BATHGATE TOWN CENTRE
Urban Design Framework

December 2008

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Urban Design Framework

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report has been developed to provide consistent improvement in the quality of Bathgate Town Centre's townscape and public realm. It consists of design guidelines to inform development proposals and development control decision-making, a design framework integrating various short to long-term strategy proposals, and guidance on the delivery and prioritisation of these proposals.

The Urban Design Strategy is proposed to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the West Lothian Local Plan 2005 and whilst not a statutory policy will form a material consideration in development control. The Design Strategy will be used to inform and support development control decision-making, and to promote and support the co-ordinated delivery of the various projects/strategies. It is intended to support and add clarity to the requirements on developers and their agents wishing to invest and promote development within Bathgate Town Centre.

The guidance should allow the Local Planning Authority Planning and Development Control interests within Bathgate to be better understood and communicated and lead to greater clarity, consistency and transparency in establishing the quality requirements within planning.

A Public Realm Design Guide has been developed alongside this report to provide design specification for the implementation of elements within the town centre environs.

The Framework is intended to fulfil three functions:

1. Set out the a vision and strategy for Bathgate within a Design Framework adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to support the Development Plan.

2. Provide a 'Design Tool' for both Planning Officers and developers that offers a clear interpretation of national policy guidance and urban design best practice that is specific to Bathgate and that will be used in Development Control to support the quality of design, adding clarity and consistency to the planning process.

3. Provide a clearer understanding of how small and incremental change can support place-making and deliver a stronger more vibrant, more sustainable town centre.

1.2 Background

Small towns across Scotland have over the last decade witnessed significant challenges as a result of changing patterns of retailing and a planning system that has done little to support traditional local centres. In recent years Scottish Planning Policy and Planning Guidance has sought to address this and give greater recognition to urban design, sustainable places and address the importance of urban design and design quality in planning decisions.

Our towns and local centres make a unique contribution to the economic and social quality of life in Scotland. These are important urban places and are likely to become more important as we seek to find ways to promote more sustainable living and address the key challenge of climate change. Small towns and local centres are also vital to local economies as key locations supporting enterprise, local services, transport interchange and a range of civic functions.

Experience over recent years and from similar sized towns elsewhere suggests that the traditional market town qualities, which differentiate Bathgate's town centre from settlements such as Livingston and the new Ravenscraig Town Centre, are under threat. The Federation of Small Business in Scotland notes that:

- Specialised stores including butchers, bakers, fishmongers, and newsagents selling confectionery, tobacco and newspapers closed at the rate of 50 per week between1997–2002

- General stores have been closing at the rate of one per day and 13,000 independent newsagents closed between 1995 and 2004 and 8,600 independent grocery stores closed between 2000-2005 (25% decline)

- Wholesalers, which underpin the vital retail infrastructure for local stores, have closed at the rate of six per week over the last two years and over a five-year period VAT registrations for small-scale food manufacturers fell by almost 12 per cent.

Confronting these challenges requires positive action by Councils, planners, local stakeholders, retailers and all those with a commitment to their local town. Positive action, when supported by positive planning and concerted local action has been demonstrated to work. Key lessons learnt include:

- Creating a strong sense of local ownership and active participation in the future planning of town centres

- Creating strong local representative organisations working together to provide leadership and provide the champions for the town centre

- Building the quality of place and ensuring that all decisions are aligned with the vision and development objectives of the centre

- Enhancing the town centre offer and quality of the visitor experience

- Building on the distinctive qualities and strengths of the town centre

If Bathgate Town Centre is to retain and build positively upon its strengths, there is a recognised need for place-specific design guidance to support the local development plan, and for a co-ordinated set of public realm strategies or interventions to be agreed, consulted upon and implemented.

1.3 Successful Town Centres

Research, in addition to everyday empirical evidence, shows that successful town centres are a result of a number of complex and interrelating aspects – environmental and service quality, mix and diversity, activity and vibrancy, adaptability, accessibility, etc. It is useful to look at national planning guidance where many of these attributes have been explained and form key policy objectives.

Scottish Planning Policy 8 (2006)
SPP8 identifies town centres as places which provide a diverse and sustainable mix of activities and land uses which create an identity that signals their function and wider role.

One of the key policy objectives contained in SPP8, especially relevant to this Design Guide, is the need **"to improve the physical quality and sustainability of our town centre environments"**. This means promoting good quality design, protecting and enhancing existing quality, supporting the creation of town centres which are safe, inclusive and attractive for everyone and which promote sustainable management of water and energy.

Planning Advice Note 59: Improving Town Centres (1999)
PAN 59 identifies the general qualities of successful and popular town centres. These centres:

■ include a range of facilities focused in a relatively small area (a critical mass of attractions) and make best use of the already considerable investment in the built environment. These attractions include a mix of shops (particularly specialised shops providing choice and variety) as well as a wide range of financial, professional and government services together with cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities. There are therefore considerable opportunities to combine shopping trips with other activities. The existence of a thriving local residential population can be a positive force for change and the maintenance of quality;

■ are highly accessible by a range of types of transport (and in particular make best use of their traditional focus as nodes for public transport), have sufficient good quality short stay car parking close to shops, have good transport linkages within the centre, and have efficient arrangements for delivery of goods;

■ have an attractive amenity in terms of the built environment and townscape, streets and public spaces are considered clean and safe, and have a sense of local identity and character; all of which greatly enhances the attraction of the centre in which the shopping or leisure experience takes place; and, in the future, will be those which have the vision and mechanisms in place to build on these assets, overcome problems, adapt to market and consumer needs, and secure appropriate and necessary improvements.

1.4 The Public Realm

The term 'public realm' often means different things to different people or disciplines. Essentially, and for the purposes of this report, the public realm incorporates all areas to which the public has ready access. This includes streets, lanes, vennels, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

■ The appearance, character and quality of the public realm are composed of streetscape and landscape elements (both hard and soft) and treatments directly within the space and by the buildings and landscaping that frame and enclose the space. The latter is frequently referred to in the field of urban design as the 'public realm armature' which recognises the total extent of open space connecting building form and facades, place qualities and public realm regardless of whether this is public or privately owned.

■ The public realm is shaped by the actions of a range of people and disciplines, including highway engineers, urban designers, architects, planners, developers, maintenance workforce, property owners and of course the general public in the way they use, treat and move around the public realm. As such, designing, creating, managing and maintaining the public realm is rarely a straightforward process, and achieving a high quality of public realm requires commitment from all parties working in collaboration around a shared vision and goal.

■ Use of the public realm inevitably involves a wide range of differing groups of people, particularly within a town centre location. These groups, often referred to as stakeholders, includes everyone with an interest in the quality and success of the town centre.   Conflicting needs and requirements between stakeholders often arise which needs to be carefully managed from the outset. This should be addressed through town centre management and creation of a public realm which is fit-for-purpose, functions effectively and which strengthens the sense of quality and enjoyment.

Vision & Objectives

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2.1 Local Plan Context

The Finalised West Lothian Local Plan 2005 identifies Bathgate Town Centre as an **Area of Built Heritage and Townscape Value** under Policy HER 25. The policy affords special consideration to maintaining its architectural character and historic significance in the control of development. It also states that due consideration will be given to the contribution it might make to the regeneration or enhancement of its wider area. The supporting text adds that the architecture of central Bathgate, despite the loss of some buildings and redevelopment, still has many handsome buildings and spaces which reinforce the status of the town as a district centre. In contrast to some of the other Areas of Built Heritage and Townscape Value, it does not rule out the likelihood that a character appraisal may identify some parts of central Bathgate as qualifying for Conservation Area designation.

With respect to listed buildings, Policy HER 4 seeks to encourage schemes for the conservation and improvements of individual or groups of listed buildings which maximise investment in the property through the use of public, charitable and private finance in partnership. One potential heritage initiative listed is to focus on Historic Town Centres through work with the local communities and other agencies to bring forward conservation and enhancement proposals.

The Local Plan encourages high-density housing development, especially within and adjacent to town centres and adjacent to public transport facilities (Policies HOU 6). For example, 45 dwellings per hectare is the density that has been applied in housing development site indicative calculations (Local Plan Appendix 6.1) for sites close to the town centre, such as Jarvey Street (LP ref HBg45).

Local Plan Housing policies provide some broad guidance in terms of housing development design principles for Core Development Areas which it states will be taken into account by the Council in considering other housing proposals (LP Policy HOU 7 and paragraphs 6.44 and 7.49). More generally in terms of design, Policy IMP 15 states that **the Council will ensure that high standards of design are achieved through the development control process and that development proposals which are poorly designed will not be supported**.

Policy IMP 15 goes on to say that the Council will identify design requirements in design briefs, outline planning permissions and through the preparation of supplementary planning guidance. Prior to this Urban Design Framework and corresponding Public Realm Design Guide, no other supplementary planning guidance has been prepared to specifically guide the design of development in Bathgate Town Centre.

2.2 Bathgate Locality Plan

The West Lothian Community Planning Partnership has committed itself to developing and delivering Locality Plans in each multi-member ward. Locality Plans are intended to better plan and develop services at a local level. They:

■ support the delivery of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA),
■ engage with and facilitate the involvement of communities in identifying and addressing local priorities,
■ provide a Focus for Action on local priorities, and
■ encourage integrated service delivery.

The Bathgate Locality Plan 2008 – 2011 highlights a number of priorities for its communities, which have then been further subdivided into actions and linked to Single Outcome Agreement targets. The two themes addressed that are particularly relevant to Bathgate Town Centre are:

■ 'Bathgate Economic Regeneration'
■ 'Older People'.

Bathgate Economic Regeneration considers Bathgate as a place to live, as a place to do business and as a place to shop. It is easy to see how quality of place and good design can have an important role to play in these aspects. The second theme of support for Older People recognises that there is a high proportion of older people living within Bathgate and that many of these enjoy the social interaction that living close to a town centre can bring. The Plan makes a clear commitment to consulting widely with older residents on planned town centre improvements.

Connecting to Single Outcome Agreement Targets

The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) West Lothian Community Planning Partnership has developed is based on a new concordat between the Scottish Government and local authorities. The details of the SOA as it affects Bathgate are set out in the Locality Plan. The locality planning process encourages local communities and organisations to work together to jointly plan services at a local level, resulting in services that are much more responsive to local needs.

Bathgate's Economic Regeneration focuses on Bathgate as a 'Place to Live'; 'A Place to do Business'; and 'A Place to Shop'. Specific planned partner actions have been defined (eg. Reduction in town centre crime / Continuous improvement to the town's visual appearance and cleanliness). These are key areas of concern to local people and are key part of Enterprising Bathgate's strategic objectives.

The Urban Design Framework offers a supportive mechanisms that will assist in helping to secure the Community Planning / SOA targets and deliver on the SOA Indicators.

The SOA should facilitate funding support to projects that can in a specific and measurable way deliver the SOA targets. The most obvious SOA and Urban Design Framework connections are as follows:

A Place to Live
Reduction in town centre crime
Control of litter/graffiti/dog fouling /etc
Secure economic gain for Bathgate from new housing
Maximise contributions of culture/ tourism to economic growth
Work to ensure Lyndsay House meets community aspirations
Nurture and strengthen civic pride
Recognise and protect the town's important buildings
Continuous improvement to the town's visual appearance and cleanliness
Address older people's needs

A Place to do Business
Increase the number of business start-ups
Capitalise on regeneration to promote economic growth
Foster innovation to develop new markets, products and services
Social enterprise / fund opportunities with voluntary sector
Promote an enterprising culture
Maximise the contribution of culture tourism and quality open spaces
A strong night time economy
Maximise benefits to the town of new Bathgate – Airdrie rail link

2.3 Enterprising Bathgate Objectives

A Place to Shop
Support to Enterprise Bathgate/BIDS in re-affirming Bathgate Town Centre as a quality shopping destination and social interaction space
Work with partners on the delivery of the Public Realm Guide and delivery of a new streetscape improvement programme
Explore with partners external project funding sources
Integration of planned retail delivery on periphery of the town centre
Establish a Bathgate brand
Continuous improvement programme for shop fronts

The key partner agreed action is clearly relevant with many of these elements delivered through the Design Guidelines and projects arising from the Framework. The specific SOA Indicators should be cited within submissions for funding and outcome indicators incorporated into funding application submissions and project monitoring and evaluation.

The SOA has committed to securing the regeneration of Bathgate and the Urban Design Framework and the urban design planning that underpins and project proposals have a key role in supporting the SOA targets.

Enterprising Bathgate has established the first Business Improvement District (BID) in Scotland. The BID involves businesses within Bathgate Town Centre who have come together to make decisions on how to improve their trading environment. The Enterprising Bathgate Business Plan 2008 to 2013 sets out a number of objectives – replicated in Table 1 – to see benefits to all business sectors. It recognises that Bathgate's strength lies in the diversity of its businesses and sees this as the foundation on which to re-build the town for the future.

The BID was set up following consultation with local businesses which revealed a number of priorities that could be arranged under five key theme headings: **Perception and Image, Clean and Attractive, Safe and Secure, Accessibility and Facilitation**. A range of potential projects were identified for

Table 1: Enterprising Bathgate BID Objectives

Benefits for the Retail Sector
- An increase in footfall as a direct result of an improved business environment
- A reduction in retail crime and stock loss through additional focus on safety and security
- Additional consumer spend and retail sales leading to increased profit
- A safer and more attractive shopping environment in Bathgate
- Sustained investment over a five year period

Benefits for the Leisure Sector
- A safer and more secure environment for customers
- A more accessible location as marketing and promotion projects gather momentum
- A co-ordinated events programme to ensure there is regularly something to see in Bathgate

Benefits to the Office Sector
- An improved working environment, which will increase business ability to recruit and retain quality staff and in turn, minimise loss of expertise
- A reduction in staff turnover, to deliver an improved bottom line
- A reduction in business crime
- Improved perception by clients of business, due to a more positive experience in, and perception of, Bathgate
- A strong voice on issues that matter to businesses

2.4 Town Centre Urban Design Objectives

the next five years and categorised under these key themes (see Business Plan, page 10).

The key themes identified through the BID Business Plan can also be translated to form the basis of urban design objectives for the Town Centre.

Development and other initiatives within the Town Centre should be designed to:

Perception & Image
- create a welcoming and attractive first impression
- portray a positive and high quality image
- attract a range of high quality retailers and other businesses to locate
- encourage a broad mix of uses and activities

Accessibility
- encourage safe and comfortable pedestrian movement
- promote access to/from the Town Centre by train or bus
- improve legibility of the public space network through townscape improvements and clearer signalisation of civic amenities and car parks

Clean & Attractive
- allow for efficient and effective maintenance and management of the public realm
- deter against vandalism of property, street furniture and soft landscaping
- preserve and enhance attractive and historic buildings
- replace or improve unattractive or poorly maintained buildings

Safe & Secure
- ensure that the entire public space network is, and feels, safe and secure
- deter crime and anti-social behaviour where possible through passive means
- allow for safe and convenient pedestrian crossing of main roads
- provide high levels of security to business premises
- bring residential uses into the Town Centre to increase passive surveillance

Facilitation
- allow for adaptable / flexible use of space and accommodation
- create a functional public realm for all users and service providers, resolving any conflicting demands through practical and sustainable design measures

Urban Design Appraisal

3

3.1 Introduction & Context

Bathgate is located in the central west area of West Lothian (see Figure 1) with a relatively large rural catchment area, but forming part of the M8 corridor linking Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is the largest traditional town in West Lothian with a population of around 15,000. Recent residential expansion, particularly at Wester Inch to the south of the town centre, is likely to add up to an additional 5000 residents.

The name Bathgate was first recorded in 1153 as 'Batket', meaning Borewood, and formed a important centre on the Edinburgh - Bathgate - Airdrie - Glasgow road. Industry developed around brewing and weaving with the Steelyard forming the traditional location where woven cloth was weighed. Bathgate is indicated on Roy's map (1750) as a substantial linear settlement with five radial roads.

By 1847 the Edinburgh and Bathgate railway was completed, leading to further growth in the town and by 1851 Bathgate had a population of 3300. Rapid growth and industrial diversification meant that by 1861 Bathgate's population had reached 10,000 with industry including the world's first Mineral Oil Refinery, Coal, Steel, Whisky and Weaving.

The BMC Truck & Tractor plant, built in the 1960's, was closed in 1986 creating significant unemployment but significant new enterprise initiatives, residential regeneration, growth in the service sector and new inward investment has re-invigorated Bathgate. In 2008 Enterprising Bathgate was established as the first Business Improvement District in Scotland.

Figure 1 - Location Map

3.2 Strategic & Local Movement

In addition to its proximity to the M8 corridor, Bathgate is also well connected by road to other surrounding West Lothian settlements. These strategic roads continue directly into Bathgate Town Centre, where the connecting streets offer good permeability and access to a number of surface car parks located around the central area. **The location of these car parks, however, is not always evident from a visiting driver's perspective, and improved signposting is recommended.** Figure 2 illustrates the principal urban blocks, connecting streets and public car parks making up the town centre.

The planned new Airdrie to Bathgate Rail Link will connect to Glasgow and improve the existing link to Edinburgh. This improved strategic connection will not only promote sustainable travel over a wide area of Central Scotland, it is also likely to increase the levels of investment and overall economic fortunes of Bathgate Town Centre. The new station – the new public transport 'gateway' to Bathgate – will be located some 400 metres further from the Town Centre than the existing station. This will bring with it the **challenge of encouraging pedestrian movement between the station and Town Centre**, thereby promoting the use of public transport and town centre services.
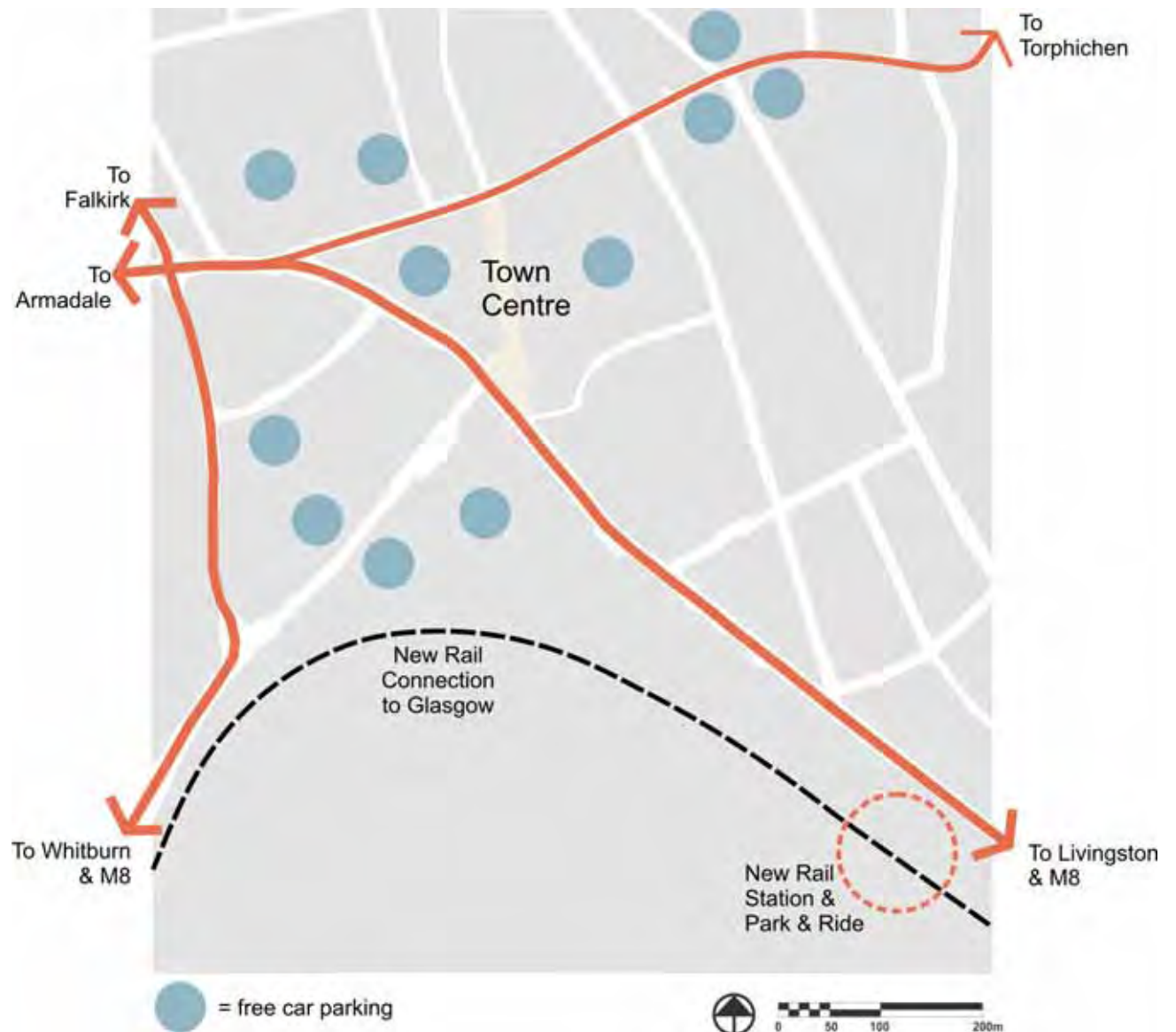
Figure 2 - Strategic Movement

The principal urban blocks are further broken down by a series of interconnecting lanes, vennels and minor streets to offer the Town Centre a permeable pedestrian network. This is a critical element in maintaining high footfall levels to benefit the Town Centre businesses. Most of these pedestrian links connect from the main shopping streets to the car parks and to the residential areas beyond. **However, the quality of many of these lanes and vennels, in terms of security and aesthetic appeal, is fairly poor, and their whereabouts are poorly indicated/signposted.**

As part of the new rail link, Network Rail will require to relocate the existing cycle path from along the old railway line. By the end of 2010 the new cycle path will run alongside the reopened railway line. The new cycle path has been developed in consultation with SUSTRANS, Railway Paths Ltd and the land access officers of North Lanarkshire Council and West Lothian Council.

The cycle route will join the Bathgate Town Centre street network at Whitburn Road, to the south of the old foundry site. The levels of vehicular traffic along this and connecting roads can be heavy, and the incorporation of dedicated on-street cycle lanes should be considered. This connection should follow the length of Whitburn Road towards George Square and should form part of a Town Centre network which also links directly and safely to the new rail station.

400 metre walkband

New Rail Connection to Glasgow

New Rail Station & Park & Ride

⮂ = connecting secondary route

◼ = free car parking

0 50 100 200m
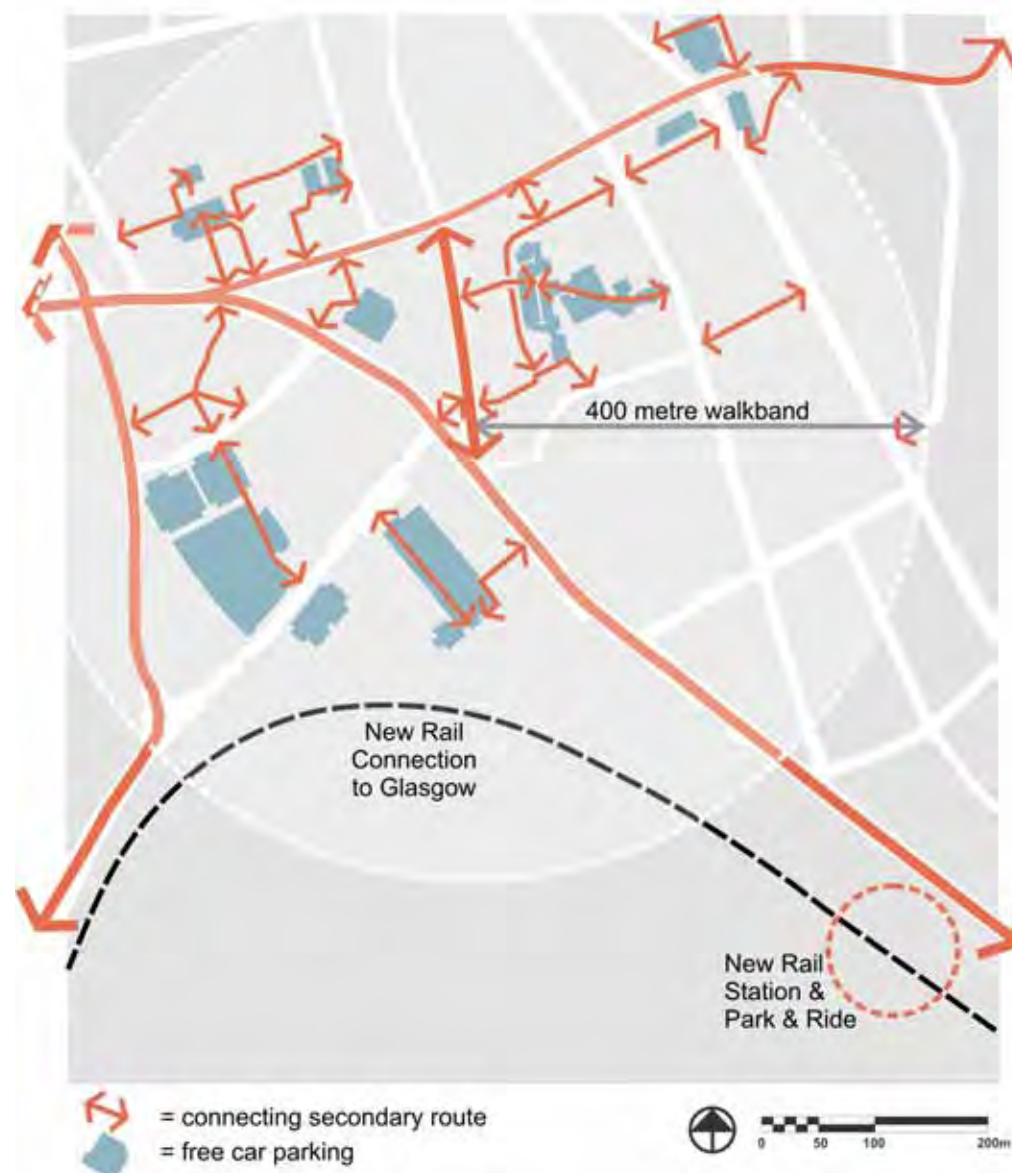
Figure 3 - Pedestrian Movement

3.3 Strengths

Bathgate Town Centre has many intrinsic strengths in terms of townscape structure and quality. It has an attractive and vibrant market town character reinforced by a high number and good range of independent businesses and services. This has been facilitated within the older core central area by a fine-grained built structure, allowing for a high number of small individual properties to create continuous active street frontages. The high number of pedestrian links from the surrounding town also contributes positively to the creation of a connected and animated public realm and successful town centre environment.

The presence of other uses and activities, such as the civic centre, the community theatre, the police station, library, offices and light industrial uses on the peripheries of the core area, all combine to attract visitors to the Town Centre for a variety of reasons. The proximity to the outdoor market and the larger scale retail units, often found in out-of-town locations, further reinforces this mix and choice which is synonymous with successful urban centres.

Despite the generous levels of public car parking (currently free of charge), and the high levels of traffic along King Street/South Bridge Street, the Town Centre generally does not feel dominated by cars. This is largely due to the location of the central car parks being 'wrapped' within the urban blocks, and due to the pedestrianisation of George Street, which is of optimum length, has sufficient points of access and good visibility from trafficked streets to enable it to function successfully as a pedestrian area.
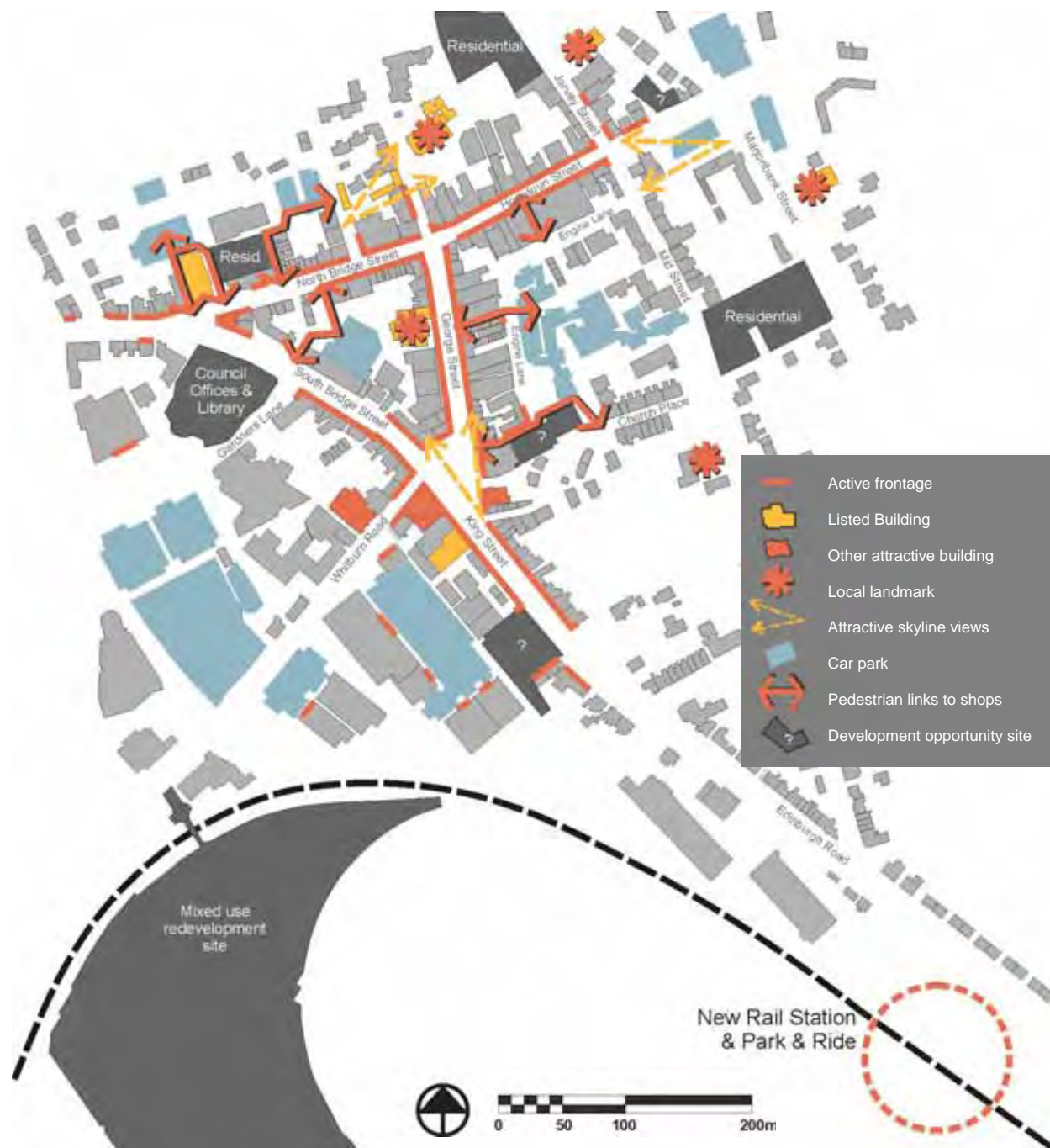
Figure 4 - Key Townscape Strengths

3.4 Weaknesses

Along with its many strengths, Bathgate Town Centre also has a number of areas requiring improvement (see Figure 5). Within the core area a number of poor quality buildings and shop facades – in terms of façade design as well as condition – detract from an otherwise attractive townscape, and impact negatively upon perceptions of the Town Centre. These include some of the larger, more modern retail units along George Street.

Street clutter and poorly related collections of street furniture / features detract from the visual impression of areas such as George Street. This problem is accentuated by the overgrown condition of the large planters, and street trees in need of general arboriculture works. Various smaller public spaces in and around the Town Centre have become tired and, in some cases, hostile in character with a lack of natural surveillance and poorly-maintained/overgrown vegetation.

The area to the south of South Bridge and King Streets is made up of significantly larger urban plots and a much looser grain structure. This inevitably means that the range and mix of uses/activities is more limited than in the Core Town Centre area. Many plots are fronted by large set backs and/or surface car parking, thereby reducing the level of street enclosure and, together with the open air market and Gardner Lane car park, result in an overall sense of 'leaking' space.

Increase distance to station

Pedestrian street clutter impedes visibility and lacks consistency

Space is overgrown, lacks passive surveillance and / or requires improvement

Featureless facades offering little / no overlooking, or unattractive backs of properties

"leaking space" -lack of street / spatial enclosure

Car park

Development opportunity site
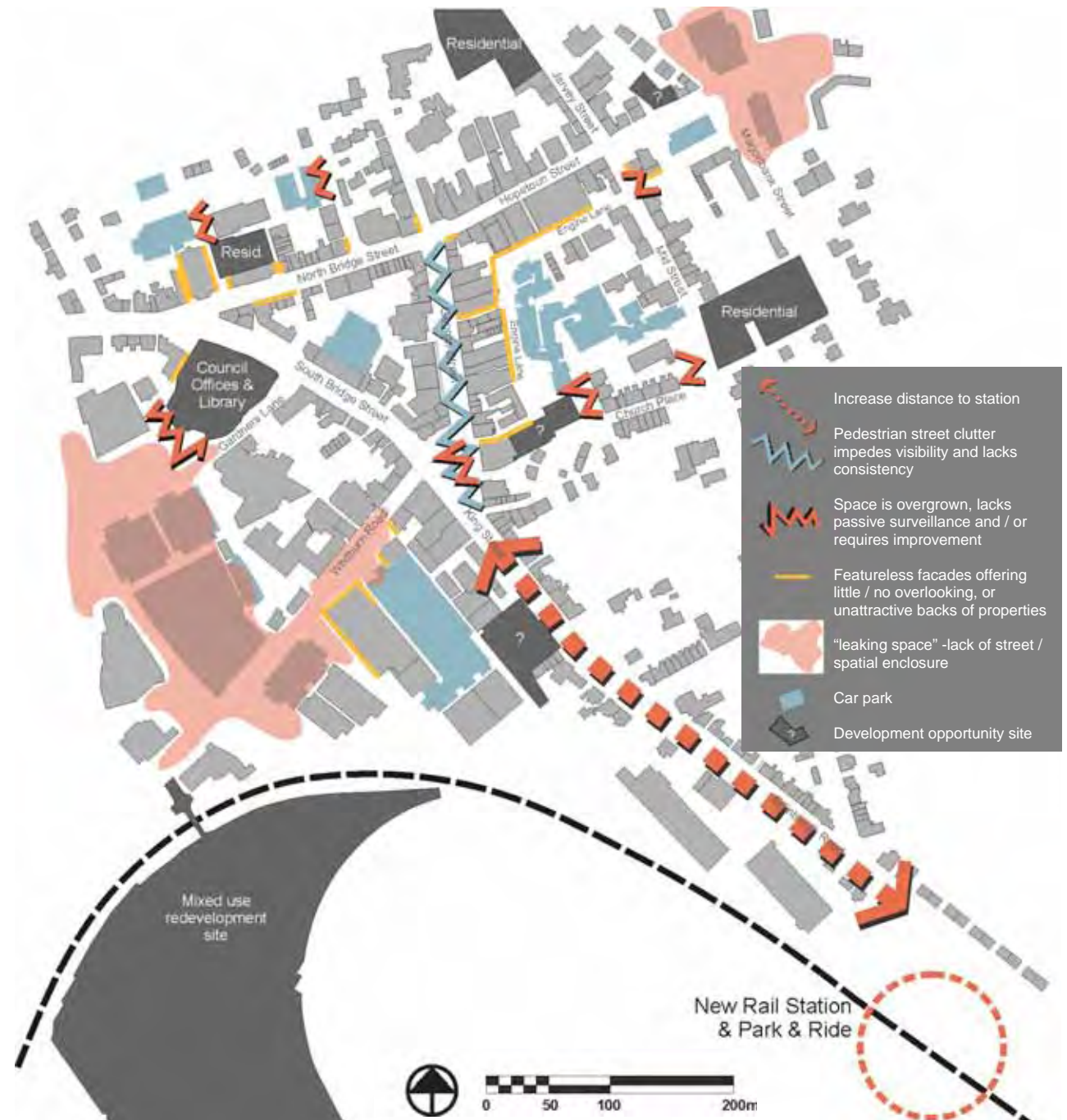
Figure 5 - Key Townscape Weaknesses

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3.5 Key Opportunities for Improvement

Measures must be sought and taken to build upon the strengths and rectify the weaknesses identified above. This includes establishing design standards to inform new developments in and around the Town Centre, and as far south as the new rail station, together with initiatives to improve local legibility and the quality of pedestrian links/spaces.

Figure 6 highlights a number of key opportunities for further consideration.

Strengthen street between new rail station and town centre

Create quality civic space to front the new rail station (Network Rail)

Reinforce key entrance nodes to town centre

Create new / reconfigure existing civic spaces at key points of pedestrian intersection

Consider views of prominent local skyline buildings

Reinforce & enhance key vennels & other pedestrian links

Remove unnecessary clutter and provide consistent design theme

Consider protection of other (non-listed) attractive townscape buildings

Provide planning & design advice to guide town centre development sites.

Figure 6 - Key Opportunities

Key Design Principles

4

4.1 Introduction

The urban design appraisal of Bathgate Town Centre highlights a number of positive and negative issues. When considered in light of the vision and objectives for the Town Centre, these issues point clearly toward a number of key design principles that should steer future planning decisions and public realm interventions. These principles, set out below, build upon the core principles set out in *Designing Places* (Scottish Exec. 2001), but relate specifically to Bathgate Town Centre. **Planning applications for Town Centre development should be accompanied by a design statement which addresses each of the following principles.**

Core Town Centre Public Realm

Strengthen Key Gateways

4.2 Retaining & Enhancing Traditional Character
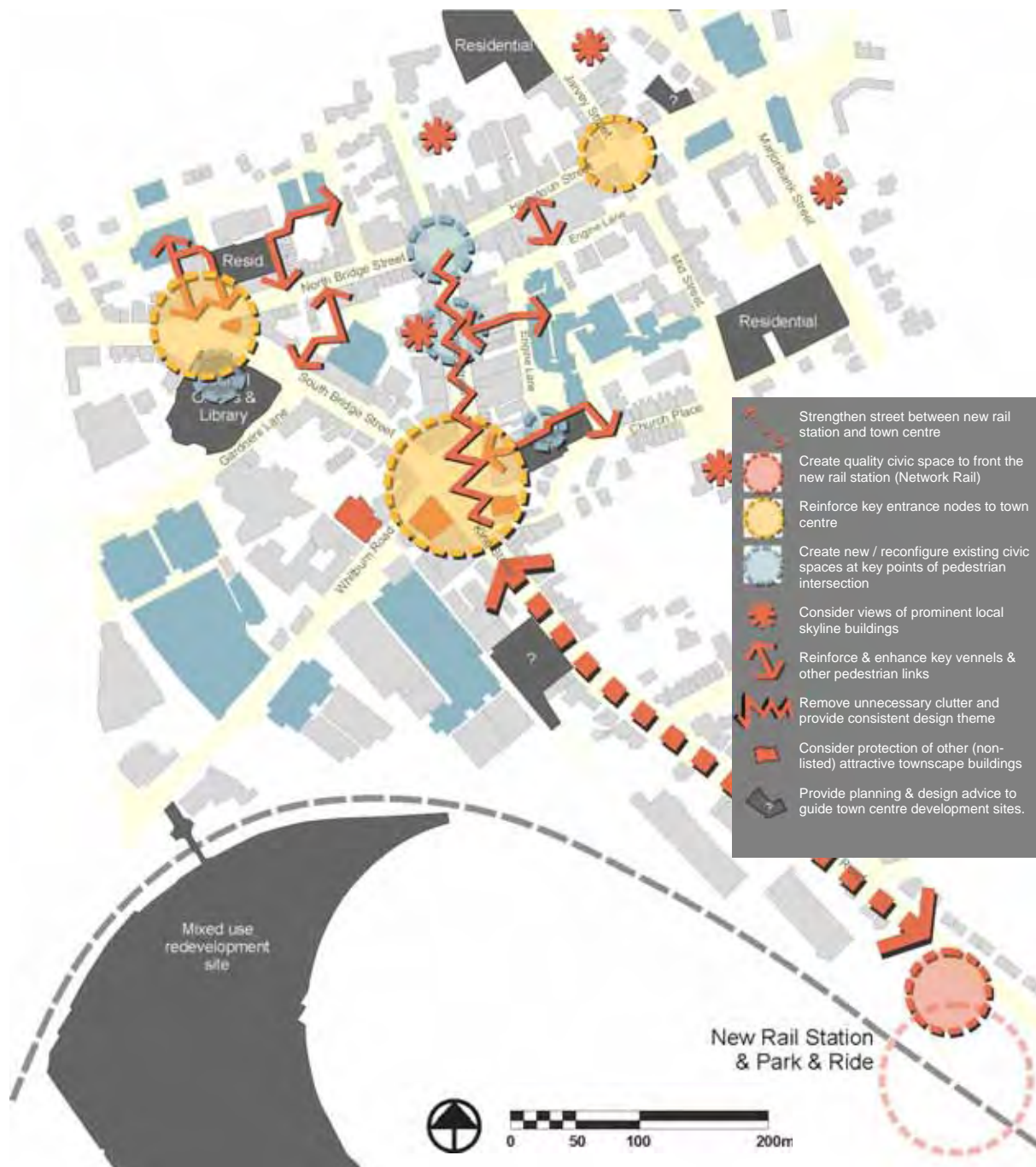
The core area of Bathgate Town Centre (see Figure 7) has distinctive place qualities that make it a successful centre and community focus. These qualities should be safeguarded and reinforced. They include aspects of development form, such as the structure and grain (plot subdivisions) of the layout and the scale and massing of buildings, which allow for:

■ good accessibility
■ a vibrant concentration and mix of uses and activities
■ comfortable 'human scale' levels of street enclosure
■ a high level of flexible and narrow-frontage plots attracting independent businesses.

Care must be taken to avoid the incremental destruction of this structure and grain, that has occurred in many other town centres, leaving large 'gaps' which break the all-important continuity of activity along street frontages.
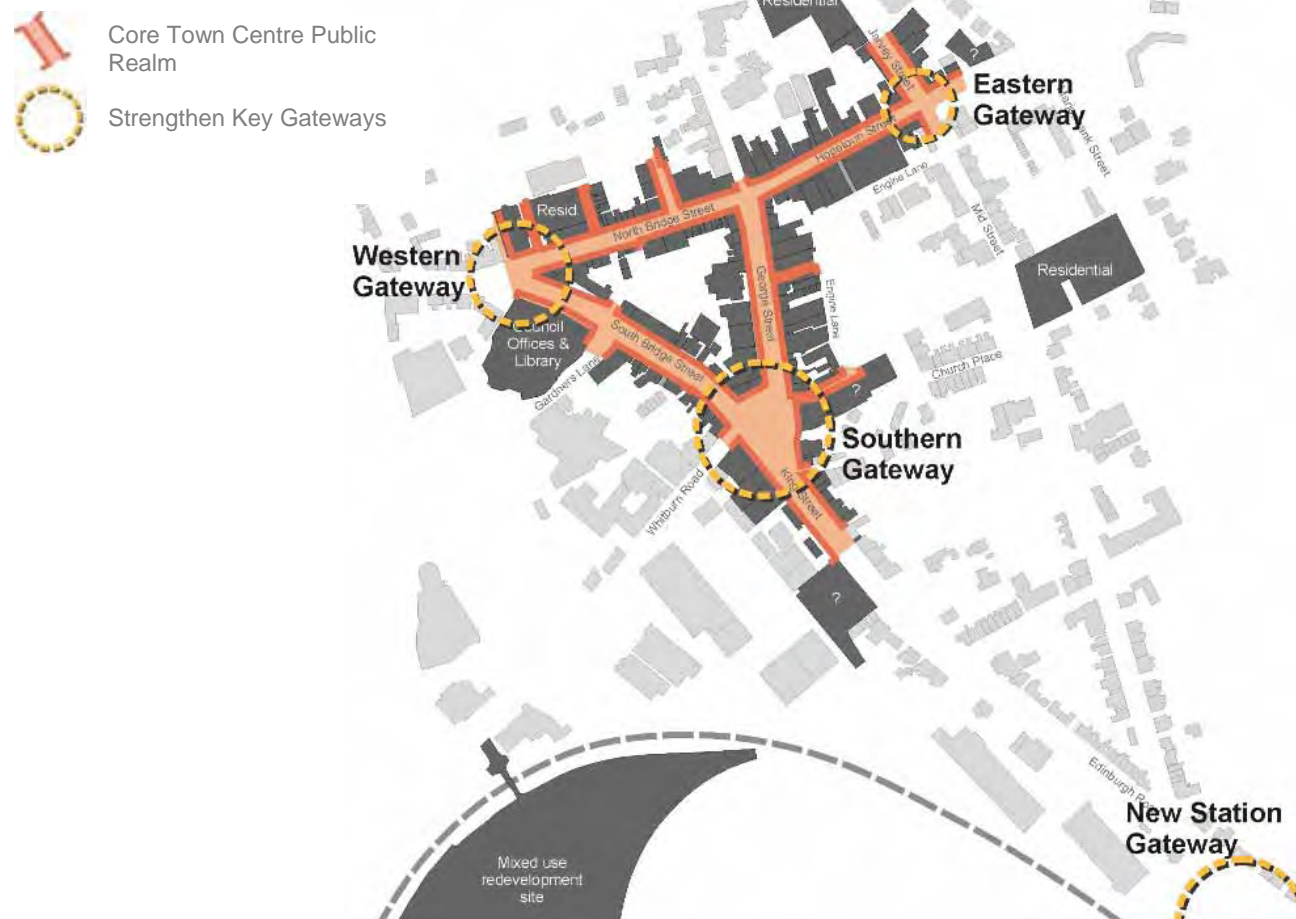

Figure 7 - Town Centre Gateways

4.3 Providing Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre Gateways

There are three distinct nodes, highlighted in Figure 7, at which two or more streets meet, which form visual/perceptual gateways to the core Town Centre area. When people arrive at these points they will generally perceive that they are entering the 'Town Centre'. Such points of 'arrival' are important in creating the first impressions of a place, and can play a significant role in creating a sense of welcome. In the case of Bathgate, the Western and Southern gateways are the more visually prominent, with some grand and attractive buildings enclosing them. These will also be the busiest nodes due to the traffic levels along South Bridge and King Streets. The eastern gateway is also a well-frequented 'entrance' from the perspective of the local residential population, although more modest in terms of the scale of enclosing buildings.

Figure 7 also highlights the area around the new rail station as a gateway. This part of Edinburgh Road will effectively become the 'public transport gateway' to Bathgate, where visitors arriving by train form their first impressions of the town.

Development interventions should seek to reinforce the quality and stature of these key nodes to create an attractive and welcoming sense of arrival to Bathgate Town Centre, and to contribute positively to the public realm quality and legibility.

4.4 Maintaining Pedestrian Ease of Movement

A high level of pedestrian permeability is essential for the continued success of the Town Centre. Despite the quality of some of the existing pedestrian links requiring improvement, the existing structure provides very good permeability or connectivity.

This structure and the links it provides must be safeguarded against future developments, in particular large-scale redevelopment projects that may cover a number of plots.

4.5 Improving Townscape / Public Realm Legibility

People tend to feel at ease in a place that is easy to understand, where there are clear and recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help them find their way around. This is the 'legibility' of a place, the degree to which a place can be read. Opportunities should be taken where possible to frame attractive views of local landmarks, such as church spires/steeples, to reinforce and enhance the main gateways, as described above, and to clear unnecessary street clutter and visual barriers. Ensuring that the pedestrian route (Edinburgh Road & King Street) between the new rail station and the Town Centre is active, safe and clearly marked will also help to promote public transport patronage.

4.6 Ensuring Natural Surveillance and Human Presence

Passive/natural surveillance and human presence within spaces is usually the most effective means of ensuring that places are safe and feel safe. People feel comfortable and confident using areas where there is good visibility and effective lighting, where they feel they can be seen and heard by other people.

Development proposals should ensure that all parts of the public realm network – streets, squares, lanes and vennels – are addressed and overlooked by development in the form of entrances and generous levels of fenestration, and avoid the creation of unnecessary visual barriers such as high walls or dense planting. The reintroduction of residential developments in and around the Town Centre represents an ideal opportunity to ensure the best levels of passive surveillance and activity throughout the day and night. Further guidance can be obtained from Section 5.0 'Design Guidelines' and Planning Advice Note 77 "Designing Safer Places" for further advice.

4.7 Minimising Barriers to Movement to Ensure Accessibility

An accessible and inclusive Town Centre must avoid barriers which would impede the movement of people using wheelchairs, those who may be visually impaired and others who can be disabled by their environments, including those pushing prams or pushchairs. Advice contained within Planning Advice Note 78 "Inclusive Design" should be followed and community accessibility groups, particularly the West Lothian Disability Access Committee should be consulted.

4.8 Promoting a more Co-ordinated Streetscape Appearance

Many developments and other streetscape interventions within Bathgate Town Centre have been carried out in a piecemeal and fairly uncoordinated fashion resulting in a mishmash of materials, public art, street furniture, paving, landscaping and planting. New buildings have also paid little regard to traditional and prevailing materials, massing and styles. For example, many new buildings have been built with facing brick, rather than sandstone or painted harl render, and or have made no attempt to replicate the traditional narrow plot frontages and massing.   Such changes incrementally weaken the order, rhythm, balance and common features which bind a place together perceptually.

New development must demonstrate closer reference to the positive traditional elements of its surrounding built context and landscape, and to reinforce the overall sense of order and unity. This will help to create a clear and positive overall image of the Town Centre.

4.9 Enhancing 'Quality' of the Public Realm

Quality is reflected not only in the design of a place, but also in the condition to which it has been maintained. Better quality, and often more expensive, natural materials will tend be more durable and to weather better than cheaper, man-made materials.   This often has direct implications for the level of maintenance or repair required over the long term. It can also be more effective in terms of quality in the long term to repair older properties than to build new replacements.

The level and condition of soft landscaping/planting also conveys an impression of the quality of a place. It is important that this is properly maintained to contribute positively to the general amenity without impinging on other functions such as accessibility and security.

Design Guidelines
for Development Control

5

5.1 Planning Application Requirements

The Council is seeking to raise design standards for new buildings and building alterations that affect Bathgate Town Centre. The following criteria will be applied in the determination of planning applications within Bathgate Town Centre. Specific illustrations of how these may be applied are set out in section 6.3.2.

Early dialogue based on the principles of this design guidance is encouraged and are intended to assist all development interests better understand requirements and the local interpretation of best practice guidance.

A Design and Accessibility Statement must accompany all substantial planning applications for development within Bathgate Town Centre (in line with the advice set out in PAN 68). This must clearly set out the design concept, explain how it contributes positively to the surrounding context and how it addresses the key principles set out in Chapter 4 and the design criteria listed below.

5.2 Respect for Traditional Urban Structure

■ New development should follow the traditional town layout where buildings are aligned along the outer perimeter of the principal block, with their frontages facing the public realm and their rear elevations towards a back court, thereby positively reinforcing street structure and public realm enclosure.

■ The main public façade of a building should always face onto and make a positive contribution to the principal adjoining public space – this will usually be a street, but in some cases such as 'backland' development this may be a lane or vennel.

■ New flatted property should always be given an appropriately detailed and lively ground floor treatment to make a positive contribution to the character of the town centre.

■ In new building, the historic plot subdivisions of the town centre should be recognised and retained wherever possible, or otherwise clearly defined through a breakdown of the building massing and elevation treatment.

■ All new buildings should make a positive contribution to the character and quality of the town centre.

■ Buildings should follow the established building line along the street frontage.

■ Buildings set back from the established building line will only be allowed where there are sound design reasons, such as the appropriate articulation of the building, and/or where this results in usable, safe and attractive public space.

5.3 Enhance Connectivity

■ Development proposals, as expressed in their accompanying Design Statements, should demonstrate how they will enhance the appearance, function, safety and accessibility of all public access routes directly adjacent to the site.

■ Development must not obstruct any public pedestrian route, either physically or visually or otherwise compromise public accessibility.

■ High boundary walls (defined as walls of 1.2 metres or greater and of more than two metres in length) should be avoided alongside or within any part of the 'Core Area' (see Figure 7) public space network.

■ The West Lothian Access Committee must be consulted early in the design process where any development proposal is likely to impact upon public realm accessibility.

5.4 Scale and Massing

■ The scale and massing of development should draw on and strengthen the prevailing order, hierarchy and rhythm of the traditional streetscape.

■ In general, building storey numbers and heights should follow the existing to ensure appropriate scaling and form. Eaves and ridge heights should match those of adjacent buildings, unless the location is appropriate for the creation of a landmark building or strengthening a key public space or street facade through a taller corner building or elevation which can act as a visual focus.

5.5 Elevations

- The principal public façade of any building should include a clear, legible main entrance and be designed to take advantage of opportunities for the overlooking of public space and good surveillance of street activity.
- Blank featureless elevations and facades lacking windows onto the public realm will not be permitted.
- Glazed openings, side and bay windows (set back from the public footpath) will be encouraged where appropriate to the surrounding streetscape context as these offer good levels of passive surveillance.
- Typically vertical windows are more appropriate than square or horizontal ones.
- The scale and proportion of street frontage elevations should continue the typical town centre rhythm and contain a minimum of 15% of windows with clear glazing. This should be considered regardless of the use being accommodated.

5.6 Adaptability

- Development proposals should not compromise the adaptability or use of adjacent public spaces.

5.7 Materials & Detailing

Design quality is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications planning and this extends to the selection and approval of appropriate materials

- The use of high quality building materials reflecting the local vernacular, such as sandstone (or a good quality artificial substitute), painted harl/render, timber and slate will be expected.
- Generally darker coloured window frames and surrounds are more sympathetic to the local vernacular than white. Strong vertical shapes are more appropriate than square or horizontal windows.
- Material palettes and samples should be discussed at the earliest stage with the planning authority.
- Although there is evidence of facing brick having been approved in the past, it would not be appropriate to continue the use of this material as the principal material in any subsequent buildings in the town centre. Exceptions will only occur if justified as part of a design of exceptional quality.
- Brick is not an appropriate material for public realm works such as walls and planters.
- Building details should be appropriate to the local tradition. For instance, large section box eaves, windows without reveals or flat roofs will not normally be permitted within the town centre.

5.8 Public Realm Landscape

- Landscape works to the public realm should add quality and contribute positively to safe public use and movement. Materials should reflect and be of no lesser quality than the best quality materials in the local area.
- The design of public realm elements should avoid unnecessary contrived details (as in levels, walls, retained structures and furniture) and seek to create simple quality spaces that are fit for purpose, use good quality materials and are readily maintained.
- At the conception stage, soft landscape should be designed to recognise future maintenance needs. The specification of higher quality items (e.g. semi-mature trees and native ground cover / or limited high density native planting) will always be more appropriate than standard shrubs.
- Private car parking should be designed and located to avoid restricting pedestrian access and movement.

For further details, see the accompanying Public Realm Design Guide.

5.9 Sustainability

- All planning applications for substantial development shall indicate how the development addresses environmental performance (including climate change, energy efficiency, material recycling and waste management) in accordance with planning policy and guidance.
- Hard surfaces should be designed in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage best practice.

5.10 Shopfront Design

As a commercial focus for over 100 years much of the character and image of Bathgate Town Centre is derived from the ground floor shopfronts. It is appropriate, therefore, to ensure appropriate design and quality in shopfront alterations and improvements in support of the promotion of the town as visitor and competitive retail destination.

Many shopfronts have been altered from their original state over time. However, their basic form may survive beneath layers of additions and change. Even where substantial loss has occurred it may be possible to reinstate lost elements or proportions to bring back much of the missing character. Even relatively modest proposals can have a positive effect, as in many cases, it may be possible to bring the shopfront back to original character incrementally through relatively modest changes over time.

stallriser matches the rest of the shopfront

Dark, neutral colour scheme

Example of a quality shopfront– Colours Studio

It should be noted that works to shopfronts may need planning consent and the installation of advertisements may need advertisement consent.

Overall Design

- Traditional shopfront 'stallrisers'– the part of the elevation filling the area between the shop window and the pavement – and cills should be retained if original and treated simply in flat timber or render and coloured to match the rest of the shopfront. The stallrisers should not be made into features through tiling, advertisements, panelling or painting in dramatically contrasting colours.
- The corporate styles of multiple stores should be adjusted to suit local circumstances. For instance, bright colours schemes might be toned down or adjusted.
- Recessed doors should be retained if they survive.
- Traditional features such as pilasters, surrounds and cornices should be retained if they survive.
- Where a shop occupies more than one building, any replacement of the shopfront should take account of the individual buildings and should not be designed as a unified whole extending across both façades.

Fascias

- Deep, "dropped" or "box" fascias should not be used and the opportunity should be taken to return enlarged fascias to their original proportions.

Materials

- Where new work is required, traditional materials should be used. Aluminium, tiles, mirrors, PVC, laminates etc. are not generally appropriate.

Colours

- Most buildings in the Town Centre date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, therefore, it is appropriate to paint their shopfronts in colours that were fashionable at the time. Such colours tended to be either neutral (browns and greys) or deep rich colours such as wines, greens, blues or even black. These include the following British Standard (BS4800) colour equivalents: Grey (00A13); Deep Plum (02C40); Beige/Brown (08B17; 08B21; 08B25; 08B29); Green/ Grey/Browns (10B21; 10B25; 10B29; 10C39); Dark Olive (12B25); Dark Greens (12B29;14C40) and; Dark Blues (18B29; 20C40).
- Pure white, purple, lilac, bright red, light blue, yellow, other light colours and pastels are not usually appropriate.
- The area up to 150mm above ground and skirtings, where staining can occur, often look best when painted black or a very dark colour such as black or slate grey.

00A13	02C40	08B17	08B21
10B25	12B25	12B29	20C40

Examples of appropriate colours

Signage

■ Hand painted signs are preferred, but high quality applied lettering of a non-plastic or reflective material and finish can also be appropriate.

■ Plastic individual letters should be avoided.

■ Where a fascia board exists, lettering should be applied flush to the board and be no higher than four fifths of the height of the fascia board.

■ Lettering should be limited to the minimum information relating to the shop and its service. Where additional lettering or signage is necessary or appropriate, consideration should be given to siting it behind the glass within the shop window. Lettering should not be applied to any sub-fascia or other parts of the façade.

■ Sponsored fascia signs are rarely appropriate unless they conform to the standards identified above.

■ Projecting box signs should be avoided.

■ Use of 'A-board' signage is not appropriate. Typically a minimum of 1.8m should be provided free from clutter at the front of shops at all times. In areas of high footfall, such as George Street, a minimum of 3m is appropriate (See the Public Realm Design Guide for further information related to public realm)

Window advertisements

■ Covering the shop window with signs and advertisements does little for the street scene as a whole and such clutter should be avoided.

■ An imaginative or even simple yet effective window display is always better than a profusion of signs and bills posted behind the glass.

Illumination

■ Internally illuminated box signs applied to the fascia and projecting in front of the main plane of the shopfront are not attractive elements in a traditional street scene and should be avoided.

■ Where illumination is necessary it should, where possible, be in the form of well designed downlights illuminating a fascia board.

■ Use of Illumination is more appropriate to premises open outwith normal hours such as pubs and restaurants. Typically the use of swan-neck lights and spotlights is not appropriate.

Security

■ Security measures, where necessary and approved, should be integrated into the original design of the shopfront rather than stuck on.

■ Flat roller shutters which cover the windows when closed, external boxes to contain roller shutters when open, alarm boxes, gates and grilles are unsympathetic and add an unattractive air to the street scene.

■ Alarm boxes should be fixed in inconspicuous positions on the façade.

■ Solid shutters cause a dead and uninteresting appearance and should be avoided. Open mesh grilles behind the glass is the preferred means of security. Where considered acceptable, external shutters should be of an open grille type.

■ Some Scottish towns have benefited from bespoke security screens crafted in wrought metal and this approach would be highly appropriate in Bathgate.

Canopies

■ Consideration of appropriateness should be undertaken in consultation with West Lothian Council. Where canopies are required, only retractable blinds of a traditional canvas type without advertisements, lettering or images should be used. Curved "Dutch" canopies are not generally appropriate.

■ The colour of canopy should be selected to complement the rest of the shopfront and typically a neutral colour should be used (See 'Colours' on the previous page for guidance)

'Dutch' style canopies are not appropriate

Retractable canvas canopies are more appropriate

5.11 Edinburgh Road - Station to Town Centre

The route from the new railway station will become a principal pedestrian route for visitors to and from the town centre. It is therefore important that this route is convenient for users and new development and change is sensitive to the importance of this location for the image of the town.

■ Any proposed crossovers to form vehicular access into sites along Edinburgh Road should incorporate dropped kerbs and pedestrian priority crossings.

■ Building frontages must be aligned parallel to the established kerbline with a maximum set back of 5 metres from the front curtilage / pavement edge.

■ The view along Mid Street should be contained by a clear public frontage along Edinburgh Road, rather than the space between buildings.

6

Design Framework

6.1 Introduction

The design framework for Bathgate Town Centre incorporates various aspects of public realm interventions, which, for practical purposes, can be addressed under the headings of **Public Space Network Strategy** and **Building Protection and Enhancement Strategy**. There are clear overlaps between these two areas, and in reality substantial and long-term public realm improvements will only be achieved through a combination of measures.

6.2 Public Space Network Strategy

The public space network forms the pedestrian circulation system upon which the success of the town centre lies. The level of connectivity and environmental quality are key to maintaining high levels of footfall. Figure 8 illustrates the current level of connectivity within the Town Centre area, revealing a good level of pedestrian permeability. These routes must be safeguarded and the experience of moving through them improved wherever opportunities exist to do so.

The Core Areas/ Spaces are numbered on Fig 8, specific guidance for each of these is provided in 6.2.1

1. George Street and the Steelyard
2. Civic Centre
3. George Street Vennel South
4. George Street Vennel North
5. Linbar House Vennel
6. Regal Vennel East
7. Regal Vennel West
8. Hopetoun Vennel
9. Mid Street (North)
10. Mid Street (South)

Figure 8 - Public Space Network Connectivity

6.2.1 Core Area Public Space Strategy

As the appraisal (Chapter 3) shows, the quality of many of the pedestrian connections, in terms of legibility, aesthetic appeal, maintenance and perceptions of safety and security, require substantial improvement if the Town Centre objectives, set out in chapter 2, are to be achieved. Figure 8 identifies the principal areas of public space within the network which would most benefit from improvements. These are described below in order of priority.
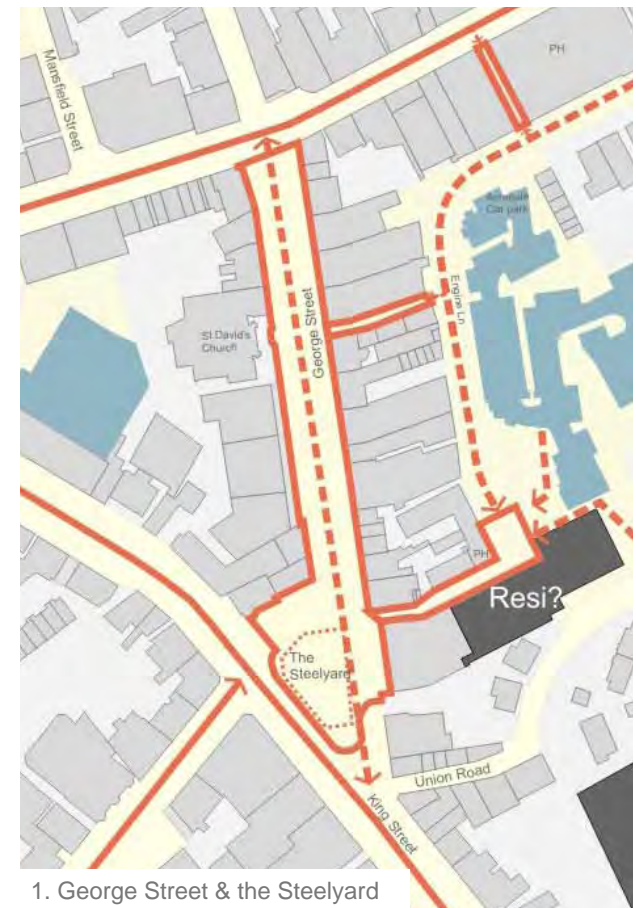
1   George Street & The Steelyard

George Street is the principal pedestrian route within the Town Centre. Its pedestrian area status functions well since the street is only 200 metres in length with relatively busy trafficked streets at either end offering activity and surveillance. It also has two vennels along its eastern edge connecting to the large Acredale car park and to the surrounding residential area. This ensures high levels of pedestrian movement to benefit the George Street businesses.

The Steelyard is a public space at the southern end of George Street, at the intersection with South Bridge Street, King Street and Whitburn Road. This is the main civic space used for street performances and special events, the location for Bathgate's Christmas tree, and on a day-to-day basis as a seating and meeting area.

The space is defined by walls, trees and sculptural elements and is usually well used. Recent years have seen the accumulation of significant levels of street clutter in and around the Steelyard detracting from its appearance and function. This area, together with the entire George Street area, merits redesign to refresh its appearance / image and functionality, in addition to requiring more regular maintenance.

- Requires renewal and removal of clutter
- Shop front and signage quality and facades need addressing
- Greater consistency in street furniture required
- Steelyard requires sensitive renewal -, trees are now overgrown, insufficient seating and walls and containment restrict use
- Potential to create other 'stopping points' or subspaces along George Street:
    - North end (junction with Hopetoun / S Bridge / Livery Streets
    - Between St David's Church and the Northern vennel
- Need to signal this as the primary retail area and secure quality retail
- Raise tree crowns to improve lines of sight

1. George Street & the Steelyard

2   Civic Centre

The current Council Offices on South Bridge Street are to be redeveloped and will house a central library and other community uses. This represents a rare opportunity to provide a civic building of significant scale to contribute positively to the Town Centre townscape and image.

- Prominent position at western 'gateway' to the Town Centre.
- Opportunity to positively address both South Bridge Street and Gardners Lane as the key streets with high pedestrian movement.
- Opportunity to create attractive civic space fronting South Bridge Street.
- Public circulation space to rear of site (centre of urban block) is overgrown and provides little visual permeability or opportunities for overlooking from adjacent premises
- New development should improve opportunity for passive surveillance of rear and side spaces, including the provision of overlooking windows.

2. Civic Centre

3   George Street Vennel South

This is a key pedestrian route between George Street and Engine Lane / Acredale Car Park.

- Links to pedestrian path & steps to Church Place
- Balbairdie Pub and forecourt trees combine to create an attractive corner space at the eastern end of the vennel
- Envisage the expansion of this small incidental public space, linked to pub or restaurant use.
- Opportunity to influence design of development site on the southeast side – e.g. ensure building(s) are set back slightly and front onto the vennel and corner space with entrances and windows along this façade to offer good levels of passive surveillance; opportunity to contain the view from George Street with an attractive façade.
- Potential for repaving in line with or as part of future George Street repaving.

3. George Street Vennel South

4   George Street Vennel North

Another key pedestrian connection between George Street and Engine Lane / Acredale car park.

- Opportunity to emphasise entrances at both ends as part of design/signage strategy common to all vennels (see below).
- Vennel opens onto George Street directly opposite St David's Church – opportunity to define a public space 'node' at this location to emphasise this important entrance onto George Street.
- Potential for repaving in line with or as part of future repaving of George Street. Paving could be continued across Engine Lane as a means of giving pedestrian priority crossing from the car park to the vennel.

4. George Street Vennel North

5   Linbar House Vennel

This vennel connects North Bridge Street to the Mansfield Street car park and serves a parade of shops with entrances along its eastern frontage.

- British Legion building entrance contains the northern end view
- Residential on upper floors of Linbar House provides some overlooking
- Adjacent development site along western edge - potential to create attractive western frontage with opportunities for natural surveillance to strengthen appeal of existing shops.
- Opportunity to provide overlooking of right hand bend towards car park to strengthen security.
- Opportunity to emphasise vennel entrances as part of design/signage strategy common to all vennels (see below).

6   Regal Vennel East

This vennel connects North Bridge Street to the car park to rear of The Regal and to the surrounding residential area.

- No windows or entrances along the side elevation of the Regal – only overlooking opportunities are from the corner building on the opposite side of North Bridge Street.
- Adjacent development site along eastern edge - potential to create attractive eastern frontage with opportunities for natural surveillance
- Opportunity to emphasise vennel entrances at both ends as part of design/signage strategy common to all vennels (see below).

7   Regal Vennel West

This vennel also connects North Bridge Street to the car park to rear of The Regal and to the surrounding residential area.

- No windows or entrances along the side elevation of the Regal or from the adjacent building on the western side.
- Better street lighting required and potential for CCTV to increase level of security.
- Opportunity to emphasise vennel entrances at both ends as part of design /signage strategy common to all vennels (see below).

5. Linbar House Vennel

6. Regal Vennel East

7. Regal Vennel West

8   Hopetoun Vennel

This vennel, connecting Engine Lane / Acredale car park to Hopetoun Street, is enclosed at first floor level. It is enclosed by a large pub to the east and a smaller retail unit to the west.

- Through refurbishment the pub has provided windows and a service entrance onto the vennel which increases the sense of security during opening hours.
- The brickwork (expanse broken up only by drainpipes along the west edge) and the ceiling are painted white to maximise light reflection.
- Consider other options to brighten appearance and further increase security.
- Hanging baskets are placed at each end to highlight the vennel's entrance along the street.
- Opportunity to emphasise vennel entrances at both ends as part of design/signage strategy common to all vennels (see below).

9   Mid Street (North)

This space fronts onto Mid Street at the intersection with Engine Lane and the steps leading up to flats on Marjoribanks Street.

- It is paved in concrete slabs and features a functionless concrete 'pagoda-like' frame and a single ornamental acer tree.
- The only building entrance on to the space is from a small and windowless barbers shop along its southern side.
- Other enclosing buildings appear vacant.
- Opportunity to redevelop this space along with adjacent buildings to form a more attractive 'stopping point', particularly for elderly residents on their way into or out of the Town Centre.

10   Mid Street (South)

This grassed space sits opposite the well kept War Memorial Gardens and a residential development site half way along Mid Street.

- Located at a key pedestrian route intersection into /out of the Town Centre.
- Opportunity for environmental improvement.
- Likely to be passed by a good proportion of elderly residents from the nearby residential home, and hence could provide seating/resting point on walk up hill.

8. Hopetoun Vennel

9. Mid Street (North)

10. Mid Street (South)

6.2.2   Vennels & Lanes Enhancement Strategy

Six of the public spaces identified in the previous section consist of vennels which act as key connections between the principal shopping streets and the public car parks and residential areas beyond. They play a vital role in the pedestrian circulation system, and without them the levels of activity along these streets would be considerably lower. Their high level of use means that their appearance, and the experience of moving through them, is likely to impact greatly on the overall impressions people have of the Town Centre.

As described above and in Chapter 3, the conditions of many of the Town Centre vennels requires improving, in terms of safety and security, aesthetic appeal and legibility - the location of the vennels is not always clear, particularly for first-time visitors to Bathgate.

A design strategy should be developed to improve all Town Centre vennels and lanes – **The Vennels & Lanes Enhancement Strategy**. There may be merit in ensuring that the Strategy follows a common design theme to help strengthen the identity of 'the Bathgate Vennel' and to help 'signpost' the location of the vennel entrances and generally improve local legibility.

In a few cases, development sites adjacent to the vennels offer opportunities to ensure significant improvements, particularly in terms of natural surveillance and attractiveness of the enclosing façades. Development of these sites should follow the specific guidance set out in 6.3.2 and contribute through its design to the aims and principles put forward in the Enhancement Strategy.

6.2.3   Signage Strategy

A signage strategy would complement the Vennel & Lanes Enhancement Strategy and aid the wider pedestrian-scale legibility of the Town Centre. This should cover the entire Town Centre Area from the new rail station to the proposed new mixed leisure scheme along Whitburn Road, the market site and Gardner Street car parks as far as Marjoribanks Street and the Simpson Memorial Garden to the east.

A distinctive and bespoke signage design should be commissioned, ideally in a style that is common or complementary to other street furniture such as notice boards, local history boards, seating, bins and bollards. Designers may wish to consider local historic symbols such as the Bathgate arches when developing their design proposals.

A Town Centre Plan could also be displayed in a matching style, ideally at the new train station and perhaps at the main public car parks. This could incorporate the location of attractive 'viewing points' and amenities, such as the Simpson Memorial Park on the outskirts of the Town Centre, and indicate various recreational 'walks around town' to incorporate these features.

Signage must be considerately positioned within the streetscape to balance effective visibility of signs with the need to maintain good levels of visual connection (few obstructions) along pathways. They should be located:

- a sensible distance from tree foliage,
- at a sensible height which takes account of wheelchair users eye level,
- in well-lit areas, not overshadowed by nearby buildings,
- to allow for a reasonable range of viewing distances
- to avoid forming clusters of various types of street furniture / highway signs.

In some cases, combining a pedestrian sign with a streetlight can work well, so long as the above criteria are still observed.

6.2.4   Transport & Car parking Strategy

Car Parking
Further public consultation should be carried out to ascertain the patterns of use and the perceived needs and aspirations of those who rely on the public car parks for their use of Bathgate Town Centre services. The findings of this consultation or survey would then form the basis for the preparation of a Town Centre Car Parking Strategy for effective management of this valuable resource.

The consultation should in particular test the following recommendations:
- A proportion of parking spaces at the Acredale and Mansfield Road car parks will become time-restricted (to 2 hour maximum stay) to allow for a greater turnaround in these areas
- A greater number of spaces should be allocated for disabled car parking and these should be located in the most convenient locations for access to Town Centre shops and services

- Provision of clear signposting of car parks for drivers arriving into the Town Centre – in particular raising awareness of the more peripheral car parks, such as at the Hopetoun / Marjoribanks Streets junction.
- Improvements to the quality of pedestrian connections between the car parks and the Town Centre.

Cycling Provisions

The rail network changes taking place will mean changes to the National Cycle Network Route 75. It is planned that this will join the existing street network at Whitburn Road, to the south of the former foundry site. From here, on-street cycle lanes should be incorporated into Whitburn Road to provide enhanced and safer access into the Town Centre.

Similarly, where the NCN Route 75 crosses Blackburn Road to the east of the golf course, on-street / off-street cycle lanes should be incorporated along Blackburn Road and Edinburgh Road to the new station and on to the Town Centre.

Enhancements to Town Centre public spaces should incorporate cycle stands in convenient and secure locations. The cycle routes should be clearly marked as part of the Signage Strategy.

6.2.5 Maintenance & Management Strategy

The upkeep of a place is as important as the design and will always be reflected in people's perceptions of that place. The streetscape management arrangements should be reviewed by a cross-departmental working group in liaison with local retailers and the BID Manager.

Maintaining quality of streetscape and a safe and welcoming appearance requires a range of management and maintenance operations coordinated between service providers, local businesses and clear management objectives and standards for all elements within the streetscape hierarchy eg. George Street / Vennels / Steelyard / South Bridge Street /North Bridge Street / etc.

Key areas to address include:

- Maintaining good housekeeping of the high profile areas and ensuring all elements of streetscape are maintained to high standards
- Maintaining good housekeeping of shop facades and frontages (window and sign cleansing) including security measures by retailers /operators
- Establishing standards for all commercial users of the public realm (street cafes /etc) an acceptable protocol for cleansing
- Arrangements for wheelie bins including agreement on timing of waste collections and locations for wheelie bin pick-ups / timing of bin put-outs
- Pavement cleansing including level of treatment in high footfall and/or heavy soiled areas including issues relating to gum

- Waste /Litter bin collection and washing and cleansing of litter bin stations
- Fly posting control

Maintenance and management of the public realm requires coordinated action to ensure spaces and places off a safe and welcoming environment for the visitor.

6.3 Building Protection & Enhancement Strategy

6.3.1 Building Condition Survey

There are four listed buildings within the Core Area and another four in the wider Bathgate Town Centre. These buildings, the Regal, the Pavilion, St David's Church and the Bennie Museum, make significant positive contributions to the image of the Core Area townscape. However, in most cases the general impression people will take away from most town centres is shaped not by a few individual buildings, but by the quality of the entire group of buildings, including what could be described as inconspicuous 'backcloth' buildings. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the general condition and appearance of all buildings within Bathgate Town Centre are of high quality.

Ideally, the condition of listed buildings should be surveyed every five years, and action taken to rectify any problems identified. However, in recognition of the group value of Bathgate Town Centre buildings, as an 'Area of Built Heritage and Townscape Value' (set out in Policy HER 25 of the Local Plan), a condition survey of the building stock within the whole Town Centre Core Area should be commissioned.

It is anticipated that the condition survey would categorise buildings into three levels of condition: 1) good, 2) in need of some maintenance, and 3) potential hazard / urgent need of repair. In addition to looking at the quality and types of hazards that exist, the survey should also aim to:
- establish the occupancy and uses of properties,
- establish the ownership profile, and
- assess a costing profile to address the condition deficiencies.

Where building problems are identified, the Council can notify the building owners of repair and maintenance requirements. In the case of listed buildings, the Council are also able to issue statutory notices which can be enforced if necessary. Besides these measures, the condition survey will allow the Council to use this accurate picture of the townscape to prioritise and consider where available funding may be most effectively directed.

One potential source of funding will be the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). Once the survey has been completed, providing an accurate picture of the scale of investment necessary, the Council will be in a position to prepare a well-informed bid to the THI for funding. If successful this would form the basis of the provision of grants for repairs and maintenance of individual properties or possibly for direct implementation of maintenance works by the Council.

6.3.2 Development Opportunity Sites – Design/ Development Briefs

The Urban Design Appraisal (Chapter 3 – figures 4 to 6) identifies a number of specific development opportunity sites currently within Bathgate Town Centre which would impact upon the public realm around them, some more significantly than others. In addition to applying the design criteria set out in Chapter 5, which should be taken into account for all Town Centre development, site-specific guidance in the form of design or development briefs should be prepared for each of these sites to ensure that opportunities are not lost and that key parts of the Town Centre public realm are improved by being enclosed by well-designed developments.

Some of these development sites are addressed below in the form of 'outline briefs' to show the key design principles which should inform development. The suggested form and location of built elements in the accompanying conceptual drawings are purely indicative and illustrate ways in which the principles can be applied to achieve the desired objectives. Developers may propose alternative concepts, but must demonstrate how the design principles are being applied to successfully achieve the objectives.

1.   New Council & Library Building

The redevelopment of the existing council building represents a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to create a building of genuine civic stature and quality to enhance the image of Bathgate Town Centre. The site sits in a very prominent location at the corner of South Bridge Street and Gardners Lane, forms part of the Western Gateway (as described in 4.3 above) and could possibly be said to affect the setting of a listed building – the Regal. It is a challenging site with pedestrian routes alongside its entire perimeter and a significant slope down to the south.

■   Development should form a strong public frontage, aligned to the established building line along South Bridge Street.

■   The corner of South Bridge Street and Gardners Lane forms a key point of pedestrian intersection and a natural focus point in terms of views up the hill from Gardners Lane car park and views along South Bridge Street. At this corner the building should be set back and provide a feature to draw the eye. The set back can allow for the creation of an attractive civic space allowing south light to fill the space. This would also be a logical point for locating the main public entrance.

■   High quality materials, including local traditional stone, should be used, particularly along the key South Bridge Street and Gardners Lane frontages.

■   Along frontages where the building massing may be unavoidably large and overbearing, the elevation treatment should be broken up with fenestration, changes in materials and/or changes/set backs in the

Resid.

The Regal

Police Station

Chill Out Zone

Aldi Food Store

Aldi Car Park

Gardners Lane Car Park

Development site

Adjacent development site

View uphill from Gardners Lane car park

View along South Bridge Street of site frontage

Create corner landmark feature to capture key views

All building frontages (with windows and entrances) should address the public realm to ensure necessary levels of passive surveillance

Retain existing vehicular access

Pedestrian routes adjacent to site

Create civic space on corner to capture south light

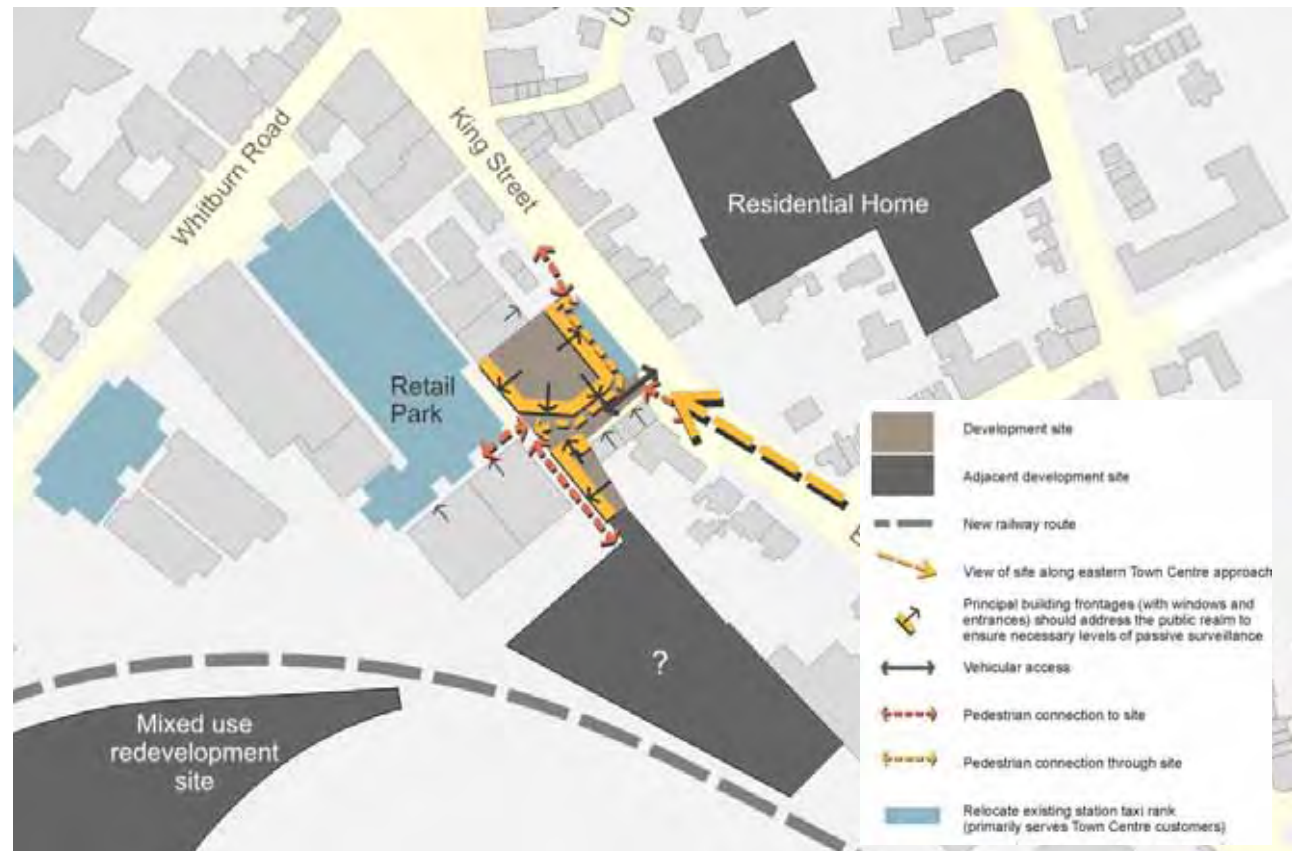Western 'gateway' to Town Centre

Public car park

building line.

2. Redevelopment of the existing rail station

Once the Airdrie to Bathgate Rail line and the new Bathgate Rail Station have been completed, Network Rail are likely to release the existing station, track and sidings land no longer required for development. The site is located between King Street and the Whitburn Road Retail Park, and is only a hundred metres from the Steelyard.

- A pedestrian link through the site connecting King Street to the retail park should be maintained
- Development should create a strong and active public façade to front King Street (the principal adjacent public space in this case)
- The existing shop units along the south eastern edge (assuming these will be retained) should be addressed by development frontage, to create a public 'lane'
- Service access to the development will be provided via this new lane (see point above) off King Street
- Space should be set aside, ideally along the King Street frontage with the building(s) setback, for the accommodation of a taxi rank to continue to serve the Town Centre.

Whitburn Road
King Street
Residential Home
Retail Park
Mixed use redevelopment site

Development site

Adjacent development site

New railway route

View of site along eastern Town Centre approach

Principal building frontages (with windows and entrances) should address the public realm to ensure necessary levels of passive surveillance

Vehicular access

Pedestrian connection to site

Pedestrian connection through site

Relocate existing station taxi rank (primarily serves Town Centre customers)

3.   Site South of the Former Rail Station

The planned new rail route will pass along the backs of the large Whitburn Road retail units on its way into Bathgate from Glasgow, and along the backs of the Edinburgh Road units on its way in from Edinburgh. Views from the train will influence people's perceptions of Bathgate, and so ensuring that development alongside this route presents a high quality image will play an important role in creating the desired sense of welcome and attractive first impression (see 2.3) to rail passengers.

The site considered here is located to the rear of Whitburn Road retail park and encompasses the current rail tracks and sidings which will no longer be required once the new station and route are in operation.

- Vehicular access can be gained from Whitburn Road, although the potential for access from Edinburgh Road should also be investigated
- A pedestrian link from the redeveloped station site should be provided, with potential for a link through to Edinburgh Road investigated, and a secondary link from the retail park also provided.
- The south western elevation and western corner will be particularly prominent from the railway and so should form an attractive façade and corner feature.
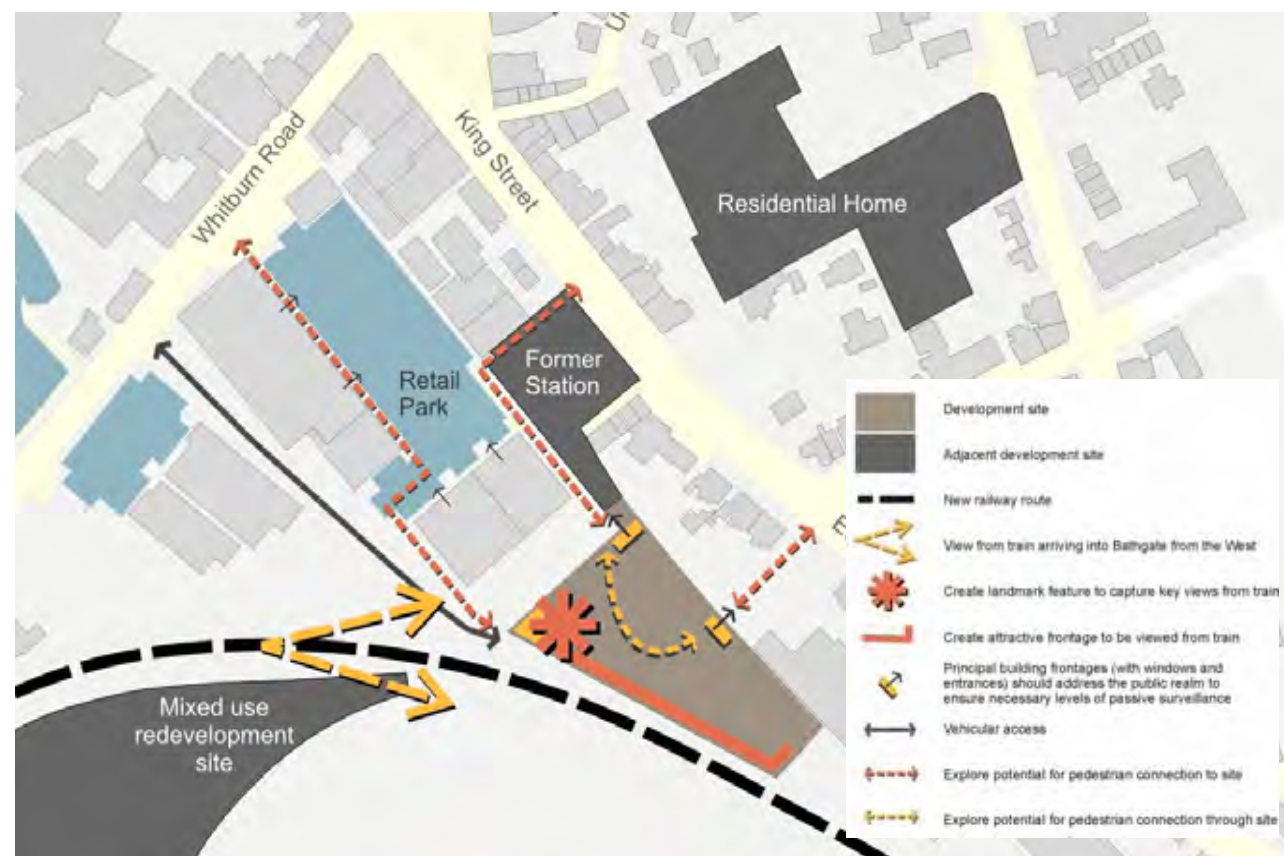
4. Engine Lane / Union Road

This development site fronts onto the George Street South Vennel opposite the Balbardie Public House, the Acredale car park and the end of Engine Lane. Parts are visible from the George Street entrance to the vennel. From Union Street the site slopes steeply down and has a retaining wall along much of its length. Views into the site are obtainable from the steps leading down from Church Place. The site offers a unique opportunity to improve the security and attractiveness of this well-used public right of way.

- Create an attractive and continuous public frontage along the vennel with entrances and windows to offer good levels of passive surveillance.
- Create a strong focal point or landmark feature to contain the view from the George Street entrance to the vennel and to terminate the view along Engine Lane.
- Provide windows along the steps and car park elevations to offer good levels of passive surveillance.
- Any site car parking should be contained within the block.
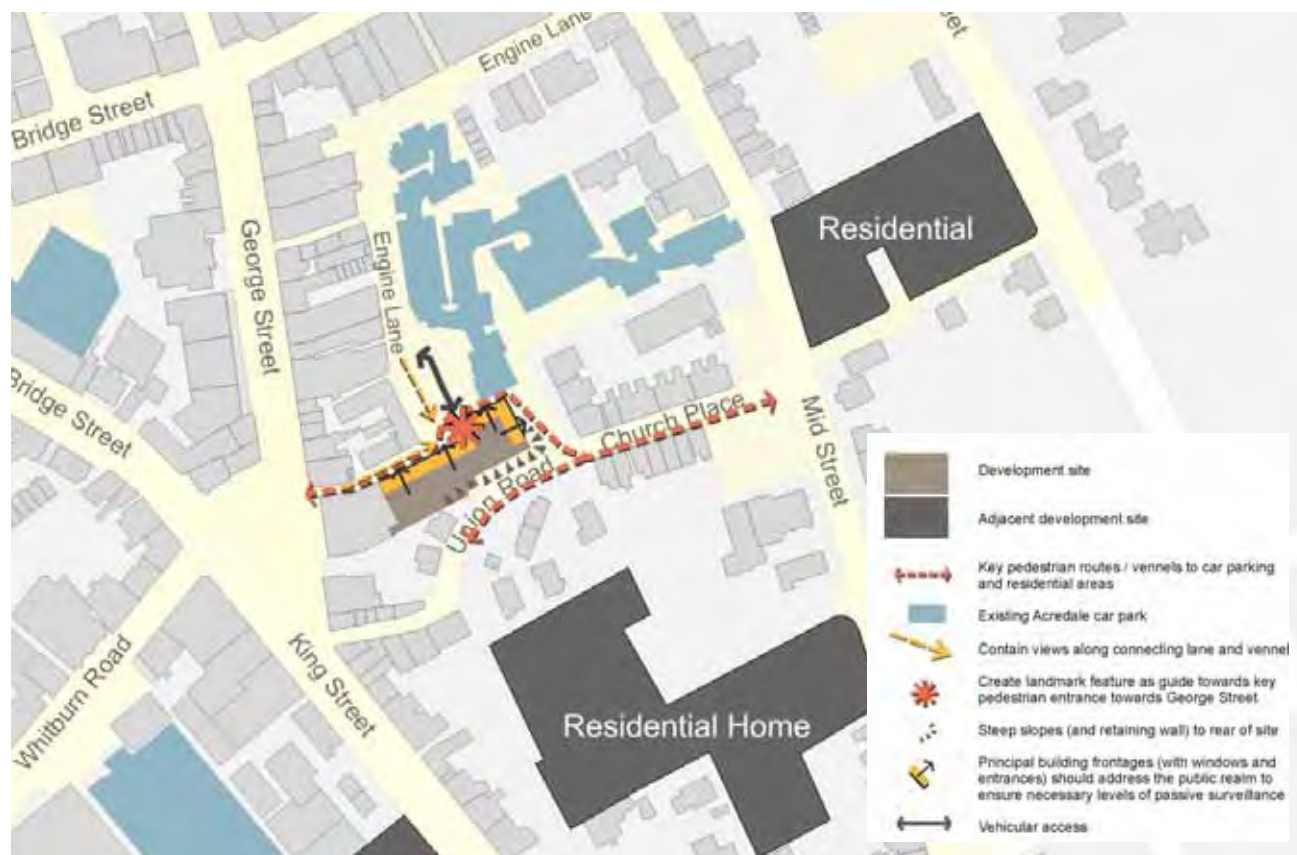
5.   Mid Street Residential Home for the Elderly

The existing residential home in the west of the site is likely to be enlarged and redeveloped to fill the area stretching up to Mid Street. Although this is one of the larger sites identified here, its location within the urban block is fairly concealed so that its impact on the public realm is minimised.

However, the site does front onto a principal route (Mid Street) and its relationship with the surrounding public realm is important in terms of ensuring safe and convenient pedestrian routes for the elderly residents to and from the Town Centre and public transport services.

- The building(s) should be positioned along the site perimeter, fronting on to Mid Street and the access road (windows and principal entrances).
- Garden / private amenity space and car parking should be located in the more secure areas to the rear.
- Improvements should be made to the pedestrian routes to the Town Centre (along Church Place / Union Road and the pedestrian steps towards Engine Lane) and to the new Rail Station (Mid Street) such as any necessary street lighting and pavement conditions.
- The potential to create a more direct pedestrian route to the Town Centre through the adjacent site through to Union Road should be explored.
- Opportunities to create 'stopping points' with benches for resting, such as the Church Place / Mid Street north corner

Development site

Adjacent development site

Principal building frontages (with windows and entrances) should address the public realm to ensure necessary levels of passive surveillance

Vehicular access to rear (secure) parking area

Improvements to pedestrian link, e.g. improved street lighting, widened pavements in parts, dropped curbs at crossing points

Explore potential for more direct pedestrian connection to Town Centre through adjacent site

Ensure good quality pedestrian route to the new station

6. Former Post Office Sorting Office

This is a small site able to create a significant positive impact on the Town Centre public realm network. It is located adjacent to two key public rights of way / pedestrian vennels which lead from North Bridge Street to public car parks and residential areas. The western vennel passes alongside the blank façade of the Regal Community Theatre. The eastern vennel serves a row of shops (Linbar House) along its eastern edge and would benefit from active frontage on the other side. The site sits behind a building spanning most of the North Bridge Street frontage and so does not need to 'front onto' this street.

- Principal frontages (with windows and doors) should address the public rights of way either side of the site – important vennels linking to town centre car parks & surrounding residential area and serving Linbar House Shops to East.
- Private amenity space and/or car parking should be contained within the centre of the site.
- Windows should overlook the entire vennel including where the east vennel (Linbar House) turns the corner towards the Mansfield Street car park.
- Vehicular access from North Bridge Street

Development site

Key pedestrian routes / vennels to car parking and residential areas

Principal building frontages (with windows and entrances) should address the public realm to ensure necessary levels of passive surveillance

Vehicular access

Existing car parks
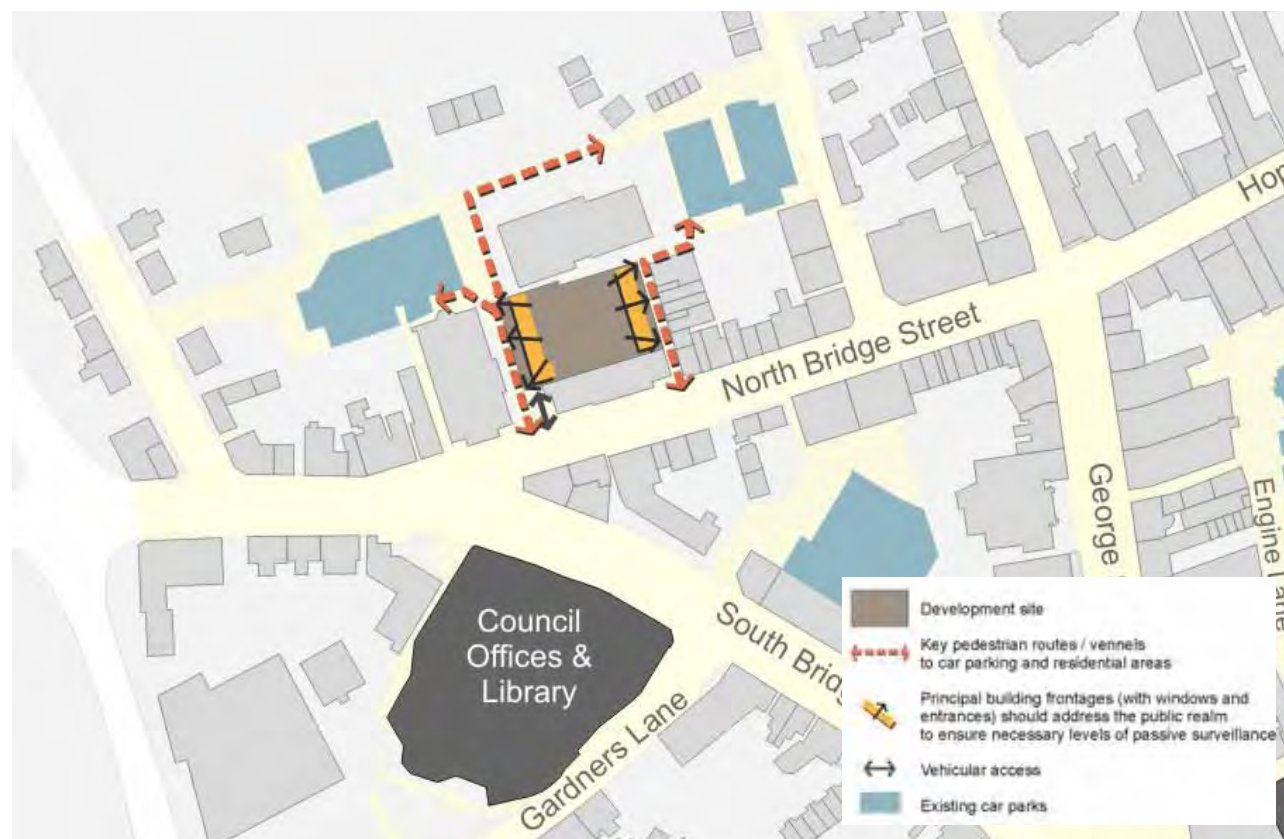
7

Prioritisation & Delivery

7.1 Introduction

The Bathgate Public Realm Design Guide provides a framework that identifies a number of core themes and development priorities for the centre of Bathgate. The guide is intended to support West Lothian Council, Enterprise Bathgate and other stakeholders to ensure that Bathgate builds on its strengths as a market town and delivers a successful and appealing Town Centre.

7.2 Constructive Partnership Working

Partnerships rather than projects deliver and support successful regeneration and regeneration without strong and active partnership mechanism is unlikely to be sustained. It is very important that the Bathgate Design Guide is seen as a process rather than simply a schedule of projects or project ideas. Critical to advancing the framework in Bathgate will be the following issues:

- **Extending Partnerships – Securing Widest possible Support and Consensus**
  West Lothian Council acting with partners such as the Community Planning Partnership and Enterprising Bathgate need to extend and build on partnerships to connect mainline services (Single Outcome Agreement / planning / policing / cleansing/ training / etc) with local initiatives (marketing / training / projects / management) that support and help Bathgate's success.

- **Securing new Funding Resources**
  The establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Bathgate's Town Centre 2008-2013 provides a new mechanism to lever new funding from public and private sector sources. West Lothian Council has agreed to match all funds raised through the BID Levy. New funding from the Community Planning Partnership; Developer Contributions and Planning Gain Support or from specialist funding bodies (Heritage Lottery / National Lottery Good Causes / Awards for All Programmes) should also be sought.

- **Promoting Projects**
  Bringing forward a range of project initiatives within a programme of works whilst also taking opportunity to capture and/or redirect windfall opportunities by encouraging other parties (developers / transport bodies / voluntary sector /etc) to adopt and support the Bathgate Public Realm Design Guide.

7.3 Delivery through a Project Based Programme

The framework seeks to balance aspiration and pragmatism and retain a clear project based strategy that is both flexible and allows various groups and interests to champion individual projects that can collectively deliver positive change and build sustainable place quality. The framework seeks to avoid an over aspirational shopping list of projects. Too often the aspirational interests lead project ambitions with initiatives that address everything but are overly ambitious relative to available resources and funding and are unlikely to be implemented.

Bathgate needs a focussed action plan with a limited number of targets that are clearly cross-referenced to goals within the Development Plan, Community Plan and Enterprising Bathgate Business Plan and the Locality Plan for Bathgate 2008-2011. The projects have been grouped as follows:

- **Enabling Projects**
  Projects that support the overall goals and ambitions and are intended to build the understanding of the Bathgate Framework and strengthen capacity and delivery mechanisms.

- **Core Projects**
  Projects that involve implementation of a programme or physical package of works that supports the strategy

- **Monitoring & Evaluation**
  Procedures to provide for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the framework to ensure it is delivering outputs and outcomes and being amended to take advantage of changing opportunity

7.4 Commitment to Quality

The framework needs to recognise that to secure meaningful change things need to be done differently. Quality needs to be an ever present commitment in everything that is done such that all schemes contribute to place quality and success. Every project, every investment however large or small should be capable of demonstrating how it improves the centre.   A commitment to quality will raise expectations, raise the quality of the public realm and create a recognition that second-best and lack of thought and attention to detail is simply not acceptable.   This 'think quality – commit to quality' thinking needs to be addressed in large scale development (Civic Centre /Library) but is equally important in minor repair work and streetscape maintenance.

In summary, Bathgate is an important Town Centre in West Lothian but one of a number of centres and resources for comprehensive renewal, and prioritisation of Bathgate above other centres will may not be possible or justified.   The partnership between West Lothian Council and Enterprising Bathgate with many other private, public, civic and voluntary sector partners needs to ensure that all capital investment, local services, public realm maintenance and management deliver the best possible outcomes and these outcomes build towards a more successful and sustainable Bathgate.

7.5 Action Plan– Urban Design Framework

This Urban Design Framework identifies and Action Plan based on enabling works, funding reviews and commissioning of development briefs and strategies. The Public Realm Design Guide Action Plan should be used for physical implementation projects for the town centre projects.

Project / Action	Lead or Project Champion	Other stakeholder	Priority			Action		
			High	Medium	Low	2008 / 09	2010 +	
1. Enabling								
Council Members briefing (Planning Committee)	WLC		✓			✓		Ensure Committee Members understand public realm objectives and principles for Bathgate Town Centre
DC Officers training	WLC		✓			✓		Particular focus on application of principles and criteria (chapters 4 and 5)
Consider the need to establish Bathgate Town Centre Design Review Group	WLC	EB		✓		✓		Greater critique of development proposals & design briefs within important and sensitive area
Consultation protocol for Bathgate Town Centre planning proposals	WLC	EB		✓		✓		Ensure effective consultation regarding development proposals with Town Centre stakeholders
Review potential public realm funding opportunities / sources	WLC/EB		✓			ongoing		Ensure that every opportunity is taken to access funds / implement projects

Project / Action	Lead or Project Champion	Other stakeholder	Priority			Action		
			High	Medium	Low	2008 / 09	2010 +	
2. Public Space Network Strategy								
George Street & the Steelyard 1. Outline design 2. Consult on design options 3. Implement early works, e.g. crown lifting of trees and general 'de-cluttering' of spaces. 4. Develop scheme proposals and secure funding	WLC/EB	Retailers, civic groups, local residents	✓ ✓ ✓	✓		✓ ✓ ✓	✓	
Civic Centre 1. Review new building design proposals in light of SPG/ emerging design guidance. 2. Outline designs for associated public space 3. Consult on outline designs 4. Implement public space works in conjunction with construction of building	WLC	EB, retailers, civic groups	✓ ✓ ✓	✓		✓ ✓ ✓	✓	1. Assessment of the building's full impact on the surrounding public realm and on the image of Bathgate.
Other Core Area Public Spaces 1. Seek / be mindful of opportunities for intervention. 2. Consider potential for adjacent development proposals to contribute towards improvement of the public spaces. 3. Co-ordinate actions with other public realm services such as Transportation.	EB WLC			✓			✓	
Vennels & Lanes Enhancement Strategy 1. Ensure all development addresses adjacent publicly-accessible vennels / lanes with overlooking windows etc. 2. Commission design proposals for co-ordinated vennel/lanes environmental enhancement works 3. Consult on proposals 4. Implementation	WLC WLC / EB WLC / EB WLC / EB		✓	✓ ✓ ✓		Ongoing	✓ ✓ ✓	

Action	Lead	Partners				
Signage Strategy 1. Commission design work and mapping (location of signs) 2. Consultation 3. Implementation	WLC / EB		✓			✓ ✓ ✓
Car Parking Strategy 1. Consultation with public on issues and priorities 2. Prepare Car Parking Management Plan 3. Consult 4. Adopt 5. Implement	EB/WLC WLC/EB WLC WLC WLC	Retailers, civic groups, local residents EB EB EB	✓	✓ ✓		 ✓ ✓ ✓
Cycle Path Connections 1. On-street cycle lanes to be incorporated into Whitburn Road to connect between the National Cycle Network Route 75 and the Town Centre 2. On-street cycle lanes to be incorporated into Edinburgh Road to connect the new rail station to the Town Centre 3. Provide cycle stands in various secure locations (good passive surveillance) within the Town Centre. 4. Ensure that the NCN Route 75 is well signposted from the Town Centre and rail station.	WLC WLC WLC WLC/EB	Network Rail SUSTRANS Network Rail SUSTRANS SUSTRANS Network Rail SUSTRANS	✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓
Maintenance & Management Strategy 1. Organise meeting between various parties at WLC and local businesses via EB 2. Establish objectives and identify key issues requiring coordination and agreement, e.g. bin collection and street cleansing times 3. Draft a Maintenance & Management Strategy Agreement 4. All parties to 'sign up' to agreement 5. Ongoing liaison between all parties to ensure agreements are regularly reviewed.	EB	WLC : Transport, Environment Services, Parks Maintenance and other related council services	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓ Ongoing

Project / Action	Lead or Project Champion	Other stakeholder	Priority			Action		
			High	Medium	Low	2008 / 09	2010 +	
3. Building Protection & Enhancement Strategy								
Building Condition Survey & THI Bid 1. Commission survey 2. Review survey findings and prioritise actions 3. Prepare THI bid based on survey recommendations	WLC	Property owners, retailers, civic groups, local residents		✓			✓	
Investment in repainting and renewal of shop façades	EB	Local retailers and Business Owners, WLC		✓			✓	
Investment in maintenance and repair of properties above the shop	EB	Local property owners, WLC		✓			✓	
Development Opportunity Sites 1. Prepare design briefs for all development sites identified within this document. 2. Maintain up-to-date record of potential development sites within Bathgate Town Centre. 3. Establish a timetable for preparation of design briefs to address new development opportunity sites	WLC Planning Policy	WLC Development Control/ Management and consultation with EB (through design review)	✓ ✓ ✓			✓	✓ ✓	
4. Monitoring & Review								
1. Monitor action plan progress 2. Assess outcomes 3. Review action plan and priorities	WLC / EB	Property owners, retailers, civic groups, local residents	✓ ✓ ✓			ongoing		