



# SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2020- 2036



SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS  
TOWN COUNCIL

South Woodham Ferrers

## **DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

2020 -2036



**Address:** Champions Manor Hall, Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex, CM3 5LJ

**Website:** [www.southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk](http://www.southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01245 429444





# Contents

**Foreword.....iii**

**1. Introduction ..... 1**

**2. South Woodham Ferrers ‘today’ ..... 3**

**3. South Woodham Ferrers ‘tomorrow’ ..... 11**

**4. The Town Centre ..... 15**

**5. Movement and access .....25**

**6. Green space & natural environment .....33**

**7. Northern growth area .....37**

**8. Design and character .....45**

**9. Community Infrastructure Levy .....51**

**10. What Happens Next? .....53**

**Notes**

- (1) This document is set up in A3 for double-sided printing.
- (2) The typeface and colour palette used in this Neighbourhood Plan reflects the original masterplan documents for South Woodham Ferrers.





# Foreword

*Dear Residents,*

Text to be drafted by SWFTC

Name

Position



# 1. Introduction

## A new plan for South Woodham Ferrers

- 1.1 This is the draft Neighbourhood Plan for South Woodham Ferrers. It covers the entire Town Council area, as illustrated in Figure 1. It sets out the local community's aspirations for South Woodham Ferrers over the period to 2036<sup>1</sup> and establishes policies in relation to land use and development. These are policies that will influence future planning applications and decisions in the area. But the Neighbourhood Plan is much more than this. It represents the community's manifesto for South Woodham Ferrers, bringing together more than just traditional planning matters.
- 1.2 The purpose of neighbourhood planning is to give local people and businesses a much greater say in how the places they live and work should change and develop over time. South Woodham Ferrers is about to enter a period of growth and development. The new Chelmsford City Council Local Plan allocates land to the north of the town for development of 1,000 new homes. Through the Neighbourhood Plan, policies and projects can be identified that influence the form and shape of this new development, how it relates to the existing town, and the nature of any facilities and infrastructure that should be provided.
- 1.3 Applicants for growth and development in South Woodham Ferrers are required to fund new infrastructure through payment of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). As and when the Neighbourhood Plan is formally 'made' as a planning policy document, 25% of all monies payable under CIL will be passed to the Town Council to spend on locally identified projects. The Neighbourhood Plan is thus a very powerful document for identifying those projects that can help deliver positive change and improvement at the local level.
- 1.4 South Woodham Ferrers was formally designated as an area for neighbourhood planning purposes in October 2015<sup>2</sup>. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has surveyed, spoken to and listened to members of the community, and has used the issues, and opportunities, raised during that process to help inform production of the policies and projects now presented in this draft Neighbourhood Plan.

## Please let us know what you think

- 1.5 There are a number of stages involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Council is seeking your feedback on this draft version of the Plan, after which any necessary changes will be made before it is submitted to Chelmsford City Council for the purposes of independent examination. Following this, a referendum will be held, where all people of voting age residing in the Parish will be able to cast a vote on whether they think the Neighbourhood Plan should be brought into force ('made'). If more than 50% of those people who turnout vote 'yes', the Neighbourhood Plan will be used to help shape planning decisions and applications in South Woodham Ferrers.
- 1.6 This version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be available for comment during XXXX and XXXX 2019. A questionnaire has been made available alongside the Neighbourhood Plan to help capture your comments. This is available via the Town Council and can be completed online via the link below:  
[Insert weblink to survey](#)
- 1.7 Please do let us know what you think: this is an exciting opportunity for the community to come together and influence future change in South Woodham Ferrers.

---

<sup>1</sup> This aligns with the period covered by the new Chelmsford City Local Plan, which it is anticipated will be formally adopted in December 2019 and with which the Neighbourhood Plan will need to conform to.

<sup>2</sup> The Localism Act 2011 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>) gave communities the power to develop neighbourhood plans, to be progressed by Town and Parish councils, or neighbourhood forums, as opposed to the local authority.



## Structure of the plan

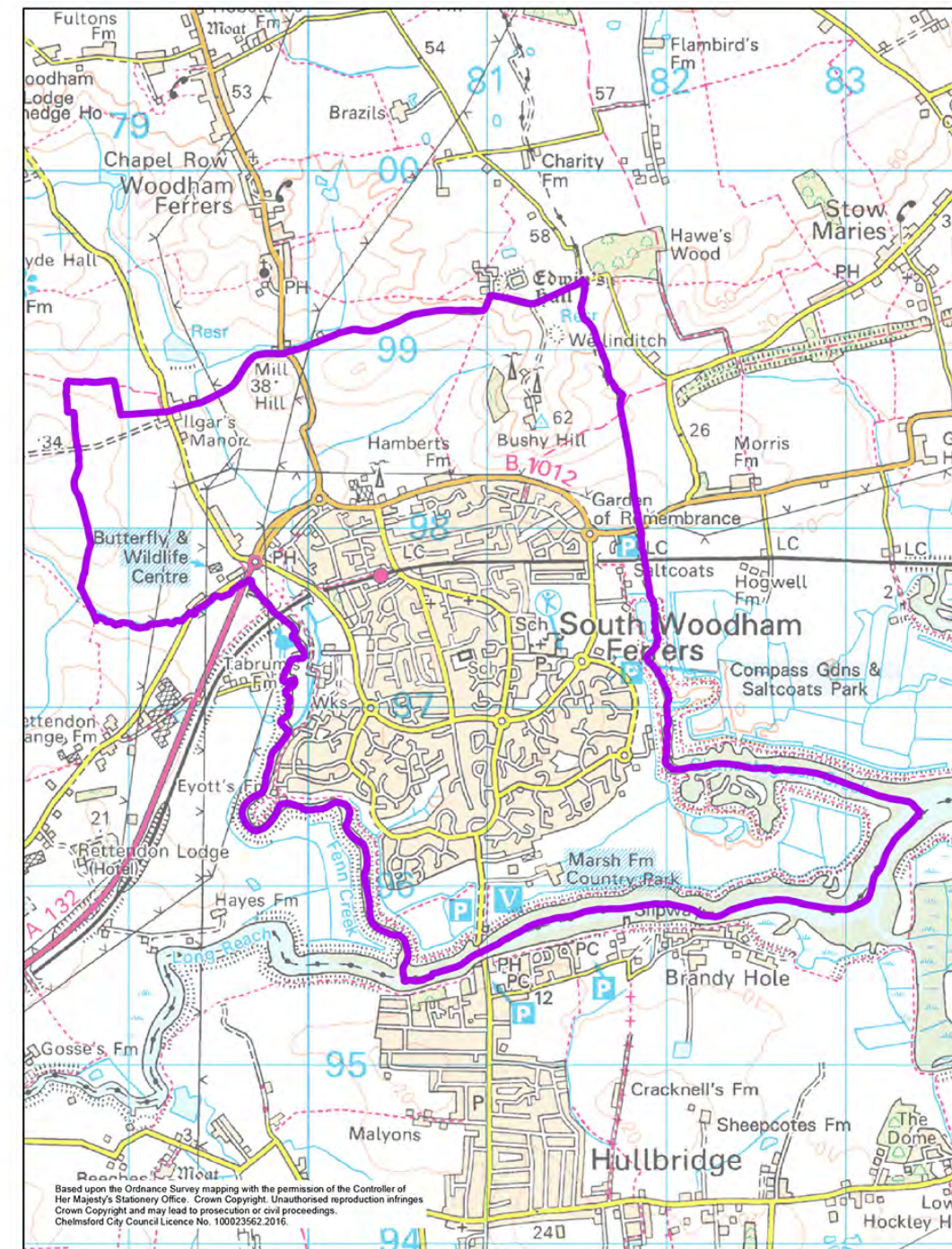
- 1.8 Following this introduction the draft Neighbourhood Plan comprises nine further sections. These are:
- Section 2: 'South Woodham Ferrers today', presents an overview of the area covered by the draft Neighbourhood Plan, what existing planning policy says for the area, key issues and comments raised during consultation.
  - Section 3: 'South Woodham Ferrers tomorrow', presents the vision and objectives for the Plan area.
  - Sections 4 – 9: These sections present the policies and associated projects for South Woodham Ferrers. These are grouped based upon the objectives outlined in Section 3.
  - Section 10: 'Next steps' outlines the current stage in the plan making process, how to respond to the draft Plan, and what the future steps in the process are.
- 1.9 For the avoidance of doubt, within sections 4 – 9, each topic area includes some introductory and explanatory text, followed by one or both of the following:

### Policy Box

The draft Neighbourhood Plan establishes land use and development management policies for South Woodham Ferrers. These are contained in blue shaded policy boxes, like this one.

### Project Box

The draft Neighbourhood Plan covers more than just traditional planning matters as it presents the community's vision for the area. Items that the community are seeking, but that cannot be delivered through planning policy, are identified and contained in green shaded project boxes, like this one. These are included within the body of the report, rather than being presented in a separate chapter or appendix, because they relate to the objectives and form a clear and important part of the story.



Directorate for Sustainable Communities  
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE  
Tel: 01245 606606 Fax: 01245 606642  
Web: www.chelmsford.gov.uk



Figure 1: The designated Neighbourhood Plan area for South Woodham Ferrers



## 2. South Woodham Ferrers ‘today’

### Overview of the neighbourhood plan area

- 2.1 South Woodham Ferrers is perhaps best known as the original Essex Design Guide Town and the growth and development which took place from the 1970's onwards. Development in the town though dates back to 1899 and the coming of the railway, with housing, in the form of plotlands, initially taking place around the station. The first period of major growth after that then took place in the 1960's and early 1970's, focused along the north-south spine of Hullbridge Road. The population of South Woodham Ferrers at this point was approximately 4,500 people.
- 2.2 Major expansion of South Woodham Ferrers into the town we know today resulted from the New Town movement, with Essex County Council leading the large scale, comprehensive expansion of the town, with the vision of it being a 'new country town on the River Crouch'.
- 2.3 The first major stage of development resulting from the new town programme took place to the north of the town, with later development from the mid-1980's taking place to the south of the railway line. The pace of development has been more limited since the turn of the century.
- 2.4 The development of South Woodham Ferrers has many lessons for the wave of new towns and garden communities currently being proposed across the country, not least those across mid and north Essex. Indeed, it appears as a case study of new developments in a 'best-practice' report prepared by the Town and Country Planning Association for the Government in 2007<sup>3</sup>. The report recognises the legacy and influence of South Woodham Ferrers within the ground-breaking Essex Design Guide, the strong lead taken by the County Council in developing the town and ongoing maintenance of it. The report notes that it is *"undoubtedly... a strong community with key elements required for everyday living"*. However, it also notes that *"the fabric of the town centre is now ripe for refurbishment"* and that, *"while being walking and cycle friendly, is still road dominated"*. Ten-years on from that report these comments remain valid and, indeed, are reflected in the priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.5 Although the town initially grew as a response to growth pressures in the 1970's and 80's, it now faces pressure for new growth and expansion, with land to the north of the town allocated for new homes and infrastructure in the Chelmsford City Local Plan. This presents an exciting new chapter in the growth of South Woodham Ferrers, with the Neighbourhood Plan establishing policies that help shape the future development of this area, such that it integrates with the existing community, reflects the character and qualities of the town and the local landscape, and brings benefits back to the town for all, through improved connections to green space, housing choice and strengthening the role and function of the town centre.

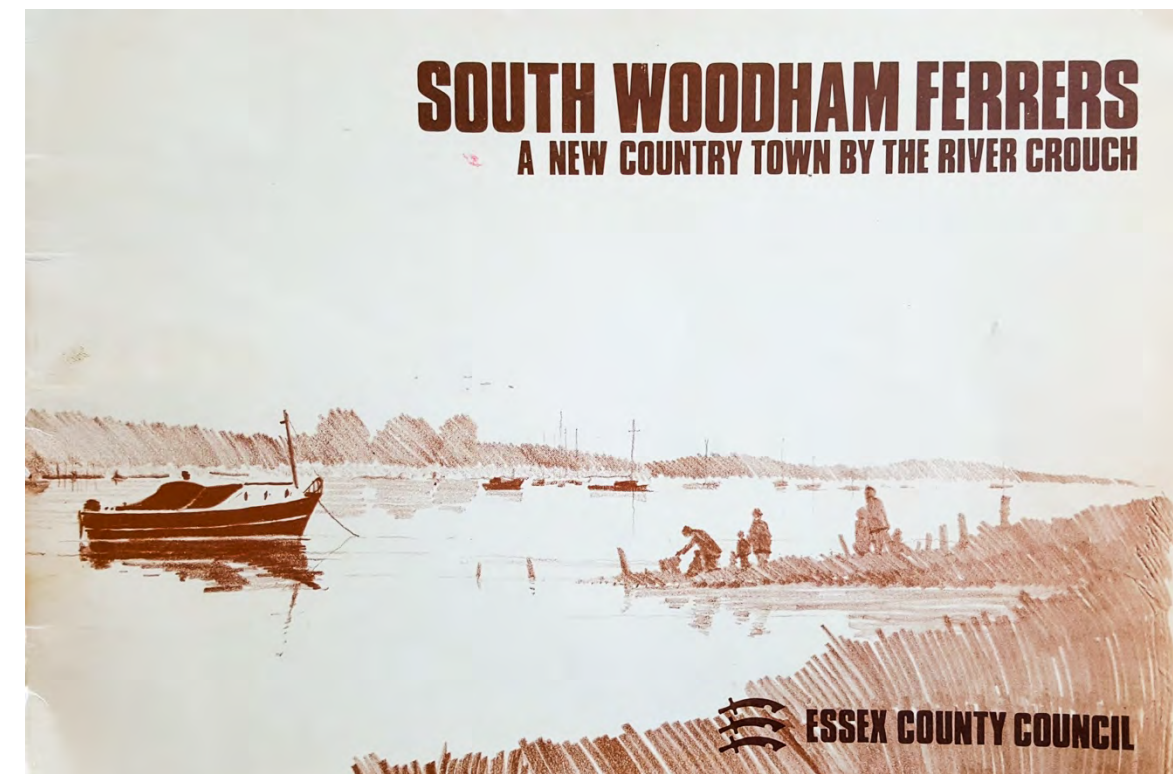


Figure 2: The cover from the original masterplan document for South Woodham Ferrers

<sup>3</sup> TCPA and DCLG, Best Practice in Urban Extensions and New Settlements: A report on emerging good practice, March 2007

# Demographic profile

- 2.6 The original masterplan for South Woodham Ferrers envisaged a population of approximately 18,000 people. Today the town has a population of 16,300 people, although this has fallen slightly since the 2011 census. The population is also ageing: the predominant age band has moved from 30–44 years old in 2001 to 45-59 years old in 2011. Population predictions now indicate a growth in the 60-74 year age group.
- 2.7 This population shift is evident in analysis of household size: much of the housing stock in South Woodham Ferrers was designed for families, with the average size house having 3 bedrooms. However, average household size is now 2.46 persons per household. This indicates that there are a large proportion of married or co-habiting couples without dependent children in the home. Altogether there are 6,600 households in South Woodham Ferrers: the majority of which (81%) live in homes either owned outright or with a mortgage.

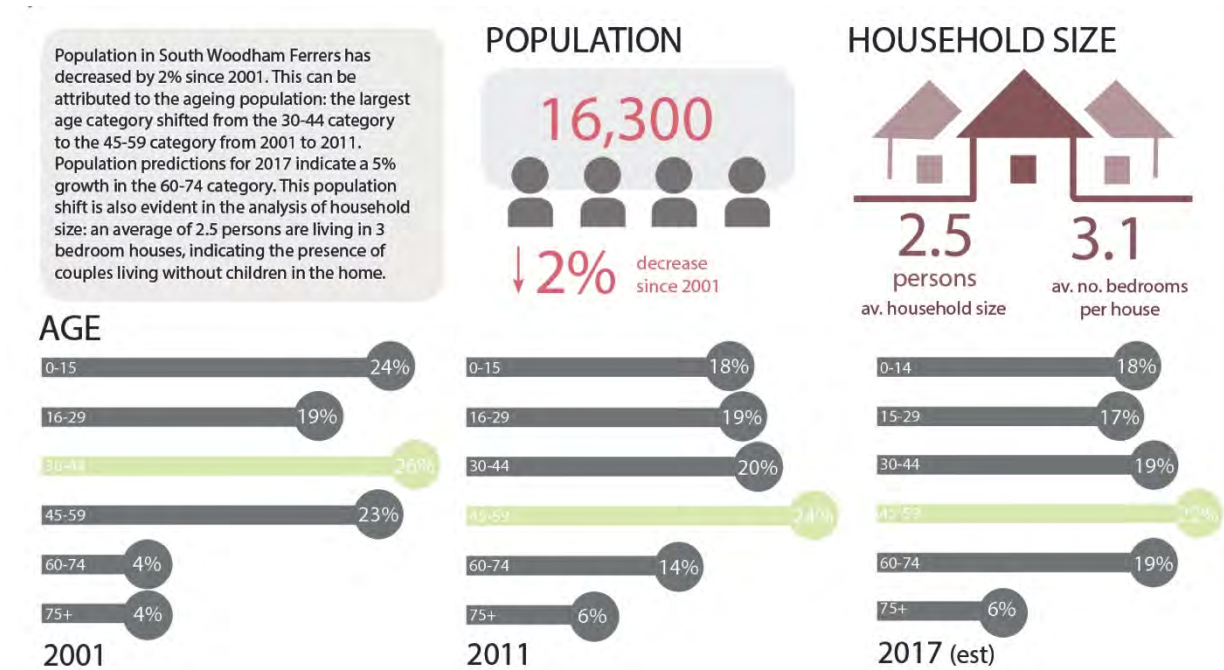


Figure 3: Population data for South Woodham Ferrers. Sources: Parallel, ONS Population Estimates Mid 2016 / Nomis, South Woodham Ferrers Parish: Local Area Report

- 2.8 A high proportion of residents (87.5%) are reported as being in good or very good health. However, and in comparison with the immediate area<sup>4</sup>, there is a relatively high prevalence of obesity and high blood pressure. Both of these can be reduced by regular exercise, with land use policies encouraging walking and cycling, through provision of safe and attractive routes, as well as incorporating accessible sports, play and leisure facilities.

## HEALTH

Disease prevalence in South Woodham Ferrers in comparison to the UK and to the rest of the Maldon parliamentary constituency:

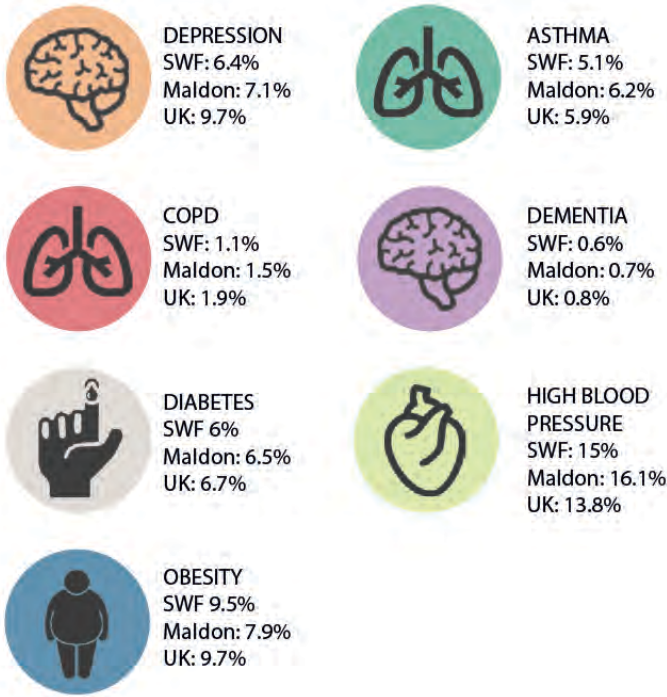


Figure 4: Health data for South Woodham Ferrers. Sources: House of Commons Library (January 2019), Constituency Data: How healthy is your area / Local Government Association, Natural Neighbourhoods, Basic facts about South Woodham Ferrers

<sup>4</sup> Constituency level data for Maldon forming part of the House of Commons Library, based on NHS digital data: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/social-policy/health/diseases/constituency-data-how-healthy-is-your-area/>



- 2.9 The town centre, which was designed and built in partnership between Essex County Council and Asda, has a relatively low vacancy rate (8%, compared to a UK average of 12.5%), but there are few comparison goods retailers, with many travelling to Chelmsford for this offer.
- 2.10 Chelmsford is also the main place of work for the economically active population of South Woodham Ferrers, with 42% of all commuters travelling to Chelmsford, most by car. This is more than double the proportion of people who commute to London (17%). Just under 10% of the economically active population live and work in South Woodham Ferrers, with others commuting to nearby towns, including Basildon. Maldon, Brentford, Rochford and Southend.
- 2.11 The relationship with Chelmsford is two-way, with almost 60% of all commuters into South Woodham Ferrers originating from Chelmsford, with 24% coming from Maldon. Although the train service led to the growth of the town in the first place, and remains important, the majority of journeys are by car and take place in both directions between South Woodham Ferrers and Chelmsford. The employment base is mixed, with the population employed across a diverse range of activities.

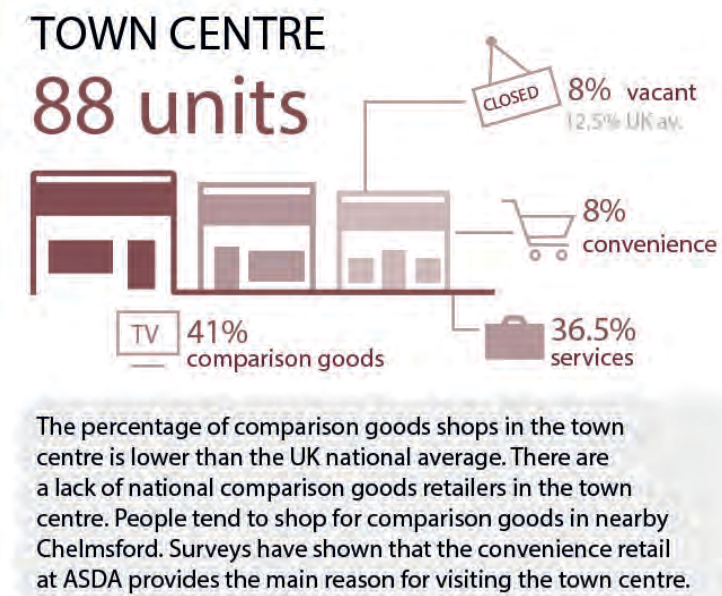


Figure 5: Breakdown of use types in South Woodham Ferrers town centre. Source: Chelmsford Retail Capacity Study, January 2015

## EMPLOYMENT

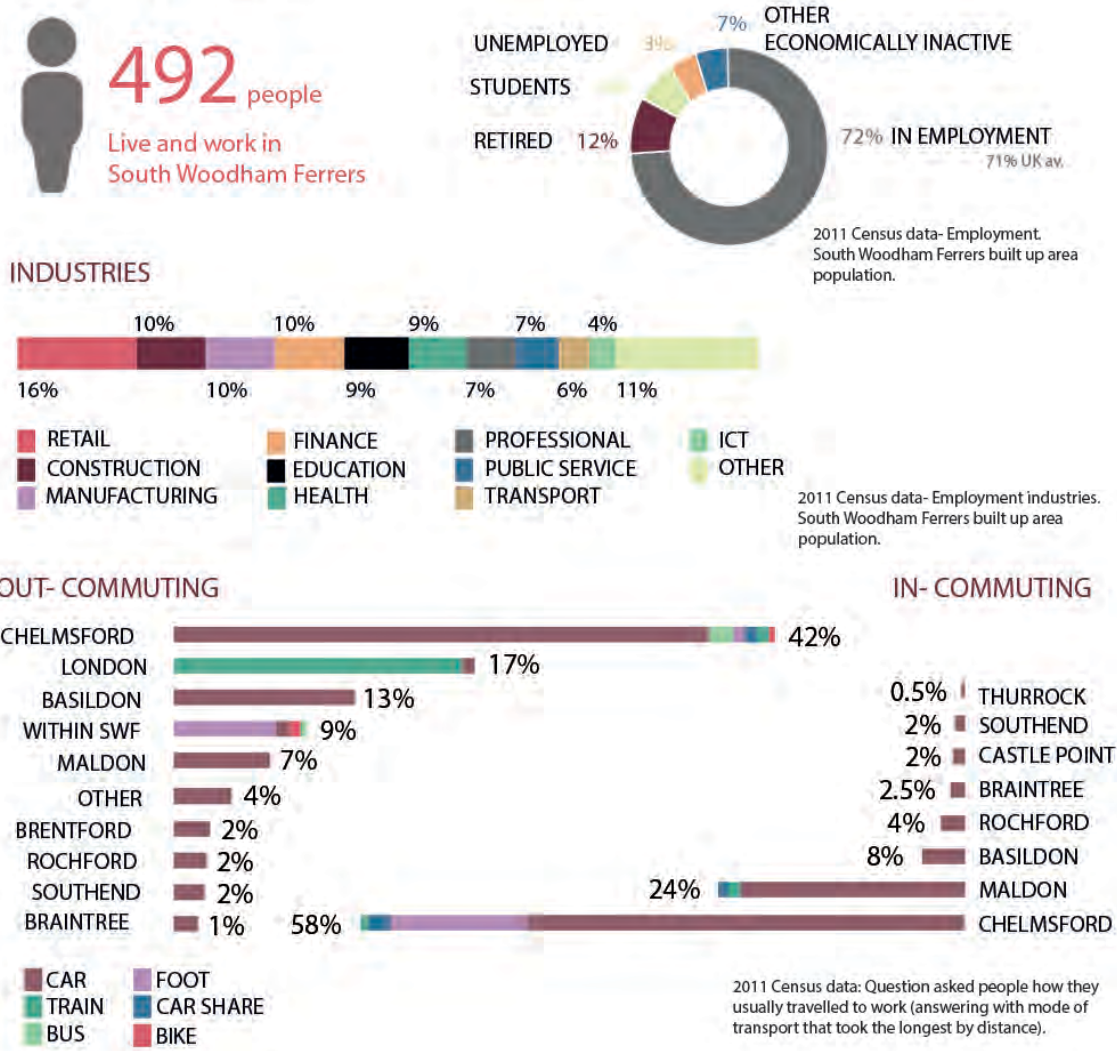


Figure 6: Employment data for South Woodham Ferrers. Sources: Nomis / 2011 Census



## What you told us

- 2.12 A series of consultation events and activities have been undertaken to inform this draft Neighbourhood Plan. They include:
- Visioning events in Summer 2017, encompassing exhibitions, displays and poster competitions with local school children.
  - A series of events in March 2019 revisiting the findings of the earlier visioning exercise, seeking to ratify the focus of the Plan. This included the display of material on the Bandstand, at the Annual Town Meeting and the Mayor's Charity Event.
  - A workshop with town centre landowners in June 2019 held at the Town Council offices, exploring the potential opportunities and scale of intervention that might be possible in the town centre from both a land-use and non land-use perspective.
  - Display of material through July and August 2019 to present emerging ideas for the Plan, including attendance at an open event at the Town Council office in July as well as attendance at the 'Summer Fun' event for parents and children held at the Town Council in the August school holiday period.
- 2.13 Alongside the above feedback was sought through surveys (both online and in paper form) and updates provided via the Town Council website and Facebook page. Regular meetings with the Steering Group have also been held, as well as meetings and workshops with the developer team for the Northern Growth Area. Meetings have also taken place with Chelmsford City Council in relation to progress and relationship with the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.14 The consultation exercises undertaken identified a range of issues of importance for addressing in the Neighbourhood Plan. Four key themes were identified, relating to:
- The town centre.
  - Access and movement.
  - Greenery.
  - Future growth to the north of the town.
- 2.15 These are expanded upon overleaf. Although not all of these are 'land-use planning policy' matters, they do reflect the community's concerns and hopes for the area, and are thus embedded in this Neighbourhood Plan through a combination of the vision, objectives and supporting projects.



Figure 7: Entry to poster competition, Summer 2017 (Top), and July 2019 consultation event at the Town Council offices (Bottom)



### i. The town centre:



Figure 8: View of the central bandstand square

- The town centre should provide a wider range of shops, restaurants, civic and community facilities.
- Potential should be explored for new employment opportunities and space for start-up businesses in the town centre.
- The quality of the public realm and connections with the town as a whole should be improved.
- The centre should be an attractive and welcoming place for people to spend time in.
- Activities that bring the town together, such as local festivals and cultural events, and which instill pride in the town, should be actively encouraged and could take place in the town centre.

### ii. Access and movement:



Figure 9: View of an existing crossing point along Ferrers Road into the town centre

- The Plan should look to provide better walking, cycling and public transport facilities, both within the town but also to Wickford and Chelmsford, for work, leisure and education.
- The speed of traffic on main roads should be reduced so that these become safer places for all users.
- The right amount of parking provision should be provided, in the right places, in new and existing development.
- There should be better maintenance of public spaces across the town.

### iii. Greenery:



Figure 10: Image of existing housing fronting onto green space surrounding the town

- New street-tree planting and green routes in the built-up area should be provided that link to the surrounding green spaces.
- Access across Ferrers Road to Saltcoats Park and Compass Gardens should be improved, making this safer for people to access by foot and by bike.
- A range of sports and leisure facilities should be provided for all ages.
- Existing flood defences should be improved and new flood mitigation measures provided.

### iv. Future growth to the north of the town:



Figure 11: View of the site of the Northern Growth Area

- Any future growth to the north of the town should be well-linked to the existing built-up area, improving connections across Burnham Road.
- Consideration needs to be given to the role and function of Burnham Road, and how growth will be balanced with traffic movements.
- A range of housing types should be provided, including those for young families, as well as opportunities for self-build homes.
- Contributions should be made towards provision of improved social and community infrastructure across the town as a whole.
- New growth and development should be designed and located so that it responds to views, the local landscape, and provides access to green space.
- New development and housing should be well designed, reflecting local character.



## The development plan

- 2.16 Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared in line with national guidance and legislation including the Localism Act (2011), the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012)<sup>5</sup>, the Neighbourhood Planning Act, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 2.17 Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan<sup>6</sup>. The development plan for South Woodham Ferrers is the Chelmsford Local Plan. Although not yet formally adopted at the time of writing, the Local Plan has been subject to examination and, subject to modifications, is a Plan that the Inspector has confirmed they are in a position to 'find sound'. The modifications to the Local Plan are currently being consulted upon and it is anticipated that the new Local Plan will be adopted by the end of 2019. This presents the planning strategy for the City Council administrative area for the years up to 2036 and is the framework within which the Neighbourhood Plan needs to function.
- 2.18 Of particular relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan are the following policies in the Local Plan:
- Support for production of Neighbourhood Plans, as expressed in Strategic Policy S4.
  - The spatial strategy outlined in Strategic Policy 9 for the Chelmsford administrative area as a whole, and which makes provision for a sustainable urban extension to the north of South Woodham Ferrers. This is further elaborated upon in Strategic Growth Site 7, establishing the mix and quantum of development to be provided. The Local Plan notes within the supporting text to this Policy that the draft Neighbourhood Plan can help shape the allocation and that, when made, the Town Council will receive 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy payable as a result of development.
  - The role and function of South Woodham Ferrers Town Centre, as set out in Strategic Policy S14, and which is further elaborated upon in Policy EM2 in respect of primary and secondary retail frontages in the Town Centre.
  - The requirement for new development to help make high quality new places, through good design and sustainable principles, as set out, for example, in Policies MP1 (High Quality Design), and MP2 (Design and Place Shaping Principles in Major Developments).
- 2.19 Other relevant policy documents at City Council level include the Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017).
- 2.20 This Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by the Chelmsford City Council Local Plan documents and the suite of supporting material providing evidence to this, all of which can be accessed via the Chelmsford City Council website<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> Updated in 2015 and 2016

<sup>6</sup> See Para 29 / Footnote 16, MHCLG, February 2019, NPPF

<sup>7</sup> See: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/> (accessed May 2019)





### 3. South Woodham Ferrers ‘tomorrow’

3.1 This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the vision and objectives for South Woodham Ferrers. It has been informed through consultation and establishes the community's aspirations for the future of the area.

#### Vision 2036

3.2 The vision for South Woodham Ferrers is presented below:

***Our vision for South Woodham Ferrers is that, by 2036, it will have become a ‘Complete Community’.***

***The strong sense of community and identity that the town experiences will have been strengthened. South Woodham Ferrers will be a safe, friendly, green, accessible and welcoming place for all, with a range of housing choices, leisure and employment opportunities, all in easy walk and cycle of the home, and with a strong and vibrant centre at the heart of the town.***

***Through future growth and change, South Woodham Ferrers will become the ‘riverside country town’, with greenery integrated into the heart of the town.***

***New development will reflect the best of the local ‘Essex vernacular’ and be an exemplar for new design and place making.***

**We see South Woodham Ferrers becoming the ‘Complete Community’.**

You previously told us that there is a strong sense of community in South Woodham Ferrers and that the town has a strong identity. Our vision seeks to maintain and strengthen this, providing a safe, friendly, green, accessible and welcoming place for all, with a range of housing choices, leisure and employment opportunities, all in easy walk and cycle of the home, and with a strong and vibrant town centre at the heart of the town.



Figure 12: Vision diagram

# Objectives

3.3 The objectives below provide a framework for the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

## Objective 01:

*To revitalise the town centre such that it becomes the hub of civic life and activity, providing a wide range of uses and facilities that cater for day-to-day needs, entertainment and leisure for all ages.*

## Objective 02:

*To make it safer and easy for all people of all ages to move around South Woodham Ferrers, promoting active and sustainable travel measures.*

## Objective 03:

*To integrate surrounding green space into the town and create new green space for the use and enjoyment of all, whilst also delivering environmental benefits.*

## Objective 04:

*To successfully integrate new growth and expansion with the existing built form and communities, providing housing choice and opportunities, as well as new community infrastructure, for the benefit of all.*

## Objective 05:

*To reflect the legacy of the Essex Design Guide in any new development, delivering high quality design in the built form and surrounding landscape.*

3.4 The policies, and projects, within this Neighbourhood Plan intend to deliver on these objectives. The following sections of the Neighbourhood Plan present these, ordered in response to the objectives.

3.5 **It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is read as a whole. All policies should be viewed together in the preparation and consideration of planning applications.**

# Spatial interpretation of the vision and objectives

3.6 The original masterplan for the growth of South Woodham Ferrers envisaged it as a 'riverside country town'. An 'abstract town plan' was prepared and included in that document (Figure 13). It notes that South Woodham Ferrers should have its own identity, 'avoiding the rigid parceling of land into areas for specific land uses... the general aim will be to foster a more cohesive approach to the creation of urban form and the sense of place'.

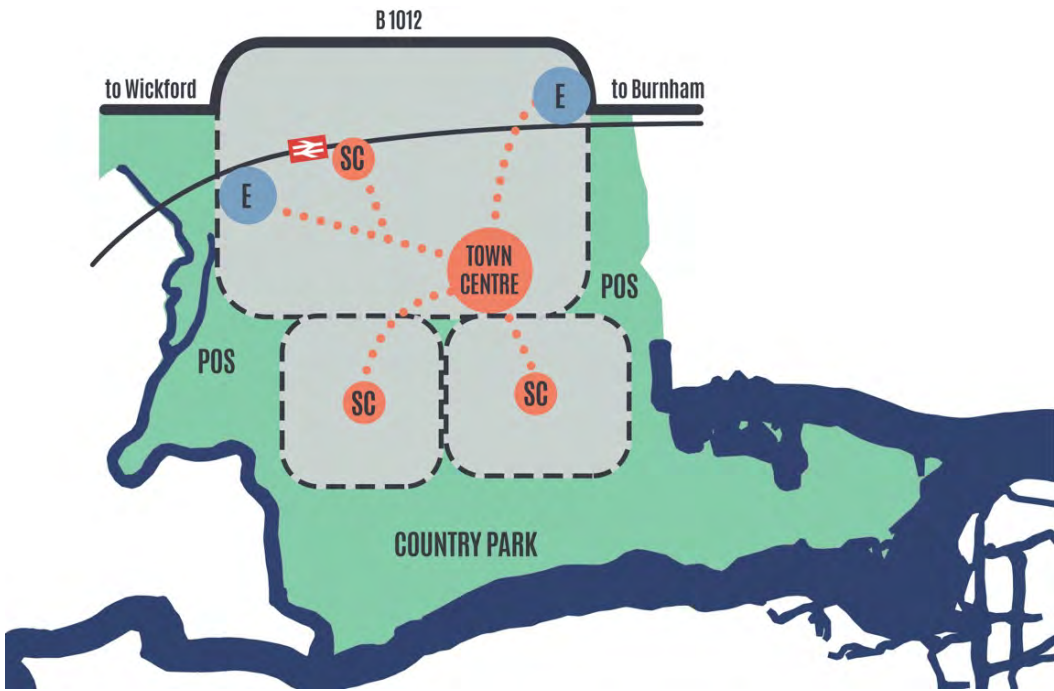


Figure 13: Original abstract plan from the masterplan for South Woodham Ferrers (Note: 'E' stands for employment, 'SC' for sub-centre, and 'POS' for public open space)

3.7 These aims hold true today. The legacy of the masterplan and associated Essex Design Guide is a town with a unique identity and its own character. Yet some of the original ambitions, for example the concept of the riverside country town, have not been fulfilled: despite being surrounded by green space, the relationship between the town and surrounding space is limited. Furthermore, the structure of the town, which is typified by a series of estate periphery roads and network of cul-de-sac development within these has created a series of disconnected areas of development and barriers to movement between these. Future change and growth in South Woodham Ferrers provides the opportunity to realise the original ambitions for the town, developing a 'complete community' that provides for the needs of all and builds upon the locally distinctive character.

3.8 The sequence below (Figure 14 - Figure 17) illustrates how South Woodham Ferrers might change over time whilst staying true to the original masterplan concept. This change is reflected in the series of policies and projects contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.



## Growing the town:



Figure 14: Updating the original abstract plan (a)

- New growth to the north of South Woodham Ferrers will be well connected to the existing built form, particularly by foot and by bicycle.
- New growth to the north also provides the opportunity to provide new accessible green space for the enjoyment of all, wrapping the town with a network of connected open space.
- Roads in and around the town are redesigned as streets, creating safer places for all.

## Greening the town:



Figure 15: Updating the original abstract plan (b)

- Green fingers and spaces reconnect the town with the surrounding landscape.
- Opportunities for new street trees and rain gardens within the public realm, integrating water with the urban environment, minimising surface water flood risk and reinterpreting the riverside setting: South Woodham Ferrers becomes the riverside country town'.

## Strengthening the town centre:



Figure 16: Updating the original abstract plan (c)

- The town centre is reinvigorated as the hub of social life and activity in South Woodham Ferrers.
- A wider range of uses and activities are found in the town centre, set around welcoming and attractive spaces.
- Regular events take place in the town centre as part of a 'Place-branding' initiative that promotes the distinct and unique local character of the town and its setting, with local businesses and land owners actively engaged in delivering local level change.

## Improving access and movement:



Figure 17: Updating the original abstract plan (d)

- A lattice of well-connected walking and cycling routes provide excellent connections across town for all people of all ages.
- Everyone is within a ten-minute walk or cycle of day-to-day services and facilities, including schools, healthcare, shops, employment and leisure opportunities.
- Transport connections to nearby towns, particularly by bus and train, are improved.



# 4. The Town Centre

## Objective 01:

*To revitalise the town centre such that it becomes the hub of civic life and activity, providing a wide range of uses and facilities that cater for day-to-day needs, entertainment and leisure for all ages.*

## Town centre challenges opportunities

- 4.1 South Woodham Ferrers town centre was planned and developed in the late 1970's as a partnership between Essex County Council and Asda, who remain the primary landowner. The design of the town centre adapted the principles embodied in the 1973 Essex Design Guide for residential areas. Although it includes many distinctive elements which create local identity, such as the Band Stand and Clock Tower, the form of the town centre, activities within it and way it is used need revisiting.
- 4.2 In 2008 the City Council, in partnership with South Woodham Ferrers Town Council, prepared a 'Plan for South Woodham Ferrers'<sup>8</sup>. Consultation informing the 2008 Plan indicated strong support for revitalising the town centre. It summarises 'key likes' as *"the town being small and friendly, its location and access, and safety"*. Key 'dislikes' included *"litter, vandalism and graffiti, the perceived dominance of ASDA, and a lack of number and variety of shops"*. With specific reference to Asda it also states that *"there is a perception that a greater sensitivity to neighbour businesses and active partnership within the town centre economy by Asda would strengthen the confidence and diversity of business in the community"*.
- 4.3 The findings of the 2008 Plan for South Woodham Ferrers remain relevant today. The emerging Chelmsford City Local Plan states that the town centre would benefit from enhancements and investment to meet the requirements of customers, businesses and visitors.
- 4.4 Drawing upon evidence prepared in support of the Chelmsford City Local Plan, as well as that produced for this Neighbourhood Plan, including a Character Area study, identified issues include:
- The dominance of the retail offer by Asda.
  - The car dominated experience of arrival to the centre.
  - The layout of the centre, which is very inward looking, and does not let the visitor know that there is a wider town centre offer beyond the Asda store.
  - A tired and poorly maintained public realm, with convoluted routes to and through the centre.

## A Vision for the town centre

- 4.5 At the heart of every successful town is a strong and vibrant centre. The NPPF encourages the use of planning to support 'strong, vibrant and healthy communities' and to improve the vitality and competitiveness of town centres.
- 4.6 We believe that South Woodham Ferrers town centre should be more than just a retail centre. It should be the 'centre of everything'. It should have a main square that is the town's 'living room'. It should be a place for social interaction, the civic hub and heartbeat of the town.

*Retail + civic and community + employment + entertainment and activities + housing + green space + places to play + places to learn + a cultural centre + a market place + a meeting place + great streets and spaces.*

- 4.7 With new growth and development, including 1,000 new homes to be delivered on land in the Northern Growth Area, comes the opportunity to identify and invest in a range of projects and initiatives to help improve the quality and function of the town centre. The new growth area will generate a population of approximately 2,500 people. A strong centre will be needed to meet the needs of the existing and new community, providing for day-to-day needs, retaining expenditure in the town and strengthening community cohesion. A series of land-use and non-land use policies and projects are included in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan, which, if pursued together, can help deliver change.



Figure 18: The vision is that the town centre should be lively and welcoming to all, with a wide range and mix of activities and uses set around an improved public realm, that becomes a place for social cohesion and interaction.

<sup>8</sup> Chelmsford Borough Council, A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers: Supplementary Planning Document, June 2008

# Initiatives

4.8 Change in the town centre can be delivered through land use and development, but also through interventions and initiatives explored in partnership with landowners and businesses that help promote the range and mix of uses in the centre, which bring people into the centre and maintain retail spend in South Woodham Ferrers. Ideas such as place branding, establishment of a business forum, community currency and public realm interventions were discussed at a town centre landowners meeting, with support expressed for investigating new ideas and approaches that help support the centre. Such initiatives could be explored and established relatively quickly, and ahead of any wider land use and development proposals that might come forward.

## Case study: a Business Improvement District

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), are business-led organisations, funded by a levy on eligible businesses in a defined area subject to a ballot of businesses signaling their approval for establishment.

A BID can provide additional and or improved services in the defined area, which have been identified as important by local businesses. This could include promotional, cleaning and environmental measures.

Money raised through the levy is ring-fenced for spending in the defined area, and spent on projects identified and agreed on by the businesses. Benefits include place promotion, increased footfall and staff retention.

There are now more than 270 BIDs in the UK. As an alternative, informal business forums might be established to identify opportunities that can be worked on together, though which might need delivering through alternative funding streams.

## Case study: a community currency

The Bristol Pound was launched as a means to help create a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive local economy, encouraging people to buy locally and thus reducing retail expenditure leakage out of the town. Similar community currencies have been introduced in places such as Brixton, Cardiff, Cornwall, Exeter, Kingston, Lewes, Stroud and Totnes.

Available at an exchange rate of 1:1, the community currency can be spent in local businesses that have signed up to the initiative. The currency can be made available in paper or digital format, and potentially linked to offers and vouchers that retain spending locally.

The implementation of the community currency elsewhere has helped support and sustain local businesses, including independent retailers, and has helped foster community pride and identity.

## Project / Aspiration SWF TCa: Town centre initiatives

### (a) Town Centre Forum

The Town Council is keen to work with local businesses and landowners to establish a business forum or similar for the town centre. The purpose of this would be to help co-ordinate and lead on activities and initiatives that help it compete with other centres. This might include the establishment and running of regular events and efforts to attract inward investment to the town centre.

This could take the form of a Business Improvement District. A not-for-profit organisation, this would help create a strong partnership between local businesses, the Town and City Councils, providing a basis to work together to deliver improvements to the town centre trading environment.

### (b) Place Branding

The Town Council is keen to prepare a 'place branding' strategy for the town, through which a year-round programme of events are curated, linked back to the unique identity of the town, including its design legacy, relationship with water and potential for local food and drink production raising the profile of the town centre and attracting visitors to spend time, and money, in the centre. This might include a design centre for visitors, showcasing the growth of the town as a centre of design excellence and providing an opportunity for the community to be involved in discussing future growth and development proposals.

Wider initiatives might also be explored, including potential introduction of a 'Community Currency', to help retain retail spend in South Woodham Ferrers, and a town-wide 'app', providing a social media platform to share local news, events and promotions.

### (c) Public Realm Pilot Projects

The Town Council is keen to explore potential public realm trial projects in association with partners, including landowners, the City and County Council. These would test opportunities for intervention prior to major works taking place, exploring how people use and interact with the space. Potential pilot projects include:

- a. A series of 'pop-up' parks within the main squares in the centre, providing planting, places to sit and opportunities for outdoor events and activities.
- b. Introduction of planting and greenery through placement of planters within the public realm.
- c. Promotion of outdoor events, including exhibitions, screenings and other cultural events, particularly those which maximise use of the Bandstand square.
- d. Installation of parklets, which can be moved around, testing the most suitable location of areas of seating.
- e. Decoration of blank walls, through use of public art, murals and greening, enlivening the space and experience of these.



## Planning and development strategy

- 4.9 Where future development is proposed in the town centre it should, wherever possible, help contribute to the vitality of the centre, encompassing the mix of uses and activities as well as the way in which it is structured and functions as a place. This includes the quality and experience of the urban realm and relates directly to the movement network, activities in spaces and links to and from those spaces, development frontages and the way in which the public, semi-public and private realms are defined.
- 4.10 There are many positive features in the town centre, including for example the pedestrian nature of streets and human scale architecture. There are also references in the built form to traditional town and village centres: the Barclays bank for example is evocative of a Guildhall or Corn Exchange. Analysis of the urban morphology has though drawn out a series of issues which development projects should help address. These include:
- Although Asda is an important anchor, footfall declines rapidly beyond this.
  - There is no real sense of arrival to the town centre, with routes leading to and through car parks.
  - Main routes through the town 'by-pass' the centre, with limited connectivity with the wider catchment of the town.
  - The hierarchy of streets and spaces, their role and function is unclear.
  - Building lines deflect and terminate views. Combined with a mix of building fronts and backs, including exposed service yards and blank walls, it is unclear what represents public, semi-public or private space, and whether you are welcome in that space.
- 4.11 Further analysis of the character of the town centre is presented in the Character Study accompanying this Neighbourhood Plan and summarised in section 8 of this Plan (Design and Character).
- 4.12 Development proposals and uses should help strengthen and recognise the central spine of the town centre, which is that from the Bandstand through to Trinity Square, as the 'High Street'. But activity and footfall currently falls away very quickly from the Asda store. Greater efforts need to be made to encourage people to move across the town centre. This relates in part to the experience and understanding of the centre. The Bandstand and routes leading from this are home to a wide range of retailers and businesses, but many are 'hidden from view'. It is not clear for example, when arriving in the main town centre car park, that there is a retail offer beyond the main Asda store. Indirect routes and structures, such as the archway from the car park through to the Bandstand, obstruct views and thus discourage movement (Figure 19). Efforts should be made to open these up and encourage footfall from the main arrival points and across the town. Projects and interventions that proposals for development should respond to are illustrated in Figure 20. All proposals should respond to good design principles and which reflect the unique character and identity of the town centre.



Figure 19: Views to the central Bandstand Square should be opened up, providing a clear visual link to the central spine from the main car park and arrival point into the town. Coupled with public realm improvements and activities in the square, this could increase footfall into the centre.

### Policy SWF TC1: The central spine

Where development is proposed within the town centre it should, wherever possible, help deliver a well-defined central spine between the Bandstand Square and Trinity Square that acts as the 'High Street' for South Woodham Ferrers. Principles that should be considered include:

#### Entrances

All development should front onto this central spine, with main doors and entrances opening onto this. Where the opportunity arises, existing retail and business units should be reconfigured to provide new windows, doors and entrances opening onto the central spine.

#### Views and connections

Where the opportunity arises, views to and connections between town centre arrival points and the central spine should be opened up, made clear and direct, including:

- a. reconfiguration of the arched entranceway into the Bandstand Square from the main Asda car park.
- b. reconfiguration of the former NatWest bank building, providing a clear link with Barons car park, but also opening views along the central spine from the squares at each end that currently terminate on this vacant building. As a short term measure, potential for 'pop-up' uses and activities of the former NatWest bank will be encouraged.

Proposals for new development in the town centre should allow retention of views to the Clock Tower.

#### Development opportunities

Opportunities should be explored that help define the public, semi-public and private realm, including provision of new development and associated frontages that enclose rear service areas. Where this opportunity arises, development should align with existing building frontages and respond to the scale and massing of adjacent buildings.

Where the opportunity arises through the size of the site, the provision of clear and direct routes through the site should be explored that strengthen links into the central spine from surrounding streets. Opportunities potentially include:

- a. Development of the Knights Street car park, providing a new frontage along Inchbonnie Road and possible new links from this through to the central spine.
- b. Reuse and or redevelopment of the former health centre and emergency services site, providing new connections across Ferrers Road.

### Policy SWF TC2: Town centre design principles

Proposals for new development in South Woodham Ferrers Town Centre should complement the special character of the centre, reflected in the height and massing of buildings, as well as the materials used and interpretation of the Essex Design Guide for application in central areas, expressed through the building styles and roof heights.

Where development is proposed in the town centre it should, wherever possible:

- a. Create clear and consistent building lines with active frontages at ground floor level, following established building lines where they exist.
- b. Provide the principal points of access to buildings on the main street or public space onto which it fronts.
- c. Provide for clear, direct and well-overlooked pedestrian routes through or around the development site, connecting with the existing route network.
- d. Clearly define areas of public and private realm through well-defined building lines and enclosure of private space. Blank walls and exposed back land areas, including car parking and servicing areas, should be screened from view, preferably through the wrapping of these with active development edges, or with other solutions such as provision of green walls that improve the quality of the townscape.
- e. Avoid creation of blank gable ends.
- f. Respect the prevailing building height. Where building heights vary this change should be subtle and step up or down by no more than half to one storey between buildings.
- g. Incorporate generous floor to ceiling heights, particularly at ground floor level, to allow for flexibility and change of use over time.
- h. Support improvements to the quality of the public realm in the town centre.
- i. Protect or enhance views of the Clock Tower from key vantage points in the centre and on approach to the centre.



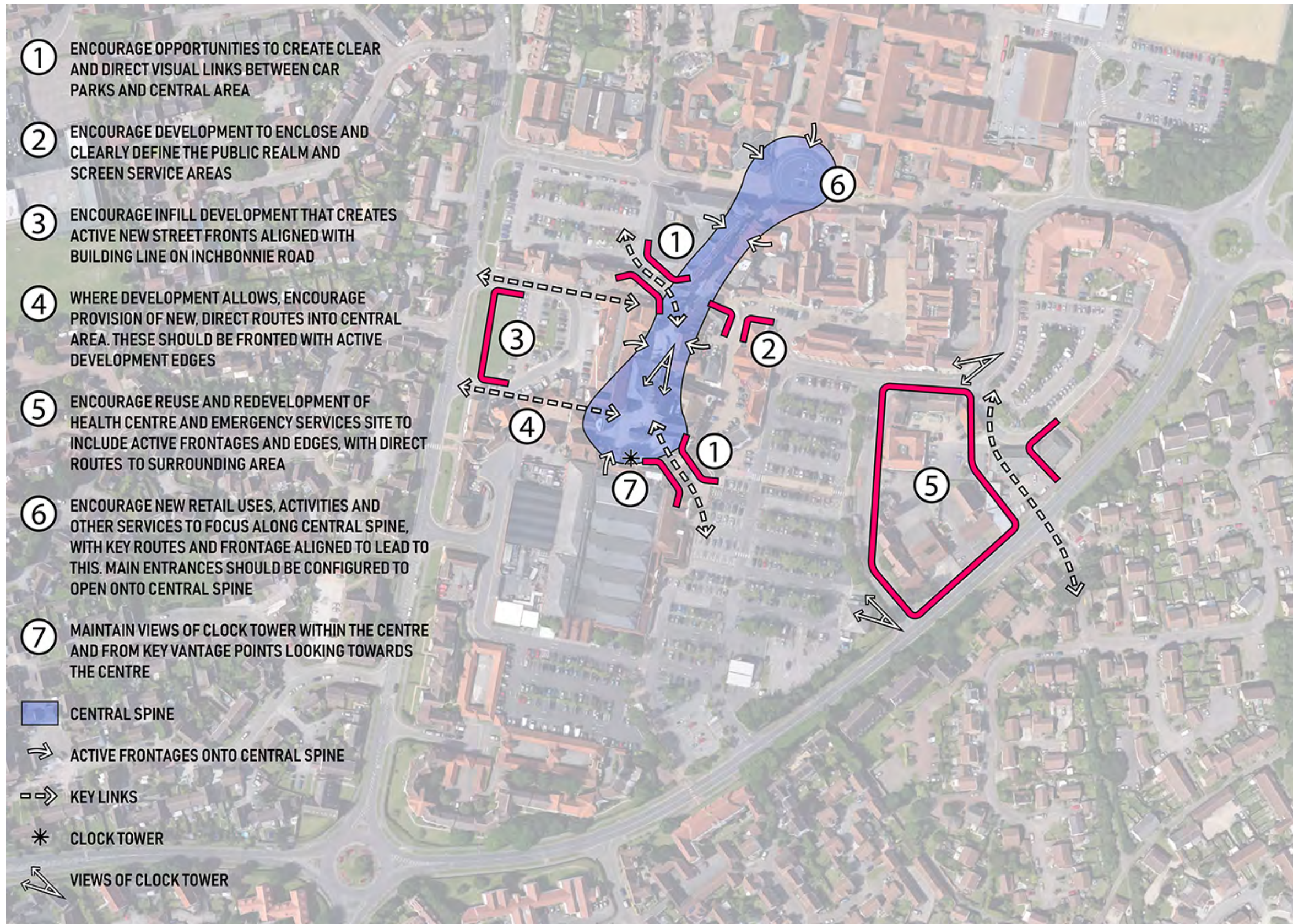


Figure 20: Potential town centre development interventions



# Town centre uses

- 4.13 A mix of uses should be provided in the town centre that encourage activity. With the changing nature of the High Street, competition from other centres and from internet-based shopping, uses that provide for a mix of activities, including services, are encouraged. Use of such services will help support retail activities, by bringing customers into the centre, including local and independent retailers.
- 4.14 A key challenge for the town centre is the decision to relocate health facilities to a new medical centre to the north of the town. Activities such as these are important to the footfall of the town. Wherever possible, and subject to viability, these buildings should be repurposed with other social and community uses, and or leisure, entertainment, arts and cultural uses.
- 4.15 There are several vacant retail units within the town centre. Temporary re-use of these, through 'pop-up' and 'meanwhile uses'<sup>9</sup> is encouraged, providing life and activity in the short-term whilst opportunities for longer-term re-use and marketing of the units is undertaken. Pop-up units could cover a range of activities compatible with the function of the town centre, including retail and places to eat.
- 4.16 Proposals for mixed use development including residential are encouraged, as this will increase the resident catchment of the centre and provide movement and activity throughout the day, helping to sustain and support town centre businesses.

<sup>9</sup> A 'pop-up' shop or other similar activity is one that opens for a short period of time on a temporary basis, taking advantage of an empty retail space. Equally, a 'meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings, such as retail units, until they can be brought back into commercial use. Both provide an opportunity to maintain the vibrancy of an area.

## Policy SWF TC3: Town centre uses and activities

Proposals for major development in the town centre should incorporate a mix of uses consistent with the role, function and character of the town centre. Suitable uses in the town centre include:

- a. Retail development (A1 and A2 uses)
- b. Leisure and entertainment (A3, A4 and D2 uses)
- c. Office development, including affordable and flexible office space for start-up and incubator businesses (B1a uses)
- d. Arts, culture and tourism (D1 uses)
- e. Social and community uses (D1 uses)
- f. Residential (C3 uses)

Where residential uses are proposed these should be on the upper floors of a mix-use scheme, with ground floors comprising retail or other complementary uses.

Meanwhile uses, including 'pop-ups', that allow for the temporary use of vacant buildings are encouraged. Proposals for such uses will need to comply with the use classes outlined above.

The main focus of the town centre uses and activities should be along the central spine.

## Policy SWF TC4: Town centre community facilities

Applications for development that provide new community facilities or which improve existing facilities in the town centre will be encouraged. Proposals for such uses should:

- a. Ensure that the facilities are easily accessible to everyone.
- b. Successfully capitalise on opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport.
- c. Be designed to allow for internal spaces to be adapted over time, providing flexibility of use and potential co-location with other complementary community uses and functions.

The loss of any space used for community purposes will only be supported where an equivalent replacement of alternative provision is made for that use within the town centre. Where an existing community facility is to be vacated the applicant should provide a strategy that indicates what the future use of that building / site might be, including, wherever practicable, reuse for alternative community facilities.

Where currently vacant social and community buildings, including former health centre buildings, are to be reused or redeveloped, applicants should, in the first instance, explore reuse for other similar uses.

# Public realm

4.17 The public realm is defined as all the spaces between buildings to which the public has access. The importance and value of good quality public realm is well recognised<sup>10</sup>. A series of public realm projects have been identified which the Town Council encourages applicants for development to respond to. These are illustrated on Figure 21. Not all of these are directly related to individual development schemes and instead represent projects that the Town Council will look to take forward in discussion with the City Council and other partners, including the Highways Authority and land owners. This forms the basis of projects towards which CIL receipts might be directed towards.

## Policy SWF TC5: Town centre streets and spaces

All proposals for development, should, wherever possible, include proposals that enhance the attractiveness of public realm, and or help contribute to the delivery of public realm improvements. Public realm improvements for the town centre include:

### The central spine

Use of new materials that define the central spine as distinct from the surrounding network of pedestrian streets and which involve removal of unnecessary barriers and street furniture. Squares along this should be reimagined as multi-functional spaces, allowing for a range of outdoor activities and events at different times of the year, including markets, screenings and displays. Provision of outdoor tables and seating is encouraged, particularly in locations where it does not hinder pedestrian movement. Where tables and seating are provided these should not be fixed in place.

### Greening

Opportunities that contribute to the greening of the urban environment are welcome. Subject to agreement of appropriate management and maintenance regimes, this includes but is not limited to:

- a. New tree planting as well as planting of wildflowers, including that on underused land alongside public highways.
- b. Planting of green walls.
- c. Introduction of urban rills and other water features, forming part of a network of sustainable urban drainage systems.
- d. Creation of temporary 'pop-up' parks.
- e. Creation of a formal landscaped square at Trinity Square, comprising part of a green landscaped street that transforms the northern edge of the centre formed by William De Ferrers school, and including planters, green walls and places to sit. This will provide a green link between Inchbonnie Road and Compass Gardens.

- f. Reconfigure Oaklands Square along the lines of a traditional 'London Square', with tree planting and places to sit.

### Streets and spaces

Opportunities to improve crossing points along Inchbonnie Road and Ferrers Road should be facilitated, connecting surrounding residential areas, parks and gardens with the central area. This will involve remodeling existing roundabouts to provide safe and direct crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists, including measures that slow traffic along Ferrers Road. Subject to feasibility, potential transformation of Inchbonnie Road will include:

- a. Introduction of rain gardens, wildflowers and trees along the currently under-utilised mown verge.
- b. Segregated cycle lanes.
- c. Visual clues, such as the narrowing of the road space and use of different materials, to define this as an entry point to the town centre.
- d. Integration of additional crossing points for pedestrians that connect with existing routes.

On-street parking provision should be removed where possible, allowing re-use of that space for walking, cycling and landscape improvements.

### The main car park

Opportunities to reconfigure the layout of the main car park should be explored, including:

- a. Creation of an enlarged arrival space at the main entrance to Asda and aligned to provide clear routes and views through to the central spine, with materials and landscaping matching that within the central spine.
- b. Provision of routes through the car park that following pedestrian desire lines and include direct connections with crossing points on Ferrers Road to surrounding residential areas.

## Case study: creating an 'urban forest'

Aarhus, in Denmark, is rated as 'Europe's second best place' to visit and in 2017 was the European Capital of Culture.

Over the last decade a city centre greening programme has transformed the quality and experience of public spaces in Aarhus. An Urban Forest programme was launched that initially changed the central square into a green meadow, with trees and water features bringing the country into town.

Exposure to nature has nurtured social trust, reduced stress, improved long-term mental health and increased educational attainment. Initially a temporary project as part of a cultural festival, it has now led to the transformation of other public squares in Aarhus, and its success was recognised as a category winner at the 2011 Landscape Awards.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Cabe, The Value of Public Space, 2004, and, The Heart Foundation, Good for Business: The benefits of making streets more walking and cycle friendly, 2011



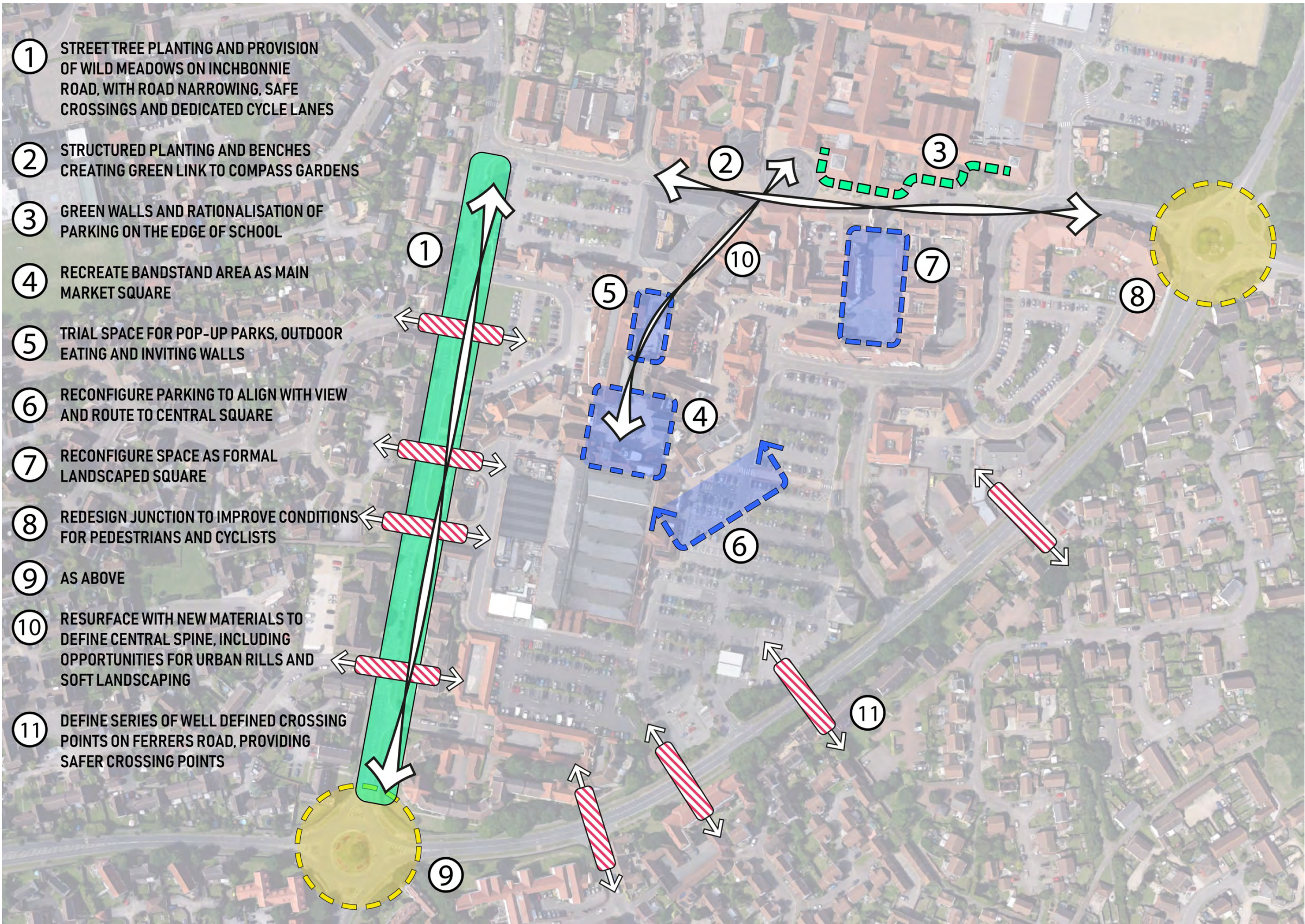


Figure 21: Public realm strategy for the town centre



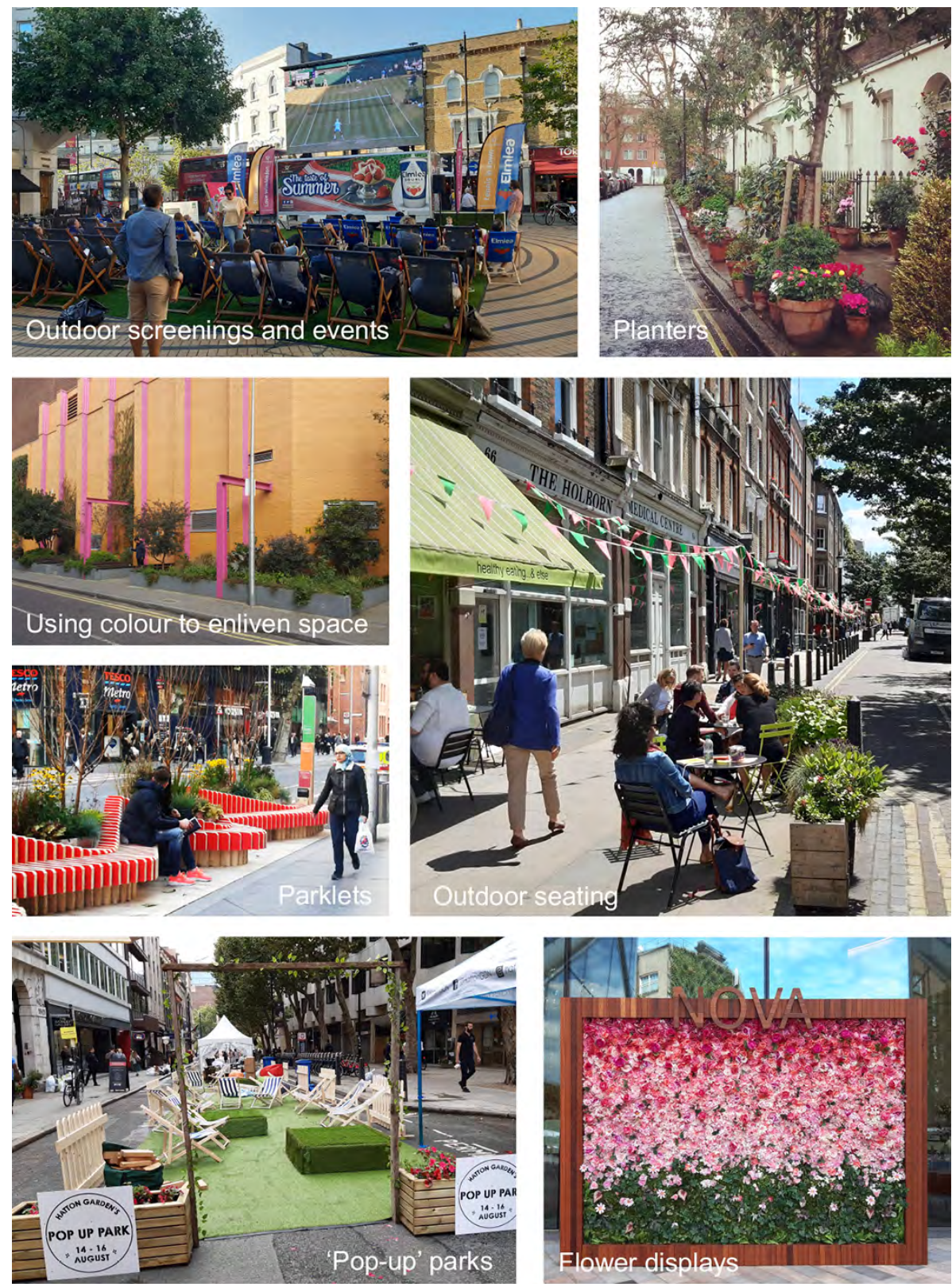


Figure 22: Example public realm images and precedents for exploring and testing ideas on an initial temporary basis in the town centre

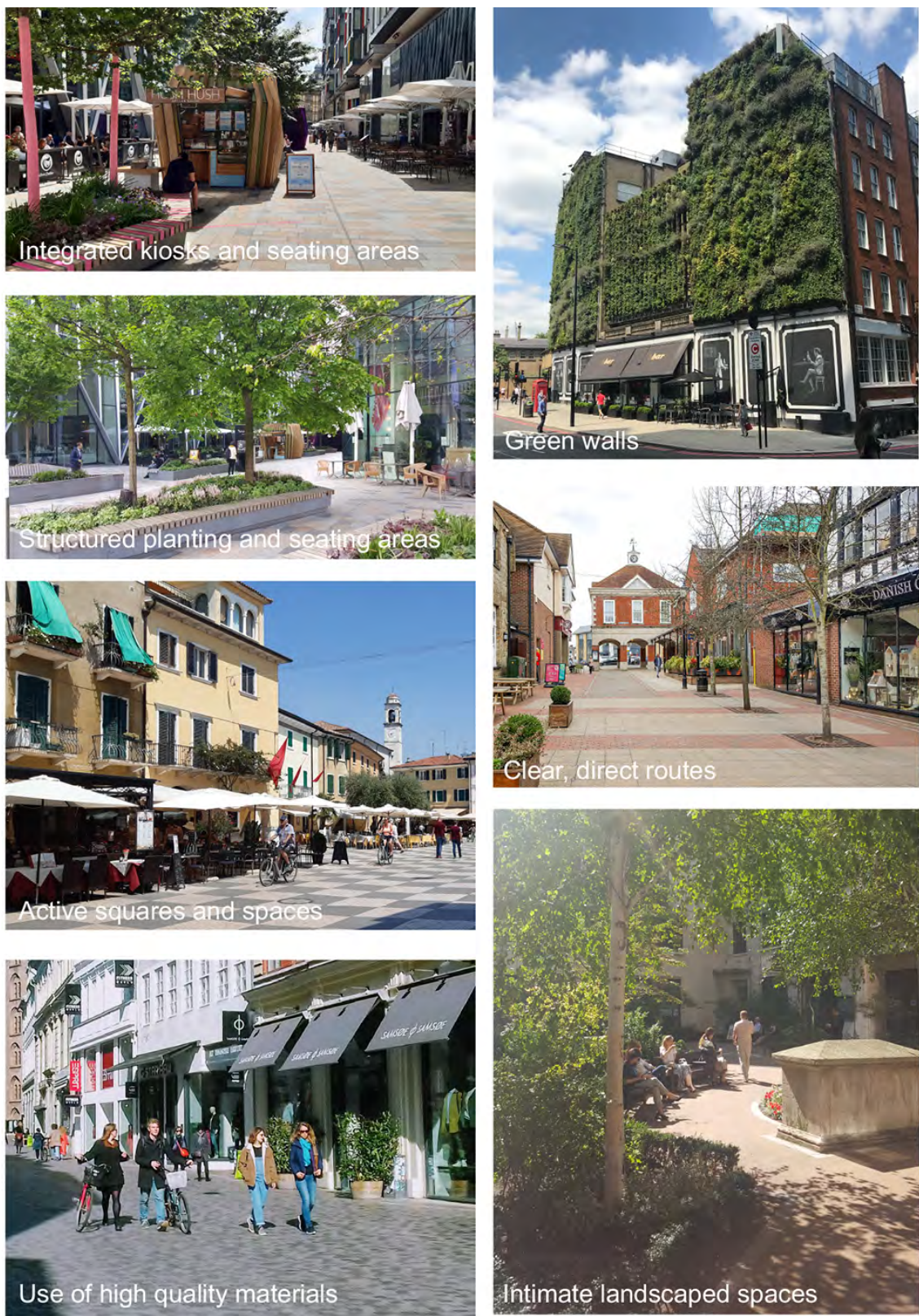


Figure 23: Example public realm images and precedents for longer term structural change and public realm intervention in the town centre



## Car parking

- 4.18 Car parking represents the dominant use of land within the town centre. Areas of parking are well-used throughout the year. The retail study undertaken by Chelmsford City Council as part of the Local Plan suggests that 70% of all visitors arrive by car, despite only 9% of visitors to the centre being from outside South Woodham Ferrers. This would suggest there is a high propensity amongst local residents to drive.
- 4.19 As part of this Neighbourhood Plan a car park and visitor survey was undertaken. This was carried out at different times of the week, during and outside of school holiday periods. The findings of the survey suggest:
- **INSERT BULLET FINDINGS HERE**
- 4.20 The areas of car parking form the setting of the town centre and comprise the main points of arrival, with the centre itself and main retail offer located behind these and looking inwards. The layout and orientation of uses suggests that the Asda store is 'the town centre'. Rationalisation of car parking space, including reconfiguring this and introducing landscaping, might improve the sense of arrival and connection with the wider retail offer.
- 4.21 However, any parking interventions need to go hand in hand with town wide strategies that support active and sustainable travel measures, such that these become easy and attractive to use. This means more direct walking and cycling routes to the centre, and reconfiguration of the alleyway network around the town. At present, many respondents to consultation exercises said they do not make regular use of these, because they are indirect and because of a perception of danger. Combined with the typical street layout in South Woodham Ferrers, which includes a network of residential culs-de-sac, walking and cycling routes are indirect, and the associated walking and cycling catchment of the centre is diminished: in short, the layout makes it easier and more convenient for people to drive than to walk or cycle.

### Policy SWF TC6: Town centre car parking

**NOTE: TO BE UPDATED SUBJECT TO FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY**

Development proposals that reconfigure parking provision and the layout of spaces will be supported, subject to evidence of use, which complement initiatives to improve the arrival experience into the town centre and include for improved walking and cycling connections into the central spine from the car park and adjacent areas.

Where multi-storey or decked parking provision is proposed this should be wrapped with active development frontages and be informed by the scale of adjacent buildings.

Proposals for the rationalisation or reconfiguration of car parking should be associated with proposals that support active travel measures across the town.

Proposals that involve the loss of on-street parking within the town centre will be supported where adequate alternative provision is shown to be available within the existing car parks, and where the space lost is replaced with public realm improvements, including landscaping, walking and cycling provision.



# 5. Movement and access

**Objective 02:**

*To make it safer and easy for all people of all ages to move around South Woodham Ferrers, promoting active and sustainable travel measures.*

## Active and healthy travel

- 5.1 The new Chelmsford City Local Plan establishes a hierarchy of movement, which states that in new development, priority should first be given to walking and cycling, followed by public transport. This is reflected in national guidance, with the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment strategy<sup>11</sup> pointing to the importance of and need for new infrastructure investment to support active travel.
- 5.2 South Woodham Ferrers is a relatively small and compact town, with everyday uses located within a five to ten--minute walk, cycle, or bus journey of the home. But current infrastructure provision does not support travel by these modes. The design of roads and streets is unbalanced and weighed heavily in favour of travel by car. This is exacerbated by the layout of development: the cul-de-sac layout often means that routes between places are convoluted and not conducive to walking or cycling.
- 5.3 The quality of streets and spaces in the town need rethinking, such that it is safe, easy and convenient for all members of society to move freely around the town. New routes and connections are needed, that provide for direct links between the places people want to travel to and which, more importantly, are safe. Space for cycling should be made available on the main routes in and around the town, and safe crossings provided at junctions to avoid conflicts between vehicles and cyclists.
- 5.4 Walking and cycling can and should be the default choice for moving around in South Woodham Ferrers. It is an aspiration that short trips, by foot and by bike, will become more common. This is good for the environment, for health and social well-being<sup>12</sup>, and for the economy<sup>13</sup>.

- 5.5 This needs to go hand-in-hand with changes to the way we currently use the car. Providing more road space and plentiful car parking simply encourages demand, creating additional traffic and supporting the growth of lower density development that is dependent on car movement. Whilst it is accepted that people will continue to travel by car, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to create the conditions that encourage safe, attractive and efficient travel by alternative modes, and which provide people with the choice and opportunity to travel by foot, bike or public transport: a choice that doesn't fully exist at the moment. Indeed, providing for good walking and cycling conditions, and improved public transport services, has been shown to help reduce congestion<sup>14</sup> and carbon emissions from vehicles, bringing environmental benefits.
- 5.6 Within South Woodham Ferrers, streets should be redesigned to recognise that they are places too, that they comprise the majority of public space in the town and should therefore provide opportunities for people to meet, sit and enjoy. New or improved walking and cycling infrastructure should reflect best practice principles, drawing on examples from The Netherlands and Denmark<sup>15</sup>, thus becoming an attractive proposition for all to use.
- 5.7 Alongside provision of safe street conditions and junctions for walking and cycling is a need to increase the provision of cycle parking, particularly within the town centre. Safe and secure parking facilities should be accommodated within the public realm, though designed such that provision responds positively to the character and quality of the built environment. Covered cycle parking is also encouraged, particularly within new commercial development, which should also provide shower and locker facilities for cyclists.
- 5.8 High quality walking and cycling routes should be integrated within new developments. But the quality and attractiveness of the network is only as good as the missing links or gaps in the routes. The Town Council thus proposes that CIL payments received from development are directed to an improved town wide walking and cycle network for the benefit of existing and new residents. Key routes for improvement are those that make short, everyday journeys easy and enjoyable. This includes improving links to parks, the town centre, schools, healthcare and other community facilities.

<sup>11</sup> Department for Transport, Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, April 2017

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the Healthy Streets Initiative developed by Living Streets with Transport for London.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the Health Economic Assessment Toolkit developed by the World Health Organisation

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, <https://civitas.eu/news/civitas-flow-quick-facts-show-how-walking-and-cycling-help-reduce-traffic-congestion>

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, The London Cycling Design Standards, Transport for London, 2014, updated 2016





Figure 24: New segregated cycle lanes should be provided across South Woodham Ferrers, providing safe and attractive traffic free routes for all to use

### Policy SWF MA1: Active travel

Applicants for development should, wherever possible, support active travel through delivery of new walking and cycle routes, and or improvements to existing routes.

Where new walking and cycling routes are provided, they must be direct, safe and convenient to use. The layout of proposed development should allow for the natural surveillance of routes through overlooking with active development frontages.

Where new cycle routes are provided, they should reflect best practice principles, including Dutch design.

Where existing walking and cycling routes are provided within or adjacent to a site, proposals for development are encouraged to show how they link into these networks.

Proposals for commercial, leisure and community uses should support and enable active travel through inclusion of safe, secure and convenient cycle parking and changing facilities where appropriate.

Proposals should not result in the loss of existing walking or cycling routes, nor reduce the capacity or safety of that infrastructure.

### Project SWF MAa: Safer streets and town wide cycle grid

The Town Council is keen to improve the town-wide cycle network, providing scope for short, everyday activities and trips to be made by bicycle. Segregated routes on the main road network should be supplemented by a network of safe streets and routes in residential areas, with junctions and crossings redesigned along Dutch-principles to make cycling as safe and attractive as possible for all members of society.

Where possible, the Town Council is keen to see other measures introduced that make the use of streets and spaces safer for all, including a town-wide reduction of speed limits on all roads to 20mph. The Town Council will seek to work with partners to explore the feasibility of such ideas.

### Case study: a small cycling city

Goes, in Zeeland, The Netherlands, has a population of 27,000 people. Recently, major investment in cycling infrastructure has helped seen the mode share for journeys made by bike for short journeys (those defined as being up to 7.5km) increase to 50%.

The town includes a network of primary and secondary cycle routes, as well as coastal paths. Major junction redesign, including those near a local school, have helped improve safety and relieve congestion on the ring road.

The town was shortlisted as Dutch 'Cycling City' in both 2008 and 2016.



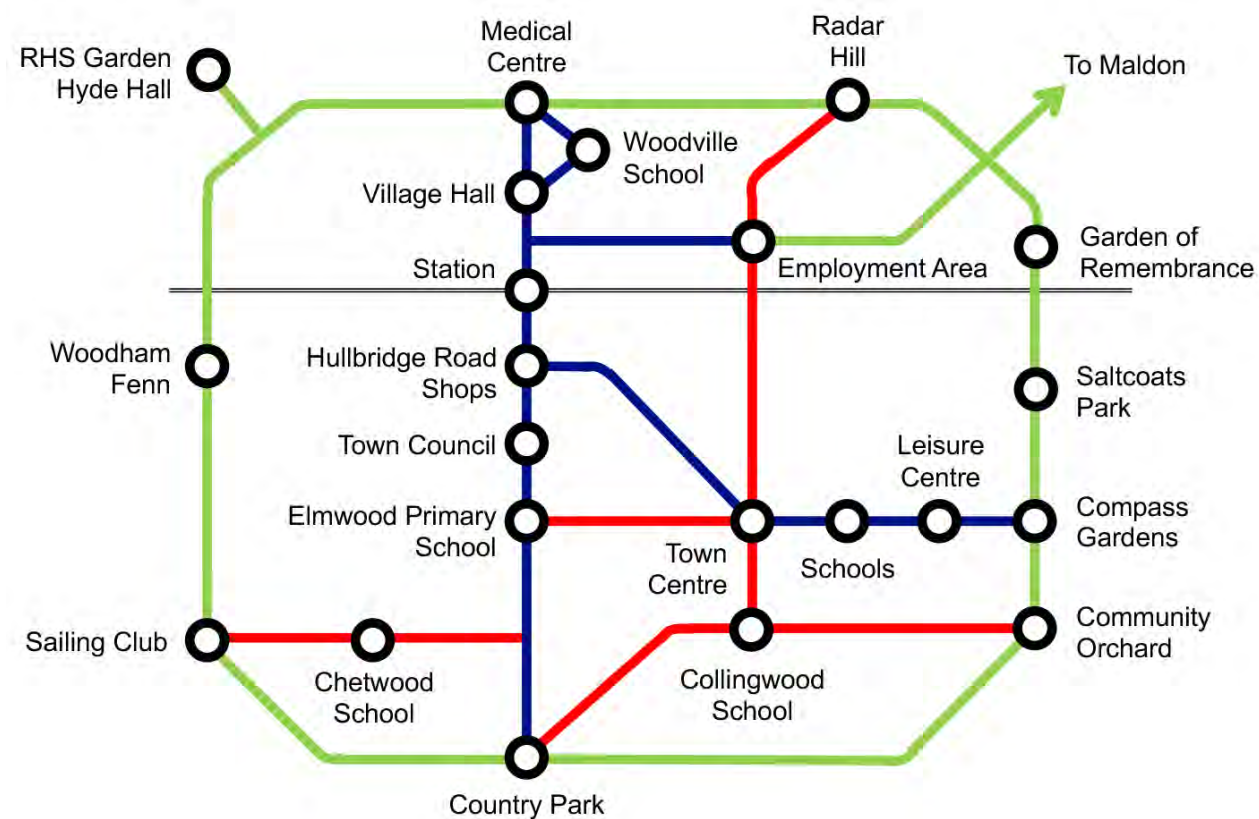


Figure 25: A connected town-wide grid of cycle routes enabling everyday journeys to be made between the home, leisure, employment and other activities.

### Case study: applying 'Dutch' cycle principles

Canmore, in Alberta, Canada, is a town of 14,000. Located in the Rockies, streets and spaces are being redesigned along 'Dutch principles' to increase the proportion of all journeys made by foot and by bicycle to 30%.

Segregated cycle lanes have been installed, with Dutch-style red paving used to make these highly visual. Other design tools have also been employed, including street tree planting and a reduction in overall road widths. These changes signal to motorists that they are 'guest in the street'. As a result, driver behaviour is changing, slowing traffic and making streets and spaces safer for all. This, coupled with introduction of greenery, also makes walking and cycling a more attractive proposition, reducing the volume of local journeys made by car.

## Alleyways

5.9 The original design of South Woodham Ferrers included a network of footpaths and alleyways, connecting residential streets with schools and the town centre. Although these allow for relatively quick journeys by foot across town there are a series of issues related to them. These include:

- Concerns about personal safety, perceived or otherwise, particularly because in many places they are indirect and do not benefit from entrances or windows overlooking them. They are, in many cases, a route 'around the back' of residential properties.
- A lack of lighting, particularly after sunset, which comprises their use.
- Poor maintenance, including overgrown vegetation, presence of litter and graffiti, reducing the attractiveness of these as routes people will use on a regular basis.

5.10 These factors, accompanied by the indirect road network, can make use of the car a more attractive proposition than walking and cycling. Through consultation, strong support was given to improving the quality of the alleyway network.



Figure 26: Example of an existing alleyway in South Woodham Ferrers. Could the space be opened up and made more attractive to users, including new development frontages and accessible community gardens?





Figure 27: This new development in Cambridge<sup>16</sup> shows how alleyways can be successfully incorporated within new development, making these safe and attractive for all to use at all times of the day, encouraging people to walk and promoting active and healthy lifestyles. Opportunities to retrofit existing alleyways along these lines should be explored.

5.11 The Town Council is keen to encourage active travel and recognises the benefits of a well-connected network of walking routes. However, interventions are required to make the existing routes more conducive to use. These might include:

- Opening up routes wherever possible, removing unnecessary walls and fencing between public spaces, creating a sense of space.
- Encouraging the provision of new frontages onto the routes, either through new development or adaptation and extension of existing development over time.
- Identifying potential for provision of more direct routes.
- Re-using redundant or under-utilised space within and along routes for other uses, such as installation of community gardens, increasing community ownership and maintenance of space, whilst also contributing to the greening of the town.
- Installation of lighting to increase the perception of safety and the use of routes.

5.12 Where areas of new development are proposed and these are to integrate pedestrian routes, these should, as outlined above, be direct, well overlooked, landscaped and lit. Wherever there are stretches of footpaths without a direct frontage onto them, these stretches should be short.

## Policy SWF MA2: Alleyways

Where new development is proposed adjacent to an existing alleyway applicants are, where possible, encouraged to provide new entrances and windows that face onto the footpath. Where practicable, development should consider how any route might be made more direct, with a clear visual link from each end of the footpath established.

Where new footpaths are proposed within a development proposal these should be short, direct and overlooked with doors and windows opening onto the route.

Where appropriate, low level lighting should be provided and designed to respect the amenity of any neighbouring residential properties.

## Project SWF MA6: Alleyway transformation projects

The Town Council is keen to work with partners to deliver transformational projects that improve the quality and attractiveness of the alleyway network such that they become a more attractive proposition for people to use on a regular basis. Projects include:

- a. Opening up enclosed spaces wherever possible through removal of walls and fences between public and semi-public spaces.
- b. Encouraging community use and ownership of the alleyways and spaces through a programme of community gardening initiatives.
- c. Establishing a regular programme of maintenance.

## Case study: creating a community garden

Lamlash Street, SE11, London, is a reclaimed road in a residential area that has been transformed from an unloved fly-tipping hotspot into a thriving community garden.

It has become a new social space in the heart of the neighbourhood, mixing places to sit and relax with opportunities for local food production, including seasonal fruit and vegetables, and an 'urban mini-orchard' of plum, apple, pear, cobnut and fig trees.

It has become an active and well-used pedestrian route and, in 2016, was awarded 'Cleaner Greener Safer Funding' by Southwark Council to expand the project.

<sup>16</sup> Image source © 2019 Google (Image capture: July 2015)





Figure 28: Lamlash Street in London has been reimagined as a traffic free community garden. It provides a direct link between adjacent streets and opportunities for local food production.



Figure 29: This 'mini front garden' project in Southfields, south west London, is a neighbourhood initiative that seeks to foster community ownership and civic pride through conversion of 'grey' areas into space for biodiversity and local food production, reusing under-utilised spaces in the public realm.

## Public transport

- 5.13 Provision of good public transport services are essential to creation of a socially inclusive community, providing opportunities for all to access services and employment opportunities. Within South Woodham Ferrers, bus links between the residential areas, the railway station, town centre and new medical centre to the north of the town are important. Bus and rail links to destinations outside of South Woodham Ferrers are also important: rail for those commuting to London, and bus for those commuting for work elsewhere, in Chelmsford for example.
- 5.14 The quality and frequency of services at present is limited, with many of those who can, travelling by car instead. Anecdotally, many respondents through the consultation process have said that they drive to Wickford in order to travel by train to London as the service there is more frequent. However, many respondents have raised concern about traffic congestion and the impact of this on journey times. Travelling by car contributes to congestion. Promoting an improved public transport service, with regular and direct links to key destinations, would help influence a mode shift away from the car to public transport services and, at the same time, relieve congestion and free-up space for those who need to travel by car.

### Policy SWF MA3: Public transport

Proposals for development should respond to the need to reduce the generation of road traffic and help reduce air and noise pollution. Development should, where appropriate to the scale of proposals, incorporate sustainable transport measures, including new bus routing, new or improved waiting facilities, and or accessibility to services.

Proposals that support provision of improved bus services to Chelmsford and Wickford, as well as between the Northern Growth Area, railway station and town centre will be encouraged.

### Project SWF MAC: Public transport services

The Town Council is keen to explore opportunities to work with partners, including Essex County Council, the Train Operating Company and the developers of the Northern Growth Area, which, subject to feasibility work, would deliver improvements to public transport services between South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford and Wickford station. The Town Council would like to see the quality of bus waiting facilities improved, integrating technology into these, providing real time journey information.



## New technology

- 5.15 The way in which people move, own and access means of transport is evolving, with new concepts, such as 'mobility as service'<sup>17</sup> and the e-vehicle revolution, providing new choice and opportunity. With technology rapidly advancing, and the climate change agenda given ever more emphasis, the role and future of traditional modes of transport, based around private car use and ownership, will need to be questioned.
- 5.16 The House of Commons cross-party Science and Technology Select Committee has recently reported<sup>18</sup> that, if the UK is to meet climate change targets, then transport solutions are required. It reports that 'in the long-term, widespread personal vehicle ownership does not appear to be compatible with significant decarbonisation'. Improvements in public transport, walking and cycling are supported.
- 5.17 The Government is committed, through the 'Road to Zero' Strategy<sup>19</sup>, to half of all new car sales being ultra-low emission vehicles by 2030 (with the sale of all petrol and diesel vehicles phased out by 2040), whilst also rolling-out the necessary infrastructure to support provision of electric vehicles. The National Infrastructure Audit<sup>20</sup> goes further than this and includes recommendations that are based on preparing for the sale of all new cars by 2030 to be electric. More recently, the Government has launched a consultation<sup>21</sup> on proposals to make it mandatory for all new homes to be fitted with an electric car charging point.
- 5.18 Support will be given to projects and proposals that embed new technologies, providing a wider range of choice and opportunity for all. Such technology should be designed such that it does not cause obstruction within the public realm (e.g.: e-vehicle charging points and cables placed on the footway which impede pedestrian movement).
- 5.19 Where mobility is provided as service, through car sharing and docking points for bikes for example, these should be located within a convenient walk of the home and main destination (such as the town centre and other places of work), encouraging their use. Where provided in the public realm, these should replace existing car parking provision, encouraging a modal shift away from use of the private car.
- 5.20 Research undertaken by Transport Systems Catapult<sup>22</sup> provides an overview of Mobility as a Service, how it works, and examples of how it might be used on a day-to-day basis. It notes that transport services need to better suit customers' circumstances and provide options that align with their lifestyles. Traditional 'one size fits all' approaches are no longer an option.



Figure 30: Example of a shared charging point for various E-Vehicles (including cars, bikes and scooters) located within a public car park

<sup>17</sup> See, for more information: <https://maas-alliance.eu/homepage/what-is-maas/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news-parliament-2017/clean-growth-report-published-17-19/>

<sup>19</sup> Department for Transport, July 2018, The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy

<sup>20</sup> National Infrastructure Commission, National Infrastructure Audit, July 2018

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/electric-car-chargepoints-to-be-installed-in-all-future-homes-in-world-first>

<sup>22</sup> Transport Systems Catapult, Mobility as a Service: Exploring the opportunity for mobility as a service in the UK, July 2016



5.21 Mobility as Service, in its current form, works through an app that enables customers to access a journey planner to show which route and combination of modes are available, including public transport, docked hire vehicles or on-demand services. Research undertaken on behalf of the Government<sup>23</sup> acknowledges that Mobility as Service will transform the way in which we travel, and that this needs reflecting in policy decisions. The research states:

*"MaaS potentially offers a paradigm shift from transport being fundamentally provider-led (i.e.: where fixed capacity is provided to serve a predictable demand), to being a fully user-led system whereby the level and type of transport supply continually adjust in response to the specific desires of individual travelers."*

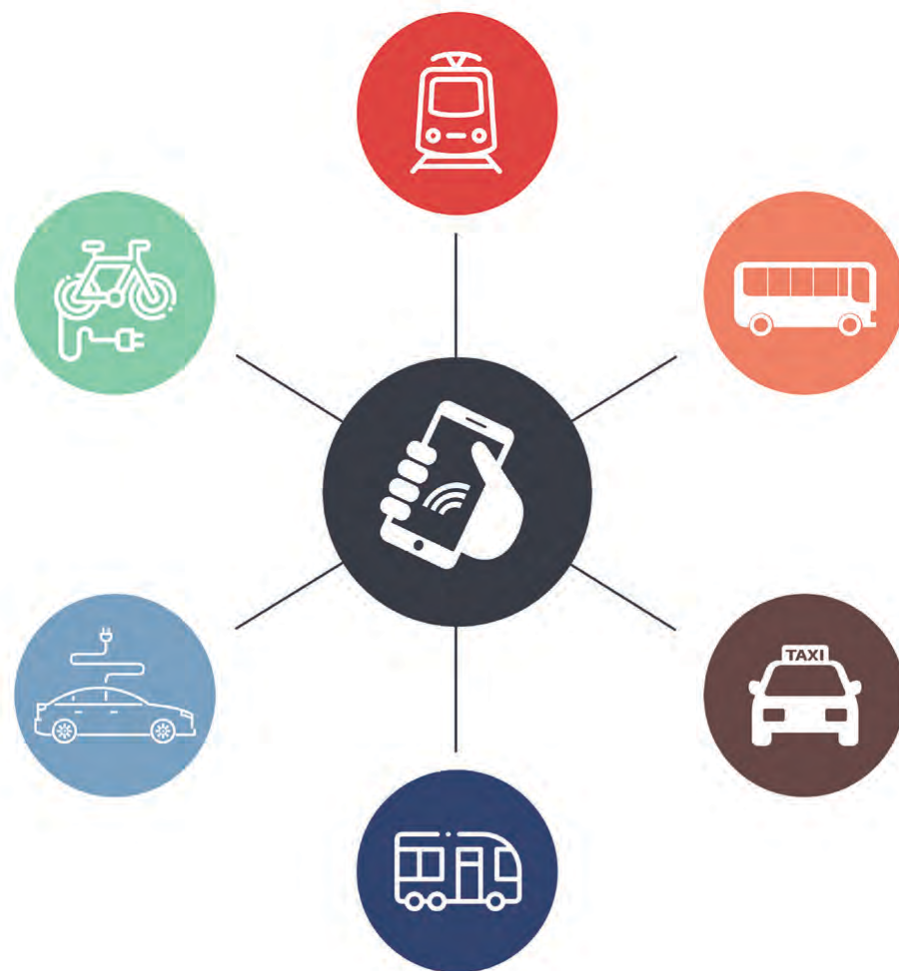


Figure 31: Provision of mobility as service alongside an improved public transport, walking and cycling network, can combine to make these attractive alternatives to private car use and ownership

5.22 It is recognized that people in South Woodham Ferrers will continue to own cars, and that they will continue to be used for some journeys. The provision of new technology and mobility solutions is though intended to provide wider choice and opportunity for all, reducing reliance on private car ownership and use, contributing to an improved environment.

**Policy SWF MA4: E-vehicles and transport as service**

Proposals for major development should explore how new mobility solutions including car sharing and mobility as service can be incorporated within the scheme. Such provision should, where practicable, include e-vehicle charging and docking points.

Proposals for e-vehicle charging points and shared mobility infrastructure within the public realm are welcome. Where proposed, they should be located sensitively to ensure that there are no harmful impacts upon pedestrian circulation or the immediate appearance of the street scene and wider townscape. Wherever possible, public EV charging infrastructure, such as cabling, should be provided in such a way that it can be expanded in the future to provide additional charging points.

<sup>23</sup> Foresight, Government Office for Science, December 2018, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) in the UK: change and its implications





# 6. Green space & natural environment

## Objective 03:

To integrate surrounding green space into the town and create new green space for the use and enjoyment of all, whilst also delivering environmental benefits.

## The ‘green necklace’

- 6.1 The natural setting of the town is a major asset. In particular, the presence of the Marsh Farm Country Park, the riparian environment of the River Crouch, network of creeks and views across these give the town character. But these assets are on the edge of the town. Despite the original masterplan for South Woodham Ferrers envisaging it as the riverside country town, there is little connection with the surrounding assets, or indeed, sense of these within the town. Better connections with and integration of the natural environment within the built form should be considered in future change. Indeed, ‘greening’ the existing built-up area will also help address matters such as flood risk.
- 6.2 Opportunities should be taken that allow for enjoyment of the green and blue space by all, connecting these with the existing built form and integrating new green space within the new Northern Growth Area. This should be done in such a way that provides space for enjoyment but without placing additional visitor and recreational pressures on the River Crouch environment.
- 6.3 Associated with this is the nature of the street environment. Periphery roads around South Woodham Ferrers are just that, and restrict movement: Saltcoats Park to the east of town for example is ‘cut off’ from the neighbouring residential area, despite presence of sport and play facilities. Improved crossing points to enable all people to cross and access the Park, and all green spaces, are required.

## Policy SWF GS1: Completing the Green Necklace

Development in the Northern Growth Area should include accessible green space that complements and completes the network of green infrastructure around the town, allowing for a continuous network of walking routes that are accessible to all. The type and mix of green space provided should be in line with standards established by Chelmsford City Council.

Proposals for new development should consider the potential for incorporating greenery with the street network, through provision of street tree planting, green spaces and sustainable urban drainage systems wherever possible.

Wherever possible, connections and crossing points should be provided along Ferrers and Burnham Road that are safe for pedestrians and cyclists, which connect with existing rights of way and other established routes.

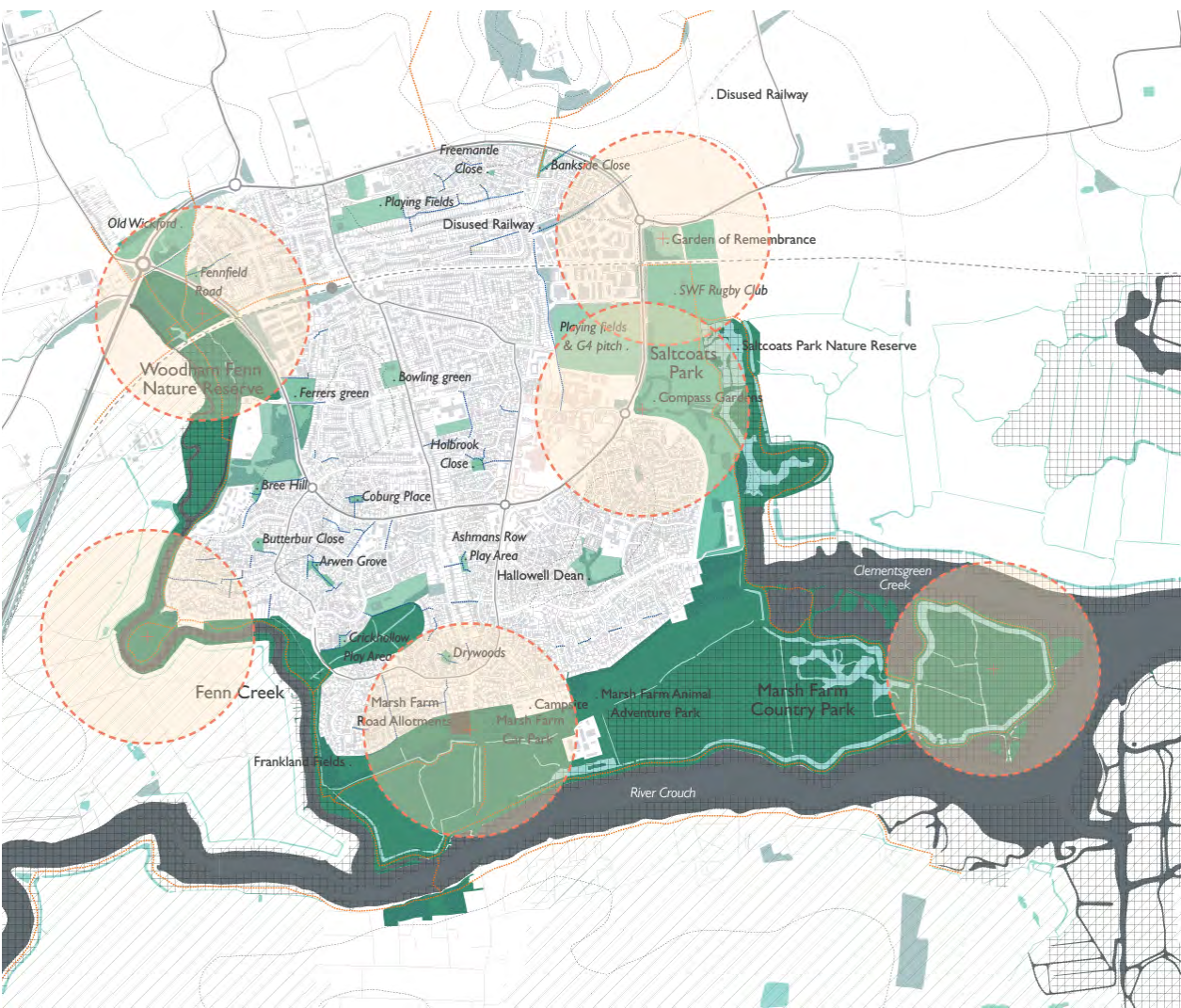


Figure 32: The above plan shows the location of green space provision within and around the town, and, by way of the circles, five minute walking distances from these spaces. The plan shows that although the town is surrounded by green space much of this is outside of a reasonable walking distance of many residents. Equally, there is limited provision of green space within the town. Opportunities that provide new green space and improved access to this are encouraged, including new green space provision within the Northern Growth Area, the greening of existing streets, through landscaping, and safer routes for all between the home and green space network. Provision of a green corridor within the Northern Growth Area, combined with accessible routes, would complete the network of green space around the town, strengthening the unique setting of the town and providing a leisure and recreational resource for all to enjoy.



## Avenues and Connections

- 6.4 As noted above, although the town is surrounded by high quality natural and amenity space, access to these is limited, as is green space provision in the built-up area. Access to and extensions of the green infrastructure network is required, including the potential retrofitting of existing streets and spaces.
- 6.5 The existing network of streets within South Woodham Ferrers include, in places, mown grass verges. These provide scope to integrate street tree planting and other landscaping, including raingardens and planting of wildflowers. This would transform the nature of the urban environment, providing a link between the built area and surrounding green space, whilst also enhancing biodiversity and flood management. Replanting mown verges with wildflowers would also bring cost benefits, reducing the need for regular maintenance.

### Project SWF GSa: Street greening

The Town Council is keen to promote delivery of greener streets throughout South Woodham Ferrers.

The Town Council is keen to work with partners, including the City and County Council, to explore how underused green spaces and roadside verges might be better used to increase biodiversity value, provide new wildlife habitats and space for local food production. Reuse of such space for raingardens and wildflower meadows is encouraged, and which would also help manage surface water run-off.

The associated management and maintenance regimes would be agreed with the relevant authorities.

### Case study: from grey to green

The city of Sheffield is surrounded by spectacular countryside, parks and gardens. The Grey to Green project has brought this colour into the city centre, transforming streets into vibrant, green and attractive public spaces.

Phase I is now complete. A large area of wild flowers, trees and shrubs have replaced redundant carriageway. Public art and provision of benches provide an opportunity for people to linger in these spaces, enjoying the sights and scents of the plant life and associated wildlife it attracts.

The scheme also acts as a new rain garden, helping to manage flood risk and surface water run-off. This is an award winning scheme delivered in partnership by Sheffield City Council and Sheffield City Region.



Figure 33: There is plenty of scope within existing streets in South Woodham Ferrers to introduce new landscaping



Figure 34: Example in Kent of trees and wild flowers alongside the street, bringing biodiversity and environmental benefits



## Creating 'Play Streets' and 'Homezones'

- 6.6 Many of the residential streets in South Woodham Ferrers take the form of a cul-de-sac and are dominated by the street environment and parking of cars, with housing built close to the pavement edge. As a result there is a lack of greenery within many of these streets. At the same time, and because of the cul-de-sac and main road network, access to green space for play and recreation is limited. This is recognised in the Chelmsford Open Space study<sup>24</sup>, which notes that although there is good provision of natural green space surrounding the town, the walking catchment of these is limited, and that there is a shortfall of allotments, amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth play space in the town.
- 6.7 Opportunities for improving access to and provision of green space in the existing built environment is actively encouraged and can bring numerous benefits, helping facilitate healthy and active lifestyles, strengthening community cohesion, and delivering environmental benefits through a net increase in biodiversity and local management of surface water flooding.
- 6.8 Transforming existing residential streets into Play Streets or Homezones is one strategy to help create greener, safer streets for residents while also creating connections with the surrounding natural environment. The concept derives from The Netherlands, where such streets are known as 'Woonerfs'. These streets typically include shared spaces, greening, traffic calming and low speed limits. A central goal of the concept being to remove the traditional segregation of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians in public spaces and encourage natural human interaction. A central goal of the concept is to remove the traditional segregation of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians in public spaces and encourage natural human interaction.

### Case study: a UK pilot Homezone scheme

The Methleys neighbourhood in Leeds was one of the first to pilot the Homezone approach in the UK. The area contains 300 properties and is home to around 700 people.

A 'turf the street' project was initially tested prior to transformation as a Homezone. The scheme has involved the narrowing of the road, and corresponding expansion of pavement areas, traffic calming, speed restrictions and new shared road surfaces, with coloured block paving and extensive planting.

Residents have reported reduced traffic and parking problems, lower speeds and improved air quality. The scheme has also improved the appearance of the area, increased street based activity and opportunities for children's play.

The scheme was funded by a pilot project set up by the Department for Transport. A detailed case study of the pilot project is available via: <https://trl.co.uk/sites/default/files/TRL586.pdf>

### Project SWF GSb: Play Streets and Homezones

The Town Council is keen to explore opportunities for transforming existing culs-de-sac into Play Streets and Homezones. This would need to involve the cooperation of homeowners and close partnership with the relevant authorities, including the local highways authority, to identify a pilot project to trail this concept, ahead of any longer term roll-out of such a project.

Identification of a pilot project would enable funding streams to be identified to help facilitate such transformation, with management and maintenance regimes and responsibilities established as a result of the trail.

Ahead of this, temporary applications for street closures as part of annual car free days and other similar events are encouraged and can be used to monitor the community benefits.

The Neighbourhood Plan encourages the Northern Growth Area to plan for and accommodate play streets and homezones within the new development area. The lessons of these schemes will be used to inform design solutions for the retrofitting of existing residential streets.



Figure 35: Concept illustration of Play Street / Homezone concept applied to a typical residential street in South Woodham Ferrers

<sup>24</sup> Chelmsford City Council, Chelmsford Open Space Study: Green space area profiles, 2016-2036





# 7. Northern growth area

## Objective 04:

*To successfully integrate new growth and expansion with the existing built form and communities, providing housing choice and opportunities, as well as new community infrastructure, for the benefit of all.*

- 7.1 The northern growth area is a major area of opportunity for new growth and development in South Woodham Ferrers. Allocated in the emerging Chelmsford City Local Plan for around 1,000 new homes and other supporting uses, it is anticipated that development will take place over a ten-year period from 2020/21.
- 7.2 The emerging Local Plan establishes the parameters for new development and the principles that need to be considered. It is expected that a masterplan will be prepared for approval by the City Council and that development proposals should accord with this. Material submitted by the City Council for the examination of the Local Plan establish the masterplan protocols. It is noted that the masterplan should be prepared by the applicant for development in agreement with the City Council and that, once approved, it will sit alongside the Local Plan.
- 7.3 However, the emerging Local Plan clearly states that *“although the development quantum and extent of the allocation is set out in the Local Plan, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan being prepared in South Woodham Ferrers is envisaged to help shape this allocation”*.
- 7.4 Through work on the Neighbourhood Plan, which has included discussion with the City Council and the developers of the northern growth area, as well as community consultation events, a concept masterplan (Figure 37) has been prepared that should be used to help guide development.

## Integrating with the existing built-form

- 7.5 The original masterplan for South Woodham Ferrers saw Burnham Road as the northern limit of the town. With the requirement to accommodate future growth and development, and the allocation of the Northern Growth Area in the Local Plan to help achieve this, Burnham Road will be 'breached'.
- 7.6 Burnham Road is the main east-west route for vehicular movements in the area, connecting the Dengie Peninsula with Basildon. Junctions on the Burnham Road also comprise the main points of vehicular access into (and out of) South Woodham Ferrers.
- 7.7 Burnham Road is a barrier to movement, carrying fast moving traffic, and is difficult to cross. Indeed, review of traffic accident data since 2010<sup>25</sup> shows a high occurrence of accidents on Burnham Road between the junctions with Ferrers Road and Hullbridge Road.
- 7.8 Questions have arisen through the work on the Neighbourhood Plan (and, before that, on the emerging Chelmsford Local Plan), as to how the wider movement function of Burnham Road might be retained whilst making conditions safer for all and enabling growth to be integrated with the existing built-form. A range of options and the implications of these have been looked at, including:
- Creation of a new northern by-pass, redirecting east west traffic. Such an approach would be very expensive and, given the topography and wider landscape constraints, would result in a significant diversion and added cost implications. This option was ruled out through the Local Plan.
  - Creation of segregated crossings (e.g.: pedestrian bridges) along Burnham Road. Similar to above, provision of bridges would be costly and complex, potentially requiring land acquisition on the southern side of Burnham Road to enable routes up to bridge level to be provided. Given the sensitive nature of the Radar Hill environment, such crossings would likely have visual consequences. Furthermore, the solution retains the status quo: that prominence is given to vehicular movements and that the road would remain a physical barrier to movement.
  - Downgrading Burnham Road to provide seamless crossings and connections between the growth area and existing built-up area. This would see Burnham Road transformed into a street, changing the nature of driver behaviour. It was thought by some respondents to previous consultation events that, with vehicle movements associated with the growth area accessing Burnham Road, plus potential growth from development further to the east in the Dengie Peninsula, this might lead to congestion and conflicts between users.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.crashmap.co.uk>

7.9 Through work on the Neighbourhood Plan a concept masterplan has been prepared (Figure 37). A fourth, preferred option, for resolving the integration issue is shown on this. This suggests that:

- The carriageway width of Burnham Road should be reduced to allow for one lane of traffic in each direction (as is currently the case), but that less space is available for motor vehicles, and thus traffic will be slowed as a result, making this safer for all to cross.
- New pedestrian and cycle crossings are provided along Burnham Road, located such that they connect with the existing network of routes and links in the built-up area. These are needed in any event and irrespective of future housing growth to enable the community to access the new superstore and health centre, as well as integrating with public rights of way that provide access to the countryside. Where crossings are provided, cycle provision should be integrated, and reflect best practice design solutions, including those typical of The Netherlands.
- Multiple points of vehicular access into the development area are provided, from Burnham Road, from the B1418 towards Bicknacre, and from Willow Grove. This will help disburse vehicular movements.
- A central street is provided through the growth area, connecting Burnham Road, the B1418 and Willow Grove. This provides a secondary route which will provide choice and disburse vehicular traffic. It will also help build resilience into the network.
- The central street should be designed such that it can accommodate bus provision, with all homes being in walking distance of bus stops.
- Within the development area, housing and other uses should be aligned to front Burnham Road and other routes, creating active frontages and which change the nature of the street from one designed primarily for vehicles to one that balances the need for vehicular movement with the wider placemaking agenda, resulting in streets and spaces that are safe and attractive places for all.

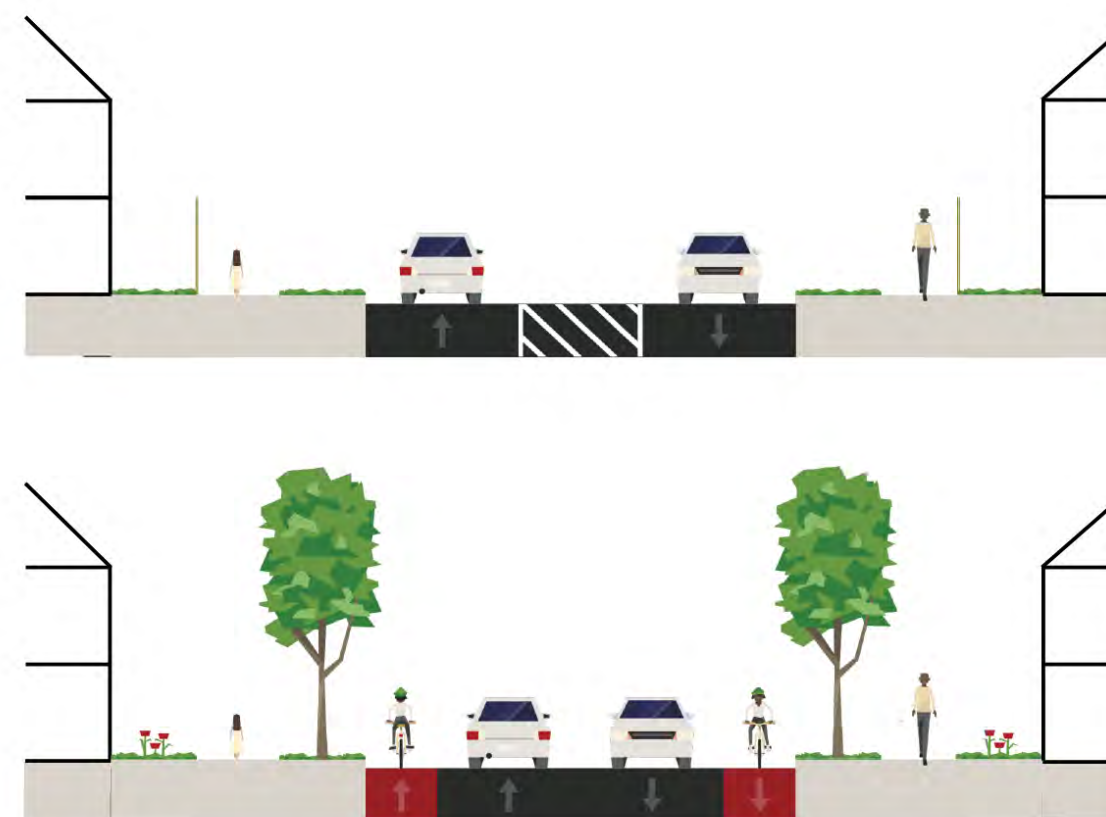


Figure 36: (Top) – cross section illustrating the typical main road alignment in South Woodham Ferrers, with houses and private gardens backing onto a generous road width. (Bottom) – cross section illustrating the structure of a potential central street through the new Northern Growth Area, providing space for different modes of transport and creating a more attractive landscaped route for pedestrians, with housing fronting onto this.

### Case study: a central ‘main street’

The Sherford urban extension, in Plymouth, is a growth area accommodating 5,500 new homes. The scheme, which is under construction, is structured around the concept of a new main street. This forms the central spine of the development.

Although the central street is classified as an arterial route (a high capacity road), it is designed to balance this function with its place-making role: local centres, squares, schools and homes are directly accessed from and front on to the main street, and pedestrian crossing points are provided along its length.



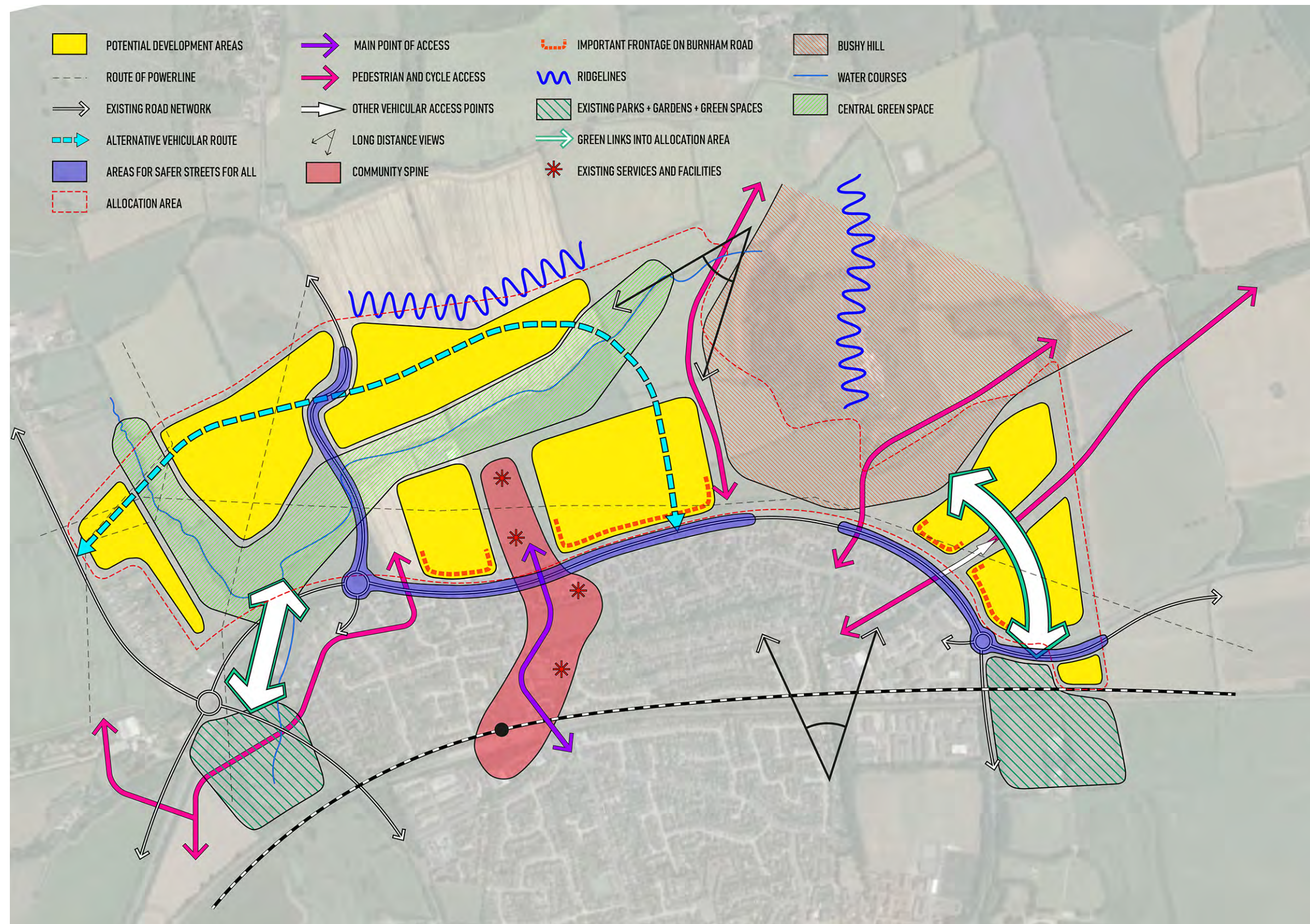


Figure 37: Concept masterplan of Northern Growth Area



# Growth area layout, mix and disposition of uses

7.10 The Chelmsford City Local Plan establishes the overall policy framework for the Northern Growth Area, including principles for development and the mix of uses to be provided. Based on consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan and studies in support of this a set of more locally specific principles are presented in the policy below and illustrated on the concept masterplan (Figure 37). These are intended to influence creation of a well-designed, accessible and permeable new neighbourhood that is connected with and feels part of the existing town.

## Case study: a new, walkable, urban extension

Nansledan is an urban extension of Newquay, in Cornwall. Newquay has a current population of approximately 20,000 people. Development of the first phase of development of 800 homes is now underway at Nansledan. Later phases will increase this to 4,000 homes.

The urban extension is built to a design code reflecting the local vernacular and use of a 'local pattern book'. It is based on a legible street-network, with all routes and spaces overlooked by buildings. Efficient use of land means all homes are within walking distance of services and facilities.

A Community Orchard has been provided as part of the urban extension. This provides a link between the new and existing community. It has created social cohesion and strengthened local identity, being a place for community activity and social interaction. Food grown at the orchard is sold in local market and used in local restaurants.



Figure 38: Bushy (Radar) Hill forms an important backdrop to South Woodham Ferrers, the setting of which should be protected.

## Policy SWF NGA1: Placemaking principles

Proposals for development of the Northern Growth Area will be informed by a masterplan to be prepared by the applicant which incorporates the following principles:

- a. Provide for an accessible, central green space that helps create and complete the green necklace of connected routes around the town.
- b. Focus development on the flatter parts of the site, such that it does not encroach on Bushy Hill, nor the ridgeline to the north of the site, preserving long distance views to these.
- c. Incorporate existing streams and water features within the site into green spaces and streets, forming a network of sustainable urban drainage across the site. These might also be integrated within the street.
- d. Retain existing rights of way across the site and establish new walking and cycling routes that connect with these.
- e. Reopen the route of the former South Woodham Ferrers to Maldon railway as a green walking and cycling corridor.
- f. Provide safe crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists at key points along Burnham Road, allowing safe use of the rights of way and other places of entry into the site. Segregated cycle infrastructure should be provided at crossing points and junctions.
- g. Create new development frontages along the northern side of Burnham Road, helping to change the nature of the street and driver behavior.
- h. Incorporate a new central street through the site, which allows access into the site for busses, as well as multiple points of vehicle access. Wherever possible, bus stops should be located so that all residents are within walking distance of a bus stop.
- i. Provide for a network of permeable and well overlooked walking routes through the site.
- j. Provision of a mix of housing types set around pedestrian and cycle friendly streets and spaces, including mews type streets, play streets and homezones.
- k. Focus provision of any onsite community uses close to the new medical centre, such that they create a cluster of uses and activities aligned along a central spine connecting with Hullbridge Road, the existing Village Hall, Station and Neighbourhood Centre, linking the new community with the existing.
- l. Respect the sensitive setting of the Garden of Remembrance. Land to the east of the Garden and within the Growth Area should form part of the 'green necklace' around the town.
- m. Provide new employment floorspace in close location to either (i) existing employment uses on Hamberts Road, or (ii) close to the new Medical Centre, creating a local centre, subject to proposed uses being complementary to the Medical Centre and adjacent residential properties.
- n. The layout of development should not preclude the longer-term opportunity to bury or divert the overhead power cables.



# Housing

- 7.11 As noted in Section 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan there is a predominance of family-sized housing in South Woodham Ferrers. However, as the town has matured, so has the age structure. This is reflected in average household size, there being a large proportion of married or co-habiting couples without dependent children in the home. It is important the Northern Growth Area provides for a mix of housing types, including those for new families as well as those looking to move into their first home, or those who wish to downsize. This will help provide a balanced mix. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) prepared by the Council indicates the broad mix of housing sizes to be provided within new development which the application for the Northern Growth Area will be expected to comply with.
- 7.12 The provision of specific housing types in response to the SHMA represents a need at a specific point in time. As demographic patterns change so need may change. Opportunities that allow people to remodel their home to allow for changing circumstances are encouraged. Subject to compliance with Building Regulations, flexible, loose-fit housing models that allow the owner to remodel the internal space to suit their needs over time, but at minimal cost, should be explored. This might be provided through market housing and or through self and custom housing opportunities.
- 7.13 The Chelmsford City Local Plan (at Policy HO1) requires provision of plots for self and or custom build housing on major development sites. The masterplan for the Northern Growth Area will be expected to identify a suitable location and plots for provision of this housing type. It is anticipated that the overall developer of the Northern Growth Area will provide the supporting infrastructure and services for each plot before these are sold.
- 7.14 Plot passports should be provided that establish the parameters within which these new homes can be designed and built, allowing for individual interpretation but within a framework that establishes the grain, scale and rhythm of new development.
- 7.15 Plot passports are in effect a summary of the design parameters for any given plot, helping private homebuilders understands what they are allowed to build on the plot. They capture key information from the planning permission for the site, design constraints and procedural requirements. The passports clearly show permissible building lines within which the new dwelling can be built as well as height restrictions and other details such as parking requirements. Aspects such as materials, roof styles and fenestration are usually left for the plot owner to decide.
- 7.16 A range of housing models and delivery might come forward on the self and custom build plots, including shared delivery through collaboration. To allow this, any area of self or custom build should be no smaller than ten plots in size.

## Policy SWF NGA2: Housing

The Northern Growth Area will provide for a range of housing types and sizes in line with the most up-to-date available information of housing needs.

Subject to compliance with Building Regulations, the applicant is encouraged to explore provision of flexible, loose-fit housing types. This includes multi-generational homes that enable part of the unit to be subdivided as a separate stand alone unit with its own entrance, allowing older children and elderly family members to live independently. The concept of Lifetime homes and provision of flexible internal layouts responding to life cycle changes are encouraged.

Development in the Northern Growth Area will make provision for self and custom build housing. No less than 5% of the total proposed housing shall be for self and custom build housing.

The location of these will be determined through the overall masterplan for the Growth Area. Areas for self and custom build housing should be no smaller than ten plots. This will allow opportunities for co-housing schemes and other collaborative delivery models to come forward.

For the area of self and custom build housing the applicant shall prepare a set of individual plot passports. These will regulate the form of development, establishing building parameters, such as height, footprint, set-backs and parking requirements. Individual plots will be provided with the necessary services by the developer to allow for connection to utilities.

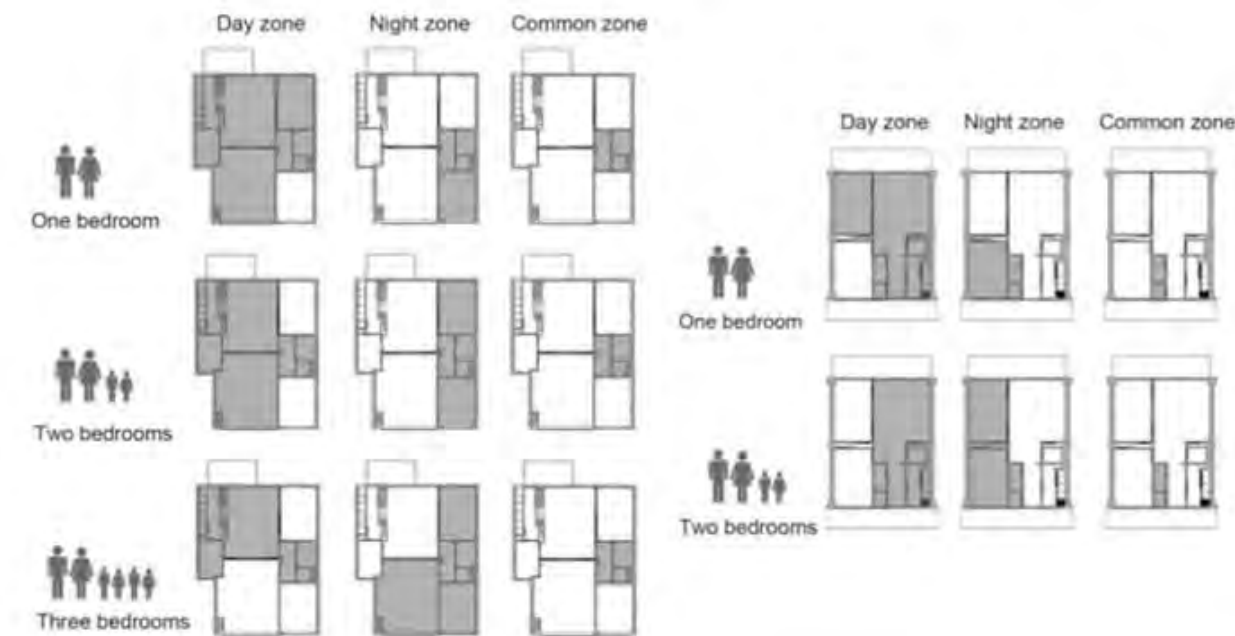


Figure 39: Illustration of a flexible, loose fit dwelling, showing how the house might be adapted to suit different demographic circumstances (image source: planningtank.com)

## Social and community facilities

- 7.17 The Chelmsford City Local Plan requires that the Northern Growth Area incorporate provision of a new primary school, to be co-located with an early years and childcare nursery. A further early years and childcare facility is also required.
- 7.18 Provision of the primary school is triggered by the child yield ratio deriving from the quantum of homes to be provided on the site. This would result in the provision of a new primary school in close proximity to the existing Woodville Primary school located in the north of South Woodham Ferrers.
- 7.19 There are parts of South Woodham Ferrers where school provision is limited. In the south west of the town the Chetwood Primary school was recently closed down due to falling pupil numbers. The school has since been repurposed for other uses though remains in the ownership of Essex County Council. Those residents of primary school age living in the south west of the town need to travel across the town for education in one of the other schools.
- 7.20 Development of the Northern Growth Area provides the opportunity to plan holistically for school place provision across the town, and thus ensure that all residents are well served by and in walking distance of a primary school. This will also ensure that funding for social and community infrastructure is directed to those places across the town where it is most needed.
- 7.21 Through the masterplan and subsequent planning application process, the developers should work in collaboration with Essex County Council (in their role as Local Education Authority and as Property owner) to explore the most effective provision of school places for the town as a whole. This might result in provision of a new school on the site of the Northern Growth Area but, equally, it might involve expanding an existing school, or reopening and reusing the Chetwood School.
- 7.22 Irrespective of where school place provision is located, routes should be planned that facilitate walking and cycling, and reduce the use of the car as part of the school run. Recommendations and case studies as to how this can be achieved have been prepared by Living Streets<sup>26</sup> and should be referenced as part of the design strategy. Further information on school place planning is provided in the Essex guide to infrastructure contributions<sup>27</sup>.

### Policy SWF NGA3: Facilities

The Northern Growth Area will deliver new primary school provision, which will either be in the form of (a) a new school on the site co-located with early years and childcare facilities, (b) expansion of existing school facilities, or (c) reuse of the former Chetwood school.

The most appropriate form of provision will be agreed through the masterplan process with the appropriate partners and funding agreed in line with guidance established by the City Council and County Council.

Where school places are provided off-site, then two free-standing early years and childcare facilities shall be provided on the site of the Northern Growth Area.

Routes to all facilities will be pedestrian and cycle friendly, allowing safe movement for all. Routes shall be designed that minimise the impact of the vehicular based 'school-run', with limited drop off and waiting facilities provided for vehicles.

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3618/livingstreets\\_school\\_run\\_report\\_web.pdf](https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3618/livingstreets_school_run_report_web.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <https://assets.ctfassets.net/5aKhke88EY5zkdMvSQj44w/33ef01a332384c239a43ecd7b356ed51/developers-guide-infrastructure-contributions.pdf>





*“This ambitious County Council project has become renowned nationally, and indeed internationally, for the innovative way it has developed... The results really speak for themselves, and the local Essex style is much evident... I agree wholeheartedly with the slogan that this is a little piece of Essex created with a lot of imagination”<sup>28</sup>*

Ron Williams, Former Chair, Essex County Council

---

<sup>28</sup> Essex County Council, A Guide to South Woodham Ferrers, 1984



## 8. Design and character

### Objective 05:

*To reflect the legacy of the Essex Design Guide in any new development, delivering high quality design in the built form and surrounding landscape.*

### A legacy of design quality

- 8.1 Good design has a major role in contributing to quality of life and creating attractive, livable places. Good design goes beyond the look of buildings and considers: the mix of uses and activities that help create lively and interesting places; the local character and distinctiveness of a place, reflected through its landscape and building materials for example, contributing to healthy lifestyles by making it easy for people to move by foot and by bike; fostering a sense of community through well designed, functional and attractive public spaces; and enhancing the quality of environment.
- 8.2 The achievement of high quality design is a core principle of the NPPF. It states, at paragraph 124, that *'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps makes development acceptable to communities'*. The importance of the design of the built environment and its contribution to making better places for people is emphasised. It goes on to note that *'Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development'* (paragraph 125).
- 8.3 In short, good design will help create high quality, safe and successful places where people enjoy living, working and visiting. Successful places are those<sup>29</sup>:
- Having a complementary mix of uses and activities.
  - Being fit for purpose, accommodating used well.
  - Encouraging easy movement.
  - Including successful public space.
  - Being able to adapt to changing needs and circumstances.
  - Being efficient in how land and other resources are used.
  - Having an appearance that is appealing and appreciated.
  - Having a distinctive, positive identity and sense of place.



Figure 40: Image from original masterplan document for South Woodham Ferrers, showing a model of one of the proposed housing areas

- 8.4 South Woodham Ferrers is the original Essex Design Guide town. First published in 1973, this forward thinking and ground-breaking document established guidance to shape new development. South Woodham Ferrers stands apart from many other towns of the same growth period, including those in Essex, at Basildon and Harlow, for example, and has a unique character.
- 8.5 Now more than forty years later the Essex Design Guide is in its fourth iteration, having been updated in 2018<sup>30</sup>. This presents new guidance and good practice case studies that should be drawn upon to inform new development, whilst reflecting the 'Essex vernacular'. Equally, new development in South Woodham Ferrers, particularly that to the north, represent a new chapter in the growth and evolution of the town. As with the original planning and development of South Woodham Ferrers, so new growth and development should be of the highest quality, embedding best practice in design.

<sup>29</sup> Source; the Design Companion for Planning and Placemaking, Transport for London (Urban Design London), 2017. This document supports and extends national Planning Practice Guidance and is intended for use by all those involved in the planning and placemaking process to help secure higher standards of urban design and the delivery of better practice.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/>

# Character and identity

- 8.6 New growth and development in South Woodham Ferrers, whether that is in the northern growth area or elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be expected to reflect upon the legacy of the Essex Design Guide and respond to the positive features and qualities of the town.
- 8.7 Alongside this Neighbourhood Plan a Character Area study has been produced<sup>31</sup>. This identifies a series of character areas across the town, positive character features, risks to character, and opportunities. It also considers the street hierarchy and typology of streets, which are central to character and affect the way in which people move around and use the town. Landscape Analysis of South Woodham Ferrers has also been undertaken<sup>32</sup>, identifying the typology of open spaces in and around the town, the potential to integrate with and extend the network of green infrastructure. Key findings from assessment of local character are summarised below, with more information within the Character Area study:

*Within the original village area (1960's – 1970's):*

Positive character features	<p>The interconnected streets make this area more pedestrian and cycling friendly than other parts of the town.</p> <p>The presence of a number of older properties, such as The Railway Pub dating from 1889, gives a sense of the historic development of this area.</p> <p>There are a small number of original plotlands development still evident in the area, which further contextualises this original village area.</p> <p>Unifying character features of the built form include the colour palate, building materials and gabled roofs. The area is generally well maintained.</p>
Issues	<p>The newer housing development to the west that separates this area from the town centre prevents direct pedestrian and bicycle access to the town centre.</p> <p>Alleyway connections are not overlooked and as such do not feel safe.</p> <p>There has been some paving over of front gardens to provide off street parking areas; this reduces the overall verdancy of the streetscene.</p> <p>There is a lack of public open space.</p>
Opportunities	<p>The reintroduction of permeable surfaces into the area would help to maintain a verdant, suburban character.</p> <p>The safety of the alleyway connections could be improved with better lighting and reciting housing to face or overlook the passageways.</p> <p>Connecting the interspersed cycle paths would help to improve their utility.</p>

*Within the 'new town' residential areas (1970's – 2010's):*

Positive character features	<p>Views towards the countryside, the River Crouch and Fenn Creek beyond the area frame the suburban context.</p> <p>Residential areas are adjacent to high quality open spaces.</p> <p>Unifying characteristics of the built form include orange, red and brindle brick, white render and different shades of weather boarding.</p> <p>Houses tend to be set in smaller plots and have short or no setbacks from the road, particularly within culs-de-sac; this distinguishes the area from the older, existing village area.</p> <p>The area is generally well maintained.</p>
Issues	<p>The network of culs-de-sac does not promote walking and cycling, as roads lack interconnections.</p> <p>Some front gardens have been paved over with hard, impermeable surfaces. This reduces suburban verdancy.</p> <p>Fast traffic and a lack of pedestrian crossings along Ferrers Road act as a barrier to movement from the residential developments to the open spaces.</p> <p>The lack of an interconnected network of streets reduces connections from the residential areas to the open spaces and Town Centre.</p>
Opportunities	<p>The area is surrounded by high-quality open space, however the pedestrian and cycle connections to these areas could be improved.</p> <p>Improvement of the disjointed cycle routes could strengthen connections to the town centre and open spaces.</p> <p>Measures to slow down road speeds would improve residential character and improve pedestrian and cycling opportunities.</p> <p>Increasing the verdancy of some of the areas, through "de-paving" and tree planting along roads, would strengthen the suburban character of the area.</p>

<sup>31</sup> Troy Planning + Design for South Woodham Ferrers Town Council, South Woodham Ferrers Character Area Study, March 2019

<sup>32</sup> Troy Planning + Design for South Woodham Ferrers Town Council, South Woodham Ferrers Landscape Analysis, April 2019



*Within the Town Centre:*

Positive character features	<p>The Town Centre has a distinctive built form that clearly distinguishes it from residential areas.</p> <p>The Town Centre is very different to other town centres planned at a similar time in terms of its built form. The Band Stand and Clock Tower are distinctive features and lend a local identity to the Town Centre. There are a number of versatile 'market square' areas.</p> <p>Inchbonnie Road is lined with grass. This improves the pedestrian walking environment.</p>
Issues	<p>There is a lack of a sense of arrival surrounding the Town Centre. This is in part due to the large car park outside Asda, and that there are no long views into the town centre from residential areas.</p> <p>Key entry points to the town centre are dominated by car parks.</p> <p>Car parking dominates a large proportion of the Town Centre, affecting overall walkability.</p> <p>The intricate network of narrow streets is illegible, and affects the overall navigability of the Town Centre. There are a lack of direct pedestrian and cycle connections to the Town Centre from residential areas.</p> <p>There are a series of 'market squares' and open paved spaces. These spaces are competing and many lack a specific role or function.</p> <p>The Town Centre lacks vibrancy as a result of the lack of diversity of uses.</p> <p>The area lacks verdancy which accentuates the impact of traffic.</p> <p>The Town Centre is in poor repair, including the hard and soft landscaped areas, surfaces and signage and street furniture.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Pedestrian and cycle connections through residential development should be improved to reduce the car-centric character of the Town Centre.</p> <p>A sense of arrival at the Town Centre could be improved by reducing the dominance of car parking.</p> <p>Long views into the Town Centre would help to signal the importance of the area.</p> <p>Connections to the market squares within the Town Centre could be improved; this would help to define the role and function of the squares. This could be achieved by 'signalling' main routes within the area, such as with tree planting and more explicit signage.</p> <p>Introducing residential and other uses in the town centre may increase vibrancy.</p>

	<p>Increasing the offer within the town centre for all age groups may help to increase vitality.</p> <p>The utility of the grassy open space to the west of the Town Centre along Inchbonnie Road could be improved.</p>
--	--

*Within the employment areas:*

Positive character features	<p>The built form and materials cohere with adjacent residential areas.</p> <p>The industries located in the employment areas have a minimal impact on residential amenity. This is partly as a result of the road network, which directly connects with main routes, reducing through traffic through residential streets.</p> <p>The Tap Room bar attached to the brewery creates a connection with the adjacent residential areas.</p>
Issues	<p>The dominant barn style typology has blank walls that do not overlook streets.</p> <p>The car dominated nature of the employment area is not conducive to a walkable environment.</p> <p>There is a lack of car parking provision, which results in many cars being parked on the street.</p> <p>Impermeable surfaces dominate in this area, associated with which there is a lack of street greening.</p>
Opportunities	<p>Some active frontages, similar to the Tap Room, along the edges of the employment areas could introduce connections between residential and commercial areas.</p> <p>Verdancy could be introduced along roads to improve the walking environment for pedestrians.</p> <p>Walking and cycling connections to the other parts of the town may help to reduce the dominance of vehicles in this area.</p> <p>Installing windows that overlook streets may help to improve the street environment, especially in regards to walking.</p>



8.8 Applicants for development will be expected to show how they have responded to findings and recommendations of the Character Study, taking a design-led approach to development. Given the legacy of the Essex Design Guide in South Woodham Ferrers, innovative design that promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness is welcome. Contemporary design approaches may be considered acceptable where they respond positively to context. To help deliver design quality, encouragement is given to the use of independent review through the use of design panels.

### Policy SWF DC1: Design

New development in South Woodham Ferrers should contribute to the creation of high quality places through a design-led approach underpinned by good practice principles and reflecting a thorough site-appraisal.

Applications for development should respond to guidance and best practice principles established in the Essex Design Guide, the Chelmsford City Local Plan and the positive design features identified within the South Woodham Ferrers Character Area Study. Schemes, should, wherever possible, support the opportunities for improving character and local conditions identified in the South Woodham Ferrers Character Study.

All buildings, spaces and the public realm should be well-designed and display a high level of architectural quality which responds positively to local context.

Applications for major developments are encouraged to demonstrate how they respond to best practice through submission of a Building for Life 12 assessment (or later equivalent).

Innovative schemes that respond to and reinterpret local design cues, and which demonstrate an imaginative sense of place whilst respecting the surrounding context, are welcome.



Figure 41: Exemplar housing schemes, such as the one above, in Saffron Walden, demonstrate the benefits of a design-led approach, successfully integrating development around a central green spine, and carefully using a limited palette of materials to create unity and interest, whilst successfully managing the impact of the private car on the quality of the street scene and enjoyment of the public realm.



## Parking in residential areas

- 8.9 The quality and provision of car parking can be a major determinant on the quality of place, particularly in residential areas. If it is not provided in the right place, it is unlikely to be used properly. The location and provision of parking should respond to good urban design and placemaking principles<sup>33</sup>, with on-plot and on-street parking provided in close proximity to the home. Rear courtyards should be avoided.
- 8.10 Where parking is provided on-street, consideration should be given to using different materials to define the use of different areas. Where possible, unallocated on-street parking provision, which is more land-efficient than parking courts, should be provided. Applications for proposals in areas of new growth are encouraged to present a street hierarchy and cross sections as part of the pack of submission material, demonstrating how parking will be provided on street. Robust street widths that allow for on-street parking but which also incorporate street trees and landscaping, and are designed to reduce speed in residential areas, will be viewed favourably. Design principles<sup>34</sup> and parking standards published by Essex County Council should also be referred to<sup>35</sup>. Provision of private and visitor parking will also need considering in light of technological changes (e.g.: MaaS) and the impact of this on planning for parking.

### Policy SWF DC2: Parking

Parking within proposed new development, including the northern growth area, shall be designed such that it is used in the way it is intended, avoiding informal parking that undermines the quality of the street environment. Parking should be unobtrusive and in locations that are overlooked. Garages, where proposed, should be set back from the main building line and street trees used to soften the visual impact of parked cars, particularly on street. Proposals for rear or separate parking courts are not encouraged and should only be proposed unless alternative provision is impracticable.

## Design review

- 8.11 The NPPF states (at paragraph 129) that Local Planning Authorities should have access to and make use of tools and processes to assess and improve the design quality of development, including making use of design review arrangements. Design review is a way of assessing the design quality of new developments by an independent panel of experts to help support high standards of design. Guidance on the Design Review process can be found via the Design Council Cabi and Essex County Council websites<sup>36</sup>.
- 8.12 In South Woodham Ferrers it is envisaged that major applications for development, as well as smaller schemes in sensitive or important locations, should be subject to design review. This might include residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals, infrastructure, community facilities, public realm and open space proposals. Design review should take place at the pre-application stage to inform the design process and again following submission of the application, to help inform officer recommendations. The final proposals submitted should show how comments made during the design review have influenced the proposed development.

### Project / Aspiration SWF DCa: Design Review

Emerging schemes for major development should be assessed through design review. Design review of smaller schemes is also encouraged, including those in sensitive or important locations, such as the town centre.

It is envisaged that schemes will be referred to the Quality Review Panel operated by Essex County Council (until such a time that Chelmsford City Council runs and operates a Design Review Panel). It is encouraged that design review takes place early in the process to allow scope for input into the emerging design. The final schemes submitted to the Council should include a report on the design review process and how the scheme has responded to this. Design Review of live applications is also encouraged.

<sup>33</sup> URBED, University of Edinburgh and Design for Homes, 2013, Space to Park, and online resource: <http://www.spacetopark.org>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/design-details/parking-design/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/1960/essex-parking-standards.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/built-environment/design-review>, and <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/qualitypanel/about/>





## 9. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 9.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge levied on development which is payable to the local authority and is intended to be spent on infrastructure projects across the Chelmsford City Council administrative area that help address the demands placed on it resulting from growth. This might include, for example, spending on new transport infrastructure, health and educational facilities, open spaces and sports facilities.
- 9.2 A portion of CIL is payable to the Town Council for spending on local projects in the Neighbourhood Plan area. When the Neighbourhood Plan is made the Town Council will receive 25% of all CIL monies paid to Chelmsford City Council in respect of qualifying development within the Neighbourhood Plan area. In regard to what this money can be spent on, advice suggests<sup>37</sup>:
- "The neighbourhood portion of CIL can be used for a wider range of planning issues than infrastructure as long as they are concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area."*
- 9.3 The Chelmsford City Council CIL Charging Schedule was approved in February 2014 and took effect on 1 June 2014<sup>38</sup>. All applications for development that are above the necessary thresholds will be subject to this charging schedule, or any subsequent updates to it. Payment is linked to an instalments policy, related to the scale and commencement of development. Associated with the Charging Schedule is a 'Regulation 123 List' which outlines the infrastructure items that the City Council will spend CIL receipts on.
- 9.4 Through consultation and work on the Neighbourhood Plan a series of projects have been identified which the Town Council intends to direct the neighbourhood portion of CIL towards. These are referred to through the Neighbourhood Plan, in the green 'projects' boxes and referenced within the CIL policy below. These projects will be kept under review by the Town Council.
- 9.5 Alongside CIL, the City Council will continue to negotiate Section 106 agreements with applicants which can provide funds or works to make development more acceptable in planning terms. The Town Council will liaise with the City Council as to the most appropriate form of Section 106 agreement relating to applications within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### Policy SWF NCIL 01: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Where development projects trigger the requirement for CIL payments these will be made in accordance with Chelmsford City Council's CIL Charging Schedule.

Monies payable to South Woodham Ferrers Town Council will be used to help support delivery of the projects outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan, including those in the green project boxes, and which include:

- a. Town centre public realm improvement projects, including trialing pilot projects to test the feasibility of schemes.
- b. Support for establishment of a Town Centre business forum or similar and associated initiatives to promote the town.
- c. Provision of a town-wide cycle network, including safe crossings and junctions along Ferrers Road to be delivered in line with best practice Dutch-style principles.
- d. Transformation of the network of alleyways, including opportunities for community gardening projects, lighting and a programme of regular maintenance.
- e. Street greening initiatives, including tree planting, wildflowers and provision of rain gardens.
- f. Identify and test a pilot Play Street / Homezone project within an existing residential cul-de-sac.
- g. Improved town-wide public transport provision and infrastructure, including improved waiting facilities and travel information.

<sup>37</sup> My Community / Locality, 2017, Community Infrastructure Levy; Neighbourhood Planning toolkit

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/community-infrastructure-levy/>





## 10. What Happens Next?

### Process through to referendum

- 10.1 This is the draft Neighbourhood Plan for South Woodham Ferrers. It will be subject to formal consultation (known as 'Regulation 14' consultation) and any necessary amendments made before being submitted to Chelmsford City Council who will start the 'examination process'.
- 10.2 The City Council will formally consult on the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan and appoint an independent examiner to review the Plan and any comments made in response to it. Following this, the examiner will issue a report to the City Council advising whether:
  - The Plan should proceed to referendum.
  - The Plan should proceed to referendum subject to modification.
  - The Plan should not proceed to referendum.
- 10.3 For the examiner to advise that the Plan proceed to referendum it will need to be demonstrated that the Plan meets what are called the 'Basic Conditions'. These include showing that the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic objectives of the Local Development Plan (i.e.: the Chelmsford Local Plan).
- 10.4 Chelmsford City Council will organise the referendum. All people of voting age in the Parish are eligible to vote on whether the Plan should be brought into force ('made') or not. If more than 50% of all people who turnout vote in favour of making the Plan, then it will become part of the suite of planning policies used by Chelmsford City Council to help shape and determine planning applications in South Woodham Ferrers.

### Reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan

- 10.5 Notwithstanding the defined period of the Neighbourhood Plan to 2036, it is recognised that, with further changes to planning policy at the national level, and consequently to the Local Plan, likely, the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be reviewed periodically. This will enable the Neighbourhood Plan to remain 'current' and in conformity with the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

South Woodham Ferrers  
**Neighbourhood Plan, 2020-2036**

(Draft version: August 2019)

---



South Woodham Ferrers Town Council  
Champions Manor Hall  
Hullbridge Road  
South Woodham Ferrers  
Essex, CM3 5LJ  
T: 01245 42944

W: [www.southwoodhamferrers.gov.uk](http://www.southwoodhamferrers.gov.uk)