

Leicester Waterside

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)



Consultation Draft
January 2015



Leicester Waterside aerial photograph

Foreword

LEICESTER'S Waterside has the potential to be one of the most exciting large-scale regeneration opportunities in the East Midlands.

Over the decades the Waterside area has suffered badly through the closure of key industries. This has left many sites that derelict, unused and ugly.

Taken together, this creates a very negative impression of this important gateway into the city.

It's time we kick-started a renewed vision for the future of Waterside as a thriving neighbourhood with great places to live and space for businesses to flourish.

This draft document sets out a new, ambitious vision for change and investment which – over ten to 15 years – will transform Waterside into a thriving place to live and work, and help reconnect Leicester to its riverside.

By setting out a clear framework for that vision, we can focus on the opportunities we want while encouraging more private sector investment into the area.

I am confident that the regeneration of Waterside could be the biggest transformation Leicester has seen since we breathed new life into Bede Island through City Challenge in the 1990s.

This draft document is our first opportunity to share our vision with the public and to invite your views on the principles that will guide the future economic and physical regeneration of Waterside.

City Mayor
Peter Soulsby

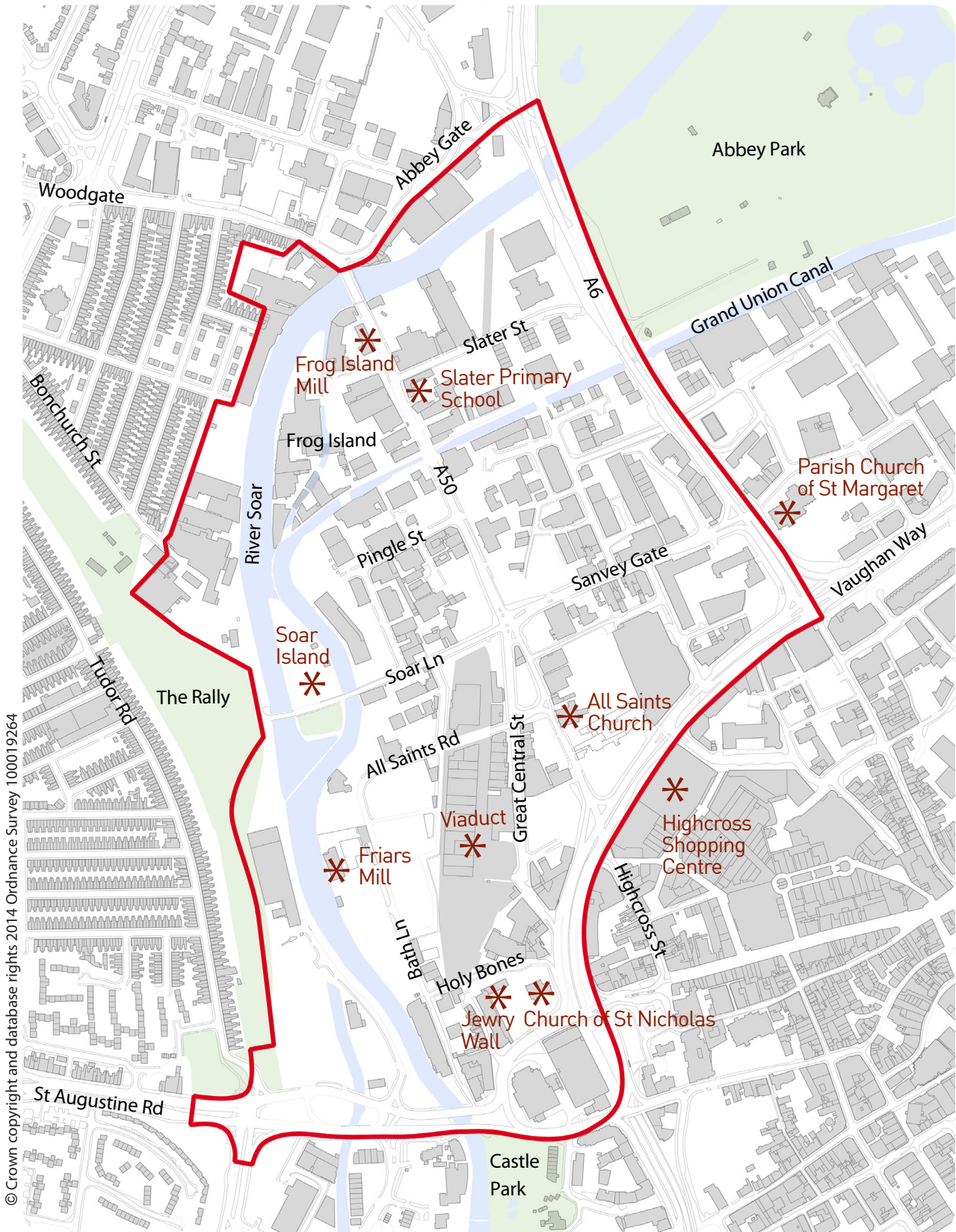
Contents

■ 1	Introduction	5
	1.1 Evidence base and consultation	7
■ 2	Vision	8
	2.1 Vision	8
	2.2 Opportunities	11
■ 3	Waterside Today – The Assets and the Constraints	15
	3.1 Regeneration Context	14
	3.2 Character of the Waterside Area	16
	3.3 Transport	19
	3.4 Green Infrastructure Assets	20
	3.5 Heritage and Townscape Assets	22
	3.6 Flooding	26
	3.7 Energy Use, Carbon Emissions and Climate Change	26
	3.8 Utilities	27
	3.9 Summary of Assets and Constraints	27
■ 4	Economic Context	28
	4.1 Economic Objectives	28
	4.2 High Quality Housing	28
	4.3 Business Space	29
	4.4 Supporting Uses	30
	4.5 Economic Summary	31
■ 5	Spatial Strategy	32
	5.1 Spatial Framework	32
	5.2 Character Areas	34
	5.3 Land Use	36
	5.4 Building Heights, Housing Types and Views	40

5.5	Heritage and Regeneration	43
5.6	Green Infrastructure	43
5.7	Transport	46
5.8	A vision for Waterside - How it could look	52
6	Delivery	54
6.1	Infrastructure Plan	54
6.2	Phasing	55
6.3	Planning Requirements	55
6.4	Landownership and Assembly	56
6.5	Funding Strategy	57
	Appendix A: Mapping of Constraints and Challenges	58
	Appendix B: Planning Policy Framework	60

Figure 1.1 Location plan

— SPD boundary



1 INTRODUCTION

Leicester Waterside comprises around 60 hectares of land between the River Soar and Leicester City Centre along the corridor of the A50. It is a gateway to Leicester City Centre and has significant potential for economic and physical transformation to create a high quality residential-led mixed use neighbourhood which connects the city centre to the waterfront.

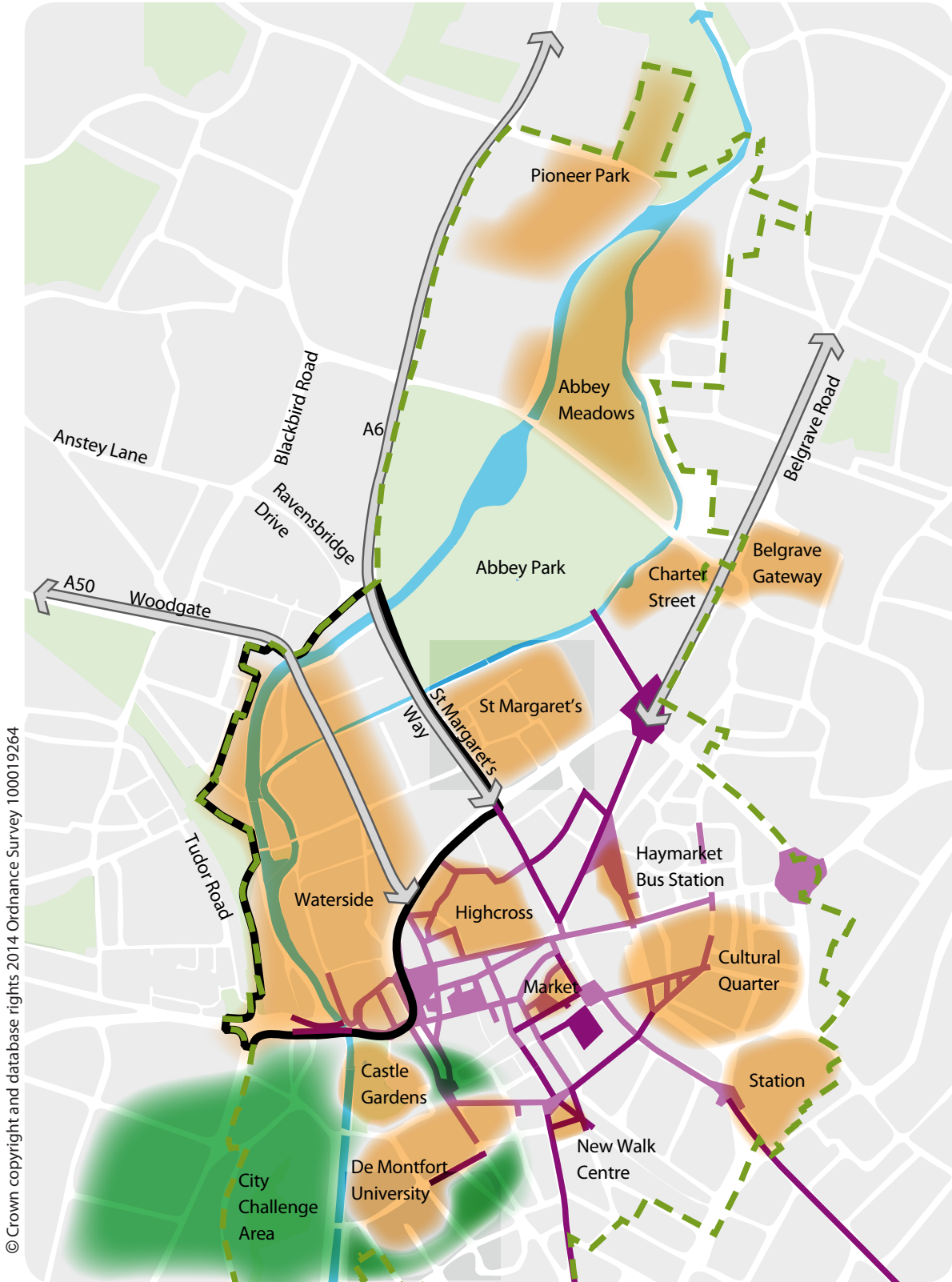
The area forms an important part of the City's wider Strategic Regeneration Area, which Leicester's Core Strategy identifies as a priority for investment and regeneration and which will deliver approximately 11,850 new homes by 2026. Regeneration of the Waterside is being led by the Leicester City Council (LCC) in partnership with Central Government and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP).

To drive forward the regeneration of Leicester Waterside, the City Council has prepared this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the area, which sets out a spatial plan and vision for change and investment over the next 10-15 years. This document will guide the quality, mix and character of development and will enable the delivery of sites and infrastructure in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner.

This Draft SPD document is subject to formal public consultation and will subsequently be adopted by Leicester City Council as part of Leicester's Local Development Framework.

Figures 1.2 Strategic regeneration context

- Development areas
 - Former City challenge area
- Planned main road improvements
 - Connecting Leicester works completed or committed
- Connecting Leicester proposed works
 - Strategic Regeneration Area
- SPD boundary



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1.1 EVIDENCE BASE AND CONSULTATION

The Draft Supplementary Planning Document strategy is underpinned by existing planning policy (which is set out in Appendix B) and the Council's planning evidence base includes the following reports of specific relevance to the Waterside area:

- Waterside Housing Market Report (GL Hearn, July 2014)
- Leicester Waterside Market Commentary (GL Hearn, September 2014)
- Strategic Economic Plan (Leicester, Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, March 2014)
- Economic Action Plan (Leicester City Council, 2012)
- Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn, June 2014)

Consultation on the Draft SPD will include the following stakeholder and community groups:

- Local residents
- Environment Agency
- Neighbourhood representatives including the Woodgate Residents' Association and the Fosse Ward Community meeting
- Local businesses and other organisations
- Landowners and site developers
- Homes and Communities Agency
- LLEP

2 VISION

2.1 VISION

Leicester Waterside

A thriving urban neighbourhood offering a unique and vibrant place to live and space for local businesses to flourish.

A place that reconnects Leicester to its waterfront, bringing opportunities for leisure, green connections and wildlife.

A place where people feel safe and comfortable to walk and cycle through, and to the city centre.

A place where the streets and homes are built to high standards of design and sustainability.

A confident place which values its history while embracing the future.

In meeting the vision, the regeneration of the Waterside seeks to deliver:



A new neighbourhood

A place with a strong identity, that is distinctively Leicester in terms of its scale of development, use of materials, streetscape, thriving diversity and fine grain mix of independent shops and businesses;



High quality homes

Great places to live along the riverside, urban neighbourhoods which offer an attractive mix of sustainable houses and apartments for people who want all the benefits of city centre living combined with a unique, high quality setting;



Support for local businesses

A strong business core and attractive commercial gateways to the city along the A50 and A6, benefitting from improved local access and public transport;



Improved access and connectivity

Improvements to the highway network to enable better access to development areas and create attractive street frontages, increase pedestrian, cycling and public transport accessibility and reconnect the Waterside to the city centre.



An active waterfront

A place which embraces the great assets of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal as places for leisure and sustainable movement by providing new riverside access and green spaces and new leisure and community facilities;



Places for nature

A place that seeks to protect and conserve those habitats most valuable to wildlife and to provide newly created habitats in less disturbed areas to enable wildlife and communities to live in close proximity.



A positive response to Leicester's heritage

A place of heritage led regeneration with the positive reuse of architectural and archaeological gems, creation of views and vistas to local landmarks and re-instatement of the historic, connected street pattern.

2.2 OPPORTUNITIES

“The Strategic Regeneration Area will be the focus of major housing development and physical change to provide the impetus for economic, environmental and social investment and provide benefits for existing communities.” Leicester Core Strategy, Policy CS04, July 2014

The Waterside is a place of great assets and opportunities. The advantages of being close to the city centre and the waterfront create an opportunity to deliver a distinctive new urban quarter, which meets the identified need for high quality homes, in an attractive and vibrant location. Residents will benefit from the setting of the waterfront and proximity to major green spaces such as Rally Park and Abbey Park, while enjoying city centre amenities such as cinemas, markets, and shops and job opportunities on their doorstep.

Residential development will be focussed to the east and west of the River Soar and to the west of the A50. This area is large enough to create a unique new neighbourhood and community, featuring a range of housing types and sizes. The intention is to create a step-change in the quality of housing on offer in the inner city and a fantastic place to live at the heart of Leicester.

Unlike greenfield sites at the edge of the city, Leicester Waterside has an established urban identity with many characterful historic structures, ranging from simple but fine examples of industrial warehouses to important listed buildings. These hidden gems are great assets which provide a link to the city's past and give a distinctive character and identity to the area. New development will need to be fully embedded within this context, respecting key views, maintaining traditional development patterns and scale and creatively re-using existing high quality structures and buildings to create a cohesive townscape rather than standalone developments.

Existing commercial areas to the west of the A50 including Frog Island and Great Central Street have the capacity to mature into vibrant new mixed use urban quarters. These areas benefit from the attractive canal and river setting and historic commercial buildings which lend themselves to high quality conversions, infill development, live-work opportunities and flexible work spaces.

The Waterside is home to several important and historic approach routes to the city: Northgate Street, (A50), St Margaret's Way (A6) and St Augustine's Road (A47). Today these are busy arterial traffic routes which benefit from good vehicular accessibility but are poor quality pedestrian and cycling environments.

There is an opportunity to modify the A50 so that it becomes a more attractive street while still fulfilling its role as a strategic part of the highway network. In particular, this brings the opportunity for the road to be transformed with

on-street parking, wider pavements, cycle ways and street trees. The revitalised street will form an attractive setting for a new local centre with retailers, community facilities and serving new and existing residential and business communities.

The redevelopment of the Waterside presents an opportunity to re-connect the street network and overcome existing barriers to movement by reconfiguring junctions to access developable land, upgrading the public realm, managing traffic in new ways and introducing new routes.

The key opportunity here is to revive the historic approaches of Highcross Street, Northgates and Soar Lane and reconnect the city centre with the River Soar, through new waterfront routes and bridges. Creating an improved access network by filling missing links and public realm upgrades will allow people to travel through the area easily, particularly on foot or by bike and will support Leicester's aim of encouraging sustainable transport choices.

The River Soar and Grand Union Canal give the area its name. Previously an important transport network for industry, the open waters are now a quiet area used for water-based leisure by canoeists, University of Leicester Rowing Club and increasingly by narrow boats cruising through Leicester's urban waterways. The canal towpath provides a commuter and leisure route to and from the City centre but opportunities exist to improve networks and links to places of work, schools and green space within a traffic-free environment.

The slow-flowing waters of the canal and river networks provide a valuable environmental asset for a wide range of flora and fauna with swans, geese and waterfowl intermingling with dragonflies amongst the reeds and rushes that



River Soar

fringe the watercourses. This is an environment to conserve and enhance, having risen from our industrial heritage. Opportunities to create safe havens for wildlife will be expected, whilst facilitating development in appropriate areas to encourage the best of an urban ecosystem including native species, such as otters.

Soar Island, on Soar Lane, being the crossing point from Newfoundpool to the proposed Waterside neighbourhood, stands out as a key location with potential to become an environmental and mixed use hub serving new and existing residents, attracting visitors to the area and enhancing wildlife habitats.

Areas adjacent to the river have traditionally been considered vulnerable to flood risk. The Environment Agency in partnership with the Council will identify a programme of flood mitigation. In addition to this, innovative and creative Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be expected to be used to minimise flood risk, improve water quality and where possible enhance biodiversity to create a strategic blue/green (SuDS/water/ecological) network.

The canal and river are potential sources of embodied energy, either as a heat source to be used in conjunction with heat source pump technology, or harnessing the kinetic energy of the flow through micro-hydro turbine technology to generate electricity.

In summary, the Waterside is a place of many assets and opportunities which can be brought to bear to support the wider regeneration of Leicester city centre and adjacent neighbourhoods, creating a great place to live and work, attracting a wide range of people and re-activating a 'lost' part of the city's heart.



North Lock, Grand Union Canal

3 WATERSIDE TODAY

THE ASSETS AND THE CONSTRAINTS

3.1 REGENERATION CONTEXT

The Waterside is at the historic heart of Leicester. It was the centre of the Roman settlement, the location of two medieval city gates and the city's original High Street which brought travellers from the north into the heart of the town. In the 19th and 20th centuries it underwent significant change, as the River Soar was joined by the Grand Union Canal, the Leicester to Swannington Railway and later the Great Central Railway and the area became a hub of trade and industry. This historic legacy is evident in the area's stock of Victorian warehouses, the remnants of the railway viaduct, the Roman and medieval street pattern and underlying archaeology.

The area remains a strategically important location; it is adjacent to the city centre's Highcross centre and is on three key routes into the city: the A50, A6 and A47. However, the historic direct routes to the city centre are now interrupted by the inner ring road which creates a barrier to easy pedestrian movement.

Perhaps as a result of its poor connectivity, the Waterside has failed to naturally establish a new role following the decline of industrial uses and is characterised by high levels of vacancy and dereliction. It presents a poor approach to the city centre, and a physical and economic barrier between the centre and the adjacent neighbourhoods of Newfoundpool.

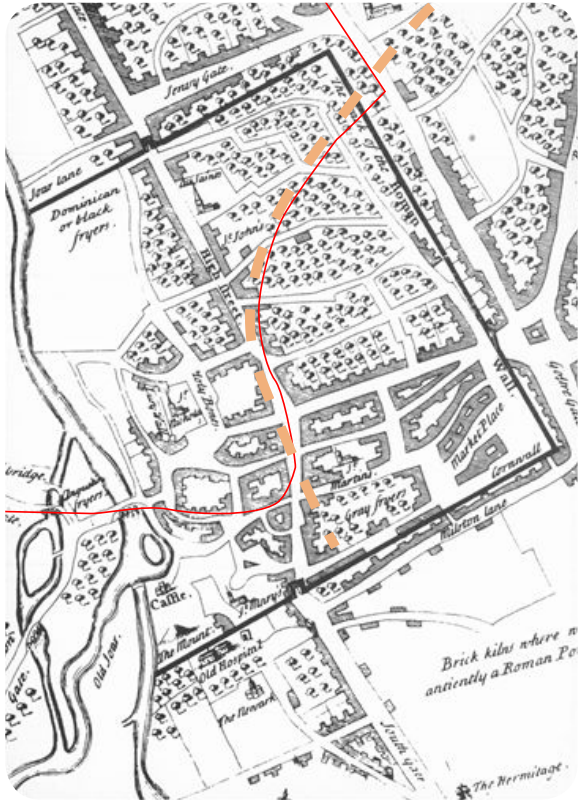
The scale of opportunity and city-wide benefits afforded by the long term transformation of the Waterside are reflected by the area's designation as part of Leicester's 'Strategic Regeneration Area' – the city's priority for infrastructure investment and a focus for the delivery of housing.

Regeneration is already underway; the City Council is currently investing £6.5 million to refurbish the listed Friar's Mill building on Bath Lane as a business hub for small and medium sized enterprises. Other committed public investment includes highway improvements and safer routes for cycling and walking. Early private sector development has delivered apartments on Bath Lane, with current permissions, applications and pre-application discussions reflecting continuing private sector interest. In addition the City Council has been allocated £21.5million of funding from central government via the Local Growth Fund.

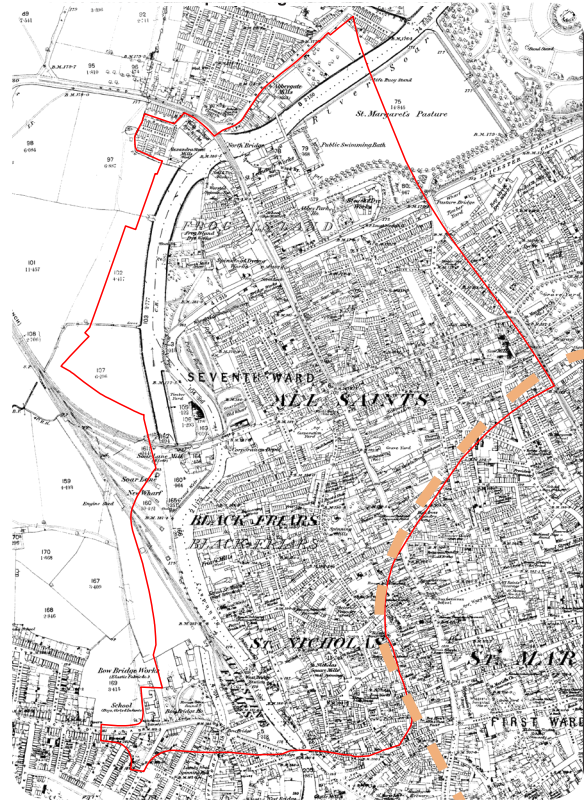
The long term aim of regeneration is to re-connect the Waterside back into the wider city, transforming it into a thriving residential and mixed use community which offers all the benefits of vibrant city life and supports the economic success of the wider city centre as a cultural and economic hub.

Figures 4.1-4.4 Historic maps

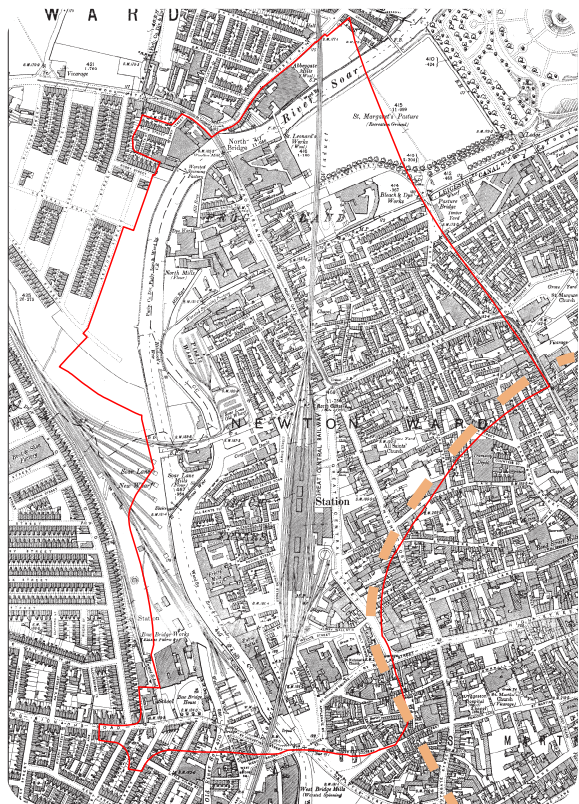
- Future line of Vaughan Way
- Vaughan Way



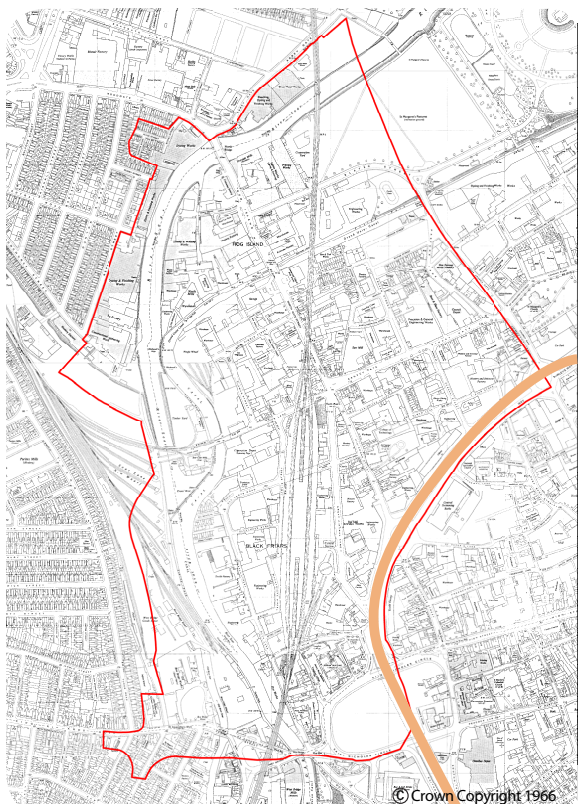
1722



1884-88



1904-8



1966

Strengthening connections along the river and canal network, improving sustainable transport routes and providing access to Leicester's major waterfront assets such as the National Space Centre, historic parks of Castle Gardens and Abbey Park and the award-winning educational establishment of De Montfort University will be central to how the Waterside develops.

3.2 CHARACTER OF THE WATERSIDE AREA

The evolution of the Waterside area over the past 2000 years has left behind a landscape with many positive features but considerable areas of dereliction requiring investment and renewal. The SPD spatial proposals have been developed with detailed consideration of the existing character to ensure that new development sits comfortably alongside the existing townscape and landscape assets of the area.



Soar Island and the Grand Union Canal

The Waterfront and Surrounds

The River Soar is characterised by a mix of hard embankments and naturalised soft green edges, with development generally set back. In contrast, the Grand Union Canal has a hard and industrialised urban landscape, but together they provide an important ecological corridor for wildlife. Both the canal and the

canalised river are well-used by pedestrians and cyclists with access via several attractive listed or locally listed bridges. The river also benefits from access along parts, however, this is not continuous. In addition, the River and Canal are well used by cruising boats including narrowboats, several rowing clubs and canoeists.

The majority of the canal and river frontage is occupied by industrial, vacant, or derelict sites. To the west of the river, these include large industrial sites in single ownerships: a working foundry at Repton Street, and light industrial and car parking off Richard III Road. Soar Island sits at the junction of the canal and river between Evan's Weir and Hitchcock's Weir in a highly prominent location. It is occupied by an unsightly cement batching plant and a small public park.

Rally Park forms an important local green space and connection between Soar Island and the terrace streets of Newfoundpool.

To the east of the river and along the canal, the areas of Frog Island, Soar Lane and Bath Lane have a mix of vacant and derelict sites, low quality light industrial buildings of 1-2 storeys and historic warehouses and mills which contribute positively to the character of the area. The area has a fragmented ownership

structure and poor access as a result of the barriers formed by the viaduct of the Great Central Railway and the watercourses. Soar Lane is an important east-west pedestrian and cycling link between the A50 and Rally Park/Repton Street.

Bath Lane is the location of the listed Friar's Mill which is being restored and converted to business uses. Adjacent sites have been cleared in readiness for residential development.



Viaduct arches on Jarvis Street

Railway Viaduct

The viaduct is the legacy of the Great Central Railway (1899-1969) and housed tracks, station platforms and shunting space, with a street level station building on Great Central Street. The top of the viaduct is occupied by late 20th century light industrial sheds and a privately operated car park. The arches, station building and surrounding sites are

occupied by car mechanics and wrecking yards and are in a poor state of repair.

The viaduct is a massive structure, crossed only by All Saints Road (the crossing itself is dark and uninviting). It limits access between the town centre and Bath Lane and acts as a visual barrier into the Waterside area. Due to its elevated position, good views towards the river can be had from the upper levels. A second, narrow stretch of viaduct is located to the north at Slater Street.



Local landmark at the junction of Highcross and Great Central Street

A50 corridor: Frog Island – Northgate Street – Highcross Street

The A50 is an important historic approach to the city leading directly to the historic market place and cathedral. The Waterside is disconnected from the city centre by the central ring road, the impact of which is particularly apparent in the ailing commercial properties

and redundant Grade I listed All Saints Church in the All Saints Conservation Area - the location of a once thriving High Street. To the north, the A50 is characterised by a fragmented streetscape of low rise 20th century commercial, light industrial buildings and vacant sites, but includes a number of high value historic buildings and a cluster of community facilities including the listed Slater Street primary school and All Nations Centre. High volumes of traffic dominate and create a poor environment for pedestrians. Buildings are predominantly two storeys in height with occasional buildings of four to five storeys.



Vaughan Way

A6 corridor, St Margaret's Way and Vaughan Way

The A6 is a key vehicular approach route into the city. The dual carriageway is greened by street trees but is traffic dominated, with fragmented safe pedestrian or cycle provision and limited crossing points (underpasses). Larger light industrial and office buildings front the road and the overall character is of a healthy

edge of city business location. Smaller light industrial estates of varying quality sit to the west. St Margaret's Church is a focal point, terminating the key view along Sanvey Gate. The predominant building height is between two and four storeys, rising to six storeys plus towards the city centre.

The streetscape of Vaughan Way is dominated by the mirrored frontage of the Highcross shopping centre, eight storey car park and linking footbridge. The adjacent properties are of mixed quality and there are a number of vacant sites. The highway dominates and there is limited ground floor activity.



St Nicholas Circle

Southern Gateway

The southern gateway to the Waterside, around St Nicholas Circle, comprises a rich mix of uses, historic buildings and archaeological remains. These include St Nicholas Church, the Jewry Wall Museum, Jewry Wall and Roman baths and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara temple and museum, as well as a short run of fine terrace housing and cobbled streets. However, the area

also includes the unsympathetically designed multi-storey car park and Holiday Inn hotel, located within a ring of fast moving traffic at St. Nicholas Circle. Current upgrades to the ring road will improve pedestrian and cycle access enhancing connections to the city centre.

The area is characterised by a drop in level from east to west. Building heights vary considerably from nine to eleven storeys for the hotel and a recent apartment block and two to three storey buildings in other locations.

3.3 TRANSPORT

The strategic roads of the A47 (St Augustine Road), A594 (Vaughan Way) and A6 (St Margaret's Way) provide a high level of vehicle connectivity to the rest of the city with daily traffic flows of between 35,000 and 60,000 vehicles. There is a significant opportunity to enhance pedestrian and cycling links to the city centre through the regeneration programme, proposals for which are provided in section 6.8. National Cycle Routes (NCR) 63 and 6, pass through the area providing strategic connections to the wider city and beyond. Much of the NCR routes are off road, as is the canal towpath, which provides connections to De Montfort University in the south and Abbey Park in the north. The link along the canal towpath is not the preferred route for NCN 6.

The proximity of the area to the city centre means that a diverse range of employment, retail and leisure opportunities are accessible on foot or by bike.

For the area south of the canal there is reasonable walking and cycling permeability except around Friar's Mill where the former railway viaduct is a substantial barrier to movement to and from the city centre. Frog Island and the Slater Street areas generally have low levels of accessibility due to a lack of crossings of the canal and River Soar.

The post-Victorian road layout creates poor vehicular access into the area; a number of streets are one way (around Friar's Mill and the Viaduct) making access into and out of the area confusing.

The A50 Northgate Street/High Cross Street is a Bus Corridor providing a bus every 2 minutes into the city centre. This corridor together with routes on the A6 and the A47 connect the area by public transport with the wider city.

3.4 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

The landscape of the Waterside is dominated by the River Soar and Grand Union Canal which converge at Soar Island. The river and canal provide habitats of high ecological value and are designated as Local Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Wildlife Corridors under Core Strategy Policy 17. They provide a linear green connection between the adjacent public parks and gardens of Abbey Park, Castle Park and Rally Park giving access to a range of play and recreation facilities. However, the network of footpaths is fragmented and access to the waterfront is limited (see Figure 4.5).

Rally Park, the railway viaduct and Soar Island are identified as Biodiversity Enhancement Sites under saved Local Plan policy GE03, reflecting their potential role within the wider green network.

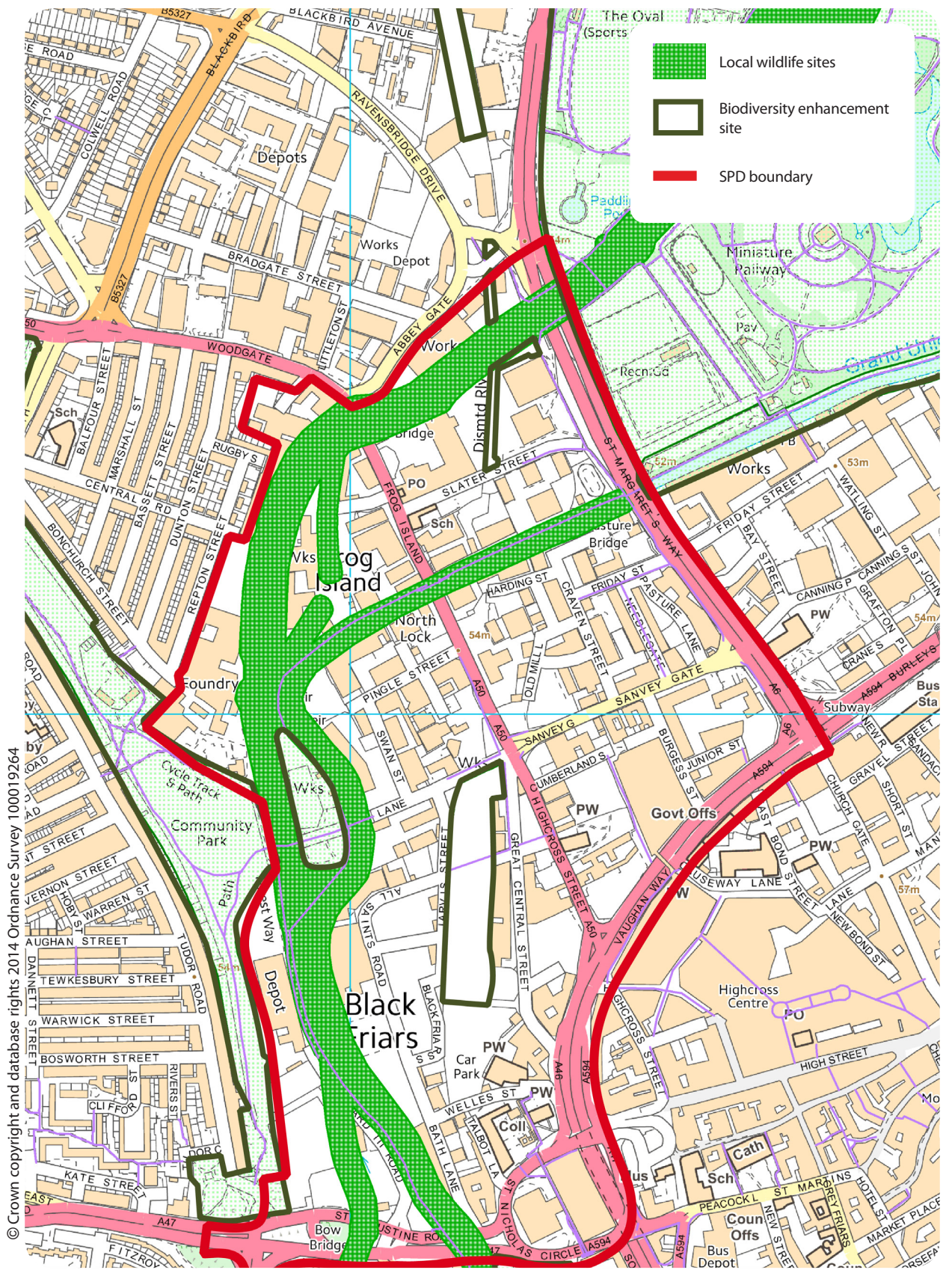
The Waterside has potential to support UK/European Protected Species and Biodiversity Action Plan species including bats, otter, nesting birds, reptiles and badgers. The greatest areas of potential occur on the banks of the River and Canal and adjacent sites.

On the downside, the invasive species Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam are present in the area, predominantly on sites along the waterfront and the viaduct.



Rally Park

Figure 4.5 Local Wildlife Sites and Biodiversity Enhancement Sites



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3.5 HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE ASSETS

Reflecting the area's long history and importance, the Waterside contains a significant number of nationally designated and locally listed heritage assets (see Figure 4.6). Both local and national policy puts the emphasis on the enhancement of heritage assets and the positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness that should be made through new development.

The area around All Saints Church is designated as the All Saints Conservation Area. In broad terms, there is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and the Waterside SPD area as a whole.



Slater Street School



Jewry Wall Museum and St Nicholas Church



All Saints Church



Donisthorpe (Friars) Mill

Nationally Designated Heritage Assets

Scheduled Monument:

- Jewry Wall

Grade I listed buildings and structures:

- Jewry Wall
- St Nicholas Church
- All Saints Church

Grade II listed buildings and structures:

- Frisby Jarvis Building
- Slater St School
- The Farben Works
- Soar Lane Canal Bridge
- 107-109 Highcross St
- Donisthorpe (Friars) Mill
- Donisthorpe Pumphouse
- Range of 3 buildings to front of Donisthorpe Mill
- Richard Roberts Factory
- Vaughan College
- Jester House, Talbot Lane
- 10 Talbot Lane
- West Bridge
- Bow Bridge

Historic Parks and Gardens

Abbey Park, a Grade II* listed Victorian municipal park abuts the area to the north east.

Locally Listed Buildings and Structures

There are also 13 locally listed heritage assets within the area. These are not protected through national legislation but nonetheless make an important contribution to the historic environment of Leicester and must be considered as part of the wider redevelopment of the area.

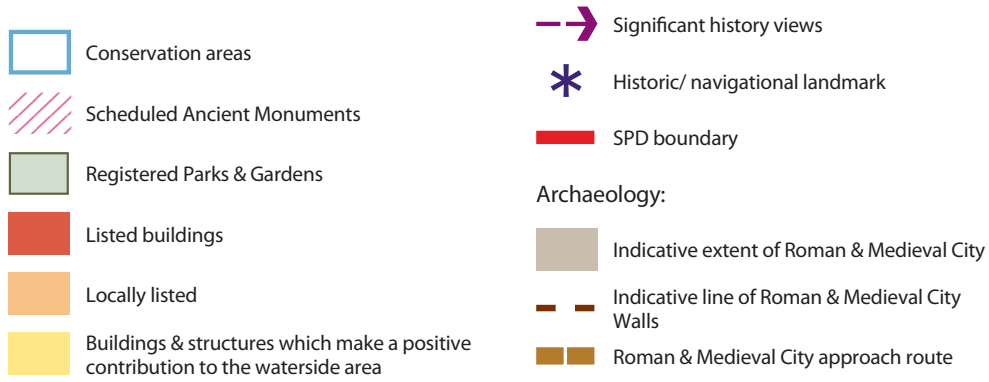
- Great Central Street former station Viaduct (North and South)
- Former Great Central Railway Station, 52-54 Great Central Street (including the former parcel building)
- 1920's Warehouse at Friars Causeway / Great Central Street junction
- Former Corporation Depot 'Gatehouse', Jarvis Street
- 2 Jarvis Street
- The Ship Inn
- North Bridge
- North Bridge Mill
- Evans Weir
- North Lock & Bridge, Grand Union Canal
- Old Mill Race Bridge, Grand Union Canal
- Soar Lane River Bridge & bases to former Swannington railway line bridge
- Great Central Railway viaduct, Slater Street

Additional buildings which make a positive contribution, but are not locally listed are identified on figure 4.6 reflecting their importance as part of the townscape of the Waterside area. Historic landmarks including church spires and tall red brick chimneys act as navigational aids and are points of interest in the city's skyline.

Archaeology

The area is underlain by significant Roman and medieval archaeological remains and is identified as an Archaeological Alert Area under Core Strategy policy 18. Figure 4.6 identifies the extent of the Roman and medieval city.

Figure 4.6 Heritage and townscape assets



3.6 FLOODING

Flood risk is a significant constraint on development, but regeneration activity which is well planned and coordinated with the work of risk management authorities offers the opportunity to reduce the risk of flooding and improve the resilience of both the Waterside area and areas nearby such as Woodgate. With regard to from the river flooding, much of the Waterside area is at significant risk. This is especially so on the west bank of the River Soar and the Frog Island area.

With regard to surface water flooding, much of the area is either at risk (within a critical drainage area and/or a hotspot as identified by the City's Surface Water Management Plan) or contributes to flooding nearby through a rapid rate of water runoff. With good design these concerns can be addressed. By addressing these issues through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) many other benefits can be secured such as pleasant green space, the efficient use of land with multi-use areas, improved biodiversity and water quality.

Evidence from DEFRA suggests that SuDS systems are generally no more expensive to build and maintain than conventional drainage systems.

3.7 ENERGY USE, CARBON EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A sustainable approach to design and construction will need to consider site micro-climatic processes and locally available energy sources. The Zero Carbon Homes Initiative, effective from 2016 will encourage greater use of on-site renewable energy and/or connection to a district energy network. Given Waterside's characteristics the canal and River system could provide potential for local energy production including heat-pump technology or small scale hydro-electricity generation.

Other local energy generation options include biomass or gas-fired combined heat and power, biomass heating and solar thermal and solar photo voltaic technologies. Many of these technologies have the advantage of attracting subsidy support via the Government's Feed-in-Tariff or Renewable Heat Incentive. For some solutions these can extend to 20-25 year terms.

The City Council undertook a study in 2011 to highlight energy delivery options available in Waterside and inform potential choices based on technical and financial feasibility. The City Council will continue to investigate renewable energy solutions and work collaboratively with developers to assist in the delivery of schemes.

3.8 UTILITIES

Services exist across the area. We are not aware of any strategic deficiencies in the utility networks which will impact on regeneration proposals, however localised reinforcement of networks is likely to be required.

Regarding utility constraints; a HV 132kV cable is located on the western edge of the Waterside area broadly running north to south through Rally Park along the back of the residential properties on Tudor Road.

Refer to Appendix A for further information.

3.9 SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS

In summary, the regeneration of the Waterside aims to build on the area's key assets and address the challenges arising from its constraints.

Assets:

- Proximity and gateway to the city centre
- Waterfront setting
- Heritage assets and characterful townscape
- Green space network and proximity to public parks and gardens
- Access to local amenities including sports, education and community facilities
- National cycle route network and bus corridor
- Committed public realm and access improvements

Constraints:

- Poor quality townscape gateway to the city
- Poor pedestrian access to the waterfront and city centre
- Significant number of vacant sites and buildings in poor condition
- Bad neighbour industrial uses
- Traffic dominated highways, but poor local access
- Remnant infrastructure
- Complex Multiple ownerships
- Flood risk

Please refer to Appendix A, figure A.1 for further details of the physical constraints and challenges of the area.

4 ECONOMIC CONTEXT

4.1 ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

A strong economic rationale underpins the vision and spatial proposals for the Waterside area and demonstrates the importance of the area's transformation to the wider economic prosperity of the city as a whole.

The City Council's Economic Action Plan sets out an investment strategy for the City's economy to 2020 and focuses on developing well paid and highly skilled jobs for the future. The strategy has the potential to build on the strength of the city's two universities, with over 50,000 students, which provide competitive advantage, international links and the opportunity to exploit the commercial potential of their knowledge, research and technology.

The Action Plan is to be achieved by improving the City Centre Business Investment Area, which includes the Waterside area, and creating an environment for business growth and well paid jobs. In particular the strategy supports the development of good quality office space for the professional and business services sector.

The plan prioritises improvements to the physical connections between the city centre assets such as the Highcross retail and leisure scheme and the wider city core including the Waterside, to enhance it as a focus for shopping, leisure, business and as a place to live.

4.2 HIGH QUALITY HOUSING

Meeting housing needs and demands is also pivotal in underpinning the Economic Action Plan. Over the past 10 years Leicester has seen a marked increase in residential development in the city centre. Reflecting the presence of the universities, there has been substantial growth of student based accommodation as well as the development of high density apartments aimed at the buy to let market and single professional people.

However, in line with the wider UK market, demand for apartment led schemes in Leicester reduced following the 2007 collapse of the housing market, which placed pressure on the viability and fund-ability of higher density developments. A number of recent developments, notably Freemans Meadow and Abbey Meadows have a mix of houses and apartments and are of a lower density than was planned prior to the 2007 property market collapse.

The Economic Action Plan highlights the importance of creating further high quality housing in attractive neighbourhoods supported by schools, which offer

a great place to live, with good connectivity to places of work and access to a diverse range of cultural, leisure, sport and entertainment activity. By providing the right type and quality of housing, the Economic Action Plan identifies that the city centre can attract and retain workers and others with the right skills needed for a prosperous economy, and help to deliver the Council's overall housing figures.

The Waterside is well placed to deliver this objective. The vision for the Waterside is to create an attractive residential environment for households who have not previously found an appropriate housing offer in the city centre to satisfy their housing needs. This means providing a range of housing types and amenities, including town houses, quality apartments, local shops and small office suites to create a balanced and sustainable community helping to underpin the local economy.

This approach is endorsed by the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) produced by the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership which outlines the local economic growth strategy and priorities for the county between 2014 and 2020.

The SEP identifies the Leicester Urban Area as a growth area, and a "transformational priority", which is focussed on the Waterside and Abbey Meadows regeneration areas. These areas are identified to deliver substantial housing, commercial and leisure/cultural developments on a cluster of development sites leading to the creation of 6,000 jobs.

The SEP has identified that development has been prohibited from coming forward at the rate expected in recent years owing to the need to assemble land and the cost of required infrastructure for access and servicing. To overcome this, the Council has been allocated £21.5m from Local Growth Funds over the next five years to deliver infrastructure and development in the Waterside area.

4.3 BUSINESS SPACE

At present, within the city centre the majority of the larger business occupiers are professional services firms, contact centres and public sector organisations. The out of town market serves regional occupiers and local professional firms who have tended to relocate from city centre locations.

The availability of office stock in Leicester has remained largely unchanged over the last few years. Much of the city centre stock is dominated by secondary accommodation; either dated 1960/70s blocks or converted self-contained period properties. The lack of modern, Grade A office space in the city centre is identified in both the 2012 Employment Land Review and 2014 Core Strategy as a barrier to economic growth.

Enhancing creativity and innovation in the City is a focus of the 2014 Core Strategy, which notes that Leicester is looking to restructure its economy to provide more service and knowledge based jobs linking with the two universities.

Historically Leicester has seen good levels of demand for smaller freehold office premises. There are a number of successful business incubator facilities in the city already and the Friar's Mill development in the Waterside will add to this and provide important move-on space for existing small businesses and new start-up companies requiring slightly larger space than currently exists in the City Centre.

Provision of a range of further small scale office suites in the Waterside, focussed around the A50, would therefore fit well with wider economic objectives and the supports the vision for a vibrant, mixed use neighbourhood in the area.

4.4 SUPPORTING USES

The attraction of the Waterside is its proximity to city centre amenities and specifically to the Highcross Shopping centre which contains a number of national café and restaurant brands and is anchored by John Lewis.

As the Waterside develops, we anticipate that a mix of small scale retail including a local food store, cafés and restaurants, leisure uses (e.g. a gym) will become established. These uses will meet local needs, (cafés/restaurants may have a wider catchment draw), and will complement rather than compete with the city centre provision and its high street multiples.

Many existing businesses presently based in the area may choose to remain and benefit from increased economic activity around them as Waterside develops. If the characteristics of existing businesses mean relocation is more suitable the City Council will seek to assist in that process if appropriate.

4.5 ECONOMIC SUMMARY

The Waterside provides a substantial regeneration opportunity to help meet the City's housing needs and underpin its local economic growth strategy. It will do so by:

- Providing a range of housing types including town houses for younger households, as well as high quality apartments;
- Creating a distinctively urban but attractive residential environment to retain those people who may otherwise leave the city centre to satisfy their housing needs;
- Creating a truly mixed use area incorporating business space and including smaller office suites with good parking standards suitable for owner occupiers;
- Providing local services and amenities including shops and leisure facilities to serve the new population and complement the city centre. Retailing is seen as key part of creating a sustainable mixed use community;
- Improving access to other social infrastructure and community facilities as well as open space to establish the Waterside as an attractive and sought after area.

5 SPATIAL STRATEGY












5.1 SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The overarching spatial framework plan for the Waterside area defines in broad terms the proposed land uses, key transport routes and local activity hubs. Planned development sites and interventions are focussed within the area marked 'zone of change' which covers the A50 corridor and land to the west (see Figure 6.1).

Key principles:

- New waterside residential neighbourhoods will be created on former industrial land to the east and west of the River Soar;
- Soar Island will become a destination in its own right with a mix of uses and green space which encourage public access to the waterfront;
- The A50 corridor will form a spine of mixed-use development including a new local centre, connecting the residential areas to the west, employment uses to the east, and city centre to the south;
- The A6 corridor and land to the east falls outside the main zone of change and will retain its light industrial and office uses;
- Public realm improvements will focus on:
 - › Re-establishing a pedestrian friendly character (similar to a high street with wider pavements, on street parking, cycle ways and street trees) on the A50, an important historic route and gateway to the city;
 - › Delivering improved connections across the A50/Vaughan Way junction to allow easy pedestrian access to the city centre;
 - › Strengthening the east-west link of Repton Street – Soar Lane – Sanvey Gate for walking and cycling. This historic route follows the Roman and medieval city wall and provides an important connection across the area and a vista to St Margaret's Church;
 - › Creating high quality gateways to the Waterside area at Sanvey Gate / Soar Lane and Vaughan Way.
- The River and Canal network will become a hub for leisure and water-based activity and will provide enhanced walking and cycling connections to nearby green space such as Abbey and Rally Parks and Castle Gardens;
- The Soar, old River Soar and Grand Union Canal network is a strategically important blue/green corridor which will be enhanced by linking green sites and sports facilities and providing appropriate areas and biodiversity corridors for wildlife.

Figure 6.1 Spatial framework

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  SPD boundary |  City centre |  A50 improvements |
|  Predominantly residential |  Employment |  High quality pedestrian & cycle route |
|  Mixed-use |  Riverside - leisure, access, landscape corridor |  Zone of change |
|  Public open space and leisure |  New and upgraded waterside links | |



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5.2 CHARACTER AREAS

Distinctive character areas are envisaged, reflecting the variety in setting and proposed building typologies and land uses across the Waterside area. The plan below highlights the general location of these areas:

Waterside West: new residential communities to the west of the River Soar, with views over an improved Rally Park, the river and the city centre skyline.

Waterside East: a new residential and mixed use community to the east of the River Soar and west of the A50, which integrates new development with retained heritage assets including Friar's Mill and forms an important link from the city centre to the River.

Soar Island: a new destination on the river with a mix of uses including green space. The highly visible central location of the Island calls for a special publicly accessible use and high quality design response which takes the needs of wildlife into consideration.

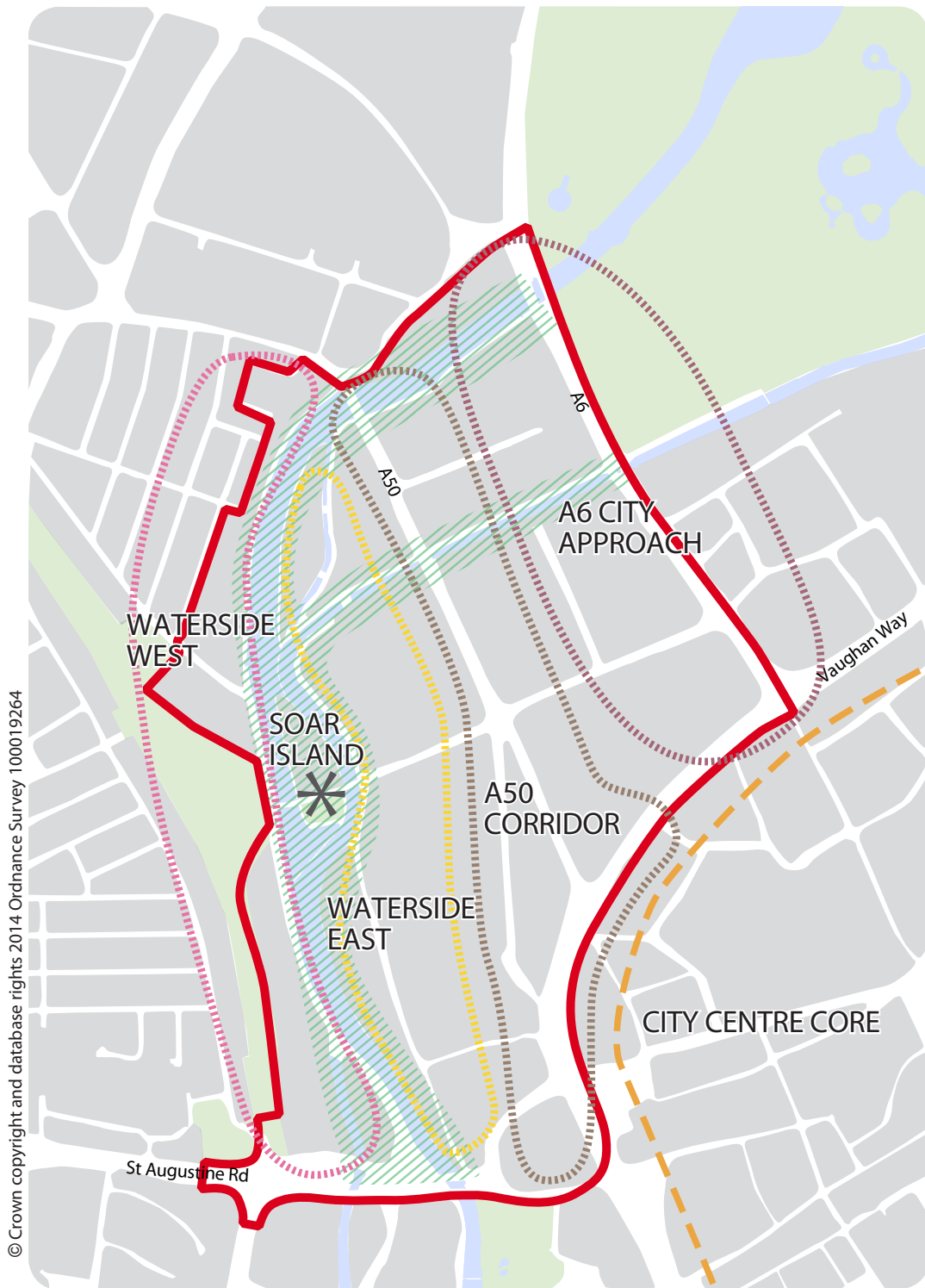
Waterside: the corridors of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal form linear character areas. They will be revitalised for leisure uses, walking and cycling and form an attractive setting for new development. Wildlife habitats will be retained and enhanced or new areas of habitat created in less disturbed areas.

A50 Corridor: a mix of employment, community facilities and a new local centre on the A50 which serves the adjacent residential and business communities. A more pedestrian friendly character will be re-established with wider pavements, on street parking, cycleways and street trees along the A50.

A6, City Approach: a major movement corridor fronted by a mix of commercial, employment and community uses. The area falls outside the SPD zone of change.

These character areas may form the basis of future more detailed design briefs.

Figure 6.2 Proposed character areas



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5.3 LAND USE

Figure 6.3 indicates the planned land use mix across the Waterside area. It assumes that flood mitigation works will be delivered in advance of development. Delivery of mitigation works may require a collaborative approach with affected landowners and comprehensive development proposals across multiple land ownerships. (See further information in Section 7.1)

The location of the Green Infrastructure is described in section 6.6.

Residential

In line with Core Strategy policy 4, development within the Waterside area will predominantly be residential led, with a focus on providing distinctive and high quality and energy efficient homes in close proximity to the city centre. A mix of high quality housing types (including town houses and apartments) will be provided, that are suitable for a range of household types and sizes and that aim to achieve the plan target amount of affordable housing. Residential led development is focused on the Waterside West and Waterside East character areas adjacent to the River Soar. The potential for narrow boat moorings is identified on the eastern bank of the River Soar, south of Soar Island.

Mixed Use and Community Facilities

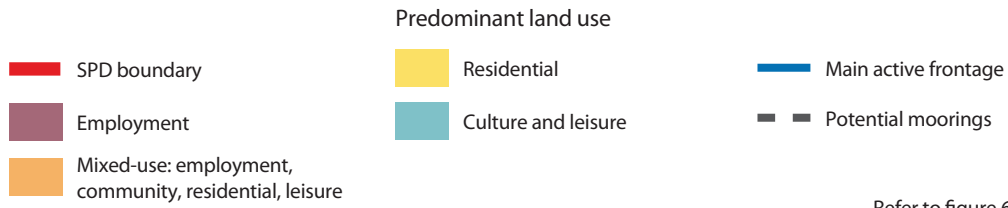
The existing mix of commercial and community uses on the A50 will be strengthened through new employment, community and leisure development with potential for residential on upper storeys. Active ground floor uses will be encouraged, particularly in the area between Sanvey Gate/Soar Lane and the canal where a local shopping centre is to be located.

The viaduct and former Great Central Station buildings are included within the mixed use zone to allow flexibility for community and public uses or further employment and commercial use in the longer term. The viaduct currently forms a barrier to pedestrian movement through the Waterside area. Proposals which deliver increased connectivity (by removing part of the viaduct), but which still enable the historic station buildings to be restored are encouraged.

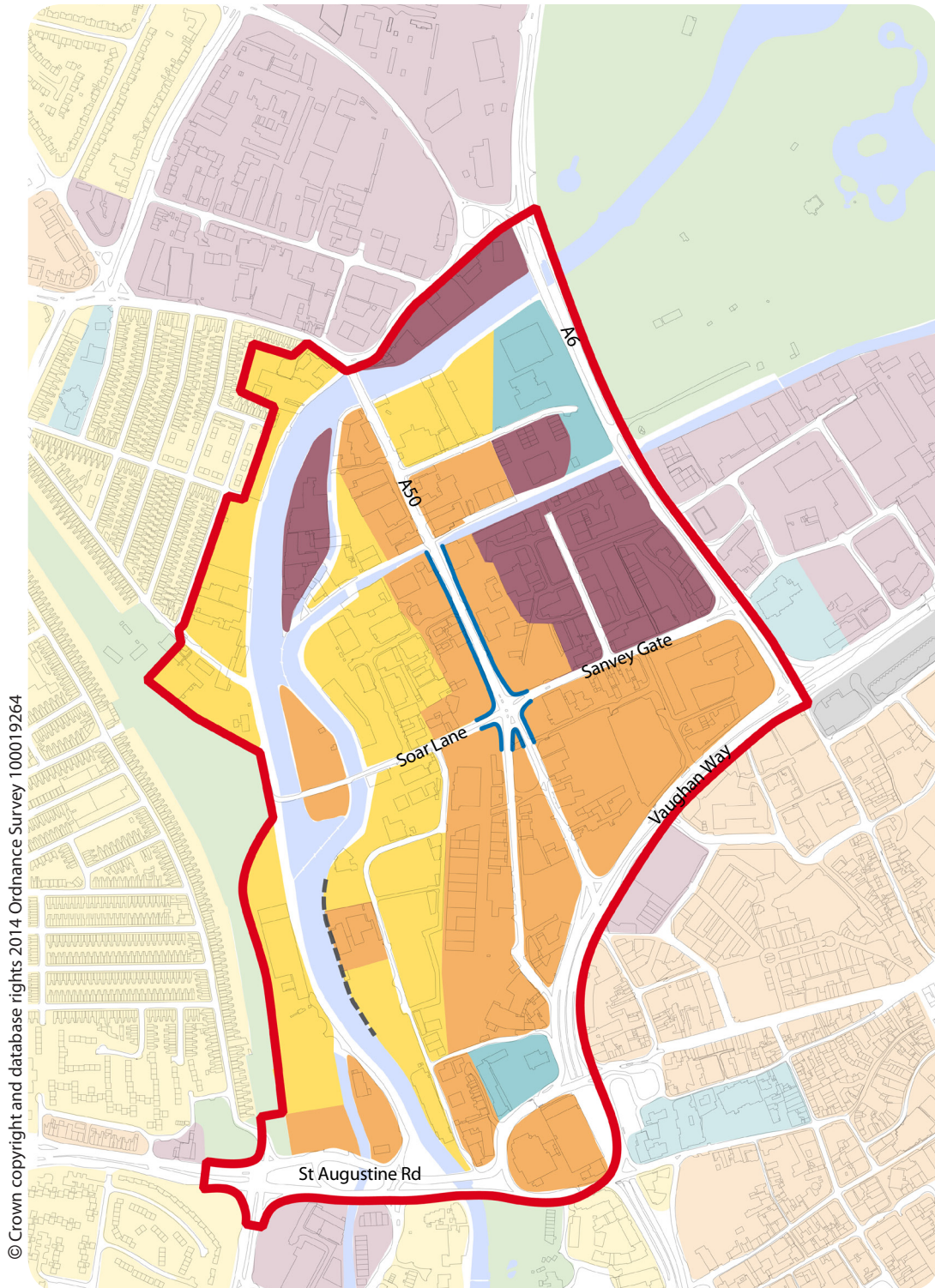
The Council will consider options for accommodating demand created for school places where this cannot be accommodated on existing school sites serving the area.

Soar Island is at one of the most interesting parts of the river. It is a distinctive and highly visible site and is well connected. Soar Island is identified for a mixed use (potentially including housing, commercial and community uses) that enables public access to the island and provides green space. It needs to include a use which creates an attractive destination that draws people to it, where they can enjoy being by the river. It requires a special approach with a design that enhances the contribution Soar Island makes to the biodiversity of the area.

Figure 6.3 Proposed land use



Refer to figure 6.5 for Green Infrastructure landuse



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Retail

In line with Core Strategy policies CS 11 and CS 4, a new local shopping centre will be centrally located on the A50 corridor somewhere between the canal and Sanvey Gate. The local centre will be designed to meet local, convenience needs. It will complement the high quality, comparison retail offer available at nearby Highcross and within the wider city centre.

As the character of the area evolves, there is the potential to attract food and drink and other small scale independent retailers to the area, with a focus on the waterfront area around Soar Island. These uses will add to the community feel and vibrancy of the new neighbourhoods.

Employment

Employment uses will form a component of mixed use areas.

New employment development will include provision of both office and workshop space that caters for small and medium sized enterprises (market evidence suggests demand for space will typically be for units ranging from 2,500 - 10,000 sqft). Market evidence also suggests that there will be demand for leasehold and freehold 'own-front-door' premises.

Friar's Mill, Bath Lane

The Council acquired Friars Mill at the end of 2012 to protect the future of this important heritage asset following a serious fire. Work began on the restoration and development of the site in 2014 to provide managed workspaces including larger 'grow-on' units. The scheme will provide 1,670 sq m of lettable floor space in 15 workspace units.



Artist's impression of the Friar's Mill development

Retained Employment Sites

The majority of retained employment land area is located between the A50 and A6, reflecting the employment designation (Core Strategy Policy 10).

Within the designated employment land fronting the A50, the SPD provides the justification for allowing mixed use development, and to the north of the canal for allowing community/leisure. These changes reflect the overarching regeneration objectives of Core Strategy policy 04 and the intention to change the character of the A50 to create an active mixed use street including local shopping centre and community uses. Similarly, within the small area of employment land to the south of Bonchurch Street, west of the River Soar, the SPD provides the justification for allowing open space and housing development, to create a positive gateway to Rally Park.

Existing employment sites adjacent to the River Soar at the western edge of Frog Island and south of Abbey Gate are retained. These areas are at risk of flooding and require water compatible design and layout.

5.4 BUILDING HEIGHTS, HOUSING TYPES AND VIEWS

The development of the Waterside will create a new neighbourhood which offers:- a unique and vibrant place to live; a place with a strong identity; a place that is distinctively Leicester in terms of its scale of development, use of materials, streetscape and fine grain mix of independent shops and businesses.

The Waterside needs a comprehensive and considered response to guide future development, to ensure all developments that come forward fit in with the long term vision for the area. Development must also be financially viable.

Housing Types

The intention is to create a place of human scale and of proven good design with town houses and apartment blocks fronting well connected streets, forming perimeter blocks and providing a mix of tenures.

The heights of individual buildings need to work in harmony with each other and the surrounding urban context to create well defined and proportioned streets. All new development should have doors and windows which front onto the street, providing ground floor activity and avoiding blank facades.

There is flexibility for a range of housing typologies including apartments and houses, including a significant number of town houses (around 30%) to attract aspirational households looking for distinctive, larger properties within a vibrant urban, waterside setting.

Heritage led regeneration should deliver residential architecture which responds to the waterfront landscape and post-industrial context of the area and seek to establish a character which is distinctive to the Waterside and Leicester.

There is potential for custom-build and other innovative housing delivery models.

Building Heights

An average height of 3-4 storeys is proposed across the Waterside. This reflects the scale of the retained historic and listed buildings, including the All Saints Conservation Area, the importance of retaining views to the city centre skyline and waterside, and the intention for the Waterside area to create a transition in height from the taller buildings which characterise the core of the city centre, down to the residential context of surrounding neighbourhoods including Newfoundpool. The SPD seeks to limit taller developments which would create streets that are dark, 'canyon like' and uncomfortable for pedestrians.

There are opportunities for buildings of up to 6 storeys in the Waterside area, along the A50 and ring road where the width of the street can accommodate this scale of development, and on sections of the canal and River where they can provide local landmarks and a strong frontage on prominent sites. In some of these locations, it may be also appropriate to include elements above 6 storeys;

Figure 6.4 Proposed building heights and views

- █ SPD boundary
- Up to 3 storeys (existing and proposed)
- ✱ Existing landmark
- Tall buildings (existing and under construction)
- City views
- ✱ Important corner or gateway site
- Up to 6 storeys (existing and proposed)
- River views
- Existing buildings elevated on viaduct of approximately 2 storeys in height



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however, taller buildings will only be permitted where exceptional design quality can be demonstrated including a positive ground floor relationship to the street and the surrounding context.

In locations identified as an important gateway or corner site, a particularly high quality and well considered design response is required given their visibility. These locations are not a justification for development above 6 storeys in their own right and a comprehensive rationale, views and townscape analysis will be required should that be proposed.

A number of high rise, small unit apartments and student housing schemes have extant consent or are under construction. These reflect former planning objectives and should not be viewed as a model for future development in the Waterside.

Views

Site layouts should be designed to retain and open up new views to the River, Canal and city landmarks including the Churches.



Stockholm



Harlow



Cambridge



London

Precedents - taller buildings of a human scale

- Provide local markers in predominantly residential areas
- High quality design that can sit comfortably adjacent to 3 storey townhouses
- Human scale suited to new neighbourhoods and communities

5.5 HERITAGE AND REGENERATION

Within regeneration areas, Core Strategy policy CS18 places particular importance on promoting the integration of the historic environment with new development, to create attractive spaces and places through heritage-led regeneration. It seeks to enhance the historic environment, including the character and setting of both designated and non-designated heritage assets and the historic public realm.

The Waterside area contains a large number of nationally and locally designated heritage assets (see section 4.5). Opportunities should be taken to use the historic cityscape to create distinctive, familiar, navigable places. New development within these areas should reflect and respect the historic environment and its architectural language whilst introducing high quality contemporary architecture. Where the original use of a building has ceased or is no longer appropriate, new, long term uses for historic buildings, which make a positive contribution will be sought. These uses should be consistent with the building's conservation as well as complementing the land use in the immediate area.

5.6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The vision for green infrastructure within the Waterside area is to enhance and connect the existing assets of green space and water courses to maximise the benefits to people and wildlife. A mix of Public Open Space, attractive greened landscaped streets, private gardens and an urban square within the residential area will complement the network of open waters of the River Soar and Canal to provide multiple benefits to local communities, businesses and visitors to the Waterside (see Figure 6.5).

In general:

- The water course network is of strategic biodiversity value, due to its linkages and connections to the wider network of green sites, both across the City and beyond its boundaries. Up-to-date ecology surveys will be expected to identify environmentally sensitive areas where development should be avoided, or appropriate mitigation/compensation provided, in accordance with wildlife legislation and planning policies. The objective will be to ensure no net loss of biodiversity, whilst facilitating development and access to the water network;
- Development should avoid areas important to biodiversity at the junctions of the river and canal networks and provide effective green space adjacent to these areas to protect and conserve the wildlife value. Where there is an unavoidable loss of natural green space which is of significant wildlife value, a similar habitat is expected to be created on a 2:1 ratio along the river/ Grand Union Canal corridor to compensate. Compensation areas up and downstream of the Waterside area will be considered, if no other areas are appropriate and if compensation is of a type and scale to maximise benefits;

Figure 6.5 Proposed green infrastructure projects

- SPD boundary
- Proposed habitat enhancements and green infrastructure
- Proposed canal enhancements
- Urban square of at least 0.25ha with equipped childrens play space to be provided within this area
- Natural & formal green space to be provided within this area
- Improvements & enhancements to Rally Park
- Sports pitches/ multi-use games area (MUGA)
- Proposed recreational facilities:
 A. new / improved equipped childrens & young peoples play space
 B. outdoor gym & new equipped childrens & young peoples play space
 C. Trim trail



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- Hydrological conditions will dictate where Green Infrastructure areas may be required in relation to flooding to facilitate development (see section 7.1). These will provide multiple benefits to flood alleviation and ecological enhancements;
- Waterfront cycling and walking routes will be connected and improved where necessary, to provide easy access to nearby Parks such as Abbey and Rally Parks, employment and residential areas;
- A holistic approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is expected across the Waterside area. Natural SuDS will be incorporated on sites adjacent to the River Soar and Grand Union Canal where possible, to minimise flood risk, improve water quality, public amenity and incorporate features to benefit biodiversity. Where this is not possible, reasons must be provided and alternative SuDS features such as permeable paving used;
- Where there is already a requirement by the Environment Agency (on stretches of the river and the canalised river), for a buffer of at least 8m between the water and built environment, opportunities for improved access, public amenity and biodiversity should be incorporated to maximise the benefits of green infrastructure and connections across the area;
- Well-designed private gardens to residential properties, street tree planting with native species, cycle routes, roadside swales and greening of infrastructure will provide biodiversity and SuDS connectivity throughout the area across a strategic green/blue network.
- Green roofs and walls should be considered on a site by site basis to reduce flood risk through increased water storage whilst providing additional biodiversity opportunities. These should be focused in flood risk areas and on routes forming the main ecological network such as Soar Island and land adjacent to Soar/Grand Union Canal junctions;
- Opportunities for transient/meanwhile uses on vacant and derelict sites should be explored on a site by site basis to provide short-term use for local food-growing or temporary meadows to be managed until sites are developed. This temporary Green Infrastructure is linked to multiple benefits such as biodiversity, visual amenity, flood relief, combatting climate change, public health and well-being, and encouraging economic regeneration.

Types of Green Space:

- Rally Park is to be improved and will provide additional facilities. Spaces and activities for older children and a multi-use games area will be provided. There will be improvements to the gateways and entrances, clearance of overgrown vegetation and improvements to planting, enhancement and interpretation of the old station. The former community garden area to the north will be redesigned. Adjacent new developments will front the park to provide increased surveillance.
- An Urban Square is proposed within the new residential neighbourhood

to the north of Soar Lane. This will comprise a formal green space of contemporary design using high quality materials, for people to dwell and enjoy. All open spaces can provide opportunities for surface water retention. The space should also include a contemporary equipped play space including sculptural forms and imaginative and stimulating features for young and older children.

- Soar Island is a unique and special place. Existing natural green spaces which are important for biodiversity should be retained and enhanced. The views of the river corridor and across the city skyline from the southern end of the Island make it an ideal location for a well-designed public space. The type of development on site should not be to the detriment of biodiversity, public amenity or increase flood risk on or to surrounding areas.
- Bath Lane Square will re-connect residents with the river, opening up long views across Soar Island and beyond and providing a contemporary, predominantly hard landscaped public space with a natural green edge.

5.7 TRANSPORT

Strategic Routes

Significant highway investment support is being provided by the Leicester North West Major Transport Project (LNW). Through the LNW project the strategic highway network serving the A50, A6 and orbital routes will be modified to serve evolving economic growth in the Waterside and the Ashton Green, Charnwood and North West Leicestershire areas. This will see schemes constructed from 2015 onwards at the major junctions on the A50, A563 and A6, that will provide improved traffic capacity.

The Waterside will generate traffic accessing new residences and businesses. The Leicester North West project, while providing increased capacity for transport movements, will also enable good access to development sites in the Waterside to be provided.

Local improvements to the A50 between Blackbird Road and the A594 Vaughan Way will focus on providing high quality active street frontages, vehicular access to developments and measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport connectivity within the Waterside and to the wider area.

Gateway Public Realm and Junction Improvements

The following locations, which are gateways to the city centre and the Waterside area, are identified for junction and public realm improvements:

- A50 remodelling

Figure 6.6 Proposed movement Infrastructure projects

- SPD boundary
- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Committed transport projects</p> <p>Junction & gateway improvements at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blackbird Rd junction 2. Soar Lane/ Sanvey Gate- including two way movement on Soar Lane 3. Holy Bones & St Nicholas Circle | <p>Improvements to existing routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junction & gateway improvements at Highcross/ Vaughan Way junction Street enhancements to A50 & Soar Lane Improvements to waterside cycle & pedestrian routes | <p>Proposed new transport infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New waterside cycle & pedestrian routes Location for new cycle & pedestrian bridge over canal Location for new bridge(s) over Mill Race |
|--|--|--|



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On Northgate Street / Highcross Street on-street parking and increased footway widths will be provided facilitating activity on the street frontage (see Figure 6.7). Improved pedestrian, cycling and public transport provision will be promoted together with enhanced local access and an attractive public realm forming the setting for a more pedestrian friendly environment

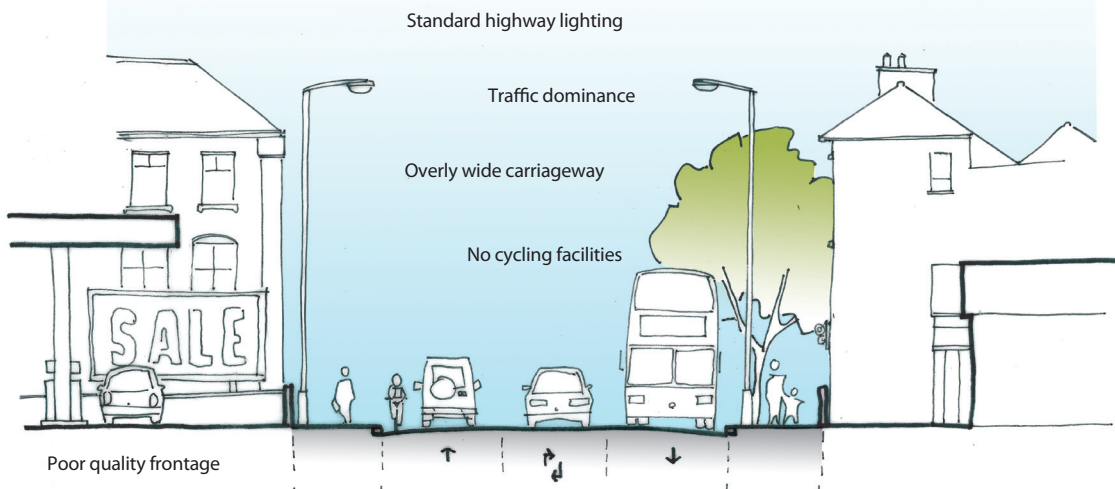
- Sanvey Gate / Soar Lane / A50.
This junction has historical significance as a gateway to the city and is the most important connecting node within the Waterside area. The existing signalised junction could be reconfigured to create a simplified crossroads. The dominance of the carriageway could be reduced and together with the development and improvement of corner sites will create a recognisable place. Two way movements, including to/from Soar Lane, would enable easy access to Waterside East.
- Blackbird Road/A50 Junction
This junction will be remodelled to enhance the link towards the A6 and ease access for development traffic to the Waterside.
- Vaughan Way / A50 junction.
The junction layout could be simplified and its size reduced to provide improved pedestrian and cycle crossings between the Waterside area and the city centre and re-establish the historic route of Highcross Street. This would facilitate the provision of high quality pedestrian and cycle links from the Waterside area to the City Centre.
- All Saints Road will be widened to open up an improved two way access to the Waterside East development sites.



Connecting Leicester cycleway, Newarke Street

Figure 6.7 Before and after street sections showing indicative A50 improvements

Typical A50 street section: existing



Indicative proposed enhancements

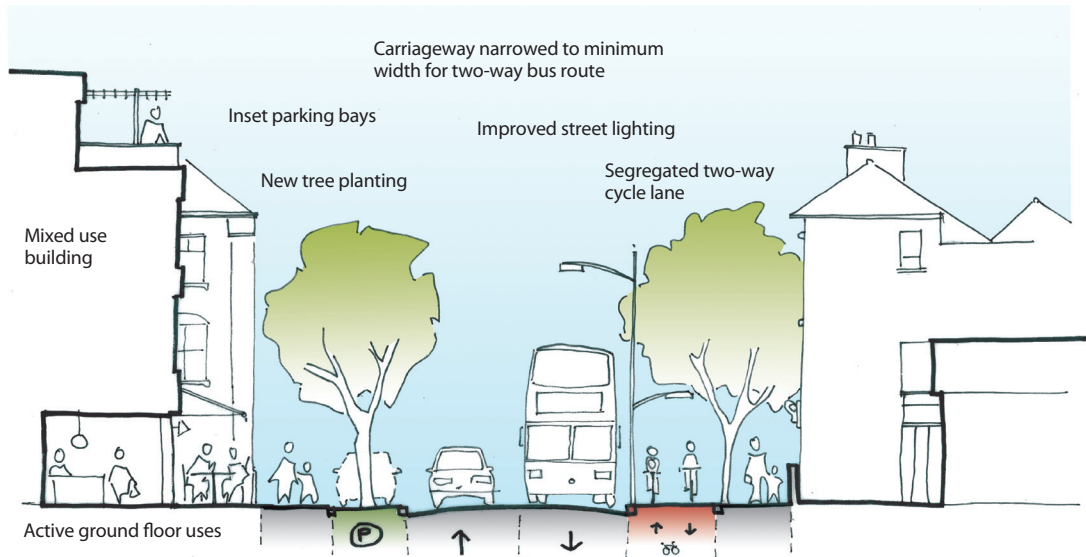


Figure 6.8 Proposed transport network

- ➔ Strategic primary route
- ➔ Primary route
- ➔ Secondary route
- ➔ Key tertiary route (indicative)
- ➔ One way streets
- ➔ Major bus corridor
- ➔ National cycle network routes & footpaths
- ➔ Other important cycling & pedestrian routes
- SPD boundary



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Street Network

The redevelopment of the Waterside will be based on a connected network of internal streets configured in a manner that improves accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians. Streets will be built to a required standard, with adequate pavement widths including on street parking where appropriate and a high quality public realm (see Figure 6.8).

Sanvey Gate, Soar Lane, All Saints Road and Bath Lane will benefit from public realm enhancements.

The A50 and A6 will continue to be strategic primary highway routes through the Waterside area. Secondary routes will provide main connections within the Waterside area with tertiary routes primarily providing access to homes.

Pedestrian and Cycling Networks

Through its Connecting Leicester and Cycle City plans, the City Council is committed to creating a thriving city centre by improving the connections between shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities, all linked by accessible high quality pedestrian and cycle routes. Significant new routes have been constructed within the central ring road and these are being extended towards the Waterside.

The following specific improvements to cycling and walking connections are proposed:

- A new pedestrian and cycling bridge over the Grand Union Canal to deliver improved connectivity between the Swan Street and Frog Island development sites;
- A continuous cycle and pedestrian link to connect Castle Gardens to Abbey Park;
- A “super-crossing” of the central ring road/ Highcross St junction to strongly link the Waterside to the city centre and its retail and cultural heart.

Public Transport Improvements

The A50 is a busy bus route with nearly 40 buses per hour using Northgate Street and Sanvey Gate in each direction. This role will be retained and local stops will be enhanced.

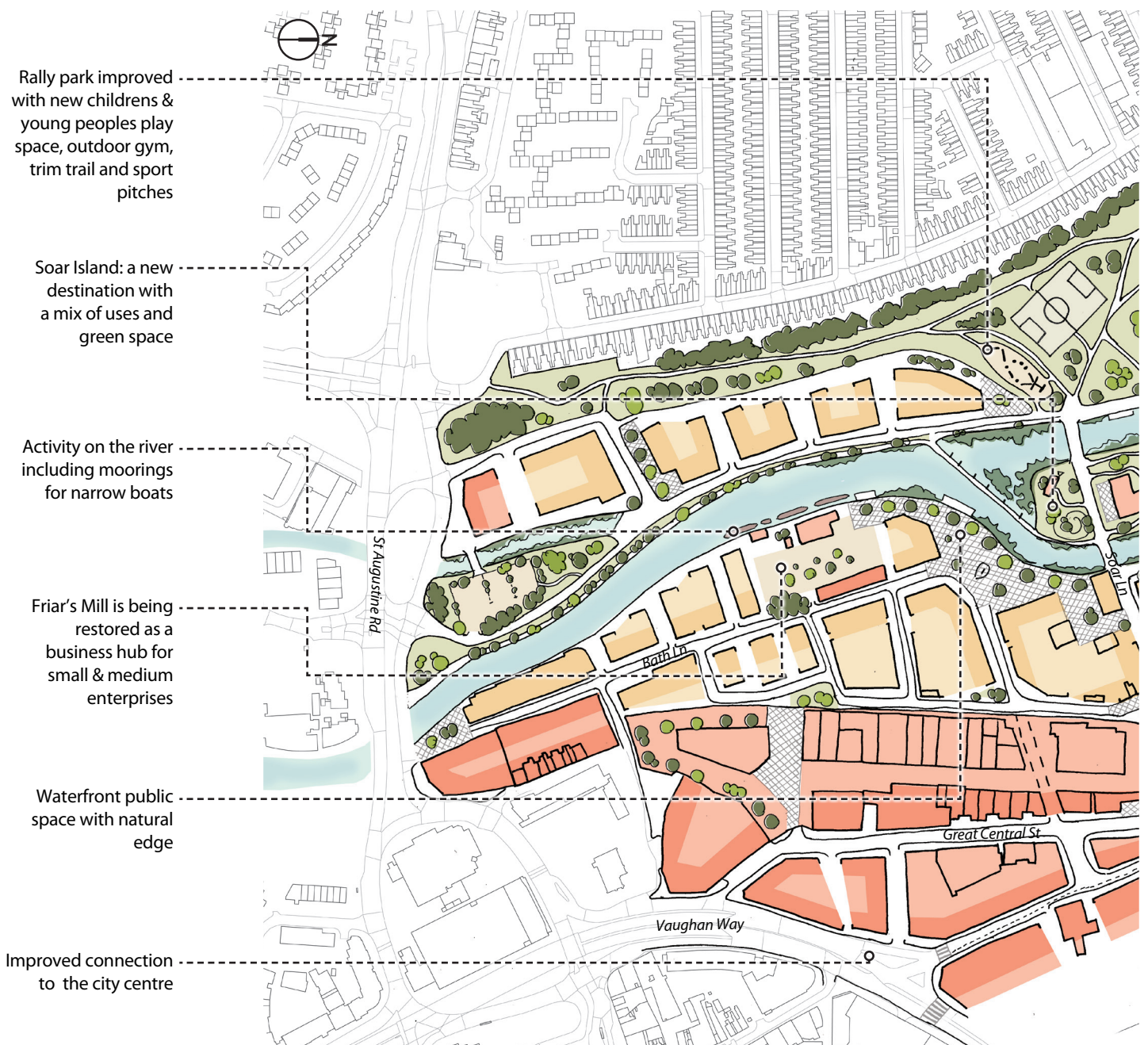
Transport Assessments and Travel Planning

Proposed developments will need to be evaluated for Transport Assessment requirements including an area wide travel plan.

5.8 A VISION FOR THE WATERSIDE - HOW IT COULD LOOK

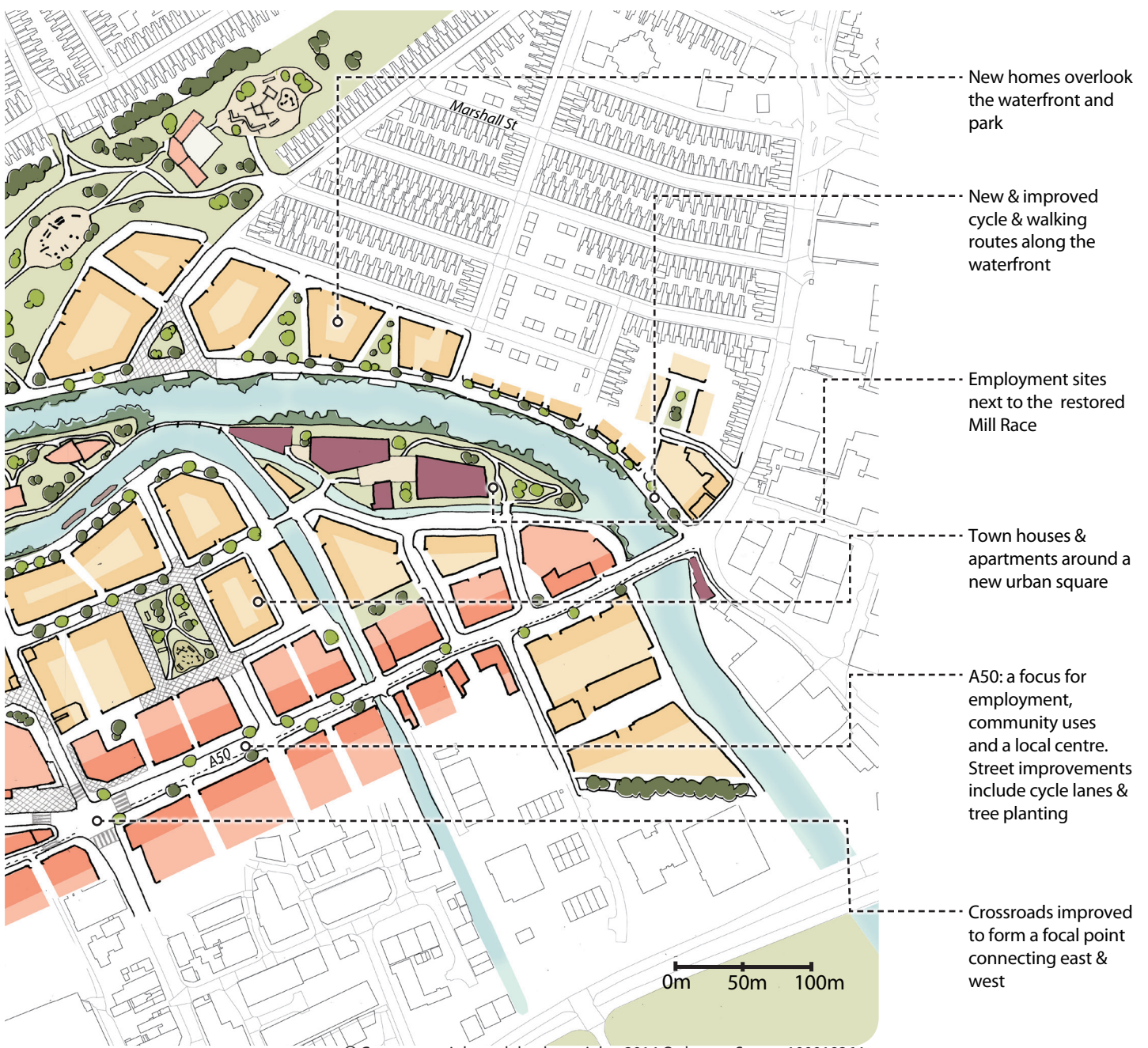
This illustrative masterplan provides one interpretation of how the Waterside area could be developed over the long term to create a high quality mixed use neighbourhood in line with the guidance contained within this SPD. The final design and layout of individual areas will be determined through the process of detailed design and future planning applications.

Figure 6.9 The vision for the Waterside- how it could look



Proposed land use

- Employment
- Mixed-use: employment, community, residential, leisure
- Residential



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6 DELIVERY

6.1 INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Infrastructure proposals to enable the regeneration of the Waterside will be developed and implemented by the Council, Environment Agency and developers as appropriate. As detailed proposals are agreed they will be included in the City Council's Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Proposed Flood Defence Works

The Waterside is constrained by an extensive flood risk along the west bank of the River and around Frog Island. The Environment Agency in partnership with the Council will identify a programme of flood mitigation works which, if economically, socially and environmentally viable, will be carried out in this area during the period to 2020. At this stage further work is required to establish what impact potential works might have on affected sites. It is unlikely all risks can be mitigated, but some sites may remain undevelopable. In this event, the Council may seek to incorporate land into the area's Green Infrastructure network, where appropriate.

It is likely that mitigation works will require a comprehensive approach to the design and phasing of development in some areas, across multiple land ownerships. The Council will seek to facilitate this with affected landowners.

Detailed flood modelling work and mitigation options will be prepared during early 2015. Affected landowners will be consulted and the necessary works will be scheduled accordingly and included on the City Council's Local Plan Infrastructure Schedule.

Proposed Highway Works

Highway works are proposed to:

- Improve the strategic road network;
- Change the character of roads to be suitable for a new, high quality, mixed use neighbourhood, and;
- Improve local access within the area and enhance walking and cycling links within and through the area.

A package of works to the strategic highway network will be implemented in partnership with Leicestershire County Council through the Leicester North West Major Transport Scheme. Local access improvements including for walking and cycling will be developed by the Council in collaboration with the Environment Agency, Canal and River Trust and relevant landowners. The Council has secured additional Local Growth Funding support to assist with this. An extensive programme of public realm works is being delivered in the City Centre under the City Mayor's 'Connecting Leicester Initiative'. Further improvements in Waterside will integrate with and complement this recent and committed investment. Consultation on proposals will be undertaken by the Council as schemes are developed.

Proposed Social Infrastructure

Redevelopment proposals will create demand for school places that cannot be accommodated by expansion on existing school sites serving the area. The intention is to identify a site within the Waterside area to accommodate the additional spaces required. Possible sites will be the subject of further consultation.

6.2 PHASING

The first phase to be delivered comprehensively in line with this SPD is likely to be within Waterside West, which sits to the west of the A50, between the canal and Friar's Mill and including Soar Island. The area includes significant Council land ownerships. This area will have an emphasis on town houses, together with new employment and small scale retail uses fronting the A50.

Alongside this, extant consents in the southern part of the Waterside West area are expected to deliver additional housing.

Future phases will focus initially on the remaining Waterside West sites, and later on the Waterside East residential sites.

6.3 PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

All development proposals will be considered against the adopted Development Plan and any other material considerations as far as they are relevant.

Planning applications will be required to meet all the City Council's local as well as national validation requirements. These are set out at

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/planning/planningapplications/makeanapplication/>

Early discussions with the local planning authority are encouraged for all development proposals and in particular for larger proposals which may need to be screened as falling under Environmental Impact regulations.

Planning Obligations

The Council is currently preparing for the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Consultation on the Charging and Infrastructure schedules will take place early in 2015 with the aim of adoption by Summer 2015.

Affordable Housing requirements will continue to be secured under Section 106 agreements. Details on the Council's approach to affordable housing provision can be found in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD 2011.

If necessary, on-site infrastructure may also be secured via a Section 106 agreement where this is consistent with the provisions of CIL.

6.4 LANDOWNERSHIP AND ASSEMBLY

The Waterside is a large area covering some 60 hectares in total. It contains a number of distinctive areas, transport corridors and land ownerships. The City Council is a significant land owner and has acquired a number of sites to help facilitate development.

CS POLICY 4 of the Core Strategy (adopted 2014) deals with the strategic regeneration area including the Waterside area. CS4 reads:

"The Strategic Regeneration Area will be the focus of major housing development and physical change to provide the impetus for economic, environmental and social investment and provide benefits for existing communities. New development within the Strategic Regeneration Area must be comprehensive and co-ordinated, complementing and building on delivery programmes and Supplementary Planning Documents"

This SPD sets out supplementary guidance informing applicants and developers of the City Council's policy. In particular, the City Council will seek to use its land interests in a proactive way to help bring forward development. Where appropriate it will seek to acquire via private treaty other interests, and at all times will seek to work with landowners to bring about the objectives set out in the Core Strategy and this SPD.

The City Council wishes to see the Waterside area developed in a comprehensive and co-ordinated way, albeit it recognises this maybe on a phased basis over a number of years.

A comprehensive approach is required:

To create a new and attractive residential-led mixed use environment;

- To optimise regeneration benefits by creating an opportunity for town houses as well as apartment led development. This will deliver additional housing in line with Council objectives and will also underpin sustainable growth in the local economy;
- To deliver improved access to the Waterside; and
- To achieve better connectivity throughout the Waterside area.

Where appropriate and required to achieve its policy objectives, the City Council will use its compulsory purchase powers to assemble key sites.

6.5 FUNDING STRATEGY

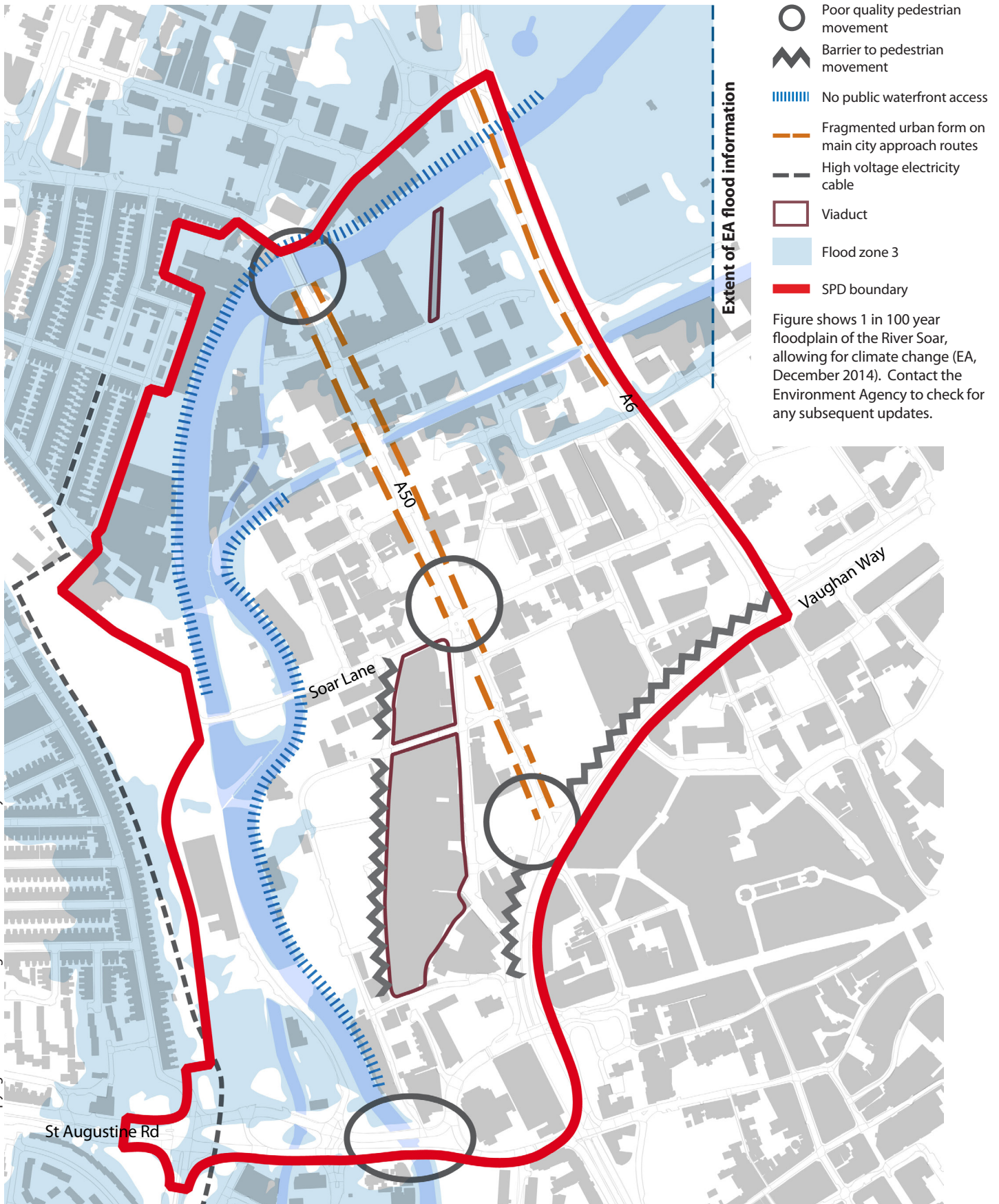
The Council is already investing in the Waterside, work has commenced on a £6.5m refurbishment of the listed Friars Mill to create a business hub. Other committed public investment which will benefit Waterside includes major investment in the A50 and A6 corridors through the Leicester North West Transport Scheme (£20m); the Connecting Leicester' programme of City Centre public realm improvements (£15m) which will help link the City Centre to Waterside; and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal access improvement project (£7m), which will create and enhance cycle and pedestrian links along the waterways. The Council has been allocated £20m from Central Government, via the LGF, for 2015-2020. To assist in the delivery of regeneration proposals as set out in the SPD the Council will continue to seek external funding to support the regeneration of the Waterside and to deliver new infrastructure to secure it, aligned to its own resources.

APPENDIX

A

MAPPING OF CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

Figure A.1 Mapping of Constraints and Challenges



APPENDIX

B

PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Planning Policy Framework

The Development Plan for the Leicester Waterside area consists of:

- Leicester Core Strategy - 2014
- Adopted proposals map
- Saved policies of the Leicester Local Plan - 2006

Other material considerations include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- All Saints Conservation Area Character Statement - January 1999
- Topic based Supplementary Planning Documents including:
 - › Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy SPD - adopted 30 November 2005
 - › Tall Buildings SPD - adopted 23 April 2007
 - › Employment Land SPD - adopted 10 December 2007
 - › Residential Amenity Guide SPD - adopted 18 February 2008
 - › Climate Change SPD - adopted 17 January 2011
 - › Affordable Housing SPD - adopted 21 March 2011
 - › Green Space SPD - adopted 11th April 2011
 - › Student Housing SPD - adopted 12th June 2012
 - › City Centre Car Parking Strategy SPD – adopted March 2011
- CIL – Preliminary Charging Schedule - consulted on May/June 2014
- CIL –Draft Charging Schedule out to consultation 30th October 2014 – 11th December 2014
- The Council’s evidence base
- A Low and Zero Carbon Strategy for the Waterside – AECOM Feb 2011
- Understanding the potential of benefits of District Heating for new developments in Leicester – AECOM March 2012
- Leicester’s Food Plan 2014-16

It is the intention that this document will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document following public consultation.

Leicester Waterside

Supplementary Planning
Document (SPD)

Consultation Draft
January 2015

Produced by Leicester City Council,
Alan Baxter and Associates LLP and GL Hearn

