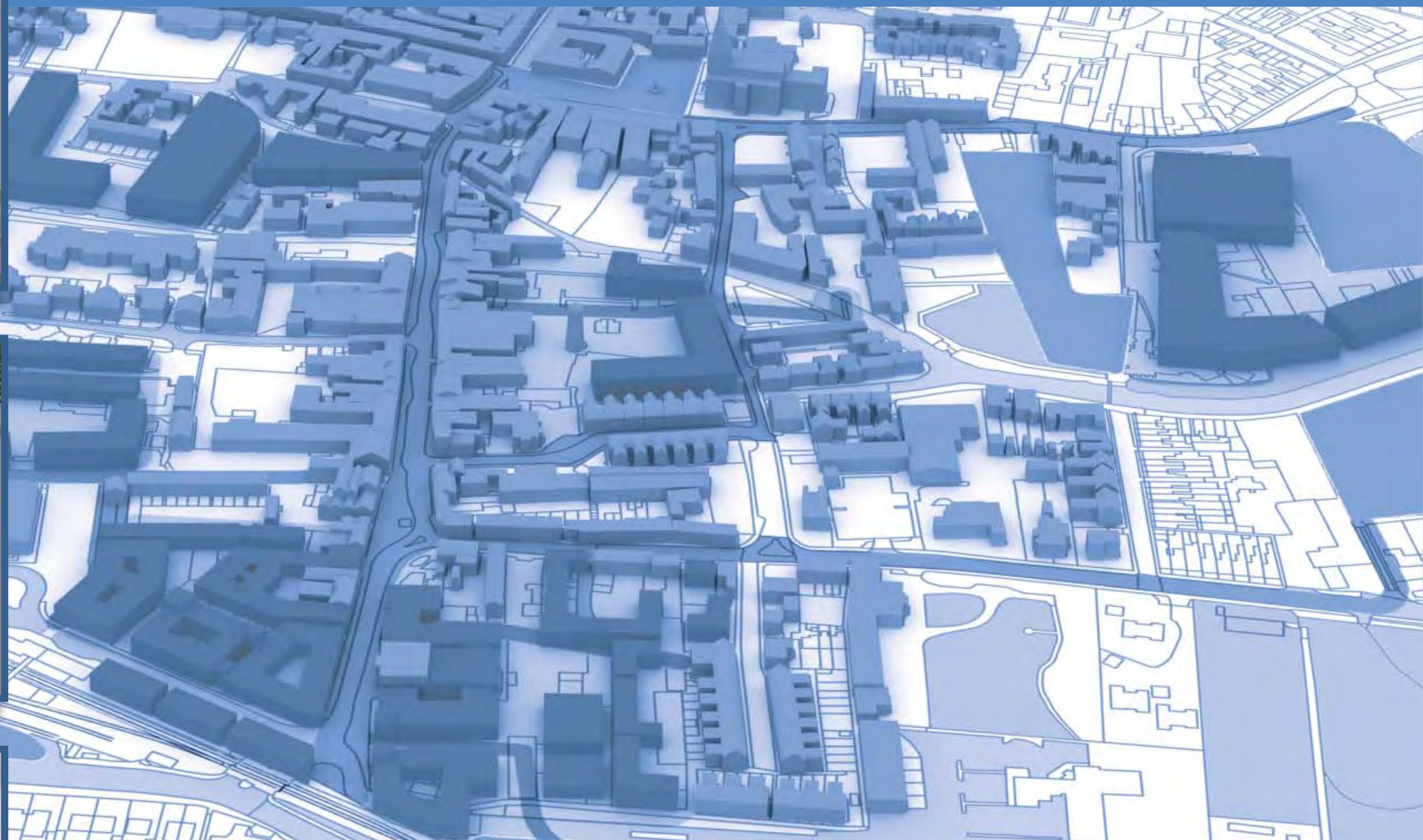


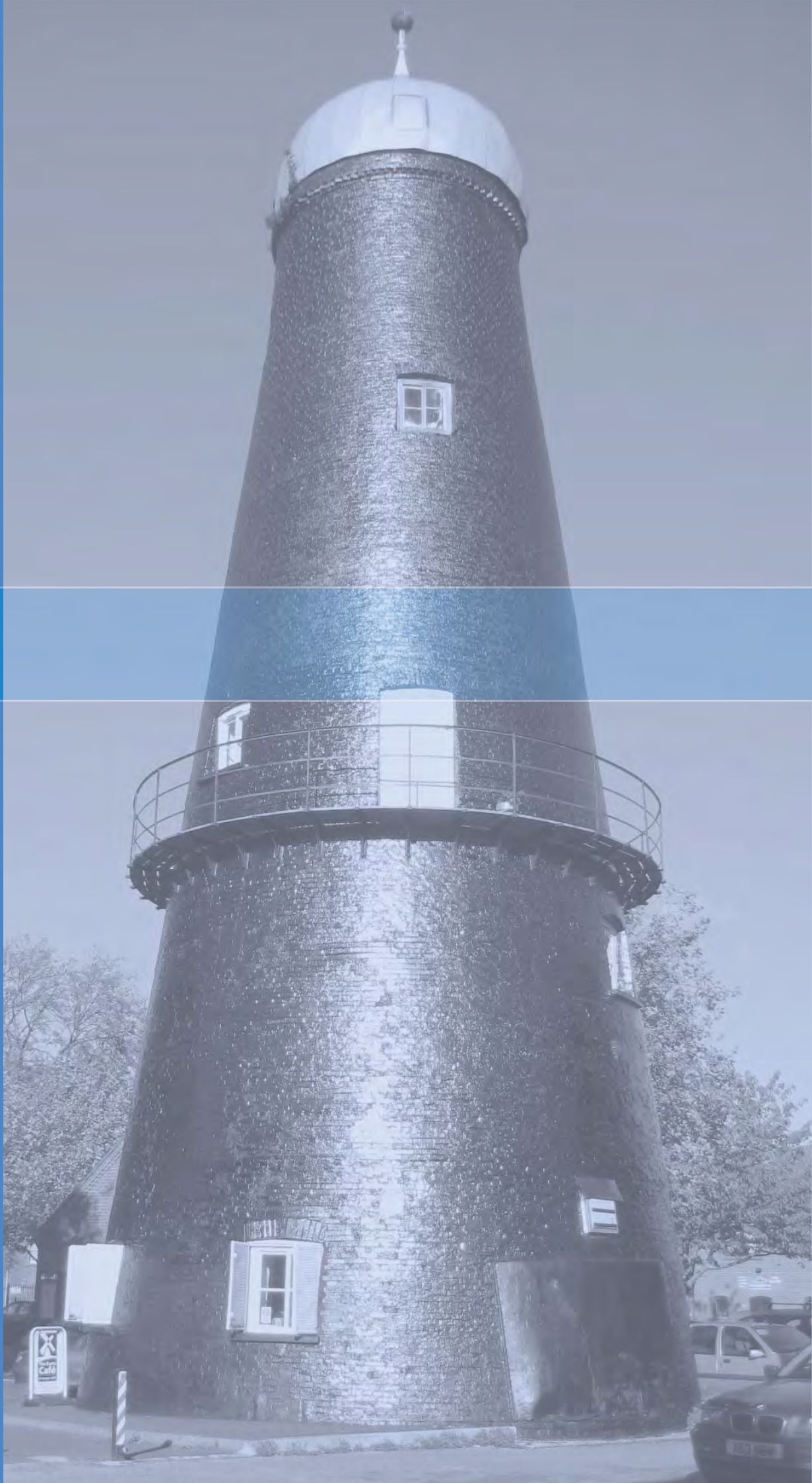
April 2011 - Final Report



SLEAFORD MASTERPLAN

April 2011 - Final Report

Originated	SH/EK/SR
Checked	SH
Approved	MS





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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary document explains the process behind the masterplan and summarises the proposals.

1.0 Introduction & Methodology

Gillespies supported by economic regeneration consultants GENECON, transport engineers Martin Stockley Associates, market advisors Savills and community engagement specialists David Potts Associates were commissioned by North Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and the Homes and Communities Agency to prepare a 25 year masterplan for Sleaford.

The masterplan team adopted the following methodology:

Stage 1 - Baseline

- Detailed baseline analysis undertaken, building on the work of the Sleaford Masterplan Scoping Study
- Defined the key issues and vision through a stakeholder and community consultation process

Stage 2 - Strategic Proposals

- Developed a series of propositions to address town wide issues
- Tested and developed ideas through a stakeholder and community consultation process
- Market tested and developed a delivery strategy

Stage 3 - Detailed Proposals

- Developed a series of propositions to address town centre issues
- Tested and developed ideas through a stakeholder and community consultation process
- Market tested and developed a delivery strategy

Stage 4 - Public Exhibition & Final Report

- Held a major public exhibition to test the masterplan proposals in tandem with a formal six week consultation period
- Developed a final Masterplan for adoption having considered the views of project partners, stakeholders and the public.

2.0 Baseline

Sleaford is the main Market Town within the North Kesteven District of Lincolnshire, located approximately 30km south of Lincoln. Its population is approximately 18,000 today.

As with many of Lincolnshire's towns, Sleaford developed to serve the surrounding agricultural economy and still maintains an important role as a service centre for its surrounding rural hinterland. The town has undergone significant growth in the past two decades, which has resulted in a population growth rate increase well above national levels. Sleaford is an attractive residential location due to its - good education, pleasant environment, good access to several employment locations, low crime and road/rail links to strategic networks. Subsequently, there is ongoing development pressure for growth to continue.

The Sleaford Masterplan Scoping Report (May 2010), set the framework for the masterplan and identified the key issues to address. In response, the masterplan developed the following issues:

The Role & Scale of Future Growth

- Residential growth is required to create a critical mass for investment in the town centre and community infrastructure throughout the town
- Community infrastructure is lacking and needs to be brought in line with recent and future planned growth
- Sleaford is a popular town and growth should enhance its existing characteristics
- New communities need excellent connections to local services to avoid being disconnected from Sleaford Town Centre
- Strategic contributors to traffic congestion should be considered in tandem with planned residential growth

Accessibility, Movement & Parking

- The town centre needs to be relieved of the pressure placed on it by private cars so that the space can be utilised by pedestrians
- A shift from private vehicles should be encouraged by providing:
 - Improved pedestrian links
 - Improved cycle links
 - Rationalise parking and improve enforcement to allow priority to be given to sustainable transport to the town
 - Improve local transport services making them more efficient and better connected
- There is a need to improve the efficiency and movement opportunities throughout the centre of the town for vehicles
- Shared surfaces should be introduced in Sleaford Town Centre so that it can be enjoyed by people on foot but also be accessed by vehicles

Fulfilling the Town Centre's Potential

- The town centre has many high quality heritage and townscape assets and they need to be celebrated by their settings
- The town centre is currently an intriguing place to explore but the visitor experience should be improved to fulfil its potential
- Sleaford needs to attract a range and quality of shops and facilities that would be expected in a market town of its size
- The town centre fails to engage and serve its population. For every pound spent by residents on comparison goods 85 pence is spent outside of Sleaford
- The number of residents and visitors using the town centre needs to increase along with time spent on each visit by improving leisure, heritage and cultural opportunities

Based on the findings of the masterplan process the following vision emerged:

"In 2036 Sleaford is a bigger, better, more confident place with a thriving retail centre, a keen sense of history and a clear idea of where it is going".

3.0 Strategic Proposals

Strategic Aim 1 - Plan positively for future growth by investing in infrastructure and creating well connected communities

The masterplan proposes a comprehensive strategy to meet this aim including:

- A short list of housing sites providing a capacity for circa 3,500 - 4,000 dwellings during the 25 year masterplan period. Developments aim to retain the compact nature of Sleaford and bring forward supporting infrastructure for both new and existing communities
- A series of strategic employment sites have been identified to supplement the existing allocations and to support the proposed residential growth areas. In addition the Masterplan envisages increased employment in the town centre reflecting new retail and service developments also incorporating small business space/managed workspace
- Improve and promote alternatives to private car usage
- Reposition and rationalise parking to strategically locate car parks on the radial approaches to the town so that they are within walking distance of the centre and its retail offer
- Promote the use of the A15 and A17 bypasses as the primary routes when moving around Sleaford
- Introduce a Parking Strategy that prevents parking in inappropriate locations around the town
- Reconfigure the town centre one-way system to two-way where possible
- Introduce access restrictions to the centre of Sleaford
- Introduce a Delivery/Servicing Strategy for the centre of Sleaford
- A school strategy to accommodate future population growth
- An east-west link across the town to overcome current congestion and to refresh town centre leisure and tourism provision, join the town centre to green wedges and break existing barriers to movement
- A series of measures to improve connections and town centre services with a view to providing a service centre for surrounding villages and communities
- Provision of a range of retail units within the town centre to attract a wider offer



KEY

	Potential housing sites for Masterplan period		Railway line		15 min walk, 7 minute cycle
	Potential long term housing sites (post Masterplan period)		Waterways		Potential new access
	Potential employment opportunities		Potential strategic pedestrian/cycle links		Link road
	Existing employment sites		Key roads		Potential future school site options
	Potential Green wedge/Sustainable corridor		5 min walk, 3 minute cycle		
	Sleaford Wood				

Note - The above plan is indicative.

Site specific masterplanning would be expected, especially for the growth areas, to ensure comprehensive development.

Existing and proposed housing areas will require further detailed analysis during the masterplan period to establish local requirements (including community infrastructure).

▲ Figure 5 Strategic proposal

4.0 The Town Centre Detailed Proposals

Strategic Aim 2 - Fulfil the town centre’s potential by creating a high quality environment and opportunities for new retail and attractions

The masterplan proposes a comprehensive strategy including:

- A series of projects to ‘Unlock the town centre’s potential’:
 - A circle of perimeter car parks with improved pedestrian links to the town centre core
 - Reconfigure the one-way system to two-way where possible
 - A flexible public realm which allows the potential for vehicle access restrictions to the centre of Sleaford
 - Improved bus services with more frequent service making public transport a viable and attractive alternative to the car
 - Pedestrian/Cycle routes that extend to surrounding communities and connect to the town centre
- A series of projects to ‘Create a pedestrian focused environment’:
 - Transform the street environment and appearance along Southgate and other key streets creating quality links between destinations
 - Improve public spaces and create high quality settings for the town centre’s assets starting with Market Place and its’ junction with Southgate to create a showpiece project
- Projects to ‘Deliver a series of destinations’ :
 - Deliver Tesco and Southern Southgate regeneration
 - Reinforce the north of the town centre (including Market Place, Money’s Yard, the existing Tesco store)
 - Enhance Sleaford’s waterside environment creating new leisure destinations
 - Transform Money’s Yard into a new attraction that links the town centre to the National Centre for Craft & Design (the Hub)

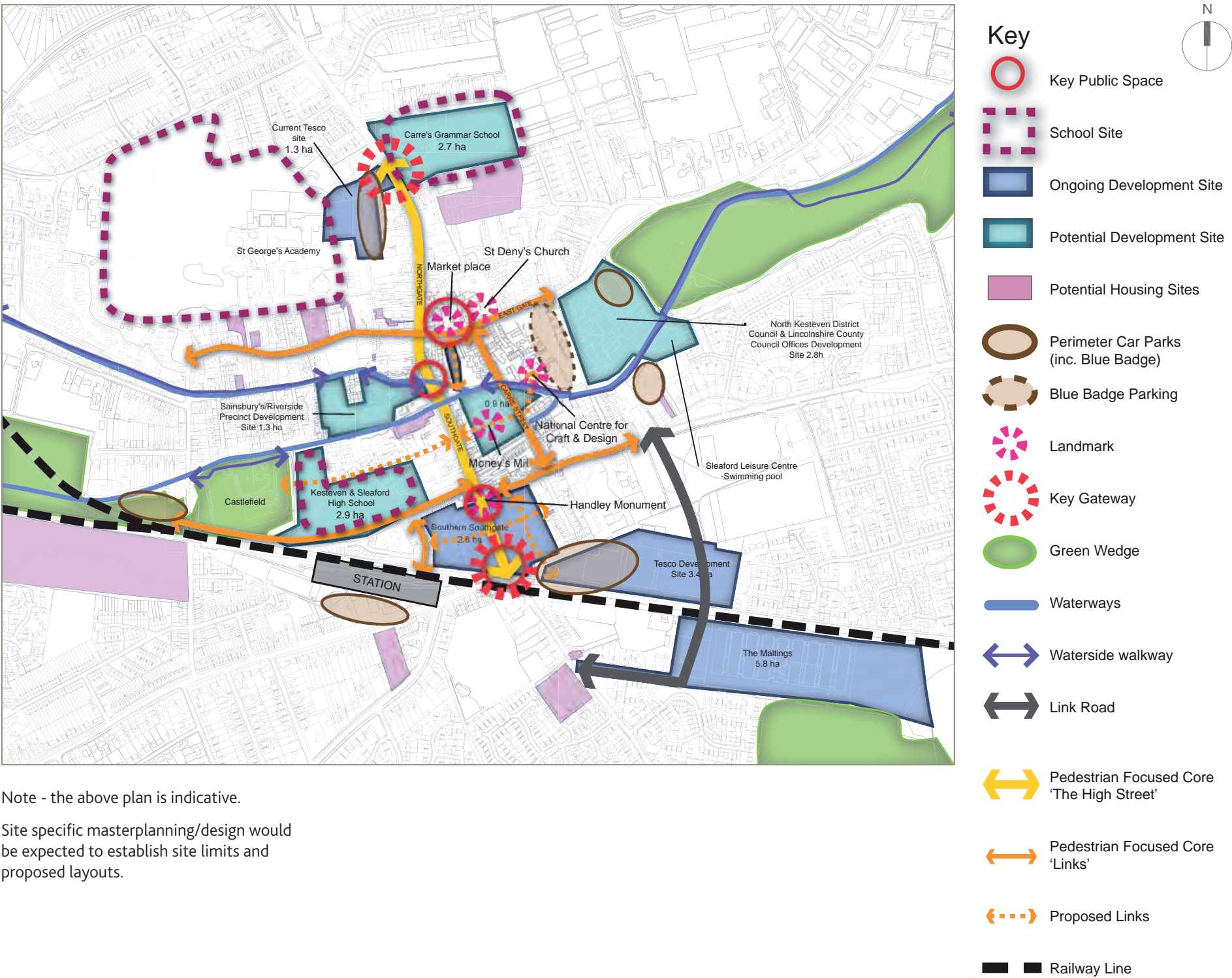


Figure 14 Town Centre Proposals

5.0 Community Engagement & Consultation

The Sleaford Masterplan Scoping Study highlighted the need to ensure strong community buy-in to any masterplan that was adopted for Sleaford. Accordingly the primary purpose of the community component in the Sleaford Masterplan Scoping Study was to highlight what currently existed within the town by way of community organisations and community based activity. This was set alongside the current knowledge base, systems and policy framework within NKDC that impact on community consultation, engagement and empowerment. This analysis was used to suggest ways in which the communities that live, work and use Sleaford could be enabled to be strongly involved in the actual masterplanning process in a mutually palatable way.

The analysis also highlighted the potential to establish a local regeneration partnership that could champion the development and implementation of an agreed masterplan for the town.

To meet the requirements of the brief a detailed community engagement plan was prepared and agreed at a very early stage in the masterplan process. A four stage community engagement plan was delivered:

1. Direct contact with key community groups and organisations;
2. An interim workshop to test early ideas and build consensus views;
3. A full, open interactive exhibition of the draft masterplan;
4. Feedback to local people on the completed masterplan (to be carried out post masterplan commission).

The four stages described above were supported and complimented by two additional actions:

5. Preparation of an agreed communications plan that promoted and raised general awareness of the Sleaford Masterplan project and kept local people informed of progress;
6. Support in the formative stages for the Sleaford Regeneration Group (SRG).

The following describes the key outcomes:

- Generally the feedback from the initial 'warm up' workshops was very positive and produced real interest in the process with many sensible suggestions and comments. Also many groups expressed approval for the more intimate opportunities created by this form of approach and engagement strategy. Over 20 workshops provided opportunities for local debate and discussion often with individuals demonstrating a strong interest in the future of Sleaford and a keenness to support actions that would bring change for the better.
- A full open public exhibition was staged at The Source, Southgate, Sleaford on 26th and 27th November 2010. The exhibition was widely advertised and promoted locally and was open to visitors from 10.00am to 8.00pm on the Friday and 10.00am to 4.00pm on the Saturday. In total just under 400 people visited the exhibition over the two days and 192 completed response questionnaires were collected and analysed:
 - Analysis of the questionnaire responses indicate a very high degree of agreement with the key issues identified for the town.
 - In terms of the freeform responses captured through the written and online consultations, most replicate and repeat what has already been recorded via the initial 'warm up' workshops. This suggests that overall the engagement and consultation process has been successful in capturing views from a wide cross section of citizens and groups.
- The newly formed Sleaford Regeneration Group (SRG) has developed into a strong masterplan partner. We have noted in particular:
 - it has a strong, inclusive and respected chair, well supported by NKDC and LCC council officers.
 - there is a good understanding of the masterplanning process and of the role and requirements of the group at this stage, which has led to a high quality of discussion and exchange of ideas/thoughts.
 - the group is purposeful and task orientated and has worked well to support the masterplan team.
 - the partnership contains a good cross-section of local interests and has to date avoided being compromised by bureaucratic or political baggage.
 - it is receptive to new ideas and generally engaged by the tasks it has been asked to perform.

6.0 Delivery & Next Steps

Implementing the Sleaford Masterplan will require a coordinated programme of activity between the public sector partners and the private sector landowners and developers, over the next 25 years. The masterplan sets out not only the strategic direction for the town and the key interventions to achieve the agreed objectives, but also identifies the key priorities and the phasing of activity.

A phasing schedule was developed by the masterplan team to demonstrate the likely delivery of proposals over the 25 year timeframe. It is aimed at maximising the early benefits associated with the Tesco investment and creating a stronger, more functional town centre. Restructuring the traffic flow and car parking is a key early action, and needs to be coordinated with the opening of the new link road bridge across the railway and the opening of the new Tesco site.

The principal source of funding for delivering the masterplan will be from the private sector, with the public sector providing financial support only on a limited scale. In support of this, the masterplan developed a high level cashflow model to consider the scale and timing of potential Section 106 contributions, and their correlation to the delivery of key masterplan projects. The private sector could potentially invest in the region of £700-800m in Sleaford during the lifetime of the masterplan. It has been estimated that the private sector could be required to invest over £100m of this sum in supporting infrastructure enhancements and providing levels of amenity provision appropriate to the scale of new housing and employment proposed. Based on examples elsewhere, it has been estimated that c£6m of this could be made available to support investment in the delivery of the town centre parking and public realm improvements, out of a total cost of c£12m. The Council will therefore need to explore funding sources to invest the balance of this sum.

A series of next steps were proposed:

- The formation of a masterplan delivery group, potentially consisting of senior NKDC, LCC, Sleaford Town Council, HCA and Sleaford Regeneration Group (SRG) representatives, covering the key themes. The development of action plans for key projects would be overseen by this group.
- It is recommended that the SRG establishes theme based sub groups to produce these action plans, with a senior officer from the masterplan delivery group overseeing and providing liaison between them and the masterplan delivery group.
- The masterplan's Key Project Delivery Tables form the basis of the action plans and are intended to be working tools.