

# Corsham

## COMMUNITY AREA FRAMEWORK

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Disclaimer: The Framework is the result of a collaborative process; the individuals involved and organisations represented do not necessarily agree with all of the proposals included here.

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# WHAT SHOULD CORSHAM

Corsham is a historic market town which sits in an important location. Together with the area that surrounds it, the town has a rich history in communications and the military and has seen substantial recent growth in key sectors. This legacy is reflected in the ambitions, intelligence, opportunities and infrastructure that the town has to offer.

WHAT ASSETS DO WE NEED TO PROTECT?

HOW MUCH GROWTH SHOULD THERE BE?

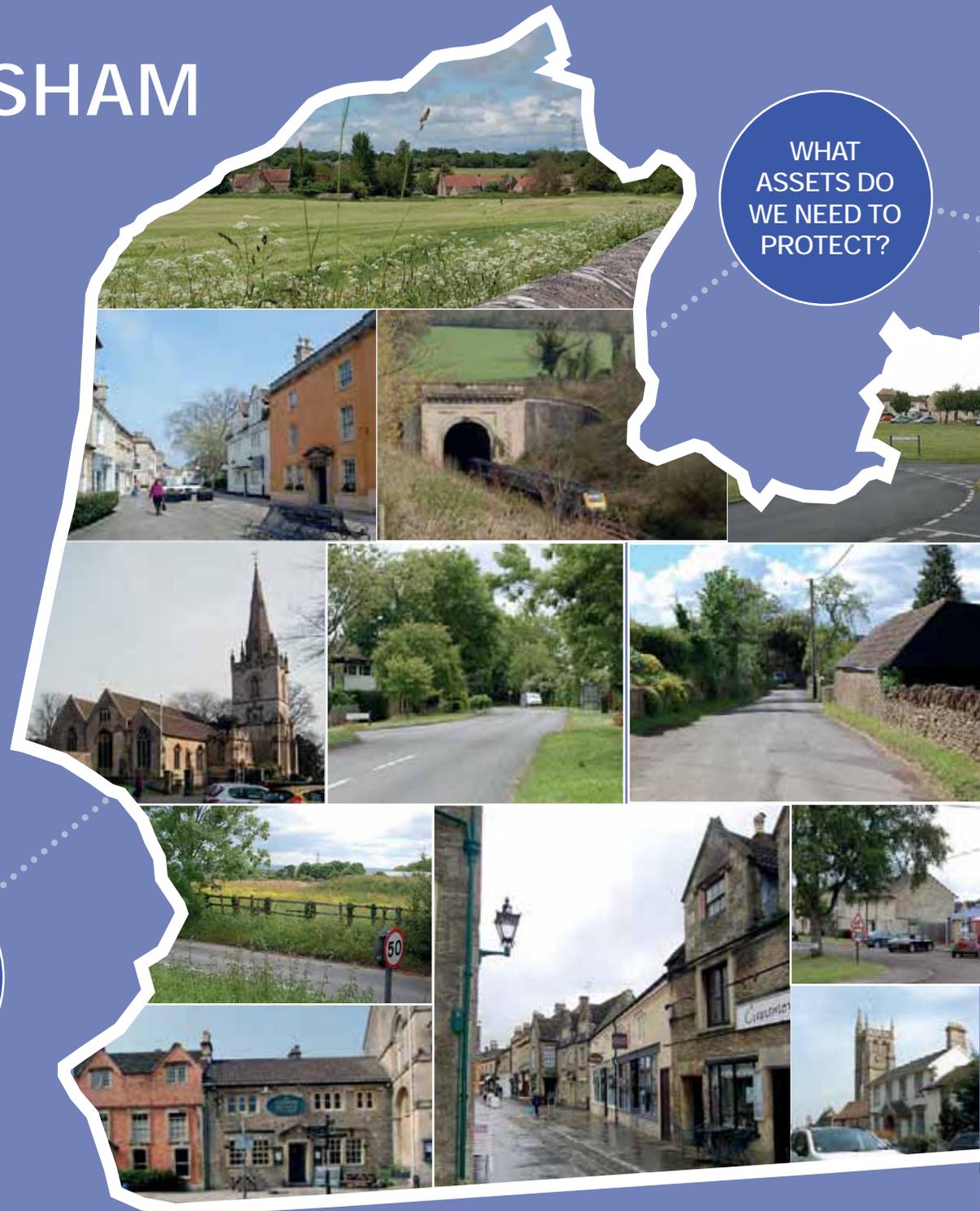
HOW DO WE CONNECT PEOPLE AND PLACES?

HOW DO WE MAKE THE MOST OF THE TOWN'S ASSETS?

WHERE SHOULD NEW JOBS BE LOCATED?

PEOPLE

CHARACTER



# BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

HOW DO WE SUPPORT TOURISM?

HOW DO WE IMPROVE LEISURE PROVISION?

PROSPERITY

HOW DO WE SUPPORT THE DIGITAL ECONOMY?

HOW DO WE SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS?

HERITAGE

HOW DO WE PROTECT GREEN SPACES?

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN THE VILLAGES?

MOVEMENT

WHAT ADDITIONAL SERVICES WILL WE NEED?

CULTURE



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through a quirk of its geology and consequent human activity, the Corsham area today is a remarkable place that presents unique opportunities belying its outward appearance of a quiet, rural Wiltshire market town. To set out a long term vision to help shape the nature of future development and growth in the Corsham Community Area, Wiltshire Council appointed Arup and Cushman & Wakefield to lead the preparation of an Area Framework and Delivery Strategy.

The area's earliest economic activity was predominantly centred on agriculture and its associated wool industry however, it was the establishment of transport infrastructure - the Great West Road and the Great Western Railway that helped to put Corsham on the map. The excavation of Box Tunnel by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, led to the discovery of a rich seam of oolitic limestone, known as "Bath stone" which, was highly sought after for stone masonry and characterised the intricate Georgian and Victorian architecture of the region.

This demand led to the excavation of expansive underground quarries, extending to millions of square metres. Areas of the mines were later re-purposed to store munitions or were transformed into secret 'shadow' factories to support the Second World War. This military and security function was continued through the Cold War, which saw the underground spaces used for nationally critical infrastructure and the site for an emergency seat of government.

More recently the Ministry of Defence has further consolidated its core communications and ICT activities in to Corsham and as such, they continue to play a key role in the wider community area as a significant employer, trainer, landowner and investor.

This technological activity, together with specialist infrastructure and skilled workforce has in turn, encouraged a number of small to medium sized businesses – as well as significant public and private sector organisations including Bath Spa University, the Corsham Institute, Ark Data Centres, Skyscape Cloud Services, Airbus, Boeing and British Telecommunications, to locate in the area.

Characterful built heritage and a high quality living environment has helped to make the Corsham community area a desirable place to live. Its talented local workforce, secure ICT infrastructure allied with educational facilities both existing (Corsham Court and Hartham Park) and planned (Mansion House and Hartham Park), has also established Corsham as a desirable place to work and to learn.

Much has been done through the wider working groups for the Neighbourhood Plan; Public Realm Strategy; and the railway station. The Framework seeks to support these efforts and to continue the natural correlation of place and activity in the Corsham Community Area.

Looking forward, continuing dialogue will be required to agree the specific delivery strategies for projects and the appropriate mechanism/bodies needed to coordinate the activities necessary to get projects/initiatives underway. The accompanying Delivery Strategy should aid this process.

The challenge for the Area Framework is to establish an appropriate balance between potential future growth to ensure the future prosperity, the realisation of the potential of its physical assets, innovation and wider ambitions and the protection of the inherent quality of place.

The Framework is structured in three sections:

**INTRODUCTION:** This outlines the purpose of the report and activities undertaken to inform the preparation of the framework.

**PRINCIPLES OF CHANGE:** This describes the transition from describing and understanding the current nature of the Corsham area, to visioning what it should be like in the future. This section provides objectives to help guide proposals and promote the area as a place to live, play, work, and learn.

**CORSHAM AREA FRAMEWORK:** This details the key projects and initiatives in terms of what they are, where they are located and why they are relevant to each area of the Community Area.

A key observation from the consultation process is that the Corsham Community Area comprises many distinct and separate places all within a wider landscape setting. At a more detailed level, the issues and aspirations for each are quite diverse. As such this report considers the Corsham Community Area as comprising three distinct spatial levels which are defined by both their geography and the coherence of the issues that affect them.

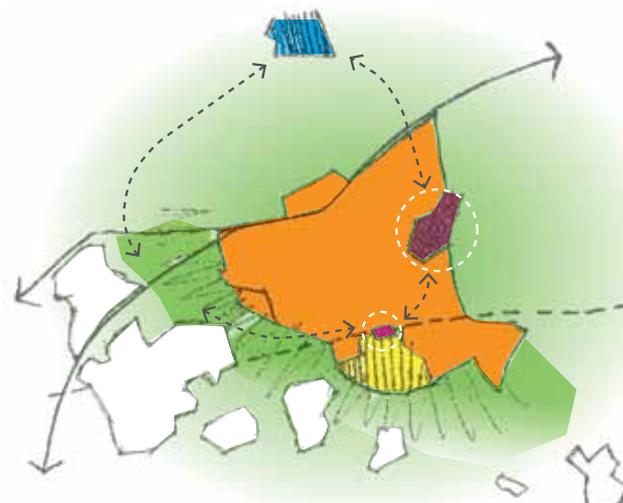
To establish a clear approach to future growth that is sustainable and holistic, the following strategic proposals have been developed.



### PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE VILLAGES

The villages are an important component of the area's character and appeal. The Framework comprises a collection of individual settlements set within their landscape context. As an approach the individual character and integrity of the villages should be protected, proposals limited to infill development with the use of brownfield sites encouraged. Opportunities that integrate sustainable agriculture, social infrastructure, conservation and tourism opportunities celebrating the history of the settlements are encouraged. This spatial level is referred to in the report as 'Greater Corsham'.

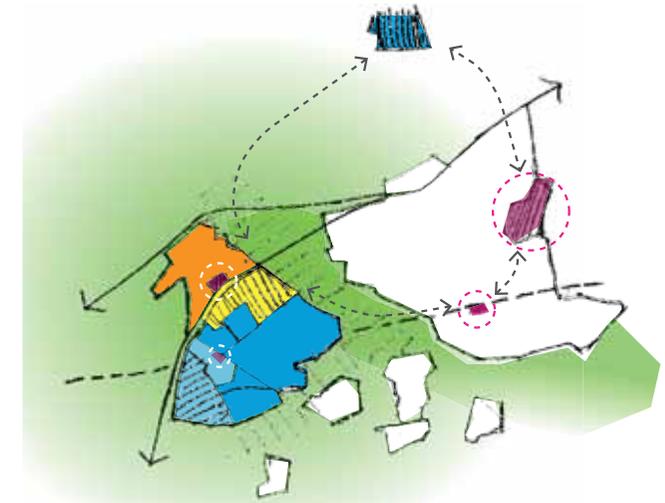
The proposals and initiatives for 'Greater Corsham' include: strategic infrastructure connections to promote a shift to more sustainable modes of travel that encourage active lifestyles and reduce congestion; the 'Corsham Link' a walking and cycling link connecting the town centre with Hartham Park, West Corsham and the site for a new railway station; and examining options for the provision of access and supporting infrastructure for a new station.



### REFOCUS CENTRAL CORSHAM

Recent growth of town has become removed from the town centre. A strategy has been developed to redefine the town as a distinct place and to facilitate growth that integrates with the existing community and strengthens the economic performance of the town centre. This spatial level is referred to in the report as 'Central Corsham'.

The proposals and initiatives for 'Central Corsham' include: a concept for a remodelled town centre exploring redevelopment opportunities at Newlands Road; sustainable growth to the south of the railway line with strong pedestrian connections to the town centre; a package of enhancements to improve legibility, wayfinding and create a strong identity for the town centre; and review the opportunity for a new hotel examining potential sites and wider redevelopment aspirations.



### CREATE WEST CORSHAM

The existing and proposed development to the west of Corsham present challenges relating to connection, identity and increased pressure on local facilities. The availability of space and flourishing economic activity present an opportunity through careful planning, to create an identity for the area as a living, working and learning environment. This spatial level is referred to in the report as 'West Corsham'.

The proposals and initiatives for 'West Corsham' include: a Development Framework outlining the potential for development and enhancing social infrastructure with an emphasis on transforming the roads between facilities and places into 'streets'; and a package of environmental enhancement measures linked to redevelopment and site remodelling opportunities.



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

This section outlines the purpose of the framework and the activities undertaken to inform the preparation of the report.

1.1 Introduction

1.2 The Process of Collaboration

1.3 Outcomes of the Consultation Process

Wiltshire Council appointed Arup and Cushman & Wakefield in March 2015 to lead the preparation of an Area Framework and Delivery Strategy for Corsham and its surrounding area. The overarching objective of the Framework is to set out a long term vision to help shape the nature of future development and growth in the Corsham area.

A steering group was assembled to inform and assist the process and provide critical review.

This document describes the process that was undertaken in preparation of the Framework and concludes with a series of potential proposals that will help to realise a long term vision.

The Framework is supported by two further reports that were completed as part of this commission. These are a Baseline Report that documents factual information regarding the study area (a summary of the Area Context is contained within Appendix B) and a Delivery Strategy as prepared by Cushman & Wakefield. Both supporting documents should be read in conjunction with this report.

## PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The town of Corsham and its surrounding landscape and settlements have undergone an interesting and unusual historical development. The influence of agriculture, quarrying, transport, military and information and communications technology (ICT) activities have combined to create a remarkable and unique place. In particular, the area's digital infrastructure and educational functions are of national and international significance and belie its outward appearance of a quiet rural market town community.

Today, the area's notable economic opportunities together with its attractiveness as a place to live, continue to assert pressure towards further urban growth. Whilst some growth may be desirable to support the long-term prosperity and viability of the area, it has been identified that due consideration must be given to the nature and possible consequences of that growth if the area's potential is to be fully realised without compromising its many assets.

The purpose of the Area Framework is to establish what sort of place Corsham should be in the future and then set out a plan to direct future development towards a long term vision. The Framework gives consideration to the key issues facing the Corsham Area and identifies proposals to help deliver change.

The Corsham Area Framework is intended to be flexible and adaptable rather than to present a fixed 'masterplan' position. It will act as a guide for a range of decisions that will shape a sustainable future for the area. Specifically, the Framework will:

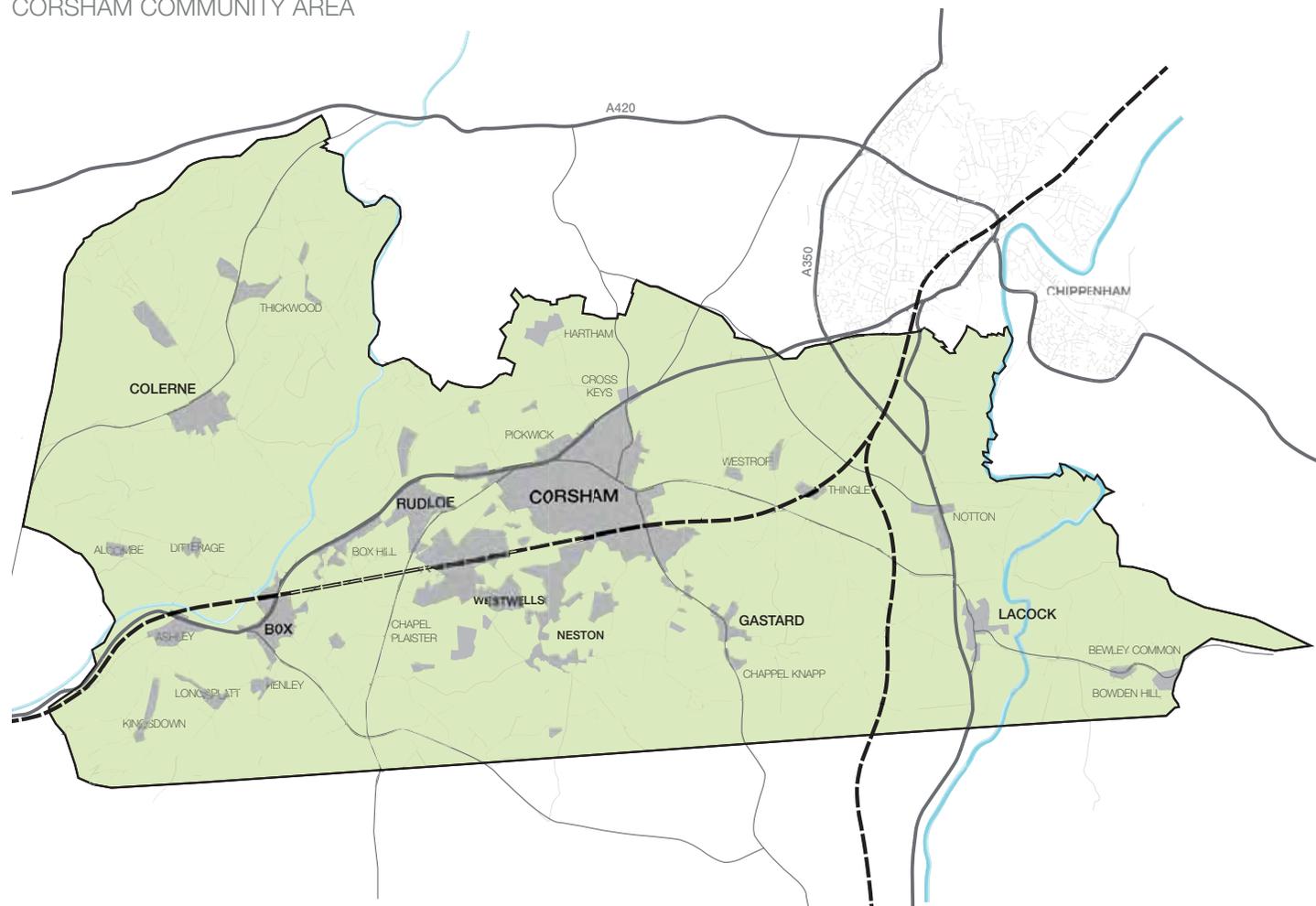
- Add detail to and enhance the plan for the Corsham Community Area as set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).
- Act as a precursor to and inform the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan along with other relevant local planning documents.
- Inform bids for investment and funding by stakeholders.
- Form a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications once the Area Framework is taken forward by Wiltshire Council and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Please note that for the purpose of this study, the Framework area is identical to that of the Corsham Community Area as set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy identified on the adjacent plan.

## THE FRAMEWORK BRIEF

*"... develop a high quality strategy and masterplan that will attract and channel new investment into the town and the wider settlement area."*

### CORSHAM COMMUNITY AREA



# THE PROCESS OF COLLABORATION

1.2

## INCEPTION MEETING

April 2015: Initial meeting to help the project team understand the range of interests and perspectives, clarify the relationship between the Framework and the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan, understand the concurrent studies, and discuss the relationship and role of the key stakeholders in the area.

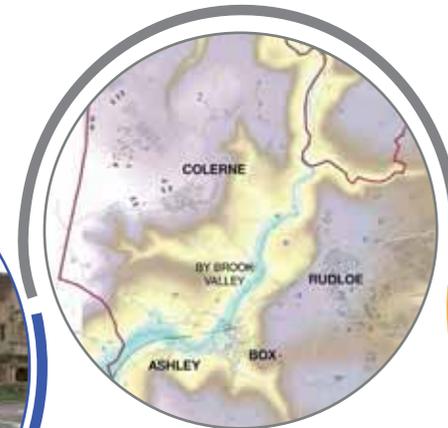


The Area Framework has been developed as part of a collaborative and iterative process. To facilitate the preparation of the Corsham Area Framework as a collaborative process Wiltshire Council established a steering group.

The steering group comprised representatives from: Wiltshire Council (officers and members), Parish Councils, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Corsham Institute, Hartham Park, Bath Spa University, Corsham Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan team, and major landowners.

Throughout the preparation of the Area Framework there have been a planned series of discussions, meetings, site visits, facilitated workshops and a stakeholder event. An overview of the activities undertaken and how stakeholders have helped shaped the framework is illustrated opposite.

## STEERING GROUP MEETING



May 2015: An opportunity to present initial findings and observations from a review of the existing baseline information. The meeting allowed the steering group to identify any knowledge gaps and key issues to be included in the Baseline Report. Following this meeting the baseline report was issued to the steering group for review.



## CORSHAM WALKING TOUR

April 2015: A walk around Corsham town centre with Steering Group members to understand some of the unique characteristics of Corsham and plans for incubation space at the Mansion House site.



## SITE VISITS

May 2015: Site visits and meetings with MoD Corsham, Hartham Park and the Ark Data Centre at Spring Park to understand the current level of activities, facilities, wider land holdings, and to understand their use of Corsham's quarries and tunnels.

## STEERING GROUP MEETING



June 2015: A discussion of the issues, opportunities and development principles identified in the baseline report. Initial comments on the Baseline Report and the need to ensure the report addresses the whole Community Area.

The meeting focused on a discussion of Corsham as a collection of separate 'places' which vary in form, function and character, and discussed the character of the 'gap' between Corsham and Rudloe.

## COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP

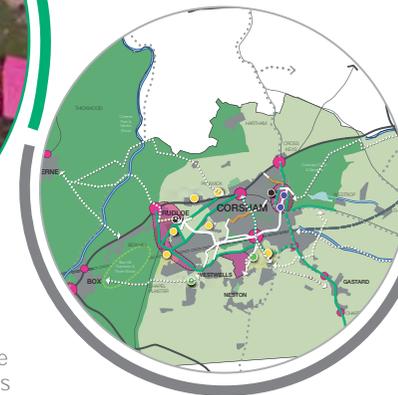


July 2015: Workshop to define and agree the baseline position and key issues for the Area Framework, and discuss key elements and themes in detail. The workshop was attended by representatives from Wiltshire Council, Corsham Town Council, the Steering Group and other key stakeholders. The workshop comprised a series of brief presentations to the workshop attendees, wider group discussions and smaller group exercises.

## PUBLIC REALM WORKSHOP



June 2015: Attendance at a stakeholder workshop for the Public Realm Study (run by NEW Masterplanning) to ensure points of discussions, ideas and common themes relating to the public realm study were fed into the Framework. The workshop was attended by local residents, business owners and a range of stakeholders.



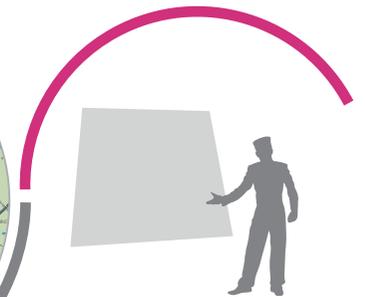
## STEERING GROUP MEETING

August 2015: Meeting to feedback comments from the collaborative workshop, present the emerging Corsham Area Framework and delivery strategy, and gather feedback to inform the reporting stage.

September 2015 onwards: Ongoing series of meetings and feedback sessions between the project team to discuss progress and content of the Framework report and discuss emerging issues.

March 2016: Presentation at Corsham Means Business event.

## PRESENTATION



## STEERING GROUP MEETING

April 2016: Meeting to review draft final Framework report.

Throughout the preparation of the Area Framework there have been a planned series of discussions, meetings and site visits, as outlined in Section 1.2. The culmination of this process of collaboration was a facilitated workshop with the Steering Group and key stakeholders.

The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Help to engender positive and collaborative relations between the consultant and stakeholder group.
- Define the baseline position, discuss key themes and agree key issues and constraints to be addressed in the Framework.
- Set agreed objectives for the Area Framework to address. The workshop was organised into two discrete parts.
  - Part 1: A facilitated whole group exercise to discuss activities and issues affecting the Community Area, physically locating these onto a large aerial plan.
  - Part 2: A series of Themed small group discussions organised by four 'places': Corsham; Westwells, Neston and Gastard; Rudloe and Hawthorn; and Wider Community Area.

A summary of the findings from this work is provided here.

## CORSHAM

The majority of the comments received centred on Corsham and its western edges.

- **Character:** A melting pot of influences and multiple identities: business, education, digital, historic and cultural/artistic influences. There was uncertainty over what type of place Corsham town centre should be: local centre versus a tourist destination. The perception of character and identity is different depending on perspective (local resident versus tourist).
- **Town centre vibrancy:** Concerns expressed over the general lack of vibrancy in the town centre which is currently losing retail premises to residential use. Opportunities to increase the retail/ employment use and footfall on High Street should be encouraged.
- **High Street:** A unique place which defines the identity of the whole town. General support for making more of the High Street and using education and enterprise facilities to drive increased footfall.
- **Retail:** The retail core at High Street is poorly connected to the main employment areas. Is it appropriate to create a secondary retail and service area? General discussion over need and appropriateness of a larger supermarket considering the town's proximity to Chippenham.
- **Education:** Recognition of the commitment and educational activities via Bath Spa University at Corsham Court, specialist digital and cyber education via Corsham Institute at Hartham Park and support for redevelopment proposals at Mansion House.

- **Environment:** General strong agreement that the green space around the town is a positive asset and should be protected. The separation from Rudloe was discussed and generally felt to be desirable to retain and enhance.
- **Services and facilities:** The town has a range of good facilities but some perception that it lacks entertainment such as a cinema. There is a lack of budget hotel provision in the area to support tourism and business travellers.
- **Connectivity:** The historic and more recent areas of Corsham are poorly connected for pedestrians. General support for the reopening of Corsham station. Support for a circular cycling route around Corsham linking key sites.
- **Land south of the railway:** Considered to be a potential development opportunity in the longer term which would help the business case for re-opening the station.



## WEST CORSHAM, RUDLOE + HAWTHORN

- **Identity:** Consensus that west Corsham has no coherent identity, is unclear in terms of point of arrival, and has no sense of a 'heart' or centre, either in a functional or symbolic sense.
- **Cohesion:** The area currently comprises a series of disparate uses that have little relationship to each other; functionally or in terms of use. The large footprints and secure boundaries of some occupiers significantly contribute to the lack of cohesion.
- **Existing proposals:** Discussion of alternative arrangements of the current proposed land uses and general consensus that it could be better if the area was planned as a coherent whole rather than on a site by site basis. There are still some opportunities to infill or change use to create a better arrangement of uses/activities.
- **Land use:** There was no consensus as to whether this area should predominantly be a place for living or working; this led to a general acceptance that there will be substantial areas of both and that there needs to be a masterplan to make these fit together better. General support for extension of Spring Park facilities and balanced development on brownfield sites.
- **Tourism:** Discussion of potential for tourism around the mines, including MoD sites but this was noted as having related health and safety concerns.
- **Local business:** General desire for MoD activities to benefit local business but limitations exist due to wider contract protocols.

## WESTWELLS, NESTON + GASTARD

These are defined in the Core Strategy as 'small villages': "Very modest development may be appropriate at small villages, to respond to local needs and to contribute to the vitality of rural communities."

- **Westwells:** Considered to lack identity on arrival from the west (Westwells Road).
- **Neston and Gastard:** Both were considered to have a strong character, close knit, green spaces with future development confined to limited infill opportunities. Settlements far enough from Corsham to avoid merger.
- **Neston Park:** Viewed as a key feature of the area, acting as a defining feature for the area south of the Corsham.
- **Leafield Industrial Estate:** Considered to have good levels of occupancy. Potential for rationalisation to maximise its potential for expansion and further opportunities.



## WIDER COMMUNITY AREA

The settlements 'identify' with different locations due to topography and cultural similarities: Colerne with Bath, Lacock with Corsham (despite proximity to Chippenham). Biddestone (outside Corsham Community Area) also looks to Corsham. The villages quite like their autonomy and do not want to be secondary to Corsham but a joined-up approach is required to development and opportunities across the area.

- **Connectivity:** Disparity between the desirable and practical connections between settlements - generally a lack of sufficient demand to support an increase in scheduled services between outlying settlements but a desire to increase cycle connectivity. Congestion on the A4 affects Corsham and Box and could limit future growth.
- **Digital infrastructure:** Some of the community still need to harness the benefits of the strong ICT infrastructure in the locality.
- **Colerne:** Generally considered to have limited functional relationship to the rest of the Community Area due to the By Brook valley. Little scope for tourism but some potential for development on the airfield/MoD site.
- **Hartham Park:** Desire for it to be better connected to Corsham and feel more part of the town to share the potential of the site.
- **Box:** Strong location in the green belt. Support for a music festival related to the presence of Real World Studios.
- **Lacock:** A strong identity has been established due to the National Trust's influence. Potential for further tourism opportunities.



# 2

## PRINCIPLES OF CHANGE

The focus of this section is to chart the transition in thinking from describing and understanding the current nature of the Corsham area, to visioning what it should be like in the future.

2.1 Framework Principles

2.2 The Framework Areas

## EXTRACT FROM THE FRAMEWORK BRIEF TO CONSULTANTS (FEBRUARY 2015)

*"The key principles to be addressed in developing the Corsham Area Framework are:*

*A place to live, work, learn and play...*

- *A place to do business...*
- *Building on the history of the town...*
- *An improved retail offer...*
- *A vibrant business location building on digital capability...*
- *Recognition of the value of MoD...*
- *An accessible town centre..."*

The Framework process has explored this brief and developed a revised set of principles that respond directly to the key issues revealed through the baseline analysis and consultation exercises. These principles begin to shape a vision of the future Corsham and provide objectives to help guide specific proposals identified within the Framework.

Together, these principles describe a place that celebrates and cherishes its heritage and landscape whilst embracing the future through technology and education. The residents enjoy living in characterful settlements and benefit from excellent community facilities that are accessible and local. Its commercial and employment centres are vibrant and viable and visitors are drawn to the areas many diverse attractions.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

In several locations, proposed urban development threatens to continue the sprawling urban form.



Most settlements benefit from a strong and positive townscape character however, some areas are poorly defined and lack an identity.



The landscape setting is highly valued however, in some locations its integrity is threatened by proposed development.



The settlements have individual identities but the connectivity issues pose issues for appropriate retail and service provision across the Community Area.



Corsham is an attractive location for business growth but requires a boost in the local infrastructure.



Corsham benefits from excellent digital infrastructure and capability of national and international significance.



## FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

Protect against the coalescence of individual settlements by defining appropriate limits for development.

Define or strengthen townscape character to establish or reinforce the individual identity of each settlement

The landscape should be protected and enhanced where appropriate and the benefits of new development should be carefully considered against potential negative impacts.

Clarify the function and hierarchical relationship of each settlement within the local and regional economic context and strengthen linkages between areas.

Develop frameworks for key growth sites to facilitate business development with related packages of enhancement and improvement measures.

Building on the existing infrastructure, support the growth and diversification of the digital economy. Facilitate connectivity within the high tech and business community.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Corsham benefits from the presence of Bath Spa University and emerging digital and cyber courses at Corsham Institute.

The town centre has suffered with empty retail units in the main shopping centre. However, there is a growing level of optimism, with new retail outlets and a restaurant opening and others expanding in to bigger premises.

Connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is poor in both urban and rural areas.

Vehicle congestion is worsening but accessibility is required to support further growth and development, particularly in Corsham town centre.

The Community Area benefits from rich history and numerous buildings and places of interest.

The area has a strong and attractive rural context which is threatened by continued growth.

The MoD has a key role in Corsham as a significant employer, trainer, landowner and potential investor.

## FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES



Facilitate the integration, growth and evolution of the area's education offer at all levels.



Encourage new businesses and create greater accessibility to the town centre.



Develop a legible, accessible and highly-connected network of walking and cycling routes.



Develop strategies to enhance movement and parking without compromising the quality of environment or pedestrian and cycle access.



Protect, celebrate and communicate the Community Area's distinct heritage to aid tourism and conserve cultural traditions.



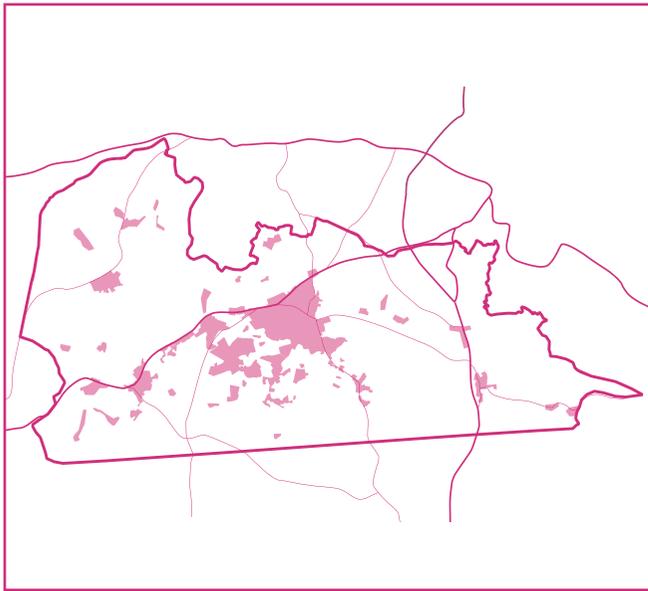
Develop a coordinated strategy for environmental sustainability that considers energy, waste, water and biodiversity and coordinates these with economic, social and political sustainability goals.



Support the MoD's ongoing presence and build on the current infrastructure.

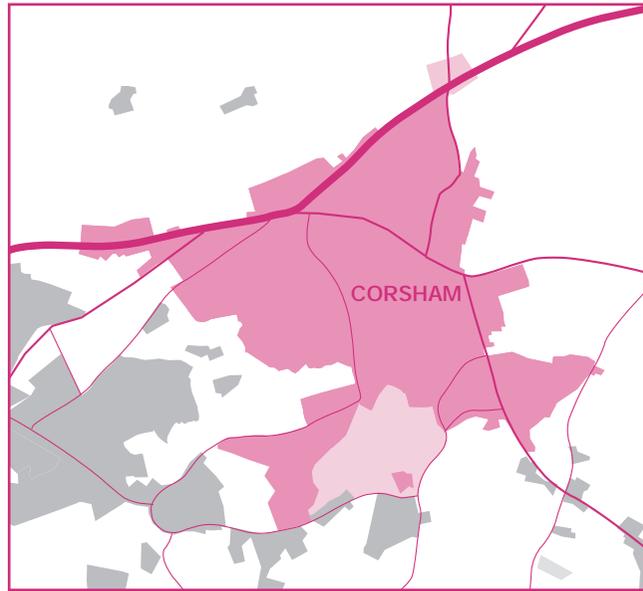


## FRAMEWORK AREAS



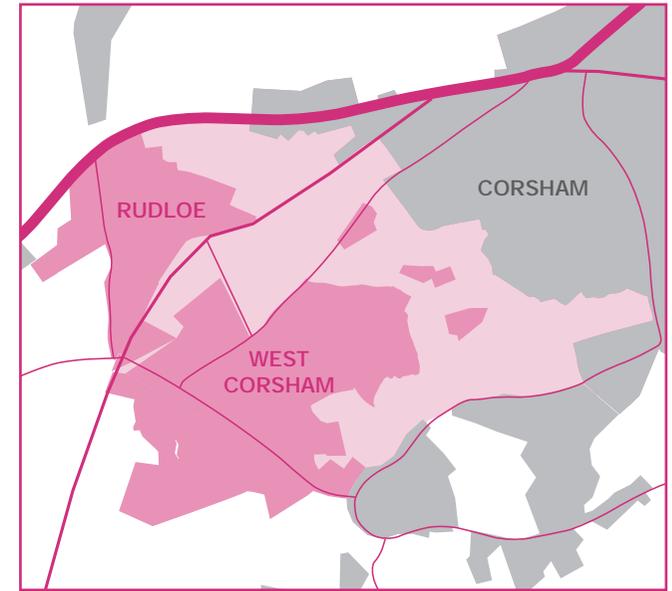
### INTEGRATE GREATER CORSHAM

'Greater Corsham' looks at the strategic moves required across the Community Area, including smaller villages and settlements and the surrounding rural areas.



### REFOCUS CENTRAL CORSHAM

'Central Corsham' looks at the interventions required in Corsham town centre and around the town in order to support the town's continued growth and vitality.

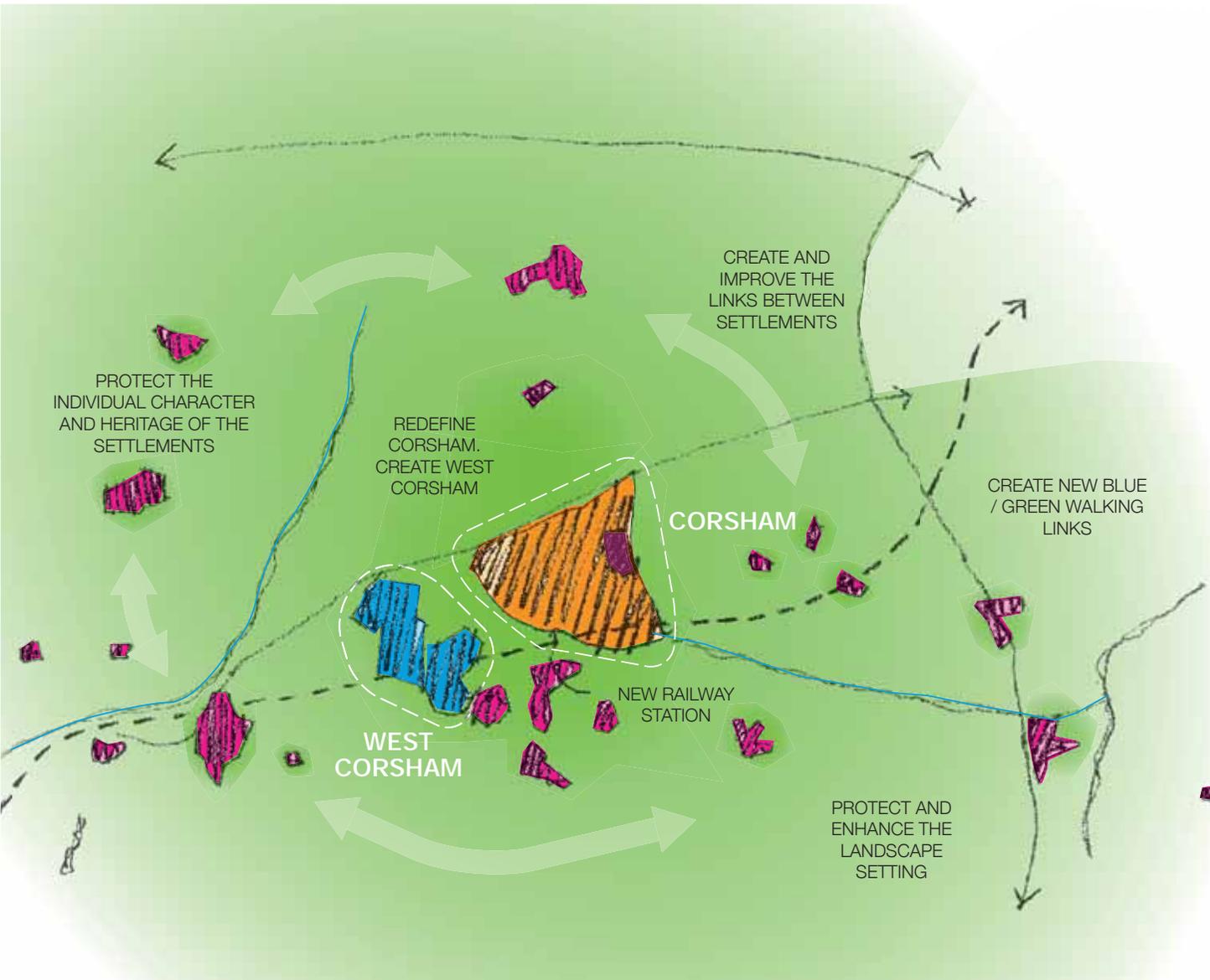


### CREATE WEST CORSHAM

'West Corsham' seeks to give development a strong steer at the western side of Corsham, creating a strong identity and sustainable development.







## A VISION FOR GREATER CORSHAM

Greater Corsham will comprise a collection of individual settlements set within their landscape context.

Each settlement will retain its own distinct character and opportunities to celebrate and protect distinct cultural heritage will be realised.

Connections between the settlements and central/ west Corsham will, where possible and appropriate, be improved. Walking and cycling routes will be enhanced. Opportunities to expand local community operated transport schemes will be encouraged. The Corsham shuttle bus service will be established to link Hartham Park with the town, railway station and West Corsham.

Opportunities to link the water and vegetation assets to create 'blue-green corridors', recreational facilities and enrich existing water and wildlife corridors.

Opportunities to enhance and extend existing employment niches (including digital, agricultural, leisure and recreation, media and creative industries and tourism) and develop suitable accommodation will be encouraged. The Vision sets out an aspirational image for Greater Corsham and is intended to help identify the primary objectives for the Area Framework.

The Vision responds to the observations that have been derived from the baseline appraisal and through consultation with the project steering group. The key observations are as follows:

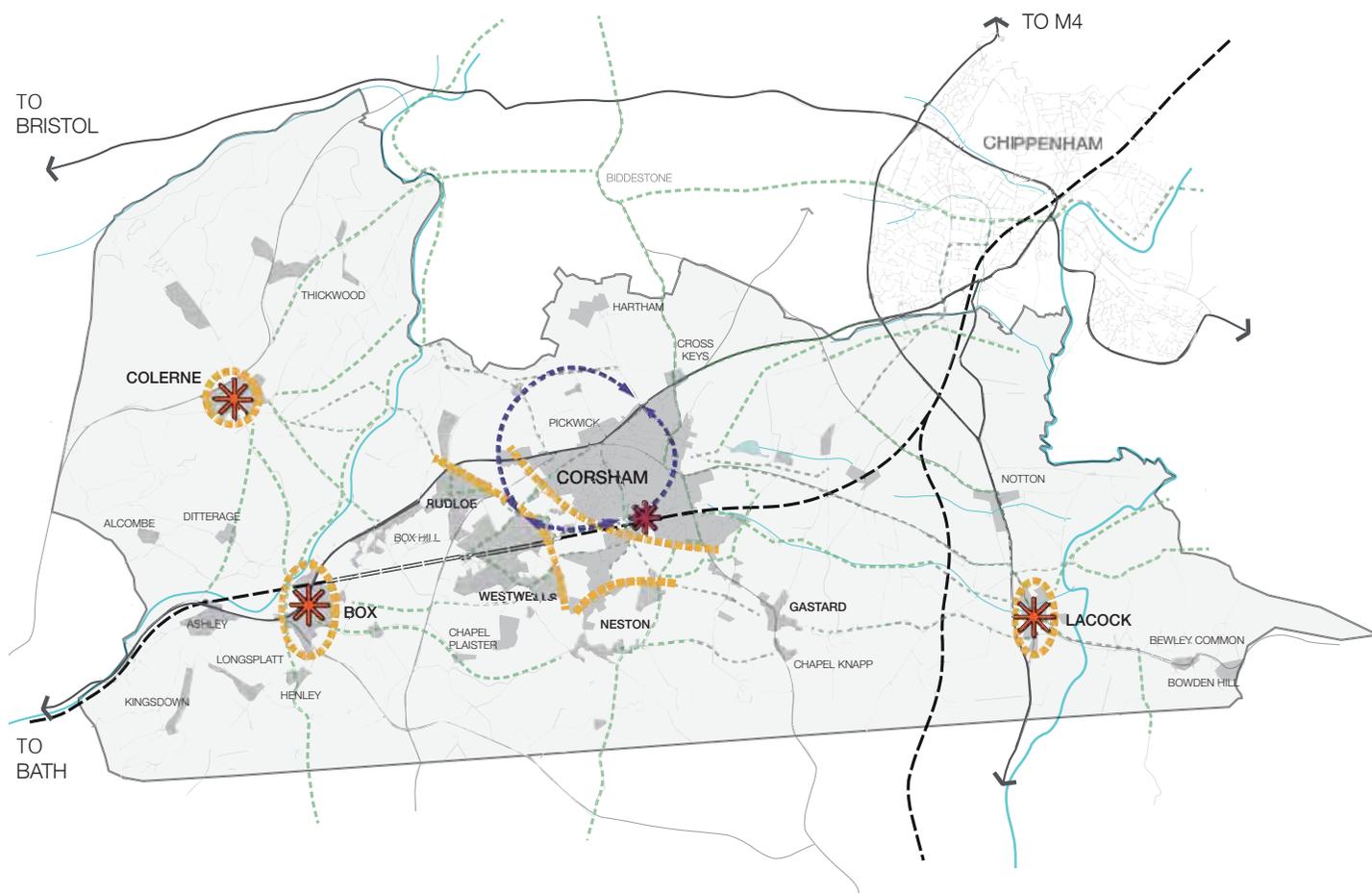
- Protect and celebrate the distinct identity of smaller settlements
- Safeguard, enhance and celebrate the rural and urban environment
- Improve connection and encourage sustainable travel

On the basis of these observations and the resultant Vision, the Framework identifies five 'projects' to substantially address issues and opportunities and help re-integrate Greater Corsham. The projects are:

- A. Sustainable settlement growth
- B. Protect the integrity of the villages
- C. Strategic Infrastructure Connections
- D. The Corsham Link
- E. New railway station at Corsham

#### PROJECTS

-  Sustainable settlement growth
-  Protect the integrity of the villages
-  New railway station
-  The Corsham Link
-  Strategic Infrastructure Connections



# A. SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENT GROWTH

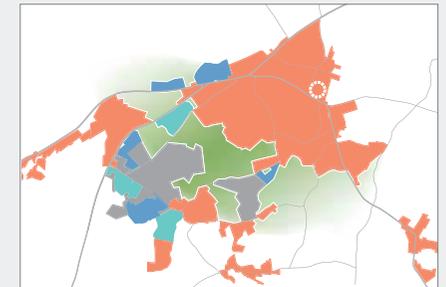
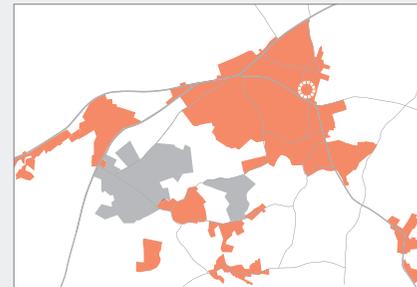
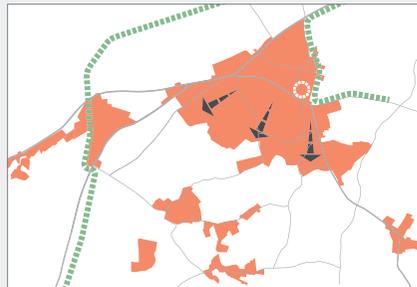
## THE OPPORTUNITY

The pattern of built development in the Corsham Neighbourhood Area is characterised by a single large settlement, Corsham Town, surrounded by smaller satellites most of which are discrete villages. Historically the town has grown in response to its evolving function, initially a market town and then as a centre for quarrying and subsequently, defence and technology activities. The outlying settlements have predominantly resulted from the areas agricultural function however, today they have limited capacity or need for significant growth.

In contrast, the town of Corsham is host to a growing variety of economic activities and through its town centre and facilities, has a lot to offer as a place to live. Correspondingly, the viability of the town centre would also benefit from increased patronage. On this basis there is both scope and desire for the town of Corsham to expand.

It has been established that recent patterns of urban development have had a detrimental effect on the town's form and character. If Corsham is to grow, then it is essential that new development is coordinated, sustainable and contributes to improvement, rather than worsening its problems.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS



- The town of Corsham is constrained to the north and east by landscape designations.
- Recent growth has been to the south and west, however this is sprawling and away from town centre.

- As well as expansion to the south and west, there has been sporadic development further to the west around Rudloe and MoD Corsham. However, development is not coordinated and does not constitute a defined place - it is more a collection of parts.
- There is no 'centre' and more recent development has occurred away from the existing town centre.

- The pattern of sporadic piecemeal growth continues as numerous planning applications submitted. This risks eroding the undeveloped area between the town and the west and risk of amorphous, unplanned sprawl and associated problems.
- Current permissions total 402 dwellings and 70,000sqm B1 development (of which some has been built out) and 3700sqm of other development.
- Current applications total 350 dwellings and 10,000 sqm employment space.

-  Existing settlement
-  Existing employment development
-  Planning application site - not determined
-  Planning application site - approved
-  Landscape designations
-  Relatively undeveloped land

## THE PROPOSAL

To address these issues and establish a clear approach to future growth that is sustainable and holistic, the following strategic moves have been developed.

### REDEFINE THE TOWN OF CORSHAM:

The town of Corsham has many assets however, in recent years its growth has led to urban sprawl that has become increasingly removed from the town centre. This has led to challenges of poor connectivity and has compromised the town's identity and the viability of town centre businesses. A coherent strategy is required to redefine the town as a distinct place and to facilitate growth that integrates with the existing community and strengthens the economic performance of the town centre.

This strategy is detailed in Section 3.2. Refocus Central Corsham.

### CREATE WEST CORSHAM:

The uncoordinated collection of existing and proposed development to the west of Corsham exacerbate the town's challenges relating to connection, identity and increase pressure on facilities. These developments neither feel like an integrated part of the town or a discrete place in their own right. However, the availability of space and flourishing economic activity represent an opportunity through careful planning, to establish a distinct new place that is well-structured, cohesive and better serves the area as a living and working environment.

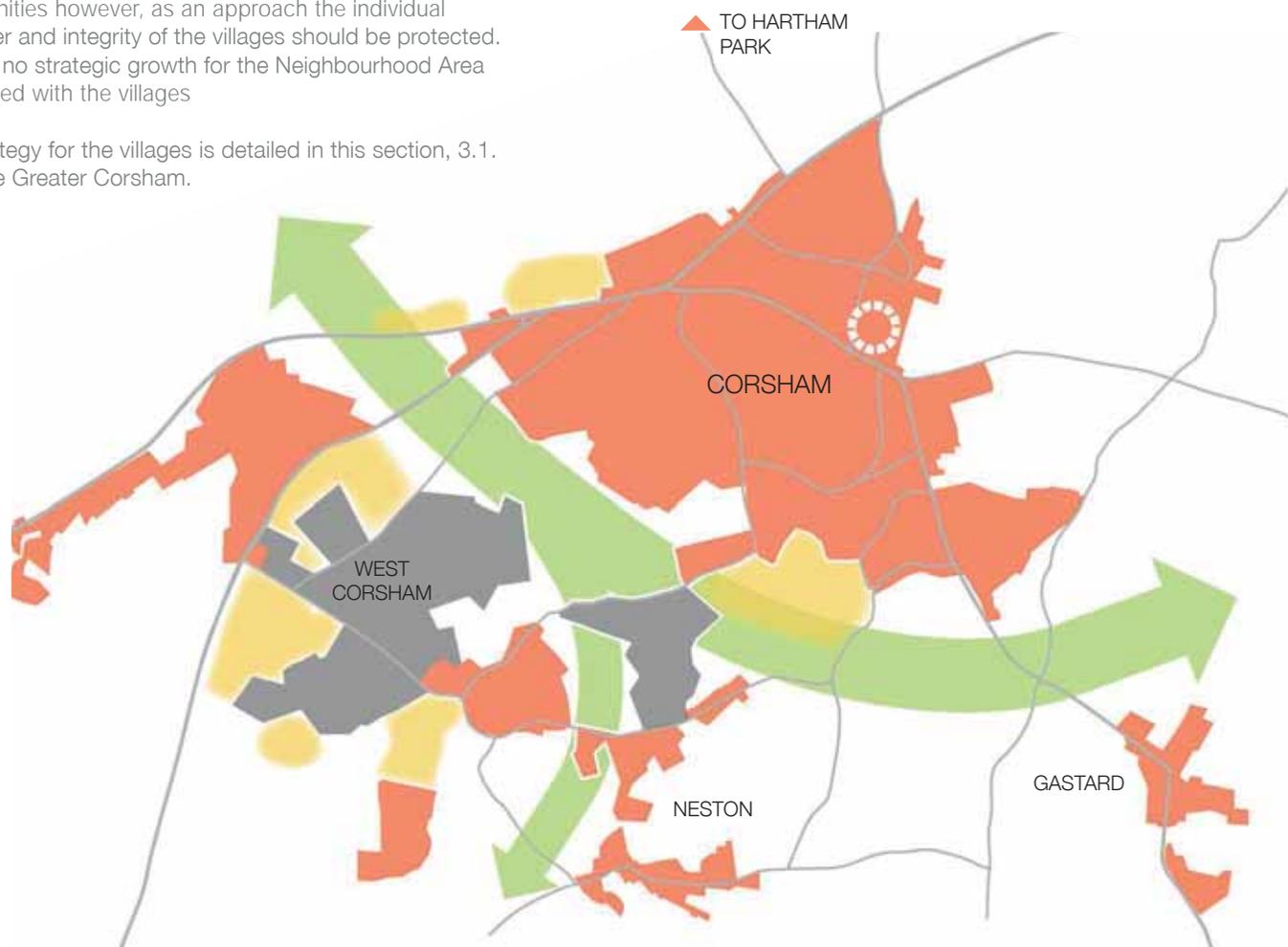
This strategy is detailed in Section 3.3. Create West Corsham.

### PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE VILLAGES:

The villages are an important component of the area's character and appeal. Each has its own issues and opportunities however, as an approach the individual character and integrity of the villages should be protected. There is no strategic growth for the Neighbourhood Area associated with the villages

The strategy for the villages is detailed in this section, 3.1. Integrate Greater Corsham.

- Existing settlement
- Existing employment development
- Potential development sites
- Preserve green setting and character to settlements



## B. PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE VILLAGES

### THE OPPORTUNITY

The Corsham Community Area (CCA) is divided into four parishes comprising Corsham, Box, Colerne and Lacock. Each parish includes a number of smaller villages and hamlets that have developed along key movement corridors. Within the Core Strategy Box and Colerne are identified as 'large Villages'. Lacock; Gastard; Neston; Rudloe and Westwells are identified as 'small villages'.

Within the North and West Wiltshire Housing Market Area at least 1,395 new homes will be provided in the CCA, of which 1,220 new dwellings will be provided at Corsham with the remaining 175 across the other settlements in CCA.

In accordance with the Core Strategy, some modest development may be appropriate within these villages to respond to the local needs and to contribute to the vitality of rural communities, improving the level of services and facilities within the area and meet local housing need.

It is important that any development is sensitively integrated to ensure the distinct integrity of the smaller settlements is protected, allowing communities to thrive and maintain a clear identity. Development and enhancement proposals should be developed in accordance with the Neighborhood Plan and parish action plans and should be endorsed by the local community.

In order to understand what level of development may be appropriate it is important to identify the key considerations. Any development will be carefully managed by the relevant policies set out within the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

#### COLERNE

- Located within the AONB and Green Belt. Overlooks the valleys of the Avon and By Brook which separates Colerne from Corsham.
- Residents tend not to use the facilities in Corsham preferring to travel towards Bath.
- Current traffic management arrangements are viewed as ad-hoc. The network is unsuitable for HGVs.
- Concerns have been raised over vehicular speeds, parking and road maintenance.
- The Parish Council has prepared an Action Plan and begun production of a village design statement.
- The village offers a limited range of business services and facilities and has poor broadband provision in some locations.

#### BOX

- The village is located within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Green Belt.
- Box village is divided by the A4. Concerns have been raised over vehicle speeds and poor opportunities for crossing, road maintenance and parking.
- Pedestrian access over the bridge adjacent to Brunel's tunnel is poor meaning restricted views of the entrance.
- The Parish Council has prepared an Action Plan.



#### LACOCK

- The village has an established identity, owned almost in its entirety by the National Trust.
- The disused Wiltshire and Berkshire canal, located to the north east of village, is undergoing restoration works.



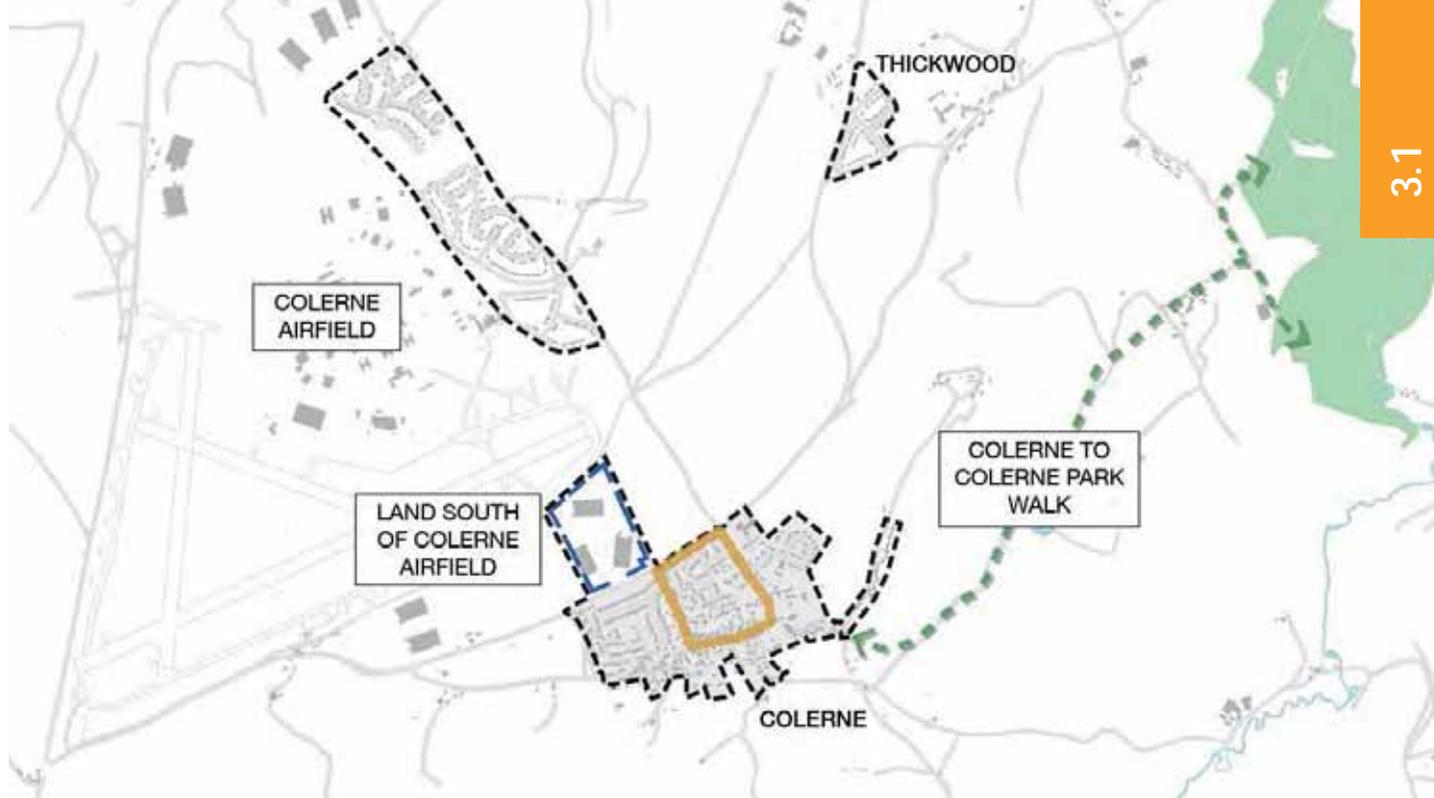
## THE PROPOSALS

Within the wider Corsham Community Area, development proposals should be limited to infill opportunities. The use of brownfield sites should be encouraged. New housing should be affordable to meet local needs.

Within the wider Community Area proposals that integrate sustainable agriculture, social infrastructure, conservation and tourism business opportunities, of an appropriate scale, could be considered. Opportunities to celebrate the history of the settlements should be encouraged, including stone quarrying, wool industry, Colerne Airfield and the Roman heritage at Colerne and Box.

Good broadband provision is considered vital for the local business communities; a strategy is required to roll-out super-fast broadband across the Community Area to facilitate small businesses and working from home as well as social functions.

-  Development boundary line
-  Current planning application (demolition of existing hangars and residential-led redevelopment and 1000sqm B1 offices)
-  Public realm enhancements
-  Woodland walk
-  Woodland area

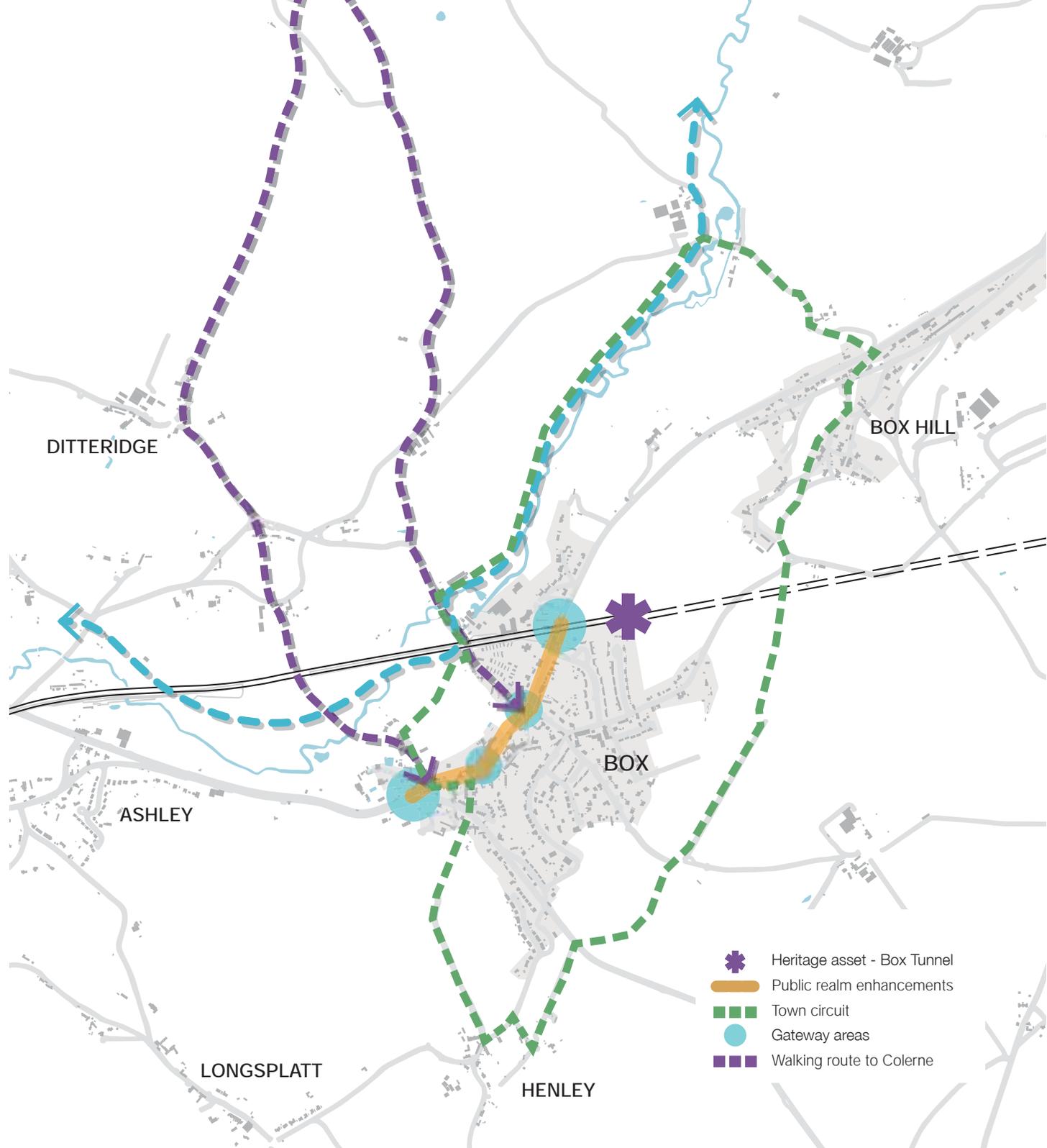


### COLERNE

- Any proposals for development should be limited to infill opportunities, restricted to brownfield sites where appropriate and safeguarding agricultural and amenity space to prevent the uncontrolled sprawl of the village.
- Development of land should be restricted to the development boundary lines to ensure uses support the village and are appropriate. Appropriate development is likely to include community-led developments that support local businesses and social enterprise and affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Develop and deliver a public realm enhancement and signage strategy to include High Street, Quarry Lane, Silver Street and Bath Road.
- Consider surface materials, street furniture, tree planting, opportunities for improved crossing facilities, measures to reduce vehicle speeds, traffic management signage, village business signage, and opportunities for improved on-street parking within the village.
- Develop a strategy, in accordance with the Woodland Trust's Colerne Park & Monks Wood Management Plan, that encourages people to enjoy and value the woods and supporting wildlife.
- Identify opportunities to enhance recreational trail connecting to the woods and supporting educational initiatives where appropriate.

## BOX

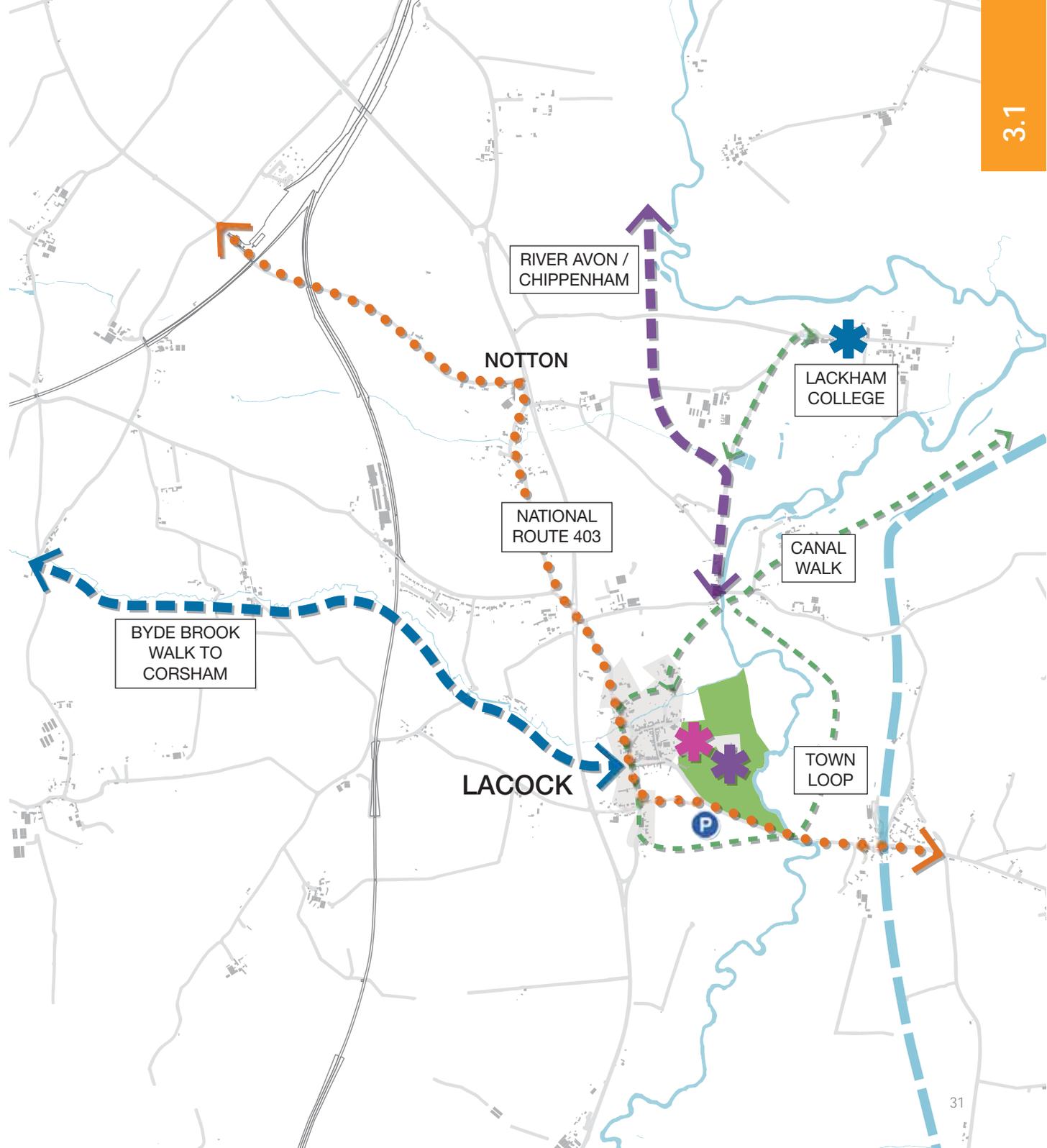
- Any proposals for development should be limited to infill opportunities, encouraging the use of brownfield sites. Appropriate development is likely to include community-led developments that support local businesses, social enterprise, and affordable housing that meets local needs.
- Opportunities to enhance and extend existing employment niches (e.g. media and creative industries) and enhance the skills of the local community should be supported.
- Develop a comprehensive parking strategy to review existing parking arrangements, explore opportunities for additional parking in the centre of Box village, and measures to improve utilisation and increase availability.
- Develop and deliver a public realm enhancement scheme along the A4 between the Bath Road and Devizes Road junction and Brunel's tunnel. Consider key gateway areas, surface materials, street furniture, tree planting, opportunities for improved crossing facilities, measures to reduce vehicle speeds, opportunities for additional on-street parking, improved pedestrian access across Brunel Bridge, improved signage, wayfinding and interpretation.
- Formalise the paths along the Macmillan Trail and Box walking trail: improve wayfinding, interpretation and marketing of the trail and the tourist and cultural heritage attractions along the route.
- Develop one or more all-weather walking routes between Box and Colerne to encourage trips between the two communities.



## LACOCK

- Any proposals for development should be limited to infill opportunities, encouraging the use of brownfield sites. Appropriate development is likely to include community led developments that support local businesses, social enterprise, affordable housing that meets local needs and tourist development of an appropriate scale
- Improve wayfinding, interpretation and marketing of existing trails and loops, including the Lacock-Bowden Hill circular route and the Byde Brook walk between Corsham and Lacock. Providing essential information about distance, terrain, location, amenities and habitats.
- Support the restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal that connects to Lacock, creating a resource for the local community and extending the tourism offer. Restore the tow path, proving a new shared walking and cycleways.
- Improve existing wildlife habitat and create new aquatic and wetland habitats for endangered species along the Byde Brook and Wilts & Berks Canal.
- Develop proposals for a new Community Sports Pavilion in collaboration with National Trust, Parish Council, Sport England, Lacock Primary School, Lacock Cricket Club, funding bodies and user groups.

-  Education - Lackham College
-  Heritage asset - Lacock Abbey
-  Tourist destination - Fox Talbot Museum



## C. STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIONS

### THE OPPORTUNITY

The Area Framework provides the opportunity to identify and prioritise key infrastructure projects within the Greater Corsham area that should be implemented to ensure the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Opportunities to promote a shift to more sustainable modes of travel that encourage active lifestyles, reduce congestion, and help improve the environment should be supported.

Key public transport opportunities include:

- Increasing rail connectivity through a new railway station at Corsham and the provision of bus-rail links;
- Strengthening pedestrian and cycling links between rural settlements and Corsham town centre; and
- Addressing the increased pressures on rural roads, in particular the A4 and Bradford Road.

### PROPOSALS

To address these issues the following strategic moves have been developed:

1. Encourage sustainable active travel
2. Improve the highway network

These strategic moves are discussed overleaf.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Greater Corsham is served by an extensive network of public rights of way and footpaths. The town is well served by bus routes with regular services to Bath and Chippenham and less frequent services to Trowbridge. Greater Corsham is currently served by six bus and coach operators, some services are subsidised. The A4 which provides a direct link to Chippenham and Bath and connects northwards towards the M4. However, to encourage sustainable travel and to accommodate future growth, there would be a need to address the following existing issues:

#### WALKING AND CYCLING

- Much of Corsham town is within a 15-minute walking catchment distance however pedestrian connectivity is limited by the street layout meaning the effective catchment area is much smaller. Beyond this 15minute walking catchment, cycling and potentially bus use provides a more attractive journey time.

- Greater Corsham is served by an extensive network of public rights of way and footpaths. The condition and interconnectivity of these routes varies.

- Many of the rural roads and lanes carry fast traffic and have narrow footpaths, often only on one side and without formal crossings.

- National Cycle Network (NCN) route 254 and Regional Route 20 pass through the Greater Corsham area, comprising a mixture of on-road routes, quieter roads, rights of way and permissive routes.

- The Town Cycle Network Plan for Corsham focuses on the town and extends to West Corsham.

- Corsham has few off-road cycle paths or on-road lanes

- Cycling may be less practical in some parts of Greater Corsham due to the larger distances involved.

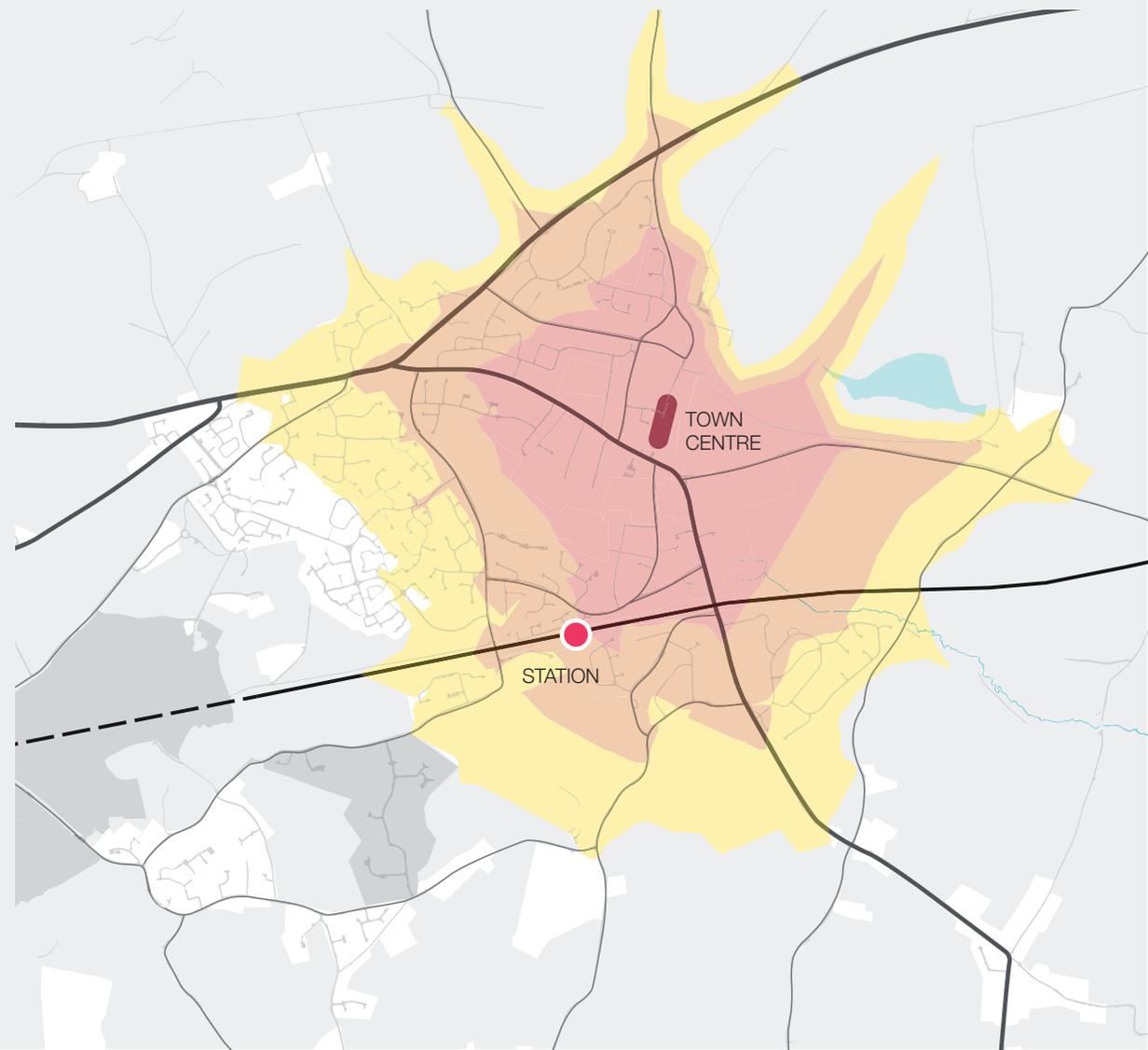
#### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- The town is well served by bus routes with regular services to Bath and Chippenham and less frequent services to Trowbridge, with all services passing along Newlands Road in Corsham town centre.

- Bus services to key employment destinations are focused on more local journeys with residents working in Bristol or Swindon required to interchange onto other public transport services.

- The Greater Corsham area is currently served by six bus and coach operators, some services are subsidised. The wider bus network in the area lacks connectivity and this creates a reliance on the car to travel to work.

## TOWN CENTRE WALKING CATCHMENT



## RURAL ROAD NETWORK

- Corsham is well served by the A4 which provides a direct link to Chippenham and Bath and connects northwards towards the M4 however highway capacity in and around Corsham is considered poor.
- Reopening the railway station and accommodating future development could increase demand for travel along the A4 route which could require highway capacity improvements.
- Leafield Industrial Estate and Fiveways Trading Estate are supported as Principal Employment Areas. Freight movements to and from these areas are currently routed along the A4. The routes are varied, carrying a high-speed of traffic, in places through B roads and lower-order roads. Movements to from the north and west pass through Box or Corsham town centre.

## WALKING TIME FROM TOWN CENTRE

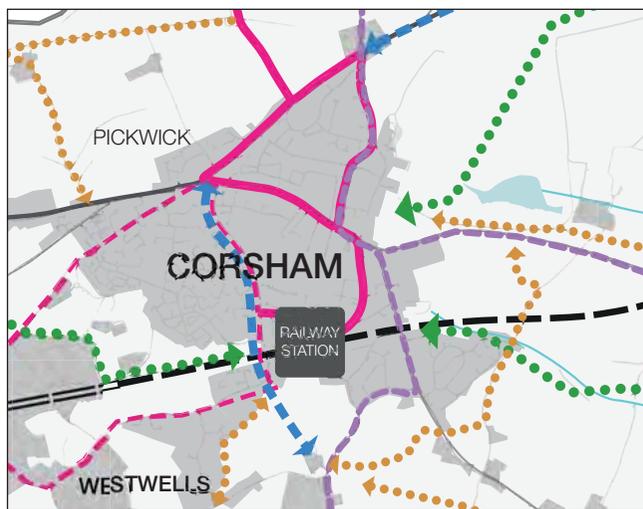
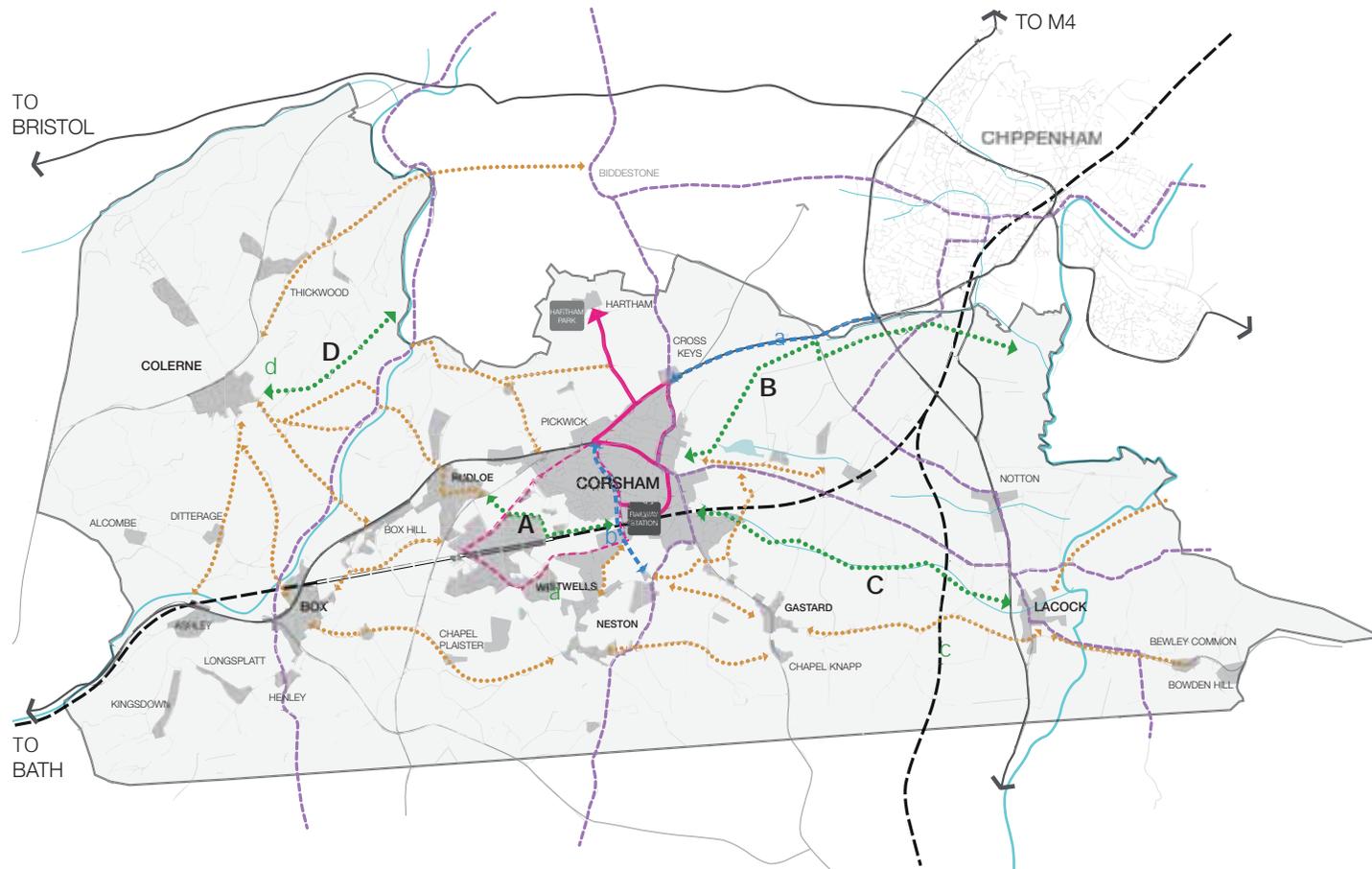


## 1| SUSTAINABLE ACTIVE TRAVEL

Measures to promote sustainable and active travel within the Greater Corsham area will be supported. Key projects include:

- **New railway station at Corsham:** This strategy is detailed in this section, under Proposal E.
- **Extend the proposed Corsham shuttle bus service** linking to Corsham Station and West Corsham, if deemed appropriate.
- **Reinforce existing off-road routes and designation of rural lanes as greenways.** Improve accessibility for all non-motorised user groups, through enhancements to the public realm, area-wide signposting, wayfinding and route marketing. Key routes include:
  - a. West Corsham Greenway
  - b. Corsham Park
  - c. Bye Brook
  - d. Colerne Woods
- **Extend the Corsham Town Cycle Network,** creating on-road cycle links along:
  - a. Valley Road (Pickwick Road to Corsham Station)
  - b. Bath Road, between Cross Keys junction and Chequers Roundabout.

-  New railway station at Corsham
-  Corsham shuttle bus service
-  Potential expansion to Corsham shuttle bus service
-  Create on-road cycle route (a/b)
-  Reinforce existing off-road routes / greenways
-  Improve links to the existing network
-  Existing strategic walking and cycling links



### CYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

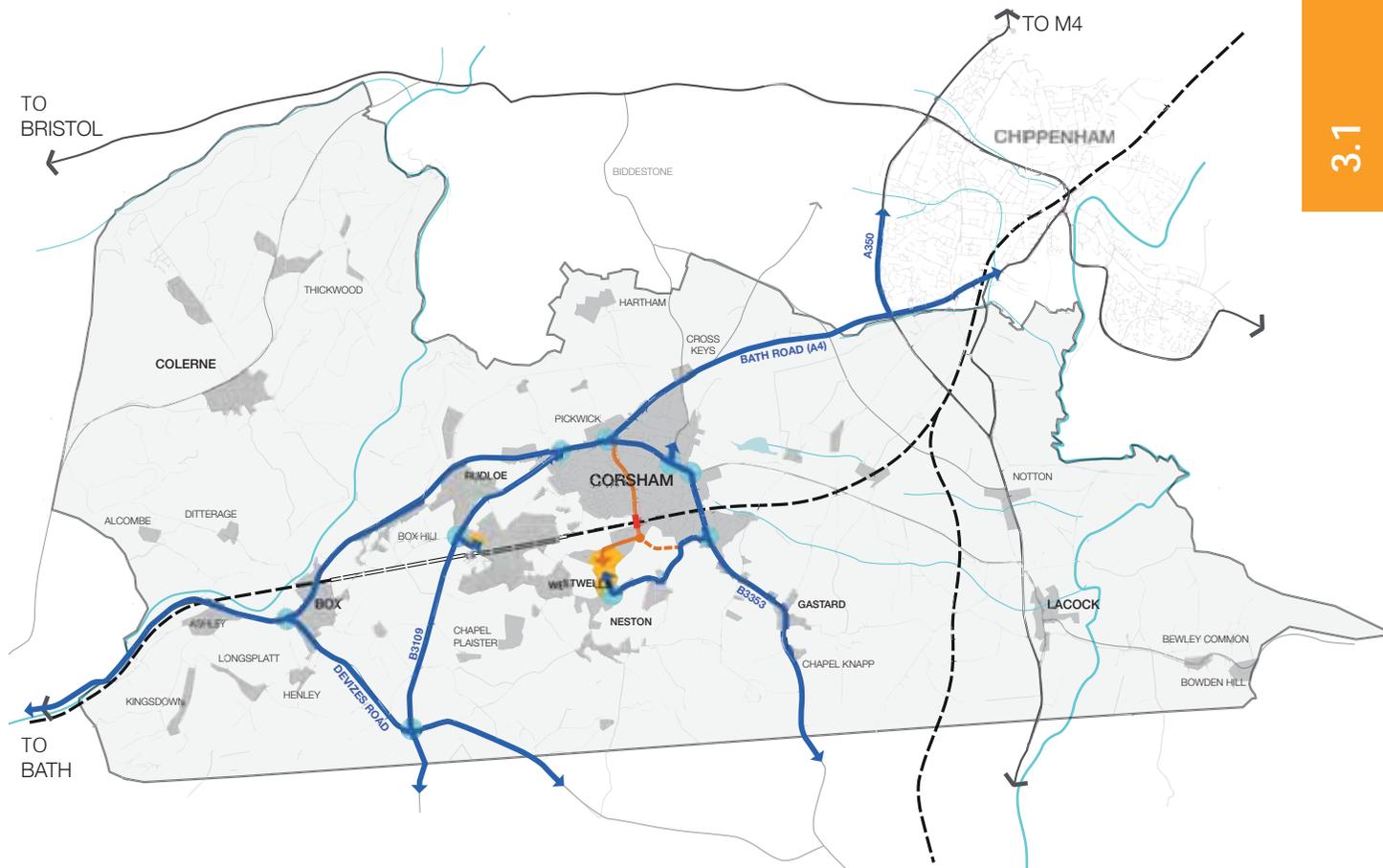
Identify opportunities to consider how the Town Cycle Network can be expanded to consider how the Town Cycle Network can be expanded to create a more comprehensive network that spans the Community Area. Support will be given for proposals which improve and extend cycling routes and link with the leisure agenda. Priority should be for routes that maximise the potential for both recreation and commuting and strengthen links towards the town centre or between Colerne, Box and Corsham.

Potential improvements: Wayfinding and route marketing for NCN and local routes; traffic calming; shared cycle routes; removal of barriers (e.g. stiles); public realm improvements and general maintenance. Generally, creating safe on-road routes should be the first option considered, but shared use or segregated cycle paths may be appropriate.

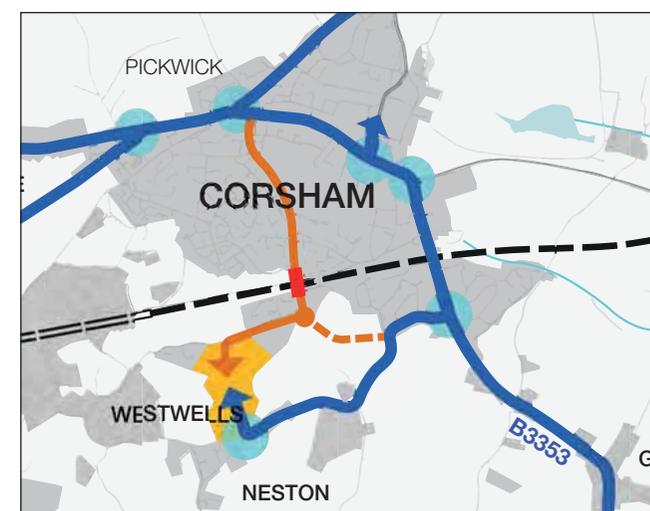
## 2| HIGHWAY NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Highway specific measures that provide a safe, sustainable rural road network within the Greater Corsham area will be supported. Key projects include:

- **Assess the capacity of the A4 and Bradford Road**, including junctions with Pickwick Road and Bradford Road and Bradford Road and Westwells Road.
- **Calculate trip generations for the land uses proposed**. Assess trip distribution based on census data. Use readily available traffic counts to gauge the impact on existing routes.
- **Transport assessments** required for major development should include identifying appropriate solutions either through mitigation or Travel Plan measures to address capacity issues on the A4 and Bradford Road
- **Design mitigation work and measures** as appropriate to address long term capacity issues, such as junction improvements, the replacement of roundabouts and priority junctions with traffic signal controls, enhanced public transport measures.
- **Develop and adopt an advisory freight network** serving the town centre and business/industrial estates, working with freight operators and businesses. Minimise conflicts at key 'hot spots' along the route, through improvements in the public realm and signposting. If improvements to the capacity of Potley Lane bridge are feasible, consider re-routing freight movements serving Leaffield Industrial Estate along Valley Road to bypass Corsham town centre.



-  Freight movement network
-  Points of user conflict / congestion 'hot spots'
-  Improve capacity of vehicular bridge
-  Improve link to Leaffield Industrial Estate
-  Principal Employment Area



## D. THE CORSHAM LINK

### THE OPPORTUNITY

At present there is no clearly identifiable route around Corsham for safe walking and cycling journeys, with particularly poor connectivity east-west and northwards to Hartham Park. There is a strong opportunity to identify a green transport link which allows for both leisure and commuter journeys and promotes sustainable travel. This Link has multiple benefits as the 'glue' between the physical, social and economic parts of the town - linking current and future activity.

It is not possible to provide off-road access along the entirety of the route however measures such as improved signposting can improve wayfinding and increase visibility of non-motorised users.

### ATTRACTIVE AND FUNCTIONAL ROUTES



### GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Signage:** Consistent signage should be introduced at junctions along the route to indicate walking distance and time to key destinations. This could take the form of fingerpost signage, maps and interpretation boards.
- **Wayfinding markers:** Wayfinding markers (set into or painted onto the ground) or public art will help promote the route as a whole and could raise awareness of other users, particularly on-road cyclists.
- **Surface materials:** Surfacing should be replaced where required to create functional and attractive routes for walking and cycling, including formalisation of field tracks.
- **Public realm enhancement:** General enhancements are needed particularly at nodal points between sections of the route. Enhancements should consider lighting, surface materials and boundary treatments with provision of seating and litter bins where appropriate.



### ROUTE SECTIONS

#### 1. TOWN CENTRE LINK

The Town Centre Link runs from Bath Road, through the town centre and south towards the railway station on existing paths and roads.

WALKING DISTANCE / TIME: 2.1km / 26min

This section of the route is discussed in detail in Area 2: Refocus Corsham Town (section 3.2).

#### 2. WEST CORSHAM GREENWAY

The West Corsham Greenway connects the employment development and MoD Corsham site to the town. The route runs along Pockeredge Drive and towards Bradford Road on existing lanes.

There is potential for an extra loop spurring from this which goes around MoD Corsham and Westwells Road to connect the employment sites along Spring Park and Skynet Drive.

WALKING DISTANCE / TIME: 1.8km / 22min

This section of the route is discussed in detail in Area 3: Create Corsham West (section 3.3).

### 3. HARTHAM PARK LINK

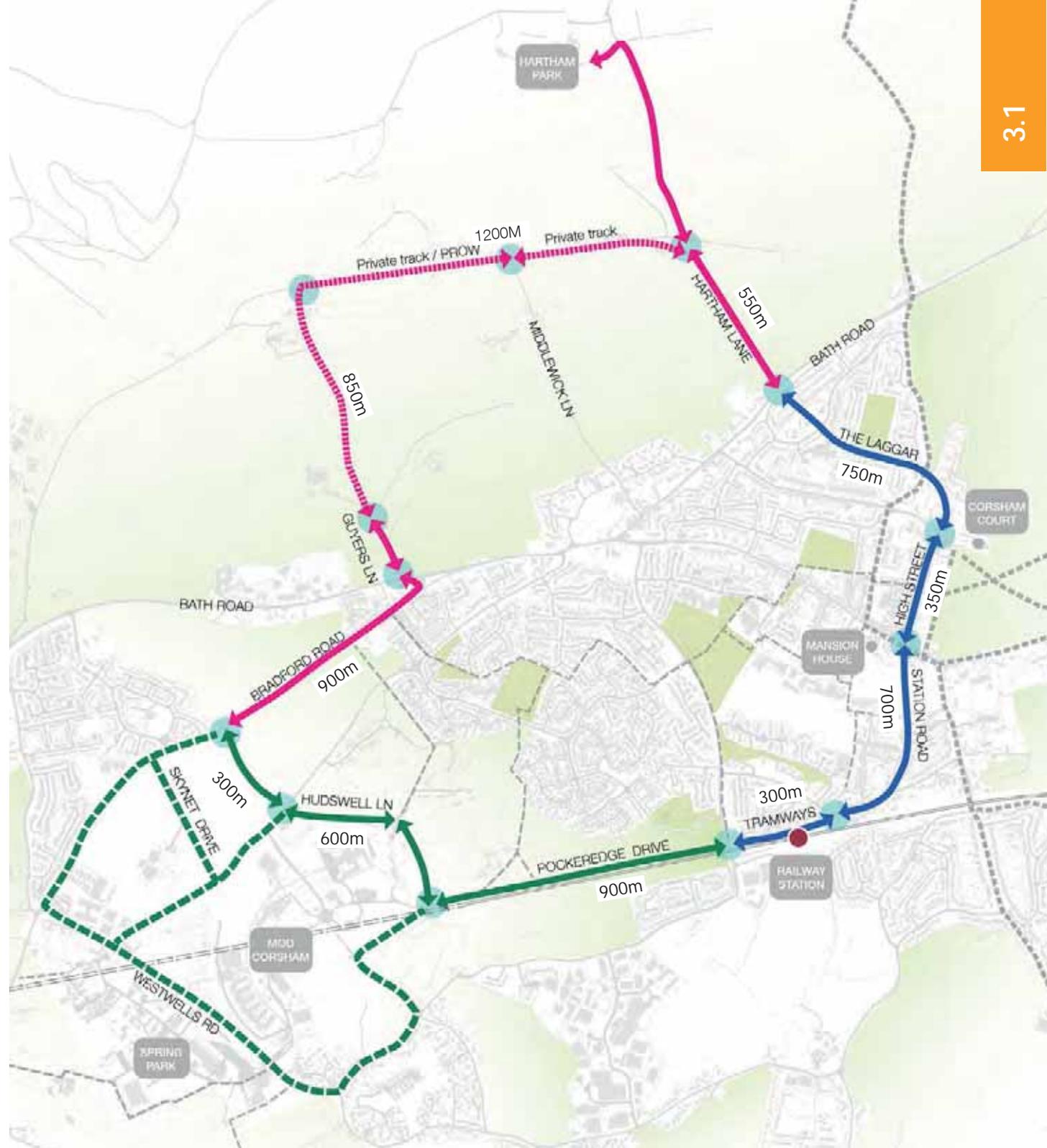
The Hartham Park Link connects along existing lanes around north of the town providing a strong route to Hartham Park. The lanes are lightly trafficked and required little enhancement to be made suitable for the Corsham Link. The most northerly section, north of Guyers Lane, is a private track with public right of way until the point where it meets Middlewick Lane. If access is not permissible, the route would need to divert along Bath Road and Hartham Lane. The key improvements on this section of the route would involve:

- Creation of crossing point on Bradford Road.
- Improvements to footpath / potential cyclepath installation on Bradford Road.
- Creation of crossing point at Bath Road to Guyers Lane.
- Improved wayfinding and environmental enhancement at nodal points.
- Where permitted, support walking and cycling access into Hartham Park from the private track.

WALKING DISTANCE / TIME: 3.5km / 45min

### CORSHAM LINK

-  Town Centre Link
-  Hartham Park Link
-  Hartham Park Link - private track
-  West Corsham Greenway
-  West Corsham Greenway - Westwells Road loop
-  Long distance walking / cycling routes
-  Public right of way - strategic links
-  Key transition point



## E. NEW RAILWAY STATION AT CORSHAM

### THE OPPORTUNITY

Corsham lies on the Great Western Main Line between Bristol and Bath in the west and Chippenham and Swindon in the east however the station closed in 1965.

A new station would be within a 10 minute walking catchment of the town centre, encouraging sustainable travel, reducing pressure on the A4 and connecting rural roads in the Greater Corsham area.

The station, as part of a wider regeneration project, could act as a catalyst to unlock the potential of land to the south of the town centre.

A feasibility study has been undertaken by Wiltshire Council to examine the potential of a new station at Corsham. The Area Framework provides the opportunity to guide the future development associated with the opening of a new railway station looking specifically at the areas north and south of the railway line; promoting walking and cycling; accommodating bus use; taxi facilities; car parking; cycle parking; cycle hire facilities and electric car charging points.

### CONTEXT

Wiltshire is well served by rail with a number of different services providing connections to London, the South West, South Coast, Wales and the Midlands. Some of the rail services also provide more local connections within Wiltshire and to nearby Swindon, Bath and Bristol.

A high proportion of rail trips have an origin or destination outside of Wiltshire with only a small number of rail trips wholly within Wiltshire. This is in contrast to the large number of car trips between Wiltshire towns.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the station specific infrastructure, there would be a need to address 'pinch points' and constraints in the existing highway network:

- Dedicated car and cycle parking required, including appropriate quantity of disabled parking.
- Existing Grade II listed Potley Lane bridge has limited capacity to accommodate increase traffic flows to station or surrounding development.
- Need to reinforce clear and desirable walking and cycling connections between the town centre and the railway station - connect to the Corsham Link route.
- Opportunity to create a new pedestrian link through South Street Business Park site.
- New pedestrian bridge required to serve the station.



	Commercial development		Potential site gateway
	Woodland / planting		Potential vehicle access
	Potential station development		Vehicle bridge - low capacity
	Residential site (consented)		Potential pedestrian bridge
	Industrial development		Pedestrian route - existing
	Potential development site		Pedestrian route - potential

The Wiltshire Rail Study (May 2013) examined whether existing rail services best serve travel needs within Wiltshire and the potential rail demand within Wiltshire that would occur with new rail stations and new/ improved rail services. This study identified that the potential for a new station at Corsham should be re-examined, noting that this had been subject to detailed studies in the past. A new station at Corsham would require a new Bristol-Swindon service between the major attractors and rail destinations of Bristol Temple Meads and Swindon.

Feasibility work has been commissioned by Wiltshire Council to examine the potential of opening a new station at Corsham<sup>1</sup> which suggests the next steps should be to focus on demonstrating a suitable service could operate to serve Corsham station through engagement with key partners and further detailed analysis.

The land required for the station and associated land uses (i.e. car parking, highways, infrastructure) should be safeguarded, so that any future development in this location does not compromise the station opportunity. Likewise, any proposals to open a station should be careful to avoid prejudicing any development on land to the south.

## THE PROPOSAL

Taking into account the constraints of the surrounding area, there are two main options for provision of access and parking to the station, Option A: Minimal intervention and Option B: More extensive network improvements. These correspond to differing levels of investment and development potential and have varied impact on surrounding areas.

### OPTION A

Option A represents a minimal approach which allows the reopening of the station but requires limited improvements to pedestrian and vehicle connectivity. A new lightweight footbridge is provided at the station with parking provided on the South Street Business Park site and along Tramways. Employment land could be reprovided on land to the south of the station. This option may limit the amount of development that can occur on land to the south.

-  Potential development site
-  Potential vehicular connection
-  New pedestrian bridge
-  Improved capacity vehicular bridge
-  Improve pedestrian links
-  Station car park
-  Station platforms / site

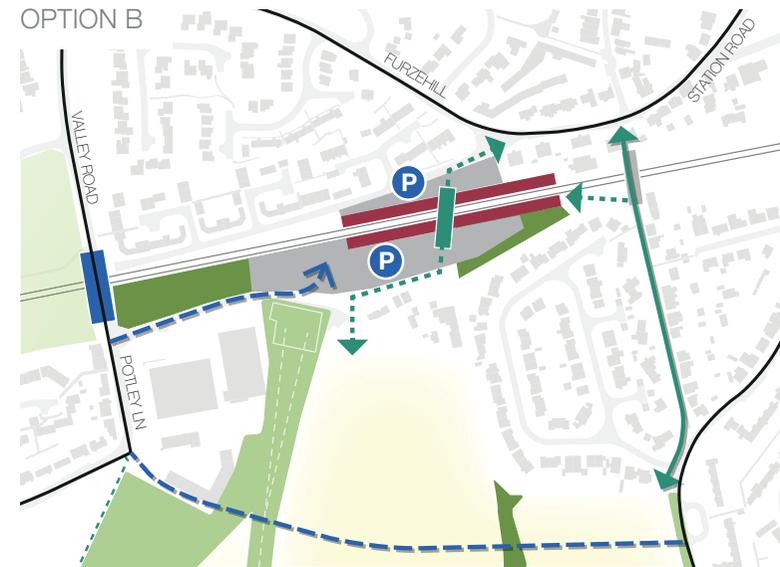
### OPTION B

Option B provides greater potential for investment in the surrounding area. Improvements to the capacity of Potley Lane bridge could increase the capacity of surrounding roads and allow a through-route across the development site to Dicketts Road. Parking could be provided to the south of the station at an increased level. This option would allow a greater quantum of development to the south.

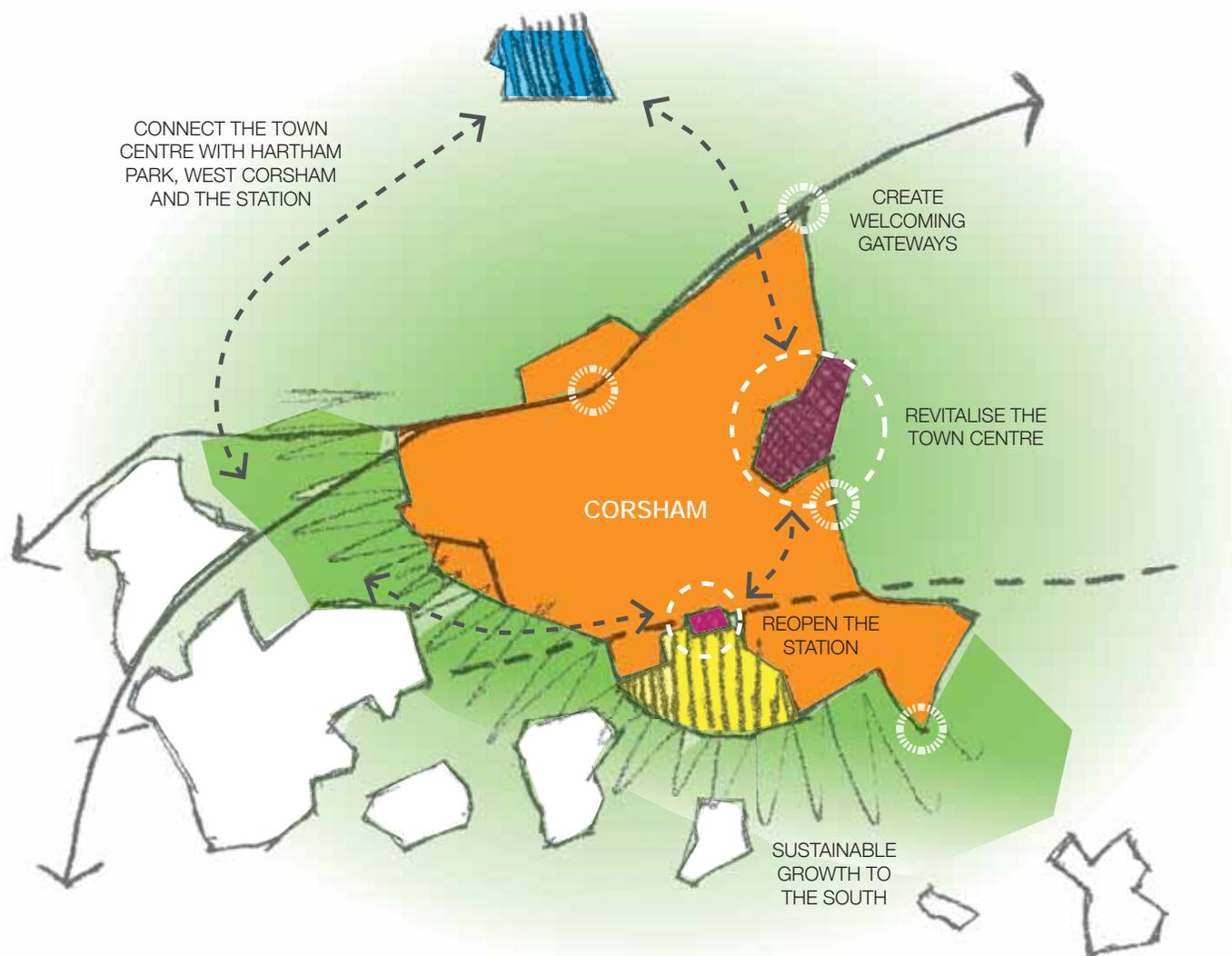
### OPTION A



### OPTION B



<sup>1</sup> Corsham Rail Station Initial Feasibility Report, Atkins (Dec 2015)



## A VISION FOR CENTRAL CORSHAM

Central Corsham will be more clearly defined with strong edges and a clear distinction between urban and rural. Gateways at the main points of entry will help define arrival and engender a clear sense of place. These will be supported by localised enhancements to the main movement routes leading to the town centre.

The town centre will be significantly enhanced to allow and encourage new development, and maximise the benefit of the existing historic character. The town centre will be improved as both a local centre to support residents' needs but also as a destination for visitors.

These objectives will be achieved through the promotion of existing assets and a diversification of retail, food and drink, cultural and community uses. The celebration of the town's heritage and distinctive character, together with significant environmental enhancements to less attractive areas, will be essential to regeneration.

There are opportunities for increasing and diversifying employment within the town centre especially in relation to the technology sector which will further support local businesses and services and add to the town's vitality.

The viability of the town centre will be supported by residential growth in areas that respect the rural setting.

New and existing walking and cycling routes will connect people and places and encourage an environment that is not dominated by vehicles. Opportunities for improved public transport connectivity and provision will be sought.

The key observations are as follows:

- The town's heritage assets present a strong character but are hidden from view of visitors passing through Corsham.
- The town centre's location on the eastern edge of the settlement reduces its accessibility on foot. The layout and structure of the town centre undermines its function.
- There are educational and economic activities within and to the north and west of Corsham town that will benefit from the establishment of strong connectivity.
- The historic pattern of the town's expansion has generally been to the west which presents issues with connectivity to the town centre and the degree of separation between settlements.
- The reopening of the railway station remains a long term objective to support Corsham's sustainable growth.
- There is an opportunity to extend the settlement to the south, close to the town centre and railway station.
- Despite the attractions of the town centre, there is a lack of vitality and limited economic activity.

On this basis, the Framework identifies five 'projects':

- A remodelled town centre
- Sustainable growth to the south of the railway
- Environmental enhancements
- The Corsham Link - town centre
- A new hotel for Corsham

