



ArkleBoyce.

Stafford Town Centre

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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Executive Summary



The Development Framework for Stafford is a guide for developers, operators and investors, describing the opportunity that has been created within the Regeneration Area, located in Stafford's northern Town Centre. The document has been prepared to guide the future comprehensive regeneration of the area and the vision described in this Development Framework will help deliver Stafford's growth, productivity and quality of life.

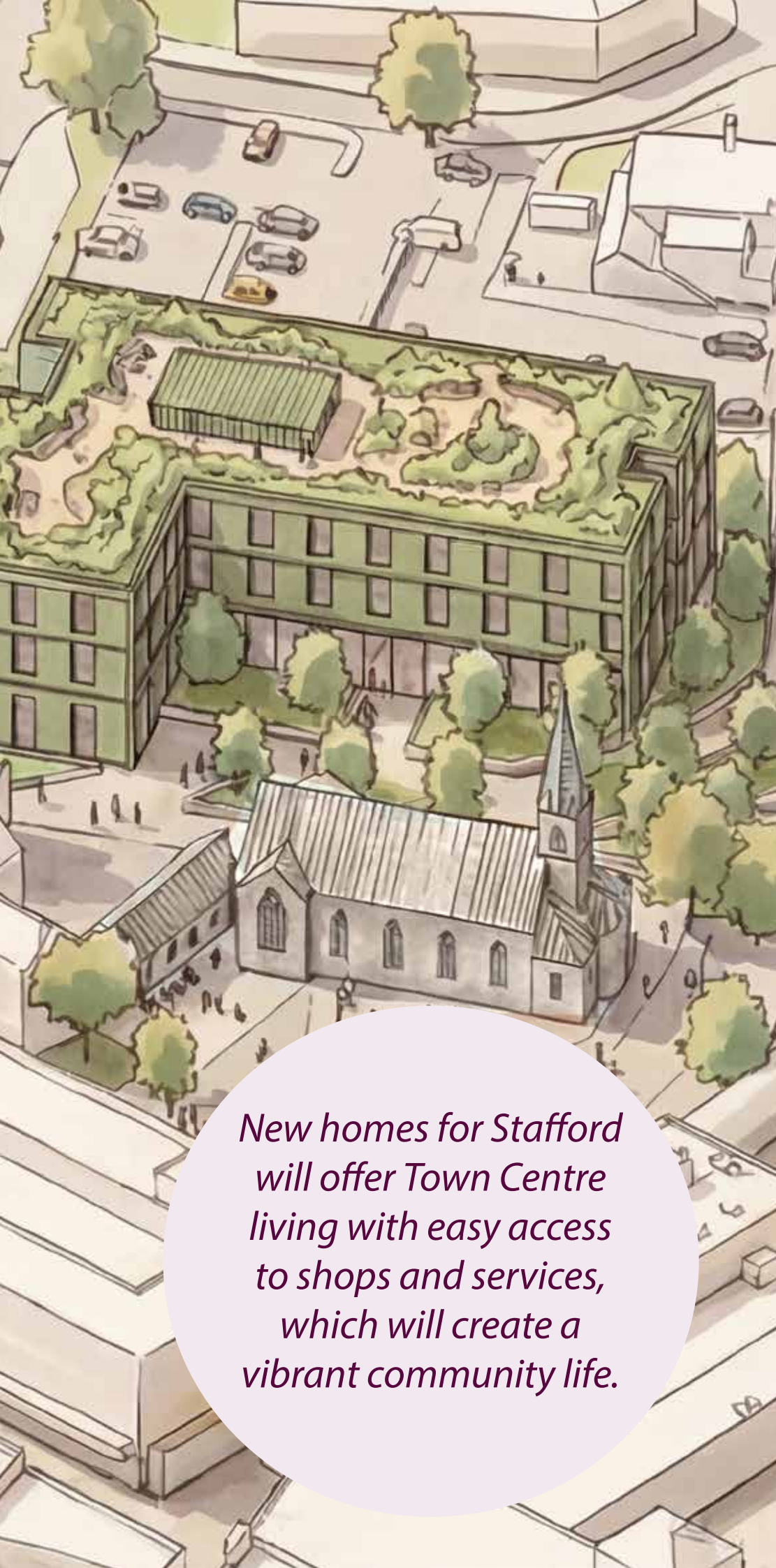
The development sites identified within this document are strategically positioned adjacent to key town centre assets. The planned regeneration will form strong physical and functional connections with the existing built environment, which will support continued development and success.

Stafford is ideally positioned with excellent connectivity to several major cities, including Birmingham and Manchester. With strong transport links and a growing local economy, the Development Framework outlines the opportunity to deliver high-quality, commercially attractive development that will enhance the wider town centre offer for current and future generations.

An aerial architectural rendering of a town center development. The scene shows a mix of existing and proposed buildings. In the upper left, there are traditional red-brick terraced houses. To the right, a large, modern multi-story building with a white roof and a central clock tower is prominent. Below this, a large, light-colored rectangular building with a flat roof is visible. In the foreground, a new market hall with a green roof and a glass facade is being developed. The streets are lined with trees and small figures of people, suggesting a vibrant community. The overall style is a soft, painterly architectural illustration.

The Development Framework sets out opportunities for new residential, commercial and educational uses set within high quality public realm.

The new market hall will act as an anchor for the north of the Town Centre, creating space for independent vendors, retail and events to boost footfall and activity.



The Vision

The vision for the Regeneration Area is to build on the town's significant successes to deliver further transformational change to the north of the Town Centre, creating a vibrant, inclusive and future-ready destination at the heart of Staffordshire.

Through public sector intervention, we have unlocked landmark development opportunities that reimagine the area as a thriving hub of commercial, cultural and community life.

Through a diverse mix of uses, including market and food hall spaces, town centre living, commercial, business and service spaces and education, Stafford's northern Town Centre will be reinvigorated with uses and development that celebrate its heritage and create resilience that meets the needs of today and tomorrow.

Our aim is to create a new destination, where visitors want to shop, where people want to socialise, learn, spend time and where businesses want to invest.

New homes for Stafford will offer Town Centre living with easy access to shops and services, which will create a vibrant community life.



I. Introduction

About this Document

Stafford Borough Council has commissioned ArkleBoyce to produce a Development Framework for the Regeneration Area in the north of the Town Centre.

The aim of the Development Framework is to provide clarity for prospective investors about the long-term vision for Stafford's transformation.

The Development Framework seeks to:

- Set out a background and context for development opportunities and public realm proposals;
- Articulate a clear vision and identity for the northern part of Stafford Town Centre; and
- Provide guidance for development proposals coming forward including appropriate uses and design principles for the built form, public realm and landscaping within the area.

Background

As with many town centres, Stafford has experienced challenging conditions over recent years which has culminated in a decrease in footfall and an associated reduction in retail offer. A number of retail units within the northern Town Centre have been vacated with little chance of those units being re-occupied.

The Government has promoted key initiatives to deal with challenges faced by town centres in the 21st century. In 2025, the Local Government Association published a paper on the transformative impact of housing led regeneration.

The paper, titled **“The role of town centre housing in town centre revitalisation”** states the following:

Housing-led regeneration has emerged as a key strategy to help address these challenges. By leveraging housing development as a driver of investment and renewal, local leaders are meeting immediate housing needs while delivering broader economic and social benefits. Working with central government and private sector partners, they are pioneering new approaches to overcome viability barriers and attract investment.

Following the Government's lead and best practice in the revitalisation of town centres, this Development Framework has been informed by discussions with a number of operators and developers who have shown an interest in the development opportunities offered in Stafford's northern Town Centre.

The process started with the launch of the Stafford Prospectus at UKREiiF in May 2025 and market leaders in the investment and delivery of town centre regeneration programmes have been engaged through a soft marketing exercise.

This has informed all aspects of the Development Framework process, including development mix and uses, quantum, scale and massing. All of which are key elements of modelling and subsequently delivering commercially viable proposals.

Phase I of the project, which is the demolition of the Guildhall and Co-op Department store, will shortly conclude. After this, the Council will continue to lead on demolition across the area with a number of sites within the Regeneration Area being progressed.

2. Context

Strategic Context

The Regeneration Area lies within the County Town of Stafford, a historic market town located in the Staffordshire, in the West Midlands region of England.

Occupying a strategic position, the town is well connected by the M6 motorway and the West Coast Main Line, making it a key node between the North West and the Midlands.

Stafford acts as a central hub for economic activity, public services and cultural life and is located nearby some of the UK's major cities, including 16 miles north of Wolverhampton, 18 miles south of Stoke-on-Trent and 30 miles north-west of Birmingham.

This accessibility underpins major regeneration programmes such as the Stafford Station Gateway and Town Centre revitalisation initiatives supported by national funding streams, signalling sustained confidence in Stafford's long-term growth potential.

Stafford also benefits from exceptional access to high-quality natural environments, with Cannock Chase National Landscape, the Trent Valley and the Shropshire Hills forming its natural landscape. The River Sow, Doxey Marshes and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal are local waterways and natural features that are in close proximity to the Town Centre. As such, the town offers residents and visitors ample access to the countryside and wildlife.

This blend of urban opportunity and rural proximity strengthens Stafford's identity as a sustainable, liveable, and well-connected County Town.



Stafford Town Centre

Stafford Town Centre is a large regional centre. The traditional Town Centre was focussed around Market Square, Gaolgate Street and Greengate Street, however in more recent years, the Town Centre has grown outwards to the north east with the development of Kingsmead Retail Park and to the east with the development of Riverside, which includes national retailers, restaurants and a cinema.

The Town Centre is currently undergoing significant transformation, guided by a number of regeneration initiatives around Station Gateway, Eastgate, expansion of NSCG College and the Market Square.

The Town Centre and its immediate surroundings has a rich heritage, containing the Stafford Town Conservation Area and a number of significant Listed Buildings.

The wider Town Centre environment is varied, with high-quality public realm evident in the traditional shopping areas of Market Square, Greengate Street and Gaolgate Street.



Site Context

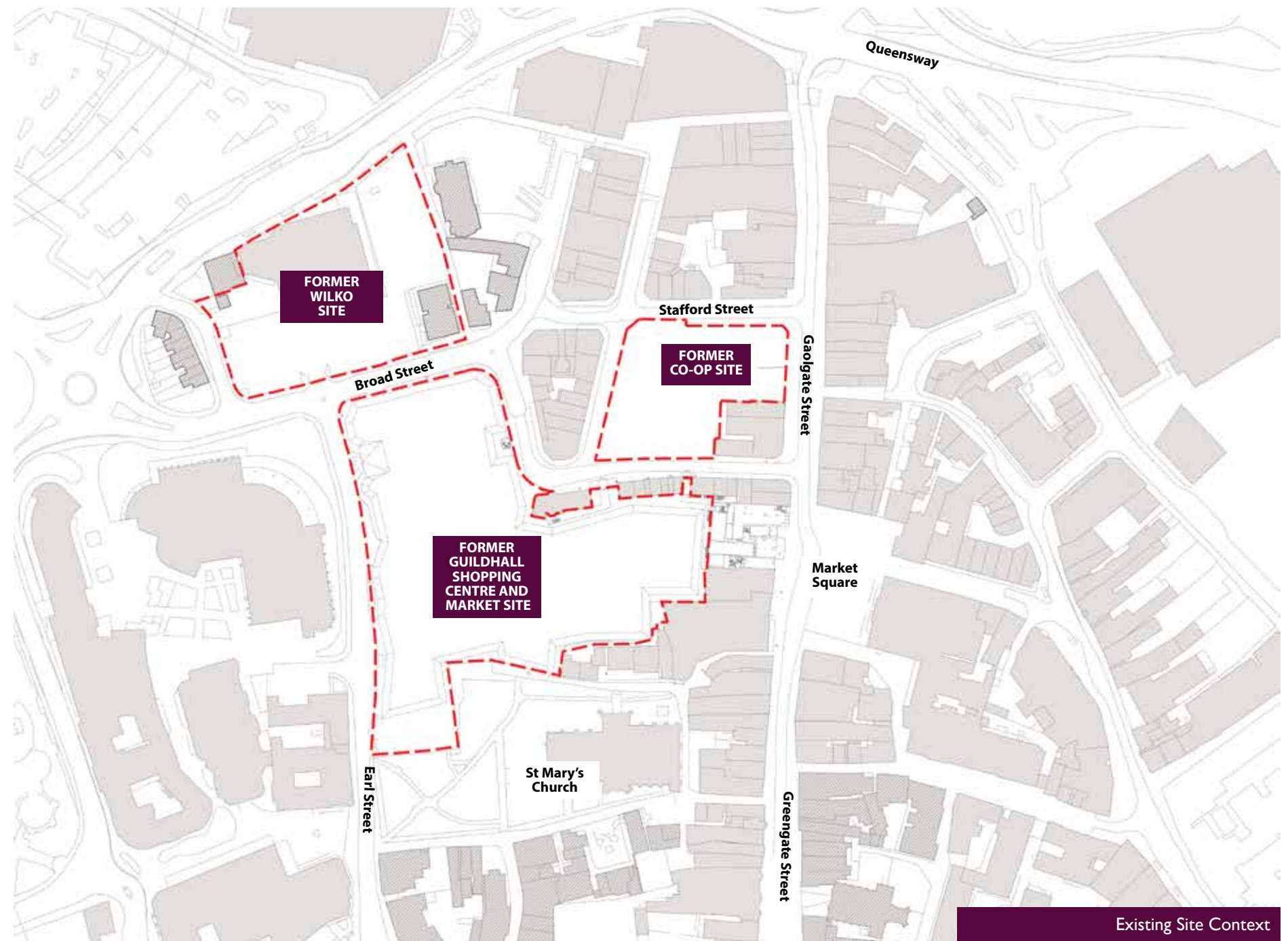
The Regeneration Area

The Development Framework covers a portion of the northern Town Centre, this spans 2.4 hectares and includes:

- The former Guildhall Shopping Centre and Stafford Market.
- The former Co-op Department Store.
- The former Wilko site.

These sites are suitable for a range of uses, including residential, commercial, retail, service uses and education. The delivery of the Development Framework will also unlock the opportunity for new public realm within the Town Centre.

In addition to the development opportunities identified within this Framework, a wider Town Centre Masterplan is nearing completion, which aligns with the vision and principles of this document.



Movement and Accessibility

The wider Town Centre benefits from a clear and permeable street network, with pedestrian-friendly streets and alleys. Extensive pedestrianisation and restrictions on vehicle movement have created a pleasant environment.

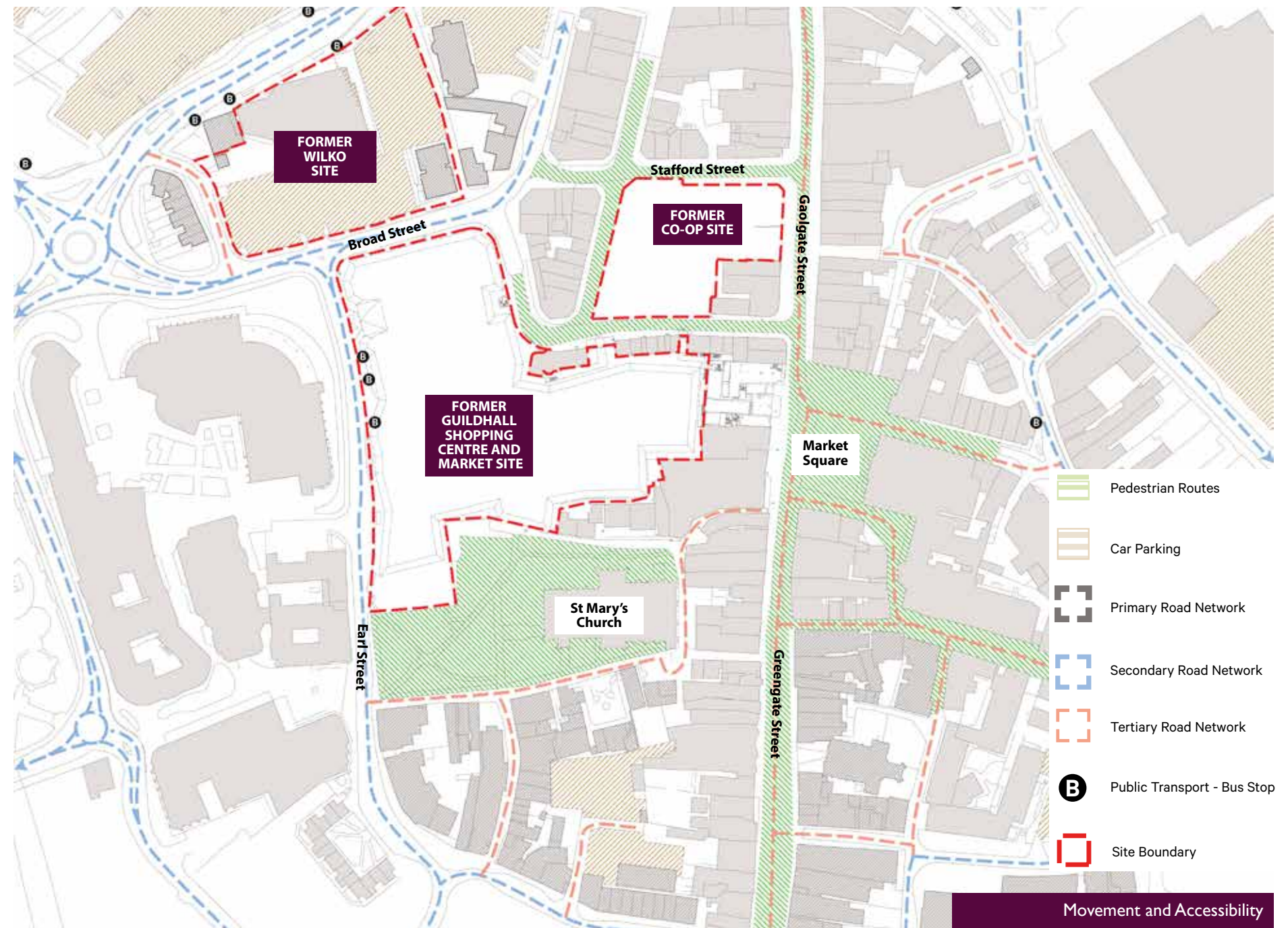
The Town Centre is well connected by multiple transport modes. Stafford Rail Station, located approximately 250m to the west of the Regeneration Area, provides services to destinations including Crewe, Birmingham, Liverpool, London, and Manchester.

Gaol Square Bus Interchange offers links to Eccleshall, Stone, Cannock, Hanley, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Newport, Rugeley, Stoke, Telford, Uttoxeter, and Wolverhampton. The majority of bus routes can be accessed from the edge of the Town Centre with a number of routes running into the centre along Eastgate Street and Earl Street.

Vehicle access is strong, with the Town Centre positioned off the A34 and A518.

National Cycle Route 5 and Route 55 provide good access into the Town Centre from the West, North West and East.

The main shopping areas, including Greengate Street, Market Square, Gaolgate Street, Riverside are pedestrianised and have high accessibility.



Statutory Designations

The Regeneration Area is located within Flood Zone 1, having a low probability of flooding.

The majority of the Development Framework area is located within the Stafford Town Conservation Area and the sites fall within the setting of a number of Listed Buildings.

The Development Framework lies close to the Cannock Chase National Landscape. Part of Cannock Chase is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). All development that leads to a net increase in dwellings within 15km of the site must take all necessary steps to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects upon the SAC's integrity.

Heritage, Landscape and Public Realm

The majority of the Development Framework area is located within the Stafford Town Conservation Area, with the development sites falling within the setting of a number of Listed Buildings.

These assets are set within a compact network of streets and alleys, where most buildings follow a strong three-storey building line. The Council's appraisal of the Stafford Town Conservation Area, currently on the heritage at risk register, highlights the former shopping centre as negative infill development that has undermined the historic character of the County Town.

As the Framework sites lie within the setting of several heritage assets, the height and massing of future development proposals is an important consideration.

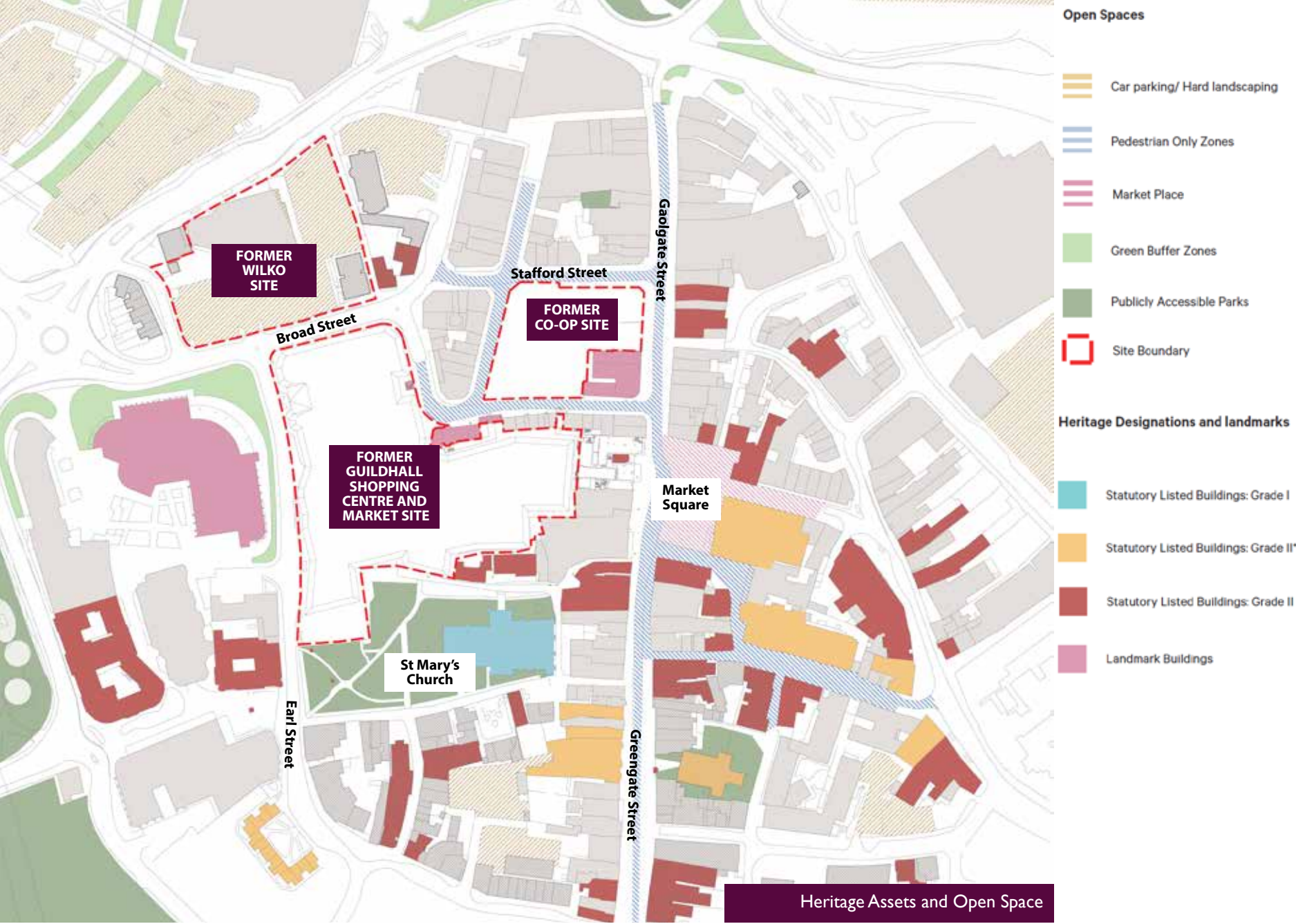
Heritage assets within and adjoining the Regeneration Area include:

- Stafford Town Conservation Area
- Grade I Church of St Mary
- Grade II Foundations of Bertelin's Chapel
- Grade II Fry Headstone
- Grade II Dale Monument
- Grade II 5-8 St Mary's Grove
- Grade II County Education Offices
- Grade II Stafford Borough War Memorial
- Grade II 2-3 Church Lane
- Grade II Church Lane Evangelical Church
- Grade II 56-58 Greengate Street
- Grade II Former Noah's Ark Inn
- Grade II 18 Market Square
- Grade II St Bernard's House
- Grade II 2 Mount Street
- Grade II 34-37 Gaolgate Street

Victoria Park is a key asset within Stafford, providing a green gateway for visitors arriving by train. It forms part of a series of open spaces along the River Sow, creating a high-quality waterfront setting that is easily accessible from the Town Centre. The river is well maintained, and many buildings benefit from their location along its banks.

The Town Centre also features a range of high-quality public realm and pedestrian areas, offering an attractive environment for retail and leisure activity. Market Square, which has recently been refurbished, sits at the heart of the centre and regularly hosts markets and civic events, reinforcing its role as a focal point for community life.

Together, the scale and quality of the building fabric, public realm and green spaces make Stafford an appealing place to walk and cycle. The River Sow's open spaces further enhance provision of accessible green areas. Stafford also holds a number of annual events, including the Stafford Food Festival, Spring Fair, Half Marathon and Christmas Lights switch on.



Planning Context

National Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework

The requirements for Local and Neighbourhood Plans are laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024). This states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Furthermore, the planning system should take into account local circumstances to ensure that economic, social and environmental gains can be delivered in a sustainable manner according to the needs and opportunities of different areas.

The NPPF outlines that a positive approach should be taken to the growth, management and adaptation of town centres and that the efficient use of land should be promoted, with substantial weight given to the value of using previously developed and under-utilised land for homes and other identified needs.

Draft National Decision Making Policies (December 2025)

The Draft National Planning Policy Framework is currently out to consultation. This sets out clearer policies for planning and decision making, with the intention that decision making policies will not be repeated in development plans.

There is continued support for the effective use of land within proposed Policy LI. For town centres, there is a greater emphasis within proposed Policy TC1 on the need to set out a clear strategy and vision to ensure all needs are considered, including the scope to accommodate additional floorspace, broaden the mix of uses, and bring vacant sites back into use.

Proposed Policy TC2 promotes continued support to strengthening the vitality and viability of town centres, where this can be achieved through the diversification of uses, intensification and provision of residential accommodation and improving access to local shops and facilities which provide day-to-day services for the local communities.

Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is the government's online resource that explains how to apply the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in practice. It provides detailed, topic-based guidance for local authorities, developers, and communities, ensuring consistency and clarity in how planning policies are interpreted and implemented.

Unlike the NPPF, the PPG is continuously updated online to reflect new policies, case law, and government priorities.

Key themes from the PPG on Town Centres emphasise vitality, adaptability, and sustainable growth. The guidance highlights how planning authorities can support Town Centres in responding to economic change, diversifying uses, and ensuring they remain attractive, accessible, and resilient.

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide sets out the government's vision for creating well-designed places that are beautiful, sustainable, and enduring. It explains what good design means in practice and provides a framework for local authorities, developers, and communities to follow. The guide identifies principles to ensure that new developments respond to local character, support social interaction, promote active travel, and integrate green infrastructure.

It forms part of national planning practice guidance and is intended to support the National Planning Policy Framework. The guide helps local authorities assess design quality, informs the preparation of local design codes, and encourages developers to deliver schemes that enhance heritage, improve wellbeing, and foster resilience. By setting a clear benchmark for design quality, the National Design Guide aims to ensure that future growth contributes positively to communities, strengthens identity, and creates places that are attractive, inclusive, and adaptable over time.

National Model Design Code

The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance to help local authorities, communities, and developers define what good quality design looks like in their area. It sets out clear design parameters and expands on the ten characteristics of well-designed places identified in the National Design Guide. The Code is intended to ensure that new development reflects local character, supports sustainable growth, and delivers high-quality places that are attractive, functional, and resilient.

Draft Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance.

The four existing guidance documents (National Design Guide, Design PPG and National Model Design Code Parts 1 and 2) have been consolidated into a single streamlined resource, "The Draft Design and Placemaking PPG".

The PPG is intended to support the application of policies in the Draft NPPF 2025. It outlines and illustrates the government's priorities for well-designed places, including the seven features of well-designed places:

- Liveability – healthy, mixed and integrated communities.
- Climate – mitigating and adapting to change.
- Nature – enhanced and optimised.
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
- Built Form – a compact and connected pattern of development.
- Public Space – safe, social and inclusive.
- Identity – attractive and distinctive.

Planning Policy for Stafford

In preparing the Development Framework, consideration has been given to national, regional and local planning policy. This includes both adopted and emerging policies in order to establish a full picture of the planning context and emerging evidenced requirements and needs.

A synopsis of the key policies which are relevant to and have informed the Development Framework proposals are contained below.

- Part 1 of the Local Plan contains a vision, spatial principles and specific policies which will guide development across the Borough.
- Part 2 of the Plan details settlement and Recognised Industrial Estate boundaries together with a policy protecting community / social facilities.

Part 1 Local Plan

The 2014 Plan for Stafford Borough (Part 1) contains a vision, spatial principles and specific policies which will guide development across the Borough.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan there have been significant changes in National Planning Policy and in particular, housing targets for Stafford.

The following Local Plan Policies are relevant to this Development Framework:

- **Policy SP3 and 4 Stafford sustainable settlement hierarchy** - which outlines the County Town of Stafford as the primary settlement within the Borough to accommodate 70% of the housing development within the plan.
- **Policy SP5 Stafford Borough Employment Growth Distribution** - which outlines 56% of the employment land should be directed at Stafford.
- **Policy Stafford 1** - the anchor policy for shaping Stafford's future - summarised opposite.
- **Policy E8 Town Centre** - outlines Town Centre policy considerations, summarised overleaf.
- **Policy N1 Design** - seeks to secure enhancements in design quality, through set design principles on use, form, space and movement.
- **Policy N2 Climate Change** - all development must incorporate sustainable design features to facilitate a reduction in the consumption of natural resources, improve the environmental quality and mitigate against the impact of climate change.
- **Policy N9 - Historic Environment** - requires new development to respect Stafford's Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and encourages high-quality design that enhances the setting of heritage assets.
- **Policy T1 Sustainable Transport** - Supports connectivity between the railway station, bus interchange, and Town Centre.
- **Policy C1, C2 and C3 Housing Policies** - Encourages a mix of residential development and outlines affordable and specialist housing requirements.

Stafford Town Centre Policy

Policies that are relevant to Stafford and its Town Centre are contained within Part 1 of the Local Plan and are summarised in more detail below and overleaf.

Policy Stafford 1 - Stafford Town

The regeneration of Stafford Town Centre is supported through **Policy Stafford 1** which is the anchor policy for shaping Stafford's future. It ensures that growth is concentrated in the town, rather than dispersed across the Borough; regeneration projects are aligned with heritage and sustainability priorities; and Stafford remains competitive against regional centres.

In summary, the policy:

- Establishes Stafford as the County Town and the primary settlement within the Borough, where the majority of new housing, employment, retail, and infrastructure will be directed.
- Identifies significant levels of housing and employment land to be delivered in Stafford, reflecting its role as a sub-regional centre.
- Supports a range of uses in Stafford Town Centre to strengthen vitality and viability, including retail, leisure, and cultural development.
- Requires improvements to transport networks, sustainable travel options, and community facilities to support growth.
- Ensures development respects Stafford's historic character and environmental assets, integrating green infrastructure and protecting conservation areas.
- Highlights strategic locations as priorities for regeneration and mixed-use development.
- Embeds principles of low-carbon design, reduced car dependency, and resilience to climate change.

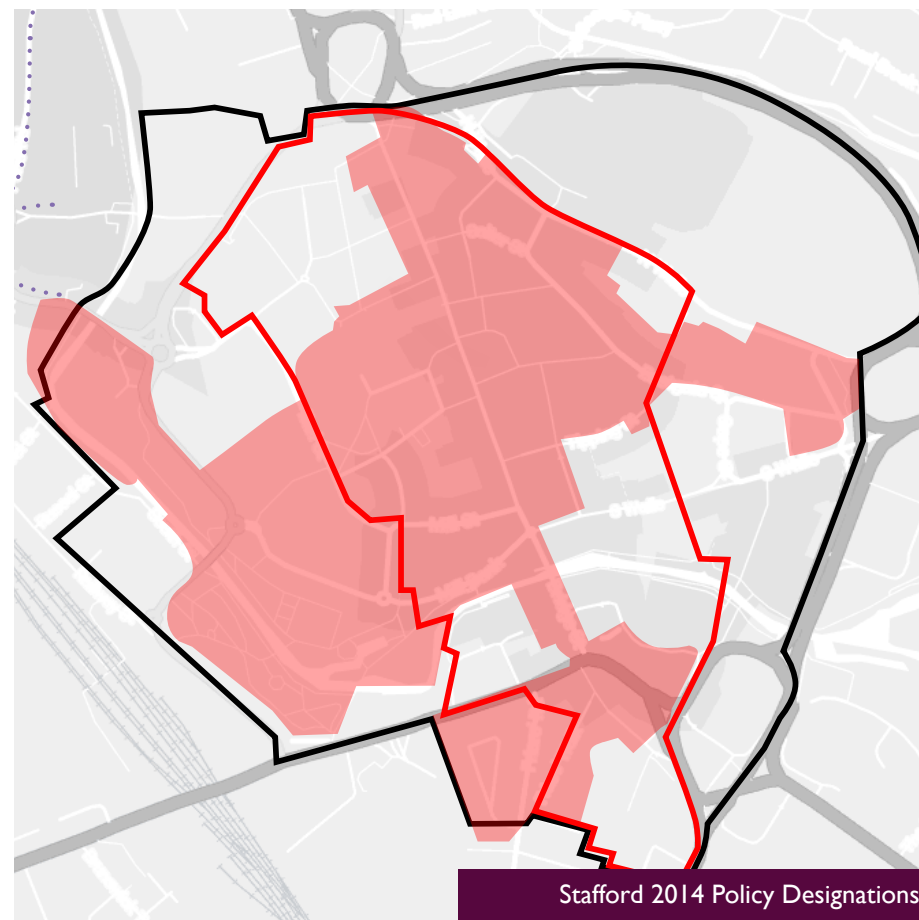
Town Centre Policy - Policy E8 - Town Centres

Policy E8 outlines:

“Stafford Town Centre is the primary comparison and convenience shopping destination serving Stafford Borough as a whole, with a vibrant night time economy including arts and cultural activities, attracting significant numbers of trips from adjoining parts of the Borough as well as developing a key role as a tourist destination within Staffordshire.”

In summary, the policy seeks to:

- Maintain and improve the quality and diversity of retail provision.
- Maintain and promote a diversity of uses.
- Retain and increase the amount of attractive residential provision in town centres, through new build and conversion.



- Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Shopping Area Boundary
- ... Western Access Improvement
- Stafford Town Conservation Area Boundary

Local Plan Part 2

Part 2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough sets out boundaries for the settlements of Stafford, it also includes a policy on protecting social and community facilities, and the employment areas in Stafford.

The Plan for Stafford Borough - Part 2 was adopted by the Council on the 31 January 2017.

- **Policy SP3 Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy** - The majority of future development will be based on a sustainable settlement hierarchy with the County Town of Stafford being first.
- **Policy SP4 Housing Growth Distribution** - 70% of housing target will be directed at Stafford.
- **Policy SB1** - details Settlement Boundaries for Stafford (bar employment use).
- **Policy SB2** - outlines social and community facilities are protected unless it can be demonstrated through evidence, the use is no longer required.
- **Policy SB3** - outlines those protected employment areas within Stafford.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Design SPD (2018)

The Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in April 2018 and provides detail on how Local Plan policies should be applied in planning applications.

It outlines the following Core Design Principles:

- Development must respond to local distinctiveness, heritage assets, and landscape setting.
- Promotes permeability, pedestrian priority, and integration with existing street patterns.
- Ensure buildings respect human scale, with appropriate massing, height, and proportion.
- Separation distances to safeguard privacy and outlook.
- Encourage high-quality streets, squares, and green spaces that foster community activity.
- Incorporate energy efficiency, green infrastructure, and climate resilience into design.
- Standards for spacing, garden sizes, and orientation to ensure good living conditions.
- Emphasis on creating mixed, inclusive neighbourhoods with varied housing types.
- Guidance on scale, materials, and detailing to ensure changes respect the character of existing dwellings and streets.

Emerging Local Plan

New Local Plan 2025-2045

Following a Cabinet decision on 6 March 2025, Stafford Borough Council are currently preparing their evidence base for a new Local Plan 2025 to 2045 which will start a new plan-making process for the area.

The Local Plan 2025 - 2045 will fully replace the Local Plan for Stafford Borough with a new development strategy, site allocations and Development Management policies.

There have been significant changes in national policy and legislation since the adoption of the current Local Plan that the new Local Plan will be considering in its preparation. Relevant to this Development Framework and providing a robust context to this document include:

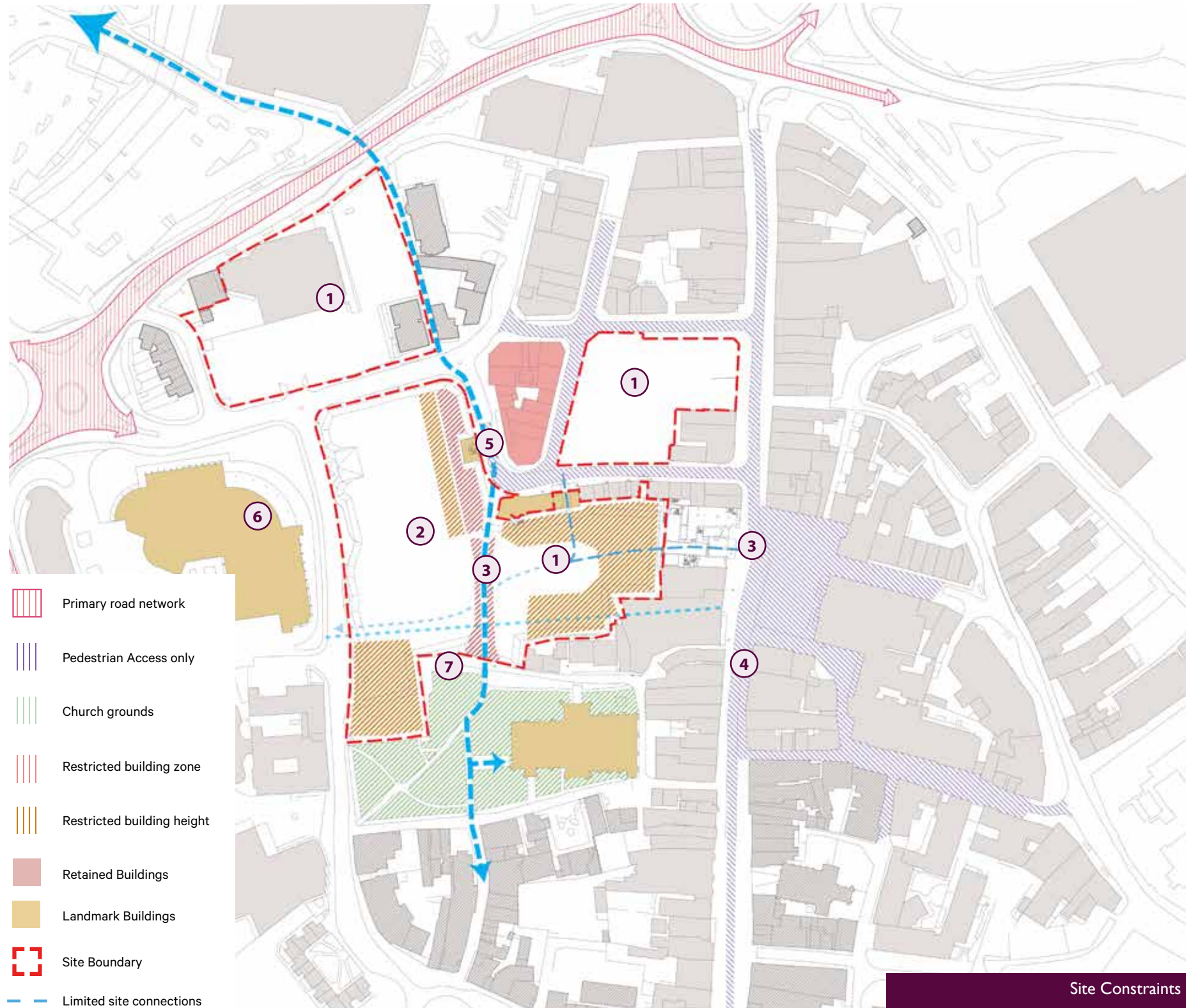
- The housing need for the area and the substantial increase in the housing requirement for the Borough;
- The sustained support for brownfield-first development to achieve higher housing targets and support urban regeneration; and
- The recognition that town centres must are no longer solely defined by retail and need to evolve.

Other Relevant Guidance

Other relevant guidance documents that have informed the Framework and should inform development proposals include:

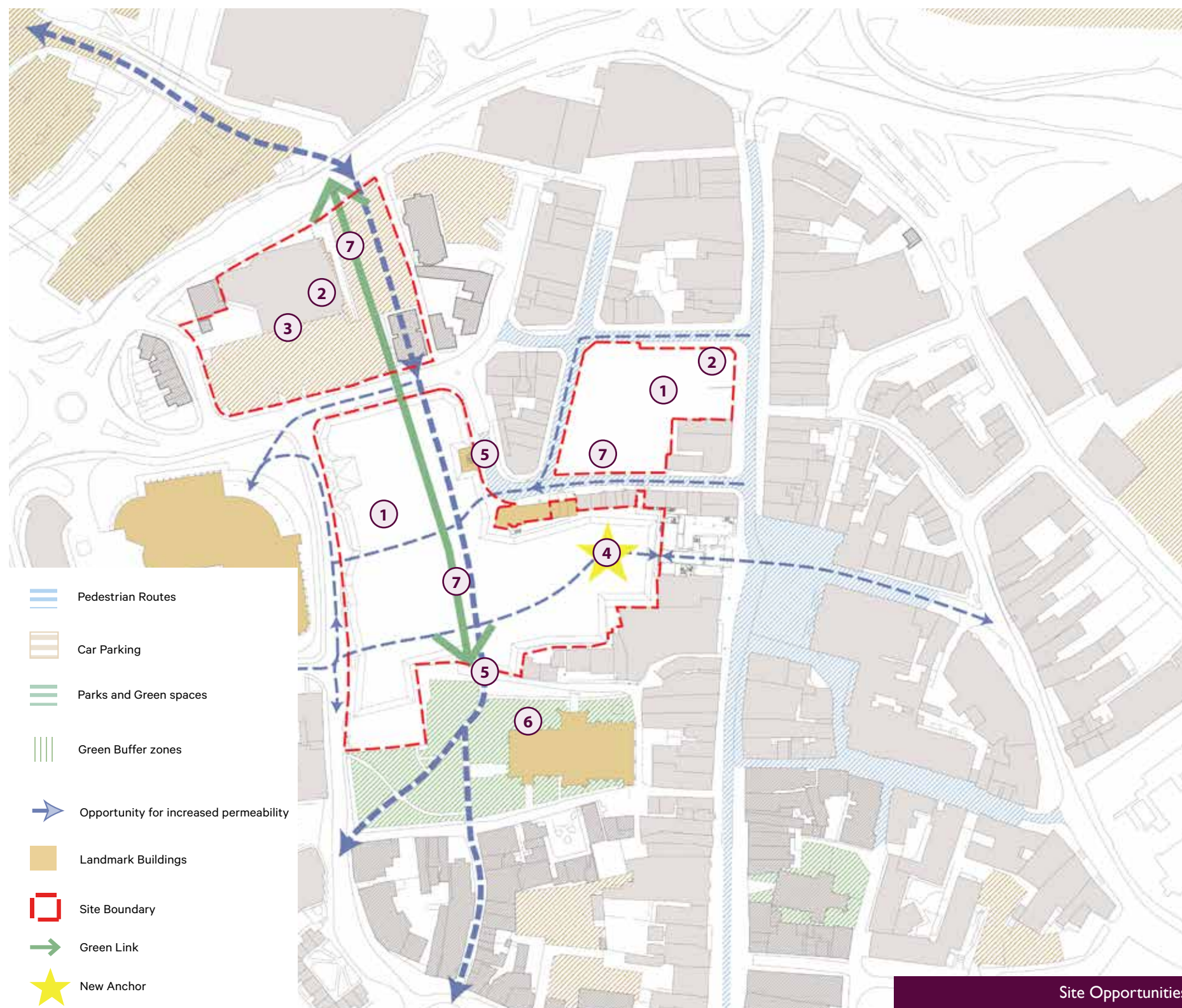
- Staffordshire Local Transport Plan (2026).
- Stafford Economic Growth Strategy (2020-2025).
- Stafford Corporate Plan (2025-2028).
- Stafford Climate Change Strategy.

3. Challenges and Opportunities



The Challenges

- ① There has been a general decline in requirement for large scale retail space within the Town Centre due to online shopping trends and post pandemic behaviours.
- ② There is a lack of suitable residential accommodation within the Regeneration Area across all age groups.
- ③ There is a lack of connectivity between key spaces and landmarks, there is a need to connect areas of the Town Centre back together.
- ④ Inconsistent quality of public realm, paving, seating options and poor signage.
- ⑤ Streets like Chapel Street lack active frontages and feel neglected compared to the primary shopping core.
- ⑥ There is an unmet and growing demand for education, yet limited space to accommodate its exponential growth.
- ⑦ Current built form around St Mary's Church creates a poor setting for the Grade I Listed Building.



The Opportunities

- ① The former Guildhall Shopping Centre and Co-op Department Store have been acquired and demolished by the Council. This is creating opportunities for the private sector to introduce a range of new uses, including residential, leisure, education and commercial to help diversify the Town Centre.
- ② Further sites have been acquired and are planned to be demolished, further expanding the regeneration footprint.
- ③ By acquiring and demolishing vacant sites, new spaces have been created which could support Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group's expansion.
- ④ An anchor development, such as a food hall can provide a focus for the centre and extend activity beyond daytime shopping.
- ⑤ Opportunity to increase footfall and improve accessibility between key landmarks, such as Chapel Tower and St Mary's Church, enhancing permeability.
- ⑥ There is an opportunity to enhance the Stafford Conservation Area.
- ⑦ Opportunity to create a sequence of new public realm areas within the town, which link to existing squares and greenspaces.

4. The Development Framework

The Development Framework has been prepared to guide the future regeneration for the north of the Town Centre. It provides design and development principles to guide development on the key regeneration sites outlined opposite.

The Development Framework provides guidance to promote sustainable growth and revitalisation within the Regeneration Area.

The vision is to create a vibrant, safe, inclusive, and sustainable Town Centre community. The core urban design principles are retained and refined to reflect Stafford's evolving needs.

The document provides both:

- **Strategic design principles** that should guide all development within the Regeneration Area.
- **Site specific parameters** for the individual sites that can help guide massing, heights and quantum.





Strategic Framework Principles

In delivering the vision for Stafford it is essential that all development demonstrates that it meets the Strategic Framework Principles to improve the quality of buildings and spaces within the Regeneration Area.

The following strategic framework principles have been identified to help shape the type of quality that future schemes should uphold within Stafford, anchoring development in local character, heritage and needs within the Regeneration Area.

Strategic Framework Principles include:

- **Creating a thriving Town Centre with a distinct character** - creating a strong sense of place that knits the area back together through permeable, active routes.
- **Creating diversity through a vibrant mix of uses** - by providing a complementary mix of uses to build on the recent successes within Stafford, such as Riverside.
- **Creating a connected and legible public realm** - through the creation of welcoming routes that prioritise people, reinforce identity, and create a resilient Town Centre.
- **Encourage a heritage-led design response** - drawing on Stafford's heritage to create an attractive and visually interesting focal point for residents of the town and the surrounding area.
- **Safeguard natural resources and sustainability** - protecting water, energy, and biodiversity through sustainable drainage, green infrastructure, efficient materials, and climate-resilient design.

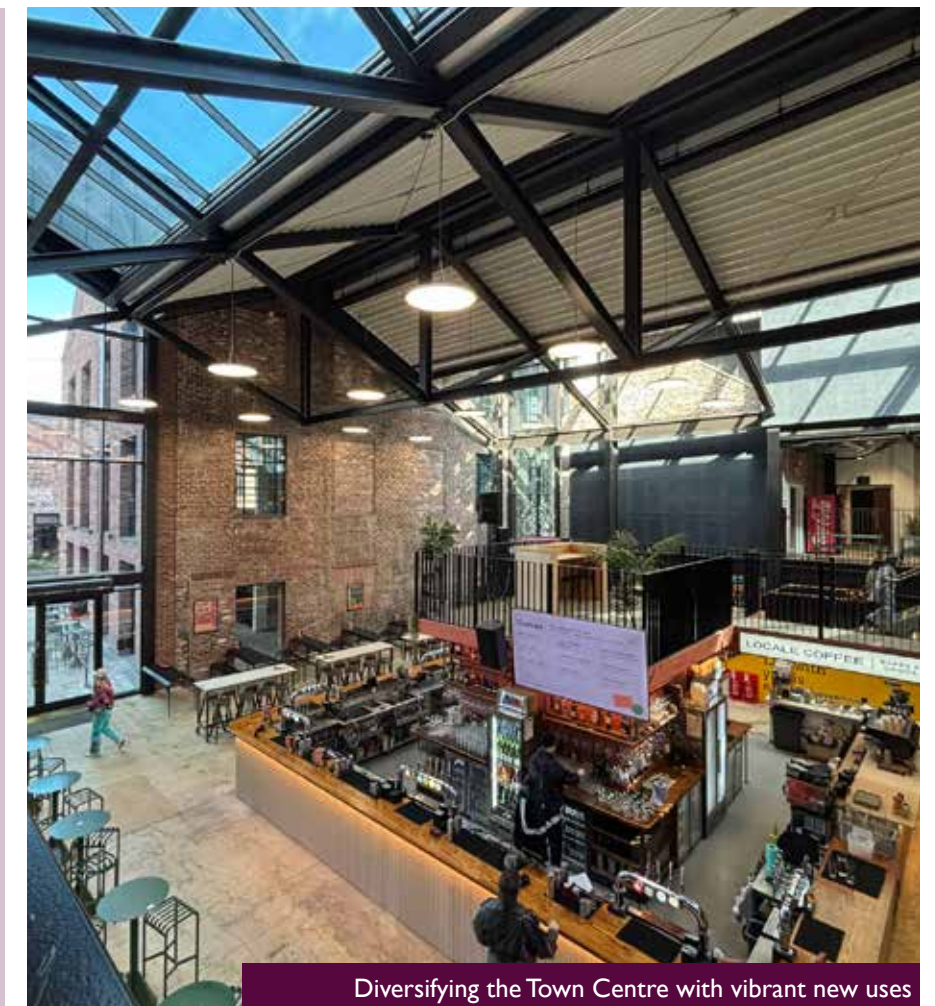
Creating a thriving Town Centre with a distinct character

It is important that at the heart of all development proposals within the Regeneration Area, a strong sense of place is developed to enhance the existing Town Centre.

Proposed interventions will bring forward a range of uses, promote a finer grain of built form and create streets and spaces that are fronted by high quality development.

The overarching aim for development within the area is to promote design excellence and develop a sense of place, with a clear character through development that:

- Reinforces Stafford's identity as a County Town, through new uses, distinctive architecture and civic spaces.
- Enhances a sense of place through the design of buildings and responding to the immediate context, heritage and townscape.
- Creates a robust urban form that encloses and fronts streets and spaces across the area. Development sites should include a clear definition between public and private spaces and demonstrate how parking and servicing can be accommodated where appropriate.
- Expands and diversifies public spaces, with improved pedestrian connectivity through a linked sequence of green and civic spaces, improving the permeability to existing public and green spaces, such as the Market Square and St Mary's Church.
- Ensures a high quality public realm to seamlessly guide people through the area and connect to adjoining locations within the town.



Diversifying the Town Centre with vibrant new uses

Creating diversity through a vibrant mix of uses

Attracting and accommodating a viable and robust mix of uses will be important in ensuring the future success of the Regeneration Area.

Successful regeneration within the town, such as Riverside, has drawn footfall away from the traditional centre. The acquisition of large sites provides the opportunity to create a complementary mix of uses within the northern Town Centre to ensure it is well-used and help attract people to live, work and play in the same area.

The Development Framework promotes a mix of uses to complement the existing retail function.

The Framework promotes a flexible range of uses, to diversity the Town Centre, including:

- A new Market Hall, including retail and food and drink.
- New homes, including buy-to-let, affordable, senior living and open market homes for Stafford.
- Space for commercial, retail, business and service uses, for a variety of operators.
- Space for educational uses and expansion of the NSCG College.

A range of unit sizes and uses will be encouraged to strengthen footfall and extend activity beyond daytime shopping, fostering a vibrant town centre environment.

Ground floors of buildings should have active frontages, incorporating uses that animate the street.



Active ground floors and a variety of uses will promote diversity

A Connected, Legible Public Realm

The Framework promotes development that enhances existing views and vistas so that the Regeneration Area is legible, permeable and easy to move around. This will contribute to improving the general accessibility of the Town Centre.

The ability to see important routes and landmarks is integral to finding your way around and helps contribute to making a place feel safe. Places where the urban form and layout make them easy to understand often function well and makes them pleasant places to work and visit.

A connected and legible public realm in Stafford should knit together heritage, civic spaces, and green assets with clear, welcoming routes that prioritise people, reinforce identity, and create a resilient Town Centre.

The Framework promotes the following:

- Key civic and heritage buildings, such as St Mary's Church and Chapel Tower should be visible along routes, aiding navigation and reinforcing character.
- Create and maintain clear, direct links between the Regeneration Area and existing civic spaces ensuring easy movement across the Town Centre.
- Reinforce Stafford's historic character by using locally appropriate materials, clear signage, public art and lighting that reflect Stafford's identity as a County Town.
- New public realm, greenspaces and streets should be designed to reinforce civic life able to host markets, festivals, and cultural events, reinforcing civic life.
- Use consistent paving, lighting, and street furniture to guide movement and reinforce identity and make spaces welcoming.



Encouraging a heritage-led design response

Making beautiful, sustainable places to live and work also means creating places that feel at home with their surroundings, while also pushing the boundaries of design.

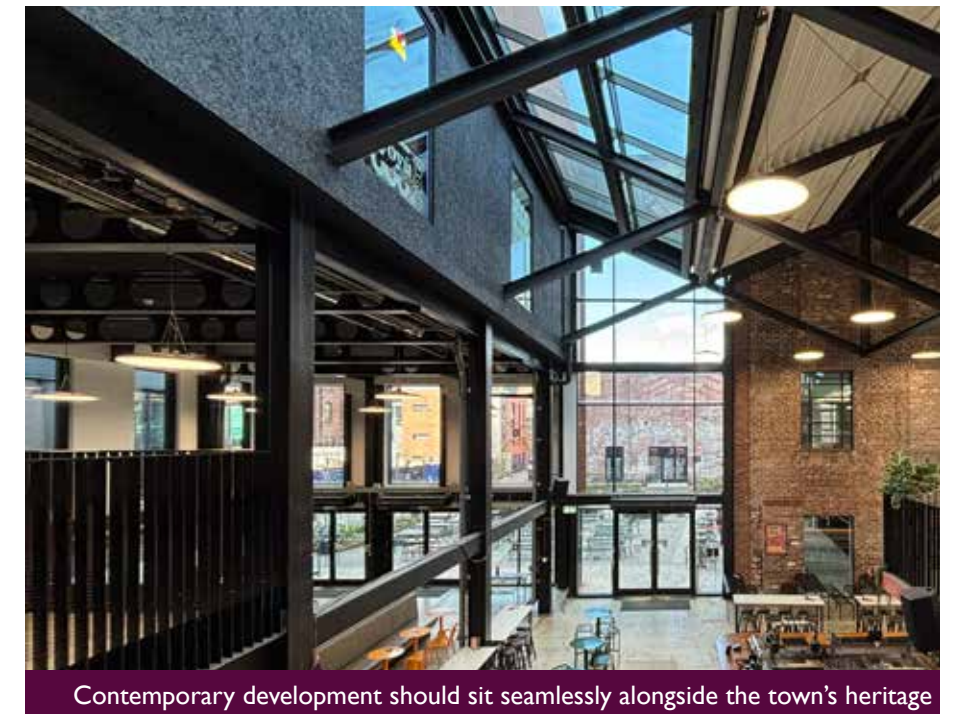
Stafford Town Centre has a rich history with an abundance of heritage assets demonstrating the town's evolution.

One of Stafford's primary strengths is drawing on this heritage to create an attractive and visually interesting focal point for residents of the town and the surrounding area.

Buildings and public spaces should be designed to the highest standards, with thoughtful detailing and a clear response to Stafford's historic character.

Development in Stafford should promote a heritage-led design response and ensure:

- New development should complement the existing townscape, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. Development should be appropriate to the scale and nature of their immediate surroundings, respecting heritage assets while introducing quality built form.
- Human-scale frontages and avoid overbearing massing that detracts from heritage assets.
- Sightlines to landmarks such as St Mary's Church, Chapel Tower and Market Square are framed appropriately and protected.
- New public realm areas reinforce historic identity and explore the inclusion of heritage trails, plaques, and public art to celebrate Stafford's history and improve legibility.
- Resilient, adaptable design that stands the test of time, supporting Stafford's identity and economic vitality.



Contemporary development should sit seamlessly alongside the town's heritage

Natural Resources

Stafford Borough Council have declared a Climate Emergency and new development on prominent sites has an important role to play in changing attitudes towards how we care for the environment and minimise our footprint on the planet.

The Development Framework is fully supportive of the Council's environmental sustainability targets and supports this through its guidance.

Development should prevent harm to the environment and mitigate any negative impacts in line with relevant planning policies, including:

- Design which achieves the highest practicable energy efficiency, uses low-embodied carbon building materials and minimises water demand on any deliverable scheme.
- At least a 10% measurable net gain in biodiversity is required in line with policy.
- Integrating shading, sustainable drainage, and natural features to future-proof spaces.
- Using robust, low-maintenance finishes that age well and reduce long-term costs.



Development should incorporate planting and biodiversity features

5. Development Areas

The Development Framework proposals each seek to contribute to the area’s overarching vision over coming years in becoming vibrant, resilient and attractive.

The Framework sets out to address the following key issues for the area:

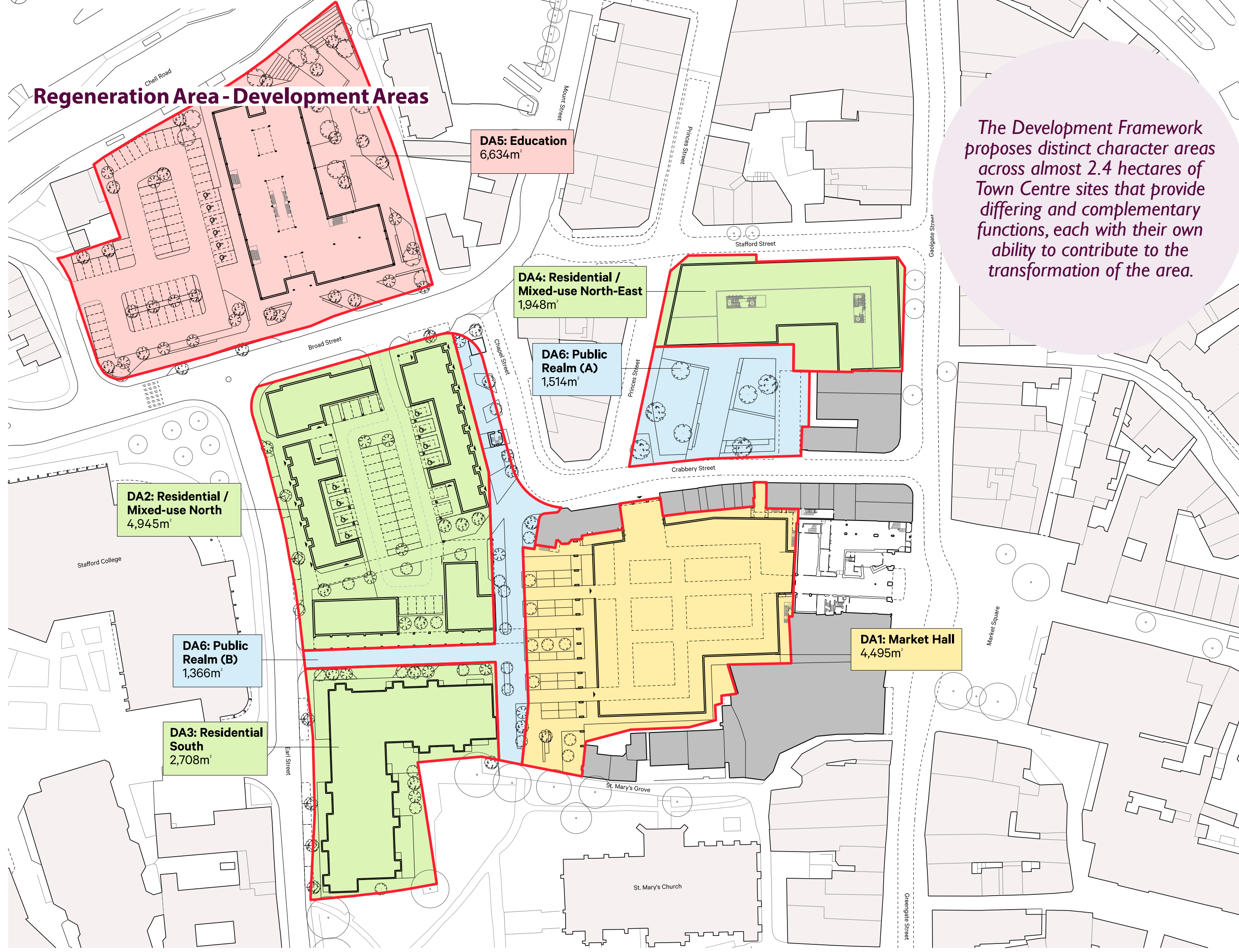
- Establishing a **strong character and identity by creating a robust, legible and flexible built form.**
- Creating an **attractive public realm that encourages people to visit and dwell.**
- Attract and accommodate a **viable mix of uses.**
- Enhance and improve **sustainable movement through the area.**

Development Matrix

Site name	Site area (m ²)	Site area (ft ²)	Building name	Ground floor GIA (m ²)	First floor GIA (m ²)	Second floor GIA (m ²)	Third floor GIA (m ²)	Fourth floor GIA (m ²)	Fifth floor GIA (m ²)	Building GIA (m ²)	Building GIA (ft ²)	No. Dwellings
DA1: Market	4,495	48,384	Market	2,594.00	-	-	-	-	-	2,594.00	27,921.58	-
DA2: Residential / Mixed-Use North	4,945	53,228	Resi Block 1 (North)	294.00	389.00	389.00	389.00	270.00	-	1,731.00	18,632.33	25
			Resi Block 2 (East)	417.00	626.00	626.00	626.00	-	-	2,295.00		25
			Resi Block 3 (South East)	275.00	345.00	345.00	345.00	-	-	1,310.00		13
			Resi Block 3 (GF Commercial)	208.00	-	-	-	-	-	208.00		
			Resi Block 4 (South West)	222.00	312.00	312.00	312.00	-	-	1,158.00		14
			Resi Block 5 (West)	292.00	548.00	548.00	-	-	-	1,388.00		16
DA5: Education	6,634	71,408	College	1,522.00	1,522.00	1,522.00	1,522.00	-	-	6,088.00	65,530.69	-
DA3: Residential South	2,708	29,149	Residential Building	1,493.00	1,493.00	1,493.00	-	-	-	4,479.00	48,211.55	47
DA4: Residential/Mixed-Use North-East	1,948	20,968	Residential Building	1,075.00	1,520.00	1,520.00	1,520.00	-	-	5,635.00	60,654.64	60
			Resi (GF Commercial)	445.00	-	-	-	-	-	445.00	4,789.94	-
DA6: Public Realm	2,880	31,000		-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00	-
Totals	23,610	254,136								27,331.00	225,740.73	200

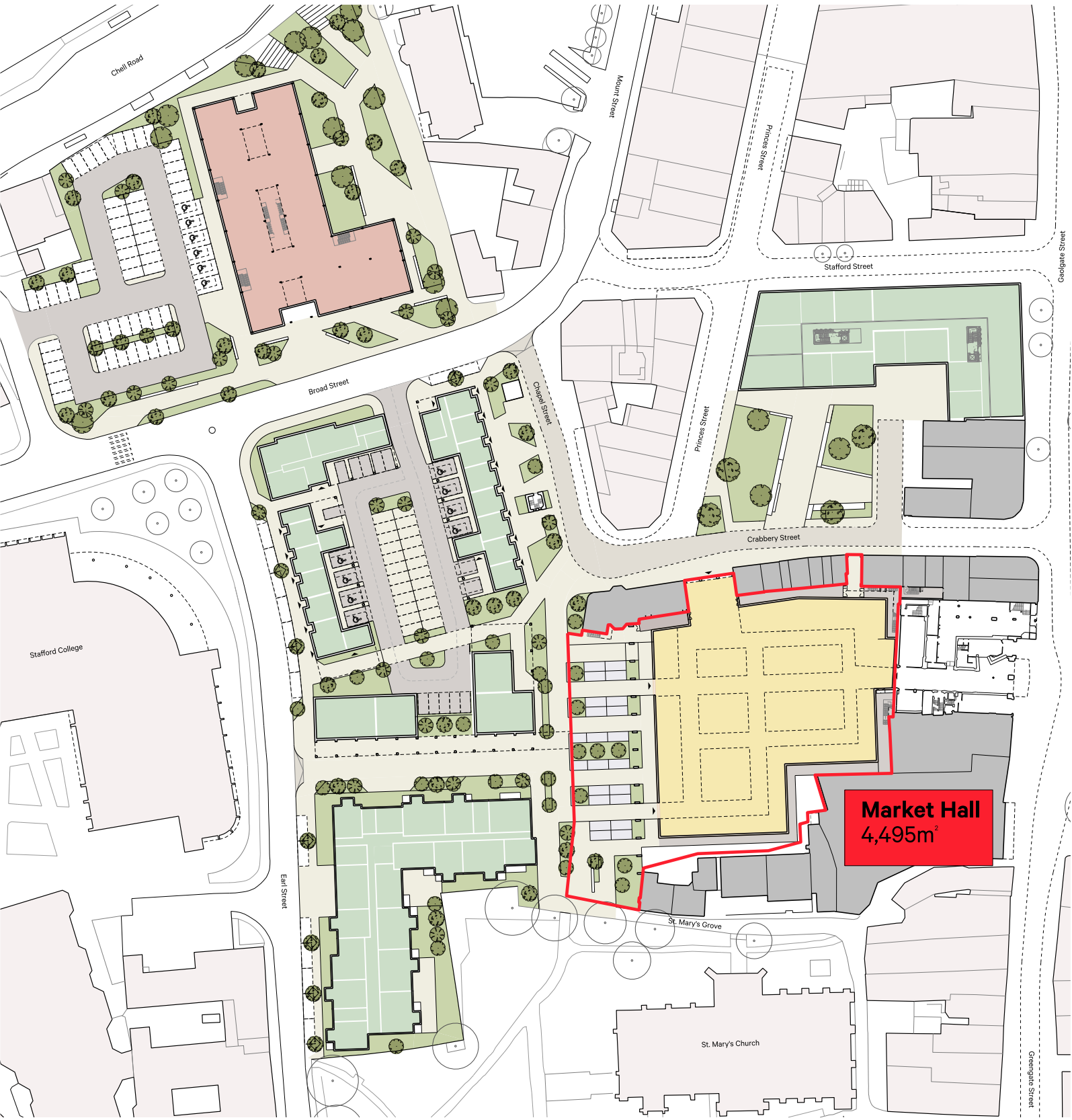
The schedules above describe the site areas at the current stage of design. The design is subject to Statutory approvals and specialist design input. Any decision to be made on the basis of these numbers, such as project viability, pre-letting, lease agreements or the like, should include due allowance for the changes inherent in the design development and building processes.

Regeneration Area - Development Areas



The Development Framework proposes distinct character areas across almost 2.4 hectares of Town Centre sites that provide differing and complementary functions, each with their own ability to contribute to the transformation of the area.

DA I: Market Hall



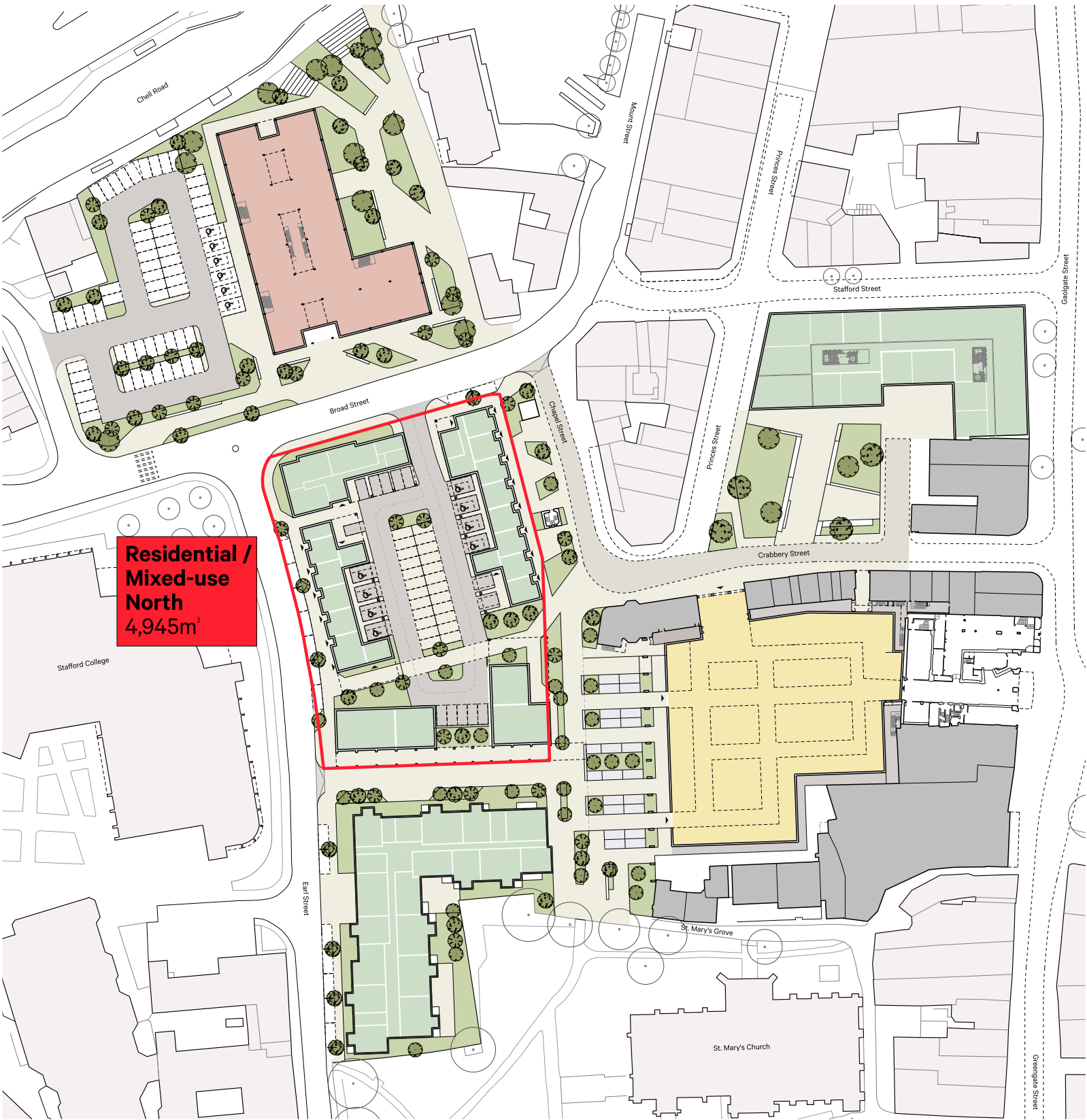
The former Guildhall Shopping Centre offers a significant redevelopment opportunity within the Town Centre. With its central location and considerable footprint, this site is perfectly positioned for a bold mixed-use scheme.

A new market hall will be situated in the heart of the Town Centre, complementing the existing retail offer to attract footfall, support businesses and acting as a focal point in the town centre.

Site Name	Market Hall
Site Area	0.45ha
Uses	Market Hall, Food, Retail.
Indicative Quantum	2,595sqm GIA.
Massing and Height	Up to two / three storeys - respect the three-storey building line typical of Stafford's Town Centre. Site appropriate for large footprint building, sensitively located behind existing built form.
Site Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate Stafford's heritage assets, Listed Buildings and Conservation Area setting into design, creating a new setting to St Mary's Church.• Ensure clear sight lines and multiple entrances to allow strong pedestrian connections to surrounding streets, including Crabbery Street and Market Square.• Create a new green connection between St Mary's Grove and Chapel Street and the landmarks of St Mary's Church and the Chapel Tower to connect previously severed links and contribute to the wider sequence of green spaces within the Town Centre.• Include shared seating, cultural programming, and event space to foster social interaction.• Design with flexibility to adapt to changing retail and leisure trends over time.



DA2: Residential / Mixed-Use North



Site Name	Residential / Mixed-Use North
Site Area	0.49ha
Uses	Residential - mix of dwelling types. Active ground floor. uses.
Indicative Quantum	8,090 sqm GIA residential development. 93 Units. 208 sqm GIA commercial, business, service use.
Massing and Height	Up to four storeys, Potential opportunity up to five storeys in appropriate locations.
Site Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development should provide a balanced mix of apartments and townhouses, catering to diverse households and age groups, including senior living and affordable homes.• The layout of any residential development should incorporate framed views and sight lines to celebrate existing high quality architecture and heritage assets, rather than obscure it.• Buildings should be set back to reduce impact along Earl Street to avoid a tunnelling effect to the street. The design should incorporate human-scale detailing and facades should be articulated to provide interest in the street scene.• Buildings should be set back on Chapel Street to celebrate landmarks, such as Chapel Tower and create space for public realm, planting and green space incorporated into the design to enhance its setting.• Homes should front onto the street, with active ground floors with a mix of uses, reinforcing the Town Centre's function and urban grain.• The design should encourage permeability and legibility, with clear pedestrian routes and courtyards that connect to the wider Town Centre and landmark's such as St Mary's Church.• Homes should have access to amenity space and communal gardens or shared courtyards should be provided within apartments to encourage social interaction and soften the built form.• Rooflines and heights must be carefully considered and designed, with step-backs or varied profiles to reduce visual impact.

The northern residential / mixed-use area is proposed on Chapel Street, south of Broad Street, on the former market site. Designed with a fine-grain layout, it will enhance the setting of nearby heritage assets and provide a mix of townhouses and apartments, with potential for other uses to create activity at ground floor.

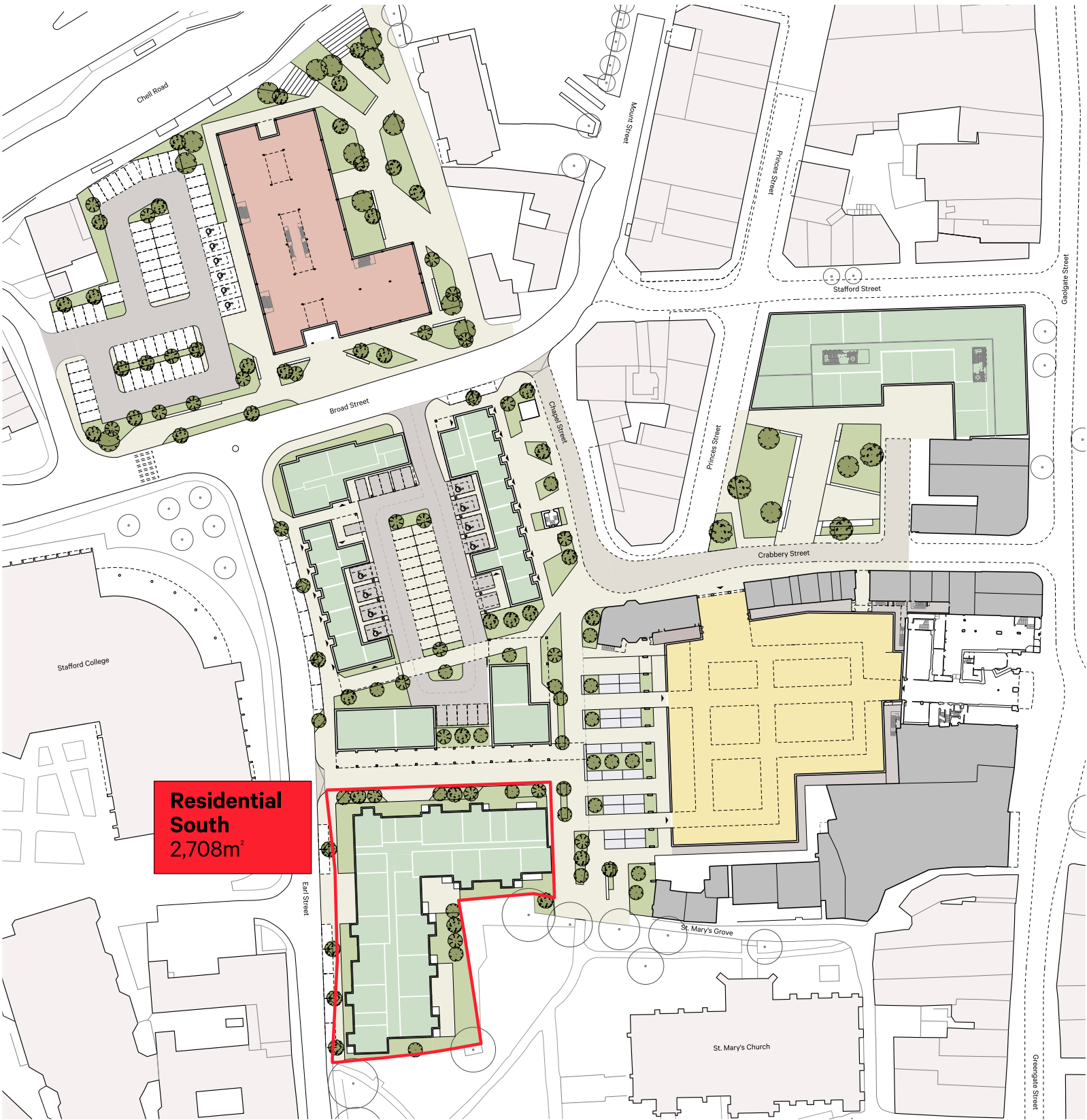
Introducing homes into Stafford Town Centre will re-energise the area, diversify its offer, and support long-term resilience.

Town Centre living sustains local shops, cafés, and leisure venues beyond retail hours, fostering a vibrant evening economy.



A finer grain of development helps better reveal existing heritage assets

DA3: Residential South



Site Name	Residential South
Site Area	0.27ha
Uses	Residential - mix of sizes. Terraced housing and apartments.
Indicative Quantum	4479 sqm GIA. 47 Units.
Massing and Height	Up to three storey development, arranged to be set back from St Mary's Church.
Site Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development should provide a balanced mix of units, catering to diverse households and age groups, including senior living and affordable homes.• Landscape and building design should enhance the church's setting, with buildings set back to reduce impact and planting and green space incorporated into the design to enhance its setting.• Homes must front onto the street, and civic square, creating active façades and reinforcing the Town Centre's urban grain.• Designs should encourage permeability and legibility, with clear pedestrian routes and courtyards that connect to the wider Town Centre and new public realm spaces created.• Homes should have access to amenity space and communal gardens or shared courtyards should be provided within apartments to encourage social interaction and soften the built form.• Design should incorporate human scale detailing to enrich the streetscape and facades should be articulated to provide interest in the street scene.• Rooflines and heights must be carefully considered and designed, with step-backs or varied profiles to reduce visual impact.

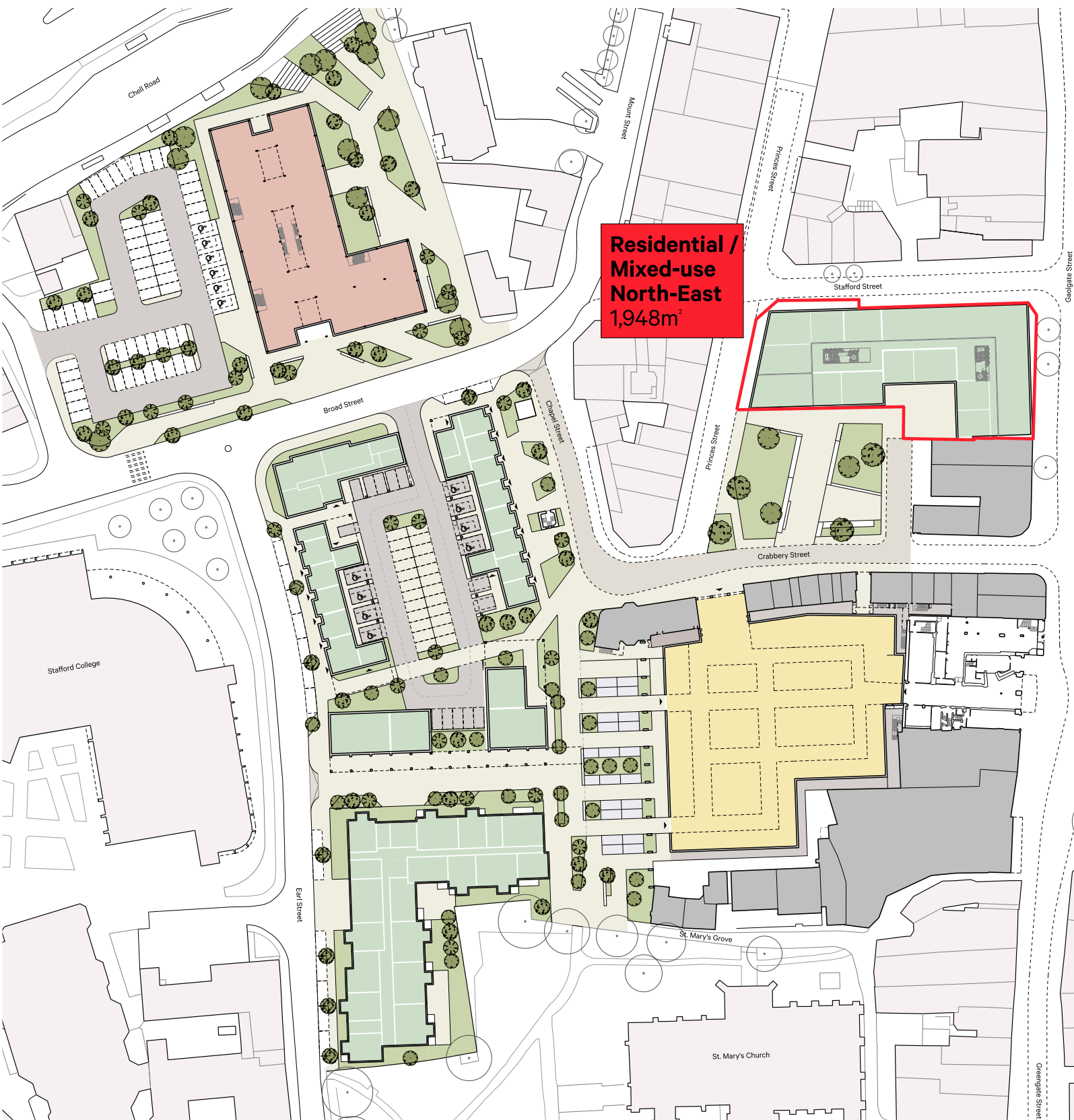
The southern residential area is located to the west of St. Mary's Church on the southern area of the former Guildhall Shopping Centre and car park. The new homes will provide an improved setting to the church and create front doors along Earl Street enlivening facades on a key town centre street.

This site also promotes Town Centre living by placing residents close to transport and services, the scheme reduces car dependency, strengthens sustainability, and promotes wellbeing.



Homes and uses should create active frontages

DA4: Residential / Mixed-Use North-East

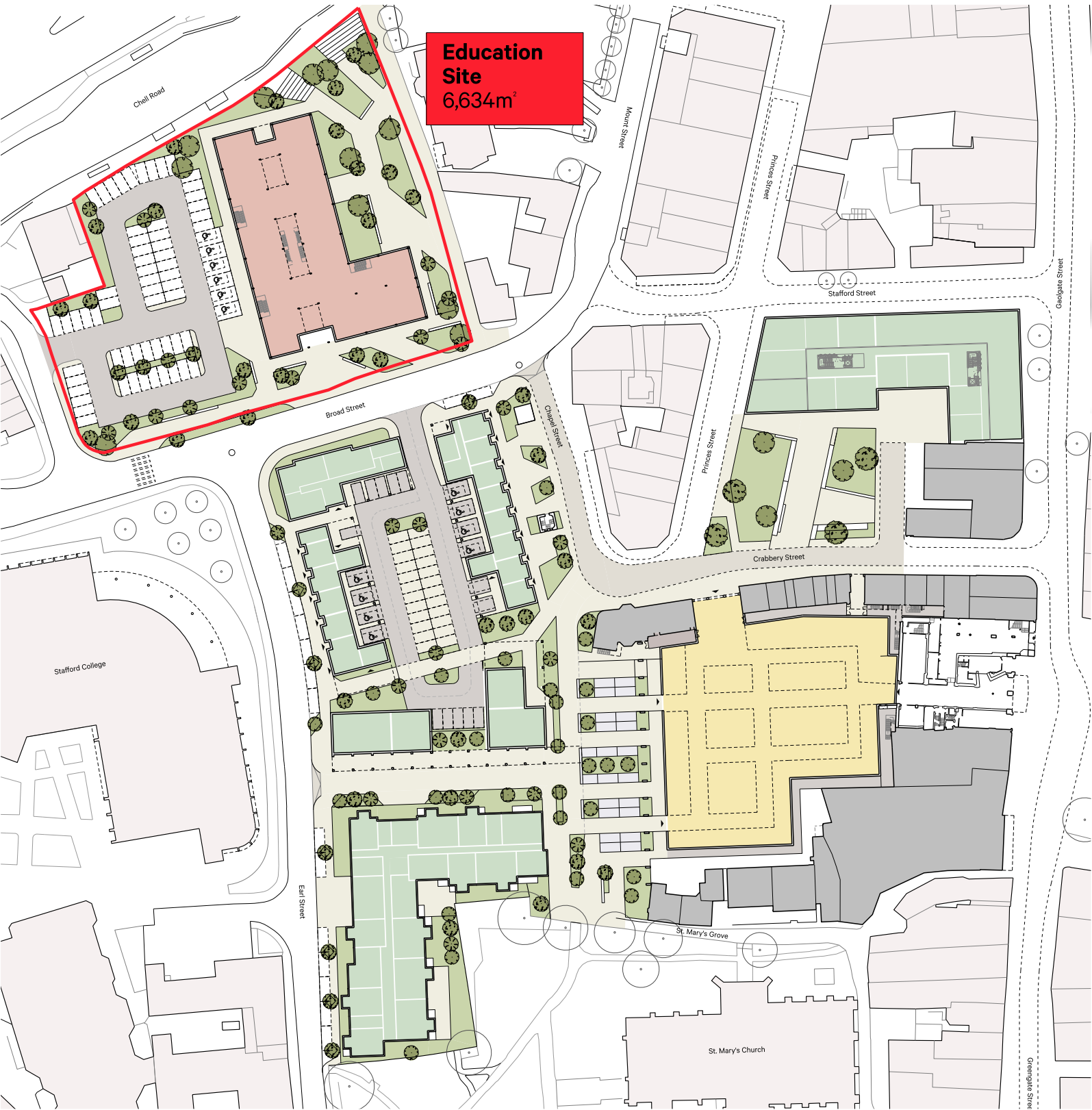


The former Co-op building on Gaolgate Street has been vacant for over ten years and offers a high-profile development opportunity at a key gateway into Stafford's northern Town Centre.

The Development Framework proposes the site is redeveloped as a mixed-use within a new public realm to help reinforce Stafford's heritage assets, animate civic spaces, prioritise sustainable movement, and create a lively, resilient Town Centre.

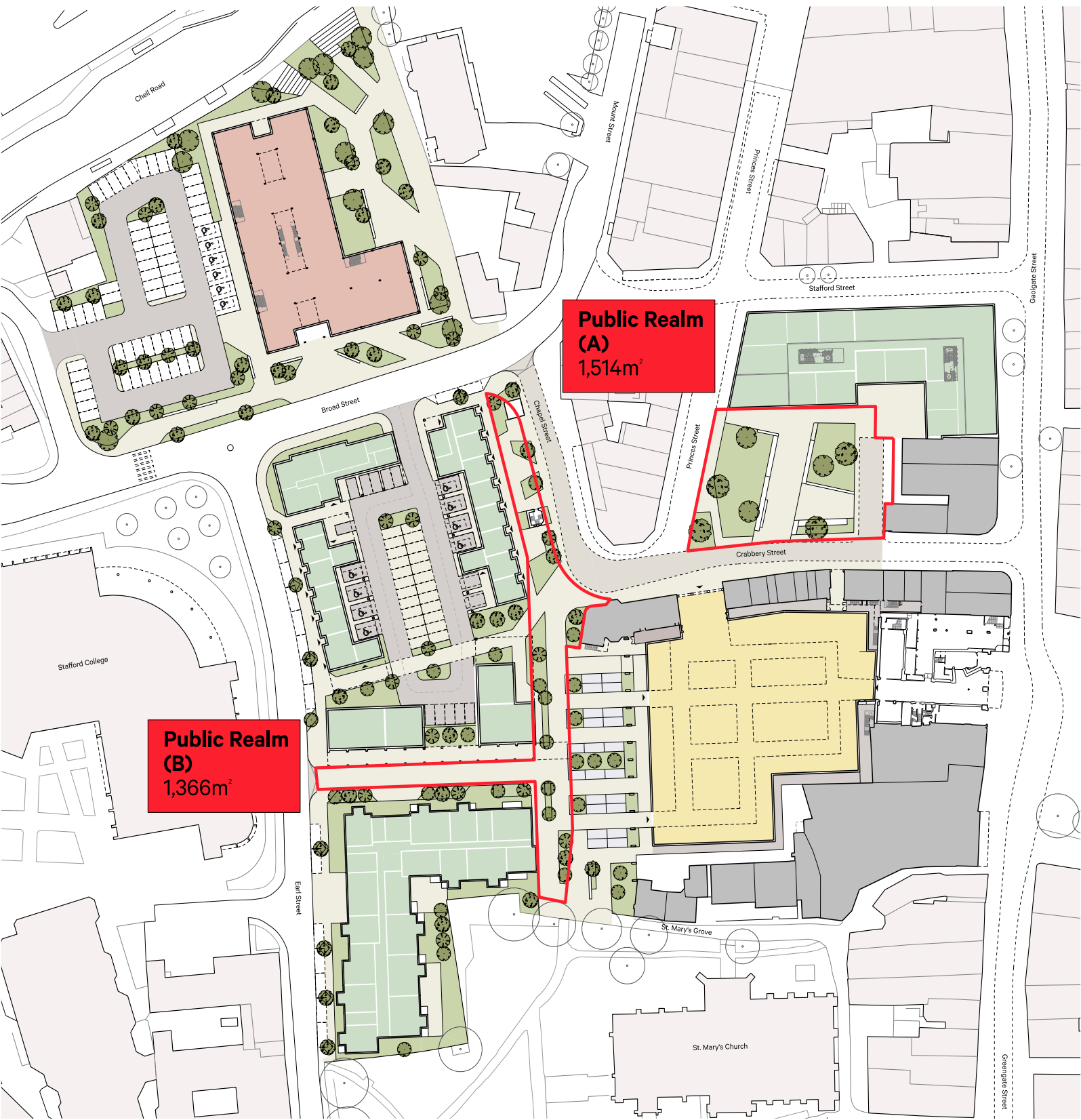
Site Name	Residential / Mixed-Use North-East
Site Area	0.19ha
Uses	Mixed-use - Residential, Commercial, Business and Service.
Indicative Quantum	5635 sqm GIA Residential. 60 units. 445 sqm GIA Business, Commercial, Service Use.
Massing and Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Up to four storeys.Residential uses above, with active ground floor uses fronting public space.
Site Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Development should provide a balanced mix of units, catering to diverse households and age groups, including senior living and affordable homes. New buildings should complement Stafford's historic fabric, with new open space allowing an improved setting to buildings on Crabbery Street.Maintain the rhythm of three-storey frontages typical of Stafford, with taller elements used sparingly as landmarks. Development of up to four storeys may be appropriate, particularly fronting Stafford Street.Buildings should frame streets and new public space.Ground floors should be animated with retail, cafés, and business uses that spill into the public realm and create activity.Development should encourage smaller unit sizes to support independent businesses and variety.

DA5: Educational Site



Site Name	Educational Site
Site Area	0.66 ha
Suitable Uses	Education.
Indicative Quantum	6088 sqm.
Massing and Height	Site suitable for a larger footprint / landmark building of up to four storeys.
Site Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reinforce the college as a landmark within the Town Centre, strengthening Stafford's role as a county town and hub for learning.• Integrate public realm and green spaces into wider sequence of green space within the Town Centre from the site, leading to St Mary's Church.• Ensure new buildings complement the setting of the Conservation Area and historic fabric, using sympathetic materials and scale.• Create flexible spaces that can evolve with changing needs and where feasible, incorporate shared facilities that benefit both students and residents.• Explore the opportunity to animate ground floors with cafés, exhibition spaces, and public-facing facilities to engage the wider community and create courtyards, squares and green areas that invite public use and foster interaction.• Maintain building heights and proportions that respect the Town Centre's character, with focal elements used sparingly.

DA6: Public Realm Enhancements



Public realm enhancements and new open spaces are proposed throughout the Development Framework Area to provide an improved setting for heritage assets and to create attractive and successful outdoor areas, providing a variety of spaces that both respond to the immediate context and encourage social interaction.

Site Name	Public Realm Enhancements
Site Area	0.3ha
Uses	Public Realm - variety of spaces.
Site Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a north-south green link between the education site to St Mary's Church, as part of a wider sequence of public realm areas that improve permeability between key buildings, streets and squares.• Ensure enhancements complement the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, and historic street patterns.• Use high-quality, locally appropriate materials (stone, brick, timber) to reinforce the county town's identity.• Improve connections to civic areas such as Market Square as focal points for community life.• Introduce trees, planting and pocket parks to soften hard landscapes and improve biodiversity.• Design spaces that can evolve with changing community needs and retail trends and adaptable areas for markets, festivals, and civic events.• Use robust, low-maintenance finishes that age well and reduce long-term costs.• Incorporate lighting, seating, and safe routes to support activity beyond retail hours.



Streets and spaces will be improved throughout the area



St Mary's Church

Market Square

Chapel Tower

Trinity Church



6. Next Steps

This Development Strategy identifies a flexible solution for the Regeneration Area to foster transformational change and revitalised growth within the northern Town Centre.

It is recognised that implementing the development proposed will be challenging but the Development Framework and this design strategy identify that it can be delivered.

The Council have committed funds to deliver and unlock this change. The investment strategy for the next three years will focus on:

- De-risking sites;
- Improving the infrastructure and environment of the area;
- Site acquisition; and
- Procurement of private sector developers.

Private sector investment is vital to the success of the Town Centre. The procurement of private sector developer/s will be a major milestone in realising the vision for the area.

The Council will work with architects and developers to develop detailed design and market solutions guided by the design principles within this Framework.



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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