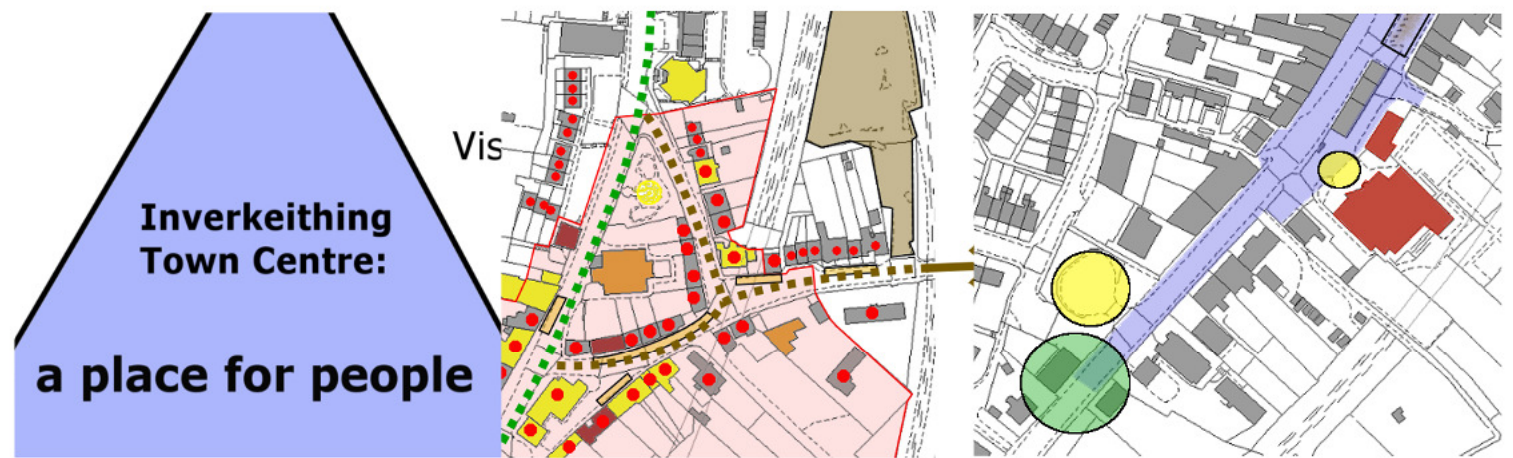


# TOWN CENTRE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: **INVERKEITHING**



# 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 Inverkeithing 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

There is a strong urban structure, providing an enclosed High St environment with a clear presence of historic buildings, providing a variety attractive buildings, rooflines and spaces. Overall the town centre offers a positive experience.



Low vacancy rates along the High St, presenting a vibrant and busy appearance, with a range of town centre shops/services present.



There is good access and easy connections available within the town centre and beyond.

North Queensferry can be accessed via the M90 (via A921), via the B981 or Ferryhill Rd. Dunfermline is a few minutes drive away, with the M90 less than two minutes drive.

National Cycle Route 1 runs through the town centre, providing accessibility and exposure for cyclists.

Inverkeithing is located close to the emerging Forth Bridge World Heritage site, with good road/rail/bus access to/from it.

Significant visitor numbers are expected in the wider area, and if captured successfully, this can help support the town centre.

Existing civic buildings and functions help define the place - i.e. the Civic Centre provides public services, civic function space, social/leisure space, a library, heritage centre and a cafe within one building just off the High Street, in a prominent and accessible location.



The urban form is characterised by strong building lines, with buildings located at the back of the pavement. This provides enclosure of public space and a strong sense of place and character.



Some parts of the public realm provides space for a comfortable pedestrian experience, although the quality of these spaces and their function varies across the town centre

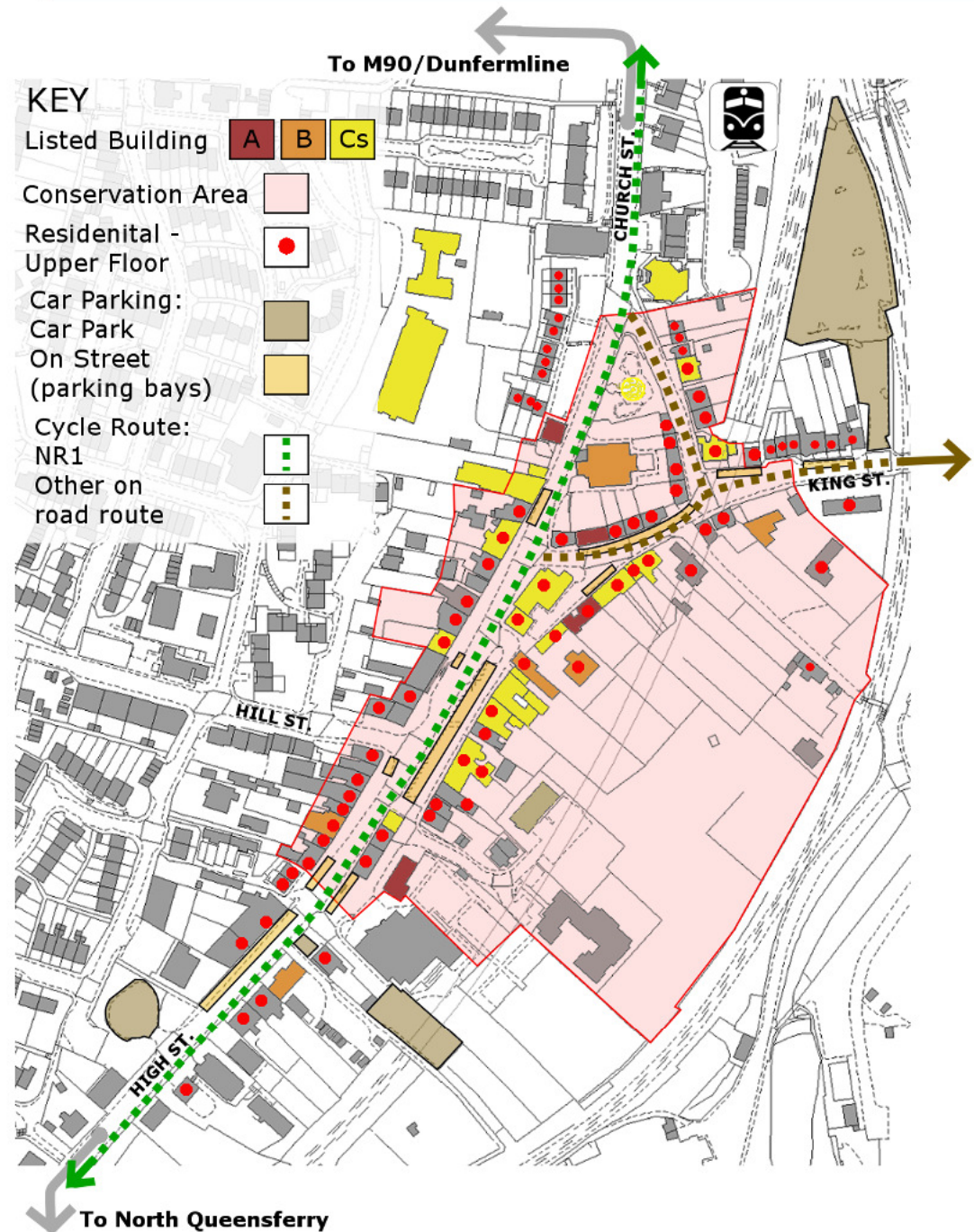


Movement: the Railway Station is close to the High Street. Town & Regional buses stop within the town centre. Car parking is readily available in the town centre.

A significant proportion of buildings in the town centre area include an element of residential use, particularly on the upper floors. This can help the town centre create/sustain its vibrancy and liveliness beyond shop opening hours.



However, the status of these buildings are not currently known - i.e. occupancy rates, building condition, number of people living in these units to be able to fully assess the impact and opportunities for the town centre.



Many buildings contribute to the quality of the urban realm and are a positive influence on the streetscape.



The town centre includes the Inverkeithing Outstanding Conservation area, as well as a number of listed buildings - the historic urban environment therefore contributes positively to the sense of place.



The High Street retail/service provision is not dominated by nationals/chains. Rather, it is the wide range of independent shops that offers the dominant retail experience.



# ISSUES

The streetscape materials are tired in appearance, in need of upgrade, and do not contribute positively to the overall urban realm experience.



Visual markers lack the strength to signal the entrance to the town centre appropriately, from the north and south. As a result, the sense of place is diminished and the visual and functional importance of the town centre is weakened.



Street car parking - is this the best use of space? Is the balance of useable pedestrian/public realm balanced sufficiently with the car parking arrangement? Would rationalisation or reconfiguration of the car parking release additional public realm space or make it more useable/comfortable?



Areas of public realm are present, but are not well used or comfortable for users due to their location/materials/street furniture.



The Mercat Cross is an important civic structure and landmark within the town. However, the Cross is tucked away in Bank St and has a very diminished visual role within the town centre.



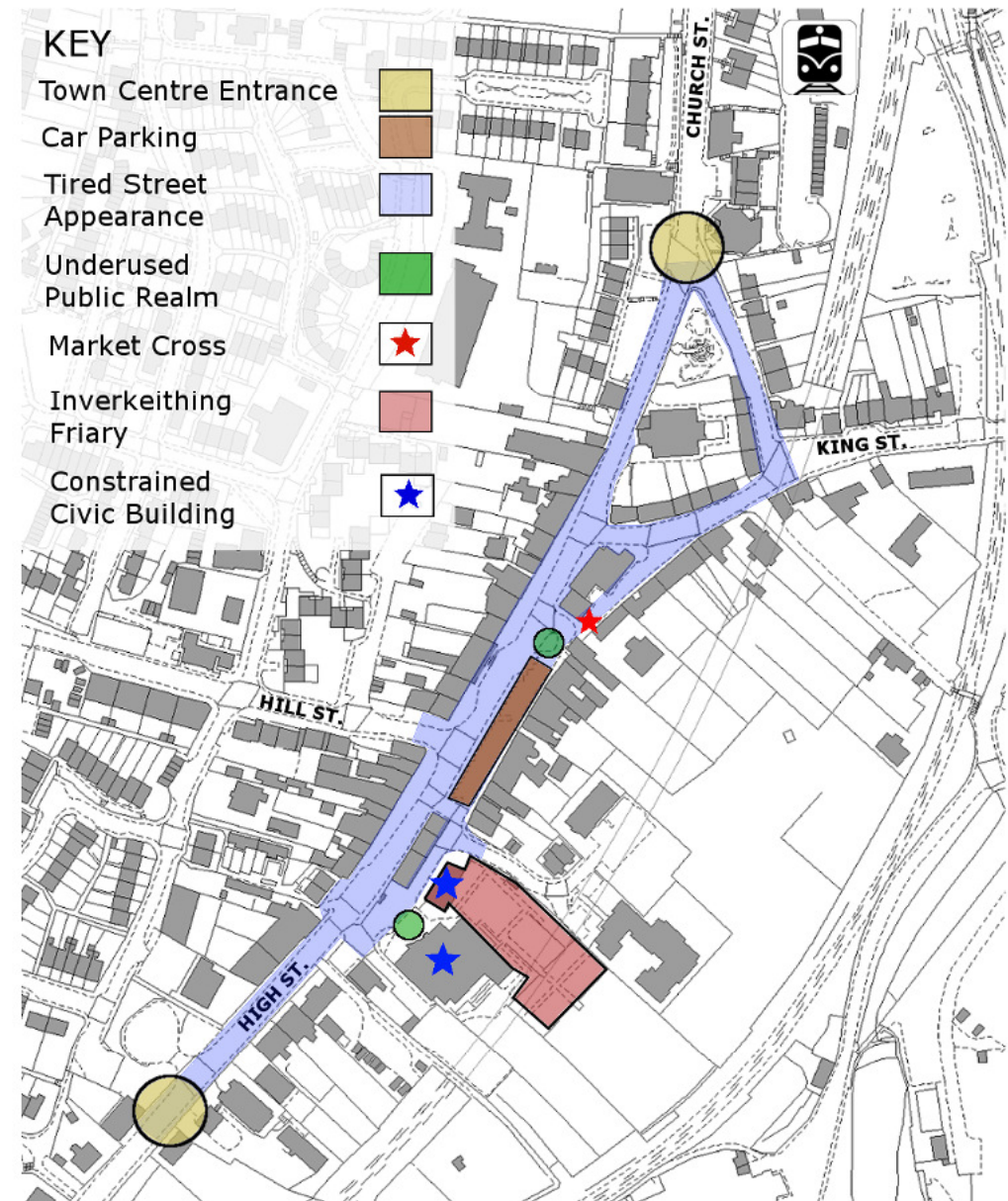
Inverkeithing Friary is an important civic building, and one of the oldest buildings in the town (14th century) which now houses Inverkeithing Museum.

However, the importance of this building is somewhat lost within the wider streetscape. It feels hidden away, and has little visual prominence in the town centre. The casual visitor would hardly know it is there.



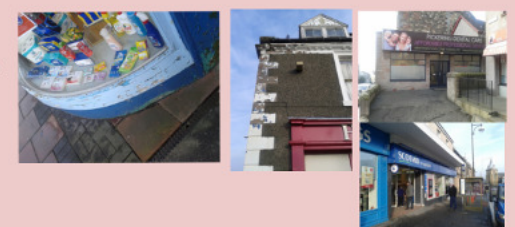
Key civic buildings are visually constrained, both by existing buildings, but also by modern street furniture, - including bus stops, signage, as well as car parking.

Casual visitors may not realise these buildings are there or what services they offer.



Some buildings/shopfronts have a negative influence on the streetscape.

A number of prominent buildings are in need of low value maintenance to enhance the visual quality of the High St.



For a town within a very central location for local/national attractions, there is very little visitor accommodation to help retain people within the town, with associated potential spend in local shops, cafes/pubs etc.



Railway Station - the route to/from the High St is not clearly defined at important junctures to facilitate ease of movement or an understanding of the place and proximity to services.



# OPPORTUNITIES

Public realm enhancements within the High St can: improve the setting of key buildings; can provide safe, comfortable and attractive places for pedestrian movement; can provide meeting, event or activity spaces.



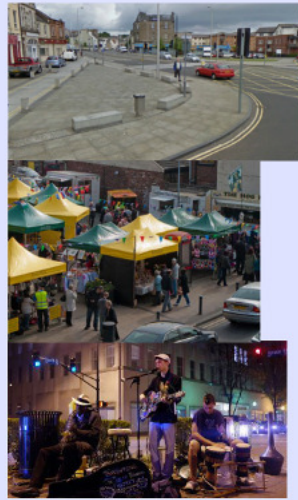
Build the capacity of Inverkeithing to capitalise on its proximity to the emerging Forth Bridge World Heritage Site - identify opportunities to enhance the offer for visitors in terms of shops/cafes/other services/events/the quality of the environment, and the overall identity or branding of the town and its town centre.



Signage strategy - combined with streetscape improvements, this can help create a legible and attractive network of pedestrian routes to/from the train station to encourage people to visit the town centre.



Space for people - building on any enhancement to the public realm, opportunities may arise to consider certain spaces for new or continued use for events, gatherings, meetings etc. A series of spaces can be identified at different scales to accommodate different levels of activity, from the Lammas Fair, to theatre/music productions, down to informal meetings/gatherings.



Visitor accommodation - opportunity to build on the proximity to existing and future visitor destinations, to create a strategy for developing the visitor accommodation function of the town for the benefit of existing and future visitor destinations, as well as the facilities/services within the town centre itself.

Residential - living over the shop. Examine opportunities to promote/facilitate the re-use of existing space above shop/service units for residential use.

Friary/Civic Centre - make these key buildings more visible - i.e. give them greater visual prominence- from the High St, through amending the arrangement of existing street furniture and signage.

Mercat Cross - opportunity to create a more prominent role for this important civic structure - options could include using this to mark the entrance to the town centre, or as a defining feature of any new or enhanced public realm.



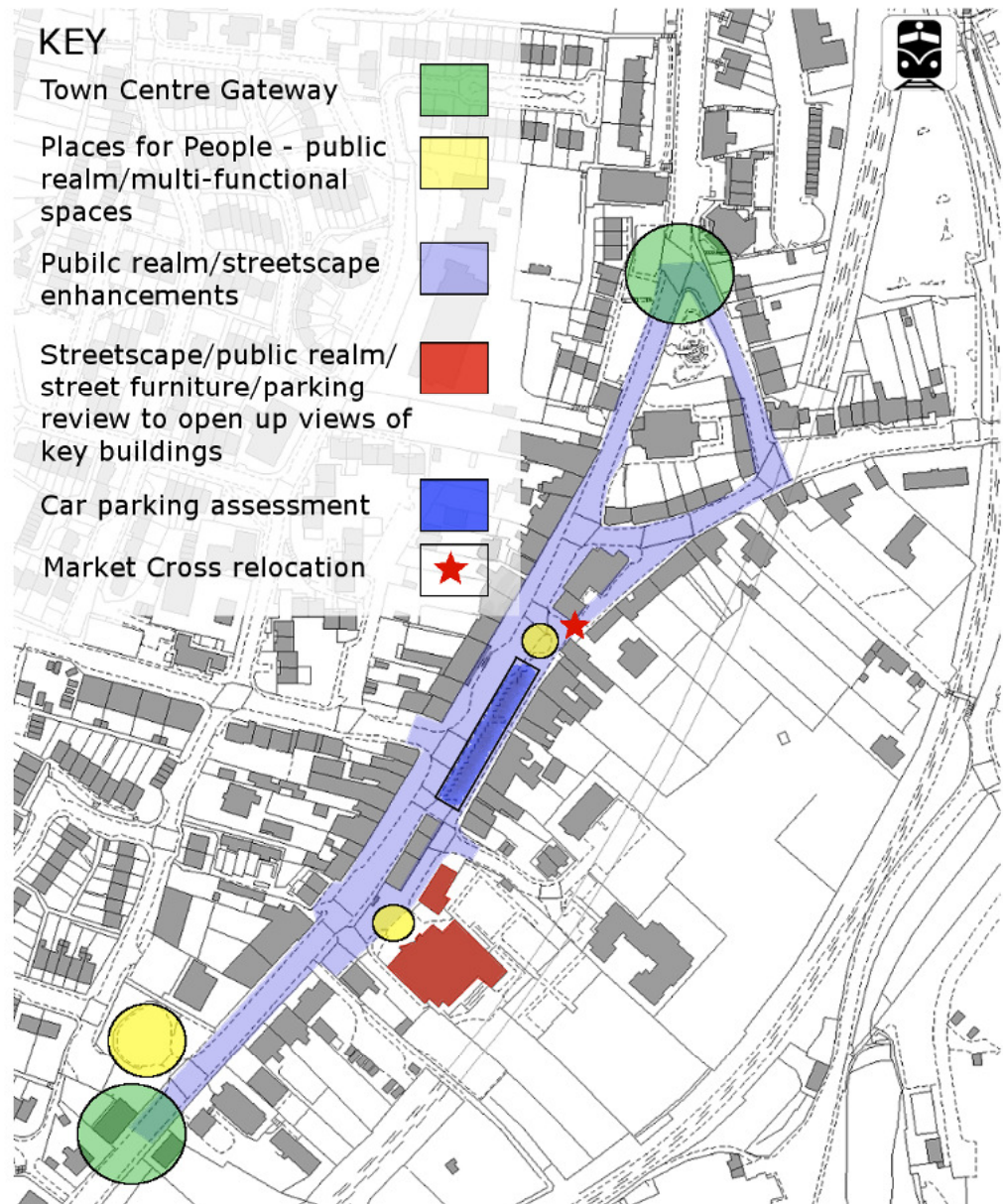
Establish a programme for continuing shopfront improvements and building maintenance to enhance the visual quality of the streetscape.



Car parking - revise arrangements on High St, to create better spaces for pedestrians. Examine opportunities for multi functional spaces that include car parking but also allow for other uses - eg street theatre, events etc to take place in these spaces.



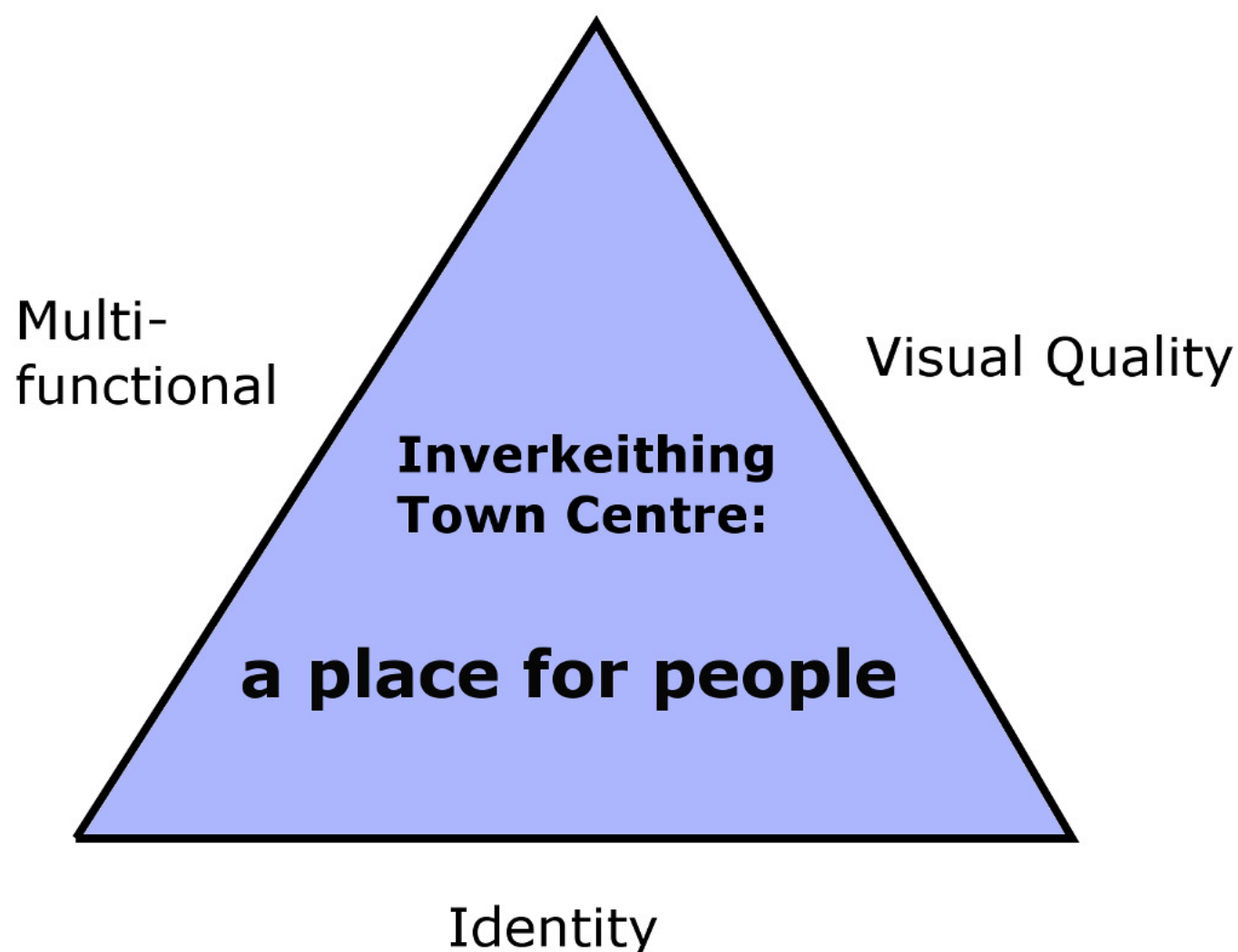
Town Centre Gateways should be designed and installed to signal the entrance to the town centre, reinforcing the identity of Inverkeithing, and mark the area as a place to spend time in.



## VISION & CONCEPTS

### VISION STATEMENT:

Inverkeithing Town Centre as a Place for People, with a strong identity, supporting an attractive, multi functional centre which can connect with, and service the needs of, the town and any nearby visitor destinations.



### KEY CONCEPTS

Deliver the vision through the key concepts of:

1. Multi functioning spaces,
2. Improving the visual quality of the town centre
3. Establishing a clear identity
4. Establishing a clear role, within the context of an attractive environment and emerging visitor attractions, for the town centre to support the needs of residents and visitors.

# ACTION PLAN

<p>Improve the orientation between the Railway Station and the High St.</p>	<p>Prepare a signage strategy allied to a public art strategy and streetscape enhancements at key junctures/ locations to enhance the orientation /movement of people from/to the train station.</p>	
<p>Building care and maintenance</p>	<p>Identify a scheme of painting and minor repairs - 't/c' to uplift the appearance of buildings along the High St area.</p>	
<p>Streetscape enhancement</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Identify &amp; Design Social Spaces - Spaces for People</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Mercat Cross</p>	<p>Use this key civic structure to mark the entrance to the High St, or as a key marker for public realm improvements identified through the work on streetscape enhancements or Spaces for People, as above.</p>	
<p>Pedestrian Crossing Points</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Enhancement of surface car parking</p>	<p>Undertake a study to review the function and layout of existing on-street car parking with a view to facilitating the creation of new and/or enhanced public space or enhanced pedestrian areas.</p> <p>As part of this, the study should examine opportunities for enhancing the appearance of off street public parking areas, including introducing these as multi functional spaces for outdoor theatre, music venues, or market/ festival spaces for example.</p>	
<p>Town Centre Living</p>	<p>A town centre living project to assess, identify opportunities, and establish a strategy for assisting the delivery of new residential development.</p>	
<p>Events Management Strategy</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Building the tourism/ service capacity of the town</p>	<p>Bearing in mind future visitor opportunities at the Forth Bridgehead areas, and related opportunities for Inverkeithing, there is a need to identify the future role of the town centre, and thus identify opportunities, market requirements etc, for new visitor accommodation and other visitor/user infrastructure to build upon the proximity to existing and future visitor destinations.</p>	
<p>Friary/Civic Centre Visual Impact</p>	<p>In conjunction with any streetscape enhancement project, there should be a design scheme in place to give greater visual prominence to these two important buildings and remove any street furniture or other items that conflicts with views into these buildings from the High St.</p>	



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<p>Enhancement of surface car parking</p>	<p>Study to examine the opportunity for examining the function and layout of existing on-street car parking with a view of facilitating the creation of new and/or enhanced public space or enhanced pedestrian areas.</p> <p>Also a feasibility study to examine the opportunity for enhancing the appearance of off street public parking areas, including opportunities for introducing these as multi functional spaces for outdoor theatre, music venues, or market/festival spaces for example.</p>	
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<p>Visitor Accommodation</p>	<p>Study to identify opportunities, market requirements, potential locations for new development, for new visitor accommodation to build upon the proximity to existing visitor destinations.</p>	
<p>Friary/Civic Centre Visual Impact</p>	<p>In conjunction with any streetscape enhancement project, there should be a design scheme in place to give greater visual prominence to these two important buildings and remove any street furniture or other items that conflicts with views into these buildings from the High St.</p>	



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