

A Strategy for Malton Town Centre

WSP Group and Atisreal for Ryedale District Council
and Yorkshire Forward

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Executive Summary

STUDY OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

WSP and its co-consultants Atisreal and Bauman Lyons Architects were commissioned in March 2007 by Ryedale District Council and Yorkshire Forward to carry out a Malton Town Centre Renaissance and Enhancement Study. The information from this study will be used to help guide planning policies and proposals in the Ryedale Local Development Framework, and will influence the activities of Ryedale District Council and partner organisations. The recommendations will help guide development and land use changes within the two towns over the next 15 years to ensure a successful and prosperous Malton and Norton.

The Study is founded on the potential of ten development sites (indicated on the map below) within Malton to contribute to the above aim. The sites include four key town centre sites; the Livestock Market area, Wentworth Street Car Park, Wheelgate and Market Place together with six other sites; Greengate, Pasture Lane, East Mount, York House, The Mount Hotel and Highfield Lane.

The Strategy concludes that collectively through development and enhancement the key town centre sites can play a key role in defining Malton's future. A critical linkage is the support and structuring of pedestrian flows between the sites to encourage increased local retail spending and retention of people within the town centre for longer periods including enhancing opportunities for café / dining / leisure activities.

A set of separate development options were produced for each site after each was analysed in terms of urban design, town planning, financial viability, traffic management and parking. The public's views on each site and potential development options were sought through consultation events to help guide the study. In addition to public consultations, dedicated consultations were carried out with local retailers and the farming community.

MALTON'S ROLE

Malton is identified in the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy as the Principal Town for Ryedale. Therefore it is the focus for future housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities in the district.

A key strength of Malton is that it is a "genuine market town" which offers a wide range of independent retailers but has the potential to provide a wider range of convenience and comparison retailing for the local population. Malton's town centre has a particularly rich historic built environment hosting many Grade II listed buildings that only strengthen the genuine market town feel. A driving force of this strategy for Malton is to ensure that developments within Malton capitalise on this major asset through major public realm improvements centered around the Market Place.

Though much of Malton's identity lies in its lack of multiple retailers, the need to secure suitable multiple retailers is vital to ensure a successful economic future for the town to complement and support independent traders.

It is critical to improve the retail vibrancy of Malton, the quality of retail on offer, increase shopper visits and encourage longer shopping dwell times in Malton if the retention of shoppers is to be significantly improved. A significant proportion of comparison goods expenditure leakage is attributed to Monks Cross Shopping Park, York City Centre and Scarborough. In order to address this leakage we consider that a mid to high quality supermarket is essential and would provide balance to supermarket offer currently in Malton and Norton. We believe that the introduction of such a facility would attract new shoppers whilst increasing footfall for the benefit of independent retailers in the town. The introduction of a new mid to high quality supermarket has been demonstrated elsewhere to often provide a significant boost to the local independent retail provision on offer, rather than damaging the local economy. The supermarket should be supplemented by new retail premises in the town centre that meet the requirements of high street retailers, including those in sectors such as men and women's clothing, which are currently under-represented in Malton. This will also help to reduce leakage of shoppers to centres outside of Ryedale. Malton's provision of evening and Sunday dining / entertainment services can also be improved and would help to reduce the current loss of expenditure by local residents and visitors. Town centre activity should also be increased through new residential development, which is urgently required to meet the area's housing needs. There is also scope to rationalise and improve town centre parking and to enhance cultural facilities through the ten sites in this Study.


THE KEY SITES

The four key sites (Livestock Market area, Market Place, Wentworth Street Car Park and Wheelgate) provide a "once in a generation opportunity" to plan comprehensively for the future to help enhance and improve Malton's town centre.

THE LIVESTOCK MARKET

The Livestock Market area presents a unique opportunity to contribute to the future development of Malton due to its close relationship to the other key town centre sites and its potential ability to substantially improve the retail offer and draw of Malton Town centre. It also offers the opportunity for additional town centre housing to be brought forward as part of a mixed use retail, residential and parking scheme.

Whilst the Livestock Market operation is of economic and social benefit for Malton and the surrounding area and should be retained within the town, outside of market days and the monthly farmers' and poultry market, this key town centre site is underutilised and provides a poor quality built environment as a contrast to the rich mix of historic buildings in the adjacent Market Place. We consider that the Livestock Market does not represent the most beneficial use of this very central site should be relocated to an edge of centre location. The opportunity exists at the Pasture Lane site for a relocated Livestock Market. This would see the Livestock Market retained within Malton and could potentially provide a location for associated businesses, or a wider usage of a new building such as at Thirsk Farmers Auction Mart and Bakewell's Agricultural Business Centre. However, this is likely to require an element of further development on the former Showfield Site to subsidise the cost of providing new premises for the Livestock Market.



By planning for the current site as a whole (as opposed to retaining a market operation on part of the site) the weight of the opportunity is increased by way of its capacity to address both retail and residential needs. The redevelopment would provide a new destination within Malton and present a genuine opportunity for the provision of new public spaces and enhancements to the existing infrastructure and surrounding buildings.

The Livestock Market area holds the potential to support the flow of pedestrians around the town centre by creating a key destination point. The Livestock Market area could also provide a significant element of the public parking provision, releasing pressure from the other key sites, in particular within the Market Place where the space can then be enhanced. The preferred development option therefore provides a mix of retail outlets, public spaces, parking and housing for the Livestock Market area.

WENTWORTH STREET CAR PARK

Wentworth Street Car Park is currently used for public car parking and provision of parking for Livestock Market related vehicles. The site's size and location suggests that it has the potential to significantly contribute to the regeneration of Malton's town centre. The car park is heavily underutilised, currently operating at 19% of its capacity. This low level of use indicates that the site has the capacity to accommodate additional uses while retaining the majority of the parking provision (utilising a decked design). However, it will be important to provide long stay facilities elsewhere if redevelopment of the site should affect the current parking regime. Parking provision for Livestock Market related vehicles would be relocated, potentially to the Pasture Lane site.

The layout and location of Wentworth Street Car Park provide the opportunity for a new retail destination on the northern edge of the town centre comprised of a mid to high quality supermarket operator. The eastern upper level of the site would be well suited to residential development in the form of flats to ensure greater amounts of activity on the site outside of the operating hours of the retail provision. A retail and residential development at Wentworth Street Car Park would complete and improve the retail circuit and flow of pedestrians through the Livestock Market area, the Market Place and Wheelgate.

THE MARKET PLACE - IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACES

An improved pedestrian environment through enhanced public spaces in Malton's town centre would offer a significantly improved experience in which to connect with local traders, the community and the historic environment. This enables Malton to be seen as an attractive destination in itself, in contrast to the offer of out of town retail centres (which will always provide a different scale of retailing to Malton), and would address widespread public concerns about conditions for shoppers and pedestrians that have been detailed in the Malton Transportation Strategy and the Roger Tym Retail Study. There is potential to create new public spaces and key enhancements that would include the proposed public realm improvements within the Market Place and enhanced linkages through improved footpaths along Wheelgate and Princess Road / Wentworth Street.

The preferred development scenario for the Market Place is focused on improving the public spaces of the area by balancing the relationship between the pedestrian and vehicular traffic/parking. The preferred development scenario envisages the pedestrianisation of the north stretch of the Market Place, with the later development of a series of terraces to the north and west of St. Michael's Church. This will significantly enhance the attractiveness of the historic Market Place and enable it to become a more

active public space. As all key site developments come forward the Market Place will become the focus of activity within Malton.

We consider that the Market Place with the proposed improvements, together with the changes to the other key sites can enhance its place as the heart of Malton from a social perspective by being a destination and place to enjoy in itself.

WHEELGATE

Wheelgate is the prime thoroughfare for Malton and the current principal retail destination. There is clear potential to improve the pedestrian and built environment, addressing issues of pedestrian / vehicle conflict that lessen its attractiveness to shoppers. The preferred development option, given Wheelgate's key linkages to the Market Place, Livestock Market area, Wentworth Street Car Park and Yorkersgate, is to enhance the public realm through widened pavements, improved streetscenes and enhanced shop fronts.

The four key sites comprising Wheelgate, the Market Place, the Livestock Market area and Wentworth Street Car Park should have a complimentary and non -competitive relationship and be clearly linked together by strengthened and better signed pedestrian routes and the Market Place itself.

OTHER SITES

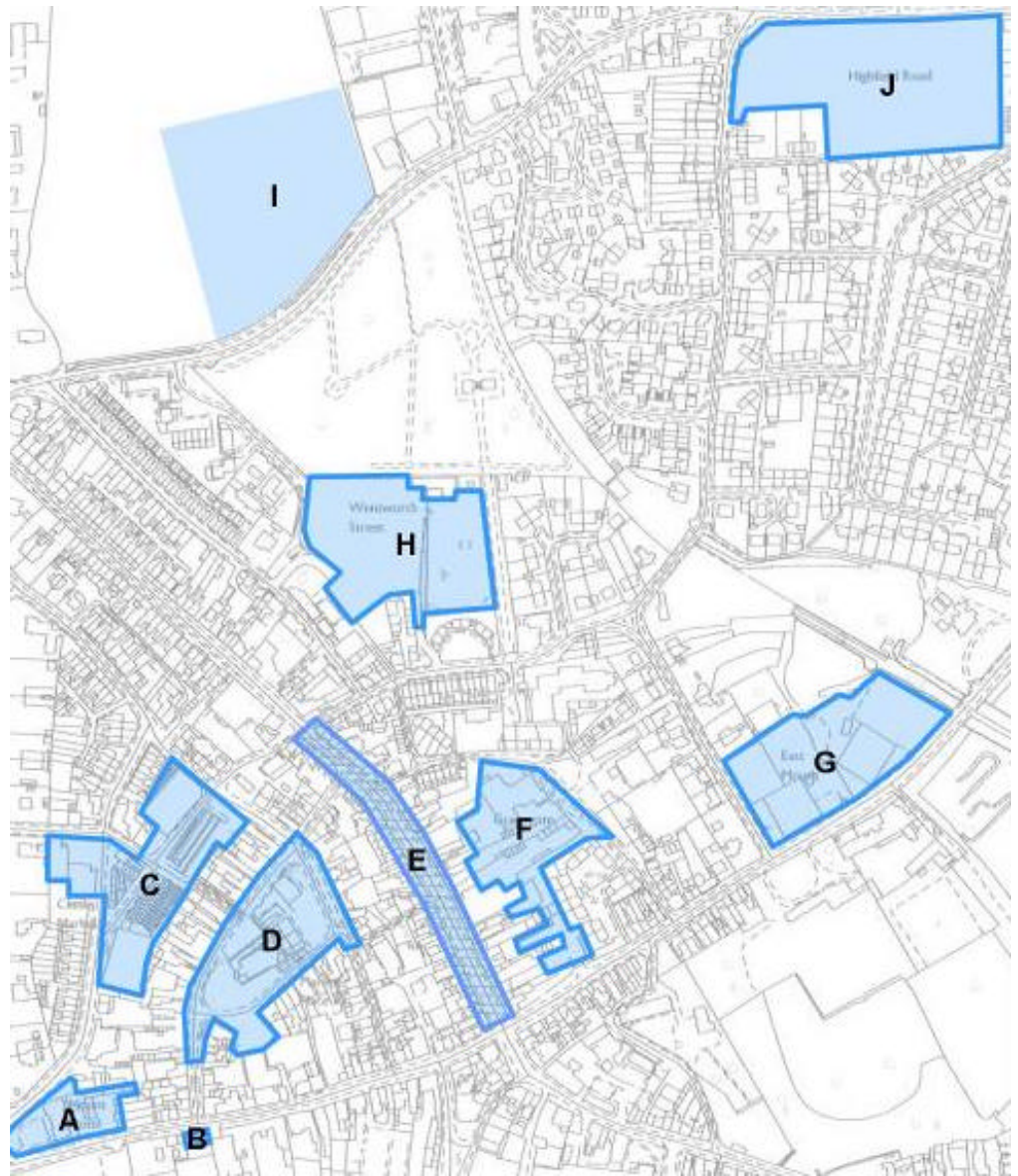
There are a number of other sites within Malton that can make a positive contribution to the strategy for Malton town centre. Together they can provide valuable opportunities for enhancement, re-use and redevelopment. The former Showfield at Pasture Lane provides a location for a relocated Livestock Market whilst offering potential for associated uses on a larger site. Land between Greengate and Wheelgate, subject to landowner negotiations, has the potential to offer a new delivery route for the eastern section of retail units along Wheelgate, so reducing current difficulties caused by service vehicles.

East Mount will potentially see a relocation of the Malton Tennis and Bowls Club. If this were to happen the preferred option is for the creation of new residential apartments along Old Maltongate and the creation of semi-detached town houses along East Mount.

York House is perhaps Malton's finest building and has the potential for the re-use of prestigious historic building and grounds for community uses. It has potential as a new venue for the Tourist Information Office and Malton Museum.

The Mount Hotel is an important town centre gateway site. The main building requires a beneficial reuse through its conversion to high quality apartments, as a hotel use is now unlikely. The quality of the recreational space at Highfield Lane has the potential to be improved, but the site is not currently suitable for development.

A map of the sites with proposed uses is found overleaf.



	Site	Proposed Use
A	Mount Hotel	High quality residential apartments
B	York House	Community use / Offices / Tourist Information Office / Museum?
C	Livestock Market area	Mixed-use development (retail / residential / parking)
D	The Market Place	Improved public realm and new pedestrian priority areas
E	Wheelgate	Improved pedestrian / shopping environment
F	Greengate	New delivery route for eastern section of Wheelgate
G	East Mount	New residential apartments and housing
H	Wentworth Street Car Park	Mixed use development (supermarket / residential / parking)
I	Pasture Lane	Relocated Livestock Market
J	Highfield Lane	Continuation of recreation use with potential improvements