

Beeches, Booths & Barr (3Bs): Local Centres

Neighbourhood Planning Design Support

Quality information

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Background and Introduction

01

1. Background and Introduction

Background

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, delivered by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide Design support to Beeches, Booths & Barr (3Bs) Neighbourhood Planning Forum. The support is intended to provide design assistance to the Forum's work in producing a Neighbourhood Plan and the regeneration of three local centres. The work is designed to complement the plan-drafting work that is underway and to propose the likely environmental and public realm improvements that would enhance these local centres.

Objective

The objective of this report is to advise on how the three local centres can enhance 3Bs Neighbourhood Area by providing:

- Public realm improvements;
- A safer environment to live and work;
- Strategies to reduce issues related to ground water flooding;
- Potential public open spaces that benefit the local community;
- Safe, walkable connectivity between the different local centres; and
- Frontage (shops and houses) design guidance.

Location

The Neighbourhood area covers the Perry Barr ward of Birmingham - as defined in 2016 - and bounded by the city boundaries of Birmingham, the railway line from Hamstead station to Perry Barr station, Regina Drive, the River Tame, and Aldridge Road from the river to the line of the M6 motorway as far as Queslett Road. The A34 Walsall Road runs through the heart of the proposed area with Queslett Road to the north, the railway line and the Old Walsall Road to the west and the M6 and Aldridge Road to the east. The Neighbourhood area includes the areas of Perry Barr, Perry Beeches Hamstead and Tower Hill. Perry Barr ward has a population of 23,652 as per the 2011 census.

The neighbourhood area is located within a suburban area with a growing, diverse and vibrant population. There is potential for considerable development within the neighbourhood area in line with community aspirations. There are a number of local centres within the proposed boundary including Tower Hill, Thornbridge Avenue as well as potential local centres such as the area Turnberry Road/Cardington Avenue.

Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this report:

- Initial meeting, site visit and walk around;
- Desktop research and policy review;
- Site analysis;
- Development of public realm interventions;
- Preparation of shop front guidance; and

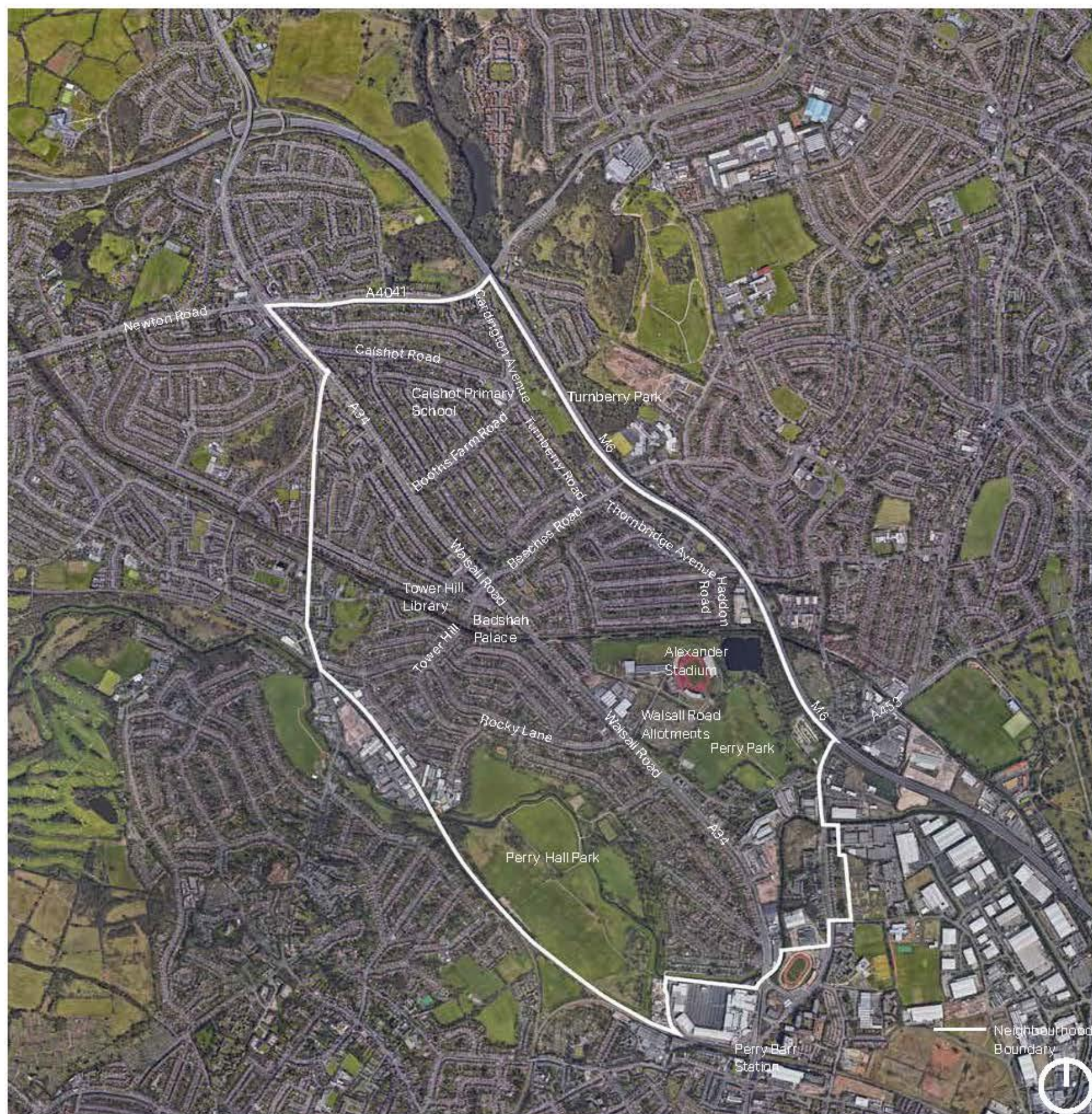


Figure 1.1 Aerial view of Beeches, Booths and Barr Neighbourhood plan (source Google Earth)

- Preparation of this draft report, for comment by the Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Study Area

The study area focuses on three local centres and their contextual surrounding. These local centres were selected based on their opportunities for improvement, flooding issues that can be addressed and their potential to become key local centres within the neighbourhood plan.

Tower Hill constitutes the heart of 3Bs neighbourhood planning area, but is cut through by Walsall Road/A34 highway. It has a busy bus interchanges, a landmark art deco listed building, the former Clifton Cinema (now the Badshah Palace), a main retail centre (Co-op), and the Tower Hill Library. The local centre has impressive views of Birmingham but busy pedestrian routes with unsafe pedestrian crossings. The comprehensive redevelopment of Bescot Court housing has the potential to improve this local neighbourhood centre.

The second local centre is **Turnberry**, located adjacent to Turnberry Park (currently undergoing redevelopment). This area has been affected by flooding and therefore its regeneration should consider sustainable green drainage strategies. Although the character of this area is mainly residential, the local centre has some independent local shops which contribute positively to the development of this area. Furthermore, Calshot Primary School is located within a central area of Turnberry local centre.

The third local centre is around **Thornbridge Avenue**, this is an interesting part of the neighbourhood area as it has mature trees, allotments and a series of shops and pubs that characterise the area. This area has some allotments that characterize the area. However, similarly to Turnberry and Calshot Road, Thornbridge Avenue and Haddon Road have suffered previously from significant flood issues and requires environmental and public realm improvement.

Legend

-  Neighbourhood Boundary
-  Local Centres Areas and Boundaries
-  Water
-  Green Open Spaces



Figure 1.2 Plan showing the local centres/areas of study



Planning Policy

02

1. Planning Policy Review

Planning Policy Review

The most relevant planning policy documents for this study are:

- Birmingham Plan 2031, Birmingham Development Plan, Part of Birmingham’s Local Plan, Planning for sustainable growth (adopted January 2017);
- Birmingham City Council, Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment-SFRA (updated January 2012).

These have been reviewed and all the policies relevant to the sites development are summarised below.

Birmingham Plan 2031, Birmingham Development Plan, Part of Birmingham’s Local Plan, Planning for sustainable growth (adopted January 2017)

Policy PG3 Place making

States that all new development will be expected to demonstrate high design quality, contributing to a strong sense of place by:

- Reinforcing or creating a positive sense of place and local distinctiveness;
- Creating safe environments that design out crime and make provision for people with disabilities;
- Providing attractive environments that encourage people to move around by cycling and walking;
- Ensuring that private external spaces, streets and public spaces are attractive, functional, inclusive and able to be managed for the long term;
- Taking opportunities to make sustainable design integral to development;
- Supporting the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods (Policy TP27); and
- Making best use of existing buildings and efficient use of land in support of the overall development strategy.

Policy TP6 Management of flood risk and water resources

States that site specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with the requirements of the relevant national planning policy and the guidance outlined in the Birmingham SFRA.

In regard to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), it states that all development proposals will be required to manage surface water through SuDS that improve water quality, enhance biodiversity and amenity.

The provision of trees and woodland is encouraged as they can provide significant benefits in terms of water management and flood alleviation and as part of SuDS.

Policy TP7 Green infrastructure network

States that the City Council will seek to maintain and expand a green infrastructure network throughout Birmingham by protecting development and where possible opportunities will be taken to extend and enhance the network and to improve links between areas of open space.

Policy TP9 Open space, playing fields and allotments

States that planning permission will not normally be granted for development on open space and that provision of public open space should be provided throughout Birmingham in line with specific standards:

- All residents should have access to a public open space within 400m, (5 to 10

minutes walk) and this should include children’s play facilities.

- Within 1km (15 to 20 minutes walk) of all residents, there should be a public open space area of at least 2ha in size. This should include public realm elements and should accommodate different recreational activities.
- Within 3km of all residents there should be access to a public park with a wide range of facilities and features and these spaces should be capable of holding local or in some instances national events.

New developments, particularly residential, should provide open space and children’s play areas

Policy TP21 The network and hierarchy of centres

States that the vitality and viability of the centres within the network and hierarchy will be maintained and enhanced. These centres will be the preferred locations for retail, office and leisure developments and for community facilities. Residential development will also be supported in centres having regard to the provisions of policy TP24.

Proposals which will make a positive contribution to the diversity and vitality of these centres will be encouraged, particularly where they can help bring vacant areas back into positive use.

Alongside new development, proposals will be encouraged that enhance the quality of the environment and improve access. Perry Barr falls within the centres with potential significant growth. The scale of any future developments should be appropriate to the size and function of the centre.

Policy TP22 Convenience retail provision

States that convenience retail proposals will be supported within centres included in the network of centres. Proposals should deliver quality public realm and create linkages and connections with the rest of the centre and improve accessibility.

Policy TP23 Small shops and independent retailing

States that proposals which promote and encourage independent and niche retailers across the city will be supported by:

- Provision of a range of retail premises across the City including smaller units;
- Considering the need for a range of unit sizes to suit all potential needs.

Policy TP24 Promotion of diversity of uses within centres

States that a diverse range of facilities and uses will be encouraged and supported in centres within the hierarchy, set out in Policy TP21, consistent with the scale and function of the centre to meet people’s day to day needs including leisure uses, offices, restaurants, community uses, cultural facilities, tourist related uses and residential. It is important that centres maintain their predominant retail function and provide shops. Primary shopping areas have been identified to protect their retail function of centres.

Policy TP27 Sustainable neighbourhoods

States that all new residential development will need to demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements of creating sustainable neighbourhoods that are characterised by:

- A wide choice of housing sizes, types and tenures;
- Access to facilities such as shops, schools, leisure and work opportunities within easy reach;
- Convenient options to travel by foot, bicycle and public transport;

- A strong sense of place with high design quality so that people identify with;
- Environmental sustainability and climate proofing through measures that save energy, water and non-renewable resources and the use of green and blue infrastructure which consists in providing a network that is built with nature to solve urban and climatic challenges; and
- Attractive, safe and multifunctional public spaces such as squares, parks and other green spaces for social activities, recreation and wildlife.

Policy TP28 The location of new housing

States that new residential development should be located outside flood zones 2 and 3a (unless effective mitigation measures can be demonstrated) and 3b as defined in the strategic flood risk assessment.

Policy TP38 A sustainable transport network

States that the development of a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system, where the most sustainable mode choices also offer the most convenient means of travel will be supported.

Policy TP39 Walking

States that the provision of safe and pleasant walking environments throughout Birmingham will be promoted by:

- Ensuring new development incorporates high quality pedestrian routes;
- Ensuring good design of pedestrian routes/areas reflecting desire lines and providing adequate way finding facilities where appropriate whilst ensuring that routes/areas are free from unnecessary clutter; and
- Providing pedestrian crossing facilities where appropriate and ensuring foot-way surfaces are well maintained.

Policy TP40 Cycling

States that cycling will be encouraged through a comprehensive city-wide programme of cycling infrastructure improvements (both routes and trip end facilities) by:

- Developing different route types;
- Further development and enhancement of an extensive off-road network of canal paths and green routes;
- Incorporating cycling into the ‘Interconnect’ on-street way-finding, and using improved direction signage;
- Improving cycle security with upgraded parking and trip end facilities within the City Centre, local centres and at railway stations;
- Increasing access to bicycles with cycle loan and hire opportunities;
- Providing enabling support to take up cycling through training and travel behaviour initiatives; and
- Ensuring that new development incorporates appropriately designed facilities which will promote cycling as an attractive, convenient and safe travel method.

Policy TP41 Public transport

States that the bus remains by far the most important mode of public transport in Birmingham. There continues to be a challenge in making bus travel attractive as a sustainable alternative to the private car. This can be achieved by providing bus priority measures and infrastructure.

Policy TP44 Traffic and congestion management

States that the optimum use of existing highway infrastructure across all modes will be encouraged and priority investment in the highway network to support the city’s sustainable transport network and development agenda will be promoted by:

- Improving the routes for all users and improving network resilience;
- Reducing the negative impacts of road traffic;
- Managing the availability and pricing of parking and ensuring effective and proportionate parking enforcement;
- Improving road safety with the introduction of 20mph speed limits across the network, except on parts of the Strategic Highway Network where higher speed limits are acceptable;
- Providing Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) and Intelligent Transport Systems that manage the transport network in Birmingham and the West Midlands;
- Targeted construction of new accesses to provide access to development/ redevelopment sites; and
- Supporting the delivery of a sustainable transport network and development agenda.

Policy TP45 Accessibility standards for new development

States that all major developments which are likely to generate, either solely or in combination with other related developments, more than 500 person-trips per day should aim to provide:

- An appropriate level of public transport provision;
- Associated public transport stops with shelters and seating;
- Real Time Information (RTI) as appropriate;
- Good cycle access with a commensurate number of convenient cycle stands, with cycle shelters where stays are likely to be of longer duration; and
- Good pedestrian access with seating where relevant.

Proposals for residential development should demonstrate that they are accessible to a range of local services such as General Practitioners (GPs), Primary and Secondary Schools, local shops and open space.

Birmingham City Council, Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (updated January 2012)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Sustainable Management of Urban Rivers and Floodplains (SMURF), Supplementary Planning Document. Birmingham City Council, June 2017

Policy 3 SuDS

States that the full potential for the use of a Sustainable Drainage System will be reviewed in the initial stages of development and it must be demonstrated by the developer that the potential for the use of SuDS has been considered and where appropriate used in the surface water drainage strategy for the site.

Policy 4 SuDS

States that there should be no net gain or there should be a reduction of surface water run off where possible as a result of new development and redevelopment sites.

Policy 12 Design of Developments

All development proposed adjacent to the river corridors and their tributaries shall be designed to take account of its proximity to the river.

Policy 17

The local community will be consulted on any developments that may have an impact on the river corridors



Site Analysis

03

2. Site Analysis

Site Characteristics

A site analysis was conducted to better understand the current land use and movement issues affecting 3Bs Neighbourhood Area.

Through the briefing received from 3Bs neighbourhood planning forum, three local centres that require regeneration were identified: Tower Hill, Turnberry Road and Thornbridge Avenue. As mentioned previously the latter two places are closely linked to flood prevention and mitigation issues. Presently, the three sites offer reduced value in terms of destination and/or place making for the neighbourhood area and are mainly residential.

Tower Hill local centre is dominated by vehicles from the bisecting 6 laned Walsall Road/A34 highway. Although the local centre contains some significant buildings like Badshah Palace and Tower Hill Library, which are overlooked by large areas of car parking. Despite the fact that parking provision is important in this area as it is mainly used by Co-op customers and although parking provision should be reduced it can continue to play a major role in bringing visitors into this local centre. The area has the potential to become an open public space which will complement the Bescot Court redevelopment opportunity as the potential library redevelopment. This part of the Neighbourhood plan has sufficient infrastructure to become a key local centre and the heart of 3Bs.

The **Turnberry** local centre is a gateway to Turnberry Park, and also an educational hub with Calshot Primary School. The independent parade of shops present an opportunity for public realm enhancement, as the site has a poor outlook and is uninviting.

Thornbridge Avenue has some nice views within the neighbourhood area, and an attractive character such as the line of mature trees that run along its length. It also offers independent shops, cafés and pub that seem to be well used and economically active. However these shops are again dominated by car parking and vehicles in front of them, a scenario that is detracting from the prospective identity of this local centre.

In all three local centres, there is an opportunity to improve pedestrian circulation by delimiting the area of the public foot-way and restricting cars parking in front of shops or houses where they can obstruct movement. These measures have the potential to provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience. This can be attained by using a unified material for the pavement. In a similar way, designated cycle routes should be addressed and proposed as this will encourage residents and members of the community to rely more on cycling as a main mode of transport and as a sustainable alternative to vehicles. There is generous space which can be used to enhance the public realm by the introduction of street furniture like seating and bollards to create some pocket open spaces in the different local centres. The street furniture should be more homogeneous giving a coherent character to the neighbourhood area.

The neighbourhood area has a significant number of parks like Perry Park, Perry Hall Park and Turnberry Park, however it is lacking public pocket open spaces where people can gather and interact. Moreover, the general public realm requires some upgrade and safe pedestrian linkages to the different open spaces. The local centres have the potential to accommodate these public squares and pocket gardens, while a connection or a green route can also be proposed to tie the open spaces together.

Most of the buildings and houses in the Neighbourhood area, specifically within the three allocated local centres, belong to the 1930's and inter-war eras and are largely semi-detached with some detached houses with front and rear gardens. They are typically two stories, built with red bricks. There are some well presented façades but some buildings seem in need of maintenance. The majority of shop fronts need to be reviewed and refined in all local centres as this will make the streets attractive and a desirable destination.



Figure 3.1 Tower Hill local Centre showing A34/Walsall road and some shops



Figure 3.4 Tower Hill local centre. Walsall road has no clear definition of the public realm, dominance of cars parked on pavement



Figure 3.2 Turnberry local centre. Shop fronts detract from the character of the building, poor public realm, dominated by car parking on pavement and tarmac on roundabouts



Figure 3.5 Calshot Primary School taking safety measures to protect children



Figure 3.3 Thornbridge Avenue local centre, characterised by a mature line of trees and inter-war style buildings



Figure 3.6 Thornbridge Avenue, car parking in front of shops detracting from the character of buildings and public realm



As flooding is a major issue within the neighbourhood area, some sustainable urban drainage strategies will need to be put in place. These can be a separate layer of the public realm and can be incorporated with the proposed pocket open spaces in the different local centres. This will mitigate flooding risks and give the neighbourhood area an overall more sustainable character. Sustainable drainage treatments are further analysed in the second report prepared by AECOM, which focuses on sustainable drainage guidance for 3Bs Neighbourhood area.

Movement

The neighbourhood area is shaped by two major highway roads, the M6 and A34, both of which are main national roads linking the north to the south of England. They are also a heavy traffic connector between Birmingham City Centre and other major cities like Oxford, Manchester and Liverpool.

Although this infrastructure cuts through the different local centres and draws their borders and boundaries, they can be used as an opportunity rather than a constraint. They can contribute to the regeneration of the local centres by facilitating access and movement. Most of the roads and streets are wide enough which allow a relatively tranquil vehicular movement with no major traffic congestion.

The neighbourhood area is served by two stations, Hamstead and Perry Barr, both of which are not easily accessible by foot as they are located on primary busy roads, Walsall Road and Old Walsall Road. A pedestrian strategy should be suggested to ease the movement between the different local centres and provide accessibility to main train stations.

There are several bus routes within the neighbourhood area, a mix of high frequency service bus routes connecting Birmingham city centre to surrounding places and low bus serviced routes that serve local residential neighbourhoods. High frequency bus routes use primary roads like the A34 whereas the low bus serviced routes use secondary roads and local streets. The bus network should be reviewed in order to incorporate bus stops at key nodes across the neighbourhood area and at strategic locations that benefit the designated local centres. Therefore bus stops need to be carefully designed and implemented into the public realm to provide a good service and not delay the local community. Again, public transport should be a preferred option for a mode of transport since this approach will reduce the use of cars around the neighbourhood area.

The topography varies throughout the neighbourhood area, framing some interesting views into nice streets and the Tame Valley canal. However, the change in topography has an adverse impact on the environmental character of the neighbourhood area and is resulting in flooding issues which will be addressed to make 3Bs a sustainable part of the city of Birmingham and set an example to other neighbouring town centres.

The connectivity between the different local centres should be improved creating a social infrastructure network that ties them all together. This can become the main spine for movement, turning the neighbourhood area into a more pedestrian friendly environment. The network should also offer a greater choice of routes and a variety of experiences. Local centres will act as key nodes, pedestrian links should be intensified and pedestrian crossings through heavy road infrastructure should be redesigned and softened to ensure safety and security.

Signage and way-finding should be revisited in order to highlight some routes such as canal walks or gateways to parks. These elements will need to be well designed and properly located avoiding cluttering



Figure 3.8 Turnberry local centre offers a hidden gateway to Turnberry Park, this can be improved with signage and better quality of material.



Figure 3.9 Badshah palace, an art-deco listed building in Tower Hill local centre overlooked by car parking and a busy road



Figure 3.10 Larger tarmac areas in front of Bescot Court and Tower Hill Library, redevelopment of these buildings would add economic value to Tower Hill local centre



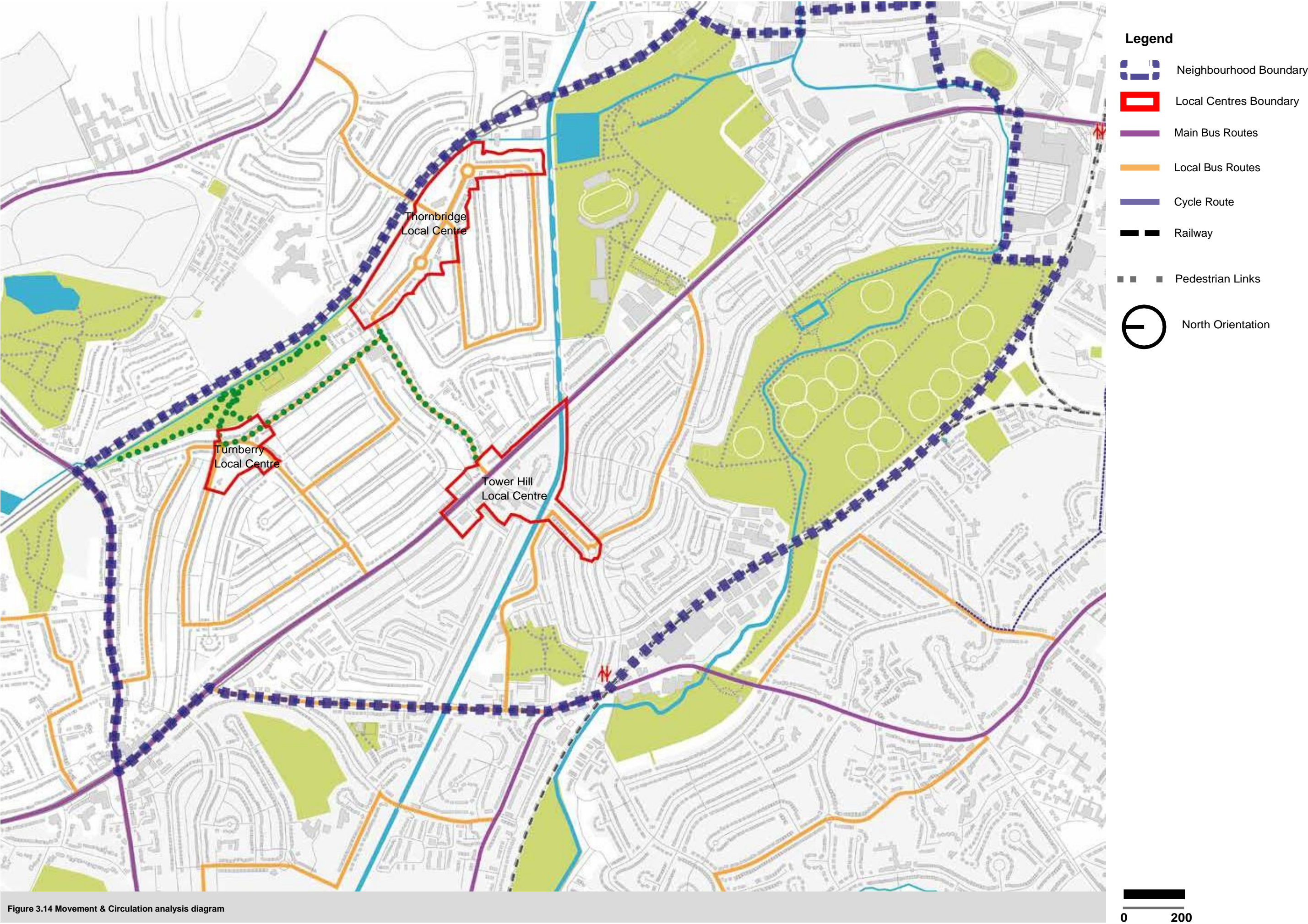
Figure 3.11 Turnberry local centre, very poor public realm, little delimitation between public and private



Figure 3.12 Tower Hill library entrance, potential open space for intervention



Figure 3.13 Heston Road, example of a road that can incorporate SuDS rain gardens which are planted areas designed to enable water infiltration into the grounds, this approach can be applied on other roads within the three local centres





Vision & Concept

04

3. Vision & Concept

The vision for Beeches, Booths and Barr (3Bs Neighbourhood area) is to be designated as a “garden suburb” north of the city of Birmingham.

The ultimate aim would be to make the neighbourhood an attractive and healthy place to live. It also seeks to reduce flood risk and decrease ground water levels. The neighbourhood area will put its residents and its local people as a priority by providing them with easy access to the existing natural environment, such as major parks, waterways and proposed pocket open spaces. The public realm will be improved and enhanced, the streets will be well managed and safe. This will create a pleasant environment for people to live and work and provide leisure opportunities.

The 3Bs will be an aspirational, multi-cultural place with a distinctive character where the community is valued and can live and grow. The regeneration of this area will set an example for town centres nearby.

The three designated local centres are to become the main vibrant destinations of the community and will hold the whole neighbourhood area together. In order to achieve that, there should be focus on the connectivity between the different local centres by regenerating the main streets with new pavements and surfaces. This regeneration can be reinforced by a better signage system, street furniture and lighting.

Each of the local centres will play crucial parts in reaching this vision.

Tower Hill Local Centre

This local centre is currently dominated by motor vehicles (parked and moving) and the 6 lanes road. The aim is for it to become a new public space and a community and retail hub. It has the potential to include a multi-functional open space and even a cafe that would complement the redevelopment of Tower Hill Library and Bescot Court housing.

Because of its central location within the neighbourhood area and its good connectivity to other streets, Tower Hill’s role as the heart of 3Bs will be enhanced, providing a new economic boost based around an improved destination and new public spaces.

Turnberry Local Centre

This local centre has some important characteristics like its proximity to Turnberry Park and the presence of Calshot Primary School, so there is an opportunity that it can become an educational hub also using the park for educational purposes. This area has previously experienced flooding, therefore the integration of pocket parks along road will help to attenuate flood risks, enhance biodiversity and improve the public realm.

Shop frontages and the quality of materials and street furniture should all be upgraded.

Thornbridge Avenue Local Centre

Although this local centre has some nice views and a unique character, it is presently experiencing some flood risk problems. There is an opportunity to incorporate a conveyswale which will mitigate the flooding issues and will enhance the biodiversity along Thornbridge Avenue, and it can become an attractive landscape feature where people can walk and sit around.

Encouraging the use of permeable surfaces and semi-grassed surfaces would reduce the dominance of car parking in front of shops and would improve the lively appearance of this part of the neighbourhood area and this local centre.

The following pages go into more detail for each of the local centres outlined above.



Figure 4.1 Example - Sidcup High Street before design principles (public realm quality, consistent and coherent lighting, hardscape materials and signage) were applied



Figure 4.2 Example - North Street, Brighton before public realm improvements



Figure 4.3 Example - Shop front implementing design principles, Sidcup High Street



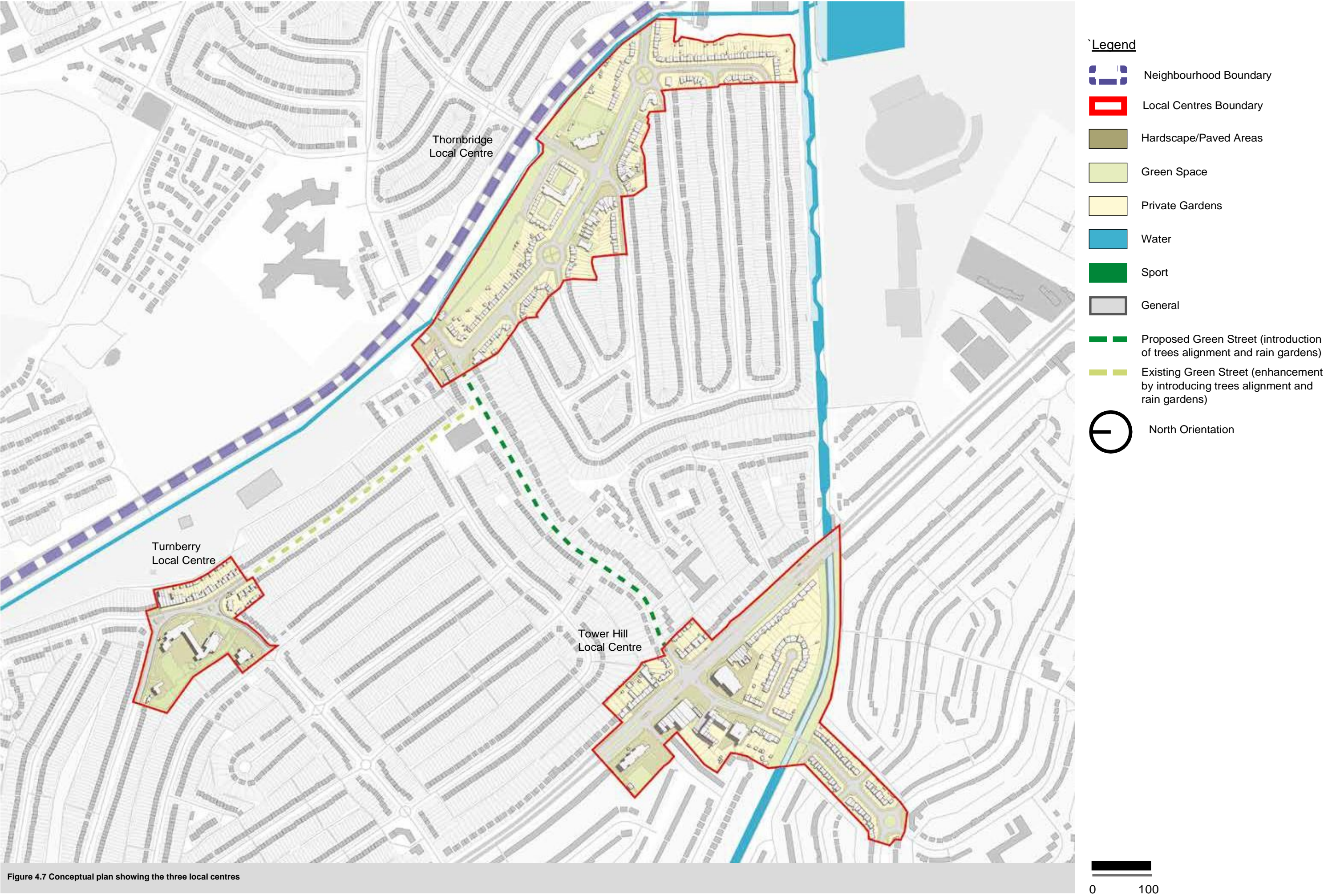
Figure 4.4 Example - Public realm and shop fronts in Sidcup after design principles (public realm quality, consistent and coherent lighting, hardscape materials and signage) were applied



Figure 4.5 Example - North Street, Brighton with an improved public realm



Figure 4.6 Example - Signage and street furniture at Douglas, Isle of Man





Local Town Centres Regeneration

05

5.1. Tower Hill Local Centre

Tower Hill can become more of a destination. At present, it consists of car parking areas, one used by events held at Badshah Palace and the second one is owned by Co-op so it is used by its customers. The potential redevelopment for Bescot Court and Tower Hill Library will eventually affect these spaces. Badshah Palace is a Grade II listed building but is overlooked by the large area of parking surrounding it.

Issues

Whilst Tower Hill Local Centre can become an important destination for the neighbourhood area, it currently has some issues that should be addressed:

- Poor public realm quality;
- Vehicle dominance;
- Large areas of hard-surfaces and parking;
- Unsafe pedestrian crossing;
- Pedestrian routes interrupted by car parking on pavement;
- Lack of interesting landscape framed views that highlight the positive aspect of the local centre; and
- Absence of public open spaces that the local community can benefit from.

Strategic Objectives for Regeneration of Tower Hill Local Centre

- Make Tower Hill local centre the heart of 3Bs by making it more inviting.
- Make it a main destination as a community and retail hub.
- Public realm enhancements, to improve the attractiveness of local shops, this will generate in an increase level of visitors trips and money spent.
- Improve character with new pavements, lighting, seating (where appropriate) and tree planting.
- Encourage the improvement of shop fronts and façades with some design continuity and guidance.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling movement by supporting infrastructure to allow for it.
- Review parking areas and provide disabled parking.
- Removal of pedestrian and vehicle conflict through the introduction of street works to reduce vehicle speeds and off street parking.
- Encourage the use of more permeable surfaces and green alternatives for car parking as a flood risk mitigation solution.



Figure 5.1 The Towers Inn pub on Walsall Road, inviting entrance



Figure 5.4 Public realm in front Co-op to be improved, potential retail hub



Figure 5.2 Pedestrian crossing at Walsall Road Tower Hill junction to be improved



Figure 5.5 Large areas of hard surfaces to be reduced and to be incorporated with public realm improvement and possible public open space that serves Bescot Court



Figure 5.3 Large areas of tarmac for Badshah Palace car parking, no character to the area



Figure 5.6 Public realm enhancement along Walsall Road to promote pedestrian and cycling movement

Design Principles

Given these conditions, the site presents a good opportunity to become a public open space with community use. To achieve this, the proposal would follow these design principles:

- Prioritise the introduction of a more vibrant experience by providing a public open space which invites residents and people to use the local centre more;
- Improve the pedestrian crossing at the junction between Walsall Road and Tower Hill to ensure a safe pedestrian environment;
- Use more permeable material for paving to reduce flood risk issues;
- Promote green, permeable parking spaces and alleviate the town centre from vehicular traffic while promoting more pedestrian and cycling movement;
- Provide an open space with community uses;
- Introduce tree planting to highlight public areas within the local centre and give it a special character;
- Improve the public realm with new pavements, lighting, seating (where appropriate) and planting;
- Establish green screening to large areas of parking which can play a dual role of noise mitigation and framing the views, creating a gateway to the local centre and a sense of enclosure; and
- Improve shop frontages around Co-op to make the local centre more inviting and appealing.

The following pages show proposals for this local centre as well as some precedent images illustrating the quality and ambience sought.

Legend

CONSTRAINTS

- Heavy Highway
- Constraining Public Realm
- Flood Risk Areas
- Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflict
- Good Views
- Bad Views
- Parking

OPPORTUNITIES

- Key Drivers/ Destination Areas
- Area of Opportunity
- Greening
- Centres Connection
- Screening Treatment
- Frontages (Shops/buildings)

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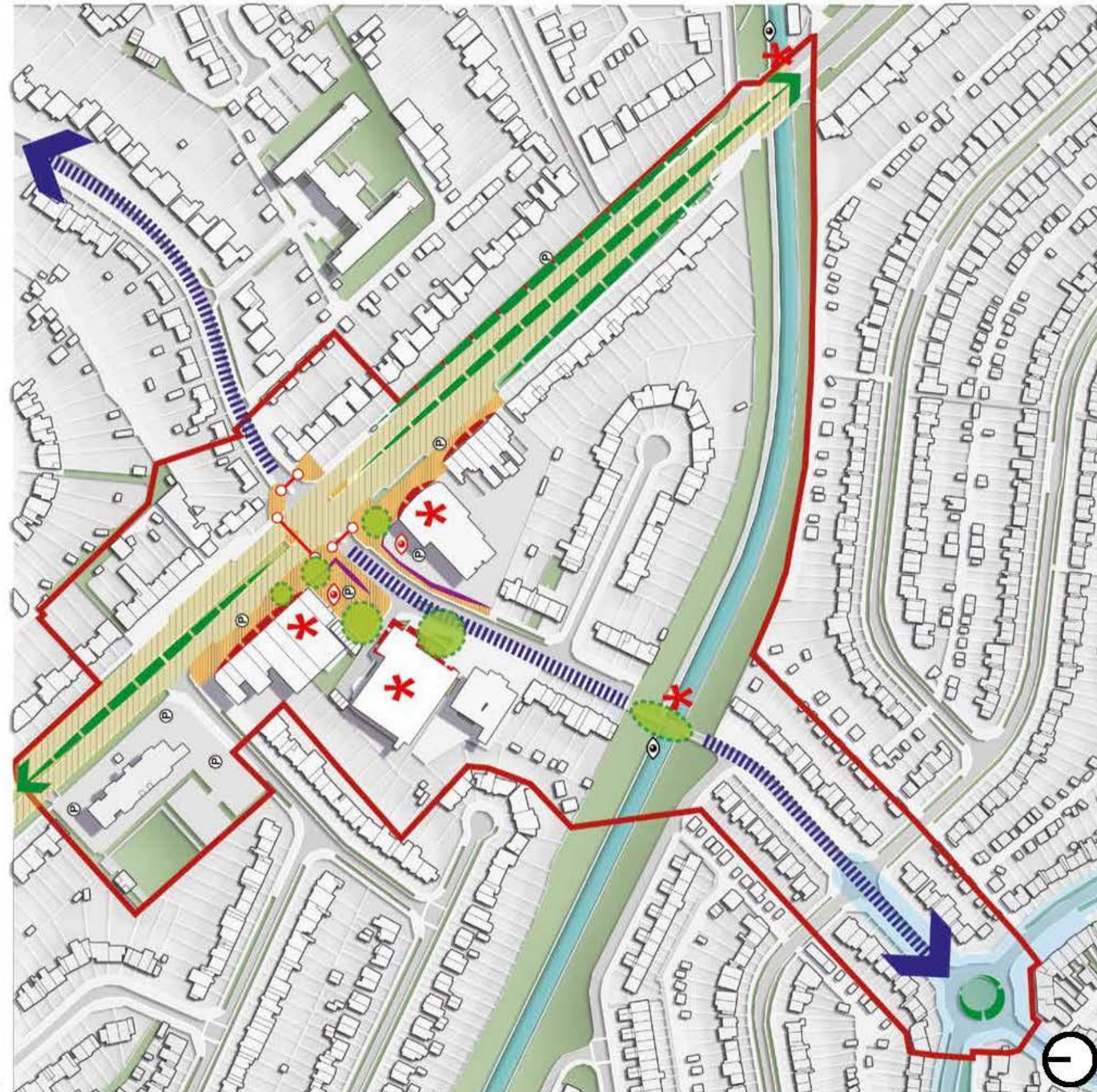


Figure 5.7 Issues and Opportunities Plan for Tower Hill Local Centre



Figure 5.8 Regeneration plan for Tower Hill Local Centre

Figure 5.8: Plan Tower Hill Local

- ① Public realm improvement. House frontage treatment
- ② Enhanced public realm, creating an enhanced urban centre
- ③ Multi-use public open space
- ④ Green screen treatment
- ⑤ Improved pedestrian crossing
- ⑥ Permeable paving in car parking to reduce flood risk
- ⑦ Bescot Court and Tower Hill Library proposed redevelopment
- ⑧ Improved pedestrian route linking the route down to canal bridge and Centre
- ⑨ Softening roundabouts to be used as pocket open spaces

Figure 5.9: Visual Tower Hill Local

- ① Green screen treatment to create a gateway effect
- ② Improved public realm with upgraded pavement, lighting, seating and tree planting
- ③ Improved pedestrian crossing
- ④ Multi-use public open space with potential outdoor cafe for Tower Hill Library
- ⑤ Car parking area reviewed and incorporating permeable paving to reduce flood risk
- ⑥ Planting beds and rain gardens for flood mitigation
- ⑦ Permeable pavement or green surface on on-street parking as a sustainable solution for flood risk
- ⑧ Bescot Court and Tower Hill Library proposed redevelopment including apartments and the ambulance station, four-storey development.





Figure 5.9 Visual Tower Hill Local Centre



Figure 5.10 Example - High quality urban square for community use, Deptford Station, Deptford, London



Figure 5.11 Example - Public realm improvement with upgraded street furniture, Pitshanger High Street, Ealing



Figure 5.12 Example - High quality hardscape treatment, Lyric Square, Hammersmith, London

Flood risk treatment

Since Beeches, Booths and Barr Neighbourhood area falls within a flood risk area, it is important to incorporate sustainable urban drainage system treatments within the different local centres to mitigate flooding issues.

For Tower Hill Local centre, the presence of large areas of car parking, it will be ideal to substitute tarmac with more permeable materials like permeable pavement and to incorporate planters which will absorb large volumes of water.

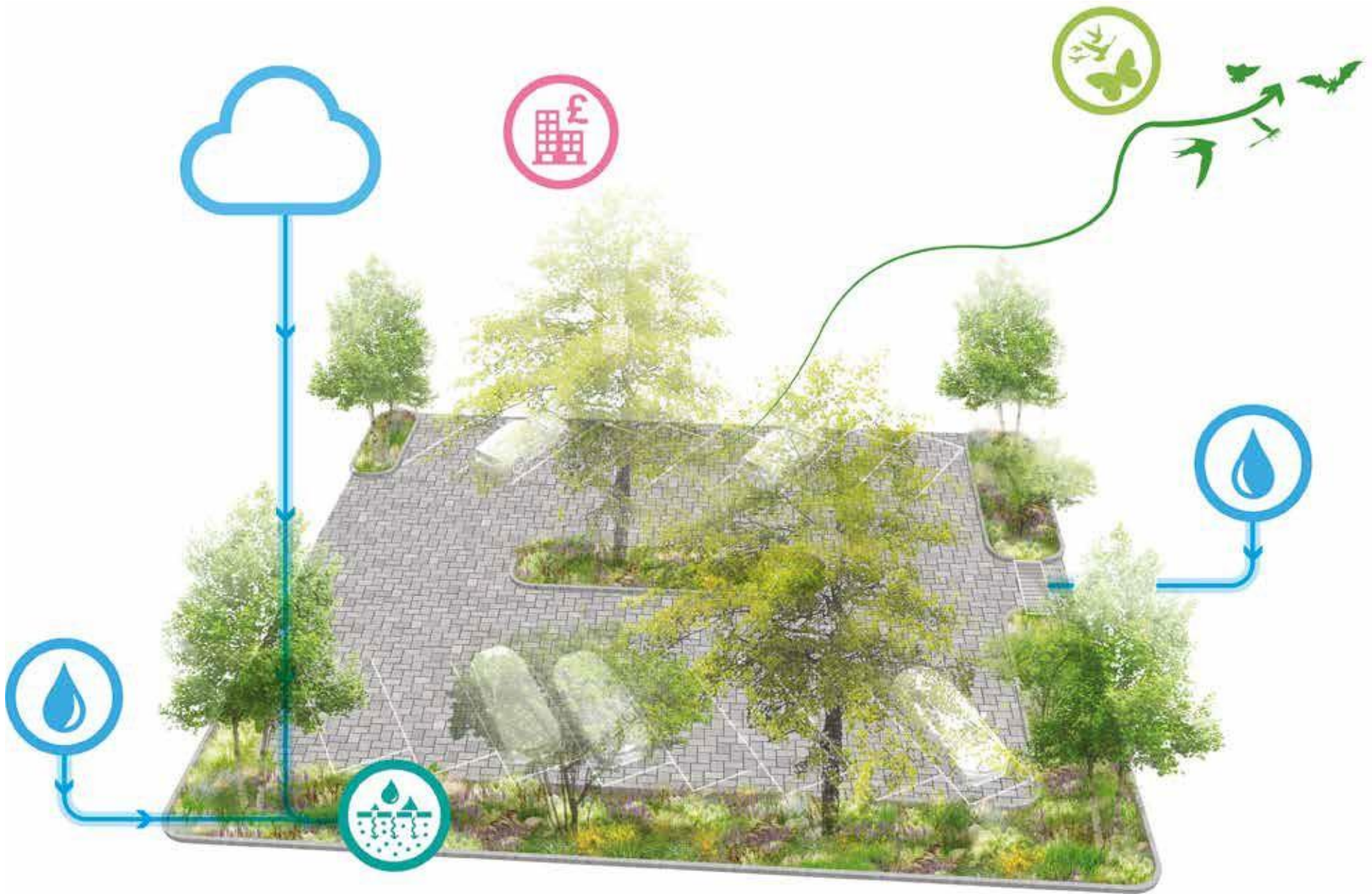


Figure 5.13 Vignette showing SuDS treatment at car parking with permeable paving and planting



Figure 5.14 Example - Car Parking with SuDS scheme, Greener Grangetown, Cardiff, Wales



Figure 5.15 Example- Street Parking with rain garden, Greener Grangetown, Cardiff, Wales



Figure 5.16 Example - Well designed pedestrian crossing, High Street Kensington, London

Evaluation of Proposal against Policies

We have evaluated each local centre proposal against the policies identified earlier in the report from Birmingham Plan 2031, Part of Birmingham Development Plan, Part of Birmingham Local Plan. This can be used as a tool for building future intervention and it also confirms the alignment of the local centre proposal to the City plan.

Planning Policy	Addressed	Short Description
Policy PG3 Place Making	✓	Proposed multi-use open space with potential outdoor cafe, attractive sustainable design
Policy TP6 Management of flood risk and water resources	✓	Introduction of permeable surfaces and green-spaces as an alternative solution for flood risk management.
Policy TP7 Green Infrastructure Network	✓	Proposal promotes and enhances pedestrian routes linking it to the centre and canal bridge.
Policy TP9 Open space, playing fields and allotments	✓	Provision of open space as part of potential redevelopment of Bescot Court
Policy TP21 The network and hierarchy of Centres	✓	Tower Hill Local Centre proposal encourages its diversity and vitality and environmental enhancement with a potential future housing redevelopment.
Policy TP22 Convenience retail provision	✓	Proposal aims to enhance existing retail and to deliver quality public realm and create linkages and connections with the rest of the centre and improve accessibility.
Policy TP23 Small shops and independent retailing		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.
Policy TP24 Promotion of diversity of uses within centres	✓	Proposal will meet people's day to day needs by offering restaurants, community uses, cultural facilities (library) and residential (Bescot Court)
Policy TP27 Sustainable neighbourhoods	✓	Bescot Court potential redevelopment will offer a wide choice of housing options with easy accessibility to shops, schools and work opportunities in an attractive and safe environment.
Policy TP28 The location of new housing	✓	Residential Redevelopment of Bescot Court is located outside flood zone.
Policy TP38 A sustainable transport network	✓	Proposal aims to improve the infrastructure of the different modes of transport to integrate a sustainable transport network.
Policy TP39 Walking	✓	Proposal ensures the provision of a safe and pleasant walking environment.
Policy TP40 Cycling	✓	Proposal encourages cycling and will improve cycle routes and security.
Policy TP41 Public Transport	✓	Improved bus stops in this local centre.
Policy TP44 Traffic and congestion management	✓	Review parking areas, improve pedestrian crossing
Policy TP45 Accessibility standards for new development		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.

52 Turnberry Local Centre

Turnberry local centre is located to the north west of 3Bs neighbourhood area. This area is characterised by its proximity to Turnberry Park and Calshot Primary School. The area that covers this local centre has a distinctive shape and topography, this has resulted in flooding issues which need to be addressed. This local centre has the potential to become a small educational hub, with a gateway to a community park. There are some independent shops with low quality public realm frontages that should also be tackled.

Issues

Some of the main issues that Turnberry local centre is currently witnessing:

- Poor public realm quality;
- Car parking in front of shops disrupting pedestrian movement;
- Flooding issues;
- Hard-surfaces on roundabouts;
- Poor inconsistent and unattractive shop frontages;
- No proper signage for pedestrian crossing; and
- Absence of an evident link and signage to Turnberry Park.

Strategic Objectives for Regeneration of Turnberry Local Centre:

- Make Turnberry Local centre a community and educational hub.
- Develop high quality public realm and pocket open spaces.
- Improve character with new pavements, lighting, seating (where appropriate) and tree planting on Turnberry Road in front of existing shops
- Encourage the improvement of shop fronts with some design guidance to increase uniformity and attractiveness.
- Create a safe pedestrian environment around school premises.
- Introduce rain gardens along residential streets as a sustainable drainage solution and to reduce flood risks.
- Create a gateway to Turnberry Park.
- Improve signage and way finding to create distinctiveness as a visitor destination



Figure 5.17 Calshot Road has a distinctive character and topography, public realm can be enhanced



Figure 5.20 Green patches along Booths Farm Road which can become rain gardens and reduce flood risk



Figure 5.18 Mix of materials at entrance of Clashot Primary School should be refined and more consistent



Figure 5.21 Roundabout with tarmac, not visually appealing, potential for pocket open space and flood attenuation solution



Figure 5.19 Poor shop frontages, car parking in front of shops taking over public realm



Figure 5.22 Poor landscape and public realm provision, tree pit with no tree

Design Principles

This local centre should preserve its current character but the quality of the public realm should be upgraded at the street level and it should reflect a sustainable and safe environment. The design principles applied here are:

- Improve public realm in front of shops which might reduce car parking;
- Provide a high quality public realm at street level, to make the local centre more inviting and appealing;
- Provide a high quality landscape amenity serving the needs of the local residents;
- Create a safe pedestrian environment around the school premises;
- Highlight the gateway to Turnberry Park; and
- Create sustainable urban drainage solutions to mitigate flood risk issues.

The following pages show conceptual design plans with potential solutions.

Legend

CONSTRAINTS

- Heavy Highway
- Constraining Public Realm
- Flood Risk Areas
- Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflict
- Bad Views

OPPORTUNITIES

- Key Drivers/ Destination Areas
- Area of Opportunity
- Greening
- Centres Connection
- Frontages (Shops/buildings)

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25



Figure 5.23 Issues and Opportunities Plan for Turnberry Local Centre

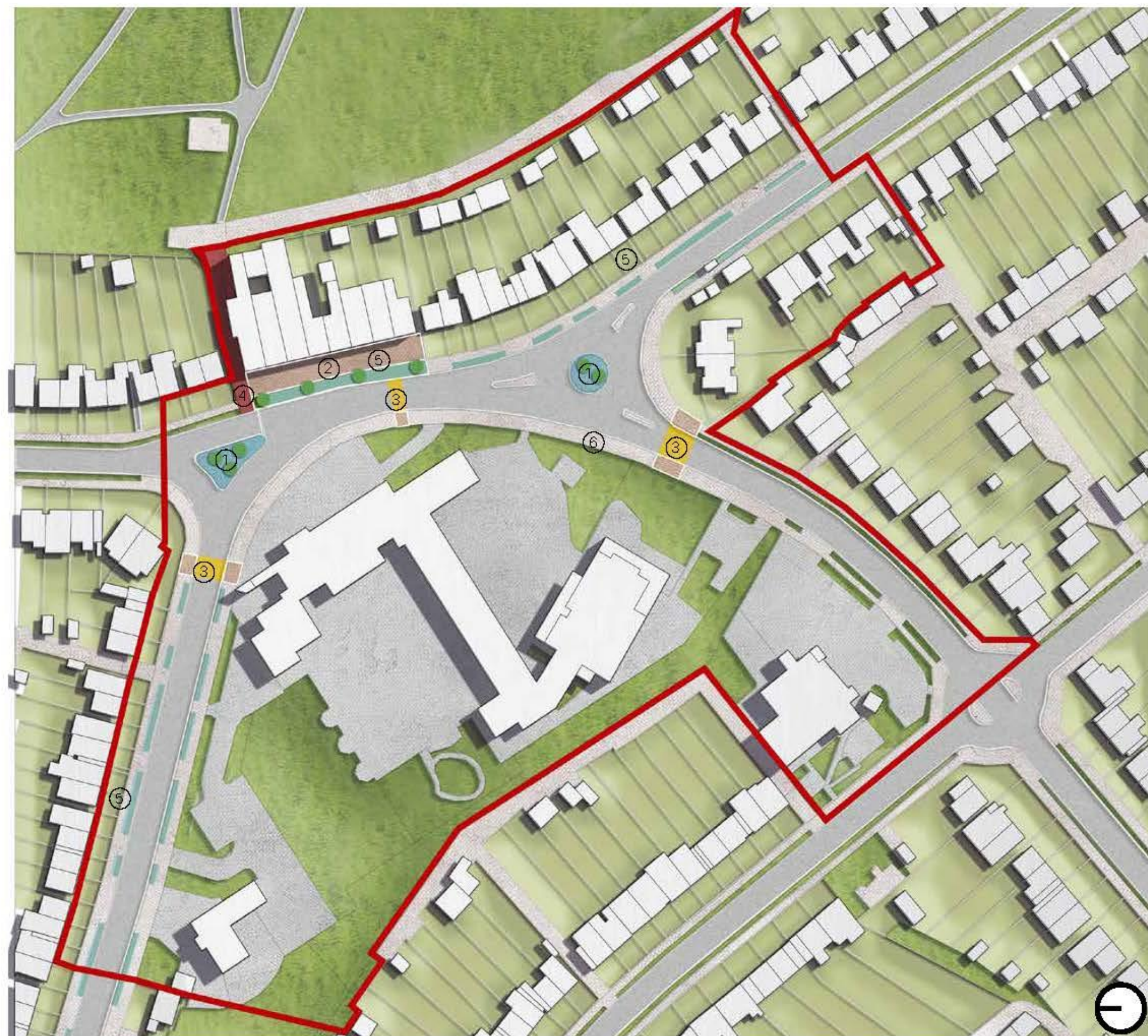


Figure 5.24 Regeneration plan for Turnberry Local Centre

Figure 5.24: Plan Turnberry Local Centre

- ① Softening roundabouts to be used as pocket open spaces and flood mitigation solution. might require a soakway tank underneath
- ② Public realm and shop front improvement.
- ③ Improved pedestrian crossing
- ④ Improved signage for gateway to Park
- ⑤ Introduction of street rain gardens to reduce flood risks
- ⑥ Improved hardscape material in front of primary school

Figure 5.25: Visual Turnberry Local Centre

- ① Improved hardscape material more coherent and consistent
- ② Planted roundabout. flood mitigation solution
- ③ Gateway to park. introduction of signage
- ④ Improved public realm with upgraded pavement, lighting, seating and tree planting
- ⑤ Improved shop front design. more uniform
- ⑥ Improved pedestrian crossing to ensure safety for kids at school, with soakaways underneath for flood mitigation.
- ⑦ Proposed street rain gardens for flood mitigation





Figure 5.25 Visual Turnberry Local Centre



Figure 5.26 Example - Public realm improvement with upgraded street furniture, Pitshanger High Street, Ealing



Figure 5.27 Example - Unified shop fronts and high quality materials, Eastgate Street, Sidcup



Figure 5.28 Example - Improved public realm, Croydon High Street, London

Flood risk treatment

For this local centre, its character and the variations in levels, it will be favourable to turn the hard roundabouts to pocket planted open spaces especially when they are located at lowest level along the street. That way they can collect water runoff and mitigate flooding risks, soakaways can also be introduced underneath these areas. Similarly, it will be good to introduce some rain garden treatments along the different streets (Calshot Road, Booths Farm Road and Turnberry Road) in front of the houses.

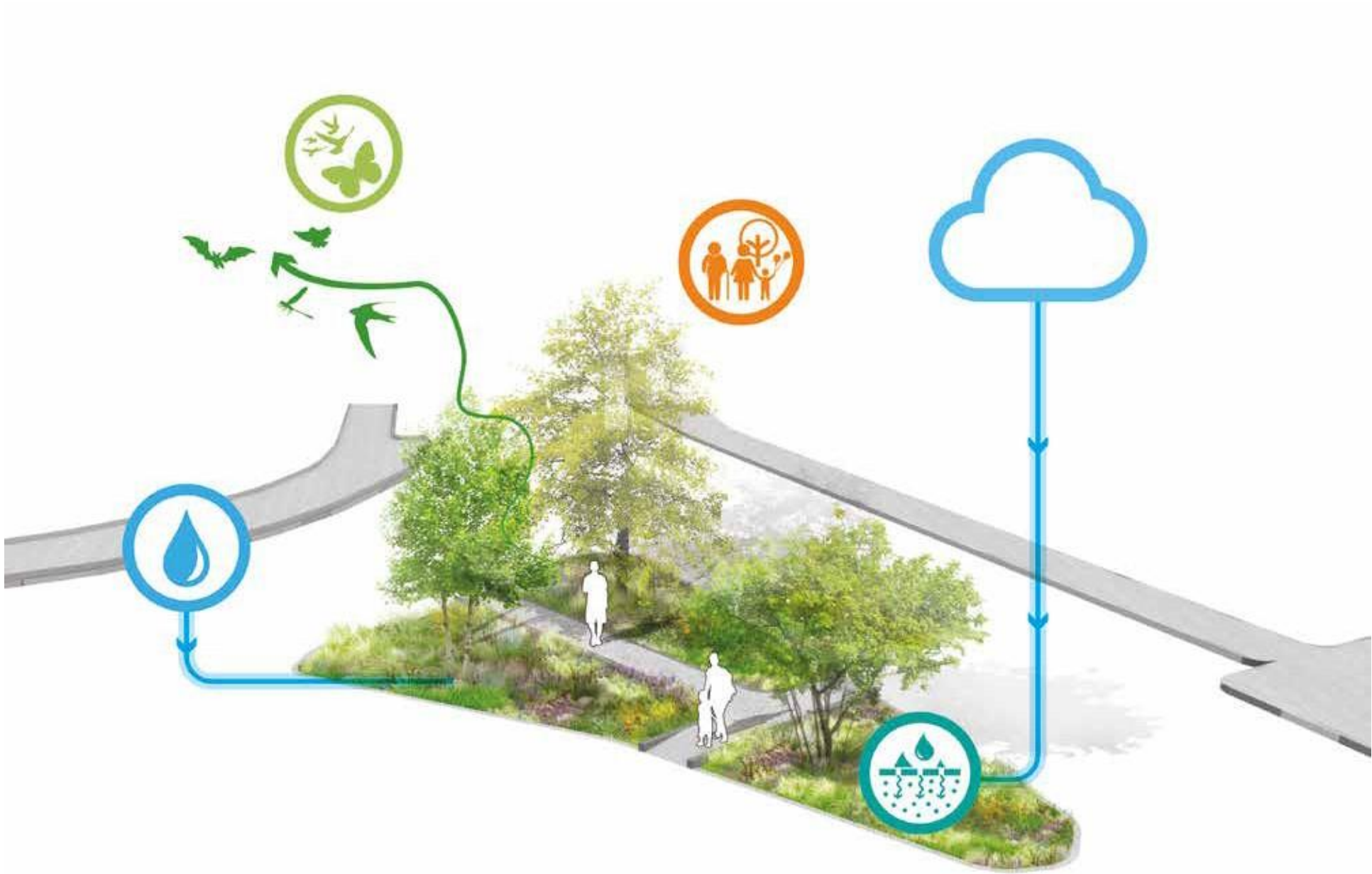


Figure 5.29 Vignette showing SuDS treatment, incorporating a pocket planted roundabout with main crossing passage



Figure 5.30 Example - Dense planting on side street for drainage attenuation, Sandy Boulevard, Portland, USA



Figure 5.31 Example - Rain garden treatment along residential streets, 12 Avenue Green Street, Portland, USA



Figure 5.32 Example - Potential gateway to park, Hetton cycle way, Hetton Lyons Country Park, Hetton-le-Hole, England

Evaluation of Proposal against Policies

We have evaluated Turnberry local centre proposal against the policies identified earlier in the report from Birmingham Plan 2031.

Planning Policy	Addressed	Short Description
Policy PG3 Place Making	✓	Proposal creates a positive sense of place with an attractive and sustainable environment, an educational hub.
Policy TP6 Management of flood risk and water resources	✓	Introduction of SuDS through proposing street rain gardens and creating open pocket spaces.
Policy TP7 Green Infrastructure Network	✓	Proposal expands green infrastructure network by emphasizing link between local centre and Turnberry Park.
Policy TP9 Open space, playing fields and allotments		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.
Policy TP21 The network and hierarchy of Centres	✓	Turnberry Local Centre proposal enhances the quality of the environment and improves access.
Policy TP22 Convenience retail provision	✓	Proposal aims to deliver quality public realm and create linkages and connections with the rest of the centre and improve accessibility.
Policy TP23 Small shops and independent retailing	✓	Provide shopfront guidance to promote and encourage independent and niche retailers in the local centre.
Policy TP24 Promotion of diversity of uses within centres	✓	Proposal will meet people's day to day needs and will offer diversity of uses and facilities like school, residential, park and open spaces, some small shops and restaurants.
Policy TP27 Sustainable neighbourhoods	✓	Any new development within this local centre will have easy access to shops, school and leisure and will promote attractive, safe public spaces and will contribute to environmental sustainability.
Policy TP28 The location of new housing		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.
Policy TP38 A sustainable transport network		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.
Policy TP39 Walking	✓	Proposal ensures the provision of a safe and pleasant walking environment with no obstruction and incorporating adequate way-finding facilities and improving pedestrian crossings.
Policy TP40 Cycling	✓	Proposal encourages cycling and will promote routes through the park and improve existing cycle routes and security.
Policy TP41 Public Transport	✓	Improved bus stops in this local centre especially in proximity to school.
Policy TP44 Traffic and congestion management	✓	Review parking areas, improve pedestrian crossing and improve routes for all users around the school premises.
Policy TP45 Accessibility standards for new development		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.

5.3. Thornbridge Local Centre

Thornbridge local centre is located towards the south east of 3Bs neighbourhood area. The area has an attractive character, with a slight change of topography, nice views and some mature line of trees that create a boulevard effect. There are also a series of independent shops and pubs which can make the area a vibrant and attractive destination. At its current status, the area is dominated by car parking that detracts from the significant potential that this local centre can offer to the residents in terms of leisure and retail. The car parking in front of the different shops have a poor layout and are resulting in a worn out and unattractive public realm.

Issues

In order for Thornbridge Local Centre to become a main destination, the following issues need to be addressed:

- Poor public realm quality;
- Vehicle dominance with poor car parking layouts in front of shops;
- Large areas of hard-surfaces and parking;
- Absence of public open spaces that the local neighbourhood can benefit from;
- Flooding issues;
- Poor inconsistent and unattractive shop frontages; and
- No proper signage for pedestrian crossing.

Strategic Objectives for Regeneration of Thornbridge Local Centre:

- Make Thornbridge Local centre a community and social hub.
- Review car parking areas and tidy them up, discourage illegal parking and across disability accesses.
- Enhance public realm with new pavements, lighting and planting to improve street character and scene.
- Develop high quality public realm and pocket open spaces.
- Removal of pedestrian and vehicle conflict through the introduction of street works to reduce vehicle speeds and off street parking.
- Encourage the improvement of shop fronts with some design guidance to promote uniformity, design continuity and to improve attractiveness that can generate improved levels of visitors trips and money spent.
- Introduce rain gardens along residential streets like Haddon street to prevent residents from parking and to attenuate flood risks.
- Create a convey swale which will enhance biodiversity and mitigate water runoff along Thornbridge Avenue.
- Encourage modal shift through the introduction of a designated cycling route to promote green transport facilities and support infrastructure.

Design Principles

The role for this local centre is to support the existing attractions whilst also maximising regeneration opportunities which will make it a main destination and a social community in the 3Bs neighbourhood area.

To achieve this the following design principles have been applied:



Figure 5.33 The Beeches pub house, a landmark on Thornbridge Avenue and a main destination



Figure 5.34 Thornbridge Avenue, independent shops and housing



Figure 5.35 Street Parking and car parking in front of shops detracting from the potential character of Thornbridge Avenue



Figure 5.36 Mature canopy of trees on Thornbridge Avenue giving the local centre a distinctive character



Figure 5.37 Large Areas of tarmac which can be reduced and substituted by more permeable material










Figure 5.38 Views towards allotments and water channel from Hassop Road, potential for biodiversity enhancement and regeneration

- Improve the layout of car parking by introducing buffer areas of planting:
- Improve the quality of public realm to make it more attractive with new paving, lighting, planting and seating:
- Introduce a designated attractive cycle route along Thornbridge Avenue:
- Soften and diversify the different roundabouts to turn them into pocket open spaces with seating and mature trees:
- Delineate between private and public through the use of different materials:
- Improve shop front to have a more unified inviting character:
- Create a convey swale along Thornbridge Avenue to attenuate flooding problems around this area:
- Use more permeable material and
- Provide potential greening and rain gardens as a sustainable urban drainage solution and to prevent street parking at residential streets like Haddon Road.

The following pages will show a proposal for this local centre as well as some precedent images illustrating the atmosphere sought.

Legend

CONSTRAINTS

-  Heavy Highway
-  Constraining Public Realm
-  Flood Risk Areas
-  Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflict
-  Good Views
-  Bad Views
-  Parking

OPPORTUNITIES

-  Key Drivers/ Destination Areas
-  Area of Opportunity
-  Greening
-  Centres Connection
-  Screening Treatment
-  Frontages (Shops/buildings)

0 50



Figure 5.39 • Issues and Opportunities plan for Thornbridge Local Centre



Figure 5.40: Plan Thornbridge Local Centre

- ① Densified and diversified planting, creating pocket open spaces with seating and permeable materials
- ② Convey swale with bridges and seating, emphasizing the essence of the avenue
- ③ Improved public realm treatment
- ④ Shop front improvement
- ⑤ Rain gardens and SuDS on residential street to reduce flood risks

Figure 5.41: Visual Thornbridge Local Centre

- ① Attractive planting beds to reduce car parking areas in front of shops
- ② High quality pavement material, delineating between public and private
- ③ Designated cycle route
- ④ Improved pedestrian crossing
- ⑤ Bridge above swale with seating area
- ⑥ Convey swale with enhanced biodiversity planting

Figure 5.40: Regeneration plan for Thornbridge Local Centre





Figure 5.41 Visual Thornbridge Local Centre



Figure 5.42 Example - Dry bed SuDS treatment, Kronsberg Hannover (part of expo 2000), Germany



Figure 5.43 Convey swale with dense planting, Rieselfeld residential district, Freiburg, Germany



Figure 5.44 Example - Conveying swale with crossing bridge, Malmö, Sweden

Flood risk treatment

Thornbridge local centre has experienced flooding issues in the past, therefore, due to the distinctive landscape character of the area, enhancement of the natural environment for use for flood attenuation purposes was provisioned. A convey swale will be introduced at the middle of Thornbridge Avenue following the topography of the site and with no interference to the existing trees. Bridges and seating areas will also be proposed along the swale to create a social and community hub. This will become a special feature for this local centre. All roundabouts will be densified with a variety of plant species and introduction of few resting/seating areas, they will act as water attenuation pocket open spaces. Moreover, street rain gardens will be suggested at residential streets like Haddon Road, these will play a dual role in flood risk attenuation and refining the appearance of these streets.

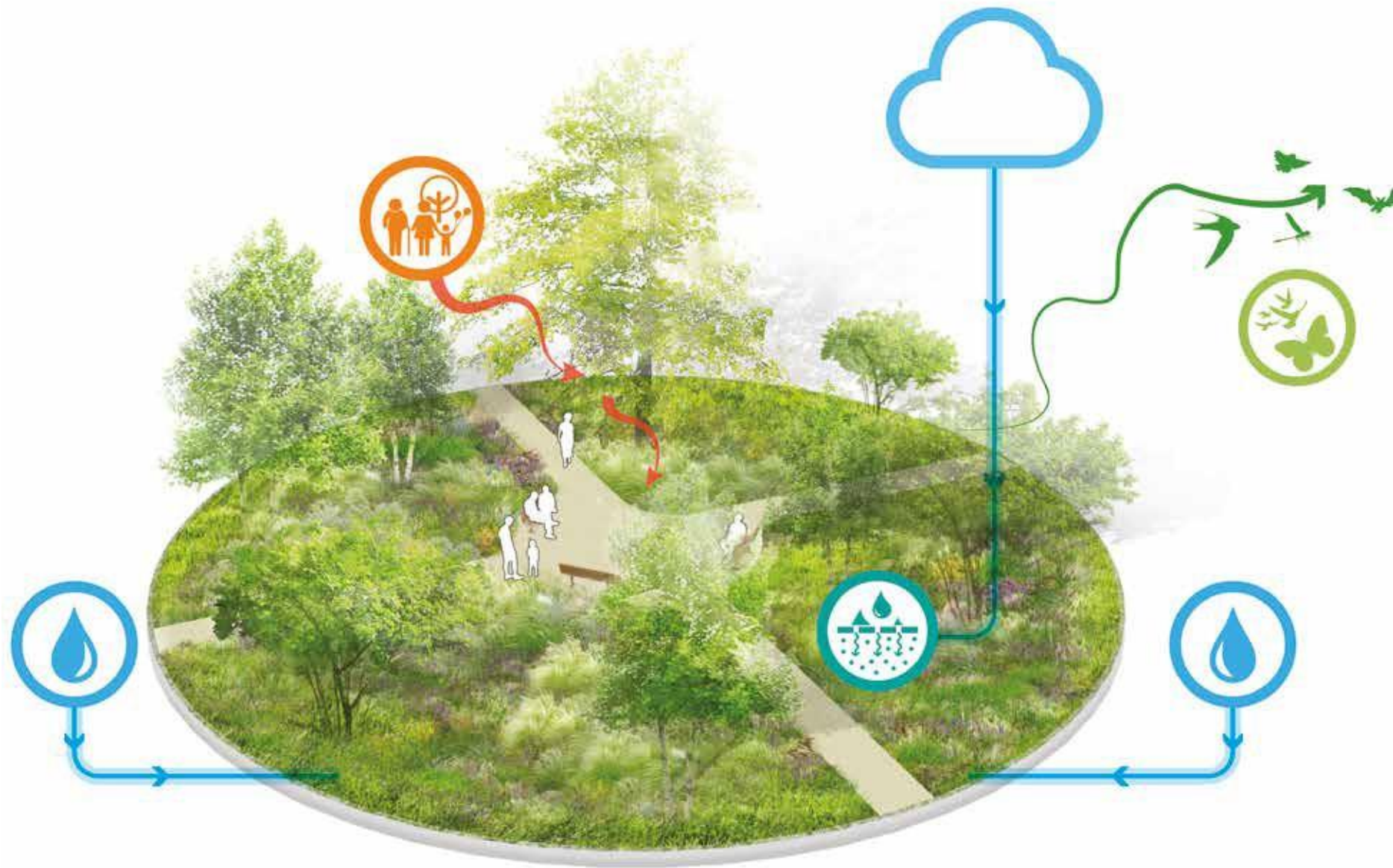


Figure 5.45 Vignette showing SuDS treatment, incorporating a pocket open space with dense planting and seating area



Figure 5.46 Example - Street rain garden treatment, 12 Avenue Green Street, Portland, USA



Figure 5.47 Example - High quality surface material and delineation between public, private and cycle route. Waltham Forest Mini-Holland scheme. Horsham



Figure 5.48 Example - Dense roundabout planting with permeable paving material

Evaluation of Proposal against Policies

Similarly to the other local centre proposals, we have evaluated Thornbridge local centre proposal against the policies identified earlier in the report from Birmingham Plan 2031, Part of Birmingham Development Plan, Part of Birmingham Local Plan. This can be used as a tool for building future intervention within this local centre and it also confirms the alignment of the local centre proposal to the City plan.

Planning Policy	Addressed	Short Description
Policy PG3 Place Making	✓	Proposal creates a positive sense of place with an attractive and sustainable environment, a social community hub.
Policy TP6 Management of flood risk and water resources	✓	Provision of SuDS through proposing residential street rain gardens, introducing a convey swale along Thornbridge Avenue and creating water attenuation open pocket spaces.
Policy TP7 Green Infrastructure Network	✓	Proposal enhances green infrastructure network by suggesting a biodiversity convey swale that connects Walsall road allotments and Perry Barr Park.
Policy TP9 Open space, playing fields and allotments	✓	Provision of an open public space along Thornbridge Avenue and creating a series of open pocket spaces.
Policy TP21 The network and hierarchy of Centres	✓	Thornbridge Local Centre proposal enhances the quality of the environment and improves access.
Policy TP22 Convenience retail provision	✓	Proposal aims to deliver quality public realm and create linkages and connections with the rest of the centre and improve accessibility.
Policy TP23 Small shops and independent retailing	✓	Provide shopfront guidance and encourage uniformity to promote independent and niche retailers in the local centre.
Policy TP24 Promotion of diversity of uses within centres	✓	Proposal will meet people's day to day needs and will offer diversity of uses and facilities.
Policy TP27 Sustainable neighbourhoods	✓	Any new development within this local centre will have easy access to shops and leisure places, will promote attractive, safe open public spaces and will contribute to environmental sustainability.
Policy TP28 The location of new housing		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.
Policy TP38 A sustainable transport network	✓	Proposal promotes a sustainable, high quality integrated transport system and offers convenient means of transport such as designate cycle routes.
Policy TP39 Walking	✓	Proposal ensures the provision of a safe and pleasant walking environment with no obstruction and incorporating adequate way-finding facilities and improved pedestrian crossings.
Policy TP40 Cycling	✓	Proposal encourages cycling and suggests a designated cycle route through the local centre and improve existing cycle routes and security.
Policy TP41 Public Transport	✓	Improved bus stops in this local centre.
Policy TP44 Traffic and congestion management	✓	Review parking areas, improve pedestrian crossing.
Policy TP45 Accessibility standards for new development		The proposal did not address this policy at this stage.



Frontages Guidance

06

6.1 Shopfront Guidance

This shopfront design guidance is intended to provide advice on the design of shopfronts within 3Bs Neighbourhood Area. Although the guidance applies throughout the whole Neighbourhood Area, it has a particular focus on the three local centres where some shops are to be found. The variable quality of shopfronts, and the impact this has on the wider 'feel' of the area, has been identified as an area of concern.

The purpose of this section is to encourage high standards of design and the use of appropriate and sympathetic materials in both new shop fronts and renovation of existing ones. Good design can make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the different local centres, helping to create an attractive shopping and cultural environment.

The key objectives in relation to shop front design and signage in 3Bs are as follows:

1. To provide guidance on the retention, refurbishment or replacement of existing shop fronts including signs and fascias;
2. To support the transformation of shop fronts in older buildings where the original design has been destroyed or otherwise compromised and the applicant is wishing to reincorporate a traditional retail frontage or a modern interpretation of it;
3. To inform and encourage a diversity of approach to shop fronts, while promoting good design;
4. To ensure appropriate provision is made to meet the access requirements of all shopkeepers;
5. To improve the shop front perceptions within the whole Neighbourhood Area although the guidelines are intended primarily for shops at the three designated local centres; and
6. To ensure only good quality shuttering and advertisements that reflect the design aspirations of the area are provided in places where they are suitable.

General principles of shop design

The most welcoming of shop fronts are inviting and attractive in themselves; they add to the shopper's experience. Usually, they have an entrance door set back from the back edge of the pavement; they will have a stall riser which is the panel below the window that raised the window up from ground level, one or two vertical mullions, and a transom rail at head of door level. Please refer to figure 6.3.

However, new construction methods and materials have led to a diffusion of the "standard" modern shop front within shopping streets. This type of shop front is usually characterized by aluminium or plastic framework, with a large area of plate glass, often incorporating a doorway. If this is applied to a historic building, it gives a visually non-cohesive appearance.

In the Neighbourhood Area, the majority of shop fronts are modern. It is important that new shops should incorporate traditional features, where these are present locally, and thus, avoid large areas of plate glass, or using aluminium and plastic as materials.

If the existing shop front is to be replaced, the key principle is that the new shop front should carefully take account of the building context and history as well as commercial concerns, being consistent with the whole architectural composition of the building. The design should take into account the period and style of the building above as well as of buildings in the immediate vicinity.



Figure 6.1 Current status of shopfront on Thornbridge Avenue (source Google street view)

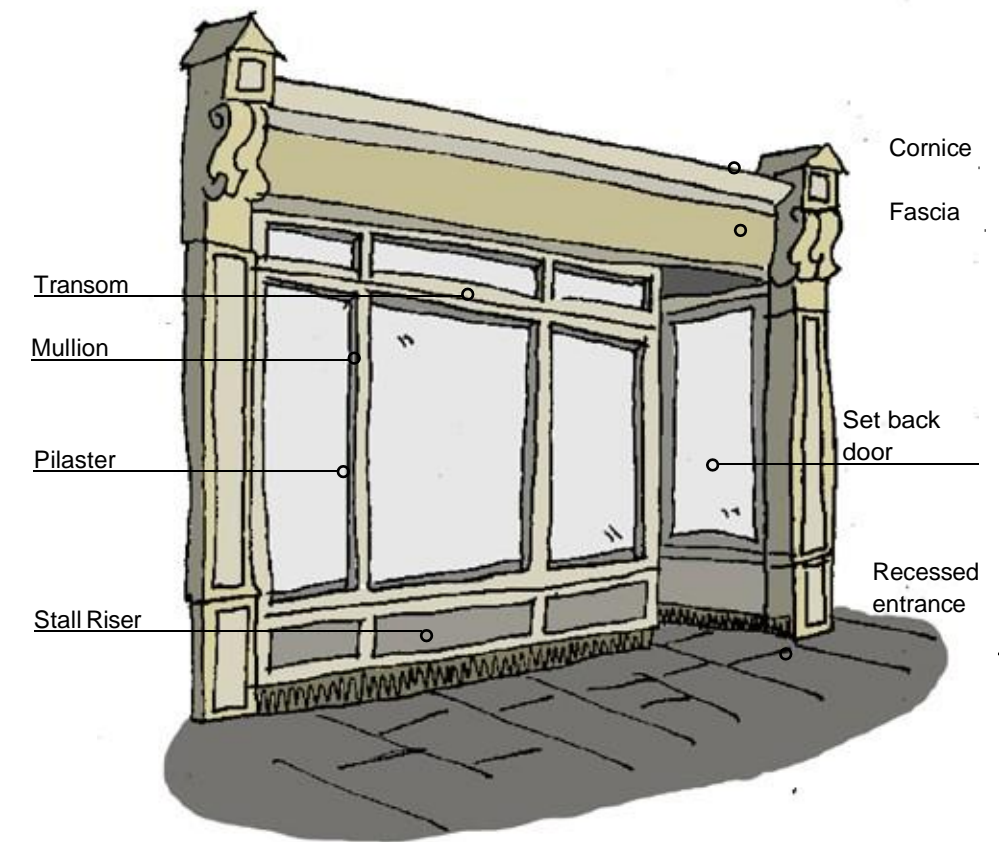


Figure 6.3 General principles of shop design



Figure 6.2 Examples of bad shop front design



Figure 6.4 Examples of good shop front design

If the premises are in a modern development, there is potential to explore a more innovative approach to a shop front. Even though this may involve the use of non-traditional materials, high quality design should always be guaranteed. Shop front design in this instance should be appropriate to the style of the building, utilizing high quality materials.

The design or redesign of a shop front in the Neighbourhood Area should take into account the age and architectural detail of the building as a whole and special attention should be paid to the elements described below.

Windows

It is highly recommended that the design of the windows should reflect and enhance the architectural style of the remainder of the building. The use of glazing panels, with mullions and transoms is preferred to the large areas of glass. Shop fronts should ensure that their windows are used to effectively display products or maintain a visual link between the street and interior of the shop. Shop fronts should avoid advertising displays, such as plastic film, that fully obscures the interior of the shop from the eyes of the pedestrian. Ground floor windows should ensure active street frontages. It is also important to consider the first floor which may be used for another use such as residential or offices.

Materials

Materials should be selected in accordance with the building character and image. As general guidance, the number and type of materials should be kept to a minimum, and always be based on the local architectural style of the street.

Signs and Advertising

Though diversity is encouraged between different shop fronts, signage should be consistent across an individual façade. There is some degree of flexibility in signage design, but as a general set of principles, the following branding is appropriate in the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- Encourage font that is the same across all external signage;
- Maintain a consistent foreground and background colour;
- Ensure that the colour palette used is reflective of the colour palette present across the whole façade, including the area above the shop front;
- If there is a hanging sign that extends out in front of the building, this should be in keeping with the rest of shop front, and not have an overbearing impact on the general street scene; and
- Advertising external to retail premises (e.g. A-frames and blackboards) should be discouraged where they impede walkways or harm local character.

Security

Addressing security is a key issue for both shopkeepers and community. The use of solid roller shutter blinds, which lead to a very unattractive environment when closed, should be discouraged. The use of open roller grills, removable grills or internal grills and meshes are preferred since the shop display can still be seen, enhancing the perception of the street outside working hours. It is recommended that roller shutters and grills are integrated into the design of the shop and not additional items that might detract from the building appearance.

Awnings, Canopies and Blinds

If integrated into the shop front design, awnings, canopies and blinds could be a very attractive addition to the street environment. Straight canvas canopies with particular retractable rollers design would be preferred and recommended instead of the use of inappropriate plastic coated blinds.



Figure 6.5 Bad window design and proportions

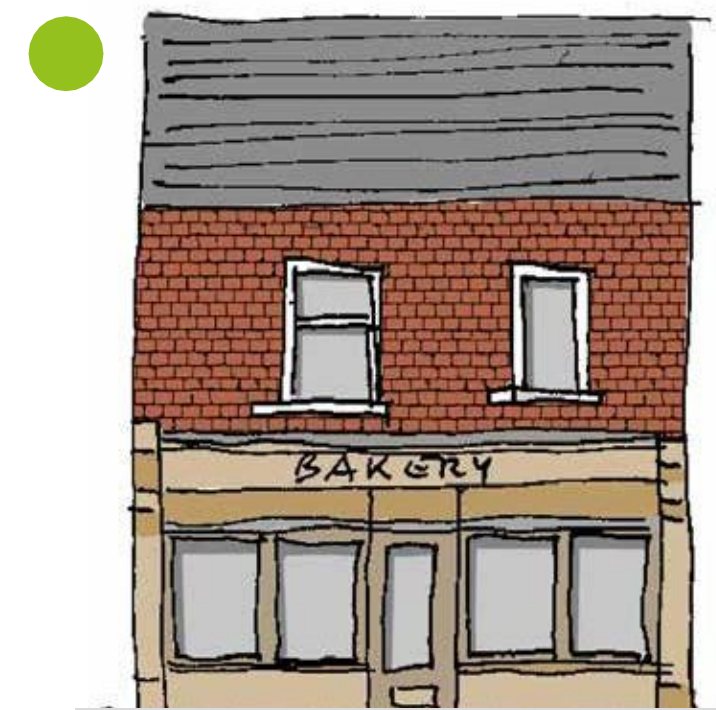


Figure 6.8 Good window design and proportions

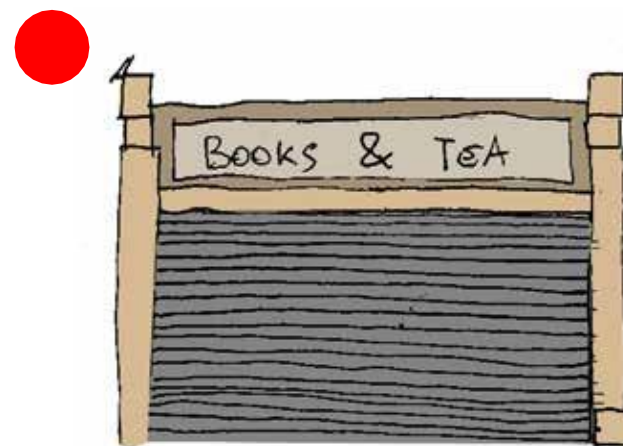


Figure 6.6 Roller shutter detract from the streetscape



Figure 6.9 Grill type shutters create active shop fronts

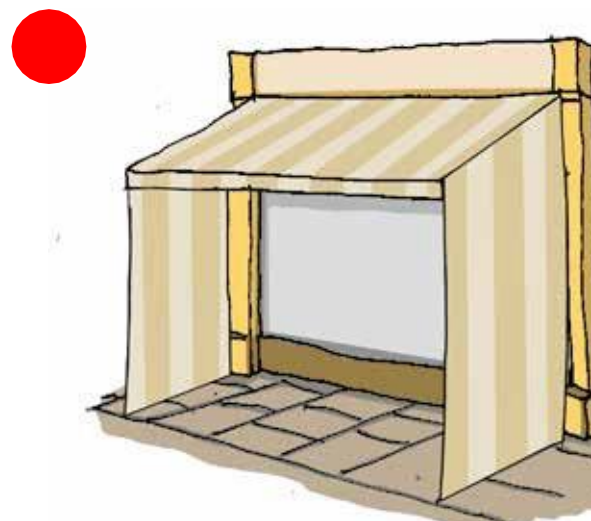


Figure 6.7 Example - Awnings

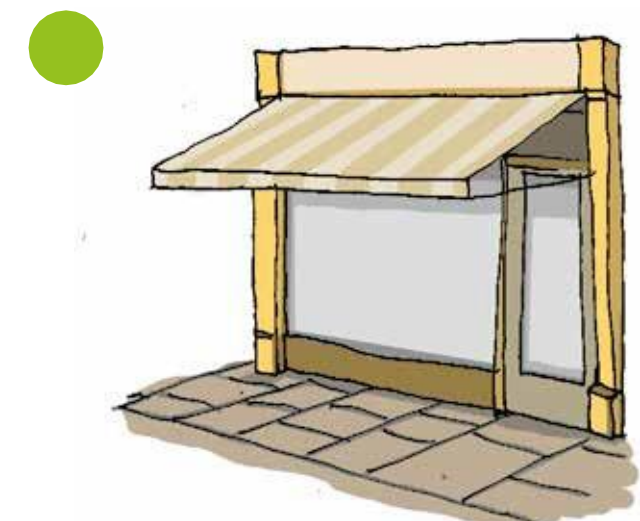


Figure 6.10 Example - Awnings

62 House Frontage Guidance

The dominant character of 3Bs neighbourhood area is residential. Moreover, two of the local centres have struggled from major flooding issues. For that reason, we have prepared this section in order to provide house frontage guidance and to propose some general design principles that can be applied throughout the neighbourhood area. The residential streets that fall within the three different local centres will be used as a prototype that can later be developed and executed in the entire neighbourhood area.

This section is to be read in conjunction with the neighbourhood planning SuDS Guidelines also prepared by AECOM.

Linking back to the vision for 3Bs Neighbourhood area, in creating a garden suburb for Birmingham city, all residential streets and house frontages should be designed in a sustainable way to reflect that. In order to achieve that, these design principles should be followed:

- Encourage the use of permeable paving at driveways;
- Propose rain garden treatment at residential streets for flood mitigation and as a delineation feature between public and private to prevent people from parking on public pavement;
- Ensure front gardens have permeable material;
- Encourage the use of stormwater planters; and
- Support front garden designs that promote sustainable urban drainage systems and principles like de-paving and introducing grasses or permeable surfacing and rain gardens.



Figure 6.11 Typical house frontages in 3Bs Neighbourhood Area (Source Google street view)

Proposed sketch for front garden design principles

- ① Planting beds and climbers
- ② Stormwater planters
- ③ Rainwater catchment pipe and storage tank
- ④ De-paving hardscape surface and introduction of grasses
- ⑤ Permeable paving
- ⑥ Rain garden



Figure 6.12 Current status front gardens, large hard surface areas



Figure 6.13 Proposed sketch for front garden design principles

Proposed sketch for residential street design principles

- ① Rain garden
- ② Permeable paving for driveway
- ③ Planting bed to reduce hard surface areas
- ④ Improved pavement for public foot-way to delineate between public and private



Figure 6.14 Typical residential street- Turnberry Road at 3Bs Neighbourhood Area (Source Google street view)



Figure 6.15 Current status residential street



Figure 6.16 Proposed sketch for residential street design principles



Next Steps

07

7. Next Steps

This report builds on the work already done by 3Bs Neighbourhood Planning Forum to offer advice on how the area’s built environment can be improved as development takes place. The recommendations are rooted in the engagement work that the Forum has undertaken, combined with the specialist skills of AECOM’s planners, landscape architects, urban designers and sustainability consultants.

Summary of Key Proposals

- Regenerate the designated three local centres (Tower Hill, Turnberry and Thornbridge) to become main destinations, community and social hubs for the neighbourhood area;
- Improve the public realm such as high quality pavements, lighting, seating (where appropriate) and planting to make the overall character more pedestrian friendly;
- Improve shop fronts and façades by following design guidance for shop fronts and facade treatments;
- Review car parking areas to improve access and use of space by integrating rain gardens and high quality seating areas;
- Opportunity to develop pocket open spaces that can mitigate flood risk issues and where people can gather and interact;
- Provide high quality street furniture (bins, benches, bollards..) with consistent design to highlight a unified sense of place;
- Improve pedestrian crossings to ensure a safe and secure pedestrian environment;
- Enhance gateway to Turnberry Park on Turnberry Road by improving signage and legibility;
- Opportunity to develop a public open square (multi-use) in Tower Hill local centre which can complement the proposed redevelopment of Bescot Court Housing and Tower Hill library;
- Opportunity to develop rain gardens on residential streets to attenuate flood risk problems;
- Opportunity to enhance the natural character of Thornbridge avenue by developing a convey swale which will enhance biodiversity and mitigate water runoff along Thornbridge Avenue; and
- Propose designated cycling routes along Thornbridge Avenue.

Purpose

The recommended next steps for how to use the outcomes of this design options study are to:

- Embed the report’s content in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan;
- Engage with the Council to develop policies supporting the proposals;
- Engage with traders and landlords to begin to implement shop front improvements;
- Identify public realm improvements to kick start the regeneration of the three designated three local centres, using the sketches in Chapter 5 as inspiration; and
- Work with those local organisations that can help to implement the recommendations.

Integration in the Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan policy needs must relate to land use planning: things that must be subject to planning permission. It is not always clear how transport and public realm proposals fit into this category, unless they form part of site (re)development.

The steering group should consider how our recommendations can be transposed into policy through discussions with the Council and use the best practice guidance from Locality to prepare draft policies for consultation. Locality’s ‘Writing Planning Policies’ guidance sets out how different planning policies are designed to achieve different things. The guide describes the three most common as:

1. Generic – a simple policy which applies universally to development across the entire neighbourhood plan area;
2. Criteria based – a policy with a series of requirements that should be met by development proposals. These can be set out as separate bullet points; and,
3. Site specific – this is where a policy applies to particular areas of land. One of the most powerful tools for a neighbourhood plan is to allocate land for a particular type of development. As well as allocating land, the Neighbourhood Plan can set out the principles which need to be followed in developing a particular site. This might include specifying what needs to be covered in a design brief to accompany any planning application. If there are site specific policies then a clear map showing the location and boundaries should be included.

Please note that some of these objectives may not be deliverable through land use planning and therefore it may not be able to be a policy within the neighbourhood plan.

Such types of community aspirations can however be included as projects within the neighbourhood plan, although unlike policies these do not carry statutory weight.

If you are unsure of the distinction between policies and projects within your plan it may be worth speaking to the planning team at your local authority.

The basic sample policy below can be used at the starting point for drafting a 3Bs specific one regarding shop fronts.

Shopfront Quality Design

Proposals will be required to be of a high quality, contributing to an overall improvement in terms of urban design and architecture.

Proposals will:

- Use an appropriate choice of materials and colour;
- Be visually attractive from all angles;
- Enhance streets and spaces through quality design and architecture;
- Promoting visual links between the interior of the shop and the street; and
- Be suitable in terms of crime prevention, community safety and security.

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