

Fleetwood Masterplan



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1. INTRODUCTION & BASELINE

Wyre Borough Council has commissioned King Sturge and URBED to undertake a masterplan for Fleetwood. This thinkpiece is a consultation document on the draft Masterplan and provides a summary of the analysis taken and ideas for regeneration. It comprises a baseline review, identification of key issues, a spatial framework for the town and three Area Frameworks for Lord Street, the Waterfront and South Docks.

Townscape & Urban Design

- 1.1 Fleetwood is a historic planned town conceived in the early nineteenth century and named after its founder, Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood. The eminent architect Decimus Burton was commissioned to design and supervise construction of the new town, which was to function as a flourishing holiday resort and as a seaport for cargo and passengers. Fleetwood has retained much of its nineteenth century fabric with the origins of the planned town still visible in the layout of streets and spaces.
- 1.2 In general the urban structure is robust. The traditional network of streets is largely continuous and uninterrupted. The oldest buildings of the town are situated around the Waterfront where the town originated. Some of the town's earliest and finest buildings remain such as the North Euston Hotel, Queen's Terrace and Fleetwood Museum. Fleetwood also retains its character as a seaside resort with buildings and areas such as the Marine Hall Gardens, Fleetwood Pier, golf courses and the bowling greens

providing such character. Weak areas of townscape are concentrated around the periphery where most change has occurred over time, particularly along Dock Street, the ASDA store and Freeport, areas poorly integrated with the traditional town centre.

People

- 1.3 The population of Fleetwood is 26, 841. There is a lower number of 20-44 year olds than the England average reflecting out migration, in part due to the loss of manufacturing jobs in the fishing and chemicals industry. There is an over-representation of over 65 year olds which is to be expected in a seaside town. The five wards that make up Fleetwood town suffer from multiple deprivation, much greater than the borough average. As a proxy for income, 36 per cent of households do not have a car and nearly 40 per cent of households have no qualifications. The town has many households suffering from economic disadvantage.

Economy

- 1.4 Fleetwood has concentrated on a narrow range of industrial sectors, namely fish and chemicals. The economy of Fleetwood has been virtually static for a number of years with no economic diversification from the traditional industries in fish and chemicals. The decline in tourism and visitor expenditure has hit the town. The closure of ICI in 1999 led to significant job losses and a severe reduction in local spending power. Fleetwood has a strong tradition as a fishing port but there has been a huge reduction in the number of fishing vessels operating out of the town. Fish catching

has declined but fish processing has continued. There is a poor quantity and quality of commercial premises with little evidence of investment. Many properties have remained vacant for years and in many cases are in poor condition, remaining unattractive to potential investors and occupiers.

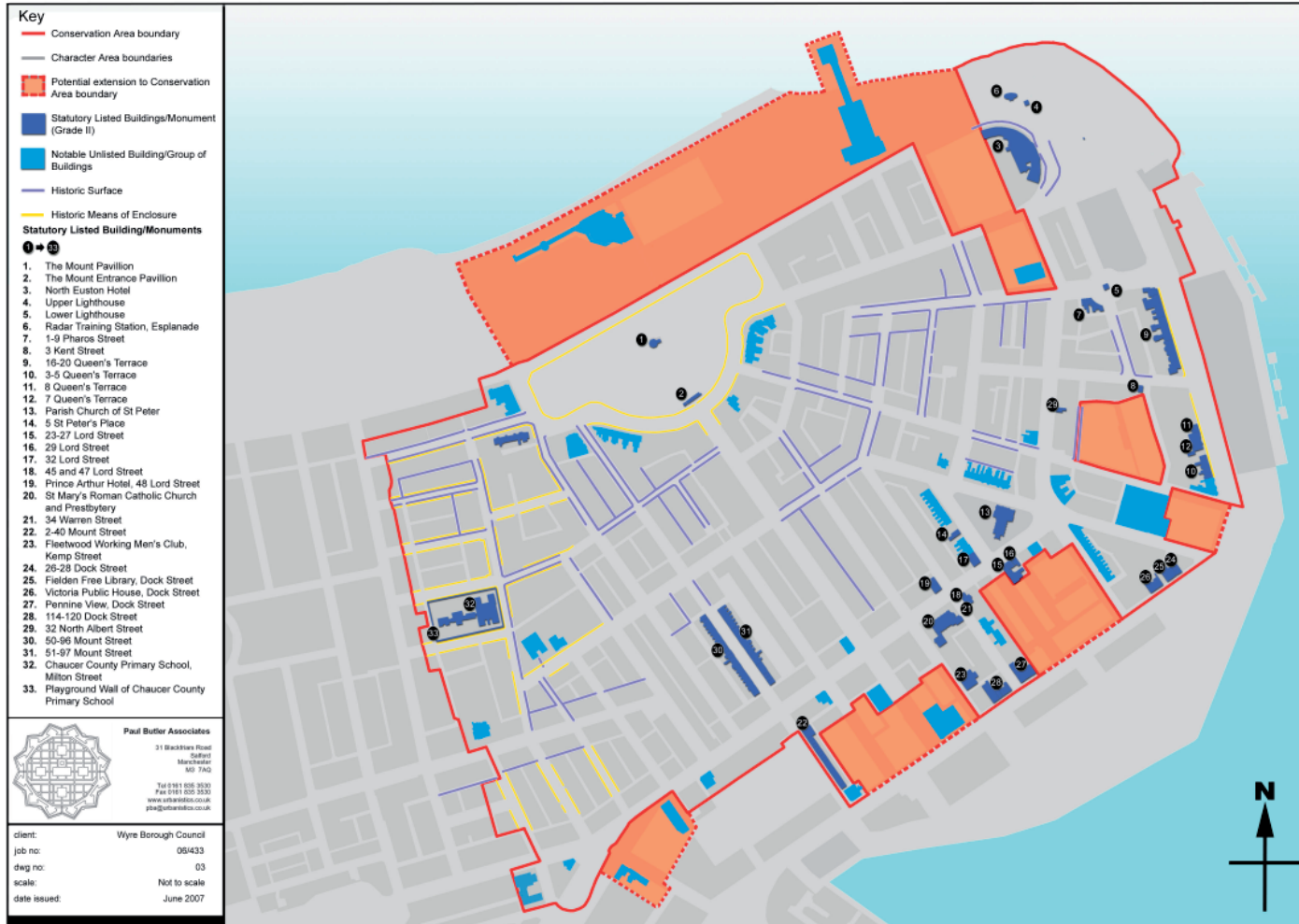
Housing

- 1.5 There has been strong growth in the housing market since 2002. However prices are the lowest on the Fylde peninsula (comparative to Barrow-in-Furness another peripheral port town). However this also offers comparative value for money and affordability. Moreover, there has been no major housebuilding in Fleetwood or upgrading of stock in many years, in part due to a lack of available sites. The stock largely comprises terraces and there is little diversity of house types.

Retail

- 1.6 Retail analysis shows other retail centres getting stronger and Fleetwood weaker. Fleetwood effectively has a 180 degree catchment due to its peninsular location. Whilst Dock Street would have made a prominent shopping district on the entrance to town, Lord Street is comparatively tucked away with no discernable entrance point or "gateways" to the visitor on arrival.
- 1.7 The out of town style ASDA superstore on the edge of a roundabout in a car parking envelope now provides the gateway to the town and theoretically acts as the southern anchor. The northern end terminates at Fleetwood Market, another key anchor, although clear linkages to and between

Heritage Assets



these facilities are poor and lack definition. Lord Street itself comprises mainly Victorian terraced properties which provide a pleasing streetscape with a variety of frontages and some distinctive historic corner buildings.

1.8 However the quality of some of the more modern units is poor and creates a negative townscape in places and the quality and consistency of facade treatment is low. The town centre lacks many recognised multiple retailers and high street names, but is well represented by local retailers and there is a variety of shops and goods on sale. Vacancy levels are low.

1.9 Freeport stands alone as a retail destination with little evidence of linked trips to Fleetwood town centre. This is not helped by the ease at which cars are allowed in and out, and the poor pedestrian, physical and functional links to the town centre. Over time, it has expanded and recently Marks & Spencer's moved in after leaving the town centre 15 years earlier. Parking is free in the 700 spaces and full security is provided throughout the complex.

Tourism and Leisure

1.10 Fleetwood retains some of its character as a traditional seaside resort. This is mainly concentrated along the northern Waterfront, lined by terraces of hotels and guest-houses and entertainment facilities (The Pier, amusement arcade, fish and chip shops, Marine Hall and Gardens, Boating Lake, miniature golf courses, bowling greens and play facilities). These facilities are mainly used in season. The Marine Hall stages shows and events year round. There is also a working ferry to Knott End and four miles of beaches and seafront gardens. Other year round key visi-

tor attractions now in Fleetwood are Freeport, Fleetwood Market, Fleetwood Museum, and the large static caravan sites. The overall scale of tourism infrastructure no longer serves the number of visitors it did presenting a clear issue of how to re-use and regenerate these outmoded visitor facilities to support a sustainable destination.

Transport

- 1.11 Similarly to other coastal towns Fleetwood is quite physically isolated with poor transportation links. This creates a barrier to economic growth due to poor transport infrastructure and the 180 degree hinterland reducing the natural customer base. Poor accessibility places constraints on tourism as well.
- 1.12 Once blessed with a mainline station the rail link to the town was cut as part of the 1960's Beeching Review. The A585 was built over the rail line. The A585 link to the motorway network (M55 Preston to Blackpool) suffers from a lack of capacity. Congestion on the road is considerable as it is literally one way in and out. At peak times this is increased by HGV traffic to the port. Unless significant public transport improvements are made this will place a limit on further development in the town.
- 1.12 The Blackpool and Fleetwood tramway provides an important recreational and commuter service between Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Blackpool. Investment is planned to upgrade the tramways, increasing the frequency of services, create special excursion services by heritage trams and promote its use for commuters to Blackpool.

Figure Ground



2. KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

- 2.1 From the undertaking of an indepth baseline assessment of Fleetwood the Masterplanning process is now at the stage to identify what are the key issues facing the town, and what threats and/or opportunities make these issues so critical to address as a priority.
- 2.2 The Masterplan is an opportunity to specifically push Fleetwood forward – it is a town that has struggled economically more than most other parts of Wyre, and deserves and requires a new voice inputting into borough strategy.

Transport and Accessibility

- 2.3 A rail study was conducted on behalf of the Wyre Strategic Partnership and the Wyre Rail Cycle Partnership to investigate the future use of the unused Poulton-le-Fylde to Fleetwood Railway line in November 2006 (Halcrow Fox). This would connect to the national rail service. An option was recommended which provided a direct service from Fleetwood to Ormskirk via Preston with a 90 minute frequency. The alignment proposed would extend along the A585 up to Amounderness Way in Fleetwood. A Fleetwood terminus was proposed in the area to the south of Freeport. The reinstatement of the line is physically and operationally feasible. It would create significant economic and social benefits and a positive impact on the local economy supporting further sustainable growth that is hard to envisage without a rail link. The biggest challenge will be to secure capital funding.

There is an, in principle, support emerging from Network Rail that should be further pursued along with a delivery and operating mechanism. The proposed waste transfer facility site to the south of Fleetwood Docks should also consider the use of rail options. Possible locations for the terminus are explored in the South Docks Area Framework.

Water

- 2.4 Fleetwood's regeneration should largely be based around the areas of water which embodies the unique history and character of the town. Waterfronts are popular places to live and people also like being near water so the ability to attract people to waterside activities is a key strength. Maximising activity along the Waterfront will be important, as well as creating better linkages between this area and the town.

Heritage

- 2.5 Fleetwood is unique amongst the towns of Lancashire, being in origin a purpose-built architect designed town. It has an attractive resort heritage exemplified by the North Euston Hotel, the tramway and the Marine Hall. Investment in this heritage, buildings and spaces is important for the town's regeneration. These distinctive and memorable spaces can enhance the quality of life and create interest and resources for the community and visitors alike.

Tourism

- 2.6 Due to structural changes affecting the tourism industry traditional working-class seaside resorts like Fleetwood, Morecambe and Blackpool have suffered. Cities and retail destinations have however thrived. Fleetwood will never be able to brand itself purely as a seaside resort, but can take

advantage of the fact it is a town by the sea.

- 2.7 Fleetwood will benefit from infrastructure investment such as the Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramway upgrade and in terms of a greater number of tourists being pulled into the local catchment area. Fleetwood still has a tourism role as a smaller historic coastal resort catering to the increase in day visits, short breaks and the rise in personal disposable income. In terms of day visits shopping and taking light exercise are primary motivators.
- 2.8 The aim for Fleetwood is to take advantage of the projected increase in visitor numbers and tramway accessibility by creating a distinctive and complementary visitor offer and marketing this identity in a unique and innovative approach. Updating the tourism offer to broaden the appeal and meet current visitor expectations is essential. Resorts that have had more success in regenerating are those which have removed the obsolete remains of their resort days. The reinvention of a former resort landmark within a regeneration context is well illustrated by the Midland Hotel in Morecambe.
- 2.9 Most research asking people what they like to do on a day out, which is the market Fleetwood should be targeting, reveals a mixture of activities and exploration, eating, drinking, shopping, browsing, walking, sitting, and different types of these activities as well. The provision of a critical mass and rich mix or "patchwork quilt" of facilities (which caters for numerous groups of people from the elderly to families to young professionals) in a variety of distinctive environments provides the strongest platform for Fleetwood's sustainable growth.
- 2.10 The type of visitor attracted to Fleetwood will depend on

what type of destination is created in the town's regeneration. A cluster of complementary leisure and recreational facilities along the Waterfront anchored by a hotel would create such a destination complementing the iconic Marine Hall. The only major hotel in Fleetwood is the North Euston Hotel built in 1841 and located on The Esplanade. In general Fleetwood is perceived as lacking quality hotel space. In particular at times of major events and festivals it is viewed that this trade is leaked to Blackpool.

Fish Processing Industry

2.11 There is local and some regional, support for a project to create a 'Fish Park' which would cluster and improve the efficiency and economic performance of processing activities. The ideal location for such a facility would be close to the A585 and suppliers, and reasonably proximate to current processing activity so as to not impact negatively on current staff travelling patterns. Obviously the proximity issues in relation to the fish processing activities create land use implications for neighbouring uses as well as the current site. If the fish processing activities centred on the current Auction Hall and Fish Dock were to continue in their current configuration, in the medium to long term, the ability to comprehensively regenerate the area is very limited, especially in relation to creating new commercial and housing development as well as potentially creating a new rail terminus in this vicinity.

Other Industries

2.12 In terms of land use restructuring and economic diversification, the area along Copse Road directly to the south of the town centre adjacent to the Blackpool – Fleetwood tram line offers the greatest opportunity for change. Currently

approximately 11 hectares of land is taken up by mainly low grade and rundown commercial buildings. This area is strategically located between the town centre and the docks and offers potential for creating managed workspace, incubator units and small office spaces and workshops. Some of the more distinctive warehouse style brick buildings nearer Station Road and the town centre where a characterful environment could be developed could offer potential space for creative industries.

Housing

2.13 The Waterfront area in Fleetwood has great potential as a desirable place to live as people always like living by the sea especially if there are good quality facilities nearby. There is potential to create a residential seafront neighbourhood in Fleetwood. This would allow better integration of the Waterfront area with the town and can create a new benchmark for property desirability, which not only helps the locality but also has a significant effect on raising investor confidence across all commercial property sectors in a town. Increasing the population of the town and attracting a wider demographic mix – some with higher incomes – will increase local spending power and encourage new retail and economic growth in the town.

Retail

2.14 Tourism increasingly relies on retail destinations. Evidence shows that significant numbers of out-of-town visitors come to visit Fleetwood Market and Freeport which shows a propensity to visit the town if the right offer exists. However these visitors are not being captured within the town centre itself and linked trips could be stronger. The Market is perceived commercially as a key strength to build

on and Freeport brings people into the area. Therefore, key objectives for the town centre are:

- providing better linkages between the two anchor destinations of Freeport and the Market (and consequently the adjoining Lord Street shops);
- joint marketing of the town and its retail offer as whole;
- bolstering the attractiveness of Lord Street as a destination in its own right;
- supporting independent retailing;
- creating redevelopment opportunities to attract new anchor stores into the town;
- improving the public realm to provide better quality materials and features;
- create a series of clear gateways and arrival points; and
- create new and improved public spaces to meet, eat, drink and relax

Other Services

2.15 Fleetwood still has a relatively important role as a hub for services and facilities for the surrounding hinterland, however Poulton-le-Fylde is the borough's administrative centre. The aim for Fleetwood is to provide an appropriate mix of uses in the town to attract in residents of the Borough as well as visitors. This will involve clawback of residents who might have once used the centre but now look elsewhere. It will rely on providing a greater choice and quality of experience. An element of this strategy may require assessing what types of commercial/office and community facilities can be clustered in the town to create more activity, uses and capture spending power in local businesses.

3. VISION AND SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

Vision

To create a sustainable and distinctive coastal town with a mix of facilities, good quality of life and connectivity built around enhancing Fleetwood's key assets of a unique heritage and waterfront setting.

Spatial Framework

The strategic spatial framework plan shows key physical interventions and concepts that will inform more detailed project work.

Area Improvements

- Transform the Waterfront area providing for modern aspirations and opening the area up to more people year round.
- To provide a choice of experience and places for recreation, eating, drinking and relaxing.
- Explore the renewal of the Marine Hall as an improved venue for theatre, events and performances, weddings, conferences and exhibitions
- Improve Lord Street as the retail high street and heart of the town, by clearer arrival points, refurbishment of buildings, better linkages, quality shop fronts and environmental improvements
- Create a hub in the centre of Lord Street where people can gather, eat drink and meet- a focus for

activity

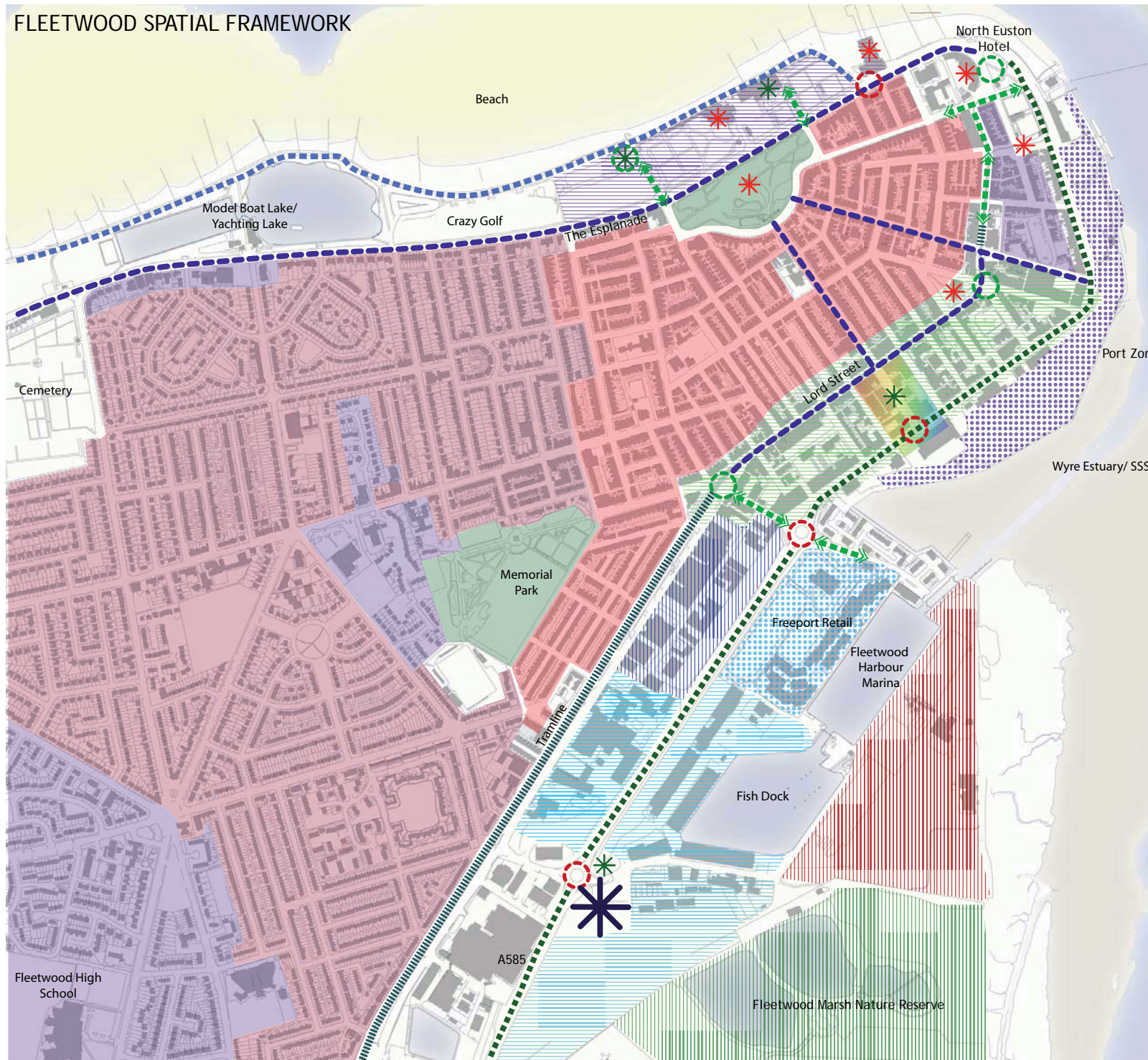
- Provide new modern commercial premises for existing businesses and start-ups close to the town along Copse Road/Station Road
- Provide better integration and linkages between Freeport and the town centre
- Create a high quality residential development and environment around Fleetwood Harbour Marina linked to the town centre

Access and Environmental Improvements

- Provide a new rail station and public transport interchange
- Improve access to, and understanding of Fleetwood Marsh Nature Reserve and footpath networks such as the Wyre Way
- Improve the A585 approach to the town and the route along Dock Street
- Improve the quality and function of London Street, Victoria Street, Lord Street and the Esplanade.
- Improve the quality and attractiveness of the promenade and its pedestrian environment
- Improve major gateways into the town, including the Knott End ferry terminal, Dock Street, Lord Street and Waterfront area
- Create new focal areas where people can gather, meet, drink, eat and relax
- Provide new landmarks to mark important areas of town
- Improve pedestrian crossings, signage, street lighting and landscaping across the town



FLEETWOOD SPATIAL FRAMEWORK



KEY

- Lord Street- Retail Quarter
- Lord Street Hub
- Fleetwood Harbour Marina development
- Mixed-use/ commercial development
- Commercial Workspace Quarter
- New Rail Station/ Interchange
- Marine Quarter
- Public Landscape Grounds
- Terraced Housing
- Inter/ immediate post war housing
- Late C20th and Planned Housing
- Port Zone
- Strategic Route
- Primary Avenues
- Enhanced Promenade
- Strengthened Linkages
- New Focal Areas
- Enhanced Gateway
- New Landmark
- Existing Landmark

4. WATERFRONT AREA FRAMEWORK

Issues

- This area is where most of the tourism infrastructure is located.
- Character eroded by under-investment in buildings and public spaces
- Blank and unattractive frontages and large areas of surface car parking
- Views out to the beach and sea not maximised and the area is very inward looking
- Low visibility and prominence of the area
- Poorly defined with no clear sense of arrival and lack of activity
- Facilities and environment do not fully meet modern day expectations
- Lacks clear and attractive pedestrian routes
- Distinctive and memorable buildings such as the Mount and Marine Hall and some good events and performances
- Marine Hall has a large ballroom with capacity for theatre, concert performances and events
- Lacks attractive spaces to eat, drink, meet and relax
- The Fleetwood Kite Club offers potential to develop this sport and activity

Proposals

The proposals for this quarter aim to create a clearly defined and distinctive attractive Waterfront. This is based on creating five areas that will animate the waterfront and create a range of experiences and a better destination with more reasons to visit

- **Discovery and Entertainment** area around the Marine Hall which is Fleetwood's principal cultural facility. Potential to remodel and refurbish the building to provide a more efficient and practical internal layout so it can host more events. Provide a fully glazed elevation to the rear of the Hall incorporating a restaurant/bar or café facility and take advantage of beach and Waterfront location.
- **Health and Fitness** area next to the Marine Hall to provide better indoor fitness and recreational facilities for people visiting and living in Fleetwood. This could include an hotel or spa facility.
- **Family Quarter** to improve the area next to the main summer beach as a family destination. Creating better water play facilities, table tennis, trampolines and picnic area. These improvements can help to provide a better gateway to the Waterfront.
- **Beach Sports** area based around the existing Fleetwood Kite Club and shop. Kite surfing, boarding and buggying are increasingly popular sports for the young and old alike. Fleetwood is a prime location for this activity due to the extent of beach and climatic conditions. This activity could be further supported potentially by a new pavilion building. This beach hut style could create an iconic new building and focus for activity comprising the kite club, changing facilities and meeting room with a first floor bar/café.
- **Waterfront Living** area on the smaller miniature golf course. This will help fund improvements to the rest of the Waterfront and Marine Hall area. It will also help revitalise this part of the Waterfront bringing activity to the area. Development here would need to provide an innovative and distinctive design to complement the Marine Hall as well as providing key views and integration with the wider area.





Aspirational image of the Promenade

Beach Sports

Residential Area

Marine Hall
'Discovery and Entertainment'

Health and Fitness

Family Quarter

Residential Area

KEY

- Key pedestrian routes

Family area

Marine Hall quarter
- Active beachsports zone

Health fitness

Key waterfront gateways
- Residential Area

Key focal areas

Enhanced landmarks
- Enhanced promenade/ Wyre Way

New landmark building

Primary avenue Esplanade 'greening'

5. LORD STREET AREA FRAMEWORK

Proposals

The proposals for this area aim to create a diverse and vibrant retail heart to the town which is vital to the future of Fleetwood.

Issues

- The definition of the area and sense of arrival is not clear
- Physical severance caused by A585
- Poor linkages between the Market and Lord Street
- Weak pedestrian circuits
- Popular Market
- Lack of national retailers
- Lack of places to sit outside
- Lack of café quarter or evening economy
- Changes to shop fronts has diluted the character
- Some poor quality shop fronts creates poor visual appearance
- Tram poles are unsightly in places

- **Create attractive gateways into the town.** Clear arrival points to the town centre are important to attract people in. The junction of the A585 and Station Road and the junction with London Street need to clearly signpost quality gateways.
- **Improve linkages.** The high street needs stronger pedestrian and cycle linkages to Freeport, Fleetwood Market and the Waterfront area.
- **Create new retail development opportunities to attract in larger national retailers.** The town needs more familiar high street shops. Marks & Spencer's has been lost from the town centre to Freeport but attracting an anchor store into the high street would improve its popularity.
- **Support local and specialist shopping.** Fleetwood has many independent retailers which create a distinctive and diverse shopping experience - this should be further supported. Local Lancashire produce and goods should also be a highlight of the town, linked to the market.
- **Create more public spaces.** The town lacks an obvious centre and needs more focal areas to meet, eat, drink and relax. This would encourage activity and vibrancy. Locations for improved high quality public squares are shown at Albert Square and Station Road. A new landmark square and heart of the town is proposed along London Street and Lord Street, which was always a significant location in the original Burton plan for the town. These areas could support complementary clusters of cafes, bars and restaurants.
- **Restore the quality of Lord Street.** Lord Street has a distinctive tramway and many heritage buildings. These should be restored to their former quality along with the re-introduction of traditional features and uniformity of shop fronts etc to improve the character and attractiveness of the high street.
- **Encourage town centre living.** Residential development in town centres can increase activity out of shopping hours. There are already many residential streets alongside the town centre but new residential development and living above shops would support the town's regeneration.
- **Improve environment and landscaping of Lord Street, London Street and Victoria Street.** This would help define these important routes better and create a more attractive pedestrian environment.



HEART OF FLEETWOOD- LORD STREET



- KEY
- New focal area
 - Landmark/ distinctive building
 - Frontage Improvements
 - Focus Areas for Improvement
 - Traffic calming/ pedestrian priority
 - Strategic routes to Esplanade
 - Streets links to be strenghtened
 - New gateways/ arrival points
 - Improved pedestrian crossing
 - Public realm/streetscape improvements
 - Green areas



6. SOUTH DOCKS AREA FRAMEWORK

Issues

- Area is underutilised for commercial activities
- The roundabout intersection creates a weak gateway to the town
- The Fish Dock could be an attractive waterspace and setting for new development
- The area offers the potential to introduce a new rail station and link to Poulton-le-Fylde
- The area is poorly integrated with the town centre

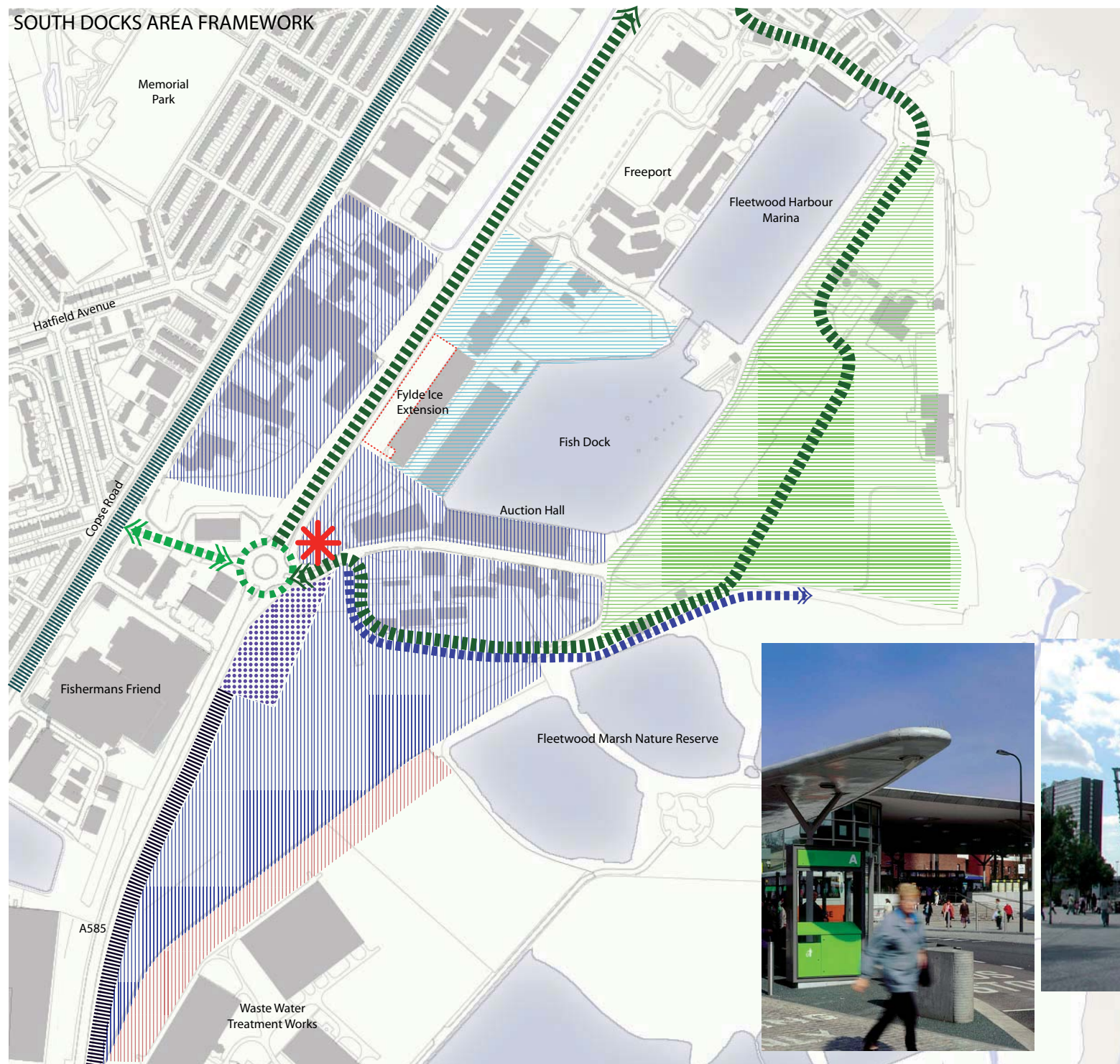
Proposals

The proposals for this area aim to provide a better gateway into the town and create a sustainable quarter of the town providing a high quality public transport interchange and mixed use development.

- **Provide a new rail station for Fleetwood.** To grow in a sustainable way the town needs a connection to the national rail service and rail access for residents, workers and visitors. It is difficult to bring the station any closer to the town given land ownership and feasibility issues. This area could provide a transport hub with a park and ride service and bus/tram interchange
- The fish processing, packaging and storage units based around Fish Dock provide important employment for the town. **Current facilities could be upgraded** to improve efficiency and further growth through the development of a Fish Park
- To aid the further **economic diversification** of the town further commercial development and more modern business premises could be developed in this area.
- **Providing an attractive gateway to the town** by a distinctive new station and landscaping along the A585 would improve sense of arrival to the area.
- **Creating a quality landscape buffer** to the waste transfer facilities to the south of the area will be important in creating a good quality environment.
- **Enhancing linkages to the riverside** and coastal footpaths should support new development.
- **Improving linkages from this area to the town centre** and across the A585 is important. This will require a clear structure of streets and spaces and strong pedestrian and cycle linkages.
- The wildlife value and interest of **Fleetwood Marsh Nature Reserve** should be promoted and this habitat further enhanced.



SOUTH DOCKS AREA FRAMEWORK



KEY

- Improved junction/ gateway
- Potential rail terminus/ interchange
- Mixed-use and potential fish business park
- Longterm mixed-use/ commercial devt.
- New landmark building/structure
- New link road (to new residential devt.)
- Potential link to tram (200m)
- Tram corridor gateway improvements
- Redrow Residential Development
- Potential shuttle service to Lord St, Freeport and new housing
- Landscape buffer



Transport Interchanges

If you require this information in a different
format or language please contact
Connect Wyre on 01253 891000.

