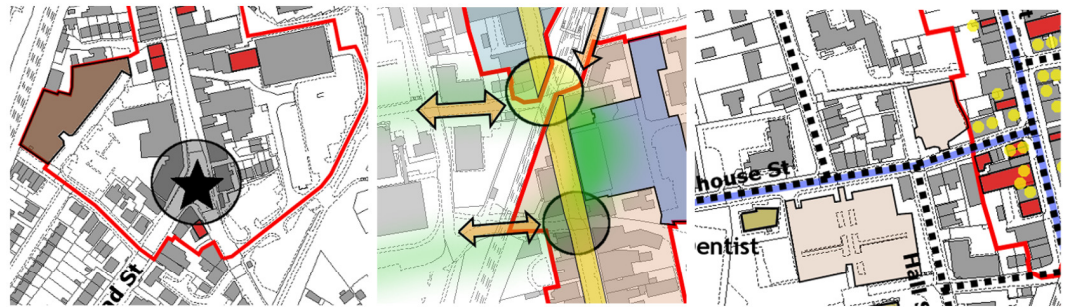


TOWN CENTRE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: COWDENBEATH



Foreword:

PLACEMAKING

The Placemaking Agenda
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Placemaking is enshrined in planning and development principles and policies across Scotland and Fife. At the Scottish Government level, the National Planning Framework, Designing Places, Designing Streets and Creating Places comprise a suite of policy documents that set the placemaking agenda for Scotland.

This is taken down to a Fife context through the Fife Urban Design Guide, and policies within the Development Plan. This will continue through the emerging Local Development Plan and the Designing Places Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The **objective** of the placemaking agenda is to **CREATE SUCCESSFUL PLACES**

Successful Places
Successful Places
Successful Places

Good quality, successful places will be assessed against the following principles, as set out by Fife Council in its **Designing Places Supplementary Guidance**:

Distinctive - Design that makes the best use of site attributes and respects and enhances the character of surrounding buildings, streets and green networks to create places that have a sense of identity.

Safe and Pleasant - Attractive, well managed and appropriately scaled places designed to encourage activity and overlooked by surrounding buildings and active frontages. With clear definition of public and private spaces, where parking does not dominate and there is natural traffic calming.

Easy to move around and beyond - Street design that considers all users and is well connected into existing movement networks, putting people and place before vehicular movement and meeting policy in Scottish Government's Designing Streets.

Welcoming - Places that encourage social interaction, where it is easy for people to find their way around and access local services in a walkable neighbourhood.

Adaptable - Places that can support a mix of compatible activities with built in flexibility so that they can adapt to changes in the future.

Resource Efficient - Development designed to make best use of resources, achieve high environmental performance and minimise impacts on the built or natural environment.

Making Places
Making Places
Making Places

The process of placemaking is complex. For new development to create places that are successful requires thinking beyond the boundary of a proposed development, and a proper assessment of how development will relate and respond to its wider surroundings.

Placemaking is more than just creating better design of buildings and public spaces. It is about understanding the nature and character of places, the interaction of buildings, spaces & movement, and how they are (or can be) used by people. Proposals should then respond to this. Schemes that are parachuted into an area, taken from other, quite different places, and that do not have regard for local circumstances and characteristics, will quite often fail.

INTRODUCTION

This document identifies design and/or development opportunities, or other interventions, that may enhance the role, function, attractiveness and, therefore, **success of Cowdenbeath town centre**. The issues are portrayed in a concise, graphical and easy to digest format.

This Framework document provides an analysis of the town centre, examining the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities**, and provides an **Action Plan** alongside an overall **concept** or vision to help steer the thinking about future projects.

This document is a **concept-based framework**. It is not a technical document with detailed solutions to all the problems. It captures the essence or ideas for actions, and displays them in a way that may help stimulate discussion or debate.

Or, in other words, the document can be seen as a vehicle for establishing a direction of travel for the area and **setting the context** for detailed project work.



The Local Development Plan for the area - **FifePlan**, sets out the expectation within **Policy 1**, Part C(6), that development proposals should:

"Meet the requirements of any design briefs or development frameworks prepared or required for the site."

In addition, Policy 6 - **Town Centres First**, sets out the Council's policy strategy for considering development proposals within our town centres.

The concepts and proposals within this document are consistent with the policy strategy established within FifePlan.

STRENGTHS

Jenny Lee story - this aspect of the town's history, alongside other historical legacies, helps to define the town and can provide attractions to draw people in.



Highly accessible town centre - key shops/ services (eg dentist/ leisure centre) or other people attractors are within or very close to the High St.



Good supply of car parking all within a minutes walk of the High St, alongside on-street parking on the High St itself, provides a high level of accessibility for journeys by car.



High level of public transport accessibility. The train station is less than a minutes walk from the High St. Bus routes that connect residential areas within the town, alongside regular services to Dunfermline, Lochgelly and beyond, make the town centre highly accessible by bus.

Movement routes indicates a high level of permeability - that is, a good choice of routes into and through the town centre. Considered alongside the high level of accessibility by different travel modes, makes the town centre a highly accessible location.



There are some elements of an identity within the town centre - and this is demonstrated by the existing red street furniture.



Town Centre South offers plenty of pedestrian space to provide a comfortable and safe environment for pedestrians, even with the high level of vehicular movements through the High St.



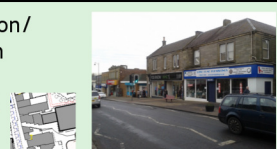
There is a traditional High St 'feel' to the town centre, mostly provided by the predominance of small units on the High St. No large superstores or shopping centres dominate the High St.



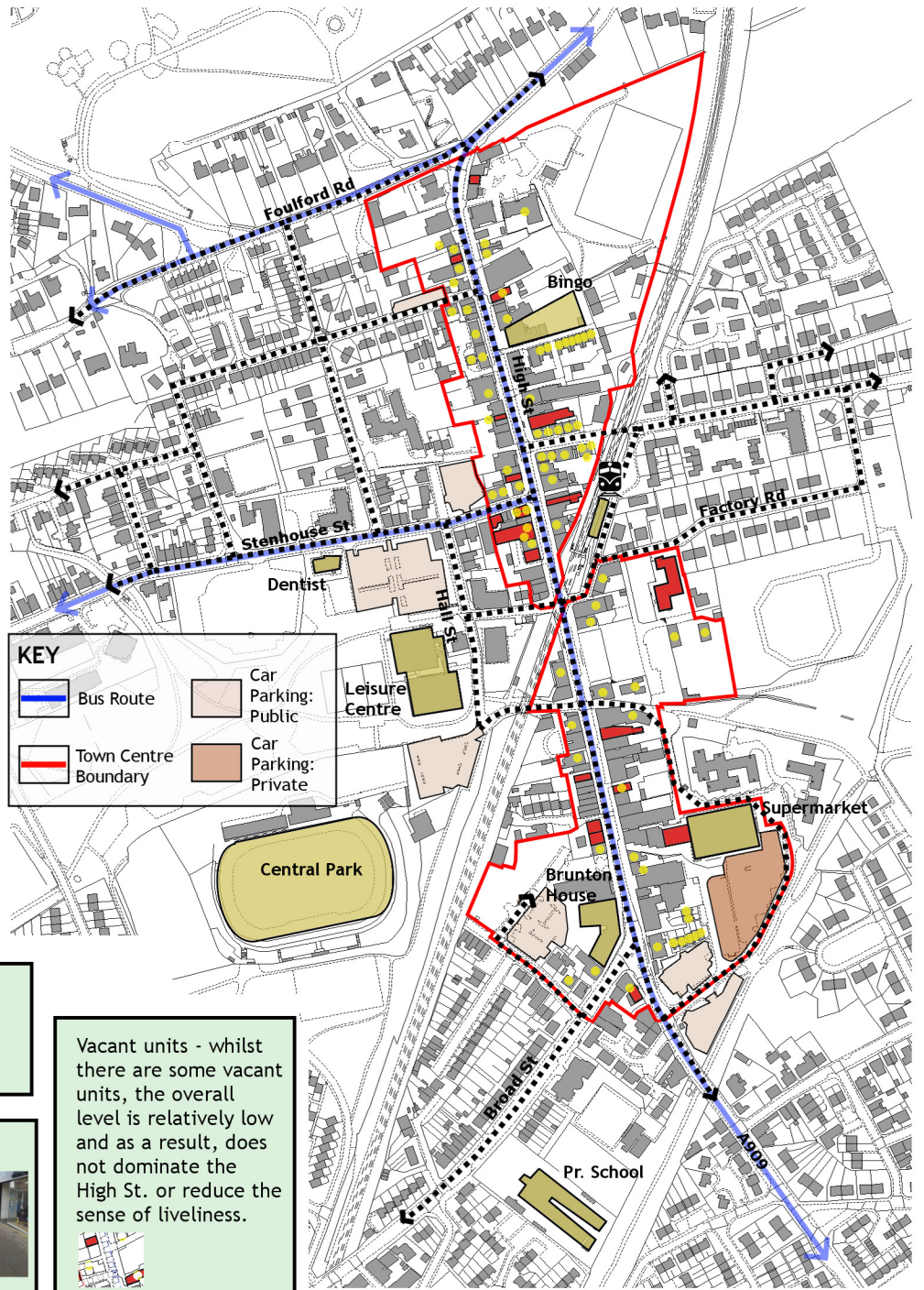
North High St - predominantly service orientated, with a tight urban grain - providing a distinction between the north and south zones of the town centre.



South High St - is predominantly comparison/ convenience shopping, with a looser urban grain - i.e. larger buildings/footprints. These distinctions help mark a clear zonal approach?



Vacant units - whilst there are some vacant units, the overall level is relatively low and as a result, does not dominate the High St. or reduce the sense of liveliness.



Stock cars - UK wide attraction, and attracts many people during the weekends across the racing season. At this time the town is very busy and helps support local businesses.



There are significant numbers of residential units within or adjacent to the High St, which helps to improve the vibrancy and vitality throughout the day/evening.



There are a wide range of retail/services within the High St. From niche shops, through to day to day grocery shopping, one "can buy most things in town"

The High St is perceived to be a "Value for money High St" - providing inexpensive goods/services, but a town centre that attracts a large local market.

ISSUES

Little green penetration into the town centre. There are significant green areas around the edge but it is not joined up or connected into the heart of the town.



What is the role of the town centre? The sense of place is not clear nor are the activities/functions that are on offer. Overall the sense is of a place to move through - due to the dominance of traffic rather than a place to spend time in. Visitors are likely to take an 'in/out' approach with little dwell time in the town centre.



The High St is very long. You can't see the whole place clearly and it is difficult to sense any attractions that will draw you from one end of the High St to the other. As a result, there is a sense that the town centre is disjointed and lacking a cohesive identity.



Poor quality or inappropriate shopfronts can detract from the visual quality of the town centre.



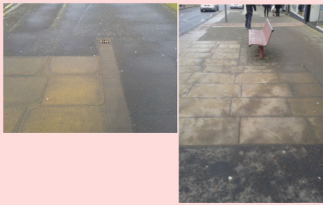
Many shops have no disabled access arrangements, restricting use, and therefore spending opportunities, by those in wheelchairs or parents with prams etc.



Poor state of pavements - there are many trip hazards and this can make it difficult for the elderly, those in wheelchairs or using prams etc to move around and access the shops services on offer.



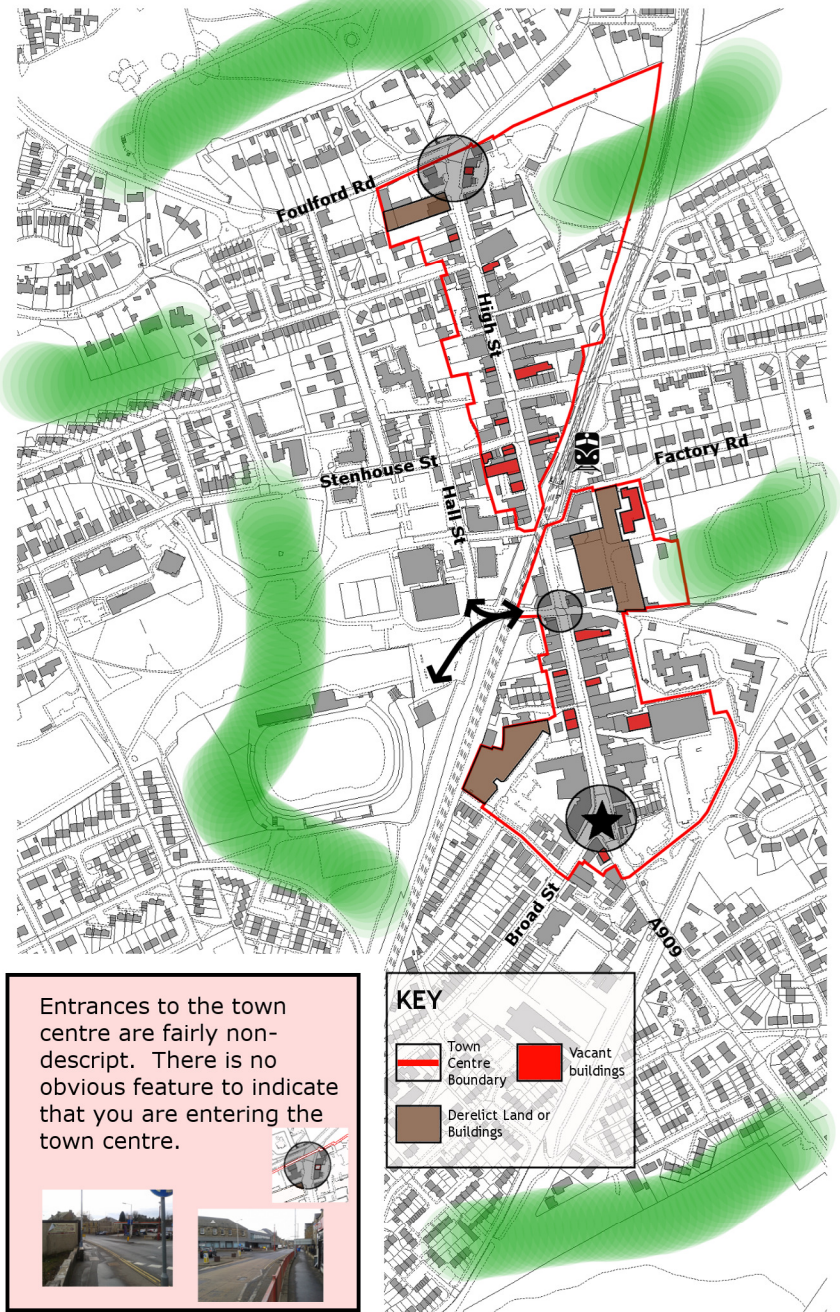
Street materials - there is a patchwork approach along the High St, with no coherent design/material philosophy employed. This further diminishes any sense of identity or place.



Pedestrian barriers - these are visually and physically oppressive. They prevent easy pedestrian movement between commercial premises and do not present an attractive or welcoming entrance to the town centre.



Prominent derelict buildings are a negative influence on the townscape. Vacant buildings, although not overbearing in numbers, can also, due to the inactivity and sometimes run down appearance, reduce the visual quality of the town centre.



Entrances to the town centre are fairly non-descript. There is no obvious feature to indicate that you are entering the town centre.



KEY	
	Town Centre Boundary
	Vacant buildings
	Derelict Land or Buildings

Route to Central Park and Leisure Centre feels remote from the town centre. The areas are not well lit, can feel uncomfortable at night and presents a negative impression which may prevent people moving between these facilities and the town centre.



There is little or no branding/publicity for the town centre to help create and sustain an identity and advertise the services on offer.

A significant number of evening services such as hot food takeaway units have external shutters that reduces the visual quality and gives a negative daytime impression of the area as a 'shut up' place.



Limited range of restaurants/cafes/pubs to retain people in the town centre in the evening.

OPPORTUNITIES

Pedestrian barriers. Opportunity to remove - slow traffic down to 20mph on approach - street markers to inform drivers that entering the town centre - natural traffic calming.



Build on existing identity features - eg red street furniture. Use existing features to help create a 'brand' for the town centre.



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Gateway features - signal entrance to the town centre - reinforce identity








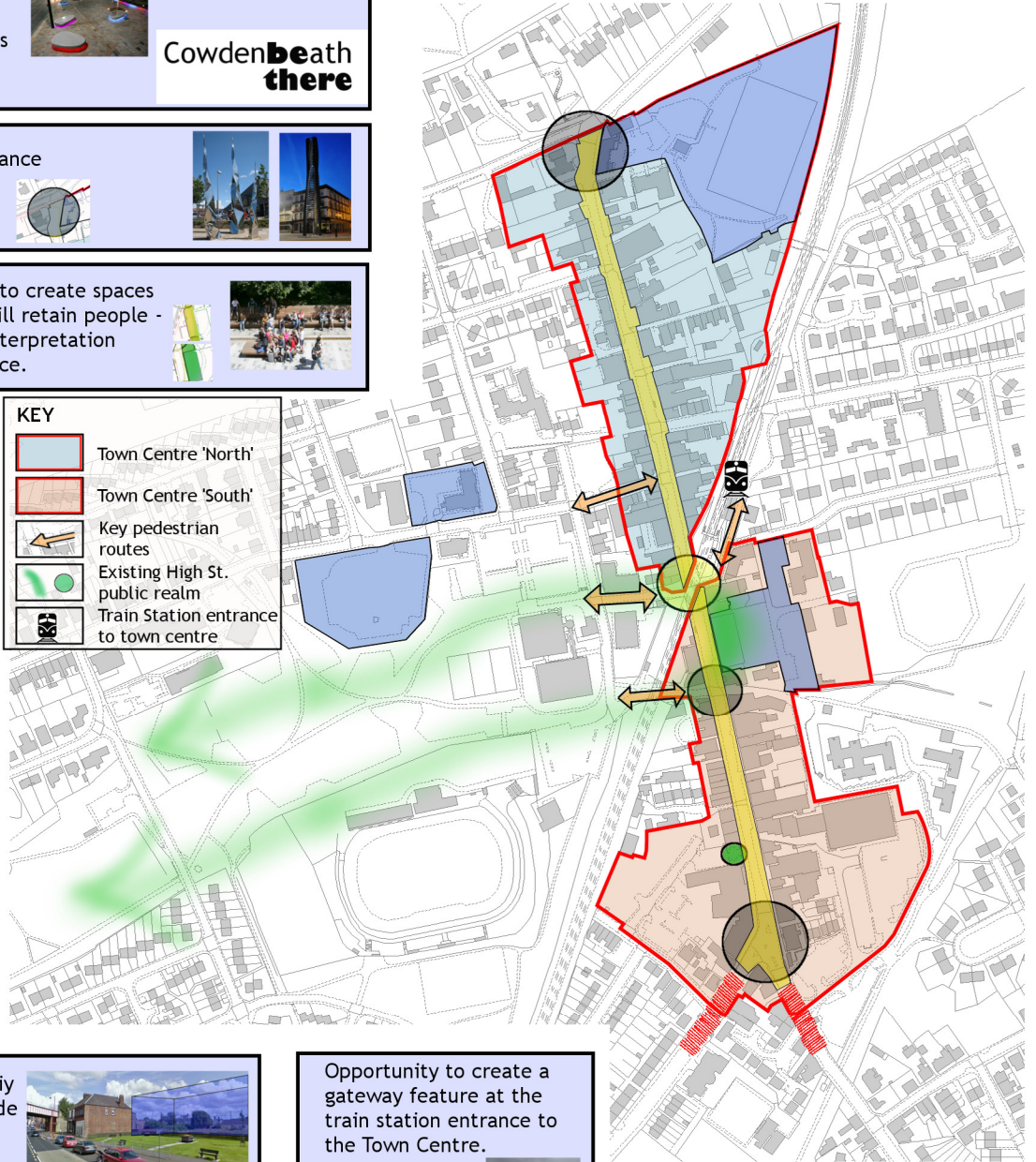
Pedestrian space - opportunity to create spaces that are more attractive and will retain people - eg public art, busking space, interpretation installations, market/event space.



Divide Town Centre into different zones - North and South and create/reinforce identities. This will also break up a lengthy and sometimes monotonous High St to create more visual and activity interest along the whole High St.

KEY

-  Town Centre 'North'
-  Town Centre 'South'
-  Key pedestrian routes
-  Existing High St. public realm
-  Train Station entrance to town centre



Railway Bridge as a transition/gateway between Town Centre North and South with street/structure/lighting improvements to mark the transition.



Development Sites - opportunity for further investment to provide new uses or uses that will bring more people into the High St. and bring vacant/derelict buildings into re-use to enhance the townscape qualities.



Opportunity to create a gateway feature at the train station entrance to the Town Centre.



Green fingers penetrating into the High St and connecting to wider green areas.



Junction/route enhancement - around the existing green space area - link to pedestrian movement routes to leisure centre/Central Park/shopping areas/Green Space. Opportunity to make the area more attractive, safe, welcoming and easy to use for pedestrians.



Stock car events - opportunity to create a wider town-event strategy - so that events are held in the High St during Stock Car races that will draw people in to the High St. Opportunity for visitor accommodation to keep people in the the area.



Create connections - eg signs, business connections within Lochore Meadows Country Park, so that services on offer within the town can encourage visitors to LMCP to spend time/money in the High St

Build on the branding exercise - promote the Jenny Lee story throughout the town centre through art, interpretation, wstudent projects, for example.

Street materials - scheme to upgrade tired/damaged or inappropriate materials. Create a unified streetscape through a design coding exercise.

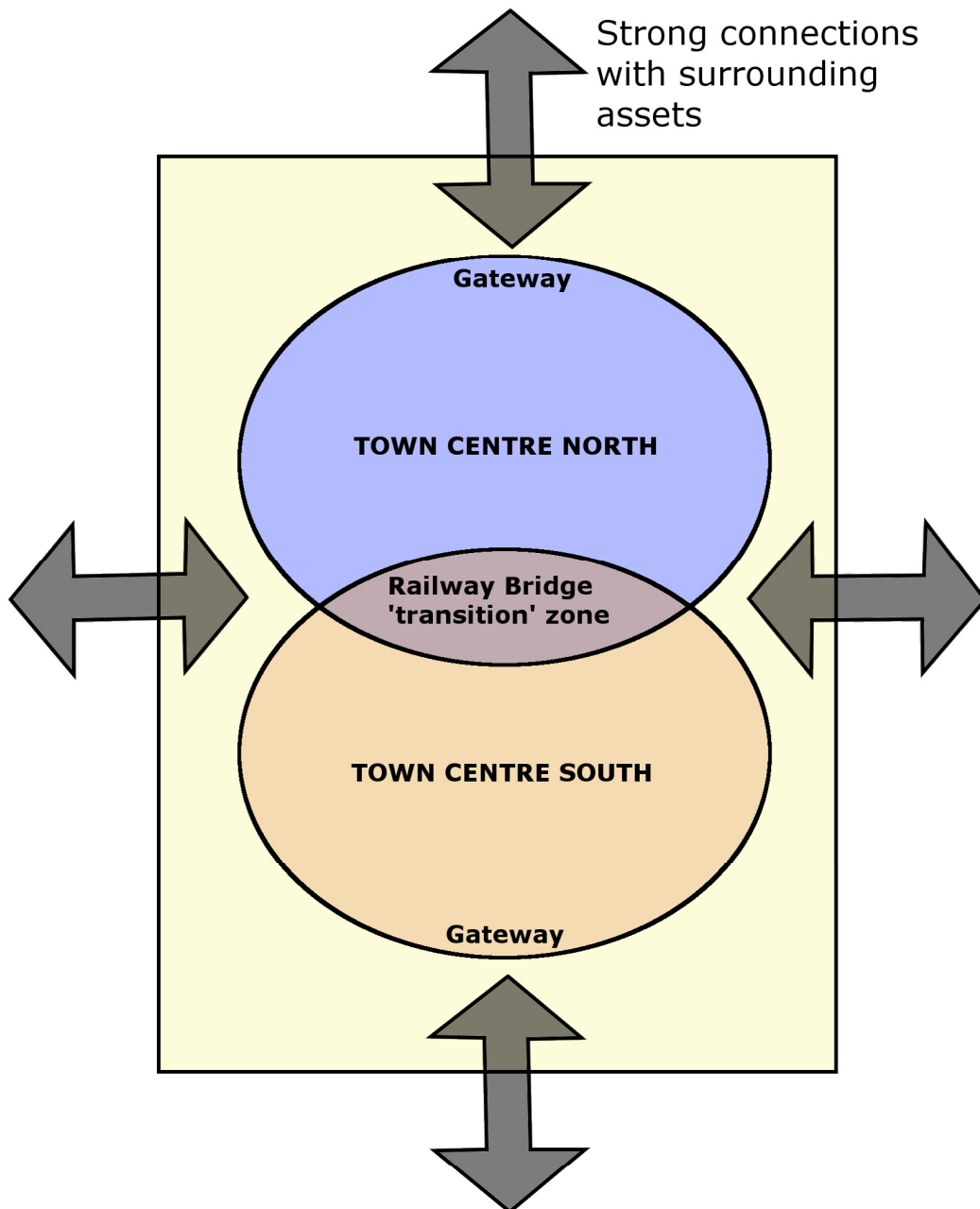


Access for All - opportunities for business, and wider environment to be accessible for all and any barriers to movement removed.

Shopfronts - shopfront improvement scheme/design coding exercise - reinforce identity



VISION



"Build on the existing assets and successes of the town centre; growing the strong identity of the north and south 'zones'; and facilitating an attractive place to spend time in."

"A town centre that looks outwards to connect with surrounding assets both within the town and further afield."

ACTION PLAN

Gateways Project

Creation of a design brief for a 'Gateways' project, to identify opportunities for provision of distinctive and welcoming features which clearly signals the entrance to the town centre and to also help build on the branding and marketing projects to strengthen the identity of the place.



Building care and maintenance

Identify a scheme of painting and minor repairs - 'tlc' to uplift the appearance of buildings along the High St area.



Streetscape enhancement

Design study for the enhancement of the pedestrian environment. Identify a scheme of improvements, through materials, lighting, public art, civic spaces for example, to facilitate safe and pleasant movement, help foster a sense of identity, create gateway features, and help facilitate a multi-functional approach to the High St and its civic spaces.



Identify & Design Social Spaces - Spaces for People

In conjunction with work on the streetscape enhancements, work could be undertaken to identify, design and implement a series of clear, attractive, multi-functional and easily accessible social spaces, with accompanying strong visual markers to signal and attract users.



New Development Opportunities

Identify major development opportunities and prepare appropriate level of design guidance for key sites.

Pedestrian Crossing Points

Enhancements of key pedestrian crossing points to reduce vehicular dominance, and encourage pedestrian movement across the High St. This should be undertaken in conjunction with work on streetscape enhancement to ensure a complete solution for people movement, space function and visual attractiveness is achieved.



Branding/Marketing Strategy

Creation of a strategy to create a strong brand/image for the town centre -focussing on assets such as independent shops, evening economy, history, town centre living opportunities, and wider town centre activities, whilst also setting out an appropriate level of design coding for future buildings/public realm to help reinforce the town centre as a distinctive place.

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Railway Bridge Art Scheme

Creation of a lighting/public art design scheme for the railway bridge as an important juncture and transition between north and south town centre areas.



Green fingers

Landscape design study to identify opportunities for connecting existing green fingers into and through the area to assist with the provision of an attractive place as well as encouraging increased biodiversity within and through the town centre.



Events Management Strategy

Create a Tourism/Cultural/Events Strategy to identify opportunities for utilising areas of public realm, and their funding requirements, to create a sustainable programme of activity in these spaces.



Building the tourism/ service capacity of the town

Bearing in mind future visitor opportunities at Lochore Meadows Country Park and other major visitor attractors such as the Stock Car Racing, and thus potential opportunities for Cowdenbeath, there is a need to clearly identify opportunities or market requirements etc, for visitor accommodation and other visitor/user infrastructure that can draw people into the town centre.

Design strategy - North & South Zones

Creation of a design strategy to create/reinforce the separate character or identities of the North and South areas of the town centre, alongside an assessment of potential future functions/roles and appearances of each area. Breaking up the town centre like this will make it a more appropriate scale for pedestrians to use and appreciate, and create a range of visual and functional activities throughout the town centre.

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