LAND WEST OF WATLING STREET
TOWCESTER PLANNING BRIEF
2016-2029
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Adopted March 2016
CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Purpose of the Brief 1
1.3 Structure of the Brief 1

CHAPTER 2: AREA CONTEXT

2.1 South Northamptonshire 3
2.2 Towcester 3
2.3 Planning Brief Area 5

CHAPTER 3: POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework 6
3.2 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 8
3.3 The Towcester Masterplan 2011 12
3.4 The Towcester Masterplan 2011 – Volume Two 14
3.5 South Northamptonshire Council’s Economic Development Strategy 2012-2015 14
3.6 South Northants Council’s Conservation Strategy 2011-2015 15
3.7 Towcester Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 15
3.8 South Northamptonshire Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010 17
3.9 Policy Summary 17

CHAPTER 4: SITE SPECIFIC LOCATIONS

4.1 SITE ONE: PAYNES NURSERY YARD

4.1.1 Site information 19
4.1.2 Planning designations and constraints 20
4.1.3 Surrounding development 20
4.1.4 The Existing Site 20
4.1.5 Flooding 21
4.1.6 Heritage Assets 21
4.1.7 Potential uses 21
4.1.8 Residential Amenities 22
4.1.9 Movement and Access 22
4.1.10 Development Principles and Guidelines 22
4.2 SITE TWO: TOWCESTER MAGISTRATES COURT

4.2.1 Site information 23
4.2.2 Planning designations and constraints 24
4.2.3 Surrounding Development 25
4.2.4 The Existing Site 26
4.2.5 Potential Uses 26
4.2.6 Flooding 26
4.2.7 Heritage Assets 27
4.2.8 Design 28
4.2.9 Residential Amenities 28
4.2.10 Movement and Access 28
4.2.11 Development Principles and Guidelines 28

4.3 SITE THREE: TOWCESTER FIRE STATION

4.3.1 Site information 29
4.3.2 Planning designations and constraints 30
4.3.3 Surrounding Development 31
4.3.4 The Existing Site 31
4.3.5 Potential Uses 32
4.3.6 Flooding 32
4.3.7 Heritage Assets 33
4.3.8 Design 33
4.3.9 Materials 33
4.3.10 Residential Amenities 34
4.3.11 Movement and Access 34
4.3.12 Development Principles and Guidelines 34

4.4 SITE FOUR: BRACKLEY ROAD

4.4.1 Site information 35
4.4.2 Planning designations and constraints 36
4.4.3 Surrounding Development 36
4.4.4 The Existing Site 36
4.4.5 Heritage Assets 36
4.4.6 Potential uses 36
4.4.7 Design 38
4.4.8 Movement and Access 38
4.4.9 Development Principles and Guidelines 38

4.5 SITE FIVE: TOWCESTER COACHWORKS

4.5.1 Site information 39
4.5.2 Planning designations and constraints 40
4.5.3 Surrounding Development 41
4.5.4 The Existing Site 41
4.8.7 Materials 62
4.8.8 Movement, Access and Parking 62
4.8.9 Development Principles and Guidelines 62

4.9 SITE NINE: TOWCESTER LANES AND FORMER LIBRARY

4.9.1 Site information 63
4.9.2 Planning designations and constraints 64
4.9.3 Surrounding Development 65
4.9.4 The Existing Site 65
4.9.5 Potential Uses 66
4.9.6 Heritage Assets 67
4.9.7 Design 67
4.9.8 Materials 68
4.9.9 Means of enclosure 68
4.9.10 Residential Amenities 69
4.9.11 Movement and Access 69
4.9.12 Development Principles and Guidelines 70

4.10 SITE TEN: RICHMOND ROAD AND WATER LANE

4.10.1 Site information 71
4.10.2 Planning designations and constraints 72
4.10.3 Surrounding Development 73
4.10.4 The Existing Site 73
4.10.5 Potential Uses 74
4.10.6 Heritage Assets 75
4.10.7 Flooding 75
4.10.8 Design 76
4.10.9 Residential Amenities 76
4.10.10 Materials 76
4.10.11 Existing Movement and Access 76
4.10.12 Future Parking and Access 77
4.10.13 Development Principles and Guidelines 78

4.11 SITE ELEVEN: ISLINGTON ROAD

4.11.1 Site information 79
4.11.2 Planning designations and constraints 80
4.11.3 The Existing Site 81
4.11.4 Potential Uses 82
4.11.5 Archaeology 83
4.11.6 Flooding 83
4.11.7 Design 84
4.11.8 Materials 85
4.11.9 Residential Amenities 85
4.11.10 Provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities 85
4.11.11 Existing Movement and Access 85
4.11.12 Future Parking and access 86
4.11.13 Development Principles and Guidelines 86

CHAPTER 5: NEXT STEPS 87
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Located in South Northamptonshire, Towcester is a growing market town and local centre which will be subject to significant housing growth in the coming years. To ensure that the settlement remains healthy and sustainable as a place to live, work and visit and continues to function well, any future housing must be accompanied by compatible, social, environmental and economic development.

In 2011 South Northamptonshire Council adopted the Towcester Masterplan, a document that provides a coherent overview and plan for how the town should develop, to ensure that it absorbs the new housing and employment growth whilst remaining a successful market town within a rural hinterland.

1.2 Purpose of the Brief

This planning brief (the Brief) seeks to build upon the Masterplan in light of current policy including that guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (adopted December 2014).

Those two important policy documents seek to deliver sustainable economic, social and environmental development ensuring a strong and competitive economy and vital and vibrant town centre whilst at the same time conserving and enhancing the historic environment and protecting the health and wellbeing of communities.

Using their guidance the Brief considers the observations of the Towcester Masterplan and develop them as appropriate in the context of today’s political, social, environmental and economic climate whilst having regard to current planning policy and guidance. This will ensure that future uses of the sites identified are proportionate, well designed and respect and strengthen the town centre whilst balancing a variety of issues and challenges.

Once adopted the Brief will be a material consideration in the planning process and will guide development within the settlement of Towcester during the period 2015-2029. This is the plan period for the Joint Core Strategy and the forthcoming South Northamptonshire Local Plan and also the estimated delivery time of the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension the development pressure and funding from which will be appropriately managed using the guidance of the Brief.

1.3 Structure of the Brief

This planning brief is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction
This chapter provides a background to the Brief.
Chapter 2: Area context
This chapter sets out the Brief area in the context of Towcester and provides an analysis of the town and area.

Chapter 3: Policy context
This chapter outlines the main policies against which the Brief has been written.

Chapter 4: Specific Locations
This chapter looks in detail at the sites which make up the Brief area. It will analyse them in turn and identify the key opportunities and constraints for each, exploring how they should be addressed moving into the future.
CHAPTER 2: AREA CONTEXT

2.1 South Northamptonshire

Covering an area of approximately 630 square kilometres South Northamptonshire has a population of just over 85,000 (ONS 2011 census) and is a rural district containing some of the country’s most quintessentially English landscapes stretching from the northern Cotswolds to the gentle rolling hills of middle England. These landscapes are interspersed with attractive, largely unspoilt villages of medieval or earlier origin, the Roman market town of Towcester, the market town of Brackley and important examples of designed landscapes at a number of major landed estates.

The district is prosperous with good education rates, a highly skilled workforce, low unemployment and low deprivation. In recognition of this it has consistently finished within the top 15 best places to live in the United Kingdom as identified through the HBOS Quality of Life Survey which in 2013 also identified the district as having the highest level of employment in the country.

There are a number of strong assets in the District, in particular Silverstone and its associated Motorsport and High Performance Technology sector and the tourism sector which supports many local jobs and attracts significant investment. Both are on track for expansion in the near future.

South Northamptonshire also benefits from a skilled, well educated workforce, a strategically prime location in the East Midlands, with a low rate of unemployment despite the recession. There is a good supply of existing and allocated employment sites which will provide for growth in the future.

2.2 Towcester

Named Lactodorum by the Romans, the historic market town of Towcester is the oldest town in Northamptonshire. It is located approximately nine miles to the southwest of Northampton and 12 miles to the north-west of Milton Keynes on the intersection of the A5 with the A43, a short distance from the M1 motorway to the north and Silverstone Circuit to the south.

Surrounded by agricultural land, the town sits within a low lying section of the Northamptonshire Vales, between the valley of the River Tove and Silverstone Brook. Due to land constraints, settlement growth has taken place to the south and west of the original settlement giving today’s town a distinct, asymmetrical shape, with the commercial centre situated on its eastern edge.

The town centre is compact and principally linear having developed along Watling Street, with a number of roads and alleyways running perpendicular from that main thoroughfare. The centre is home to a number of attractive historic buildings and a range of independent businesses which offer Towcester’s circa 10,000 residents and visitors to the town a variety of products and services.
These businesses are thriving with South Northamptonshire Council’s ‘State of the District's Economy Report (2013/2014)’ identifying there to be 75 commercial units in the town centre with a vacancy rate of only 5%, well below the national average. A clear demand for additional shops and services within the town is also reported.

Towcester grew considerably in the later part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century with the addition of housing development and some large employment units to the north of the town. This growth is set to continue with Towcester Racecourse identified for expansion along with the Towcester South development and its approximate 3,000 houses (Figure 1). All will place greater demand on Towcester town centre as will the commercial and housing growth taking place at nearby Silverstone.

\textbf{Figure 1:} Towcester will be subject to significant housing growth in the coming years with the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension receiving planning permission in 2015. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
2.3 Planning Brief Area

With the exception of the Market Square all of the sites considered within the Brief sit to the west of Watling Street with the Brief area being identified as the ‘Land West of Watling Street, Towcester’.

The area stretches from the flood plains and Magistrates Court in the north to Vernon Road in the south covering approximately 32 hectares (Figure 2). The area is varied in character and land use and includes much of the fine grained buildings and narrow burgage plots of medieval Towcester which run west off of Watling Street. It also includes much of the town’s 18th and 19th century development consisting of a number of small scale red brick terraces to the rear of the burgage plots along with a number of larger 20th century buildings including Sponne School, Towcester C of E Primary, Towcester Infants School and two supermarkets. The character and qualities of the area are considered further in Chapter 4.

Figure 2: The Land West of Watling Street, Towcester Planning Brief Area. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
CHAPTER 3: POLICY CONTEXT

Proposals for the sites identified through this Brief need to be considered in the context of the Government’s vision for sustainable development. The following details the relevant national and local policies against which the development of the sites need to be assessed.

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in April 2012 with its companion Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) launched in March 2014. At the heart of these two documents is a presumption in favour of sustainable, economic, social and environmental development.

The following sections of the NPPF are of particular relevance in the context of the Brief and need to be considered when considering sustainable development within Towcester. They are:

- **Section 1 - Building a strong, competitive economy**
  
  This advises that planning should support and encourage sustainable economic growth and that Local Planning Authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and to support an economy fit for the 21st century.

- **Section 2 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres**
  
  This advises that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and consider the management and growth of centres over the plan period.

  Such policies should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and support their viability and vitality through the promotion of competition and an allocation of a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed.

- **Section 4 - Promoting sustainable transport**
  
  This advises that encouragement should be given to proposals which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion and that in preparing local plans Local Planning Authorities should support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

  The NPPF continues that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate parking for motorcycles and bicycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres.
• **Section 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes**

This advises that in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future trends and the needs of the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own home).

• **Section 7 - Requiring good design**

This advises that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

The NPPF continues that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation but that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. It further adds that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Planning policies and decisions therefore need to address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.
Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

This recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and need to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and that Local Planning Authorities need to take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

3.2 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 (the JCS) was adopted in December 2014 with an overarching spatial vision ‘to embrace new development and the benefit it can bring for regeneration, whilst retaining and improving what is good about the area’

The JCS sets out this long-term vision and a number of objectives for the whole of West Northamptonshire to 2029, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development. It identifies specific locations for strategic new housing and employment and changes to transport infrastructure and other supporting community facilities.

To ensure that its vision is achieved a number of spatial objectives and policies are identified to assist in its delivery. Some are relevant to the Brief and include:

Objective 1 – Climate Change
Seeking to promote sustainable development, travel and the production of renewable energy.

Objective 2 – Infrastructure and Development
Seeking to protect and enhance existing local services and to ensure social, physical and green infrastructure is adequately provided to meet the needs of people and businesses.

Objective 3 – Connections
Seeking to reduce the need to travel and make sustainable travel a priority and in so doing combat congestion and reduce carbon emissions whilst addressing social exclusion for those without access to a private car.
Objective 7 – Supporting Towcester and Brackley Town Centres
Seeking to support Towcester and Brackley in their rural service centre roles to ensure their communities are self-sufficient, sustainable places and the towns are the focus of services and facilities for surrounding villages.

Objective 8 – Economic Advantage
Seeking to strengthen and diversify West Northamptonshire’s economy.

Objective 10- Educational Attainment
Seeking to raise educational achievement and the skills base for the communities of West Northamptonshire.

Objective 11- Housing
Seeking to provide a range of housing in sustainable locations to ensure all residents have access to homes that they can afford and that meet their needs.

Objective 12 – Protecting and Supporting Rural Communities
Seeking to protect and support rural communities to ensure they thrive and remain vital.

Objective 15 – High Quality Design
Seeking to achieve high quality design in both rural and urban areas and to take account of local character and heritage and provide a safe, healthy and attractive place for residents, visitors and businesses.

Objective 16 – Heritage
Seeking to conserve and where possible enhance, through carefully managed change, heritage assets and their settings and to recognise their role in providing a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

In order to deliver these objectives the strategy sets out the principles of sustainable development that all development will follow in order to achieve the vision for West Northamptonshire. These principles are detailed in a number of policies with the JCS continuing and stating in relation to Towcester that the town ‘will have a successful historic town centre that is the focus of its rural catchment. The town will retain its visual and physical connections to the landscape through Easton Neston Park, nearby Watermeadows and Towcester Racecourse. It will provide a diverse economy based on high technology, tourism and leisure’.

Policy T1 of the JCS provides a Spatial Strategy for Towcester and identifies one particular policy area as being the ‘Towcester Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area’ and details ways in which the existing vital and viable town centre can be enhanced to meet the demands of a changing economy and growing population.

The regeneration proposals for the town centre include the Market Square and extend to Queen’s Road and Richmond Road to the west. All of the locations considered through this Brief are either within, or immediately adjacent to, that area (Figure 3).
The role of Towcester as a rural service centre will be supported and enhanced by the following development and other proposals:

- **Housing development within the existing urban area and as part of the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension;** (see policy T3)

- **Employment development as part of the regeneration of the town centre and as part of the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension;**

- **The regeneration of Towcester Town Centre, principally through the mixed use development of the Moat Lane Area;** (See policy T2)

- **Additional services and facilities provided through the regeneration of the town centre and the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension;**

- **Delivery of an A5 relief road and complementary sustainable transport to improve air quality and reduce congestion in the town centre;**

- **The provision of additional comparison (non-food) shopping floorspace within the town centre and local shopping facilities within the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension; and**

- **Supporting the protection and improvement of the facilities provided at Towcester Racecourse.** (see Policy T5).

Within the boundary of the Moat Lane Regeneration Area and the town centre mixed use development incorporating the regeneration of brownfield land and development will provide:

- **Civic and community facilities, including tourist, leisure and cultural facilities;**

- **New residential, employment, retail and food and drink premises to enhance the vitality of the town centre; and**

- **The preservation and enhancement of Bury Mount Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Conservation area and the town centre’s heritage assets.**
Figure 3: West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Policy T2 Area - Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
Policy T4 outlines transport improvements for Towcester and is detailed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY POLICY T4 – TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS FOR TOWCESTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To support accessibility and sustainable transport within Towcester the local authority will:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Support improvements to the connectivity of Towcester with the wider A43 network including enhanced public transport connections with Silverstone, Northampton and Milton Keynes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Support the extension of the walking and cycling network to connect the new development to the town centre;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Secure the construction of an A5 relief road to the south of Towcester and the management of through traffic within the town centre;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Secure junction improvements to the A43;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Promote walking and cycling within the town as an alternative to car journeys;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Review parking provision across the town; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Improve bus facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3 The Towcester Masterplan 2011

The Towcester Masterplan (the Masterplan) was adopted in March 2011 and seeks to secure Towcester’s position as a successful market town in the 21st century creating amongst other things:

- A vibrant town centre
- Excellent connectivity
- Successful local businesses
- A family environment

The Masterplan highlights three action areas within Towcester that it considers are in need of a programme of action and identifies the redevelopment of key opportunity sites to be the catalyst to this. One of the action areas is identified as being ‘Towcester Town Centre’ and covers the Moat Lane Project, Sponne School, Magistrates Court, Police Station and the area around the current Waitrose supermarket.

The Masterplan identifies the following regeneration proposals for Towcester Town Centre which will include:

*The Market Square and the Moat Lane area of the town and extend to Queens Road and Richmond Road to the west. The vision is for a town centre that has a thriving, historic and expanded town centre, a hub for employment, shopping, professional and public services with the market place at its heart. The first major development is the Moat Lane development, which will help expand the existing*
town centre and provide space for new civic, retail, employment, housing and leisure development. Following this is the need to give the Market Square back its role as the heart of the town centre, which will be possible after the construction of the A5 relief road which will take the majority of traffic, especially HGVs, from the town centre. Finally, the closure of the Magistrates Court and the possibilities resulting from the move of Sponne School to the Towcester South development will result in the opportunity of increasing commercial uses in this part of the town centre. Towcester Lanes will follow with the Sponne School site, as the economy recovers but it is sensible to plan for the release of the sites now, even though this will be a more medium term development.'
Chapter Four of the Masterplan considers in more detail how the town centre can be strengthened to achieve this and help to develop it as a vibrant and successful market town. It identifies a number of development options for sites which it considers will help strengthen and enhance the town centre and these are discussed in some detail in the Masterplans second volume.

3.4 The Towcester Masterplan 2011 – Volume Two

Five key opportunity sites are identified within Towcester Town Centre by the Masterplan. The Brief will look at these sites in greater detail and consider them in addition to a number of other locations within the Town that are considered to be of importance to its regeneration.

The five Masterplan sites are illustrated in Figure 4 above and consist of:

- Site TB – Market Square
- Site TC – Towcester Lanes
- Site TD – Sponne School and Magistrates Court
- Site TK – Islington Road
- Site TM – New Bus Facilities


The Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) sets out the Council’s vision for Economic Development within the District from 2012-2015. It identifies South Northamptonshire as a prosperous District with a highly skilled workforce, good education rates and low deprivation. The Strategy sets out priorities to support the local economy based around a number of key priorities which outline the focus for the economic future of South Northamptonshire. Those priorities are:

1. Strengthening Skills and Reducing Unemployment
2. Supporting Business Growth
3. Dynamic Market Towns
4. A Strong Rural Economy
5. Promotion of the District for Tourism

In relation to Priority 3: Dynamic Market Towns - The Strategy identifies Towcester as being an attractive and traditional market town with challenges to face in the coming years. It identifies the settlement as having a strong sense of place and uniqueness partly from its concentration of independent shops, with any new development needing to provide the investment and flexibility sought by today’s shoppers but at the same time preserving what is special about the existing town.

The Strategy states that the renewal of the Towcester Town Centre will help maintain the role of the town as an attractive venue for destination shopping and strengthen its economy as well as the relationship with the surrounding villages.
thereby reducing the outflow of talent, spending and investment. Positive planning remains crucial to achieving this.

The Strategy seeks to support dynamic market towns by:

- Ensuring new employment opportunities are created within the Urban Extensions of Towcester and Brackley.
- Establishing a shop front improvement scheme to bring coherence to the look of the town centres.
- Supporting the delivery of new retail provision at Moat Lane in Towcester and bringing vacant units back into use in Brackley.
- Establishing a Town Fund through contributions from the urban extensions to each town and use Development Briefs to establish appropriate redevelopment opportunities for a number of parts of the centre of Brackley.
- Using the contributions to the Town Fund to actively manage the town’s promotion, both their town centres and their tourism assets, such as historic walking trails.

3.6 South Northants Council’s Conservation Strategy 2011-2015

South Northamptonshire Council is committed to preserving what is special about the district, ensuring that its exceptional heritage is recognised, valued, enhanced, explained and made accessible to as many people as possible. In 2011 the Council adopted a Conservation Strategy that set out its responsibilities and aspirations for the historic environment, the resources that were available to it and a programme of how it intended to undertake that task over a five year period.

The Conservation Strategy detailed the Council’s key objective for conservation as being:

‘to protect what is special in South Northamptonshire’s historic built environment by preventing loss, managing change effectively, promoting understanding and contributing to sustainable development.’

3.7 Towcester Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Towcester Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were adopted in August 2012. The Appraisal provides a clear understanding of the special interest of Towcester by assessing how the historical development of the town has influenced the current form, analysing its present day character and identifying opportunities for enhancements.

The adopted appraisal considers Towcester to be a settlement of great antiquity and interest with the designation and the document being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the Conservation Area and its setting and other decisions.
It is not the intention of the Appraisal to prevent change within the Conservation Area, it instead seeks to manage it in a way that maintains, reinforces and enhances the special qualities of the area.

This is reinforced through the Conservation Area Management Plan which outlines that in order to be successful any future development within the Conservation Area needs to be mindful of the local character and that good design should be able to
accommodate 21st century requirements and still make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The Management plan states that:

‘Successful new development in the conservation area should:

• Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land,
• Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it,
• Respect important views,
• Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings,
• Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings,
• Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.’

3.8 South Northamptonshire Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2018

South Northamptonshire district is facing some tremendous challenges in the years ahead, with housing representing a critical issue. The Council has powers and responsibilities to promote balanced housing markets through planning measures to deliver new affordable homes, enforcement powers against owners of empty properties, tackle crime and poverty through its many partnerships, legal responsibilities to respond to and prevent homelessness together with the power to provide advice to landlords, tenants and others.

The strategy explains how the Council will balance these different roles and sets out what its priorities are for housing providing both innovative and traditional solutions to deliver these.

Taking into account relevant national and local policy and local demographic and housing issues the Housing Strategy has identified five key priorities at its heart which aim to:

• Ensure that housing supply meets housing need.
• Create prosperous and sustainable communities.
• Support residents to access and maintain suitable accommodation.
• Tackle homelessness – the homelessness strategy.
• Promote independent living and support community health and wellbeing.

3.9 Policy Summary

Both national and local policy supports the development of the sites identified in this Brief for mixed housing, commercial, employment, leisure and civic uses which will help to deliver the Government’s objective of sustainable development.
CHAPTER 4: SITE SPECIFIC LOCATIONS

This chapter looks in detail at the sites which make up the Brief area. It will in turn analyse them and identify the key opportunities and constraints for each, identifying how they should be addressed moving into the future.

The Brief considers nine sites in total. These are illustrated in Figure 6 and discussed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

![Figure 6: Land West of Watling Street Towcester Planning Brief sites](image-url)
4.1 SITE ONE: PAYNES NURSERY YARD

4.1.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Watling Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>0.6ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Brownfield site used as storage for a nearby nursery and home to some of the towns flood defences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Use Classes</td>
<td>Sui generis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>One known owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Towcester Magistrates Court © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.1.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>The site is accessed off the busy A5 trunk road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Zones</td>
<td>The existing site is located within both a Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Payne’s Nursery Yard (Photographed from the south)

4.1.3 Surrounding Development

The Brief site is located to the west of the busy A5 Trunk Road on the northern periphery of Towcester’s medieval centre.

The pattern of development in this location is light with the site surrounded by the flood plains of Towcester to the north, south and west and the A5 and modern housing development of ‘Northfield’ to the east.

4.1.4 The Existing Site

The Brief site is principally undeveloped with no buildings located on it. It is however set to hard standing and used as storage for a local business subdivided in part by a post and wire fence. The site also forms part of the town’s floodplain and is located behind a brick wall with floodgates that close across it. A hedge separates the yard from the highway and brings a rural quality to the area.
4.1.5 Flooding

The entire site is located within both a Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3.

It is likely that nearly all future uses would involve an increase in flood risk as the vulnerability classification of the sites use would change. This will limit the future use of the site to all but the most essential of water compatible development. Early engagement with the Environment Agency is essential to any future proposals for the site.

4.1.6 Heritage Assets

The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation. The setting of nearby heritage assets, including the Towcester Conservation Area, will also need to be carefully considered.

4.1.7 Potential Uses

Archaeology and flood risk severely restrict the use of this site. The site does however form a gateway to the northern approach of the town centre and is currently in a neglected state. There is opportunity for its enhancement in a manner that would improve its character and the visual amenities of the area whilst at the same time reinforcing the entrance of the town centre.

![Figure 9: A Gateway to the town centre (Photographed from the north)](image-url)
4.1.8 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of the residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise and odour that it may generate.

4.1.9 Movement and Access

Vehicular access currently exists onto and off the site from Watling Street, the A5 Trunk Road that passes north to south across the face of the area. The A5 is a strategically important and heavily used road and future proposals will need to carefully consider this to ensure it continues to serve its purpose as part of a national system of routes for through traffic in accordance with Section 10(2) of the Highways Act 1980. This will be done in the interests of road safety by demonstrating that future proposals for the site minimise disruption on the trunk road that may result from vehicles entering and exiting it.

The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately demonstrate that they have considered traffic movements and parking arrangements and that may cause harm to the existing situation.

4.1.10 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site One the Council will support development where:

- *It is demonstrated that it is not at risk from flooding and does not cause a similar risk to others.*
- *It makes provision for off street car parking and does not harm the functioning of the existing highway network.*
- *It improves the visual qualities of the area.*
- *Respects the setting of nearby heritage assets.*
4.2 SITE TWO: TOWCESTER MAGISTRATES COURT

4.2.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Watling Street NN12 6DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>0.8ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Part developed, including Towcester Police Station and vacant Magistrates Court. Car parking and undeveloped land to the rear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Use Classes</td>
<td>Sui generis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>Two known registered owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Towcester Magistrates Court Brief site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
### 4.2.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TD (Sonne School and the Magistrates Court)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Sponne School and Magistrates Court Opportunity Site. An area that the Masterplan considered could provide additional commercial accommodation and employment uses within the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site is located within the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Building/non-designated heritage asset</td>
<td>The Magistrates Court building has been identified as a significant building by South Northamptonshire Council and is a non-designated heritage asset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument</td>
<td>A Scheduled Ancient Monument (list entry No 1002900) is situated in the south western corner of the site. It is recorded as being 'Bank of Roman town 550ft (170m) in length N of Brackley Road and W of High Street'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>The site is accessed off the busy A5 trunk road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Zones</td>
<td>The existing buildings and site frontage sit within a Flood Zone 2. Other areas of the site are designated as Flood Zone 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Rights of Way</td>
<td>A Public Right of Way (definitive map reference SB8) passes through the south of the site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 11](image-url): The Towcester Magistrates Court Brief site has two known registered owners © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.2.3 Surrounding Development

The Brief site is located to the west of the busy A5 Trunk Road on the northern periphery of Towcester’s medieval centre.

The pattern of development in this location is fairly light with the site surrounded by the playing fields of Sponne School to the west and the town’s floodplains to the north. Surrounding uses are a mixture of residential and commercial but also include Towcester’s Fire Station.

With the exception of the Fire Station, which is located a short distance to the south, the surrounding built form is mainly domestic and vernacular in scale and design. This includes immediately adjacent to the site a small terrace of Victorian Cottages that sit on the pavement’s edge. They are constructed of brick under a slate roof and are two storeys in height. Directly opposite sits a terrace of late 18th/early 19th century brick and stone built properties. These are two storeys in height and have been listed as a result of their special architectural and historic interest. Immediately to the north of these lies the town’s former North End Baptist Chapel. This is now a commercial property.

Figure 12: Towcester Magistrates Court (Photographed from the northeast)
4.2.4 The Existing Site

The Brief site is dominated by the Magistrates Court building, an imposing buff brick structure constructed in 1937. The building is two storeys in height with an attic and is set back from the highway with a frontage that is approximately 60 metres in width. The building is identified as a ‘Significant Building’ in the Towcester Conservation Area Appraisal and the Council also consider it to be a non-designated heritage asset. Future decisions regarding the site need to be made with this in mind whilst having regard to the guidance contained within the NPPF and PPG.

Hard standing provides parking at the front and again at the rear where it is enclosed by a boundary wall. Beyond this an area of previously undeveloped land is located and to its south, one of Towcester’s Scheduled Ancient Monuments recorded as being a bank of the Roman town.

4.2.5 Potential Uses

The Towcester Masterplan identified the Magistrates Court as being within Opportunity Site TD and a high value site on which, should it become available for redevelopment; future uses could include business uses, community, leisure, recreation and commercial development. This could include links to the adjacent Sponne School site to help facilitate the sustainable growth of that facility along with other educational and business development activities that support the growth agenda.

This Brief and current planning policy support these potential uses. The Brief also acknowledges that the site is located on the edge of the town centre beyond the boundaries of the ‘Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area’ as defined in Policy T2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. As a result of this and in response to changing market conditions and the character of the surrounding built form and uses, South Northamptonshire Council would also consider appropriate proposals for a residential use on the site in response to local housing need.

4.2.6 Flooding

The existing buildings and site frontage sit within a Flood Zone 2 whilst other areas of the site are designated as Flood Zone 3.

A number of the change of use proposals outlined above would involve an increase in flood risk as the vulnerability classification of the building’s use would change. Whilst such a change is generally permissible, the Council would expect future development proposals to demonstrate that they have been designed to be safe in relation to flooding and that there is safe access and egress onto and off the site and to and from its buildings. Early engagement with the Environment Agency is essential to this process.
4.2.7 Heritage Assets

In addition to the Magistrates Court being a non-designation heritage asset Site Two is located in the Towcester Conservation Area and within the setting of a number of listed buildings. The area is also one of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation. Similarly investigation and historic buildings’ recording will need to be undertaken in relation to the existing building prior to any formal applications being considered.

A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) with the list entry number: 1002900 is situated in the south western corner of the site. It is recorded as being ‘Bank of Roman town 550ft (170m) in length N of Brackley Road and W of High Street’

The SAM represents a physical barrier at this corner of the site significantly restricting its future access and development. The SAM is a designated heritage asset and proposals that cause harm to it, or its setting, will not be supported by the Council. Any schemes that propose the intensification of existing uses at the rear of the site or development within the setting of the SAM need to be carefully considered and are unlikely to be acceptable. The redevelopment of the area does however present an opportunity to enhance and better reveal the significance of the monument ensuring that it is properly understood and preserved moving into the future.

Figure 13: The western elevation of the Magistrates Court with the Scheduled Ancient Monument to its south (Photographed from the south)
4.2.8 Design

The Magistrates Court is a non-designated heritage asset located within the confines of the Towcester Conservation Area where it has been identified as a significant building by this Council.

Any proposals for the demolition or unsympathetic alteration of the building will be strongly resisted. Future proposals will need to demonstrate that they either sustain or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and are consistent with its conservation. The front façade of the building is of particular interest and future proposals should retain this in its entirety and have regard to the pattern and design of the building’s existing fenestration.

4.2.9 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of the residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise and odour that it may generate.

4.2.10 Movement and Access

On-site parking currently exists for users of the building and consists of approximately 20 spaces to the front in a formalised car park with some less formal parking to the rear.

The site is accessed from Watling Street, the A5 Trunk Road that passes north to south across the face of the area. The A5 is a strategically important and heavily used road and future proposals will need to carefully consider this to ensure it continues to serve its purpose as part of a national system of routes for through traffic in accordance with Section 10(2) of the Highways Act 1980. This will be done in the interests of road safety by demonstrating that future proposals for the site minimise disruption on the trunk road that may result from vehicles entering and exiting the Magistrates Court site.

The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately demonstrate that they have considered traffic movements and parking arrangements and that may cause harm to the existing situation.

4.2.11 Development Principles and Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Site Two the Council will support development where:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It utilises and preserves the significance of the existing Magistrates Court Building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It proposes appropriate community, leisure, recreational, commercial and residential uses or a mixture thereof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It makes provision for off street car parking and does not harm the functioning of the existing highway network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It better reveals the significance of the on-site Scheduled Ancient Monument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is demonstrated that it is not at risk from flooding and does not cause a similar risk to others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.3 SITE THREE: TOWCESTER FIRE STATION

#### 4.3.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Watling Street NN12 6DD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>0.5ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Part developed, telephone exchange and Fire Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Use Classes</td>
<td>Sui generis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>Four known registered owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Towcester Fire Station Brief site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
### 4.3.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TD (Sponne School and the Magistrates Court)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Sponne School and Magistrates Court Opportunity Site an area that the Masterplan considered could provide additional commercial accommodation and employment uses within the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site is located within the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>Nos 239 and 241 form part of the site’s southern boundary and are Grade II listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant buildings</td>
<td>The adjoining Nos 247-255 Watling Street have been identified as significant buildings by this Council as have all properties on Nelson’s Yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument</td>
<td>A Scheduled Ancient Monument (list entry No 1002900) is situated in the south western corner of the site and also runs along its northern boundary. It is recorded as being ‘Bank of Roman town 550ft (170m) in length N of Brackley Road and W of High Street’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>The site is accessed off the busy A5 trunk road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Zones</td>
<td>Part of the site’s existing frontage sits within a Flood Zone 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Rights of Way</td>
<td>A Public Right of Way (definitive map reference SB8) passes through the north of the site whilst Right of Way SB30 runs along its western boundary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 15:** The Towcester Fire Station Brief site is in multiple ownership © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.3.3 Surrounding Development

The Brief site is located to the west of the A5 Trunk Road just to the north of its crossroads with the Brackley Road and Northampton Road in the centre of Towcester.

The pattern of development in this location is lighter than that seen elsewhere in the town centre. Whilst those properties which front Watling Street still largely conform to the historical pattern of development and burgage plot arrangement that is such a characteristic of the town. The site is enclosed by the playing fields of Sponne School to the west and the Magistrates Court to the north. Surrounding uses are predominately residential although some less intense non-residential activities are also present.

With the exception of the Magistrates Court, which is located a short distance to the north; the surrounding built form is mainly domestic and vernacular in scale and design. This includes immediately adjacent to the site in the north, a small terrace of Victorian Cottages that sit on the pavement’s edge. They are constructed of brick under a slate roof and are two storeys in height. Immediately to the south an earlier terrace of properties has been listed as result of its special architectural or historic interest. These are again two storeys in height and constructed of painted brick under a slate roof with brick end and ridge stacks.

An attractive terrace of three red brick houses is located immediately opposite the site. These date from the early 19th century and are listed. A similarly proportioned and detailed terrace is located on the site’s southern boundary and adds some scale to that end of the site.

4.3.4 The Existing Site

The site is dominated by Towcester Fire Station; a functional building of uncharacteristic proportions set back from the highway. This and the tower to its rear were constructed from buff brick in the second half of the 20th century and are surrounded at both the front and the rear by areas of hard standing. A vehicular access runs to the east of the Fire Station and provides access to the rear of the site.

A further area of hard standing is found to the rear providing much needed private parking to a number of the properties on Watling Street. Beyond this is located one of the town’s Scheduled Ancient Monuments and to the east the town’s telephone exchange.

The latter is a late 20th century building of no architectural or historic interest located in a plot of approximately 0.14ha enclosed by a close bordered timber fence.
4.3.5 Potential Uses

The Towcester Masterplan considered that Opportunity Site TD may have the potential to provide commercial offices, leisure and cultural uses, car parking and town centre homes.

The Brief site forms part of that larger opportunity area and this document and current planning policy generally support those previously identified potential uses. The Brief also acknowledges that the site is located in a predominately residential area beyond the boundaries of the ‘Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area’ as defined in Policy T2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. As a result of this and in response to changing market conditions and the character of the surrounding built form and uses, South Northamptonshire Council would consider appropriate proposals for a full residential use on the site in response to local housing need.

4.3.6 Flooding

Part of the site’s existing frontage sits within a Flood Zone 2 and a number of the uses proposed above will involve an increase in flood risk as the vulnerability classification of the site’s use will change.

Whilst such a change is generally permissible, the Council would expect future development proposals to demonstrate that they have been designed to be safe in relation to flooding and that there is safe access and egress onto and off the site and
to and from its buildings. Whilst being safe from flooding itself future development should also demonstrate that it is also not going to place those in other areas at risk.

4.3.7 Heritage Assets

Site Three is located in the Towcester Conservation Area and within the setting of a number of listed buildings. The area is also one of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation.

A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) with the list entry number: 1002900 is situated in the south western corner of the site and also forms part of its northern boundary. It is recorded as being ‘Bank of Roman town 550ft (170m) in length N of Brackley Road and W of High Street’

The SAM represents a physical barrier to the development of this corner of the site significantly restricting its development. The SAM is a designated heritage asset and whilst proposals that cause harm to it or its setting will not be supported by the Council the redevelopment of the site does present an opportunity to enhance and better reveal the significance of that asset ensuring that it is properly understood and preserved moving into the future.

4.3.8 Design

Should the redevelopment of the site be justified the Council considers that it would present an opportunity to bring about a more efficient land use and enhancements to the character and quality of the area in terms of its architectural and urban design.

The site lies within the Towcester Conservation Area and was redeveloped in the late 20th century at the expense of much of its historic character and special interest. The removal of the site’s later additions and redevelopment in a manner which enhances the character and appearance of the Towcester Conservation Area would be supported.

In undertaking this work future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing. With this in mind the Council will support proposals for the restoration of a residential scale frontage to Watling Street and the sympathetic development of the areas to its rear.

4.3.9 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained, selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important, the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being
distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

4.3.10 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise and odour that it may generate.

4.3.11 Movement and Access

On-site parking currently exists for users of the site’s existing buildings along with a standalone private car park for the occupants of a number of the properties on Watling Street.

Whilst it is noted that the car park is currently in private ownership with a restricted use any redevelopment would need to ensure adequate dedicated parking as well as general parking to meet the needs of these existing users.

The site is accessed from Watling Street, the A5 Trunk Road that passes north to south across the face of the site. This is a strategically important and heavily used road and future proposals will need to carefully consider this to ensure that it continues to serve its purpose as part of a national system of routes for through traffic in accordance with Section 10 (2) of the Highways Act 1980. This will be done in the interests of road safety by demonstrating that future proposals for the site minimise disruption on the trunk road caused by vehicles entering and exiting the site.

The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately demonstrate that they have considered traffic movements and parking arrangements and that may cause harm to the existing situation.

4.3.12 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site Three the Council will support development where:

- It enhances the character and appearance of the Towcester Conservation Area and reinforces the built form adjacent to the highway.
- It proposes appropriate commercial, leisure, cultural, commercial and residential uses or a mixture thereof.
- It improves provision for off street car parking and does not cause harm to the functioning of the existing highway network.
- It better reveals the significance of the on-site Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- It is demonstrated that it is not at risk from flooding and does not cause a similar risk to others.
4.4 SITE FOUR: BRACKLEY ROAD

4.4.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Brackley Road, NN12 6DJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Highways land including parking bays and bus stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>Northamptonshire County Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Brackley Road Brief site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.4.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TM (New</td>
<td>The site lies within the TM Opportunity Site, an area that the Masterplan considers could provide new bus facilities for the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus facilities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration policy area as designated through the JCS and is subject to Policy T2 of that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site is located within the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>A number of listed buildings border the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3 Surrounding Development

The Brief site comprises the highways land of Brackley Road just to the south of its junction with Watling Street. Here it is bordered by commercial properties some of which have a functional industrial appearance.

4.4.4 The Existing Site

The site incorporates the highway and pavements to the east and west of Brackley Road. This is of some width with the carriageway sufficient to accommodate two moving lanes of traffic whilst also allowing for the parking of cars. In addition sections of parking bay have also been introduced, one on either side of the highway, with an area also designated as a taxi rank. A bus stop and shelter are located on the pavement on the eastern side of the highway and currently used by the service that runs from Northampton to Bicester.

4.4.5 Heritage Assets

The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be mindful of this with formal applications preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation. The site is also located within the confines of the Towcester Conservation Area and bordered by a number of listed buildings. Future proposals will also need to be mindful of this with formal applications again supported by the appropriate heritage assessments.

4.4.6 Potential uses

The site lies within the Towcester Masterplan TM Opportunity Site, an area which the plan considers could provide new bus facilities for the town. Discussions held between the Council and its partners at Northamptonshire County Council and the current operators of the bus service which runs through the town identified a current
Figure 18-19: Brackley Road, bus stop and on street parking.
demand and commitment to enhance public transport services within the Towcester. Part of these discussions related to amending the route of a bus services through the town and the provision of a further bus stop on western side of the Brackley Road south of its junction with Watling Street. This is a proposals supported in principle by all partners.

4.4.7 Design

The design of any new bus stop and street furniture in this location will need to be carefully considered and sensitive of the surrounding heritage assets.

4.4.8 Movement and Access

A significant level of on street parking occurs in this area of Brackley Road and it is from there too that vehicle and pedestrian access to the Towcester Coachworks, Saracens Head Hotel and to a number of properties on Watling Street occurs. During peak times traffic problems are noted on the highways in the area.

Future proposals for public transport will need to be mindful of these characteristics and those of the surrounding road network. The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately demonstrate and which would cause harm to the existing situation.

At Site Four development will be supported where:

- It proposes facilities for public transport.
- It does not harm the functioning of the highway network and contributes positively to sustainable transport.
- It responds positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
4.5 SITE FIVE: TOWCESTER COACHWORKS

4.5.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Brackley Road NN12 6DJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>0.25ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Towcester Coachworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Use</td>
<td>Sui generis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>Two known registered owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 20: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Towcester Coachworks Brief site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
### 4.5.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TM (New bus facilities)</td>
<td>The site lies within the TM Opportunity Site, an area that the Masterplan considers could provide new bus facilities for the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration policy area as designated through the JCS and is subject to Policy T2 of that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site shares its northern, eastern and southern boundaries with the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>The site shares its northern boundary with No 223 Watling Street, a grade II listed building. The site also sits within the setting of a number of other listed properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 21: The Towcester Coachworks Brief site has two known registered owners © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487](image)
4.5.3 Surrounding Development

The Brief site is located to the west of the Brackley Road just to the south of its crossroads with the A5.

Although only a short distance from Watling Street and the main town centre, the site is surrounded by residential development to the north and south with Sponne School forming its western boundary. The eastern boundary is defined by the Brackley Road and the rear car park of the Saracens Head Hotel. All combine to create a more residential built form and quieter character.

In general the pattern of development surrounding the Brief site is finely grained with most properties forming a continuous built frontage to the highway. General massing is vernacular and domestic in scale with properties being no more than two storeys in height.

An exception to this exists to the west with the Sponne School development having a larger built form than the surrounding development. This is uncharacteristic of the area and should not be replicated in future development.

4.5.4 The Existing Site

The site is currently home to a number of buildings of functional industrial appearance. These were constructed in the latter part of the 20th century and have been home to a number of industrial uses in the intervening years.

The largest of these buildings is single storey in height with a mono-pitch roof. It is constructed of a functional brown/red coloured brick and measures approximately 50 metres in length dominating the site and the street scene in this part of Brackley Road.

To the north east of this and also on the highway’s edge, a smaller building of similar appearance is located and combines with its neighbour to enclose the site.

Immediately to their rear is a further cluster of buildings. These again are late 20th century constructions with flat roofs and are of limited architectural and historic interest.

4.5.5 Potential Uses

The Towcester Masterplan considered that Opportunity Site TM may have the potential to provide new bus facilities for the town however recent discussions between the Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the operators of one of the bus operators operating within the town concluded that there is currently not a need for such a facility on this site.
The site is however located within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area with the NPPF, JCS (specifically Policy T4) and the other policy referred to in chapter 3 above supporting of an appropriate mixed use development on the site. The Council would however strongly resist the loss of employment generating uses altogether unless it can be demonstrated that the release of such uses would offer significant planning benefits to the local area.

Figures 22 & 23: Towcester Coachworks modern unprepossessing buildings (Photographed from the north and south)
4.5.6 Heritage Assets

The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest with records showing that one of the town’s former inns was located to the north and that the town’s wall and Roman ditch passed nearby. Any future development will need to be mindful of this and preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation. The site is also located within the setting of the Towcester Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings and future proposals will need to be mindful of this and supported by the appropriate heritage assessments.

4.5.7 Boundary walls and means of enclosure

Some significant stone walls demarcate the western boundary of the site. Whilst these have not to date been listed they are of significant interest and positively contribute to the character of the area. The Council will resist proposals for the removal of these walls with future development providing the opportunity for their investigation, recording and enhancement.

4.5.8 Design

Should the redevelopment of the site be justified, the Council considers that it would present an opportunity to bring about a more efficient land use and enhancements to the character and quality of the area in terms of its architectural and urban design.

The site lies adjacent to the Towcester Conservation Area and was redeveloped in the late 20th century at the expense of much of its historic character and special interest. The removal of the site’s later additions and redevelopment in a manner which enhances the setting of the Towcester Conservation Area would be supported.

In undertaking this work future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing. With this in mind the Council will support proposals for the development of a residential scale frontage to Brackley Road and the sympathetic development of the areas to its rear.

4.5.9 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained, selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important, the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.
4.5.10 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise and odour that it may generate.

4.5.11 Movement and Access

A singular vehicle access exists into and out of the site off of the Brackley Road just to the south of its traffic light controlled junction with the A5 Trunk Road and the Towcester Air Quality Management Area.

A significant level of on street parking occurs in this location and it is from there too that access to the car park of the Saracens Head Hotel and to a number of properties on Watling Street occurs. During peak times traffic problems are noted on the highways in the area.

Future development will need to be mindful of these characteristics and those of the surrounding road network and specifically the A5. The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately demonstrate that they have considered traffic movements and parking arrangements that may exacerbate the existing situation.

4.5.12 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site Five development will be supported where:

- It enhances the character and appearance of the site and the setting of the Towcester Conservation Area.
- It proposes facilities for public transport.
- It proposes appropriate commercial, leisure, cultural, commercial and residential uses or a mixture thereof.
- It improves the functioning of the highway’s network and contributes positively to sustainable transport.
### 4.6 SITE SIX: SPONNE SCHOOL

#### 4.6.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Site Address</strong></th>
<th>Brackley Road NN12 6DJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site area</strong></td>
<td>8.5ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Sponne School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of uses</strong></td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Use Class</strong></td>
<td>D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site ownership</strong></td>
<td>One known registered owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Site Map](image-url)

*Figure 24: Sponne School © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487*
4.6.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TD (Sponne School and the Magistrates Court)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Sponne School and Magistrates Court Opportunity Site, an area that the Masterplan considered could provide additional commercial accommodation and employment uses within the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site shares parts of its eastern and southern boundaries with the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Building/non-designated heritage asset</td>
<td>The oldest building on the site dates from the 1920s and is of some heritage value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument</td>
<td>A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) (list entry No 1002900) is situated to the east of the site just beyond its boundary. It is recorded as being 'Bank of Roman town 550ft (170m) in length N of Brackley Road and W of High Street'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Preservation Orders</td>
<td>Order number 02/1978 protects a variety of trees and covers both singular specimens and those in groups. These are located mainly to the west of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Rights of Way</td>
<td>A Public Right of Way (definitive map reference SB9) passes through the west of the site whilst Right of Way SB30 runs east then north from the school’s main entrance and along the eastern boundary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.3 Surrounding Development

The Brief site is located on the northern side of Brackley Road to the west of its junctions with Queen’s Road and Pomfret Road.

Although located only a short distance from Watling Street and the main town centre, the site is surrounded to the east, west and south by residential development whilst the floodplains to the River Tove delineate its northern boundary. All combine to create a quiet and attractive character to the area which has a dominant residential built form.

The pattern of development in this area varies with the properties to the east and south mainly being constructed of red brick and dating from the town’s Victorian expansion. Those to the west were constructed in the latter 20th century and include the properties of a number of modern housing estates. All have a domestic scale and appearance.
4.6.4 The Existing Site

The site is currently home to Sponne School, a Foundation Academy with specialisms in Music and Science.

The school has been based in its current location since the 1890s with the oldest of today’s buildings officially opened in 1928. Since that time the built form of the school has changed considerably and the site is now populated with an array of functional buildings of varying scales and designs. An original school building still remains however and is of some heritage value. The Council will strongly resist proposals for the removal of this building.

These cluster to the south of the site along the Brackley Road whilst located to their north and west are the school’s tennis courts and playing fields and to the east the site’s car parking.

**Figure 25**: Sponne School (Photographed from the east)

4.6.5 Potential Uses

The Towcester Masterplan considered that Opportunity Site TD may have the potential to provide additional commercial accommodation and employment uses within the town. This assessment was however based on the assumption that the existing school would vacate the site and relocate to a new facility to be built within the town’s forthcoming southern urban extension.

Since the publication of the Masterplan the decision has been made not to relocate the school which now intends to continue meeting the educational needs of a growing Towcester from its existing location.
Towcester’s population is estimated to increase by approximately 50% over the next two decades and in response to this growth it is likely that the existing school buildings will need to be upgraded and new buildings constructed on the site.

South Northamptonshire Council will support such growth where the matters outlined below have been appropriately considered. Such growth may be linked to the opportunities that present themselves at Towcester Magistrates Court as identified in Section 4.2 above.

### 4.6.6 Provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities

The Council will resist proposals for development that result in a net loss in the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities. Should development of new buildings be proposed on existing pitches/sports facilities additional on-site sports provision will need to be made to address the loss of those facilities. The Council strongly encourages the introduction of all-weather pitches and would support proposals that would make them and the site’s existing facilities available for community use in the future.

### 4.6.7 Heritage Assets

The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording.

A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) with the list entry number: 1002900 is situated in the north eastern corner of the site and also forms part of its northern boundary. It is recorded as being ‘Bank of Roman town 550ft (170m) in length N of Brackley Road and W of High Street’

The SAM represents a physical barrier to the development of this corner of the site significantly restricting its development. The SAM is a designated heritage asset and whilst proposals that cause harm to it or its setting will not be supported by the Council the redevelopment of the site does present an opportunity to enhance and better reveal the significance of that asset ensuring that it is properly understood and preserved moving into the future.

### 4.6.8 Design

Should the redevelopment of the site be justified, future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing. New development will need to respect the setting of the nearby conservation area and SAM.
4.6.9 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

4.6.10 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise, odour and light that it may generate.

4.6.11 Movement and Access

Two accesses currently exist onto the site off the Brackley Road. One is at the main entrance to the school leading to the buildings themselves and their car park. The other entrance is further west between the residential properties of Nos 64 and 66 Brackley Road.

Brackley Road is a major route through Towcester linking the A5 trunk road to the A43 in the west. A significant level of on street parking also occurs in this location whilst to the east part of the town’s one way system joins Brackley Road at Queen’s Road. A light controlled crossing is also located immediately to the south of the school. During peak times traffic problems are noted on the highways in the area.

Future development will need to be mindful of the characteristics of the surrounding road network as detailed above and carefully consider the impact that any future development will have on traffic movements in the area. Whilst it is noted that the site’s existing car park is currently in private ownership with a restricted use, any future development will need to ensure adequate dedicated parking. The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately consider traffic movements and parking arrangements or cause harm to the existing situation.

4.6.12 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site Five development will be supported where:

- It does not harm the site’s existing playing field/leisure provision and offering.
- It proposes facilities for community use.
- It complements the existing educational offer.
- It enhances the character and appearance of the site and the setting of the Towcester Conservation Area and the SAM.
- It makes provision for off street car parking and does not cause harm to the functioning of the existing highway network.
- It respects the residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding development.
4.7 SITE SEVEN: SPONNE ARCADE

4.7.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Watling Street and Richmond Road NN12 6BY, NN12 6BX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>0.7ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Developed, comprising the Sponne Arcade Shopping Centre, Cooperative Supermarket and car park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of units</td>
<td>17 none empty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use classes</td>
<td>A1, A2, C3, D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>Multiple registered owners including South Northamptonshire Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 26: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Sponne Arcade Brief site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
## 4.7.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration policy area of the JCS and is subject to Policy T2 of that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TC (Towcester Lanes)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Lanes Opportunity Site an area considered to provide an excellent location for boutique and niche shops, cafes and restaurants, the development of which would help to improve geographical links to the Town Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The whole of the site lies within the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>No 187 Watling Street and Nos 7-11 Sponde House Shopping Centre are situated within the site. The Old Barn forms part of the northern boundary. A number of the walls are also curtilage listed to surrounding properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Preservation Order</td>
<td>Order number 02/1978 protects 5 Scots Pines on the southern boundary of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQMA</td>
<td>The site’s eastern boundary borders Towcester’s Air Quality Management Area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 27:** The Sponne Arcade Brief site has multiple registered owners © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.7.3 Surrounding Development

Historically the site is located within the core of the medieval/post-medieval market town of Towcester and the walled centre of the Roman town of Lactodorum, which was refortified in the late Saxon period.

The site is located in backland behind the historic frontages of Watling Street and the urban and architectural form and detailing of the surrounding development is reflective of historic Towcester.

To the east this development takes the form of two to three storey buildings of narrow width which form a continuous frontage to Watling Street. These are constructed of locally sourced orange brick with a number being rendered or painted under clay or slate tile roofs. To the rear of the properties extend narrow plots containing a mixture of low level wings, outbuildings and workshops all constructed of similar materials.

At the north of the site the pattern of building changes when the fine grained and dense development of Watling Street loosens with larger and detached properties in substantial plots dominating. These are again constructed of brick and in some cases local ironstone.

To the east the density of development increases again with the terraced housing of Victorian Towcester. These are generally constructed of local orange brick and one and a half to two storeys in height with limited or no front gardens. Buildings are positioned tight to the highway’s edge.

4.7.4 The Existing Site

The site itself has developed in a varied manner and comprises in the east the rear wings and outbuildings of the historical properties that front Watling Street. These are single storey in height, of a functional appearance and painted white. They follow the traditional burgage form and arrangement that characterises the town centre.

Modern buildings are present immediately to the west of these and whilst their location is such that they continue the historic pattern of development, their scale and detailing give them away as later additions.

Those buildings were constructed in the late 1970s/early 1980s and are very much buildings of their time being built of brown brick under concrete tiled hipped roofs. These materials, along with the depth and height of the buildings, represent uncharacteristic features within this part of the town centre.

Further west and located on the site’s southern boundary is the Co-op supermarket building. This is constructed of brown brick under a concrete tile roof and, with a trading area of approximately 700 square metres (South Northamptonshire Council Retail Study 2009), represents a substantial and uncharacteristic scale of development with an incongruous building form that dominates the site and the
surrounding area. The remainder of the site is set to car park with 80 standard car parking spaces available to the customers of the Co-op supermarket.

4.7.5 Potential Uses

Although a mix of uses exist across the site it is dominated by those commercial activities falling within the A Classes of the planning use classes order, those being shops and services.

The Council would strongly resist the loss of these existing retail and other employment generating uses, unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer economically viable for those particular purposes in the long term or that the release of such uses would offer significant planning benefits to the local area. As whilst other uses apart from retail can create local employment opportunities this needs to be balanced with the need to consider the protection of potential retail sites within a physically constrained town centre and the benefits that retail uses can bring to the vitality of the town.

In such cases the reuse or redevelopment of the site should be considered with regard to Policy T2 of the Core Strategy which promotes mixed use development as supported by the guidance contained within both the NPPF and PPG. In the case of this site a possible mixed use could, given the central location and accessibility to existing services and facilities, and the demographics of the district with its ageing population (South Northamptonshire Council’s State of the Districts Housing report 2014) include accommodation for older people. Additions to the existing commercial offer would also be supported with any such offer being at the east of the site adjacent to the existing commercial part of the town.

Figure 28: The site and current Co-op building (Photographed from the west)
4.7.6 Heritage Assets

Site Three is located in the Towcester Conservation Area and contains a number of listed buildings. The area is also one of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation.

4.7.7 Design

Should the redevelopment of the site be justified the Council considers that it would represent an opportunity to bring about a more efficient land use and enhancements to the character and quality of the area in terms of its architectural and urban design.

The site lies within the heart of medieval Towcester but was redeveloped in the late 20th century at the expense of much of its historic character and special interest. The removal of the site’s later additions and redevelopment in a manner which enhances the character and appearance of the Towcester Conservation Area would be supported.

In undertaking this work future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing. The burgage plot arrangement at the eastern end of the site is a significant characteristic that should be retained and reinstated where possible and although the western end of the site does perhaps provide greater potential for a less constrained approach; its development will still need to respond positively to its surroundings. All development should be mindful of the setting and significance of the surrounding heritage assets which include a number of important listed structures.

4.7.8 Means of enclosure

Boundary walls and means of enclosure are an important characteristic of the site with a number being listed and these should be retained. That which forms the site’s western boundary is however a later addition having replaced now demolished buildings in the 1970s and there may be some potential for exploring the reinstatement of a more substantial and useable built form in this location. Such development whilst still retaining the dominant means of enclosure has the potential to positively contribute to the street scene.

4.7.9 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of the residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise and odour that it may generate.
4.7.10 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

4.7.11 Existing Movement and Access

On-site parking exists for users of Co-op supermarket with a two hour time restriction on its use. This is accessed from Richmond Road in the west at its junction with Queen’s Road from where a right of access also exists for those visiting the Sponne House Shopping Centre.

This access and the car park are heavily used although the adjoining roads are historic routes of a predominantly single width and in places also form part of the town’s one-way system. On street parking occurs on all routes further impacting on traffic movements in the area.

In the north Queen’s Road joins Brackley Road whilst to the south Richmond Road meets Watling Street and the Towcester Air Quality Management Area. This area runs along the eastern boundary of the site and any future development will need to be mindful of it and the characteristics of the surrounding road network, carefully considering the impact of traffic movements in the wider area.

Pedestrian access to the site is available from both Richmond Road and Watling Street where a right of way exists between frontage buildings. The permeability of the site is key to pedestrian movements within the wider town allowing access from the residential developments in the west to the centre. In addition on the site’s northern boundary private accesses also exist to a number of residential properties on Park Street.

Figure 29: Highway routes around the Brief site are narrow and restrictive (Photographed from the west)
Figure 30: The existing highways surrounding the site. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487

Figure 31: Possible highway improvements with Pomfret Road one-way in a southerly direction. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.7.12 Future Parking and access

Future development will need to be mindful of the characteristics of the surrounding road network as detailed in paragraph 4.6.10 above and carefully consider the impact that any traffic movements will have on the wider area. The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately consider traffic movements and parking arrangements or cause harm to the existing situation.

The Council will strongly support proposals that bring about improvements to the surrounding highway network including the expansion of the towns one-way system to restrict the flow of traffic along Pomfret Road in a northerly direction (Figures 30 and 31). This is a long standing objective of the Council identified through paragraph 7.29 of the Volume One of the Towcester Masterplan. It is considered that such proposals will have positive impacts on the highway network and access to the Brief site.

Whilst it is noted that the site’s existing car park is currently in private ownership with a restricted use, any redevelopment would need to ensure adequate dedicated parking as well as general parking to meet the needs of visitors to the town centre. Access across the site from Watling Street to Richmond Road and the town beyond is important and should be retained.

4.7.13 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site Seven the Council will support development where it proposes:

- The retention of existing employment uses.
- The justified redevelopment of the site with an appropriate mixed use development as discussed in paragraph 4.6.5 above.
- An attractive development of high quality design which would take its lead from the surrounding area and enhance the significance of the Towcester Conservation Area.
- Development which makes provision for off street parking and contributes to the improvement of the town’s existing highway network.
4.8 SITE EIGHT: MARKET SQUARE

4.8.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Watling Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Town centre site consisting of car park, highway and a number of commercial frontages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>Multiple mainly falling within the A and B use classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Highways England, Town Council and private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 32: The Market Square brief site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.8.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area</td>
<td>The eastern extreme of the site lies within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration policy area of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and is subject to Policy T2 of that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume Two Opportunity Site TB (Towcester Market Square)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Market Square Opportunity Site, an area that the Masterplan considered had the potential to provide a pedestrian friendly area that would re-energise the town centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site is located within the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>The site is enclosed by a number of important listed buildings including Towcester Town Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQMA</td>
<td>The site is covered by Towcester’s Air Quality Management Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>The site includes the busy A5 trunk road.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8.3 The Existing Site

As the name suggests the site is located in the heart of the town of Towcester and is considered to date from the medieval period.

The Square is enclosed on all sides by the two to three storey properties of medieval Towcester with their dominant commercial uses. The impressive grade II listed Town Hall is positioned at the southern end of the Square. It was constructed in 1865 as a Town Hall and Corn Exchange.

Watling Street the main A5 trunk road runs north to south through the west of the site whilst the eastern side forms a small town centre car park.

The car park currently provides 28 car parking spaces including three disabled spaces. With the exception of the disabled spaces the layout and size of the existing parking bays does not meet current standards with the orientation of the bays presenting safety issues for users of the car park and those travelling along Watling Street.

The layout of the car park also impacts on the functioning of the highway and adds to the poor air quality in the area, contributing in part to the designation of the Towcester Market Square Air Quality Management Area in 2005.
4.8.4 Potential Uses

Working with Highways England (HE) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), South Northamptonshire Council is exploring future options for the Market Square to ensure that air quality in Towcester meets the standard required to ensure that it is not detrimental to health.

The existing Market Square car park is part of the A5 trunk road and it is the responsibility of HE. In recognition of the current issues HE are exploring options for a new parking scheme which, together with parking enforcement measures to be administered by NCC, will reduce congestion and improve air quality in the town centre.

A new scheme is intended to minimise disruption to the flow of traffic through the town and in so doing reduce emissions and improve air quality.

This Brief is supportive of proposals that improve the functioning of the Market Square and the benefits that they will bring to the town centre. It does however also recognise the content of the Towcester Masterplan and its considerations for opportunity site TB (Towcester Market Square) and is generally supportive of those proposals as a longer term aspiration for the centre of the town once the Towcester South Development and the relief road are implemented.

The market square is at the heart of Towcester but currently used as a car park. The town’s main landmarks are situated within the vicinity of the Market Square and the setting and significance of the Town Hall. Chantry House and a number of other important buildings could be enhanced if the use of the space were reconsidered.
Improving the public realm and changing the use of the space to create an area that can be used for occasional markets and other outdoor events would not only enhance the built environment but also act as a catalyst in the promotion of a vibrant and vital town centre which would complement the town’s continued growth.

Such a transformation can however only occur once the relief road to the south of Towcester has been completed and heavy goods vehicles and other non-local traffic has been removed from Watling Street and the Market Square. The opportunity will then exist for the Market Square to regain its role as the heart of the town.

Whilst a loss of parking will occur the benefits that the work will bring to the proper planning of the town are considered sufficient to outweigh that loss especially in light of the proposals that are currently in place for additional town centre parking.

Removing the existing parking and making the Market Square pedestrian friendly would allow for markets to be held in a central location. These and the other activities that would be undertaken there would re-energise the town helping it to grow moving into the future.

In undertaking such work consideration would need to be given to the following:

**4.8.5 Heritage Assets**

The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording. Site Seven is also located within the Towcester Conservation Area and within the setting of a number of designated and non-designated Heritage Assets the setting and significance of which needs to be carefully considered as part of future development proposals.

**4.8.6 Design**

Following the completion of the Towcester relief road and the de-trunking of the A5 through the town centre, a scheme can be prepared for the redevelopment of the square.

The entire square should be repaved in high quality and durable stone paving on a shared surface with reduced vertical demarcation between the footway and carriageway. Existing high quality and historic materials should be retained and development undertaken in accordance with the guidance contained within the Towcester Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Public art and feature lighting could be incorporated into this space to give it a unique presence. Enhanced lighting, set within the pavement areas would also allow for the utilisation of the space after dark.

Careful consideration will need to be given to such lighting and the design and positioning of street furniture and signage to ensure that the space remains
uncluttered and flexible. Future street furniture should be of a high quality to complement the conservation area in which it is to be located.

The Council would also strongly support the enhancement of the shop fronts surrounding the Market Square as this will complement its future uses. Such changes should be undertaken in accordance with the guidance contained within the Council’s forthcoming Advice Note on shop fronts and signage.

4.8.7 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained selecting from the range rather than using all of it.

4.8.8 Movement, Access and Parking

The Market Square currently provides 28 car parking spaces including three disabled spaces. With the exception of the disabled spaces the layout and size of the existing parking bays does not meet current standards with the orientation of the bays presenting safety issues for users and those travelling along Watling Street.

The layout of the car park also impacts on the functioning of the highway and contributes to the poor air quality in the area that has seen the designation of the Towcester Market Square Air Quality Management Area. In the short term the Council supports the Air Quality proposals for the Market Square set out at http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/4342.htm whilst in the longer term proposals to pedestrianise the Market Square are also supported although future disabled parking provision will need to be carefully considered.

4.8.9 Development Principles and Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Site Eight the Council will support:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works that reduce congestion and pollution within the centre of Towcester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works that promote the vitality and viability of the town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pedestrianisation of the Market Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works that enhance shop fronts and the public realm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SITE NINE: TOWCESTER LANES AND FORMER LIBRARY

4.9.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Watling Street and Richmond Road NN12 6BX, NN12 6EX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>0.45ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Developed, comprising the rear curtilages of a number of commercial and residential properties on Watling Street, a builder’s yard and the former library building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use classes</td>
<td>A1, A2, A3, B1, C3, D1 and Sui Generis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ownership</td>
<td>Multiple known registered owners including Northamptonshire County Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 34: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Towcester Lanes and former library Site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
**4.9.2 Planning designations and constraints**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration policy area of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and is subject to Policy T2 of that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Volume 2 Opportunity Site TC (Towcester Lanes)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Lanes Opportunity Site an area considered to provide an excellent location for boutique and niche shops, cafes and restaurants, the development of which would help to improve geographical links to the Town Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Northamptonshire Council - Register of Assets of Community Value</td>
<td>Towcester’s former library was registered as an asset of Community Value on 19 June 2014 and will remain on the register until 19 June 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The whole of the site lies within the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>Nos 171,175,177,179,181 Watling Street are located within the site. No 183 forms a boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Buildings/non designated heritage assets</td>
<td>No 173 Watling Street and No 14a Richmond Road have been identified as Significant Buildings as has the former library building which is a non-designated heritage asset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Preservation Order</td>
<td>Order number 02/1978 protects 5 Scotts Pine on the northern boundary of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQMA</td>
<td>The site’s eastern boundary borders Towcester’s Air Quality Management Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Right of Way</td>
<td>A public right of way (definitive map reference SB54) runs north to south through the site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.9.3 Surrounding Development

Historically the site is located within the core of the medieval/post-medieval market town of Towcester and the walled centre of the Roman town of Lactodorum, which was refortified in the late Saxon period.

The site is located in the backlands behind the historic frontages of Watling Street and the urban and architectural form and detailing of the surrounding development is reflective of historic Towcester.

To the east this development takes the form of two to three storey buildings of narrow width which form a continuous frontage to Watling Street. These are constructed of locally sourced orange brick with a number being rendered or painted under clay or slate tile roofs. To the rear of the properties extend narrow plots containing a mixture of low level wings, outbuildings and workshops all constructed of similar materials.

Such plots and their outbuildings form the northern and southern boundaries of the site whilst the western boundary comprises the terraced housing of Victorian Towcester. These are generally constructed of local orange brick and one and a half to two storeys in height with limited or no front gardens. Buildings are positioned tight to the highway’s edge.

### 4.9.4 The Existing Site

The site itself has developed in a varied manner over the centuries and in the east comprises the burgage plots of medieval Towcester and the properties that front Watling Street.

These follow the traditional burgage form and arrangement that characterises the town centre with the plots clearly delineated as they run westwards towards Richmond Road. Rear wings and outbuildings run east to west and are one, one and a half and two storeys in height and of a functional appearance adding variety and interest to the area.

The site’s western extreme borders Richmond Road and is home to Towcester’s former library building (Figure 36).
This dates from 1869 and is a characterful property that was originally the Towcester Church of England School. The building is registered by South Northamptonshire Council as an Assets of Community Value. It is constructed of red brick under a slate roof at a single storey in height and is identified as a ‘Significant Building’ in the Towcester Conservation Area Appraisal. The Council also consider it to be a non-designated heritage asset. Future decisions regarding the site need to be made with these designations in mind whilst having regard to the guidance contained within the NPPF and PPG.

4.9.5 Potential Uses

Although a mix of uses exist across the site, it is dominated at ground level at its eastern end by the commercial properties of Watling Street and activities falling within the A Classes of the planning use classes order, those being shops and services.

The Council will strongly resist the loss of these existing retail and other employment generating uses, unless it can be demonstrated that the release of such uses would offer significant planning benefits to the local area in the long term.

The Towcester Masterplan identified the Towcester Lanes area as being a natural route from the town centre to Richmond Road and Waitrose. It considered that it was an underused part of the town that would provide an excellent opportunity for boutique and niche shops, cafes and restaurants which would help improve the geographical links between Waitrose and the centre.

Such uses are acceptable in principle and are supported by this Brief, current planning policy and specifically Policy T2 of the JCS which promotes mixed use development as supported by the guidance contained within both the NPPF and PPG.
Located in central Towcester at the western end of the site Towcesters’ former library has served the community for many years. However in the spring of 2015 it will cease to operate from that site as it moves to a new purpose built building in Moat Lane as part of the regeneration proposals for that area.

The current building and site are situated in an important and prominent location within the town centre and whilst Policy T2 of the Core Strategy does allow for a mixture of uses in this location, the Council considers that to retain the building in a community use would be to respond most positively to the needs of the town and best serve the proper planning of the area.

Should however such uses prove to be unviable, activities falling within the A and B1 use classes could be acceptable on the site.

4.9.6 Heritage Assets

In addition to the former library building being a non-designation heritage asset Site Eight is located in the Towcester Conservation Area and contains a number of listed buildings.

The site is also located within an area of known archaeological interest with records suggesting the former ditch of the Roman town passed near to the library building. Any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording. Similarly investigation and historic buildings’ recording will need to be undertaken in relation to the existing building prior to any formal applications being considered.

4.9.7 Design

In undertaking this work future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing.

The burgage plot arrangements across the site are a significant characteristic of the area that should be retained and reinstated where possible. Future development will need to positively address this characteristic and retain important features and buildings. New development will need to be of a scale and design compatible with the existing and generally be one to one and a half storeys in height with a significant linear emphasis that follows the pattern of the surrounding development.

At the western end of the site is the library building. The Council also considers the building to be a non-designated heritage asset and will strongly resist proposals for its demolition and unsympathetic alteration. Future proposals will need to demonstrate that they either sustain or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and are consistent with its conservation. The highway facing elevations of the building are of particular interest and future proposals should retain these in their entirety and have regard to the pattern and design of the building’s existing fenestration.
4.9.8 Materials

New buildings and extensions to existing should be constructed of materials selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

4.9.9 Means of enclosure

Boundary walls and means of enclosure are an important characteristic of the site and should be retained. Of particular interest are the walls that delineate the boundaries of the burgage plots to the rear of the Watling Street properties and that orange brick wall which runs to the north of Public Right of Way SB54 along the boundary of No 183 Watling Street. All add considerably to the character and appearance of the conservation area in which they are located. A number are also listed as are the outbuildings and rear projections that also delineate the plots. Their largely blank facades contribute to the significance of the area and future proposals for development will need to be mindful of these important characteristics.
4.9.10 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of the residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise that it may generate.

4.9.11 Movement and Access

The site is accessed in the west from Richmond Road where both a vehicular and pedestrian access exists. The pedestrian access is a Public Right of Way (definitive map reference SB54) which runs west to east across the site exiting in the east between Nos 181 and 183 Watling Street. No vehicular access exists onto Watling Street.

The permeability of the site is key to pedestrian movements within the wider town allowing access from the residential developments in the west to the centre with SB54 linking Richmond Road and the town beyond to Watling Street and the Market Place. Future development should ensure this right of way and pedestrian movements remain unencumbered.

Vehicle access is also important and allows admittance to the rear yards and parking areas of properties on Watling Street. In addition a car park with approximately 13 spaces is located immediately to the rear of the library building providing restricted parking for its users.
Richmond Road and the adjoining roads are however historic routes of a predominantly single width and in places also form part of the town’s one-way system. On street parking occurs on all routes further impacting on traffic movements in the area.

In the north Queen’s Road joins Brackley Road whilst to the south Richmond Road meets Watling Street and the Towcester Air Quality Management Area. This area runs along the eastern boundary of the site and any future development will need to be mindful of it and the characteristics of the surrounding road network, carefully considering the impact of traffic movements in the wider area.

The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately consider traffic movements and parking arrangements or cause harm to the existing situation. Proposals that bring about improvements to the surrounding highway network will be supported including those for the expansion of the towns one-way system to restrict the flow of traffic along Pomfret Road in a northerly direction (Figures 30 and 31).

Whilst it is noted that the site’s existing car park is currently in private ownership with a restricted use, any future development will need to ensure adequate dedicated parking as well as general parking to meet the needs of visitors to the town centre.

4.9.12 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site Nine the Council will support development that proposes:

- The retention of the former library building with a community use.
- Development that respects the burgage plots of medieval Towcester.
- Development that activates and energises the lanes of Towcester and provides a link between the Market Square and Richmond Road.
- An attractive development of high quality design which takes its lead from the surrounding area and enhances the significance of the Towcester Conservation Area.
- Development which makes provision for off street parking and contributes to the improvement of the town’s existing highway network.
4.10 SITE TEN: RICHMOND ROAD AND WATER LANE

4.10.1 Site information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Richmond Road and Water Lane NN12 6HZ, NN12 6RQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>2ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Part developed brownfield site, comprising the Richmond Road car park, Waitrose Supermarket and its car park, a vacant area, a bungalow and commercial vehicle sales site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of uses</td>
<td>Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Use Classes</td>
<td>A1, C3, Sui generis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Four known registered owners including South Northamptonshire Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 39: Planning designations and constraints affecting the Richmond Road and Water Lane © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
### 4.10.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration Area</td>
<td>The eastern extreme of the site lies within the Towcester Town Centre and Moat Lane Regeneration policy area of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and is subject to Policy T2 of that strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Opportunity Site TC (Towcester Lanes)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Towcester Lanes Opportunity Site an area considered to provide an excellent location for boutique and niche shops, cafes and restaurants, the development of which would help to improve geographical links to the Town Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>The site is bordered by the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Preservation Order</td>
<td>Order number 02/1978 protects a number of Poplar trees in the south of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQMA</td>
<td>The site’s eastern boundary borders Towcester’s Air Quality Management Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Zones</td>
<td>The southern boundary of the site is identified as being within a Flood Zone 3 and a larger part of the site as a Flood Zone 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public right of way</td>
<td>A public right of way (definitive map reference SB23) passes to the front of the Waitrose store across the car park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 40:** The Richmond Road and Water Lane Brief site has four known registered owners © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.10.3 Surrounding Development

Historically the site is located just beyond the core of the medieval/post-medieval market town of Towcester and the walled centre of the Roman town of Lactodorum, which was refortified in the late Saxon period.

The site is located beyond the backlands of both medieval Towcester and also the town’s Victorian expansion and remained undeveloped until the late 20th century. Today the site is bordered to the north by residential properties; mainly the terraced housing of Victorian Towcester. These are generally constructed of local orange brick and one and a half to two storeys in height with limited or no front gardens. Buildings are positioned tight to the highway’s edge. To the east late 20th century buildings border the site and separate it from Watling Street. These mainly have a residential use.

Separated by Silverstone Brook, Towcester Recreation Ground sits to the south and provides an expanse of public open space whilst to the west, modern housing on the former Radstone Technology site fronts onto Water Lane, directly opposite the site and is a mixture of two to three storeys in height.

4.10.4 The Existing Site

The site itself consists of four principal areas (Figure 41). These are:

1. **The Richmond Road Car Park.** A surface car park with approximately 93 spaces in marked bays including 3 spaces for disabled users. This offers free unrestricted parking. The car park is bordered by the Waitrose Supermarket to the west with the residential properties of Richmond Road and Richmond Court forming its northern and eastern boundary. Silverstone Brook and its public footpath demarcate the southern extreme of the site. Vehicular and pedestrian access is provided from Richmond Road and pedestrian access only via the footpath to the north of Silverstone Brook.

2. **Waitrose Supermarket and carpark.** This has a trading area of approximately 1,400 square metres (South Northamptonshire Council Retail Study 2009). The store benefits from a surface car park offering approximately 250 spaces to customers on a four hour time limit.

   The supermarket is bordered by the Richmond Road Car Park to the east, Silverstone Brook and Towcester Recreation Ground to the south, whilst residential development adjoins the south western, western and north eastern boundaries. A car sales site joins the north western corner and shares an access with the supermarket off Water Lane. A single directional access is also provided in the east from Richmond Road.

3. **Bucklands Commercial Vehicle Sales Site.** This is set behind a low level brick wall, this part of the site is home to a single storey bungalow and a large tarmac covered open space from which caravans are sold.
4. **Former Radstone Technology car park**
   This part of the site is a former private car park associated with Radstone Technology which once occupied a site on the opposite (west) side of Water Lane. The former car park has been vacant for over ten years with its associated factory site redeveloped for housing.

   The site is enclosed by brick walls to the southern and northern boundaries, with a close boarded fence along the front (western) boundary with Water Lane onto which a vehicle access exists. A row of Victorian terraced houses are present to the north with gardens sloping down to the site and a two storey business court development to the east. To the south there is a modern bungalow and commercial vehicles sales site, with Waitrose superstore beyond. The modern housing on the former Radstone Technology site is a mix of two and a half and three storeys in height where it fronts onto Water Lane.

![Figure 41: The principal areas of the Richmond Road and Water Lane Site © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487](image)

4.10.5 **Potential Uses**

   Although a mix of uses exist across the site it is dominated by the Waitrose supermarket and areas of public and private car parking.

   The Council would strongly resist the loss of these existing uses, unless it can be demonstrated that the release of such uses would offer significant benefits to the local area in the long term.

   Any new uses will be considered on their own merits and need to be justified in terms of prevailing planning policy and guidance.
In relation to Area No 4 South Northamptonshire Council recently approved application S/2013/0269/MAF granting planning permission for the redevelopment of the site and the construction of a 50 bedroom care home. This is a use considered to be consistent with planning policy and appropriate to the surrounding area.

4.10.6 Heritage Assets

The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording. The site is also located within the setting of the Towcester Conservation Area and care will need to be taken to ensure that future development does not cause harm to its setting and significance.

4.10.7 Flooding

Parts of the site are within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and the Council would expect future development proposals to demonstrate that they have been developed with this in mind and are compatible with the guidance of the NPPF and PPG in relation to such matters. Early engagement with the Environment Agency is recommended in relation to future proposals within the identified flood zones.

Figure 42: The Richmond Road Car Park and surrounding development (Photographed from the west)
4.10.8 Design

Should the redevelopment of part, or all, of the site be justified future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing.

Should site 3 come forward the Council’s considers that its redevelopment would represent an opportunity for enhancement both in terms of architectural and urban design, the activities that are undertaken there and the manner in which it functions. The creation of an active frontage to the site to reflect the surrounding uses would be advantageous.

4.10.9 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise, odour and light that it may generate.

4.10.10 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

4.10.11 Existing Movement and Access

The immediate environs of the site are very much dominated by roads, car parks and a vehicle sales establishment. This contrasts markedly with the historic centre of the town. Water Lane has become a major vehicle route, which connects the residential areas to the south to Brackley Road and the town centre. It also enables local traffic to bypass the busy Watling Street in the central core, leading to increased traffic generation.

Onsite parking exists in the form of the Richmond Road and Waitrose supermarket car parks. The former offering unrestricted access, the latter limited with a four hour time restriction on its use.

Both car parks can be accessed from Richmond Road with Waitrose also having an access off Water Lane from where access to the caravan sales site and proposed care home is also gained.

The car parks are heavily used although the adjoining roads are either residential in nature or historic routes of a predominantly single width. In places these also form
part of the town’s one-way system where on street parking occurs further impacting traffic movements in the area.

![Figure 43: Water Lane, Waitrose and the Vehicle Sales site (Photographed from the north)](image)

### 4.10.12 Future Parking and access

Future development will need to be mindful of the characteristics of the surrounding road network as detailed above and carefully consider the impact that any traffic movements will have on the wider area. The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately consider traffic movements and parking arrangements or cause harm to the existing situation.

The Council will strongly support proposals that bring about improvements to the surrounding highway network including the expansion of the town’s one-way system to restrict the flow of traffic along Pomfret Road in a northerly direction (Figures 30 and 31).

Whilst it is noted that the site’s existing car parks are in private ownership any proposals for redevelopment will need to ensure adequate dedicated parking as well as general parking to meet the needs of visitors to the town centre.
4.10.13 Development Principles and Guidelines

At Site Ten the Council will support:

- The retention of existing employment uses.
- Development which makes provision for off road parking and contributes to the improvement of the town's existing highway network.
4.11 SITE ELEVEN: ISLINGTON ROAD

4.11.1 Site information

| Site Address     | Islington Road  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site area</td>
<td>6ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Description      | Part developed comprising community, 
|                  | education and leisure facilities, 
|                  | residential and commercial properties. |
| Number of uses   | Multiple        |
| Existing Use     | A1, A4, A5, C3, D1 and D2 |
| Classes          | Multiple known registered owners 
|                  | include Towcester Town Council and 
|                  | Northamptonshire County Council |

Figure 4: The Islington Road Brief site has multiple of known registered owners © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey 100022487
4.11.2 Planning designations and constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation/Constraint</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Masterplan Opportunity Site TK (Islington Road Community Action Area)</td>
<td>The site lies within the Islington Road Opportunity Site an area in which the Masterplan considered there to be the opportunity for the consolidation of existing community and leisure facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towcester Conservation Area</td>
<td>Part of the site lies within the confines of the Towcester Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>The site is located within an area of known archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Zones</td>
<td>Parts of the site’s northern boundary are identified as being within a Flood Zone 3 and a larger part of the site as a Flood Zone 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public right of way | Two public rights of way (definitive map references SB23 and SB36) pass through the site.
---|---
Listed Buildings | The Grade II listed No 81, 93 and 131 Watling Street are situated on the site’s eastern boundary. Their boundary walls and curtilage features may also be listed.

### 4.11.3 The Existing Site

Located at the southern end of the Brief area Islington Road is the largest of the sites to be considered. It sits some distance from the town centre in a backland area with the surrounding development varied in nature.

This includes to the north the Waitrose supermarket development and to the south and west the residential properties of 20th century Towcester. These are very much of their time in terms of their architectural and urban design.

To the east the site is bordered by the historic properties that line the sides of Watling Street. These are two to three storeys in height constructed of local stone or brick, sometimes painted. They are positioned tightly together creating an unbroken frontage to the highway. In some cases, as is found elsewhere within the town, narrow plots extend to the rear of these buildings in a westward direction. These contain a mixture of low level wings, outbuildings and workshops all constructed of similar materials.

The uses found within the Islington Road area itself vary but are predominantly community, education and leisure with some residential development also present. The area is currently home to Towcester C of E Primary School, Towcester Recreation Ground, Towcester Youth and Community Centre and the Riverside Centre. A diverse range of social groups also have their premises located in the area and these include Towcester Town Football Supporters’ Club, Studio Band, St John’s Ambulance and the A5 Rangers. Their buildings are found in properties on the eastern side of Richmond Road.

The built form within the area varies with the uses. With the exception of a small run of housing to the south of Islington Road, development is very much functional and of its time (the second half of the 20th century) in terms of its scale, massing and architectural detailing. This includes the three storey red brick apartment blocks of Wootton Court and Islington Court which do not represent a traditional form of the development within the area or the town at large.

Towcester C of E Primary is located opposite these to the west of the highway. The school consist of large purpose built post war structures constructed of brick under flat and sheet metal roofs. These are set in substantial plots behind metal railings.

A similar building material has been used in the construction of the Riverside Centre a large community use building constructed under a planning permission approved in
the 1980s. To its south Towcester Youth and Community Centre occupies a pre-fabricated building of limited quality and to the front of both separating them from Towcester Recreation Ground is a substantial area of hard standing used for car parking. Further areas of hard standing exist to the east of Islington Road offering parking to the users of the various clubs and community buildings that exist in the area.

On the whole such buildings have developed in gaps in what was an historic built frontage and are set back from the highway. The buildings and breaks in the built frontage that they have created do not add value to the area's character or appearance.

Towcester Recreation Ground encompasses a substantial part of the site and is utilised both on a formal basis by local teams and clubs and informally by residents. It is an important open space and community asset within the town and is bordered to the north by Silverstone Brook an important natural resource within the heart of Towcester.

4.11.4 Potential Uses

Whilst containing a number of uses the area does feel somewhat neglected with many of its existing facilities and buildings appearing outdated and hidden away. The
current development does not represent an optimum use of the land and the existing buildings are poorly designed and at odds with the qualities of the town at large.

The planned growth of Towcester represents an opportunity to enhance and regenerate the area both in terms of its architectural and urban design and the activities that are undertaken there and the manner in which it functions.

When considering such change the Council will strongly resist the loss of the existing community and other employment generating uses, unless it can be demonstrated that the release of such uses would offer significant planning benefits to the local area in the long term.

The Towcester Masterplan considered that the Islington Road area would provide an opportunity for the consolidation of existing community and leisure facilities into a single building or series of buildings facing onto the recreation ground with a single area of car parking. The land released by the consolidation, it proposed, could then be used for housing.

Such uses are acceptable in principle and are supported by this Brief, current planning policy and guidance contained within both the NPPF and PPG. The consolidation of the area’s existing uses, reordering and redevelopment offers the opportunity to enhance the vitality and viability of the area optimising land use whilst at the same time also allowing for urban design and architectural improvements.

Towcesters population is expected to increase by approximately 50% over the next two decades and in response to this growth it is likely that the existing school buildings will need to be upgraded and new buildings constructed.

South Northamptonshire Council will support such growth where the matters outlined below have been considered.

4.11.5 Heritage Assets

Part of Site Ten is located within the Towcester Conservation Area and also contains a number of listed buildings. Care is needed to ensure that future development does not cause harm to the significance of these heritage assets and is supported by the appropriate heritage assessments.

The site is also located within an area of known archaeological interest and any future development will need to be preceded and supported by the appropriate level of archaeological investigation and recording.

4.11.6 Flooding

Parts of the site are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and the Council would expect future development proposals to demonstrate that they have been developed with this in mind and are compatible with the guidance of the NPPF and PPG in relation to such matters. Early engagement with the Environment Agency is recommended in relation to future proposals within the identified flood zones.
4.11.7 Design

Should the redevelopment of the area be justified the Council considers that it would represent an opportunity to bring about a more efficient land use and enhancements to the character and quality of the area in terms of its architectural and urban design.

Site Ten lies within the heart of medieval Towcester but was redeveloped in the second half of the 20th century at the expense of much of its traditional character and architectural interest. The consolidation of a number of the community facilities into purpose built new structures would allow for the regeneration of the area in a manner which enhances its character and appearance.

![Figure 47: Removal of existing buildings and the infilling of gaps in the street frontage would represent an enhancement to the area.](image)

In undertaking this work future proposals will need to be mindful of the pattern and appearance of the existing surrounding development and specifically its form, scale, layout and detailing. With this in mind the Council will support proposals for the restoration of a continuous built frontage to Islington Road in place of the existing unprepossessing structures and support the sympathetic development of the areas to its rear.

New development will need to respect the setting of the nearby conservation area and those listed buildings contained within it and also the form and character of those properties situated to the west of Watling Street and their burgage plots.
4.11.8 Materials

Materials should be selected primarily from the local palate although their use in development should be restrained selecting from the range rather than using all of it. Although important the town’s heritage does not necessarily mean that a pastiche of the vernacular will be acceptable across the site. To be successful future development will need to be mindful of local character whilst at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

4.11.9 Residential Amenities

Any new development will need to be mindful of residential amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties both in terms of its visual impact, loss of light and privacy and any noise, odour and light that it may generate.

4.11.10 Provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities

Towcester Recreation Ground is an important open space and community asset with the town and the Council will strongly resist proposals for development that result in a net loss in the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities. Should development of new buildings be proposed on existing pitches/sports/play facilities additional on-site sports provision will need to be made to address the loss of those facilities.

Should further development be proposed on the school site this too will need to be mindful of the provision of existing outdoor facilities and play provision.

4.11.11 Existing Movement and Access

Vehicle access exists into and out of the site from the south only. This is from Vernon Road just west of its junction with Watling Street through a road junction of limited width and visibility that falls below modern highway standards.

Islington Road itself is narrow in width with some on street parking. It is however relatively quiet and with the exception of the start and end of the school day these existing characteristics do not generally harm the functioning of the surrounding highway network.

Car parking exists on the street and in the car parks of the various buildings that line the side of the highway. Not all are laid out or utilised in a manner that makes the best use of the available land. Pedestrian access is better and occurs from all directions although not all routes are the most hospitable or easily navigable by those on foot.
4.11.12 Future Parking and access

Future development will need to be mindful of the characteristics of the surrounding road network as detailed above and carefully consider the impact that any traffic movements will have on the wider area. The Council will resist proposals that do not adequately consider traffic movements and parking arrangements or cause harm to the existing situation.

Whilst it is noted that the site’s existing car parks are not within the control of the Council any proposals for redevelopment will need to ensure adequate dedicated parking as well as general parking to meet the needs of visitors to the town centre.

The regeneration of the area also offers the opportunity to improve pedestrian access by making the existing links to the wider town more hospitable and legible at all times of the day.

![Figure 48: Existing Car Parking at Riverside Court and Towcester Youth and Community Centre](image)

4.11.13 Development Principles and Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Site Eleven the Council will support:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The retention of existing employment uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development which makes provision for off road parking and contributes to the improvement of the town’s existing highway network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improvements of the existing pedestrian routes from the surrounding town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The development of a built frontage to Islington Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The consolidation of existing uses and the more efficient use of land.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: NEXT STEPS

This Brief has built upon the work of the Towcester Masterplan and whilst having regard to current local and national policy has identified and assessed eleven key opportunity sites within the town. The Brief recommends future uses and development for these sites which will strengthen the town centre whilst balancing a variety of issues and challenges.

Following public consultation the Brief was adopted in March 2016 as a supplementary planning document and it and the recommendations that it makes are a material consideration in the planning process and will guide development within the settlement of Towcester during the period 2015-2029. This is the plan period for the Joint Core Strategy and the forthcoming South Northamptonshire Local Plan and also the estimated delivery time of the Towcester South Sustainable Urban Extension the development pressure and funding from which will be appropriately managed using the guidance of the Brief.

In all cases the recommendations of the Brief relate to sites that are outside of the ownership and control of the Council but where these are brought forward for development the Council strongly recommends early engagement through its Development Management pre-application advice service, details of which can be found at http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/1485.htm.

In a number of cases future pre-applications and any formal applications that are to be submitted will need to be accompanied by appropriate studies, reports and justification. This may include the following:

**Heritage Statements** – These will provide an assessment of the significance of the heritage asset and the potential effect of the development upon it should be considered. The National Planning Policy Framework advises that as a minimum the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER) should be consulted, together with an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. The HER’s at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) are not yet available online so any enquiries should be directed to them using the following links.

- [her@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Applicants are also advised to contact NCC (Archaeology) for further advice before proceeding with their proposals.

**Ecological Statements** – Applicants will need to consider the effect of their proposals on protected species and further information may need to accompany future submissions including a phase 1 survey to identify the habitats present and features likely to be used by protected species and any further detailed survey reports for any individual protected species should these be necessary. In order to assist in this reference should be made to the Standing Advice prepared by Natural England which is available using the below link and will help in assessing if there is a
reasonable likelihood of protected species being present and, if so, the relevant survey and mitigation requirements. The advice will be a material consideration in the determination of formal applications.


**Transport Assessments** – All development proposals will need to be mindful of the characteristics of the surrounding road network and carefully consider the impact that any traffic movements will have on the wider area. Applications may need to be accompanied by a transport statement especially where they relate to sites on the Watling Street. It is recommended that applicants seek the views of Northamptonshire Highways for Highways and Rights of Way Advice and Highways England where proposals effect the A5. They can be contacted using the below links.

http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/northamptonshire_highways/Pages/default.aspx

**Flood Risk Assessments** – Where proposals relate to a site in a flood zone applicants should obtain advice from the Environment Agency using the details below.

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

**Community Infrastructure Levy** - In addition to the above applicants should also note that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) comes into effect from 1st April 2016 and will apply to all liable developments that receive planning permission on or after this date.

More information about the CIL (including definitions of what developments are liable, what developments are exempt) can be viewed on the Councils website via the following link:

http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/7143.htm

When making an application CIL forms and advice on what CIL forms will be needed is also available on the Planning Portal website at:

http://www.planningportal.gov.uk

and within the national Planning Practice Guidance at:

http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy/

Please note that planning permissions that are liable for the CIL will still also be subject to S106 obligations for site specific contributions that are required to mitigate the impact of a particular development.