

Two Waters Strategic Framework

# Final Report

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urbanism







This report sets out a strategic framework for the Two Waters area, south of Hemel Hempstead town centre. The framework will help guide and shape future development proposals and has been based on a series of consultation responses.



Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio that specialises in urban design, urban planning, neighbourhood strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of planning and design projects across the UK.

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# Project Background

What is the strategic framework for Two Waters?



Two Waters is an area of approximately 124 hectares located on the southern edge of Hemel Hempstead. There is an varied mix of land uses in the area, including residential, light industrial, retail and community uses, together with large and valuable recreational spaces in the centre.

The area is experiencing growing pressure for change and in response to this pressure, Dacorum Borough Council has commissioned a “strategic framework” to provide clear planning and design guidance for this part of the town.

## The context to the study

The Two Waters area is anchored in the west by Hemel Hempstead railway station, in the east by Apsley railway station and to the north by the Magic Roundabout on the southern edge of the town centre. There is currently an eclectic mix of land uses around the edges of Two Waters, including residential, light industrial, retail and community uses, and a large swath of valuable recreational land in the centre, owned and managed by the Box Moor Trust.

This mix of living, working and open space has the potential to create a vital and vibrant neighbourhood on the southern edge of Hemel Hempstead town centre but better coordination of these assets is required. There is also a growing pressure for change through speculative planning applications for the redevelopment of various sites.

The risk facing the area right now is of a series of ad hoc or piecemeal redevelopment proposals that fails to join together and also fail to maximise the opportunities presented by the conditions of this fascinating rural-urban edge.

Therefore, Dacorum Borough Council has commissioned the production of a robust “strategic framework” to help guide development over the coming months and years. This framework will become be a valuable part of the planning and design toolkit for this part of the town. This report has been prepared on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council by Feria Urbanism a design studio with specialisms in civic design and urban strategies.

## Strategic framework vs. Master plan

The strategic framework will help guide successful renewal and change on the ground in Two Waters by ensuring that there is a clear and widely-supported vision in place. Therefore the strategic framework has been prepared to provide immediate planning and design guidance for the area and also inform future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters, should this be commissioned at a later stage.

The need for this two-tier approach (i.e. strategic framework followed by more detailed master plan(s)) results in part from the relatively short timeframe covered by the work to date. This has not necessarily allowed for the required depth of research to be undertaken to inform a full master plan at this stage. This expediency as regards the timeframe was necessary however due to the growing redevelopment pressures in the area and the need for an overall sense of direction for the area to guide planning decisions in both the short and medium term.

There has also been a substantial level of stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the strategic framework. It is therefore considered that the framework will in be a sound platform for a subsequent master plan due to the level of consultation and engagement at this stage. Thorough consultation still needs to take place for the following stages, including those from neighbouring local areas and Boxmoor. The follow-on piece of work, in the form of a more detailed master plan, will be able to readily pick up where this strategic framework leaves off and add more detail at the next tier down.

## Consultation & engagement

The strategic framework has been developed with significant stakeholder involvement. Two participatory workshops were organised and run by the Feria Urbanism team in the first part of 2015.

The first of these two events asked a series of questions about the status of the area right now, the opportunities and challenges it offers and the pressures for change. The results of this first workshop were used to directly inform the scope and content of the second workshop, at which a series of “hypothesis” drawings were tested and challenged.

The hypothesis drawings presented different scenarios for change and suggested ways in which they could be implemented on site. These ideas were challenged and tested by the participants and a wide range of issues were addressed including a draft public realm and landscape strategy, building heights and urban form and the different community groups and organisations that could play an active role in the development of the area moving forward.

The results of the two workshops have not only helped inform this strategic framework but have also helped to define the scope and content of the more detailed master plan.

The results from the two workshop events can be found in a separate appendix document, together with copies of all the consultation materials specifically prepared to support the work on the framework.

## How the framework will be used

Following the two successful workshops events, there is now a greater understanding of the topic areas that the Two Waters strategic framework can address with a degree of certainty and those areas that will need to remain flexible, or will be addressed by a future master plan.

The strategic framework therefore indicates the council’s intentions for the future formal planning policy framework for the area and the council wishes it to be taken into account now. This strategic framework is a material planning consideration that may justify proposals which are contrary to the Local Plan. The council will also need to take account of emerging information, such as further studies on access and movement, land ownership and other site-specific matters, and consider how this information may affect the proposals outlined here. The Two Waters area needs to fit into the wider vision for the town and the borough, especially in terms of meeting wider housing and employment needs. Any displaced uses should generally be found new accommodation elsewhere.

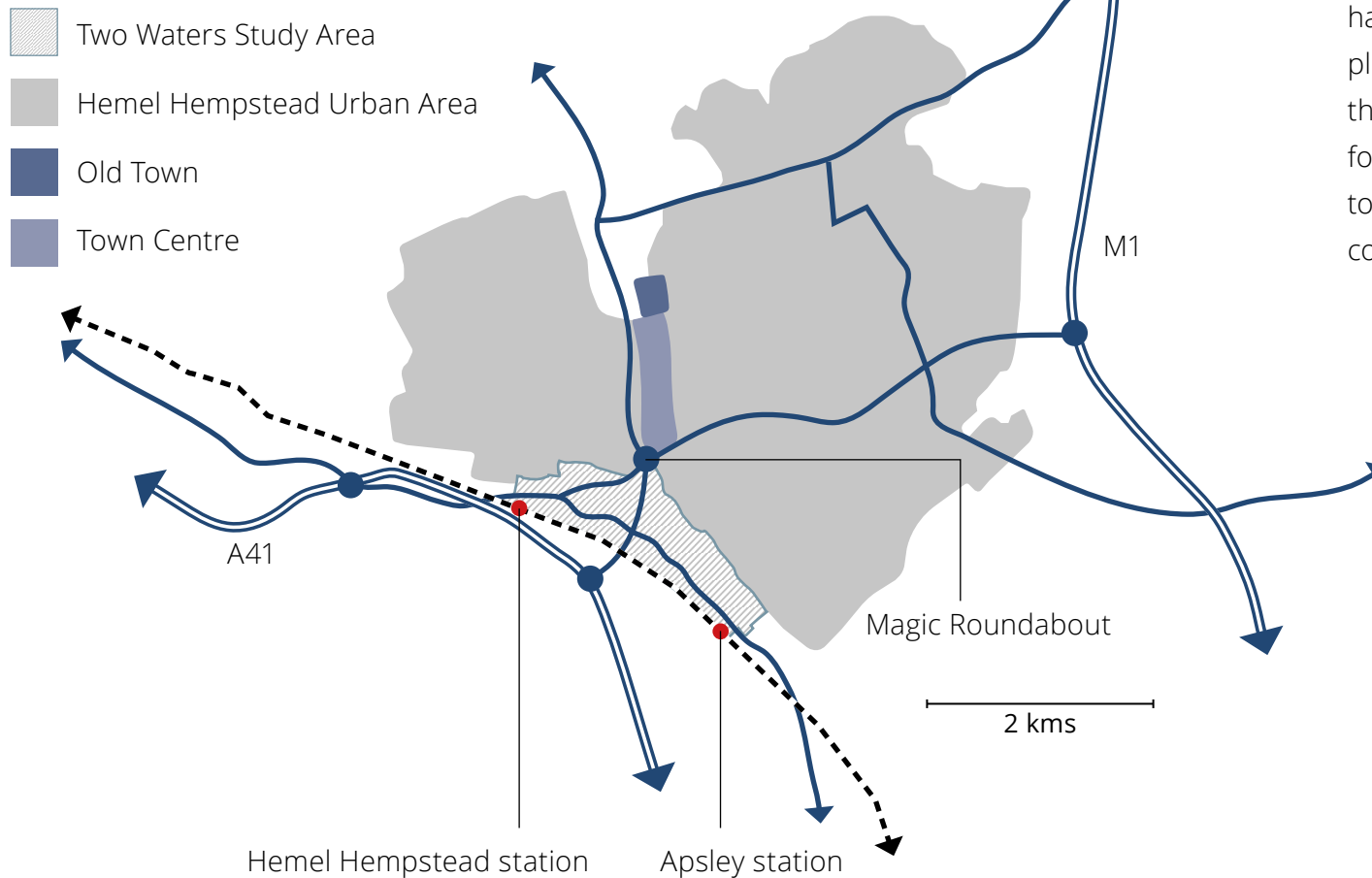
## Issues & opportunities

Over the following pages (11 — 17) is an objective assessment of the qualities and opportunities that the Two Waters area currently presents, presented through a series of photographs taken by the study team. These photographs, and the issues they illustrate, were also used to inform participants of the issues at the start of the two consultation and engagement events.



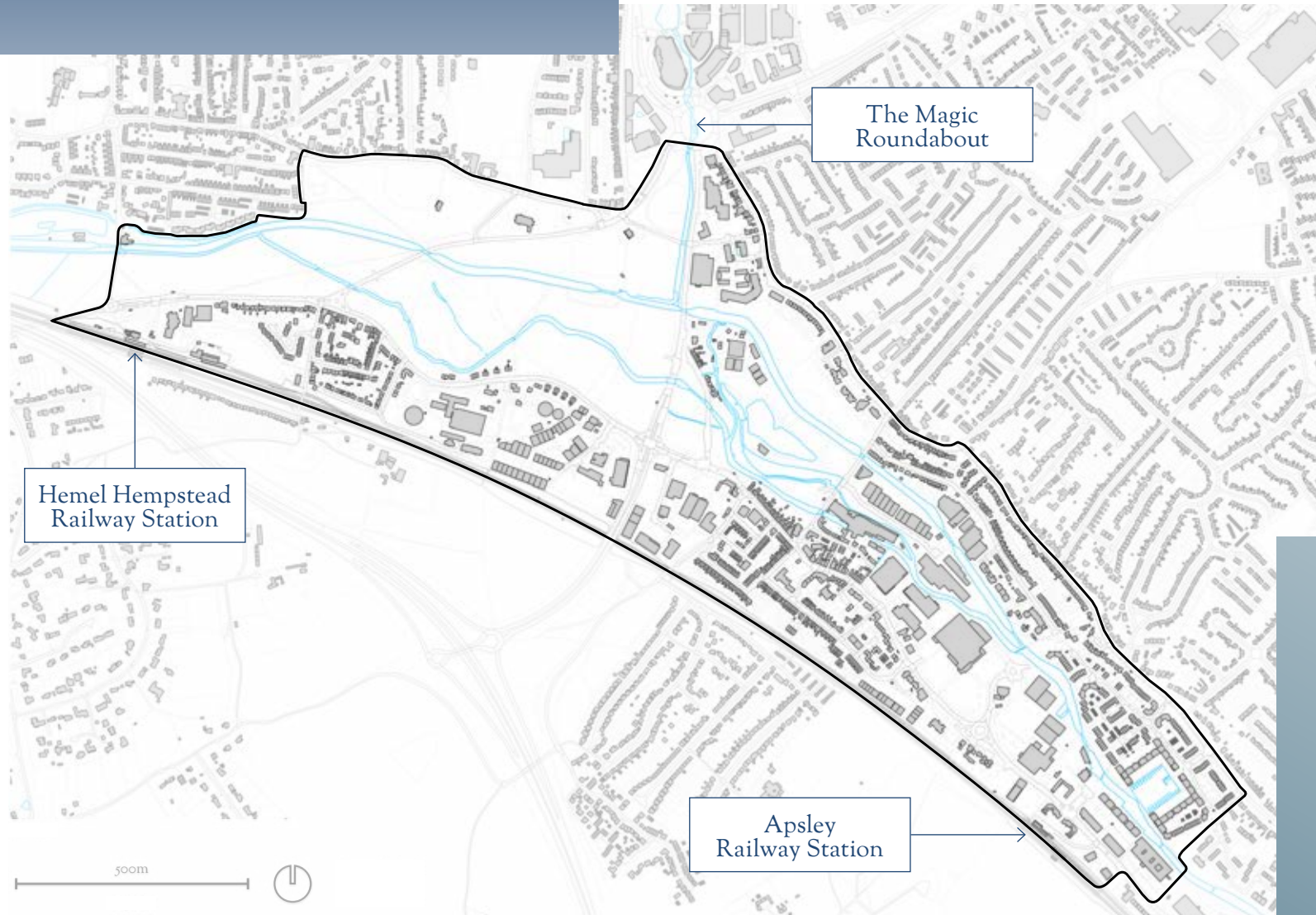
## Strategic Location

The Two Waters study area covers approximately 124 hectares on the southern edge of the Hemel Hempstead urban area. Anchored in the west by Hemel Hempstead railway station, in the east by Apsley railway station and to the north by the Magic Roundabout. Both the Town Centre and the Old Town have recently been subject to master planning and development strategies of their own and the strategic framework for Two Waters will help unite the town core with its southern edge in a coordinated manner.



The site is of strategic significance for the town, acting as a southern gateway

## Site Context



The three features that help anchor the study area

## Issues & Opportunities

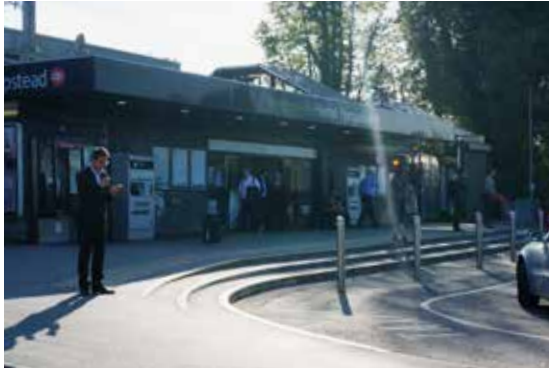


The Grand Union canal runs through the site, providing good opportunity for walking and cycling links alongside the water. However, industry tends to “turn its back” on the water creating several blank edges.



Other sections of canal are edged with new development that provides a sense of overlooking and natural surveillance. This makes these areas feel safer to use. House boats also add to the activity levels alongside the water.





Hemel Hempstead in the west is the busier of the two railway stations, with regular trains direct to London in only 20 minutes. The station car park is very popular with commuters.



Meanwhile, Apsley station in the east is not as busy as Hemel Hempstead and has fewer direct services to London.



Apsley High Street is located in the eastern part of the Two Waters areas. A traditional local high street, it contains a lively mix of local shops and services but can be blighted by traffic congestion at peak periods. Further east beyond the high street can be found big-box format retail units (including a Sainsbury's supermarket) and light industrial units.



The Corner Hall neighbourhood, on the eastern side of the study area, contains some significant heritage buildings. These act as local landmarks and add to the rich mix of architectural types and forms across the area.



Contemporary architecture is also present across the study area and this further adds to the sense that there is no dominant overall style or form to development in the area. The framework will seek to strengthen this idea of an eclectic yet coordinated mix of forms and styles.



The area has many wide roads, big junctions and narrow pavements, as shown here in Apsley. This can often make walking a frustrating experience.



The Station Road — London Road junction is a key decision point in the street network for the area.



The large junction at the A414 Two Waters Road — A4251 London Road crossroads was highlighted as a significant bottleneck for peak-time traffic problems. While there are pedestrian facilities around this space, the scale and size of the junction deters walking in this area. New development is also starting to be established immediately adjacent to this junction.



East of the Two Waters Road and north of the Grand Union canal is a B&Q retail unit. The car park is adjacent to the water's edge. There was a general acceptance at both workshops that this was not the best use of valuable land close to the water. Redevelopment opportunities in this location, should they arise, must create more intensive, more "people-centred" forms of development and the framework will acknowledge this.





Three-storey, flat-roofed housing can be found north of the canal in the western part of the site. While “of its time” in terms of form and architectural style, the waterside development was seen as relatively successful at the workshop events and could be model for future waterside redevelopment opportunities elsewhere in the Two Waters area.



The variety of architectural forms in the area is marked and cottages can be found alongside the canals just as readily as flats and higher density forms of dwelling. The framework will seek to protect this variety as a characteristic of the area.



Local landmarks, such as the Fishery Inn, are important social and economic reference points for the study area.



Higher density housing can be found in the Apsley area, close to the lock development and the railway station. Higher density around public transport nodes will be encouraged by the strategic framework.



London Road contains less intensive land uses (e.g. car dealerships) that are currently subject to change of use applications. The strategic framework needs to provide guidance on how this can be managed in a coordinated way.



London Road provides access to recreational land and parking congestion can arise as a result.



The green open land in the heart of the study area is owned and managed by the Box Moor Trust. This land provides a valuable resource for all Hemel Hempstead residents and visitors but is under increasing pressure as it becomes more intensively used. The strategic framework therefore seeks to increase access to the less well-used parts of the recreational network in order to relieve some of this pressure. Furthermore, the intensive redevelopment of sites in and around the study area should be asked to contribute towards the protection, management and enhancement of this major recreational resource.





There is a close geographical relationship between the town centre and Two Waters area, that lies immediately to the south. The recently completed town centre master plan is now in place and one of the aims of the strategic framework for Two Waters is to help unite these two areas in a coordinated manner.



Creating opportunities for people to get close to the water has been a critical component of many successful regeneration projects in recent years. Despite a significant length of canals and rivers across the area there are surprisingly few opportunities to simply sit out and enjoy being part of a waterside environment. The Fishery Inn (above) is one of the few establishments that allows public access to the water and the area could benefit from more such venues.

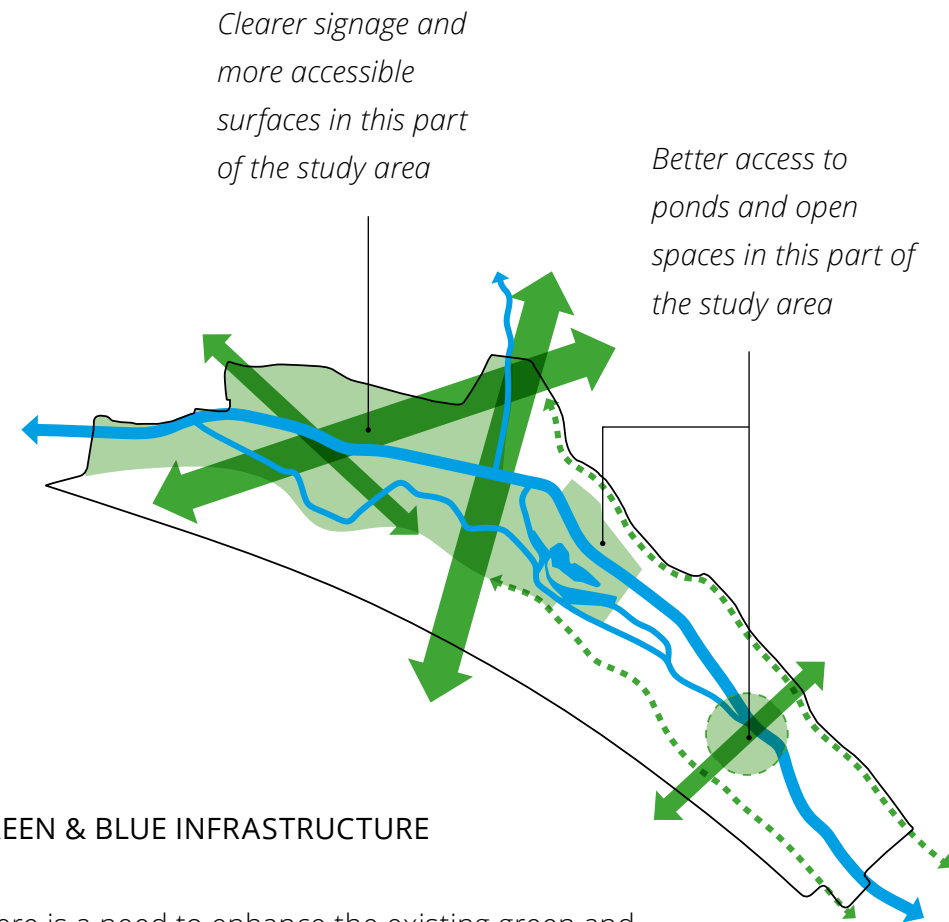


# A Vision for Two Waters

The Two Waters area is complex and ever-changing but there are some key issues around which the strategic framework has been able to establish some design and planning principles around some important fixes. These are set out here in a series of five diagrams, created to address the issues of green and blue infrastructure; land uses and attractions; streets and movement; and edge conditions.

These diagrams were prepared by the Feria Urbanism team and are based on both its own assessments of the study area and the outcomes of the two consultation workshops.

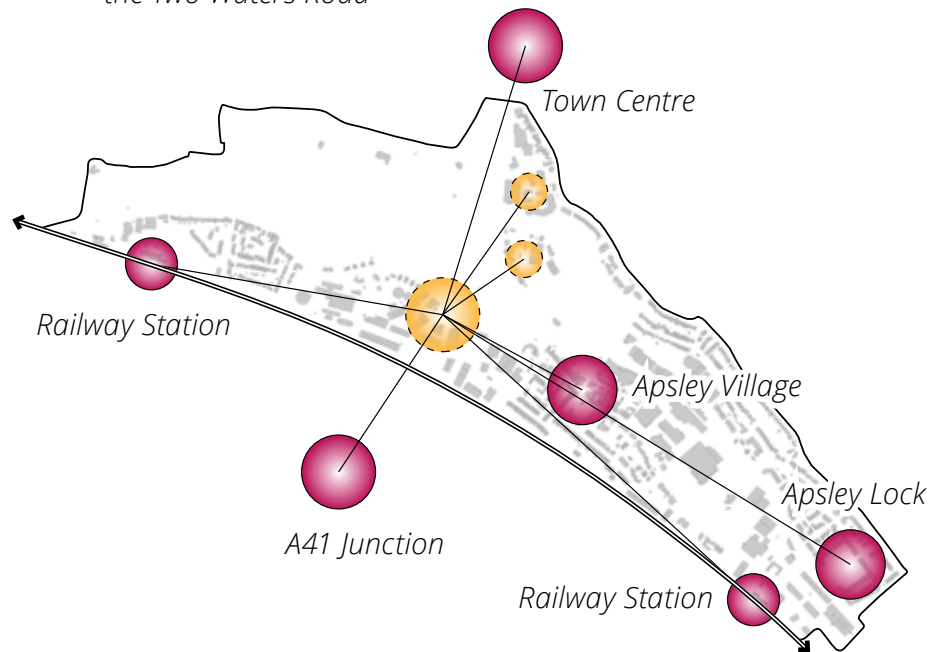
These diagrams should be seen as high-level information to guide the overall vision for the area. They should be read alongside the series of four more detailed drawings in this report (see pages 25, 29, 33 and 37) which essentially comprise the strategic framework proper and address four critical components of place-making i.e. uses and activities, access and movement, streets and spaces and form and detail.



## GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

There is a need to enhance the existing green and blue network and extend a connected network deeper into the south east of the study area to help relieve the pressure on the more accessible areas in the north west.

● Key redevelopment opportunity areas along the Two Waters Road



### LAND USE & ATTRACTIONS

Connect the study area with the anchors at the corners through active travel modes and create new focal points along the Two Waters Road at the key redevelopment opportunity sites.

➔ Redevelopment of land south of London Road to look over the top and between development in front to obtain views of open space



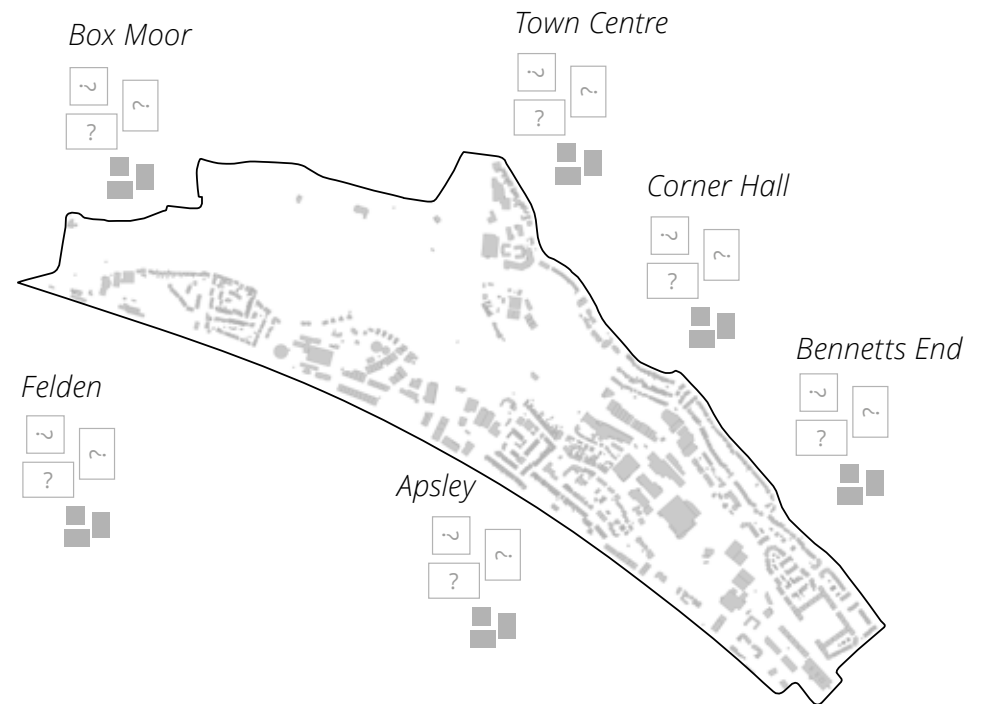
### THE LONDON ROAD GOLDEN THREAD

Create a "golden thread street" running along the southern edge of the study area. London Road is to be re-imagined as an attractive address street that links together areas of change.



## STREETS & MOVEMENT

Develop a clear and legible street pattern to better connect the area with its surroundings. Reduce traffic congestion across the network and create a strong spine street running north-south linking the A41 with the town centre in the form of a green boulevard or similar.

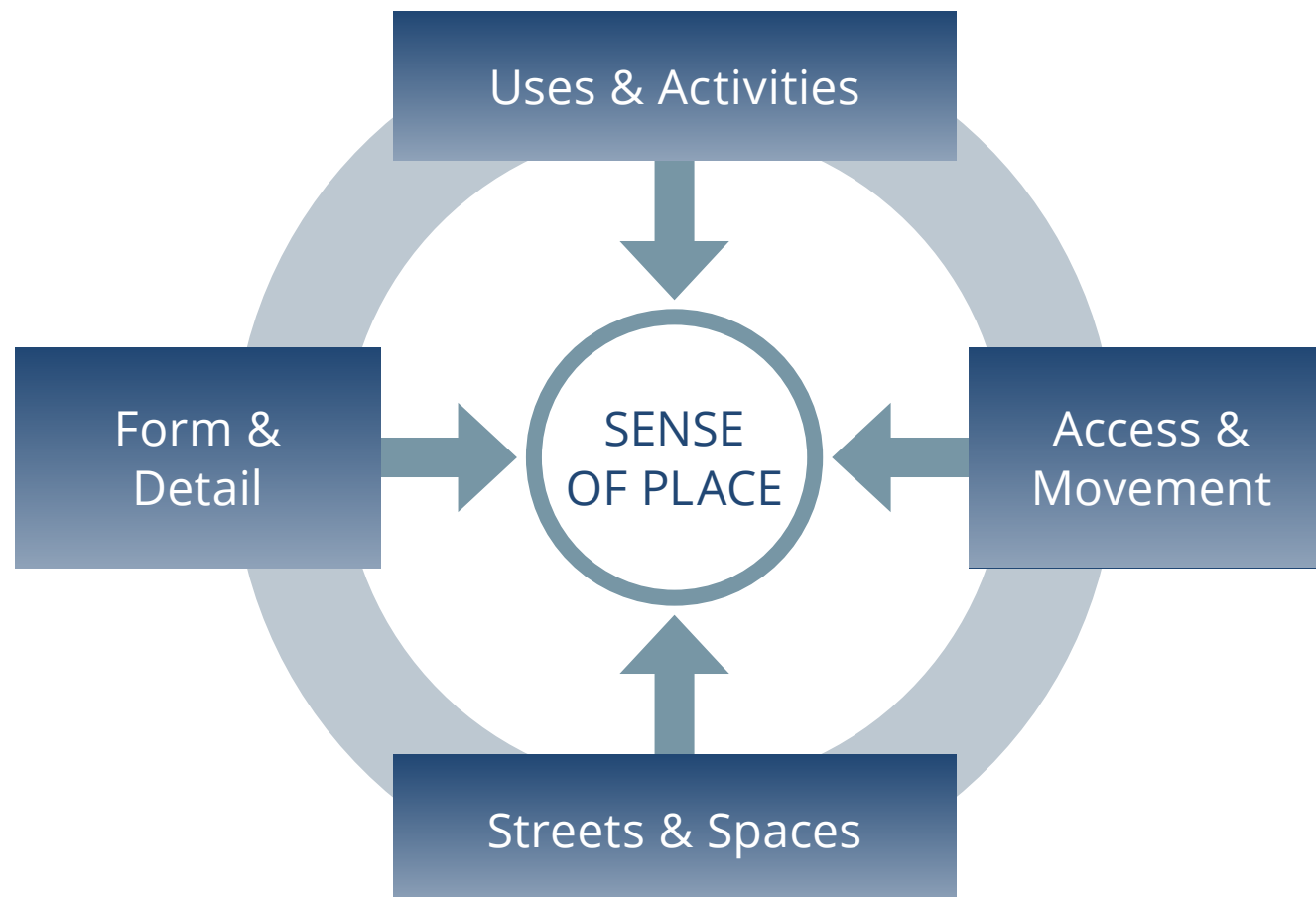


## RESPECT THE EDGES

Be a good neighbour to the surrounding residential areas. Understand the communities that live and work in the surrounding areas and ensure they have enhanced access to an improving and evolving Two Waters area.



## What creates a sense of place?



In order to create a positive sense of place, the four components of place i.e. uses and activities, access and movement, streets and spaces and form and detail need to work in harmony to support one another. Therefore, the strategic framework has looked at each component part in detail before fitting them together to create an integrated approach to place-making for Two Waters. This methodology provides a robust set of tools to inform future development opportunities.

Ensuring that all four components are working in harmony will be critical to a successful future

# Uses & Activities

What are the changing patterns of land use and activity across the study area?



There is a growing pressure to redevelop employment and industrial land for residential purposes. The framework therefore seeks to manage this change in a coordinated way to ensure an appropriate balance between living and working is maintained across the Two Waters study area. It does this by identifying specific areas where such as shift will be encouraged and the criteria that will apply.

## Right use, right place

The two workshop results suggested that one of the key roles for the strategic framework is to establish a clear vision for the future distribution of land uses that encouraging the right sort of development in the right areas. The criteria to define what is the right location has been informed by the local landscape context and the strategic context, linking Hemel Hempstead town centre with the outlying anchors of the railways stations and the A41 road access.

Therefore, to ensure sustainable land use patterns for Two Waters, the strategic framework needs to encourage certain areas to be developed in certain ways through adherence to an adaptable set of planning and design criteria. This includes the ground floor mix of uses. The consultation work also revealed anxiety about a potential imbalance between housing and other equally important elements in a successful neighbourhood, such as community infrastructure including medical and educational services.

## Business relocations

The relocation of businesses from Two Waters to other, potentially more appropriate, locations in the town or in the borough, also needs to be considered as part of a future master planning stage. It was considered vital to the future of the area that business development is given as much focus as housing delivery.

## Longer term options

The workshops also revealed a radical interventions as regards a major rail project, the relocation the two train stations to a single, more central location, about midway between the two current locations. While this was seen by many participants as either impractical or too costly there was nevertheless a sizeable number of views reflecting this concept as something to pursue further. Consideration should therefore be given at the master plan stage to safeguarding land in this general area for such a major rail project and a separate work stream could be commissioned to understand in more detail the feasibility and deliverability issues associated with such a bold relocation project.



The area contains a wide variety of employment uses and while there is pressure to redevelop these for more economically valuable residential uses, there needs to be a future strategy that addresses retention/expansion or off-site relocation to other sites in the town or borough.



## Future master plan work

The following uses and activities issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis and include:

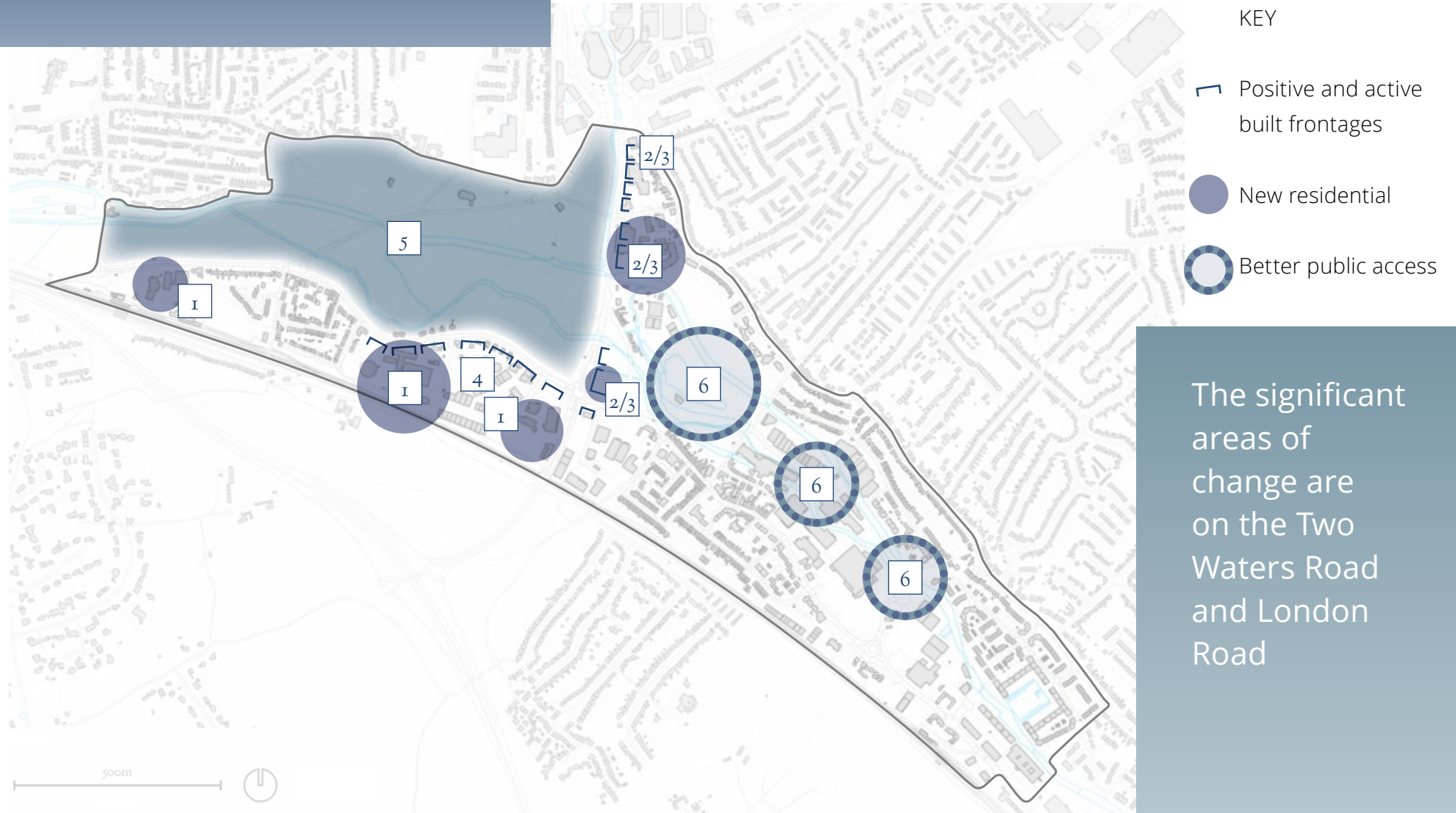
- Creation of more detailed “proving” layouts to demonstrate site-by-site floor space capacities;
- Indicative and/or accurate floor space areas in square metres;
- More precise guidance over land uses mixes, as defined under the formal Use Class Order designations (i.e. A1, A2, A4, B1 etc.)
- Upper floor land use mix indications and how this may or may not relate to the associated ground floor uses (i.e. viability testing);
- Incorporate a strategy for employment retention/expansion or off-site relocation to other sites in the town or borough;
- Further work needs to be done to test the feasibility of relocating the railway station as the costs are likely to be considerable. A new station on a four-track railway requires realignment over a considerable distance to provide for island platforms. It may also require widening of the Two Waters Road bridge.
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

## Uses & activities

The strategic framework advises that the following uses and activities guidance should apply:

- 1 A general shift away from employment uses and towards residential land uses south of London Road;
- 2 A general shift away from employment uses and towards residential and leisure-based activities to the east of Two Waters Road;
- 3 Substantial sections of active ground floor uses, such as niche retailing, leisure (e.g. food and drink) to the east of Two Waters Road, looking westwards over the open spaces;
- 4 Significant stretches of positive frontage design, such as attractive residential ground floors, to create a safe and secure public realm on the southern edge of London Road;
- 5 Continue to maintain and enhance significant areas of recreational open space in the centre of the study area — these are well-used at present but will require future investment and protection as the area becomes more intensively used by a growing residential population;
- 6 Open up new areas of open space through enhanced access to the water courses and bodies of water to the east of Two Waters Road in order to create a more opportunities for recreational activity but also to relieve the pressure on the more intensively used areas of recreational land.

# Uses & Activities Framework Plan



KEY

Positive and active built frontages

New residential

Better public access

The significant areas of change are on the Two Waters Road and London Road



# Access & Movement

What are the different ways people will move across the study area?



Peak-time traffic congestion was identified at the first workshop as the number one challenge faced by the Two Waters area. The second workshop explored a range of solutions to address this challenge and almost all of them involved greater provision and support for non-car modes of travel, especially walking and cycling.



## Better non-car alternatives

Encouraging walking and cycling was a key recommendation from both workshops. These active travel improvements should be aimed principally at commuters using the stations in the morning and evening peaks to help reduce the number of cars heading across the Two Waters area. The number of “green network” alternatives across the study area gives Two Waters a head-start over other similar sized-areas faced with the same challenges even if the increased intensity of development expected in future years is likely to result in an increase in traffic, at least over the short term, until such green alternatives are effectively in place.

A localised Hemel Hempstead bike hire scheme, with docking points at both railways stations and near the Magic Roundabout should be considered as it is likely to appeal to both weekday commuters and weekend leisure riders too. Improving canal towpath surfaces and lighting will help make these alternative network routes cycle-friendly. The introduction of more frequent bus services and the implementation of new bus priority measures

was also suggested. Such bus priority measures need to be investigated through more detailed access and movement work to assess the effects of the reallocation of existing road space.

Peak-time traffic congestion is considered a critical issue within Two Waters and the workshop results suggest that much of this traffic, especially along London Road is due in part to commuters travelling to and from both railway stations. This traffic flow can be further obstructed by parked cars and tight bridges along. Some participants at the workshops believed that the introduction of a new central train station (i.e. relocation the two train stations to a single, more central location, about midway between the two current locations) could help alleviate this problem.

## Car parking

The workshops revealed a desire to see greater car parking provision across the Two Waters, especially at the railway stations, but providing more parking space for cars is only likely to encourage greater cars use within Two Waters and therefore add to current traffic congestion.



The area has a significant length of waterside routes, and while much of this network is way-marked participants at the workshop events felt more could be done to make these routes more legible and more accessible.

## Future master plan work

The following access and movement issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis. Access and movement topics for a master plan to address include:

- More precise street and/or carriageway widths;
- Location and extent of underground services and how this may affect delivery/costs;
- Travel demand patterns, to be determined through movement survey work;
- Car parking levels, to be informed by more detailed proving layout work and site capacity testing (i.e. number of residential units will inform car parking levels);
- Public transport viability, for example on new routes and services;
- Rail provision/re-provision of station requirements and expansion;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

## Access & movement

The strategic framework advises that in terms of access and movement, the following guidance should apply:

- 1 Two Waters Road should become a “green boulevard approach road” linking the town centre with the A41; The street should be multi-modal with renewed emphasis on active travel modes (i.e. walking and cycling) and include bus priority measures;
- 2 London Road needs to become an “address street” with redevelopment opportunity sites providing strong active frontages to the street. This street should also be multi-modal with renewed emphasis on active travel modes;
- 3 London Road needs more frequent pedestrian crossing points, especially close to origin/destinations such as the railway stations;
- 4 The Station Road and London Road junction should be redesigned as a civic space with shared-space or free-flowing traffic qualities; The A414 and London Road junction needs to be simplified and incorporate better cycling and walking infrastructure while supporting a smooth and efficient flow of traffic;
- 5 Waterside routes and canal tow paths require smooth, well-drained surfaces to encourage access for all across all seasons;
- 6 Areas with higher levels of parking demand are likely to be found in the where clusters of taller buildings will be permitted.

# Access & Movement Framework Plan



Given its green and open nature, the area must prioritise active travel



# Streets & Spaces

What qualities should the different streets and spaces have across the study area?



Perhaps the defining quality of Two Waters is the green and open nature of the landscape at the heart of the area. This is the memorable image for the visitor and local resident alike. Green, attractive, distinctive, dynamic and open were the top five descriptors as established by the tasks at the first workshop and now the framework needs to set out how these qualities can be maintained and enhanced.

## Green spaces, civic spaces

While there is a glorious green heart to the study area, there is a marked absence of high quality civic spaces (e.g. market squares, town squares, small hard-landscaped spaces etc).

A primary candidate for a new civic square is Hemel Hempstead station, that currently offers a poor quality welcome to visitors. Such a new civic space could be introduced if the area also accommodates an increase in workers and residents through the redevelopment of the adjacent sites. At the very least, the landscape and public realm across the station forecourt front needs to be improved and there should be high quality mapping and signage (e.g. legible city infographics) of the Two Waters area available to visitors on arrival.

Apsley is another area that would benefit from the introduction of a proper civic space. A small-square to accommodate local events (e.g. farmer's markets) will help give this active community a greater sense of identity and focus. Further engagement with the residents, businesses and landowners is required to pursue this idea.

## Green routes, great streets

As already mentioned, the Two Waters Road should become a green boulevard approach road linking the town centre with the A41 junction. The street should be multi-modal with renewed emphasis on active travel modes (i.e. walking and cycling) and include bus priority measures. Avenue planting along this street will help deliver the step-change that is sought.

## Continuity & enclosure

Potential redevelopment of the B&Q site offers the opportunity to create a waterside destination for the public, perhaps anchored by leisure uses and food/drink uses. Redevelopment principles for this site should insist on direct access to a public waterfront and the creation of a high quality civic space as a focus for the area.

Any redevelopment of the site needs to be economically viable and deliver a regular income to the Box Moor Trust (the site's landowner) as income from this site contributes greatly to the upkeep of the green open space in the heart of the Two Waters area.



Two Waters Road is a primary route into the town centre and lead to a positive user-experience, with high quality development edging the street and overlooking the open space to the west. However, the current land uses and urban forms fail to exploit this opportunity and therefore the framework sets out how redevelopment could bring about a positive change in this area.

## Future master plan work

The following streets and spaces issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis. Streets and spaces topics for a master plan to address include:

- Further work needs to be done to test the feasibility and deliverability of the small-scale civic space envisaged in the Apsley area. The area of search for this space is likely to be in and around the big-box retail units and successful delivery may result in the loss of some parking spaces in return for an attractive focal point for the neighbourhood. Further engagement with the residents, businesses and landowners is therefore required to pursue this idea;
- More detailed street and/or carriageway design standards and widths;
- Hard and soft landscape specifications, such as planting schemes and design details;
- Maintenance regimes;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

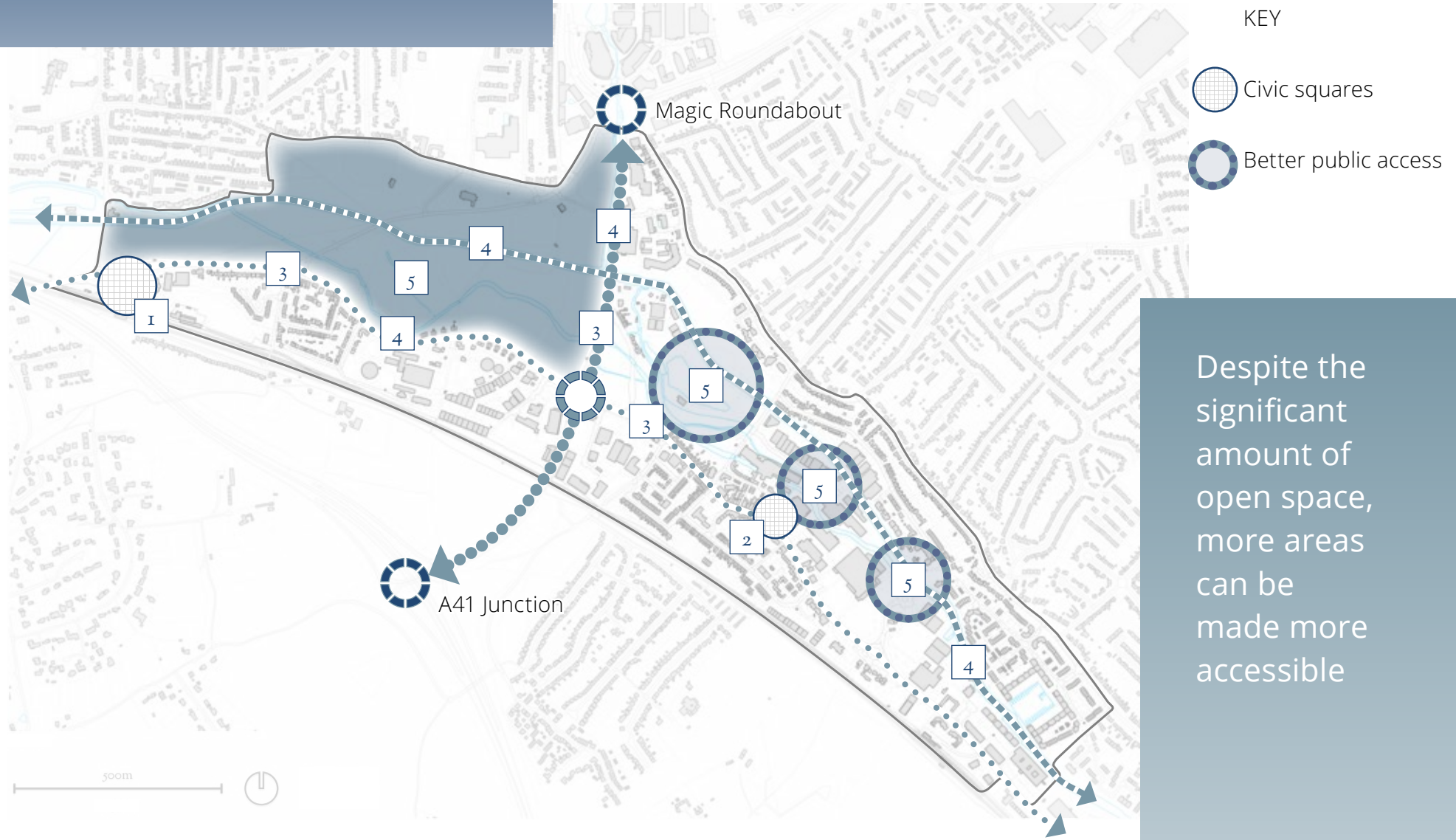
## Streets & Spaces

The strategic framework advises that in terms of streets and spaces, the following guidance should apply:

- 1 Key public realm interventions are required around Hemel Hempstead railway station to deliver a new civic square and welcome space; this landscaped space could be cross-funded/linked to new residential development on adjacent sites;
- 2 A small-scale civic space (i.e. approx. 25m x 25m) in Apsley to provide a focus for the local community should be delivered; a small area of existing surface car park may be needed to deliver this high quality pedestrian-focused landscaped square;
- 3 The implementation of street-tree planting schemes to create avenues and/or boulevards along Two Waters Road and sections of London Road will be encouraged; such interventions can raise land values on adjacent sites and widen the redevelopment opportunities as well as mark out the primary movement routes and reinforce the street network hierarchies;
- 4 The user experience for all streets and spaces should be walkable, safe, convenient, connected, active and open;
- 5 Significant investment in the maintenance of the green opens spaces in the heart of the study area together with new investment to open up and offer greater accessibility to the green and blue infrastructure network to the east of Two Waters Road.



# Streets & Spaces Framework Plan



## Form & Detail

Which architectural and design principles should inform new development proposals?



The combination of buildings, green open space and the local environment is key to the charm of Two Waters. The rich mix of architectural styles across the area provides an attractive backdrop and the design quality of the many individual buildings and structures, such as the canal bridges, enhances this mix further. New designs need to be complimentary to this existing mix. The delivery of quality open space alongside innovative architecture was a key design feature of the original 1947 New Town plan and the strategic framework seeks to recapture the spirit of this pioneering movement.



## Distinctive design

Workshop participants described Two Waters as being distinctive due to its unique mix of design styles that nevertheless integrate well e.g. old and new architecture compliment one another. Future master plan work should seek to create design codes (or similar) specific to the area in order to better define exactly what is distinctive about the area how this ideas can be realised through future developments.

## Taller buildings

There was general agreement at the second workshops that general agreement that the area south of the Magic Roundabout, Hemel Hempstead station and the A414 and London Road junction are suitable places for a taller building clusters. Building heights along the Two Waters Road could be lower than that suggested at the workshop (i.e. 5-6 storeys) as development should not over-shadow the canal and not be too overpowering.

Likewise, Hemel Hempstead railway station is also in a sensitive location, with a more

immediate proximity to the Box Moor Trust open space than some other areas. Taller buildings here also need to acknowledge the presence of more domestic-scale urban forms further east along London Road.

## High density, high quality

Should higher density forms of development come forward, then the necessary infrastructure (e.g. high quality pocket parks, communal gardens) to support these higher density new residential forms is needed. Without this open space provision to offset the intensity of the development, then the pressure on the Box Moor Trust land is only likely to increase further as new residents seek recreational opportunities across the heart of the area.

## Two Waters Road

New development edging the Two Waters Road should be set back to allow sufficient space for attractive boulevard tree planting and the provision of multi-modal movement infrastructure (e.g. generously wide cycle paths).



Functional and attractive two-storey domestic-scale architecture can be found across the Two Waters and makes up the bulk of the “background” buildings across the study area. While there is a pressure to deliver more innovative, high-rise developments (with some schemes already being granted planning permission subject to agreement) care must be given to the successful juxtaposition of these contrasting urban forms.



## Future master plan work

The following form and detail issues remain outside the scope of the strategic framework but can be addressed by a future, more detailed master plan for Two Waters. These topics are to be confirmed through a formal master planning brief, that takes the strategic framework as its basis and include:

- Building density i.e. calculations based on plot ratio, site coverage, viable developable areas etc;
- Design codes, or similar, setting out specific architectural approaches;
- Detailed building heights policy;
- Topography and building heights advice based on AOD figures;
- Materials, detailed form, massing and rooflines;
- Other issues, to be determined by a future master planning brief.

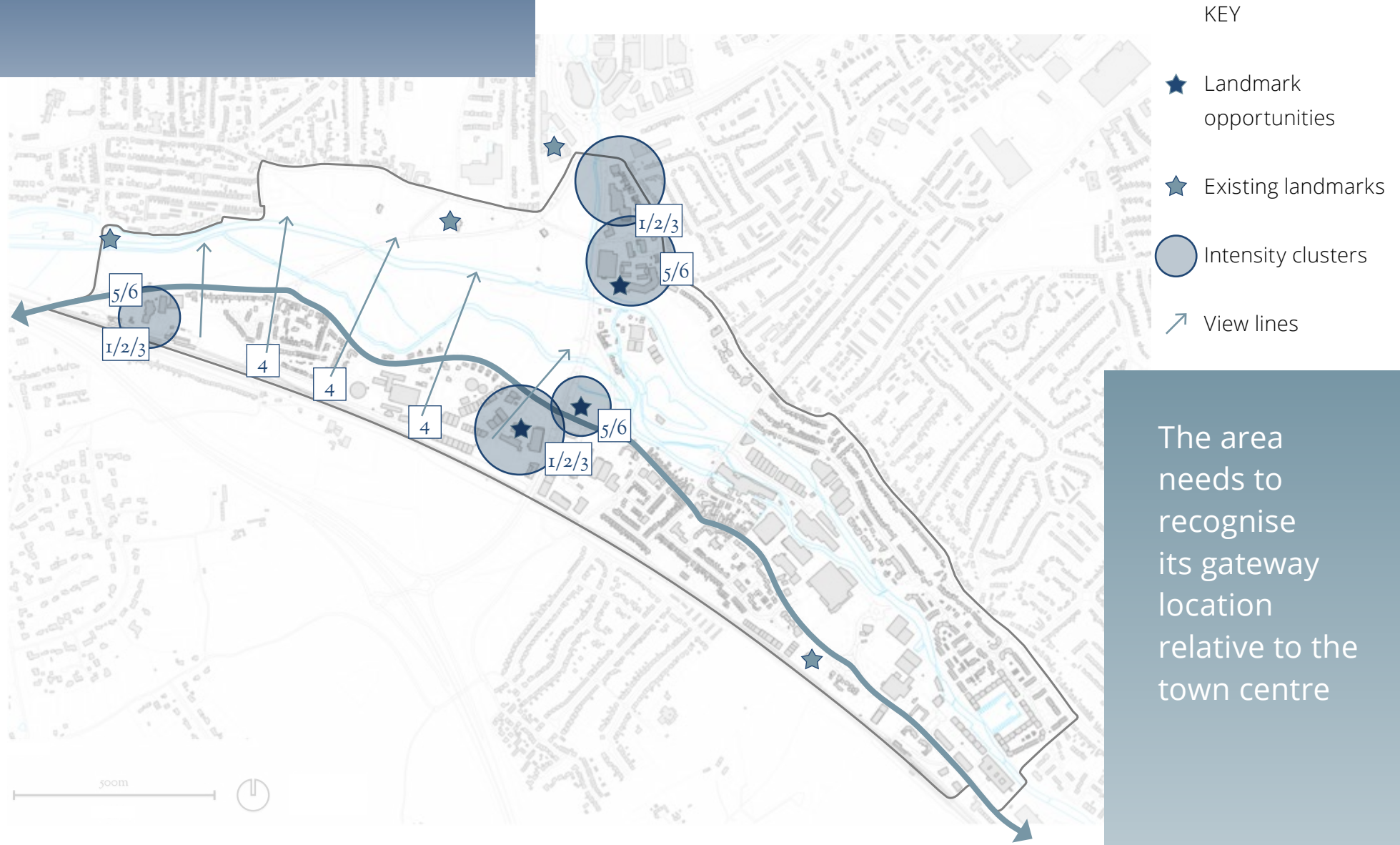
## Form & Detail

The strategic framework advises that in terms of form and detail, the following guidance should apply:

- 1 The creation of greater intensity around Hemel Hempstead railway station, the Two Waters Road and the A414 and London Road junction; this intensity can be offset by open gaps in between the development to provide views to and from the open space;

- 2 The creation of taller building clusters around Hemel Hempstead railway station, the Magic Roundabout and the A414 and London Road junction; Careful consideration about how such clusters will impact on neighbouring developments and longer distance views to be resolved through future master plan work;
- 3 Taller and more intense development needs to be in areas of high accessibility so the successful implementation of active travel modes to these identified areas will be critical;
- 4 In areas where the land rises (e.g. between London Road and the railway line) redevelopment should positively exploit this level change to allow longer distance views into open countryside to the north either between or over the top of other buildings;
- 5 A fresh contemporary approach to architecture will be welcomed but care is needed to ensure scale, density and visual qualities enhance and compliment the existing built forms, especially heritage assets and more domestic scale architecture;
- 6 The pioneering tradition of the New Town movement, especially its deliver of high quality homes through innovation in architecture can be reinterpreted for Two Waters in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Contemporary ways of achieving this include ecological innovation, technological innovation and community asset building, for example.

# Form & Detail Framework Plan



KEY

- ★ Landmark opportunities
- ★ Existing landmarks
- Intensity clusters
- ↗ View lines

The area needs to recognise its gateway location relative to the town centre



The first workshop provided a wide range of views on the Two Waters area.

See Report Appendix for details.





The second workshop provided a rich range of information and opinion on the future of Two Waters.

See Report Appendix for details.







