
Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan

A Plan for Transformation: Vision Document



“The Local Enterprise Partnership supports the ambitions for the regeneration of Weymouth town centre and is delighted to see the progress achieved with developing a clear and achievable vision through this masterplan. We have approved in-principle funding support to enable this work to progress further, and look forward to continued working with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council to achieve the outcomes, which will make a real difference to southern and western Dorset”.

Gordon Page
Chairman of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

“The hosting of the sailing events for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games have transformed aspirations for Weymouth’s residents and its business community. Our approach in creating and establishing the vision for Weymouth town centre has been through our local communities as co-creators: to this extent the regeneration of the town centre is in response to local priorities and needs.

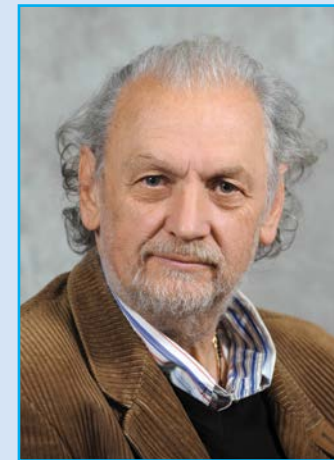
The redevelopment of the town centre will provide a real catalyst for positive transformation and further investment into South and West Dorset. The delivery of the town centre vision will be through a comprehensive partnership approach that will create greater business confidence and encourage investment from stakeholders and the public and private sectors.

With the changing finances of local government grant received from central government, the council has to secure finances through commercialisation, economic growth and investment by better use of its assets. In Weymouth and Portland we have fantastic assets within our town centre and Portland which will help us achieve investment, income and create new jobs and businesses.

We will build upon our existing, and seek new, partnerships that are able to deliver significant projects that connect the community’s aspirations with the location’s exceptionally high quality landscape, seascape and built heritage.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in the development of this vision. We recognise that when we work together, collaboratively, creatively and with confidence that we can together deliver the successful revitalisation of Weymouth.”

Cllr Mike Byatt
Economic Development Brief Holder



Why a masterplan?

- This document sets out ambitious proposals to transform Weymouth town centre into a vibrant and prosperous community, with up to 1,000 new homes and 2,700 jobs across five town centre sites covering 58 hectares
- We aim to build on Weymouth's current position and create a thriving hub for west and south Dorset, further enhancing its image and reputation as a vibrant employment, shopping and leisure centre with a strong cultural identity, supported by thriving business, tourism, commercial and education sectors
- The vision is a key part of the Borough Council's ambitions, responding to the challenges of achieving economic investment, delivering community aspirations and producing alternative sources of council revenue
- The masterplan has the support of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership and aims to secure more private investment into the town centre. It is part of our wider economic growth ambition to develop the Western Growth Corridor for Dorset, including housing and job growth at Weymouth and the exciting visitor attractions of Jurassic and MEMO on Portland

Weymouth Today

- Weymouth town has a port and marina, is a centre for shopping and employment and a major UK seaside tourist destination. With a stunning Georgian seafront, large wetland nature reserves dissecting the built up area, and set on the Jurassic coast World Heritage Site, it is an extremely attractive place to live, work and visit
- The Borough has new employment sites established at Osprey Quay & Portland Port. These two sites have already brought significant

investment with new advanced engineering, marine and maritime businesses either relocating or starting up at these modern waterside facilities

- The Weymouth Relief Road and improved transport infrastructure have enabled expansion of the Granby Industrial Estate, the introduction of the Link Park Trading Estate and establishment of the new Mount Pleasant Business Park, creating new employment and reinvigorating aspirations for further growth
- Planned housing developments at Littlemoor, Markham & Little Francis and Wey Valley will bring over 1,100 new homes in addition to the 1,000 town centre homes
- Dorset County Council has invested £6.3m in cycling and walking infrastructure since 2011 in addition to road spend, giving Weymouth one of the best cycle networks of similar sized towns in the South West

Weymouth Transformed - A Plan for Change

- Weymouth has an unprecedented opportunity for economic growth and transformation, playing a pivotal role in driving the wider local economy
- The town has fared well for over 200 years with its exceptionally high quality landscape, seascape and built heritage. Whilst retaining these features, there is a need to modernise, providing new opportunities connected to the aspirations, energy and needs of local people
- Inspired by our community, the town centre is at the start of some exciting changes that will ensure that Weymouth can live up to expectations as an exciting, vibrant 21st century coastal town with an enhanced vitality, accessibility and appearance
- Our Plan for Change involves the regeneration of five key areas of Weymouth town centre, resulting in new homes, jobs and top quality cultural facilities. We are seeking partners able to deliver significant development projects to achieve this vision

What's happened so far?

- A series of events was held in summer and autumn 2014 asking the public what they liked about Weymouth and what they would like to change. This was followed up with workshops that looked forward to how Weymouth could develop over the next five years, and conversations with businesses and landowners
- The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) recognises the economic potential of the Western Growth Hub and in particular what we have developed for the town through the Masterplan, which is now at number five on their Dorset strategic economic plan priority list
- Consultants have examined the community aspirations in the context of our objectives and advised us what is achievable both technically and economically
- A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced to set out more detailed proposals together with a delivery plan for how they will be achieved. The SPD will be formally adopted later in 2015 alongside the Local Plan

What you told us

Key issues arising from the public and business consultation were:

- The town has massive potential, and areas such as the harbourside are real positives
- The town needs an exciting vision to provide confidence for investors
- There is a need for higher paid jobs with better career prospects, and less dependence on summer tourism
- Maintaining a good range of shops and services is important

- There is a need to take pride in the built heritage, maintain, improve and show off the historic streets and buildings
- The station could become a better entrance to Weymouth, with a more welcoming environment and better links to the centre
- The Peninsula is the right place for leisure development
- The dominance of cars in the town centre has a harmful impact
- Better arts and cultural activities and facilities are needed

The feedback has guided the vision and masterplan.

What happens next

A plan for implementation will be developed further, but an outline of key tasks is set out in section 5.

3 Key Themes

Four key issues need to be addressed to maximise the redevelopment opportunities in the town centre:

- Jobs
- Homes and People
- Place
- Movement

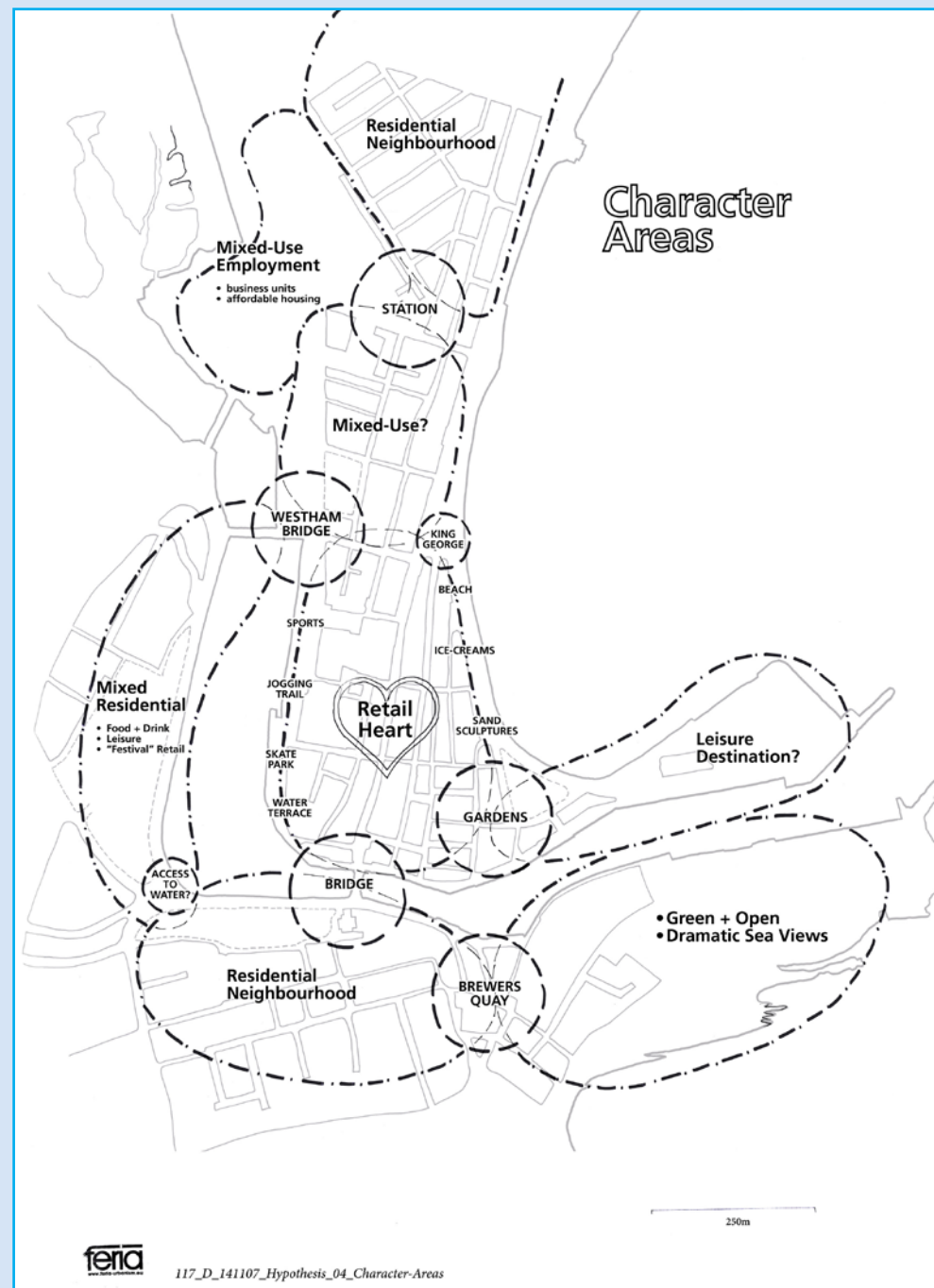
Jobs

The public and business consultation established clear priorities for the town centre regeneration. The top priority was to “Provide opportunities for higher paid, less seasonal jobs with better career prospects for young people”.

The Council’s economic strategy, Priorities for Growth, sets out the ambition to create new and higher paid employment opportunities through the regeneration of the town centre as well as developments at the major employment sites of Granby Industrial Park, Link Park, Mount Pleasant, Osprey Quay and Portland Port. Regeneration will not only create new employment but also by creating a new attractive environment, will encourage the growth of existing businesses as well as attracting inward investment to these sites, enabling a wider choice of employment opportunity.

Supporting the development of existing and/or establishment of a skills hub or Higher Education facility is an integral part of the regeneration. This can ensure the future demand for a skilled workforce can be met locally, enabling improved career prospects, encouraging our young people to stay in the locality as well as attracting young people to visit and study in the area.

The town centre regeneration will also support access to training, skills and employment opportunities. The Council will use its policies, such as procurement, and work with our partners and developers to create new work placements and training opportunities as part of the project whilst enabling improved access to employment opportunities.



Business Start-ups and Grow-on Space

The area around the station provides a well-connected location suitable for developing a business zone for encouraging business starts ups and also to provide some grow on space. This area also provides opportunities to provide office and other small scale commercial space as does the area at the harbourside.

Retail, Cafes and Restaurants

New small scale retail units can be developed as part of the sites at the station, harbourside, Commercial Road and the Peninsula, including specialist shops supporting the marine and tourist sectors. More facilities for family eating can be incorporated into developments along the harbourside, Commercial Road and on the Peninsula.

Visitor Accommodation and Attractions

Weymouth is well served by a variety of hotels and guesthouses, providing local employment opportunities. The harbourside provides an opportunity to develop a modern hotel with conference facilities, which the town currently lacks, and there is also potential for serviced accommodation in this location to provide greater choice. The council owns many of the seafront hotels and will consider the future of these in the light of this masterplan.

Weymouth could benefit from additional all-weather attractions to build upon the existing Sealife Centre and Tower that appeal to visitors and local people alike. There is capacity to add to the facilities at Lodmoor.

Homes and people

All of the key sites provide opportunities for the development of a range of housing in the town centre location. The harbourside and Peninsula sites in particular could include styles of housing not currently available in the Weymouth housing market. There is some scope for improving homes above shops within the town centre area to bring vacant space back into use.

Affordable housing provision will be an important element of the redevelopment of the key sites, though development viability will be taken into account in deciding the quantity and mix as the plans develop.

Community uses are an important part of any redevelopment proposals. A focus for these is on the harbourside development site including the existing church, Surestart children's centre and St John Ambulance. Other short term opportunities will exist on sites whilst development proposals are drawn up.

Communities can play a big part in helping the transformation of their town. Community initiatives should be encouraged as this can increase pride in the local area, as can the development of social enterprises.

Procurement should be used to encourage contractors and developers to provide employment, work experience and training opportunities for local workforce and suppliers.

The creation of new employment opportunities will require investment in additional housing. It is therefore recognised that housing sites around the town, such as the Littlemoor Urban Extension and Markham & Little Francis development, will make a significant contribution to the town centre regeneration.



Places

New Public Spaces

Each of the key development sites will include new public spaces, particularly along the harbourside, including Westham Bridge, in front of the station and on the Peninsula. A major new pedestrian route could be created around the harbour from Westham Bridge to the town bridge, with links to the station and to the Peninsula. The public realm around the Peninsula, Custom House Quay and the harbour will be improved to make it more attractive. In the longer term the construction of a tidal barrage is proposed to reduce long term flood risk in the town centre and this could provide an opportunity to connect the Peninsula to the Nothe via a pedestrian link.

Improved Public Places

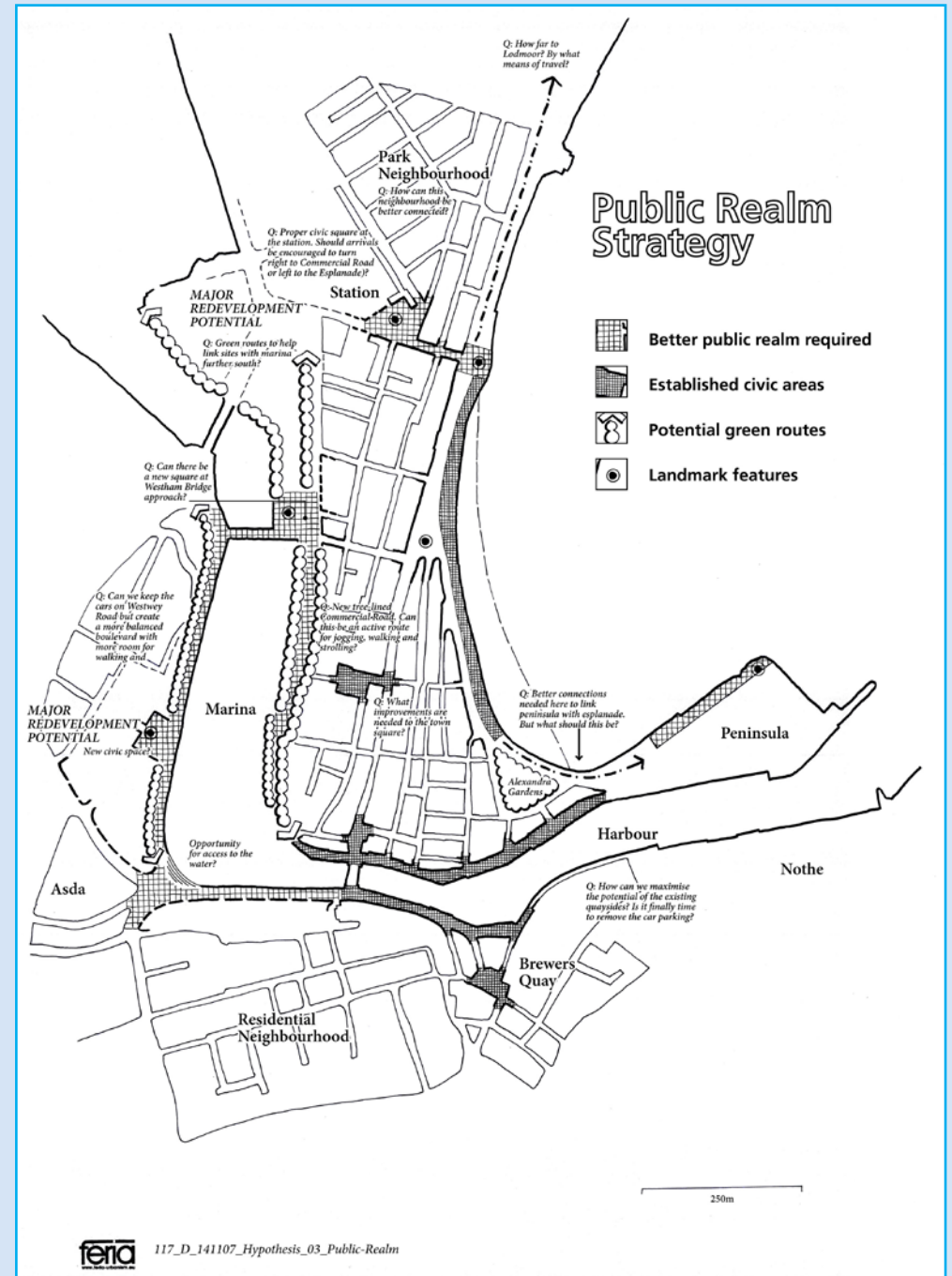
Key routes will be enhanced by the planting of suitable trees and vegetation, supplemented by imaginative lighting and street furniture. A public art trail could be developed to connect new art installations to each other and may include outdoor performance space (s). The Peninsula has been identified through the public consultation as an area for a significant art installation. Access to the RSPB Radipole Lake and Lodmoor nature reserves will be improved from the town centre car parks and station.

WiFi Access

Free WiFi access is proposed across the town centre to encourage businesses and enhance visitor and leisure experience.

New Cultural Facilities

There is potential for an improved or new cultural centre creating an environment for a wide range of cultural and art activity. The new facility could establish an auditorium, performance space, art gallery, museum and heritage facility, bars, café and a restaurant. This could provide training opportunities for students in hospitality, events management and catering as well as the performing arts.



Movement

Reducing the Dominance of the Car

We want the town centre to be less dominated by car movement, and better for pedestrians and cyclists. This would enhance the economic potential of key spaces within the town. The harbour area is currently severed from the town centre along Commercial Road and the station from the Swannery car park. Better sharing of the space between cars, pedestrians and cyclists is needed, together with signage to the major destinations, although they may need to be separated for safety reasons. These shared spaces should have reduced speed limits, such as 20mph.

We include an ambition to satisfactorily conclude the issue of cycling and pedestrian usage along the full length of The Esplanade.

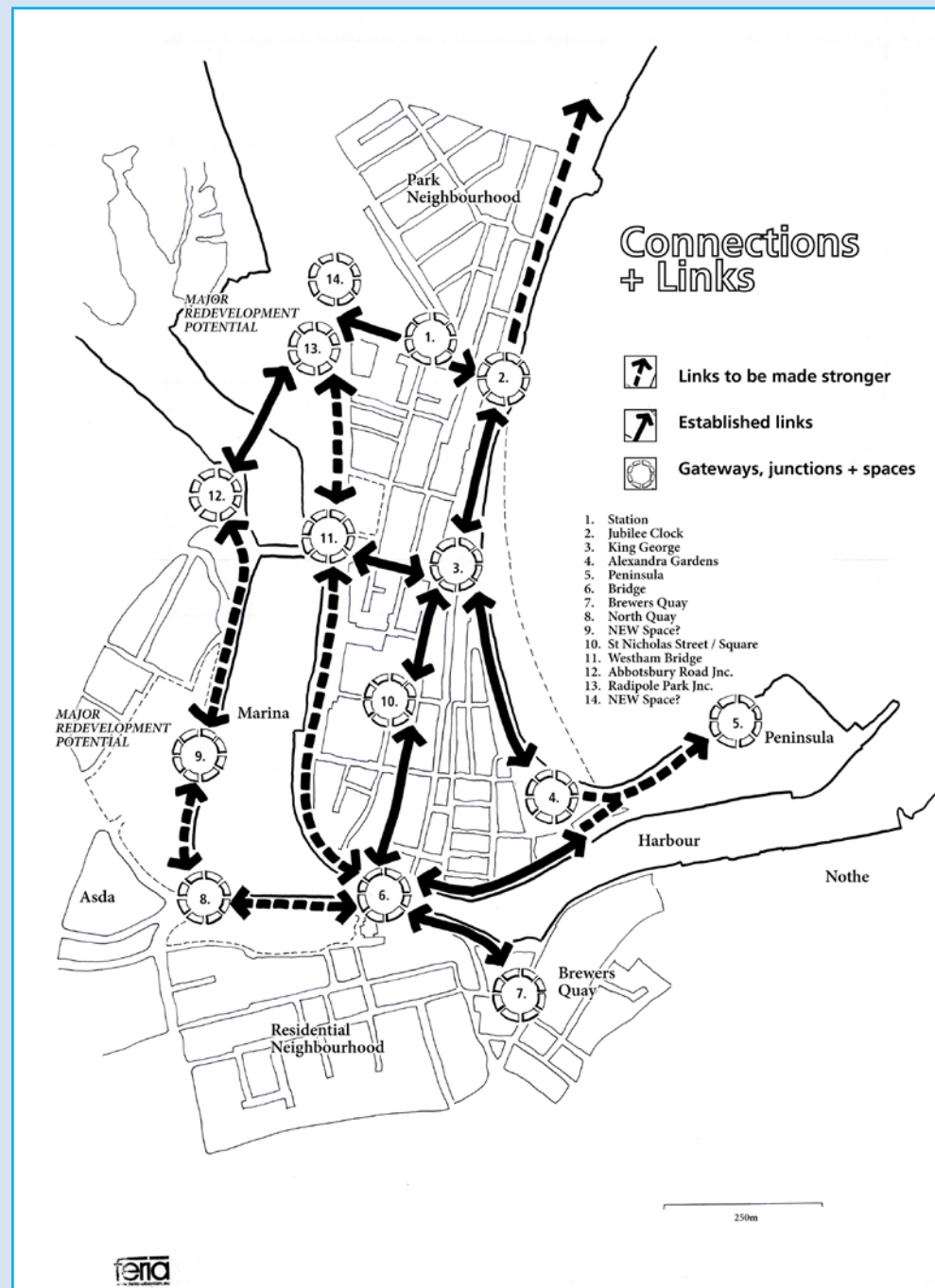
Access for buses, particularly to the town centre along Commercial Road and at the station, is an essential part of a transport strategy that needs to be developed alongside the Masterplan. Bus facilities will be provided at the rear of Debenhams to maximise convenience for bus users.

Preparing a Transport and Movement Strategy

A careful balance is needed to provide enough car parking to support the town centre and access to key services and the needs of residents, while discouraging unnecessary through traffic and managing vehicle movements to improve freedom of movement for pedestrians. A new parking strategy will be prepared to develop this approach.

Key car parks such as the Swannery and Lodmoor should provide a gateway role for long and short term parking. This will need to be supplemented with short term parking for shoppers concentrated on Commercial Road, as well as dedicated town centre parking for specific users including blue badge holders and harbour users.

Parking which dominates the waterfront will be reduced, making this area more attractive for pedestrians. Loading will be restricted between 10am and 5pm. The appearance of the key car parks will be improved to give a better welcome to Weymouth for visitors.



Improving the Station Area

The area around the station is tired and needs improvement to make it more welcoming to visitors to the town. Pedestrians need to be given a greater priority for arriving and departure and pedestrian links to the town centre, Radipole Lake nature reserve and to the beach need to be strengthened.

Significant Opportunities at the vacant Ferry Terminal

There will be significant economic and social potential to redevelop and reinvigorate the ferry terminal from Autumn 2015 as a result of the reduction in the amount of traffic going to and from the ferry port. This gives opportunities to comprehensively redevelop the Peninsula and to reconfigure the Esplanade south of the Kings Statue to provide a better pedestrian environment.

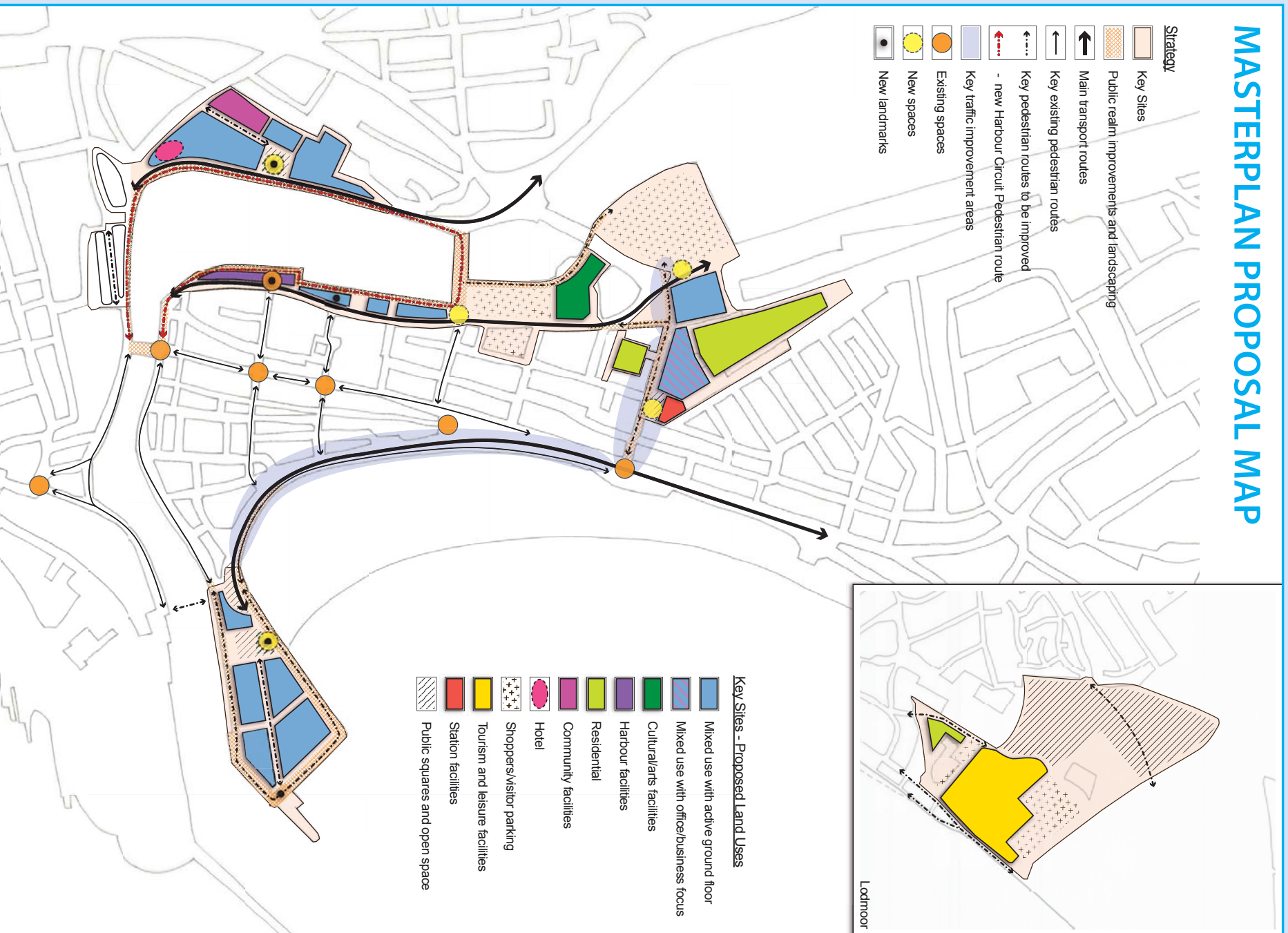


- *Lodmoor Gateway*
- *Station Gateway*
- *Commercial Road*
- *Harbourside*
- *Peninsula*

The following pages summarise the emerging vision for each site, together with the opportunities and constraints. It is intended that with the funding support from the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal, further work will be carried out during 2015 to develop more detailed plans for each site.

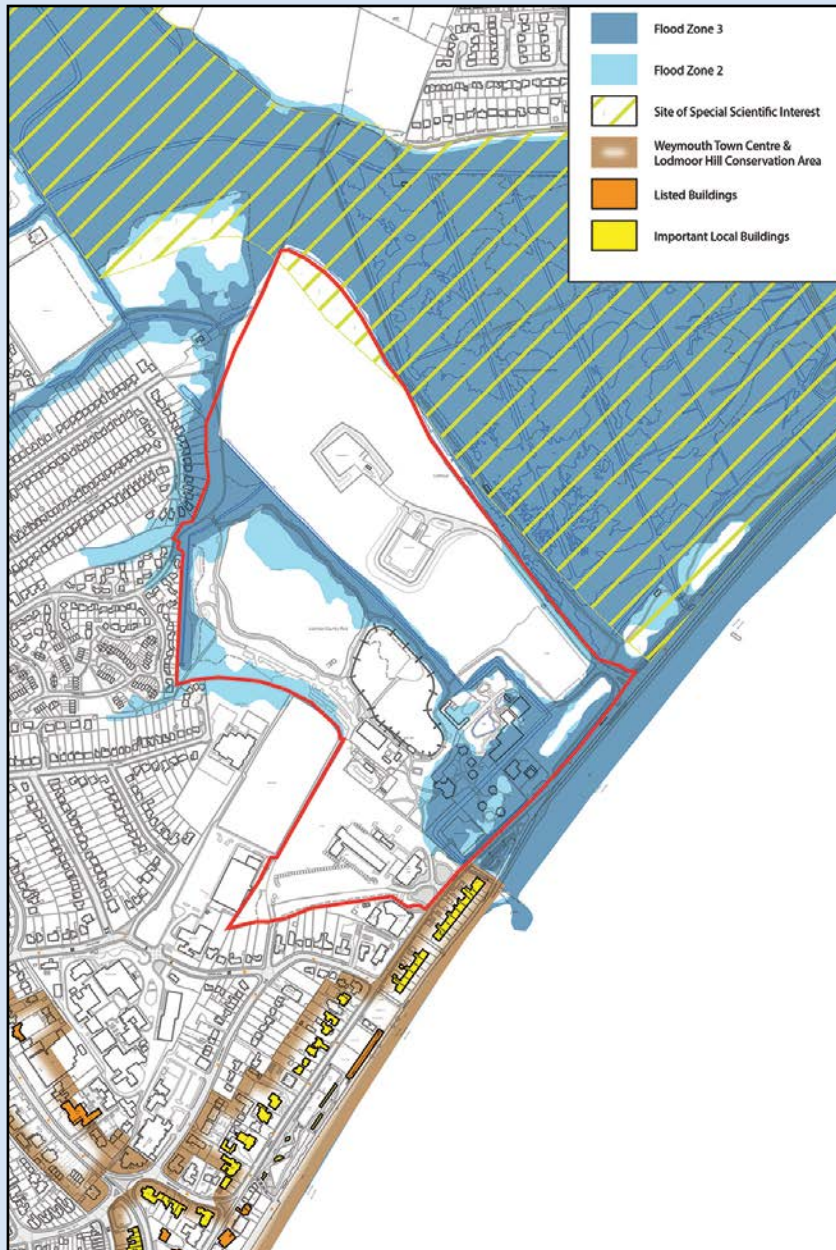


MASTERPLAN PROPOSAL MAP



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019690. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Lodmoor Site Constraints



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019690. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

VISION

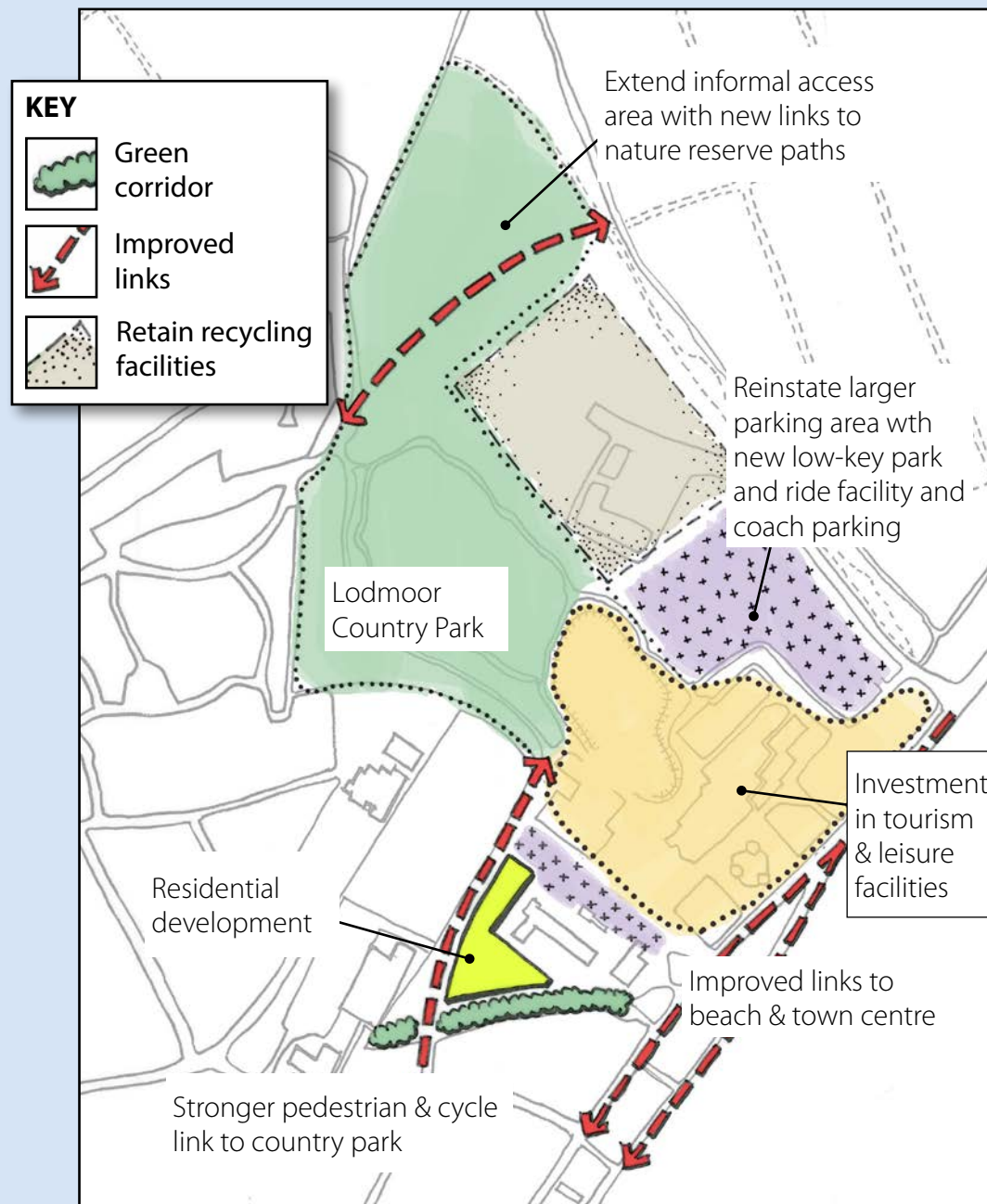
To improve the leisure facilities to include more wet weather attractions and extend the Country Park; to provide gateway parking for the town centre; to improve cycle and pedestrian links to the town centre; and provide limited residential development. Building on the presence of Weymouth College, the opportunity exists to extend the further and higher education facilities.

Opportunities

- The site is strategically located marking the entry point to Weymouth and the start of the main settlement. Despite the out-of-centre location, it is an important contributor to the tourist economy of the town as a whole
- Directly adjoining the site is one of two RSPB Nature Reserves in Weymouth which is designated as a site of Special Scientific Interest
- The Sea Life Adventure Park is one of the major visitor attractions in Weymouth and is important for the town. Merlin Group also operates the Sea Life Tower located on the Peninsula
- The site adjoins Weymouth College and expansion could help to enhance future learning and skills in the town

Site Constraints

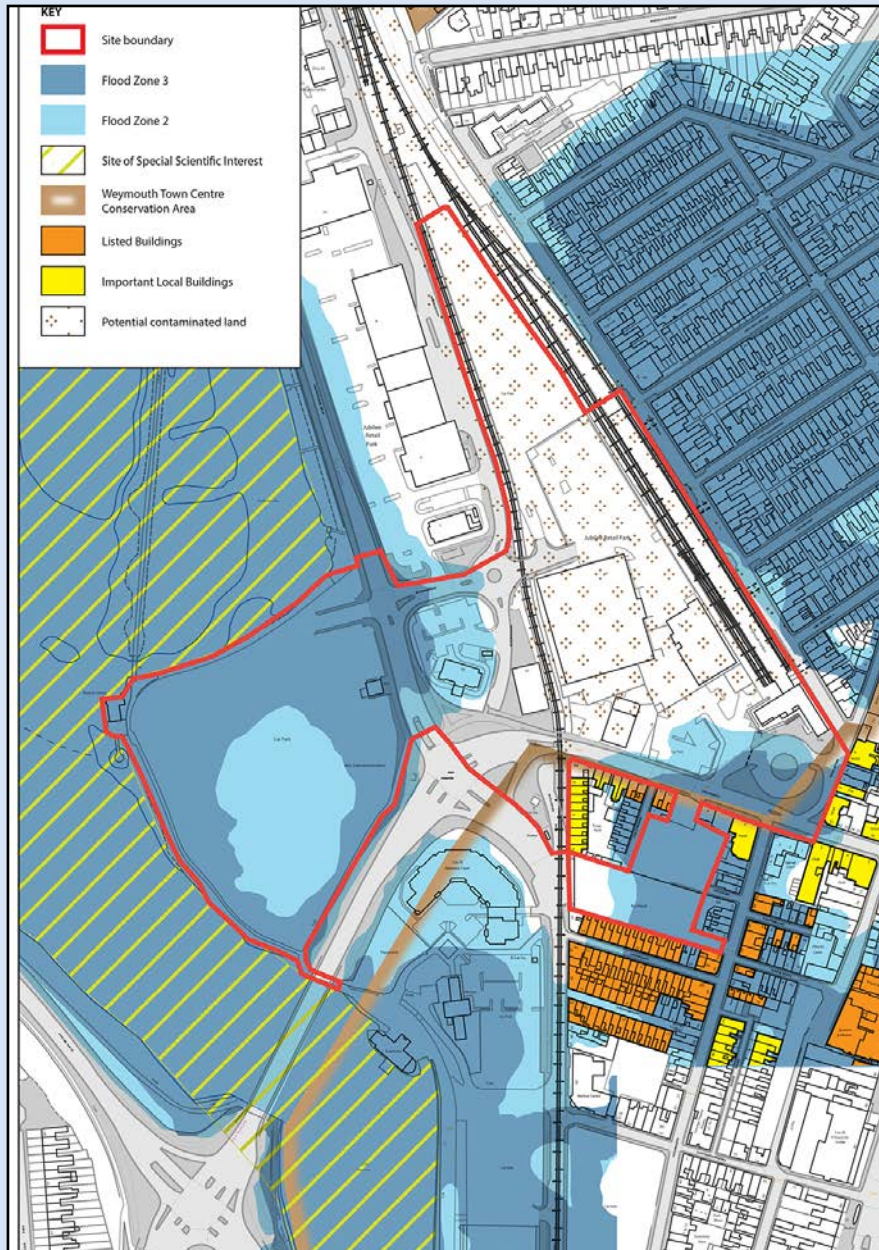
- Parts of the site, namely the area occupied by Sea Life and the fringes of the Country Park, are classified as Flood Zone 3
- Historic potentially contaminative land uses; infilled ground, landfill and petrol station
- Current potentially contaminative uses are the composting facility, waste transfer station, leisure developments and electricity substation



KEY PROPOSALS

- Investment in tourist and leisure facilities
- Extension of country park
- Improved parking for cars and coaches
- Improved links to beach and town centre
- Development of educational facilities

Station Gateway Site Constraints



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019690. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

VISION

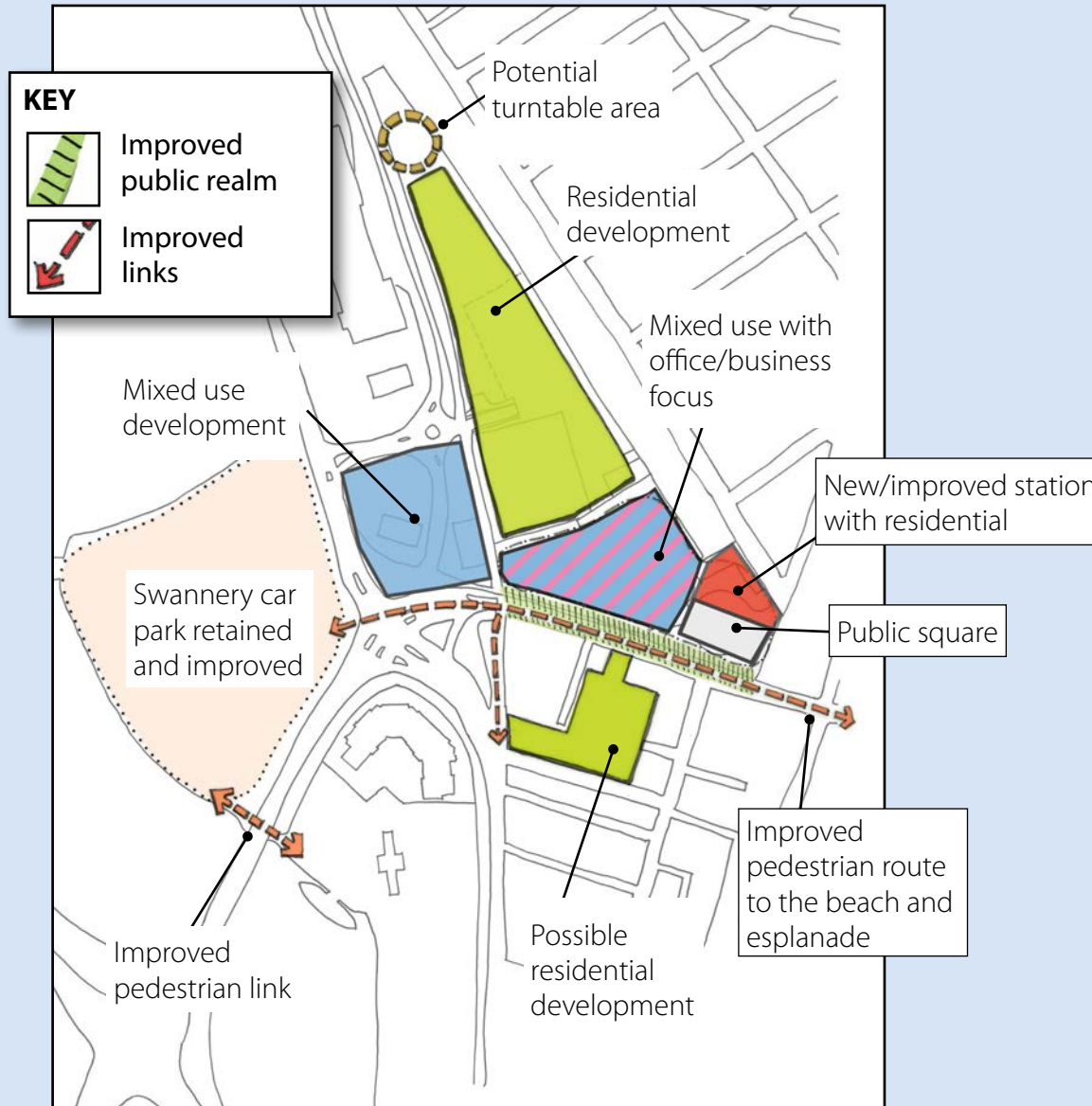
To create a better arrival point and transport connections for local people and visitors. This will include public realm improvements around the station and providing easier connections to the beach, marina and main shopping area. Development on this site will be mixed but will focus the business and commercial development around the station including an enterprise/start-up business park.

Opportunities

- The site adjoins the Jubilee Retail Park, one of Weymouth's main out of centre retail parks
- The site provides the chance to improve the first impressions of the area to visitors, and to improve accessibility between this point of arrival and the town centre
- The bus depot adjoins a number of listed properties on Bath and Wesley Streets
- There are opportunities for residential, employment and commercial development across this diverse site
- There is an opportunity for improved interpretation for visitors and improvements to the pedestrian routes to Radipole Lake

Site Constraints

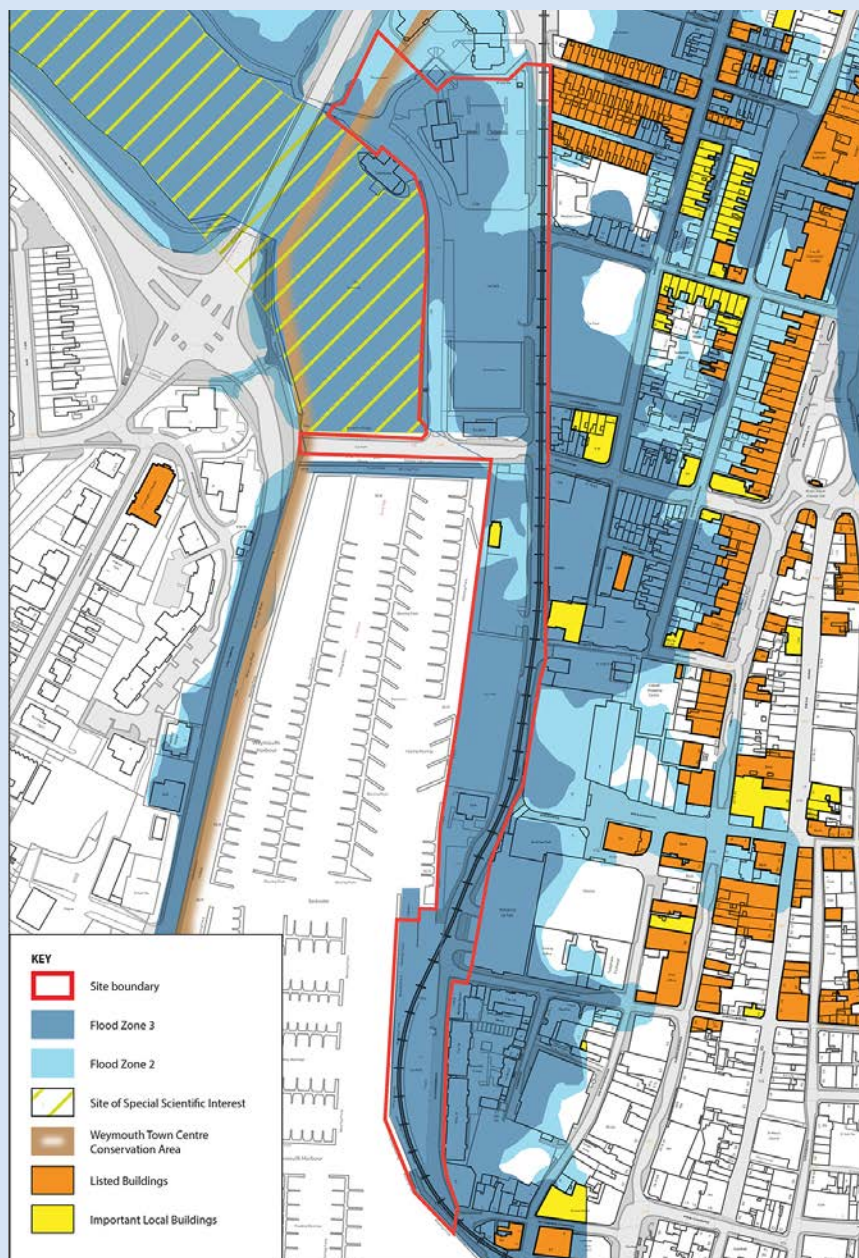
- Parts of the site are within Flood Zones 2 and 3
- The site is severed by the unused railway which runs between the station and the Peninsula
- Historic potentially contaminative land uses: infilled ground, landfill, saw mill, rail freight yards, depots, engineering yards, lines and sidings
- Current potentially contaminative uses are electricity substation, petrol station, bus depot, railway station and rail lines



KEY PROPOSALS

- New/improved station with flats above to create a gateway to the town
- New public space in front of the station
- Redevelopment of commercial uses to west of station to become mixed use including employment and commercial development
- Retention and improvement of Swannery car park to create a welcoming entrance to the town

Commercial Road Site Constraints



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019690. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

VISION

To provide a modern extension to the current town centre with a focus on waterfront development, improved or new community and cultural facility, commercial development and improved pedestrian links from the station to the town centre and to the peninsula. To continue to build on the opportunities presented by the active local fishing industry.

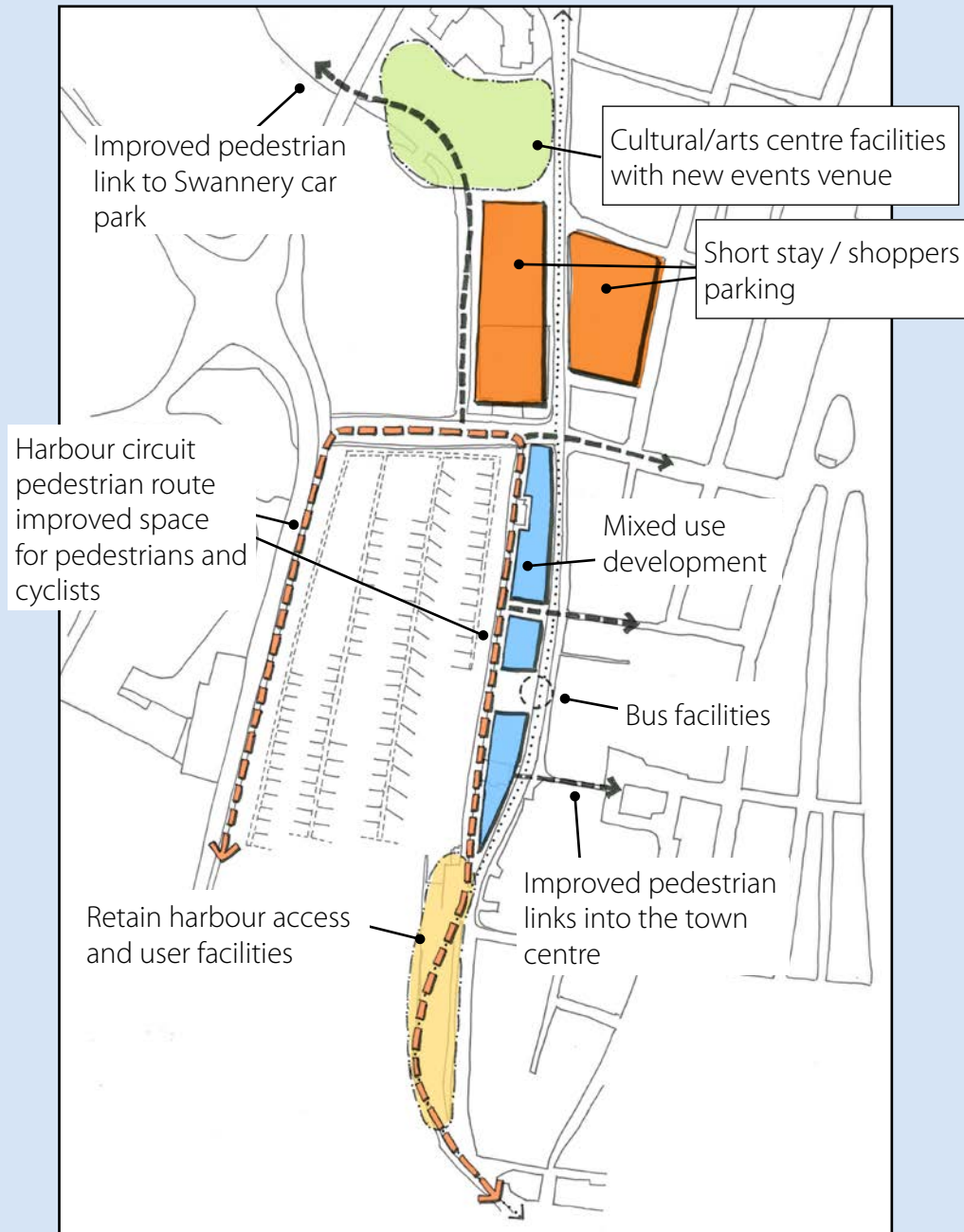
Opportunities

- Adjoins an attractive marina and lies close to town centre facilities
- Provides a variety of activities which are attractive to visitors.
- Has potential to provide part of the round-the-harbour pedestrian link
- Westham Bridge provides an attractive view point across the whole inner harbour
- Improved public realm would make a significant difference to the feel of this entrance to the retail heart and take into account the required improvements to sea defences
- Adjacent to Radipole Lake Site of Special Scientific interest
- Potential new cultural facility

Site Constraints

- The Commercial Road area is located largely within Flood Zone 3.
- The unused railway which connected the train station to the Peninsula, runs along Commercial Road and through the site in part (just south of the slip way entrance)
- Seawall requires minimal investment (circa. £25k)
- Historic potentially contaminative land uses: infilled ground, garage, railway lines and sidings, joinery works and timber yards

Commercial Road Development Plan

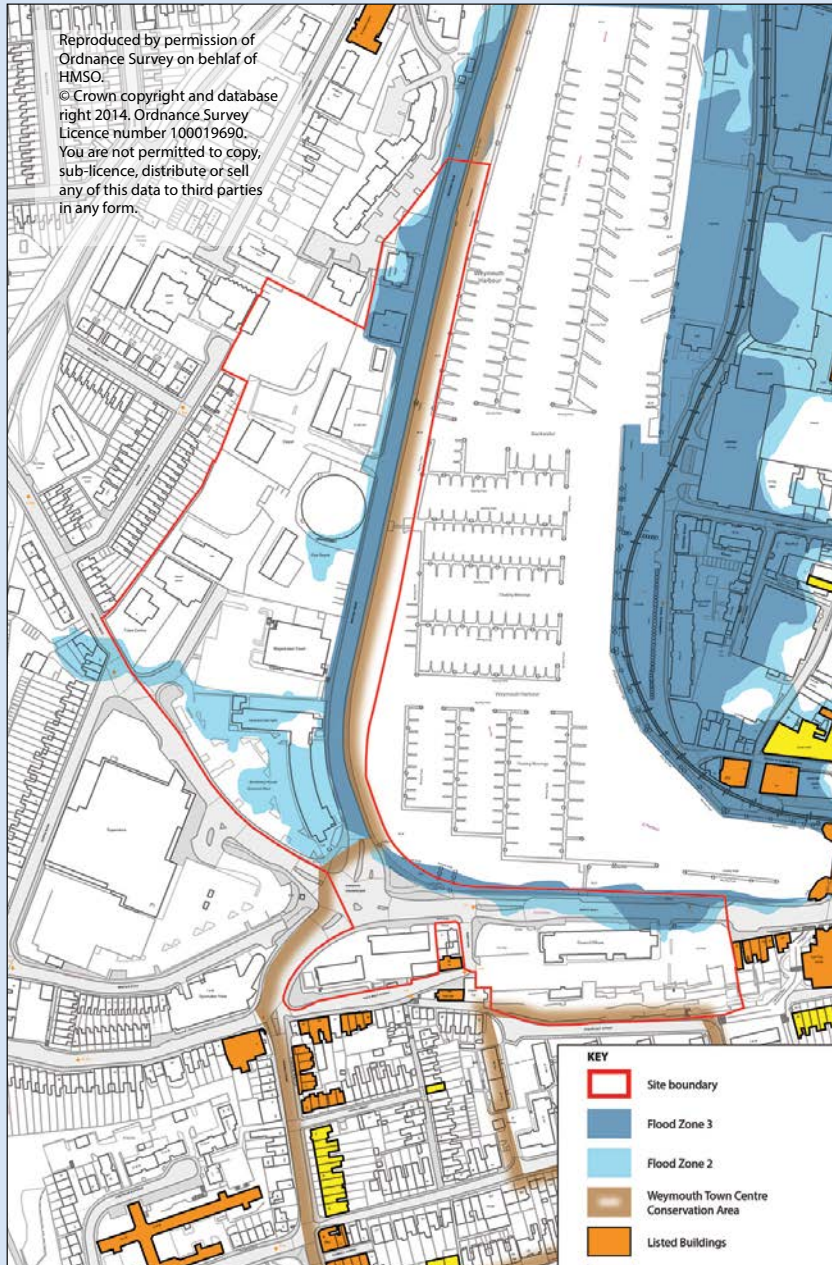


- Current potentially contaminative use is an electrical substation
- Services of note: Effluent Disposal Drain and Foul Sewer both will require avoidance, diversion or protection

KEY PROPOSALS

- Potential improved or new cultural hub with links to the harbourside walkway
- Improved short stay car parks
- Development on harbourside
- Harbourside walkway

Harbourside Site Constraints



VISION

To create a new residential and enterprise quarter. This area will have a modern and vibrant atmosphere with improved public realm and civic space. The focus of development will be mix of residential and commercial uses to encourage a greater level of activity across thought the day and night. This aims to create a safe environment including good public realm for waterside walking and cycling. This site has the potential for locating community facilities, a modern hotel with conference facilities and improved facilities for waterborne visitors to the marina.

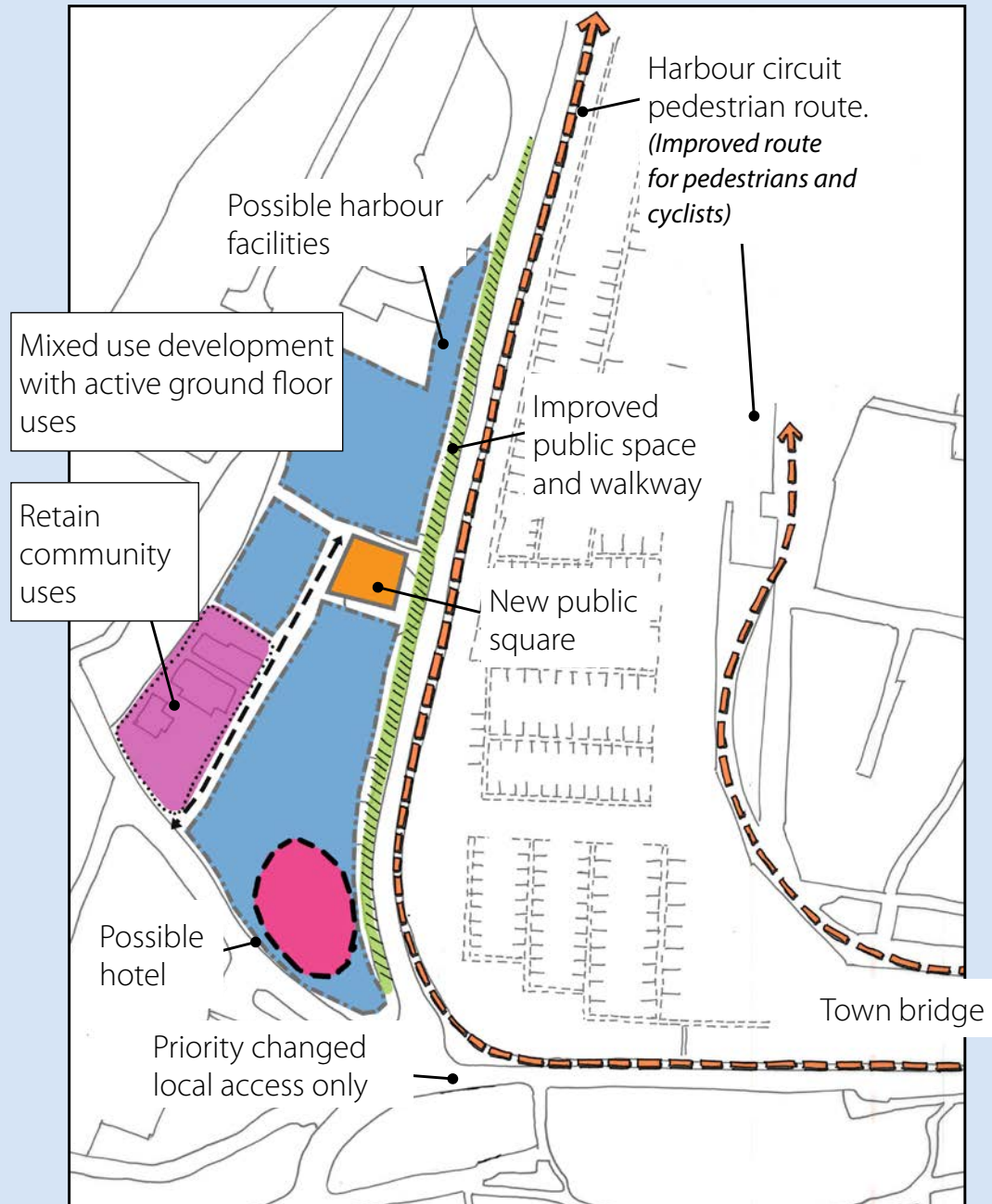
Opportunities

- The site overlooks the marina area and has potential to provide part of a round-the-harbour pedestrian link
- Enhanced pedestrian movement and quayside public realm
- There is potential to improve Westway Road as a boulevard alongside the harbour and as part of the harbourside pedestrian circuit
- The existing occupiers are diverse and there are a number of disused and underused buildings
- With the exception of the Peninsula, the Harbourside is the largest development opportunity in Weymouth and is highly accessible. The site is of sufficient size and importantly depth to accommodate a wide range of uses

Site constraints

- Historic potentially contaminative land uses: gasworks infilled ground, garages, timber yard, fire/ambulance station
- Current potentially contaminative uses are gas depot, electrical substation and vehicle parks depot

Harbourside Development Plan

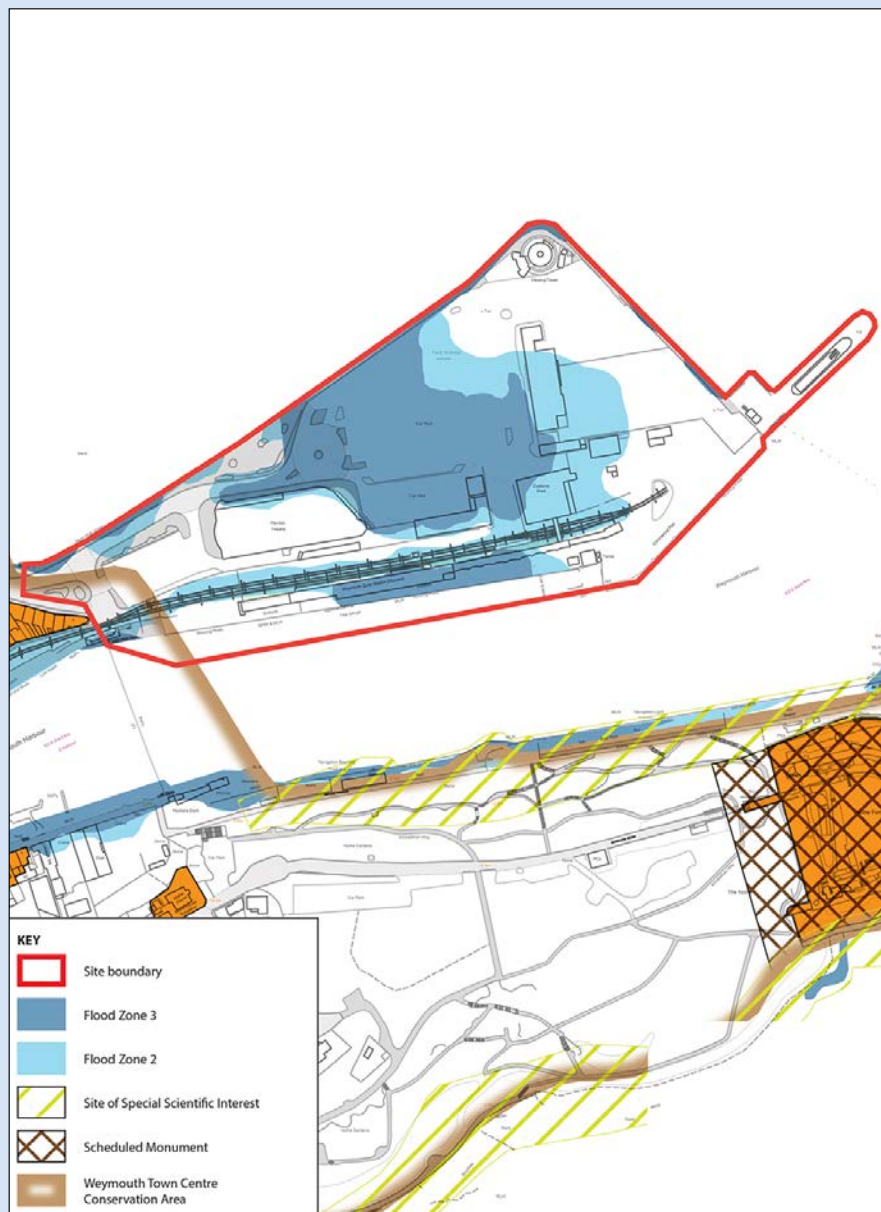


- Southern part of the site is within a conservation area
- Weymouth electricity substation lies within the site and the cost of relocation will be prohibitive
- Largely within Flood Zone 3 and subject to tidal and ground water flooding and requires flood defence measures

KEY PROPOSALS

- Boulevard approach along Westwey Road
- Redevelopment to potentially create hotel and other mixed uses
- New public square.

The Peninsula Site Constraints



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019690. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

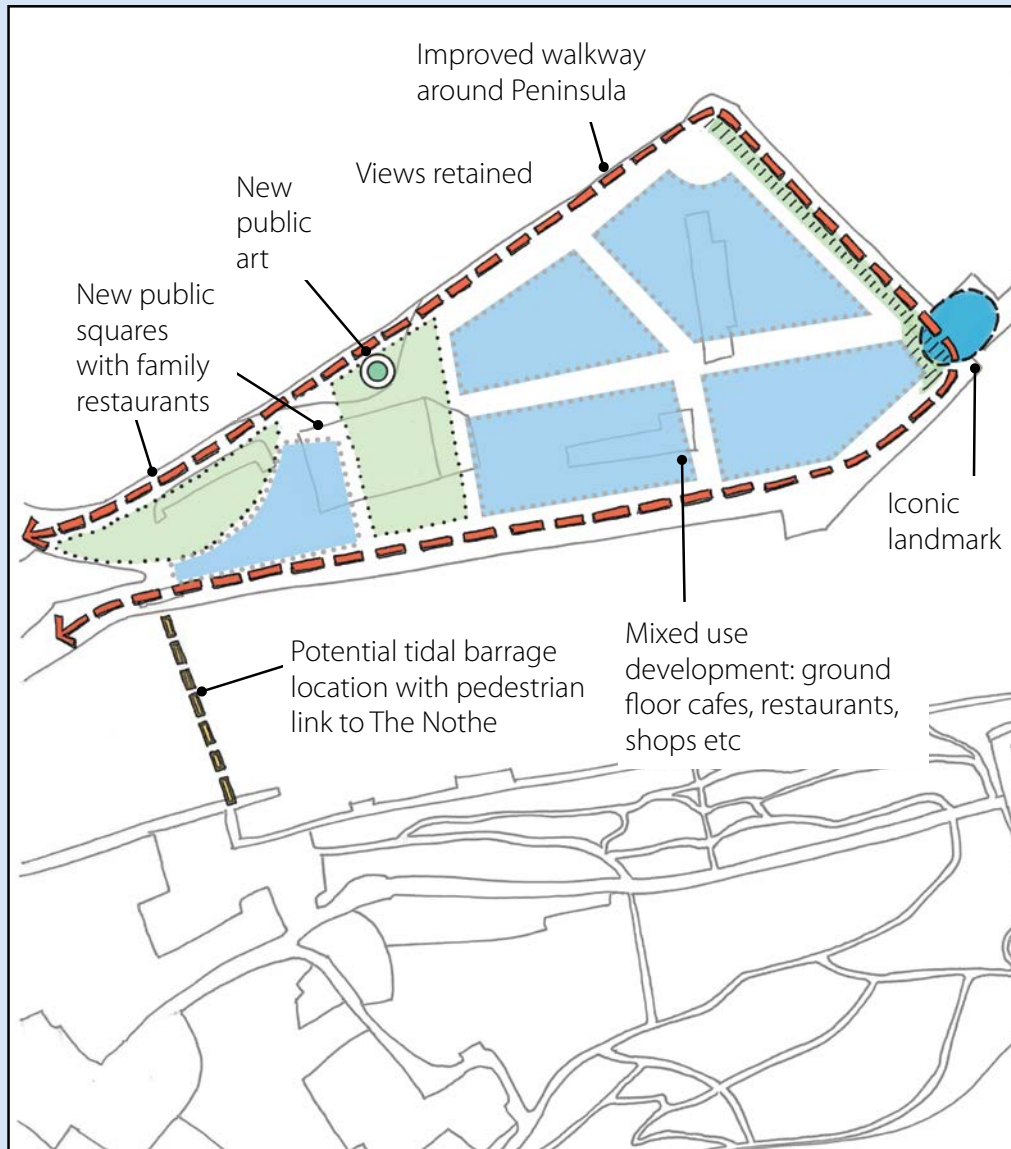
VISION

Creation of a new destination on the Peninsula, including upgraded tourism and leisure facilities; new public spaces; family-orientated commercial uses; and residential development above active ground floor uses, offering fantastic sea views. This site offers waterside transit options to connect with the World Heritage Jurassic Coast and potential provision of visitor boating berths and waterborne leisure facilities. There would be an improved pedestrian walkway around the peninsula and an iconic landmark on at the end to draw people round. It is also the potential location for a tidal barrage which could provide a pedestrian link with the Nothe.

NOTE Any proposals coming forward to provide a new ferry service would affect the development proposals for the Peninsula. Any changes will need to be considered as development proposals are progressed.

Opportunities

- Prominent and highly visible from most parts of the seafront area
- Located between the town centre and the Nothe Fort, which is a scheduled ancient monument and backdrop to views over the bay
- Scenic views of the South Dorset Coast and the whole of the Esplanade from all parts of the Peninsula
- There is an opportunity to comprehensively plan this development of the site and improve the access to the public
- The site has the potential to provide for a different market, potentially one with a high spend and demand for associated facilities, food and drink establishments or niche retail
- Any scheme on this site has the capacity to significantly change the feel of the town centre
- There is significant potential for high quality housing and leisure facilities



Site constraints

- The site is reclaimed land and is bordered by sea walls that require significant investment to bring them back up to standard. Maintenance requirements will be ongoing for these walls and the Stone Pier
- The central area of the Peninsula is within part Flood Zone 2 and part Flood Zone 3
- The former railway tracks, which formerly served port activity, run across the site
- The decommissioning of the buildings associated with the current ferry service operations
- Historic potentially contaminative land uses: infilled ground and railway/tramway
- Current potentially contaminative use is the ferry terminal
- Ground conditions are likely to cause increased construction costs

KEY PROPOSALS

- Walkway around the Peninsula
- New public spaces & squares
- Mixed use development – ground floor café/restaurant with flats above
- Scale respecting that of the seafront and views of The Nothe
- Network of street/public spaces to complement the town
- New public art
- Landmark building/structure

5 What happens next

There is a lot of work still to be done. The work set out below, some of which is supported by the funding investment from the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, shows what we still need to do to make Weymouth ready for investment.

PROJECT

- Transport & Movement Study
- Car parking review & strategy
- Public realm strategy
- Palette of materials for Weymouth
- Decision on Decommissioning of Ferry Terminal
- Delivery vehicle for redevelopment sites
- Produce marketing, procurement & disposal strategy for each key sites
- Continue dialogue with landowners and occupiers regarding development and relocation strategies
- Detailed economic appraisal for redevelopment sites
- Detailed technical appraisal for redevelopment sites
- Initiate discussions with educational establishments
- Assessment of potential sites for Arts trail
- Carry out Unexploded Ordnance desk study
- Promotion of Natural Weymouth and Portland Partnership's work to develop strategy for wildlife based tourism

PROJECTs continued

- The Weymouth Bay Coastal Processes Study is considering long term flood risk management options and this will continue
- Carry out PRA on Harbourside, Station and Lodmoor sites
- Carry out EIA Screening opinion on Peninsula and Station sites
- Submit bids for funding to LEP
- Continue consultation with Dorset County Council, Environment Agency and other partners
- Further detailed feasibility and business planning to explore potential for new cultural facility
- Investigate if current Marina and Harbour offices and facilities are fit for purpose to see if any development potential

There will be a five year delivery plan produced following the adoption of this document.