



# Stakeholder Engagement & Vision Report

December 2022



# Executive Summary

## The Need for a Vision

Windsor has witnessed a series of major shocks in its recent history. The Covid pandemic in particular has had a severe impact on the local economy and exposed the extent of its reliance on a narrow strand of tourism.

As visitors return, and now with the passing of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, there is a need to review and consider a vision for the future of Windsor, in context with the needs of the local community and future challenges such as climate adaptation.

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead council enlisted The Prince's Foundation to undertake a stakeholder engagement process to comprehensively uncover the assets, challenges and opportunities and articulate a vision that can guide Windsor for its next 20 years.

## A Community-Led Process

This Vision for Windsor document has been developed through a stakeholder engagement programme that took place over the course of several months, consisting of a number of opportunities for engagement through in-person events and online resources.

## An Emerging Consensus

Outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process highlighted some key issues and common themes.

### Movement & Access

Access to the town centre has emerged as a central issue, affecting wider Windsor residents and town centre staff in particular who note the cost and lack of available parking, as well as limited public transport options.

### Heritage, Character & Identity

Core to Windsor's sense of place is the heritage and built qualities of the town, something which many are keen to ensure is protected and conserved.

### Richness of Natural Resources

The parks, gardens, river and riverside have frequently been acknowledged as assets, with the possibility to activate and enhance these areas for greater use and benefit.

### Uses, Commercial Diversity & Local Amenities

A lack of variation and diversity in the retail and commercial options, alongside a lack of amenities for local residents has been highlighted. There is a need to nurture a varied economy, so that the town can provide enough diversity of amenities for all, whilst giving a collective voice to stakeholders in local decision-making.

### Global Windsor

There is recognition of the wide-reaching benefits of national and international tourism, and the opportunities it presents. At the same time may be a need to resolve some of the conflicts between visitor and resident needs and rebalance priorities.

### Local Governance

The representation of resident, business and community interests is needed to guide and support decision-making at the local level.

## Defining & Delivering the Vision

Throughout a process of stakeholder workshops, public events and feedback, a Vision has been developed to address overarching and persistent issues and build on the opportunities identified. The Vision, along with 5 Vision Statements, speak to specific core aspects and recurring themes that are key to Windsor's future.

To support the delivery and actualisation of the Vision, a number of strategies and actions have been explored and presented as potential avenues, options and next steps.

# Executive Summary

## A Vibrant Future for Windsor

**An attractive, thriving and welcoming town for the local and global community.**

### Vision Statements

#### Transport & Movement

Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor town centre.

#### The Built Environment

Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor.

#### The Natural Environment

Promote, activate and improve access to the natural assets and resources.

#### The Local Community

Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.

#### The Global Community

Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse and resilient hospitality industry.

### Strategies & Actions

A number of strategies and actions have been suggested, with each intended to deliver against some or all aspects of the vision and vision statements.

#### Gateways & Arrival

1. Develop Satellite Parking Sites
2. Celebrate Arrival into Windsor
3. Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections
4. Encourage a Shift to Active Travel

#### Town Centre Movement

5. Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre
6. Improve Cycling & Walking Connections
7. Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement
8. Consolidate Town Centre Parking
9. Maintain Priority Parking and Access

#### Character & Uses

10. Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor
11. Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core
12. Diversify Town Centre Uses
13. Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail

#### Public Realm

14. Apply and Maintain a High-Quality Materiality of the Public Realm
15. Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront
16. Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites

#### Local Governance & Community Partnerships

17. Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships
18. Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor
19. Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords
20. Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate
21. Capitalise on Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

This document is created by The Prince's Foundation representing and recording the activities and outcomes of the Vision for Windsor project by Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) and The Prince's Foundation.

The Prince's Foundation provides holistic solutions to challenges facing the world today. We champion a sustainable approach to how we live our lives and build our communities.

The work of The Prince's Foundation is inspired by His Majesty The King Charles III: that by understanding the balance, the order and the relationships between ourselves and the natural world we can create a more sustainable future.



[www.rbwm.gov.uk](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk)



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# Project Overview

The Vision for Windsor project sets out to consider what the next 20 years could look like for this town, and to articulate a vision for its future.

## Part 1: Project Overview

- Introduction
- Programme
- Stakeholder Engagement Approach
- Methodology
- Project Area



# Project Overview

## Introduction

**Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead council have enlisted The Prince's Foundation to lead a stakeholder engagement process, in order to uncover Windsor's assets, challenges and opportunities, leading to the development of a Vision and a number of strategies.**

### Project Aims & Objectives

1. Establish baseline information to understand the site and context.
2. Engage with a wide range of relevant stakeholders and provide appropriate opportunities for the public to inform the vision.
3. Facilitate a series of workshops with invited participants to collaborate on the development of the vision and strategies.
4. Review the outcomes of the engagement process and information gathered into a vision document.

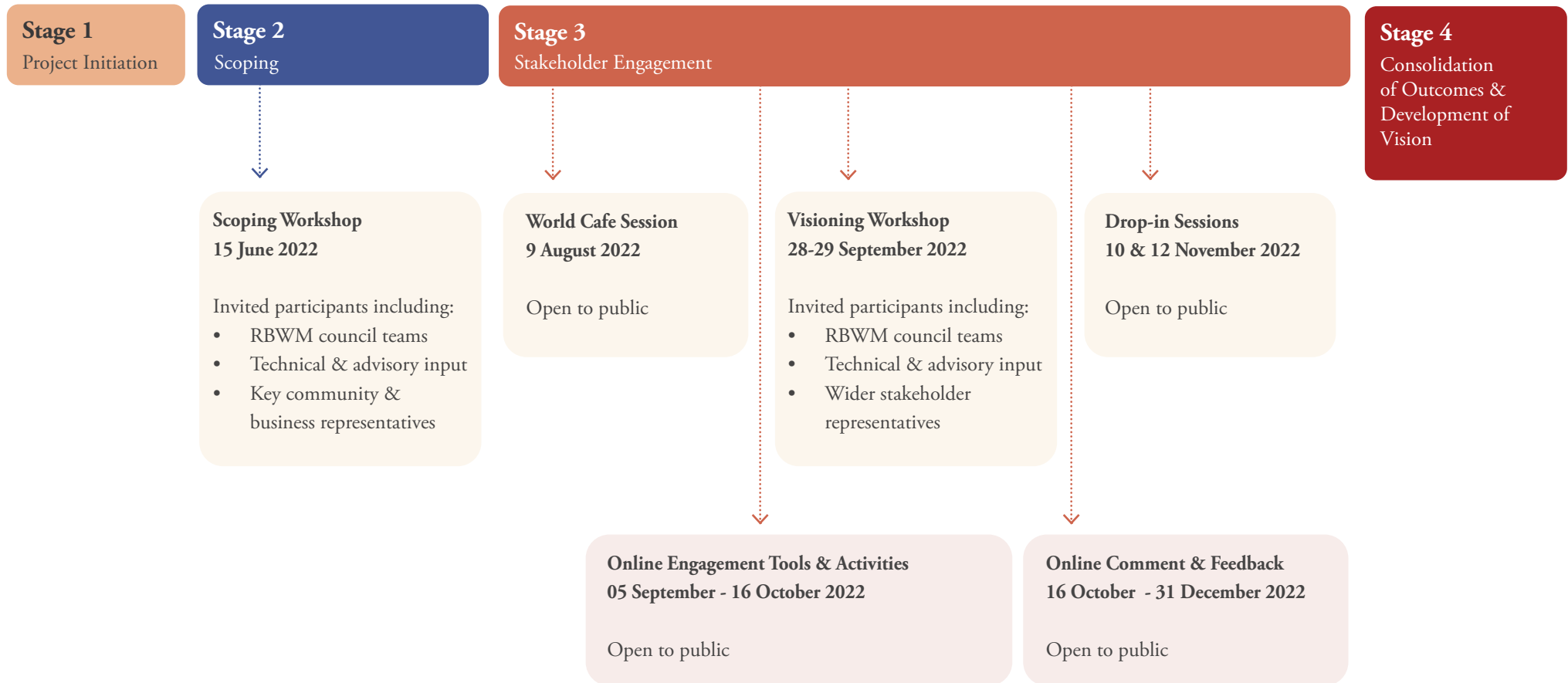
### Method

- The Prince's Foundation have facilitated a programme of stakeholder engagement based on our experience of our Enquiry-by-Design process of community-led planning.
- The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework has been employed to assess the quality of place in order to develop a complete and holistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Windsor as a place to live, work and visit.

# Project Overview

## Programme

The Vision for Windsor has been developed through a stakeholder engagement programme that took place over the course of several months, consisting of a number of opportunities for in-person and digital engagement.





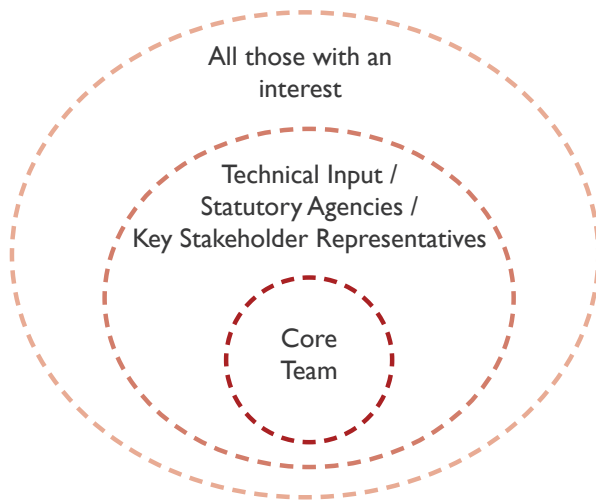
# Project Overview

## Stakeholder Engagement Approach

### Strategy for Stakeholder Involvement

A stakeholder can be defined as any person with an interest or concern in the matter at hand. Stakeholders may fall under many different categories, and be affected in different ways. The engagement process aims to capture a spread of interests and concerns from a wide representation of stakeholders.

The stakeholder engagement strategy begins with a core team at the outset of the programme, and at each stage reaches out to widen the degree of participation.



### Core Team (Stage 1 - Project Initiation)

The core team is formed of the central facilitating team and key decision makers, who have been involved from project inception. These include council leaders and strategic members of the council, and the project and facilitating team. These participants have been involved from Stage 1 of the project.

### Second Tier (Stage 2 - Scoping)

The secondary tier of engagement reaches out to some of the key stakeholder representatives to input technical and strategic knowledge. This included local business representation, community knowledge and essential service providers, alongside relevant expert input. The scoping workshop at Stage 2 engaged with this second tier of stakeholder to understand the core issues and emerging themes.

### Third Tier (Stage 3 - Stakeholder Engagement)

The third tier engages the general public that may have an interest or stake in the project. Residents, visitors, the working population and anyone that simply has an interest in Windsor town centre development are all relevant stakeholders. Stage 3 of the project engages widely to build a consensus on key issues and identify common themes across sectors and communities.

# Project Overview

## Methodology

### The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework:

Every place is endowed with different natural, financial, social and built assets, which we call the 'Four Pillars of Sustainability'. These form the basis of The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework, a tool that we have implemented to holistically assess the quality of place for Windsor.

	NATURAL	SOCIAL	FINANCIAL	BUILT
ROOTED	<p><b>NATIVE</b></p> <p>The incorporation of species and materials adapted or suited to the area. <i>e.g. reflection of the local environment in the gardens and landscaping.</i></p>	<p><b>BELONGING</b></p> <p>Identification between people and place expressed through friendship, culture and local traditions. <i>e.g. community events held in public buildings and spaces.</i></p>	<p><b>STEWARDSHIP</b></p> <p>Secure and diverse forms of tenancy and community management of assets. <i>e.g. the possibility for the community to create housing and services suited to their needs.</i></p>	<p><b>PLACE MAKING</b></p> <p>Delightful places that people love and want to be in. <i>e.g. architecture that is mindful of local materials, climate and character.</i></p>
CONNECTED	<p><b>ECOSYSTEMS</b></p> <p>Local ecosystems remain whole by retaining and creating links. <i>e.g. maintaining wildlife habitats, natural corridors and watercourses.</i></p>	<p><b>SOCIAL EXCHANGE</b></p> <p>A network of social and community organisations that promote connections between people. <i>e.g. existence of support clubs, sports teams and volunteer opportunities.</i></p>	<p><b>INTEGRATED</b></p> <p>Accessible capital and local goods as well as supported commercial hubs and local trading. <i>e.g. facilitation of local markets and supply chains.</i></p>	<p><b>INTER-CONNECTED</b></p> <p>Neighbourhoods with connected walkable streets allowing access to public spaces and transportation. <i>e.g. logical routes to enable access to daily needs within walking distance of residential areas.</i></p>
BALANCED	<p><b>BIODIVERSE HABITAT</b></p> <p>A sustainable relationship between humans, animals and plants. <i>e.g. local crop production that contributes to food security.</i></p>	<p><b>MIXED</b></p> <p>An inclusive, diverse and mixed population that is tolerant and respectful. <i>e.g. diversity in housing stock that is affordable and suitable to various demographics.</i></p>	<p><b>DIVERSE</b></p> <p>A mixed and local economy and a mixed profile of investment <i>e.g. existence of local goods and services that are affordable.</i></p>	<p><b>PROPORTIONAL</b></p> <p>Places with beautiful and well-scaled architecture and a mix of building types. <i>e.g. a high street with coherent shop fronts.</i></p>
RESILIENT	<p><b>REGENERATIVE</b></p> <p>The ability for the natural environment to respond and adapt to changes in climate and human activity. <i>e.g. sustainable drainage systems that minimise flood risks.</i></p>	<p><b>LOCAL GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p>Local planning and organising frameworks and lifelong education opportunities. <i>e.g. promoting educational and training opportunities to utilise and develop local skills.</i></p>	<p><b>ADAPTABLE</b></p> <p>A flexible economic framework with a broad range of economic activities at different scales. <i>e.g. sustainable growth model of housing provision and other amenities.</i></p>	<p><b>DURABLE</b></p> <p>Building types, spaces and uses that are suited for the region and which can adapt and change over time. <i>e.g. buildings that can adapt into smaller or larger units or accommodate a change of use.</i></p>
PRUDENT	<p><b>CONSERVATION</b></p> <p>The protection, management and enhancement of natural resources. <i>e.g. using sustainably produced and harvested materials.</i></p>	<p><b>ACCESS TO SERVICES</b></p> <p>Safe community facilities and amenities for people. <i>e.g. accessible libraries, health facilities and job centres within the community.</i></p>	<p><b>REINVESTMENT</b></p> <p>Careful financial planning with a vision for quality long term returns. <i>e.g. Incorporating timely maintenance and community investment.</i></p>	<p><b>PRESERVATION</b></p> <p>A priority to refurbish and renovate with recycled and lasting materials from renewable sources. <i>e.g. well - insulated building stock that uses passive methods of cooling and heating.</i></p>

# Project Overview

## Project Area

### Area of Focus

The Vision for Windsor will focus predominantly on the area of the town centre. This includes the railway and bus arrival points, shopping streets, the Castle surroundings and sites near the riverside.

### Buffer Zone

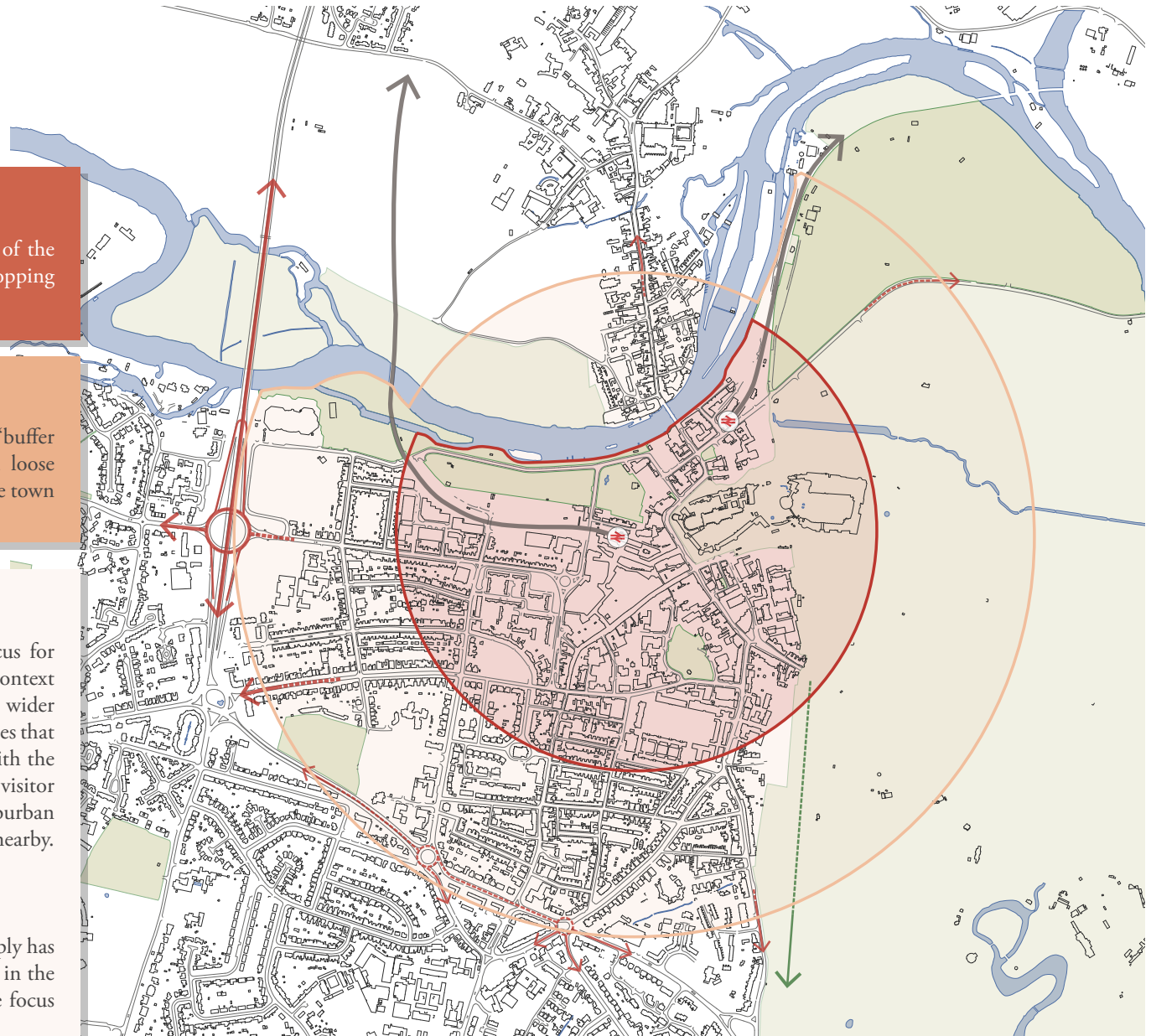
A walkable catchment surrounding the town centre forms a 'buffer zone' of impact and influence. This catchment represents a loose boundary that includes areas within a ~15 minute walk from the town centre.

### Wider Context

Areas beyond the buffer zone are likely to sit outside the focus for this project, however we will nevertheless consider the wider context strategically and contextually, particularly when addressing wider movement and transportation links. There are also many other sites that are important to recognise and to consider their relationship with the town centre, as well as their impact on the resident, working and visitor population. These may include other visitor destinations, suburban and residential communities, and other towns and institutions nearby.

### Who can get involved?

Residents, visitors, the working population and anyone that simply has an interest in Windsor town centre are all invited to participate in the workshops, regardless of whether or not they reside within the focus and buffer areas.



# Scoping

A Scoping Workshop was held to collect a foundation of preliminary information and develop an initial understanding of the constraints and opportunities.

## Part 2: Scoping

- The Scoping Workshop
- Baseline Information
- Strategic Opportunities
- Conclusions



# Scoping

## The Scoping Workshop

**A Scoping Workshop took place on the 15th of June 2022 in order to scope out initial opportunities and constraints, whilst developing a foundation of contextual information.**

The purpose of this Scoping Workshop was to bring together a core team of stakeholders, members of the council and local leaders to understand some of the key interests regarding the future of Windsor, at an early stage of the Vision for Windsor project.

### Attendance & Representation

#### Project & Consultant Team

- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- The Prince's Foundation
- Andrew Cameron Associates

#### Council Representatives

- Economic Growth
- Sustainability and Climate
- Planning
- RBWM Property Company
- Housing Services
- Highways
- Neighbourhood Services

#### Community Representatives

- Council Leaders & Cabinet Members
- Local Ward Councillors
- Windsor, Eton and Ascot Town Partnership
- Thames Valley Police

#### Business Representatives

- Visit Windsor
- Royal Windsor Shopping Centre
- Windsor Chamber of Commerce
- Legoland Windsor Resort
- Windsor Castle

### Workshop Agenda

#### Session 1: 15<sup>th</sup> Morning

- Welcome
- Stakeholder Statements
- Technical Briefings
- Q&A
- Tour of Area & Sites

#### Session 2: 15<sup>th</sup> Afternoon

- Workshop Groups & Discussion
- Feedback & review

### References

- [Borough Local Plan 2013 – 2033](#)
- [Windsor 2030](#)
- [Windsor Neighbourhood Plan](#)
- [Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead](#)

# Scoping

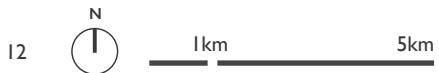
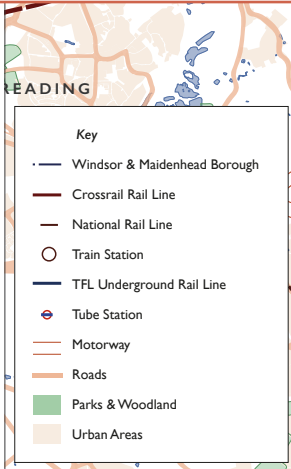
## Baseline Information

### Wider Context

Windsor's location benefits from its proximity to London, strategic rail and motorway connections and a major international airport, providing national and international access to its valuable cultural, heritage and environmental assets.

Windsor is surrounded by a rich natural environment including The River Thames and Jubilee River, The Chiltern Hills AONB and other green spaces and waterways such as the Colne Valley Regional Park.

Eton, Slough, Bracknell and Maidenhead are Windsor's closest neighbouring towns and cities, that provide additional access to transport connections, retail and cultural amenities.



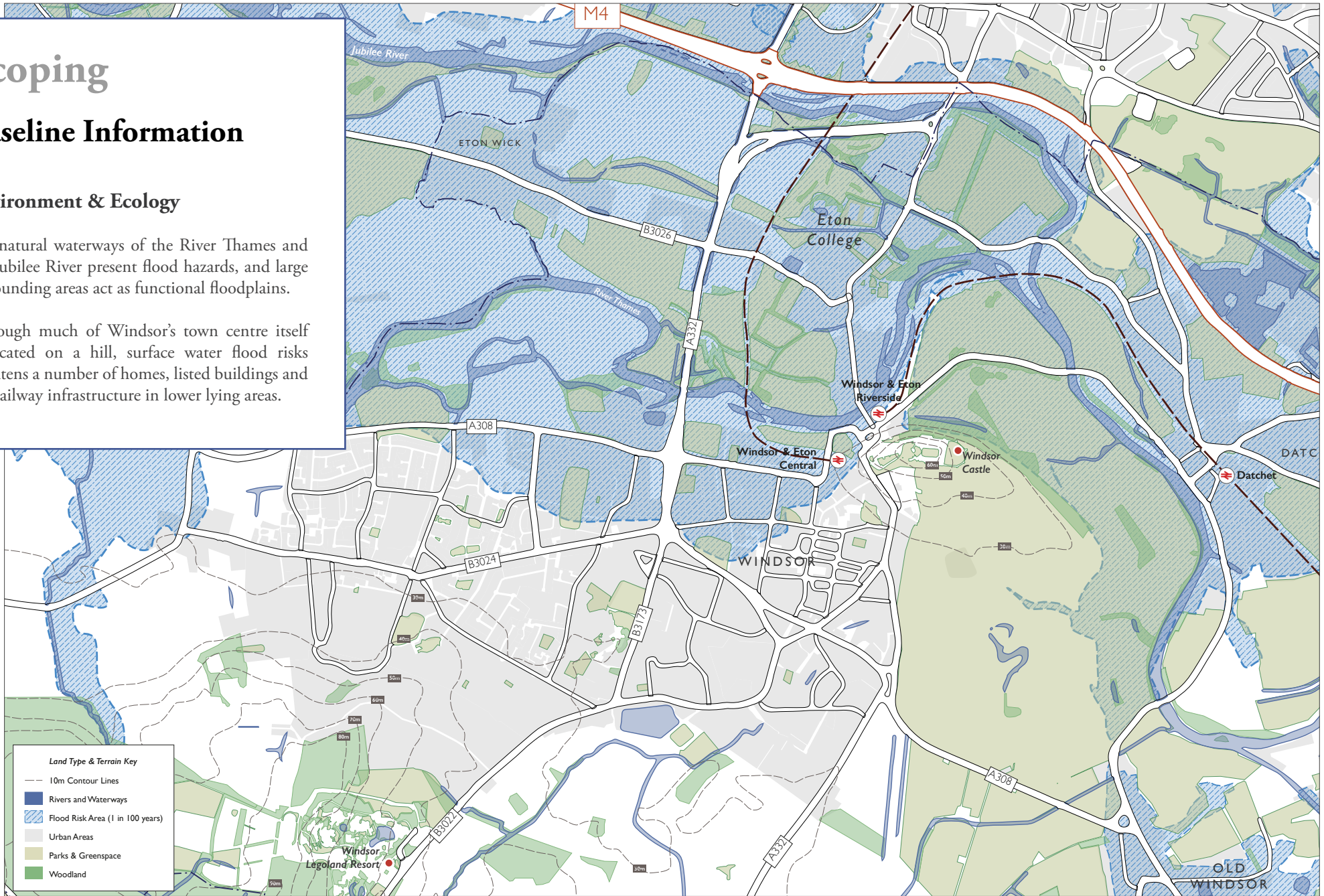
# Scoping

## Baseline Information

### Environment & Ecology

The natural waterways of the River Thames and the Jubilee River present flood hazards, and large surrounding areas act as functional floodplains.

Although much of Windsor's town centre itself is located on a hill, surface water flood risks threatens a number of homes, listed buildings and key railway infrastructure in lower lying areas.



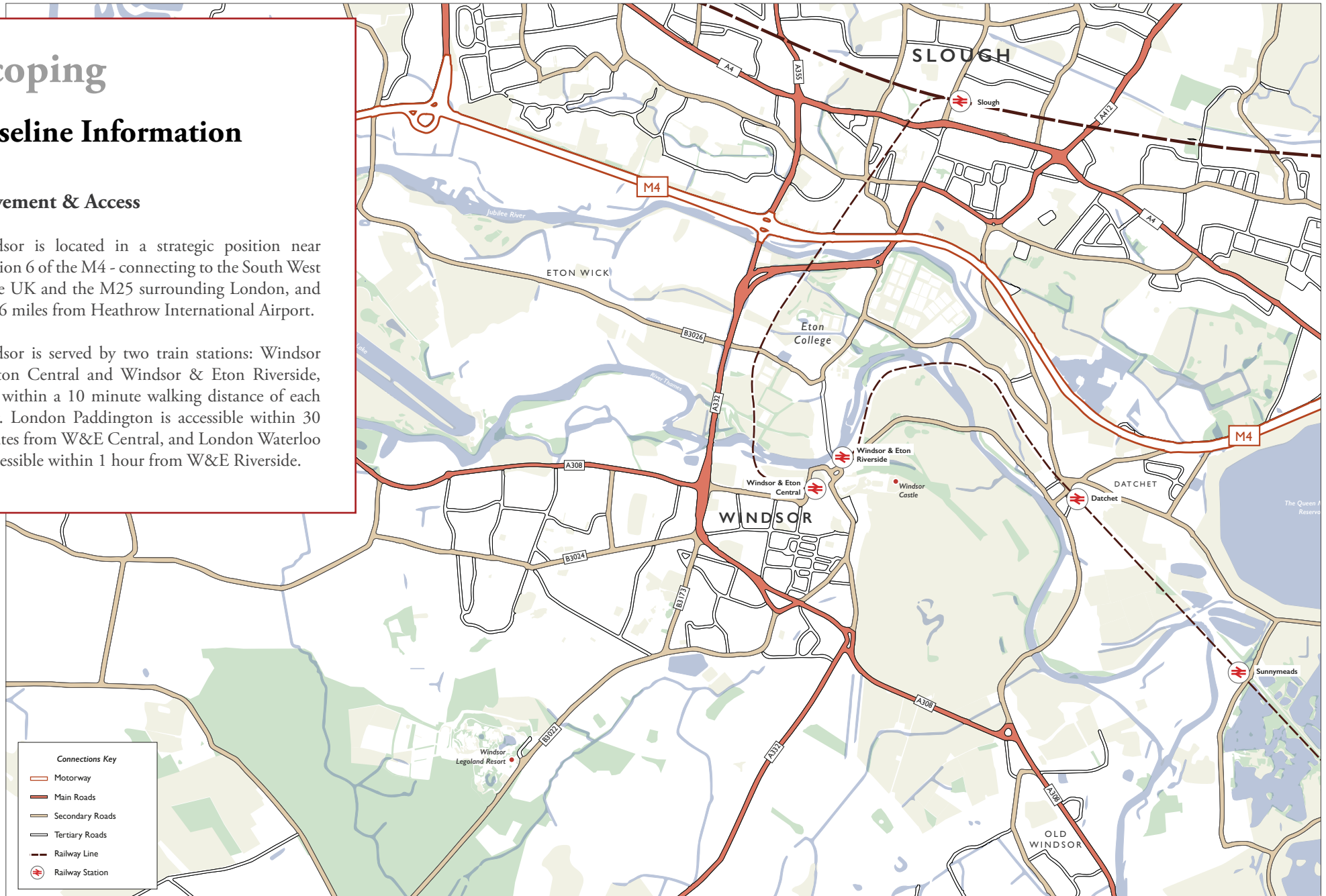
# Scoping

## Baseline Information

### Movement & Access

Windsor is located in a strategic position near junction 6 of the M4 - connecting to the South West of the UK and the M25 surrounding London, and only 6 miles from Heathrow International Airport.

Windsor is served by two train stations: Windsor & Eton Central and Windsor & Eton Riverside, both within a 10 minute walking distance of each other. London Paddington is accessible within 30 minutes from W&E Central, and London Waterloo is accessible within 1 hour from W&E Riverside.



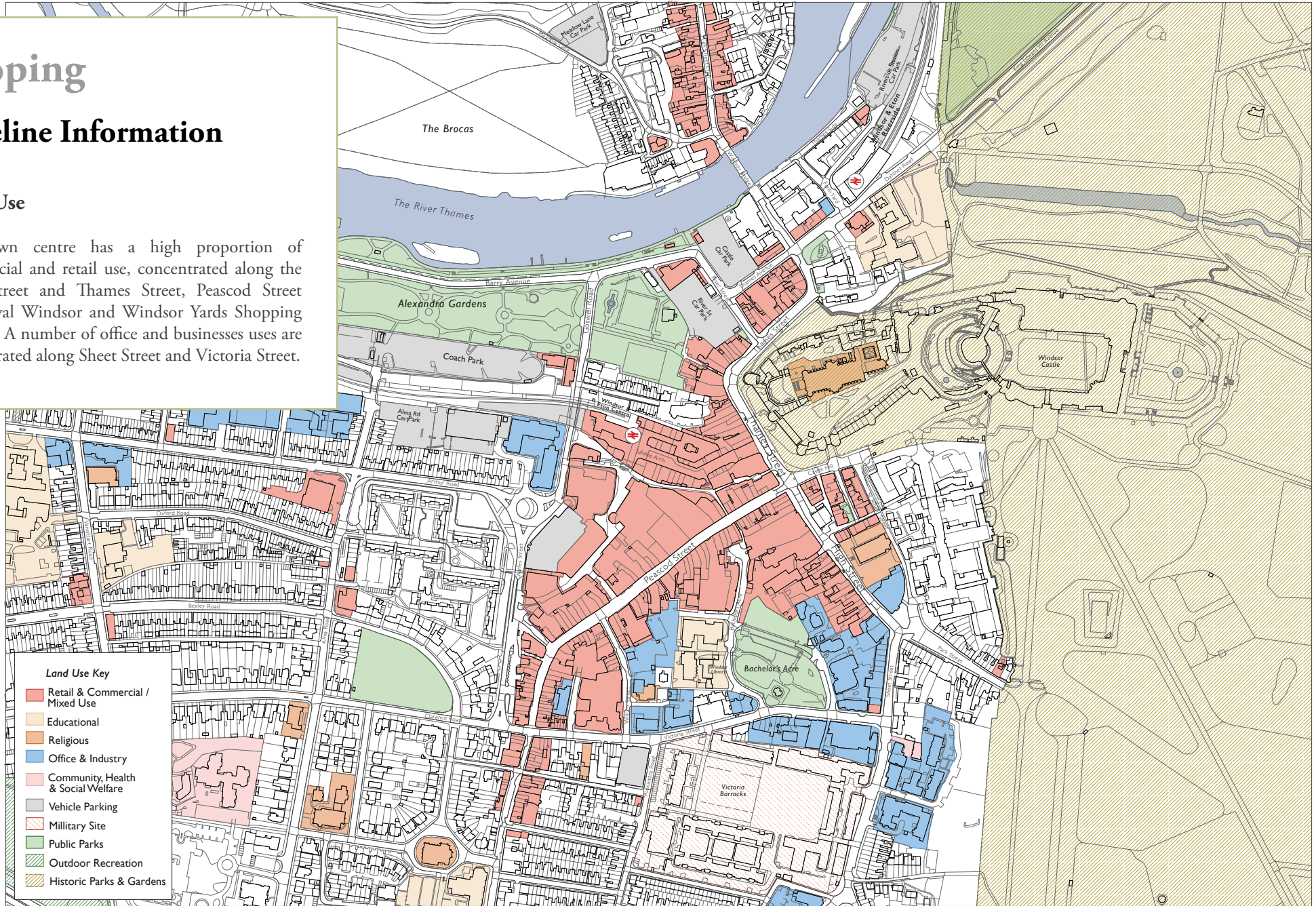


# Scoping

## Baseline Information

### Land Use

The town centre has a high proportion of commercial and retail use, concentrated along the High Street and Thames Street, Peascod Street and Royal Windsor and Windsor Yards Shopping Centres. A number of office and businesses uses are concentrated along Sheet Street and Victoria Street.

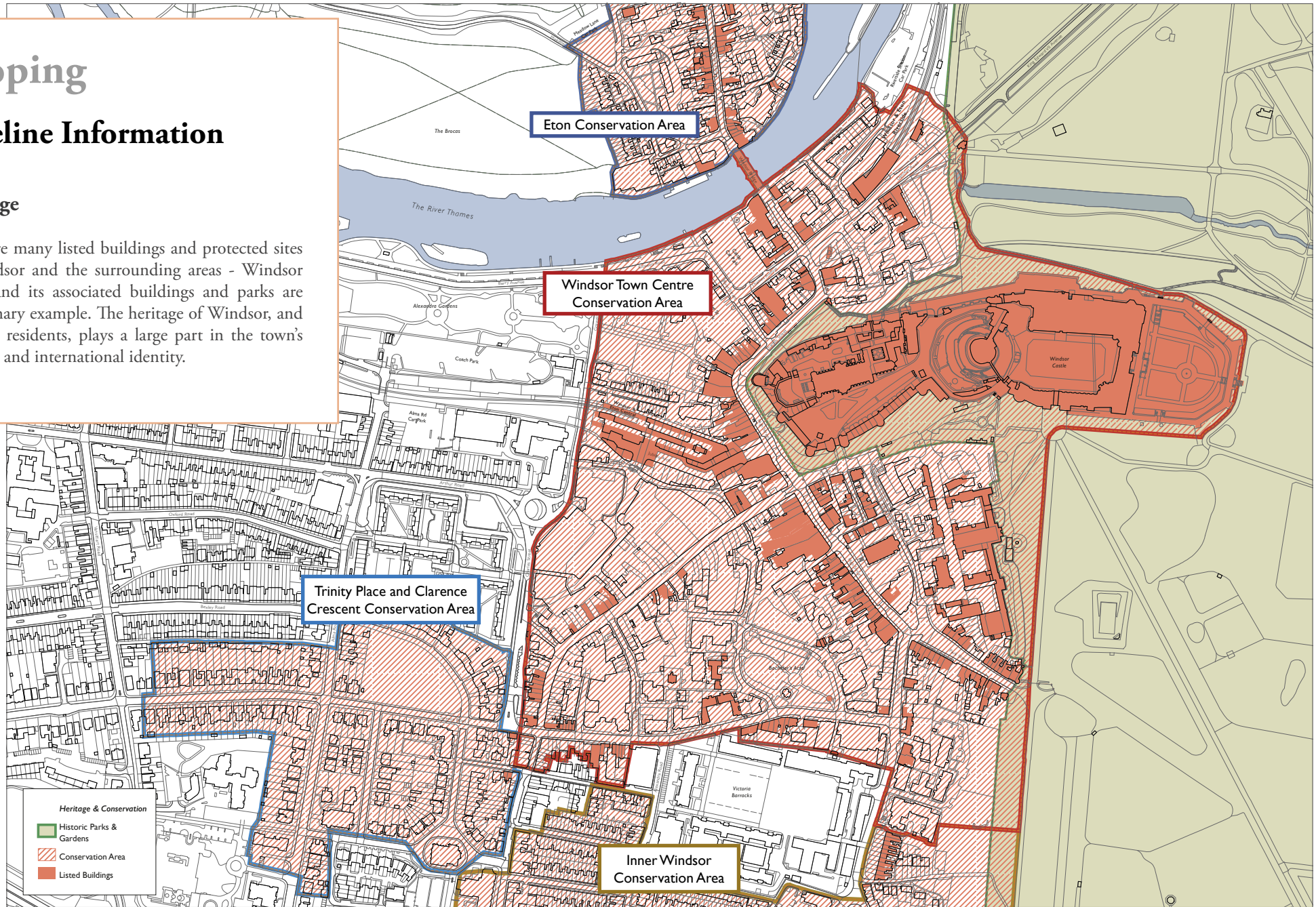


# Scoping

## Baseline Information

### Heritage

There are many listed buildings and protected sites in Windsor and the surrounding areas - Windsor Castle and its associated buildings and parks are the primary example. The heritage of Windsor, and its royal residents, plays a large part in the town's national and international identity.



# Scoping

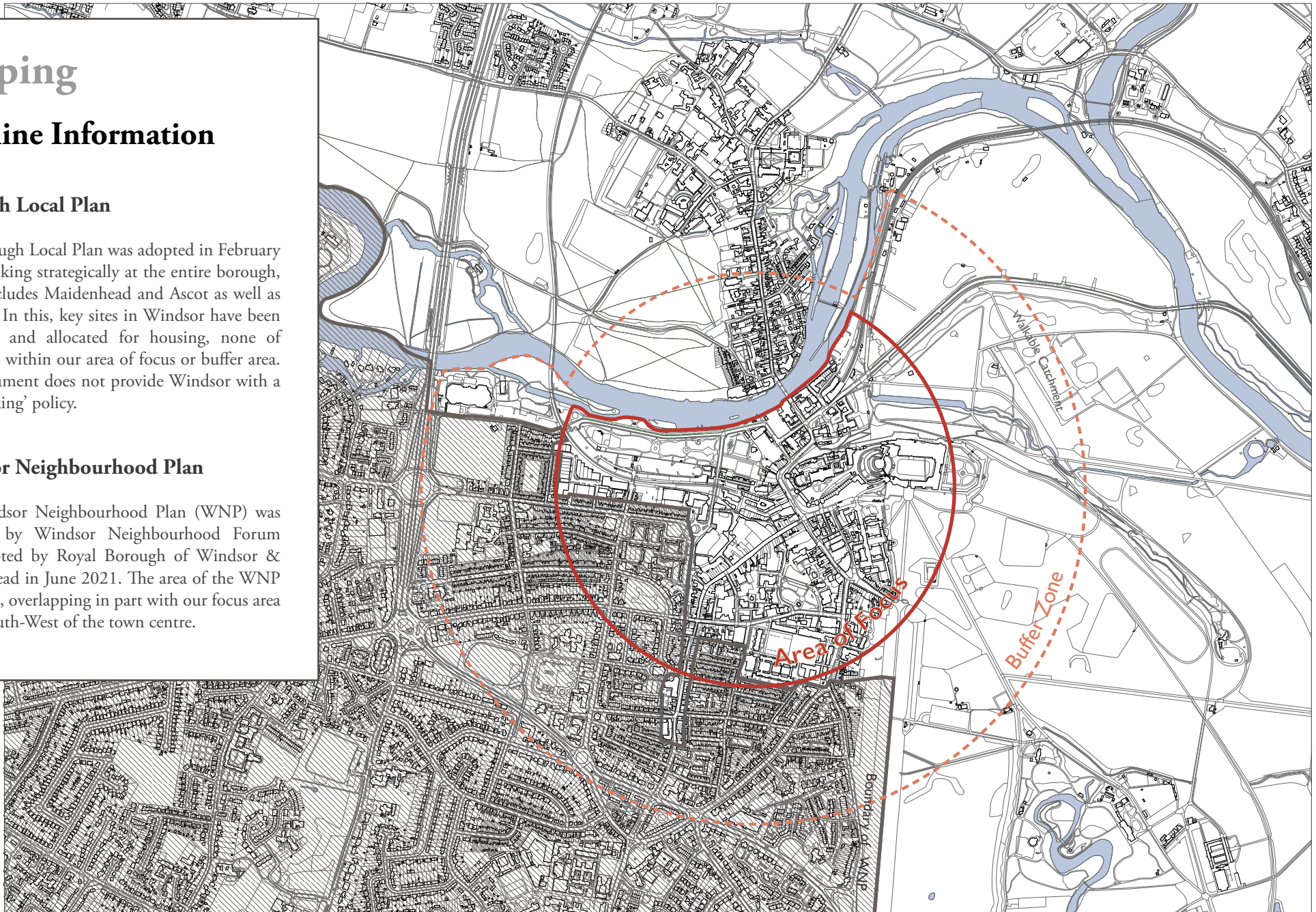
## Baseline Information

### Borough Local Plan

The Borough Local Plan was adopted in February 2022, looking strategically at the entire borough, which includes Maidenhead and Ascot as well as Windsor. In this, key sites in Windsor have been identified and allocated for housing, none of which are within our area of focus or buffer area. This document does not provide Windsor with a 'placemaking' policy.

### Windsor Neighbourhood Plan

The Windsor Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was prepared by Windsor Neighbourhood Forum and adopted by Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead in June 2021. The area of the WNP is marked, overlapping in part with our focus area to the South-West of the town centre.



# Scoping

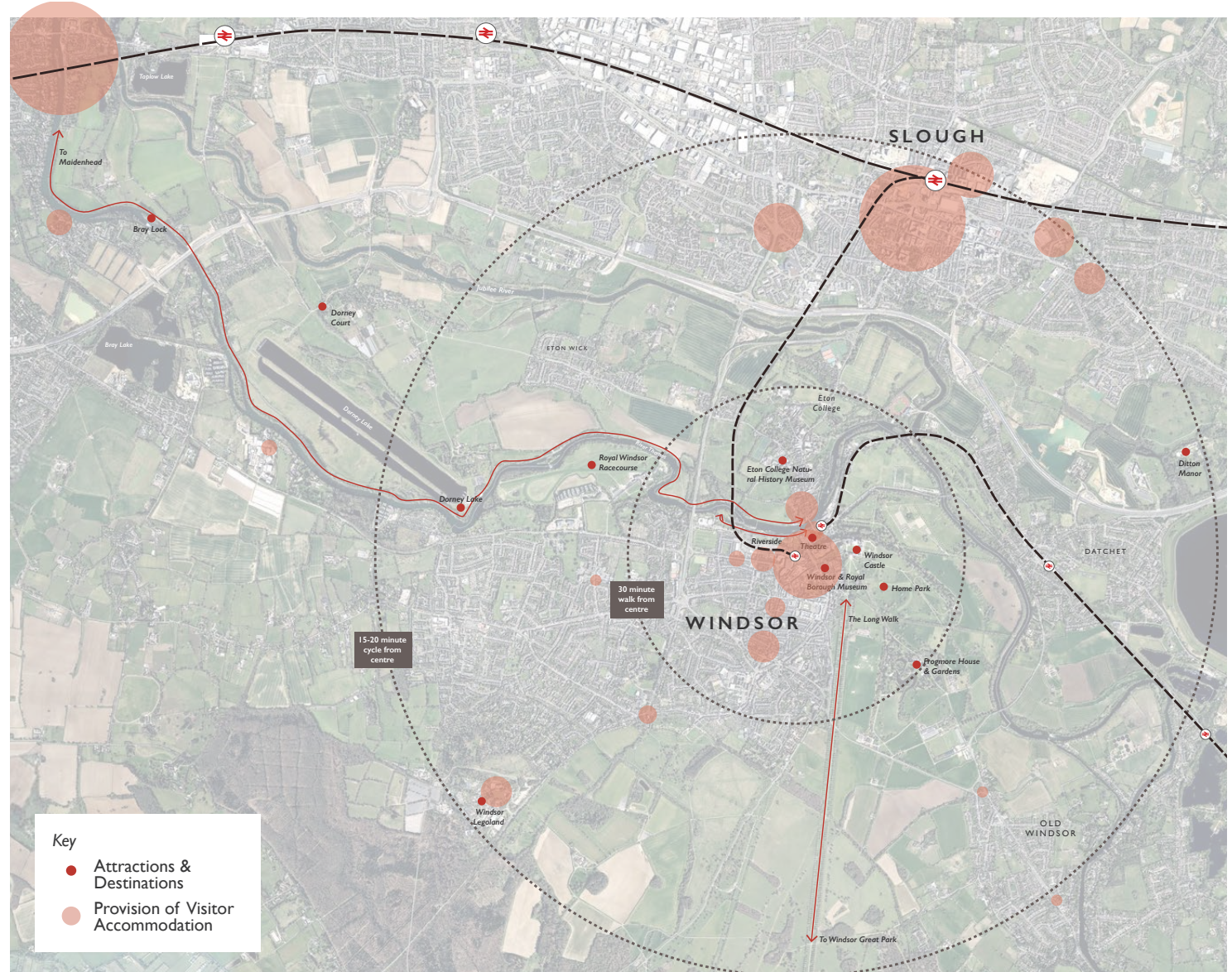
## Strategic Opportunities

### Tourism & Hospitality

Tourism and hospitality significantly contribute to Windsor's local economy, as a major source of income and employment for the town.

Windsor sees a high number of day trip visitors, generally determined by the visiting hours of Windsor Castle, and often resulting in low visitor expenditure (£35 average spend per person). The much smaller number of overnight visitors yield a considerably greater average spend (£325 per person). Increasing dwelling time of visitors by expanding the attractions of Windsor may be key to gaining a larger and wider distribution of the economic benefits.

Pre-covid levels of tourism are not expected to return until 2025, so in considering the future of the hospitality sector, this may be an opportune moment to rebalance the type of visitor offer: affordable and middle-tier accommodation, with independent, local retail & dining could encourage longer stays and spread the impact of a transient visitor population.



# Scoping

## Strategic Opportunities

The following council-owned assets have been identified as opportunity sites that could be strategically enhanced and activated with new or additional uses, in order to contribute to improving Windsor for residents and visitors.

### The Riverfront Area

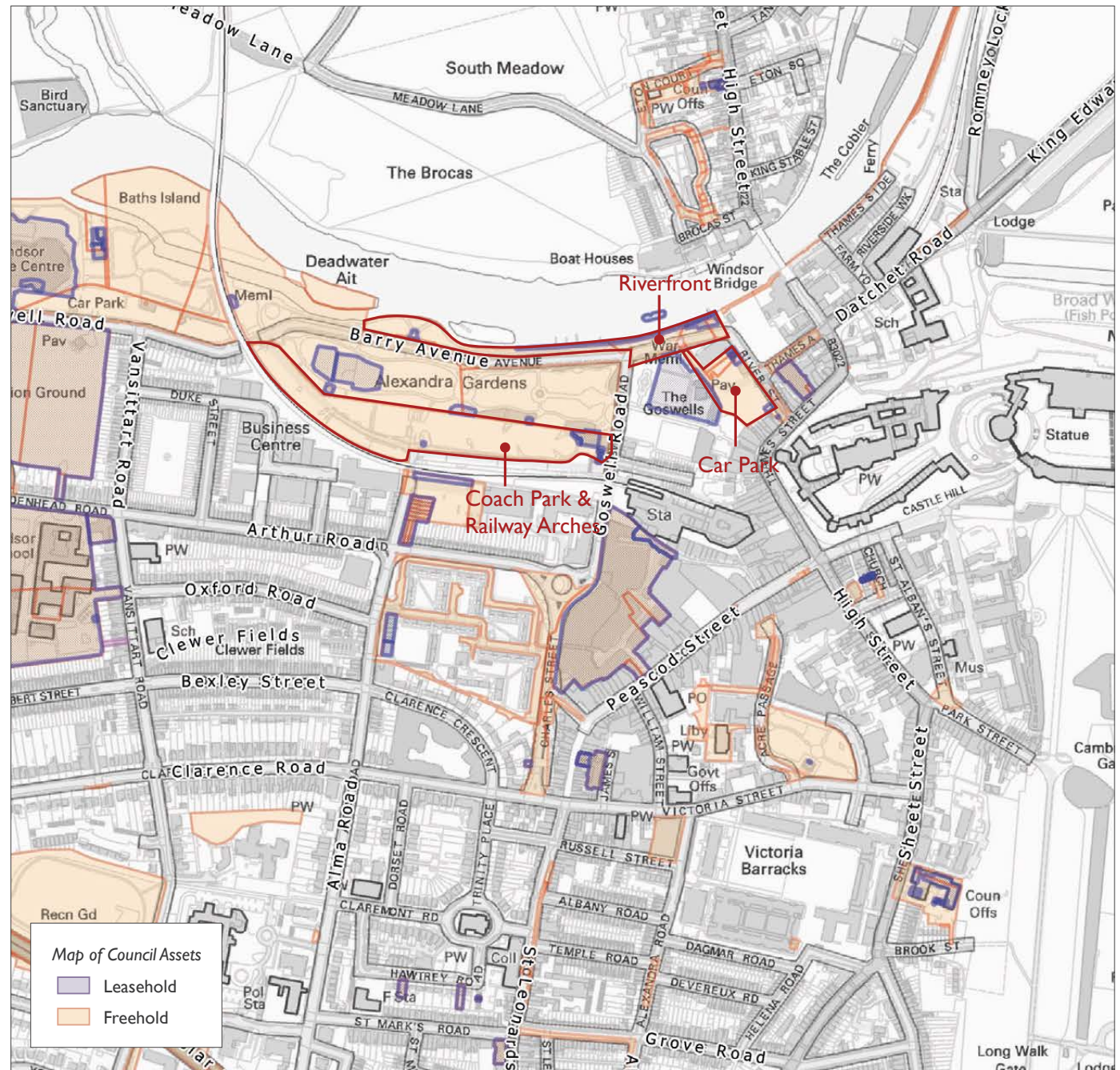
The riverside could be activated as a connection between Alexandra Gardens and other green spaces, as well as establishing as an alternative route to the town centre and Castle.

### Railway Arches

The railway viaduct currently acts as a barrier between Windsor and the riverside. Opening connections could improve linkages to Barry Avenue, the parking areas and the riverfront and create more pedestrian movement in this area.

### Parking Sites

The council-owned car parking and coach parking sites have potential for investment and regeneration to provide a mix of other uses, integrating parking requirements whilst also creating improved connections with the train platform and to the town centre.



# Scoping

## Strategic Opportunities

### Walkability and a Walkable Central Catchment

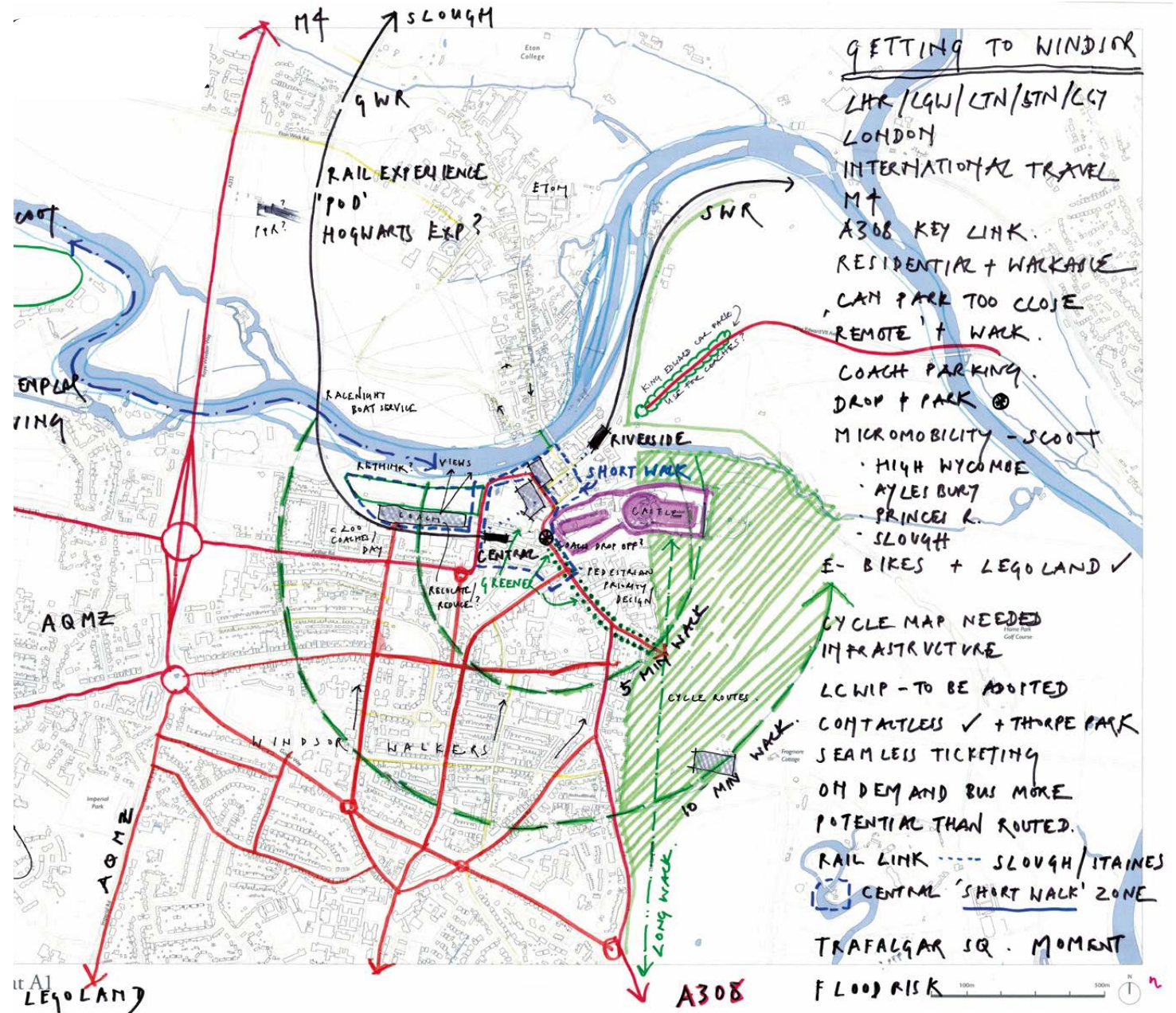
The town centre is highly walkable - it features interesting and historical streetscapes, many pedestrianised and pedestrian-friendly streets and main areas of activity are in close proximity.

Whilst transit is needed to gain access to the centre of Windsor, vehicle parking could be placed more remotely, as it is currently occupying space in central areas and creating high volumes of traffic. There is potential to develop a 'drop & park' system to manage volumes of coaches and visitors.

A significant catchment of local residents can also access Windsor within a short walk. Affordable and accessible public transport options could be developed to create sustainable means of travel from further residential areas, increasing accessibility whilst reducing parking and traffic demands.

### A Sustainable Core

A strategy of prioritising pedestrian and cyclist movement over vehicle movement could form a sustainable core for Windsor's centre - a concept that has been given the title of 'The Short Walk'.



# Scoping

## Strategic Opportunities

### Stakeholder Groups

There are a number of communities in and around Windsor and the town centre is a central asset to all of them. This means engaging across multiple political wards and community groups, with a number of businesses and a working population also invested in the town centre.

Previous consultations have taken place that have led to actions such as the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the last instance of this took place before Covid, and therefore won't have captured the context of the post-pandemic future.

The following stakeholder and stakeholder groups were identified as part of an initial stakeholder mapping exercise, which was developed and expanded throughout the engagement process.

### POLITICAL & LOCAL INTEREST

- Residents groups
- Local community groups
- Windsor Neighbourhood Forum
- Eton Town Council
- Eton Community Association
- [Windsor and Eton Society](#)

### COMMUNITY

- Schools, parents & families
- Youth council representing young people
- Disability & Inclusion Forum
- Faith groups
- Windsor College
- Windsor Library
- Thames Valley Police
- Eton Community Association

### TRANSPORT PROVIDERS

- South Western Rail
- Great Western Railway
- Bus Companies
- Tour operators - national & international
- Cycle Hire Schemes

### BUSINESS GROUPS

- Town Centre Group
- Visit Windsor Partnership
- Riverboats
- Windsor Racecourse
- Windsor Legoland
- Hotels and accommodation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Retailers and traders

### LANDOWNERS & INVESTORS

- Windsor Yards & Windsor Royal Shopping Centres
- Crown Estate
- Royal Collection
- Victoria Barracks & Combermere Barracks
- The Arch Company

### CULTURE

- Festivals
- Museums
- Leisure Centre
- Theatre Royal
- The Old Court Artspace

# Scoping

## Conclusions

### NATURAL CAPITAL

**There are many green and blue assets to Windsor that are a key aspect of health, wellbeing and enjoyment of the town**, such as the parks, gardens, the river and riverside. These could be better connected and integrated into the cultural offer of the town centre, particularly as connecting routes between the train stations, town centre and other destination points.

**The surface water flood risks for Windsor threatens a number of homes, listed buildings and essential infrastructure.** Planning and adaptation for changes in the climate is necessary to ensure environmental resilience against natural hazards such as this.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

**There is a lot of social activity that takes place in Windsor, with local resident communities as well as large numbers of national and international visitors.** Visitors are an important resource to the town, but a large transient population can also present challenges. Managing these points of tension is important to maintain a balanced relationship.

**A varied evening and night-time economy in the town centre is somewhat lacking, with limited offers of evening activities.** The evening economy needs to broaden its offer to cater to wider groups and different demographics, including differing age ranges, local residents and overnight visitors. It also needs to have a harmonious relationship with its neighbourhood population. Improvements to street lighting, managing anti-social behaviour outside clubs, and developing a more varied night-time offer could address this.

### FINANCIAL CAPITAL

**Businesses are facing new challenges with changes in customer and visitor trends taking hold**, including the post-Covid recovery of tourism amongst other economic shocks. Businesses feel the need to build future resilience and security.

**There is a real desire to invest in the quality of the experience of Windsor for local and visitor populations alike.** There are a number of strategy and vision plans already established or taking shape, with many invested stakeholders. 'The Windsor Experience' ties together the variety and quality of retail, commercial and tourist provision that makes the town a vibrant destination and place to live and work.

### BUILT CAPITAL

**Movement and access in and around Windsor centre could be made easier and more convenient**, with particular attention needed on managing the volume of private vehicles and supporting sustainable means of travel including public transport, cycling and walking. The public realm is a key opportunity area to improve the local and visitor experience, in terms of access, safety and enjoyment.

**Net-zero carbon by 2050 is a target for the borough.** To achieve this, it is necessary to consider improving sustainable transport choices as well as energy efficiency in buildings, a challenge for a city with a high number of older heritage buildings.







# Engagement Outcomes

## Stakeholder Engagement Overview

A programme of stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to inform the Vision for Windsor. The objective of these events was to develop an in-depth and holistic analysis of Windsor's assets, opportunities and threats, and to understand the key concerns and priorities of Windsor's community and users.

### Elements of Stakeholder Involvement

#### World Cafe in Clewer and Dedworth West

The World Cafe held a session on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 which asked: "What do you want to see in Windsor Town Centre?". The World Cafe is a youth community event and this session was attended by a total of 28 people, with a high proportion of under-30s. A report on the outcomes of the session have been reviewed and fed into these outcomes.

#### Visioning Workshop

Community and business representatives were invited to a two-day workshop that was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Approximately 35 people attended the Visioning Workshop, including RBWM council teams, local councillors, business owners and operators, and community group representatives. This was an opportunity to collaborate across multiple stakeholder groups to develop an understanding of key issues and emerging themes regarding the aspirations for Windsor.

#### Vision for Windsor Online Engagement

The RBWM online webpage was used as an opportunity for wider public engagement. The webpage hosted The Vision for Windsor survey, and an interactive map for participation in the Mapping Quality of Place exercise, as well as other opportunities for the public to submit ideas and comments throughout the process.

#### Public Engagement Sessions

Members of public were invited to attend a drop-in session to review the outcomes in draft and contribute their responses. 279 comments were received in total across 2 drop-in events.

### Activities & Assessments

#### Community Capital Assessment

The Visioning Workshop was an opportunity to form a collective assessment of the Natural, Built, Social and Financial aspects of Windsor.

#### Mapping Quality of Place

We asked stakeholders to identify areas, places or spaces that represent positive aspects, negative aspects or opportunities. This was conducted as part of the Visioning Workshop and via an interactive map online on the webpage.

#### Vision for Windsor Survey

The Vision for Windsor survey was hosted on the RBWM website between the 5<sup>th</sup> September and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and was also available in print at request from Windsor Library. The survey was completed by 411 members of the public.

#### Comment & Feedback

The webpage was routinely updated with materials, with an option for viewers to submit comments via a feedback tool. This was closed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. 47 comments were received through this feedback tool.

# Engagement Outcomes

## Vision for Windsor Survey

### Most Commonly Mentioned **Positive Aspects**

- 1 GREENSPACE**  
By far, most of the positive comments related to the greenspace, including mentions of the numerous parks and recreation grounds in and around Windsor as well as the wider greenspace. These include mentions of Home Park, the Long Walk, Alexandra Park, the Great Park, to name just a few.
- 2 WINDSOR CASTLE**  
Numerous comments mentioned Windsor Castle specifically as an important landmark and asset to the town. There were also many comments made regarding Windsor's role in history following the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- 3 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY**  
Many comments mentioned the retailers, restaurants and eating places that contribute to the liveliness and vibrancy of the town.
- 4 THE RIVERS & THE RIVERSIDE**  
The Thames and Jubilee Rivers are frequently mentioned as positive aspects of Windsor.
- 5 HERITAGE, ARCHITECTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**  
The heritage architecture of Windsor is cited as an important part of the town's identity and contributes to the feeling of a historic place.
- 6 LOCATION**  
There were many mentions of Windsor's location within picturesque areas of countryside as well as its strategic proximity to London and Heathrow airport. Access to the motorways and railway services were also frequently mentioned.
- 7 COMMUNITY**  
Comments mention that there is a strong community in Windsor and that many people feel a sense of belonging where they live and work.



# Engagement Outcomes

## Vision for Windsor Survey

### Most Commonly Mentioned **Negative Aspects**

- 1 CAR PARKING**  
A large majority of comments relate to the cost and availability of car parking in Windsor town centre. Many people say this deters them from visiting Windsor centre, particularly as other centres in the region are easier to access by car.
- 2 LOSS OF BUSINESSES**  
Another important issue that many are concerned about is the number of empty retail units, and the fact that businesses appear to be struggling or under threat of closure.
- 3 RETAIL DOMINATED BY TOURISM**  
An additional recurring comment relates to the number of businesses in Windsor that cater specifically to the tourist market, and a lack of businesses that benefit the local population.
- 4 LACK OF LOCAL SERVICES & AMENITIES**  
Many further comments noted the lack of local amenities and facilities, particularly cinema, entertainment, sport and leisure, as well as the lack of local or independent retail.
- 5 TRAFFIC & VEHICLE NUMBERS**  
The traffic congestion and pollution due to the numbers of cars, coaches and other vehicles accessing the town centre is mentioned frequently as a negative.
- 6 APPEARANCE**  
Concerns regarding appearance relates to both graffiti, litter and overall cleanliness in certain areas of the public realm, as well as the appearance and maintenance of buildings.
- 7 HOMELESSNESS**  
Numerous comments mention that there is a high degree of homelessness and concern regarding access to affordable or sheltered housing.



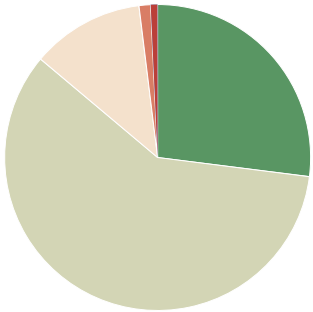
## Aspects that were rated highly...

### SAFETY

On the whole, do you feel safe when going about your usual activities in Windsor town centre?

#### Question options

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Not at all

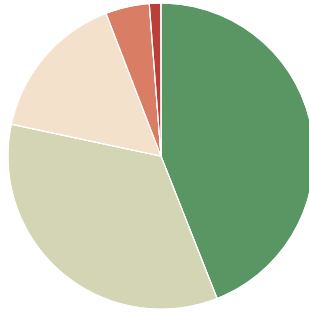


### ACCESS TO GREENSPACE

How would you rate the quality of green space and natural environments in Windsor?

#### Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

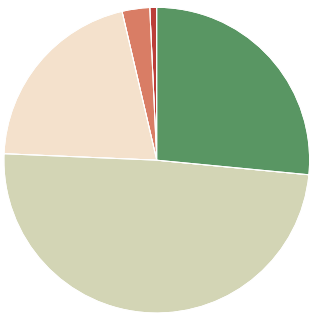


### URBAN ENVIRONMENT & LEGIBILITY

How do you find navigating the town and finding your way around?

#### Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

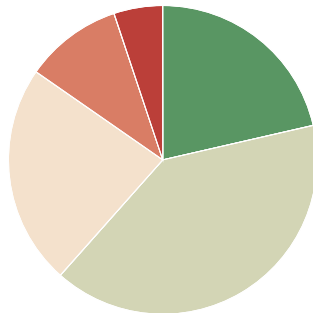


### SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Do you agree that Windsor is a place where you can live, work, spend leisure time, do business, and meet your daily needs sustainably, being conscious of your environmental impact?

#### Question options

Strongly agree Slightly agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly disagree



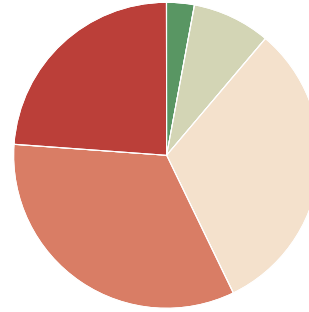
## Identified weakness...

### LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Do you feel that you are able to get involved in influencing and affecting positive change in Windsor town centre?

#### Question options

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Not at all

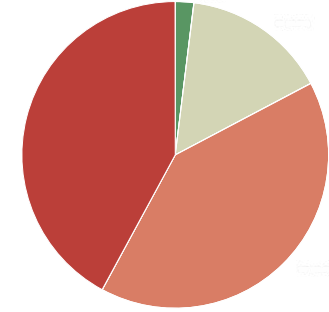


### RESILIENCE & STABILITY

Have the types of traders, vendors & service providers that you regularly frequent in Windsor remained stable in the last few years during periods of crisis?

#### Question options

Highly resilient, most businesses retained Some resilience, many businesses retained Some loss of businesses Loss of many businesses

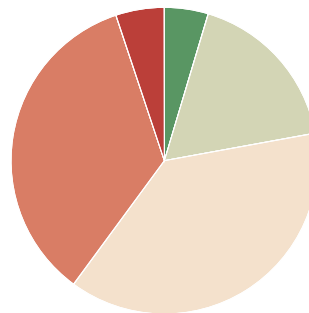


### COMMERCIAL DIVERSITY

Thinking about the things you normally spend money on, is there variety in the range of activities and commercial offers for you in Windsor?

#### Question options

Lots of variety Enough variety Some variety Limited variety No variety

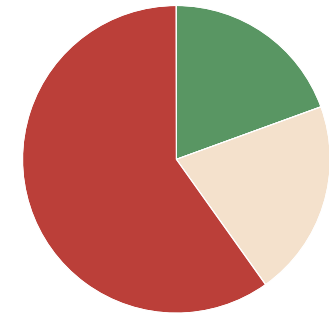


### ACCESS TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

As a resident, worker, or visitor, do you feel there are enough services, facilities and retail provision for you?

#### Question options

Yes Unsure No



## Access to services and amenities

### ACCESS TO SERVICES

Do you feel that you have access to the following facilities and amenities in Windsor?

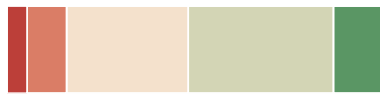
Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

Places to meet with people you know



Facilities for sport & recreation



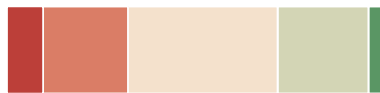
Places to meet the wider community



Opportunities for employment



Opportunities for learning



### ACCESS TO SERVICES

How do you rate the access to goods, services or amenities in Windsor Town Centre?

Question options

Very Good Good Ok Poor Very Poor

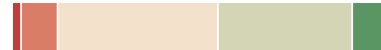
Restaurants



Leisure & Sport



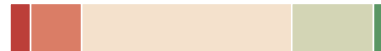
Hotels & Accommodation



Arts & Culture



Nightlife



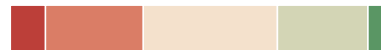
Events



Branded Retail



Entertainment



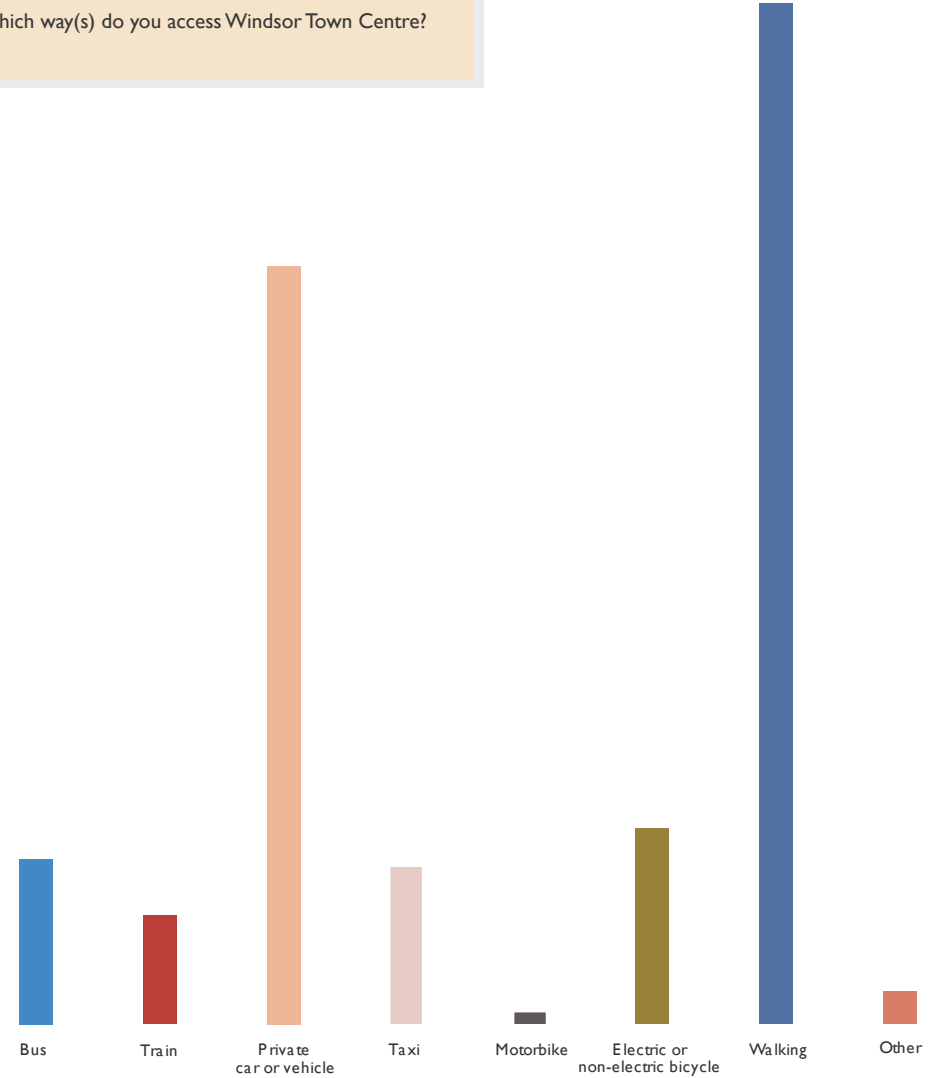
Independent Retail



## Movement patterns

### TRANSPORT

Which way(s) do you access Windsor Town Centre?



# Engagement Outcomes

## Vision for Windsor Survey

### Most Commonly Mentioned Areas for Improvement

#### 1 IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY & QUALITY OF RETAIL

The clear priority is indicated as improving the diversity and quality of the retail and commercial offer. Most comments related to a lack of retail options in various regards - affordable, independent, local or artisan etc. It is clear that the retail and commercial offer does not provide enough variety and choice for its community.

#### 2 IMPROVE ACCESS

Many comments suggested improvements to bus services, cheaper parking or more parking available for specific users. It is clear that most people find access to the town centre extremely difficult and very limited. Many feel that their only option to access the centre is by car, leading to enormous pressure on the roads and car parks. Some comments have mentioned a Park & Ride option would be welcomed to avoid having to navigate congested roads in the centre. Overall, there are many indicators that movement and access into the town centre needs to be resolved to provide efficient and convenient access for all types of users including residents, workers and customers, according to their various needs.

#### 3 REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF VEHICLES

Many commenting would like to see reduced vehicles numbers into Windsor town centre overall, for reasons such as congestion, pollution and to create a safer environment for both cyclists and pedestrians - particularly in areas of heavy footfall.

#### 4 MORE AMENITIES FOR THE LOCAL POPULATION

It is felt that there should be more facilities for local residents, and that some specific demographics, such as adolescents and young adults, have little offered in the way of amenity, entertainment and leisure.

#### 5 IMPROVE CYCLING & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

A lot of comments related to the poor infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, which include secure bike parking and pleasant cycle and walking routes. Many people would like to see improvements so that they feel it is safe, convenient and pleasant to cycle or walk into and around Windsor.

#### 6 IMPROVE THE PUBLIC REALM

Many people would like to see improvements to the appearance, maintenance and cleanliness of the public realm. The riverside area is one particular example where it is felt there could be a more pleasant and accessible public space that takes advantage of the river, one of Windsor's main assets.

#### 7 MAINTAIN THE HERITAGE QUALITIES OF WINDSOR

The heritage architecture of Windsor is a highly valued aspect of the town centre and there are some concerns that the current maintenance and use of buildings or possible future development may threaten this quality. There is a strong consensus that any improvement to the centre must conserve and enhance its heritage identity.



# Engagement Outcomes

## The Visioning Workshop

A wide range of stakeholder representatives were invited to a two-day workshop that was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September. This was an opportunity to collaborate across multiple stakeholder groups and users to develop an understanding of key issues and emerging themes regarding the aspirations for Windsor.

The workshop consisted of a number of sessions and attendees were encouraged to participate in the full programme. On the first morning, Session 1 was intended as an opportunity for all participants to develop a common understanding of relevant issues. In Session 2, that afternoon, participants formed groups of mixed representation to take part in engagement activities and group discussion, the outcomes of which are collated and presented in the next few pages.

Sessions 3 and 4 provided the opportunity for the development of strategies and actions, which are presented in the final chapter (Part 5) of this document.

### Attendance & Representation

#### Project & Consultant Team

- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- The Prince's Foundation
- Alan Baxter Ltd

#### Council Representatives

- Economic Growth
- Planning
- Transport & Infrastructure
- Neighbourhood Services
- Heritage & Conservation

#### Community Representatives

- Local ward councillors & council leaders
- Windsor, Eton and Ascot Town Partnership
- Windsor Neighbourhood Plan
- Windsor & Eton Society

#### Business & Investor Representatives

- Windsor Yards & Windsor Royal Shopping Centres
- Windsor Chamber of Commerce
- Legoland Windsor Resort
- Development interests
- Retail & hospitality businesses

### Workshop Agenda

#### Session 1: 28<sup>th</sup> Morning

- Welcome
- Stakeholder Statements
- Technical Briefings
- Vision for Windsor Outcomes so far
- Q&A
- Tour of Area & Sites

#### Session 2: 28<sup>th</sup> Afternoon

- Workshop Groups: Analysis
  - Community Capital Assessment
  - Mapping Quality of Place
- Workshop Groups: Opportunities & Vision Statements
- Feedback & review

#### Session 3: 29<sup>th</sup> Morning

- Welcome & Summary of Day 1
- Vision for Windsor Objectives
- Q&A
- Workshop Groups: Actions

#### Session 4: 29<sup>th</sup> Afternoon

- Workshop Groups: Actions (cont')
- Feedback & review
- Closing Statements & Next Steps

# Engagement Outcomes

## Mapping Quality of Place

The participants of the workshop took part in two initial engagement activities to form an assessment of Windsor town centre. They were done in groups of 8-10 participants each and the results of these activities have been consolidated in the following pages.

### Activity 1: Mapping Quality of Place

In activity 1, participants were asked to place coloured dots on a map of Windsor and the immediate area, indicating positive assets and attributes in green, problem spots in red, and opportunity areas in blue.

### Activity 2: Community Capital Assessment of Place

In activity 2, participants were consulted on both the positive and negative aspects of the 4 key pillars of sustainable communities; Natural, Social, Financial and Built.

#### Positive

Green dots denote 'positive areas, spaces or features that people like and work well'. Where the green dots accumulate, these signify areas that should be retained, preserved or enhanced.

There are a number of areas that contain multiple green dots, most of these being natural environments or heritage features:

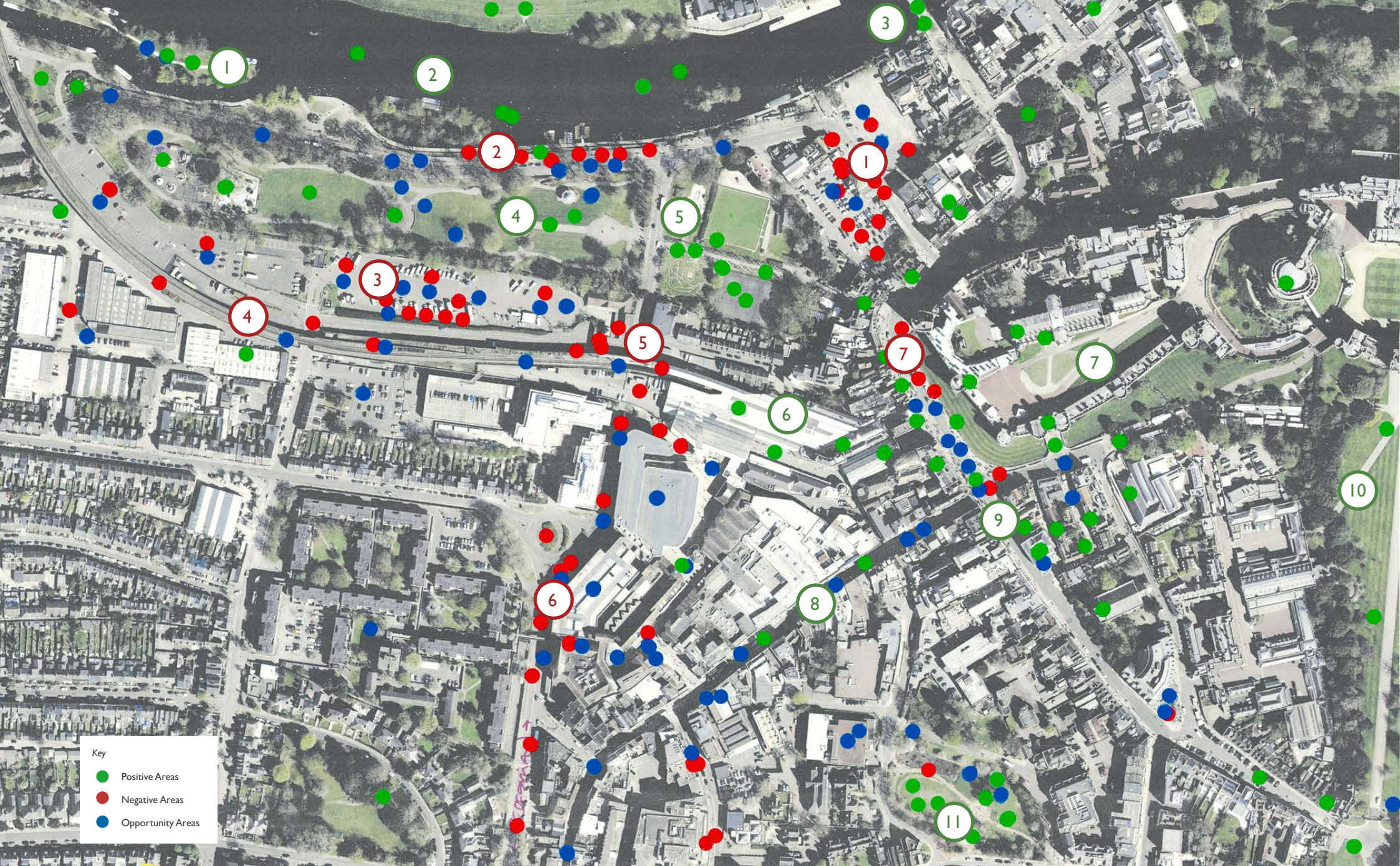
- ① Bath Island
- ② River Thames
- ③ Bridge to Eton
- ④ Alexandra Park
- ⑤ Jubilee Fountain, Royal Windsor Maze, Tennis Courts & Bowls
- ⑥ Windsor Royal Shopping Centre
- ⑦ Windsor Castle
- ⑧ Peascod Street
- ⑨ The Guildhall, Museum and areas of the High Street
- ⑩ Bachelors Acre
- ⑪ Home Park / Long Walk

#### Negative / Opportunity

Red dots denote areas that people dislike, and blue dots where people see potential. Where these colours are clustered together indicate areas that should primarily be looked at for improvement or regeneration.

There are a number of areas that contain multiple red and blue dots together, and these seem to focus on the service and access needs of Windsor:

- ① Riverside car parking sites
- ② Riverside public realm
- ③ Coach parking site
- ④ Railway arches
- ⑤ Pedestrian bridge to coach park
- ⑥ Charles Street and service areas for Windsor Yards, Royal Windsor and Peascod Street retail units.
- ⑦ Thames Street Road including junction at statue of Queen Victoria.



# Engagement Outcomes

## Community Capital Assessment

### NATURAL CAPITAL

#### Positives

- *Good access to parks, recreational areas & green space in the urban centre.*
- *The greenbelt and wider areas.*
- *Protected sites of special scientific interest and historic parks.*
- *The river and riverside.*
- *Biodiversity and ancient trees.*

#### Negatives

- *Lack of soft landscaping in town.*
- *Some areas of greenspace are underused.*
- *Flooding presents a hazard.*
- *The riverside is not well connected to the town centre.*
- *The riverside has poor public realm.*
- *Lack of green public space near Windsor Castle.*
- *Charges for access to Great Park.*
- *Lack of cycle routes along riverside and through parks.*

#### Opportunities

- *Creating better connections between amenity spaces.*
- *Activating river and riverside with new uses.*
- *Improving access and use of the parks.*
- *Improving Alexandra Park's public realm.*
- *Enhance green corridors and biodiversity.*
- *Create more river views.*
- *Local farming and food markets.*

# Engagement Outcomes

## Community Capital Assessment

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

#### Positives

- *Strong sense of community.*
- *Lots of community groups and local events.*
- *Generally safe and high levels of wellbeing.*
- *Local heritage, history and tradition.*

#### Negatives

- *Lack of local amenity and services.*
- *Local governance and politics as a barrier.*
- *Affordability of housing and cost of living.*
- *Tensions with tourist population.*
- *Lack of younger demographics and ageing population.*

#### Opportunities

- *Provide more facilities for locals – cinema, local retail etc.*
- *More evening activities.*
- *More for young people, adolescents and families.*
- *Develop cultural offer and share the history and heritage of Windsor.*

# Engagement Outcomes

## Community Capital Assessment

### FINANCIAL CAPITAL

#### Positives

- *There are plenty of businesses and retailers.*
- *It is a popular tourist destination with a high level of footfall.*
- *A number of popular visitor attractions.*
- *Strategic location.*
- *Access to an international market.*
- *Windsor is well-known and has a brand value.*

#### Negatives

- *Lack of staff due to difficulties in accessing the town centre.*
- *Lack of transport options.*
- *High business costs.*
- *Difficult service access for businesses in some areas.*
- *Uncertainty in the tourist market.*
- *Tourism contribution to the wider town centre is limited.*
- *National and local austerity threatens businesses.*
- *Security and policing is poor.*
- *High amounts of retail and lack of mixed use. E.g. lack of office space and residential.*
- *Lack of evening and overnight amenity and provision for visitors to spend more than a day.*

#### Opportunities

- *Developing the evening economy to promote more local activity and overnight stays.*
- *Affordable accommodation for overnight visitors.*
- *A greater mix of uses including a more varied commercial offer.*
- *Connection to the royal family.*
- *Green tourism.*
- *Celebrate Windsor.*
- *Reconsider parking and access to the centre.*
- *Develop movement and transport infrastructure.*
- *Improve links to Heathrow.*
- *Create a more affordable town centre.*

# Engagement Outcomes

## Community Capital Assessment

### BUILT CAPITAL

#### Positives

- *Heritage architecture is well-liked and celebrated.*
- *Historic fabric and conservation area protections.*
- *Windsor Castle is an important landmark.*
- *Railways are an essential piece of infrastructure.*
- *The town centre is highly walkable.*
- *Connection to Eton and Eton College.*

#### Negatives

- *Access and transport networks are poor.*
- *Parking capacity is limited.*
- *Poor public realm in some places.*
- *Some difficult pedestrian routes.*
- *Poor cycling infrastructure.*
- *Topography is difficult for less able or mobile people.*
- *Connectivity is poor from West Windsor and other areas.*
- *Threats to heritage protection.*
- *Clutter in public realm and on buildings.*

#### Opportunities

- *Preserving and enhancing heritage identity.*
- *Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety and access.*
- *Enhancing rail links.*
- *Reconsider entry and access to the centre.*
- *Enhancement of parking sites.*
- *Improvements to public realm.*

	<b>NATURAL</b>	<b>SOCIAL</b>	<b>FINANCIAL</b>	<b>BUILT</b>
<b>ROOTED</b>	<b>NATIVE</b> The surrounding natural environment is one of the most distinctive and valuable assets of Windsor.	<b>BELONGING</b> Residents have reported feeling safe living and working in Windsor, and that the community is a key positive aspect of living here.	<b>STEWARDSHIP</b> A lack of stewardship and community-ownership of facilities in Windsor is evident, with a lack of control over the type of commercial offers available.	<b>PLACE MAKING</b> The built environment of Windsor, including the heritage architecture and landmark buildings such as Windsor Castle, are regularly referenced as positive aspects of the town and a contributor to its identity.
<b>CONNECTED</b>	<b>ECOSYSTEMS</b> The varied network of waterways and greenspace not only creates vital ecosystems, but is an important resource for the community.	<b>SOCIAL EXCHANGE</b> Many community groups providing opportunities for social exchange and contribute to social interaction and mixing.	<b>INTEGRATED</b> Windsor's economy and activity can appear dominated by the tourism industry however, many do acknowledge the positive aspects of this as a provider of employment and income.	<b>INTER-CONNECTED</b> Windsor has poor public transport links to regional and local areas, and transport options are limited, creating problems with the ease and affordability of access.
<b>BALANCED</b>	<b>BIODIVERSE HABITAT</b> The environment contributes to the attraction of Windsor as a place to visit, live and work where people feel they can live sustainably and conscious of environmental impact.	<b>MIXED</b> Despite diversity amongst Windsor resident and visitor population, not all users feel that the town centre meets their needs.	<b>DIVERSE</b> There is a strong feeling that more diversity is needed in the retail and commercial offer, where currently the focus may be on the tourist market rather than meeting local needs.	<b>PROPORTIONAL</b> Balancing competing access needs of multiple users is needed to manage high volumes of movement and access to the centre.
<b>RESILIENT</b>	<b>REGENERATIVE</b> As adaptation to changes in climate is needed, the natural assets play an important role, particularly against mitigating flood risks.	<b>LOCAL GOVERNANCE</b> Concerns have been expressed regarding governance as there are feelings that resident and local community interests are not represented.	<b>ADAPTABLE</b> There are feelings of concern regarding the resilience and adaptability of the financial aspects of Windsor as many businesses appear to be struggling or closing.	<b>DURABLE</b> The town centre is highly rated in terms of its appearance, the quality of buildings and how easy it is to navigate.
<b>PRUDENT</b>	<b>CONSERVATION</b> There may be some risk of the loss or degradation of the natural assets, as the area deals with high visitor populations. This makes conservation and management a key priority.	<b>ACCESS TO SERVICES</b> Many surveyed responses have cited a lack of access to some key community amenities - particularly in regards to what is available to support young adults and adolescents.	<b>REINVESTMENT</b> More facilities that serve the needs of the community are needed for local residents to feel greater ownership, and a sense of investment.	<b>PRESERVATION</b> Conservation areas and listings are in place but further levels of consideration as to how to retain the essence and quality of Windsor's unique built environment is needed.

Consolidated Community Capital Framework analysis showing strengths and weaknesses of each capital, with strengths highlighted in darker tones and weaknesses in the lighter shades.



# Engagement Outcomes

## Conclusions

### Community Capital Framework Analysis

The comments from the engagement outcomes have been applied to The Prince's Foundation Community Capital Framework to assess Windsor across various aspects of its natural, financial, social and built capital. The results of this analysis indicate strength in the natural and built capital but weakness particularly in the financial capital and in some aspects of the social capital.

Particular strengths to celebrate and build upon include the natural environment, the built heritage and strong community networks. Weaknesses are identified relating to a lack of stewardship, diversity and adaptability of the local businesses and economy, and an ability to deliver the town-centre needs of the whole community.

### Outcomes & Emerging Themes

#### **Movement and Access Into Windsor**

Access to the town centre is a central issue, particularly affecting residents and workers. The Vision for Windsor survey suggests most users walk or drive to Windsor, showing little use of public transport. Bus services, in particular, can be improved in terms of local and regional connections, times of the day and frequency. Issues relating to cost and availability of parking need to be addressed, by developing other transport options to access the centre, such as a park & ride and transit shuttles using rail, bus, river and active travel.

#### **Land Use and Diverse Commercial Offers**

There is a need for a varied mixed-use offer in the centre that also provides housing, office and broader leisure and commercial uses as well as a diversity of retail and commercial options. There is interest in developing some of the missing amenities, such as an evening economy including food and beverage offers, as well as cultural and entertainment options.

#### **Activating Underused Natural Resources**

Celebrating the parks and greenspaces, and promoting greater use of these assets. This may include activating the riverfront areas with better quality public realm, improved signposting and a reconsideration of current parking sites.

#### **Future of the Hospitality Industry**

There is a need to build long-term financial resilience by diversifying the tourist attractions and offers, to provide a better visitor experience and gain town-wide benefits and re-investment. Windsor Castle plays a fundamental role in creating a balanced and mutually beneficial relationship with the town centre and local communities. There may be a need to resolve some of the conflicts between visitor and resident needs and rebalance priorities.

#### **Protection of Heritage, Character and Identity**

Prioritise retaining and enhancing the built character, the quality of the public realm, building conditions and shop fronts, ensuring that development and enhancement of Windsor does not threaten the existing qualities of place and heritage. This aligns with the development of a Windsor brand and experience that celebrates Windsor's assets of its environment, heritage and Royal connections.

# A Vision for Windsor

The Vision articulates a broad consensus, developed throughout the stakeholder engagement process, regarding main concerns for the future of Windsor.

## Part 4: A Vision for Windsor

- Preface
- The Vision & Vision Statements
- Transport & Movement
- The Built Environment
- The Natural Environment
- The Local Community
- The Global Community



# A Vision for Windsor

## Preface

**This project sought to ask the communities of Windsor what their aspirations are for their town centre. Our investigation has led to a clear and strong sense of what Windsor represents to the many people that visit, and what they would like to see from it in the future:**

- A thriving centre of community and commercial activity that provides for the daily needs of its local population.
- A memorable visitor experience, that meets the expectations of a globally recognised destination.
- A place that celebrates its unique history, heritage, culture and royal connections.
- A place that is pro-actively tackling the challenges of climate change and ensuring a secure future for its people.

## The Vision

The Vision and Vision Statements, presented in the next few pages of this chapter, intend to capture the aspirations and priorities that have been identified throughout the process of stakeholder engagement. The Vision focuses on five important facets to Windsor and the opportunities and considerations related to them;

1. Transport & Movement
2. The Built Environment
3. The Natural Environment
4. The Local Community
5. The Global Community

## Purpose & Intention

The vision has been developed with the aim of:

- Identifying the broader and far-reaching issues that need to be tackled strategically and holistically.
- Articulating an intention and direction that could be used to guide future decision making.
- Providing a big-picture perspective in which to assess the current opportunities and challenges.
- Considering how to plan for future changes, manage resources and ensure a secure economy and quality of life in Windsor.

# A Vision for Windsor

## The Vision & Vision Statements

### A Vibrant Future for Windsor

An attractive, thriving and welcoming town for the local and global community.

#### Transport & Movement

Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor town centre.

#### The Built Environment

Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor.

#### The Natural Environment

Promote, activate and improve access to the natural assets and resources.

#### The Local Community

Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.

#### The Global Community

Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse and resilient hospitality industry.

# A Vision for Windsor

## Transport & Movement

**Develop sustainable, convenient & affordable options to travel into Windsor town centre.**

An overwhelming issue that affects the residents, visitors and businesses of Windsor is that of access to the town centre. Despite good connections to London and Heathrow, for many residents in West Windsor and the surrounding regions, access to Windsor town centre is costly and difficult, due to limited public transport options and a lack of car parking.

Existing vehicle parking sites are located close to the centre, which presents problems of limited capacity and a lack of additional space to grow to meet increasing demand. This also creates traffic congestion and pollution, placing a high volume of traffic in the centre, and contributing to an unsafe and unpleasant pedestrian environment.

A strategy is needed to reconsider transport and movement to access Windsor, encapsulating investment in reliable and frequent bus and rail services, satellite parking sites for day and overnight visitors and the promotion of cycling and walking where possible, along safe and pleasant routes. Doing so provides the opportunity to improve the experience of arrival into the town and embed sustainable and environmentally-conscious principles.



Windsor & Eton Riverside rail station



Current visitor arrival into Windsor via coach park



Coach parking site

# A Vision for Windsor

## The Built Environment

**Protect and enhance the heritage, character and identity of Windsor.**

Windsor's identity is closely related to its built environment, which is composed of heritage buildings, conservation areas and listed structures.

There are understandable concerns regarding the impact of any future development, adaptation or growth, on the character and identity of the town. At the same time, poor quality public realm, and buildings that are under-maintained or not fitting within character of Windsor can impact negatively on the harmony and consistency of Windsor's character.

A heritage strategy for Windsor must consider not only how to protect the areas of conservation and surrounding sites, but how enhancement can be done in keeping with the local character and identity, extending to shop fronts and building façades, and the materiality and landscaping of public spaces.



# A Vision for Windsor

## The Natural Environment

**Promote, activate and improve access to the natural assets and resources.**

Windsor's diverse natural environment, including the numerous parks, greenspaces and the riverside, are frequently attributed as some of its principal assets. Many of these are in close proximity to the town centre and can be accessed within a short walking distance.

However, the riverside and Alexandra Gardens, which have the potential to be extremely high-quality urban green spaces, are hidden behind vehicle parking sites and busy roads.

There are opportunities to activate these spaces, improve way-finding and link up a network of green amenity and biodiversity corridors that enhance the natural environment and raise awareness of the variety of attractions within the town centre area.



River Thames



Barry Avenue riverside area



Alexandra Gardens

# A Vision for Windsor

## The Local Community

**Create a thriving local economy of business and community partnerships that benefit from Windsor's global brand.**

There is a prevailing sense amongst the local population that the town centre lacks sufficient amenities, retail and services for their needs. There are also concerns that there may be a loss of businesses and retailers, particularly as the town is recovering from the impact of Covid lockdowns and travel restrictions. Businesses report feeling threatened with increasing cost, lack of staff and uncertainty in the market and customer demand. A consequence of this business instability may be contributing to a feeling of competition between the local and global consumer.

Despite these challenges, Windsor maintains strong community groups and networks. Opportunities to strengthen local governance and increase community ownership and partnerships could see residents take a greater role in shaping a town that delivers their needs as well as providing a unique offer of retail and services to visitors from around the world. Positioning Windsor as a place of national and international importance, and defining the 'Windsor brand' creates a platform to attract inward investment from local, national and global partners from a variety of sectors and industries, leveraging the global position for local benefit.



The Old Court Arts Centre & Cinema



Railway arches units



Peascod Street shops



# A Vision for Windsor

## The Global Community

**Deliver a world-class visitor experience supported by a strong, diverse and resilient hospitality industry.**

Windsor takes enormous pride in its globally-recognised name, and tourism is a major contributor to the local economy. However the volatility of the industry has been exposed with recent national and international crises that has resulted in a lack of stability for businesses that rely on visitor footfall.

Building strength, diversity and resilience in the hospitality industry is essential to delivering a world-class visitor experience, whilst also ensuring secure employment and a stable economy. The visitor profile, currently concentrated on a particular tourist market, can be broadened to take advantage of businesses and events that have a global reach. To do this, filling the gaps in the provision of visitor accommodation, cultural, entertainment and evening and night-time activity is needed, to diversity the standard visitor experience of Windsor beyond a visit to the Castle. Nevertheless, opportunities to develop the relationship with the Windsor Castle, official royal warrants and place-based branding provide a chance to benefit from Windsor's iconic profile through re-investment in the place and locale.



Hotel accommodation in Windsor



Retail supporting Castle visitors



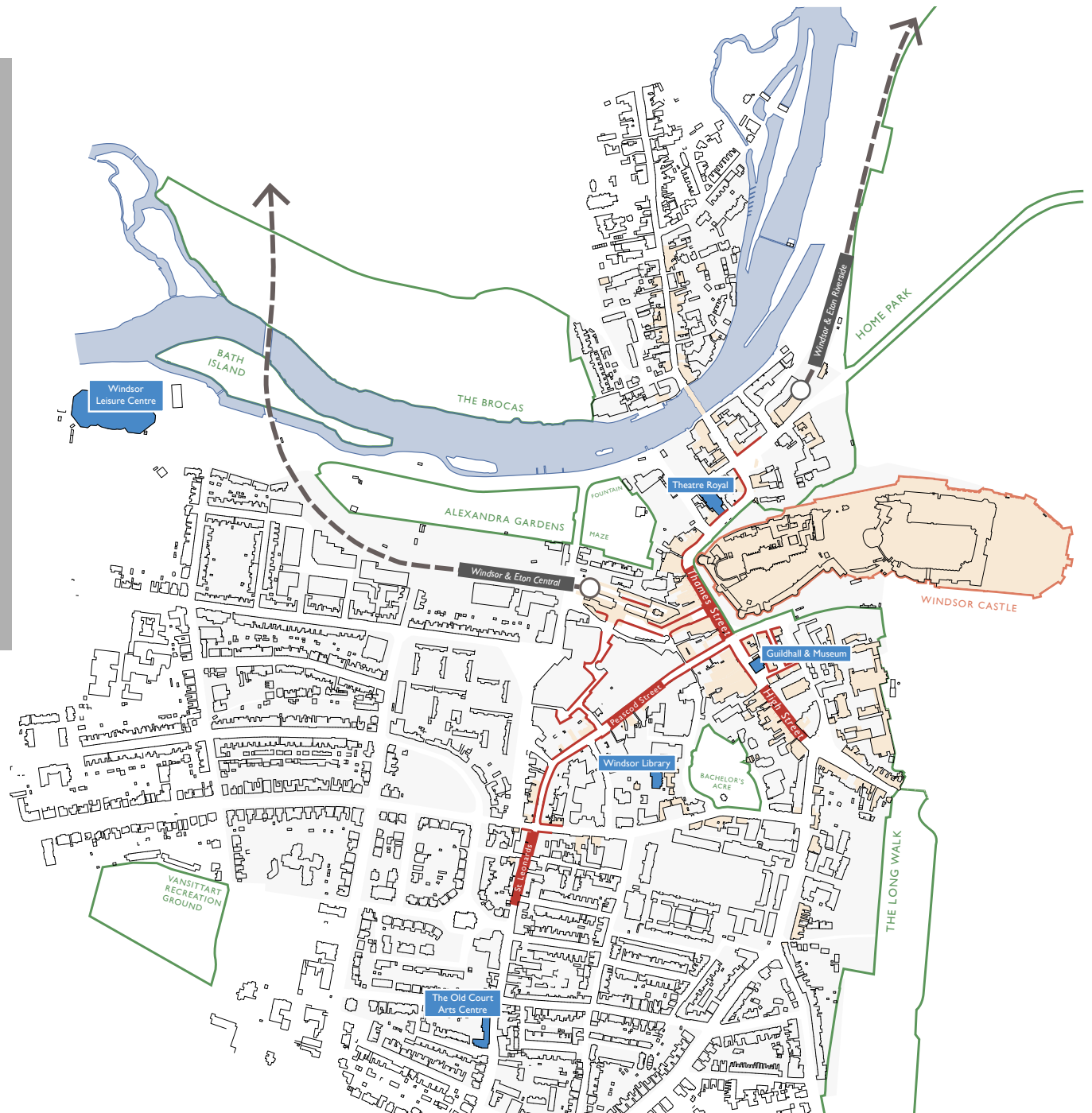
Royal Windsor Shopping Centre

# Strategies & Actions

A set of strategies and actions explore some opportunities and options to deliver the Vision.

## Part 5: Strategies & Solutions

- Delivering the Vision
- Gateways & Arrival
- Town Centre Movement
- Character & Uses
- Public Realm
- Local Governance & Community Partnerships
- Implementation



### Windsor Town Centre Assets

- Rivers & Waterways
- Parks, Gardens & Public Access Greenspaces
- Heritage Assets & Listed Buildings
- Rail links
- Retail & Commercial Streets
- Community & Cultural Assets

# Strategies & Actions

## Delivering the Vision

**The Visioning workshop, that took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September, presented an opportunity to deliberate a number of possible options to deliver the Vision.**

The outcomes of this workshop session have been distilled into a set of actions and strategies, detailed in the following pages, with the purpose of illustrating and outlining possible next steps.

The plans and diagrams contained within this segment are for illustrative purposes only, and are based on the information available at the time of the project workshop.

### Overview

A number of strategies have been formulated alongside a series of 21 action points, all intended to deliver against some or all of the vision statements.

### Strategies

- Windsor Gateways Strategy
- Town Centre Movement Strategy
- Character Area Strategy
- Public Realm Improvement Strategy

### Actions

#### Gateways & Arrival

1. Develop Satellite Parking Sites
2. Celebrate Arrival into Windsor
3. Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections
4. Encourage a Shift to Active Travel

#### Town Centre Movement

5. Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre
6. Improve Cycling and Walking Connections
7. Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement
8. Consolidate Town Centre Parking
9. Maintain Priority Parking and Access

### Character & Uses

10. Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor
11. Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core
12. Diversify Town Centre Uses
13. Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail

### Public Realm

14. Apply and Maintain a High-Quality Materiality of the Public Realm
15. Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront
16. Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites

### Local Governance & Community Partnerships

17. Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships
18. Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor
19. Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords
20. Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate
21. Capitalise on Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

# Strategies & Actions

## Gateways & Arrival

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### Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

#### Action #1. Develop Satellite Parking Sites

The town centre itself lacks capacity to meet the demand for vehicle parking. Developing a range of satellite parking options will relocate a large amount of vehicle parking needs outside the centre of Windsor. This will relieve increasing pressure for town centre parking and remove high levels of traffic from the centre.

#### Action #2. Celebrate Arrival into Windsor

For visitors travelling by coach, the experience of arrival may be dampened by difficult and unpleasant access routes to the town centre from the current coach parking site. The Windsor experience can be better celebrated by integrating transit via scenic routes directly to the town centre and other attractions. These could be provided by boat and bus services or high-quality walking and cycling options as an active alternative.

#### Action #3. Invest in Improving Public Transport Connections

Creating frequent and reliable public transport links to other nearby destinations is fundamental to embedding sustainable and affordable movement and can be strategically developed to benefit town-centre wide destination points.

Investing in rail connections to Slough presents an opportunity to develop a more frequent service and support a connection to a dedicated parking and arrival facility near the M4.

Bus services from wider areas appear to be infrequently used. Developing on-demand bus services for residential areas with limited demand would improve accessibility for many locals that are unable to travel to Windsor by private vehicle.

#### Action #4. Encourage a Shift to Active Travel

A shift from vehicles to active travel - such as walking and cycling - has an important role to play in reducing the overall impact of traffic and congestion, particularly when considering the high numbers of visitors. Providing bike, e-bike and scooter hire can open these opportunities to visitors as well as locals, and promote the use of methods of active travel to access wider areas within and around the town centre.

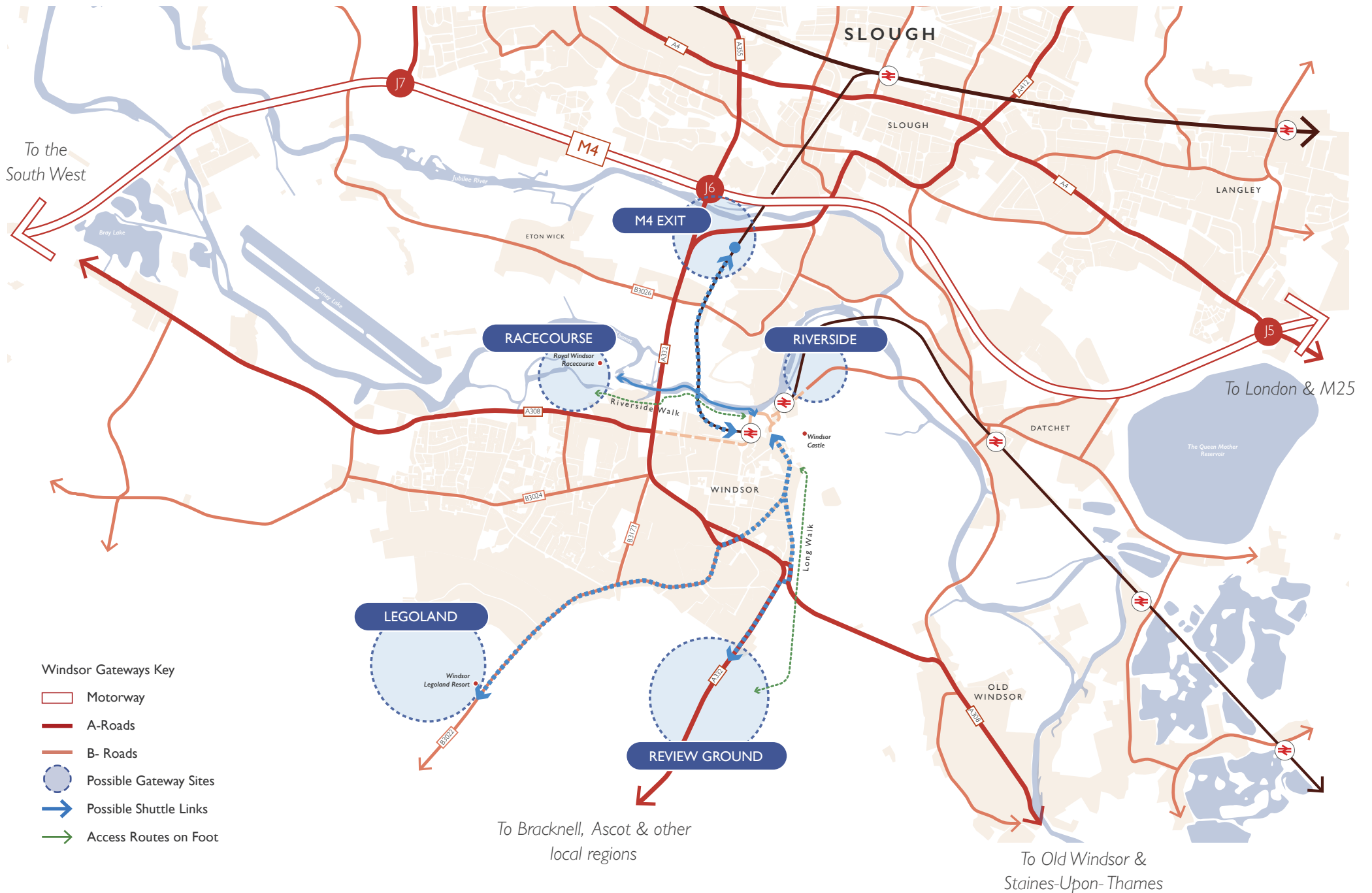
### Windsor Gateways Strategy

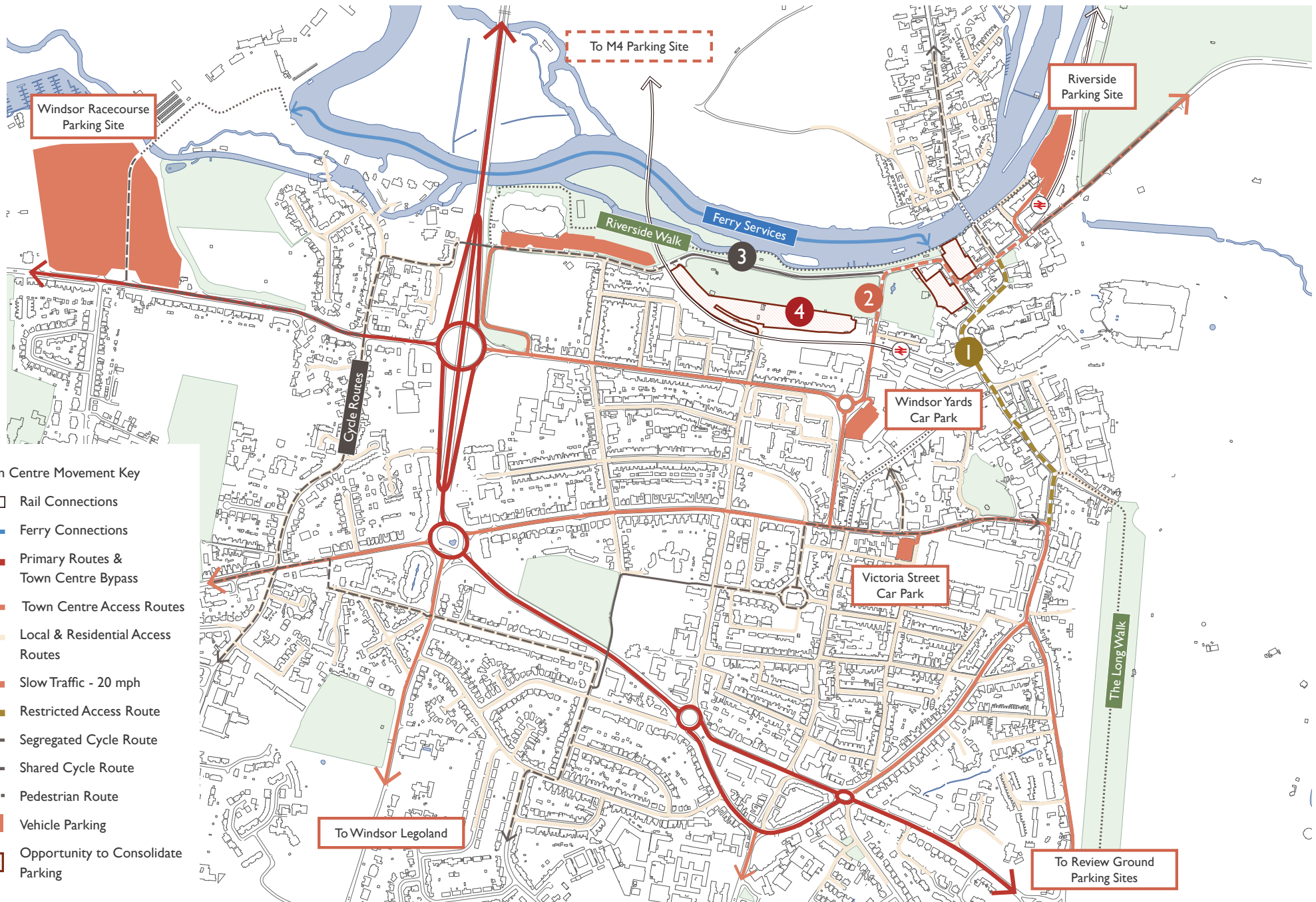
'Gateway' is a term we are using to denote a place that signals arrival. As Windsor is a compact, busy centre within a relatively sparse and rural area, a transition from the sub-rural to urban context takes place at these gateway points.

The gateways are located at the periphery of Windsor's urban area, and are designed to prompt a switch from one mode of transportation to another. This is necessary in order to facilitate more efficient methods of movement in the urban environment, and to remove heavy traffic and congestion from the central area. The gateways should be high quality spaces that elevate Windsor as a major destination and contribute to the visitor experience of entering an historically important area.

The gateway points should provide a place for secure and low-cost parking, necessary facilities including electric charging points, and access to various other transport and shuttle services such as bus, boat or rail. Methods of active travel can be encouraged by developing clear and legible cycle and walking routes and bike, e-bike and scooter hire schemes.

Strategic locations for these sites could take advantage of existing parking provisions, such as the Riverside and Review Ground parking. They could link with other destinations on the edges of Windsor, such as Windsor Racecourse and Legoland, as an opportunity to develop improved links to the town centre. Parking located adjacent to the M4 would capture a high volume of visitor traffic and coaches at a strategic point, and could potentially be served by the Windsor to Slough rail line.





# Strategies & Actions

## Town Centre Movement

### Town Centre Movement Strategy

The town centre movement strategy explores the various options for travel in the central area of Windsor. In allocating priority users for key routes, multiple layers of town-wide movement networks can be created that function to balance the needs of all users, including private vehicles and access needs, public transport networks and cyclists and pedestrians. Some key elements of this strategy include:

- 1 Thames Street & High Street**  
Route restricted to general traffic, but allowing public buses, taxis, emergency vehicles and service access, in order to reduce unnecessary through traffic.
- 2 Thames Avenue to Goswell Road**  
A 20mph zone to slow vehicles and alleviate congestion.
- 3 Riverside & Barry Avenue**  
Traffic removed from Barry Avenue between arches and junction with Goswell Road, to create a dedicated cycle and walking route, as part of a Riverside connection to Windsor Leisure Centre and on to Windsor Racecourse.
- 4 Car and Coach Park Site Consolidated and Reconsidered**  
This coach and car parking facility is poorly located and often over-capacity during peak hours, requiring a rethink on how this can be provided to meet future demands, and finding an appropriate location, such as a parking site near the M4. Moving this site would remove the congestion from coach traffic in the area, and open opportunities for other amenities along the riverside.

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### Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

#### **Action #5.** Discourage Unnecessary Vehicle Movement and Through-Traffic in the Town Centre

The town centre can be dominated by vehicle movement and parking during peak hours, which limits space for other users and pedestrians and cause safety issues and movement conflicts – particularly where there are often large crowds outside the Castle. Whilst an element of vehicle movement and access needs to be maintained, through-traffic should not be encouraged, and vehicle movement should be slowed to ensure the quality of the pedestrian experience.

#### **Action #6.** Improve Cycling and Walking Connections

Windsor's centre is fairly compact and highly walkable. Developing cycling and walking routes are an opportunity to showcase some of Windsor's key assets - such as the Riverside and the Long Walk, as well as link up to parking sites at the periphery. This also serves to create better connections to West Windsor and open amenable access routes to wider community residents.

These routes and connections should be developed, maintained and clearly marked as access routes to Windsor town centre, as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

#### **Action #7.** Take Advantage of the River Thames for Access and Movement

The use of the Thames as a movement channel provides opportunities for connecting the town centre to Windsor Racecourse, as well as further destinations such as Maidenhead and Staines. Whilst boat services currently exist, developing and promoting a frequent and reliable service could increase uptake.

#### **Action #8.** Consolidate Town Centre Parking

Large areas of surface parking waste valuable land in prime locations of the town centre, and create an unattractive amenity and areas of inactive space. In conjunction with the development of satellite parking sites which can relieve parking demand and provide an alternative coach parking facility, town centre surface parking should be consolidated with other uses to open new opportunities and better activation of the central area.

#### **Action #9.** Maintain Priority Parking and Access

Reducing vehicle and parking access can impact those unable to use other options and reduce accessibility for those with greater access needs. Sufficient priority parking in the centre should be reserved for those with the greatest needs in terms of accessibility and use, and not simply apportioned by cost.

# Strategies & Actions

## Character & Uses

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### Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

**Action #10.** Invest in the Riverside to Create an Attractive Entrance into Windsor

The Riverside area provides the first glimpses into Windsor when arriving by train into Windsor & Eton Central, or by boat or on foot from the West. This presents an opportunity to display the best of the built and natural environment and create strategic views and sight lines towards Windsor Castle which is a major visible landmark.

**Action #11.** Employ Guidelines and Regulations to Maintain the Character of the Heritage Core

The Heritage Core of Windsor represents a very valuable asset in terms of its historic, cultural and built capital and in the interests of maintaining a high-quality destination. Within this defined central heritage area, standards must be upheld relating to the appearance, materiality and condition of the built environment.

Developing regulation and guidelines on this topic may be necessary to outline how to monitor and retain a consistent standard within the Heritage Core, applying to various aspects of building facade and shop frontage, street spill-out, outdoor seating and encroachment of activities into public spaces.

**Action #12.** Diversify Town Centre Uses

The Town Centre area has a number of shopping areas with a high proportion of commercial and retail units. However, a core issue identified is in respect to a lack of variety and diversity in the type of commercial offers. Other uses need to be supported that provide some of these missing elements for broader local and visitor needs, particularly more variety in entertainment and evening activity to contribute to an active town centre throughout the day.

**Action #13.** Nurture the Local Culture, Arts and Retail

St Leonards Road has the potential to develop a separate identity as a centre of local arts, culture and independent retail, anchored by the Old Court Arts Centre at one end and connecting to Peascod Street and the Town Centre at the other.

This location provides an opportunity to support local creators, makers and businesses, away from the more competitive and tourism-driven environment of the town centre, investing in the development of a collection of locally-led community resource as well as an alternative attraction for visitors that is away from the crowds. Enhancing signage and features of public realm design can also contribute to a branding and identity as a unique place within Windsor, in order to attract the activity to create a thriving economic environment.

### Character Area Strategy

This strategy recognises the distinct and varied functions that co-exist in the town centre. Understanding and defining these can guide the coherent development of the town's identity, finding a place for all the necessary needs to synchronise and thrive. Four character areas are identified along with their key amenities:

**The Riverside** – a scenic entrance into Windsor:

- Windsor Leisure Centre
- Alexandra Gardens
- Riverside Path
- Windsor & Eton Riverside Station

**The Heritage Core** – the celebrated historic built environment:

- Windsor Castle & Crown Estate
- Guildhall & Museum
- High Street and Thames Street shops & amenities

**The Town Centre** – wider retail, commercial and service provision:

- Windsor & Eton Central Station
- Windsor Royal & Windsor Yards Shopping
- Windsor Library
- Bachelor's Acre
- Peascod Street Shopping

**The Cultural Quarter** – local amenity, retail and culture:

- Peascod Street & St Leonards Road Shopping
- Old Court Arts Centre
- Windsor College



## THE RIVERSIDE

The riverside area has an integral role to play in creating a scenic arrival into Windsor, framing views of Windsor's landmark castle with a green and blue buffer of the surrounding river and gardens. This area also provides recreation and leisure amenities, as well as supporting access routes via train, boat and cycling and pedestrian access.

## HERITAGE CORE

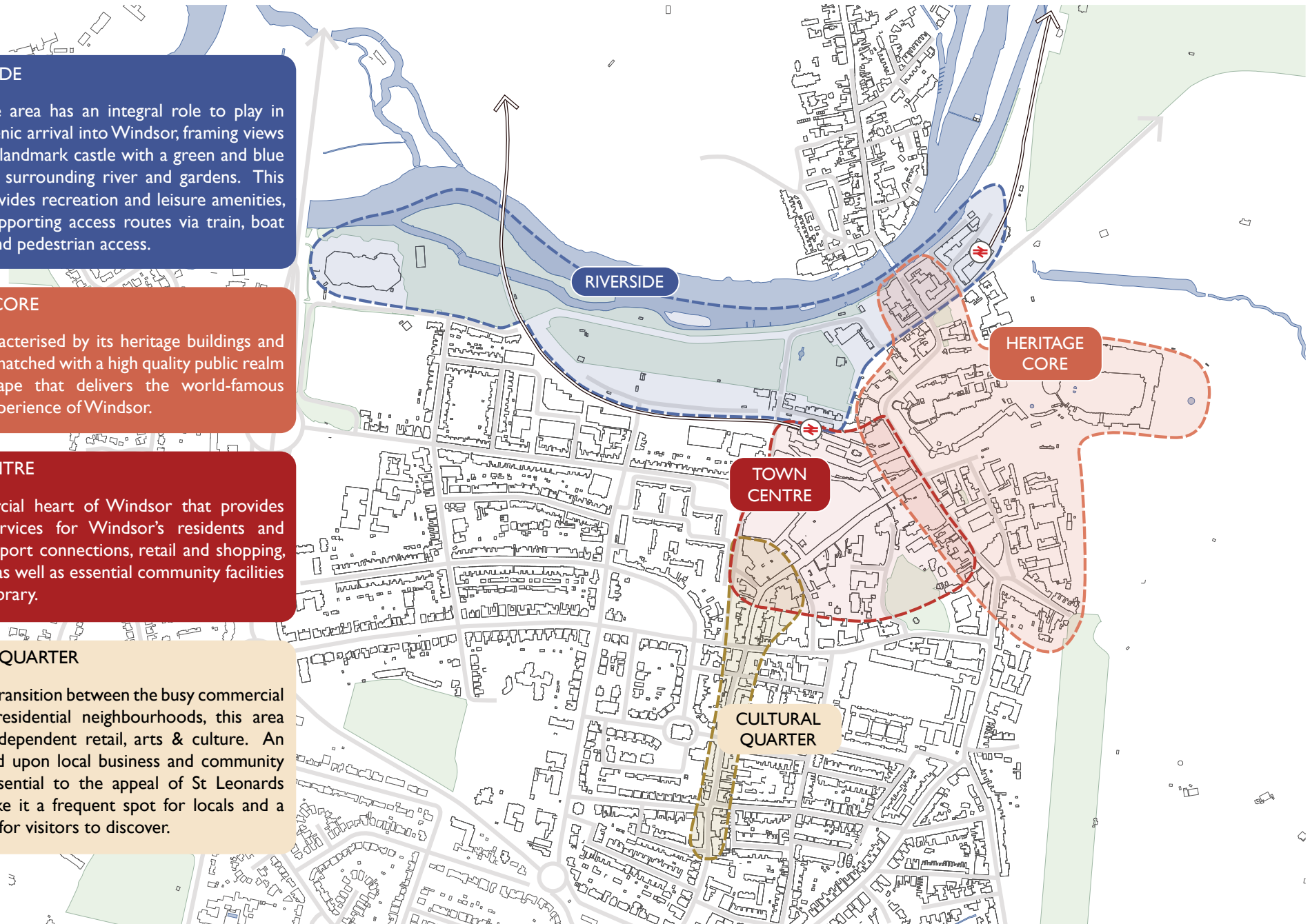
An area characterised by its heritage buildings and historic feel, matched with a high quality public realm and streetscape that delivers the world-famous image and experience of Windsor.

## TOWN CENTRE

The commercial heart of Windsor that provides the core services for Windsor's residents and visitors: transport connections, retail and shopping, restaurants, as well as essential community facilities such as the library.

## CULTURAL QUARTER

Forming the transition between the busy commercial centre and residential neighbourhoods, this area celebrates independent retail, arts & culture. An identity based upon local business and community activity is essential to the appeal of St Leonards Road, to make it a frequent spot for locals and a 'hidden gem' for visitors to discover.



# Strategies & Actions

## Public Realm

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### Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

**Action #14.** Apply and Maintain a High Quality Materiality of the Public Realm

As part of a long term aspiration, create a high quality material finish to key streets and public spaces. This should consider road surfacing and paving, street furniture and areas of landscape, which all form part of the urban experience.

One aspect of this may be removing some areas of tarmac or asphalt surface in favour of more sympathetic materiality for the heritage environment, shifting the focus away from vehicle movement towards a distinctive pedestrian experience. This could also be supported by inserting more soft landscape and tree planting within areas of urban landscape to soften the streetscape.

**Action #15.** Improve Engagement with the River and Riverfront

One of the key underused assets of Windsor is the river and riverfront. Whilst there are some inherent uses of the river for leisure, sport and transportation are taking place, more can be done to promote and activate this asset. This could be delivered by removing some of the physical barriers to access, such as vehicle movement along Barry Avenue, and creating generous cycle and pedestrian paths, and developing more commercial, community and leisure activities along the riverfront.

**Action #16.** Develop a Framework for Regeneration of Riverside Parking Sites

The riverside car and coach parking sites represent the most strategic opportunities for regenerative change for the improvement of the area and benefit of the community.

These sites represent the weakest areas of the town centre in regards to visual impact, legibility and a cohesive built form. Inevitably, there is a limited life-span in their current form as other parking solutions will need to be found to manage growing capacity needs, and a framework for future use of these sites should be pro-actively considered.

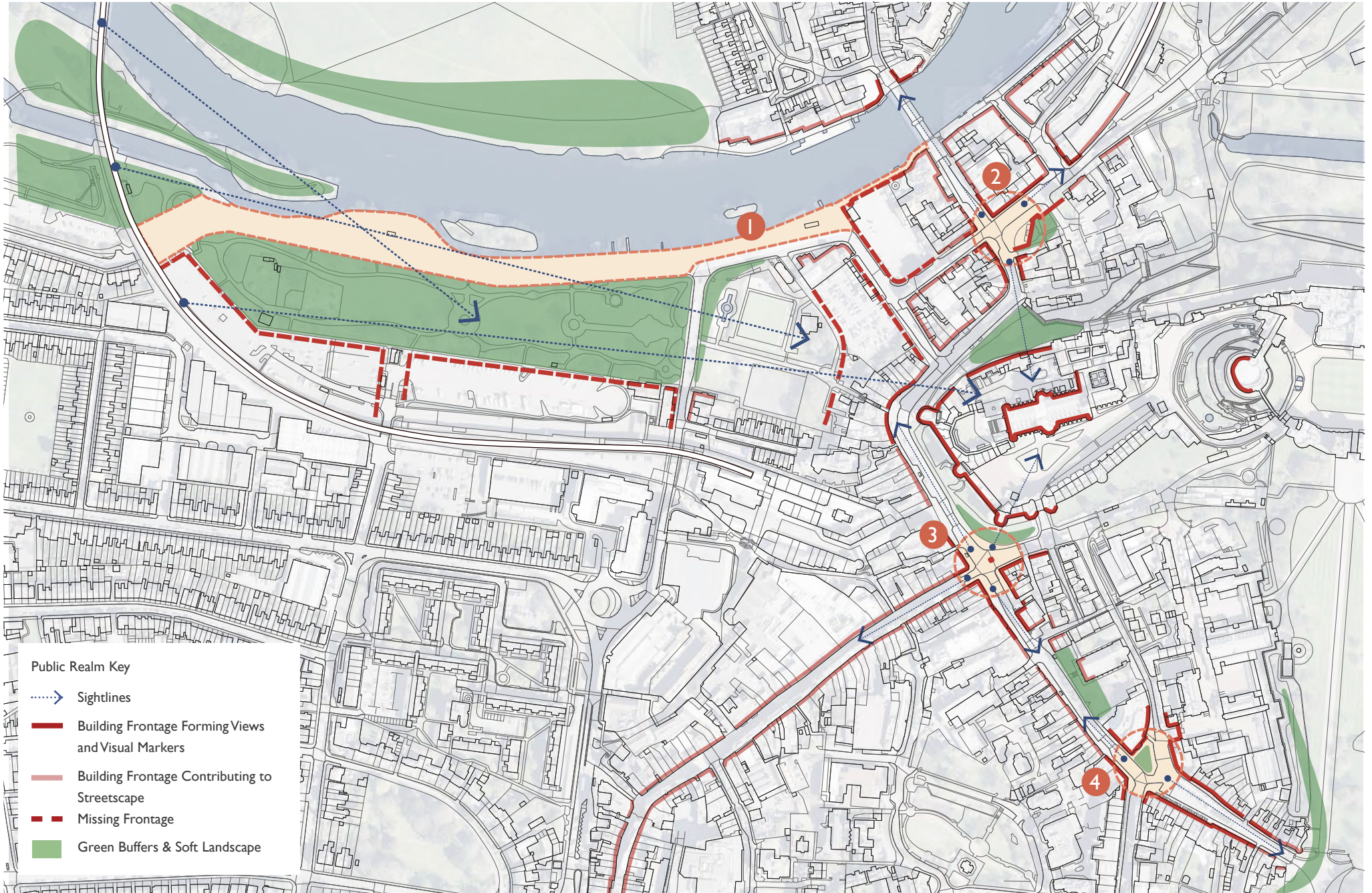
Developing a framework is an opportunity to consider how to repair the fractured streetscapes and create appropriate frontages to overlook and activate public spaces, whilst signalling arrival and entry into the town centre. It is also necessary to consider how any new structures remain sensitive to the area with appropriate design sensitivity and control of form and heights.

**The community have made clear that any development on the riverside should be sympathetically designed and controlled to show tangible benefits for the town itself.**

### Public Realm Improvement Strategy

This strategy seeks to connect a network of public spaces, nodes of activity and crucial anchor points. Some aspirational points of public realm investment are outlined, with recognition of a number of public realm improvements scheduled for 2023 at Castle Hill and the lift and bridge to the Coach Park.

- 1 The Riverside Public Realm**  
Development of a generous cycling and pedestrian channel, providing access and engagement with the water. This is also an opportunity to rethink how the riverfront meets Alexandra Gardens and remove some of the barriers between these public amenity spaces, and design in flood prevention and water retention to protect the surrounding areas.
- 2 Thames Street Junction**  
An important node to be articulated as a key entry point to Windsor's central area with a sympathetic material treatment in accordance with impressive views of the Castle walls at a passing point to the Riverside area, Eton Bridge and Riverside Rail Station.
- 3 Castle Hill**  
A central public space flanked by the Castle, the Guildhall and the monument to Queen Victoria. This public space requires wider, more comfortable pedestrian movement flows that use well-designed crowd management street furniture and appropriately acknowledges the statue at the centre. Upcoming improvements may be able to deliver on a number of these aspects.
- 4 Sheet Street Junction**  
A key node that bridges the High Street and Park Street leading towards the Long Walk, that can be better articulated with sensitive materiality and landscape.



# Strategies & Actions

## Local Governance & Community Partnerships

### Key Actions to Deliver the Vision

#### **Action #17.** Build a Directory of Community Groups and Partnerships

The strength of Windsor's existing local community networks can be maximised to create a directory of groups and partnerships, a potential first step to synthesize the wider community needs with active resources to deliver against local targets and interests, whilst also creating a greater degree of community ownership and agency.

#### **Action #18.** Establish a Collective Voice of Stakeholder Representation Across Windsor

A forum to discuss and develop a strong voice of stakeholder representation of the various interests of residents across Central Windsor and West Windsor, in addition to wider areas that share a stake, is needed to create a unified community response, and dissolve some broader tensions and conflicts. This could enable a means for council offers and local political representation to support and devolve a degree of decision making power to a single entity community interest group.

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#### **Action #19.** Create a Register of Ownerships and Landlords

A landlords register is intended as a means of creating accountability, transparency and forming channels of communication to land and building owners in Windsor.

#### **Action #20.** Engage with Windsor Castle and The Crown Estate

The relationship with Windsor Castle, historically and in the modern day, has been an important one. It is important to consider how the community supports the Castle, and the Castle serves the community in return, with a mutually beneficial relationship to be sought.

The Castle is an opportunity to celebrate Windsor's history and develop a programme of community education and skill development, and other cultural and community opportunities.

#### **Action #21.** Capitalise on Royal Warrants and the Windsor Brand

Windsor has a history of producing high quality goods and services for the Castle and its royal residents, and today, this branding power carries global recognition. This presents an opportunity for local businesses and investors to capitalise on the Windsor name and contribute unique commercial offers that support the ethos of the modern day royals of craftsmanship and sustainable practice. Windsor can take advantage of this to cultivate opportunities for cultural, leisure and business tourism, and stage national and international events, to build diversity and resilience in its economy.

# Strategies & Actions

## Implementation

### Recommendations for Delivery of Strategies & Actions

- Identify priority areas and interventions, alongside a programme and timeline.
- Create a stakeholder matrix for further consultation.
- Embed community engagement as a means to review initiatives as they develop and ensure a holistic approach that is in line with the principles and goals of the Vision.

### Next Steps

The actions will be prioritised and reviewed through RBWM Cabinet and schedules agreed accordingly. It is intended that the following governance is implemented to facilitate this:

- Review existing groups & forums with involvement in Windsor before establishing any new stakeholder groups
- Form a Programme Board to monitor and steer progress across all vision statement and key priorities within each
- Form task and finish groups to wrap-around the key priorities, with adequate subject matter experts to drive these forward

A critical element of the next phase of work on the Vision for Windsor project is to continue working with stakeholders and members of the community. This is why working groups will encourage co-production alongside residents and interested parties.



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