Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design guidance

Consultation Draft

Baseline Report

July 2008

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Urban Design Guidance for Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent is proposed to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by both Local Planning Authorities. The aim of the SPD is to help translate strategic design policies and plans into practice advice and guidance. Some key areas of focus were identified at the outset of the project, these being:

a. The key centres;

b. The transport corridors that connect them together; and

c. Open spaces, canals and landscape that link places.

The SPD is intended to address sustainable urban design in an integrated manner and to help promote a more sustainable pattern and form of development.

This baseline report aims to enable an understanding of the complexities of this area. It maps the main characteristics of the area, the infrastructure and development elements on a series of layers. These provide a structured analysis of North Staffordshire and set a basis from which to identify elements that may need further detailed analysis. It also provides a baseline from which to start thinking about the nature of the guidance. The study concentrates on the built up areas of the conurbation, as these appear to be most in need of guidance.

This report sums up the work undertaken in Stage 1, including a summary of first impressions, initial briefings and appraisals and planning policy review. It reflects the understanding and evidence base that informed the initial draft strategic urban design vision. Since that stage, a number of iterations of the strategic urban design vision and the detailed design guidance have been prepared and reviewed by the client group. In this time, our understanding of the place and context has evolved as have policy and other projects and the final design guidance reflects that evolution.

1.2 Context

The context for the study is summarised as follows:

a. The built up area of North Staffordshire is focused in the east along the A500 and A50 corridors, with the main centres, the City Centre and Newcastle town centre on either side of the road;

b. The urban built up area of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme is made up of some eight towns and a number of smaller centres. These towns merge with one another creating a polycentric urban agglomerate;

c. Greenbelt designation to the west of Newcastle-under-Lyme settlement boundary, stretching to the M6, separating Kidsgrove from the main settlement;

d. The western area contains only a few settlements and is predominately rural in character;

e. The A500 and A50 provide the primary transport linkages throughout the area; and

f. In contrast to Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme is predominately rural in character with the majority of the Local Authority area taken up by countryside.
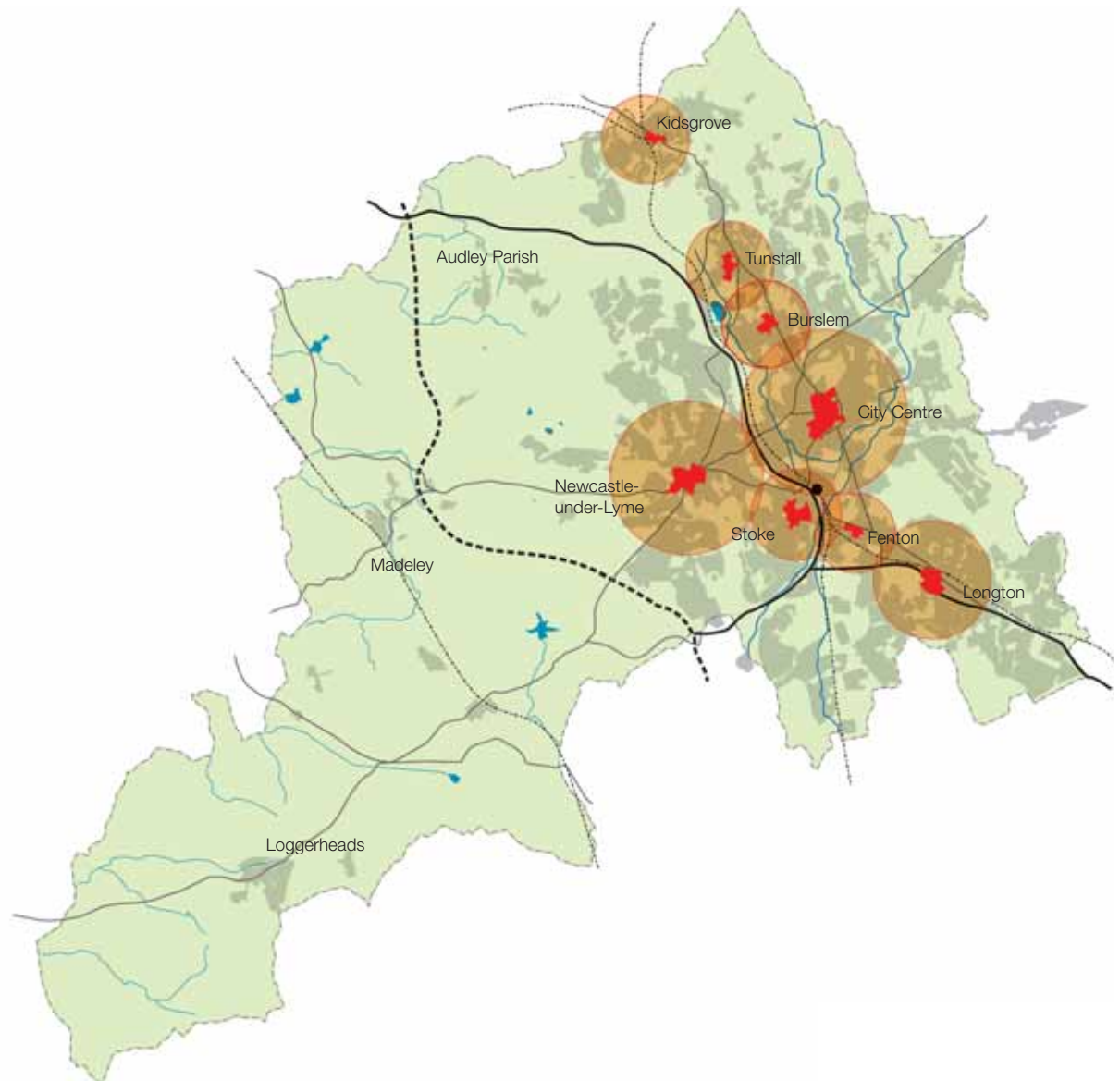
2.1 Initial appraisals

To be relevant to the local area, design guidance must respond to the qualities and characteristics of the places that make up the two Boroughs. We have undertaken a number of site visits and - together with the consultation events - have assembled an analysis of the key urban design issues affecting the area, and highlighted themes that the more detailed urban design guidance may address. The analysis is summarised in Section 3 of this document.

Overall, three principal characteristics are particularly striking:

a. The first is the contrast between the built up areas of the conurbation and its immediate landscape setting and the rural areas to the west in particular; and

b. The second is the fundamental influence of the geology and undulating topography on the pattern of urban form that has developed in the conurbation; and

c. The third is the clearly polycentric form of settlement, which led to thriving places in competition to outdo one another in the heyday of the industrial era but, which now need to complement one another.

2.2 Structure of initial findings

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development sets out clearly the government's expectations about good design, its importance and value. By Design is referred to in PPS 1 as a guide to best practice in relation to urban design.

This section uses By Design's urban design objectives as its structure:

a. Character;
b. Continuity and enclosure;
c. Quality of the public Realm;
d. Ease of movement;
e. Legibility;
f. Adaptability; and
g. Diversity.

Refer also to the policy review in section 4.

"Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good deign is indivisible from good planning." (para 33)

"Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context or fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted." (para 34)

" Have regard to good practice set out in By Design, Better Places to Live, Safer Places, Planning and Access for Disabled People" (para37)
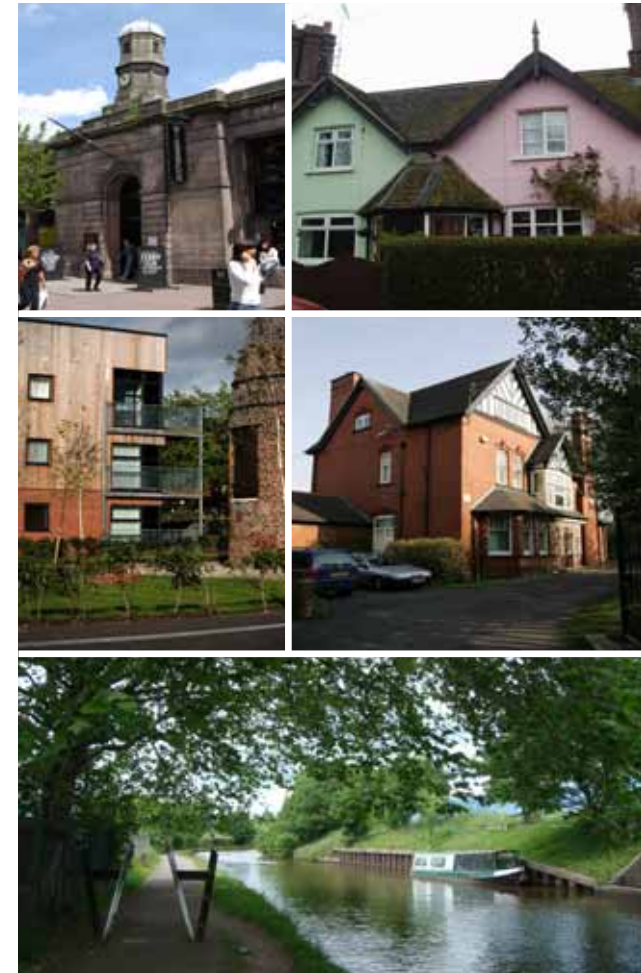
2.3 Character - a place with its own identity

Many of the places which we now think of as being pleasantly distinctive grew naturally in response to local circumstances. Where such distinctiveness is ignored, new development may reflect only the marketing policies or corporate identities of national and international companies, the standard practices and products of the building industry, or the latest fashions among design professionals. Development that responds sensitively to the site and its setting, by contrast, is likely to create a place that is valued and pleasing to the eye. (Source: By Design)

Key questions:
What is distinctive about a place?

What are its special characteristics?

Positives
a. The sub-region has a wealth of historic fabric, much of which has definite character;
b. Most of the town centres already have a distinct character of their own that can be enhanced and strengthened and in particular, Newcastle town centre has a coherent character and sense of place as a whole.
c. The rural area, both its villages and the countryside; and
d. Some residential neighbourhoods have an established, positive character, for instance Penkhull and others have the potential to create a stronger character.

Negatives
a. The most obvious negatives are the out-of town forms of development in town, interspersed through and at the heart of the built up area rather than on its edges;
b. Large areas of low grade landscapes, although these appear much greener when trees are in leaf; and
c. The standard of design quality in many existing residential areas, which have little or no sense of place.

Opportunities and issues
a. There is much that is distinctive so make the most of it, and celebrate it, whether it is the topography and views, canals and rivers, the industrial heritage, Burslem town centre, the availability of open land. All of these can be assets; and
b. Elsewhere, there is an opportunity to introduce new character through new development, which offers a freedom and challenge to designers that is often not available.

2.4 Continuity & enclosure - a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

Successful urban space (including street space) is defined and enclosed by buildings, structures and landscape. The relationship between buildings on a street, and between buildings and the street, are key to this. Buildings which follow a continuous building line around a street block and contain the private space within back yards or courtyards are often more successful than individual buildings that stand in the middle of a site. Buildings with live edges, such as shopfronts, doors directly to the street, or residential upper floors, enable people to keep an eye on public space and make it feel safer. (Source: By Design)

Key questions
How built up and urban is the place in terms of street frontages and its building heights?

Positives
a. The centres generally feel urban, once you have arrived within them;
b. A number of residential areas have well defined street types, for instance: Victorian terraced areas; Victorian suburbs, and Interwar suburbs; and
c. Some of the older industrial areas are urban in form.

Negatives
a. The centres are isolated and inward looking when approached from outside - they do not have an urban form or street frontages;
b. In many parts of the conurbation, there is little coherent pattern to street frontages;
c. Building heights are often too low for a street to feel urban - the space is too open; and
d. There is a lot of unbuilt land, which appears to newcomers to be dispersed throughout the conurbation in a random pattern.

Opportunities and issues
a. Should the aim be to urbanise the whole built up area of the conurbation? Or what is the alternative?
b. Extend the urban form found within centres out into their hinterlands; and
c. Use landscape as well as built frontages to enclose space.

2.5 Quality of the public realm- a place with attractive and successful outdoor spaces

The public realm is made up of the parts of a village, town or city that are available, without special charge, for use by everyone. This can include streets, parks, squares, arcades and public buildings, whether publicly or privately owned. It provides the setting not only for everyday life, but also for more formal civic occasions. Anyone who is designing a building, or any other structure, is helping to shape the public realm. (Source: By Design)

Key questions

What public places are there and what are they like?

How safe, well used and attractive?

Positives

a. There is good provision of good quality parks within the conurbation, generally dating from the Victorian era, with most of the centres having an associated park;

b. Tunstall's market square - Tower Square - is an example of a high quality urban space; and

c. There have been a number of recent environmental projects that have improved the quality of public spaces in various locations.

Negatives

a. Other than the parks above, the quality of open spaces is often poor in terms of landscape quality, supervision, linkages, facilities and having a clear role and purpose.

b. Boundary conditions in residential areas can affect the quality of the public realm, where walls or fences are lost or broken down, on-plot car parking dominates, or where gardens are uncared for.

c. The relationship between some of the public realm improvement projects and activity, ie use of those spaces, is not always apparent.

d. The quality of the public realm is undermined by significant areas of derelict/ underused sites.

Opportunities and issues

a. To exploit assets such as canals and rivers, as part of the public realm network.

b. To reinforce the open space and landscape network so that it is better connected together, both visually and in terms of moving from place to place.

c. To link environmental enhancements to a strategy for promoting and sustaining nodes of activity.

d. Consider introducing new landscapes for instance forestry, or community food initiatives.

2.6 Ease of movement - a place that is easy to get to and move through

The convenience, safety and comfort with which people go to and pass through buildings, places and spaces play a large part in determining how successful a place will be. Streets are more than just traffic channels for vehicles, and should offer a safe and attractive environment for all. Well-designed streets encourage people to use them, and make going outside a safe and pleasant experience. (Source: By Design)

Key questions

How accessible and well connected together are places?

Particularly when not travelling by car?

Positives

a. There is a good strategic road network into and through the area, the M6. The A500 and A50 in particular.

b. There are good rail connections.

c. There are good bus links between the different centres.

d. It is possible to travel quickly from centre to centre by car using the A500.

Negatives

a. Many residential areas feel poorly connected and some are so even for car users, particularly towards the edges of the conurbation.

b. Fast roads sever centres from their catchment areas, for instance in Longton.

c. Generally the urban environment is car dominated.

d. The quality of facilities for public transport is poor, for instance the bus stations.

e. There is little evidence of a high quality cycle network.

Opportunities and issues

a. Promote users not in cars on the transport corridors that link centres directly - buses, cycling and walking.

b. Tame the ring roads - aim to integrate vehicular routes into places and improve pedestrian and cycle connections.

c. For residential environments an aim should be to improve streets for non car users.

d. Improve the quality of experience in using public transport.

e. Promote walking and cycling links in general.

2.7 Legibility - a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

Landmarks, gateways and focal points help people find their way. Vistas create links between places. Visible routes and destinations, and a visible choice of routes, will contribute to making a place feel safe and non-threatening. Places where form, layout and signage make them easy to understand are likely both to function well and to be pleasant to live in or visit. (Source: By Design)

Key questions

How easy is it to find your way around?

And how clearly identifiable and memorable are places?

Positives

a. There are a number of unique monumental landmark buildings in different centres, for instance Ceramica in Burlsem and a number of Victorian churches on the skyline.

b. The valley between Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle means that on both sides there is a sense of prospect looking out across it.

c. Newcastle has a clear identity and is memorable - it has a much more typical structure to its settlement pattern that can easily be comprehended.

Negatives

a. The landmarks do not always relate well to places where navigation decisions are made so they do not support finding your way around.

b. Centres are not evident from passing by or around them on ring roads, so it can be difficult to know where you are.

c. Outside centres it is often difficult to distinguish one place from another.

d. Directional signing can be confusing and may feel counter intuitive where it signs car users onto the A500 or A50 to reach somewhere rather than the more direct route between centres.

e. The image of the central valley is poor when viewed from the A500.

f. The view from ring roads also provides a poor image of centres.

Opportunities and issues

a. Integrate centre better into their wider surroundings.

b. Present a better image to the outside world, both along the central valley and along ring roads.

c. Aim to vary the character between different places or different developments in a more planned and coherent way.

d. Decide - is it one place or many?

2.8   Adaptability - a place that can accommodate change easily

Places need to be adaptable at every scale. A household makes different demands on a house as children are born and grow up. Towns and cities as a whole have to adapt as industries rise and decline, demand for housing and the nature of workplaces changes, and buildings and infrastructure age. (Source: By Design)

Key questions
How well prepared is a place to respond to a changing environment over time - climate change, social and economic conditions?

Positives
a.   There is a historic building stock, much of which is potentially adaptable.
b.   Residential areas generally contain types that are fairly flexible - with relatively few large system built estates, or Radburn layouts for instance.
c.   There is land availability, so should be possible to be responsive to environmental factors.

Negatives
a.   The relative weakness of the economic base to underpin regeneration in the long term.
b.   The poor environmental performance of much of the existing housing stock at present.

Opportunities and issues
a.   There is an opportunity to future proof new build developments and to upgrade existing buildings.
b.   In many locations there is little reason to be particularly sensitive to the appearance of environmental technologies.
c.   Landscape led environmental initiatives such as forestry, wood pellet production and allotments could contribute to adaptation to climate change and enhance the landscape and environmental quality.
d.   The cost of upgrading the environmental performance of existing building stock is recognised to be an issue.

2.9 Diversity - a place with variety and choice

A mix of uses may be appropriate at a variety of scales: within a village, town or city; within a neighbourhood or a street; or even in a particular building. In a town centre, for example, housing can provide customers for shops, make use of empty space above them and generate activity when they are closed. In residential areas, workplaces, shops and other facilities can make the place more than just a dormitory. (Source: By Design)

Key questions
What variety of uses and activities can be supported?

Positives
a. The centres are relatively local to residential areas in most cases.
b. There is generally a mix of uses in each centre as well as retail, in particular in Newcastle and the City Centre;
c. Most of the key centres have an identified niche role that can be reinforced.

Negatives
a. Apart from the two key centres identified above, the other centres lack diversity.
b. All centres lack residential as part of their mix of uses.
c. Burlem lacks a local residential catchment - around the centre there are relatively few people living who would use it as their local centre.
d.   Out-of-centre uses and forms of development weaken the centres.
e. A key issue is a lack of attractive urban housing and a predominance of suburban estates.
f. There is a lack of 'people places' - destinations that attract people because of their environment and concentration of activity.

Opportunities and issues
a. Reinforce centres and develop their distinctive roles.
b. Introduce more diversity through different types of housing
c. Aim to establish nodes where people want to visit - focal points with a concentration of activities.
d. Promote and manage the mix of uses and activities.

3.1 Topography

The undulating topography in North Staffordshire is one of the strongest characteristics of the area.
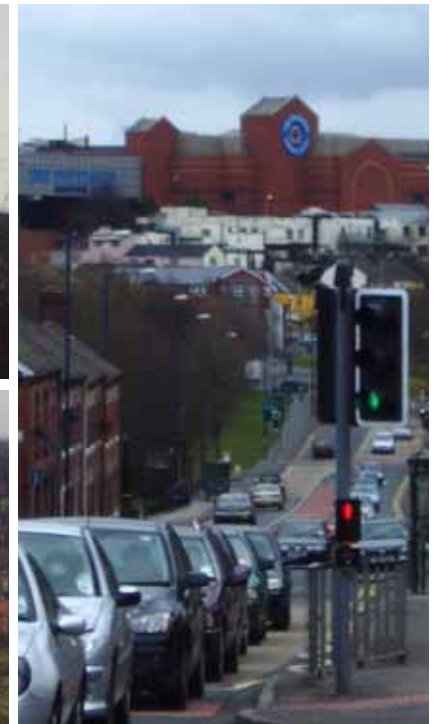
Heights vary between 100m AOD and greater than 200m AOD. Although the majority of the built up area of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent is within a medium height range, localised changes in level create areas of particular prominence, with a number of Stoke-on-Trent centres being positioned on spurs off the ridge that runs along the eastern side of the valley of the Fowlea Brook.

The City Centre is located on one of these local high points and is highly visible from the surrounding area. The change in level is especially notable from the west and north.
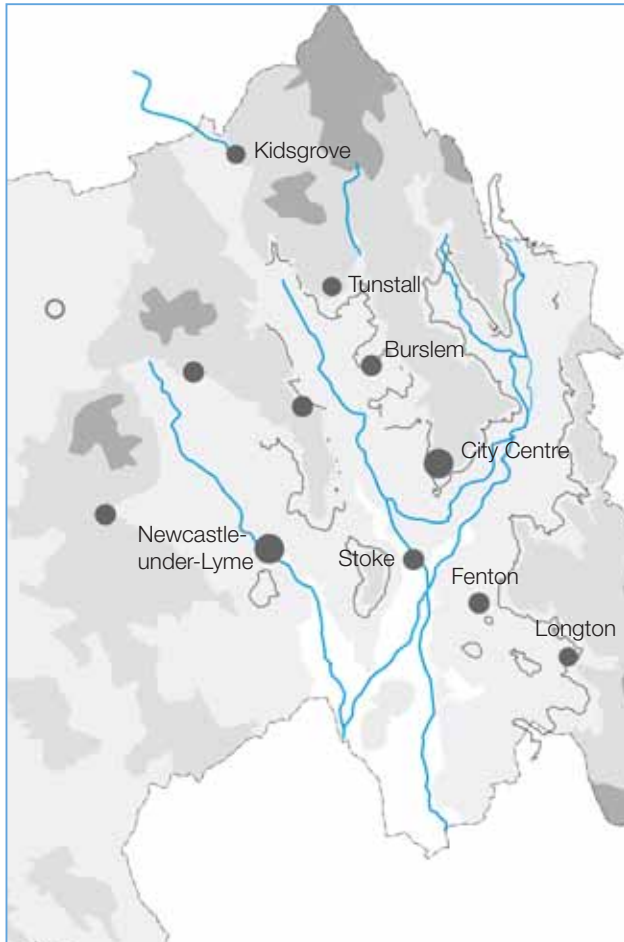
Long views across valleys frequently open up between housing and along key transport corridors. These views are important in terms of openness and distant views, however they are often marked negatively by poor quality industrial development at the valley bottom.

Traditional development forms, such as Victorian terraced houses generally reflect the topography and step up and down hills in a sensitive manner. Newer developments, including the Potteries Shopping Centre, often lack consideration in terms of site topography and buildings sit awkwardly on slopes or impact negatively on key views.

Outside the conurbation, to the east the land rises to the millstone grit uplands of the Staffordshire Moorlands, whilst to the west it flattens out gradually into the Staffordshore Plain. To the north, Mow Cop is set on a local high point. To the south west of Newcastle-under-Lyme the rural area is generally made up of rolling farmland, although the Maer and Hanchurch Hills are a block of uplands with a varied and undulating landform, with a small scale landscape of ridges and valleys.

Detail to show relationship of centres in the conurbation to landform

LEGEND
- < 200 m
- 150 - 200 m
- 125 - 150 m
- 100 - 125 m
- > 100 m
- Water bodies
- Town Centre

Kidsgrove

Tunstall

Burslem

City Centre

Audley Parish

Newcastle-under-Lyme

Stoke

Fenton

Longton

Madeley

Loggerheads
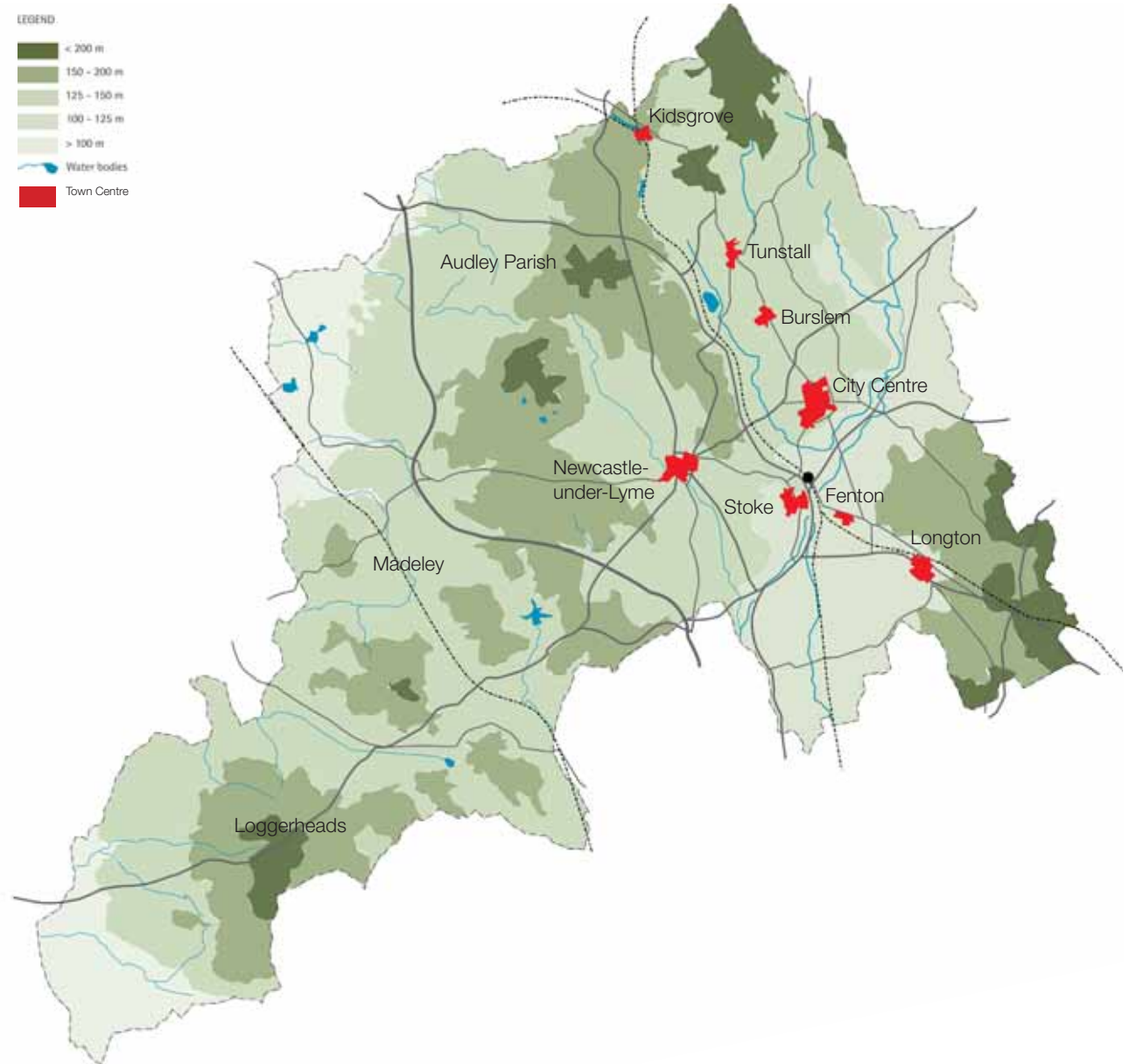
3. Initial urban design appraisals

3.2 Transport corridors

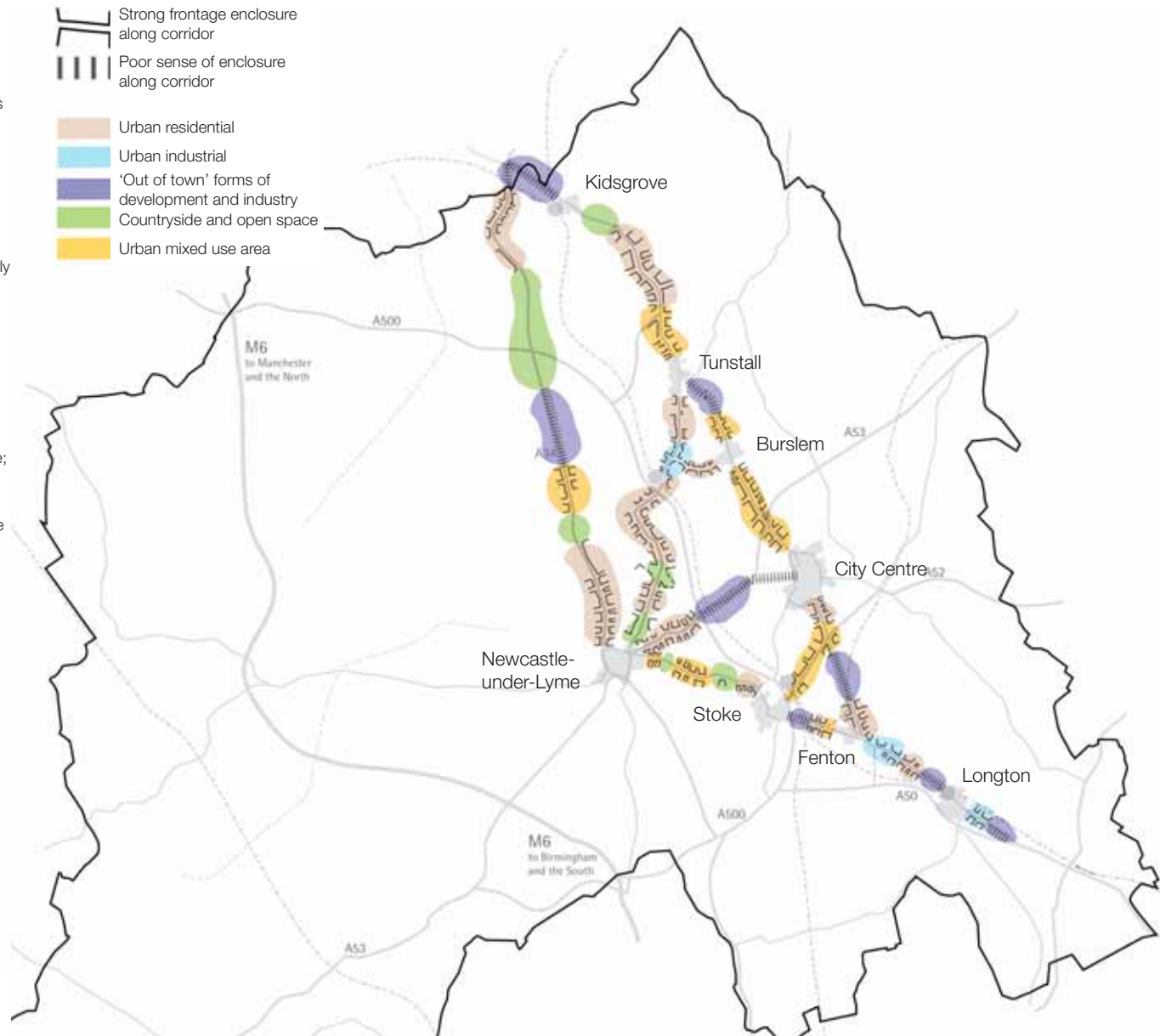The main traffic corridors can be separated into a primary and secondary network. The primary network consists of the A500 and A50. Traffic is generally directed onto these routes, providing fast links between centres. The secondary network predominately has a local traffic function. It provides more direct links between centres. Many of these routes are based on historic street connections between places.

The primary network has recently been subject to environmental improvements and the scope to change the character of the A500 and A50 is very small. Therefore, as identified in the brief, this study concentrates on the secondary transport corridors. These represent an opportunity to become pleasant and multi-modal routes that are positive links between places. There is scope to encourage cycling along these routes and generally create more pedestrian friendly environments.

This section sets out the key transport corridors connecting centres and describes their varying character, identifying a number of character areas along the corridors. The strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of each of these character areas are summarised and provide a basis from which guidance may be developed. The following character areas have been identified:

a. Urban residential, urban industrial and urban mixed use areas, which comprise roads with frontage development and high degree of enclosure;

b. Out of town retail and industrial areas, which comprise roads with no enclosure and fragmented frontages;

c. Open space and landscape areas, which comprise roads with landscape character.

Legend:
- Strong frontage enclosure along corridor
- Poor sense of enclosure along corridor
- Urban residential
- Urban industrial
- 'Out of town' forms of development and industry
- Countryside and open space
- Urban mixed use area

Urban residential

Description
a. Generally based on 19th century street layout;
b. Frontage development predominately in the form of Victorian terraced houses;
c. Mix of uses, i.e. residential and small retail/commercial units;

Strengths
a. Well enclosed space;

Weakness
a. High traffic volume can impact negatively on living environment;

Opportunity
a. Encourage non-residential uses on ground floors;
b. Improve environmental quality for residents;
c. Improve opportunities for cycling and create safe cycle environment;
d. Expand sustainable transport modes;

Urban industrial

Description
a. Generally based on 19th century street layout;
b. Buildings generally positioned at or close to edge of pavement;
c. Mix of uses, i.e. Industrial and commercial units;

Strengths
a. Well enclosed space;

Weakness
a. Little animation at street frontage;
b. Poor pedestrian environment;

Opportunity
a. Encourage activity at street frontage;
b. Enhance pedestrian environment;
c. Improve opportunities for cycling and create safe cycle environment;

Countryside and open space

Description
a. Predominately lined by landscape and streets partly enclosed by hedges and tree planting;

Strengths
a. Landscape setting creates positive contrast to urban areas;

Weakness
a. May appear car dominated, encouraging higher traffic speeds;

Opportunity
a. Retain/strengthen landscape character;

'Out of town' forms of retail and industry

Description
a. Vehicle dominated environment;
b. Streets lined by out of town retail and small industrial units;
c. Poor degree of enclosure;

Weakness
a. Poor pedestrian environment;
b. Lack of enclosure/activity encourages higher traffic speeds;
c. Lack of distinct character;

Opportunity
a. Creating higher degree of enclosure and consistency, either by building and or landscape;
b. Enhance pedestrian environment;
c. Create distinct character;

3.3 Canals and rivers

The canals and river provide great opportunities for recreation and for sustainable transport, walking and particularly cycling. However currently neither are particularly well integrated into the surrounding areas. In many locations they are blocked in between major infrastructure and industrial areas. Where they run adjacent to residential development, houses tend to back onto the canals and river.

The report identifies the main character areas that address the canals and river corridors, which may need further urban design guidance.

These character areas are:

a. Canal/river adjacent to residential housing;

b. Canal/river adjacent to industrial uses;

c. Canal/river adjacent to derelict land; and

d. Canal/river adjacent to open space.

The experience of travelling along the canal, either on the towpath as pedestrian or cyclist, or by boat is distinctly different to the experience of the conurbation by road. The Trent and Mersey Canal in particular is very green in character and adjacent uses are mostly screened by dense landscape buffers. The experience of this character is very important and creates a local distinctiveness and a positive impression that is worth retaining.

The Harecastle Tunnel between Kidsgrove and Goldendale is a distinct character area in itself for boat users although not for those who are not travelling by water. It was built in 1777 and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Areas of distinct character

Canal

Rivers

Residential area

Industrial area

Park

Open land
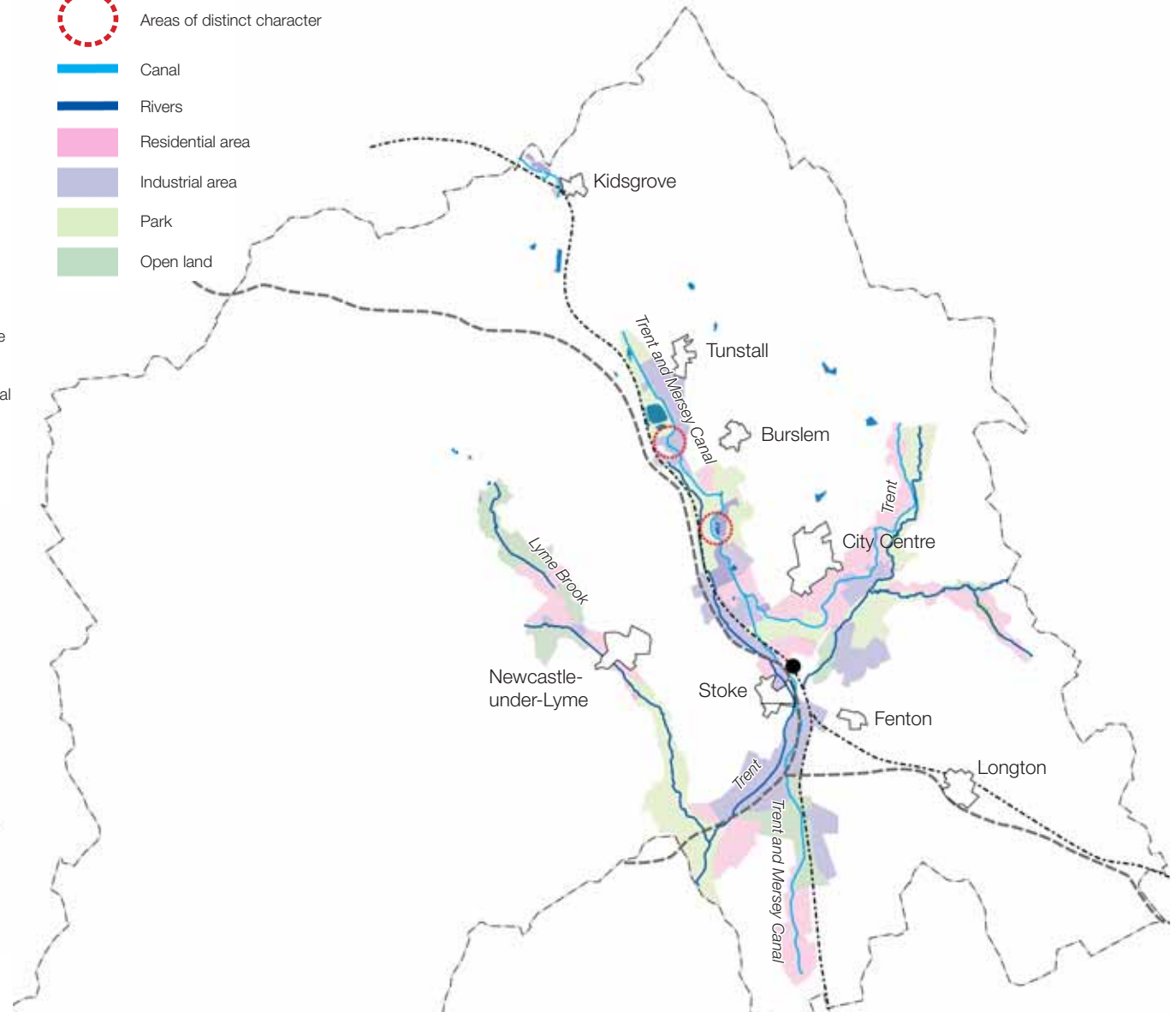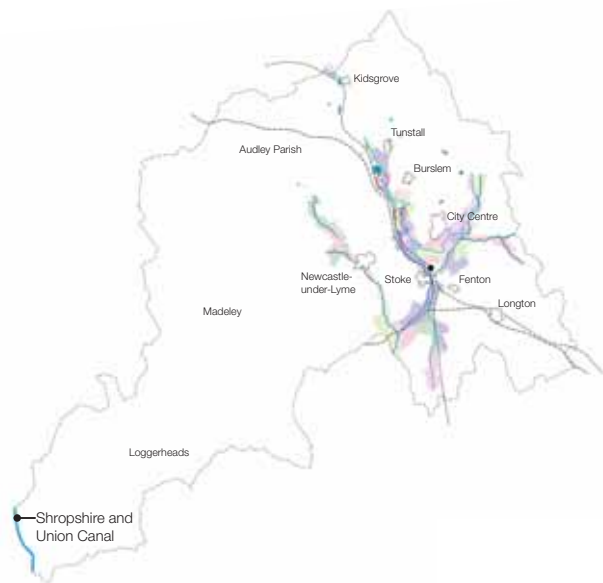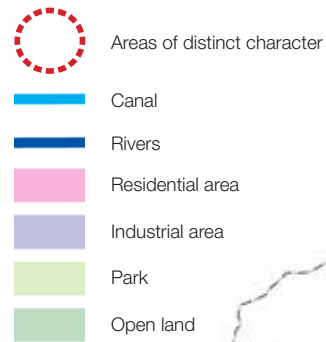
3. Initial urban design appraisals

Residential

Description
a. Houses generally turn their sides or backs towards the canal;
b. In less urban areas canals/rivers are lined by shrub and tree planting;

Strengths
a. Local residents benefit from canals/river environment;

Weakness
a. Little overlooking and activity along the canal/river;
b. Little opportunity for the residents to access the canals/river, other than from the towpaths;

Opportunity
a. Improve passive surveillance;
b. Improve public access;

Industrial

Description
a. In some areas development, predominately industrial sheds, is built close to the waters edge. This is particular the case where development dates back to the 19th century;
b. Where there is a towpath, it is often lined by tree planting;

Strengths
a. Existing canal side character may be valuable in heritage terms;

Weakness
a. Little overlooking and activity along the canal/river;
b. Generally the river/canal sides are not publicly accessible, other than from the towpaths;

Opportunity
a. Enhance industrial character;
b. Improve activity along the waters edge;
c. Improve public access and pedestrian environment;

Parks/ other open spaces

Description
a. River/canal runs through landscape;
b. Varies between being enclosed by trees and shrubs and open grassed areas;

Strengths
a. Waterside is accessible;
b. Canal/river provide a natural habitat and is likely to be of high ecological value;

Weakness
a. Generally poor quality towpath surface;

Opportunity
a. Enhance the landscape setting;
b. Introduce activity alongside it, such as boating or waterside cafes to create destinations;

Open land

Description

a. Canal/river generally located within private land (farmland or derelict, cleared land);

Strengths

a. Sense of openness creates contrast to more built up, urban areas;

Weakness

a. Limited accessibility;

Opportunity

a. Future development areas, within the urban areas provide the opportunity to create a distinct waterside character, with buildings that address the canal/river positively;

b. Encourage the sense of openness where river/canal flow through farmland and provide access to encourage recreational uses, such as cycling and walking;

Canal/River adjacent to infrastructure

Description

a. River/canal are adjacent to major infrastructure such as rail tracks and highways;

b. Noise impact from adjacent traffic;

Strengths

a. In a few particular locations the crossing of different transport modes create unique and exciting situations;

Weakness

a. Access is generally difficult and limited;

b. Environment may be noisy and dusty and provides little positive quality;

c. Bland retaining walls, offer little opportunity for greening;

Opportunity

a. Enhance landscape and tree planting along towpath to create buffer planting to infrastructure and enhance waterside environment;
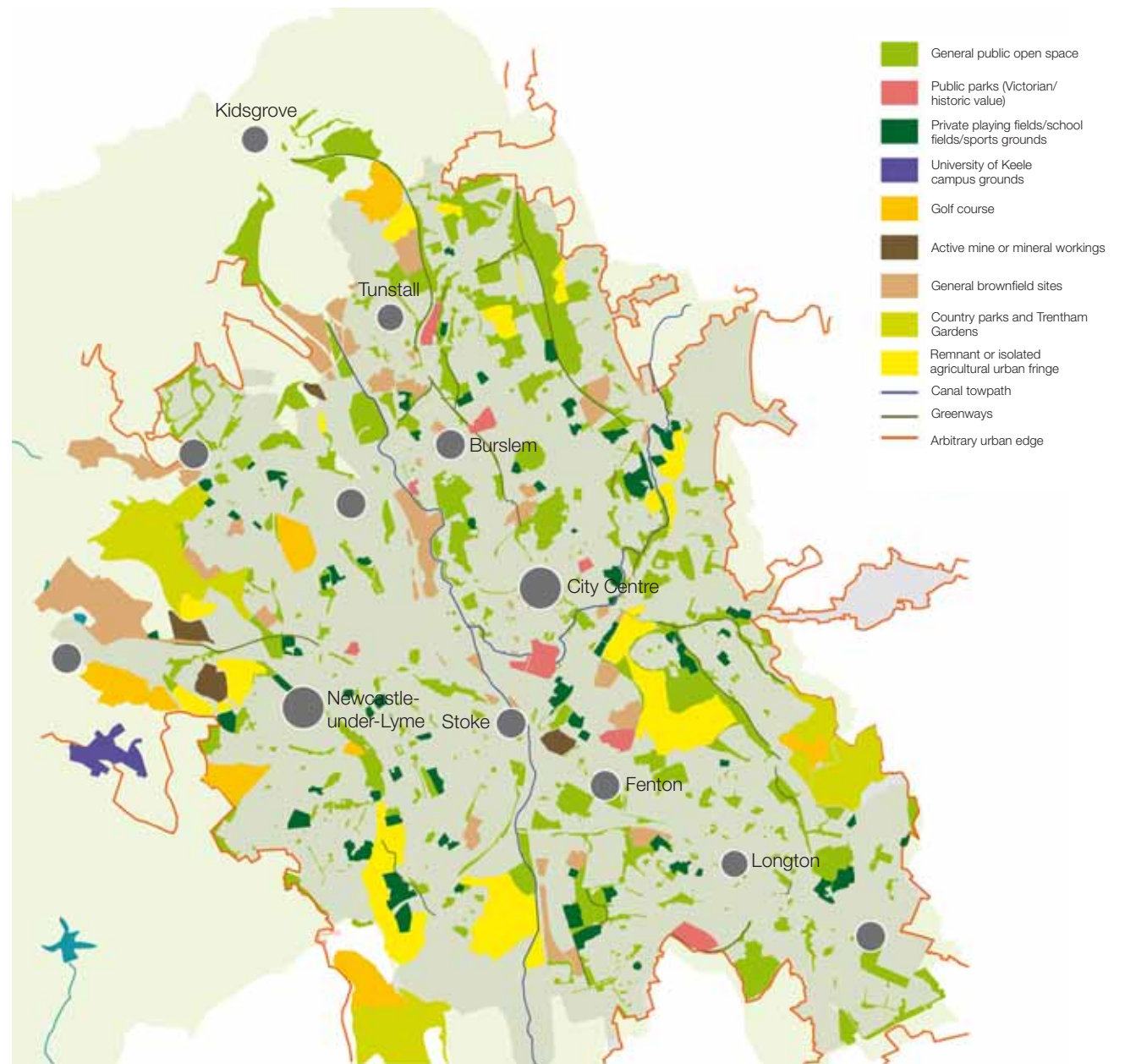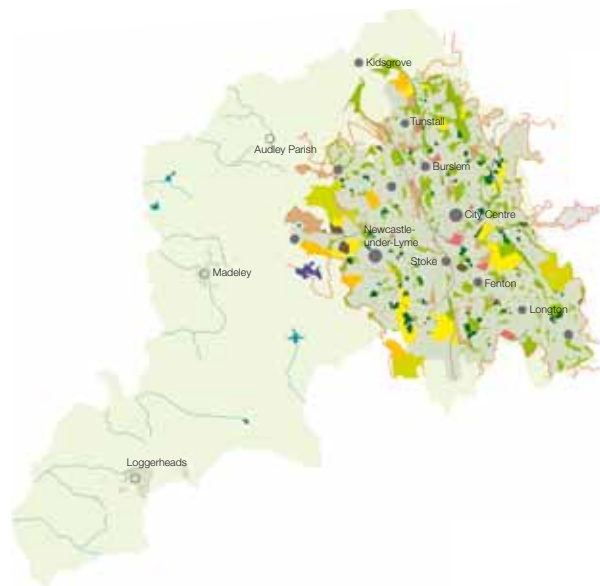
3.4 Open space and landscape areas

The study of open spaces and landscape concentrates on areas associated with the urban built up area of North Staffordshire. These spaces are most likely to be an issue in terms of urban design and may need of further guidance in the forthcoming design guide. It also considers the landscape character of the area as a whole.

Open spaces and landscape in and around the conurbation

The open space and landscape layer identifies the main open areas within, or near, the built up conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

General public open space includes areas that appear to be public access green space, such as parks, open spaces alongside roads or within housing estates, non-agricultural land that does not appear to be fenced and/or has clear pedestrian desire lines, open recreation areas or sports grounds (those that are not fenced off). It includes also some small areas of demolished houses that are not fenced off or under development.

Generally the urban conurbation is well covered with open spaces. However, these are mostly of low quality and poor maintenance. The spaces also appear dispersed and fragmented rather than forming a coherent and joined up network.

Legend:
- General public open space
- Public parks (Victorian/ historic value)
- Private playing fields/school fields/sports grounds
- University of Keele campus grounds
- Golf course
- Active mine or mineral workings
- General brownfield sites
- Country parks and Trentham Gardens
- Remnant or isolated agricultural urban fringe
- Canal towpath
- Greenways
- Arbitrary urban edge

3. Initial urban design appraisals

Public parks (Victorian/historic)

Victorian parks laid out during the era of main industrial growth - they correlate with the heritage characterisation assessment category of 'statutory significance'. Examples are Hanley and Burslem Park.

Urban edge

Line denoting approximate position of arbitrary edge of urban area.

Playing fields - private/school

Recreational areas, playing fields, cricket and football pitches that appear not to have obvious public access; school grounds.

Brownfield

Former tips, spoil heaps, workings, industrial sites etc that do not appear to show public access, or appear to be undergoing redevelopment.

Country Parks and Gardens

Larger scale public access areas on rural fringe/rural areas, inferred from maps and plans.

Active workings

Areas that appear to be actively worked for clay etc or used as landfill as determined from aerial views.

Isolated agricultural

Arbitrary areas of agriculture isolated within largely urban areas, as identified by farming paraphernalia, animal desire lines and cows. Probably often quite degraded horticulture, under threat from urban activity.

Landscape and open space away from the conurbation

'Planning for Landscape Change' (2000) adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Staffordshire County Council, provides a landscape character assessment of the areas outside the built up area of the conurbation and defines a series of landscape character objectives.

The rural areas defined here lie mainly within the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (no 61) Regional Character Area as defined in the County landscape character assessment.

This area of rolling farmland includes villages such as Loggerheads and Betley. A part of the plain within Staffordshire is an intensive agricultural landscape of dairy farming, with some stock rearing, but it is giving way to arable farming in places.

The more intact areas of landscape with a positive character show an irregular pattern of hedged fields, ancient hedgerows and large numbers of over-mature hedgerow oaks. The extensive network of small, often sunken, winding lanes, the dispersed pattern of small rural villages and the traditional red brick architecture all help to give the area its own character.

The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain can itself be subdivided into two character areas:

a. The Woodland Quarter is a locality of sandstone hills and large woodlands to the south west of Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Maer and Hanchurch Hills are a block of uplands over 400m with a varied and undulating landform, which creates a small scale landscape of ridges and valleys. Slopes are often wooded and there are large trees.

b. The Northern Meres and Mosses is an area of clay lowlands to the north of the Woodland Quarter. This area is under commuter pressure, resulting in property improvements and some erosion of rural character.

Smaller areas of landscape around the northern and eastern fringes of the conurbation fall within the Potteries and Churnet Valley (no 64) Regional Character Area. This includes:

a. Coalfield/ fringe farmlands areas, formerly extraction sites, now in agricultural use fringe farmlands; and

b. Restoration land, former industrial/ quarry workings not in agricultural use, but acting as informal open space, generally found as pockets between housing.
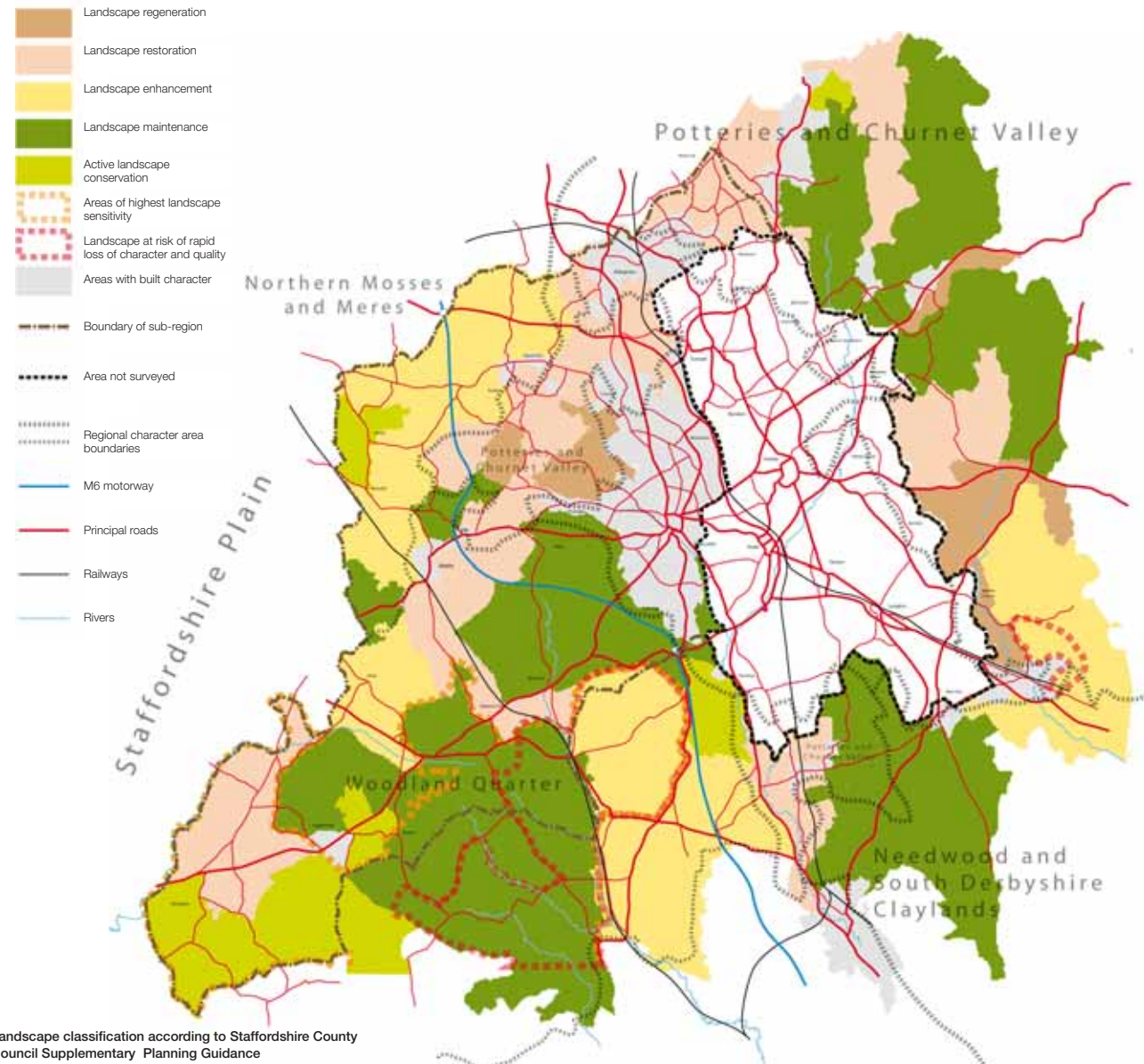
To the north east of Stoke-on-Trent, around Mow Cop, is the remains of an historic landscape with the character of the Low Peaks beyond.

Initial characterisation of landscapes in and around the conurbation

The Staffordshire County Council 'Planning for Landscape Change' 2000 provides useful categorisation for landscape types and a thorough policy basis for a large part of the 'rural' urban fringe areas to the conurbation.

An initial characterisation of landscapes in the conurbation and on its fringes identified three key characters, which relate to those identified in the SPG five classes although within a more urban context.

a. Rural led landscapes;

b. Transition landscapes;

c. Urban led landscapes.

Landscape regeneration
Landscape restoration
Landscape enhancement
Landscape maintenance
Active landscape conservation
Areas of highest landscape sensitivity
Landscape at risk of rapid loss of character and quality
Areas with built character
Boundary of sub-region
Area not surveyed
Regional character area boundaries
M6 motorway
Principal roads
Railways
Rivers

Landscape classification according to Staffordshire County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance

Rural Led areas

Ancient open countryside, woodland and working farmland. This character typifies large areas of Newcastle BC area and is associated with gently rolling landscape with defined valleys with discrete settlements and farmsteads punctuating the landscape. In these areas, the quality of landscape is important. (SCC landscape quality: 'Very High' and 'High' and policy objective "active landscape conservation' and 'Landscape Maintenance'.)

Transition landscapes:

A wide variety of informal spaces, not necessarily publicly accessible, but all potentially add to overall variety of landscape character. These may be:

a. Former quarry workings with informal planting;

b. Urban fringe / urban rural where urban development abuts working landscape;

c. Allotments;

d. Areas of amenity grass or large-scale extensive open spaces / country parks;

e. Brownfield sites, such as spoil heaps, tips and former industrial facilities, that are not intended for intensive developments;
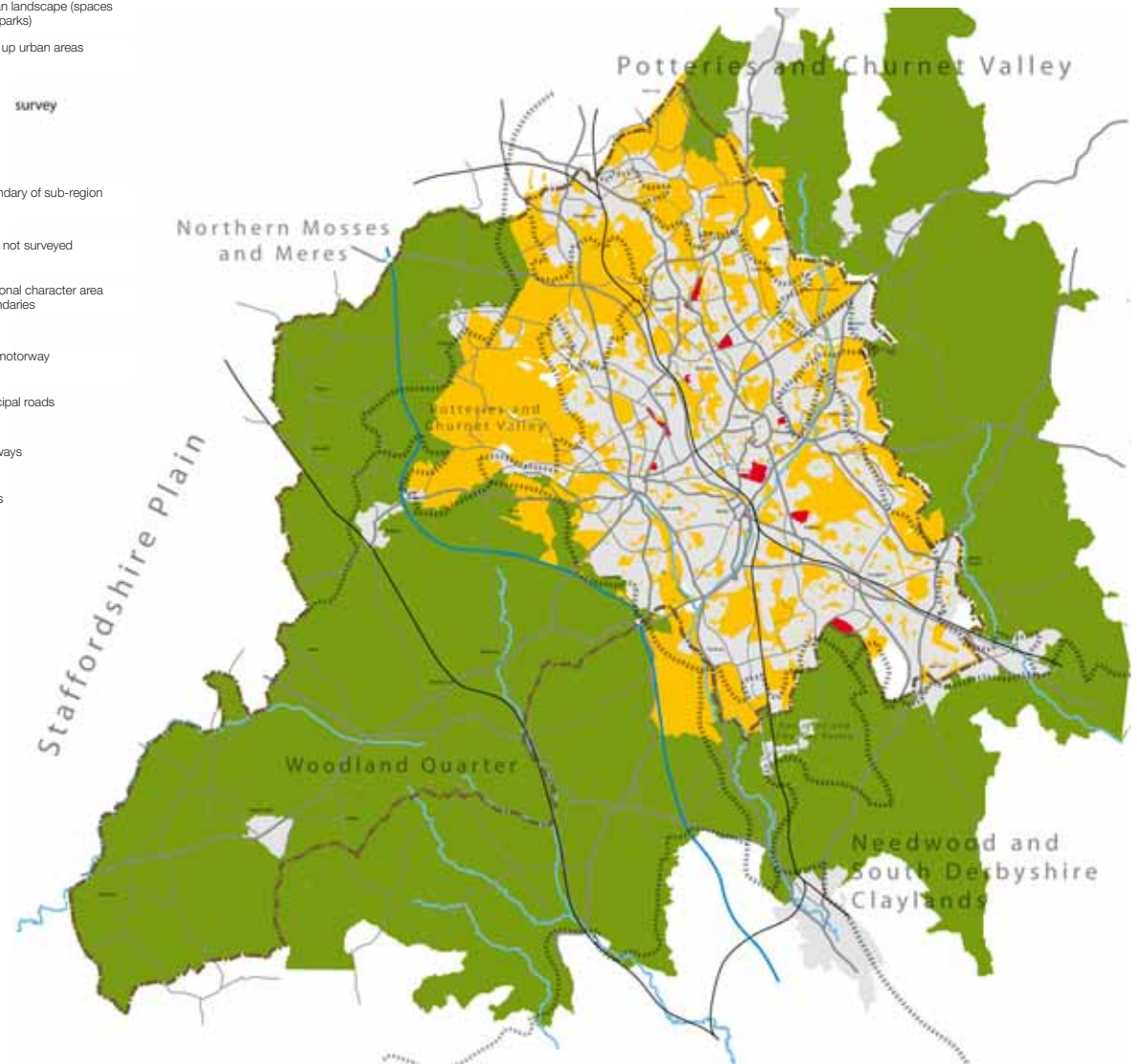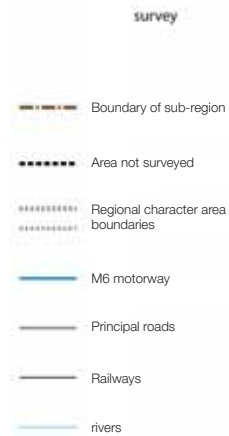
Generally low environmental quality and little positive landscape character. This landscape character can be subdivided into;

Coalfield / fringe farmland - low grade farmland set around the urban conurbation. Urban fringe areas where urban expansion has weakened the individual identities of upland settlements creating a suburban sprawl. In these areas there is often little positive landscape character or quality of environment. (SCC landscape quality: 'Moderate' and 'Low' and policy objective "Landscape enhancement' and 'Landscape Restoration')

Restoration land - former industrial / quarry workings not in agricultural use - acting as informal open space. Generally found as pockets within dense housing providing important potential assets to the local communities. Its open space function is important although the quality of environment is generally not high. (SCC landscape quality predominantly 'Very Low' with some 'Low' and policy objective "Innovative landscape regeneration" and 'Landscape Restoration')

Urban led areas

Landscape character predominantly defined by the quality of the built form and architecture where the open space and the public realm is defined and enclosed by dense built form. Typically the landscape will be intensively used, formal and structured in character and highly maintained. The landscape character of urban led areas is predominantly determined by the architectural quality and layout of buildings and activities relating to spaces and potential for streets to contribute to the greening of an area through street tree planting or front gardens. (SCC landscape quality range from "Very High" with active landscape conservation , "High" with landscape maintenance to 'Moderate' and policy objective "Landscape enhancement')

Legend:
- Rural landscape
- Transition landscape
- Urban landscape (spaces and parks)
- Built up urban areas

survey

- Boundary of sub-region
- Area not surveyed
- Regional character area boundaries
- M6 motorway
- Principal roads
- Railways
- rivers

3.5 Housing typologies

The following pages describe the predominant residential housing typologies. Although North Staffordshire consists of a wide variety of development typologies within the conurbation, in rural settlements and in the countryside, the report identifies only those that are likely to be an issue in design terms and may need addressing in the forthcoming guidance.
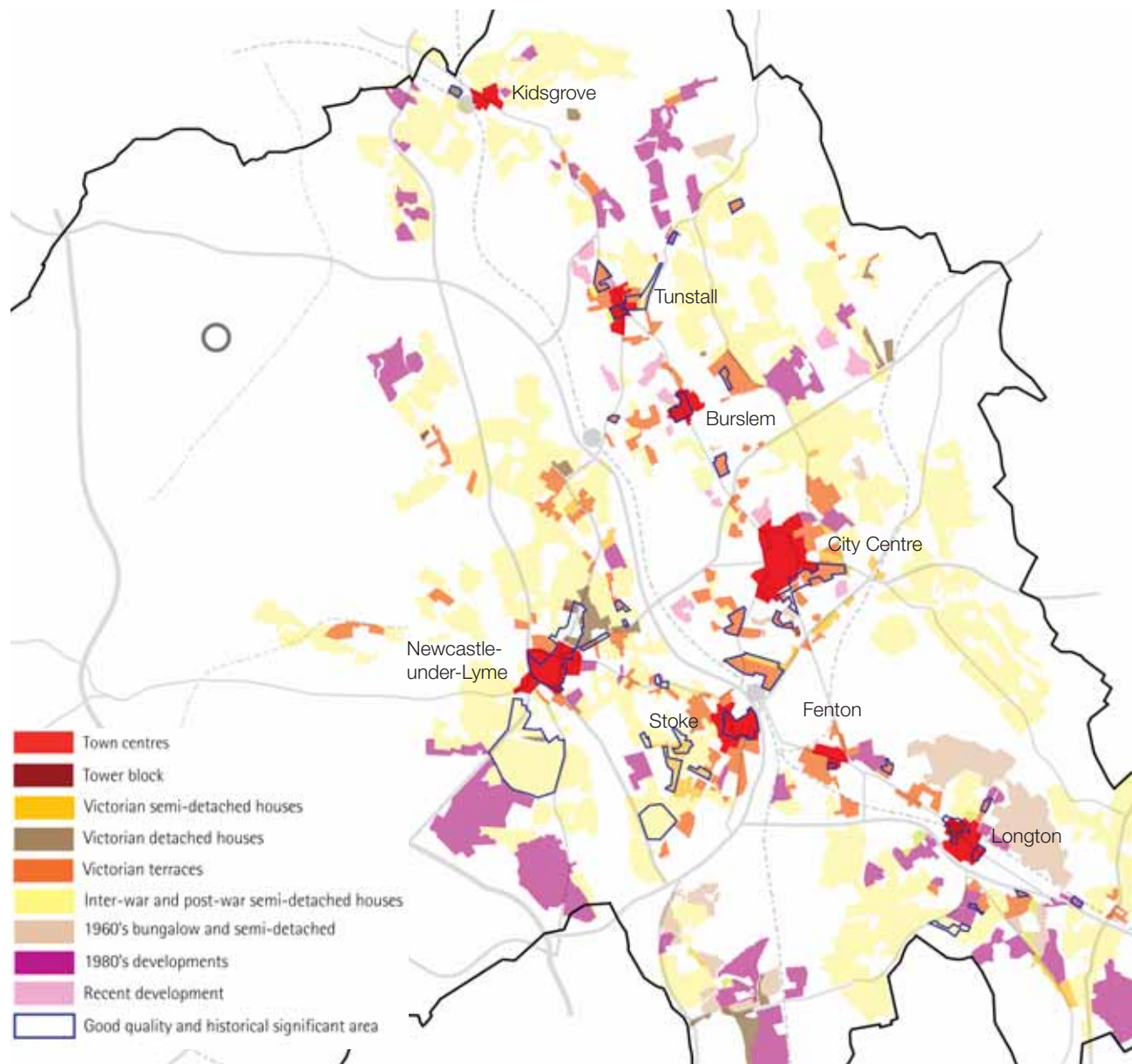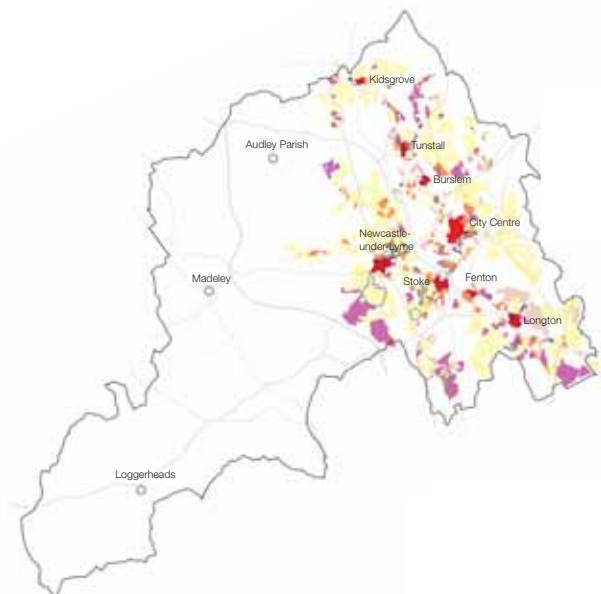
a. Victorian terraces;

b. Victorian semis and detached houses;

c. Inter war and post war semi-detached houses;

d. Post war 1960-1990s development; and

e. Recent development.

The plan shows that the predominant housing typology is inter war or immediately post war housing estates, mainly of semi detached houses.

It also shows that, contrary to perception, the number of Victorian terraces is fairly low, but however, that they are clustered in prominent and/ or accessible locations, such as around key transport corridors and town centres.

Housing areas are generally not well integrated into centres, so do not provide an immediate local population that would help to support activity in the centre. In particular, the City Centre and Burslem lack a local residential catchment.

The quality and character of design of housing in areas with typologies not identified here, or in locations not shown here, may still be important.

Legend:
- Town centres
- Tower block
- Victorian semi-detached houses
- Victorian detached houses
- Victorian terraces
- Inter-war and post-war semi-detached houses
- 1960's bungalow and semi-detached
- 1980's developments
- Recent development
- Good quality and historical significant area

Victorian and Edwardian detached and semi-detached housing

Description
a. Variety of buildings, unit sizes and tenures;
b. Mostly 2 storey with pitched roof and gables;
c. Varied material palette, but predominately red brick and/or light render;

Strengths
a. Generally areas of higher quality and distinct character;
b. Popular typology that is flexible and adaptable;
c. Good provision of open space;
d. Good landscape quality, including street trees, mature trees in front and back gardens;

Weakness
a. May be of poor environmental performance, due to lack of insulation and poor airtightness.

Opportunity
a. To improve their sustainable performance for instance by replacing windows, adding insulation and/or technologies such a solar collectors;

Distinct street scene, created by the topography and a series of semi-detached houses

Mature trees, verges and detached houses, create a high quality suburban street scene.

Houses are set back from the edge of pavement with small front gardens. Predominant boundary treatment are hedges of varying height.

Victorian terraced housing

Description
a. The biggest identified housing market failure occurs in areas of poor quality terraced housing;
b. Variety of types of terrace houses in terms of sizes, plot width and internal layout, however these are generally not mixed and each street / area is of one type;
c. Some are of historic value, but smaller houses may be perceived negatively due to size and condition;
d. Generally pockets of distinct character, especially in combination with undulating topography;
e. Varied materials with predominately red brick;
f. Mostly 2 storey heights.

Strengths
a. Larger units are flexible and adaptable;
b. Good definition of streets;

Weakness
a. Little variety of unit types and sizes per area;
b. Smaller terrace houses are too small for families;
c. Homogeneous streetscape and layout;
d. Car dominated streets, due to lack of car parking spaces;
e. Lack of open space and limited private outdoor space;
f. Age of buildings may lead to poor state of repair;
g. Rear alleys are unattractive and perceived unsafe; and
h. May be of poor environmental performance, due to lack of insulation and poor airtightness.

Opportunity
a. Improve public realm in the form of homezones and the quality of landscape;
b. Introduce open space and play facilities;
c. Introduce more variety of unit sizes by introducing larger units and/or flatted development in key locations; and
d. To improve their sustainable performance for instance by replacing windows, adding insulation and/or technologies such a solar collectors;

The roof line of this terrace reflects the topography.

This typology is set back from the edge of pavement to allow small bay windows and front gardens.

A uniform frontage of terrace houses. Parked cars are parked along the roadside with little distance between the front room and the street.

A larger terrace typology with bay windows, gables and front gardens.

Inter and post war semi-detached housing

Description
a. Varied quality in terms of construction and detailing, influencing the overall quality;
b. Generally developed as comprehensive developments, taking into consideration public facilities, open space public realm design and the overall form;
c. 2 storey red/orange brick buildings; and
d. Hipped roof form.

Strengths
a. Good definition of streets;
b. Buildings designed and laid out in groups;
c. Good provision of public and private open space;
d. Generally good pedestrian permeability;
e. Street tree planting in higher quality schemes;

Weakness
a. Homogeneous urban environment;
b. Poor legibility (large areas of 2 storey semi detached houses);
c. On some estates poor integration of open space and tired looking public realm;
d. Little variety in terms of unit types and sizes;
e. Age of buildings may lead to poor state of repair; and
f. Poor sustainable performance, due to lack of insulation and airtightness.

Opportunity
a. Introduce variety in terms of unit types;
b. Improve legibility (for example by introducing higher elements in key locations);
c. Public realm improvements;
d. To improve their sustainable performance for instance by replacing windows, adding insulation and/or technologies such a solar collectors;

The quality of this housing typology depends on the original built quality and state of maintenance.

The estates of lesser quality often also have a less robust layout, with many spaces not well addressed.

This is an example of a higher quality development, where streets and space are well overlooked and enclosed.

The higher quality detail on this development is apparent and adds to the positive character of this estate.

1960s - 1990s houses and bungalows

Description
a. Relatively few 1960s developments. Those that exist are mostly smaller clusters.
b. Large areas of 1980s housing;
c. Generally 2 storey buildings including a variety of materials;
d. Predominately pitched roofs with the exception of some 60s development that have flat roofs;
e. Grassed verges and 'left over' spaces are a characteristic of 1960s and 1980s developments;
f. Many developments are mono-use, sprawling housing estates with poor accessibility to public facilities, low quality public realm design and open space;

Strengths
a. 1960s developments generally consistent in term of architecture, with simple building forms and large windows, providing good levels of daylight;

Weakness
a. 1980s and 1990s development is often highway orientated layout, while development from the earlier years is laid out following Radburn principles;
b. Many large developments have little sense of place and are not very distinctive in character;
c. Poor legibility and large block sizes make it difficult for people to move around;
d. Lack of consistent boundary treatments and poor definition of public and private space, in some instances leading to a confusion between fronts and backs (especially 1960s developments);
e. Little mature landscape and tree cover and no provision of street trees;

Opportunity
a. Public realm improvements;
b. Create pedestrian routes and improve accessibility to facilities;
c. Improve legibility and introduce variety;

There are generally very few 1960s developments. Those that exist separate the car from the pedestrian and houses are accessed via pedestrian path, making them less legible.

Although these bungalows do not provide a high degree of enclosure, they create a distinct character and enhance the open views over the valley.

1980s development are generally monotonous and of little distinction.

Close boarded fences and garage doors alongside roads create a negative environment.

More recent development

Description
a. Generally 2 storey buildings with pitched roofs and gables;
b. Predominately red/brown/orange brick with some elements of render;

Strengths
a. Generally a mix of unit sizes and tenures;

Weakness
a. Developments create no sense of place and little distinct character. Often they are either bland or over complicated with no consistent approach;
b. Some new development are poorly linked to existing areas and services;
c. Little regard is given to existing characteristics, such as topography and canals and riversides;
d. Many still appear highway driven and designed around the car;
e. Lack of high quality architecture;

Opportunity
a. -

Fairly new development creates little distinction in terms of place and character.

This recent development does not relate well to the existing topography and creates a poor edge along the slope.

Small infill development near Kidsgrove.

This development addresses the canal more positively and creates a positive frontage.

3.6 Commercial typologies

The development of the conurbation was primarily based upon the coal mining and pottery making industries, which started to develop In the late 16th century, and continued to expand until the 20th century. The potteries industry included brickworks as well as ceramics. Coal mining also expanded, as did associated iron working. These industries grew up wherever the natural resources, the coal and clays, could be extracted, creating a complicated mosaic settlement pattern, interspersed with areas still in agriculture. During the mid twentieth century the industrial base declined significantly until today the extractive industries are largely gone, although a legacy of industrial heritage and brownfield remains.

Non residential uses have been classified into six main typologies:

a. Education;
b. Hospitals;
c. Science park;
d. 20th century industrial;
e. 19th century industrial/ business;
f. 'Out of town' forms of mixed commercial development including retail.

Only the latter three have been described in more detail as they are more likely to be an issue in urban design terms, as follows:

The mapping shows clearly that industries have located in highly accessible areas, such as along the railway and canal corridors and the A500 and A50.

Legend:
- Town centres
- Education
- Hospital
- 20th Century industrial
- 19th Century industrial
- 'Out of town' forms of commercial development including retail
- Science Park
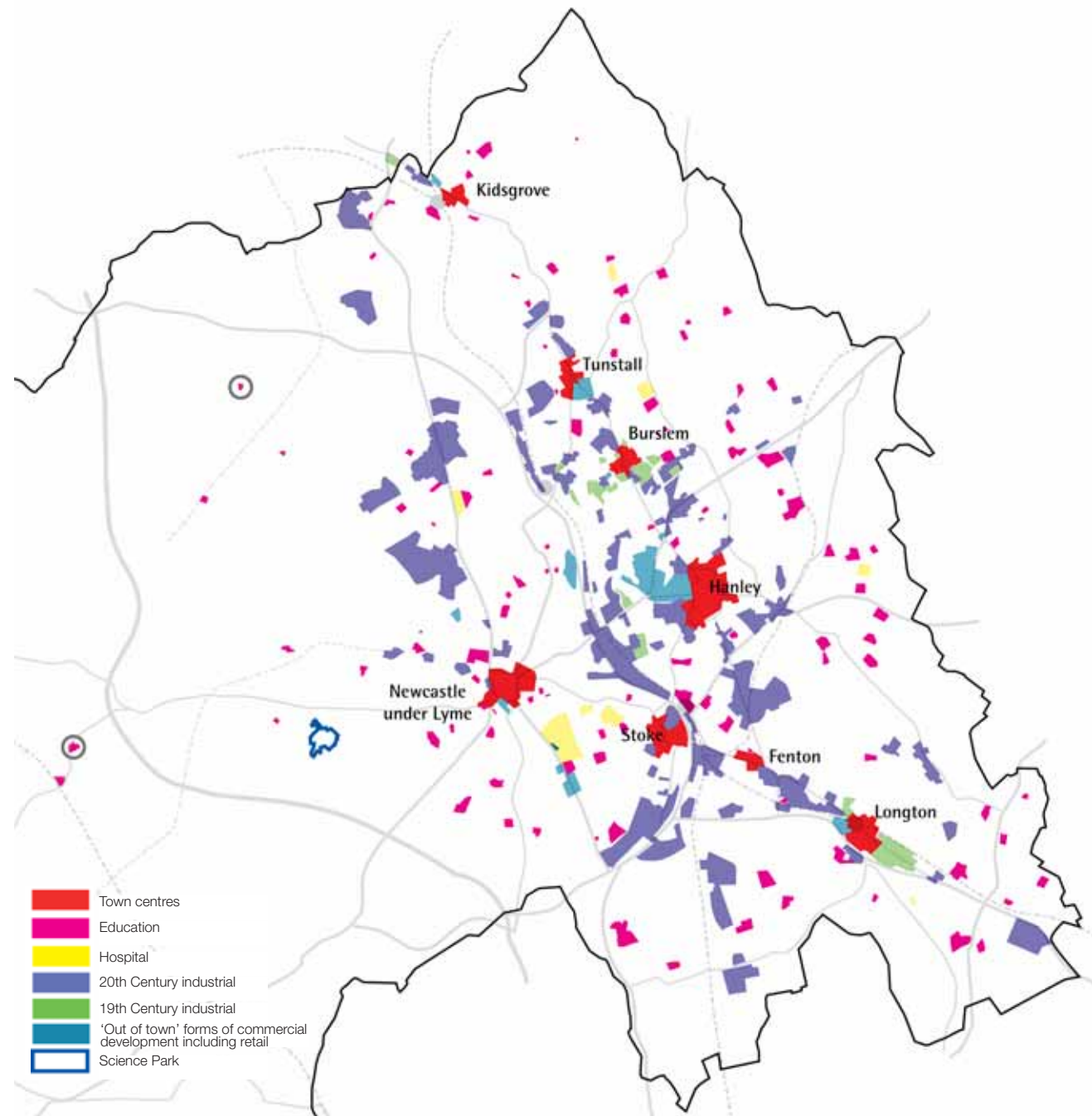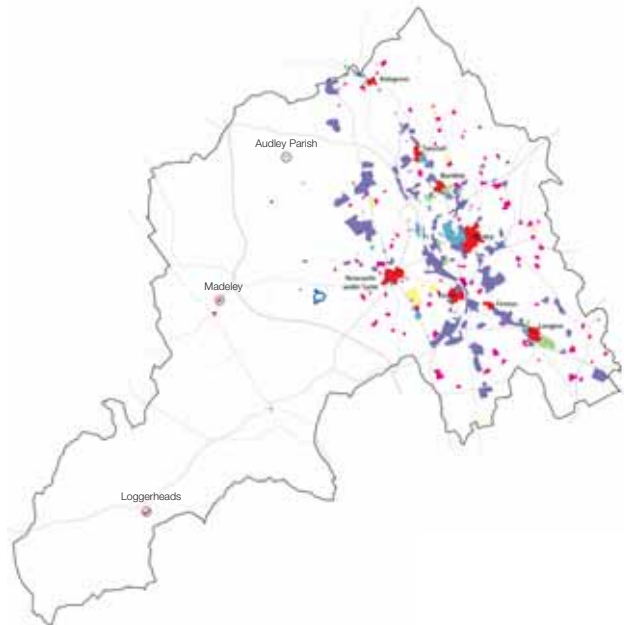
3. Initial urban design appraisals

19th century industrial

Description

a. Tight urban grain and high degree of enclosure to streets, with buildings set near or at back of pavements

b. Predominately brick buildings;

c. Adaptable building structures, although expensive to convert;

d. Rich in building heights and forms.

Strengths

a. Some areas are of high quality and important industrial heritage;

b. 19th century buildings generally add local distinctiveness and a sense of place;

Weakness

a. Many are in a poor state of repair and derelict;

Opportunity

a. Reuse and renovation of existing buildings;

b. Enhance the character with new infill development that adheres to the same design principles;

c. Opportunity for bold contemporary architecture.

20th century industrial / offices

Description

a. Predominately sheds of various sizes;

b. Building heights are equivalent to 2-3 residential storeys;

c. Predominately located in valleys;

Strengths

a. Create employment near to residential areas;

Weakness

a. Visually unattractive, in particular the roofscape when viewed from the higher lying town centres and residential areas;

b. Poor public realm;

c. Little consistency in terms of development form and layout;

d. Not very accessible by alternative means of transport;

Opportunity

a. Enhance public realm with planting and environmental improvements;

b. Create overarching framework for layout, streets and buildings;

c. Introduce extensive tree cover and encourage green roofs to minimise the visual impact of roofs;

'Out of town' forms of development including retail

Description

a. Large buildings set within plot and surrounded by extensive areas of surface car parking;

b. Building heights generally the equivalent of up to 3 residential storeys;

c. Generally separated from residential areas;

Weakness

a. Poor definition of streets and space;

b. Car dominated environment;

c. Little coherence in terms of layout, buildings and landscape;

d. Land intensive development form;

e. Poor landscape and environmental performance, due to large areas of sealed concrete/tarmac surface;

Opportunity

a. Plan an overall strategy/layout to create consistency and character;

b. Create a more positive street frontage and higher degree of enclosure/definition;

c. Create more sustainable buildings and landscape, for example by introducing porous paving and/or SUDS;

d. Improve accessibility and integration with surrounding areas, especially to existing town centres.

Historic building adds to the distinct character of the place. However derelict buildings can contribute to a negative attitude towards a place.

Industrial sheds of varying sizes

Office building with large floorplate and extensive areas of surface car parking

A minimum of planting is generally ensured, but this is often not mature enough to have any positive impact.

Due to the topography and location of the industrial uses, the roof scape is often very prominent.

Smaller, less elaborated industrial buildings clearly define streets and spaces and provide a high degree of enclosure

Due to the topography and location of the industrial uses, the roofscape is often very prominent.

Large floorplate retail sheds and extensive areas of surface car parking characterise these areas.

3.7 Centres

One of the most distinctive features of the sub-region is that the conurbation is polycentric – it has developed as a series of distinct places with many centres.

Different centres developed in different ways and for different reasons. Newcastle grew up as a market town around a castle, set at the crossing of the Lyme Brook. Until the end of the medieval period it was the principal town in the area, with today's towns of Stoke-on-Trent being small farming hamlets.

As the industries of the sub-region expanded, the hamlets of Stoke-on-Trent developed into independent towns, most set along the line of what is now the former A50. The towns benefited from the patronage of wealthy industrialists and were fiercely competitive with one another. Monumental civic buildings and churches characterised this patronage, so providing distinctive landmarks for each of the centres.

Although Newcastle became a significant industrial town, particularly with coal mining to the west, it retained much of its character as a historic market town.

Each of the main centres identified in the brief has its own distinct characteristics. These are:

a. The City Centre;

b. Newcastle-under-Lyme;

c. Longton;

d. Tunstall;

e. Stoke;

f. Burslem;

g. Kidsgrove;

h. Fenton.

On the following pages each of them is described in terms of their weakness, strengths and urban design opportunities, to bring out the differences between them and highlight their distinctive characteristics.

The report also refers to historic maps, illustrating the historic development of each of the town centres.
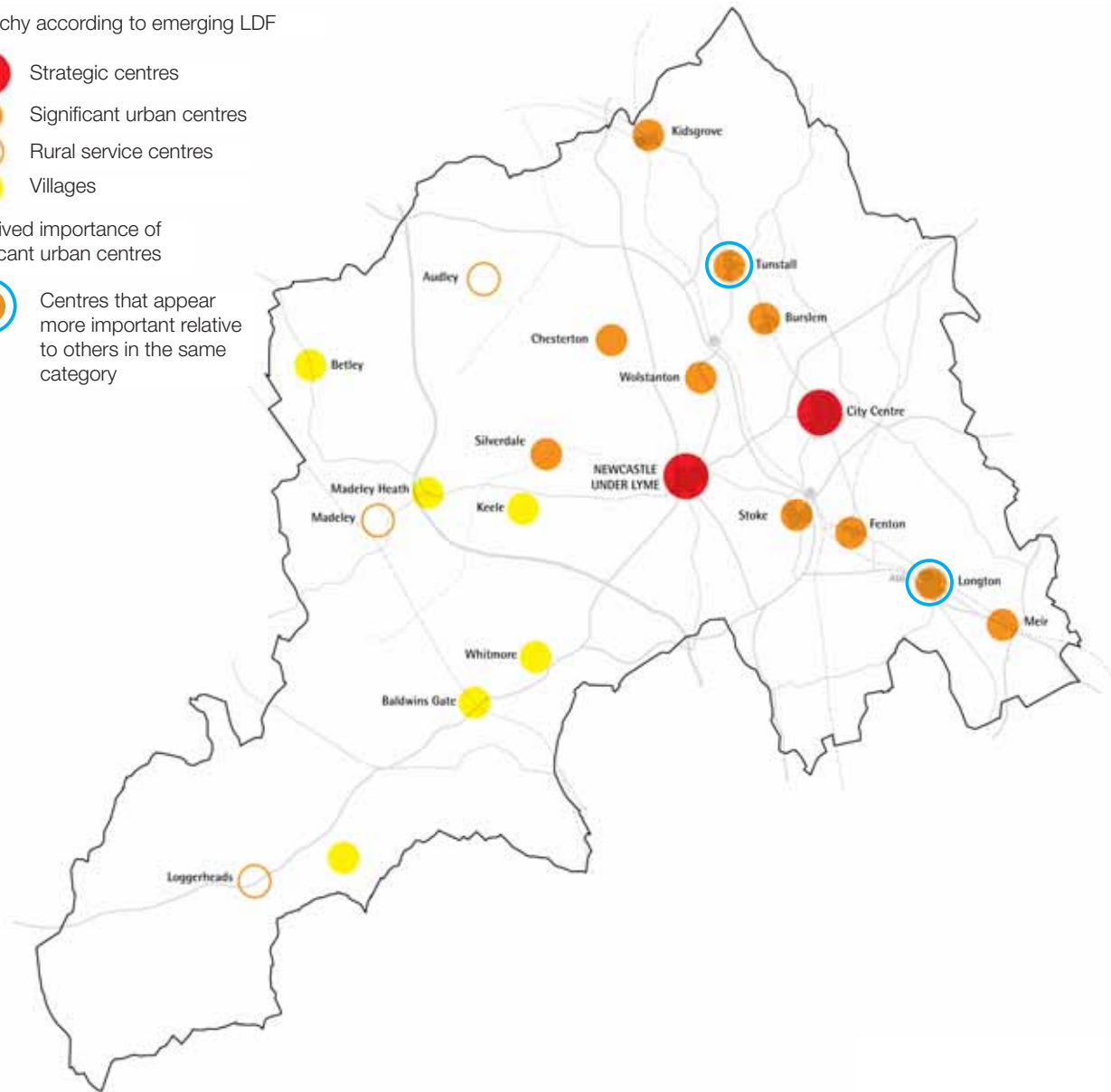
Where the findings of other studies are incorporated, they are referred to in the relevant section.

Hierarchy according to emerging LDF

Strategic centres

Significant urban centres

Rural service centres

Villages

Perceived importance of significant urban centres

Centres that appear more important relative to others in the same category
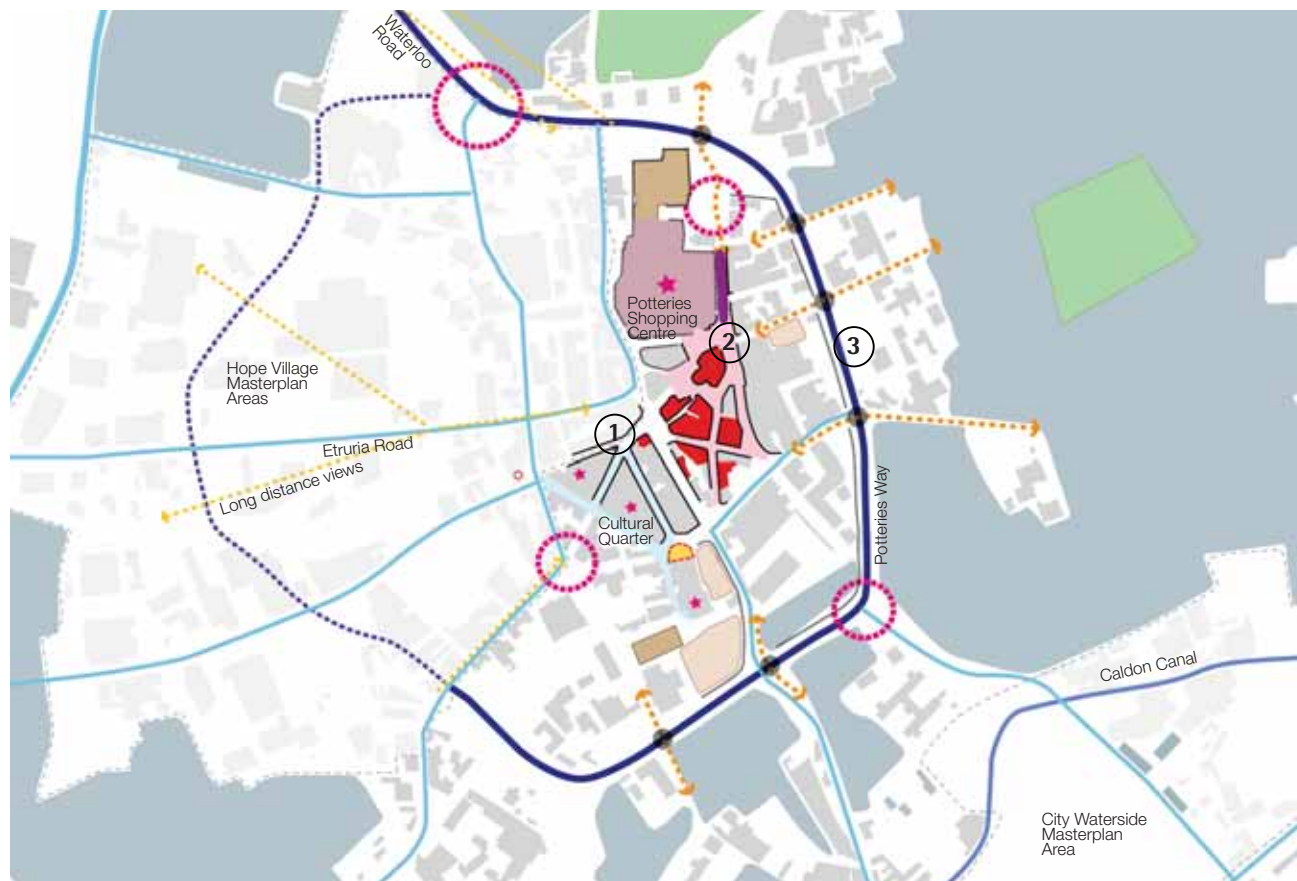
City Centre

Strengths:

a. Busy retail centre including a variety of retail (including shopping centre and covered market) and cultural offers (including theatre, Victoria Hall, museum);

b. Some historic buildings and street layout;

c. Where there are historic buildings they particularly contribute to the sense of a distinct character;

d. Good urban structure and pedestrian linkages within the heart of the centre;

e. Parking is mainly located in multistorey car parks.

Weaknesses:

a. The centre turns inward with little activity along the outer edge;

b. Ring road creates severance between town centre and surrounding areas;

c. Lack of built development outside the retail core, in particular very little housing within walking distance;

d. Quality of design of built development and public realm;

e. Limited size and extent of centre for a City Centre of a conurbation, in terms both of range of uses and activities, but particularly of urban form;

Opportunities:

a. Integrate centre more strongly into surrounding area through new development;

b. Strengthen gateways;

c. Create built form frontages onto ring road ;

d. Improve pedestrian links into centre;

e. Improve quality of development and public realm;

f. Extend urban form over wider area.

Waterloo Road
Potteries Shopping Centre
Hope Village Masterplan Areas
Etruria Road
Long distance views
Cultural Quarter
Potteries Way
Caldon Canal
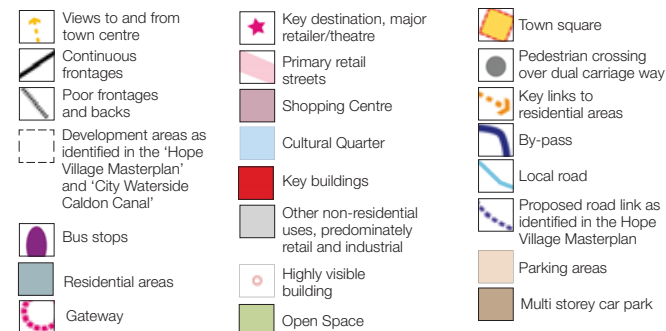City Waterside Masterplan Area

1 Some characteristic historic buildings add to the character of the City Centre.

2 The pedestrianised section of the High street consists of a variety of old and newer buildings.

3 A dual carriageway separates the surrounding residential areas from the town centre.

Views to and from town centre
Continuous frontages
Poor frontages and backs
Development areas as identified in the 'Hope Village Masterplan' and 'City Waterside Caldon Canal'
Bus stops
Residential areas
Gateway

Key destination, major retailer/theatre
Primary retail streets
Shopping Centre
Cultural Quarter
Key buildings
Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial
Highly visible building
Open Space

Town square
Pedestrian crossing over dual carriage way
Key links to residential areas
By-pass
Local road
Proposed road link as identified in the Hope Village Masterplan
Parking areas
Multi storey car park

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/issues

a. By 1830 Hanley town centre had developed a strong economy based on the potteries industry;

b. The core area was a sequence of squares all connected to each other and easily accessible from the residential areas. Tontine Square, Fountain Square, Albion Square and Market Square are still existing, but now are severed from housing by the dual carriageway of the A50;

c. In 1769, Josiah Wedgwood built his model factory and an estate of workers' housing on land to the west of Hanley town centre, which he called Etruria.

d. Horse trams were replaced by steam trams and by buses in the late 1920s, connecting Hanley to the south to Fenton and Longton and to the North to Burslem along Piccadilly and Lichfield Street;

e. The Northwood area to the east of Hanley town centre experienced a great development push in the late 18th century with the development of the village around Providence Square and expansion of terraces in the 19th century;

f. There was very little green space within the urban area, with the exception of the still existing Hanley Park and the Slack Field Recreational Ground behind St. John's Church to the north of Hanley Town Centre. The green area has been replaced by a multi-storey car park to serve the Potteries Shopping Centre;

g. By 1900 the area to the west of the Trent and Mersey Canal contained former mine workings and the Shelton Iron and Steel works, whilst the focus of the pottery industry had moved to the Longton area;

h. In the period up to the 1950s, new residential areas were built to the east of Hanley town centre in Bucknall and Abbey Hulton.

1898

1953

3. Initial urban design appraisals

Newcastle

Strengths:

a. Busy retail centre includes a variety of retail (including niche retail and leisure (including bars and cafes, theatre, cinema) offers;

b. Historic built environment and street layout with attractive public spaces;

c. Visual connections to surrounding residential areas, despite ring road;

d. Historic buildings and coherent townscape in much of historic streets particularly adds to a distinct character;

e. Good urban structure and pedestrian linkages within the town centre;

f. Parking is located in multistorey car parks;

Weaknesses:

a. The centre turns inward with little activity along the outer edge;

b. Ring road creates severance between town centre and surrounding residential areas;

c. Underpasses as crossing points across ring road, generally poor quality and do not create positive pedestrian linkages;

Opportunities:

a. Strengthen links between centre and surrounding areas, particularly for people on foot;

b. Quality of public realm and streetscape design;

c. Strengthen gateways;

d. Improve frontages onto Rycroft Road and Lower Street;

1. The Guildhall, one of the key landmarks in the centre

2. The High Street provides a pedestrian friendly shopping environment.
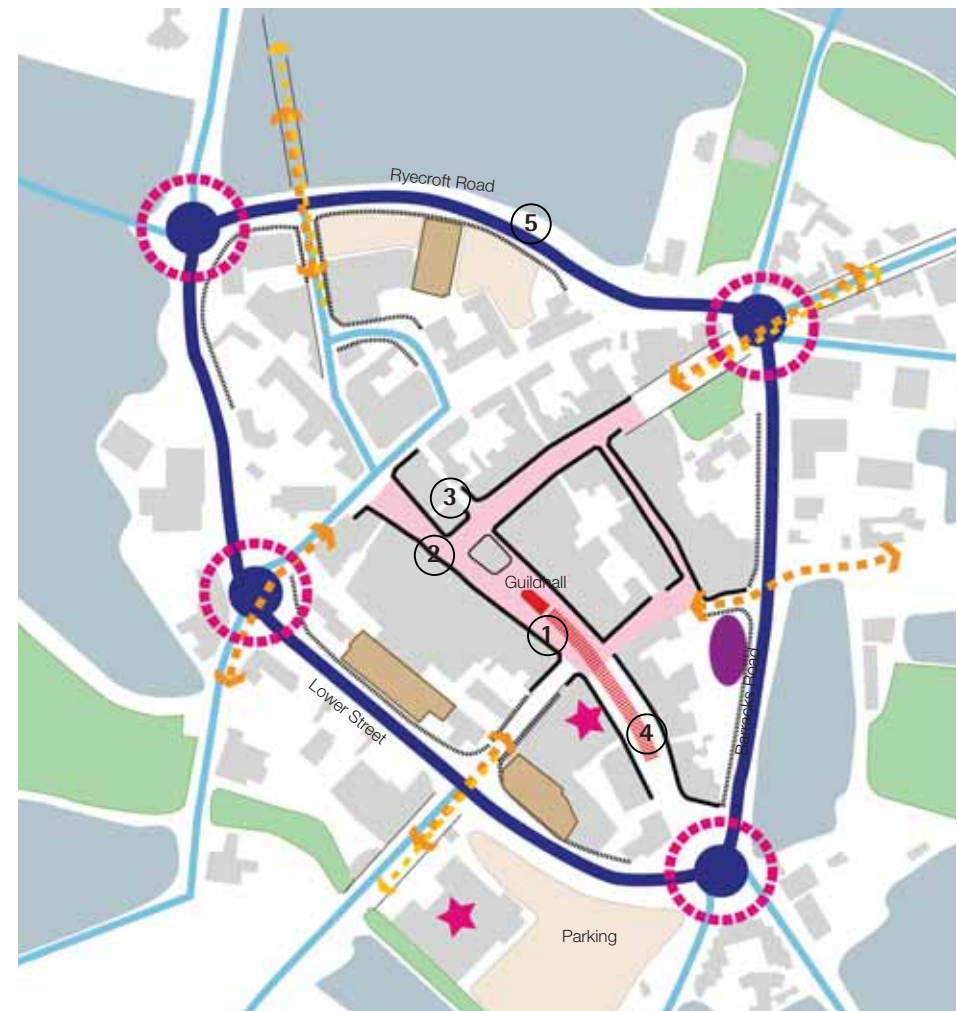
3. Small courtyards and alleyways create variety and interest.

4. The lower section of the High Street creates a high quality urban street and market space.

5. The ring road creates a separation between the town centre and surrounding residential areas.

Legend:

- Visual links
- Continuous frontages
- Poor frontages and backs
- Bus station
- Residential areas
- Primary retail streets
- Key buildings
- Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial
- Location of street market
- Gateway
- Key destination
- By-pass
- Local road
- Highly visible building
- Open Space
- Town square
- Pedestrian crossing over dual carriage way
- Key links to residential areas
- Parking areas
- Multi storey car park

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

a. Newcastle-under-Lyme developed as a market town with its centre based on retail, markets nad in the 20th century activities such as education and culture, for instance the New Vic theatre;

b. The core area is centred on the High Street, Ironmarket and St. Giles Church, with the Guildhall nad St Giles Church still acting as the key landmarks;

c. To the north of the town centre, on the opposite side of the railway line a new residential area of high quality villas was built along Queen Street. This area called Brampton still maintains some of its historic buildings in a green setting;

d. In contrast to industrial development in Stoke, Fenton, Longton, Hanley and Burslem, industries developed towards the edges of the settlement, away from the town centre, which continued to maintain its traditional market town structure;

e. Newcastle developed as an independent centre, with no tram connections to Hanley or Stoke;

f. Before the 1950s new residential areas were built both to the south and the north of the centre in the Porthill area;

g. The historic urban structure still remains, especially the access roads into the town centre: Queen St, London Road, Liverpool Road and Pool Dam. Today all these roads lead into the ring road which runs around the town centre separating it from the surrounding residential areas.

1953
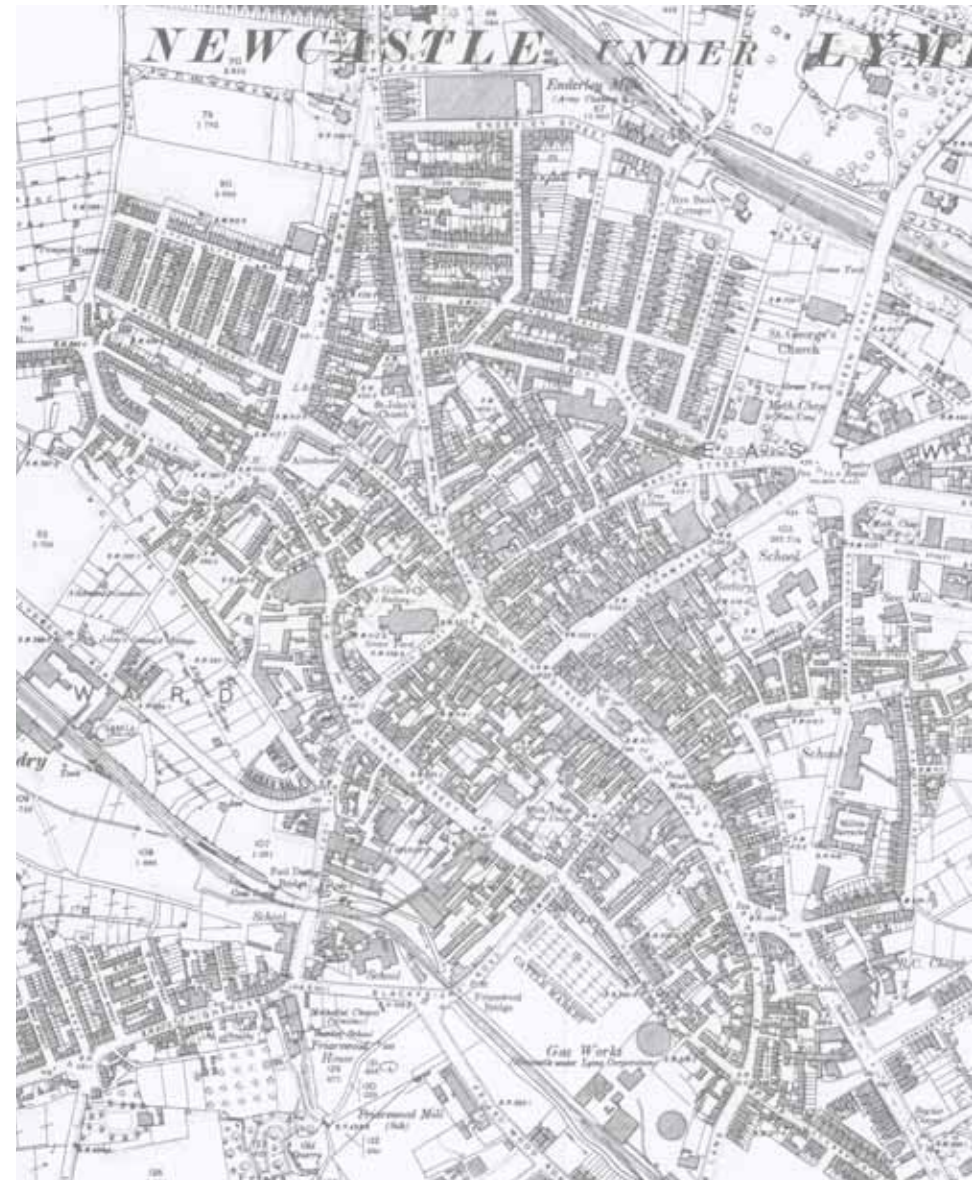
1898

Longton

Strengths:

a. Active retail centre includes a variety of retail offers (including large format supermarket and covered market);

b. Well integrated 'out of town' shopping;

c. A number of historic buildings/structures create a distinct character (railway bridge, Town Hall, Market, Gladstone Pottery Museum); and

d. Good urban structure and pedestrian linkages within the core.

Weaknesses:

a. Severance from residential areas in the south west (highway);

b. Industrial uses to the north-east, east and west separate residential areas from the centre;

c. Poor state of repair of much of historic building fabric;

d. Quality of shopping precinct, particularly its public realm quality;

e. Separation of Gladstone Pottery Museum from the remainder of the centre;

f. Lack of any high quality public realm;

g. Poor edges, due to inward looking arrangement of retail units;

h. Large extent of surface parking around centre; and

i. Poor design of peripheral parking areas, which generally make it difficult to walk between different retail units and into The Strand.

Opportunities:

a. Strengthen gateways with public realm improvements;

b. Improve frontages, in particular onto Commerce Street;

c. Improve pedestrian links to wider area, especially across dual carriageway;

d. Introduce residential development into town centre;

e. Create pedestrian link between Gladstone Pottery Museum and retail area; and

f. Improve design of parking provision to serve centre as a whole better.

1 The Gladstone Pottery Museum is an attractive tourist destination, but is physically and visually separated from the shopping area. By improving pedestrian links, visitors may be attracted to take advantage of local shops and facilities.

2 The Strand is the primary shopping street. It is lined by a variety of buildings, many of historic value.
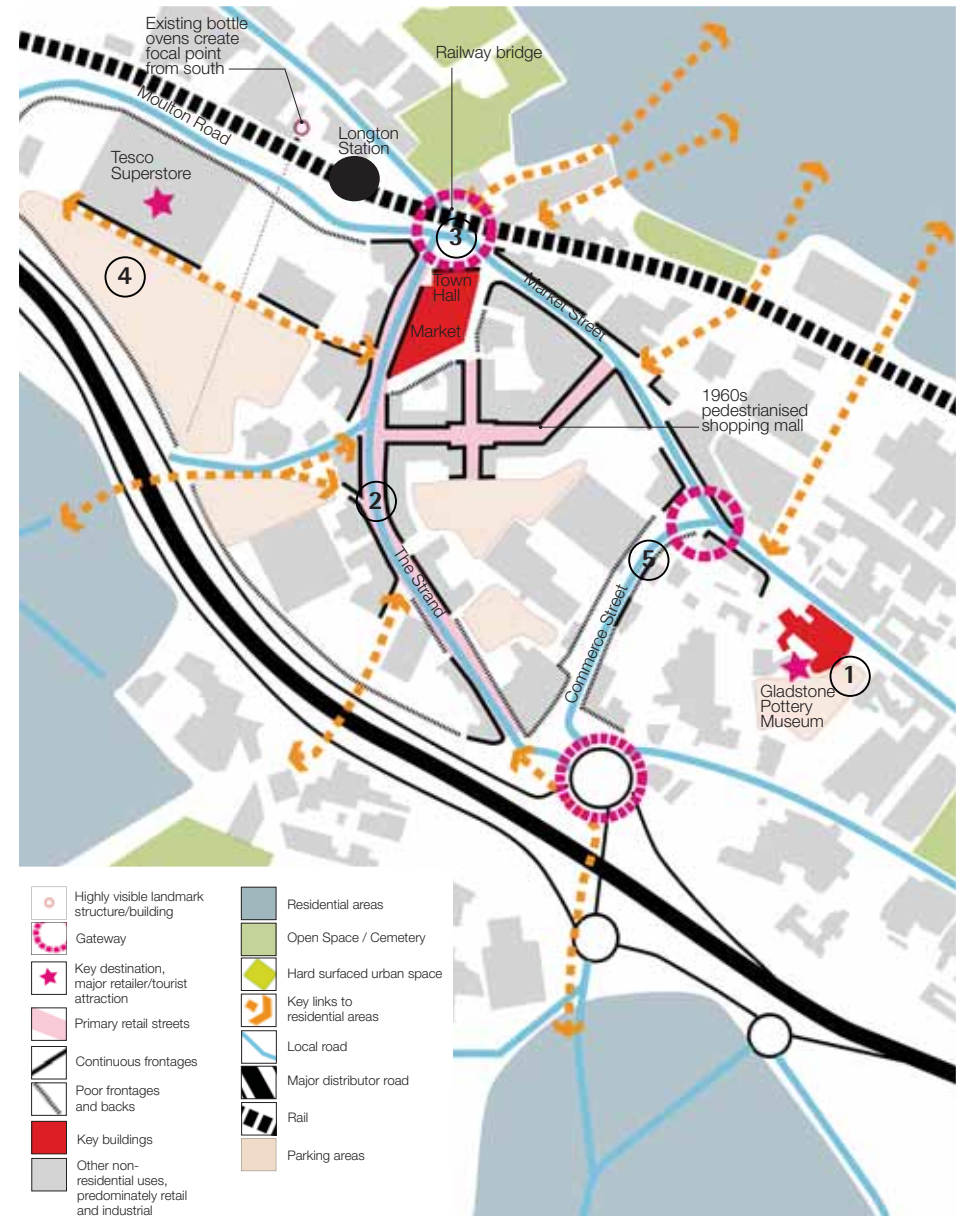

3 The junction of The Strand, Market Street and Moulton Road has a strong character but is dominated by traffic and designed for highways. The railway bridge and Town Hall create an opportunity for a distinctive gateway into the centre.

4 Surface car parks provide for the needs of visitors, but are generally designed to serve a particular development rather than the centre as a whole. Some appear fragmented and impact negatively on the townscape.

5 The main shopping street is inward looking and edges to the south and east are of poor quality. Many buildings, in particular large retail outlets, back onto key approach routes.

Legend:

- Highly visible landmark structure/building
- Gateway
- Key destination, major retailer/tourist attraction
- Primary retail streets
- Continuous frontages
- Poor frontages and backs
- Key buildings
- Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial
- Residential areas
- Open Space / Cemetery
- Hard surfaced urban space
- Key links to residential areas
- Local road
- Major distributor road
- Rail
- Parking areas

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

g. The core area was a grid of narrow streets connecting the main facilities like the train station, market and local pottery industries;

h. Horse trams were replaced by steam trams and by buses in the late 1920s connecting Longton to Fenton and Hanley along the High Street, Market Street and King's Street;

i. The railway line separated the new residential areas to the north from the town centre;

j. Today, the historic urban structure is still visible and streets like the Strand keep their original alignment but have been enlarged to accommodate the former A50;

k. In the last years former potteries in the town centre have partly been replaced by modern industry or the big retail stores such as Tesco.

1898

1953

Tunstall

Strengths:

a. High quality High Street lined by historic buildings of substantial scale and massing;

b. Close proximity to residential areas to the east and west;

c. Historic Town Hall and Tower Square are locally distinctive;

d. Recent refurbishment of the market hall and public realm improvements around the Town Hall;

e. Larger areas of open space located within short walking distance to town centre; and

f. Good urban structure and linkages within the town centre and to the adjacent residential areas to the west.

Weaknesses:

a. Little distinct identity and poor definition of gateways;

b. Poorly integrated 'out of town' forms of shopping development;

c. Approach into Tunstall is lined by area of retail sheds and surface car parking that provides little distinct character;

Opportunities:

a. Create locally distinct gateways that clearly define arrival in Tunstall;

b. Improve environmental quality of links between the High Street and 'out of town' forms of retail;

c. Redevelop buildings of lesser quality along the High Street; and

d. Create a positive edge to Scotia Road.

1 A number of 'out of town' format retail outlets are located immediately adjacent to the main shopping street. These are linked to the high street but pedestrian routes are not conveniently located.

2 Scotia Road forms the main through route past Tunstall and is not a road of particular positive character. However, the library building located at the top of the hill is a positive landmark building.
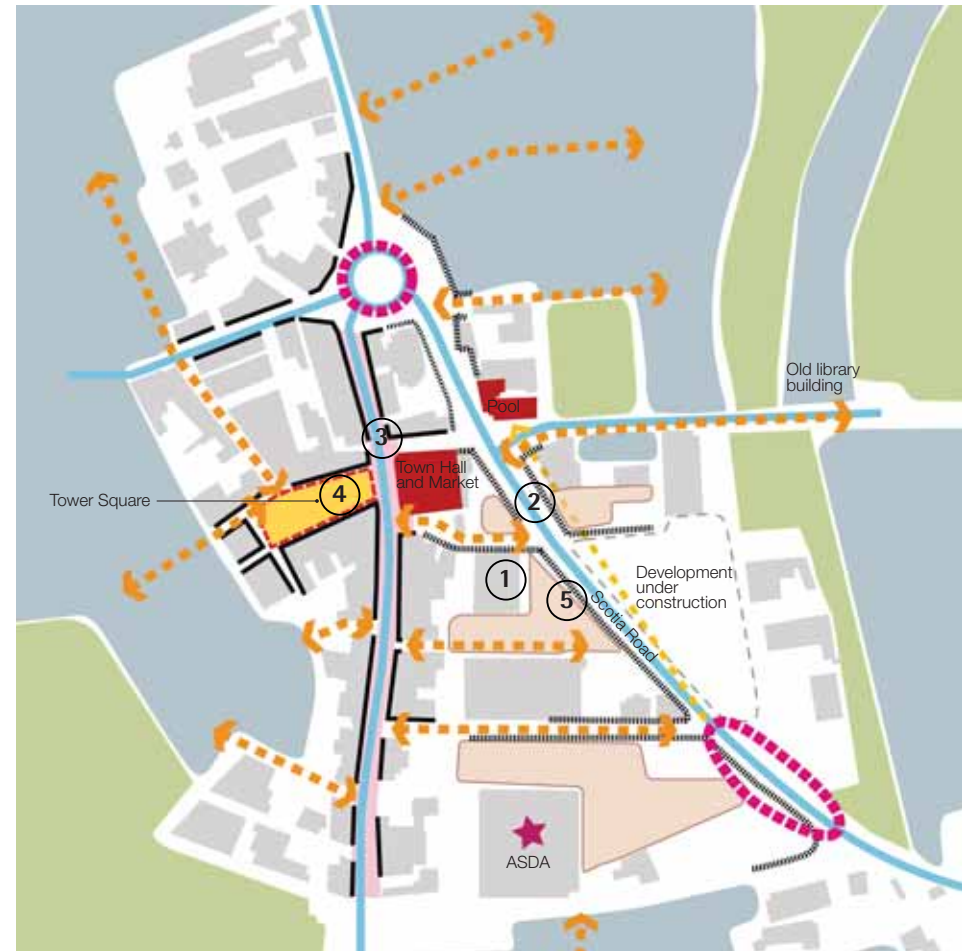

3 Parts of Tunstall High Street are lined by high quality historic buildings of substantial scale and massing, However other buildings are of poor quality and state of repair.

4 Tower Square is a distinctive feature for Tunstall and creates a positive focal point for the town.

5 To the east a church forms a positive landmark building, however views are marked by extensive surface car parking in the foreground.


Old library building

Pool

Tower Square

Town Hall and Market

Development under construction

Scotia Road

ASDA

Legend:

- Gateway
- Key destination (major retailer)
- Primary retail streets
- Continuous frontages
- Poor frontages and backs
- Residential areas
- Open Space / Greenway
- Development Area (under construction)
- Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial
- Key buildings
- Key links to residential areas
- Local road
- Town Square
- Visual links
- Parking areas

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

a. The core area was centred on the Tower Square and on the High Street with terraced housing to the west;

b. Horse trams were replaced by steam trams and by buses in the late 1920s connecting Tunstall to Burslem and Hanley and the rest of the conurbation;

c. Following the opening of the Trent and Mersey Canal in 1777, a number of factories developed west of the town centre;

d. Before the 1950s new residential areas were built to the east of the centre;

e. The original urban structure remains intact with the main roads, public open spaces like Tower Square, Tunstall Park and the recreational ground surrounded by the Jubilee buildings still in existence. However, the potteries industries have been replaced by the big retail stores as in Longton.
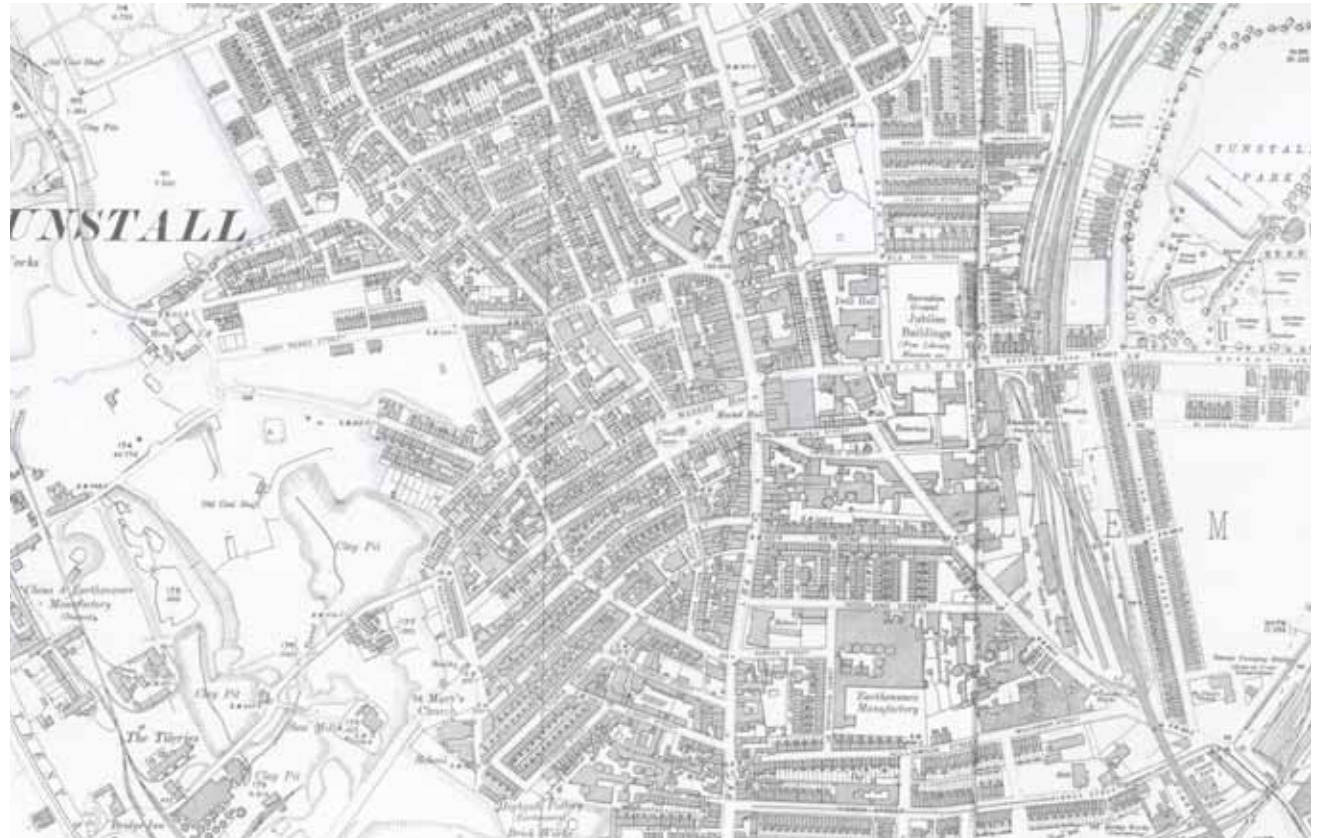
1898

1953

Stoke

Strengths:

a. Close proximity to Stoke-on-Trent Station (around 10 minutes walk);

b. Historic market frontage and clock tower that are locally distinct;

c. Cluster of historic buildings, St. Peter's Church, Town Hall and market frontage;

d. Recent high quality new public spaces and artwork; and

e. Good urban structure and linkages within the town centre and to the adjacent residential areas.

Weaknesses:

a. Little distinct identity relating to the shopping area;

b. Poor state of repair of historic building fabric;

c. Severance to development to the east due to highway and rail line;

d. Large areas of derelict former industrial land, in particular the former Spode site at the heart of the centre;

e. Convoluted traffic routing based on one way system;

f. Poor edges in key locations, i.e. backs of buildings or blank walls; and

g. Poor quality buildings in key locations impact negatively on the whole town centre.

Opportunities:

a. Strengthen gateways into Stoke to define it as a place in its own right;

b. Revitalise and enhance the setting of the historic market frontage;

c. Improve quality of street frontages and public realm;

d. Redevelopment/ conversion of vacant/ derelict sites and buildings within centre creates opportunity to introduce high quality residential/mixed use environment close to Stoke Station; and

e. Improve pedestrian links between supermarket and shopping streets.

1 The historic market frontage in Stoke has a unique character, now an open market square enclosed by one storey market buildings, since the original market hall burned down in the 1980s.

2 Stoke Town Hall forms a key landmark along Glebe Road, a key approach into Stoke. Together with St.Peter's Church and historic town houses on St.Peter's Close, it forms a high quality townscape setting.
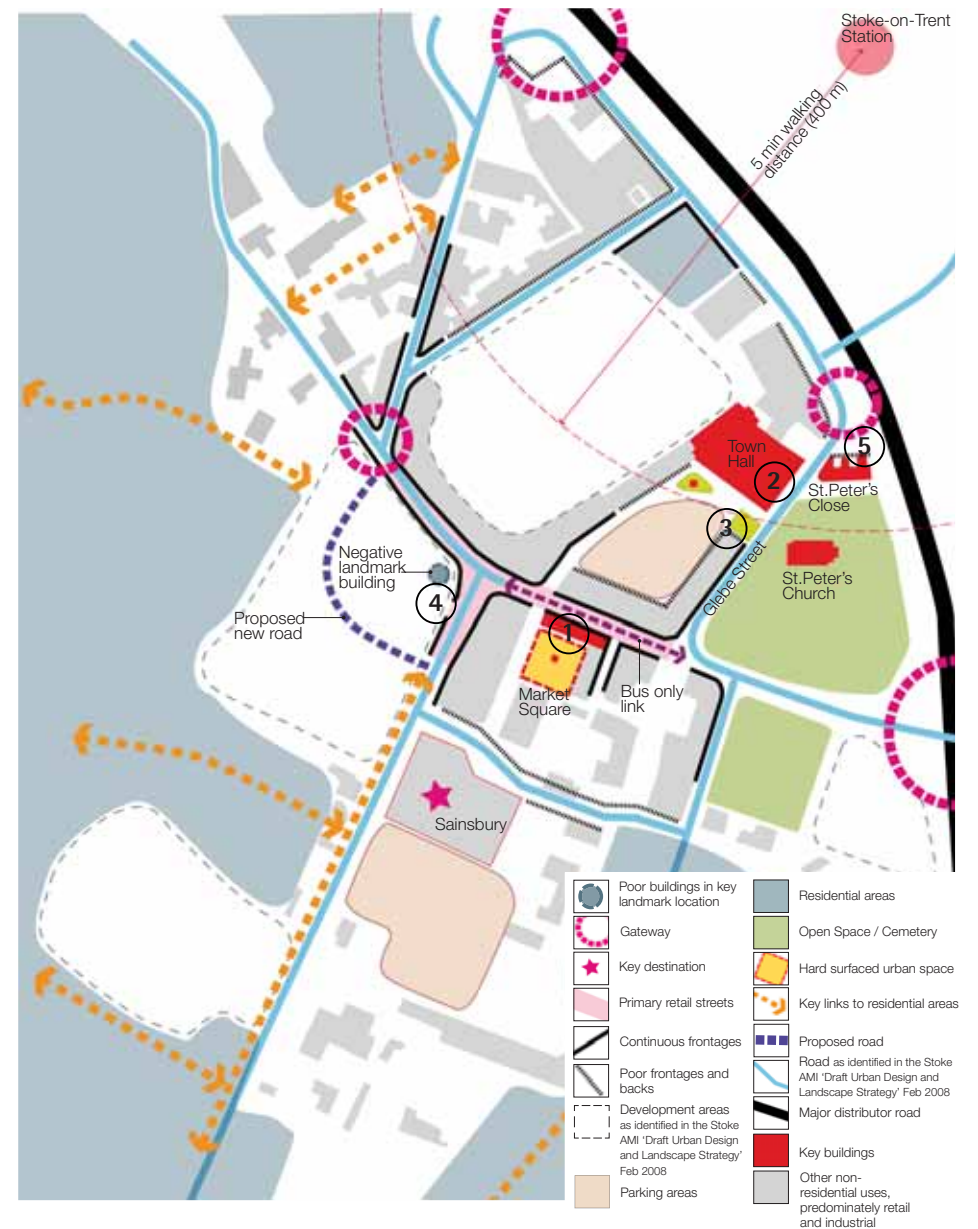

3 A new square and artwork on Glebe Street adds to the setting of the Town Hall. Unfortunately this is influenced negatively by an unattractive surface car park and backs of buildings.

4 Poor quality buildings occupy key landmark locations and add little positive character to Stoke.

5 Although in terms of massing, enclosure and street alignment the approach is positive. It is let down by the rear elevations of development along St. Peter's Close, which terminate the vista.


Legend:

- Poor buildings in key landmark location
- Gateway
- Key destination
- Primary retail streets
- Continuous frontages
- Poor frontages and backs
- Development areas as identified in the Stoke AMI 'Draft Urban Design and Landscape Strategy' Feb 2008
- Parking areas
- Residential areas
- Open Space / Cemetery
- Hard surfaced urban space
- Key links to residential areas
- Proposed road
- Road as identified in the Stoke AMI 'Draft Urban Design and Landscape Strategy' Feb 2008
- Major distributor road
- Key buildings
- Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

a. Stoke had a strong economy based on the pottery industry located just off the High Street, and with a high concentration of schools;

b. Stoke was very well connected due to the tram line leading to Hanley and Fenton running on Liverpool Road and Church Street, and its proximity to the station. Also access to the Trent and Mersey Canal helped to develop the pottery industries;

c. There were many green spaces and sports grounds in the urban area to the south of the centre next to the River Trent;

d. Already in 1898 the railway line and the canal were acting as a physical barrier to pedestrian movement between the centre and the residential area to the north;

e. Before the1950s new residential areas were built, such as Trent Vale to the south;

f. The original urban structure is still visible, especially the landmark buildings like St. Peter's Church and the North Staffordshire Infirmary. To the west of the town centre the area of Penkhull maintains its original village layout around St. Thomas Church.


1953
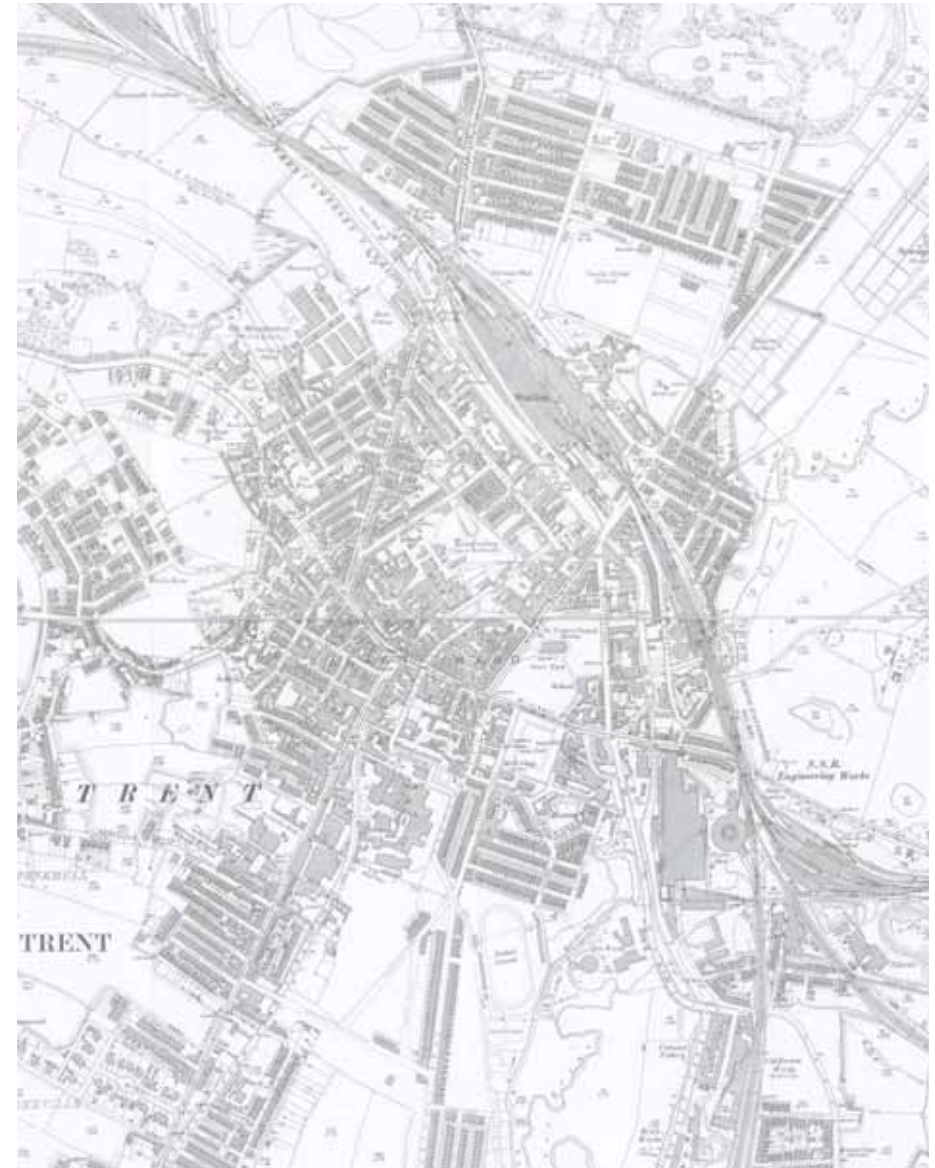
1898

Burslem

Strengths:

a. High number of historic buildings of good quality;

b. The centre is well connected to the wider area and it is not negatively marked by highway engineered bypass solutions;

c. Good urban structure and linkages within the town centre and to the surrounding areas;

d. Traditional streets and spaces are generally well addressed by buildings with a high degree of built form enclosure to the spaces;

e. Proximity to Trent & Mersey Canal and Greenway open space network (National Cycle routes) within approximately 10-15 minutes walk; and

Weaknesses:

a. Large number of derelict buildings;

b. Poor state of repair and vacancy of key buildings;

c. Traffic congestion on Market Place creates a hostile pedestrian environment;

d. Quality of public realm does not live up to quality of historic buildings and townscape;

e. Negative impact of derelict land on edges of centre on overall character.

Opportunities:

a. Utilise existing historic building stock;

b. Improve street environment and public realm;

c. Strengthen gateways into Burslem;

d. Improve pedestrian and cycle links to the Canal and Greenway; and

e. Redevelopment of derelict sites within centre creates opportunity to introduce high quality residential development that supports town centre activities.
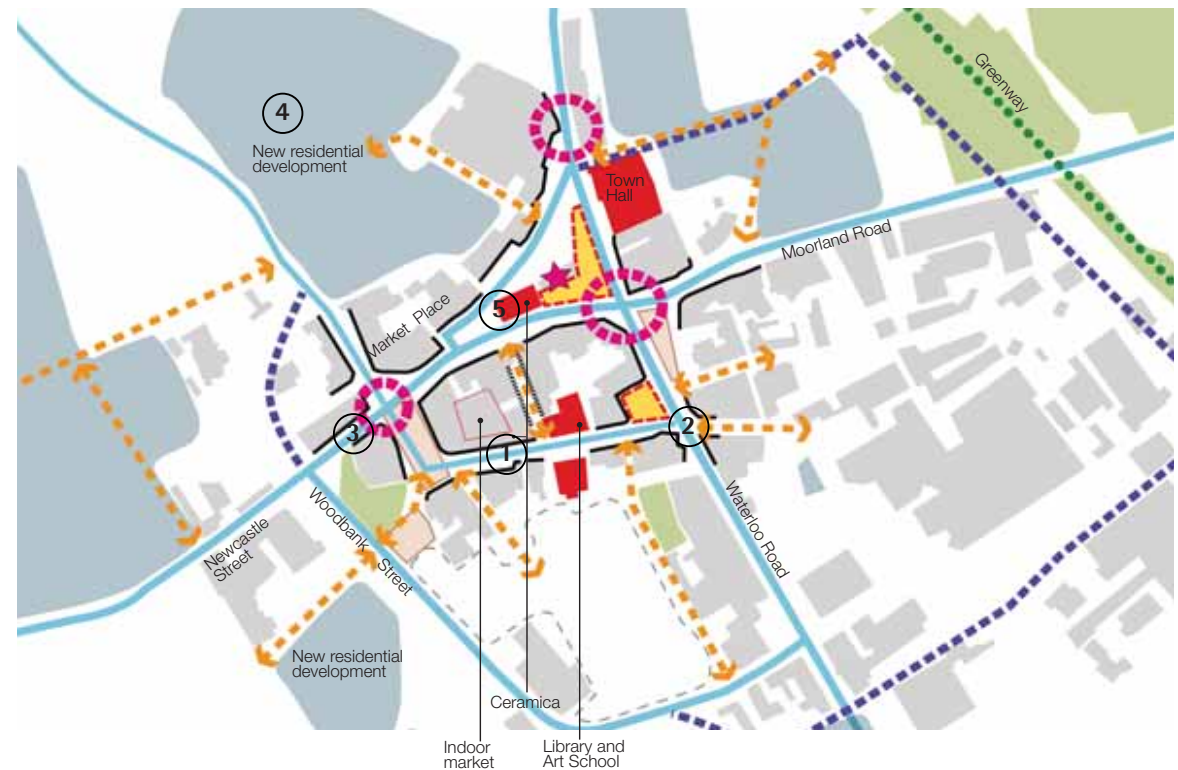
1. Queen Street has a positive and distinctive character. It is lined by a number of high quality historic buildings that are of greater scale and massing than the predominant built form.

2. Approach to Burlem from City Centre is distinct in character due to its straight alignment, its topography and long views to and from City Centre.

3. Buildings in Burslem are predominately historic in character. This creates a distinct character and opportunity for heritage led regeneration.

4. Several new developments are being built within close proximity to Burslem Town Centre.

5. Ceramica's buildings form key landmarks and focal point.

Legend:

- Key buildings
- Gateway
- Key destination - Ceramica
- Continuous frontages
- Poor frontages and backs
- Development areas as identified in the Burslem Masterplan June 2004
- Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial
- Residential areas
- Open Space / Cemetery
- Hard surfaced urban space
- Existing and potential key links to residential areas
- Road
- Proposed by pass as identified in the Burslem Masterplan June 2004
- National Cycle Route
- Parking areas

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

a. Burslem was considered the 'Mother of the Potteries'. Pottery was the major industry, however mining was also important;

b. The core was formed by: Market Place, Swan Square, Queen Street and St. John's Square. The central area was characterised by the presence of the pottery industries, with residential areas located at the edges of town;

c. The horse trams were replaced by steam trams and by buses in the late 1920s connecting Burslem to Tunstall and Hanley along Waterloo Road;

d. Some desirable housing was built along the tram way (Waterloo Rd.) in the form of detached and semi-detached villas, in contrast to the dominant townscape of terraces;

e. By 1910 Burslem's importance was gradually slipping away towards Hanley and the south.

f. Before the 1950s the residential areas to the west grew, especially along Newcastle Street;

g. Nowadays, historic buildings like the Town Hall remain intact while the decline of the pottery industry has left empty plots in the town centre, available for new development.


1953
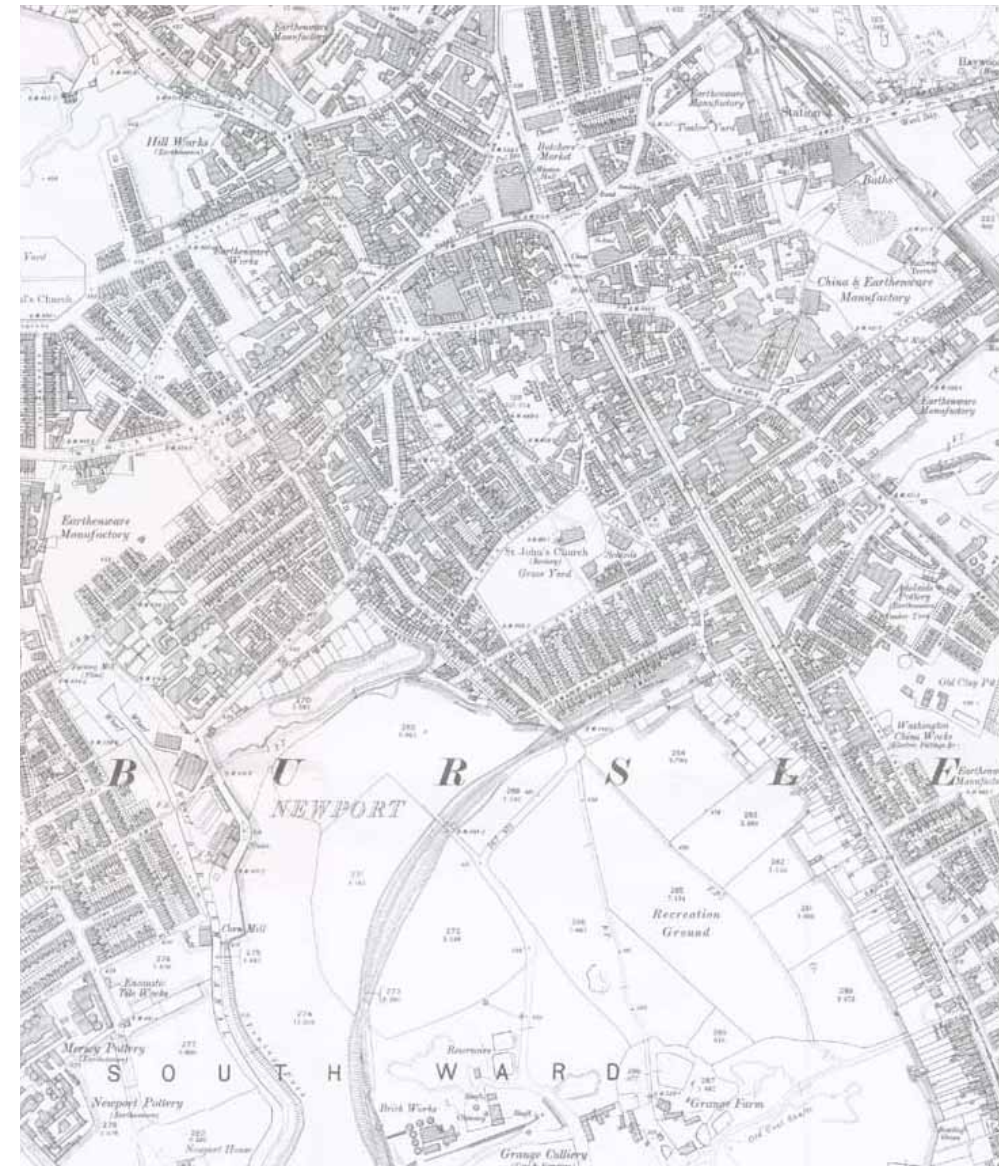
1898

Kidsgrove

Strengths:

a. Small but active centre, offering a variety of local shops and services;

b. Locally distinct identity;

c. High quality of Market Street;

d. Gateway to Cheshire;

Weaknesses:

a. Large areas of surface car parking occupy primary sites within the centre;

b. Traffic congestion along Liverpool Road and Market Street;

c. Existing station is separated from town centre, tucked away behind main retail streets;

Opportunities:

a. Redevelopment of surface car parking sites;

b. Manage traffic flow to improve environment for pedestrians;

c. Improve pedestrian environment along Liverpool Road;

d. Improve links to station;
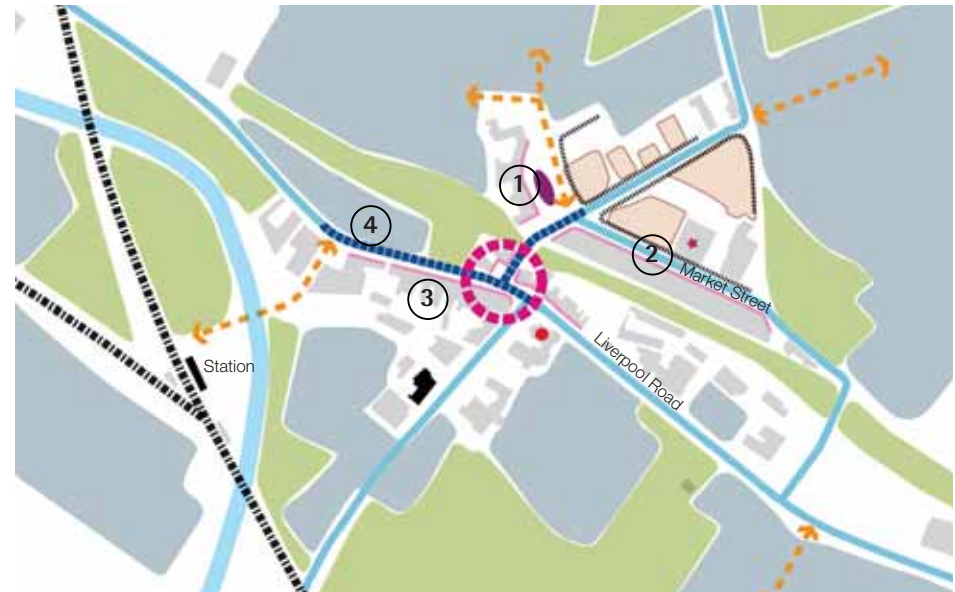
1 Shopping parade and bus station

2 Market Street has a distinct character with a variety of buildings and shops.

3 The main vehicular thoroughfare along Liverpool Road is lined by retail units, cafes and other services. Carriageway and pavements are narrow, leading to traffic congestion at peak times.

4 Level changes in the area create interesting boundary conditions and settings for buildings.

Landmark buildings

Gateway

Key destination, superstore

Primary retail frontage

Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial

Residential areas

Open Space

Key links to residential areas

Road

Traffic congested narrow street

Parking areas

Poor frontages and backs

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

a. From the eighteenth century, Kidsgrove's growth was based on the coal mining industry;

b. It was well connected to the north as a result of the Trent & Mersey Canal passing close to the Town Centre, with the Harecastle Tunnel, providing canal access to the rest of the conurbation being located just to the south of the town;

c. The introduction of the railway system in the middle of the 1800s facilitated more routes for transport and promoted increased growth of the town;

d. The decline in demand for coal and subsequent closure of mines led to a decline in industry in Kidsgrove;

e. Kidsgrove grew originally along Liverpool Road, (A50 today) and expanded during the 1950s in the south west areas and in the 1980s to the north east of the centre.

1953

# 3. Initial urban design appraisals

Fenton

Strengths:

a. Historic core of high quality buildings and townscape setting;

b. In close proximity to a number of open spaces and recreation uses;

Weaknesses:

a. Main thoroughfare ('public face') of Fenton is lined by poor quality development and surface car parking so that the historic centre is hidden;

b. Historic centre is not well linked to other activity such as market and doctors surgery,

Opportunities:

a. Improve links between activities and central core;

b. Enhance visual and physical links to historic core,

c. Utilise Albert Square as social focal point, for example by bringing other uses to the square;
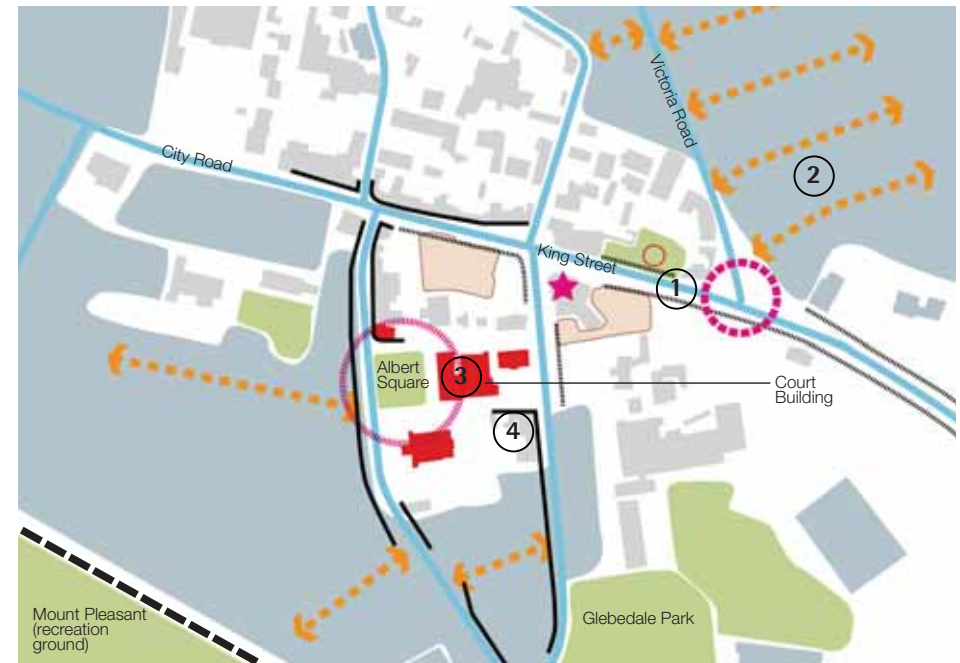
1 Approach into Fenton along City Road through areas of poor quality industrial development to mixed use area with some retail frontages

2 Characteristic streets of terraced housing to the north east of Victoria Road, Fenton

3 The Courts building and Albert Square create a distinctive, high quality place. However it is not visible from the main traffic thoroughfare and people passing may not be aware of it.

4 Existing library building also adds to the character of Fenton.

Legend:
- Existing landscape (gateway) feature
- Gateway
- Key destination, GP surgery
- Other non-residential uses, predominately retail and industrial
- Residential areas
- Open Space
- Key links to residential areas
- Road
- Parking areas
- Continuous frontages
- Poor frontages and backs

Historical development 1898-1953: key influences/ issues

a. Fenton was based on a dual economy of farming and mining;

b. The core area was represented by Albert Square with the great Town Hall building and Christ Church, still existing today. The main potteries industries were located on City Road;

c. The horse trams were replaced by steam trams and by buses in the late 1920s connecting Fenton to Longton and Hanley along Victoria Road and King's Street;

d. The residential areas consisted mainly of terraced houses off the City Road and Victoria Road, still existing today;

e. Before the 1950s the residential area expanded to the South West and some new housing replaced the old terraces;

f. Fenton maintains its industrial character but at the same time has also retained historically important green spaces such as Fenton Park to the north and Priors Fields to the south east.
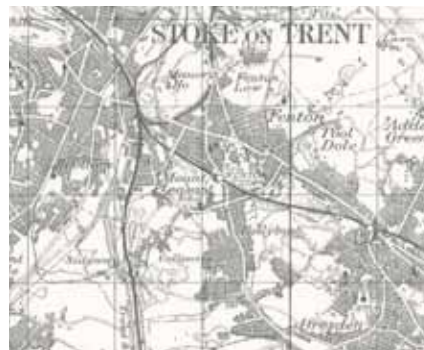
1953
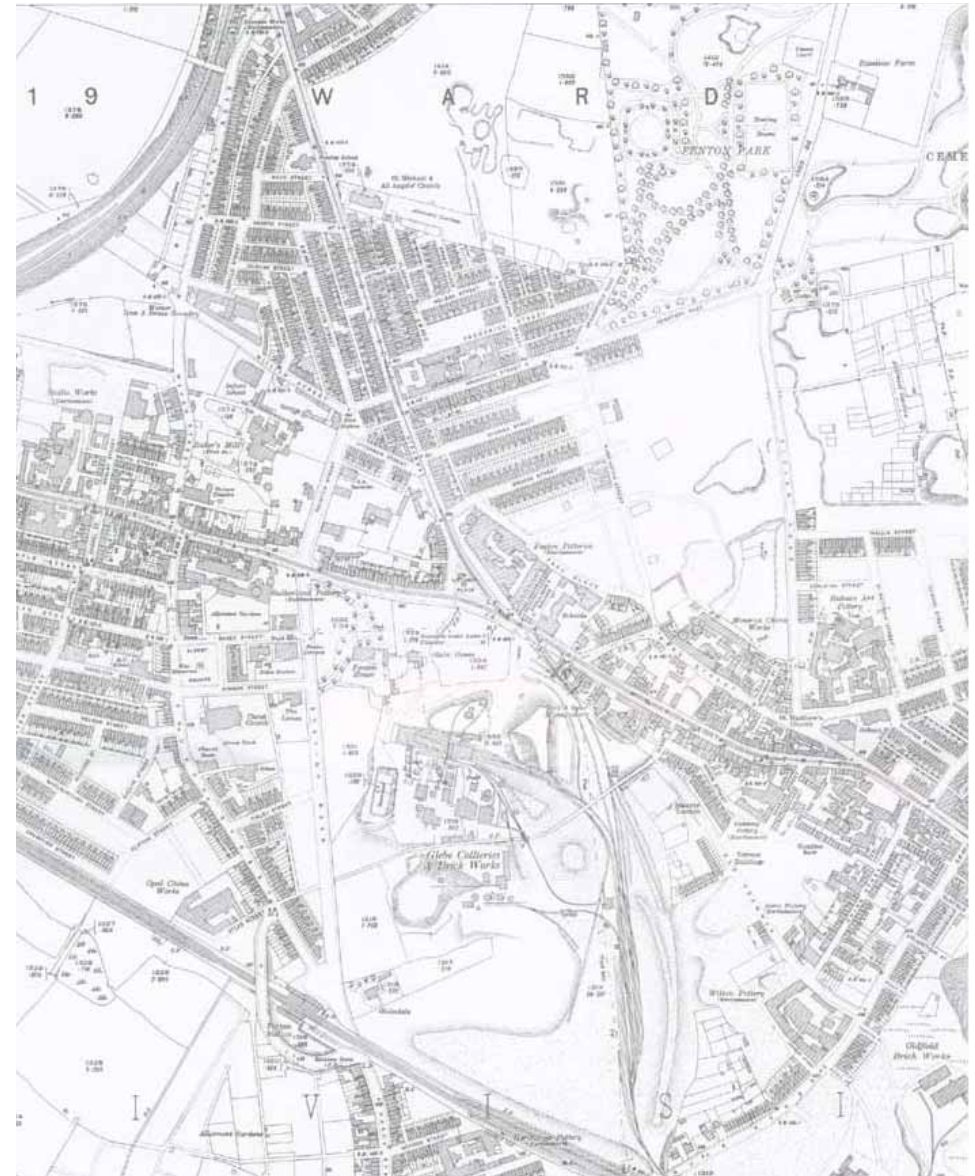
1898

3.8 Rural settlements

The rural areas comprise the majority of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough area. The western part of this borough in particular contains a number of villages.

There is no consistent pattern for the siting, the settlement form or the built form of villages. Some are on high ground, for instance Mow Cop. Others are sited in valleys, for instance Madeley. They developed for a variety of purposes, and this has led to a variety of settlement patterns.

The oldest villages were developed for agricultural reasons, often in a ribbon format along water courses or key routes at road junction points, or associated with large estates and their estate farms, for instance Betley, in relation to Betley Hall. These villages were often extended later in response to industrial requirements, sometimes related to agriculture, for instance mills, at Madeley, or extraction, for example at Alsager Bank.

There has been uneven development pressure across the rural areas, which is reflected in today's settlement patterns. Villages close to the conurbation or associated with industrial activity, now have a mixed development pattern spanning through the centuries, for instance, Madeley, with a rural centre, terraced workers housing and 1930's semi-detached housing.
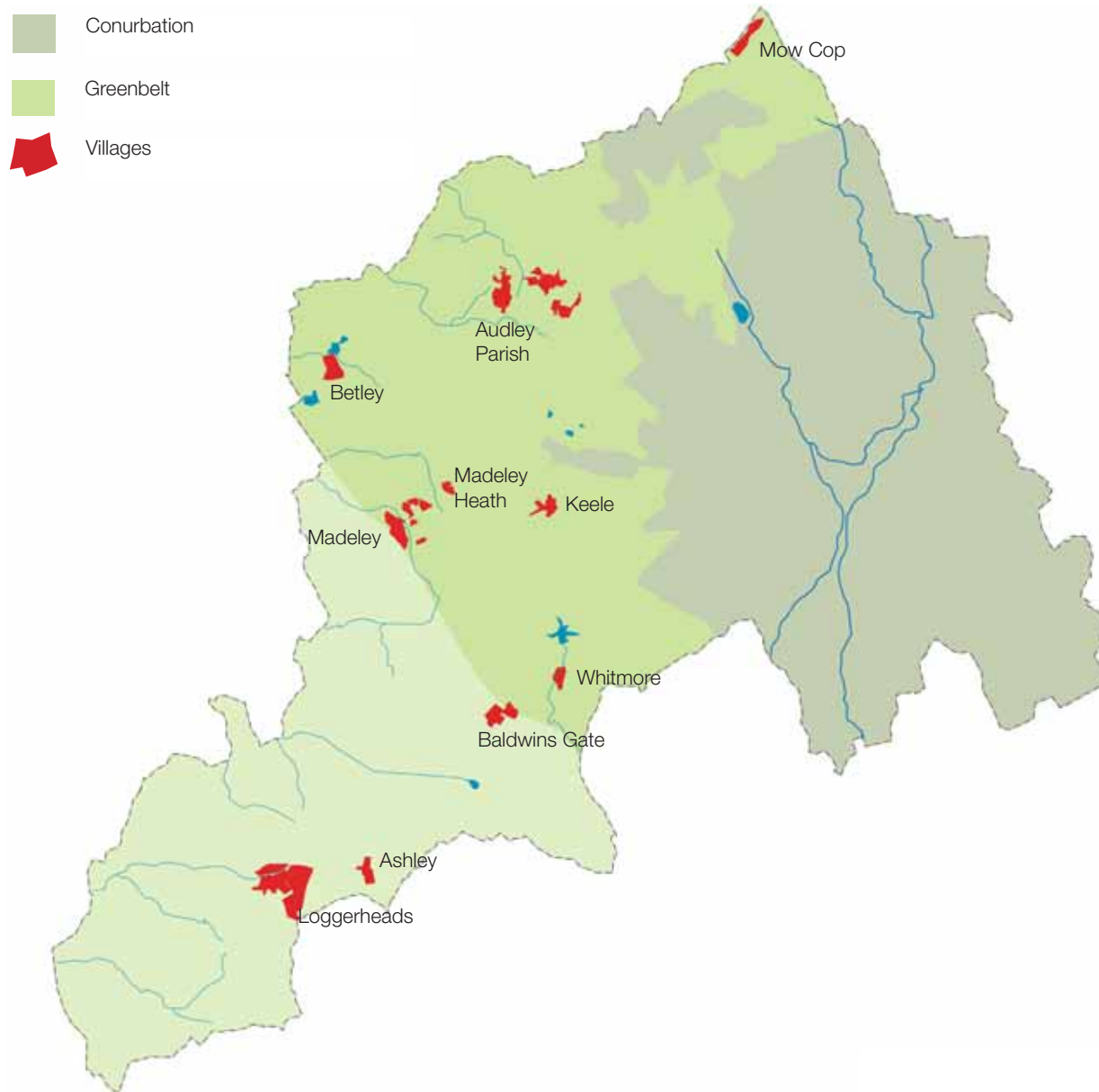
There has been uneven development pressure across the rural areas, which is reflected in today's settlement patterns. Villages close to the conurbation or associated with industrial activity, now have a mixed development pattern spanning through the centuries, for instance, Madeley, with a rural centre, terraced workers housing and 1930's semi-detached housing.

In general the era in which a building was constructed is the most significant influence on its built form.

A number of the villages include designated conservation areas, where the quality of design of any new development will need to respond to the existing character and appearance of the area, including:

a. Audley;

b. Betley;

c. Keele;

d. Madeley.

See section 3.4 for the landscape character of rural areas.

Conurbation

Greenbelt

Villages

Mow Cop

Audley
Parish

Betley

Madeley
Heath   Keele

Madeley

Whitmore

Baldwins Gate

Ashley

Loggerheads
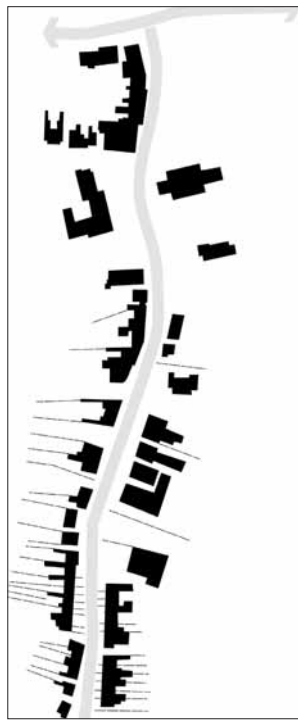
Audley: A cluster of linked settlements. Varied pattern of settlement and built form. Here, in Church Street the church and Victorian former vicarage stand out from general pattern of frontage development, which has long, narrow plots, terraced groups of buildings, with buildings set close to street frontage, building line of each terrace fairly consistent, but not always parallel with street and varying between terraces. Elsewhere, built form includes Victorian workers' cottages and late 20th century bungalows.

Madeley: In the valley bottom, it developed around milling with the Pool providing a source of power for watermills. Together with a village green, the lake still forms a central feature of the village.   Around its perimeter, the mill and church are the key landmark buildings, both set in landscape so that they appear to be positioned at the edges of the settlement. In Victorian times it was served by two railway stations and there is evidence of railway related development for instance in terraced housing on the outskirts at Bar Hill. There is a variety of more recent 20th century development on the outskirts of the village.

Betley: Varied pattern of settlement and built form. On Main Street generally, long, generously sized plots; detached buildings or small groups; irregular building line. Exception is recent terrace to south. 20th century housing estate settlement pattern to streets off main street.

4. Policy review

4. 1 Introduction

Urban design guidance for Stoke on Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme must be consistent with the current and emerging framework of national, regional and local planning policy. We have reviewed policy as it relates to sustainable urban design issues that the urban design guidance will need to address.

The policy review is structured as follows:

a. National planning policy
b. Regional planning policy
c. Local planning policy
d. Procedural implications for the Urban Design Guidance
e. Other, non planning policy documents

4.2 National Policy

National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) that are replacing Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) as part of the new planning system introduced by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In terms of sustainable urban design the following are most relevant:

a. PPS1 Delivering sustainable development
b. PPS1 Planning & Climate Change Supplement
c. PPS3 Housing
d. PPS6 Planning for town centres
e. PPS7 Sustainable development in rural areas
f. PPG13 Transport
g. PPG 15 Planning and the historic environment
h. PPG 17 Planning for open space, sport and recreation.
i. PPS22 Renewable Energy

The procedures for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are set out in:

a. PPS12 Local Spatial Planning, adopted in June 2008.

National policy for highways design is set out in:

a. Manual for Streets

These policy documents are supported by a range of companion guides:

a. By Design – Urban Design in the planning system: towards better practice (2000)
b. The Urban Design Compendium

c. The Urban Design Compendium Volume 2
d. Better Places to Live by Design
e. Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and implementation Tools (ODPM 2005)
f. Places, Streets and Movement.

All of the national policy documents include requirements for good and sustainable design and these are summarised below:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
'Good design is indivisible from good planning'

'High-quality design ensures usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.'

'Planning policies should promote high-quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted'.

'Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people.'

'High-quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process.'

Planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access… based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics.

See also section on By Design below.

PPS1 Planning & Climate Change Supplement
Sets out how regional and local planning can best support achievement of the zero carbon targets alongside meeting community needs for economic and housing development.

Climate change consideration should be integrated into all spatial planning concerns.

In considering planning applications before DPDs can be updated to reflect this PPS planning authorities should have regard to this PPS as a material consideration which may supersede the policies in the plan.

Any policy relating to local requirements for decentralised energy supply to new development or for sustainable buildings should be set out in a DPD not a SPD.

In consideration of environmental performance of proposed development, planning authorities should expect new development to take account of plan form, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and overall be planned so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions and support opportunities for decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy supply; …..give priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems; …..

PPS3 Housing

The planning system should deliver high quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard.

'Good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, which contributes to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities'.

Local planning authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the types of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area, aimed at: creating places, streets and spaces which meet the needs of people, are visually attractive, safe, accessible, functional, inclusive have their own distinctive identity and maintain and improve local character; and promoting designs and layouts which make efficient and effective use of land, including encouraging innovative approaches to help deliver high quality outcomes.

Matters to consider when assessing design quality include the extent to which the proposed development is: easily accessible…. to public transport and community facilities… and is well laid out so that all the space is used efficiently, is safe, accessible and user friendly; provides or enables good access to community and green and open amenity and recreational spaces….; is well integrated with and complemented the neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally in terms of scale, density, layout and access; facilitates the efficient use of resources and seeks to adapt to and reduce the impact of climate change; takes a design led approach to the provision of car parking; creates or enhances a distinctive character that relates well to the surroundings and supports a sense of local place and civic identity; provides for the retention or reestablishment of biodiversity.

Good design is fundamental to using land efficiently. LPAs should facilitate good design by identifying the distinctive features that define the character of a particular local area.

PPS6 Planning for town centres
It is essential that town centres provide a high-quality and safe environment if they are to remain attractive and competitive. Well designed public spaces and buildings, which are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable, are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre. Policies for the design of development for main town centre uses, regardless of location, and for development in town centres, should promote high quality and inclusive design, in order to improve the character and quality of the area in which such development is located and the way it functions.

Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools, which supports PPS6:
Development should: normally be orientated so that it fronts the street; respect building lines of the existing urban environment and, where appropriate, build up to the edge of the curtilage; maximise the amount of active street frontage; avoid designs which are inward looking and which present blank frontages; provide level access from the public realm; and in the case of development in edge-of-centre locations, provide good pedestrian access to the centre.

PPS7 Sustainable development in rural areas
To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the

promotion of: good quality sustainable development that respects and where possible enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside

To promote more sustainable patterns of development – focusing most development in or next to existing towns and villages; - preventing urban sprawl

Planning authorities should ensure that development respects and where possible enhances the particular qualities of a location whether this is the historic and architectural value of a town or village or the local countryside character. It should also contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity and be of an appropriate density and scale for its location having regard to PPD1 and By Design.

A positive approach should be taken to innovative high quality contemporary designs that are sensitive to their immediate setting and help to make places better for people to live and work in.

Local planning authorities should prepare policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout their rural areas in accordance with Annex C to PPS1 and utilising tools such as Landscape Character Assessments and Village or Town Design Statements.

Proposed Changes to Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres - Consultation July 2008

Proposed to refine the policy approach to planning for town centres and strengthen the government's policy on positive planning for town centres, in particular proposed changes to how some planning applications should be considered and tested. Proposed a new impact assessment framework.

The new impact test included the requirement for applicants to consider the appropriateness of the scale of development, and for local authorities to ensure that proposed locations for new development are accessible by a choice of means of transport and to consider the impact on car use, traffic and congestion arising from a proposal.

Design quality, including (for the first time) how the proposal would help mitigate the impacts of climate change, also formed part of the proposed new test.

PPG13 Transport

Local planning authorities should actively manage the pattern of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport… and seek by the design and layout of developments and areas, to secure community safety and road safety.

When thinking about new development, and in adapting existing development, the needs and safety of all in the community should be considered from the outset… taking account of the importance of good design.

PPG 15 Planning and the historic environment

The design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general it is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community.

New buildings do not have to copy their older neighbours in detail. Some

of the most interesting streets include a variety of building styles, materials and forms of construction, of many different periods, but together forming a harmonious group.

PPG 17 Planning for open space, sport and recreation

Local networks of high quality and well managed open space help create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe and can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being.

LPAs should… audit open space facilities… Audits of quality will be particularly important as they will allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and maintenance.

New open spaces should improve the quality of the public realm through good design.

PPS22 Renewable Energy

The opportunity for incorporating renewable energy projects in all new development should be considered, including such technologies as solar panels, biomass heating, small scale wind turbines, photovoltaic cell and combined heat and power schemes, which can be incorporated into new development and some existing buildings.

PPS25

Requires the identification, reduction and management of flood risk at all stages of the development process in terms of location of proposed development and its design , including protecting areas required for flood storage, provision of flood defences, and incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and other design measures as appropriate.

Those proposing development are responsible for:

a. Designs which reduce flood risk to the development and elsewhere, by incorporating sustainable drainage systems (see Annex F) and where necessary, flood resilience measures (see Annex G); and

b. Identifying opportunities to reduce flood risk, enhance biodiversity and amenity, protect the historic environment and seek collective solutions to managing flood risk.

The series of companion guides share similar themes and aspirations.

By Design

By Design succinctly proposes seven key objectives for good urban design:

Character - A place with its own identity

Planning should promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

Continuity and enclosure - A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

Planning should promote continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.

Quality of the public realm - A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas

Planning should promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and

elderly people.

Ease of movement - A place that is easy to get to and move through

Planning should promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

Legibility - A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

Planning should promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people and their way around.

Adaptability - A place that can change easily

Planning should promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Diversity - A place with variety and choice

Planning should promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

This brief summary of national planning policy demonstrates that there is strong national policy framework not only encouraging but requiring good design.

The process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents is set out in PPS12 Local Spatial Planning, which was introduced in June 2008, and makes changes to the previous procedures.

PPS12 Local spatial planning

Supplementary Planning Documents can be produced to provide greater detail on the policies set out in Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) prepared by local planning authorities. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) forms part of the development plan for an area but is not defined as a DPD in PPS12, so cannot provide the policy basis for SPD to be prepared by a local planning authority.

4.3 Development Plan Policy

Regional Policy

The RSS for the West Midlands (initially June 2004, adopted in Jan 2008 incorporating phase 1 revision) provides the regional framework and broad spatial strategy, including the Regional Transport Strategy, within which each local authority will prepare its LDF. It informs the development of strategies and programmes for other public agencies and service providers including those involved in health, education, skills and learning, and crime reduction. It also provides the spatial framework for the Regional Economic Strategy.

Guiding principles for the Review of the RSS are set out in Annex A, including:

'Principle F: To protect and enhance the quality of the environment, strengthening the interrelationship with economic and social progress and health and well-being.'

The Review was divided into three blocks of work of which the first is already incorporated into the RSS. Two further partial reviews are in progress:

a. Phase 2, including housing and employment;

b. Phase 3, including environmental issues.

North Staffordshire is identified in the RSS Spatial Strategy Diagram as a Major Urban Area (MUA) and Regeneration Zone with two Strategic Centres (Stoke City Centre and Newcastle-under-Lyme).

Relevant to design issues, Policy UR1: Implementing Urban Renaissance – the MUAs, promotes:

a. Environmental improvements, including greening programmes and conservation of the historic environment

b. Raising the quality or urban design architecture and public art and spaces

Policy QE3: Creating a high quality built environment for all, promotes:

a. Securing a high quality of townscape, urban form, building design and urban spaces, which respects regional and local character culture and history,

b. Incorporating sustainability considerations such as energy and water efficiency, use of renewable energy, etc

Policy QE4: Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces promotes:

a. Adequate provision of accessible, high quality urban greenspace

b. Creation and enhancement of urban greenspace networks

The RSS aims to contribute as far as possible towards the national energy target of 10% of electricity produced from renewable energy by 2010 with an aspiration to double this between 2010 and 2020. Technical studies indicate potential for a range of renewable energy generation, with potential for Biomass in the rural areas and urban fringe, solar energy, energy from waste and wind energy.

Policy EN1: Energy Generation promotes:

a. Encouraging proposals for use of renewable energy resources

b. Providing locational guidance through SPD on the most appropriate locations for each renewable energy technology

c. Identifying the environmental and other criteria that will be applied to determining the acceptability of such proposals, including impact on landscape, surrounding residents, etc.

The Consultation Draft of Phase 2 of the West Midlands RSS was published in December 2007 and the consultation period has been extended to December 2008.

This includes new cross cutting policies relating to climate change, sustainable communities, sustainable construction.

All of these policies in the RSS are strategic rather than detailed, and reinforce the national policies on design quality and sustainability.

Local Development Framework
These policies include new DPDs and SPDs that have been prepared under the new planning system to form part of the LDF for each local planning authority. It also includes 'saved policies' from adopted UDPs and Structure

Plans, which are still in place until replaced by new DPDs.

Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme are working jointly on a number of policy documents including the urban design guidance.

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy Submission Draft May 2008.
The Strategic Vision and Aims include a number that are relevant to urban design guidance, relating to 3 themes of people, prosperity, and place and image, the most relevant including:

Prosperity

(SA7) - To enhance the City Centre of Stoke-on-Trent's role as sub regional commercial centre; to help Newcastle town centre to continue to thrive as a strategic centre, both within a network of accessible and complementary, vital, vibrant and distinctive North Staffordshire town centres

(SA8) - To increase the attraction of the area as a tourist destination based on its industrial heritage, existing and future magnets of tourism and leisure interest and the high quality environment in the surrounding rural area

Place and Image

(SA11) - To focus development within the communities of Loggerheads, Madeley and Audley Parish to support their function as rural service centres that meet the requirements of local people

(SA12) - To renew the fabric of urban and rural areas to promote the best of safe and sustainable urban and rural living

(SA13) - To protect and improve the plan area's network of canals and watercourses, green spaces/infrastructure and parks to provide the landscape setting for high quality development of homes, employment and leisure opportunities; opportunities for physical activity and to foster a more sustainable way of life

(SA14) - To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character of the plan area by ensuring new developments are appropriate in terms of scale, location and their context.

(SA16) - To eliminate poor quality development and establish a culture of excellence in built design by developing design skills and understanding, by requiring good, safe design as a universal baseline and distinctive design excellence in all development proposals, and by promoting procurement methods which facilitate the delivery of good design.

(SA17) - To minimise the adverse impacts of climate change in the move towards zero carbon growth through energy efficiency, promoting the use of renewable energy sources and green construction methods in accordance with best practice

(SA18) - To promote mixed use and residential development where it can support city, town and local centres

The Core Spatial Strategy sets out a series of strategic spatial principles,

including a hierarchy of centres with an outline of each of their roles, and spatial principles of:

a. Targeted regeneration

b. Economic development, and

c. Movement and access.

It also includes area spatial strategies and strategic principles for a series of strategic sub-areas, these being:

a. City Centre of Stoke-on-Trent

b. Stoke-on-Trent Inner Urban Core

c. Stoke-on-Trent Outer Urban Area

d. Newcastle Town Centre

e. Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods

f. Newcastle Rural Areas

Core Strategic Policies intended to complement and help deliver the area spatial strategies are set out. The key policies that the urban design guidance relates to are as follows:

CSP1 - Design Quality

New development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent's unique townscape and landscape and in particular, the built heritage, its historic environment, its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres. 12 key criteria for the design quality of new development are set out in the policy.

Policy CSP2 – Historic Environment

Both Councils will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the historic heritage of the City and the Borough including buildings, monuments, sites and areas of special archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

Policy CSP3 – Sustainability and Climate Change

Development which positively addresses the impacts of climate change and delivers a sustainable approach will be encouraged.

The policy sets out that the highest standards of energy and natural resource efficiency will be achieved through 9 key requirements relating to energy production, energy consumption, sustainable construction methods, water efficiency, sustainable drainage, habitat creation, and supporting other initiatives and best practice standards.

Policy CSP4 – Natural Assets

The quality and quantity of the plan area's natural assets will be protected, maintained and enhanced through 4 key measures.

Policy CSP5 - Open Space/Sport/Recreation

The plan area's open space, sports and leisure assets will be enhanced, maintained and protected through 5 key measures relating to partnership working, additional provision to meet local needs, linking new residential development to open spaces, ensuring accessible, safe and high quality provision and developer contributions.

The Core Strategy will become the primary statement of local planning policy for the two local Planning authorities when adopted. However, the programme for the preparation and adoption of the SPD is in advance of that for the Core Spatial Strategy, so there will be an interim period when legally the SPD will need to rely on other adopted policy sources for its justification.

Other local policy is as follows:

Stoke-on-Trent Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
Sets out the appropriate stages for consultation during the preparation of an SPD together with appropriate techniques for involvement.

During preparation and evidence gathering, prior to formal consultation on a draft document, these are:

a. Minimum requirement – consult statutory bodies, where appropriate dependent on the nature of the SPD and specialism of the statutory body.

b. Additional options - include letters to interested parties, articles in local newspaper and City Council publications, Member workshops, presentations to interest groups on request, meetings, engagement with LSP and RENEW, and Link to Community Ward Plans.

Similarly identifies techniques of involvement during consultation on draft and adoption and publication.

Stoke-on-Trent DPDs
City Centre and Etruria Road Corridor Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options "Draft Spatial Options" (August 2007)

This sets out a series of spatial options for the future development of the area, identifies potential development sites, together with the appropriate land uses and other key parameters for development, for consultation purposes.

The commencement notice for two other AAPs has been published:

a. Inner Urban Core Area Action Plan

b. Meir Area Action Plan

Development Portfolio Preferred Options (June 2006)

The Development Portfolio document, published for consultation purposes, indicates where new development sites for housing, employment and shopping are proposed in the City where no Area Action Plan is proposed. Transportation proposals are also included.

Stoke-on-Trent SPD
Inclusive Design Access for All (Feb 2008)
Sets out the various requirements and design guidance for accessible design in planning, accessibility and building regulation legislation.

Newcastle-under-Lyme SCI
Sets out the process for production of an SPD and appropriate forms of consultation.

Pre-production - informal consultation from the outset, prior to and during the production of the initial draft,, which will tend to involve those organisations and individuals with a specific interest in the content of particular SPDs.

Newcastle-under-Lyme DPDs

No additional documents

Newcastle-under-Lyme SPDs
Knutton and Cross Heath Design SPD Phase 1 (February 2008)
Relates to a first phase of the RENEW proposals for transformational change in the area, following preparation, for the area as a whole, of a draft Area Regeneration Framework by RENEW in November 2007.   It provides urban design guidance for the development of a major site and the remodelling of the Lower Milehouse housing estate. Published for consultation.

Newcastle Town Centre SPD (Jun 2008)
Sets out key themes to be addressed in order to attract investment and increase the Town Centre's vitality, these being: public realm, accessibility, the retail offer, range of entertainment and leisure, employment, housing and presence of University and associated medical developments. It defines a series of housing areas and development concepts for a series of different quarters, including:

a. The northern gateway, opportunity to enhance key approach through College and other development;

b. Northern quarter, possible opportunities for residential, leisure, office and hotel development;

c. Live work quarter, potential mixed use are with office and housing development;

d. Town historic core, important focus of retail, Council activities and public realm opportunities;

e. Pool Dam Waterside quarter, new potential mixed use growth area for the town centre.

Guidance is given for four key development sites, where there is currently developer interest. Published for consultation.

Saved Policies
'Saved policies' from adopted UDPs and Structure Plans are still operational until replaced by new DPDs.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Saved Policies extended beyond 28 Sept 2007))

D1 Sustainable Forms of Development

Promotes sustainable forms and patterns of development through 9 criteria including concentrating development within the fabric of urban areas while protecting or enhancing their distinctive character and environmental quality, considering reuse of land and buildings, creating communities with a balanced mix of land uses to reduce the need to travel, protecting and enhancing natural and cultural assets including open spaces.

D2 The Design and Environmental Quality of Development

Development should generally conserve and where possible improve the quality of life and the environment and should meet 8 criteria the most relevant to urban design guidance being

a. Be informed by, or sympathetic to, the character and qualities of its surroundings in its location, scale and design

b. Be designed to relate to its surrounding context while not excluding

innovative and creative designs.

D3 Urban Regeneration

Regeneration is a fundamental requirement of a sustainable strategy, to be achieved by initiatives, which will enhance the image, create vitality and improve the safety, comfort and environmental quality of urban areas. Enhancing the image, attractiveness and accessibility of town centres, improving the availability quality and diversity of housing stock, creating improving and extending areas of wildlife value, open spaces and access to watercourses are all specifically identified.

D7 Conserving Energy and Water

Supports measures that help to conserve natural resources including more efficient use of energy, greater use of recycled materials, use of renewable energy resources, more efficient use of water.

Stoke on Trent Revised City Plan 2001, including Technical Appendix and SPG
BP10 Design of New Development, which identifies key considerations when considering proposals, these being external appearance, scale, relationship with adjoining areas, layout and space around buildings, include the well being of pedestrians, landscape and accessibility. Proposals for prominent and environmentally sensitive locations will require a higher standard of design than elsewhere.

A Design Guide forms a Technical Appendix covering the topics of residential development, home extensions and shopping.   The residential development design guidance covers issues such as privacy, daylight and sunlight, private garden space, car parking, design of dwellings, landscape, pedestrian movement and security.

Stoke on Trent Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
Design Strategy for the Built Environment (Jul 1999)
Sets out design policies and detailed guidance in relation to: context and local distinctiveness, urban design, architectural design, development in architecturally or historically sensitive locations, alterations and extensions, design statements and public art. Also includes a strategy for implementation that included: detailed design guidance, development control, communications and education, a proactive approach and monitoring and evaluation. An Urban Design Analysis, description of Local Character and SWOT analysis are provided in Appendices.

Burslem Masterplan and Urban Design Action Plan 2004
Provides vision and action plan for the renewal of Burslem. Sets urban design guiding principles for area as a whole and identifies 8 strategic development sites with aims, development principles, indicative development capacities and illustrative drawings to show potential form of development. Also includes public realm strategy proposals.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 Adopted October 2003
No saved general design or sustainability policies. Some references to design issues in some saved policies in particular: Employment policy (E6) relating to Chatterley Valley requires high quality development and landscape and policy relating to canals requires the character of the canal or its setting not to be harmed (T11).   Policy N16 aims to consolidate and enhance the green heritage network comprising 12 defined sites. N17 Landscape

character – general considerations requires development to be informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality, including visual impact, landscape elements that contribute to local distinctiveness, historic elements which contribute significantly to landscape character and quality such as field, settlement or road patterns.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
Space around dwellings (not dated)
Provides development control standards for the relationships between dwellings.

Madeley Village Design Statement (October 1998)
Whitmore Village Design Statement (Jun 2002)
These documents describe the distinctive character of the villages and their surrounding countryside, show what influences that character and include design principles for future development based on that character.

4.4 Implications for Urban Design Guidance SPD

The proposed Urban Design Guidance is in line with national and regional government policy on urban design quality.

For the Urban Design Guidance to be adopted as an SPD jointly by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, it needs:

a. To have been identified in the LDS for each local planning authority;
b. To elaborate one or more adopted DPD policies in the LDF of each local planning authority, and
c. To be prepared according to procedures set out in PPS12.

The Urban Design Guidance is clearly identified in each LDS as required.

In the long term, the aspiration is for the Urban Design Guidance to elaborate upon design and sustainability related policies in the joint Core Spatial Strategy, once it has been adopted. The guidance will be prepared with this aim in mind. However, the Core Spatial is likely to be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination around November 2008, so will not be in place by April 2009, which is the target date for adoption of the Urban Design Guidance as SPD.

In the meantime, therefore, the Urban Design Guidance needs to elaborate upon other, adopted DPD Policy. Stoke-on-Trent has a saved design policy in the Revised City Plan 2001: BP10 Design of New Development but no saved policies relating to sustainability issues. It would be possible for the Urban Design Guidance to be prepared to elaborate upon this policy. However, Newcastle-under-Lyme has no saved design or sustainability policies in its Local Plan 2011.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 includes saved policies relating both to design and sustainability issues and it covers both authorities. For this reason, the Structure Plan provides the simplest policy basis for the Urban Design Guidance, which can be prepared to provide greater detail upon the following policies:

a. D1 Sustainable forms of Development;
b. D2 the Design and Environmental Quality of Development
c. D3 Urban Regeneration
d. D7 Conserving Energy and Water.

The Statements of Community Involvement define the appropriate forms of consultation that should take place during the preparation of an SPD.

In relation to the Stoke-on-Trent SCI, the client group includes representatives of the key statutory bodies with an interest in the SPD, these being English Heritage, CABE, the Housing Corporation and RENEW. The Urban Vision/ Tibbalds joint programme of workshops has included invitations to representatives of other statutory bodies, such as the police, Environment Agency etc. Consultation has included a number of the additional options such as a Member workshop, meetings with key stakeholders and engagement with RENEW and it has gone beyond these to include workshop sessions for local authority officers and wider stakeholders.

The programme of consultation also satisfies the Newcastle-under-Lyme SCI requirement.

4.5 Other, non planning, policy documents

We have reviewed a number of other background and policy documents which are informing regeneration and development but which have no formal planning status at present:

Stoke Town Stage 1 Spatial Framework (May 2008)

Hope Village and Business Boulevard Regeneration Framework Draft Final Report (May 2008)

Business Plan 2008-2011, (no date), North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership

Stoke AMI Stoke-on-Trent Draft Urban Design and Landscape Strategy (Feb 2008)

Stoke Town Masterplan Stage 1 Spatial Framework (Feb 2008)

Transforming North Staffordshire Overview (Feb 2008) North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership

Hope Village Development Framework Draft RENEW (Dec 2007)

RENEW Knutton, Cross Heath, Silverdale and Chesterton Draft Area Regeneration Framework (ARF) (Nov. 2007)

Hope Village Masterplan Site Analysis and Opportunities (no date)

Hope Village Baseline and Positioning Report RENEW (Sept 2007)Draft Baseline and Positioning Report Stoke Town AMI (no date)

19 century Terraced Housing in Knutton Village: A Study of Typology (Mar 2007)

North Staffordshire Conurbation, Assessment of Historical Significance (Dec 2006)

RENEW North Staffordshire Partnership Board-'Design Issues' (Nov. 2006)

RENEW North Staffordshire Partnership Board-'Sustainability' (Nov. 2006)

Newcastle Town Centre AAP Urban Design Aspects (Aug 2006)

City Waterside Caldon Canal Stoke on Trent (Dec 2005)

Newcastle Town Centre: Western Edge Urban Design Contextual Study (Nov 2005)

Newcastle Town Centre: Eastern Approaches Urban Design Study (June 2005)

Stoke on Trent Baseline Report Burslem Masterplan (June 2004)

Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm Strategy (Feb 2004)