



TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL
**DOVERCOURT
MASTERPLAN
REVISITED**

FINAL REPORT
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Ash Sakula Architects



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- 1 Dovercourt Station
- 2 Kingsway
- 3 High Street
- 4 Station Road
- 5 Railway pedestrian bridge
- 6 A120 - Dovercourt bypass
- 7 Kingsway Hall
- 8 Milton Road Car Park
- 9 Starlings Block
- 10 Orwell Terrace
- 11 Cliff Park
- 12 Queen Victoria Statue
- 13 Pedestrian underpass
- 14 Dovercourt Beach

Figure 1.1: Dovercourt aerial photograph

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT THIS STUDY

This study, the Dovercourt Masterplan, develops a strategy for the revitalisation of Dovercourt town centre. It sets out a positive vision, guides development and identifies a range of projects that will attract residents and visitors and improve the image and quality of the centre.

This study was commissioned in January 2018 by Tendring Council as a means to update the previous masterplan (Dovercourt Rediscovered) from 2011. The plan had to reevaluate the town centre in the context of the changed commercial and planning environment. A particular focus for the study was to explore the feasibility of development of two key sites in Dovercourt, the Council owned Milton Road Car Park and the boarded-up Starlings Block that detracts from the town centre.

The masterplan was prepared by Urban Initiatives Studio in collaboration with Ash Sakula Architects, Montague Evans Property Advisors and Stockdale Cost Consultants. The study evolved through engagement with local stakeholders, councillors and council officers. This report summarises the project and its outcomes, and sets out a strategy for improvement and change in Dovercourt that can turn the tide for the centre.

The report is comprised of four sections, described below:

1 Introduction – an overview of the project, the study area and a review of the previous masterplan, Dovercourt Rediscovered.

2 Understanding Dovercourt - an analysis of Dovercourt and identification of constraints and opportunities. Topics include character, heritage, transport and planning policy.

3 Regenerating Dovercourt – setting out the vision for Dovercourt and the strategy for regeneration. This section includes an illustrative masterplan for the town centre and an overview of public realm and development interventions.

4 Catalogue of regeneration projects – this section identifies twenty concrete projects that will help to bring about change in Dovercourt. Their range includes development projects, public realm improvements and the management and promotion of the town centre.

1.2 THE STUDY AREA

The area subject to this study covers the town centre of Dovercourt. It includes the retail area of the High Street and Kingsway, Dovercourt Railway Station, Cliff Park and the Dovercourt Beach.

The area subject to this study is shown in Figure 1.1. The study area is defined by the following boundaries: to the north the A120; to the east Waddesdon Road (rear of properties) and Cliff Park (inclusive), to the south Dovercourt Beach and to the west Mill Lane, Patrick Lane and Kingsway (rear of properties).

1.3 ENGAGEMENT

This study benefited from close working with Tendring's officers, who have an excellent working knowledge of Dovercourt. A meeting was held early in the process with the Coastal Community Team (CCT), which includes a range of stakeholders, to refresh the knowledge base brought forward from the previous masterplan and to test initial thinking. In October 2018, the masterplan team met with Councillors, officers and other stakeholders to review the draft strategy and initial recommendations, and to obtain their views. These comments have informed the subsequent iteration and finalisation of the study.



- Gateways
- P Parking

Opportunity Areas:

1. Starlings Block, High Street
2. Station and adjoining area
3. Kingsway North
4. Junction of Orwell Road and High Street
5. Milton Road Car Park
6. Land at junction of Orwell Road and Marine Parade
7. Kingsway South

Figure 1.2: The Dovercourt Rediscovered Masterplan (2011)

1.4 PREVIOUS MASTERPLAN - DOVERCOURT REDISCOVERED

The precursor to this masterplan is Dovercourt Rediscovered, published in 2011. It sets out a heritage-led approach to guide the transformation of Dovercourt and establishes the following broad vision:

“Dovercourt will be a thriving town with an attractive High Street, a range of shops and cafes and regular street markets: a town which is proud of its heritage but also able to respond to new opportunities. A town with a high quality public realm and open spaces, stunning beaches and good connections - an attractive place to live, work, shop and visit”.

To achieve this vision, the spatial strategy for the masterplan centres around three key areas of the town and sets out ambitions for each of these:

- **Station Gateway** - revitalising the area around the station with the refurbishment of the station building and a new public space to create a better gateway to the town and seafront, an improved transport interchange with improved linkages to Bathside Bay and HIP and a focus for new business and leisure uses;
- **High Street** - reinvigorating the High Street with new shops, galleries, cafes and restaurants to create a more diverse retail offer and attractive pedestrian environment; and
- **Seafront** – enhancing Cliff Park Gardens and the promenade to encourage more visitors throughout the year and provide improved amenities for local residents.

Dovercourt Rediscovered makes principal recommendation for the improvements to the public realm and signage throughout the

town centre. It also identifies some sites for redevelopment. However, there are no proposals included for these sites or any indication of what would be a viable scheme. The masterplan further provides a marketing strategy and identifies potential funding and partnership models for realising the strategy.

Dovercourt Rediscovered proposes to establish a new public space in the High Street by closing the centre section and re-routing traffic via the station.

While the masterplan document is principally sound few of its proposals have been implemented. This has been likely due to the lack of funding for public realm improvements and a challenging development context.

In this context the Dovercourt Masterplan seeks to build on this work, to provide a more realistic understanding of the development context and to identify deliverable initiatives and proposals for the town as it is now.

Public Engagement

A public engagement exercise was carried out as part of the Dovercourt Rediscovered project. Exhibitions were held over 2 days in November 2010 and members of the public were invited to comment on the masterplan and share their thoughts on what needed to change in Dovercourt.

The main results are highlighted below:

- 88% of attendees stated their first impression of Dovercourt town centre as unwelcoming/ untidy;

- In response the question, ‘what do you like about Dovercourt?’, 81% of respondents stated the seafront, 64% the heritage and 45% the open space;
- The most commonly cited responses to what attendees did not like about Dovercourt was the quality of the street scene (74%), the shops (52%) and the leisure offer (45%);
- In terms of improving the street scene, the top two results were for improving the shop fronts (71%), and landscaping improvements (58%). In addition approximately half of respondents felt that new street furniture, paving, lighting, information boards/ signage would improve Dovercourt’s street scene. The least popular choice was public art, with only 19% of respondents stating this as a preference;
- Attendees were shown various improvements to key areas within the town centre. The most popular interventions noted were the refurbishment of the station area (76%), the redevelopment of vacant sites on the high street (90%) and landscaping improvements along the sea front (72%); and
- 90% of respondents to the questionnaire supported the proposals.

Although the consultation was done a number of years ago, the results are still considered relevant because of the slow pace of change in Dovercourt. Many of the issues facing residents in 2010 are still pertinent today.



Figure 2.1: Map of Dovercourt and Harwich in 1842

2 UNDERSTANDING DOVERCOURT

2.1 HISTORY OF DOVERCOURT

Dovercourt has a long history, with the settlement appearing in the Domesday Book in 1086. Some of the oldest buildings still surviving in the area are military forts, such as Harwich Redoubt from 1808 and Beacon Hill Fort, rebuilt in 1892. This reflects the strategically important location of Harwich and Dovercourt on the coast of the North Sea.

The town as we know it dates primarily from the 19th Century. At this point, Harwich to the north was much more established, being an important port and naval base. Despite its size, Dovercourt was a popular seaside holiday resort. This function was aided by the arrival of the railway in 1854.

In 1845 John Bagshaw built a mansion at Cliff House and began plans for a new town at Dovercourt. These ambitions can still be seen today in the grand Orwell Terrace on Cliff Road and the more modest terraced properties on Victoria Street, which Bagshaw developed.

After falling into disrepair, Bagshaw's mansion was demolished in 1909 and the grounds were opened as Cliff Park in 1911, providing the main public open space in Dovercourt.

Another landmark for the town, the statue of Queen Victoria, was erected in 1904.

By the 1920s, the centre of Dovercourt was fully established and many of the terraced streets that define the town today had been constructed. The town's function as a holiday destination continued into the 20th Century, with hotels appearing on the seafront.

By mid-century, the town had grown further, accommodating substantial suburban development. At this point, Harwich and Dovercourt had become contiguous, but with each retaining their local centres and character.



Dovercourt Bay, early 1900s



High Street in 1954

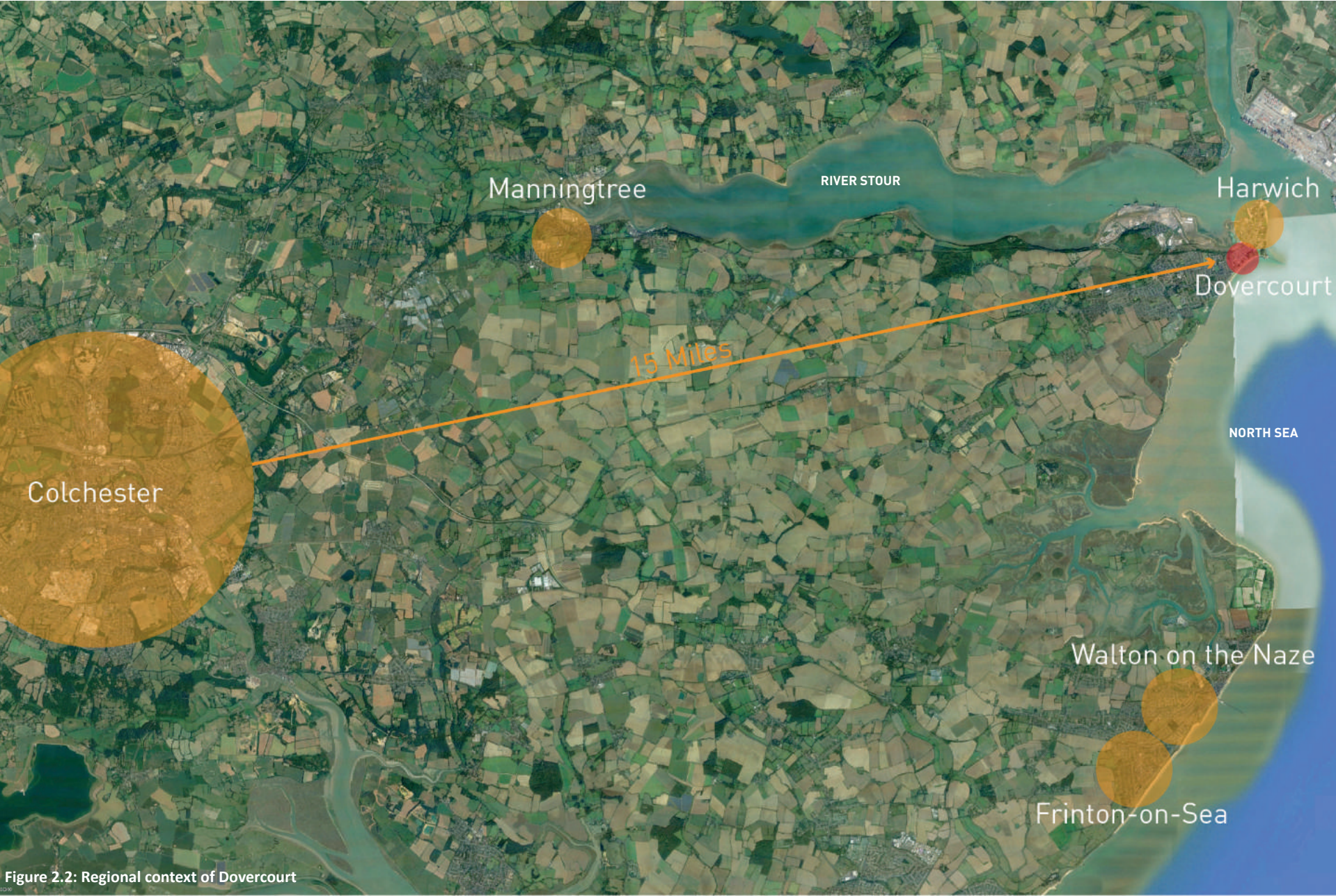


Figure 2.2: Regional context of Dovercourt

2.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Dovercourt is a small seaside town in Essex, situated on a narrow peninsula between the confluence of the River Stour and River Orwell and the North Sea. It is situated next to Harwich Town, the historic port town at the tip of the peninsula and is approximately 15 miles (30 minute drive) east of Colchester, the nearest large settlement.

Adjacent to Dovercourt is Harwich International Port with regular ferries to Holland. To the north on the opposite side of the River Orwell lies the Port of Felixstowe, which is the largest container port in the UK. Dovercourt is the main service centre for the settlements of Harwich Town, Upper Dovercourt and Parkeston as well as outlying villages.

The town's main asset is its pristine beaches and in previous decades, it was a successful seaside resort. However, the decline in popularity in English seaside tourism in general has left the town feeling neglected and underused. Despite this decline, there remains a committed local population who feel a strong attachment to the town and wish to see it recover.

Both Dovercourt and Harwich Town wards fall into the most deprived decile in England. They are characterised by a high-levels of children living in low-income families, high levels of long-term unemployment, poor public health and an aging population. Spending power is low and the need for social and health service delivery is high.

These are structural issues typical for many seaside towns that struggle from their peripheral location, the loss of the seaside tourism, limited job-opportunities, the outward migration of upwardly mobile younger people, low educational attainment and a concentration of poverty. However, Dovercourt has many strengths, which need to be understood and capitalised on. These are discussed in the following sections.



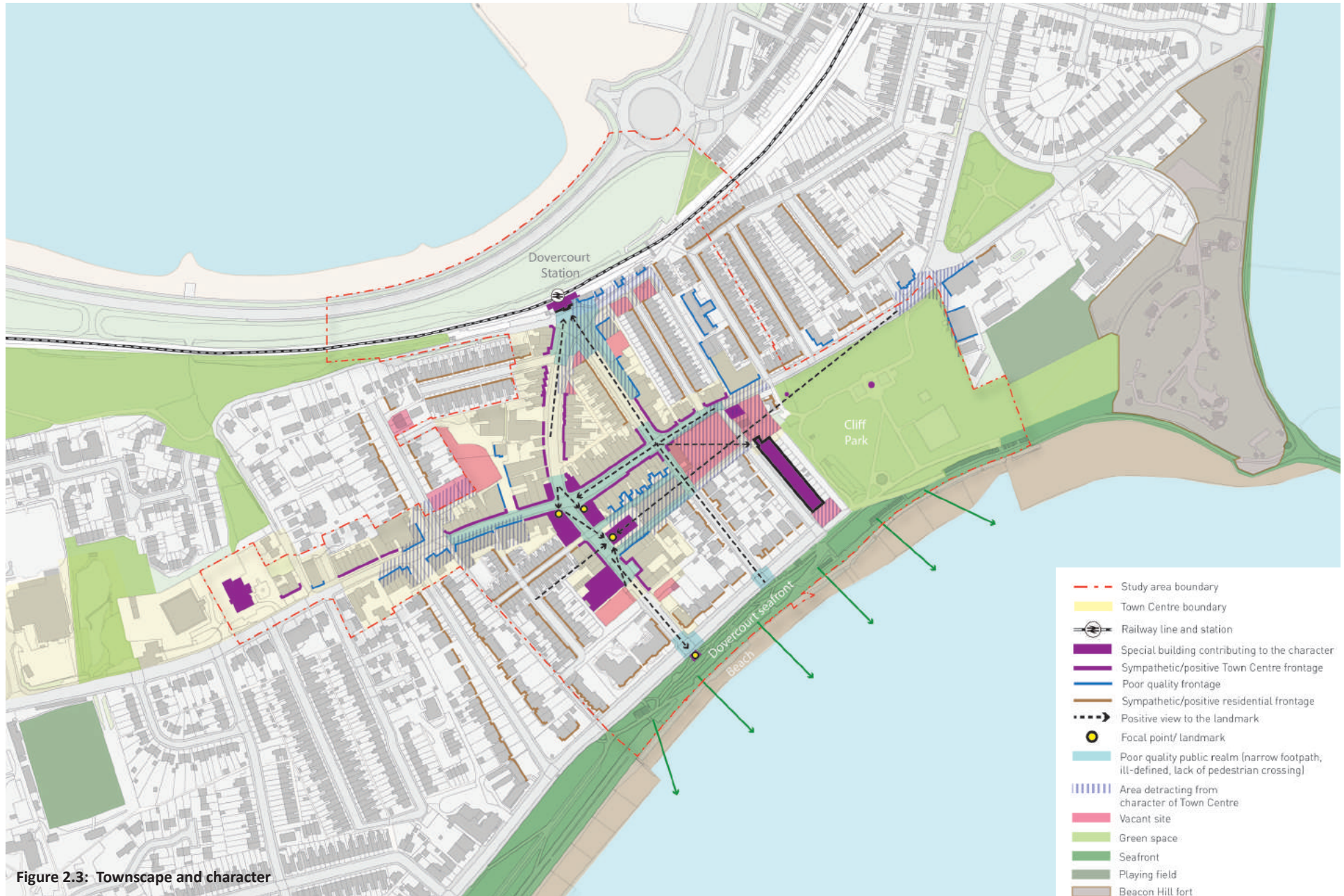
Colourful beachside huts, reflecting Dovercourt's role as a leisure destination



View across the River Stour towards Harwich International Port, northwest of Dovercourt



Container Port Felixstowe to the east of Dovercourt





Fine grain parade of shops characterise the High Street in the centre, albeit the quality of shop fronts is frequently poor and detracts from the character of the street



Larger buildings with bland architecture characterise the western end of the High Street.

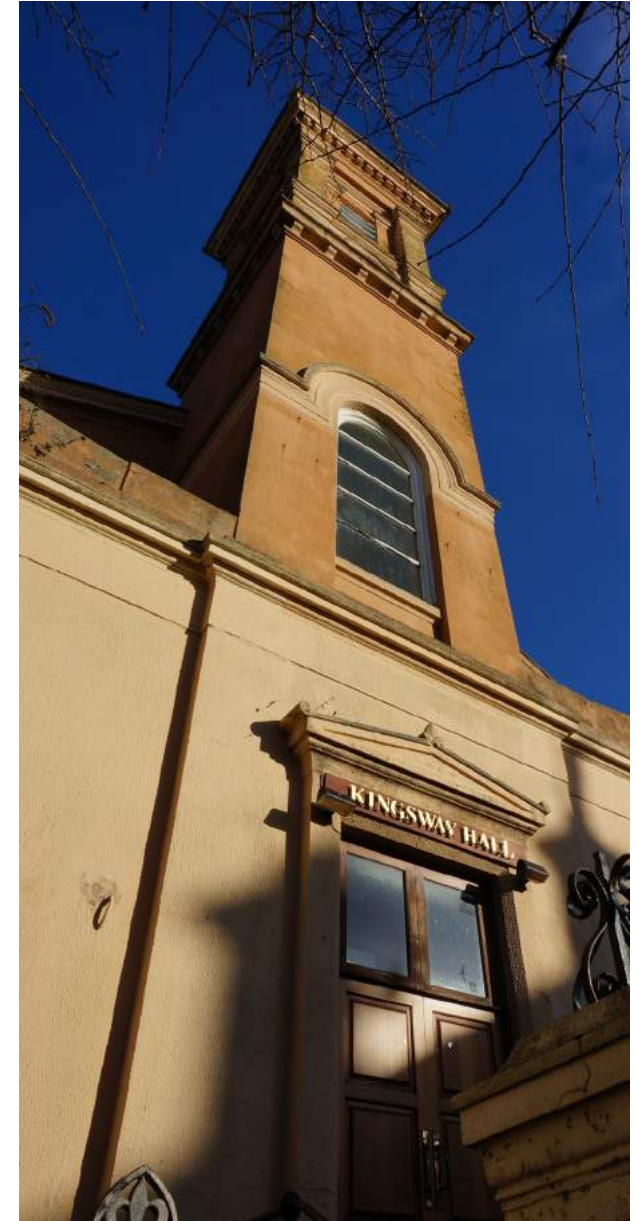
2.3 TOWNSCAPE AND CHARACTER

The centre of Dovercourt has the basic elements for a successful small town centre with distinctiveness and character. The main high street links the town with its residential hinterland of upper Dovercourt to the west and Harwich Town to the east. The centre is focused around the crossroads with Kingsway that links the station with the sea front.

The High Street runs east-west and its centre is largely characterised by a fine grain parade of shops. However, the quality of shop fronts in many of the buildings is poor and comprise unsympathetic store design and often oversized signage that detract from the character of the street. Postwar redevelopment in the western parts of the High Street introduced larger buildings with bland architecture that erode this character further.

The Grade II listed Kingsway Hall, a 19th century evangelical church, provides a prominent landmark on Kingsway and there are a number of Victorian buildings with interesting features that add character to the High Street, especially at the intersection with Kingsway. A small turret spire on the south western corner (Original Factory Shop) provides a prominent focus in the view along the High Street.

Immediately to the east of the centre, adjacent to the Starlings Block, the Victorian Grade II listed Orwell Terrace overlooks Cliff Park and with its imposing scale adds a character that is more akin to Victorian London than a small seaside town.



The tower of Kingsway Hall is a prominent landmark



Starlings Block (foreground) and Milton Road Car Park (middle ground) detract from the coherence and continuity of the centre

Kingsway to the south of the High Street is the civic heart of the town, with Kingsway Hall, the Library a number of shops and the recently opened Wetherspoon pub in the former Co-op building. Some town centre uses also extend along Kingsway towards the station, primarily on the western side of the street.

Milton Road Car Park and the Starlings Block - the large vacant site between the High Street and Milton Road, are eyesores, which detract from the coherence and continuity of the town centre character.

At the terminus of Kingsway, on the seafront is the Queen Victoria statue. It acts as an important marker in the town and on the seafront. However, the addition of insensitive railings at its base and the placement of a lamppost almost directly in front of the statue have harmed its setting.



Marine Parade and The Queen Victoria Statue, which is marred by insensitive railings

Much of the immediate hinterland to the centre is characterised by terraced streets with Victorian red-brick housing, nowadays often rendered and painted in different colours. This lends much of the town centre a strong urban and residential character. Unfortunately in a few places the consistency of this character is disrupted by unsympathetic later development, vacant sites, car parking and a loss of urban form. This is especially apparent around the station on Station Road, on East Street and on parts of Hill Road.

Detached and semi-detached housing is situated between Milton Road and Marine Parade with larger buildings overlooking the seafront. This area is distinctly less urban and contrasts with the rest of the centre.

The land rises towards the seafront, offering views back into the lower lying centre. The view north along Bay Road is an important character view. In the middle ground its focus is on the small Victorian Station Building that albeit being vacant and boarded up strikes with its simple elegance



Victoria Street with early Victorian terraced housing

and symmetry. The backdrop to this view, the River Stour with rural landscape beyond, brings into sharp focus the narrowness of the land and how the centre is situated between two water bodies.

Cliff Park and the seafront (including the promenade and landscaped areas) are the main offer of public space in the town centre. They are attractive and provide excellent views out over Dovercourt Bay.

Figure 2.3 identifies positive townscape features that contribute to character and distinctiveness of the town centre (purple and brown colour), but also poor frontages and areas of the public realm that require improvement.

2.4 USES

Dovercourt is a small town centre, which caters as the main service centre for a large hinterland including Upper Dovercourt and to some extent Harwich town, which has little retail and service provision of its own. Shops and other town centre uses are largely concentrated along the High Street and on parts of Kingsway. The immediate hinterland of the centre is residential.

The town centre competes for footfall with the recent extension of the Harwich Gateway Retail Park which includes a BM homestore, Argos, Carpetright, Peacocks and Homebargains beside Morrisons Supermarket and a Lidl Store. The retail park is situated 1.5km to the north west, directly accessible from the A120 and offers ample free parking.

Data from May 2015 shows that Dovercourt had approximately 113 retail and service units, comprising a total of 17,180 sqm (184,924 sq. ft.). There are a few national retailers in Dovercourt, including Superdrug, Boots, Iceland and The Co-Operative. In addition the town has a strong presence of bank branches, including Santander, TSB, Halifax and Nationwide, and a post office. Apart from these Dovercourt's retail market is predominantly characterised by small independent retailers.

There are a few comparison and discount stores, local groceries shops, and a broad range of service providers, such as hairdressers, estate agents, phone repair shops, opticians and funeral directors. Cafes and takeaways are located in the

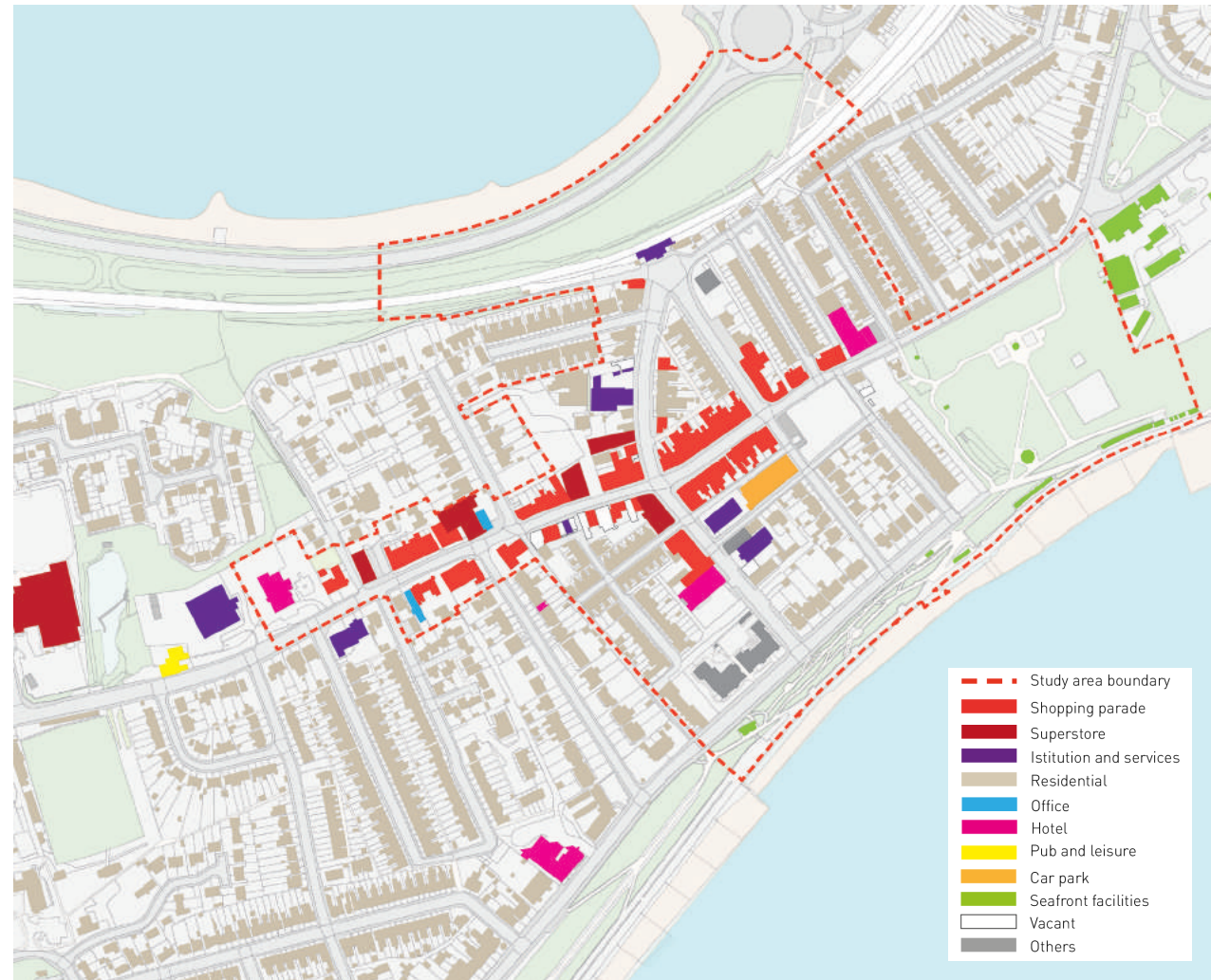
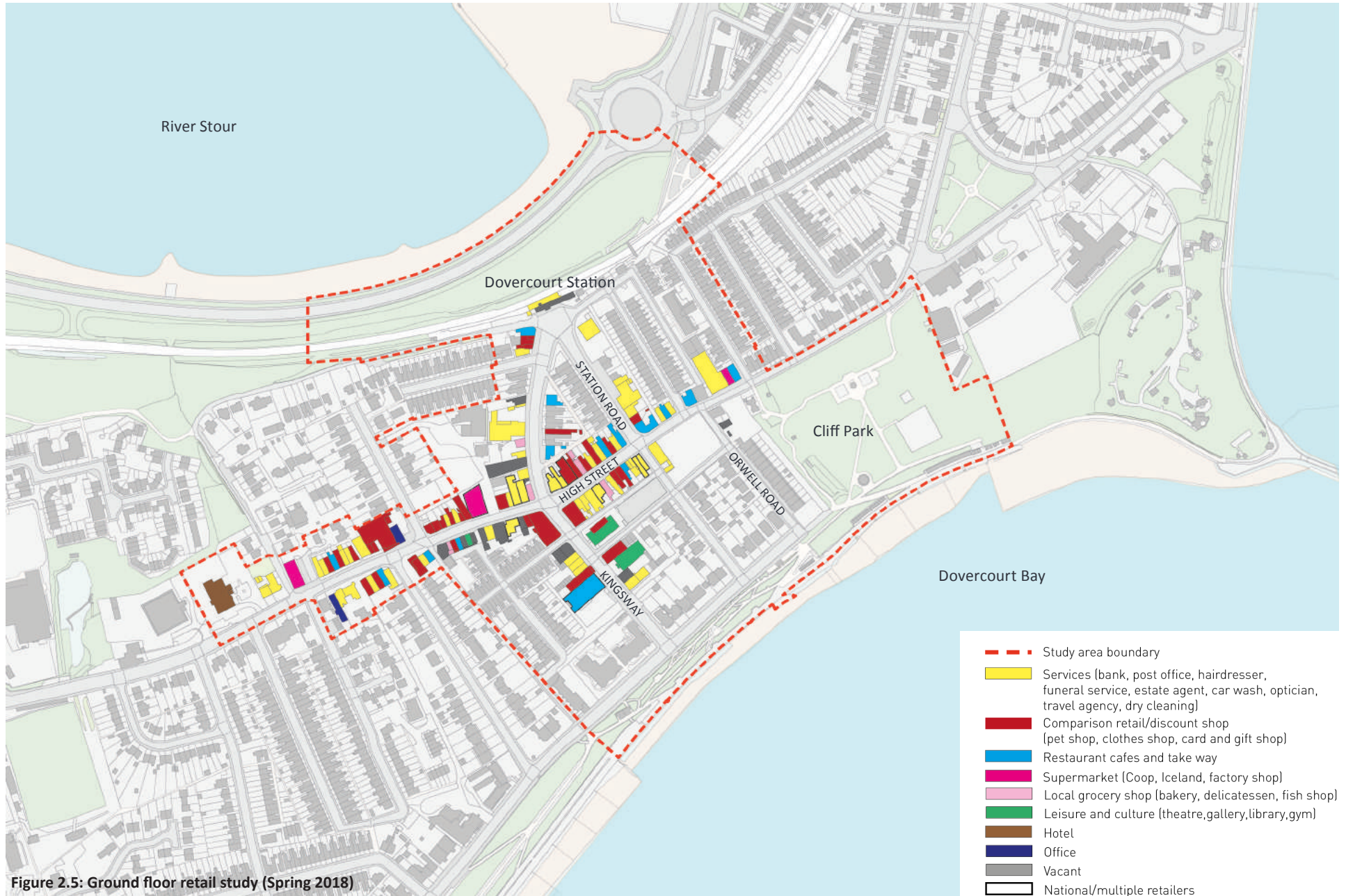


Figure 2.4: General uses





Majority of retailers in the town centre are independents

eastern end of the High Street and on Kingsway. The Bottle Kiln Wetherspoon Pub is a recent addition of a national restaurant opening in Dovercourt. A Costa Cafe is planned to open in the former Barclays Branch on Kingsway.

The centre has a limited leisure offer, including two gyms, Universal Fitness and Body Move Fitness. The presence of a library and the Kingsway Theatre (albeit only occasionally used) are important to the diversity of the town and their continued use should be supported and promoted as much as possible.

Apart from the Tower Hotel, the town centre accommodates a number of guest houses, including the Bottle Kiln Wetherspoon and the Goodlife Guest House. The Cliff Hotel on Marine Parade closed in 2017.

Dovercourt centre has a very limited provision of employment uses, which includes a post-office sorting depot, a car service and repair store, and a few small offices in shop units.

At the time of survey (Spring 2018) there were 13 vacant units in the town centre, concentrated



Friday's street market in the High Street provides a basic offer of stalls with little variety and poor appearance

especially on the southern side of the High Street to the west of Kingsway and on Kingsway itself. Many of the units have remained vacant for a considerable number of years, often suffering from increasing dilapidation issues (though many are very small or poorly located with reference to the heart of the centre). Boarded up premises can be found at the station as well as along the seafront and these detract from the appearance of the town. Vacancy rates in Dovercourt have been generally higher than other centres in Tendring.

The type and appearance of local independent shops suggests that many of them are only marginally viable and that owners hold off or cannot afford to invest in improvements to their premises and shop fronts. There is a sense among local shopholders that footfall and business has declined since the opening of the Harwich Gateway Retail Park.

There appears to be a fragile balance that underpins the current town centre vitality. If more key anchors that draw people into the centre such as banks, the library or the post office were to close, the centre could quickly lose custom.



The Bottle Kiln Wetherspoon Pub in the former Co-op Store has restored a previously dilapidated buildings and turned it into a new eating-out destination

There is presently little offer that appeals to younger people and residents with greater spending power. Enhancing the offer and attractiveness of the centre for upwardly mobile customers will be important in stemming the decline of the centre. A number of independents have tried to lift the image and quality of provision in Dovercourt, most notably Deli 141, Sun crust Bakery and the Cabin, which indicates that there is entrepreneurship and interest that regeneration initiatives could tap into.

Dovercourt has a weekly local market, which is held on Friday in the High Street, requiring the closure of the centre section for traffic. The market however only comprises a limited number of stalls, and its offer and appearance is poor. There is potential to improve the market offer by diversifying the type and number of stalls. The introduction of market management would also ensure a coherent set up and improved image. A improved market would contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of Dovercourt's retail offer and help create a sense of place and culture within the town. Enhancing and expanding the market could also offer low entry costs for new retailers.

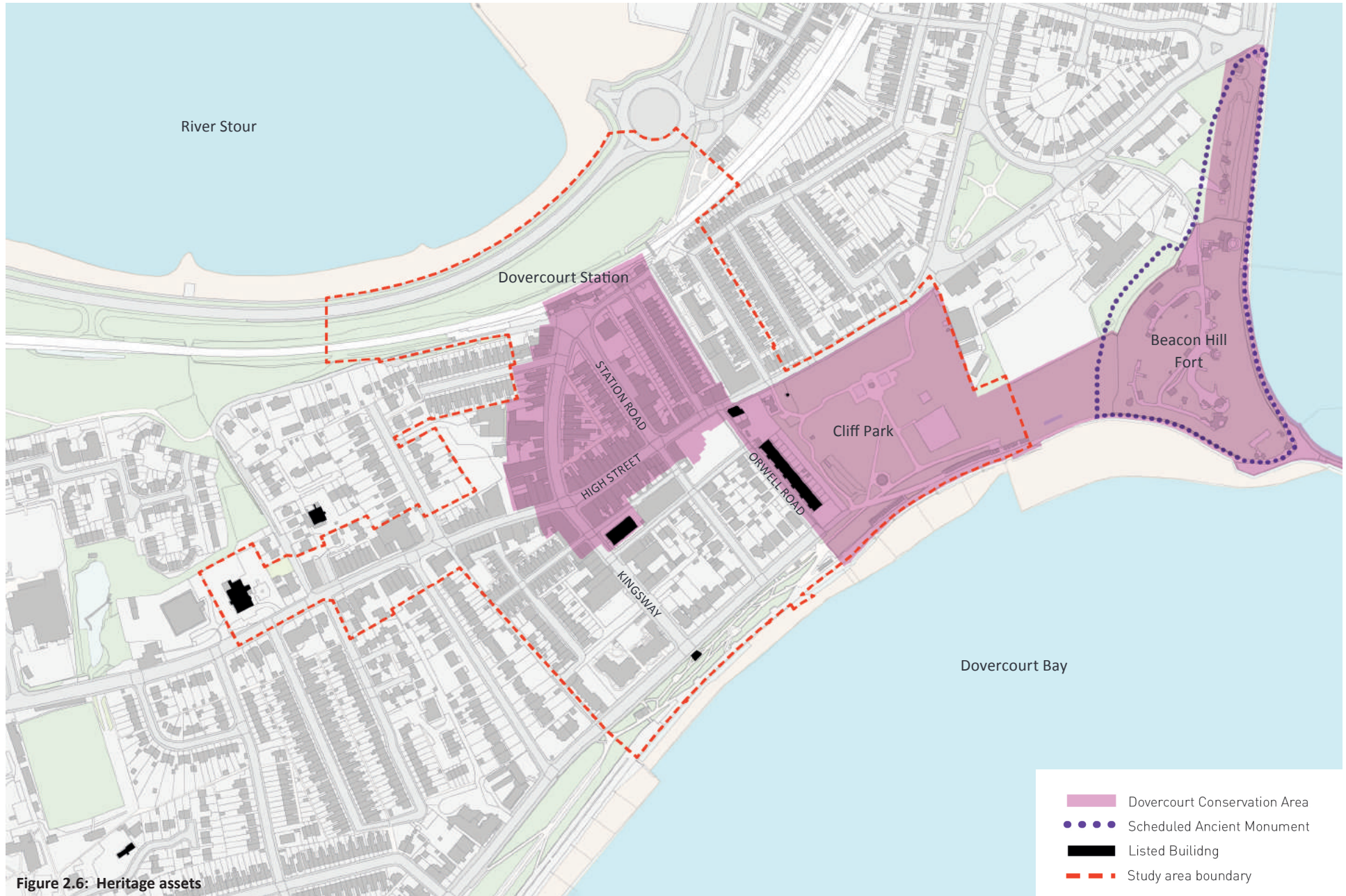


Figure 2.6: Heritage assets

2.5 HERITAGE

A large portion of the study area is designated as the Dovercourt Conservation Area, encompassing the northern end of Kingsway and Station Road, the High Street, Orwell terrace, Cliff Park and Beacon Hill. There are many interesting historical buildings within the town. However, many of these are in poor condition and are at risk of dilapidation.

Many of the listed buildings in Dovercourt are the legacy of Robert Bagshaw. One of these is the Grade II Listed Kingsway Hall, a former church built in the mid-1870s in the Italianate style. Located just south of the high Street, along Kingsway, this grand building acts as a landmark within the town. Since closing as a church, the building has reopened as a community arts centre and houses a charity shop.

Orwell Terrace, also developed by Bagshaw, is a set of Grade II Listed terraced properties on the western edge of Cliff Park. To the west of the town centre is the Grade II Listed Tower Hotel, built in 1885. Originally built as a large house, the hotel is set back within a larger plot and so is not fully visible from the street. Nonetheless, it adds character to this part of the town.

Beacon Hill Fort to the east of Cliff Park has been used as a military fortress since 1500 but was abandoned after WW2. It is a scheduled monument and is currently being looked after by a local not for profit group.



Orwell Terrace properties in a state of neglect, viewed from within Cliff Park



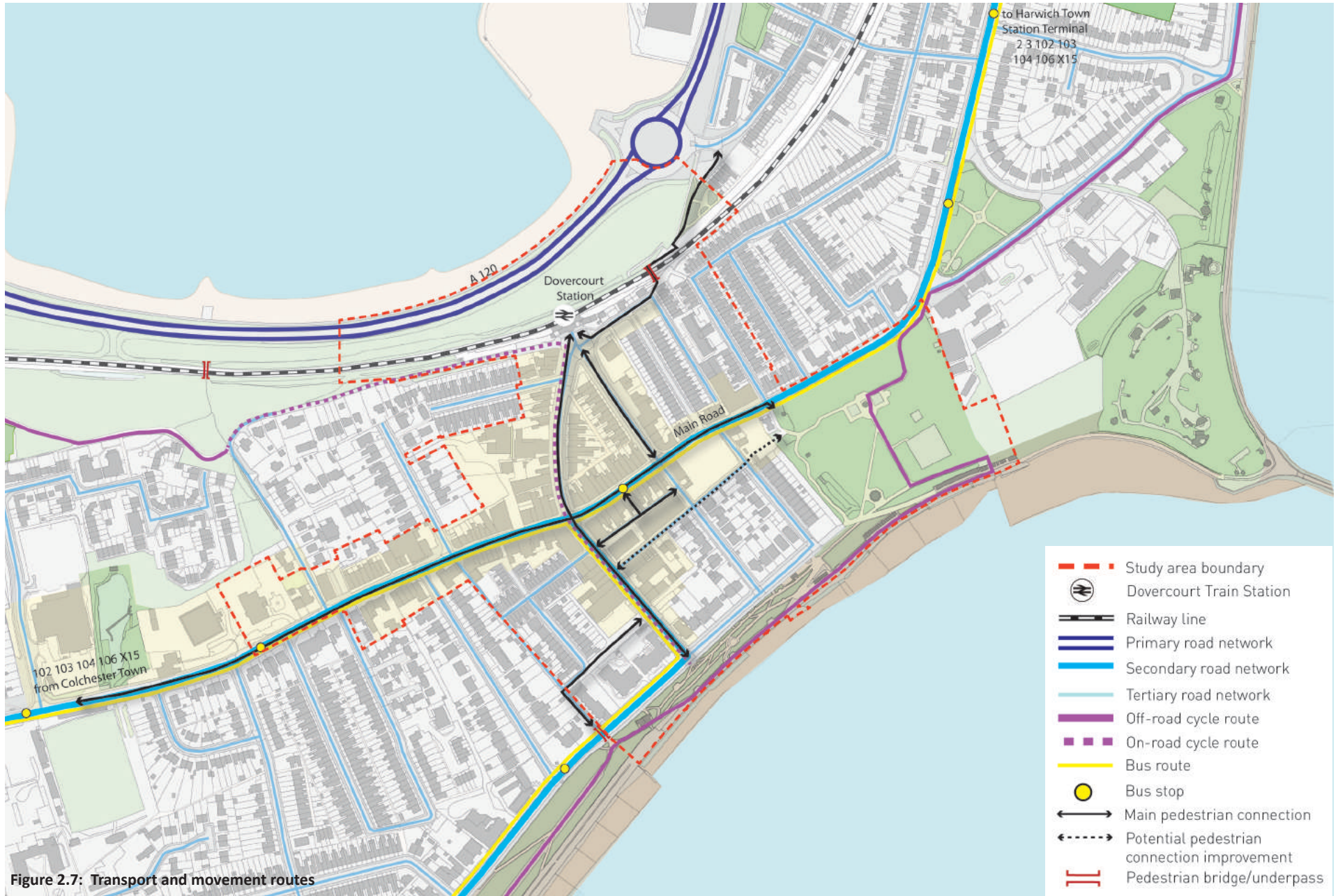
Kingsway Hall, a Grade II Listed building which acts as a local landmark



Historic buildings in the Dovercourt Conservation Area add character to the town



The Grade II Listed Tower Hotel, west of the town centre





Dovercourt train station



Local bus service which runs through Dovercourt



Milton Road car park which provides 68 spaces

2.6 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Being one stop from the end of the line at Harwich Town, connections to Dovercourt by rail are limited. Several services a day connect the town to Manningtree with onward connections to Colchester. Dovercourt station is situated on Kingsway, although infrequent services mean that this does not generate much footfall in the town centre.

Buses are more popular and run through the centre that connect Dovercourt with its outer residential areas and the larger centres of Clacton-on-Sea and Colchester. Real time bus information is provided on stops in the High Street. On Friday, the market day, when the central section of the High Street is closed, buses along with general traffic are diverted along Station Road and Kingsway.

The A120 strategic road runs to the north of the town, providing a good connection to Colchester and beyond. However, its presence means that traffic into and out of Harwich town bypasses

Dovercourt, potentially resulting in some loss of passing trade. The town centre is connected to Harwich town and the Upper Dovercourt residential area by the secondary road network. The main access to the town is provided by the B1352.

Milton Road car park is a two level Council owned 68 space pay and display car park to the south of the High Street. On street parking in the High Street, on Kingsway and Station Road is free but time limited to two hours during the week and on Saturdays. Surrounding residential areas generally have no parking restrictions.

The town centre is entirely walkable and very close to Cliff Park and the attractive seafront. However, the quality of the public realm along key routes is poor and dominated by a street design that favours the car over the pedestrian.

Especially the connection from Dovercourt Centre to Bathside is poor and does not feel safe as it involves the crossing of the railway via an overbridge and the passage is through an

overgrown and unsupervised area. The connection from Station Road into Grafton Road is equally poor.

Dovercourt is situated on the 6,000km North Sea cycle route that connects Shetland with Bergen in Norway as well as on the National Route 51 from London to Harwich. There is also a leisure cycle circuit of 6 miles promoted by Tendring Council along the seafront to Harwich Town and passing Dovercourt Station. Apart from these, facilities for local cycling are poor.

The principal access streets are space constrained and lack dedicated cycle lanes and signage, and feel unsafe to cycle, especially for less experienced cyclists. In addition there is little provision of cycle stands in the centre. Improving the provision for cyclists would help to make cycling more attractive as a means to access the town centre, especially as the majority of Dovercourt's hinterland is accessible by bicycle in less than 10 minutes. Increasing cycling would also help improve public health, reduce air pollution and limit pressure for car parking.



Figure 2.8: Open spaces and public realm



Cliff Park, a well maintained public park



The beach, Dovercourt's main asset



Narrow pedestrian paths

2.7 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACES

As a seaside town, the focus of publicly accessible open space in Dovercourt is its attractive stretch of beach, including the sloped green banks that connect street level to the shore. Cliff Park provides a substantial green space, with amenities such as a playground and bandstand, and adjoins the historic Beacon Hill Fort, which has potential to be a unique visitor destination and nature reserve. While in close proximity these assets feel disconnected from the town centre due to the lack of legible and quality pedestrian routes. Improving connections would integrate these open spaces as part of a greater town centre offer, encourage trips and increase dwell time.

While rich in open spaces at the periphery, the town centre lacks a central space where people can meet and enjoy the social life of the town. The streets themselves are the main public spaces outside of the seafront and Cliff Park. However, they are not optimised for people. The absence

of a central space to stop and enjoy the place is a major weakness of Dovercourt, and one which is addressed by this study.

Street design is functional and focused on traffic movements. The carriageway is wide with relatively narrow footways, especially in the High Street itself, and routes are not easy to cross. There is almost no provision of public seating, which would be well used given the number of older residents frequenting the centre.

The majority of footpaths have asphalt surfaces which have numerous patch repairs. They look unsightly and do little to visually differentiate the pedestrian realm from the road space. Guard rails and barriers on key junctions and the seafront further detract from the quality of the public realm.

The lack of tree planting is noticeable and this gives the streets a stark appearance. There is



The public realm feels outdated and uncared for

little in the quality of the public realm in the town centre that, on its own, would attract people to come and spend time. Improving this is key to the regeneration of Dovercourt.

The poor quality public realm further detracts from the character and distinctiveness of the town centre and degrades its image.

2.8 LOCAL PROPERTY CONTEXT

The major trend in shopping patterns over the past number of years has been a substantial growth in online shopping and a reduction in people visiting local high streets. In many places this has resulted in business closures and vacant units in town centres. Although this is partly the case in Dovercourt, the High street has largely survived due to committed local residents and an older population who still prefer to visit brick and mortar shops.

There is little demand for additional retail units in the town, and focus should instead be placed on filling those that are vacant. Demand is likely to come from independent traders, and there are a few modest growth sectors, which include convenience and comparison retail, coffee shops and takeaways.

Office development is unlikely in Dovercourt due to low demand. However, there may be scope for small scale, flexible managed office space to stimulate demand. There are currently three hotels in Dovercourt, the Tower Hotel, the Premier Inn, to the north west of the study area, and the Pier Hotel in Harwich. The Wetherspoons pub on Kingsway offers a small number of rooms and there is at least one more guest house (The Goodlife) situated within the centre. It's unlikely that there is a market in the town for further hotel development, as even budget hotel chains seek more visible and accessible locations.

Leisure and culture uses are important for the vitality of the town centre, and encouraging related spending. Dovercourt already has a good gym offer and it is unlikely that there is additional demand for this. The library and Kingsway Hall are important for the town and should be strengthened and grown if possible. Any other community-led leisure activities would benefit the town and should be supported, although their viability would need to be examined and understood.

There may be scope for residential development in Dovercourt, if its viability is carefully assessed. House prices are modest in the town but there may be scope for development of a "senior living" scheme, which benefits from proximity to local shops and services.



Vacant unit in the town centre



Local independent businesses

2.9 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The current adopted Local Plan is the 2007 Tendring District Plan. However, elements of this plan are considered out of date and not in accordance with the NPPF. The Council is in the process of preparing its new local plan. The Publication Draft Local plan was consulted upon between June and July 2017. However, it has not yet been adopted.

Given the above, the planning policy situation in Dovercourt is complex. Whilst elements of the 2007 plan are still relevant increasing weight is being given to the emerging Local Plan. This planning policy review therefore considers both documents.

URBAN REGENERATION AREA

The 2007 plan designates Dovercourt Town Centre as an “Urban Regeneration Area”, including the Starlings Block, Milton Road Car Park and the train station. Requirements for this area are set out in **Policy QL6 - Urban Regeneration Areas**.

More specific to Dovercourt is **Policy HAR12 – Dovercourt Town Centre Regeneration Area**. Within the defined regeneration area, which covers parts of the town centre, appropriate mixed-use development (including residential use) will be encouraged in order to bring about the repair and restoration of historic buildings. This designation is retained in the Draft District Local Plan 2012-2033 and beyond. This plan renames the designation as a “Priority Area for Regeneration.” However, the boundary remains the same. Policy

related to this designation is included in **Draft Policy PP14 – Priority Areas for Regeneration**. This policy is very similar in sentiment to **Adopted Policies QL6 and HAR12**. It states that development in these areas should be consistent with the following aims:

“These areas will be a focus for investment in social, economic and physical infrastructure and initiatives to improve vitality, environmental quality, social inclusion, economic prospects, education, health, community safety, accessibility and green infrastructure.

As well as this, the Council will seek to: preserve or enhance the historic assets of these areas, including the at risk conservation areas.”

The at risk conservation areas identified include the Dovercourt Conservation Area which is also located within the study area boundary.

PROTECTED OPEN SPACES

There are several areas of protected recreational spaces in the study area. These include the seafront, Cliff Park and small pockets of open spaces between the railway line and the A120. **Policy COM7 - Protection of Existing Recreational Open Space Including Children’s Play Areas and Pitch and Non-Pitch Sports Facilities** of the Adopted Local Plan and **Policy HP 4 – Safeguarded Local Greenspace** of the 2013-33 Plan prevent the loss of these spaces.

FLOOD RISK

Both the adopted Local Plan and Draft Local Plan identify flood risk in a small area in the northern part of the masterplan area. This is located north of the High Street, affecting Victoria Street, East Street, Crown Lane and part of the railway line.

A small portion of this area between the A120 and the railway line sits in Zone 3 (High Risk). The remainder is in Zone 2 (medium risk).

The Council’s approach to flood risk is outlined in **Policy QL3 – Minimising and Managing** of the Adopted Plan and in **Policy PPL1 – Development and Flood Risk** of the Draft 2013-33 Plan. Flood Risk is unlikely to effect the proposals in this masteplan as it covers only a small section of the study area and the requirements of these polices relate to more detailed development proposals.

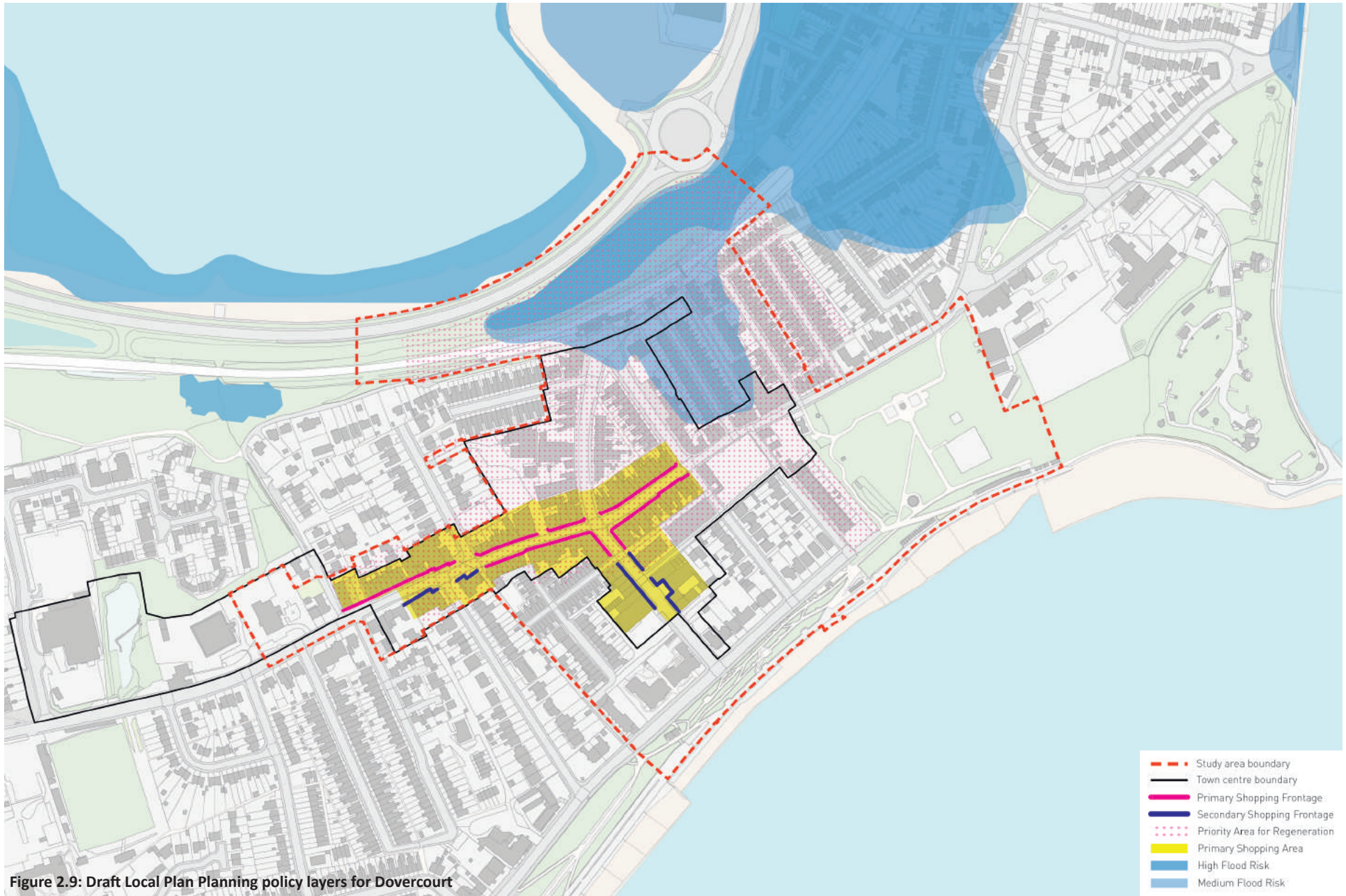


Figure 2.9: Draft Local Plan Planning policy layers for Dovercourt

PROTECTING CAR PARKS

Policy TR8 – Public Car Parks of the Adopted Local Plan safeguards public car parks.

There are two public car parks in the study area – one at Milton Road and one at the train station. Policy states that these will be protected from redevelopment unless:

- It can be proven that there is no longer a need for the facility; or
- It is demonstrated that replacement facilities can be provided close by.

This designation is no longer included in the Draft Plan.

CONSERVATION AREAS

A large portion of the study area lies within the Dovercourt Conservation Area. The conservation area designation covers the historic Orwell Terrace and adjacent Cliff Park Gardens, and an area between the High Street and railway line between Kingsway and Gwynne Road. The area has an interesting blend of 19th and early 20th century architecture.

The Conservation Area boundary remains consistent in both the Adopted and Draft Local Plans. The policy related to Conservation Areas is very similar in both plans.

Policy EN17 – Conservation Areas of the Adopted Local Plan states that development within a Conservation Area must enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and protects

the area from insensitive development and alterations.

Policy PPL8 – Conservation Areas of the Draft 2013 - 2033 Plan protects historic buildings within Conservation Areas and states that new development should not be detrimental to the area.

The Dovercourt Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2006) includes a series of suggested improvements including:

- Orwell Terrace - constructing the missing southern end to enhance the area and Marine Parade as whole;
- High Street – enhancements to older properties on the High Street between Cliff Park Gardens and Station Road (dilapidated buildings on the Starlings Block have since been removed);
- A general requirement to redefine building forecourts with boundary treatments (especially along Station Road);
- Dovercourt Station – improvements to the station arrival space;
- Bagshaw Road – improvements to the alleyway from Bagshaw Road to the High Street; and
- Cliff Park Gardens – improvements to the north east corner.

SHOPPING FRONTAGES

The Adopted Local Plan shows primary shopping frontages running along the High Street. There are no secondary shopping frontages. Retail uses along the primary shopping frontages are protected by **Adopted Policy ER33 - Non-Retail Uses Within Primary Shopping Frontages**. This policy resists change of use from A1 to A2-A5 unless under certain circumstances.

Primary shopping frontages are also identified in the Draft 2013-33 Plan. However, Secondary Shopping Frontages have also been introduced. The new Secondary Frontages can be found along Kingsway South. In addition, some of the shopping frontages from the 2007 plan at the western end of the High Street have been demoted to Secondary status. Policy related to both the Primary and Secondary Frontages is contained in **Draft Policy PP5 Town Centre Uses**. The draft policy is less prescriptive compared to Policy ER33 of the adopted Local Plan and states that shopping areas should support town centre functions and that primary shopping frontages should retain at least 70% A1 use.

Draft planning policy is shown above in Figure 2.9.



Seafront and beach



Strong attachment to town centre by local people



Existing convenience, service and leisure offer to build on

2.10 SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

STRENGTHS

- Much of the town centre's built fabric stems from the town's heyday as a Victorian seaside resort. This includes the grand Orwell Terrace, Kingsway Hall, the Station Building and many other buildings along the High Street and Kingsway, which offers the town centre both character and a sense of history.
- The town centre is the main retail and service centre for the local population of Dovercourt and Harwich town. It includes a number of bank branches, the post office, the library, Kingsway Hall, a discount supermarket, two pharmacies, and many independently run shops and services, cafes and takeaways, as well as a Bottle Kiln Wetherspoon Public House.
- Dovercourt has good rail and road connections with the East of England, the station is in easy walking distance of the town centre and seafront and provides hourly services to

Manningtree with connections to London, Colchester and Ipswich. The town is further accessible by buses connecting the centre with its immediate hinterland, Harwich, Clacton and Colchester.

- The town centre benefits from a number of visitor attractions in the wider area including the seafront and beach that adjoin the town centre. Cliff Park – a large open space with expansive views over Dovercourt Bay, Beacon Hill Fort, an abandoned military fort and scheduled monument, and the 19th Century Harwich Redoubt Fort, which is now a museum.
- Dovercourt is a short walk away from the better known Town of Harwich, a visitor destination where in 1620 the Mayflower sailed to take the first settlers to what is now the USA.

WEAKNESSES

- The town centre is suffering from wider changes in the retail environment, especially online retail, as well as from competition by the Harwich Retail Park which provides a Morrisons Supermarket, a Lidl Store, a B&M Homestore, Argos and a Peacocks Store together with a Costa Cafe and McDonalds just outside of the town centre. There are enduring shop vacancies in the town centre and the expectation is for the number of vacant units to increase. There is no demand from larger national retailers to take up space within Dovercourt. This is further stifled by the lack of large retail units.
- Dovercourt's weekly street market in the High Street is unattractive and does not live up to its potential. It comprises only of a few stalls, has a limited food and takeaway offer, and lacks clear market management in terms of layout, appearance and the variety/expanse of the offer.



Poor quality public realm



Lack of care and attention to the public realm



Vacant and derelict sites indicate lack of investment

- The town centre appears dominated by vehicular traffic due to the amount of space given over to the highway and parked cars, and comparatively narrow footways, especially in the High Street.
- Some pedestrian routes into the town centre are convoluted, lead through back lands and feel unsafe, especially the route from Bathside and Grafton Road, but also from Dovercourt Beach Park via the underpass and Empire Road.
- Cycling infrastructure is poor with no evident provision in the main streets to support cycling via dedicated routes, signage or provision of cycle stands.
- Overall the quality of the public realm is poor. The prevailing use of black asphalt as the footway surface along with the pattern of past patchwork repairs looks cheap. It also fails to provide a clear visible differentiation from

the street space. Together with prominent road markings, guard rails on main junctions, and basic street furniture, this gives a sense of utilitarian street design but not of a quality pedestrian environment.

- Walking routes from the town centre to both the seafront and Cliff Park lack adequate design and sign-posting to promote these amenities and attractions as part of the town centre experience.
- The town centre lacks a public space as the focus of town centre activity and space for the community to meet, enjoy and celebrate the town centre;
- Overdominant signage, cheap materials and unsympathetic design detract from the appearance of Victorian buildings in the centre and downgrade the character of the shopping area.

- Vacant and derelict sites detract from the appearance of the town centre and provide a sense of disinvestment, especially where hoardings are dilapidated and sites are overgrown and subject to fly tipping.
- Milton Road car park is in poor structural condition and detracts from its immediate street environment.
- Overall the town centre appears unattractive and not welcoming to visitors and local people. It does not show signs of a proactive approach to town centre management.



To build on and enhance the existing character of Dovercourt



To redevelop Council assets such as the Milton Road car park as catalyst for regeneration



To support the visitor economy by enhancing Dovercourt's image and character and improving connections, signage and visitor amenities

OPPORTUNITIES

- Repair, intensify and enhance Dovercourt's image by redeveloping eyesores and vacant sites with new housing and mixed use developments.
- Support local shops and businesses and attract additional town centre uses that can complement and strengthen the local retail, service and tourism offer.
- Bring forward a catalyst development on the Milton Road Car Park and Starlings Block sites that change the perception and image of the town and accelerates regeneration.
- Create a step change in the quality of the public realm in the centre to make the centre a more walkable and people friendly environment, and to improve its image.
- Create a new public space in the heart of the town as the focus of activities and as a place to meet, relax and spend time.
- Improve the appearance of shops and building frontages in the High Street and Kingsway to bring out the historic, fine grain and intricate character of these streets and strengthens Dovercourt's identity.
- Enhance facilities for cycling to encourage more local people onto bicycles and support cycling for leisure and health purposes;
- To support the visitor economy by continuing to promote Dovercourt and Harwich, and by improving connections, signage and visitor amenities around key attractions and the centre itself.
- Celebrate the 400-year anniversary of the Mayflower journey and establish other regular events and festivals that put Dovercourt on the map, attract visitors and reinforce local identity.
- Bring the station building back to life and animate the station environment, for example by converting it into a small workspace hub or café.
- Create a strong management arrangement for the town centre that can look effectively after the promotion, marketing, maintenance and improvement of Dovercourt town centre, and that listens to and has the support of local businesses.



Failure to attract the young generation and working families will undermine the town centre's future



If the right actions are not taken, Dovercourt could see more vacant units



Lack of funding could undermine the Council's ability to bring forward development and improvements to the town centre

THREATS

- Failure to enhance the environment and to attract a younger generation and working families means that over time, with an aging population, businesses and shops will see less and less footfall, reinforcing the spiral of decline. Doing nothing is not an option.
- Further closure of key retail and service anchors, such as banks and the post office, could undermine regeneration efforts by further depressing the town centre.
- Increased competition from out-of town retailers would have a significantly detrimental impact on the livelihood of the centre.
- Failure to attract visitors through marketing, improving the experience and making best use of Harwich and Dovercourt's attractions, would forgo the potential of additional footfall and spending power to support the livelihood of Dovercourt.
- Lack of funding could undermine the Council's ability to upgrade the public realm and bring forward development.
- Lack of investor interest and poor market demand for retail uses and housing may affect the viability and deliverability of development proposals.
- Failure of public sector agencies to coordinate work and have a joined-up approach will undermine the ability to obtain funding and could affect the effectiveness and delivery of regeneration projects.
- Failure to engage with local businesses, voluntary organisations and grass-roots groups during the delivery of the masterplan may antagonise the very people who have an interest in the town centre and could help deliver the town renaissance.
- Focusing on capital projects alone and ignoring softer means of regeneration such as promotion, marketing, events, better town centre management, small scale interventions and meanwhile uses, could mean that the momentum generated by the masterplan is lost. Change could take too long to deliver and the centre will decline further in the interim period.
- Lack of political leadership and a clear officer mandate with dedicated resources for the implementation of the masterplan may threaten the recovery and regeneration of Dovercourt.



3 DOVERCOURT MASTERPLAN REVISITED

3.1 VISION

Through intensive engagement with the local community the Dovercourt Rediscovered Masterplan (March 2011) set out the following vision:

“Dovercourt will be a thriving town with an attractive High Street, a range of shops and cafes and regular street markets: a town which is proud of its heritage but also able to respond to new opportunities. A town with a high quality public realm and open spaces, stunning beaches and good connections - an attractive place to live, work, shop and visit”.

Whilst time has moved on and the wider context to this masterplan is different from eight years ago, the Dovercourt vision remains as relevant today as it was then. It therefore was adopted as the principal objective to guide this masterplan.

Improve Dovercourt's provision and experience for families and young people



3.2 A NEW TOWN CENTRE PARADIGM

The conditions for town centres have become more challenging, with online shopping and retail parks increasingly competing and undermining brick and mortar shops.

Diverse retail offer

The lessons from recent studies into high streets are that retail is likely to decline further while the service and leisure role of centres remains strong. With the growth of the coffee culture there is generally a greater demand for cafes and restaurants, as well as for a lively evening economy, entertainment and leisure uses within town centres.

Character, amenity and sense of place

The role of centres as social meeting places will become more important. People come to town centres for a variety of reasons, such as running errands, shopping or to access local facilities. But besides these primary purposes, visits often involve other activities like meeting friends, stopping for a coffee or a bite to eat, going to a park or children's play area, or just spending time roaming the streets and spaces to enjoy the experience and to feel part of the community.

Successful urban places are a combination of many factors which must work together. A compact, characterful and quality environment with pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces will support and be supported by a range of uses and facilities.

Business location

Town centres increasingly promote themselves as business locations. Smaller firms and the self-employed often prefer the vibrancy of urban centres with access to facilities and amenities over out of town business parks or being isolated working from home. Providing small business hubs and incubator spaces can often tap into an unmet local demand and attract businesses into a town centre. This can support local regeneration by clustering entrepreneurial capacity and enriching social networks, generating footfall for local shops and facilities and increasing the level of local spending, while supporting local economic development and job creation.

A place for local residents

Town centres benefit from having more people living in them or close by, as residents animate the streets during the day and evening and support local businesses. People of all ages are increasingly interested in living in lively urban areas that are close to public transport and have the convenience of eating, leisure and health facilities nearby.

Many regeneration strategies nowadays aim to intensify town centres and their immediate hinterland with new housing, especially where they are well served with public transport. They also aim to improve walking and cycling connections with established neighbourhoods to make it easy and convenient for residents to access and frequent the centre on a daily basis.

Do nothing is not an option

People tend to exercise choice, especially those with greater spending power. In competition with other nearby centres, places that are attractive and offer an enjoyable, interesting and varied experience, while providing the usual range of town centre uses, will be preferred.

Places that fail to respond to the shifting role of town centres will become sidelined, are at risk of losing footfall and shop closure. Dovercourt is at a point where it needs to act to avoid the spiral of decline accelerating. Doing nothing is not an option.

3.3 TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

The following nine principal objectives encapsulate the strategy for Dovercourt town centre's renaissance as a thriving and attractive place to live, work, shop and visit:



The town centre has potential for more work space



Enhance the offer of the town centre

1

REINFORCE THE TOWN CENTRE AS THE PLACE FOR LOCAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- Promote uses and facilities that strengthen the comparison and convenience retail offer, and the service, civic, health, community, cultural and leisure provision in the centre.
- Listen to existing shops and businesses and respond to their concerns and suggestions;
- Prevent further expansion of the Harwich Retail Park or the development of similar out of town retail and leisure uses that undermine the town centre offer.
- Prevent the conversion of ground floor retail units to residential uses in the High Street and Kingsway, but otherwise promote a flexible approach to the provision of a wide range of non-residential town centre uses at groundfloor including workspace and employment.
- Encourage the meanwhile use of vacant properties and sites, for example with pop-up shops, community hubs, galleries, cafés and the like that create interest and animation.
- Improve the appearance and offer of the street market by bringing in an experienced market manager or operator.

2

TO INTENSIFY THE TOWN CENTRE AND ENHANCE ITS ROLE AS A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

- Seek the intensification of the town centre with new development or the extension of existing buildings whilst ensuring a sensitive and contextual response to the local character, the typical scale and grain of the urban fabric and heritage assets.
- Promote new mixed use or housing developments that provide homes for young people, families and the elderly and help enliven the centre.
- Bring vacant spaces above shop units back to life by converting them to residential or employment uses that help animate and overlook the high street.
- Provide workspaces within the centre through the conversion of vacant shop units in peripheral locations into small office units, and by bringing the station building back into active use as an incubator and small business hub.

3

ENHANCE DOVERCOURT'S CHARACTER AND STRENGTHEN ITS DISTINCTIVENESS

- Preserve and enhance heritage assets and promote sensitive renovations and interventions in buildings (listed and unlisted) that contribute to Dovercourt's character, townscape and distinctiveness, especially within but not limited to the Dovercourt Conservation Area.
- Promote and support shop front improvements in the High Street and Kingsway to better reveal the character and quality of the historic shopping parades and to strengthen the distinctiveness of these streets.
- Protect and enhance views to local landmarks within the town centre (Kingsway Hall, Queen Victoria Statue, Station Building, articulated corner buildings with turrets on Kingsway, and Orwell Road Terrace).
- Protect and celebrate long views from the town centre to Dovercourt Bay, the Stour and Cliff Park.
- Repair the urban fabric by redeveloping vacant or underused sites and eyesores (such as the Milton Road car park and the Starlings Block) that detract from the character and appearance of the town centre.
- New development to be of high quality and respect the scale, grain, building lines, materiality and spectrum of colours of the built fabric in the town centre and positively contribute to the town's existing character.



The seafront - one of Dovercourt's greatest assets



Kingsway Hall adds character to the town centre



Many buildings have a unique character

4

MAKE IT EASY AND ATTRACTIVE FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO THE TOWN CENTRE BY ALL MODES OF TRANSPORT

- Provide quality, safe, direct and continuous walking routes into the centre from the immediate hinterland (especially Bath Side and the Grafton Road Neighbourhood) and neighbourhoods further away (Harwich, Upper Dovercourt, the Vineway).
- Improve the quality of the pedestrian environment and provide easy and safe road crossings that follow desire lines.
- Complement the existing cycle provision (National Cycle Route) with a network of direct and continuous local cycling routes that connect surrounding residential areas with the centre and the seafront. These should be signed along quiet streets and marked or segregated on more trafficked corridors to encourage local cycling. Cycle stands should be provided in key locations.
- Work with public transport providers to ensure public transport is an attractive, frequent and affordable means to access the town centre especially for local and disadvantaged people (such as teenagers and older people) that have no access to private modes of transport.



Provide cycling infrastructure

- Enhance the quality of the town centre parking provision, balancing parking needs in certain locations (such as the High Street) against other regeneration objectives such as improving the public realm and providing wider pavements.
- Provide electric charging points to support cleaner technologies and explore the viability of car and bike sharing provision in the centre.
- Explore the potential to establish a new sign-posted (overflow) car park for visitors to the north of the station, accessed directly from the A120 to provide capacity to respond to seasonal peak parking demands.
- Establish attractive signposted high quality circular routes for walking and cycling that connect multiple visitor attractions, including the station, the town centre, Dovercourt Beach, Cliff Park, Beacon Hill Fort, Harwich Fort and Harwich Town.



Signage can enhance the visitor experience



Improved bus stops and waiting areas

5

PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

- Significantly improve the quality of the public realm to lift the image of Dovercourt and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Widen footways in the High Street and Kingsway, to support the relaxed browsing of shop fronts and to encourage social interaction, allowing people to stop and have a chat without obstructing the passage to others.
- Establish better formal and informal crossing facilities along the High Street and Kingsway and promote continuous footway treatments at side street entries that emphasise pedestrian priority and make moving easier for less able town centre visitors and prams and wheelchair users.
- Replace asphalt footway surfaces with consistent sets of pavement slabs to aesthetically differentiate the footway from the carriageway and create a sense of quality, and to enable the future maintenance of services without undermining the coherence of the footway and the quality of the street scene (currently, the asphalt is marred by unsightly patch repair after works carried out on services).



An example of a high quality street environment

- Plant trees and provide greening throughout the centre to soften the street scene, add to character, offer shade and shelter, and reduce pollution.
- Provide formal and informal seating opportunities, particularly close to junctions and on inclined streets, to allow people (especially older or less mobile people) to rest, meet and observe the street life.
- Provide a coherent palette of quality public realm furniture throughout the centre including seating, mixed recycling bins, cycle stands, signage and lighting, to enhance the image and give a sense that quality matters in Dovercourt.



Public realm interventions can improve the safety of streets and create more space for pedestrians



Attractive paving and seating areas can encourage people to stay in the town centre

6

OFFER QUALITY PUBLIC SPACES THAT INVITE PEOPLE TO STAY

- Create a new public space in the heart of Dovercourt as the focus for the community and public life. The space should have a high quality and distinctive design, be inclusive and provide a wide range of open space amenities, offer flexible areas to accommodate a regular street market, festivals and events, and deliver a step change in the image of the town.
- Integrate Dovercourt Beach and Cliff Park as part of the town centre offer, by connecting them with quality and legible routes, providing appropriate signage and ensuring their continued quality and amenity;
- Along key routes, such as the High Street and on Kingsway, seek opportunities for well designed pocket spaces for people to meet, sit down and enjoy the town centre. These should provide a bespoke design with formal or informal seating, landscaping and lighting, and contribute to the town's distinct character.
- Provide opportunities for formal and informal play in the public realm to cater for children and promote an active engagement with the urban space. Public art will encourage animation, interest and an element of surprise in the town centre.



Public seating with an integrated feature tree



Public space can encourage people to stay in the town centre



The public space could be home to an enhanced street market

7

SUPPORT SMALL INTERVENTIONS TO ANIMATE THE CENTRE, BRING QUICK IMPROVEMENTS AND CATALYSE CHANGE

- Some problems in urban places require small interventions such as improving a road crossing, providing a bench on a slope for older people to rest, adding greenery or painting a wall to freshen up the street scene. They could also include pop-up shops, community projects or temporary public realm interventions.
- Small interventions can also be time limited, for example trying out a different highway layout (with cones, pot plants, artificial grass, deck chairs and street art), with temporary road closures or replacing parking bays with parklets (offering a mini park with seating and greening next to the footway).
- Sometimes what starts as a temporary intervention changes how people see and use a place, helping to overcome initial concerns or objections, and can instil support that leads to a permanent solution. Small interventions often can make a real impact on attractiveness, enjoyment and the image of a town centre despite being incremental, small scale and low budget.



Even a little bit of green space can make people feel more comfortable and at home



Low cost public art can help to animate a space

- They may be initiated by local activists who deeply care for their place and know how to organise the community and get things done. They could also come from business groups or the local authority itself. However, an inflexible approach by the relevant authorities and lack of resources are typical impediments for small interventions coming forward.
- Tending Council should realise the potential of small-scale interventions for the improvement of Dovercourt Town Centre and the wellbeing of the local community. Small interventions should be supported where possible both in terms of the regulatory framework as well as through provision of resources. A dedicated contact person for small scale interventions should be identified that can help facilitate these projects.



Temporary uses can bring vacant units back to life

8

EFFECTIVE MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE TOWN CENTRE

- A dedicated web page and instagram presence (www.historicharwich.co.uk) has already been established that promotes Harwich and Dovercourt Bay as a tourism destination and hosts the Mayflower 400 programme.
- Expand on this ongoing work and carve out a special role and brand identity for Dovercourt town centre, focusing on tourism but also catering for local residents.
- Marketing strategies could include:
 - An extension to the website and expansion of its social media presence (facebook/ twitter) that primarily targets local people and provides information about Dovercourt's (and Harwich's) offer, local businesses and facilities, news and information, events, promotions and a platform for 'Dovercourt talk'.
 - Holding regular events and festivals that become synonymous with the town centre, and attracts locals as well as visitors. Events could include music or an open air cinema in Cliff Park, water sports or competitions on the



Attractive signage can improve the visitor experience

beach and food themed market events in the high street. The 2020 Mayflower celebration could also become a big draw for Dovercourt. Rewarding regular town centre customers, with a reward schemes.



Organising festivals can help to put Dovercourt on the map



Regular events and effective marketing can bring more visitors to the town

- Providing signage and plaques with information about the town centre.

9

MANAGE THE TOWN CENTRE

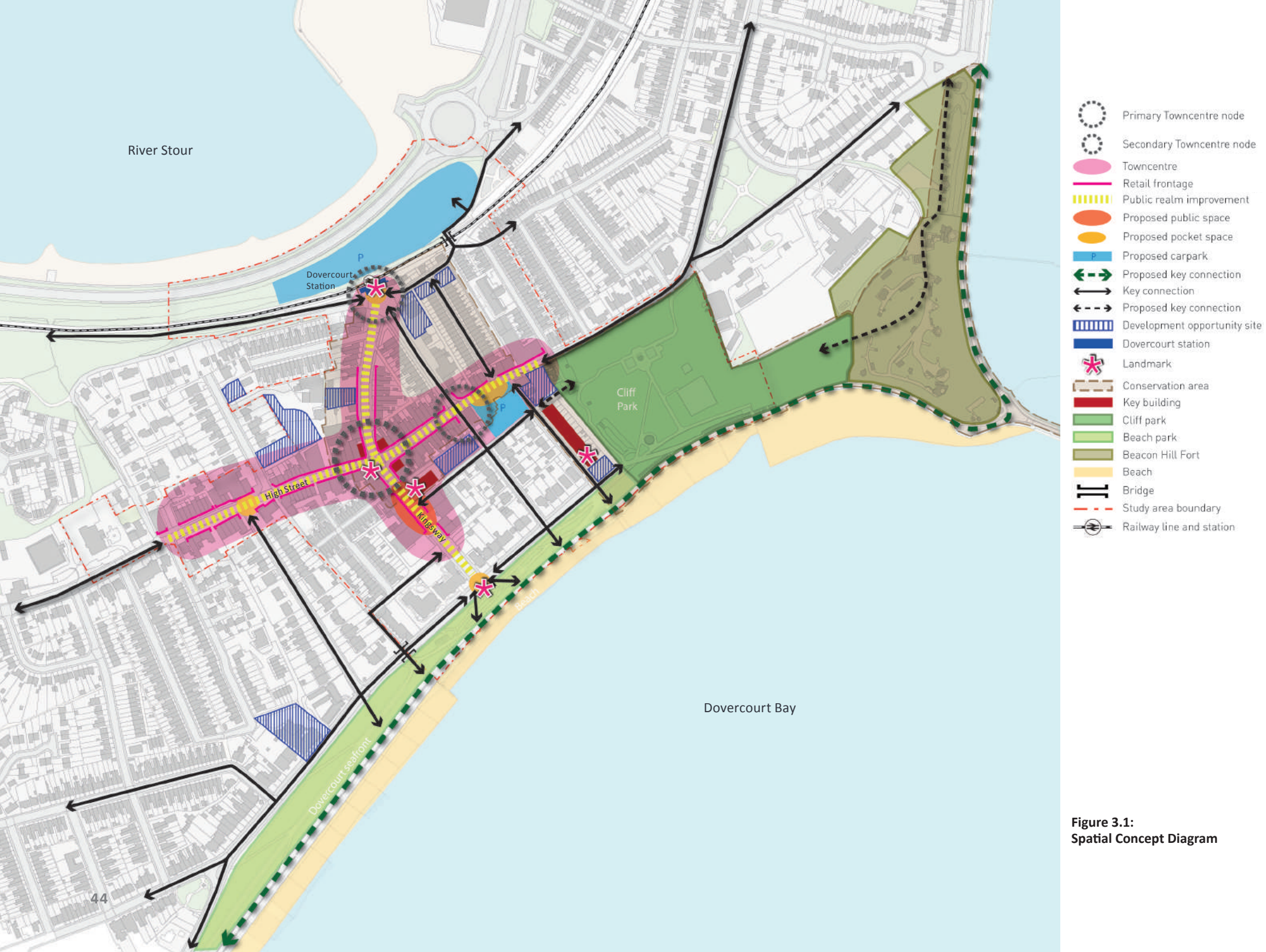
- Look after the town centre and ensure it is clean, safe, well maintained, and a welcoming place overall.
- Undertake promotion and marketing;
- Make the most of seasonal events and celebrations with decorations such as Christmas lights and flowers.
- Organise markets, events and festivals;
- Offer a point of contact for businesses and a lobbying platform for town centre interests with the Council and other agencies.
- Oversee town centre activities, engage with businesses and the community, and help with the resolution of issues and conflicts.
- Town centre management could be undertaken by the Council in partnership with local businesses.



Manage the appearance of the town centre, for example by dressing up site hoardings



Maintenance is key to an attractive environment



-  Primary Towncentre node
-  Secondary Towncentre node
-  Towncentre
-  Retail frontage
-  Public realm improvement
-  Proposed public space
-  Proposed pocket space
-  Proposed carpark
-  Proposed key connection
-  Key connection
-  Proposed key connection
-  Development opportunity site
-  Dovercourt station
-  Landmark
-  Conservation area
-  Key building
-  Cliff park
-  Beach park
-  Beacon Hill Fort
-  Beach
-  Bridge
-  Study area boundary
-  Railway line and station

Figure 3.1:
Spatial Concept Diagram

3.4 SPATIAL CONCEPT

Spatial proposals of the town centre strategy are represented in the concept diagram (Figure 3.1). The diagram shows the principal elements of the town centre, key connections and other proposed interventions.

Dovercourt town centre

This area is the focus of town centre activities and where mixed use development should be promoted. The concept diagram identifies the extent of the town centre with its retail frontages. Ground floor frontages should be generally active in this area, including retail, services, restaurant, leisure and employment uses. New residential ground floor uses should not be permitted along the High Street and Kingsway at locations within the town centre.

Town Centre Nodes

Three nodes are identified where key movement routes come together. These are at the junction of the High Street and Kingsway (which is the main crossroad in the town centre) at Bath Road, and at the railway station. Each of these nodes is a place where people naturally congregate. They should offer a high quality public realm, potential for people to sit, and enable pedestrians to cross roads along desire lines. As decision-making points, the built form around these places should be legible and distinctive.

Public realm improvements

Public realm improvements are proposed along the High Street and Kingsway, to create a high quality pedestrian environment in the centre of the town and enhance its character and appearance (see section 3.7).

Key Connections

The concept plan identifies important approach routes into the centre, via Cliff Park and Dovercourt Beach. Key connections should provide a quality environment for pedestrians that is overlooked and well defined by development.

Two new connections are proposed. The first connects Milton Road with Cliff Park to enable direct access to the park from Kingsway and open up a new leisure route. The second is a proposal to provide better access to Beacon Hill Fort from Cliff Park to better integrate these spaces. The Beacon Hill Fort is a potential new visitor destination and opportunities should be sought to provide public access and connect this in the circuit of leisure routes, especially with Cliff Park.

Public spaces

A new public space is proposed on Kingsway outside Kingsway Hall and the library to act as the focus for the community and for public life. The space could accommodate a regular street market, festivals and events, and deliver a step change in the image of the town.

Four pocket spaces on key routes are proposed for people to meet, sit down and enjoy the town centre. These are located at the station, at the Queen Victoria Statue, on the High Street west of Orwell Road (adjoining the proposed new town centre car park), and at the intersection with Hill Road as a resting space on the hill slope.

Car parking

Two new car parking locations are proposed. A surface car park on the Starlings Block provides replacement spaces for the redevelopment of the Milton Road car park that is reaching the end of its life.

There is potential to open up a site to the north of Dovercourt Railway Station (accessed from the A120) as a new car visitor/overflow carpark to cater for peak demand. Both car parks would help to bring footfall through more peripheral parts of the High Street and Kingsway respectively, and support businesses and town centre vitality more widely.

Heritage, landmarks and views

The concept diagram identifies a number of designated heritage assets and key landmarks that contribute to Dovercourt's character and distinctiveness. They should be preserved and enhanced and views to landmarks need to be protected from intrusion by unsympathetic development. Development within the historic part of the centre, and especially within the Dovercourt Conservation Area, will need to be sensitive and respond appropriately to the townscape, the dominant existing materials and fine grain of the context.

Development opportunities

The plan identifies a number of vacant and under-used sites that present opportunities for development and in so doing, the repair of the urban fabric (see section 3.6). Mixed use developments with active ground floor uses should be provided within the town centre and on the seafront to animate streets and generate footfall. Residential development is proposed in more peripheral locations.

The station building offers the opportunity for conversion into a workspace hub to bring new life into this building and prevent it from further dereliction, while also creating a focus for local employment.



- KEY**
- New pavement
 - Parking/loading bay
 - Parking bay
 - Raised side street entry
 - Raised table junction
 - Footway cross over
 - Pedestrian/Cycle path
 - Public space surface
 - Landscaping
 - Community garden
 - Proposed street trees
 - Proposed feature trees with circular benches
 - Private garden
 - Private yard space
 - Proposed development footprint
 - Station workspace hub
 - Seating object
 - Feature lighting
 - Bench
 - Circular bench around tree
 - Public art with seating
 - Enhanced Queen Victoria statue
 - Market stall
 - Bus gate
 - Pedestrian crossing
 - Landscaping
 - Drop off place
 - Cycle parking

Figure 3.2:
Illustrative Masterplan

3.5 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

Based on the concept plan, an indicative masterplan has been prepared that illustrates with a bit more detail how Dovercourt could be regenerated.

The illustrative masterplan shows in principle design solutions showing how development sites could be brought forward and public realm improvements could be implemented. It provides an array of proposals that have been developed to understand the potential for change. The cost and viability implications for key sites are also examined.

The illustrative masterplan is show in Figure 3.2.



Artist illustration of the proposed new public space in Kingsway



- KEY**
- New pavement
 - Parking/loading bay
 - Parking bay
 - Raised side street entry
 - Raised table junction
 - Footway cross over
 - Pedestrian/Cycle path
 - Public space surface
 - Landscaping
 - Community garden
 - Proposed street trees
 - Proposed feature trees with circular benches
 - Private garden
 - Private yard space
 - Proposed development footprint
 - Other potential sites
 - Station workspace hub
 - D01 Development site boundary with site code

Figure 3.3:
Development opportunities

3.6 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The illustrative masterplan identifies a number of development opportunities in the study area that are important for the regeneration of Dovercourt. These are identified in Figure 3.3.

Generally these are underused, vacant or derelict sites which detract from the image of the town centre and the quality of the pedestrian environment in their vicinity. Redeveloping these sites would repair the urban fabric, deliver new activities and housing, establish a sense of enclosure and animation along streets and breath new life into the town centre.

A few of these sites are in the ownership or under the control of the Local Authority whilst the majority are privately owned. Tendring Council should actively engage and work with landowners to explore how these sites could be brought forward for development, and how they could support the regeneration of the town centre.

A number of development scenarios for the Milton Road Car Park site and the Starlings Block were developed and tested as part of this masterplan work. The preferred option for these sites are included in the illustrative masterplan and is described below.

Key development opportunities

D01 Starlings Block West – Opportunity for the development of the corner plot on the western end of the Starlings Block with a mixed-use building that provides active ground floor uses towards the High Street and animate the corner with Bath Road. The height of development should mirror heights in the High Street of three storeys plus a roof or set back storey. The remainder of the

Starlings Block is proposed to be developed as a new town centre car park (see next section 3.7);

D02 – Redevelopment of the Milton Road Car Park with a residential scheme, to establish a positive frontage and enclosure onto Milton Road and enhance the setting of Kingsway Hall. This could take the form of three storey townhouses above a shared undercroft private car park. In addition, the scheme should aim to reprovide a minimum of 15 public car parking spaces on Bagshaw Road;

D03 – Opportunity to redevelop the private car park with a mixed-use building that re-establishes the frontage onto the High Street and Orwell Road. A new public pedestrian connection between Milton Road and Cliff Park should be established as part of this development. The development needs to provide a sensitive contextual response to the adjacent historic buildings, including the listed Orwell Terrace and Cliff Park. Heights should not be more than 3 storeys with a set-back or roof storey. Car parking should be integrated within the development and not visually dominate the public realm or park;

D04 – Opportunity to redevelop the derelict corner plot on Orwell Road with a building that forms an appropriate response and ending to Orwell Terrace. With high quality architecture the building should respond to its exposed location at the end of Marine Parade, overlooking Dovercourt Bay and leading into Cliff Park. The development should be residential led, with the possibility of an active ground floor use, such as a café or restaurant that can benefit from footfall along the seafront and into Cliff Park, as well as from a magnificent south facing outlook over the seafront. There is an opportunity

to provide outside seating terraces and establish a new waterfront destination in Dovercourt. Upper floor uses could include new homes or holiday lets. Heights should be sympathetic to Orwell Terrace and not higher than four storeys plus a roof/set back storey;

D05 – Opportunity to refurbish the Station Building and bring it back into use to help animate the station environment. A potential future use could be as a co-working space that provides rented desk space, a meeting room and a café. A bicycle rental station and a tourism information point could also be considered.

D06 and D07 – Opportunity to redevelop the two derelict sites on either side of Victoria Street with housing. Buildings should front onto Station Road, define and animate the street space, and turn the corner into Victoria Street. Heights to be no more than two storeys plus a setback or roof storey;

D08 – Opportunity to bring the former amusement arcade back into life with an active ground floor use, such as a retail unit, café, restaurant or leisure use, perhaps with residential above. The site has been subject to a planning permission and this is expected to be delivered in 2019.

Potential other development opportunities

In addition to the above, the Development Opportunity Plan in Figure 3.3 identifies other development opportunities that, albeit not critical for the regeneration and enhancement of the town centre itself, could be brought forward with housing or mixed use development to contribute to the intensification and animation of Dovercourt.



- KEY**
- New pavement
 - Parking/loading bay
 - Parking bay
 - Raised side street entry
 - Raised table junction
 - Footway cross over
 - Pedestrian/Cycle path
 - Public space surface
 - Landscaping
 - Community garden
 - Proposed street trees
 - Proposed feature trees with circular benches
 - Private garden
 - Private yard space
 - Proposed development footprint
 - Station workspace hub
 - P01 Public realm improvement boundary with project code
 - Seating object
 - Feature lighting
 - Bench
 - Circular bench around tree
 - Public art with seating
 - Enhanced Queen Victoria statue
 - Market stall
 - Bus gate
 - Pedestrian crossing
 - Landscaping
 - Drop off place
 - Cycle parking

Figure 3.4:
Proposed public realm improvements

3.7 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

Based on the understanding of Dovercourt, the vision and spatial concept, and in discussion with the Council, high level concepts for the improvement and design of the public realm were developed. The preferred public realm improvement scenario, broken down into projects, is presented in Figure 3.4.

Proposed public realm projects are conceptual and indicative at this stage. They do not constitute design schemes for construction purposes. The purpose of this design is to illustrate the aspiration and scope of potential projects and to obtain an understanding of potential costs and other delivery implications.

Proposals are presented as the precursor to more detailed work that will need to be undertaken including transport modelling, impact assessments, and engagement with relevant stakeholders. Delivery will be subject to the decision by the relevant Highway and Regeneration authorities and to the availability of funding.

Objectives

The principal aims for public realm improvements are to:

- Enhance the connectivity, directness and safety of pedestrian routes;
- Provide a higher quality pedestrian and cycling environment;
- Offer amenities for people to ensure that staying in and moving around the town centre is easy, enjoyable and interesting; and
- Improve the overall image and perception of the town centre.

Public realm improvements

The following streets and junctions were identified for public realm improvements:

- High Street
- Kingsway
- Station Road
- Part of Milton Road
- Part of Empire Road and Mill Lane (link from Kingsway to the seafront via underpass)

Town Centre Car Park

A new surface car park is proposed on the Starlings Site that transforms this vacant and derelict site into a positive space in the town centre. The car park provides replacement parking for the Milton Road car park in a friendlier surface level format, and helps to generate footfall along the High Street and into Kingsway via Milton Road.

The design also provides a new pocket space along the High Street with opportunities for landscaping, seating and play. It also includes the provision of new public toilet facilities.

Kingsway Public Space

A new public space is proposed outside Kingsway Hall. This would create a new focus in the centre and a new place for the street market, as well as for festivals and events. The space would require the closure of the central section of Kingsway South, however a retained bus-service (using bus-gates) and out of hours servicing could in principle be accommodated as part of the design. If the street market would move into this space the closure of the High Street for traffic on Friday's would no longer be necessary.

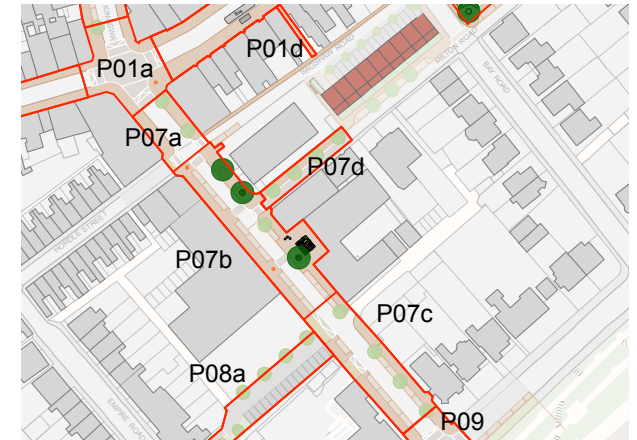


Figure 3.5:
Fall-back scenario for Kingsway

Given the role of Kingsway in the vehicular street network a fall back option (Figure 3.5) was looked at that kept the street open for general traffic. Interventions in this scenario are limited to the widening of footways and improvement to the public realm. Whilst this would deliver an enhanced street scene, it does not have the catalytic and transformative impact of the new public space, neither would it be suitable as a new market location.

Pocket spaces

Other proposals include the creation of pocket spaces on the High Street, a new plaza outside the station, and an improved setting for the Queen Victoria Statue on the southern end of Kingsway.

PUBLIC REALM PRINCIPLES

A number of important public realm design principles were developed as part of this study that should be used to guide any public realm improvements in the town centre.

Removal of Guardrails

Where not absolutely necessary on safety grounds, guardrails should be removed to provide more footway space, greater flexibility for people to cross, and to enhance the image and quality of the street scene.

Increased footway width

Where possible footway width should be increased by narrowing the road space to a minimum requirement to provide more space for people to move through at different speeds and direction, to enable people to stop, meet and browse shop windows, and to limit footway conflicts outside entrances. Gains in the size of the footway may also allow the provision of benches or informal seating for people to rest, meet others and watch the world pass by.

Continuous footway treatment

Along the main movement routes, road entry treatments are proposed that continue footways across the mouth of side streets with a level surface. This allows an easier and barrier free movement, especially for buggies, wheelchair users and people with reduced mobility. It also clearly indicates to drivers that they are crossing a footway and need to adjust their speed and driving style appropriately, making it safer for pedestrians.

Raised table-top junctions

At the intersection of the High Street with Kingsway Road and Station Road it is proposed to raise the junction to the footway level and introduce a different coloured road material. This will make the crossing of these junctions easier for pedestrians, slow traffic down, signal to drivers that greater attention is required and overall make this a safer environment. At Kingsway, a diagonal pedestrian crossing could be facilitated within the existing all green pedestrian light phase.

Street parking and servicing

On-street parking is removed from the central section of the High Street to facilitate the creation of wider footways. The existing bus stops are retained. Car parking is proposed to be formalized within side streets with delineated bays interspersed by tree planting and junction build outs to reduce the width of streets and allow easier informal crossing by pedestrian. Where appropriate, car parking and/or loading bays could be raised to the level of the footway to become natural footway extension when they are not in use.

Introduction of street trees

It is proposed to introduce tree planting along the main streets, including larger feature trees in public spaces, to provide a green and friendly environment. Trees in the urban environment provide numerous benefits including improved air quality, dampening of ambient noise, shading and cooling overheated town centres in the summer. They have also been shown to aid mental health and generally make people feel happier and healthier. Feature trees can include Common Oak trees and Birch (*Betula* sp.). Benches underneath trees can provide welcome seating places to rest and meet. Street trees should be planted at regular intervals along Kingsway and Station Road. Street tree species could include *Sorbus* sp. or Turkish Hazel.



Street trees can create a healthier environment

New street and feature lighting

New feature lighting in key locations will improve lighting levels in the town centre and improve energy efficiency, while emphasising certain areas or aspects of buildings and other features in the town centre. This will contribute to character and ambience and create a more attractive town centre during the evening and night. Feature lighting could include special lighting columns that provide a contemporary response to the historic town centre, as well as the uplighting of trees and buildings.

Public realm furniture

Throughout the town centre a consistent palette of quality public realm furniture should be provided, including benches, informal seating objects, bins and cycle stands.



Attractive benches can greatly enhance a space

Surface materials

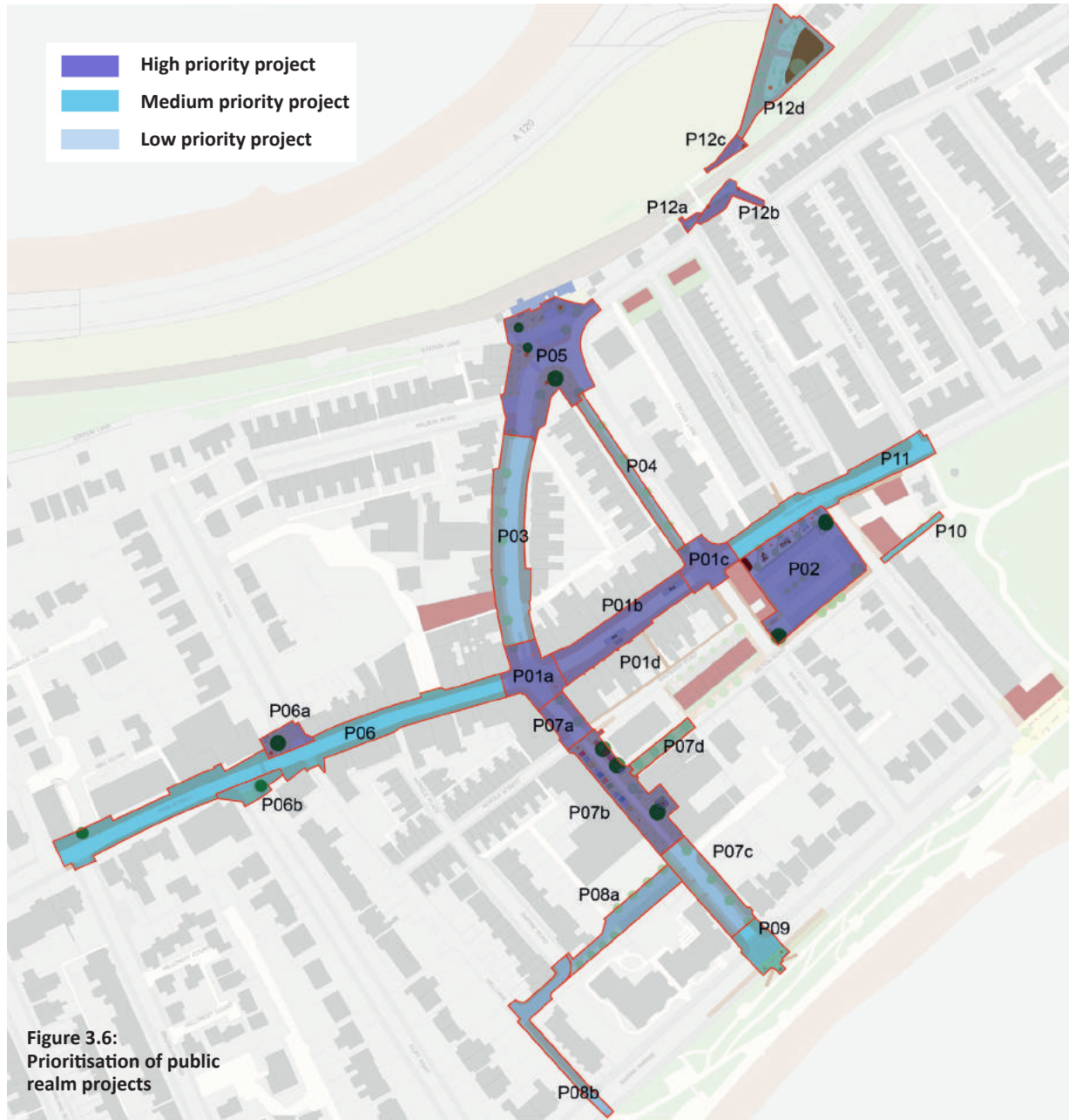
A coherent set of quality surface materials should be provided throughout the town centre. The design and specification should respond to the function and importance of the public realm in the town centre. Conventional concrete footway pavement is appropriate in most of the streets, while a more diverse and higher quality specification should be used in public spaces where it contributes to quality, sense of place and distinctiveness. Materials should complement the surroundings with the use of materials suitable to the historic setting. High quality and durable paving material is paramount to ensure the long term quality of the public realm.

The following paving materials are considered suitable:

- **‘New footway pavements’** to replace existing asphalt surfaces with large format concrete paving slabs of a rectangular format, laid in a 2/3rd, 1/3rd staggered bond perpendicular to the carriageway for a clean regular look;
- **‘New public space pavement’** constituting smaller rectangular or square paving slabs with variation in colour and feel (concrete, tumbled concrete or granite sets), laid in an alternating striped or circular pattern, providing emphasis to public spaces. This could include occasional colour accents with sets of different colours, such as glazed dark blue paving that is present already in the alley off Bridge Street; Kerbs – existing grey granite kerbs should be retained

and any replacement kerbs should blend in with the existing kerbs in terms of materials, appearance and size. For secondary routes, where granite kerbs are not in existence, a silver grey lightly textured conservation style concrete kerb should be used;

- **Carriageway** – new asphalt wearing course should be applied to streets where the public realm has been improved. This should include use of coloured aggregate or tinted bitumen, subject to relevant highway specifications, for raised table top junctions or pedestrian crossings. Designated crossings should be paved in an alternative material such as tumbled concrete or granite sets. This should raise awareness of both car owners and pedestrians that these areas should not be considered as traditional road environments and traffic speeds need to be reduced.



Project Code	Project Name	Priority
P07b	Kingsway South: Public space outside Kingsway Hall and Library	high
P02	Starlings site: Car park and public space	high
P05	Station Forecourt: Public space and public realm improvements	high
P01a	High Street and Kingsway Junction: Public realm improvements	high
P01c	High Street and Station Road Junction: Public realm improvements	high
P06a	High Street West: Pocket space	high
P01b	High Street Centre: Public realm improvements	high
P07a	Kingsway South: Public realm improvements	high
P12a	Railway Bridge: Improved access to steps and landscaping	high
P12b	Grafton Road: Improved pedestrian link and landscaping	high
P12c	North of Railway Bridge: improved pedestrian link and landscaping	high
P06b	High Street West: Pocket space	medium
P06c	High Street West: Public realm improvements	medium
P11	High Street East: Public realm improvements	medium
P10	Creation of pedestrian link from Milton Road and Cliff Hill Park	medium
P09	Queen Victoria Statue: Improvements to the setting of the statue	medium
P12d	Ingestre Street: Enhancement of open space	low
P03	Kingsway North: Public realm improvements	low
P04	Station Road: Public realm improvements	low
P07c	Kingsway South: Public realm improvements	low
P07d	Milton Road: General enhancement and closure to traffic	low
P01d	Backshaw Link: Repaving and enhanced lighting	low
P08a	Connection between Kingsway and Empire Road: formalise and improve route	low
P08b	Mill Lane: Improve path and underpass	low

PRIORITISATION OF PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

For each public realm project a high level cost estimate was prepared to provide the Council with an understanding of likely costs.

Funding will be unlikely to be available for the entire suite of public realm projects. Therefore public realm projects have been prioritised against their potential to support the regeneration of Dovercourt.

The appraisal considered the extent to which each project would contribute to the regeneration objectives including the transformation of Dovercourt's image, the delivery of improved environments for regular town centre users and visitors, the variety of open space on offer, and wider regeneration benefits such as supporting existing businesses and attracting new footfall. Projects were prioritised as high, medium and low priority.

Figure 3.6 shows a plan with project priorities together with a table summarising each projects priority.

High Priority Projects

High priority projects are critical for the regeneration of Dovercourt. They will have a transformative impact, act as catalyst and bring major improvements to residents and visitors. Their delivery should be pursued with urgency.

The following high priority projects were identified:

- Delivery of a new surface car park and associated public space on the Starlings Block - providing a much improved car park and unlocking the

- re-development of the Milton Road Car Park.
- Delivering a new public space outside Kingsway Hall and improvements to Kingsway (south) - establishing a new focus and open space amenity in the centre.
- Improvement of the central section of the High Street between and including the junctions with Kingsway and Station Road - significantly enhancing the quality and appearance of the primary shopping area.
- Transformation of the space outside the railway station - giving space back to pedestrians and enhancing the arrival experience at the station;
- Enhancing the directness and safety of the pedestrian route to Bath Side and Grafton Road - significantly improving the main connections with these residential areas.
- Creation of a pocket space at the corner of the High Street with Hill Road - to celebrate the western end of the High Street and provide a place to rest on the hill slope.

Medium Priority Projects

Medium priority projects are equally important to the regeneration of Dovercourt as they improve important parts of the street scape in the town, albeit in more peripheral locations. Budget permitting, they should be delivered jointly with high priority projects or shortly thereafter.

Medium priority projects include:

- Public realm improvements of the High Street to the west of Kingsway - improving the pedestrian environment and image of this local shopping street.

- Public realm improvements to the High Street to the east of Bath Road - enhancing the approach into the centre from the east and complementing the interventions on the Starlings Block.
- Connecting Milton Road with Cliff Park - opening up a circular route that better integrates the park with the centre.
- Improvement of the space around Queen Victoria Statue - creating a pocket space and enhancing the setting of this listed structure.

Low Priority Projects

The remaining public realm projects are considered low priority. Although by themselves less critical to the regeneration of Dovercourt they remain important as they upgrade the street scene by connecting streets and contributing to an overall coherent image and appearance throughout the centre.

Projects in this category include the public realm improvements of remaining parts of Kingsway, Station Road, Milton Road, the route from Kingsway to Dovercourt Bay via the underpass, and improvements to the open space on Ingestre Street.

More information on specific public realm projects are included in Chapter 4 of this report.



4 TWENTY REGENERATION PROJECTS FOR DOVERCOURT

The masterplan has set out a town centre strategy that identifies a great number of ideas, proposals and initiatives for the regeneration of Dovercourt Town Centre.

A catalogue of twenty key regeneration projects has been compiled. The array of projects include the redevelopment of sites such as the Milton Road Car Park, the provision of new town centre car parks, public realm improvements throughout the town centre, shopfront improvements, the reanimation of the station, improvements to the street market, a signage strategy, meanwhile uses, a programme of festivals and events and the establishment of a dedicated town centre management organisation.

Each project includes a project description and identifies delivery partners. It also ranks the regenerative impact of each project as Transformative, Very High, High or Moderate, to aid the prioritisation of projects.

The catalogue of twenty projects is aimed at informing the Council as well as potential delivery partners and the wider public of the opportunities for regeneration. It seeks to provide guidance and direction, but also to stimulate initiatives and activism, especially around the concepts that could be taken on by local businesses or the community.

Regeneration does not happen by itself. It requires a concerted effort and collaborative approach by the public, private and voluntary sectors, working together with the community to make change happen.



PROJECT 1 STARLINGS BLOCK DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Development of a surface car park on the vacant Starlings Site to replace the Milton Road public car park (68 spaces). The new car park has a capacity of 59 parking spaces including six disabled spaces. Together with the redevelopment of the Milton Road car park (Project 02), which delivers 15 spaces on Bagshaw Road, this provides a total of 74 spaces. Surplus spaces will allow the removal of car parking spaces from the High Street to enable public realm improvements (Project 03).

The car park access and egress is from Orwell Road. The car park would be level with the High Street and due to the level difference a retaining wall and balustrade is provided along Orwell Road and Milton Road. Access stairs to the car park are located on Milton Road, both on the corner with Orwell Road and with Bay Road. Electric vehicle charging points should be provided.

Between the car park and the High Street a new linear public space is provided. This provides benches, tree planting, landscaping and children's timber play equipment. A public toilet facility is located at the western end of the space. A large feature tree with a circular bench beneath marks the eastern end of the public space.

A green pocket space with another feature tree and timber bench enhances the street scene at the corner of Milton Road with Bath Road. A green wall is proposed along the western edge of the car park to visually enhance the outlook from the car park towards the party wall of the existing building.



Existing view of Starlings Block site



Figure 4.1: Location plan



Figure 4.2: Proposals for Starlings Block and Milton Road car park - oblique view

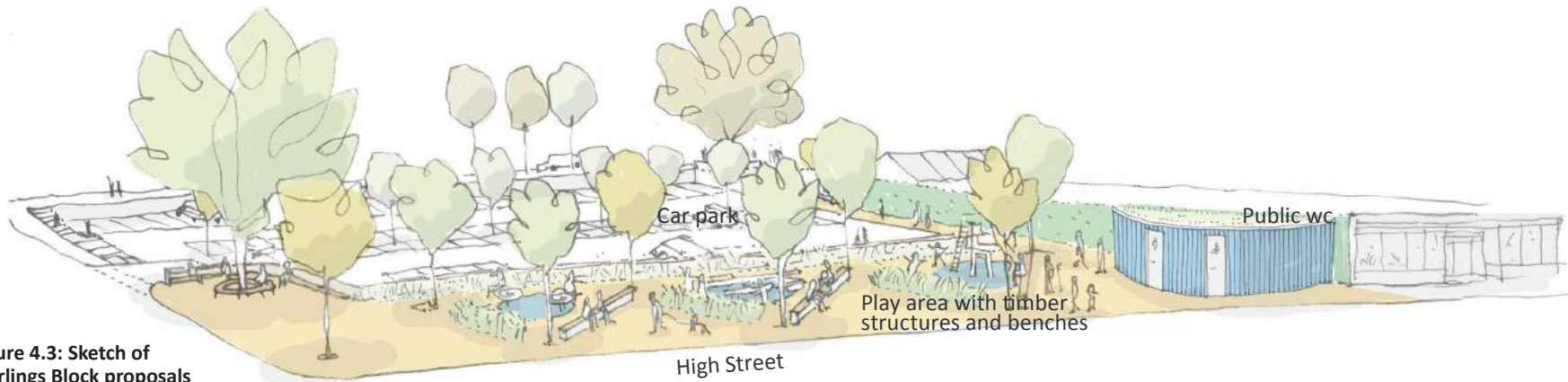


Figure 4.3: Sketch of Starlings Block proposals

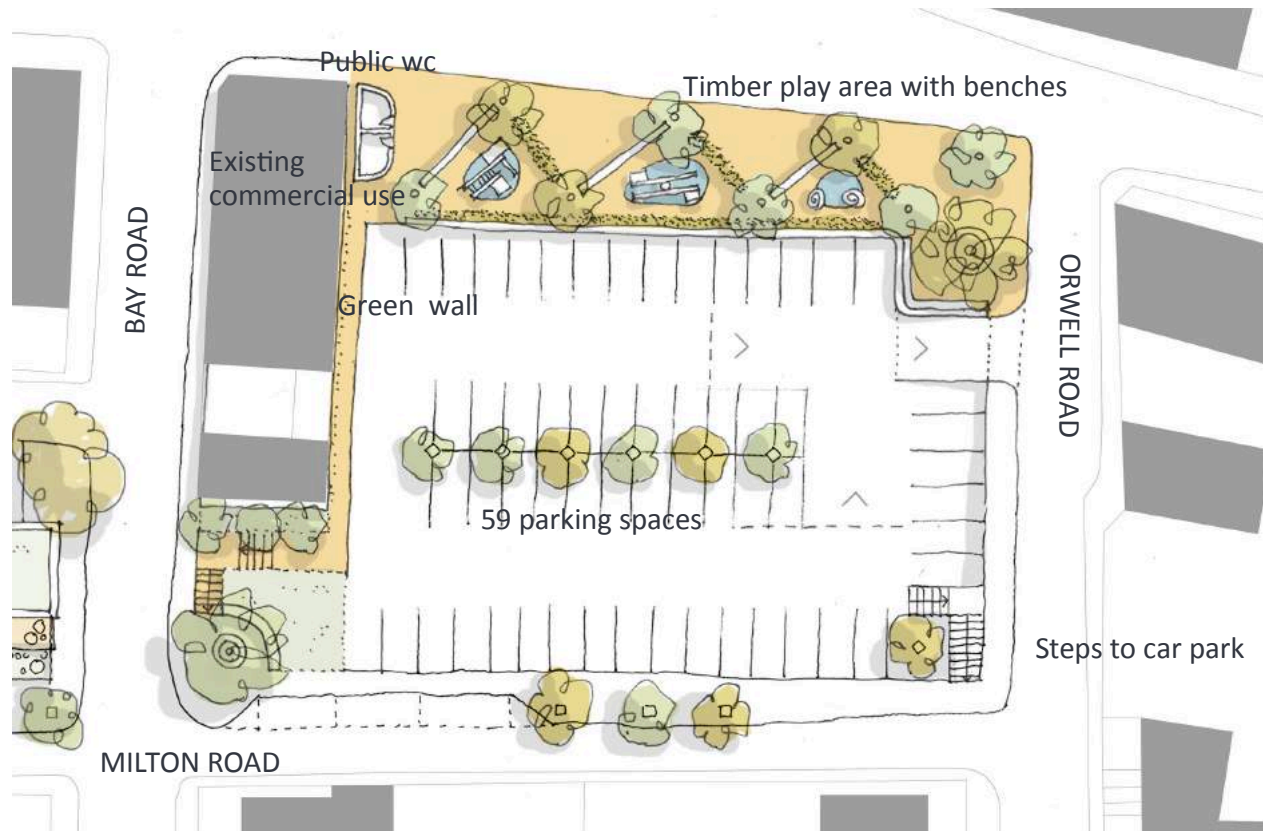


Figure 4.4: Plan of Starlings Block site proposal

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Requires land assembly by the council and delivery as a capital project.

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
VERY HIGH**

PROJECT 2 MILTON ROAD CAR PARK REDEVELOPMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Milton Road car park is demolished and the site redeveloped with a terrace of nine three-bedroom town houses. The houses front onto Milton Road and offer a small garden between the footway and the entrance. They are three storey with the top-floor set back, offering space for south facing roof terraces. The buildings sit above a shared private undercroft car park with 17 car parking spaces.

On Bagshaw Road 15 public car parking bays are provided, interspersed with tree planting. Additional four on-street parking spaces are provided on Milton Road to allow relocation of parking from the High Street (Project 03).

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public-private sector collaboration

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
VERY HIGH**



Existing view of Milton Road car park



Figure 4.6: Location plan



Figure 4.5: Sketch of Milton Road car park proposal



Figure 4.12: Section

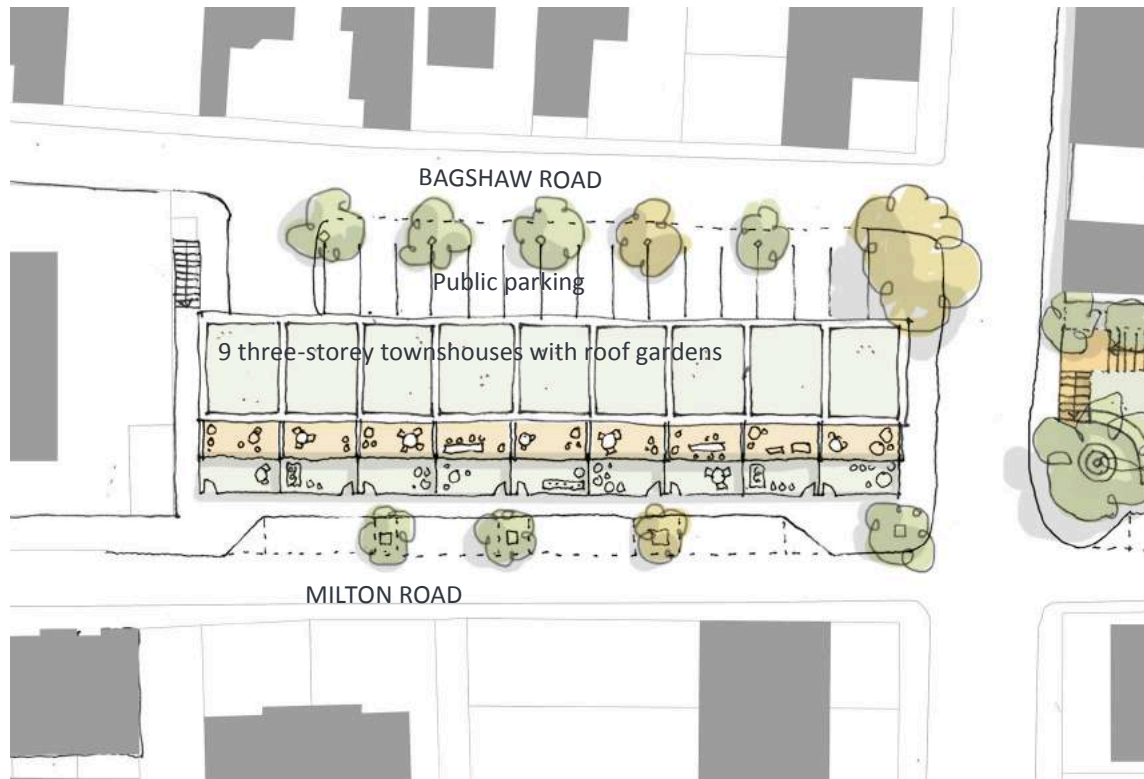


Figure 4.7: Plan of Milton Road car park proposal

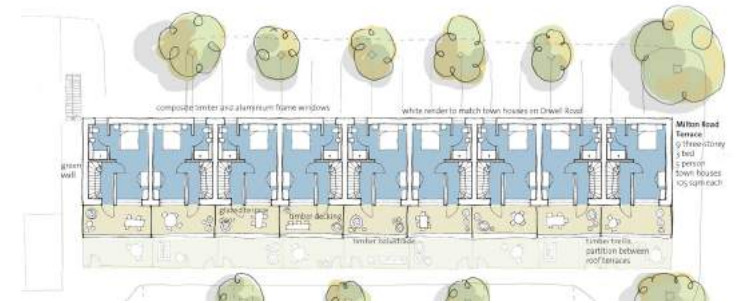


Figure 4.8: Second Floor Plan

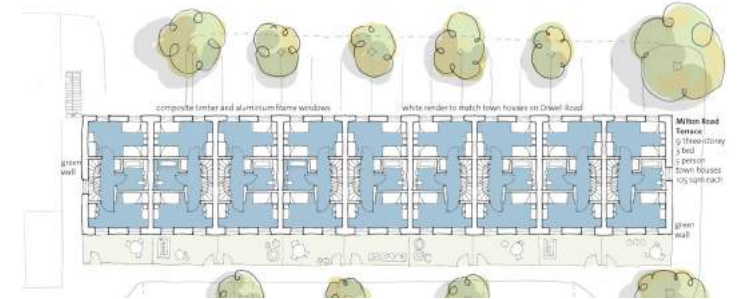


Figure 4.9: First Floor Plan

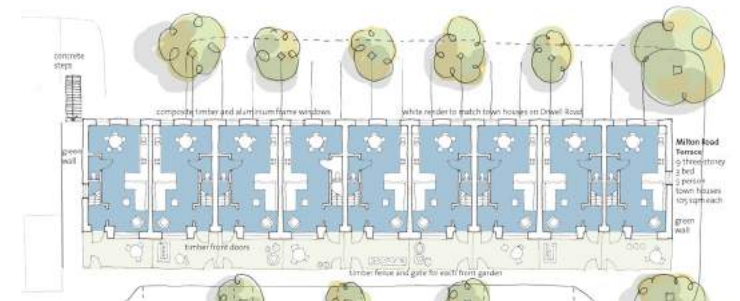


Figure 4.10: Ground Floor Plan

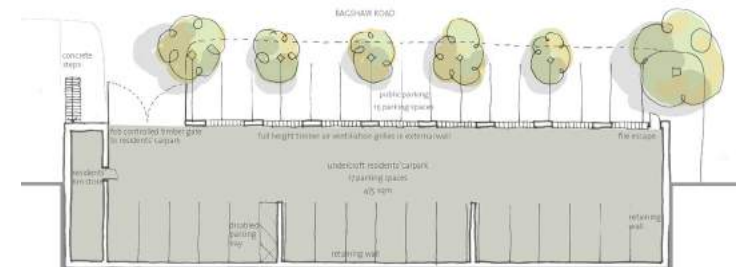


Figure 4.11: Lower Ground Floor Plan

PROJECT 3 HIGH STREET PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project provides a comprehensive public realm improvement of the High Street between, and including, the junctions of Kingsway and Station Road.

High Street improvements require the removal of car parking. Replacement parking is to be located on Bagshaw Road as part of Project 2. This allows the widening of footways for less restricted pedestrian movement. Footways should be resurfaced with a coherent set of concrete pavement slabs. Bus stops will be retained. Junction improvements include the removal of guardrails, the tightening of corners and the extension of footways into the former highway to provide more generous pedestrian space. This could accommodate planters, formal or informal seating, a feature lighting object and bicycle parking. The junctions are raised to the footway level to make crossing easier, especially for less mobile people, kids scooters and prams. Footways should be paved with concrete pavement slabs, while the raised junction table could be finished in a buff surface colour for visual presence. Signal control of the Kingsway Junction should be retained.

The lane next to 141 High Street, leading to the car parking on Bagshaw Road, should be repaved and better lit to make this a welcoming pedestrian link.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project.

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
VERY HIGH**



Existing view of High Street, looking east



Figure 4.14: Location plan



Figure 4.13: Sketch of High Street public realm proposals, looking east, showing widened footways, informal seating objects, planters, and street decoration



Existing view of High Street, looking west

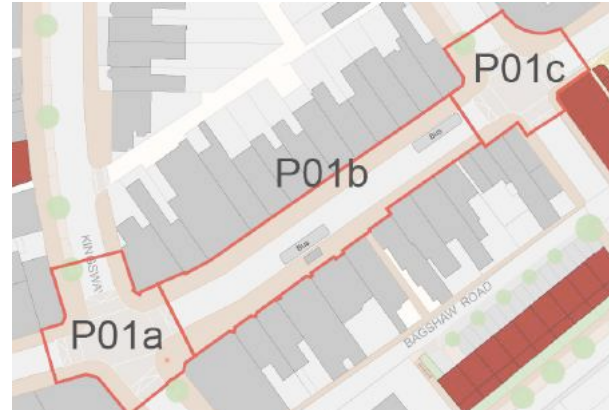


Figure 4.16: Site plan



Figure 4.15: Sketch of High Street public realm proposals, looking west, showing footway build outs around junction, planters, seating objects and feature lighting

PROJECT 4

KINGSWAY PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project improves the public realm on Kingsway (south) from the junction with the High Street to the southern end of the Wetherspoons site.

The preferred option for this site is the transformation of Kingsway into a new public space by removing general traffic, which would give a new heart to Dovercourt and deliver significant regeneration benefits. However, more detailed work is needed to establish the feasibility of this option due to its impact on traffic, parking and the movement network, and the need to engage with a range of stakeholders. A less aspirational fall-back scenario was developed that improves the public realm whilst retaining the movement role of this street. Both scenarios are described here.

The preferred option creates a new public space outside Kingsway Hall and the Library, closing this section of Kingsway for general traffic, except for buses and out of hours servicing. New distinctive paving is extended across the street with a single lane bus route marked with a different paving color and pattern. Bus traffic through this short single lane section could be signalled with a bus gate on either end to facilitate alternating movement. Existing street trees are retained and complemented with new tree planting. A public space design is implemented that provides formal and informal seating and feature lighting. Provision for the holding of street markets and events should be planned as part of the design including the provision of electricity and water



Existing views of Kingsway

outlets, and an indication of market stall positions. The opportunity to establish outdoor terrace style seating in front of cafés or restaurants, such as the Wetherspoons should be explored to further animate the street and to encourage vacant units back into use. This space needs to be of exceptional quality to become the heart of community activities, help transform the image of Dovercourt and amplify its historic character.

Free Public Wifi could be provided (for example provided by the library) as an additional open space amenity and to attract people to come here and stay.

The fall-back option involves the widening of footways and their resurfacing with new footway pavement slabs. The kerb alignment is moved outwards and the carriageway is narrowed. Parking and service bays are formalised and raised to the footway level to form natural footway extensions when they are unoccupied. Street trees outside Kingsway Hall and the Library are retained and additional trees planted. A distinctive paving



Figure 4.17: Location plan

material is to be provided on the pocket space outside the library to provide a sense quality and differentiation. This space could also feature public art and seating. Informal seating objects should be located on the eastern footway with feature lighting located along the western footway. The ambition is to transform Kingsway into a quality street space, that emphasises the setting of Kingsway Hall, the library and other retail uses. It will offer an opportunity for people to stay and enjoy the town, as well as for activities to spill out onto the pavements.

In both options, the short section of Kingsway between the junction with the High Street and Bagshaw Road should be improved by removing the guardrails, extending the footways into the carriageway, providing concrete paving on the footway, planting street trees and providing seating outside the murals on the eastern side.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project.

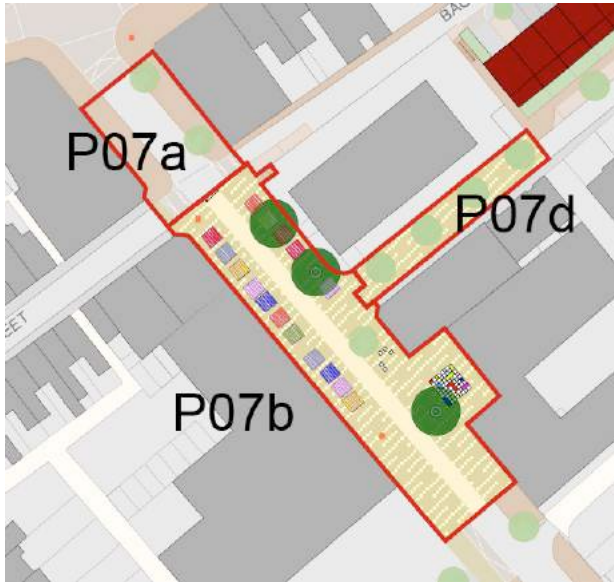


Figure 4.18: Preferred option



Figure 4.19: Fall back scenario



Figure 4.20: Sketch of Kingsway public realm proposals - preferred option, showing how the space could become pedestrianised, offer seating, tree planting and feature lighting, and provide a new home for the street market.

REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
TRANSFORMATIVE for Preferred Option
VERY HIGH for the fall-back option

PROJECT 5 STATION PLAZA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project transforms the station forecourt into a welcoming public space. It involves the realignment of the road space with footway build-outs, the formalising of the station parking and kiss-and-ride arrangements, the provision of a new pedestrian crossing and a direct pedestrian connection across the space from Station Road into Kingsway.

The design includes benches, seating objects, feature lighting, cycle stands, tree planting and landscaping. This will completely transform the area into an attractive public space in which to spend time and will create a distinctive gateway into the town centre.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project. The Council will need to work jointly with the Highway Authority, Network Rail and Greater Anglia, to deliver a coherent project.



Existing view of corner plot opposite station



Figure 4.22: Location plan



Figure 4.21: Sketch of Dovercourt Welcome Plaza with a new tree surrounded by a circular bench and feature lighting

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
VERY HIGH**



Existing view of Dovercourt Station

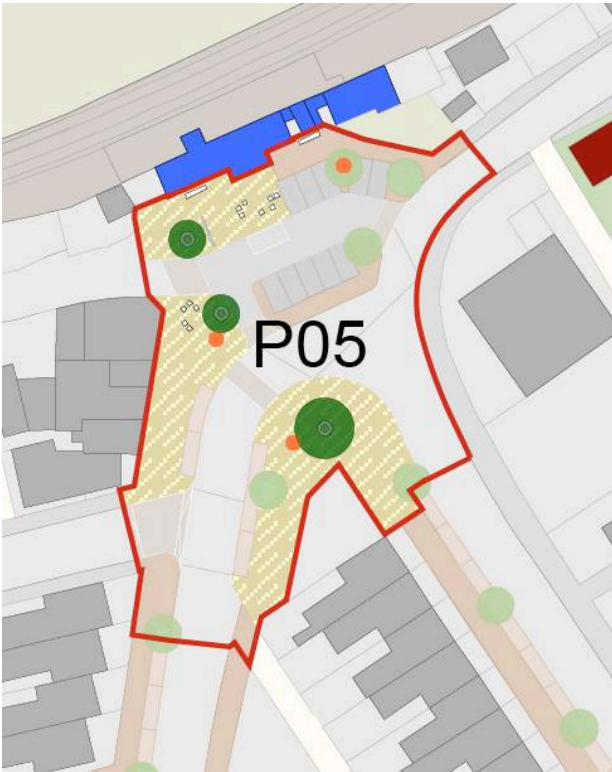


Figure 4.23: Site plan



Figure 4.24: Sketch of station plaza proposals, including footway build-outs, formalised parking and drop-off, tree planting and seating

PROJECT 6 REANIMATING THE STATION BUILDING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is about bringing the station building back into meaningful use to preserve its historic fabric and to help activate the station environment. A potential future use could be a co-working space that provides rented desk space, a meeting room and a café. A bicycle rental station and tourism information point could also be considered. Interventions would include the refurbishment of the buildings and the fit out of its spaces for intended occupation.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project. The Council will need to work jointly with a workspace provider/voluntary organisation, Network Rail and Greater Anglia, to plan the delivery of the project.



Existing view of train station



Figure 4.25: Location plan



Potential for coworking space within the



Potential for bike rental station

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**

PROJECT 7 CONNECTION WITH BATH SIDE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project involves a suite of interventions that improve the quality of the walking connection between Bath Side/Grafton Road and Station Road. These are important access routes for residents into the town centre.

The project involves improvements to the access paths leading to the pedestrian bridge, including removing the dog-leg in the path, clearing out vegetation and creating a clear line of sight to the steps on the northern side. Furthermore, it includes the resurfacing and alignment of routes, landscaping, tree planting and the provision of benches and street lighting. There is an opportunity to significantly improve the quality of the triangular open space on Ingestre Street. This could include the establishment of a community allotment garden if there is local interest.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector in partnership with community groups.

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**



Existing view of pedestrian route from Bath Side to the railway bridge



Figure 4.27: Location Plan



Figure 4.26: Sketch of proposal for improvements to the route from Bath Side, offering a clear line of sight from the approaching path to the bridge, making it feel more safe

PROJECT 8 LINK INTO CLIFF PARK

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project involves the creation of a new pedestrian link between the north eastern end of Milton Road and Cliff Park. This will open the missing link on the route from Kingsway to the park and help to better integrate the open space with the town centre.

The project would involve the creation of a 3m wide public access to the north of Orwell Terrace with a resin bound surface path with green margins, the provision of street lighting and the joining with existing paths in Cliff Park. As the land is part of a private car park it is likely that this route will only be implemented when this car park is brought forward for development, for example through use of Section 106 powers. The masterplan identifies the opportunity for a residential or mixed-use development on this site.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public-private collaboration

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**



Existing view of the potential connection with Milton Road



Figure 4.28: Location plan



Figure 4.29: Sketch of proposal for new connection into Cliff Park

PROJECT 9

QUEEN VICTORIA STATUE ENHANCEMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project improves the setting of the Queen Victoria Statue on Marine Parade. This includes the removal of the guard rail from the front of the statue and the installation of heritage railings to the rear and sides of the statue. The lighting column in front of the statue is replaced with two feature streetlights on either side. The CCTV column to the left of the statue is to be relocated away from the statue.

Interventions further include the tightening of the junction to make it easier to cross, resurfacing with new, distinctive paving material, provision of benches and the up-lighting of the statue.

This project will add distinctiveness to the upper end of Kingsway, provide a visual focus and destination on Marine Parade, and enhance this important gateway to the Beach.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
MODERATE**



Existing view of the Queen Victoria Statue



Figure 4.30: Site plan



Figure 4.31: Sketch of proposed improvements to the setting of the Queen Victoria Statue

PROJECT 10

POCKET SPACES ON THE HIGH STREET

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project transforms a leftover area of public realm into a usable pocket space. This will enhance the environment, provide a focus on the western arm of the High Street and offer a resting place halfway up the hill.

The project involves a footway build-out at the junction with distinct public space paving and the provision of a new feature tree with a timber bench below. It could also include the provision of other seating objects and a feature lighting element. A raised side entry table should be provided at the junction with Hill Road to provide continuity to the footway and prioritise pedestrian movement along the High Street.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project. Council to work with the owners of 270 High Street to ensure a coherent public realm solution across public and (potentially) private land.

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**



Existing view of the potential connection with Milton Road



Figure 4.32: Site plan



Figure 4.33: Sketch of pocket space proposal

PROJECT 11 SEA VIEW DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is about the redevelopment of the derelict corner plot on Orwell Road with a building that forms an appropriate response and ending to Orwell Terrace. With high quality architecture, the development should respond to its exposed location at the end of Marine Parade, overlooking Dovercourt Bay and leading into Cliff Park. The development should be residential-led, with the possibility of an active ground floor use, such as a café or restaurant that can benefit from footfall along the seafront and into Cliff Park, as well as from a magnificent south facing outlook over the seafront. There is an opportunity to provide outside seating terraces and establish a new waterfront destination in Dovercourt with high quality public realm.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Private sector led project

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
MODERATE**



Existing view of the Sea View site



Figure 4.34: Site plan



Figure 4.35: Sketch of Sea View proposal

PROJECT 12 OTHER TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

This project includes a suite of improvements to other parts of the High Street, Kingsway and Station Road that form part of the circuit of routes in the town centre. Public realm improvements of the remaining parts of the town centre streets would result in a coherent and high quality public realm treatment throughout and contribute to a much improved image to Dovercourt.

Generally this involves the decluttering of footways, repaving with concrete pavement slabs and the provision of raised side street entry treatments to provide footway continuity.

In addition, on Kingsway North, Kingsway South and Station Road, kerbs are realigned and the carriageway narrowed. Parking and service bays are formalised and raised to the footway level to form natural footway extensions when they are unoccupied. Street trees are planted between car parking bays.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**



Existing poor quality public realm in Dovercourt



Figure 4.36: Site plan



Raised footway level side street entry treatments emphasise pedestrian priority



Well laid paving slabs create a sense of quality in the public realm

PROJECT 13 IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE BEACH

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project improves the pedestrian route from Kingsway via Empire Road and the underpass to the beach front.

It involves formalising the connection between Kingsway and Empire Road as a shared surface lane with landscaping on either side. There is potential here to accommodate approximately 15 perpendicular car parking bays that could potentially reprovide parking lost on Kingsway as part of the Kingsway Improvement Project.

It also includes public realm improvements of the route along Empire Road and Mill Lane, providing a consistent surface treatment that leads pedestrians along the route. In addition signage and lighting to the underpass should be provided.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project, may require negotiation with any private sector interest subject to land ownership

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
MODERATE**



Existing view of poor quality link



Figure 4.37: Site plan



Potential for landscaping as part of improved link



PROJECT 14 SHOPFRONT IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is to initiate the improvement to shopfronts in the High Street and Kingsway, aiming to install signage and shopfront design that is sympathetic to the whole of the building and the overall character of the street space. Improved shopfronts can lift the image of town centres and make them a more attractive and welcoming place to be. They are most effective when combined with public realm improvement schemes that bring a comprehensive facelift and improvement to the quality of the street.

A shopfront improvement project would involve the provision of grant or match-funding by the council as an incentive for landowners and businesses to undertake the required improvements. The improvements should be guided by a shopfront improvement manual that sets out the key design principles. Alternatively, such a scheme could be supported by hands-on advice by an architect with shopfront improvement experience to help with the design, choice of solutions, signage and materials.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Delivered by the private sector with public sector (part) funding, guidance and support

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**



Some existing shopfronts are unattractive and feel outdated



Simple, attractive shopfront



Figure 4.38: Location plan



Shopfronts can be improved with simple contextual design

PROJECT 15 MARKET IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project aims to revive the street market in Dovercourt. Street markets with a diverse offer, including food and specialist stalls can be a major catalyst for town centres, providing a new destination for shopping, eating, spending time and engaging in the social life of a town. Market improvements in Dovercourt should focus firstly on improving the management of the existing market by uplifting its appearance and broadening its offer. This would include coordinating the layout and size of stalls, the operational time of the market, ensuring stall-holders park their vans outside the market area and manage the relationship between the market and existing retailers in the street in a mutually beneficial way.

The scheme could further include the broadening of the market offer with specialist markets such as Christmas markets, antique markets or food fairs. The market should continue to operate on the High Street where it is central to the town centre. If a new public space is created on Kingsway, the market should be relocated there. This would also allow the market to be held more frequently during the week and at weekends, without the need for closing the High Street. The market improvements should be led by an experienced market manager or market operator.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**



The existing market does not present itself well



Figure 4.39: Site plan



Improve the offer of the market



Organised stall layout can pull people into the market

PROJECT 16 RIVERSIDE CAR PARK

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is to transform the vacant site to the north of the railway line adjacent to the A120 into a town centre overflow car park. This could provide extra parking spaces during the summer season or during town centre events, when the Starlings Car Park or other streets may be closed. It is in close proximity to the town centre. Visitors can use the pedestrian bridge over the railway. On their way to the centre and the seafront they will generate footfall and support local businesses. Signage on the strategic road network could be used to divert visitors away from the town centre and directly to the overflow car park.

The project involves preparing the site for use as a temporary car park including opening a new entrance to the site from the roundabout on the A120 and the establishment of a walking connection with the railway pedestrian bridge. The car park would need to be appropriately secured outside operating times to avoid attracting illicit activities and managed well when it is operational.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project, need to investigate ownership and work with site owners to deliver car park - potentially as a temporary solution

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
MODERATE**



Existing view of the site



Figure 4.40: Location plan



Figure 4.41: Site plan

PROJECT 17

TOWN CENTRE SIGNAGE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is about providing coordinated signage and information throughout Dovercourt. From the station to the seafront new signage should be provided to assist wayfinding and provide information about the town, its heritage, beaches and attractions. The graphic identity and design of signs will need to be coordinated between Dovercourt, Harwich Town and other tourism destinations in the sub-region to provide a coherent and recognisable approach and branding. Signs and information panels should be provided on key arrival points into Dovercourt and at its main destinations.

Locations to be considered are:

- Outside the station;
- On the Starlings car park;
- At the overflow Riverside car park;
- At the intersection of the High Street with Kingsway and with Bath Street;
- Outside Kingsway Hall;
- On Kingsway at the link to the pedestrian route to the beach;
- On the beach promenade leading to the underpass;
- At the northern end of Orwell Terrace at the entrance to Cliff Park;
- In Cliff Park leading to Milton Road pedestrian link; and
- On the beach front.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led project

REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
MODERATE

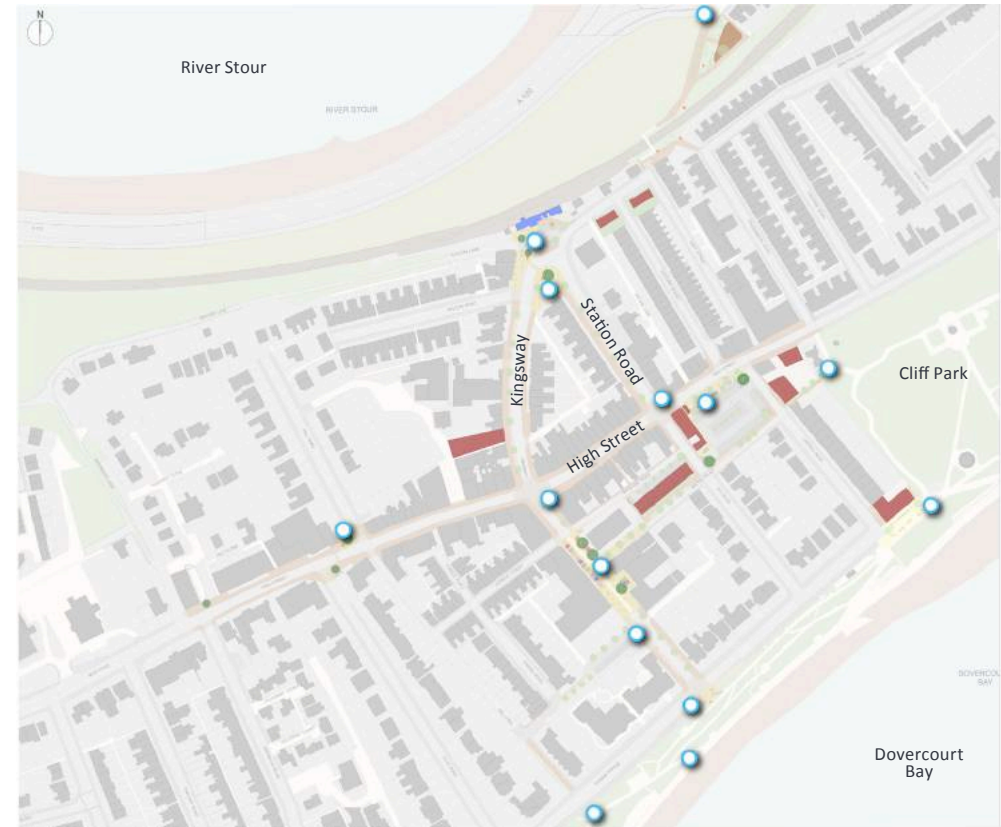


Figure 4.42: Suggested locations for signage



Simple attractive signage

PROJECT 18 SMALL INTERVENTIONS AND MEANWHILE USES

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Small interventions and meanwhile uses can bring quick change or animation to a town centre, often delivered through community action with little financial resources. They offer a huge potential for regeneration - making meaningful use of vacant buildings and spaces, fostering experimentation and reimagining different ways in which urban spaces can be used and designed.

Meanwhile projects are essentially people focused. They involve people in a collaborative fashion for the benefit of a community project. Participants are driven by shared goals, the power of collective action and the satisfaction of quickly delivering change (even if only temporary). They can enrich the culture of a place, make it more inclusive and create shared memories that feed communities and provide a sense of belonging and wellbeing. They can help build the identity of a place and draw out talented collaborators and attract young people and families.

Meanwhile uses however often need a helping hand and an intermediary that connects the enthusiasm and activism of local people with real properties and buildings, engages with landlords, deals with risks and insurance, regulation and planning, and offer resources and expertise. This establishes fertile ground and legal basis upon which creative community action or

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
VERY HIGH**

entrepreneurialism can take place. Intermediaries and stimulators for meanwhile uses can be not-for-profit organisations in the arts, culture or social sector, social enterprises, such as the Meanwhile Foundation or Meanwhitespace CIC, property owners and developers, or indeed the Council's regeneration and tourism teams.

A wide range of potential projects for Dovercourt could be envisaged. For inspiration, this includes:

- ① Temporary public realm project outside the station, utilising paint, planters, pallets, cushions, fabric, hay bales and strip lighting to playfully explore a different public realm design for the large asphalt expanse outside the station.
- ② The temporary closure of Kingsway for a weekend in the summer, testing out a public space in this location, bringing out deck chairs, artificial grass and market stalls.
- ③ The use of vacant shop units as pop-up shops, cafés, galleries, yoga studios, community groups, co-working space, for example in the station (see project 6), the amusement arcade or vacant shops on the High Street.
- ④ Following its decommission as a car park and before it's redevelopment, the Milton Road Car Park could become a meanwhile culture or leisure venue, with a cinema, shows, music or other activities taking place on the lower deck, while upstairs could be used as a temporary container garden and café.



Temporary use of vacant shop units

- ⑤ Vacant sites such as the Starlings Block or the site on Orwell Road could be the temporary home for food vans with outdoor seating or an art and culture space. For instance, the sites could host a stage for music and theatre performances, and offer workshop/studio space. It could also be a space for children and adults to play, offering ball courts, a skate park and climbing wall, creating a new and attractive offer that brings different people into the town centre.
- ⑥ Paint or decorate site hoarding with community or street art to enhance the look of the town centre.
- ⑦ Improve the environment by planting trees or flowers, picking litter, providing hanging baskets, or establishing a community garden on leftover land.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Community led projects with support by the public sector, social enterprise or charitable organisations, landowners and developers



Low cost temporary public space created from pallets



Potential to provide a space for play or sports on vacant site



Figure 4.43: Location plan

PROJECT 19 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Holding events and festivals are a good way to market a town centre, create a sense of local pride within the community, and attract new visitors into a town. Events generate footfall and boost local businesses. Festivals can put a place on the map, add to its brand and may result in increased levels of tourism.

Local events can also attract residents into the town centre who would normally come here. It can help to highlight positive change, such as improvements to the appearance and offer of the centre, change ingrained perceptions of the centre and result in repeat visits.

A range of events could be explored in Dovercourt, such as music events, an open air cinema in Cliff Park, a watersports or beach competition at Dovercourt beach, food-themed market events in the High Street or Kingsway, a circus at Starlings Block, or a Dovercourt Sports Challenge on the station plaza. Festivals and events should be coordinated with Harwich to ensure they reinforce each other as a joint tourism destination. The 2020 Mayflower celebration will be an important opportunity to promote Dovercourt alongside Harwich.

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
HIGH**

Organising events and festivals require expertise and resources. It could be undertaken by either a dedicated role in the council, outsourced to an events organiser or undertaken by the town centre management team (see next project).

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public sector led, or undertaken by public-private partnership



Providing attractions for children



Animating the streets with festivals, events and stalls

PROJECT 20 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Visitors to Dovercourt want to see a clean, well-managed and attractive environment. Poor street cleaning, anti-social behaviour and poor quality shopfronts detract from this image. Town centre management must be proactive in exploring opportunities for pop-up activities, temporary uses and responding to and supporting traders and businesses ideas.

The management of the town centre should be undertaken through a partnership approach between the council and local businesses with the aim to make Dovercourt a more attractive destination. A more formal town centre management organisation should be established with a dedicated town centre manager, clearly defined responsibilities and its own resources. This could be led and run by the Council or could take a different public - private - voluntary partnership approach

Its remit could include:

- Providing a forum for local businesses;
- Street cleaning;
- Security (in partnership with the Police);
- Managing small interventions and meanwhile uses;

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:
VERY HIGH**

- Shopfront improvements;
- Market management;
- Support to business start-ups and community initiatives;
- Events planning and management; and
- Branding and promotion.

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Public-private voluntary sector partnership approach



Hanging baskets enhance the street scene



Maintenance is key to an attractive environment

Tendring
District Council



URBAN
INITIATIVES
STUDIO

Ash Sakula Architects

 MONTAGU
EVANS

