

Draft 2019

# Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide



**South Somerset**  
District Council



Report No	Author	Checked	Rev	Issued
19006 – Public Realm Design Guide	PK	-	A	30/09/19

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## 1. Introduction

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 PRDG Process
- 1.3 Consultation
- 1.4 Guide to Using the Document
- 1.5 Extent of the Public Realm Design Guide

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## 1.1 Introduction

A key component in achieving the Yeovil Town Centre Strategy is investment and enhancement of Yeovil's public realm.

This is about enhancing the public realm for public use and enjoyment. Yeovil deserves a high-quality public realm which complements and is the equal of its architecture, urban form and historic features.

Recognising this, South Somerset District Council has commissioned this Public Realm Design Guide (PRDG) for the town centre to set the framework and quality standards for transformational change.

The PRDG's key objectives are to:

- Provide a coherent approach to improving connections across the town centre, particularly between severed parts of the public realm;
- Improve the physical and visual quality of streets for the benefit of residents and visitors, and in turn the town's economy;
- Reinforce Yeovil's distinctiveness throughout its public realm;
- Redress the balance within the town centre between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists, such that street design increases social interaction; and
- Provide a sustainable and flexible framework to inform decision makers and practitioners.

The PRDG will sit alongside, inform and compliment separate studies to be undertaken as part of Yeovil Town Centre Strategy including; Town Centre Access Strategy, Car Parking Strategy and Associated Signage, Walking and Cycling Strategy, Improved Pedestrian Wayfinding.

1. Introduction

1.2 PRDG Process

There are a vast number of individual and corporate interests in Yeovil’s public realm and various points of view on how best it should be improved and what functions it needs to serve. In drafting Yeovil’s PRDG, extensive consultation has been carried out with a wide range of stakeholders to understand and balance these different points of view.

The work began with a series of workshops facilitated to gather opinion on Yeovil’s public realm. Following this, a series of targeted consultations were undertaken to meet specific individuals and discuss their priorities further. In addition, a number of council representatives have been involved in commenting on and shaping the PRDG as it has developed.

The PRDG has been part of a formal six-week consultation period before passing for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document by SSDC’s executive committee.

The PRDG process is illustrated below.

1.3 Consultation

The public were consulted upon the emerging public realm design guide through a month-long consultation running from the 20th July to 17th August 2019.

Key stakeholders have also been consulted through a series of workshops and individual discussions to ensure that the various interests and opinions have been taken into consideration.

Those stakeholders which have been consulted through the PRDG process include:

- Somerset County Council Highways
- South Somerset District Council
- Operators of Quedam Shopping Centre and Glovers Walk Shopping Centre
- Yeovil Town Council
- Yeovil Chamber of Trade & Commerce
- Avon & Somerset Police
- Access for All

STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The public consultation feedback received showed that:

- There is strong support for the creation of an improved pedestrian environment within the town centre;
- A consensus that current levels of vehicle access detract from the quality of the public realm;
- There are numerous elements of the town centre environment which detract from the current experience with anti-social behaviour, condition of the paving and street furniture, and lack of trees and planting being the most reported issues;
- There is strong support for additional street tree and ornamental planting within the town centre.

The key findings from the public consultation are illustrated overleaf.

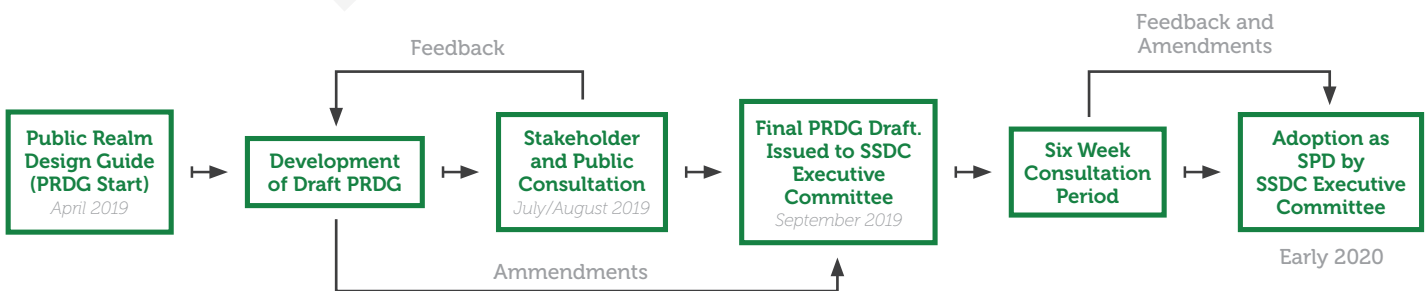
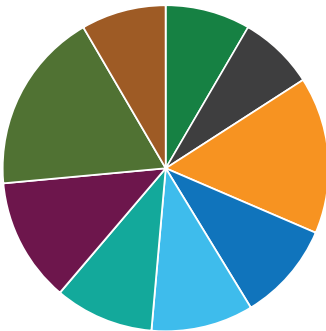


Figure 1.1 – The Public Realm Design Guide Process



### Are there any elements of the town centre environment which detract from your experience or make you feel unsafe?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Existing volume of traffic	8%	54
Poor lighting of public realm at night	8%	48
Condition of the paving and street furniture	16%	100
Lack of activities	10%	63
Lack of seating	10%	65
Lack of access to green space	10%	63
Lack of trees and planting	12%	79
Anti-social behaviour	18%	116
Other	8%	54
Answered	100%	188

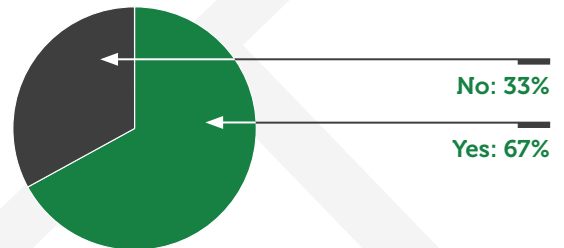


- **Existing volume of traffic**  
54 Responses (8%)
- **Poor lighting of public realm at night**  
48 Responses (8%)
- **Condition of the paving and street furniture**  
100 Responses (16%)
- **Lack of activities**  
63 Responses (10%)
- **Lack of seating**  
65 Responses (10%)
- **Lack of access to green space**  
63 Responses (10%)
- **Lack of trees and planting**  
79 Responses (12%)
- **Anti-social behaviour**  
116 Responses (18%)
- **Other**  
54 Responses (8%)



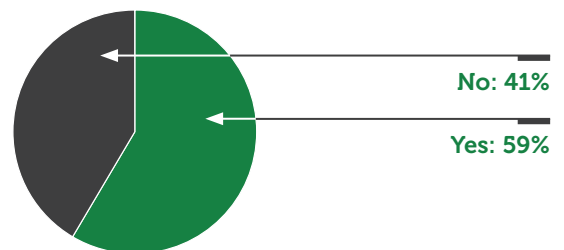
### Do you support the creation of an improved pedestrian environment within the town centre?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	67%	126
No	33%	62
Answered	100%	188



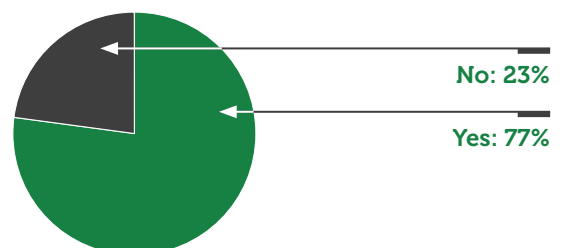
### Do you think that vehicles within the town centre detract from the quality of the public realm?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	59%	110
No	41%	78
Answered	100%	188



### Would you like to see additional street tree and ornamental planting within the town centre?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	77%	145
No	23%	43
Answered	100%	188



## 1.4 Guide to Using the Document

The PRDG is aimed at all those involved in the investment in, design or maintenance of the public realm, whether they are overseeing public investment in the public realm or private sector development in the town centre. This will include both South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council as well as private sector organisations, developers and consultants. In addition, local businesses and the local community may retain an interest as they will benefit from an improved public realm.

The PRDG may be used for a number of reasons, comprising;

- To inform and support the Public Realm Enhancement schemes identified within the Yeovil Town Centre Refresh.
- To inform the design of new and enhanced public spaces and streets.
- To help coordinate and prioritise investment in public realm projects.
- To provide a framework for external bids for public funding to support improvements to public realm.
- To assist council highway officers to secure section 278 agreements to make improvements to the highway and public realm.
- To assist council development control officers to secure section 106 monies and to ensure that developers deliver public realm that is of a consistently high quality and appropriate to the relevant part of the town centre.
- To guide the council, statutory undertakers and private developers in the selection of surface materials and furniture for the public realm.
- To help clarify management responsibilities for streets and spaces.

It is important to note that the design guide offers broad principles and design guidance, which cannot address the subtleties of design required for every specific location. Rather, the aim is to provide initial parameters and guidance which set a high-quality standard and future aspiration for Yeovil's public realm and should form the basis for the preparation of more detailed designs. The PRDG has been divided into 8 sections, which are summarised below;

- Section 1** – Introduction
- Section 2** – Existing Public Realm Context
- Section 3** – Design Parameters
- Section 4** – Public Art
- Section 5** – Lighting Strategy
- Section 6** – Wayfinding and Signage Strategy
- Section 7** – Materials and Specification
- Section 8** – Making it Happen



## 1.5 Extent of the Public Realm Design Guide

The study area for the PRDG covers Yeovil town centre is shown in Figure 1.2 below. The study area boundary is formed by the A30, which runs around and defines the northern perimeter of town centre, and Yeovil Country Park running along the southern boundary.

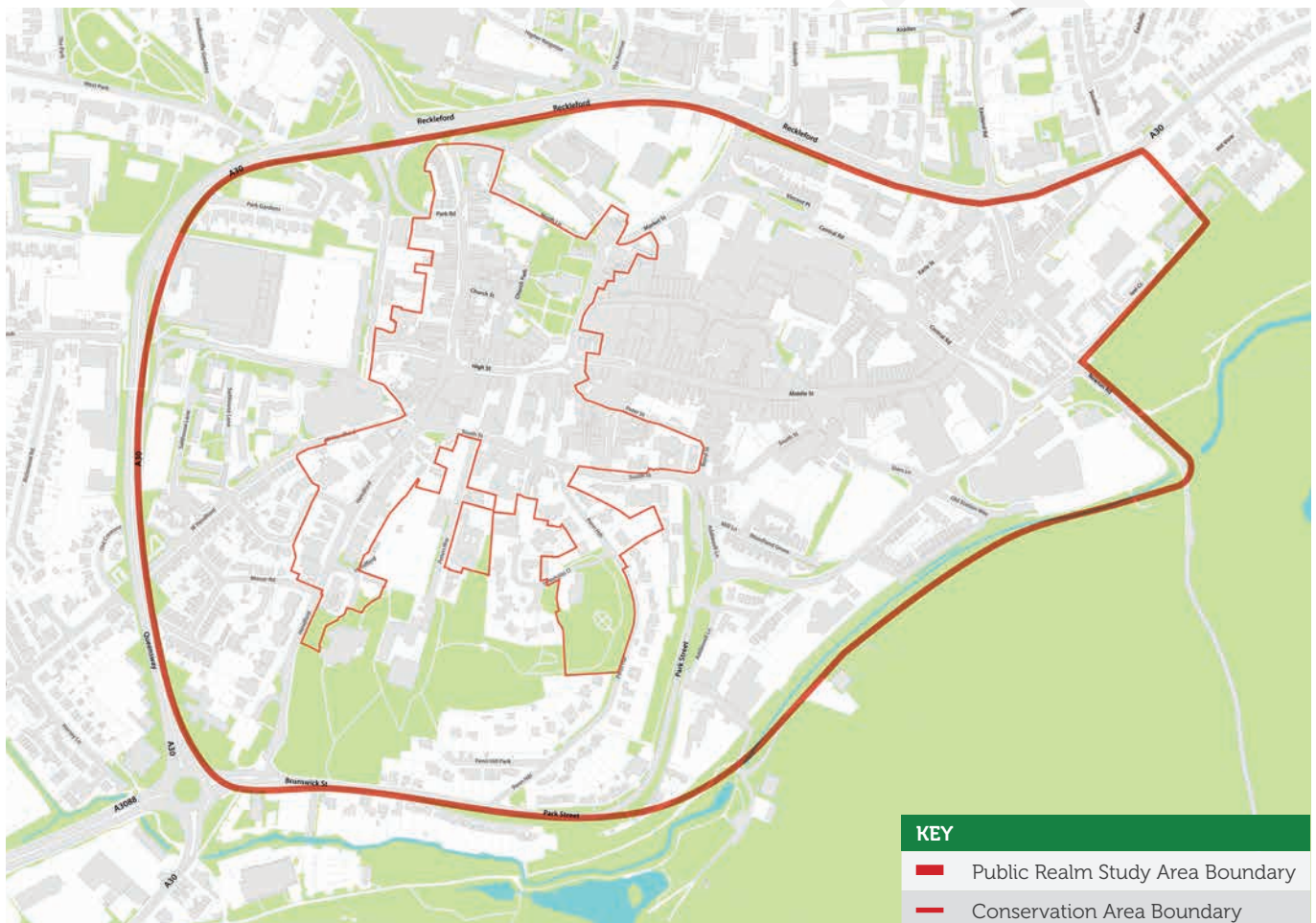


Figure 1.2 – Study Area



## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

- 2.1 Review of Previous Studies and Best Practice Guidance
- 2.2 Planning Context
- 2.3 Brief History of Yeovil
- 2.4 Access and Movement
- 2.5 Legibility
- 2.6 Land Uses
- 2.7 Public Realm Condition, Quality and Character
- 2.8 Trees, Greenspace and Public Open Space

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- 34





## 2.1 Review of Previous Studies and Best Practice Guidance

The PRDG has been informed by the outcomes of the Yeovil Town Centre Refresh 2018 and also a number of key guidance documents.

### YEOVIL TOWN CENTRE REFRESH 2018:

A Town Centre Development Strategy for Yeovil that proposes future projects under three key themes 'Public Realm'; 'Development';

and 'Transport'. Under the theme of 'Public Realm' a number of projects were identified including the enhancement of existing public spaces at The Borough and The Bandstand.

Key opportunities were identified as part of these public realm projects, which are subject to further development. These are illustrated in the extract pages shown overleaf.

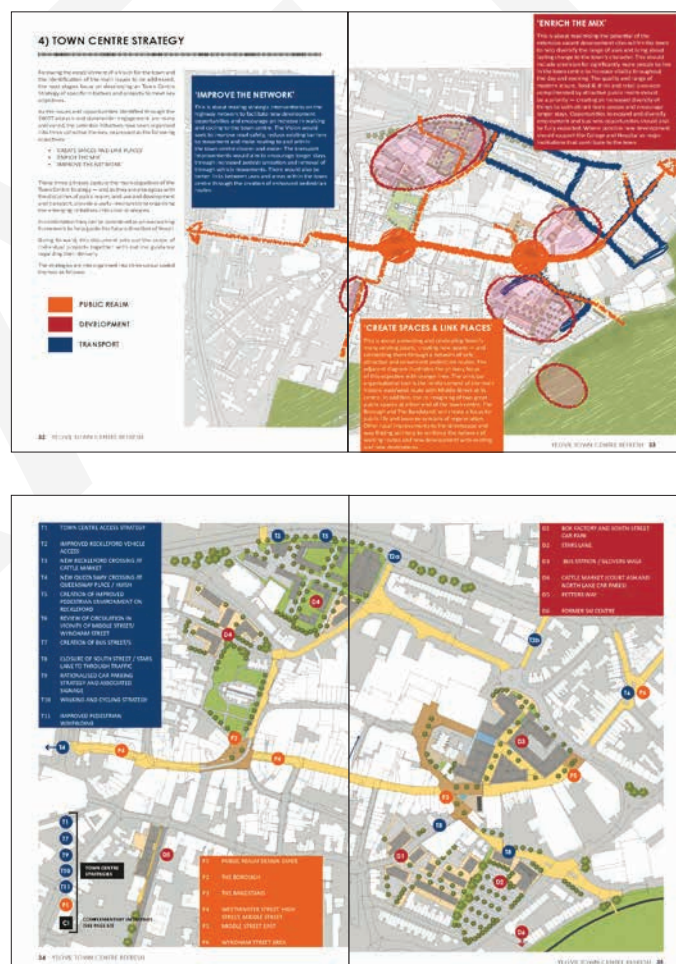
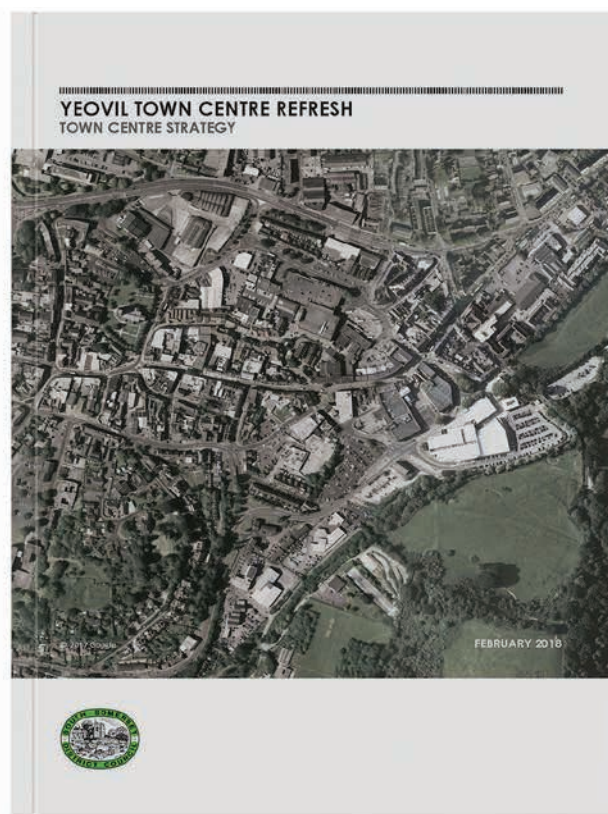


Figure 2.1 – Yeovil Refresh Cover and Extract Pages

## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

### HISTORIC ENGLAND 2018 STREETS FOR ALL:

Provides national and regional design guidance for those involved in planning and implementing highways and other public realm works in sensitive historic locations. This guidance sets five goals for Public Realm Enhancement, which comprise;

1. **An Inclusive Environment** – Public realm schemes need to be carefully designed to ensure they provide everyone with equal access.
2. **Public Safety and ease of Movement** – The movement of people and goods is one of the fundamental purposes of our streets and public realm and the balance between the two should be reconciled to provide safety for all users.
3. **A healthy environment that supports our wellbeing and cohesion** – Public realm enhancement needs to consider spaces as places for public interaction and promote healthy and sustainable forms through urban greening.
4. **A high-quality environment** – To achieve and sustain a high-quality environment, public realm and highways works need to be both functional and attractive, using materials of appropriate quality and durability for the setting and purpose (and enabling on-going maintenance), as well as achieving a positive aesthetic impact that complement the character of the area.
5. **Economic Benefit** – Sensitive investment in the public realm will conserve the special interest of historic places and unlock the potential of places to create new opportunities for businesses and unique experiences for customers.

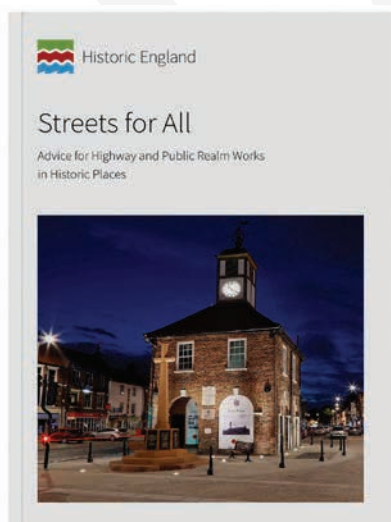
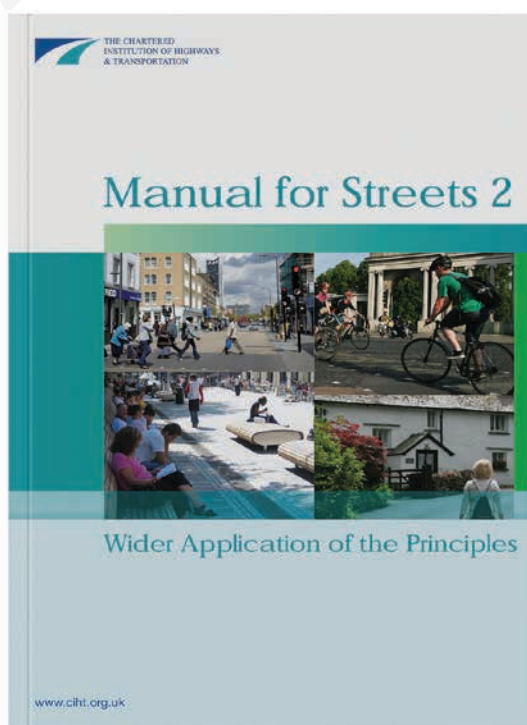
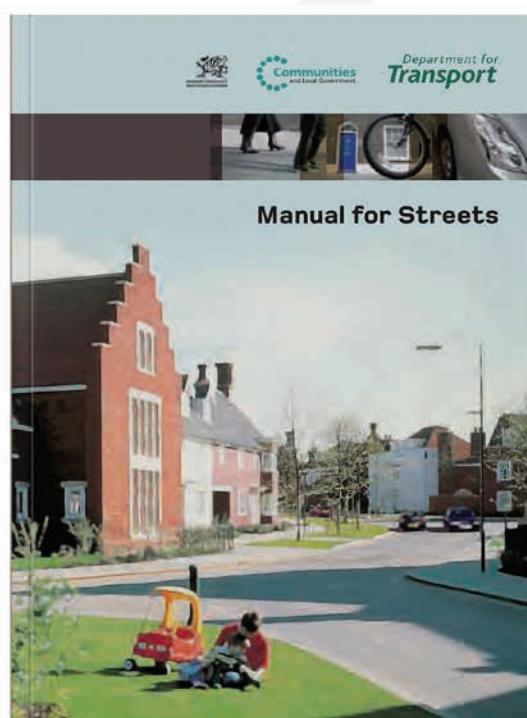


Figure 2.2 – Historic England 2018 'Streets for All' Report

### MANUAL FOR STREETS 1 AND 2

A suite of complimentary documents published by the Department for Transport (DfT), which underpin the approach to the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of urban streets.



Figures 2.3 – Manual for Streets 1 (MfS1) and 2 (MfS2)



## 2.2 Planning Context

The Public Realm Design Guide will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed guidance to assist decision makers and will become a material consideration in determining any planning applications where works propose enhancements to or new areas of public realm within Yeovil town centre.

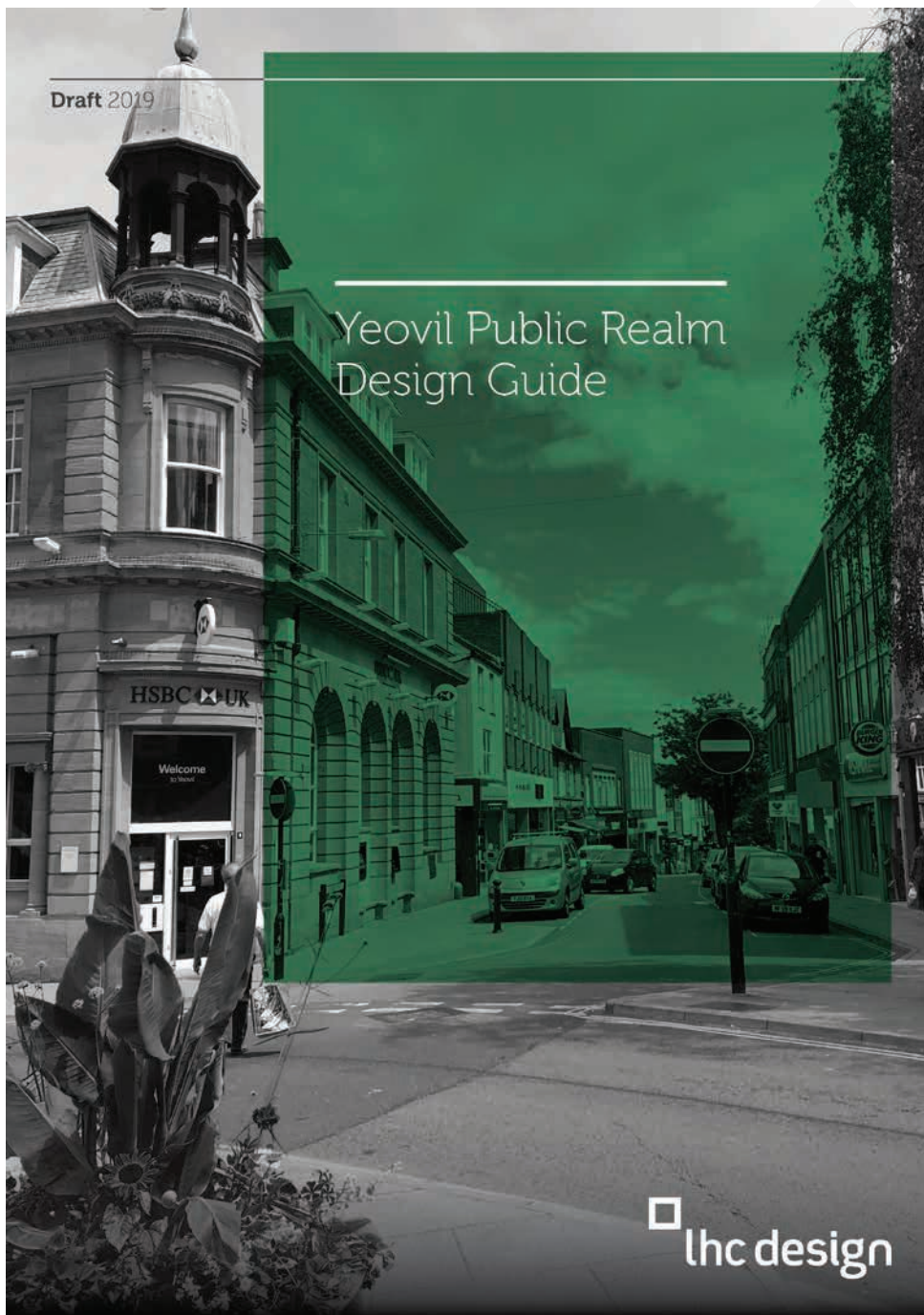


Figure 2.4 – Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide

### 2.3 Brief History of Yeovil

Yeovil's history has been well documented in a range of reports. It is not the purpose of the PRDG to recount Yeovil's history in great detail, but by describing the key factors influencing the evolution of the town, the evolution of the public realm can be understood.

There is limited evidence of Stone Age activity in Yeovil however it is understood that immediately prior to the Roman invasion of Britain, the area was inhabited by the British Celtic Durotriges – a tribal group occupying an area from Devon to Wiltshire.

Roman activity has been found around the Westland Complex and it is believed that this may have constituted a Villa with complex of outbuildings to a small town with a street grid extending over 40 acres.

Yeovil was mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) as Givele possibly meaning 'The river noble' and noted as a thriving market town.

It was not until the 1800s when the expansion of Yeovil began in a form recognisable today, based upon growth of the glove making and leather industry. During this time the population grew from approximately 2,500 in 1800 to 13,500 in 1890.

The majority of growth during this period expanded outwards from the medieval Borough into the surrounding Manors of Kingston and Hendford.

Yeovil became a municipal borough by Act of Parliament in 1854 and the boundary of the town was expanded then and then again in 1904 due to the increase in the size of the town's population.

The last major expansion of the borough boundary occurred in 1928 when the town doubled in size overnight. In 1931 the population exceeded 19,000 and grew to 41,000 in 2001.



Figure 2.5 – Historical Expansion of Yeovil Town Centre (Source: Yeovil Refresh 2018)



The last major expansion of the borough boundary occurred in 1928 when the town doubled in size overnight. In 1931 the population exceeded 19,000 and grew to 41,000 in 2001.

The construction of Queensway dual carriageway in 1977 saw the implementation of a ring road surrounding the historic town centre, resulting in the severance of the historic street pattern and demolition of a number of dwellings and buildings in the area.



**Middle Street, circa 1962**  
Source: Bob Osborn



**Middle Street, circa 1975**  
Source: Bob Osborn



**Middle Street, circa 1965**  
Source: Bob Osborn



**Triangle (Bandstand), circa 1960**  
Source: Bob Osborn



## 2.4 Access and Movement

Access and movement in Yeovil can be considered in relation to;

- Motor Vehicles
- Cyclists
- Pedestrians
- Public Transport

### VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

#### Primary Vehicle Routes

Yeovil's ring road (Queensway/A30) is a mainly dual carriageway route that forms the primary vehicle circulation route around the north and west of the town centre. The ring road is currently a busy and largely unattractive route and the geometry lends itself to fast vehicle speeds, although it is restricted to 30-40mph. In the main, the width of the route, size of junctions and traffic flows / speeds represent a significant barrier to pedestrians and cyclists approaching the town centre from the surrounding residential areas. Many people are also discouraged from using the existing overbridges and subways.

The Queensway section of the ring road is a particularly unattractive route dominated by concrete barriers to the central reservation, pedestrian guard railings and traffic signage. This produces a canalised Highways dominated environment. The Reckleford section of the ring road from the Hospital Roundabout at its western end, is at grade with the surrounding area, however there is scope to reduce the dominance of vehicles in order to improve pedestrian movement and also enhance their overall appearance.

The primary vehicle approaches into Yeovil town centre meet the ring road at key junctions and roundabouts. The primary vehicle approaches are:

- 1. Western Approach:**  
A388 (Lysander Road/Horsey Roundabout)
- 2. Northern Approach:**  
A37 (Kingston/Hospital Roundabout)
- 3. Eastern Approach:**  
A30 (Sherborne Road/Wyndham Street/Reckleford)
- 4. Queensway Place**

The key junctions and roundabouts represent main vehicle arrival points into the town centre and like the ring road, the dominance of vehicles, barriers and signage, currently make these gateways unattractive. The ring road roundabouts that form part of the western and northern approaches are particularly unpleasant for

Figure 2.6 –  
Existing Vehicular Circulation Plan



pedestrians who have a choice of either using the unappealing and dated subways and overbridges or attempting to cross the busy roads at grade.

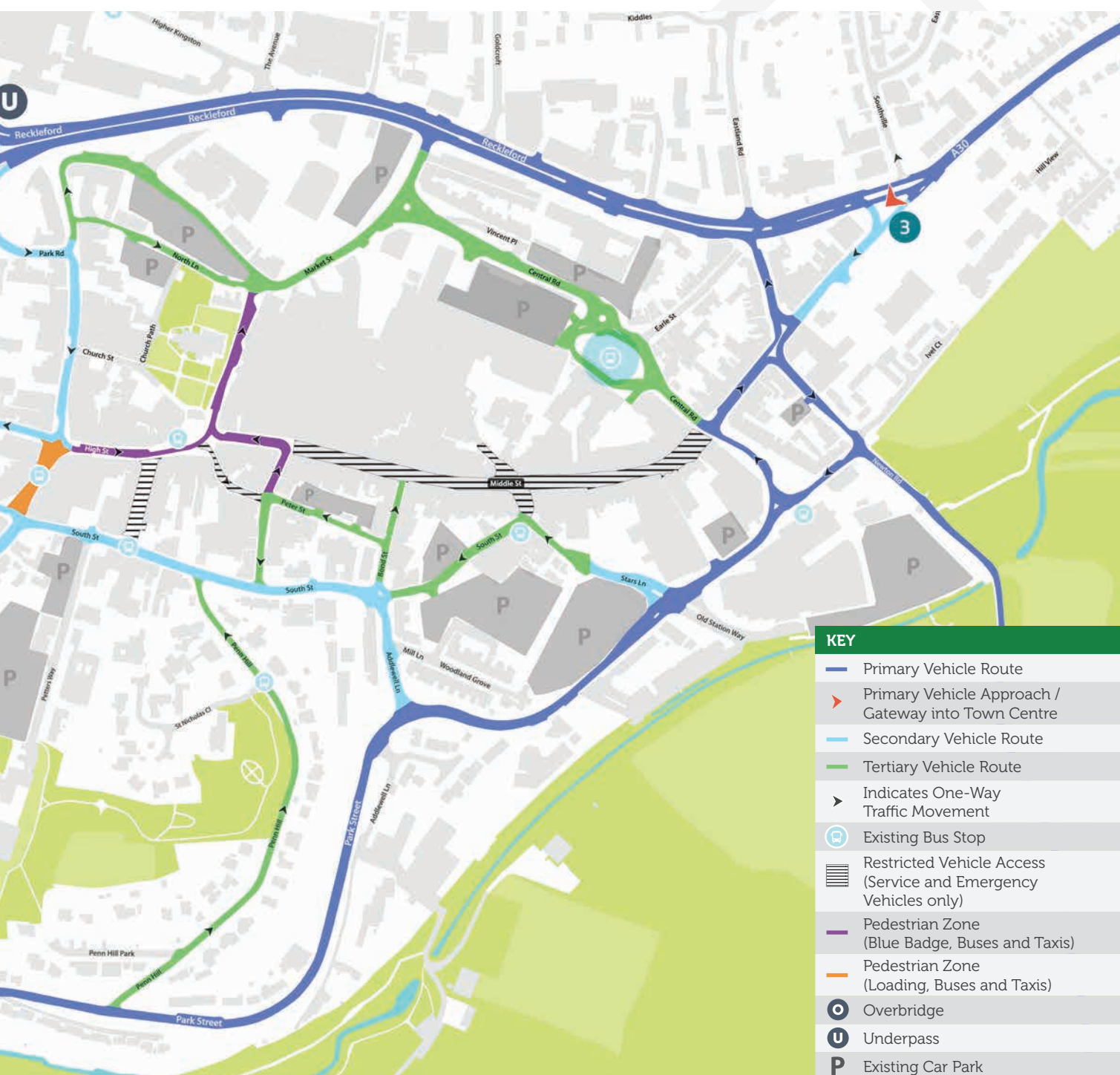
### Other Vehicle Routes

Within the ring road, the road network becomes unclear and represents a mix of Yeovil's historic street pattern, which has been severed in places by the construction of Queensway, and more recent roads which have been built to connect with the ring road itself. The resulting street hierarchy is poor with many streets lacking a role or meaningful function. Many of these streets exhibit an over engineered Highways

character, leading to low quality public realm.

A tighter network of historic streets can be found spanning out from the high street/retail core and many have been made into one-way routes, which contribute to a confusing movement framework and also direct traffic into the high street, where pedestrian movements are highest.

A pedestrian zone is in operation within parts of the town centre core, where traffic restrictions are in place. However, these are widely ignored and without effective enforcement.





## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

### CAR PARKING

There is a total of 18 council owned surface car parks within the town centre area offering various opportunities for those visiting the town centre. These comprise a total of c.1,600 off-street car parking spaces in a mix of short, medium and long stay car parks. Additionally, there are four private car parks providing further opportunities for parking in the town centre for c.1,500 vehicles (Tesco, Quedam, Yeo Leisure Park and Manor Hotel). The hospital also provides 650 car parking spaces for visitors only

The most well utilised council car parks are Peter Street, North Lane, Market Street, Petters Way, Court Ash, South Street Market and Stars Lane . Some of the car parks have low utilisation rates including Huish, Earle Street and Box Factory.

The large decked car park provision provided as part of the Tesco superstore at Queensway Place, offers 2 hours of free parking. This has high utilisation rates and acts as a significant entry point for many visitors.

Quedam Shopping Centre also operate a multi-storey car park, which also acts as a key entry point into the town centre.

There is a tendency for car park areas to detract from the public realm and the significant level of car parking within the town could encourage travel by car into the town centre.

Various streets within the town centre also have an on-street parking provision, which leads to an over domination of cars within the public realm and town centre. This conflicts with and restricts pedestrian movements in a number of locations and encourages vehicles to enter and circulate within the town centre, including on roads subject to traffic regulation order restrictions.



- |                 |                        |                                      |                      |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Stars Lane   | 6. South Street Market | 11. Tesco's Superstore (Private)     | 16. Earle Street     |
| 2. Box Factory  | 7. Petters Way         | 12. North Lane                       | 17. Newton Road      |
| 3. South Street | 8. West Hendford       | 13. Court Ash                        | 18. Middle Street    |
| 4. Peter Street | 9. Fairfield           | 14. Market Street                    | 19. Yeo Leisure Park |
| 5. Park Street  | 10. Huish              | 15. Quedam Shopping Centre (Private) | 20. Goldenstones     |

Figure 2.7 – Plan showing existing car parking provision





On-street parking provision within Middle Street develops a congested pedestrian environment



Existing taxi rank within Silver Street congests access into the St. John's Church precinct



On-street parking and vehicle access within High Street



Blue badge parking bays and vehicle access within lower Middle Street conflicts with the pedestrianised environment

## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The existing bus station offers a poor-quality arrival point into the town centre. It is located to the rear of the Glovers Walk shopping centre, which is largely vacant, and there is poor connectivity with the Quedam Shopping Centre and the surrounding retail core within the town centre. Its location at the bottom of the town centre also poses issues with connectivity for those with mobility issues.

This situation is due to be addressed through the building of a new bus station as part of a wider regeneration scheme of Glovers Walk Shopping Centre.

A secondary bus stop hub is located further north at the top of the High Street, within the Borough. This has high usage and provides a convenient location for those arriving in to the retail core by bus. However, it is considered too congested in this space with frequent bus stacking.

Yeovil Junction railway station is located approximately 2km to the south-east of the town centre and acts as a connection to the mainline railway. This is not conveniently located to access the town centre as it requires people to use a further rail connection to Yeovil Pen Mill station, a connecting bus service, cycling or vehicle to access the town centre.

Yeovil Pen Mill station is located approximately 1km to the east of the town centre and requires pedestrians to walk through Yeovil Country Park or along Sherborne Road, which offers a poor gateway

and convoluted connectivity with the town centre.

### CYCLE ROUTES

There is limited provision of cycle routes within the town centre.

There is a well-used cycle route which runs along the northern boundary of Yeovil Country Park from Lysander Road in the west to Yeovil Pen Mill in the east, which enables cyclists to move around the southern perimeter of the town centre. There is cycle connectivity from this to the town centre via Stars Lane and Old Station Lane, however this is provided as part of a busy Highways junction.

Cycle routes within the remaining town centre area are few in number and unclear as part of a vehicle dominated environment.

Cycle connectivity with the town centre from the wider residential areas north and west is inhibited by the presence of the busy and Queensway/ Reckleford ring road, which acts as a physical barrier and requires cyclists to dismount when using pedestrian over-passes or use the existing underpass.

National cycle routes 26 and 30 run around the southern perimeter of Yeovil, approximately 2km to the south. However, there is no connectivity from these to the town centre itself.



Bus Station



Bus Stacking into The Borough



## PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The principal pedestrian circulation route within the town centre runs east – west through the retail and historic core from Westminster Street, High Street and Middle Street. This route acts a spine through the town centre and is characterised by sections of trafficked streets, one-way streets and pedestrianised zones leading to an incohesive and low-quality route in places.

In combination with restricted and one-way vehicle access routes in the town centre core, short sections of the street network at the heart of the retail and historic core have been fully pedestrianised within Middle Street. These areas experience very heavy pedestrian flows during the daytime.

Vicarage Walk runs through the Quedam Shopping Centre and acts as a secondary pedestrian route that runs parallel to the main retail spine and High Street. The access points into this route are poor, limiting legibility and footfall.

Pedestrian routes to car parks and surrounding areas span out from these areas along secondary streets surrounding the town centre, where both footfall and legibility of the routes decreases.

Pedestrian routes across Queensway and Reckleford take the form of overbridges and an underpass at the Hospital Roundabout. These offer poor routes and gateways into the town centre.

A recreational pedestrian/cycle route runs east-west along the northern boundary of Yeovil Country Park, providing a well-used resource.



Pedestrian route along Yeovil Country Park

## RELEVANCE TO THE PRDG

The following bullet points summarise the relevance of access and movement, which are to be addressed in the PRDG;

- Improve the appearance of Queensway/Reckleford ring road and main approaches to the town centre, as well as improve the environment and crossing facilities for pedestrians (part of the access strategy).
- Overall dominance of vehicles in the town centre needs to be reduced and pedestrian-friendly environments extended from the town centre core streets outward. This could include a reduction in bus and vehicle access encroaching into the town centre streets whilst providing high quality bus stops/streets in convenient locations.
- Improve gateways into the town centre
- Promote awareness and use of Yeovil Country Park, particularly for cyclists as an alternative to using the ring road.
- Strengthen pedestrian links outward from the town centre core and across Queensway
- Strengthen pedestrian and cycle links between the railway station and the town centre.
- Improve the appearance and approaches to public and private car parks.
- Provide an attractive, high quality bus station that is easy and convenient for pedestrians to access (through the design and construction of the new bus station).



Vicarage Walk pedestrianised route

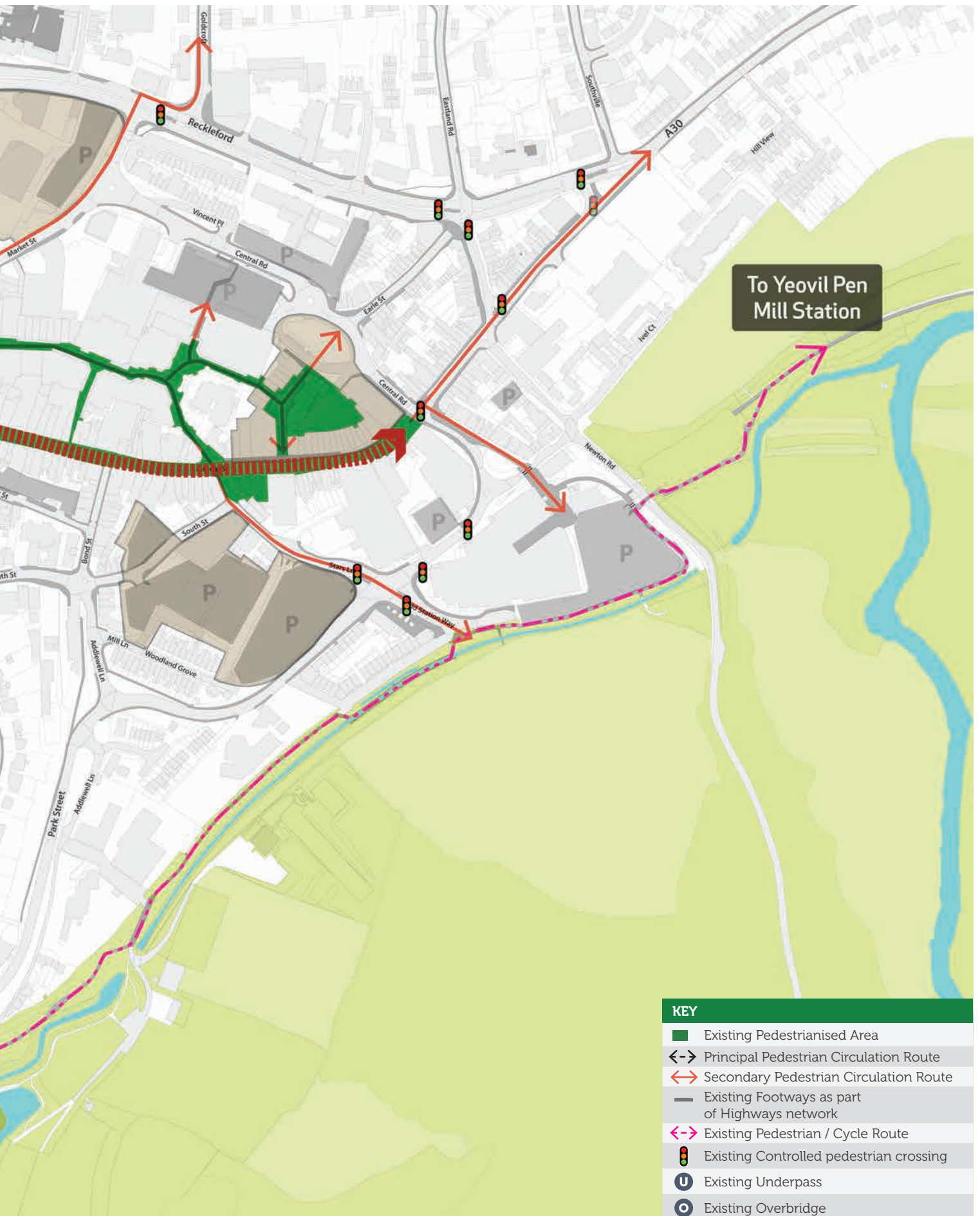


2. Existing Public Realm Context



Figure 2.8 – Plan showing existing pedestrian and cycle circulation





## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

### 2.5 Legibility

Legibility determines how easy it is to navigate and orientate within a place. Legibility is influenced by the following:

- Simplicity of the street layout
- Key orientation features
- Key landmark buildings that form skyline features or are particularly prominent
- Other landmark buildings
- Other landmark features
- Gateways
- Key views and vistas

#### SIMPLICITY OF THE STREET LAYOUT

Yeovil's historic street layout is based around an east-west spine comprising Westminster Street, High Street and Middle Street. A network of smaller streets run from this in a north-south direction within a tight urban grain. St. John's Church occupies a location at the heart of the historic core. The historic street pattern then meets a more recent street layout, which relates to more to the connectivity to the Queensway and Reckleford ring road. These streets are much larger in scale and often break the historical street layout, leading to an incoherent street layout and number of severed streets. Queensway and Reckleford ring road acts as a significant barrier beyond this, limiting the connectivity to the network of streets beyond.

#### KEY ORIENTATION FEATURES

There are two key orientation features, which are integral to legibility in Yeovil Town Centre. They are:

- St. John's Church, which sits in an elevated location within the Borough
- Yeovil County Park and Ninesprings Park: defines the southern boundary of the town centre and provides a strongly defined green backdrop.

#### KEY LANDMARK BUILDINGS AND OTHER LANDMARK BUILDINGS

There are a number of key landmark buildings in the town centre, which are shown in Figure 2.9. St. John's Church appears in skyline views and acts as the key landmark building. In addition, there are a number of other distinctive landmarks buildings which include:

- Magistrates' Court
- Old cinema building (St. Margret's Home Store)
- Prince Street corner
- Cineworld complex
- HSBC building
- Boswell's and M&S, Quedam
- Vicarage Street Methodist church

Outside of the historic core, landmark buildings are fewer in number.



**St. John's Church provides a significant landmark within the town centre**



**War memorial provides a focal point within the Borough**



## OTHER LANDMARK FEATURES

Other landmarks are formed by distinctive places or features, rather than buildings. These are shown in Figure 2.17, and include the war memorial within the Borough and Clock tower within High Street.

## GATEWAYS

As described in section 2.4 – Access & Movement, Gateways into the town centre are poor. This results in a poor start to those visiting the town centre.

## KEY VIEWS & VISTAS

The orientation features and landmarks identified in Figure 2.17 are integral to the key vistas and views experienced in Yeovil.

A series of framed views are present within the historic town centre core, which assist in the understanding of the public realm.

Distant views of Yeovil Country Park occupying elevated land to the south of the town centre provide a defining character to those views out from the town centre.

## RELEVANCE TO THE PRDG

The following bullet points summarise the key points relating to existing legibility which are to be addressed in the PRDG.

- Although the town centre is compact and the historic streets laid out as a logical pattern, the legibility of the town centre is compromised by more recent development outside of the historic core, which has resulted from the construction of the inner ring road. This does not conform to this pattern and creates a barrier to movement between the town centre and wider residential areas. Legibility must be improved to address this.
- An understanding of Yeovil's key orientation features should be promoted through the wayfinding strategy.
- The lack of distinctive landmarks in the northern and southern areas of the town centre should be addressed through the creation of new landmarks (at gateway locations).
- As highlighted in Section 2.4, generally gateways at the town centre's approaches are not distinctive. These should be strengthened to assist orientation.
- Existing views and vistas should be protected and enhanced. The lack of distinctive views and vistas in the northern and southern areas of the town centre should be addressed in tandem with the creation of distinctive gateways and landmarks.



**The Clocktower provides a focal point at a key pedestrian nodal point**



**A number of high quality victorian buildings provide visual focal points on street corners**

## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

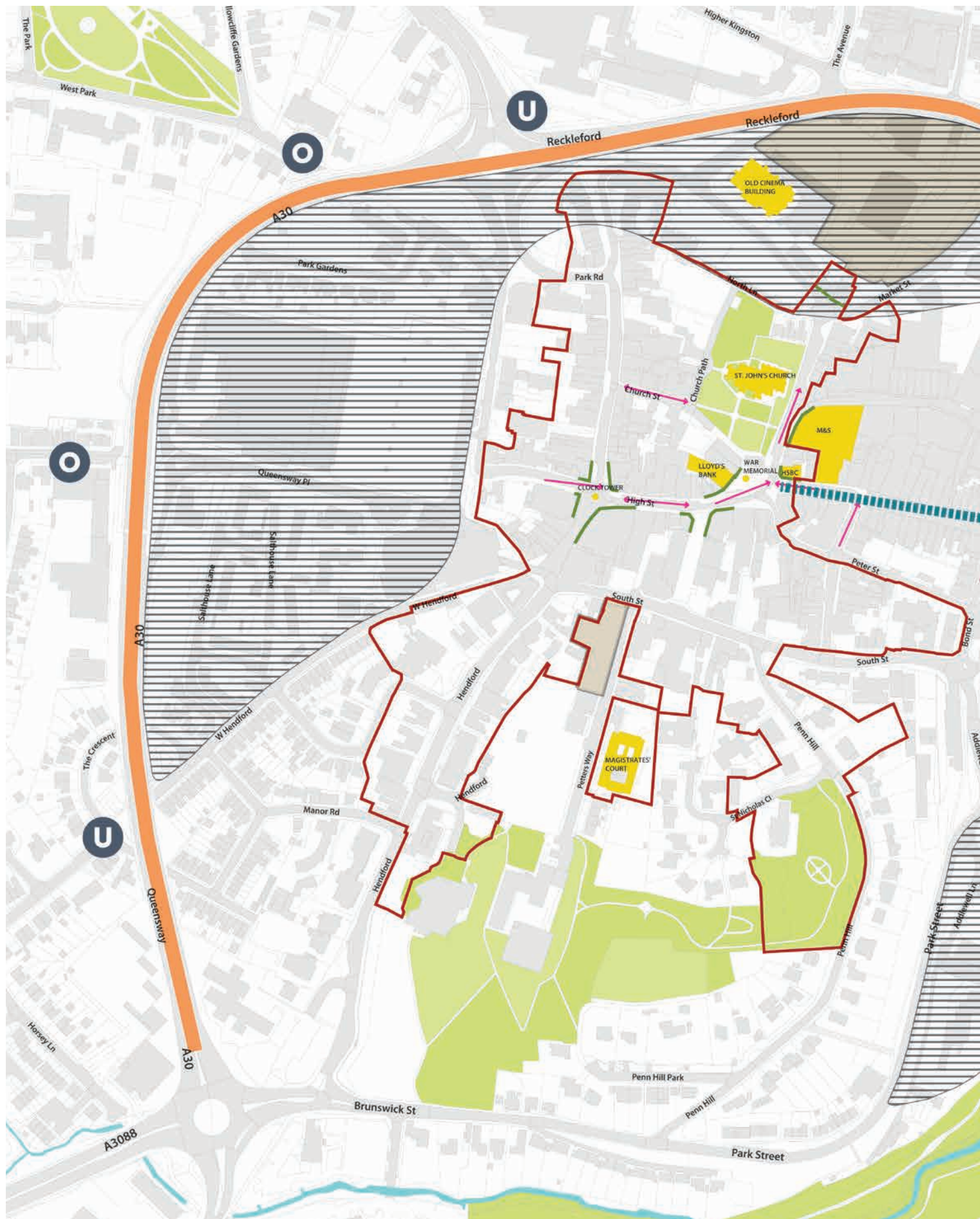
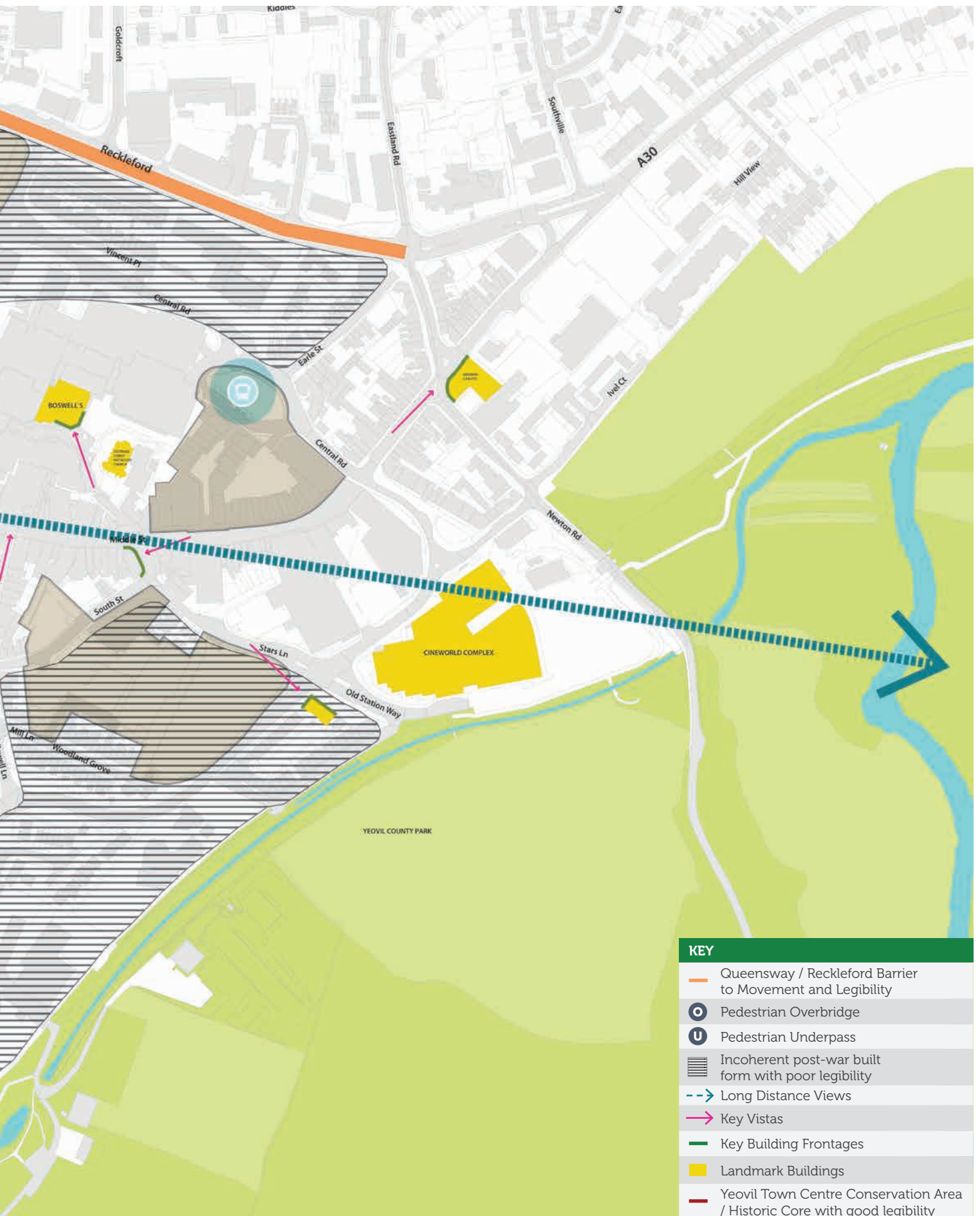


Figure 2.9 – Plan showing existing legibility, landmarks & views





2. Existing Public Realm Context

2.6 Land Uses

Figure 2.18 Shows the primary retail area is concentrated along High Street, Middle Street, and the Quedam Shopping Centre. These areas comprise a mix of national retailers and smaller independent shops. Glovers Walk shopping centre at the eastern end of Middle street is largely vacant and offers a low quality retail offer. Smaller independent shops are located on Western Terrace.

To the east, the Yeo Leisure Park provides a mix of leisure uses and chain restaurants.

There are large tracts of underutilised and fragmented brownfield land within the northern, eastern and western areas of the town centre, which results in low quality townscape. Some of these have already been earmarked as locations for future development including the Cattle Market, Glovers Walk/Bus Station and Stars Lane/Box Factory. However, further opportunities should be considered to intensify land uses in these areas.

Surface car parks also occupy significant areas of land within the town centre. Although these offer convenient opportunities to park, they offer little in terms of place-making and further reduce the density of townscape.

The existing superstore on the western fringe of the town centre offers a large retail facility, however its large massing offers a poor juxtaposition with surrounding uses and townscape character.

Much of the southern area of the town centre is made up from civic, office and post war residential uses. These are of low density and currently have a poor interaction with the core of the town centre itself.



Retail Core



Underutilised Land



Surface Car Park



Independent Shops

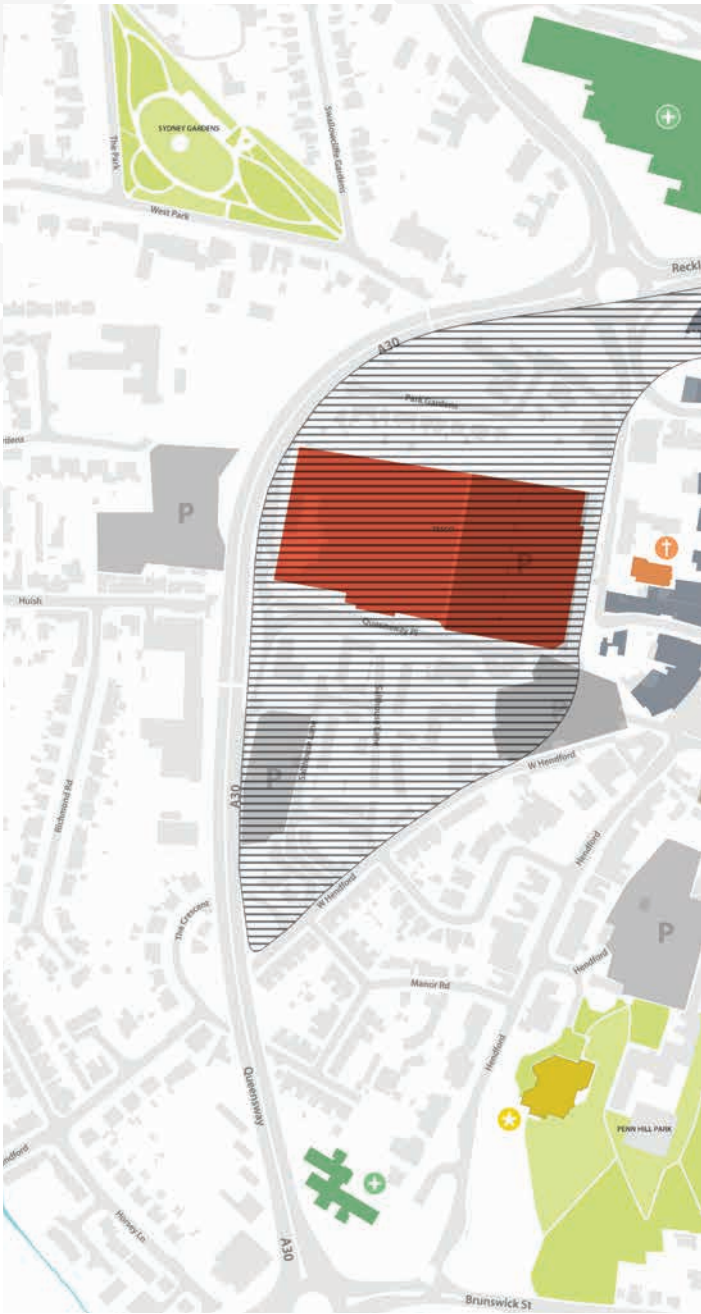


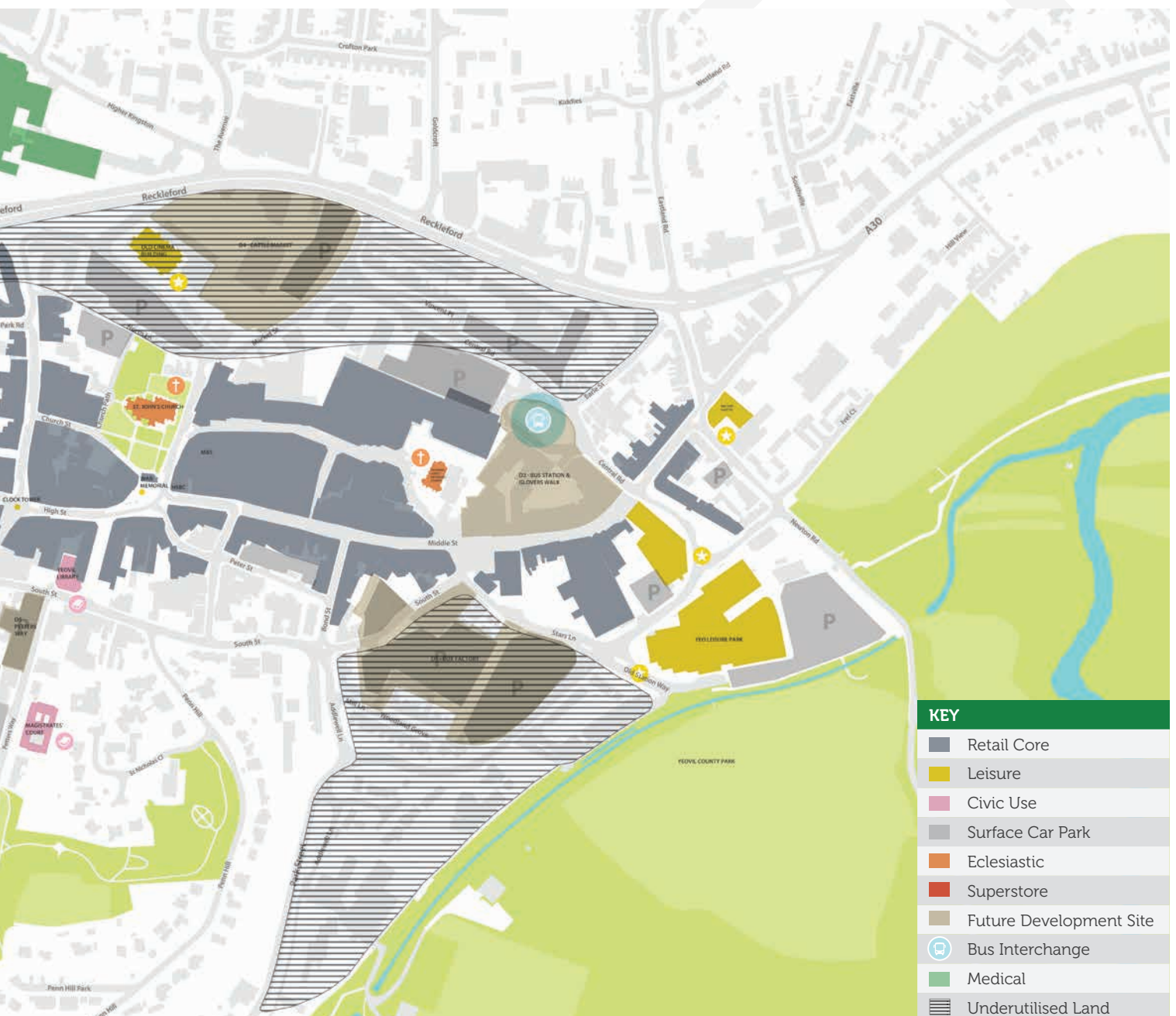
Figure 2.10 – Plan showing existing land uses



## RELEVANCE TO THE PRDG

The following bullet points summarise the key points relating to existing urban form and land use which are to be addressed in the PRDG.

- Address the issue of poor enclosure and dead spaces within areas of the town centre
- Address the poor enclosure and incoherent urban form and Highways arrangement in backland areas.
- There is a need to enhance and promote the retail experience.
- Consider the role of public realm in supporting an enriched mix of land uses.
- Develop a public realm which will support future leisure/culture development opportunities and Yeovil's evening and night-time economy.



## 2. Existing Public Realm Context



Figure 2.11 – Plan showing public realm quality





## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

### 2.7 Public Realm Condition, Quality and Character

#### HIGHER QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

As would be expected, the higher quality public realm is located within the historic and retail town centre core. However, this is limited to Vicarage Walk through Quedam, St. John's Church precinct, King George Street and Hendford. Although these spaces possess positive attributes, there is little cohesion or common character between them.



Vicarage Walk within  
Quedam Shopping Centre



St. John's Church precinct



Hendford



King George Street

#### MODERATE QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

The existing pedestrianised areas of Middle street and Yeo Leisure Park are considered to be of medium quality. The public realm in these areas comprise a mixture of concrete block and flag paving materials together with street furniture. Although these areas are in a reasonable condition it is considered that the materials palette is dated.



Yeo Leisure Park



The Borough



Middle Street



South Western Terrace



## LOWER QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

The majority of streets surrounding the historic town centre core are of low-quality public realm. The surfacing in these areas consists of tarmacadam, as part of a Highways dominated environment. Car parking and service areas do not help to raise the quality in these areas. Parts of the retail spine are also of low-quality including Westminster street, eastern and western extents of Middle Street and Glovers walk Shopping centre. The existing bus stations offers a particularly low-quality level of public realm at the key entrance point.



**Glovers Walk Shopping Centre**



**Lower Middle Street**



**Bus Station**



**Stars Lane**

## VERNACULAR MATERIALS

There is a lack of historic vernacular of public realm materials or features present within the town centre. However, there are clues relating to appropriate local materials within some of the surrounding buildings.

The use of Blue Lias limestone and sandstone is a common historical trait, which has driven much of the built form character.



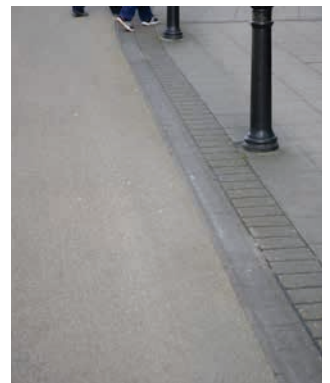
**Blue Lias stone flag paving**



**Sandstone used within historic building frontages**



**Sandstone used within historic building frontages**



**Buff anti-skid surfacing to carriageway**

## 2.8 Trees, Greenspace and Public Open Space

### PUBLIC GREENSPACES

Within the study area are the following key public green spaces:

#### ***St. John's Church Grounds***

The principal green space within the heart of the town centre. The grounds contain various small memorial spaces/gardens, with trees, bedding plants and seating. Views of this space are restricted somewhat from the Borough due to existing built form.

#### ***Penn Hill Park***

A generously sized park occupying a significant area of the southern area of the town centre, which is characterised by open grassland and parkland trees. This park is currently underutilised and hidden behind numerous civic buildings on its northern approach.

#### ***Yeovil County Park and Ninesprings Park***

A significant linear park running along the southern boundary of the town centre, offering a well-used leisure route. Landform within the park rises steeply to provide the town centre with a green backdrop that is widely visible from the historical core. Currently pedestrian and cycle connections between this resource and the town centre are poor.

#### ***Sydney Gardens***

A pleasant Victorian neighbourhood greenspace cut off from the town centre by Queensway. Currently, pedestrian and cycle connections between this resource and the town centre are via a pedestrian over-bridge and poorly defined route, leading to underutilisation.



Sydney Gardens

### HARD LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE/PUBLIC SQUARES

There are two existing urban squares within the town centre:

#### ***The Borough***

The Borough acts as the principal space within the town centre and is well used as a place to socialise within cafés on the northern fringes and also acts as a significant arrival point for those arriving by bus. Existing vehicular movements run through the centre of the space and present a barrier to pedestrians.

#### ***The Bandstand***

The bandstand is located mid-way along Middle Street and provides a key nodal point within the town centre linking Middle street, Stars Lane and Quedam shopping centre. Although it is used as part of the outdoor markets, this space is currently underutilised and is part of a low-quality built environment.

There are a number of other nodal points including Ivel Square within Quedam and the Clocktower space where Westminster Street, Princes Street, High Street and Hendford meet.



St. John's Church precinct



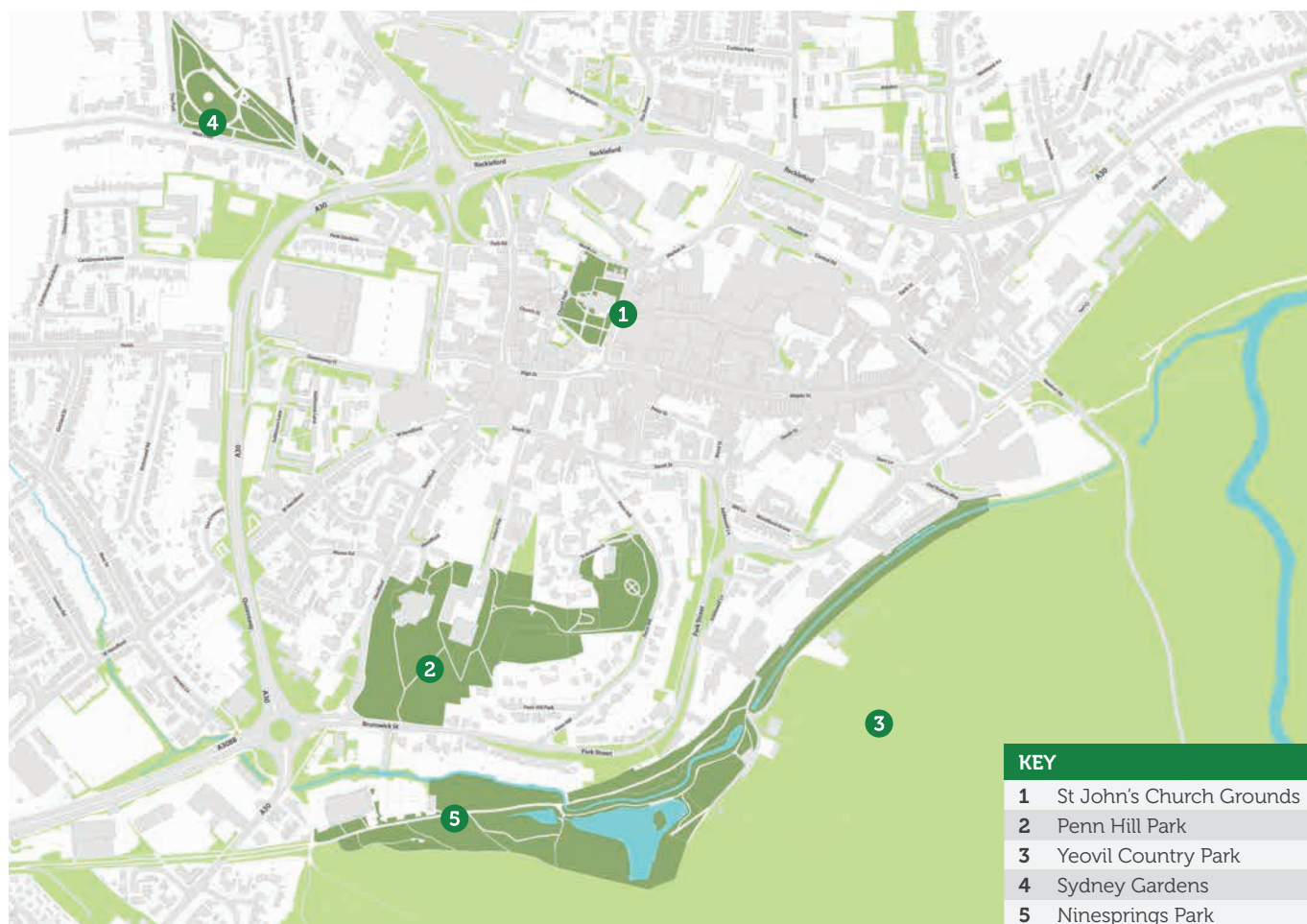


Figure 2.12 – Plan showing Public Greenspace



The Borough



The Bandstand

## 2. Existing Public Realm Context

### TREES

Apart from trees within the public green spaces identified, there are a number of mature trees present within the streets and public squares. However, many of these are of low quality, currently causing issues with surrounding paving, and are unevenly distributed throughout the town centre.

### RELEVANCE TO THE PRDG

The following bullet points summarise the key points relating to trees, greenspace and public open space, which are to be addressed in the PRDG.

- A limited number of trees are found within the town centre streets, many of which are of low quality. Selective tree removal coupled with new tree planting could be used to improve the appearance of streets and gateways.
- Existing greenspaces should be protected and enhanced as destinations in their own right and used as potential event spaces.
- Need to enhance pedestrian links with existing green spaces to increase usage and to enhance the relationship with the town centre. In particular, improved connectivity between the town centre and Yeovil County Park, Sydney Gardens and Penn Hill Park should be sought.
- Develop opportunities for enhanced squares and additional nodal points within the town centre to enliven the public realm.



Existing Alder trees located within Middle Street



Existing London Plane trees within King George Street



Existing Lime trees provide a green boundary to St. John's Church precinct



Existing tree roots damaging paving area







## 3. Design Parameters

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### 3.1 Vision and Public Realm Framework

To ensure there is a wholistic approach to Yeovil's public realm it is important to set an overall vision that subsequent public realm guidance and public realm projects seek to attain.

An overall public realm framework concept is shown below, which seeks to deliver the vision. Further detail on individual facets of the public realm are dealt with separately within the following sections.

#### The Vision

Yeovil's future public realm must build on the town's identity and distinctive qualities. Future investment must be of high quality, creating a timeless public realm that is built to last. As well as respecting the history of the town, the public realm must also meet the needs of modern Yeovil, as a thriving economic and social centre, through the creation of a legible, coherent and sustainable environment which connects Yeovil's assets.



Figure 3.1 – Town Centre Concept Plan

## 3.2 Spaces and Gateways

### **TOWN SQUARES**

Two town squares have been identified in figure 3.2. These are existing hard landscaped spaces that should be strengthened and enhanced around the principles set out within the Yeovil Refresh and as developed below.

#### ***The Borough***

- Develop a landmark square that unites the Borough and St. John's church gardens and offers a high-quality and flexible environment
- Create a safe pedestrian focussed space that reconciles bus and vehicular movements
- Incorporate an architectural lighting scheme to celebrate the existing war memorial and St. John's Church
- Develop bespoke street furniture and paving elements linked to a town centre arts strategy.

#### ***The Bandstand***

- Create a high-quality public square and events space that acts as a key nodal point at the eastern end of the town and compliments proposed redevelopment of Glovers Walk shopping Centre
- Reconcile site levels to maximise the usable level space available for events
- Enhance the surrounding built form through façade enhancements and activate ground floor uses to encourage food & beverage uses and develop the night-time economy to enliven the space
- Consider the use of an electronic outdoor event screen





Artists impression of potential enhancements to The Borough



CGI of potential enhancements to The Bandstand

TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS

Twelve town centre gateways have been identified in figure 3.2. These locations have been chosen in recognition of their importance as entrance points into the town centre and visitors’ first impressions, whether arriving by foot, bike, train or by car. The following overarching principles should be applied to the design of these gateways.

Overarching Principles

- The gateways should be designed as attractive arrival points to the town for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. This should be achieved using a combination of methods, such as the removal of street clutter, use of planting, incorporation of artworks and/or gateway structures, feature lighting and use of better-quality surfacing to pedestrian routes.

- Each gateway should be designed to form a distinguishable threshold and distinctive gateway in order to assist in orientation.
- The gateways should be designed as pedestrian-friendly environments, with safe and attractive pedestrian crossings and clearly defined routes, supported by waymarking signage.
- The gateways should be coordinated with proposed ‘At grade’ crossing points as proposed by the access strategy.

The twelve gateways are listed in the table opposite.

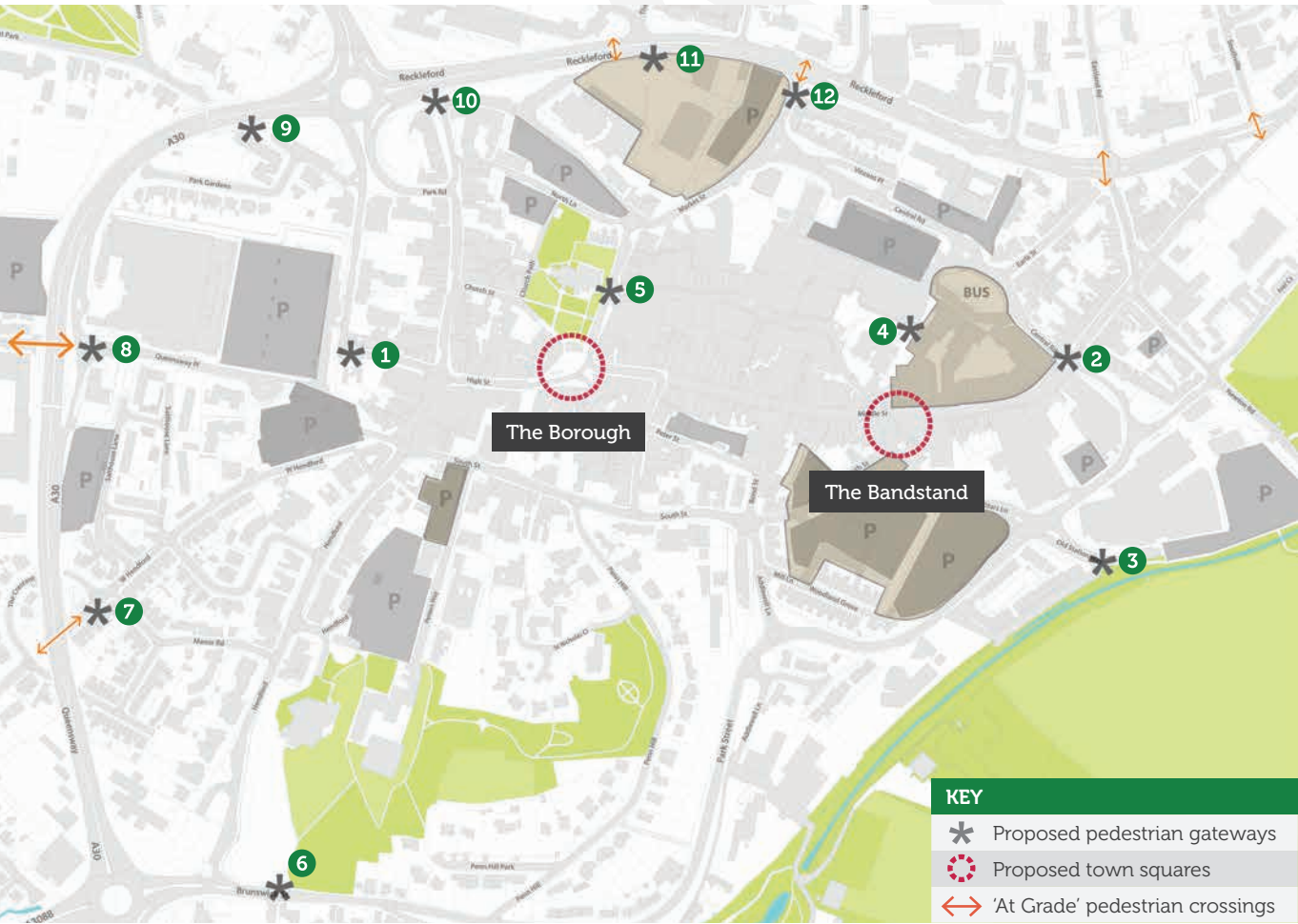


Figure 3.2 – Gateways and Town Squares

Proposed locations of town centre pedestrian gateways and squares. (Refer to table on opposite page for gateway descriptions).



Gateway Name	Description
1. Westminster Street Gateway	A key pedestrian arrival point from those entering the town centre core from the adjacent supermarket car park
2. Middle Street / South Western Terrace Gateway	A key pedestrian, bus and vehicular arrival point signalling arrival into the town centre core
3. Yeovil Country Park	A key pedestrian/Cycle arrival point from those entering the town centre from Yeovil County Park and Yeovil Pen Mill
4. Bus Station & Glovers Walk Gateway	An important gateway between Quedam Shopping Centre and the future redevelopment of the Bus Station and Glovers Walk Shopping Centre
5. Quedam / Vicarage Walk Gateway	A gateway into Quedam from St. John's Church precinct and the Borough.
6. Penn Hill Park Gateway	A key pedestrian gateway into Penn Hill Park linking from Ninesprings Park to the town centre. This also acts as a visual gateway for those entering the town Centre.
7. West Hendford Gateway	A future pedestrian gateway linked to an at-grade crossing point of Queensway that will connect the wider residential area with the town centre.
8. Queensway Place Gateway	A future pedestrian gateway linked to an at-grade crossing point of Queensway that will connect the wider residential area and Huish car park with the town centre.
9. The Park Gateway	A future pedestrian gateway linked to an at-grade crossing point of Queensway that will connect the wider residential area and Sydney Gardens with the town centre.
10. Court Ash Gateway	A significant pedestrian and cycle gateway from those entering the town centre via the existing underpass linking to Yeovil District Hospital and Yeovil College
11. Cattle Market Gateway	A future pedestrian gateway linked to an at-grade crossing point of Reckleford that will connect the wider residential area and redevelopment of the Cattle Market site with the town centre.
12. Market Street Gateway	A future pedestrian gateway linked to an at-grade crossing point of Reckleford that will connect the wider residential area with the town centre.



Precedent images of potential public realm interventions at gateways

### 3. Design Parameters

#### PUBLIC GREENSPACES

Five key public greenspaces have been identified within the town centre (see Figure 3.3). These provide important amenity for residents, workers and visitors. The greenspaces should be strategically connected to town centre routes and will be designed and developed as visitor attractions in their own right.

#### *Overarching Principles*

- Existing greenspaces should be protected and enhanced to become an integral component of the public realm.
- Pedestrian connections between the town centre core and greenspaces should be enhanced to encourage pedestrian movement.
- The distinctive features and individual qualities of these public greenspaces will assist in orientating users.
- The primary function of these spaces must be as social and amenity places for people, providing a setting for recreational activities, play and events.
- Yeovil's green spaces should incorporate public art and wayfinding to support their interpretation and connectivity.

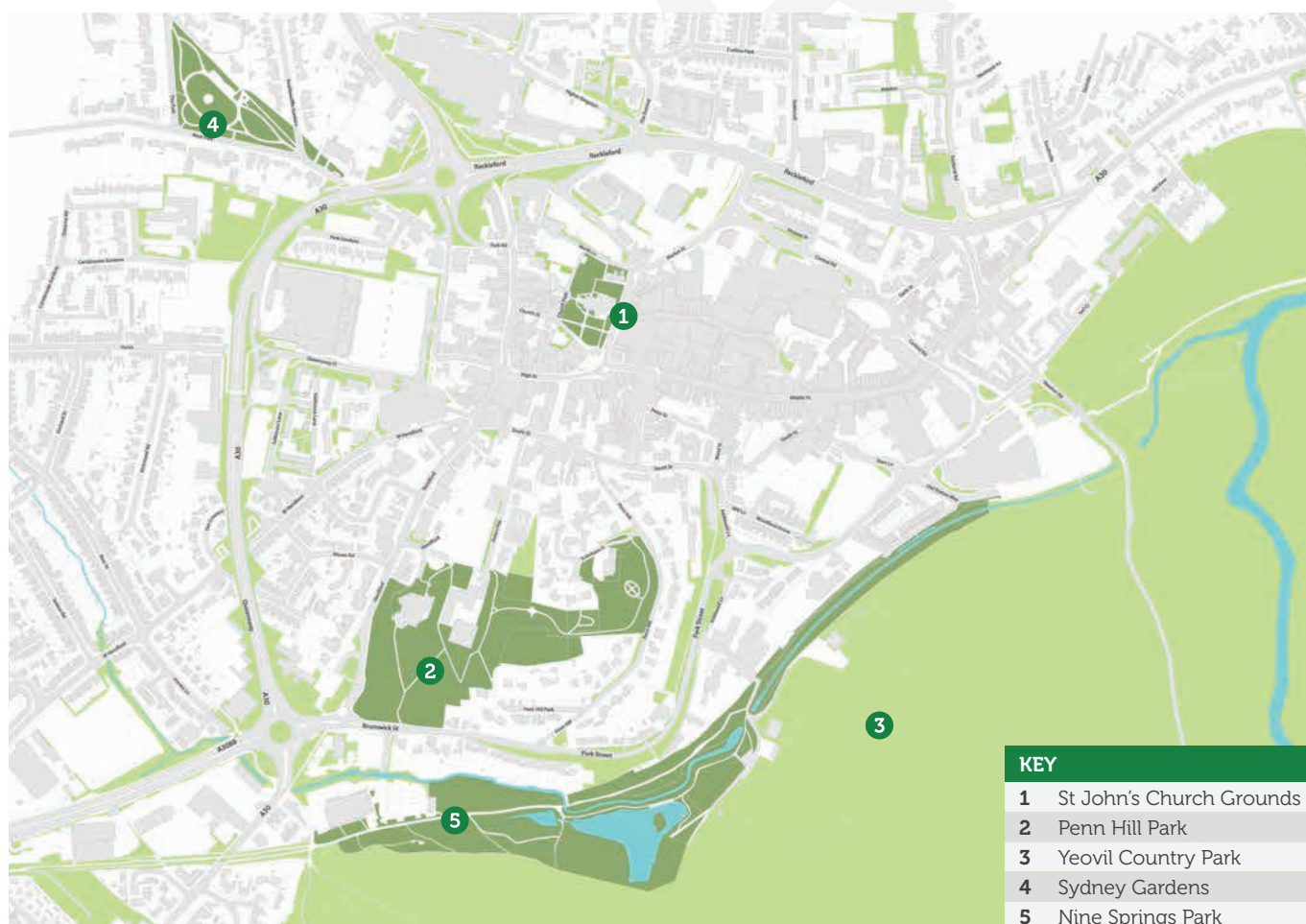


Figure 3.3 – Public Greenspaces Locations





Examples of public greenspace uses



### 3.3 Street Hierarchy

In response to the vision for Yeovil's future public realm to prioritise the needs of pedestrians, the street hierarchy for Yeovil will seek to increase pedestrian and place focus and comprise a clear pedestrian street hierarchy.

At present, Yeovil's streets can be broken into the following categories and sub-categories:

#### **1. PRINCIPAL PEDESTRIAN STREETS (MED – HIGH PEDESTRIAN USE)**

##### **1a) Pedestrianised Street**

Pedestrianised Streets represent some of the most important streets within the town centre in terms of scale, architecture, history and function and as a result are required to support high pedestrian usage. Due to their importance for accommodating pedestrians and position within the movement framework they are not required to accommodate vehicles, except for emergency access and servicing, allowing for the use of higher quality materials throughout.

Currently, these street types are found at King George Street, sections of Middle Street and Vicarage Walk.

##### **1b. Semi-pedestrianised Street**

Semi-Pedestrianised Streets also represent some of the most important streets within the town centre occurring along the main east-west spine and support medium to high pedestrian usage. However, due to their position within the movement framework they are also required to accommodate vehicle access (bus, taxi, blue badge holders, servicing), which requires the use of a defined carriageway with kerb upstand.

Currently, these street types are found at Hendford, Westminster Street, High Street, Silver Street and sections of Middle Street.

#### **2. SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN STREETS (LOW-MED PEDESTRIAN USE)**

Secondary pedestrian streets play an important role in connecting the town centre with wider residential areas and destinations. These streets also provide strategic vehicle access within and the town centre, currently comprising the majority of the streets connecting into the Queensway/Reckleford ring road. The aspiration for these streets is to enhance

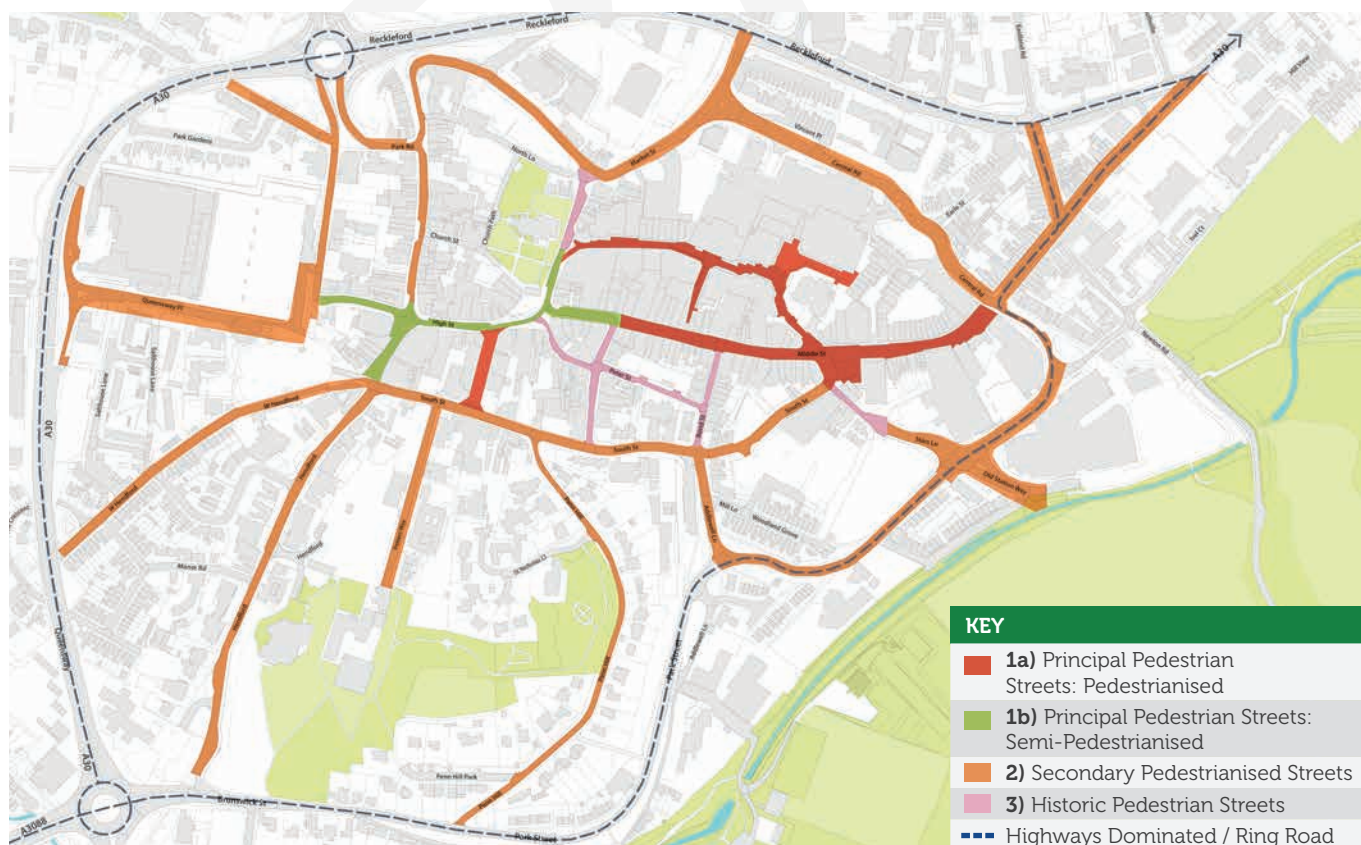


Figure 3.4 – Existing Street Hierarchy



the pedestrian focus through opportunities with street planting, wayfinding coupled with a review of carriageway narrowing whilst maintaining the access requirements.

### 3. HISTORIC PEDESTRIAN STREETS (LOW - MED PEDESTRIAN USE) HISTORIC

Pedestrian Streets form a narrow network of streets within the town centre core. They provide one-way vehicle access and informal pedestrian routes.

Currently, these street types are found at Stars Lane, Wine Street, Union Street, Peter Street and Bond Street.

### THE ASPIRATION FOR YEOVIL'S STREETS

The diagram below illustrates the aspirational changes to Yeovil's street hierarchy. These show the potential for future changes in hierarchy that will inform the associated street design and also identify where priorities should be focussed.

The aspirational changes to the street hierarchy can be summarised by

- Extending pedestrianised street types within the town centre's east-west spine via new vehicle restrictions to High Street, Middle Street, Wine Street and Bond Street.
- Enhancement of a number of strategic pedestrian streets, which provide an important role as pedestrian routes linking wider town areas with the town centre core. These coordinate with improved 'At-Grade' crossing points of Queensway/Reckleford as proposed by the Access Strategy.

It is necessary to allow for a degree of flexibility in the hierarchy in order to allow for changing priorities and unforeseen issues.

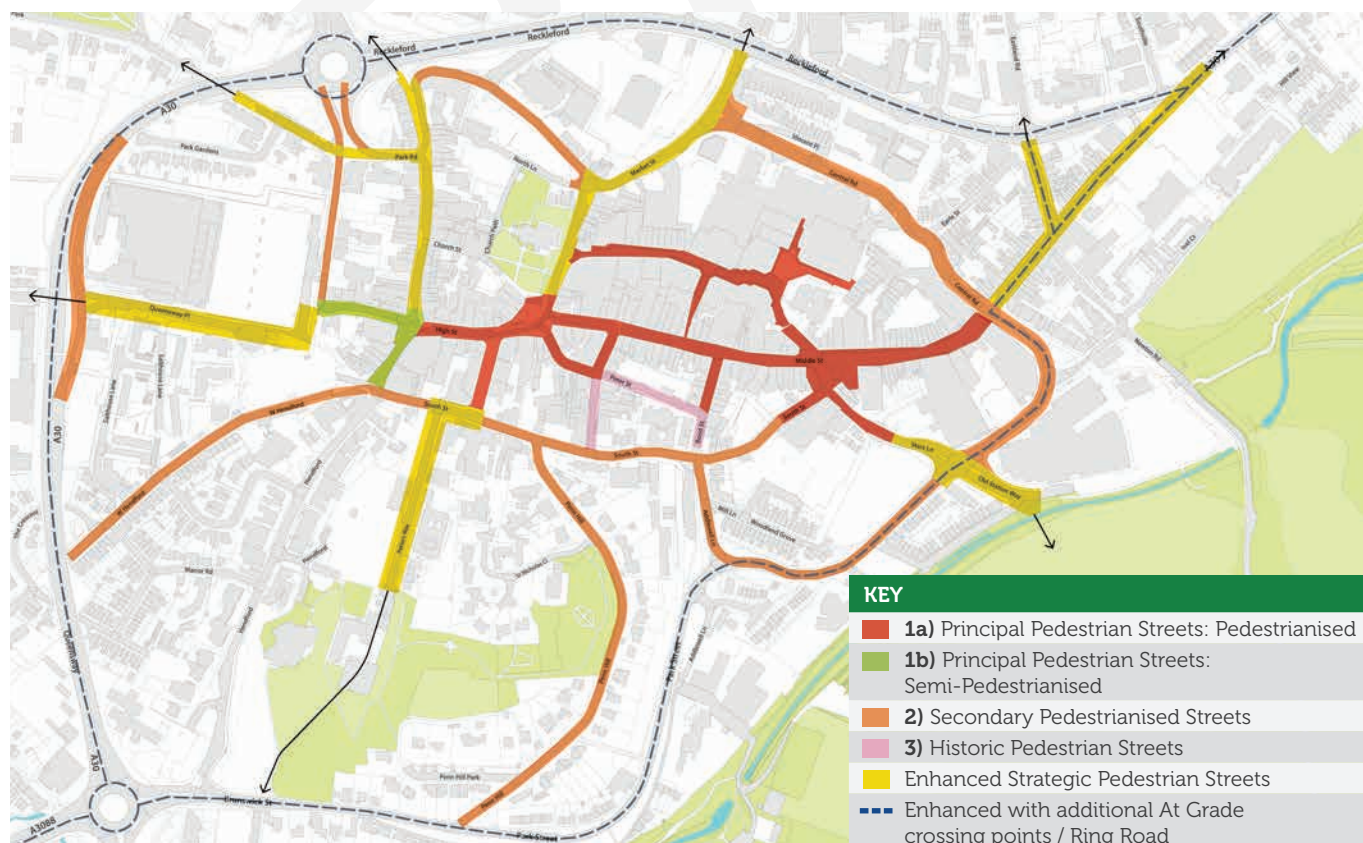


Figure 3.5 – Aspirational Street Hierarchy

3.4 Street Design

The aspirational street hierarchy will inform the street design appropriate to each location within town centre.

Street design codes have been provided for each category to inform design makers about key design parameters and principles.

STREET TYPE 1 – PRINCIPAL PEDESTRIAN STREETS

**Role**  
Principal Pedestrian Streets have been selected based on the scale, character and importance of streets, as well as their current and potential future role as pedestrian routes connecting key visitor attractions. It is envisaged that these principal streets would support medium to high pedestrian use and would be designed to be pedestrian/cycle friendly, albeit accommodating varying levels of vehicle use associated with emergency servicing requirements.

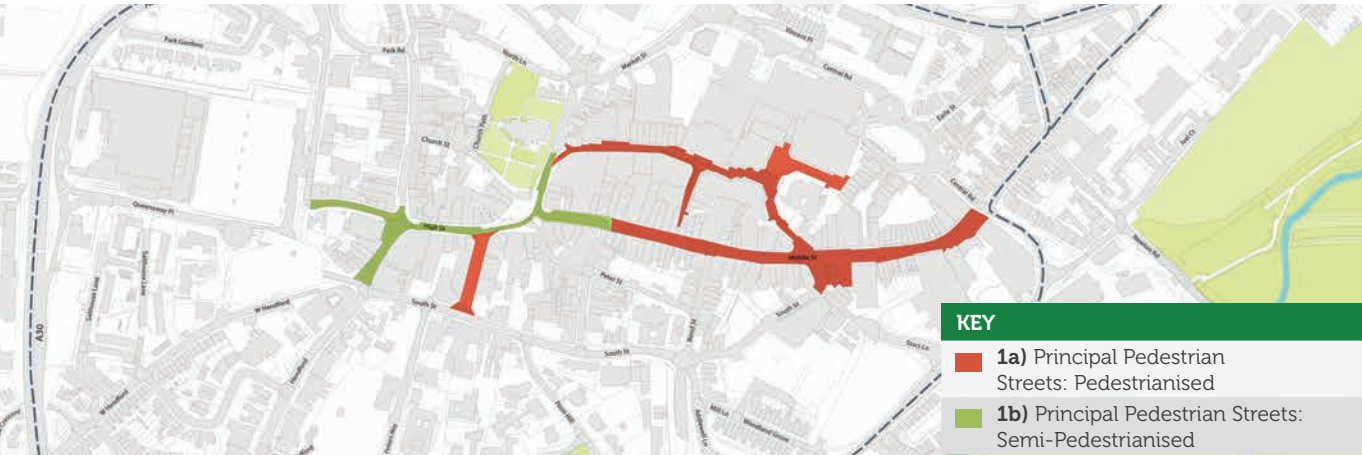


Figure 3.6 – Locations of Principal Pedestrian Streets 1a and 1b.

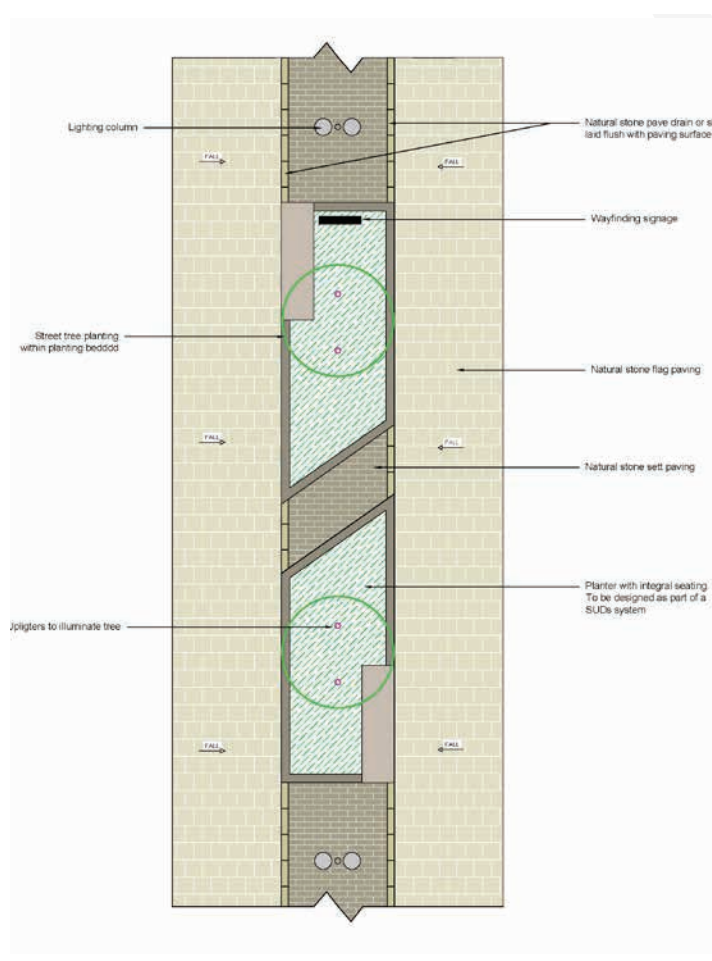
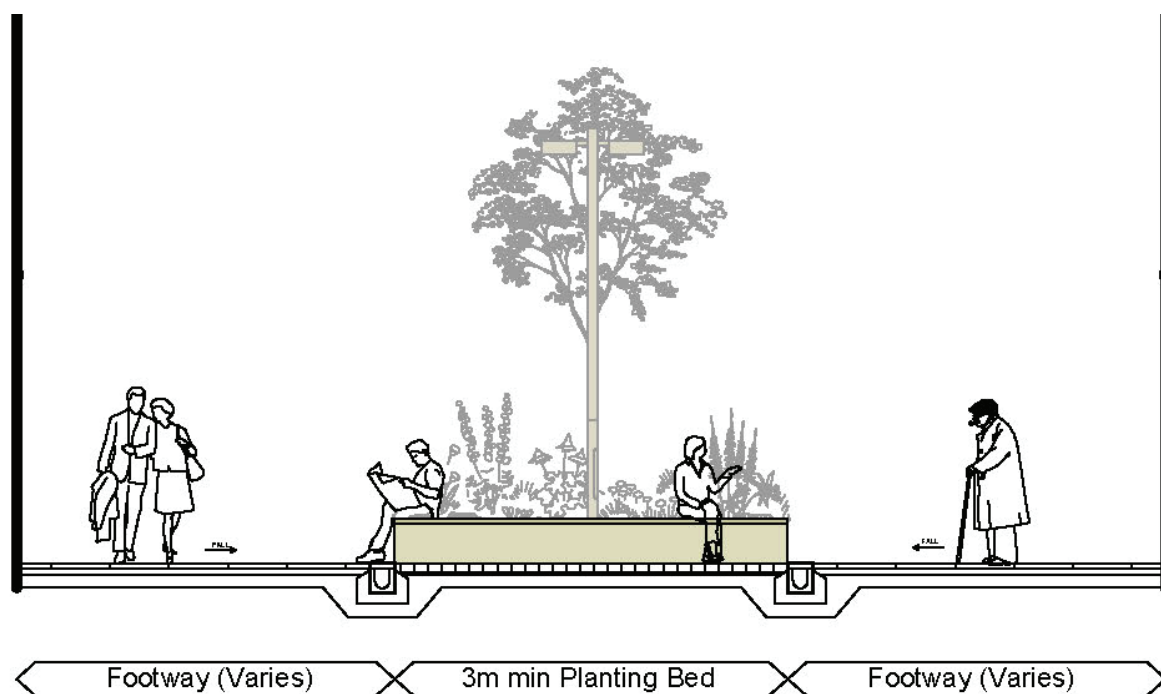
1a) Pedestrianised Street (High pedestrian use and no vehicles except access and servicing)	
Description	Key Design Principles
Pedestrianised streets represent some of the most important streets within the town centre in terms of scale, architecture, history and function. As a result of this they are required to support high pedestrian usage. Due to their importance as pedestrian streets and position within the movement framework, they are not required to accommodate vehicles, except for access and servicing, allowing for the use of higher quality materials throughout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of the highest quality natural stone materials and street furniture</li><li>• Use of flush natural stone kerbs to indicate carriageway route</li><li>• Potential to accommodate bespoke detailing and local variations in material detailing to add a richness and distinctiveness to individual streets.</li><li>• Street design to include street tree planting and new lighting</li><li>• The design of paving to withstand vehicle overrun</li><li>• Target speed of 5-10mph for any vehicles entering for emergency access and servicing only</li><li>• Minimal 3.7m carriageway widths required for emergency access</li></ul>
1b) Semi-Pedestrianised Street (High pedestrian use with bus and vehicle access)	
Description	Key Design Principles
Semi-Pedestrianised Streets also represent some of the most important streets within the town centre occurring along the main east-west spine as a result are required to support medium to high pedestrian usage. However, due to their position within the movement framework they are also required to accommodate low to medium vehicle flows and bus use, which requires the use of a kerb upstand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of the highest quality natural stone materials and street furniture</li><li>• Use of a low 25mm upstand natural stone or conservation kerbs to delineate carriageway route</li><li>• Target speed of 5-10mph for any vehicles</li><li>• Potential to accommodate bespoke detailing and local variations in material detailing to add a richness and distinctiveness to individual streets.</li><li>• Street design to include street tree planting and new lighting</li><li>• The design of paving to withstand vehicle overrun and projected traffic movements</li><li>• Servicing layby design to include similar material as footpath</li><li>• Carriageway to be surfaced in buff anti-skid surfacing to harmonise with pedestrian areas</li><li>• Minimal carriageway widths required for access requirements to maintain low speeds. (All sections are one-way)</li></ul>



### 3. Design Parameters

**Figure 3.9 – Pedestrianised Street Type 1a**

*High pedestrian use with restricted vehicle access*



**Figure 3.10 – Pedestrianised Street Type 1A**

**Example of a fully pedestrianised street**

Figure 3.7 – Pedestrianised Street Type 1A  
Allowing service Access

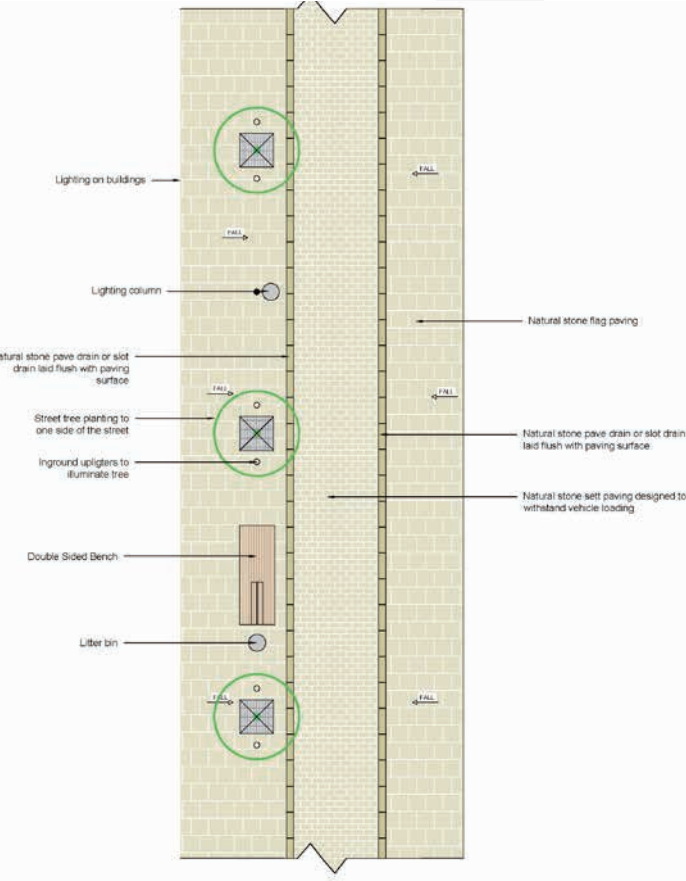
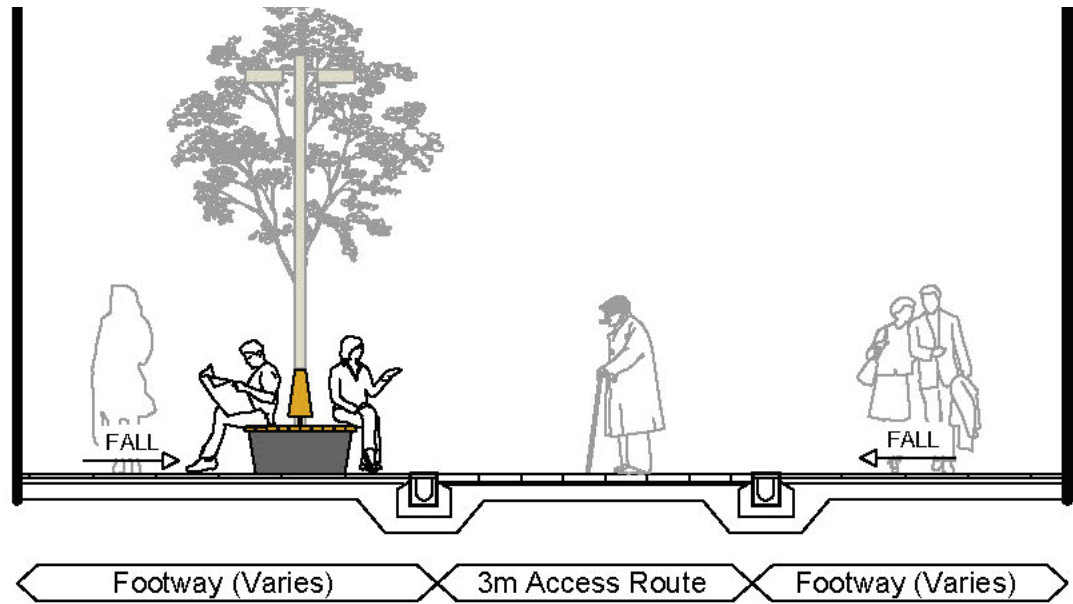


Figure 3.8 – Pedestrianised Street Type 1A

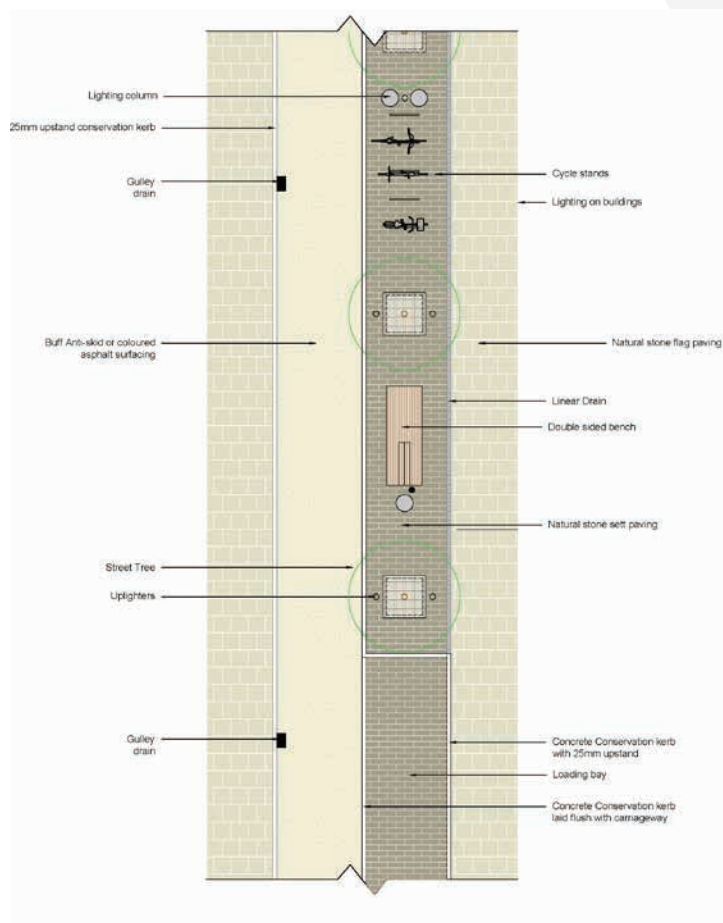
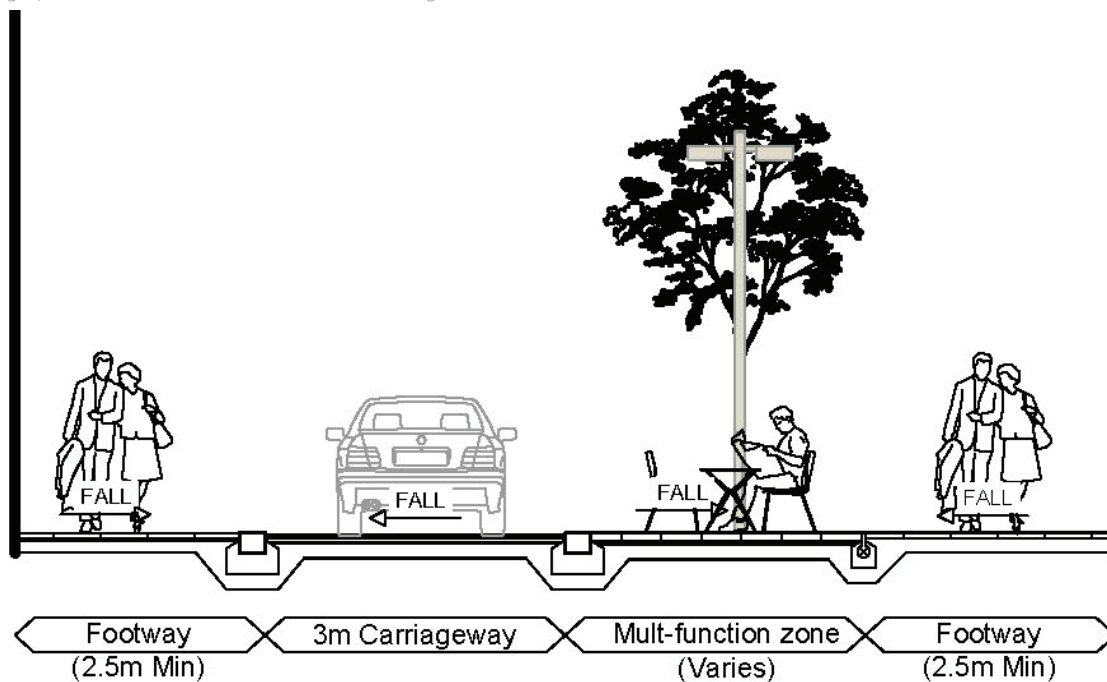


Example of Pedestrianised Street  
allowing service access



**Figure 3.11 – Semi-pedestrianised Street Type 1b**

*High pedestrian use with bus, tax and blue badge vehicle access*



**Figure 3.12 – Semi-pedestrianised Street**

**Example of a semi-pedestrianised street**

STREET TYPE 2 – SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN STREETS

Role

Secondary Pedestrian Streets lead out from the town centre and play an important role in providing both strategic pedestrian and vehicle access routes. The design of these streets will be required to reconcile all uses within a safe, pedestrian focussed way.

A number of these streets have been identified as strategic pedestrian routes that should be enhanced to improve links with surrounding town centre and residential areas.

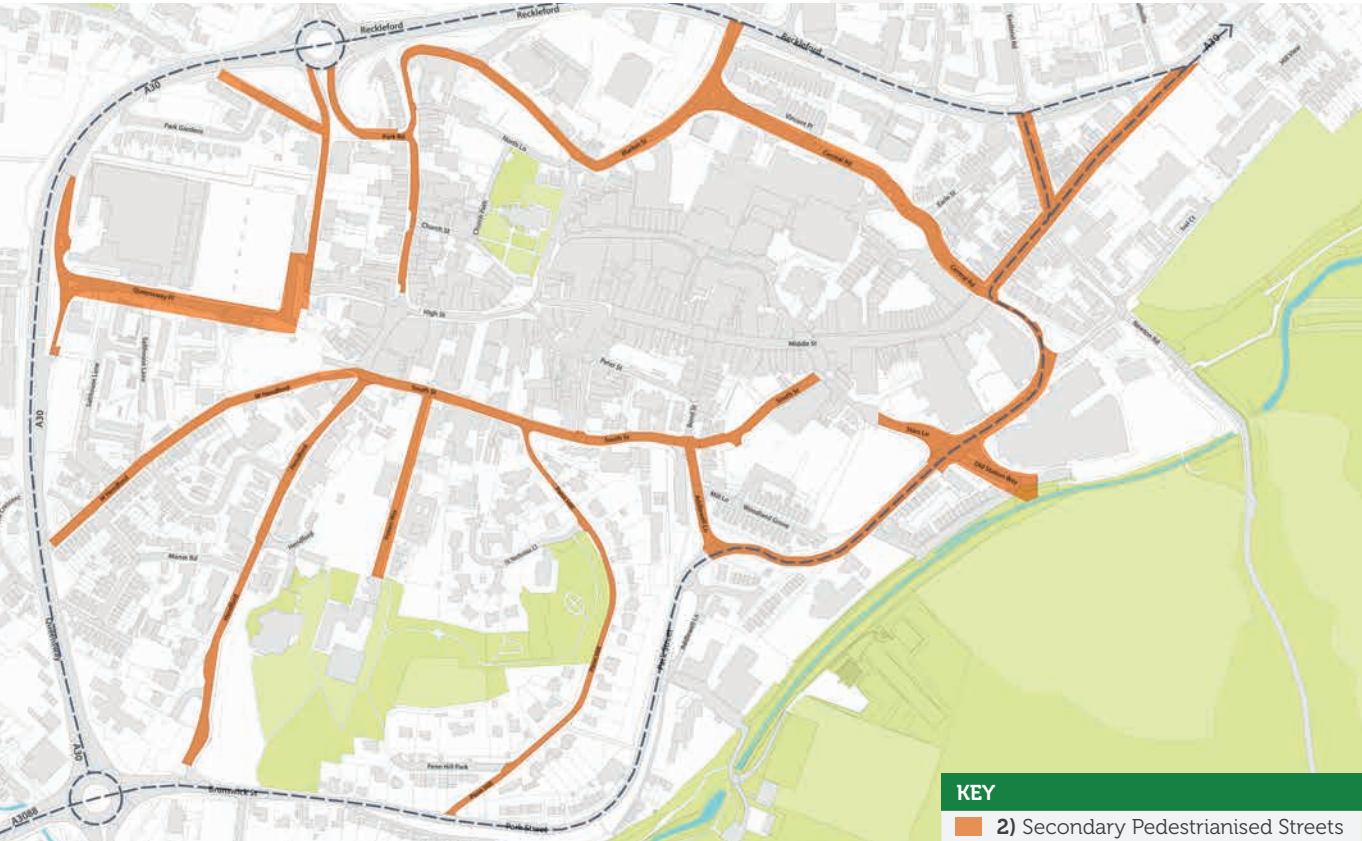
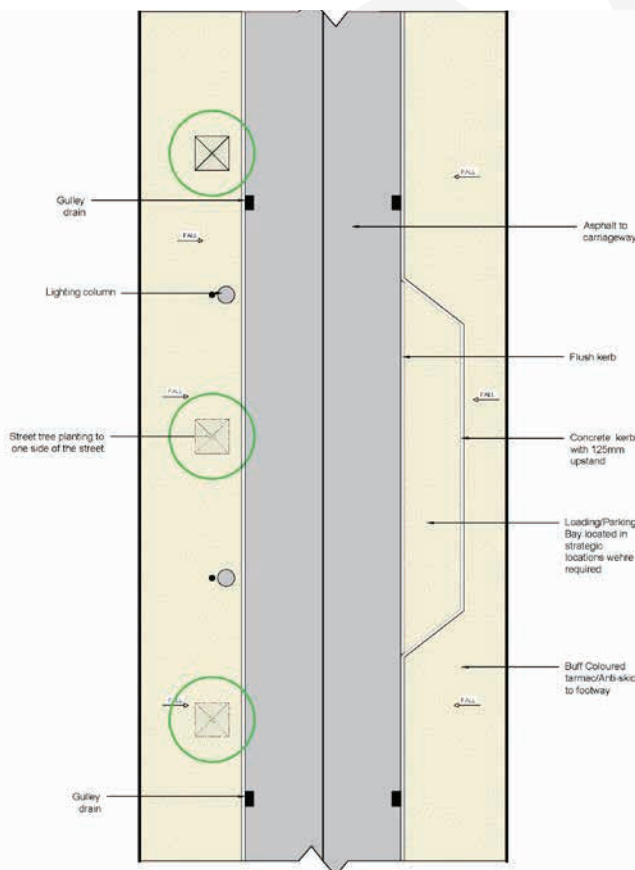
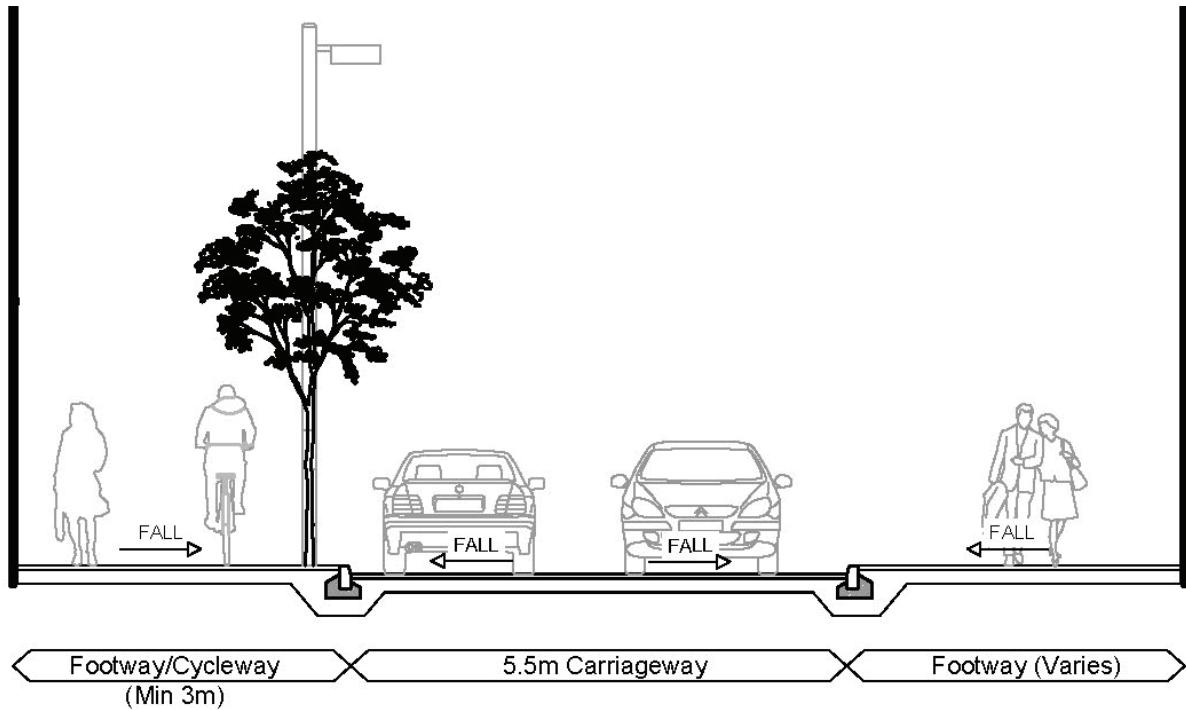


Figure 3.13 – Locations of Secondary Pedestrian Streets

Secondary Pedestrian Street	
Description	Key Design Principles
<p>Secondary and enhanced strategic pedestrian streets play an important role in connecting the town centre with wider residential areas and destinations. These streets also provide strategic vehicle access within and the town centre, currently comprising the majority of the streets connecting into the Queensway/Reckleford ring road.</p> <p>The aspiration for these streets is to enhance the pedestrian focus through opportunities with street planting, wayfinding and review of carriageway narrowing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of functional concrete materials to pavements to reflect the lesser importance of the street for pedestrians.</li><li>• Use of 125mm upstand kerbs to delineate carriageway route.</li><li>• Target speed of 20mph for any vehicles.</li><li>• Street design to include street tree planting where possible and new lighting.</li><li>• Carriageway to be surfaced in tarmac to adoptable standards.</li><li>• The width of pavements should be maximised, wherever possible through the narrowing of carriageways.</li><li>• Wherever possible, two-way streets should function without central white lines in order to encourage a more cautious response from drivers and reduce traffic speeds.</li><li>• Wayfinding signage or gateway signage to be included at key pedestrian gateways.</li></ul>



**Figure 3.14 – Secondary Pedestrian Street**  
Strategic Access Streets



**Figure 3.15 – Secondary Pedestrian Street**  
Strategic Access Streets

**Example of a secondary pedestrianised street**

STREET TYPE 3 – HISTORIC / MINOR PEDESTRIAN STREETS

Role

Historic / Minor Pedestrian Streets are much smaller in scale than the Principal and Secondary Pedestrian Streets and commonly comprise tightly grained historic streets surrounding the town centre core. These streets have a low – medium pedestrian flows linking to surrounding car parks and wider town centre destinations. They commonly perform a one-way vehicle access with on-street parking. It is considered that pedestrian movements could be enhanced within these streets through restriction of vehicle access and reduction of parking.

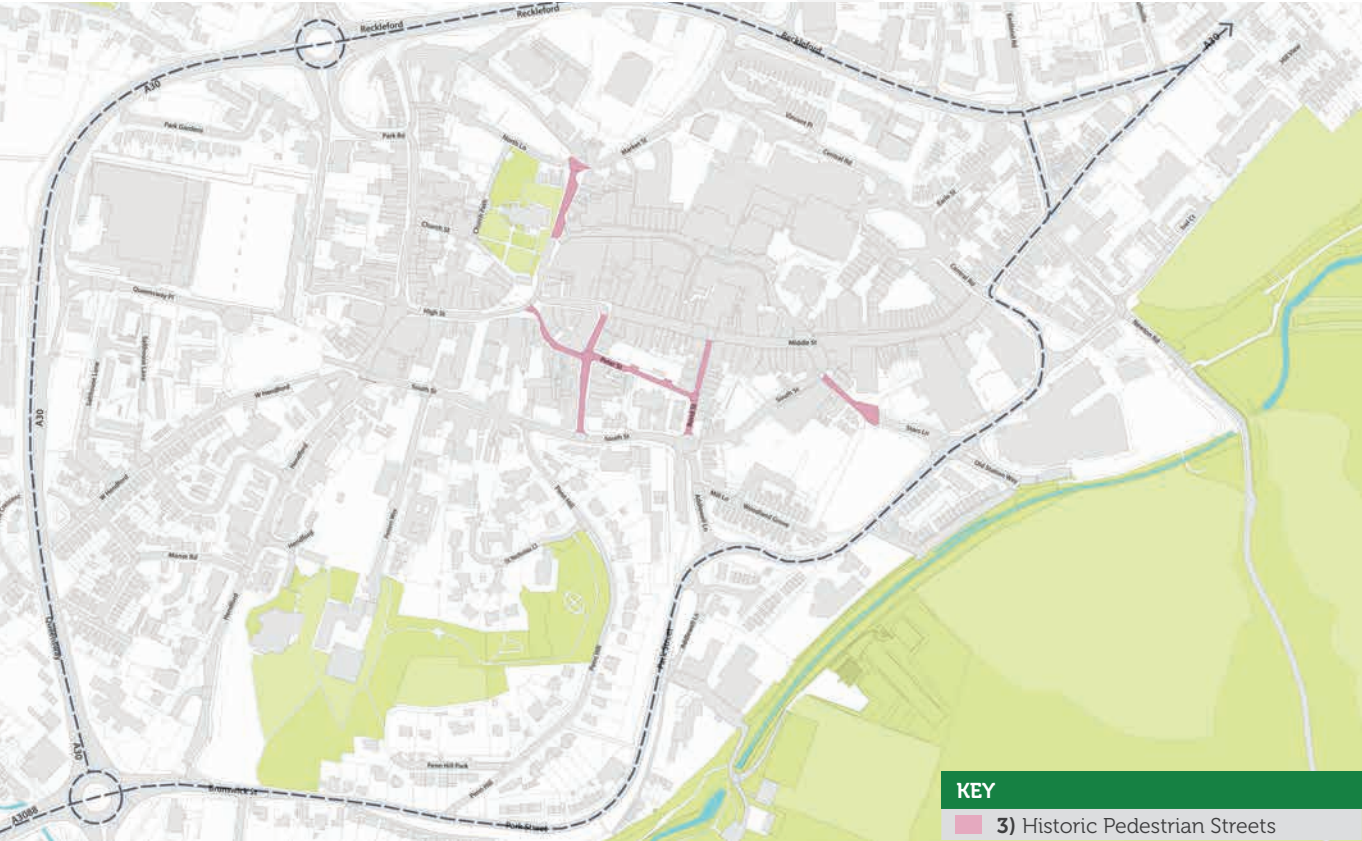


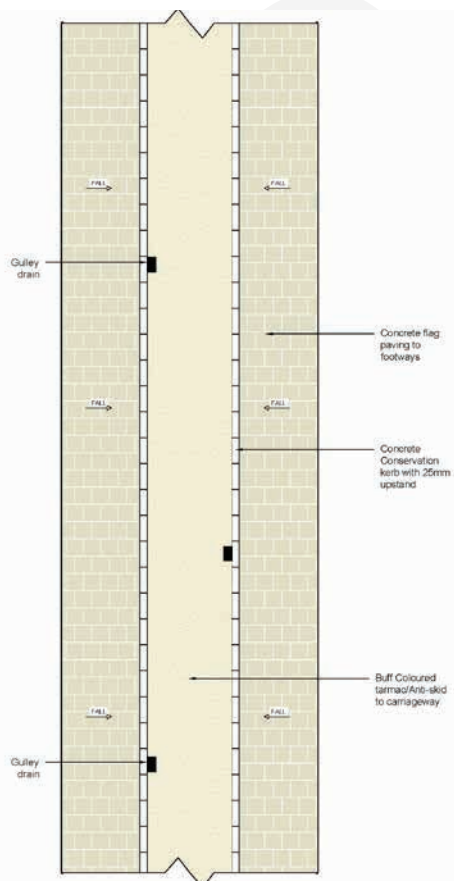
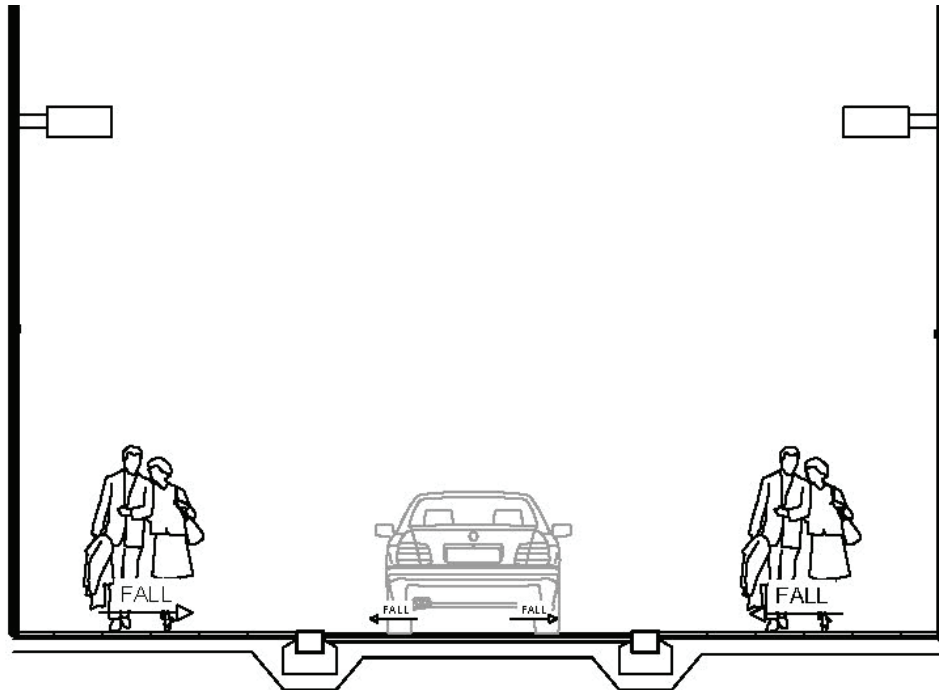
Figure 3.16 – Locations of Historic Pedestrian Streets

Secondary Pedestrian Street	
Description	Key Design Principles
<p>Historic/ Minor Pedestrian Streets form a narrow network of streets within the town centre core. They provide one-way vehicle access and informal pedestrian routes.</p> <p>The aspiration for these streets is to enhance the pedestrian focus through opportunities of carriageway narrowing, restriction of vehicle access and on-street parking provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of sympathetic materials palette</li><li>• Use of a low 25mm upstand or flush kerbs to delineate carriageway route</li><li>• Target speed of 5-10mph for any vehicles</li><li>• Carriageway to be surfaced in buff anti-skid surfacing or coloured asphalt to harmonise with pedestrian areas</li><li>• Minimal carriageway widths required for access requirements to maintain low speeds and maximise footways (All sections are one-way)</li><li>• Building mounted lighting to be used where possible due to narrow street widths.</li></ul>



**Figure 3.17 – Historic Streets**

*Minor pedestrian use, typically with one-way vehicle access*



**Figure 3.18 – Historic Streets**

*Minor pedestrian use, typically with one-way vehicle access*

**Examples of historic streets, with one-way vehicle access.**

## 3.5 Cycle Links

At present cycle connectivity within Yeovil town centre is poor. Although, a well-used off-road cycle route is present running east- west through Ninesprings/Yeovil County Park to Yeovil Pen Mill station, there are no dedicated connections from this route to the town centre.

Cycle connectivity is being considered as part of the Access Strategy. However, it is considered important that enhanced cycle routes are provided along Hendford and Stars Lane, improving access into the town centre from the Ninesprings/Yeovil County park cycle route.

Cycle access should be designed into the public realm and streets wherever possible to encourage cycle use and particular focus should be made to provide cycle connectivity along the arterial streets running out from the town centre, which

link to the wider residential areas beyond the Queensway and Reckleford ring road.

This may require enhancement to existing underpasses, over bridges or the creation of 'At-Grade' crossings proposed as part of the Access Strategy.

Dedicated cycle routes should comprise suitable bound materials such as Asphalt, coloured tarmac or resin bonded surfacing. The use of self-binding gravel within green spaces could be considered where a more sympathetic material choice is required.

Good quality cycle storage and parking will be provided within the town centre to enable users to securely lock their cycles

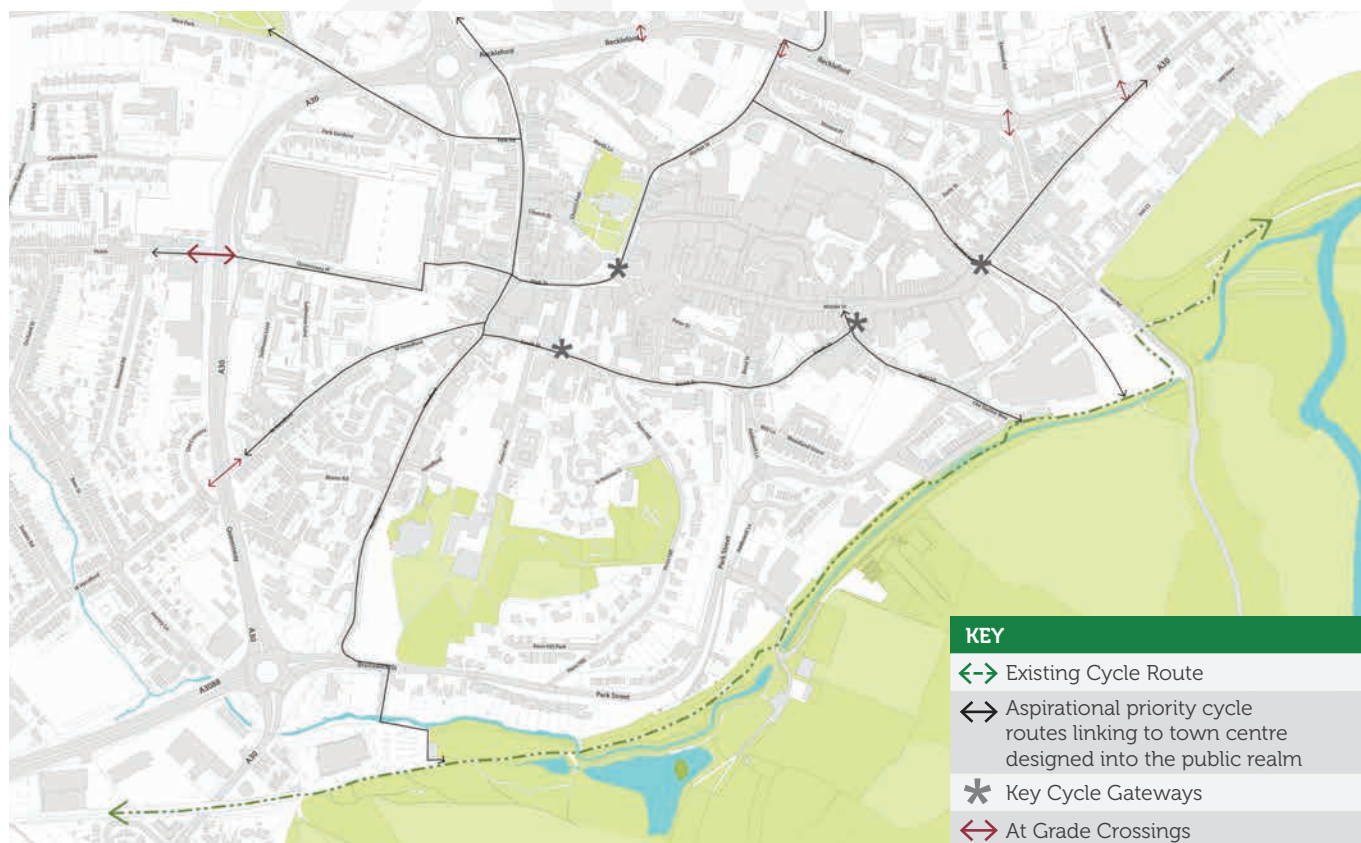


Figure 3.19 – Cycle Links Plan





Examples of Cycleways