

A Sea Change

WHITEHAVEN TOWN CENTRE

Whitehaven
Town Centre
Development
Framework

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Development prospectus



BroadwayMalyan

Prepared by:

**Broadway Malyan
Hemingway Design
Insight 02
Denis Wilson Partnership
Porter Brown Solutions**

**On behalf of
Copeland Borough Council**

**The Regeneration Unit
Copeland Borough Council
Catherine Street
Whitehaven
Cumbria
CA28 7SJ**

**Tel: 01946 598438
Fax: 01946 598307**

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Introduction

Whitehaven is gearing up for the 21st century. It is the focus of a comprehensive regeneration programme to transform the town and develop its many assets. Whitehaven has experienced significant changes in its economy in recent times. Long associated with mining, the export of coal, manufacturing and the nuclear industry, the town now has the opportunity to develop its role as a service and visitor centre and exploit its proximity to the Lake District National Park. The town's impressive Georgian heart underpins its architectural quality and distinctiveness and sets it apart from its neighbours.

The regeneration programme for Whitehaven is supported by a number of partners in the form of Government agencies led by the Urban Regeneration Company for Furness and West Cumbria — West Lakes Renaissance and supported by Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council. The partners are committed to quality investment and design in the town and have financed The Town Centre Development Framework to help promote and guide public and private sector investment.

The development proposals in this Prospectus include exciting harbourside opportunities for residential, retail and commercial development. The strength of support

from public organisations for regeneration in Whitehaven and the availability of gap funding to support investment in the town, make this an attractive development option. We believe that there is real potential for rising property values and returns.

To assist and support investment in Whitehaven a dedicated delivery team has been created from key staff at Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and West Lakes Renaissance. The team is committed to helping investors make the right investments and to supporting their implementation through the provision of gap funding and other public support programmes.

For further information or to have a more detailed discussion contact:

The Regeneration Unit
Copeland Borough Council
Catherine Street
Whitehaven
Cumbria
CA28 7SJ

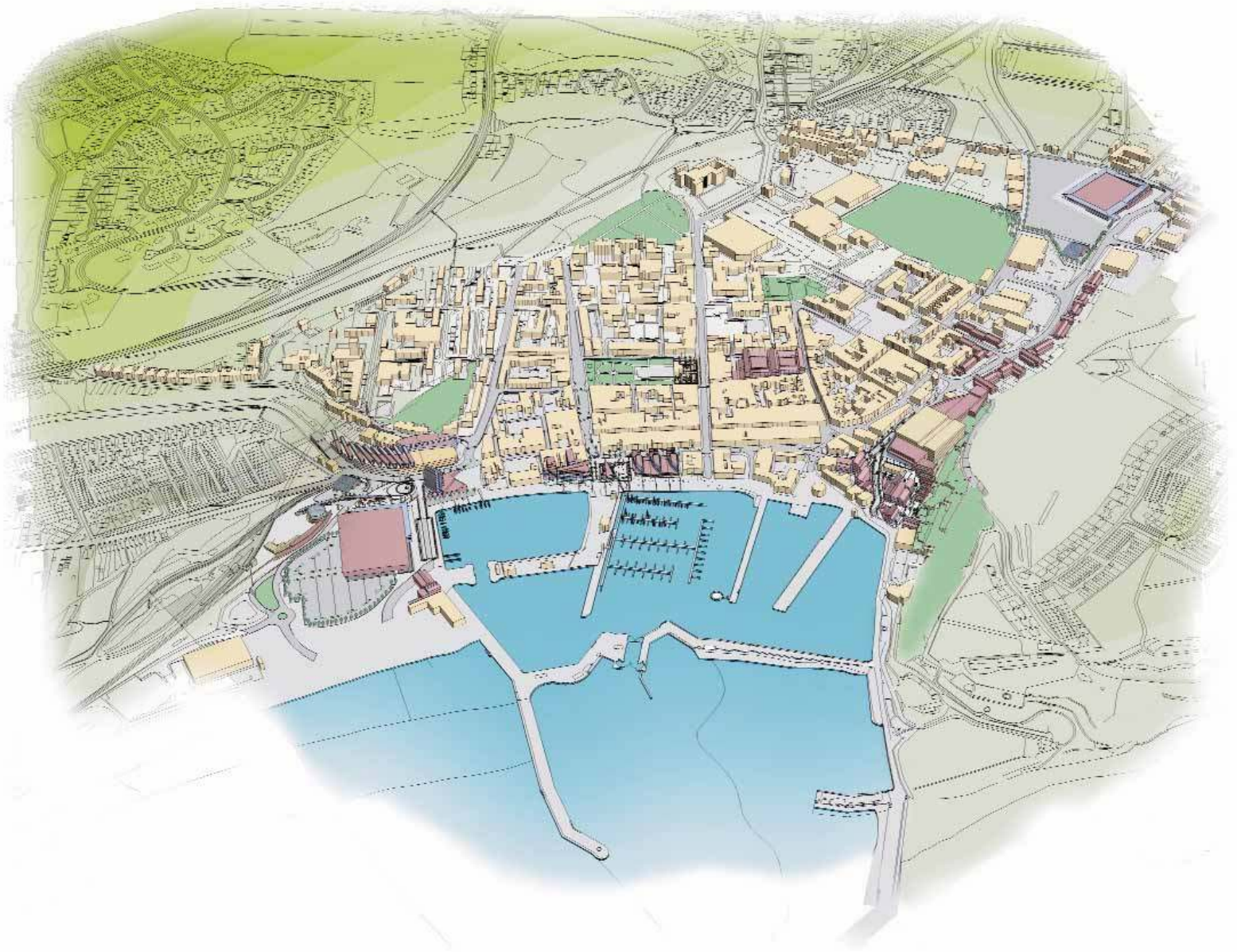
Tel: 01946 598438
Fax: 01946 598307
Email: gmcwilliam@copelandbc.gov.uk

WHITEHAVEN TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Birds eye view

Key Proposals

- A new leisure and cultural quarter from Bransty Gate to Bulwark Quay.
- An improved and extended retail quarter on the site of the original fishing village around Quay Street.
- The extension of Catherine Street to Newtown and realignment of the one-way system away from The Strand and Tangier Street.
- New public squares at the heart of development areas to improve links between the town centre and harbour and provide new focuses of life and dynamism.
- Improvements to the town's major greenscapes and the creation of a new park on the Mountpleasant terraces 'The Hanging Gardens'.
- Improvements to all major footpath links and the realignment of the C2C route through 'the playground'.
- New and modernised play and recreation facilities for children and teenagers.
- Extensive improvements to the town's 'streetscape' in particular along the major approach roads and realigned one-way system.



Development framework & planning context

TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

The Town Centre Development Framework aims to make the town an attractive, pleasant and practical place of the highest quality for residents and visitors alike. Key objectives include:

- Significantly strengthen the links between the harbour and the town centre and encourage movement across the town.
- Use the development of new, high quality public space to link parts of the town and provide new focal points for activity.
- Improve transport, movement and accessibility throughout the town.
- Improve the quality of the public realm and strengthen the character areas of the town.

The Town Centre Development Framework includes a design guide and public realm strategy for the whole town centre, but the main focus of our work is concentrated in two areas of strategic importance. The map shows the two distinct areas, and highlights the development sites and main public spaces proposed within each of these areas. The public spaces will act as the backdrop to the site based developments and set high standards for the town's regeneration. The proposals for the individual development sites are aimed at attracting new investment to the town and ensuring appropriate, high quality design proposals on the sites, although these will be developed independently and their ultimate form will be determined by specific developers within the constraints set by this development framework.

A first phase of regeneration has already been completed. The impressive transformation of the 18th century harbour side was an early stage in this process and provides an important focal point for future development in the town. This Development Prospectus forms part of a long term development plan for Whitehaven and provides details of investment opportunities in two key 'zones' — Bransty Gate and Harbour and Swing Pump and Newtown. These two areas are at the heart of regeneration plans set out in the Whitehaven Town Centre Development Framework. The 'Development Zone' brings together a number of linked sites and proposed public investments for the town and invites developers and investors to discuss potential development options and benefits.

The information is provided in two parts. The first part describes the development zones as a whole in the context of the wider development framework for the town centre. The second part provides more detailed information on individual sites in the form of a development brief.

PLANNING POLICY PRINCIPLES AND GUIDANCE

Planning Policy Principles and Guidance — Zones A and B

In order to establish a context for regeneration within Zones A and B, it is necessary to highlight the relevant local planning policies and guidance which will inform any development within them. The Council will judge all development proposals against the aims, principles and policies in the Local Plan and policies in the Copeland Local Plan but intends to progress work on the Area Action Plan for the town centre and harbour-side as part of its Local Development Framework. This 'Seachange' report will be a major influence on the content of the Area Action Plan. The overarching principles for recommended developments within the town have been outlined in the Local Planning Context Section, and include criteria such as high quality sustainable and appropriate design, land use compatibility, safety, conservation, amenity protection and energy efficiency. The policies relevant to both Zones are as follows:

Development Opportunity Sites

The Council has defined a range of 'Town Centre Development Opportunity Sites' which fall within both Zones. These sites have been designated because they are under-used, 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. The majority of these areas form the Development Sites proposed within Zones A and B of the Development Prospectus.

The principle need to regenerate these areas has been established within the Local Plan, and the Development Prospectus provides a detailed brief for their comprehensive redevelopment. Development within these sites should comply with the Council's Development Strategy and Sustainable Development Principles, and be responsive to the more site specific policies and land use designations as outlined below.

Design

In terms of the design of new developments within Zones A and B, there are ten criteria relating to 'Sustainability in Design', which all proposals must comply with. They seek to ensure that schemes promote good design, access, car-parking, conservation,

ecology, re-use of existing infrastructure where possible, amenity protection, energy efficiency and flood risk considerations. Schemes will only be acceptable where they are sustainable and employ high quality and inclusive design principles.

Tourism

The Plan states that proposals for large scale tourist development will be permitted so long as they accord with the principles of sustainable design and do not compromise the qualities and character of the coast or public access to it. Proposals that offer recreational opportunities for the local population are particularly welcomed.

Town Centre Policies

The majority of both Zones fall within the designated Town Centre boundary, which covers the main concentration of commercial activity within Whitehaven. The northern edge of Zone A and the southern edge of Zone B are outside the town centre boundary, but are included within the 'Peripheral Area', which lies adjacent to the town centre boundary.

The Local Plan encourages a mix of uses within the town centre provided that non-retail proposals are not detrimental to the main shopping function. In addition to retail provision ((A1 uses as prescribed with the Use Classes (Amendment) Order 2005)), there are a number of acceptable uses outlined within the town centre policy, including leisure, recreational, hotel and food and drink facilities. The proposals to develop a 'leisure quarter' within Zone A and the general development proposals within each Zones are considered to be supportive of the aims of this policy.

The town centre 'Peripheral Area' is less reliant on shopping as a main function, and uses such as warehouses, offices, large retail stores/warehouses, car parks, car showrooms, taxi and vehicle hire businesses and petrol filling stations are considered to be appropriate. Its location outside the town's historic core means that 'large retail stores and other extensive land uses which provide services which are an integral part of an attractive town centre' can be accommodated, such as Development Site 1: Tesco. In relation to the sequential test required by PPS 6,

the town centre periphery should be treated as if it were in the town centre.

Primary Shopping Frontages

The town's 'Primary Shopping Frontages Area' is situated along King Street between Market Place and Duke Street, and lies centrally within both Zones, the majority being within Zone A. The Council will seek to encourage continuous retail frontages in this area and only retail outlets (class A1) will be permitted on ground floor premises.

Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas

The southern area of Zone A encompasses Whitehaven's Town Centre Conservation Area, and also the western edge of the High Street Conservation Area. The northern section of Zone B is also within Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area. These areas have been designated as a result of their special character and identity.

The Plan states that 'development within Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Area.' Where a building makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, its demolition will not be permitted unless the Council is satisfied that there is no viable use. In all cases where demolition is permitted this will be subject to carrying out a redevelopment scheme which enhances the area consecutive to the demolition. The scheme should comply with the general 'Sustainability in Design' principles within the Local Plan. Developments that fall within these Conservation Areas should be sufficient in detail to enable the visual impact of the proposal to be understood.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 has been replaced by the Use Classes (Amendment) Order 2005. The 2005 Order introduced two further classes with the 'A' use class (A4 & A5) therefore Developers are advised that some of the uses listed in Policy TCN 2 of the replacement Plan may now not fall into the

former A3 use class 'Food & Drink'. Following the 2005 Order, the A3 use class covers restaurants, snack bars & cafes, A4 uses cover pubs and bars, and A5 uses cover take-aways. Developers are therefore encouraged to seek advice about the suitability of such uses under these new arrangements.

The Harbour

The northern stretch of the harbour is included within Zone A and the southern edge is included within Zone B. The harbour is designated as a 'Developed Coastal Zone', which also lies within the Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area. The Council seeks to promote development which requires a coastal location in this area, and will not permit development which is detrimental to its functioning as a harbour, any associated wildlife or landscaping, or increases the risk of flooding.

Greenspace

In terms of urban greenspace, there are six areas which fall within Zones A and B. These include Trinity Gardens, the greenspace surrounding St Nicholas Tower and Whitehaven Playground. These areas have been designated for their landscape importance and/or recreational/amenity value and should be preserved and enhanced. Where trees are lost as a result of development they should be replaced. The Council also encourages the provision or improvement of recreational and amenity space in connection with new developments.

Housing

An Interim Housing Statement was published in June 2004, which is being used for development control purposes until the adoption of the replacement Local Plan. 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. Both Zones are included within Whitehaven's settlement boundary.

The Local Plan states that in order to attract inward investment quickly and bring impetus to regeneration, a much higher rate of house-building has to be encouraged over the next few years. This has to accommodate a variety of house types concentrated on a range of attractive sites.

Transport

In terms of transport policies, the current Cumbria Local Transport Plan (2001-2006) includes provision for work on several infrastructure improvement schemes. 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 requires an improved physical connection with Whitehaven Town Centre. Both Zones include various proposals for improved linkages for the town centre which comply with the aims of the Plan.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

As described above, the Development Prospectus Areas form part of a wider Development Framework for the town centre. Key public realm projects of relevance to each DPA are outlined in the following chapter. However, two major changes to the transport infrastructure of the town centre are of relevance to all development sites.

Roads & Traffic

The town's one way system currently takes through traffic along The Strand and Tangier Street, creating a major obstacle to pedestrian movement between the town centre and harbour. The volume of traffic itself and the associated safety measures along this road corridor, such as safety barriers, mini-roundabouts, loading bays, lights, signage, etc, makes it a very unfriendly and unappealing place to walk around. This has the effect of separating the town centre further from the harbour and is one of the main reasons why the harbour regeneration has not successfully spill over into the rest of the town, and why the harbour itself has not become a livelier, more dynamic place. An important part of the strategy is the realignment of the one-way system to avoid The Strand/Tangier Street corridor and make this road a much more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Transport Interchange

The existing station is a very poor quality building, hidden away behind a sea of car parking, a petrol station and a garage. This is an important arrival point to the town for many visitors and day trippers, as well as a vital link to nearby communities for non-drivers. The bus station and depot have closed down and a good bus/coach station is equally important for the promotion of Whitehaven's obvious tourism potential, as well as improving communications for residents. A new transport interchange is proposed on the site of the existing railway station, integrating these services at one, prominent location in a new building, replacing the petrol station, and fronting the new square at Bransty Gate. This will create a welcoming and impressive first impression of the town for visitors and a much more user-friendly public transport system for residents.

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Email: gmcwilliam@copelandbc.gov.uk

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

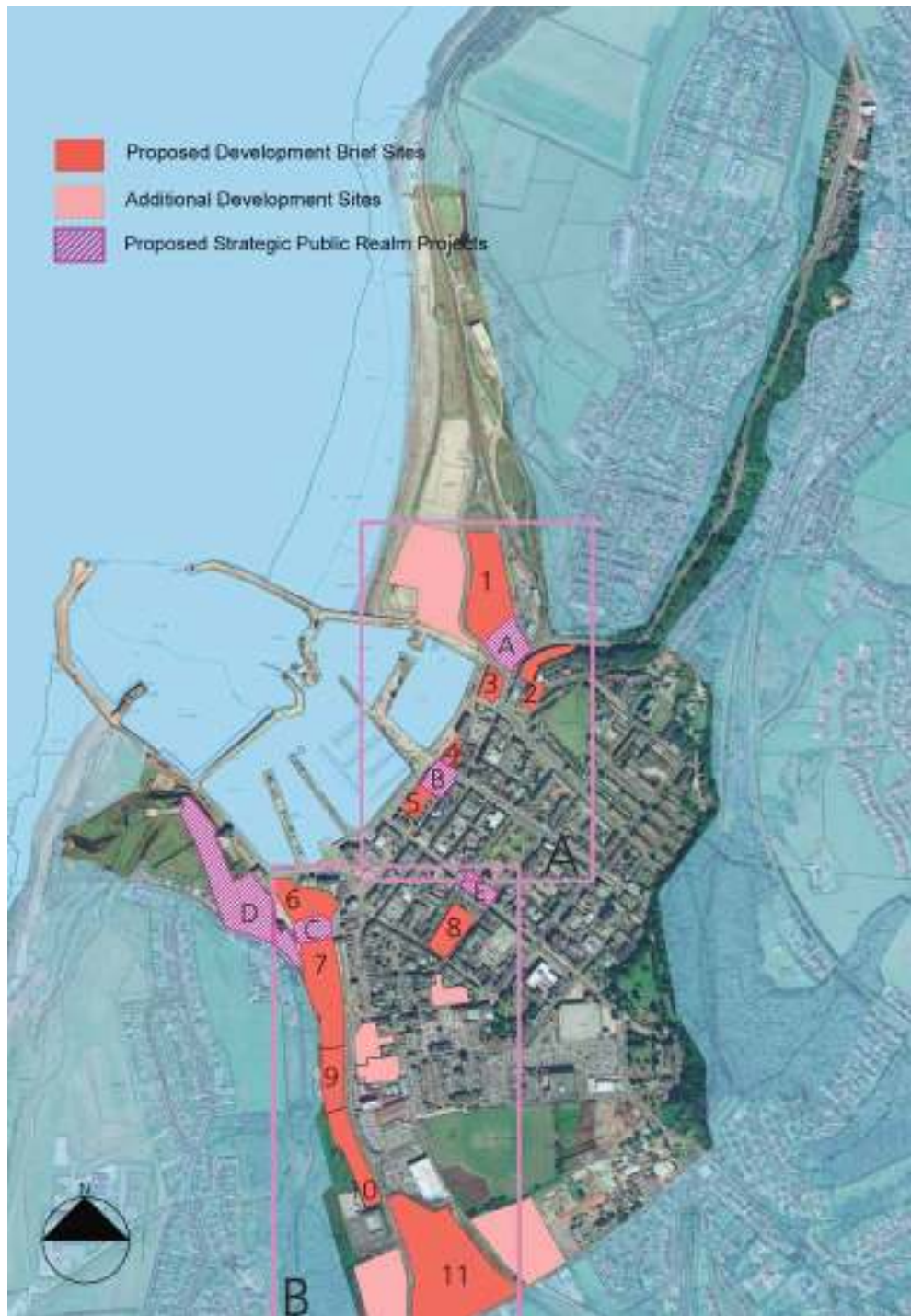
Whitehaven has the benefit of a long-term strategic plan for the town provided by the key public agencies. It also has access to public resources that can help deliver regeneration in a targeted and integrated way that supports private investment.

Couple this with the quality of the available sites many of which are harbour-side prime development opportunities and the aspirations for quality regeneration set out in this Prospectus we believe are achievable. Our own base viability testing supports these assumptions.

Major commercial investment already planned for the town will act as a catalyst and anchor and kick start a programme of sustained investment. For those investors able to engage Whitehaven's regeneration at an early stage the opportunities are considerable.

The Whitehaven Delivery Team is waiting to hear from investors and developers whose aspirations and ambitions for Whitehaven mirror our own to achieve maximum value and regeneration impact.

We look forward to hearing from you.



The development prospectus areas

ZONE A: BRANSTY GATE AND HARBOUR

Located at the northern end of the harbour area and the town centre, Bransty Gate is the main arrival point from the north of the town, and is the main access point to the town from the A595 loop road. The Development zone includes sites around the Bransty Gate area, and at the centre of the harbourfront at the Strand—Tangier St junction.

The northerly end of the development zone is currently the location of a Tesco store that is subject to proposals for a major expansion on the harbour side location. The new store if approved will act as a significant anchor to the northern end of the town, providing a destination in its own right. The area has become the focal point for new investment in night-time and leisure activity and there is a concentration of bars, nightclubs and restaurants in the area.

The Town Centre Development Framework sets out a range of proposals for the zone and guidance for development. The proposal is to develop a ‘leisure quarter’ for the town, building on the existing. An exciting mix of nightlife, performing arts, training facilities, café bars, hotel and leisure facilities, office accommodation and living space will be developed around two new public squares and a transport interchange.

Zone A: Development Sites

The development zone has five key development sites and the Development Framework has proposed the following preferred uses, form and mass of development.

Site 1: Tesco To ensure that the proposed expansion of the Tesco site is carried out to a high quality to improve the surrounding area and remove car parking from this important gateway. The store should face onto the new ‘Bransty Square’ and include a café/bar to introduce some life and activity. Car Parking should be to the rear.

Site 2: Bus Station and Garage Create a landmark building that provides a powerful sense of arrival. This aims to provide a new centre for art and design activities, including workshop space, galleries and retail outlets, a performing arts centre and a youth centre including a training and educational facility.

Site 3: Bus Depot Hotel accommodation and leisure development, again within a landmark building that makes a real statement about Whitehaven's quality, values and aspirations. Combined with the Bus depot site opposite, these two new buildings will create a strong and identifiable gateway to the town centre, echoing the Bransty Arch of bygone days.

Site 4: Harbour Commissioner's Office New office accommodation to be provided above a ground floor leisure facility (a bar, café or restaurant), facing onto the millennium promenade and new square.

Site 5: Mark House and Old Baths A new development comprising a mixture of residential accommodation and a small, specialist leisure or retail facility at ground floor level facing onto the new square.



1 Zone A Bransty Gate and Harbour. 2-3 Views of the Bransty area today. 4-6 Existing development around the Mark House/Old Baths area. 7 Bransty Gate and 8 Bulwark Quay — development visions



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Public realm

The framework for development in the area is configured around the development of two new public squares.

A. Bransty Gate A contemporary, dynamic public square to provide a lively and attractive arrival point to the town. A new transport interchange will be developed around the site of the railway station, and the square will improve links between this important facility and the town centre.

B. Bulwark Quay A new public square focussed on a restored 'Old Baths' building with new leisure developments on both sides. This will provide a new focus of activity, which should help to bring new life to the harbour as well as improve the linkage between the millennium promenade and the town centre shopping areas.

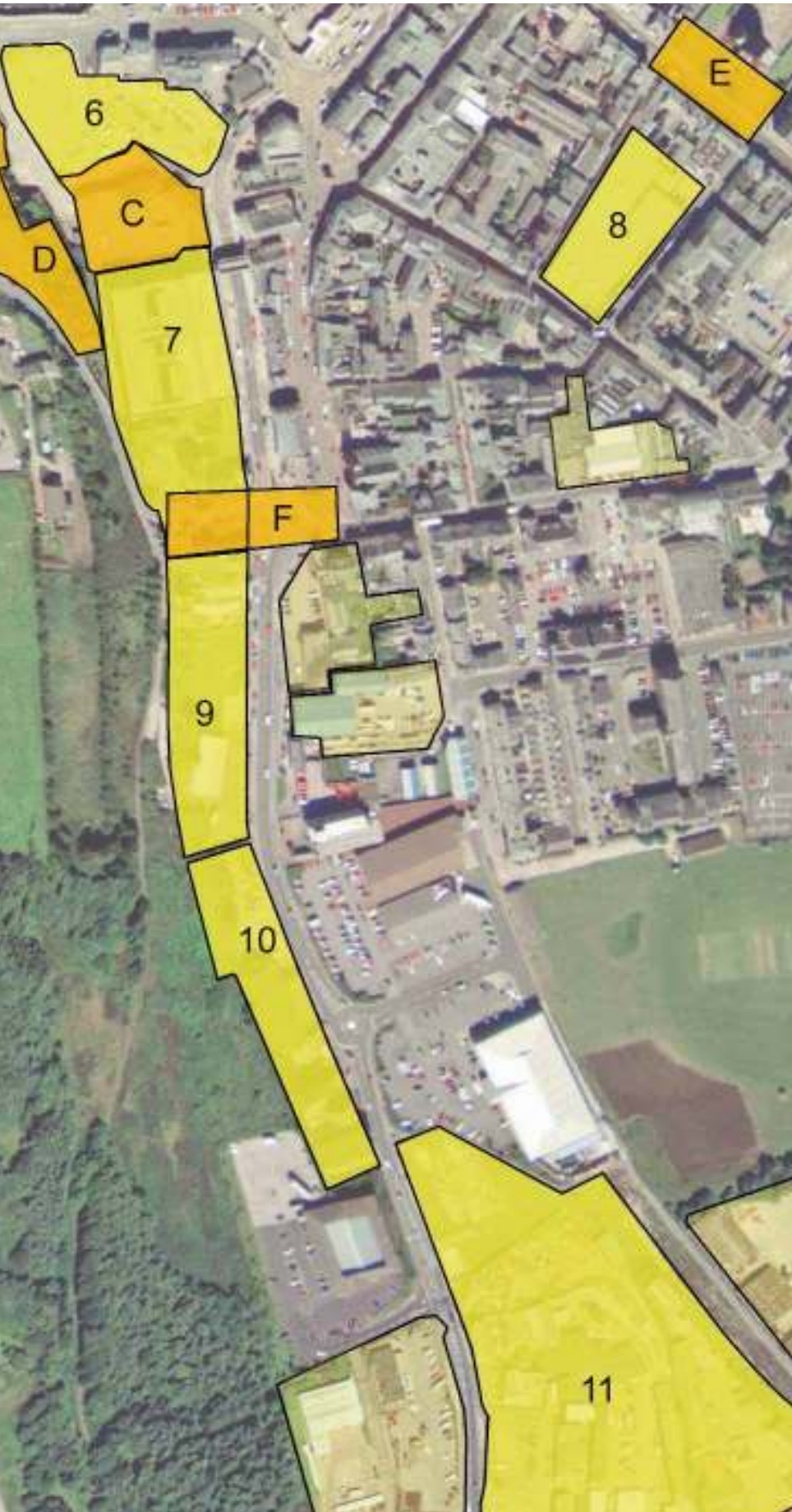
There is a commitment from key public sector bodies to ensure delivery of the public squares with private sector partners and to establish long term management agreements, which will guarantee a high quality of maintenance over the long term.



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ZONE B: SWINGPUMP & NEWTOWN

Located at the Southern end of the town centre Quay St / Swingpump area is part of the main retail quarter of the town, closely linked to the market. The Development Framework aims to consolidate this use but to improve the quality of the buildings and public spaces to provide a much more diverse and attractive extension to the market square, linking better to the southern end of the harbour. The aim is to establish a small number of larger scale 'anchor' stores and a range of specialist and independent retailers that will ensure the town provides a more interesting offer for visitors as well as improving facilities for locals. This approach will reinforce Whitehaven's niche retail provision in relation to nearby towns.

Further south along Newtown and Preston Street, the aim is to provide a much improved arrival corridor to the town centre from the south. The number of vacant and semi-derelict sites provides an opportunity to transform this run down edge of town. It is important that new development is to the back of pavement and provides car parking to the rear. New buildings may be of a larger scale and more contemporary nature than would be appropriate within the town centre. Specific proposals are outlined below.

Zone B: Development Sites

The development zone has six key development sites and the Development Framework has proposed the following preferred uses, form and mass of development.

Site 6: Quay Street Car Parks (east and west) A mixed use area comprising harbour front residential accommodation and improved retail facilities around a new public space. The car parking spaces would be replaced within the development and as part of the extension of the adjacent multi-storey car park.

Site 7: Multi-Storey Car Park and Albion Street Scrap Yard Redevelop the multi-storey car park to improve access, extend its capacity and improve its appearance, incorporating a renewed and expanded ground floor retail area. Replace the adjacent shops with a new, modernised extension overlooking the new Chapel Square.

Site 8: Wilkinson's Store Potential for relocation of Wilkinson's to new premises in retail area around Chapel Square and redevelop this key town centre site as high quality apartments around a parking courtyard.

Site 9: Newtown Serviced accommodation for temporary and part time workers and/or student residences associated with new specialist higher education facilities at Westlakes Science Park.



Site 10: Preston Street Provide high quality residential accommodation, with secure car parking to rear incorporating premises for retail outlets, professional services and workshops at ground floor level.

Site 11: Ginns & Former Corporation Yard There is an existing proposal for a new Asda store on this large site. Any such development should avoid locating further seas of car parking along the road edge and should aim to provide a high quality landmark building at this important gateway to the town centre, with servicing and parking to the rear. Ideally a new store should also provide a vibrant and transparent frontage along the street itself, and contribute to the enhancement of this arrival corridor.





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- 1 View of proposed Quay Street redevelopment
- 2 Birds eye view of proposed developments along Newtown and Preston Street
- 3 Chapel Square
- 4 St Nicholas Square

Public realm

The framework for development is configured around the creation of a new public square and public realm investments:

C. Chapel Square New public square around existing Chapel as a focus for the new retail development on Quay Street car parks and on the ground floor of the redeveloped multi storey car park.

D. The 'Hanging Gardens' Landscape enhancements to the existing terraced slopes to create a public park on the south shore of the harbour with improved pedestrian links to the Kells area and the coastline.

E. St Nicholas Square Open up the front of the existing gardens to create a more accessible public square as a focus to the heart of the historic town centre.

F. Albion Square Realign Albion Street and create a small new public space around it at this important point of arrival to the town from the Kells area.

G. Castle Square Create a new square, open to Lowther Street, as a focus for the redevelopment of Flatts Retail Park, screening the car parking from the street and providing a more attractive complement to the Castle itself at this key gateway to the town centre.



An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows clear, turquoise water with visible ripples and reflections. The bottom half shows a darker, deep blue bay or inlet, with numerous small white rocks or pebbles scattered across its surface. The coastline is visible as a thin line separating the two water bodies.

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