



# A Masterplan for Central Portishead

Wyndham Way Opportunity Area  
Masterplan - draft for consultation

August 2022



Portishead  
Town  
Council



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Allies and Morrison  
Urban Practitioners

**AVISON  
YOUNG**

**PJA**

 **Distinctive**



## INTRODUCTION

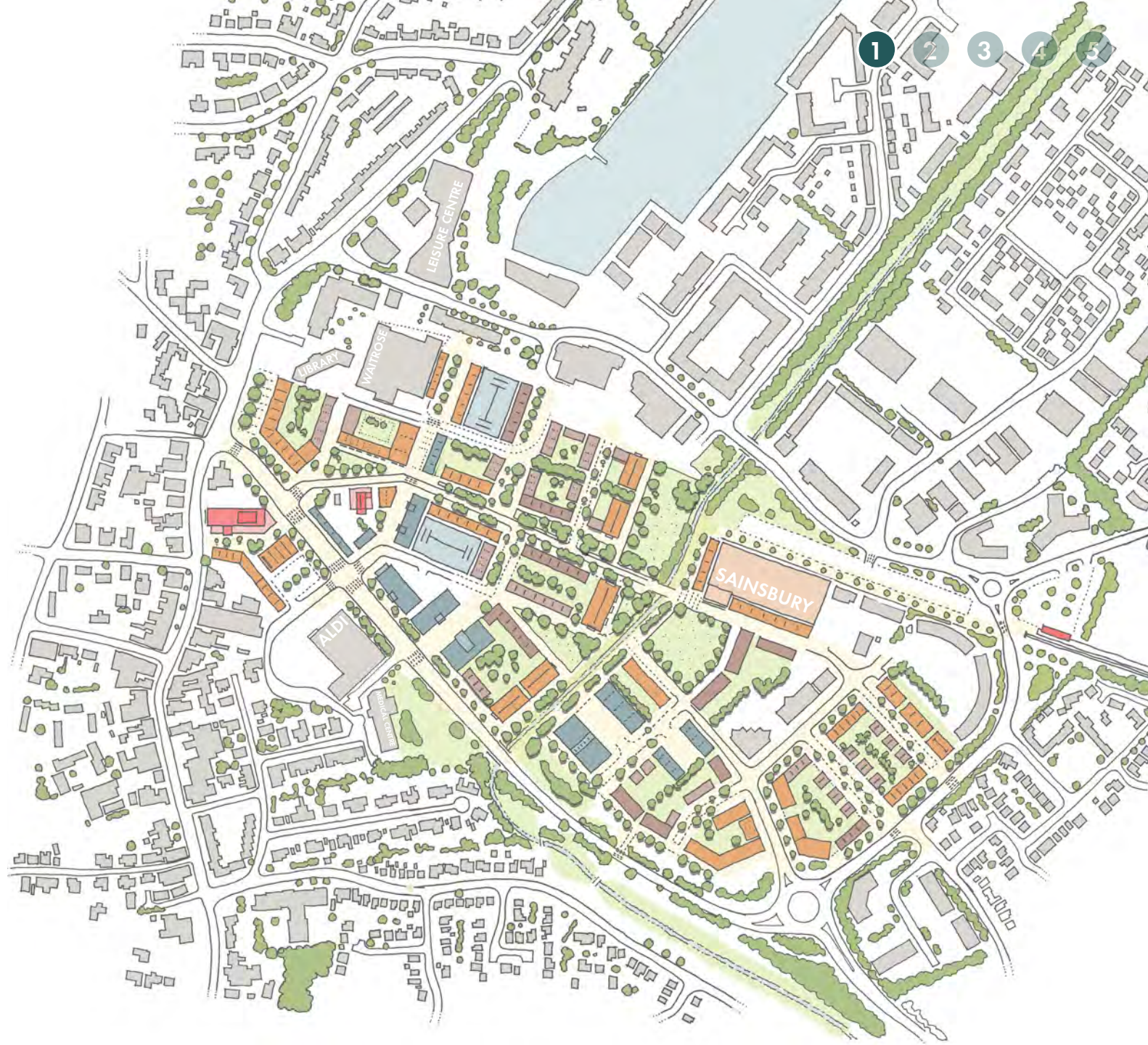
# Introduction

This draft masterplan has been prepared to help guide potential future development of the central area of Portishead, between the High Street, the Marina and the planned new railway station. It has been led by North Somerset Council working with Portishead Town Council and key land owners and with extensive local consultation.

The project started with the 2021 publication of the Vision and Scoping Study which set out the key principles for the area and identified how change could benefit Portishead as a whole. The town has grown substantially over recent decades, and this is an important opportunity to make better connections between the new and old areas.

This is also an important chance to help make Portishead more sustainable through supporting the local economy, helping to reduce car-dependency and creating a greener place.

Change is expected to be gradual - there are many different land owners in the area, so this is a framework for change rather than a big planning application. This approach helps to set a clear direction of travel and coordinate designs so that they add up to deliver the vision we want to see.





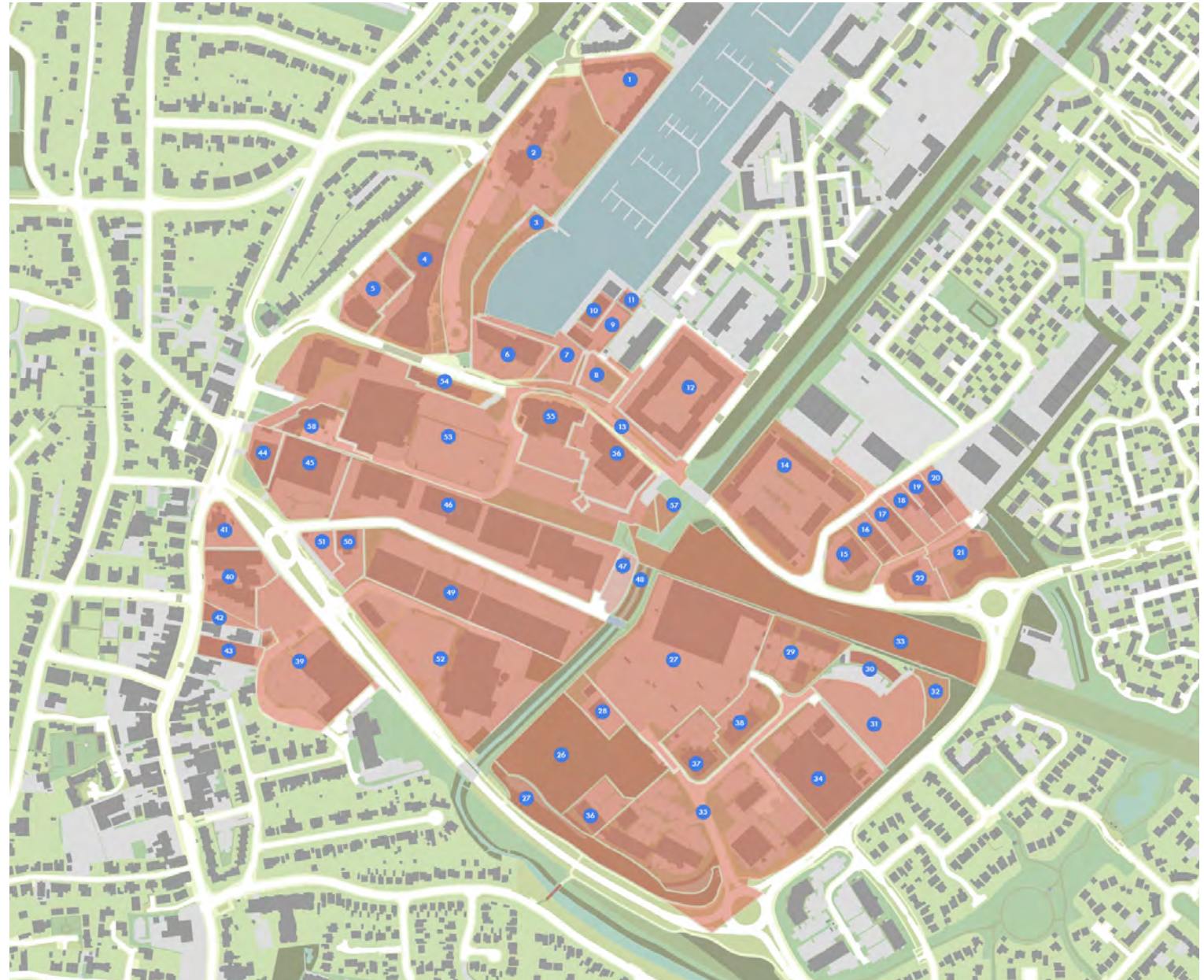
# INTRODUCTION

The land ownership in the area is a really important factor for how the area could change over time. This plan shows the many different parcels of land, and illustrates just how many different land owners have an interest.

A masterplan for an area like this is different to a planning application. It can't dictate a single design, or require that things are developed at a specific time. Even public projects like changes to roads are subject to funding being available. Any change will be gradual, piecemeal and could take many different forms.

The masterplan creates a framework for change. It sets out how the different area can be developed in coordinated ways which contribute to a wider picture. This includes planning the network of streets and spaces and considering different uses. It has to take account of existing uses which may not change for a long time, as well as be flexible enough to allow land owners to develop a range of different options.

What it can do is show what good change should look like, and provide clear rules for the things which are fundamental.



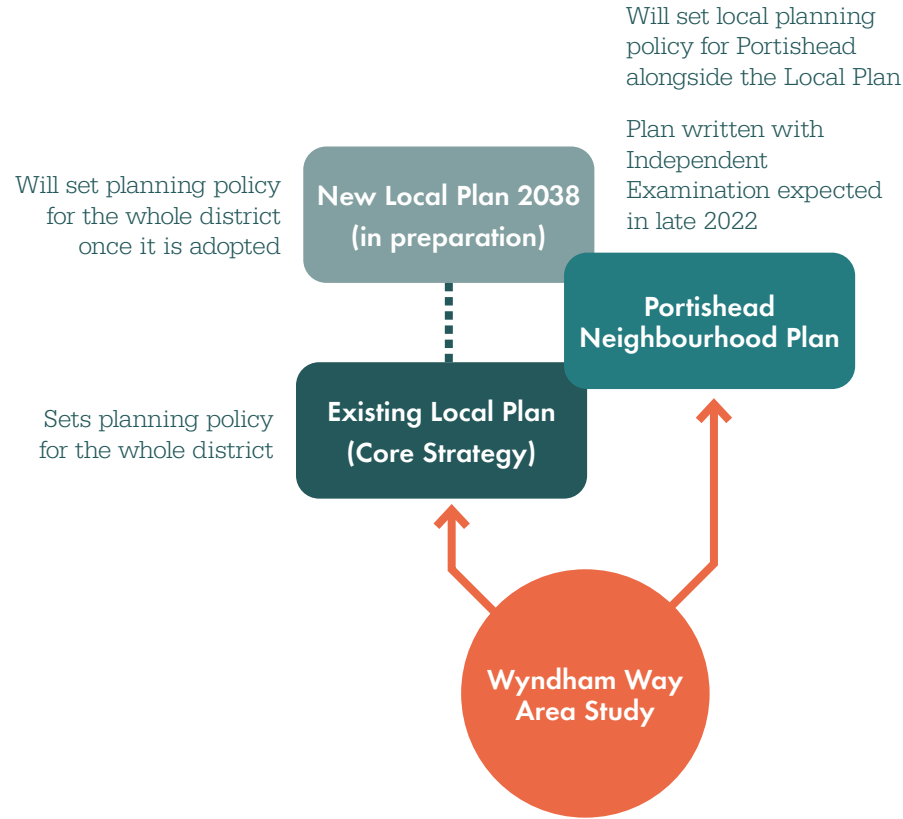


# INTRODUCTION

## Understanding the area

This masterplan is based on extensive research across many different topics. The team has studied the history of the area and how the town has grown responding to the landscape and the historic industry. The team has looked at the environmental and ecological constraints, including wildlife and water. This has informed ideas for how the area can work better for the environment and help reduce the risk of flooding through good design.

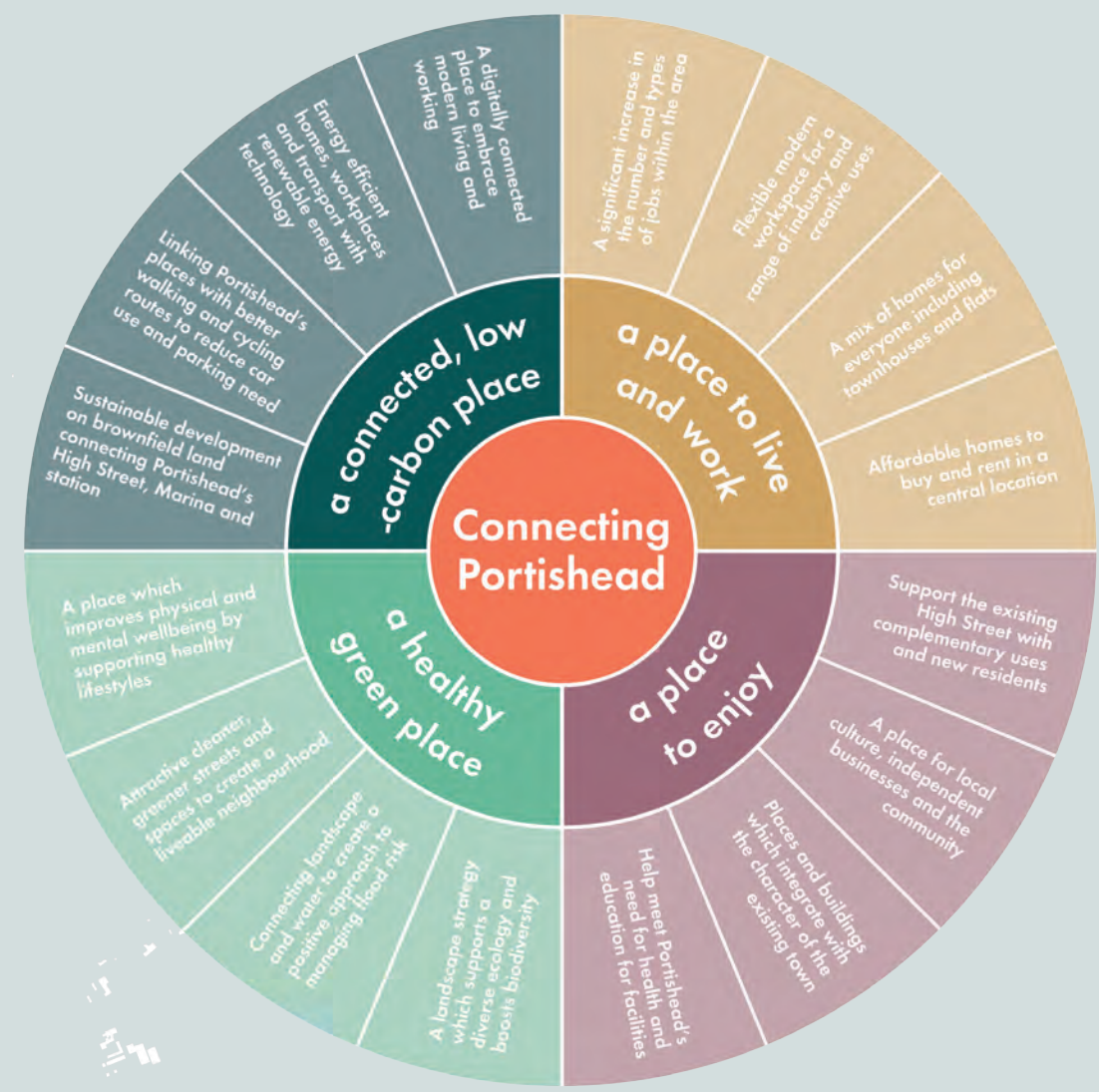
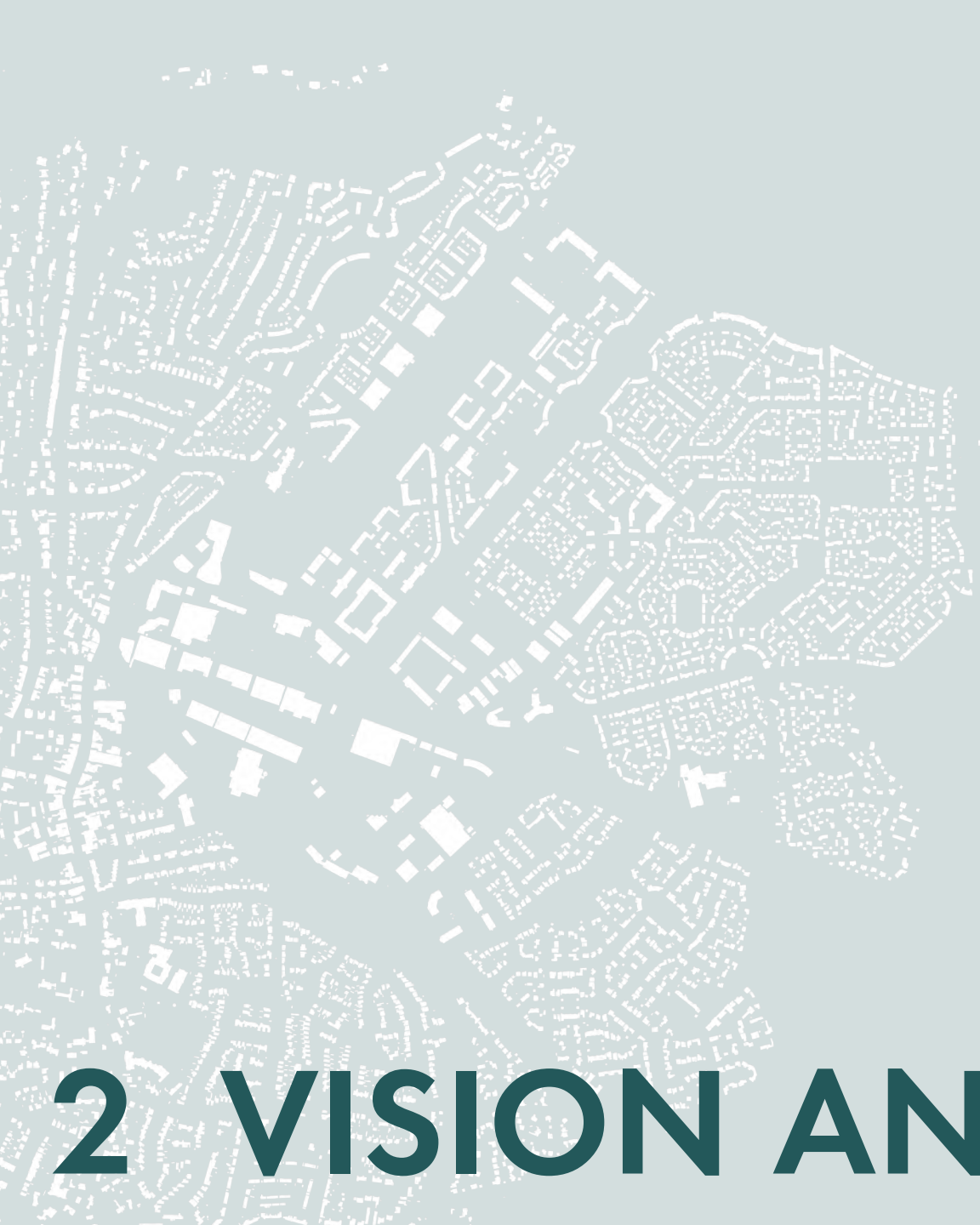
The baseline work also looks at the social and economic context, identifying the issues and opportunities for new and existing uses. This work has also taken place in the context of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan and could help to inform future planning policy development.



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- Victorian
- 1930s
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 2020s



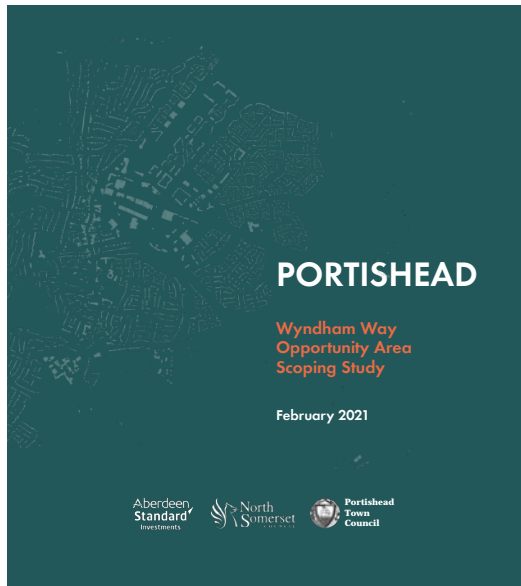


# 2 VISION AND PRINCIPLES

## VISION AND PRINCIPLES

# Vision and principles

The 2021 Vision is the starting point for this masterplan, and remains central to the approach. It was developed through our consultation work and has helped shape our detailed ideas for the area. You can read this document on our project website.



**“Develop a place for Portishead, of Portishead, capturing the town’s unique character and embracing the opportunities for living and working in a better way.”**

Plan a new mixed area on central brownfield sites to create a sustainable place and maximise the return on the public investment in Portishead Rail

Build a place for people to live and work locally, supporting a circular economy and reduced car dependency

Connecting Portishead

Create a joined-up approach for a healthy, liveable and sustainable place by coordinating and connecting different sites

Ensure that the necessary community infrastructure including school and health provision is delivered to support the development

After dark, Wyndham Way becomes a sort of no man's land and doesn't feel too safe

There is no sense of arrival and no great impression of the High Street

The leisure centre is too small, in the wrong place and poor quality

The intersection at the petrol station, Wyndham Way, High Street and Cabstand is a very awkward pinch point. The intersection NEEDS to be eased, it is very difficult to get through, very busy and way too much traffic

More green space!

The rhine greenway could become central green area

Old Mill Road feels like a wasted space. Could this be made into a link between Waitrose and Homebase?

We enjoy coming to Portishead to walk along the greenway, marina and pier.

The area needs to be more attractive with nicer public spaces

The site has a poor structural environment. It disrupts public space and footpaths and is a health hazard

The Old Mill Road businesses are essential and provide important high skilled and professional jobs

Can we improve the building frontages in the Wyndham Way area?

Could we include an arts or culture club?

Harbour Road is aggressive for pedestrians, a better route across the car park would help

# 3 CONSULTATION





## CONSULTATION

# Listening to local people

The approach to the masterplan is being developed through ongoing consultation with local residents, councillors and landowners. It began with the extensive listening exercise in the Vision and Scoping Study and has continued through new consultation in spring 2022. We have received hundreds of comments and ideas through our library drop-in, stakeholder site visit workshop and through the website:

**Desire for better public transport:** people would like to see better bus services and a well-connected railway station.

**Improved accessibility:** The lack of good walking and cycling routes through the area tends to promote car use. Many enjoy walking but suggested that the area needs new and better connections.

**Importance of the rhyne greenway:** Many people use the rhyne greenway as an enjoyable space to walk, cycle and run. People see its environmental importance and would like it to be protected and enhanced.

**Improving the attractiveness of the area:** People are keen to see more attractive streets including planting and seating.

**Parking:** There are different opinions around parking provision - some people would like to see parking in Portishead sustained and some people think there is too much. The existing design and location of car parking makes the area hard to navigate and less attractive to walk through.

**Traffic:** Many commented on the amount of traffic in Portishead and the dominance of cars. The Cabstand junction is a particular pressure point for the area.

**Protect current economic uses:** People want to see new businesses settle and thrive whilst protecting the current industry within the Wyndham Way Area. There is a desire for smaller independent shops and businesses.

**Sustainability:** Development must aim for carbon neutrality - energy efficient and enhance and protect local wildlife.

**Schools:** There is concern that rapid growth in new housing would place pressure on school places.

**Leisure:** Some people would like to see the leisure centre improved or replaced with a new facility.





# CONSULTATION

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Feedback and ideas from the consultation have helped to develop the vision and principles into the draft masterplan

A cycle way from the High Street down Old Mill Road, past the station and then parallel to the railway to Pill.

Redevelop Old Mill Road and create an attractive connection between the station and the High Street. Encourage independent businesses to set up in Portishead to attract visitors to Portishead.

The Old Mill Road businesses are essential and provide important high skilled and professional jobs

Encourage independent businesses to set up in Portishead to attract visitors to Portishead.

There is no sense of arrival and no great impression of the High Street

This is a good opportunity to create an attractive and distinctive gateway between the new station and the High Street

When you approach Portishead from Wyndham Way, you notice straight away the lack of trees. So we definitely more evergreens needed here

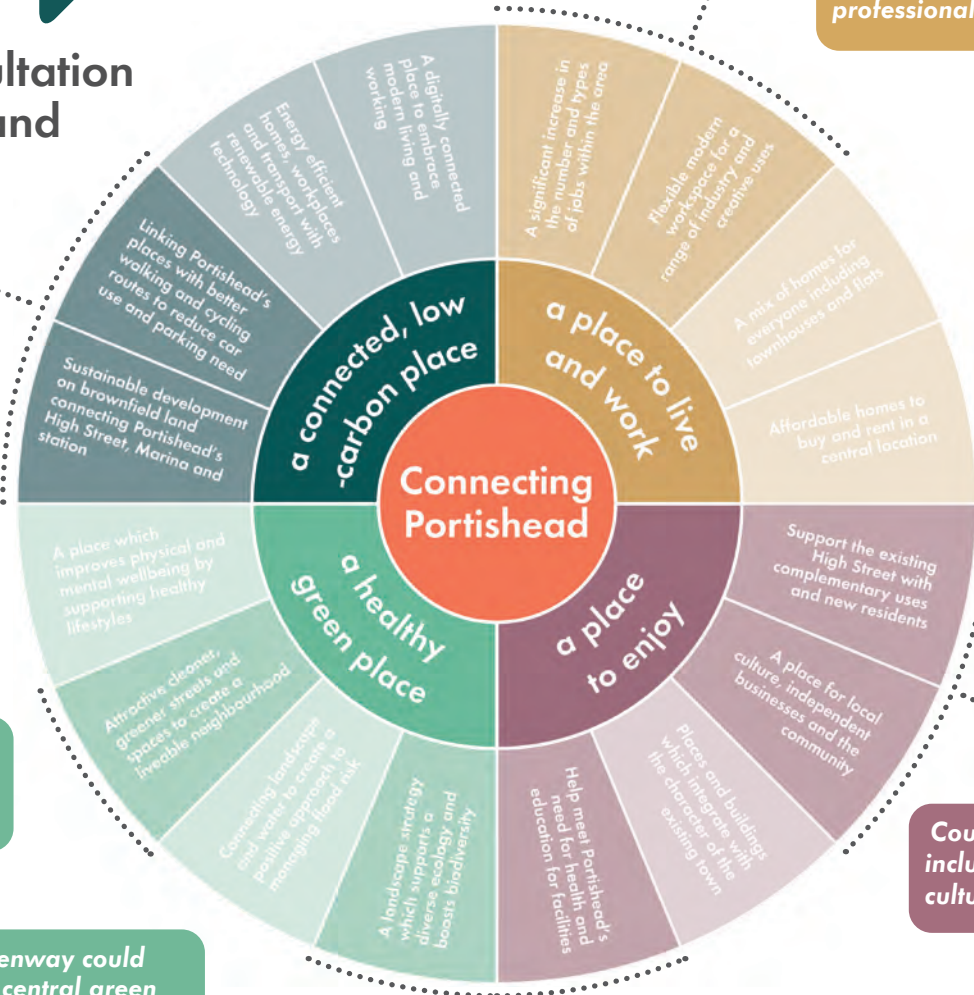
The area needs to be more attractive with nicer public spaces

The greenway could become central green area

More green space and space for wildlife

A wider range of businesses would encourage people to start business and find work in Portishead

Could we include an arts or culture club?





# 4 MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK



# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## The masterplan framework

The masterplan has been designed to explore and address the key outcomes of the engagement and research process. It sets out a joined-up approach for the gradual transformation of the area in the context of a series of important discussions which cover not only the Wyndham Way area, but affect the wider town.



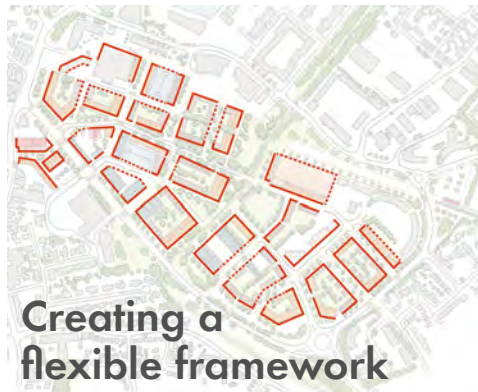
**Workspace & industry**



**A green and blue environment**



**A connected district**



**Creating a flexible framework**



**Parking**



**School place provision**



**Leisure centre options**



**Planning for Portishead rail**



**Somerset Hall options**



## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

# Workspace and employment

The existing employment in the Wyndham Way area has been an important part of the public debate around the masterplan. Employment and workspace in and around the town centre has a significant role to play in making the town more economically sustainable, with local jobs supporting the high street and giving people more opportunities to work locally.

Over the last few years the national trend has seen demand for employment and commercial space has remained high, making it attractive for land owners. In the short term, this makes the development of existing sites like Old Mill Road less likely as the space is in demand. Change is likely to be gradual and more likely to be about creative mixed use.

Workspace can be designed to be much better integrated into the wider town, helping to create good streets and be a positive part of Portishead. Lots of historic factory and mill buildings in our towns and cities do this very well and show how workspace could be better integrated into the town.



Crate is an example of innovative workspace for small businesses within an existing industrial estate. It includes a cafe and has become a centre for events and markets



# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## New types of workspace

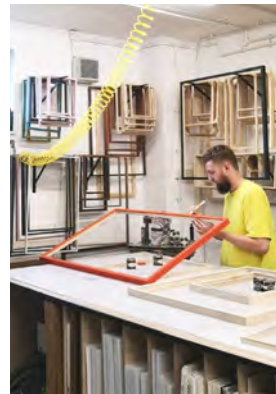
In recent years employment sites have tended to be low density and low rise. This contrasts with more historic developments like Victorian factories and warehouses which tended to be multi-storey. Stacked workspace for creative 'maker-spaces' is returning as a form of development, as is work space as a ground floor use with housing above. Both options mean that more activity can be accommodated within a site, using land more efficiently and helping to support the town centre.

For any workspace as part of mixed use development, providing yard space which can accommodate vans and deliveries is an important factor, as are goods lifts to upper floors. Work space units also typically need much bigger floor-to-ceiling heights than other uses.

When considering a mixed use scheme, it is important that work space is designed so that factors such as noise, air quality and servicing do not affect nearby homes and create conflict. Careful design of service yards and bin stores as well as the orientation of entrances can play a big part in making mixed use areas successful.



Uplands is an example of the modern stacked industrial space being planned. It includes service yards and goods lifts as well as creating good street frontage.



Modern work space can be much more flexible and attractive.





## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

# A green and blue environment

Green streets and spaces are a vital aspect of creating a place which is liveable, supports biodiversity and helps to address the impacts of climate change. Whilst the rhine creates an attractive green corridor through the heart of the area, a large proportion of space is hard surfaces, either roofs, roads or car parks.

Given the fragmented ownership of the area, it is unlikely that a single large park could be created. However, a series of smaller spaces which connect into the rhine corridor will create usable spaces and will help to extend the benefits of green space to a large proportion of the site.

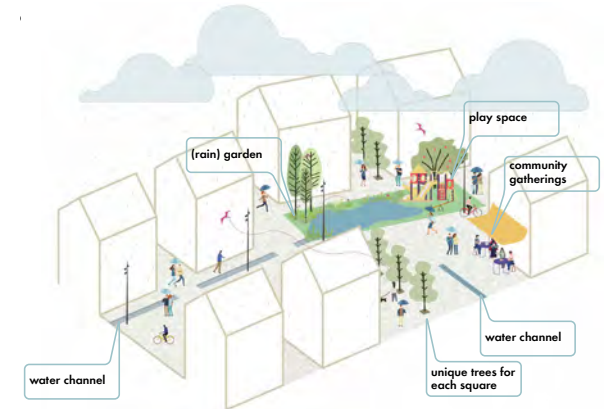
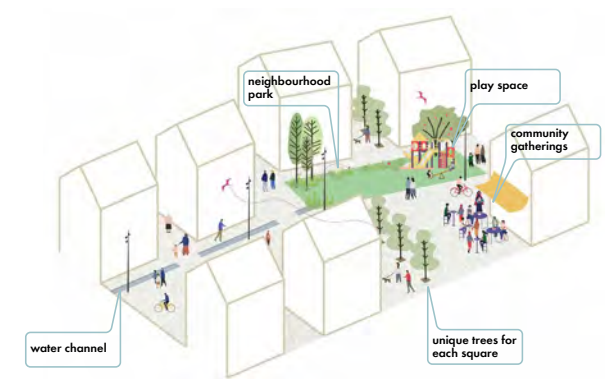
New and improved streets are also expected to be much greener. Trees are important to provide shade and help maintain cooler temperatures. Greenery at ground level can include elements of seating and features for play, but should also include rain-gardens for sustainable urban drainage to help manage water run-off and reduce flood risk downstream.

Finally, gardens and green roofs also have a big part to play in making the area as green as possible and provide space for residents to relax.



Extending Portishead's central greenway

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Green streets and spaces serve many functions



# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK





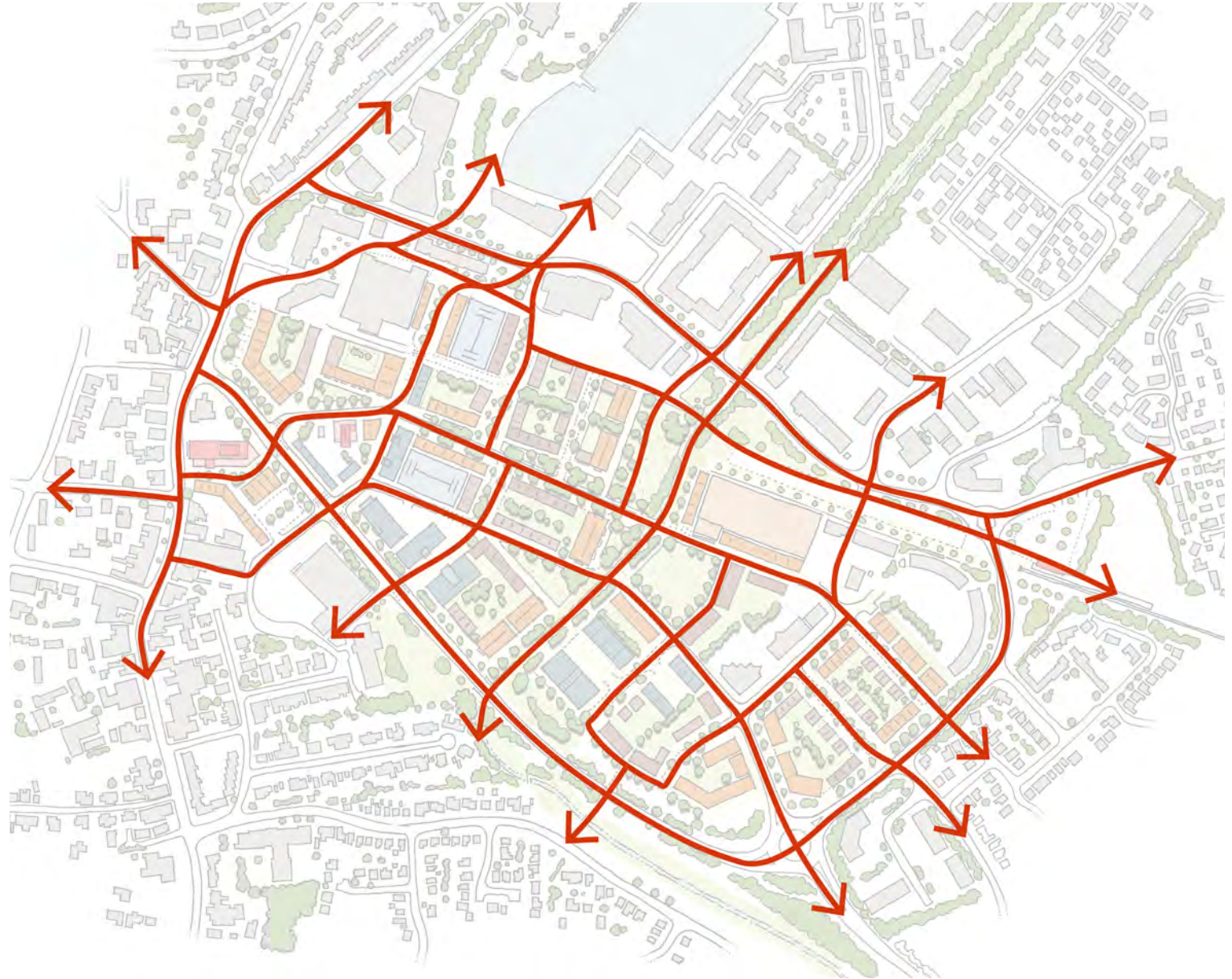
## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

### A connected district

Delivering a connecting network of streets and routes for walking and cycling has been one of the consistent ambitions of this project. It tackles one of the big issues that has arisen as Portishead has grown over the last few decades, but without the connecting routes that could make short journeys really easy to do on foot or by bicycle.

The fragmented ownership in the area makes a comprehensive street pattern hard to deliver as a single project. However, the fact that different land owners need to coordinate their developments to deliver joined-up streets is one of the challenges which makes this framework important. Without it, there is a risk that piecemeal development will never produce a connected place.

A clear and attractive street network will help to make walking and cycling easier for some trips. Whilst it won't replace every car journey it can replace some of them, giving healthy choices to more people. It will also make the town better for children and teenagers who don't drive by creating a safe environment which gives them more independence.



Movement network

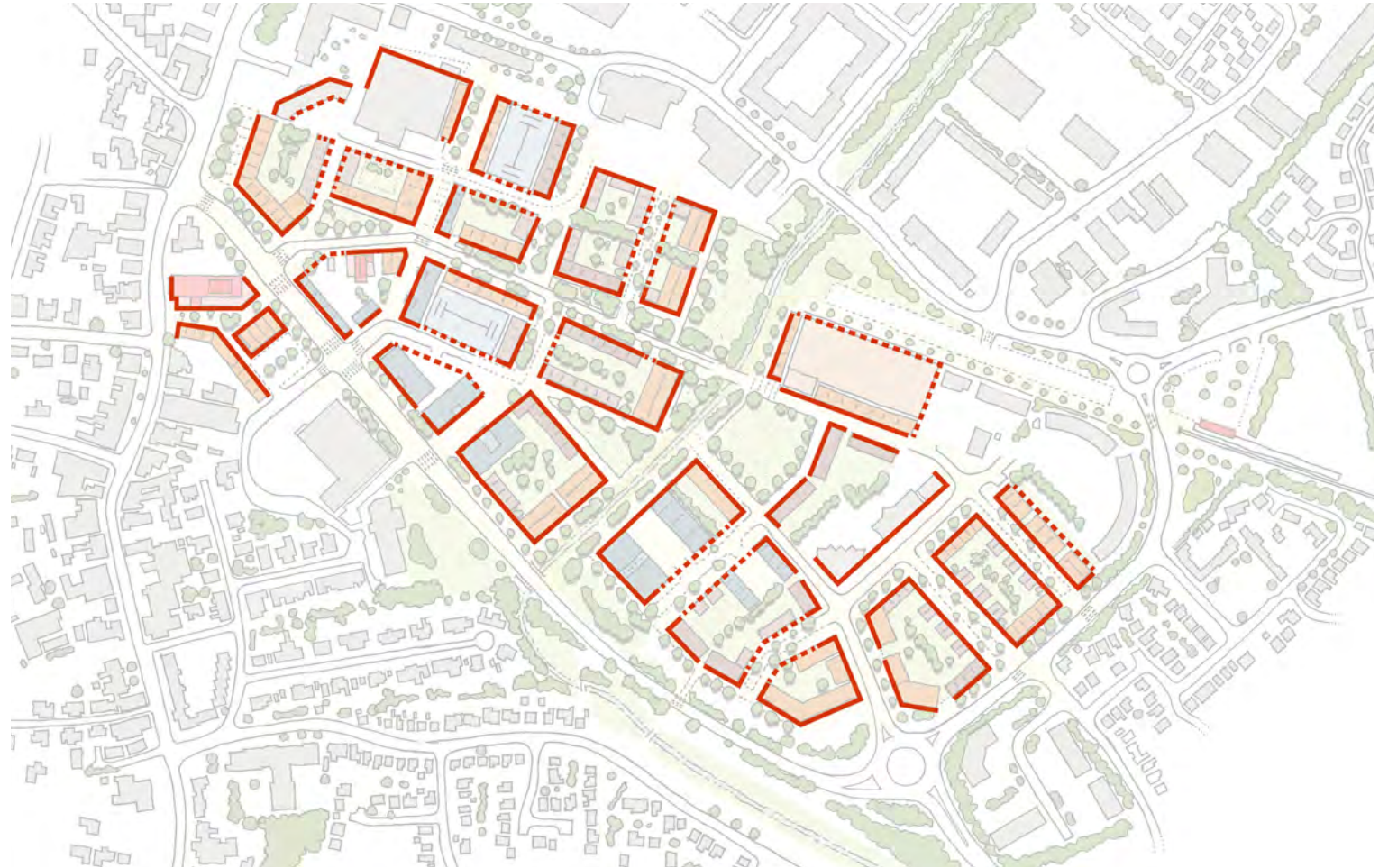
## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

# Creating a flexible framework

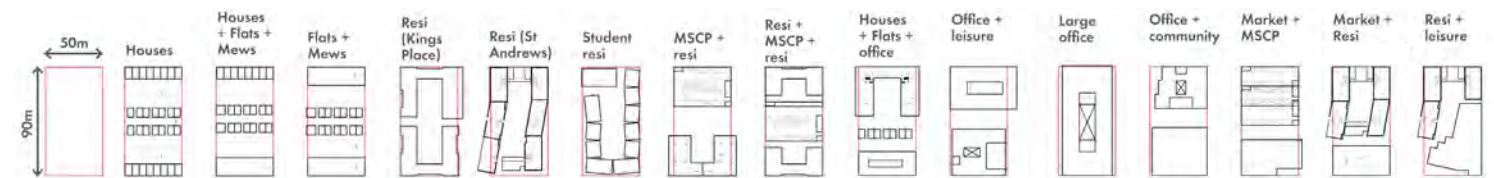
Urban blocks are the key components of our historic towns and cities. They help to create places which deliver safer streets by overlooking with front doors, windows and shop fronts. They are flexible in being able to accommodate a wide range of uses and enable change over time that supports a resilient economy. They also define clear fronts and backs creating areas for gardens, yards and servicing away from the front faces onto public streets.

The flexibility which a good block structure creates is really important to the Wyndham Way area. Change will happen over a relatively long period of time and through many different projects. Whilst the illustrative masterplan help to show ways in which the area could change, the framework of blocks defines the essential rules for development that give landowners and developers the opportunity to be creative but still work in a coordinated way.

The block structure which has been developed for the Wyndham Way area takes account of land ownerships and existing buildings to give the most flexibility whilst still unlocking change.



Urban block structure







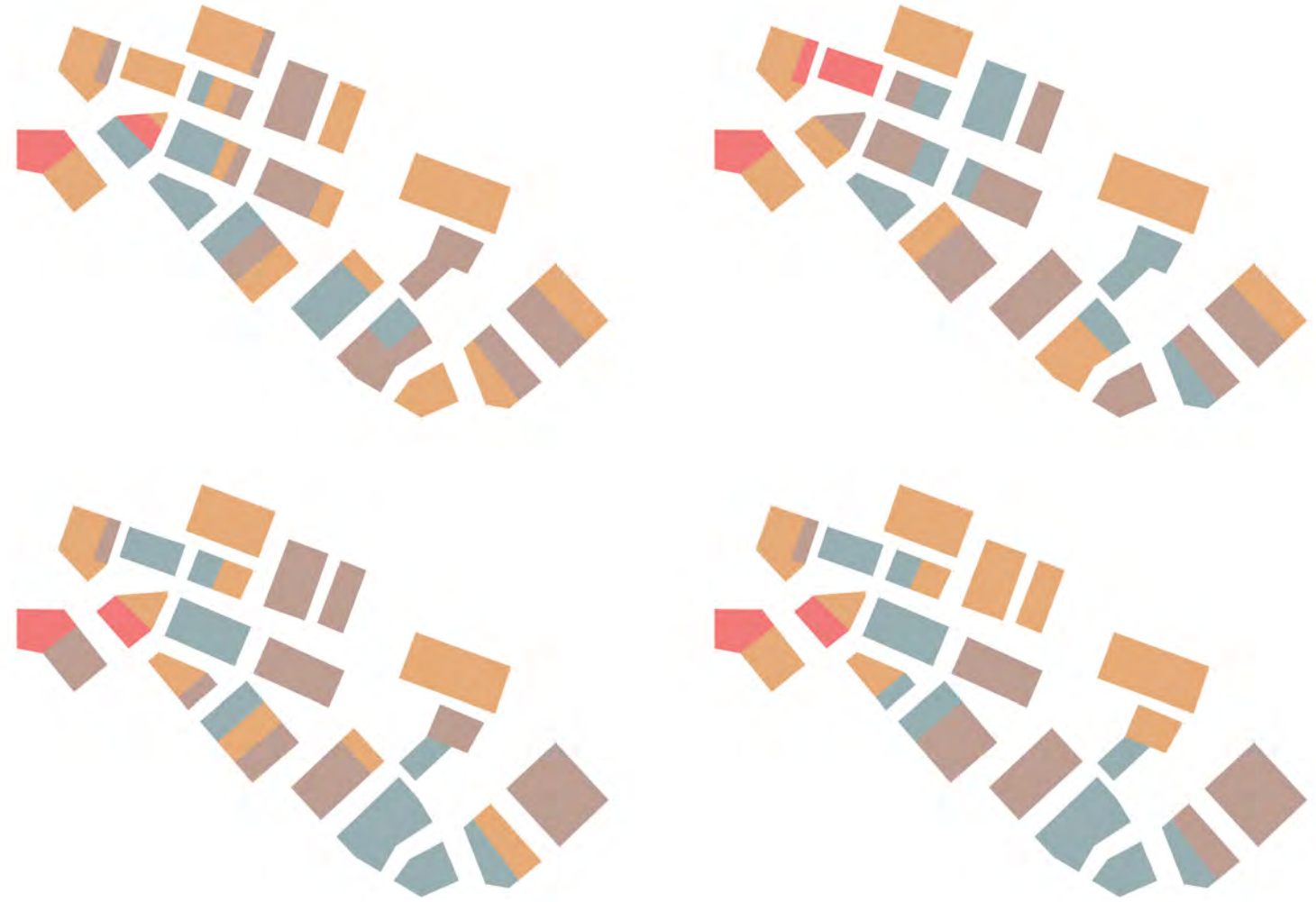
# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## Planning for different uses

The ability to deliver a range of different uses within the area is a key part of the masterplan approach and it is important to appreciate that the illustrative scheme shown in this document is just one way in which the area could develop.

The framework which we have proposed not only allows for variations in the design of individual buildings but also allows for variations in uses. A flexible approach will help the wider town adapt to changing demands for workspace, leisure, community facilities, homes and more, helping to support a more resilient economy for the town.

-  Mixed use blocks including shops, leisure and community uses with homes above
-  Workspace and employment
-  Residential development including townhouses and flats
-  Potential for public uses



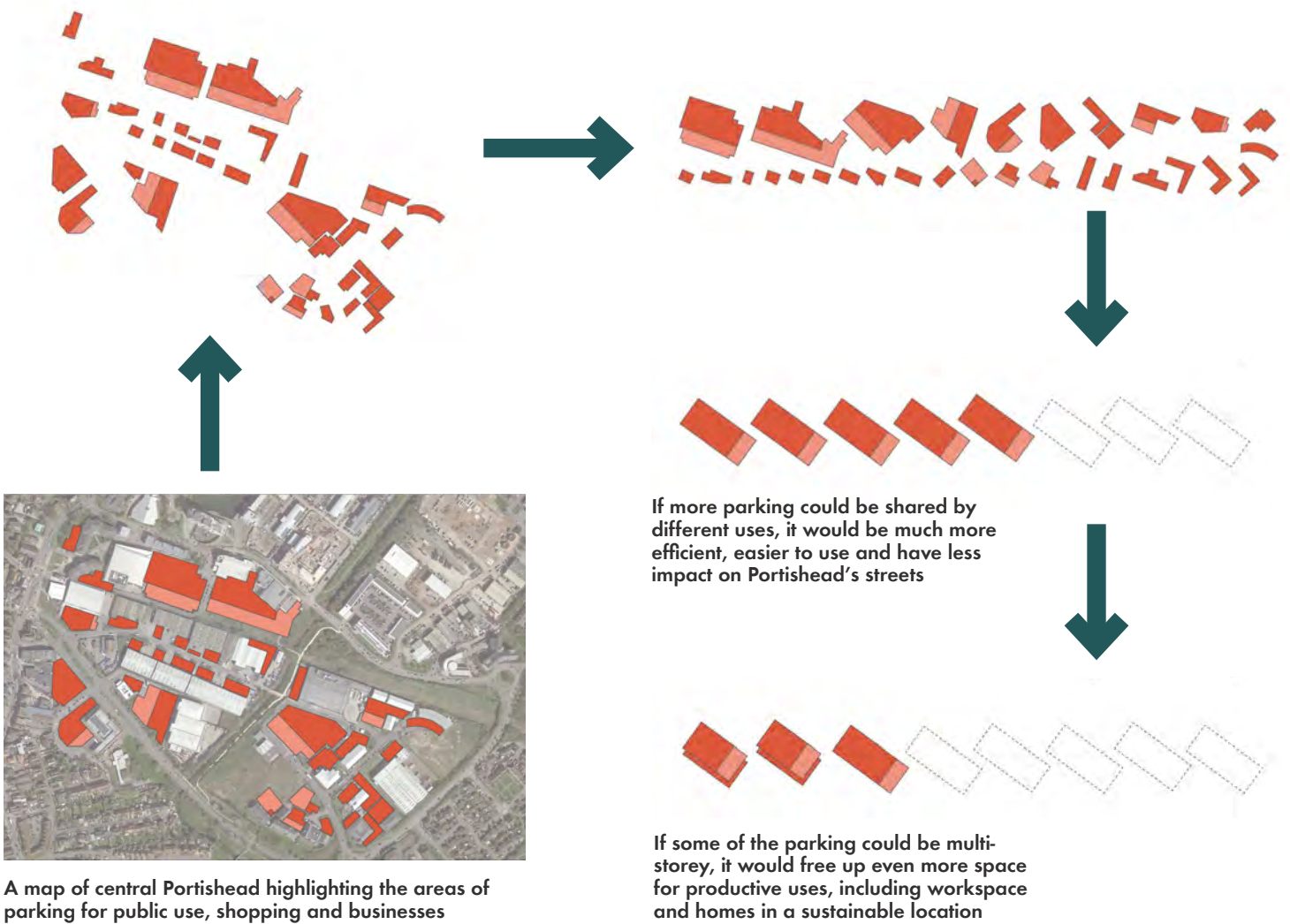
# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## Parking

Surface car parking currently dominates this part of Portishead. Whilst some car parks like the town centre car park adjacent to the High Street are in demand and well used, most of the car parks are bigger than they need to be. This is largely because they each serve different uses and are split across different ownerships.

As the area changes over time, a different approach to parking could help to meet Portishead's parking needs but also reduce the impact it has on the streets. Greater use of shared parking and multi-storey parking would mean that less space needs to be given over to cars and more can be used for buildings and spaces.

Provision of different parking to suit different needs will also help. Parking near the High Street which is best for short-stay errand parking should be complemented with longer stay parking suitable for people who work in the area, but might not need to park quite so close.



A map of central Portishead highlighting the areas of parking for public use, shopping and businesses

# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

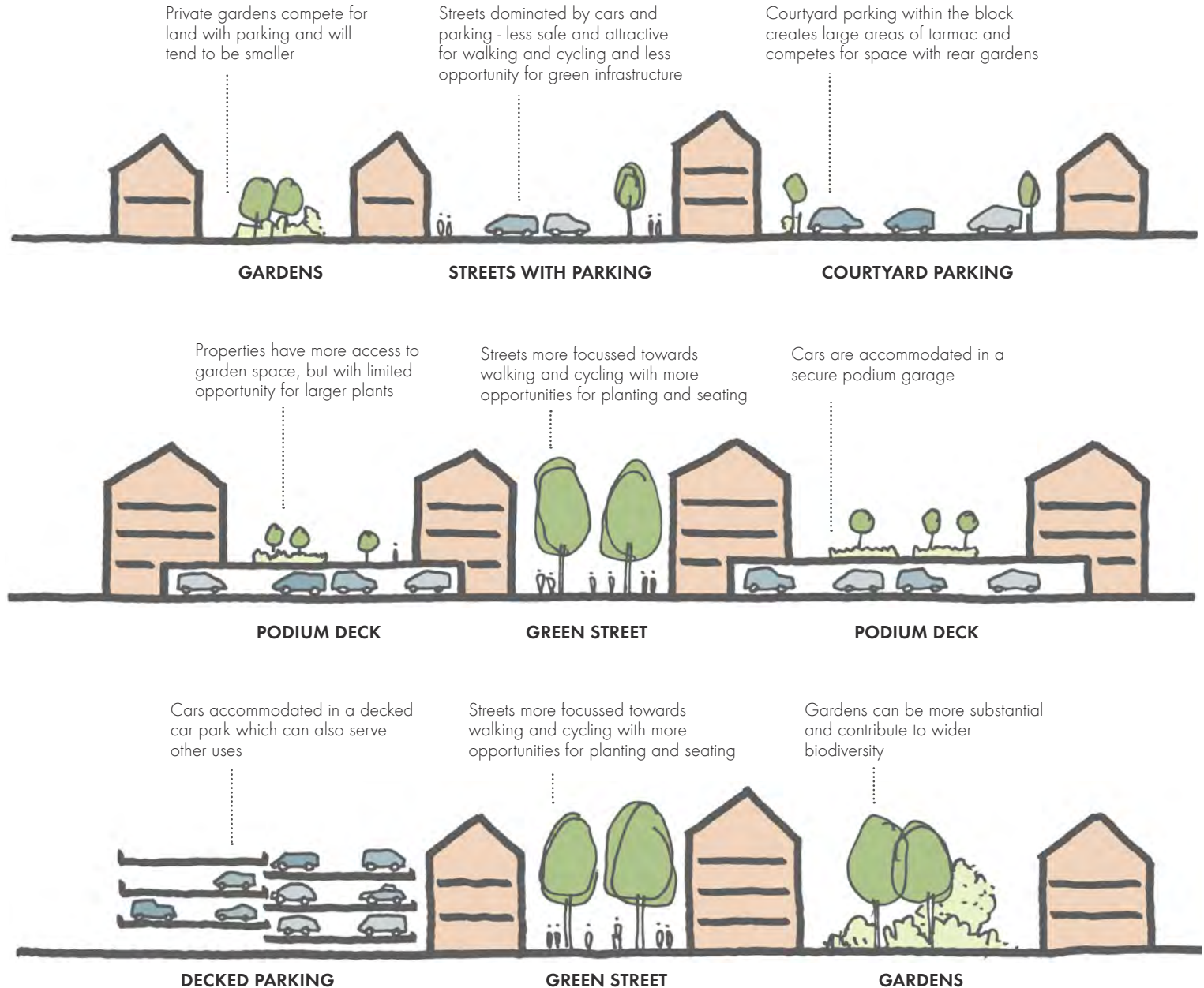
## Residential parking

Any new homes in the area will need some parking, although the central location and delivery of the station will help to reduce the overall requirement. There are different ways to deliver this, each with their strengths and weaknesses.

Surface parking, either on street or in courtyards is space-hungry and has a big impact on the public spaces. It limits the amount of development that can be delivered, but has the advantage of being cheap to build.

Parking in a podium or a multi-storey car park is more expensive to build, but can be used to create better streets and more garden space for residents. They allow for streets to be focussed around walking and cycling as well as allowing deliveries and servicing, and can support schemes like car sharing which reduce the need for car ownership.

The masterplan framework is flexible and can accommodate a range of options. However, options which reduce the need for surface parking will work best with the other objectives in the masterplan to create a sustainable place.





## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

# School place provision

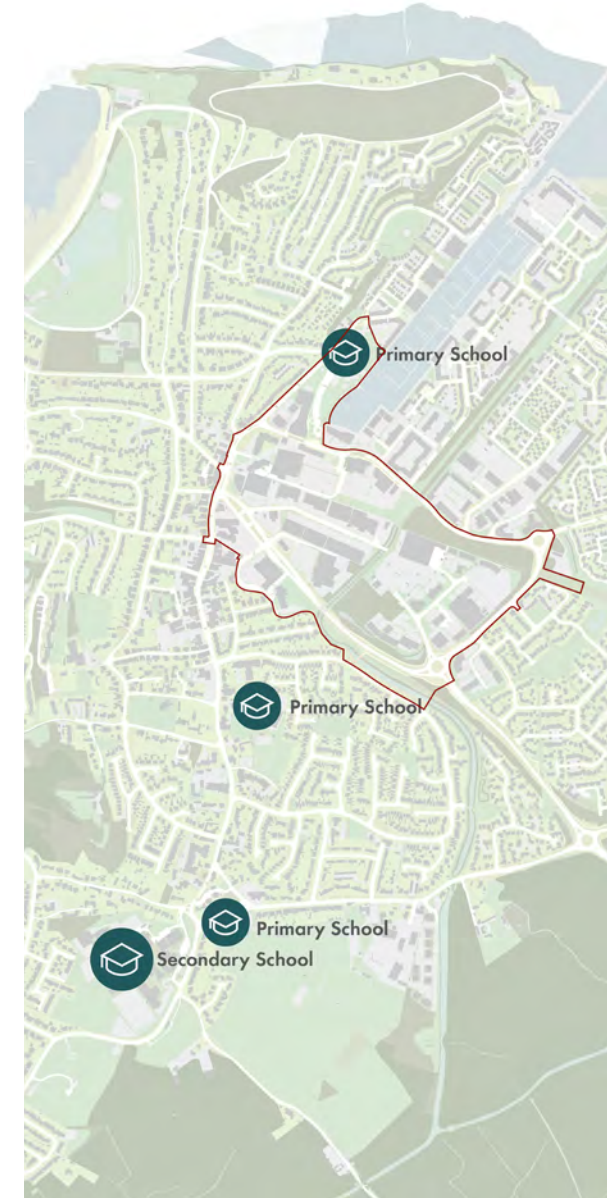
There is currently some capacity in Portishead's schools, although there could be a deficit in secondary provision by 2026 without intervention. This reflects the rapid growth of the town over recent decades, and the school age bulge this has created and that is passing through the academic years.

If the masterplan proposals were being delivered as a single large scheme it could trigger the need to deliver a new primary school as it would create a new demographic bulge which the existing schools may not be able to meet.

However, as the area is in many different land ownerships, any change is expected to be gradual over a longer period of time. None of the individual schemes would either be large enough to trigger a school or have a site large enough to accommodate one.

Given this context, we expect that gradual delivery of new homes over a long period of time will create a need for school places which is itself gradual, and which follows the existing bulge through the school system rather than making it bigger.

Although the development of new homes won't necessarily deliver a new school, each development will make a contribution to public funds which includes funding for school places. The local planning authority will continue to keep this under review and may need to allocate land for a school. Land owners and developers are strongly encouraged to engage at an early stage.



## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

### Leisure centre options

Although local people have told us they would like a better leisure centre, Portishead’s existing facility is one of the better and newer ones in the district. This means that it isn’t likely to be replaced in the short or medium term. However, as the Masterplan sets out a gradual process for change, it is possible to anticipate that a new leisure centre could be developed in the longer term. There are a number of factors to consider which can help to plan for this:

- Having the leisure centre in a central location helps to support the High Street and means that it is as accessible as possible
- To ensure continuous operation, it would be good to deliver a new leisure centre on a different site before closing or redeveloping the old site
- A new centre could allow for a more extensive leisure offer, including a training pool, and could include basketball courts and five-a-side pitches - possibly on the roof
- There could be opportunities to integrate and re-provide other public uses



The Britannia leisure centre in Hackney is a good example of a modern facility in an urban area, including rooftop pitches and courts.

# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## Planning for Portishead rail

The delivery of Portishead Rail creates a new context for the centre of the town and a genuine alternative for travel to Bristol. The plans for the station including changes to the road network to create space for the station and forecourt, and a new car park on land to the north of Sainsbury's.

The masterplan will help to deliver good walking and cycling routes to the station which will help some people to travel without a car. It also shows how new sustainable development in the area around the station will help to capitalise on the investment of public money.

The station will help people commuting to Bristol, but will also make it easier for people who want to get to Portishead. This will support local businesses and should make Portishead a more attractive location for investment.

Along with the delivery of the railway, page 27 of the masterplan also highlights wider potential transport improvements, including the opportunity for a mobility hub on Wyndham Way.

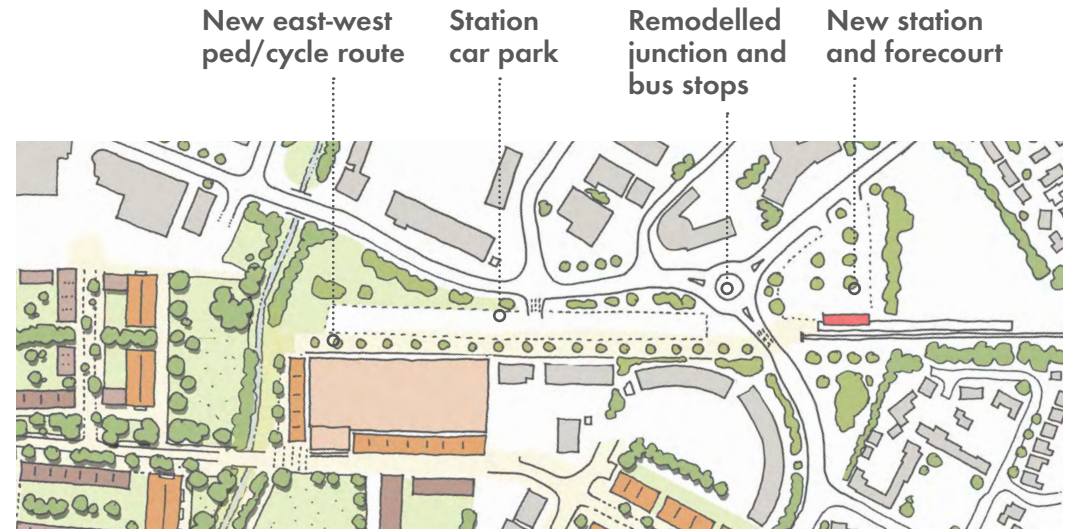
### Existing station area

showing the current road layout and building.



### Proposed plans for the station

showing how the existing Phoenix Way roundabout will be moved to create the station site. It will be connected with improved pedestrian routes, new bus stops and a new station car park.







# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## Somerset Hall options

Somerset Hall and the Precinct are important parts of the town centre, but also rather turn their backs on Wyndham Way and create a poor first impression of Portishead for many people.

The masterplan sets out how the Precinct could be redeveloped around a remodelled Somerset Hall, creating an opportunity for supporting the growing range of businesses in the area, alongside space for community events. Remodelling the existing building reduces cost and complexity, but is also a more sustainable approach.

Any development would need to be carefully phased and to work with the existing businesses, ideally to re-provide new accommodation which minimises the disruption to continuity of trade.

Some parking should be retained to support short stay parking for shopping and errands but could be designed like a market square so that it can be turned over for big public events on special days. Active street frontage onto Wyndham Way will make it a better point of arrival into the town and could be a future location for bus stops.



Top: Historic images of the Precinct  
Below: The Precinct today

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Different sketch options for the development of the Precinct and Somerset Hall with new public space



## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

### An illustrative plan

This illustration shows how the area could look if it was all developed in line with the principles set out in this masterplan. It has the potential to be a connected and sustainable district with a mix of homes, jobs, green space and community infrastructure.



Buildings with the potential to include shops, workspace or community infrastructure at street level with homes above



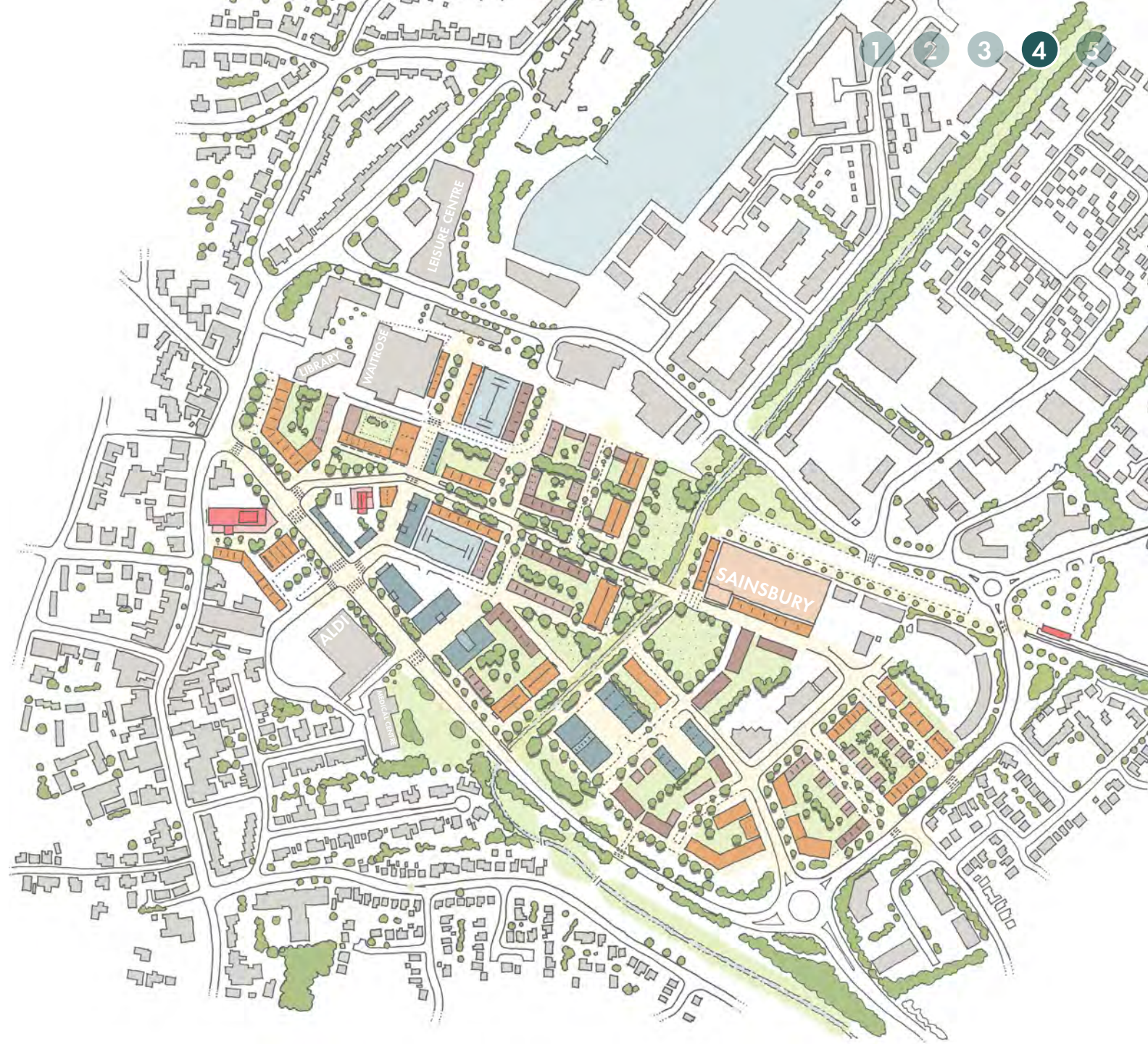
Buildings suited to workspace and employment space, ranging from conventional light industry through to studio and workshop space



Buildings likely to provide new homes, including a mix of family houses, flats and duplex



Key public facilities, including the station and Somerset Hall





## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

# A vision for transport improvements

New street connection from the Marina to Wyndham Way

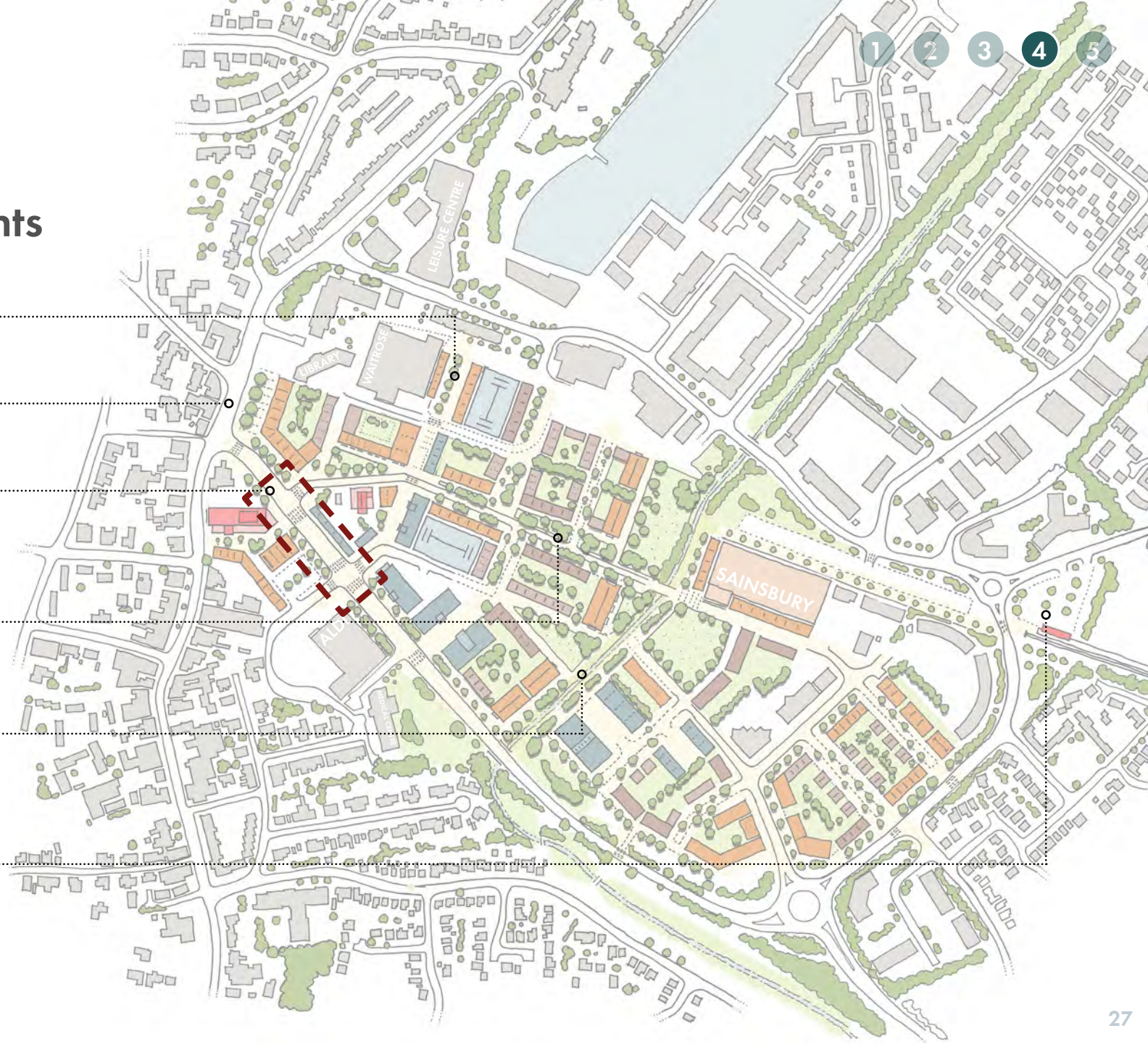
Improved Cabstand Junction especially possible if the Petrol Station is redeveloped

A transformed Wyndham Way could be an ideal future location for a transport hub

New and improved streets and spaces within any development should be green in character and focussed on walking and cycling.

The rhyne retains an important role as a walking and cycling route, but as part of a connected network

New Portishead Rail station and forecourt, supported by new bus stops, improved walking and cycling access and a new station car park





# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## Connecting routes

This image shows the new connecting route from the High Street to Portishead Marina, through the Old Mill Road area. New buildings would include a mix of uses with workspace and commercial premises at street level and new homes above. As with the flexible approach to buildings and uses, there is also potential for scale and massing to vary as detailed building designs are developed. This could include taller buildings reflecting the context of the marina and subject to high quality design.



Existing





## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

### A green environment

The proposals show how the greenway can be enhanced and extended to create a green corridor with soft edges connecting into new development. Homes and businesses overlooking the corridor help to create safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists.



Existing





# MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

## East to west routes

This image shows the improved links along Old Mill Road between the station and the town centre. It also illustrates how developing new parking for Sainsbury's above the store could release land for homes and open space overlooking the greenway.



Existing





# 5 PHASING AND DELIVERY

## PHASING AND DELIVERY

# Gradual and flexible change

This masterplan for central Portishead is designed to be flexible, allowing for changes in the economic and development context over a long period of time. There are lots of different land ownerships and it is hard to predict or dictate how change will happen. Some sites will come forward for development before others while some may remain in commercial use for the long term. The following section explores how change could happen, but there are many other ways in which development could be delivered.

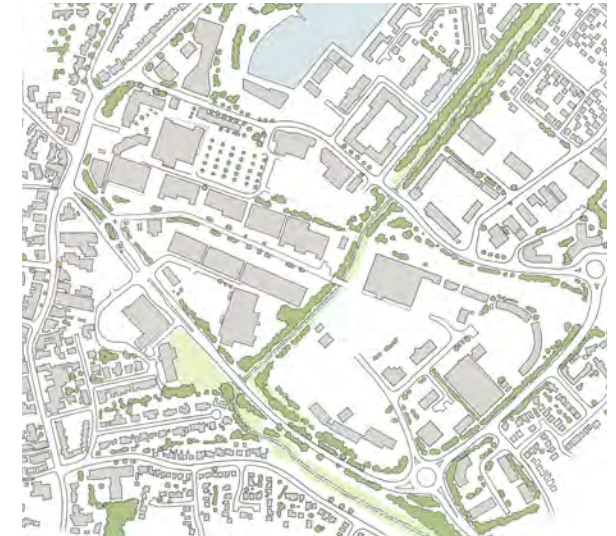
This masterplan approach is important as it helps to form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and supports decisions about the need for community infrastructure such as school places. This process includes understanding how quickly sites might be redeveloped, bearing in mind their current use - some are completely vacant, and others have long-standing businesses and tenants.

The plans capture a few key principles which will help to coordinate and unlock change:

**Enable independent delivery:** The more that individual land owners can plan and deliver development by themselves, the easier it will be to deliver. However, the local planning authority will want to ensure that proposals do not blight neighbouring sites and that local infrastructure delivery (for example open space) is equitable and practical.

**Enable quick wins, not expedient solutions:** Setting out a clear masterplan will be helpful in unlocking early projects, as people can see that they form part of a wider strategy. However, it is also important to make sure that the projects delivered contribute to the wider vision for a connected place, rather than just being expedient.

**Minimises changes to infrastructure:** Leaving roads, sub-stations and buried services in place as much as possible keeps costs down and makes change easier for individual land owners. However even gradual change and growth will require contributions to and investment in local infrastructure along the way.





## Understanding growth



### Short term - 0 to 5 years

Change in the short term is likely to be limited to available sites like Gordano Gate (as an industrial site) and some residential or mixed use development elsewhere in the study area, though no planning applications for development of any of the sites have been received.

Opportunities for the Precinct and delivering different types of workspace on Old Mill Road could help to strengthen links from the High Street to the Marina. The delivery of the railway station and improved bus infrastructure could also materialise in the first five years.



### Medium term - 5 to 10 years

In the medium term, we could see redevelopment of the Sainsbury's site and parts of the Old Mill Road area to deliver a mix of uses including new homes, commercial and community space new green space, along with development at other sites.



### Long term - 10 to 15 years

In the longer term we might expect that sites like the retail park and petrol station at the Cabstand junction are redeveloped for a mix of homes, commercial and community space, along with the Homebase site and other parcels of land down towards Quays Avenue.

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