

Whitehaven today: baseline study

A Sea Change

WHITEHAVEN TOWN CENTRE



BroadwayMalyan

Whitehaven Town Centre Development Framework
Whitehaven today: baseline study

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1 Introduction

WHITEHAVEN IN THE WORLD

Whitehaven is a town of approximately 27,000 people, situated on the Cumbrian coast, within the Borough of Copeland (see figure 1.1). It is the main centre of population in the borough and its administrative heart. It is a town with a long history, but whose origins as a modern settlement are to be found in the period of expanding international sea trade and early industrial development, of the late 17th and 18th centuries. In its heyday, Whitehaven was one of the most important and prosperous ports in the country, with an economy based on coal production and diverse secondary manufacturing industries, as well as on a sea trade which included slaves, tobacco, sugar and rum.

Today the town is composed of a number of distinct peripheral communities, mainly of late 19th and 20th century origin, ringed around the historic town centre and harbour. The well-conserved grid iron street pattern and predominantly Georgian architecture of the historic town centre reflect the wealth and success of the town in the early industrial period, but the fragmented and partially derelict periphery of the centre and many of the outlying communities are the product of a long slow decline. Over the last 50 years most of the town's traditional industrial base has disappeared and the Borough has become increasingly dependent on the nearby Sellafield

nuclear power station, which accounts directly or indirectly for over 50% of all employment, as the mainstay of its economy.



The town now faces the decommissioning of Sellafield and of the Rhodia chemical works, its last major industrial plant, over the next decade. Like many other old mining and industrial centres, Whitehaven is at a crossroads: further decline, or reinvention and regeneration. Important steps have already been taken forward over the last decade, most notably

the complete restoration and refurbishment of the harbour, which has begun to put the town back on the map and change its image. This in itself, however, has not been enough to attract significant new investment and development to the town.

THE WHITEHAVEN REGENERATION PROGRAMME

Westlakes Renaissance and Copeland Borough Council are coordinating a Regeneration Programme for the town, to identify and address some of the key structural, environmental and identity problems which it currently faces. The principal focuses of interest are the town centre itself and adjacent areas to the south and east. The major projects include:

- The Haig Colliery Masterplan, covering a wide coastal area south of the harbour, with the Haig Mining Museum at its heart;
- A wider Implementation Programme for a masterplan covering the coastal strip linking Whitehaven to St Bees Head, the Kells residential area, and the Pow Beck Valley;
- A Town Centre Development Framework, the aim of the current study.

This study and report should be seen in the context of this wider regeneration drive and not simply as an attempt to improve the town centre in isolation from the peripheral communities which it serves.

THIS STUDY

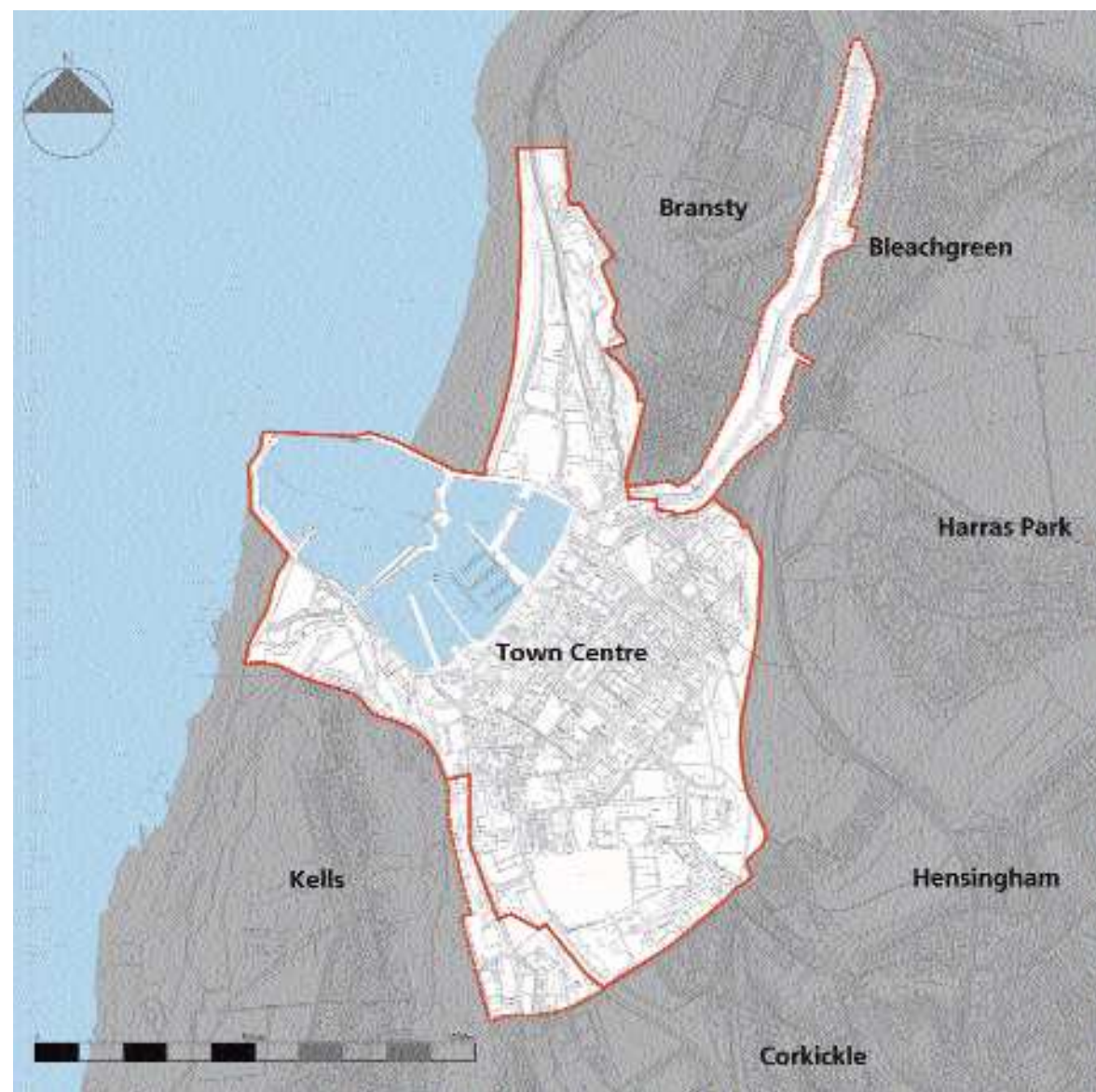
This study involves the production of a development framework for Whitehaven town centre (see figure 1.2 for the project boundary). The study area comprises the historic town centre, the harbour and a wide peripheral ring around the town centre, encompassing the principal approaches and gateways. This area is of strategic importance as the main administrative, professional and retail centre for the whole borough, as well as comprising an area of exceptional historical significance and architectural interest.

The Development Framework will provide a vision and strategy for the physical development of the town centre over the next decade, rooted in the context of a realistic appraisal of its current economic situation and potential. It will comprise specific strategies and proposals for the improvement of the town centre's public spaces, parks and gardens, streets and footpaths, and transport network, as well as providing design guidelines which will help to establish a consistent approach to all future development within the town centre area. In addition to the Development Framework, the study will provide a number of Development Briefs for key sites, or clusters of sites, identified and agreed during the course of the study. These will aim to raise market interest in the town and encourage high quality development on sites of strategic importance, as a means of transforming the image and perceived potential of the town and kick-starting a wider process of long term investment and development.

THE PROJECT TEAM

The project team was appointed in September, 2004 by Copeland Borough Council and comprises a diverse range of specialists in urban and rural regeneration, who are working closely together with each other and key local bodies. The organisations involved in the project and their main roles are as follows:

- **Broadway Malyan:** Landscape, urban design, architecture and planning;
- **HemingwayDesign:** Urban design vision;
- **Insight O2:** Economic and demographic appraisal, community and stakeholder engagement;
- **The Denis Wilson Partnership:** Transport planning and infrastructure;
- **Porter Brown Solutions:** Tourism and leisure, local and regional regeneration expertise.



AIMS OF THIS REPORT

This report represents the culmination of the first part of the study. This has involved extensive site surveys, research and consultation carried out into all the key areas of the study, in order to gain as complete an understanding of the town as possible, including: its history and community; its political and social structures; its economy and demographic make up; its architecture and urban structure; its public spaces, parks and gardens; its transport network and infrastructure. The report aims to summarise the key findings and conclusions of this process of investigation, identify the main issues and outline the main objectives for the final Development Framework.

SUMMARY

Whitehaven is at a turning point in its history. The trade and industries which have created the Whitehaven of today have run their course and the town faces significant economic and structural problems. However, its prosperous past has left a legacy of a stunning harbour and an exceptionally coherent grid pattern town centre, with many fine Georgian buildings. The town now faces the challenge of reinventing itself to recover its lost prosperity and ensure it remains an attractive and vibrant place to live, well into the 21st century.

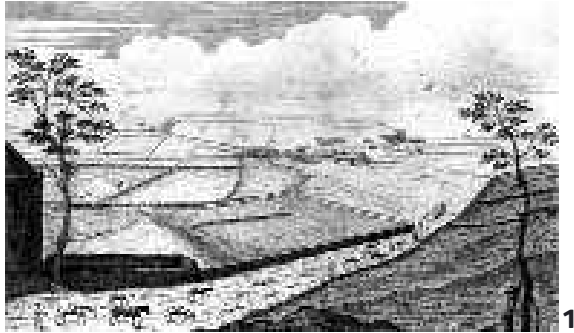




2 The birth of a town: background

KEY FACTS

- Whitehaven is a town built on sea trade and industry, founded initially on the drive and vision of successive generations of the Lowther family.
- Its main industrial base was coal extraction until the closure of the last mine in the 1980's. Other industries were mainly related to shipping or to imported products.
- Its period of greatest prosperity was during the 18th century when the town was one of the most important ports in the country, reflected in the impressive scale of its harbour.
- The town centre is an exceptionally well—conserved and unusual example of a rationally planned grid-iron street pattern, with many fine Georgian buildings surviving from its period of splendour.
- Whitehaven has strong historical links to the USA, especially to towns on the Virginia and Maryland coasts. Two important American personalities: George Washington and John Paul Jones, are connected to the town.
- Jonathan Swift lived here for a short time in his childhood and his vision of Lilliput may have been inspired by views to the town from his hilltop home.
- In its heyday the Whitehaven was forward thinking, entrepreneurial and bold. Some of these qualities need to be recaptured if the town is to regain its pride and prosperity.



EARLY ORIGINS

There is little evidence of a settlement on the site of present day Whitehaven until the middle ages. Prior to this a Roman Fort had been established at Moresby, to the north, and a settlement had been established around the monastery at nearby St Bees. The area was fought over and controlled successively by Saxons, Danes, Scots and, from 1092 onwards, by the Normans. The first specific references to Whitehaven are from 1172 onwards, when the harbour was used for the transportation of soldiers. The name is probably Scandinavian in origin, referring to either a white farmhouse or toft, or to a nearby white headland. The lands belonged to the Parish of St Bees and were of economic importance for salt and coal as well as fishing. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the seventeenth century the only settlement was a small fishing village around the mouth of the Pow Beck, between today's market place and the Quay Street car parks.

THE INDUSTRIAL TOWN

Modern Whitehaven has its origins in the 17th century. In 1624 the village had a mere 25 householders but several generations of the Lowther family, wealthy Westmorland aristocrats, recognised its potential and invested heavily in the town over two centuries. Christopher Lowther began the construction of the harbour with the Old Quay in the early

17th century and laid the foundations of the town's later wealth by exporting coal to the fast growing Dublin. His son John inherited the lands in the mid 17th century and continued in the family footsteps, further developing and diversifying the industrial base to embrace chemical manufacturing, textile production, rope and sail making and shipbuilding among other activities. Under Sir John, trade with the America's also took off and Whitehaven became a major centre of the 'golden triangle', with its ships trading slaves from Africa for the luxury products of the new world: tobacco, sugar and rum (2). At one stage it was the second most important port in the country after London in terms of vessel registry. This trade was to continue until the American war of Independence, which brought about the beginning of a long decline for the town.



THE LOWTHERS' LEGACY

Sir John also bought and enlarged 'Flatt Hall' which, rechristened 'Whitehaven Castle', became the Lowther family home until well into the 20th century (3). He reorientated the town's main road to lead directly to the gates of the Castle (4). He also built St Nicholas Church at the heart of the growing town, and provided it with a school and hospital. Sir John Lowther, therefore, laid the foundations of modern Whitehaven and his son James consolidated his father's work, building many more important buildings including St James's Church, and becoming one of the richest commoners in the land (5). By the second half of the 18th century



the town was one of the most prosperous ports in the country.

THE RATIONAL TOWN

One of the most unique features of Whitehaven is its planned grid iron street pattern. A definitive architectural study on the town's growth: 'Whitehaven 1660–1800' (the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments) states that:

'Whitehaven is not a town of great architecture. Its buildings are fine but modest by the best standards of the 18th century. However, it has an unusually coherent architectural character and as such, occupies a unique place in the history of early modern towns.'

The grid iron pattern has its origins in Sir John Lowther's period of control. In order to achieve it, he seems to have set about systematically





1650

- The historic Core of Whitehaven with Pow Beck as an open watercourse.
- Informal Street Pattern.
- Harbour consists of breakwater and shingle beach.



1750

- Watercourses and original village still illustrated.
- Georgian grid is laid out and in development.
- Tangier Street and The Strand with beach frontage.



1800

- Georgian grid is fully built out and harbour expanded.
- Early street pattern still apparent.
- Pow Beck is now culverted and makes way for market.
- Newtown is developed.



1900

- As town becomes more heavily populated the grid is infilled - industry expands.
- Railway dominates the harbour front and coast.
- Harbour extended.
- The Castle reflects the development of the town.
- First signs of spread to surrounding hills.



1970

- Original village footprints lost to larger built forms.
- Newtown and High Street slum clearance. High Street replaced with current flats.
- Railway rationalised.
- General decongestion of the town centre but creation of large peripheral communities.



2000

- Additional demolition around harbour.
- Further rationalisation of railway.
- Supermarket sheds add large footprints to town periphery.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT (Figure 2.1)

acquiring land over a 30 year period in order to control the town's development. A letter of his regarding urban development is quoted in 'Whitehaven 1660–1800':

'Uniformity is best when a town spreads from ye centre to ye Circumference...ye best way of all is to mark out several streets and to set different rates and let em choose where they will.'

This philosophy is at the root of the great diversity within a very coherent framework, a feature which lends the town much of its charm and appeal.



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Figure 2.1 illustrates the development of the town from a small fishing village to the country's sixth largest port in less than a century.

THE 19TH CENTURY

The American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars in Europe marked the beginning of the end of Whitehaven's golden era. Many ships were destroyed and trading links lost, and a number of important merchants faced ruin during this time. The town continued to grow in the 19th century but it was overtaken in importance as a port and as an industrial centre by numerous towns and cities during the industrial revolution. The town, constrained by the sea, the steep surrounding hills and by the Lowther's Estates inland, became steadily denser and more chaotic, with extensive poor quality slum development filling in many of the inner courtyards of the block structure and the hillsides to the north and south. Most of this housing was cleared in the early 20th century and the

walls and alleys of the New Houses still survive on the brows above Preston Street/Newtown (6).



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Despite the relative decline, the town was still a busy industrial port and many of its buildings reflected this. The arrival of the railway and spread of lines throughout the town centre was perhaps the most significant change during this century and The Grand Hotel and Railway Station at Bransty reflected the confidence and pride felt by the citizens. The Bransty Arch, built to transport coal from the St James' Pit to the harbour in the 19th century, was nevertheless built in the form of a grand triumphal arch, and at one of the town's most important gateways. This too was a symbol of the town's pride and prosperity, but was demolished in the 1930's despite significant local opposition (7).



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MINING

Coal extraction was already carried out in the middle ages on behalf of the Parish of St Bees. Mining had been the original source of the town's wealth and early growth and continued to be its mainstay throughout the 19th and much of the 20th centuries. In the 17th century there were more than a dozen pits producing coal, and although many of these were quickly worked out, new pits were regularly sunk and technical improvements led to steady increases in the amount of coal extracted.

Whitehaven was in the forefront of innovations in this field for many years and introduced steam driven pumps and ventilation systems at a very early stage. Despite being among the most dangerous coalfields in the country due to the high levels of methane, the rich coal seams continued to be deepened and extended. Many of the shafts



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extended several miles out below the Irish Sea, and by the time of the closure of the last working pits in the 1980's there were plans to drive shafts all the way to the Isle of Man, some twenty miles away!

The last mine closed in the 1980's and with it ended a centuries old industrial tradition in Whitehaven. Most of the evidence of this long mining history has been obliterated but nevertheless some of the most distinctive features of the town's landscape owe their origins to the pits. The Ladysmith pit functioned until 1943, when it was taken over by Marchon products and

converted into a chemical manufacturing centre which is the town's last surviving major industry. The Haig Pit has now been converted into a mining museum, located on the coast to the south of the town centre. The Wellington Pit was on the south shore, overlooking the harbour, and many of the features which make up this distinctive backdrop to the harbour itself are remnants of this pit, constructed by the Lowthers deliberately to look like a castle: the candlestick flue, the gatekeeper's cottage, the Howgill tunnel and the impressive retaining walls (8).

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

Much of Whitehaven's early success was based on trade links to the New World. Several Whitehaven families established plantations and shipbuilding industries on the coasts of Virginia and Maryland in particular. There are strong links between some of these coastal areas of the United States and Whitehaven, reflected in the architecture and even in some of the building materials.

There are also important Whitehaven connections to two major figures in American history, George Washington and John Paul Jones. Mildred Gale, a Virginian, was widowed young by Lawrence Washington, who left her with three children. Her second husband was a Whitehaven merchant who took the whole family back to Whitehaven. Unfortunately, she died soon afterwards and a legal dispute over the custody of the children eventually resulted in their return to America where Augustine later married and gave birth to George, the future first President of the United States. An elegant Georgian mansion at 151 Queen Street was later built by her husband and is to this day, associated with the town's George Washington link.

John Paul Jones was born north of the border on the Solway Firth and worked as a seaman on Whitehaven ships as a young man. He later emigrated to America and in later life became the founder of the US Navy. He made his mark on



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Whitehaven by leading the only attack on the British mainland of the American War of Independence in 1778. Although undermined by his men's visits to a local inn and an unexpected gust of wind putting out the light they had prepared to set fire to the British boats, the attack was partially successful, and destroyed a good number of Whitehaven ships. This was a seminal event in the town's history and is commemorated in harbourside sculptures. It was of as much symbolic as material importance and in many ways represented the end of the glory days for the town.

THE REAL LILLIPUT?

Another important personality associated with Whitehaven is Jonathan Swift, the 18th century political satirist and author of *Gulliver's Travels*. Although the connection appears to have become exaggerated in local folklore, he lived here for a couple of years as a child, when his parents moved from Ireland. The house he lived in still survives on the southern hilltop overlooking the harbour, and is still known as the Jonathan Swift house. Legend has it that his memories of watching the tiny ant-like men scurrying around in the busy harbour

below him was the inspiration for one of Gulliver's most well known adventures in Lilliput. Whether true or not, the story is very suggestive and quite believable from the fantastic vantage points up on the Mountpleasant slopes.

SUMMARY: HISTORY LESSONS

Whitehaven has an unusual history, which is reflected in many of the town centre's distinctive overall layout and unusual built features. The relative loss of energy and drive in the 19th century led to a gradual decline in the town's fortunes but preserved the town from the worst effects of the industrial revolution on its urban structure. Today the town centre still represents a rare example of a relatively intact, planned Georgian grid pattern and many of its original buildings are still in good condition, reflecting the past prosperity and confidence of the town. The town's history is not only a source of local interest and pride but a potential source of interest for visitors. Numerous features, both extant and disappeared, could be better exploited to alter the image of the town, and something of the past confidence could be restored. Some of the key features which may inform the town's future development include:

- The American connection
- The seafaring and trading tradition
- The recently restored harbour
- The industrial heritage
- The town centre's urban grid and architectural distinctiveness
- The Jonathan Swift link

The Whitehaven of today was created by entrepreneurs, striving to keep the town in the vanguard of new developments in technology and architecture. It must not be forgotten that the Georgian buildings

and harbour which are seen to day as 'heritage' were modern and contemporary in their day. The spirit which made Whitehaven so successful in the 18th century, was one of enterprise, risk, experimentation and rational planning. Something of the flair and forward thinking of the town's forefathers must be recovered if Whitehaven is to regain its lost prestige and put itself back on the map.

3 The town today: Urban design appraisal

KEY FACTS

- The town has three great assets: an attractive natural setting, a well-conserved historical town centre, and a large, well-refurbished harbour.
- The historical core is characterised by a rational grid pattern, composed of a series of irregular urban blocks. Much of its charm lies in the irregularities derived from the interaction of the grid with the topography and pre-existing street pattern.
- Many buildings have office or residential above ground floor retail or leisure uses, creating a mixed use environment.
- The interior of some blocks provides private parking and attractive courtyards, but the majority of internal spaces are dominated by poor quality car parking and service yards.
- The surviving Georgian architecture includes many fine buildings but most of the 20th century additions have been of very poor quality. Few, if any recent developments are of a quality consistent with the town's historical legacy.
- The historical core is ringed by a periphery of poor quality development, vacancy and dereliction, which undermines its environment and image, provides poor links to surrounding areas and drives down land values and aspirations.
- All the main 'gateways' to the town centre give a very poor first impression. The three main arrival points are dominated by large insensitive superstores—either existing or proposed—and associated parking.
- The southern approach corridor, Newtown/Preston Street/The Ginns, is particularly fragmented, but the degree of vacancy and dereliction provides an opportunity for wholesale transformation of this area.
- The refurbishment of the harbour has been very well carried out, but has failed to act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town centre or to attract new investment and life along the harbour front itself.
- The Strand/Tangier Street corridor severs the harbour from the town centre, due to the volume of traffic and related highways works, and to the fact that buildings on both sides 'turn their backs' on this road.
- The streetscape of the town centre is very mixed in quality, giving an overall sense of incoherence and clutter which detracts from the inherent qualities of the town's architecture and urban grid.
- The town has very few public squares and spaces and those that do exist are mainly poorly located, designed and maintained. The recently refurbished harbour represents the largest area of public realm in the town and yet is under utilised except during major festivals. The St Nicholas' Gardens at the heart of the town centre is an ideal location for a lively public square but functions more as a quiet backwater.
- Whitehaven has an abundance of green space but again this is mostly of poor quality, neglected and little used. The exceptions are the town centre gardens, which are conventional but popular and well maintained
- Outdoor recreation provision is extremely poor and facilities for children and young people in particular are very inadequate.



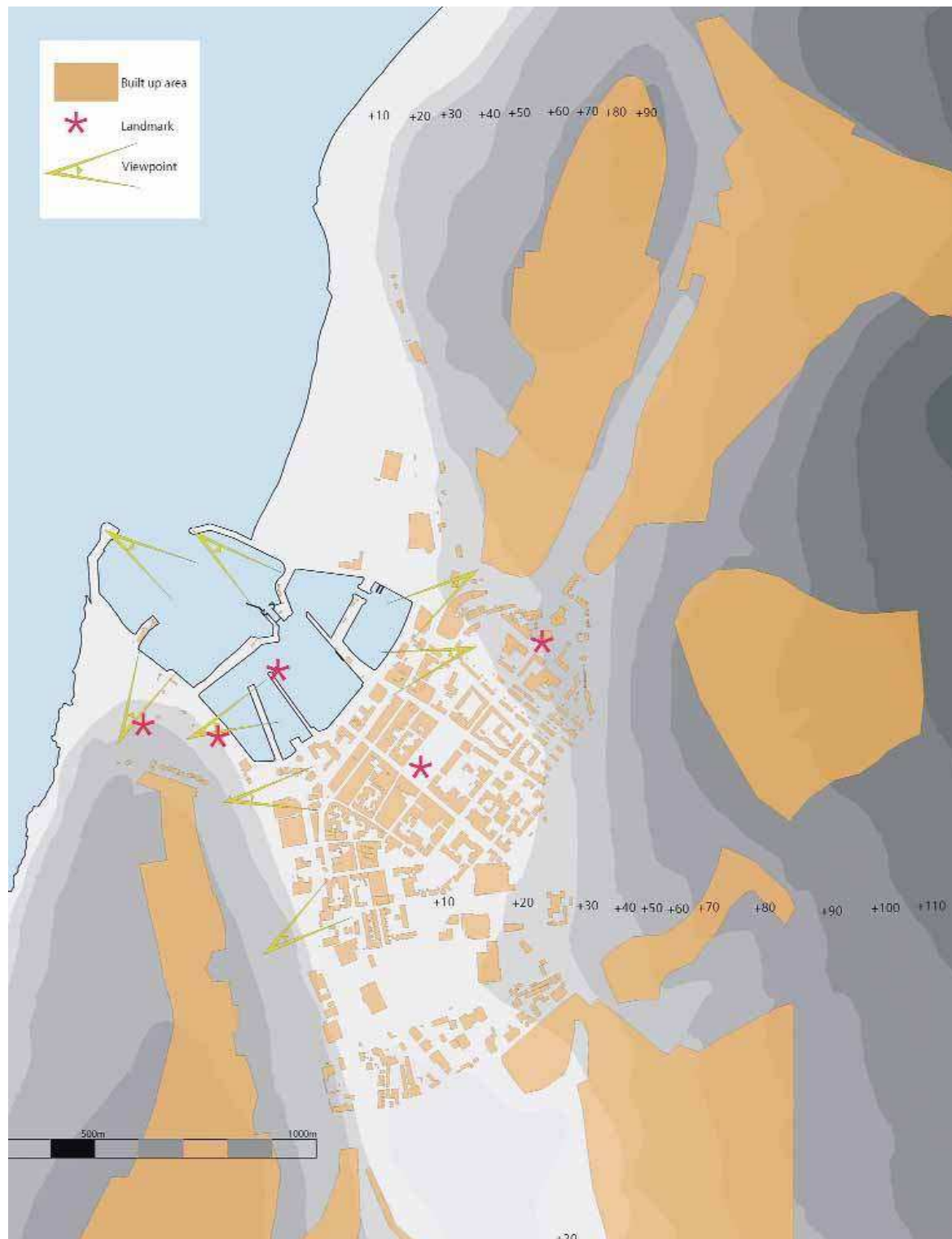


Figure 1: Topography & Visual Analysis

TOPOGRAPHY AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

The town centre of Whitehaven sits in a bowl, opening out to the sea, and almost surrounded by low hills on three sides. The Pow Beck valley forms the main break in the surrounding slopes as it approaches from the south, before opening out to form a wider plain where the original fishing village grew up. The southern slopes of the valley are steep and wooded, running up to Kells, while its northern side is a more gently sloping alluvial plain on which the main body of the town was built. Most of the study area is contained within this bowl, although the northern extremes of the study area extend beyond it. The 'North Shore' is a coastal shelf, below the steep slopes and cliffs running up to the Bransty ridge. Bransty Row is a steep sided valley which has provided the main historic approach to the town. The High Street area is built on steep slopes on the northern edge of the valley, but stitched into the original fabric of Lowther's Whitehaven.

The tight physical constraints on the town's development led to an ever increasing concentration of housing and industry in the 18th and 19th centuries and this in turn led to the first developments on the hills overlooking the town. In the 20th century, the decreasing density of the centre has been paralleled by the rapid growth of these peripheral areas to the north, south and east, creating a town composed of several poorly connected satellite communities ringed around the historic core.

Visually, the town's topography provides one of its most significant features. From the harbour the features on the hilltops to the north and south form important visual landmarks, and the view inland is one of a town ringed by wooded hills. From within the historic centre, the slopes surrounding the town give a strong sense of definition and containment. Channelled views are afforded along the roads running north-south towards hilltops on both sides. St James's Church at the end of Queen Street forms a key focal point and full

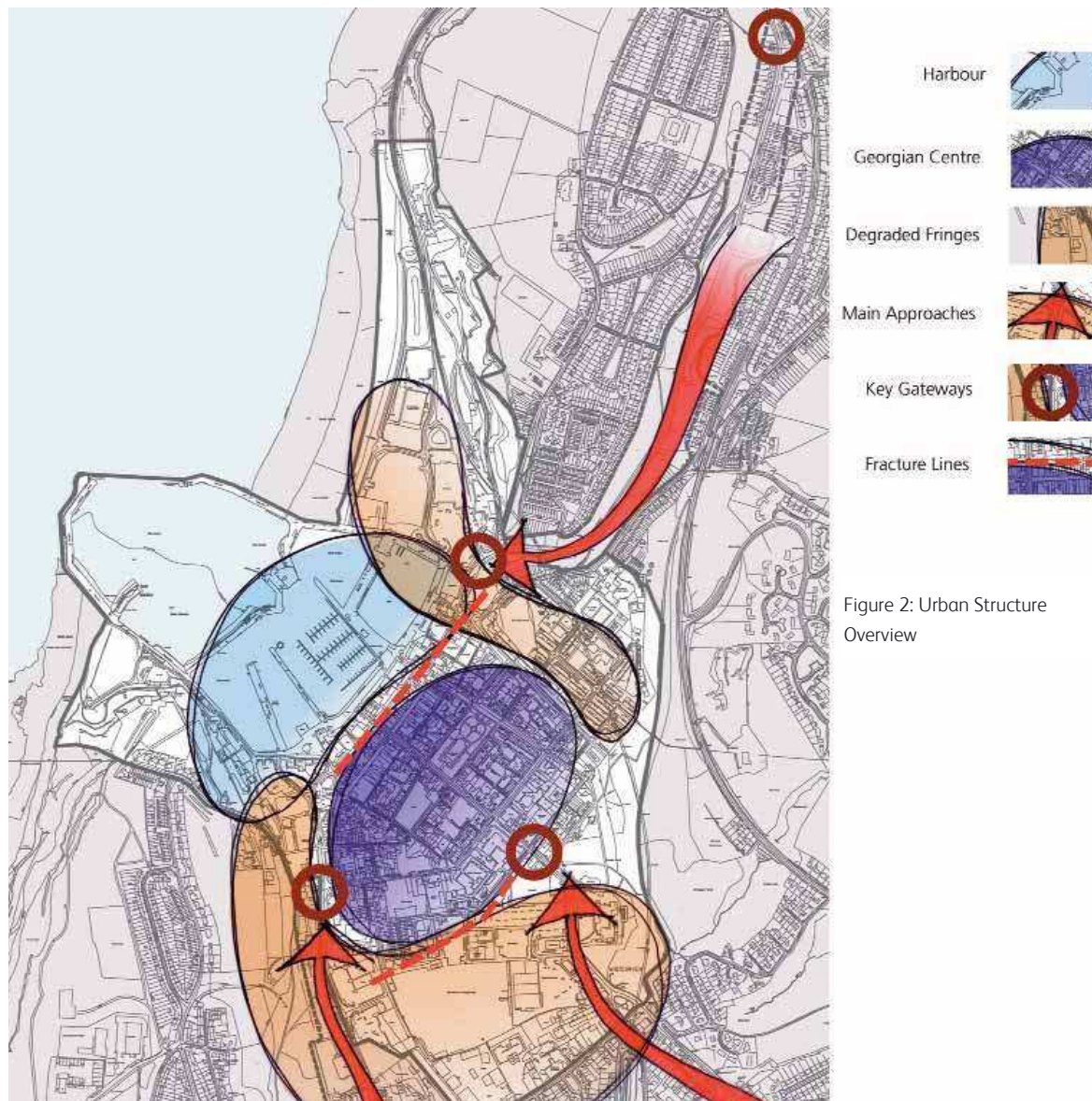


Figure 2: Urban Structure Overview

URBAN STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

The overall urban structure of Whitehaven reflects its historical development with remarkable clarity. The steady economic decline of the town during the late 19th and 20th centuries has probably spared it from the major redevelopments undergone by many other more industrial towns. However, the dereliction and decay resulting from the closure of businesses, the drop in population, the growing need for car parking, and the clearance of 'slums' to make way for more modern council housing, have all had an impact on the town of today.

Historic Town Centre

The urban grain and character of the historic centre, defined by the grid iron street pattern laid out by Sir John and his son James Lowther during the 17th century, has survived to the present day and retains much of the charm and style of its original conception, despite the many changes it has undergone since then. A surprising number of very elegant and attractive buildings survive from the 17th and 18th centuries. Many individual buildings and, in some cases, whole blocks, have been replaced, but, although this has to a degree diluted the town's coherence, the replacements have generally had the architectural 'good manners' to respect the building lines, scale, materials and colours characteristic of the town.

Harbour

The town has always turned its back on the harbour, which must have been a noisy, smelly, crowded place in its heyday. The current one-way system, running along The Strand and Tangier Street, only accentuates this separation of the two historic 'hearts' of the town. The recent regeneration of the harbour has done much to convert it from a rundown, industrial port into an attractive marina and seafront. However, it remains isolated from the main town centre and lacking in any life or focus of activity except for the rare occasions when there is

stop to the historic town. The hills and slopes themselves provide a series of vantage points over the town with spectacular views. The uneven pitches and eaves of the rooftops, dotted with spires and chimneys are one of the town's most underestimated features. Legend has it that Jonathan Swift's short sojourn as a child in a house on the southern hilltop overlooking the harbour was the inspiration for his vision of Lilliput. Whether true or

not, the legend reflects a powerful aspect of the town's appeal. Some of the key viewpoints include those from:

- The A595 Loop Road
- The southern tip of the Bransty Area
- The slopes above Mountpleasant
- The Recreation Ground
- The footpath from Albion Road to Kells

a tall ship in dock. These twin hearts should be contrasting but complementary facets of the town, helping each other to thrive and yet their apparent isolation has the opposite effect – those who use the town centre are not attracted to the harbour, and those visitors who come to see the harbour see no reason to explore the town.

Fragmented Periphery

It was mainly around the periphery of the original town, to the south and north, that the industries developed and where most of the denser, poorer quality slum housing sprung up. Inland, to the east, the grounds of the Lowther estate formed the edge of the town. It is around this periphery where the clear urban grain of the centre blurs and fragments. Industrial buildings and the crowded blocks and terraces of workers housing have been cleared. They have been replaced mainly by piecemeal development of very poor quality, without any apparent long term planning or structure, consisting of car parking, distribution depots, large scale retail 'sheds' and ugly blocks of flats. Apart from The Castle and grounds on the Lowther Street approach, these 'degraded fringes' form an almost unbroken ring around the town centre.

Gateways and Approaches

The experience of arrival is a vital part of the image and memory of a place. There are three main 'gateways' and approaches to Whitehaven town centre, and all have been spoilt by the piecemeal and fragmentary development of the last decades. The main turn off to Whitehaven from the A595 is a poorly marked junction dominated by a petrol station. The approach road from this junction leads through a deep, wooded valley which is potentially very attractive but is currently very poorly managed, and overgrown. The northern end of the harbour has historically been the main point of arrival by road but also by train. Several of the symbols of Whitehaven's prosperity and confidence; the Grand Hotel, the Station and the Bransty Arch, graced this area in the 19th cen-

ture. These have been replaced by a sea of car parking, a very poor quality supermarket building, and the now vacant bus station and depot, which together form the newcomer's first impression of the town. The second main approach is from the east, past The Castle, once home to the Lowthers and therefore one of the town's most historically important buildings. The recently built retail park opposite is an eyesore at this key point of arrival

and provides a sad contrast between the Whitehaven of today and that of yesterday. Finally, the southern approach road from St Bees and Egremont, has always been the more industrial edge of the town. Today, a long stretch of this corridor is now dominated by vacant lots, dereliction, car parking and retail or distribution 'sheds', providing a very poor approach.

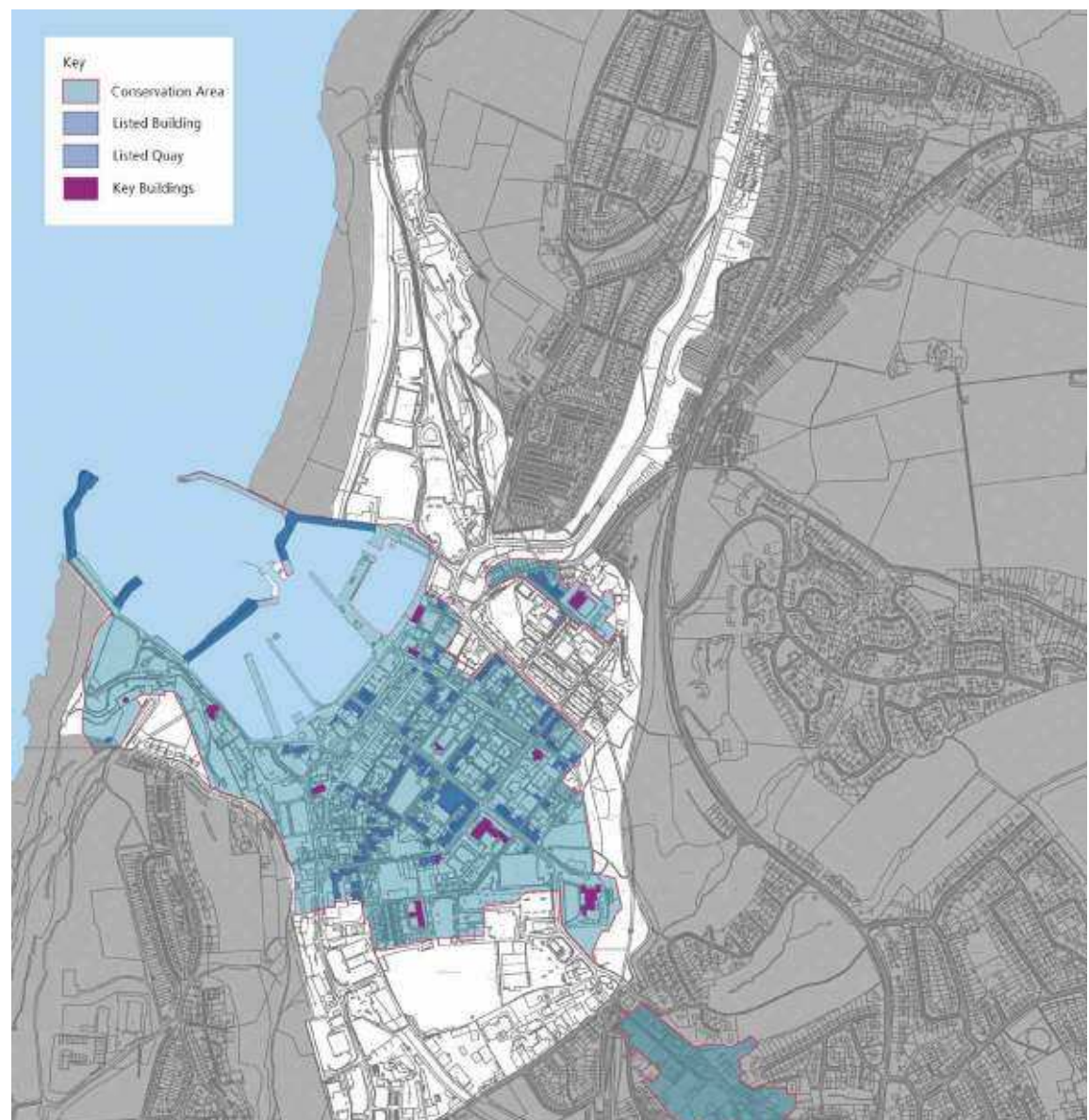


Figure 3: Architecture & Heritage

URBAN STRUCTURE & ARCHITECTURE

The Urban Grain

Most of the architectural appeal of Whitehaven dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, when the grid pattern framework laid out by the Lowthers was gradually filled in. The interest of the centre is not so much in the individual merit of particular buildings – although many are very attractive – but in the coherence and charm of the rational street pattern, and the way in which it interacts with the natural topography. Although a clear framework and set of rules was laid out by the Lowthers, the majority of plots were developed individually or in small groups, leading to a high degree of variety and individual detail, which lends interest and surprise to the legibility of the centre as a whole.

Most of the town centre consists of three-storeyed terraces forming urban blocks. The building line for the most part is at the back of the pavement, creating narrow, sharply defined streets (1), with an almost total absence of front gardens, although a few of the earlier mansion houses have small courtyards, such as that of the Waverley Hotel on Tangier Street.

The most interesting aspect of the Whitehaven grid are the little irregularities throughout the rational system. These lend it an element of surprise and subtle variety and are due to the interaction of the grid pattern with the existing conditions inherited by the Lowthers. These include the sloping topography of the valley and watercourses, the existing street pattern, and the existing pattern of land ownership. The axis of the grid is Lowther Street, which runs perpendicular to the harbour front and links to the main entrance to the Castle. Duke Street predated the grid pattern and veers slightly from the parallel. George Street, similarly, varies from the parallel because it follows the base of the steeper slopes to the north running up to High Street. The extension of the grid up the

slopes to High Street creates long, framed views from the rising ground, back to the town, and similarly, St James's Church forms a visual 'full stop' when viewed from within the town centre (2).

At the southern edge of the town the grid interacts with the old fishing village around the market. Here, the perpendicular roads turn through almost 45 degrees to stitch back into the southern access road which roughly followed the route of the Pow Beck. This area has a tighter grain and more organic street pattern typical of an older, unplanned settlement, centred on the market, which is still the town's only true public space. Tangier Street and the Strand were the original seafront before the development of the harbour, and also break from the regular grid. These fracture points form important focal points or nodes within the urban fabric. The striking building at the dog-leg junction between the Strand and Tangier Street is one example of this (3).

The hierarchy of importance within the streets is complex. The main streets are those running north south, linking the Lowther estates to the harbour, Lowther Street and Duke Street (4). These are generally wider and have always been the busier and more elegant streets. The streets running east-west are generally narrower and secondary in importance, although there are significant variations within this. An interesting feature is the progressive widening of the blocks from the west (harbour) to the east (inland) ends of the town, which is paralleled by the increasing prestige and elegance of the architecture. Strand Street is a wide corridor between the harbour front and the backs of King Street which formed a clear boundary between the town itself and the harbour. King Street and New Street/Chapel Street run parallel to the Strand with only a single building depth between them, forming linear terraces, which face onto King Street (5), the main shopping street and turn their backs on the streets on either side. This is one of the main reasons why The Strand continues to act as a break or barrier between the town and harbour. Further east from New Street the gap



(1) Town centre streetscapes



(2) Views to and from High Street along Irish Street



(3) Key fracture points



(4) Duke Street



(5) King Street

between the streets widens and to the east of Nicholas Gardens large blocks are formed, broken up by intermediate lanes. It is this area where most of the finer and larger buildings are located and today the majority of the civic and professional functions of the town are situated here.

An important aspect of the town's structure is the block arrangement and the consequent importance of the inner spaces as well as the outer streets. There are a number of lanes and ginnels which split the larger blocks or provide access into their core, which are an important part of the charm of the town centre (5). A number of recent residential schemes provide internal parking courts, with a clearly marked contrast between public and communal areas. However, the majority of the interior spaces are of poor quality and uninviting. The blocks vary considerably, according to their location in the hierarchy, size and historical development. Others have been converted into public car parks or service accesses for the larger stores and civic buildings. One or two of these areas have potential to provide attractive and more intimate spaces and lanes, but the quality of the public realm is currently very poor and, where accessible, these spaces are unattractive backwaters which do nothing to complement the high quality of the front elevations (6).

Architecture

The Georgian hierarchy of proportion from ground to second floor is a consistent theme, although the degree of detail and ornamentation varies considerably between the grander buildings on the main streets and the simpler terraces along the secondary streets. It is at the junctions of the more prestigious streets that most of the grander buildings are to be found, with more decorative detail, often incorporating ornate pilasters and capitals and with more impressive porch entrances (9). Good examples are on the corner of Lowther Street and Irish Street, or at the junction between The Strand and Tangier Street (3). Where the original buildings have been replaced by more recent architecture, the important definition of corners has usually been lost, such as the Civic Hall on Lowther Street (15). Some of the more attractive and characteristic themes of the architecture include the 'Scalloped' doorways on corners (7) and a number of elegant porched entrances (8). The number of elegant mansion houses surviving within the tight urban fabric of the centre is a testament to Whitehaven's prosperity. These include the County Court building on the corner of George Street and Irish Street (10), the Mildred Gale House at 151 Queen Street, and the Waverley Hotel on Tangier Street. (11).

Industrial Architecture

The town's industrial past is also very evident, despite the number of buildings that have been lost. Many of the town's most prominent landmarks are remnants of its industrial heritage, such as the pumping station for the Duke Pit, and 'the Candlestick' (12) and Gatekeeper's Cottage on Mountpleasant. The harbour itself, with its numerous Quays and Tongues, is a testament to the historical importance of the port, and there are a number of lighthouses and cottages around the quays which are important parts of this architectural whole. The recent refurbishment has succeeded, on the whole, in complementing these features rather than detracting from them. In addition a number of large mills and bonded warehouse buildings survive, two of which have been well converted to flats in recent years and which may be an interesting model for new development (12).

The 20th Century

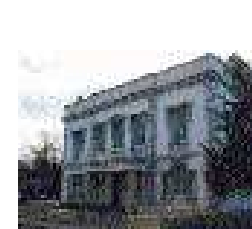
Within the historic town centre are many more recent buildings of very varying quality, most of which have only contributed to diluting and undermining the character and quality of the original urban grain. Although the majority of these have respected the urban grain and scale. Some of the



(5) Characterful Lanes and Ginnels



(7) 'Scalloped' doorways on corners



(10) County Court



(11) The Waverley Hotel



(6) Poor public realm in interior of many blocks



(8) Elegant porch entrances



(9) Grand buildings on key corner locations



(12) Industrial structures and buildings





(13) Dead Frontage on the Harbour



(15) Civic Hall



(17) Wilkinson's store: breaking the urban grain



(14) Multi storey car park on Swingpump Lane



(16) The new Inland Revenue Building



(18) Interesting residential developments around courtyards

worst offenders in the late 20th century have been the Civic buildings which have tended to ignore the building lines, scale and quality of their surrounds. The award winning Civic Hall of the 1960's (15) stands back from the street, weakening the sense of enclosure and definition of this important junction. Similarly, the multi-storey car park on Swingpump Lane is a crude and insensitive building which blights a key edge of the town centre (14). Recent changes have improved its security and efficiency but the timid improvements to the frontage do little to mitigate the visual impact of this building. The harbour frontage is also dominated by poor quality functional blocks, which contribute to a sense of neglect and deadness along the promenade (13) despite the high quality refurbishment of the public realm. They also blight the Strand/Tangier Street corridor to the rear and exacerbate the severance between the town centre and harbour.

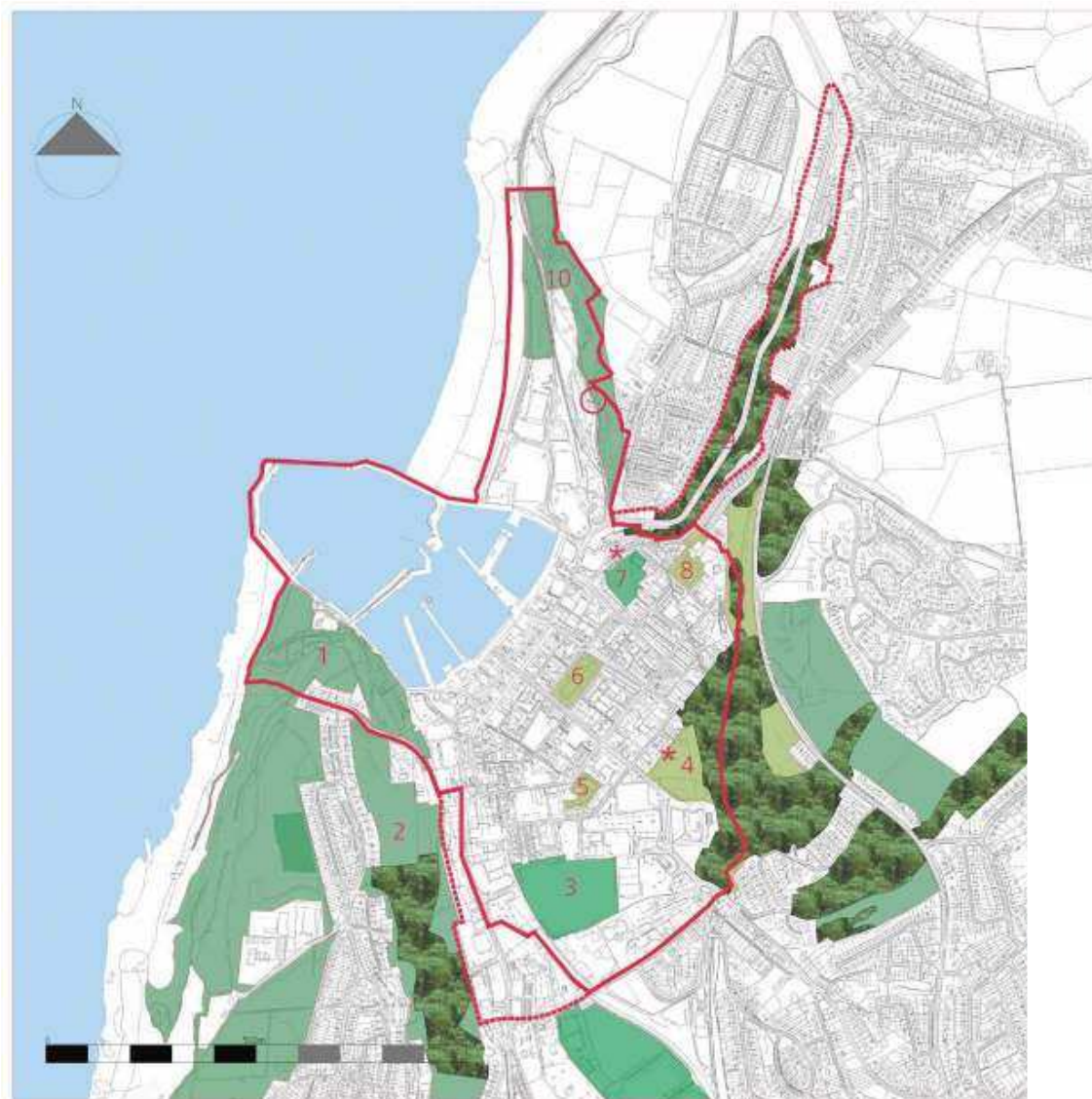
Some of the most recent buildings reflect a growing recognition of the need for higher quality architecture but do not succeed in setting the high standard that the town deserves. The new Inland

Revenue office block on the harbour front (16) is a reasonably attractive building, in keeping with the traditional bonded warehousing of many ports, but it fails to provide any active frontage along the harbour and has further blighted Tangier Street with a large car park to the rear. The new Council Offices between Catherine Street and Irish Street (see Civic Quarter illustrations), are an improvement on the previous building but represent a poor pastiche of the vernacular architecture which, far from complementing or enhancing the existing buildings, only helps to dilute the overall quality and consistency of the street frontages.

Some of the worst atrocities, however, have been over the last decade, with the arrival of the 'volume retail' sector. The Flatts retail park, opposite the Castle, the retail 'sheds' along the Newtown/Preston Street corridor and the Tesco development at the Bransty Gate have all compounded the fragmentation and loss of identity around the fringes of the centre. In particular the location of buildings, back from street frontages, behind a sea of car parking, has diluted and

degraded the fringes of the town centre to a previously unseen extent. There are also one or two examples of 'big sheds' in the town centre, such as the Wilkinson's store off Irish Street (17). An attempt has been made to integrate this better into the town centre but the long blank walls and monotonous facades completely deaden the streets around the store and represent one of the most glaring inconsistencies in the historic core.

Examples of good recent architecture are few and far between, although some of the smaller scale residential schemes are successful (18). A new block between George Street and Duke Street has been constructed around a large, landscaped internal parking court. The architecture is modest but maintains a strong urban block, provides a high quality and well-maintained communal area and is appropriate in scale to its town centre context. Another good example is a small residential development within an interior courtyard off Queen Street.



GREEN SPACES AND PUBLIC PLACES

Public squares, parks and gardens are the places where a community comes together. They are the informal social spaces where people meet and relax, where civic events are held and which often form the main focus of economic activity. They provide places for healthy outdoor play and sports. They are also the places which visitors intuitively look for to orientate themselves and make sense of

an unfamiliar set of streets. The most memorable towns and cities are almost always those with attractive, lively public squares and parks. Whitehaven has a very dense town centre, with relatively little formal public space, a legacy of its rapid growth within tight constraints in the 18th and 19th centuries. The existing public and green spaces are of very variable quality and it is interesting that the town does not have a single significant public square, a feature that is usually charac-

teristic of Georgian and Victorian towns, especially where planned to such a high degree. Informal public greenspace is plentiful but much is unusable due to steep slopes or dense vegetation. However, this wooded setting is an important feature of the town and a potentially attractive context for key routes and footpaths into the centre. There is an urgent need to improve both the quantity and quality of the public spaces and green space network in Whitehaven to create a better environment for the local community, extend the range of outdoor recreation facilities, make the town more attractive to visitors and to revitalise key parts of the town centre.

Public Squares and Spaces

The Market Square (1) was the only public square in Lowther's Whitehaven, although it was more an incorporation of the medieval fishing village than a specifically planned part of the new town. The original square linked Swingpump Lane to King Street but the later construction of the market hall, now the tourist information centre, reconfigured the square to its current form, more of a wide junction between streets than a real square. However, despite a number of rundown buildings, it is still a very attractive space and on market days, the most vibrant and lively part of town.

The redesigned harbour (2), is the only other real public space in the town centre and is more a network of wide walkways and stopping points than a single space. However, it is the main venue for large events and a popular place to stroll and sit on good days. The harbour itself is a unique feature of the town, and it has been very well refurbished, with high quality materials and good design. But despite this, its regeneration has not been successful in bringing new life and vibrancy to the town. The frontage is dominated by poor quality or vacant buildings and is strangely almost devoid of places to sit and have a coffee, a beer or even a fish and chip lunch. 'The Hub' is the main genuine harbourside space but often feels quite bleak and unprotected.

There are other minor spaces within the town, outside the **Civic Hall (3)** and the space off **Queen Street (4)**. Although very different spaces, both display a lack of clear design thinking. Both are potentially attractive spaces which feel cluttered and unwelcoming and are little used.

Parks

Castle Park (5) is the town's only real public park and is significant as a focus of community life and as a venue for outdoor concerts and events in the summer. Although large, much of it consists of steep, inaccessible, wooded slopes. The parkland area adjacent to the Castle itself is a fairly undistinguished area of open grassland, whose main qualities are due to its containment by the woodlands, and as a setting for the Castle itself, the home of the Lowther family for three centuries. Planting within the park consists of one or two isolated trees, and the lime avenue running up to the Castle. Of the built features within the park, a statue at the main entrance is the only one of significance. A bandstand and public toilet are of very poor quality and do nothing to enliven or improve the space. There are benches along the avenue but little other furniture of note.

Gardens

St Nicholas' Gardens occupies a central location, between Lowther Street and Duke Street and is a well-maintained and popular space, consisting of an ornamental garden, around the intact tower and footprint of the old church. However, it occupies a very large area at the heart of the town, and is entirely surrounded by a hedge, which suggests a secluded character. This enclosed, slightly private quality is strange at the centre of a dense Georgian town and does little to enliven the streets around it or to provide a real 'heart' to the town.

Trinity Gardens (6) is in a more isolated location and therefore, slightly less well used, but also a popular place for people to eat their sandwiches, read a book or meditate on life. It is also a space created in the absence of a church, and with the gravestones and footprint of the church still conserved. The gardens are not memorable, but still form a pleasant surprise on a walk around the town and seem more appropriate in this quieter, less central location.



(1) The Market Place, on a busy market day



(3) Civic Hall frontage



(5) Castle Park



(2) Dead frontage on the harbour



(4) Hidden, little used space off Queen Street



(6) Trinity Gardens

Recreation grounds

There are two main recreation grounds within the study area. Both are bleak, bare, expanses of grass with no redeeming features except for their functional use for kicking a ball around or perhaps throwing a frisbee.

'The Playground' (1) is the last remaining vestige of the open 'Flatts' that once formed the grounds of the Lowther estate and still the largest area of usable greenspace in the town. Today it is used exclusively for sports, mainly rugby, with a single entrance in the south western corner, a small clubhouse and a small stand on the northern side. A footpath runs along the southern edge but high, overgrown mounding and a fence block it from going anywhere. The Playground is obviously important as a sports venue but its location and enclosed character act as a blockage to potential routes both north-south and east-west. It may provide opportunities to improve pedestrian links from between Coach Road and the town centre, as well as from Newtown to the Flatts. It also represents a wasted opportunity to improve the visual environment of the area and could be a far more attractive place with some relatively simple changes. There seems to be no reason why its function as a sports pitch could not be combined with a greater visual appeal and physical permeability.

The Recreation Ground (2-4) in the High Street area, is another large open expanse of bare grass, on a high vantage point overlooking the town. Along the High Street edge is a fenced in garden area which is now very run down and uninviting. Even as a recreation ground it must be of limited value, as there is no fencing. A single, rusty bench on a concrete footing looks out over a fantastic view of the town and harbour. This is a spectacular location and a completely wasted opportunity for a much more attractive small park.



(1) 'The Playground'



(3) Recreation Ground



(2) Recreation Ground: formal garden



(4) Recreation Ground: vantage point

Informal greenspace

In addition to the more formalised parks, gardens and recreation grounds, Whitehaven is surrounded by areas of woodland and open space, which are very important to the town's visual identity and appeal, although not formally a part of its outdoor recreational facilities. The most important of these are described below:

The wooded slopes of **the Bransty Approach (5)** form a green corridor which is the main way into the town centre. The woods are poorly managed and with a high percentage of probably self-seeded trees, especially sycamore. Further stands of pine have been planted in recent years and there are large incongruous areas of hydrangeas along the road edges. The overall effect is of a dark, gloomy corridor in the summer and of a bare, slightly neglected one in winter. At night the poor lighting makes it feel almost threatening, and the footpaths and steps through the woods are in very poor condition.

The Mountpleasant 'terraces' (6 & 7) on the southern slopes of the harbour are a remnant of the dense terraced housing and industrial activity which stretched from here all along the base of the southern slopes until well into the twentieth century. The terraces are formed from the retaining walls of the cleared housing and have now been overrun by regenerating scrub vegetation in many places. Two steep flights of steps cut through them to the carefully mown lawns at the top. The walls and steps, although overgrown and unkempt, are a memory of the town's industrial past and the green backdrop to the harbour, broken up by industrial features, is a fascinating and attractive part of the wider view.

The North Shore area consists of an unkempt and chaotic mix of mounding formed from industrial waste, isolated industrial and commercial developments of very poor quality and steep scrubby slopes at the base of impressive cliffs. What could potentially be a very attractive area of shore-



(5) Bransty Approach



(6) Mountpleasant: remains of old buildings at base



(7) Mountpleasant: upper terraces

line is currently a run down and forgotten area on the periphery of the town centre

Play and recreation

Provision of play and recreation facilities for children and young people in the town centre area is very poor. There are two play areas within the town centre. One is in Castle Park (8) and the other is in the Recreation Ground. These are both small, substandard and in poor condition. There is a skatepark in the North Shore area, to the north of the station and accessed from the Coastal Path. The skatepark is in an isolated location with no security measures.

The scarcity and quality of facilities for young people in the town is a reflection of the low priority currently given to this segment of the population. Any attempt to improve the environment for the local population must place a higher priority on play provision and recreation space for teenagers. These can be sensitively integrated into existing parks and open space areas, but it is important to make sure that they are not isolated as this only increases young people's sense of marginalisation and adds to the insecurity of such places, increasing the risk of them being monopolised for undesirable activities.



(8) Castle Park: play area



(9) Recreation Ground: The Play Area

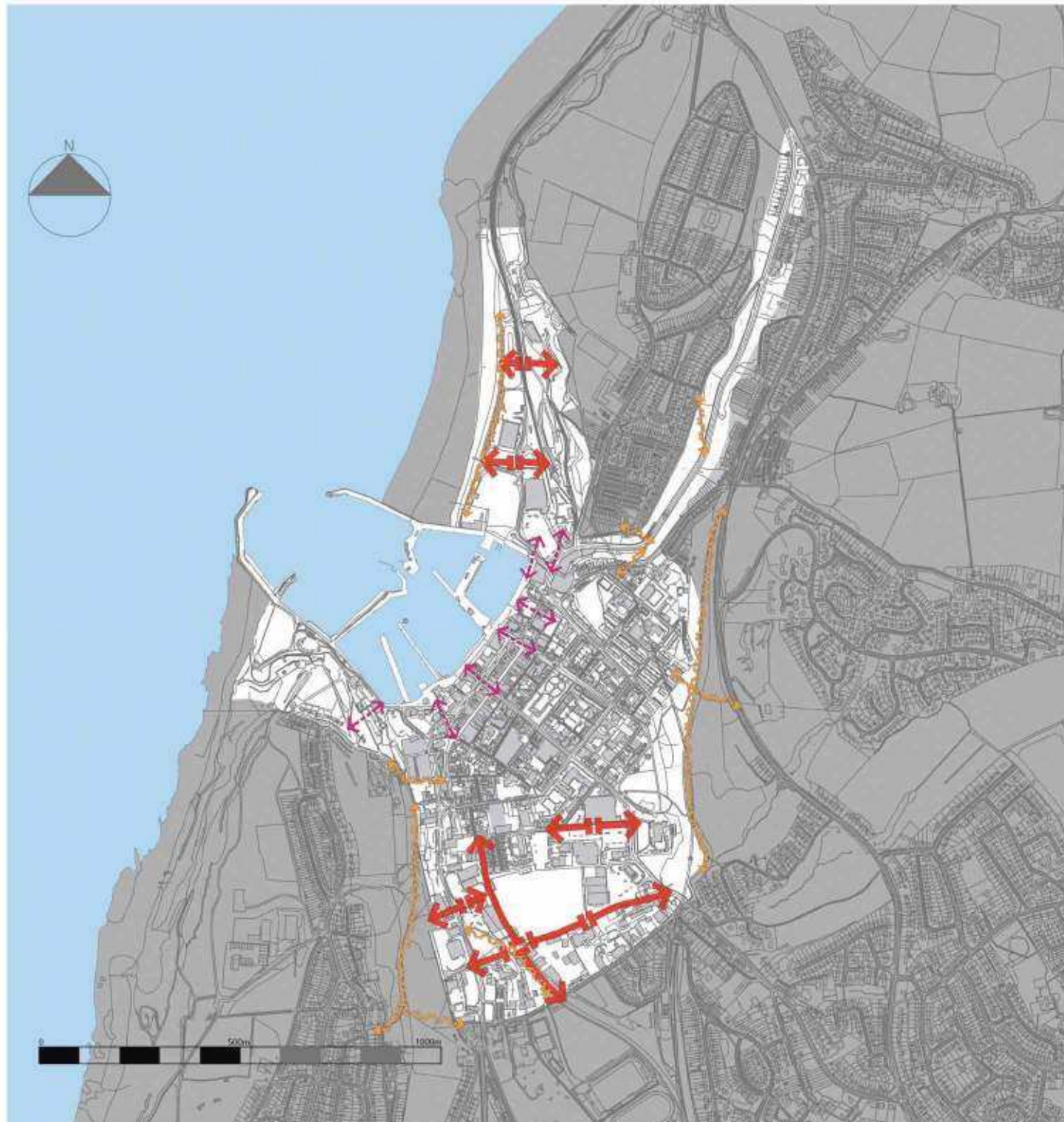


Figure 5: Permeability

-  **NO WAY THROUGH!**
Physical break on major
desire line
-  **POOR LINKS**
Barriers or obstacles to
important connection
-  **POOR QUALITY FOOTPATH**
Bad surfacing, lighting or
general condition appearance

Figure 5: Permeability

PERMEABILITY AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The grid pattern of the historic town centre is a very permeable structure, providing easy access to most areas and a clear hierarchy of streets which makes orientation easier within the centre. However, around the periphery the situation is very different. Physical links between the town centre and the surrounding areas are generally poor and, in some important cases, non-existent. The main issues are illustrated on figure 5, and outlined below:

- There are frequent links to the harbour but the quality of these is generally poor. Many are small ginnels between buildings, often with steps, ramps or kerbs (1). These provide little or no sense of leading to the harbour front and are often quite off putting to the newcomer. However, the most important obstacle is the Strand Street/ Tangier Street corridor itself, which is part of the one way system (2). Apart from the often heavy traffic, all the junctions along the street are surrounded by long barriers, aimed at protecting pedestrians but also acting as a serious constraint on movement, and



(1)

adding to the visual clutter. The small roundabout at the junction with Market Place is for traffic calming purposes but has the effect of adding yet another set of barriers to fluid movement. The importance of the street for deliveries to the rear of shops on King Street compounds the problem still further.

- Most pedestrian links to peripheral communities to the north and south (Bransty, Kells, Bleachgreen, Harras Park) are via footpaths which provide one of the main points of access for many people in these communities (3). Most of these footpaths are in a very poor condition, with bad surfacing, loose or uneven steps, little lighting, litter, and, in some cases, overgrown vegetation on both sides (4). These issues create not only a physical obstacle for many people, but perhaps more significantly, a perceived safety problem which may put off many potential users.
- To the east of the town centre, a large area, corresponding roughly to the old Lowther estates known as 'The Flatts', which is about 70% of the size of the whole historic core, is not crossed



(2)



(3)



(4)

by any roads or footpaths at all. This creates a block in the permeability of the area and a limitation on access between the town centre and the Corkickle area. Between Irish Street and Coach Road, there is no direct route at all from Newtown to Lowther Street, either for cars or pedestrians. It also has the effect of forcing the important C2C route on to the busy and unattractive Newtown Road for the first stretch, taking cyclists out of the attractive town centre and through one of the worst parts of the town.

Access Issues

For the less able-bodied and those who use wheelchairs or push prams, the town centre is generally very difficult to get around. Although attractive, many of the stone pavements do not provide a comfortable or smooth surface. Many of the pavements on secondary streets are also narrow, and broken by regular crossing points, many of which do not have good drop kerbs. The streets are full of obstacles and barriers, sometimes designed for pedestrian safety but also acting as a constraint on movement. In addition, poor coordination in the installation of signage, furnishings, planters and barriers, has led to a very cluttered public realm in many places, which adds a further obstacle. Evidence of poor maintenance in a number of places, such as potholes, deep puddles, and broken flags, only compounds an already acute problem.

STREETSCAPE

The streetscape of Whitehaven town centre is generally very attractive, but this is mainly due to the architectural quality and coherence of most of the streets. The other elements that make up the streetscape; paving, furnishing, planting, lighting, etc., are a contradictory mixture of interesting detail and high quality materials in places, contrasting with some very poor quality, badly maintained, or cluttered areas, which detract from both the visual appeal and the 'usability' of the streets.

Paving Details

Generally, the quality of paving materials in the historic town centre is high and good use is made of a wide range of materials including stone flags, setts, cobbles, and pebbles as well as modern block paving, used to define vehicular and pedestrian area, parking and loading bays, access points and shared surfacing. There are many interesting examples of the use of high quality materials and unusual paving patterns in the town centre pavements. Some of the most notable are:

- (1) Alternating linear strips of granite flags and square stone blocks is a particularly unusual and attractive detail, used on many narrow pavements, although in places it creates a very uneven surface which is difficult for the less able bodied, wheelchair users or pram pushers to negotiate;
- (2) Good quality, concrete block paving combined with stone flag paving and cobbles, around the market area in particular, to define vehicular areas and parking bays;
- (3) Decorative pebble mosaics used to enliven the pedestrian areas;
- (4) The use of well designed, high quality stone paving along the millennium promenade.

Unfortunately, even where individual streets and areas are well paved, there is a lack of coherence in materials and design which weakens the character and sense of identity of the town centre considerably.

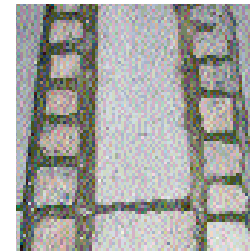
There are also many places where the generally high standard of materials is not maintained or where the quality of maintenance is very poor and where pavements are pockmarked with repairs (5). This is true around most of the periphery of the centre: Newtown, Coach Road, and the High Street area. Within the town centre core, many of the smaller lanes and alleys and some of the areas around the pay and display car parks are also poor in this respect.

Signage & Orientation

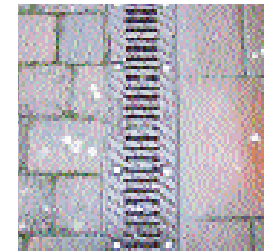
The signage in the town centre is almost universally poor in design quality, clarity, location and state of repair. Signage at the main access point to the town centre from the Loop Road, as mentioned above, is badly sited and easily missed. Main highways signage in the centre itself is often very insensitively sited, the worst example of which is at the Lowther street gateway (6 & 7), where a large sign forms an obstacle in the pavement and blocks the first views to the town centre at this major arrival point. Pedestrian signage is generally in very poor condition and often unclear. It also often adds to the problem of general 'clutter' in the streetscape. The more recently installed signage on the harbour front, although more attractively designed is not functional and in some cases has become almost illegible. Generally speaking, orientation both for vehicles and pedestrians within the town centre is very poor and leads to a sense of confusion in the newcomer.

Furnishings

Apart from the newly refurbished harbour, where the street furnishings are beautifully designed and of excellent quality (8–10), the rest of the town is generally poorly furnished. King Street is the main exception to this rule. The furnishings here are of good quality but are standard items without any sense of place. They also reflect a common but false idea of 'heritage furnishings', in that they are ornate Victorian/Edwardian style benches, which are probably not appropriate to the Georgian context of Whitehaven. It is interesting that, in contrast, the unashamedly contemporary approach of the harbour area complements the historical features and architecture very successfully. Throughout the rest of the town centre, furnishings are dominated by ugly benches, bins and planters which are often in a bad state of repair. Unusually, the bollards are generally of a much higher quality and more appropriate design, although here too there is a degree of inconsistency across the whole town centre.



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)



(7)



(8)



(9)



(10)

Lighting

The lighting standards also reflect the piecemeal approach to the public realm in the town centre. The harbour regeneration has adopted a very contemporary, clean white column and outrigger, while a more traditional lantern has been used in the busier core areas of the Market, King Street and along the Strand/Tangier Street corridor (11). Further away from the retail core and main streets, more functional, columns of very varying quality and condition predominate. Away from this main core, the lighting levels are low and many of the smaller lanes and alleys are very badly lit. Footpaths and steps linking the centre to the peripheral communities, such as the route through Castle Park, and the main footpath to Kells, are almost unlit and very unsafe in places. Feature or accent lighting is also very limited. The harbour regeneration includes a striking wavy lighting feature along Lime Tongue and a major landmark 'The Crow's Nest', which is lit at night (12). These bring a new sense of dynamism to the harbour area when lit, although they are often turned off. However, other important features; the Beacon, the Candlestick and the Church Towers are poorly illuminated and many key buildings and features have no accent lighting at all.

Planting

Apart from the parks and gardens, the streets and spaces of Whitehaven town centre are remarkably devoid of vegetation. Street trees are limited to some bedraggled specimens along the Strand and some healthy, mop headed sorbus in the small square off Queen Street (13 & 14). Large pines have been planted along the harbour. The narrowness of many secondary streets makes tree planting inappropriate, but several of the main streets are wide enough to accommodate tree planting and would benefit from a small number of carefully chosen, well-sited trees. The main form of planting in the town centre is limited to an assortment of raised planters and beds containing small shrubs and annuals (15). These do little to improve or

brighten up the streets and a great deal to contribute to the general clutter which plagues much of the town centre.

Public Art & Interpretation

Interpretation of the town's rich heritage is widespread but very varied in quality. The best examples are perhaps where public art, design and historical interpretation have been fused. The best examples of this are associated with the harbour regeneration, where functional features, such as benches, bike racks, security barriers and paving have been beautifully designed to reflect the town's maritime history (16). More direct interpretative texts have been subtly built into benches and nicely crafted statues have been used to suggest historical events and characters (17). The use of similar statues at other locations in the town is also successful in awakening the curiosity of the newcomer. Another attractive feature is the use of pebble mosaics at the Market Place and along King Street to reflect historical themes.

However, the interpretation in the rest of the town is limited to traditional plaques and boards (18). The boards are uninspiring, poorly designed and often in a very bad state of repair. Printed material is equally lacking in flair and imagination and there is much scope for improvement in these areas.

Clutter

Whitehaven town centre reflects a common disease of most of our towns and cities, stemming from the multiple agencies and organisations that have a role or responsibility in the design and maintenance of the public realm: clutter (19 & 20). The combined requirements of paving, lighting, furnishing, signing, planting and protecting the streets often leads to an uncoordinated chaos of elements which often have the cumulative effect of defeating many of the aims which these items are installed to achieve. English heritage has recently launched a campaign against cluttered streets called 'Save Our Streets' which applies as



(11)



(12)



(13)



(14)



(15)



(16)



(17)



(18)



(19)



(20)

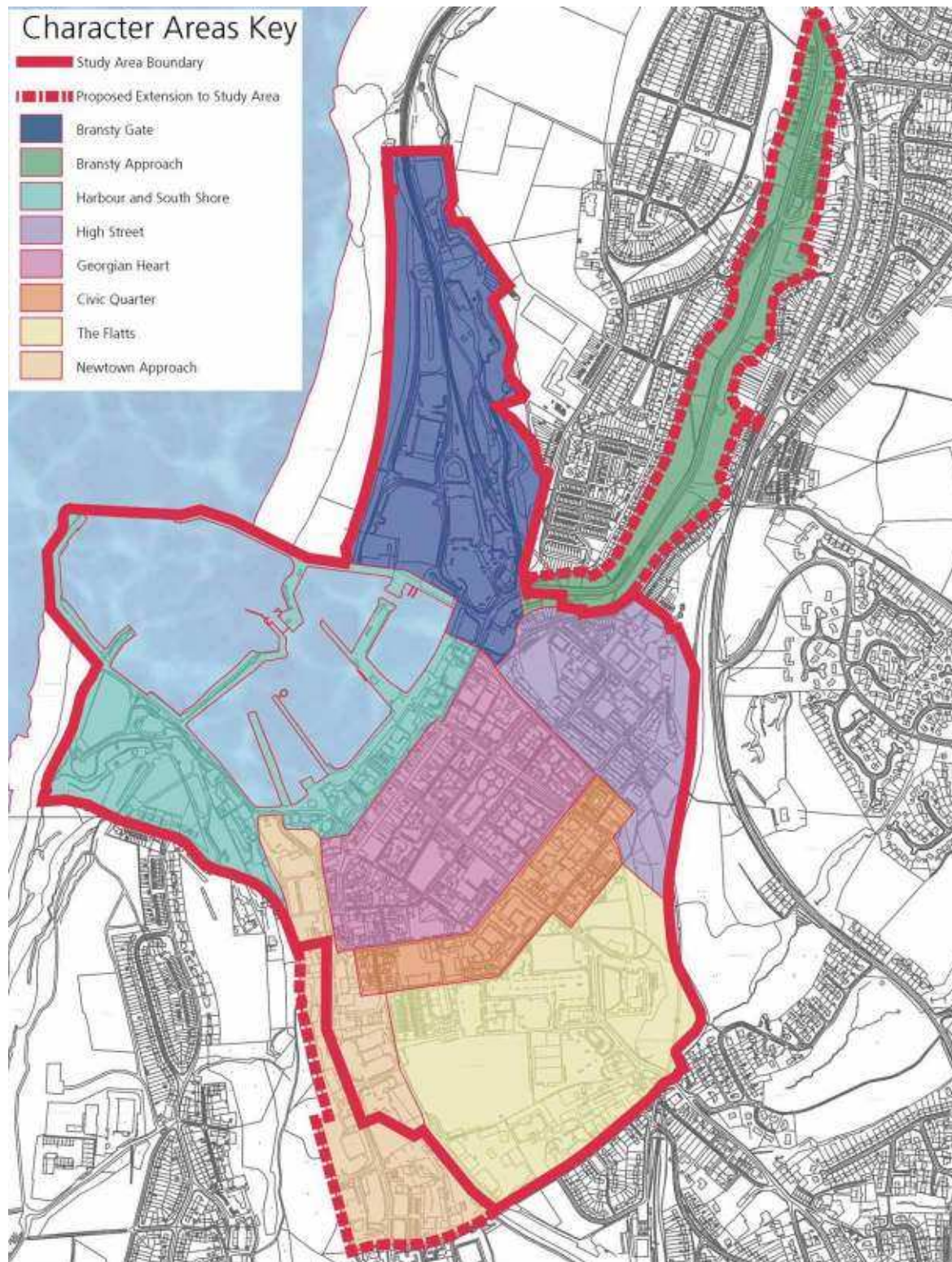


Figure 6: Character Areas Reference Plan

much to Whitehaven as anywhere in the country:

‘The towns and villages of England are being blighted by superfluous signs, haphazard paving and obstructed footways. As a result our streets are losing their local distinctiveness and character.’

Simply looking at the streetscape as a whole and designing in functional requirements in a coordinated fashion can do a great deal to eliminate this clutter. Other problems are more difficult to resolve and result from the adoption of Highways Standards aimed at protecting pedestrians, which have the effect of constraining and restricting their movement in favour of the motor vehicle. Examples from around the world have demonstrated that approaches which prioritise pedestrian movement and subordinate the car can actually be more effective in safety terms as well as producing far more attractive and accessible streets.

CHARACTER AREAS

The study area has been divided into Character Zones in order to analyse the structure of the town and the different component parts in more detail. These broad zones are not always homogeneous within themselves but have been chosen as ‘useful units’ which are linked by certain key qualities and issues.

Bransty Approach

This ‘green corridor’ (1) forms the main approach to the centre of Whitehaven, and for newcomers, their first experience of the town. The junction to the town centre is very poorly signposted and fronted by a petrol station. The access road, Bransty Row, then runs through a steep sided, wooded valley to emerge at the ‘Bransty Gate’. The wooded slopes appear overgrown and unmanaged, creating a shady and gloomy corridor in summer whilst in winter it looks scruffy and fairly

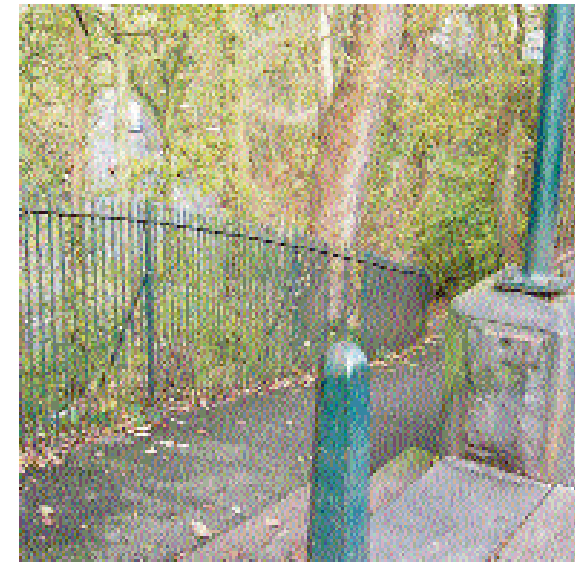
bleak. The pavements alongside the road and footpaths to the adjacent communities, are poorly lit and in a bad state of repair (2). The last stretch of the road before arrival at the town is dominated by empty hoardings on one side and small walled, unkempt gardens on the other.

Main area objectives:

- Improve the main junction to create a greater sense of arrival and clearer indications;
- Improve the management of the woodlands, removing unwanted species, opening up the canopy and creating a much more open, attractive woodland;
- Improve signage and lighting on pavements and footpaths;
- Remove or enhance obsolete and undesirable structures at final stretch of approach.



(1) Bransty Approach



(2) Bransty Approach

Bransty Gate & North Shore

The southern end of this area is the main gateway to the town centre and the first impression most visitors will have of the town, whether arriving by road or rail (3). It is currently dominated by vacant and derelict buildings, car parking, a petrol station and a poor quality supermarket. The remainder of the area is a coastal shelf, between the sea and the steep slopes rising to Bransty, once a hive of the shipbuilding and mining industries, but today a rundown backwater with isolated reminders of past activities. The Cumbrian Coastal Path runs along the base of the of the Bransty Cliffs, to the east of the railway, and the North promenade runs along the edge of a shale beach, separated by steep piles of rocks acting as flood defences. Both footpaths are potentially attractive but in poor condition and very badly signposted from the harbour and town centre. There is also no link between the two across the railway line.

Main area objectives:

- Create a new high quality gateway to the town;
- Create new transport interchange on station and forecourt;



(3) Bransty Gate & North Shore

- Develop high quality harbour frontage adjacent to fish processing plant;
- Improve North Promenade and Coastal Path and link better to main harbour;
- Create new pedestrian link across the railway.
- Relocate the skatepark to a less isolated area and create high quality facility.

The Harbour

The large harbour (4 overleaf) is the town's most outstanding feature, historically and visually. It contains numerous features of historical interest and provides a network of footpaths and view-points, both out to sea and back to the town. It

contains a well used marina and a small but surviving fishing industry. The recent regeneration has been very well designed and carried out, but the harbour frontage still lacks the opportunities to have a bite to eat or an evening drink which would bring it to life. The busy Strand St/Tangier St corridor separates it from the more vibrant town centre retail areas. It is only when the biannual Maritime

Festival is on or when a Tall Ship is in dock that it realises its obvious potential to become a major attraction and focus of a wider regeneration of the town centre as a whole. The Beacon is one of the town's two main visitor attractions and enjoys an outstanding location but is not imaginative or interesting enough in its content to act as a significant draw at the moment.



(4) The Harbour



(5) Newtown Approach



(6) Newtown Approach

Main area objectives:

- Downgrade the Strand St/Tangier Street corridor to prioritise pedestrian access between the town centre and harbour;
- Create new or upgraded public spaces to improve visual and physical links between Strand St and the harbour frontage;
- Promote leisure developments in ground floor of harbour frontage and encourage use of promenade for outdoor seating;
- Improve links between Millennium Promenade and footpath routes to north and south;
- Explore opportunities to improve the Beacon as a visitor attraction;
- Ensure all new development along the harbour frontage also addresses the Strand St/Tangier Street corridor and provides good links.

Newtown Approach

This is a wide corridor running from the harbour front along the base of the steep slopes that mark the southern edge of the town centre (5 & 6). Historically, much of the town's secondary industrial activities and associated workers housing have been concentrated along this route. Today it is the most deteriorated section of the town due to extensive clearance and dereliction. It comprises the town's main car parking provision at its western end, a number of very poor quality retail developments, distribution depots, and vacant or derelict sites. The road itself, although a secondary approach into the town centre, is important as the main approach from communities to the south within Whitehaven itself and its hinterland, not only for car drivers, but also as a major bus route and pedestrian/cycle link. The first stretch of the C2C route, used by around 15,000 people annually, runs along this road and is not only a very inauspicious start to this important route, but is dangerous for cyclists. A large section of the road, between Scotch Street and Coach Road, has no links for cars or pedestrians, through to the northern side of town.

Main area objectives:

- Upgrade road corridor to create an attractive approach to the town;
- Take advantage of high quality, harbour front sites for new, mixed use development around Quay Street incorporating redevelopment of multi-storey car park;
- Opportunities for landmark architectural developments at gateway on western edge of town centre;
- Improve or redirect the first stretch of the C2C route;
- Provide new through routes to improve links to Lowther Street;

The Flatts

This area (7 & 8) was historically the open grounds of the Lowther's Estate, and remained largely undeveloped until the 20th century. However, development since then has been carried out piecemeal and without a coherent plan. It comprises primarily two small industrial estates on Coach Road, the Flatts Retail Park, a school and church on Coach Road, some residential properties, and the Playground – a large open sports pitch. These elements have no connecting infrastructure in the form of roads or footpaths to provide links between them. The area lacks integration into the town centre and acts as a block between Lowther Street, Newtown, Coach Road and Catherine Street. The retail park, directly opposite the Castle, is an eyesore at a prime gateway to the town centre. The Playground, although a useful recreation facility, is a bleak and unattractive area of open space which provides no links through it

Main area objectives:

- Provide pedestrian links along the edges of The Playground, north–south and east–west;
- A new continuous footpath along the southern edge of the Playground may also allow the C2C cycle route to be diverted away from Newtown;
- Improve the amenity value of the Playground as a more accessible and attractive greenspace as well as a recreational resource;

- A long term objective must be to enhance the Lowther Street gateway to the town centre by improving the appearance of the Flatts Retail Park;
- Redevelop industrial sites along Coach Road as new sustainable residential developments on the town centre fringe, improving Coach Road and promoting greater permeability.

The Civic Quarter

This area (9 & 10) forms the eastern edge of the historic town centre, originally the outer boundary of the town adjoining the Lowther Estates. This area forms a distinct character zone due to the concentration of civic and professional activities and buildings within this strip, including the



(7) The Flatts Coach Road



(8) The Flatts: Retail Park



(9) The Civic Quarter: The Library



(10) The Civic Quarter: New Council Offices, Irish Street frontage

Borough and County Councils, the Library, Civic Hall, Records Office, Police and Fire Stations and District Courts, as well as numerous financial, legal and medical practices. The scale and character of many of the buildings reflects the area's status, but there are a number of more recent buildings which undermine and dilute this character. The area also contains a small, undistinguished public space in front of the Civic Hall, which is important as part of the first impression of the town as the newcomer turns the corner past the Flatts Retail Park. The Trinity Gardens are also important as a quiet retreat, popular at lunchtimes and summer evenings. The area is curiously not linked to Newtown to the south as Catherine Street stops short at a run down timber yard creating a dead end on this important street.

Main area objectives:

- Improve the quality of the public space outside the Civic Hall to create better gateway to centre;
- Extend Catherine Street to Newtown to improve access to and across this area;
- Improve poor quality civic buildings to reflect the prestige of the area;
- Enhance Trinity Gardens;

The Georgian Core

This character zone comprises the remainder of the historic town centre between Irish Street and The Strand/Tangier Street (11). This area historically has been the focus of shopping, pubs, restaurants and cafes, and this pattern is still true today. The area is a classic example of a mixed use town centre, with residential properties side to side with, and above shops and cafes. The area has great



(11) The Georgian Core

charm and, on a market day, vibrancy, despite the downturn in the fortunes of the town, reflected in many of its businesses. Lowther Street is the elegant backbone of the town centre. Many of the more prestigious shops have been located here in the past, although today an outdated department store is perhaps the only survivor. Along with Roper Street, it seems to be the favoured location for the handful of more specialist shops. The St Nicholas Gardens, between Lowther Street and Duke Street, are the town's major public space and popular for strolling and relaxing, yet occupy a huge area and are designed as a secluded gardens with a high hedge all the way round the perimeter. This leaves the town lacking a dynamic focal public space at its heart. King Street, which forms the western edge of the area, has long been the main shopping street and remains so today, but turns its back on the Strand and Tangier Street, reflecting the town's historic attitude to the once chaotic, industrial harbour. The area to the south contains the main retail area of the town, focussed on the busy Market Place and south King Street. To the north, between Lowther Street and Duke Street, the retail offer slowly peters out and beyond Duke Street takes on an exclusively residential character. There has been a good deal of new development over the last two or three decades of a mixed quality but generally conserving the block structure and scale of the original town. The Wilkinson's store between Lowther Street and Roper Street is an exception to this and creates a solid block of blank walls and dead frontage, totally inappropriate to this part of town. The area is also full of small ginnels and lanes which create potential interest but are often disappointing. Car parking and servicing uses tend to dominate the accessible areas within blocks and are generally of very poor quality and appearance. Generally speaking, despite the high quality pedestrianisation of King Street and paving of the market area, the streetscape of the area is particularly blighted by clutter and incoherence.

Main area objectives:

- Encourage the King Street premises to 'face the Sea', and provide frontage facing onto Strand Street as well as King Street itself;
- Where appropriate, improve the interior area within blocks to make them more attractive and pedestrian friendly;
- Provide coherence, simplicity and high quality throughout the streetscape, removing clutter;
- In the mid to long term, replace the Wilkinson's 'shed' with high quality development consistent with the scale and character of the surrounding area;
- Convert the Lowther Street end of the St Nicholas Gardens into an open, paved, public space as a more accessible focus for the heart of the town;
- Consolidate the southern area around the market as the main retail core and promote more specialist shops on Lowther Street.



(12) High Street: houses on upper Wellington Row

High Street

This northern edge of the town centre is built on the steep slopes rising from the Pow Beck coastal plain (12 & 13). St James's Church is a simple, elegant 18th century building located at a strategic focal point, at the end of Queen Street and one of the cardinal points in the Lowther Grid Iron structure of the town. It is surrounded by a generous

churchyard which is today a bleak expanse of mown grass with no distinguishing features. The buildings along High Street and Wellington Row



(13) High Street: Wellington Row junction

are among the most elegant and attractive of the town and form a second conservation area. However, the bulk of the area comprises large, ugly blocks of 1960's flats, built in parallel rows rising up the slope to High Street. These completely break the established block pattern of the town centre and are separated by quite large areas of wasted open space. A complex of school buildings opposite the church at the top is equally undistinguished. The Recreation Ground is a large and equally bleak open grassed space, except for a fenced garden area near the High Street edge, which is neglected and in poor condition. A small play area appears equally run down. Similarly to 'the Playground' this space is of little value except for sports and is a missed opportunity to provide a far more attractive and diverse neighbourhood park. It also provides one of the best vantage points in the town, a fact which is reflected only in one rusty metal bench.

Main area objectives:

- Upgrade or re-clad the blocks of flats and improve the open spaces between them to create a more pleasant environment;

- Improve the Recreation Ground with perimeter planting, a high quality playground and an attractive and comfortable viewing point area;
- This is a possible new location for the skatepark and other associated facilities for teenagers;
- Improve the Churchyard around St James's – why not a toddler's playground here?;
- Improve the George Street corridor with tree planting and public realm improvements;
- Create a much improved secondary 'gateway space' up to the High Street area at the base of Wellington Row.

SUMMARY

Whitehaven has a number of great strengths in terms of its visual character and appeal:

- Its attractive setting, contained within wooded hills;
- The large, historic harbour which has been recently refurbished to a high standard;
- The well conserved and coherent Georgian town centre;
- A surprising number of exceptionally attractive Georgian buildings;
- The features and remnants of its industrial past;
- Many surprising and attractive details in the architecture and streetscape.

However, its decline during the 20th century and much of the development of the recent past has led to the weakening and fragmentation of its urban fabric around the edges and a serious undermining of its visual appeal and functional strength as a district and visitor centre. Some of the most significant problems it faces today in terms of its urban fabric are:

- The spread of volume retail on town centre and peripheral sites, and especially at key gateways;
- The use of large areas of land for poor quality car parking;
- Extensive vacancy and dereliction around the fringes of the centre;
- The poor links between the town centre and harbour due in part to the one-way system along Strand Street and Tangier Street and the consequent poor quality of this corridor;

- The lack of good quality public spaces within the town centre to act as focuses for life and activity;
- The poor quality of buildings along the harbour frontage, and lack of opportunities to bring life and activity to this area;
- The clutter and lack of coherence in the streetscape, adding unnecessary barriers and obstacles to easy movement around the town;
- The very poor provision for play and outdoor recreation for younger people within the town centre;

The main objectives for its regeneration must be to address these key issues:

- Create a series of high quality and attractive public spaces (squares, parks, gardens);
- Ensure that new development obeys a simple set of architectural 'good manners' in order to consolidate the urban grain;
- Ensure that adequate car parking is provided but in less prominent locations, where it detracts from the visual quality of important parts of the town;
- Create a network of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes—make it a walkable and pedalable town;
- Establish a set of ground rules for the design of streets and spaces to minimise clutter, provide adequate furnishings, make places well lit and safe, and spread consistency and quality in the use of materials;
- Design clear and distinctive signage to make it easy to find your way around
- Create good links between the town centre and harbour, between the town centre and Coach Road and between the Castle and Newtown;
- Take proactive measures to bring more life and activity to the harbour area and Strand Street/Tangier Street corridor in particular;
- Provide high quality play and recreation facilities at strategic locations around the town.

4 Getting around: transport & infrastructure

KEY FACTS

- Whitehaven is poorly served by major roads and rail networks. The junctions from the A595 loop road to the town centre are badly signed turn offs which give no sense of arrival at a significant town.
- The town is a local transport hub but its railway station is small and hidden away and its bus station is disused. Rail and bus services are regular, although links to the national rail network are indirect and slow. A transport interchange near the railway station is a long term aim to improve the integration of transport systems and the accessibility of the town.
- The circulatory system in the town centre works well on the whole, maintaining speed levels at an appropriate level and providing good access. The exceptions are along the Strand/Tangier Street corridor, where traffic volumes and associated highways works create severance between the town centre and harbour, and along the Swingpump Lane/Newtown corridor, where the use of mini-roundabouts slows traffic but is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Car parking overall meets existing demand but is of poor quality and much of the provision is concentrated in the Quay Street area, detracting significantly from the environment of this area and leading to queueing at busy times.
- Signage is generally very poor, leading to unnecessary additional traffic circulation and detracting from town's streetscape.
- Whitehaven is the main start point for the Sea to Sea (C2C) cycle route, and the Cumbria Coastal Way passes along the seafront. However, little provision is made for cyclists or walkers and stretches of these routes are very poor, in particular the start of the C2C. This represents a major missed opportunity.
- Away from the main one way system, the town centre is generally a reasonably pedestrian friendly environment, although levels of clutter in streets, high kerbs, narrow pavements and poor maintenance are all evident. The design of car parks, both public and associated with the supermarkets, is very poor and creates an unsafe, unfriendly environment for pedestrians in these areas.
- Footpath and cycle links to the large residential areas outside the town centre are generally in very bad condition, with low or non existent lighting, poor surfacing and low levels of maintenance.

ARRIVAL / ACCESS TO THE TOWN

To put Whitehaven in context, the town is currently served by a number of principal roads and regular bus and rail services. The town serves as a local hub for public transport services reflecting its status as a 'key service centre' within the Cumbria and the Lake District Joint Structure Plan (CLDJSP). These are identified as the focus for new development within the region and within these centres a 'high level of transport accessibility' is a primary consideration in forward planning.

Figure 7.1 shows Whitehaven in a regional context, and highlights the principal transport routes by which the town is accessed.

Geographically, Whitehaven is located approximately 8 miles south of Workington on the Cumbrian coast. The A595(T) runs north-south providing the principal road connections to the north, east and south. The A595(T) by-passes the town centre, with access afforded via the A5094 at Bransty and Hensigham. The B5345 forms the other major radial route into the town centre to and from the south. This road passes through St. Bees before connecting into the A595(T).

The A595(T) Parton-Lillyhall improvement scheme has been included in the government's Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI). This is a small number of nationally important schemes that Ministers have determined should be built within 7 years. Proposal will relieve congestion in the vicinity of the Toll Bar junction on the main route into and out of Whitehaven to and from the north and the east (and the motorway network) via the A66(T).

The major radial routes lead into the one-way circulatory system which rings the town centre area. The development of gateway treatments on these approaches to the town centre should complement the regeneration objectives of the project.

In addition to the consideration of gateway treatment on the town centre approaches, the key junc-

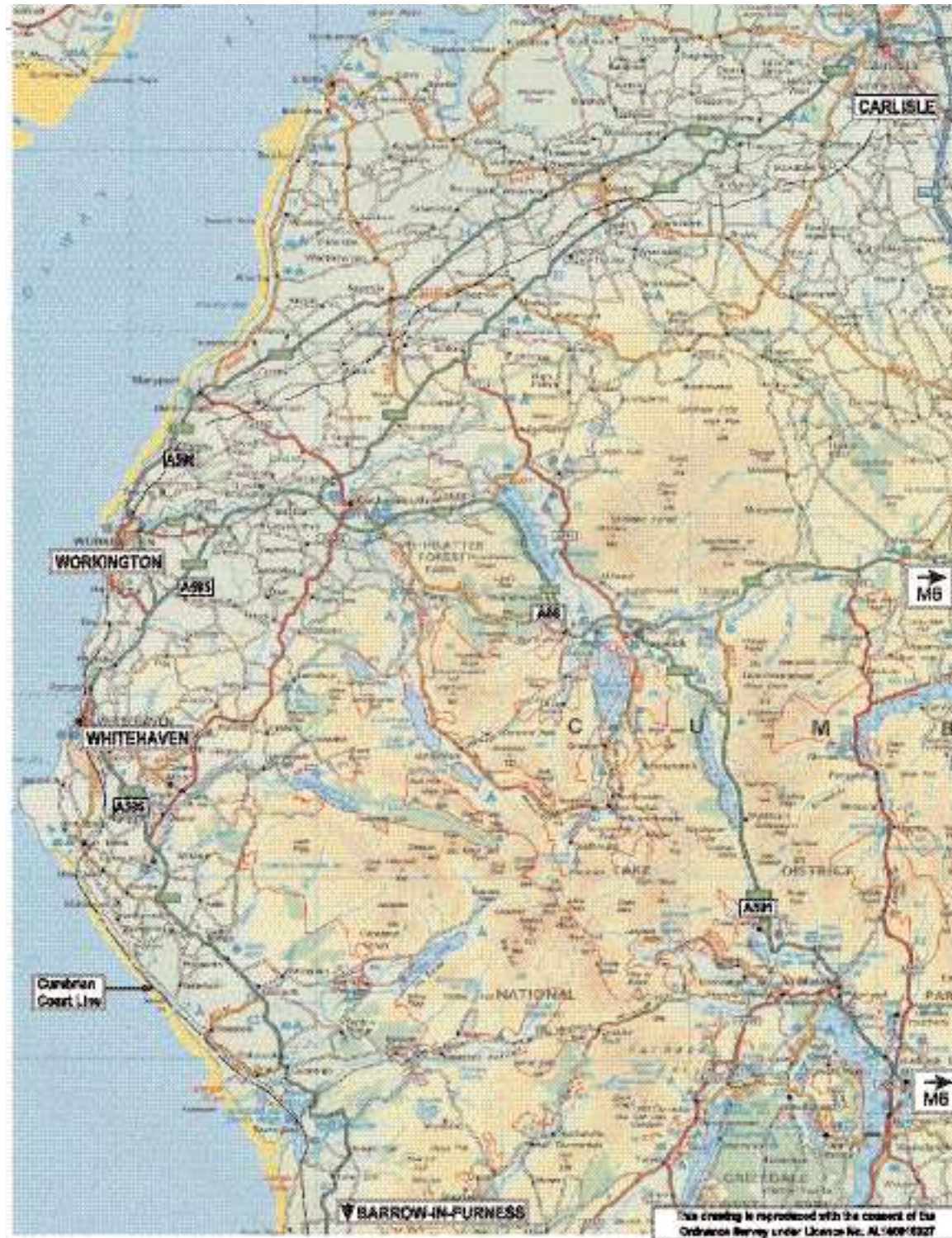


Figure 7.1: Whitehaven in Context

tions to the A595(T) have been identified for the development of 'arrival' features, to promote the identity of the town. Whilst these locations lie outside the study area of this project they are highlighted as the existing configurations belie the significance of Whitehaven as a major destination.

The town centre area road network was the subject of a major recent improvement scheme, addressing issues of traffic circulation, road safety and to enhance the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The bulk of the proposed measures have been implemented and these principally included changes to the circulatory system, environmental treatments on Lowther Street, King Street and Roper Street, and a comprehensive traffic calming scheme on Swingpump Lane / Strand Street.

Access to Whitehaven by rail is via the Cumbria Coast Railway Line (Carlisle - Barrow-in-Furness). There are two stations within the town, Whitehaven station to the north of the town centre and Corkickle to the south. Regular services stop at both stations. Carlisle and Barrow stations provide connecting services to the remainder of the national rail network.

Whitehaven town centre also serves as a hub for local bus services. The built up area of Whitehaven is well served by regular buses, as are the main centres of population in the immediate area around the town. The level of service dissipates further from the town into the more rural areas. However, regular services operate along the principal road corridors to Workington and Carlisle.

These issues are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

RECENT STUDIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

As outlined above, a comprehensive package of measures has recently been implemented within the town centre affecting traffic circulation and in

order to create a safer and more pleasant environment.

The main elements of the scheme were:

- reversion to two-way traffic operation on Swingpump Lane,
- comprehensive traffic calming scheme on Swingpump Lane / Strand Street / Tangier Street,
- mini-Roundabouts at ends of Swingpump Lane,
- introduction of 20mph zone in town centre,
- additional traffic calming measures including 'gateway' treatments at entries to 20mph zone, junction treatments and at pedestrian crossing points,
- new pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities, and
- new designated cycle routes within the town centre.

In addition, a traffic calming scheme and 20mph restriction have been introduced on Coach Road, and bridge strengthening work has been carried out on Mirehouse Road to allow heavy goods vehicles to avoid the town centre.

These improvements have resulted in the removal of some through traffic from the town centre, notably along Strand Street. However, this route remains the primary corridor for northbound traffic within the existing one-way system, with traffic levels remaining high enough throughout the day. The result of this is that there remains a significant severance effect between the main shopping area and the harbour area, and that the movement of traffic continues to be the primary function of the Strand Street corridor, with a commensurate impact on amenity for pedestrians and town centre accessibility.

In contrast, the improvements to the Lowther Street corridor have created an environment which effectively serves the needs of all road users whilst promoting a 'pedestrian-friendly' impression. The street is open to all traffic but the combination of kerbside traffic activity (servicing, bus stops etc.), large numbers of pedestrians and the carriageway treatment combine to create an awareness of the

town centre / shopping status of the street and promoting the sense that pedestrian activity has priority without the need for excessive traffic control measures.

In addition to the above, the establishment of the Sea to Sea cycle route (C2C) has included a section of the cycle route within the town centre. The route starts at the harbour travelling onto Swingpump Lane where the route is signed to the south-east along the road before leaving the road and using a pathway through to Coach Road. The route is generally off-road from this point. Unfortunately, this route takes cyclists out along one of the busier and less attractive road corridors in the town.

The harbour area has itself been the subject of significant recent investment. Vehicle activity is minimal and the areas open to vehicular traffic are well defined through the use of bollards. The harbour front is designated as the 'Millennium Promenade' and a high quality open route runs the length of the main harbour front and to 'The Beacon' centre.

WIDER STRATEGIES AND LONG TERM PROGRAMMES

The Highways Agency have begun work on a major improvement of the A595(T) between Parton-Lillyhall, north of Whitehaven. The current estimate is that the construction work could begin in 2006 for completion by 2007. This highly congested section of the A595(T) is the main route into and out of Whitehaven and is considered a restraint to economic growth. The improvement of this route is expected to deliver significant benefits relating to transport and accessibility in the Whitehaven area.

The anticipated level of traffic growth in West Cumbria is relatively low, at around 1% p.a. The impacts on traffic levels of changes in the employment pattern in the region are difficult to quantify but are likely to play a role in the restraint of traffic



Figure 7.2: Road Network and One Way System

growth. The effects of background traffic growth are therefore not expected to be a material factor in the development of scheme proposals.

The existing bus station at the northern end of the town centre is currently disused. Both Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council are promoting the establishment of a public transport interchange facility in Whitehaven, with the preferred location being at the Bransty end of the town centre in the vicinity of the railway station to provide a hub connecting rail and bus services.

The Sea to Sea Cycle Route forms part of the National Cycle Network (Route 7A). The National Cycle Network is a linked series of traffic-free paths and traffic-calmed and minor roads being developed across the UK, linking town centres and the countryside. In this context the section of the route within Whitehaven must be considered a priority in the development of any highway proposals within the town centre.

ROAD NETWORK AND ISSUES

The road network within the town centre comprises a circulatory one-way system which encircles the core town centre area. This principally comprises Duke Street, Scotch Street, Irish Street, Swingpump Lane, Strand Street and Tangier Street. The town centre road network is shown in Figure 7.2.

The network of town centre streets within this 'ring' are generally open to vehicular traffic but with a general impression of pedestrian priority through the use of traffic calming, surfacing materials and a 20mph speed restriction. The 20mph speed restriction also covers the northbound section of the one-way system along Swingpump Lane, Strand Street and Tangier Street, and the harbour area.

King Street, the main shopping street, and a section of Roper Street are designated pedestrian priority areas. However, some conflict occurs within the section of road between servicing vehicles

and pedestrians which appears to be unnecessary in some cases where alternative servicing arrangements appear possible from either Strand Street or Queen Street.

As with the description of Lowther Street in para 4.2.5 above, the traffic activity within the town centre is generally appropriate to the environment. The servicing and access requirements of an active shopping centre are enabled but the general character within the town centre is 'pedestrian-friendly'.

The exception to this is the Swingpump Lane / Strand Street corridor which is necessarily subject to high traffic levels due to its function as part of the circulatory one-way system. This results in a traffic-dominated environment in spite of the 20mph speed restriction, traffic calming measures and numerous designated pedestrian crossing points. The traffic levels on this route, and protective guardrails put in place around main junctions, create a substantial barrier between the harbour and the main shopping areas, effectively cutting off the harbour from the more active pedestrian areas.

Of the traffic currently using the Swingpump Lane / Strand Street corridor up to 85% is through traffic, with the peak proportion occurring in the evening peak hour (17.00-18.00). Even outside this peak, the proportion of through traffic is 70% during a typical off-peak hour during the day.

On the approaches to the town centre, inspection has shown much of the signing to be of poor quality. The approaches on the three main radial routes are substantially different in their character and use of junction types. As a result, there is inconsistency in the level of information provision and impression of road status in the immediate area outside the core town centre.

The Swingpump Lane / Newtown route is characterised by the use of mini-roundabouts. This route has currently relatively high traffic flows and whilst this type of junction has some traffic calming effect, roundabouts are the least safe junction type

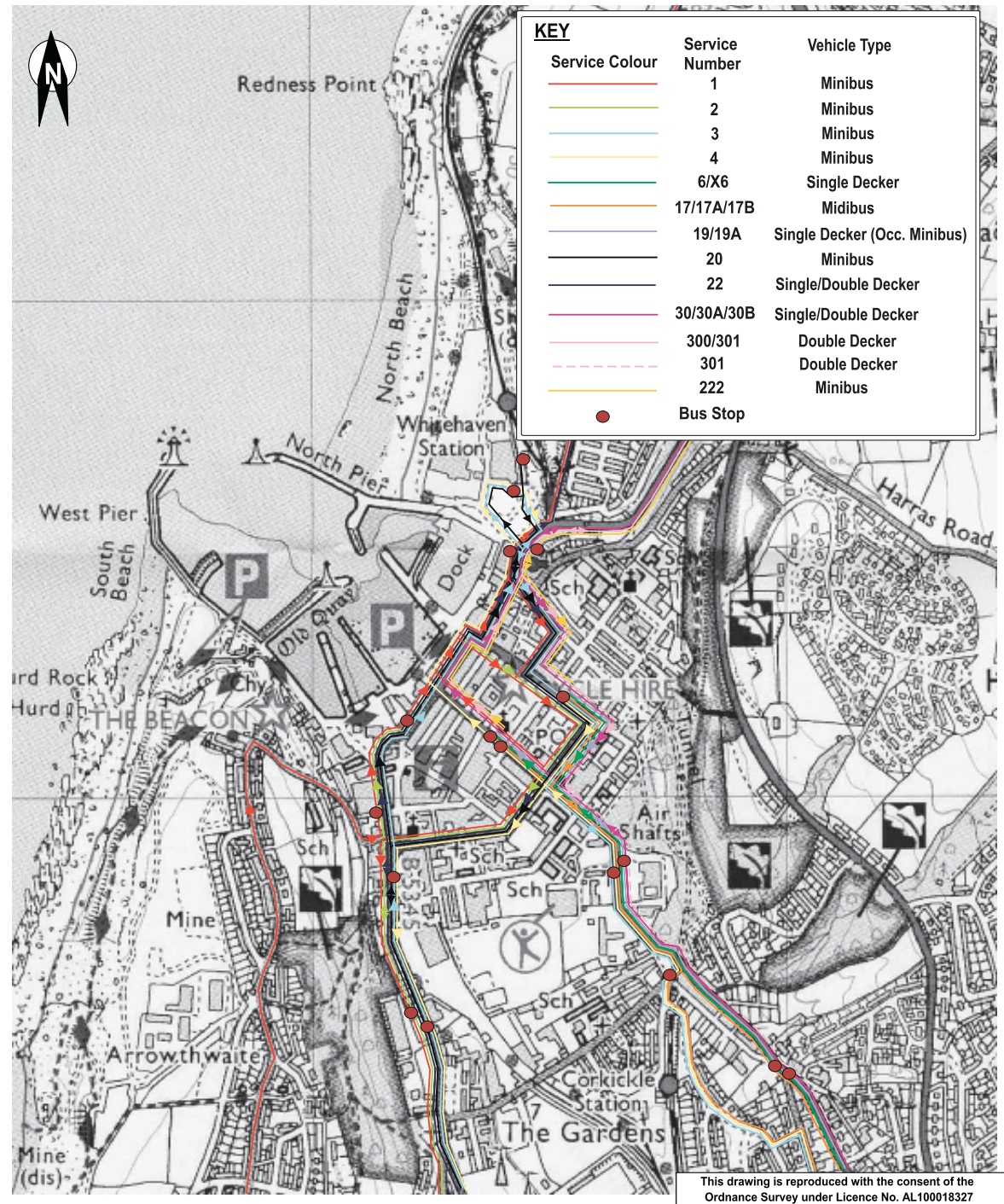


Figure 7.3: Town Centre Bus Network

for pedestrians and cyclists. Given the status of this route as part of the Sea to Sea cycle network the investigation of opportunities to provide a safer environment for cyclists is considered a priority. This section of the Sea to Sea route is currently designated within the official route map and guide as requiring 'special care'.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Figure 7.3 shows the bus routes and locations of stops in the Whitehaven Town Centre. A map of bus routes for the wider area is included in Appendix 1.

The existing bus routes provide good coverage of the built-up area of Whitehaven, and also provide direct access to the core shopping area within the town centre. The catchment area for the bus services is illustrated in Appendix 1, which is based on a 400m catchment radius for each bus stop. The prominent exception to the otherwise very good level of service provision is the Harras Park area, which is not covered by any existing bus services.

Details of the existing bus services and frequencies are shown in Appendix 1.

The focus for existing services within the town centre are the Lowther Street, Strand Street and Duke Street stops. The Lowther Street and Strand Street stops are, in particular, very well located for access to the shops and harbour area. The Duke Street stop serves all routes leaving the town centre to the south and east.

The quality of the bus stops within the town centre is generally good with stops typically having shelters and some stops (route 30) having raised kerbs to take advantage of low floor (easy-access) buses. Route 30 has been identified as a 'Quality Bus Route' and the commensurate improvements are being made along the length of this route.

Some congestion has been observed in the vicinity of the Lowther Street bus stops due to the number of waiting passengers at the stops and the volume of pedestrian movement along Lowther Street.

Currently the bus stop on Strand Street serves only a limited number of the routes passing through the town centre, whereas all the routes converge on Strand Street to the north of Lowther Street. The existing bus stop on Strand Street is ideally located to serve both the shopping area and the harbour area, and there may be potential for the provision of an additional stop to take advantage of the additional services using the road to better serve the harbour area.

One bus service (route 20) currently stops at Whitehaven rail station, providing a direct connection between the station and the town centre shopping area.

A bus station was formerly located on Bransty Row to the north of the town centre. This building is now disused.

The establishment of an interchange facility to create direct connections between bus and rail in Whitehaven is listed as a priority within the Copeland Local Plan and is supported in the CLDJSP. This is seen as an essential part of any strategy to improve transport connections, to allow direct transfer from all of the Whitehaven area to the rail network which is currently only available via the route 20 service.

Whitehaven rail station, on the Cumbria Coast Line, is located to the north of the town centre, with the access road leading from Bransty Row / New Road. The area in front of the station is reserved for parking use by rail personnel only.

Regular rail services operate between Whitehaven and Carlisle with stops at the major centres along the west coast of Cumbria. A less frequent service operates between Whitehaven and Barrow-in-Furness. Details of train services and frequencies are shown in Appendix 1.

The southern end of Whitehaven is served by a second rail station at Corkickle, accessed via Coach Road / Station Road through which Barrow services pass.

PARKING

Public car parks are located throughout the town centre area, allowing good penetration of the main shopping area and the harbour area for car users. The locations of the public car parks are shown on Figure 7.4. Some on-street parking is also available within the town centre which includes designated areas for disabled access.

Whilst the spread of car park locations throughout the town centre is good, the level of parking availability is dominated by the car parks at the southern end of the harbour and in particular the multi-storey car park, which account for roughly two-thirds of the spaces in the town, with the multi-storey alone accounting for half the total spaces in the public car parks.

Overall the parking provision within the town meets demand, but the most popular car parks, in particular the surface parking closest to the shopping areas are regularly full and queueing has been observed at the entrances to the surface car parks accessed from Quay Street, at the southern end of the harbour.

Car parking has an essential function in the town and the appropriate levels of provision related to the opportunity sites need to be incorporated within the development strategy. This should include the maintenance of the existing levels of overall public parking provision.

The parking guidelines contained in the Copeland Local Plan cover the majority of development uses. These will determine appropriate maximum parking levels for the development strategy. Use of these standards will ensure that sufficient operational parking is provided to serve the needs of

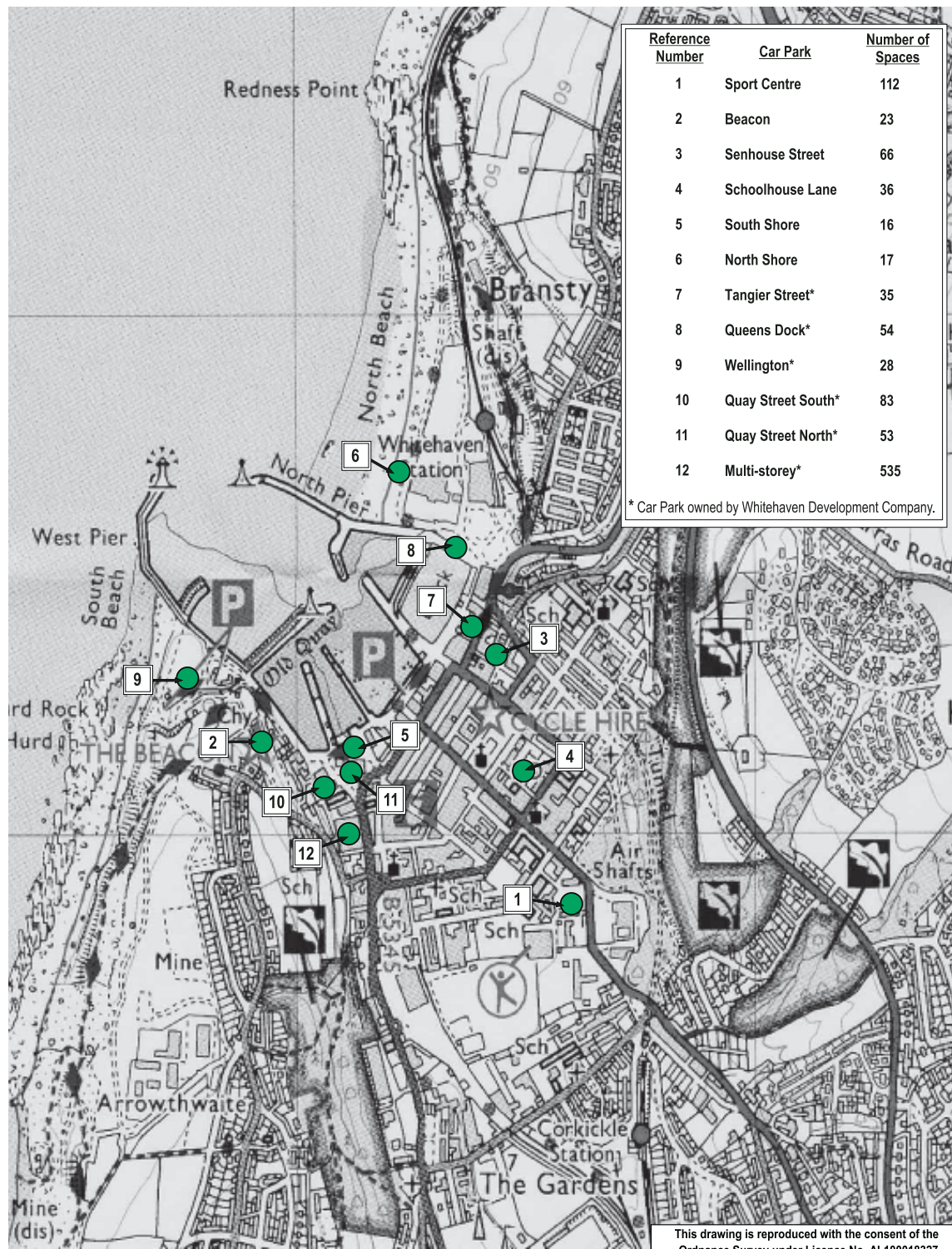


Figure 7.4: Car Park Locations

development sites at a level that does not encourage unnecessary car travel.

Any requirement for replacement public car parking may potentially include the shared use of space within redeveloped sites. This would necessarily be achieved by planning condition and would require an appropriate charging and enforcement regime to be imposed to control parking activity.

Additional demand for long stay (commuter) car parking will be met through the appropriate level of parking provision within redevelopment sites in accordance with adopted parking standards. In accordance with current policy no additional provision should be made for long-stay parking and this should be reflected in the charging and enforcement regimes at public car parks.

The current parking standards do not include any specific guidance for coach parking. However, there are clearly uses for which the provision of space for coaches would be appropriate, particularly where an element of tourist attraction is anticipated. Provision for coach parking could potentially be rationalised within proposals for public transport interchange facilities, replacement public car parking areas, or in association with individual redevelopment proposals.

As noted above the signing within the town centre is often poor, and this applies to direction signing for car parking. Poor driver information contributes to unnecessary traffic circulation and given the restrictive nature of the one-way system in the town centre improvements to signing can be expected to assist in minimising the impact of traffic in the town.

Improvements to signing within the town would improve driver awareness and cognisance, and reduce unnecessary circulation. Such provision could include variable message signing (VMS) to indicate car parking availability on the approaches to the town centre.

WALKING AND CYCLING

Access to the town centre area, by whatever means of transport, culminates in the vast majority of cases with an element of travel on foot. Walking is the primary mode by which town centre amenities are taken advantage of by users and this should be reflected in the provision for pedestrians within the town centre road network.

The town centre area is generally a pedestrian friendly environment. As described above, the layout of the street, traffic controls, use of materials and provision of pedestrian facilities combine to create an accessible area of free pedestrian movement.

There are, however, some exceptions to this and one of the key findings of the baseline investigation is that there are lessons that can be taken from the highly commendable achievements of recent improvement schemes and applied to create a coherent pedestrian environment.

In particular, Strand Street carries high traffic volumes throughout the day which act as a barrier to pedestrian movement between the shopping area and the harbour. This situation has been improved slightly as part of recent town centre improvements, with the removal of some through traffic and the introduction of traffic calming and pedestrian crossing facilities. However, the traffic volume remains relatively high and therefore dominates the character of the street.

The pursuing of schemes to relieve traffic along this corridor and increase pedestrian priority should form an integral part of the overall transport strategy. This is with the aim of improving the links between the shopping and harbour areas.

In addition, whilst areas within the town have been the subject of improvements to pedestrian facilities, there is some inconsistency between these areas and peripheral locations. In some cases, for example at the northern end of the Millennium Promenade, the transition from an area of high

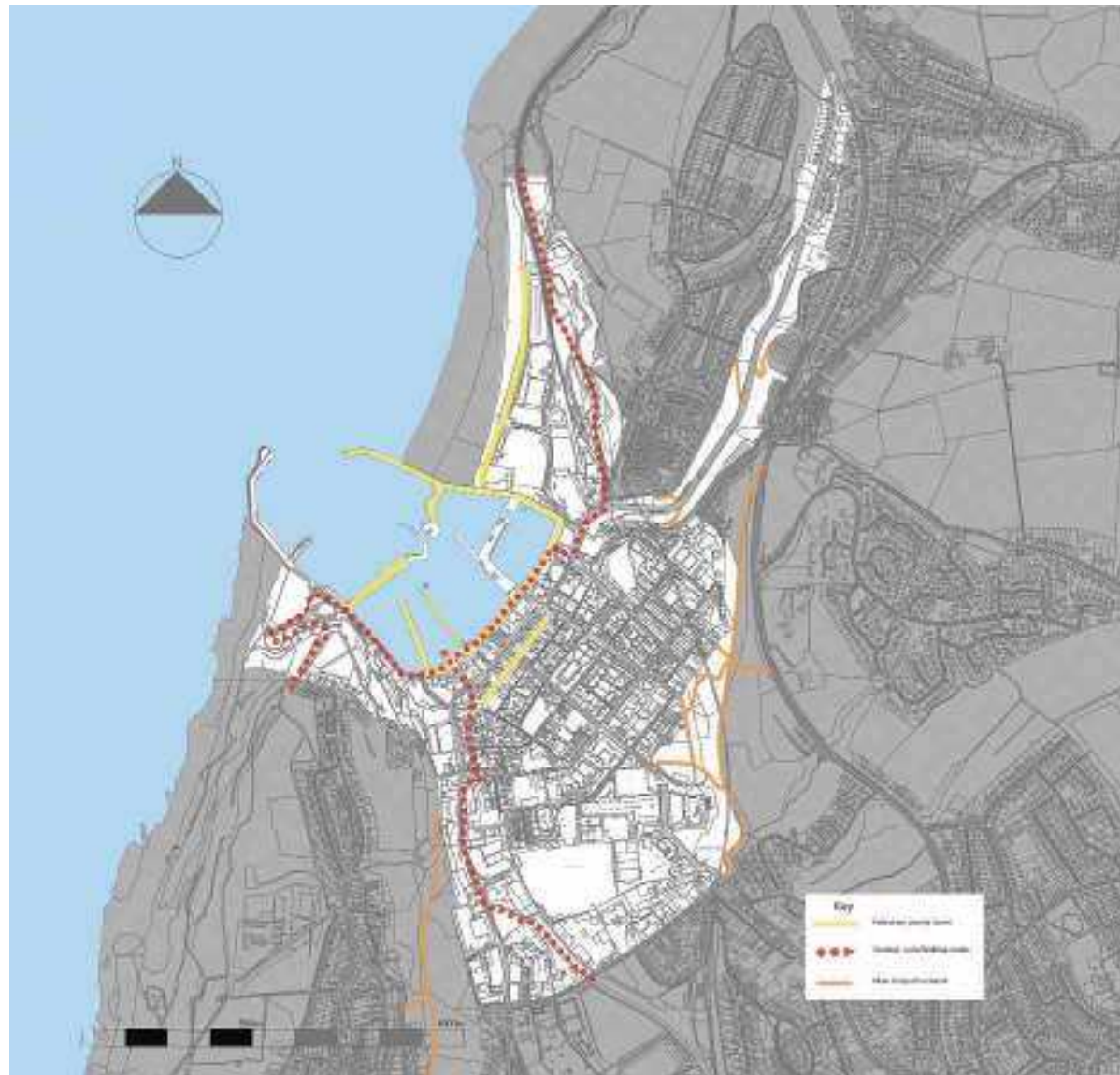


Figure 7.5: Footpaths and Strategic Leisure Routes

pedestrian priority and unimproved sections leading to the rail station environs is stark. Pedestrian routes become unclear and far more difficult to negotiate. This reflects a lack of consistency in the provision of facilities connecting 'improved' areas with surrounding pedestrian routes.

The consistency of pedestrian facilities connecting key sites within the study area and the connection

of existing pedestrian routes within the town centre consistently into the surrounding residential areas should be incorporated in the overall strategy.

The consistency of pedestrian facilities connecting key sites within the study area should be incorporated in the overall strategy.

A major long distance walking route, the Cumbria Coastal Way, also passes through the town centre and should be given a high priority in the development of detailed proposals. The route of the Cumbria Coastal Way is shown in Figure 7.5.

Cycling does not currently account for a significant proportion of travel for the bulk of regular journeys in Whitehaven. However, leisure cycling is significant particularly that associated with the Sea to Sea cycle route of which one of the west coast start / end points is the harbour at Whitehaven.

The Sea to Sea cycle route forms part of the National Cycle Network (Route 7A). The path of the Sea to Sea route within the study area is shown in Figure 7.5. The National Cycle Network is a linked series of traffic-free paths and traffic-calmed and minor roads being developed across the UK, linking town centres and the countryside. In this context the section of the route within Whitehaven must be considered a priority in the development of any highway proposals within the town centre.

Redevelopment of areas within the town centre will also present opportunities for the improvement of cycle facilities. Appropriate levels of cycle parking in accordance with parking guidelines will need to be provided, and consideration of the potential to improve cycle connections on and between existing routes should form part of the strategy for development opportunity sites.

In more general terms, cycling has the potential to offer an alternative to the car for many journeys and measures to promote cycle use are a key tool in the promotion of sustainable travel behaviour. As such, opportunities to improve facilities for cyclists will have a general application within the strategy, and not just apply to the major (Sea to Sea) route.

SUMMARY

Whitehaven is a 'key service centre' within Cumbria and as such the town will act as a focus for new development within the region and a 'high level of transport accessibility' is expected to be a primary consideration in forward planning.

Arrival both from the major routes into the town and on entering the town centre area is not well defined in terms of gateways and signing. These are a means of reinforcing the identity of the town as well as improving driver awareness, and improvements are recommended.

A number of recent improvement schemes have been implemented within the town centre to remove unnecessary traffic and reduce the impact of traffic on other town centre activities. The success of these measures has been limited due to the restrictive nature of the existing town centre road network. It is recommended that opportunities to build upon the successful elements of the recent improvements particularly in relation to the Strand Street corridor which currently acts as a barrier to movement between the main shopping areas and the harbour.

Town centre car parking is currently focused on the multi-storey car park accessed from Swingpump Lane. The public car parks have a vital function within the town centre and retention of the overall provision is recommended, though consideration should be given to redistributing the parking supply where opportunities arise, which could be combined with appropriate levels of provision within future redevelopment. The surface car parks in particular are generally well used.

The local bus services generally provide good coverage within the town, and penetration of the central area is excellent. However, some gaps in the network have been identified together with opportunities to improve service to the harbour area and to improve integration between bus and rail services.

The establishment of an interchange facility has been identified as a key element in improving public transport accessibility and integration between bus and rail services. The preferred location for interchange facilities is in the vicinity of Whitehaven Rail Station.

The provision within the town for 'Quality Bus' services is currently limited, limiting accessibility and the attractiveness of public transport. Opportunities for improvements to waiting facilities and public transport priority should be explored.

The Sea to Sea cycle route has one of its west coast starting points at the harbour in Whitehaven. This is a cycle route of national significance. The section of the route along Swingpump Lane and Newtown is currently shared with relatively heavy traffic and features mini-roundabouts, creating conflict between vehicles and cyclists. Opportunities for increasing the level of priority for cyclists, reducing traffic volumes and/or altering the cycle route should be explored.

Further improvements to cycle facilities within the town centre will complement the role of the Sea to Sea route and contribute to sustainable transport objectives by encouraging more cycle use.

Whilst generally pedestrian-friendly, there is an inconsistent level of provision for pedestrians within the town centre area and this should be addressed to ease pedestrian movement. Traffic levels along the Strand Street corridor are currently a significant barrier to pedestrian movement and further measures to reduce the impact of traffic in this corridor should be investigated.

5 Making a living: the economy

KEY FACTS

- The decommissioning of Sellafield and the imminent closure of Huntsman represent the end of a long history of large scale manufacturing and industry in Whitehaven.
- Around 8,000 jobs will be lost over a ten year period but the relatively long timescale provides an opportunity to reinvest and restructure.
- Low levels of self employment and small business creation reflect a lack of dynamism and entrepreneurial spirit which will require a significant cultural readjustment.
- The town centre retail offer is limited and vulnerable to competition from out of town supermarkets and new retail developments in Workington. The strength of Whitehaven is in the smaller scale and more specialist stores. The most dynamic area is concentrated around the market place and southern stretch of King Street.
- The range of cafes, restaurants and bars has improved significantly in recent years but remains limited. Most new development is concentrated around Tangier Street and Bransty Gate, an emerging leisure quarter.
- The residential property market in the town centre remains poor despite price rises in the town as a whole over the last four years, due mainly to constraints on access, parking and amenity space.
- Commercial property is also very limited and comparatively low in value. West Lakes Science Park attracts the major share of investor/developer interest and the only significant new office developments of recent years have needed substantial public financial support.
- Despite the town's obvious assets, the tourism and leisure sector is very little developed.
- Investment in the harbour and new visitor attractions in recent years has begun to put the town on the map and the last biannual Maritime Festival attracted over 200,000 people, but a number of serious obstacles remain, including:
 - Limited and poor quality accommodation in the town centre
 - Insufficient range of visitor attractions
 - A lack of good restaurants, cafes, bars and entertainments
 - Few opportunities for active leisure, especially for family groups

– A rundown and poorly maintained physical environment

– Poor provision for walkers, cyclists and sailors

INTRODUCTION

The reliance of Copeland on large scale manufacturing industry for employment and wealth creation makes it, and with it Whitehaven, vulnerable to a process of structural economic change. Copeland has seen a significant number of traditional manufacturing jobs in relatively low value sectors disappear over the last 10 years. Between 1991 and 2002 5700 jobs were lost from the manufacturing sector. The imminent closure of the Huntsman chemical works represents the loss of the town's last remaining large scale industrial employer.

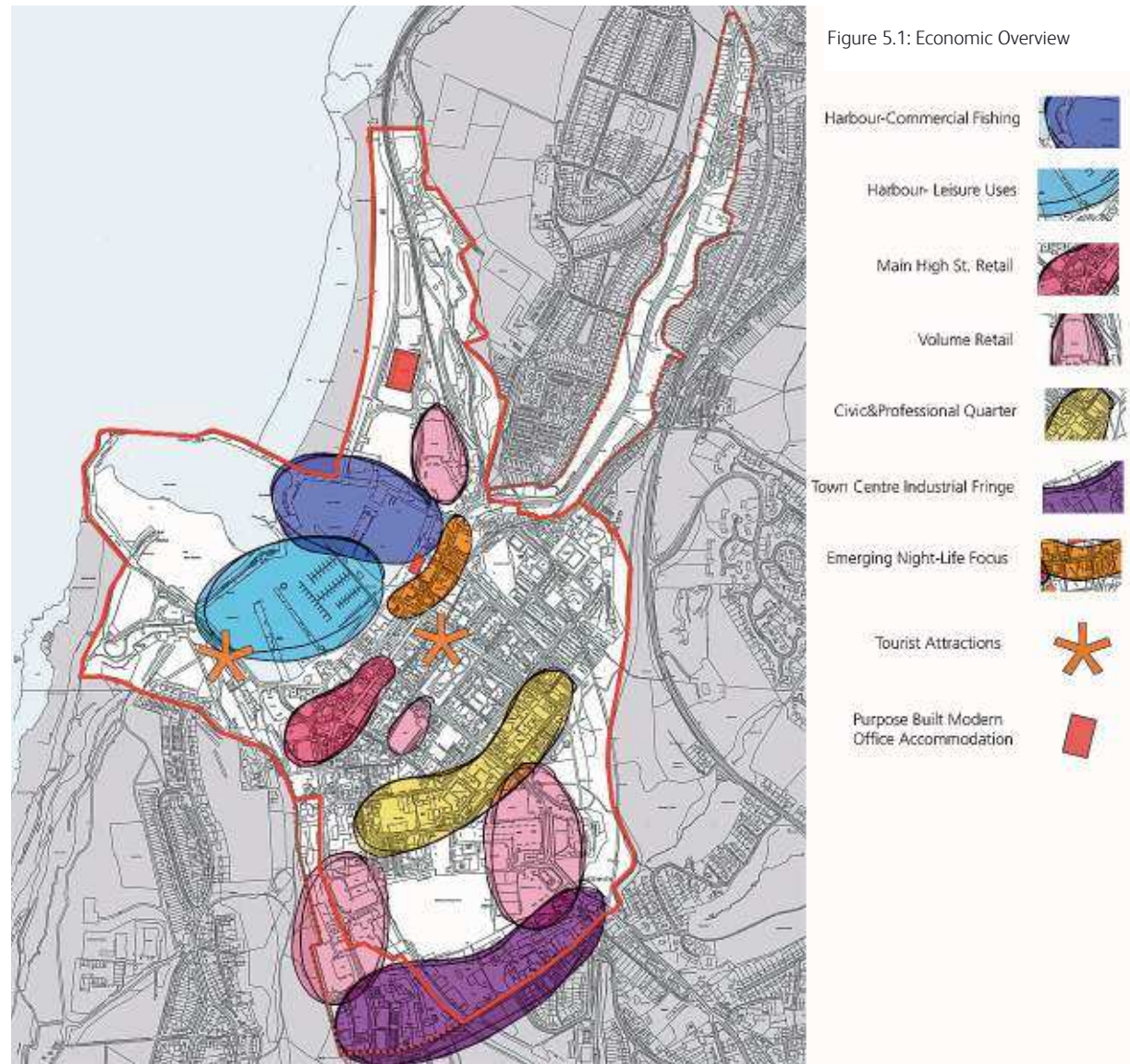
The District's reliance on direct and indirect employment from BNFL is the primary concern for future economic sustainability and prosperity. BNFL, unlike the manufacturing referred to above, is not subject to the same range of market forces that reflect global trends. Instead, it is driven by long term views about national energy policy and sensitivities to the relative safety and impact of nuclear energy. In addition, large parts of the UK's nuclear infrastructure has reached the end of its serviceable life and a process of decommissioning is about to be embarked

upon. As a counterbalance to this, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Headquarters is to be based at the West Lakes Science Park and there will be supply chain opportunities directly associated with the decommissioning programme. Equally it is anticipated that a further knowledge based cluster of investment related to the decommissioning will be attracted to West Cumbria. The Government has also responded to the implications of the decommissioning process by establishing the West Cumbria Strategic Forum. This is a group of senior Government representatives chaired by a senior minister and aiming to ensure a coordinated, coherent and appropriate response from Government to the impact of decommissioning in the area.

The impact of this process is expected to result in the loss of 8000 jobs directly employed by Sellafield by 2016 and there will be secondary impact in reduced contract work and on the supply chain in the area. The loss of jobs, direct and indirect, is anticipated over a reasonably long timescale. This is unusual when compared to the restructuring of the steel or coal industries and affords Copeland and West Cumbria some time to plan and manage for the predicted impact and associated change. The scale of the impact is likely to be compounded as the employment at BNFL has a very beneficial effect on average wage rates in the district as the average gross weekly wage in Copeland of £485 is above the national average of £475 and significantly above the County average of £431.

Should a significant proportion of the lost employment be replaced by lower waged employment in tourism, low value service industries or lower value manufacturing, then the secondary impact resulting from reduced disposable income may also be considerable.

Given the demographics of Copeland and Whitehaven it might also be expected that a reasonable proportion of those losing employment at BNFL will take early retirement and effectively opt out of the labour market. This has certainly been seen in other communities where significant



restructuring has taken place. If this occurs then it may exacerbate an already ageing population structure by increasing the number of residents dependent on pension transfer payments for their livelihood and reducing overall disposable spend, and tightening the labour market still further.

In areas where there is a history of large, paternalistic employers, a less dynamic and entrepreneurial economy is often found. This would seem to be true of both Copeland and Whitehaven. In Copeland in 2002 there were 1435 VAT registered businesses representing 283 businesses per 10,000 adults and just 67 per cent of the England average. The Census of Employment also shows that self

employment as a proportion of the population was 9.87 per cent for Cumbria, 6.4 per cent for Copeland and 4.39 per cent for Whitehaven.

CURRENT ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The Town Centre of Whitehaven supports a range of activity including high street and 'edge of town' retail, civic and public administration, professional and public services, commercial, leisure and tourism. The distribution of these different functions is shown in Figure 5.1. This demonstrates the commercial development of the town over the past 20 - 30 years. Key issues to note include:

- Limited spatial focus of primary high street retailing centred around the Market Place and extending south to Quay St and north along King St
- The dominance of professional and financial services on Lowther St
- The limited 'professional' quarter; Scotch St / Irish St and parts of New Lowther St
- The dominance of 'edge of town' volume retail activity on key gateways; Morrisons and retail park at Flattwalks, Tesco at Bransty, Aldi / Netto / Iceland et al on Preston St and New Town
- The low commercial value and relative
- dereliction of Strand St and Bransty Row, forming a barrier between town centre, gateway and harbour
- The emerging leisure / night-time quarter around Tangier St and Bransty Row
- The mix of residential, economic and civic use within the Georgian grid bounded by Catherine St, Swingpump, Strand St and Duke St

- The paucity of modern office development / buildings; provision is limited to the Inland Revenue building on the harbourside and Vertex Call Centre at North Shore
- The dominance of fishing and recreational boating infrastructure to the north side of the harbour

PROPERTY MARKET CONTEXT

Whitehaven has a perfectly valid and functional property market, supported for years by the earning and so spending power of BNFL employees. Rental and capital values have been influenced by key structural factors including:

- The town's geographical peripherality in regional terms
- The proximity of competing products (i.e. Workington Town Centre and West Lakes Science & Technology Park)
- The population's spending power and consumption trends
- Limited and often constrained infrastructure; parking provision, public transport, accessibility
- The built form of (narrow shop fronts and poor access), and protection relating to, the built heritage of the Georgian town grid
- The limited incidence of local or incoming retail and leisure entrepreneurs

The result has been a market that functions, but only at a level enabled by rental and capital values that have traditionally been somewhat discounted from regional and even sub-regional averages, and is limited in coverage across the town centre. The historic fabric of much of the town centre characterised by narrow shop fronts, deep plots and constrained access has resulted in poor commercial utilisation of first and second floors

and an persistent incidence of derelict and abandoned buildings.

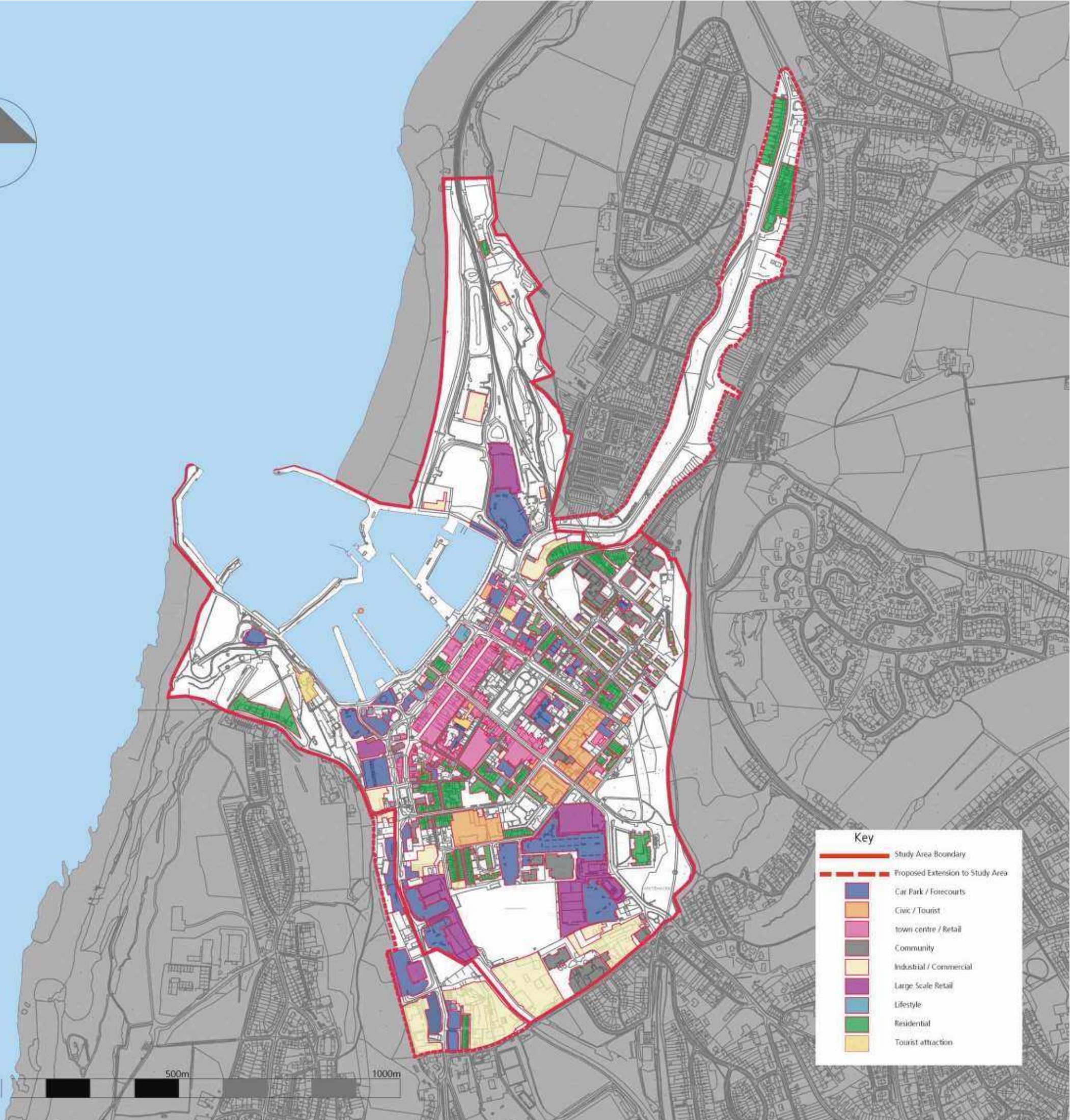
Baseline analysis of current market conditions as at October and November 2004 provides the following intelligence. It should be noted that market appraisal is a far from exact science; demand can only be assessed from evidence defined from key indicators such as:

- Vacancy levels
- Reported rental levels
- Reported investment yields
- Rental trends

Retailer, developer and investor confidence can be inferred from analysis of this data, but hard evidence of demand and the attitudes of the property sector is commercially confidential, and notoriously difficult to pin down. In a market such as Whitehaven, where the incidence of deals is limited, and direct comparison with other centres cannot be easily made, market appraisal inevitably becomes less precise.

RETAIL

The prime retail area of the town is Market Place, the southern part of King St (up to Lowther St) and the harbour end of Swingpump Lane. In recent years vacancy levels have materially declined, from 14.7%, substantially above the UK average of 10.9% in 2002 to a much healthier 10.9%. This had led to limited rental growth, with zone A rents now in the region of £40 psf, reducing the gap toward the north lakes average, but still some 15-20% below towns such as Keswick and Penrith. There is a reasonable level of investor interest in prime retail stock, with deals being made at an 8% yield for the best covenants, the core market level is however lower, with valuations for lending purposes supporting yields from 6.5% – 7%. There is limited evidence of market activity, with low levels of unit turnover and very few rent reviews; agents report that the



| Key | |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| | Study Area Boundary |
| | Proposed Extension to Study Area |
| | Car Park / Forecourts |
| | Civic / Tourist |
| | Town centre / Retail |
| | Community |
| | Industrial / Commercial |
| | Large Scale Retail |
| | Lifestyle |
| | Residential |
| | Tourist attraction |

500m

1000m

prospects for rental growth in high street units are limited.

The market is fragile, and reliant upon good footfall generated by car parking at Quay St and Swingpump Lane. Whitehaven continues to be materially affected by the competing offer at Workington; anecdotal evidence relating to the recent increase in trading activity claims that it is more to do with restricted access in Workington town centre (due to redevelopment) than an improved offer in Whitehaven.

In addition to high street comparison shopping (which comprises 49% of retail activity), the town supports two major superstores, Tesco at Bransty Row and Morrisons (formerly a Safeway store) off Catherine Street, and a cluster of smaller 'value' convenience operators including Aldi, Kwik Save and Iceland aligned along Preston Street. Tesco have submitted a planning application to redevelop their site and build a new store which will effectively double their current floor-space, to 85,000sq ft, extending their current offer to include non-food offer categories. Asda is currently proposing a scheme on a site off Coach Road to the southern gateway; this is subject to consideration by Copeland Borough Council.

The Bridges Retail Park (located adjacent to Morrisons) has proven successful; the original developers have recently disposed of their interest and agents report that they would be interested in pursuing a similar small retail 'warehouse' scheme of 5 or 6 units within the town. This interest may support plans for retail led development at Quay Street, further investigations can be made with the developers if relevant.

Beyond the prime area, confidence and activity is much reduced. The northern stretch of King St (beyond Lowther St) and the upper reaches of Lowther St (beyond Queen St) experience very limited footfall. Local agents feel that the town centre retail market is vulnerable to any material 'extension' of retail activity to the edges of town;

| Retailer | Level of Interest | Requirement Sq Ft | Notes |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Gamestation | High | 1,000 – 1,500 | Search ongoing |
| Subway | Good | 1,500 | |
| New Look | Good | 4,000 – 6,000 net | |
| Holland & Barrett | Good | | With or without new development |
| Select Retail | Good | 2,000 | Current requirement |
| Ethel Austin Ltd | Average | 2,500 sq ft | |
| Bay Trading Coy | Average | | New development |
| Halfords | Potential | 4,000 – 5,000 sq ft + 25 designated parking spaces | 'Open to persuasion' on new development |
| Julian Graves | Possible | 1200 – 1400 sq ft | Subject to tenant mix |
| Fat Face | Possible | 1,500 sq ft + back up | If new development good enough |
| JJB Sports | Possible | High St – 2 floor 10,000 – 12,000 Out / edge of town – health and fitness / retail 22,000 sq ft | New in Workington, would consider |
| Home Bargains | Good | 8,000 – 10,000 of ground floor | |
| Greggs of Cumbria | Good | 1,000 | Current requirement for 3 rd unit |
| Superdrug | Potential | | Would relocate existing outlet into new development |
| Savers | Potential | 2,500 | Away from King St as too much comparable competition |
| Allsports | Good | 2,500 – 3,000 | On current list |
| Hawkshead | Good | 2,500 – 7,000 | Current Requirement |

as such the proposals from Tesco, Asda and any potential expansion at Morrisons will need careful consideration.

There appears to be potential developer and investor interest in the retail sector in Whitehaven, predicated on the recent investment in the har-

bour, and to an extent by limited options elsewhere. This currently appears to be constrained by the town's demographic context, and to a material extent by the perception of a lack of confidence in the town demonstrated by the poor management of public spaces, slow pace of redevelopment of

key opportunity sites and the lack of any real 'trigger' for investment.

Despite the substantively enhanced harbour environment, and visible successes such as the Zest bar, there is little evidence of private sector enterprise coming forward with a niche and tourism related retail offer. This illustrates a lack of confidence in the overall context of the town centre, which together with a low level of indigenous entrepreneurial culture, will need a robust demonstration of commitment to change.

Informal Retail Demand Survey

The informal retail demand survey carried out demonstrates material potential developer and investor interest in the retail sector in Whitehaven, predicated on the recent investment in the harbour, and to an extent by limited options elsewhere. Despite the level of positive responses received, there is limited evidence of this demand being converted to deals on the ground. This indicates a continuing lack of confidence, influenced to an extent by town's demographic context, but also to a material extent by the perception of a lack of confidence in the town demonstrated by the poor management of public spaces, slow pace of redevelopment of key opportunity sites and the lack of any real 'trigger' for investment. The level of potential interest exhibited by retailers for a good quality new scheme, situated in the prime retailing area clearly supports the preparation of a retail focused scheme in the master planning process, and ongoing dialogue with the retailers concerned.

RESIDENTIAL

The residential market in the town is complex; there has been substantial price inflation in all sections of the market over the last four years, with growth strongly ahead of the national average. (See figure 3)

3

| | Price Range £ | % of stock | % inc on 2003 | National Av |
|-----------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Terrace | 66k – 152k | 25 | + 55 | + 20 |
| Semi- Det | 79 – 92k | 49 | + 33 | + 18 |
| Detached | 136 – 170k | 15 | + 37 | + 13 |
| Flats | 48 – 73k | 12 | | |

Source : Land Registry

Despite this growth, prices are still below those in Eden and South Lakeland, although generally much more on a par with the North West regional average.

This 'value gap' within the town centre is likely to account for the limited interest shown in development within Whitehaven by leading national, or even regional housebuilders. Initial market testing suggests that Whitehaven is 'not on the radar' of many firms; when considered against the very limited development opportunities available across Cumbria and parts of the North West resulting from development control housing policies this confirms the likelihood of 'market failure', and the possible need for public sector intervention to kick start private sector investment. It will be very interesting to monitor the performance of the development by Reed Graham Developments Ltd of 11 four and five bedroom town houses with off street

parking at Garlieston Court, Whitehaven. The first phase of three units has now been released for marketing, and is being offered at £250,000 per unit; whilst still lower than prices for similar accommodation at popular edge of town developments such as Highlands, the gap is much reduced. A successful sales campaign for this development will demonstrate the viability of higher value residential development in the town centre, and would provide a valuable exemplar for any emerging proposals on the Wilkinson site and beyond.

COMMERCIAL

Whitehaven's commercial property offer within the town centre is limited. There are clusters of industrial sites on the southern and eastern edge of the town (Coach Road and Ginns), many of which are virtually

4

| Apartments | | |
|--|---|--|
| Property 1: £85,000 - £95,000 West Strand, Harbourside – 2 bed flats | Property 2: £80,000 34 Scotch St, 1 bed 1 st floor flat in period conversion | Property 3: £95,000 Roper Court, Harbourside |
| Two Bed Properties | | |
| Property 1: £95,000 Fern Way, Whitehaven – modern 2 bed semi detached house on a new estate, off street parking and garden | Property 2: £80,000 Queen St, Whitehaven Period 2 bed end terrace | Property 3: £77,000 12 Willamsons Lane, Hensingham 2 bed mid terrace, off street parking and garden |
| Three Bed Properties | | |
| Property 1: £165,000 31 Fern Grove, Whitehaven modern 3 bed detached, en-suite shower room, gardens and garage | Property 2: £150,000 Lonsdale Place, Whitehaven Period 3 bed (plus attic room) town house, gardens and rear yard | Property 3: £120,000 42 Hillcrest Avenue, Whitehaven – 3 bed ex LA semi, gardens and garage |

redundant or under-utilised. More recent investment in industrial premises within the town is restricted to the fish packing plant on the north harbourside. There is substantial provision of industrial floorspace within Copeland, with large estates at Leaconfield (Cleator Moor) and Egremont, and the extensive Lillyhall facility all within the market catchment.

The provision of offices is also relatively limited within the town centre; the traditional 'professional quarter' is not terribly evident, although there are a few examples of lawyers and accountancy offices in Georgian buildings. Many of the first and second floors above retail premises are utilised as office space by a range of private, public and voluntary sector occupiers. The space is of limited quality, and characterised by narrow frontages, poor accessibility and limited off street parking. The market for this sort of space is characterised by limited demand is therefore limited, as evidenced by rentals peaking at £6 psf (exclusive of rates) on recent lettings in Lowther St.

There have been two modern office developments within the town centre in the last five years, both substantively supported by European and UK government funding. The purpose built contact centre at North Shore is let to Vertex on a 10-year lease from 2000, at a passing rent of £6.70 psf (although part is sub-let to British Nuclear Group at a higher figure). The rent is due for review with effect from December 2005, and there is some speculation from local agents as to whether an increase in excess of RPI will be achievable, and if so, whether the tenants will seek to break the lease. Vertex has not developed business to fill the building, and its rental commitment is currently underwritten by the BNG sub-let. In the event that BNG relocate these staff to the Science Park (which must be a real possibility), the cost per sq ft of occupied space (i.e. that which they are actually using) may become prohibitive.

The Inland Revenue building on the harbourside was developed via the Private Finance Initiative, and currently achieves a headline passing rent of £9.50 psf. This is substantially in excess of the rents in the

town centre (although comparable with the Science Park), and there is speculation from agents and investors locally that it is not sustainable. The recent letting at the Science Park of Galemire Court, the newly built 22,000 sq ft building as HQ for the NDA at £8.50 per sq ft (plus £4 per sq ft service charge) confirms these views.

The office market in the town centre is substantively affected by West Lakes Science & Technology Park which has attracted the lions share of investment and occupier interest; construction is currently underway of three new purpose built units for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and British Nuclear Group and the forward master plan provides for an extension of up to an additional 15 hectares. The decision by British Nuclear Group to site more staff at the Science Park was taken in preference to a scheme promoted by developers City & Provincial on the former Bus Depot site at Bransty Row / Tangiers Street (opportunity site WCT4). It must be inevitable therefore that future focus of B1 investment will be at the Science Park. The not-for-profit status, and economic development obligations of West Lakes Properties means that they immediately have a potential price advantage over private sector competition (requiring a 15 - 20% profit margin).

It is interesting to note that rental levels and yields at West Lakes Science & Technology Park are somewhat discounted from rents achievable further east in Cumbria along the M6 motorway corridor, where headline rents are 15 - 20% higher than the best achievable in West Cumbria. This 'value gap' is demonstrated by the reluctance of developers to provide space speculatively, even at West Lakes Science & Technology Park, without relying upon public sector intervention and gap funding. Some form of intervention / cross subsidy is therefore likely to be necessary to stimulate any commercial development within the town centre, and great care will need to be taken to ensure that developments differentiate from provision at the Science Park, and that occupiers needs and requirements, especially relating to parking, are met.

TOURISM AND LEISURE SECTOR

Tourism has not developed fully for a number of reasons—difficult access, poor image, lack of good accommodation, lack of range of attractions, not enough good shops, restaurants, bars, etc. There has been considerable investment in recent years both in the development of visitor attractions and in the town centre built environment, but this is very patchy and limited, especially in terms of exciting activities for local young people and visitors.

There has been considerable growth in visitor numbers in recent years, though access to reliable data, such as STEAM, is not available for Whitehaven. W3M estimate that there have been 800,000 visitors since January 2000. However, an average of 200,000 visitors per year is small and does not represent a major contribution to the local economy. Most are day visitors, not overnight stays. Some of the main issues with regard to tourism are summarised below:

The Harbour

The development of the historic harbour has been carried out to a high standard, creating an attractive public space and an expanding marina, whilst continuing to cater for a small but significant fishing fleet. Despite the very real attraction of the harbour, with its high quality furnishings and small scale public art, the offering to the visitor as well as local residents is still very limited. There are no outdoor seating areas for cafes, bars or restaurants along the Millennium Promenade and, although popular for strolling and sitting in good weather, this waterfront area which should be a focus of life and activity, is notably empty even on busy market days. The exceptions are during the biannual Maritime Festival and rare visits from tall ships, such as the recent visits from the Endeavour, when the harbour comes alive and its potential can be seen. Illuminated at night, the new harbour is a powerful image but, if it is to be used in marketing, visitors need to be assured that the light features will be working regularly. This is a major strength of the town, however, better on-going maintenance

nance, cleaning and activities to “get more life” into the area are required.

Marina

The new marina has been very successful and there are plans for its extension. However, facilities and attractions for those using it are limited. Good restaurants, accommodation and boat supplies and equipment are all noticeably in short supply. Apart from the marina, the main market for Whitehaven’s leisure activities is the resident population of the town and wider borough. Despite the presence of the marina, there are no water based leisure activities on offer, such as fishing trips, boat or kayak hire.

C2C cycle route

Whitehaven harbour is the start of the C2C cycleway. This is one of the most important long distance cycle routes in the country and attracts over 15,000 cyclists per year, most of whom dip their wheels in the sea but very few of whom stay the night. The route is also popular for walkers. The route through the town takes cyclists out along one of the most unattractive edges of the centre. Most cyclists will see little to encourage them to stay longer or come back again with their families. The Cumbrian Coastal path also crosses Whitehaven Harbour, making it a potential focal point of interest for this fast growing sport, but the needs of cyclists are poorly catered for and there are few opportunities for less ambitious cyclists to go on shorter circular routes.

Visitor Attractions

The town has great potential interest for visitors, but the current offer is insufficient to attract people to stay. The main formal attractions in the town centre are the following:

- The Beacon commands (run by Copeland Borough Council) a magnificent position on the harbour, but has insufficient content to add to the visitor experience.

- The Rum Story (run by W3M) is interesting and engaging but needs up-dating and refurbishing. It is also disconnected from the harbour and many visitors to Whitehaven are unaware of its existence.

Other potential features of interest:

- Whitehaven’s Georgian heritage and architecture adds greatly to the pleasant ambience of the town and is highly prized by residents. As with the harbour, this is not enough to constitute a visitor attraction in its own right, but has the potential to be a delightful setting for activities that will attract tourists, including speciality retailing and dining.
- There is great potential to attract an American market through the development of the Mary Gale House (home of George Washington’s grandmother), the connections with John Paul Jones—later founder of the U.S. Navy - and the ‘Golden Triangle’ trade route between Britain, Africa and North America, which was instrumental in the development of Whitehaven as a major Georgian Seaport.
- The town’s industrial heritage is an interesting feature, closely connected to its trading and seafaring traditions. A number of features bear testament to this past and could be more successfully packaged into a stronger attraction. The current proposals to upgrade the Haig Mining Museum and surrounding area, adjoining the town centre, will begin this process.
- The Jonathan Swift House is a surviving house on the south shore overlooking the harbour where Swift lived as a small boy. Legend has it that his vision of Lilliput originated in his childhood memories of looking down on the tiny figures in the harbour from above. Whether true or not the idea is very suggestive and, although it is not perhaps a strong enough basis for a visitor attraction in its own right there may be potential to incorporate this into a wider package of attractions related to seafaring and discovery.

Leisure and Catering

Whitehaven has a well-developed leisure sector, focused mainly on the Tangier Street / Bransty Row / Duke Street area although now spreading along the harbourside, with more than 12 premises holding a public entertainment licence. There is evidence of increasing confidence in the harbourside leisure economy; Zest’s café bar is trading well, and proposals are being developed for a new café bar on the corner of New Lowther Street. There are however at least two pubs boarded up, and a range of leisure premises seeking new owners / operators including the John Paul Jones pub and the cinema on Strand Street. Some of the main issues in this respect are outlined below:

- There are a few restaurants of reasonable quality, including one with a presence on the Harbour seeking to expand, but none in the higher quality range.
- Specialist retail shops do exist, including a good second hand bookshop and wine merchants, although they are limited in number.
- There are many pubs, some of which have recently up-graded their image, but overall the public houses are not particularly attractive to visitors. The exception might be Weatherspoons, who operate a large pub close to two of the key development sites towards the north end of the harbour. With a cluster of restaurants/bars and night clubs, this area is developing into the “night life quarter” of the town. However, there is a lack of ‘traditional’ pubs or more contemporary wine bars serving a visitor market.
- There is no cinema or theatre in the town, although there is an attractive cinema building which currently operates as a bingo hall, and a once renowned historical theatre building in the town centre. There is a small theatre outside the town centre serving a mainly local audience.

- There is a large leisure centre which offers a wide range of dry sports facilities. There is no swimming pool in the town itself.

Accommodation

Despite its historical connections and harbourside renaissance, Whitehaven has very limited provision of bed spaces. A search on Whitehaven via www.western-lakedistrict.co.uk shows between 60 & 70 bed spaces within the town, mainly within guest houses. Despite the proximity of the West Lakes Science & Technology Park, and of British Nuclear Group, there is a complete lack of four or five star accommodation within or on the edge of the town centre, the nearest provision being Ennerdale Country House Hotel at Cleator.

Limited accommodation and the lack of an attractive hotel on the harbour is a commonly acknowledged weakness. There are a small number of guest houses, mainly serving temporary workers and tradesmen, but only one higher quality hotel, slightly outside the town centre itself.

Tourism conclusions

The current tourist offering is small-scale and fragmented. It is strong in terms of setting, but weak in terms of content and does not offer enough to attract people to stay for weekends. Relatively few who are staying in the Lake District make the journey through to Whitehaven even in search of wet-weather alternatives. Significantly, Cumbria Tourist Board does not regard it as a priority for development.

However, there is potential to build on existing tourism strengths and to improve them (e.g. there is no fish restaurant, no fishing tackle shop, no informal café to make the focus of a stroll along the promenade). By packaging the uniqueness of the setting together with the potential for activities and 'doing something different' more effectively, a profile for the town can be created in certain niche markets over the medium and longer term to further develop Whitehaven's location to access the Irish Sea, explore the Western Lakes and visit the wild coast line.

Whitehaven already has its 'Big Idea'; its maritime heritage which encapsulates the Georgian town, the Harbour, the connections with America, Jonathan Swift and even its industrial heritage. One of the objectives of the Town Centre Framework could be for Whitehaven to turn back towards the sea from which it derived its early prosperity and through doing this not only attract more visitors to the town but improve the quality of life for residents. In order to achieve this an urban design framework will be essential to create;

- High quality public spaces as a focus for life
- Network of good foot/cyclepaths
- Better welcome for cyclists and sailors: 'cycle hub'/showers/repairs/clothing/hire
- Better interpretation and use of art/design to tell the story
- Improved orientation: feel comfortable, find your way around

SUMMARY

Whitehaven faces major challenges. The patterns of economic and demographic change experienced over the last 20 years seem set to continue. A declining and ageing population will affect levels of local disposable income and labour market flexibility if current projections are realised. Economic restructuring will continue to reduce the levels of manufacturing employment and seems likely to reduce average wage levels as predicted losses at BNFL feed through. In addition, Whitehaven experiences significant levels of deprivation and a declining built fabric for large areas of public housing. Skills and educational levels of residents are also comparatively low, presenting challenges for new commercial development.

There are also comparatively low levels of self employment. However, there are signs that local education provision is improving and that higher education options will be available locally. The location of the NDA HQ and the decommissioning process itself will provide further economic opportunities and the coordinated support of Government will be potentially very beneficial.

Development in Whitehaven and of the town centre will be reliant on capturing a greater share of visitor spend from the wider population and from tourism. Clearly this will require a greater level of town centre investment and an improved retail offer. However, yields are comparatively low within the West Lakes and the County and the environment is becoming increasingly competitive. Residential values have risen significantly in recent times and the market has played 'catch up' with County and regional averages.

6 Community

KEY FACTS

- The population reflects an economic background dominated by large scale, primary industries and comprises a relatively low percentage of managerial and professional residents.
- Current demographic trends show an ageing and declining population. The closure of Sellafield and loss of an estimated 8,000 jobs will reinforce this tendency.
- The wider district has a relatively high concentration of highly skilled and well qualified residents, mainly associated with the West Lakes Science and Technology Park (WLSTP) and Sellafield. The decommissioning process and anticipated investment in the Science Park represent an opportunity to encourage a greater percentage of this social group to live in Whitehaven.
- Levels of educational qualification are low and most of the district's schools and colleges perform below the national average.
- Cumbria is the only county with no university. There is a proposal for UCLAN to establish new facilities in West Cumbria and also for a new research and training facility within the WLSTP, which may help address the lack of training and educational opportunities.
- Indices of deprivation and social exclusion are also high, and two wards are in the top 100 most deprived in the country.
- Despite this there is a strong loyalty and sense of identity among the local population who are generally happy to live in Whitehaven despite a wide range of frustrations.

Whitehaven Population Curve

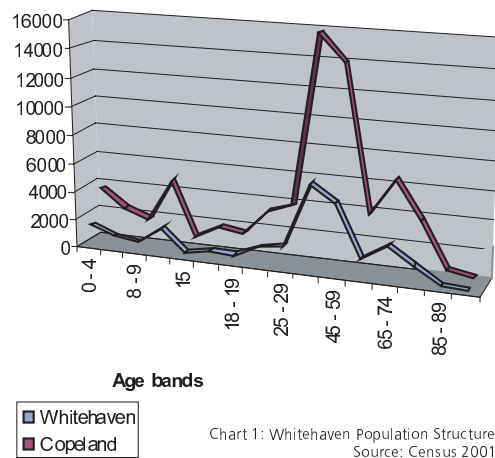


Chart 1: Whitehaven Population Structure
Source: Census 2001

INTRODUCTION

The demographic profile of Whitehaven is a key element in determining a framework for development of the town centre. The issue of who lives in Whitehaven, their spending power and socio economic position is instrumental in the function of the commercial capital investment market and the primary driver of public services.

The population of Copeland at the 2001 census was 69318. This represented a fall of some 2000 in the 10 years from the 1991 Census and a continuation of the trend from the 1981 census results. The Population is ageing reflecting national demographic trends but also the outflow of younger cohort, an issue of concern reflected in a number of strategic documents. Population projections published in the Cumbria Economic Assessment show an expected fall in Copeland by a further 7000 by 2026, the highest rate of forecast decline in Cumbria.

Chart 1 ‘Whitehaven Population Structure’ (Source: Census 2001) clearly illustrates the aging

population in Whitehaven and in Copeland. It is noticeable that for Whitehaven that the population from 1–30 is particularly low compared to the 30–60 age group. This will have implications not only for the workforce but for demands on public services over the next 20 years.

The population projections are based on a ‘rolling forward’ of the current population structure and allowing for known trends. However, work undertaken by ERM to assess the socio economic impact of options for decommissioning at the Sellafield plant highlight the potential for an even greater decrease in population. These projections show that from within the travel to work area 15–20,000 people would be likely to leave the area within the next 20 years as a direct result of employment change. Such change will clearly have a negative effect of the size of the market place and the levels of disposable income available locally.

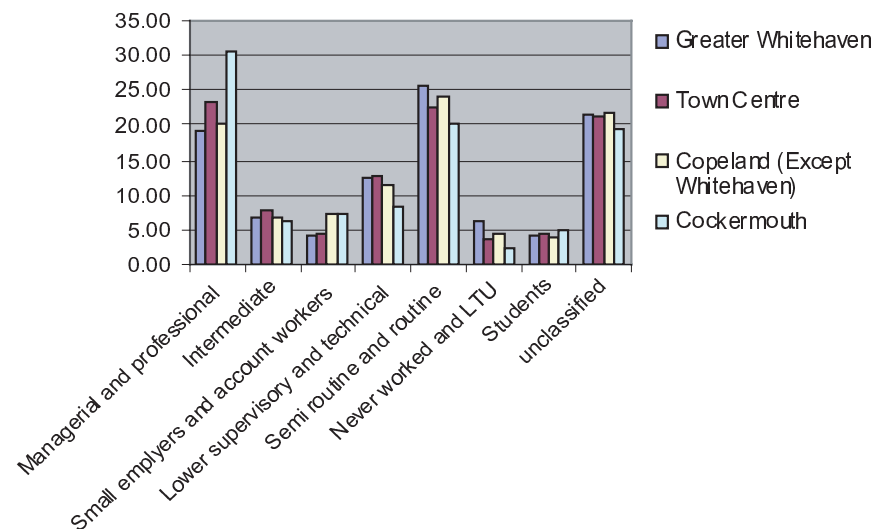
Whitehaven’s population has been configured to serve a historically large manufacturing and primary industry base, originally based around coal, the production of chemicals and latterly dominated by Nuclear Fuels. Whitehaven is the largest set-

tlement in Copeland and its socio-economic make up reflects this industrial background.

Chart 2, compares the relative difference between the socio economic patterns in Copeland, those in Whitehaven and as direct comparator Cockermouth. As the chart shows, a significant proportion of the higher socio economic groups as a whole lie outside of Whitehaven. Clearly, this has some impact on the patterns of retail and commercial investment, with the current town centre configuration seemingly serving the local population rather than the wider area.

Although ‘Greater Whitehaven’ has relatively low levels of managerial and professional residents, the Town Centre has some 23 percent. Cockermouth appears to provide a focal point for managerial and professional residents with over 30 per cent of the population being from this cohort. Greater Whitehaven has a much more significant representation of residents in the semi routine and routine occupational classifications.

Chart 2: Comparison of Socio Economic groups in Copeland and Whitehaven



EMPLOYMENT

Whitehaven’s reliance on manufacturing industry is still easy to see in the patterns of employment for residents in the town. Chart 3 shows the industry of employment as registered in the 2001 census and is a useful measure of what people actually do for a living as opposed to the measure of employment by the resident businesses.

At over 27 per cent, manufacturing employment remains the dominant feature of the local economy, followed by of employment within the public sector, health, education etc. and retail and wholesale distribution. This pattern is reflected at a district level.

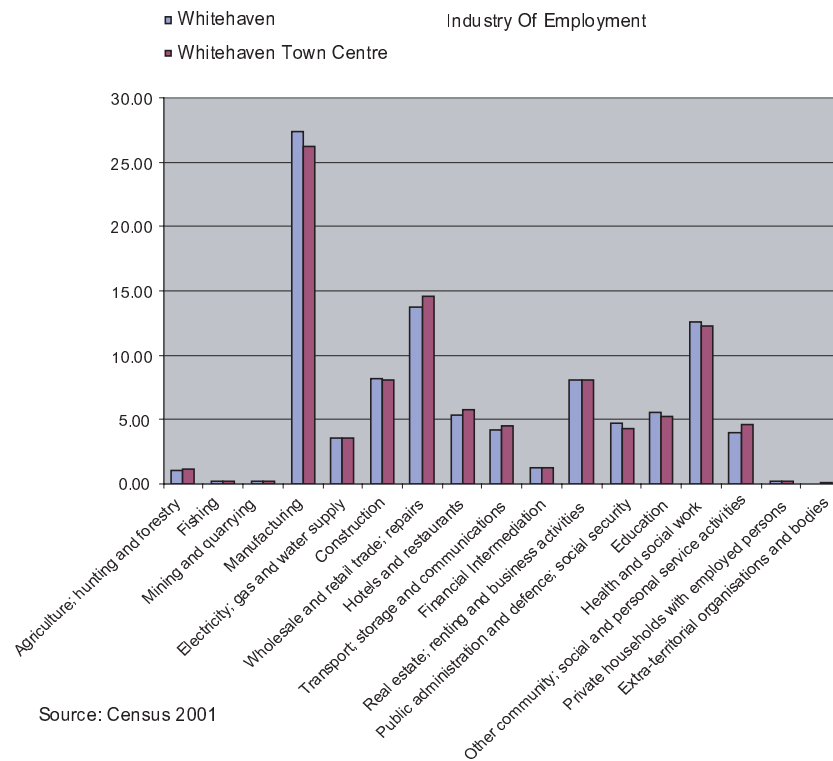
As we will see later, a large proportion of this manufacturing employment remains vulnerable to a

combination of public sector policy in respect of the energy industry and to the on-going process of structural economic change.

Given this history, the levels of self employment in Whitehaven are also lower than for Copeland and Cumbria. Table 1 shows the comparative figures as drawn from the 2001 Census.

As Table 1 shows, the self employment rate for Whitehaven is less than half that for Cumbria. This pattern too is evident in the number of VAT registrations though these are not available for below District level. In 2003, (the latest published data for registrations) some 140 businesses were registered for VAT in Copeland. Only Barrow had a lower number of registrations in Cumbria (100). The number of registrations in Copeland was less than half that for Allerdale or Carlisle. The net change in

Chart 3: Whitehaven Resident Industry of Employment



| Variables | All people aged 18 - 74 | People aged 18-74: Economically active: Self-employed |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Area | | |
| Cumbria | 354183 | 34945 |
| % | 60.37 | 9.87 |
| Copeland | 50687 | 3242 |
| % | 56.46 | 6.40 |
| Bransty | 3461 | 193 |
| Harbour | 2957 | 183 |
| Hensingham | 3055 | 114 |
| Hillcrest | 2031 | 73 |
| Kells | 1807 | 79 |
| Mirehouse | 3229 | 74 |
| Moresby | 911 | 60 |
| Sandwith | 1847 | 71 |
| | 19298 | 847 |
| % | 55.54 | 4.39 |

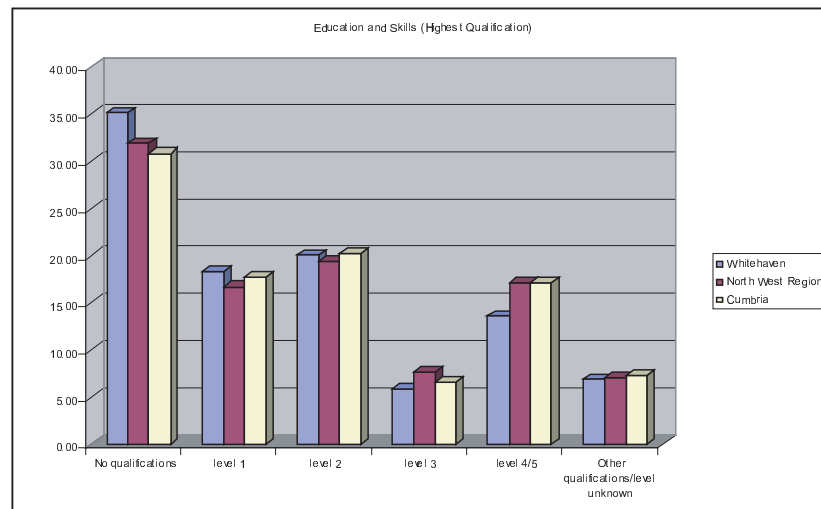
Source: Census 2001

Table 1: Economic Activity in the UK

businesses registered and deregistered for VAT in this year was 25, again less than half the number of Allerdale or Carlisle. This pattern can also be seen in 2002. The highest levels of VAT registrations were achieved in the following sectors:

- Hotels and restaurants;
- Wholesale and retail;
- Construction;
- Manufacturing, and;
- Agriculture.

Chart 4: Whitehaven Education and Skill Levels



Source: Census 2001

by the range of employment and lifestyle offered by the area. The 2001 census showed that there were 151 students living away from home during term time providing an indicator of those at educational institutions outside the area. Although no local access to university in West Cumbria at the current time there are plans proposed and under development for a West Lakes Research Institute linked directly to the University of Central Lancashire and Lakes College. This will provide further opportunities for local people but also will locate students from outside the area in Whitehaven. This is attributed to the formalised employment provided through employers such as BNFL. It is at the higher level of qualifications achieved that Whitehaven falls below the levels of the County and the Region.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Whitehaven also has significant challenges in terms of social deprivation. The built fabric of some of its key housing areas, adjacent to but not in the town centre, is in need of renewal and the Index of Local Conditions shows two wards in the top 100 most deprived wards in the country (Sandwith and Mirehouse) and a further seven wards in the top 15 percent.

Economic activity in the two wards is low as a proportion of the adult population (16–74) at just 56 per cent compared to 62 per cent for Whitehaven and Copeland and 65 per cent for Cumbria. (source Census 2001). These figures again highlight the number of individuals not participating in the labour market, a situation that may be exacerbated with the loss of permanent relatively well paid manufacturing employment.

SKILLS AND EDUCATION

The skill profile of Whitehaven reflects its industrial and manufacturing history. Chart 4 shows the level of educational qualification attained in comparison to the County and the region.

Chart 4: Whitehaven Education and Skill Levels (Source: Census 2001). Some 34 per cent of Whitehaven residents have no qualifications. This figure is significantly more marked than the Labour Force Survey (2000) and is shown as a proportion of the resident population rather than economically active. However, at levels 1 and 2 Whitehaven marginally exceeds the County and the Region.

Basic skills agency data shows that Cumbria has lower numeracy and literacy levels than the national average and that within Cumbria, Copeland and Barrow have the lowest numeracy levels. At a ward level the most disadvantaged wards show the poorest levels of literacy and numeracy with Mirehouse West showing the worst levels in Cumbria with over 40% of the population with poor literacy and 50% poorer numeracy. (source: Cumbria Economic Assessment 2004)

The two high schools located in Whitehaven have shown a marked pattern of improvement over the last four years. OFSTED data shows that St Benedicts Catholic High School achieved 48% with 5 A*–C GCSE grades in 2001. By 2004 this has risen to 56%, marginally above the average for Cumbria and England. Whitehaven School was similarly achieving 33% in 2001 and this has risen to 50% in 2004. This compares with Ehenside Community School in Cleator Moor the progress of which appears to have deteriorated, at least by this measure. Achieving 31% with 5 A*–C GCSE grades in 2001 this fell to 22% in 2004 and was less than half the national and county average.

Young people wishing to progress to higher education from Whitehaven and West Cumbria currently need to leave the area to attend university. This often raises the question of retention of the brightest in the area and how this can be achieved. While this is of course desirable the decision to study elsewhere is often an emotional one and likewise first destinations following university are not usually associated with a return home. However the opportunities for people to return home slightly later in life will be influenced directly

CONSULTATION

Background

The following paper offers a brief report on the views and ideas gathered during the initial phase of the consultation process regarding the development of the town centre in Whitehaven. The results have acted as a reference point for the wider team as they have worked on the wider design, transport and commercial appraisals and have informed the emerging design guidance document and the concept usage plan and its associated visuals.

The consultation is an on-going process and, as the users and residents of the town get to see the developing thoughts and outputs of the team, further results are being gathered and continue to form part of the process of the development of strategy and design.

The initial phase of consultation was based on:

1. Strategic document review.
2. Interviews with representatives from various key stakeholder groups and organisations.
3. Attendance at various community meetings.
4. The 'Consultation Station'.
5. The project website

Strategic document review

The team were provided with a range of reading and background material. The key documents that the team reviewed and used to understand the strategic setting were:

- Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016 (First Deposit Version)
- 'Gearing Up For Change' - The New Copeland Economic Strategy and Action Plan (post consultation draft)
- New Visions for Furness and West Cumbria
- NWDA Regional Strategy

- Managing the Nuclear Legacy
- Copeland's Best Value study: "Let's Talk"

Below are some specific observations and pertinent 'headlines' from a selection of the reports noted above.

- There appears to be a great deal of synergy at the higher strategic level. All local strategies have worked within the New Visions framework and policies are consistent and congruent.
- There are gaps in terms of the actions proposed to implement these policies.
- There is evidence of authorities and agencies not adhering to policies (e.g. proposed ASDA development, the Council Offices)
- Population decline is widely noted as a serious issue for future gross sales.
- Of the 7000 jobs forecast to be created between 2001 and 2016, there is a concern regarding the low forecast percentage of those that will be in Class A, B and C1.
- Sewerage and drainage backup are a problem with new developments, more so since the installation of the tidal gates.
- The Highways Agency is concerned about development that will increase traffic on the trunk road and access to peripheral areas (e.g. the top of Kells).
- There is a divergence of local opinion regarding support for the nuclear industry as opposed to wind farms (an overall comparative analysis of social and economic impact of these two industries in the area might be undertaken as a guide and focus for future local debate).

- The tourism and cultural offer is regarded as being of poor quality or 'tired' and is incomplete.

With regards specific sites initially seen as offering development potential the Local Plan notes the following:

- New superstore: both the Highways Agency and the Countryside Agency are concerned due to the impact on traffic and the town centre (respectively).
- On the same issue, both Government Office for the North West and Cumbria County Council question the analysis of 'need' for another superstore. The Roger Tym Retail Study for West Cumbria came to the same conclusion.
- Harbour View Site (WCT15): plans for residential/tourism on this site raised the single largest number of objections. This is seen as valuable recreation land used by locals and visitors alike as a viewpoint.
- WCT15 and 16: English Heritage object to development here due to adjacent conservation sites.

Stakeholder Interviews

The team interviewed representatives from local agencies and institutions that have an interest in the town, a wider view of its strategic setting and the ability to influence investment from the public purse. The interviewees and the organisations they represent were:

- Michael Heaslip, West Cumbria Local Strategic Partnership
- Terry Ponting, W3M (Whitehaven Development Company)
- Graeme Ives and Rosie Mathisen, Westlakes Renaissance

- John Grainger, Cumbria Inward Investment Agency
- Richard Greenwood, Cumbria Tourist Board

Key issues and observations from the interviews include:

Local Strategic Partnership:

- No specific policies with regard to Whitehaven.
- Fully endorsed the New Visions aspiration of Coastal Regeneration and recognise West Cumbria as a Maritime Region.
- Supported the principle of balanced development through development frameworks.
- Aspire to town centre revitalisation through high standards of urban design including the balanced provision of housing, with a presumption in favour of town centre housing in preference to suburban or rural developments.

W3M:

- Consider key economic driver to be niche retail linked to maritime heritage and good quality built environment
- Stated that a clearer understanding of the above point is emerging among local retailers but that they need to be convinced of the success of this approach elsewhere to encourage local investment.
- Town centre planning needs to be clearer, possibly 'themed', including shop front improvements.
- Council need to show commitment by taking responsibility for adequate cleaning and lighting of the harbour area and wider public realm maintenance.
- Need to be more pro-active in terms of acquiring the preferred site for an 80 bed hotel with

leisure/dining facilities, for example by offering to rebuild the night club elsewhere so the Mark House site can be expanded.

- Both the Beacon and the Rum Story "need refurbishment".
- Car parking is adequate as long as increased use of the multi-storey is encouraged.
- There is evidence that people are coming to Whitehaven to shop; August and December are the busiest months for parking.
- There have been an estimated 800,000 visitors to Whitehaven since January 2000.
- Partners need to think about what it will take to run the town centre and harbour as 'Whitehaven Limited'.
- Believe that the ASDA planning approval will be 'called in' due to objections from Allerdale Council.

West Lakes Renaissance:

- More business/office space required as existing accommodation often inappropriate to modern use (e.g. much of it 'over the shop' with no disabled access)
- Some accommodation that has previously been retail space is no longer appropriate for that use; need to think more innovatively about office, workshop and residential uses.
- Belief that the management of parking provision is currently inadequate leading to inefficient usage of facilities and a perception of insufficient space. Parking needs to be made easier to make office space competitive with West Lakes Science Park and Lillyhall Business Park.
- Need to get College activity back into the town.

- The town centre requires a diverse housing offer, high density, modern developments that offer 'city-scape' living. But residential development must not block the town/harbour access.
- Not sure that Mark House is the best site for hotel.
- Develop the Mary Gale (Washington's Grandmother) House as tourist attraction to 'hook' American visitors. With Rum Story and improvements to Beacon this makes a reasonable package for a weekend stay.
- However, there are only a limited number of times that locals will want to visit even the best museums. Develop the festival activities to make Whitehaven a place to be visited by other West Cumbrians for family days out. Linking the Maritime Festival to other developments that might include: Caribbean Carnival, Tall Ships, Maritime Film Festival, celebration of American connection, etc.
- Many of the opportunities are already here but the area does not have many entrepreneurs with the vision and energy to make things happen; need to nurture it locally and attract it in. Needs a stimulating, exciting environment to make entrepreneurs want to live and develop their ideas in Whitehaven.
- NDA will create few jobs directly, though these will be highly paid.
- However, there will be indirect job-creation through the relocation of key suppliers to the industry. Many of the direct employees may be imported but will generate the need for further supply of services.
- The logical place for direct suppliers (technology companies) to locate is West Lakes Science Park, but other services would be better placed in the town centre where they can serve a wider community.

Cumbria Inward Investment Agency

- Need for ‘blue sky’ thinking between the emerging issues of the nuclear industry and the future of tourism and the economy as a whole in West Cumbria.
- Important to find a balance between the ‘blight’ likely to follow any NIREX 2 decision or future power requirements, and the unique location of Whitehaven between the sea and mountains.

Cumbria Tourist Board

- There is no strategic fit between ‘West Cumbria’ and the wider Lakeland focus of CTB.
- CTB will concentrate on a ‘brand’ approach, e.g. Western Lakes
- There is a low skill base in tourism industry in Whitehaven.
- There are significant gaps in the offer expected by visitors.
- CTB have an officer working at the grass routes to make improvements in these areas.
- A decent hotel and cruise ship visits are areas that CTB is interested in following up; some doubt about the likelihood of two hotels in Whitehaven (taking account of West Lakes) when the market has not responded over the past years of Sellafield growth.
- Like CIIA, believes that in the long term there is a need for completely new approaches to the issues affecting tourism in Whitehaven and West Cumbria.

Community Meetings

The existing Neighbourhood Forums, run by the Cumbria County Council, have been used as ‘entry’ points to the communities in and around the town. The team has attempted to engage not only town centre residents and other interested parties, but also outlying communities such as Cleator Moor

and Egremont. The following points offer a generalised sense of the responses to the introductory presentation that was made.

1. There is a real and wide concern that new development will somehow ‘damage’ the existing Georgian heart and its setting. It is likely that any suggestion for contemporary design will need to be introduced in an extremely sensitive manner and will need to convince many people that it will enhance what are widely known to be architectural assets.
2. A hotel development is seen as important. However, there is scepticism about its potential to be viable and a recognition that it is something of a ‘chicken and egg’ situation with regards the development of tourism.
3. Provision for youth is a major concern. This includes diversionary leisure and recreational opportunities as well as skills development and business training. There is a wide consensus that the young of the town need much more encouragement to stay and that latent entrepreneurialism needs nurturing and financial support.
4. The development of wind power generation sites is a clear concern. Whilst it is held by some that this may offer the opportunity to create an ‘energy town’ (wind, wave, nuclear, etc.) there is a strong cynicism about the ability of the present suggestions for wind turbines to provide jobs or to add anything to the tourism offer.
5. There is a powerful concern regarding the ‘uncivilised’ drinking culture within the town centre. It is known to make people feel unsafe at night. There is a view that a ‘continental’ style restaurant, residential and entertainment area, probably on the quayside, that was self policing and away from the pub culture is needed.
6. The present cultural offer for locals is widely accepted as being good “as far as it goes”. The provision of a cinema and a performing arts

venue are common demands. The creation of an exciting skate park, as an integral part of the town scene, has also been a recurring idea.

7. As part of the town’s visitor offer there is a wide recognition that more toilet facilities are needed at or near the Harbour.
8. There is a strong recollection of a good section of beach in the outer Harbour area and many attendees have questioned whether this could be ‘reinstated’ to create easy recreational access to the sea for locals and visitors.
9. It is understood that the gateways to the town are poor and that the town and its attractions require better ‘advertising’ and signage from both the ring-road/by-pass as well as from further afield.
10. Superb views of the harbour and town are available from many vantage points; however they are known to be something of a local ‘secret’. Opening them up, making them more attractive and signposting them is an idea that has much support.
11. The ‘service’ function of the town, particularly its retail function and including its market, are highly valued. There is a concern at new development may ‘swamp’ what exists, which would be resisted, and drive out long standing retailers. There is a strong feeling that new developments should be designed and delivered to encourage and grow local business before it considers attracting outside investment.
12. The industrial heritage of the town is considered to be a strong asset and many feel that it should be better explained and more fully celebrated. This includes even the most recent industries such as chemical manufacture and nuclear energy production, neither of which have a ‘presence’ in the town centre.

13. There is a strong feeling that the potentials of the proximity of the sea are not taken full advantage of. There is a concern that the Maritime Festival concentrates on the harbour and misses opportunities to connect to the wider town economy and encourage return visits. Provision for visiting recreational sailors is considered to be poor and it is thought that the fishing industry could be interpreted and become something of an attraction.
14. Traffic circulation and management is a widely held concern. It is thought that it needs 'slowing' and that sign-posting should be better, especially to car parks. The bus stops in Lowther Street, due to their proximity to the shopping centre, are highly valued.
15. General management of the public realm, and the obvious signs of deterioration of recent investments in the harbour area in particular, is a concern held by many.

Consultation Station

The Consultation Station, and its associated website, continues to be a significant point of contact for town residents and visitors. Along with the comments box and prioritisation exercise it continues to yield useful ideas and comment and will be a feature of the on-going collection of views regarding the teams developing output.

Initial display material offered the opportunity to make general comments about what is valued within the town and what concerns people about the built, the natural and the social environment. Participants were offered a 'lead question' followed by a series of response options. This range of options was drawn from the results of various interviews and consultations with town stakeholders. Whilst eight options were offered, participants only had the opportunity to exercise six, 'secret ballot', choices, all on one or one on each of six. This was done in an attempt to force a degree of 'decision' on participants making them think carefully about their choice.

So that a view might be reached regarding any difference amongst varying cohorts participants were requested to indicate their position in terms of their relationship to the town. They were asked to indicate whether they were resident within the town boundary, outside of the town boundary and/or within a neighbouring town or if they considered themselves irregular visitors or tourists from a greater distance.

RESULTS

The following tables offer the raw data of the responses gained.

Table 1: What I most like about Whitehaven town centre is.....

| What I most like..... | Residents | Neighbouring Communities | Visitors |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------------|----------|
| Georgian buildings | 41 | 11 | 6 |
| The market | 13 | 0 | 1 |
| The harbour | 54 | 9 | 2 |
| Supermarkets | 54 | 2 | 0 |
| Nightlife | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Restaurants | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Shopping experience | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| Range of services | 3 | 1 | 0 |

Table 2: What I most dislike about Whitehaven town centre is.....

| What I most dislike..... | Residents | Neighbouring Communities | Visitors |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|----------|
| Lack of cleanliness & maintenance | 61 | 18 | 5 |
| Limited range of shops | 77 | 27 | 12 |
| Transport & access to and from the town centre | 23 | 6 | 1 |
| Vehicles in pedestrian areas | 34 | 11 | |
| Too little car parking | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Too much car parking | 44 | 30 | 9 |
| Limited cultural offer (pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theatres) | 83 | 14 | 3 |
| Anti-social behaviour | 53 | 18 | 16 |

CONCLUSIONS

Whilst the exercise cannot claim to offer a 'scientifically robust' or complete understanding of perceptions and views of the town centre it is certainly indicative of general feelings and, in turn, lends support to similar views expressed at the various stakeholder consultations and meetings. However, the prioritisation exercise and its initial questions have revealed some interesting views and perceptions:

1. Residents value the harbour and the supermarkets more highly than the Georgian buildings.
2. Nightlife is not a valued aspect of the town's offer.
3. The market is valued by residents of the town centre more than by people from neighbouring communities.
4. Restaurants and eating, the range of services, the market and the overall shopping experience offered by the town centre are significantly less valued than the harbour and the Georgian architecture along with the supermarkets.
5. The limited cultural offer is a strong concern for town centre residents.

6. There is considerable anxiety regarding anti-social behaviour across all three respondent groups, notably this is a strong concern of those who consider themselves tourists or infrequent visitors.
7. The limited retail offer is seen as a strongly negative feature by all respondent groups.
8. The relationship between pedestrians and traffic within the shopping areas is a concern to resident users of the town centre.
9. Interestingly, and in contrast to many other town centre's, it is widely held that there is too much car parking provision.
10. The lack of cleanliness and maintenance of the public realm is a strong concern.

Forward Strategy

This initial phase has presented the concept of change to a wide audience in a variety of situations. There has been an unequivocally positive response to the notion, the only questions raised being based on a legacy of similar exercises in the area and associated disappointments along with the capacity of local organisations to deliver the necessary impetus to catalyse change. Well evidenced ideas are now emerging within the consultant team and the next phase of engagement will concentrate on presenting them and eliciting responses to less nebulous concepts and designs. The following paragraphs outline our intended approach to the final stages of consultation:

Resident and Neighbouring Communities and Visitors

Engagement of the wider community will continue to be focussed on the Consultation Station, though media based consultation will be used in an attempt to reach those who either don't use the town regularly or who feel intimidated by coming to the Station.

Key Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder groups including heritage and historical and retail and other commercial interests will be invited to a presentation of the finally agreed overall concept report, public realm strategy and design guidelines. It is hoped that representatives from the council and other strategic parties will be in attendance.

Potential Developers and Other Delivery Partners

A presentation to interested developers and potential joint venture and other delivery partners is seen as important. It is hoped that a presentation to this group could be organised by the council and that representatives from the consultant team would make a presentation of the overall project results and take questions on specific development briefs/sites.

7 Planning appraisal

KEY FACTS

- Whitehaven is within a Regeneration Priority Area identified by RPG13 and classed as a Regional Service Centre. As such, investment in its future is strongly supported by national and regional planning policy. The decommissioning of Sellafield and creation of the West Cumbria Strategic Forum have added greater urgency and political weight to the regeneration of the town and wider district.
- Government planning guidance currently places great emphasis on the creation of sustainable communities. Opportunities exist in Whitehaven to address many of the key elements of this aim, some of which are outlined below:
- High density, mixed use town centres are encouraged. Whitehaven already meets these criteria to a degree, and regeneration should seek to reinforce its traditional healthy mix, rather than weaken it further, as recent developments have tended to do.
- A thriving and diverse retail sector is seen as essential to the vitality of a town centre. Town centre retail should be preferred to out of town or fringe developments. Current levels of volume retail on the periphery of the town centre already threaten to undermine the existing retail offer in the centre and further large scale developments should be discouraged.
- Development on brownfield land should be preferred to greenfield sites in order to avoid urban sprawl and encourage reuse of land in town centres. There are numerous opportunities for brownfield development around the fringes of the town centre which represent a significant opportunity.
- High quality design is seen as a key tool to improve the urban environment and attract investment by 'adding value' to development. This must be an essential element in the regeneration of Whitehaven.
- The encouragement of walking and cycling is seen as important to improving the environment, health, and quality of life within urban areas and reducing dependence on the car. The fragmented nature of Whitehaven and poor links between its communities make this an even more essential component of its regeneration as a sustainable community.
- Tourism is seen as a major driver of regeneration and complementary to the improvement of services for local communities. It is closely linked to the enhancement and promotion of the natural and built heritage. Whitehaven's history and architectural legacy are a huge source of relatively untapped potential in this respect.
- The coast and 'coastal zones' are seen as an important economic, environmental and social resource and their protection and enhancement is encouraged.
- The provision of good quality, well maintained open spaces and recreational facilities is viewed as central to improving the quality of people's lives in urban areas and a key to most successful regeneration schemes.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has resulted in a major reform of the planning system. At the heart of these reforms is the Government's commitment to achieving a planning system that creates sustainable communities and delivers sustainable development. As part of the reform process, planning guidance notes (PPGs) that set out the Government's objectives and advice for the planning system are being replaced with Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) that reflect the Government's new agenda for planning. At the current time, Government policy on key issues affecting Whitehaven is covered in the following documents:

Draft PPS 1 Creation of Sustainable communities This draft policy seeks to promote urban regeneration and inclusive, healthy, safe, and crime free communities, encourage economic growth, bring forward suitable land to meet the expected needs for housing, industrial development, retail and commercial development, ensure jobs and services are accessible by all means of transport, protect biodiversity, promote more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of previously developed land/buildings, and reduce the need to travel.

PPG 3 Housing This policy seeks to ensure that housing meets the requirements of the whole community in terms of quantity, size, type, location and affordability in order create mixed communities, prioritise the use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield sites, and promote good quality mixed use developments which reduce car dependence.

PPG 4 Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms This policy supports new development and aims to direct it to sustainable and brownfield locations, ensure that new developments are compatible with surrounding land uses

and the environment, and create mixed-use schemes.

PPG 6 Town Centres and Retail Development

This policy identifies a sequential approach to selecting sites in terms of directing development to town centres rather than out of town areas wherever possible, and promotes well designed mixed use schemes which have an accessible range of shops, employment, services and facilities.

PPG 13 Transport The objectives of this policy are to promote more sustainable forms of transport choices, promote accessibility to jobs and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce the need to travel especially by car.

PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment

This policy seeks to preserve and enhance the historic environment, including listed buildings and conservation areas. Conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives therefore new developments must seek to enhance the character of the historic environment and secure their continued vitality.

PPG 17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation

The objectives of this policy are to promote well-planned, accessible and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities that cater for a variety of needs. Sport and recreation are fundamental to support an urban renaissance, promote social inclusion and community cohesion and promote sustainable development.

PPG 20 Coastal Planning This policy seeks to protect the coast and 'coastal zones' as an important economic, environmental and social resource, and emphasises the need to conserve the natural environment by supporting development that requires a coastal location e.g. tourism, recreation etc, enhance areas that have suffered from dereliction and consider flood risk, erosion and land instability.

PPG 21 Tourism The Government's policy is that the tourism industry should flourish in response to

the market while respecting the environment by facilitating and encouraging development and improvement in tourism provision and ensuring that the impacts, such as traffic, are managed effectively.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Regional Planning Guidance Note 13 establishes the spatial development framework for the North West Region, and was published in March 2004. RPG 13 is currently being reviewed and will be replaced by a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It is anticipated that the RSS will build upon existing objectives and policies of RPG13 but encompass broader, spatial issues such as health and culture.

The overriding aim of this guidance is to promote sustainable patterns of spatial development and physical change. This is essential to ensure a better quality of life for the people of the region. Within this, the RPG states that Region's environmental assets must not be sacrificed for economic prosperity. The key objectives of the RPG include, amongst others, the need to secure the revival of coastal resort towns and other coastal settlements and to ensure the sensitive and integrated development and management of the coastal zones.

RPG13 refers to three Regeneration Priority Areas, as identified in the NWDA's Regional (Economic) Strategy. 'West Cumbria and Furness' form one of three identified priority areas, and includes Whitehaven. These areas are economically fragile and the RPG states that there is a need for development and redevelopment to ensure the physical enhancement, significant regeneration and gradual restructuring of the area. In addition to this, the New Vision for West Cumbria and Furness is a sub-regional strategy and action programme, which includes the harbour areas of Whitehaven as one of the key locations for regeneration. The areas of activity of this vision are as follows:

- Managing transition
- Lifestyle

- Coastal renaissance
- Better connections
- Leadership/networking
- Communities that work
- Advantage through knowledge

RPG13 makes reference to the National Cycle Network, which has been proposed by the sustainable transport charity Sustrans. Over 600 kilometres of continuous routes will eventually connect many of the regional towns and cities, including the Whitehaven/Workington to Tynemouth/Sunderland 'C2C' route, which is completed and used by around 15,000 people a year.

OTHER KEY REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Regional Economic Strategy

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) provides the economic development framework for the Northwest, and together with RPG13, contributes to the sustainable development targets set out in Action for Sustainability (AFS) and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework. The RES identifies five priorities and associated strategic objectives for the region in order to transform the Northwest through sustainable economic development. The priorities and objectives are as follows:

- Business Development: exploit the growth potential of business sectors, improve the competitiveness and productivity of businesses and develop and exploit the region's knowledge base.
- Regeneration: deliver urban renaissance, deliver rural renaissance and secure economic inclusion.
- Skills and Employment: develop and maintain a healthy labour market.
- Infrastructure: develop the strategic transport, communications and economic infrastructure and ensure the availability of a balanced portfolio of employment sites.

- Image: develop and market the region's image.

New Vision for West Cumbria

The New Vision for West Cumbria and Furness is a sub-regional strategy and action programme, which includes the harbour areas of Whitehaven as one of the key locations for regeneration. The areas of activity of this vision are as follows:

- Managing transition.
- Lifestyle.
- Coastal renaissance.
- Better connections.
- Leadership/networking.
- Communities that work.
- Advantage through knowledge.

Strategic Forum for West Cumbria

The New Vision also includes the Strategic Forum for West Cumbria, which guided by the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), ensures the management of socio-economic change in West Cumbria resulting from the impact of decommissioning at Sellafield. The Forum aims to gain Government support for sustained additional programmes in West Cumbria in order to rebuild the economy.

The key message from both the Forum and the MoA, is that the decommissioning is a large-scale problem which requires the creation and management of long term programmes. These include those which foster the creation of a world-class business in environmental remediation, grow higher education by evolving a university for West Cumbria with a major role in environmental science/engineering/nuclear skills agenda and support new high quality infrastructure in road, rail, ICT and teaching hospital and education investment.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Whitehaven is located within the borough of Copeland, which is situated in the County of Cumbria and operates under a two-tier development plan system. The **Cumbria and Lake**

District Joint Structure Plan guides change in land use by providing a strategy and policies for the development and use of land within Cumbria, including the Lake District National Park. The **Copeland Local Plan** provides the planning policy context for Whitehaven, and translates the broad Structure Plan policies into more detailed policies and site allocations.

Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan

The existing Structure Plan was adopted in 1995 and covers the period from 1991 to 2006. A replacement Structure Plan has now been produced which will guide development strategically within the County until 2016. An examination in public (EIP) was held in September and October 2004 to inform further amendments and it is likely that this replacement plan will be adopted in Spring/Summer 2005.

The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan encourages development within towns such as Whitehaven where it will be used to diversify the economic base, improve quality of life, improve the environment, create a mix of uses, provide and support new and refurbished housing which offers quality and choice in the housing market, foster the distinctive development opportunities offered by ports and harbours, create and improve sea links, provide new tourist attractions especially where this builds on the heritage of coastal towns, improve transport communications, and facilitate improvements in ICT.

Copeland Local Plan

The adopted Copeland Local Plan was published in June 1997 and covered the period from 1991 to 2001. The Local Plan is currently under review, and a first deposit replacement Local Plan was published and consulted upon in February 2004. It is anticipated that the revised deposit draft will be published in April 2005, with a Public Local Inquiry into outstanding objections to the Plan commencing in September 2005. The policies in the replacement Plan reiterate those within the adopted Plan.

However, they are more up to date in terms of regional and local circumstances.

As part of the reform of the planning system, a Local Development Framework (LDF) will replace the Local Plan within 3 years. A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is currently being produced and sets out the Council's programme for the production of the LDF. In the meantime, the Local Plan policies will be 'saved' and used for development control purposes.

The adopted and replacement Local Plans include a **Development Strategy** which focuses on the need for regeneration within the borough. The replacement Local Plan details a number of **Sustainable Development Principles**, which inform any strategies and development proposals for the Borough. These principles are summarised as follows:

- Concentrate development in the main urban areas.
- Prioritise development sites.
- Provide decent homes and housing environments e.g. location, size, affordability etc.
- Make more efficient use of sites e.g. higher densities.
- Promote development with a mix of uses.
- Ensure new developments are accessible by public transport, walking or cycling.
- Protect important resources of environmental, social or economic capital e.g. natural habitats, historic sites etc.
- Ensure new development is compatible with the size and character of existing settlements.
- Encourage high quality design and materials.
- Encourage economic growth.

- Maintain vitality, viability and character of town centres.
- Promote diversification of the rural economy.
- Ensure that development is not located in areas that are liable to flood or where there is a risk of coastal erosion/inundation and that it does not create such problems.
- Encourage development which minimises waste, pollution and demands on existing infrastructure and services.
- Promote restoration of derelict and neglected land and land decontamination.

The Local Plan states that Whitehaven is the principal town in the Borough, and is designated as a Key Service Centre, where most new house building, employment and other needs will be accommodated as part of the mainstream regeneration activity. The contribution of the 'Vision for Whitehaven' and 'Renaissance for Whitehaven' programmes are also recognised in the replacement Plan, and the Council state that they will continue to encourage high quality new development and new initiatives in the harbour area and town centre to strengthen the tourism, retail and service functions.

Development Control Polices: The Council has defined a range of '**Town Centre Development Opportunity Sites**', which are underused, vacant, derelict or currently incompatible areas of land with the potential to be developed for a mix of uses; such as retail, leisure, office and residential. 25 sites were identified in the adopted Local Plan (policy TCN 4), which has now been reduced to 16 sites in the replacement Plan (policy TCN 7). These sites are highlighted on the proposals map.

Proposals for large scale **tourist development** will be permitted so long as they accord with the principles of sustainable design set out in policy DEV 6 and do not compromise the qualities and character

of the undeveloped coast or public access to it. Proposals which offer recreational opportunities for the local population will particularly be welcomed. The replacement Plan identifies a '**Tourist Opportunity Site**' area, which covers the Whitehaven Coastal Fringe and links the harbour with Haig Pitt and the St. Bees Heritage Coast (site TOS3).

There are two **Conservation Areas** within the town centre; these are Whitehaven Town Centre and Whitehaven High Street. The Town Centre boundary is extensive and includes the harbour. Development within these areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

Important areas of **open space** within the existing urban boundaries will be protected and encouraged, such as the Whitehaven Playground, Trinity Gardens and the greenspace surrounding St Nicholas Tower.

In terms of **retail** policies, the Council encourages further shopping, commercial and tourism related development especially where it promotes physical integration between the town centre, the harbour-side and the Pow Beck valley. A 'Prime Shopping Area' has been designated on King Street, within which continuous retail frontages will be sought.

An Interim **Housing** Statement was published in June 2004, which revises the first deposit draft Plan policies. This Statement aims to restrict housing development on greenfield land and outside settlement boundaries in order to reduce housing supply levels in line with Cumbria Structure Plan requirements.

There are a number of proposed **employment** sites within Whitehaven, which reflect the opportunities for investment and mixed use developments. Policies relating to employment uses are accommodating, with appropriately scaled employment proposals and extensions to existing employment uses being permitted with few qualifying criteria.

In terms of transport policies, the current Cumbria Local Transport Plan (2001-2006) includes provision for work on several infrastructure improvement schemes. Those of relevance to this project are: Whitehaven eastern relief road, mentioned above, and Whitehaven Pow Beck spine road, which is a concept which involves an alternative gateway route into the Town Centre from the St Bees Road (estimated cost £1.1m). The Council intends to prepare a Parking Strategy shortly and seeks to ensure a 'maximum' level of car parking provision for new developments. The Council is also committed to improving public transport, with the 'single most important item in the current LTP schedules' being considered to be the Whitehaven Transport Interchange. There are four cycle route schemes in the LTP, and these are Gosforth to Seascale, Whitehaven to St Bees, Moresby to Keekle and Gosforth to Calderbridge.

The St Bees Road (estimated cost £1.1m). The Council intends to prepare a Parking Strategy in accordance with the Development Framework, and will seek to ensure that appropriate levels of parking in suitable locations are provided for existing and new developments. The Council is also committed to improving public transport, with the 'single most important item in the current LTP schedules' being considered to be the Whitehaven Transport Interchange. There are four cycle route schemes in the LTP, and the most relevant include the Whitehaven to St Bees and Moresby to Keekle routes. In addition to these routes, there is an off-road cycleway from Whitehaven via Distington to Workington, which is an important part of the West Cumbrian network and requires an improved physical connection with Whitehaven Town Centre.

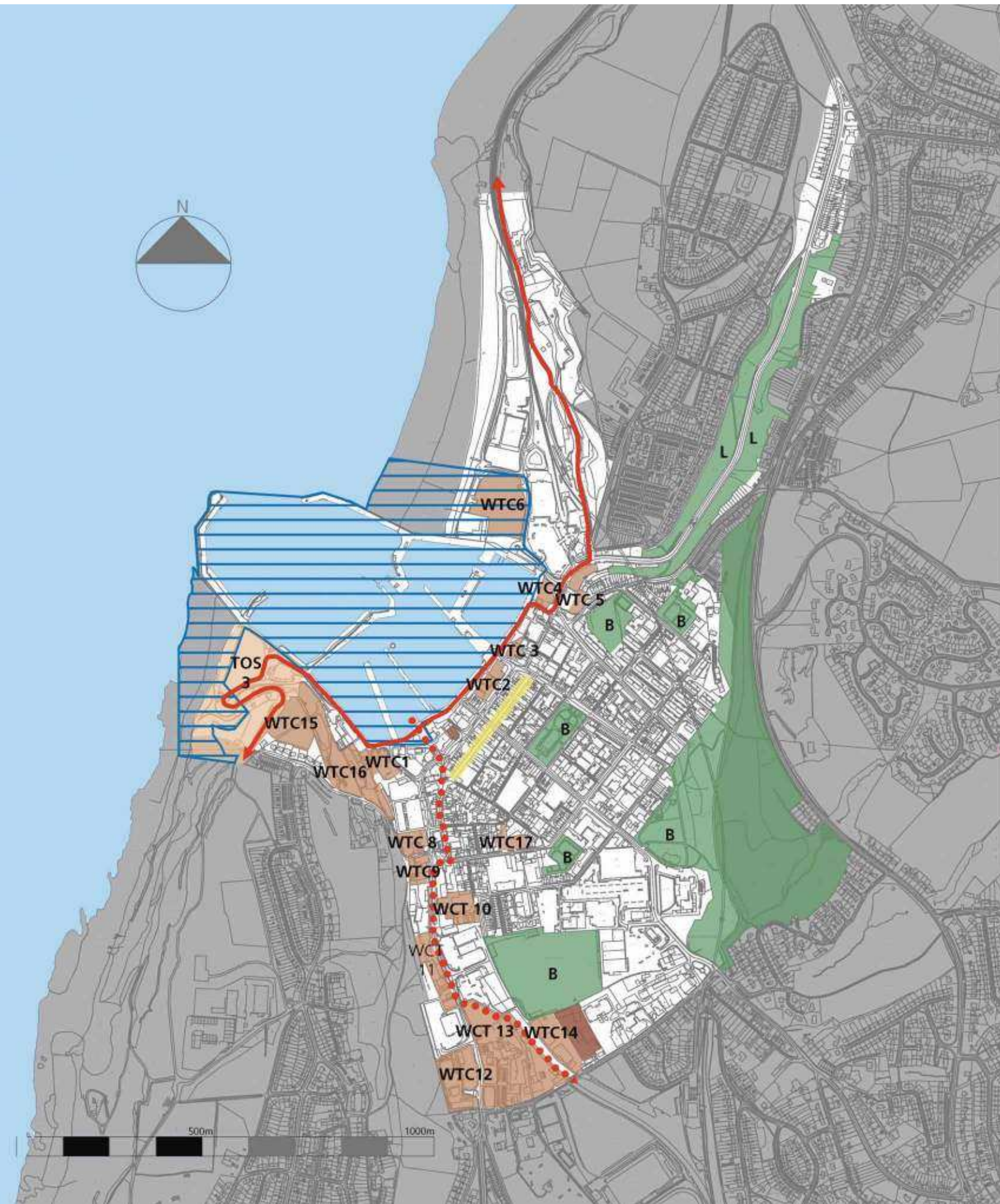
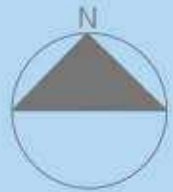
There are ten criteria relating to **sustainability in design** which all development proposals must comply with. They seek to ensure that schemes involve good design, access, car-parking, conservation, ecology, re-use of existing infrastructure where possible, amenity protection, energy efficiency and flood risk considerations.

CONCLUSIONS

The Development Framework for Whitehaven will need to be in accordance with the Government's new agenda for a planning system that creates sustainable communities and sustainable development.

The principle of regenerating Whitehaven is wholly in accordance with Regional Planning Guidance and reflects the town's status as part of a Regeneration Priority Area and as a Key Service Area as identified in the Local Plan. It will be important for the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy to continue to recognise the status and role of the town in the region, so that there is support at regional level for the delivery of the Masterplan in the long term.

The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan is supportive of investment and development within towns such as Whitehaven, and encourages schemes which facilitate economic, social, environmental improvements. Both the adopted and replacement Local Plans identify numerous development opportunities within Whitehaven, and include a Development Strategy which focuses on the need for regeneration within the Borough.




KEY

Housing

 With Planning Permission HSG1


Regeneration

 Whitehaven Prime Shopping Area TCN 4


 Development Opportunity Sites TCN7


 Tourist Opportunity Site TSM2

Environment

 Coastal Zone Development ENV 14

Urban Greenspace Protection

 Landscape Importance ENV 9

 Recreation / Amenity SVC 17

 Both ENV 9/SVC 17

Routes

 Cumbria Coastal Way ENV 14-15

 C2C-Route

8

Delivering the vision: agencies & funding

INTRODUCTION

The brief for the Development Framework emphasised the importance of deliverability. The importance and difficulty of this crucial consideration in the context of Whitehaven has been reinforced during the Baseline Appraisal. As with all regeneration planning initiatives, it is all too easy for proposals and plans to operate within a vacuum and be seen as an end in themselves. The implementation of an ambitious and challenging regeneration programme will require a sustained and coordinated commitment on behalf of the public sector partners. This chapter assesses the existing roles and responsibilities of the main public sector partners, the existing strategic framework and funding opportunities and identifies the main issues which will need to be addressed in order to put flesh on the bones of the Development Framework over the next decade.

STAKEHOLDERS & KEY ORGANISATIONS

The public agencies critical to the policy and delivery of the town centre regeneration are as follows:

Copeland Borough Council (CBC), West Lakes Renaissance (WLR), Cumbria County Council (CCC), Whitehaven for the 3rd Millennium (W3M), Cumbria County Council (transport and highways) and, in addition, the recently created West Cumbria Task Force. Two additional bodies have been established with a specific brief to oversee the implementation of the wider regeneration programme and the Town Centre Development Framework, incorporating representatives of the above statutory agencies and other key stakeholders such as English Partnerships or the local business community. These are, respectively, the Town Centre Steering Group and the Whitehaven Regeneration Partnership. In addition to these public sector bodies, the private sector, both locally and nationally, is of crucial importance to the successful implementation of the Town Centre Development Framework.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS:

- **Copeland Borough Council** – responsible for planning, land assembly, negotiating planning gain, compulsory purchase and serving repair or dangerous structure notices, and for the local economic and social strategic context. The Council are also key to the longer term success of the Whitehaven Town Plan as the guardians of planning guidelines, the first point of contact for private investors and the negotiators of key areas of planning gain and economic and community development.
- **West Lakes Renaissance** – manage and approve project funding from the North West Development Agency, act as the gateway for European Regional Development Funds and provide the regional strategic overview.
- **Cumbria County Council** – responsible for highways and public transport policy including lobbying for trunk road development, improvements to local roads and approval of

new interchanges and access to development sites. They share with CBC the role of local community liaison—e.g. the Local Forums.

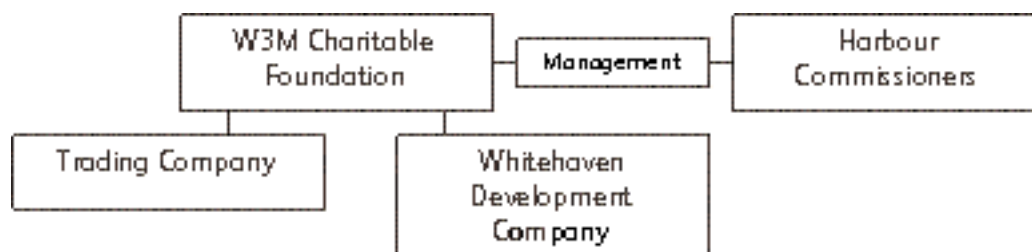
- **W3M** – Whitehaven for the Third Millennium (W3M) is a charitable foundation, formed to maximise funding from the Millennium Commission to regenerate the harbour and related environs. It was created in 1999, based upon the existing assets, management and executive of the Whitehaven Development Company, an autonomous regeneration company tasked with economic and tourism development in Whitehaven, and set up by Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council in 1993. The structure of the organisation is illustrated below and the map on the following page illustrates the crucial role they play in the regeneration of the harbour area and surrounds.

Since its creation, the company has been responsible for the regeneration of the harbour, harbourside and development of the fishing and leisure business of the harbour working in close alliance with the Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners. It has also developed the Rum Story visitor attraction, and related offices and educational resource.

W3M is a key stakeholder in the Town Centre Development Framework in its capacity as:

- Landowner—it owns key opportunity sites as identified on the ownership / stakeholder plan
- Land manager—it is responsible for the management and maintenance of the civic space adjacent to the harbour (deriving from it's responsibilities to the Millennium Commission)
- Tourism Operator—it is responsible for the management of the Rum Story visitor attraction
- Car Park Owner / Operator—it owns the main short stay / pay & display parking provision in the town centre (see below) and receives the revenue stream
- Developer / Joint Venture Development Partner—it has plans to develop a new boat building and maintenance facility, holds land that Tesco need for their redevelopment proposals and other key opportunity sites
- Regeneration Company—it has a mandate within Whitehaven Development Company to deliver economic and tourism development within the town.

To date, the study team has not been able to fully ascertain details on the articles of association and memorandum of understanding of the development company or charitable foundation and is unclear as to the precise nature of the relationships, responsibilities and liabilities between W3M, Copeland



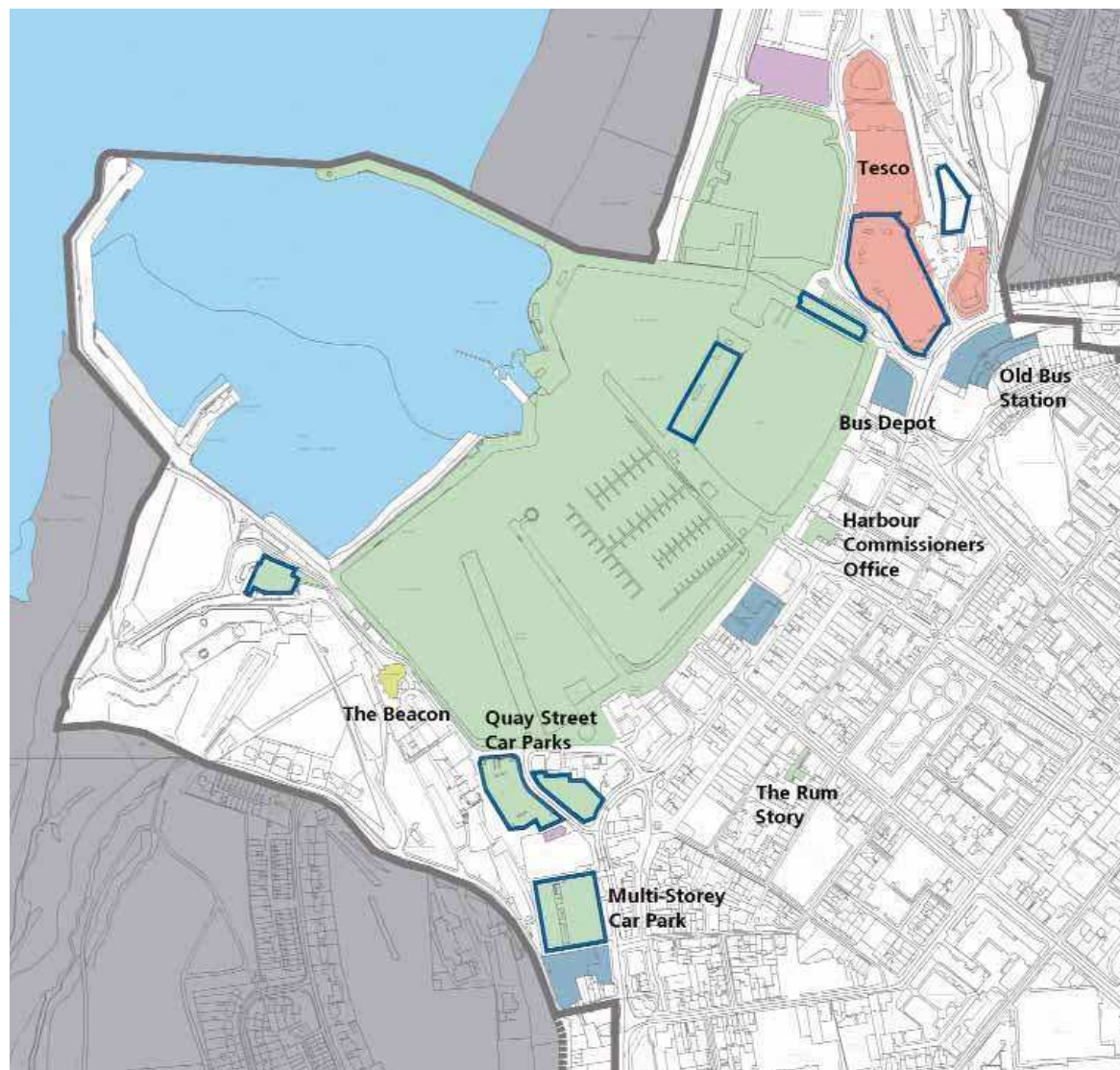
District Council and Cumbria County Council. This needs to be better understood – we need the Client Group to facilitate access where necessary.

- **The Private Sector** – new investment from the private sector is essential to the delivery of the longer delivery of the Whitehaven Town Plan. The vast majority of the recent investment in Whitehaven has been public sector led, with the exception of two supermarkets

FUNDING & PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Public funding is likely to be instrumental factor in engaging the market to make sufficient investment to create a momentum for change in the town centre. The following points summarise the key current positions in relation to accessible funding:

- A time extension for **European Regional Development Fund** means that applications will be accepted for projects that will start before the end of 2006 and be completed by the year end 2008. ERDF funding is complex, yet it may be key to development in the short to medium term, prior to the need for investment to be primarily private sector led. The timescale requires projects (and project partners) to be agreed no later than the end of 2005 to give ample time for application approval.
- With limited funds available and varying intervention rates, liaison with West Lakes Renaissance, CBC and the Regeneration Support Team (through West Lakes Renaissance) is essential at all stages. A minimum of 10% public sector investment is a requirement, making joint ventures a key for projects seeking ERDF. A maximum of 50% ERDF is possible but is unlikely. An intervention rate of between 30-40% is more likely. ERDF is 'funding of last resort', so each project is required to prove the need for funds in terms of market failure and negative capitation. The down side of large public sector grants is that it



Land Ownership/Control Key

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| | W3M |
| | Copeland Borough Council |
| | Private Developer / Landowner |
| | Tesco |
| | Lowther |
| | Car Park |

becomes more difficult to create a “clean” market justification in the future.

- **West Lakes Renaissance** has a major stake in developing the longer term economy in Whitehaven. They have also expressed an interest in potential joint ventures with the private sector—e.g. a hotel. Likewise, **W3M** might consider assembling land for longer term returns on investment for the right project.
- **CBC** and **CCC** have limited capital resources but may provide some support for key projects, roads and public transport infrastructure and services.
- For particular projects funding could also be available from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England and for small local projects, from the Community Forums, the Cumbria Community Foundation and a range of Charities and Trusts.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY REVIEW

The main strategic documents that have significant implications for the town centre are:

- Copeland Local Plan 2001-2006 (First Deposit Version)
- “Gearing up for Change”—The New Copeland Economic Strategy and Action Plan
- New Visions for Furness and West Cumbria
- NWDA Regional Strategy
- Westlakes Renaissance action plans
- Managing the Nuclear Legacy

Of these, the most immediately relevant to the Whitehaven Town Centre are “Gearing Up for Change” and the Copeland Local Plan. The main objectives of these strategies that will be addressed through the Framework are:

- Developing the tourism market
- Developing communications links
- Refreshing and renewing the built environment

- Drawing far greater economic value from key natural assets (in the context of Whitehaven town centre this is principally the coastline, but it is also an access point for the Western Fells.)
- Providing a supply of opportunities and attractions for the existing and next generation.
- Boosting the image and profile of Copeland.

“Gearing Up for Change” identifies a range of key projects to assist in the achievement of these objectives of which the development of the Whitehaven Town Centre Framework is one. The key projects that will contribute to realising a new future for the town centre are included within the New Vision thematic areas of:

- Actively Managing Transition – although this theme is mainly focussed on nuclear and technology expertise the proposed projects to develop the arts, crafts and creative industries and the food and drink sector could work to support niche (and youth orientated) enterprises in Whitehaven Town Centre.
- Lifestyle Choice – particularly researching niche markets and specific accommodation needs and the proposed Festival Development Programme (which links lifestyle and tourism opportunities).
- Coastal Renaissance – particularly Whitehaven Harbour works, Cycle Hub Feasibility and Whitehaven Tall ships.
- Making Better Connections – specifically the proposal to improve Whitehaven station.

Whitehaven Town Centre Redevelopment sits within wider strategic policies for West Cumbria and the county as a whole. These include the Learning and Skills Council Strategic Area Review for West Cumbria which will influence the future planning of education and skills planning, and Cumbria Vision, the overall strategic vision for the county.

There is synergy between these strategies, with stated policies appearing to be congruent and

complementary. However, there are some crucial gaps and tensions in the actions proposed to implement these policies. Among these are:

- Lack of enforcement of current design guidance upon new town centre developments.
- Potential tension between developments at Westlakes Science Park and Whitehaven Town Centre (e.g. hotel plans and competition with regard to developing commercial office space.)
- Apparent piece-meal and opportunistic approach to development in the town centre.

Possible solutions include:

- The Whitehaven Town Centre Framework should assist in addressing these difficulties by providing an integrated vision for development in key areas of the Town Centre, supported by planning at a more detailed level.
- Discussions with key stakeholders – West Lakes Renaissance, W3M/Harbour /Commissioners, the Town Centre Development Group and the West Cumbria Local Strategic Partnership testify to a high degree of support for the further development of the town. Win-win solutions are required to meet the various aspirations of these organisations.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Regardless of the quality of the Development Framework and its role as supplementary planning guidance, it is in practice unlikely to act as a catalyst for investment in Whitehaven in isolation. The realisation of the opportunities emerging for the Development Framework will require a critical mass of investment that will provide a ‘tipping point’, the basic confidence for more speculative investors to follow. Ultimately, it is the level and quality of investment into the town that will be the only measure of success for this initiative.

The primary ‘tool’ proposed to generate an interface between the Development Framework plans and the market place is the production of Development Briefs based around defined ‘Development Prospectus Areas’, including details and opportunities for individual sites set within a masterplan. This proposed approach will provide an effective and flexible basis for a coordinated marketing strategy, through which the town will present its ambitions and potential to the market place. However, we do have to ask the hard question—‘will this deliver the investment required in the town?’

Our view is that the Development Briefs are ‘necessary, but not sufficient’ and a more dynamic interventionist approach is required to actively engage the market place.

WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO?

For the circumstances in Whitehaven it is unlikely to be enough to produce what is essentially information for the market place and hope that it is able to recognise the potential seen by public institutions. A more direct, dynamic and interventionist approach is required.

Models of regeneration investment from the USA may provide some help in this respect. Second generation investment funds have been successfully used to regenerate previously blighted areas using only private sector investment funds. While many circumstances differ there is a feature of the approach that is central to the levels of success achieved. US examples, having established a master plan, shift the focus directly to securing a basis of development ‘deals’ with site owners or developers to enable a level of direct influence and ‘control’ over investment plans. It is direct engagement with the market rather than the provision of a guiding framework.

In the USA this is achieved through the use of equity based deals in a critical mass of development sites that over a relatively short period of

time can raise property values, yields and change the way an area is perceived and functions. In Whitehaven, taking some of these principles we believe it is essential to undertake the following:

- **Engagement with site owners** There needs to be direct engagement undertaken with owners and/or occupiers of each of the identified sites in the two zones to explore their current views and 'sell' the proposed vision. In some circumstances it may be possible or indeed beneficial for site owners to operate collectively. Where site owners have no interest in the propositions then sale to an interested developer or compulsory purchase must be considered. Cooperation, rather than compulsion, is likely to produce better results. However, statutory authorities need to be seen to be serious and to be able to move relatively quickly.
- **Clarify the role** of the public sector the role of the public sector in this initiative is critical. It can help provide a role in gap funding where this exists and contribute to investment in quality public realm. Compulsory purchase seems likely to be part of the equation. A commitment to on-going maintenance and to quality local service provision will be critical. While being subject to the controls and processes of public accountability the partners in Whitehaven need to be much bolder about what they intend to bring to the 'deal' and be confident that they can deliver it. The private sector does not act as a coherent and coordinated group of investors. That role must be played by the public sector and used to positively engage private sector interests to mutual advantage.
- **Gear up for delivery** A clear organisational structure, with defined roles and responsibilities is essential for the effective delivery of the Development Framework. However, there does not appear to be a clear focal point in Whitehaven for getting things done in a business like way, quickly and efficiently. Current relationships between the key partners are as

much part of the problem as part of the solution. The project and process so far still feels remote from the highest officer levels in the Borough Council and elected representatives. Both critical to a successful outcome.

Whitehaven is entering a new stage in its evolution and it requires a body that is flexible and responsive, that carries political and community support and is able to access resources. Work is required to put this in place sooner rather than later. Our view is that the basis of this organisation exists in W3M and that, with the right motivation, W3M could be given an extended operational focus on the town centre to create both an innovative and practical delivery model.

This approach articulates a 'grasping of the nettle' we feel is necessary for Whitehaven. It has sensitivities that are both political and that relate to statutory responsibilities. The consultancy team believe they can help deliver this outcome, but it will require strong support from the partners and an expansion of the available resources for the project.

9

Where now?

INTRODUCTION

Whitehaven is at a turning point in its history. The industries and trade which created the town of today have run their course and the town faces significant economic and structural problems. However, the long term decommissioning of Sellafield provides a window of opportunity in which to begin to address the challenges this presents and establish a foundation for renewed economic stability. Political recognition at government and regional level, of the difficulties faced by the whole district, may also help secure the funding and will to provide the long term investment which this will require.

Since the 19th century, the town has increasingly depended on a small number of large industrial employers. This has led to the development of a predominantly low-skilled, poorly qualified community. The gradual loss of this traditional industrial

base has left Whitehaven and Copeland increasingly dependent on the Sellafield nuclear power station for primary and secondary employment. Although this facility also attracts a significant number of highly skilled, specialist or managerial jobs, relatively few of this group live in Whitehaven itself. The loss of jobs related to the decommissioning process will therefore exacerbate an existing trend towards a declining and ageing resident community, and will tend to lower levels of disposable income.

Even under the most optimistic scenarios, it seems very unlikely that potential alternative forms of employment will compensate for the scale of job losses anticipated. The town must therefore begin the process of adaptation to a future which will involve a reduced population, a very small industrial and manufacturing sector, and a much greater reliance on small business, tourism and the service sector for employment. The role of the town centre

in this transformation will be to provide a lively and attractive urban base for a wider range of social groups brought to the region through the NDA and associated expansion of the Westlakes Science and Technology Park, a high quality service centre for the hinterlands and district, and a new tourist destination for the region.

This adaptation must involve significant economic and social diversification, the context and catalyst for which must be a much enhanced physical environment. The Development Framework will provide a long term strategy for the restructuring and improvement of the public realm and infrastructure, to provide a mix of retail, leisure and residential opportunities appropriate to the wider economic development aims.

TOURISM AND REGENERATION

Tourism must play an important part in this diversification and Whitehaven possesses great untapped potential in this respect, related to its built and natural heritage, its use as a base for active leisure pursuits, such as watersports, cycling and walking, and its historical links to sea trade, the Americas and personalities such as Jonathan Swift and John Paul Jones. However, tourism in itself is not a panacea for the town's problems. It brings a number of associated disadvantages such as low pay, seasonal or part time work and vulnerability to changing markets and social trends. The growth of the tourist sector must be seen as a means to an end; a catalyst for economic diversification and revitalisation. The success of the town as a tourist destination is linked to the development of a quality service sector, a varied retail offer and a range of leisure and lifestyle options. These elements are closely interdependent and as a whole will help not only attract visitors but also provide a more lively, interesting and attractive place to live, work and invest.

DISTINCTIVE OFFER

Whitehaven must develop a distinct identity and cultural offer to that of neighbouring Workington, which is currently undergoing extensive redevelopment to consolidate its role as the preferred base for the big name department stores such as Debenhams and Marks & Spencers.

The smaller scale and historical setting of Whitehaven are much more suited to niche, specialist or independent outlets, which will provide a distinctive offer and complement the appeal of its built and natural heritage. Specialist, high quality shops, cafes, restaurants and bars are an important part of the visitor experience but also vital to encourage a wider range of people to live in the centre or use it on a regular basis.

The promotion of a smaller scale, more diverse and specialist retail sector in the town centre, will

require a reversal or at least a stabilisation of the recent trend to allow increasing numbers of volume retail outlets within the town centre and around the fringes.

CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

The achievement of these aims will involve something of a cultural renaissance for the town and will require a sustained initiative to promote a more entrepreneurial culture, to encourage and support appropriate ventures, to train and empower local people and also to attract new investment from outside. Such a process will require long term commitment from the public sector combined with imaginative and proactive engagement with the private sector.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

The key to the long term prosperity of the town centre lies in providing a high quality urban environment with a diverse range of amenities, which will prove attractive to visitors, as well as providing a stimulating place to live and work. The historic architecture and street pattern of the town centre, combined with its harbour frontage, provide an attractive location, and its proximity to beautiful countryside and sea is an added advantage. The extent of dereliction, vacancies or simply poor quality development around the fringes and in small pockets within the centre, currently undermines its appeal and dynamism but also offers numerous opportunities for new and interesting development.

The historical legacy of the town should be seen as an opportunity, not as a constraint on new development. It is important to complement the historic built environment with high quality and sensitively designed contemporary architecture. Attempts to replicate historical styles almost universally produce a mediocre pastiche which only serves to dilute the appeal and distinctiveness of the authentic architecture.

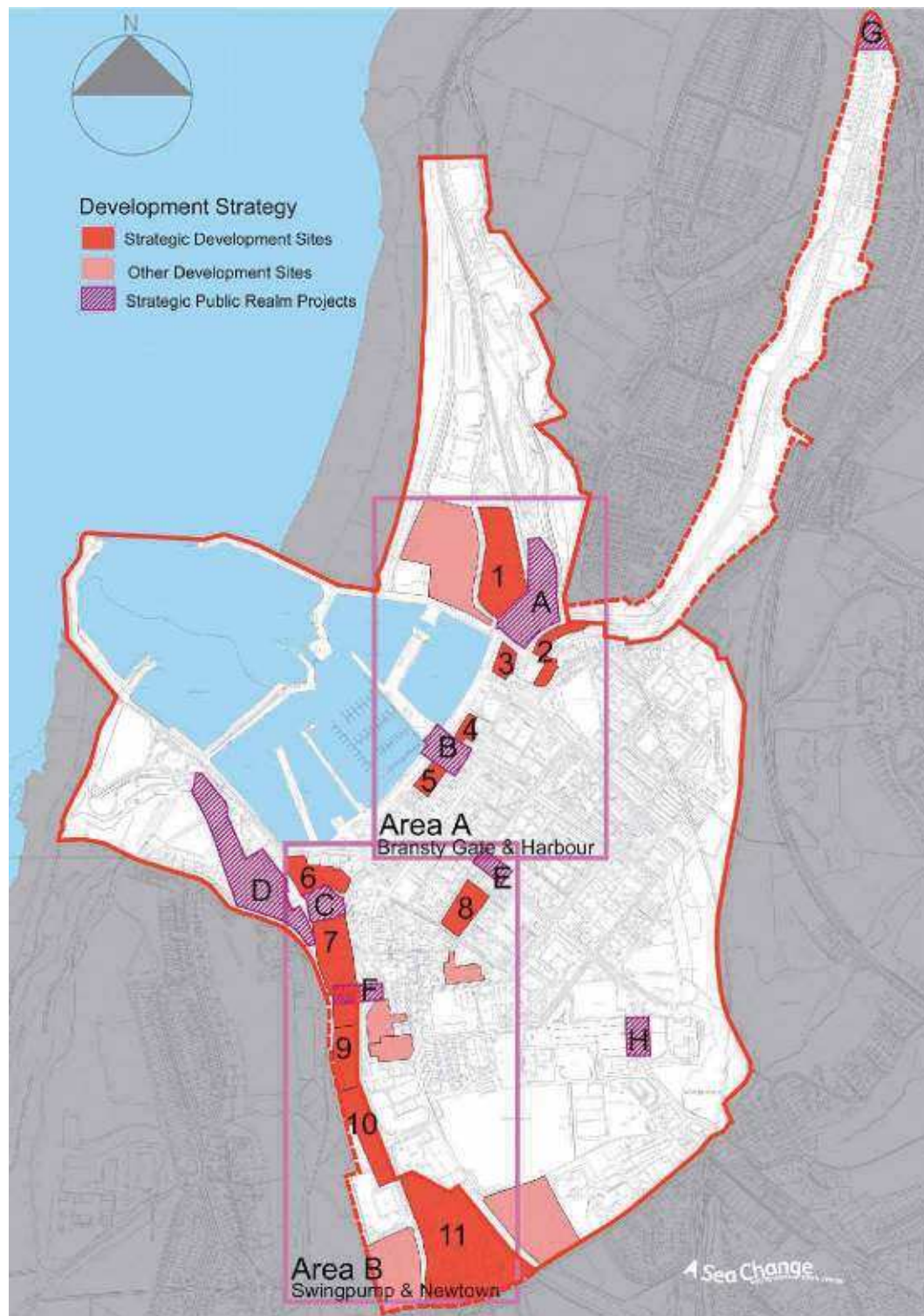
High quality public spaces usually provide the focus of life and vitality in any urban centre. The town lacks well located, accessible spaces which can play this role. The creation and improvement of public spaces as focal points for improved retail and leisure activity is seen as central to the regeneration of the town centre and to bringing about the necessary sea change in the town's image and environment.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMMITMENT

Given the current climate of low investor and developer confidence, poor image and little internal dynamism, this cultural and physical transformation will require a bold and far-reaching strategy to kick start the town's regeneration. It is vitally important that Copeland Borough Council and its partners demonstrate a clear commitment to a substantial programme of environmental improvements, to a new benchmark in standards of design and implementation and to the long-term maintenance of the public realm. This will not only deliver real benefits to the environment and lifestyle of the local community but also instill a sense of confidence and optimism in potential investors which is currently missing.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Town Centre Development Framework will seek to provide an achievable vision and a series of deliverable development proposals aimed at improving the physical environment of the town and overcoming some of its basic structural problems. The Development Framework aims to group individual development briefs within wider Development Prospectus Areas. These will illustrate the relationship of key sites to public realm and infrastructure improvements and provide an integrated and holistic vision of what is achievable in the town centre. This will not only help communicate the proposals to stakeholders and community members, but also provide a valuable marketing



tool to demonstrate the opportunities and potential within the town centre to potential developers.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The main overall objectives of the Town Centre Development Framework are the following:

- Create a series of new and improved public spaces as focal points for new life and activity within the town centre.
- Improve the quality of the town centre green-space and provide much better play and recreational facilities
- Improve key 'gateway' sites and approaches to the town centre.
- Create a network of safe and attractive foot-paths and cycle routes to link the town centre better to surrounding areas and wider strategic networks.
- Improve links between the town centre and the harbour
- Substantially reduce through-traffic along The Strand/Tangier Street and create a pedestrian-friendly zone along this corridor.
- Improve the integration and the prestige of public transport services in the town centre.
- Provide opportunities for high quality contemporary urban living in the town centre.
- Extend and diversify the range of small scale and specialist shops and of good quality places to eat and drink in the town centre.
- Develop a wider range of visitor accommodation and provide facilities to welcome cyclists, sailors, walkers and others involved in active leisure pursuits.

Figure 9.1. Development Strategy

- Engage the large scale retailers to involve them in the enhancement of their sites and better integration into the urban grain of the town centre.
- Explore opportunities to improve and extend the range of visitor attractions.
- Set high standards for design, materials and maintenance which will reflect the raised aspirations of the town.

This Baseline Study has demonstrated that the problems to overcome are significant but also that the potential for positive transformation exists. This study identifies a number of aims and opportunities which may form the basis for a successful strategy of change. The Town Centre Development Framework will provide a bold and imaginative vision for how these aims can best be realised and provide a powerful tool to help transform the image of Whitehaven, attract investment, and revitalise the town's economy and physical environment.

CONCLUSION

Whitehaven, along with much of West Cumbria, faces a major challenge over the next decade, which may determine the long term sustainability of the town. Although many of the economic and demographic indicators are bleak, the town has a number of strengths which have the potential to provide the foundation for a renaissance in its fortunes. In addition, the growing political awareness of the potential consequences of the nuclear decommissioning process may help release the necessary funding and provide the framework to facilitate change.

A Town Centre Development Framework is an important step towards achieving the necessary Sea Change, in that it represents an attempt to proactively coordinate and market development opportunities in pursuit of an overall vision. However, it is not enough simply to articulate a vision. This must be actively and determinedly pursued over a prolonged period of time. The transformation of the town will not only require a major commitment and drive - both financial and organisational - from the partner agencies but a long term cultural and social change in the local community. This will involve clear leadership and commitment from all stakeholders, cooperation between the key agencies and an on-going, constructive engagement with the community and its representatives.

Appendix 1: transport

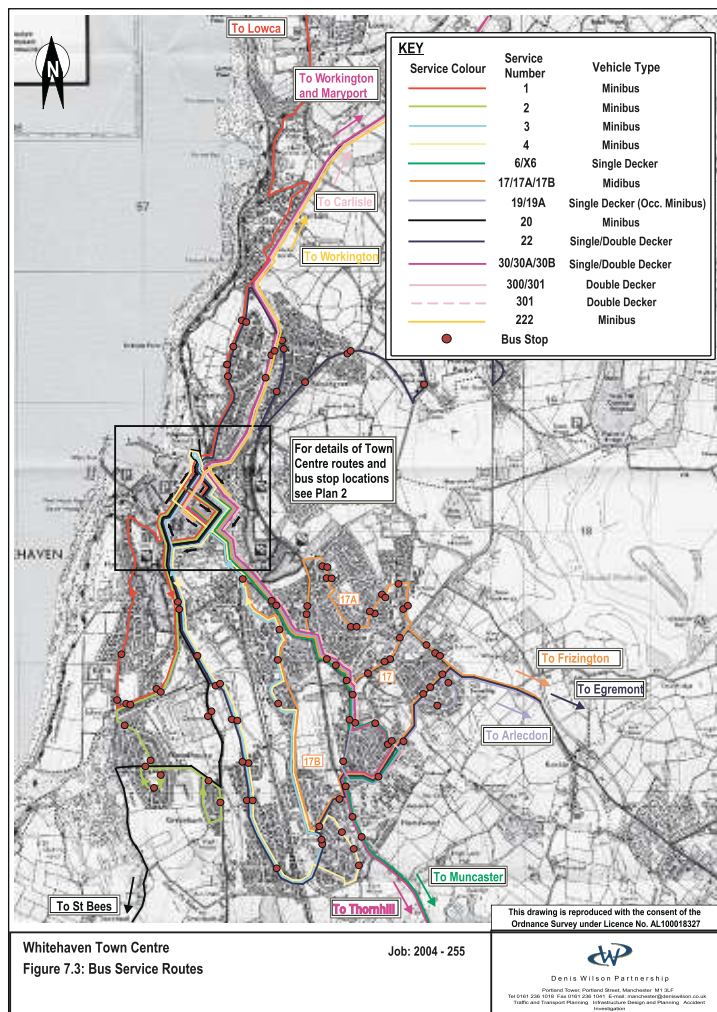


Table 7.6 Whitehaven Bus Services

| Service Number | Route | Frequency (Minutes) | | | | Sun |
|----------------|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | Mon - Fri | | Sat | | |
| | | Day | Eve | Day | Eve | |
| 1 | Kells – Whitehaven - Lowca | 30 | 2 services | 30 | 2 services | 60 |
| 2/2A | Whitehaven – Woodhouse-Greenbank – Whitehaven | 30 | 60 | 30 | 60 | 60 |
| 3 | Whitehaven – Mirehouse (Circular) | 20 | 30 | 20 | 30 | 60 |
| 4 | Whitehaven – Mirehouse (Circular) | 20 | 60 | 20 | 60 | - |
| 3B/4B | Whitehaven – Mirehouse (Circular) | - | - | - | - | 60 |
| 6 | Whitehaven – Muncaster Castle | 4 Services per day * | 1 service* | 4 Services per day * | 1 service* | - |
| X6 | Whitehaven – Muncaster Castle - Millom | - | - | - | - | 4 services per day |
| 17 | Whitehaven – Frizington Via Hensingham Square, Keekle, Cleator Moor Square and Wath Bow | 30 | Less than 1 per hour | 30 | Less than 1 per hour | 8/9 services per day |
| 17A | Whitehaven – Frizington Via Red Lonning, Keekle, Cleator Moor Square and Wath Brow | 30 | - | 30 | - | |
| 17B | Whitehaven – Frizington Via Corkickle, Mirehouse Shops, West Cumberland Hospital and Cleator Moor | - | 2 Services | - | 2 services | - |
| 19 | Whitehaven – Rowrah/Arlecdon | 3/4 services | 1 service | 3/4 services | 1 service | 2 services per day |
| 19A | Arlecdon – Whitehaven | 1 service (Outbound only) | - | - | - | - |
| 20 | Whitehaven – St Bees | 60 | - | 60 | - | - |
| 22 | Moresby Parks – Whitehaven - Egremont | 60 | - | 60 | - | - |
| 30 | Thornhill – Egremont – Whitehaven – Workington – Maryport Via Distington, harrington, Annie Pit and Flimby | 2 services per hour | Less than 1 service per hour | 2 services per hour | Less than 1 service per hour | 60 |
| 30A | Thornhill – Egremont – Whitehaven – Workington – Maryport Via Distington, harrington, Dewent Howe and Flimby | 60 | - | 60 | - | - |
| 30B | Whitehaven – Workington - Maryport | 1 service | - | - | - | - |
| 300 | Whitehaven – Workington – Carlisle | 60 | - | 60 | - | - |
| 301 | Whitehaven – Workington - Carlisle | - | 3/4 services | - | 3/4 services | 120 |
| 222 | | 5 services | - | 5 services | - | - |

* Service 6 departing Whitehaven at 1445 (Mon – Fri only) terminates at Calder Bridge. Evening service from Munster Castle to Whitehaven only.

Table 7.7 **Whitehaven Train Services****Carlisle – Barrow-in-Furness Line**

Carlisle– Dalston– Wigton– Aspatria – Maryport – Flimby– Workington – Harrington – Parton – Whitehaven – Corkickle –
St Bees – Nethertown – Braystones – Sellafield – Seascale – Drigg – Ravenglass – Bootle – Silecroft – Millom – Green
Road – Foxfield – Kirkby-in-Furness – Askam - Barrow-in-Furness

Weekday

| Carlisle – Barrow-in-Furness Line | NUMBER OF SERVICES | | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| | 0700-0900 | 1600-1800 | EVENING (AFTER 6PM) | DAILY |
| Whitehaven to Carlisle | 2 | 2 | 3 | 14 |
| Whitehaven to Barrow-in-Furness | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Carlisle to Whitehaven | 2 | 2 | 5 | 15 |
| Barrow-in-Furness to Whitehaven | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |

Saturday

| Carlisle – Barrow-in-Furness Line | NUMBER OF SERVICES | |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------|
| | EVENING (AFTER 6PM) | DAILY |
| Whitehaven to Carlisle | 3 | 14 |
| Whitehaven to Barrow-in-Furness | 1 | 9 |
| Carlisle to Whitehaven | 4 | 15 |
| Barrow-in-Furness to Whitehaven | 0 | 8 |

Sunday

| Carlisle – Whitehaven | NUMBER OF SERVICES |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | DAILY |
| Carlisle to Whitehaven | 3 |
| Whitehaven to Carlisle | 3 |

Frequent services operate from Barrow-in-Furness to stations in Preston, Lancaster and Manchester and from Carlisle to Scotland and North-east England.

Appendix 2: retail survey

RETAIL AUDIT—WHITEHAVEN

The following is an informal survey of potential demand for retail space in Whitehaven, carried out by Ian Barbour of Markham Vaughan Gillingham between December 2004 and February 2005.

INTEREST/POTENTIAL INTEREST

Gamestation

I have spoken to Stuart Williams of Edwards Hardwick and Partners who thinks that Gamestation will already be in Whitehaven by the time any development is undertaken! However their requirement is for 1,000 ft²–1,500 ft².

Subway

Kevin Brereton at Hithcock Right & Partners confirmed interest in approximately 1,500 sq ft.

New Look

Interested in 4,000 sq ft net, 6,000 ft gross via David Williams at Dalgleish.

Game Stores Limited

I spoke to Robert Wingrave of Lunsen Mitchenall who states that Games Stores Ltd are already in Workington and would need some convincing to move up to Whitehaven. However, they would consider moving to Whitehaven with substantial improvement to the current facilities.

Holland & Barrett

I spoke to Doug Sinclair who is the Property Director at Holland & Barrett and he explained to me that Holland & Barrett have an interest in gaining representation in Whitehaven, whether or not the proposed development goes ahead.

TK Maxx

I spoke to a Mr Fawley of Fawley Watson Booth. He explained that TK Maxx do not have representation on the Cumbrian coast and that they turned down an opportunity in Whitehaven as they felt the demographics of the area did not suit them. I explained to Mr Fawley that the district population is 70,000, he felt that this was at the bottom end of the TK Maxx target list.

TK Maxx have however, taken a unit in Halifax which has similar demographics to Whitehaven. For TK Maxx to come to Whitehaven, they would need to know that there were good anchor tenants in the development.

Ethel Austin Limited

I have just spoken to Steve Birkby from Mason Owen & Partners and he felt that Ethel Austin Limited would consider Whitehaven, however would need approximately 2,500 sq ft of retail space.

Bay Trading Company

I spoke to Justin Mortimer of Cheetham & Mortimer. His client, Bay Trading Co, would indeed be interested in locating to Whitehaven.

Halfords

I spoke to Michael Hill of Halfords Plc, who explained to me that they have looked at Whitehaven in the past. However, Halfords do have a store in Workington and they felt that this would cannibalise trade if they were to locate to Whitehaven as well. However, Mike did say that they would reconsider now. Halfords are indeed looking at smaller towns and their size requirement would be between 4,000 and 5,000 sq ft. They would also need approximately 20 to 25

designated parking spaces. Mike said that he would definitely give Whitehaven some serious thought and would be open to persuasion.

Rosebys Plc

I have spoken to Kevin Brereton of Hithcock Wright & Partners. He explained to me that Rosebys are not acquiring many properties at present; they are focusing on the disposal of a variety of properties due to the restructuring of their business. However, he felt that in 12 months time this situation would change and locations such as Whitehaven could be a possibility. Kevin acts for Subway and felt that this would be an ideal location for someone such as themselves. Subway would be interested in approximately 1,500 sq ft of retail space and by 2010, Subway would like to have at least 2010 units open across the UK.

Select Retail

Spoke to John Sunderland at Select Retail. Whitehaven is on their target list and they are already looking for approximately 2,000 sq ft of trading space, there is not a great need for a large amount of ancillary. They used to trade well in Workington until they were 'thrown out' before the development started. Cumbria is Select Retail's 'target market'.

Julian Graves

Got an email from Hugh Ockleston of Ockleston Bailey; Julian Graves "Possibly interested, dependant on tenant line up. Julian Graves would require 600 / 800 sq ft ground floor sales plus half cover back up. Would pay something like £25,000 p.a.x. Need a min internal width of say 17'."

De Bradley Mill

I have spoken to Simon Woolwork who is not familiar with Cumbria whatsoever. He explained that he would not be able to commit to Whitehaven without at least seeing the town but do operate a Dept Store concept in Dover. However, he is not adverse to the idea of looking into it further as they do not have representation along the Cumbrian coast. He will be interested in taking between 15,000 sq ft and 48,000 sq ft.

Fat Face Ltd

I have spoken to Daniel Oliver of Cushman & Wakefield who explained to me that Whitehaven is certainly not on Fat Face's requirements list. However, they are in all of the Cumbrian towns and major villages, so if the proposed development was good enough then Fat Face would consider. They would be looking for approximately 1,500 sq ft with back up.

JJB Sports

I have spoken to Alan Stell, who explained that JJB have recently taken a unit in nearby Workington. However, this would not prevent them from locating to Whitehaven. They would be looking for either a high street superstore (10,000 sq ft to 12,000 sq ft, on 2 floors) or an out of town health and fitness/retail unit (22,000 sq ft split on 2 floors).

Home Bargains

I have received an e-mail from Nigel Bennett of Bennett Real Estate Consultancy. Home Bargains would certainly be interested in taking space in Whitehaven. They would be looking for approximately 8,000 sq ft to 10,000 sq ft of ground floor space.

Lloyds Pharmacy

I spoke to a contact in the property department of Lloyds, he felt that Whitehaven in principle would be suitable for Lloyds as they do not have representation in Cumbria. He then went onto say that due to legislation regarding pharmacies, it might not be possible. His colleague, Jim Campbell is getting back to me later on today.

The Body Shop

Sean Varilone of Colliers CRE is agent. He says that Body Shop are in the process of undertaking an in house retail audit before looking at expansion. They have had a good Christmas and will certainly be on the expansion trail; subsequently they are open to any commercial opportunities at present. Opportunities considered on individual merit. Body Shop are concentrating on larger towns.

Greggs of Cumbria

I have spoken to Nick Yields and Greggs already have 2 units in Whitehaven. However, they have been looking for a third unit for sometime now. Ideally they would be looking for 1,000 sq ft in total. 20 ft x 50 ft if possible, ground floor only. Greggs are trading extremely well in Whitehaven and Workington.

Superdrug/Savers

Superdrug are already in King Street, Whitehaven. (The agent considered this the best street for retail in Whitehaven). In principal Superdrug would relocate within Whitehaven if new retail provision were provided and depending on the nature of the development. They would not consider opening a second unit. However Savers (Superdrugs discount brand) would have a requirement for the Town. However, due to the rather congested nature of King Street with Bodycare, Boots and Superdrug already represented they would be looking for new retail provision. Approximately 2,500 sq ft.

Allsports

Not in Whitehaven but is on the requirements list. 1,600 – 1,800 sq ft with 1,000 backup needed.

Hawkshead

Have requirement for Whitehaven. Minimum 2,500 sq ft, maximum 7,000 sq ft.

T J Hughes

Richard Frogget in meeting all day. Possible interest.

Stead & Simpson

Spoke to John Smith in the property department. He explained that "Whitehaven is not on the wishlist" and his feelings of the town are pretty negative. He feels the quality of the retail has deteriorated over the last few years. However, depending on the quality of development and the quality of the anchor tenants then they could be persuaded. They will not consider this a priority however. If they were to take a unit they would require approx 1,250 sq ft of trading space and 800 sq ft backup. 1,500 sq ft of this must be on the ground floor.

Thomas Cook

Would need to know more about it before making decision. Would need substantial rent-free period before making decision, as they couldn't afford to spend the money on it right now.

NOT INTERESTED/UNLIKELY

Fads

I spoke to Charles Bell of Morgan Martin, who explained to me that his client Fads would not be interested in Whitehaven due to the fact that there is already DIY in the town. However, his client's Music Zone would almost certainly be interested in taking space in Whitehaven.

Ottakers

Spoke to Keith Whale of Gooch Cunliffe Whale whose client believes that the demographic profile of Whitehaven is not suitable for Ottakers. They need a town with higher discretionary income, "not as industrial as Whitehaven". Ottakers already have a unit trading in Barrow in Furness, which is not doing particularly well, therefore he doubts his client would be interested.

Edinburgh Woollen Mill Limited

I have just spoken to Paul Rubbins, Estate Manager for Edinburgh Woollen Mill Ltd, who explained to me that they would be looking for approximately 2,000 sq ft of sales with approximately 1,000 sq ft of ancillary storage. With regards to Whitehaven,

demographically the town does not fit Edinburgh Woollen Mills criteria. They are targeting an older more affluent customer and Whitehaven has already been considered and turned down due to its demographics.

However, if we were to supply them with further information on the proposal then they would consider locating to Whitehaven. The Estates Manager explained to me that they would look into it, tentatively, and with the correct incentives.

Shoefayre Limited

I spoke to Stuart Gutteridge, at Shoefayre Ltd, who explained to me that Whitehaven has already been considered as a potential location. However, in terms of its geographical position the cost of delivery would be too high and with poor predicted turnovers, it would not be a viable option.

Stuart did explain to me that if the scheme was big enough it would draw people from all over Cumbria and then this would be a possibility. Transport links are definitely a problem for retailers such as Shoefayre Limited with low price points.

Argos

No further requirement.

BHS Ltd

I spoke to Tony Hatch of BHS Limited. "Whitehaven is not on BHS's radar", as the market is considered as peripheral and rather small for the in-store investment that they would be looking to make. When I explained that the district population was approximately 70,000, Tony still considered this to be a relatively small market. However, in the future the smaller store format is going to be considered and subsequently BHS should be kept on file for future reference.

Mothercare

Spoke to David Williams, Dalgleish. Mothercare have not mentioned Whitehaven in their requirements. They are only in Carlisle in Cumbria and would be looking to expand. 70,000

population however is low on their demographic scale in terms of criteria for locating.

Boots

Spoke to Linda Goodacre in Estates and she explained that Boots are very happy with where they are at present. However, if the scheme is big enough to attract people from outside the catchment (she called it the 'pull of the development') then Boots would consider.

Millets/Blacks

Already have space in Whitehaven.

Mackays

Spoke to Charles Parkin of Mackays. Mackays own the freehold of their unit in Whitehaven and are very content with the space they currently have.

Lakeland Ltd

Spoke to Mr Hoffrand. Lakeland will not be interested in taking space in Whitehaven. The only Cumbrian town interested in is Carlisle. Whitehaven is too small a town for Lakeland. They want to be in towns such as Reading. They have satisfied their quota in the North.

Arcadia Group

Sent Susan Shaw an email 19/1. Awaiting response.

Jessops

Andrew Heaney of Johnson Fellows feels that Workington is the stronger option.

Appendix 3: economic & demographic statistics

| <i>Table KS17P Cars or Vans* (United Kingdom)</i> | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|------------|------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Variables</i> | <i>All households</i> | <i>Percentage of households (number of cars or vans)</i> | | | | | <i>All cars or vans in the area**</i> |
| | | <i>: None</i> | <i>One</i> | <i>Two</i> | <i>Three</i> | <i>Four or more</i> | |
| Area | | | | | | | |
| North West | 2812789 | 30.21 | 43.54 | 21.53 | 3.7 | 1.02 | 2874991 |
| Cumbria | 209027 | 24.43 | 47.13 | 22.85 | 4.24 | 1.35 | 233388 |
| Copeland | 29486 | 27.94 | 45.71 | 21.47 | 3.77 | 1.11 | 30944 |
| Bransty | 1863 | 17.28 | 46.7 | 30.43 | 4.67 | 0.91 | 2339 |
| Harbour | 2009 | 44.2 | 39.47 | 13.09 | 2.44 | 0.8 | 1539 |
| Hensingham | 1855 | 34.29 | 49.65 | 13.85 | 1.89 | 0.32 | 1564 |
| Kells | 1083 | 32.78 | 48.01 | 16.44 | 2.31 | 0.46 | 984 |
| Mirehouse | 1868 | 43.15 | 42.08 | 12.42 | 1.93 | 0.43 | 1390 |
| Moresby | 486 | 12.35 | 45.27 | 33.95 | 6.58 | 1.85 | 685 |
| Sandwith | 1129 | 45.62 | 39.68 | 11.87 | 2.13 | 0.71 | 827 |

| TABLE UV59 OCCUPANCY RATING | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Variables | ALL HOUSEHOLDS | Occupancy rating + 2 or more | Occupancy rating + 1 | Occupancy rating 0 | Occupancy rating -1 | Occupancy rating -2 or less |
| Area | | | | | | |
| North West | 2812789 | 1432444 | 747893 | 480204 | 113980 | 38268 |
| Cumbria | 209027 | 116323 | 56029 | 28821 | 6098 | 1756 |
| Copeland | 29486 | 16148 | 8214 | 3916 | 939 | 269 |
| Bransty | 1863 | 1165 | 484 | 176 | 27 | 11 |
| Harbour | 2009 | 885 | 507 | 444 | 122 | 51 |
| Hensingham | 1855 | 913 | 549 | 288 | 82 | 23 |
| Kells | 1083 | 514 | 374 | 138 | 41 | 16 |
| Mirehouse | 1868 | 988 | 497 | 287 | 84 | 12 |
| Moresby | 488 | 327 | 107 | 44 | 7 | 3 |
| Sandwith | 1129 | 399 | 406 | 244 | 63 | 17 |

| Table KS13P Qualifications and Students (England and Wales) (United Kingdom) | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Variables | All people aged 16 - 74 | No qualifications | level 1* | level 2** | level 3*** | level 4/5# | Other qualifications / level unknown |
| Area | | | | | | | |
| North West | 4839669 | 31.89 | 16.71 | 19.43 | 7.75 | 17.17 | 7.05 |
| Cumbria | 354183 | 30.84 | 17.74 | 20.29 | 6.62 | 17.16 | 7.35 |
| Copeland | 50687 | 34.31 | 18.39 | 19.36 | 5.77 | 14.82 | 7.35 |
| Bransty | 3461 | 24.88 | 19.13 | 22.31 | 6.76 | 20.2 | 6.73 |
| Harbour | 2957 | 35.71 | 16.06 | 18.67 | 5.61 | 16.84 | 7.1 |
| Hensingham | 3055 | 35.81 | 19.35 | 19.67 | 5.83 | 11.75 | 7.59 |
| Kells | 1807 | 39.13 | 18.87 | 20.75 | 5.31 | 10.46 | 5.48 |
| Mirehouse | 3229 | 48.71 | 17.62 | 17.71 | 4.49 | 5.23 | 6.22 |
| Moresby | 911 | 24.37 | 18 | 20.42 | 7.03 | 22.17 | 8.01 |
| Sandwith | 1847 | 46.29 | 17.81 | 17.92 | 5.2 | 6.88 | 5.9 |

| Table KS18P Tenure (England and Wales; Northern Ireland) (United Kingdom) | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| Variables | All households | Owns outright | Owns with a mortgage or loan | Shared ownership* | Rented from: Council (local authority)** | Rented from: Housing Association / Registered Social Landlord*** | Rented from: Private landlord or letting agency | : Rented from: Other# | |
| Area | | | | | | | | | |
| North West | 2812789 | 29.78 | 38.89 | 0.59 | 13.57 | 6.5 | 7.66 | 3.01 | |
| Cumbria | 209027 | 34.9 | 36.94 | 0.49 | 9.05 | 6.97 | 7.84 | 3.81 | |
| Copeland | 29486 | 29.92 | 37.55 | 0.34 | 13.98 | 9.07 | 5.6 | 3.54 | |
| Bransty | 1863 | 29.58 | 54.16 | 0.48 | 9.55 | 2.36 | 2.47 | 1.4 | |
| Harbour | 2009 | 22.2 | 29.37 | 1.1 | 22.05 | 9.96 | 10.3 | 5.03 | |
| Hensingham | 1854 | 25.13 | 36.57 | 0 | 22.44 | 6.58 | 4.64 | 4.64 | |
| Kells | 1082 | 32.62 | 38.45 | 0 | 15.25 | 5.73 | 5.08 | 2.87 | |
| Mirehouse | 1868 | 19.59 | 29.82 | 0.37 | 41.81 | 1.71 | 1.87 | 4.82 | |
| Moresby | 486 | 32.1 | 44.03 | 0 | 10.91 | 6.38 | 4.73 | 1.85 | |
| Sandwith | 1129 | 16.56 | 22.67 | 0.8 | 47.48 | 2.21 | 4.69 | 5.58 | |

| TABLE UV05 SCHOOLCHILDREN AND STUDENTS | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------|--------|
| IN FULL TIME EDUCATION LIVING AWAY FROM HOME DURING TERM-TIME | | | |
| Variables | ALL SCHOOLCHILDREN | | |
| | AND STUDENTS | Male | Female |
| Area | | | |
| North West | 58159 | 28630 | 29529 |
| | | 49.22711876 | 50.77 |
| Cumbria | 5461 | 2743 | 2718 |
| | | 50.23 | 49.77 |
| Copeland | 661 | 338 | 323 |
| | | 51.135 | 48.87 |
| Bransty | 47 | 30 | 17 |
| Harbour | 30 | 14 | 16 |
| Hensingham | 29 | 16 | 13 |
| Kells | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| Mirehouse | 12 | 5 | 7 |
| Moresby | 14 | 10 | 4 |
| Sandwith | 10 | 7 | 3 |
| Total | 151 | 87 | 64 |
| % | | 57.62 | 42.38 |

92 WHITEHAVEN TODAY: BASELINE STUDY, May 2006

Table KS09AN Economic activity - all people (United Kingdom)

| Variables | All people aged 16-74 | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Employees Part-time* | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Employees Full-time* | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Self-employed | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Unemployed | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Full-time student | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Retired | People aged 16-74: Economically active: Student | People aged 16-74: Economically inactive: Looking after home/family | People aged 16-74: Economically inactive: Permanently sick/disabled | People aged 16-74: Economically inactive: Other | Unemployed people aged 16-74: Aged 16-24 | Unemployed people aged 16-74: Aged 50 and over | Unemployed people aged 16-74: Who have never worked | Unemployed people aged 16-74: Who are long-term unemployed** |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Area | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumbria | 354183 | 48218 | 130642 | 34945 | 12154 | 6951 | 59003 | 9924 | 20072 | 22603 | 9671 | 3271 | 2274 | 1019 | 3913 |
| | 65.76 | 13.61 | 36.89 | 9.87 | 3.43 | 1.96 | 16.66 | 2.80 | 5.67 | 6.38 | 2.73 | 0.92 | 0.64 | 0.29 | 1.10 |
| Copeland | 50687 | 6490 | 18886 | 3242 | 2543 | 706 | 8436 | 1409 | 3412 | 3616 | 1947 | 666 | 436 | 281 | 945 |
| | 62.87 | 12.80 | 37.26 | 6.40 | 5.02 | 1.39 | 16.64 | 2.78 | 6.73 | 7.13 | 3.84 | 1.31 | 0.86 | 0.55 | 1.86 |
| Bransty | 3461 | 487 | 1532 | 193 | 121 | 69 | 509 | 93 | 198 | 174 | 85 | 37 | 15 | 14 | 47 |
| Harbour Hensingham | 2957 | 315 | 1065 | 183 | 159 | 44 | 575 | 77 | 136 | 304 | 99 | 42 | 23 | 24 | 69 |
| Hillcrest | 3055 | 400 | 1118 | 114 | 146 | 44 | 547 | 87 | 229 | 275 | 95 | 34 | 31 | 19 | 60 |
| Kells | 2031 | 321 | 999 | 73 | 42 | 35 | 288 | 71 | 100 | 79 | 23 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 15 |
| Mirehouse | 1807 | 262 | 668 | 79 | 73 | 22 | 329 | 46 | 111 | 143 | 74 | 24 | 9 | 13 | 23 |
| Moresby | 3229 | 436 | 996 | 74 | 239 | 49 | 556 | 99 | 300 | 320 | 160 | 65 | 24 | 30 | 98 |
| Sandwith | 911 | 116 | 399 | 60 | 38 | 14 | 145 | 23 | 49 | 51 | 16 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| | 1847 | 251 | 507 | 71 | 199 | 22 | 243 | 46 | 185 | 198 | 125 | 54 | 23 | 21 | 81 |
| | 19298 | 2588 | 7284 | 847 | 1017 | 299 | 3192 | 542 | 1308 | 1544 | 677 | 273 | 145 | 127 | 404 |
| | 62.36 | 13.41 | 37.74 | 4.39 | 5.27 | 1.55 | 16.54 | 2.81 | 6.78 | 8.00 | 3.51 | 1.41 | 0.75 | 0.66 | 2.09 |
| | 5076 | 687 | 1503 | 145 | 438 | 71 | 799 | 145 | 485 | 518 | 285 | 119 | 47 | 51 | 179 |
| | 56.03 | 13.53427896 | 29.61 | 2.86 | 8.63 | 1.40 | 15.74 | 2.86 | 9.55 | 10.20 | 5.61 | 2.34 | 0.93 | 1.00 | 3.53 |

Table KS02P Age* structure (United Kingdom)

| Variables | All people | : 0-4 | 5-7 | 8-9 | 10-14 | 15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | : 20-24 | : 25-29 | 30-44 | 45-59 | 60-64 | 65-74 | 75-84 | 85-89 | 90 & over |
|------------|------------|-------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Area | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| North West | 6729764 | 5.88 | 3.78 | 2.74 | 6.93 | 1.37 | 2.66 | 2.47 | 5.79 | 6.18 | 22.09 | 19.06 | 5.09 | 8.59 | 5.55 | 1.24 | 0.61 |
| Cumbria | 487607 | 5.19 | 3.48 | 2.54 | 6.35 | 1.29 | 2.47 | 2.08 | 4.59 | 5.5 | 21.67 | 20.73 | 5.78 | 9.81 | 6.37 | 1.4 | 0.73 |
| Copeland | 69318 | 5.37 | 3.57 | 2.6 | 6.84 | 1.34 | 2.59 | 2.23 | 4.78 | 5.7 | 22.78 | 20.12 | 5.65 | 9.28 | 5.59 | 1.05 | 0.52 |
| Bransty | 4657 | 6.74 | 3.24 | 2.4 | 7.09 | 1.48 | 2.51 | 2.66 | 4.68 | 6.06 | 26.13 | 19.56 | 5.3 | 7.41 | 3.54 | 0.69 | 0.49 |
| Harbour | 3949 | 3.95 | 2.53 | 2.2 | 5.42 | 0.96 | 2.66 | 2.1 | 4.66 | 5.22 | 22.23 | 20.16 | 5.67 | 12.18 | 7.98 | 1.49 | 0.58 |
| Hensingham | 4212 | 6.27 | 3.73 | 2.9 | 6.34 | 1.07 | 2.3 | 2.18 | 5.7 | 7.22 | 21.77 | 17.66 | 5.72 | 9.97 | 5.7 | 1.12 | 0.36 |
| Hillcrest | 2639 | 5.65 | 3.26 | 2.84 | 7.01 | 1.55 | 2.77 | 2.31 | 4.4 | 7.43 | 24.9 | 23.42 | 5.38 | 6.37 | 2.35 | 0.27 | 0.11 |
| Kells | 2429 | 4.98 | 3.13 | 2.68 | 6.18 | 1.07 | 2.72 | 1.93 | 5.15 | 6.42 | 22.85 | 18.65 | 6.05 | 10.62 | 5.89 | 1.28 | 0.41 |
| Mirehouse | 4632 | 5.63 | 4.1 | 2.74 | 8.79 | 1.51 | 2.91 | 2.33 | 6.02 | 5.16 | 21.59 | 16.9 | 4.58 | 10.21 | 6.13 | 0.82 | 0.56 |
| Moresby | 1280 | 5.7 | 4.69 | 2.03 | 6.56 | 1.56 | 1.88 | 2.42 | 5.47 | 5.86 | 23.28 | 19.06 | 5 | 8.2 | 5.47 | 1.56 | 1.25 |
| Sandwith | 2569 | 6.97 | 4.24 | 3.39 | 8.41 | 1.75 | 2.69 | 2.96 | 5.37 | 7.08 | 23.67 | 18.26 | 4.24 | 7.63 | 2.76 | 0.47 | 0.12 |

Table KS12AP Occupation groups - all people (United Kingdom)

| Variables | All people aged 16 - 74 in employment | Managers and senior officials | Professional occupations | Associate professional and technical occupations | Administrative and secretarial occupations | Skilled trades occupations | Personal service occupations | Sales and customer service occupations | Process; plant and machine operatives | Elementary occupations |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Area | | | | | | | | | | |
| North West | 2900020 | 13.7 | 10.48 | 12.76 | 13.07 | 11.69 | 7.63 | 8.32 | 9.83 | 12.52 |
| Cumbria | 219908 | 12.92 | 9.09 | 11.41 | 10.46 | 16.29 | 7.22 | 7.84 | 10.86 | 13.91 |
| Copeland | 29222 | 10.65 | 8.45 | 13.11 | 10.75 | 16.41 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 12.62 | 14.32 |
| Bransty | 2266 | 12.62 | 10.41 | 16.28 | 12.22 | 14.92 | 6.22 | 6.13 | 11.3 | 9.89 |
| Harbour | 1602 | 12.48 | 10.3 | 15.11 | 12.11 | 14.11 | 7.74 | 6.05 | 10.24 | 11.86 |
| Hensingham | 1670 | 7.96 | 7.25 | 12.22 | 10.18 | 15.15 | 9.16 | 8.62 | 14.07 | 15.39 |
| Hillcrest | 1425 | 11.37 | 8.42 | 19.09 | 13.26 | 14.46 | 6.32 | 5.96 | 11.93 | 9.19 |
| Kells | 1028 | 7.39 | 4.47 | 10.89 | 9.53 | 14.01 | 10.6 | 8.95 | 14.79 | 19.36 |
| Mirehouse | 1545 | 6.41 | 2.59 | 8.03 | 9.06 | 14.5 | 9.19 | 9.64 | 17.35 | 23.24 |
| Moresby | 587 | 12.78 | 9.71 | 16.87 | 12.78 | 11.75 | 5.96 | 6.81 | 12.61 | 10.73 |
| Sandwith | 848 | 6.72 | 5.66 | 8.49 | 6.96 | 12.38 | 10.5 | 8.84 | 16.16 | 24.29 |

Appendix 4: consultation

Whitehaven – Town Centre Regeneration Framework PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES

| Source of Comments | Comments |
|--|--|
| Resident – Rick Casson who was involved in the Media Day on 17 th November. Written comments. | <p>The best parts of Whitehaven are the harbour, the park with the bandstand, the renovated Lowther Castle, the road into Whitehaven past the old Victorian/Georgian town houses, the Georgian town houses, the Civic Hall – for watching bands, the pubs/live music, the old building in the market place (needs renovating), the curry houses, the ruins of the St. Nicholas church which has a café in the remaining part and is really relaxing and the trees/open space.</p> <p>The worst parts of Whitehaven are the dated nightclubs, the fact that there is only one Department Store which is too crammed with products and has a dated shop window, the lack of diversity of shops, too many hair dressers/tea rooms, attitudes to litter/change/recycling, lack of opportunities for local designers/artists in terms of work and promotion, the half-day closing on Wednesdays for shops and the Woodhouse/Greenbank Estate/Old Marchon Chemical Factory Area which is very grim and has a bad reputation. It would be great to see the old chemical site as a Green Industry Area.</p> <p>He would like to see a design development/art/creative centre, the development of more sporting facilities such as an indoor snowboard/ski dome, a mountainbike track and an indoor skatepark, an annual music event in Whitehaven Park, utilisation of the cycle route through regular events such as a 'Coast to Coast Challenge', more sculptures, farm diversification, sympathetic and environmentally friendly housing and utilisation of local media to get people interested.</p> |
| Resident - email via Seachange website | States that planning permission has been granted for a housing development next to Castle Mews. Whitehaven Castle and its surroundings form an important gateway to the town and will be ruined if this development goes ahead. The development will also impede the flow of traffic down through Flatt Walks onto Lowther Street. |
| Resident - email via Seachange website | Suggests that potential exists for the construction of a Roman-like semi-amphitheatre to be built on the hill overlooking the harbour. |
| Resident - email via Seachange website | States that planning permission has been granted for a housing development next to Caste Mews. Whitehaven Castle and its surroundings form an important gateway to the town and will be ruined if this development goes ahead. |
| Artist (performance & theatre) - email via Seachange website | Expression of interest to be involved in the regeneration of Whitehaven and may be willing to move to the town. States that Whitehaven is ideally situated in terms of the Lakes, Cumbria, Newcastle and Gateshead which all have plenty of visitors looking for culture. The Edinburgh Festival may play a role due to its proximity to Whitehaven. The Cumbria Institute of Art is very close by – there should be resources to 'incubate' new business, particularly new media. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Suggests the provision of a vernacular railway which links the town centre to the Haig Mining Museum. The Museum is very difficult to find and get to. In addition there could be a trail which follows sculptures in the town e.g. the bandstand cap. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The harbour could be improved by adding handrails and restoring the steps to make access to the beaches safer. It is dangerous at present, particularly in bad weather or after tides, as the steps are worn out. |
| Visitor – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Link the Haig Mining Museum with the town centre so people at Kells can benefit from the regeneration. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Likes the multi-storey car park and thinks it works well. |

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| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Toilet facilities in the multi-storey car park are not working. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There are no cinemas in Whitehaven – why? The previous cinema closed as it was up three flights of stairs and there was no lift. Are there any grants available to re-open it? |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There should be some toilet facilities near Tesco's. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The station lacks good facilities, is unwelcoming and has a 'dismal platform'. The train station should be viewed as an opportunity to improve a main gateway into the town. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Tesco's 'ever expanding empire' threatens to engulf the station. It is wrong that they are allowed to spread onto valuable town land and ruin the local economy by tempting people away from local shops/produce. Tesco should agree to sell local produce. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There could be a railway around the harbour. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The market is an asset to Whitehaven. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There should be a bowling alley in the town centre which would help to keep youths of the street. There should be more nightclubs/bars. Most of the youth in Whitehaven travel to Workington for entertainment. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The new Council building should be demolished as it is not in keeping with the town. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The old shop fronts should be retained. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Something should be done with the old bus station. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The green area between Duke Pit 8 and the coastguard building must be retained as public space and left open. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Suggests the provision of a glass cover/canopy over the main shopping thoroughfare -when it rains, shoppers disappear. Retain public green area between Duke Pit 8 and the coastguard building. |
| Resident – verbal comments given in Consultation Station | The railway station closes too early to allow visitors to make full use of the town's facilities, and is not a pleasant environment to wait for a train in due to the lack of facilities. The shopping facilities in Workington are better than Whitehaven's. |

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| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The Beacon Museum is a 'white elephant' at present. There could be a café on the top floor overlooking the harbour, subject to the lift being in working order. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Suggests making collectables (badges/buttons etc) and charging an entrance fee for the Maritime festival. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There should be a hotel & up market restaurant opposite the Weatherspoons pub, as it is an ideal location for tourists due to the position of the harbour. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Demolish Council building, it is not in keeping. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | New Council building is an eyesore. Not enough public toilets. Do not need anymore supermarkets, need small retailers in shops within the town centre. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Have day trips to the Isle of Man. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There are lots of things going on for elderly people. However, streets need to be cleaner, remove leaves, and more public toilets. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Need more public toilets. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | CBC needs to offer more help to businesses. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Too many charity shops which take up prime positions in the town centre, there should be a limit. Asda will generate jobs and tidy up unused areas of the town. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Hold Maritime Festival every year. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Likes Whitehaven as it is, but could do with more leisure and toilet facilities. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The harbour side and surrounding area could benefit from more amenities to encourage people to visit the area. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Likes the idea for the approach into Whitehaven and redevelopment of the bus station in a hotel. Traffic in and out of the town is awful. The harbour would benefit from a few shops and hanging gardens. |
| Resident – written comments | Need more toilet facilities, a hotel, and more competition for stagecoach buses. |

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| posted in Consultation Station | |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The town should invest in Whitehaven RLF – a new improved stadium for RL and other uses. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Very poor shopping facilities in the town centre, high business rates, parking problems. The harbour is great apart from the Wave and lights – don't want it to look like a theme park. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Shopping area is nice and clean but let down by the lack of toilet facilities. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Need more public toilets, need large lay-by/picnic area on loop road to view the town. More people would admire the views and come into the town rather than pass by. Top Park would be an ideal location. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | There should be plenty of different establishments on the harbour side – restaurants, cafes, bistros, art and craft shops and bars where people can sit inside and out and enjoy the views across the harbour. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Live on the Coach Road estate and find parking terrible as people are parking there while they work in the town centre. More parking must be made available in central Whitehaven. The civic hall should be modernised – seating should be staggered. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | More parking is necessary. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Need some public toilets, shops and cafes on the harbour. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Like the idea of the new development of Whitehaven and the possible improvement on entry to the town – also need to improve the exit of the town to stop long queues of traffic. The harbour site could be improved with little shops and cafes. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Need more toilet facilities. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Like the ideas for the harbour i.e. inclusion of shops, which would be a plus for the Whitehaven. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Improvement of cleaning and maintenance of the harbour. Do not like Christine's Pram Shop. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | The harbour is nice following the work on it. Need to make signs more positive – to many 'don't do this' in the area. |

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| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Need improved choice of shops, no more supermarkets, need another town hotel and a decent book shop. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | No more charity shops. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | In a town this size there should be at least 4 public toilets (towns like Keswick use stainless steel toilets with formica 'seats' glued on. There should be at least one toilet which opens 24 hours – the ideal site would be where all the clubs are. When a hotel is built at the harbour side it should have level access and a lift. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Whitehaven needs a cultural centre where local artistic people can perform and display their talents on a daily basis. Need more activities like local drama, folk dancing, jazz bands, dancing etc. Need to involve schools and children. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Toilets in Lonsdale Centre still broken. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Need decent public toilets both on harbour side and in town centre. Agree with roundabout to provide better access to Whitehaven from loop road. Needs cheaper parking to attract more visitors. Remove old stall store which is now derelict on Irish Street. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Lack of toilet facilities in town centre. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Council tax is too high. |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Christ Church was demolished but left in bad state, needs to be cleaned up. Disturbed about idea of Tesco being built on stilts – one in Aberdeen is terrible. Surprised about BNFL using old bus station as offices – another private site on the harbour being used as offices considering the call centre has already taken one prime site. What will happen to old bus station? |
| Resident – written comments posted in Consultation Station | Young people need to be involved in the redevelopment. Highlight Georgian past but don't get stuck with staying in that mode – blend new with old. Ensure new developments don't just accept any developer – ensure they enhance the character of the town not like the supermarkets. Either have lighting features or forget them, e.g. the harbour wave was on an unpredictable basis which is a major lost opportunity particularly if it is going to feature in promotional material. Nightlife – good that there are a few eating places, but it is poor quality and lacking nightlife which renders Whitehaven a nightlife ghetto – needs to be more diversity and choice e.g. cinema, pubs. Shopping area improving all the time and will grow with the harbour – needs link with harbour. Maritime festival needs to concentrate on town and harbour not just the harbour – needs more genuine maritime involvement rather than theatrical props. Reduce traffic impact on town or at least the harbour so that pedestrians rule. Parking problems. Better transport connections – bus/train/taxi/parking/park and ride? Improve bicycle set up to allow more to use cycleways and park bikes instead of cycleways being behind the scenes. The health benefits of walking/cycling need to be pushed through. Agree with more tree planting. Agree with sculpture/design features and progressive features which enhance yet don't involve silly money at unrealistic levels. Agree with control on impact of facades – supermarkets etc as gateway gives poor impressions. Youth aspect should be endorsed and highlighted in new developments, and curb anti-social behaviour so that improvements are not ruined by anti-social aspects including litter, dog fouling etc. Need new key shops to build critical mass of shopping experience so that it piles up in co-coordinated fashion. |

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| <p>Neighbourhood Forums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harbour and Bransty • Hensingham • Egremont and St Bees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more toilet/shower facilities around the harbour • enhancement/signage for the skateboard facility • ensure all the gateways encourage people to enter Whitehaven and to develop the harbour • The harbour should be a setting for activities that attract people to Whitehaven and to engage local people. • The harbour is a major strength of the town, but needs on-going maintenance, lighting and cleaning. • The town needs “more life” – an evening culture, arts and entertainment. • New developments should be in keeping with the architectural heritage. • Need more toilet facilities near Harbour if we are going to cater for visitors. • There used to be a good section of beach in the Harbour - is it possible that some of this could still be left exposed? • Create easier recreational access to the sea • Whitehaven in Bloom could provide annual flower displays for the town gateways. • People travelling south often pass above Whitehaven, but after they've driven a section of the ring-road that gives superb views, they should be encouraged to turn down into town at the next gateway. • more youth facilities e.g. a major town centre youth centre • there was a consensus that designs should be Georgian/Classical rather than very modern, adventurous buildings such as building Tesco on stilts • road access should be improved and the use of the railway should be encouraged before any hotels are built e.g. redeveloping the Morrison's site with nearby Richmond House as a hotel • oppose all wind power development (approx 2 to 1 people in agreement to this) – wave power may be more acceptable • get planning gain on the designs that have made Whitehaven a 'gem' town • The lack of facilities for youth in the Whitehaven area is a serious issue. That has not changed in 20 years. A major town centre youth centre should include not only general activities, but sports, arts, business development and outdoor activities – a means for young people to develop skills outside of school. • There is a need for families to feel safe in Whitehaven – that happened during the Millennium Celebrations when the streets were taken over by people just having a good time and the jobs vanished. • Tourism in general is restricted by the poor access routes by both road and rail. A hotel is needed, but would it be viable? • The loss of jobs at BNFL will have a major negative effect on Whitehaven. Alternate energy projects will not replace jobs locally, and the imposition of wind turbines would restrict the potential for tourism growth since it would create eyesores and act as a physical barrier to people coming here. • Create clusters of tourism attractions in the adjoining settlements that will add to the critical mass of attractions, and also draw people into the attractive countryside and along the coast. |
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Whitehaven – Town Centre Regeneration Framework
Prioritisation Exercise

WHITEHAVEN'S BEST FEATURES

| Best Features | Visitors | Neighbours | Residents |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Georgian Buildings | 6 | 11 | 41 |
| The Market | 1 | 0 | 13 |
| The Harbour | 2 | 9 | 54 |
| Supermarkets | 0 | 2 | 54 |
| Nightlife | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Restaurants | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Shopping Experience | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Range of Services | 0 | 1 | 3 |

User groups were defined as:

- Visitors: from outside the area, travelling further than approximately 20 miles
- Neighbours: living in a town or village within approximately 20 miles
- Residents: living in or adjacent to the town centre

Initial observations include:

- The Georgian architecture and the harbour are seen by all the town's users as its best features.
- Visitors and neighbours think the Georgian architecture is more of a feature than the harbour.
- Residents appreciate the supermarkets and the harbour equally.
- The market is valued by residents but in no significant way by other town users, it does not appear to be a reason for coming to the town.
- The nightlife of the town (including theatre, cinema, pubs, clubs etc.) is not considered to be a key feature. This may represent the demographic of the consultation station users rather than a more widely held notion.

NOTES