



cheltenham

urban design framework

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Contents

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Overview
- 1.2 Background
- 1.3 Purpose of this Report

2. Economic Baseline

- 2.1 Population
- 2.2 Employment Trends
- 2.3 Business Sectors
- 2.4 Economic Activity, Skills and Qualifications
- 2.5 Deprivation
- 2.6 Economic Policy Context
- 2.7 Property Market Conditions
- 2.8 Implications

3. Planning

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Planning Policy
- 3.3 Planning Strategy

4. Transport

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Previous Studies
- 4.3 Discussion Papers
- 4.4 Transport Policy Context
- 4.5 Road Network Review
- 4.6 Public Transport
- 4.7 Cycling
- 4.8 Pedestrian Access
- 4.9 Safety
- 4.10 Servicing Requirements
- 4.11 Parking
- 4.12 Travel Behaviour
- 4.13 Summary Implications for a Transport Strategy

5 Town Centre Urban Design Review

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Character Areas
- 5.3 Function of Streets and Street Scene Review
- 5.4 Public Art, Culture and Heritage Assets
- 5.5 Green Space
- 5.6 Public Space Usage and Quality
- 5.7 Signage and Wayfinding
- 5.8 Public Realm Management & Financial Implications

6. Sites

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Review of Sites in Public Ownership
- 6.3 Chelt Walk/ St James
- 6.4 Royal Well
- 6.5 North Place

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Cheltenham's Economy
- 7.3 Transport Implications
- 7.4 Urban Design Review
- 7.5 Development Sites
- 7.6 Indicators of Success

Drawings

2. Economic

Drawing 1: Cheltenham's Economy

4. Transport

Drawing 2A: Transport and Access
Drawing 2B: Transport and Access

5. Town Centre Urban Design

Drawing 3: Character Areas
Drawing 4: Function of Streets
Drawing 5: Quality of Street Scene
Drawing 6: Cultural Environment
Drawing 7: Historic Environment
Drawing 8: Green Space
Drawing 9: Public Realm

6. Sites

St James': Site Analysis
St. James': Photographic Analysis
Royal Well: Site Analysis
Royal Well: Photographic Analysis
North Place: Site Analysis
North Place: Photographic Analysis
Drawing 10: Land in Public Ownership

Appendices

A Freight Map
Bi Proximity to Bus Routes - under 30 min frequency
Bii Bus Routes - under 15 min frequency
C Proximity to Bus Routes - all services

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Halcrow Team comprises Aedas Architects, Colin Buchanan (transport and access), King Sturge (property consultants), Nisbet LLP (cost consultants) and Eaton Waygood (signage and public art consultants).

Civic Pride Partnership, consisting of Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), Gloucestershire Country Council (GCC) and the South West of England Development Agency (SWRDA) commissioned the Halcrow Team to deliver the Cheltenham Civic Pride Urban Design Framework (UDF). The commission involves bringing together, updating and taking forward a number of studies to form an Urban Design Framework. This Baseline report comprises the first deliverable of the Cheltenham Urban Design Framework.

SWRDA's Civic Pride guidelines are based on the principle that "good design and investment in the public realm lies at the heart of regeneration and sustainable development". Enhancing the public realm is essentially about enriching communities because the public realm is a shared space. Providing the connection between activities and destinations, it is a pervasive element of daily lives. For the Civic Pride Initiatives, the public realm is essentially a pedestrian experience, the emphasis being on lively and safe spaces, which accommodate outdoor activities, entertainment, meeting and gathering (as well as sustainable access and healthy lifestyles in a walkable environment).

SWRDA Civic Pride guidelines identify some of the key ingredients of a successful scheme as being:

Good quality design – a key ingredient of a project's success

Local distinctiveness – reinforcing the special qualities of an area

Sustainable design – impacts on natural resources, water and energy demands

Funding – access to funding and ensuring maintenance costs can be met

Stakeholders – engaging those affected by the scheme

Commissioning body – a proactive design and delivery process that includes agreement by the key partner, cross-disciplinary working

Regeneration strategy – all projects should form part of a wider regeneration strategy

Urban Design Framework – a vision of the area, setting out key design principles, providing a wider strategy for improving a neighbourhood

Development Brief – providing clear guide lines on site development

Public Art – involving artists at the outset
Planning consents – ensuring deliverability of a scheme

1.2 Background

The study builds on work already undertaken, primarily by Latham Architects who developed an initial Urban Design Framework as part of the Local Plan Review in 2001. The Framework received a high level of support locally, and set out a vision to "Create the future most beautiful town in England", based upon 6 themes:

- A place that attracts
- An historic town that looks to the future
- Distinguished buildings with civilised streets
- An accessible and walkable town
- A place for working, walking and leisure
- A community at ease with itself

The 2001 Latham Urban Design Framework was developed further into the Civic Pride in Cheltenham Report (2002), which dealt primarily with opportunities on a number of sites in Cheltenham, and provided the basis for the Borough Council's bid for SWRDA Civic Pride funding.

The main objectives of the SWRDA Civic Pride Initiative can be summarised as:

- Urban renaissance , through an improved townscape and hence economic and social prospects
- Good design
- Promoting social inclusion through improved access to public space
- Better management of public space
- Reinforcement of local distinctiveness
- Promoting accessibility and putting people before traffic
- Reducing opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour

The Latham Civic Pride Report (2002) report considered the role of the public realm in bringing together, visually and functionally, parts of the town centre that differ in use and history. The report conceives of the town centre as being comprised of routes and nodes. Key nodes (such as squares and transport interchanges) should be focal points, accommodating their use. In contrast, routes should facilitate safe, secure and convenient connectivity between these focal points, in a comprehensive and consistent manner. The report identifies a series of projects or opportunity sites in Cheltenham, and considers design solutions for these projects in some detail. However, while the Latham study more than satisfies the first ingredient of a successful project which relates to good design. There are a number of ingredients which are addressed only partially or not at all. Additional work is required in order to take the Latham further, as a suite of justifiable, deliverable and cost effective public realm projects capable of satisfying the Civic Pride objectives.

The Civic Pride Partnership has commissioned the Halcrow team to update the Latham work and other studies and to develop a suite of documents which will provide a planning context for decisions generally in Cheltenham town centre on development, transportation and the public realm and specifically on valuation, design, and development issues relating to landholdings in the Council's property portfolio. Essentially the requirement is for the preparation of an urban design strategy, a transport strategy and a public realm strategy, within which a programme of public realm improvements is to be developed. At the same time the development of 3 key sites publicly owned sites will be used to generate revenue to fund these public realm improvements.

The Partnership have defined the study objectives as follows:

Environment

- To provide a context for decisions on urban design, planning, transportation, street scene and maintenance issues which will produce a high quality and imaginative public realm
- To work within the principles of the SWRDA Guidelines for Civic Pride, and establish a reputation for environmental excellence in the town, providing a context for the implementation of public art, cultural and heritage projects
- To comply with regional strategies which attempt to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions

Economy

- To stimulate economic development within the town centre and contribute to regional competitiveness
- To link economic growth and town centre regeneration with skills retention and development
- To enhance the town's reputation as a national centre of culture and encourage investment in the leisure, tourism and retail sectors

Transport

- To set the context for reducing traffic impact, improving accessibility for walking, cycling, disabled people, public transport users, businesses and their service requirement
- To provide a context for the provision of accessible and safe off-street public car parking and for integrating local, regional and national bus and coach nodes

Sustainability

- To deliver a safe, innovative leading edge or "beacon" sustainable solution to provide benefits for people living, visiting and working in the town
- Set high standards of sustainable construction and work within existing planning policies, "Future Foundation" and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the South West

Property Management

- To provide the context for decisions on the management of the three town centre sites on the Council's property portfolio

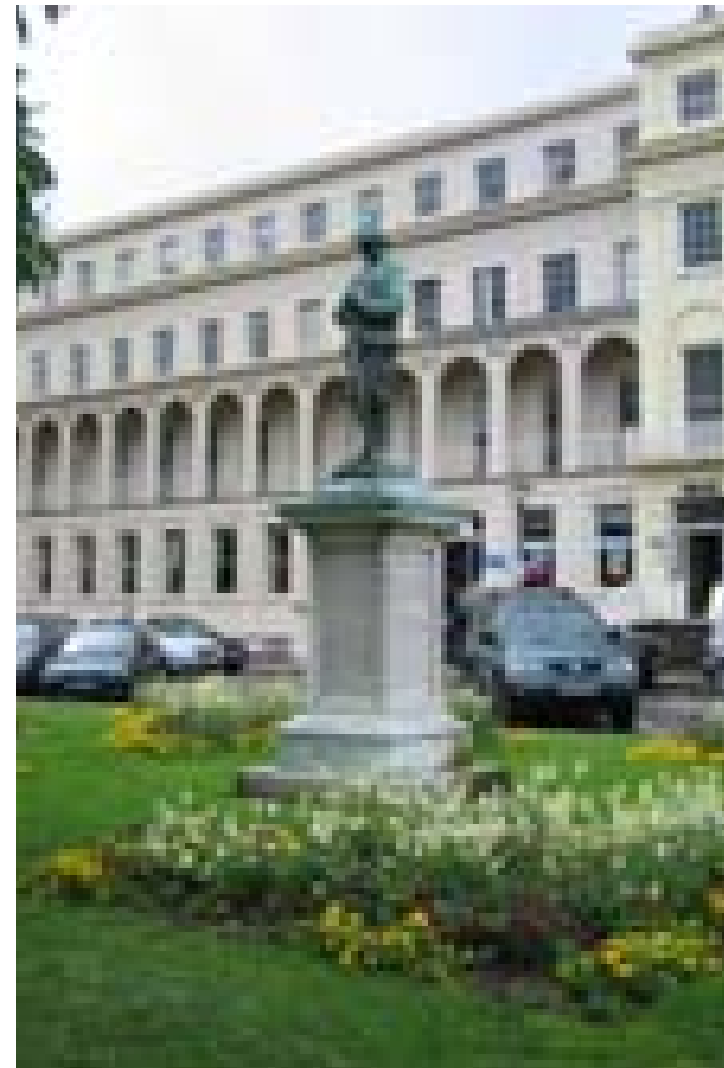
1.3 Purpose of this Report

This baseline report reviews and pulls together the existing studies and policies affecting the Cheltenham Civic Pride study area. It is intended to sit alongside the Latham Civic Pride Report, complementing and building upon this report, rather than repeating and reiterating Latham's analysis. While the Latham report was particularly design- oriented, this baseline report provides the economic, property market, transport and planning context for the Latham proposals and considers other elements such as signage and public art. It extends the previous analyses to cover the full extent of the Civic Pride study area, addresses gaps and uncertainties in the Latham analysis, provides an update of recent projects and initiatives, and integrates the outputs from more recent work undertaken subsequent to the Latham studies.

This baseline report is intended to provide a platform from which to launch the urban design, transport and public realm strategy development in next phases, by providing a solid rationale for future intervention. As such, it is intended to be used as a "handbook" by the Study Team, setting out the key issues relevant to each of the workstreams, and enabling a cross-disciplinary appreciation of the key issues. The baseline report also includes essential data to be used as part of the sustainability appraisal of development options, which will be necessary to progressing the individual site masterplans/ development briefs through the planning system as Supplementary Planning Documents.

The report itself includes a series of drawings on which much of the baseline data (obtained from CBC and through on site assessment) is shown. This data has been developed as a series of CAD layers which can be overlain and will be fundamental to informing and refining intervention proposals in later stages.

In addition to this baseline report, four approach studies have been undertaken, considering the experience of arrival in Cheltenham from London Road, Cirencester Road, Evesham Road and the pedestrian approach from the station along the Honeybourne Line. These approaches were not assessed by Latham, and the studies are intended to complement the analysis in this baseline report as well as the completing the full set out studies of the approaches, initiated by Latham. These approach studies are set out in a separate self standing report, and forms part of the Phase 1 Baseline deliverables package.



1.4 Structure

The report contents have been developed in response to the Phase 1 requirements of the Partnership's Cheltenham Urban Design Framework briefing document.

Section 2 provides an economic baseline review of the study area, identifying key growth sectors, Cheltenham's performance, and a basic commercial supply and demand appraisal. This section sets out core economic objectives for the UDF.

Section 3 considers planning policy and sets out a strategy for obtaining SPD status.

Section 4 consists of a town centre baseline transport review, considering the implications of the Latham proposals, as well as a review of transport policy, recent studies and issues.

Section 5 sets out the baseline urban design approach, considering character areas; street scene; public art, heritage and cultural assets; urban green space; the use of public space and a signage review.

Section 6 considers the individual sites selection, confirming the most appropriate sites to be taken forward, and considering how development could meet economic objectives, urban design impacts and sets out optimum development site boundaries along with initial development options.

The conclusion in section 7 highlights the outcomes of the baseline analysis and the implications for future phases. It also sets out recommended indicators for measuring the success of the Civic Pride initiative.

2. Economic Baseline

2.1 Population

Cheltenham is a medium sized market town with an estimated population of 110,900 (2004 Midyear Population Estimate, Office of National Statistics). The population age profile is older than average with some 17.2% of the town's population is aged 65 and over compared to the average of 16.1% in England and Wales.

The town's general economic position is one of prosperity and relative affluence. The average income per head in 2002 was £18,956, some 11% higher than the national average . The median gross annual pay in 2005 was £24,973, higher than the county, regional and national averages (The Economy of Cheltenham – 2002 Update, GLMIU, October 2004).

Table 2.1: Median gross annual pay (2005)

Cheltenham	£24,973
Gloucestershire	£22,980
South WEst	£21,736
England and Wales	£23,200

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS

Cheltenham's economy is autonomous in many respects but not self-contained overall. It forms part of the greater sub-regional economy with strong links to Gloucester and the central Severn Vale area of economic activity.

2.2 Employment trends

The Cheltenham economy experienced significant growth throughout the 1990s and early 2000s and remains one of the key drivers in the regional economy. The town is a major sub-regional employment centre, with more than 62,000 jobs recorded in 2004.

The town's key employment sectors include financial and business services, distribution/ hospitality, public services and (to a lesser extent) manufacturing. According to 2002 data almost a third of Cheltenham's employment is in the public administration, education and health sector (32%), with a further 28% in distribution, hotels and restaurants, 18% in financial and business services and 12% in manufacturing.

Employment trends over the period 1998-2004 indicate declining dependence on traditional construction and manufacturing industries and significant growth in the distribution/hospitality and public administration/education/health sectors. Overall, the number of jobs in all sectors increased by 8% in the period 1998-2004

Table 2.2: Cheltenham main employment sectors (1998-2004)

Industry	1998	2004	Change 1998 to 2004
Manufacturing (SIC D)	10,318	7,702	-25%
Construction (SIC F)	1,989	1,795	-10%
Distribution, hotels and restaurants (SIC G,H)	14,972	17,492	+17%
Transport and communications (SIC I)	1,354	1,345	-1%
Banking, finance and insurance, etc (SIC J,K)	12,438	11,379	-9%
Public administration, education & health (SIC L,M,N)	14,344	20,078	+40%
Other services (SIC O,P,Q)	2,071	2,418	+17%
Total (including smaller industries)	57,618	62,287	+8%

Source: ABI, NOMIS

Small and medium size enterprises are the lifeblood of an area's economy and are indicative of its dynamism and entrepreneurial spirit. Some 96% of Cheltenham businesses employ fewer than 50 people and 67% employ less than 4. These firms are important to Cheltenham and the wider sub-region, not least in supporting the local labour market, generating wealth and economic activity and improving external perceptions of Cheltenham as a place to do business.

Table 2.3: Cheltenham enterprise size breakdown (2004)

Size of enterprise (by number of employees)	1-4 employees	5-10 employees	11-24 employees	25-49 employees	50 or more employees
Percentage of all enterprises	67%	16%	9%	4%	4%

Source: NOMIS, ABI

2.3 Business sectors

The significant fall in manufacturing employment is in line with national declining manufacturing trends. The number of Cheltenham based manufacturing companies registered for VAT also declined significantly between 1998 and 2004 (Table 2-3). During 2003 and 2004 alone 100 manufacturing companies closed down while only 45 started up.

The last decade or so saw an impressive start up rate for real estate, renting and business activity firms; over the period 1998-2004 some 1,350 new companies registered for VAT. At the same time however, some 1,000 real estate, renting and business activity firms closed down, highlighting the high volatility of the sector.

Even though employment in banking, finance and insurance declined by 9% between 1998 and 2004, the number of VAT registered financial intermediation companies more than doubled during the same period, suggesting a shift towards smaller (even one-person) sized companies.

Table 2.4: Cheltenham VAT stocks (1998-2004)

Industry	1998	2004	Change 1998 to 2004
Manufacturing (SIC D)	355	290	-18%
Construction (SIC F)	345	390	13%
Wholesale, retail and repairs (SIC G)	700	695	-1%
Hotels and restaurants (SIC H)	225	270	20%
Transport, storage and communications (SIC I)	105	100	-5%
Financial intermediation (SIC J)	45	105	133%
Real Estate, renting and business activities (SIC K)	1,295	1,495	15%
Public administration; Other community, social and personal services (SIC L,O)	255	265	4%
Education; health and social work (SIC M,N)	60	75	25%
Total (including smaller industries)	3,435	3,725	+8%

Source: ONS

Retailing is an important part of Cheltenham's economy and the town centre has a healthy retail sector popular with both local residents and visitors/tourists. Along with Gloucester it is one of the sub-region's two major shopping centres. Cheltenham has an estimated shopper catchment of 233,000 (derived by CBRE using NSLSP data), ranking it at 44 in the Promis Top 200 town centres in the UK. Cheltenham ranks 22nd on the basis of its PMA retail score and 20th on the PMA fashion score and has broadly the expected volume of quality retail provision given the size and affluence of the shopping population .

The town centre has a total gross floorspace of 120,700 m² over 680 retail outlets and a greater focus on comparison shopping facilities. More than half of the town centre's retail floorspace is comparison goods, about a quarter of floorspace is service and 5% of floorspace is convenience goods.

The output of retailing in Cheltenham was valued at around £181 million in 2000 and retail employment increased by 14% over the period 1998-2004. However, Cheltenham's strong retail performance in recent years and the town centre's retail prospects for the future need to be viewed in the context of increased retail competition from other retail centres as well as alternative emerging means of retail such as internet and digital television shopping.



Tourism and the night-time economy are also significant contributors to the town's economy. Gloucestershire Tourism estimate that in 2000 some 6 million visitor trips were made to the area generating some £256 million in visitor expenditure . Cheltenham has several long-established visitor attractions including its impressive variety of festivals; cultural and sporting events; Regency architecture; conferences; diverse retail provision and relaxed, spa-town atmosphere. The town's night-time economy has grown rapidly in recent years and is estimated to generate between £21 and £31 million annually. (Sources: PROMISlive Cheltenham Retail Report, June 2006, Cheltenham Borough Local Plan: The Economy, Cheltenham Borough Local Plan: The Economy)



2.4 Economic activity, skills and qualifications

The town's economic activity rate is higher than the national and regional averages but lower than the county average. The percentage of people claiming unemployment benefits is lower than the national average but higher than the county and regional averages (Table 2-4).

Table 2.5: Economic activity and claimant rates

Industry	Economic activity rate Jun 2004 - May 2005	Claimant rate Jun 2005 - May 2006
Cheltenham	82.7%	2.1%
Gloucestershire	84.0%	1.6%
South West	81.6%	1.5%
England and Wales	78.6%	2.4%

Source: ONS

The skills and qualifications profile of Cheltenham residents is exceptionally high. This is reflected in the proportion of working-age people qualified to NVQ Levels 3, 4 and above. During the period June 2004 – May 2005, 55% of all Cheltenham working-age residents were qualified to Level 3 and 40% were qualified to level 4 or above. These figures are noticeably higher than the county, regional and national averages.

Table 2-6: Qualification and skill levels

Industry	NVQ Level 3	NVQ Level 4+
Cheltenham	55.2%	40.0%
Gloucestershire	48.4%	28.6%
South West	46.6%	26.0%
England and Wales	44.5%	25.8%

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

The highly skilled and qualified labour force is one of Cheltenham's key strengths and a great asset for its future economic growth and development. However, the declining trends in traditional low-skill employment sectors such as construction and manufacturing present growing challenges for those people at the lower end of the skills and qualifications market. Furthermore, there appears to be a skills gap in a range of employment sectors including IT, tourism, customer care and marketing.

To help address potential skill gaps, a number of Sector Skills Councils (SSC) have been established, covering a diverse range of industrial and business sectors including (amongst others):

- Science, engineering and manufacturing technologies;
- Retail;
- Financial Services;
- Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism;
- Construction; and
- Audio Visual Industries.

Potential skills shortages could be at least partially addressed by the influx of foreign workers to the United Kingdom in recent years. These foreign workers predominantly from Eastern Europe, but also and other parts of the world are often highly skilled and qualified. The local economy could benefit from utilising their skills and knowledge to address skills gaps with additional social benefits in terms of enabling them integrate into the local community.

2.5 Deprivation

Cheltenham is a relatively affluent town. However, as with many other towns and cities, general levels of affluence and prosperity can mask pockets of persistent deprivation.

According to the 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Cheltenham has one super output area (SOA) ranked in the 10% most deprived in the country (St Paul's Ward – located to the north of the study area). Table 2-7 summarises the most deprived SOAs in Cheltenham and how they rank in the 2004 IMD.

Table 2-7: Cheltenham most deprived SOAs (2004)

Super Output Area	Ward	National rank (1 = most deprived, 32,482 = least deprived)
E01022152	St Paul's	2,138
E01022160	Springbank	4,148
E01022133	Oakley	4,695
E01022122	Hesters Way	4,698
E01022120	Hesters Way	5,130
E01022121	Hesters Way	5,503
E01022147	St Mark's	5,526

Source: Indices of Deprivation, ONS

Hesters Way ward while not having any areas of extreme deprivation (in the 10% most deprived nationally), does have three super output areas (out of four in the ward) ranked in the 20% most deprived nationally. Overall, Cheltenham as a local authority is ranked 238th out of 354 local authorities in England (where the local authority ranked 1st is the most deprived and the one ranked 354th the least deprived).

2.6 Economic Policy context

Cheltenham's existing economic situation, its future prospects and strategic objectives need to be assessed within the greater regional, sub-regional and local economic policy context.

2.6.1 Regional and sub-regional policy context

i) Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006-2015

The strategy sets out an ambitious picture for the future of the region's economy and its contribute to the wider regeneration and prosperity of the South West. Main opportunities (closer European integration, growing population, skilled labour force, low unemployment levels, entrepreneurship and innovation) and threats to the region (ageing population, peripherality, off-shoring and outsourcing of manufacturing and service industries) are identified.

The strategy recognizes that the general affluence and well-being of the region masks the existence of areas of persistent deprivation, mainly disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, which the strategy targets for sustainable development and regeneration.

The Strategy promotes the region's cities and larger towns as viable and attractive places to live, work, shop and recreate. Investment in infrastructure, culture and regeneration is seen as vital to the success of these urban centres and Gloucester/Cheltenham is identified as a key area with the potential for a far more significant role in the region.

ii) The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy 2003-2014

The Strategy identifies five strategic objectives for the economic growth and development of the sub-region:

- Improve transport, accessibility and infrastructure and ensure the adequate supply of employment land;
- Develop employment opportunities, support SMEs and encourage business start-ups;
- Promote skills and training, matching the skills of the labour force to the requirements of the labour market;
- Meet the area's urban challenges, with a firm focus on the regeneration of Cheltenham and Gloucester town centres; and
- Meet the area's rural challenges, maximising the economic potential of Gloucestershire's rural environment while protecting and preserving the quality of the countryside.

The Strategy prioritises the need for investment in the physical fabric and infrastructure of Cheltenham town centre. The Strategy also suggests that although Cheltenham and Gloucester have independent roles as employment, cultural and tourist centres, for many purposes they function as a combined economic entity. It is considered that co-ordination of investment in transport infrastructure and a unified approach to economic and spatial planning could have benefits in terms of economies of scale, raising the profile of the Severn Vale as a location for inward investment.

The Strategy supports the Civic Pride proposals for regenerating Cheltenham Town Centre, building on its cultural strengths and diversity and maximising external funding opportunities.

2.6.2 Local policy context

i) Cheltenham Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy

The Strategy's ultimate goal is to enable a prosperous and sustainable local economy, providing high quality and accessible goods and services; supporting enjoyable, fairly paid jobs; and retaining a high quality of life, both for visitors and local residents.

The guiding principles of the Strategy include improving all aspects of quality of life, promoting sustainability, encouraging partnership working and enhancing social responsibility. Some of the Strategy's main themes include promoting a thriving economy, a decent standard of living and an attractive and safe town.

The Strategy identifies five strategic objectives for the economic development and regeneration of the town:

- A diversified and sustainable local economy;
- A quality approach to the town;
- A skilled labour force;
- Employment creation and economic regeneration; and
- Sustainable transport infrastructure that meets business requirements.

As part of the above, the Strategy prioritises appropriate inward investment, improving the quality of the town centre, maximising the potential of the night time economy, supporting business and providing quality business premises, pedestrianising the town centre and improving transport management and accessibility.

ii) Cheltenham Borough Local Plan (Adopted June 2006)

The Economy

The Plan's objectives include maintaining and enhancing the economic vitality and diversity of the Borough while safeguarding the most versatile employment land. The Plan acknowledges that even though some additional employment land has been provided in recent years, an even greater amount of employment land has been lost to other uses. The scarcity of development opportunities in the urban area necessitates the careful allocation of land between employment, commercial, residential and other uses.

The Plan endorses the Government's planning policy guidelines on the location of future development for business use, adopting the sequential approach to the selection of sites (town centre locations being the first choice, edge of town centre locations second etc).

With regards to the tourism and night-time economy, the Plan recognises their importance and contribution to the economic growth and prosperity of the town but also highlights potential issues associated with traffic congestion and parking pressures (tourism) and crime or fear of crime (night-time economy). The Plan also identifies the need to maintain and improve the stock of serviced accommodation in the town so that the town can meet the qualitative and quantitative needs of visitors and successfully compete in an increasingly competitive tourism market.

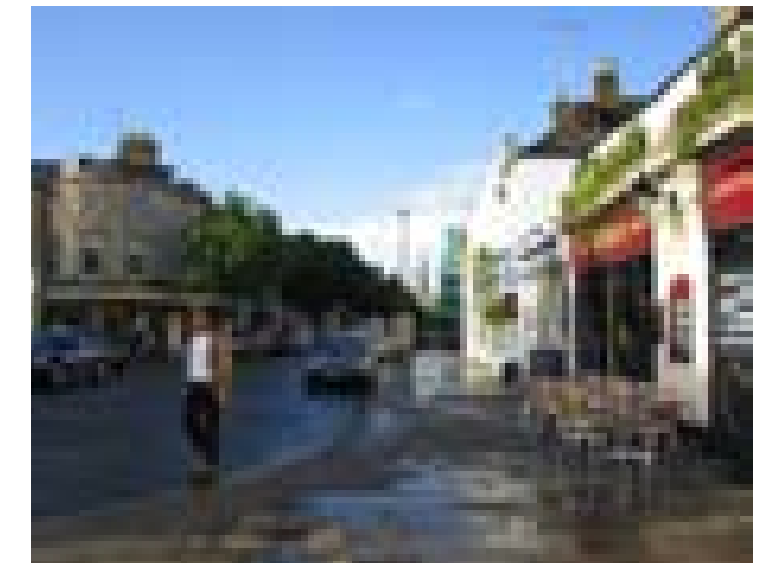
Retail

The Plan recognises the significance of retail to the town's economy and highlights the town centre's position as a major sub-regional shopping centre. With regards to existing and future retail developments, the Plan aims to maintain the concentration of shopping within the three established Central, Montpellier and High Street West End town centre shopping areas.

The retail capacity analysis undertaken by Donaldsons in support of the plan indicated there is no further need for convenience goods floorspace but there is need to identify additional town centre floorspace for unit shops of between 9,900 and 11,800 m² gross. Additionally the analysis identified the need for 26,000 – 30,000 m² gross floorspace for bulky goods retailing, although part of this need could be met by existing commitments or additional floorspace within existing sites.

PPG6's "primary shopping area", "town centre" and "edge of town" terms need to be defined in the context of Cheltenham's unique layout characteristics for the purposes of the sequential test and approach to development. The Plan sets out the following sequential hierarchy for the location of new retail developments:

- Central Shopping Area;
- Montpellier and High Street West End Shopping Areas;
- Elsewhere within the Core Commercial Area;
- District or neighbourhood shopping centres; and
- Accessible out of centre sites.



iii) Cheltenham's Night Time Economy Strategy 2004 to 2007

The Strategy recognises the role and importance of Cheltenham's night time economy, estimated to be worth in the region of £21 - £31 million. It identifies that most night time activities are concentrated within the town centre and recognises that the town centre should remain the focus of such activities in the future. The Strategy identifies the challenges relating to the night time economy such as disorder, crime, litter and anti-social behaviour and sets out a series of aims and objectives:

- Coordinate planning and licensing operations to more effectively manage licensed premises and businesses;
- Provide improved facilities for all users of the town centre at night;
- Encourage a more diverse night time economy that will appeal to more people and improve its image and perception;
- Create a safer and cleaner town centre environment at night; and
- Respect and enhance the quality of local residents' lives.

The Strategy links into the Cheltenham Civic Pride initiative by recognising the need for urban spaces to be welcoming, well lit and well used. Reclaiming, underutilised, poor quality open spaces will improve people's sense of safety in and around the town centre and will act as a catalyst for changing their perceptions, culture and behaviour.

2.7 Property market conditions

2.7.1 Retail uses

Cheltenham town centre's prime retail pitch is the area located on the Central High Street between the junction with North Street and Winchcombe Street. Retailers represented within this stretch include Marks & Spencer, Boots, WH-Smith, Virgin Megastores and Dixons. Furthermore there are fashion retailers such as French Connection, Top Shop, New Look and Dorothy Perkins. A number of the traditional banks and building societies are located in this area which sees the highest level of footfall. Regent's Arcade is located in the vicinity and comprises a two level covered shopping centre and connects the central area with the Cavendish House of Fraser department store.

The Promenade offers a high quality secondary pitch and is a quality shopping destination both in terms of retailers and the environment that it provides. Retailers include Cavendish House department store, Jaeger, Habitat, Karen Miller, Austin Reed, Jigsaw, Oasis, GAP and Waterstones. The area also provides an eating and drinking destination with restaurants and bars including Pizza Hut, Pizza Express, Bella Italia, Café Rouge and Starbucks, helping make the Promenade a pleasant shopping and eating destination.

The west of the High Street has partially been pedestrianised with the remainder now only open to one way traffic. Compared to High Street and the Promenade this area is a lesser quality location. The Lower High Street offers an eating and drinking location with the focus in this area being on pubs, cafes and restaurants.

Montpellier is considered a niche shopping location, with specialist and independent retailers. It is physically distinct from the remainder of the town centre and offers a different retail opportunity with a mix of specialist shops and cafes, restaurants and bars. Montpellier is considered the most relaxed shopping location within Cheltenham town centre .

The three main shopping streets in Cheltenham (according to street ranking TM which rates each street within a town centre based on its attractiveness and stores) are:

- High Street;
- Promenade Street; and
- Regent Street.

In January 2005 the vacancy rate in Cheltenham town centre was 5.6%. The prime area in Cheltenham remains fully let with only two units in this location changing hands between 2004 and 2005 .

Based on data from the Property Vacancy Register (Gloucestershire First) there are some 76,533 square feet of available retail space across in the town as a whole. This is broken down as follows:

Table 2.8 Retail vacancies

Size (square feet)	Amount of space available (square feet)	Number of units
1 - 499	2,481	7
500 - 999	16,452	21
1,000 - 1,499	12,515	10
1,500 - 2,499	3,889	2
2,500 - 4,999	24,667	2
5,000 - 9,999	16,529	7
10,000 - 24,999	0	0
25,000+	0	0
Total	76,533	49



In June 2006 there were 140 reported retail requirements for Cheltenham, against a national average of 56. (Note however, that this figure was derived from the Focus Property Database and may be inflated as the requirements may be county based rather than town specific.)

Cheltenham has a high level of demand for a town of its size and status. This is due to the high retail provision. Retailers who have recently expressed an interest in the town include :

- The Fragrance Shop,
- Past Times,
- Fop Records,
- Whistles
- CJ Hughes.

Prime rents in Cheltenham were strong during the 1980s peaking at £145 per square foot in the town centre in 1990. Rents fell back during the recession and stabilised at around £130 but rose back to £170 at the end of 2000 . Prime rents for Cheltenham town centre in 2006 are at £190 per square foot. (By comparison, prime rents in the Broadmead area of Bristol are at £180-£185, although this is expected to grow once the Merchants Quay extension is completed. Prime rents in Gloucester are at £130. These are located on East Street and are also forecast to increase once the redevelopment of Kings Square is completed.) While this reflects a healthy retail economy in Cheltenham, higher rents in the town do pose a potential threat to independent retailers who may be priced out of the area. This applies particularly to the independent traders on the west end of the High Street, whose presence contributes to Cheltenham's unique retail offer and charm. There is a need to ensure that opportunities for the small independent retailers are retained.

The prime retail yields in Cheltenham in 2005 were reported at 4.75%. It is anticipated that there has been some movement in this yield since then and the adjusted figure is now estimated to be closer to 4.25%. Retail continues to be a strong investment vehicle and it has continued to see tightening yields for good covenants.

There is a need to strengthen Cheltenham's unique retail centre putting in a total quality approach which includes culture, heritage and leisure. Key issues include :

- The need for improved access.
- The marketing of the town centres smaller more specialised shop offer such as Montpellier.
- A need to identify initiatives and strengthen which correspond to the environmental and social characteristics and aspirations of the town such as the farmers market, which is held twice a month and has proven very popular.

The non-shopping area is currently dominated by motorised transport, with high levels of traffic congestion, pollution and accidents. Effective traffic management and improved pedestrian provision are the key issues affecting the town centre and are of strategic importance when considering the vitality and viability of the town centre.

DTZ undertook a strategic assessment of the South West region's town centres, published in January 2006. It notes that the South West region lacks a strong regional centre with none of the regional centres being ranked within the top 20 ranking centres (based on size and attractiveness). In 2006 Cheltenham was ranked 30th which is an improvement on 2005 where it was ranked 31st. The town centre brings an annual income of £674 million per year which places it higher than other regional shopping centres such as Bath, Bournemouth and Cribbs Causeway. The improvement in this ranking indicates that Cheltenham is a thriving retail location that is continuing to grow in popularity.

However, there are constraints to this growth. For example, there are few or no opportunities within the primary shopping area for new developments required to meet identified retail and leisure facility needs . Beechwood Shopping Centre does offer opportunities for the expansion of the town centre and retail developments. This centre benefits from a shopping frontage to the High Street and is located within the primary shopping area. The location represents an area of underused land and through comprehensive redevelopment has the potential to provide a significant amount of additional floor space provision and large scale units which are currently lacking.

The area to the rear of the Council office and in front of the Royal Crescent represents an opportunity for small scale redevelopment and environmental improvements which would help create a leisure quarter. This area could be appropriate for restaurants, cafés, bars and retail units capable of accommodating small scale specialist retailers. Good design will be imperative in delivering appropriate development and the provision of public open space and seating would boost the profile of this site. The Urban Design Framework should encourage the links between the town centre and Montpellier.

In summary Cheltenham town centre is considered to be of a high quality providing diverse opportunities and shopping experiences. In order to maintain and build on the town's popularity however, it is essential to provide additional provisions that will enhance the retail offer within Cheltenham.

(Sources: Focus Report, June 2006, PROMISlive Cheltenham Retail Report, June 2006, Gloucestershire Workspace Policy Strategy, March 2005, DTZ Pleda Consulting)

2.7.2 Leisure and Tourism uses

As discussed earlier, Cheltenham is a well established leisure centre offering a wide selection of cultural and sporting facilities as well as eating and drinking venues which are popular with local residents and visitors/tourists. Existing leisure uses within the town centre include health clubs, museums, art galleries, a bingo hall, library, cinemas and community centres. However, when considering Cheltenham as a leisure and tourism destination, it is necessary to consider the provision of hotels, guesthouses and other accommodation facilities. Cheltenham currently has some 30 listed hotels and numerous guesthouses. At peak visitor times (such as racing events and festivals) there is a shortage of accommodation within the town.

It has been found that whilst the number of bed spaces in the town is increasing, the number of small guesthouses is falling. This is due (at least in part) to the financial incentives available for residential conversion. Gloucestershire First and Hotel Operators have confirmed there is considerable demand/requirement for sites/existing buildings for new hotel developments. There is also an additional need to provide conferencing facilities within the town centre, something that could be accommodated by good quality hotel developments. At the other end of the scale there is demand from the budget operators who would be prepared to consider developing a hotel as part of a mixed use scheme.

Planning Permissions have been granted for a hotel on the site opposite the new brewery development and a Big Sleep Hotel which is under construction within the town centre but there is still unsatisfied demand for greater capacity.

North Place may provide an appropriate opportunity for a hotel development especially when being considered alongside the surrounding land uses. The North Place site may be a suitable site for the provision of a large scale quality hotel with complimentary leisure and recreational facilities. Such a hotel should also provide additional, much needed conference facilities. Alternatively, if the Council Offices were to be accommodated elsewhere (for example, on the North Place site), the current building on the Promenade could be a prime location for a high-end boutique hotel.

In respect of the night time economy, there is a diverse selection of restaurants, pubs and bars with over ten listed nightclubs within the town centre, and a variety of options available to people (Locations are shown on Drawing 1; Cheltenham's Economy.)

However, these destinations tend to be spread rather than concentrated in a particular location, with no clearly defined evening economy zone. This makes it difficult for visitors to enjoy the benefits of Cheltenham's nightlife and renders the night time economy more difficult to manage and co-ordinate, with greater risk of anti-social behaviour and impacts on amenity arising.

Furthermore, the provision of family-orientated leisure facilities within Cheltenham is less comprehensive. While the evening economy in the town centre appears relatively buoyant, it is primarily orientated mainly towards the 18-35 age bracket. This gap in the market should be addressed in any future leisure development proposals.

The recent brewery development has sought to address some of these issues with the provision of new town centre leisure and recreational facilities including a 12 screen cinema and family orientated eating and drinking locations. The Gloucester Quay site that has now received full planning permission presents a potential source of competition for leisure uses in Cheltenham. The scheme includes proposals for some 70,000 square feet of leisure units including bars and restaurants. This development will also include a factory outlet centre and is likely to provide direct competition to the brewery development.

There are currently 15 Health and Fitness Establishments within Cheltenham which are predominately independent. A new Fitness First gym is contained within the brewery development site. Nevertheless, it is considered that there is a market opportunity for another health and fitness facility within the town centre, potentially as part of a hotel development.

Cheltenham is suitable for the expansion of leisure and tourism activities due to its catchment area and attractive retail and cultural offers. However, there are issues surrounding the viability of commercial developments for leisure purposes. Leisure facilities do not generate high land values and this is why they tend to be located away from prime commercial locations. We would anticipate the need to provide leisure facilities alongside other uses such as residential, where these developments could act as a catalyst generating the land value necessary to make leisure developments financially viable.

Note: When the planning application was made for the brewery scheme there was also consideration given to the provision of a casino facility. However, considerable local opposition to this scheme on top of strict casino development regulations meant that the plans to pursue such a development were dropped.

2.7.3 Office uses

Demand for commercial property remains good in Cheltenham with requirements for employment sites originating mainly from existing occupiers who are seeking to upgrade their accommodation. There is generally a lack of readily available sites for development and a number of office requirements cannot be accommodated due to the lack of developable sites within Cheltenham.

Brownfield sites are prioritised for employment development, although commercial viability is a concern. There is a need to protect the current office supply within Cheltenham, refurbish developed sites, increase the level of stock, provide more flexible accommodation to meet the requirements of many modern businesses practices.

The demand for commercial property remains goods with size requirements reflecting the County position with focus of demand on units up to 5,000 square feet . Cheltenham Borough does not have any major business or enterprise parks but there have been some large scale owner occupier developments on the fringe of the town such as the new GCHQ development, Endsleigh Insurance and Zurich Financial Group.

Based on data from the property vacancy register (Gloucestershire First) there are some 319,979 square feet of available office accommodation, broken up into the following size bands:

Size	Amount of Space Available ft²	Number of Units
1 - 499 ft²	6,255	21
500 - 999 ft²	17,606	23
1,000 - 2,499 ft²	30,742	21
2,500 - 4,999 ft²	40,324	11
5,000 - 9,999 ft²	67,584	9
10,000 - 24,999 ft²	85,679	6
25,000+	71,819	2
Total	319,979	93

These figures include both office accommodation situated in the town centre and out of town provision.

No prelets or purpose built were reported in Cheltenham for 2005. The Promis Report identified that take-up in the last 5 years was split between the town centre and out of town locations by a ratio of 60%:40% .

Cheltenham had an estimated office stock of 3.1 million square feet at the end of 2005. Some 18% of the existing office stock was completed since the end of 2000 and as such can be considered new stock. That is a relatively high percentage when considered against the national average.

Over the last 20 years completion in Cheltenham has totalled 1.2 million square feet equating to an average of 60,000 square feet per annum. In the last 5 years completion has averaged 112,000 square feet per annum. Over the 20 years to 2005 Cheltenham increased its office stock by 33%. This is lower than the national average of 46% .

In the Cheltenham market around 92% of space developed since the end of 2000 has been prelet or purpose built. There are currently some 6,000 square feet of office space under construction at the brewery site, a mixed use residential and leisure facility.

There are currently 1.9 million square feet of office space in Cheltenham's development pipeline (excluding developments currently underway); all of this has current planning permission. Of the schemes planned two are in excess of 100,000 square feet and one between 50,000 and 100,000 square feet. All of the space planned is located out of town.

In terms of specialised space the Cheltenham Film Studio is a key media cluster where opportunity to provide space should be supported. There are a number of examples of flexible managed workspace within Cheltenham Borough, such as the Eagle Tower that offers flexible office accommodation for a number of different requirements. Eagle Tower has been well received and there is now a need to provide a similar facility elsewhere.

Prime rents in Cheltenham were reported to stand at £14 per square foot at the end of 2005. Prime office rentals levied at £13.50 in 2000 and there was no increase until 2005 at which point rents of £14 were achieved. At this stage £14 per square foot only equates to town centre office accommodation and there is no data available for out of town accommodation.

Information provided by the IPD local markets model in December 2005 forecast that rental growth in 2006 would decline by 0.6% with an increase of 1.4% in 2007. These figures indicate that the rents being achieved in Cheltenham at the moment are considered to be at rack rent. At the end of 2005 the prime yield in Cheltenham was reported to stand at 6.25%. This is according to data provided by Cushman & Wakefield. Yields are now closer to 6%.

Source: PROMISlive Cheltenham Office Report, June 2006

Much of the office accommodation in the town centre is of within Regency style conversions. Whilst this creates an attractive environment it does not meet the operational needs of many modern businesses.

Discussions with local commercial agents highlighted: general lack of availability of modern office accommodation in the town centre
oversupply of Regency style accommodation
lack of car parking associated with Regency office provision significant out of town development due to lack of town centre opportunities;
static market

Agents stated that they would not recommend speculative building of office accommodation in town centre. Nevertheless, a number of known developers have expressed an interest in developing office/ mixed use accommodation within the town centre. This is not surprising given the desirable nature of Cheltenham and a lack of competing schemes.

2.7.4 Residential

The housing market in Cheltenham is diverse and buoyant. Cheltenham is regarded as a desirable residential location. This is due to a number of factors including its attractive architecture, culture and heritage offer and close proximity to the Cotswolds.

Cheltenham offers a good mix of accommodation with a high proportion of the residential apartments in the town centre. In recent years there has been a lot of commercial accommodation redeveloped for residential use. This is due in part to the problems surrounding Regency style accommodation to meet modern office requirements.

The market for new build accommodation within the town centre has been buoyant and active over the last few years. Through discussions with local agents we have been able to establish that there is still a very buoyant market for apartment accommodation within the town centre which is considered a desirable location for town centre living due to its retail, cultural and heritage offer. Consultation with residential developers confirm their favourable response to Cheltenham as a location and to the concept of residential/mix use town centre developments.

In respect to the existing housing stock in Cheltenham the market also remains very buoyant. The 2001 Census identified 48,164 residential dwellings in Cheltenham. The majority of households, 71.34% are owner occupied.

All Households	Owned Outright	Owned with Mortgage	Shared Ownership	Rent from Council	Rent from HS/SI	Rent from Private Landlord	Other
48,164	31.83%	39.18%	0.55%	10.12%	3.21%	12.07%	3.04%

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The average prices of detached, semi-detached, terraced houses and flats/maisonettes are significantly higher than the county averages. This statistic supports the fact that Cheltenham is a desirable residential location.

Source: Land Registry Residential Property Prices, Jan-Mar 2006

	Detached		Semi-detached		Terraced		Flat / Maisonette		Overall	
Cheltenham	Av £	Sales	Av £	Sales	Av £	Sales	Av £	Sales	Av £	Sales
	£375,696	90	£210,650	178	£215,843	191	£150,099	147	£222,106	606
County of Gloucester shire	£308,564	618	£179,119	826	£167,855	734	£134,936	334	£201,798	2,512

Residential Land Availability in Cheltenham Borough, April 2005

During 2004/2005 a total of 509 dwellings were completed in the borough. More than 83% of the completed dwellings were on previously developed brown field land. Planning permission was granted for 81 sites, a net increase of 510 dwellings during 2004/2005. Taking account of additions and losses as of April 2005, planning permission existed for a net addition of housing stock of 1,939 dwellings. The Gloucestershire Structure Plan covering the period mid 1991 to mid 2011 states that Cheltenham has a net housing requirement of 7,350 dwellings.

2.7.8 Development opportunities

Potential opportunities in respect of the 3 key sites identified in the Urban Design Framework Brief are set out below:

ii) Royal Well

Site extends to approximately 1.09ha
 Outstanding opportunity to provide one of the UK's highest profile regeneration / redevelopment schemes.
 Potential leisure / retail opportunity- restaurant and niche shopping location
 Council Office conversion to hotel / residential
 Create a new 'shopping experience'
 Bus Station relocation & resolution of ring road traffic issues is required
 High public realm requirement
 Linkage between town centre and Montpellier
 Residential/ mixed use – high architectural integrity required on any new build.
 High Value Site
 Consider site enlargement

iii) Portland Street/ North Place

Site extends to approximately 2.1 hectares
 Hotel Development to include leisure and conferencing facilities
 Potential office development – relocation of the Council Offices
 Mixed Use – leisure
 Fringe retailing larger out of town provision
 Residential
 Re-provision of bus station

i) St James/ Chelt Walk

- Site extends to approximately 0.45 hectares
- Adjacent land uses residential, offices and super store
- Prime residential location
- Edge of prime office location
- Potential office / mixed use location
- Suitable for large office development
- Car parking provision adjacent to site
- Access issues to be resolved

Demand & Initial soft market testing

Cheltenham is characterised by strong retail demand, a shortage of employment sites, and a requirements for modern office space that meet modern business needs.

Initial soft market testing involved contacting a number of the local and national commercial and residential developers to ascertain level of interest and perception in Cheltenham. This indicated strong developer interest in commercial / mixed use development, with Cheltenham considered a key opportunity given the dearth of development opportunities. Similar high levels of opportunity were indicated for residential and stand alone office development.

2.8 Implications

Assessing Cheltenham's economic objectives and priorities and the town's existing commercial market and development situation we can draw a series of conclusions regarding the alignment of development opportunities and economic goals.

- Cheltenham has a strong economy and optimistic prospects for the future but needs to address a series of socio-economic issues:
- Ageing population
- Decline in traditional employment sectors like manufacturing and construction
- Skills gaps in sectors like retail, tourism and financial services
- Quantitative and qualitative lack of hotel accommodation
- Negative impacts of the night time economy
- Physical constraints to development and investment (lack of appropriate sites)

Some of these issues can be directly linked to the development of the three identified sites.

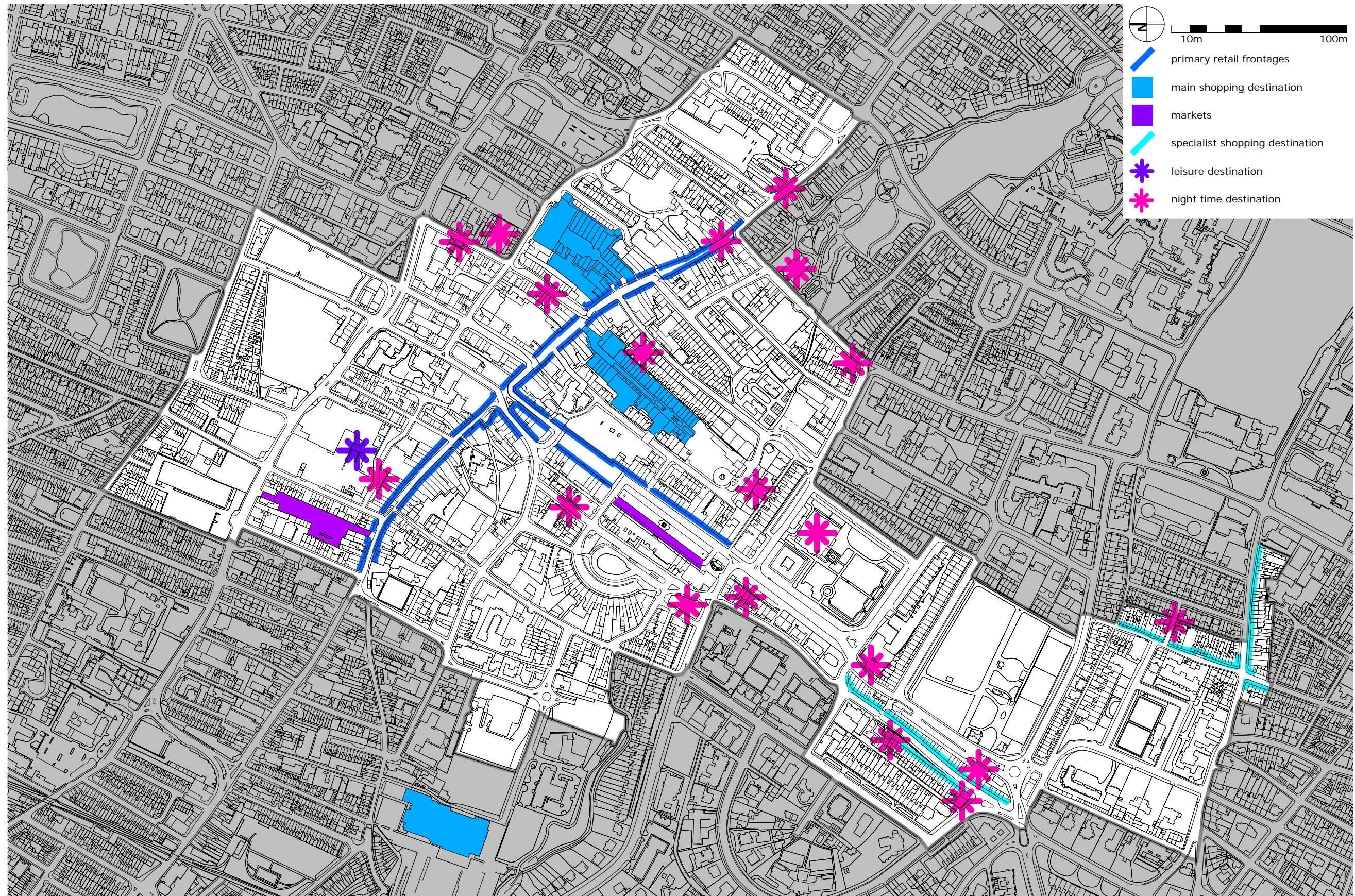
The decline in traditional employment sectors necessitates the creation of jobs in alternative industries such as financial services, tourism, leisure and retail. At least one of the identified sites could be considered for such uses. The Royal Crescent site could provide a good opportunity for the development of a new, high-quality hotel that would help improve the town's accommodation and conference hosting capacity. This would greatly enhance the town's tourism competitiveness vis-à-vis other sub-regional centres like Gloucester. Furthermore, even though Cheltenham is well catered when it comes to recreational and leisure facilities for younger people, there are currently few such facilities for Cheltenham's older population and these sites could provide the opportunity for developments that would cater more towards that demographic.

The development of currently vacant/underutilised sites would also help make the town feel safer at night and could contribute towards alleviating some of the negative impacts of the night time economy (e.g. anti-social behaviour, fear of crime etc). Reclaiming these urban sites would make the town feel a safer and less intimidating place at night and could help bring about behavioural changes to late night revellers.

As identified in the market commentary chapter, the town faces a lack of appropriate sites for development for a number of uses including modern offices, retail, leisure and residential. These development constraints could have significant impacts on the local economy's vitality and competitiveness. The three identified sites could provide a much needed provision of well located, development opportunities.

Based on the preceding analysis, it is considered that the following economic objectives should underpin the Urban Development Framework:

Reinforce and enhance Cheltenham's unique character and identity as a Regency town which is attractive to locals, visitors and potential inward investors
Retain and enhance Cheltenham's position as a premier events town, with a range of indoor and outdoor venues
Support key employment growth sectors (public administration; education and health; hotels, restaurants and retail) through skills and accommodation provision
Support key entrepreneurship sectors and provide suitable accommodation for small to medium sized enterprises in business, tourism and retail sectors
Address the skills gap (e.g. in the tourism and retail sectors) particularly through specialist training programmes, promoting Cheltenham as a centre of excellence in the service industry
Promote Cheltenham's position as the foremost retail destination in the sub-region, supporting a range of independent, high street and specialist shopping
Tackle persistent pockets of deprivation by increasing opportunities, expectations and the quality of environment in deprived areas
Develop night time economy within clearly demarcated areas of the town centre, improving the variety of facilities for families and older people, with better legibility for visitors, and improved safety and amenity after dark
Bolster the contribution of tourism to the economy through the provision of quality hotel accommodation and number of beds
Improve transport and accessibility, reducing congestion and reliance on cars for town centre access
Provide appropriate development sites, which are suited to a diverse range of retail, leisure, business and residential uses, corresponding to needs within the market



3. Planning

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the planning policy issues at national, regional and local level which have implications for the Urban Design Framework. It also provides an overview of issues and requirements associated with the new planning system (introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004). The Council has expressed an intention to adopt the UDF as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), part of the suite of documents which will comprise the Cheltenham Local Development Framework (LDF). This section sets out the proposed planning strategy for taking the UDF through the key stages to adoption.

3.2 Planning Policy

3.2.1 National Context

Development proposals which form part of the Cheltenham LDF must conform to national and regional planning guidance. The Government produces a range of national planning policy statements, setting out the broad principles that must be addressed by local authorities during the preparation of their LDFs.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: 'Delivering Sustainable Development' sets out the key policies and principles and the Governments' vision for delivering sustainable development. PPS1 states the following key principles upon which plan should be based and which have direct implications for the study:

- Development plans should ensure that sustainable development is pursued in an integrated manner;
- Local planning authorities should address the causes and potential impacts of climate change, reducing energy use and emissions (for example, by encouraging patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car) and promoting the development of renewable energy resources;
- Promote high quality, inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; and
- Ensuring that communities have the opportunity to participate in the process of drawing up the vision, strategy and specific plan policies.

3.2.2 Regional Context

Cheltenham Borough lies within the South West Region. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets the regional framework for growth and development in the South West from 2006 to 2026. The revised RSS will be issued in early 2008 and will supersede Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) 10 which was issued in September 2001. The RSS sets out the draft spatial vision for the South West:

"The South West must remain a region with a beautiful and diverse environment. By working together and applying the principles of sustainability we can achieve lasting economic prosperity and social justice whilst protecting the environment. This approach will secure a higher quality of life now and for future generations."

A key issue for the Borough is accommodating its proposed share of the Region's housing allocation. The draft allocation for Cheltenham is 12,500 dwellings between 2006 and 2026. It is the intention to focus about 8,500 dwellings within the existing Cheltenham urban area and within non-green belt extensions and for about 4,000 dwellings within an urban extension to the north/north west of Cheltenham.

The draft RSS proposes total job growth across Cheltenham of about 10,750 jobs over the plan period primarily focused within the urban area. The RSS intends to guide investment to places of greatest need. There are key issues surrounding the economic prosperity of the region:

"High employment rates but relatively low productivity; marked contrasts within the region and the widest variations in overall economic performance of any English region."

It is therefore important that the proposals for the 3 development sites include elements of employment use. Residential and employment development should be provided at densities to maximise this accessible town centre location.

3.2.3 County Context

The Gloucestershire Structure Plan Third Alteration (unadopted), September 2005 is to be replaced by the RSS. The Plan's policies will remain material considerations until superseded by the RSS. The Structure Plan takes into account national and regional guidance issued by the Government and establishes the strategic pattern of development across the county, including the Borough of Cheltenham for the period 2001 to 2016.

The Structure Plan Third Alteration sets out ten objectives for the county:

- To promote a pattern and form of development that will contribute to the sustainable conservation of natural and man-made resources, and reduce as far as possible pollution and waste;
- To promote a level of growth which can be sustained within the constraints of the County's natural resources, the quality of the environment and the provision of infrastructure;
- To reduce any negative impact as far as possible on the environment;
- To protect the County's historic heritage;
- To stimulate economic activity and employment in the County;
- To provide an appropriate level and type of housing in the period mid 2001 to mid 2016 within the overall principles of 'sustainability';
- To contribute towards a reduction in both global and local environmental effects of road traffic;
- To promote the regeneration and 'greening' of the urban areas of the County;
- To promote the development of renewable energy resources in the County; and
- To develop a pattern of land use which contributes to reducing energy demands and promotes conservation in the way energy is used.

The Gloucestershire Structure Plan Third Alteration defines the Cheltenham PUA as the continuous built up area of Cheltenham Borough and those parts of the parishes of Bishop's Cleeve, Woodmancote and Uckington that fall within the continuous built up area. The plan requires that provision is made for 2,400 new dwellings each year in the County between mid 2001 and mid 2016. Within the overall County figure, provision will be made in the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Cheltenham for 6,200 new dwellings in the plan period. The PUAs offer the best opportunity for further sustainable development due to their access to facilities and public transport services.

3.2.4 Local Context

i) The Cheltenham Borough Local Plan (adopted June 2006)

The Local Plan identifies the priorities and objectives for Cheltenham. These are based around a vision that in the year 2020 the Borough should be,

"...a vibrant, safe and sustainable town where residents, workers and visitors enjoy the benefits of social, environmental and economic well being."
(Cheltenham's Community Plan 2003-2007)

The objectives supporting this overarching vision are to:

- secure the provision of necessary and relevant services and facilities in conjunction with development
- achieve a high standard of design in new development
- protect public safety and amenity
- reduce crime and the fear of crime
- make provision for identified development needs
- create more sustainable patterns of development, with priority use of previously-developed land
- make best use of development land
- meet the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities



The Council's Land Use and Development Strategy for the period up to 2011 is based on the Council's long-term vision for land use. The vision is based around four broad themes linked to the Government's land use and development priorities and Cheltenham's Community Plan. The four main themes are set out below.

Sustainable Development

A key consideration is to accommodate future housing, employment and social/community needs whilst promoting wider sustainability goals, including the protection of the unique landscape and townscape character of the area. Central principles are:

- Conserving and improving Cheltenham's natural, cultural and built environment
- Making best use of land and other finite resources
- Providing for local employment, housing and other community needs
- Helping to promote sustainable forms of transport and reduce the impact of traffic on the environment

An attractive safe town

Cheltenham is renowned for its high quality built and natural environment. The Local Plan will help to maintain and enhance Cheltenham's environmental qualities by:

- Protecting the setting of the town
- Conserving historic buildings and conservation areas
- Conserving and enhancing valuable open spaces and trees
- Promoting an urban design approach to new development
- Requiring high quality architecture for new buildings
- Promoting a high standard of design in public spaces, including new public art
- Creating a safe environment, helping to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime

A thriving economy

Cheltenham is one of Gloucestershire's two sub-regional employment centres. The Local Plan aims to maintain a balanced economy with low levels of unemployment and maintain Cheltenham's strong economy by:

- Supporting the town's reputation as a national and international cultural centre
- Promoting tourist facilities and attractions
- Fostering the town centre and supporting its retail and other commercial functions

Safe and accessible travel and transport

Cheltenham's position as a sub regional centre, growing car ownership and commuting has increased traffic levels in Cheltenham. More sustainable patterns of transport are to be facilitated by:

- Facilitating accessibility
- Influencing travel modes through parking provision and travel plans
- Making best use of existing roads through traffic management

ii) Saved Local Plan Policies

Moving from the existing Local Plan policy framework to the a LDF under the new planning system, a number of Local Plan policies will be saved and passed over to the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. If the UDF is to be adopted as SPD, it will be required to demonstrate conformity with these saved policies. Relevant saved Local Plan policies are summarised below.

Town Centre

The Local Plan recognises the important role that the town centre can play in helping to reinforce Cheltenham's position as a sub-regional centre. As the most sustainable location in terms of access to services and commercial uses the town centre must seek not just to serve new and existing residents but also help to accommodate growth. Policy CP4 of the Plan stipulates that proposals for development will only be permitted where they would,

"...(e) maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre and district and local shopping facilities. "

The Council acknowledges the merits of mixed use development as a means of achieving sustainability and improving the town centre's vitality and viability.. There are a number of town centre sites allocated under Policy PR2 for mixed use development, including,

- (a) land at St. George's Place / St. James' Square; and
- (b) land at Portland Street.

The St James's Square car park is allocated for commercial use and an element of residential development . Cheltenham Local Plan (2006) specifies that minimum of 8 residential units is expected for this site.

Their phasing for development will depend on the potential land use changes of other town centre sites (specifically the Whitbread brewery, which has been completed). The Local Plan Second Review acknowledges that this site is unlikely to come forward for development within the next 5 years.

Although the Local Plan confirms the southern section of Portland Street is reserved for the development of a Magistrates Court, consultation with the County Council indicates that the Magistrates Court on St George's Road is more likely to be refurbished. The remaining area of Portland car park is allocated for future housing development with a significant contribution towards affordable housing and public open space improvements. Cheltenham Local Plan (2006) specifies that minimum of 80 residential units is expected for this site, including 50 affordable residential units at gross density of 120 dwellings/ha. Again the Local Plan states that development is unlikely to come forward within the next 5 years.

Housing

The demand for housing in Cheltenham is currently high and there is also a significant shortfall between the need for affordable housing and completions. There is a key issue regarding the sites to accommodate future housing needs, including affordable housing whilst promoting wider sustainability goals, including the protection of the historic environment, the green belt, AONB and public open space.

Local Plan Policy HS 73A (Housing Development) is the key policy for housing which states,

Housing development will be permitted on:

- Land allocated for residential development;
- Previous developed land; and
- In all cases development should make the most efficient use of land

Residential Density

The Council's approach to housing density is set out in the supporting text to Policy HS 73A and reflects PPG3 Housing, guidance which states that developments which make inefficient use of land (below 30 dwellings/ha) should be avoided. Developments which make more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings) should be encouraged and a greater intensity of development should be encouraged at places with good public transport accessibility. The Council will allow development below 30 dwellings/ha only if the character of a conservation area or the setting of a listed building is likely to be harmed.

It is important that the masterplan makes efficient use of land whilst having regard to the character of the surrounding area. Given the central location of the development sites a residential density in excess of 50 dwellings/ha should be sought. The Local Plan seeks a gross density of 120 dwellings/ha for North Place.



Affordable Housing

The provision of affordable housing is an important issue. There is a significant shortfall between the need for affordable housing and the amount being built. A steady supply of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenure is necessary to generate vitality, facilitate continued economic prosperity, help support local shops and services and help achieve the aim of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Policy HS 73 (B) (Local Housing Needs) seeks the provision of a minimum of 40% of total dwellings as affordable housing in developments of 15 or more dwellings or on residential sites of more than 0.5ha.

The Local Plan specifies that 50 out of the 80 allocated residential units for the site at Portland Street are to be affordable units. The level of required affordable housing for the site at Portland Street is likely to secure a high number of affordable housing units however too onerous and unfeasible requirements for affordable housing elsewhere could lead to less housing coming forward and could affect the overall housing supply.

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

The study sites are located within the Central Conservation Area. Policy BE 8 (Development in Conservation Areas) sets out the Council's general principles for development in Conservation Areas. Development will only be permitted in Conservation Areas if it is of an exceptionally high design standard and if it is in keeping with the existing character of the area. UDF proposals will need to respect the essential elements of the local townscape character.

Policy BE 9 (Open Space in Conservation Areas). The policy states that development will only be permitted if it does not detract from the green character of the area.

Policies BE 28 (Demolition of Listed Buildings) and BE 30A (Buildings of Local Importance) aim to protect Listed Buildings and buildings of Local Importance. The development proposals will need to respect all Listed Buildings and buildings of local importance.

Archaeology

New roads within the development areas will be subject to Policy BE 33 (Design and Landscaping of new roads). All roads will need to be designed to a high standard of environmental design and construction.

Policies BE 34 (Nationally Important Archaeological Remains) and BE 34A (Archaeological Remains of Local Importance) seek to protect archaeological remains, this is particularly pertinent for the three development sites as important archaeological remains are often found in Conservation Areas, especially in town centre locations. The implementation of policies BE34 and BE 34A does not mean that new development is prohibited but it just requires sensitive design. The development proposals will need to address potential archaeological implications. Listed Building consent and Conservation Area consent may be required.

Urban Green Environment

Cheltenham's public open spaces are protected by Policy GE36 (Public Open Space). The development of areas identified as public open space will not be permitted.

Policy GE40 (Protection and Replacement of Trees) and GE41A (Trees and Development) seek to protect those trees which contribute to the quality of the townscape. Development proposals will need to respect existing trees and to provide replacement trees if a protected tree has to be felled. Trees within Conservation Areas have broadly the same protection as trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

Natural Environment

Policy NE64 (Contaminated Land) states that development will only be permitted on a site known to be contaminated where the site is remediated. Remedial measures can be implemented either before development or as part of the development.

Employment

The Local Plan's policies seek to:

- Maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the Borough
- To maintain economic diversity
- To safeguard the most versatile employment land

The Local Plan notes provision of employment land falls short of Structure Plan requirements. The Local Plan emphasises that the town can not afford to lose existing employment land to alternative uses and existing employment sites will be safeguarded. This is implemented through Policy EM 67 (Safeguarding of Employment Land). This may affect development options at Royal Well. Mixed use development will be sought at St James Square and North Place. Both sites are subject to Policy EM 66 (C) (Employment Uses), which allocates the sites for mixed use development.

Retail

Policy RT82 (Location of Retail Development) permits retail development within the three development sites, all the sites fall within the Core Commercial Area and are thereby subject to Policy RT83 (Location of Retail Development). Policy RT83 seeks to limit the environmental impact of retail development in the town centre by ensuring that development is at a scale appropriate to the Core Commercial Area and the Conservation Area and does not result in a net loss of public car parking.



Culture and Recreation

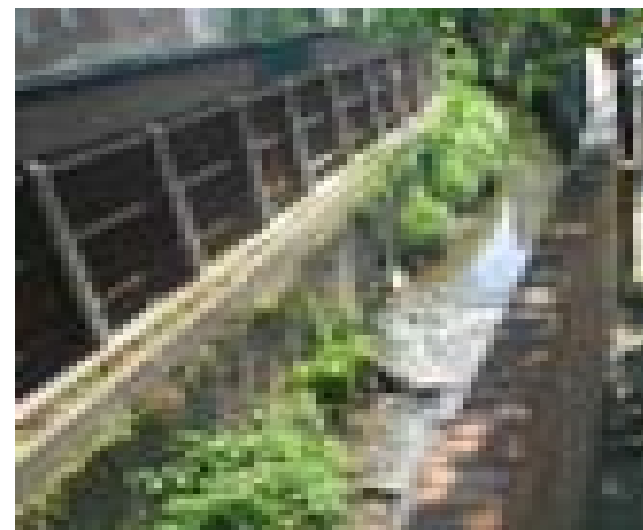
The Local Plan's policies for culture and recreation seek to fulfil Structure Plan objectives, including:

- Protect existing recreational facilities and encourage the provision of additional facilities which will meet local and sub-regional needs (policy RE.1)
- Protect existing open spaces and playing fields, and require the provision of open space in association with new development (policy RE.2)

The Council's broad intent for its cultural and recreational policies is to secure adequate provision for the Borough up to 2011 coupled with the aim to increase, recreational participation, human health and well being.

The Local Plan recognises the role that leisure uses can play in increasing the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre and their potential nuisance to local residents. Policy RC 95A (Restaurants, Night Clubs and Licensed Premises) permits the development of A3 and A4 uses providing the premises has good access and is unlikely to cause harm to the amenity and character of residential areas.

Policy RC 102A (Amenity Space in Housing Developments) ensures that an appropriate amount of open space is provided within new housing developments.



Flood Risk

The Environment Agency's indicative floodplain map shows that the development sites at Royal Well and St James' lie within areas of flood risk. The effects of climate change will also increase the rate and volume of run off from development and could lead to greater risk of localised flooding. The run off rates will largely be dependent on the promotion of measures for natural drainage and groundwater replenishment as part of masterplan preparation. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how the impacts of climate change (drought and flooding) can be addressed and overcome.

All development proposals will need to conform to Local Plan Policies UI 118 (Development in Flood Zones) and UI 117 (Development and Flooding), Environment Agency advice and be in line with guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 and Draft PPS25.

Renewable Energy
RPG10 sets the target for Local Authorities within the South West to supply 11-15% of electricity through renewable sources by 2010. The masterplan proposals have an important role to play in helping to meet government and regional targets. Increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide emissions should be a key design consideration. The provision of energy efficiency measures and the promotion of design for more extreme climatic events should form part of the essential infrastructure for the development areas, including both residential and commercial buildings.

In accordance with Local Plan Policy UI 121A (Renewable Energy), renewable energy proposals will not be allowed where they would cause harm to residential amenity or to areas of importance such as Conservation Areas, listed buildings and buildings of local importance.

Transport

Local Plan policies place emphasis on achieving quality design and highway safety. Policy TP 127 (Development and Highway Safety) seeks to encourage the development of a safe highway and Policy TP 129 (Development and Highway Safety) seeks good highway design. This emphasis should be reflected in the masterplan proposals.

One of the key issues facing Cheltenham is the increasing negative effects of road traffic on the environment and on local residents. It is considered that future growth will increase pressure on Cheltenham's transport infrastructure. However, one of the underlying principles of the Local Plan is to promote alternative sustainable modes of transport and reduce the number of car trips.

The Local Plan applies a car parking standard of 1 space per dwelling for residential development within the Core Commercial Area. Given the development sites' central location a lower level of parking provision or car free development could be feasible and should be considered.

Design

Delivering improvements in the sustainability and quality of design of new developments is a key objective of the Local Plan. Policy CP7 states,

"Development will only be permitted where it:
(a) is of a high standard of architectural design; and
(b) adequately reflects principles of urban design; and
(c) complements and respects neighbouring development and the character of the locality and/or landscape.

Extensions or alterations of existing buildings will be required to avoid:
(d) causing harm to the architectural integrity of the building or group of buildings; and
(e) the unacceptable erosion of open space around the existing building. "



Principles of Urban Design

The Local Plan sets out the required approach to design; these principles are outlined below

Character

- create or reinforce a sense of place with its own distinctive identity
- reflect existing topography, landscape and ecology
- utilise a hierarchy of building form and design to reflect the use and importance of buildings
- create focal points and places
- create areas of hard and soft landscaping

Continuity and enclosure

- use buildings and trees to define space
- distinguish clearly between public and private spaces, providing continuous building frontages between them where possible

Quality of the public realm

- create attractive spaces which provide a variety of interest and experience
- produce comfortable local microclimates
- provide overlooking of streets and spaces, especially main elevations
- design lighting and landscaping to reduce opportunities for crime
- enrich space with well-designed details (e.g. paving, public art, lighting, signs, seats, railings, and other street furniture)
- avoid visual clutter and confusion, especially from signs and advertisements
- design areas for ease of maintenance, particularly in regard to litter collection, mechanical sweeping and the maintenance of planted areas

Ease of movement

- promote accessibility to and within an area, particularly on foot, bicycle, and for people with limited mobility
- increase permeability by avoiding cul-de-sac and connecting adjacent streets

Legibility

- develop a clear, easily understood image of an area
- retain and create views of existing and new landmarks, skylines and other focal points
- provide recognisable and memorable features, especially at key locations

Durability

- create spaces that can adapt easily to changes in need and use
- provide environments which are suitable for their use
- use quality materials

Diversity

- where appropriate within buildings, street or areas, consider a mix of building forms, uses and tenures

3.2.5 Cheltenham Community Plan Our Future, Our Choice, October 2003

Cheltenham's Community Plan 'Our Future, our Choice' was prepared by Cheltenham's Strategic Partnership and sets out the long term vision for Cheltenham:

'The vision for Cheltenham in the year 2020 is for it to be a vibrant, safe and sustainable town where residents, workers and visitors enjoy the benefits of social, environmental and economic wellbeing.'

The Community Plan identified five main priorities:

- To reduce crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, in our communities
- To improve the supply and standard of affordable housing
- To reduce inequalities in our communities and develop a sense of community
- To protect and improve the environment of Cheltenham and make it a beautiful and sustainable town (that is, a town that can grow and develop to improve quality of life for all, now and in the future)
- To improve sustainable travel and transport options (that is, transport that allows the whole community to travel safely and easily in an environmentally-friendly way)

The LDF is closely linked to the Community Plan, it provides the spatial framework for the aspects of the Community Plan that relate to land use and development. The LDF is the key mechanism to delivering the priorities set out in the Community Plan.



3.3 Planning Strategy

3.3.1 Cheltenham's Local Development Framework

During 2006 work began on Cheltenham's LDF which is the emerging development plan for Cheltenham. Under the Government's planning reforms introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the LDF will replace the existing Local Plan. The new LDF will set out the strategy for the way in which land is used and guide new development in the Borough for the period up to 2021.

The LDF will consist of a portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDD). Central to this portfolio is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), which sets out the overall vision for future development in the Borough and is the basis for later LDDs, including the Housing Allocation and Employment Allocation DPDs, which identifies proposed sites for development to meet the Council's vision. In addition to these statutory DPDs there will be a number of non-statutory Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), setting out more detailed guidance at a more specific level. The Core Strategy will be the Council's first DPD. In addition to these LDDs, the Council is also required to prepare a number of further documents as part of the LDF process, including:

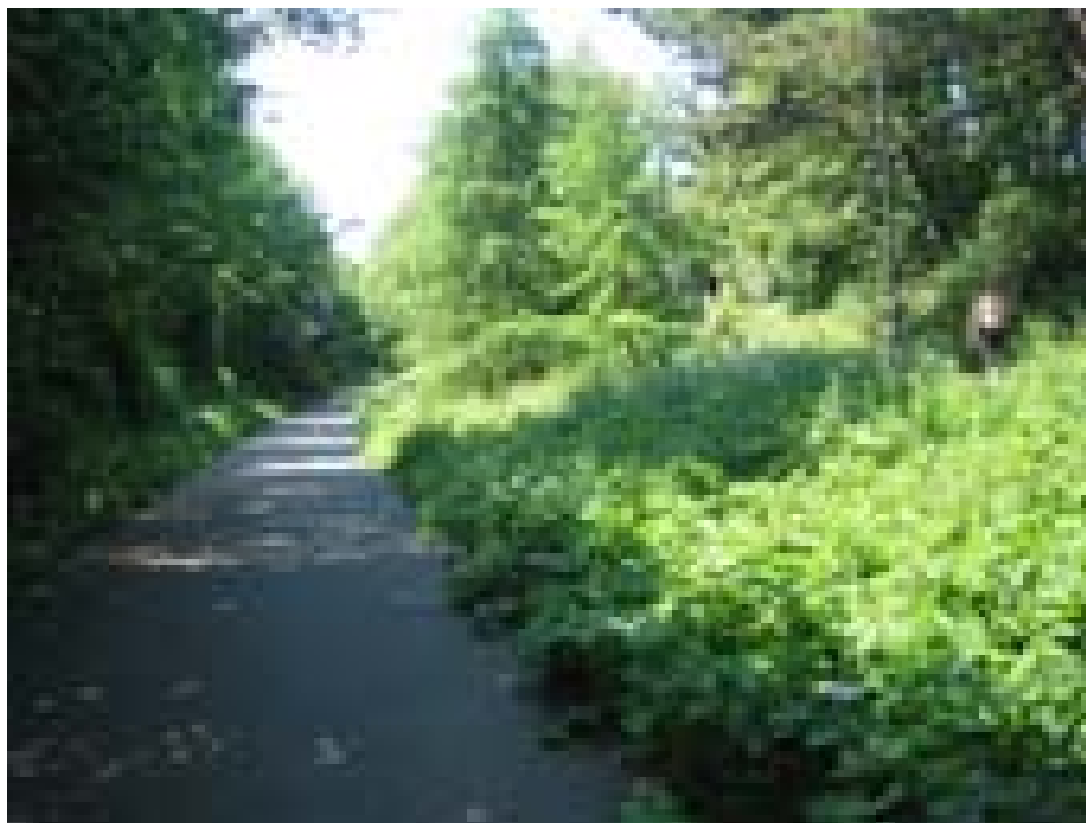
- Local Development Scheme (LDS) - 3 year project plan for the preparation of the LDF, it sets out key milestones in DPD and SPD production and the resources required in producing these documents.
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – outlines how the Council aims to involve local communities and stakeholders in the DPD and SPD preparation process.
- Proposals Map – shows the areas to which the DPD policies relate to, the existing Local Plan Proposals Map will be updated as new policies materialise.
- Annual Monitoring Report – this report will outline and monitor the progress made with the preparation of Cheltenham's LDF.

3.3.2 SPD Preparation

Cheltenham Borough Council intends to adopt the three individual Development Briefs as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which will form part of Cheltenham's LDF. SPD replaces Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) under the new planning system introduced with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The UDF is identified as a SPD in the Cheltenham Borough Local Development Scheme which has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Approval. PPS12 guidance states that this route should "not be used to avoid policies being subject to public examination". It will therefore be essential to be able to demonstrate thorough consultation throughout the UDF development process. Given that the new planning system is still in the early stage of implementation, we would also recommend an early discussion with the Government Office (as advised in section 3.9 of the companion guide to PPS12) to confirm that the SPD route is appropriate.

PPS12 'Local Development Frameworks' outlines the status and function of SPDs. SPDs are not DPDs and do not have their statutory status but are material considerations in planning applications and they must relate to DPD policies. The role of SPDs is to expand and supplement policies set out in the DPDs or saved policies in the existing Local Plan.

There are statutory procedures, which must be followed in preparing SPDs. Although not subject to independent examination by a Planning Inspector, they are subject to Sustainability Appraisal and consultation requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as well as Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 which relates to public participation.



3.3.3 Sustainability Appraisal

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) on all of Cheltenham's LDDs. SAs help planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans through a structured assessment of options and policies against key sustainability issues for their area.

It is envisaged that the SA will draw upon the SA which is currently being undertaken for Cheltenham's LDF.

The preparation of a Scoping Report is the first stage of the appraisal process. This Scoping Report for the LDF is currently being drafted by the Council. The aim of scoping is to ensure that the SA process focuses effort and resources on the significant issues and also provides an early opportunity for other parties to provide comment.

While the UDF can not directly influence all these issues, it has a key role to play in encouraging and enabling sustainable land use patterns and contributing to the continued viability and self sufficiency of the town centre, help meet housing targets and enabling affordable housing.

Table 2 overleaf provides a summary of the key interfaces between Cheltenham's LDF, the UDF and SA, as well as setting out the critical path and programme for future stages of the LDF and the UDF.

The draft Scoping Report, published May 2006, identifies the main sustainability issues affecting Cheltenham as:

Economic Issues

- House prices are high relative to incomes
- High levels of in and out-commuting
- Shortage of employment land

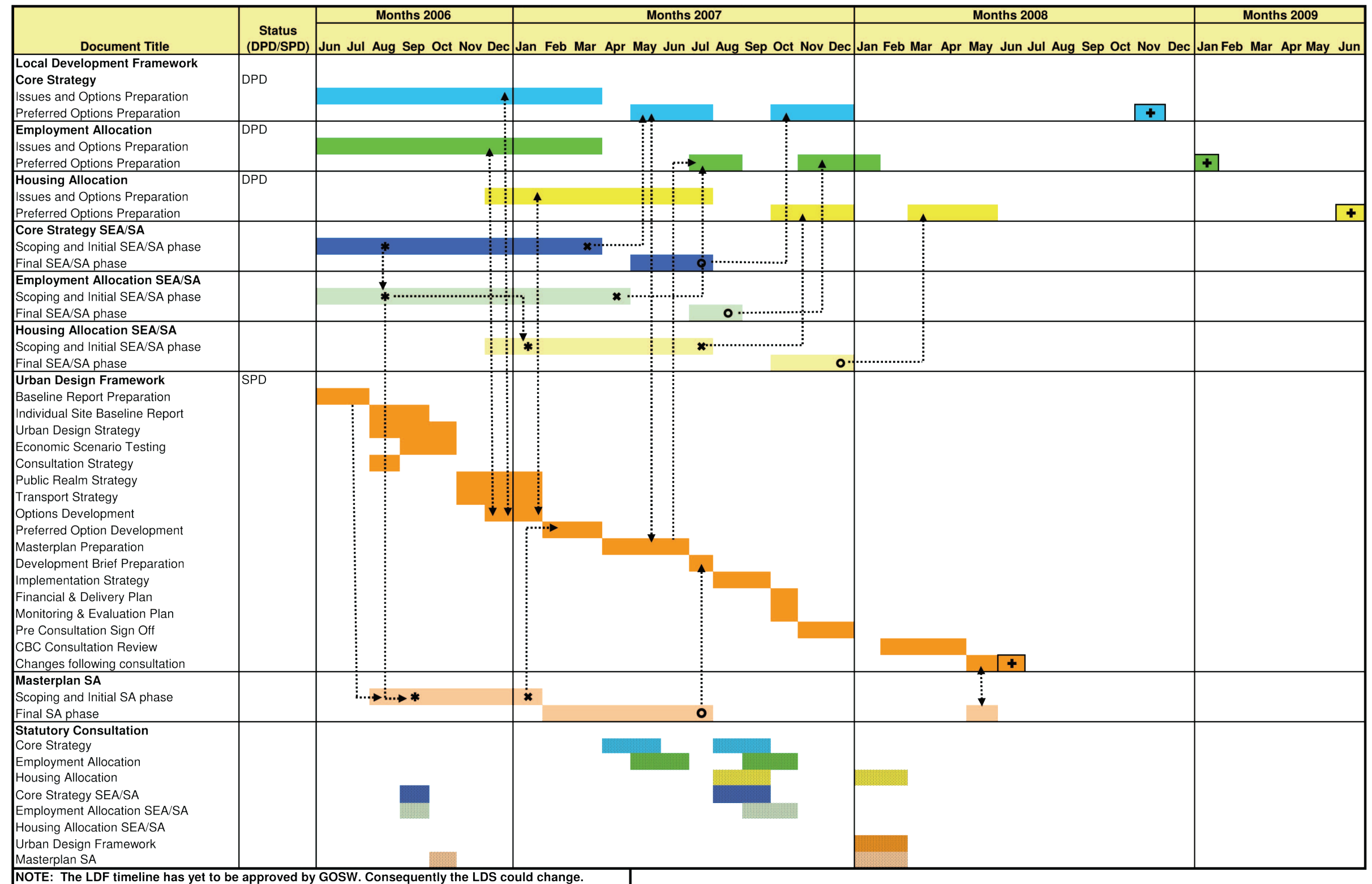
Social Issues & Inequalities

- Shortage of affordable housing
- The loss of affordable units
- Homelessness
- Incidents of violent crime
- Pockets of social deprivation in some wards

Environmental Issues & Sustainability

- Reduce energy consumption
- Increase % of homes built on previously developed land
- Need to protect and enhance landscape and nature conservation designations
- Need to respect and enhance conservation areas and maintain health of listed buildings
- Encourage recycling

Table 3: Schedule of proposed Local Development Documents (LDF, SEA/SA, and consultation)



- * SEA/SA Output: Scoping Report
- x SEA/SA Output: Appraisal of Issues and Options
- o SEA/SA Output: SA/Environmental Report to accompany the Preferred Options/Draft Development Brief
- + DPD Adoption

4. Transport

4.1 Introduction



Cheltenham Borough Council previously commissioned several studies to inform the development of an Urban Design Framework and associated Civic Pride Initiatives for the town. Work to progress an Urban Development Framework and associated design guides draws upon this earlier work, where it is appropriate to do so. However, current work does not progress in a policy vacuum, since development in the town currently falls within the requirements of the Local Development Plan. Furthermore, the Second Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan contains adopted proposals for delivery across the County over the next five years.



This section therefore summarises relevant findings from selected earlier studies and gives a brief overview of the transport and accessibility policy context pertaining to development in Cheltenham. It does not repeat key tenets of national policy, but instead focuses upon their proposed local application, as expressed through the recently adopted Second Local Transport Plan for Gloucestershire and policies within the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

4.2 Previous Studies

Much of the previous work towards the development of an Urban Development Framework for Cheltenham was completed by Latham Architects in the early years of 2000. In addition, a Town Centre Access Study was undertaken by Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd, in association with the University of the West of England. Each of the following documents is reviewed in turn below:

- Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Strategy – Latham Architects, July 2001.
- Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Strategy – Tewkesbury Road Approach – Latham Architects, July 2001.
- Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Strategy – Gloucester Road Approach – Latham Architects, July 2001.



- Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Strategy – Shurdington Road Approach – Latham Architects, July 2001.
- Civic Pride in Central Cheltenham – Pre-Consultation Working Draft – Latham Architects, September 2002.
- Cheltenham Town Centre Access Audit – Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd and the University of the West of England, Bristol, September 2003.

4.2.1 Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Strategy (July 2001)

The Urban Design Strategy centred on Cheltenham Borough Council's 20:20 Vision for the town, which had already been adopted. In brief, the overarching aims for the town are: to increase its attractiveness; to look to the future whilst protecting and celebrating its historic past; to produce an accessible and walkable town; a place for working, learning, living and leisure; a community at ease with itself. Historical parts of the town considered to be of particular importance are the regency areas of Lansdown, Montpellier, Imperial Square, Promenade and Pittville.

Other specifically articulated aims are to support tourism and other economy and to improve the town's legibility (both within and approaching the town centre). Urban design is seen as key to both of these aims; being central to re-branding and renewing the image of the town. Important sub-aims are Integration, Access, Movement, Safety and Security.

Latham Architects consider that overall, levels of permeability and connectivity are good in Cheltenham. However, barriers are created by Traffic (particularly the inner ring road) rather than by buildings.

They indicate that new development should respect the scale and quality of development in the existing wide/civilised regency streets. Existing high quality streets are identified to include: High Street, Clarence Street and Berkeley Place. Key 'missing' links in the town centre identified were between Albion Street and the Rose and Crown Passage and between the High Street and the Brewery Site. Others relate to key development sites. Future development strategy should seek to 'fill' these gaps as a priority.

Key principles and proposals for the town centre that were put forward by Latham Architects are summarised in Table 4.1. Thus study will not necessarily support all of these principles and proposals. Some of them have already been implemented/ addressed in the town, others can only be considered subject to viability studies and other development priorities within the town. Initial comments and views of the general principles and proposals are incorporated into the table.

Key proposals will be taken forward in the next stages of the study – taking into account public realm, urban design and site development priorities as well as costs and potential for revenue generation.

Table 4.1: Comments on Transport Elements of the draft Urban Design Strategy (2001)

Proposal / Principle	Specific Locations Mentioned	Further details / considerations	Key comments / views
Fill 'missing' links in the town centre pedestrian route network	Between Albion Street and the Rose and Crown Passage Between the High Street and the Brewery Site		Agree with the principle of filling in any missing gaps. However, main benefit occurs in the role of linkages within wider routes.
Use a street block system to extend the central area	None specifically mentioned. Potentially applicable to Individual Sites	Increase density and diversity.	Unclear what this would entail. Notion appears over-simplistic.
'Regain the streets for people'.	Including, but not limited to, extending pedestrian priority areas, particularly in the narrow, medieval high street.	Can be considered as one measure to accompany downgrading of the central portion of the inner ring road.	Further pedestrianisation and road space reallocation might be useful tool in meeting objectives of transport strategy.
Remove non-essential traffic	Heart of the town centre	To encourage a more attractive, safer environment and access for all. Could allow road space reallocation and PT priority.	To be a central part of any future strategy, in reducing problems associated with traffic impacts in and immediately around the town centre.
To ensure parking is hidden from view	None, but particularly new developments.		Beneficial in principle in urban design terms. However, potential issues include cost, achievability and surveillance.
Encourage mixed use and evening/cultural economy.	None	Mixed use and evening economy, broadly beneficial to accessibility, reducing the need to travel and efficient sustainable transport provision (e.g. spreading demand throughout the day).	Broadly beneficial to transport strategy. Implications of evening economy upon public transport provisions and requirements as well as taxi facilities requires consideration.
Attractive routes for pedestrians along direct routes into the town centre			Key principle to any future transport strategy. To be supported by signage, and public realm improvements to promote legibility.
Traffic calming of minor roads that could be used by cyclists to enter town centre.			Could be useful on carefully selected routes. Must take account roles within route network and requires careful design.
Pedestrian priority crossings over distributor roads			Important to key locations, in order to reduce severance, increase coherence and directness of pedestrian access routes.
Relocation of western end of inner ring road	To Hewlett Road	Route dominates town centre and is a barrier to safe and convenient pedestrian/cycle movements.	Potentially beneficial to urban realm and necessary for redevelopment of key sites. Requires further exploration and feasibility testing
One-way system	For access to A435 Evesham Road (via North Place, Clarence Road, Winchombe Street.		Should be considered, as may have capacity benefits in terms of operation of northern section of ring road. However, must be balanced against potential issues/dis-benefits such as severance of development sites.
Revise bus routes in town centre	Suggests a one way loop anticlockwise around town centre. Suggests via Albion Street, St James Street, Bath Road, Oriel Road, Royal Well, Clarence Street.	Suggests single carriageway and one-way through pedestrian areas and dedicated one-way lane carriageway in traffic areas.	Could have some merits in terms of ease of route operation. However, there could be implications in terms of efficiency, interchange and legibility of service, as well as patronage if route is circuitous.
Restrict access south of inner ring road		Via one-way route creation/ restriction of turning movements for access/egress	To be explored further.
Enhance pedestrian leisure routes	South West: To Royal Well and Montpellier; North East to Pump Room at Pittville		To be taken up in future phases, with consideration in the transport, public realm and urban design strategies as well as in site development.
Deter through traffic from town		Remove signage on approaches that directs traffic to locations through/beyond it.	Routes/signage require comprehensive attention as integral part of chosen strategy.
Improve legibility for motorcyclists and other road users		Via a clear hierarchy of signs, including to car parks and to specific places. A mental framework of the town to assist direction signage.	
Explore Opportunities for the development of 'Green Routes' into the town centre.	E.g. through parks and gardens from various directions		Ensuring adequate routes in all directions of approach is key, but do not necessarily have to be 'Green Routes'. Green walking and cycling routes to be explored in tandem with the public realm strategy development. Greening of approaches to the town to be considered.
Provide for interchange between public and private transport at a wide variety of locations			Agree to the extent that Park and Ride is an important part of the Parking Strategy. Interchange between public transport and parking, where possible, can also be beneficial.
Provide a comfortable walking route between town centre and railway station			Honeybourne Line has now been delivered. However, could benefit from further improvements (e.g. issues of security/ seclusion/limited access/ lack of escape routes, and access to the town centre. Alternative after dark Town/Railway links could also be beneficial.
Implement frequent park and ride		Latham suggest it should serve not only A and Z, but also intermediate locations.	Potential issues with reliability/journey times/ attractiveness etc.
In any proposals, retain adequate access for servicing and emergency vehicles, as well as disabled.	Universal.		Key principle to be applied to all proposals and to be a consideration in proposed paving materials. However, ease of servicing (cf. retaining servicing) must be balanced with other scheme objectives.



Proposals for regaining the streets, include to remove through routes, either by the creation of true cul-de-sacs, or by closing key points to general traffic at peak times of day (e.g. to re-instate the through routes to offer natural surveillance and convenience of arrival during evenings).

Latham also recommends a series of additional studies/analyses. These included:

- A long term access and transport strategy for 2005 – 2020.
- An audit of each gateway into the town centre and the recommendation of improvements.

Three considerations are said to determine the 'quality' of approach routes: navigation, flow and appearance.

- Identify how Cheltenham Spa's Parks can become integrated via a network of linear green routes and public realm.
- Identify existing and potential major pedestrian and cycle desire lines.
- These recommendations are to be addressed through the various Civic Pride workstreams.

4.2.3 The Three Approach Studies

In 2001, Latham Architects undertook studies of three approaches to the town centre: Gloucester Road; Shurdington Road and Tewkesbury Road. The approach studies comprised. overall qualitative assessment of the quality and urban design consistency of each route, with reference to built form and landscaping along the routes. Their discussion covers issues of gateway features and landmarks, provisions for traffic control and aesthetics of those used. However, the assessment does not fully address issues of functionality, which could also affect the image of a route (for example, ease of navigation or comprehensiveness of signing).

In addition, the studies do not really take account of the needs of different users from a functional point of view. For example, the adequacy of pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities could have been considered.

(i) Tewkesbury Road Approach, July 2001

This is the principle route corridor from the North West of Cheltenham. Latham Architects summarise the route as being:

"Utilitarian corridor burdened by an undistinguished and monotonous ribbon of poorly related developments."

It is reported that the corridor is characterised by unattractive clutter including signs, traffic lights (sometimes on overhead gantries), safety barriers etc. It has narrow footways and suffers from heavy, fast moving traffic.

(ii) Gloucester Road Approach, July 2001

The route comprises the principle route from the West of Cheltenham and links to the M5 Motorway. It is heavily trafficked and traffic often travels at speed, making the route intrusive, dangerous, unpleasant and plagued by pollution. Nevertheless, Latham Architects consider that the final one and a half kilometres of the route, through Montpellier, are "quite splendid" and generally attractive, benefiting from a number of well conceived and planned developments and planting schemes.

The overall aim for the route is to conserve and respect its attractive nature when considering private development. In addition, to take advantage of opportunities for enhancement and to maintain sensitivity in highway engineering decisions, as well as to seek to reduce traffic volumes by all means possible.

(iv) Shurdington Road Approach, July 2001

The final route considered by Latham Architects is Shurdington Road, which is the principal approach to Cheltenham from the South West. It is a traditional single carriageway route which acts as an important route to the town with an accordingly heavy flow of traffic. Latham Architects report a number of distinct changes in character along the route. As with other routes, the quantity of traffic is reported to compromise the quality of the route. Five distinctive sections of this route are discussed in the approach study. These can be simply summarised as a series of landmarks to improve legibility and arrival, and development to enhance this approach.

Four further approaches (Evesham Road; London Road; Cirencester Road and the Honeybourne pedestrian route) which were not assessed by Latham have been considered as part of this Civic Pride Phase 1 baseline study. These are the subject of a separate Approach Study Report.



4.2.4 Civic Pride in Central Cheltenham – Pre-Consultation Working Draft, September 2002

This document outlines the nature and importance of Civic Pride and the quality of the public realm. It summarises key issues for the town centre area of Cheltenham and then continues to consider the role of the public sphere and spaces in supporting the sustainable development of Cheltenham. Access to the town centre by different modes is considered, as well as appropriate pallets for streetscape improvements. Finally, a series of routes and spaces for pedestrians are considered in detail. It is noted that the assessment focuses on pedestrians, even though cyclists are also of critical importance. Latham Associates consider that designing for cyclists is a more complex issue which requires deeper consideration.

Nevertheless, the pre-consultation draft of the Council's Civic Pride Initiative document includes specific and relatively detailed proposals for these sections of the central urban area (e.g. Royal Well, The Promenade/ North Street, Boots Corner. Portland Street and North Place). These are important to the current study for two reasons. Firstly, in terms of an overall strategy for the central area and, secondly, in terms of the detailed proposals for the Royal Well and for North Street (individual development sites to be considered for re-development by the present study). This is discussed in more detail in the chapters which cover the individual site assessments.

Key Transport and Access Issues

Chapter 3 of the Civic Pride report presents a diagram of central Cheltenham, highlighting key constraints relevant to the development of the transport strategy, such as:

- Poor approaches to Regency Cheltenham;
- On-street parking clutter;
- Highway Clutter;
- Areas of reduced safety;
- Areas of key pedestrian/vehicle conflict;
- Narrow pavements;
- Poorly lit areas; and
- Poor surveillance

Key opportunities highlighted include the removal of non-essential traffic from the town centre and scope to make better use of the wide Regency Promenades, which offer plenty of space within which to enable improvements.

Recommendations that continue to be supported through the Civic Pride Initiative Document are:

- Removal of through traffic from core (by means of a "Northern Relief Road");
- Retention of access to properties and car parks;
- Rationalisation of bus routes into a dedicated one-way loop;
- Extension of daytime traffic-free areas;
- Implementation of streetscape improvements, recognising the role of the public realm in drawing together heritage and contemporary elements of the built environment into a legible whole;
- Improved linkages between spaces and routes;
- Prioritisation of pedestrian route improvements between St Paul's, Pittville and Montpellier;
- Support for national and local transport, planning and accessibility policies;
- Installation of electronic information displays on approaches to the town centre, to reduce internal traffic circulation.

Sustainable cycle access

Cycling to work in Cheltenham significantly exceeds the national average, as a result of the relative flatness and compactness of the town. There is potential for further modal shift. The Latham Report recommends:

- Establishing a network of cycle friendly routes;
- Reviewing current restrictions on cyclists, to remove existing barriers;
- To provide conveniently located/secure cycle parking throughout the town centre.

All of these are worthwhile actions. The first is already being taken forward by the Borough, notably through the publication of the Cheltenham Cycle Map. The second item was recently the subject of a consultation exercise relating to cycling in the town centre. The Council has also provided an additional 25 cycle racks throughout the town, including the Tivoli shops, the Promenade, outside the children's library, and in the High Street next to the post office.

Sustainable public transport access

The Latham Report recommends that buses and taxis should be accessible, within 300m of offices, shops and tourist destinations. Latham proposes a bus 'ring' around the town centre, on which services would run in an anti-clockwise direction. It is argued that the proposed central bus loop will bring more of these within a 300m isochrone.

The Latham report argues that interchange is a key problem between bus services in the town centre. Because there is no central focus for the town services and it can be necessary to walk some distance to reach the appropriate stop. They consider that the one way bus loop I would improve the situation, and will expand the area of the town centre falling within a 5 minute walk of a bus stop, ensuring service provision to the south eastern part of the town centre which is presently unserved.

Rationalising central areas bus stops, routes and nodes will be an extremely important aspect of any future town centre transport strategy or urban design framework. However, it is considered that there are likely to be more favourable solutions available which would retain proper penetration of services into the heart of the town centre and avoid the issues associated with efficiency, legibility and patronage.

Servicing

It is proposed to refine and extend the current time-management of access into pedestrianised areas, to allow service routes alongside bus routes (where space permits this) and to provide access at some times of day via appropriate routes and shared surfaces.

Cars

Car access to properties will be retained but through traffic will be deterred via the creation of access loops, with preferential access and parking for the disabled.

Sustainable pedestrian access

Latham proposes several pedestrian 'Corridor Improvement Projects' within the town centre, including:

- Royal Well to Waitrose/John Lewis;
- High Street to Black and White Site/ Portland Street Car Park;
- Boots Corner to St Paul's/Western Regeneration Area; and
- Links through, to and from the High Street are proposed for improvement, to maximise the value of this area.

Latham argues that the most important priority route improvements should be those to Pittville and Montpellier to mark the importance of the historical development of the town along this North-South axis.

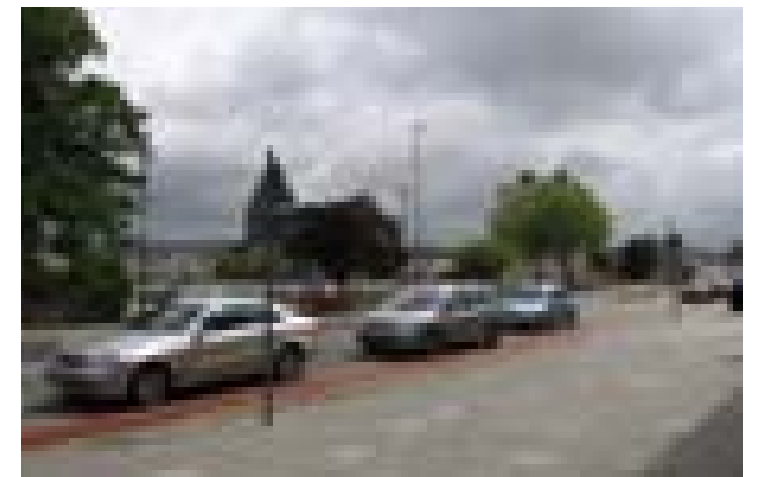
Particular problems faced by pedestrians in Cheltenham are reported to include:

- Poor quality paving and street furniture;
- Poor legibility;
- Inadequate lighting;
- Fragmented pedestrian routes, interrupted by heavy traffic flow;
- Street clutter; and
- Lack of surveillance and vibrancy in some locations (people feel vulnerable to anti-social behaviour).

Key initiatives along the key corridors, are to incorporate legible infrastructure, street surfacing and street furniture and to identify sites for new frontage development to offer enlivened surveillance.

Through Routes

Latham proposed that through routes be re-organised to fall further from the town centre, with new pedestrian friendly crossings installed over these, where they cross pedestrian promenades or other key desire lines.





4.2.5 Cheltenham Town Centre Access Audit, September 2003

This document was completed by Foxley Tagg Planning, on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council and in association with the University of West England in 2003. It incorporated a detailed street audit of numerous streets just outside the town centre (unfortunately several of the most central streets were omitted).

The pedestrian street audit looked at 19 of a planned 21 routes around the town centre. In addition, pedestrian flow counts were undertaken, which are crucial to understanding existing levels of route demand. Of course, these reflect the current situation, with only existing routes, public transport stop locations and travel generators/attractors. Just 8 locations were covered and the count period only extended from 11.30 to 15.30pm. As a result, commuting and evening route utilisation cannot be readily understood. Nevertheless, the counts undertaken are still likely to offer a valuable indication of route usage at the survey times and of dominant flows.

The main conclusion drawn by Foxley Tagg Planning about route usage is that the key demand routes are the High Street (east – west) and Montpellier to the Promenade (north - south). These are likely to represent locations suitable for particular consideration.

Recommendations arising from the audit are:

- **Dropped kerbs;**
- **Formal Pedestrian Crossing Provision;**
- **Improved Pedestrian Phases Timings;**
- **Improved Signage/Legibility Points;**
- **Visitor Information/ Mapping;**
- **Seating Provision;**
- **Extended Pedestrianised Areas; and**
- **Dealing with A-boards**



4.3 Previous Discussion Papers

In addition to the studies commissioned by Cheltenham Borough Council, many central area transport issues and principles have been considered by Council staff and discussed with Council members. Of particular importance is a series of position papers which relate to the issue of shared use of certain spaces within the town centre by pedestrians and cyclists. This sub section highlights key issues and conclusions in relation to this matter:

4.3.1 Pedestrian and Cyclist Shared Use in the Town Centre (Report to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 6 April 2006)

This report presents findings from a survey of Residents and Visitors to Cheltenham Town Centre. Views were sought on proposals for more consistent rules regarding cycling to be applied within the town centre, allowing shared cycling in pedestrianised areas, including High Street and the Promenade.

A survey of public opinion explored concerns about potential impacts on vulnerable users such as the young, elderly and disabled. Key findings include:

- Access by car is not as dominant as is sometimes assumed to be the case;
- 61% of respondents were aware of restrictions on cycling in the town centre, but considered simplification of the rules could be beneficial;
- A substantial majority expressed support for allowing cycling in the areas they were shown on a plan (see above), with the exception of the High Street near Marks and Spencer where views were more evenly split;
- 10% claimed that they, or a family member had suffered from a collision in the town centre

Peripheral routes around the town centre (inner ring road) are largely unattractive to cyclists and might be more dangerous than alternative routes directly through the town centre. The survey indicates some support for segregated routes for cyclists through the town centre. However, this may lead to increased incidence of 'territorial' behaviour and less regard being given to other users (e.g. pedestrians). In addition, such a solution would require additional signage and the successful reconciliation of urban design considerations with disabled access and engineering issues associated with a delineated or kerbed route.

DfT guidance on shared use by cyclists and pedestrians reports that in shared use areas, reported accidents between cyclists and pedestrians are rare. It also notes that in some instances, where full shared access cannot be permitted, time-based restrictions might offer an alternative to shared access at all times of the day. Nevertheless, it would appear to suggest that shared access at all times of the day would be preferable.



The report concludes that the Civic Pride initiative should look at options for alternative routes providing direct routes through the town centre, but which circumvent key areas of pedestrian prioritisation. However, in the shorter term, lifting of the existing bans was recommended to the committee as the most appropriate interim action. It is argued that this would help to complement other town centre initiatives (e.g. reducing sign clutter, removing ambiguity about the varying regulations at different locations within the town centre).

Of additional interest is Appendix B of the report which summarises public comments in relation to how the Council might encourage more walking and cycling within the town centre. Notable town centre suggestions included:

- Improving the connectivity of cycle routes;
- Providing additional cycle racks, particularly well geographically related to need, rather than convenience of siting. An alternative suggestion was to place them in locations well associated with CCTV cameras (to offer a cheap and convenient means of improving security and perceptions of security);
- Highway maintenance (e.g. repair pot holes, sweep up broken glass regularly);
- Making access by cyclists more convenient by changing some of the one-way streets;
- Providing viable routes through the town centre which do not entail use of the inner ring road;
- Providing better bus/cycle integration (e.g. bus companies carrying cycles);
- Implementing a 20mph speed restriction in the town centre;
- Provide additional contra-flow lanes and high quality routes like the Honeybourne Line;
- Address existing conflict points in the town centre and within existing cycle networks;
- Ensure that traffic light sensors take account of cyclist needs and demand; and
- Improve consistency in route marking, surfacing, signage etc



4.4 Transport Policy Context

A number of local policy documents outline the principles for transportation and accessibility policy in the area. The most important document is the recently adopted Gloucestershire County Council Second Local Transport Plan, which sets out the latest policy situation, as well as spending allocation proposals for the next five year period, subject to the final Government Funding Allocations.

Also of importance is the Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan, from which a series of policies covering planning, design, transportation, accessibility and other issues have now been adopted for development control purposes. Until the adoption of Local Development Framework Documents, which will supersede these policies, they provide the context within which development proposals within the town must be progressed.

Relevant transport/accessibility requirements and proposals articulated through these documents are summarised below:

4.4.1 Cheltenham Borough Local Plan (adopted June 2006)

Key principles of policy expressed through these which relate to transport and access have particular relevance to the individual development sites to be progressed by the Council as part of the Civic Pride project.

Policy CP 5 considers sustainable transport and the requirement to reduce the need to travel. Ensuring the accessibility of all development sites for vehicles (including public transport), pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities/mobility impairment is a key consideration. Accessibility needs will be assessed with reference to Regional Planning Guidance criteria, (until superseded). The aim is to meet travel demands in a safe and energy- efficient way. A level of parking will be permitted which encourages walking, cycling and public transport and discourages use of the private car.

It will be necessary for sites to meet LTP targets for the proportion of trips to the site by each mode of transport (for Cheltenham, as part of the Central Severn Vale, the target quoted through the Local Plan is a minimum of 40% of trips to work by non-car driver modes by 2006 and 45% by 2011).

Policy PR 3 lists three proposed transport schemes for the town, two of which are road related. Nevertheless, the two road schemes included within these are understood to have now been dropped by the Council.

Policy BE 33 addresses the design and landscaping of new roads, which should be to a high standard, with proposals for adjoining land and highway boundaries where appropriate.

Policy TP 127 discusses development and highway safety. Where a development proposal necessitates a new access, or would intensify use of an existing access, it is necessary to ensure that highway safety will not be affected. Similar considerations must be taken into account where the proposal would generate a high turnover in the use of on-street spaces.

Policy TP 125 covers the servicing of shopping facilities, requiring that where possible, units should be serviceable via the rear. Service access should be shared with/by adjoining properties wherever possible.

Policy TP 125A considers the appropriateness of Long Stay Parking Facilities and indicates that new long stay spaces will not be permitted unless a need can be demonstrated as part of a comprehensive strategy for car parking, provision and charging.

Finally, a number of other policies also deal with the issue of parking, specifying requirements such as that there will be no increase in spaces permitted for existing land uses, except where need is fully demonstrated in association with a Travel Plan and where the spaces are required to solve an existing problem. Parking levels at new development will be assessed in relation to Council's parking standards.



4.4.2 Cheltenham Transport Plan 2000/01 to 2005/06

Whilst the implementation period for the Cheltenham Transport Plan has now ended, it remains an important document in understanding the context within which the Urban Design Framework must be developed. It was produced by Cheltenham Borough Council, at the time of the First Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan, in order elaborate and give greater depth of consideration to the situation in Cheltenham and proposals for the town through the First LTP Period.

In respect of transport challenges, the document states that:

“Traffic volumes and speeds are now ranked highest out of all the things people most dislike about Cheltenham. Most people would like to see and absolute decrease in traffic levels.”

Perceptions of poor safety and insecurity also deter walking, cycling and public transport use and that an information gap in knowledge of public transport services amongst the population also plays a role. In addition, public transport is often perceived to be expensive, unreliable and dirty.

The Cheltenham Transport Plan aims to make better use of existing highway infrastructure, to improve alternatives to the private car, to discourage unnecessary and inefficient car use and to implement a town centre strategy. The Council sought to build on existing strengths of the town, without compromising its unique heritage.



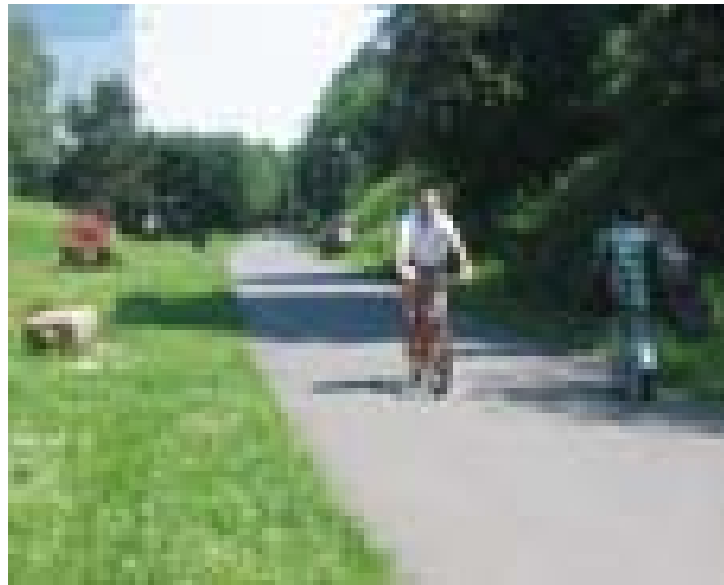
Physical factors influencing travel in the town include:

- Cheltenham's position as sub-regional centre, with a large rural hinterland and dispersed population. Coupled with infrequent public transport services, this leads to high levels of in-commuting by car.
- The lack of a central interchange for bus and rail (with the rail station at a distance from the town centre).
- Traffic management systems, such as the one way gyratory, which typically creates poor conditions and a poor environment for walkers and cyclists.
- The inner ring road is disorientating for car users.
- The compact, concentric and generally flat nature of the town, which improve opportunities for cycling (and walking)..
- The Regency heritage of the town characterised by wide, tree-lined streets, offering ample pavement space and a pleasant environment for pedestrians

Bus services

Key improvements affecting bus services are:

- Better integration of services (still stands as an important requirement).
- More cross town routes (some now exist, but scope for further improvement).
- Greater frequency of and penetration of buses into residential areas.
- Development of orbital routes, especially to key major employers (employment is fairly decentralised in the town).
- A simplified fare system, with additional concessions and more integrated ticketing.
- Unified public transport information, timetables displayed at every stop (this has still not been achieved and some bus stop flags do not even display the number of service which calls at them).
- Improved effectiveness and availability of Park and Ride, as an alternative to long stay parking within the town centre.
- In terms of bus service provision, the Council reports that it operates and informal Bus Quality Partnership with the local commercial operator, Stagecoach. Several bus lanes and priority measures had already been put in place, including on the A40 Lansdown Road/Portland Street and A435 Evesham Road. There were further proposals for additional such measures.
- In addition, the difficulty of interchange is again noted. CBC report that the Royal Well Bus station is decreasingly used by operators who prefer on-street stops. They report that there are therefore three key linear bus nodes, in Pittville Street, the High Street and the Promenade. It can be up to a 500m walk to the required stop on a different route. Rail connections from Cheltenham are fair, although not all services link to the railway station, because it is approximately a mile from the town centre.



Cycling and Walking

The Council continues to work towards implementation of a Cheltenham Cycle Network (CCN). For walking, the main aim is to make it pleasant, safe and convenient to walk into and around the town centre, with the creation of attractive public spaces (e.g. removing obstacles and street clutter), proposals to pedestrianise some of the town centre streets and to introduce traffic calming in some residential areas containing routes to the town centre.

At the time the transport plan was prepared, the borough recorded the highest level of cycling accidents of all districts in England. This is partly a reflection of high levels of usage (7% cycling to work), although the situation could be improved with appropriate measures. The Council's preferred approach is to seek alternatives to segregating cyclists, instead favouring provisions to assist them in cycling safely with other traffic. Cycle access is restricted within the central pedestrian areas of the town.

A wide range of cycle schemes had already been implemented between 1995 and 2000. For example contra-flow/ with flow lanes, traffic calmed areas, advanced cycle stop lines, cycle feeder lanes and segregated facilities. The National Cycle Network runs through Cheltenham, serving both the town centre and the railway station, which is an asset. In addition, the Council is working towards implementation of the Cheltenham Cycle Network, with focus on filling in the missing links.

In 2000, there were two locations for cycle parking in the town centre, these were at Crescent Place and Regent Street. The Council planned to secure additional cycle parking in the town centre, at the railway station and at other major interchange destinations. The Council recently provided an additional 25 cycle racks throughout the town, including the Tivoli shops, the Promenade, outside the children's library, and in the High Street next to the post office.



Traffic Management

In terms of traffic management, the central proposal (as for many similar towns and cities) is to reduce the supply of long stay parking, particularly focussed at influencing commuter traffic. It was indicated that this might entail Controlled Parking Zones in residential areas around the centre. Indeed, many now have permit schemes in place, or waiting restrictions, such that people may not park for more than 1.5 hours during the daytime, with varying hours of application.

Cheltenham Borough Council proposed to develop a hierarchy of routes, comprising of main radial, local distributor and town centre ring roads. All vehicles should be encouraged to make use of these, including HGVs. The aim would be to reduce traffic in more sensitive areas. It is reported that lorries represent 10% of traffic in Cheltenham and have negative effects on the environment, congestion and road safety, which is disproportionate to this (e.g. they are more than 10% responsible for these issues).

The Council also proposed a town centre strategy to reduce through traffic in the centre. In particular, the following proposals are included:

- Northern relief road (now abandoned).
- An outer distributor road for the town centre.
- Downgrading the A40 corridor.
- Reviewing all destination signage in the Borough to improve clarity and reduce clutter.
- Potential introduction of Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) Systems and Variable Message Signs (VMS). Upgrades would include bus priority facilities.
- Signed lorry routes.
- Loading and unloading restrictions where unrestricted use would cause significant levels of congestion.

Town Centre Strategy

Chapter 10 of the Cheltenham Transport Plan set out a strategy for the town centre, which aims to create prestige public places in the High Street and the Promenade. Changes include prioritising access for pedestrians, disabled people and public transport, and the establishment of Town Centre Traffic Management Working Group. The main aims of the Strategy are to:

- Contribute towards a strong day and evening economy;
- Manage road space more effectively in and around the town centre to reduce congestion and pollution;
- Minimise the impact of traffic on public open spaces;
- Make pedestrian movements safer, simpler and more effective;
- Create a town centre which better serves the needs of disabled people and people with impaired mobility;
- Provide better quality car parking facilities, more convenient, attractive and accessible; and
- Provide improved cycle facilities for journeys into and around the town centre, with more secure cycle parking.

The strategy recognises the importance of the availability and pricing of on-street and off-street public car parking. It also focuses on supporting the economy and regeneration, but improving access and by seeking to enhance the environment within the town centre, but reducing the impact of traffic, to make it a more attractive place to live, shop and work.

Schemes put forward include town centre remodelling; traffic management; park and ride signage; bus priority measure schemes (including Tewkesbury Road, Bath Road/Shurdington Road, Gloucester Road/St Georges Road, London Road, Lansdown Road, Inner Ring Road, and a Cross Town Route); controlled parking zones (in the Town Centre, Montpellier, All Saints/St Lukes, Lansdown and Pittville); Town Centre Pedestrian Access Strategy Schemes; Town Centre Parking Information Schemes (VMS); and National Cycle Network (NCN) and Cheltenham Cycle Network (CCN) Schemes.

4.4.3 Gloucestershire Second Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 – Adopted March 2006



This plan provides a background to the Urban Development Framework, reflecting the current policy and funding intentions for the County as a whole, including the Central Severn Vale (Cheltenham and Gloucester). A central aim is supporting regeneration and sustainable transport in Cheltenham and Gloucester (PUAs). The objective is to reduce accidents and make better use of existing opportunities, moving towards a new strategy for on-street parking, park and ride and decriminalised parking enforcement. The County Council Transport Strategy to 2026 will focus on maintenance, safety, implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement and Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS).

In the short term, investment will be focused on road and junction upgrades and in the longer term, the deliver 1,000 park and ride spaces around the County, benefiting from segregation on all major bus routes.

Key monitoring findings:

- Park and Ride usage increased 50% during the first Local Transport Plan period. Patronage on the 94 route increased by 18% in 6 months
- Traffic growth over the central cordon in Cheltenham (the very inner area of the town centre, roughly equating to the inner ring road) has remained static.
- This corresponds with a fall in car park usage in the town centre (average of 3% per annum, 2002 to 2005 - possibly partly or wholly as a result of charging increases).
- Cycling levels have remained fairly static in Henrietta Street and Portland Street and rose before falling back again in Montpellier Gardens, but have increased along Lansdown Road (as recorded by ACCs).

Issues and opportunities

Several of the key issues and opportunities in Cheltenham have already been covered in preceding sections of this chapter. Nevertheless, these are reiterated below:

- Lorry movements are a major public concern. The Council now has an adopted lorry route strategy, which was developed and agreed through local consultation. In addition, an advisory freight route map was also published in April 2005. Enforcement of weight and other restrictions will be essential to the success of the freight/lorry strategy. The freight map can be found in Appendix A.
- Congestion is a key issue in the Central Severn Vale, where average traffic speeds fall below 15mph in the am peak on a large proportion of the road network (as recorded by monitoring vehicles fitted with GPS responders). Indeed, 2003 data for Cheltenham indicates that speeds can fall below 10mph on some roads with typical peak hour (7.30 – 9.00am) speeds of 10-15mph on others.
- There may be scope to further increase levels of bus patronage. The Stagecoach depot in Cheltenham has already reported a 6.5% increase in patronage between 2003 and 2004.
- A significant highway maintenance backlog is identified as a key challenge. This has a potentially detrimental affect upon cyclists, as a result of potholes and poor surfacing, excessive camber, vegetation and gutter debris.

Cycling

Key gaps in the cycle network which correspond to the central area and/or its approaches are as follows:

- Evesham Road (Swindon Lane – West Drive);
- London Road (London Road and Copt Elm Road to Cirencester Road);
- Shurdington Road (Up Hatherley to Bath Road);
- Lansdown Road/ Montpellier/ Promenade;
- Gloucester Road (Liburtus Road, St Georges, to Great Western Road); and
- Tewkesbury Road (Old Gloucester Road to High Street).

Public Realm

Opportunities to improve the public realm in Cheltenham through the Civic Pride Initiative are identified, with regeneration benefits highlighted. The need for safe crossing points, for development that incorporates the principles of “secure by design” and for accredited car park security are emphasised, as is the need to address the accessibility needs of disabled people.

Parking

One of the County and Borough Council's key priorities for the next 18 months is to decriminalise parking enforcement, and implement network traffic management on the key radial routes into the town. The Council mentions the need to consider access by person not by vehicle and therefore, the opportunity for high occupancy vehicle lanes.

In addressing parking issues in the principal urban areas the County Council propose to consider the extension of on-street Pay and Display Parking, in order to control commuter parking. It is considered that reducing the availability of ‘free’ long stay spaces is a priority in seeking to manage congestion. A parking and demand management strategy is put forward, to include parking standards to be applied to new developments.

4.4.4 Summary of implications of previous studies and transport policies

From the preceding analysis, it is clear that a number of key issues need to be addressed in the transport strategy development in future phases:

- The central area is dominated by the inner ring road, which can lead to vehicle/pedestrian/cyclist conflicts, reduced safety, negative externalities (noise/pollution) and thereby a less attractive environment than might otherwise be possible. A key aim for the central area should be to remove non-essential traffic (especially through traffic) from the heart of the town centre, particularly during peak daytime hours. The transport strategy will need to demonstrate the feasibility of this proposal.
- Despite improvements to local bus services, including the introduction of several 'through routes' via the town centre (as opposed to all routes terminating in the town centre), the current bus route network and location of bus stops hinders opportunities for effective interchange. There are too many disparate foci for bus stops. This means that interchange is inconvenient and if pursued can involve a significant walk between bus nodes in the town centre.
- Congestion is a significant issue at peak times within the Central Severn Vale. Average speeds of below 15mph have been recorded across the network for the AM Peak. Levels of vehicular traffic to the central area have fallen. This in itself could be considered a positive outcome, provided that there is no negative economic impact. A better balance is required. A key aspect of future strategy development must be improving the environment within the town centre such as to assist the economic vitality of the town (for retail and tourism).
- Unfortunately, high cycle use is allied with a high cycle accident rate. Safety of cyclists and pedestrians needs to be addressed within the central area through the UDF. Direct pedestrian and cycle routes through and to the town centre need to be assured.

- Signage, orientation and legibility should be improved for all motorised and non-motorised users for the town centre.

At the same time, the town centre exhibits several strengths, which should be enhanced and capitalised upon as part of future transport strategy development:

- Compactness and relative flatness: This has enabled particularly high levels of cycling to work to be recorded (7% mode share). The Borough and County Councils are working towards expansion and improvement of both the National Cycle Network and Cheltenham Cycle Network in the area.
- Existing and expanding park and ride sites: Sites have increased in popularity, partly as a result of increased parking charges within the town centre.
- A good working relationship with the commercial bus operator: it has assisted in the success of joint initiatives to upgrade route 94 and in increasing patronage on the local network (6.5% increase in patronage reported for Stagecoach's Cheltenham Depot).
- Prioritisation by the County and Borough Councils of the implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement and proposals for a comprehensive parking and demand management strategy.
- Actions are being taken to improve opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport in the town centre, with measures proposed through the current Local Transport Plan for bus priority on key corridors.





4.5 Road Network Review

4.5.1 Introduction

The team undertook a comprehensive site survey of the town centre study area, in order to inform the baseline study. The purpose of our visits have been to gain a qualitative, as well as a quantitative understanding of transport and accessibility issues, strengths and weaknesses on a town-wide level.

Drawinga 2A and 2B summarise our on-site observations along with key information gained from previous studies and/or Cheltenham Borough Council.

A short commentary of our baseline findings, as shown on Drawings 2A and 2B, is set out below. Where appropriate, we instead refer to plans previously produced, particularly where it would not be possible to incorporate the information onto Drawings 2A and 2B without compromising its overall clarity.

4.5.2 Road Network

Drawings 2A and 2B shows the Cheltenham Inner and Outer Ring Road. As is evident from the plan, the inner ring will function as part of the outer ring for northbound traffic (e.g. the outer ring is incomplete around its eastern portion, in the respect that it caters for southbound traffic only). It is understood that this principally results from a constraint at the 90 degree bend on the A46, where it meets the pedestrianised high street.

As previously discussed, the ring roads are wide, cause severance of routes into the town centre at key locations as well as within the town centre (for example at Boots Corner). The wide layout, plethora of junctions and sections of one way operation lead to the incidence of accelerating and decelerating traffic, which is intimidating to pedestrians.



The main arterial radials within the Cheltenham Road Network meet the town centre in five locations. These constitute the main approaches into Cheltenham as follows:

- A419 Tewkesbury Road
- A435 Evesham Road
- A40 London Road/A435 Cirencester Road
- A46 Bath Road
- A40 Gloucester Road

In most locations, private vehicles and public transport vehicles share the same space. An exception is the western pedestrianised section of the high street, which is open to westbound public transport vehicles (and for servicing) but not for general traffic. Access to this area is controlled via a bus gate.

The local road network is also used by cyclists, particularly as on-road cycle lanes and facilities have been largely favoured, within the town centre itself, over off-street routes (notwithstanding several exceptions further afield, such as along Lansdown Road and the Honeybourne Line).

4.5.3 Traffic Patterns and Levels

Cheltenham Borough Council has provided traffic flow diagrams of 24 hour flows in 2004, for both all traffic and HGV traffic particularly.

For general traffic, it is clear that the greatest volume of traffic on workdays is carried into/out of the town centre via:

- The A40 to the South West (40,000 vehicles on the dualled stretch to the West Princess Elizabeth Way, almost 30,000 between Princes Elizabeth Way and Gloucester Road and a little over 20,000 vehicles on the Lansdown Road portion of the route, during the 24 hour monitored period in 2004) and
- Tewkesbury Road to the North East (28,630 vehicles over the monitored 24 hours in 2004). This corresponds to the two routes into the town from the M5 Motorway and from the direction of nearby settlements of Tewkesbury and Gloucester, with which Cheltenham has strong links (e.g. in terms of levels of in/out-commuting to/from these locations). Arle Court Park and Ride intercepts some traffic on the Gloucester Road Approach. Prioritisation of expansion of the Arle Court Park and Ride Site is an extremely sensible as a means of trying to reduce congestion and demand on the busiest approach.

Another important arrival route is from the South East which carries approaching 24,000 vehicles on the portion of London Road between where the A435 and the A40 merge and Old Bath Road.

In addition, Princess Elizabeth Way (A4013) also carries between 20,000 and 30,000 vehicles, acting as an important outer orbital section of route west of the Town Centre. The majority of the outer and inner ring road were recorded as carrying between 10,000 and 20,000 vehicles through a 24 hour weekday, as did the other key approaches not already discussed.



In terms of HGVs, the relative distribution of flows between the approaches to the town centre appears to be the same as for general traffic, with the dualled portion of the A40 carrying over 1,000 HGVs over the 24 hour period, other key routes carrying between 500 and 1,000 and the remainder between 300 and 500. Once at the town centre, the northern section of the Outer Relief Road and Lansdown Road carry the most HGV traffic (500 to 1,000). Flows for other parts of the central area are more modest (e.g. 200 vehicles or less).

The observed flows do not necessarily reflect demand, as in congested conditions maximum flow will not be the same as full demand. Indeed, when we compare the traffic flow diagrams with a Congestion Map presented for the County in the Second Local Transport Plan, we find that average speeds throughout much of the central area of Cheltenham are lower than 10mph during the AM Peak (2003, 7.00 - 9.30am). This point will most probably apply more significantly to general traffic than to HGVs.



4.6 Public Transport

4.6.1 Rail

Cheltenham Railway Station falls outside the study area and is located outside the study area, approximately 1.2 to 1.5 kilometre from the centre of the town.

It is possible to cycle comfortably between the Railway Station to the town centre via the Honeybourne Line. This route provides a key link between the station and town centre. However, beyond St Georges Place there is no clear route into the town centre, with poor signage and legibility, and conflict with road traffic. It is unclear which direction a visitor would then need to go in order to complete their trip to the town centre and to find cycle parking.

The Honeybourne Line also provides a pedestrian route to the town centre, although it must be noted that the station is unfortunately located beyond the maximum desired walking threshold (800m, IHT), and safety issues may deter users, particularly after dark. Public transport integration within the town is covered in a separate sub section below (e.g. bus links to the town centre).

4.6.2 Bus

Bus accessibility plots for the town (see Appendix B) show the number of households within 100m, 200m, 300m and 400m of a bus stop. Plots are available for those within these distances of a 15 minute service, a 30 minute service, or any service. Our analysis focussed on the 400m maximum desired walking distance to a bus stop (IHT guideline). Cheltenham Borough Council indicate that 67% of the population benefit from this level of proximity to a service of at least a 15 minute frequency, 93% to a service of at least a 30 minute frequency and 99% to any service. Services to the south east of the town centre are of a lower frequency than those which serve locations in different directions. Overall, levels of bus accessibility are considered to be reasonably good.

An assessment of service frequency indicates that many roads within the town centre carry more than one bus every 15 minutes. Indeed, frequencies are likely to greatly exceed this along these stretches, where several high frequency routes converge. Designing for public transport accessibility along these links (or alternative town centre bus routes) should be central to the transport strategy.

At present, County Bus Services terminate at the town centre bus station at Royal Well, which is well located relative to the town centre. Services terminating here tend to be rural services. In contrast, there are several locations where there is a clustering of bus stops for town services (e.g. for internal services). This creates difficulties in interchange between certain routes and is extremely confusing for visitors.

The locations of bus stops in the town centre are shown on Drawing 2A. Clusters of stops are located at:

- High Street;
- Pittville Street;
- The Promenade; and
- Royal Well.

Maps showing the routing of services within the town centre are in Appendix B. Routes are organised such that on entering the town centre, services perform a relatively small loop (examples include at Royal Well, the Promenade, or to the south of the High Street to return through Boots Corner) before exiting again along the same route in reverse. This is inefficient in terms of routing once within the town centre and contributes to interchange difficulties.



The potential relocation of facilities at Royal Well (to enable the redevelopment of this site), the need for a reliable and legible interchange, and the routing of services through the town centre will need to be considered as part of the transport strategy to be developed in the next phase. It is considered that this should include a wholesale review of routes in the town centre, in conjunction with operators. Issues for consideration would include alternative and more efficient means of serving the heart of the town centre, as well as the scope for delivering additional through-routes which we understand would be supported by the Council and other stakeholders.

Overall, integration between bus and rail in Cheltenham is reasonable at best. Bus services D and P.Q. serve Cheltenham Railway Station and the town centre. The former of these runs at a high frequency of every 10 minutes from Monday to Friday daytimes. The latter is only an hourly service.



4.7 Cycling

4.7.1 Cycle Routes

The Honeybourne Line links into the National Cycle Network (NCN) to the West of the Town Centre. The NCN also serves the railway station. There is another NCN link into the town centre that travels from the railway station along an on-road segment to Lansdown Road, where it then travels eastwards to the Gordon Lamp Junction and then north along Montpellier Street (on-road section). Unfortunately it then ends where Montpellier Street meets St Georges Road and then a cyclist must make their own way to the town centre on a route of their choice, most probably along the Promenade, where some cycle facilities exist (see discussion of cycle facilities below).

4.7.2 Cycle Facilities

Cycle facilities are shown on Drawing 2A. Cycle parking is shown as indicative purple hoops (see key) and designated cycle lanes (both on-road and off-road) are shown as purple lines either on or adjacent to the carriageway (as appropriate).

Overall, cycle lane provision within the town centre is not particularly extensive. The most comprehensive sections are:

- Along Princess Elizabeth Way, where modern development has enabled comprehensive provision, including crossing facilities, lanes and advanced cycle stop lines.
- Through Montpellier Street, Trafalgar Street and Imperial Street, which comprises a signed route, with signalised crossings at key junctions from the south of Montpellier Terrace onwards towards the town centre. The route ends at the Civic Offices, where several banks of cycle rack are available.
- From the South East, including Charlton Kings, there is a signed route into the town centre through Sanford Park. This meets the town centre at Bath Street and then continues to Cambray Place where cycles are exempt from pedestrianisation of the high street just to the north and where several cycle racks are located. There is no signalised crossing over Bath Road.

- A signed route is located towards the north west of the town centre, running via St Georges Place, over the High Street, along Henrietta Street and onwards over Swindon Road (outer ring road) towards St Pauls. There is a controlled crossing at the Henrietta Street/Swindon Road/Unalley Street junction to assist cyclists to cross the inner ring road.

4.8 Pedestrian Access

4.8.1 Routes

Pedestrian facilities are provided alongside most roads and subject to adequate footway widths, surfacing, lighting, security and connections (e.g. signalised or uncontrolled crossings), routes alongside most roads should be available to the physically able.

The Promenade and High Street, are well suited to pedestrians, particularly as these routes include large pedestrianised sections. However, crossing of the inner ring road causes a certain segregation between different sections of the High Street. Although a signalised crossing point is available, given the scale of observed flows, the crossing point is unattractive and pedestrians sometimes need to wait for some time before the lights change in their favour. The road is intimidating to pedestrians due to fast moving (one way) traffic, with rapid accelerating after the lights change. This junction at Boots Corner is focal point in the heart of the town centre. The combination of heavy traffic, safety barriers and a hostile pedestrian environment does little for permeability and sense of arrival in this location.

Several key pedestrian links shown on the plan are segregated from motorised traffic, for example the link through St Mary's church yard.

4.8.2 Pedestrian Flows



A limited amount of data exists in relation to existing pedestrian flows. Counts (at 8 locations) were undertaken by Foxley Tagg Planning, in association with the University of the West of England. These were only conducted during the day between 11.30 to 15.30 (6 points) or 11.30 to 13.30 (2 points). The results do not highlight routes which show existing demand (or are currently favoured) during the evening or for commuting purposes.

Findings reflect demand within the town centre during the day and do not provide an indication of flows along about routes into the study area. In order to better understand demand, it would be necessary to look not only at observed patterns, but more widely at trip origins and destinations.

Nevertheless, the surveys indicate largest recorded flows were along the Promenade (North – South) and along the High Street (North South). These partly reflect the location of shops, cafes and services, as well as pedestrianised environments where there is ample space for pedestrians. More recent (February 2006) pedestrian surveys of the High Street and Promenade carried out by DPDS indicate that the highest levels of use during the day (outside of commuting hours) are on the central part of the High Street, opposite Dixons (average 5370 per hour); High Street, just west of Boots Corner (average 3265 per hour); and on the eastern stretch of the High Street near the junction with Rodney Road (average 2570 per hour). Flows along the Promenade (average 1350 per hour) and through Regents Arcade (average 1980 per hour) are lower.

In addition to the above, Latham Architects produced a plan to show pedestrian movements routes through the town centre. Again, they highlighted the High Street and Promenade as important routes. Interestingly, however, they show there to be a greater movement along Royal Well than along the Promenade to the front of the Civic Offices. This is surprising. Another key route recorded is on along the Promenade, Montpellier Walk and on towards the Gordon Lamp.



Latham Architects reported that there is a major movement along Portland Street and beyond along the A435 corridor. Other movement routes to/from/through the town centre were graded as of medium flow. These include Clarence Street, Bayshill Road, Bath Road, Fairview Road, Albion Street, North Street, St Pauls Road, Swindon Road, New Street, Knapp Street, Grovesnor Street, along with others.

4.8.3 Pedestrian Facilities

Key elements of the urban streetscape have a direct impact on the attractiveness and comfort of pedestrian journeys, these include: surfacing; well located crossings (on desire lines to enable comprehensive, direct and coherent routes), lighting (for pedestrian trips after dark), security, as well as places to rest.

The function of streets and quality of streetscape are discussed in more detail in section 5, and shown on Drawings 4 and 5. Drawing 4 also shows Indicative pedestrian desire lines which are currently not well served by existing facilities. The issue of safety is discussed in the section which follows

The location of signalised crossings are shown on Drawing 2A. Those which are green are existing, good quality crossings. Orange ones are reasonable uncontrolled crossings and red dashed lines over roads/junctions have been added where it is considered that a controlled crossing is:

- Absent; or
- Of inadequate standard; and where
- Provision/enhancement is considered at this preliminary stage to be potentially beneficial

Portland Street is considered to be a priority for improved provision, particularly if this area is to be redevelopment. Improvements are also required on Albion Street, Bath Road, Oriel Road, at several locations along Montpellier Walk, on North Street and on St George's Place.

4.9 Safety

4.9.1 Key conflict points

Based on an assessment of accident data held by Cheltenham Borough Council, it is difficult to note any particularly discernible patterns from the accident plots. Nevertheless, there are some locations where a degree of accident clustering does appear to be occurring, including at junctions and along certain sections of route. These locations include:

- St Margaret's Road (ring road, 3 serious collisions),
- Montpellier Walk (2 serious collisions),
- St George's Road (4 serious collisions)
- At key junctions on the ring road or approaches: Gordon lamp junctions, College Road/London Road, Fairview Road/Winchcombe Street.

4.10 Servicing Requirements

Existing service accesses to units within the central shopping area are shown as red triangles on Drawing 2B. Access is also required to units within the High Street and can currently be gained from the front of units. It is clear that the inner ring road, as well as certain other town centre roads provide an important service access function. These can be seen where there is a concentration of the red arrows. These would either need to be retained, or alternatives to the relevant unit provided as part of any transport strategy (unless the use which is being served is also to be relocated).



4.11 Parking

Off street car parks in Cheltenham Town Centre are shown on Drawing 2B. The number of spaces in each of the Public Off-street Car Parks are also shown on the Plan. The table below summarises off-street parking provision in the town.

Car park	Spaces
Bath Parade	80
Beechwood Arcade	372
Brewery	23
Chapel Walk	47
Chelt Walk	90
Grosvenor Terrace	452
High Street	126
North Place	484
Phoenix Passage	36
Portland Street	329
Regent Arcade	557
Rodney Road	111
Sherborne Place	102
St. George's Road	116
St. James' Street	202
Total	3,127



In addition to the off-street car parks in the town centre, there are substantial areas of on-street parking, which are shown on the plan. These are subject to different time restrictions and charges in different areas.

Our town centre site visits concurred with the general conclusion within the LTP, that there are difficulties of parking enforcement in certain locations, which might be eased following decriminalised parking enforcement. Multiple occurrences of illegal parking were observed in the town, particularly in Montpellier Street.

Data on car park usage for two single days (Friday and Saturday 7am to 7pm) through the period of 1998 to 2003 are available from Cheltenham Borough Council.

These indicate that levels of usage have fluctuated over the period, decreasing in the late 1990s, before rising again in 2000 and the early part of 2001, before falling again and levelling off during the remainder of the period to 2003. Overall, the level of vehicles parked in Cheltenham has increased slightly during the period, but only by approximately 500 vehicles per day. Data on car park usage indicate that levels of usage fluctuated over the period between 1998 and 2003, decreasing in the late 1990s, before rising again in 2000 and the early part of 2001, then falling again, but levelling off during the remainder of the period to 2003. Overall, parking levels in Cheltenham have increased slightly during the period, but only by approximately 500 vehicles per day.



4.12 Travel Behaviour

Figure 2.10 on page 66 of the Second Local Transport Plan for Gloucestershire summarises travel to work behaviour in Cheltenham, in terms of the degree of self containment, out commuting and in commuting. This indicates that 37,480 travel to work trips are contained within Cheltenham (e.g. Residents who also worked in the town at the time of the 2001 Census). In addition, 15,425 residents commute out of the area, with the main two destinations being Tewkesbury (36%) and Gloucester (22%). Finally, 22,228 non-residents travel to work in Cheltenham. Again, Tewkesbury (41%) and Gloucester (21%) are the main locations from which people commute, along with the West Midlands (11%). These demands for flows between Cheltenham and Tewkesbury/Gloucester are likely to correspond to the particularly high flows observed on these routes.

Gloucestershire County Council Environmental Research Team undertook an Origin and Destination Analysis to understand Travel to Work Flows in the district of Cheltenham, based upon findings from the 2001 Census. Their report indicates that the number of people working within the Borough increased from approximately 53,000 in 1991 to around 60,000 in 2001. However, levels of out-commuting also increased, including to locations outside of the County (e.g. West Midlands, Bristol).

In terms of travel to work mode share, car driver travel dominates commuting flows within the County (84% of trips from and 81% of trips to the district). Levels are almost as high for trips from/to outside the County. However, public transport mode share is greater than other parts of the County. More encouraging is travel to work mode share for those who both live and work within the District, which showed that at least 42% of residents travelled to work by sustainable modes (36% by walking and cycling and 6% by public transport), as compared to 49% as a car driver and 7% as a car passenger. Indeed, it is encouraging that amongst those who work and live in the town, the percentage of people who travel to work by foot or cycle has increased more than the percentage who drive to work.

Council data on levels and patterns of travel to work by cycle within Cheltenham indicate high levels of Travel to Work by Cycle mode share (6.9%), but that levels vary between wards. Levels of cycling are particularly high from the Oakley Ward, Hesters Way, Leckhampton, St Peter's, Swindon Village, Springbank and Charlton Park. Over 7% of travelled to work by Cycle from each of these wards in 2001, up to a maximum of 11.09% from Oakley. Indeed, the ward for which the lowest proportion of commuting by cycle was recorded was Lansdown (4.22%). It is important to note that levels in even this ward were significantly higher than the national average, which is in the region of 3%.

4.13 Summary of Implications for a Transport Strategy

The baseline review of transport networks in Cheltenham revealed a number of shortcomings, to be addressed in any future transport strategy for the town. These are as follows:

- The ring roads, in particular the inner ring road, generate severance and are intrusive, forming a barrier to Civic Pride improvements to the town centre. This is particularly the case for the northbound – eastbound section of the inner ring road along Royal Well Road, Clarence Road and Albion Street. “Boots Corner” exemplifies the effect of the inner ring road on the town centre, where the High Street is split with a marked change in environment between the High Street west and the High Street east.
- The outer ring performs an essential function of distributing traffic around the northern and western parts of the town. However, its northern section is increasingly congested and its attractiveness as a key route is decreasing. This has an impact on the wider town centre, as traffic potentially redistributes

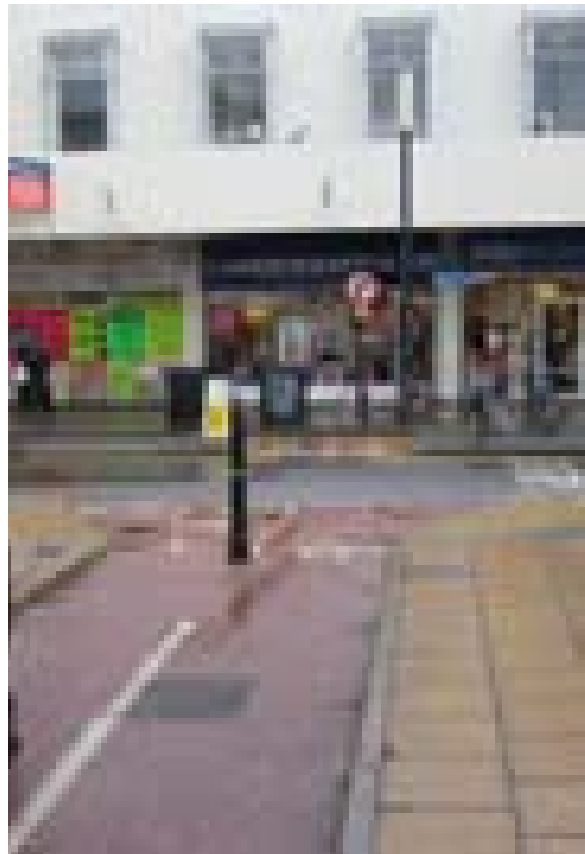
on other routes.

- The town benefits from 5 clearly identifiable access corridors / gateways. However, in traffic terms, because parking in the town is concentrated to the north and east, it is believed a significant amount of traffic has to be routed through the centre to access these facilities. Arrival points into the town do not necessarily correspond directly to the 5 arrival corridors.
- The town is served by an extensive network of bus services. However, these follow a multiplicity of routes and loops, criss-crossing the heart of the town centre. This reinforces severance and conflict with pedestrians and cyclists, contributing to a lack of legibility of the current bus network as well as impeding good integration and interchange between services.
- Service routes through the town centre also cross the heart of the town centre and in particular the High Street and therefore create multiple conflict points with pedestrians and cyclists.
- Pedestrian routes in the town centre are based on a network in the form of a cross, with The Promenade providing the north-south link and the High Street the east-west link. This network lacks connection with other adjacent areas such as Montpellier and St Paul's mainly because of the severance effect of the ring roads.
- The cycle network in the town also suffers from some key gaps, in particular when there is a need to



cross the ring roads.
As a result a transport strategy for the town would have to consider the following:

- Reducing the impact of the ring roads, especially the inner ring road,
- The location of arrivals points into the town and their relationship with the commercial centre at the heart of Cheltenham,
- The prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic in the heart of the town,
- Simplifying the local bus network and the delivery of a potential through route through the town centre with the creation of a key arrival/interchange point.
- A Transport strategy for the town would have to adopt an holistic approach, and review the concept



Drawing 2A: Transport and Access



