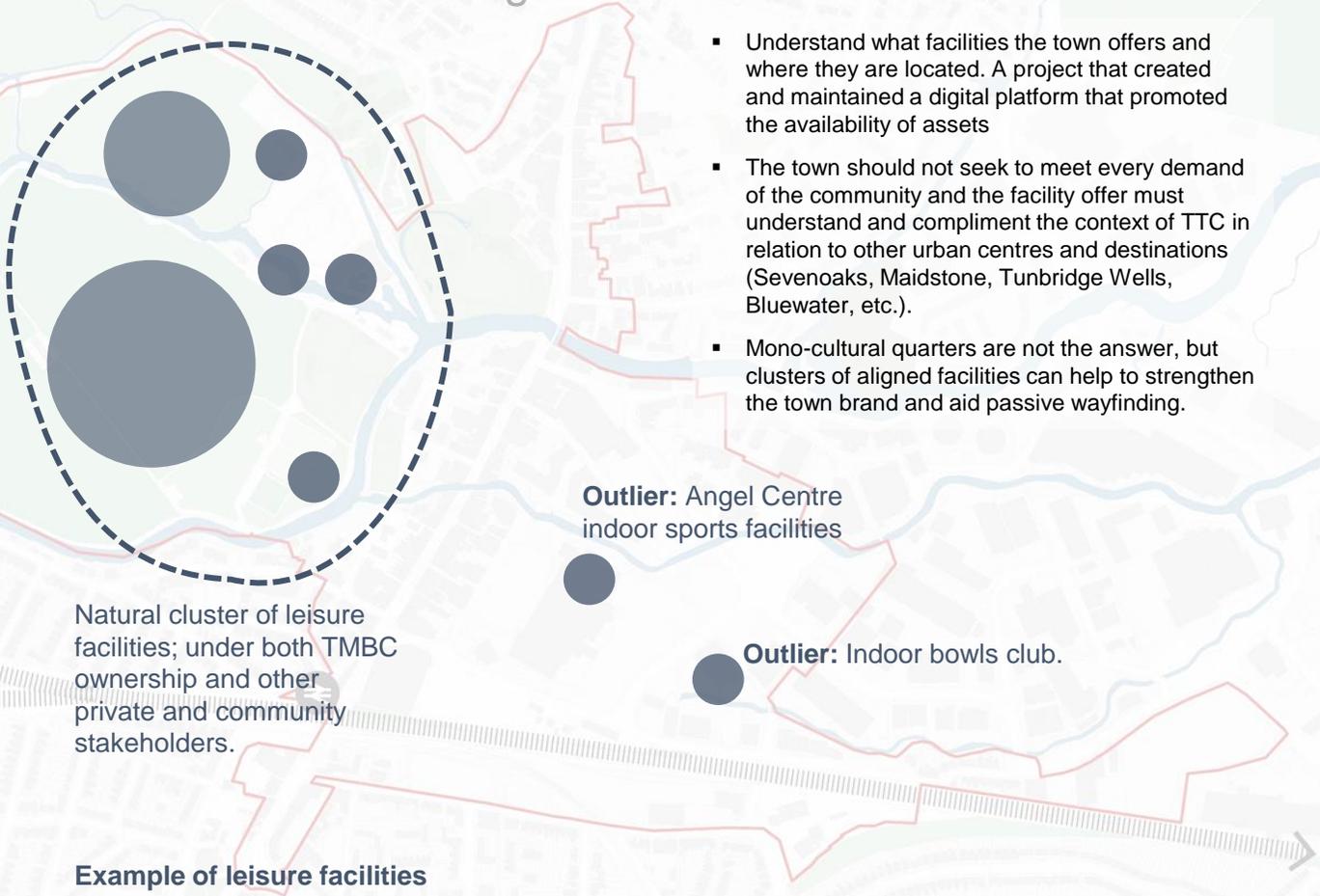
- Support new, best practice health facilities. Explore co-location strategy that combines treatment with active lifestyle facilities.
- The strength of Tonbridge's outdoor leisure facilities could be a driver for a new focus to the town brand related to healthy living.
- Investment in biodiversity would jointly contribute to sustainability priorities as well as promoting physical and mental health.

# 04. Facility alignment

Mapping and understanding the existing facilities and services within the town, across multiple sectors and ownership, to ensure the alignment and accessibility of existing and new facilities and services, with the needs of Tonbridge residents.

### Approach to quantification:

- If success of a scheme will relate to alignment to a balanced and well-rounded mix of facilities across the town, then the existing provision needs to be understood and mapped.
- The mapping should include privately owned assets that include community use agreements committing partial availability of the facilities to the public.
- Proposed schemes that seek to identify a gap in facility provision, and then address this need, will score highly.
- There are natural clusters of facilities within the town that could be enhanced by the development of visions for “quarters” within TTC. Proposals that align with these visions, and hence promoted the town brand as a whole would score highly.
- Colocation of facilities that enhance the experience and accessibility for residents would score highly.
- Proposals that needlessly fragment similar facilities across different areas, or duplicate existing, under-utilised facilities would score poorly.

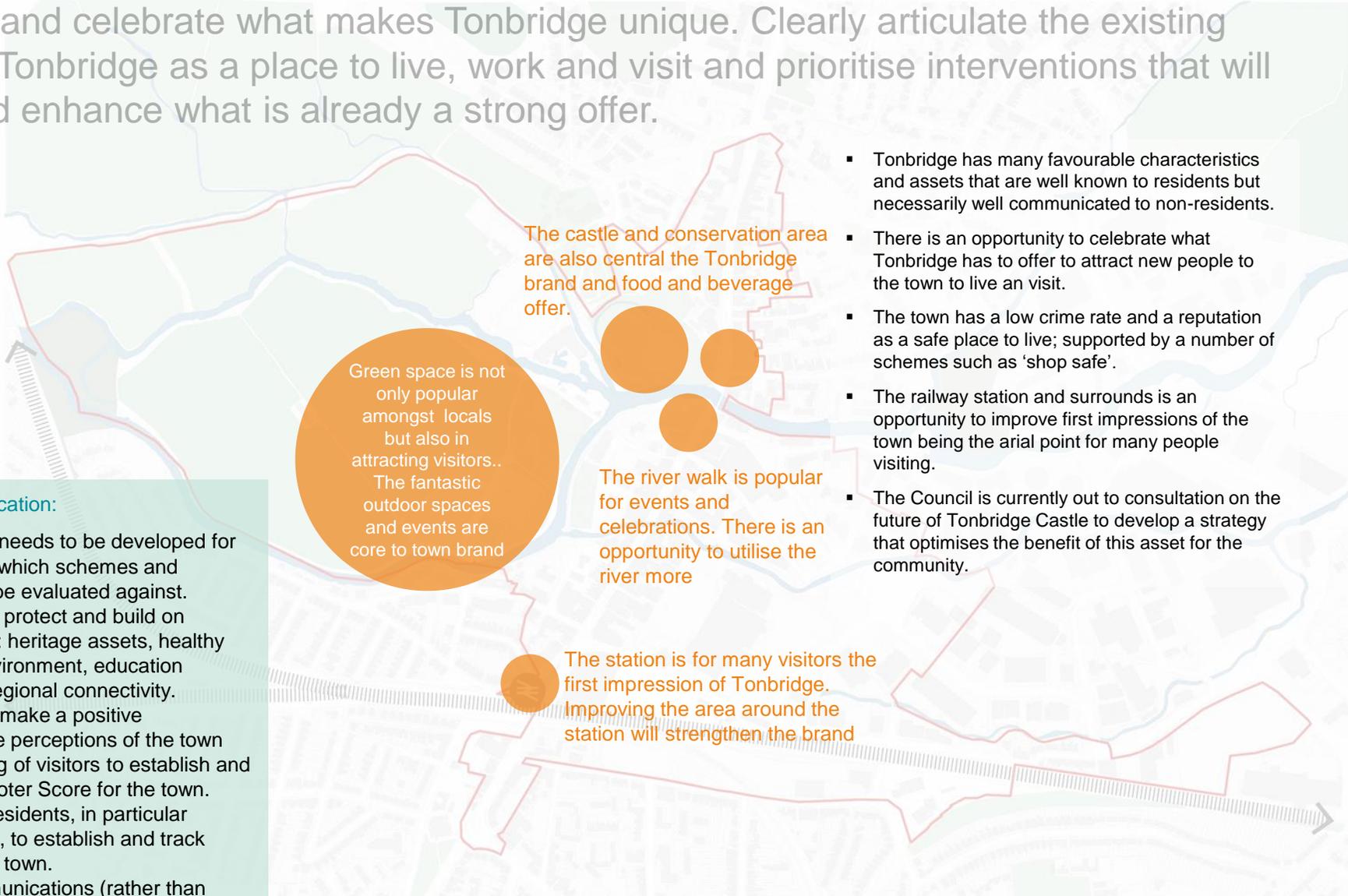


- Understand what facilities the town offers and where they are located. A project that created and maintained a digital platform that promoted the availability of assets
- The town should not seek to meet every demand of the community and the facility offer must understand and compliment the context of TTC in relation to other urban centres and destinations (Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Bluewater, etc.).
- Mono-cultural quarters are not the answer, but clusters of aligned facilities can help to strengthen the town brand and aid passive wayfinding.

Example of leisure facilities

# 05. Strengthening the town brand

Recognise and celebrate what makes Tonbridge unique. Clearly articulate the existing benefits of Tonbridge as a place to live, work and visit and prioritise interventions that will support and enhance what is already a strong offer.



- Tonbridge has many favourable characteristics and assets that are well known to residents but necessarily well communicated to non-residents.
- There is an opportunity to celebrate what Tonbridge has to offer to attract new people to the town to live an visit.
- The town has a low crime rate and a reputation as a safe place to live; supported by a number of schemes such as 'shop safe'.
- The railway station and surrounds is an opportunity to improve first impressions of the town being the arial point for many people visiting.
- The Council is currently out to consultation on the future of Tonbridge Castle to develop a strategy that optimises the benefit of this asset for the community.

**Approach to quantification:**

- A brand strategy needs to be developed for the town against which schemes and intervention can be evaluated against.
- Brand strategy to protect and build on current strengths: heritage assets, healthy living, natural environment, education excellence and regional connectivity.
- Schemes should make a positive contribution to the perceptions of the town
- Regular surveying of visitors to establish and track a Net Promoter Score for the town.
- Surveys of non-residents, in particular London residents, to establish and track awareness of the town.
- Digital and communications (rather than building) projects will score highly.

# 06. A diverse economy

A strong mix of social and commercial offers that meet the needs of the spectrum of stakeholder groups within the town, to support economic growth in a resilient manner.

- The lack of office accommodation within the town centre was identified.
- There is a need to both support the independent retailers but also attract select national retailers
- An opportunity to better accommodate changes in the way people work and improve shared office provisions
- There is an opportunity to attract more experience focussed business to the town centre

### Approach to quantification:

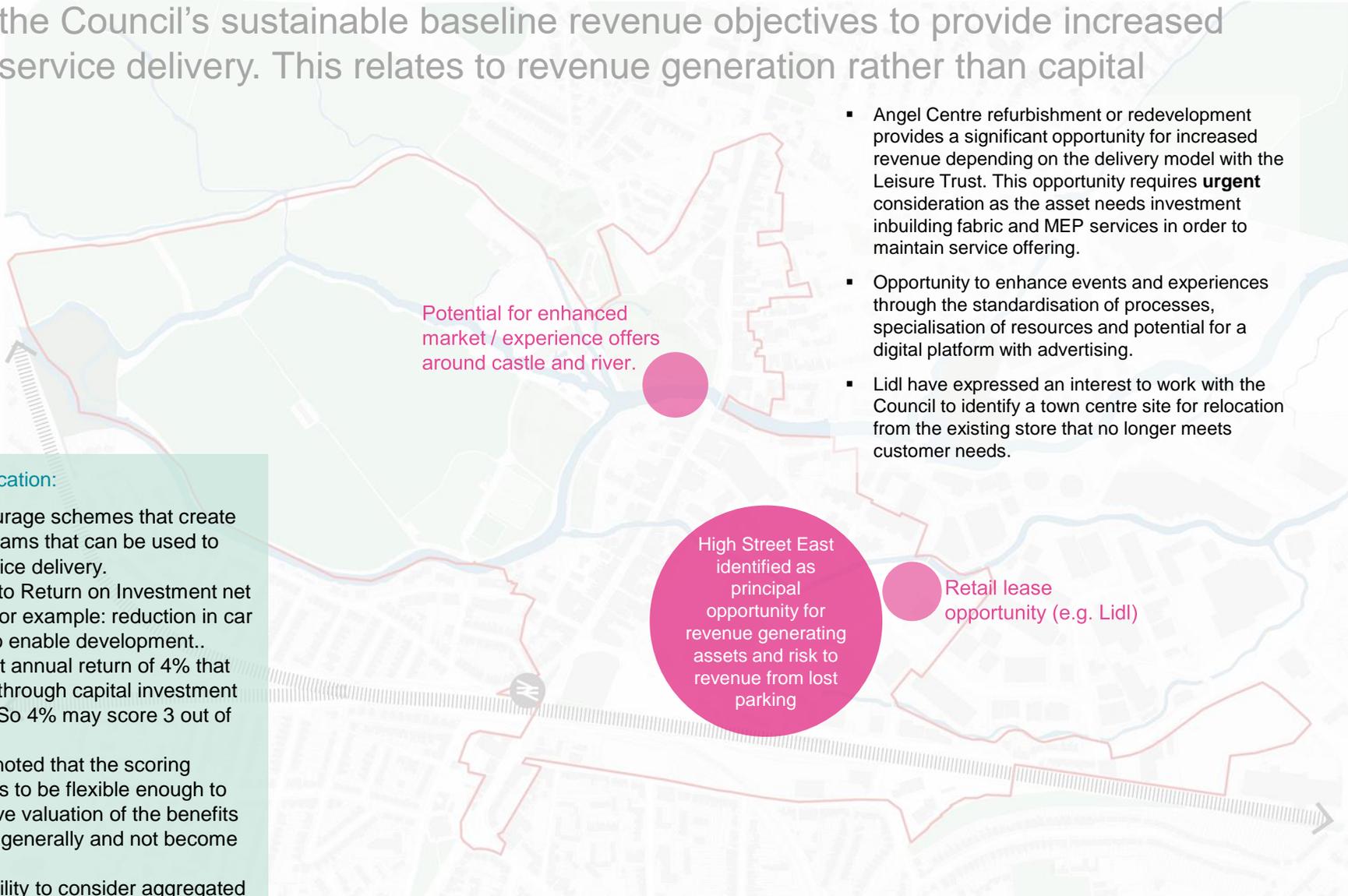
- If success of a proposal will relate to the enhancement of TTC's economic offer then a baseline of the existing mix will be required to be commissioned and maintained.
- A scheme that fills identified gaps within the economic landscape would score highly.
- A scheme that reflects a continuation of the status quo, or reduction in choice, would score poorly.
- The identification of the gap, and justification of the demand, could be achieved at the options appraisal stage rather than relying on a commissioned model of the town centre economy and stakeholder group demand.
- The options appraisal within the economic case for proposed schemes should include contribution to employment and social value.

High Street West identified as opportunity contribute to enhancing economic diversification

High Street East identified as opportunity area to contribute to enhancing economic diversification.

# 07. Revenue stream creation

Exceeding the Council’s sustainable baseline revenue objectives to provide increased income for service delivery. This relates to revenue generation rather than capital receipts.

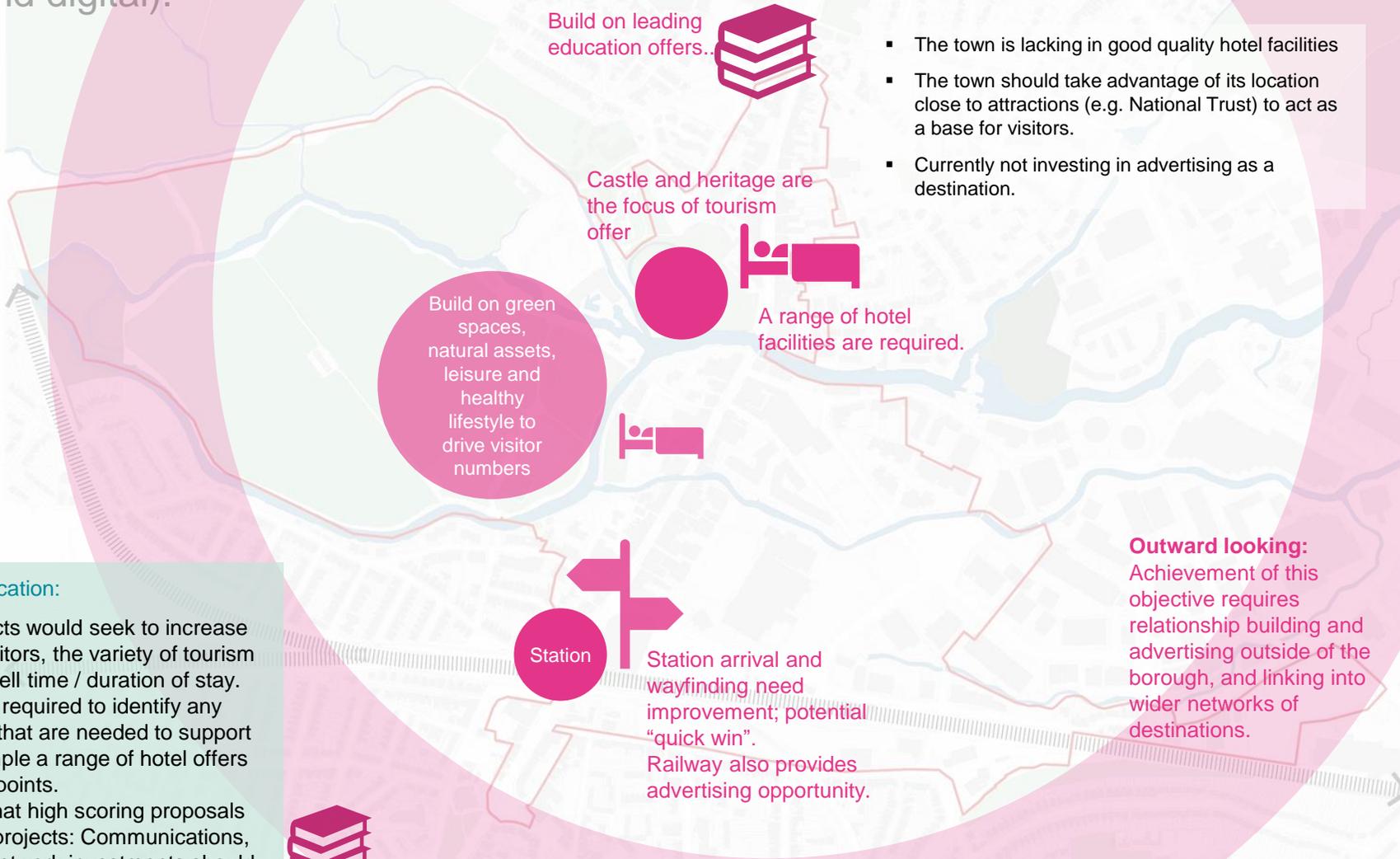


**Approach to quantification:**

- Success to encourage schemes that create new revenue streams that can be used to contribute to service delivery.
- Scoring to relate to Return on Investment net of loss revenue, for example: reduction in car parking spaces to enable development..
- Baseline to reflect annual return of 4% that can be achieved through capital investment in property fund. So 4% may score 3 out of possible 5.
- However, it was noted that the scoring mechanism needs to be flexible enough to allow for subjective valuation of the benefits to the town more generally and not become a barrier.
- Incorporate flexibility to consider aggregated contributions from clusters of developments.

# 08. Visitors / tourism

Growing the visitor/tourist economy in terms of attractions, visibility and accessibility (physical and digital).



- The town is lacking in good quality hotel facilities
- The town should take advantage of its location close to attractions (e.g. National Trust) to act as a base for visitors.
- Currently not investing in advertising as a destination.

**Approach to quantification:**

- Successful projects would seek to increase the number of visitors, the variety of tourism offers and the dwell time / duration of stay.
- A gap analysis is required to identify any missing facilities that are needed to support tourism; for example a range of hotel offers at different price points.
- It is recognised that high scoring proposals may not be built projects: Communications, advertising and network investments should be promoted.



# 09. Attract different groups

Creating a place to live and work that caters to diverse groups of people and promotes inclusivity.

### Approach to quantification:

- If success of a scheme will relate to the attraction (and or retention) of new age groups then a baseline of existing mix of people will be required to be commissioned and maintained.
- A scheme that improves attraction and/or retention of groups identified as missing or under-represented in the commissioned study would score highly.
- A scheme that reflects a continuation of the status quo would score poorly.
- Consideration should be wider than residential, to include attracting groups to work, study, shop and engage with the community / experiences. Tourism is covered by another Objective.
- Consideration should be given to demographic metrics such as age, ethnicity and ability.
- Likely to be subjective scoring between options.
- Possible opportunity for local GCSE students to undertake the baseline study.

Racecourse & Tonbridge Farm identified as an focus area which contributes – enhanced outdoor leisure offers.

High Street East identified as an focus area which could contribute – new places to live and work, plus enhanced indoor leisure.

KCC site / Barden Road – opportunity for younger people

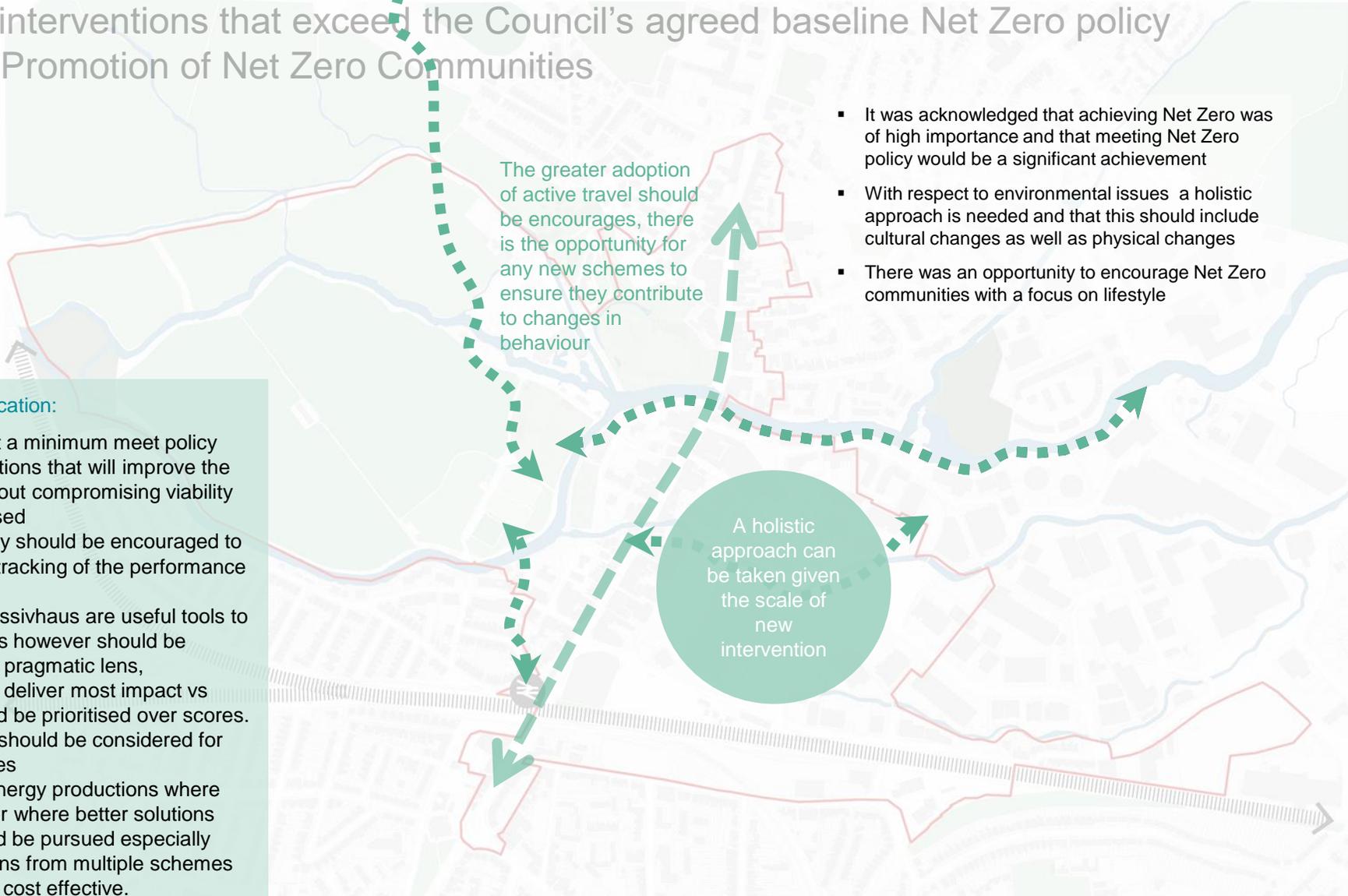


Opportunity to build on facilities such and The Mix that cater for younger people.

- Encouraging school children to remain within the town after school and engage with activities was identified as a priority. These groups are currently attracted by activities in Tunbridge Wells.
- It was recognised that housing solutions across all generations was required; later living offer currently under represented.
- Engagement with the Youth Forum identified that younger people want facilities close to the town centre, meaning they could be dropped off and could then walk easily and safely to destinations.
- Younger generations have highlighted a demand for environmentally sensitive offers, such as vegan restaurants and retailers that promote re-use rather than resource consumption.

# 10. Exceeding net zero targets by 2030

Prioritising interventions that exceed the Council's agreed baseline Net Zero policy objectives. Promotion of Net Zero Communities



The greater adoption of active travel should be encouraged, there is the opportunity for any new schemes to ensure they contribute to changes in behaviour

- It was acknowledged that achieving Net Zero was of high importance and that meeting Net Zero policy would be a significant achievement
- With respect to environmental issues a holistic approach is needed and that this should include cultural changes as well as physical changes
- There was an opportunity to encourage Net Zero communities with a focus on lifestyle

- Approach to quantification:**
- Schemes must at a minimum meet policy however interventions that will improve the environment without compromising viability should be prioritised
  - Data transparency should be encouraged to ensure accurate tracking of the performance of new schemes
  - BREEAM and Passivhaus are useful tools to evaluate schemes however should be viewed through a pragmatic lens, interventions that deliver most impact vs investment should be prioritised over scores.
  - Biodiversity gain should be considered for proposed schemes
  - Explore on site energy productions where practical however where better solutions exist these should be pursued especially where contributions from multiple schemes prove to be more cost effective.

A holistic approach can be taken given the scale of new intervention

# SECTION 3

## Recommendations and Next Steps

# Priority of Focus Areas

- 01 High Street East
- 02 Town Centre Connections
- 03 Station Arrival
- 04 High Street West
- 05 Leisure Racecourse & Tonbridge Farm

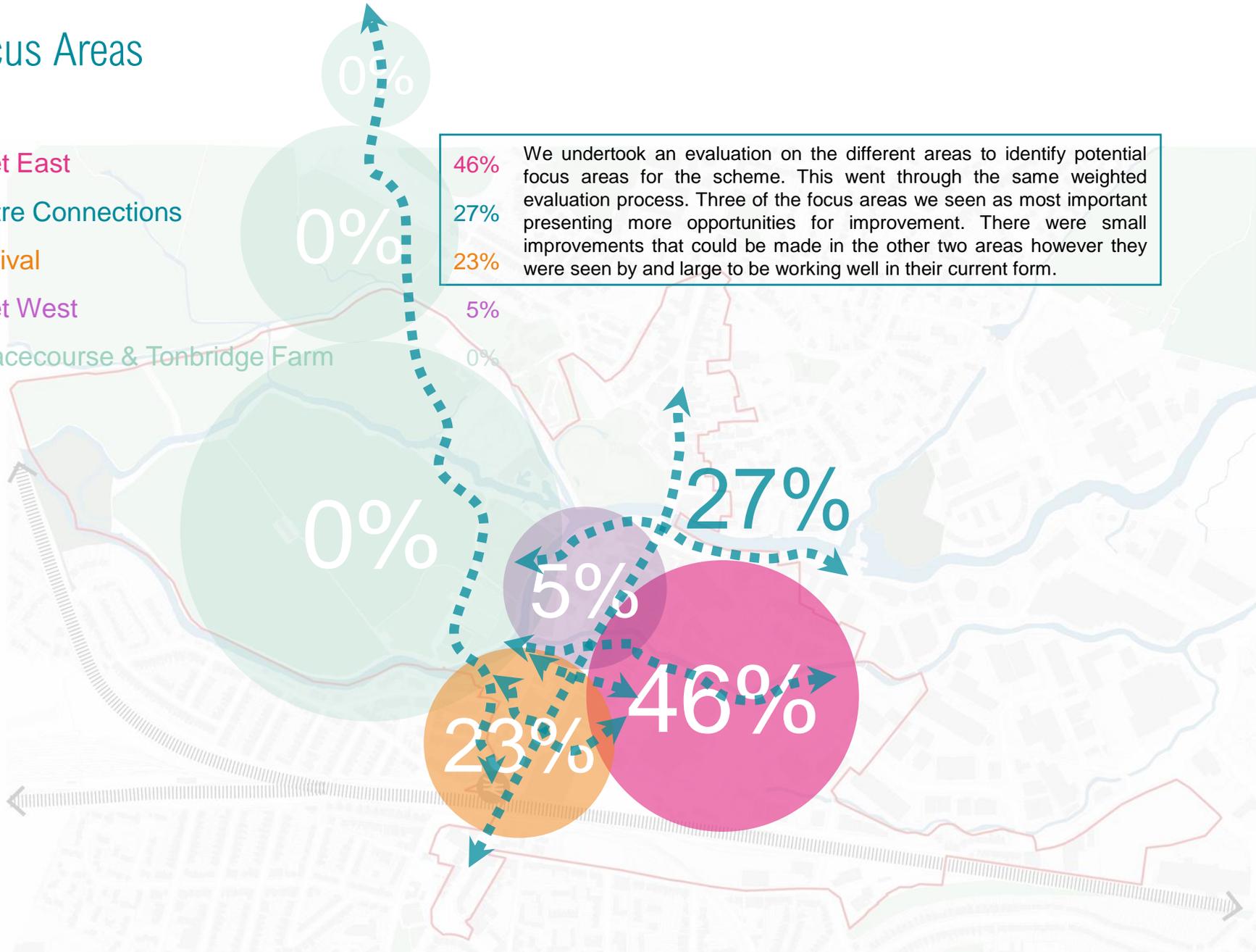
46% We undertook an evaluation on the different areas to identify potential focus areas for the scheme. This went through the same weighted evaluation process. Three of the focus areas we seen as most important presenting more opportunities for improvement. There were small improvements that could be made in the other two areas however they were seen by and large to be working well in their current form.

27%

23%

5%

0%



# Prioritisation of programme objectives by area

The stakeholders at Workshop 1 collectively debated and agreed the top 4 programme objectives relating to each of the five Focus Areas. For each area the primary objective was identified. The following three priority objectives for each areas were not ranked.

Those objectives that were agreed as baseline assumptions will be relevant for any proposals across the whole town centre.

- 1** Primary objective for the area, as identified by the stakeholders in the workshop
- 2** Secondary objective for the area, as identified by the stakeholders in the workshop

	Net Zero by 2030	Ensure a positive revenue baseline	Meet Affordable Housing Policy	Wider availability of housing typologies	Connection of existing assets	Healthy lifestyle	Facility alignment	Strengthening the town brand	A diverse economy	Revenue stream creation	Visitors / tourism	Attract different groups	Exceeding net zero by 2030		
High Street East	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	1			2		2	1		2			
Town Centre Connections					1	2		2				2			
Station Arrival				1	2				2				2		
High Street West					1				2	2	2				
Leisure: Racecourse & Tonbridge Farm							2	1	2						2

# Opportunity Plan

During the workshop process, opportunities were identified for improvements to the town centre. The following pages of this report capture the location of the opportunities, prioritisation and dependences between the necessary workstreams.

## Opportunities

- A. Improved wayfinding from Station
- B. Improved pedestrian connections from high street to Medway High Street and Park
- C. Improved connections along Medway River and across High Street
- D. Improved movement along the Medway River to Cannon Lane
- E. Connection from Sussex Road areas to Riverside.
- F. Improve N/S movement
- G. Improved access to Tonbridge Farm

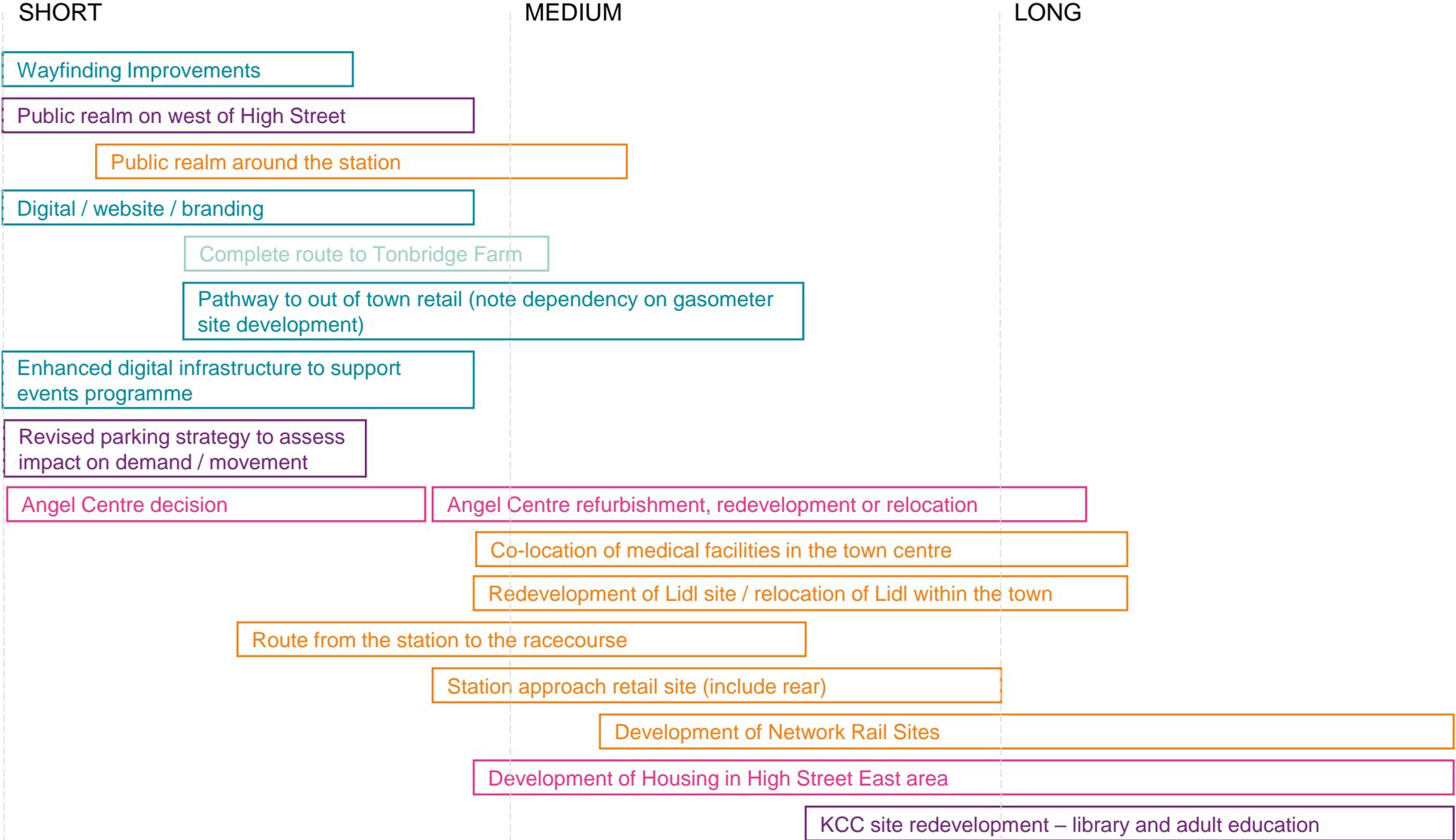
- 1 Station arrival improvement and Barden Road
- 2 Lidl Block redevelopments
- 3 Railway Sidings (South and North)
- 4 High Street 'arrival'
- 5 High Street East + Angel West Car Park
- 6 Angel Centre-Refurbish/redevelop
- 7 Surface carparks and commercial interface
- 8 Medway Corridor + Small carparks
- 9 Activating the Medway
- 10 Tonbridge Pool Carpark + Model Rail
- 11 Improved access to Tonbridge Far



← - - - → Connections

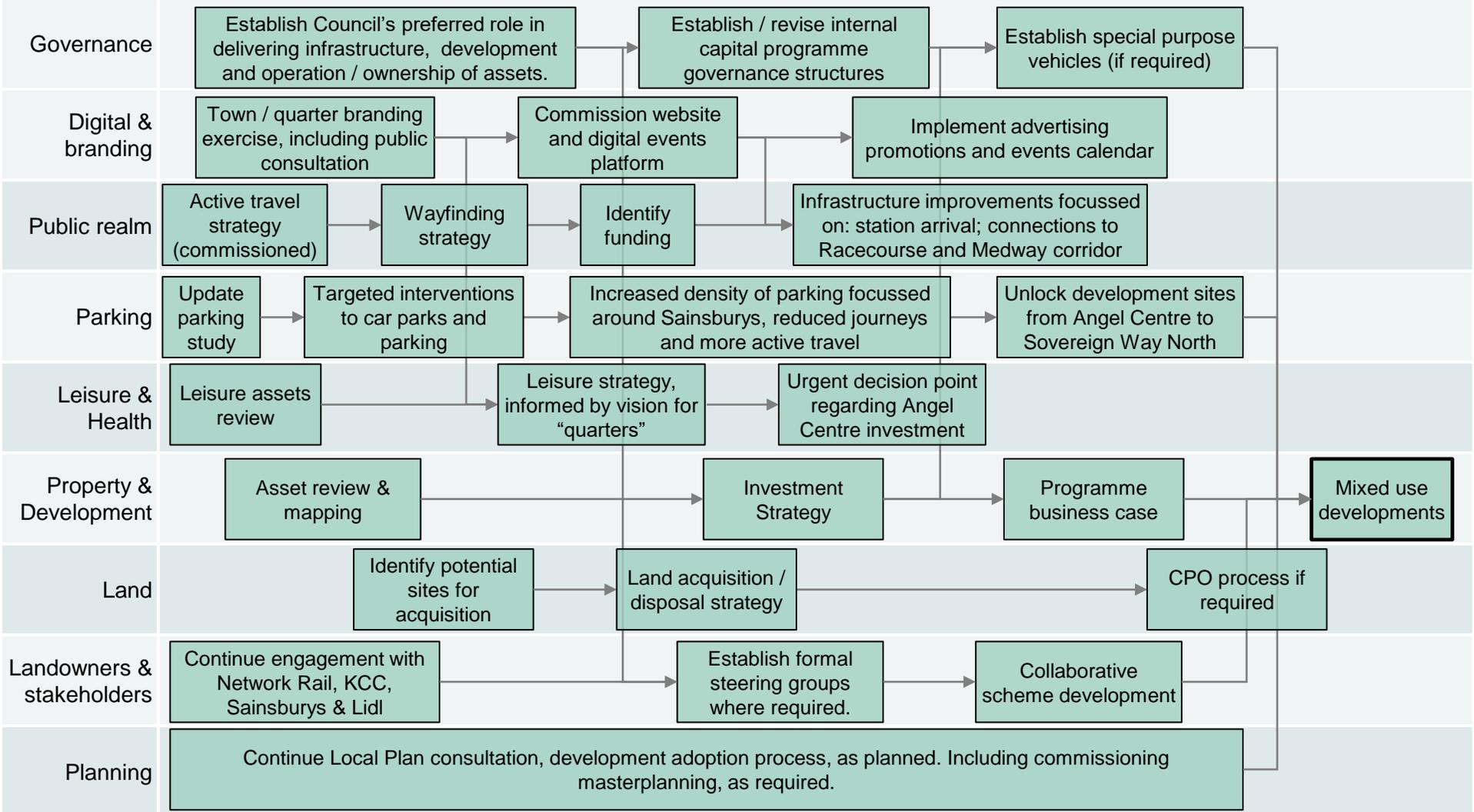


# Short, Medium and Long Term Opportunities



# Recommended Initial Workstreams

There are a number of concurrent workstreams that need to be progressed to achieve the Council’s ambitions for town centre:



# Further deliverables to support town centre development

During the workshop process, a number of additional studies and reports were identified that were required, or recommended, to support the establishment of a strategy for town centre and quantification of targets for some of the programme objectives:

## Highly Recommended

- Bespoke housing density policies for zones in the town centre
- Build To Rent policy, specific to the town centre
- Updated parking utilisation study. Potential enhancement to assess reasons for visits and choice of parking location, length of stay and impact on demand from targeted restriction of spaces or price increases.
- Council asset utilisation review and optimisation strategy. Include analysis of facilities at Tonbridge Farm to assess alignment to football club proposed development.
- Mapping of existing assets and facilities across the town centre that are available to for community use, including those in third party ownership with s106 commitments to make available to the public.

## Recommended

- Design guide for TTC with consideration of heritage assets and protected views
- Baseline study to establish the baseline mix of demographics within the town, in reference to living, working, studying, shopping and engaging with the community and events/experiences.

## Potential

- Tonbridge equivalent to Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs) – measure of public transport accessibility of an area within the town centre.
- Benchmarking study against other similar towns in terms of location, size and demographic to assess relative performance and identify gaps.

# Recommended Next Steps (Phase 2A)

In order to progress the review of Council assets across the town centre the following priorities are recommended for the first phase:

## 1. Governance:

- Establish framework of a town centre programme business case that identifies the tasks required to develop all five cases (strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management) in line with best practice guidance. To include further development of workstreams and interdependencies.
- Workshop to establish Council's preferred role in delivering infrastructure, development, operation and ownership of assets.

## 2. Commission Town centre (and quarter) branding strategy, including public consultation

## 3. Asset Review:

- Council asset utilisation review and optimisation strategy, with a focus on internal and external leisure facilities.
- Mapping of existing assets and facilities across the town centre that are available to for community use.

## 4. Parking study:

- Commission parking study to include targeted interventions to car parks and incentives to establish evidence base for permanent changes.

## 5. Commission a wayfinding strategy, to include:

- Physical and digital options for signage and wayfinding
- Proposals improvements to the station arrival experience and the links between the High Street and the Racecourse Sports Ground

## 6. Options Appraisal

- Development options appraisal for site along northern strip of the car parks in High Street East, including Angel Centre (in collaboration with Leisure Trust).

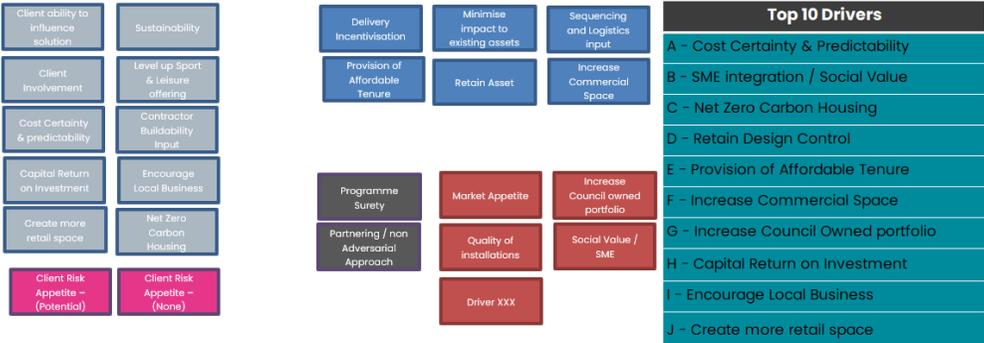
## 7. Planning Policy

- Bespoke housing density policies for zones in the town centre (emerging design code)
- Build To Rent policy, specific to the town centre

# SECTION 4

## Appendices

# Appendix 4.1: Drivers and Influencers concept overview

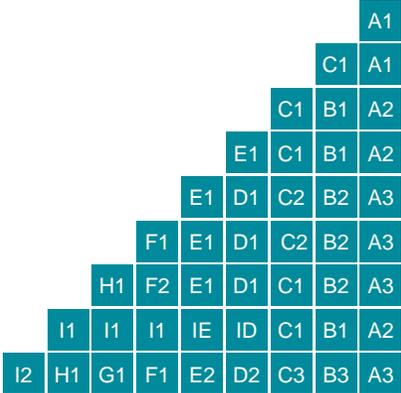


The drivers and influences workshop is an industry leading tool and algorithm developed by Mace. The tool and the associated workshops are utilised to provide an objective evaluation of a variety of delivery options against a clients core criteria's.

This tool provides a basis for which future opportunities can be evaluated on a case by case basis and will allow the Client team to accurately define the best delivery solutions based on what matters most to them.

The Drivers & influences tool workflow and the associated deliverables and outcomes are described in detail throughout this presentation as well as how they will be applied to the procurement process.

- A – Cost certainty & predictability
- B – Social value
- C – Net Zero Carbon housing
- D – Design control
- E – Affordable housing
- F – Increase commercial space
- G – Grow Council-owned portfolio
- H – Capital Return on Investment
- I – Encourage local business
- J – Create more retail space



**Level of Preference:**  
 3 – Major Preference  
 2 – Medium Preference  
 1 – Minor Preference



# Appendix 4.2: Drivers and Influences workflow

## Phase 1 Strategic Objective definition

### Discovery

### Engage & hypothesise

- Confirm project Scope
- Identify project Stakeholders
- Communicate objectives early with stakeholders & set expectations on level of inputs
- Review of current plans and proposed approach
- Confirm boundaries for workshops

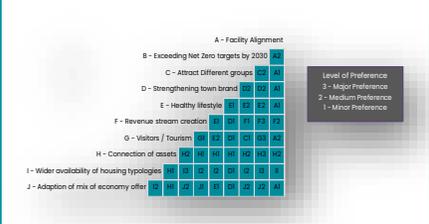
Area	Objective	Key Deliverables	Key Risks	Key Stakeholders	Key Milestones
Project Scope	Define project boundaries and objectives	Project Charter, Scope Statement	Scope Creep	Client, Stakeholders	Week 1-2
Stakeholder Identification	Identify all project stakeholders	Stakeholder Register	Missing Stakeholders	Client, Stakeholders	Week 2-3
Communication Plan	Develop communication strategy	Communication Plan	Communication Breakdown	Client, Stakeholders	Week 3-4
Workshop Preparation	Prepare for strategic objective workshops	Workshop Agenda, Materials	Workshop Disruption	Client, Stakeholders	Week 4-5
Workshop Execution	Conduct strategic objective workshops	Workshop Outputs, Notes	Workshop Ineffectiveness	Client, Stakeholders	Week 5-6
Workshop Follow-up	Review workshop outputs and integrate into strategy	Workshop Summary, Strategy Updates	Workshop Output Not Used	Client, Stakeholders	Week 6-7

- Outputs:**
- Scope & objectives for Mace engagement
  - Rapid understanding of project requirements

### Definition

### Define Client Drivers & Influences

- Define Clients drivers & Influences using our industry leading drivers and Influences tool
- Outline top 10 strategic drivers for delivering Client requirements
- Undertake a weighted evaluation to confirm relative importance of each driver
- Workshop format with key members



- Outputs:**
- Weighted evaluation of competing drivers
  - Confirmed top 10 Strategic Objectives

## Phase 2 Active Delivery

### Develop

### Confirm areas of influence for future improvements

- Develop potential solutions and review proposed procurement strategy against defined drivers and influences
- Confirm procurement Strategy

Phase 1	Programme Strategy Review And Analysis	Deliverable or Task	Cost	Risk	Quality	Time	Stakeholder	Impact
11	Provide completed Discovery log		A	C	R	C	I	I
12	Drivers and influences Workshop		A	C	C	R	I	I
13	Define weighted evaluation of competing drivers		A	C	C	R	I	I
14	Outline and evaluate potential solutions		A	C	C	R	I	I
15	Stakeholder analysis		A	C	C	R	I	I
16	Confirm proposed procurement strategy		A	C	C	R	I	I
17	Procurement Strategy Approval		A	C	C	R	I	I

- Outputs:**
- Scoring of potential deliver routes against Client strategic objectives
  - Finalisation of Procurement Strategy

### Delivery

### Deliver procurement activities

- Deliver Client requested procurements

Phase	Deliverable or Task	Cost	Risk	Quality	Time	Stakeholder	Impact
11	Procurement Strategy Review And Analysis						
12	Provide completed Discovery log						
13	Drivers and influences Workshop						
14	Define weighted evaluation of competing drivers						
15	Outline and evaluate potential solutions						
16	Stakeholder analysis						
17	Confirm proposed procurement strategy						
18	Procurement Strategy Approval						
19	Preparation of tender documentation						
20	Develop soft market testing questions						
21	Issue soft market testing						
22	Review soft market testing responses						
23	Finalise market testing responses within documents						
24	Agree contract form and schedule						
25	Draft Outline Specification						
26	Develop High Level Evaluation Criteria						
27	Technical Questions Workshop						
28	Commercial Workshop						
29	Outline Contract documents produced						
30	Technical Questions produced and circulated for review						
31	Prising Schedule Produced and circulated for review						
32	Agree evaluation panel						
33	Publication invite						
34	IT document updated to reflect technical, pricing and evaluation criteria						
35	Produce final specification and appendix documents						
36	Collate final documents						
37	Internal review of tender documentation						
38	Prepare final documents to publish upload to IT						

- Outputs:**
- Successful Procurement of any required procurements

# Glossary

BTR	Build to Rent
PRS	Private Rental Sector
PTALs	Public Transport Accessibility Levels
TTC	Tonbridge Town Centre



155 Moorgate  
London EC2M 6XB

T +44 (0) 20 3522 3000