

DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE FRINGE

MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Detailed Analysis of the Issues and Options

Flood Risk

1. The Environment Agency updated strategic flood risk assessment of the area predicts that much of the area would be subject to flooding with varying degrees of severity. Much of the area is flood risk Zone 2 with significant areas falling within Zone 3a. This would mean that the Environment Agency would object to planning applications in the area and its promotion for regeneration, unless significant mitigation takes place to allow development.
2. Options were considered around the best response to this. These were:
 - (a) **OPTION 1** - Do nothing, rendering much of the area undevelopable,
 - (b) **OPTION 2** - Mitigate along the whole river corridor or
 - (c) **OPTION 3** - Expect all developments to mitigate on a site-by-site basis with the consequent impact on uses and viability.
3. In terms of **OPTION 1** a key opportunity would be missed to regenerate the area with a diverse mix of uses including housing. The areas within flood risk zone 3a¹, in line with PPS 25 would not be suitable for 'highly vulnerable' uses such as basement dwellings, and would be subject to an Exception Test for 'more vulnerable' uses such as housing, bars, restaurants or halls of residence. As this would limit the potential uses in the area and prevent the round the clock activity that would promote community safety as a result of mixed-use development this option was not attractive. Much of the potential activity and vibrancy in the area was envisaged to be by the riverside where the highest values might be realised, as well as the creation of an attractive and liveable environment. The Exception test would require developers to demonstrate that there are no other sites that

¹ * The overall aim of decision-makers should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1. Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, decision-makers identifying broad locations for development and infrastructure, allocating land in spatial plans or determining applications for development at any particular location should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2, applying the Exception Test if required. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should decision-makers consider the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required. From PPS 25.

could be developed for the required mix of uses, which would hinder the regeneration of the area.

4. **OPTION 2**, to mitigate the flood risk along the length of the river corridor has been explored in detail by JBA Consultants, in partnership with the Environment Agency. This option has many attractive features as not only would this be an opportunity to consider the river system as a whole, with attendant restoration opportunities, it would alleviate further problems downstream by adding capacity into the channel. Significant mitigation is possible by the removal of key constraints, such as Russell Street Weir, that would be complemented by the creation of a wider multi-functional green infrastructure asset in the river corridor. This option would require the phased creation of a linear park from the Skerne Restoration project at Rockwell to the north to Feethams and South Park to the south. This option has a number of advantages:-
 - (a) The linear park would allow off-road pedestrian and cycle access alongside the river in a north – south direction passing through a newly created part of the town with attendant health, wellbeing and sustainability advantages.
 - (b) The improvements to the river corridor would improve values alongside the river, stimulating high quality and diverse development opportunities.
 - (c) The habitats and biodiversity potential of the river would be maximised.
 - (d) The linear park created could form a wider arts and culture trail following the development of Darlington from market town, to industrial town to the birth of the railways.
 - (e) The existing heritage buildings alongside the river would benefit from its restoration in terms of setting and outlook.
5. The management of the flood risk in this way would negate the need for developers to mitigate within their own development, improving the public realm and the viability of schemes.
6. These advantages have to be considered in the light of the possible disadvantages of this approach such as:-
 - (a) The need for appropriate funding mechanisms to ensure that the infrastructure level intervention is feasible.
 - (b) More complex development phasing will be required, making it more difficult to respond positively to ad hoc development enquiries.
7. **OPTION 3** considered the effect of minimal intervention in the river corridor and requiring each development to provide its own flood defences. This would potentially slow down the delivery of development in the area, already adversely affected by issues around viability. Also the required works would create a poor

public realm, with defended ground floors and would still require the building of further defences above the current revetments. Each development, in this scenario, would have to demonstrate its own flood resilience, have to stand the cost of defending their small section of the corridor which may be disadvantageous to the development in terms of cost depending on the severity of the risk, there would be no net improvements to biodiversity or riverside access.

8. Overall OPTION 2, to mitigate the flood risk along the length of the river corridor and the creation of a new linear park was taken forward as the preferred solution to this issue, with the support of the Environment Agency.

Connectivity

9. The Town Centre Fringe is predominantly outside the inner ring road and to the east and north constrained by the East Coast Mainline and the Bishop Auckland railway line. Within the area Victoria Road and Parkgate are key points of arrival for rail passengers arriving at Bank Top railway station. To the east of the area Central Park, a key regeneration priority is accessed via Parkgate and Haughton Road, both of which pass through the Town Centre Fringe.
10. The Connections Study (2009) made various recommendations to improve access to Central Park and beyond and to improve movement for pedestrians and cyclists to the east of the Town Centre. The study proposed that to improve connectivity a number of actions would be required:-
 - (a) Junction improvements on the inner ring road
 - (b) More direct crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists
 - (c) A direct connection over or under the East Coast Mainline for pedestrians and cyclists
 - (d) Better connections between the railway stations, locations within the Town Centre Fringe and the Town Centre.
11. In addition the opportunity to modify the inner ring road to improve its amenity value was proposed. The Connections Study recommended that signalised junctions replace all of the roundabouts.
12. Three options were considered around the inner ring road:
 - (a) **OPTION 1** - do nothing to change the pedestrian movement pattern.
 - (b) **OPTION 2** - replace the roundabouts with junctions but keep the 'ring road'.

- (c) **OPTION 3** - modify the path of the inner ring road or bury it to create new public realm and development opportunities.
13. **OPTION 1** considered the consequences of taking no action in terms of pedestrian and cycle connectivity into and through the area. Movement into the area from the Town Centre is currently made difficult by the inner ring road. Pedestrians are prevented from crossing at desire lines at all of the roundabouts and are deflected to crossings between roundabouts or into subways. This causes problems in terms of access and security and is a barrier to residents in the area making use of the facilities in the Town Centre. In addition, the lack of pedestrian connectivity has cut off Parkgate, Northgate and Victoria Road shopping streets from the rest of the town, with the consequence of depressing these areas economically. Further north the Valley Street area, identified as a key area for housing in the future again suffers from severance from the Town Centre. If these issues are not to be addressed, the Town Centre Fringe will remain cut off from the rest of the town, disadvantaging current and future residents and businesses. For this reason an intervention would be required for the area to be regenerated.
14. **OPTION 2** considered retaining the path of the inner ring road and providing signalised crossing points to facilitate better pedestrian movement. There are a number of advantages to this approach:-
- (a) Pedestrians and cyclists would be able to cross the ring road on desire lines without deflection.
 - (b) The capital costs of modifying the road would be less than more significant remodelling.
 - (c) Improvements could be made to the central reservation of St Cuthbert's Way as identified in the Connections Study.
15. However the disadvantages to this approach were revealed through further modelling work and design exercises:-
- (a) There would be significant delays for motorists in combining signals with roundabouts.
 - (b) The land take of the road infrastructure would still be large, reducing the opportunity to create a street with a frontage, natural surveillance and improved amenity.
 - (c) Existing crossings may be lost as traffic would have to stop twice at the roundabout and at intermediate points.
16. **OPTION 3** looked at a more radical intervention based on the recommendations of the Connections Study and taking this further. Some work was done to examine the possibility of partially burying the ring road to the east of the Town

Centre. This was discounted early in the process due to issues around costs, the existing flood risk and ground water in the area. Also the river runs parallel to the inner ring road and limits the opportunities to cross the road apart from the bridging points, thus negating the rationale for this approach.

17. The carriageway and area taken up by the existing junctions is large and creates a road network with poor frontages and street activity. Compressing the two carriageways together on St Cuthbert's Way would free up space beside the river for north to south connectivity without reducing the capacity of the road for vehicular traffic. By then removing the roundabouts the amount of land taken up by highway infrastructure could be reduced creating further development opportunities and appropriate street enclosure and activity. This would reduce the psychological barrier of the ring road, encouraging smarter transport choices. At Victoria Road the creating of a signalised junction would allow the river to be opened up again as it is currently culverted below the existing roundabout. This would also free up space for development close to the Town Centre, complementary to the planned developments in Feethams.
18. By adopting the third option both north to south connections and east to west movement across the inner ring road would be simplified. Pedestrians would be able to cross at desire lines and the historic connections between the Town Centre and the Town Centre Fringe and beyond could be repaired. This would improve accessibility into the Town Centre Fringe opening the area up for development and growth.
19. In line with the Connections Study the direct link to Central Park is still being considered and shown in the draft masterplan, with appropriate public realm provided to make this connection secure, pleasant and attractive.

20. OPTION 3 was taken forward in detail alongside measures required for the highway network improvements and flood risk mitigation. There would be economies in creating the linear park, modifications to the ring road and signalising the junctions, creating an attractive environment for both pedestrians and cyclist in all directions.

Traffic

21. Increased development in the Borough will create additional vehicle movements that will need to be managed. This needs to be balanced with the advantages of redeveloping the area, as it is an accessible location that lends itself to walking and cycling as well as public transport use. Specialist consultants, Colin Buchanan, have been retained to provide transport and civil engineering advice to the Council regarding the Town Centre Fringe.
22. Options were considered around the best response to this issue. These options were considered in the context of

- (a) The strategic management of the wider highway network by developing a “web” of routes rather than “spokes” to reduce pressure on the inner ring road.
 - (b) The implementation of a SCOOT system of traffic light controlled junctions on radial routes to control the flow of traffic onto the inner ring road and therefore create reliability of performance of the network
 - (c) The continuation of Sustainable Travel initiatives through Local Motion
23. The engineering options for the Town Centre Fringe were:-
- (a) **OPTION 1** - do nothing, which would ultimately result in congestion and the stagnation of the area in terms of development due to highway objections.
 - (b) **OPTION 2** - a partial modification of the current inner ring road, with modified or new signals.
 - (c) **OPTION 3** - the signalisation of a number of junctions and the modification of the route of the inner ring road alongside other strategic interventions to support this.
24. The brief for the work is based on the Connections Study for Darlington (2009). In that Study, the vision for the Fringe was that it would be a place where it is pleasant and safe to walk to shops, parks and schools; where streets are safe to cycle on and cross; where neighbourhoods are activated (for example, in terms of community involvement); where work is not far away and is easily reached by public transport and where people choose to walk, cycle or take the bus rather than to drive.
25. The transport objectives that apply to this work (derived from the Connections Study) are:-
- (a) Enhancing connections to development / regeneration areas.
 - (b) Improving town centre access.
 - (c) Balancing the needs of various transport modes.
 - (d) Better and safer streets.
 - (e) Improve public transport connections.
 - (f) Integrating modes of transport.
 - (g) Changing travel behaviour
26. These objectives are in line with adopted Core Strategy Policy CS19.
27. **OPTION 1** forecast the situation on the ring road if development was started without investment in transport infrastructure. The model forecast was that traffic flows to the town centre would increase by up to 1.67% during the day with a lower increase during peak periods. Such an increase in motorised traffic could be accommodated within the existing road network with minimal delays, but crucially, would not permit any enhancement of facilities for pedestrians or

cyclists. This would be completely counter to the vision for the Fringe and prevent the realisation of the environment that is needed to encourage development. The do nothing scenario also ignores the potential for changing travel behaviour to more sustainable ways of using the existing transport infrastructure, currently being supported through the Local Motion project and the Tees Valley Bus Network Initiative. This means that the transport network would be increasingly vulnerable to unforeseen traffic congestion and consequential impacts (longer journey times, emission levels etc) if development plans were implemented.

28. Signalisation of ring road junctions provides an opportunity to:-
 - (a) Support the Connection Study by reducing the scale and impact of each junction, and the ring road in general, while minimising the impact on road network capacity.
 - (b) Better manage traffic through new signaling technologies.
 - (c) Improve bus priority through hurry call facilities.
 - (d) Improve pedestrian and cycle links and facilities between the town centre and fringe
29. **OPTION 2** involves the use of traffic signals within the existing road layout, replacing some roundabouts. The design principle was to keep the junction design to a compact size thus allowing pedestrians and cyclists to cross with minimal delay. However the junctions would be operating over capacity - up to 137%, this would create significant traffic congestion and uncertainty in journey times for cars, buses, lorries and taxis. It would mean that the Town Centre Fringe could not be developed in its entirety due to the constraints of the road network
30. **OPTION 3** develops the concept of managing movement by all types of transport (walking, cycling, buses, cars, lorries etc.) to minimize delay and maximize the predictability of travel times. This would allow the development opportunities of the Town Centre Fringe to happen.
31. Option 3 can be implemented in phases to more closely link the investment with the land that will be developed over time. Also, by providing choice of routes and through the modifications to signaling, demand can be reduced on the inner ring road.
32. It is proposed that the first phase would include:-
 - (a) The signalisation of Freeman's Place junction incorporating East Street & a new alignment for the western carriageway of the ring road to Parkgate (to release land for the linear park).
 - (b) This above is linked with the signalisation of the Parkgate/St.Cuthbert's Way junction on a new alignment with access to Stonebridge being on a left

in, left out basis offset from the new junction.

- (c) The opening up of Borough Road with new signalised junctions at each end to provide an alternative route to the ring road.
33. Junction capacity has been tested for both the morning and evening peak scenarios in 2020. Development assumptions in 2020 were agreed and include:-
- (a) Mixed use development in the town centre fringe
 - (b) Central Park Development
 - (c) Lingfield Point
34. Given the current development market, it is unlikely that these developments will be complete by 2020 and so the traffic modelling work undertaken represents a worst case scenario.
35. As part of a package measure to be implemented in later phases it is proposed to:-
- (a) The signalisation of the Northgate/St Cuthbert's Way junction.
 - (b) The realignment of St Cuthbert's Way to a new signalized junction located at the end of Valley Street North and Russell Street.
 - (c) The construction of a new link between Parkgate and St Cuthbert's Way to the south of the current alignment allowing the creation of a public space in front of the Civic Theatre.
 - (d) The realignment of St Cuthbert's way to a new signalized junction with Victoria Road.
 - (e) The provision of a new bridge over the River Skerne at Victoria Embankment and the provision of a new signalized junction between Victoria Road and Feethams.
36. Additional proposals are inferred in the masterplan for interventions that may take place beyond the life of the plan that would open up further areas for development, for example in the Albert Hill area. A realignment of the inner ring road to the northwest towards Bondgate would release further land for development and reinstate the historic street pattern.
37. The full implementation of the vision for the Town Centre Fringe will result in a highway network that minimises traffic congestion through the provision of more direct management of all modes of transport. Implementation of this new infrastructure fits within the overall strategy set out in the Third Local Transport Plan and set out in more detail in the Network Management Plan (NMP). In the NMP, the Council has divided the network into three categories – red, amber and green – based on their importance and impact on other parts of the network. The categories have been based on national criteria including pedestrian flow, the proportion of heavy goods vehicles and the proportion of buses.
38. Each category of road is constantly monitored in order to identify any causes of congestion, possible measures to mitigate that congestion and implement the

chosen solutions. Typically, in the wider Borough, the solutions will be a mixture of infrastructure, traffic management, development control and travel behaviour initiatives.

39. Most bus routes to and from the town centre would largely remain unaffected by the proposals, but buses should get further protection from general traffic. Most routes would enter the town centre by Northgate, as well as Stonebridge or Feethams exiting by East Street, Stonebridge or Feethams as appropriate to their destination. **(Bus Plan to Follow)** The results of the masterplan consultation, any revisions and proposals will be used to inform emerging work looking at bus routes and the location of stops.

40. Subject to the phasing outlined above OPTION 3 has been incorporated into the masterplan proposals for consultation.

River Corridor and Green Infrastructure

41. The River Skerne runs all the way through the Town Centre Fringe from north to south. Recent projects to restore the river upstream at Rockwell have assisted in improving the Skerne to the point where it provides an important habitat.
42. Alongside the river there is a variety of development. Alongside historic buildings both industrial and to a lesser extent domestic are a number of twentieth century developments that add little to the character of the area and many turn their back on the river.
43. Much of the river corridor is constrained by revetments and historic flood defences effectively canalising the river from Rockwell Park in the north to South Park in the south. These historic interventions have straightened the channel, reduced and regularised the depth of the river and prevented the full functioning of the river. Many of these interventions have exacerbated the effects of flooding and climate change.
44. A report was commissioned for Darlington Borough Council from the River Restoration Centre to explore the feasibility of restoring the river from Rockwell to Feethams. This report concluded that a number of benefits could be realised through the restoration of the river corridor in terms of the ecology and biodiversity, public access and amenity and the mitigation of flood risk. Where it may not be feasible to modify the route or width of the river due to heritage considerations, for example, the report outlines the measures that could be undertaken to improve the river.
45. Options considered for the river corridor were:
 - (a) **OPTION 1** - do nothing other than the minimum to mitigate flood risk.
 - (b) **OPTION 2** - mitigate flood risk and undertake limited restoration work.
 - (c) **OPTION 3** - recognise the importance of the river as a key green infrastructure asset and use its presence to add value to the development of

the area.

46. In **OPTION 1** the works to the river corridor would be minimal other than those to physically mitigate the flood risk. The removal of some constraints in the channel and the building of additional defences on top of the existing revetments might achieve some of this. However, this option is not favoured as many people had expressed a desire to make more of the river in the life of the town and the solutions applied would further erode the value of the river in terms of access and amenity and ecology value.
47. **OPTION 2** considered the partial restoration of the river retaining much of the existing width and character of the river and replacing some of the revetments with more natural alternatives particularly to the north of the area and to the south around Feethams. Whilst this may have improved the ecological value of the river within the channel the wider green infrastructure value of the river would not be realised. Also if this approach is taken many of the opportunities to create access would be unrealised. As a key deliverable from the public consultation was improved access and amenity alongside the river, this option was less favoured.
48. **OPTION 3** explored the potential to create a linear park as a means to achieving a number of outcomes. By widening the river corridor and creating a more natural riverbank additional flood capacity could be built in. mitigating both localised and distant flood risk. This would also allow the creation of a natural habitat with a variety of the flow rates and depths within the river channel. This would have significant ecological benefits. Presently there is no possible route north to south alongside the river, although historically there was. The creation of this access would allow off-road pedestrian and cycle journeys with very few interruptions and conflicts with vehicular traffic. The removal of those redundant buildings with little or no historic value within the river corridor would allow an improved setting for those of value in terms of character and appearance. Many of the affected buildings are reaching the end of their service life and their redevelopment would be resisted on the grounds of flood risk due to their position in the flood plain.
49. Specific enhancements to the river corridor proposed in the draft masterplan include:-
 - (a) The creation of a green corridor of sufficient width (A minimum of 50 metres either side of the river) using a selection of green roofs, green walls and other suitable design features that together, allows the adjoining habitat within the corridor to enhance the rivers capacity and so help it deliver its important function as a biodiversity link, connecting the Durham Carrs, through Ketton farmland and onto the river Tees.
 - (b) Creation of a green corridor with visual and safe physical access for pedestrians, cyclists and wildlife to the river edge, neighbouring areas, the

Skerne Corridor to the north and Victoria Embankment to the south.

- (c) Provision of links to new local greenspaces with opportunities for recreation, access to nature and heritage, outdoor gyms and a public art trail. A range of interpretation including technology like smart phone applications could educate users.
- (d) Creation, extension or enhancement of the Skerne's habitats will reinforce this important wildlife corridor for water vole, fish, birds and otters.
- (e) Planting native broadleaved trees and orchards, grassland and associated wetlands along the river banks and improving the mix of priority species in the area, the setting of heritage assets like the listed Russell Street, Chestnut Street and John Street bridges and the Skerne Bridge ancient monument.
- (f) Provision of new development should be integrated with existing and new green infrastructure to create a naturalistic, flexible and positive urban river edge and restate the built environment's relationship with the river corridor.
- (g) Replacement of alien species along the riverbank with native species through partnership working with Friends Groups, Durham Wildlife Trust and volunteers.
- (h) Creation of a greener riverbank by planting up concrete ledges or cutting small niches in the river wall for plants to cascade down.
- (i) Provision of a high quality townscape and streetscape next to the river should flow into the adjoining streetscape through harmonised lighting, landscaping, surfacing, public art and green buildings.

50. In accordance with the desire expressed through the public participation to improve access to the river and improve its amenity, allied to the need to mitigate flood risk OPTION 3 was taken forward alongside the preferred option for the inner ring road (OPTION 3), as there are linked benefits of the two approaches.

Historic Environment and Heritage Considerations

- 51. The Town Centre Fringe is an important part of Darlington's historic development. Railway heritage, early industrial development and Quaker residences and gardens have all contributed to the character of the area. This, linked with the changes that have taken place in the river valley has contributed to a rich and diverse environment with many layers of history.
- 52. Evidence remains to the north of the area of Darlington's important role in the development of the railways. Many of the buildings around North Road Station are related to railway heritage and the Skerne Bridge at the northernmost point of

the Town Centre Fringe is a Scheduled Monument and the world's oldest working railway bridge.

53. Further south, in the Valley Street area, were the homes of the Pease family, most notably Joseph Pease's house on Northgate, and the site of extensive gardens in the river valley. Throughout the area are historic houses of local importance and the Northgate conservation area is partially included in the Town Centre Fringe masterplan area.
54. To the south of the masterplan area the former site of textile mills and riverside industries such as tanneries are still part of the character and layout of the area, with some scant remains in evidence.
55. Recognising and valuing these important historic assets and the development of the area, a Conservation Management Plan was commissioned and consulted on separately as part of the masterplanning work and public participation. This was used to identify key buildings to be protected, the underlying street patterns and the importance of the river in the historic development of the area and the town. Based on this, much of the proposed masterplan seeks to repair, retain and reconnect the historic street patterns, and provide a suitable setting for the historic buildings in the area. The full report is available, with the key historic features to be retained or conserved identified on the draft masterplan.
56. To the north of the masterplan area, the area around North Road Station and the Skerne Bridge has been identified as a 'Heritage Campus', with a view to stimulating complementary development to enhance the offer of the area. Both Parkgate and Victoria Road are under consideration for Conservation Area status to provide more control over the quality of development in these important points of arrival from Bank Top Station, a key issue identified through the public participation process.

Housing

57. The Town Centre Fringe has some of the town's poorest quality housing. This is located in specific, isolated areas, divided by major roads. Much of the area is industrial and currently housing is a secondary use in many areas. The quality of the streets and public realm is typically poor.
58. There are specific issues in the town centre fringe around the thermal performance and structural integrity of many of the houses in the area. Many were built towards the end of the nineteenth or early twentieth century, and significant proportions do not have cavity walls or any form of insulation. Much of the works that have been undertaken since they were built have taken the form of plastic replacement windows and mid c20 extensions to provide kitchens and bathrooms.

59. Most houses in the area have no garden and many houses have front doors directly onto the street. There is a small amount of open space and playgrounds in the area, and what exists is of poor quality.
60. There is a predominance of terraced properties in the area, typically two or three bedroom. Based on a telephone household survey around 30% of homes in the area have children living there. Around 40% of residents live alone, with 12% of residents being single pensioners. Just over 60% of the properties in the area are rented, with the majority of these being owned by private landlords, which is a high proportion.
61. In some areas, particularly around Borough Road, there are a number of vacant properties. However, these are few in number, and the area has not experienced significant market failure.
62. There were a number of options explored around housing:-
 - (a) **OPTION 1** - do nothing with the existing housing and focus on the new build in the area.
 - (b) **OPTION 2** - improve the existing stock in line with modern standards.
 - (c) **OPTION 3** - demolish a proportion of the existing housing stock to allow for redevelopment.
63. In terms of **OPTION 1**, the living conditions of the local residents were a key theme in the public participation work. Many of the issues that were highlighted were around the quality of the public realm and anti-social behaviour and fly tipping in the back lanes. Overall around 80% of people are satisfied with their home as a place to live considering their own home, with more detailed concerns expressed over the wider environment. Just focussing on new development in the area would not address the inherent problems in the area and would make it difficult to integrate new housing with the old. Also, without further investment within the life of the masterplan, the difference between the existing homes and new homes in terms of amenity, thermal performance and risks would be unacceptable and worsen social division between existing and new residents, including fuel poverty and risks.
64. **OPTION 2** considered the refurbishment of the existing stock to bring this up to standards of performance and amenity. Much of the remaining housing in the area is built on a street pattern that reflects the topography of the landscape below, some of which has distinctive and attractive characteristics, such as Hargreave Terrace. Much of the existing housing in the area would have a sustainable future if an intervention were to be made in the short to medium term. Consultants were commissioned to explore a package of measures that would improve the existing stock, the following was recommended:-
 - (a) The installation of extra insulation as necessary in both the roof and on internal walls, including the creation of a warm roof space to allow

conversion at a later date.

- (b) The replacement of windows sympathetic with the character of the houses.
 - (c) The installation of mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems.
 - (d) Water recycling measures.
 - (e) Improvements to the street environment including dedicated parking and street trees.
 - (f) The removal of the back lanes to create garden areas for residents.
 - (g) The creation of small front gardens and defensible space on streets where houses face directly onto the street.
65. This approach would allow the existing community to remain in the area, the incremental improvement of the housing stock funded through the new development in the area and the retention of housing that makes a contribution to the character of the area. Also the existing historic street pattern would be retained and improved, again relating old and new development to the landscape and topography. This would also constitute a less resource intensive solution than demolition and new build.
66. **OPTION 3** looked at the demolition of much of the housing in certain areas. This would allow the provision of new homes in areas of the poorest quality. As the area has not suffered market failure, the purchase and demolition would be problematic and would break up the existing community. Some partial demolition could be undertaken, but the requirement to do so is limited across much of the area as the above measures are a more cost-effective solution.

67. Overall, based on the suggested improvements and the public participation work, the option to retain the existing housing stock in the area was taken forward. Where housing has been lost alongside existing streets this should be replaced in the masterplan to reinforce the street pattern and create natural surveillance improving safety and security.