



**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council

Abingdon-on-Thames Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF)



February 2023



Located 6 miles south of Oxford, Abingdon-on-Thames is a quaint, bustling market town nestled on the river Thames just waiting to be explored.

Steeped in history and dating back to the Saxon era, Abingdon-On-Thames is a rare gem. Holding claim to 'the oldest, continuously inhabited town in England', Abingdon is a delight to visit. Stroll around the town and soak in the wealth of architecture, historical treasures, shopping, independent stores and of course the beautiful Thames river.

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Carter Jonas

Abingdon-on-Thames: Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF)

Vale of White Horse District Council (Vale) has commissioned Carter Jonas to prepare the CARF working alongside Glanville as transport consultants. The team and roles for the project are set out in more detail below:



Vale is leading the production of the CARF, with the majority of the CARF study area falling within its jurisdiction.

Carter Jonas

Carter Jonas LLP has acted as lead consultant, providing urban design and masterplanning, planning and development services for production of the CARF on behalf of Vale.



Glanville Group has provided transportation and highways advice as part of the Carter Jonas LLP consultancy team.

Further to the core team, we have worked in consultation with the following:



South Oxfordshire District Council (South) is the neighbouring district with jurisdiction over the area of land included in the CARF study area to the south of the River Thames.



Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is the statutory highway authority for the CARF study area.

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1.0 Foreword

“ We are delighted to present the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) to all those interested in the future of Abingdon town centre.

In preparing the CARF it has been important to remember that change doesn't happen overnight; it takes time and a comprehensive plan to address small, medium and large-scale challenges.

The CARF sets a non-prescriptive and aspirational framework that we hope will deliver healthy and sustainable change and improvement by steering investment and development for central Abingdon over many years. It includes short, medium and long-term interventions that require continued support and investment from the council, a range of partners and the public to transform areas of the town.

Importantly, the CARF has been informed by meaningful engagement with local people and groups who know the area and will benefit most from the changes proposed. Abingdon is clearly well-loved, and its many attributes should be celebrated. The CARF therefore establishes a Vision and opportunities that will evolve over time to strengthen Abingdon's appeal and reputation as a great place to live, work, play and visit.

”



Councillor Bethia Thomas

Leader of Vale of White District Council and Cabinet member for community engagement

2.0 Executive Summary

This document is about facilitating positive change in central Abingdon. Over recent years, central Abingdon has declined somewhat in relation to its retail offer, popularity and in respect of parts of the public realm and ability to move around. This document seeks to address some of these issues and sets out specific actions which would help regenerate the area.

Central Abingdon has a number of opportunities and constraints to delivering meaningful change. Opportunities include key sites within the ownership of Vale, which can be redeveloped in whole or in part to facilitate beneficial new uses identified as part of the stakeholder and public engagement for the CARF. Constraints include existing traffic and highways arrangements as well as a lack of facilities for youth and the sensitivities of developing around heritage assets.

A detailed analysis of the CARF study area including sites, streets, and public spaces alongside the existing property market is provided. This then provides the basis for setting out key themes for change in central Abingdon around town centre transport and the public realm; river access and recreation, land use and built form and development opportunities for key sites.

A detailed engagement and consultation exercise took place between May and July 2022 to help shape the CARF. This included important stakeholders as well as members of the public who have been instrumental in providing feedback to initial ideas as well as suggesting future uses and improvements for central Abingdon.

A series of objectives, together with a Vision, are set out to articulate the main drivers for change. Regeneration opportunities are outlined involving transport, mobility and the public realm, culture and recreation, together with proposals for the future redevelopment, or adaptive reuse, of key sites. Addressing the challenges of climate change is a fundamental part of the objectives, Vision and approach to regeneration opportunities.

The council is also seeking opportunities to shape the design and appearance of key parts of central Abingdon.

Finally, the CARF sets out non-prescriptive opportunities to deliver and fund interventions and help steer how key sites could come forward alongside improvements to transport, mobility and the public realm. A summary and next steps describes the potential future stages of work beyond the CARF, including the requirement for any future proposals to be subject to the planning process, to help deliver positive change for residents, businesses and visitors to Abingdon.

3.0 Introduction to the CARF



- 3.1 Purpose of the Document
- 3.2 Timeframe for Other Documents and Studies
- 3.3 Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan and the CARF

3.1 Purpose of the Document

Vale appointed Carter Jonas LLP to provide masterplanning and design advice, in order to develop a vision and framework for change for central Abingdon.

Abingdon-on-Thames is a town (pop. 33,130 2011 census) in the Vale of White Horse district of Oxfordshire, sitting alongside the River Thames which runs to the south of the town. The town is rich in history, believed to be the longest continually inhabited settlement in England and is home to many splendid listed buildings and a historic town centre.

The intention of the CARF is to create a forward-looking vision for the future of Abingdon, which ensures the heritage of the place is conserved and protected, whilst putting in place a plan to deliver real and positive change that will ensure the town centre's future success and that of its inhabitants.

It proposes a number of development opportunities but does not intend to prescribe exactly what will be developed in the town. The detail of any specific proposals that come forward following the CARF would be defined and considered through the planning process. As such, whilst this is a Council document, it does not prejudice the Council's ability to determine individual planning proposals in its role as Local Planning Authority.

The creation of the CARF was a four-stage process:

-  Analysis and Review;
-  Masterplanning;
-  Regeneration Opportunities for Focus Areas; and
-  Masterplan and Action Plan.



Fig 3.1: Images of landmark buildings within Abingdon town centre (1: Abingdon County Hall Museum; 2: Abbey Gardens; 3: Abbey Gate - see map for locations)

 Wider CARF Study Area and Vale owned Opportunity Sites





3.2 Timeframe for Other Documents and Studies

Other town centre documents and studies were being undertaken at the same time as the CARF. These include the Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan (NP), being prepared by the Town Council and the Joint Local Plan being undertaken by Vale and South.

The NP will form part of the development plan and will cover an area of the town that is bounded by the edge of the Parish of Abingdon, which is considerably more extensive than the area covered by the CARF. In addition, the Joint Local Plan will guide new housing and jobs needed in the area, and set planning policy, informing planning application decisions for the districts.

The timeline opposite sets out the key milestones for all these projects. At the same time, there are also several transport-focused projects on-going such as the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (or LTCP) and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), both being led by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

In addition, Abingdon Carbon Cutters and Abingdon Liveable Streets are preparing their own locally devised LCWIP in the form of the Abingdon Cycling and Walking Network Plan, and Sustrans are working on the Abingdon National Cycle Network Missing Link. Sustrans are an organisation responsible for creating and managing the National Cycle Network, prioritising walking and cycling across the country.

The Vale Climate Action Plan has been considered through the production of the CARF.

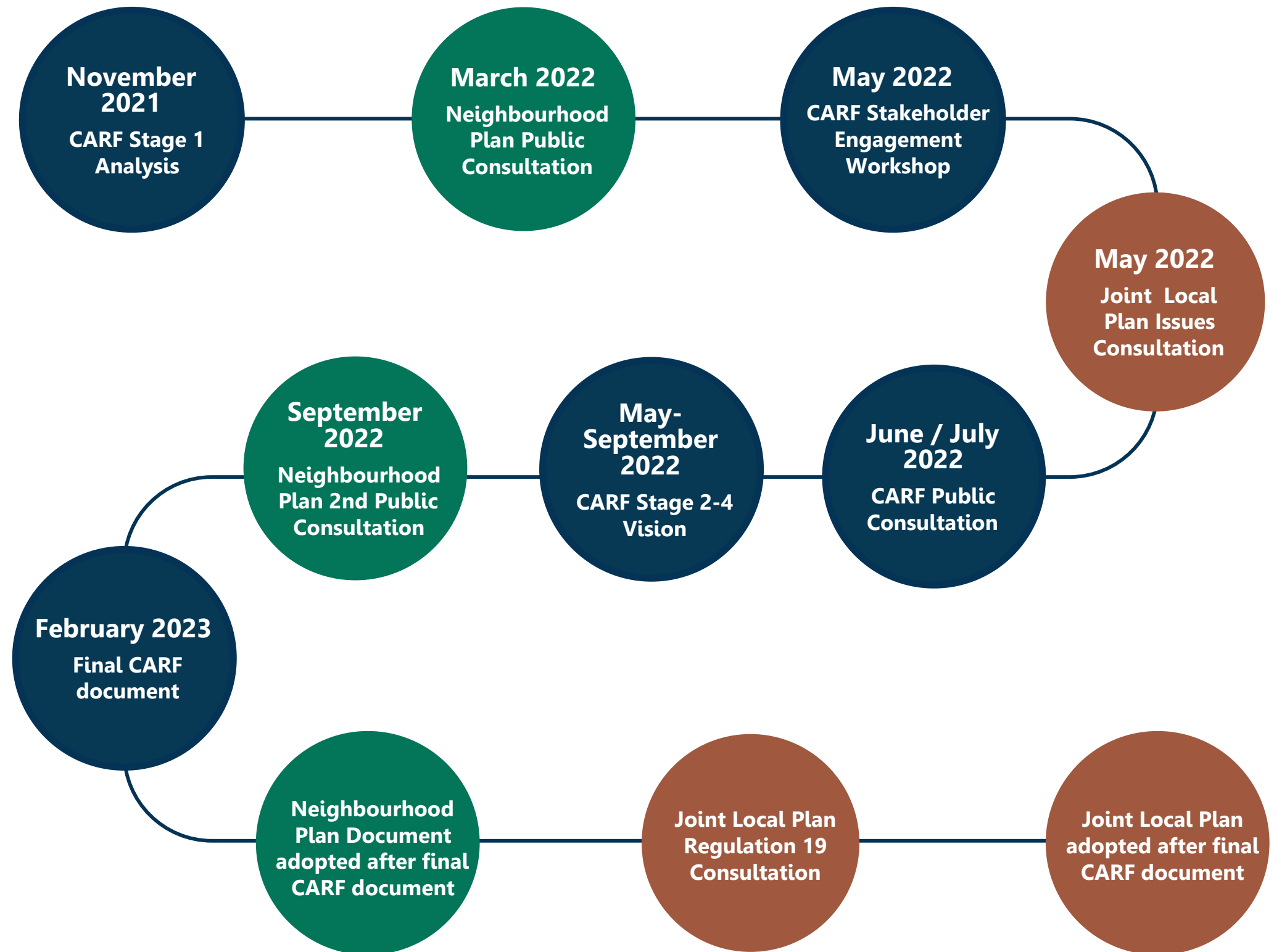


Fig 3.2: Timeline of other documents in relation to the CARF



3.3 Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan and the CARF

Given that both the NP and the CARF consider strategies and interventions for the same area, it is important to set out how the two documents differ and, as such, evidence why both documents can be complementary.

The key differences between the NP and the CARF are as follows:

1. The study areas of the NP and the CARF are very different with the NP study area including all residential and suburban areas of Abingdon and the CARF focussing on the town centre area and immediate surroundings only.
2. The CARF focuses on redevelopment, regeneration, transport and area / site specific opportunities in the town centre and the NP focuses on a wider range of planning and environmental matters across the whole of the town / parish boundary.
3. The CARF document holds limited to no planning weight despite being a material consideration. Once adopted, the NP will form part of Vale's Local Development Plan and will hold full planning weight to inform and guide consideration of planning applications and development within Abingdon.



Fig 3.3: Diagram illustrating the CARF study area in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation area. (Not to Scale)



Stage 1: Analysis and Review



4.0 Context and Baseline Analysis



- 4.1** CARF Study Area Overview
- 4.2** Planning Policy
- 4.3** Abingdon Context
- 4.4** Area Profile
- 4.5** CARF Study Area
- 4.6** History
- 4.7** Heritage
- 4.8** Movement - Vehicles
- 4.9** Movement - People
- 4.10** Land Use - Daytime
- 4.11** Land Use - Evening

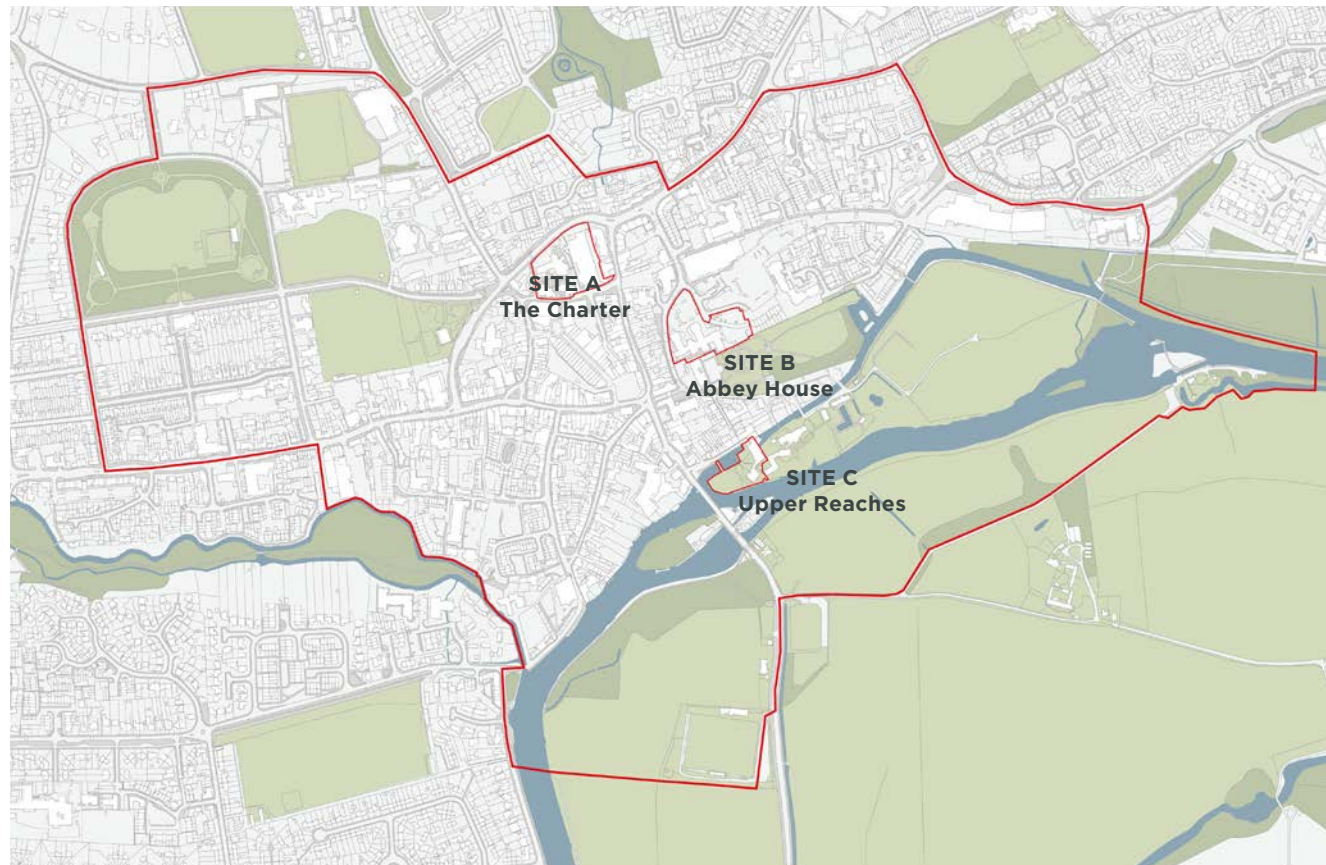
4.1 CARF Study Area Overview

Abingdon-on-Thames is a town located 10 km south of Oxford, 24 km south-east of Witney and 10 km north of Didcot in the flat valley of the Thames on its west bank, where the River Ock runs in from the Vale of White Horse. It is on the A415 between Witney and Dorchester, just east of the A34, which in turn links it with the M4 and M40 motorways. The historic town centre sits just north of the River Thames at a bend in the river and opposite Andersey Island. The rest of the town, developed later in the 19th and 20th centuries, sits north, west and east of the town centre.

Fig 4.2 illustrates Abingdon-on-Thames' location on the edge of the Vale of White Horse District boundary with South Oxfordshire, where the Thames forms the natural boundary between the two districts.

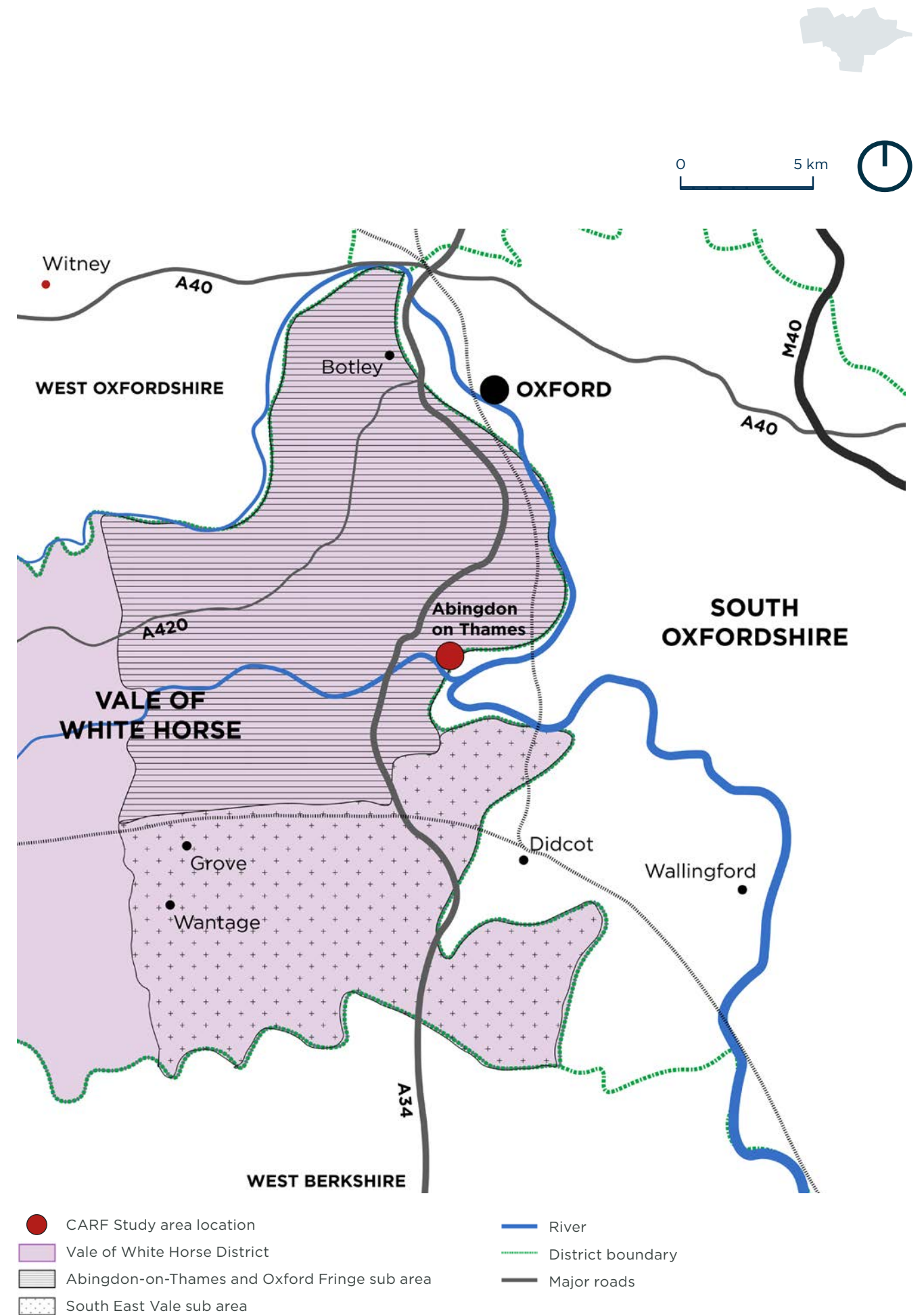
SITE AREAS:

- CARF Study Area - 112.6 hectares
- Site A: The Charter - 0.92 hectares
- Site B: Abbey House - 0.86 hectares
- Site C: Upper Reaches - 0.45 hectares



Wider CARF Study Area and Opportunity Sites

Fig 4.1: Plan of the CARF Study Area and Opportunity Sites



- CARF Study area location
- Vale of White Horse District
- Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe sub area
- South East Vale sub area
- River
- - - District boundary
- Major roads

*Layers taken from Vale Local Plan

Fig 4.2: Wider Context Plan of Abingdon-on-Thames in relation to Vale of White Horse district and Oxfordshire



4.2 Planning Policy

The current development plan in effect is the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (adopted in two parts in 2016 and 2019). This will be replaced by the emerging Joint Local Plan once adopted.

Abingdon is part of an area called the “Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Sub-Area” in the Local Plan. Section 5 of the Local Plan 2031 states that Abingdon will:

- “...continue to provide an attractive place to live, with development carefully managed and the overarching purposes of the Oxford Green Belt protected.”
- “...continue to function as an important service and employment centre within the district.”
- “The historic character of the town centre will have been maintained and the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area will have been comprehensively and attractively redeveloped.”

The plan opposite identifies key policies within the context of Abingdon-on-Thames and the CARF study area. It highlights strategic housing allocations (CP4) to the north of the town, specifically known as “North” and “North West” of Abingdon-on-Thames. The two areas, taken together, will include approximately 1,000 new homes for the town.

A key element of planning policy for Abingdon can be found at Core Policy 8: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area, which states that:

- “Our over-arching priority for this Sub-Area is to maintain the service and employment centre roles for Abingdon-on-Thames....”

Finally, the Local Plan does allocate a number of areas in and around Abingdon Town Centre as follows:

- The Abingdon Albert Park and Abingdon Town Centre conservation areas (Policy DP37)

- Town Centre policy area (DP13)
- Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area (CP10).

There is currently no town centre masterplan for Abingdon-on-Thames, however as noted earlier in this document there is the emerging NP which will provide guidance for potential development within Abingdon-on-Thames. Direct engagement with the NP Steering Group informed the development of the CARF and guided in part some of the proposals set out later in this document.

While not the same as formal planning policy, the Vale’s Climate Action Plan for 2022 - 2024 sets out how the district will achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, with a 75 per cent reduction in emissions by 2025. Actions which help underpin sustainable development and transport are important to helping achieve these goals. The CARF has therefore formulated strategies that are underpinned by the objective to help reduce emissions.

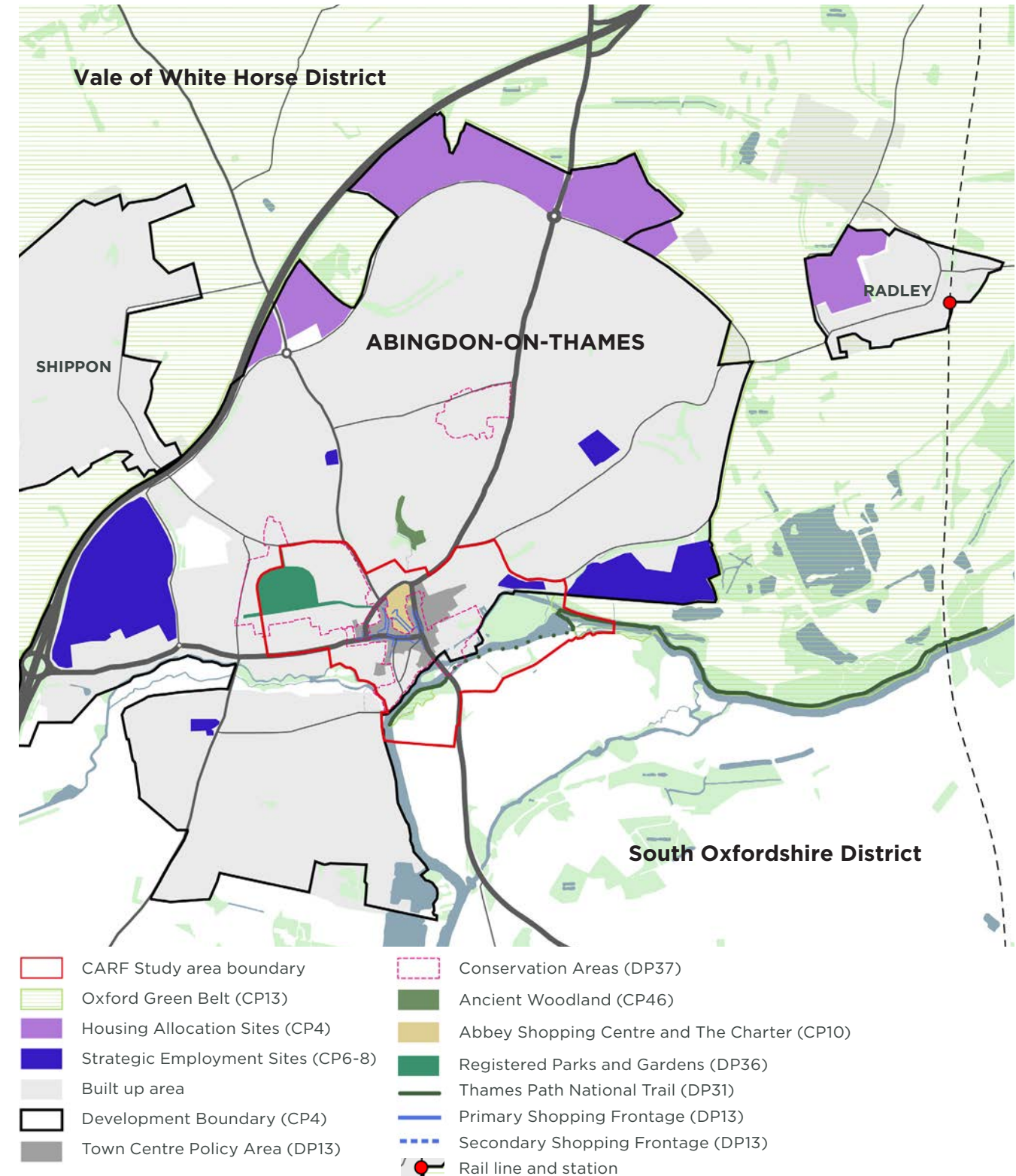


Fig 4.3: Development (DP) and Core (CP) Adopted Policies Map (Local Plan 2031)



4.3 Abingdon Context

Abingdon-on-Thames is one of the larger settlements located within Oxfordshire. It occupies a position just north of the River Thames and is strategically located on a key route between Oxford to the north and Didcot to the south.

The rail station serving Abingdon is located at Radley, some 3.2 km north-east of the historic town centre. Abingdon is well connected by road in all directions. The town has expanded northwards largely due to the border with South Oxfordshire to the south of the River Thames and its expansion is constrained by the Oxford Green Belt that surrounds the settlement to the north.

The town includes a number of employers important to the regional economy with healthcare, education and retail being the primary employment sectors. (Oxfordshire Parish Profile report 2021).

Abingdon Business Park is located approximately 2km to the west of the town centre and serves as an important location for many businesses, providing office space and industrial units. The Science Park campus, located 1km to the east of the town centre, is host to several large tech companies and significant employers.

There are many schools in Abingdon-on-Thames including several top independent schools. The area has a higher rate of people attending higher education than the national average. (Oxfordshire Parish Profile report 2021).

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | CARF Study area boundary | | National rail |
| | Built up area | | Rail station / line |
| | Abingdon Town Centre boundary | | National cycle network |
| | Business park | | Bus route to rail station |
| | Science park | | Vehicular routes |
| | Medical centre / hospital | | Bus station |
| | Community facility | | Isochrone |
| | Education facility | | |
| | Religious facility | | |



Fig 4.4: Context plan



4.4 Area Profile

The graphs opposite illustrate key demographics for Abingdon-on-Thames. Based on the latest 'Oxfordshire Parish Profile report' for Abingdon-on-Thames area produced in January 2021, it is estimated that Abingdon has a population of around 34,500 people with 62.5% being of working age. This has seen an 8% increase since the last census taken in 2011. The data also suggests that there are less people living in Abingdon from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to the national average (Fig 4.8).

Crime rates in Abingdon are on average higher than across Oxfordshire. Since 2020 there has been a significant increase in crime rates (see Appendix B Fig. 1.1). The top 3 types of crime in Abingdon are Anti-Social Behaviour, Drugs and Violence (Fig 4.5).

There are many schools across Abingdon-on-Thames with several top private institutions located in the town. When comparing the data, 46% of the people in secondary education go on to higher education compared to only 37% across England (Fig 4.6).

The data suggests that Abingdon has a highly educated population. Only "17% of the population have no qualifications compared to 22% across England" (Oxfordshire Parish Profile report), while 48% of people are in full time employment, much higher than the 39% across England.

69.3% of housing in Abingdon-on-Thames is owner occupied, lower than the 73.8% in South Oxfordshire but higher than the national average of 64.1%. The average house price in Abingdon-on-Thames is higher than across England at £341,584 (2021 Statistic).

Crime Rates

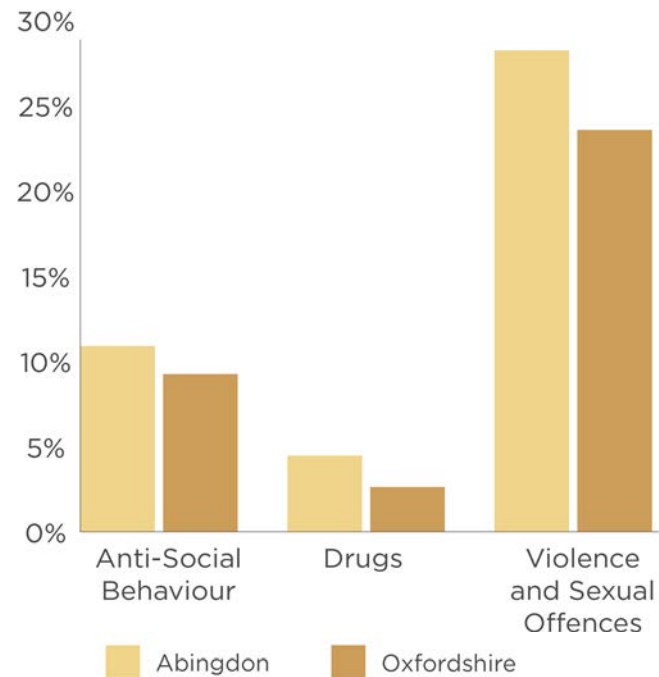


Fig 4.5: Top 3 types of crime as a % of overall crime rates

Higher Education

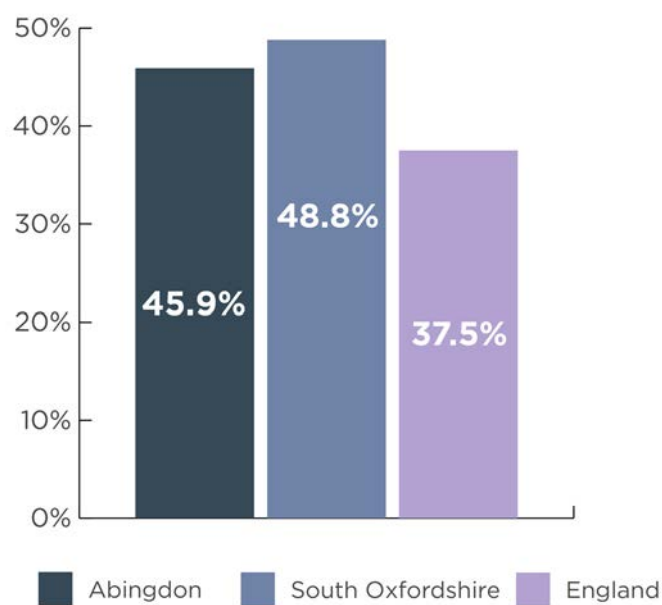


Fig 4.6: Attendance in higher education by the age of 19 (2014-2017).
(Source: <https://www.ilivehere.co.uk/statistics-abingdon-oxfordshire-204.html>)

Population



Fig 4.7: Population estimate for 2021. (ONS)
(Source: Oxfordshire Parish profile report)

Ethnicity

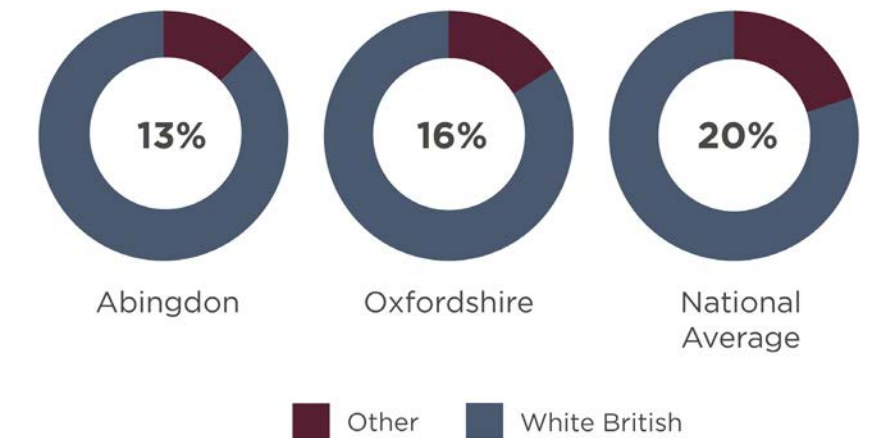


Fig 4.8: Percentage (%) of the population who are from an ethnic minority (Source: Oxfordshire Parish profile report)

Age Distribution

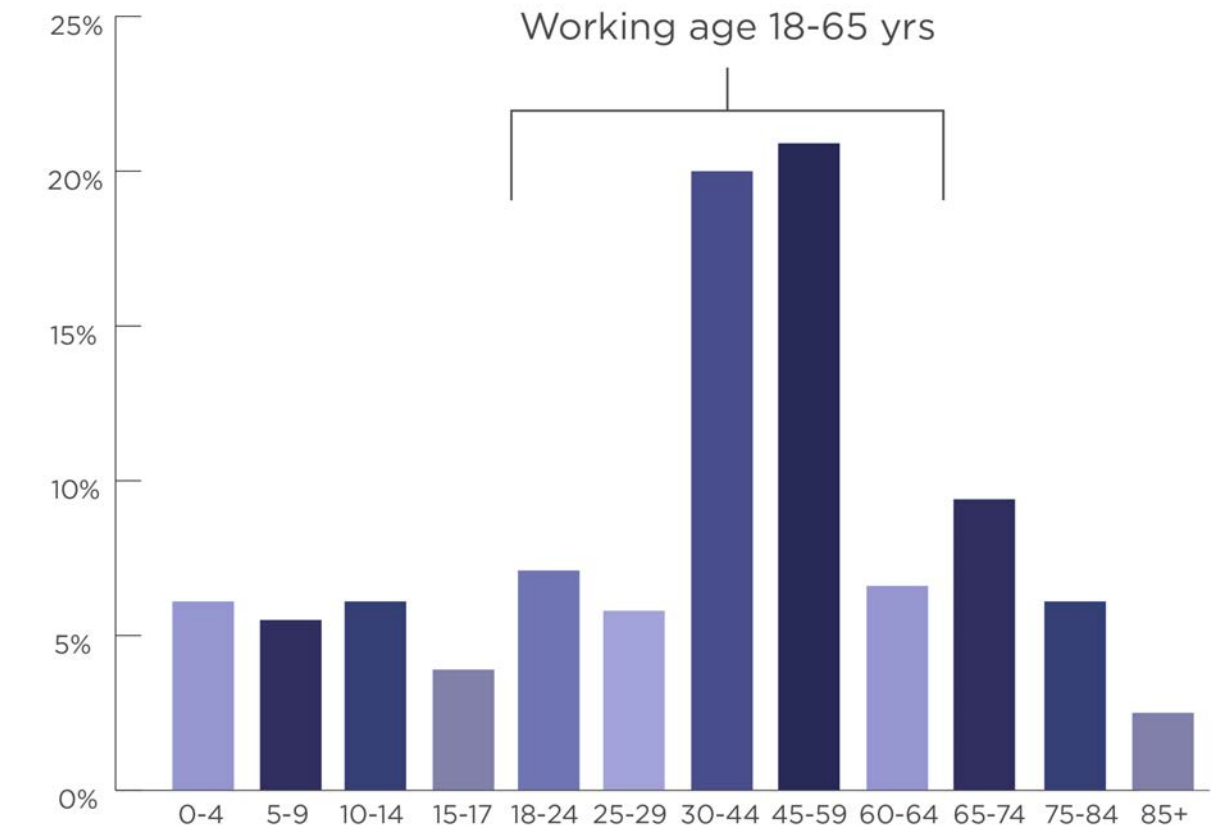


Fig 4.9: Population distribution by age (Source: <https://www.ilivehere.co.uk/statistics-abingdon-oxfordshire-204.html>)



4.5 CARF Study Area

The core of the town centre is made up of predominantly leisure (food and beverage), retail, community facilities (including healthcare) and some employment uses. Additionally, there is a significant number of residential properties of different forms within the town centre. There is also an inner ring of housing which sits around the core town centre uses and to the east is an area of significant open space along the Thames corridor, including Abbey Gardens and Meadows. Education facilities are prevalent to the west and northwest of the town. Abingdon is a compact and highly walkable place and is supported by a pedestrianised retail core along Bury Street and Market Place.

The plan opposite illustrates the position of the Opportunity Sites within the context of the town centre boundary.

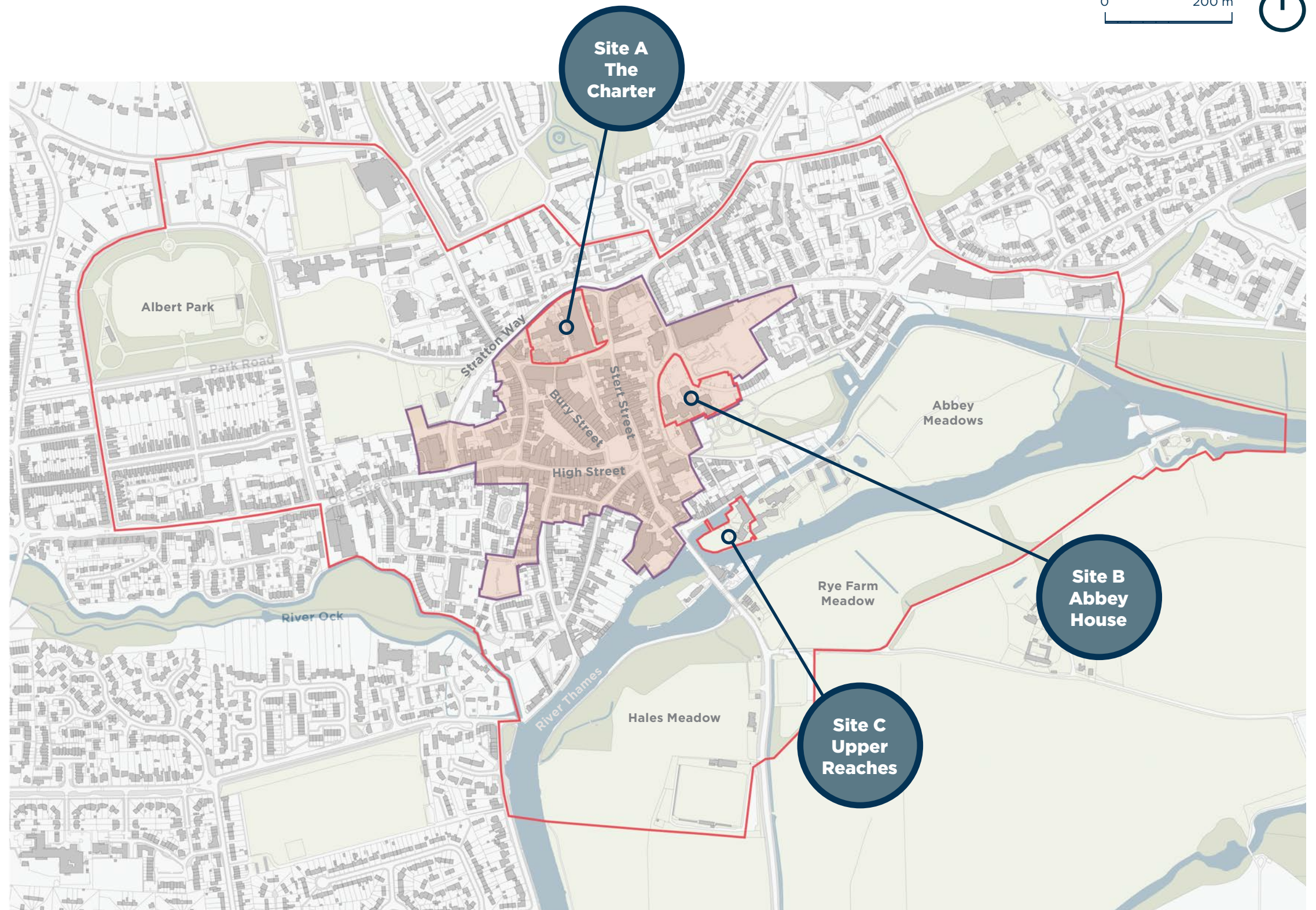
Site A - The Charter Site is located within the town centre and on the edge of the boundary, forming an important strategic location and gateway connecting the north of Abingdon to the town centre.

Site B - The Abbey House Site is located within the town centre boundary. This includes New Abbey House and the two car parks to the west of the Site.

Site C - The Upper Reaches Site is located on the outskirts of the town centre, but is in a prominent location surrounded by several historic buildings and can be seen in key views of the town centre from Abingdon Bridge and south of the River Thames.

Site Areas:

- CARF Study Area - 112.6 hectares
- Site A: The Charter - 0.92 hectares
- Site B: Abbey House - 0.86 hectares
- Site C: Upper Reaches - 0.45 hectares



- CARF Study Area boundary
- Abingdon Town Centre boundary

Fig 4.10: Abingdon town centre site location plan

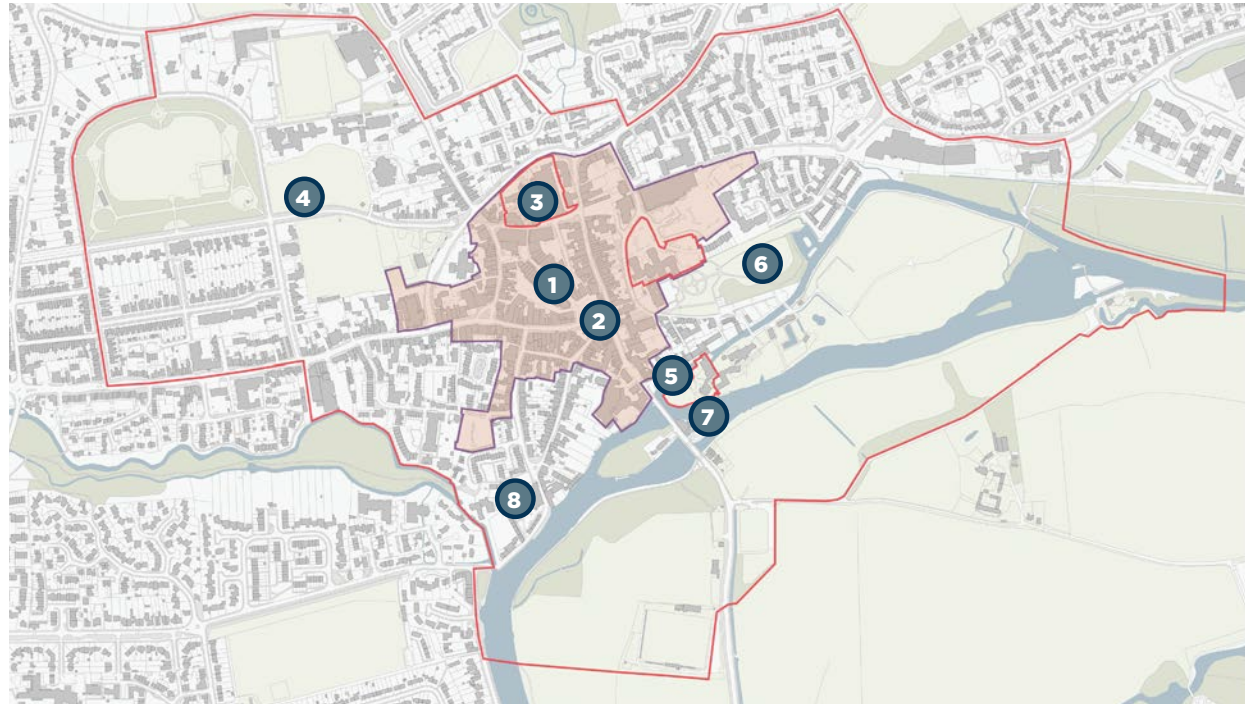


Fig 4.11: Photo location plan

Photos taken of the CARF study area highlight several key locations in the town such as the main pedestrianised retail core of Bury Street and the town square to the south.

Most buildings in Abingdon town centre are between 2-3 storeys. The Charter multi-storey car park is one of the taller buildings in the town centre at around 4 storeys tall.

Major parks and open / green space are located to the south and north-west of the town centre and include Albert park, Abbey Meadows, Hales Meadow and Rye Farm Meadows south of the River Thames.



Fig 4.12: View of lower Bury Street, a major shopping street, looking North



Fig 4.13: View of Abingdon Market Place at the corner of High Street and Stert Street



Fig 4.14: View of The Charter car park from within The Charter Site on the northern edge of the town centre



Fig 4.15: View of Abingdon School grounds from Park Road looking north



Fig 4.17: View of Abbey Gardens behind the town council offices and Old Abbey House



Fig 4.18: View of Nags Head island from the Upper Reaches Site next to the River Thames



Fig 4.16: View of Thames Street from Abingdon Bridge



Fig 4.19: View of Abbey Checker, adjacent to the Unicorn Theatre and the Long Gallery



4.6 History

There is evidence that Abingdon has been occupied since the Iron Ages with continuous settlement since that time. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Abingdon was a bustling agricultural centre with an extensive trade in wool and a strong weaving / clothing manufacturing industry. The Abbot of the monastery held a local market from very early times. In 1790, Abingdon Lock was built and not long after, in 1810, the Wilts & Berks Canal opened, linking Abingdon with Semington on the Kennet and Avon Canal. Abingdon became an important link between major centres such as Bristol, London, Birmingham and the Black Country.

The historic map c.1898 provided on this page demonstrates that by the late 19th century, the core of the town was largely developed. The key routes of High Street, Stert Street, Bridge Street and Ock Street were formed and the movement network in and out of the town centre was well established. Due to the risk of the River Thames flooding from time to time, development generally occurred to the north, away from the river.

In 1856 the Abingdon Railway station opened, just east of Stert Street, and the town had a central rail station until it was closed in 1963. Today the town is served by a station located at Radley (3.2km distant) to the north-east of the town centre. The line serving Radley is in turn linked with the Great Western Railway which serves Oxford, Didcot and beyond.

Since the 1980s, Abingdon has played host to several important communication companies, including at Abingdon Business Park off the A34.

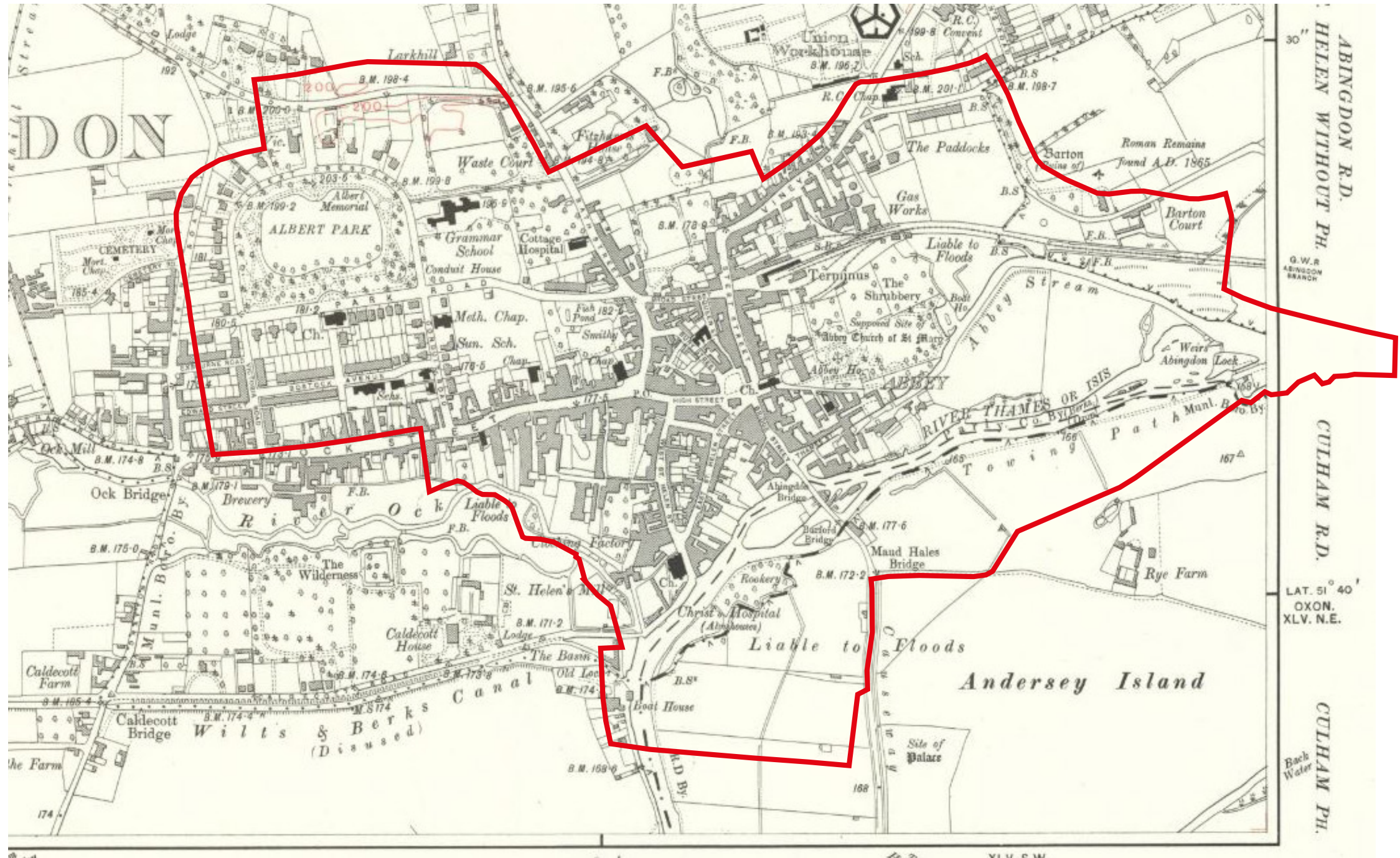


Fig 4.20: 1898 Map of Abingdon (Source: National Library of Scotland)



4.7 Heritage

Abingdon has three conservation areas, two of which lie within the CARF study area:

- Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area - this area covers a large proportion of the listed buildings in the town centre
- Albert Park Conservation Area - covering a large part of the study area to the north west including Albert Park and Abingdon School

Many of the listed buildings are of high architectural and historical merit, dating from the 18th century and earlier. East St Helen Street, High Street and Stert Street, in particular, are home to buildings from the Medieval and Victorian times. The legacy created by these buildings, along with the historic street pattern in this part of the town, is exceptional, and it is vital that these assets are protected.

The heritage and conservation plan opposite shows registered listed buildings and the extent of the Abingdon town centre conservation areas.

Heritage - Key Points:

- Historic buildings in Abingdon are predominantly Grade II and Grade II* listed.
- Old Abbey House and its surrounding walls are Grade II listed and the adjacent gardens are a National Scheduled Monument.
- There is a Grade II listed building adjacent to The Charter Site.
- Part of the building on the Council owned Upper Reaches Site is Grade II listed.
- The Upper Reaches Site falls within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area. The Charter and Abbey House Sites lie adjacent to this Conservation Area.

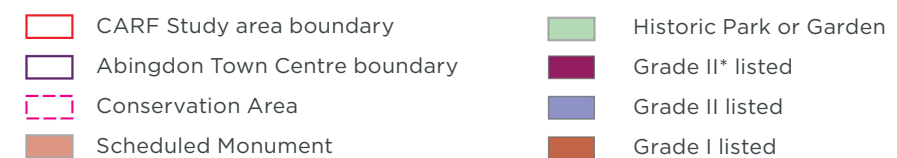
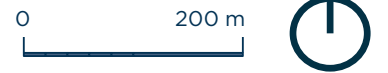
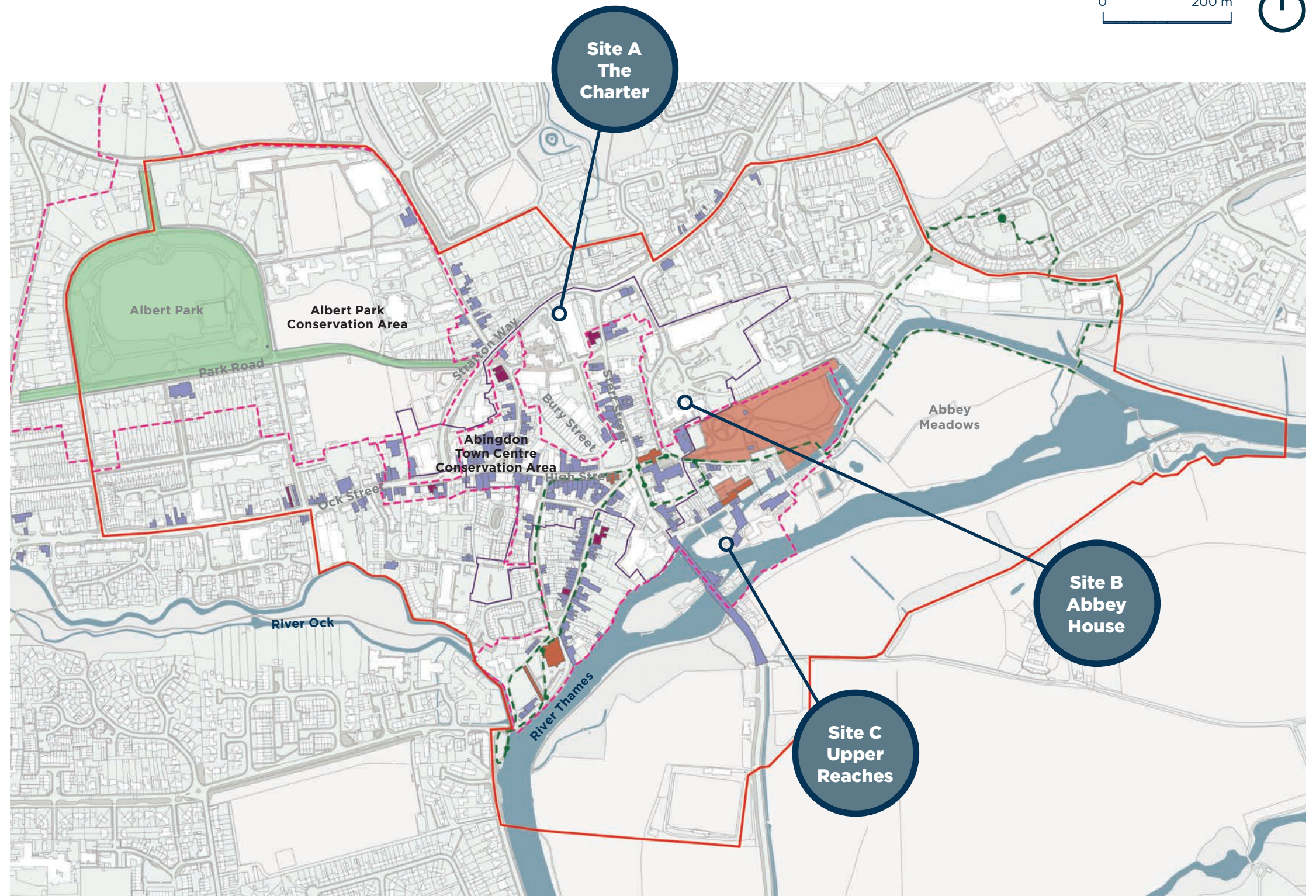


Fig 4.21: Heritage and conservation plan

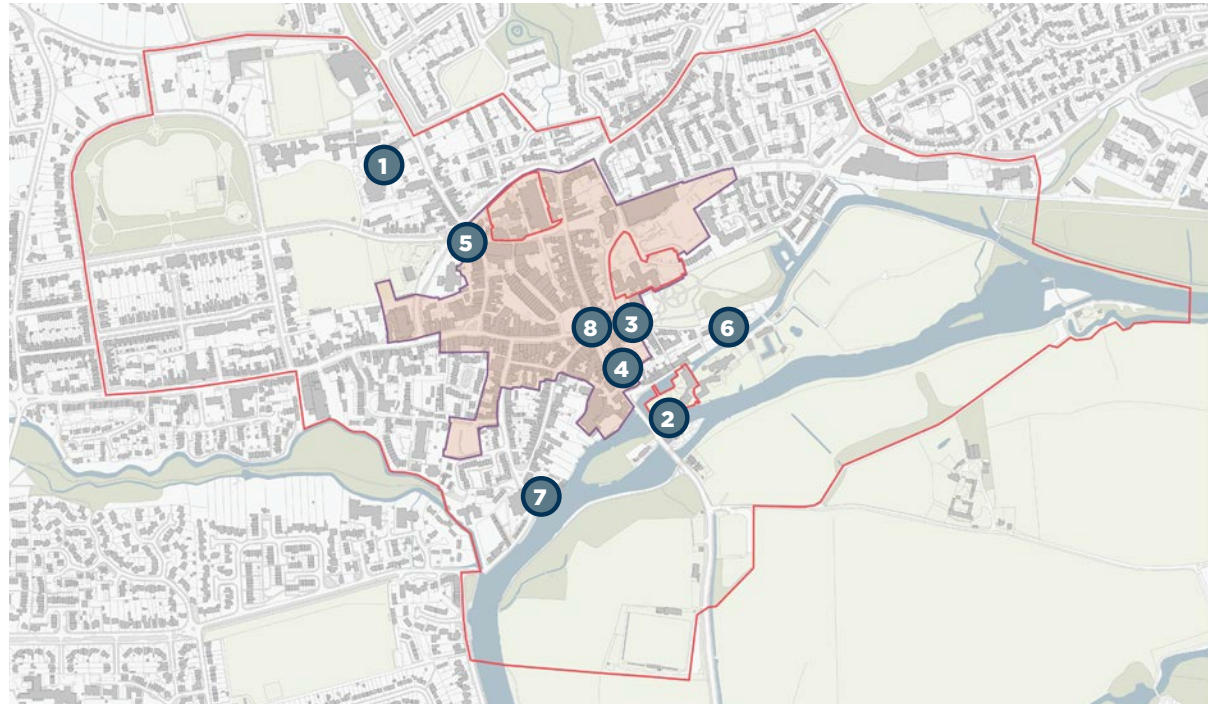


Fig 4.22: Photo location plan

The photos on this page identify some of the notable buildings around Abingdon town centre that are of historical significance, dating back to 1260 AD. For example, the former Unicorn Theatre on Thames Street is one of the earliest examples of architecture in Abingdon and is Grade I listed, while Abbey Gate is a well recognised and a celebrated asset in the heart of the town centre.



Fig 4.23: View of Abingdon School north of the town centre. The building is not nationally listed, however is significant to the history of Abingdon. (Source: Abingdon School)



Fig 4.24: View of Abingdon Bridge built in c. 1416, a Grade II listed structure and Scheduled Monument



Fig 4.25: View of Abbey Gate, a Grade I listed building and Scheduled Monument built in the late 15th century



Fig 4.28: View of Unicorn Theatre on Thames Street, a Grade I listed building and Scheduled Monument dating from c. 1260



Fig 4.26: View of The Crown and Thistle Hotel and Public House on Bridge Street, a Grade II listed building originally built in c. 1605



Fig 4.29: View of Grade I listed Brick Alley Almshouse built in c. 1718



Fig 4.27: View of Stratton House, 50 Bath Street. A Grade II* listed building. (Source: Abingdon Town Council)



Fig 4.30: View of Abingdon County Hall Museum, a Grade I listed building in Abingdon town centre built in c. 1680



4.8 Movement - Vehicles



Vehicular Movement

The plan opposite shows the primary bus routes / stops, parking facilities, highways connections and the Sustrans cycle route which passes through the town centre.

Stratton Way, Stert Street and High Street form a gyratory around the core of the town centre. All key approaches to the town's gyratory system are signal controlled in an effort to manage traffic flows; this includes signals on Ock Street, Vineyard and Bridge Street which give rise to extensive queuing at peak times. Dependency on cars is high in Abingdon-on-Thames and there can be heavy congestion within the centre. Abingdon Bridge is a particular pinch point for traffic into the town centre to / from the south, as this is one of the few points at which vehicles can cross the river. It is estimated that around 83% of households in Abingdon-on-Thames own a car, much higher than the national average of 74% (Source: Oxfordshire Parish Profile report).

The Department for Transport (DfT) undertakes traffic counts at key data points on the highway network across the country and provides a summary of statistics. Some of these data points are located within the CARF Study Area. As a result of Covid-19, working habits have been altered significantly with a much greater proportion of people working from home, reducing vehicular traffic and public transport usage.

A review of accident data reveals that there have been 16 pedestrian casualties across the town centre in the last 5 years and 94 in the last 22 years, including one fatality on West St Helen Street in 2006. There have been 75 cycle casualties in the last 22 years.

If this review is broadened to include all casualty types, there was one other fatal accident at Stratton Way / B4017(Wootton Road) junction arising from an accident involving 3 vehicles in 2018.

Public Parking Provision

All public car parking facilities are located within a 2-5 minute walk of the centre and are evenly distributed across the town.

Car parks:

1. Audlett Drive: Total spaces - 98, Disabled spaces - 3
2. Abbey Close: Total spaces - 75, Disabled spaces - 4, Motorcycle bays - yes
3. Cattle Market: Total spaces - 69, Disabled spaces - 3
4. Charter MSCP: Total spaces - currently 56 (normally 451), Disabled spaces - 13
5. Civic: Total spaces - 65, Disabled spaces - 6
6. Hales Meadow: Total spaces - 21, Disabled spaces - 2, Motorhome Bays - 2, Coach Drop Off Bay - 1 (20 minutes wait limit)
7. Rye Farm: Total spaces - 121, Disabled spaces - 6
8. West St Helen Street: Total spaces - 107, Disabled spaces - 6, Motorcycle bays - yes

Total spaces in town centre:

1,007 (currently 612 due to Charter MSCP closure), Disabled - 43

Typical parking charge rates at date of publication:

Parking Duration	Charges
Up to 1 hour	Free (with ticket)
Up to 2 hours	£1.50
Up to 3 hours	£2.30
Up to 4 hours	£4.20
Up to 6 hours	£5.10
Over 6 hours	£6.10

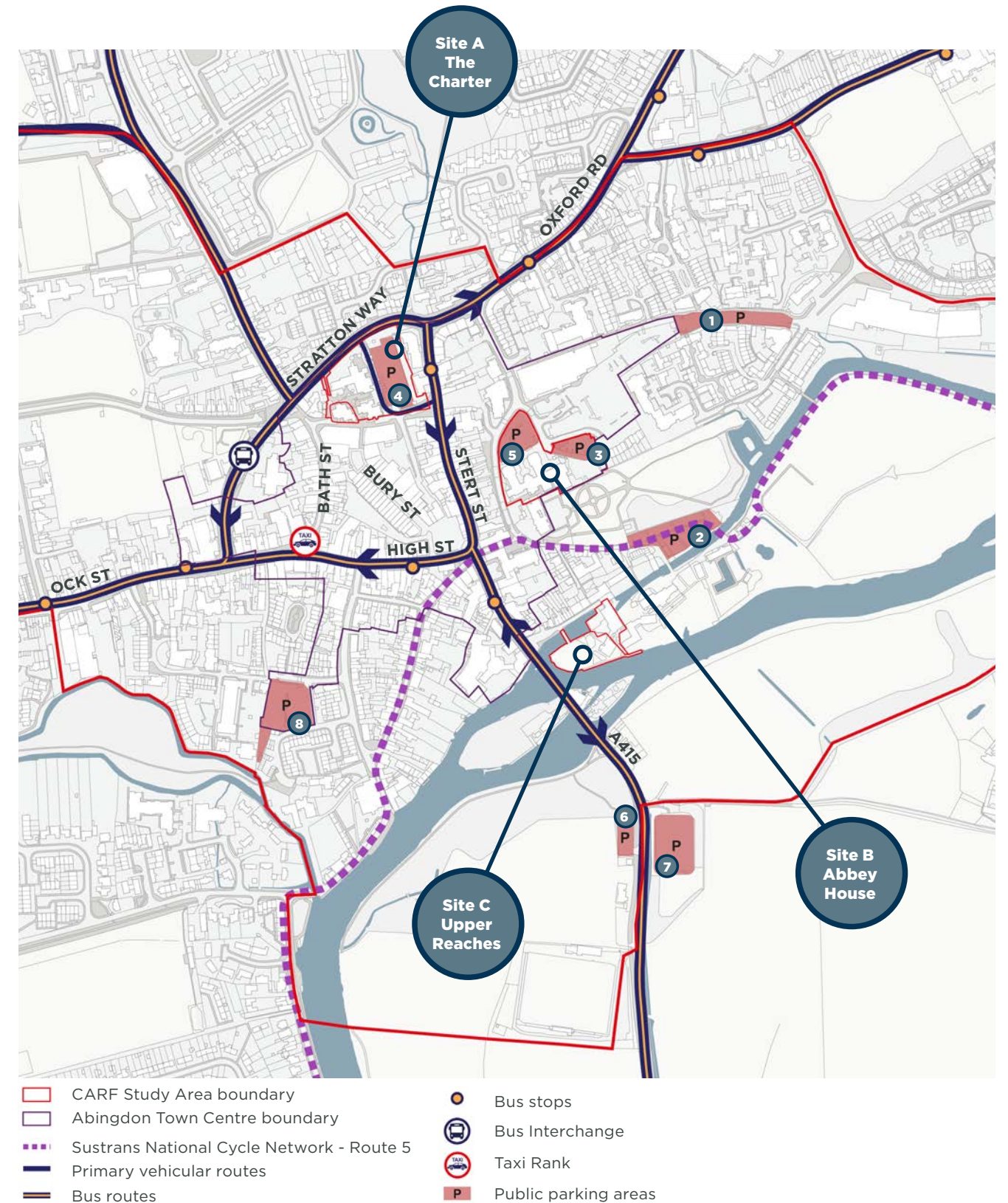


Fig 4.31: Transport movement plan



Public Transport

Motorcycle parking is free.

While the Vale recognises the need for parking within central Abingdon, it is important to transition over time to more sustainable modes of travel such as cycling, walking and bus travel, as examples. The strategies set out later in the CARF are therefore biased in favour of solutions which favour sustainable modes, while at the same time not excluding the motor vehicle from accessing central Abingdon.

There is a good public transport network by road with the main bus route out of Abingdon running west along the A415 towards Marcham Interchange to serve destinations in South Abingdon, Didcot, Harwell and Wantage, while northbound services utilise Oxford Road and Radley Road to serve Oxford City Centre and Radley Railway Station in the case of the latter.

The railway station is about a 20 minute bus ride from the centre and the main bus interchange is located on Stratton Way to the west of the town centre. There is also a taxi rank located at the corner of High Street and Bath Street. Currently there are large intervals between buses (refer to bus schedule in Appendix B Fig B1.4). As a result there is an opportunity to improve bus stops to provide shelter and seating for people such as the elderly and disabled.

On average, Abingdon-on-Thames has higher accessibility to almost all key services by public transport or walking compared to the rest of Oxfordshire and national average. It takes on average 15 minutes to reach the town centre or GP service, while the nearest supermarket or primary school are located less than 10 minutes away (Appendix B - Fig B1.2).

Movement Vehicles - Key Points:

- Stratton Way severs the north of Abingdon from the town centre and there are few, formalised controlled crossing points which makes crossing the gyratory system challenging.
- Stert Street and High Street are a one way system through the town centre.
- Wayfinding and orientation within the town centre is often difficult.
- There is good access to car parking with potential for the expansion of Rye Farm car park.
- The prevailing speed limit within the Town Centre is 30 mph, however there is future opportunity to reduce down to 20 mph.
- There are around 1,007 public parking spaces available in the town centre, however this is reduced to 612 due to closure of much of The Charter car park.
- There is a good public bus network in Abingdon with access to neighbouring destinations including Oxford city centre.
- There is an opportunity to provide improved bus frequency and more convenient stops within the town centre, including access for elderly and disabled people.

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4.9 Movement - People

Pedestrian Movement

The plan opposite shows the pedestrian infrastructure within the town centre. This includes a public market place (Abingdon Market Place), and Bury Street. To the east of the town centre are Abbey Gardens / Abbey Meadows which provides a major public park and recreation facility in walking distance of the town centre.

Stratton Way is a physical barrier restricting pedestrian movement to the north and west skirting the edge of the town centre. There are poor crossings at grade and a subway that opens onto The Charter Site that invites anti-social behaviour at night.

Access to the river front is primarily from the south via Bridge Street and from the east via Abbey Meadows. However access to most of the river frontage to the north of the Thames is restricted by development breaking up the Thames path that runs along the River Ock. The Ock Valley Walk is maintained by Abingdon Town Council and starts at St Helen's Church south of the West St Helen Street car park.

Provision for Cyclists

There is a major national cycle route, the Hanson Way, also known as NCN5 that connects the north of Oxfordshire to the south. The route goes through Abingdon, entering from the east alongside the River Thames and exiting to the south towards Didcot. The southern part of this route through the town centre is shared with vehicles. Apart from this route, the local cycle network is fragmented across the town and there is potential for this to be improved.

Movement People - Key Points:

- There is excellent access to recreational green spaces within a 5-10 minute walk of the town centre.
- The southern part of the National Cycle Network route is a shared route with the public highway.
- The only fully pedestrianised street in the town is Bury Street, however the southern part tends to be more active and vibrant than the northern part.
- There is opportunity to improve north-south and east-west pedestrian links through the town.
- The town centre has potential to build upon the principles of a 15 minute neighbourhood.

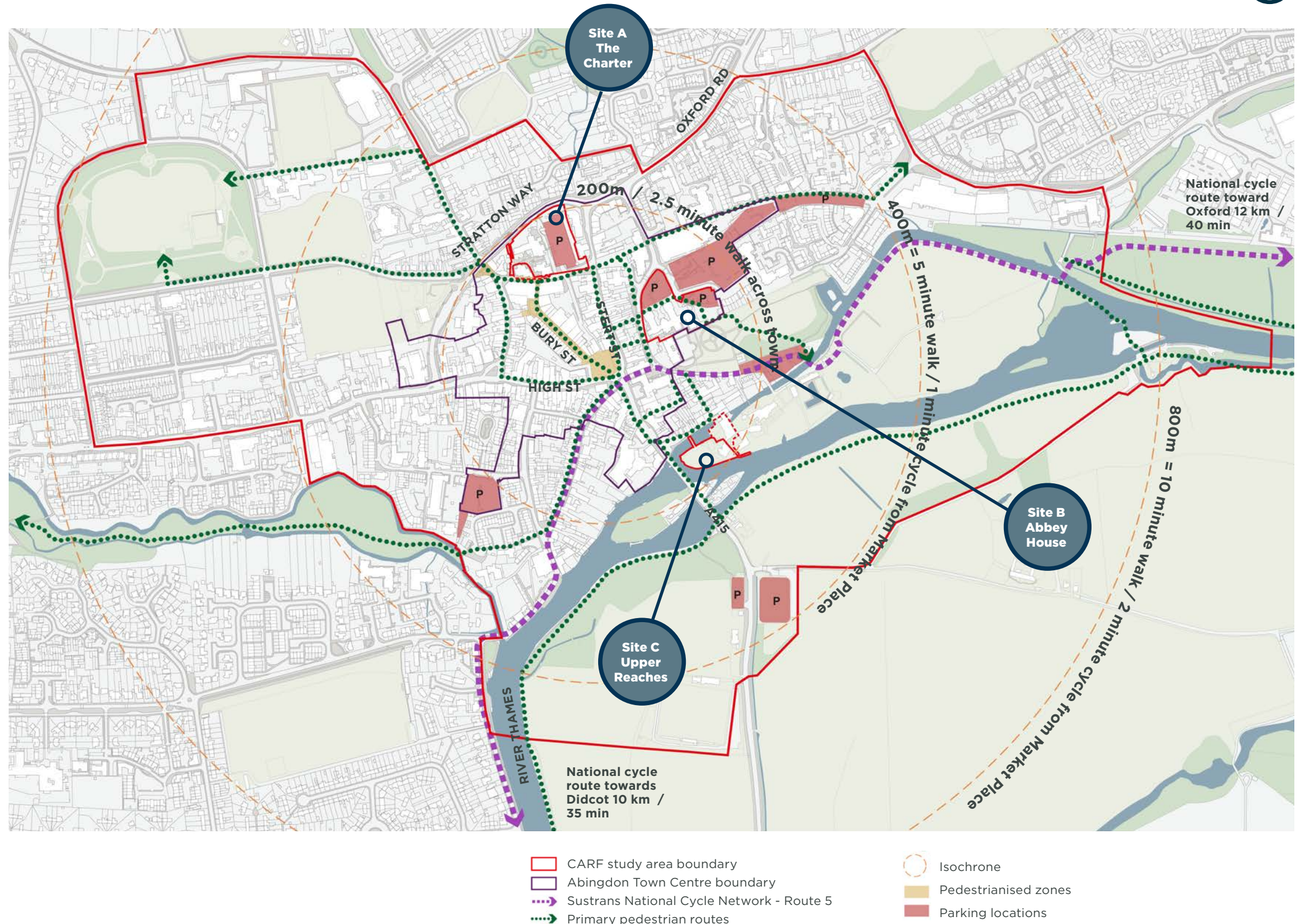


Fig 4.32: Pedestrian and cyclist movement plan



4.10 Land Use - Daytime



Abingdon Town Centre is compact and includes a relatively defined retail and commercial core set around the High Street, Ock Street, Stert Street, Bath Street and Bridge Street. The uses within this area include many retailers, professional offices, healthcare, restaurants / bars and other shopping / leisure uses. To the south and west of Market Place there are a few more independent shops on Bridge Street, East and West St Helen Street and Bath Street. These are important in maintaining a diverse retail offering in the town centre. However, since Covid-19 there has been a general decline in retail and there are several retail units in prominent locations that remain vacant.

Beyond this central area the remainder of the Study Area is largely residential, however there are several schools, including primary schools, churches and large areas of open space such as Albert Park and Abbey Meadows / Gardens.

Several important buildings and spaces in the town centre are owned and / or are operated by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council. This includes The Guildhall, which host events for the town and the Market Place, where the Town Council hosts events and is responsible for renting out table space to cafes, enabling the cafe culture present in this location.

Land Use Daytime - Key Points:

- There are several vacant buildings along Stert Street and Bury Street.
- The town centre is dominated by retail led uses with low rise residential housing around the periphery.
- There is an opportunity to diversify uses in the town centre including new homes and office space.
- There is an opportunity to build upon the cafe culture and independent retail offering which is popular during the day.
- There is an opportunity to encourage independent retailers to occupy shop units through business support offered by Abingdon Town Council, building upon the strong craft trade that exists.

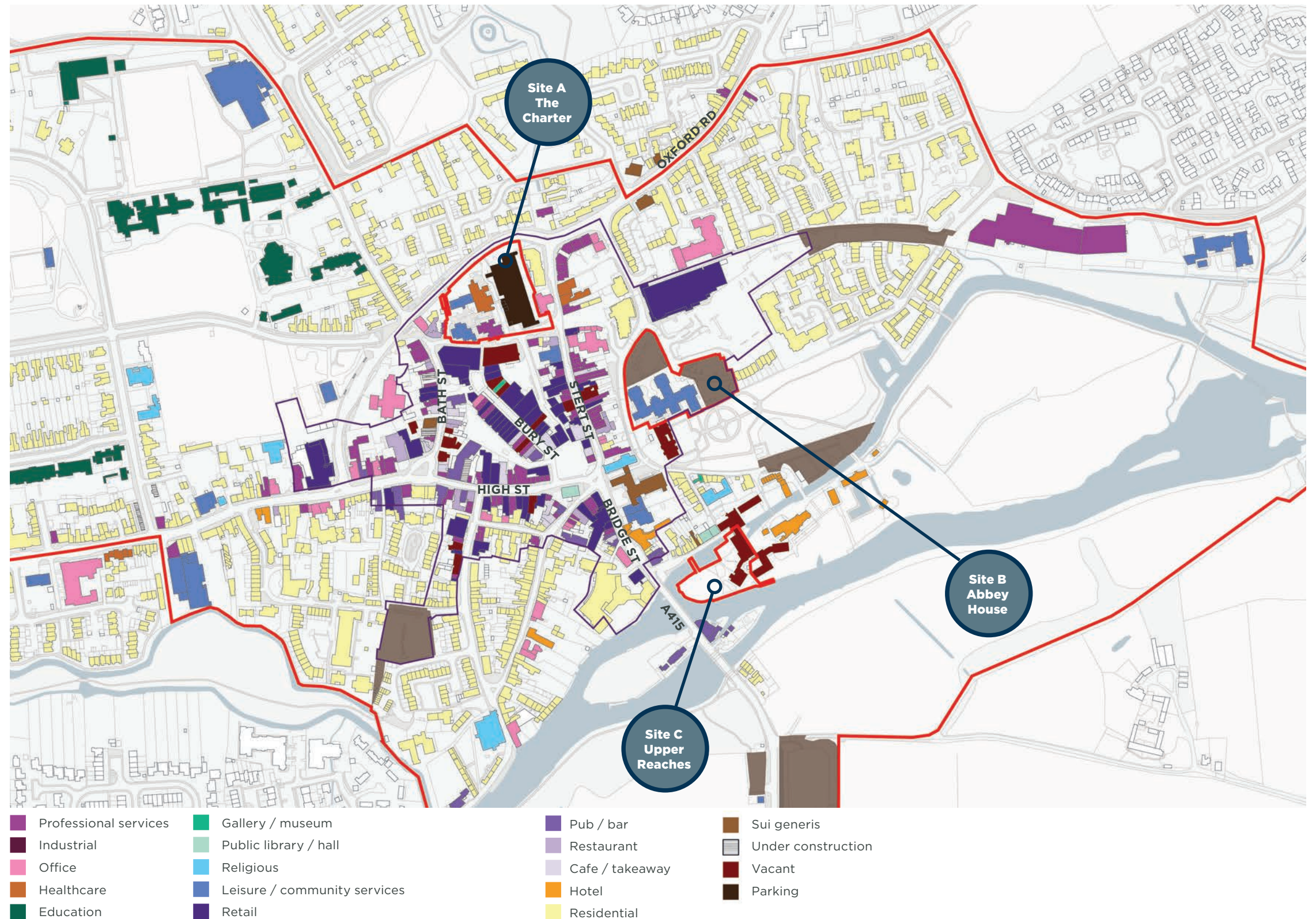


Fig 4.33: Land use (daytime) plan



4.11 Land Use - Evening



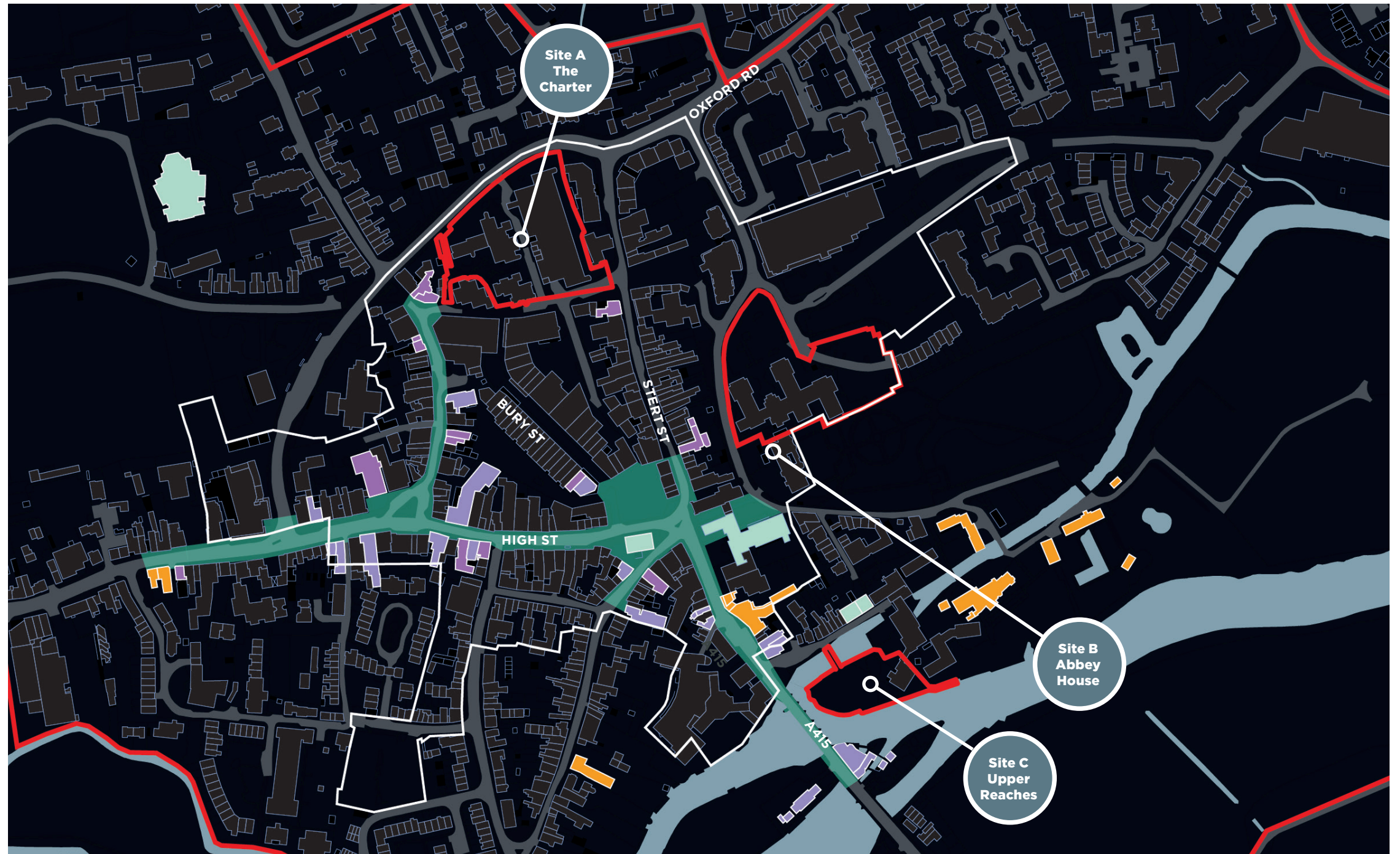
The plan opposite illustrates the night time and evening economy uses in Abingdon town centre. Most restaurants are spread across the town centre, while pubs / bars are more concentrated along Bath Street and High Street.

Night time uses in Abingdon are limited with no nightclubs being identified within the town centre although most pubs / bars are typically open to 1-2am.

Most hotels are located to the south-east of the town centre including the Crown & Thistle and Cosener's House.

Land Use Evening - Key Points:

- There is no dedicated area for night time and evening economy uses in Abingdon town centre although there is a concentration of these uses around High Street / Bath Street.
- More emphasis could be given to arts and culture as part of the nighttime economy offer, including Amey Theatre, Unicorn Theatre and The Abbey Cinema.
- There is potential to create a more active and vibrant evening economy within the town which builds upon the current High Street / Bath Street offering to attract more evening and weekend visitors into Abingdon town centre.
- There may be merit in exploring whether more pubs, bars or restaurants could be located along the river in order to compliment the various hotels that have tended to congregate in this location.



- Pub / bar
- Restaurant
- Hotel
- Event spaces

Fig 4.34: Land use (evening) plan

5.0 Site Analysis



5.1 Land Ownership

5.2 Site Specific Considerations



5.1 Land Ownership

The plan opposite shows land and built assets which are under OCC and Vale ownership. It also indicates where assets owned by the two councils are the subject of lease agreements. It does not identify other land ownership in the town, although there are other significant land owners such as Abingdon Town Council.

Three specific brownfield Sites have been identified by Vale for potential redevelopment, which need to be considered as part of the broader regeneration proposals for the town centre. These include:

- The Charter
- Upper Reaches
- Abbey House

The CARF study has also identified The Net Site under the ownership of OCC as another potential development site for further consideration.

Summary:

- Vale owned Sites can play a major role in the vision and delivery plan for the town centre, given the desire for their refurbishment or development and prominence within the town.
- It is important that these Sites are not viewed as development opportunities in isolation, but as part of a broader vision for Abingdon which considers all landholdings within the CARF study area and ensures a comprehensive approach is taken.

- ▭ CARF Study Area and Opportunity Sites
- ▭ Freehold (Vale)
- ▭ Leasehold (OCC)
- ▭ Freehold (OCC)
- ▭ Leasehold (Other)

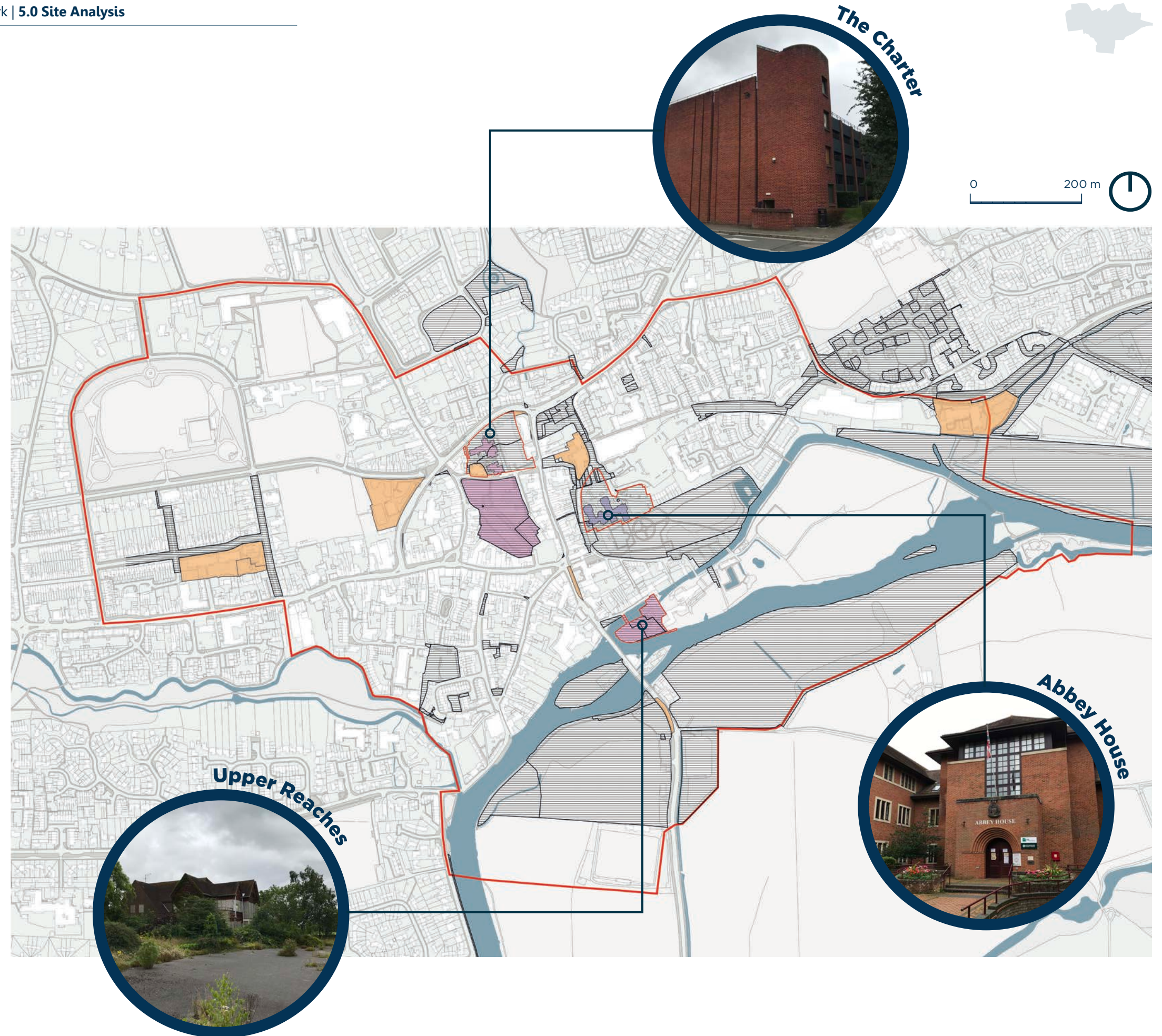


Fig 5.1: Land ownership plan



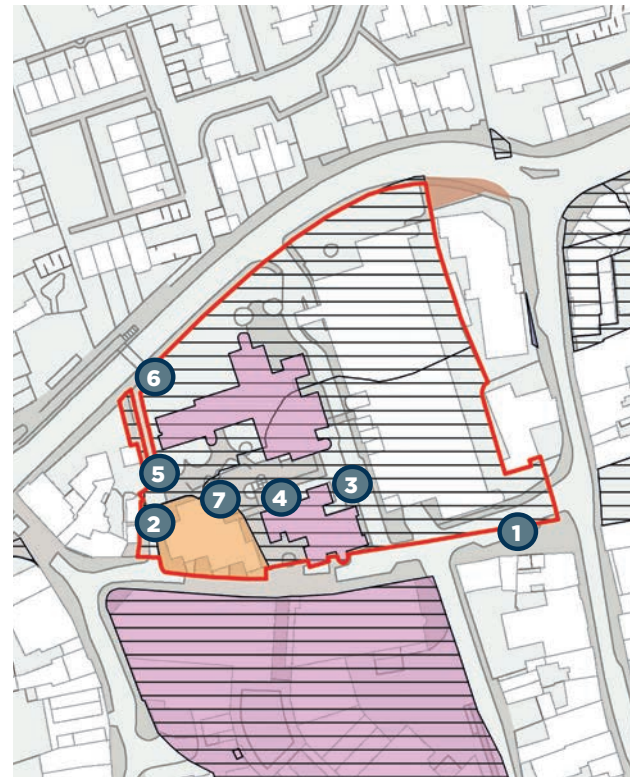
5.2 Site Specific Considerations

5.2.1 Site A: The Charter



Site Description

- The Charter Site area is approximately 0.92 hectares and is located on the northern edge of the town centre boundary.
- The Site sits outside but adjacent to the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area and is bounded by a Grade II* listed building to the east of the Site.
- The Site is bounded to the north by Stratton Way and there is a pedestrian subway tunnel on the north-west corner that links the north of Abingdon to the town centre.
- The freehold ownership of the Site is split between OCC and Vale.
- The freehold interest of the Health Centre, Day Care Centre and Car Park is owned by Vale and the freehold interest of the Library owned by OCC.
- The Site within Vale's freehold is subject to a number of occupational leases which provide health and other public services.
- The buildings on the Site were built in the mid 1970's (completed 1977) and are of masonry construction. They have little to no significance to the character of the historic town centre.
- The multi-storey car park is 4 storeys in height and in poor condition. At the time of publication it was partly closed to the public.
- Core Policy 10 (CP10) within Vale's Local Plan 2031 relates to this Site and supports a retail led development.
- There have been concerns with safety following several reports of anti-social behaviour and crime occurrences on the Site.
- There are several mature trees to the north of the Site that provide a natural buffer from the busy traffic on Stratton Way.



- 1 The Charter Site
- 2 Freehold (Vale)
- 3 Freehold (OCC)
- 4 Leasehold (Other)

Fig 5.2: Land ownership plan for The Charter Site



Fig 5.3: View of The Charter Car park from Broad Street



Fig 5.4: View of Abingdon library. There are overhead footbridges that connect the buildings on the Site at an upper level



Fig 5.7: View of the pedestrian subway under Stratton Way, linking the north of Abingdon with the town centre



Fig 5.5: View of The Charter car park from the adjacent highway running north to south



Fig 5.8: View looking north towards residential areas across Stratton Way from the northern edge of the Site



Fig 5.6: View of The Charter car park from behind Abingdon Library



Fig 5.9: Photo of the graffiti related to antisocial behaviour on The Charter Site



Considerations - The Charter



Opportunities

There is potential to:

- Redevelop the Site to create a major new mixed-use development. This may include restaurants, shops, new housing (including later living homes), a health hub, potential employment / office space and a new and improved public library / tourist information centre to replace the existing facilities. All proposals should consider the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area SPD.
- Enhance the public realm along Broad Street and Bury Street and provide a new public square at the entrance to The Charter. This new public square could support a new multi-modal transport hub with space for cycle parking / facilities.
- Open up a through route for buses along Broad Street, onto Bath Street connecting with Stratton Way with a drop-off at The Charter. This would also serve to relieve the existing congestion along Stert Street.
- Create new accessible green space by retaining existing trees around the Site and creating an improved urban park setting.

Constraints

- Abingdon Library facilities may need to be re-provided on the Site or relocated elsewhere, however the future of library provision is to be determined by OCC.
- The north-east corner of the Site is located within Flood Zone 2.
- There are likely to be a number of ownerships and occupational interests to consider.
- New development would need to consider the impact of views to / from the east towards listed buildings at Stert Street.
- The Site is bounded by a Grade II* listed building to the east and there are four other listed buildings within it's vicinity.

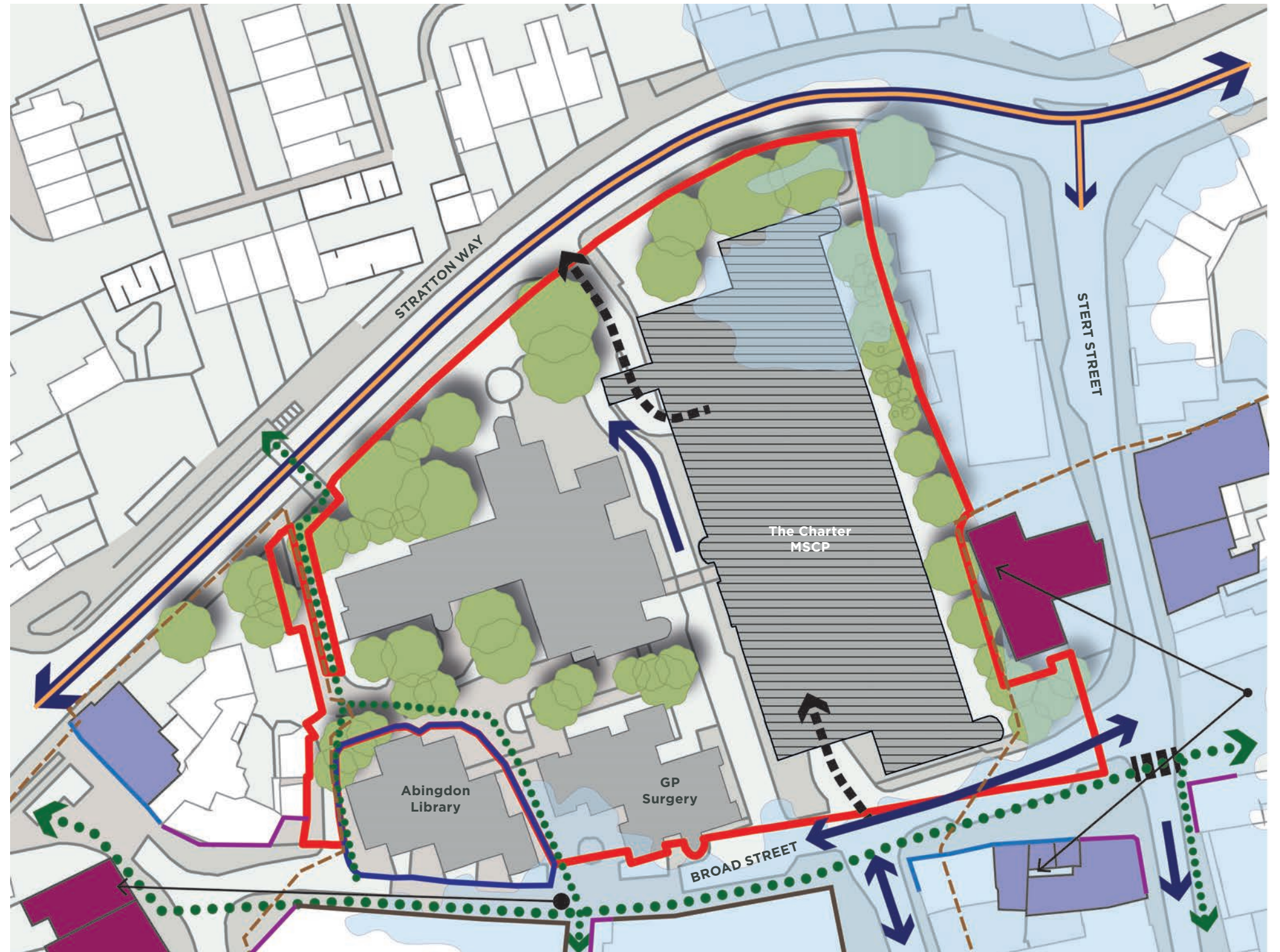
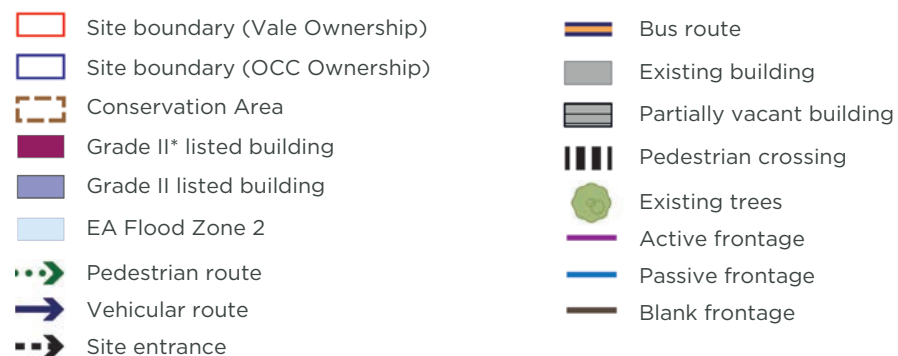


Fig 5.10: The Charter Site considerations plan

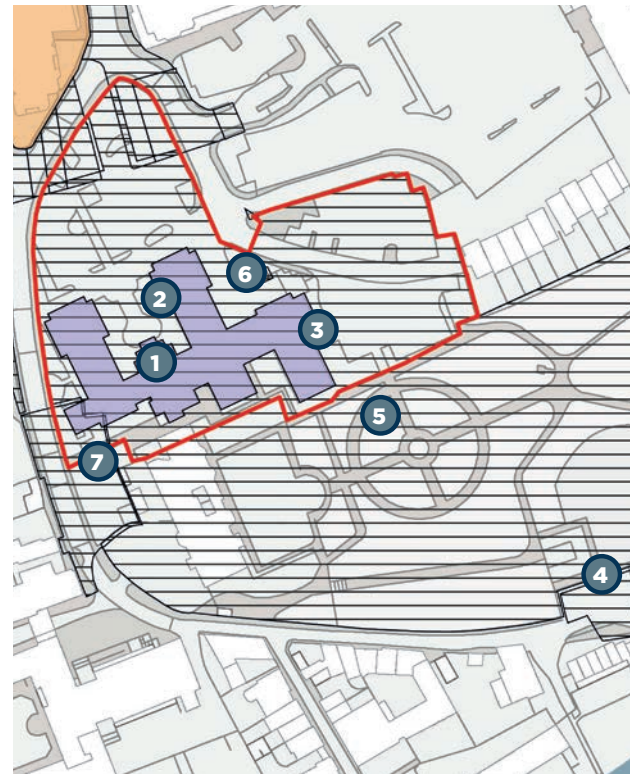


5.2.2 Site B: Abbey House



Site Description

- The Abbey House Site extends to approximately 0.86 hectares.
- The majority of the Site, except for the gardens, fall within the Town Centre Policy Area (DP13) but there is no site specific policy relating to it.
- Vale own the freehold interest of the Abbey House Site, which is occupied by OCC and the Citizens Advice Bureau. At the time of publication, Vale and South have temporarily relocated their staff to work from Abbey House. Its future use needs to be considered, be that redevelopment or conversion to alternative uses.
- Part of the Site falls within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area. This includes Old Abbey House and Gardens. There are no listed buildings within the Site boundary, although Old Abbey House and walls to Abbey Close and Trendell's Garden is Grade II listed, and the Gardens are a National Scheduled Monument.
- Grade I listed Abbey Gate is located across from the Grade II listed Old Abbey House and there are several Grade II* listed buildings to the south of the Site.
- Old Abbey House was built around 1780 and is constructed of limestone and brick dressing. Many of the original architectural features remain, however there have been significant alterations to the building particularly to the eastern facing facade that fronts onto the Gardens.
- Old Abbey House Site has been sold and the building is being converted into a 27 bedroom hotel.
- New Abbey House is of a similar architectural style to the buildings on The Charter Site c.1990s although the official year of construction is unknown. It comprises red brick and masonry construction. The building is approximately 3.5 storeys in height.
- There are two surface car parks on the Site, the Cattle Market and Civic Car Parks which provide around 135 spaces.
- The national cycle network route (NCN5) runs along the Site's southern boundary from east to west.



 CARF Study Area and Opportunity Sites
 Freehold (Vale)
 Leasehold (OCC)
 Freehold (OCC)

Fig 5.11: Land ownership plan for the Abbey House Site



Fig 5.12: View of entrance to new Abbey House



Fig 5.13: View of the Civic car park from Abbey House



Fig 5.16: View of Abbey Gardens, a National Scheduled Monument



Fig 5.14: View of Abbey House from the Cattle Market car park



Fig 5.17: View of the entrance into the Cattle Market car park from the north



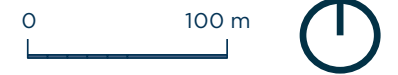
Fig 5.15: View of Abbey Close car park to the south of Abbey Gardens



Fig 5.18: View of the west side of Abbey House and along Abbey Close Street to the east of the Site boundary



Considerations - Abbey House



Opportunities

There is potential to:

- Refurbish and re-purpose the Abbey House building and associated car parking areas to the north and east of the main building.
- Provide a new use which contributes positively to the town centre and complements the neighbouring Old Abbey House as a hotel. Opportunities include a mixed-use building with office space, residential accommodation, a hotel, a health hub and other community uses.
- Consolidate some car parking, whilst prioritising elderly and disabled vehicle users and provide an improved public realm experience for pedestrians, including improvements to pedestrian connections from Stert Street to Abbey Gardens and the neighbouring Waitrose Site.
- There is potential in the long term to develop on the car parks and propose new uses that complement the adaptive re-use of Abbey House.

Constraints

- There are likely to be a number of ownerships and occupational interests to consider.
- Any future uses of Abbey House should be sensitive to the adjacent Grade II Listed Old Abbey House and other adjacent Grade I and II listed buildings.
- Any future uses of Abbey House should be sensitive to the Abbey Gardens Scheduled Monument and Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area.
- Abbey Close is a narrow two-way street leading to the Abbey Close car park, where there is no through route.

Site boundary (Vale Ownership)	Bus route
Conservation Area	Bus stop
Grade I listed building	Existing building
Grade II listed building	Under redevelopment
EA Flood Zone 2	Scheduled Monument
EA Flood Zone 3	Existing trees
Pedestrian route	Active frontage
Vehicular route	Passive frontage
Site entrance	Blank frontage
National cycle network route	

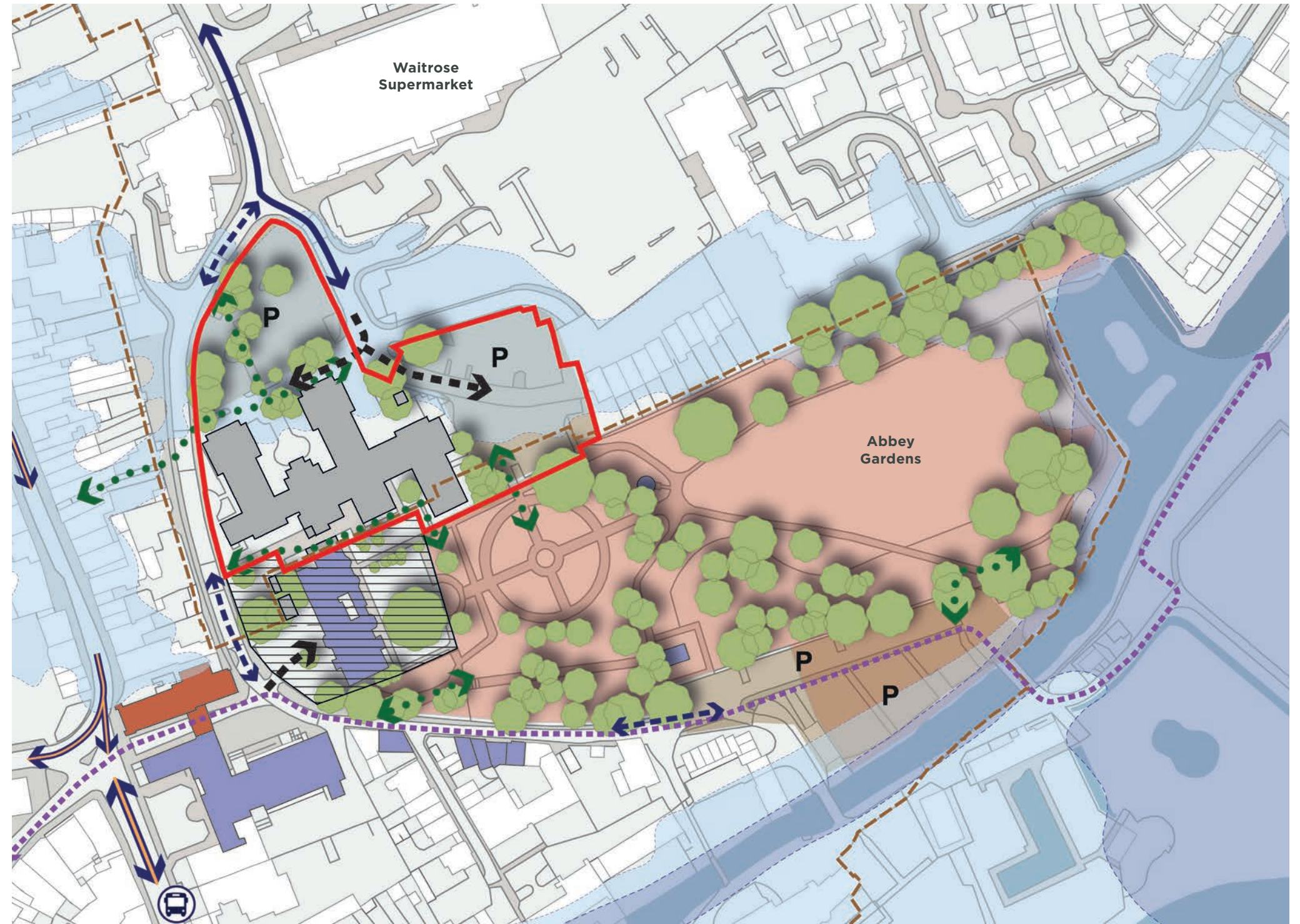


Fig 5.19: Abbey House Site considerations plan

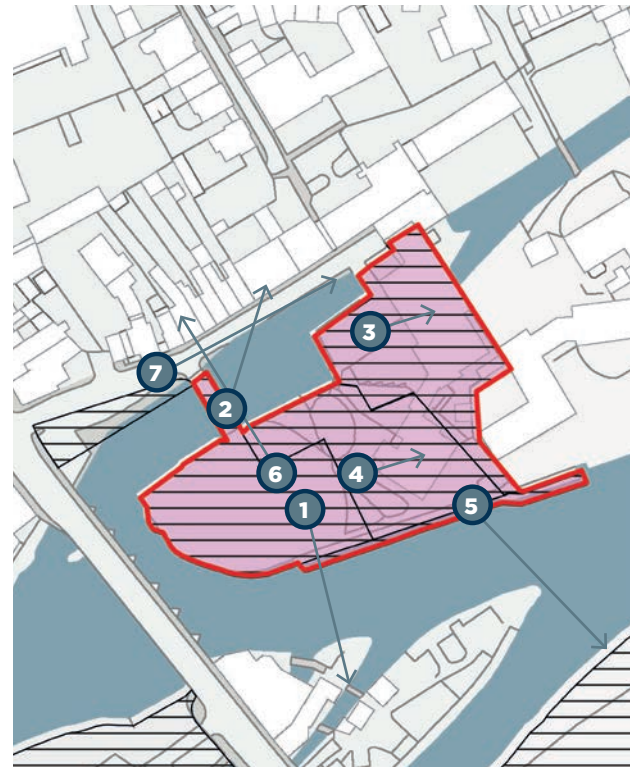


5.2.3 Site C: Upper Reaches



Site Description

- The Upper Reaches Site area measures approximately 0.45 hectares.
- The Site is a peninsula surrounded by the River Thames. It is currently unoccupied and there is one vacant building, the former Upper Reaches hotel, that has been closed since 2015.
- The whole Site is within the freehold interest of Vale. The Site is under a long leasehold which constrains development. The Vale continues to explore opportunities to encourage and enable improvement to the Site.
- The land and buildings are currently let to the 'Contemporary Hotels Limited' with 73 years left on the lease.
- The Site sits outside the town centre boundary but falls within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area. There is no site-specific planning policy related to the potential future development of the Site.
- Part of the hotel building to the north-east of the Site is Grade II listed, while the part to the south is of newer construction but has little architectural merit.
- The majority of residential buildings to the north of the Site along Thames Street are Grade II listed.
- Abingdon Bridge and Abbey Buildings adjacent to the Site are listed and Scheduled Monuments.
- There are only two points of access onto the peninsula from Thames Street including a narrow vehicle bridge.
- The Site is located in Flood Zone 2 and partially in Flood Zone 3 and there is a history of localised flooding in the area.



Upper Reaches Site
 Freehold - Vale
 Leasehold - Other

Fig 5.20: Land ownership plan for the Upper Reaches Site



Fig 5.21: View of the Site looking south-west towards the Nags Head pub along Abingdon Bridge



Fig 5.22: View of Thames Street from the bridge connecting to the Site



Fig 5.25: View of Rye Farm Meadow to the south of the Site across the River Thames



Fig 5.23: View of the vacant listed Upper Reaches building to the east of the Site



Fig 5.26: View from the Site looking north towards the historic buildings on Thames Street



Fig 5.24: View of the southern part of the Upper Reaches building



Fig 5.27: View along Thames Street looking towards the north-east



Considerations - Upper Reaches



Opportunities

- Provide improved pedestrian access into the Site using the existing bridge connections from Thames Street.
- Improve views of the river frontage from Abingdon Bridge and from Rye Farm Meadow located to the south of the River Thames.
- Redevelop part of the Site and re-purpose the Grade II listed building to the north-east to potentially provide uses such as a hotel and function space, restaurant and other leisure uses, and possibly new homes.
- Provide recreational open space on part of the Site that could complement the potential redevelopment of the listed building and any new uses.

Constraints

- The majority of the Site lies within Flood Zone 2 and partially in Flood Zone 3, which could limit potential development on the Site, or at least part of the Site.
- The Site falls within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area and there are several listed buildings neighbouring the Site's boundary that may impact development.
- There is a Grade II listed building within the Site area that would need to be retained and re-purposed.
- The Site is bounded on three sides by the River Thames. If the Site were to flood, there could be potential access issues.
- Under the current lease agreement, redevelopment will need to be delivered by the long leaseholder in partnership with Vale.
- Vehicular access onto the Site may be limited by the narrow width of the bridge crossing. Thames Street is also very narrow towards its eastern end.
- Adjacent Abingdon Bridge and the Abbey Buildings are Scheduled Monuments, which may impose further constraints on the development of the Upper Reaches Site.

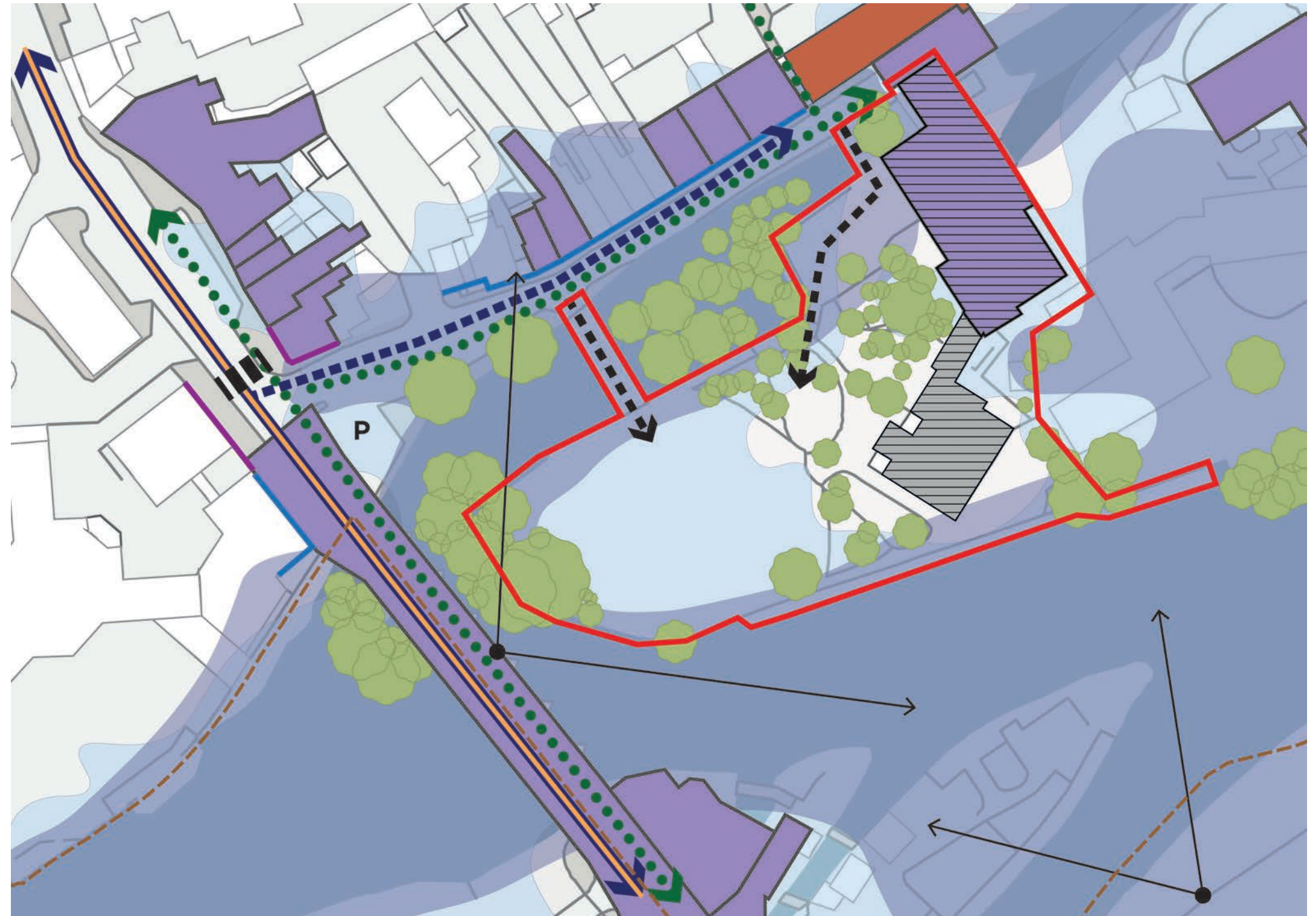


Fig 5.28: Upper Reaches Site considerations plan



6.0 Market Analysis



- 6.1 Market Analysis
- 6.2 Key Findings



6.1 Market Analysis

The following market analysis was undertaken in February 2022 ahead of the subsequent work to develop the CARF proposals.



Retail

Abingdon is designated as a Market Town in the Vale Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and its role is to provide essential services for the surrounding area.

The main retailing streets within Abingdon are Bury Street, High Street, Stert Street and Bath Street. Bury Street is the main retailing street within Abingdon, with national retailers including Boots, Superdrug, WHSmith and Poundland. However, there is no defined anchor tenant in the town centre and as at February 2022, six units were highlighted as vacant.

Stert Street is dominated by local independent retailers. Abingdon has a strong brewing tradition and Bath Street is dominated by independent food and beverage (F&B) operators and several takeaway shops. Across the town centre, there is relatively little in terms of national F&B operators, and ASK, Pizza Express, Pablo (part of the Lounges group), two Costa Coffees, Starbucks and Wetherspoons are the only branded restaurants / cafes. There is little in terms of a premium dining offer.

In terms of foodstore provision, Abingdon town centre has a limited supply. Waitrose is located on the east of the town centre and there are two small Tesco Express' on Oxford Road and off Wootton Road, a Co-Op on West St Helen Street, a Spar on High Street and a number of small independent convenience stores. A new Lidl store opened in April 2021 within Fairacres Retail Park and a Tesco Extra is located off Marcham Road. Planning Permission was granted in November 2021 for a new Aldi supermarket on Wootton Road.

The food store market is active at present, although this is a quickly evolving dynamic. Food retailers have an active requirement for Abingdon of circa 10,000-25,000 square foot (sqft), but this is for Sites outside the town centre due to the parking requirement.

Rents within Abingdon's main retail locations are between £12 per square foot (psf) and £20 psf on an overall basis. Immediate competition to the town centre comes from Fairacres Retail Park, which is located c. 2 km to the west of the town, between Abingdon Community Hospital and the A34. Occupiers here include B&M, B&Q, Pets at Home, Lidl, Costa, The Gym and Homebase.

Oxford is the greatest competition to Abingdon where there is a greater provision of occupiers, particularly national outlets and mid-high end fashion retailers, in a quality environment. Pedestrianised Cornmarket Street is the prime pitch and Oxford also benefits from the refurbished and extended Westgate Centre which opened in 2017 and which provides modern retail and leisure space.

Didcot also provides both comparison and convenience shopping, with the Orchard Centre comprising a Sainsburys, M&S Food Hall and fashion operators such as H&M, TK Maxx and Next.



Office

Office accommodation in Abingdon is split between the Business and Science Parks, standalone options and the town centre. Occupier requirements tend to be focussed at Harwell and Milton Park, particularly when considering larger national and global occupiers, both of which are located just outside Abingdon.

As at February 2022, the Abingdon office market is generally relatively flat. Out-of-town rental levels are generally around £30.00 - £32.00 psf for grade A stock whereas rents within the town centre are generally between £15.00 and £20.00 psf, with the highest quoting rent at £21.50 psf at The Lambourn.

2021 saw increased activity in the R&D / life science sector and whilst focused in established science park locations in the wider area, demand and associated rents for

R&D space on Abingdon Science Park have increased with the most recent lettings at c £30 psf.

Abingdon town centre is predominantly characterised by small scale offices of 2,000-3,000 sq. ft occupied by locally owned businesses. In terms of potential requirements, given there is limited stock over 3,000 sq. ft., there is considered to be demand for units of circa 5,000 sq. ft. within Abingdon.

The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the office market was not clear as at February 2022 but an emerging trend for a new type of office typology is demand for a 'work near home' offer, i.e. satellite offices in and around major metropolitan areas which allow for more local commuting by employees. This provides workers with the separation between private and professional lives and the opportunity for social interaction, without a long commute.



Leisure

Due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the cinema market, national cinema operators are currently focussed on stabilising their existing portfolio rather than new acquisitions. National operators Picturehouse (owned by Cineworld), Odeon and Vue are all represented in Oxford, with a further independent The Ultimate Picture Palace, also located there.

The town centre's leisure offer was improved in December 2018 through the opening of the Abbey Cinema. There is also a Cineworld in Didcot, and both Oxford and Didcot are less than 20 minutes drive from Abingdon. The national operators not represented in the area are Everyman and the Light but in the current time, and given the extent of the competition, there is envisaged to be little demand for an additional cinema within Abingdon.

Abingdon has several cultural assets which are centred around the Abbey Buildings and its gardens. Abbey Hall hosts one cinema screen with a secondary screen in the Unicorn

Theatre, which also still hosts many other theatre performances.

The Abbey Gardens and Meadows provide a valuable outdoor space for the town centre, which includes good quality play space for children and links to the river where there is Abbey Meadows Outdoor Swimming Pool.

There are several sporting facilities on the edge of the town centre including The White Horse Leisure & Tennis Centre that is located 1.8 km to the east of the town centre. Further from the Town Centre are the Southern Town Sports Area and Tilsley Park, which contribute to the overall offering of the town.

Abingdon County Hall Museum is located in a Grade II listed building overlooking Market Place and offers a number of cultural events throughout the year, as well as telling the history of the local area. The Market Place hosts weekly Monday markets, monthly Farmers markets and quarterly local food and craft markets. Abingdon also hosts a wide range of musical events ranging from classical concerts to tribute bands, folk and jazz at a variety of venues from the 400+ seat Amey Theatre to local pubs.

Abingdon's library is located within The Charter area of the town centre and is accommodated within a small, poor-quality building. Subject to available funding, the possibility to relocate this facility into a better location and / or building should be considered.



Residential

Abingdon is highlighted in the Local Plan as an area appropriate for strategic housing growth with a need for affordable housing. Abingdon has an older population than both the national and Oxfordshire average, and there is therefore interest from developers of over-55 living accommodation.

In terms of future supply, there are a number of major residential developments underway



in and around Abingdon. Kings Gate is a residential development to the north of the town, currently being developed by David Wilson Homes. This is a scheme of 200 units, including 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed homes. 3 bed houses are currently being marketed for £466,000 - £487,000 and 4 beds at £559,000 - £689,000. It is part of a wider scheme of over 900 units, which will be developed in the future.

Dalton Barracks is a site in Shippon, approximately 2.20 km to the north west of Abingdon Town Centre currently occupied by the Ministry of Defence but expected to be vacated by 2029. This is allocated within the Local Plan as a site for development of 1,200 homes. However this could increase to c. 4,500 in line with the Garden Village status awarded by Homes England in June 2019.

On the outskirts of Kennington, to the north east of Abingdon, a development of 283 dwellings gained planning consent in 2019 and the site is currently being marketed.

As at February 2022, residential schemes in and around Abingdon have sales rates between £350-£480 psf.



Hotels

Abingdon has a reasonable range of hotel accommodation including Hilton Garden Inn, Premier Inn, Cosener's House and The Crown & Thistle.

Old Abbey House was acquired by Ede Group in February 2021 to convert the building into a 27-bedroom hotel.

Based on market feedback, there is interest in the potential for additional hotel beds in the town centre.



Health

There are currently two GP surgeries within Abingdon; Malthouse Surgery which is located within The Charter and Abingdon Surgery located on Stert Street. It is understood that both of these practices are actively exploring the potential for new premises given the pressure on their respective accommodation, and are potentially interested in co-locating to new premises.



Education

Abingdon is home to a high number of secondary, primary and specialist schools, alongside a higher education college within walking distance of the town centre. There are also a large number of primary schools within the suburban areas of Abingdon and adjacent villages.

Education is therefore an important source of employment for the town and also a driver of footfall.

6.2 Key Findings

Sector	Key Findings (as at February 2022)
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abingdon is a Market Town and has a role as a service centre. Bury Street is its only pedestrianised retail street but lacks an anchor at the northern end. Food store provision is limited, and food retailers have requirements for Abingdon. Abingdon faces strong competition from Oxford with a superior offer in a quality environment.
Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The office market is generally flat in Abingdon town centre. Occupier requirements tend to be focussed on Harwell and Milton Park. Rents circa £15 - £20psf in town centre. Potential requirements for 3-5,000 sq. ft. floorplates within the town centre. There is an emerging debate nationally on 'third space' accommodation to provide space for 'working near home' rather than 'working from home' which could benefit smaller centres.
Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural assets are focused around Abbey Gardens and Meadows, which provides valuable outdoor space for the town centre. Abingdon County Hall Museum offers cultural events and represents the history of the town. The Abbey Cinema is a relatively new addition to the town centre and given the impact of Covid on this sector and the competition from Oxford and Didcot, there is not considered to be demand from other operators at the current time. Abingdon Library is housed in a poor-quality building within The Charter. There is an opportunity to upgrade or relocate the library to provide a modern, fit for purpose facility. Sports facilities at White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre are situated outside of CARF study area.
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abingdon is highlighted in the Local Plan as an area appropriate for strategic housing growth and a need for affordable housing. There is demand from over 55 housing developers for the town centre. Two key schemes proposed for the wider Abingdon area: Kings Gate and Dalton Barracks with combined housing for over 2,100, with the potential for future growth at the Garden Village. Residential schemes in and around Abingdon have sales rates between £350psf - £480 psf.
Hotels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abingdon has a reasonable range of hotel accommodation including Hilton Garden Inn, Premier Inn, The Crown & Thistle and Cosener's House. There is understood to be interest to provide additional hotel beds in Abingdon town centre.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are two GP surgeries within Abingdon: Malthouse and Abingdon Surgery. Both surgeries are actively exploring the potential for new premises and are potentially interested in co-locating.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abingdon is home to a large number of educational facilities. These are an important source of employment for Abingdon and a driver of footfall.

Table 01: Key findings summary table

7.0 Analysis Summary



- 7.1 SWOT Analysis
- 7.2 Summary and Stage 2



7.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Heritage assets and historic town centre (but this can also limit the amount of change);
- Attractive riverside setting;
- Compact and walkable town centre;
- Ample parking provision;
- Good bus connections and access to the national cycle network;
- Excellent access to green and recreational space;
- Strong employment in healthcare, education and retail sectors;
- Contained retail core; and
- Immediate access to key services in under 15 minutes on foot.

Weaknesses

- No train station located in the town centre;
- Retail and leisure competition from Oxford;
- Confusing parking, signage and wayfinding;
- Key footfall drivers are located outside of the town centre i.e. schools, retail / leisure uses on Fairacres Retail Park and employment uses on Abingdon Business Park;
- One way traffic system / traffic over Abingdon Bridge; and
- Antisocial behaviour in parts of town centre, e.g. Upper Reaches, The Charter and the subway.

Opportunities

- Improved library and council services;
- Consolidation of car parking;
- Diversify the uses within the town centre;
- Improved pedestrian safety;
- Provision of night time economy uses;
- Reduction of air pollution and response to climate change through provision of new sustainable development and implementation of Electric Vehicle infrastructure in the town centre;
- Opportunity to better connect with existing and proposed communities to the north of Abingdon; and
- Improve and enhance transport hubs to provide shelter and seating, which could encourage public transport usage.

Threats

- Heritage (which can limit the amount of change);
- Climate change - in particular an increased risk of flooding to the Upper Reaches Site; and
- Over reliance on private car use.

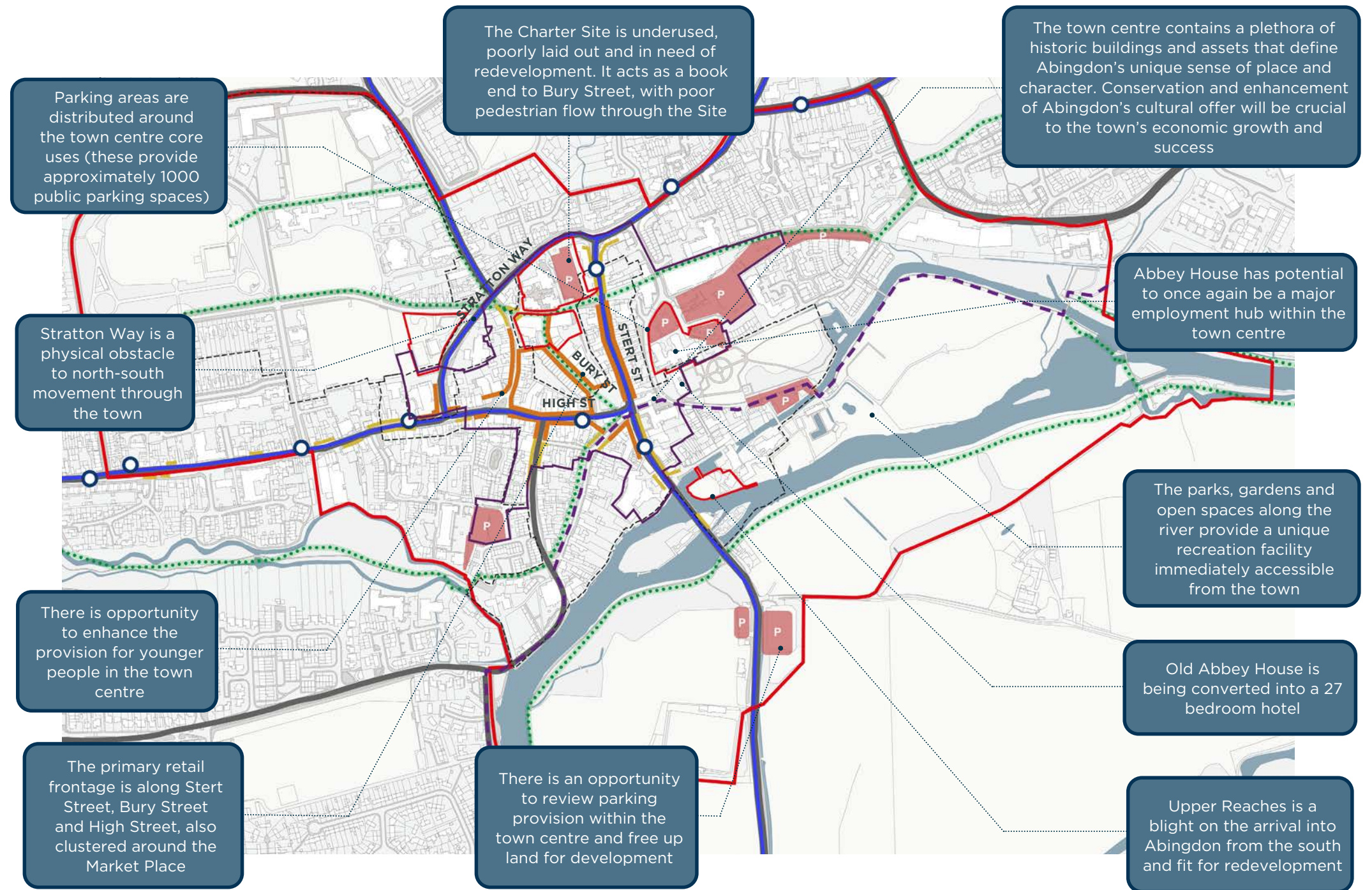
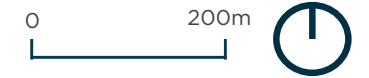


Fig 7.1: Townscape SWOT analysis plan



7.2 Summary and Stage 2

Abingdon Context

Following completion of Stage 1 of the CARF 'Analysis and Review', the following conclusions have been drawn regarding Abingdon-on-Thames town centre, which are taken forward through Stages 2-4 to deliver a Vision and strategies for key Sites.

Abingdon is a strategically well-located settlement on the banks of the River Thames at its confluence with the River Ock, with good north-south highway connections into Oxford, 10km to the north. The historic street pattern which dates back to the 12th century is largely intact, with a plethora of historic buildings creating a stunning centrepiece for the town, together with historic parks and gardens.

Much of the pre and post WWII era housing development has occurred to the north of the town centre due to the land alongside the river corridors to the south being constrained by flooding. The current Vale Local Plan housing policies seek to allocate further housing land to the north of the town, which will further grow Abingdon's population of 34,000+ people.

Major employers in the town have largely vacated the town centre, and are located at the Science Park off Barton Lane to the east and Abingdon Business Park to the west, and take advantage of these more accessible locations away from the tight streets of the historic town's core.

A high number of Abingdon residents are educated to degree level or higher (45.9%) which is significantly above the national average, and a large proportion of the population are within the 30-60 years working age bracket (40%).

The Abingdon town centre economy largely centres around retail providers, with some supporting leisure, arts / culture, and employment uses. To the north and west of the town there are several large and successful schools including Abingdon School, John Mason School and Fitzharry's School alongside Abingdon and Witney College, which operates as a higher education facility. As a result, education is a major draw and source of employment for residents of the town and its village neighbours.

The Market Place is the bustling heart of the town, as it has been for many hundreds of years. The recently refurbished space plays host to community events run by the Town Council, including a weekly market, farmers' market and craft fairs.

The CARF Study Area

The defined Study Area which is the subject of this work, comprises a total area measuring 112.6 hectares which covers much of the inner town area, including open spaces to the south and east. The Town Centre Policy Area (Local Plan DP13) is confined within this area and a Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council.

The Conservation Area (Local Plan DP37) is a key consideration for new development, within which Vale owns three key landholdings - Upper Reaches, The Charter and Abbey House. These key landholdings have a potentially significant role to play as part of the future regeneration of the town centre. The detail of these Sites is explained at Chapter 5.0 of this document.

The Opportunity

There is an opportunity to create a Vision and delivery strategy for Abingdon town centre which seeks to build upon the recognised successful attributes of the place. Whilst the council-owned assets located in the town can play a key role in regeneration, there are complexities associated with delivery of each Site which need to be considered further.

As identified through the summary SWOT analysis, there is opportunity to:

- Plan for sustainable re-development and future transport and mobility by ensuring actions which address climate change are a key part of future projects;
- Foster and promote Abingdon's daytime independent retail and leisure offer, which is centred around the Market Place;
- Protect Abingdon's rich heritage whilst better promoting the cultural offer;
- Better connect the town with the Thames and Ock river waterfronts;

- Rationalise public parking provision and as a result free up land for development in the town centre;
- Improve the Sustrans and other cycle links through the town which are currently dominated by vehicles;
- Enhance bus stops, connections and promote use of public transport, including access to Radley Station to reduce reliance on the private car;
- Provide new and rationalised healthcare facilities;
- Improve the night-time leisure and hospitality offer by creating more space to promote Abingdon as an evening destination for food, drink and entertainment;
- Respond to Vale's climate change objectives by cutting down pollution through reduced traffic, air pollution and generate green energy in the town centre as part of new developments;
- Better connect communities to the north of the town with the town centre through improved pedestrian and cycle connections, in particular across Stratton Way which is a physical obstacle to movement;
- Reduce antisocial behaviour, particularly around The Charter area of the town centre through redevelopment;
- Regenerate three council-owned Sites, The Charter, Upper Reaches and Abbey House which are currently vacant or under utilised;
- Create new employment opportunities, in the form of small office lets or work hubs through change of use or new development; and
- Explore opportunities for an improved youth provision through indoor and outdoor facilities that create spaces for younger people to meet and enjoy.

These identified opportunities later fed into the creation of the core objectives for the CARF.

Next Steps

Following completion of Stage 1, the next step taken was to prepare an overarching Vision for the defined CARF Study Area. A transport consultant was appointed to work as part of the project team to help develop this strategy. A two-stage consultation process was then undertaken, which involved first convening stakeholder workshops in early May 2022 to identify key issues and opportunities within the town centre; and secondly a public exhibition and 4-week online consultation based on emerging themes and ideas from the first stages of work. This has informed the Stage 2 work.

The Stage 2 work involved:

- Development of a movement / connectivity strategy;
- Development of a strategy to improve legibility, taking better advantage of the established town centre assets;
- A strategy to optimise car parking space distribution / rationalisation for the town centre;
- Recommendations for new uses and / or repurposing of existing uses;
- Recommendations for additional pedestrianised areas and / or areas of people focussed public realm;
- Identification of Opportunity Sites and feasibility studies for these sites;
- Identification of strategies and proposals that are underpinned by the need to address climate change; and
- Preparation of an overarching strategic ambition and Vision for the town centre.

Completing the CARF

Following completion of the consultation and Stage 2 work, more detailed urban design / viability studies were undertaken on specific identified development Sites, including supporting viability analysis to determine viable briefs / options. This will ensure that the CARF provides a robust regeneration framework that can transition seamlessly into delivery so that real, positive and sustainable change can take place.

Stages 2-4: Creating the Vision



8.0 Engagement and Key Themes



- 8.1** Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback
- 8.2** Theme 1: Town Centre Access and Public Realm Improvements
- 8.3** Theme 2: River Access, Culture and Recreation
- 8.4** Theme 3: Land Use and Built Form
- 8.5** Theme 4: Key Development Opportunities
- 8.6** Public Exhibition and Online Consultation



8.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

A workshop was hosted on 4 and 5 May 2022 at Abbey House for local stakeholder groups. The workshop was attended by 38 representatives of various local groups with around 20 participants at each workshop session.

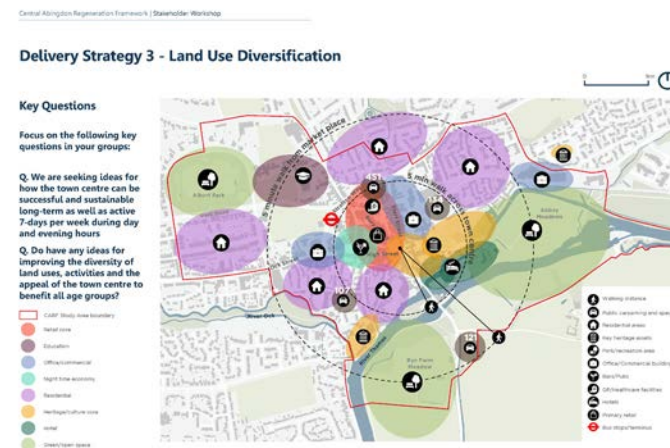
The stakeholders were asked to provide feedback and ideas on various delivery strategies that had emerged from the initial analysis and design objectives on this page. The workshop included a summary presentation of the work undertaken to date with reference to the emerging Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan, the Joint Local Plan and various transport strategies.

Four delivery strategies were presented and discussed at the workshops including:

1. Access and public realm improvements;
2. River frontage and green spaces provision;
3. Land use diversification; and
4. Key development Sites.

There was considerable alignment across both workshop sessions on a number of matters and recognition of the need to work jointly across the local authorities and local organisations to deliver improvements. The feedback given on the delivery strategies presented directly informed four key themes that were developed following the stakeholder engagement. The themes are presented as drivers for change in the town centre.

Full details of the stakeholder engagement exercise are set out in the CARF Consultation Report, available on the Vale's website.



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Fig 8.1: CARF stakeholder engagement slides

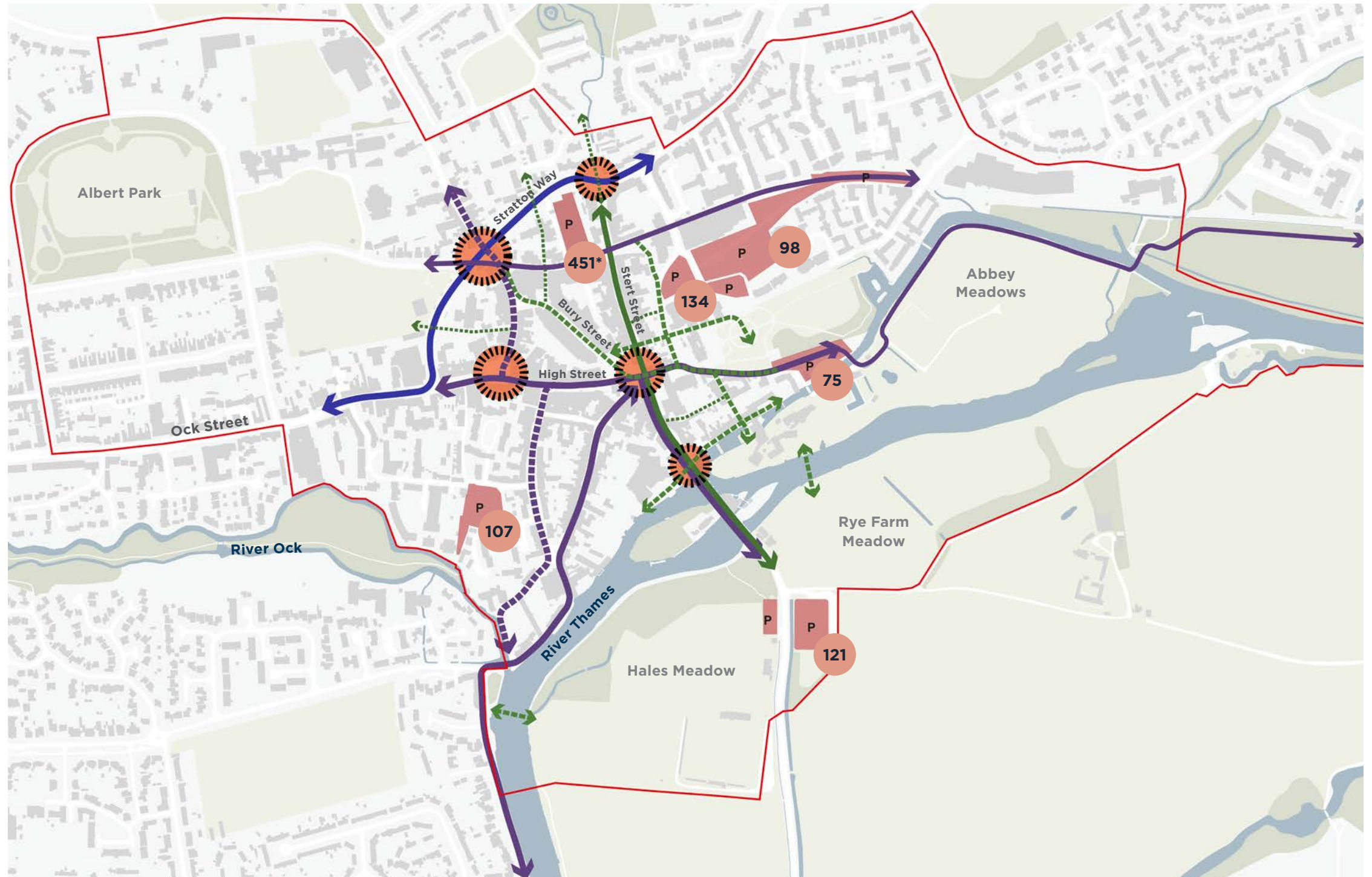


8.2 Theme 1: Town Centre Access and Public Realm Improvements



Key interventions in relation to Theme 1 include the following:

- Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities in the town centre, especially around the Market Place.
- Potential for “Park and Walk” facilities leading into the town centre.
- Improved bus priority in some locations and the need to make the town centre more accessible in general for all user groups.
- Improved use of, and access to, the River Thames for a variety of river-based activities and leisure.
- Better pedestrian links, especially from the south including the potential for a new pedestrian / cycle bridge across the Thames to the west and / or east of Abingdon Bridge, alongside opportunities to permanently instate one-way traffic over Abingdon Bridge to enable the widening of the footpath and cyclepath.
- Key junction improvements - Areas where traffic calming and public realm improvements could be implemented to give greater emphasis to pedestrians and cyclists, reducing car dominance.
- Key public realm improvements - to include specific areas within the town centre, for example ‘The Square’ at Bath / Ock Street, Old Station Yard, and Market Place. Pedestrian improvements to enhance the user experience for those with accessibility and mobility issues alongside other more vulnerable demographics.
- Improved wayfinding through the implementation of new public art projects across the town centre. This could be bespoke lighting, street furniture, signage and / or landmark pieces that enhance the public realm experience.



* This car park is not at full capacity and currently operates with 56 spaces

- CARF Study Area boundary
- P Public car parking locations
- Car parking spaces
- ↔ Major vehicular route
- ↔ Key cycle corridor
- ↔ Key pedestrian corridor
- ☀ High incident areas for vehicle / pedestrian collisions
- Potential Interventions:**
- ↔ Potential connectivity, cycling and public realm improvements
- ↔ Potential cycle infrastructure improvements

Fig 8.2: Transport and public realm opportunities plan



8.3 Theme 2: River Access, Culture and Recreation



Key interventions in relation to Theme 2 include:

- Improving the offer for youth and young adults in key locations such as The Net;
- New “leisure routes” along the River Thames and within the town centre;
- Improved public spaces for play, relaxation, events and gatherings;
- Improved access to the waterfront and provision of blue / green infrastructure to support water based activities leisure uses;
- Potential for a culture trail around the town centre with wayfinding mechanisms, taking in key locations and buildings of historic and cultural significance; and
- A greater focus on arts, heritage and culture events and activities.

These locations were considered at the time for improved leisure and recreation provision:

1. The Net
2. Bath / Ock Street ‘The Square’
3. Bath / Bury Street entrance
4. Old Station Yard
5. Market Place
6. Northern Riverfront / Thames Street
7. Upper Reaches
8. St Helens Wharf / Margaret Brown Gardens

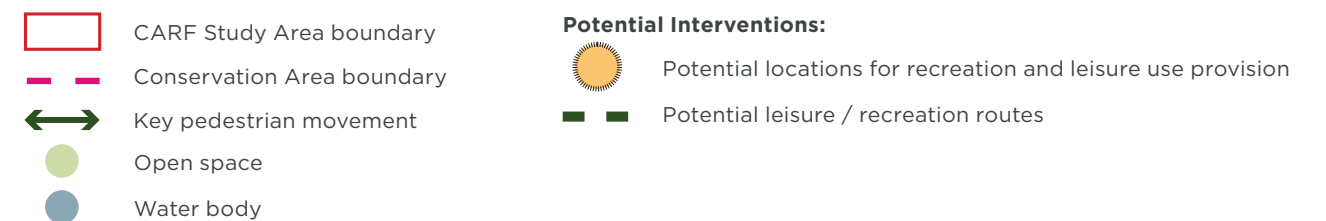


Fig 8.3: Recreation and culture opportunities plan



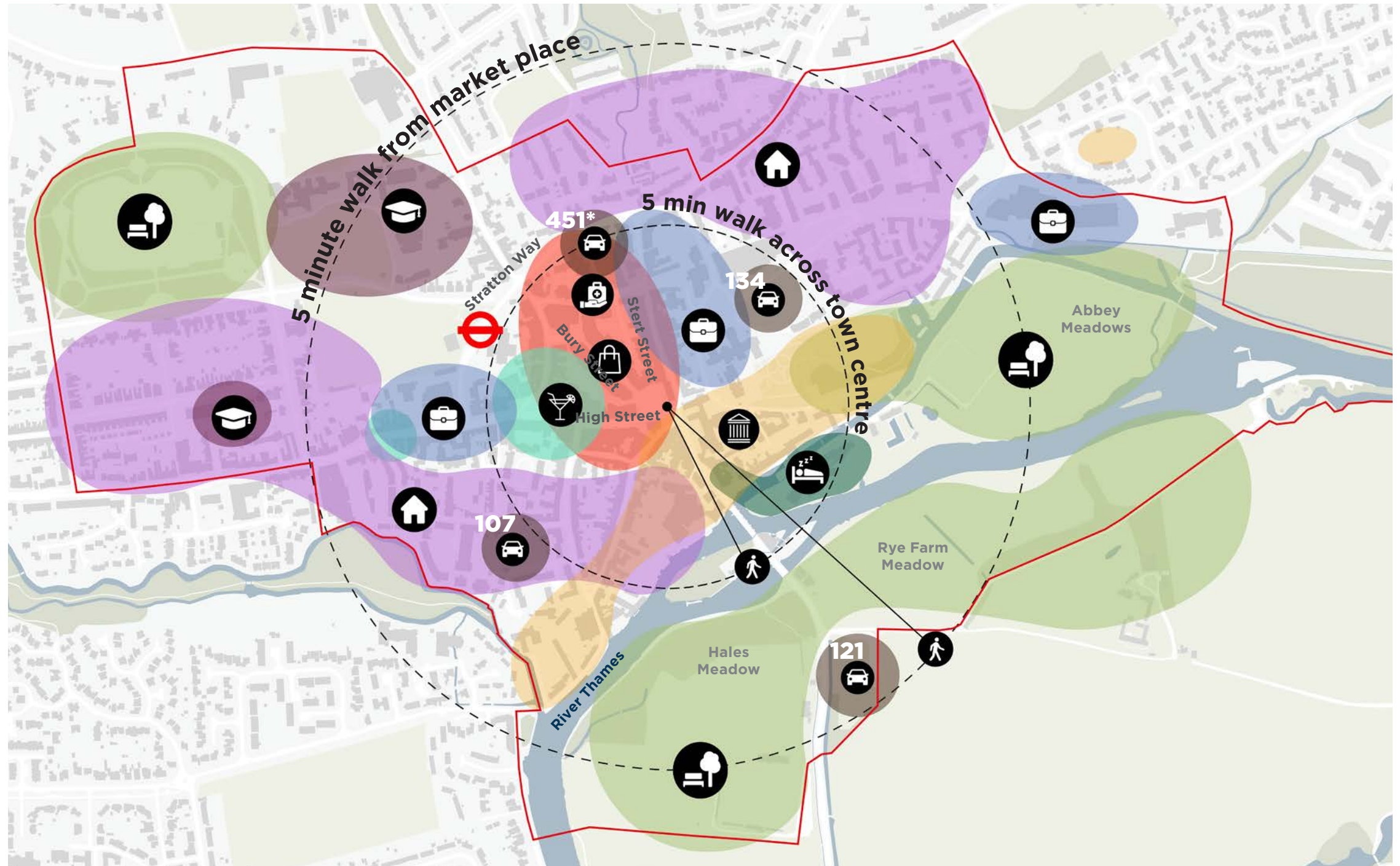
8.4 Theme 3: Land Use and Built Form



Key interventions in relation to Theme 3: include the following:

- Diversification of land use and activity in the town centre including an improved tourist information centre;
- Creation of a 'health hub' to house existing GP surgeries and complimentary health services;
- Re-housing the library in improved accommodation;
- Support for independent retailers;
- Ensuring mixed use which could include new residential uses, subject to location;
- Improving the visitor appeal, potentially including the provision of new hotel accommodation;
- Improved facilities and activities for youth;
- Future buildings or adapted buildings that include sustainable design features that help tackle climate change and accessibility issues; and
- Apply 15 minute neighbourhood principles, ensuring that a large percentage of the population are able to access activities and everyday necessities within the study area within a 15 minute walk.

- Retail core
- Education
- Office / commercial
- Night time economy
- Residential
- Heritage / culture core
- Hotel
- Green / open space



* This car park is not at full capacity and currently operates with 56 spaces

- CARF Study Area boundary
- Average walking time
- Public car parking
- Residential areas
- Heritage assets
- Park / recreation area
- Mixed employment / leisure
- Bars / Pubs
- GP / Healthcare facilities
- Hotels
- Primary retail
- School / Education
- Bus stops / terminus

Fig 8.4: Land Use and built Form opportunities plan



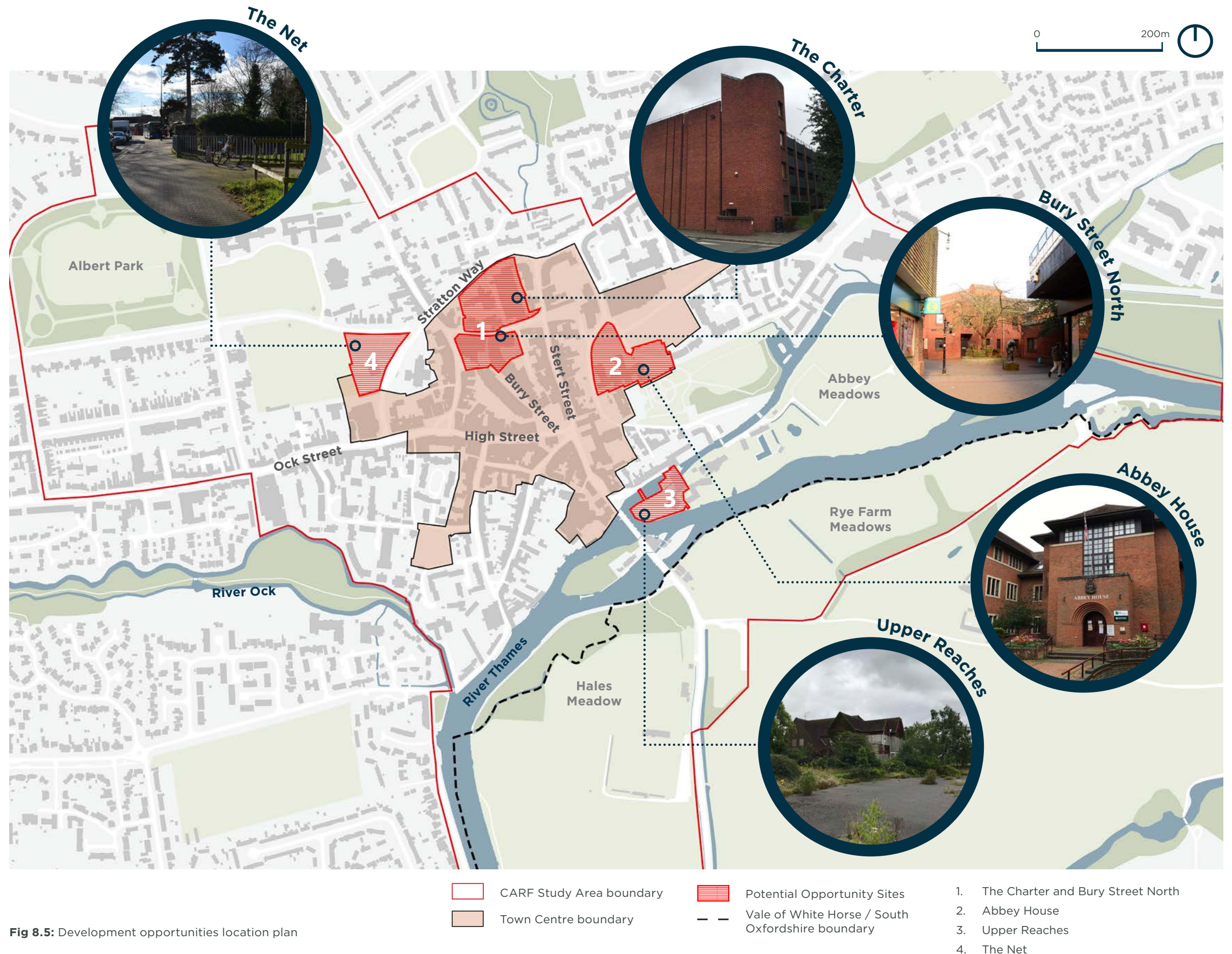
8.5 Theme 4: Key Development Opportunities

Key interventions in relation to Theme 4 include the following:

- The need to redevelop The Charter / Bury Street North area due to the appearance of the area and associated anti-social activities along with the potential for an integrated health hub amongst other uses in this location;
- The long-standing need to redevelop the Upper Reaches Site;
- The benefit of better youth provision in the town centre, including potential reestablished facilities at The Net Site; and
- The desire to consider other Opportunity Sites for potential future re-purposing, including Abbey House.

Three of the Opportunity Sites highlighted fall within Vale's ownership and have been identified earlier in this document. In addition, following stakeholder engagement, The Net Site was identified as a key opportunity for youth provision and has therefore been included in the CARF study. This Site falls within OCC's ownership. Coxeter House was also considered following the stakeholder workshop and was included in the public consultation. Together with the Bury Street North Site they demonstrate the considerable capacity available to create new uses within the town centre and improve the public realm.

The development opportunities for these Sites are considered in more detail in Chapter 10.





8.6 Public Exhibition and Online Consultation

A public consultation took place between 17 June and 15 July 2022, which included an online survey open for four weeks, an in-person consultation event on 17 and 18 June and a student workshop on 11 July 2022. In total, 385 people responded to the online survey, 355 people attended the in-person consultation event and 20 students attended the workshop. The consultation was advertised via email, press release, social media posts and flyers ahead of and during the process.

The in-person exhibition was used to launch the consultation and took place in a vacant shop on Bury Street in the heart of Abingdon town centre. Exhibition boards outlined the process to date alongside proposals for the key themes. Concurrently with the exhibition, a consultation website was launched displaying the material online alongside a survey to collect feedback. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at the in-person exhibition.

The online survey included 37 questions covering a wide variety of topics about Abingdon town centre based on the identified themes, with questions including:

- Whether they were a resident or a visitor;
- How frequently they visited central Abingdon;
- Suggestions for improving central Abingdon;
- Draft Vision and themes for change;
- Ideas for improving services, access, recreation and land use; and
- Detail on the proposals associated with each themes.

The council has produced a detailed Consultation Report which outlines the process, communications and responses in full detail. The below summarises the responses for each theme.

Vision and Objectives

Overall, there is agreement with and support for the CARF project. Participants and respondents generally support our vision and objectives, with 61% respondents to the online consultation either strongly supporting or supporting our vision. 24% respondents who didn't support the vision suggested it needs to be less vague, and others provided specific commentary about how it could be improved.

Respondents like central Abingdon for a lot of reasons, with the most common being:

- the River;
- access to green spaces, including Abbey Meadows and the playground;
- the history, character and aesthetic of central Abingdon;
- the Market Place; and
- the great variety of shops, particularly the independent shops.

Respondents think central Abingdon could be improved by a number of interventions, including:

- providing a better retail, food and beverage offer;
- addressing traffic volume and control; and
- improving parking and accessibility.



Fig 8.6: Photographs taken of the public consultation event setup

Theme 1: Town Centre Transport and Public Realm Improvements

There were a considerable number of comments in response to the specific topic-based questions and other associated questions which covered access, transport, car and cycle parking, the quality of the public realm, movement and circulation, Park & Walk sites and strategies amongst other things.

The following summarises the main responses:

- The private vehicle remains the most common main form of transport for people visiting central Abingdon, with 36% respondents answering this compared to 34% who walk and 20% who cycle. For this reason, car parking was still seen as necessary to serve the town centre;
- Many people think car parking is currently good, although would wish to see the level of provision retained and an increase in the number of free parking hours;
- Retention of car parking in central locations is needed for people with accessibility issues. Accessibility for everyone is key and needs to be embedded into all proposals;
- Traffic needs to be addressed and control measures are needed to reduce congestion, particularly over Abingdon Bridge and around the one-way system;
- A Park and Walk strategy would mostly be supported if it meant people would have to walk less than 15 minutes in daylight hours and 5 minutes in hours of darkness;
- More people would switch to more sustainable modes of travel to help tackle the climate emergency if improvements were made to the bus, cycle and pedestrian networks in and around the area;
- Existing bus provision is good but could be enhanced by new bus routes that serve key facilities and services, better timed and more reliable connections to rail services and improved reliability, timing and frequency of buses. 75% respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with

the need to enhance bus stops and connections, and promote use of public transport, including access to Radley Station to reduce reliance on cars. In addition, 13% respondents suggested that improved safety on buses, especially since Covid-19, would encourage them to use the bus; and

- 20% more people would travel to central Abingdon by bicycle if there were improved cycle paths with safer and better routes, more and better secure cycling facilities in the area, including secure bicycle storage in more central locations, better cycle lanes and cycle repair shops.

For instance:

- 70% either strongly agreed or agreed with the need to improve the Sustrans and other cycle links through the town which are currently dominated by vehicles;
- 68% of respondents provided additional comments to indicate what additional cycling infrastructure is required stated that secure bike facilities are needed, particularly in central locations;
- In addition, some respondents noted cycle paths are required near to schools with comments suggesting the existing cycle lanes on the main routes into the town were not currently fit for purpose;
- Improvements are required to elements of the public realm that encourage walking (e.g., signage, street lighting, ease of getting about, condition of pavements, street furniture and street cleanliness); and
- People particularly want the public toilets to be improved as there is currently a lot of vandalism alongside a lack of cleanliness and availability.



Theme 2: River Access and Recreation Provision

The following summarises the main responses received for Theme 2:

- 63% respondents use or access the River Thames frequently, and 29% access it sometimes. Of those responses, people use the river for many different things such as walking, running, sightseeing and activities. Nonetheless, 43% respondents thought that access to the river could be improved, potentially through better cycle and pedestrian access (including a potential pedestrian bridge), improved leisure activities and facilities, and other recreational facilities;
- More facilities are needed for younger people, including outdoor and indoor facilities and a youth club / centre. Activities should provide space for younger people to gather safely, including more affordable food options and facilities that encourage exercise and hobbies;
- 74% respondents support the principle of a Cultural Trail and believe it should incorporate the rich range of cultural and historical areas in central Abingdon. 22% were unsure on whether they supported it and only 4% did not;
- People would like there to be a more diverse range of leisure and recreational services and facilities for local people, such as independent shops, art galleries and events; and
- The Abbey Meadows Outdoor Pool is a well-loved facility that people would like to see open for longer hours.

Theme 3: Land Use Diversification

The following summarises the main responses received for Theme 3:

- The current spaces and facilities in Abingdon are good, but more could be done to improve the retail offer, including comments from 28% respondents highlighting that more independent and clothing shops are needed in central locations. People are unhappy about the number of vacant shops and the current retail mix which they feel is dominated by cafes, charity shops and barbers;

- There could be more food and beverage outlets, entertainment facilities and spaces for arts and cultural activities alongside a better hotel offer;
- There is a lack of healthcare facilities at present and there is support for a centralised Health Hub to co-locate health services with other public services;
- The library is a well-loved facility but could be improved as part of any redevelopment;
- There is objection to new housing in the centre, although this is also met with some opposing support and the wish that any new housing should be affordable and meet the needs of local people;
- There is some uncertainty about the provision of workspaces, with 36% respondents not knowing what current provision is available, although there was a reasonable response across questions (including for site specific proposals) to suggest that more working space (potentially co-working space) is required;
- 71% respondents confirmed that they like the green spaces and natural areas in central Abingdon, but more could be done to incorporate and improve these through our proposals;
- Responses to questions throughout the survey indicate that Abingdon is generally well regarded by people that live and visit, but more could be done to improve the attractiveness of the town to visitors and tourism; and
- There is a need to address and improve town centre management.

Theme 4: Key Development Opportunities

Consultation responses relating to Theme 4 are set out below with regard to each individual Site.

The Charter and Bury Street North:

The majority of respondents (59%) either strongly support or support proposals for The Charter and Bury Street North, which included redevelopment of the whole Site for a mixed use scheme that establishes a clear and seamless relationship and environment between The Charter and Bury Street North. There was support for demolishing the Site and starting afresh with new development.

Comments in relation to this Site include the following:

- Respondents felt there is the potential to re-provide the library, GP surgery and public services as an integrated hub within The Charter development;
- Some responses suggested The Charter is the wrong location for a tourist centre;
- Respondents were particularly concerned about the proposed bus route and potential reduction of car parking in this location;
- In respect of a potential bus route through the Site, respondents asked that proposals need to be specific on establishing what is existing or proposed, and where any proposed route would run;
- There were mixed views about removing parking at this location, with some stating car parking is needed. Concerns over car parking appear to be exacerbated by the partial closure of The Charter. Respondents believe this is a good location for a car park but that it currently feels unsafe and something needs to be done to improve it whilst not completely removing the parking it provides; and
- Respondents felt it would be helpful to remove high level walkways due to safety concerns and that any new development should have active ground floor frontage to avoid anti-social behaviour.

Abbey House:

There is a high level of support for proposals at Abbey House, with 55% respondents either strongly supporting or supporting the proposal to adapt and re-use the existing building instead of demolition.

Comments in relation to this Site include the following:

- There were several comments which indicated a higher level of support for the Site becoming a community and / or health hub or facility for young people (alongside other proposed mixed uses), as opposed to a hotel.

Additional suggestions from potential uses included offices, activity space and the re-location of the library.

Upper Reaches:

There is a very high level of support for proposals at Upper Reaches, with the majority of respondents (70%) either strongly supporting or supporting the proposals presented which included redevelopment of the Site for potential uses such as a hotel, restaurant and leisure.

Comments in relation to this Site include the following:

- Respondents support the inclusion of public space on the Upper Reaches Site, with those who disagreed with the proposals suggesting there is a need to increase public space and add leisure facilities here as a priority. This linked to comments about the need to provide better connections to the river in this location;
- Respondents did not generally support housing at this location and in particular the idea of flats, and suggested that either less or no housing should be provided; and
- Other suggestions for uses of the Site were made by respondents, which included a youth hostel, bike café, leisure area or science park.

The Net / Coxeter House:

There is a very high level of support (51% respondents) for considering ways to encourage improved youth, leisure and recreational facilities at Coxeter House and The Net Sites.

In general, comments relate to the desire to see youth provision restored and retained on The Net Site. Some responses suggested the potential for a transport hub and youth centre combination across The Net and Coxeter House Sites.

Whilst Coxeter House was considered through engagement and consultation, there was no engagement from the landowner and proposals were therefore not developed further. Nonetheless, there remains a future opportunity to explore the potential of Coxeter House and other sites outside public control which were identified through the consultation.

The feedback received from the engagement and consultation has been considered and used to inform the CARF proposals outlined in subsequent chapters.

9.0 The CARF Vision



- 9.1 Vision Statement
- 9.2 Sustainability
- 9.3 Core Objectives
- 9.4 Concept Framework



9.1 Vision Statement

The following Vision Statement has been informed by the background analysis, stakeholder engagement and public consultation.



Abingdon is a thriving destination where residents and visitors have easy access to a range of new and existing facilities within a preserved heritage setting, with direct access to the River Thames.

A central transport hub provides a landing place for people accessing Abingdon town centre via foot, bicycle and public transport, with other local hubs at Old Station Yard, Rye Farm Meadow and Abbey Meadows.

Park and Walk facilities allow motorists to stop and walk into town, reducing traffic in the town centre and improving noise levels and air quality. Improved pedestrian space along Stert Street and Bath Street and enhanced junction connections along Stratton Way and High Street have made the town centre safer and easier to navigate and a more friendly environment for pedestrians and cyclists, with new wayfinding infrastructure connecting people to leisure and cultural trails within and beyond the town centre. Our vision embraces Vale's climate change agenda, and proposals such as these will contribute towards tackling climate change and reducing emissions.

New and improved services in the town centre include a major public health and social care hub, a new public library, new independent shops and restaurants, a revamped cinema and major new youth facilities, making best use of public assets.

Key gateways into the town centre and the wider public realm have been revived to increase the attractiveness of the town to residents, visitors and investors. The promotion of improved spaces and facilities in the town, alongside the town's culture, heritage and enhanced environment is better coordinated and more effective to ensure the future viability and vitality of Abingdon.

Abingdon is the perfect place to live, work, play and visit.



Fig 9.1: Vision precedent images



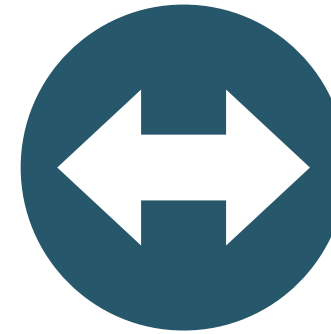
9.2 Sustainability

The vision aims to align itself with the Vale's Climate Change Action Plan 2022 through key interventions. These include but are not limited to:

- Promoting walking and cycling within the town centre through new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes;
- Improving links into and through the town centre from the rest of Abingdon and beyond by improving public transport;
- Promoting access to public transport through the introduction of a new transport hub and the improvement of wayfinding to make bus stops more accessible;
- Identifying opportunities for sustainable development and assessing the potential for re-purposing and redeveloping;
- Highlighting the need for all new development to be energy efficient and meet policy and building regulation compliance for energy efficiency;
- Reducing air pollution within the town centre and improving the management of car parking and associated movement through the introduction of park and walk locations and EV charging points;
- Improving vehicular movement through traffic calming and public realm improvements at key junctions; and
- Enhancing biodiversity in central Abingdon with new tree planting and optimising opportunities for net gain at Opportunity Sites.



Promoting walking and cycling within the town centre



Improving links into and through the town centre from the rest of Abingdon and beyond



Finding opportunities for sustainable development through re-purposing buildings and maximising energy efficiency where possible



Reducing air pollution within the town centre



Improving the management of parking and vehicular movement



Enhancing biodiversity in central Abingdon



Promoting access to public transport

Fig 9.2: Sustainability infographics



9.3 Core Objectives

The Core Objectives for the CARF are:

1. Protect Abingdon's rich heritage whilst better promoting the cultural offer;
2. Consolidate public parking provision prioritising disabled and elderly vehicle users, as a result free up land for development in the town centre;
3. Improve walking and cycle links through the town which are currently dominated by vehicles;
4. Enhance bus stops / connections and promote use of public transport, including access to Radley Station to reduce reliance on the private car;
5. Provide new and co-located healthcare facilities;
6. Improve the night-time leisure / hospitality offer by creating more floorspace to promote Abingdon as an evening destination for food, drink and entertainment;
7. Foster and promote Abingdon's daytime independent retail and leisure offer;
8. Respond to climate change objectives by cutting down pollution through reduced traffic / air pollution and generate green energy in the town centre through new developments;
9. Better connect communities to the north and south of the town with the town centre as part of any improved pedestrian / cycle connections in line with the 15 minute neighbourhood principles. In particular, removing physical obstacles for crossing Stratton Way and the River Thames; and
10. Reduce antisocial behaviour, particularly around The Charter and Upper Reaches areas of the town centre, through redevelopment and town centre management.

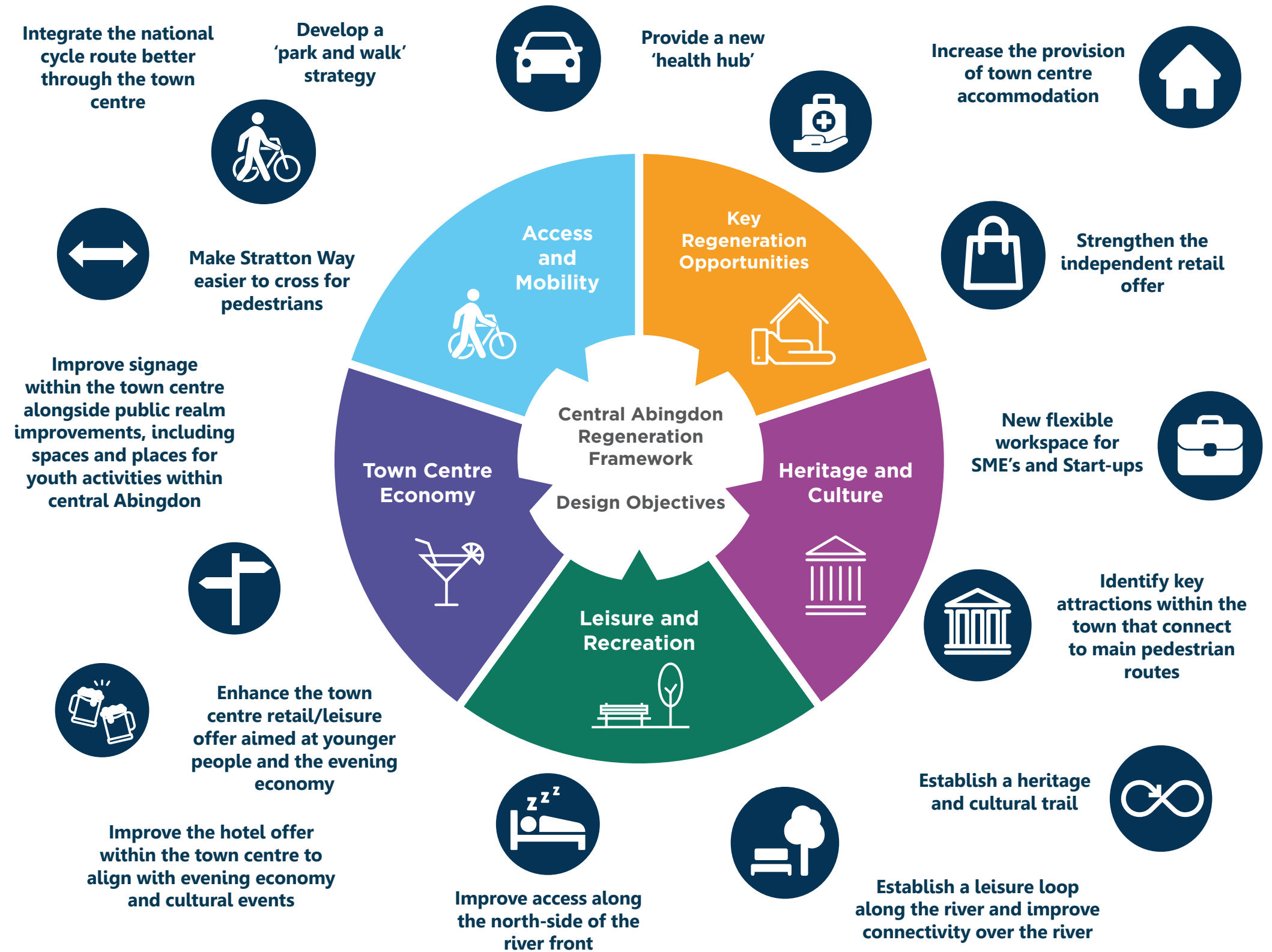


Fig 9.3: Core objectives diagram



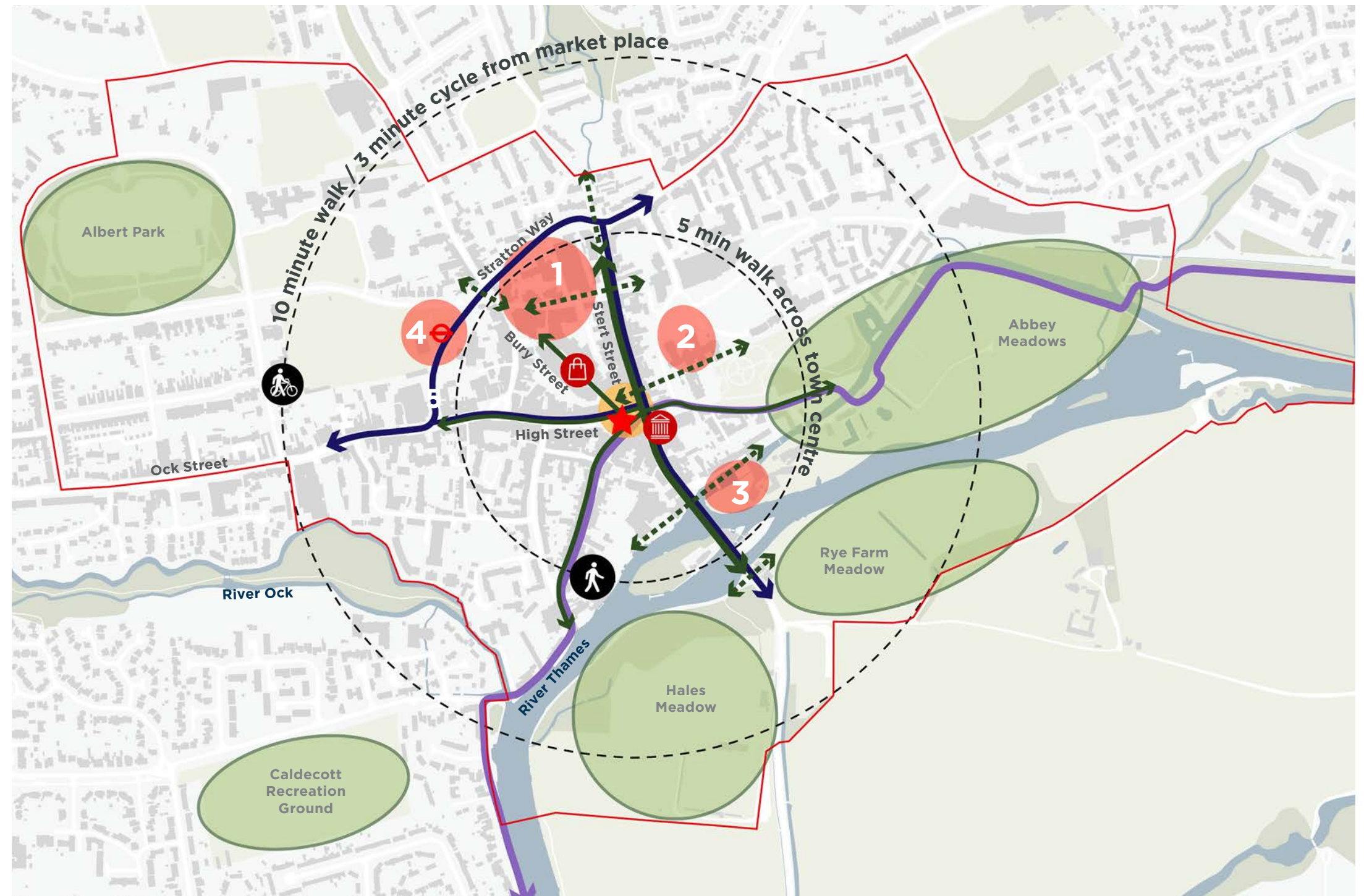
9.4 Concept Framework



The following Concept Framework plan is a simplified illustration of the Vision and Core Objectives already presented together with the key opportunities for redevelopment (or adaptive re-use) and improved, sustainable connectivity, movement and access.

1. **Transport, Mobility and Public Realm Improvements** by improving access, movement and connectivity in the town centre.
2. **River Access, Culture and Recreation**, reconnecting the town centre to the River Thames and its heritage assets through improved wayfinding, leisure uses and walks in and around the river and new and improved cultural trails.
3. **Land Use and Built Form**, by having a strong economic base for the town centre through a diversified and attractive mix of uses to support working, shopping, living and visiting.
4. **Development Opportunities** in which key Sites within the town centre could provide uses that serve local needs and benefit the town as a whole.

- CARF Study Area boundary
- Major green / open space
- Major public space
- Potential opportunities for redevelopment
- 500m / 1km distance isochrones
- Key pedestrian movement
- Potential improved pedestrian connections
- Major vehicular route
- National cycle route (Sustrans)
- Average walking and cycling time
- Historic core
- Retail core
- Major landmark building
- Main bus stops / terminus



1. The Charter / Bury Street North
2. Abbey House
3. Upper Reaches
4. The Net

Fig 9.4: Concept framework plan

10.0 Regeneration Framework



- 10.1 Theme 1: Transport, Mobility and Public Realm Improvements
- 10.2 Theme 2: River Access, Culture and Recreation
- 10.3 Theme 3: Land Use and Built Form
- 10.4 Theme 4: Key Development Opportunities
 - 10.4.1 The Charter and Bury Street North
 - 10.4.2 Abbey House
 - 10.4.3 Upper Reaches
 - 10.4.4 The Net



10.1 Theme 1: Transport, Mobility and Public Realm Improvements



The general aims of Theme 1 are to enhance the town centre environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, while reducing the dominance of private vehicle movements. Improvements to the public realm and movement should reflect interventions which improve opportunities for increasing sustainable transport and associated travel modes. A balance needs to be struck between the future provision of car parking particularly for the disabled and elderly, and a transition to more sustainable modes of travel, which should be delivered in co-ordination with other transport initiatives and projects. Additional measures may be needed in the future to increase public awareness of the improvements once implemented and to promote their use.

Key Transport, Mobility and Public Realm improvements proposed are as follows:

- 1 Rye Farm Park and Walk** – there is potential for a transport hub in this location, it could be reconfigured to increase parking capacity to provide an enhanced park and walk facility. There is potential to provide electric cycle parking / charging here to allow for quicker onward journeys. Opportunities for coach parking provision should continue to be explored. There is potential to link with the improved pedestrian bridge over the river and provide electric scooters.
- 2 Thames Crossing** - potential for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the river with associated onward connections to be explored. Options for locations could include adjacent to the swimming pool, the Upper Reaches or off St Helens Street – which introduces the concept of a circular walk. Potential exists for an improved connection to the river.
- 3 Abingdon Bridge Reconfiguration** - potential for reconfiguration of Abingdon Bridge to improve pedestrian safety between the town centre and Rye Farm car park by exploring opportunities for permanently instating a one-way traffic bridge, cycleways and wider pedestrian footpaths.
- 4 Four Key Junction Improvements** - areas where traffic calming and public realm improvements could be implemented such as raised surfaces or surface materials e.g. block paving to give greater emphasis to pedestrians and cyclists, reducing car dominance – Bridge Street / High Street, Ock Street / Bath Street, Park Road / Stratton Way, Broad Street / Stert Street. Pedestrian improvements to enhance the user experience for those with accessibility and mobility issues alongside other more vulnerable demographics.

- 5 Transport Hub at The Charter / Bury Street North** – an interchange between pedestrians and cyclists, other non-motorised traffic and potentially electric buses subject to the future bus route.
- 6 Bus Diversion to Broad Street** - subject to further work and the various options proposed for The Charter / Bury Street North, there is potential to divert southbound buses through Broad Street to bring them closer to the heart of the town centre. This could also become the main servicing route for The Charter and Bury Street North.
- 7 Upgraded East-West Pedestrian Links** - existing pedestrian links could be improved between Stert Street and Abbey Close.
- 8 Footway Widening to Bath Street** - potential to remove some on-street parking along Bath Street (southern end), retaining disabled parking and loading bays as required and widening footways, provide enhanced cycle lanes and improve the public realm and materials used to reduce car dominance.
- 9 Stratton Way Public Bus Stop Upgrade** - potential to improve the public realm experience around the bus stops on Stratton Way, improve signage to and from the town centre and connections northwards to the Bath Street / Broad Street junction.
- 10 Old Station Yard** - public realm improvements via Old Station Yard to emphasise connectivity between Waitrose and the town centre.
- 11 Sustrans NCN route 5 past Market Place** - contraflow cycle lane from Lombard Street to the junction of Bridge Street / High Street / Stert Street as currently cyclists have to dismount. There is an opportunity to emphasise the route through the town and consider improvements to legibility and safety around the town.
- 12 Cultural Trail** - town centre loop with potential to improve signage for wayfinding, legibility, walkability and identification of cultural and heritage assets.
- 13 Leisure Walk** – connecting the leisure facilities including the pool, the river walk, Rye Farm Meadow and the football, rugby and cricket facilities south of the river.
- 14 Bath Street Right Turn** - there is potential to explore right turns southbound out of Bath Street onto Stratton Way subject to a further assessment. This could reduce westbound traffic having to navigate the gyratory system and minimise traffic passing through Market Place.

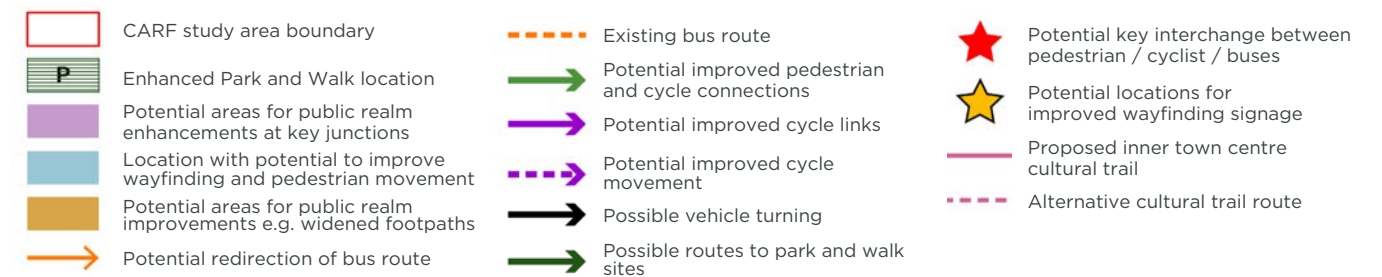
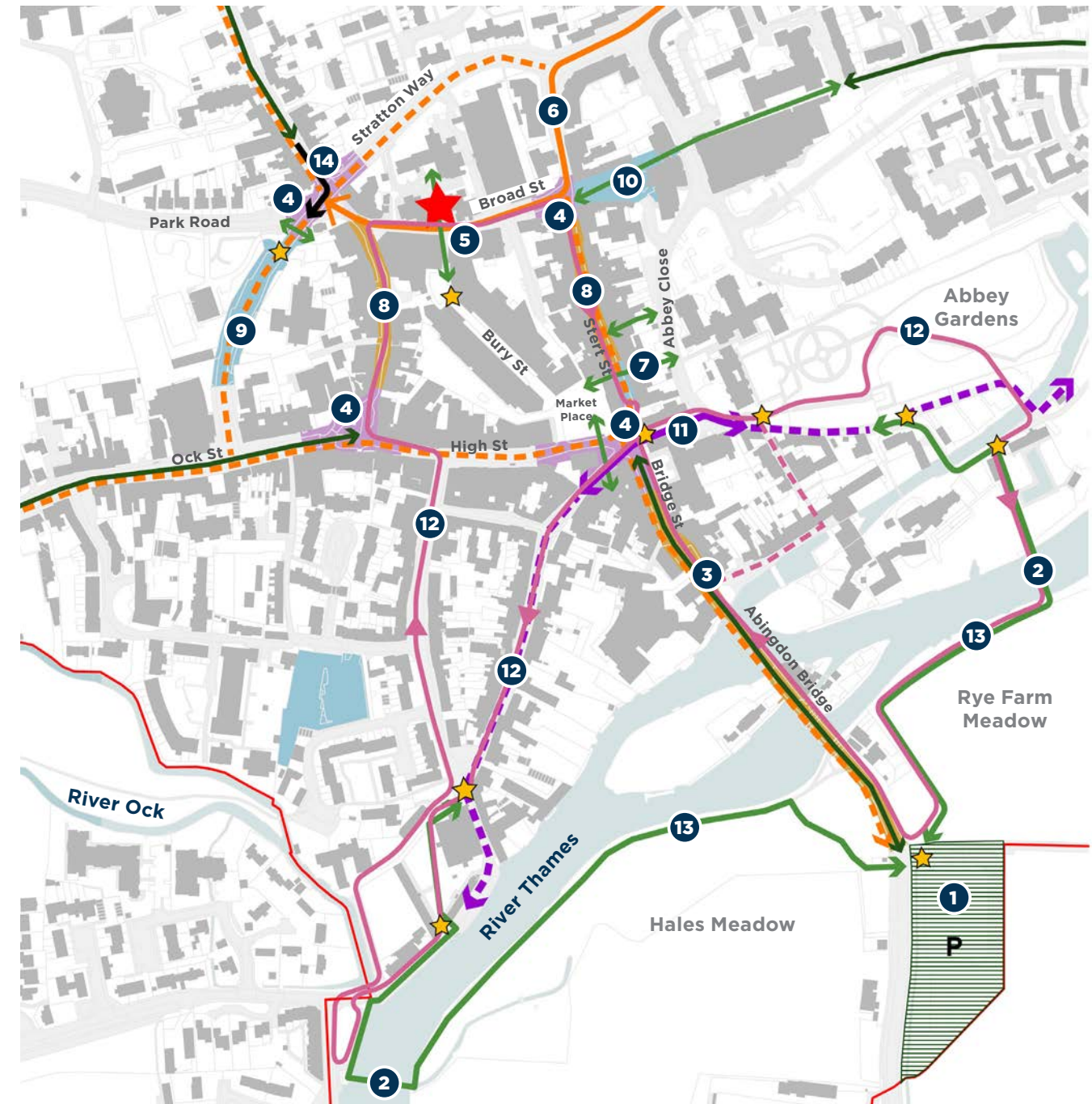


Fig 10.1: Transport and public realm improvement strategy plan



10.2 Theme 2: River Access, Culture and Recreation



The general aims of Theme 2 are to strengthen Abingdon's relationship with the River Thames and its built environment. There are opportunities to improve access to the river, highlighting the rich culture and heritage of the town, the existing leisure and recreation offer associated with the centre, the potential for blue infrastructure at the river and improving the cultural trails and leisure walking routes within and around Abingdon town centre.

Engagement and consultation has highlighted support for a potential cultural trail and leisure walk route. The proposed cultural trail shown opposite combines existing heritage walks promoted by Abingdon Town Council including the Abingdon Heritage Walk, Lost Abbey Trail and parts of the Abingdon Waterways Walk and the Thames Path National Trail. These walks have the potential to link in with public realm improvements to create an enjoyable experience for self-guided walks and tours, however the specific routes are subject to certain proposals being delivered, such as the location of any pedestrian and cycle crossings over the river.

The proposed walks and trails connect many of Abingdon town centre's heritage assets and leisure and recreational facilities. There is potential to emphasise these walks physically by implementing wayfinding tools such as signposts or street stickers (Fig 10.3 and 10.4) at key locations within central Abingdon. There is also an opportunity to commission local and public artwork in key locations and Opportunity Sites within the central area, and implement a public art trail around Abingdon in the future.

The proposed walks and trails are as follows:

- A 2.75km figure-of-eight cultural trail centred around Market Place, passing Abingdon's most significant historic buildings and a number of Opportunity Sites. The walk could be extended or varied with additional signage to note locations off route, including old industries in Abingdon such as the old Brewery and Old Station Yard;
- An extended outer loop of the cultural trail is proposed to the west of the town centre. The route passes listed buildings along Ock Street and the Albert Park Conservation Area, joining parts of the proposed leisure loop;
- A 5km leisure loop passing through historic parks and gardens, incorporating existing riverside footpaths and quiet roads, connecting major outdoor leisure and recreational facilities and key public spaces in the town centre; and
- Linking these recreational facilities will help bolster the leisure offer in central Abingdon. In particular, opportunities should be considered to enhance the leisure offer alongside the river, including Abbey Meadows Outdoor Pool and outdoor facilities and spaces for younger people.

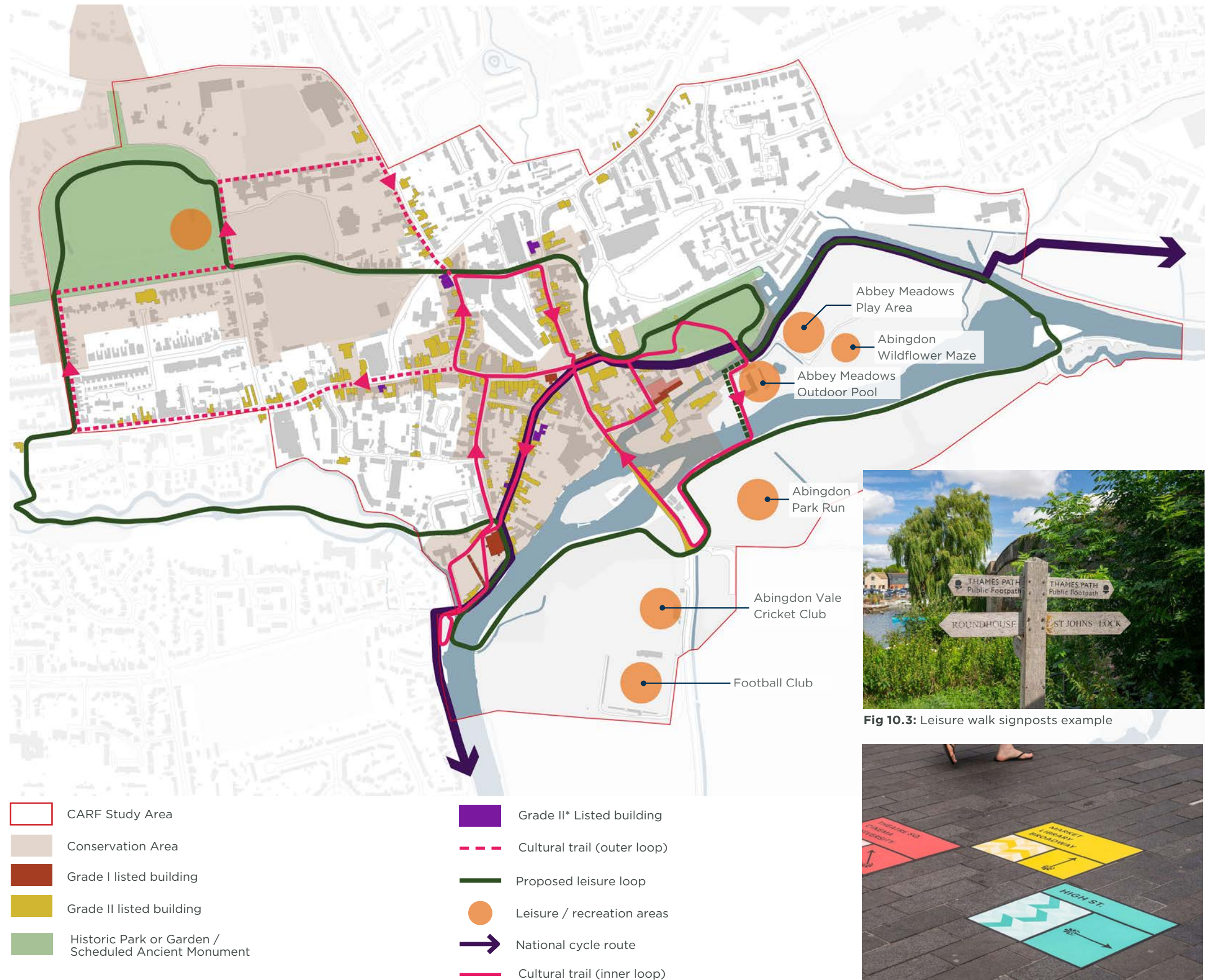


Fig 10.2: Cultural and leisure trails diagram



Fig 10.3: Leisure walk signposts example



Fig 10.4: Wayfinding signage stickers (Stratford town centre)

10.3 Theme 3: Land Use and Built Form

Key Land Use and Built Form improvements proposed include space to facilitate the below through work with third parties and a comprehensive placemaking approach:

- 1. Improved retail offer** - New retail units providing an active frontage at The Charter and Bury Street North, bringing life into the southern end of Bury Street and improving retail attractiveness and investment to reduce vacant units. Independent retailers are particularly important in Abingdon therefore allowance should be made for growth of this market.
- 2. More food and beverage outlets** - Food and beverage locations alongside retail uses in The Charter and Bury Street North, including space for communal places to eat.
- 3. Space for arts and cultural activities** - Building upon the existing arts and cultural activity offer in Abingdon, which is already well-loved and needs to be better promoted. A proposed civic square at The Charter and Bury Street North that provides space for events, outdoor performances, markets and pop-up units. Events and conferencing space proposed at Abbey House and Upper Reaches. Greater emphasis on the relationship with the river for enhanced riverside events. A cultural trail that links and promotes Abingdon's rich culture and heritage.
- 4. A better hotel offer** - Potential space for different types of hotel and hospitality offer at The Charter and Bury Street North, Abbey House and Upper Reaches.
- 5. Centralised health and other public services** - A health hub alongside other public services at either The Charter or Abbey House.
- 6. Improved library provision** - An improved library provision at The Charter, possibly as part of a wider community / youth space with facilities for other learning-based activities.
- 7. More affordable housing and housing that meets the needs of local people** - Potential for affordable and market housing at The Charter and Bury Street North, Abbey House and Upper Reaches.

- 8. Potential for care / extra care and over-55 accommodation** at The Charter and Bury Street North and Abbey House.
- 9. More workspaces** - Co-working and work near home spaces at The Charter and Bury Street North and potentially Abbey House.
- 10. Green space incorporated into proposals** - Significant and high-quality open space proposed for The Charter and Bury Street North and Upper Reaches, and the relationship with existing open space improved and enhanced at Abbey House.
- 11. Improve the attractiveness of Abingdon** - A comprehensive, sustainable and healthy placemaking strategy proposed to improve the overall attractiveness, safety and enjoyment of central Abingdon.
- 12. Improved town centre management** - An opportunity to adopt a more coordinated and effective town centre management strategy which takes a holistic approach.

	Culture
	Housing
	Public square
	Public open space
	Workplace
	Food and beverage
	GP / Healthcare facilities
	Hotels
	Retail
	Library
	Care facilities
	Sites of Interest
	Conservation Area
	Grade II* listed building
	Grade II listed building
	Grade I listed building

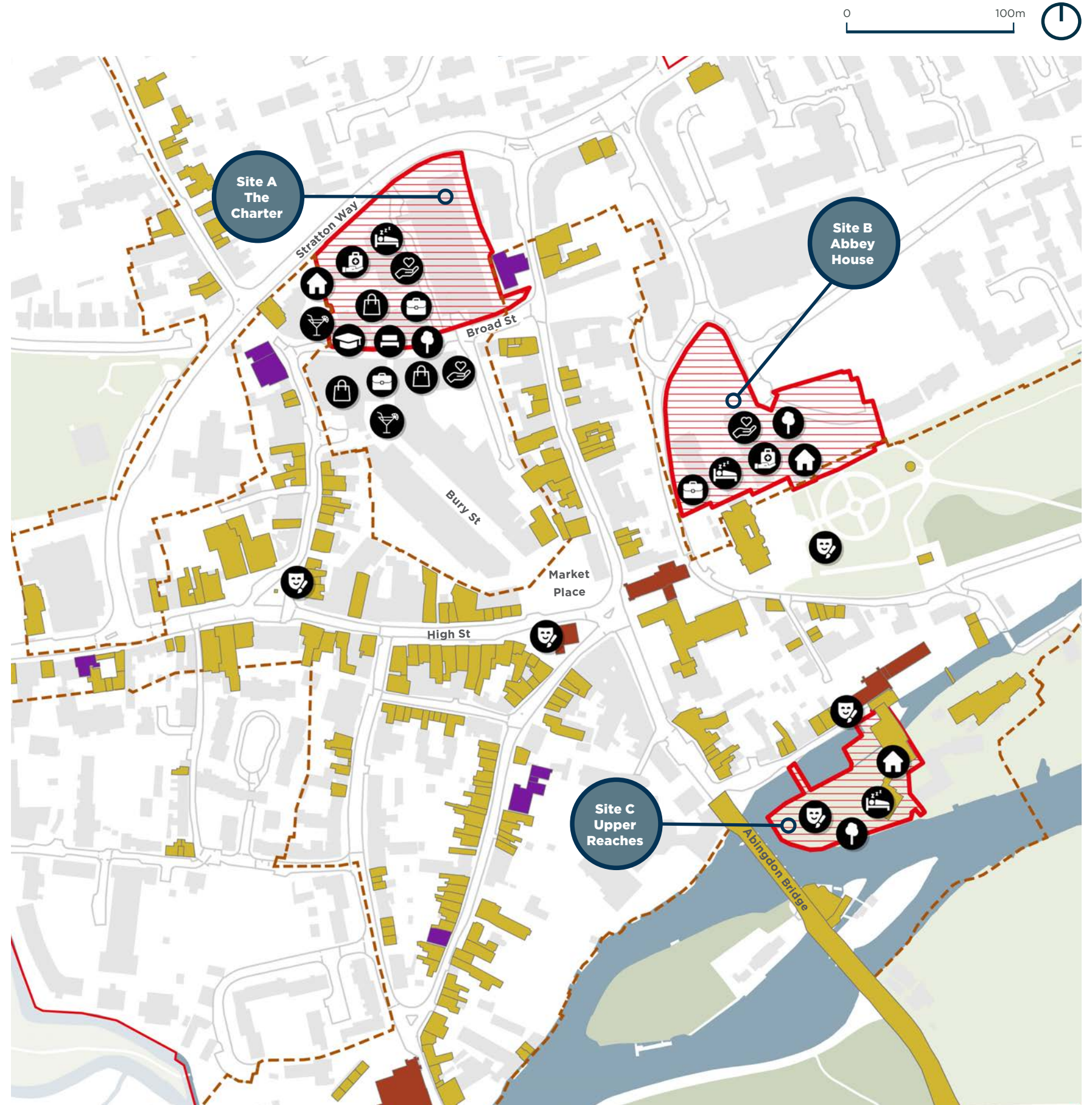


Fig 10.5: Land use and built form diagram

10.4 Theme 4: Key Development Opportunities

10.4.1 The Charter and Bury Street North

Site Description

Site Area

- The Charter - 0.92 hectares
- Bury Street North - 0.35 hectares

Existing Site Use:

- 4-storey public car park, doctors surgery, public library, retailers

Flood Risk:

The north-east corner of the Site is located within Flood Zone 2.

Access:

Access is provided for vehicles directly onto Stratton Way to the north, off Broad Street to the centre and Bath Street to the west. There is a service road, Queen Street, to the rear of retail spaces fronting onto Bury Street.

Heritage:

The Site lies adjacent to the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area. The Grade II* The Knowl is located immediately east of the Site. To the west of the Site lies Grade II listed 31 and 33 Bath Street.

Landscape / Trees:

There are several mature trees to the north of the Site, in particular alongside Stratton Way, that provide a natural buffer from the wide pavement and busy traffic.

Building Condition:

The multi-storey car park is in poor condition and is currently partly closed to the public. The GP Surgery appears well maintained. The buildings on the Site were built in the mid 1970's (completed 1977) and are of masonry construction. They have little to no significance to the character of the historic town centre.

Views:

Key views are east towards the listed buildings at Stert Street and from the library frontage down Bury Street towards Market Place.

Other Considerations:

Abingdon library facilities may need to be re-provided on the Site or relocated elsewhere, however the future of library provision in this location is still to be determined by OCC.



Fig 10.6: Location Plan

AREA SUMMARY	Footprint		No. Storeys
	SQM	SQFT	
The Charter			
Multistorey Carpark	2,425	26,102	4
Library	387	4,166	2
Health Centre	895	9,634	3.5
Public Toilets	60	646	1
Day Centre	407	4,381	2
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	4,174	44,929	
Bury Street North			
Retail	2,862	30,806	2
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	2,862	30,806	

Table 02: Existing Land Use Schedule

Key Opportunities Summary

The Charter area represents an opportunity to remove unattractive, utilitarian buildings, and re-provide them elsewhere or alongside other uses on-site. Bury Street North has a close relationship with The Charter and the two Sites should be delivered in a coordinated fashion.

The library has potential to be reprovided improving on its current facilities and could include additional space for expanded functions such as computer rooms, study rooms or social spaces.

The public realm experience could be greatly improved through integrating the design of open space in the Site's future redevelopment, observing good, healthy and sustainable placemaking.

New buildings should be designed to meet carbon net zero requirements, including sustainable construction and energy techniques which can help reduce the long term impact of climate change. Phasing of delivery should be coordinated to ensure continuation of services being replaced on Site.

The development opportunities outlined within this section are informed by masterplanning, design and transport advice alongside public engagement. They propose aspirational options forming the regeneration framework but are not intended to be prescriptive. Any future proposals subject to planning permission by the Local Planning Authority would need to be supported by further evidence and design. This document may be used as a material consideration but should not prejudice the Local Planning Authority's role in considering any individual planning applications within the Study Area.

Key Design Principles

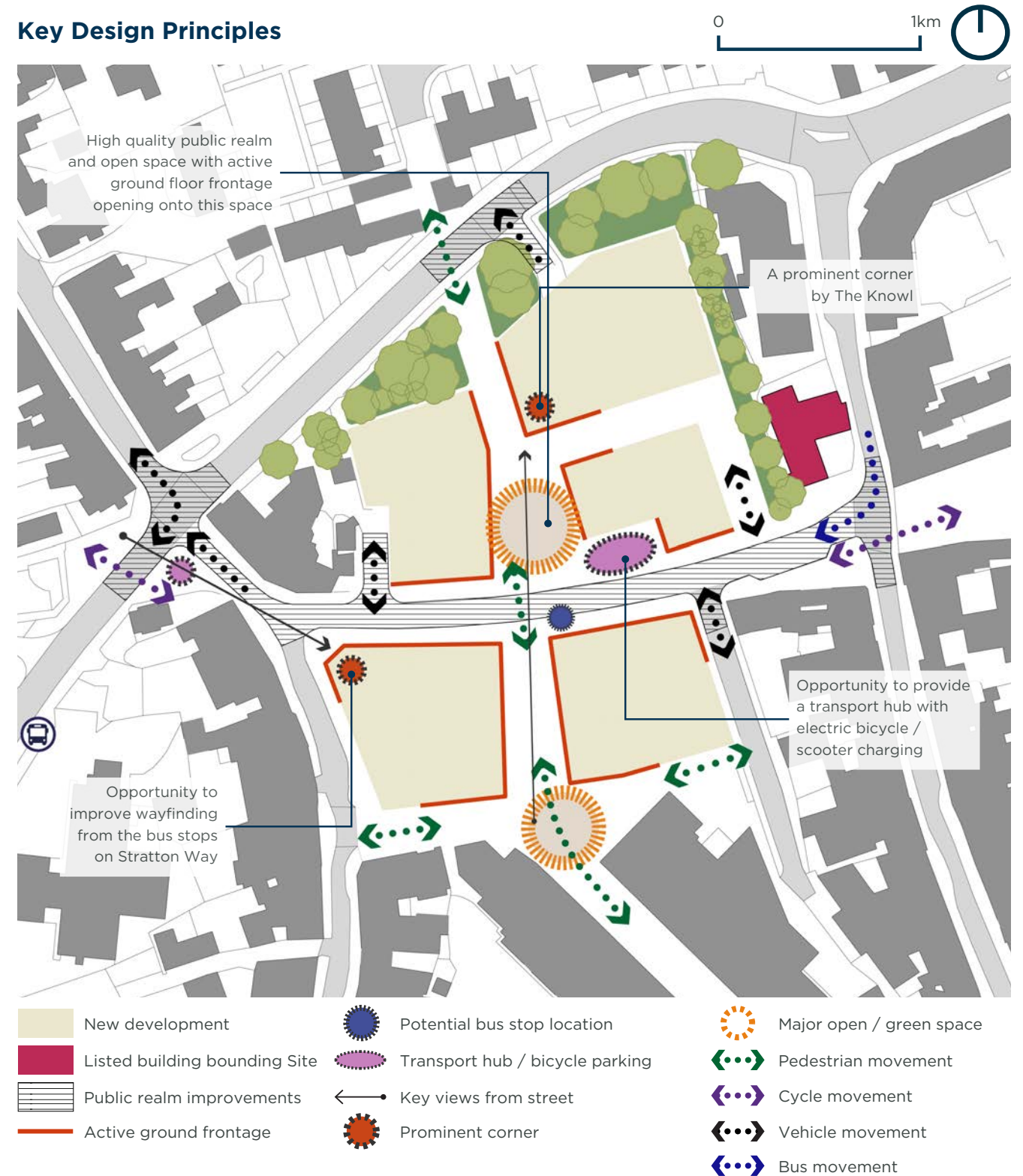


Fig 10.7: Plan setting out the key design principles for redevelopment of The Charter and Bury Street North Sites

Development Brief - Option A

The Charter

Assumptions:

- Up to 5-storey high development.
- Demolish The Charter and bookend units on Bury Street North and clear the Site for development.
- Provide parking for disabled visitors and other use-focused parking.
- Relocate the healthcare facilities and social care functions off-site into a new Health and Care Hub.
- Re-provide the public library facilities on Site in an improved facility.
- Provide hospitality at upper level (roof top bar / restaurant).
- Possible budget hotel.
- 3-4 storeys of market / affordable apartments over ground floor uses.
- Leisure uses which could potentially include a gym, cinema, bowling alley, indoor golf, trampoline centre etc.
- Active ground floors uses - retail, hospitality.
- 300-500sqm office units (co-working and 'work near to home' spaces).
- Youth spaces at ground floor.
- Retention of mature trees.
- High quality public realm, upper levels with accessible terraces.
- Provide a transport hub accessed directly off Broad Street with links to Stratton Way to the north.
- Car club parking spaces and parking for blue badge holders only.
- Broad Street could become a bus loop with the transport hub between The Charter and Bury Street North, an opportunity which requires further consideration as future detailed proposals and projects come forward.
- Retained and improved public convenience provision.
- Provide accessible toilets.

Bury Street North

Assumptions:

- Up to 4-storey high development.
- Mix of hospitality, retail ground floor uses to Bury Street North - enhancing the 'retail journey' from Market Place to The Charter.
- Retirement or market / affordable homes above ground floor uses.

Development Schedule

SITE AREA	HA	SQM
The Charter	0.92	9,200
Bury Street North	0.35	3,500
TOTAL	1.27	12,700

Option A	Building Footprint	No. Storeys (Incl. basement)
The Charter	SQM	
Building 1 (New)	2,045	3
Building 2 (New)	751	5
Building 3 (New)	820	4
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	3,616	-
Bury Street North	SQM	
Building 4 (New)	1,560	4
Building 5 New)	1,418	4
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	2,978	-

Table 03: Development mix schedule - option A

Option A - Ground Floor and Basement Plans



Fig 10.8: Proposed ground floor plan

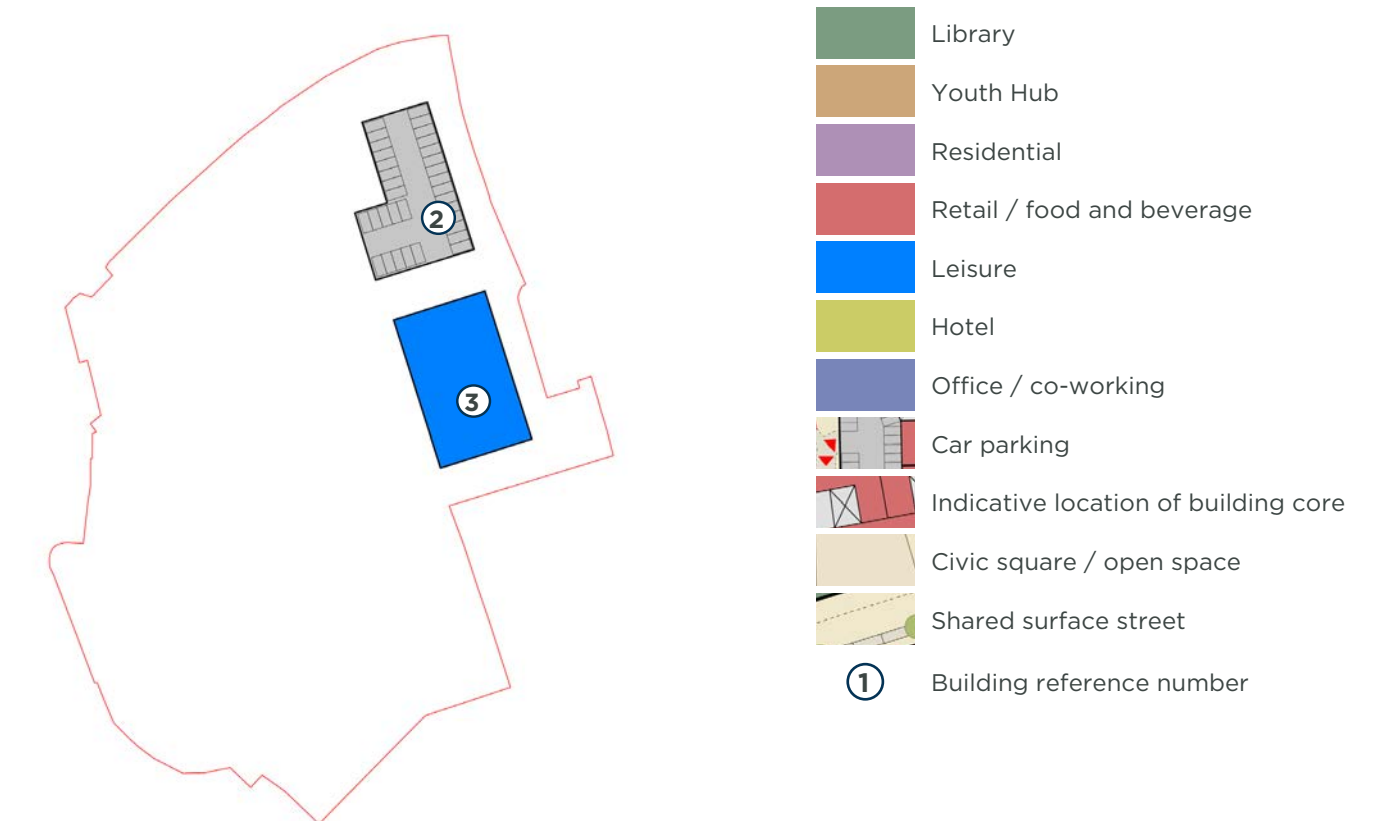


Fig 10.9: Proposed basement floor plan



Option A - First Floor Plan

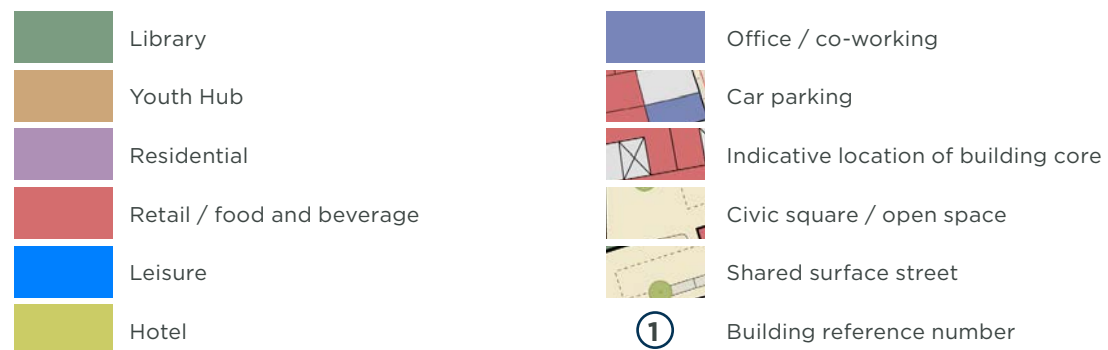


Fig 10.10: Proposed first floor plan

Option A - Second Floor Plan



Fig 10.11: Proposed second floor plan



Option A - Massing Study



Fig 10.12: The charter and bury street north - option A - massing study - view 1



Fig 10.13: The Charter and Bury Street North - option A - massing study - view 2



Fig 10.14: Building references plan



Development Brief - Option B

The Charter

Assumptions:

- Up to 5-storey high development.
- Demolish The Charter and clear the Site for development.
- Re-provide the healthcare and social-care facilities on-site in a new 'Health and Care Hub' with potential to include advice and community services on the ground floor – phased to provide continuity of service (3,000sqm across up to 3-storeys).
- Re-provide the public library facilities on Site.
- Provide hospitality at upper level (roof top bar / restaurant).
- 3-4 storeys of market / affordable apartments over ground floor uses.
- Active frontages including a mix of hospitality, retail supporting uses at ground floor.
- Youth provision.
- Retention of mature trees.
- High quality public realm, upper levels with accessible terraces.
- Provide parking for healthcare use, blue badge holders and other use-focused parking.
- Improved connectivity and wayfinding to connect with and utilise the bus stops off Stratton Way to the west.
- Retained and improved public convenience provision.
- Leisure uses which could potentially include a gym, cinema, bowling alley, indoor golf, trampoline centre etc.
- Provide accessible toilets.

Bury Street North

Assumptions:

- Up to 4-storey high development.
- Mix of hospitality, retail ground floor uses to Bury Street North – enhancing the 'retail journey' from Market Place to The Charter.
- Retirement or market / affordable homes above ground floor uses.

Development Schedule

SITE AREA	HA	SQM
The Charter	0.92	9,200
Bury Street North	0.35	3,500
TOTAL	1.27	12,700

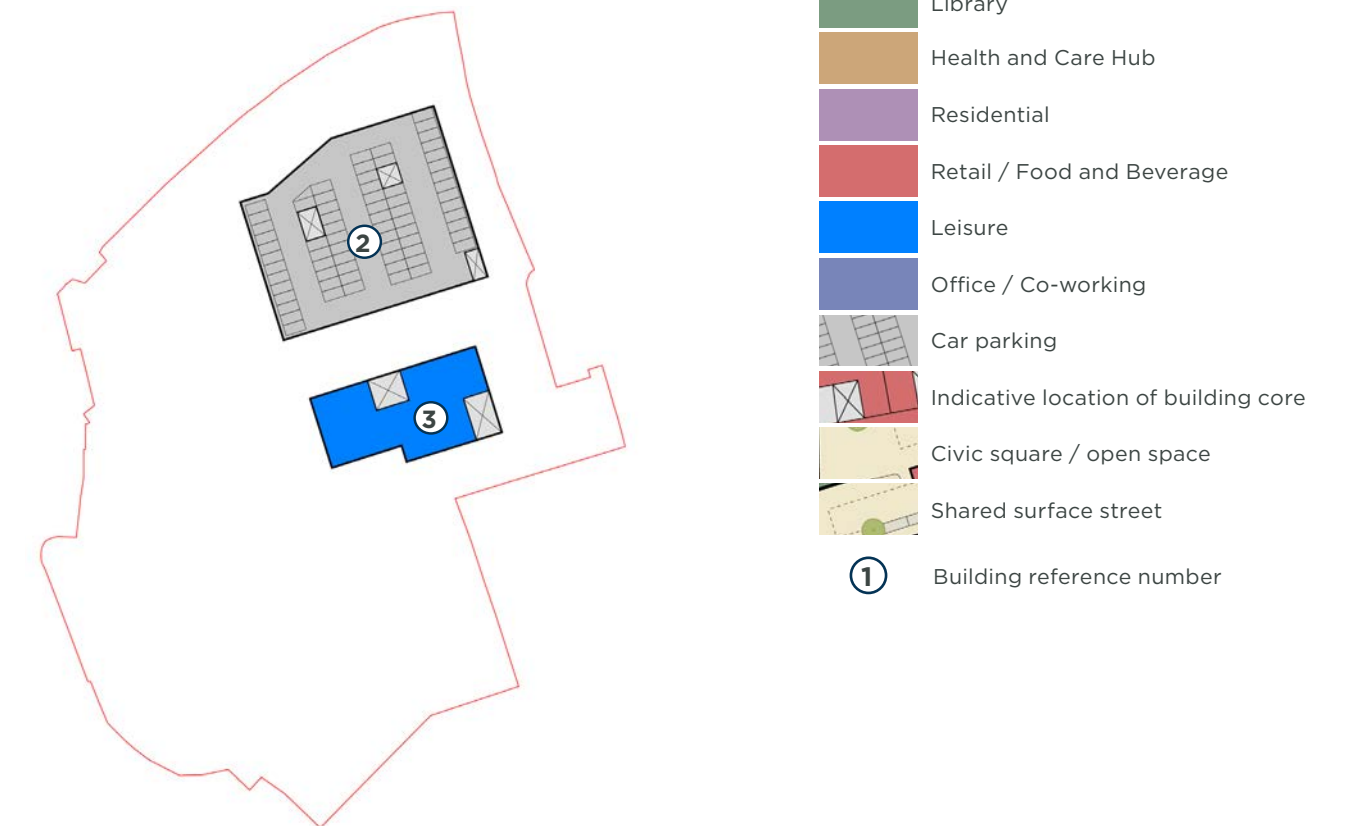
Option B	Building Footprint	No. Storeys (Incl. basement)
The Charter	SQM	
Building 1	1,233	4
Building 2	1,810	5
Building 3	772	4
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	3,815	-
Bury Street North	SQM	
Building 4 (New)	1,560	4
Building 5 (New)	1,418	4
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	2,978	-

Table 04: Proposed development schedule - option B

Option B - Ground Floor and Basement Floor Plan



Fig 10.15: Proposed ground floor plan



- Library
- Health and Care Hub
- Residential
- Retail / Food and Beverage
- Leisure
- Office / Co-working
- Car parking
- Indicative location of building core
- Civic square / open space
- Shared surface street
- 1 Building reference number

Fig 10.16: Proposed basement floor plan



Option B - First Floor Plan

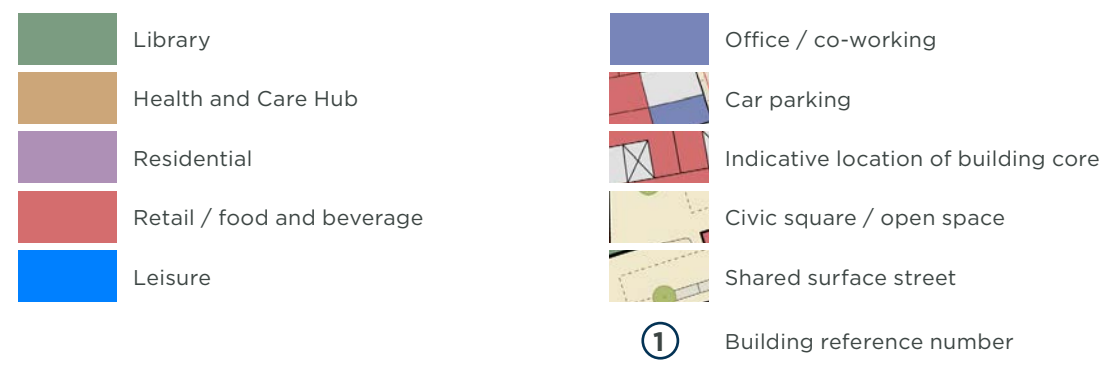


Fig 10.17: Proposed first floor plan

Option B - Second Floor Plan



Fig 10.18: Proposed second floor plan



Option B - Upper Floor Plan














- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Library |  | Office / co-working |
|  | Health and Care Hub |  | Car parking |
|  | Residential |  | Indicative location of building core |
|  | Retail / food and beverage |  | Civic square / open space |
|  | Leisure |  | Shared surface street |
| | |  | Building reference number |



Fig 10.19: Proposed upper floor plan



Option B - Massing Study



Fig 10.20: The Charter and Bury Street North - option B - massing study - view 1



Fig 10.21: The Charter and Bury Street North - option B - massing study - view 2



Fig 10.22: Building references plan

10.4.2 Abbey House

Site Description

Site Area:

0.86 hectares

Existing Site Use:

Offices and car parking

Flood Risk:

Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding; less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year).

Access:

Abbey Close is a two-way street leading on two limbs to either the Civic and Cattle Market car parks at the front and side of Abbey House or to the Abbey Close car park, where there is no through route.

Heritage:

Adjacent Old Abbey House and walls to Abbey Close and Trendell's Garden which are all Grade II listed; adjacent Abingdon Abbey (remains of) Scheduled Monument; adjacent Grade II listed statue of Queen Victoria and Grade II listed fragments of mosaic buildings in Abbey Gardens.

The Site falls partially within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area.

Landscape / Trees:

There are several trees towards the northern part of the Site, across the car parking area which border the existing pedestrian zone. There is improved green space in the vicinity of the building.

Building Condition:

The building is in a reasonable condition. Abbey House was built in the 1990s and is 3 storeys in height, comprising red brick and masonry construction.

Parking:

There are two existing surface car parks on the Site, the Cattle Market and Civic car parks which provide around 135 pay and display spaces in total. The number of spaces required to serve a repurposed building needs to be determined.

Open Space:

There is potential to link open space to Abbey Gardens, and improve public realm and movement corridors around the building periphery. Private spaces and roof terraces are to be considered.



Fig 10.23: Location plan

AREA SUMMARY	Footprint		No. Storeys
	SQM	SQFT	
Abbey House	1,985	21,366	3
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,985	21,366	

Table 05: Existing land use schedule

Key Opportunities Summary

There is an opportunity to refurbish or re-purpose the Abbey House and associated car parking area to the north-west of the Site. This could support uses that contribute positively to the town centre and complement the refurbishment of Old Abbey House as a hotel. There is also the opportunity to improve the pedestrian connections from Stert Street to the west through the Site. The future potential to develop over the car parks, with some retained undercroft parking, is another opportunity which could be explored.

The retention of this building will help to reduce the long term impact of climate change through the reduction in carbon expenditure associated with new construction. New buildings should be designed to meet carbon net zero requirements, including sustainable construction and energy techniques which can help reduce the long term impact of climate change. Phasing of delivery should be coordinated to ensure continuation of services being replaced on Site.



Key Design Principles



Fig 10.24: Plan setting out the key design principles for redevelopment of the Abbey House Site



Development Brief

Option A – Health focus

Assumptions:

- Health and Care hub as a primary use, including a GP surgery.
- Supporting office space (300-500sqm office spaces or co-working space).
- Potential care / extra care use.
- Potential to include advice and community services on the ground floor.

Option B – Hotel use

Assumptions:

- Conversion to a hotel (no. rooms to be determined).
- Supporting hospitality and conferencing.

Option C – Employment

Assumptions:

- Office space (300-500 sqm office spaces or co-working space).

Option D – Residential, including retirement

Assumptions:

- Over 55's accommodation (no care / extra care).
- Market and affordable homes.

Development Schedule

SITE AREA	HA	SQM
Abbey House	3.31	33,100
TOTAL	3.31	33,100

Option	Estimated Building Footprint	No. Storeys	Building Use	Gross External Area (GEA)		Gross Internal Area (GIA) (90% of GEA)	
				SQM	SQFT	SQM	SQFT
Option A (Health Hub)	1,832	3	Health Hub	3,664	39,439	2,785	29,974
			Office/Co-working	1,832	19,719	1,392	14,987
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,832	-	-	5,496	59,158	4,177	44,960
Option B (Hotel)	1,832	3	Hospitality/Conferencing	1,832	19,719	1,392	14,987
			Hotel accommodation	3,664	39,439	2,785	29,974
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,832	-	-	5,496	59,158	4,177	44,960
Option C (Office)	1,832	3	Office/Co-Working	5,496	59,158	4,177	44,960
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,832	-	-	5,496	59,158	4,177	44,960
Option D (Residential)	1,832	3	Office/Co-working	1,832	19,719	1,392	14,987
			Residential	3,664	39,439	2,785	29,974
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,832	-	-	5,496	59,158	4,177	44,960

Notes:

NB1: All options assume the refurbishment of the existing building with some limited demolition as appropriate

NB2: Upper floor plans and specific layout proposals for each option have not been included as they would be subject to further assessment of the building structure and condition

Table 06: Development schedule

Concept Plan



Fig 10.25: Proposed ground floor plan

10.4.3 Upper Reaches

Site Description

Site Area:

0.45 hectares

Existing Site Use:

The Site comprises a peninsula surrounded by the River Thames. It is currently unoccupied and there is one dilapidated vacant building and associated car parking areas that are in disrepair; the former Upper Reaches Hotel on the Site has been closed since 2015.

Flood Risk:

The majority of the Site lies within Flood Zone 2 and partially in Flood Zone 3, which could limit potential development on part of the Site.

The Site is surrounded on three sides by the River Thames. Access requirements would need to be considered with regard to the potential for flooding.

Access:

There are two points of access onto the peninsula from Thames Street including a narrow vehicular bridge which could limit access onto the Site. Thames Street narrows towards its eastern end.

Heritage:

The Site falls within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area and there are several listed buildings neighbouring the Site's boundary that may impact development. Abbey Mills (part of the hotel building) is Grade II listed while the southern part is of newer construction which has little architectural merit.

Landscape / Trees:

There is a stand of trees on the western boundary and trees located centrally within the Site. The trees are afforded protection by virtue of the location in a Conservation Area.

Building / Site Condition:

The buildings and external areas are in a derelict and unsafe condition and the associated car parking and open space is significantly overgrown. The Site is currently boarded up to deter public access.

Building Heights:

Existing buildings vary from 2 to 2.5 storeys.

Views:

Key views are north from the Site in the direction of Abingdon Abbey (remains of) Scheduled Monument and several Grade I and Grade II listed buildings. There are key views looking south from the Site onto the River Thames. There are also key views onto the Site from Abingdon Bridge.

Other Considerations:

The Site is currently subject to a long lease to a private company which means it is not under public control. Any redevelopment will need to come forward in accordance with land ownership considerations.

Parking:

A large part of the Site is currently in use as a car park to support the hotel, which has fallen into disrepair.

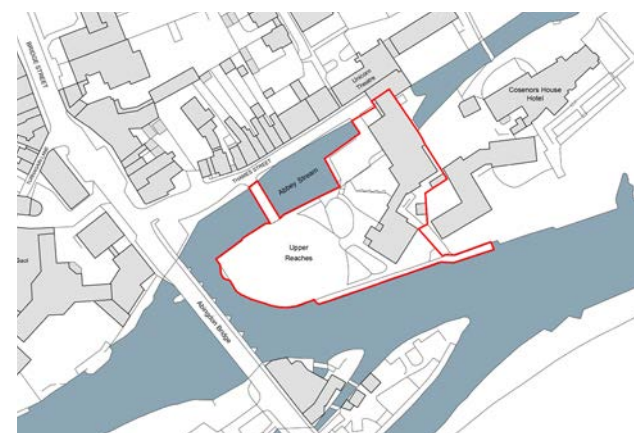


Fig 10.26: Location Plan

AREA SUMMARY	Footprint		No. Storeys
	SQM	SQFT	
Upper Reaches			
Hotel (Vacant)	826	8,891	2.5
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	826	8,891	

Table 07: Existing land use schedule

Key Opportunities Summary

The Site provides the opportunity to re-purpose the Grade II listed building to the north-eastern part of the Site, as well as provide complementary recreational open space and public access to the river in this location.

New buildings should be designed to meet carbon net zero requirements, including sustainable construction and energy techniques which can help reduce the long term impact of climate change.



Key Design Principles



Fig 10.27: Plan setting out the key design principles for redevelopment of the Upper Reaches Site.

Development Brief - Option A - Retention / diversification of existing use

Land Use

Assumptions:






- Demolition of the current 1960's extension and retention / refurbishment of the current listed building.
- 2.5-3 storey development.
- Refurbishment of the existing listed building as a boutique hotel and spa, and venue for conferencing and weddings, undertaken sensitively and considering heritage assets.
- New purpose-built extension to provide hospitality and accommodation for the hotel.
- New landscape, open space and parking arrangements across the Site area.
- Improved leisure offering in this location to enhance the riverside setting, including opportunities for outdoor cafes, pop-ups etc.
- New openly accessible public realm fronting the river with access off Thames Street for pedestrians.
- Improved river frontage and access to boats and moorings.
- Sustainable building construction and energy demand and operation.

Development Schedule

SITE AREA	HA	SQM
Upper Reaches	0.45	4,500
TOTAL	0.45	4,500

Option A	Building Footprint SQM	No. Storeys (Incl. basement)	Land Use
Building 1 (Refurbishment)	544	2.5	Hotel Conferencing
Building 2 (New)	455	3	Hotel Spa
Building 3 (New)	151	1	Café/Restaurant
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,150		

Table 08: Proposed development schedule - option A

	Hotel accommodation
	Hotel business conferencing
	Hotel hospitality services (e.g. spa, restaurant)
	Cafe / restaurant pavilion
	Surface car park
	Indicative location for building core
	Outdoor seating
	Site entrance
	Building reference number

Option A - Ground and Upper Floor Plans



Fig 10.28: Proposed ground floor plan



Fig 10.29: Proposed upper floor plan



Option A - Massing Study

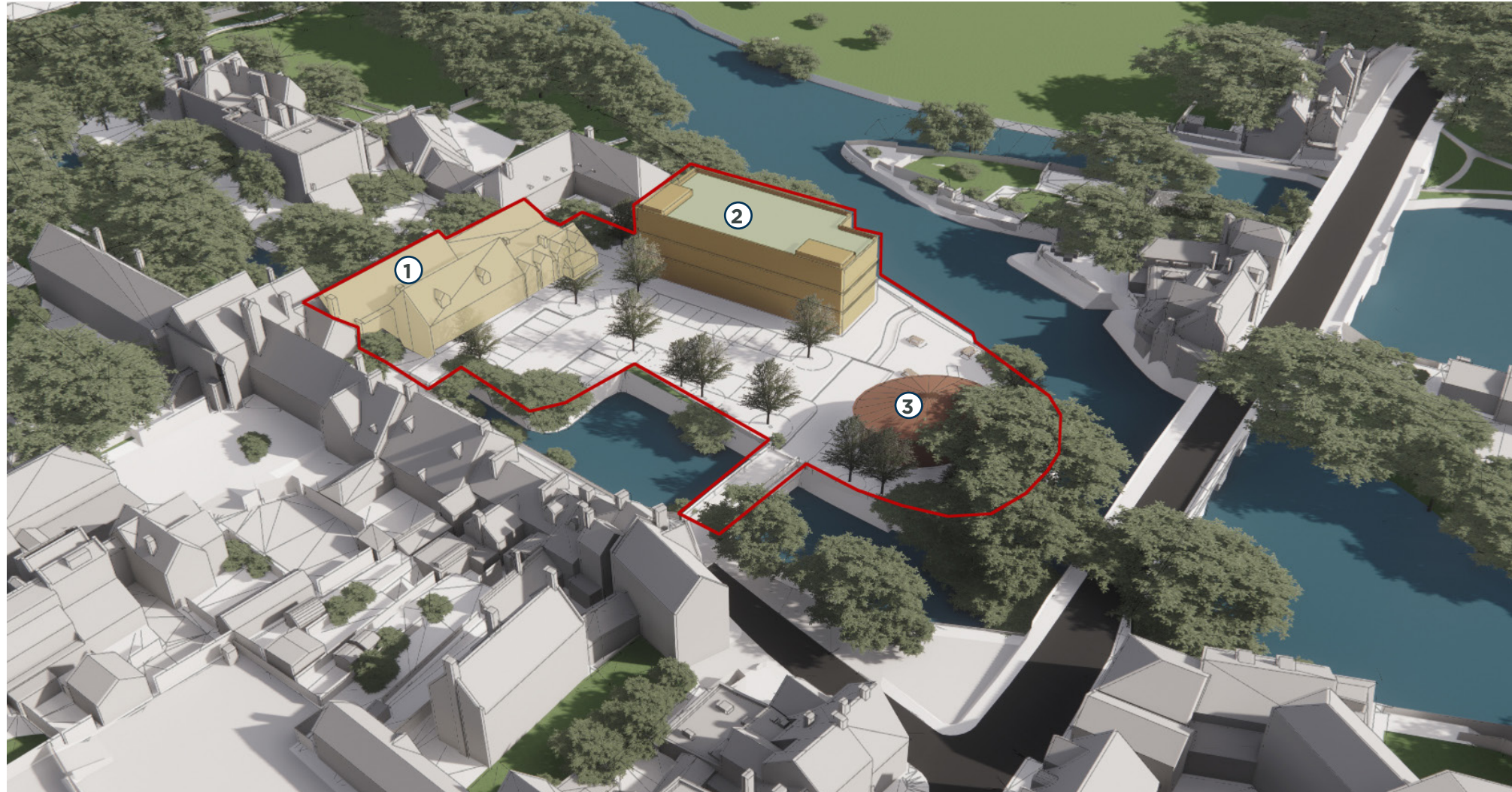


Fig 10.30: Upper Reaches - option A - massing study



Fig 10.31: Building references plan

Development Brief - Option B - Residential / Mixed Use

Land Use

Assumptions:

- Demolition of the current 1960's extension and retention / refurbishment of the current listed building.
- 2.5-3 storey development.
- Refurbishment of the existing listed building as residential apartments.
- New purpose-built extension as part of a residential scheme, mindful of the neighbouring Conservation Area, heritage assets and views.
- New landscape, open space and parking arrangements across the Site area.
- Opportunities for outdoor cafe, pop-ups etc.
- Co-working space.
- New openly accessible public realm fronting the river with access off Thames Street for pedestrians.
- Improved leisure offering in this location to enhance the riverside setting, including new boat house, changing pavilion, moorings and associated leisure offer.
- Improved river frontage and access to boats and moorings.
- Sustainable building construction and energy demand and operation.
- Integrated cycle parking and storage.

Development Schedule

SITE AREA	HA	SQM
Upper Reaches	0.45	4,500
TOTAL	0.45	4,500

Option B	Building Footprint SQM	No. Storeys (Incl. basement)	Land Use
Building 1 (Refurbishment)	544	2.5	Residential Office/Co-working
Building 2 (New)	574	3	Residential Car Parking
Building 3 (New)	270	1	Culture/Leisure
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	1,388		

Table 09: Proposed development schedule - option B



Option B - Ground and Upper Floor Plans



Fig 10.32: Proposed ground floor plan



Fig 10.33: Proposed first floor plan



Option B - Massing Study

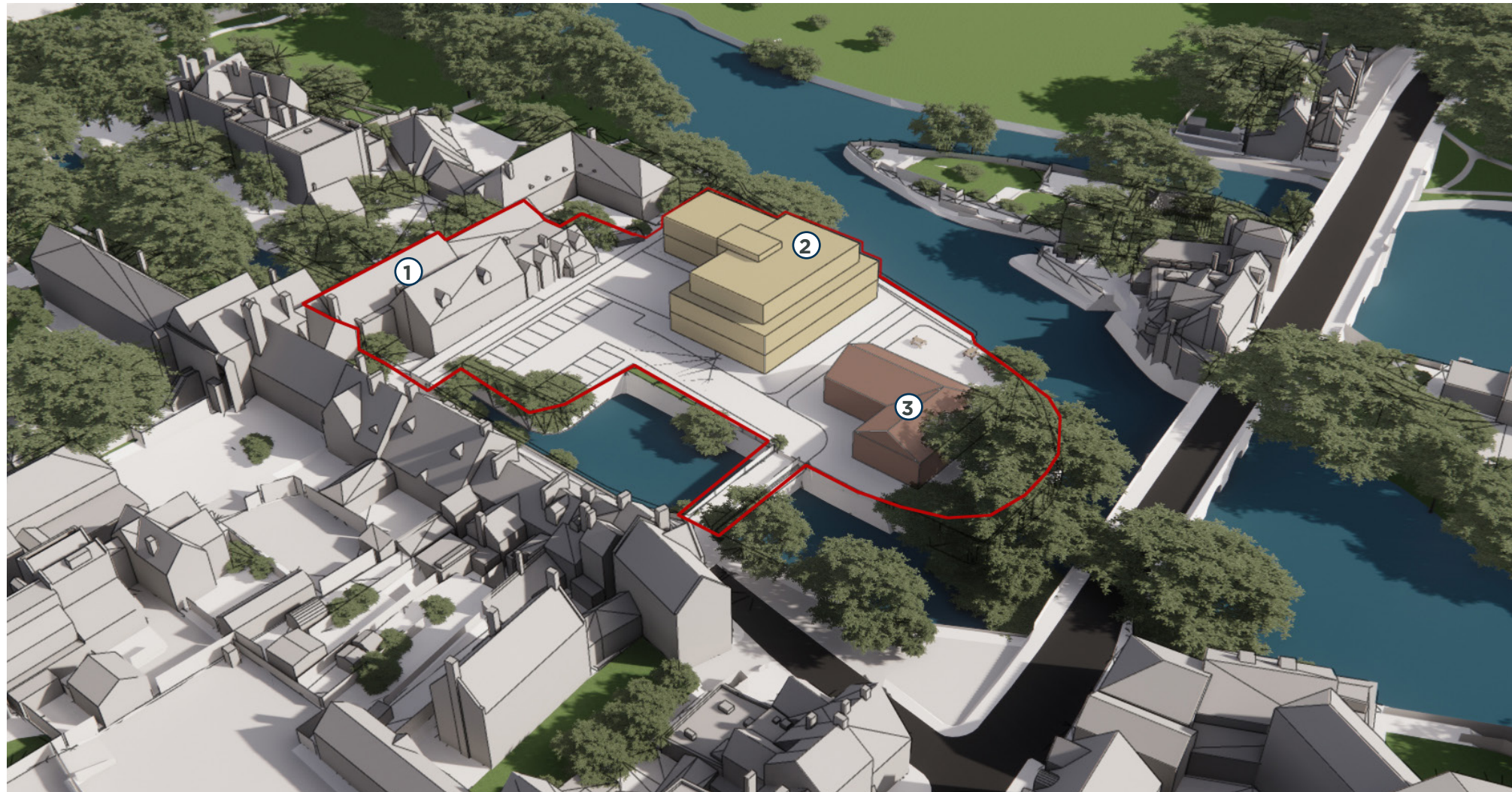


Fig 10.34: Upper Reaches - option B - massing study



Fig 10.35: Building references plan



10.4.4 The Net

Site Description

Site Area:

0.57 hectares

Existing Site Use:

The main use of the Site is for OCC statutory functions including Abingdon Children and Family Centre alongside associated car parking and green space.

Flood Risk:

Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding; less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year). There is a low to medium risk of surface flooding centrally on the Site. Medium risk means that this area has a chance of flooding of between 1% and 3.3% each year.

Access:

There are two vehicular access points serving the Site, one off Stratton Way and one off Park Road, although the latter hasn't been in use for a number of years. There is also a pedestrian access off Stratton Way, adjacent to the bus stops.

Heritage:

The Site falls within the Abingdon Town Centre Conservation Area and there are a number of listed buildings within close proximity.

Landscape / Trees:

There are several trees on the northern end of the Site and along the boundary of the western part of the Site.

Building Condition:

The building appears to be in a reasonable state of repair.

Building Heights:

The current building is 2 storeys. In the event of any redevelopment 2-4 storeys may be appropriate.

Views:

Key views of the Site include the view from Stratton Way looking south and from listed buildings on Ock Street.



Fig 10.36: Location plan

AREA SUMMARY	Footprint		No. Storeys
	SQM	SQFT	
The Net			
Community Services	322	3,466	2
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	322	3,466	

Table 10: Existing land use schedule

Key Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

There is potential to:

- Create a new youth hub with a range of activities complimentary and sensitive to the existing services delivered on-site.
- Demolish or repurpose the existing building including potential to extend.
- Improve connectivity to the Site from Stratton Way.
- Rationalise the parking layout by separating the vehicle infrastructure from the main body of the Site.
- Provide a play area, MUGA / outdoor sports facility, roof top sports and improved outdoor space for events and biodiversity.
- Refurbish or redevelop to provide a

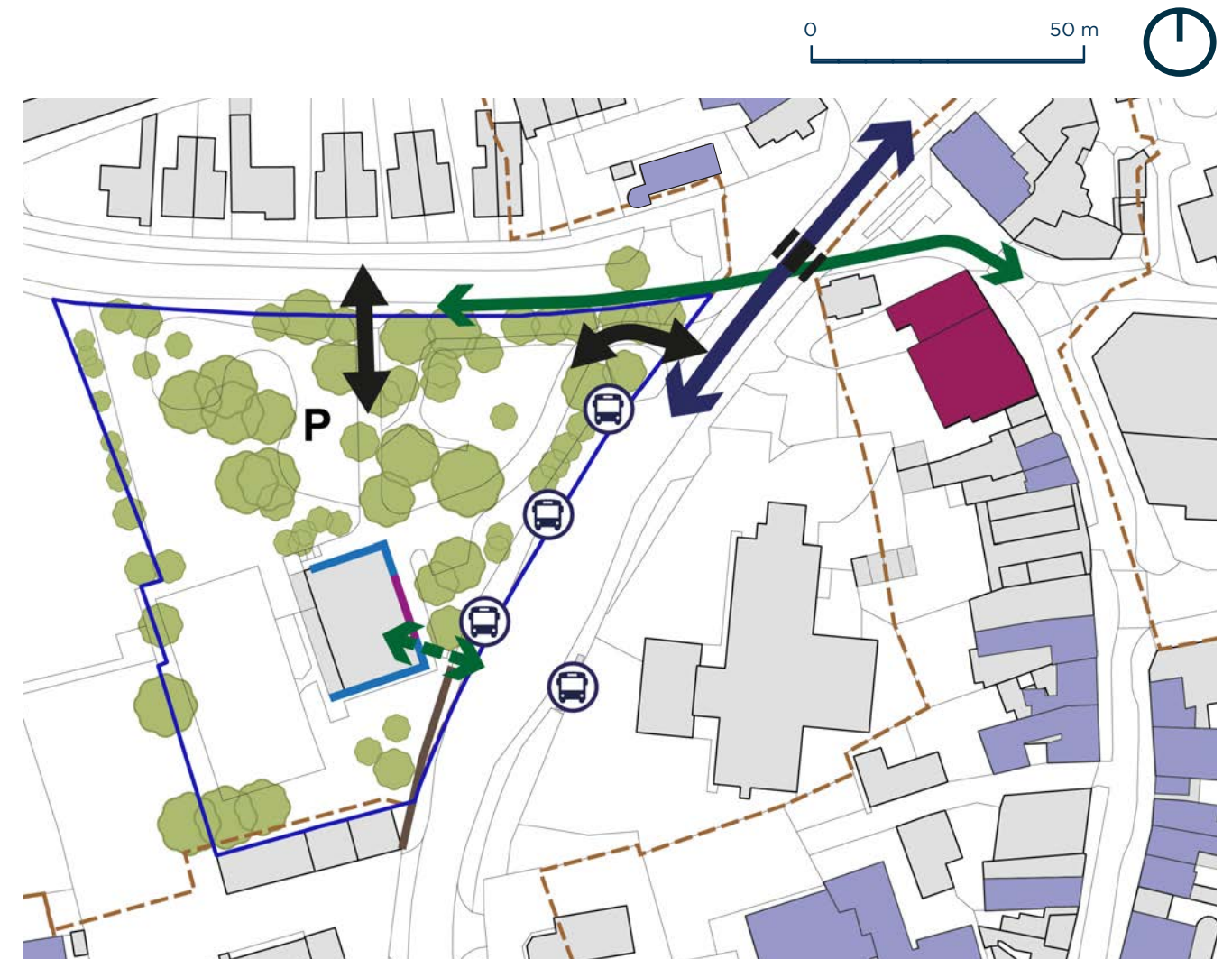


Fig 10.37: The Net Site considerations plan

mix of uses including community use, employment and ancillary food and beverage space.

- Provide facilities (such as a mini transport hub) for cycle parking, scooters, electric transit and other forms of transport.

Constraints

- There are sensitivities associated with existing OCC services which may need to be reprovided within a development proposal.
- The Site supports significant areas of open space, including mature trees.
- There are a number of neighbouring listed buildings.
- There are high levels of noise from traffic on Stratton Way.
- There is no vehicular access from Park Road onto Stratton Way.

- Site boundary (OCC Ownership)
- Conservation Area
- Grade II* listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Pedestrian route
- Vehicular route
- Site entrance
- Bus route
- Bus stop
- Existing building
- Pedestrian crossing
- Existing trees
- Active frontage
- Passive frontage
- Blank frontage

11.0 Delivery and Next Steps



11.1 Delivery and Next Steps



11.1 Delivery and Next Steps

Deliverability has underpinned the approach to the Opportunity Sites, town centre transport and public realm improvements and wider placemaking proposals. These potential interventions seek to capitalise on the town’s strengths and address its constraints, and they will need to be carefully assessed to confirm what is realistically deliverable. Successful delivery will attract new occupiers and investment to the town centre.

11.1.1 Planning Policy

The aim of the Regeneration Framework is to provide confidence to prospective developers, investors and occupiers as to the potential of Abingdon town centre as a development opportunity and to guide future decisions to support the Vision for central Abingdon and achieve the highest quality of development in the town. The Framework is not a planning policy document itself, but it will help to steer the formulation of new policies in both the Abingdon Neighbourhood Development Plan (which is currently in preparation and once adopted will form part of the statutory Development Plan) and the forthcoming South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan. The Framework document has been prepared in consultation with the Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to ensure that its vision, objectives and development priorities and opportunities align with those of the local community.

Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan and Joint Local Plan will provide the policy basis against which any future planning applications for development within the locality will be objectively assessed.

11.1.2 Viability of Interventions

The Regeneration Framework has been appraised using inputs that reflect current market conditions to review their ability to be delivered. The viability assessments represent a moment in time and will be reviewed in line with changing market conditions as the various projects are worked up in more detail.

The CARF has considered a variety of options for different sites, and where these are not currently financially viable, they will remain as an option in the event that there is a change

in circumstances and an improved viability in the future. The availability of public sector support through use of its assets or via grant funding may also have an important bearing on whether projects are deliverable or not. The viability has been tested on the basis that each Site will be delivered by the private sector, allowing for a commercially acceptable level of return based on commercial interest rates but this will be reviewed as the projects are developed.

The mix of uses on each of the Opportunity Sites has been proposed following an analysis of the current local market. Further soft market testing will confirm the level of demand for the proposed uses and this will help further refine the assessment of viability. There may also be potential for additional income to be driven from the Opportunity Sites, which will be explored further.

11.1.3 Funding Considerations

Funding for the delivery of the various projects outlined will come from a variety of sources but a key objective is to reduce the reliance on public sector funding as far as possible, while still realising the ambition for a sustainable and vibrant town centre.

Where Vale is landowner, the full range of delivery and funding options will be considered at the appropriate time, including involving the private sector. Vale and its partners will consider the extent to which they want to take an active role in the projects and consider the balance between risk and reward on a site-by-site basis.

Investment in public realm and improved movement through the town centre will need to be delivered using grant or other funding but these initiatives are anticipated to increase the town centre’s attractiveness to leisure and business visitors and will have the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour, thereby improving footfall and local spending.

Where public sector funding is required, Vale will consider the following:

- Existing Council and other public sector partner budgets
- Public sector borrowing, depending on the level of prevailing interest rates at the time

- Using the Council’s position as landowner to enhance viability, including cross subsidisation of sites
- Planning obligations / Community Infrastructure Levy
- Involvement of other project partners with access to funding sources that the Council is not able to access, for example One Public Estate and health funding through the local Integrated Care Board
- Active travel / sustainable transport funding
- Other sources of funding may also be

available as centralised capital and revenue funding programmes from the Government come forward.

11.1.4 Prioritisation of Interventions

The interventions are at different scales and levels of complexity and therefore are capable of delivery within different timescales. The table below sets out the different interventions alongside commentary on whether they are deliverable (subject to planning and other regulatory consents) in the short (0-5 years), medium (5-10 years) or long term (10+ years).

Intervention	Timescale	Comments
Town Centre Transport, Mobility and Public Realm	Short / Medium	Subject to further testing, evidence to support each proposal and identifying funding, many of the interventions could be delivered in the short term. Interventions that would be delivered as part of wider development proposals would need to be delivered in the medium term. Equally, more complicated interventions such as changes to the streetscape and junctions would take longer and would require receipt of more substantial funding in order to facilitate their delivery.
The Charter	Short / Medium	Existing occupation will need to be considered to understand and define timescales for current and future use. Before redevelopment begins, the public services that are currently on site need to be re-provided, either on site or elsewhere. The town centre location and opportunity for a wide mix of uses increases the complexity of this Site.
Abbey House	Short / Medium	The building is within the ownership and partial occupation of Vale and is subject to leasehold occupation which includes other public partners. Vacant possession could however be achievable in the short term to enable a clear route to delivery. The proposals envisage refurbishing and / or repurposing the building, hence the delivery timescales could be shorter than a full demolition and rebuild, depending on the nature of the proposals.
Upper Reaches	Medium / Long	There are a number of significant constraints affecting development on this Site. Not least, the Site is currently subject to a long lease to a private company and therefore, Vale has limited control. The Site also includes a listed building and is within Flood Zones 2 and 3, hence the planning process is expected to be complex.
The Net	Short / Medium	The Site is wholly within the ownership of OCC and therefore would have an identified route to delivery, subject to OCC’s own property strategy and available funding.

Table 11: Timescales for interventions



11.1.5 Next Steps

- Relevant decision making to agree scope and prioritisation of projects and interventions.
- Establish a comprehensive work programme to focus on the delivery of the various projects and initiatives outlined in the CARF.
- Work with other Council departments to pick up on the range of opportunities that have emerged through the engagement and consultation process.
- Further testing on highways proposals and identification of funding.
- Continued engagement with OCC reflecting their role as landowner, highways authority and service provider.
- Continued engagement with the owner of the Bury Street shopping precinct and other relevant stakeholders, including Abingdon Town Council and the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.
- Explore how improvements to town centre management could improve user experience.
- Progress land assembly on the Regeneration Framework sites where possible.
- Identify where the production of site-specific development briefs is required.
- Undertake soft market testing with potential development partners and end users.
- As proposals progress, further testing of viability and agreement of development / disposal strategies.
- A strategy for branding and promoting the town centre.
- Maintain a positive, proactive communications strategy and action plan to support the above actions.
- Continued engagement with the Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan Group to ensure that relevant policies come forward for adoption in the Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan.
- Early engagement with the Council's Planning (Development Management) team on pre-application development proposals.

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Appendices

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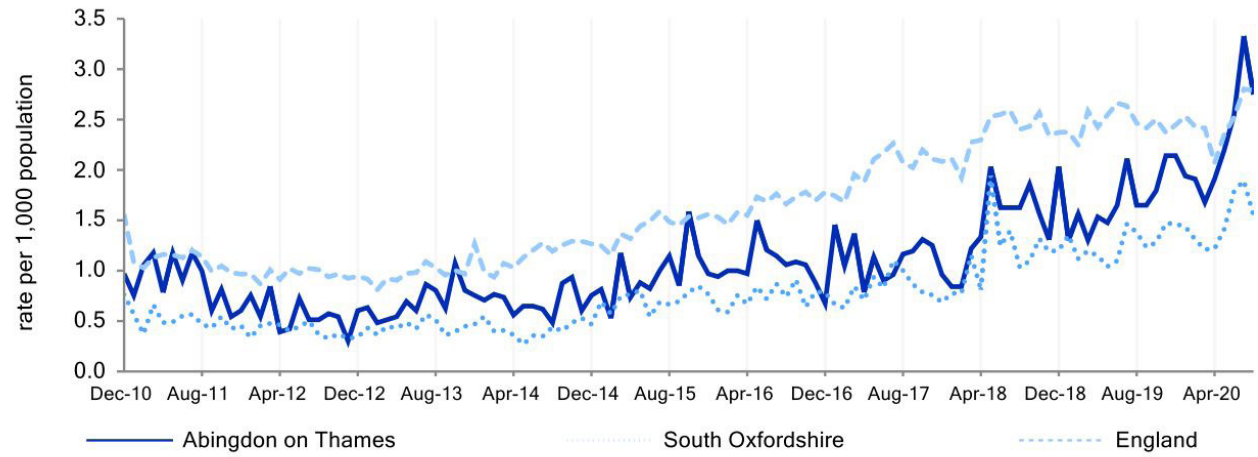


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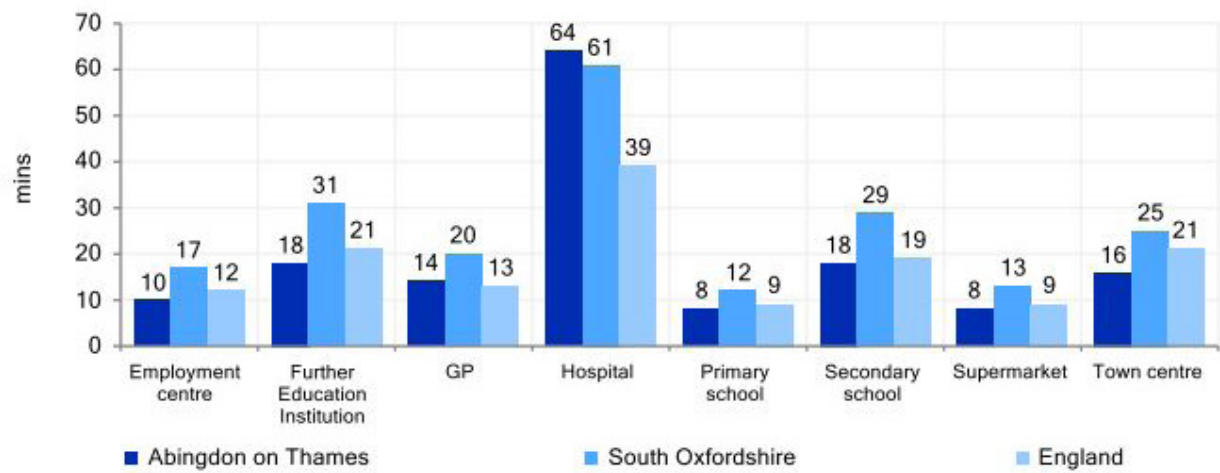


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Bus Schedule Summary (December 2022)

Bus Service	Operator	Abingdon Bus Stop(s)	Route Summary	Frequency	Brief Outbound Schedule Summary	Brief Inbound Schedule Summary
City X1 & NX1	Oxford Bus Company (OBC)	Vineyard, Bath Street, High Street, Stratton Way, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	Oxford City Centre to Wantage via, Redbridge Park&Ride, Abingdon, Marcham and Grove	2 per hour	Mon-Fri 05:30-02:00 Sat 06:00-02:00 Sun 07:00-23:00	Mon-Fri 05:30- 03:00 Sat 06:30-03:00 Sun 08:30-23:30
City 13		Vineyard, High Street, Stratton Way	Northway to Abingdon via Oxford City Centre, Kennington and Radley	3 per hour	Mon-Fri 05:30-23:30 Sat 06:30-23:30 Sun 08:00-23:30	Mon-Fri 05:30-23:30 Sat 06:00-23:30 Sun 08:00-23:15
City 34		Vineyard, High Street, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	Oxford City Centre to Wantage via Abingdon Harwell Campus and Chilton	2 per day	Mon-Fri 07:00 and 08:00	Mon-Fri 17:30 and 18:30
City X3, Connector X2 & NX2	OBC & Thames Travel	Vineyard, High Street, Stratton Way, Ock St	Barton or Oxford Rail Station to Abingdon & Didcot via Barton Park (X3) Oxford City Centre, Redbridge P&R, Abingdon, Drayton (X2), Steventon (X2)	2/3 per hour	Mon-Fri 05:00-03:00 Sat 06:00-03:00 Sun 08:00-00:00	Mon-Fri 05:00-00:00 Sat 05:30-00:00 Sun 07:00-00:00
Connector 33	Thames Travel	Goodwyn Close, Bath Street, High Street, Stratton Way, Bridge Street	Oxford City Centre to Wallingford via Wootton, Abingdon, Milton Park, Didcot and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	1 per hour	Mon-Fri 05:30-22:00 Sat 07:30-20:00 Sun 07:30-20:00	Mon-Fri 06:30-00:00 Sat 07:30-20:00 Sun 07:30-20:00
41		Vineyard, Stratton Way, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	White Horse Leisure Centre to Caldecott via Abingdon Town Centre	5 per day	Mon-Fri 09:30,10:30,11:30, 12:30, 14:30	Mon-Fri 10:00,11:00,12:00, 14:00 and 15:00
45		Bridge St, Stratton Way, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	Abingdon to Templars Square, Cowley via Culham Science Centre, Berinsfield, Littlemore and Rose Hill	1 per hour	Mon-Fri 07:00-17:30	Mon-Fri 07:00-17:30
BB1		Vineyard, Stratton Way, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	Abingdon to Didcot Schools via Drayton and Steventon	2 per day	Mon-Fri 07:24 and 07:35	Mon-Fri 15:25 and 15:29
BB1A		Vineyard, Stratton Way, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	Rose Hill to Didcot Schools via Kennington, Radley and Abingdon	1 per day	Mon-Fri 07:10	Mon-Fri 15:29
15	Pulhams Coaches	Bath Street, Stratton Way, Conduit Rd (Ock St)	Abingdon to Witney via Millets Farm, Standlake	1 per 2 hours	Mon-Fri 08:30-18:00 Sat 08:30-18:00	Mon-Fri 07:30-17:00 Sat 07:30-17:00

Fig B1.4: Bus time table through Abingdon Town Centre (as at December 2022)



Carter Jonas

One Chapel Place
London
W1G 0DJ