

THE STARTING POINT  
SUTTON TOWN CENTRE TODAY

PART **B**

# PART B: SUTTON TOWN CENTRE TODAY - BASELINE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

This section represents a summary of the full baseline analysis which was undertaken for Sutton Town Centre highlighting the implications for the framework. The full analysis can be found in Appendix A. The baseline has formulated a summary of key issues that are likely to affect the future aspirations of the town centre and is an important platform upon which the future design ideas have been developed.

This section outlines the key issues which are fundamental to the delivery of the Urban Design Framework and therefore is not intended to provide an exhaustive review of existing documentation and survey work.

### The Wider Context

The London Borough of Sutton is situated within close proximity to a number of large competing centres. It lies approximately 10 miles south of central London, 4 miles west of Croydon, 6 miles southeast of Kingston and approximately 4 miles south and northeast of Wimbledon and Epsom respectively.

Sutton Town Centre is the fourth largest centre in South West London, behind Croydon, Kingston and Bromley. It offers a range of activities for residents and visitors, especially retail and leisure uses. Situated centrally within the Borough, Sutton Town Centre is identified as a Metropolitan Centre by the adopted UDP (2003), the Preferred Options Core Planning Strategy (2008) and the London Plan (2004).

The town centre is well served by a surrounding road network with the study area being accessed from the west and east by the A232. From the south, vehicular access is via the B2230 and from the north by the B273, both provide a direct link into the heart of the town centre. Public transport is principally provided by the mainline rail station located in the southern part of the study area and through a number of bus stops dotted around the town centre.



Fig B1: London Borough of Sutton in Context



Fig B2: London Borough of Sutton

Sutton Town Centre is an attractive and accessible centre, with a wide range of shopping, employment and leisure activities and good public transport links. It has around 400 retail outlets centred around an attractive pedestrianised High Street. A range of arts, culture and entertainment activities, pavement cafés and a vibrant evening economy all contribute to a lively town centre, which is also a significant office location within South London. The commercial core is surrounded by long established residential areas. It is a transport hub and the most accessible location in the Borough.

## PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This section outlines the general principles and main points of the planning framework in which the emerging framework for the town centre must operate. Other studies which have an influence on the framework have been summarised throughout this Baseline Analysis section and more fully detailed in Appendix A. For ease of interpretation this section has been broken into three main sections as follows:

- A. National Policy Guidance
- B. Regional Policy Guidance
- C. Local Policy Guidance

### A. National Policy Guidance

#### ***PPS6: Planning for Town Centres***

PPS 6 sets out the Government's objectives and policy advice. The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:

- › Planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and
- › Promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

These key objectives are consistent with the Government's wider policy objectives, in particular, 'to develop more sustainable patterns of development, ensuring that locations are fully exploited through high-density, mixed-use development and promoting sustainable transport choices, including reducing the need to travel and providing alternatives to car use.'

Local planning authorities are urged to plan positively for the growth and development of town centres, assessing the need for further town centre uses and ensuring there is the capacity to accommodate these uses. Authorities should focus development in, and plan for the expansion of, such centres as appropriate and identify suitable sites. Local planning authorities should actively plan for growth and manage change in town centres by making better use of land and buildings, including redevelopment where appropriate, and extending the centre where necessary.

### B. Regional Policy Guidance

#### ***The London Plan***

The London Plan was published in February 2004 and Draft Further Alterations were published in September 2006. It is a strategic plan setting out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework for development in London in the next 15-20 years. It seeks to promote London as a world city and to maintain and enhance the competitiveness of business, including encouraging manufacturing, services, tourism, culture and the arts. It promotes the strategic importance of London's town centres in accommodating economic growth, including that of retail and leisure facilities, seeks to maximise housing provision and to facilitate the development of efficient transport systems.

South London Sub-Regional Development Framework  
The South London Development Framework (SLDF) requires growth (including housing, jobs, retail, community facilities) to be accommodated in those areas with the greatest potential for sustainable development. In particular, each of the subregion's four metropolitan centres (which includes Sutton) is expected to grow significantly to 2016. These are seen to perform strongly and have important potential for mixed development as well as retail expansion. The mixed-use policies in the London Plan are expected to lead to new concentrations of housing in town centres.

'The ability of the sub-region's town centres to improve their image and attractiveness will be a key to accommodating sustainable growth. Much of their vitality will be driven by a suitable retail offer,

a consolidated office market, and a spread of other attractions – cultural, leisure and public services – as well as housing.'

At a site level, the form, scale and phasing of development should be integrated with the capacity and accessibility of the public transport system for different locations. Developments that generate a significant number of trips should be sited in or near locations with good accessibility by public transport, and with sufficient existing capacity or planned capacity coming on stream in time to meet the expected demand. In appropriate locations, densities will have to rise and intensification be sought.

### C. Local Policy Guidance

#### ***The Core Planning Strategy: Preferred Options (2008)***

A Preferred Options document has been published for public consultation. This reflects the Council's current view in relation to the broad policies and development proposals required to achieve its vision for the Borough. The CPS emphasises the importance of ensuring the success of Sutton town centre. How this should be done is summarised in Preferred Core Policy CP11.

#### ***Preferred Core Policy CP11 – Sutton Town Centre***

The Council will promote Sutton Town Centre as a centre for the regeneration and growth of retail, office, housing, leisure and cultural development. The Council will strengthen Sutton Town Centre's role as a Metropolitan Centre by supporting:

- › An expansion of its main retail and leisure area;
- › Increases in the range and quality of the retail offer;
- › The creation of a range of employment opportunities including enhanced office provision;
- › The development of a balanced and socially inclusive night-time economy;
- › The development of Tramlink and a modern transport interchange; and
- › The creation of a safe and attractive environment through enhancements to the public realm.

### ***The Site Development Policies: Issues and Options (2007)***

The Site Development Policies DPD identifies a range of sites to meet the development needs of the Borough, as set out in the Core Planning Strategy, and puts forward policies for controlling development across the Borough in accordance with the Strategy. However, the DPD does not identify specific sites within the Town Centre, these are to be identified in the Sutton Town Centre Plan. The following policy issues are relevant to the town centre urban design framework:

#### **New Town Centre Development**

It is considered that a policy is required which includes the thresholds of development for different levels and types of centres in the town centre hierarchy. The aim should be to locate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right type of centre, to ensure that it fits into that centre and it complements its role and function. Local planning authorities should therefore consider setting an indicative upper limit for the scale of developments likely to be permissible in different types of centres, and developments above these limits should be directed to a centre higher up the town centre hierarchy.

#### **Shopping Frontages**

The Council considers that a local policy is needed, which sets out the extent to which uses other than retail are desirable in the shopping frontages of Sutton Town Centre.

#### **Character and Design**

It is considered that a detailed policy is required, which sets out the criteria against which new proposals will be assessed in order to ensure that all development is of the highest quality, incorporating principles of good design and which is appropriate to its setting. This policy will be applicable to all new developments.

### ***The Sutton Town Centre Plan - Issues and Options (2007)***

The Council is currently preparing an Area Action Plan for the town centre known as the Sutton Town Centre Plan. The Plan will set out the detailed planning policies and proposals to guide development in the town centre over the next 10-15 years. The Issues and Options document marks the end of the first stage of plan preparation. It identifies the main planning issues facing the town centre, possible development sites and highlights possible options for the future. The main indicative requirements for the town centre include:

- › An expansion of the Primary Shopping Area to accommodate an extra 20- 25,000 sq m gross retail floor space by 2017;
- › Provision for additional leisure and tourism facilities, including commercial leisure, a sports centre and a 'cultural hub';
- › Modern office space to meet the needs of small and medium sized businesses;
- › Residential development exceeding 140 units per annum to meet at least 40% of the Borough's housing needs; and
- › Community facilities.

#### **Potential Development Options**

The AAP identifies three broad character areas along the linear High Street as a potential means of influencing the scale and the character of future development. It also identifies eighteen 'potential development areas' where high-density mixed-use development or redevelopment could take place.

### ***The Development Framework for Sutton Station and Adjacent Land SPD (2005)***

The Council adopted its Development Framework for Sutton Station and Adjacent Land as a supplementary planning document in July 2005. This was prepared in view of the considerable potential of Sutton Station as a redevelopment site and the strategic significance of the redevelopment of the station and surrounding area to the regeneration and growth of the town centre as a whole. It was also intended to assist in identifying and assembling the land and property required for the introduction of Croydon Tramlink into Sutton town centre.

The Sutton Station Area covers a substantial part of the southern end of Sutton Town Centre including most of the non-residential land surrounding the railway station, extending north to Grove Road and Sutton Court Road. The Framework sets a number of redevelopment objectives, notably:

- › Provide comprehensive, large-scale, mixed-use, town centre development, with retail, leisure, office and residential (including a significant proportion of affordable housing) uses;
- › Meet the need for new community facilities as part of private sector development on suitable sites;
- › Ensure that new development relates satisfactorily to nearby buildings, creates distinctive landmark developments and provides a visually distinctive gateway to the town centre;
- › Safeguard land required for Tramlink and facilitate land assembly;
- › Provide safe pedestrian and cycle access, and ensure appropriate provision for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic; and
- › Seek to retain and enhance employment opportunities.

The key transport improvements required to serve development in the Framework area include:

- › The provision of an improved tram/bus/rail/taxi interchange and improved pedestrian movement between the station and Sutton Court Road; and
- › The provision for the construction of a new road link between the junction of Mulgrave Road/High Street and Grove Road, which would enable the southern part of the High Street to become a pedestrian-friendly public transport corridor.

### ***London Borough of Sutton 2007-2010 Economic Strategy***

The Council's Economic Strategy 2007-10 seeks to encourage inward investment into the town centre. It sees Sutton town centre as an indicator of the Borough's health. It stresses the importance of providing a complementary offer to Croydon and Kingston if it is to be a destination for visitors and businesses. The Sutton Town Centre Partnership is seen as an important partner in the implementation of the strategy.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Until the mid 19th century Sutton was one of a string of villages and hamlets along the 'spring line', where the chalk dips below a narrow belt of Thanet Sand before the start of the impervious London clay upon which London sits. The early parishes were narrow and long from north to south. Local springs collect to form the upper reaches of the River Wandle, one branch coming from the Ponds in Carshalton, the other from Croydon to Wallington, before turning north and meeting in Hackbridge to head for the River Thames. Surrounding parishes emerged during the Middle Ages, but the story of Sutton begins long before that, with archaeological finds going back over ten thousand years.

It is with the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, after the Roman period in the early 5th century AD, that Sutton's major development really begins. The place names first appear in a charter of Chertsey Abbey, around the 13th century. Surrey was settled by the Middle Saxons, which is evidenced in the old county names of Middlesex. Surrey was variously controlled by Mercia and Wessex before finally being absorbed into Wessex after 825 AD.

Chertsey Abbey held the manor of Sutton until its dissolution in 1537, when it was taken over by Henry VIII, who granted it to the Carews of Beddington. After various changes of ownership, the lordship of the manor was bought by Thomas Alcock in 1845. He sold part of the land for redevelopment, but also helped fund the new church of All Saints, Benhilton (1863-66), and the total rebuilding of St Nicholas, the parish church, in 1862-64. In 1912 the lordship was stripped of manorial rights, and sold to the Lamplugh family.

Until the middle of the 18th century, Sutton was of no greater size than any of the other villages along the spring line, and was considerably smaller than Epsom. It was focused around The Green and the parish church some 800 yards to the south.

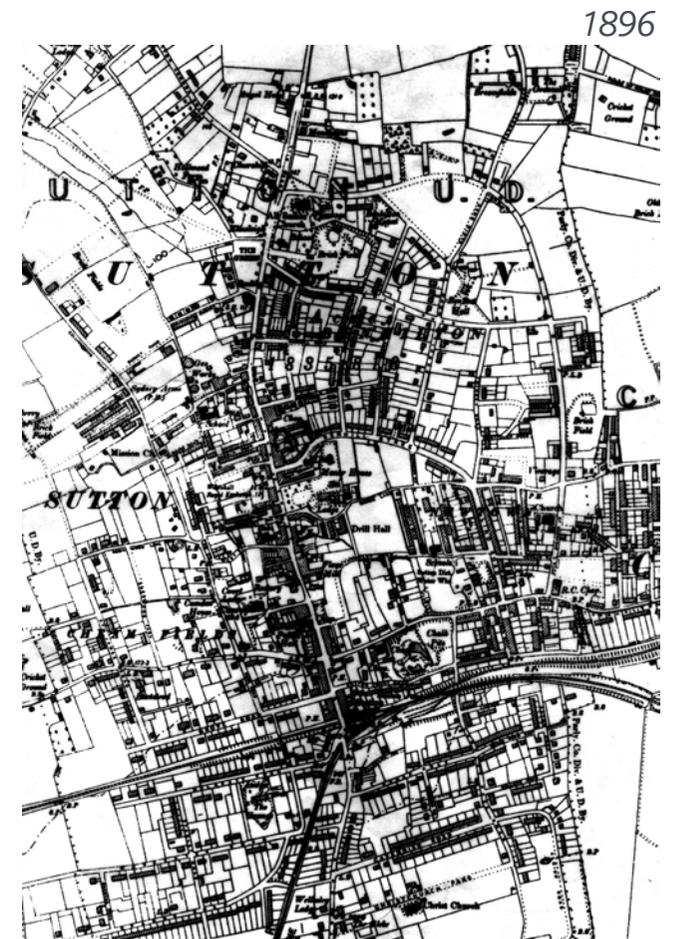
The first catalyst for growth was the turnpiking of the London to Brighton Road, which went through Sutton from 1755, until 1809, after which the route moved east to go through Croydon. In the 1840s, around twenty coaches a day changed horses at the Cock Hotel (on



the present High Street). An east-west turnpike road was laid out at the same time, which ran from Epsom to Croydon. It passed through Sutton on the Carshalton and Cheam Roads, producing a major crossroads where development arose.

Sutton's significant growth began with the arrival of the railway in 1847. The census population figures illustrate the enormous growth rising from 1,304 in 1841, 13,977 in 1891, to 21,270 in 1911. Sutton, a junction station from 1865, underwent spectacular growth, due not only to its railway station, but also its location at an important crossroads. The surrounding suburbs grew rapidly with the provision of essential services.

With the expansion of the village into a town, post-railway, a number of churches were built, or in the case of the parish church of St Nicholas, rebuilt. These were: All Saints for Benhilton in the 1860s, Christchurch for south Sutton in the 1880s and St Barnabas for east Sutton, also in the 1880s. Each suburb had a distinctive



character. East Sutton, however, had more of an artisan flavour. Large numbers of these houses have been lost as, from the 1950s onwards Sutton's developers saw flats as the future. Large houses in spacious grounds surrounding the main centre were replaced by blocks of mostly three-storey flats.

Sutton from the 1890s, at the height of its Victorian prosperity, was a village that had been transformed into a substantial commercial centre. This was surrounded by prosperous suburbs, which were growing significantly. At this time it was transformed from a parish into a Local Government District in 1882. In 1894 it became a fully-fledged Urban District Council. In 1900 the town acquired Municipal Offices, which were at the junction of Throwley Road with the High Street. A modern post office was built in Grove Road in 1907, and a large police station in Carshalton Road in 1909. In 1906 trams arrived at the north end of town, later to be replaced by trolley buses.

1913



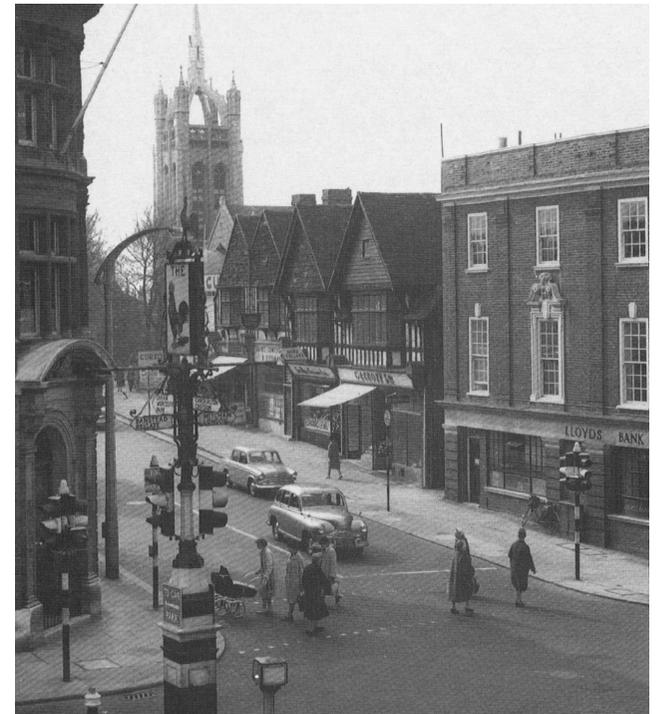
In the early 1960s much of the High Street was pedestrianised. This was achieved by means of parallel roads to its east and west. These became Throwley Way and St Nicholas Way, which cut swathes through the hinterland and opened up many sites for redevelopment, ringing the town with new buildings. Some of it was in the form of tower office blocks. Much of the old character of the town was swept away in the late 1960s and 1970s. This included the removal of the Municipal Offices, the swimming baths, the Congregational Church, the Granada cinema, Shinner's department store, Len's of Sutton, the Cock Hotel, the Greyhound and many others. In the suburbs, at the same time, blocks of flats were replacing the Victorian and Edwardian heritage.



Cheam Road



High Street, 1955



Cheam Road, 1955



Sutton General View from the south, 1965

## UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES: BASELINE ANALYSIS

This section provides a summary of the Urban Design analysis of Sutton Town Centre. The full baseline analysis is included in Appendix A. The analysis has been based on site visits, and a review of previous studies including the Sutton Town Centre Urban Design Analysis (2007), Retail Needs Study (2007), Understanding Sutton's Local Distinctiveness Characterisation Report, Sutton Local Implementation Plan (2007), SPD Development Framework for Sutton Station and Adjacent Land (2005) and the Sutton Town Centre Plan Issues and Options (2008).

To establish the priority issues and preferred design decisions which underpin the Urban Design Framework, the implications for the Framework of each topic have been highlighted within this section.



*High Street / Cheam Road Junction*



*The High Street*



*All Saints Church, St Nicholas Way*



*Red Lion Public House on the High Street*



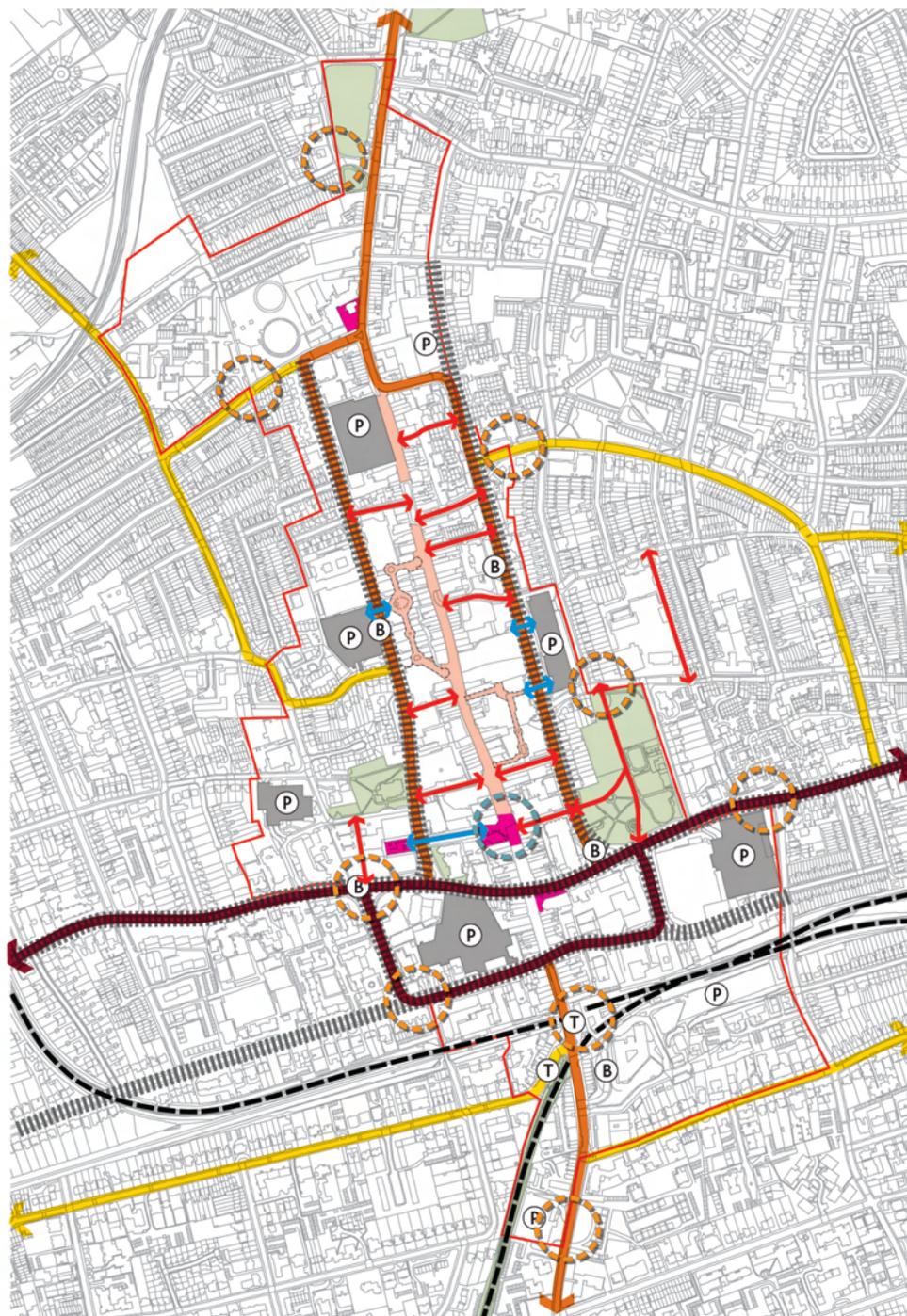
*Zurich Place and The High Street*



*Sutton Green and the northern gateway to the Town Centre*



Fig B3: Three dimensional model of Sutton Town Centre today- View from the north



## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING ACCESS, LINKAGES & CONNECTIONS

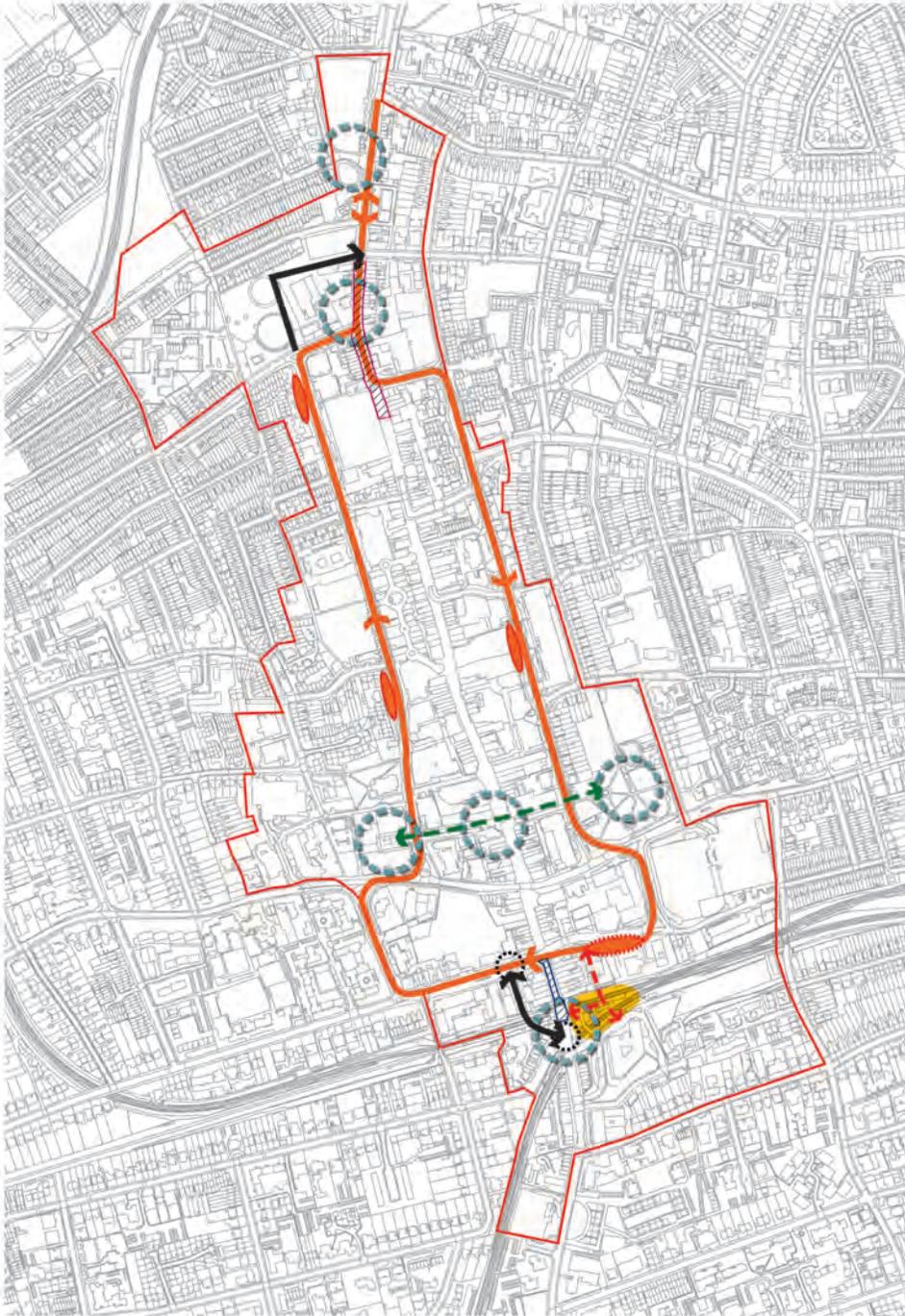


Fig B4: Existing Access, Linkages & Connections

## Access, Linkages and Connections

### Implications for the Framework

- › Reduce the barrier effect of the gyratory by slowing traffic speeds, providing a more 'human' feel with interactive street frontages, and 'greening' with soft landscaping and trees.
- › Provision of additional pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities across the gyratory ring road system and linking into the High Street.
- › Improving east-west connections out of the commercial core through the creation of a 'boulevard' link between the Civic Centre and Manor Park, the provision of active frontages, public art, sculpture and architectural lighting and the provision of additional routes as part of the redevelopment of key sites.
- › Opportunity to take traffic out of the northern and southern ends of the High Street through the construction of new road links between the Brighton Road High Street/Mulgrave Road intersection connecting with Grove Road in the south, and through the Gas Holder opportunity site in the north.
- › Rationalisation of long stay commuter parking, and the provision of convenient shopper parking.
- › Provision of a major interchange centred on the terminus of Tramlink and Sutton Station.
- › The safeguarding of land for the preferred Tramlink route through the town centre.
- › Potential for tram stops around the town centre to improve the accessibility of the northern, eastern and western parts of the town.
- › Potential for an improved bus transport interchange in North Sutton.
- › Improving accessibility in the centre - reducing the impact of the gradient of the High Street by creating a shopping 'circuit' and the integration of pedestrian and cycle lanes to create a shared surface.
- › Identify locations for secured cycle parking facilities within the town centre.



# SUTTON TOWN CENTRE CURRENT TRANSPORT PROPOSALS

Source: Sutton Town Centre Plan – Issues and Options

-  Town Centre Plan Boundary
-  Shared Transport Corridor (tram/bus/private car)
-  Direction of Movement
-  Proposed Location for Public Transport Interchange
-  Potential Areas for Tram Stops
-  Sutton Station Redevelopment
-  Potential New Link Roads
-  Potential New Junctions
-  Potential Public Transport Corridor
-  Potential Extension to Pedestrianised Area
-  Key Pedestrian Links
-  Potential Boulevard Link
-  Potential Improved Focal Spaces
- 

Fig B5: Current Transport Proposals

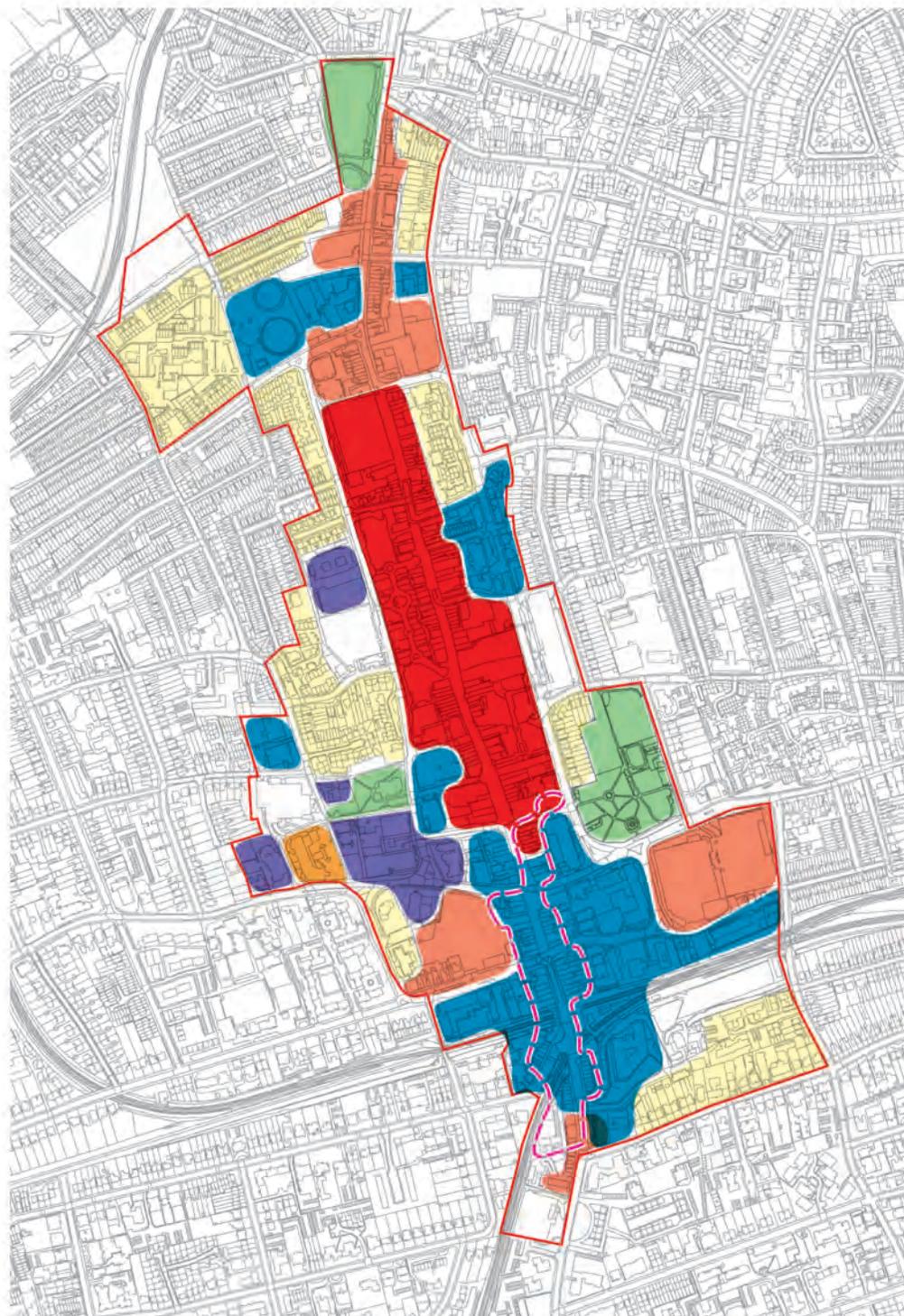


Fig B6: Existing Activity Areas

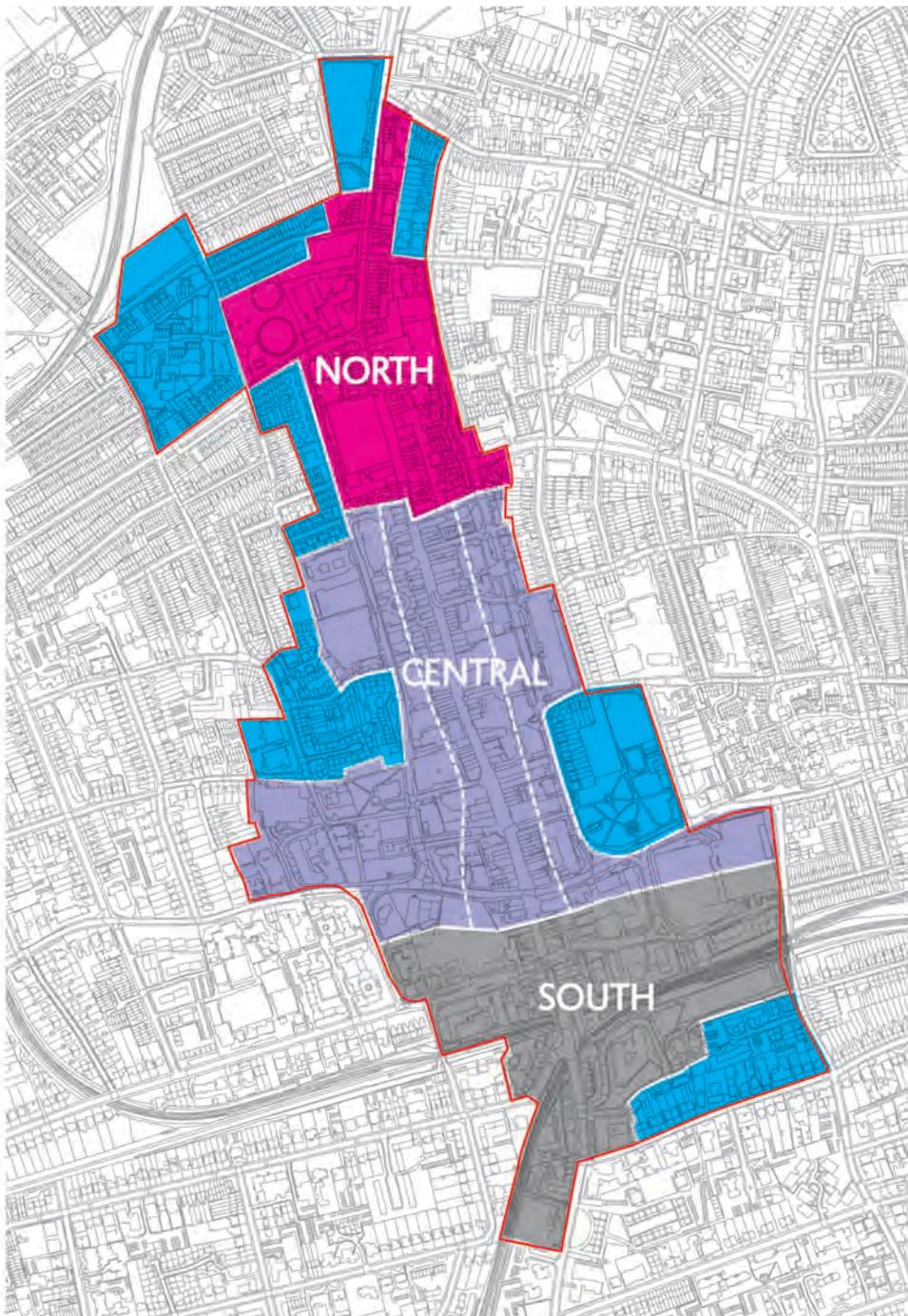
## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING ACTIVITY AREAS



## Current Land Uses

### *Implications for the Framework*

- › The need to provide the right kinds of retail units to attract the national multiples as well as the independents.
- › Provision of an extra 20- 25,000 sq m gross retail comparison floor space by 2017.
- › Provision of modern flexible, affordable office space to meet the needs of small and medium sized businesses.
- › Provision for additional leisure and tourism facilities, including commercial leisure, a sports centre and health facilities within a “cultural hub” around the Civic Centre.
- › Opportunities to diversify the town centre evening economy, and create a weekend destination.
- › Building on the proposals for additional hotel provision in the centre, and the opportunities to attract and cater for business visitors to the town (e.g. conference facilities, restaurants/bars).
- › Consider locations for additional community facilities including a location for Sutton Christian Centre community facilities.
- › The requirement to accommodate in excess of 140 new residential units within the town centre per annum incorporating a mix of tenures including 50% affordable housing and types of units.



## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING CHARACTER AREAS

Source: Sutton Town Centre Plan- Issues and Options



## Character Areas

### Implications for the Framework

- › Create distinctive 'quarters' for the town centre through establishing preferred design guidance and principles for all new development sites.
- › North Sutton could become the focus for secondary retail, office and residential development focusing on the Gas Holder, Magnet and Matalan sites, and incorporating improvements to Zurich Place and Sutton Green.
- › Opportunity to upgrade the poor quality retail frontage opposite Asda.
- › Improve east-west connection along Greenford from the High Street through the development of active frontages.
- › Central Sutton provides the opportunity to extend the Primary Shopping Area beyond the linear High Street. Times Square MSCP and the Robin Hood School sites could be developed for high density retail and leisure uses with housing and offices above. The site focused around Lodge Place should allow improvements to be made to the east-west connections and the development of a visitor circuit for the town centre.
- › High density residential development opportunities should be considered adjacent to Manor Park and Beech Tree Place to provide stronger frontages to St Nicholas and Throwley Ways.
- › A 'cultural hub' could be promoted focusing on the Civic Centre and Library through the redevelopment of the Civic Centre car park for cultural, community and leisure uses. This area could be more effectively linked into the High Street on the eastern side of the town through the development of a boulevard link.
- › The Morrison's block offers the potential to improve the western gateway to the town centre along Cheam and Grove Roads. Opportunities should be explored to improve the development relationship to the street.
- › South Sutton provides significant opportunities through the redevelopment of the sites around the Station, with potential for tall buildings with a mix of uses including offices, leisure, secondary retail and residential uses.
- › Opportunities through redevelopment to create new and improved focal spaces, particularly at the gateways into the town centre and at the 'heart' of the town around the existing Town Square/ Millennium Gardens.

Fig B7: Existing Character Areas



Throwley Road looking south



View towards Millennium Gardens and All Saints Church



Fig B8: Existing Urban Grain

## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING URBAN GRAIN

 Town Centre Plan Boundary



### Urban Structure

#### *Urban Grain*

The figure ground plan highlights the very strong north-south alignment of the town centre defined by the long linear High Street contained by consistent built frontages. The blocks adjacent to the High Street have gradually been infilled with larger development creating impenetrable blocks including the shopping centres, multi-storey car parks and big box retail units. As a result east-west routes are restricted through the central section of the High Street.

#### *Gateways and Landmarks*

The town centre includes a number of positive landmarks including the Trinity Methodist Church which acts as a town wide landmark with its dominant crown and lantern spire and position within the highest part of the centre, and St Nicholas Church along St Nicholas Way with its dominant tower and spire. Zurich House, Helena House, the gas holders and All Saints Church are all key landmarks in the northern part of the town centre. There are also a number of low quality landmarks including the tower blocks around the station and the multi-storey car parks.

#### *Views and vistas*

Local views to landmark buildings allow people to orientate themselves within the town centre and promote the 'legibility' of the urban fabric. There are a number of prominent view corridors and vistas including:

- › The station area with its elevated location and the concentration of tall buildings helps to identify this important gateway at the southern end of the town centre.
- › Zurich House marks the northern end of the High Street and forms a prominent termination to the vista from the pedestrianised High Street.
- › The view corridor southwards along Throwley Way which is punctuated by the large tower blocks of Surrey House, South Point, and The Quadrant around the station area.
- › The view corridor northwards along St Nicholas Way of the gas holder.
- › The view of the spire of St Nicholas Church from the High Street looking west along Church Street.
- › The view of the Civic Offices and Central Library looking west along Hill Road from the pedestrianised High Street.
- › The view looking east from the pedestrianised High

## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING VIEWS AND VISTAS

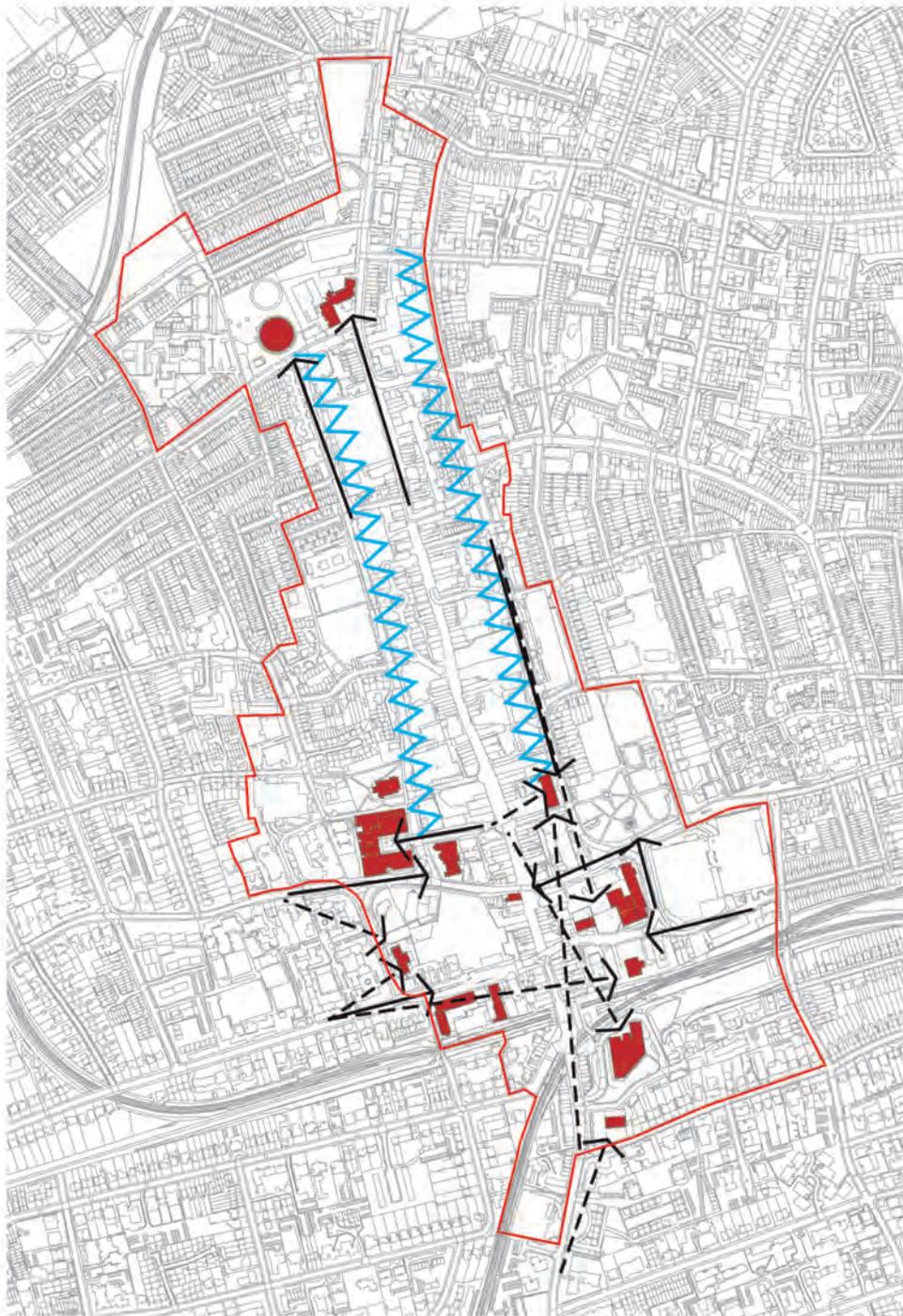


Fig B9: Existing Views and Vistas

Street of the residential tower block along Throwley Way rising above the shop units.

- › The prominent view of Trinity Methodist Church on entering Sutton from the west along Cheam Road.
- › The view looking west along Carshalton Road of the prominent Barclays Bank corner building.
- › The view looking east on approaching the town from Grove Road of Cophthall House, the Post Office building, and South Point.
- › The view of the monument in Manor Park from Sutton Court Road looking northwards along Chalk Pit Way.

There are very few visual connections, however, from the High Street outwards in either an east or west direction, and from St Nicholas Way and Throwley Way into the commercial core. This is largely the result of the 'big box' nature of the development to the rear of the High Street and the blank walls, exposed backs and service areas which act as visual barriers and impede legibility.

### *Implications for the Framework*

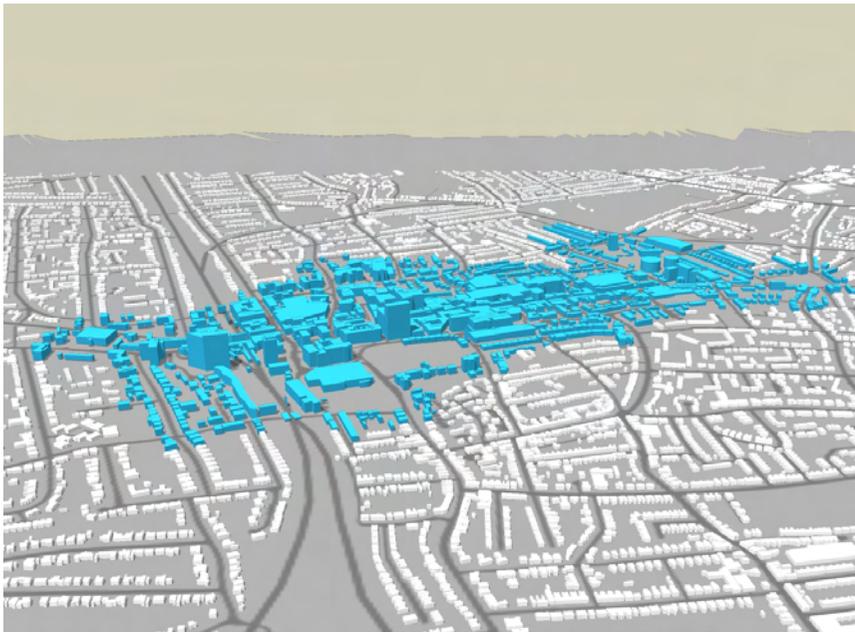
- › New development should seek to complete the blocks through the creation of active frontages along St Nicholas Way and Throwley Way, and the wrapping of service yards and car parking areas within the block structure.
- › New development should help to create enclosure and activity around open spaces and squares.
- › Opportunities should be promoted to increase permeability east-west across the town centre.
- › The High Street will be more sensitive to higher density new development with predominant building heights of 3 storeys.
- › Tall buildings will most favourably be considered around the station, and at key gateways into the town centre.
- › The topography and impact on Borough views should also be a key consideration in the location of tall buildings.
- › Opportunity to introduce new landmark buildings and open up view corridors to existing landmark buildings to promote the legibility of the centre.



View north along High Street

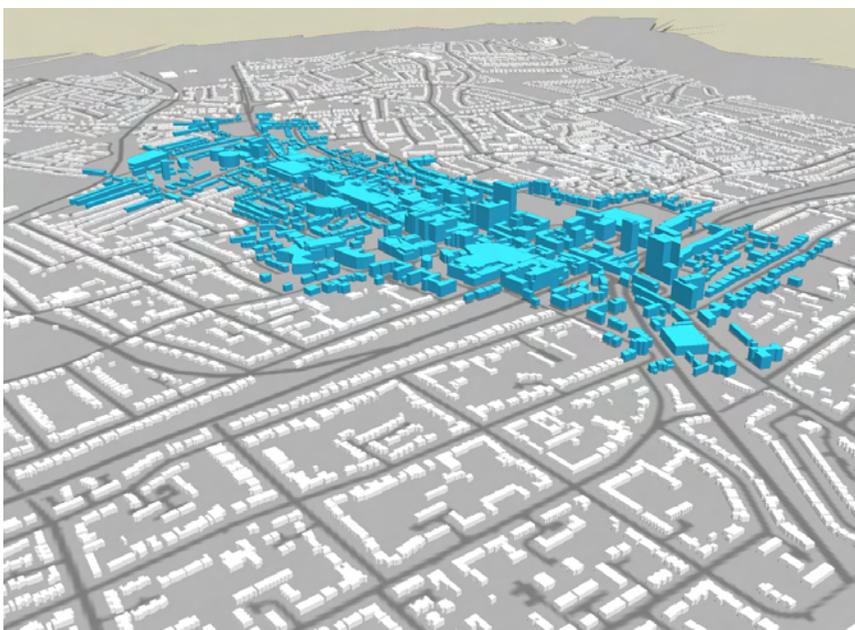
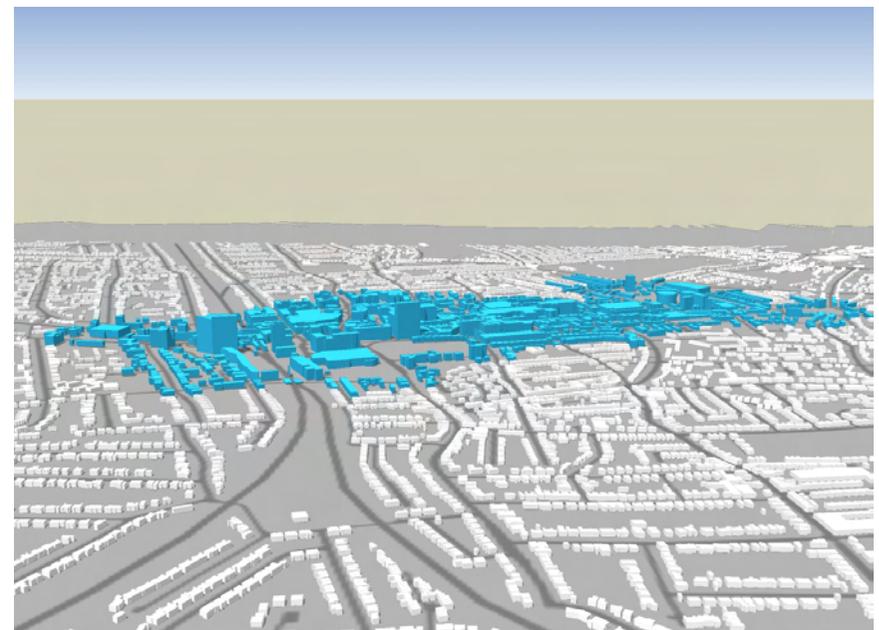


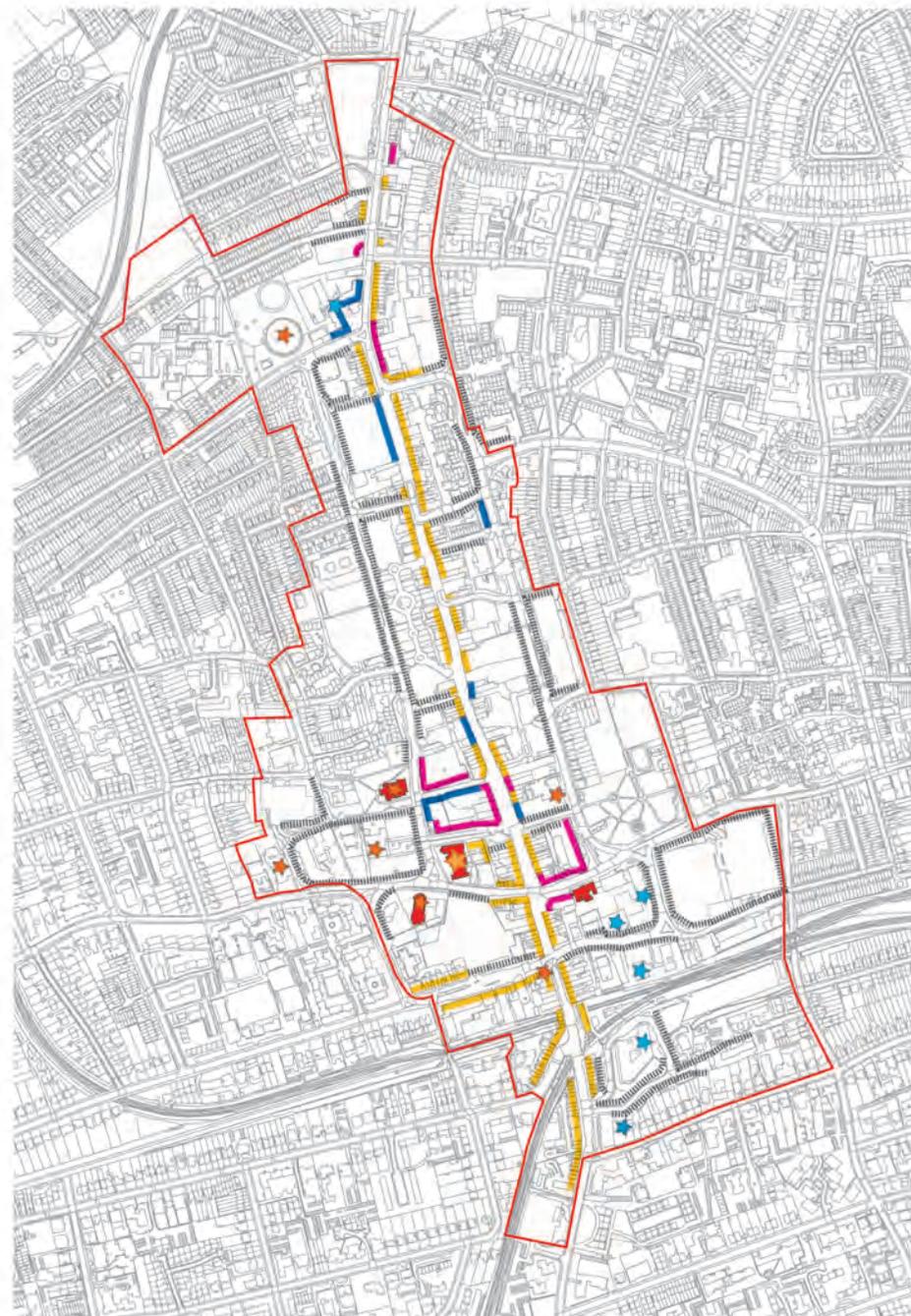
View south along Throwley Way



## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING SCALE, MASSING & TOPOGRAPHY

- › There is a pronounced slope downwards from south to north across the Town Centre, with the railway station situated on the highest point.
- › Development along the High Street is predominantly 3 storeys in height, with an increase in both height and massing behind it along Throwley and St Nicholas Ways.
- › The northern part of the town centre is characterised by buildings of between 2 and 3 storeys in height, punctuated by the Zurich House tower, and the Gas Holders which rise above.
- › There is a concentration of taller buildings in the southern part of the town centre south of Cheam/Carshalton Roads and around the station area.





## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING TOWNSCAPE QUALITY



Fig B10: Existing Townscape Quality



Police Station, Carshalton Road



Barclays Bank, Cheam Road

## Townscape Quality

The High Street comprises a variety of buildings including attractive early 19th century buildings, high quality Victorian/Edwardian/mock Tudor buildings, poor quality late 1960s/70s, and more modern infill buildings such as the shopping malls with entrance pavilions onto the High Street. The older buildings along the High Street have a strong vertical rhythm that reflects the individual narrow fronted buildings which grouped together form strong urban blocks, this has been diluted by later infill development in the form of 'big box' units.

There are a number of buildings which are out of scale with the surrounding buildings including the one storey retail parade opposite the station, and along Marshall's Road in the north of the town centre. Other areas which project a poor quality image of the town centre are located along Throwley Way and St Nicholas Way and along Sutton Court Road and Wellesley Road where 'backs' of properties, service areas and surface car parks are exposed to the street frontage.

There are few listed buildings in the Town Centre, they include No. 26 and 28 High Street- east side, the c19th Cricketers Inn and two remaining cottages at No's 344 and 346 High Street. Listed buildings are situated along the surrounding roads including the Mecca Bingo Club, Sutton Police Station on Carshalton Road, the Trinity Methodist Church and Hall, Sutton Baptist Church and Church Hall, the Church of St Nicholas and Gibson Mausoleum in St Nicholas' Churchyard both along St Nicholas Way.

### ***Implications for the Framework***

- › Consider opportunities to improve the appearance of buildings along the High Street, particularly towards the northern end and where appropriate consider opportunities to redevelop blocks of poor quality and inappropriate scale.
- › Consider opportunities to enhance the setting of significant and listed buildings within the town centre.
- › New development should promote the traditional grain and human scale of the High Street with strong vertical rhythms and individual buildings or the appearance of individual buildings within the block, varied rooflines should also be promoted.

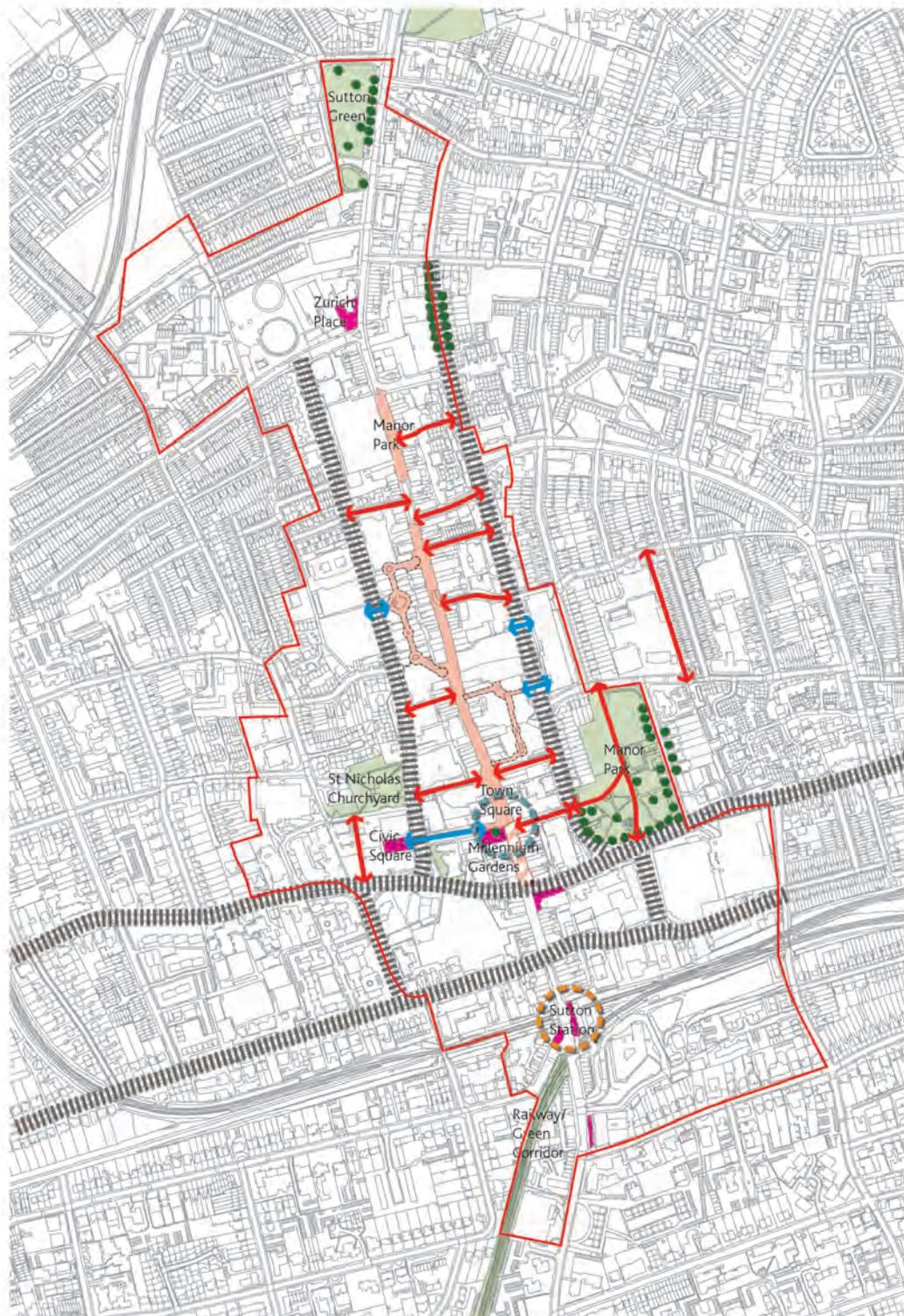


Fig B11: Existing Public Realm

## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE EXISTING PUBLIC REALM

### Public Realm Quality and Provision

The pedestrianised High Street forms the main public space in the town centre and is the most highly used in terms of footfall; the space is generally pleasant and includes a number of street trees, street furniture and seating areas although the mix of pedestrians, cyclists and the street clutter creates confusion and impedes accessibility. The High Street links a number of squares including:

- › Zurich Place north of the pedestrianised High Street. This is a hard landscaped space which is tired and lacks activity around it due to a number of vacant units;
- › The pedestrianised space outside Asda which hosts the town's street market is highly cluttered with signage and has a run down appearance;
- › Millennium Gardens south of the pedestrianised area which incorporates decorative railings, seating area, planters and covered performance space. This space could act as a focal space for the centre with its central location between the Civic Centre to the west and Manor Park to the east;
- › The Town Square which is located on the High Street adjacent to Millennium Gardens and incorporates benches, street trees, hanging baskets, bicycle racks and the occasional market stall; and
- › There is also an extended area of pavement outside the Sutton Station entrance with ticket machines, information boards, and small kiosks, this small space is particularly congested during peak times.

There are a number of areas where cafés 'spill-out' into the street for example on the High Street, opposite the station in the expanded pavement space at the junction of Brighton Road and Mulgrave Road, and outside the cafes and restaurants below Sutherland House along Brighton Road at the southern end of the town centre. There is a regular street market which takes place outside Asda north of the pedestrianised area and a number of market stalls are occasionally situated along the High Street which create activity and interest along the street.

The main green spaces are situated to the east, west and north of the High Street and include:

- › St Nicholas Churchyard to the west provides a secluded and quiet environment, the Landscape Appraisal highlighted this space as of 'good' quality, however there are opportunities to better enclose the space which is currently undermined by the hard edges of buildings that enclose it.

- › Manor Park to the east of the High Street was refurbished early in 2005 and includes a children's playground, although the B&Q building and backs of the houses along Throwley Way provide a poor backdrop to the park.
- › On the northern edge of the town centre the local park of Sutton Green is considered of 'average' quality, the larger green space on the northern side of Burley Road contains a series of mature trees, expanse of grass and a children's playground. However, the public toilet block and recycling facilities along the road frontage reduce the overall quality of the space. The small grassed space on the southern side of Burley Road is less well used and flanked by a blank wall and attracts litter due to the lack of natural surveillance and activity surrounding it.

The pedestrianised High Street and open spaces also serve as venues for events including the Manor Festival an annual fair which takes place on Manor Park at the end of July, and speciality markets including French, Italian and German Festive Market which takes place along the pedestrianised High Street. The High Street was also venue to the National Women's Cycle Road and Circuit series in July 2007.

The Sutton Town Centre Plan highlights a number of opportunities to improve existing open spaces and create new spaces and pedestrian priority areas in the centre, including:

- › Creating an open plaza from Throwley Road to the Civic Offices, extending the pedestrianised area and linking Millennium Gardens and town square with Manor Park to improve connectivity;



The High Street - southern end

- › Developing new houses next to Manor Park which could integrate and overlook the space;
- › Public realm and building frontage improvements to Zurich Place;
- › Southern part of the High Street (south of Cheam/Carshalton Road) to become a pedestrian-friendly public transport corridor;
- › Improvements to the public realm including traffic calming measures along the Throwley Way/St Nicholas Way gyratory system;
- › De-cluttering of the High Street public realm;
- › Creation of a distinctive southern gateway to the town around Sutherland House and Brighton Road car park which could incorporate a new public space.
- › The North Sutton Study (2003) identified opportunities for café/kiosk/restaurant facilities on Sutton Green and on the open space south of Burley Road to provide a new focus for these areas;
- › The provision of a small café/restaurant on Zurich Place as the focus for streetscape improvements around it;
- › The creation of a green boulevard with wide walkways extending from Sutton Green in the northern section of the centre;
- › The gateway into North Sutton could be improved with painted bridges, enhanced planting, signage announcing arrival into Sutton and adding lighting and public art;



Throwley Way

### **Implications for the Framework**

- › Promote opportunities to linger and add vibrancy to the town centre through the creation of usable spaces as part of new developments with seating, events, exhibitions, and specialist markets.
- › Improve the quality of the existing market and reintroduce a farmer's market.
- › Incorporate public art and lighting opportunities.
- › Create a new Civic Square to incorporate market stalls and a café.
- › Improve the connection between the Civic Offices, Millennium Gardens and Manor Park through the creation of a 'boulevard' link.
- › Encourage the use of Manor Park through development to the edges and improved links to the High Street.
- › Promote the use of Sutton Green through the development of a café, restaurant within the space to promote activity.
- › Improvements to Zurich Place with an extension to the pedestrianised area of the High Street adjacent to the space, and encourage active uses.
- › Improve the gateway to Sutton Station by extending the space at the front of the station building as part of the implementation of a public transport corridor and the redevelopment of surrounding buildings.
- › Opportunity to remodel Grove Road to improve its function and attractiveness as a 'boulevard' type street through carriageway reallocation and tree planting.
- › Opportunity to create pedestrian priority shared surfaces in Lodge and Manor Places to provide additional breathing spaces off the High Street .



Underpass leading to the Civic Centre

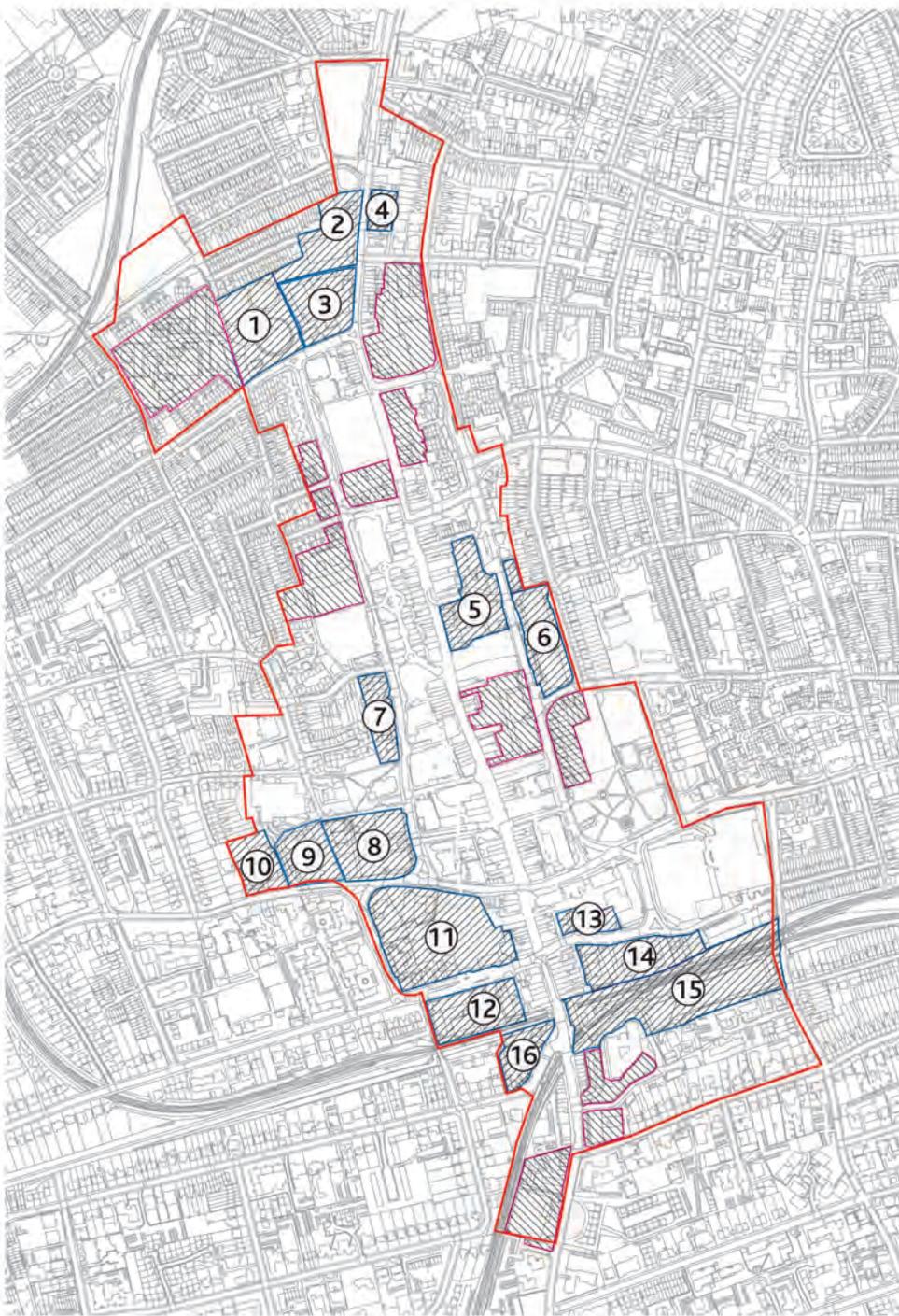


Fig B12: Development Opportunities

## SUTTON TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



## Development Potential

A number of areas within the town centre have been identified in the Sutton Town Centre Plan: Issues and Options – Consultation Draft (2007) as well as by the consultant team in the preparation of this study where potential future development may be appropriate. They have been identified using the following criteria:

- › Existing UDP Opportunity Sites not yet fully developed;
- › Sites identified in the Sutton Station SPD;
- › Sites identified in the North Sutton Study;
- › Sites that have been the subject of development interest; and
- › Other sites that, by reason of their location and character, may be suitable for more intensive redevelopment.

All of these areas have a role to play in bringing about short and long term economic, environmental and social success for the Town Centre as well as bringing about a real improvement in its character and appearance. The rationale for this was concerned with exploring the visual, economic and environmental potential of these areas to maintain and improve the status and role that the Town Centre has as a key retail, employment and residential centre. In addition, the poor contribution of some of these sites in aesthetic, economic and social terms offer real opportunities for change.

Additional sites have also been identified which we believe could assist in improving the appearance and function of the Town Centre by creating better urban form of higher architectural quality and greatly improved public realm and connectivity. These sites may not be delivered within the timespan of the AAP however design guidance should set out the principles for redevelopment should this occur in advance of other sites to ensure that all sites are considered holistically.

Importance should be placed on considering proposals for the key sites in an holistic way, unlocking difficult delivery issues through collaboration resisting the opportunity to develop easier proposals and sites in isolation. The areas of development potential are shown in the plan opposite.

## IDENTIFYING CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The culmination of the urban design analysis process has highlighted the key weaknesses and opportunities that exist in the town centre.

The following plans provide a summary of the key issues and opportunities that are applied in developing the concept design and vision of the study area.

### Issues

- › Barrier effect created by the gyratory system around the town centre and poor quality pedestrian and cycle environment.
- › Lack of east-west connections across the town centre.
- › Long linear nature of the High Street and pronounced slope creating accessibility issues.
- › Poor quality of the townscape, neglected buildings and vacancies particularly in the northern part of the town centre.
- › 'Big box' infill development which reduces the permeability of the town centre.
- › Lack of good quality landmark buildings in the town centre.
- › Poor setting of existing listed and landmark buildings and poor visual corridors to these buildings reducing the legibility of the town centre.
- › Lack of significant areas of public open space, and poor connectivity to existing public spaces and squares.
- › Street clutter and segregated cycle lanes along the pedestrianised High Street creates confusion and reduces the overall quality of the streetscape.

### Opportunities

- › Extent of the town centre boundary – should the town centre be reduced north-south, extended east-west?
- › Creation of a visitor circuit with active frontages, stopping points – seating, open spaces etc.
- › Improving linkages across the gyratory – removal of bridges, underpasses, creation of wide at grade crossing points feeding directly into the High Street.
- › Creating activity in spaces – function and activity of space - café on Sutton Green, restaurant on the small space south of the Green, new focal space linking the Civic Centre and Manor Park across the High Street, new space to announce the start of the retail core.
- › De-cluttering the High Street – shared surfaces, allowance of traffic in the evenings.
- › There are significant development opportunities.
- › Development value realised from redevelopment in the Town centre should be used to fund improvement to the public realm.
- › Major opportunity to improve the design quality of buildings within the Town Centre.
- › The existing character areas within the Town Centre should be respected and enhanced.



*Sutton High Street*



*Gas Holder Site*

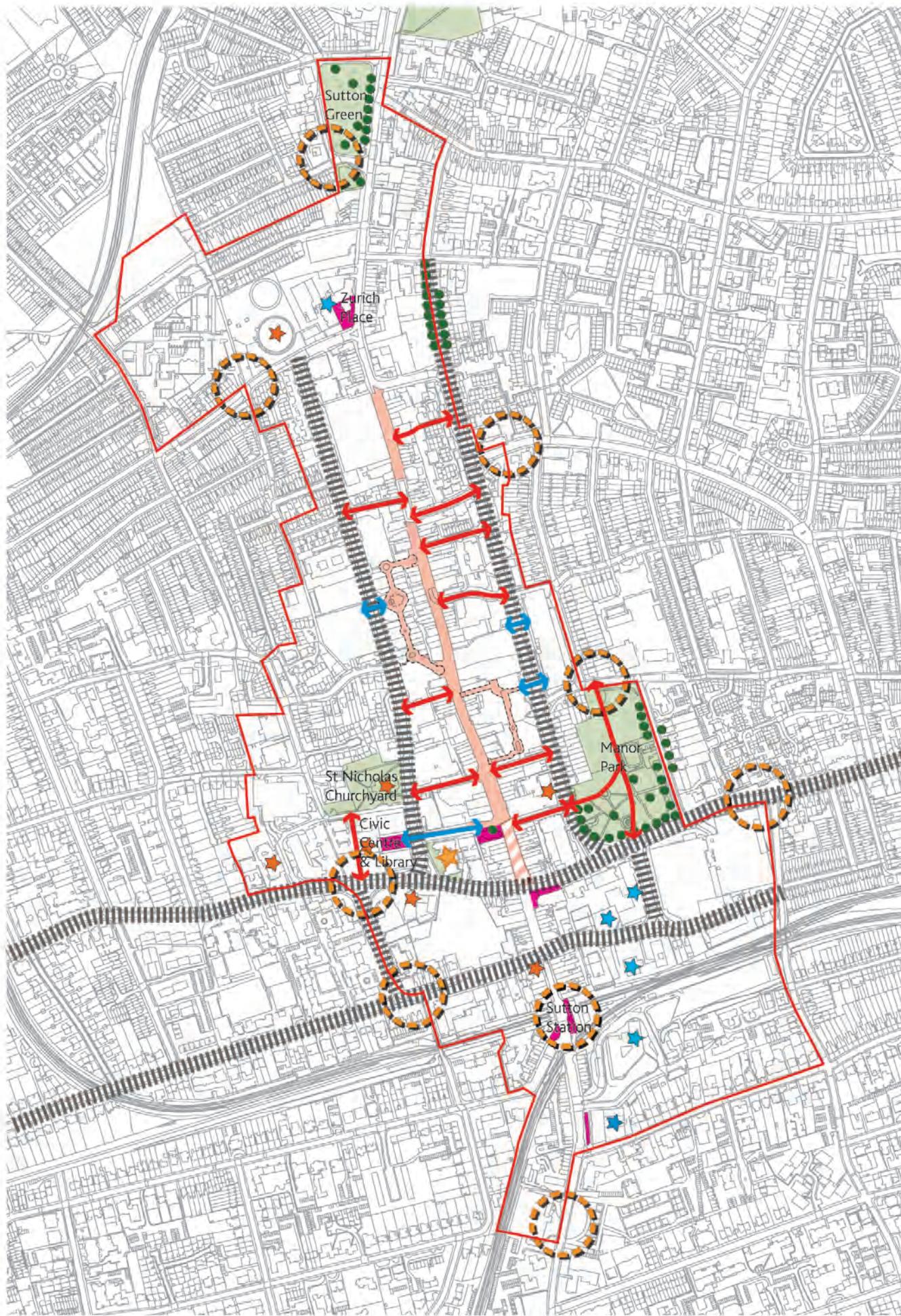


*Millennium Gardens*



*Times Square Carpark*

# SUTTON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES

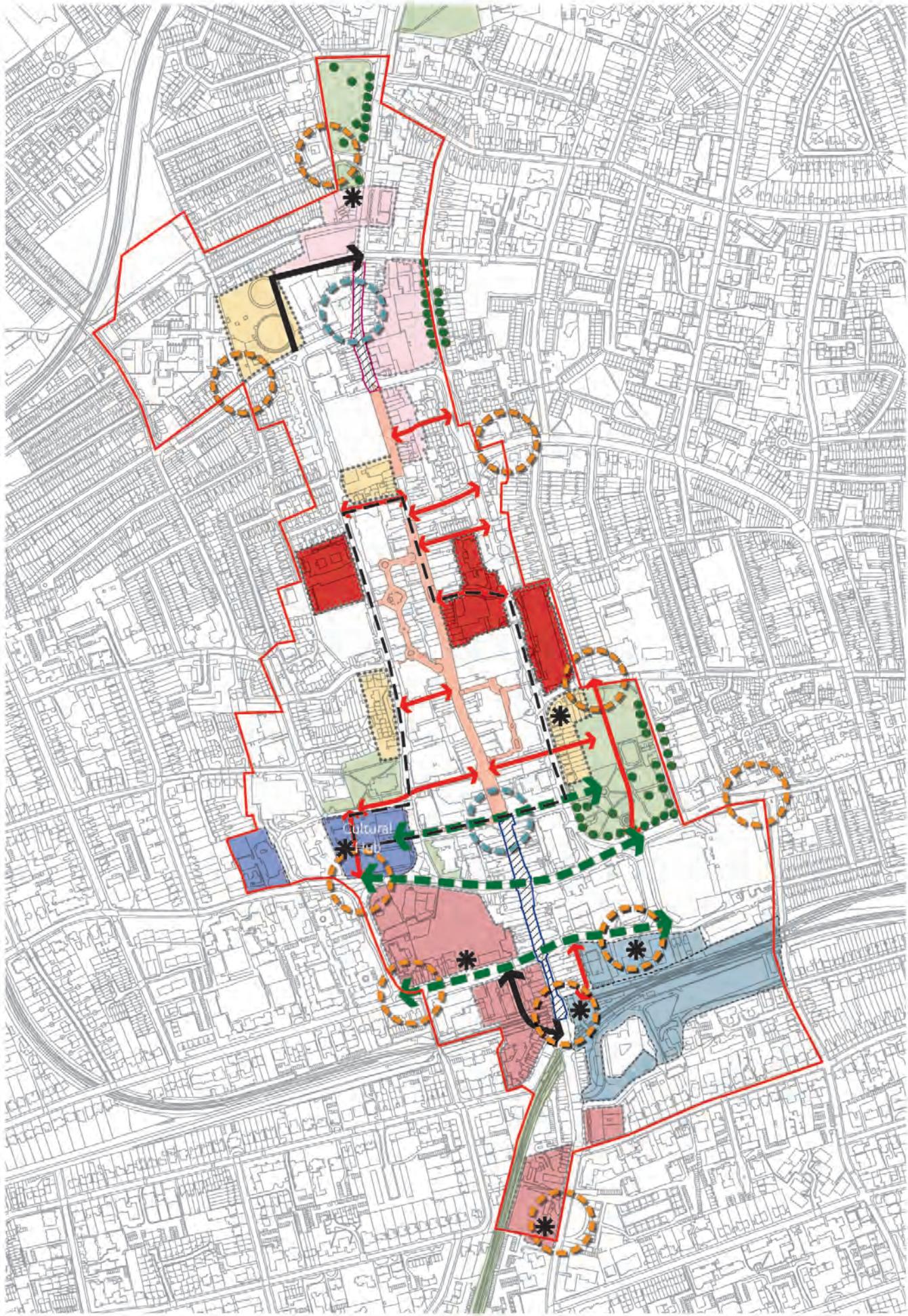


-  Town Centre Plan Boundary
-  Uncelebrated Gateways
-  Public Square/'Spill-Out' Space
-  Green Space
-  Pedestrianised Area
-  Indoor Shopping Arcade
-  Poor Quality Pedestrian Links
-  Segregated Subway or Bridge Link
-  Hostile Areas for Pedestrians
-  Town Wide Landmark
-  Positive Local Landmark
-  Negative Local Landmark



Fig B13: Existing Issues

# SUTTON TOWN CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES



- Town Centre Plan Boundary
- Development Opportunity Sites
- Local retail/leisure, small offices, housing
- Predominantly housing
- Large scale retail/leisure with office and housing above
- Civic and Community facilities
- Predominantly Office and Residential Uses
- Office, residential, second retail or leisure uses
- \* Location for Landmark Building
- Strengthened Gateways
- Potential Focal Spaces
- Potential Circuit around the Town with active frontages
- New Link Road
- Enhanced pedestrian routes
- Potential boulevard link
- Extended Pedestrianised Area
- Extended Pedestrian Priority Area



Fig B13: Existing Opportunities

## TOWN CENTRE - SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- › Comfortable shopping environment;
  - » Pedestrianised High Street
  - » Human scale of the buildings
  - » Active frontages and enclosure to the High Street
- › Well connected - 23 minutes to Central London;
- › Convenient town centre car parking facilities;
- › Retailer representation relatively strong – most of the national retailers present;
- › Low vacancy levels, relatively low retail rental levels;
- › Numerous street trees; and
- › Well used green space (Manor Park).

### Weaknesses

- › Long and narrow town centre without a defined heart;
  - » Slope from south to north creates accessibility issues
- › Barrier effect created by the gyratory system;
  - » Creating service corridors not streets
  - » Lack of east-west connections across the town centre
  - » Creating a poor quality pedestrian and cycle environment
- › Poor sense of arrival –gateways/ landmarks; and
- › Lack of a distinct identity.
  - » Relatively few independent shops
  - » Average quality townscape
  - » Few landmarks
  - » Hidden assets (churches, high quality buildings).
  - » Lack of quality/delight/variety in the public realm
  - » Deficient in both quality and quantity of open space

### Opportunities

- › Significant development opportunities;
- › Improving linkages across the gyratory and east-west connections;
- › Extension to the pedestrian priority area at the northern and southern ends of the High Street;
- › Potential for New taller/ landmark buildings;
- › Demand from operators to improve and extend the retail and leisure offer;
- › Creation of distinct 'quarters' to create identity and encourage diversity;
- › Creation of a 'cultural hub' incorporating civic centre, leisure and cultural facilities;
- › Rationalisation of long stay commuter parking.
- › Tramlink opportunities;
- › Potential to diversify the evening economy and create a weekend destination;
- › Creation of a circuit to enhance the town centre experience linking key destinations and new spaces;
- › Create new and improved public spaces including activities such as cafés/ kiosks/ restaurants, markets, events;
- › Additional hotel provision in the centre - increased business and visitor potential; and
- › Capitalise on the environmental potential- Create a sustainable town centre.



St Nicholas Way

### Threats

- › Lack of a distinctive image and offer to differentiate the town from its competitors;
- › Growth has not kept pace with competitors - stagnation of retail rental levels;
- › Loss of employment and businesses out of the Borough - competition from more modern office developments in outer London (Epsom, Reigate and Croydon);
- › Lack of demand for existing office stock - outdated, does not meet demand for SMEs;
- › Loss of office space through conversion to residential - could lead to a shortfall in supply before the end of the LDF period;
- › Over-provision of small residential units within the town centre – lack of tenure mix;
- › Safeguarding of land for Tramlink extension may restrict development potential; and
- › Impact of significant levels of growth on infrastructure.

### *Town Centre Context and Requirements: Implications for the Framework*

- › The Town Centre is one of four Metropolitan Centres in the sub-region which is expected to grow significantly to 2016.
- › 140+ new residential units per annum by 2016/17;
- › 16-24,000 sq m additional comparison retail floorspace by 2016/17;
- › Small overall increase on additional office floorspace up to 2016;
- › Large scale leisure and cultural facilities – sports centre, health facilities, theatre, dance studio;
- › Diversify the town centre evening economy, and create a weekend destination;
- › Additional hotel provision;
- › New/ improved community facilities (health clinics, medical practitioners, nurseries, crèches, community halls and meeting rooms).

