

Carlisle City Centre Development Framework



Executive Summary

February 2015

Introduction

Bilfinger GVA were appointed in June 2013 to prepare a Development Framework to guide future development in Carlisle City Centre to 2030. This executive summary presents our findings and recommendations.

Aims and Objectives

The Development Framework has the following over-riding objectives:

- To guide future development in the City Centre to 2030;
- To identify suitable locations within the City Centre to accommodate future development to meet identified needs;
- To identify potential timeframes for development/delivery;
- To incorporate the views of the community in preparing options for future development; and
- To ensure the work forms part of the Council's evidence base for the Local Plan which will inform development options and future strategy for the City Centre.

Planning Policy Context

NPPF requires local planning policy to:

- Promote competitive town centre environments;
- Adopt the sequential approach to development – 'centres first' followed by edge and then out of centre;
- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet identified future needs;
- Assess the potential to expand centres to ensure sufficient supply of sites; and
- Identify the timescales for delivery.

It is recognised that out of centre retail development could undermine the vitality and viability of Carlisle City Centre.

The Development Framework therefore seeks to address the requirements of National Planning Policy in identifying potential sites to meet future identified needs.

Retail Context

City-wide Retail Study (2012) conclusions:

- Quantitative need for c. 18,000 sq. m (200,000 sq. ft) of Class A1 non-food retail floorspace across the city by 2030;
- Limited availability of sites within the existing City Centre Primary Shopping Area (PSA) to meet current and future needs;
- Existing retailers and key department stores in the City Centre trading from relatively constrained units (size, configuration, age);
- Carlisle lacks prominent mid-to-high range retailers; and
- In retail catchment terms the City Centre caters for almost 500,000 people.

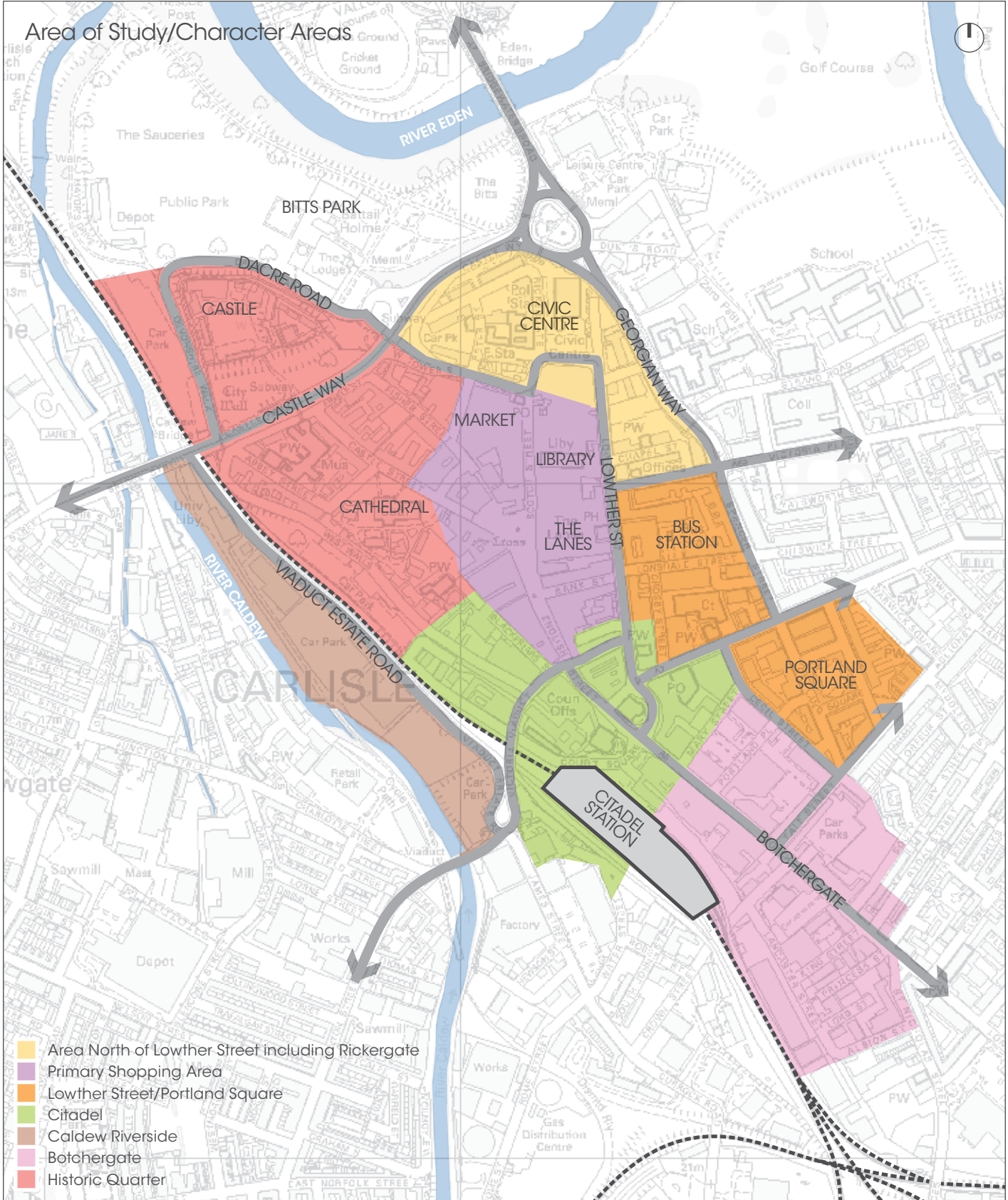
Current Issues:

- City Centre facing significant competition from out-of-centre retail destinations;
- Without identifying appropriate range of suitable and deliverable sites then City Centre vulnerable to competition; and
- Inability to meet latent retailer demand for new premises in Carlisle – retailers could gravitate to less constrained out-of-centre locations.

Study Programme

Work on the Development Framework has been undertaken in the following six stages:

Stage 1	Information Review and Analysis of City Centre Area
Stage 2	Identify Opportunities, Constraints, Key Issues and Initial Ideas and Options for Change;
Stage 3	Consultation and feedback on Initial Ideas and Options
Stage 4	Refinement and identification of Preferred Options
Stage 5	Consultation and Feedback on Preferred Options Recommendations
Stage 6	Final Report and Recommendations



Baseline and Evidence Base

The following presents some of the key analysis which has helped to inform the preparation of the options and strategy for the Development Framework

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan

The Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership has produced a Strategic Economic Plan which aims to make Cumbria one of the fastest growing economies in the UK. The focus is on supporting investment in key sectors such as manufacturing, energy, food and drink and the visitor economy. The key priorities are:

- Inspiring and supporting businesses reach their full potential;
- Ensuring motivated and skilled people, both employees and entrepreneurs;
- Ensuring the right Infrastructure to support business competitiveness and growth; and
- Using Cumbria's environment as a key economic asset.



Cumbria County Council's Economic Strategy

Cumbria County Council's Economic Strategy - 'Economic Ambition' aims to encourage growth in the business community, and through this, support the vision and aspirations of the Cumbria County Council's Local Council Plan. The Ambition focuses on the following priorities:

- The excellent north south communications enjoyed by the main towns along the M6 / West Coast Main Line corridor;
- West Cumbria's global reputation and expertise in nuclear and clean technologies;
- The County's strengths in the growing advanced manufacturing sector, particularly in submarine construction, biopharmaceutical and LED clusters, and
- The world class rural landscape and strong Lake District tourist brand.

The strategy highlights opportunities to improve Cumbria's workforce skills through increasing apprenticeships, work related training and through the provision offered through Cumbria's education institutes. Working alongside the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership is also highlighted as a priority to develop the strategic direction of the county and identify barriers and opportunities for economic growth.



Carlisle City Council's Economic Strategy

Through the Carlisle Economic Development and Enterprise Priority Group, the City Council have produced a Community Plan for Carlisle and District, for the period 2011 – 2016. The vision to deliver economic growth, included within the Community Plan, incorporates the following aims:

- Maximise opportunities conferred through significant population growth;
- Ensure measured and sustained economic growth and performance across the district;
- Ensure there are secure, diverse, and progressive employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas;
- Promote a move towards a higher wage economy;
- Ensure employers have access to skills and staff required to enable development; and
- Ensure that Carlisle has the range and quality of housing, education, health and community services to drive economic growth in the future.

The Economic Development and Enterprise Priority Group will work alongside the Chamber of Commerce, the Larger Employers Affinity Group and the Local Enterprise Partnership to identify a future action plan, with specific projects developed.



Retail Strategy

GVA was appointed by Carlisle City Council in February 2012 to prepare a city-wide retail study.

The study sought to provide a comprehensive picture of current local shopping and leisure patterns and identify the potential need for new development within the city. The study recommended that in order to pro-actively plan for future development through the emerging Local Plan, the Council should identify potential site opportunities for new development.

The retail study identified that the City Centre is performing well with around 70% of local residents within the Carlisle urban area regularly shopping for non-food retail goods. However, the study pointed out that while the historic nature of the city centre is a significant asset and attraction, it also restricts the ability of existing retailers to expand their offer and also constrains realistic development opportunities to deliver modern retail floorspace to attract new retailers and improve the performance of the city centre and enable it to assume its sub-regional role for the wider local area. It broadly identified a requirement for approximately 18,200 m² of new non-food retail floorspace over the plan period to 2030.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the study concluded that the City should proactively identify new sites within, or on the edge of, the City Centre PSA to meet the need identified.

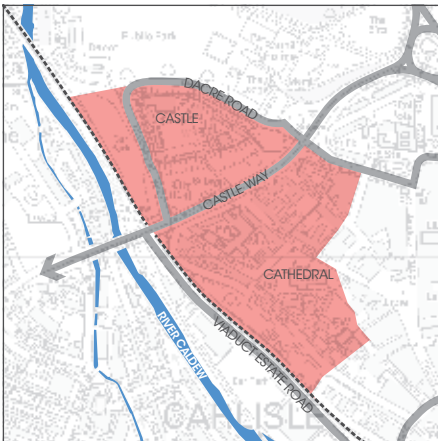
Market Analysis

Our analysis indicates that there is considerable interest from operators, investors and existing occupiers to invest in a variety of city centre uses in Carlisle including retail, hotel, restaurants and leisure.



Character Area Analysis

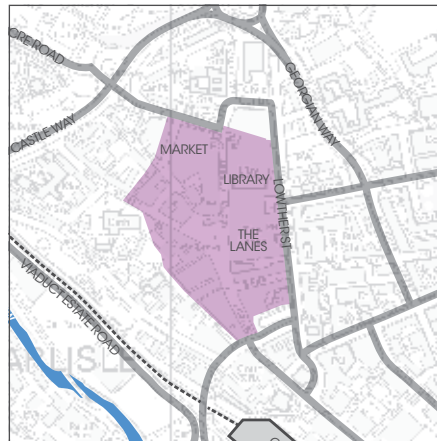
Detailed analysis of the character, opportunities and constraints and ideas regarding future options for change for each respective character area were set out in the first public consultation exercise in November 2013. The detail below summarises this analysis which provided the baseline context for further work and the preferred option consultation exercise in July 2014 and the final recommendations.



Historic Quarter

Character: the area is an established conservation area with a number of iconic listed buildings and structures including the Castle, Cathedral and City Walls. There is an attractive public realm (landscaping, surfaces, buildings etc.) and opportunities for outdoor congregation. The area also includes Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery which is a major tourist destination.

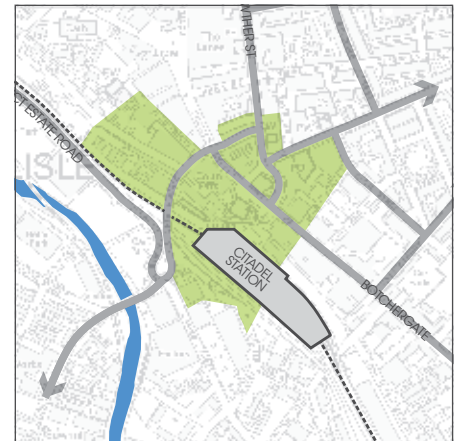
Key Issues: Castle Way severs the Castle from the wider Historic Quarter resulting in constrained pedestrian movement to the west and north. The railway and changes in levels further restricts movement. The former Hooper's Department Store building is an important destination between the City Centre Primary Shopping Area and the Historic Quarter.



Primary Shopping Area (PSA)

Character: the City Centre PSA is linear in configuration and extensively covered by a conservation area designation with a number of historic buildings and structures including the iconic Old Town Hall. The western side of the PSA fronting on to English Street comprises substantial retail and commercial buildings inter-dispersed with modern 'infill' retail units. The Market Cross is a prominent and popular public realm area in the centre of the PSA. The Lanes Shopping Centre is a modern mall destination located to the east of English Street which is physically and visually integrated with the wider historic PSA. The area also includes an indoor market.

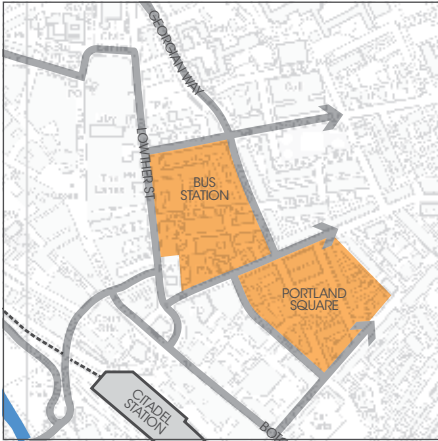
Key Issues: whilst the historic and linear nature of the City Centre PSA is a significant asset, it also constrains future potential for new development without substantial physical intervention. There are limited infill opportunities. Access, movement and car parking availability are also key issues.



Citadel

Character: a key City Centre gateway extending from the railway station to the PSA. The area is covered by a conservation area designation which includes the railway station, Court Square and the iconic Grade I listed Citadel buildings. More modern buildings to the rear of the Citadel structures accommodate a mix of retail and commercial uses. Cumbria County Council offices are located to the rear. The Crescent is a busy thoroughfare and comprises retail and leisure uses including a number of restaurants, bars and takeaways.

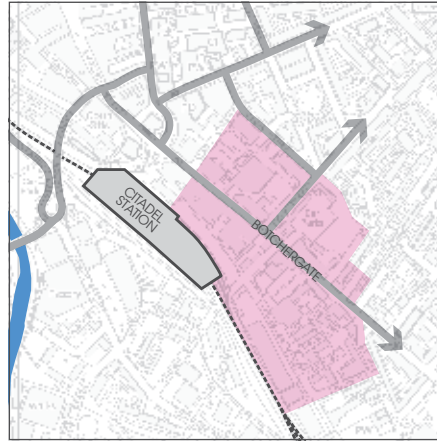
Key Issues: the relocation of the County Council to its new offices on Botchergate provides an opportunity to secure new viable uses for surplus sites and also the Citadel structures. The relocation of The Pools to the Sands Centre from the rear of the station also provides opportunities to review how access approaches to the station function.



Lowther St/Portland Square

Character: the area comprises a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses. Portland Square is an important conservation area with a number of listed buildings centred around an attractive garden square. Lowther Street is a secondary retail area with a number of shops and commercial uses. The area is the primary north – south route through the city centre for public transport with the bus station as an important hub.

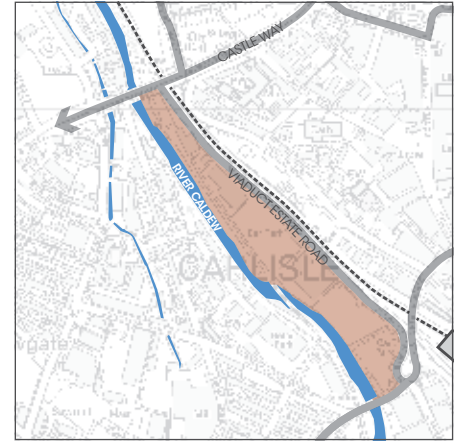
Key Issues: the relocation of Cumbria County Council offices to Botchergate will reduce footfall in the area and potential alternative viable uses for vacated premises will be required. There are significant vehicle movements along Lowther Street given the number of car parks. The pedestrian linkages between this area and the PSA are poor.



Botchergate

Character: the gateway to the City Centre from the south, Botchergate is a mixed-use area and the main focus of the City Centre evening economy with a number of pubs, clubs, restaurants and takeaway uses. The multiplex cinema is a key attraction.

Key Issues: the evening economy uses generate some environmental and visual amenity issues relating to blank day-time frontages. The new Cumbria County Council offices will significantly increase day-time footfall in the area and provide the stimulus for further investment. There are multiple ownerships in the area and physical intervention will be a challenge.

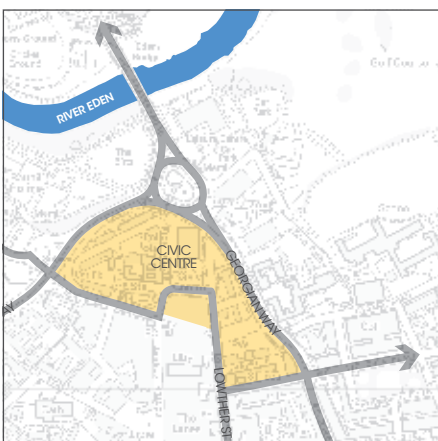


Caldew Riverside

Character: the area is detached from the wider City Centre by the railway line and significant changes in levels. Currently there are a mix of low grade commercial and leisure uses along with extensive areas of surface car parking and the area includes a number of vacant sites.

The site is under-utilised although a significant proportion of the site is subject to planning permission for a new Tesco superstore.

Key Issues: the site is in mixed ownership and Tesco has an extant planning permission. Whilst the site is an important brownfield regeneration opportunity, it is detached from the City Centre and would effectively function as a standalone destination with limited prospects of physical integration.



Area North of Lowther Street including Rickergate

Character: a mixed-use area located between the PSA to the south and key transport routes and Bitts Park to the north. The area is located within the City Centre Conservation Area. The area comprises residential, civic and administrative uses (City Council offices, police station and Magistrates Courts). The area is well defined by Georgian Way to the north and West Tower Street to the south. There are a number of surface car parks.

Key Issues: a significant proportion of the site is within public ownership and is relatively under-utilised with surface car parks and large building footprints. Pedestrian connectivity to the PSA is a key issue for the wider site.

Option Development

Following the initial options and ideas presented through the November 2013 consultation, we undertook further analysis to identify the potential for future change within each of the character areas. The following summarises the technical work which underpinned the development of the preferred options and potential for change in each character area, together with the prospective scope of intervention. This information was presented through the second consultation in July 2014.

Option Analysis

GVA led the consultant team and undertook the planning and development analysis. BDP prepared the urban design/landscape analysis and concept plans. The transportation analysis was undertaken by Hyder and Montagu Evans provided broad brush viability and property market advice.

This work has included:

- Physical Capacity and Design Analysis of the Area to the North of Lowther Street including Rickergate;
- Transport Analysis of the Area to the North of Lowther Street including Rickergate and the Station/Citadel;
- Engagement with Officers at Carlisle CC and Cumbria CC on all character areas;
- Initial engagement with public sector land owners in the Area to the North of Lowther Street including Rickergate; and
- Commercial advice / soft market testing in the Area to the North of Lowther Street including Rickergate.

Potential for Change

Each of the character areas has been categorised according to their potential for future change and prospective scope of intervention. This is illustrated on the plan to the right which draws upon the analysis undertaken.



Low Potential For Change/Intervention:

- Historic Quarter; and
- Primary Shopping Area;



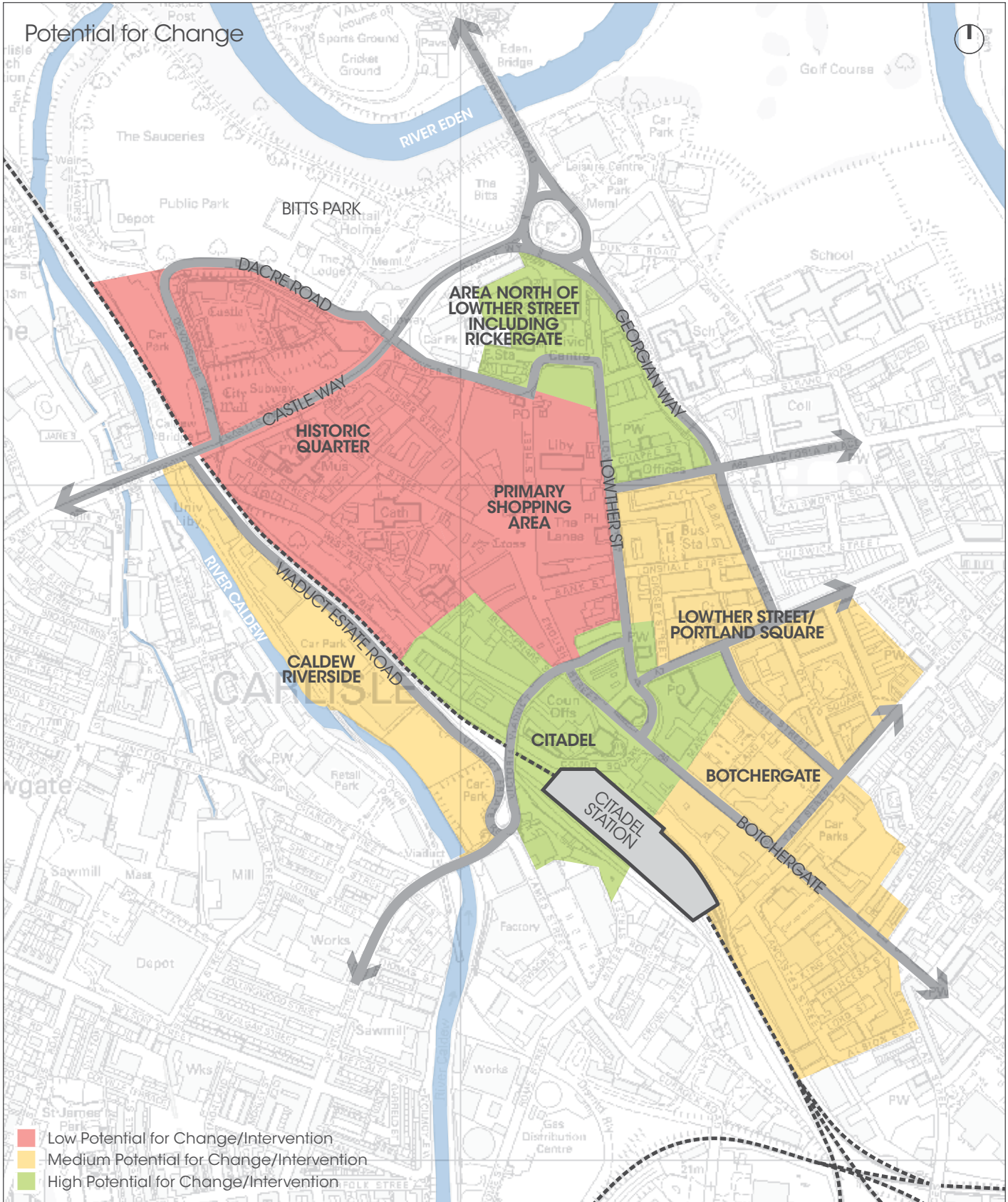
Medium Potential For Change/Intervention:

- Botchergate;
- Lowther Street/Portland Square; and
- Caldew Riverside;



High Potential For Change/Intervention:

- Citadel, and
- Area North of Lowther Street Including Rickergate



Low potential for change/intervention

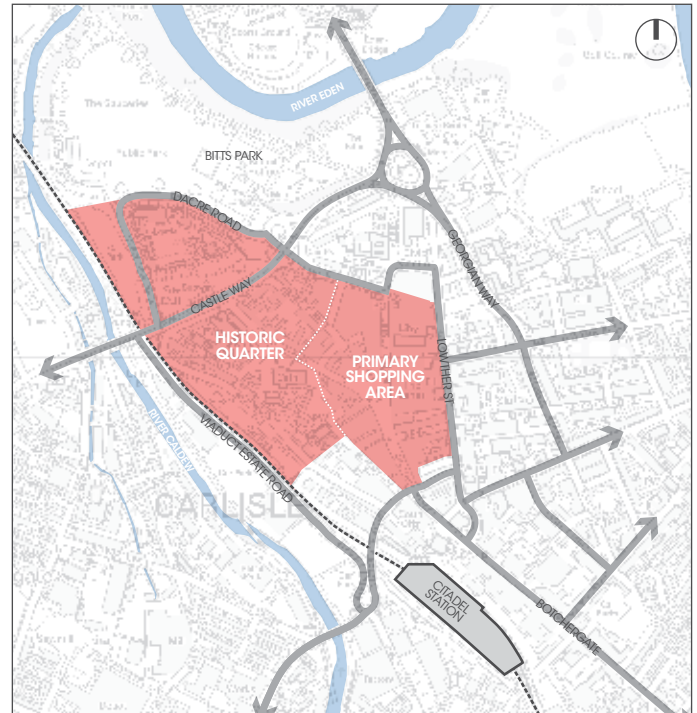
The following presents the guiding principles which are recommended to be used to promote and enhance the Historic Quarter and the Primary Shopping Area in the future. The emphasis for these character areas should be active management rather than significant physical interventions.

Historic Quarter

- Limited (if any) Physical Intervention/Redevelopment;
- Increase Pedestrian Permeability and Accessibility (Castle Way);
- Promote Key Attractions (Museum, Castle, Cathedral and Tullie House);
- Maintain and Enhance Attractive Public Realm;
- Focus on uses and activities which complement and enhance the character of the area; and
- Potential for more outdoor seating and pedestrian activity.

Primary Shopping Area

- Limited (if any) Physical Intervention/Redevelopment;
- Increase Pedestrian Permeability and Accessibility;
- Promote Flexibility in Secondary Areas (Off Pitch);
- Maintain and Enhance Attractive Public Realm;
- Maintain and Enhance Transport Movement Circulation; and
- Manage Parking Capacity.



Medium potential for change/intervention

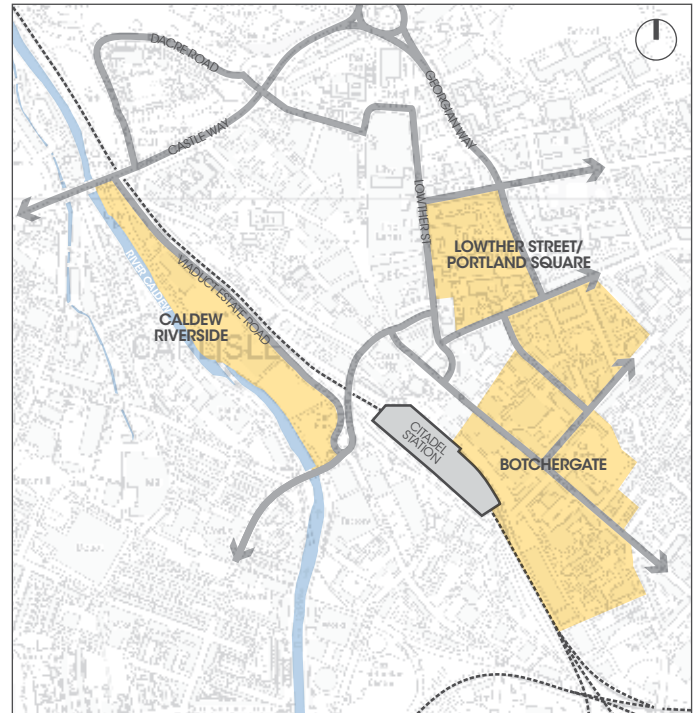
The following presents the guiding principles which are recommended to be used to promote and enhance the Botchergate, Lowther Street/Portland Square and Caldew Riverside character areas in the future. These areas require active management but also have potential for new development.

Botchergate

- Build Upon New County Council Office Anchor;
- Promote Flexible Uses in Secondary Areas (Off Pitch);
- Improve Public Realm – Gateway from the South;
- Implement the adopted Conservation Area Management Plan and reduce the risk posed to the Conservation Area as a heritage asset;
- Manage the Evening Economy (Land Use and Environment);
- Enhance pedestrian and vehicular movement;
- Manage Parking Capacity; and
- Encourage the appropriate re-use of gap and vacant premises and the empty upper floors of properties in the area;

Caldew Riverside

- Assist in expanding the City's Green Infrastructure network through the creation of a riverside walk/cycle way.
- Brownfield Regeneration Opportunity;
- Implemented Foodstore Consent (Tesco);
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular access to the area; and
- Potential for mix of uses to complement (but not compete) with the City Centre.



Lowther St/Portland Square

- Limited Physical Intervention in Portland Square due to the conservation area and historic buildings;
- County Council relocation provides opportunities to encourage a viable new mix of uses (residential, employment);
- Opportunity to redevelop surface car park on Lowther Street;
- Encourage flexible mix of uses on Lowther Street;
- Improve public realm and viability of uses around the bus station;
- Opportunity to address physical barrier of Lowther Street by improving permeability and ease of access to PSA;
- Improve public realm where opportunities arise;
- Enhance pedestrian and vehicular movement; and
- Manage parking capacity.



High potential for change/intervention

The following presents the guiding principles which are recommended to promote the Citadel/Station and Area to the North of Lowther Street including Rickergate in the future.

Citadel/ Station

- Significant Enhancement of Station Public Realm;
- Improved Gateway (Court Square to Citadel);
- Limited Physical Intervention at Court Square;
- English Street/Rear of Citadel - Mixed Use Redevelopment Opportunity (Public Ownerships). Uses could include office, leisure, residential, education and ancillary car parking. A flexible approach would help to ensure that appropriate and deliverable opportunities come forward in response to market conditions;
- Opportunity to Secure Viable Use for Listed Citadel Structures;
- Public realm enhancements to English Street (where possible);
- To review and improve station car parking access and drop off provision; and
- A major redevelopment opportunity with the relocation of the swimming pool from the rear of the station.

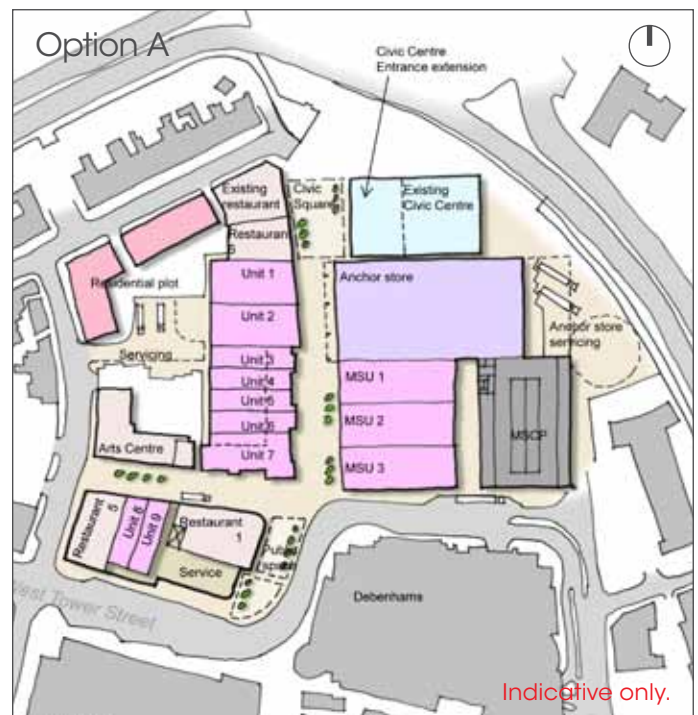


Area North of Lowther St including Rickergate

Option A: Retain Civic Centre Tower

Whilst the Civic Centre tower is retained under this option, there are significant physical interventions proposed, including:

- Construction of new development on the footprint of the Civic Centre buildings which are to be demolished (excluding tower);
- Construction of new development on the adjacent existing car park;
- Demolition and redevelopment of existing police station / courts buildings (Old Police Station façade to be retained);
- Demolition of existing premises along Warwick Street;
- Pedestrianisation of Rickergate; and
- Creation of a new vehicular access from Georgian Way.



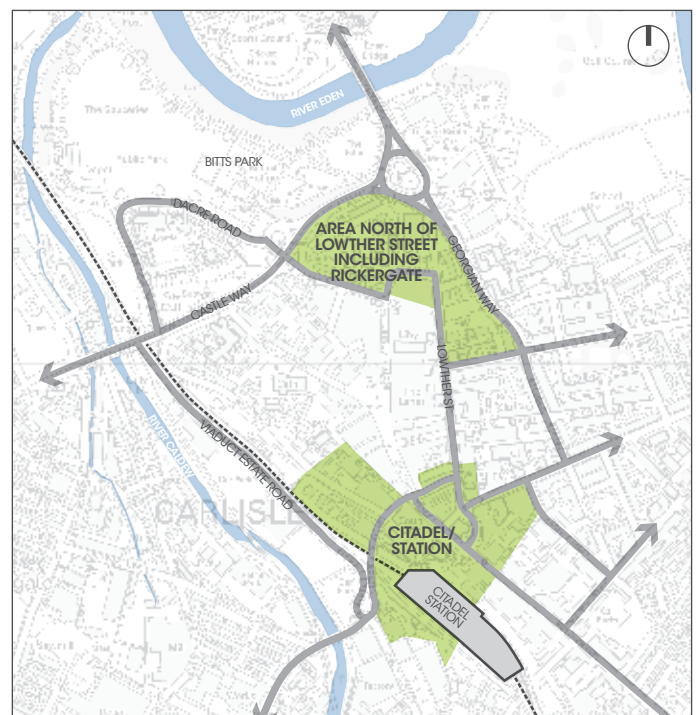
Option B: Comprehensive Development of Civic Centre Tower

The interventions are the same as under Option A with the exception that:

- The Civic Centre would be demolished and the site would be subject to comprehensive redevelopment;
- The Anchor Store is slightly larger and has a higher quality of space;
- The unit next to the existing restaurant (Adrianos) would be used for retail as it is located on the Anchor Store retail circuit; and
- The large retail units on Rickergate would be double height, providing more floorspace.

Key proposals for both options are as follows:

Use	Option A	Option B
	Quantum (m2)	Quantum (m2)
Class A1 Department Store	8,278	8,688
Retail Units	3,676	5,130
Small Retail Units	2,976	2,976
Restaurant Units	2,272	1,929
Total	17,202	18,723
Residential	31 Apartments	31 Apartments



The Preferred Option

The following presents the Preferred Option for development in the Area to the North of Lowther Street including Rickergate together with a series of exemplar images and artist's impressions of an indicative future scheme.

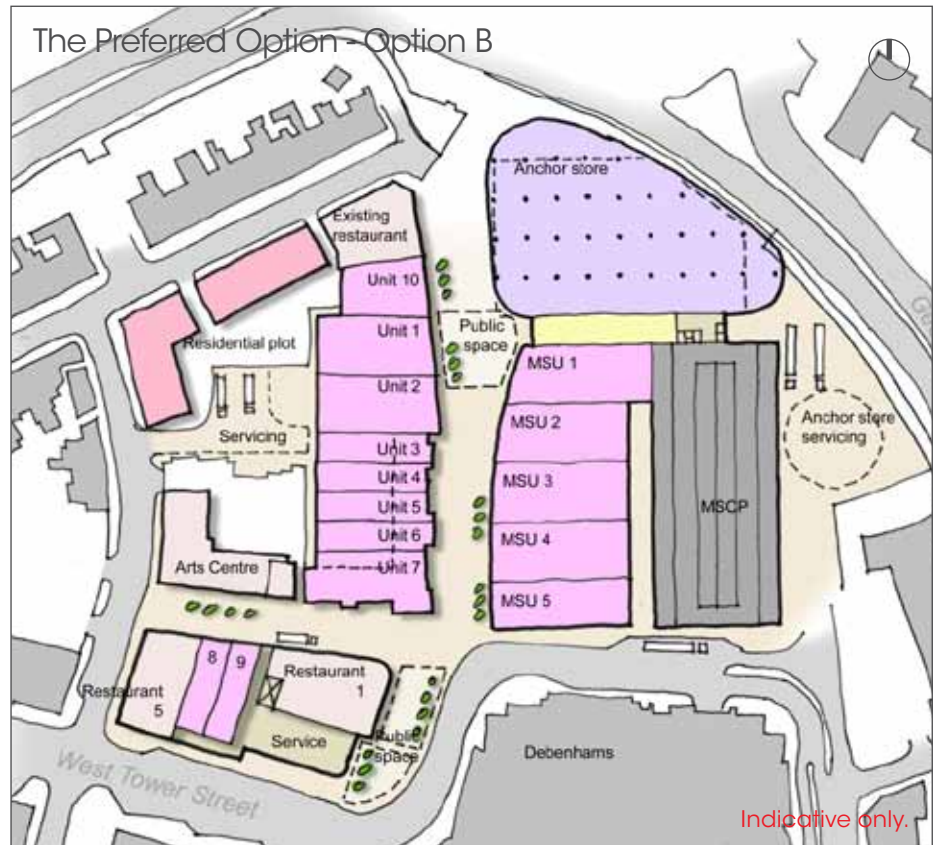
The Preferred Option/ Comparative Analysis

Whilst both options provide a logical extension to the existing City Centre Primary Shopping Area (PSA), the main difference between the respective options for Rickergate is as follows:

- Option A promotes partial demolition of the Civic Centre (tower retained) whilst Option B identifies total demolition;
- Option B enables more retail development to be delivered given the larger development area;
- Commercial feedback has identified that the size, shape and frontage / prominence of the Anchor Store under Option B is more attractive whereas it is constrained under Option A and does not meet current operator expectations;
- Option B has a stronger retail street / circuit and frontage; and
- Option B provides an increased quantum of car parking.

Option B is therefore recommended as the preferred option for new retail-led development in Carlisle City Centre. It would largely but not exclusively meet the quantitative need identified in the City-wide retail Study which the City Council are actively required to plan for.

The images show examples of redevelopment elsewhere whilst the drawings indicate how the scheme may look if development is brought forward.



Aerial view looking north east



Consultation on the Preferred Option

Consultation on the Draft Development Framework took place between 28th July and 1st September 2014.

The following highlights some of the key issues that were identified through the process of consultation, a number of which have led to changes which have been reflected in the Final Report and Recommendations.

Extension of Primary Shopping Area to include land to the East of Lowther Street

Views were expressed around the possibility of extending the City Centre PSA to include a wider location including land to the east of Lowther Street (including the Lowther Street car park) in responding to future retail needs.

Notwithstanding the challenges this may pose (including land ownership and permeability), we recognise that there has been some recent interest in considering retail development in this area and that the identification of this area along with land to the north of Lowther Street / RickerGate for future comparison retail development would afford a greater degree of flexibility to respond to the identified needs for future retail development as they arise.

Recognising the Value and Importance of the RickerGate Community

Some respondents felt that the value and importance of the RickerGate community would be undermined by the development proposals shown in the Draft Framework. We would like to reassure everyone that one of our key objectives is to respect the values of the RickerGate community alongside the other communities who live in the City Centre area. Any future development proposals will be assessed in relation to these existing communities and in consultation with the community.

Sequentially Preferable Sites and Delivery Timeframes

Whilst noting the preference of some respondents for major retail development to be focussed on alternative sites to the preferred option, we would like to emphasise that other sites within the City Centre do not have the capacity to accommodate the required quantum of retail growth or within the required timeframes. Some sites are also sequentially less preferable in retail planning terms as they are detached from the City Centre PSA.

Preserving the Character of the Conservation Area in RickerGate

The development proposals in RickerGate are not considered incompatible with its conservation area status as the conservation area designation would not in itself preclude development but instead ensure that any future proposals maintain the character and heritage quality of the area which has already been identified.

The importance of the Citadel Area

The Final Report has been strengthened to reflect the considerable potential which exists for mixed use redevelopment of the Citadel and wider area regeneration. The City Council are continuing to work jointly with Cumbria County Council to fully understand, promote and accelerate the realisation of the redevelopment potential of the Citadel site. For these reasons, the delivery of new development in the area of the Citadel is a key priority for the City Centre Development Framework particularly in the context of the forthcoming relocation from the Courts by Cumbria County Council and the opportunity to take forward and consider some of the future development/investment opportunities in more detail.

Flood Risk

Some concerns were raised in relation to the possible risk of flooding in the future, particularly in the Caldew Riverside and RickerGate areas. The Local Plan already contains policies which deal with flood risk and the need to consider for example, a potential breach scenario in the flood defences which protect these areas, would be dealt with through the process of a Flood Risk Assessment which would be required to accompany any development proposal for these areas.

Green Infrastructure

The importance of promoting a green environment and sustainable methods of transport (including non-motorised transport) is embedded in both Cumbria City Council's and Carlisle City Council's green infrastructure objectives and is seen as an essential component to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of climate change. The Council's green infrastructure policies will form an important part of the City Centre Development Framework over the time period of the plan.

Cyclists and Cycleways

There have been suggestions that more emphasis should be given to cycleways. The City Centre Development Framework does refer to improved permeability (movement) across the City and it should be emphasised that this extends to all users including cyclists. Other policies in the Local Plan seek to promote a continuous, safe and attractive public rights of way network including cycleways.

Transport

The impact of potential future development proposals on the transport network has also been raised during the consultation and it is worth pointing out that important transport modelling work is being undertaken to support the implementation of the Local Plan. Consultants have recently been appointed to undertake an assessment of the necessary interventions, including specific improvements to Citywide cycle and walking networks. This study once published will inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will act to prioritise investment in infrastructure across Carlisle.

Car Parking

The need to manage parking capacity is acknowledged by the Framework as a matter which requires attention. The City Council is currently considering the management and parking arrangements for car parks in its ownership and how these can be used to help maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the City Centre.

Park and Ride

A query was raised on the possible need for a Park and Ride facility but it should be noted that there is no evidence to currently support the need for a park and ride site.

Vacancies and Displacement

Some concern was raised about the presence of vacant retail units in the core of the City Centre. One of the key things to emphasise is that existing vacancies are below the national average and there is a relatively strong demand for vacant units within the core of the City Centre and a relatively quick turnaround in bringing new occupiers into properties that have been vacated. The City Council are also committed to working with stakeholders to reduce the number of vacancies within the City Centre and will be proactive in using the powers available to them to assist in this objective. It is also worth noting that evidence from the Carlisle Retail Study supports the need for additional retail units within the City Centre particularly from a qualitative perspective in terms of providing the size, form and configuration of units which accord with retailers' current high street needs.



Recommendations

The Key Recommendations and Way Forward are outlined below.

Key Recommendations

The Development Framework will guide future development in Carlisle City Centre to 2030.

The Development Framework forms part of the evidence base which underpins the identification of suitable and deliverable site specific allocations and / or broad locations for growth that will be identified in the Local Plan.

The Development Framework does not have the status of either a Development Plan Document or a Supplementary Planning Document but will be a material consideration in the determination of any future planning applications submitted in advance of the new Local Plan being adopted.

The plan opposite presents the key recommendations of the Carlisle City Centre Development Framework. There are 3 key proposals:

- Firstly, the proposed northern extension of the Primary Shopping Area into the Rickergate and Lowther Street areas which are denoted with the green hatching;
- Secondly, the proposed development opportunity at Citadel which is denoted with the purple hatching; and
- Thirdly, the proposed development opportunity at Caldew Riverside which is denoted with the brown hatching.

Northern Extension of the Primary Shopping Area into the Rickergate and Lowther Street area

A significant part of the area is in public sector ownership and includes a number of buildings which occupy large plots with considerable development potential. These buildings are located next to a number of under utilised sites including surface car parks. The conceptual option development plans and supporting analysis outlined in this document show that these sites have the capacity to accommodate the required levels of floorspace outlined in the Retail Study. In addition, the analysis has shown that there is the market appetite to deliver development on this scale and in this location and that there is occupier demand to take up the floorspace that is provided.

Citadel: A Catalyst to Regenerate the Southern part of Carlisle City Centre

The Citadel site occupies a pivotal position as a gateway to the city from the station and has considerable potential for future mixed use development. There is an opportunity to re-use and redevelop parts of the site in the short term for a variety of main town centre uses including conference facilities, residential, educational and institutional uses. Our analysis does however conclude that the area does not easily lend itself to major retail led development. It is important however to note that any development around the Citadel area will need to be in keeping with the objective to preserve and enhance the significance of the unique nature of the heritage assets in this locality.

The reuse and redevelopment of the buildings and land on the site could also act as a catalyst to enhance the vitality and viability of the southern extent of the City Centre, including Botchergate which is in keeping with the objectives of the Development Framework. Opportunities to secure and build on this should therefore be maximised as far as is possible.

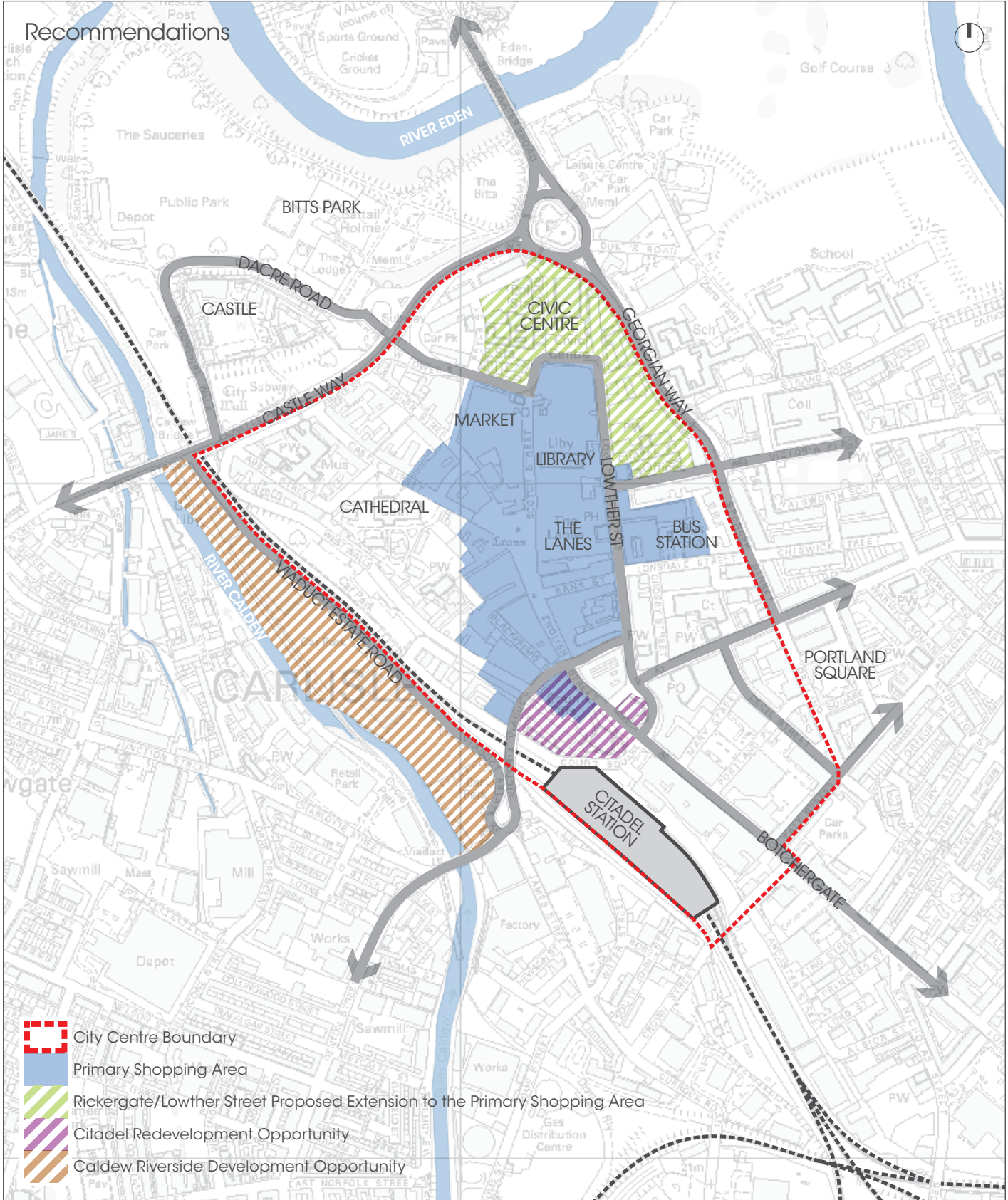
Caldew Riverside

The area is suitable for a mix of uses which should complement those found in the City Centre. While the site has an implemented foodstore consent, this document has highlighted that the area is sequentially less preferable for major new Class A1 comparison (non-food) retail development than the City Centre and this forms a key part of our recommendations. The area is identified as having 'medium' rather than 'high' potential for change in view of the above mentioned constraints and associated development viability concerns which will need to be addressed in bringing development opportunities forward.

It is important that proposals for redevelopment should utilise the opportunities presented by the River Caldew including the riverside walk/cycle way and links to the City Centre. The opportunity for bringing forward site development proposals within the context of a coherent vision and strategy for the wider area should also be supported.

Historic Quarter; Primary Shopping Area; Botchergate and the Lowther Street / Portland Square Areas

While the focus on the above recommendations has been on the redevelopment opportunities which have been identified in the Rickergate/Lowther Street, Citadel and Caldew Riverside areas, the guiding principles identified in the 'Proposed Strategy' for each of the other areas considered forms an integral part of the Development Framework Recommendations and should be embedded in policy where relevant and appropriate.



Recommendations

-  City Centre Boundary
-  Primary Shopping Area
-  Rickergate/Lowther Street Proposed Extension to the Primary Shopping Area
-  Citadel Redevelopment Opportunity
-  Caldew Riverside Development Opportunity

The Way Forward

Northern Extension of the Primary Shopping Area into the Rickergate and Lowther Street area

Further and more detailed work will need to be undertaken to identify whether:

- The site can be made available for development within the required timescales;
- The proposed scheme, which includes relocation of the Council offices and other public sector bodies, is viable in cost terms (funding and investment);
- There is sufficient physical capacity to accommodate the site (highways and other site-specific infrastructure and environmental matters); and
- The proposal is commercially viable and attractive in terms of economic returns, land values and levels of potential market demand.

The majority of the land required to deliver the Preferred Option is within City Council ownership and discussions with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have indicated that they are willing to explore the opportunities for relocation with a view to making their land available for redevelopment. Further discussions with the MoJ will be undertaken to take the development opportunity forward.

It is recognised that careful consideration is required to ensure that any redevelopment would integrate effectively with the existing area. Redevelopment also offers an opportunity to better integrate the area with the parks beyond, the Sands Centre (as a key leisure hub), the new Arts Centre (and entertainment venue) and the car parks at the Sands and Swifts which many visitors from the north currently use.

Ongoing market testing with potential developers/investors is essential to ensure that the Preferred Option and conceptual proposals identified in this report are progressed and refined in line with current operator requirements. Community engagement is also essential as plans for the area are progressed.

Citadel: A Catalyst to Regenerate the Southern part of Carlisle City Centre

It is recommended that the City Council prepare a Development Brief for the site in conjunction with Cumbria County Council to outline the opportunities and scope for a more comprehensive redevelopment of the site. This approach will ensure that the potential benefits of site redevelopment are maximised and that any opportunities to accelerate delivery are identified. Such an approach will also ensure that development proposals respect the significance of the heritage assets which characterise this area, which could be prejudiced if development comes forward on a piecemeal basis. Site development opportunities should be flexible in nature to respond to changing market requirements, thereby ensuring that proposals do not prejudice any longer term opportunities. We also recommend that further market testing is undertaken to inform the content of the Development Brief. Community engagement is also essential as plans for the area are progressed.

Caldew Riverside

Caldew Riverside is considered to be a medium to long term development opportunity area where development initiatives will be brought forward by the private sector. The City Council should however give further consideration to the opportunity of preparing an overarching masterplan for the area, at an appropriate future time, which will provide more detail than is currently available in the Development Framework. Such an approach will again be important in acting to ensure that the opportunity presented by the site in its widest sense is not lost to piecemeal development outwith the context of a clear strategy. Community engagement is also essential as plans for the area are progressed.

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