



Falkirk Council

FALKIRK COUNCIL FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE VISION AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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INTRODUCTION: A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE

The changing patterns of how we shop is releasing our town centres from the past decades of retail dominance and we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to repopulate the town centre and reintroduce the diverse uses that meet the community's needs. Reconnecting the community to the centre and focusing development in a core area is not only critical to the wellbeing of that community, it is the most environmentally responsible future we can strive for.

This document provides a framework for Falkirk Council to deliver the social and cultural ambitions of the community. It presents a 'joined up' approach to new development where uses are positioned in relation to each other to create the vibrancy and activity that is key to a thriving town centre.

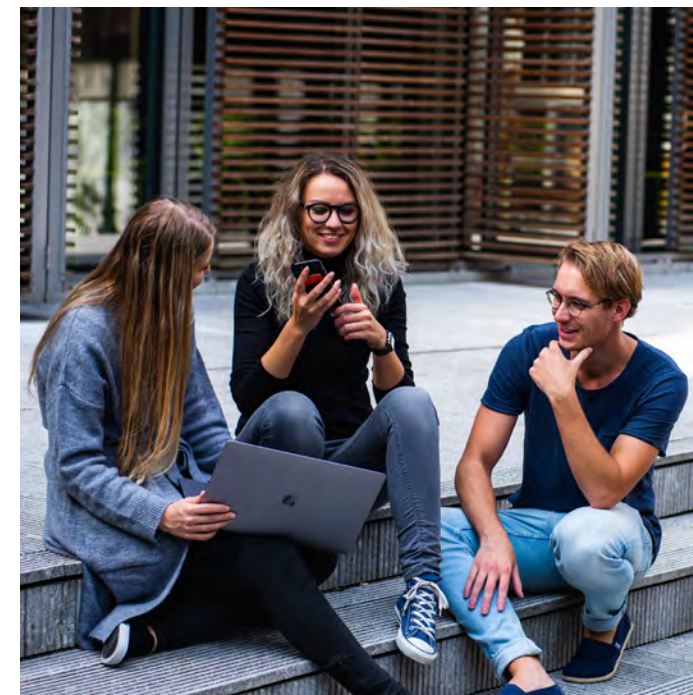
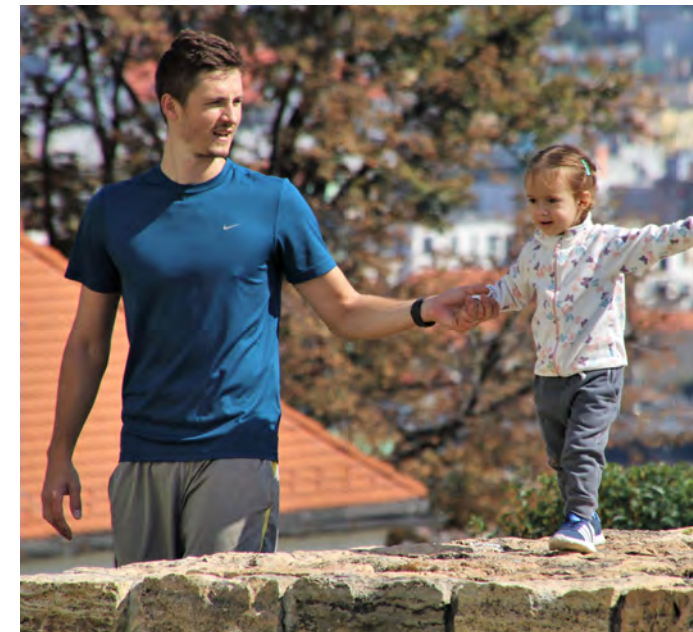
Bringing together the many positive moves currently in development in Falkirk through the 2021 Growth Deal, this vision is a clear statement of ambition that is based on best practice and known successes. It is influenced by a depth of market understanding and is achievable. This framework offers a shared vision and can project an alignment of intent that will position the town well to apply for future public funding and attract private investment.

A PEOPLE CENTRED APPROACH

Our town centres offer a rich and authentic environment that, for generations, have been the back-drop to the ceremonies and memorable events of our community. Furthermore, the health of a town centre reflects the health of the wider community or society. An energised town centre that is open to all and where there is alignment, engagement and transparency on decision making will combat isolation, create opportunity and enrich all our lives.

It is critical that we achieve a perception shift in our community and stakeholders and reposition Falkirk in people's psyche and at the core of this proposal is the need to reconnect all of us to our town centre.

This study shows a vision of a better Falkirk that meets the requirements of all regardless of age, disability or wealth.



“...combat isolation, create opportunity and enrich all our lives.”

Client

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CONTENTS

	Introduction	03
	Falkirk: A Thriving Town Centre	08
1	Falkirk Today	20
	Context & Analysis	22
	Positive Moves	50
	Conclusions	62
	What If?....	64
2	Project Brief	76
	Area of Study	78
	Stakeholder Engagement	96
	Published Brief	99
3	The Vision for Falkirk Town Centre	100
	Design Concept	102
	Manifesto in Action:	106
	1. Concentrate	108
	2. Tell Your Story	112
	3. Go Bold	114
	4. Consolidate	118
	5. Repopulate	122
	6. Attract	132
	7. Create Workplace	138
	8. Shift Perceptions	148
	9. Replace and Repair	154
	10. Regenerate	160
	11. Illuminate	164
	12. Gather	166
	13. Include & Invite	174
	14. Connect	180
	15. Revive	192
	16. Educate	194
	17. Locate Services Centrally	198
	18. Meanwhile	202
4	Conclusion & Moving Forward	208



The development of a physical and spatial vision requires a three-dimensional response and we have presented proposals for each focus area.

Each of the proposals and ideas in the Vision will require to be tested against a range of criteria including: property ownership, deliverability, funding, economic feasibility as well as community and stakeholder support.

As such, the ideas and specific proposals for individual buildings and land included in the Vision do not represent Council commitments or 'deemed' compliance.

They demonstrate a 'direction of travel' - an interpretation of what is appropriate and achievable to achieve the ambitions of the brief.

Key retail assets and sites in Falkirk that have been vacant long term adversely affect the environment, degrading the quality of the town, impacting on the community and contributing to anti-social behaviour.

This vision for the future of the town must assume that, where there are ownership issues, they must and will be unlocked and that the council have a key role to play as an enabler.

FALKIRK: **A THRIVING** **TOWN CENTRE**

This document shows a vision of Falkirk town centre in 10 to 20 years' time and the transition from reducing retail dominance to a vibrant mixed use and inhabited town centre that meets the needs of the whole community.

Within the various engagement events and meetings we asked the question - what does Falkirk need to become in order to ensure its success for the future?

A meeting place, a gathering place, somewhere that attracts people to come and spend time, somewhere that celebrates its rich heritage and community culture; in essence - A Thriving Town Centre.

A real, functional town centre delivers opportunity, inclusion, and wellbeing for everyone through providing the space for a wide array of social and cultural activities; interactions, not just transactions.

A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE: CONNECTED

The centre of Falkirk is where arterial routes and the wider community all connect and meet. The heart of the town centre (the High Street) provides the springboard to all of the surrounding attractions and services.

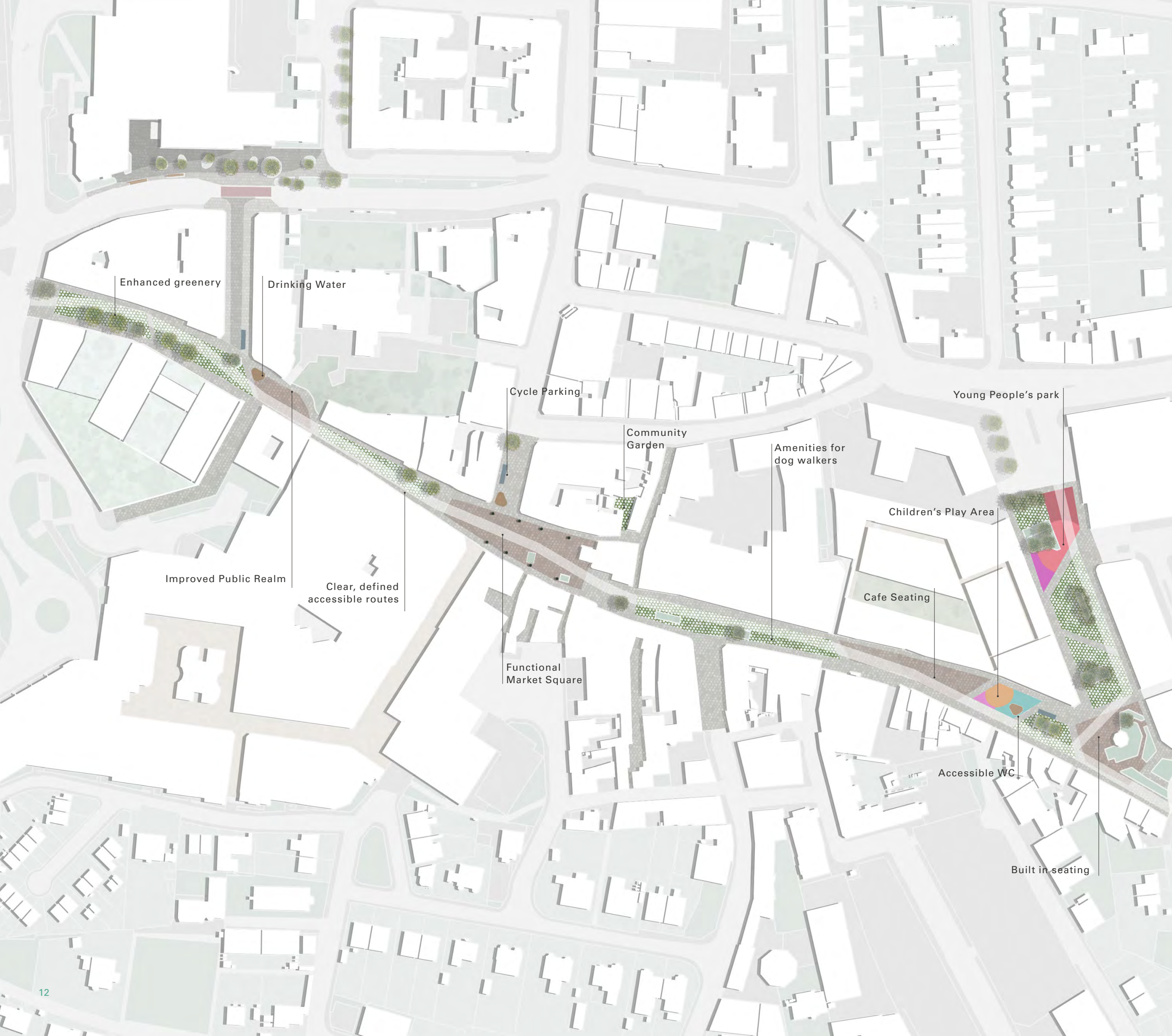
Rather than being forgotten about, the High Street is an integral part of all routes through the town.



A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE: INCLUSIVE

The High Street is a place for families to spend time – with dedicated play areas, amenities and active urban spaces where cafes can spill out onto the street.

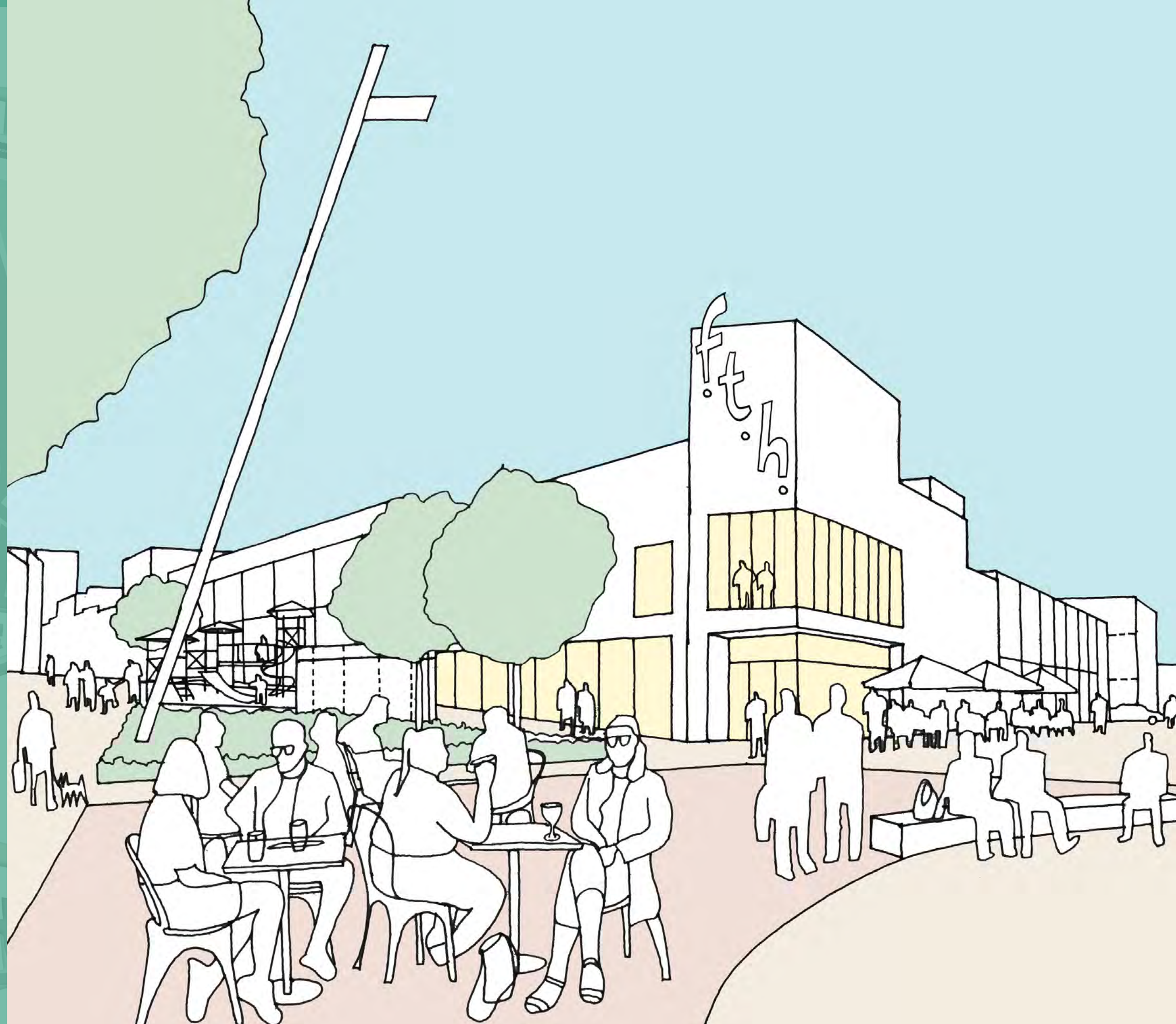
There are places for teenagers to hang out free of charge where they can be active without feeling unwanted and unwelcome. The walking and wheeling routes are clearly defined and easy to navigate by everyone.



A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE: GATHERING PLACE

The east end of the High Street is a bustling cultural centre where visitors and residents can spend time; day into night. It is lively and safe and host to all civic gatherings; graduations, protests, festivals, performances.

During the week days it is a vibrant public space where workers can enjoy all the benefits of a thriving town centre. On the weekend, it is the heart of the night time economy with theatre and music performances, smaller venues, an outdoor bandstand, a nightclub, along with restaurants and bars.





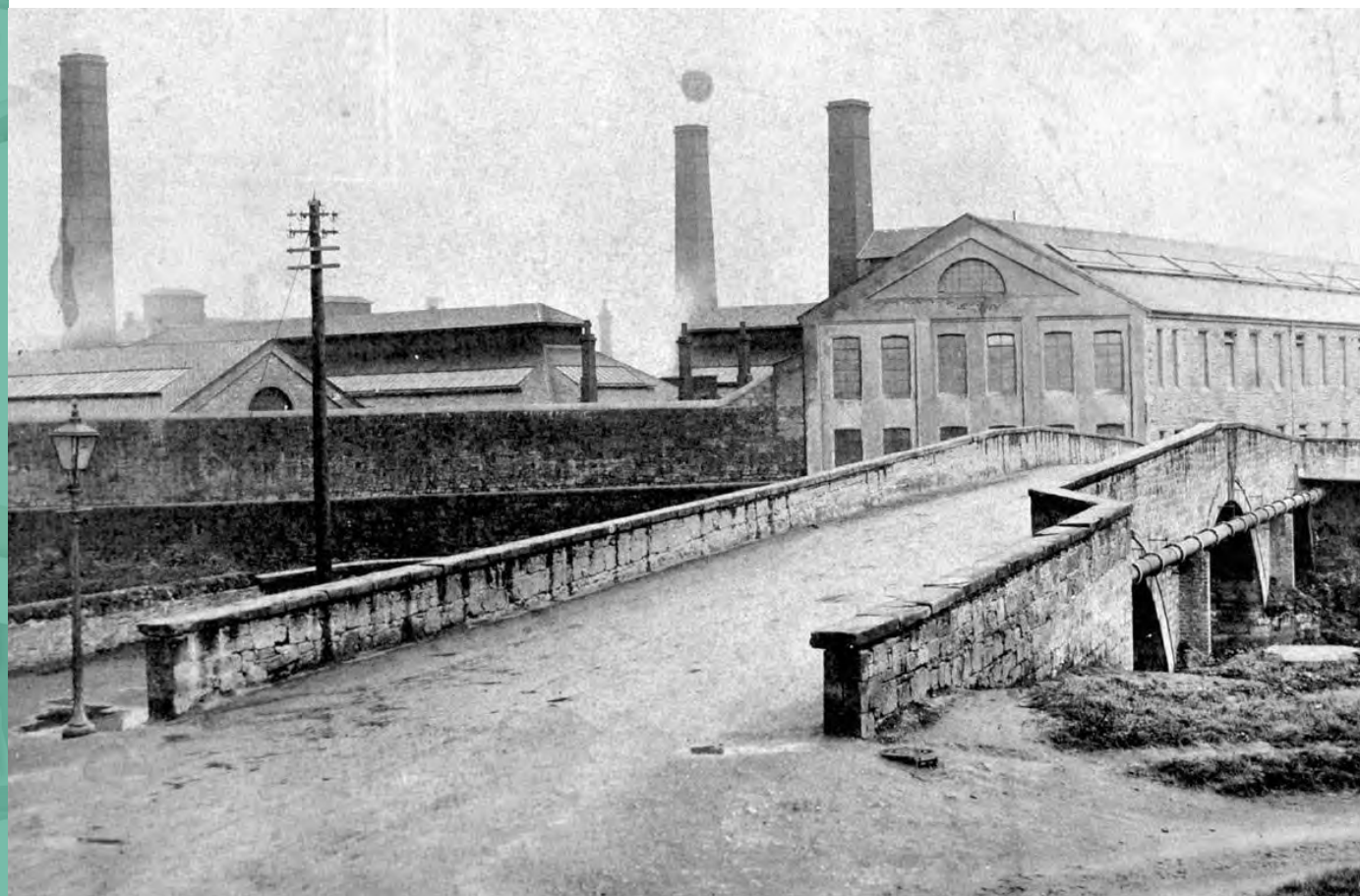
A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE: FRIENDLY + WELCOMING

The west end of the High Street caters to everyday life for an intergenerational community.

The older population can live in the historic centre with everything on their doorstep, transport hub, shops, cafes, clubs and health centre.

Young professionals also feel the benefit of living next door to town centre amenities like co-working, gym and further education space.

Those who work in the town centre have access to a convenient and high quality environment for their children to go to nursery school.



A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE: AUTHENTIC HERITAGE

A town built on innovation and excellence, everyone who walks down Falkirk High Street can experience stories and insight into the rich industrial heritage and medieval history.

There are informative public art installations at key points and it is easy to find information about connecting to trails and attractions further afield, such as the Kelpies, Falkirk Wheel, Forth and Clyde Canal, Antonine Wall, etc.



1. FALKIRK TODAY

FALKIRK TODAY: INTRODUCTION

Falkirk, in a unique position between Edinburgh and Glasgow, is a town that is steeped in fascinating history and built heritage with a growing tourism industry.

A small agricultural settlement, Falkirk first began in 1057 with the anglicised title appearing on a map as earlier as 1583 – displaying only the name and a church just east of Callendar lands. The strategically advantageous position on the road south to Glasgow led to the development of Scotland's largest cattle market with 24,000 cattle sold per annum and generating one third of Scotland's income.

Falkirk's townscape grew with additions including the steeple and tollbooth. The Mercat Cross sat close by these buildings displaying the town's new status and enabling twice weekly markets that grew into the Falkirk Tryst. Further additions of lodgings and a post office by 1636 aided the town's ascension to "Burgh of regality" in 1646.

The excellent provision of coal and proximity to exportation methods & routes led to a boom in industrial work, namely iron-related manufacturing. The Scottish consumption of iron made goods

truly took off when the Carron Company grew into agricultural products, enabling the agricultural revolution in Scotland. By the late 1800's Falkirk had over twenty foundries.

New provision of entertainment came in the form of the Electric cinema (later renamed the Empire) which opened in the redundant Erskine church on Silver Row in 1901, followed by a 2200-seat theatre, the Grand Theatre, later converted as the Cannon cinema. A ballroom opened at the back of Mathieson's Bakery, 65 High Street in 1937 and though no longer in existence, it is still remembered as a venue for weddings and other celebrations. The arrival of department stores such as Marks and Spencer (1936) and the Co-operative Society (1937) demonstrated confidence in the town's economy.

The 20th century saw a steady decline in the demand for iron goods and Falkirk's industrial centre deteriorated. Tourism as an industry began to dominate with the development of the Falkirk Wheel, The Kelpies, and the inscription of the Antonine wall as a world heritage site.

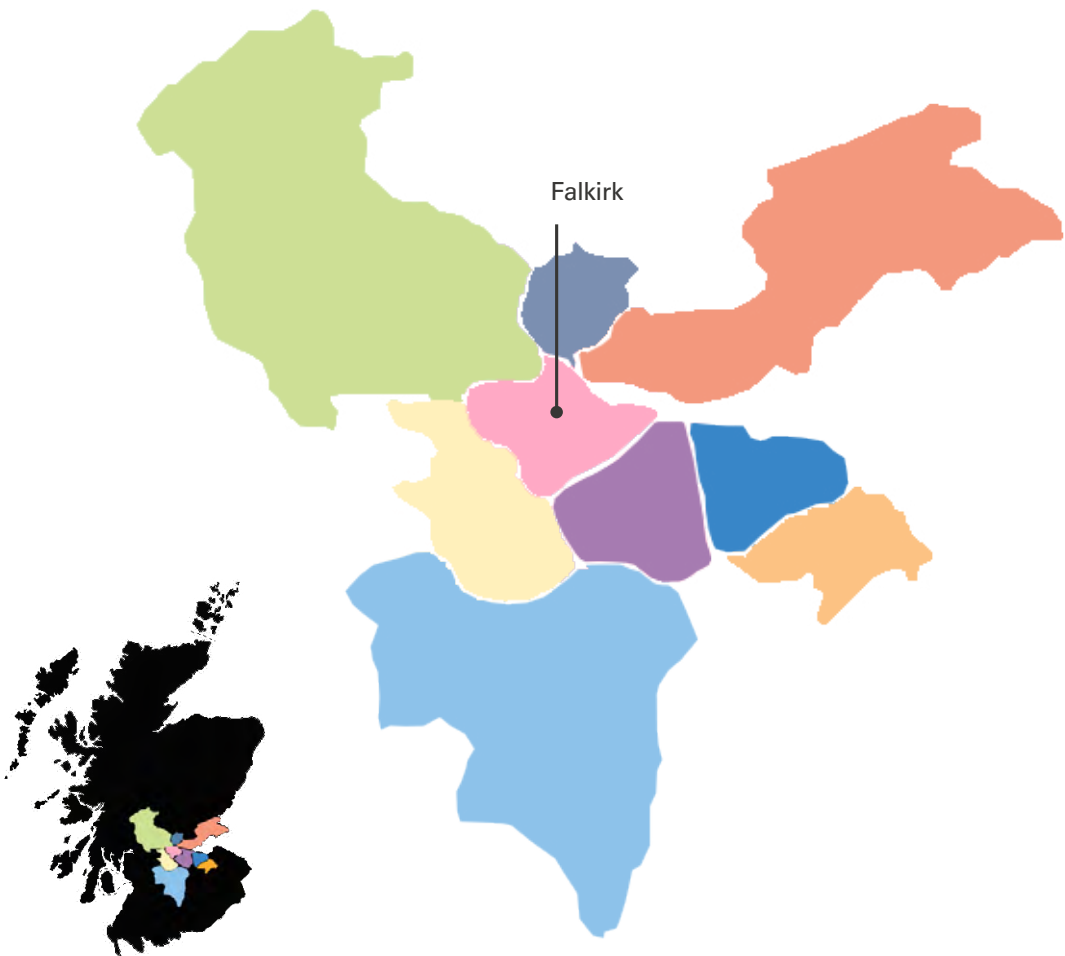


FALKIRK TODAY

NATIONAL & REGIONAL CONTEXT

The town is the administrative centre of the wider Falkirk Council catchment area and lies in the Forth Valley, 23.3 miles (37.5 km) north-west of Edinburgh and 20.5 miles (33.0 km) north-east of Glasgow.

The town is at the junction of the Forth and Clyde and Union Canals and comprises the towns of Grangemouth, Bo’ness, Denny, Camelon, Larbert and Stenhousemuir, and the cluster of Braes villages.



SETTLEMENT IN FALKIRK

The Falkirk Council area borders a number of local authority areas including Stirling, North Lanarkshire, Fife and West Lothian. Falkirk is the largest town in the region which has an overall population of around 160,560 across 72,994 households. This is projected to rise to 172,219 by 2041.

Falkirk town has an estimated population of 35,900 which has increased by 2.2% in the last 10 years.

64.2% of people are of working age and 20.0% of people are aged 65 and over.

While the number of children is projected to decrease slightly in the future, the number of older people will increase considerably, with those aged 75+ increasing by a significant amount.



FALKIRK TODAY

CONTEXT:

OUR TOWN CENTRES

The issues identified in this document are not unique to Falkirk. In many historical town centres, the change in shopping patterns has led to a surplus of retail floorspace and, in particular, large floorplate users are becoming increasingly thin on the ground.

Our town / city centres must adapt to this new environment and the solution lies in reducing and concentrating retail space rather than propping up an old retail led approach.

This consolidation of retail will allow us to rebalance our towns with the reintroduction of the uses squeezed out by previous retail dominance. These uses will then be in the centre – the most universally accessible location for our community and the highest quality and most meaningful backdrop.

Long ago the logistics of retailing stock systems made the upper floor storage areas fallow and there is now the opportunity to populate this “airspace” and some of the repurposed retail with town / city centre living and work-place to further energise the town.

Retail goes where people go – there will always be a place for it, but it will be increasingly independent, compact and experiential and it will add to the unique experience of our town / city centres to evolve them from the 80’s/90’s “Clone Towns” they once were.

THEN:

In Town / City Centres

- All Retail
- Banking
- Civic
- Offices
- Healthcare
- Education
- Sports

NOW:

After Years of Erosion

Mainly in Town Centre

- 20% of all Non-Food Retail / 20% of all Food Retail

Increasingly on Internet

- 17% of all Non-Food Retail / 6% of all Food Retail
- Banking
- Education

Mainly not in Town Centre

- 63% of all Non-Food Retail / 74% of all Food Retail
- Cinema
- Education
- Healthcare
- Residential

NEXT:

What We Need Now

- Residential
- Leisure / Sports
- Offices / Workspace
- Maker Space / Studio Space
- Education
- Healthcare
- Culture /Tourism
- Retail



Note: Percentages quoted above are pre-pandemic and are representative figures across all towns

FALKIRK TODAY
CONTEXT:
COMPETING RETAIL OFFERS

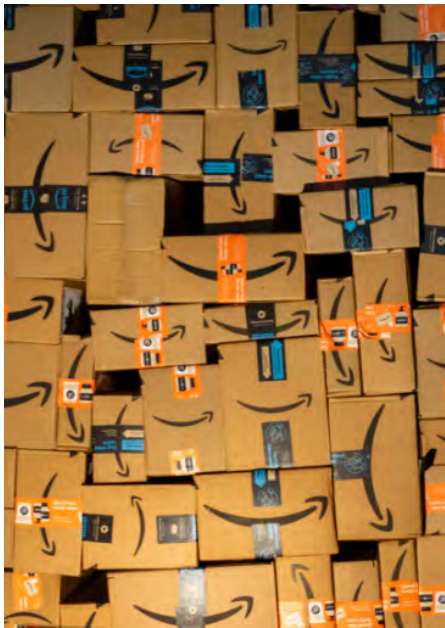
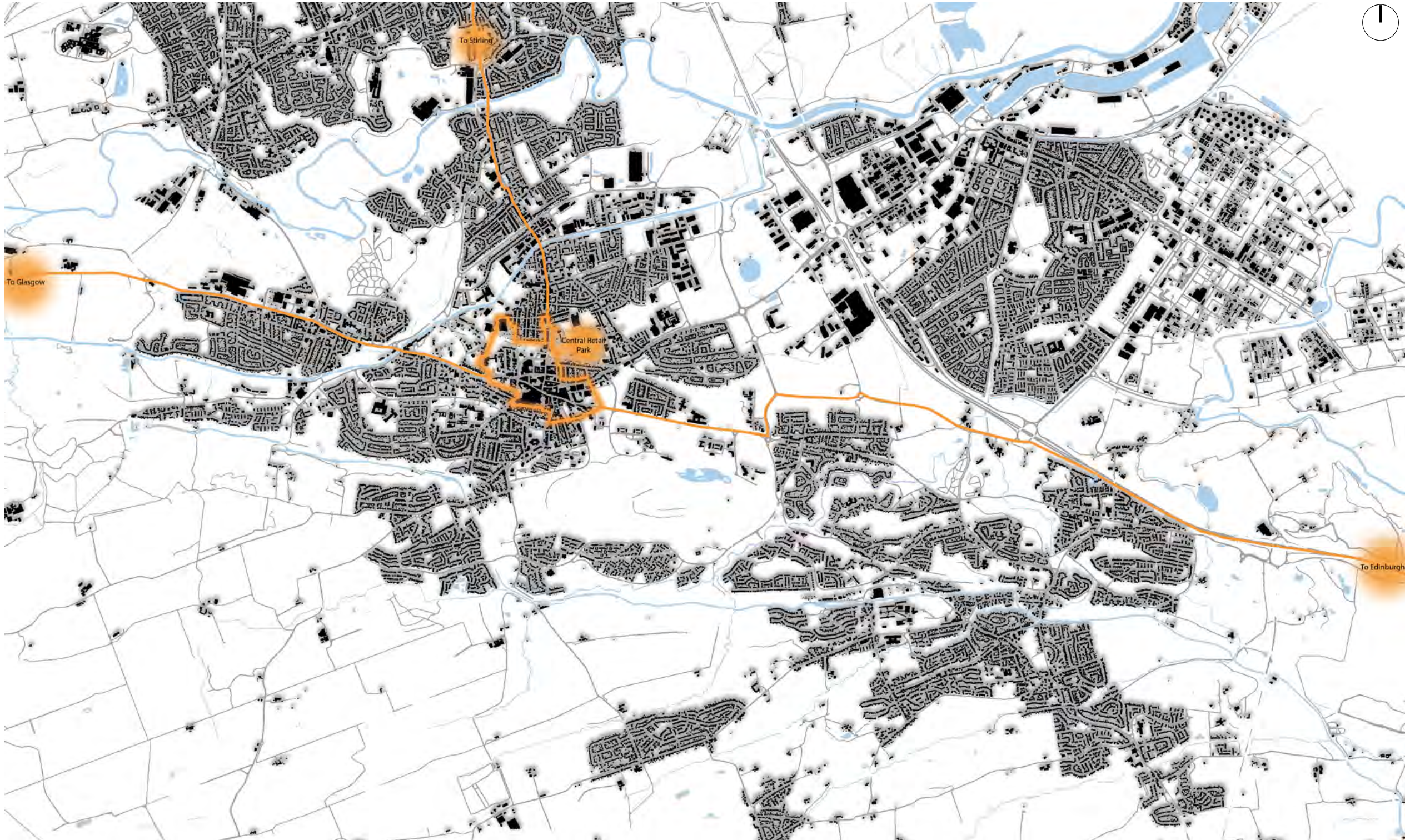
The changes in consumer behaviour and the reducing demand for retail floor space over previous decades is well documented. Increasing online shopping combined with competition from out-of-town retail has had a significant impact.

This is the situation across Europe where retail has dominated our urban centres for decades. The pandemic has both accelerated

the demise of retail dominance and increased our appreciation of quality open space and how much we value social interaction.

In addition to competition from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling, the High Street is also affected by its proximity to the 37,600sqm Central Retail Park, which has a functional relationship with the town centre by offering free surface

parking, this unfortunately leads to a certain amount of diverted trade and investment, which the High Street loses out on.



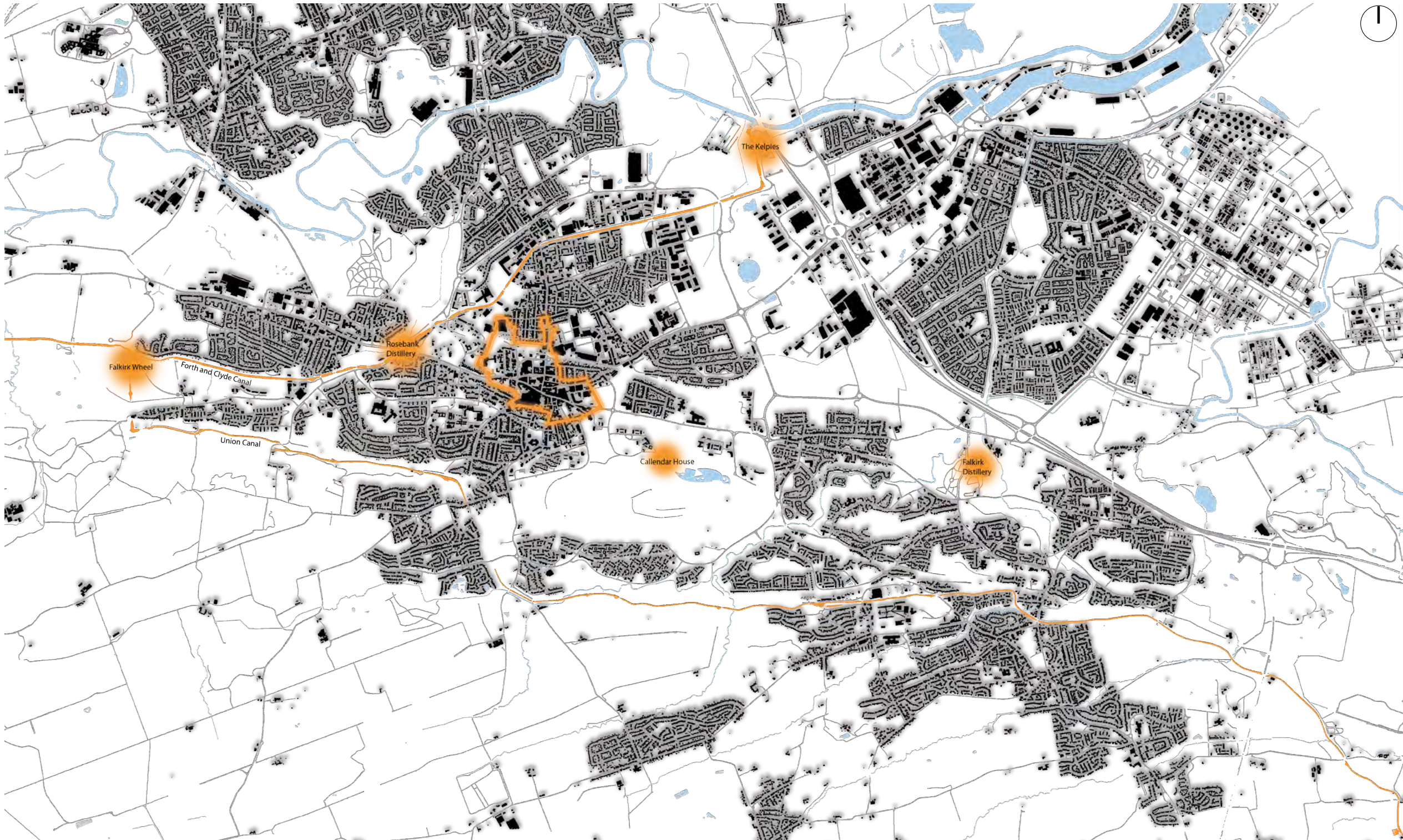
FALKIRK TODAY

CONTEXT:

SURROUNDING ATTRACTIONS

Falkirk town centre is surrounded by many tourist and cultural attractions. This is both a positive and negative for the town centre as it brings people to the area but visitors often bypass the historic centre of Falkirk in favour of these peripheral, edge of town, or out of town, attractions.

This Vision promotes a town centre first principle for any new attractions for the town and aims to connect surrounding assets such as Callendar Park, the Forth and Clyde canal and Union canal into the heart of the town- the High Street.



The Kelpies



Falkirk Wheel



Callendar House



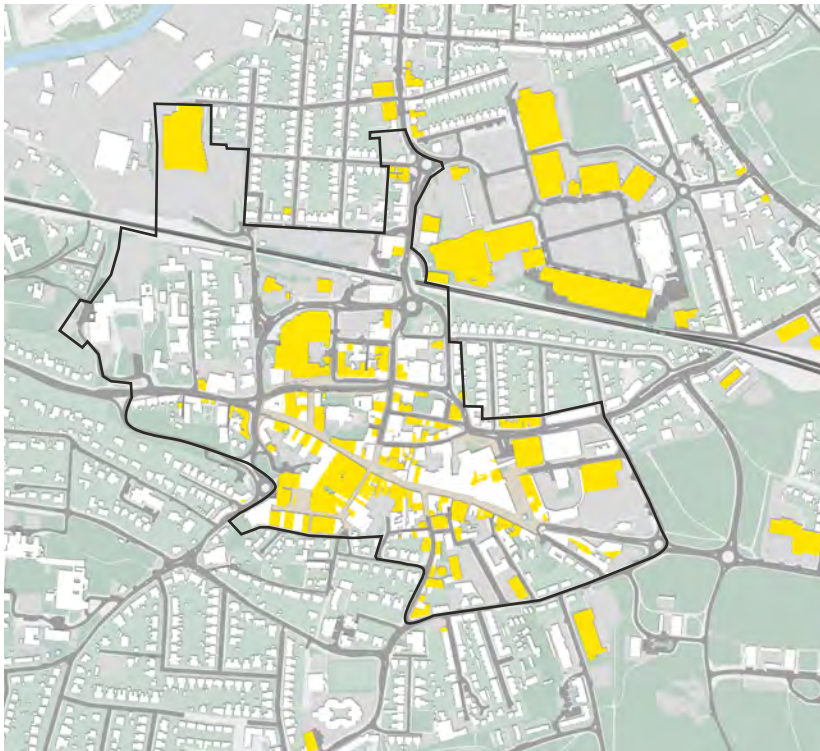
Rosebank Distillery



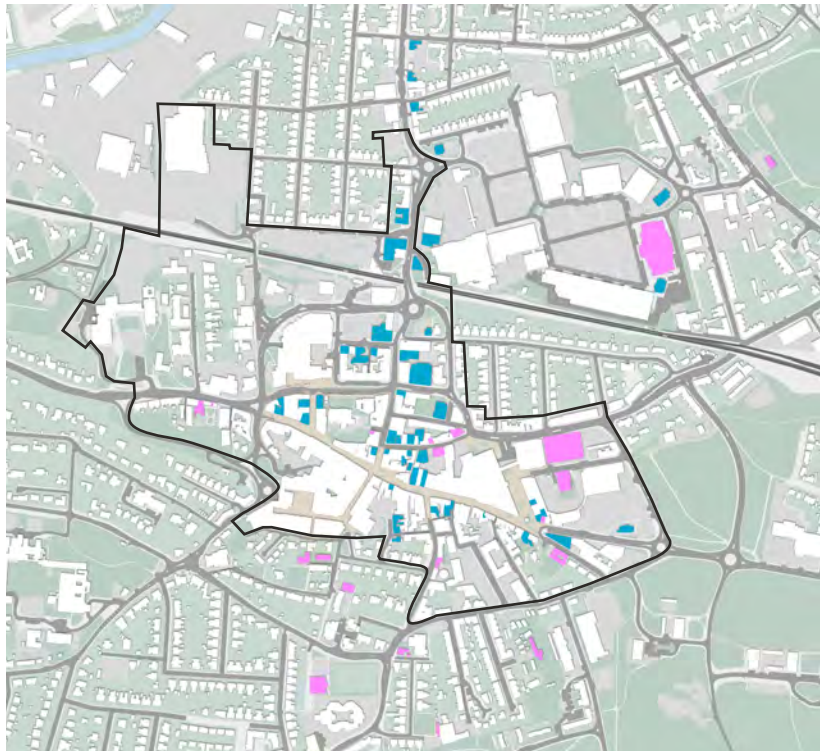
Falkirk Distillery

FALKIRK TODAY
ANALYSIS:
EXISTING USES

The adjacent maps demonstrate the current distribution of key uses throughout Falkirk town centre.



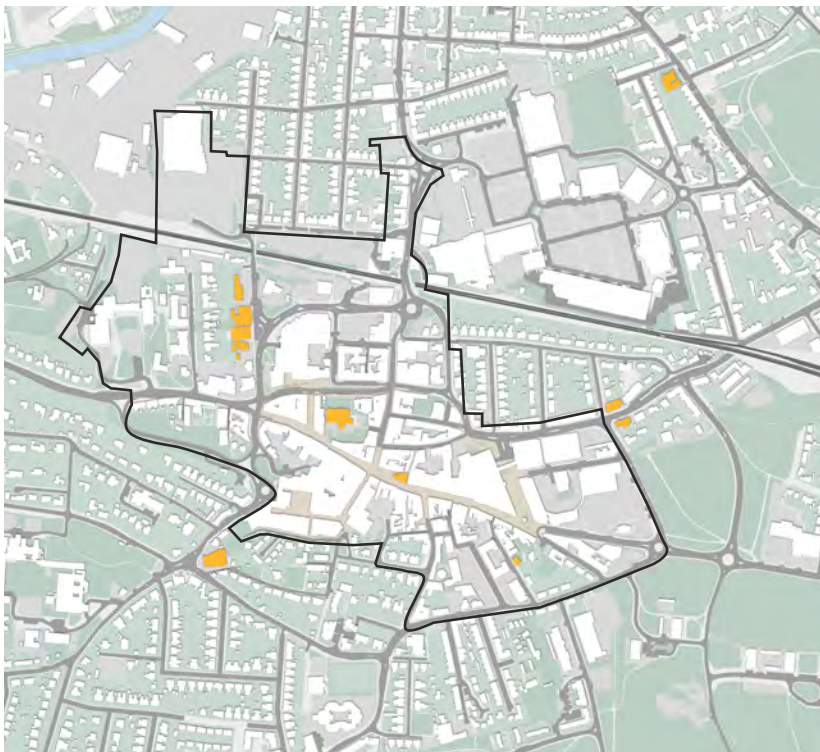
Retail



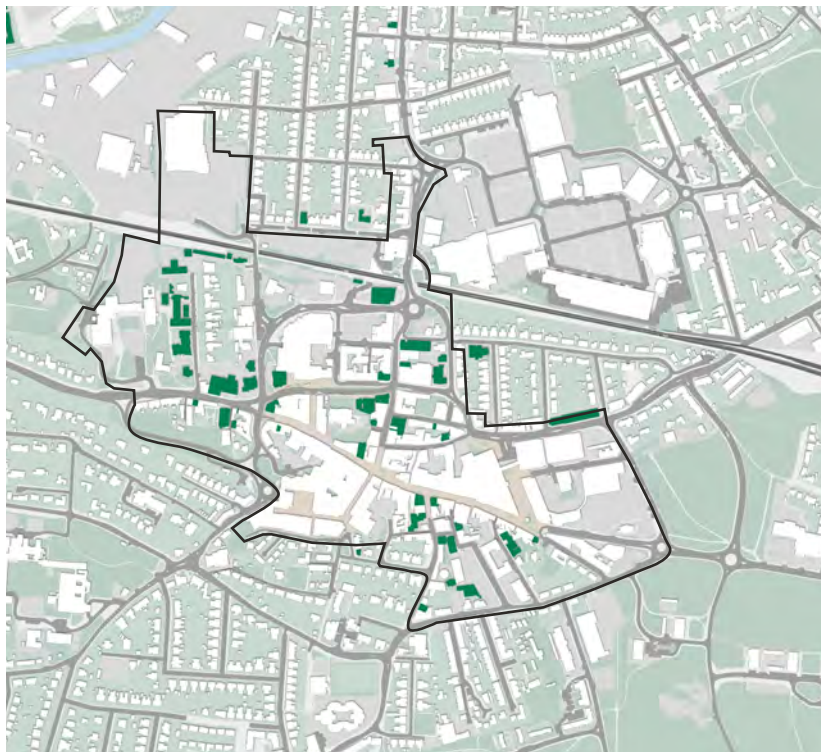
F&B / Leisure



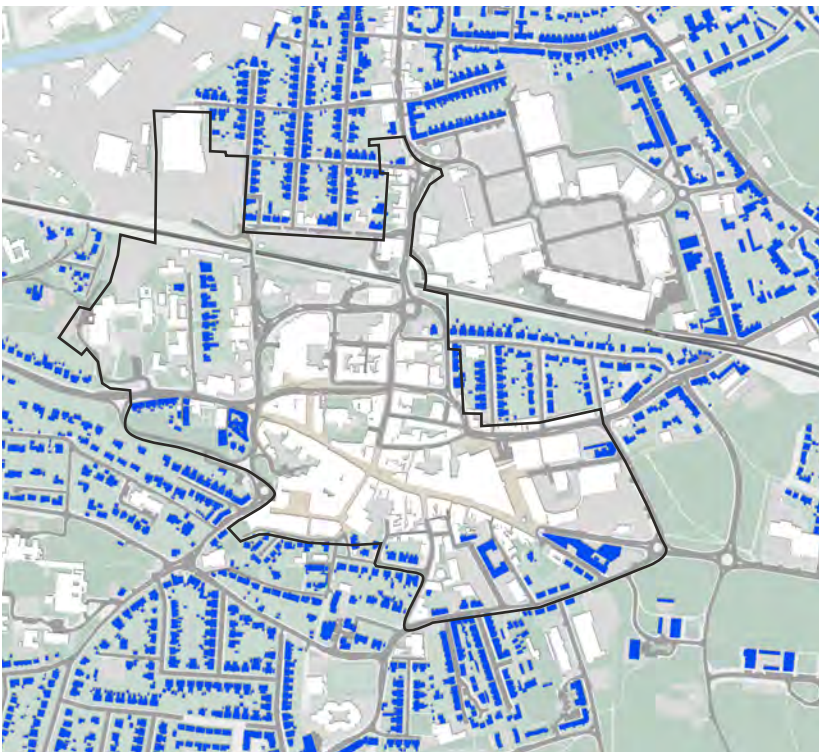
Healthcare



Civic / Community



Commercial



Residential

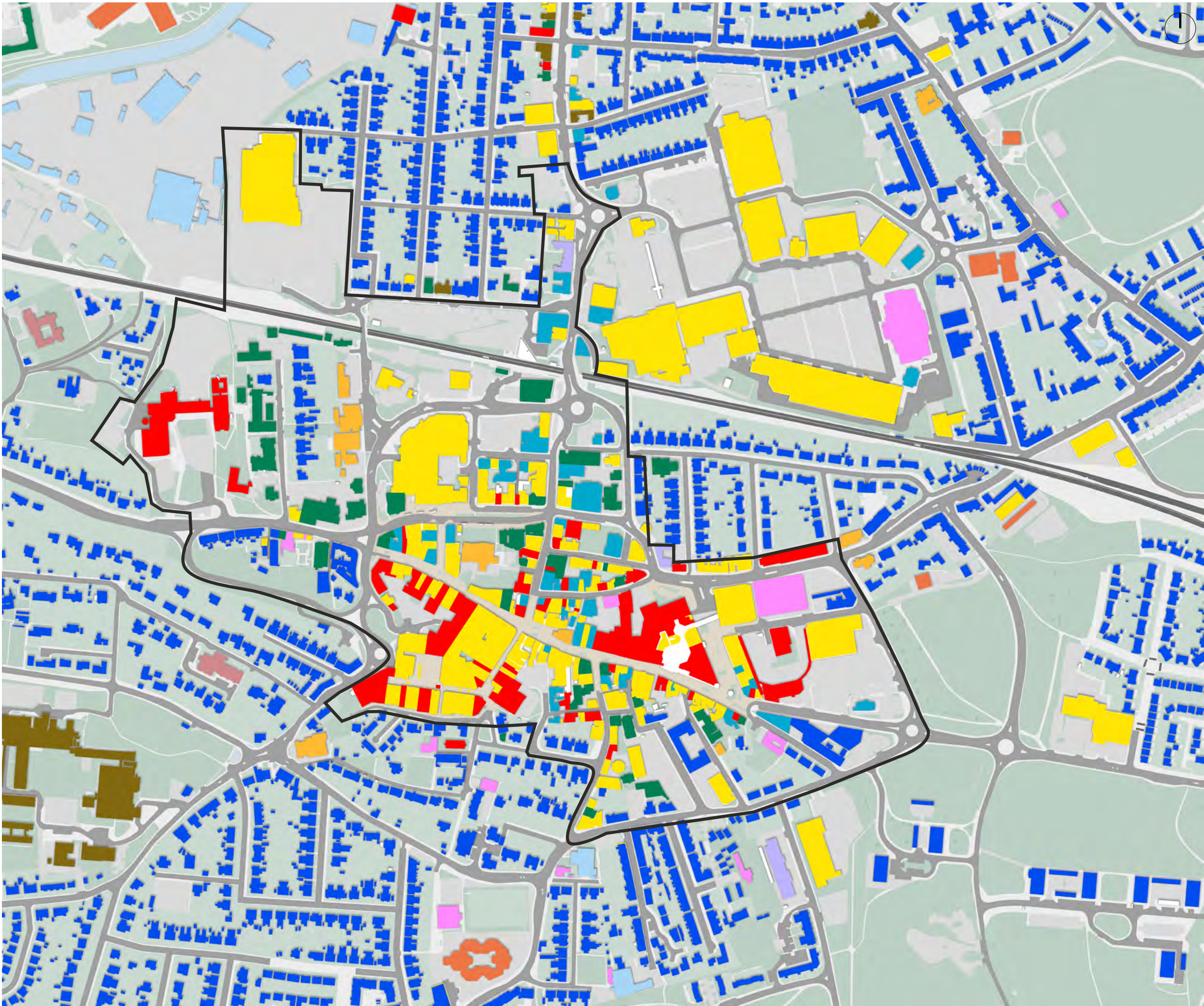
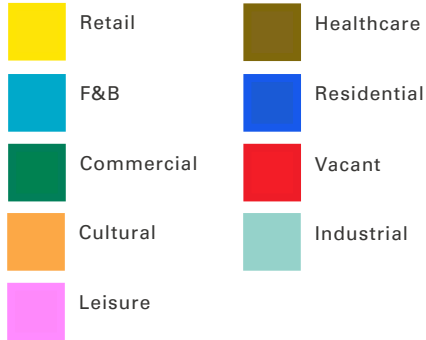
FALKIRK TODAY

ANALYSIS:

COMBINED USES

The combined uses map demonstrates that there is a dominance of retail space and a lack of town centre living, meaning that it is essential to repopulate, bring vibrancy and support the ambition for an improved evening economy.

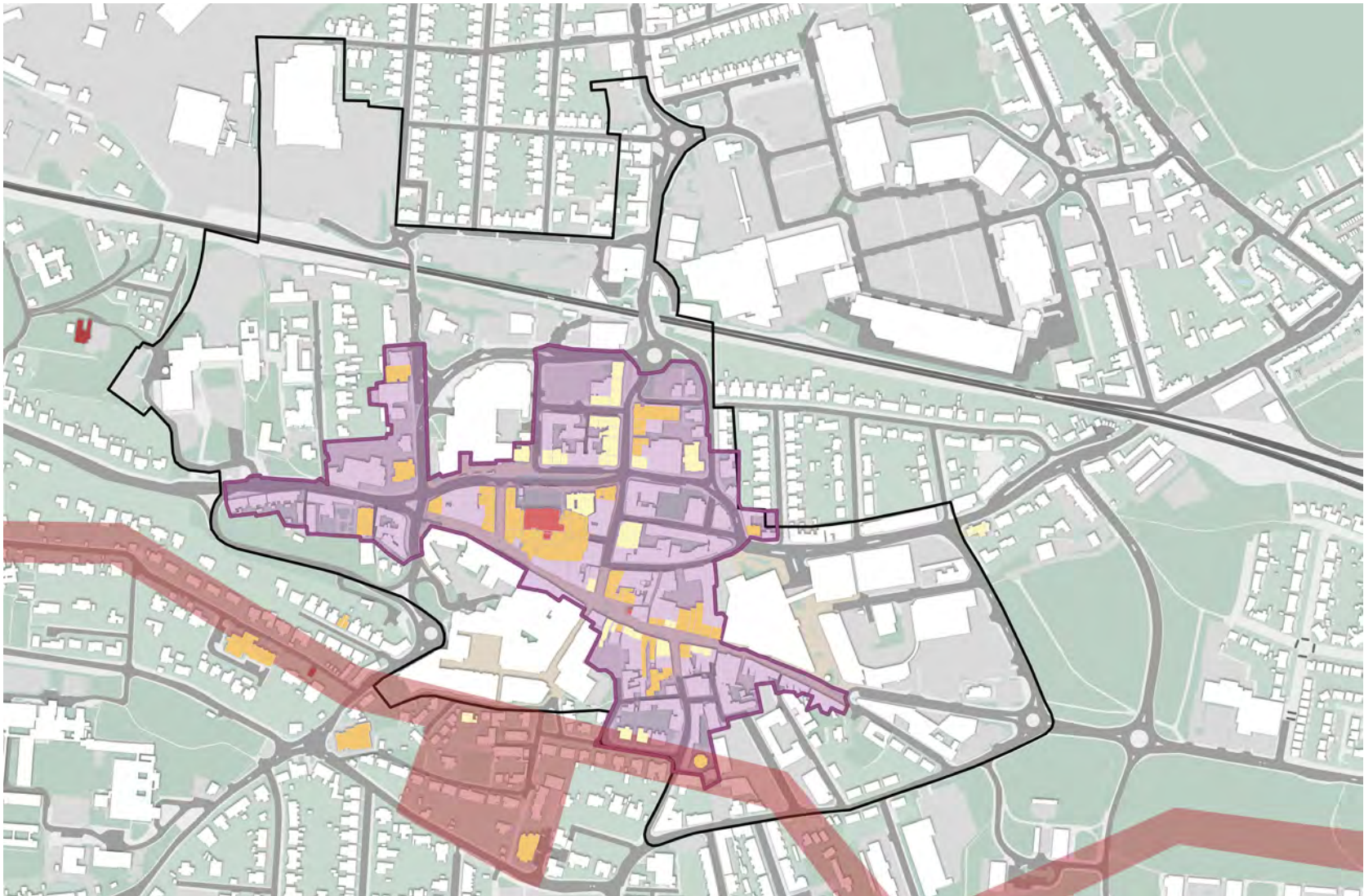
Increased levels of residential accommodation would also support the recommendations of the Scottish Government publication 'A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres' that calls for the creation of **20 minute neighbourhoods**, allowing people to access most of the services and facilities that they need in their daily life, all of which are present in or around Falkirk town centre.



FALKIRK TODAY

ANALYSIS:

BUILT HERITAGE



- Antonine Wall
- Building At Risk
- Grade A Listed
- Grade B Listed
- Grade C Listed
- Conservation Area

There is a concentration of high quality listed buildings within the town centre in a variety of styles from MockTudor to Art Deco.

The Falkirk Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) has issued several grants to local property owners, businesses and organisations to allow them to carry out repairs and other works to historic properties and spaces within the THI area.





1888



1940

As is evidenced on the historic maps below, Falkirk High Street has always been the historic centre, around which residential development has grown.

Central Retail Park replaced the Callendar Iron Works and Goods Depot in the mid 1990s, changing the balance and future of the town significantly.

The Howgate Shopping Centre, built in 1990, also had a significant role in changing the face of the town, replacing the old Howgate street which used to form a strong connection to the south west from the High Street.



2022

FALKIRK TODAY

ANALYSIS:

DEMOGRAPHICS -

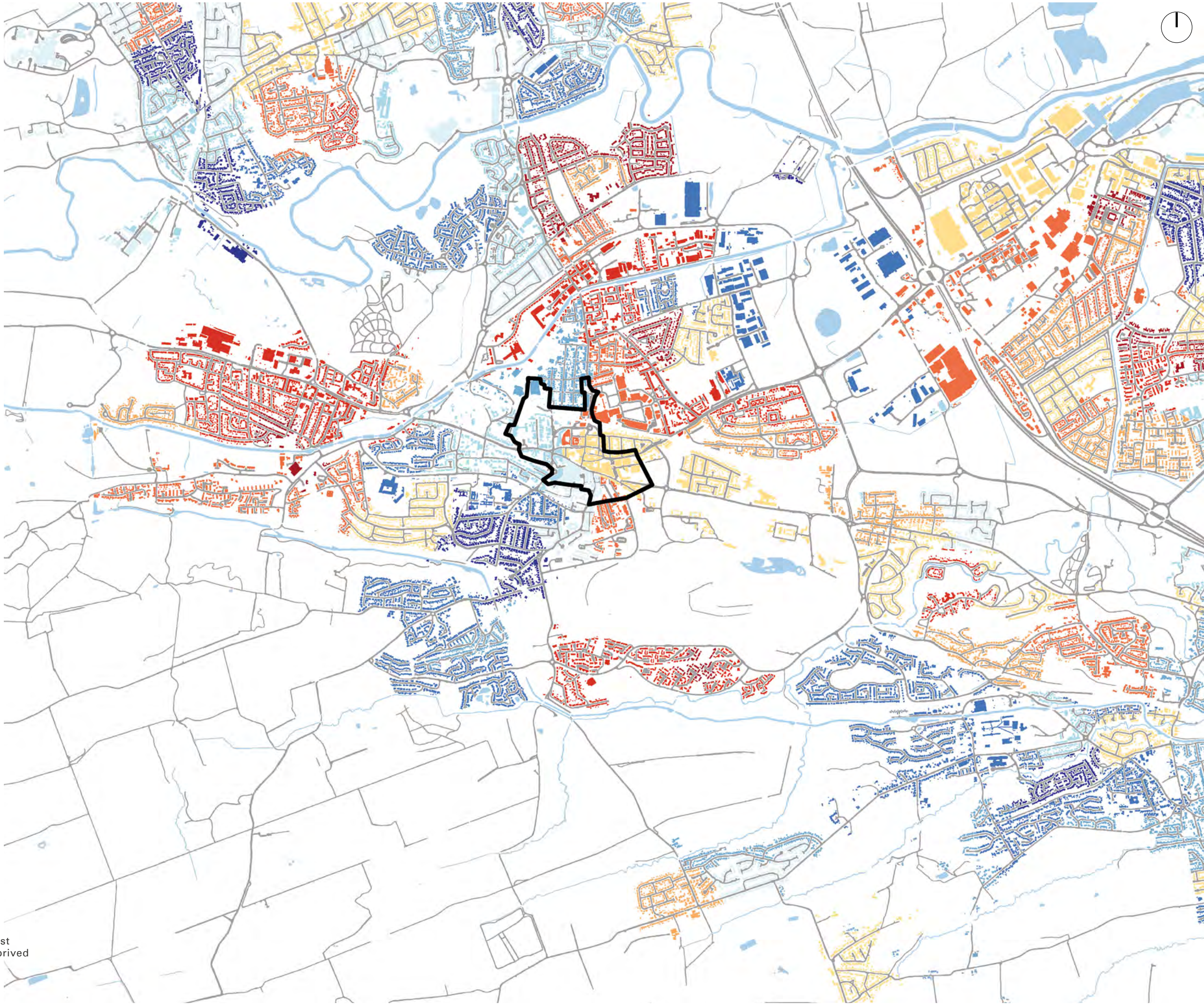
AFFLUENCE VS

DEPRIVATION

Information taken from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020. In Falkirk, there are 18 areas within the most deprived 20%.

This demonstrates statistics on relative deprivation in small areas in Scotland (arranged by Postcode) published by the Scottish Government.

(Note: non residential buildings are also coloured in the graphic)



FALKIRK TODAY
ANALYSIS:
TOPOGRAPHY

The traditional development of the medieval High Street on the brow of a hill (with the church at the highest point) can be seen in Falkirk.

There are significant changes in level falling away from the High Street, most dramatically to Cockburn Street at the west of the town centre boundary.

Footfall on the High Street is negatively affected by the topography and connectivity of the town centre. A significant difference in elevation between the High Street and Central Retail Park, where many visitors park, may deter pedestrians and those with mobility issues.



FALKIRK TODAY

ANALYSIS:

TRANSPORT / CONNECTIVITY

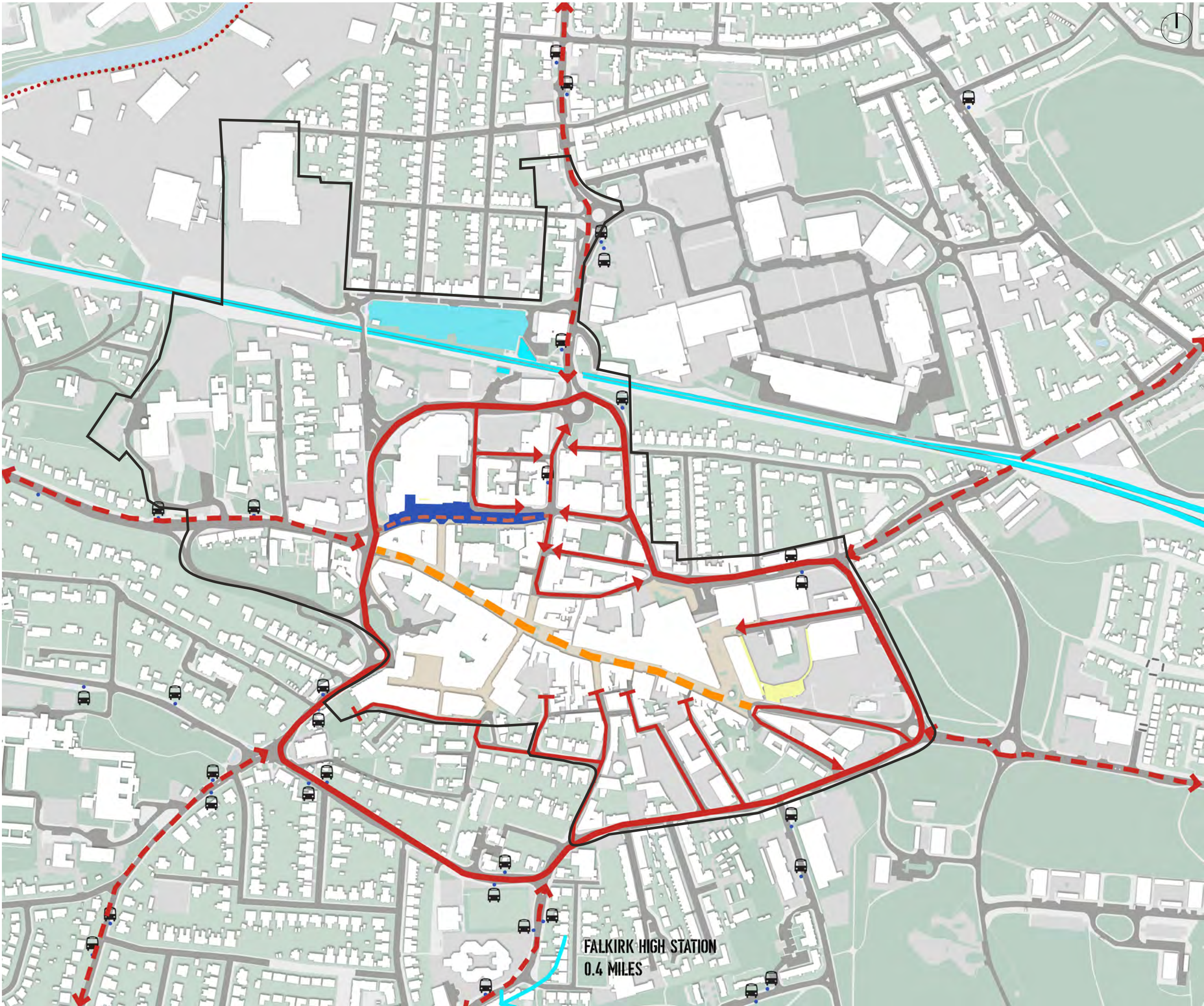
'All roads lead to Falkirk'

Once Scotland's epicentre for cattle markets with roads connecting it to every corner of the Highlands and Islands, the town now has an inner ring road that bypasses the High Street along with a range of visitor attractions on the outskirts of the town.

Grahamston train station connects to the north via Stirling and to Glasgow and Edinburgh via longer duration services than Falkirk High.

The original bus station site at the east end of the High Street is abandoned due to the bus hub being moved to Newmarket Street.

-  Bus Stop
-  Former Bus Station
-  Bus Station
-  Railway Station
-  Ring Road
-  Main Road Access
-  One Way System
-  Dead End Road
-  Buses Only
-  Service / Accessible Vehicles Only



FALKIRK TODAY

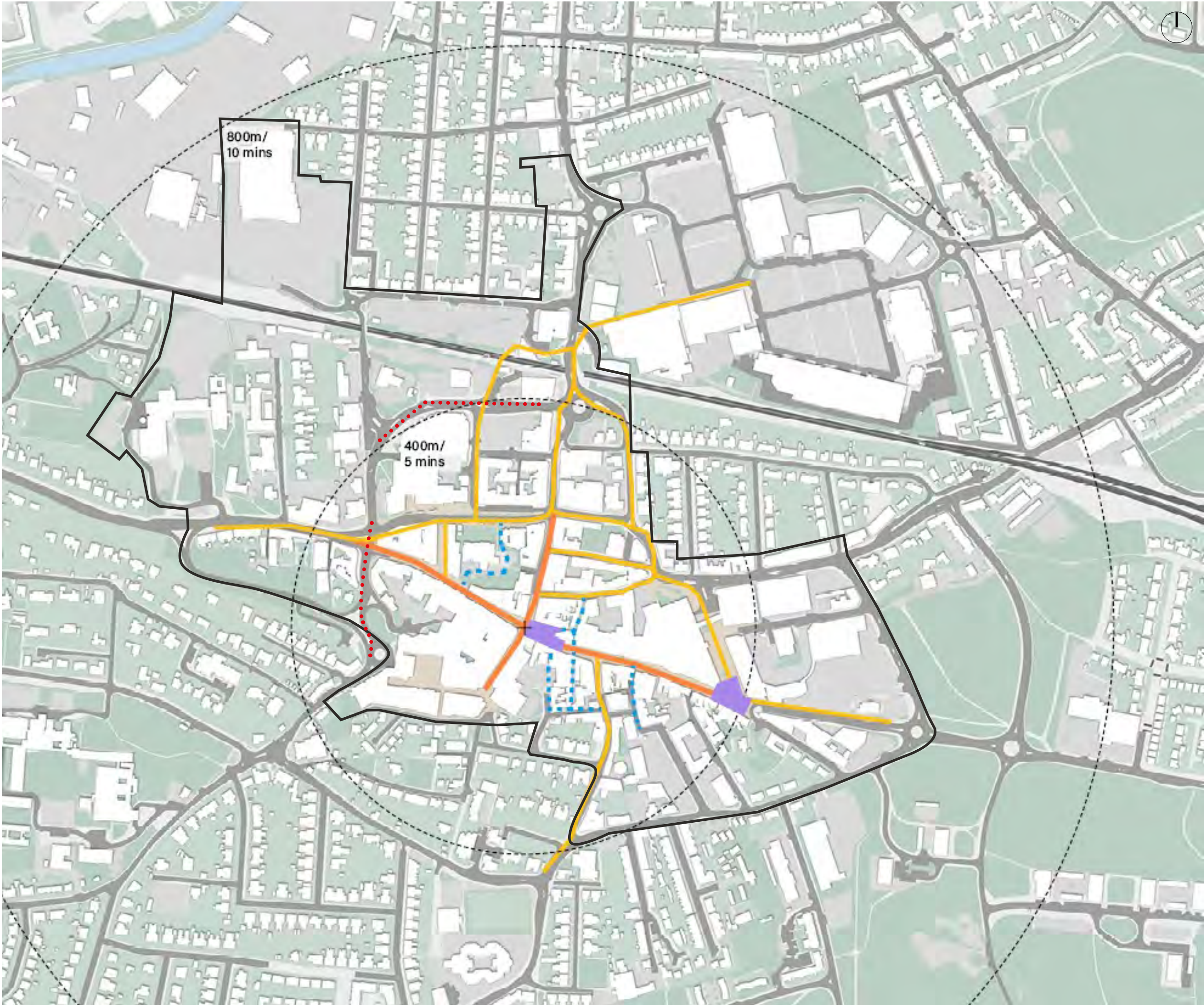
ANALYSIS:

PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

The ring road around the town centre is fairly impermeable for those walking or wheeling. There are major challenges at key junctions such as across Garrison Place and Cockburn Street.

Once on the High Street there is a pedestrianised zone (other than servicing and accessible parking). Cycling time restrictions on the High Street are recommended to be removed in the new Falkirk Active Travel Strategy.

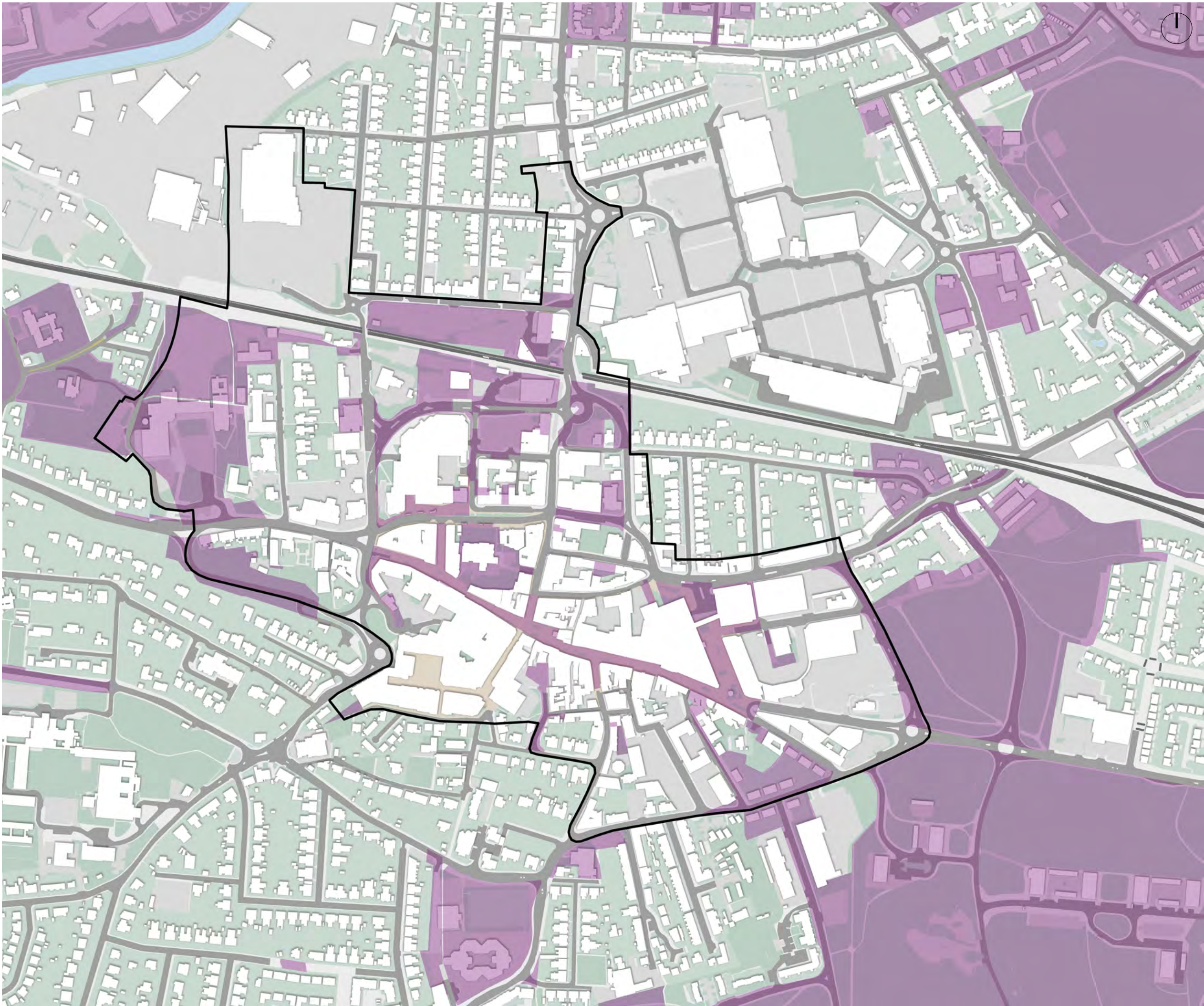
- Public Squares
- Primary Route
- Secondary Routes
- Lanes / Tertiary Routes
- Crossing Challenges



FALKIRK TODAY
ANALYSIS:
COUNCIL OWNERSHIP

The Council own relatively few sites in and around the High Street (though they have control and responsibility for infrastructure and urban realm).

Within the town centre boundary, ownership is concentrated around Grahamston Station and the former Municipal Buildings site.



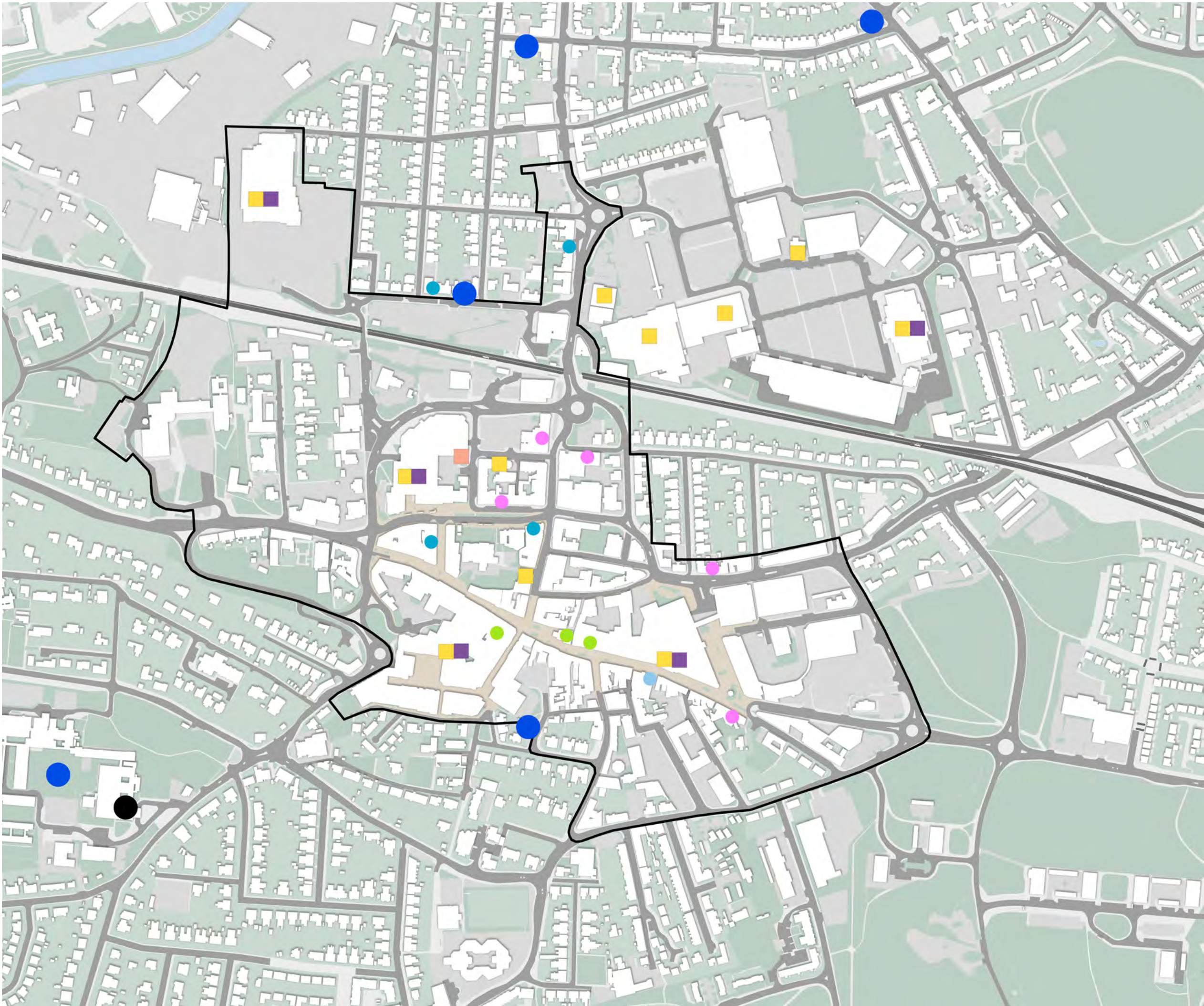
Falkirk Council Ownership

There are several GP practices in the local vicinity, most accommodated in converted residential buildings.

There is a concentration of dentistry, audiology, optometry and therapy providers within the town centre boundary.

Toilet facilities are generally located within retail premises – there are no general public welfare facilities on the High Street.

- GP Medical Practices
- Community Hospital
- Opticians / Audiologists
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy / Other Therapy
- Dental Practices
- Council Public Toilets (Closed)
- Toilets with Baby Changing
- Toilets with Accessible WC



FALKIRK TODAY: POSITIVE MOVES

Falkirk Growth Deal

In December 2021 Heads of Terms were signed between UK Government, Scottish Government and Falkirk Council in the transformative Falkirk Growth Deal.

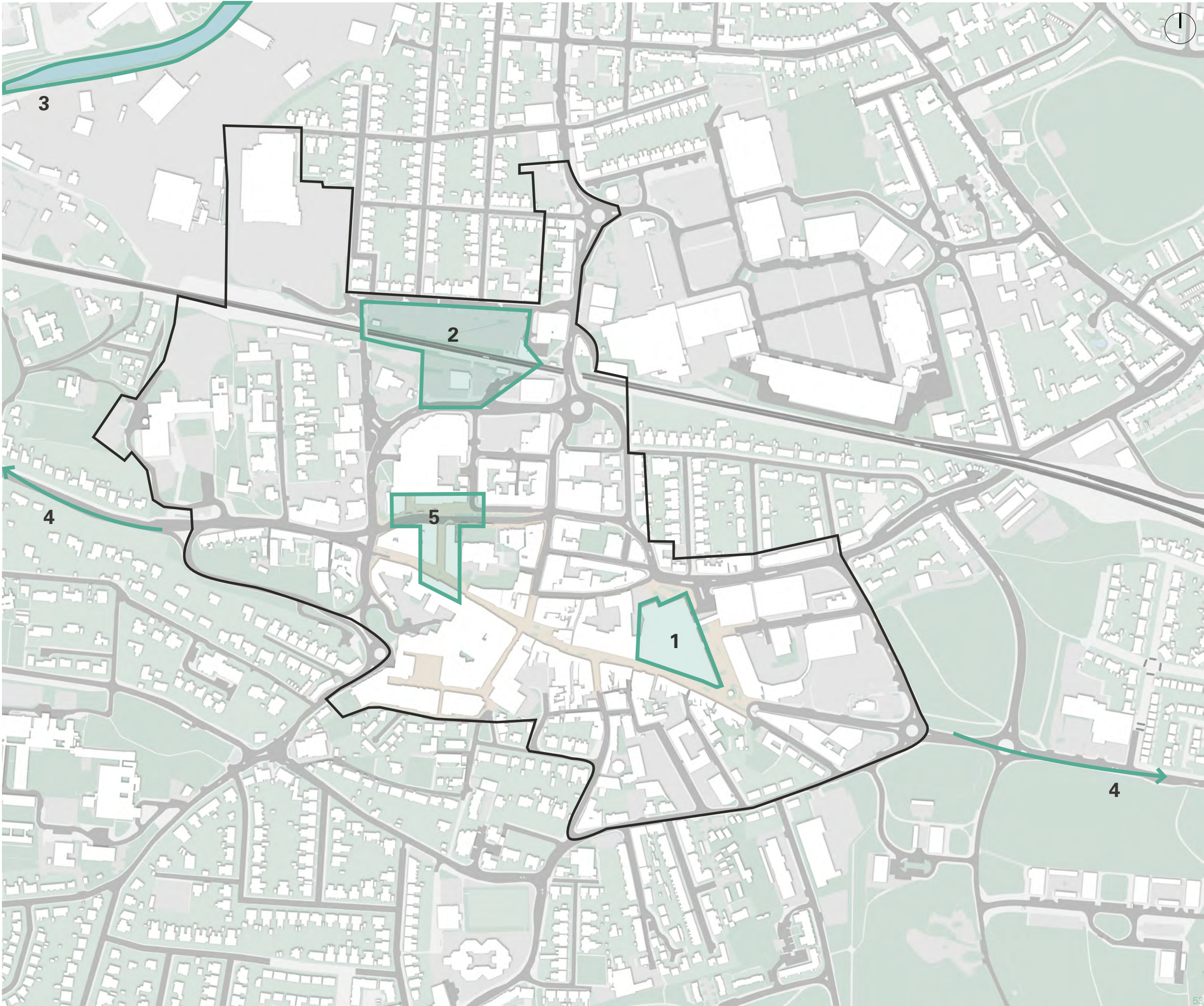
The agreement contains details on 11 projects that will benefit from a total of £80m investment from UK and Scottish Governments, £45m from Falkirk Council, and £5.8m from Scottish Canals to create an Investment Zone for Falkirk and Grangemouth. The deal is expected to create up to 2,000 jobs and £1bn worth of future investment. Key projects relevant to this study are:

- 1. Town Hall / Arts Centre
- 2. Falkirk Central Sustainable Transport Hub
- 3. Canal Centre and Art Park

Other positive projects active in the town include:

- 4. The recent completion of Falkirk Distillery and the imminent completion of Rosebank Distillery.
- 5. Works are also underway to transform the urban realm at Newmarket Street and Lint Riggs with enhanced greenery.

These projects are shown in more detail in the following pages.



FALKIRK TODAY: POSITIVE MOVES TOWN HALL / ARTS CENTRE

Scottish and UK governments will each invest £3 million inThe Falkirk Arts Centre, providing a vibrant new centrepiece in the region’s cultural sector.The Centre will contain a 550-seat auditorium, studios, workshop, and other facilities.

The Arts Centre will contribute greatly to the regeneration of Falkirk town centre.



Michael Laird Architects - Rendered View of Town Hall/ Arts Centre



Michael Laird Architects - Rendered View of Town Hall/ Arts Centre



Michael Laird Architects - Sketch Plans of Town Hall / Arts Centre

FALKIRK TODAY:
POSITIVE MOVES
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT HUB

The sustainable transport hub aspires to improve the existing transport infrastructure in and around Falkirk. Not only is the project key to a green approach in future, but it is also pertinent to other projects described in the growth deal.

Capitalising on the potential for modal shift and greater interchange opportunities, and removing the barriers currently limiting individuals' movement.



Falkirk Grahamston Station



**FALKIRK TODAY:
POSITIVE MOVES**
**CANAL CENTRE AND
ART PARK**

Lock 16 on the Forth and Clyde Canal is an underutilised strategic asset which has the potential to become a mixed-use canal-side quarter.

A Centre for Excellence and Innovation in canal maintenance and boat building will offer collaboration with local industry and will investigate decarbonising solutions.

Benefitting from £3 million of Scottish Government investment, the project will deliver a series of creative interventions running along the banks of the Forth and Clyde Canal, breathing new life into Falkirk’s waterfront through an Art Park.

The Art Park could include an offshoot that runs through the High Street with new installations attracting visitors into the heart of the town.



**FALKIRK TODAY:
POSITIVE MOVES**
**ROSEBANK
DISTILLERY AND
FALKIRK DISTILLERY**

Building on Falkirk’s industrial heritage and attracting a new profile of visitors to the town, these two new whisky distillery projects add to Falkirk’s future story.

Falkirk Distillery follows a more traditional vernacular style, while Rosebank has a modern industrial style.

Rosebank Distillery is situated on the edge of the town, while Falkirk Distillery is in a remote, out of town location.



Falkirk Distillery



Michael Laird Architects - Rendered View of Rose Bank Distillery



Michael Laird Architects - Internal render of Rose Bank Distillery

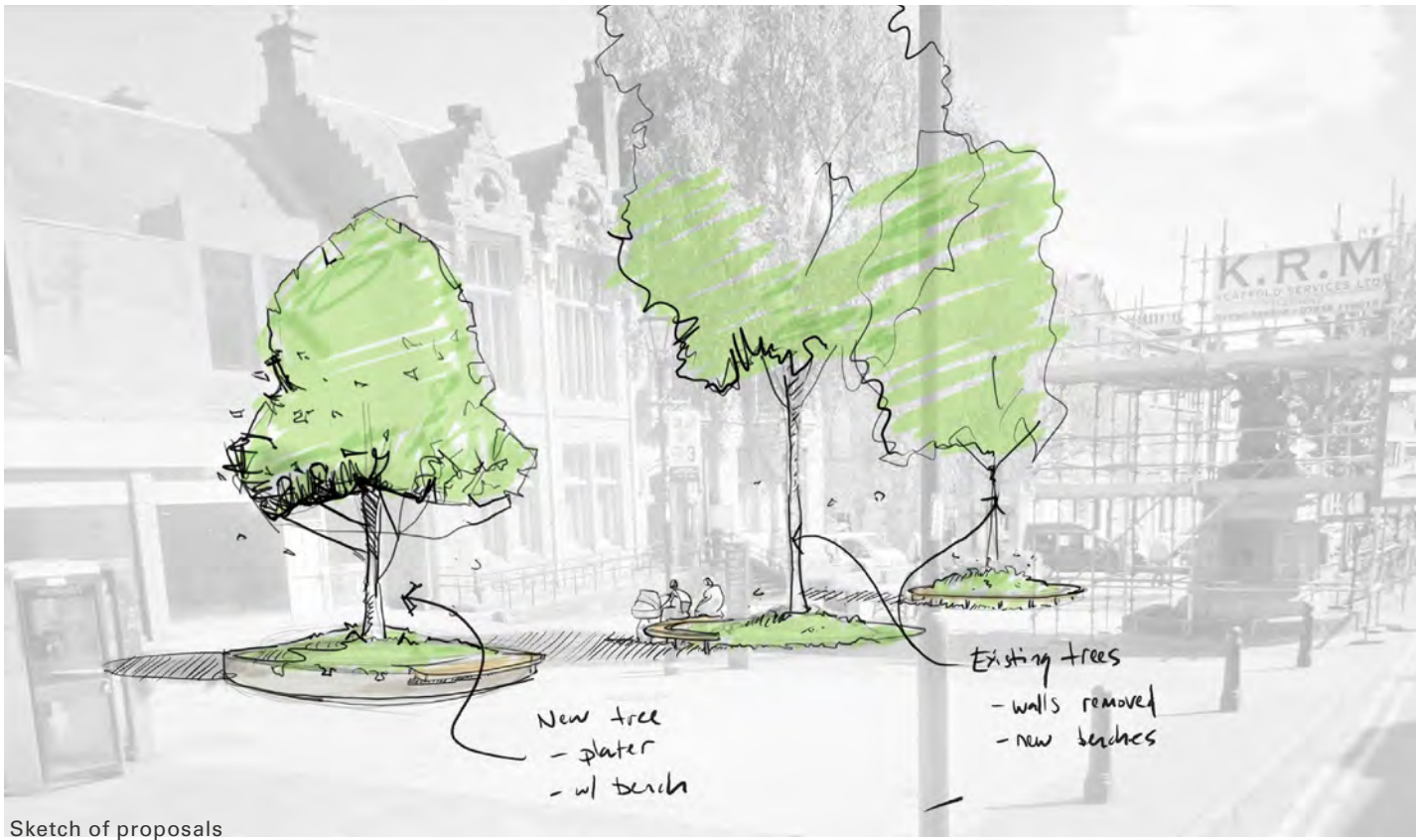
FALKIRK TODAY:
POSITIVE MOVES
NEWMARKET STREET /
LINT RIGGS URBAN REALM

The works underway to create higher quality urban realm around the Bus Hub at Newmarket Street and extending down onto Lint Riggs are a welcome investment in green infrastructure for the town.

These streets are key connections in the wider vision for the town centre and the new landscaping will serve as a strong precedent for future interventions.

The 30-week project is funded from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund and will improve the attractiveness of this busy retail and bus hub, improve pedestrian safety, reduce anti-social behaviour and improve accessibility for all.

- Design features include:
- High-quality natural stone in keeping with the character and heritage of the Town.
 - High-quality street furniture.
 - Kerbs lowered to provide an open accessible space for all.
 - Installation of new street lighting.
 - Six new trees and new planter seating areas.
 - An additional bus stop on the southern side of the street adjacent to Trinity Church to minimise queuing for buses.
 - Introduction of a commemorative stone and bench donated by Royal British Legion Scotland.



Sketch of proposals

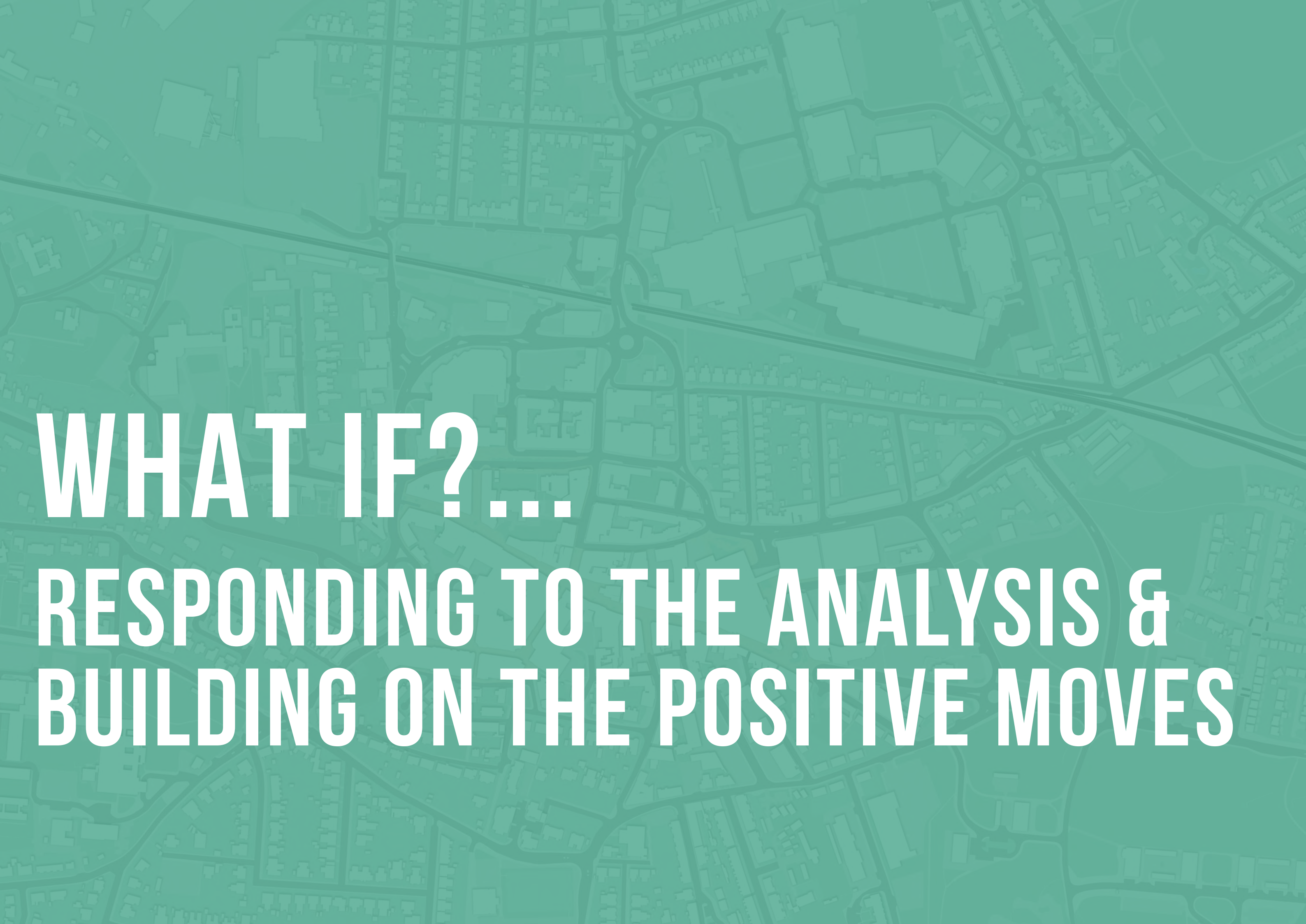


Rendered view of Newmarket Street proposals

The analysis of existing uses, built form and streets and spaces within Falkirk town centre has highlighted the following:

- At present, the town has an overprovision of retail with two shopping centres and a retail park directly adjacent. There is a need to diversify the offer away from retail and introduce a greater range of uses and services.
- There are impermeable and car centric roads cutting pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users off from their High Street. There is a need to create a more people friendly town centre and strengthen active travel connections through and outwards from the town centre.
- There is insufficient quality civic and greenspace. The High Street is a key asset and should be allowed to reach its full potential as a vibrant series of human scaled spaces, activated with new businesses and provided with high quality welfare facilities.
- There is a lack of residential accommodation in the town centre and an increase would bring vitality and passive surveillance and footfall, helping businesses and services to thrive.
- Topography and large retail assets create barriers to permeability. There is an opportunity to learn from the historic street grain to introduce new lanes and connections.





WHAT IF?...

**RESPONDING TO THE ANALYSIS &
BUILDING ON THE POSITIVE MOVES**

WHAT IF?....

.....WE ENCOURAGE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS BRINGING PEOPLE BACK TO LIVE IN THE HEART OF THE TOWN CENTRE?



WHAT IF?....

.....WE IMPROVE GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION OF KEY STREETS THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RIGHT TYPE OF RETAIL, PUBLIC SERVICES & ALTERNATIVE USES?



WHAT IF?....

.....WE PROMOTE THE STRENGTHENING OF THE EVENING ECONOMY THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW F&B / LEISURE / PERFORMANCE USES, INCREASING FOOTFALL AND ACTIVITY?



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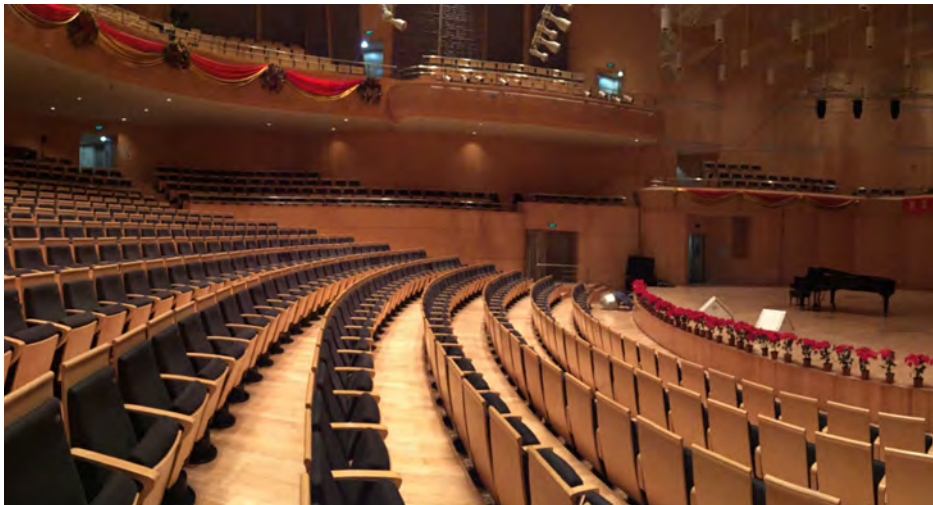


Tim J Gray / Shutterstock.com



WHAT IF?....

.....WE IMPROVE EXISTING & CREATE NEW CULTURAL OFFERS TO BENEFIT THE LOCAL POPULATION & ENCOURAGE TOURISM GROWTH?



.....WE PROVIDE NEW PLACES TO SAFELY GATHER AS A COMMUNITY, CAPABLE OF HOSTING A VARIETY OF EVENTS?

WHAT IF?....

.....WE TRANSFORM HOW PEOPLE TRAVEL
TO & MOVE THROUGH THE TOWN CENTRE BY
PROMOTING & FACILITATING SUSTAINABLE
FORMS OF TRANSPORT?





2. PROJECT BRIEF

PROJECT BRIEF

AREA OF STUDY

The project brief specified several areas of focus for the study which we have grouped into four key zones that encompass:

- **Callendar Square**
- **Former Bus Station**
- **Howgate Centre**
- **Former Marks and Spencer Building**
- **West End**
- **Falkirk Central Transport Hub / Grahamston**
- **Municipal Buildings Site**

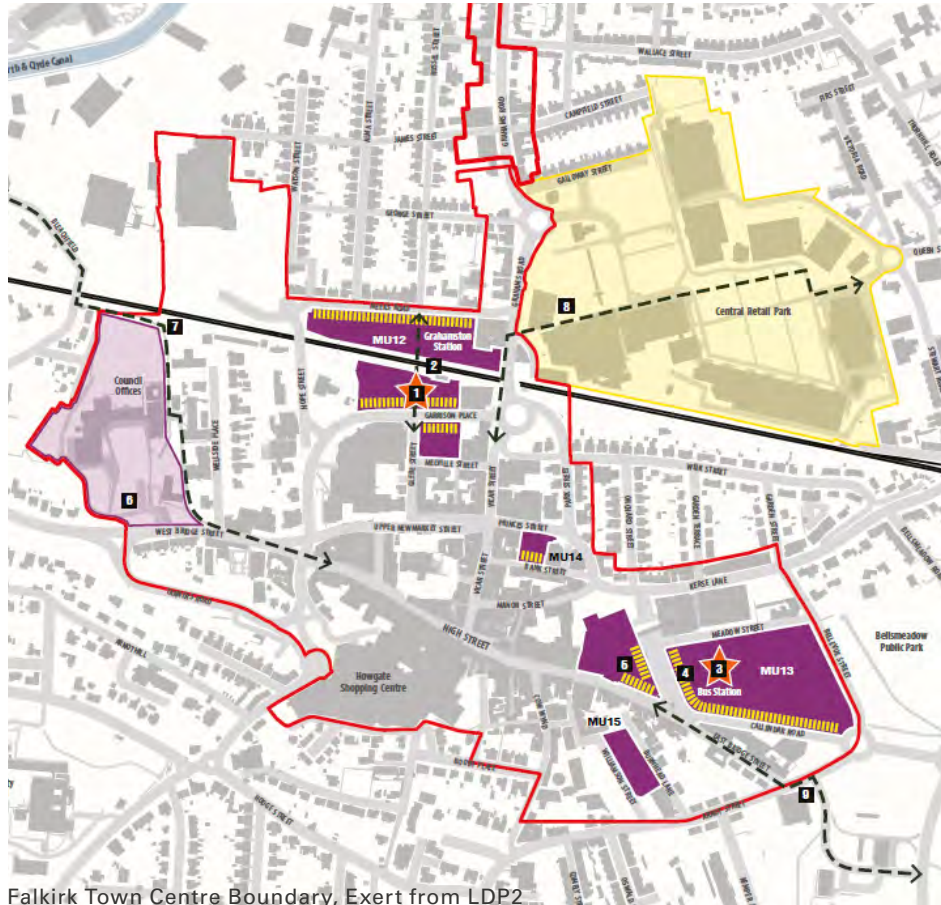
We have also taken cues from the potential development sites highlighted in Falkirk's Local Development Plan (LDP2)

Although the areas of focus overlap minimally with the Conservation Area, all four are directly adjacent and, therefore any projects brought forward in future must make due consideration to form and finishes in order to respect and enhance the protected surroundings.

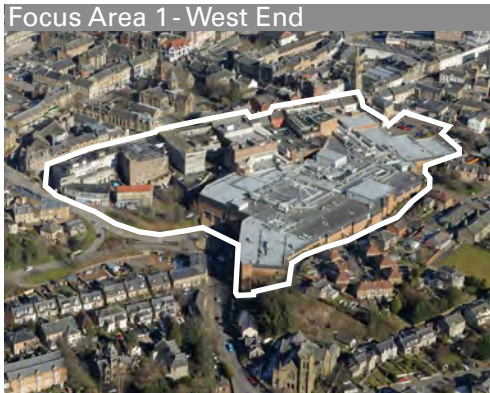
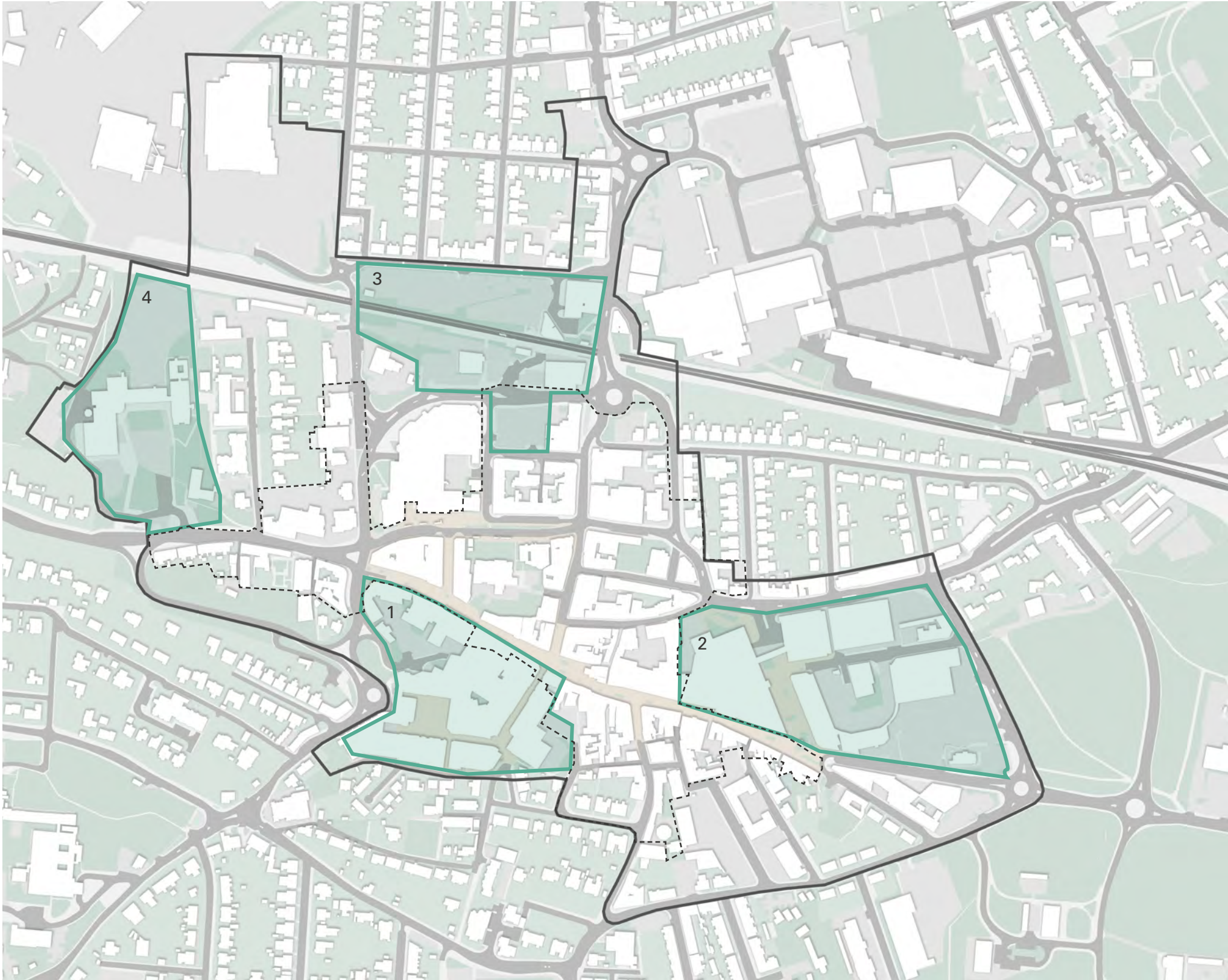
Council town centre boundary

Area of focus

Conservation Area



Falkirk Town Centre Boundary, Exert from LDP2



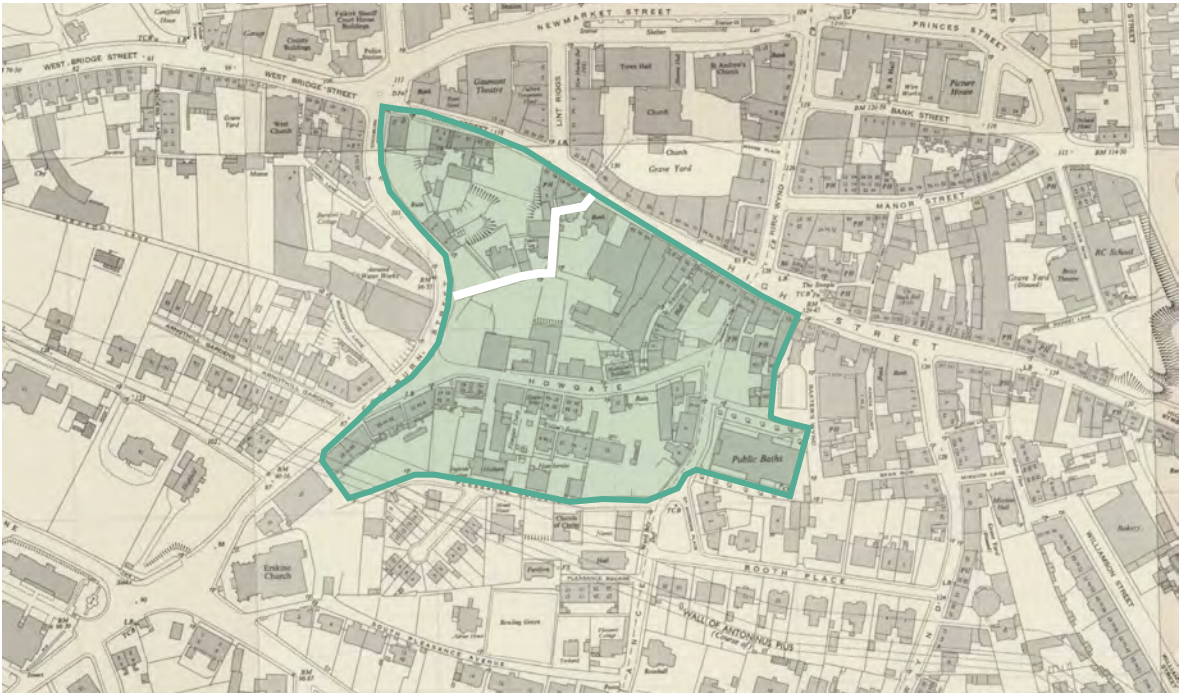
FOCUS AREA 1
WEST END
SITE CONTEXT

Urban Context

Located at the western end of the High Street and bordered by Cockburn Street and Pleasance Gardens, the area acts as a gateway to the High Street. It is within walking distance of Grahamston Train Station and Newmarket Street Bus Hub and has extensive parking provision over four undercroft levels, beneath the Howgate Shopping Centre.

The Howgate Centre is one of the more successful retail offers on the High Street. Pedestrian access to the mall level is at grade with the High Street, while the car park levels descend a further four levels to the south west, accessed from Cockburn Street.

Access for vehicles would need to be carefully considered in any redevelopment due to these challenging level differences. Investment in and around this area could provide a major regenerative effect to the town centre in conjunction with the other sites.



Historic Context

The pattern of long plots running perpendicular to the High Street is visible in the adjacent map from 1944. Along with the prominent connection of the former Howgate street (now the Howgate Mall), there was a key connection at Bell's Wynd, terminating at the steps leading up to Trinity Church.

Also visible is the Public Baths building off Baxer's Wynd which provided a health and wellbeing function for the community.

FOCUS AREA 1
WEST END
SITE ANALYSIS



1 View of Falkirk Trinity Church from High Street
2 Vacant M&S unit
3 Corner of Kirk Wynd & High Street
4 View of service yard from Bell's Wynd

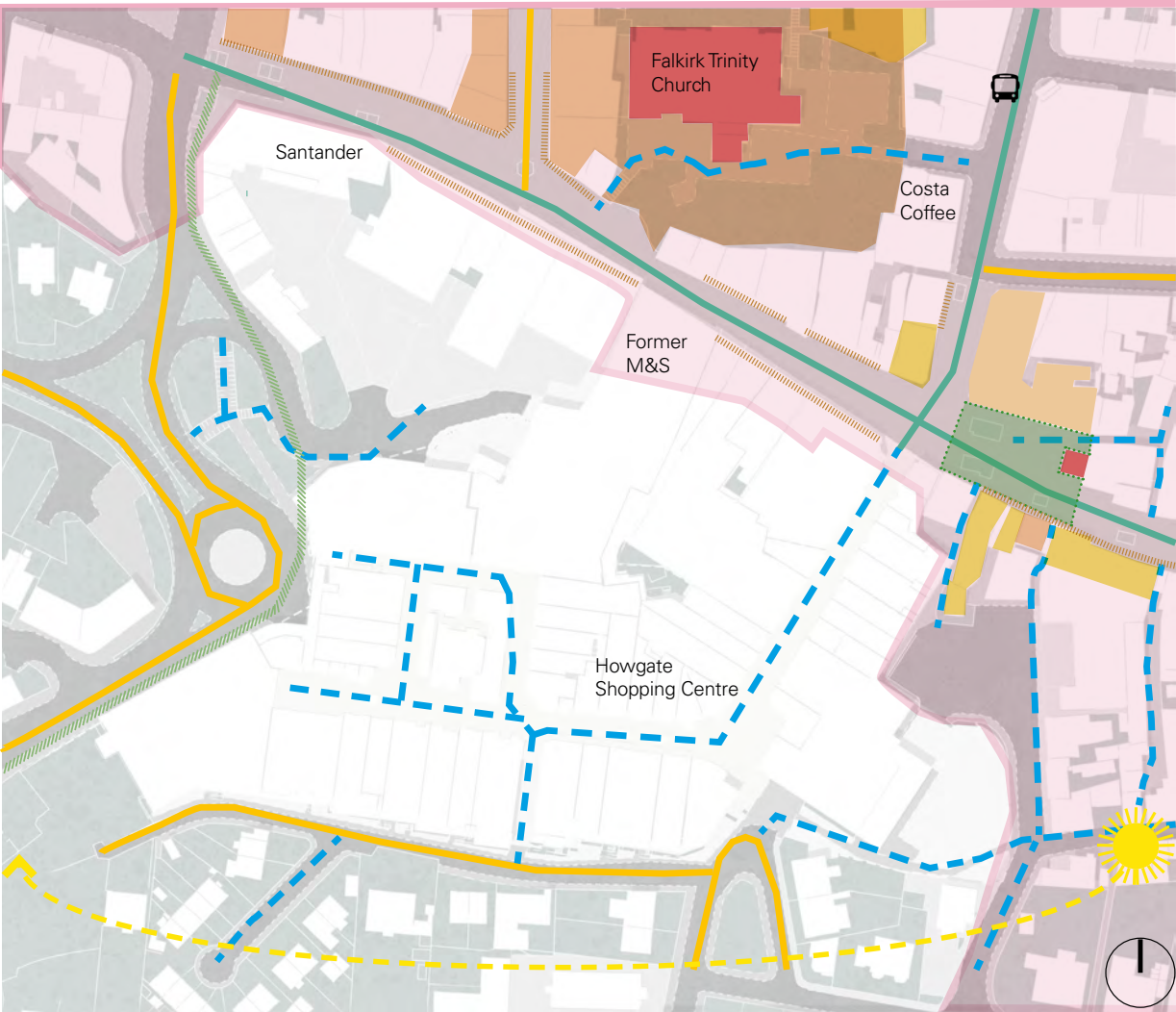
Ground Floor Uses:

- Retail
- F&B / Leisure
- Residential
- Office / Commercial
- Community
- Vacant



Opportunities and Constraints:

- Conservation Area
- Category A Listed Building
- Category B Listed Building
- Category C Listed Building
- Active Frontages
- Public Space
- Change in Level
- Direction of Sun Travel
- Primary Routes
- Secondary Routes
- Pedestrian/Tertiary Routes

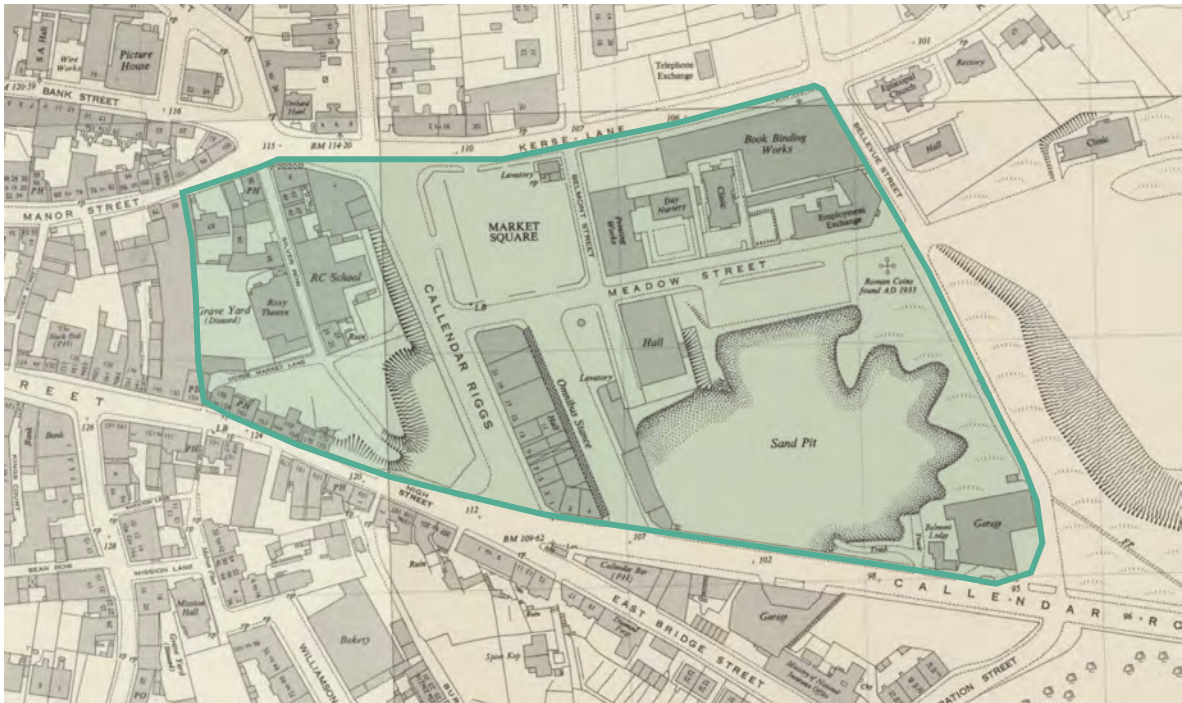


FOCUS AREA 2
CALENDAR SQUARE
SITE CONTEXT

Urban Context

This eastern site offers the potential to create a ‘dumbbell effect’ in conjunction with new development at the west end of the High Street, creating pull and footfall between two attractors. It also has strong connections to the M9, Forth Valley College, Falkirk Stadium and The Kelpies. It is within walking distance to the Grahamston Train Station and Upper Newmarket Street Bus Hub.

The site is currently under the ownership of several parties. Furthermore, the smaller retail units outwith Callendar Square are performing well and present a successful frontage to the street.



Historic Context

The map adjacent shows the significance of Callender Riggs with the large Market Square, also containing public lavatories.

The current Callendar Square site was permeated by Silver Row, running past the Roxy Theatre and School.

FOCUS AREA 2 CALENDAR SQUARE SITE ANALYSIS



1 Calendar Square car park

2 Covered pedestrian walkway at former bus station

3 Eastern end of High Street

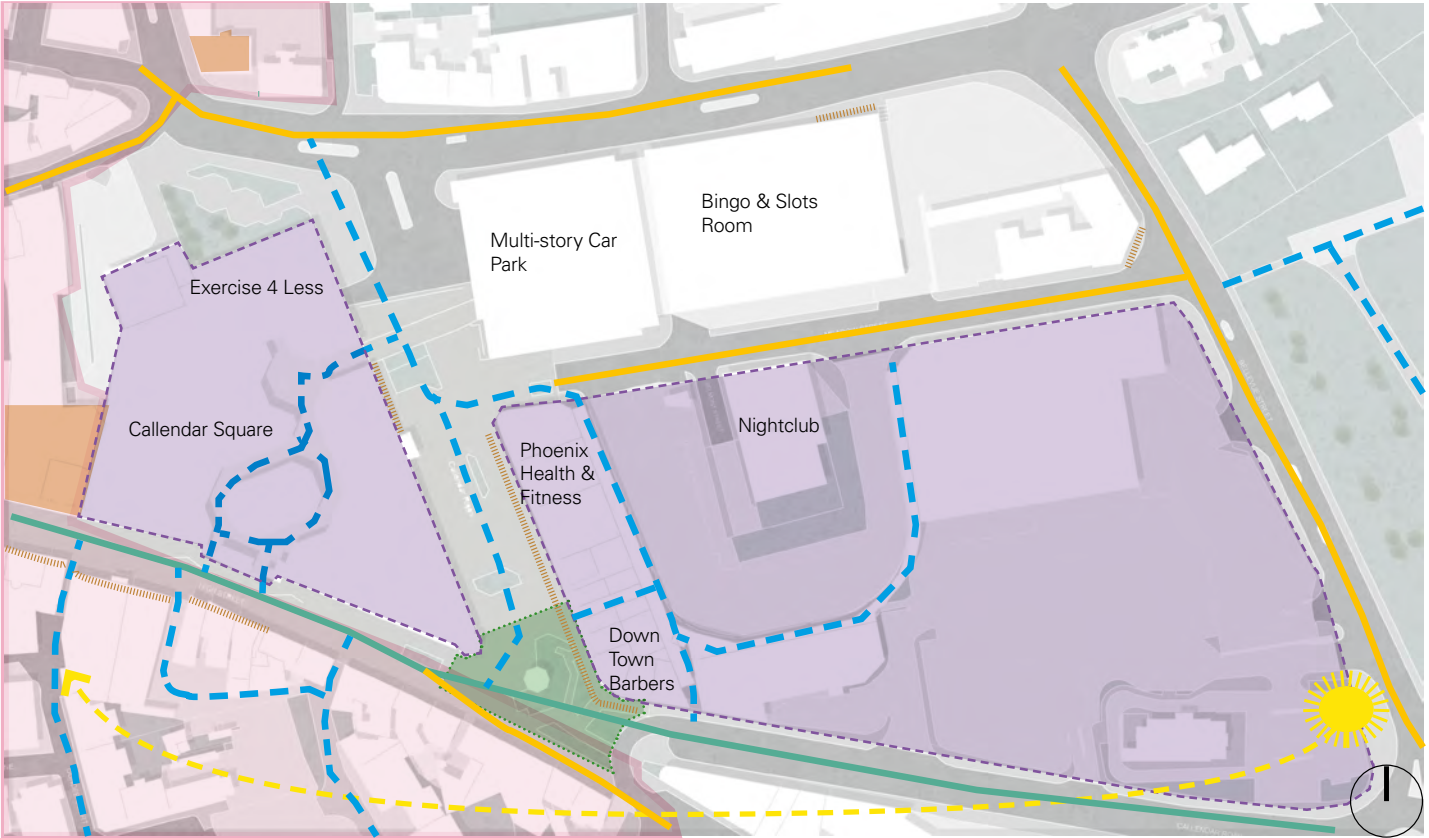
4 Calendar Square east service entrance

Ground Floor Uses:

- Retail
- F&B / Leisure
- Residential
- Office / Commercial
- Community
- Vacant
- Hotel

Opportunities and Constraints:

- Conservation Area
- Category B Listed Building
- Active Frontages
- LDP Development Site
- Public Space
- Change in Level
- Direction of Sun Travel
- Primary Routes
- Secondary Routes
- Pedestrian/Tertiary Routes



FOCUS AREA 3

GRAHAMSTON STATION

SITE CONTEXT

Urban Context

Located to the north of the town centre, near the Central Retail Park, Grahamston Station is one of two train stations in Falkirk. The site is easily accessible via Meeks Road connecting to Hope Street and Graham Street. It offers close connections with the central bus hub on Upper Newmarket Street and further onto the High Street, however the topography of the town poses challenges for those with mobility issues. The site has a sizeable parking offer, over-providing by nearly two thirds for the average daily occupancy.

Grahamston station is proposed as the site for the new Sustainable Transport Hub, which will encourage multi-modal travel through Falkirk and the surrounding areas while providing an improved arrival point into the town centre.



Historic Context

The original Victorian Station building can be seen in the map opposite, sitting to the south of the tracks at the termination of Glebe Street.

This area of the town was more densely built up in urban blocks with continuous frontages to Vicar Street and Garrison Place

FOCUS AREA 3 GRAHAMSTON STATION SITE ANALYSIS



1 Corner of Meeks Road & Grahams Road
2 View of Post Office
3 Eastern view of Asda from Melville car park
4 View of Party Rocks shop entrance
5 Morrisons petrol station viewed from Hope St

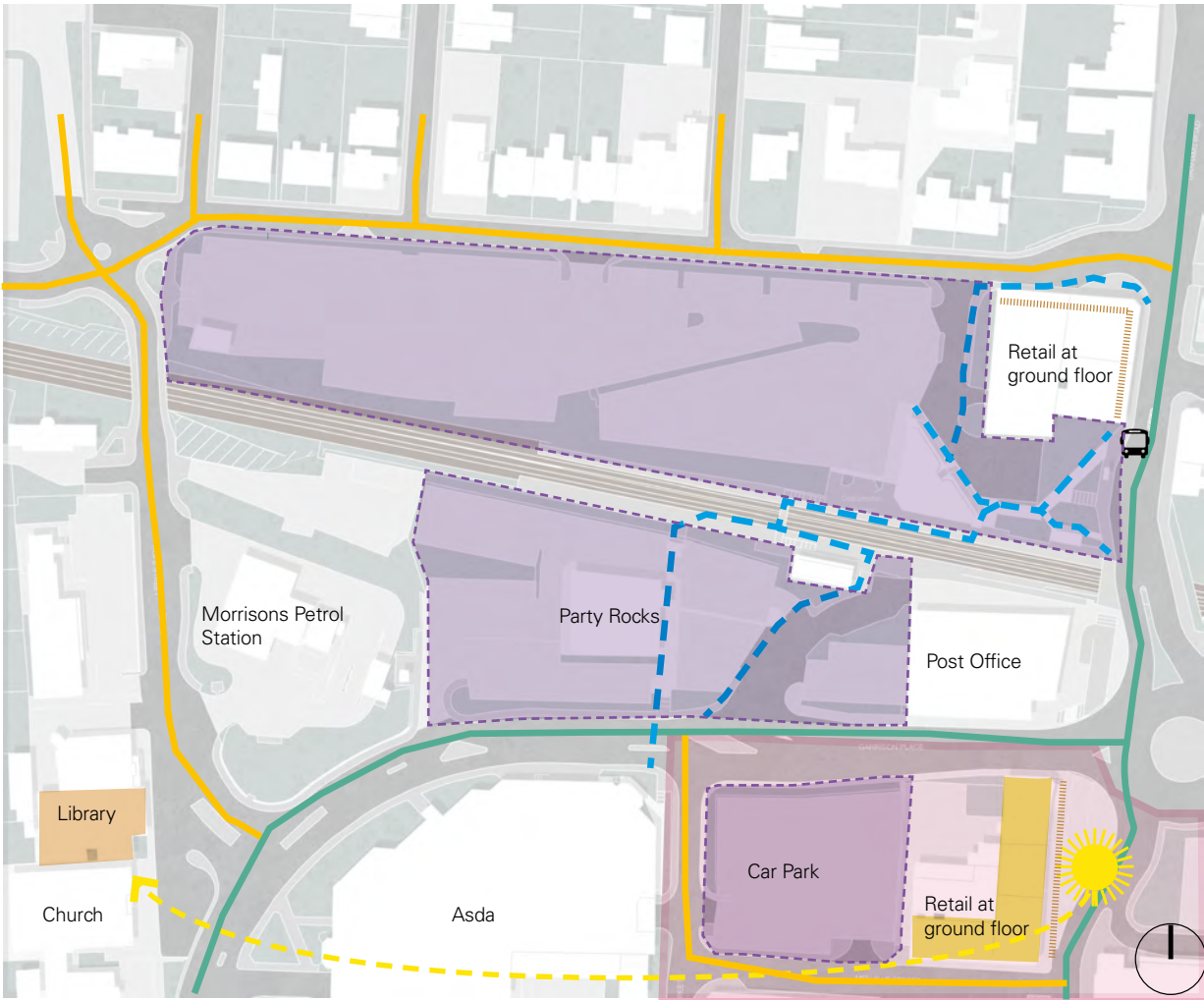
Ground Floor Uses:

- Retail
- F&B / Leisure
- Residential
- Office / Commercial
- Community
- Vacant
- Hotel



Opportunities and Constraints:

- Conservation Area
- Category B Listed Building
- Category C Listed Building
- Active Frontages
- LDP Development Site
- Public Space
- Change in Level
- Direction of Sun Travel
- Primary Routes
- Secondary Routes
- Pedestrian/Tertiary Routes



FOCUS AREA 4

FORMER MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

SITE CONTEXT

Urban Context

On the western edge of the town centre, the Municipal Buildings site is the current location of the Falkirk Council HQ Building and the former Town Hall. The site is owned in its entirety by Falkirk Council. The site's access, off West Bridge Street/ A803 is the main access to the town for visitors from the M80 or those coming into the town from the Falkirk Wheel. While the site offers good road connections it is slightly remote from the actual heart of the town centre and High Street.

Clearing the site would open up the area for future development, possibly for residential developers. However, the changing topography across the site would require significant excavation and retention to deal with access to potential new development.



Historic Context

The site was originally home to Westbank House, demolished in 1962.

The north south connection from the opposite site of the train track into West Bridge Street is visible, through what would have been a predominantly green site.

FOCUS AREA 4

FORMER MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

SITE ANALYSIS



1 Job Centre looking south west
 2 Commercial block looking north west
 3 View south of adjacent housing
 4 View of house west of Municipal Site

Ground Floor Uses:

Retail

Residential

Office / Commercial

Community

Vacant

Opportunities and Constraints:

Conservation Area

Building at Risk

Active Frontages

LDP Development Site

Public Space

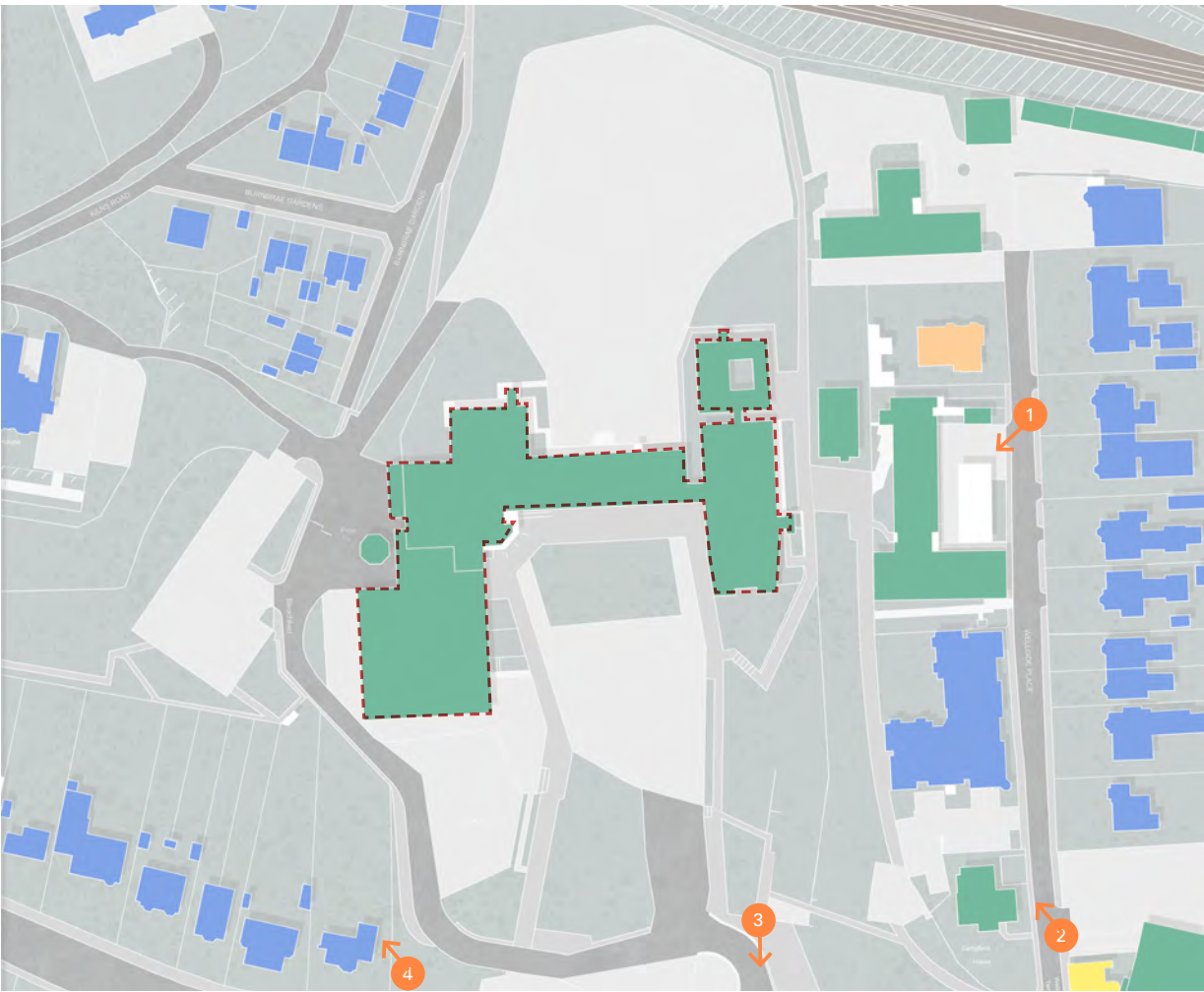
Change in Level

Direction of Sun Travel

Primary Routes

Secondary Routes

Pedestrian/Tertiary Routes



PROJECT BRIEF

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Workshop

11th January 2023

The purpose of the initial stakeholder workshop was to gather the ideas of those in attendance.

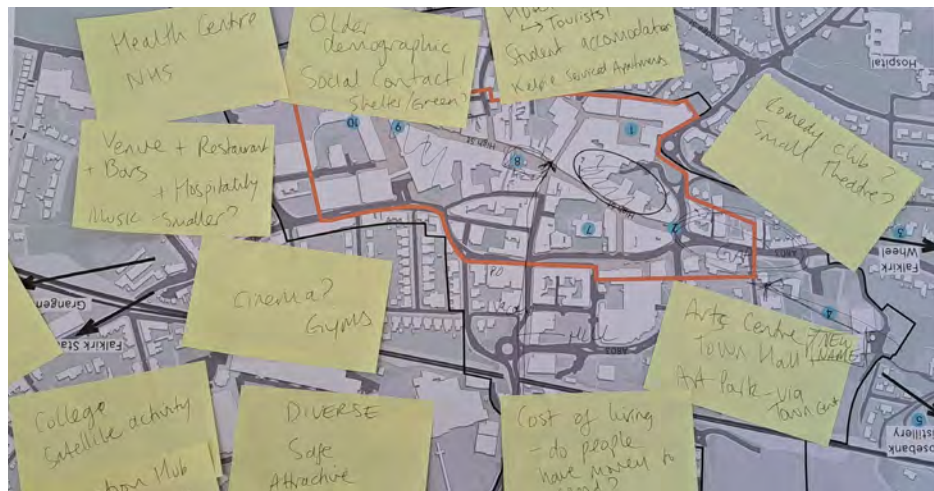
Two workshops were run over the course of the afternoon with the following titles;

Workshop 1

Repopulate, Re-energise, Reposition, Rebalance Themes

Workshop 2

Falkirk's future narrative?



Stakeholder Workshop attendees:

- 
- Falkirk Council
 - Falkirk Trinity Church
 - Forth Environmental link
 - Scotrail
 - Police Scotland
 - Forth Valley College
 - Falkirk Delivers
 - Scottish Futures Trust
 - Scotland Towns
 - NHS
 - Forth Valley Sensory Centre
 - DT Accounting
 - Gatehouse Property Management (Howgate)
 - Cygnet Properties (Callendar Square)
 - Rewd Group
 - Brookfield Properties (Central Retail Park)
 - Hannigan Hotels

Open Day Event 1

16th March 2023

The Open Day was held to update Local Councillors, Residents, Business Owners and young people on the concept development



Open Day Event 2

22nd June 2023

The Open Day was held to update Local Councillors, Residents, Business Owners and young people on the developed Vision



Published Stakeholder Event Report Documents

The outcomes of the workshop event were summarised and published in a report document that in turn informed the development of the detailed project brief for the visioning study. This is appended to the full version of this report.

The comments from attendees of the Open Days were also documented and shaped the development of the project.

PROJECT BRIEF

1 TO 1 ENGAGEMENT

One to one engagement was under taken with the below list of stakeholders:

- Cultural Services
- Waste Services
- Forth Valley College
- NHS Forth Valley
- GO Youth Trust
- Central Retail Park
- Local Historian Ian Scott
- Forth Valley Sensory Centre
- Panther Securities
- Hannigan Hotels
- Belgate
- Sustainable Transport Hub Team
- Town Hall/Arts Centre Team

Reports of the one to one sessions were summarised and published and informed the development of the detailed project brief for the visioning study. This is appended to the full version of this report.





CENTRAL RETAIL PARK
FALKIRK

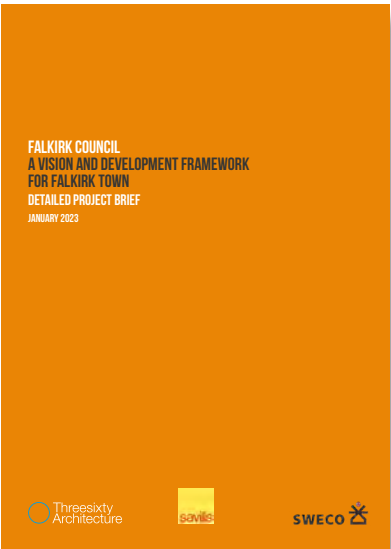


PROJECT BRIEF

PUBLISHED BRIEF

Key Objectives

- Regenerative**
A renewed regeneration direction for Falkirk which builds on the Town Centre's historic character and heritage to enhance its sense of place, legibility and liveability
- Proactive**
Respond to current and future challenges
- Responsible**
Support the Council's net zero objectives through its approach to accessibility, and the use of resources and infrastructure
- Collaborative**
Work with local stakeholders to reimagine the town centre and co-produce an ambitious and deliverable new Vision and Plan to support its successful recovery, growth and evolution.
- Ambitious**
Provide a vision and an approach to regeneration opportunities which is both ambitious and deliverable
- Considerate**
Consider changing retail and leisure trends, growing town centre living and repurposing of vacant sites
- Encourage Investment**
Identify priorities for intervention and investment with a focus on community wealth building
- A Catalyst**
Encourage and accelerate mixed-use regeneration to reinstate and reinforce Falkirk town centre as the vibrant commercial and community heart of the town
- Influentia**
Inform policy and design considerations within the forthcoming LDP3, and in relation to major planning applications which may come forward over the next 5-20 years.
- Contextual**
Develop a vision that considers how to best complement Central Retail Park, the Forth & Clyde canal, Callendar Park, The Antonine Wall, the Helix and the Falkirk Wheel.





3.

THE VISION FOR FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE

THE VISION FOR FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE DESIGN CONCEPT DIAGRAM

Key Concepts

The key moves are formed around two principles:

1. Strengthening green north-south connections and;
2. Creating gateway buildings to pull people west-east along the High Street.

The High Street is spilt into pockets of activity with different themes:

- Health
- Market
- Civic





THE VISION FOR FALKIRK
TOWN CENTRE



METHODOLOGY: MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE: 18 STEPS TO REBALANCE, REPOPULATE & REPOSITION THE TOWN CENTRE

We structured the brief and this Vision and Framework based on an established 18 point Manifesto.

Developed in partnership with Revo, the Scottish Government, Renfrewshire Council, and Scotland's Towns Partnership, this manifesto derives from the publication 'A Vision for High Street Regeneration' – an agenda for a whole town centre vision.

This structures the myriad of factors to be considered in a logical and hierarchial sequence.



To bring transformative change to your town centre, your vision needs to identify and meet the needs of the wider community while responding to the global climate emergency.

From social cohesion and commercial regeneration to carbon reduction, energy conservation and flood resilience, our 18 point manifesto is a guide to creating sustainable urban centres. The manifesto highlights the right initiatives to regenerate the town centre, responding to the current and future needs and uses of the local and wider population.

THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



1. CONCENTRATE

Take a deliberately focused approach centred on the heart of the town, where we can repurpose and protect a valued legacy of buildings, support an improving local economy and create opportunity.

Concentrated Boundary

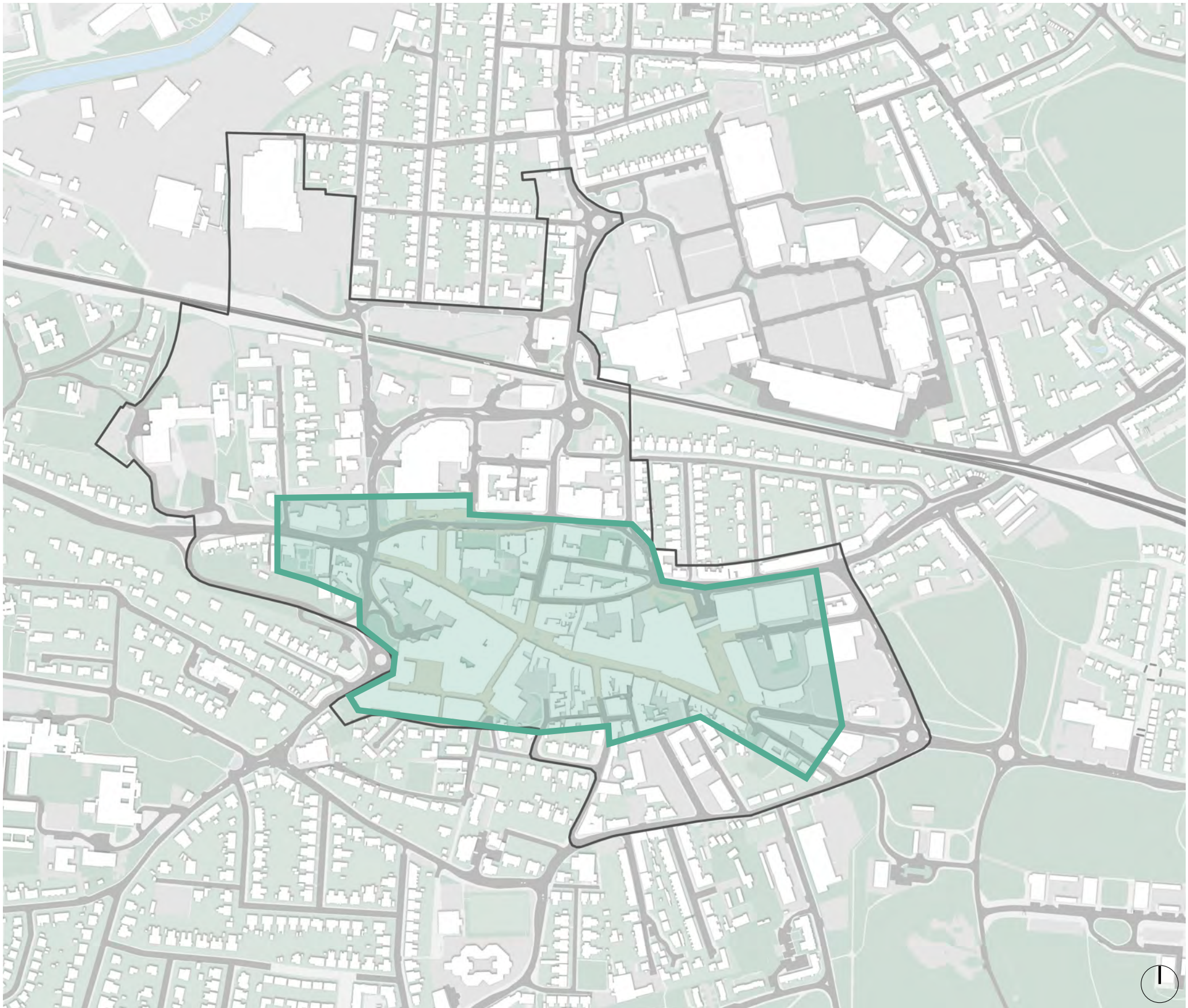
The adjacent map shows the study boundary area agreed with Falkirk Council at the inception of this project. In order to prevent “spreading the jam too thin” by attempting to regenerate equally and simultaneously across the wider town centre, a focused boundary is determined.

The focused town centre boundary is defined as the High Street and the streets directly adjacent.

This area encompasses Wellside Place in the west to the midpoint of East Bridge Street in the east; and from Princes Street / Newmarket Street in the north to Pleasance Gardens and Bean Row to the south.

- LDP 2 Town Centre Boundary
- Concentrated Study Boundary

This concentration will make transformational change visible, and act as a catalyst for positive evolution beyond this initial boundary.



Scottish town centre area comparisons relative to population

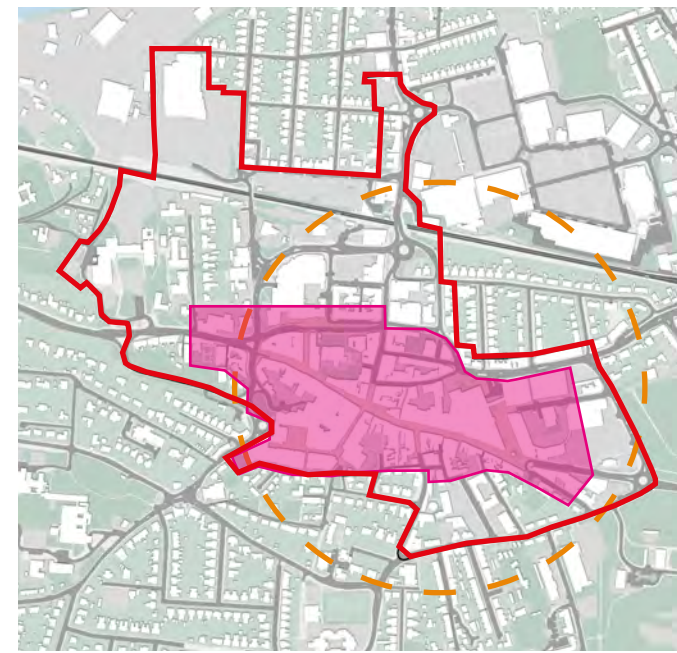
The images below illustrate comparative studies of other town's 'true' town centres against population.(Population figures taken from www.usp.scot, an initiative of Scotland's Town's Partnership in conjunction with the Carnegie Trust, Stirling University, CLES and The Scottish Government).

This demonstrates that the Falkirk Town Centre boundary, is in line with Paisley and Clydebank, and we have taken the same approach to the concentrated Study Area.

Boundary set by Local Authorities

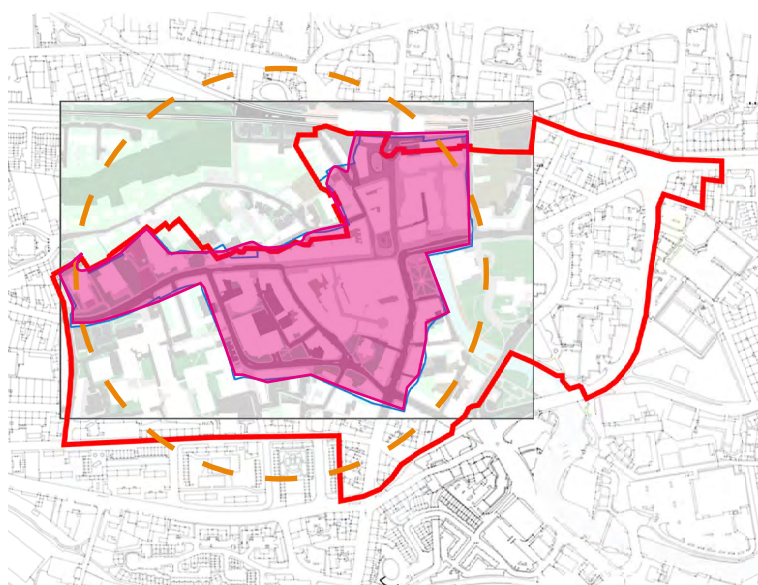
'Concentrated' Town Centre Area

FALKIRK



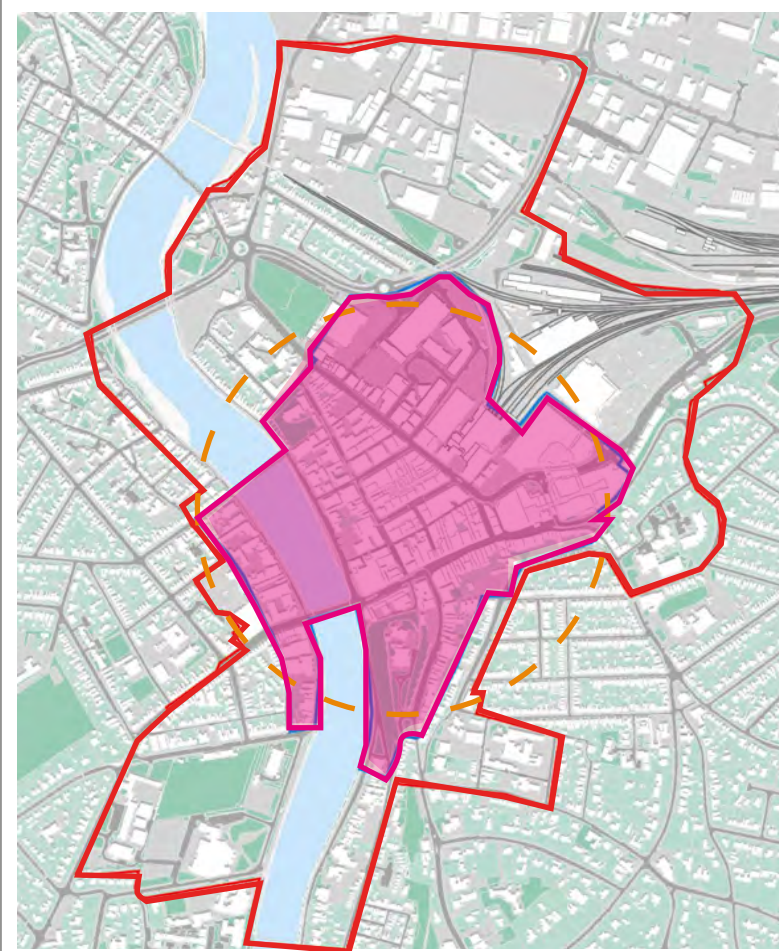
Population	35,398
Town Centre Area (by FC):	44 Hectares
'Concentrated' Town Centre Area:	15 Hectares

PAISLEY



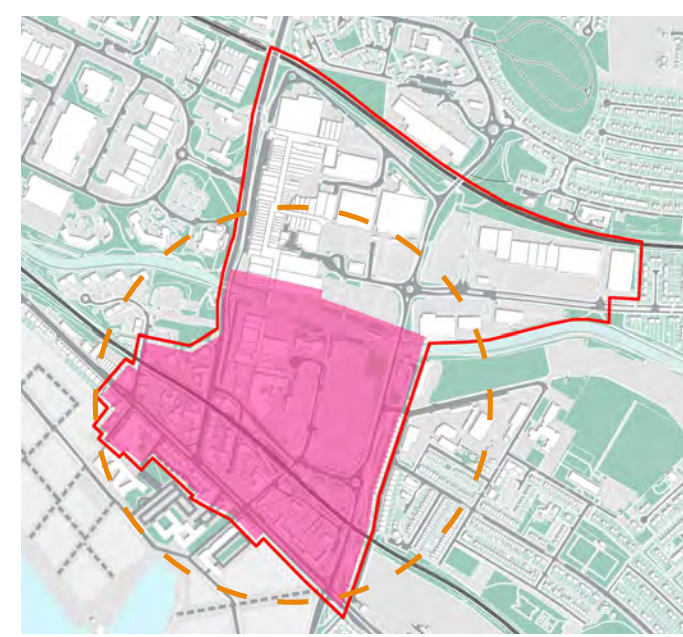
Population	76,834
Town Centre Area (by RC):	42 Hectares
'Concentrated' Town Centre Area:	16 Hectares

INVERNESS



Population	48,201
Town Centre Area (by THC):	109 Hectares
'Concentrated' Town Centre Area:	33 Hectares

CLYDEBANK



Population:	28,799
Town Centre Area (by WDC):	44 Hectares
'Concentrated' Town Centre Area:	20 Hectares

THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



2. TELL YOUR
STORY

Your town needs a clear, unique story and purpose that provides a clarion call and reason for transformation.

There are many parts to a town’s story that can provide a basis for an authentic narrative. This is not about creating a simple strapline. One part of the story will not be enough. The richness of the narrative will come from the blend of a number of these strands, consisting of multiple messages and be chameleon-like, resonating differently with different groups.

Establishing Falkirk
town centre’s purpose &
narrative

Falkirk has a strong history as a key player in our national economy, from being the centre of the cattle trade, to iron manufacturing, to the current petrochemical industry in Grangemouth.

The town has a distinctive story to tell, some of which is held within certain buildings and structures [The Kelpies, Falkirk Wheel, The Steeple and Trinity Church, Forth & Clyde Canal] but more needs to be made of the town centre itself.

The future purpose and narrative of the town will include a multitude of stories: a just transition to green energy, a place that celebrates its success, a town centre that provides for its community and ensures inclusion and equality.

The purpose of this Vision is to recognise the importance of narrative to both position Falkirk on a wider stage and nurture a sense of pride in place and belonging.

What is Falkirk’s future
story?

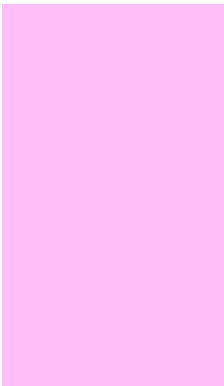
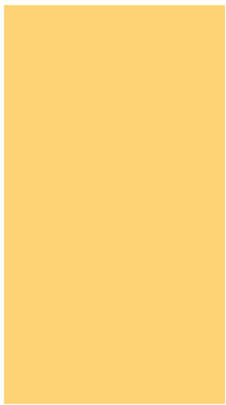
At our stakeholder workshop we asked the group to consider what Falkirk needs to be in order to secure its future and to think what the town centre would look like in 10- 20 years.

The responses received informed our developed narrative for Falkirk:

A Thriving Town Centre.

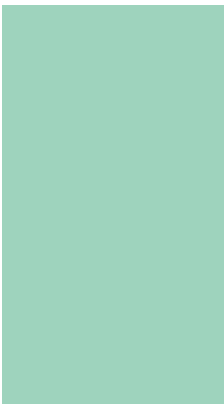


Make cycling, walking, and wheeling a centerpiece and vastly improve the transport links between our successful sites.

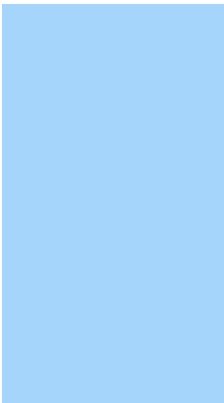


Celebrate Falkirk’s place as an industrial innovator.

Take forward major investment in attractions that bring people into the town centre.



Increase housing in the town centre to improve the look, feel and vibrancy of the space as well as better support the local businesses.



The town needs to be a place where families can have a full, fun day out from morning to night.

THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION



3. GO BOLD

While the changing patterns of retail have created new challenges, this shift provides us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to rebalance our town centres.

Repurposing a large single use asset such as a shopping centre can transform a town centre in one bold move, repopulating the heart and increasing permeability by breaking down large blocks into new streets and lanes.

Now is the time to reintroduce uses that serve the needs of our whole communities.

Single Ownership Assets A strategic overview

The large single ownership retail assets of the Howgate and Callendar Square are inward looking and offer little activity to the High Street. The Panther Securities site at the west end of the High Street is also of significant scale in the town centre. It is experiencing high levels of vacancy and much of the floor area, especially upper floors, are in disrepair.

The Howgate Centre is impacted by changing retail patterns but trading

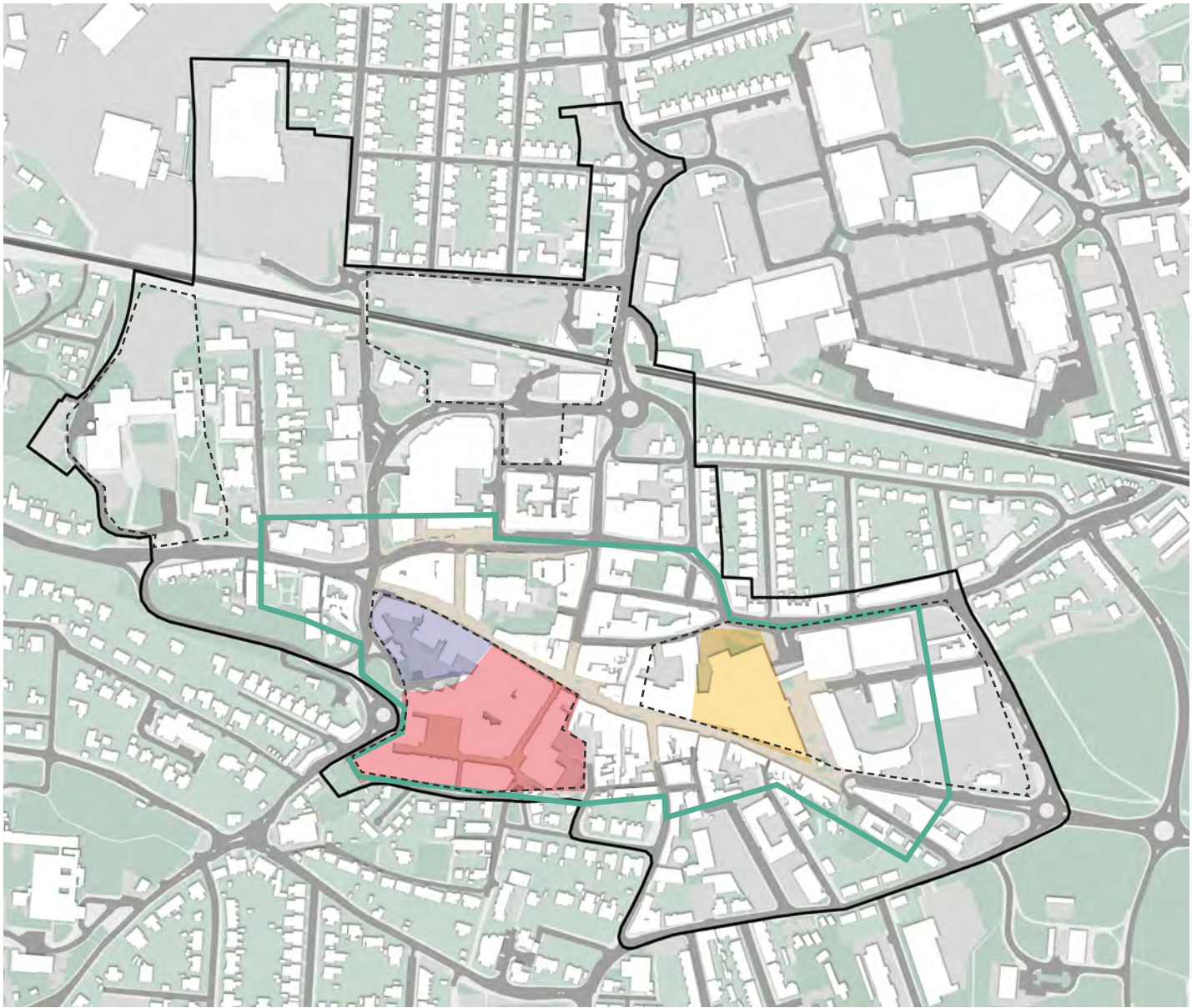
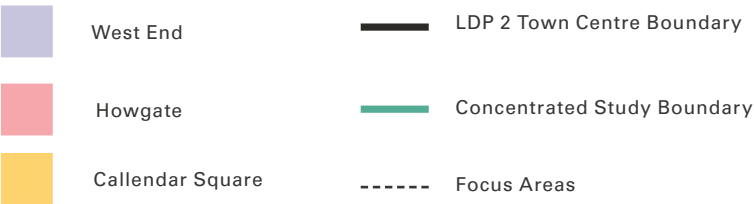
better than Callendar Square. It is expected however that nationally, owing to changing retail habits and lack of demand there will be a requirement to significantly reduce retail space in our town centres across the UK within the next 5 years.

Repurposing two out of three of these large assets (Callendar Square and Panther Securities) has the potential to strategically rebalance and repopulate the town centre

Council-Led Sites

The Municipal Buildings site and the majority of the Grahamston site is under control of the Council and therefore also present the opportunity to make a significant change to the overall balance and vitality of the town.

The four main focus area proposals are introduced on the following page and explored in further detail throughout various sections in this Vision document.





3. GO BOLD

Focus Area 1: West End

A ‘Health Street’ concept, incorporating new mixed use development and repurposing the existing M&S building to promote health and wellbeing for the community and be a highly visible exemplar of high street regeneration.

Intergenerational living and workplace take up space above active ground floors, while a historic pedestrian connection is reinstated, opening up views of Trinity Church.



Focus Area 3: Grahamston Station

A modern and attractive transport hub building creates an iconic termination to the end of Glebe Street.

Pedestrian and accessible routes are prioritized over cars and the introduction of greenery and high quality public realm transform the site. New residential and commercial blocks above active ground floors re-densify the area and strengthen the street edges.



Active Ground Floor

Commercial

Leisure

Education

Health Care

Nursery

Transport Hub

Arts Centre

2 Bed / Shared Apartment

1 Bed Flat / Studio

3 Bed Townhouse

Focus Area 2: Callendar Square

A cultural quarter and civic heart at the entrance to the High Street with a variety of different outdoor gathering spaces.

The MSCP incorporates a satellite mobility Hub with connections to active travel routes. Purpose Built Student Accommodation is a complimentary use to the night time economy in this area, along with artist and maker space, exhibition, small venue and night club in the repurposed Co-Op Building.



Focus Area 4: Municipal Buildings

A high quality amenity space runs through the centre of the site, overlooked on all edges by a mix of residential typologies and tenures.

This spine forms the sustainable urban drainage system along with active travel route and a place for a variety of outdoor activities.



THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



4. CONSOLIDATE

Reduce retail to the right level for a re-energised and diversified town centre with the right-sized (smaller) units supporting the increasing trend for independent, artisanal traders.

Relocate retail to street edges and concentrate the offer; don't bury it deep in the urban block.

Re-energizing the town

Right-sizing the retail offer and consolidating as much of this, as far is practicable, to the heart of the High Street allows for diverse uses to be brought in to bolster footfall and re-energise the retail that remains. Redeveloping the large sites at Callendar Square and Panther Securities will push the remaining retail back onto the High Street and strengthen the Howgate Centre where it can thrive alongside new complementary uses and benefit from an increase in town centre residents.

The proximity of Central Retail Park has displaced a significant element of retail from the core town centre and this is particularly visible on the High Street and Callendar

Square. The Howgate centre owners are optimistic and are actively filling vacancies and anticipate strengthening the offer with an increased mix of complementary uses (leisure, collaborative workspace, etc). It is likely that the critical mass of the Howgate combined with a consolidation of retail will ensure its success as a destination in the town centre.

Elsewhere the High Street and surrounding streets and vennels are likely to benefit from differentiating from national chains and focus on providing distinctive independent and hybrid offers benefitting from the draw of the new Town Hall and Arts Centre and the critical mass of the Howgate.



Retail and Leisure Uses



Falkirk town centre is focused around the High Street, Howgate Centre and Callendar Square, which in summation, comprises approximately 610,000 sq.ft. Whilst the edge of town market is dominated by Central Retail Park.

Across the UK there has been a general contraction in the retail market with many shopping centres being repurposed and repositioned to include alternative uses. Falkirk town centre has been significantly impacted with a very high vacancy rate and subsequently it has witnessed falling rents. We see the repurposing of the M&S as a potential seed project with potential education uses as being suitable with potential demand from Forth Valley College.

Although a significant reduction in the stock of retail property is required in Falkirk town centre, there will continue to be a need for an element of convenience and service based retail in the town.

As part of the masterplan we would recommend including a relatively small element of retail and leisure space to help create active frontages. There may be scope to attract some local / independent operators and flexible "maker" space could be considered to attract the creative industries. We recommend condensing any retail and leisure accommodation to the middle of the town centre.

CASE STUDY:
SNEAKER LAUNDRY,
GLASGOW



At first glance Sneaker Laundry looks like it could be a coffee shop, or a fashion store, or a pop-up event space, it is infact all three of these things and more.

This innovative store features the world's largest Sneaker Laundry, Allpress Espresso x SNKR Café and Retail store all located in the historic Trongate area of Glasgow City Centre.

The blurring of the lines between retail, cafe and event space together with a stripped back industrial aesthetic has led to it becoming a well loved community space in this vibrant part of the city, popular with artists and creatives, regularly playing host to live DJs and events.



4. CONSOLIDATE

Active Ground Floor Uses: A Diverse Town Centre

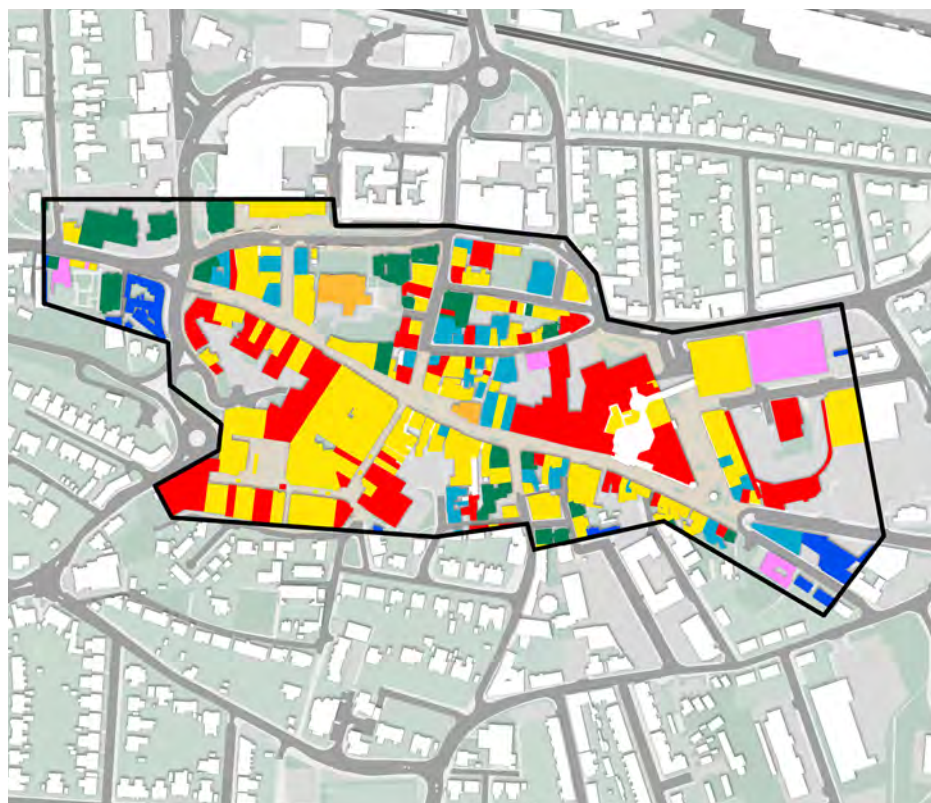
Activity at street level is vital to create a vibrant town / city centre and we can no longer rely on retail alone to fulfill this need.

The proposals significantly reduce the amount of retail space within the concentrated study area by approximately 30% based on the existing picture (see below).

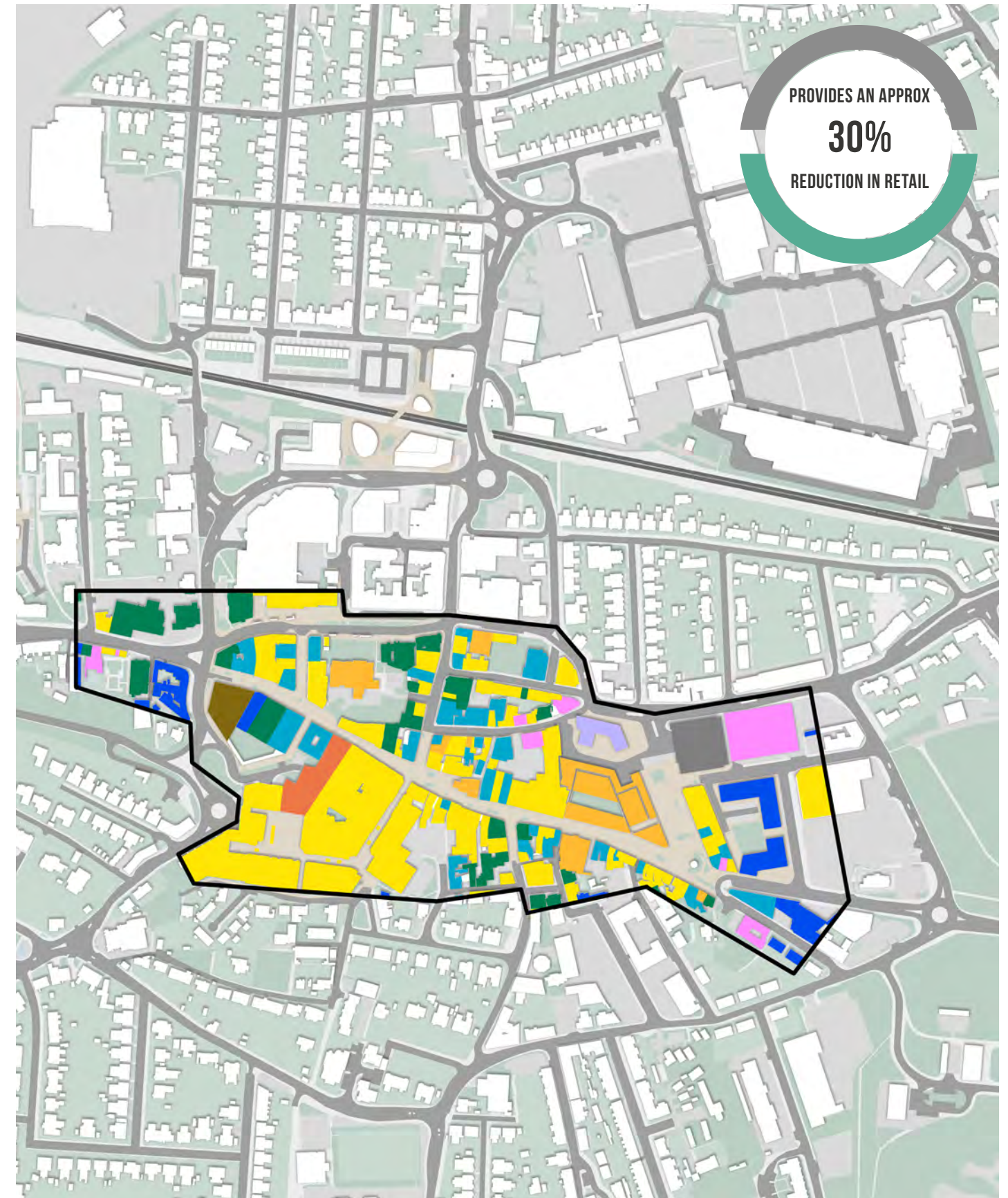
This 'right-sized' offer consisting predominantly of smaller units has been augmented with the

introduction of a variety of different uses, most notably Culture, Workplace, Healthcare and space for Community /Third Sector uses.

This varied mix will encourage greater footfall and make these services accessible to all.



Existing Ground Floor Uses



Proposed Ground Floor Uses

THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION



5. REPOPULATE

Introduce significant levels of urban living to the town centre. Create mixed-use blocks with a variety of tenures (private for sale, affordable, social housing, student accommodation, affordable housing and care accommodation).

Bring life back to upper levels over retail space through residential conversion.

Urban living at the heart of a revitalised town centre

The Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan states the ambition to extend town centre living and attract residential developments, especially townhouses, apartments, student accommodation, affordable housing and care accommodation.

There has been recent increasing developer interest in upper storey residential conversions within the concentrated study area which is a positive move and should be carefully integrated with diverse active ground floor uses, also encouraging the evening economy.

We have created a framework that focuses on the introduction of significant urban residential in a variety of types, tenures and affordability, based on market intelligence developed by Savills. This ensures that we appeal to as wide a market as possible.

Residential Uses

Falkirk town centre has witnessed a lack of supply over the last few years with the majority of new build development activity focused on family home sites in surrounding towns. A full residential report can be found in the appendices section of this document.

Based on the chronic undersupply of new build homes we suggest considering small to medium sized two, three and four bedroom properties that can attract first time buyers, couples and growing families.

The masterplan reflects Savills advice to include a range of residential typologies and tenures to help repopulate Falkirk and help with its wider regeneration. The residential accommodation includes apartments, family starter homes, townhouses and Later Living.

The flatted residential blocks are designed in a manner that allows for optionality and flexibility, with the ability to cater for various residential tenures including social, affordable or private for sale. The indicative blocks are low rise in order to ensure deliverability and attractiveness in the market. Careful consideration will be required in terms of phasing and the release of plots.

Including a wide range of tenures will help de-risk the overall development and help deliver a critical mass of housing. Furthermore, there may be potential funding sources available such as grant funding if social housing is to be delivered.

Purpose Built Student Accommodation (“PBSA”)

The recently opened Forth Valley College at Falkirk extends to 20,720 sqm and cost £78m to build. The campus can accommodate 11,000 students of which 2,000 are full time. The number of full time students is usually a key determinant of demand for purpose built student accommodation.

Of course much depends on where the students actually live – if they are all from the Central Belt of Scotland then it is likely that the majority will commute and therefore there will be very limited demand. Other key determinants of demand include the number of post graduate and overseas students.

We understand that some students either stay in Stirling University accommodation and a number of international students are housed in Glasgow and commute to Forth Valley Campus. We also understand that ECITB (Engineering Construction Industry Training Board) use hotels to fulfill their accommodation needs. We require to understand whether students would consider PBSA within the town centre and if there is a genuine requirement / need.

It may also be that the College is missing out on attracting students to their courses through not having purpose built residences. Students tend to prefer residences in desirable places to live with amenity and leisure close by and so would likely prefer a town centre location than edge / out of town.

Students living within Falkirk town centre could help support a night time economy, create a vibrancy and support other uses. There may be an opportunity to work more closely with the Forth Valley college and look at ways to involve their students in the redevelopment of the town centre.

Viability is likely to be challenging given where constructions costs, inflation and rents. However, there may be a way in which Forth Valley College can help stimulate development, for example by taking a lease (subject to understanding covenant).

savills





5. REPOPULATE

A Significant Level of Varied Residential Accommodation at the Heart of the Town Centre

The proposals generate the opportunity for around 170 new residential units to be created in the town centre in a variety of types and tenures to appeal to and meet the needs of as wide a section of the community as possible. The concepts presented in this Vision are subject to the residential market demand.

Terraced townhouses with dedicated parking spaces and private gardens provide family accommodation. Streets are orientated west-east to reinforce connections to Dollar Park and respond to the lower-rise terrace and villa buildings to the west. The urban blocks are connected with walls to bring structure to the development, along with creating private, gated access to rear pathways.

Larger apartment blocks provide density, responding to the residential and commercial buildings on Wellside Place to the east. These contain a mix of tenures from private for sale through to affordable housing (potentially suited to Blocks

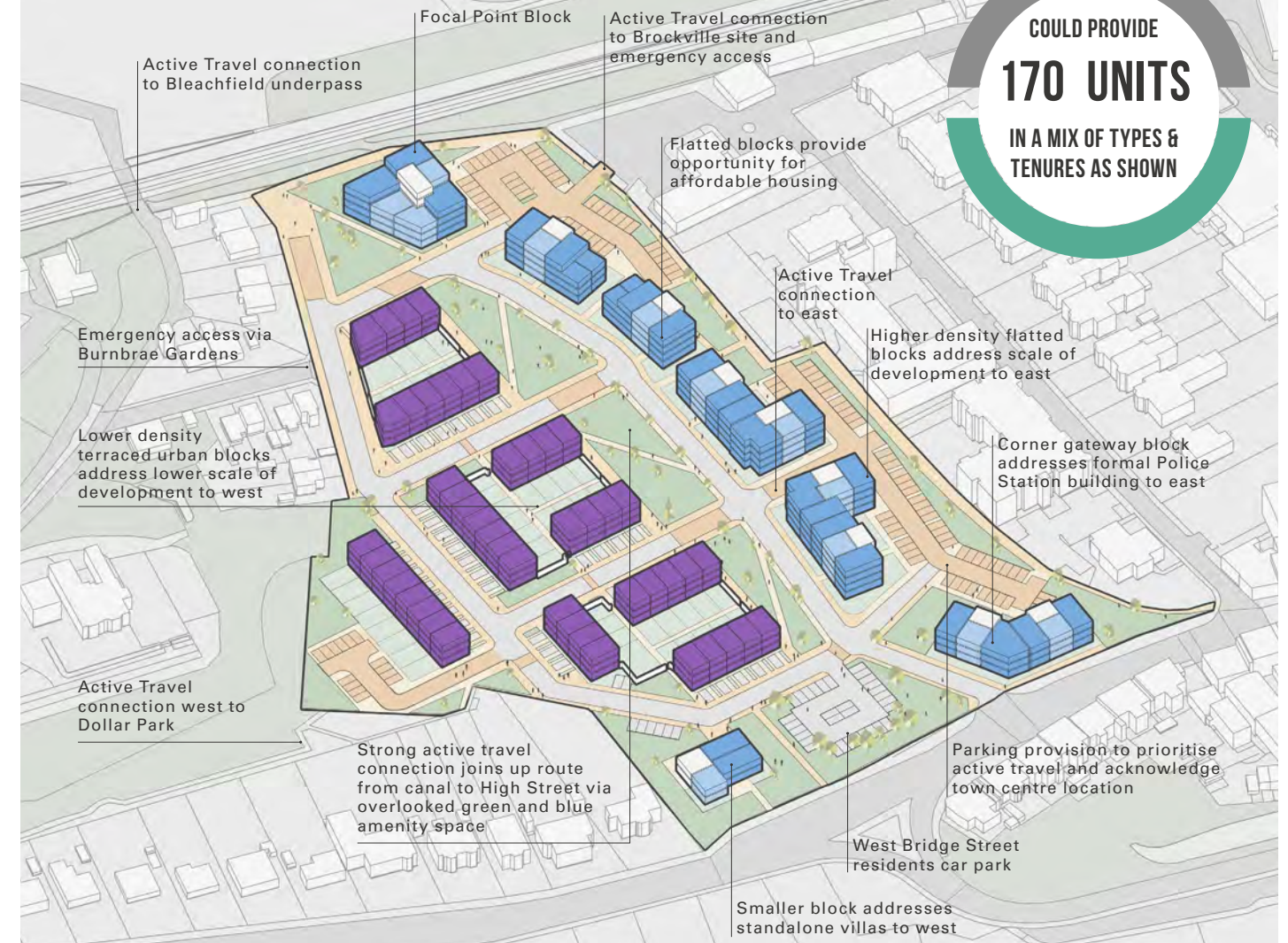
A, B and C). Two bed units generally benefit from dual aspect and an east-west orientation.

Connections into the surroundings are maintained including the Bleachfield railway underpass and Brockville site. Emergency access can be gained from Burnbrae Gardens or Brockville. West Bridge Street residents retain car parking rights at the front of the site, masked from the main road by heavy planting.

The linear amenity space, with its multiple green and blue functions, can be seen from the entrance to the site and terminates with a unique block which also overlooks the railway.



Area of Focus 4: Municipal Buildings



- 2 bed Flat
- 1 Bed Flat
- 3 Bed Townhouse



5. REPOPULATE



CASE STUDY: BKK-3 ARCHITECKTEN, DIVERSE HOUSING, HAMBURG, GERMAN

This mixed-use development adjacent to Grasbrookpark contains residential units (partially subsidised) offices, a day care centre, retail, and food service.



Completed in 2017 it forms the southern edge of the development site as a whole and is designed to reduce wind & noise filtration to the central elevated courtyard, while maintaining good light access through the day.



CASE STUDY: GOLDSMITH STREET HOUSING, NORWICH, UK

The Goldsmith Street houses are designed to passive house standard using a solar design. Comprising of 100 socially rented homes, accessed off a reduced width street, this design fosters community with communal play areas and naturally reduced traffic speed.





5. REPOPULATE

MANIFESTO IN ACTION

Varied Residential Accommodation across the whole Town Centre

Residential, of different types and tenure, is introduced across all focus areas as a key move to re-densify the town centre and bring much needed footfall to the High Street.

Residential accommodation above active ground floors provides passive surveillance and opportunities to live at the heart of the town centre, close to all of the facilities it provides and in proximity to the excellent public transport links.

The proposed blocks provide the necessary massing and density to create the feel of a real town centre and complement the key heritage assets within the conservation area.

Parking provision for any new residential proposals within the town centre should prioritise active travel as per Falkirk's Active Travel Strategy.

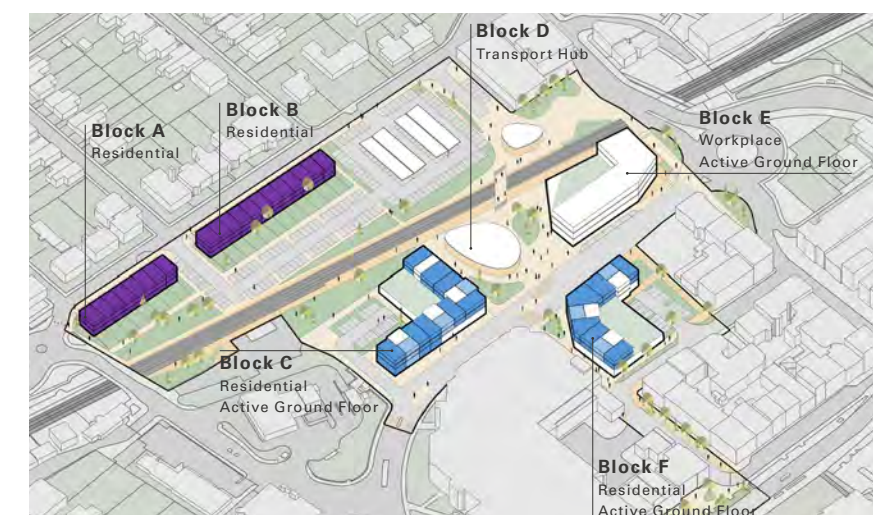
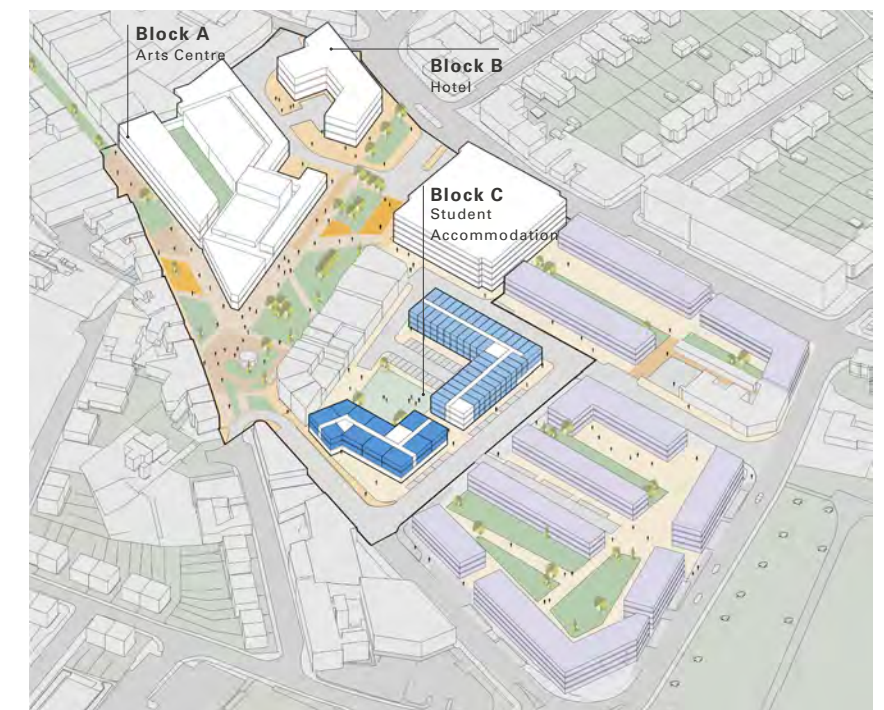
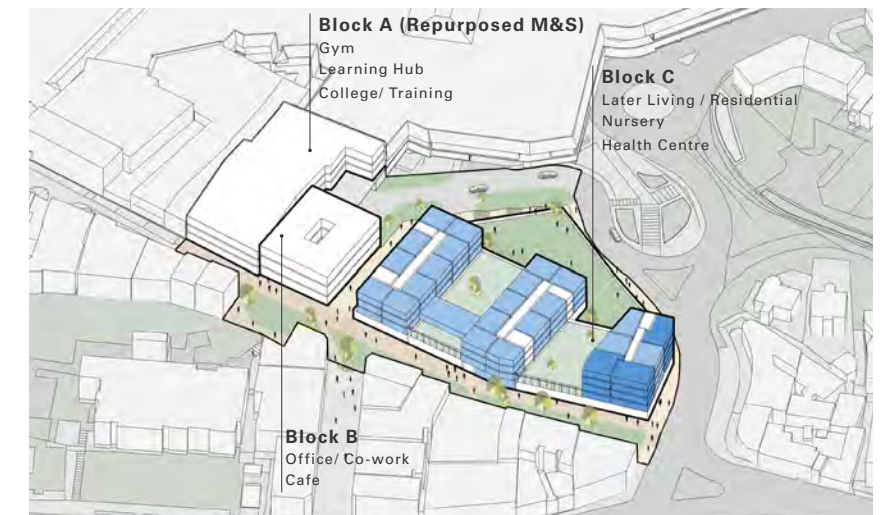
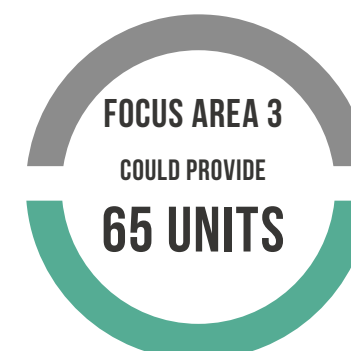
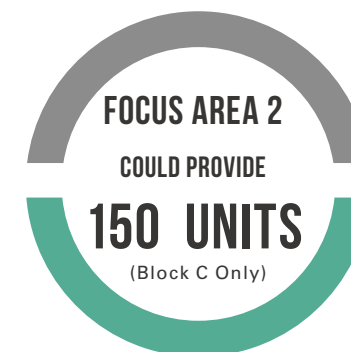
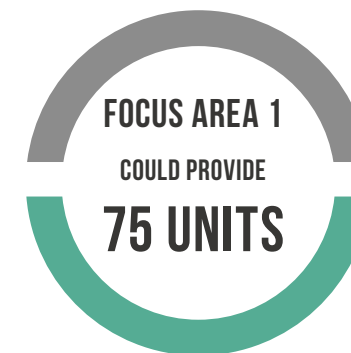
In order to include as varied a demographic as possible within the town centre, Focus Area 1 suggests a later living block with shared facilities for the residents at first floor level directly connecting to a private south facing roof garden.

The location at the east end of the High Street is a stone's throw from the Bus Hub on Newmarket Street and the new Sustainable Transport Hub, along with cafes, shops and heritage assets on the High Street.

This block also contains a daycare / nursery facility with its own private raised south facing garden, stepped down one level from the later living garden. Parking and servicing are accommodated by using the site's change in level as it slopes down towards Cockburn Street.

Focus Area 2 features purpose built student accommodation, split over two blocks. Both blocks feature ground floor shared amenity space, along with private parking and green space. Single studios are provided alongside multiple occupancy flats. In the long term future, the sites currently occupied by Buzz Bingo, B&M and KFC may come into play and these are also fit for redevelopment for residential, with direct connection to Callendar Park.

Focus Area 3 introduces a family living typology to Meeks Road and a tenement typology to Garrison Place with apartments above active ground floors of retail, F&B or workplace.





5. REPOPULATE

CASE STUDY: URBAN UNION LAURIESTON LIVING, GLASGOW

This ambitious regeneration project in the heart of the city creates new retail and commercial space and a mix of affordable and private housing.

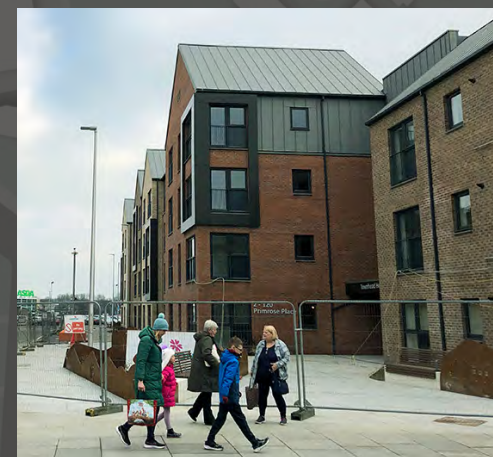
364 homes were constructed in Phase 1 including social rent, mid-market rent, affordable apartments and private for sale.

173 homes were created in Phase 2 and a further 359 residential units are being delivered in Phase 3, where work commenced at the end of 2020.



CASE STUDY: BRACEWELL DEMENTIA FRIENDLY FLATS, ALLOA

Creating 60 new homes designed to be accessible and dementia friendly, the project regenerated a brownfield site in Alloa and will assist the new tenants to continue independent living in their own energy efficient homes.



THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



6. ATTRACT

Social and cultural attractors are a major catalyst for positive change and offer important opportunities to drive more visits into your town centre.

From community and civic destinations, to cultural centres, cinemas and European-style food halls, these uses can bring new life to old, cherished buildings. Look to work with existing institutions and community groups to bring new galleries, museums and

performance spaces to the heart of the High Street.

Positioning these attractors strategically and making them work together to energise key routes by stimulating footfall is critical. You probably only have one shot to get the location right.

Visibility, radial influence and approach routes should determine their positioning, not just conveniently available sites.

The Dumbbell Effect

New attractors are already emerging in Falkirk, adding to the popular tourist destinations around the town, such as Rosebank and Falkirk Distillery, however it is important that future attractors be located strategically within the town centre to create a draw and an energy within the very heart of the town.

A concept derived from American-style malls can be applied to the High Street where an attractor (or ‘anchor’) is placed strategically at either end to draw footfall between them.

To the west, a Health-led attractor is proposed and is shown in more detail in Section 17: Locate Services Centrally. The west end could be anchored by a different use, provided it offered significant community benefit, footfall

generation and activation of the ground floor, however, healthcare is suggested as a prime example of these parameters.

To the east, the Town Hall / Arts Centre is central to creating a vibrant and creative culture and kick starting the evening activity in and around the High Street.

Secondary attractors such as co-work and learning space, street food market, heritage attraction, art exhibition space and a small venue can be located at intervals along the whole High Street between the primary ‘anchors’.

- Main Gateway Attractors
- Repurposed/ Secondary Attractors

“A new Falkirk Town Hall would act as a major draw for cultural activity across central Scotland, as well as provide a major catalyst for economic growth and physical regeneration in the town centre.”

Malcolm Bennie - Director of Place Services, Falkirk Council





6. ATTRACT

Town Hall / Arts Centre

The Town Hall / Arts Centre project is currently at very early stages but the principles of the layout provide an idea of what the future building may look like.

The corner of the site has great visibility and could be a beacon or landmark gateway to the High Street. A generous and transparent foyer, café and library space could provide an attractive, sheltered public place where people could meet or work.

The architectural design of the facades has the potential to reflect or reference Falkirk's strong culture and heritage.

The Council Hub (One Stop Shop) at ground floor directly on the High Street would be a highly accessible and visible front face for the public to access various council services.

An internal courtyard would provide green visual amenity and private break out space for staff and studio spaces could open out onto this space in summer.

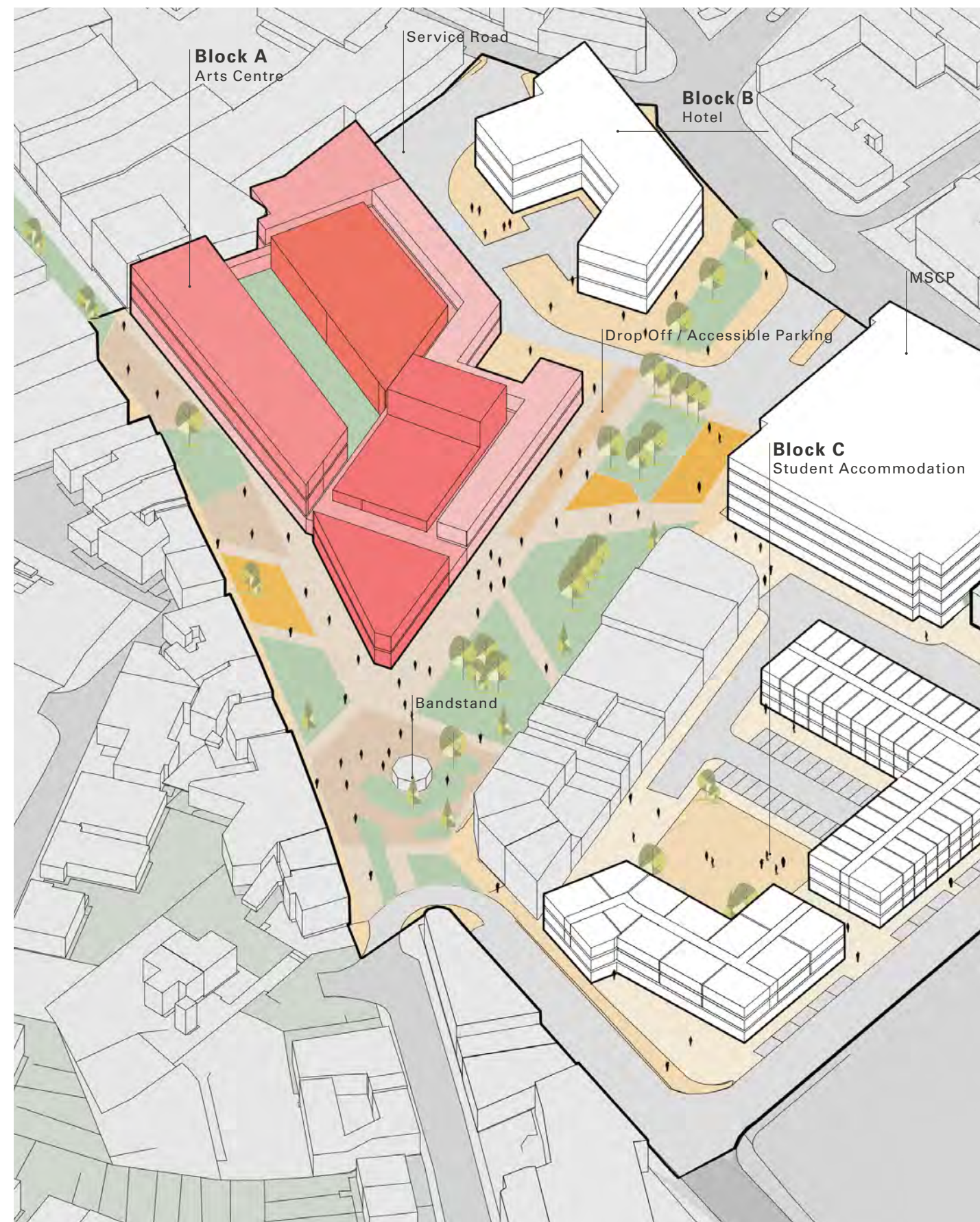
The surrounding landscaping will help the facility to knit into and enhance the wider High Street and Callender Riggs.

In addition to the retained multi storey car park, drop off and accessible parking provision could be incorporated on Callender Riggs.

Complimentary outdoor spaces such as a play area, cycle parking, bandstand seating, space for teenagers and facilities for dog walkers make the environment usable by everyone and reinforce this as the civic heart of the town.



Arts Centre





6. ATTRACT

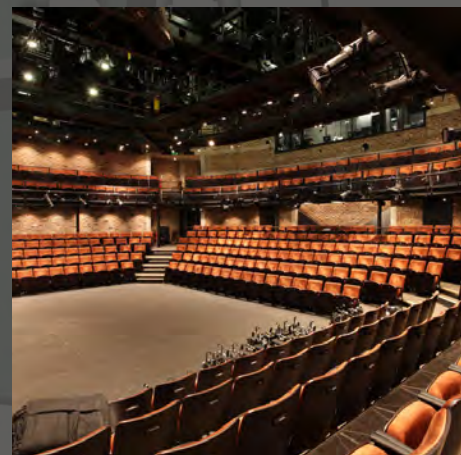
CASE STUDY: EVERYMAN THEATRE, LIVERPOOL

The Everyman is a new theatre which replaces the original 19th century institution. The Foyer is arranged on three levels overlooking the street with a 400 seat adaptable thrust stage auditorium. Reclaimed bricks from the original building clad the internal walls of the new facility.

The building features several creative workspaces, rehearsal room, workshops, sound studio, a Writers' Room, and EV1 – a special studio dedicated to education and

community groups. The design combines thermally massive construction with a series of natural ventilation systems and low energy technical infrastructures to achieve a BREEAM Excellent.

The main west facing facade of the building is a large-scale public work of art consisting of 105 moveable metal sunshades, each one carrying a life-sized, water-cut portrait of a contemporary Liverpool resident.



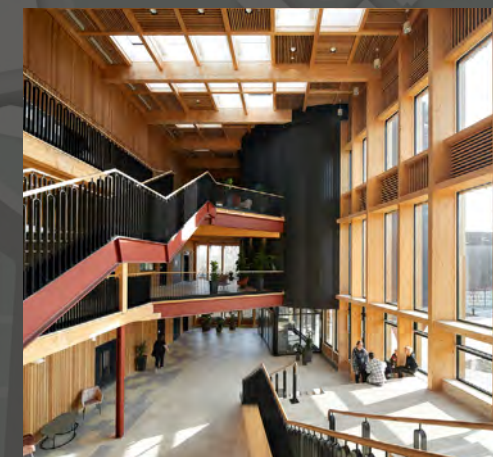
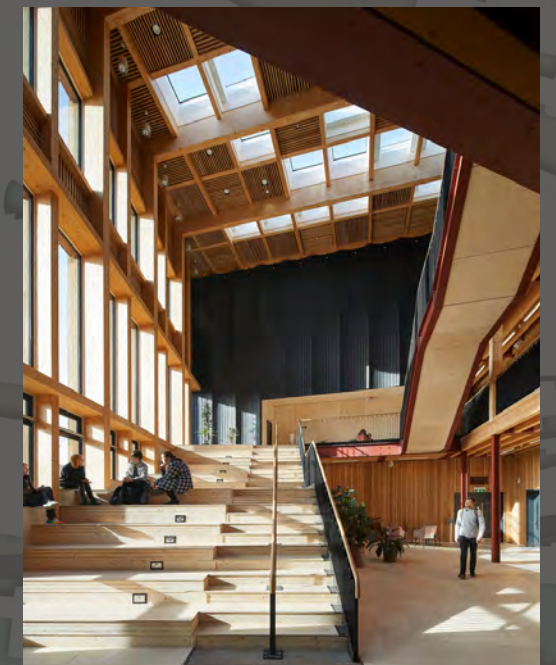
CASE STUDY: CREATIVE CENTRE, ST JOHNS UNIVERSITY, YORK

A purpose-built creative center with bespoke spaces for performance, creative writing, and media production.

The design focuses on various main elements, one of which is the sustainability of the building. Using a substantial timber frame, YSJU only requires simple climate controls to manage all spaces within the structure.

Furthermore, employing the "third space" technique, the large atrium serves as a space for cross disciplinary cooperation while taking in stunning views of the nearby York minster.

The Centre has been built with low embodied carbon materials, such as glulam timber frame and CLT (cross laminated timber).



THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



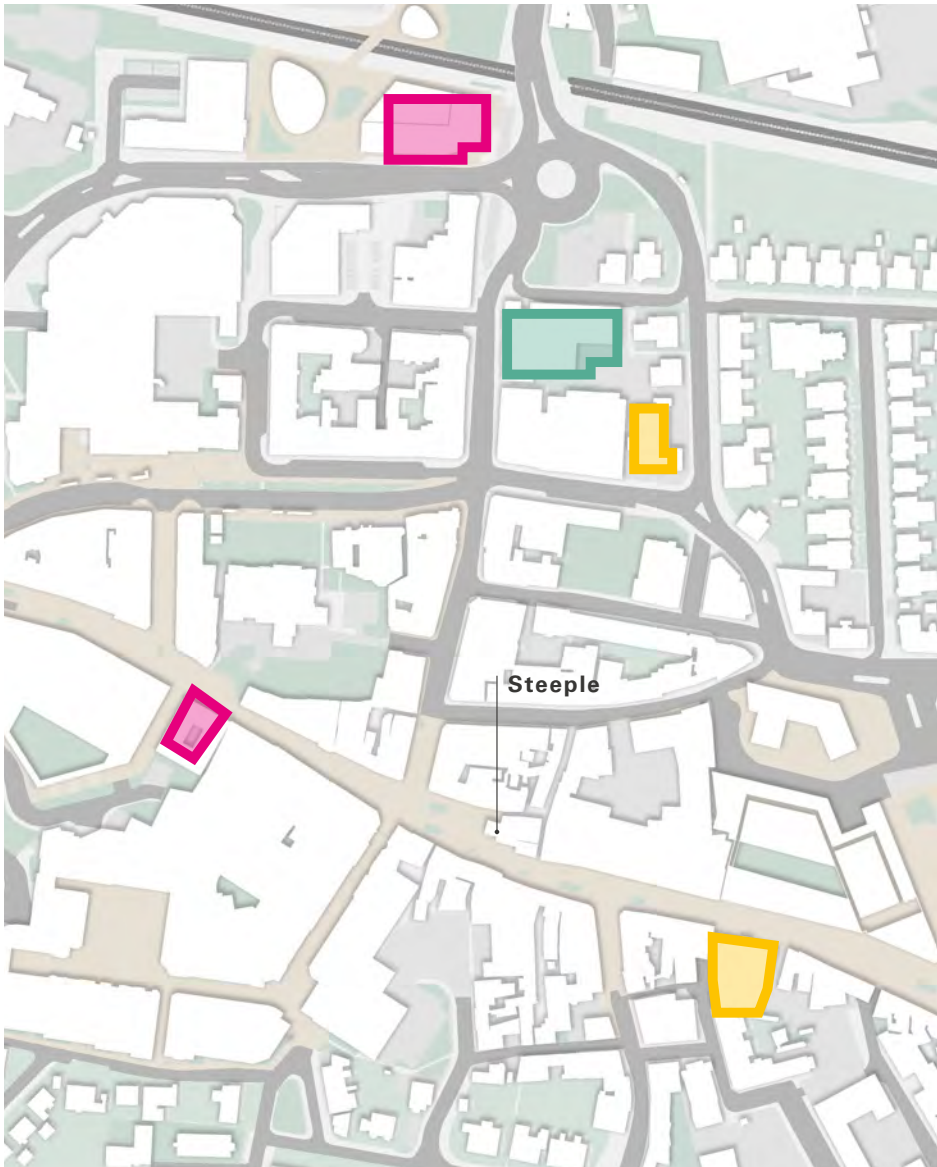
7. CREATE
WORKPLACE

Reintroducing residential on its own to town centres could lead to areas devoid of life and activity during working hours. The way we work is changing. Introduce workspaces that create vibrancy during the day while offering flexible working and healthy live / work balance. With remote working accelerated by Covid-19, there is a greater need for local shared workspace in well-connected towns to bridge between home and city centre.

The Hub, Falkirk

Falkirk’s Business Hub is located within the converted General Post Office building and contains 50 serviced office spaces, co-working space, meeting rooms, fitness offers and food and drink opportunities.

Over 35 Businesses cohabit the building on a mixture of leases, from 3 months to long term contracts. The Hub is currently fully let with a waiting list for future occupants.



- Falkirk Hub
- Repurposed to Workplace
- New build Workplace

Office / Co-Working Uses

There is limited office supply within Falkirk Town Centre itself and this suggests it has not been seen as a “place” to work in an office.

The principal focus of offices has been in the out of town market – particularly adjacent to Junction 6 of the M9 leading to Grangemouth Docks where the principal business parks are Gateway Business Park and Earls Court Business Park

At the Falkirk Business Hub, 45 Vicar Street for example, Bellair have refurbished the former post office with a more modern extension to the rear. This 24,000 sq. ft. office building offers a range of mainly small business units for 2 – 10 employees in suits of 250 – 1,000 sq. ft. The Hub includes a small fitness suite and café. The Bellair website claims that the Hub is nearly fully let. This serviced hub micro office suite model could be adopted.

The legacy of Covid-19 has been the growth of remote working and demand for serviced offices / workspace close to towns across the central belt. Therefore, given the trends we suggest this use should be considered as part of the masterplan given this trend is likely to be here to stay.

If the Council Hub and Library was established in the town centre then it would seem logical that the Business Gateway was established as part of the overall offer. The development of the new Government Hub could lead to spin offs and businesses considering to locate to the town centre. There also may be additional government requirements that are generated by the new Hub.



New Opportunities for
Workplace

Creating workplace in local centres has many benefits for towns and communities. Living close to work can allow families and caregivers more flexibility in their work-life balance. This is of particular benefit to women who undertake the vast majority of care for children or older dependents in the UK.



The presence of a workforce in and around the High Street generates activity and footfall during the day which can better support local cafes and shops.

Building on Falkirk’s proud industrial and manufacturing tradition, the Vision shows maker and craft workspaces on the High Street which would compliment the new cultural activity around the Town Hall / Arts Centre and support the local creative industry.



Co-work spaces that take advantage of a post COVID desire to be more flexible and local in our approach to working can work well alongside small business suites with shared facilities. These can act as incubator space for small businesses and allow for growth in tech and digital sectors.

This is consistent with the Falkirk Town Centre Action Plan which aims to support creative industries growth and allow for innovation within the business sector.



7. CREATE WORKPLACE

What if we worked with the building owners to transform assets through the introduction of artist studios, exhibition space and a small venue alongside reinvigorated retail and a Maker Market?



1930's Cooperative Building

This significant building at 165-169 High Street is positioned directly opposite the site for the new town hall and offers a great repurposing opportunity to give it a new lease of life and support existing community groups and initiatives in the creative fields. There is potential to integrate and connect into 171 High Street, currently occupied by Callendar Pharmacy.

Building on the new character of the surroundings and from the feedback received through stakeholder

engagement, this Vision shows proposals to reinvent the building as a creative hub consisting of maker space / workshops, studios and creative office space with an element of co-work.

A retail unit is maintained to the front of 171 High Street, while the potential for the space to the rear is shown as an intimate venue for small music or comedy acts. The ground floor of the Co-Op building is imagined as a space for artists and makers (some of whom may work in the studios above) to sell their work.

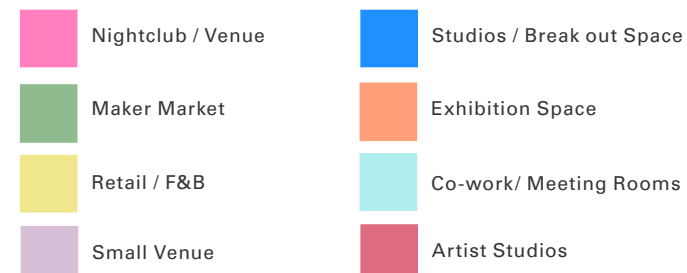
The proposals show how the first floor of 171 High Street might accommodate an exhibition space for a variety of events while the first



floor of the Co-Op side contains shared amenity, break out and meeting spaces plus some studios where there is access to natural light.

Moving up to second floor there is open co-work space and small meeting rooms. The third floor could be split up into cellular studios with good access to natural light.

The existing roof is flat and clear of plant equipment so could be transformed into a vibrant active roof garden that would offer views over the town centre, steeple and Callendar Park. This could host a rooftop bar/café, outdoor cinema and is an opportunity for urban farming.



Roof

Roof top Bar
Urban Farm

Third Floor

Artist Studios

Second Floor

Co-work space
Meeting Rooms

First Floor

Exhibition Space
Break Out / Amenity Space
Studios

Ground Floor

Maker Market
Small Venue
Retail Space

Basement

Nightclub / Venue





CASE STUDY— WASPS' INVERNESS CREATIVE ACADEMY

THE LARGEST CREATIVE HUB IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.

Wasps Studios is the UK's largest not-for-profit provider of affordable creative workspace.

In January 2018 it trasformed two Category-B listed buildings in the centre of the Inverness to provide 32 artists' studios, 54 workspaces for creative industries, individuals and cultural social enterprises, as well as publicly accessible flexible workspace, meeting, events, exhibition, café, and workshop space.

It is the largest sustainable creative arts facility and community resource of its type in the Highlands and has been developed with, and for, the local creative community.

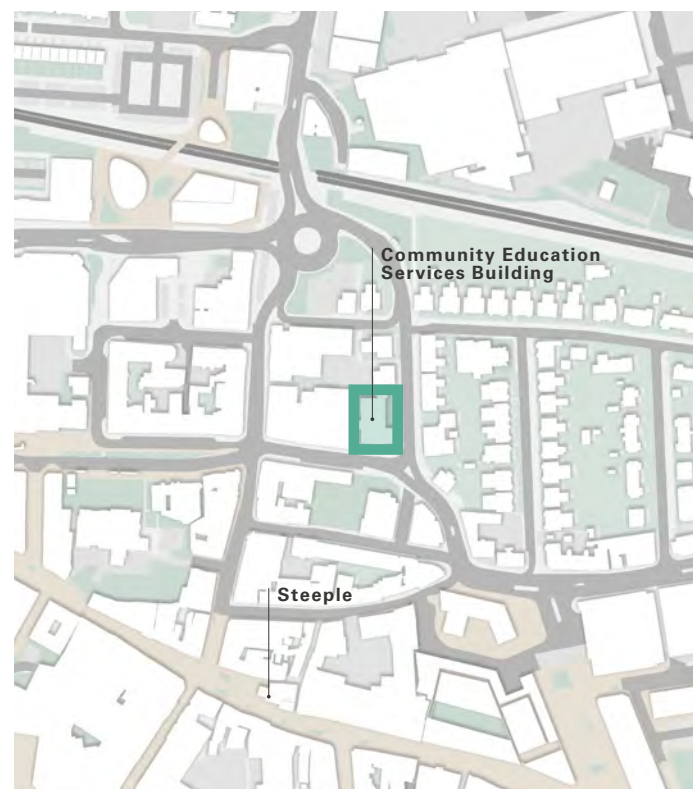


7. CREATE WORKPLACE

Community Education Services Building

The Community Education Services Building had been underused for several years and it is well suited to a modern workplace intervention, designed to enhance the character of the building.

It has a prominent frontage to Princes Street, which contains a unique stretch of buildings of differing styles. The site has space for parking and is in a highly accessible location within the town.



CASE STUDY: ALBERT WORKS, SHEFFIELD

Re-energizing four virtually derelict brick warehouses, Albert works involved landlord and tenant working collaboratively toward the most positive outcome.

Architectural interventions, exposed brickwork and tastefully selected furnishing make for a tactile and comfortable working environment



7. CREATE WORKPLACE

Creating Community with a New Office Pavilion

The Vision shows how a new workplace building might activate the civic space on the High Street and also provide a fitting sensitive backdrop to the impressive Trinity Church.

The ground floor is open and accessible with café and co-work space, also serving to activate the newly reinstated Bell's Wynd. A ground floor cafe is suggested that is open to the public but also services those who work in the upper office floors.

Natural light can be brought into the heart of the space through a central void, creating a bright and energising workspace in the centre of town. Nearby amenities of healthcare, nursery and gym mean this is a highly convenient and connected workplace, reducing the time required to travel between daily tasks.



CASE STUDY: WESTBERLIN

Located on Friedrichstraße in central Berlin, not far from Checkpoint Charlie, WestBerlin is a co-work space, coffee bar and shop, serving sandwiches, salads and cakes.

Housed within the ground floor of a 60's residential block the café offers carefully curated space to relax and work in, with everything from the furniture to the signage and logo carefully thought out.



CASE STUDY: LIVE WORKS

This sensitive conservation project ensured the future of a creative charitable body while creating commercial space joined with educational facilities for literacy and a new kind of public space which can be used as an outdoor performance area.

The Live Works development includes massing which maintains the unique characteristics of Newcastle's quayside, creating a vibrant intimate public venue that encourages interaction, dwelling and performance.



THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION

8. SHIFT PERCEPTIONS

Open up lanes and views that dramatically change how people remember the town. This enriches the experience and how we emotionally connect to our environment by providing greater connectivity, permeability and new ways to navigate through our urban centres.

A Transformed Urban Realm: New routes and destinations within the town centre

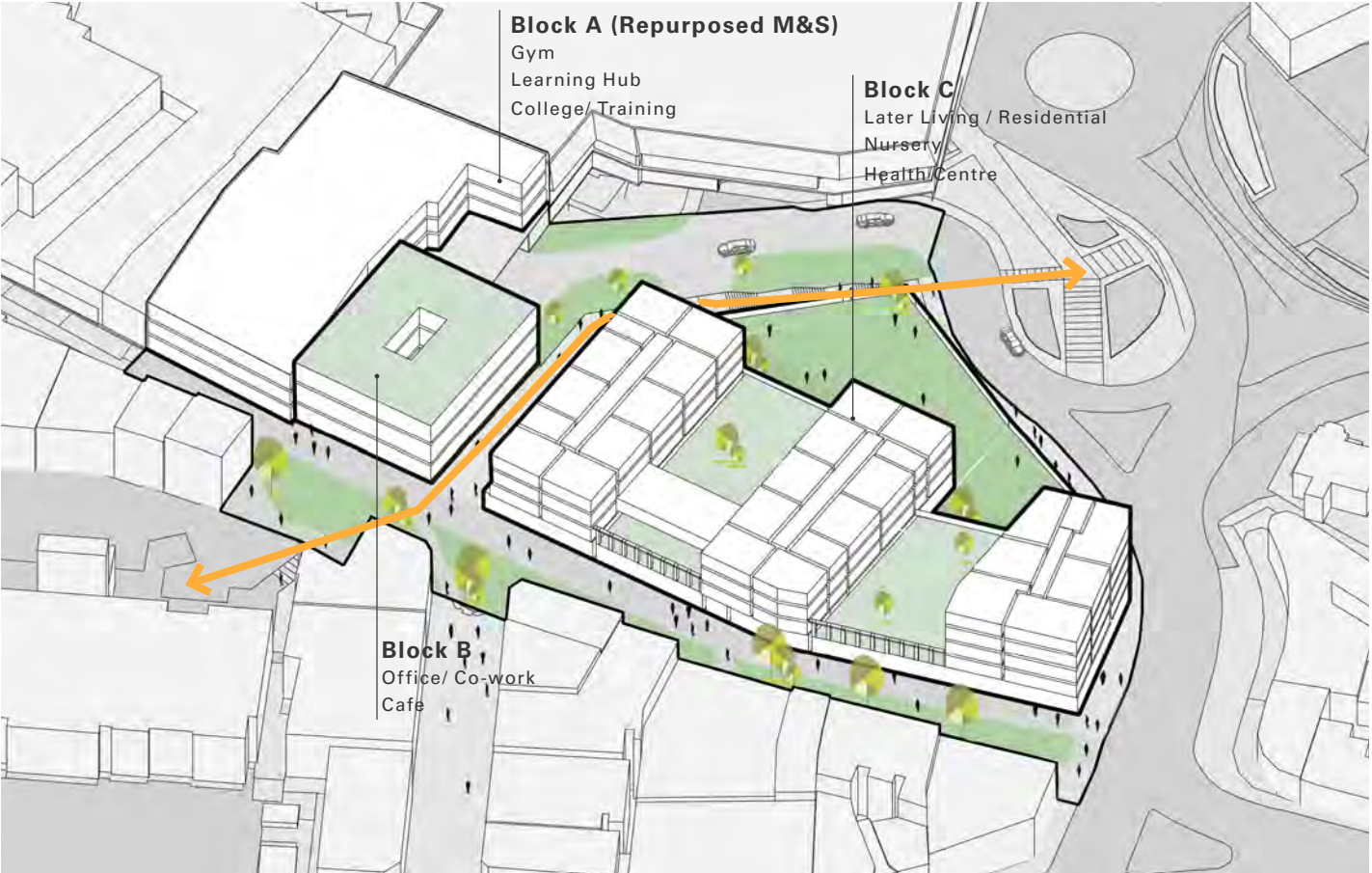
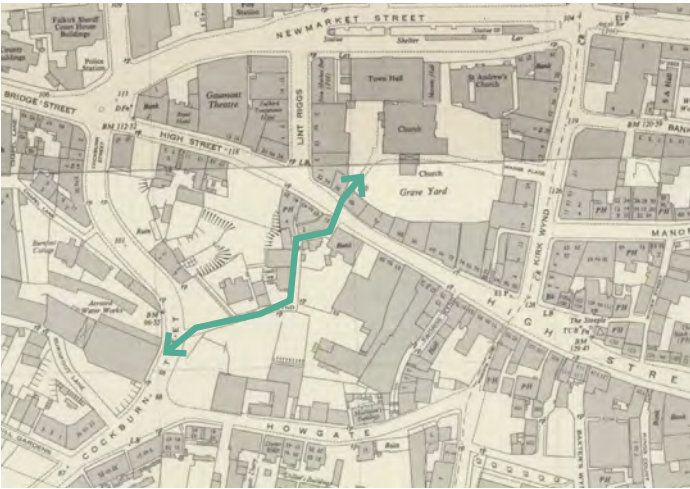
The route from the High Street to the new SustainableTransport Hub is crucial to the experience of the town centre. Work has already started to enhance the first part of this route (Lint Riggs and Newmarket Street). It is proposed to continue this intervention along Glebe Street and across Garrison Place into the surroundings of the new Transport Interchange.

A new view that transforms perceptions

The historic street pattern of Falkirk town centre follows the traditional herringbone pattern of narrow plots, closes and wynds off of the central spine of the High Street. Although many of these historic lanes and closes have been lost to redevelopment, many still survive around the east end of the High Street and this has influenced how the Panther Securities site is shown broken down and fragmented into linear blocks.

Re-introducing permeability through a new human scaled lane changes both how we experience the physical nature of the town and how we emotionally connect with it. When turning the corner of the new Bell’s Wynd lane to face the High Street, the view aligns with the steps up to Trinity Church, offering a new perspective of this significant building.

The new connection also brings an opportunity to activate the rear of the Howgate Centre, potentially creating an attractive public entrance in this location or opening up the former Debenhams unit with windows overlooking the raised green spaces.



— Historic Bell’s Wynd Route
— Reinstated Bell’s Wynd Route



8. SHIFT PERCEPTIONS



Existing Lanes

There is potential to create a unique thriving independent operator led environment in the historic lanes in Falkirk town centre, especially on Wooer Street.

Keeping the lanes activated, clean and well-lit will transform people's perception of the spaces, along with the introduction of colour and street furniture.



CASE STUDY: HIDDEN LANE, GLASGOW

The Hidden Lane in Glasgow is a secluded spot of bright buildings that are used as studios for a host of creative endeavours. With over 100 studios, all hosting a variety of different workspaces, it has become a colourful destination on Argyle street.

It has become a hub for creatives in Glasgow with diverse attractors such as a brewery and tearoom, alongside art galleries, therapists, massage rooms and yoga studios.

The studios are home to jewellers, artists, musicians, writers, fashion workshops and many more.

Credit: The Hidden Lane



8. SHIFT PERCEPTIONS



Ceramic Studio Courtyard

There are opportunities to activate back courtyards within the network of small lanes and vennels.

A good example of this can be seen at Bean Row Pottery, where an open garden space has been created, connected to the Pottery studio and shop.



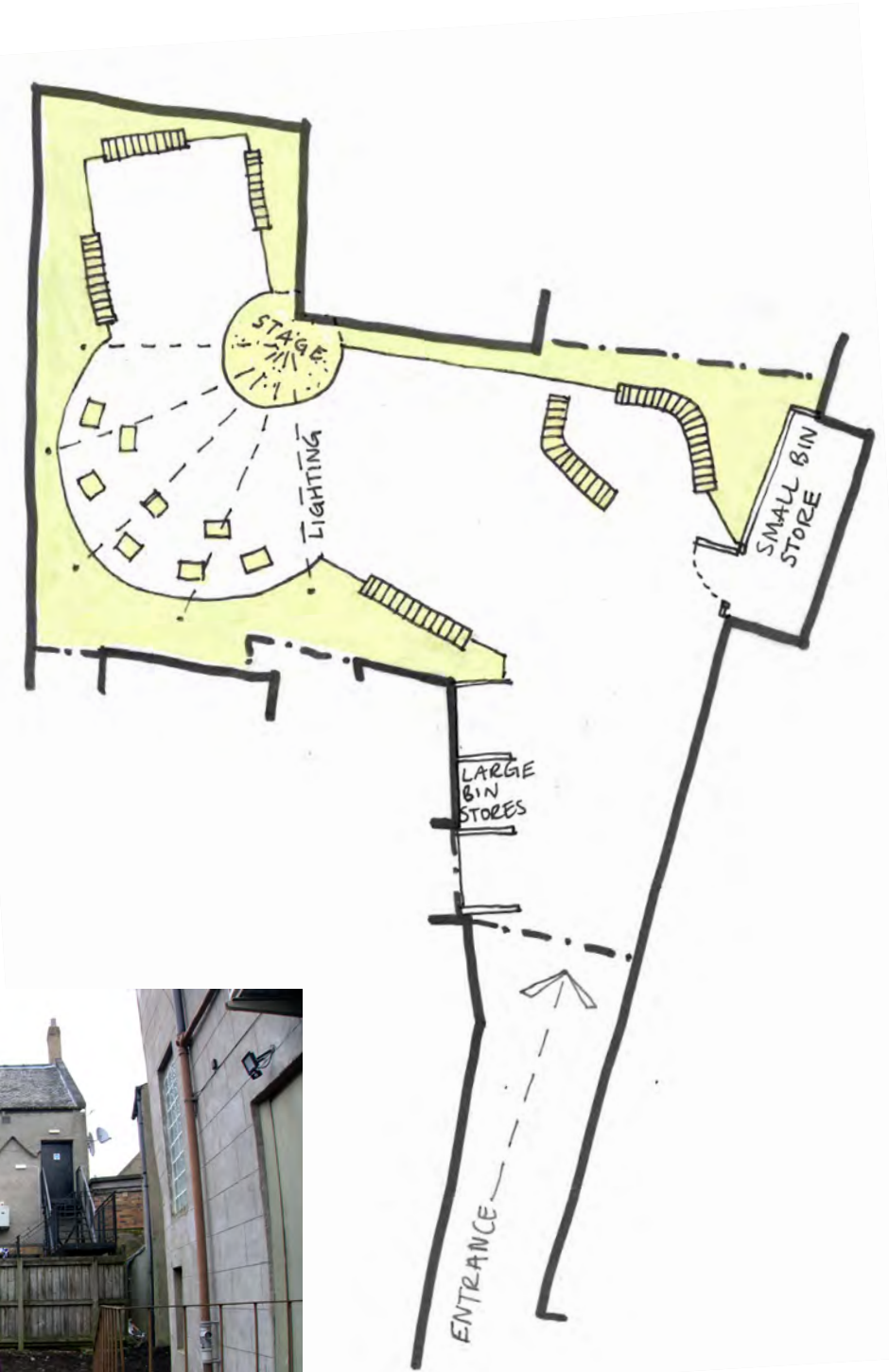
Leah's Yard

Leah's Yard is an innovative repurposing scheme, centred around a small industrial courtyard. It's intention is to showcase everything Sheffield is good at, including boutique retail units, food and beverage opportunities, heritage workshops and unique office spaces all set within a thriving community.

Fleshmarket Close

There are Community-led proposals to develop Fleshmarket Close, a courtyard located directly off Tolbooth Street at the Steeple and the historic site of slaughtering and butchering livestock raised around the town.

The design intent includes a stage for small performances along with raised planters and seating. Lighting in the space will be important to ensure it is safe and attractive in the evening.



THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION

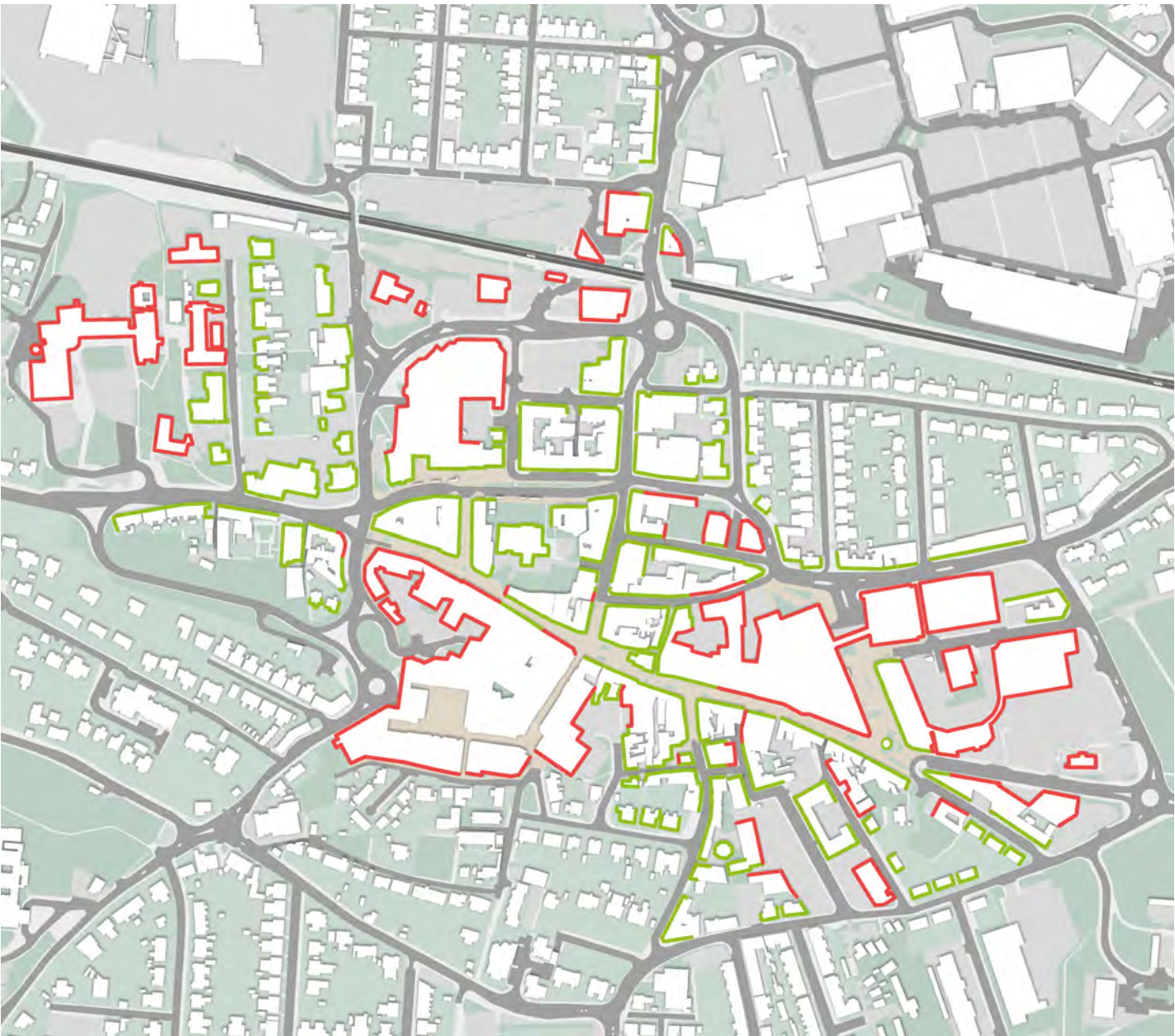
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9. REPLACE AND REPAIR

Take the opportunity provided by repurposing and rebalancing to upgrade or replace buildings that offer nothing to the urban environment.

Many of our town centres benefit from a legacy of quality historic buildings and these new interventions should be of a contemporary architecture that matches them in quality and ambition.

- 1 45 High Street
- 2 Maniqui Night Club
- 3 Callendar Square
- 4 Vacant Antonine Hotel



Existing Frontages Diagram

The Backdrop to Town Centre Life

Falkirk has a wide variation of frontages of both a positive and negative nature. The majority of the positive frontages are centred on Newmarket and Vicar Street. The Panther Securities site and Callendar Square provide negative and inactive frontages to most edges.

Beyond these specific areas, some buildings may have poor quality shopfronts at street level but provide a positive contribution to the streetscape due to the quality of the overall facade.

This exercise has assisted in the identification of a number of potential sites where the replacement or upgrade of negative frontages would be beneficial to the town centre streetscape.

- Positive Frontage
- Negative Frontage



9. REPLACE TO REPAIR

The Old Station Hotel given a new purpose

The built heritage that enriches Falkirk's town centre brings a strong distinctiveness and authenticity.

Heritage assets are to be protected and cherished and the best way to ensure this is to bring them back into life through repurposing.

The old Station Hotel building has a prominent position at the market square, opposite the Steeple, but has lain vacant for several years.

The ground floor of this corner unit (formerly Burton) could be reimagined as a vibrant street food offer, re-activating a culture of food markets in the historic square.

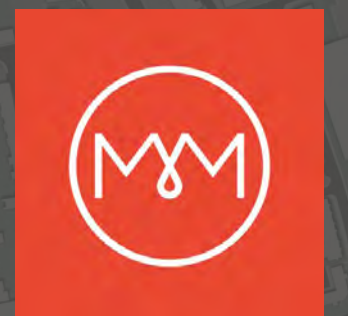


CASE STUDY: KOMMUNE, KOLLIDER

At street level, Kollider is home to Kommune, a 16,000 sqft european style foodhall offering a diverse mix of local operators, an artisanal bakery and speciality coffee, independent retail and a bar.



A MIXED-USE ATTRACTOR BREATHING NEW LIFE
INTO A FORMER DEPARTMENT STORE





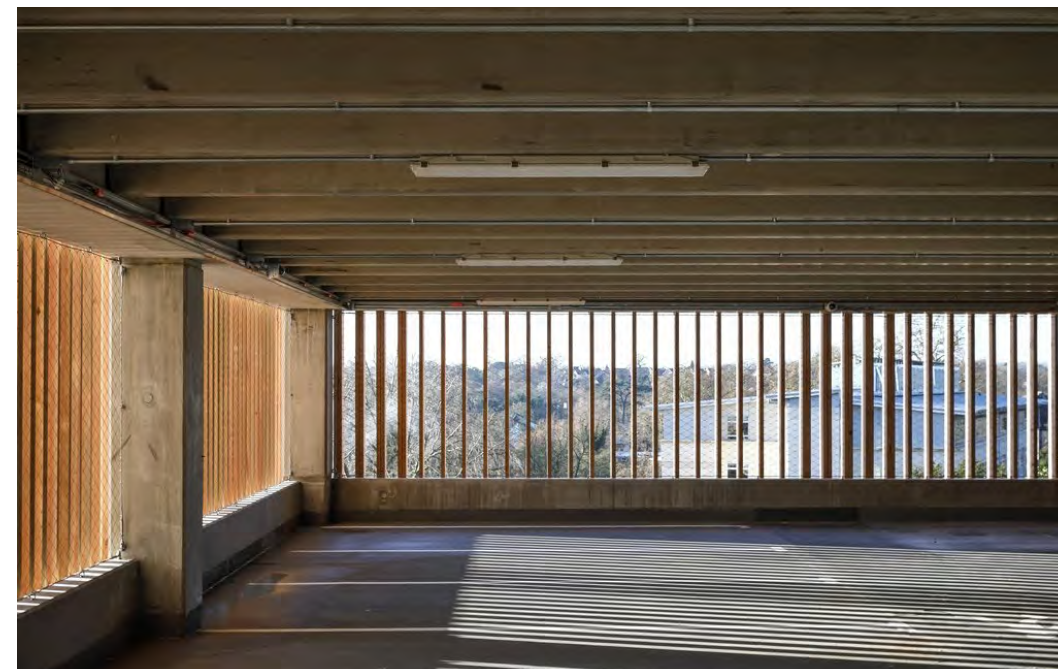
9. REPLACE TO REPAIR

Callendar Square Car Park

Although satisfying a need for parking in the centre of town, the current multi storey car park building at Callendar Square is tired and offers a negative front on all four sides of the prominent five storey structure.

There are many exemplars of high quality design of car park, especially through the use of timber.

This, along with a shift towards integrating an active travel mobility hub, EV charging and potential PV roof array could help to transition this building towards a greener agenda and provides a more positive backdrop to the new Town Hall / Arts Centre development.



THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION



10. REGENERATE

In response to the climate emergency, enshrine an ambition to achieve shared international goals within your Vision. This can be done by working towards a carbon zero objective and a more circular economy, generating localized renewable energy and recycling waste.

Promote biodiversity and flood resilience in an inventive way that provides quality greened urban space for the community in the heart of our towns.

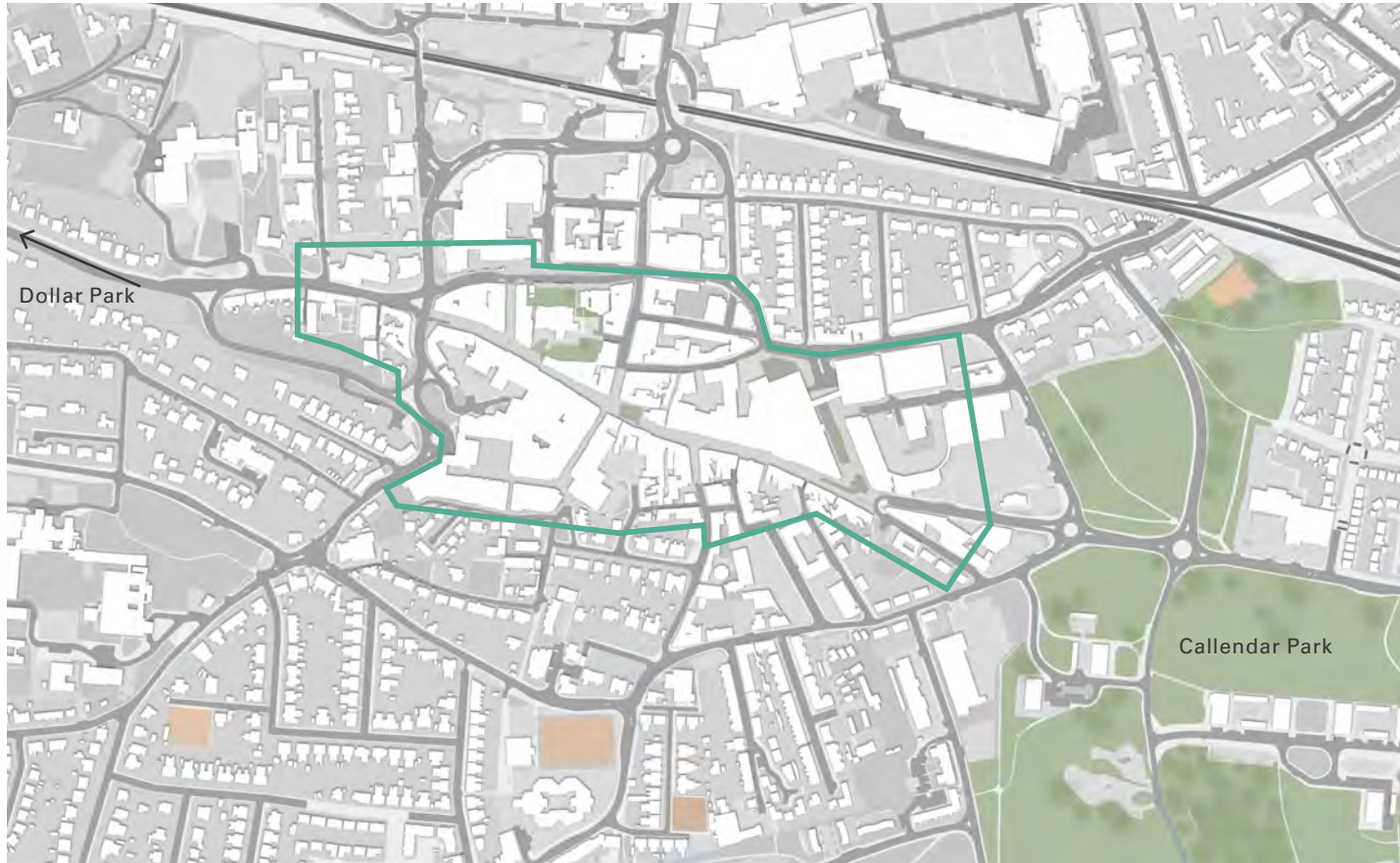
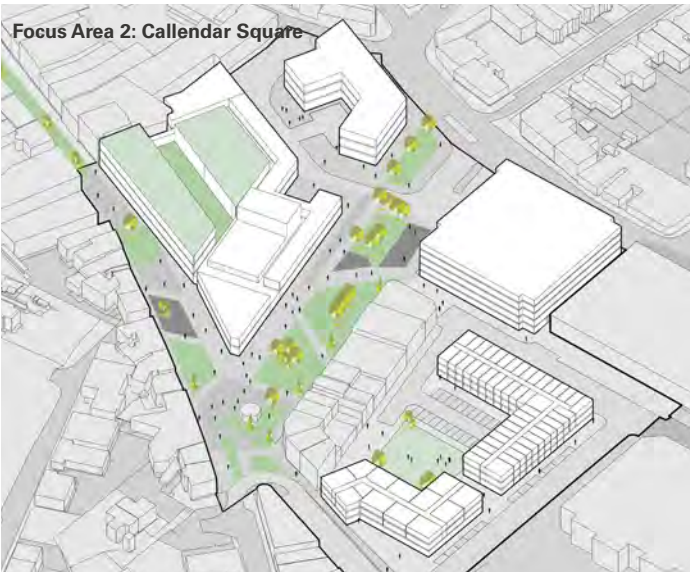
- Concentrated Study Boundary
- Park / Greenspace
- Active Greenspace (Sport etc)

Falkirk Today: Green Space

Being a town with a strong sustainable agenda could be a unique part of Falkirk’s identity, attracting a population and businesses that are increasingly aware and concerned about living and operating responsibly.

There is very little green space within the town centre – the large green spaces of Callendar and Dollar Park are located outwith the town centre boundary- so the creation of new high quality, low maintenance urban green space will create biodiversity, improve well-being and encourage healthy living practices.

Incorporating opportunities to dwell through seating and play areas would be an inclusive addition and this is explored further in Section 13: Include and Invite.



Environmentally Responsible Moves

The development of the Sustainable Transport Hub and publication of Falkirk’s first ActiveTravel Strategy are welcome moves towards creating a responsible town centre. More detail on this can be found in Section 14: Connect. Decarbonising the PublicTransport services in Falkirk is a project that will also receive funding through the Growth Deal.

Repurposing existing structures is the most environmentally responsible approach to development in terms of embodied carbon. We have suggested opportunities for repurposing several key buildings throughout

this document: the M&S building, the High Street Co-Op building, the old Station Hotel, Falkirk Library and Community Education Services building.

New ‘state of the art’ developments have the potential to fully integrate green technology from the outset and potentially create surplus energy that can be fed directly into the local population. The new Town Hall / Arts Centre building is a great candidate for this through renewable solar, wind, air or geothermal technologies.

Much needed new green space at the heart of the town centre

The greening of Falkirk town centre and the promotion of greater biodiversity is a key aim of the Vision.

The proposals for all four focus areas introduce significant levels of new greenspace at the heart of the town centre for the benefit of the entire community regardless of age or ability.

This is achieved in a variety of ways, including new green infrastructure along public routes and the High Street, raised amenity decks above active ground floors, green roofs and a new linear park at the Municipal Buildings site.

Together this increases the overall quantum of natural habitat, biodiversity and sustainable urban drainage in the town.



10. REGENERATE

MANIFESTO IN ACTION

Greening The High Street

The proposals for the High Street do not necessarily need to be undertaken in one single phase. Key spaces along the route, such as the market square and civic space around the town hall, may be prioritised as the first phases.

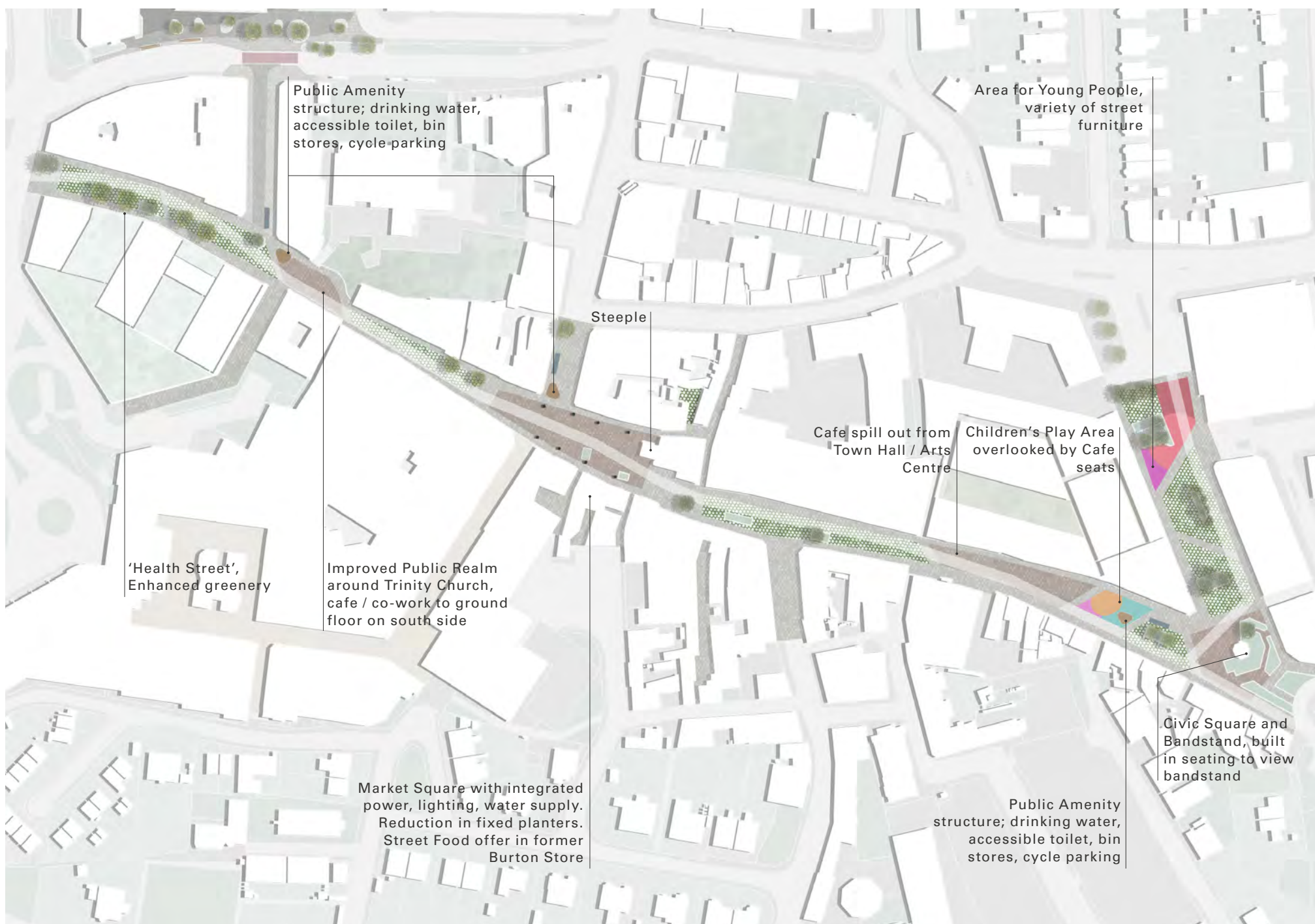
The overarching principles of the proposals are to:

- create a clear purpose for the various spaces along the High Street that supports and enhances the surrounding uses.
- maintain a vehicular route for servicing, emergency and accessibility purposes.
- increase accessibility through the creation of clear, legible routes for walking and wheeling.
- increase inclusivity through spaces designed with different demographics in mind and the integration of public welfare facilities.

The latter two principles are discussed in Section 13: Include and Invite.

In between areas of open, hard-landscaped spaces, areas with softer, natural textures can be incorporated. This may include areas of grass with new trees in a low maintenance style similar to those proposed at Newmarket Street.

In addition, the use of permeable paving as pictured above has numerous benefits as a natural Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) method, helping prevent localised surface flooding when mains drainage becomes overwhelmed, and bringing a more natural aesthetic, all while having the ability to withstand vehicles.



Planter Maintenance

The proposals reduce the total number of built in stone planters, removing those that currently do not have any significant trees or planting in them and create an unnecessary obstacle. This may include scaling down the planters in the Market Square, along with removing two or three along the length of the High Street.

Where planters are retained, these may be enhanced with simple groundcover vegetation and the addition of timber benches to the edges.

Waste Disposal

There are existing challenges with waste management around the High Street and there is an opportunity to incorporate solutions into the proposals.

This Vision identifies areas where new multi purpose structures could be located and these could function as a bin store for surrounding businesses if they do not have alternative waste removal access.

These could be independant structures or interventions that adapt and reuse existing redundant planter bases, in locations such as Vicar Street.

THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION



11. ILLUMINATE

Public art and dynamic lighting can transform the existing environment for a relatively small outlay. Lighting, in particular, can create a variety of effects to suit the season or event, celebrate rich historic facades and elevate the everyday.



Transforming Falkirk town centre with light and colour

The Art Park project offers the opportunity to build on the existing public art throughout the town, with particular focus around the High Street. The introduction of colour and light can celebrate the historic town centre fabric, transform the arrival experience and improve safety on key routes into the town centre, including the Steeple, key heritage monuments and the new Town Hall / Arts Centre.

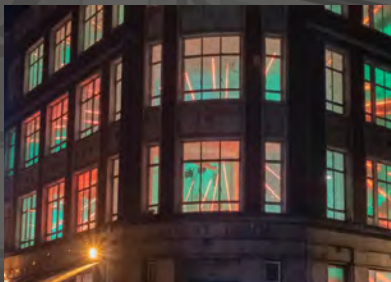
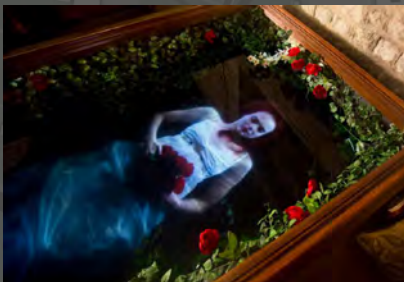
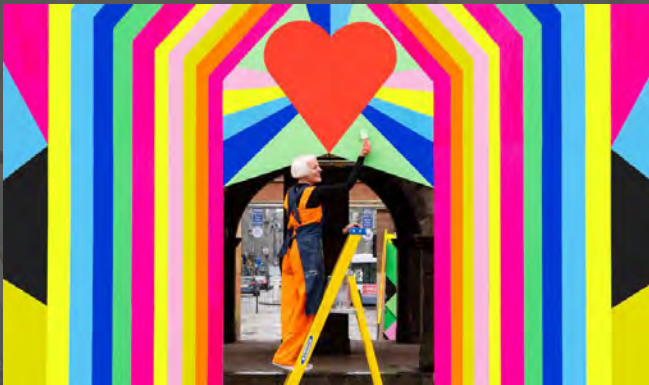
A town centre lighting strategy will be a key component in creating a safe, high quality environment and supporting the extension of activity into night time economies.



CASE STUDY: BRISTOL LIGHT FESTIVAL

Presented by Bristol City Centre Business Improvement District, "Bristol Light Festival" runs each year in February and is aimed at supporting the recovery of Bristol's priority high streets with light-based art installations.

Installations in 2023 succeeded in attracting 250,000 visitors over ten days, the 11 attractions were spread throughout Bristol with a wide variety of local food, drink and shopping opportunities along the route.



Opportunities along the High Street



New Landmark

The new Town Hall / Arts Centre has the potential to feature a beacon or landmark, signifying the gateway into the High Street.



New Art Installations

As part of the new Art Park project there is potential for new public art pieces to enhance the key spaces along the High Street and for these to feature unique lighting design.



Trinity Church

Enhancing the lighting design for Trinity Church would make more of a feature of this iconic building in the evening, especially when viewed from the new Bell's Wynd.



Falkirk Bandstand

The Bandstand is an important structure on the High Street and would be further enhanced by a dramatic lighting scheme.

THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



12. GATHER

Re-energise the centre by providing urban places that enrich day-to-day life and accommodate events that will attract local residents and visitors from outside the town. These external ‘rooms’ should encourage vibrant, year-round use.

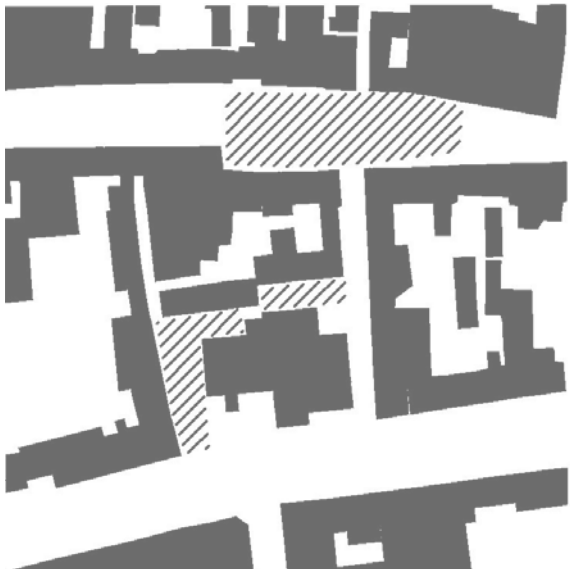
Provide ‘place not just space’ with active edges, human-scaled enclosure, and greening for play and wellbeing. Enhance these places with degrees of shelter to allow all-weather use, safe gathering and social distancing when required.

Falkirk Today:
Civic Spaces

While open public space is limited, the widening of the High Street at the Steeple is an asset in the heart of Falkirk. It is however compromised by vacant retail within close proximity and needs to be reactivated to become a vibrant destination in its own right.

The public realm at Callendar Riggs is also a great amenity space for the town but lacks variety and purposeful design in what is a large space.

The adjacent plans and images show comparable UK exemplar projects where an appropriate scale of development surrounds connecting urban spaces, providing a series of different sized spaces and an attractive place to gather en-masse.



Market Street and Church Square
St Andrews



Queensberry Square, Midsteeples and High Street
Dumfries





12. GATHER

The Heart of Falkirk: An Inclusive Civic Space

The Public realm around the new Town Hall / Arts Centre will be a civic heart and gathering space for the community. Adding to its current functions, including a popular place for protest, the space will play host to a wide range of year round events and community activities, enriching the daily experience of the place.

The bandstand is shown augmented with built in seating, making use of the natural change in level and becomes a prominent stage for performance and debate.

Through the design of places for children, teenagers, students and older people, it can become an inclusive place, encouraging people of all ages to visit and spend time enjoying curated activities geared towards them, a place to meet friends and family, a place to celebrate the seasons and major events throughout the year. Graduations held in the town hall can spill out onto the square, festivals and performances can create shared memories for the community and gatherings and parades will kick off at this key meeting point.



CASE STUDY— CITYPROJEKT STUBENGASSE, MÜNSTER

HUMAN SCALED REPAIR OF THE URBAN GRAIN

Stubengasse, once a traffic clogged artery into the medieval centre of this historic city and also home to a large surface car park has been transformed into a vibrant mixed-use pedestrian and cycle friendly quarter.

The new built form that surrounds the pedestrian square and lanes was constructed in

two phases and in two distinct yet contextual styles that complement the surrounding heritage architecture in terms of both materiality and massing.

The new buildings all have active ground floors that house retail space, restaurants, a hotel foyer and office foyer for the local headquarters of Deutsche Bank. On their upper levels they provide a variety of residential apartments and duplexes complete with private rooftop terraces and gardens, together with hotel and office uses, that provide passive surveillance to

the newly formed urban realm below.

A series of active narrow lanes, reminiscent of the historic street pattern radiate out into the wider city grain from the central ‘wedge’ shaped public space that contains carefully placed pockets of greenspace that define external cafe seating areas.

Infilling the last significant gap site in the centre of the city, the project was awarded the German Urban Planning Prize upon completion in 2010.





12. GATHER

CASE STUDY: THE FROME INDEPENDENT

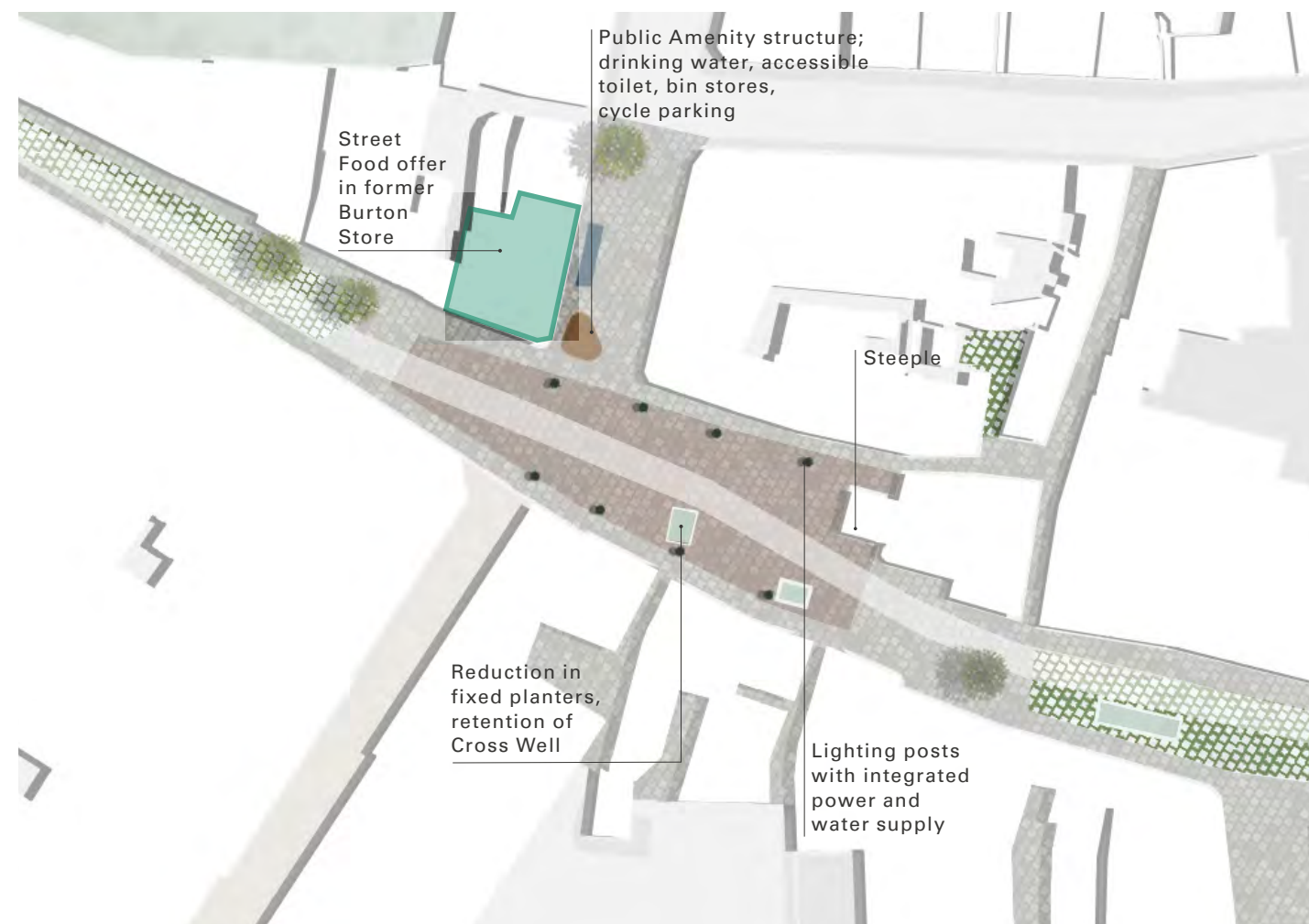
This market, held on the first Sunday of every month has transformed the fortunes of Frome in the West Country. It began in 2009 with 15 stalls and now boasts 250 stands and its economic impact has been felt throughout the town.

The market sells everything, from homeware to flowers and fresh produce, including a specially curated Farmers Market and has a thriving street food offer with a wide variety of cuisines available.

The market supports new and fledgling businesses through their 'suitcase sale' area, offering smaller non-committal pitches concentrated together. When the market began, the majority of small independent shops in the town centre were vacant, now they all have tenants. The success of the market has encouraged the local authority to invest in the public realm in the centre of Frome and for the first time in generations, young people are moving to the town instead of away.



AN INNOVATIVE MARKET REVITALISING THE TOWN CENTRE



A Revitalised Market Square

A functioning market square requires a high level of infrastructure and open space. The Vision proposes to remove the large planter to the north and keep only the part of the south planter which houses the stone Cross Well. This frees up more space for market stalls and circulation while also reducing the maintenance requirement.

To organise and service the space rationally, a grid of service posts providing lighting, power and water might be introduced.

It is important that the space is activated by complimentary uses and the suggested street food offer in the former Burtons unit described in Section 9: Replace and Repair would strengthen the narrative of promoting local food businesses and artisanal products. Markets could be held in partnership with the occupier, spilling out onto the street and creating an indoor/outdoor event.



THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION

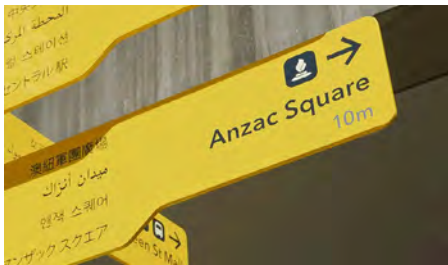


13. INCLUDE & INVITE

Make your town centre accessible for all, regardless of age or ability, accommodating those with issues of dementia or mobility and providing pause points throughout. Offering welfare facilities accessible for all can have a significant impact on the footfall and dwell time.

Create success for your town centre by helping people discover and enjoy it easily. Develop a memorable, cohesive and legible wayfinding strategy that helps people navigate their way around.

Getting Around: Navigating Surfaces and Routes Safely



Safety & Inclusivity: Making the town centre feel safer & more welcoming

Key to the successful evolution of Falkirk Town Centre will be ensuring that it is accessible and navigable by all, regardless of age or ability, accommodating those with issues of dementia or mobility and providing pause points throughout.

Seating and Shelter User Friendly Spaces

Seating and shelter are fundamental aspects of usable streets and spaces. For several decades, shopping malls have provided extensive protection from inclement weather and this provision cannot be underestimated.

With the predicated continuation of the 'de-malling' trend, re-introducing areas of shelter and seating is important. The other benefits that malls provide – smooth even floor surfaces, bench seating, public amenities, warmth etc. can be achieved in other ways with careful design.

The key to street shelter and seating is not to create hazards and obstructions that block clear routes. Any structures should contrast visually to their surroundings and feature warnings such as changes in ground texture.

According to London Legacy Development Corporation's Inclusive Design Standards, seating should be provided no less than every 50m, complimented by natural shelter such as trees or other urban interventions.

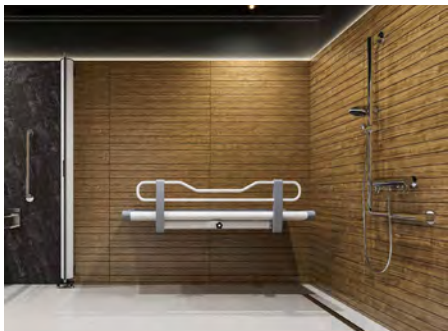


Providing public welfare facilities suitable for all: Essential to Town Centre Inclusivity

The provision of welfare facilities was brought up by some groups during stakeholder engagement workshops and was viewed as particularly important for young people, families with young children and by senior citizens.

Welfare facilities are also vital to people of all ages with mobility and medical issues and the availability of spaces to allow adult changing are increasingly being provided in public buildings and in retail centres as they are viewed as attractors and a means to increase dwell time. This same principle would be applicable to the town centre.

Gender neutral 'superloo' models are becoming increasingly popular



and their introduction should be considered. These enhanced cubicles have the ability to cater for ambulant disabled people as well as being inclusive and safe for transgender people. Facilities for people with more complex disabilities (Changing Places) are game changing, especially considering that there are none currently in the town centre. This is an essential facility that would be best located in the new Town Hall / Arts Centre.



13. INCLUDE & INVITE

Creating Intergenerational Public Spaces

Spaces that are safe and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities have the potential to bring many social and wellbeing benefits.

Designs should provide access for people who use a wheelchair, mobility aid, cane or walking stick and cater to their families, friends, carers and assistance dogs. This requires places for groups to sit together, spaces for prams and

pushchairs and secure designated space for dog waste with access to bins and fresh water.

Public spaces should be overlooked by active frontages and play spaces with conveniently placed observation points for parents or carers.

Parks and open squares should benefit from direct sunlight to promote health and wellbeing,



while also offering natural or built shade structures.

Outdoor exercise equipment can also help to promote active lifestyles along with opportunities for learning and mental stimulation for all ages. This could include road safety mock-up parks for children or a place to play board games such as chess.



CASE STUDY: MAKE SPACE FOR GIRLS



Make Space for Girls campaigns for facilities and public spaces for teenage girls on the premise that parks, play equipment and public spaces for older children and teenagers are currently designed for the default male.

Currently provision for young people consists almost entirely of facilities such as skate parks, fenced pitches and BMX tracks. These are seen as meeting the needs of all young people when

in fact they are places dominated by boys. Girls feel that parks are unsafe, and offer nothing for them, yet these issues are seldom acknowledged.

There are obviously many other issues at stake here as well. Race and national heritage, religion, culture, relative deprivation and disability all affect girls' access to public spaces.

Make Space for Girls have undertaken and collated extensive research, all which points to the following 8 principles for a successful place for teenage girls:

- Climbing up high
- Dividing up large spaces
- Social exercise
- Social seating
- Structures to hang from
- A stage for fun
- Hammocks
- Weather proof



Spaces for Teenagers Youth Group Engagement

Young people and teenagers should be included and invited to the town centre with active, engaging services and facilities that offer positive social interaction.

In the Vision engagement events, young people said they would like more places to hang out other than the vacant High Street.

They would like to see affordable places to eat and a variety of interesting independent shops. There was a strong desire for fitness services aimed at young people, like a gym that opened late so they can go after school. Public toilets and better lighting after dark would make the town centre a preferable location to hanging out in parks or woods.



13. INCLUDE & INVITE

Falkirk Town Centre: An Accessible Space

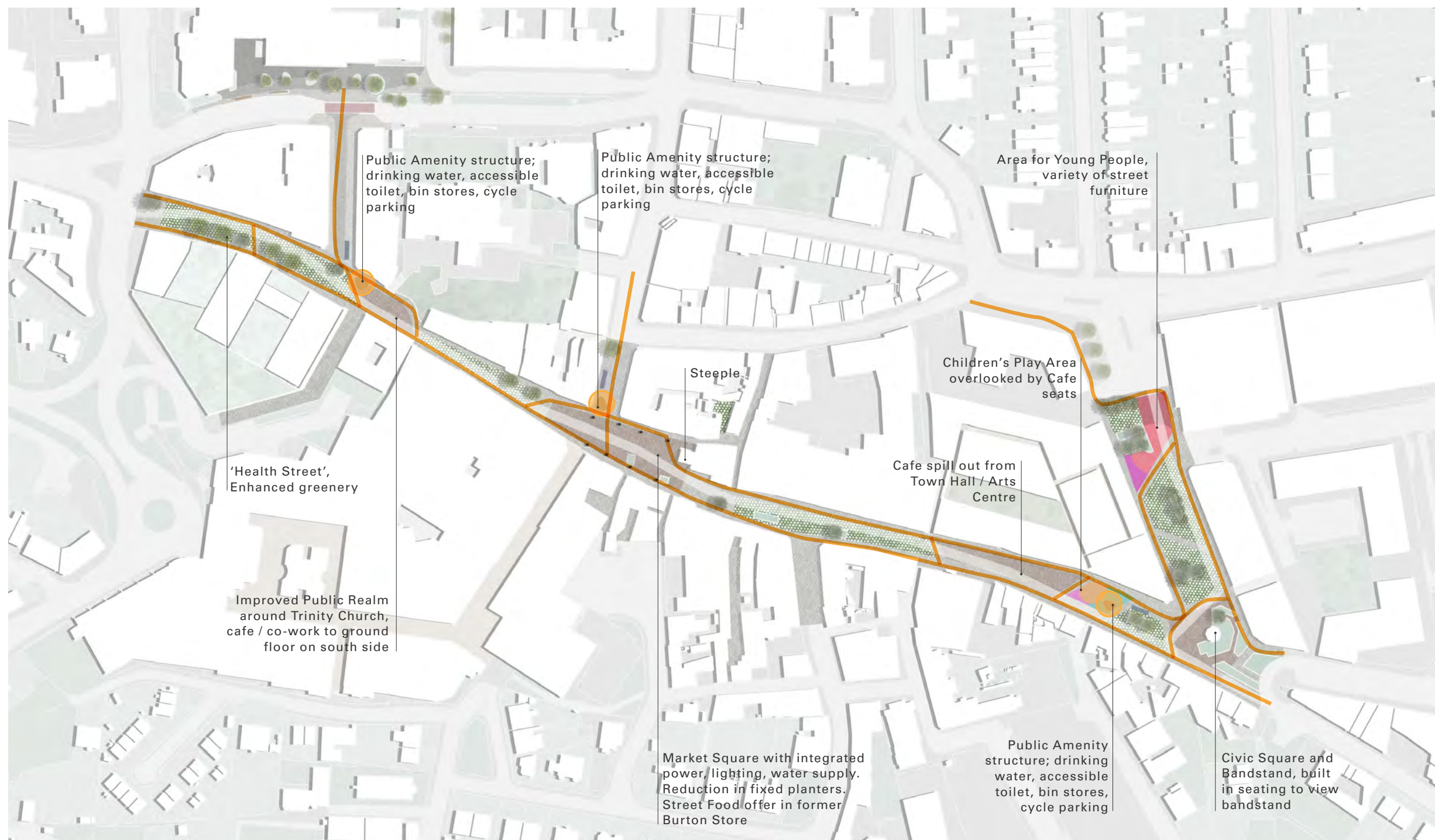
- Public Amenity Structure
- Clear unobstructed route in contrasting material

Engagement with Forth Valley Sensory Centre highlighted that there are many accessibility issues with the High Street at present. The many traditional stone planters create obstacles on the journey that can be hard to see as the street surface and planter materials are all similar tones.

The Vision proposes the enclosure of the retained planters into clear 'green zones' that feature a contrasting material textures such as grass or permeable paving. The clear, obstacle-free route for pedestrians and wheelchair users is highlighted in a different material that is smooth and even.

There is a safeguarded route for service vehicles however this is intentionally less well defined and traverses multiple surface textures in order to encourage vehicles to move slowly. The proposals also incorporate a new accessible drop off point directly outside the new Town Hall / Arts Centre.

Having landmarks and distinct, recognizable spaces along the street help both those with visual impairments and dementia / memory issues. This comes in the form of defining the purpose of each key space on the High Street and reinforcing its individuality with memorable public art and infrastructure. The market square, children's play area, bandstand zone will all have a unique and recognisable character.



THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



14. CONNECT

Introduce safe walking and cycle routes and better connect the wider community to their centre with environmentally friendly public transport. This will reduce car journeys, promote health and wellbeing as well as rebalancing inequality for low car ownership groups.

The future is likely to bring reduced car ownership alongside increased use of electric vehicles. In the meantime, we need to accommodate cars to encourage the wider suburban community to use their town centre and maintain equality of access. However, this should not be to the detriment of the quality of urban places. Routes into town and parking should be made legible and consideration should be given to the careful use of pedestrianisation, striking a balance with access and visibility of traders.



Prioritising people over cars:
Can we make the town centre more pedestrian & cycle friendly?

Creating a safer and more attractive walking and cycling environment for all within the town centre must be a priority of the Vision to ensure that Falkirk evolves into a welcoming and sustainable town, ready to meet the challenges of the climate emergency.

Falkirk's recently published Active Travel Strategy states that:

"Across Scotland, and around the world, policy makers are adopting a people-first approach to planning and transport, creating great places connected by a healthier and more sustainable transport system.

We know that active travel – walking, wheeling and cycling – is the best form of transport for the environment, health and wellbeing, and local economies. It is also the cheapest form of transport, and much less affected by cost-of-living increases than motorised

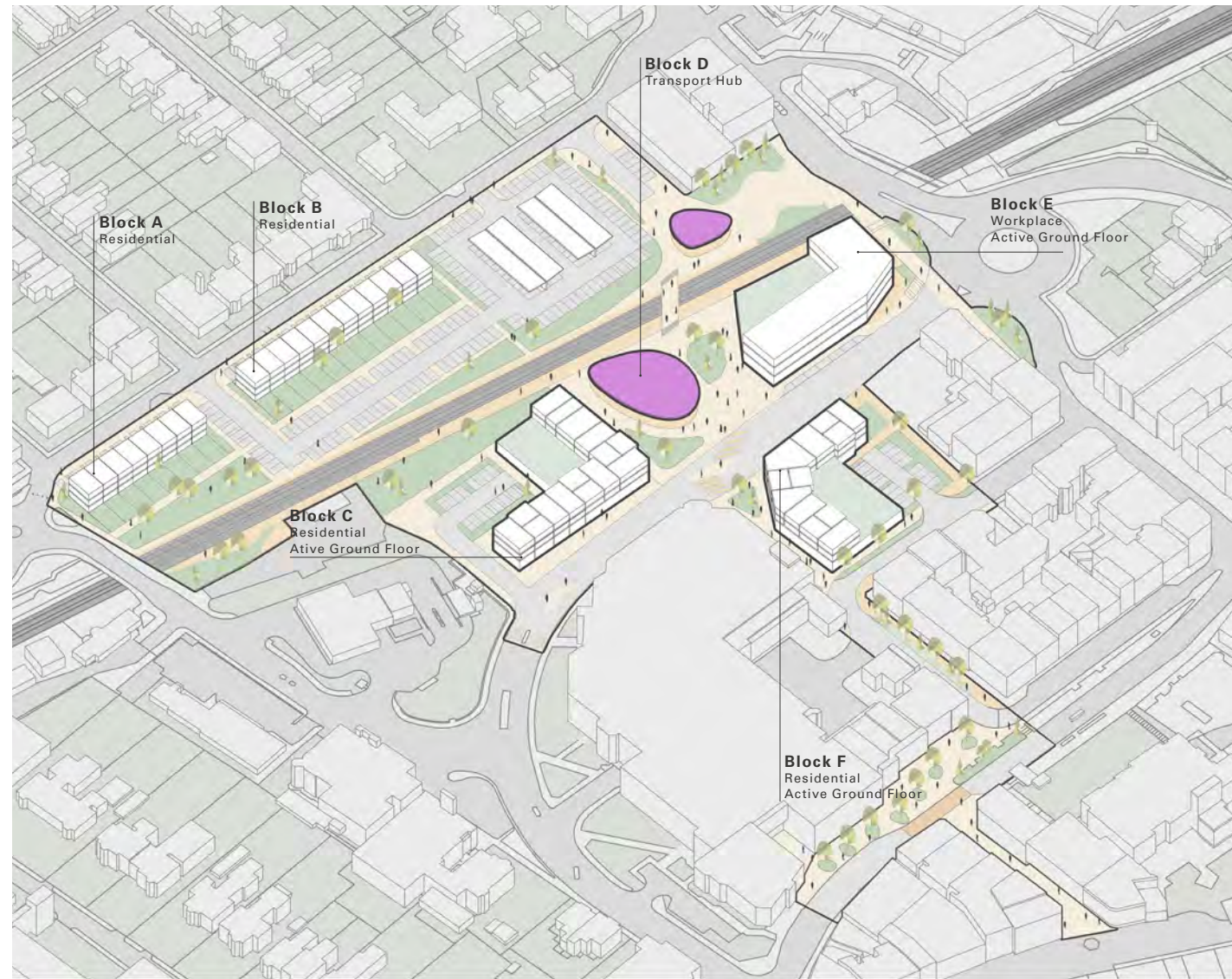
transportation. By shaping our communities for walking, wheeling and cycling, we support individuals, families and businesses to make transportation choices that are best for their own needs and budgets."

A key move for the town is to remove time restrictions for cyclists on the High Street. The implications of this have been considered in the proposed urban realm improvements.





14. CONNECT




Sustainable Transport Hub

The proposed Sustainable Transport Hub at Grahamston Station will be key to unlocking the full potential of co-locating and marrying local and regional public transport services with active travel provision within the town centre

This project will support the regeneration of Falkirk town centre as it becomes a regional services, transport, cultural and community hub, reversing the decline in footfall

in the centre, rebalancing uses and creating a night-time economy.

The Sustainable Transport Hub will include a rail, pedestrian and cycling interchange. Taking advantage of increased capacity and better strategic links with electrification of services to Edinburgh, Glasgow & Stirling, it will improve arrival facilities in the centre of town, with coordinated services linking it to key sites and places.

 Sustainable Transport Hub





14. CONNECT

Sweco: Strategic Transport Planning

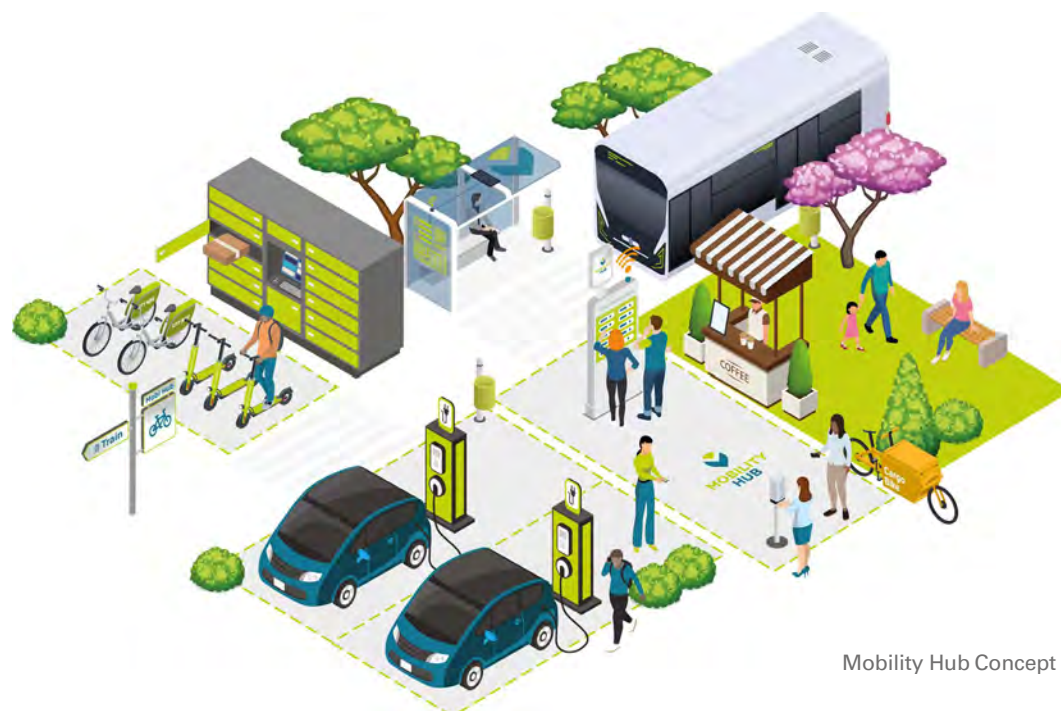
Sweco was commissioned to provide strategic transport planning support for the preparation of a Masterplan Vision for the regeneration of Falkirk town centre.

The key ambition of the project is to create a Masterplan Vision setting out development principles that can ultimately deliver a vibrant and attractive town centre where people can live, work and easily move around.

Their full report can be found in the appendices section of this document.

The report provides transport planning advice which:

- Sets out the existing transport context, covering all modes of transport and acknowledging the 20 minute neighbourhood concept;
- Identifies transport principles associated with the Masterplan Vision. This also takes account of relevant policy guidance, covering all modes of transport and integration with the Sustainable Transport Hub; and
- Sets out the next steps associated with transport planning input.



Mobility Hub Concept

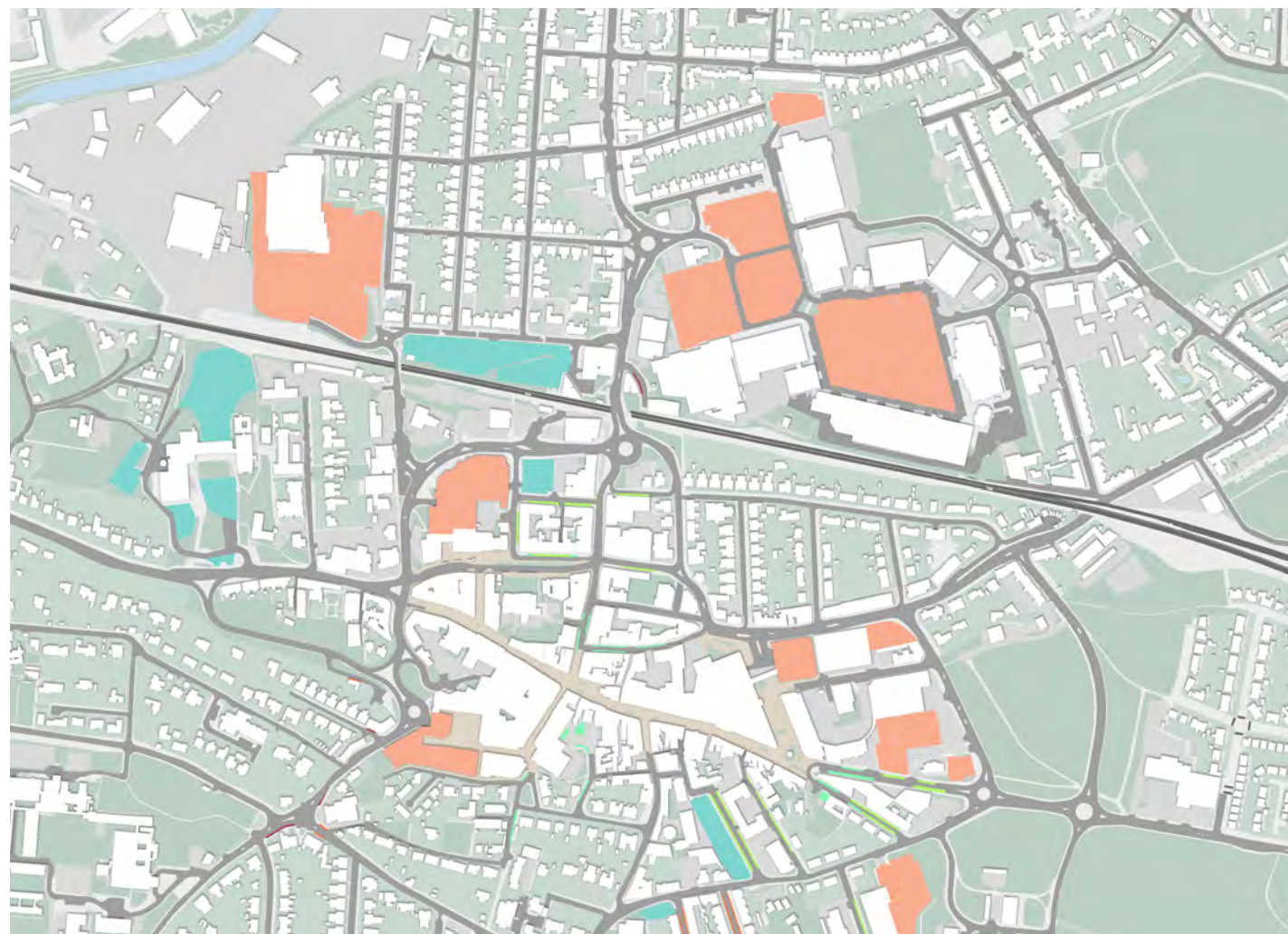
REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

It is envisaged that the following transport planning input will be required to inform future stages:

- Develop the multi-modal route hierarchy in further detail, defining the status and function of routes along with corresponding design standards;
- Prepare travel demand estimates as development plots are confirmed and brought forward;
- Develop a parking management framework which supports sustainable travel patterns, but recognises that essential vehicle access needs to be supported;
- Develop an electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy to establish quantum of charging units, enabling infrastructure for future provision and delivery/management options;
- Continued dialogue with Falkirk Council to coordinate evolution of the Town Centre with the delivery of the Sustainable Transport Hub;
- Develop the Sustainable Transport Hub concept and identify start-up components and potential future components which can be accommodate in a modular manner to respond to changes in travel behaviour;
- Explore servicing strategies to minimise the need for large delivery vehicles to enter the town centre;
- Monitor the evolution of the Town Centre against the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, using the established criteria to help guide development and infrastructure decisions;
- Incorporate the Town Centre Masterplan Vision into the Local Transport Strategy;
- Develop an infrastructure framework which identifies phased infrastructure implementation requirements to support development of the town centre. Include a fair and transparent mechanism to coordinate and collect development contributions to fund infrastructure;
- Liaise with public transport operators to coordinate service provision in relation to planned and emerging development;
- Liaise with car club and bike hire operators to identify opportunities to incorporate supporting infrastructure and services;
- Prepare a Transport Assessment to support the Masterplan in its entirety, with more detailed assessments where required as detailed applications are made for development plots/areas.



14. CONNECT



Falkirk Today: Car Focused

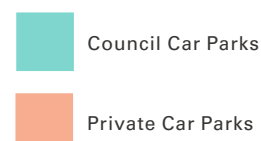
Currently, surface parking is spread throughout the town centre, with Council and private car parks available. This includes parking at the railway station and retail park. In addition, some on-street parking is provided through the town centre, with allocated bays for disabled users.

The Council car parks are pay and display, offering cheap parking provision in the town centre. Electric vehicle charging stations are provided at Falkirk Grahamston Railway Station and Glebe Street car park, south of Grahamston Station.

Further charging stations located throughout Falkirk to complement the existing provision and encourage the use of electric vehicles where private vehicle travel is necessary.

Council Operated Car Parks:	1009
On Street Parking:	228
Private Car Parks:	4167
Callendar Square:	400
Howgate Centre:	580
Central Retail Park:	2500
Asda:	284
B&M:	149
Other:	254
Grand Total:	5404

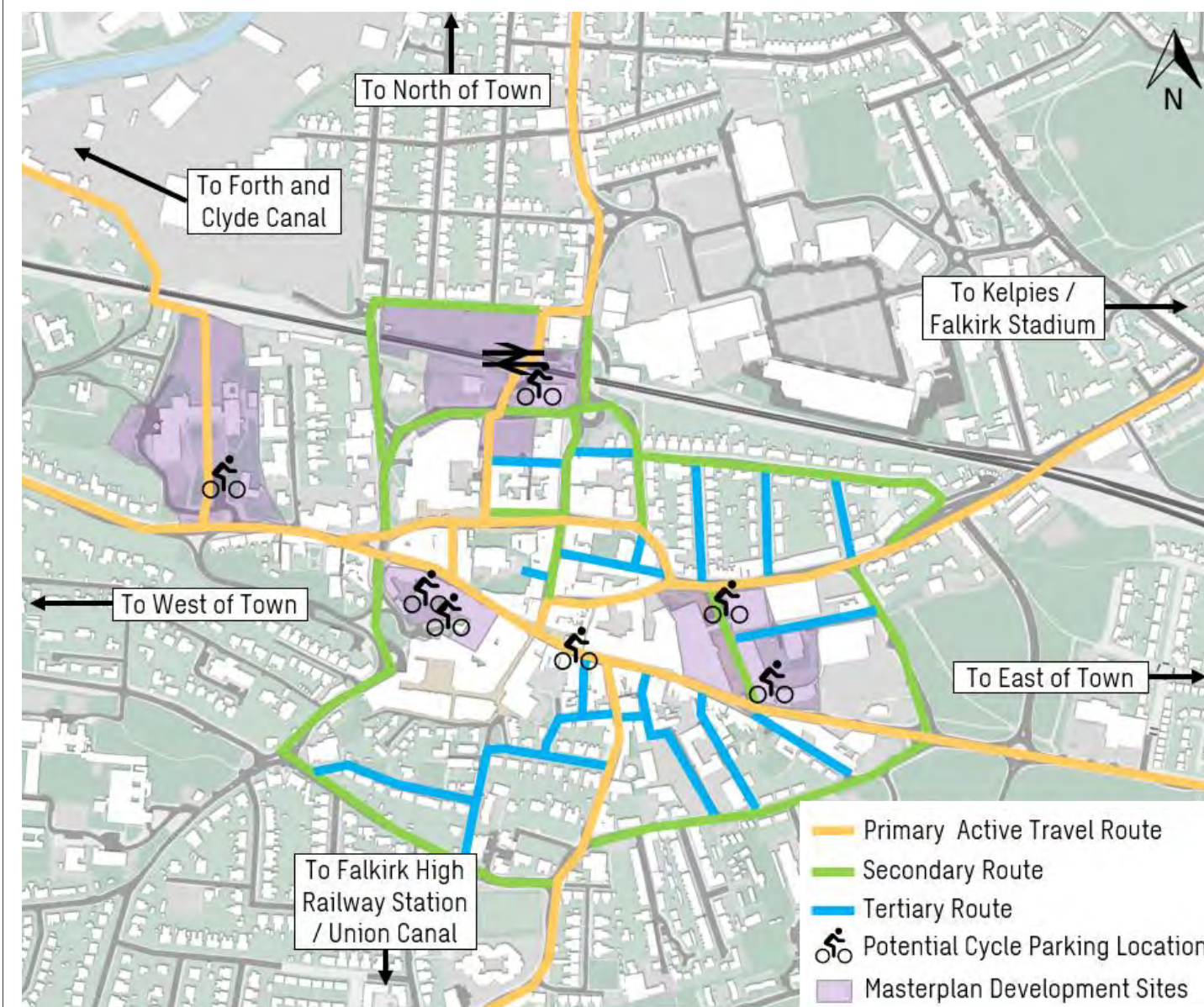
space per 6.5 residents and we believe there is scope to reduce this provision to create areas for strategic development. Current estimates are that 30% of the overall capacity is underutilised.



Pedestrian & Cycle Movement

Vehicle priority is often detrimental to pedestrians and cyclists. The vision for Falkirk town centre recognises the established sustainable travel mode hierarchy, which places pedestrians first and single occupancy private vehicle travel last and delivers the following

- A key north-south active travel route connecting the Sustainable Transport Hub at the existing Grahamston Station to the High Street;
- A network of active travel routes throughout the town centre, connecting the proposed Masterplan sites on key desire lines, including the Sustainable Transport Hub;
- Multiple connections to the external network that offer more choice for short distance active travel movements between the town centre and the surrounding area, including the green attractions of Victoria Park, Helix Park and Callendar Park;
- Enhances the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, through appropriate active travel provision.





14. CONNECT

Falkirk Town Centre: A 20 Minute Neighbourhood

NPF 4 includes a focus on local living and the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. A 20-minute neighbourhood assumes that an individual can make a walking journey to local amenities and facility within a 20-minute round trip walk. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has a significant role to play in the vision for the town centre and as such the transport planning input focuses on how the redevelopment of the town centre can support this.

Policy 15 within NPF 4 states the following:

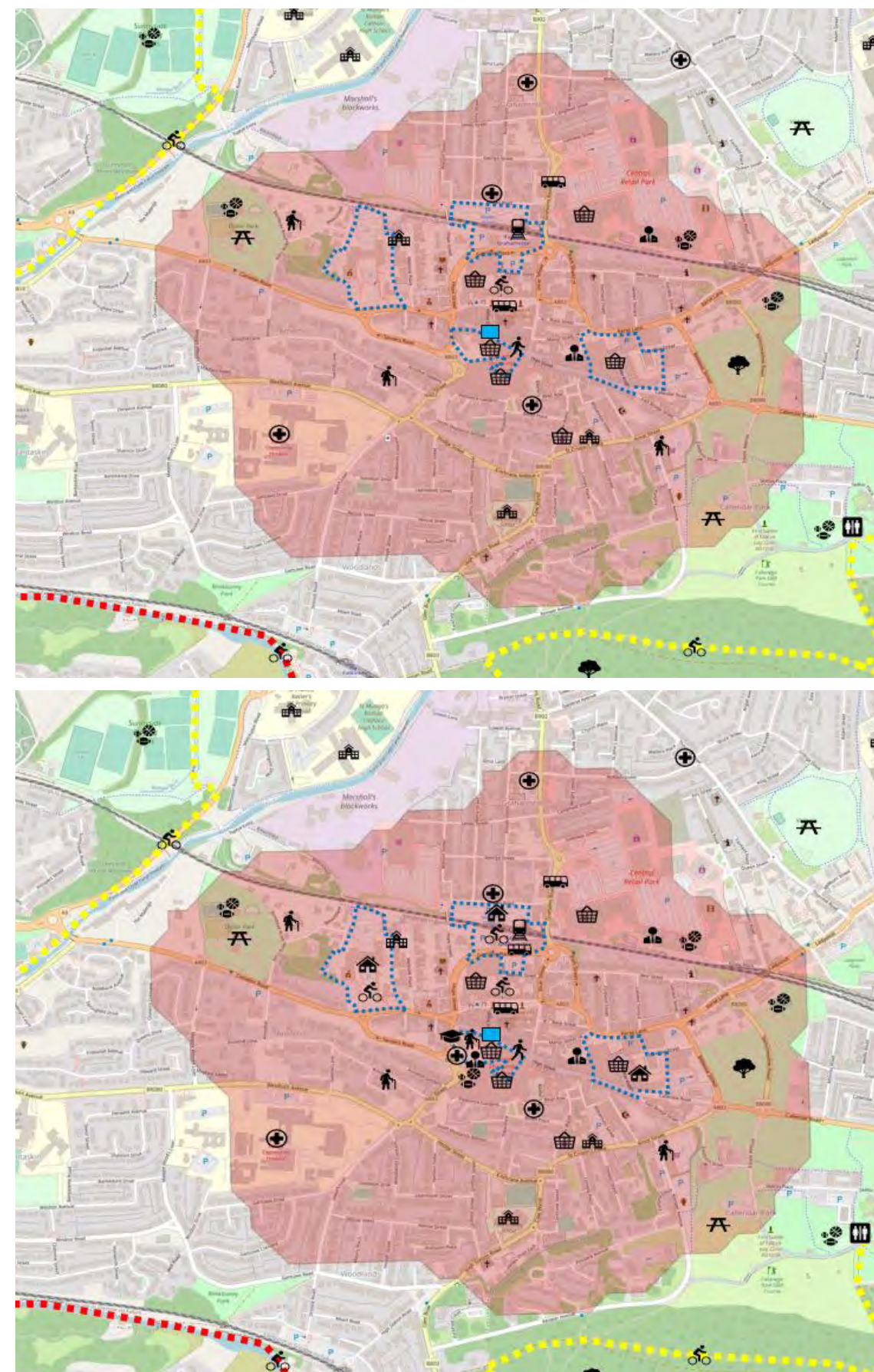
“Development proposals will contribute to local living, including, where relevant, 20-minute neighbourhoods. To establish this, consideration will be given to existing settlement pattern, and the

level and quality of interconnectivity of the proposed development within the surrounding area, including local access to:

- Sustainable modes of transport including local public transport and safe, high-quality walking, wheeling, and cycling networks;
- Employment;
- Shopping;
- Health and social care facilities;
- Childcare, schools, and lifelong learning opportunities;
- Playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, opportunities for food growth and allotments, sport, and recreation facilities;
- Publicly accessible toilets;
- Affordable and accessible housing options, ability to age in place and housing diversity.”

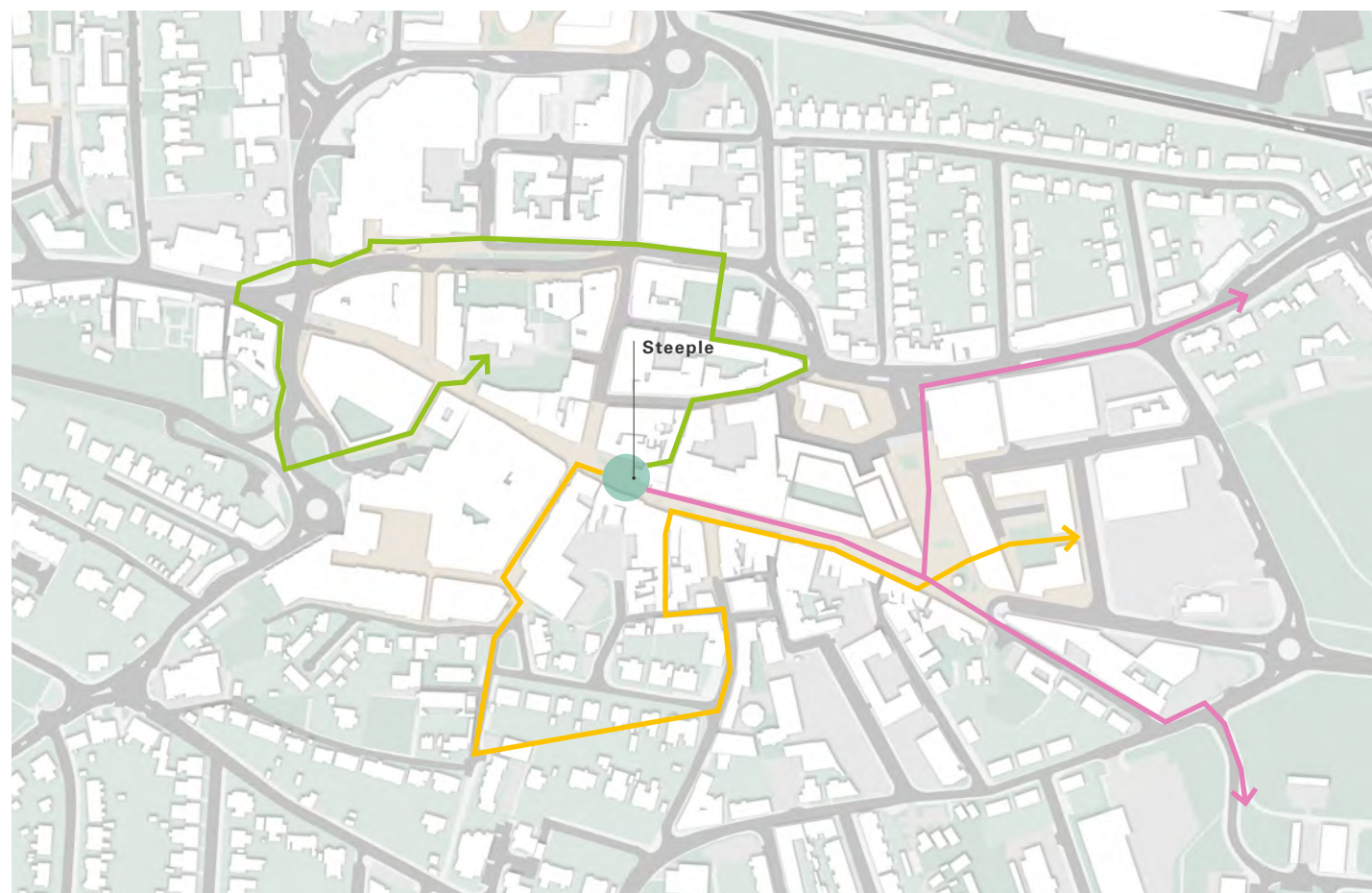
The diagrams opposite show the 20-minute walking neighbourhood as existing and with the introduction of amenities within the Masterplan Vision. The figures show that:

- The introduction of additional active travel routes within Falkirk town centre improves connectivity to key features of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept;
- New residential development will be provided at three locations within the town, which will have effective 20-minute neighbourhood catchments;
- The West End site provides new education, employment, assisted living, retail, and healthcare facilities which will be accessible.





14. CONNECT






Heritage Trails

The suggested heritage trails build on existing initiatives in the community such as the Falkirk Area Iron Trail and the reinstatement of the Steeple visitor centre. Using the Steeple as a marker and setting off point for all heritage trails would allow for centralised information sharing and promotion, strengthening the narrative of the High Street being the centre of the town's heritage activities.

These trails would help direct travel to Callendar Park and Dollar Park and have the potential to tie into currently well established walks such as the John Muir Way or Antonine Wall trail.





-  Falkirk Area Iron Trail
-  Falkirk Local History Society Tour 1
-  Falkirk Local History Society Tour 2

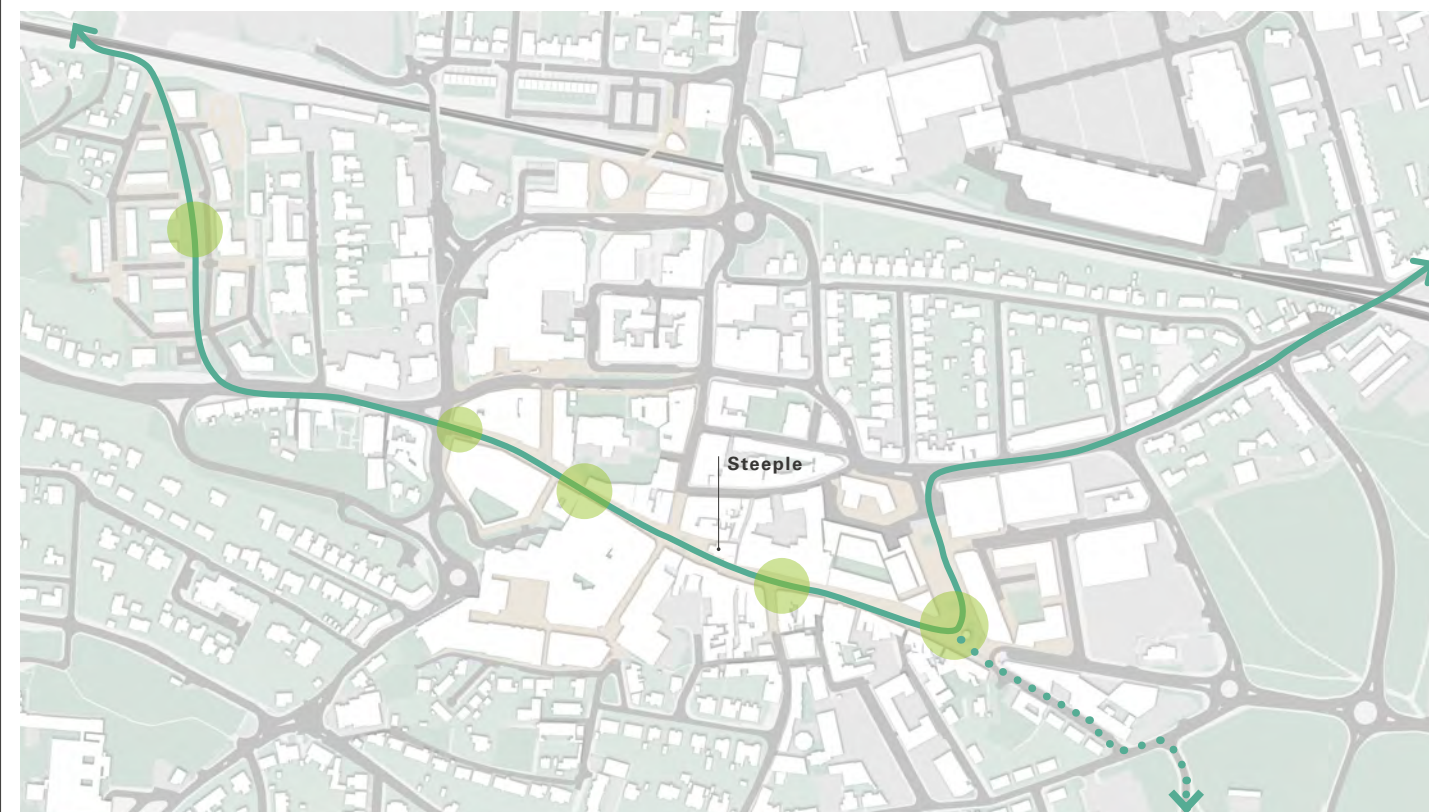
Art Park

Scotland's National Outdoor Art Park is a Growth Deal project that will deliver a series of creative interventions running along the banks of the Forth and Clyde Canal, breathing new life into Falkirk's surrounding waterways. It will offer visitors a journey through strengthened green corridors between the existing signature tourism assets, building upon their success to extend the regenerative effects of culture further across region.

The Vision proposes that this route have an offshoot that runs through the new linear park at the Municipal Buildings site and connects into the High Street, extending to the new Town Hall / Arts Centre with optional connection into Callendar Park. Instances of public art along the High Street could give the centre of Falkirk a distinct identity that reflects the town's authentic character.



-  Art Park Walking Route
-  Potential Art Installations



THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION



15. REVIVE

Repopulate and re-energise your town centre to be safer and more welcoming. Increase activity and passive surveillance from new residents, workers and a vibrant and sustainable evening economy.

These shifts will require changes to historical planning law use class and licensing restrictions to bring life to ‘dead zones’ in your urban centre.

A Stronger Evening Economy

This Vision proposes the expansion of the evening economy in the town centre, with a particular focus on ensuring this is introduced in locations that work with the existing uses and promotes activity where desired, for example around the new Town Hall / Arts Centre.

New residential developments can be designed to provide passive surveillance to routes and spaces providing a safer, more welcoming environment for all. Along with ongoing repurposing of upper floors along the High Street into residential, the suggested student accommodation block on the former bus station site and the new residential development at the west end of the High Street could contribute to this.



Restaurants and Bars

Cafes, Restaurants and Bars opening out onto the newly landscaped public realm.



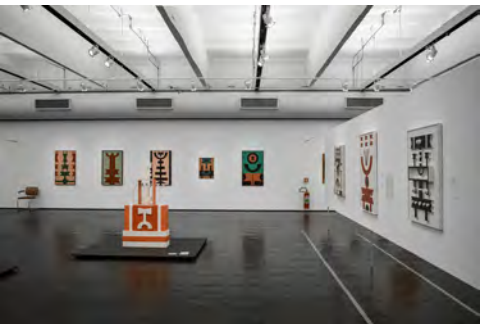
Theatre

Larger venue for theatre productions, music and dance performances and community events.



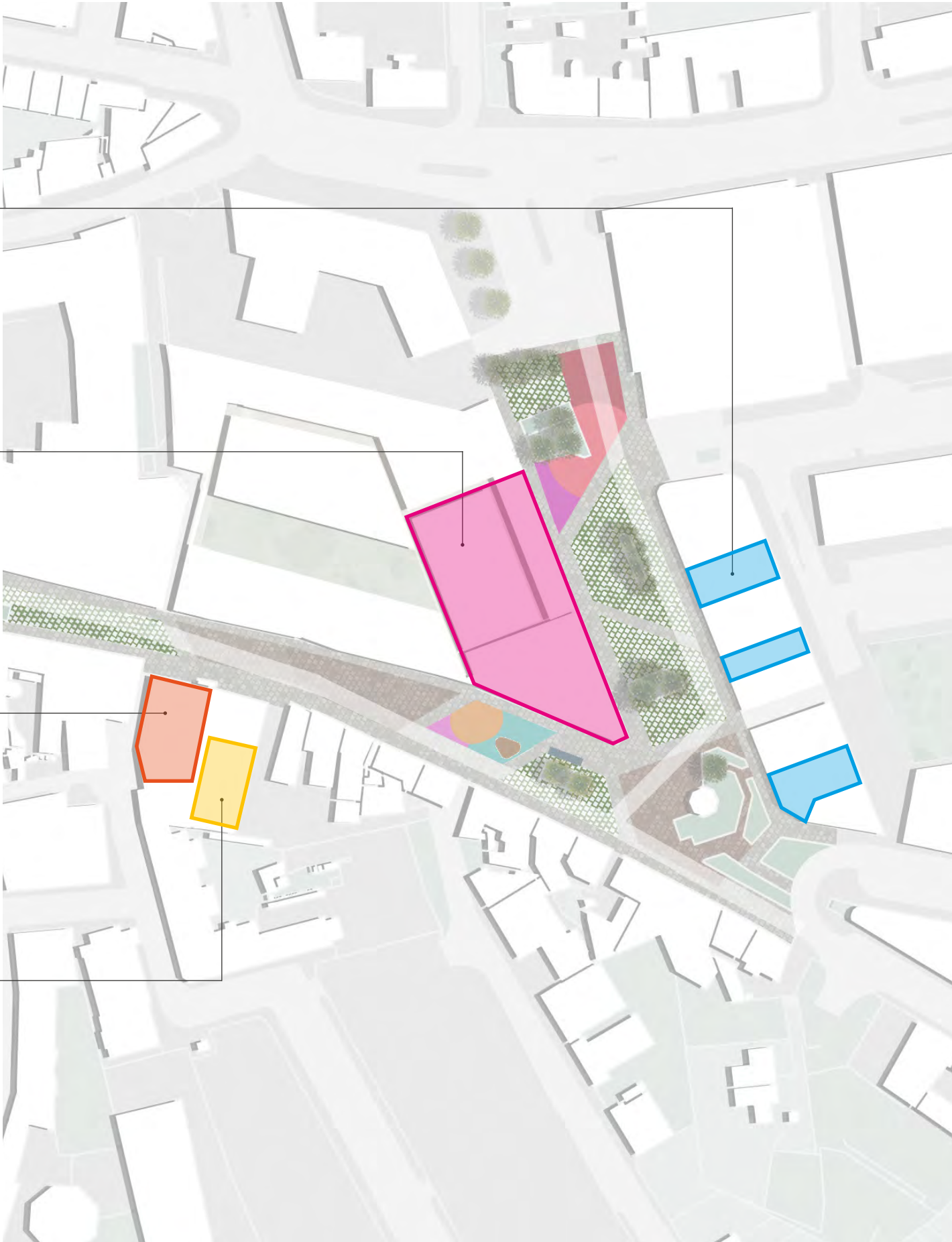
Exhibition Space

Flexible Gallery Space showcasing local artists.



Nightclub

Potential Basement converted into nightclub.



THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



16. EDUCATE

Encourage established education providers and community groups to take space in the town centre.

Beyond conventional institutions, life-long learning encourages people from all walks of life to learn new skills and meet new people. This will create a sense of empowerment, increase wellbeing and combat digital poverty.

Building on the presence of Forth Valley College

Forth Valley College opened their £78 million state-of-the-art campus on Grangemouth Road in 2020 and this may play a key part in encouraging young people and the wider community to study in Falkirk or attract new students from further afield to the area.

They are one of Scotland’s leading providers of education and training, delivering more than 750 courses from campuses in Alloa, Falkirk and Stirling. They pride themselves in offering a vibrant student community and high quality learning experiences.

Over 94% of students progress to further study or employment. Forth Valley College annually attracts over 13,500 students on courses ranging from full-time programmes, apprenticeships and training courses.

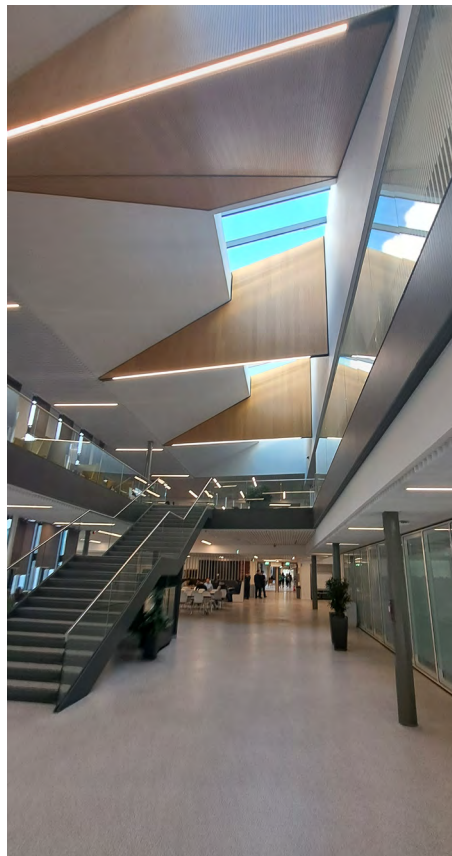
Could existing partnerships drive change and innovation in the town centre?

Forth Valley College are a key player in The Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership, the first formal regional partnership between a health board, university and college in Scotland.

This exciting partnership aims to deliver transformational change to the health and social care of the area through the delivery of new learning and development opportunities for students and staff, and by becoming

a centre for world-class research and innovation developed to directly respond to the needs of local people.

Forth Valley College are also leading a Growth Deal initiative to deliver a Transition Skills Project, which will see a major investment in skills development and delivery for the area.



CASE STUDY:
MEN’S SHEDS

Men’s Sheds focus on social connection, building friendships, sharing skills and knowledge, and building camaraderie. Activities range widely from metalwork, woodworking, repairing and restoring, electronics, model buildings or even car building.





16. EDUCATE

What if we worked with the building owners to transform the vacant M&S building through the introduction of skills development and learning space into the town centre?

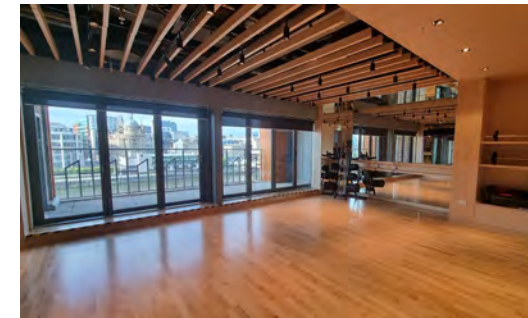
M&S Building: Reimagined

A key component of this Vision is to encourage established providers and community groups to consider taking space in the town centre.

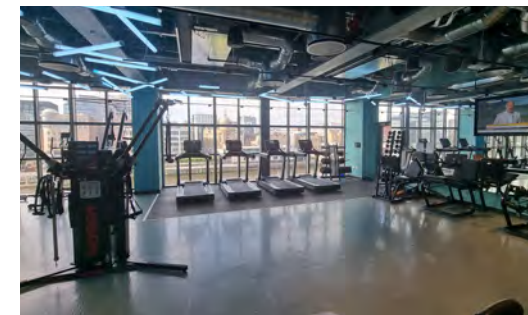
The vibrancy of the town would further benefit if activities could integrate with the town centre by taking up vacant space in existing buildings such as M&S.

Bringing learning onto the streets would both reinvigorate the High Street and support accessibility and opportunity for lifelong learning for the wider community.

Lifelong learning encourages people from all walks of life to learn new skills and meet new people. This creates a sense of empowerment, increases wellbeing and combats digital poverty.



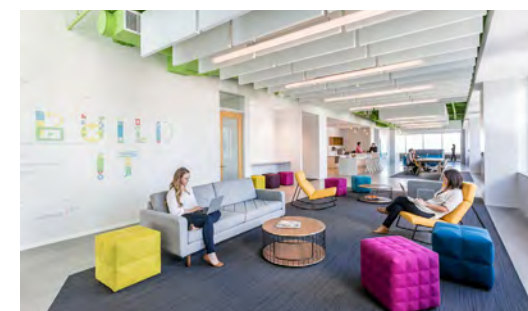
Third Floor
Gym Studio



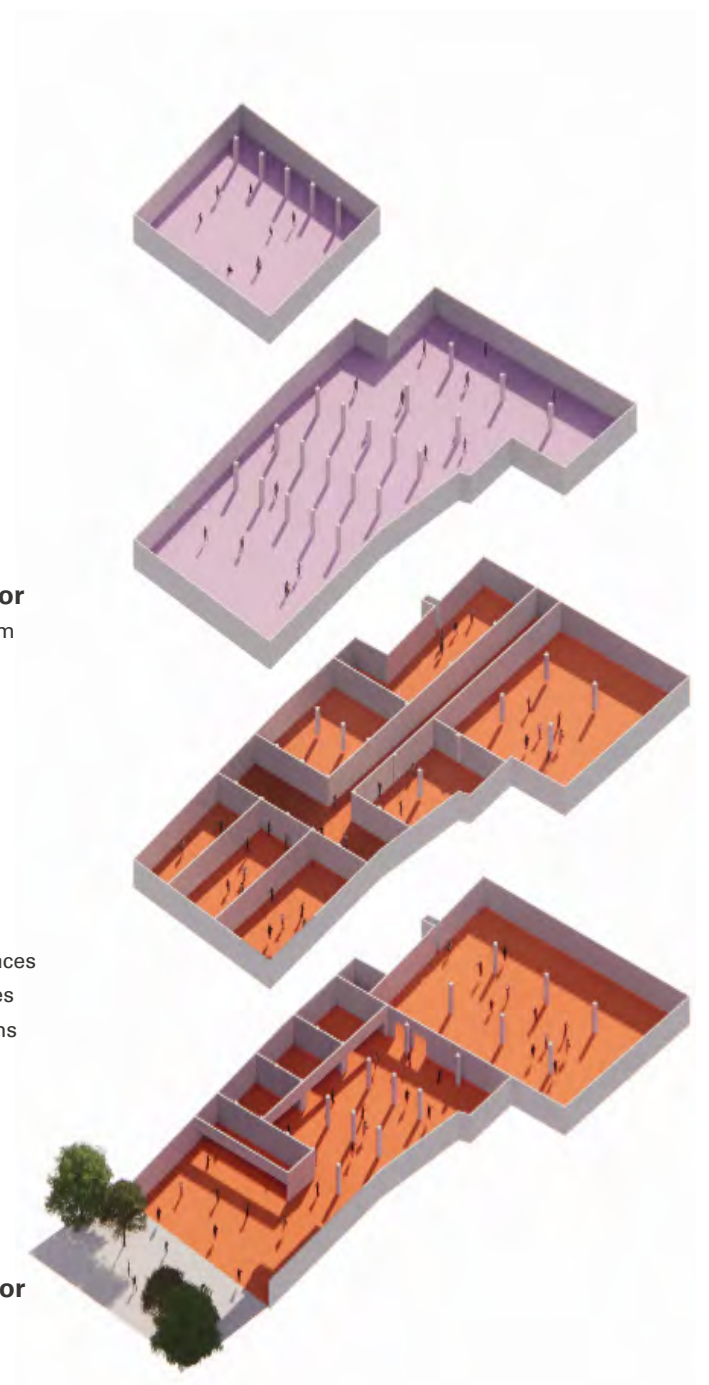
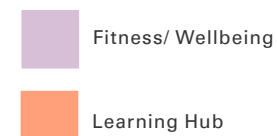
Second Floor
Open Plan Gym



First Floor
Education Spaces
Training spaces
Meeting Rooms



Ground Floor
Learning Hub



THE VISION: MANIFESTO IN ACTION



17. LOCATE SERVICES CENTRALLY

Key institutions such as education providers, health and civic establishments can be fantastic assets for a town centre. They offer essential accessible services right at the heart of the community, enhancing town centre vibrancy and greatly increasing footfall.

For public funded developments, reinforce the responsibilities and all-round benefits in locating these assets and services centrally.

Essential services accessible to all

The proposals encourage the location of essential services in to the town centre, building on some existing institutions such as Skills Development Scotland and Forth Valley Community Focus CIC who already have their service centres in the heart of the town centre on Manor Street.

In alignment with government guidance such as the ‘Town Centre First Principle’ and ‘A New Future for Scotland’s Town Centres’ the Council Hub / One Stop Shop will be located in new Town Hall / Arts Centre as a place to access Registration, Licensing, Council Tax, Benefit Advice facilities via self help, Interview & Open desk facilities

Museum
Falkirk Library building retrofitted to a Museum displaying the Council’s collection in collaboration with the Third Sector



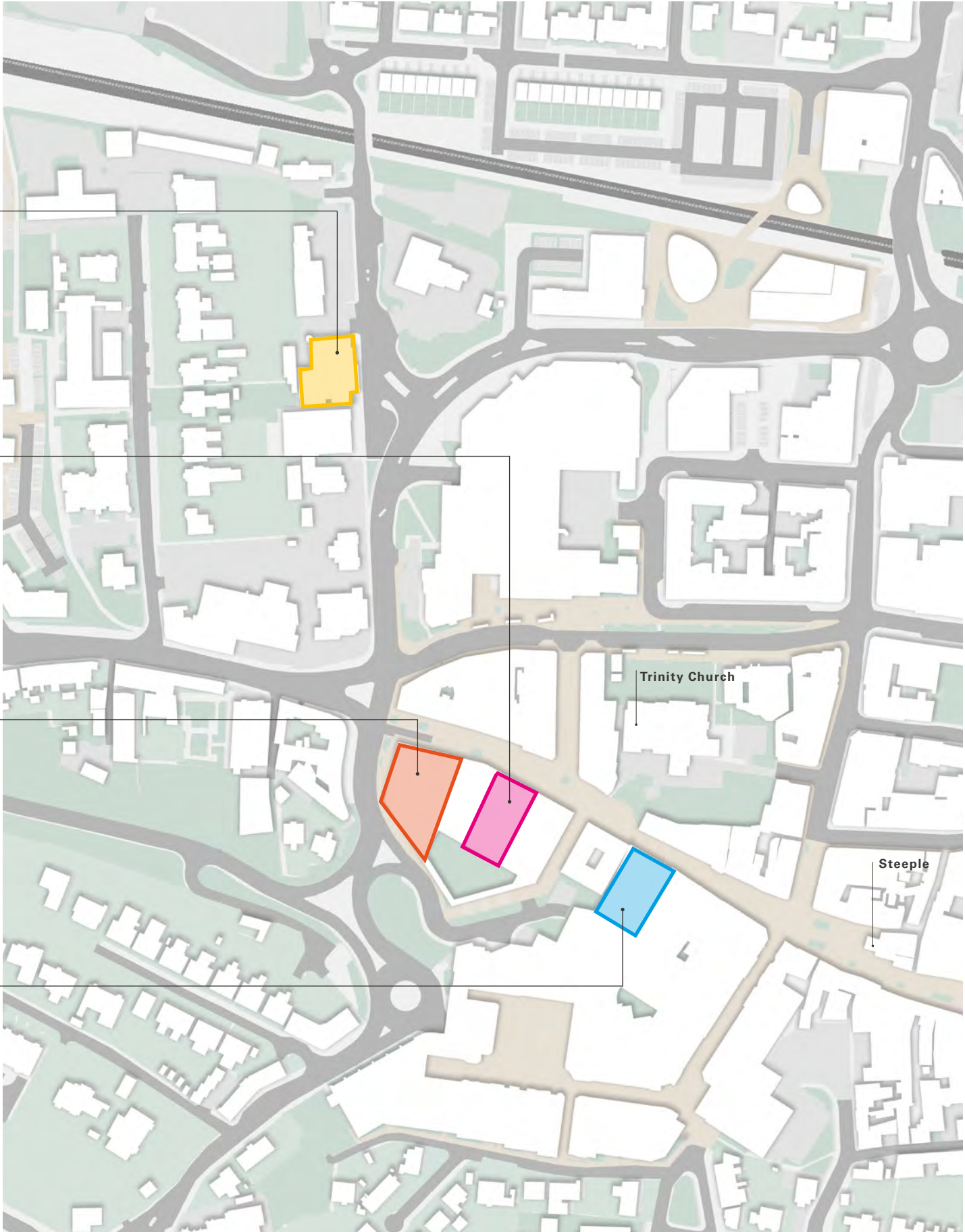
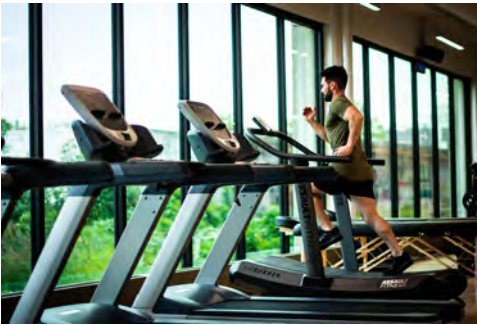
Nursery
Child care facilities located on the ground floor of a mixed use intergenerational block



Healthcare
An amalgamation of primary care, community services and diagnostics facilities at the heart of the community



Fitness & Wellbeing
Top floor gym and fitness studio space in former M&S building





17. LOCATE SERVICES CENTRALLY

Health Street: A model for Falkirk

Health services are a key part of the mix of uses we need to re-introduce into our town centres. It helps drive footfall into the heart of the town and benefits the businesses based there (retail, restaurants, cafes, leisure). The location of permanent and visiting staff also energises the town centre and supports businesses.

The town centre is the most accessible location available to all demographics and with the concentration of multiple uses, car journeys will be reduced and the challenges of the climate emergency more readily addressed.

While hospitals are under intense pressure, there is an excess of space capacity on high streets offering the potential to take advantage of the national drive to move outpatient diagnostics out of hospitals into the community, along with the ability to amalgamate local primary care and community services.

Locating the healthcare use within a concentration of other community wealth building and 'health creation' uses can support the concept of social prescribing, a means of enabling health professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services such as volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.



 Active Ground Floor	 Health Care
 Commercial	 Nursery
 Leisure	 2 Bed Flat
 Education	 1 Bed Flat

CASE STUDY: WOODSIDE HEALTH, GLASGOW

Located at the centre of the community and replacing the previous 1970's facility, Woodside Health and Care Centre brings together an amalgamation of primary care facilities and community care for a more integrated and efficient service.

The Centre occupies an unusual organic shaped urban block at a road junction and, in response to this, each side of the site has a unique entrance representing one of the main drivers in the brief:

- The Health Centre
- Community Addictions
- Elderly Daycare



THE VISION:
MANIFESTO IN ACTION



18. MEANWHILE...

Transformation takes time and not all proposals will be delivered in the short-term.

Where a building or site is vacant, encourage ‘meanwhile’ uses that benefit the wider community, either through the creation of public space or temporary occupation for curated retail, commercial or cultural use.

Short term impact
bringing long term
benefits

There is ample opportunity to enliven existing underused spaces and places within the town centre to create immediate vibrancy and impact in the short term. This could happen at different times of the year allowing ‘pop-up’ creative leisure or cultural ventures to make an impact and stimulate interest and activity.

Interventions of a ‘meanwhile’ nature on even part of a site can permit a phased approach to the delivery of larger developments, preventing their lying dormant and inactive in their entirety

for the duration of their often complicated and protracted design, procurement and construction. The Vision explores the introduction of temporary green space to accommodate family friendly outdoor amenities for active uses that support and enhance the visitor experience and connect the whole community to the town centre.

 Vacant Space





18. MEANWHILE...

A Gap in the Town: Bank Street

The gap site at Bank Street is identified in the Local Development Plan for Housing/Business/Retail use with an estimated capacity for 27 residential units. An infill proposal has previously been granted planning permission but there is a lack of movement in taking development forward.

At such a central position within the town centre, with good access to south light, the site presents an opportunity for a temporary community garden, park or growing space, led by local organisers. It is an opportunity to involve school children in the process and promote education, health and wellbeing.

In future, when development is brought forward on the site, the community's established efforts could be relocated to one of the proposed green spaces in this Vision, such as the green space outside the health centre and nursery at the west end of the High Street, or the rooftop garden of 165-169 High Street.



MANIFESTO IN ACTION

CASE STUDY: GAP FILLER CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND



BRINGING LIFE BACK TO THE CITY

Following the earthquake in 2011, while the government looked at the long term reconstruction over 100 citizen led projects sprung up all over the city, from community gardens, markets housed in

shipping containers, cycle repair, temporary co-working spaces and performance venues.

These brought much needed activity back to the heart of the city, assisted in speeding the recovery and informed government investments. More than 70 of these were conceived and organised by Gap Filler, an arts based


community action group.

They created, amongst other things, a cycle powered cinema, a performance venue constructed from wooden pallets and a giant interactive outdoor arcade game.

They continue to innovate and come up with fresh meanwhile uses to this day.



FALKIRK:
A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE

An aerial photograph of a city street grid, rendered in a dark, monochromatic grey scale. The map shows a dense network of streets and building footprints, with some areas appearing more developed than others. The overall tone is professional and urban.

4. CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD

CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD

WHAT IS THE VISION?

Focused

This document sets out a series of physical and spatial changes in the town centre to achieve the social and cultural ambitions of the community.

It is deliberately focused around the High Street area and the streets directly adjacent, in order to prevent “spreading the jam too thin” by attempting to regenerate equally and simultaneously across the wider town centre.

It Sets the Direction of Travel

The Vision records and responds to the requirements of the community.

While proposals included in the Vision do not represent Council commitments or ‘deemed’ compliance, the coordinated Vision is a clear statement of ambition that can achieve alignment of intent and stand as a guideline to assess the appropriateness of future development.

At the Right Time

There are many underlet and struggling Shopping Centres and Assets in towns across the UK and their value is at its lowest ever. They offer the “big move” to reintroduce significant new uses into a town and focus fit-for-purpose, consolidated retail onto the street.

This is not about bailing out the private sector – it is an unprecedented opportunity for the community that Falkirk Council and Central Government should continue to find ways to capitalise on.

Bold

The changing patterns of retail have given us a once in a lifetime opportunity to rebalance retail dominance by reintroducing uses that meet the community’s needs and by repopulating our town centres with workplace and town centre living.

This won’t be achieved without significant redevelopment to repurpose or demolish and rebuild.

It Enshrines Scottish Government Policy

Probably the three key policies concerning the built environment are ‘Town Centre First’, ‘The Place Principle’ and ‘A New Future for Scotland’s Town Centres’.

Along with the environmental agenda, the proposals enshrine the principles of these policies and recognise the imperative to ensure key players stay focussed on the town centre in what they can contribute (vibrancy and connectivity) and how they will benefit.



CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD

CREATING & MAINTAINING MOMENTUM



Attracting Investment

The published Vision is a statement of intent and positivity about the town and reinforcing it is “open for business”.

We can use the Vision content to create ambassadors for the town and attract investors through a series of developer days and awareness programmes.

Securing Funding

The 2021 Falkirk Growth Deal provides a total of £80m investment from UK and Scottish Governments, £45m from Falkirk Council, and £5.8m from Scottish Canals. It is expected to result in up to 2,000 jobs and £1bn worth of future investment.

We should use the Vision to develop and showcase projects that can effect transformational change and ensure Falkirk is best placed to benefit from the release of any future funding.

Engaging the Community

Success will require the buy in of the wider community and the published Vision should be used to engage, excite and nurture buy in from community groups.

CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD
IMPLEMENTATION

Behavioural Change

The current procurement mechanisms and decision-making approach to investment need to change if they are to be able to recognise the real value of development that safeguards our town centres rather than favouring the easier answer of edge of town and out of town development that has seen public sector funded education, healthcare and services marginalised when they could contribute to a vibrant town centre.

This traditional “best value” approach has been changed in both the Public Sector Finance Manual and the NHSTransaction Handbook in favour ofTown Centre First, Place making and Carbon Reduction.

We need all decision makers to presume for town centre investment and to understand the value to our town and our community.



In the Right Place

Some of the proposed moves may be frustrated by ownership and may need to happen in another guise.

It is the identifying of the types of moves and “building blocks” to achieve a re-energised town centre that is the true value of the project. Beyond this, the Vision study highlights the importance of positioning uses (attractors) where they can have the highest impact.

We are likely to get one chance in this lifetime to get these decisions right.

Staying the Distance

This is a 10-20 yearVision and perhaps some of the moves will take longer so it is important to identify the quick wins and programme out the longer-term projects.

A stalled spaces strategy and temporary locations can be identified. Can we set up artist’s studios or collaborative working in unused space? Some moves will blossom, others may fail. We need to see the town as a beta project or test bed for re-invention.

WHAT WILL THE
VISION ACHIEVE?

When we deliver the Vision we will have reprofiled the town centre to be the vibrant focus for the whole community with wellbeing, inclusion and opportunity at its heart.

We will have a consolidated and successful retail offer and new uses that meet the needs of the community and extend into an evening economy.

We will have repopulated the centre and provided workplace and creative space. We will be proud of Falkirk town centre.

“A real, vibrant and successful town centre for the whole community with wellbeing, inclusion and opportunity at its heart.

