ANNEX

Background information

Strategic Location & Connectivity

Melton Mowbray is a market town in north-east Leicestershire, part of the Melton Borough. Surrounded by 50,000 hectares of rolling countryside, it combines the rural charm of Melton Borough with excellent connectivity to cities like Leicester, Nottingham and Loughborough via the A607 and A606. The railway line also runs through the town to provide rail connections across the country.

History

Understanding the history of Melton Mowbray is key to appreciating the town centre and help in identifying the unique historic opportunities that the town centre presents.

Medieval period

During the medieval period, Melton Mowbray developed as a thriving market town. Its growth, initially linked to the location at the river crossing, eventually evolved on the back of wool trade and, in turn, other commodities, including sheep, corn, butter and herbs. In the seventeenth century, a marked decline in trade impacted the town's prosperity.

Industrialisation

Industrial expansion significantly transformed Melton Mowbray. The Melton Mowbray Navigation Canal from Syston to the Melton Mowbray basin (1795) and the Syston to Melton railway link (1846) enabled numerous industries to establish and prosper in the area, thus driving population growth. At this time, there were two prestigious industries in Melton Mowbray, Stilton Cheese, and pork pies. Other industries, including wool and boot factories also settled in Melton Mowbray during this period. Hence, a large number of houses were built in the town, shaping a significant part of the town centre's buildings and spaces.

20th century

Construction of the main roads around the town centre have altered the historic street pattern and its urban grain. During the post war years, the town expanded with the construction of large housing estates on the northern and southern fringes of the town.

Today

Today, Melton Mowbray embraces its heritage as the "Rural Capital of Food," known for its pork pies, Stilton cheese, and agricultural ties. Its economy thrives with a growing manufacturing sector and increasing food production startups and rural enterprises.

Town Centre as the heart of the town

The town centre of Melton Mowbray is the oldest and most vibrant part of the town, reflecting its historical roots as a market town. The street layouts, buildings, and spaces within the central area showcase a development pattern that evolved from medieval times, with Georgian and early Victorian architectural influences. Most of these buildings are two to three storeys tall, set on narrow plots, and form continuous frontages that give the town centre a strong sense of enclosure and cohesion.

The entire shopping area falls within a designated conservation area, preserving its historical and architectural significance. The town's layout and structures, combined with its market tradition, make the town centre a key retail hub and destination within the borough. The Melton Mowbray Town Estate (MMTE) runs a market in the town centre every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, which remains a focal point of the town's economy and social life. The town centre, with its architectural charm and bustling market culture, continues to play a central role in the town's identity and image to the broader region.

Planning Structure

In the UK, the planning system operates through a hierarchical structure, with policies and guidance cascading from national to local levels. Each layer provides a framework within which development is assessed and planned. Understanding this hierarchy is crucial for aligning the Melton Town Centre Design Guide within the broader planning context.

National Level

At the national level, broad principles are set to guide all development across the country. This is the top layer of guidance that all other plans and developments must follow.

Relevant guidance inform the development of the town centre design guide include:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guide
- Manual for Streets
- DfT Local Transport Notes

Regional Level

The regional level of planning coordinates development across multiple local authorities, addressing large-scale issues that impact the wider area, while ensuring that local policies align with overarching regional goals.

Relevant guidance inform the development of the town centre design guide include:

- Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan
- Leicestershire Highway Design Guide

Local Level

Borough Level

Local policies focus on specific issues and offer detailed guidance for shaping the area's growth. They ensure that development meets community needs while aligning with broader planning goals from national and regional levels.

Relevant guidance inform the development of the town centre design guide include:

- Melton Local Plan (Oct 2018)
- Melton Borough Design SPD

Melton Mowbray Town Centre
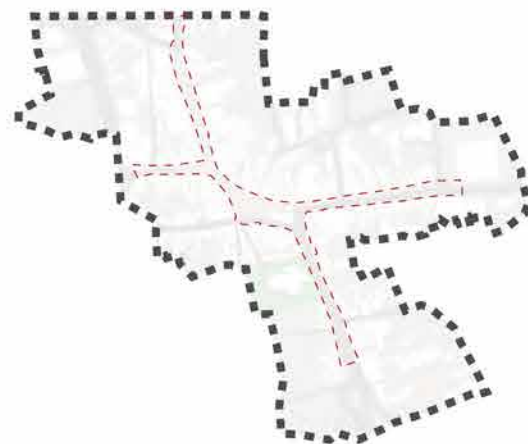
Below the borough-level policies are guidance documents that provide additional details on designated areas. These documents build on borough-wide policies and offer specific guidance for the design and development of those areas.

Relevant guidance inform the development of the town centre design guide include:

- Melton Mowbray Town Centre Vision (July 2022)
- Melton Mowbray Conservation Appraisal

Policy review

Melton Local Plan (Oct 2018)

Published in October 2018, the Melton Mowbray Local Plan outlines a long-term strategic vision and policies for the development of the borough up to 2036. Its vision focuses on creating a desirable place to live, work in and visit, enhancing Melton Mowbray as the historic market town.

Key priorities include supporting economic growth, improving infrastructure, providing affordable housing, safeguarding heritage, and addressing traffic issues. It also focuses on the revitalisation of the town centre, promoting health and wellbeing of locals, and fostering resilience to environmental challenges. The plan builds on the borough's unique identity, reputation, heritage, character and rural nature to ensure the future development meets the needs of the local community, benefits the economy and improves the quality of the living environment

Melton Local Plan Review & Updates

The local plan underwent reviewed and updates starting from 2023. The emerging policy is broadly consistent with the policies in the Local Plan 2018 with a minor amendment to the policy related to the primary/secondary shopping frontages.

Relevant Policy	Aims & Objectives
Policy EC5 - Melton Mowbray Town Centre	• Enhancing and promoting the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray's town centre • Support the retention of Melton Mowbray's role as a primary retail destination • Ensuring new development respects the local heritage and integrate with the towns's historical character • Advocates for enhancing the quality of public spaces and providing an attractive and walkable environment for pedestrians
Policy EC6 – Primary Shopping Frontages	• Preserve the strong retail focus within Melton Mowbray's primary shopping frontages while allowing some flexibility for complementary uses to enhance the town centre's appeal.

Relevant Policy	Aims & Objectives
Main Town Centre Uses and Melton Mowbray Town Centre	• Maintain active frontage to ensure the key retail areas remain vibrant and attractive • Encourage high-quality shopfront design and visual permeability, improving the look of the town centre and contributing to an engaging streetscape. • Retain and respect historical shopfront features and architectural character, ensuring new developments and shopfront integrate with and enhance the town's heritage. • Promote the use of green infrastructure, such as street trees and green walls, to enhance the environment and contribute to sustainability goals. • Promote a compact, walkable environment that makes it easier for pedestrians to navigate and spend time in the area, benefiting local businesses.

Policy review

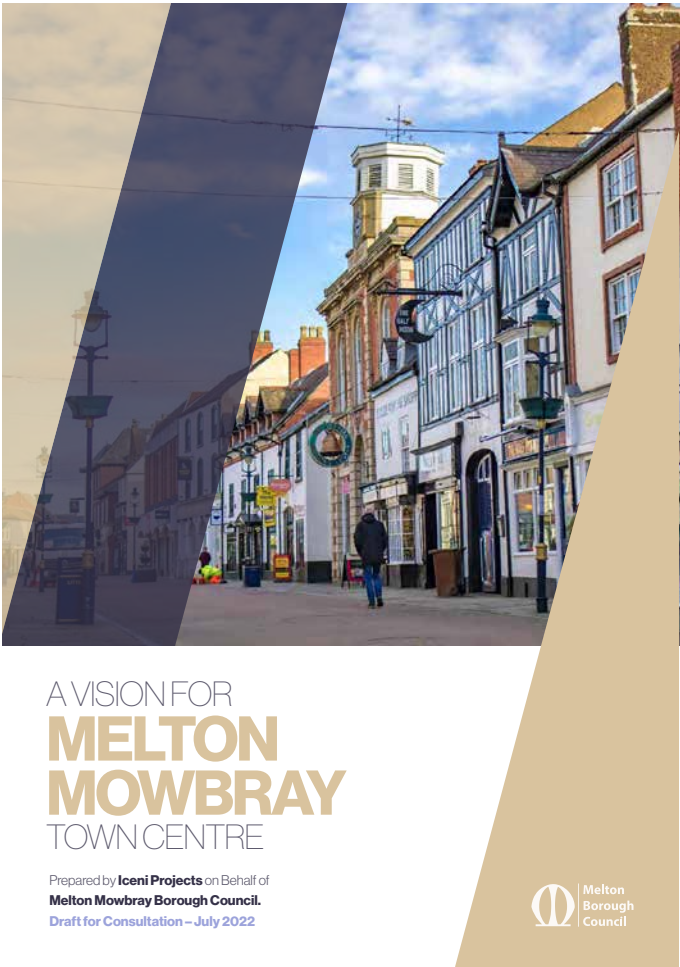## Melton Mowbray Town Centre Vision (July 2022)

The Melton Mowbray Town Centre Vision (July 2022) outlines a long term comprehensive strategy for revitalising the town centre and enhancing its role as a vibrant hub for the community. The vision document was adopted in September 2022. It set a vision for the town to strengthen its position as the 'Rural Capital of Food' and to maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray as a rural market town. The vision is built on community engagement and extensive evidence base study to inform the direction for future changes.

To deliver the vision, the document identified the three main areas for improvements. The list below lists out the key interventions that are relevant to this guide.

A variety of development projects have been identified to enable the vision for Melton Mowbray. These projects are set to become key landmarks within the town, attracting foot traffic and creating employment opportunities. They hold the potential to transform the Melton Mowbray town centre, revitalising the area and enhancing its appeal.

The town centre vision informs our design guide by establishing clear priorities and objectives that align with the community's aspirations for the area. In turn, the design guide equips stakeholders with the necessary tools and guidelines to bring their vision to life.

Priority	Interventions
Reinforcing commercial and economic activities	• Redesign the key gateways to enhance arrival experience. • Enhance the town centre's character and identity through refurbishment of the heritage building • Improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the High Street to increase footfall and access to the town centre amenities to create a successful commercial hub.
Enhancing visitor experience	• Improve physical and visual connectivity between the various market locations. • Enhance the arrival experience and key entry points by car through the addition of active frontages, better signage, enhanced lighting, landscaping and upgraded amenities. • Improve the visibility of the High Street to increase footfall and attract occupiers • Improve the connectivity, accessibility and legibility between key destinations to mutually benefit from increased footfall
Increasing the use of public open spaces	• Enhance pedestrian and cycle paths to better connect the town centre with employment sites, new residential areas, visitor destinations, and other parks.

A VISION FOR
MELTON MOWBRAY
TOWN CENTRE

Prepared by **Iceni Projects** on Behalf of
Melton Mowbray Borough Council.
Draft for Consultation – July 2022

Melton Borough Council

Policy review

Melton Borough Design SPD

The Melton Borough Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on how to achieve high-quality design in new developments throughout the borough. It aims to enhance the character of Melton Borough's built environment, ensuring that development is sustainable, respects local distinctiveness, and contributes to create a liveable places for people.

The SPD is built on six core design principles that reflect the aspirations of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- **Working with Nature** – Encouraging development that integrates natural landscapes, supports biodiversity, and enhances the ecological value of the area.

- **Making Room for Water** – Promoting water-sensitive design, including sustainable drainage systems and flood risk mitigation.

- **Positive Public Spaces** – Creating well-designed, welcoming public spaces that foster social interaction and community engagement.

- **Accessible and Legible Streets** – Ensuring streets are easy to navigate, pedestrian-friendly, and well-connected, promoting sustainable modes of transport.

- **Locally Distinctive Places** – Preserving and enhancing the unique character of Melton's built environment, reflecting its heritage and cultural significance.

- **Adaptable & Resilient Buildings** – Supporting the development of buildings that can adapt to changing needs over time and are resilient to environmental and climate-related challenges.

The Melton Borough Design SPD provides the foundational framework for the town centre design guide by setting out principles and design standards that should be adhered to under the borough's wider planning objectives and vision. These principles help guide design decisions to ensure that new developments respect the character of Melton Borough and contribute positively to both the environment and community.

Melton Mowbray Conservation Area Appraisal

The Melton Mowbray Conservation Area Appraisal is an essential document that evaluates the historic and architectural importance of the town's conservation areas. The appraisal highlights key features that define the area's character, offering guidance for their preservation and enhancement while serving as a framework for planning decisions that respect the town's historical value and local distinctiveness.

Currently the Melton Mowbray Conservation Area is listed as "at risk" on the Heritage at Risk Register, with a "very bad" condition rating and medium vulnerability, along with a deteriorating trend. This situation underscores the urgent need for conservation and improvement efforts to preserve the area's historic significance.

Key Points of the Appraisal:	Negative Factors Identified:
- Historic Significance: The area showcases buildings and spaces that reflect the community's rich history and development. - Architectural Character: The blend of architectural styles, from Georgian and Victorian to traditional shopfronts, is vital to the town's identity. - Public Space and Streetscape: The importance of public spaces and streetscape elements, such as paving, lighting, street furniture, and greenery, in contributing to the town's character and historical setting is emphasised.	- Loss of Original Features: Alterations to historic buildings have resulted in the loss of key architectural details, including traditional windows and doors. - Unsympathetic Modern Additions: Inappropriate modern developments, such as poorly designed shopfronts and signage, detract from the traditional streetscape. - Poor Maintenance: Neglect of historic structures has led to decay and disrepair, particularly in key heritage assets. - Public Realm Quality: Cluttered streets, poor paving, and inappropriate street furniture diminish the visual appeal and character of the conservation area.

Policy review

Context of the Town Centre Design Guide

The Town Centre Design Guide serves as a guidance document within the local planning hierarchy, positioned below the borough-level policies.
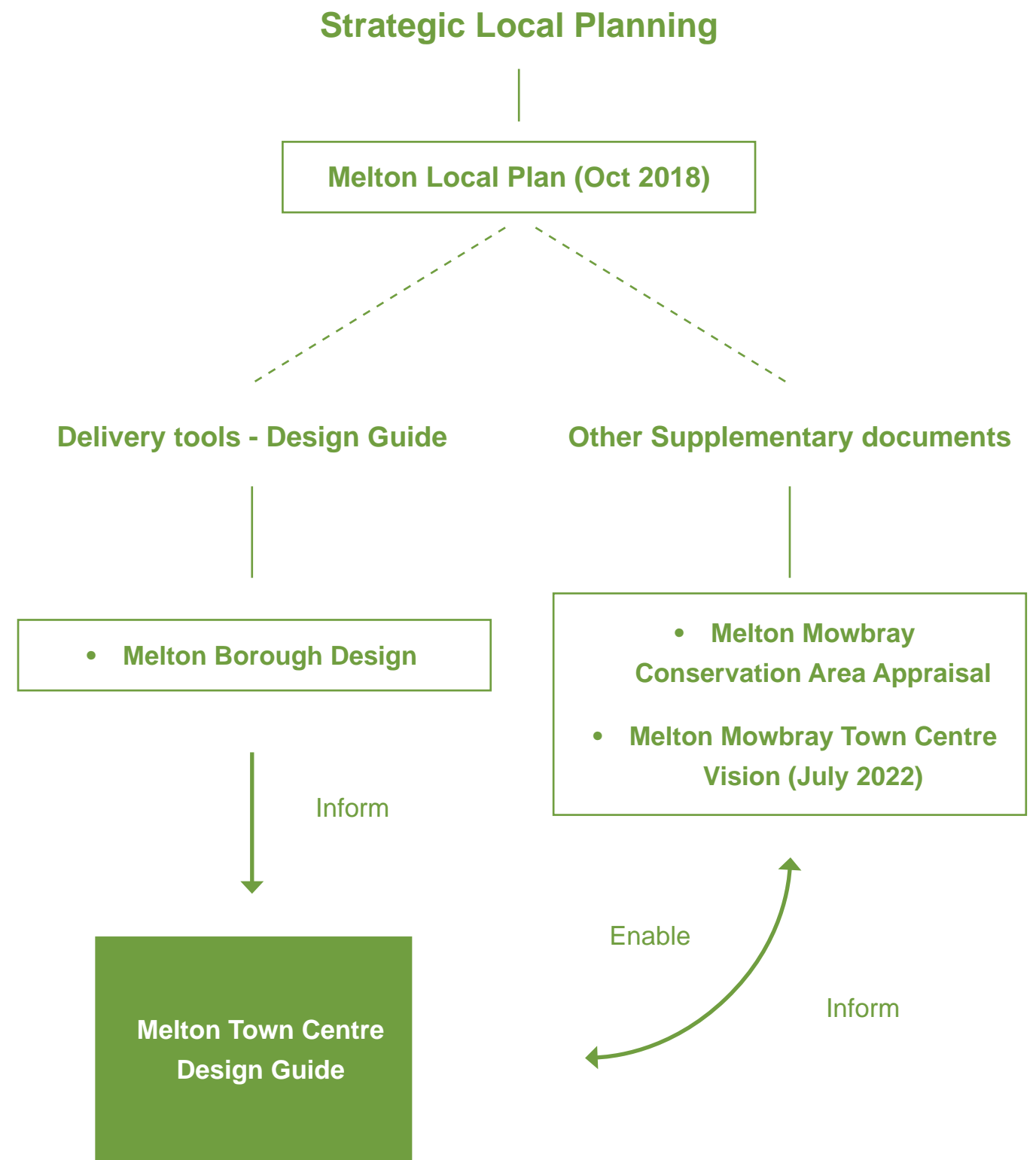
It builds upon the existing borough-wide policies, and serve as a tool to enable the delivery of the town centre vision through better design of the streetscape and public realm in the town centre that will resonate with local needs, character and aspirations.

The direction and the structure of the Town Centre Design Guide is shaped by a policy review of the key local policies and guidance documents. This sets the foundations of the guide, listed below, by identifying the priority areas, ensuring the guide is responsive to the specific challenges and opportunities of the town centre.
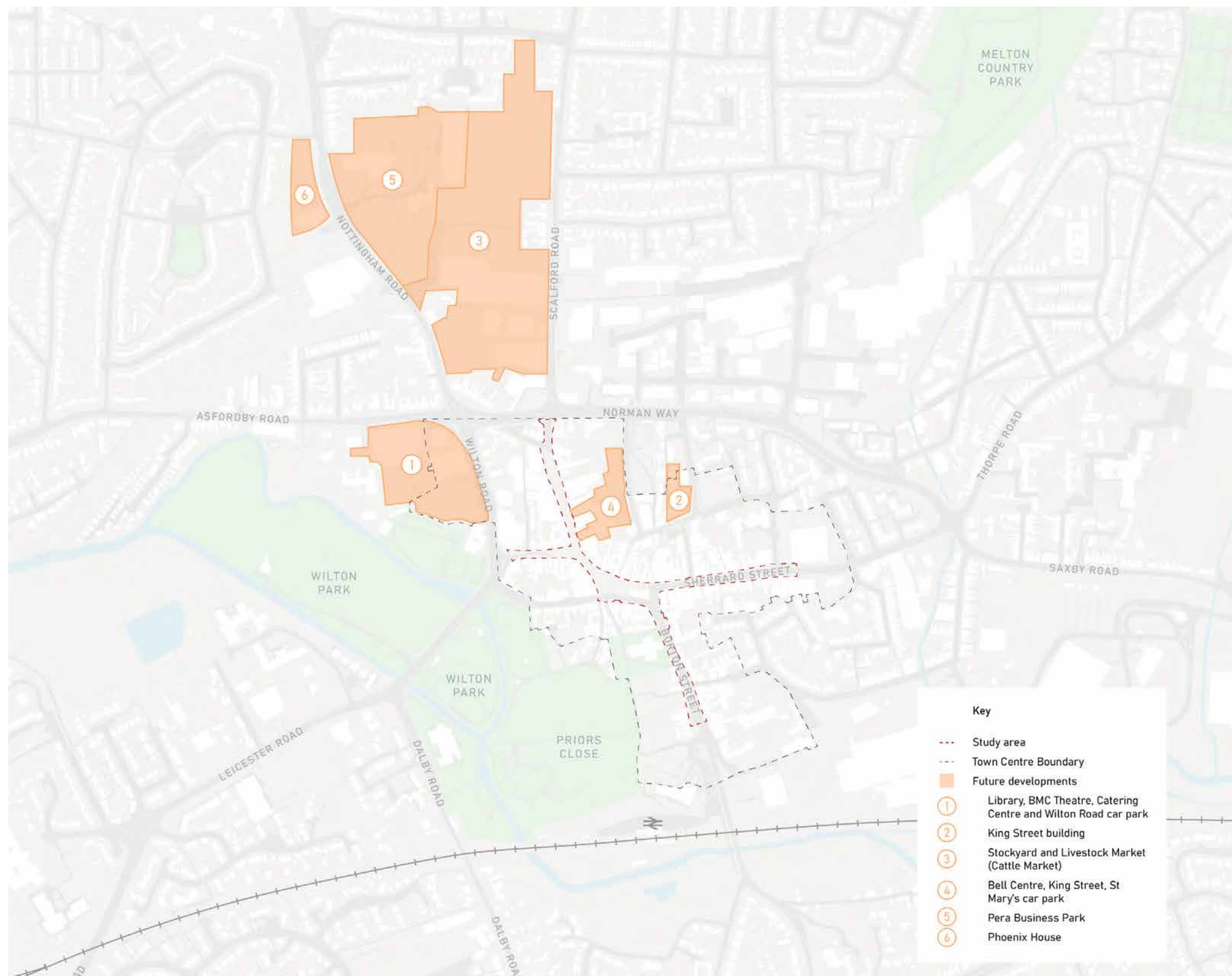
- **Strategic Vision Alignment**
  The long-term strategic vision outlined in the Melton Local Plan and Town Centre Vision is essential for guiding the development of the town centre. It focuses on enhancing Melton Mowbray's identity as a desirable place to live, work, and visit, while reinforcing its role as the 'Rural Capital of Food.'

- **Supporting Town Centre Vitality**
  Policies that aim to boost the vitality and viability of the town centre emphasize the importance of creating a vibrant commercial environment. This supports local businesses and attracts both residents and visitors, ensuring that Melton Mowbray remains a primary retail destination.

- **Heritage Conservation**
  Preserving the historic and architectural significance of the town, as highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, is crucial. The town's heritage assets contribute to its unique and distinct character, especially as the designated conservation area is currently listed as "at risk."

- **Public Space Enhancements**
  High-quality public spaces are vital for promoting social interaction and improving the overall experience of the town centre. Accessible, well-designed, and attractive public areas will contribute to a vibrant community atmosphere and enhance the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

- **Connectivity and Accessibility**
  Improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity is key to enhancing the town centre. Strengthening the links between key destinations and amenities will help create a more compact, walkable environment, making it easier for people to navigate and enjoy the town centre.

The Town Centre Design Guide acts as an enabler for bringing tangible, positive changes to the town centre's physical environment. As a guidance document, it translates strategic visions and policies into practical design principles that can be implemented on the ground. It serves as a practical tool for developers, planners, and stakeholders, ensuring that all changes align with the broader aspirations of the town, reflect the unique character of the area, and enhance the overall quality of life of the community

Strategic Local Planning

Melton Local Plan (Oct 2018)

Delivery tools - Design Guide

- **Melton Borough Design**

Inform

Melton Town Centre Design Guide

Other Supplementary documents

- **Melton Mowbray Conservation Area Appraisal**
- **Melton Mowbray Town Centre Vision (July 2022)**

Enable

Inform

Town Centre Development Context

Key

- – – – Study area
- - - - Town Centre Boundary
- ▨ Future developments
- ① Library, BMC Theatre, Catering Centre and Wilton Road car park
- ② King Street building
- ③ Stockyard and Livestock Market (Cattle Market)
- ④ Bell Centre, King Street, St Mary's car park
- ⑤ Pera Business Park
- ⑥ Phoenix House

The town centre is envisioned as a key role in delivering the 'Rural Capital of Food' (RCoF) proposition and acting as a vital service destination. It will be a place where people can experience the local offerings and socialising.

To support this vision, several development projects have been identified, including:

1. **Library-BMC Theatre, Catering Centre, and Wilton Road Car Park:** Enhancing recreational and cultural offerings.

2. **King Street Building:** Opportunities for commercial, retail, or leisure development.

3. **Stockyard and Livestock Market:** A key destination that combines tourism with food and beverage offerings.

4. **Bell Centre, King Street, and St. Mary's Car Park:** Expanding food and beverage options.

5. **Pera Business Park:** Establishing a key employment area.

6. **Phoenix House:** Developing a key destination in town.

These diverse development projects will enrich the town centre's offerings for residents and visitors, introducing new dynamics in activity, amenities and footfall. The streetscape and public spaces are essential to shape the overall experience and a thoughtful design can synergise these elements and effectively support the delivery of the vision.

The study area boundary includes the pedestrianised streets, such as Sherrard Street and Burton Street. It serves as a framework for acquiring baseline information to inform the design guidance. However, the final application of this guidance will extend beyond this area to cover the entire town centre.

Image of the city
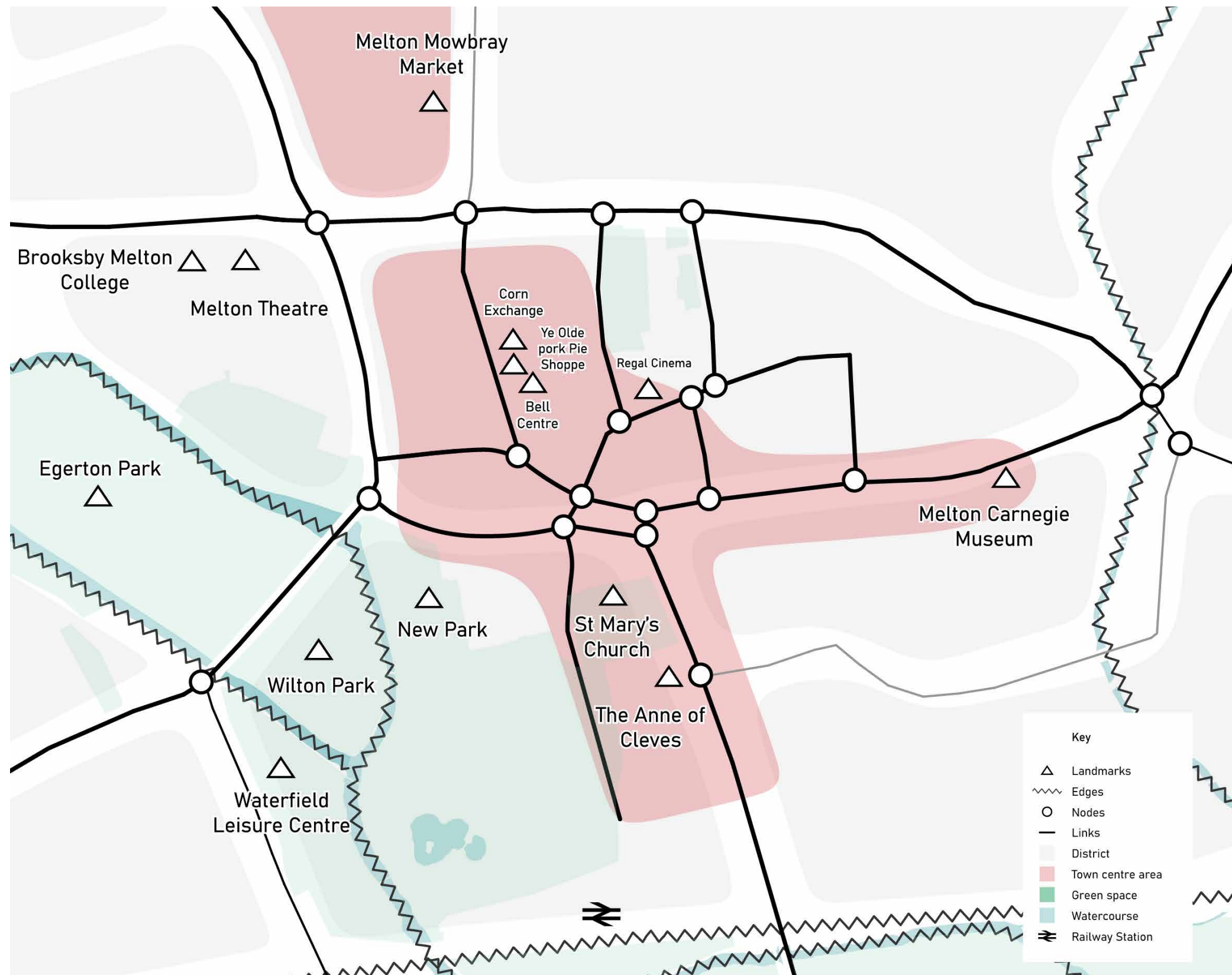
The Lynchian analysis, based on Kevin Lynch's urban concepts and his book The Image of the City, focuses on understanding urban morphology, key destinations, and movement patterns in an area. This method emphasises how people perceive, navigate, and interact with the built environment.

Paths - Paths are key movement corridors that shape how people navigate the town centre. Streets such as Nottingham Street, Market Place, King Street, Leicester Street, Sherrard Street, High Street, and Burton Street act as primary paths, aligning with major destinations, such as retail areas and landmarks

Edges - Edges are generally identified as severance features that contain an area. They influence how people move through, locate, and experience areas. The edges in the town centre are minimal, with the River Eye and railway line acting as key southern edges

Districts - The town centre is the core district, surrounded by residential and industrial areas. Further integration between these districts could strengthen the connection to the town centre and reinforce the primary core of the town centre. Strategic gateway points can visually and functionally connect these districts to the town centre, creating a more cohesive and interconnected urban environment.

Nodes - Nodes represent key junctures or decision points within an area. The key nodes have been identified at the main junctions around the study area and also at natural meeting points of pedestrian desire lines.

Landmarks - Landmarks are key destinations that enhance legibility and orientation in town. It identifies multiple significant features, including the museum, local parks, amenities, and heritage buildings, all contributing to footfall and the town's overall identity.

Heritage
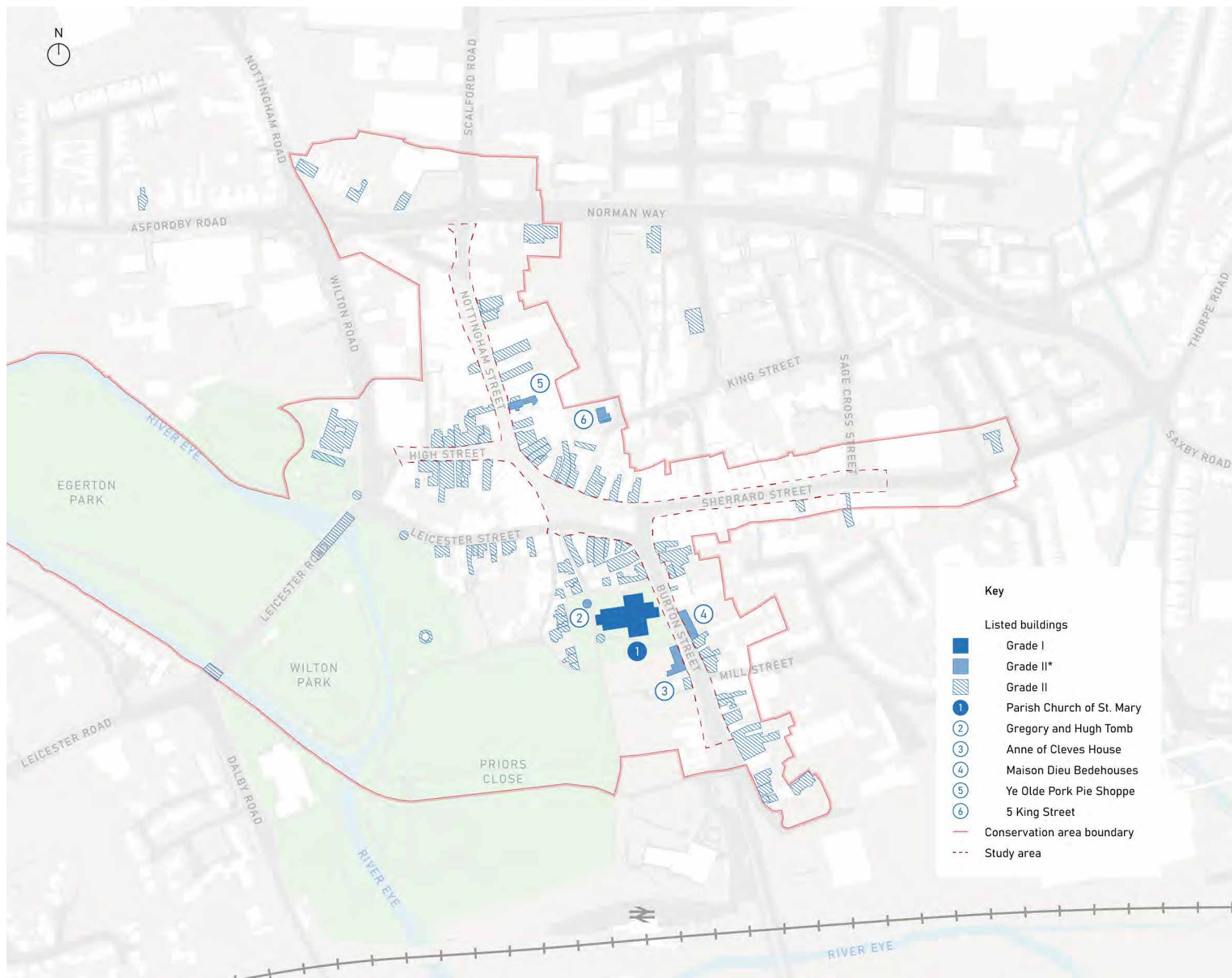
Melton Mowbray has a unique heritage as a rural market town, with its historic core recognised as a key asset. Designated as a conservation area in 1975, the boundary was later extended in 1986 to include Sherrard Street and Egerton Park, encompassing a total of 97 listed buildings.

Historic England categorises all listed buildings in three different grades, which relate to their interest and importance:

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest

- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest

- Grade II buildings are of special interest

St Mary's Parish Church (1.), dating from 1170 and described as the stateliest and most impressive of all churches in Leicestershire, is the only grade I listed project in the town centre. Five other buildings are listed with a grade II*, namely:

- 2. Gregory and Hugh Tomb

- 3. Anne of Cleves House

- 4. Maison Dieu Bedehouses

- 5. Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe

- 6. 5 King Street

Key

Listed buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- (1) Parish Church of St. Mary
- (2) Gregory and Hugh Tomb
- (3) Anne of Cleves House
- (4) Maison Dieu Bedehouses
- (5) Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe
- (6) 5 King Street
- Conservation area boundary
- Study area

Local character

Gastronomy

Melton Mowbray's gastronomical offer forms an essential part of its identity. With international recognition as the home of pork pies and Stilton cheese, it has earned an enviable reputation as "the Rural Capital of Food". A great testament of this is the Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe, a key destination in the town centre that has been recently renovated. The town centre livestock market is a unique feature, reinforcing its rural food heritage.

Pubs

Inns and public houses play an essential role in Melton Mowbray's public life, history and character. A great example of this is The Anne of Cleves pub on Burton Street. Originally built as a dwelling for priests in 1383, the building belonged to Thomas Cromwell, before he fell out of favour with King Henry VIII. In 1540, Henry VIII gifted the pub to Anne of Cleves as part of their divorce settlement.

Fox hunting

The town was formerly known as the 'Capital of Hunting' for its aristocratic links to fox hunting in the late eighteenth century. Numerous lodges and hotels with their associated stables, yards and utility buildings were built in the town centre as a result of this practice. Furthermore, Melton Mowbray became the centre for hunting attire using Melton Cloth, hard wearing dense wool weave with excellent waterproof qualities.

Paint the town red

A notorious accident related to the town's built environment is when in 1837, the Marquis of Waterford and his entourage got inebriated and painted a number of the town's prominent buildings red, hence the term 'Paint the town red' as an analogy for unruly behaviour.

Etymology

There are currently two theories about the origin of the town's name. "Melton" may have originated from either "Milltown" - due to the presence of two watermills in the area, , or from "Middleton" – Melton being central to several hamlets. The Mowbray suffix is taken from Roger de Moubray who held the Manor c.1185.
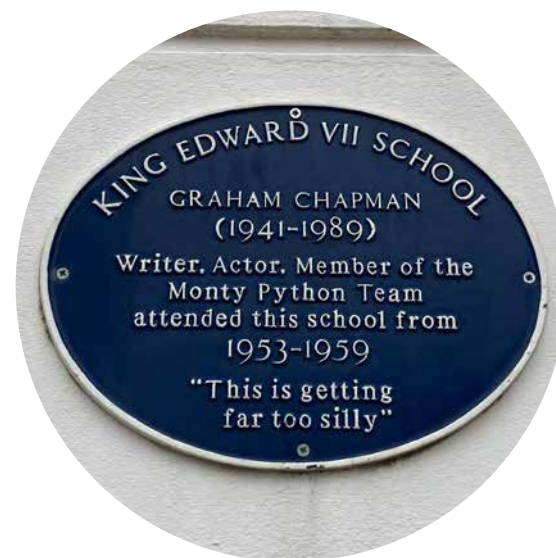
Architectural character

The town's character and architecture is significantly influenced by the successive layers of history. The study area is composed of a diverse array of buildings in different styles, materials, and ages, all contributing to the character and image of Melton Mowbray.

The majority of town centre architecture is Georgian or early Victorian. The entire shopping area falls within the conservation area and several of the buildings fronting the streets are listed, some dating back to the seventeenth century. The majority of these structures are two to three stories high, featuring simple gabled forms set on narrow plots. This arrangement creates continuous frontages that enforce a strong sense of enclosure. The narrow widths of individual buildings together with "Georgian" style windows give a strong vertical emphasis.
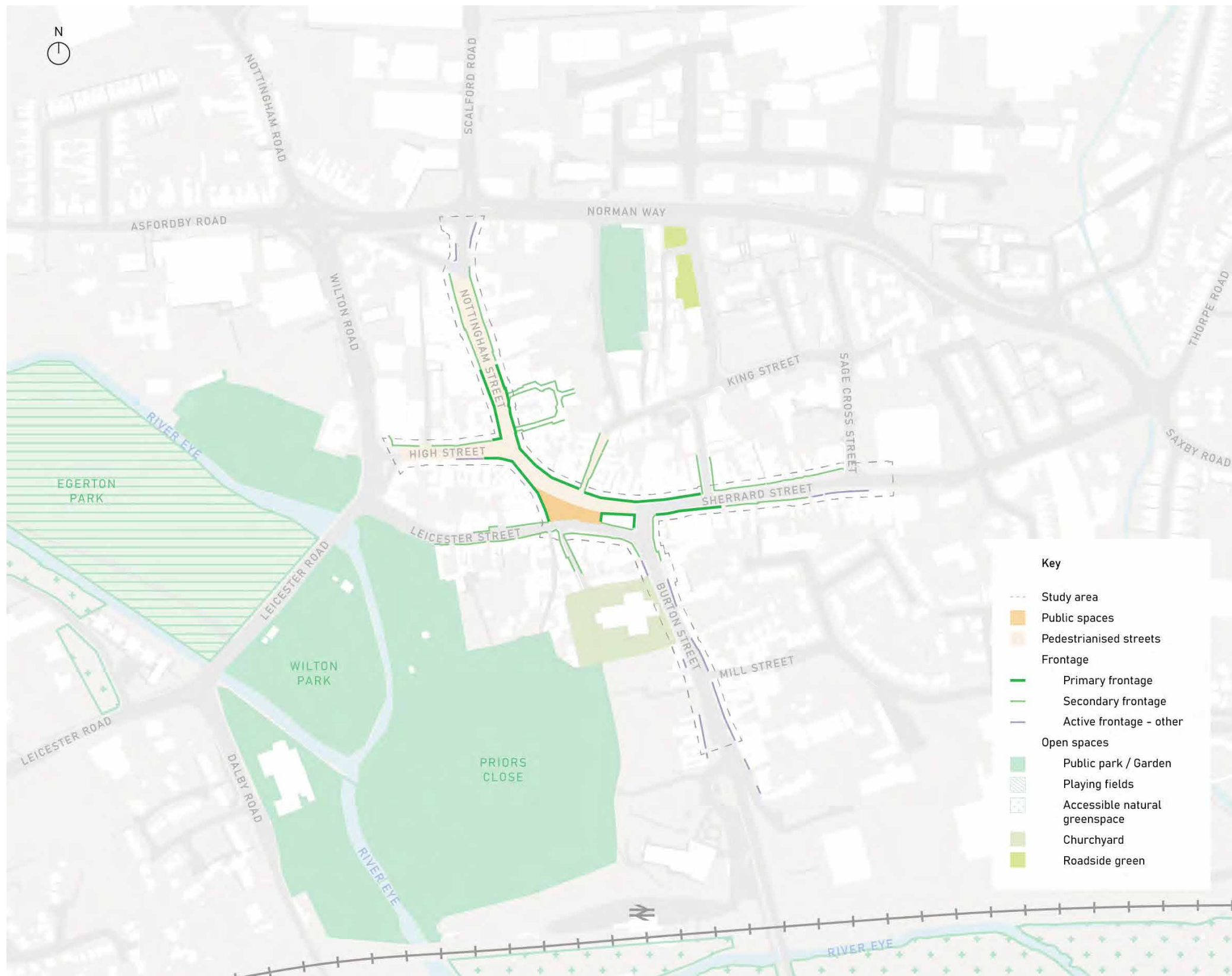
Since the nineteenth century shop fronts have been added to these buildings in various styles, many incorporating appropriate traditional details which contribute in a unique way to the character of the town centre.

The Georgian, Victorian and later post-industrial developments within the town are essentially built of red brick buildings with Welsh slate or rosemary tiled roofs. In a few cases yellow brick can be found as can clay tiles. Surviving medieval buildings are of local yellow stone. As the majority of town centre buildings have been designed for high quality retail and commercial uses the typical form of fenestration is variations of the vertical sliding sash; there is occasional use of Yorkshire sliding sash and early casement forms.

Public realm and open spaces

Key

- - - - Study area
- Public spaces
- Pedestrianised streets

Frontage
- Primary frontage
- Secondary frontage
- Active frontage – other

Open spaces
- Public park / Garden
- Playing fields
- Accessible natural greenspace
- Churchyard
- Roadside green

Melton Mowbray features a wide variety of public and open spaces that are at the heart of the town's public life. The public space comprises all accessible spaces between buildings including Highway , Council and Estate owned land.

The town centre includes pedestrianised zones, plazas, and civic spaces, which act as major social and gathering spots. arket Place, in the town centre, is the main focal point, complemented by the pedestrianised Nottingham Street, High Street, and western part of King Street which provide additional public spaces. The core of the town centre, lined with extensive shopfronts, benefits from these public spaces by creating an inviting environment for interaction, relaxation, and enjoying the town.

The local plan distinguishes between primary and secondary shopfronts to help manage development and maintain the town as the borough's retail hub. Sherrard Street and Burton Street, outside the pedestrian priority zone, extend the retail core and maintain continuity to the main shopping areas.

Priory Close, New Park, Wilton Park, and St Mary's Churchyard are key green spaces within the town centre. Their proximity to the core area of the town centre strengthens the connection between the town's social and commercial activities, and its leisure spaces. They provide access to open space and nature, serving as key destinations that generate more footfall.

Beyond the core town centre, there is an open space on St Mary's Way, along with several pocket parks scattered across its surrounding areas. They further enrich the town's public realm and are integral to the town's character and functionality.

Public Realm

Market Square

The square serves as the central public space for Melton Mowbray. It forms a flexible space that hosts part of the market, with multiple market stalls located on the square on market days, as well as other events. The space is surrounded by shops, cafes and outdoor dining areas. Key features include an open area for flexible use and the Corn Cross statue. A seating area with benches around a tree and decorative planters provides a place to rest, gather, and socialise.

Market Place, High Street, and Nottingham Street

Market Place, High Street, and Nottingham Street collectively form the majority of the pedestrian priority zone in Melton Mowbray. The streets are lined with two-to-three-story historic buildings, primarily featuring retail shopfronts at ground level. These streets generate significant footfall, contributing to the overall vibrancy of the town centre. Alongside Market Place, serves as the town's primary public and social space. These streets provides pedestrian links between key destinations such as Stockyard in the north and the railway station and St. Mary's Church in the south.

Footways are paved with high-quality Yorkstone, while the centre has block paving with pattern and colour detailing, though cracking and other maintenance issues have been observed. The street furniture maintains a heritage aesthetic, though some pieces diverge from this style. Furniture zones are generally well-aligned behind flush kerbs, but street clutter at particular locations can obstruct pedestrian flows. Greening is present through a series of temporary planters across the area, which could benefit from a more consistent and permanent arrangement.

Public Realm

King Street

The western part of King Street, narrower and more enclosed, retains a cohesive town character with its two-to-three-story historic buildings and traditional shopfronts. It connects the town centre to key points such as St. Mary's Way car park, Regal Cinema, and several bus stops. The street's entrance from Market Place is marked by a decorative metal archway and a metal art piece along the building frontage. Block paving with intricate patterns and colours extends along the street. Footways incorporate outdoor seating, advertising boards, and other street furniture.

Nottingham Street/ High Street Public Space

The intersection of Nottingham Street and High Street forms a key movement node and gathering spot within the pedestrian priority zone. However, the space lacks clear coordination and is cluttered with street furniture.The absence of resting areas suggests an opportunity for improvement. This public space could become more inviting, encouraging visitors and residents to engage with it and its surroundings, fostering social interaction.

Alleyways

Alleyways provide alternative routes between main streets within town centre. The two notable ones include Wilton Terrace, a quiet passage with residential housing lining its side, linking to Park Road, and a more significant passage to St Mary's Way car park, which serves as an arrival point for visitors and sets their first impression of the town. The latter features block paving aligned with the pedestrian priority zone and a seating area at its intersection with Nottingham Street, offering a resting spot and wayfinding information.

Public Realm

Seating Areas

Scattered throughout the town centre, seating zones are strategically located at key gateways to the pedestrian priority zone, such as the Market Place, High Street, Nottingham Street, and St Mary's Way car park.

- Market Place Gateway: This area features a mismatch of benches, bins, wayfinding poles, bollards, an information display panel and advertising boards. This accumulation of elements clutters the space, missing the opportunity to provide a coordinated welcoming point with a defined aesthetic.

- St Mary's Way Car Park Gateway: While equipped with benches and lamp posts, the furniture arrangement lacks coherence, in particular due to a circular brown bench that doesn't align with the overall street furniture aesthetic.

- Nottingham Street Gateway: As per the Market Place gateway, this space does not establish a clear gateway space due to the poor coordination between the existing features, planters, bollards, bins, and benches.

- High Street Gateway: This public space creates a welcoming atmosphere, with a series of benches situated between a line of six trees, complemented by bollards and a wayfinding pole.

Public Realm

Sherrard Street

Lined with two- to three-story historic buildings with ground-floor retail shopfronts, Sherrard Street connects the town centre and the eastern part of Melton Mowbray. Paved with high-quality Yorkstone and equipped with street furniture in line with the town centre's aesthetic, there is yet a lack of trees and shrub planting along the street. Furthermore, existing furniture clutters the street at some locations, with a series of bollards, lighting poles, advertising boards, and outdoor seating, leading to narrow effective footway widths.

Burton Street

Burton Street serves as a crucial connector from the town centre to the southern edge, leading to the railway station. It features lines of historic two- to three-story buildings with ground-floor retail shopfronts and multiple local landmarks, including St. Mary's Church and the Anne of Cleves pub. However, the street lacks vibrancy, with an absence of spaces to socialise and a primary focus on vehicular movement. This is reinforced by a functional public realm dominated by concrete paving.

Leicester Street and Church Street

Leicester Street, a narrow thoroughfare at the southern edge of the core town centre and market square, connects Burton Street to the east. Lined with historic buildings, and ground-floor retail shopfronts, its current street design prioritises vehicular traffic with a wide two-lane carriageway and narrow footways. The street is also connected to Church Lane, a pedestrianised alleyway with historic buildings and a ground-floor retail shopfront. It offers a more direct route connecting the town centre and St. Mary's Church and railway Station.
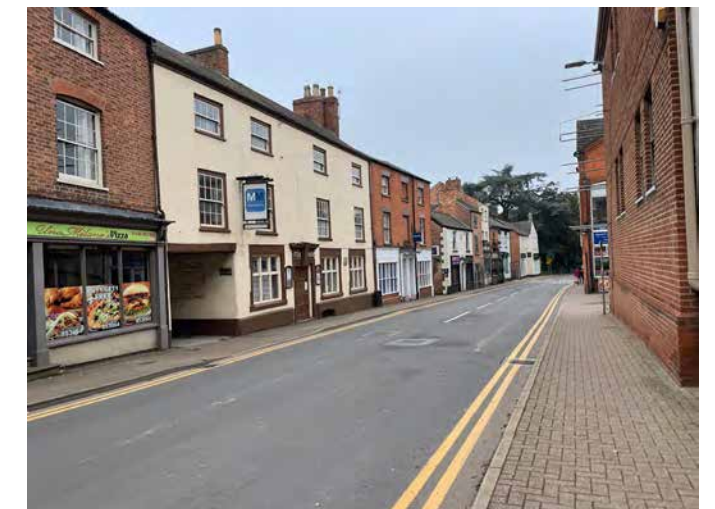
Connectivity and gateways

The town centre vision has identified a vital pedestrian network connecting surrounding areas to the town centre. Building on this foundation, the analysis highlights three types of gateways:

- **Strategic Gateways:** These access points align with key pedestrian routes to the town centre. Located at major junctions, they enhance connectivity between different areas and encourage movement into the town centre.

- **Town Centre Gateways:** These entry points into the core town centre emphasise the pedestrian experience and movement. They are designed to draw attention to retail shopfronts and create a visual connection to the character and atmosphere of the town centre.

- **Arrival Points:** Arrival Points refer to key transport hubs, such as railway stations, bus stations, and car parks, facilitating seamless transitions from other transport modes into walking access to the town centre. These points serve as vital connections for both residents and visitors, allowing easy access to the town's amenities and services.

The analysis highlights the critical connections to the town centre and the importance of the pedestrian experience. It emphasises that the first impression of the town centre significantly influences how visitors perceive and navigate the area. The enhancement of the gateway could create a welcoming environment that significantly contributes to the town's identity and vibrancy.

Key

- - - Study area
- - - Town centre boundary
◯ Gateways – Strategic
ⓝ Gateways – Town centre
△ Arrival points
↔ Key pedestrian routes

Connectivity and gateways

Strategic Gateways
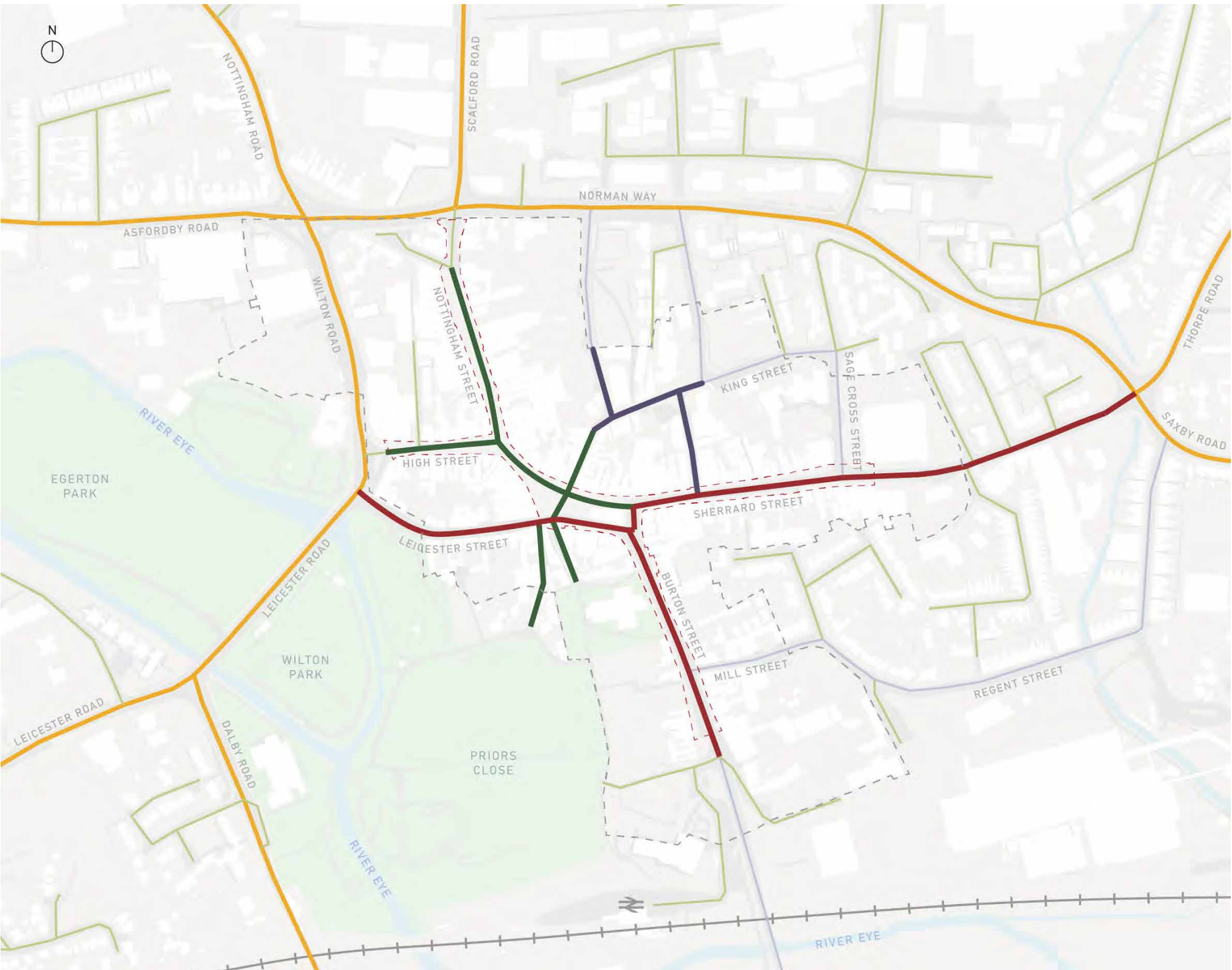

Town Centre Gateways
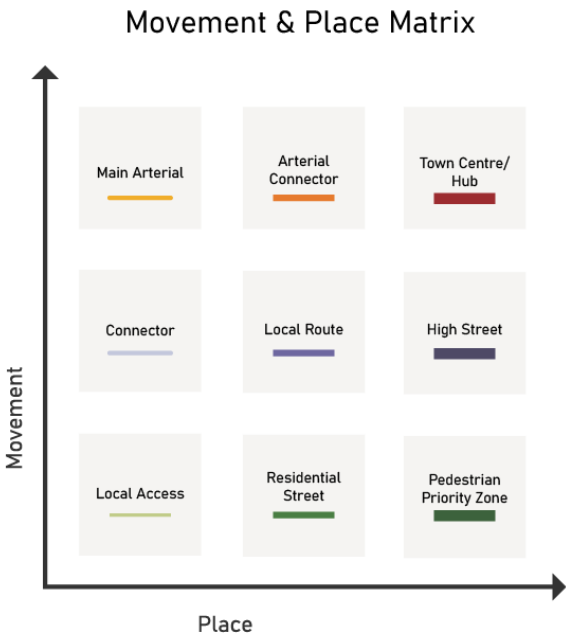

Arrival Points
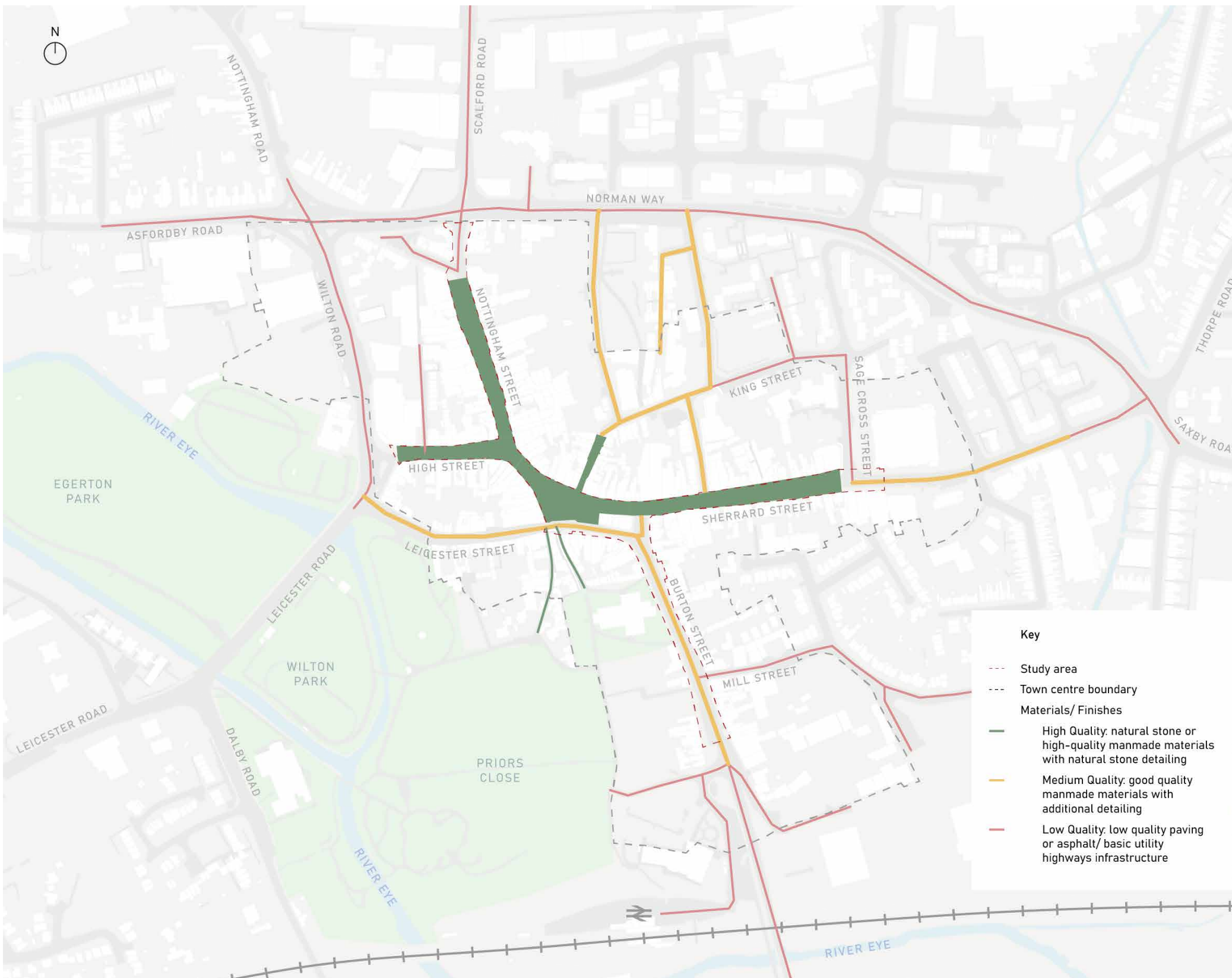
Movement & Place

The Street Typology analysis characterises all streets in the study area using a 'Street Type Matrix.' These typologies categorise streets based on a combination of their 'Place' and 'Movement' functions. The matrix helps to understand the dual role of streets and identify opportunities for redefining and promoting their place function by improving the streetscape.

The plan suggests a clear hierarchy of street types in the town centre, ranging from "Town Centre/Hub" to local access streets. Streets within the core town centre are designed with a high place function, indicating that they are not only movement corridors for both pedestrians and vehicles but also important public spaces. The core town centre areas serve as pedestrian-priority zones where social interactions and activities are encouraged, acting as major community gathering spots within the town centre. On the edges of the town centre, streets such as Norman Way of Leicester Road shift towards movement functions, focusing on vehicle access and transportation routes.

Movement & Place Matrix

Main Arterial	Arterial Connector	Town Centre/ Hub
Connector	Local Route	High Street
Local Access	Residential Street	Pedestrian Priority Zone

Movement (vertical axis) / Place (horizontal axis)

Quality of Public Realm

The concept of streets as public spaces underscores their role beyond mere transportation corridors; they are essential to community life, providing backdrops for social activities. Various factors influence the public realm's quality, and this analysis focuses on pavement materials and finishes to gain insights into design quality—serving as a foundational layer of information.

In the town centre, high-quality paving, such as Yorkstone and brick paving with additional detailing in patterns, enhances the aesthetic appeal and contributes significantly to the historic atmosphere. However, minor maintenance issues, like uneven surfaces or worn edges, need attention to preserve their integrity.

Further from the core, while paving materials remain good quality, some areas show signs of wear, such as cracking and unevenness, which can detract from the overall visual appeal. Asphalt is commonly used in other town centre areas, providing a functional and durable surface but often failing to harmonise with the historic streetscape, leading to a visual disconnect that impacts the town's character.

Key

- - - Study area
- - - Town centre boundary

Materials/ Finishes

— High Quality: natural stone or high-quality manmade materials with natural stone detailing

— Medium Quality: good quality manmade materials with additional detailing

— Low Quality: low quality paving or asphalt/ basic utility highways infrastructure

Street Furniture

To gain a clear understanding of the variety and design consistency of street furniture in the town centre, this review looked into the range of items such as litter bins, bollards, planters, benches, and other fixtures, with attention to their materials, finishes, colour schemes, style, and alignment with the town's historic aesthetic.

The objective is not to create a comprehensive catalogue of all the street furniture in town but to gain valuable insights through the study. This analysis seeks to summarise the commonalities and variations observed among the existing street furniture,

Bollards

Bollards are designed in a cast iron heritage style to complement the historic setting of the town. They are typically found in areas that separate pedestrian streets from roads with traffic. Finished in royal blue, they feature a decorative gold ring banding and a rounded top, with minor variations in detailing among different bollards.

Street Lighting

There are several types and design styles of street lighting, each complementing the surrounding architecture while contributing to the overall atmosphere of the streetscape. Functionally, they provide safety and visibility during nighttime hours.

Lamp Posts

Typically found in the core town centre area, these lamp posts embody heritage and vintage designs to enhance the aesthetics of the historic urban landscape.

- Victorian Heritage Style: Designed in a Victorian heritage style, these lamp posts are usually made from cast iron and feature lantern ornaments with decorative corners. They showcase ornate detailing, including scrollwork and motifs, often painted in royal blue with gold accents.

- Industrial Vintage Style: Industrial vintage lamp posts exhibit a classic, utilitarian aesthetic. They feature tall, straight posts with decorative elements and cylindrical poles that may curve or flare at the top where the light fixture is mounted. These street lights are generally taller than traditional fixtures, providing a more substantial presence on the street. Their height helps illuminate larger areas, making them both functional and decorative. They share a cohesive colour combination of royal blue with gold accents, reinforcing the town's aesthetic continuity.

Wall-Mounted Lighting

Similar to the Victorian-style heritage lamp posts, these lanterns are mounted on walls and feature decorative corners, blending seamlessly into the traditional aesthetic of the area. They are typically finished in black.

Highway Lighting

Characterised by a simplistic, utilitarian design, highway lights are finished in light grey paint. They are strategically placed at the edges of the town centre to efficiently light the carriageway.

Street Furniture

Planters

The town features a variety of planters that enhance the streetscape, categorised into three main types.

- Hanging planters are mounted on railings, bringing greenery to eye level

- Lamp-post baskets provide elevated floral displays

- Floor-standing planters of various sizes and shapes, typically in black or green, are scattered around the town centre, with some designed as tiered planters, and planters with benches

Benches

The majority of the benches in the area feature a heritage style, characterised by cast iron ends and a central support, with dark or pale brown timber as seating and equipped with a backrest. The armrest, finished in shades of gold, blue, or green, features a lionhead detail as a decorative element.There is also a backless bench of a similar style, designed with royal blue cast iron supports and dark brown timber.

There are several exceptions, including modular seating in a circular shape that allows pedestrians to face away from the back. The benches are finished in brown paint.

Street Furniture

Litter Bins

The litter bins are typically square or hexagon with four side or two side openings and styled with contrasting lettering. Multiple bins in the town centre are made of cast iron, and feature a traditional design that complements the historic townscape, with textured royal blue finishes, gold banding, and a pyramid top. However, there are a few modern variations. Some designs feature a smooth, matte finish with a contemporary font style, while others feature a smooth satin finish with a royal blue body and light grey lettering, without the gold banding. Both designs present a more modern style.

Differing from the litter bin, he recycling bin observed in town is made of plastic, featuring a modern, functional design and a black finish.

Other Fixtures

There are various other fixtures that serve other practice purpose and contribute to the functionality of the street.

- Letter Box: A classic red pillar-box-style design that adds a traditional touch to the streetscape.

- Historic crosses: Modern reinterpretation of historic monuments, including the Corn Cross. They serve as landmarks, contributing to the area's heritage.

- Telephone Box: Redundant street furniture featuring simple utilitarian design. There is a potential to transform their use or to remove these to reduce street clutter.

- CCTV Pole: Painted in royal blue, blending with other heritage-style furniture

- Highway Signage: Typically grey, providing functional guidance

- Utility Box: Finished in dark green

- Bus shelter: Finished in light blue

Street Furniture

Temporary Street furniture

Temporary street furniture, typically supplied by shops, includes a variety of advertising boards, including A-frame boards, wooden chalkboards, and swing signs that promote businesses along the footway. Moreover, several restaurants and cafés within the town centre provide outdoor dining areas with tables and chairs, each featuring diverse styles. These setups are portable and can be cleared away when the establishments close, allowing for flexibility in public space use and enhancing the vibrant atmosphere of the area. Some shops enhance their shopfronts by placing planters and displays of merchandise in front of their premises.

Overall Branding & Style

The overall branding of the street furniture in Melton Mowbray emphasises a cohesive aesthetic that reflects the town's heritage and character. Efforts have been made to integrate heritage-style designs, from Victorian to industrial vintage, to enhance the historic streetscape and maintain the town centre's atmosphere.

However, newer additions occasionally deviate from the heritage theme, incorporating modern elements in design, detailing, colours, and fonts. Newer initiatives, such as planters, aim to enhance the environment but display styles that sometimes vary from the established aesthetic.

Colour Palette

The street furniture audit demonstrates a predominant colour scheme in the town, featuring royal blue as the main colour and gold as an accent. This creates a consistent visual identity.

However, a closer look reveals slight variations in the royal blue shade across different pieces of street furniture, which may also differ depending on the finish. Black and gold is another popular colour combination used throughout the area. Green is occasionally seen on street furniture that belongs to the Town Estate, as this colour is used to differentiate ownership. Other colours also appear sporadically among the various street furnishings.
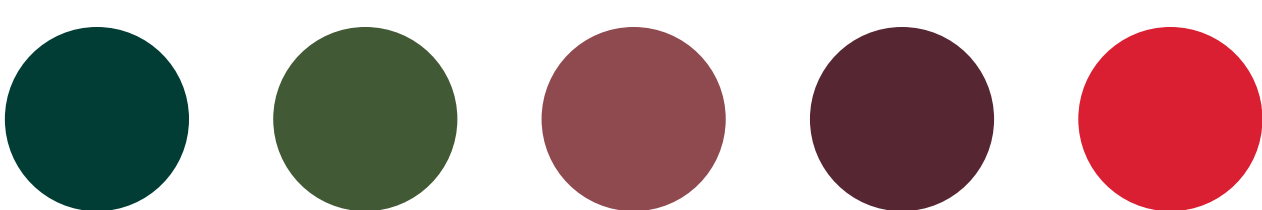
Royal Blue & Gold Combination
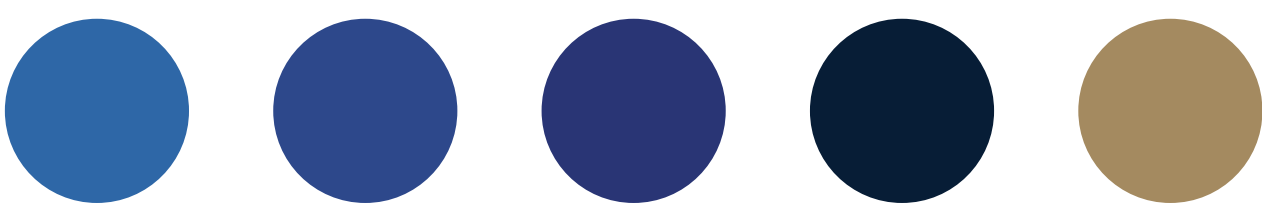
Other Predominant Colours

Other colours

Wayfinding

Wayfinding is a crucial aspect of urban design, and its shapes, forms, and purposes have evolved alongside new landscapes and spaces over time. The complexity of the urban environment necessitates the use of visual cues to assist visitors in navigating the area independently. These cues often include maps, signage, symbols, and colours, all designed to guide users through a more pleasant, safe, and immersive experience.

This guide presents an opportunity to rationalise the existing wayfinding approach in order to provide an enhanced wayfinding experience for locals and visitors alike. This strategy will also contribute to unify and declutter the town centre's public realm.

Directional Signage

In the town centre, directional signage plays a vital role in helping people reach their destinations. These signs guide pedestrians from their current locations to their desired destination. They are strategically placed at junctions, major decision points and gateways into the town centre including, High Street, Market Place, and Nottingham Street.

The existing wayfinding signage in Melton prominently features finger posts, a traditional navigational choice comprising ground-planted posts with multiple "fingers" indicating directions to various destinations.

- Style: The finger posts embody a traditional or heritage style, aligning with Melton's historical context and architectural character.

- Colour: These panels utilise a royal blue and gold colour combination, with royal blue as the dominant hue.

- Materials: Constructed from stainless steel and aluminium, these signs are designed for durability and resistance to weathering.

In addition to these fixed signs, there are wall-mounted signs and flag on lamp column, providing directional information to locations such as the market place and the stockyard. These portable signs offer flexibility for temporary wayfinding needs. , which is located north of the core town centre. These portable signs offer flexibility for temporary wayfinding. needs.

Identification

Identification signage marks specific places or areas and provides general information about the overall surroundings, helping visitors navigate more effectively. Informational signage is best placed in areas with high visibility and exposure.

These signs are commonly found in the town centre, displaying general information such as street names and place names. They are often wall-mounted or post-mounted, featuring traditional posts. Designed in black with a white background and black font, they reflect a classic design that contributes to the town's heritage atmosphere.

Additionally, identification banners in vintage red, featuring an 'M' and a crown, are found on lamp posts and other street furniture. These banners support the Royal Heritage Trail, guiding visitors to significant royal-associated sites.

Wayfinding

Informational Signage

Another type of wayfinding is informational signage, which typically consists of informational boards that provide details about the history and significance of the area where visitors are standing. While these signs are informative, they offer less assistance in navigation.

In Melton, these signs are part of the Melton Heritage Trail, highlighting the history of significant heritage buildings and their importance to the town. There are a total of seven display panels along the heritage trail route, primarily located in the town centre, especially in pedestrianised areas and conservation areas featuring numerous listed buildings. Additionally, general information signs are scattered throughout the town.

These interpretation panels are often lectern-mounted or post-mounted, designed in black aluminium to reflect a heritage aesthetic.

However, the interpretation panels within the Melton Mowbray Town Estate managed area, mostly parks and recreational areas are specifically designed in green to harmonise with the surrounding environment.

Heritage Trail

Melton Mowbray's rich history is showcased through two heritage trails that offer visitors self-guided tours of the town's significant sites through informational plaques, panels and identification banners.

The Heritage Trail highlights key historic landmarks and buildings, including Melton's medieval origins and its evolution as a market town. Plaques and information panels along the route provide details about the significance of these sites, often focusing on their architectural heritage and their role in the town's past.

The Royal Heritage Trail builds upon this by emphasising Melton Mowbray's royal connections, especially its historical ties to hunting and royalty. This trail features identification banners in vintage red, adorned with an 'M' and a crown, on lamp posts and other street furniture, indicating royal-associated sites throughout the town.

Both trails enhance the town's cultural identity and engage visitors with its historical environment. They are also supported by the town's wayfinding system, which provides clear directional signage, informational panels, and identification markers to help visitors navigate between landmarks with ease.

Surface Materials

Footway / Public space

Yorkstone flags used in the Town Centre footway

Contrast between buff surface and Yorkstone setts

Coloured asphalt as the material used on Market Place

Carriageway

Brown concrete blocks for the carriageway areas

Red and dark concrete blocks in the pedestrianised core

Edges and blockwork details in the Town Centre

Local vernacular

Yellow ironstone as part of local building

Brick

Historic stone setts

The streetscape in the town centre presents a wide variety of paving materials and finishes. These materials contribute significantly to the character of the town centre, defining the different spaces and highlighting the features and characteristics of Melton Mowbray.

Primary Palette

The urban spaces across the pedestrianised core are paved with a combination of Yorkstone flags and setts for the footway areas, and red and brown concrete blocks for the carriageway spaces. Both types of materials have been selected to strengthen the historic character of the town centre, as well as the pedestrian priority. Yorkstone paving is a high-quality material in line with the prime location of the town centre, while the concrete blocks are compatible with vehicle use and overrun. The square on Market Place has been covered with a beige buff surface that unifies the space, creating a flexible 'piazza'.

The incorporation of local stone as a building material also plays a key role in creating a unique environment in Melton Mowbray. A great example of this is the use of local yellow ironstone as the main material used in multiple buildings across the study area.

Secondary Palette

Other streets in the town centre e.g. Burton Street have been designed with a more conventional approach to paving materials, incorporating concrete modular paving on the footways and asphalt for the carriageway.

Shopfront Design

Shopfront Design Across Time

In the town centre, the rich heritage has earned the area conservation status. Shopfront styles span a range of historical periods, each bringing unique characteristics shaped by the aesthetics and practical needs of their time. Each of these styles contributes to the rich architectural character of the town centre, with elements from different periods coexisting to reflect a history of evolving design.

- Several historic shopfronts showcase medieval façades, characterised by distinctive features such as columns typical of 14th-century architecture, sturdy rubble stone or masonry, small panes of glass set in lead frames, and raised plinths or steps.

- Georgian shopfronts, originating in the late 18th to early 19th centuries, are marked by a balanced, classical style emphasising symmetry. Fascias typically span the full width of the shop, providing a unified look across the storefront. Windows were initially divided into smaller panes, but larger glass windows became popular with the advent of cast iron piers that allowed for greater structural support. Common Georgian features include classical detailing, such as pilasters with capitals beneath the fascia, taller stall risers, doors are frequently topped with fanlights, semi-circular or arched windows that add light and ventilation.

- Victorian shopfronts built on Georgian elements with added ornamentation and detail. Key elements included larger plate glass allowed expansive displays, framed by ornate console brackets, dentilled cornices, and patterned glass transoms. Fascias were framed with stepped cornices, often angled outward for visibility. Recessed entrances provided extra depth and display space, enhancing the shopfront's allure for passersby.

- Edwardian shopfronts, while still influenced by classical design principles, reflect a shift towards a lighter, more restrained style. They reduce the amount and complexity of ornamentation, instead opting for smaller, subtle designs.

- The Modernist period marks a departure from traditional styles, favouring sleek and minimalist designs that emphasize functionality. Influenced by Art Deco, Modernist shopfronts adopt simple, geometric forms and avoid excessive ornamentation, creating an efficient, streamlined look. Industrial materials like steel, aluminium, and glass are commonly used, reflecting the industrial aesthetic of the time.

Historic Shopfront with medieval facade

Georgian Shopfront

Victorian Shopfront

Modern shopfront

Modern shopfront

Shopfront Design

Existing Conditions of the Shopfronts

The Melton Mowbray conservation area's "at risk" status highlights concerns about poorly designed or maintained shopfronts and signage, which harm its traditional streetscape and historical value. A closer look shows a mix of good practices and areas for improvement that, if addressed, could help safeguard the conservation area's status.

Best Practice

- **Maintenance of Original Features:** Shopfront elements such as cornices, pilasters, window frames, and other details are safeguarded and carefully emphasised. This preserves the building's architectural heritage, adding character and visual value to the town centre.

- **Proportional Alignment:** Shopfronts respect original design proportions and layouts, aligning new features with the existing structure, which create a balanced, visually pleasing elevation.

- **Use of Appropriate Materials and Colours:** Materials and colours in line with the building's original palette contributes to the historic architecture, enhancing the town centre's appeal.

- **Subtle Contemporary Design:** Contemporary shopfront designs use subtle elements like muted colours and matte finishes, supporting historical character without overwhelming it, creating a modern feel that complements heritage appeal.

- **Well-Designed Signage:** The colour palettes, logos, and fonts of some town centre shopfronts respect the historic character while introducing contemporary styles, adding personality and continuity to the landscape.

Shopfront Design

Areas for Improvement

- **Inappropriate Materials and Colours:** Plastic, vinyl, or aluminium in bold, clashing colours create visually overwhelming shopfronts that clash with the neighbouring frontage and historic streetscape.

- **Overuse of brand colours:** Brand colours sometimes dominate the building's façade, detracting from the building's architectural features and overall streetscape cohesion.

- **Poor Maintenance of Traditional Features:** Neglect and inconsistent repairs give the shopfront(including upper levels) a worn appearance, with cracked paint, damaged cornices, or mismatched repair materials undermining its historic charm.

- **Low quality materials and Finishes:** Materials and finishes that are low-quality degrade quickly, leading to frequent, unsightly repairs that diminish the shopfront's appeal.

- **Overlooking historic features:** Additions that obscure or ignore original architectural details such as consoles, cornices, and capitals compromise the building's historical character, especially with low-quality materials like plastic banners.

- **Inappropriate new additions**: Panels or cladding that hide the original framework diminish the shopfront's authentic appeal.

- **Ignoring Original Proportions and Design Elements:** Misalignment with existing proportions creates an unbalanced look, disrupting the flow and harmony of the shopfront's original layout.

- **Out-of-place signage design:** Inappropriate signage, including materials, size, fonts, and artwork, can clash with traditional architecture, disconnecting the shopfront from its heritage.