



# Wincanton Town Centre Strategy

Town centres across the country are facing significant pressures which have changed how we use the high street. The impact of online shopping and competition from larger centres are well known and form part of wider structural changes which necessitate the need for adaption and change.

Wincanton is no different and as an important and long established Market Town serving the east of South Somerset district, the town centre provides a local shopping and service role for its local community, a wide rural catchment area and visitors.

We all have expectations as to what we want when we visit the town centre but how do we ensure Wincanton town centre responds to current and future challenges in order to create a more vibrant centre and boost footfall?

South Somerset District Council has identified the Wincanton Town Centre Action Plan as a Council priority and commissioned specialist consultants to prepare a Strategy to help enhance and develop the vibrancy of the town centre moving forward.



We take this opportunity to outline the main components of the Strategy in the next few boards. This includes the interventions and initiatives, in conjunction with our key partners and local stakeholders, that we consider will help enhance and support the regeneration and rejuvenation of Wincanton town centre as a quality local destination.

## the local destination





# Wincanton Town Centre Strategy

## Engagement

In preparing the Strategy, we have engaged extensively with a range of stakeholders including the Town Council, community organisations with a town centre presence, landowners and town businesses (including the Chamber of Commerce), to identify the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the town centre. This has helped to inform our Vision which sets out how Wincanton town centre can strengthen its vitality and viability and promote positive change whilst ensuring the qualities and attractiveness of the centre are enhanced and safeguarded.



## Vision

The 'vision' is for Wincanton town centre to become a place that:

- Is well used and a thriving place to live, work and visit
- Has an enhanced retail, community and social function that encourages visits during the day and evening
- Has a wider mix of uses, including commercial floorspace and quality housing
- That supports enterprise, creativity and vibrancy
- That makes more of the centres special cultural and heritage character through improvements to the public realm and buildings to attract investment into the town centre.
- Will create a convenient and attractive destination for local residents and visitors.

## Objectives

To achieve our Vision, we have identified a number of key objectives which we consider will help to set the future ambitions to best support and deliver the Vision. These objectives seek to:

- Encourage a greater level of use and strengthen loyalty for the town centre with local residents.
- Encourage a wider mix of uses, including new employment, homes, community, leisure and creative enterprises.
- Safeguard and improve the quality and attractiveness of the historic built environment and public realm.
- Protect and develop the cultural and heritage attraction of the town centre for visitors.
- Strengthen and safeguard the convenient access and movement of people to and through the town centre on foot, bicycle, public transport and car.
- Strengthen place branding, communication and marketing to the local catchment and visitors.

We want our Vision and supporting objectives to be delivered through the town centre Strategy which we will use alongside our key partners, to identify priorities for intervention and initiatives.

We are keen to ensure Wincanton town centre builds on its unique strengths as a distinctive quality market town, strategically located adjacent to the A303, which is differentiated from other towns.





# Wincanton Town Centre Strategy

The objective of the Strategy is to provide a clear direction for positive change and to encourage new investment into the town centre. We also want to promote Wincanton and provide a framework to guide decision making and co-ordinate activities to achieve wider improvements. To achieve this, we will work with our key partners and local stakeholders to ensure a successful implementation of the Strategy.

The Strategy is structured around a number of inter-related main themes. These relate to:

- **Broadening the mix of uses to enhance footfall by residents and visitors**
- **Creating a destination**
- **Enhancing the attractiveness of the town centre environment**

## Creating a destination

- Develop local partnerships to promote the town centre and coordinate marketing activities
- Promote loyalty initiatives for the town centre
- Encourage coordinated marketing with local visitor attractions

## Broadening the mix of uses to enhance footfall by residents and visitors

- Encourage a sustainable and quality mix of uses to extend the use and vibrancy of the town centre
- Maximise the reuse of vacant buildings for suitable uses, including temporary uses
- Support employment provision in the town centre
- Encourage a greater range and choice of uses to support the evening economy
- Encourage quality town centre living on suitable sites, where appropriate
- Help promote footfall generators
- Encourage a diversity of independent retailers and services (business and community)

## Enhancing the attractiveness of the town centre environment

- Improve the public realm for the pedestrian through pavement and crossing enhancements
- Safeguard and enhance the existing heritage quality and character of the town centre
- Encourage cycle and pedestrian access/linkages to the town centre
- Create more accessible public spaces for town centre uses, including events and market space
- Balance the impact of traffic in the town centre
- Review town centre parking management
- Improve lighting schemes to support the evening economy



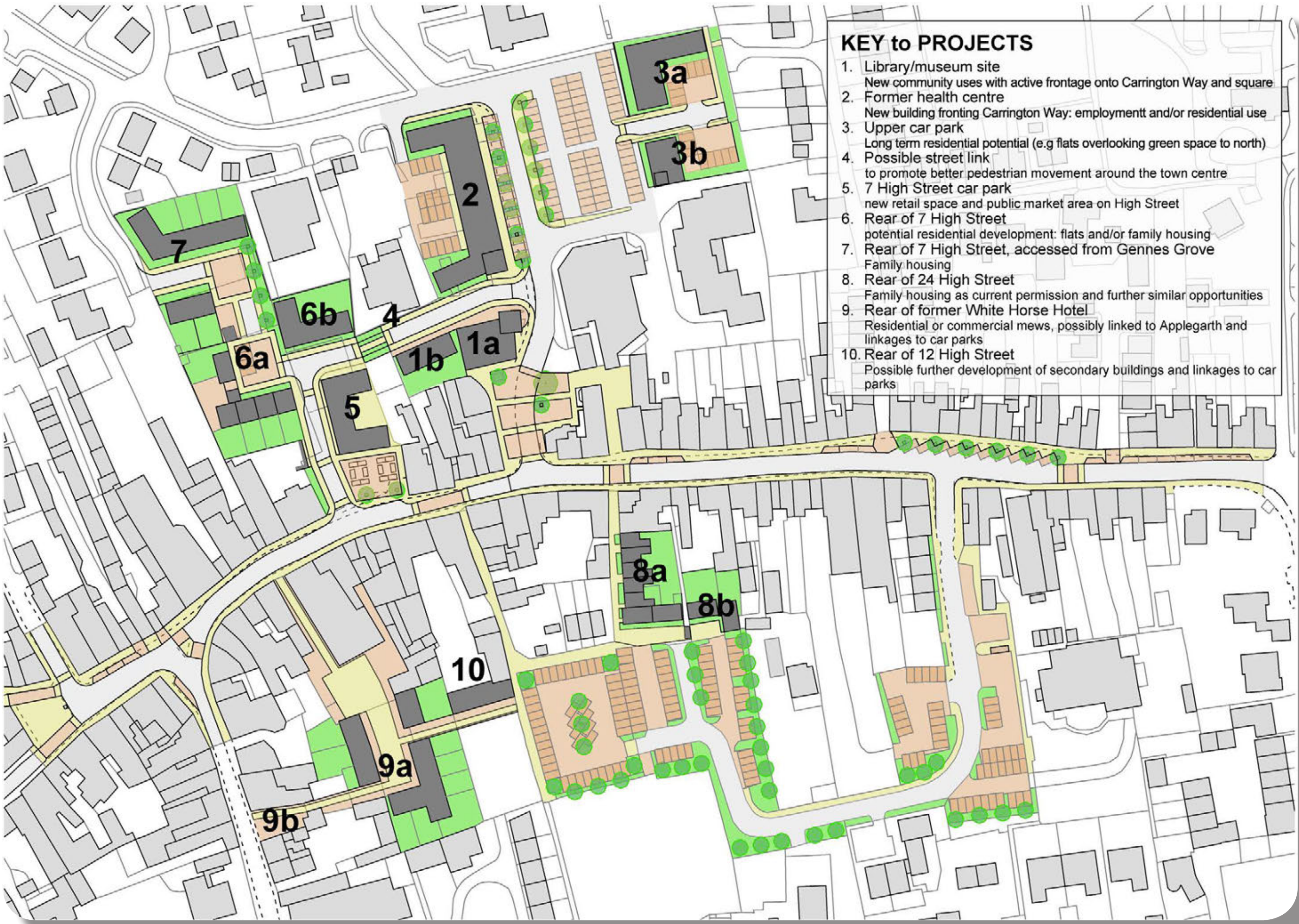




# Wincanton Town Centre Strategy

A key objective of this Strategy focuses on the promotion of a wider range of uses in Wincanton town centre, to help encourage greater footfall, attract new investment and extend the vibrancy of the town centre during the day and evening. In addition, the lack of a town centre anchor is identified as a perceived weakness for generating visits.

We have looked at a number of potential suitable town centre sites to consider the contribution and range of preferred uses that the sites that could, over time, offer for supporting an enhanced range and mix of suitable main town centre uses, such as commercial, retail, residential and community, for supporting the delivery of the vision.



We consider these sites could help to contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre but recognise the priority will be to maximise the flexibility of end uses in order to respond to market requirements. At this stage our thoughts are indicative.







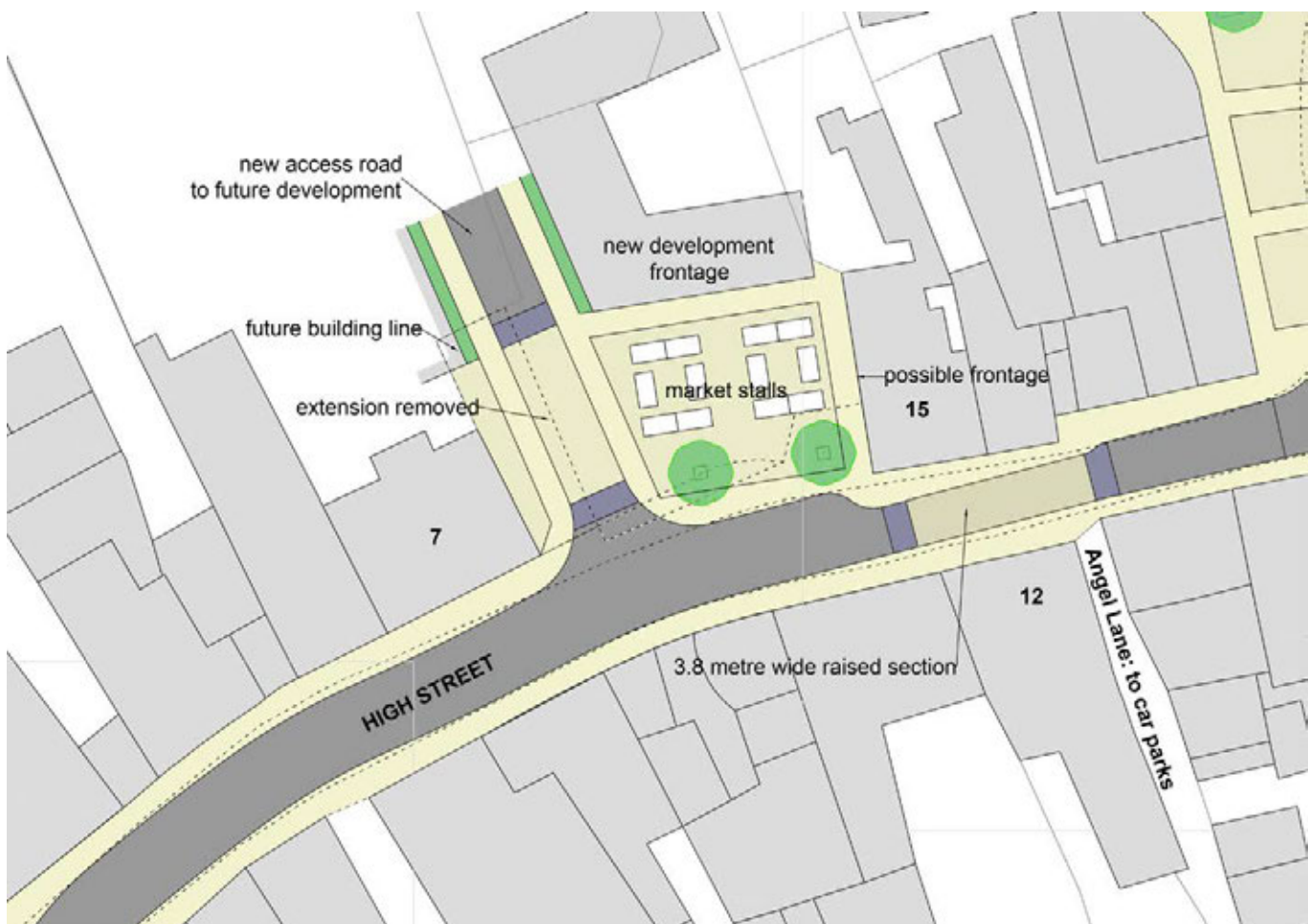
## Key locations

New and improved public realm is proposed to enhance the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the town centre. We have identified a number of qualitative improvements which seek to create a more pleasant environment for local residents and visitors and help support our wider objectives to encourage greater visits to the town. Some of the improvements align with the priorities of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan which outline the need to make the town centre safer for pedestrians and non-car users, particularly to address the narrowness of footways and the impact of traffic circulation and speed.

The Strategy also outlines the contribution of the historic town centre environment (Conservation Area and numerous listed buildings) as a unique attractive asset and the need to safeguard the quality and maintenance of key buildings. In addition, opportunities exist within the town centre to provide new public squares, where events/markets and other activities could take place to help enliven the centre. There is also scope for associated qualitative enhancements such as tree planting, landscaping, lighting and public art, which together will contribute to a welcoming and attractive town centre environment.



Market Place



Western High Street



Carrington Way



Eastern High Street





# Wincanton Town Centre Strategy

The previous boards identify a range of specific physical projects and interventions. Whilst these form an integral core element of the Strategy, there are a range of complementary softer initiatives which in combination, will help to support the successful implementation and delivery of the Strategy. We have drawn on

feedback from key stakeholders alongside examples of best practice from comparable market towns which are responding to similar challenges, to identify a number of initiatives and ideas which we consider will help enhance and promote Wincanton town centre as a multi-functional destination.



## Specific initiatives

could include the following:

- brand, marketing and communication strategy in collaboration with local stakeholders
- events, night markets and festivals (with local linkages e.g. Wincanton racecourse, Discworld).
- targeted intervention of property grants to encourage maintenance and incentivise occupancy, where appropriate.
- encouragement of temporary uses, such as pop up shops and restaurants.

We have identified initiatives focused on:

## Increasing footfall

Wincanton town centre needs to draw people in for a wider 'bundle of benefits' and to

strengthen its reputation as a reliable, convenient, and friendly centre.

## Repositioning the town centre in people's minds

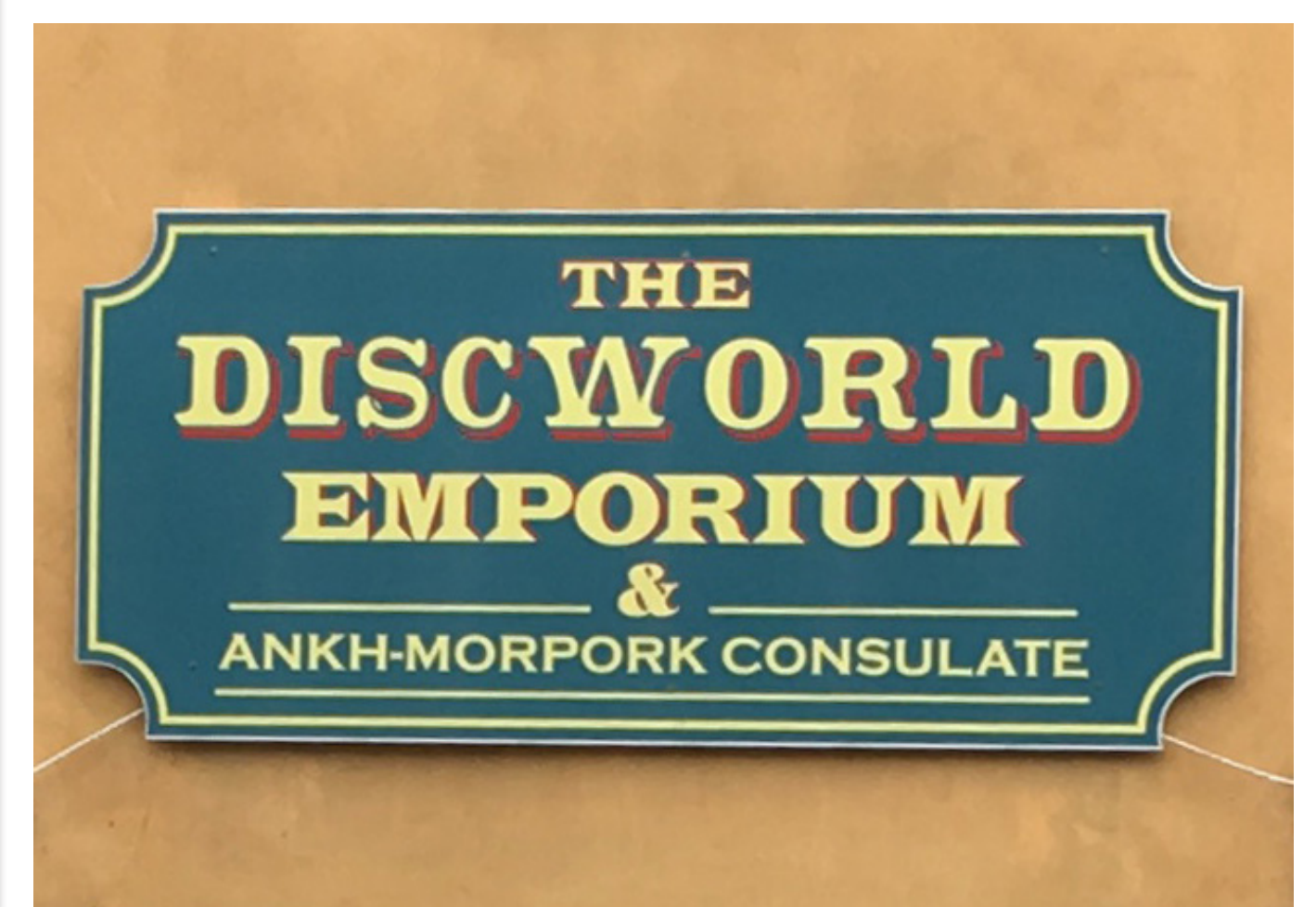
The relationship between a town centre and catchment population influences the use

of a town centre. Successful centres focus on their collective offer to attract visits.

## Property grants and support

The town centre contains a number of prominent vacant and underused buildings which offer the opportunity for permanent (and temporary) reuse and more diverse

enterprises. We further recognise support is needed to encourage the repair and refurbishment of listed and locally significant historic buildings.



# complementary initiatives

# 6





Our Strategy provides a framework of ideas and initiatives to support the regeneration of Wincanton town centre.

We are at the beginning of the process.

At this stage we have identified a series of priority interventions and projects which are considered the most crucial in the short term for supporting the Strategy objectives.

We fully recognise that the success of the Strategy requires us to work proactively in collaboration with a range of local organisations and stakeholders to shape and deliver these initiatives.

As your town centre, we are keen to hear your thoughts to ensure the Strategy meets local needs and aspirations for the future direction of the town centre. Please use the comment form provided to let us know what you think.



Further details of the full draft Wincanton Town Centre Strategy supported by an Action Plan are available on our website at: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) where you will have the opportunity to provide your feedback.

