



# Northfield Regeneration Framework

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# Foreword

Northfield town centre is one of the key local centres in Birmingham. It is designated as a 'District Centre', and is the 5th largest centre in the City by turnover and 6th in terms of retail floorspace. In recognition of its importance, as a busy active centre, providing shops and local services serving the south of the City, the Council has developed this framework to help Northfield to maintain its position, remain competitive and attract new investment.

The Council has worked with partners to bring forward significant investment, which has increased Northfield's attractiveness, as a place to do business, shop, work and live. In particular, the construction of the Northfield relief road, (Sir Herbert Austin Way), has opened-up the opportunity to unlock new development sites. The aspiration of this framework is to attract new investment into these sites, whilst maintaining Northfield's traditional town centre character.

This framework offers a vision for growth and future priorities for Northfield as a local centre. It also identifies development opportunities to: increase the diversity of the 'convenience and comparison' shopping offer; attract new services, offices and other town centre uses; and importantly, increase employment opportunities for local people. It seeks to promote investment and new high quality development that will deliver substantial regeneration and strengthen Northfield's role as a key centre serving south Birmingham.

To help realise the aspirations and priorities contained in the framework, the Council recognises the importance of a co-ordinated effort by landowners, developers, businesses and local residents. We are committed to working with others over the coming years, in the interest of the local community.

## **Councillor Tahir Ali**

Cabinet Member for Development,  
Transport and Economy  
Birmingham City Council

# 4 Introduction

The centre of Northfield provides a full range of local services and shops, functioning as a traditional town centre. This role can be regarded as Northfield's 'unique selling point' and is important compared to other centres along the A38 Bristol Road. Emerging developments at Longbridge and Selly Oak will bring different shopping destinations to the A38 corridor, but Northfield will remain unique as the only centre offering a full range of shops from both independent operators and national chains, as well as services and other facilities in a vibrant, pleasant high street environment. The need to continue this role into the future is regarded as being of paramount importance for the City, and the long term regeneration of Northfield is a key aspiration of Birmingham City Council.

Over the past 10 years the City has invested over £16m in Northfield, providing the relief road (Sir Herbert Austin Way) and £1.8m worth of new street lighting, paving, seating and planting along the length of the town centre. Private sector investment of around £30m has provided better retail choice, including Sainsbury's and Aldi food stores.

The construction of Sir Herbert Austin Way has opened up a number of potential development opportunities totalling around 5ha. This regeneration framework highlights sites for development and investment, as well as other actions to regenerate the centre.

The key issue for Northfield is a need to maintain and strengthen its importance, ensuring that the momentum built up through recent investment is carried forward into new development opportunities.

Northfield is a District Centre within Birmingham's shopping hierarchy, serving a wide catchment area. There is a good choice of retailers, with over 200 shops, including many familiar 'high street' brands and names offering convenience and comparison goods, as well as businesses in the financial, leisure, administration and service sectors and a range of health, and community uses. Other assets include good public transport access, a large quantity of car parking, active town centre

management and the presence of a Business Improvement District. As the largest centre in south-west Birmingham, it has considerable potential to deliver new developments and increased capacity for retail and other town centre uses.

The framework seeks to promote investment in Northfield centre as one of the City's key suburban centres. Although it is

not a statutory planning policy document, it sets out a vision for sustainable development and regeneration, and identifies opportunities for investment and specific regeneration actions to support the future viability and vitality of the centre. It is related to, and builds on proposals in the adopted Birmingham Unitary Development Plan, the emerging Birmingham Development Plan and Northfield Local Action Plan.



Bristol Road South



Plan 1 City Context Plan

# Vision and objectives

## Vision

Northfield will strengthen its distinct function as a traditional town centre within Birmingham, providing a full range of local services and shops. It will attract investment and new development in key sites, build on its unique identity, improve its retail offer, and retain important services, leisure, community uses and offices in a vibrant and successful centre. It will be a place for growth and investment, where new opportunities can be nurtured and mature businesses enhance their vitality. It will be a well designed and attractive place with a unique identity, providing a welcoming and safe experience for visitors and local people.

## Objectives for Northfield

1. To maintain and strengthen Northfield's position as an important District Centre in south-west Birmingham.
2. To capitalise on the impact of the new road by extending the town centre character to include the frontage to Sir Herbert Austin Way. This will involve opening up and bringing forward development sites within the centre for new high quality retail and mixed use development particularly to the west of the centre and adjacent to the new road.
3. To improve the quantity and quality of retail space to provide a more diverse offer. This includes new retail units to attract additional 'high street' retailers to Northfield, particularly those offering quality comparison goods.
4. To realise more opportunities for evening and leisure activity in the centre, particularly family orientated activities as well as a range of restaurants/cafes.
5. To support initiatives to further develop a unique identity for Northfield, e.g. street markets, events, and specialist shopping.
6. To support change that builds on the identity and distinctive character of Northfield as a place, following good urban design principles.
7. To further improve the urban environment and public realm, contributing to a strong sense of place and forming an attractive, safe environment for pedestrians, including people with mobility impairments.
8. To improve accessibility within the centre, links to surrounding areas, and car parking.
9. To increase involvement of stakeholders in delivering regeneration including a continuing role for the Town Centre Partnership, BID company and town centre management, building on the success of recent years.



# Context

Northfield Centre lies on a major arterial route, the A38 Bristol Road, approximately 9km south of Birmingham City Centre and 7km from both the M5 and M42 motorways.

Northfield is a busy, vibrant town centre, which provides a diverse range of shops, key services, offices, leisure, education and community facilities. It is the economic centre of the area supplying local jobs.

The boundary of the centre is shown on the plan below. This reflects the extent of the town centre as set out in the Shopping and Local Centres SPD adopted in 2012.

## The catchment area

Northfield Centre is surrounded by predominantly residential areas, which rely upon the centre for the majority of their shopping and convenience needs. It is the main District Centre serving a large area of south west Birmingham, and its catchment area includes Northfield, Bournville, West Heath, Longbridge, Rednal and Kings Norton. The centre also offers important services and community facilities that attract users from further afield.

Northfield Centre is also a transportation hub with excellent public transport access to all surrounding areas, as well as to the City Centre. Bus is the main means of travel to the centre (The 2010 'Making Journeys in Northfield' study identified 43% use bus services to access the centre). Northfield railway station has park and ride facilities, providing a frequent, fast train service to the City Centre and connectivity beyond Birmingham.

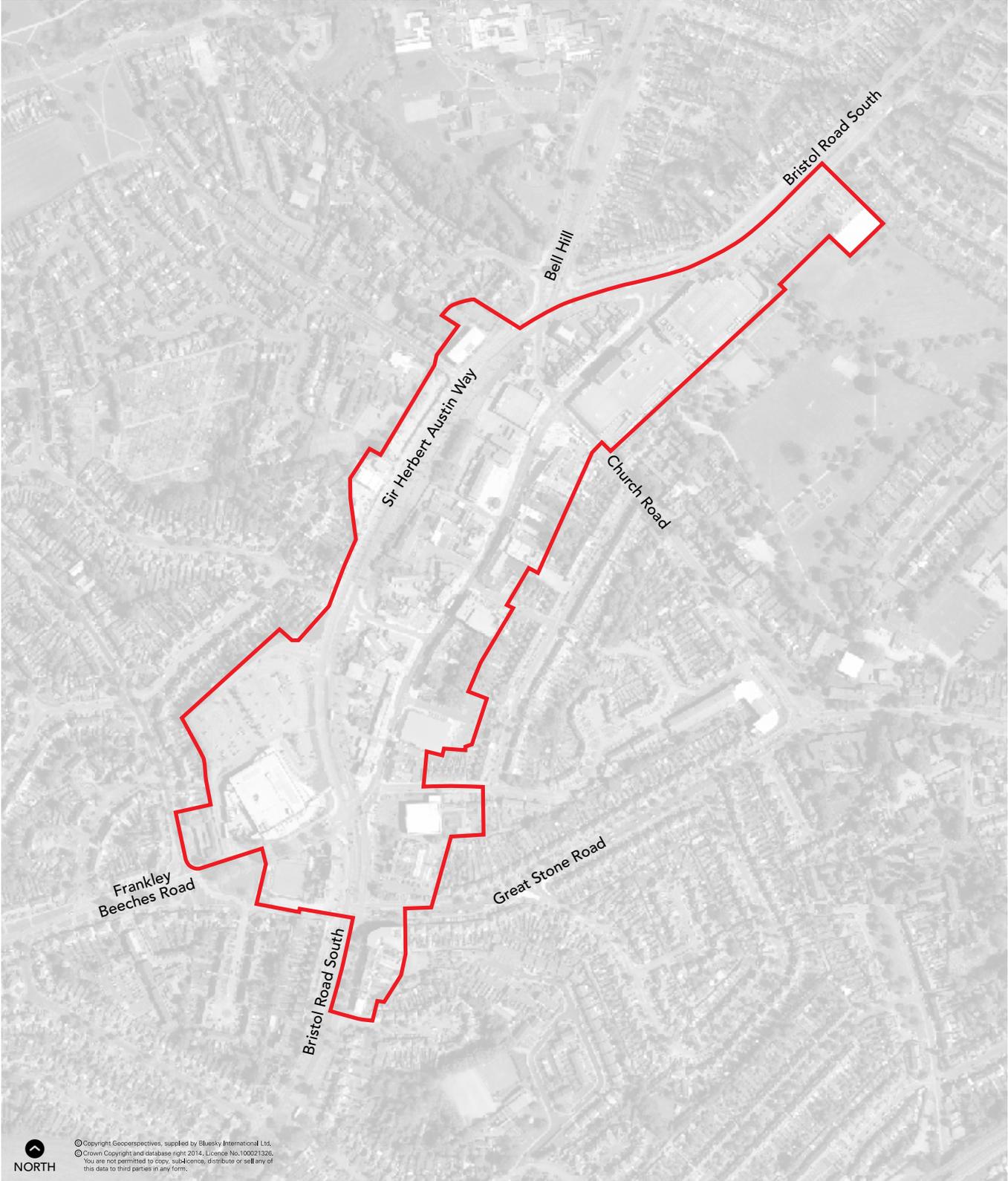
The A38 Bristol Road provides easy access to and from the City Centre to the north and the M5 to the south. Northfield Ward has a higher than average car ownership

rate compared to the rest of Birmingham and shoppers driving into the centre have a good choice of car parking facilities.

A population of over 100,000 live within 3km of Northfield town centre. This represents 10% of Birmingham's growing population of over one million. Northfield's demographic profile indicates a strong representation (72%) of working age residents, demonstrating a stable community with average household sizes.



Bristol Road South transport interchange



Plan 2 Regeneration Framework boundary

## Retail profile

The town centre, with over 200 retail units, has a particularly strong offer including representation from high street operators such as Boots, Argos, W.H. Smith, New Look, Currys, Sainsbury's, Aldi, Iceland and Wilkinson, together with a wide range of smaller independent retailers. It is designated as a District Centre in the City's hierarchy of centres, and is the 5th largest in the City after the City Centre, Sutton Coldfield, Kings Heath and Erdington. The Birmingham Retail Need Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, 2009, updated 2013) contains further details, and concludes that Northfield is generally a vibrant and stable town centre.

The centre boundary and within this, the Primary Shopping Area are identified in the Shopping and Local Centres SPD (2012). This also outlines some specific retail policies which apply within the centre, summary details of which are set out in Appendix 1.

The Northfield Shopping Centre is the main anchor at the northern end of the centre. It contains 42 shops, the largest indoor shopping centre outside the City Centre. In addition to its high street brands it provides over 650 parking spaces and attracts shoppers from further afield - with a weekly footfall in excess of 100,000. The Sainsbury's store provides a major anchor at the southern end of the centre.

There are also a number of important services such as banks, building societies and civic services contributing to more than 67,500sq.m of retail and commercial floorspace. Compared to the national average of 14.3%, the vacancy rate in Northfield remains lower at just 12.8% (March 2012).

Other assets include an annual carnival (held in Victoria Common Park), public spaces suitable for events, CCTV and active town centre management.

## Business Improvement District

In 2011 the business community in Northfield voted to create a Business Improvement District (BID), and the BID was established in January 2012 following a successful ballot of some 200 town centre businesses and organisations. The BID company (NTCB Limited) is led and funded by these and employs a full time BID Manager to deliver environmental improvements and management, events and promotional activities and support to BID levy payers as set out in the approved BID Proposal.

The BID Company places a levy on business rates and will raise over £500,000 over five years to promote local businesses and trade, and take forward further investment and improvement in the centre. Businesses have prioritised making additional environmental improvements, promotional and marketing events and organising better safety measures for shoppers and businesses to encourage further growth and development. Through this work, the BID is helping to instil confidence in the centre and its future.

The BID is co-located with its sister company, Northfield Town Centre Partnership, which pursues a complementary community based programme of activities. These include the Visit Northfield Shop, which provides a visible high street



The Black Horse PH

outlet for a range of services and facilities to support both town centre businesses and the wider community.

### The surrounding area

Beyond the Framework boundary, there is a range of community facilities which are complementary to Northfield town centre. Their activities and accessibility mean that they are intrinsically linked to Northfield's well-being, and it is important that the Framework recognises their influence:

- Royal Orthopaedic Hospital - is a small, specialist teaching hospital offering planned orthopaedic surgery. It is one of the foremost Orthopaedic units in Europe, and is the largest local employer with further significant spin off potential for the town centre.
- Victoria Common Park - an important open space and leisure facility with scope for investment and improved accessibility.
- Northfield Library - an important community facility for over 100 years.
- Northfield Adult Education Centre - one of over 20 centres across the City offering a wide range of academic and vocational courses for adults.
- Northfield Ecocentre - offers practical and inspiring ideas and advice on how to green up your lifestyle, home or business.
- YMCA - providing support, accommodation and training for young people.

The Framework also complements and contributes to other regeneration initiatives across south-west Birmingham, for example the 'Climb Project' led by the Member of Parliament, which aims to create a new identity and economic vision for the area and assist the young and unemployed into jobs.

### Local investment

In recent years, the City Council has invested significantly in Northfield's infrastructure, public realm and community facilities, including opening the relief road in 2007. This major improvement reduced traffic volumes from the high street by town centre by some 80%, relieving the high street of congestion and opening up sites for development.

In 2009, the council carried out a £1.8m environmental improvement project with new pavements, street furniture, road carriageway and street lighting along the length of the town centre.

In the last 10 years Birmingham City Council has also invested in improvements to Victoria Common

and refurbished and upgraded Northfield swimming baths to a modern leisure facility offering multi-use sports gymnasium and training facilities in addition to swimming.

Private sector investment includes:

- Sainsbury's flagship 6,500sq.m store which opened in 2002, with a 500 vehicle shopper's car park.
- Aldi opened a 2,000sq.m store in 2009 at the southern end of the high street.
- A £1m refurbishment scheme for the historic Black Horse PH by JD Wetherspoon has provided a landmark gateway to the southern gateway of the high street.



Tays Corner

# Development principles

The Development Opportunities section on page 16 outlines 5 opportunities where potential exists for substantial investment/development/redevelopment. Elsewhere, ongoing investment in the town centre is encouraged. The following development principles set out a co-ordinated approach to how best this can be achieved.

## Growth

Northfield town centre benefits from a diverse mix of uses including shops, community facilities, work and leisure opportunities, and religious establishments. A mix of complementary uses enhances the vibrancy and vitality of this important local centre. Mixed uses can reduce the need for people to drive, help support a good range of services, increase natural surveillance day and night, and allow an area to adapt to market conditions. Therefore, within each site, new development should also contain a mix of uses.

Consideration should be given to subdividing sites into narrower development plots to encourage more activity and diversity. A vertical mix of uses will be encouraged where appropriate, such as leisure or retail on the

ground floor, and residential and/or offices at upper floors. Development along Sir Herbert Austin Way needs to feel like an extension to the town centre.

## Shops and offices

A number of sites are within the primary shopping area and new development on these sites should include convenience and non-food comparison retailing, and new larger retail units at ground floor level.

As a District Centre identified in the 2013 Pre-submission Draft Birmingham Development Plan, the amount of comparison retail and office floor space growth should be appropriate to the size and function of the centre but should not normally exceed 5,000sq.m gross in either case.

## Leisure

There is scope to encourage higher quality, family orientated restaurants, coffee houses and cafés, which would help to bolster the diversity of the centre during the day and generate evening activity.

## Other uses

Tourism, cultural, community/health, and residential development are all appropriate uses for town centres. At upper floor levels, appropriate uses will include residential and offices.

## Transport and connectivity

It is important to ensure that new development is well connected to the existing streets and public spaces in Northfield town centre, and that it is easily accessible from surrounding residential areas.

Commercial developments are more likely to flourish on main movement routes. Currently there are few routes between Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way, and Sir Herbert Austin Way feels remote from the activity in the main shopping area. It is acknowledged that Sir Herbert Austin Way forms part of Birmingham's Strategic Highway Network with a purpose to effectively and efficiently distribute traffic along this key transport corridor. This function of the road must be retained when development options are considered. However, the opportunity to improve crossing of this road for pedestrians and cyclists should be considered. Development of the opportunity sites will need to incorporate



Northfield Baths

new safe, direct, legible, well overlooked and well lit routes, and to improve existing ones.

### Highways

The LSTF (Local Sustainable Transport Fund) scheme contains highway improvements around the Black Horse/Great Stone Road junction and along the A38 to the south of Northfield. The proposals to be implemented before 2015 include installation of cycle parking facilities, optimisation of traffic signals along the relief road and at either end of the local centre, surface treatment 'gateway' features at either end of local centre, signage to/from the railway station and a 20mph speed limit within the local centre and adjoining side roads.

In addition to the current schemes there is scope to reduce the carriageway and widen the footways at the Bristol Road/Bell Lane/Church Road junction, which could open the opportunity for much better pedestrian environment. There may be scope to include a pedestrian diagonal crossing across the junction, linking the Northfield Shopping Centre to the west side of the road in line with the relatively high pedestrian desire line for this movement.

### Parking

Parking provision in Northfield is varied, ranging from short stay on-street parking throughout the town centre, through a number of smaller City Council operated car parks, to several large privately operated car parks including Sainsbury's, Aldi and Northfield Shopping Centre.

Development opportunities which would cause the loss of off-street parking will be considered on their merits. Some replacement provision should be provided on site. Adequate and safe servicing arrangements will also be required.

New development proposals should consider provision for electric vehicles.

### Cycling

For many people cycling is becoming a preferred mode of transport and is ideal for short journeys. Cycling is a major policy direction within the Birmingham Mobility Action Plan (BMAP), Local Transport Plan and many other policy documents. In addition, as well as the current Local Sustainable Transport Fund, the City Council has launched the Birmingham Cycle Revolution. This project has an overall investment package worth £24.3m, including £17m of government funding. It aims to make cycling a mainstream form of transport over the next 20 years, with a target of 5% of all trips in the City to be made by bike by 2023 and to double this to 10% by 2033.

As a result, there is considerable scope for improving cycling provision and activity, from the inclusion of facilities for cycle storage in new developments, to physical improvements to cycle routes, including providing dedicated highway space for cyclists and enhanced destination signposting. New development proposals should include facilities for cycle storage. For example, from the north of the Northfield

area in particular the access from Manor Park, the proposed Merritts Brook Greenway, the Bournville Valley Parkway and Victoria Common all provide excellent access routes, but they need improved 'on-road' and 'off-road' provision to be better used and realise their potential. Likewise, from the west and south the River Rea National Cycle Route passes Northfield rail station and could be better connected to the Northfield Centre.

In addition to these aspirations, there are a number of initiatives which will support the growth of cycling as a means of sustainable local transport, such as:

- The LSTF project: improving cycle routes along the Bristol Road Corridor to facilitating better journeys from Longbridge and Selly Oak, as well as other local journeys.
- Cycle South Brum: a local partnership project based in Northfield, which facilitates cycle loans, training and maintenance, assisted by £50,000 of People's Millions ITV/Lottery funding.

This type of cycle provision should be expanded and in the future the Northfield Local Centre could accommodate a mini-cycle hub.

### Pedestrians

There have already been significant improvements to the public realm, and this has already encouraged more people to walk and cycle, thereby reducing car use. Improved connections will also assist with access to public transport.

Development of the opportunity sites will need to incorporate new safe, direct, legible, well overlooked and well lit routes. Improvements to existing routes are also needed. In particular, links to Victoria Common from the town centre are poor at the moment and any development proposals will need to address this. Funding to improve public rights of way in the area should also be sought.

#### Public transport: Bus travel

Improvements to the bus stops and interchange area just south of the junction of Bristol Road South/Church Road/Bell Lane would be desirable. Consideration should be given to allow bus operators to terminate and layover services in the high street area. This would help improve public transport reliability and interchange opportunities.

#### Servicing

New developments must consider how new businesses will receive deliveries without causing congestion for other road users. In addition, the positioning of a dedicated taxi rank should also be considered in order to accommodate this important mode of transport.

#### Sustainability

##### Re-using and retro-fitting

Re-using existing buildings avoids the energy and resource depletion associated with providing a new building. Consideration should be given to re-using and retro-fitting existing buildings if possible, particularly where they contribute positively to local character, for instance 5 and 7 Bell Lane, vacant Grade II listed buildings.

#### Building for the future

Where possible, new buildings should be designed to be robust and adaptable to meet changing requirements. New development should achieve high levels of thermal insulation, reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions through the use of renewable energy, provide water conservation measures, include good recycling provision, optimise sustainable urban drainage, maximise the use of sustainable materials, use low energy systems, and source labour and materials locally. New residential development should meet Code for Sustainable Homes level three at the minimum, and commercial developments at least BREEAM 'very good' standard. Sustainable waste management should be incorporated from the beginning of development through sustainable demolition and construction techniques and the recycling of building waste. Properties should have good recycling provision and district based waste management schemes are encouraged.

#### Sustainable living

New housing should include a mix of housing tenure, types and sizes. In Northfield town centre a relatively high density of development, of the equivalent of 50 dwellings per hectare will be encouraged. More people living locally will help to support local facilities and shops.

#### Digital infrastructure

Developers will be encouraged to include the necessary physical infrastructure to accommodate open access information and digital communications (ICT) networks (i.e. available to competing service providers) as an integral part of all appropriate new developments.



Prices Square

## Design and historic environment

### Historic environment and landscape characterisation

The form a development takes will depend on its context, character, assets and constraints of the site. Development within the existing built up area will be expected to reuse land, buildings and spaces to best effect within a modern context. Further understanding of the context within which new development will take place will be provided by the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study which the City Council is undertaking in conjunction with English Heritage.

Archaeological remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date were found in archaeological observations during construction of Sir Herbert Austin Way and in archaeological excavations required as conditions of planning permission for development west of Sir Herbert Austin Way (the Sainsbury's petrol station). It is likely that these remains extend to the east of Sir Herbert Austin Way as well, therefore archaeological work is likely to be required as part of development on Opportunity Sites B, D and E.

### Scale, massing and enclosure

The scale, massing and type of buildings should reflect local context. The aim should be to create a coherent, legible urban form with a strong sense of place. Design considerations will include existing site features and buildings, the scale of streets, topography and views. Development must accord with the principles of good urban design as set out in 'Places for All' and other Council policy.

The predominant building height along Bristol Road South is of 2-3 storey buildings, however the south/east side of the high street has a more coherent character than the north/west. Along the south east side there is a consistent building line, close to or at back of footway, and a fairly consistent shop front width with frequent front doors and shop windows. New

development along the north west side of the high street should be of a similar scale and rhythm, and build on this positive traditional high street character.

Development along Sir Herbert Austin Way could be of a larger scale and up 4 to 5 storeys in height, reflecting the scale of the road; however taller elements may be appropriate in some locations, particularly at key corners and on approaches to the centre. Buildings should generally be positioned at back of footway, address the road, and parking should not dominate the street scene.

Prominent corners should be built positively to enhance legibility, and to provide enclosure, definition and architectural interest. Taller elements may be appropriate at key corners and gateways. Particularly important will be the treatment of the two major junctions of Herbert Austin Way and Bristol Road South, to signal the approach to each end of the main shopping area and enhance the identity of the place.

### Considering local character

The setting of retained buildings should be respected and complemented, including the Grade II listed 5 and 7 Bell Lane. Where buildings are retained, for instance, the Northfield Shopping Centre, development should secure improvements to their design and appearance.

### Attractive streets and public spaces

Buildings should have active frontages (doors, windows and clear glazing) facing existing and new streets and public spaces, generating activity and natural surveillance that promotes public safety. Long runs of blank wall will not be supported. The main access to buildings should be from the public realm. Active frontages are particularly important along the high street and new development on Sir Herbert Austin Way.

New public spaces need to be well located, well overlooked by adjacent buildings with front doors opening onto the space, and have the potential to accommodate a variety of activities. They should be accessible 24 hours a day. Good public space has the potential to enhance the image of Northfield and the design should draw on the local context.

Architecture, detailing and materials should be of a high standard that reinforces the positive aspects of Northfield's character and contributes to a strong sense of place. 'Standard', bland buildings that fail to respond to the local context will not be acceptable.

### Parking and servicing

Parking and servicing should not dominate developments. Whilst redevelopment may require the loss of some surface car parking, it may be difficult to replace all of what is lost within more intensively developed sites. The need for parking on each opportunity site will need to be assessed, and proposals considered on their own merits; the amount, location and design will have to be considered and impacts minimised. Surface car parking in front of buildings will not be acceptable. There may be the opportunity to review the use of existing parking and to encourage it to be used more efficiently. Development should take the opportunity to rationalise or improve existing servicing arrangements.

### Hard and soft landscape

New development proposals should include for further environmental enhancements within the town centre such as high quality street furniture, paving, tree planting and public art.

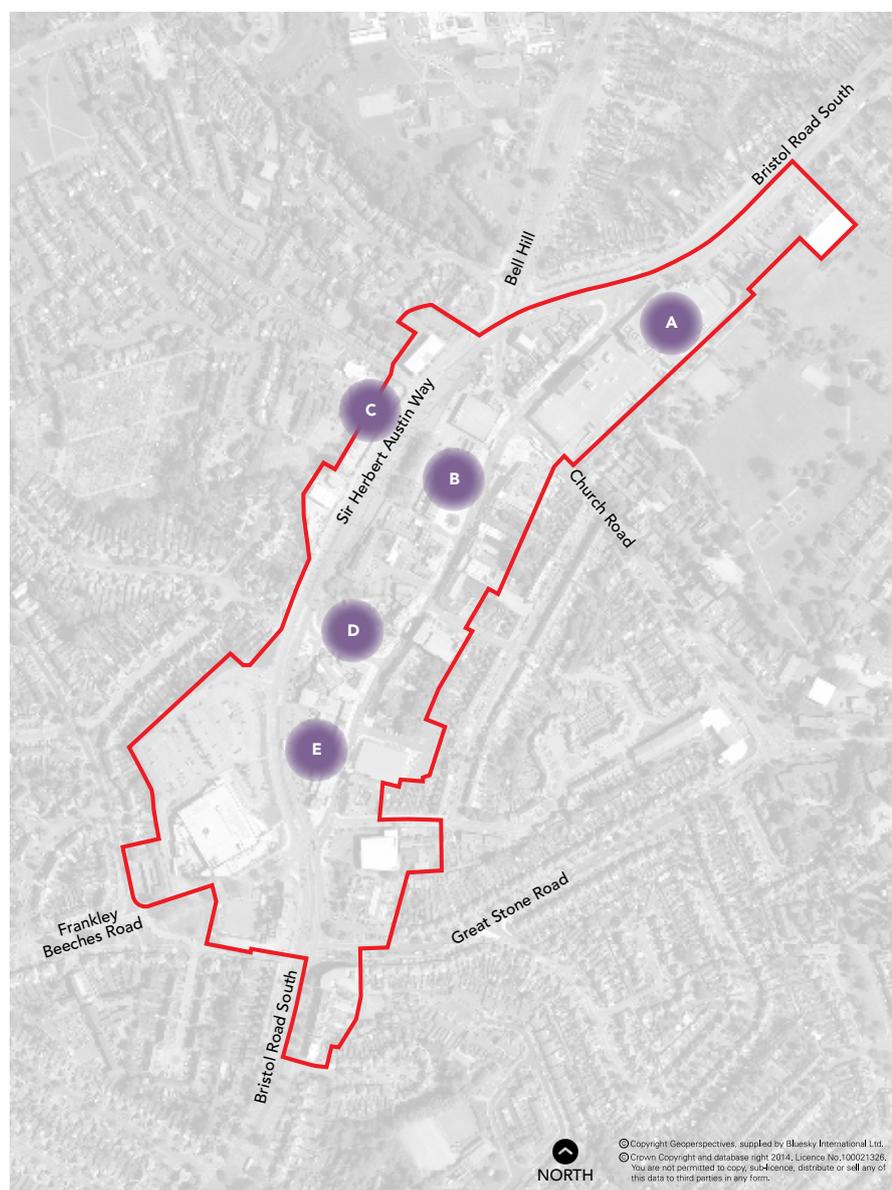
# Development opportunities

There is scope for considerable investment in Northfield. Sites totalling around 3ha offer opportunities for development on the western side of Bristol Road South and adjacent to the new road (see below), with additional opportunities in and around Northfield Shopping Centre. These could be developed individually, however more comprehensive redevelopment of several adjoining sites would be particularly welcome.

The centre provides opportunities for more shopping, services, leisure uses, the expansion of office space and other town centre uses. The potential of various development opportunity sites is examined below. However, this is not an exhaustive list and other potential

developments may emerge in time, for example small scale redevelopment on the eastern side of Bristol Road South.

Relevant policies are listed in Appendix 1.



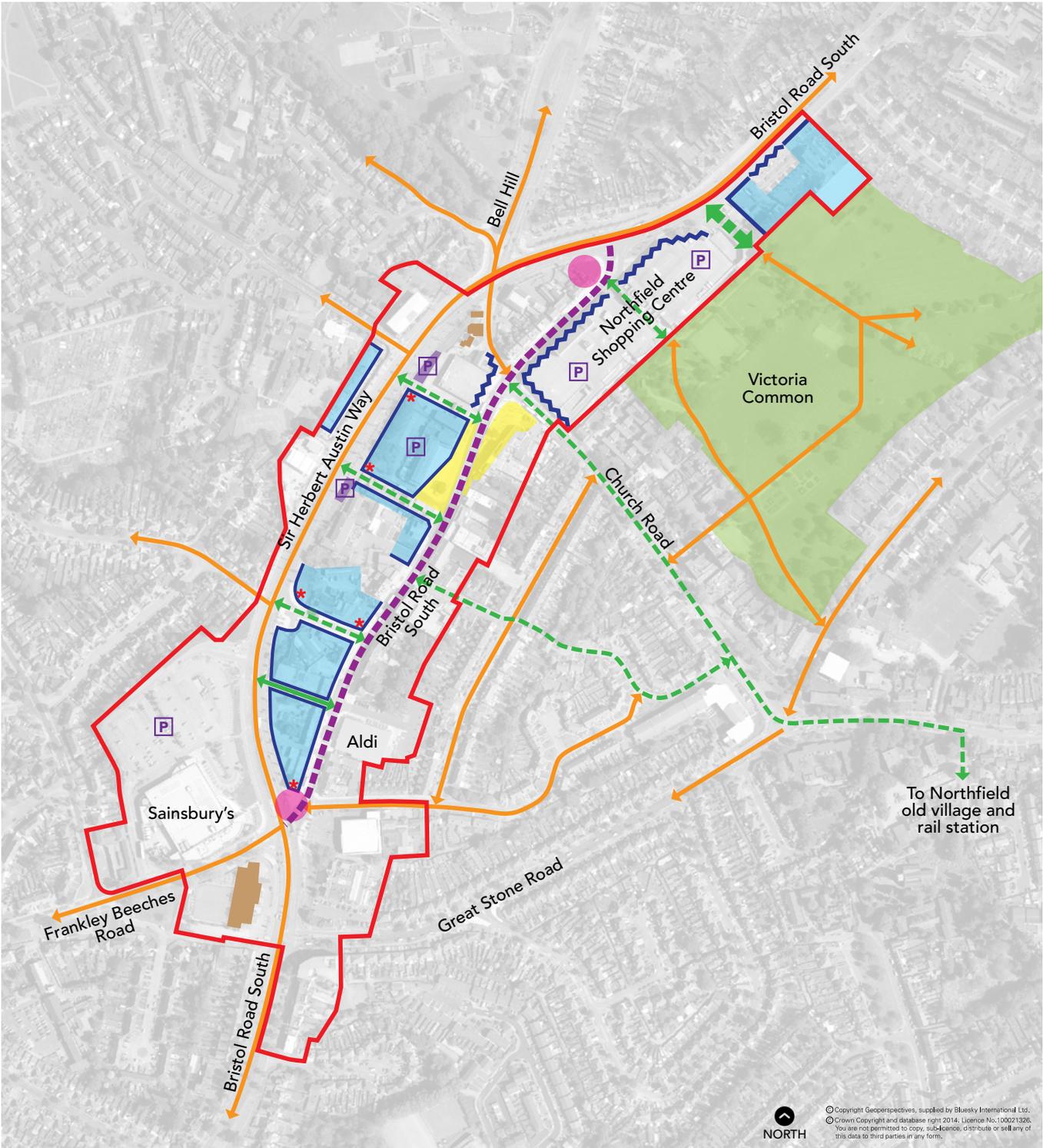
**Plan 3** Regeneration Framework opportunities

**KEY (Plan 3)**

- Framework boundary
- Development opportunity sites

**KEY (Plan 4)**

- Framework boundary
- - - High street - continued investment
- ← Existing walking route
- ← New local walking route
- ← Improved connection to Victoria Common
- - - Improved walking route
- New/improved public spaces
- Gateway feature
- ~ Improved building frontage
- New active frontage
- Development/building opportunity
- \* Landmark corner (to 5 storeys)
- Listed buildings - retained with new uses
- P Parking - improved
- Improvements to Victoria Common



Plan 4 Key proposals/opportunities

**Opportunity A**

Northfield Shopping Centre and land to the north.

Built in the 1960's and formerly known as the Grosvenor Centre, it hosts over 40 retailers including well known high street stores. The Centre's own car park provides over 600 spaces. By far the largest building in Northfield, it occupies a focal point position at the centre's northern gateway. However, its external appearance and provision is somewhat dated, reflecting a building 'of its time'. It is an inward looking building, with retail frontages addressing internal streets. Whilst some retail units face onto Church Road, the Bristol Road South and Victoria Common, elevations are largely blank and inactive, with two entrances on Bristol Road South. Similarly, the frontage to Victoria Common is very poor, with an entrance onto the park which is not overlooked, and blank service area and car park walls. To the north of the shopping centre, there is an insufficiently signed, poorly overlooked and indirect route to the park.

In terms of retail floor space and parking provision, the centre is the key to Northfield's viability, as many familiar high street retailers are located here. There is known demand for additional retail floor space in Northfield but the Northfield Shopping Centre cannot physically meet the size, shape and frontage sought by retailers. The Centre is keen to explore how it can offer more attractive facilities which meet today's retail requirements.

The area to the north is occupied by a mixture of uses, including the motor trade, a row of small shops occupied by independent retailers and industrial units which are set back from the street. This area feels disconnected from the rest of the town centre. Another area owned by the City Council has recently been used as a staff car park by the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital.

**Potential**
**Northfield Shopping Centre**

In the short to medium term, there may be potential to reconfigure parts of the centre, and/or extend it so that Northfield's retail and business offer can be improved. In the longer term, redevelopment will be encouraged to provide better retail led mixed use development to meet demands of retailers within a modern complex. It will also be desirable to 'facelift' the exterior, providing attractive facades to Bristol Road South and Church Road.

In the long term, redevelopment of the Northfield Shopping Centre would create the opportunity to provide a new visible and clearly defined, direct and well overlooked pedestrian route to Victoria Common from Bristol Road South, in the location of the current entrance from the shopping centre. This would improve links for pedestrians approaching the town centre from the south east. Redevelopment of the Northfield Shopping Centre site could also provide a much improved, active frontage to Victoria Common, as well as Bristol Road South.

**Development principles**

- Where levels and practicalities allow, additional shop fronts to be incorporated into blank elevations to increase active frontage.
- Improvements to the external appearance of the shopping centre building, ramps and walls on Bristol Road South, Church Street and Victoria Common elevations.
- An improved route to the park through the shopping centre, with better signage on Bristol Road South.

- Improved and more welcoming entrances to the shopping centre, particularly from Victoria Common and along Bristol Road South.

**Facts**

Area - approximately 2ha.

Current uses - retail.

Owners - private sector.

Constraints - internal layout, external appearance, service access, surrounding land uses.

Priority - short/medium term.

Delivery - private sector and potential public sector input.

**Site to the north of the shopping centre**

The adjacent area could offer the potential for an additional retail or mixed use development, either as a 'stand-alone' proposal or as part of a larger scheme in partnership with Northfield Shopping Centre. Any proposals must relate well to the existing shopping centre, its parking provision and improve its accesses.

- Any development should include provision of a wider, direct, lit and overlooked route to Victoria Common.
- Provision of an active frontage with clear glazing and doors facing onto Bristol Road South.
- Development of a high quality of design, respecting the scale, massing and grain of the existing buildings.
- It will also be essential to ensure that any affected business interests are relocated as part of any proposals, to ensure that valuable jobs and services are retained in Northfield.

### Facts

Area - approximately 0.7ha.

Current uses - small retail, business, leisure, parking and motor trade.

Owners - private sector and BCC.

Constraints - multiple ownerships, site assembly, access to park.

Priority - short to medium term.

Delivery - private sector with public sector input and interest as landowner.



### KEY

	Existing buildings to be incorporated into new development		New active frontage (windows/doors) to shopping centre where possible
	Existing walking route		Strong active frontage to new development
	Improved connection through shopping centre		Existing shopping centre entrance
	Improved, wider, direct, overlooked route to park		Improvements to entrance
	Existing park walking route		Development opportunity north of shopping centre

### Plan 5 Development design principles (short to medium term)

## Opportunity B

Prices Square and land off Bell Lane.

This location presents a significant opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment in the longer term. It comprises a City Council owned 1960s public square surrounded by shop units, with flats and offices above. Behind this, and fronting Sir Herbert Austin Way, is a City Council owned public car park. Royal Mail currently occupies the adjacent site to the south and a variety of single storey retail units lie to the north. The northern corner of the site contains a number of older buildings and yards including No.7 Bell Lane, a vacant Grade II Listed Building, currently regarded as being 'at risk'.

Whilst Prices Square is an important venue for events and activities, and there have been some recent improvements to the public realm, when not in use it can have a rather bleak and open character. Retail units are set well back from the street, benefiting less from passing trade along the high street. The Bell Shopping centre lacks character and design quality, and addresses the key corner of Bristol Road South and Bell Lane weakly. The wide service access, and exposed backs provide a poor image and environment for pedestrians, and a negative setting for the listed buildings. Sir Herbert Austin Way feels remote, with pedestrian links either narrow and not overlooked, or terminating in dead ends, service areas and car parks.

### Potential

This is another prominent site in an attractive location in the heart of the town centre and would provide a catalyst for regeneration of the centre. It could be redeveloped to provide new retail units and other uses appropriate to town centres, such as leisure, office, cultural, and community uses. Offices and residential will also be acceptable on upper floors. This area provides

an opportunity for cafes and restaurants with outdoor seating areas fronting onto new public spaces.

A quality landmark design of up to 5/6 storeys would improve the built environment in this location with offices/residential uses at upper levels.

The opportunity to provide shop frontage on the high street and the relief road would bring transformational change in Northfield, both in terms of the town's appearance and its ability to attract more retailers. There would be potential to improve the existing space at Prices Square and/or create a new public space or plaza within the development with 24 hour access. Safe, attractive new pedestrian routes to be provided between the relief road and the high street.

Existing public parking within the site should be replaced as part of the development.

Renovation of the group of distinctive listed buildings will be welcome, as these are one of the few remaining traditional historic elements of Northfield. Potential uses such as retail, leisure, office, cultural, community and residential would be appropriate, subject to respecting the heritage assets of the site.

### Development principles

- A retail led mixed use development with active uses (retail, cultural, community) on ground floor, with the potential for offices or residential to upper floors. Cafés and restaurants would be suitable around the square.
- Improved, direct, legible pedestrian connections linking Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way.

- Perimeter block development with primary frontages to Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way and secondary active frontages to roads linking the major routes.
- An enhanced Prices Square, with an adjusted building line creating a better alignment for the shops, but ensuring that it remains large enough for activities and events.
- The redesigned Prices Square must reinforce the character of the town centre and contribute to a strong sense of place. Planting, detailing and materials should be of a high standard.
- Opportunity for Prices Square and Tays Corner to be combined as one co-ordinated open space at the heart of the town centre.
- Retention of important trees.
- South of Prices Square, an adjusted building line along Bristol Road South to increase the width of pavement for pedestrians.
- New uses to be found for the listed buildings on the corner of Bell Lane and Sir Herbert Austin Way, with an improved setting provided as part of development.
- Redevelopment of the end unit of The Bell shopping centre, to provide a better quality character and frontage, better address the corner and Bell Lane, and improve the setting of the listed buildings.
- 2 to 3 storeys along Bristol Road South and pedestrian links, with up to 4 or 5 on Sir Herbert Austin Way. Additional height may be acceptable on corners.
- Along Sir Herbert Austin Way, development should have a town centre character and grain.

**Facts**

Area - approximately 1.65ha.

Current Uses - retail, offices, upper floor residential, parking, service access, some vacant buildings.

Owners - private sector and BCC.

Constraints - multiple ownerships, site assembly, Listed Buildings.

Priority - short to medium term.  
 Re-use of Listed Buildings - short to medium term.

Delivery - private sector with public sector input and interest as landowner.



**KEY**

- Listed buildings - setting to be improved and uses identified
- Improvements to unattractive elevation
- Potential for restricted parking
- Perimeter block development active frontages to public realm
- Primary frontage
- Secondary frontage
- Pedestrian public realm
- Improved walking routes
- Existing walking route
- Trees to be retained
- Potential landmark corners
- Prices Square/Tays Corner combined open space
- Possible building entrances

**Plan 6** Development design principles (short to medium term)

## Opportunity C

Land adjacent to Sir Herbert Austin Way.

### Potential

This site has a prominent frontage to Sir Herbert Austin Way but is long and narrow restricting the possible form of development. It has a long boundary to Bellfield School which needs to be treated sensitively. Provision of parking on the site will be a particular challenge, and any proposals should include well designed elevations to deliver a distinctive landmark. Planning permission has been granted for offices on this site.

### Development principles

- Retention of the large mature Oak tree on the boundary with the school to the south of the site. Development to avoid the root protection area and canopy of this tree and to be set back from it accordingly.
- Screen planting and acoustic fencing may be necessary along the boundary to protect the privacy and amenity of the school.
- Potential uses to be B1 offices, carefully designed C3 residential development, A3 restaurant, or A3/A5 restaurant with ancillary takeaway.
- Active frontages to Sir Herbert Austin Way, Vineyard Road and the pedestrian route.
- A strong continuous building line to be provided along Sir Herbert Austin Way.
- The building line along Vineyard Road should be no further forward than the school.
- The building line facing the pedestrian route to Hilary Grove to be set back from the boundary, to create a sense of openness along the route, increase forward visibility, and prevent it feeling too cramped.

### Facts

Area - 0.24ha.

Current uses - vacant site.

Owners - private sector.

Priority - short term.

Delivery - private sector.



**KEY**

-  Existing mature oak tree to be retained and protected
  -  Screen planting/acoustic fence along school boundary
  -  Landscape setting along frontage
  -  New build offices or residential - active frontage on Bristol Road
-  Respect building line along Vineyard Road
  -  Potential office entrance location
  -  Existing walking route

**Plan 7** Development design principles (short to medium term)

## SOUTHERN GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY SITES

### Opportunity D

Land north of Lockwood Road.

This site has 3 frontages in a central location: to Sir Herbert Austin Way, Bristol Road South and Lockwood Road. It is currently occupied by a mix of retail units, a bank, small businesses and short-stay car park, together with a remnant of land resulting from the construction of Sir Herbert Austin Way. Adjoining the site, to the north, lies Northfield Baptist Church and Ash Grove, a care home for the elderly and small business units connected with the motor trade.

The short stay car park on the corner of Lockwood Road is a poor use of this prominent corner, and the shops set back behind this car park consequently have a weak relationship to the street. Lockwood Road is a well used route for pedestrians and the bus stops are often busy, but its character needs improving.

#### Potential

There is potential for an additional retail-led development, with scope for other town centre uses such as residential or offices above. Development should provide frontages to both Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way, and an appropriate treatment to Lockwood Road which is a key pedestrian route to the centre.

#### Development principles

- Retail uses would be most appropriate along the high street, with offices or residential above. Commercial or office uses would be welcomed along Sir Herbert Austin Way.
- A strong and active primary frontage to Bristol Road South, following the established building line at back of pavement.

- A strong active frontage to Sir Herbert Austin Way, with entrances and clear glazing. Development to be at back of pavement to create an urban/town centre character.
- Potential for a landmark corner at the junction of Sir Herbert Austin Way and Lockwood Road.
- A secondary active frontage to Lockwood Road. An improved waiting area for bus passengers, including additional tree planting where underground services allow.
- 2 to 3 storeys along Bristol Road South and Lockwood Road, with up to 4 or 5 on Sir Herbert Austin Way. Additional height may be acceptable on corners.

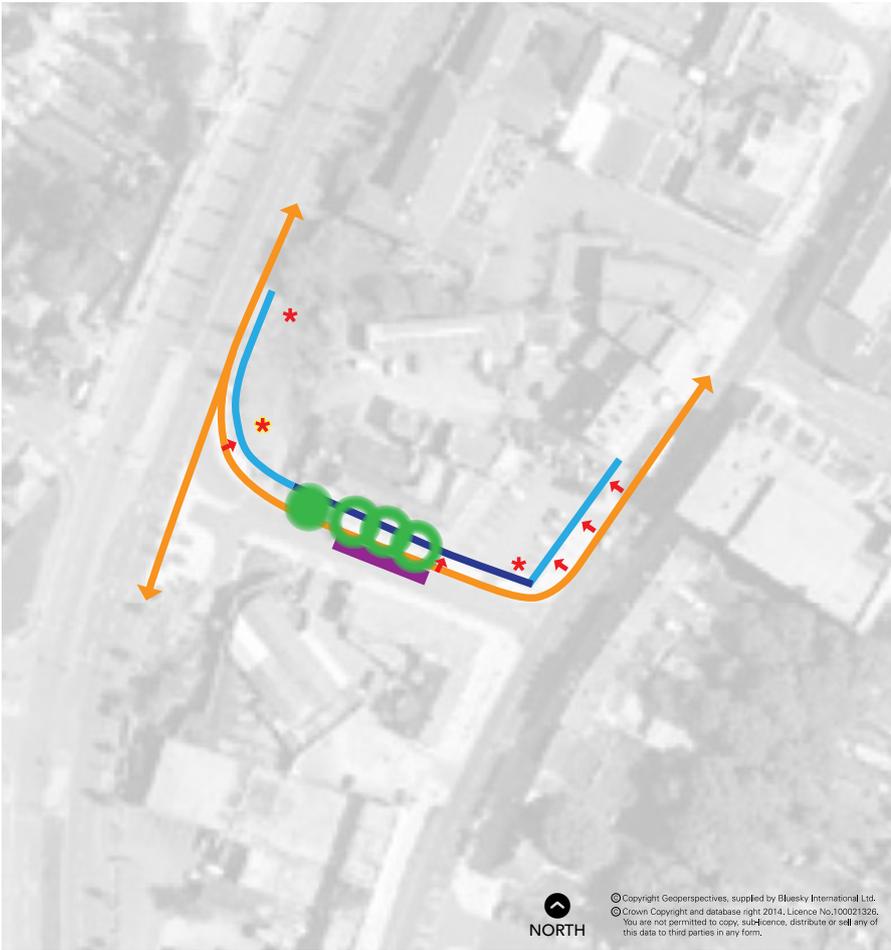
#### Facts

Area - approximately 0.3ha.

Current uses - retail, service yards, parking, motor trade, banking, vacant land.

Owners - private sector and BCC.

Priority - medium term.



**KEY**

- Existing walking route
  - New building - mixed use development - primary frontage and active elevation
  - New building - secondary frontage active elevation
  - Potential landmark corner - up to 5 storeys
- Potential architectural feature/ interest
  - Potential entrance
  - Existing tree retained
  - Proposed trees
  - Improvements to bus stand and waiting area

**Plan 8** Development design principles (short to medium term)

**Opportunity E**

Land between Bristol Road South/Sir Herbert Austin Way, south of Lockwood Road.

This triangular location occupies a prominent site visible from south of the A38 at the southern gateway to the centre opposite the Sainsbury's store.

The Black Horse Junction is a key gateway to Northfield town centre. Whilst the Black Horse public house (located to the south) is a local landmark, the architecture on the corner of Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way is undistinguished, and represents a weak gateway into the local centre.

The site contains no direct pedestrian links between Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way and this lack of permeability increases the sense of disconnection between the two.

**Potential**

Proposals which secure the comprehensive redevelopment of this area will be welcome, provided they create a high-quality landmark development. Main town centre uses led by retail, and other uses such as leisure, office, cultural, community and residential development would be appropriate.

The primary frontage should face onto Bristol Road South, with an additional active frontage to Sir Herbert Austin Way.

**Development principles**

- A mix of uses will be appropriate, with predominantly retail along Bristol Road South.
- Development along Bristol Road South to follow the traditional building line at back of footway, to maintain a town centre character with a strong frontage.

- Redevelopment should include a retail frontage along Bristol Road South with a high street grain and rhythm, frequent front doors and clear glazing.
- Development along Sir Herbert Austin Way should have a town centre character, with a strong active frontage. Building line to follow the back of pavement.
- 2 to 3 storeys along Bristol Road South and pedestrian links, with up to four or five on Sir Herbert Austin Way. Additional height may be acceptable on corners.
- A new, direct and overlooked pedestrian route between Bristol Road South and Sir Herbert Austin Way, linking to the pedestrian crossing and entrance to the superstore.



**KEY**

- ← Existing walking route
- ← New pedestrian link
- New building - mixed use development - primary frontage and active elevation
- New building - secondary frontage active elevation
- \* Potential landmark corner - up to 5 storeys
- \* Potential architectural feature/interest
- ← Potential entrance
- Existing crossing

**Plan 9** Development design principles (short to medium term)

- Potential for a prominent building entrance at the corner of Lockwood Road and Sir Herbert Austin Way.
- A greater sense of place is needed at the Black Horse Junction, to signal the approach to the town centre. Development presents the opportunity to create a greater sense of enclosure, definition and architectural interest, possibly with a landmark building at the corner.

#### Facts

Area - approximately 0.9ha.

Current uses - retail, some residential on upper floors, service yards.

Owners - private sector.

Constraints - multiple ownerships, site assembly.

Priority - medium to long term.

Delivery - private sector with public sector input.

Environmental improvements and other measures to regenerate the centre:

#### 1. Victoria Common Park

Victoria Common Park is regarded as an important resource in Northfield, providing essential open space. Its facilities include space for football, multi-use games and children's play areas. The park provides a well-used pedestrian route from the adjoining residential area to the town centre.

#### Potential

Investment could give better association with the town centre and clear paths and access would help to secure this park as a valuable green resource for the town. The park entrance to the shopping centre could also be opened out to improve accessibility to the high street.

#### 2. Tays Corner/Prices Square

These are situated in the main high street opposite the Northfield Shopping Centre on Church Road. It was remodelled as part of the £1.8m environmental enhancement works undertaken in 2008.

#### Potential

Further improvements to enhance this key focal point for the high street - with potential for market stalls and a multi-use area for one-off events with seating and public art.

#### 3. General improvements

Environmental improvements to car parks, landscaping works at town centre gateways, improved pedestrian routes to, from and through the centre and the station.

#### 4. Other measures to promote the centre

Support for initiatives to further develop a unique identity for Northfield, e.g. street markets and events.

Support for key stakeholders in delivering regeneration including the Town Centre Partnership, BID company and town centre management.

# Delivery

The Northfield Regeneration Strategy encompasses:

- Working in partnership.
- Supporting the planning application process.
- Supporting site assembly.
- Setting priorities and securing development funding.
- Ensuring development quality and infrastructure through the statutory planning process.

## Working in partnership

Key to the success of the area will be to ensure that development is delivered in a coherent way that contributes to a sustainable future for the south of Birmingham. The public sector is a major landowner in Northfield and will have a role to play in bringing forward development. The City Council will also work with the private sector landowners and developers to bring forward development opportunities. The role of other stakeholders including the Town Centre Partnership, BID and local community are also crucial to securing the sustainable regeneration of Northfield.

We will achieve this by:

- Working with the community to ensure that development meets local needs as well as delivering wider benefits for the City, all in accordance with the localism agenda.
- Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and its partners to link the Strategy to the objectives and implementation framework of the LEP.
- Contributing to the assembly of land into viable development sites, including the use of compulsory purchase orders where appropriate.

- Each development will be challenged to deliver economic and social benefits as well as built infrastructure.

The City Council's Employment Access Team has a key role in co-ordinating resources to create job opportunities in Northfield.

## Pre-application advice

The Council encourages developers to seek pre-application advice at an early stage. This helps to streamline the planning process and ensures that consistent advice is given to potential investors.

The pre-application process also includes input from specialist officers who can advise on conservation, urban design, archaeology and transportation issues. An easy-to-use online facility for these enquiries is available on our website at:

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/preappadvice](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/preappadvice) or by telephoning Planning Enquiries on (0121) 303 1115.

## Planning applications

Every effort will be made to process planning applications within the City Council's target timescales. Applications are required to be assessed in accordance with material considerations, including statutory planning policies, and the current policy context for Northfield.

To ensure high standards of architecture, landscape and urban design, the City Council's Design Review Panel will assess development proposals both early in the design process and at planning application stage.

## Site assembly and impacts on existing businesses

Multiple ownerships can prevent progress in developing part or all of a site. The City Council can use its Compulsory Purchase Order powers, where appropriate, to facilitate the implementation of redevelopment proposals.

Wherever possible and appropriate it will be important to ensure that affected business interests are relocated as part of any proposals to ensure that valuable businesses jobs and services are retained in Northfield.

## Site investigation/reclamation

If contamination or site condition is a problem, we will work with developers to put together an appropriate package for remedial action where funding is available.

## Securing infrastructure

Where appropriate, Planning Obligations or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be required from developers towards the provision of infrastructure and

services. This may be for on-site or off-site facilities, or in the form of contributions to a fund for larger scale projects within the area, such as:

- Physical infrastructure including, new and improved highways connections.
- Environmental facilities such as additional public realm improvements.
- Public transport.
- Neighbourhood energy generation.
- Training and employment.
- Digital communications and information.
- Business support.

Where proposals include residential accommodation, contributions relating to affordable housing, education, open space and play areas may also be sought.



**Waheed Nazir**  
Director of Planning and  
Regeneration

## Delivery table

OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	TIMESCALE/TERM	BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES
Northfield Shopping Centre and land to the north	Refurbishment/reconfiguration and potential for additional retail and mixed uses. External improvements.	Short/medium term.	Improved retail offer and better external appearance.	1, 2, 3, 4, 7.
Bell Lane	Renovation.	Short term.	Re-use of disused historic buildings.	3, 4, 7, 8.
Prices Square	Comprehensive redevelopment with new retail units and other uses - offices/residential and new public space.	Long term.	Realisation of major development opportunity.	All.
Land between Bristol Road South/Sir Herbert Austin Way, south of Lockwood Road	Potential landmark redevelopment site.	Medium to long term.	Realisation of development opportunity.	All.
Land adjacent to Sir Herbert Austin Way	New office development.	Short term.	Re-use of vacant site in a sustainable location near to the centre.	1, 2, 4, 6, 7.
Land north of Lockwood Road	Retail or commercial office development including parking.	Medium term.	Consolidation and improvement of existing site.	2, 4, 7, 8.
Victoria Common Park	Improved access and recreation facilities.	Short/medium term.	Safer, better access to improved recreation facilities.	4, 5, 7, 8.
Tays Corner	Further improvements.	Ongoing.	Improved environment.	5, 7.
Other improvements	Enhancements to car parking, landscaping, gateways, signage etc.	Short/medium term.	Improved environment.	All.

# Appendix 1

## Policy context

### **National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.**

Paragraphs 23-27 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres).

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

### **Birmingham Unitary Development Plan, 2005 (saved 2008).**

Including paragraphs 7.21-7.26 (Other centres) and 19.16-19.18 (Northfield).

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/udp](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/udp)

### **Pre-submission Draft Birmingham Development Plan, 2013.**

Policy TP12 (Historic environment).

Policy TP20 (Network and hierarchy of centres).

Policy TP21 (Convenience retail provision).

Policy TP22 (Small shops and independent retailing).

Policy TP24 (Promotion of diversity of uses within centres).

Policy TP25 (Local employment).

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/plan2031](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/plan2031)

### **Northfield Local Action Plan, 2000.**

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/area](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/area)

### **Shopping and Local Centres SPD, 2012.**

The Shopping and Local Centres SPD identifies the Northfield District Centre boundary and within this, the Primary Shopping Area.

Policies 1-5 and accompanying text apply. Within Northfield Town Centre, this means a minimum threshold of 55% of units in A1 use, and no more than 10% of units within the centre or frontage to consist of A5 hot food takeaways. Also, the general consideration that; "Health issues have also been recognised as a material consideration in considering planning applications for development and change of use."

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/spdlocalcentres](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/spdlocalcentres)

### **Archaeology Strategy SPG, 2003.**

In particular Section 5 and Appendix 5.

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/citywide](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/citywide)

### **'Regeneration Through Conservation' - Birmingham Conservation Strategy SPG, 1999.**

In particular "Sustainable development and the historic environment."

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/citywide](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicy/citywide)





