

# Warrington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted June 2021



**WARRINGTON**

Borough Council



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## Foreword

I am delighted to present Warrington's Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Warrington is growing and evolving, and nowhere is this more evident than in our town centre, which is undergoing a real renaissance.

As our town centre changes, it's vital that all development contributes to our collective vision - to make Warrington a better place to live, work and visit.

This SPD is part of the Council's commitment to work closely with developers, setting out our design expectations for all proposals.

By bringing together our aspirations for sustainable development, this document will help us manage the increasing number of development proposals coming forward in the town centre.

It establishes clear design principles to guide new development in the town centre and across key development sites.

And it requires developers to give detailed consideration to how their proposals will contribute to the wider town centre at the start of their design process.

We have strong ambitions to make our town centre an attractive, thriving and sustainable place for all of our residents, businesses and visitors. Our Town Centre SPD will play an important part in this, by setting the framework for high quality development, now and in the future.

**Cllr Russ Bowden**  
**Leader, Warrington Borough Council**



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Warrington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It supplements the adopted Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy by providing additional guidance to help ensure that forthcoming developments in the Town Centre are planned in a coherent way and will deliver a high-quality built environment and public realm.

### Area of Application

- 1.2 The area which the SPD relates to is defined on the plan overleaf (Figure 1). It includes the Town Centre boundary as defined by Policy CS7 in the Local Plan Core Strategy. It also takes into account the 'Key Areas of Change' as identified in Figure 12.1 of Chapter 12 (The Town Centre) of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy. These sit in and immediately adjacent to the defined town centre boundary.

### Status of this Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.3 This SPD has now been adopted by the Council to support the implementation of policy and associated standards in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy. It will inform decision making by the Council on submitted planning applications.
- 1.4 This SPD will replace the Bank Park and Bridge Street SPD's, adopted in October 2010 and May 2009 respectively and the Winwick Street SPG that was adopted in February 2004. It also in part supersedes the Standards for Parking in New Development SPD (adopted March 2015), insofar as it relates to the Town Centre.

### Planning Policy Context

- 1.5 The SPD has status as the support tool for the implementation of both nationally prescribed planning policy and adopted Local Plan policies.

### National Planning Policy

- 1.6 Planning policy at the national level is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was last revised in 2019.
- 1.7 The NPPF encourages the delivery of sustainable development that contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy; supports vibrant and healthy communities; and contributes to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 1.8 Chapter 7 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' and Chapter 12 'Achieving Well-designed places' are of particular relevance to this SPD.

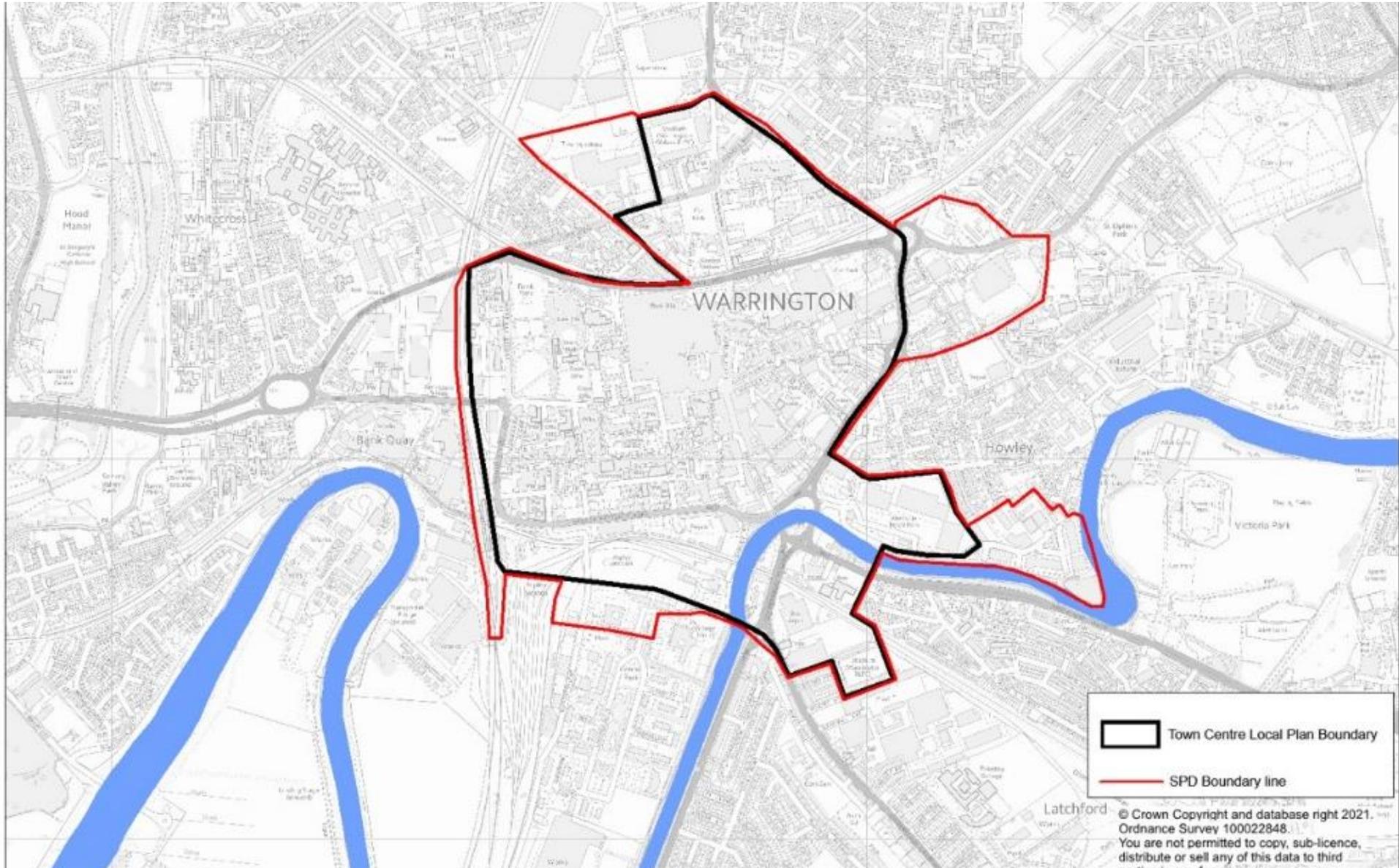


Figure 1. The SPD Area

## Local Plan Policy

- 1.9 The Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) is the adopted Local Plan for the Borough of Warrington. The Local Plan Core Strategy is the overarching strategic policy document for guiding the location and level of development in the Borough up to 2027.
- 1.10 The principal place making policy for the Town Centre (Policy TC1) sets out urban design principles for the town centre as a whole. It also identifies a number of underutilised areas where either comprehensive redevelopment or smaller scale regeneration would not only improve the areas themselves but also the wider town centre. It indicates that the Council will produce Supplementary Planning Documents or design briefs for these sites where appropriate.
- 1.11 Other Local Plan Core Strategy policies relevant to this SPD are summarised at Appendix A.
- 1.12 Given increasing development pressures, this SPD provides additional guidance to implement the Local Plan vision and objectives for the Town Centre as a whole and other key areas of regeneration.
- 1.13 The SPD has looked again at gateways and main routes where intensification of development through increased height is anticipated. There is a focus on quality of development and ensuring that there is proper understanding of the Town Centre context.
- 1.14 Supplementary Planning Documents and guidance has previously been produced to guide the re-development of the Bridge Street/Time Square, Bank Park and Winwick Street areas. Much of this redevelopment has now been completed, but elements of these SPDs and guidance which are still relevant have been incorporated into this SPD.

## Emerging Draft Local Plan

- 1.15 In June 2019 the Council published the Preferred Submission Version Local Plan (PSVLP) for consultation. There were over 3,000 responses to the proposals as a result of this consultation. The Draft Plan is currently under review. It is intended that certain aspirations within this SPD will become part of that new Local Plan including the adoption of National Dwelling Standard Sizes, additional requirements for private amenity space and preferred dwelling layout. On adoption of the Local Plan, the SPD will be revised to cover all formal changes.

## Other Relevant Strategies

- 1.16 The SPD will not only help the delivery of the Local Plan Core Strategy but also a number of other Council strategies that support the social, physical and economic improvement of Warrington and in particular the Town Centre.
- 1.17 The most relevant strategies for the SPD are:
- the Town Centre Masterplan - approved by the Council in January 2019, setting out the Council's long term vision for the development and regeneration of town centre;
  - the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan (FLMTM) (2020) which seeks to promote sustainable transport modes through wide-ranging public realm improvements; and
  - Warrington Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan (2020) – provides a regeneration framework for the 6 wards surrounding the Town Centre to ensure that residents in these areas benefit from Warrington's economic development.
- 1.18 Other relevant strategies include Warrington Means Business (2020); Warrington's Local Transport Plan 4 (2019); Warrington's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019); and Health & Well-being Strategy (2019). A summary of all relevant strategies is in Appendix B.



## 2. Design Rationale

### Introduction

- 2.1 The design work for the SPD was commissioned to bring together important Local Plan policy and through it the sustainable redevelopment of brownfield sites in the town centre. As set out in the introductory section, the SPD also reflects other forward-looking Council documents including The Town Centre Masterplan (2019), The First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan (2020) and the Central 6 Masterplan (2020). These documents look to increase residential development in the town centre; rationalise vehicular access into the town centre and improve sustainable transport opportunities; and create a quality environment for new and existing residents.
- 2.2 The aim of this SPD is to provide tangible guidance for applicants bringing forward development proposals for the Town Centre to follow and realise the design policies of the Local Plan and the ambitions of the other supporting adopted Council documents.
- 2.3 The process that has been followed in preparing the SPD includes the key steps set out below.



Time Square, Warrington Town Centre

## Warrington Today

- 2.4 Warrington has many positives as a Town Centre. These include:
- A historic building stock that includes more than 90 listed buildings which contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the town centre;
  - Public open spaces such as Bank Park, Palmyra Square and Marshall Gardens, which provide valuable amenity space for people using the town centre;
  - Public transport infrastructure, including two rail stations and a bus station, which provide access to a wide range of local, regional and national locations.
  - A strong commercial core with a large number of office buildings supporting a wide range of businesses
  - Major shopping and leisure destinations including Golden Square and the recently completed Time Square development; and
  - A thriving cultural quarter, including Parr Hall, the Pyramid and Warrington museum.
- 2.5 Like many regional town centres Warrington also has a number of issues which need to be addressed to realise the full potential of the town centre. These include:
- Vehicle-dominated environments at key junctions / gateways which do not provide a positive experience to those entering the Town Centre;
  - A relatively harsh, and in places cluttered, urban environment which for large portions of the Town Centre lacks any natural features;
  - The need to give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists, in particular in the eastern part of the Town Centre, where a legacy of wide carriageways and junctions have fractured the historic urban grain and make it a vehicle dominated environment (see Fig 2);

- The vastly under-utilised River Mersey, which should be contributing more to the town as both a natural amenity and as a place making feature;
- Areas of the Town Centre which lack a visual consistency degrading the sense of place; and
- Changing consumer retail trends resulting in an increasing number of vacant shop units.

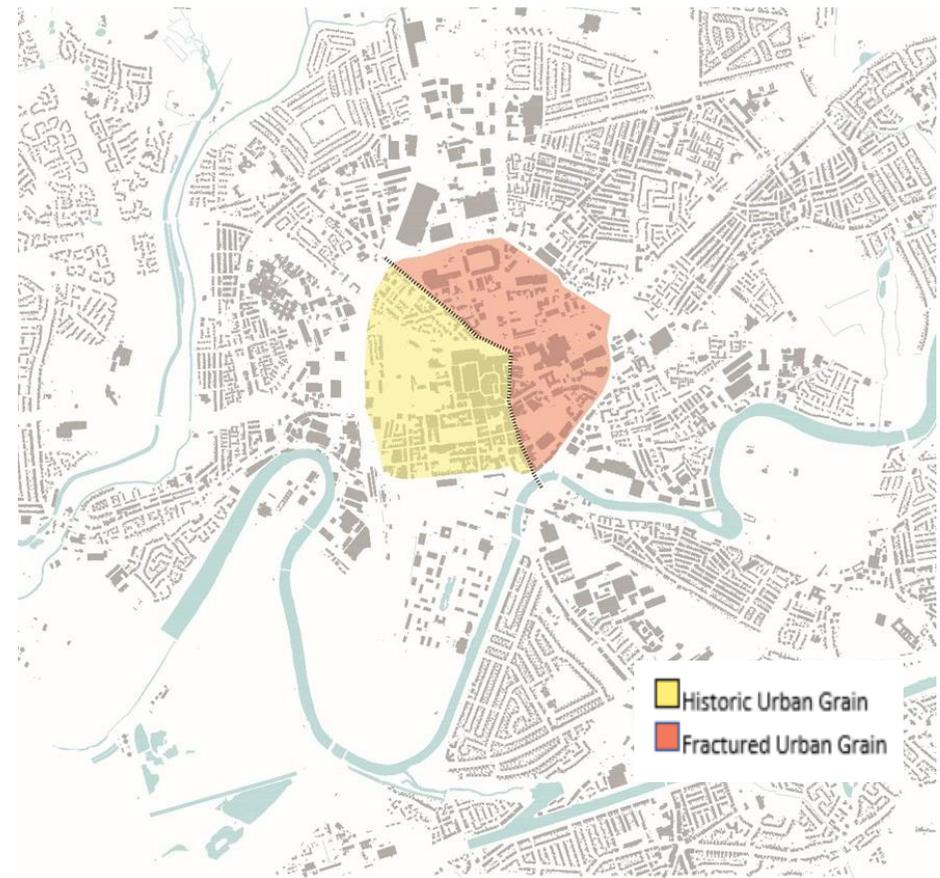
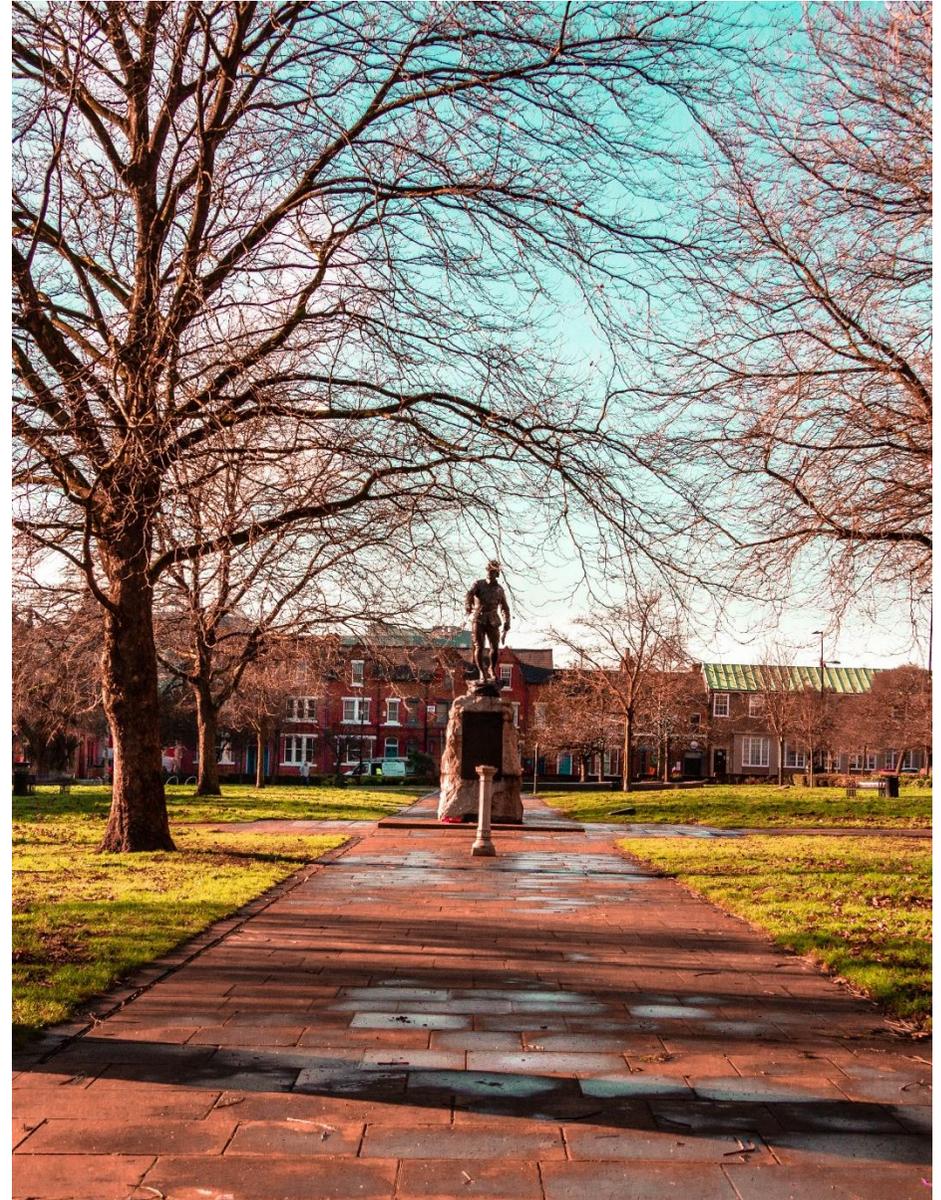


Figure 2. Warrington Town Centre – Urban Grain

## Ensuring a successful Town Centre for the Future

- 2.6 Warrington is at an important juncture as a town and place. The 2020 Town Centre Masterplan, produced by the Council, sets out an ambitious and forward-thinking vision for the town up to 2040. The realisation of this masterplan will be transformative for Warrington, positioning it as somewhere that can benefit from sustained and long-term prosperity.
- 2.7 An integral part of realising this prosperity is delivering Warrington Town Centre as a highly liveable environment, one that provides a balance between that of the city and suburban living and sees the benefit of both. The Town Centre can provide the benefits of city living such as excellent transport connections, a vibrant retail and leisure offer throughout the day and evening and a mixture of cultural attractions close by. As a town rather than a city, Warrington can also deliver a scale of place that is much more people-focused, one that can be crossed on foot rather than by vehicle and within which people can feel a tangible sense of community.
- 2.8 Delivering this sense of community is also an important aspect of making the Town Centre an attractive alternative to suburban living in the Borough. There is huge potential for increasing the residential population of the Town Centre, but this must be realised with a focus on providing a high-quality residential environment and delivering Warrington Town Centre as a highly liveable town environment which will support maintaining it as a place people choose to live.

**Good Place making = Good Economic, Long-Term Outcomes.**



Queen's Gardens, Palmyra Square

## What makes a Great Place?

- 2.9 Great places have a strong sense of place stemming from a clear local identity which people and communities can identify with, giving a sense of belonging. As the size of Warrington increases through the expansion of its residential population and the bolstering of the retail, leisure and commercial community of the Town Centre, it is important that people can still identify strongly with Warrington as a place and town.
- 2.10 A strong sense of place and local identity is intrinsically linked to a place's memorability. We attribute value to places that have a clear understandable design form and quality. The design guidance provided within this SPD is a way of delivering future regeneration that will foster and engender a strong sense of place and local identity, which includes maintaining a human and town scale to development, improving access and visibility to the River Mersey as well as providing guidance to assist in establishing new neighbourhoods within the Town Centre.
- 2.11 This strong sense of identity created by well-designed places instils a human connection and draw which adds commercial and civic value to all activities, be that: shopping, dwelling, working or relaxing. This guidance is people-focused and supports and builds upon the environmental improvements proposed by the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan. Delivering these improvements and focusing on repairing the fractured urban grain caused by 20<sup>th</sup> century vehicular infrastructure will be fundamental to reinstating the connection between people and the environment that good place making demands.



## A Highly Liveable Town Environment

- 2.12 A fundamental aim of this SPD is to deliver Warrington Town Centre as a highly liveable environment. Liveability is the focus on people's social, economic and physical well-being and the understanding that all need to work together to ensure maximum benefit. As part of this approach, providing a high-quality urban environment; good quality housing, safe and attractive places to walk and cycle; and access to retail, employment, cultural and leisure opportunities including access to nature are the emphasis of the SPD.
- 2.13 Place making has a significant impact upon achieving liveability. Good Place making reinforces the link between people and environment and is therefore fundamental to delivering liveability in the Town Centre. The guidance provided within this SPD is born out of a people-focused, place making-led approach and seeks to enable the delivery of Warrington as a great place, delivering not just new development but genuine regeneration.

## The Big Idea

- 2.14 To deliver Warrington as a highly liveable urban environment, addressing the issues raised in this section, the following 'Big Idea', an all-encompassing generator from which the design guidance in this SPD stems, can be summarised as:
- Increasing the density of development and enhancing connection to the River Mersey whilst maintaining a human and town scale context;
  - Providing a focus on liveability, well-being and creating strong communities at all scales; and
  - Ensuring a focus on creating good, long-term economic outcomes and truly sustainable regeneration.

## How can this happen for Warrington through the SPD?

- 2.15 The design guidance within this SPD is provided at four scales to deliver liveability within Warrington Town Centre:
- **Town Scale** – this is the consideration of the whole of the town centre, and includes how it looks and functions. The ambition is to improve the look of the town by capitalising on its assets such as the river, its historic development patterns and to take the opportunities that the gateways or entrance sites and locations offer for high quality redevelopment. A key aspect of this is to relate to the human experience of the environment and what feels and is seen as pleasant. This includes the scale and size of developments and also how people access the town centre and are able to move around within it. For Warrington, where movement is car dominated, a major task is to rationalise access by car and improve the sustainable transport options. These elements will work together to deliver a town centre with a strengthened identity and sustainable patterns of development.
  - **Neighbourhood Scale** – neighbourhoods are seen as identifiable areas of the town centre with distinct characteristics and uses. The Town Centre Masterplan identifies quarters across the town centre and looks to take advantage of locational and geographical factors that can aid regeneration of the area. An example of this is the River Mersey at the southern entrance to the town centre, where industrial development has in the past characterised the area but there is now an opportunity for new residential led mixed developments with greenspaces and leisure uses set by and enhanced by the river.
  - **Urban Block Scale** – these form the component parts of a neighbourhood and relate to individual development proposals. In this context it is important that the fit, representation and

identity of a neighbourhood is reflected in any proposals that are forthcoming. Where identity is poor, new developments offer the opportunity to create new landmarks and positively redefine areas. Function and operation within urban blocks is important in creating community cohesion and a liveable environment. Different functions need to work together to ensure economic and environmental well-being works for all. This includes the relationship to highway infrastructure and neighbouring uses.

- Dwelling Scale – to ensure that new residential development gives occupiers a quality environment that provides a good choice for living in the town centre, the dwelling scale needs to address what are liveability essentials. This includes size of dwellings, orientation and access to natural light, and what has become even more important in the Covid era the access to private and public amenity space. These elements are seen as vitally important to mental and physical well-being as well as promoting town centre living.

## The National Design Guide

- 2.16 The SPD has a base within the National Design Guide, a document which advocates a place making-led approach. Applicants should refer to this document and the ten characteristics of a well-designed place included within it when preparing development proposals.
- 2.17 The SPD also provides the platform to move forward to more detailed design guidance for the town centre as a whole or for individual areas or sites within it, if and when the Government's proposed approach to design codes is introduced.

### The ten key strands of a well-designed place

The ten key strands of a well-designed place, underpinned by the right climate, community and character, are:

1. Lifespan – made to last
2. Context – which enhances the surroundings
3. Identity – ensuring attractiveness and distinctiveness
4. Built form – a coherent pattern of development
5. Movement – accessible and easy to move around
6. Nature – which is enhanced and optimised
7. Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive
8. Uses – mixed and integrated
9. Home buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable
10. Resources – efficient and resilient

Figure 3. The ten key strands of a well-designed place



## 3. Town Scale

### Overview

3.1 Provided within this section are design principles that contribute strategically to delivering Warrington as a highly liveable town centre. This section embeds the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan (FLMTM) principles and standards within the SPD, setting out how the highway network will be improved to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport. It also includes geographic principles that define the key gateways into the town centre and where and how taller buildings should be delivered. These principles and standards permeate through to the other scales of design guidance within the SPD: neighbourhood scale, urban block scale and dwelling scale.

#### TS1. Street Hierarchy – Main Principles

1. The diagram, figure 4, shows the street hierarchy for the First and Last Mile and the priority for future changes and improvements to the Town Centre’s highway system which must be adhered to.
2. Development that compromises implementation of the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan will not be permitted.
3. Development proposals should consider connectivity through the town centre when positioning buildings on site, and design of routes and spaces that are adjacent or near to connections identified within the First and Last Mile street hierarchy.
4. Developments should deliver/ contribute to the implementation of enhanced connectivity through safe and pleasant routes for pedestrian and cyclists to secure their future use. Further details of Warrington Borough Council’s expectations on contributions can be found within the ‘Planning Obligations’ section of this SPD.

- 3.2 Shifting towards a pedestrian-focused town centre is of fundamental importance to making Warrington a truly liveable town. The First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan (FLMTM) proposes significant changes to the road hierarchy within and around the town centre which will contribute greatly to realising this aim. The FLMTM has identified a series of design concepts for the 3 street types set out below with a number of locations suggested for early implementation. The full delivery of the FLMTM is expected to be rolled out as the Town Centre regeneration proceeds. This includes seeking to ensure that development and conversion of property will support the FLMTM proposals with sustainable transport recognised as a priority.
- 3.3 Delivering an urban environment that is safe and pleasant to walk and cycle through encourages sustainable travel choices, improves health and well-being and is indicative of good place making. Establishing strategic pedestrian routes at a town scale is key to delivering this strategy and supporting the aims of the FLMTM.
- 3.4 Improving pedestrian accessibility in combination with an appropriate urban grain and strong street pattern will assist in delivering good, long-term place making, liveability, wellbeing, health, and economic benefits for Warrington.
- 3.5 The expected treatment and form of the streets which make up this hierarchy are explained in more detail in the Traditional Streets section.



## Traditional Streets

- 3.6 Traditional Streets are designed to accommodate higher levels of vehicular traffic, whilst also providing a welcoming and safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. This layout includes conventional traffic controls and elements such as standard footways and raised kerbs. The street is designed to encourage walking and cycling and making these modes more apparent to motorists to encourage careful driving behaviour.
- 3.7 Figure 5 illustrates a conceptual design for the treatment of such a part of the highway network within the town centre. The A49 (Mersey Street/Fennel Street) retains its core function to serve higher levels of vehicular traffic but is changed to enhance the environment for pedestrians and cyclists.



Figure 5. Conceptual Design for A49/Church Street/Dial Street Junction

## Informal Streets

- 3.8 Informal Streets are usually designed with lower kerbs, narrowed carriageways, and minimal signing. There is still a pavement and a carriageway, but the differentiation between them is typically less than in a Traditional Street.
- 3.9 The design of Informal Streets needs to pay particular attention to the safety and accessibility of blind/partially sighted people: for example, crossings and footways need to be detectable. Informal Street layouts rely on quality public realm to welcome and give priority to people movements, encouraging slow-moving traffic to give way to pedestrians. Cycling on street should be attractive in a low speed, low traffic environment.
- 3.10 Figure 6 (overleaf) illustrates a conceptual design for an Informal Street treatment along Sankey Street within the town centre. The design concept changes to a pedestrian priority street at the eastern end as Sankey Street approaches the fully pedestrianised area (car free) and turns down Bold Street.

## Pedestrian Priority

- 3.11 Pedestrian Priority design is best suited for low traffic flow streets, introducing traffic restrictions and public realm improvements to create streets where pedestrian and cyclists feel that they can move freely anywhere and where drivers should feel they are guests.
- 3.12 Pedestrian Priority Streets are designed with no kerbs and minimal traffic signage, and travel lanes should be kept as narrow as possible to maximise pedestrian walking space.



Warrington Central Train Station

## TS2. Defining Key Gateways

### Summary principles:

1. Gateways are identified as key arrival points into the Town Centre by footpaths, cycle-ways, road or rail. The following locations (shown on Fig 7) are defined as Key Gateways into the town centre:
  - **Northern Gateway:** The area in and around the stadium to the north of the town centre.
  - **Southern Gateway:** An area centred on the historic Warrington Bridge that crosses the River Mersey but extends to include Lower Bridge Street to the north, sites to the south of the River Mersey, along Wharf Street to Victoria Park to the east and sites in and around Wilson Patten Street to the west.
  - **Eastern Gateway:** This area is centred upon the Cockhedge Green roundabout at the junction of the A57 and A49 roads which includes surrounding buildings and sites that have fractured the historic grain of the town centre.
  - **Western Gateway:** This area includes Warrington Bank Quay Station and the industrial sites to the west of it. This area has an important role to play in the future with the arrival of HS2 and the Northern Powerhouse Rail alongside a potential post-industrial regeneration of the area.
  - **Central Station Rail Gateway:** This area includes Warrington Central Station with sites that link the northern and eastern gateways including Wireworks, off Winwick Street and Tanners Lane, as well as the New Town House and Cockhedge Shopping Park sites.
2. Design of buildings and structures at the Key Gateways should respond the importance of the gateway as a place of arrival into the town centre and be of high architectural quality and merit.



Figure 6. Conceptual Design for Sankey Street – Informal Street moving to a Pedestrian Street



Figure 7. Key gateway locations

- 3.13 The key gateways are important as they represent the start of the experience of Warrington Town Centre as a place and present the opportunity to create a sense of arrival and experience for residents and visitors coming into the town centre. Improvement of these areas is therefore of strategic importance to the regeneration of the town centre of Warrington and new development should include landmark buildings or structures including infrastructure of a high design quality.
- 3.14 The gateways are identified in Chapter 12 (The Town centre) of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy in Figure 12.2 - Key Routes and Gateways as “Gateway Destination Sites”. The SPD has also included the northern ‘major node’ as a key gateway given its development potential. The gateways connect the regeneration sites identified in the Neighbourhood Scale to destinations in the town centre such as Golden Square, Palmyra Square, the Town Hall and Time Square.
- 3.15 These gateways are also where the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan (FLMTM) is proposing interventions with the traffic junctions in these areas. At the Eastern and Southern Gateways there are currently significant roundabouts/ junctions that are vehicle dominated and provide a very poor first impression for those entering the town centre. Prioritising the pedestrian through carriageway reconfigurations at these gateways and the rationalisation of the priorities for traffic crossing the River Mersey at the Southern Gateway could have a transformative impact upon the presentation and appearance of the town centre at its entrance points and improve the permeability of the town centre in tandem with other proposals from the FLMTM.
- 3.16 Applicants should engage Landscape Architects as part of their application team on major or gateway developments, ensuring that proposals are of high quality, deliverable and will be maintained in the future. Consideration should be given to planting that can provide year-round colour and promote biodiversity within the town centre, prioritising the use of native species

### TS3. Creating Strong Connections across the Town Centre

#### Summary principle:

Development should support connections within the Town Centre and between the town centre and the surrounding residential areas. The following routes (shown in Fig 8) are identified as important connections that should be improved:

- The east-west connection between Bank Quay Station and Victoria Park
- The north-south connection from the Halliwell Jones Stadium, through the Town Centre to the River (Bridgefoot)
- Rail and Bus Station connection.



Figure 8. Key Connections/Routes

## The East-West Connection between Bank Quay Station and Victoria Park

- 3.17 As residential communities increase in the town centre and car parking is rationalised it will be important to ensure that links across the town are improved and support sustainable transport networks that the FLMTM proposes. Policy in the Local Plan promotes connections within the Town Centre and between the town centre and its surrounding resident population. It also supports green links that connect the town's parks and waterways ('Circular Parklands') which are shown in figure 9. The overall ambition is to ensure both end point destinations are identified but also that the routes function to support residents' and visitors' inward economic and leisure activities in the town centre and outward movement to green open spaces identified in the Circular Parklands.
- 3.18 A pedestrian route of importance is promoted which connects Victoria Park east of the town centre with Bank Quay Station in the west, forming a route that traverses the Southern Gateway Area of the town centre. This route is of strategic importance because:
- it starts and ends at two important points:
    - (a) Victoria Park – which is an important health, well-being and liveability resource for residents of the town centre as both a green, open space and the location of several sports and pastimes facilities.
    - (b) Bank Quay Station – a rail station which provides important connections to the local, regional, and national rail network providing residents and those entering the town centre with an important alternative to private vehicle use. With the delivery of HS2 and the Northern Powerhouse Rail, Bank Quay station's importance will only increase, making good access to it vital.



Victoria Park

- The route traverses the Southern Gateway and the Wilson Patten Street Neighbourhood, areas that this Design Guidance recognises as future areas of opportunity. Good access through these areas and improved connectivity with adjacent parts of the town centre will be critical to their future success.
- The western end of the route, near Bank Quay station is proposed to be improved by the FLMTM to an 'Informal Street' and this route will reinforce the value of these proposed works.
- The connection in part follows the River Mersey and in doing so will assist in promoting the river as a key place making and liveability amenity of the town centre.

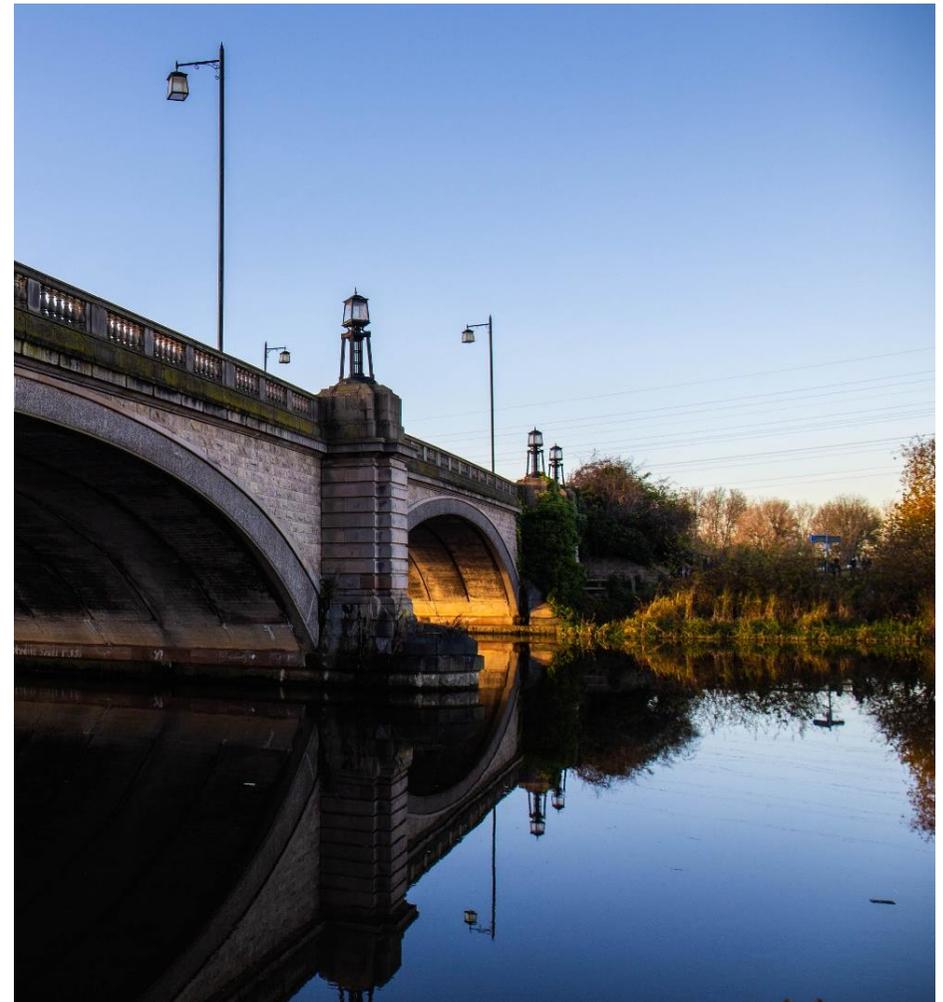
- Include street improvements proposed by the FLMTM where portions of Bridge Street, Scotland Road and Winwick Street will be improved as 'Pedestrian Priority' streets.

### The North-South Connection from the Stadium, through the Town Centre to the River

3.19 Alongside the East-West connection from Victoria Park to Bank Quay, this Design Guidance promotes the importance of a strong, pedestrian-focused connection between the Stadium area to the north of the town centre core and the area around Bridge Street and across the River Mersey to the south.

3.20 This route will:

- Work in conjunction with the east-west connection to maximise pedestrian accessibility at a strategic level across the town centre and into the areas immediately surrounding it, promoting liveability by making the town centre a people-first place to be.
- Connect two important parts of the town centre, the Northern and Southern Gateways, both of which have strategically important roles to play in Warrington's future as they see development realised.
- Further integrate important parts of the town centre such as Times Square, the New Town House and Cockhedge sites, Golden Square, Warrington Central Rail Station and Wireworks.



Bridge Foot, River Mersey

## Rail and Bus Station Connections

3.21 The two railway stations in Warrington provide a national north to south link (Bank Quay) and a regional west to east link (Central) between Liverpool and Manchester and beyond. The bus (Interchange) links out to the sub region. These transport hubs work as distributors of travellers arriving and moving around the town. The railways themselves have been identified as key gateways and destinations, however it is important that links are provided to ensure that people can move between these hubs by sustainable modes and that those links make for a pleasant and welcoming experience in Warrington town centre.

3.22 The route will:

- Support sustainable linkages between transport hubs in the town centre.
- Support sustainable access into the town centre for work and leisure opportunities.
- Promote the regeneration of the town centre for residential and commercial purposes as moving about the town becomes an attractive and pleasant experience.

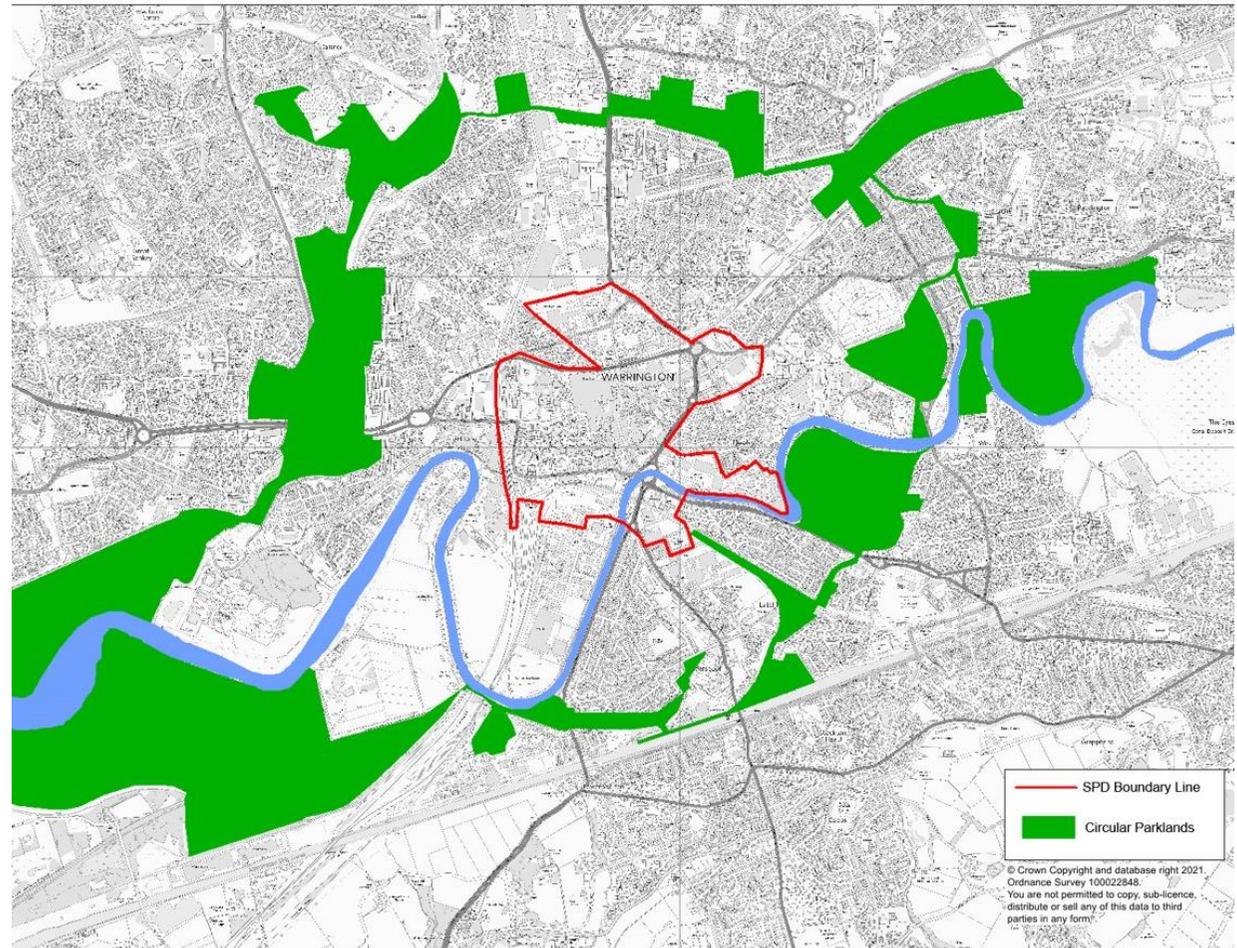


Figure 9. Warrington's Circular Parklands

## TS4. Car parking and The Town Centre Travel Plan

### Summary principles:

1. In the Central Area within the Town Centre SPD Boundary as detailed on Figure 10, the Council will expect car-free (zero parking) proposals in both residential and non-residential development.
2. Where a development is proposed to include car parking within the Central Area (within the Town Centre SPD Boundary detailed on Figure 10) developers will be expected to demonstrate that the parking is essential to the specific needs of the development such as disabled car parking provision.
3. In the town centre outside the Central Area, but within the Town Centre SPD Boundary detailed on Fig 8, the council will consider provision below the standards set out in the Supplementary Planning Document Standards for Parking in New Developments (March 2015) for both residential and non- residential developments.
4. New or additional publicly available long-stay parking, typically serving visitors and commuters, into the town centre, will be situated in locations outside of the Central Area, but within easy walking distance of the town centre, to intercept traffic that would otherwise access the town centre at peak times. An appropriate level of long stay parking within the Central Area may be supported where its principle function is to serve town centre railway stations, namely Bank Quay and Central, and any redevelopment associated with those stations. Short stay parking will be supported where necessary in the town centre to serve the businesses located there.
5. All developments will be expected to provide a contribution via s106 agreements towards the Town Centre Travel Plan. This contribution will be based on equivalent price for a parking space (using the requirements of Standards for Parking in New Developments (March 2015))

- 3.23 The Council through the approval of Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) is committed to reducing car trips into the town centre and are already facilitating this through key programmes such as the FLMTM and the Town Centre Travel Plan. It is expected that all new development proposals within the town centre, regardless of size and nature, should assist in the delivery of such programmes through a system of managed under-provision of parking and support the implementation of these programmes.
- 3.24 The levels of parking provision associated with Warrington town centre, and where that provision is located, is carefully determined to meet two main requirements. Firstly, it will support the needs of businesses and their customers. Secondly, car parking will support our wider vision of a less car-dominated town centre.
- 3.25 In LTP4 and our FLMTM we have now developed proposals to implement these aims. Within the Town Centre SPD Boundary, we have designated a Central Area where we will expect car-free proposals in both residential and non-residential development and where it is not considered appropriate to provide new or additional publicly available long-stay parking.
- 3.26 The Central Area is bounded by the railway lines to the west and south, the A49 to the east and A57 Midland Way to the north and is shown in Figure 8. Where any development is proposed with car parking within the Central Area, for this to be considered developers will be expected to demonstrate that the parking is essential to the specific needs of the development.
- 3.27 Outside of this Central Area, but within the Town Centre SPD Boundary as defined on Figure 10, we will consider car parking provision below the standards set out in the Supplementary Planning Document Standards for Parking in New Developments (March 2015) for both residential and non-residential developments.

- 3.28 In addition, publicly available long-stay parking should be located outside of the Central Area in order to intercept traffic that would otherwise enter the town centre. This will reduce the number of cars in the town centre, particularly in the peak times when people are commuting, creating a more pleasant town centre environment that is less dominated by vehicles. However, an appropriate level of long stay parking may be retained to serve town centre rail stations at Bank Quay and Central, which may include provision within the Central Area.
- 3.29 Travel Plans are routinely required from developers as a condition of planning consent, to enable and encourage more sustainable travel choices and a reduction in car journeys. An area-wide town centre travel plan has been developed to support reduced resident car ownership, commuter car journeys and allow below standard parking provision. It includes car club provision to allow subsidised access to a hire car when needed, cycle hire for those who do not own their own, and discounted ticket incentives to use buses and trains.
- 3.30 Applicants are still expected to support sustainable travel through the design of their development and to provide prospective travel plans to support any application. However, in lieu of providing their own travel plans, developers should expect to contribute to the area-wide plan and provide a point of contact on-site to facilitate travel plan implementation within the development. A summary of the Town Centre Travel Plan is appended to this SPD.
- 3.31 All development will be required to contribute, in the form of S106 contributions, towards the Council's programmes to reduce car travel and enhance connectivity by sustainable transport modes throughout the town centre. The travel plan incorporates the needs of businesses, residents, retail and leisure users to help reduce the cumulative impact of these developments on the surrounding road network.
- 3.32 It is also essential that any development proposals give careful consideration to the need for emergency vehicle access, waste/recycling collection and appropriate servicing and delivery areas. All development should work to the principles defined in the Council's Design Guide Note DGN1: Parking & Servicing with particular attention to the relevant sections covering Emergency Access, Waste & Recycling Collection, Servicing & Delivery, Turning Areas and Design Vehicles and Swept Paths.

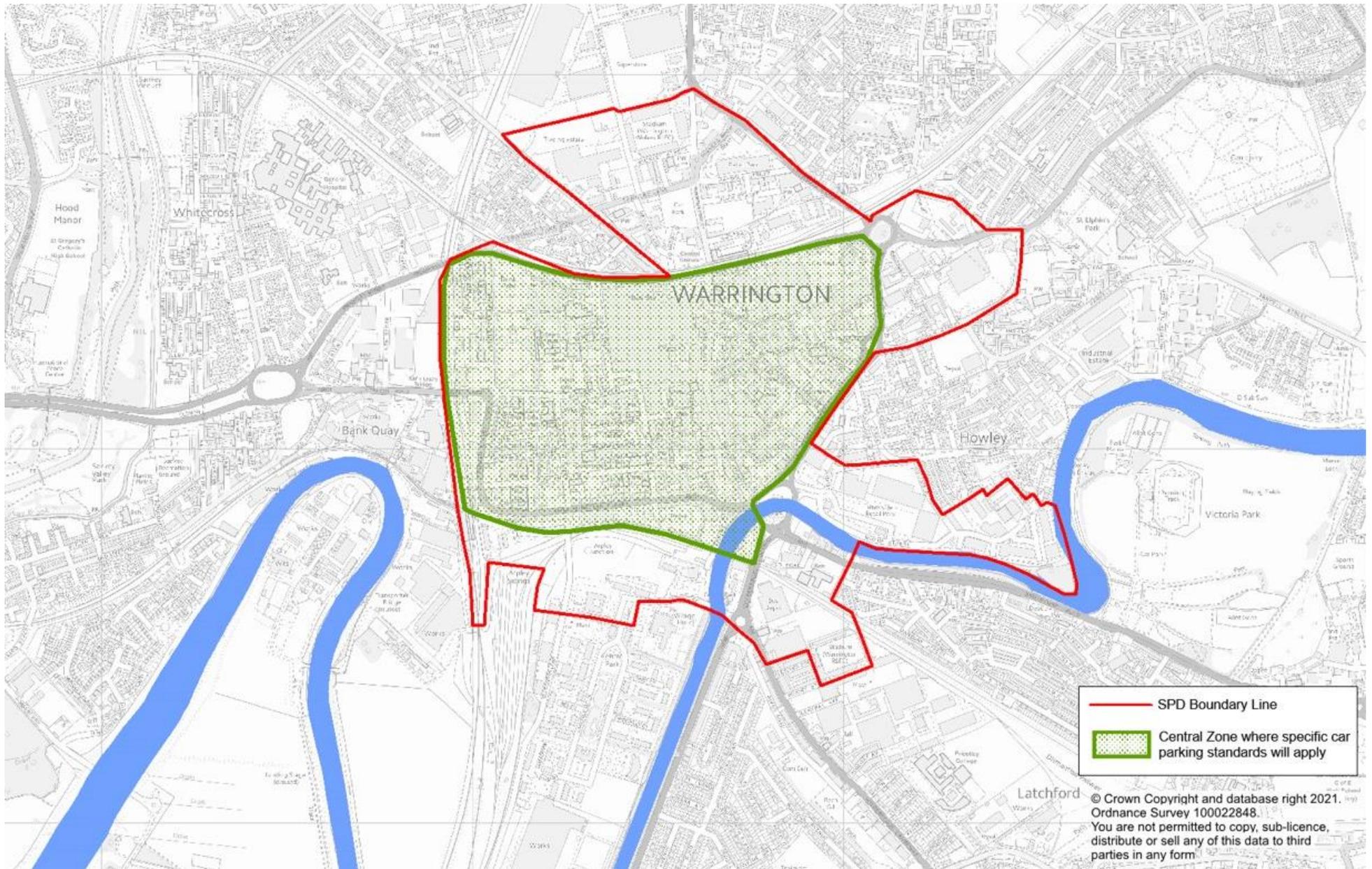


Figure 10. Car-free proposal areas

## TS5 Maximising the River Mersey as a Place Making Feature.

### Summary Principles:

1. Development along the frontage of the river should improve access to the river with new green links that can combine to form a linear park alongside the River Mersey and connect the green spaces that surround the town centre. This should be realised within development as well as through contributions made by developers as detailed in the Planning Obligations section of this SPD.
2. Developments should also positively address the river, providing active frontage along it.
3. Developments should support the delivery of sustainable transport connections to the river.



The River Mersey

- 3.33 The history and development of Warrington is intrinsically linked to the River Mersey as a major crossing point. As the town has over the centuries expanded and urbanised the Mersey has become more important. The river's development as major navigable waterway being an important factor in 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialisation of the town.
- 3.34 The river today is a vastly underutilised feature that is hidden from those in the town centre. It interacts most closely with the town centre in bends of the river to the west of Bank Quay Station, where industrial uses and the rail station separate the river from the town centre, and at the Southern Gateway of the town centre where, although closer and more visible, the river is not easily accessible to pedestrians.
- 3.35 Improving access to the west of Bank Quay relies upon the future regeneration of key sites along the riverside including Warrington Bank Quay Station which will change with the arrival of HS2 and the Northern Powerhouse Rail project. Both have medium to long-term timeframes and have an important role in enabling better access to the river Mersey from the town centre. Future regeneration in this area should not only include development that maximises the amenity of the river but should also improve access to the river from the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.36 The development of sites adjacent to the river is encouraged subject to compliance with National and Local Planning Policy on flood risk. Riverside design should maximise aspects to the river addressing the river positively at ground level through the maximisation of active frontage and the inclusion of green riverbank walks to create safe and attractive places for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.37 This SPD supports the 2020 Town Centre Masterplan proposals for 'Rediscovering the River' and at the Southern Gateway there is the opportunity to deliver the aims of the masterplan in the short term.

Improving access to the northern bank of the river would assist in connecting sites to the south of Wilson Patten Street. In the longer-term links along the river should be sought from Wharf Street to Victoria Park.

- 3.38 New traffic free links to the River Mersey should be provided that can combine to create a linear green walk alongside the river. These links should also seek to connect the green spaces that surround the town centre to create the 'circular parklands' aspiration highlighted in the 2020 masterplan. These links should be as green as possible to maximise the well-being benefit of them for people, creating safe and attractive areas by the river Mersey, during both day and night, to encourage sustained activity alongside it in the future.
- 3.39 Works to improve sustainable transport connections across the bridges that cross the river including new pedestrian and cycle only bridges will improve connections to the riverbank and allow views to the river from them. These works are referenced within the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan alongside other environmental improvements which improve access to the river. Developments will be expected to support their implementation through provision of S106 contributions.
- 3.40 Improving access to the River Mersey will have long-term benefits for the town centre. The river is an important natural amenity which can deliver well-being benefits for people who can interact with it. The river also has an important place making role to play where it can contribute to the uniqueness of Warrington making the town an enjoyable and memorable place to be.

TS6. Consider the Size and Profile of the Roofscape of any Proposed Development and Ensure that it positively enhances the Existing Character of Warrington.

**Summary Principles:**

1. Roofscapes should be considered in context to promote visual cohesiveness across the town centre. Applicants should evidence this process within information supporting applications to the Council.
2. The surviving character of Warrington's historic, pre-war urban fabric should be reinforced through roofscapes of any proposed new buildings or conversions/ alterations of existing properties.
3. Large, flat and mono-pitched forms will not be permitted where they conflict with the historic roofscapes of the town centre.
4. New developments should take advantage of opportunities to provide accommodation within roof spaces, including amenity accommodation and green features to promote biodiversity in the town centre.
5. Conversions of listed, locally listed and other buildings that are in or adjacent to conservation areas should have regard to the visual appearance and impact of proposals on the roofscape of the surrounding setting and should enhance and reinforce the historic appearance of them.



The Blue Bell, Horsemarket Street

- 3.41 Roofscape plays an important role in how we view and experience a place, in particular from medium and long distances where the size and profile of roofscapes can have a relatively pronounced impact upon townscape.
- 3.42 In Warrington, the historic street lay out and building proportions (urban grain) was disrupted during the twentieth century with buildings that included larger footprints and subsequent larger roofscapes. Warrington's landscape is such that the roofscape of the town centre is particularly visible when approached from the south. This means that at an important gateway entry point into the town centre these larger roofscapes can have a negative impact, more so when they are flat, mono-pitched or include large planes.
- 3.43 The historic fabric of Warrington is comprised of small to medium footprint buildings set at a relatively low height with pitched roof profiles. Subtle variations in roof form, pitch and material provide visual interest whilst maintaining a sense of cohesiveness. This subtle variation of roofscape contributes importantly to the character of Warrington and the stepping of roofscape contributes to the look and pattern of streets and spaces.
- 3.44 Proposals that do not properly consider the visual impact of their roofscape risk providing incongruous additions to the townscape that could negatively impact upon historic roofscapes and detract from the attractiveness of the wider town centre.
- 3.45 Moving forward, building proposals should be aware of the impact of their roofscape on the townscape of the town centre. During the design of proposals proper consideration should be given to the design of the roofscape, including size, form, and materiality. Roofscapes also offer the opportunity for integrating accommodation, including residential facilities that can be both internal and external, benefitting from good views and good natural daylighting. Proposals for the use of roofscapes for external licensed

areas associated with restaurants, bars and clubs should be aware of possible impacts on surrounding and nearby residential amenity. Proper consideration should be given to design and acoustic mitigation.

- 3.46 Proposals should also be aware of their immediate neighbours in the locality and respond appropriately to promote the surviving character of Warrington. This could include variations in roofscape which in turn provides visual interest whilst contributing to the townscape and sense of place.



## TS7 The Human Scale and Taller Buildings

### Summary Principles:

1. Developments should be people-focused and properly consider how pedestrian and cyclists will move in-and-around any buildings. The street level should be animated and engaging for pedestrians and appropriate consideration should be given to how buildings will be accessed safely.
2. The general datum of building heights across the Town Centre is 3-5 storeys.
3. A building will be classed as a tall building where it is significantly higher in scale than the buildings within its locale and/or it is a building which significantly changes the skyline.
4. Any taller buildings proposed will need to be designed and justified with regard to their setting and the height of surrounding buildings. Proximity and relationship to heritage assets will also be a consideration and applicants should reference Historic England's Tall Building Advice Note 4 and follow its guidance, in particular section 4, 'Making a Planning Application.'
5. Significant buildings of height that relate to key gateways and along the A49 may be considered. This may be between 10 and 12 storeys at the identified key gateways and up to 8 storeys along the A49 corridor, however reference should be made to the guidance at the neighbourhood scale for locations where these buildings may be considered appropriate and applicants must still justify any proposals for such buildings based on contextual appraisal and strong design rationale.



Springfield Street, Warrington town centre

- 3.47 Warrington is a town rather than city, and it should allow a person walking to comfortably cross it. This human scale of the town centre should be maintained and be reflected in the future development of the town. The design of higher density buildings and their frontages and arrangement should be done with the human/people scale as the starting point.
- 3.48 Developments should consider how people will move through the town and how they will experience buildings and spaces when on foot or cycling. This should start with consideration of the footprint and massing of buildings and how people will move in-and-around the buildings and the spaces that are created between them. The enclosing of streets and spaces should be related to pedestrian movement with the widths of streets and the scale of spaces providing a comfortable and safe place for people.
- 3.49 The height of buildings has an important role to play in achieving people based scale of development in the town centre. Developments that are taller than the buildings within their locality and/or which will significantly change the skyline should be classified as tall buildings.
- 3.50 Taller buildings have a place in Warrington town centre but buildings closer to the scale of the historic urban fabric, which is around 3-5 storeys are better for the creation of the scale and width of streets and spaces that people will be most comfortable in. The streets and spaces created by future development should be pleasant places for people to exist in throughout the year and should not be overshadowed and overborne by new and existing development. An applicant will need to provide convincing justification, taking into account all relevant design principles set out in this SPD, that increased height above 3-5 storey level is acceptable.
- 3.51 The Council recognises that there are areas of the town centre where tall buildings are more likely to be acceptable. As a guide, this

includes the A49 corridor that runs north/ south along the eastern periphery of the town centre and to the northern side of the River Mersey at Wharf Street where up to 8 storeys of development may be appropriate. Taller buildings of circa. 10-12 storeys may be appropriate within the identified key gateway areas where they have a role as both positive threshold markers to the town centre as well aiding navigation for those traversing the town centre on foot and are properly justified through contextual analysis.

3.52 This guidance does not seek to prohibit developments that are higher than these stated scales, however it serves to advise applicants where they are seeking an alternative approach that they will need to provide justification for their proposals.

3.53 The storey heights suggested along the A49 corridor and within identified key gateway areas are indicative and proposals that meet these heights will not automatically be permissible. In addition, they are also not a maximum height of development and are provided as a starting point for an applicant-led, pre-application process where the robust justification for a tall building should be reached. Historic England provide guidance for applicants seeking to make a planning application for a tall building within their Advice Note 4, Tall Buildings, which should be followed.

#### [Historic England - Tall Buildings: Advice Note 4](#)

3.54 This process should involve agreement of key views with Warrington Borough Council and any other relevant consultees such as Historic England on an application-by-application basis during the pre-application stage to test appropriate heights and their impact upon conservation areas, listed buildings and other heritage assets. The impact of proposed tall buildings also needs to be assessed upon the overall townscape and the roofscape of the town centre during this process, including from the southern approach to the town centre where large portions of the town centre are visible.

3.55 Tall buildings should be of an excellent architectural quality and applicants should be able to demonstrate at the pre-application stage that proposals are credible and deliverable technically and financially to ensure that they are not diluted post-planning. Tall buildings should also respond positively to their surroundings, including other tall structures and topographical features with consideration of how they gather as clusters, where relevant.

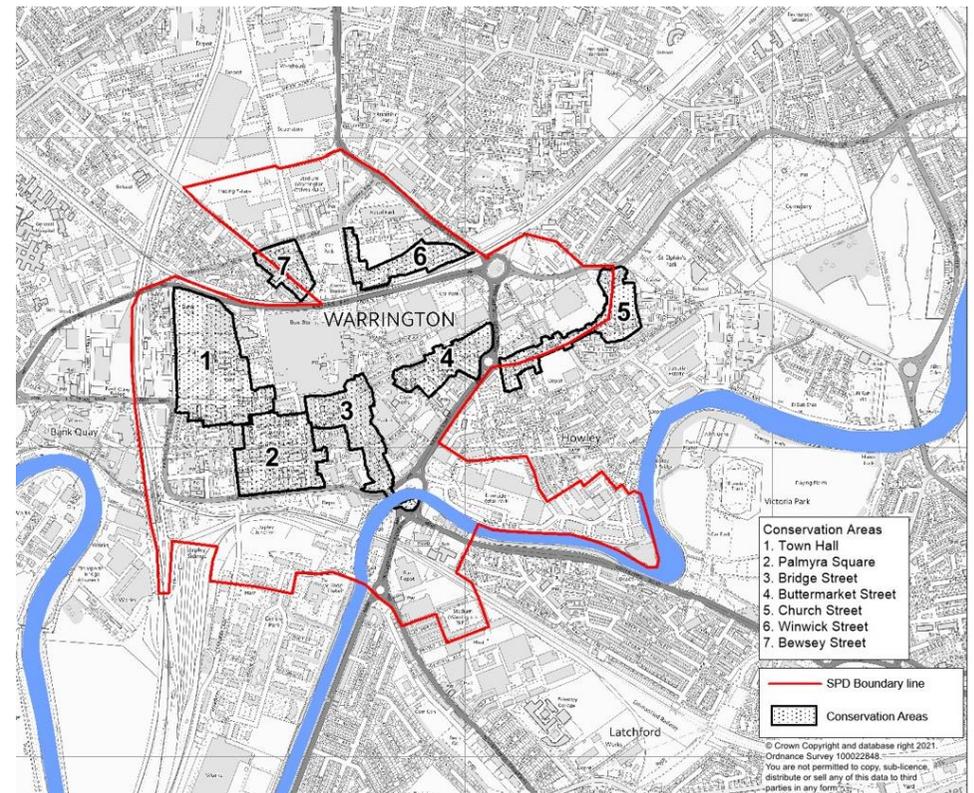


Figure 11. Town Centre Conservation Areas

## TS8. Appropriately consider the Heritage Assets and Historic Street Patterns of the Town Centre.

### Summary Principles:

1. Applicants should consider how development proposals impact the listed structures, Conservation Areas and other heritage assets including any archaeological remains in the town centre from the start of the design process and explicitly record this process in information supporting any planning application.
2. Developments located both inside and outside of conservation areas can impact upon the conservation areas and should enhance them, minimising and mitigating any potential negative impacts.
3. Impact on conservation areas and the buildings they contain is greater for major development proposals and taller buildings, even with increased distance. Careful assessments should be made in any design review prior to discussions with the Council.
4. Conversions of listed buildings, locally listed buildings plus any partial redevelopment on site of listed buildings with new annexes or new building should provide a comprehensive assessment of historic site, setting and building features.
5. The historic street pattern that characterises the western half of the town centre is one that prioritises pedestrian movements. This should be replicated and enhanced in any new development proposals across the whole of the town centre.

- 3.56 There are six conservation areas located within Warrington Town Centre (in addition to the Church Street Conservation Area to the immediate east of the centre) for which the Borough Council provides guidance leaflets alongside conservation area appraisals. The conservation area guidance information and associated management plans may be reviewed and updated in the future but should be

referenced by those preparing development proposals. The conservation areas in the town centre are:

- Bewsey Street
- Bridge Street
- Buttermarket Street
- Palmyra Square
- Town Hall
- Winwick Street



Warrington Town Hall

3.57 These six areas account for a significant proportion of the town centre. Those bringing forward development proposals both within and outside of the conservation areas should be able to demonstrate a design rationale for their proposals that is derived from a rigorous contextual analysis that includes, where relevant, the information and guidance provided within the Conservation Area Appraisals.

3.58 Development proposals outside of conservation areas can still impact upon the character, appearance and setting of them and this is true for the majority of the town centre because of the geographic reach of the six combined areas. This potential for impact is increased for developments that are located adjacent or close to conservation areas as well as significant development proposals and taller buildings that may be visible at a greater distance from them.

3.59 The information within the appraisals provides a good starting point for those designing in the town centre. The Council intends to update the Conservation Area Appraisals but until that point the existing documents should be referenced. Development proposals within the town centre are required to have properly assessed their impact upon the listed structures within it and to take account of any archaeological remains. Applicants bringing forward development proposals adjacent to conservation areas should assess any impact on adjacent listed structures and archaeological remains and undertake assessments.

3.60 The urban grain (lay out and proportions) of Warrington Town Centre has two quite distinct characters that are broadly separated by Bridge Street/Legh Street (see figure 2) where:

- To the west, there is a strong urban grain that is derived from the surviving historic building fabric of the town centre.
- To the east, the urban grain is fractured from the impact of development during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.



River of Life, Bridge Street

3.61 The western half of Warrington Town Centre sees much of its historic urban grain retained. In the areas within this half the urban grain has a rigour to it. Streets are ordered with an established hierarchy which because of its historical development was designed for people to walk through rather than travelling by car. The resulting fine-grain street pattern provides buildings of relatively modest footprints and massing that is supported with well-proportioned open spaces at both Palmyra Square and Bank Park, with which the Town Hall is set.

3.62 This fine-grained and ordered pattern of streets and spaces makes this part of Warrington town centre potentially very liveable as an area that was designed for people, rather than cars to exist within and navigate through.

3.63 The eastern half of the town centre has seen much disruption to the historic urban fabric during a period where development was focused upon the movement of vehicles rather than people. This has led to the historic, finer urban grain being replaced with a wider and much more disjointed layout of buildings and streets. This occurred as this half of the town centre was forced to accommodate the results of vehicle-prioritised planning that included wide carriageways, roundabouts, wide sweeps of road and creation of large surface car parking. The coarseness of this grain is further reinforced with large-format retail buildings that characterise the eastern half of the town centre. Similarly the Golden Square shopping centre that has a large footprint that covers an area which historically was broken down into several smaller development blocks and at lower height.

3.64 This vehicular-focused development makes for an environment that is not attractive for pedestrians. Wide carriageways, poor sightlines and insecure spaces are not comfortable places for people to exist and navigate through.

3.65 In moving Warrington away from a town centre that prioritises vehicles towards one that is pedestrian focused it will be necessary to address the legacy of a coarser urban grain that exists in the eastern half of the town centre. The aim will be to create a strong street pattern that is:

- arranged logically,
- includes a hierarchy of streets,
- is pedestrian focused, and
- is easily navigable establishing a framework from which a great place can develop.

3.66 Delivering a strong street pattern is of fundamental importance to delivering liveability because it enables people to move comfortably through a place, establishing a positive relationship between person and place and encourages future repeated use.



## 4. Neighbourhood Scale Design Guidance

### Overview

- 4.1 Within this section the guidance references the development quarters of the town centre and how neighbourhoods can be identified in these areas. The design principles are set out to support the strengthening of neighbourhood identity in development proposals and underline the need to reinforce a people-based approach. This allows proper connections across localities, the visual identity of places and the consideration of all resident and visitor populations to ensure community interaction and engagement. The establishment and fostering of communities is integral to humanising the town centre and making it a highly liveable and connected urban environment.

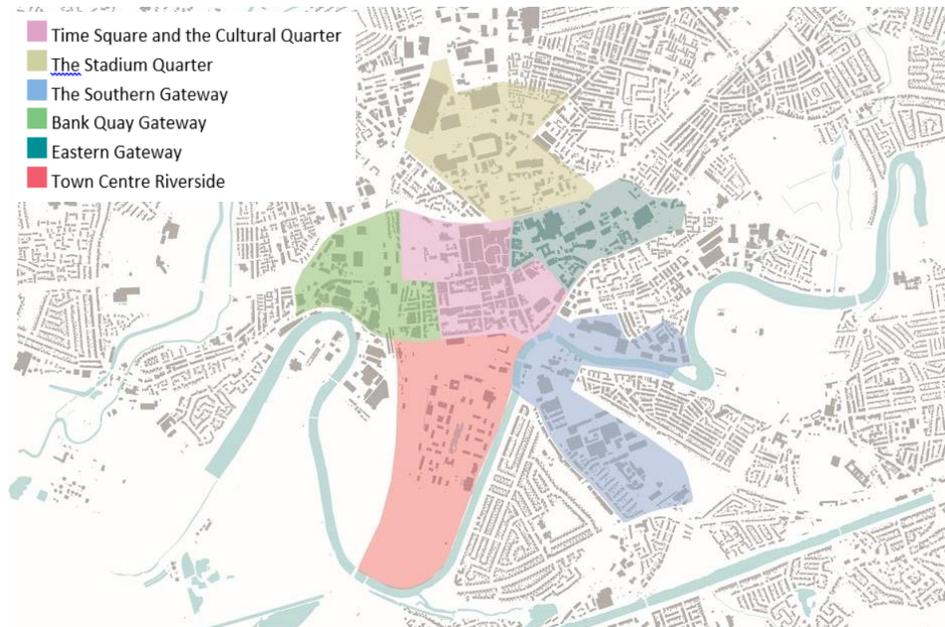


Figure 12. Warrington Master Plan Development Quarters



### NS1. Warrington Masterplan Development Quarter Ambitions

#### Summary principles:

Development proposals should seek to support and strengthen neighbourhood identity in the Development Quarters identified in the Warrington Masterplan. The following Development Quarters (shown in Fig 12) have been identified:

- Time Square and the Cultural Quarter
- The Stadium Quarter
- The Southern Gateway
- Bank Quay Gateway
- Eastern Gateway
- Warrington Waterfront (within the Town Centre SPD Boundary)
- Town Centre Riverside Opportunity Area



Warrington Market at Time Square

## Time Square and the Cultural Quarter

4.2 Time Square and the Cultural Quarter are at the core of the town centre and its major retailing, leisure and commercial activity. It is also covers where development has focused from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most recently it has seen the major regeneration scheme at Time Square come forward. This includes new Council Offices, new leisure uses and a new premises for the indoor market. The Council's Town Centre Master Plan sees this area as key to the regeneration of the town with residential living, cultural facilities, office uses, leisure uses and small business uses all promoted. The expectation is that development of all types in this area should be of a quality commensurate with expectations laid out in the Masterplan. Those bringing forward proposals should therefore address the following guidelines:

- The area will see an increase in town centre living in the future. Commercial development including new hotel and leisure uses are also expected. Applications for new development and conversions are expected to reference the guidance in this SPD. Of particular relevance are the requirements for dwellings in the urban block design, guidance on dwelling size, treatments to street frontages, quality of amenity for residents and appropriate access to and provision of waste and recycling facilities. When considering amenity careful consideration of the potentially conflicting needs of activities (retail/ commercial/ entertainment/ leisure/ residential) will need to be assessed to ensure that a high quality environment can be achieved for both proposed and existing activities without detrimental impacts due to the proximity to one another.
- The area contains four conservation areas where the approach to development is expected to reflect sensitivities to the historic environment and the setting of nationally and locally listed buildings.

- Development of sensitive sites such as, Garven Place and the Cabinet Works, whether it takes the form of redevelopment or the conversion of existing buildings must seek to enhance place and promote mixed uses including residential, business spaces, co-working space and any supporting commercial activity.
- Any development at Garven Place should relate to the existing built form of the Town Hall complex in terms of both scale and massing, respect the Town Hall's setting and enhance the pedestrian route that exists between the Golden Square Shopping Centre and the Town Hall.
- The buildings that front onto Mersey Street are architecturally poor with minimal presence onto the road. New development should seek to provide high quality buildings that provide an active frontage onto Mersey Street and enhance the street scene.
- Bridge Street and lower Bridge Street in particular suffers from high vacancy rates, the mediocre quality of some of its ground floor frontages and an over concentration of food and drink uses. Development should seek to increase the range of uses, make use of the upper floors of buildings and take opportunities to improve the appearance of the shop frontages, particularly by replacing the presence of solid security shutters with more appropriate alternatives as specified in the Council's Design and Construction SPD.
- In keeping with the objectives of the Council's LTP4, and recent studies such as the FLMTM, the priority given to pedestrians and cyclists must be reflected in proposals coming forward that impact directly on the road hierarchy. Financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements may be considered in lieu of direct works.



Bridge Street



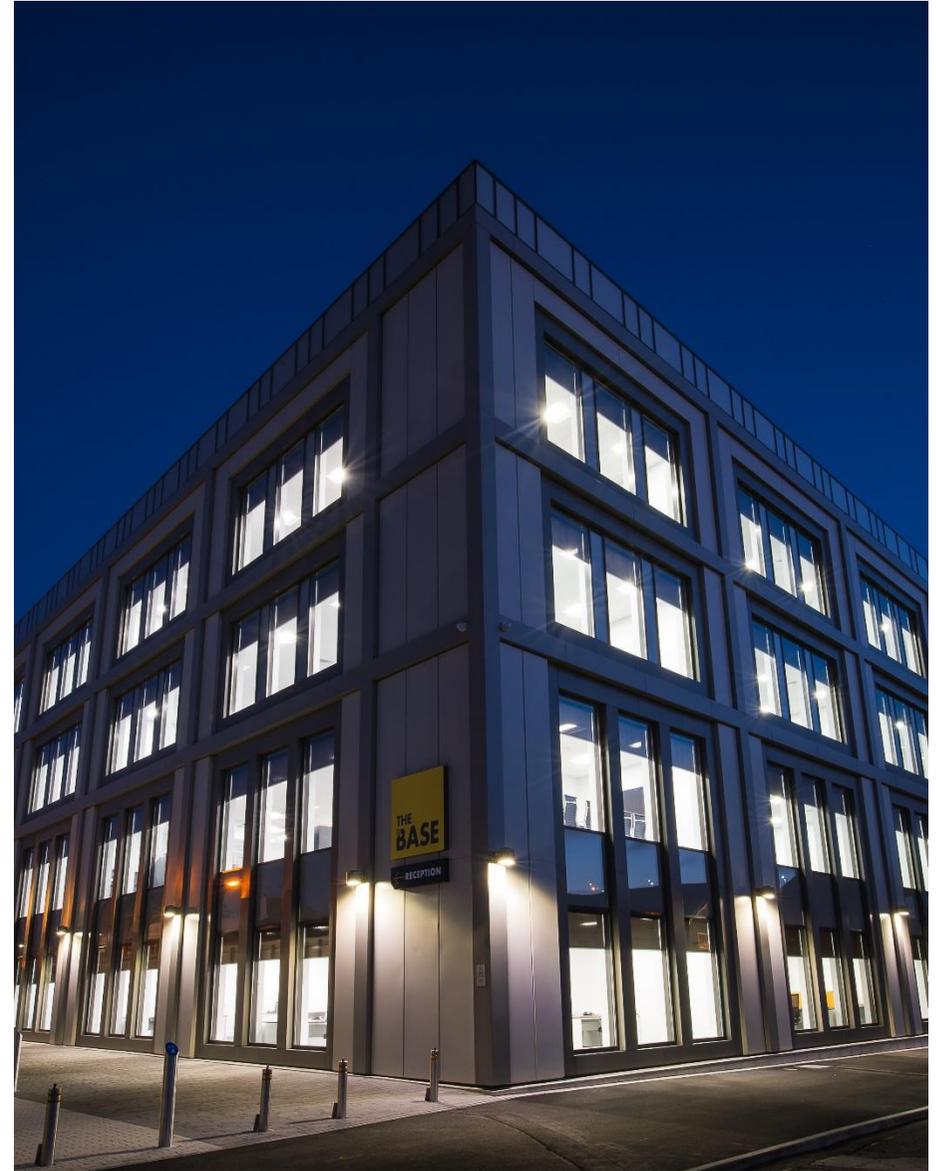
Pyramid and Parr Hall

- Reduced or zero car parking in new developments as well as rationalised on-street parking in this area is promoted and financial contributions will be expected towards the Town Centre Travel Plan to improve sustainable transportation in the town centre.
- The area is the hub of the town's cultural and community facilities including: The Pyramid, the Parr Hall and numerous restaurants/bars in Palmyra Square, the new indoor marketplace and Time Square which includes a cinema, Council offices and restaurant/bars. Linkage to the town's cultural and community facilities should be promoted through new developments with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists. Proposals for residential development in this area should take note of existing uses and consider whether residential in a particular location is suitable. For example, the impact that commercial uses may have on residential amenity at peak times of operation and any open air facilities for customers that exist or could be introduced.
- The area contains recently enhanced formal urban green spaces at Bank Park and Queens Gardens together with the creation of a new public square in the Time Square development. New development should take advantage of these public spaces complementing them with new green spaces and improving access to them and linkages between them.

## The Stadium Quarter

4.3 The area consists of a mix of uses, including: industrial, transport hubs (Central station and the bus station), offices, education, trading centres, a large supermarket and the Warrington Wolves Rugby League stadium. The Masterplan's ambitions focus on capitalising on the area's good transport links to help significantly increase the residential offer, whilst enhancing the commercial/office provision and improving the cohesion of the public realm in the area. The area is currently largely a vehicle-dominated environment with poor street presentation. There are a number of sites currently coming forward for development in the area and any development proposals should consider the following design principles to ensure that regeneration ambitions are met:

- New development should include: the provision of active frontages; ensure integration of a human scale to proposed developments; and enable repair and reinforcement of the urban grain by providing enclosed spaces and design of street vistas that feel safe and reinforce residential amenity.
- The sites identified in the Masterplan offer the opportunity for taller buildings, including the areas at Pinners Brow/Silver Street and the west side of Winwick Road (Wireworks). Reference to the tall buildings guidance in this SPD should be made and supported with a robust justification for the proposed height as required by this guidance.



The Base

- This area contains the Winwick Street Conservation Area and adjoins the Bewsey Street Conservation Area. Significant listed buildings within the area include: St Ann's Church, The Wheatsheaf PH; the Boultings; the Kings Head PH; the Three Pigeons PH; and the former Cheshire Lines Warehouse. Reference to design principles for any development impacting on historic buildings and environments in this SPD must be made together with relevant conservation area guidance.
- In keeping with the objectives of the council's LTP4, and recent studies such as the FLMTM, the priority given to pedestrians and cyclists must be reflected in proposals coming forward that impact directly on the road hierarchy. Financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements may be considered in lieu of direct works.
- In this area reduced car parking in new developments as well as rationalised on street parking is promoted and financial contributions will be expected towards the Town Centre Travel Plan to improve sustainable transportation in the Town Centre.
- This is a particularly harsh urban environment that does not contain any urban green space/street trees. Developments should include provision of private and public amenity space for residents within their boundaries and take opportunities to improve links to existing green spaces elsewhere in the town centre and the greening of streets. A new area of public space should be provided within the vicinity of Central Station.

## The Southern Gateway

4.4 The Southern Gateway quarter offers a major riverside regeneration opportunity. As the key gateway from the south, creating views to the river is vitally important as this will reinforce a sense of arrival

into the town. The Town Centre Masterplan envisages the water frontage as an opportunity to create new, high-quality riverside residential development with active green corridors and spaces along the river. There is also the ambition to mark this entrance in the town centre with buildings of architectural merit that could be at height. This SPD supports the implementation of these ambitions and the following principles for development in this area must be considered when bringing forward proposals:

- A new riverfront commercial area fronting onto the south side of Bridgefoot.
- The creation of new residential communities along Wilderspool Causeway and along the northern river frontage, where a variety of residential typologies (houses and apartments) will be supported; any commercial development should be ancillary to the new residential development.
- The provision of a major new area of waterfront public open space, incorporating the under-utilised Marshall Gardens; improving the setting of the cenotaph and creating a riverside walkway/cycleway that links the Bank Quay area to Victoria Park. Proposals along the river front must allow for access to the riverbank and allow for footpaths and a cycle way. Contributions to support green space and footway/cycleway improvements will be sought through Section 106 Agreements.
- Proposals for access to a development in this area should prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and support the aspirations of the FLMTM by creating direct and active travel friendly townscape linkages to destinations in the town centre and surrounding leisure/cultural opportunities. Financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements may be considered in lieu of direct works.

- Reduced parking in new developments as well as reduced on street parking in this area is promoted and financial contributions will be expected towards the Town Centre Travel Plan to improve sustainable transportation in the town centre.
- Developments that compromise delivery of strategic improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on crossings over the river Mersey will not be permitted.
- Tall buildings may be considered suitable that relate to the north of the Gateway. Design assessments should be made in line with guidance in this SPD and analysis of views should be undertaken. Proposals that obscure important views to the south of the town centre will not be permitted.
- The Council will bring forward more detailed specific guidance for this area in the form of an area masterplan in due course.

## Bank Quay Gateway

4.5 The focus and identity of Bank Quay is the railway station which forms part of the West Coast mainline connection between London and Scotland. As a main entrance and key gateway by train into the town it is currently sited in an area that is dominated by older industrial development including the Unilever site and the rail lines and supporting sidings/facilities. This area faces older town centre residential property, where residents have a poor outlook and the amenity of the area is further exacerbated by traffic that results in reduced air quality and excessive noise. It is important that proposals coming forward have significant regard to existing amenity issues for residents as part of the regeneration approach. The Town Centre Masterplan identifies the ambitions of the Council to support the redevelopment of the station itself, potentially including a HS2 stop, rail hub and Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals. Also identified is

the opportunity to make the Station and surrounding area a significant entrance and arrival point into the town with proposals for a mixture of uses including hotels, office, and hospitality.

Development proposals should therefore:

- Seek to enhance access between proposed developments and the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists. S106 contributions will also be sought to support improved pedestrian and cyclist links, including linking the Bank Quay area through Bridgefoot to Victoria Park.
- Have regard to the impact of existing and potential rail lines on the amenity of any development proposals.
- Integrate a response to high road traffic volumes and associated poor air quality within any development proposals.
- Consider residential amenity for future occupants. This includes poor views/aspects and lack of private and communal amenity space in a development. Development will not be permitted where it will result in poor residential amenity for existing or future residents.
- Assess the height and context of any proposals adjacent to existing residential development and should provide an improvement in residential amenity where possible.
- Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and support the aspirations of the FLMTM by creating direct and active travel friendly townscape linkages to destinations in the town centre and surrounding leisure/cultural opportunities. Financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements may be considered in lieu of direct works.
- Reduce car parking in new developments and rationalise on street parking in accordance with the Townscape principles of the central area. Financial contributions will be expected towards the Town Centre Travel Plan to improve sustainable transportation in the town centre.



St Elphin's Church

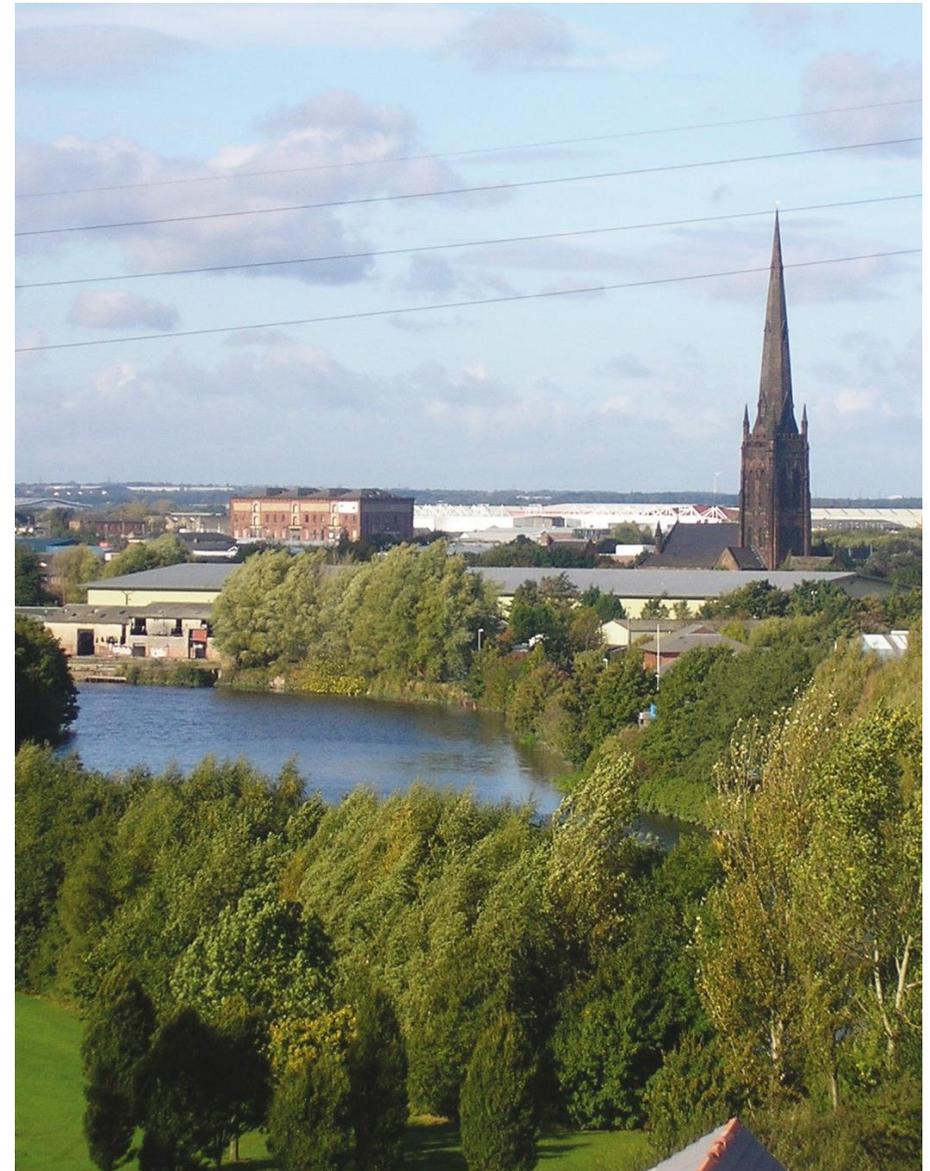
## Eastern Gateway

4.6 The eastern access to the town centre is currently dominated by roads, roundabouts and poor 60s, 70s, and 80s commercial development. This has a negative impact on the presentation of the town and on quality heritage assets such as St Elphin's Church and the surrounding conservation area. The Town Centre Masterplan identifies the opportunity in this area to create a new residential area adjoining the town centre. A number of sites are envisaged to come forward in the short to medium term, including the former Council offices at New Town House together with elements of the existing retail park at the Cockhedge Centre, though this will require rationalisation of the existing retail offer. The FLMTM contains proposals for the roundabouts and road priorities in this area, which must be referenced and considered in future development proposals. Residential development must reference neighbourhood, urban block and dwelling guidance, including that on tall buildings. In summary:

- A variety of residential typologies (houses and apartments) will be supported. Retail and commercial should be ancillary to new residential development.
- Design of new residential blocks must have regard to the provision of active frontages, integration of a human scale to proposed developments, the repair and reinforcement of the urban grain by providing enclosed spaces and the design of street vistas that feel safe and reinforce residential amenity.
- The former Council offices at New Town House together with part of the retail park at the Cockhedge Centre are expected to come forward for redevelopment. Taller buildings on this site may be permissible subject to justification as identified by the Townscape principles. Development proposals should incorporate new green space on the site.
- Proposals for access to developments in this area should prioritise pedestrians and cyclist movements by creating

townscape linkages to destinations in the town centre and surrounding leisure and cultural opportunities. Section 106 contributions will be accepted in lieu of direct works, where appropriate.

- Developments that compromise delivery of strategic improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on identified routes and roundabouts as proposed in the FLMTM will not be permitted.
- In this area reduced or zero car parking in new developments as well as rationalised on street parking is promoted. Financial contributions will be expected towards the Town Centre Travel Plan to improve sustainable transport in the town centre and also support streetscape proposals for the town centre as proposed in the FLMTM.
- Development proposals must consider and assess the impact of any proposals on the Church Street and Buttermarket Street Conservation Areas and any nationally or locally listed buildings in the area.
- Consideration must be given to noise and air quality. Development will not be permitted where residential development will result in poor residential amenity for future occupants, this includes poor views/aspects and lack of private and communal amenity space in a development. Neither will development be permitted that would unduly restrict the operations of existing businesses/uses.
- The area contains recently enhanced formal urban green spaces at St Elphin's Park. New development should complement existing green space with new green space on site including the provision of private amenity space for residents within a development's boundaries. The improvement of links between existing green spaces elsewhere in the town centre will be promoted through sustainable transport modes and greening of the streets as set out in the FLMTM.



A View of Warrington Town Centre



River Mersey

### Warrington Waterfront (within Town Centre SPD area)

- 4.7 This area which is identified as part of Warrington Waterfront in the Town Centre Masterplan sits adjacent to the river Mersey as it weaves its way along the southern border of the town centre. Ambitions for this area include a new riverside park and riverside walk/cycle way, new residential development and improved connectivity into and across the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.8 Design principles that need to be considered for the wider Waterfront area and the development sites that sit within it are as follows:
- A variety of residential typologies (houses and apartments) will be supported. Retail and commercial uses should be ancillary to new residential development.
  - This area suffers from heavy traffic and resultant poor air quality which must be considered when putting together any development proposals.
  - Design of new residential blocks must have regard to the urban block scale design guidance. This includes the provision of active frontages, integration of a human scale to proposed developments, repair and reinforcement of the urban grain by providing enclosed spaces and the design of street vistas that feel safe and reinforce residential amenity.
  - Proposals along the riverfront must allow for access to the riverbank and allow sufficient space for separate footpaths and cycle ways. Contributions to support green space and footway/cycleway improvements will be sought through Section 106 Agreements.
  - Proposals for access to a development in this area should prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and support the implementation of the FLMTM by creating townscape linkages to

destinations in the town centre and surrounding leisure and cultural opportunities (both existing and proposed).

- Developments that compromise delivery of strategic improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on crossings over the river Mersey will not be permitted.
- Where tall buildings are proposed reference must be made to guidance in this SPD as to where it is allowable to consider tall buildings and what assessments will be required in connection with any planning proposals. Buildings that obscure the view of the town centre roofscape from the south and other identified important views will not be permitted.
- Reduced or zero car parking in new developments as well as rationalised on-street parking is expected in areas identified as falling into the Central Zone. Financial contributions will be expected towards the Town Centre Travel Plan to improve sustainable transport in the town centre and support the FLMTM streetscape proposals for the town centre.
- The creation of green space linkages along the river and improvement of the existing Marshall Gardens and its integration with future riverside development is prioritised and s106 contributions will be sought to support these improvements.

### Town Centre Riverside Opportunity Area

- 4.9 To facilitate development and to strengthen the regeneration of the southern approach to the Town Centre a key opportunity area has been identified along the riverside, which is identified on Figure 13. This area includes sites that lie across three of the identified development quarters. The development of these areas together will have an increased impact and for this reason a masterplan will be prepared to guide toward a preferred development layout.



# NEIGHBOURHOOD QUARTERS SCALE

## Warrington Waterfront/ Southern Gateway Opportunity Area

- Stadium to river enhanced north-south connection with priority for walking, cycling and public transport.
- Victoria Park to Bank Quay enhanced east-west connection.
- Potential to review traffic routing on north/south movements.
- Street pattern extension.
- Active residential edge at road.
- Linear park buffer to train tracks linking to the river.
- Enhance the river edge.
- Enhance and extend the park.
- Gateway buildings with storey heights of up to 10-12 storeys around gateway graduating back to the 3-5 storey height of the town centre.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle accessibility and junction redesign.

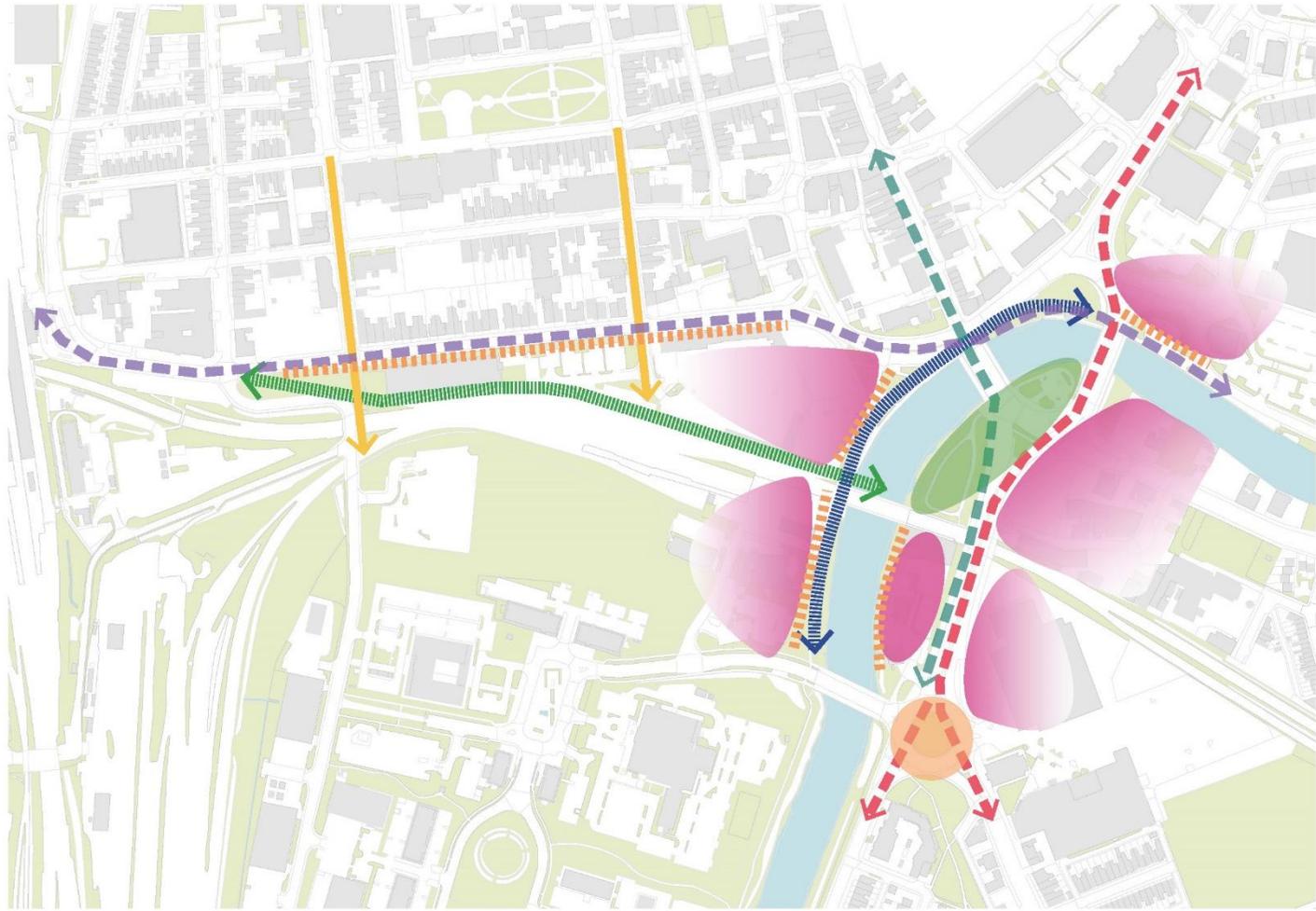


Figure 13. Town Centre Riverside Opportunity Area

## General Neighbourhood Design Requirements

### NS2. Visual Consistency (Building Materials, Windows, Roofscape) to Achieve a Cohesive Pattern of Development and give Identity to Neighbourhood Areas

#### Summary Principles:

1. Development proposals should respond to the neighbourhood within which they are located, as well the wider town centre, to ensure that people can identify where they are in the town centre. To achieve this visual consistency in proposals needs to be reinforced.
2. Neighbourhoods within the town centre will often include existing building fabric which should be appropriately considered and responded to.
3. When presenting development proposals for planning consideration, analysis of form, composition, scale, proportion, colour, tonality, materiality and texture in the context of the neighbourhood being designed within should be undertaken and recorded. Corresponding design proposals should enhance and improve neighbourhoods through achieving visual consistency with the environment of the town centre. Materials, building methods and details in the design should aim to enhance the local distinctiveness of an area. Where there is no or poor precedent set for specific types of materials to be used, a high quality area with a distinct character should be created, either from traditional or more modern materials. It is the degree to which any material is appropriate to its surroundings and its function that should determine its use.
4. Developments are not expected to duplicate existing structures but reference the positives of these in new developments. Specific detailing will be important in considering overall design such as window reveals, brickwork detailing and bonding. This should be expressed in proposals.

- 4.10 Identity of place encourages people to own and belong to a neighbourhood. Community is encouraged through the numerous daily social interactions between people within a neighbourhood. Places with a visual consistency are memorable and engender familiarity for people in them, reinforcing the positive relationship between the community and neighbourhood. It should be noted that visual consistency will only be positive if proposals are well designed in other ways too and designers should only seek to depart from visual consistency with existing context where the architectural quality of the building or buildings proposed allows alternatives. The predominant building material in Warrington is brick and this should be used rather than cladding, render or concrete as the main facing material. Pitched roofs are predominately covered in slates and this theme (of grey tiled roofs) should also be continued.
- 4.11 Landscape that is disjointed and fractured and then sits alongside competing buildings reduces the sense of place and identity and can result in a visual confusion for people. This in turn can result in an unsettling environment being created. Each development should have a limited palette of facing materials and colours, with interest created through detailing, with particular attention paid to windows and entrances.
- 4.12 Achieving visual consistency involves designers looking beyond the confines of their own proposals and at the overall setting and context within which they are designing. Robust and considered contextual analysis will be an essential starting point of any assessment process and will be required to be undertaken and recorded within information supporting any application for planning. Assessment should involve a judicious screening of context and end in tangible outcomes that extract the positive aspects of existing, successful aspects of Warrington's built environment whilst noting how negative aspects can be subsequently addressed.

4.13 Form, composition, scale, proportion, colour, tonality, materiality and texture are all important considerations in achieving visual consistency. Analysis of existing context and corresponding translation into development proposals under these headings should be undertaken by the applicants during the pre-application stage. This should then provide the basis of discussion and review for the pre-application stage with the Council. This process, and how it has manifested in design proposals, should be explicitly recorded within information supporting planning applications.

4.14 In addition to discussion with the Council during the pre-application stage on these design considerations it is expected that major applications will also be reviewed by the Places Matter Design Review Panel with applicants presenting information to the panel that includes this analysis and assessment sufficiently early in the pre-application process to allow for the incorporation of the panel's recommendations into proposals in advance of submission.

4.15 Visual consistency for Warrington should result in buildings and spaces that enhance and improve neighbourhood and:

- are evolved from, and are subsequently rooted in, the context of the town centre;
- will form distinctive and memorable places whilst remaining coherent;
- are harmonious across all aspects and scales of design; and
- will provide a positive visual and functional amenity for people.

### NS3. Create Clear Central Focal Points and Link to Existing and New Community Facilities and Open Space.

#### Summary Principles:

1. All developments within the town centre should consider how they link to publicly accessible open spaces and cultural facilities in the town centre and promote safe, sustainable access and use of them.
2. Major developments, which include the design of new buildings and the conversion of existing buildings should have regard to existing patterns of movement and should introduce new focal points/enhance existing focal points and gathering places.
3. Where publicly accessible open spaces and communal facilities are proposed they should be located to enable ease of access for as many people as possible.

4.16 Neighbourhoods are formed of communities of people. It is people that bring life and activity to neighbourhoods and places and sustain them with their daily interactions. For neighbourhoods to establish themselves as places for people and to flourish in the future, community facilities and spaces support the growth and strengthening of the community. This guidance will help strengthen both new and existing communities and help deliver the aspirations for neighbourhood improvements and connections set out in the Central 6 Masterplan.

4.17 All new developments should consider and enable good, safe and sustainable access to existing community and cultural facilities within the town centre. This should be done in a manner that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists, delivers or complements the proposals of the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan and maximises the incorporation of green infrastructure.

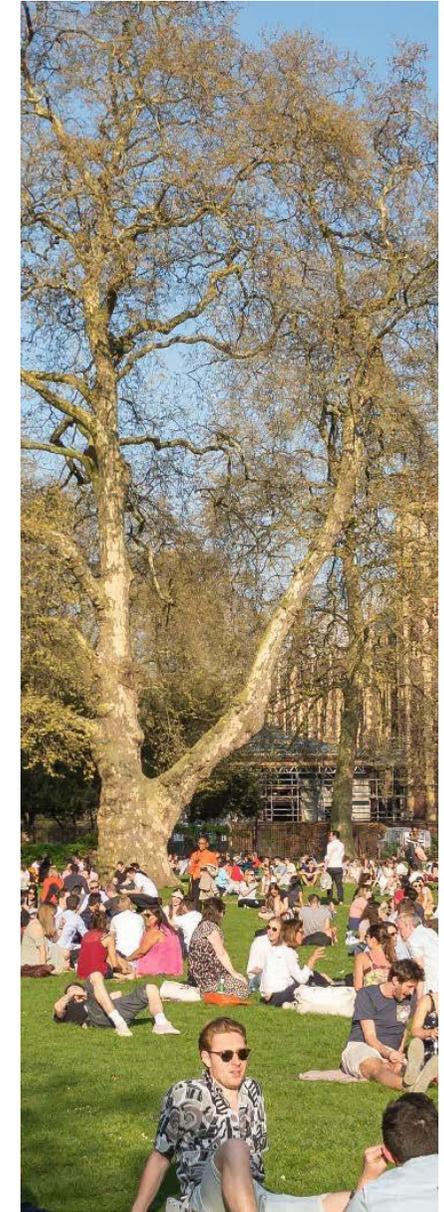
Developments should provide neighbourhoods with clear centres and focal points which could be manifested in a variety of ways. These could include public squares, greens, gardens, seating areas or monuments/public art, which all foster a sense of community and identity.

#### NS4. Make it Accessible with Multi-generational Appeal.

##### Summary Principles:

1. Buildings and spaces within neighbourhoods should facilitate the inclusion of all members of society and adopt inclusive access best principles.
2. Residential development proposals should support the diversification of residential and household types and tenures, creating multi-generational neighbourhoods within the town centre, including homes for families and older people.
3. The location of building entrances, communal facilities and other non-residential uses should be located to enable access by all and meet the requirements of the Equality Act, National Planning Policy Framework and Building Regulations as a minimum.

- 4.19 To secure the future sustainability and vitality of neighbourhoods within the town centre it is important that neighbourhoods are designed to appeal to as broad a spectrum of people as possible. The town centre can be somewhere that appeals to a range of different age groups, from those entering the property ladder through to those looking to downsize from a family home to something more aligned with their needs. Residential development proposals should provide this diversification of residential and household types to create multi-generational neighbourhoods within the town centre.



4.20 Making the town centre a place for families will be an important part of Warrington's future as a highly liveable environment. This needs to be supported within the inclusion of appropriately sized and designed dwellings. This can include apartments which should include private external amenity space and good access to other communal areas and are encouraged to be provided in more liveable formats, such as dual-aspect apartments arranged around a courtyard. Street level, duplex townhouse dwellings within apartment blocks can also act as a viable alternative to more traditional housing typologies, providing highly liveable dwellings, whilst delivering a more appropriate density for the town centre.

4.21 Appealing to this broad demographic will require a mix of residential types and within neighbourhoods. This approach is also important in preventing the creation of isolated pockets of residential developments, ensuring genuine neighbourhoods are being created.

4.22 Access into and around neighbourhoods should be planned to make access to and from buildings as easy and direct as possible. This must enable access that that is inclusive for all. Topography, surface treatments, lighting and planting are all design aspects that need proper consideration.

4.23 Building entrances should be clearly articulated and logically placed to make them easily identifiable and accessed as easily as possible for all. Similarly, communal and other non-residential uses such as commercial retail and leisure facilities that may be incorporated within development proposals and will enrich the experience of living within the neighbourhoods should also be easily accessible to all.

4.24 Meeting the requirements of the Building Regulations should be considered as a minimum benchmark with the Council encourages designers to maximise the integration of best practice inclusive design access measures within proposals.





## 5. Urban Block Scale Design Guidance

### Overview

- 5.1 The urban block design guidance has cascaded down from the town and neighbourhood scales. It sets out how development proposals should have regard to their setting, how they should secure high environmental standards and how quality buildings and good residential experience can be delivered. An Urban Block can include both new build developments and conversion of existing buildings.
- 5.2 This guidance is not exclusive to any single use, although specific use guidance is provided for residential uses which is then expanded with more detail in the dwelling scale design principles. This guidance should be referenced and incorporated by applicants bringing forward residential and mixed-use urban blocks.

#### Streetscape

1. SUDs/Green Infrastructure.
2. Road/Cycle Path.
3. Footpath.
4. Defensible Space.
5. Defined Entrance Threshold.
6. Celebrated Residential Entrance Doors.
7. Ground Floor Residential Windows; bays to be considered for passive observation and engagement with streetscape.

- Defined Threshold Space
- Defensible Space
- Celebrated Residential Entrance/Door
- Field of View from Bay Windows
- Footpath
- SUDs/Green Infrastructure
- Drainage
- Cycle Path/Road

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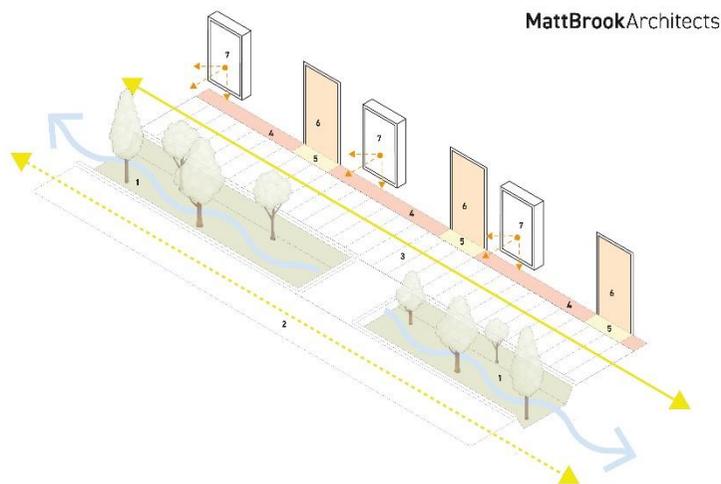


Figure 14. Streetscape/Active Street Frontages

### UB1. Plan the Ground Floor of Buildings to Maximise Active Street Frontages.

#### Summary Principles:

1. Developments should provide a mix of uses at street level that can deliver activity across the day and throughout the week contributing to a safe and pleasant environment. Active frontages should be maximised. This includes residential uses when properly considered and appropriately designed.
2. Applicants should demonstrate during the pre-application stage that there is credible demand for non-residential uses proposed at street level to ensure that active street frontages are not compromised through vacancy of units. The uses and quantity of street level accommodation should be agreed with the Council in advance of submission.
3. Urban blocks should include street level residential uses. These uses should be focused within existing and proposed areas that are primarily residential areas and should function to create active street frontages.
4. Entrances and non-residential uses such as commercial retail/leisure spaces should be prioritised to higher footfall areas. They should be located with good visibility and be inclusive to all in their access to them.
5. Although the conversion of properties may present additional challenges involving the incorporation of existing building elements, development proposals involving existing properties should still seek to maximise active street frontages. Fundamental to this is early consideration and agreement with the Council that the proposed change of use is appropriate and achievable during the pre-application stage.

5.3 The provision of active street frontage within buildings is an important aspect of achieving liveability. Activity at the ground floor of buildings is the foundation of a positive building to street environment creating life and vitality at street level for pedestrians and cyclists. Urban blocks should seek to maximise this active street frontage to ensure that they contribute to the creation of a positive street environment for people.

5.4 Providing a mixture of uses at street level, including residential uses, can deliver activity across the day and throughout the week, contributing to a safe and pleasant environment for people. This can and should include residential uses which are still appropriate at street level when designed properly. Street level residential uses should be proposed within existing residential areas as well as within proposed areas that will be predominantly residential. Figure 14 shows how residential uses in Urban Blocks can animate streets and work with sustainable transport improvements to create place.

5.5 The relationship between dwelling and street will need proper consideration with the use of defensible spaces and thresholds that should not only provide sufficient privacy from the street for dwellings but also act as a space for social interactions to occur. Habitable rooms should be located facing to the street to allow for the street to benefit from passive natural surveillance. The relationship between ground floor residential accommodation and other building uses at street level will also need to be considered to ensure that these uses are accommodated in a complementary manner.

5.6 The ground floor planning of buildings is both fundamentally important and demanding because of the range of uses that they must accommodate. Delivering a well-designed ground floor plan can deliver both a successful building and accompanying street environment. Functional ground floor arrangements of buildings should not come at the cost of delivering active street uses. Areas

within buildings that do not offer active street uses such as servicing and back of house areas should have minimal street frontage presence.



Courtesy of De Trafford and MattBrook Architects

- 5.7 As the density of a building increases the demand on creating a successful ground floor arrangement also increases. In a residential urban block as more dwellings are included, back of house areas including plant, refuse and cycle storage all increase in size. There will therefore be a maximum density at which a successful ground floor can be delivered.
- 5.8 Designers will be expected during the pre-application stage to have properly assessed the ground floor of proposals to ensure that a density of development being proposed can deliver maximised active street level frontages whilst also delivering the functional requirements of the building.
- 5.9 Although basement levels can accommodate service areas the construction of them is costly and applicants should demonstrate that any basement levels of accommodation proposed are viable and deliverable. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate that there is credible demand for street level non-residential uses. The size and amount of accommodation should be agreed with the Council during the pre-application stage.
- 5.10 Building entrances and any non-residential uses such as commercial /retail/leisure spaces should be provided alongside higher footfall areas to enable their future repeated use. These spaces should be located so that they are highly visible to people from the street and located so that they are convenient to access.
- 5.11 This should be supported with building and landscape design that incorporates best practice inclusive access principles to ensure safe, practical and convenient access to these spaces for all.

## UB2. Properly Plan for the Servicing of Buildings.

### Summary Principles:

1. Maximising active street frontage should not preclude providing sufficient and appropriately planned servicing areas within the curtilage of buildings.
  2. Servicing and back of house areas should be located so that they can be accessed and used easily by both residents and those servicing buildings.
  3. Servicing and back of house areas should be sized appropriately, be secure and meet the Council's set requirements for waste management. Design guidance for these areas can be found Warrington Design Guidance Note DGN1: Parking and Servicing 2015.
  4. The impact of building servicing should not adversely impact upon the appearance of buildings. This can be achieved through considered approaches to screening and façade integration. These areas do not provide active frontages and they should have no or minimal street presence.
- 5.12 The provision of active street frontage within buildings should not preclude providing a sufficient quantity of well-planned accommodation that enables the proper servicing of buildings. These areas, including plant, vehicle parking, cycle storage and refuse areas should be included within the curtilages of buildings to safeguard the quality and safety of the external environment.
- 5.13 Servicing and back of house areas should be appropriately separated and located to make access to them convenient and easy to use. Proximity to vertical circulation cores is important to minimise distances to service areas and the efficient planning of them is especially important at the ground floor of buildings where the demand on space can be most pronounced.



Cycling storage example

- 5.14 The routes of access to building servicing areas are also important to the quality of building proposals with their impact upon ‘front of house’ areas requiring proper consideration. How people move refuse from their apartments to the communal store should be considered alongside other considerations such as how visitors arrive at a residential development entrance and up to a resident’s apartment.
- 5.15 Security is an important factor, especially in relation to the accessing of vehicular parking and cycle storage areas. These access arrangements should be properly assessed and applicants should demonstrate how these areas are safely and securely accessed. Pre application discussions are encouraged and should involve consultation with Cheshire Police’s Designing Out Crime Officer.
- 5.16 Building servicing proposals should be sufficiently developed and coordinated in advance of submission to the Council to ensure that their size and arrangement facilitate their proper functioning as well as their future maintenance and replacement of plant equipment in the future. The Council provides guidance in the Design Guidance note DGN1 Parking and Servicing 2015. Applicants should be able to demonstrate how their proposals comply with this guidance.
- 5.17 The impact of servicing and back of house areas should not adversely impact upon the appearance of buildings, in particular at street and roof level where this impact is most likely to occur. Plant equipment should be contained within the building curtilage except in exceptional circumstances where constraints of the site do not allow for this. For building servicing equipment it should be appropriately screened in a considered manner so as to not detract from the appearance of the building, including at roof level. The discharging of ventilation equipment and any necessary perforation of building façade to enable ventilation should be done in a considered manner that is integrated with the rest of the appearance of the building.

- 5.18 Proposals should also account for the servicing of buildings from the highway. Applicants will be required to demonstrate where refuse will be moved to for collection and how this will be managed in a manner which is both safe and does not compromise the external environment nor impede pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement.
- 5.19 Proposals should record where those delivering to buildings will stop if travelling by vehicle, including in large vans, providing safe and dedicated spaces to do so that again will not compromise the external environment nor impede pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement. This will require the submission of information that includes vehicle tracking for refuse vehicles and large delivery vans to ensure that proposals are credible and deliverable.
- 5.20 For urban blocks comprised of residential apartments, developers should look at how post will be delivered and accessed this should ensure that deliveries can be made in a manner that does not compromise the security of the building. Applicants should seek the advice of Designing Out Crime officers at Cheshire Police on their proposed arrangements and incorporate feedback received during the pre-application stage.
- 5.21 Commercial and retail properties will also need to give due consideration to servicing as part of an appropriate servicing strategy to being included within submissions to the Council. The frequency of servicing should be limited as much as possible and take place during the quietest part of the day and week. Night time collections are not encouraged close to residential developments

### UB3. Green Spaces and Amenity Space within Urban Blocks.

#### Summary Principles:

1. Developments should support increasing the amount of green infrastructure in the town centre to soften the urban environment by integrating green space design within them.
2. Urban blocks should be designed with consideration of how green space and infrastructure can be incorporated from their inception. External terraces, courtyard gardens, and the greening of routes in and around urban blocks should be maximised.
3. The size and proportion of proposed spaces should be proportional and be designed with functionality in mind; this should include consideration of whether equipped play will form part of the provision.
4. Where developers are providing open space on site this should be designed to maximise sunlight penetration.
5. Publicly accessible open spaces should be located within a development to ensure they can function appropriately and support the movement of people safely through the wider street network during the day and at night.
6. Roofscapes of proposed new urban blocks should be utilised for amenity purposes in a manner that contributes positively to the townscape of the Town Centre. This could include residential lounges, workspaces and play spaces. These uses should be carefully considered so that they add value and remain useful in the long term.
7. Property conversions providing residential space should include the provision of internal communal spaces and look to provide external communal space. They should protect and enhance residential amenity whilst protecting the character of historic buildings.
8. Where it has not been possible to meet the Council's on-site open space standards and other applicable provisions for amenity and play space, developments will be expected to make contributions via s106 funding to off-site improvements.

5.22 The COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed the importance and value of being close to high-quality green spaces and infrastructure as they act as an important well-being amenity, something that has increased in value in an urban environment. Planting should be as naturalistic as possible and use mature trees and planting to ensure that the well-being benefit of such spaces is fully achieved.

5.23 The incorporation of new green spaces and infrastructure within Warrington Town Centre will have a significant impact upon improving the urban environment of the Town Centre. In addition to the softening of what is currently a relatively harsh environment, new green spaces and infrastructure can improve air quality, provide visual screening, mitigate noise, temper wind flows and provide biodiversity improvements.

5.24 Urban blocks should be designed with consideration of how green space and infrastructure can be incorporated from their inception. External terraces, courtyard gardens, and the greening of routes in and around urban blocks should be maximised to provide residents and those working within urban blocks within Warrington quick and easy access to high-quality green spaces and infrastructure.

5.25 Locating public open space and communal private amenity together within urban blocks can provide opportunities to increase the impact of green open space and vary the landscapes within the town centre. The benefits for the Urban Block are that more dual aspect dwellings can be provided plus active frontages and views to green space can be maximised. This is exemplified in figure 15.

### Residential Block

1. Public green space marking entrances to residential blocks.
2. Resident's amenity spaces associated with entrances, providing active frontages.
3. Quiet internal green courtyard.
4. Residential ground floor use providing active frontage to external perimeter of the block and streetscape.
5. All service provision including refuse storage to be provided within the building footprint, minimising disruption to active frontages.



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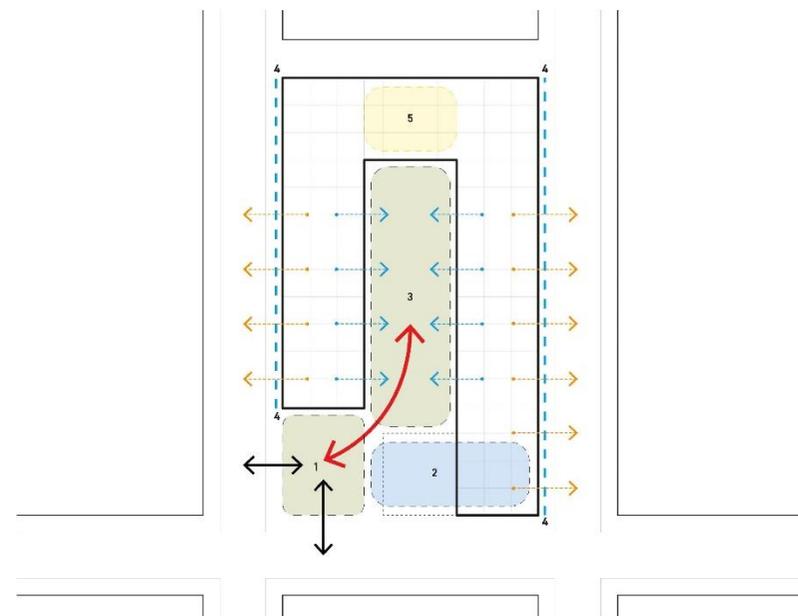


Figure 15. Residential Block and Amenity Space (Courtesy of MattBrook Architects)

- 5.26 Urban blocks should also look at how amenity space within roof spaces are provided in a manner that creates a positive contribution to the townscape of the Town Centre. Amenity facilities within urban blocks may include residential lounges, workspaces, kitchen gardens and play spaces but their uses should be carefully considered to ensure that they add value to the development that they are proposed within. Applicants are required to include how such spaces will be managed and maintained in the future as part of information supporting any planning application.
- 5.27 Developments involving the conversion of existing properties to residential dwellings should wherever possible include internal amenity space for residents as well as seeking to provide communal external space. For historic buildings, these spaces are required to be provided whilst protecting the character of the building.
- 5.28 The Council's open space standards are set out in the Planning Obligations SPD with guidance for individual dwellings provided in the Dwelling Scale section. The Council may consider S106 contributions in-lieu of on-site provision of green spaces or amenity facilities if provision on site is demonstrated not to be possible. This will only be in exceptional circumstances, such as where it would harm the character of an historic building or on a site that is small and has constraints.

#### UB4. Provide Designs and Layouts that instil a Sense of Community and Provide Opportunities for Incidental Social Interactions.

##### Summary Principles:

1. Both new developments and conversion of existing buildings should provide building entrance and reception areas designed to enable social interactions by users within urban blocks.
2. Commercial urban blocks should include entrance reception areas that contain associated amenity space that encourages interactions

between occupiers and residential blocks should include facilities that encourage neighbourly interactions.

3. The journey from block entrance to dwelling entrance within residential blocks should be designed to provide a pleasant experience for users and provide opportunities for incidental social interactions to occur.
4. The conversion of existing historic properties should reference any different uses in the building and how entrances will be used to service the proposed uses. In the case of residential uses, and the interaction of other uses with it, residential amenity should be protected. Applicants should agree the proposed change of use for a property with the Council as early in the pre-application process as possible.

- 5.29 Urban blocks, both new and involving the conversion of existing buildings, should include entrance and reception areas that encourage social interactions between building users for blocks of both residential and non-residential uses.
- 5.30 Within residential urban blocks it is important for design proposals to include features that help to establish and strengthen a sense of community between residents. The establishment and strengthening of a sense of community come from the daily social interactions between residents and this is what design proposals should seek to encourage.
- 5.31 Communal and shared circulation areas are where most of these interactions will likely occur, making the design of these spaces important. Building entrance areas should be safe and secure but also open and inviting. Residents' lounges and informal workspaces may be located off the entrance reception area to encourage occupation and activity for extended periods during which neighbourly and social interactions can occur.

- 5.32 Residential reception areas should support urban blocks being safe and pleasant to use.
- 5.33 Within commercial urban blocks the value and importance of a well-designed entrance area is the same as a residential block. These areas should also be safe and secure whilst being open and inviting with the use of a staffed reception desk. Associated ground floor uses could include more informal break-out spaces/ shared workspaces or cafés that will not only act as potentially valuable resources for building occupiers but can also provide active street level uses.
- 5.34 The journey of resident from building to apartment entrance within residential urban blocks is an opportunity for incidental social interactions to occur. These circulation areas should be designed to provide a pleasant environment to encourage their use beyond simply moving through them as quickly as possible. Circulation areas have the potential to be areas which can be utilised by residents as amenity spaces themselves and add value to developments. Circulation areas that are naturally lit and look out onto landscaped courtyards should be encouraged whilst layouts that deliver extended runs of double loaded corridors that are completely artificially lit should be avoided.
- 5.35 Development proposals involving the conversion of existing properties should still incorporate designs and layouts to instil a sense of community and provide opportunities for incidental social interactions. Although there may be some limitations in working with an existing and/or historic property not being able to satisfy this requirement may be indicative of an inappropriate proposed use for a property. Applicants should discuss the proposed change of use for a property with the Council as early in the pre-application process as possible for agreement with the Council as appropriate.



Circulation/ community areas. Courtesy of De Trafford and MattBrook Architects

## UB5. Respond to Noise and Air Quality Issues

### Summary Principles:

1. Developers must be aware of the specific noise and air quality (including odour) issues relating to their site and how their proposals will be affected by them.
2. Those coming forward with development proposals should raise and discuss issues with the Council early in the pre-application process, including any site-specific issues and how they will be addressed or mitigated.
3. Development proposals should be able to demonstrate how the design of proposals respond to noise and air quality issues affecting them.
4. Responses should be design rather than specification led and include consideration of the changing nature of the Town Centre in the future as the residential population increases and important infrastructural improvements are delivered, such as those noted within the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan.

- 5.36 Warrington, like many places, has air quality issues that are associated with vehicle traffic that circulates in-and-around the Town Centre that will need appropriate consideration, especially at sites near the ring road that experience higher vehicle traffic levels. Fine particulate pollution is also a growing health concern from sources including traffic, domestic burning and heating sources.
- 5.37 In addition, the Town Centre accommodates multiple differing uses within it, including those that support the evening economy that are important to the vitality of the centre but can cause increased noise levels. Any hot food cooking premises has the potential to cause odour impacts.
- 5.38 As development activity within the Town Centre increases applicants will need to properly consider these issues, particularly where

proposing residential developments, to ensure that designs respond appropriately. Applicants should engage early with the Council during the pre-application process to discuss such issues to enable them to be properly factored in to the design process. This will help to ensure that design positively addresses concerns at an early stage and does not have to be redesigned and provide retrofit solutions in later stages.

- 5.39 Early engagement with the Council and proper understanding of air and noise issues should enable a design-led response to them. A design-led response to such issues should start with fundamental site decisions that should establish a positive starting point for supporting design decisions to be made downstream. The arrangement of urban blocks on site should be borne out of a contextual analysis that includes noise and air quality to inform their siting. The proposed uses and their location within urban blocks should reinforce the site arrangement. External amenity spaces such as balconies and terraces should be carefully located. Landscaping and tree planting should be utilised to screen against and mitigate the impact of air and noise quality issues.
- 5.40 Urban block design should consider the proximity of any potential site to the Air Quality Management Areas and DEFRA Noise Mapped Areas identified in Figures 16 and 17 respectively. Design strategies should identify at initial stages where influences from the above may impact on the building siting, design and layout and consider/incorporate appropriate mitigation within the designs put forward for subsequent applications. The specification of the external façade and ventilation strategy will play an important role in providing residential accommodation that responds appropriately to air and noise issues. However, development proposals should not rely entirely on specification to address air and noise issues, and instead, specification should reinforce positive design-led responses to sources.

5.41 Proposals should also be mindful of the changing nature of the Town Centre as the residential population increases and infrastructural improvements are delivered, including those within the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan that will improve upon current air and noise issues. Reference should be made to guidance set out in the Town and Neighbourhood scales.

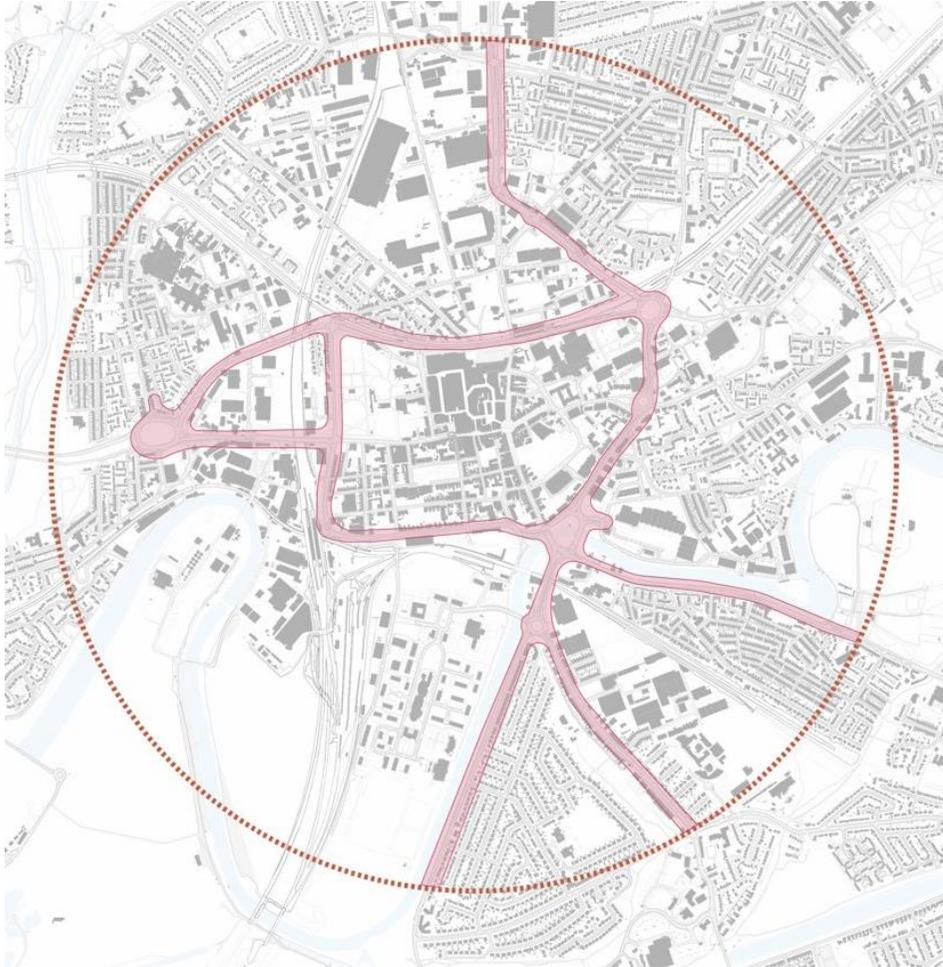


Figure 16. Air Quality Management Area

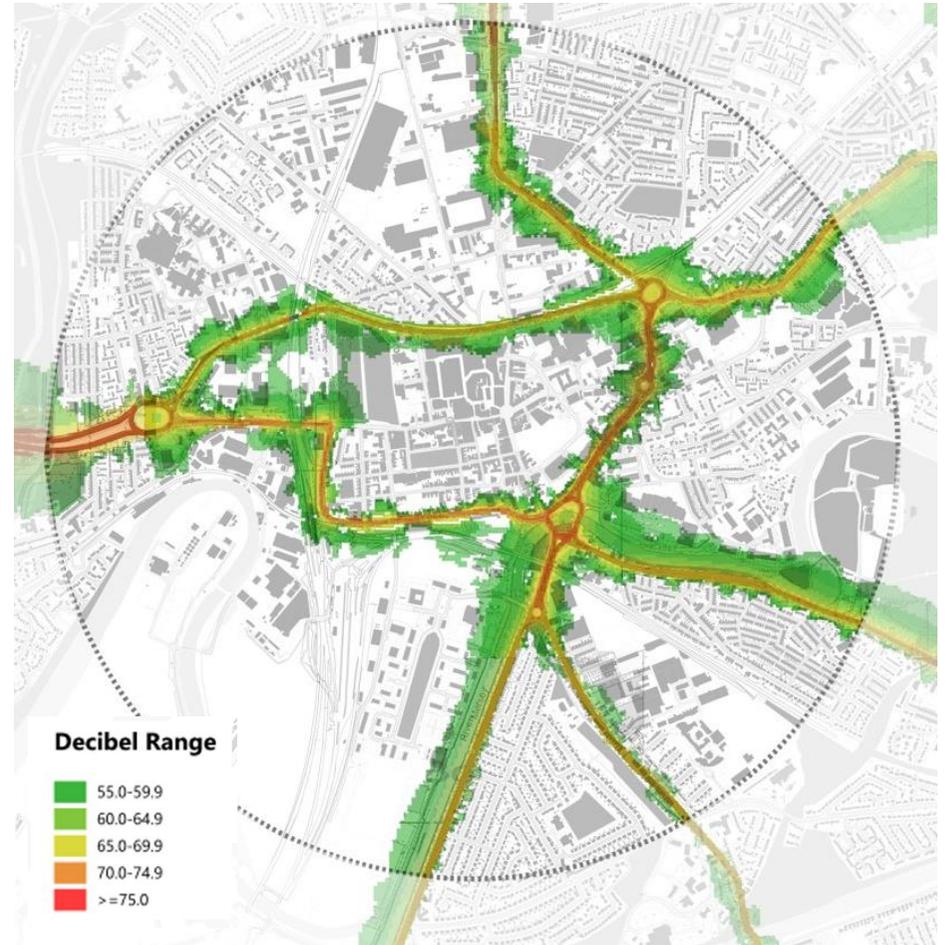
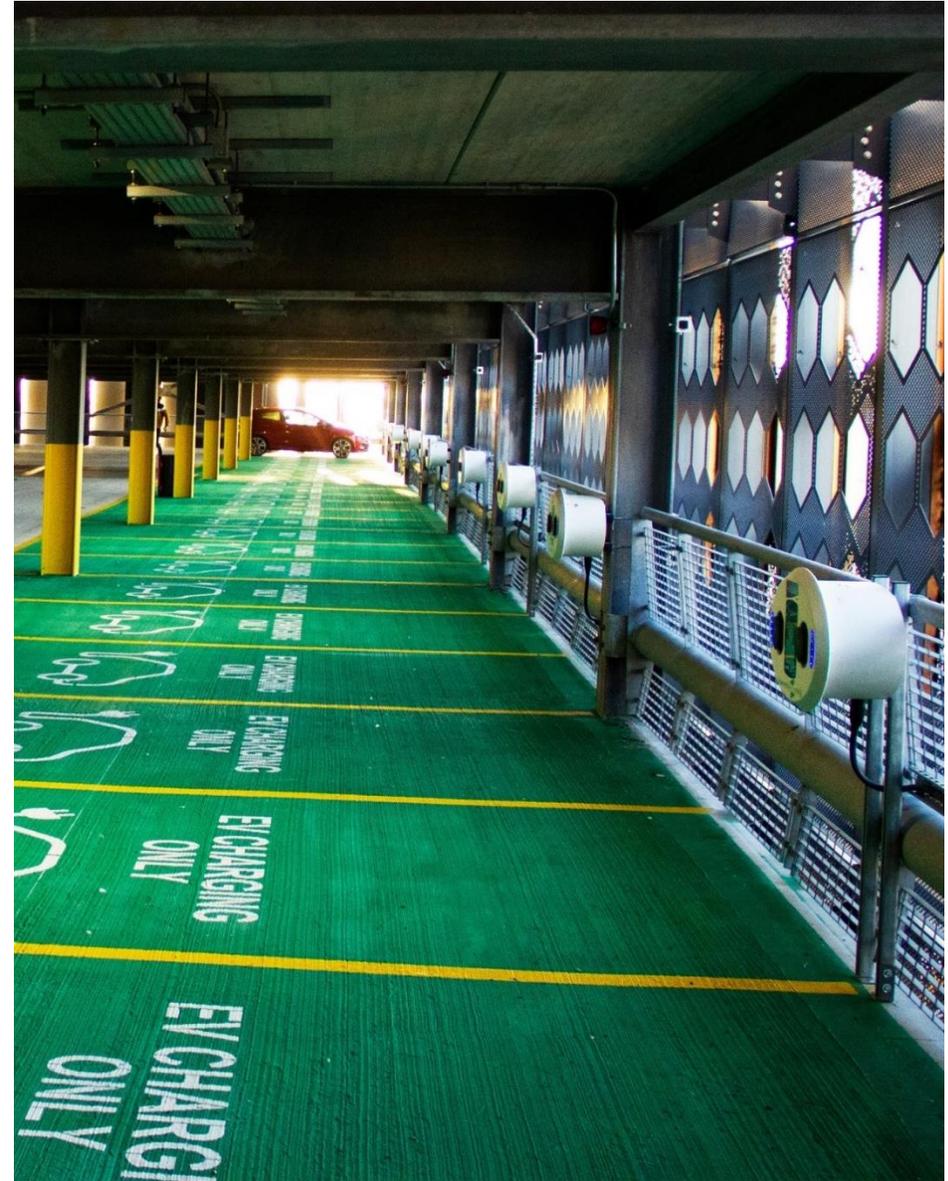


Figure 17. Road Noise Mapping

## UB6. Incorporate Sustainable Approaches of Design.

### Summary principles:

1. Development proposals should seek to improve upon the standards set out in the Building Regulations for reduction in water and energy consumption.
2. Development proposals should look to minimise their carbon footprint during both the construction and operational stages of their life in line with the Council's aspiration to make Warrington Britain's first carbon-neutral town by 2030.
3. Cycle storage must be provided and this should be in compliance with the guidance provided under Section 15 of the 'Design and Construction' Supplementary Planning Document produced by the Council.
4. The Council is committed to provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) in all new developments and in upgrades to the street and road scape of Warrington. Development proposals are expected to meet this requirement and where there are offsite works carried out by the Council on behalf of the developer s106 or s278 contributions as appropriate will include these costs.
5. Reference should be made to the Townscale guidance on car parking provision and note the areas where car free development is expected and where contributions to s106 to support the Town Centre Travel Plan will be required.



Time Square multi-storey car park

- 5.42 As Warrington Town Centre is developed and revitalised for the people of the Borough it is important that this development is realised in a way that sustains the environment for future generations to enjoy. Subsequently, development proposals should incorporate sustainable approaches to design. In line with the National Planning Policy Guidance paragraph 150 (B) this should begin with design proposals that respond appropriately to orientation, location and environment with an energy efficient building envelope and glazing design.
- 5.43 Development proposals should seek to improve upon the standards set out in the Building Regulations for water usage involving the specification of appliances, grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting alongside reducing energy consumption.
- 5.44 All major commercial and residential development proposals within the area covered by this SPD are required to maximise opportunities for the use of decentralised renewable and low carbon energy or meet a proportion of the developments energy needs from renewable or low carbon sources as outlined in the Planning Obligations SPD. Bio-mass and wood heating systems though are not considered appropriate in urban areas due to increased emissions of fine particulates.
- 5.45 Designers should consider the application of BREEAM standards and aim to achieve a very good or excellent rating, especially when considering the aims of sustainable development as detailed in current and any future National Planning Policy guidance.
- 5.46 In all circumstances before considering site development, developers should contact relevant utility service providers such as United Utilities and Scottish Power, and also environmental control bodies such as the Environment Agency on issues relating to risk of flooding and take appropriate advice.
- 5.47 Warrington in its Climate Emergency Declaration 2019 has the stated intention of making Warrington a net carbon neutral area by 2030. Applicants should look at how development proposals will be constructed and the impact that the specification and method of construction can have as well as during the operational life of a building through the incorporation of technologies such as low carbon heating systems.
- 5.48 In ensuring a highly liveable urban environment within the Town Centre, it is important to promote and encourage sustainable transport choices, including increased cycle usage. The First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan will deliver important infrastructural improvements, and to support this, developments will be required to contribute towards the delivery of sustainable modes of transport and to deliver cycle storage within development. Storage should be secure and sheltered and meet the requirements set out in Section 15 of the 'Design and Construction' SPD produced by the Council. This guidance is applicable to both new build developments and conversions of existing buildings.



## 6. Dwelling Scale Design Guidance

### Overview

- 6.1 Residential development in the town centre will form an important part of the future redevelopment of brownfield sites. To create sustainable development that increases the residential population of the town centre and helps it become a highly liveable place it is of fundamental importance to provide high quality homes that appeal to a broad spectrum of people so that people choose to live in town centre.
- 6.2 To meet this aim new residential developments or conversion of properties to residential uses will be expected to meet the nationally described space standards and residential amenity standards. These standards will be formally placed into policy in the new Local Plan. Particular attention to noise, odour and air quality issues from adjacent uses must be addressed in any planning submissions to the Council.
- 6.3 This section of the guidance should be followed by those bringing forward development proposals that include residential uses with applicants required to demonstrate how they have followed the design principles included within it to deliver well designed homes.

#### DS1. Provide Dwellings that are Appropriately Sized and Arranged to Create Well-Designed Homes Now and in The Future.

1. Dwellings should be well designed and appropriately sized to deliver highly liveable homes for Warrington.
2. Dwellings should aim to meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards and provide an amount of built-in storage that meets or exceeds the standards, arranged to support the users it is aimed at.

3. Dwellings should enable residents to work from home in a liveable manner.
4. Designers are encouraged to reference other recognised dwelling standards and incorporate appropriate design measures to maximise the liveability and appeal of dwellings especially when providing for specific demographic groups.

- 6.4 It is of fundamental importance to the delivery of highly liveable dwellings in the town centre, that they have appeal to a broad spectrum of future residents, including families and that they are sized appropriately to meet future residents' needs. In support of this, all new dwellings within Warrington Town Centre, including apartments, should aim to either meet or exceed the sizes for dwellings noted within the 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards' as provided by the UK Government.
- 6.5 This includes both the overall size requirements for dwellings as well as the technical requirements covered within section 10 of the document.
- 6.6 Dwellings should be planned in an intelligent and efficient manner to maximise habitable room sizes and minimise the space given over to corridors within dwellings.
- 6.7 For those designing dwellings targeted at specific demographic groups, they should also reference any associated specialist, recognised documentation and incorporate appropriate and relevant guidance into proposals. Such guidance includes the 10 key design criteria produced by the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) which is relevant not only for the spectrum of older persons' housing but contains design guidance that can be applied more generally, relating to good light, ventilation, storage and the ability to move easily through dwellings.



Working from home

## DS2. Dwelling Layouts

### Summary Principles:

1. Habitable rooms within homes should be arranged to maximise access to natural daylight and be supported with appropriate glazing design to support residential amenity and the Council's aim of making Warrington a carbon neutral town by 2030.
2. Support will be given to the delivery of well-designed, dual aspect homes over that of dwellings with only a single aspect. Applicants bringing forward major developments should seek to maximise the proportion of dual aspect homes particularly for those with more than 1 bedroom.
3. The habitable rooms of dwellings should be orientated to maximise views to existing green spaces and future proposed green infrastructure improvements.
4. If single aspect homes are proposed it is considered important that these should be of a high quality and designed to maximise natural daylighting levels with positive views to areas such as communal or neighbouring greenspaces and vistas across the town centre.
5. Overlooking of habitable rooms must be avoided and privacy of residents must be protected.

6.8 Access to good levels of natural light throughout the day delivers important mental and physical health benefits. It is therefore of fundamental importance to the delivery of highly liveable homes that dwellings enable this access.

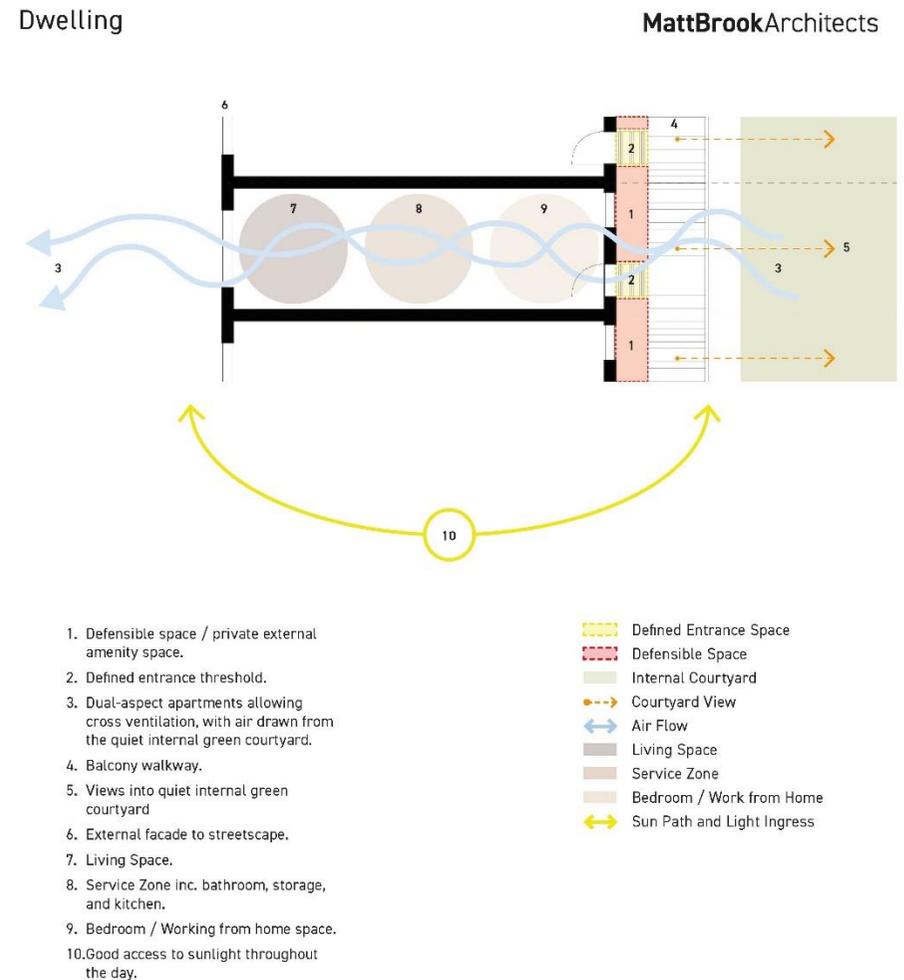
6.9 Dwellings should be designed to maximise natural daylight within habitable rooms. Fenestration should support this by being carefully sized and arranged as part of a considered elevational arrangement and respond to the room it is serving whether it be a bedroom, living room, kitchen or study, etc. Maximising the height of glazing within rooms will increase the depth of penetration of sunlight, and

rooflights, where it is possible to incorporate them, can be utilised to provide natural light into deeper and darker parts of dwellings.

6.10 The glass utilised within contemporary windows and glazing systems are available with a range of coatings and finishes which affects the amount of sunlight that passes through it. Development proposals should seek to provide an appropriate specification as part of a holistic approach to glazing design. This should be led by the sensible arrangement and sizing of fenestration to deliver good access to natural daylighting whilst delivering dwellings that minimise energy use in a sustainable manner.

6.11 Dual aspect dwellings provide tangible benefits that mean that development proposals should seek to maximise their use. Dual aspect dwellings provide more than one aspect increasing visual interest for residents in their homes. Dual aspect dwellings also enable sunlight to penetrate dwellings for an increased period of the day which can be reflected in the arrangement of rooms within dwellings, specifically the living space(s) to capitalise upon this benefit. Dual aspect dwellings also allow for the natural cross-ventilation of homes providing a sustainable means of ventilation. Figure 18 shows how dual aspect dwellings can work in this manner.

6.12 Dual aspect apartment blocks can not only provide highly liveable apartments but can also be a highly efficient means of realising an appropriate density for the town centre in a commercially deliverable manner. Applicants bringing forward major developments should seek to provide development proposals that maximise the provision of dual aspect dwellings.



**Figure 18. Principles of dual aspect dwellings (Courtesy of MattBrook Architects)**

6.13 As part of a well-designed home, habitable rooms should be orientated to maximise views to both existing spaces and future green infrastructure improvements to capitalise upon the benefits of these aspects.

6.14 The incorporation of green spaces and green infrastructure across the streets and spaces of the town centre and within emerging neighbourhoods will deliver important well-being benefits for the people of Warrington providing spaces for direct interaction with nature. In orientating habitable rooms the privacy of residents must be protected.



**Figure 19. Example of a dual aspect apartment block (Courtesy of De Trafford and MattBrook Architects)**

### DS3. Provide Private External Amenity Space to all Dwellings.

#### Summary Principles:

1. The design of the external amenity space should be considered to maximise its usage throughout the year.
2. It is expected that a minimum of 5, 7 and 9 square metres per dwelling will be provided for 1, 2 and 3 or 3+ Bedroom dwellings respectively. This can be in the form of a balcony, private roof or ground floor terrace.
3. Where it is not possible to provide private amenity space for individual dwellings then it is important that private communal space for residents is provided in accordance with the comparable expected sqm set out for private amenity space above.
4. Private external amenity space should complement the design of the dwellings.
5. Where there can be no provision of private external amenity space at all, then additional space should be provided within habitable rooms of the internal floorspace of dwellings and off site contributions will also be sought for improvements and/or provision of public green space.

6.15 All homes proposed within the town centre should aim to include private external amenity space as part of their design. As has been reinforced during the lockdowns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, dwellings that do not include private external amenity spaces present liveability issues for the occupiers of them.

6.16 The provision of communal external amenity spaces within urban blocks, neighbourhoods, and the wider town centre should be complemented with private external amenity spaces to dwellings to ensure that residents of the town centre have guaranteed access to this important well-being resource.



Private outdoor space

- 6.17 The design of external amenity spaces should be considered to maximise usage throughout the year. Providing appropriate shelter from the elements in balcony design is essential.
- 6.18 Private external amenity spaces should be planned with the same care and attention as that of the rest of the dwelling design. They should be sized and proportioned properly and should relate to the size of dwelling and the corresponding number of occupants that they are serving.
- 6.19 The following minimum size of external private amenity space will be required:
- 1 bedroom: 5sqm minimum private external amenity size
  - 2 bedrooms: 7sqm minimum private external amenity size
  - 3 or more bedrooms: 9sqm minimum private external amenity size
- 6.20 The design of any balconies should be done as part of a carefully considered exercise involving the overall design of the external appearance of the building and should not be incongruous additions to external building envelopes.
- 6.21 Where balconies are proposed, these should be designed so as to provide some protection from elevated external ambient noise sources wherever possible. Positioning balconies on noisy road facades will generally present technical challenges to reduce noise exposure to future occupants. The use of glazed perimeter screens can increase openness whilst providing an acoustic barrier below the overall screen height. Private external amenity spaces should comply with noise levels advised within BS8233:2014 wherever possible but should always aim to be as low as possible to increase amenity benefits.
- 6.22 It is understood that in certain circumstances the provision of private amenity space and/or private resident communal space is not possible. In this circumstance developers should discuss with Officers

at an early stage mitigation measures such as additional internal size of dwellings and off-site payments for improvements to green spaces in and around the town centre.

#### DS4. Noise and Air quality Issues in Dwelling Design.

##### Summary Principles:

1. Dwellings are required to reinforce positive design responses to noise and air quality issues incorporated at the urban block design scale within the design of dwellings.
2. At pre-application stage appropriate consideration should be given to the ventilation of dwellings to ensure that an appropriate approach to fenestration design has been undertaken.

- 6.23 The arrangement and location of dwellings should be provided following the process described within the Urban Block as part of a design-led approach to responding to noise and air quality issues within Warrington Town Centre. This should provide a positive starting point from which the design of dwellings can continue to respond appropriately to noise and air quality issues.
- 6.24 Dwellings will need to provide sufficient levels of glazing and ventilation to not only satisfy regulatory requirements but to also deliver highly liveable homes for the town centre. Fenestration design, ventilation strategy and the incorporation of private external amenity spaces for dwellings will all be key considerations. All of these features, and how they are designed and delivered need, appropriate consideration early on in the pre-application stage and discussed with the Council to ensure that future applications are sufficiently developed, robust and detailed and provide a highly liveable environment for occupiers.

#### DS5. Undertake the Conversion of Existing Properties into Dwellings in an Appropriate Manner.

1. Development proposals involving the conversion of existing and/or historic buildings into residential dwellings should comply with all the design guidance in this SPD to deliver well-designed, highly liveable and functional homes.
2. Dwellings proposed as part of the conversion of an existing property should aim to meet or exceed nationally described space standards.
3. Applicants proposing the conversion of existing buildings into dwellings should undertake early pre-application consultations with the Council and agree the fundamental principles of conversion.
4. Development proposals should ensure that the impact of any environmental issues from and on adjacent properties have been sufficiently mitigated.
5. Development proposals that include multiple uses should ensure that existing and new residents' amenity is properly protected.

- 6.25 Development proposals involving the conversion of existing and/or historic buildings into residential dwellings should comply with the design guidance contained within this SPD as much as practically possible, acknowledging the constraints of working with existing buildings including the need for secondary glazing and ventilation systems. Where it is not possible to comply with specific aspects of the guidance applicants should justify this position by demonstrating that proposals will result in dwellings that meet the overall trajectory of the guidance in this SPD of well-designed, highly liveable homes.
- 6.26 A fundamental part of delivering well-designed, highly liveable homes is ensuring that they are appropriately sized and contain enough built-in storage. Dwellings proposed as part of the conversion of an existing property should meet or exceed standards noted within the 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' as provided by the UK Government.

6.27 The provision of waste and recycling areas and their servicing is an especially important consideration in conversion of older building especially where there are other types of uses. Conversions must meet the requirements as set out in the Council's guidance DG1 Parking and Servicing and ensure that servicing of areas by the Council or for commercial waste contractors can be done safely with minimal impact on the residential amenity of the converted property and any adjoining properties.

6.28 Not all buildings will be conducive for conversion into residential dwellings or may require significant alterations to enable them to provide well designed, highly liveable dwellings. Applicants bringing forward development proposals should discuss proposals involving conversions early in the pre-application process to agree the fundamental principles of any proposed conversion. For those proposing the conversion of historic properties, development proposals should work with the existing fabric of the building and not adversely impact upon the character of it.

6.29 Development proposals including changes of use for the conversion of existing properties into dwellings should also ensure that they properly consider the impact of any environmental issues from adjacent properties and ensure that they have been appropriately mitigated. The conversion of buildings that currently do not accommodate residential uses are likely to be located adjacent to other commercial properties and may include those that support the evening economy. As such any conversion proposals will need to properly consider and mitigate any environmental issues such as air quality and noise and consider impacts that the conversions themselves may have on neighbouring property and how these should be mitigated.

6.30 Development proposals that include other uses alongside residential dwellings should ensure that existing and proposed residents' amenity is properly protected and that the interfacing between uses is properly considered and designed. The entrances and servicing of the differing uses should be separated and provided to complement one another.



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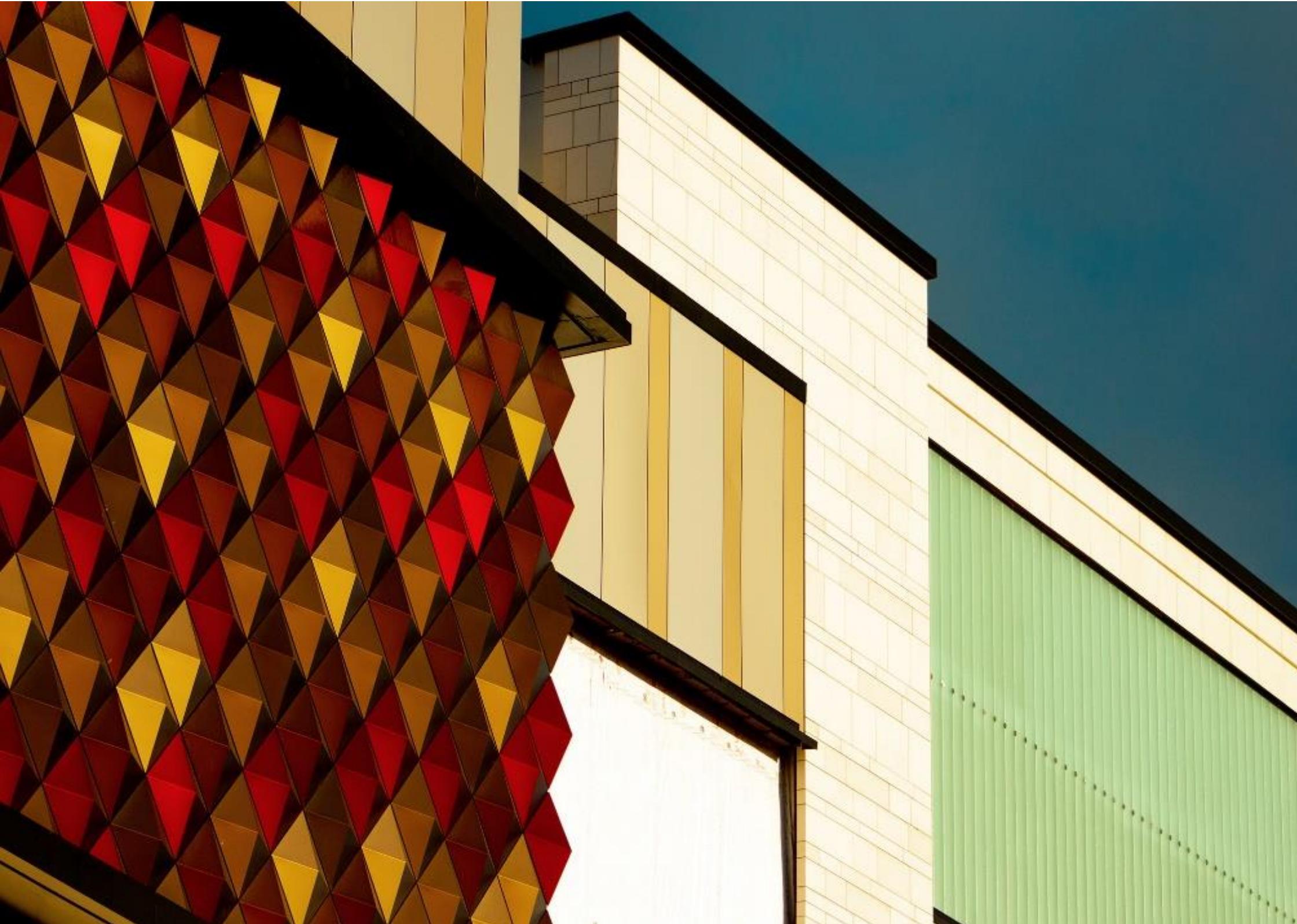
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## 7. Planning Obligations

- 7.1 The previous sections of the SPD identify a range of planning obligation contributions that the Council will expect from development proposals coming forward in the Town Centre SPD area.
- 7.2 These contributions are necessary to mitigate the impact of increasing densities of development. Through the framework provided by the SPD, the Council is able to coordinate planning obligations and, combined with other funding sources, deliver a coordinated programme of investment to improve the town centre environment, promote active and sustainable travel modes and support the creation of sustainable residential communities.
- 7.3 The Council has full confidence that the vision and regeneration programme established in the Town Centre Masterplan, together with the strong emphasis of this SPD in improving the quality, distinctiveness and sense of place of the town centre, will be reflected in strong development values in the medium and long term.
- 7.4 The Council acknowledges that in the short term, there may be development proposals coming forward which are genuinely not able to meet all of the expected planning obligation requirements set out in this SPD, together with wider requirements of the Council's Local Plan Core Strategy and Planning Obligations SPD.
- 7.5 In order to satisfy the Council that a scheme cannot meet the full range of planning obligation requirements the applicant will be required to submit a full Viability Assessment (VA) and meet the Council's costs of evaluating that assessment as specified in the Planning Obligations SPD (Paragraphs 2.17 to 2.23).
- 7.6 Where the Council is satisfied that a development is not able to meet all of the expected planning obligation requirements, then contributions towards improving the town centre environment will be prioritised. This may mean the Council is not always able to secure the full policy compliant level of affordable housing and meet all of the other contributions set out in the Planning Obligations SPD.
- 7.7 This prioritisation is to ensure the Council is able to continue the transformation of the town centre environment, which will in turn attract wider private sector development investment. This approach has proved extremely successful with the regeneration of Time Square.
- 7.8 Without further required improvements to the town centre environment, there is a risk that individual development proposals will be fragmented and the town centre will not be able to take advantage of its unique opportunity of combining the benefits usually associated with city centre living and the quality of residential environment usually found in more suburban locations. Without broadening the appeal of the town centre, particularly in terms of future residents, development values will not uplift and the Council's vision for mixed and sustainable communities will not be realised.
- 7.9 The type of contributions that will be prioritised will therefore include those towards:
- Delivering the Local Transport Plan and supporting strategies such as the First & Last Mile Transport Masterplan, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Mass Transit and Bus Strategy;
  - open space and public realm improvements; and
  - Measures to support, promote and deliver greater use of sustainable transport modes as set out in the Town Centre Travel Plan.
- 7.10 The Council recognises that the way it normally seeks planning obligations as set out in the Planning Obligations SPD, is not always practical in respect of higher density residential development. For

example, the threshold for on-site publicly accessible open space at 40 dwellings may not be appropriate where development is coming forward on a relatively small and constrained site. In such instances it may be more appropriate for a commuted sum to be provided for the provision of new or improved public open space elsewhere in the town centre.

- 7.11 Where new publicly accessible public realm and green open space is required on town centre development sites, then the Council will expect it to be laid out, managed and maintained by the developer. In doing so, it will be important that the location, design and quality of the open space, together with management and maintenance arrangements, are consistent with those owned and maintained by the Council in order to ensure they contribute to an integrated network across the town centre as a whole.
- 7.12 It is anticipated that the Council will shortly be updating its Planning Obligations SPD to provide more detail on its approach to securing planning obligations on town centre sites.



## 8. Design and Planning Application Process

### Good Design Process

- 8.1 To deliver proposals that are well designed and incorporate good place making qualities applicants and designers will need to follow and comply with the guidance of this SPD and commit to a good design process to support this.
- 8.2 The Council takes a positive and creative approach to assessing planning applications. To assist the Council applicants will need to evidence and record their design approach including but not limited to material that shows how the proposals being put forward meet with planning policies and how they meet the design principles set out in this SPD. Given the importance of the regeneration of the Town Centre and the sensitivity of sites within its boundary, a rigorous analysis of typology and context should be undertaken taking into account spatial, transit, social, economic, historic and heritage factors and cultural context. As stated in the NPPF, design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.
- 8.3 For those bringing forward major applications, or those located within gateway areas of the Town Centre, applicants will be required to take their proposals to the Places Matter Design Review Panel sufficiently early in the pre-application stage to enable feedback provided to applicants to be incorporated into submitted proposals.

### Sufficiently Advanced Design Proposals, Supported with Robust Information.

- 8.4 Applicants will need to ensure that the design of development proposals is sufficiently advanced to meet with the guidance contained within the entirety of this SPD. For applicants seeking to utilise outline or hybrid applications it will be necessary to first agree this with the Council as early in the pre-application stage as possible ensuring that in doing so the design resolution of proposals is sufficiently advanced and accompanied by enough supporting information to properly demonstrate compliance with this SPD.
- 8.5 Supporting information should include enough drawing information to convey design proposals properly and clearly, in context, with sufficient detail for the Council to be able to properly assess development proposals. This drawing information should also be supported with any specialist reports, plans or documents required by the Council to properly assess compliance with this SPD.
- 8.6 As stated in the National Planning Policy Framework 'Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.' A key document for demonstrating good process will be the Design and Access Statement that should support all applications for development proposals coming forward within the Town Centre. This statement should record the design process and analysis of brief, typology and context, alongside providing the information needed for the Council to properly assess development proposals. To enable this, applicants should refer to the guidance document 'Design and access statements. How to write, read and use them.' As produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment which can be accessed at [on the nationalarchives.gov.uk website](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

## Pre-Application Expectations

- 8.7 Applicants should seek to engage with the Council as early as practically possible during the pre-application stage. Details of the Council's pre application service can be found at [warrington.gov.uk/pre-application-advice](http://warrington.gov.uk/pre-application-advice). The Council will offer Planning Performance Agreements for major applications. Details of this will also be provided through the above link. Having read, engaged with and incorporated the guidance into developing design proposals, applicants should be able to provide information recording this process alongside the presentation of design proposals to the Council for discussion and feedback.
- 8.8 The design guidance included within this SPD includes notes on specific topics that are required to be discussed and agreed at pre-application stage. For example, for tall building applications it will be expected that key views will be agreed on an application-by-application basis to test appropriate heights and their impact upon conservation areas, listed buildings and other heritage assets. This is just one example of such guidance and applicants should ensure that the design guidance is read in full to understand other requirements of it for the pre-application stage.
- 8.9 Applicants should be prepared to undertake more than one consultation with the Council, as well as public consultation(s), during the pre-application stage where required, and for those undertaking major applications or applications located within gateway areas of the Town Centre applicants will be required to undertake a design review with the dedicated PlacesMatter Design Review Panel for the Town. As part of the pre-application stage specialist Officers will be engaged in order to advise on how to deal with and mitigate aspects such as traffic, heritage, air quality, noise and odour that may impact developments.

## The Role of the Warrington Design Panel

- 8.10 To support applicants undertaking a good design process, the Council has worked with PlacesMatter, the Royal Institute of British Architecture's independent design review service for the North West, to form a dedicated Design Review Panel for those bringing forward development proposals within the Town Centre, and subsequently following this guidance. PlacesMatter promote good design, adding value and operating under the 'Ten Principles of Good Design'.
- 8.11 The panel is comprised of expert, cross-disciplinary members who will provide timely and impartial advice to those bringing forward development proposals during the pre-application stage. This dedicated panel, who have been consulted on the creation of this guidance, will provide consistency of advice across incoming applications for the Town Centre. Applicants bringing forward major applications, or those located within gateway areas of the Town Centre will be required to present their proposals at review with the Panel, sufficiently early in the pre-application process to incorporate their feedback within submitted proposals.
- 8.12 The feedback provided to applicants from the panel will empower applicants to deliver development proposals that incorporate good design, place making and liveability which in turn can be championed by Council Officers and Members to deliver Warrington Town Centre as a highly liveable environment.



## 9. Appendix A - Local Plan Core Strategy

The Local Plan Core Strategy Policies that will be supported by the Town Centre SPD include:

### Policy CS1 (overall Spatial strategy – Delivering Sustainable Development)

This sets out the Council's requirement for development proposals in Warrington. In particular, on issues of design, the built environment and surrounding environment it requires amongst other things:

- priority afforded to accommodating growth in Inner Warrington through the use of previously developed land;
- the importance of sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town Centre...
- the need to safeguard environmental standards, public safety and residential amenity;
- the delivery of high standards of design and construction, that have regard to local distinctiveness and energy efficiency; and
- the need to improve equality of access and opportunity.

### Policy CS4 (Overall Spatial Strategy - Transport)

This policy identifies the main strategic transport priorities to support the delivery of vision and objectives of the LPCS, a number of which relate to the Town Centre.

### Policy CS7 (Strategic Location – The Town Centre)

As well as supporting a variety of development to enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, this policy identifies the need to bring forward supporting documentation for development within the Town Centre. This current SPD is part of this approach.

### Policy CS9 (Strategic Location – Inner Warrington)

This policy recognises that the older core of the town will be a focus for renewal and regeneration as brownfield sites become available especially for residential development. The policy seeks to secure the maximum benefits from brownfield sites including a mix of tenure and types of housing to give an attractive balanced offer. It also supports the improvement in the quality of Inner Warrington's

green infrastructure, its biodiversity and connectivity to the wider Warrington network of greenspaces and corridors. SPDs such as that for the Town Centre are referenced as a specific mechanism as to how this can be achieved.

### Policy SN1 (Distribution and Nature of New Housing)

This policy identifies that 60% of the provision of new homes should be in Inner Warrington, including the Town Centre in order to deliver environmental, social and economic regeneration of the Town Centre in accordance with one of the main objectives of the Plan. In supporting this approach the Town Centre SPD will help deliver long term quality of development within the Town Centre which will contribute to raising the quality of the environment for current and future residents.

### Policy SN7 (Enhancing Health and Well-being)

This policy seeks to secure the health and well-being of residents with a focus on those areas including Inner Warrington where inequalities are at their greatest. As well as access to community facilities the policy identifies that well-being is promoted through cultural activity and a good quality environment. This is something that the SPD will promote through private and public amenity space requirements as well as access to open space.

It will also focus on safety and security in design bringing in a human scale that responds and identifies positively with places. These preventative measures are seen as essential if the Town Centre is become a 'good' place to live and is supportive of reducing inequality across the Borough.

### Policy QE3 (Green Infrastructure)

In promoting residential development in the Town Centre the policy requires that there is consideration both to the connectivity to existing green spaces but also the need to cater for increases in demand. The impact of Covid 19 has seen the importance of green spaces increase especially in more densely developed urban environments. The SPD seeks to address these needs and the priority that needs to be afforded either through on-site provision or off-site improvements.

### Policy QE6 (Environment and Amenity Protection)

As part of this policy the impacts of air quality, noise and odours are considered with respect of current and future residential occupiers. It also considers the

living standards dwellings offer with a desire to see maximum sunlight levels, minimal over shadowing, good outlook etc. The SPD will directly address these issues by adopting standards and promoting design principles that will seek to see quality new homes in the Town Centre that contribute to the health and well-being of residents.

#### **Policy QE7 (Ensuring a High-Quality Place)**

The principles and standards that the SPD will seek to introduce will be important in implementing the quality points that the policy addresses as it will promote design excellence and sustainable patterns of development.

#### **Policy QE8 (Historic Environment)**

Much of the Town Centre is covered by Conservation Areas with both nationally and locally listed buildings contributing to the more characterful areas of the town. The SPD will support the intention of the policy to preserve and enhance the historic environment by setting down considerations for development that impacts on heritage assets and environments through design guidance for new and existing buildings.

#### **Policy MP1 (General Transport Principles)**

This policy looks to promote measures to reduce car travel and utilise available capacity before additional infrastructure is provided and advances the concept of locally specific parking standards.

#### **Policies MP3 (Active Travel) and MP4 (Public Transport)**

These policies support Policy MP1 by seeking to ensure that more sustainable modes of travel, such as active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport (bus, train and taxi/private hire) are realistic and attractive alternatives in all new development by linking in to existing networks where possible or providing appropriate infrastructure and services where this cannot be achieved. The SPD will highlight specific measures identified through the Council's FLMTM that seek to address these transport priorities in respect of the Town Centre.

#### **Policy TC2 (Small Scale Development in the Town Centre)**

This policy seeks to ensure that smaller scale opportunities to improve the Town Centre and the way it functions are not missed. The SPD will support this policy by providing guidance on the location of new civic spaces and the enhancement of the public realm, together with the identification of gateway and key routes into the Town Centre to ensure that development contributes to a sense of arrival and ease of movement around the centre.

#### **Policy IW1 (The A49 Corridor)**

Whilst this policy is primarily concerned with improving Winwick Road between the town centre and the M62 it also aims to improve active travel and public transport links into the Town Centre and ensuring that development contributes to improving the appearance of this northern gateway into the centre and provide a sense of arrival when approaching the Town Centre from the north.

#### **Policy IW2 (Victoria Park Area)**

This policy supports small scale development ancillary to the role of the park and seeks to ensure that development in areas immediately surrounding the park secures appropriate access to it, in particular by improving riverside links to the Town Centre.

## 10. Appendix B – Other Relevant Strategies

### **Warrington Means Business (2020)**

Warrington Means Business has been developed with the key function of providing a clear single picture of economic growth and regeneration in Warrington over the next 20 years. It is based on existing policies and programmes including the Local Plan, the Cheshire and Warrington Strategic Economic Plan, Transport for the North and the Warrington Transport Plan (LTP4). In order to support economic growth, it identifies focusing development on the town centre and reinforcing and improving Warrington as a place to live as key objectives. The SPD will seek to support the delivery of these objectives.

### **Warrington Town Centre Master Plan (2020)**

The Warrington Town Centre Masterplan outlines a programme of work for delivering the LPCS objectives in respect of the Town Centre of Warrington and indicates the intention to prepare a Town Centre SPD to address in more detail the spatial pattern of development across the Town Centre; the urban design standards that will be required for the Town Centre and its associated development quarters and expectations for site specific proposals. The publication of this document has resulted in significant recent development pressure and therefore the Council considers that it is now necessary to bring forward the SPD as a priority.

In addition to general urban design considerations it is considered necessary for the SPD to provide specific guidance on residential amenity standards due to the large number of residential schemes being promoted and the recognition that the Council's standards for conventional suburban housing development are not readily applicable to high density Town Centre developments.

### **Warrington Local Transport Plan 4 and First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan**

The Warrington Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) was approved as council policy in December 2019. It sets out a transformational set of policies and actions which are intended to tackle an overreliance on the private car for many journeys and support a move to greater use of more environmentally sustainable and low carbon modes of transport. A key early action of the approved Local Transport Plan was to develop a strategy and series of design concepts to support travel into, around and out of the Town Centre. The First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan (FLMTM) has now developed these principles and their inclusion in this SPD are intended to give them weight and support the planned development of the Town Centre. The executive summary of the First and Last Mile Transport masterplan is appended to this SPD.

### **Warrington Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan (2020)**

The Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan is a long-term project that is intended to run until 2040 and covers the six inner wards around the Town Centre. Its aims are for the Central 6 neighbourhoods to “catch up with the growth and transformation that wider Warrington is witnessing and to enable people living in the central areas to participate in the growth and economic prosperity of Warrington. It reinforces a number of themes that have been identified through other strategies, including; creating greater accessibility for communities to facilities, services and an ability to meet needs in higher quality places; creating healthier places and creating a movement network that allows people to get around using active travel modes. In particular improving access along and across the waterside and the greening of streets.

### **The Climate Emergency Declaration (2019)**

The Climate Emergency Declaration 2019 issued by the Council sets out the pledge to make Warrington a net zero carbon area by 2030. The approach involves both action by the Council as an organisation to reduce carbon emissions and any outside impact through policy and programmes that support the

regeneration and economic growth of the Borough. For the built environment, reducing greenhouse gases is an important strand of action.

This is to be achieved through promotion of sustainable transport such as in the Town Centre Travel Plan, encouraging sustainable design in streetscapes and developments through provision of more greenery and supporting the implementation of building design that uses the latest sustainable technologies and meets accredited government national technical standards. This SPD supports this approach and seeks to support existing Local Plan policies that seek to reduce the carbon impact of new development in order to meet the Council's aims and ambitions.

#### **The Health and Well-being Strategy (2019)**

The SPD is an important document in taking forward this strategy as its theme of 'Liveability' will promote the Town Centre as a more pleasant, safer and healthier place to live, work and visit for all. As part of the drive to improve people's health there are two important supporting documents that are referenced in this SPD that have a fundamental impact of people's quality of life in the town centre, these are:

- The Air Quality Action Plan - The Air Quality Action Plan sets out a number of measures to try to meet national air quality standards within current Air Quality Management Areas and to improve air quality across the wider Borough. Any development should consider and support these measures to improve health impacts on existing, and proposed development, from poor air quality.
- Noise Important Areas – these are identified areas where noise is considered an issue for residents and where mitigation measures will be sought. A particular issue can be traffic in the Town Centre and in tandem with the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan this SPD will seek to reduce noise impact in the Town Centre.

## Appendix C

Appendix C, the Town Centre Travel Plan, is available as a separate document

## Appendix D

Appendix D, the First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan, is available as a separate document