

Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

What is the Masterplan?

A Town Centre focused Masterplan borne out of the feedback from FW2040.

The Masterplan and Deliverability Framework for the regeneration of Fort William town centre is a key component of the wider work of the Fort William 2040 Vision. It focuses on a number of sites throughout the town centre with the ambition to:

- Improve the quality of the urban environment
- Strengthen connections to the Loch
- Ensure resilience in the face of the climate emergency
- Identify functions that can be introduced to repopulate and reinvigorate the town centre

The ambition is to transform Fort William Town Centre through a series of physical and spatial moves into a vibrant, textured, varied, safe and inclusive place to live, work and play.

It is engaging stakeholders to re-imagine the future of Fort William and defining the next phase of its evolution.

It presents a 'joined up' approach to new development where uses are positioned in relation to each other to create the vibrancy and activity that is key to a thriving town centre to benefit community, tourism and commerce.

The proposals highlighted are indicative in terms of scale and by no means demonstrate intended detailed design. They show the 'art of the possible' and further stakeholder engagement will be required, particularly with the community and building owners and occupiers.

Bringing together the many positive moves currently in development in Fort William through the FW2040 Vision, this Masterplan is a clear statement of ambition that is based on best practice and known successes. It offers a shared vision and projects an alignment of intent that will position the town well to apply for future public funding and attract private investment.



Fort William: A Town Centre for Everyone

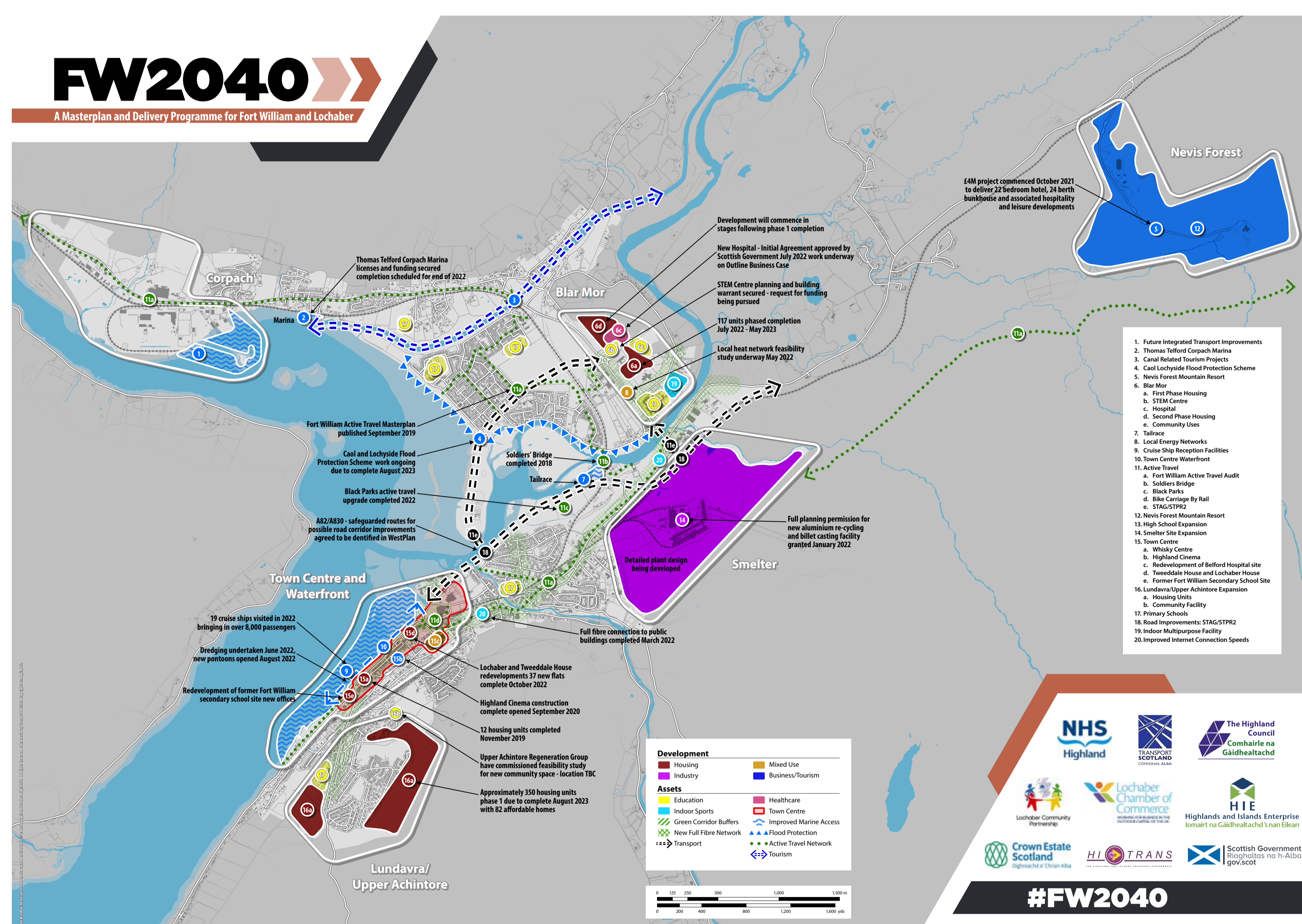
Our town centres offer a rich and authentic environment that, for generations, have been the back-drop to the ceremonies and memorable events of our community. Furthermore, the health of a town centre reflects the health of the wider community or society.

The Masterplan seeks to develop an energised town centre that is open to all and where there is alignment, engagement and transparency on decision making will combat isolation, create opportunity and enrich the lives of the community it serves.

It is critical that we achieve a perception shift in our community and stakeholders and reposition Fort William in people's psyche. At the core of this proposal is the need to reconnect all of us to our town centre.

The Masterplan shows a vision of a better Fort William that meets the requirements of all regardless of age, disability or wealth.

Context: FW2040 Vision



Fort William 2040 (FW2040) is an ongoing project to co-ordinate and deliver a shared Vision for the future of Fort William and Lochaber. This Vision and accompanying Masterplan and Delivery Programme have been prepared with feedback gathered from consultation events involving people living, working, and investing in the area.

The FW2040 consultation process generated feedback on the quality of place Fort William and the wider area could and should be.

The key themes of the FW2040 Vision are as follows:

A Great Place to Live

With a unique landscape and distinctive local communities. Sufficient and affordable housing is a key issue for the area, as well as facilities and accommodation for visitors, with a need to attract and retain a diverse range of residents, visitors and enterprises.

A Connected Place

Highlights the need to maximise opportunities for a diverse range of transport and other connecting networks including new technologies.

A Place Facing Water

This theme focuses on the importance of water and the need to take full advantage of existing water assets to support industry, tourism, and communities.

A Place with Collective Vision

This underpins all work on FW2040 and is about new ways of working based on strong partnerships and good communication.

Addressing the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency

Project delivery partners should work towards Fort William becoming a net-zero town. All projects, regardless of scale, will be encouraged to consider ways in which they can contribute to the net-zero target.

NPF4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is a long-term plan for Scotland's development and infrastructure needs and, together with The Highland Council's Local Development Plans and Supplementary Guidance, forms the Development Plan that influences planning decisions for Fort William.

NPF4 embodies the Place Principle. It contains six spatial principles that promote shared understanding and collaboration in planning Scotland's future places:

Just Transition

Empowers people to shape their places and supports fair and inclusive net-zero transition.

Conserving and Recycling Assets

Makes productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, to lock in carbon and minimise waste.

Local Living

Improves health and wellbeing through easy local access to services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure.

Compact Urban Growth

Limits urban expansion to optimise land use for services and resources, including flood risk management and biodiversity.

Rebalanced Development

Targets development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline.

Rural Revitalisation

Encourages sustainable rural development, to grow and support urban and rural communities together.

By applying these principles, Scotland's spatial strategy supports the planning and delivery of three key Place themes: Sustainable – Liveable – Productive.

The Place Principle is being utilised to develop a shared understanding between partners and communities of what Fort William town centre is and what it wants to become.



Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

Challenges & Drivers

Changing Retail Habits

Changes in consumer behaviour

Reducing demand for retail floor space (The Fort William Town Centre Health Check notes that the vacancy rate has increased from 8.5% in 2018 to 12.3% in 2022.)

Increasing online shopping

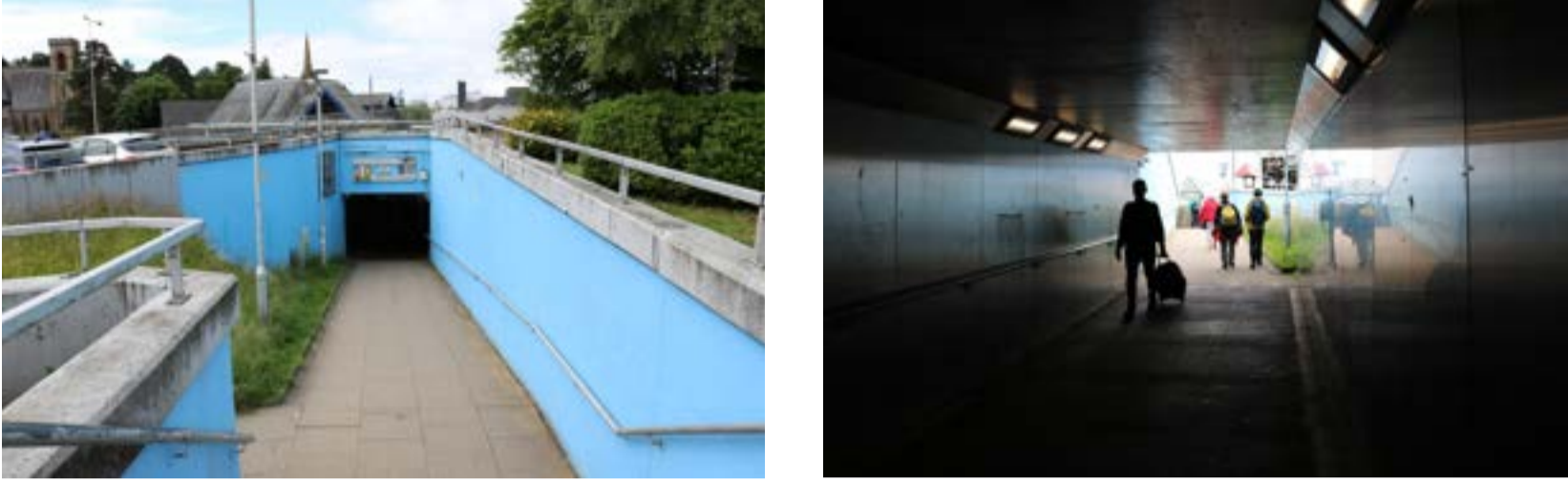
The proximity to the edge of town retail parks (Fort William and North Road)



Poor Arrival Experience

The first impression any visitor arriving by public transport (train or bus) gets of Fort William town centre currently is a supermarket car park.

The High Street is not visible and can realistically only be reached via a dark pedestrian underpass in a poor state of repair.



Lack of Connection to Loch Linnhe & The Old Fort

The town centre feels disconnected from Loch Linnhe. It has traditionally turned its back on the loch with limited points of visibility and physical connection to the High Street.

The A82, combined with the Supermarket Car Park make it difficult to visit the Old Fort, a real missed opportunity.



Lack of Residential Accommodation

There is a strong demand but a current lack of affordable residential accommodation within Fort William that is having a detrimental impact on the future prosperity and growth of the town.

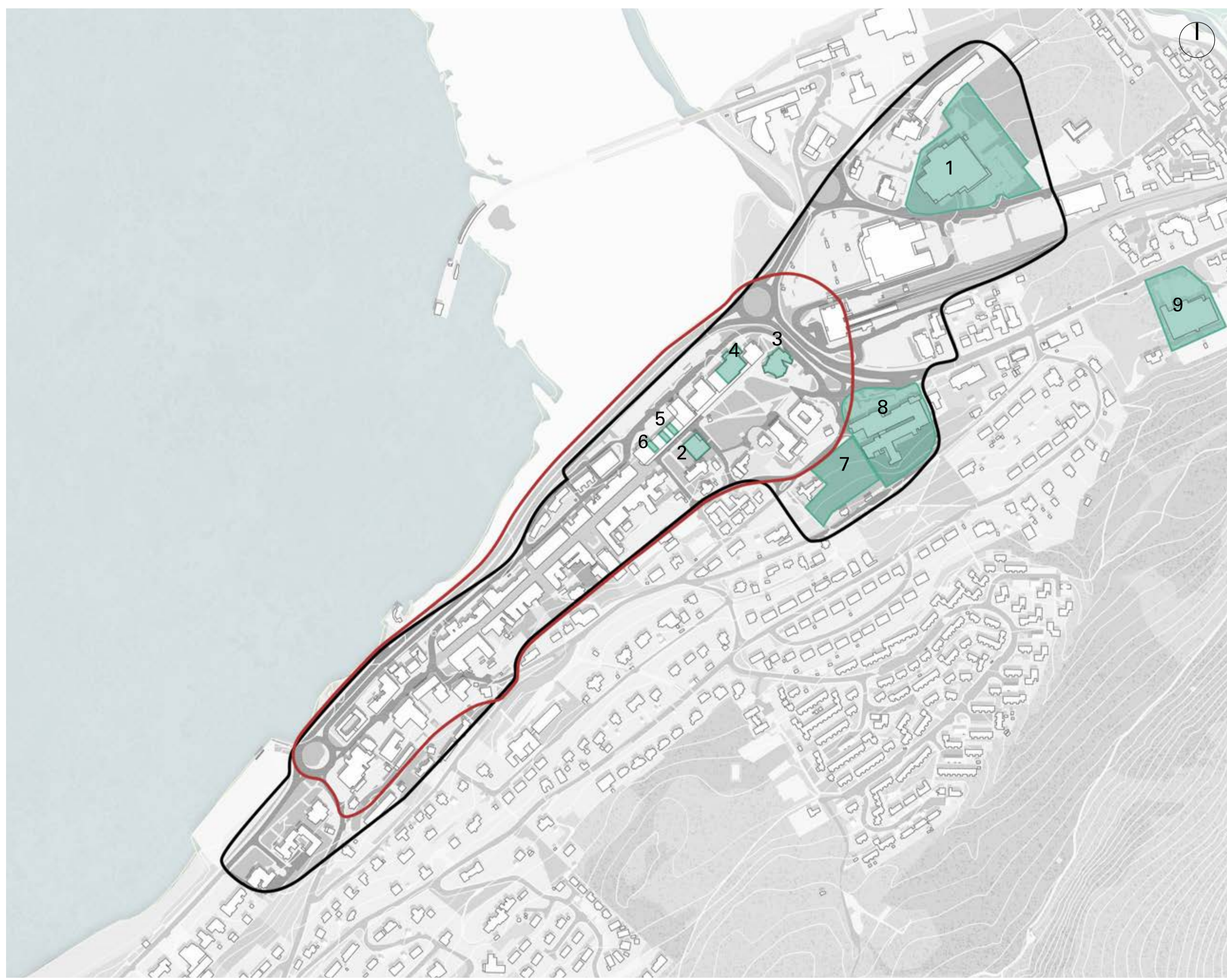


Positive Moves

When compared with other towns and cities throughout Scotland, Fort William town centre already contains a number of key ingredients to promote vibrancy and resilience and these form a great foundation upon which to build this masterplan framework.

A number of these positive moves can be defined as follows:

- Highland Cinema
- New Council / HIE Offices
- Garrison Hotel
- Whisky Centre Housing
- Tweeddale & Lochaber House Housing
- E-Bike Scheme
- Black Isle Bar
- Diversification of the High Street



Study Area

A concentrated and focused approach is the first key principle in the prescribed methodology for Vision Led Regeneration in order to prevent "spreading the jam too thin" by attempting to regenerate equally and simultaneously across the wider town centre.

The Masterplan defines a more focussed town centre boundary (red line) that 'feels' like the town centre as you experience it on the ground. It extends from the train and bus station area to the north, bringing the edge closer to the High Street, down to the West End Roundabout at the southern end of the High Street.

A number of key areas of opportunity (as shown in the adjacent map) lie beyond this concentrated town centre boundary (Nevis Centre, Lochaber Leisure Centre, Belford Hospital & former St. Mary's School site) and design proposals have also been considered for these.

This map also highlights a number of key assets and sites of opportunity that were identified as part of the initial project scope. These are as follows:

1. The Nevis Centre
2. Former Tesco Store
3. Nevisport
4. Former M&Co store
5. Former TSB branch
6. Former Council Service Point
7. Site of former Fort William RC Primary (St Mary's)
8. Current hospital site
9. Lochaber Leisure Centre site

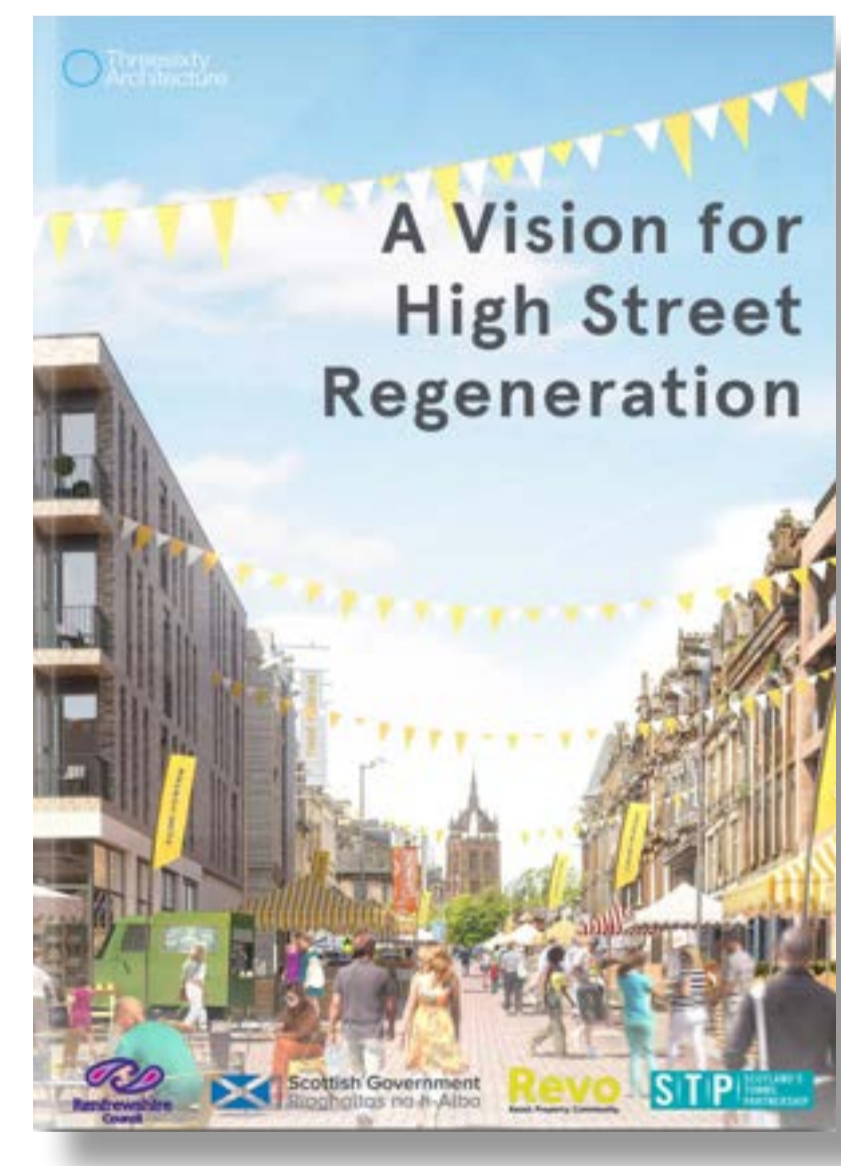
Approach & Methodology

The Masterplan seeks to show the kind of moves that will achieve an aspired quality of place and resilience for Fort William.

It is built on an understanding of Scottish Government guidance and what is working in other towns but is importantly a Fort William specific solution grounded in a depth of analysis and consultation.

A successful town centre core supports a vast diversity of functions and the ways we collectively use the town centre are wide ranging and complex. To structure a response around this complexity, we have followed the principles in the guidance 'A Vision for High Street Regeneration' developed by Threesixty Architecture in collaboration with The Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Revo.

We have employed the methodology and manifesto that structures the analysis and response into key sections.



Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

legible town

Responding to Community Feedback
'We need to improve connections and access to the lochside from the town centre'

Connectivity & Movement

Due to its predominantly rural context, it is essential that Fort William is well served by a joined up and effective public transport network.

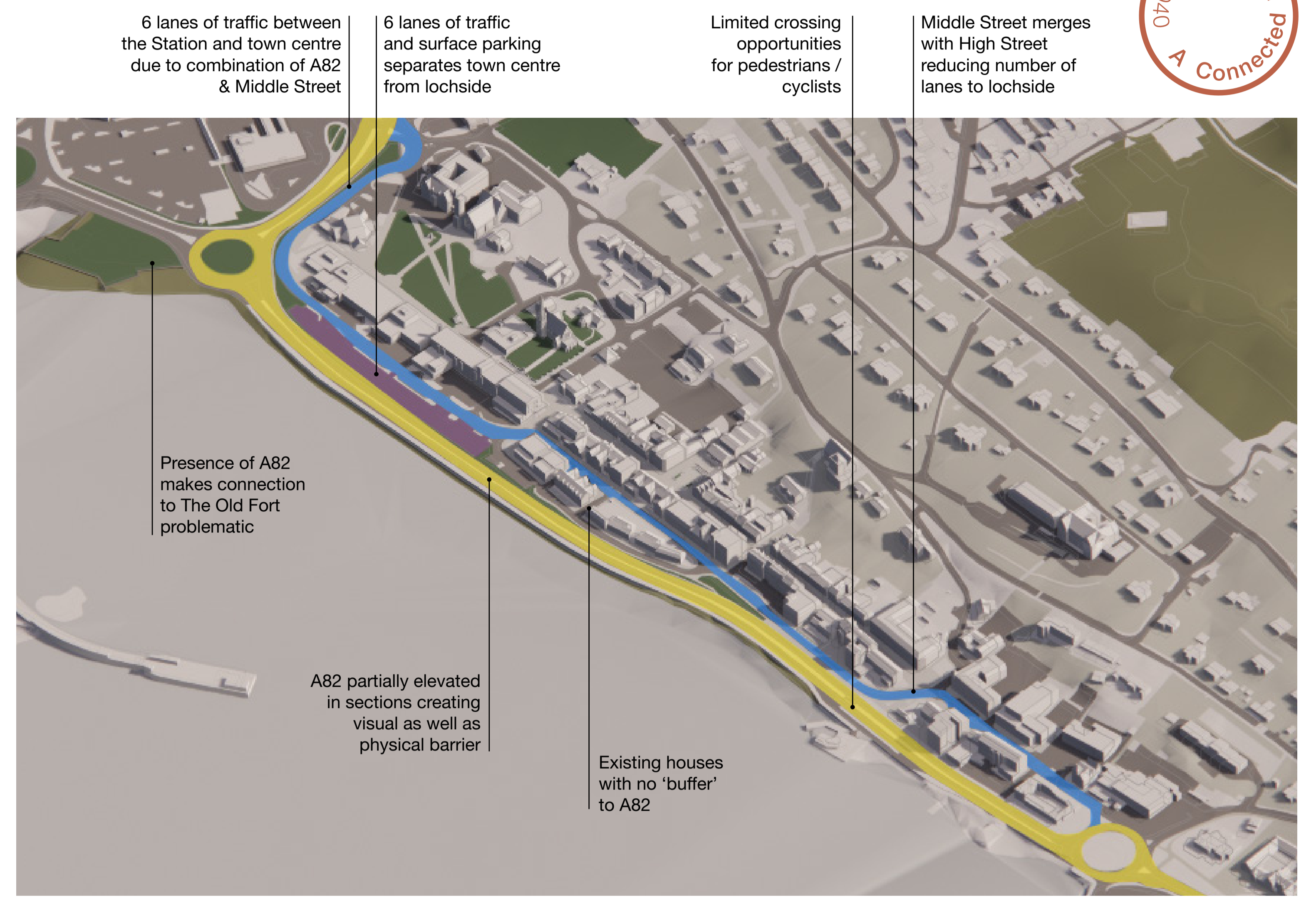
Working with our transport consultants Sweco, we have carried out a high level assessment of the current conditions for transport, accessibility and proximity to services. We have also explored opportunities for greater connectivity as part of the town centre masterplan proposals.

At present, anyone arriving by Public Transport at either the bus or train station can only access the town centre via an unattractive series of ramps and stairs that lead to an underpass due to the domineering presence of the A82.

The underpass severs any direct pedestrian link at street level and transforming this arrival experience for the better, encouraging greater visibility and legibility has been a key focus of this Masterplan.

In many locations, six lanes of traffic must be negotiated between the town centre and the edge of the loch. This is also the case upon approach to the town centre from the area around the train and bus stations. Indeed, the only means of safely reaching the High Street and historic Parade greenspace is via a pedestrian underpass.

Improving pedestrian connectivity and the physical environment around these elements is a key ambition of the masterplan proposals as shown below.



A82 & Middle Street: Barriers to Connectivity

Improving the Pedestrian Experience



Removal of Middle Street A82 Reduced Lanes



Concept Aerial View



Proposed Plan: Middle Street Removed & Reconnected Via A82 Junction

Reducing lanes on the A82 and the partial removal of Middle Street:

- Reduces the number of lanes adjacent to the train and bus station area, making a street level crossing easier
- Creates a large potential development site that would have active facades to both the Parade and the loch at this key gateway location
- Allows the introduction of a wider pedestrian and cycle route along the edge of the loch, better connecting to UHI and the Old Fort
- Permits the creation of a greened landscaped strip to the town centre side of the A82 to shield the existing residential buildings and exposed backs of properties, presenting a better 'face' to users of the A82
- Still permits access to Middle Street and to the required rear parking areas of Lochaber & Tweeddale House

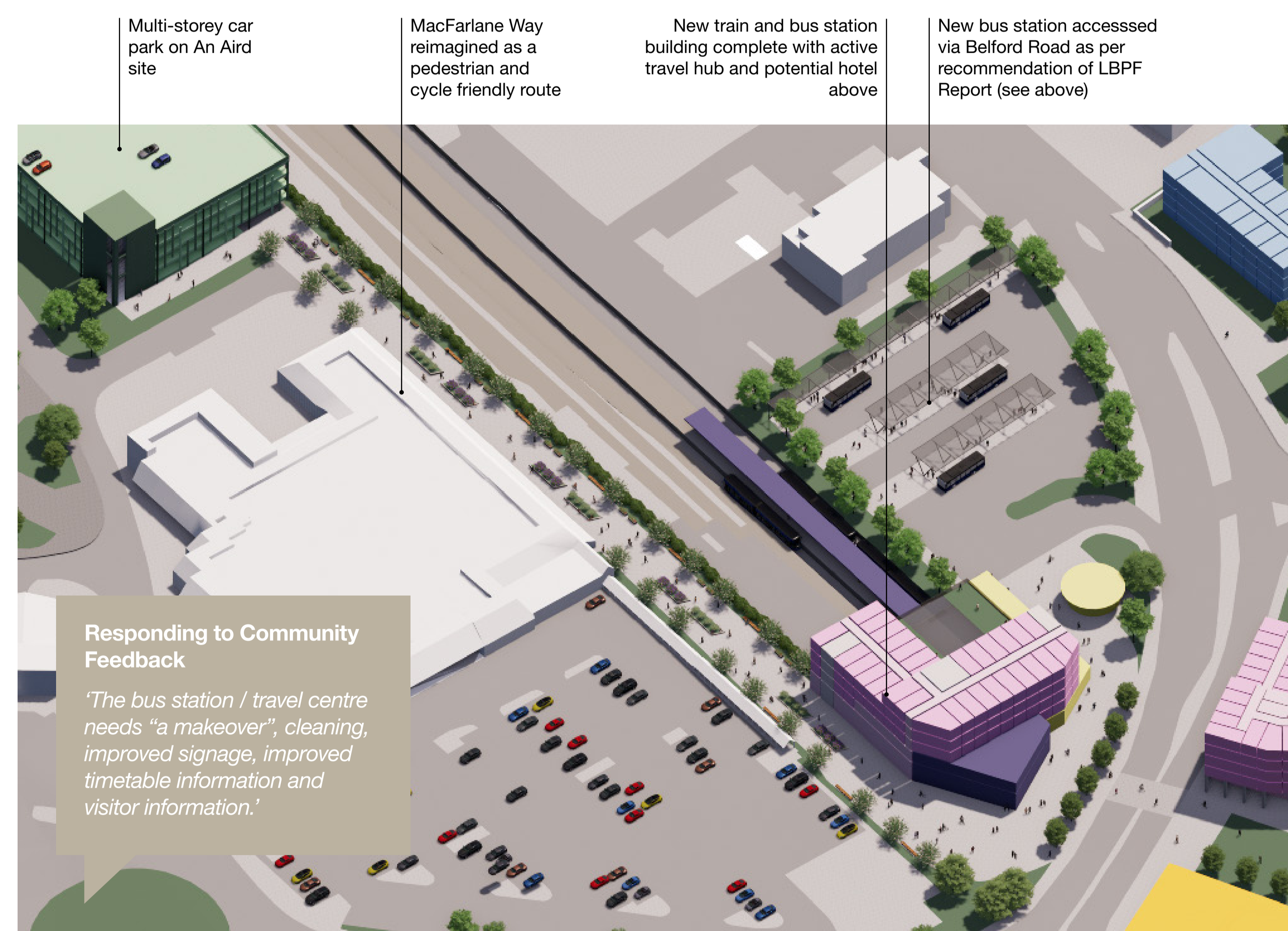
Public Transport: A Joined Up Approach

The masterplan proposes improvements to the public transport network (particularly the arrival experience) within Fort William town centre through a number of initiatives, namely:

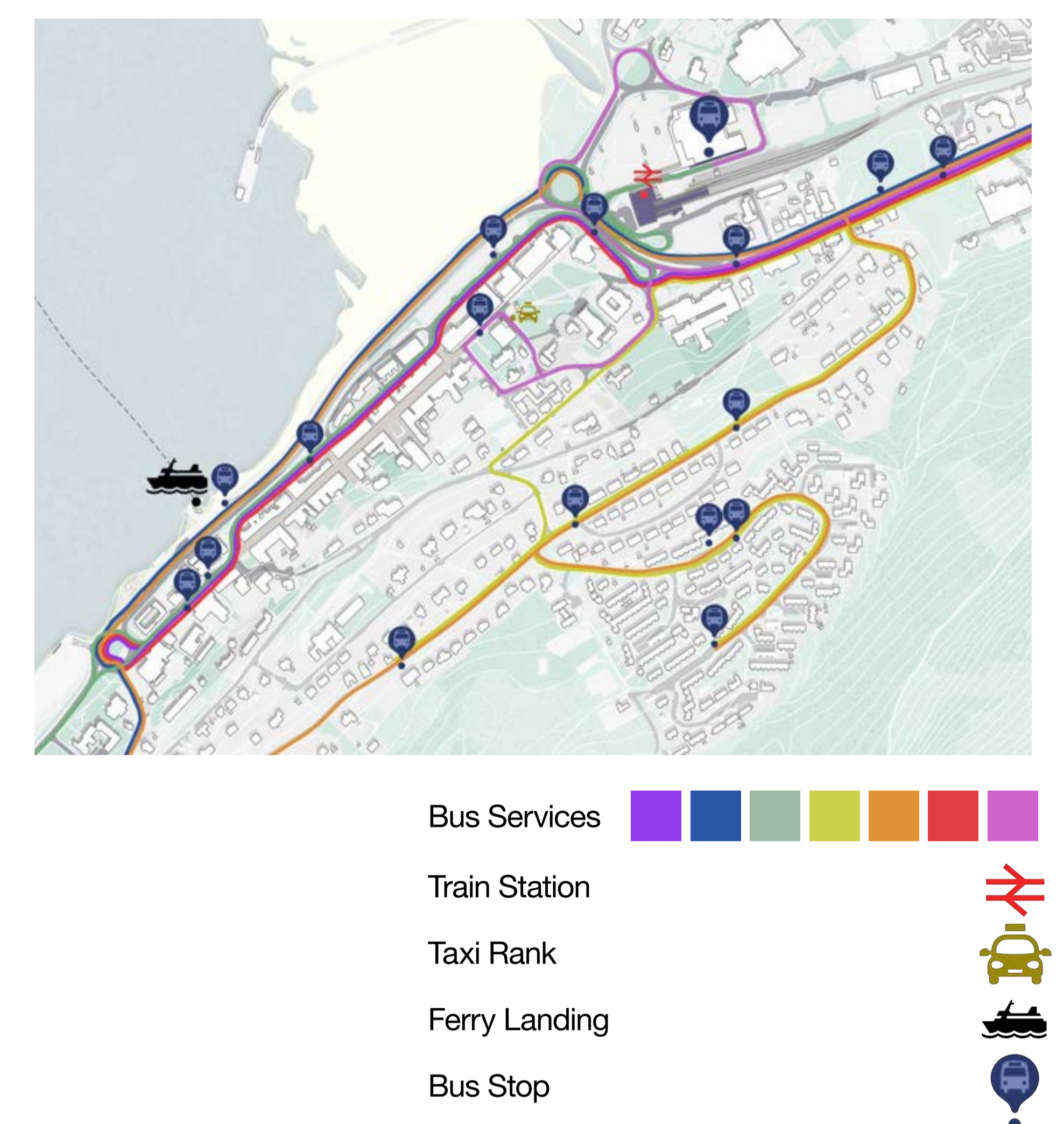
A New Bus Station: Creation of a new dedicated bus station, on the current Train Station Car Park, close to the existing facility. This would be augmented with an active travel hub. *(This bus station location has already been proposed as part of the Lochaber Bus Partnership Fund: Appraisal Report of April 2023, prepared for The Highland Council).*

A Transformed Train Station: Redevelopment of the train station to provide an enhanced passenger facilities, improved accessibility and waiting areas.

The proposals also suggest the incorporation of a hotel within the new building providing an appropriate massing and to take advantage of the views that this prominent site would afford. A new welcome space at the entrance to the station is proposed, with planting, seating, shelter and cycle parking.



Existing Public Transport Provision



Responding to Community Feedback
'We need better transport links, increased bus service provision and better local train connections.'

Car Parking

Journeys by car are important within Fort William and its wider rural catchment. There are large areas of car parking around and within the town centre; Morrisons Supermarket, the West End car park, right on the edge of Loch Linnhe, the centrally located Viewforth Car Park and the Middle Street Short Stay Car Park.

We have considered the balance of accommodating the car with the creation of human scaled urban place, especially in areas identified for repurposing or redevelopment.

The masterplan acknowledges the importance of car parking to the local community and seeks to safeguard parking wherever possible while still providing sufficient opportunities for development to transform the town's relationship with the loch and to create new 'gateways' into the town centre.

The adjacent map demonstrates the proposed public parking picture for the town centre that:

- Retains Viewforth Car Park in its entirety
- Retains the majority of the West End Car Park
- Reconfigures Middle Street Short Stay Car Park as part of a potential future development
- Retains parking at the current Nevis Centre site
- Adds a new Multi-Storey Car Park on the current An Aird Car Park site to replace the train station car park area and to provide a **town-wide net increase in parking provision**
- Disabled parking will be retained throughout the town centre either in or close to current locations to ensure accessibility is maintained.

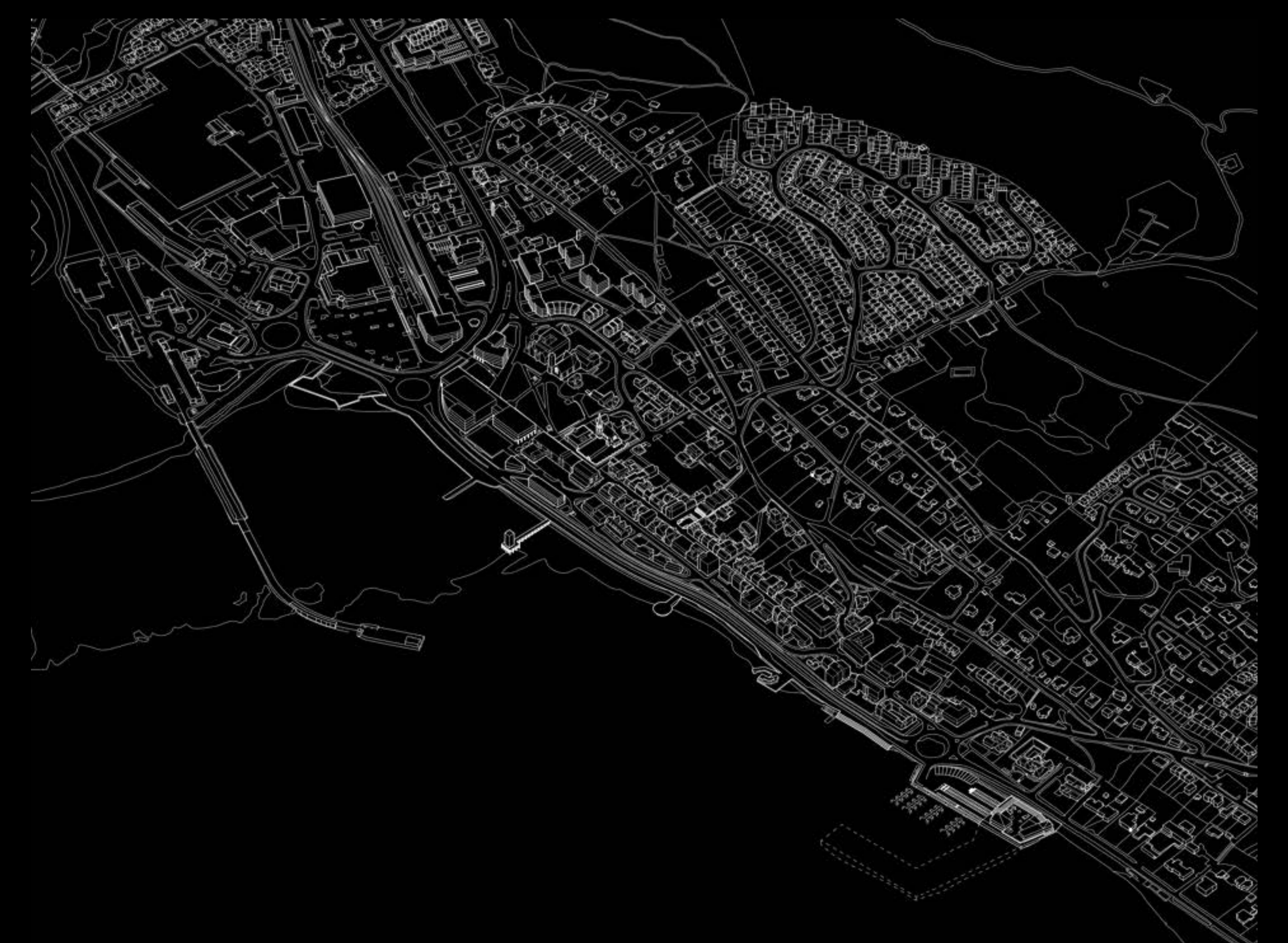
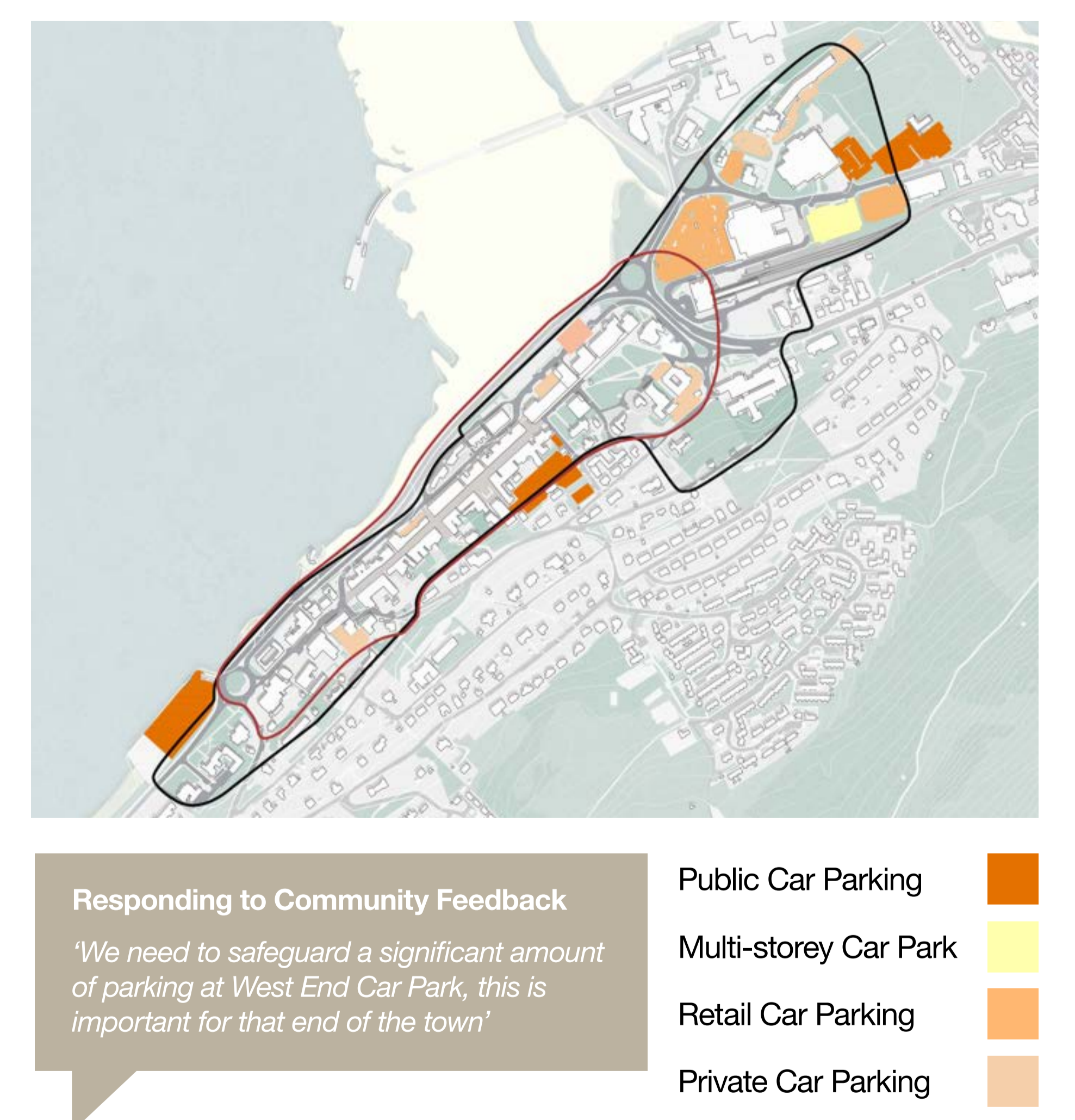


An Aird: New Multi-storey Car Park



Solar Canopies: Energy Generation & Shelter at Surface Parking Areas

Proposed Car Parking Provision



Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

legible town

Responding to Community Feedback
'We need better multi-use spaces for community events / festivals / markets and high quality street furniture'

An Improved, Permeable Public Realm

The historic street pattern of Fort William town centre follows the traditional herringbone pattern of narrow plots, closes and wynds off of the central spine of the High Street.

The masterplan proposes a series of potential interventions within the urban grain that positively transform the pedestrian experience.

This new urban realm plan for Fort William is the glue which will hold all the elements together to create a coherent and attractive environment for the town centre to function well.

Improvements to existing streets and spaces are proposed that, in tandem with a series of new permeable lanes and spaces strengthen connections from the High

Street, the spine of the town centre to the edge of Loch Linnhe and in turn the Old Fort, and to the train and bus station, thanks to the removal of the existing underpass.

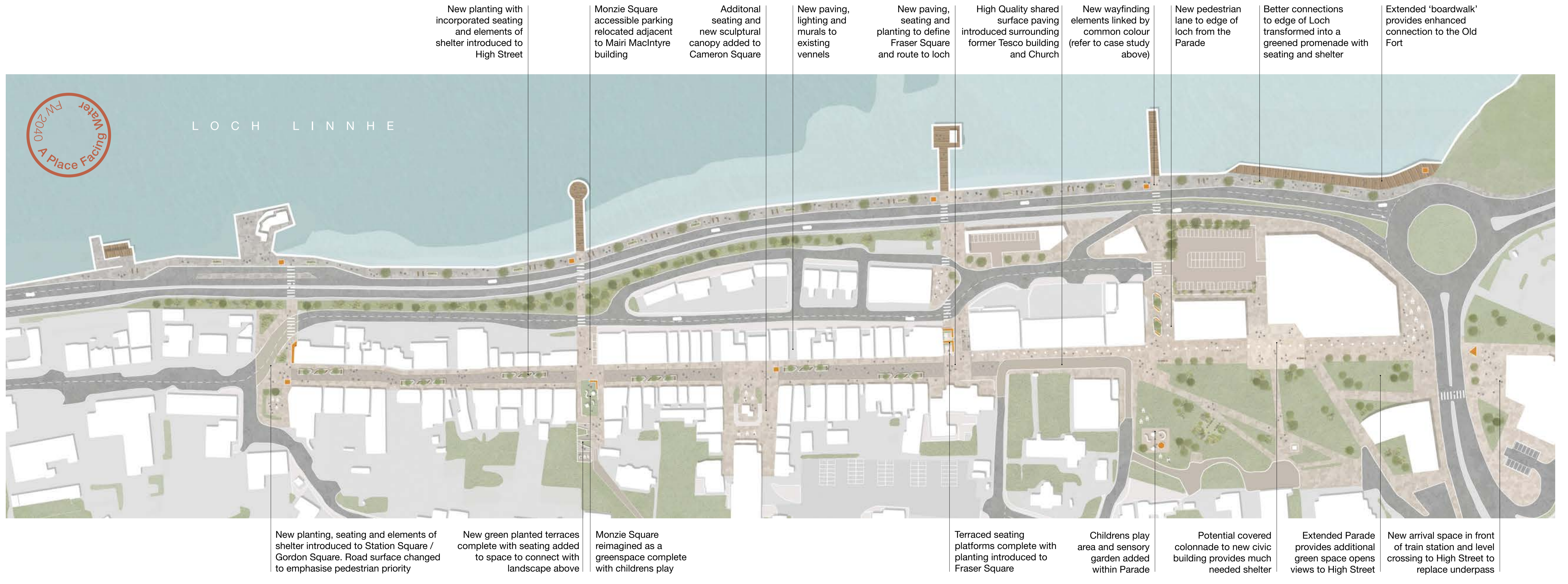
Due to the narrow form of the medieval closes and wynds, accessibility, lighting and security must be carefully considered in order to create environments which are safe for everyone.

The potential combination of moves is shown on the plan below.

Existing Pedestrian Movement



- Primary Pedestrian Route →
- Poor Quality Route ≡
- Important Town Element ●
- Walking Route ····
- NCR 78 Cycle Route —
- Barrier to Movement ⚡



- New planting with incorporated seating and elements of shelter introduced to High Street
- Monzie Square accessible parking relocated adjacent to Mairi Macintyre building
- Additional seating and new sculptural canopy added to Cameron Square
- New paving, lighting and murals to existing vennets
- New paving, seating and planting to define Fraser Square and route to loch
- High Quality shared surface paving introduced surrounding former Tesco building and Church
- New wayfinding elements linked by common colour (refer to case study above)
- New pedestrian lane to edge of loch from the Parade
- Better connections to edge of Loch transformed into a greened promenade with seating and shelter
- Extended 'boardwalk' provides enhanced connection to the Old Fort

- New planting, seating and elements of shelter introduced to Station Square / Gordon Square. Road surface changed to emphasise pedestrian priority
- New green planted terraces complete with seating added to space to connect with landscape above
- Monzie Square reimagined as a greenspace complete with childrens play
- Terraced seating platforms complete with planting introduced to Fraser Square
- Childrens play area and sensory garden added within Parade
- Potential covered colonnade to new civic building provides much needed shelter
- Extended Parade provides additional green space opens views to High Street
- New arrival space in front of train station and level crossing to High Street to replace underpass

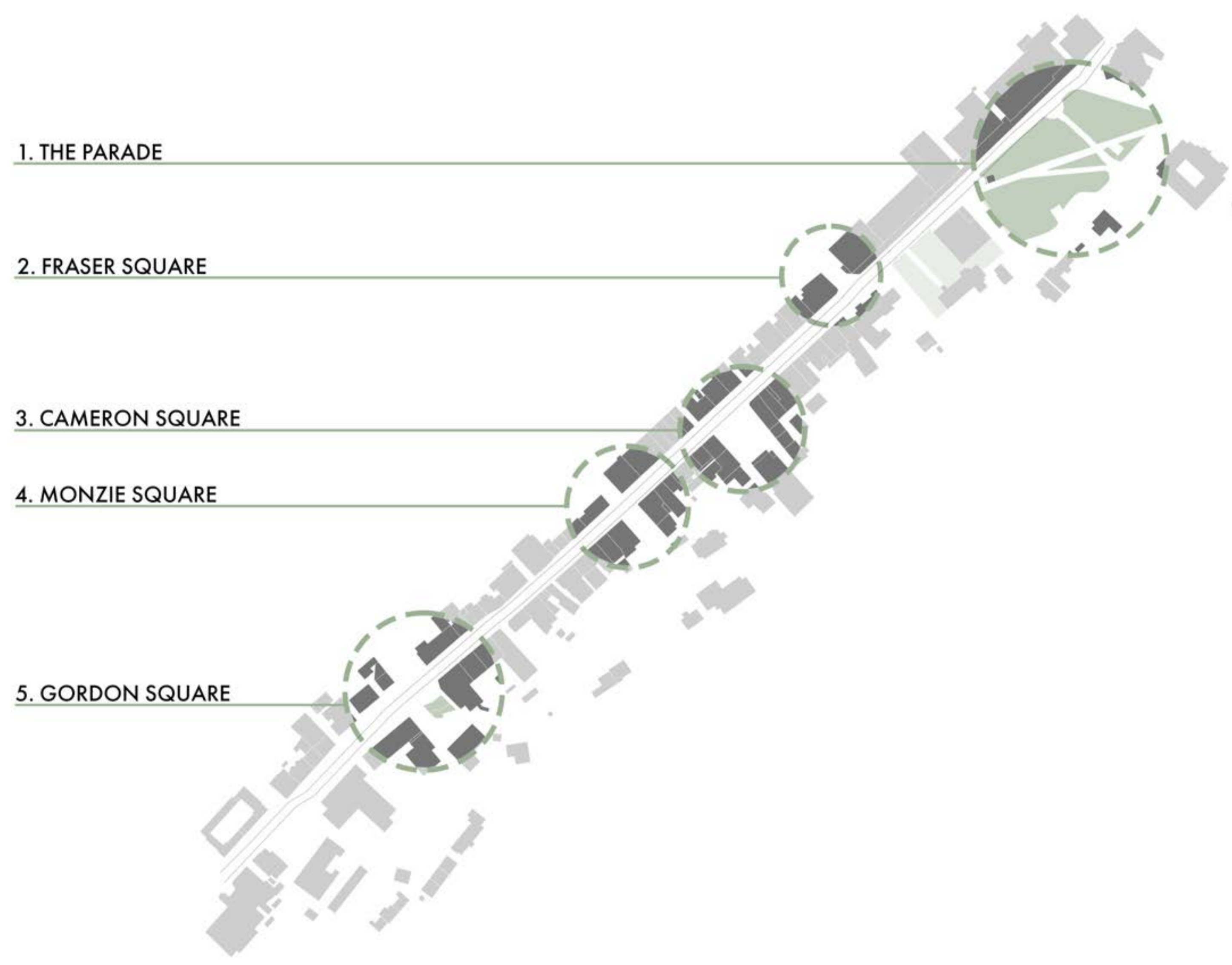
Gathering Places

Fort William town centre is fortunate to contain a number of significant public spaces at its heart with distinct natures.

The most significant of these are the Parade, a historic green space and Cameron Square, a hard landscaped civic square surrounded by cultural and leisure uses and with a canopy at its centre to encourage year round use.

A third space, Gordon Square, not only marks the start / end of the West Highland Way but is the only one of these spaces with a direct visual connection to Loch Linnhe.

A key focus of this Masterplan is to propose the creation of new 'place' wherever the opportunity arises throughout the town centre and has identified a number of existing spaces that could be improved to provide much needed human scaled gathering spaces, particularly connected to the central High Street 'spine'.



Existing Civic / Greenspace



- Key civic space ■
- Key civic greenspace ■
- Cemetery ■
- The Old Fort ■
- Active greenspace ■



Fraser Square Proposals



Monzie Square Proposals



Gordon Square Proposals



Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

living town

Responding to Community Feedback
'Introduce new adaptable and flexible housing for the elderly population to allow independent living'

Responding to Community Feedback
'There is currently a real lack of affordable private housing in Fort William, we need to build more'

New Town Centre Housing

From the feedback received as part of the Fort William Community Action Group consultation in 2019 (contained in the Fort William Locality Plan), there is a perception among the local population that there is a lack of housing and affordable options to rent or buy.

Fort William town centre has already benefitted from the introduction of new homes right on the High Street thanks to the repurposing of Tweeddale House and Lochaber House, and the new build development on the Whisky Centre site, completed in 2019.

Within the comments received as part of the FW2040 consultation there was a call for the introduction of additional residential accommodation for the ageing population (including care home provision) in a central location to ensure care needs were being met.

This masterplan shows a framework that focuses on the introduction of residential in a variety of types, tenures and affordability. This ensures that we appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

The FW2040 Vision seeks to create a 'Great Place to Live' and there is a stated ambition to increase the number of homes in a variety of tenures throughout Fort William and the wider Lochaber area.

While the town centre alone cannot provide the projected level of new homes it can be an active contributor in meeting these ambitious targets.

Through stakeholder engagement it has been identified that there is a need for new residential accommodation to serve the expanded hospital at Blar Mhor, protect existing workforce levels and to permit growth at key local employers.

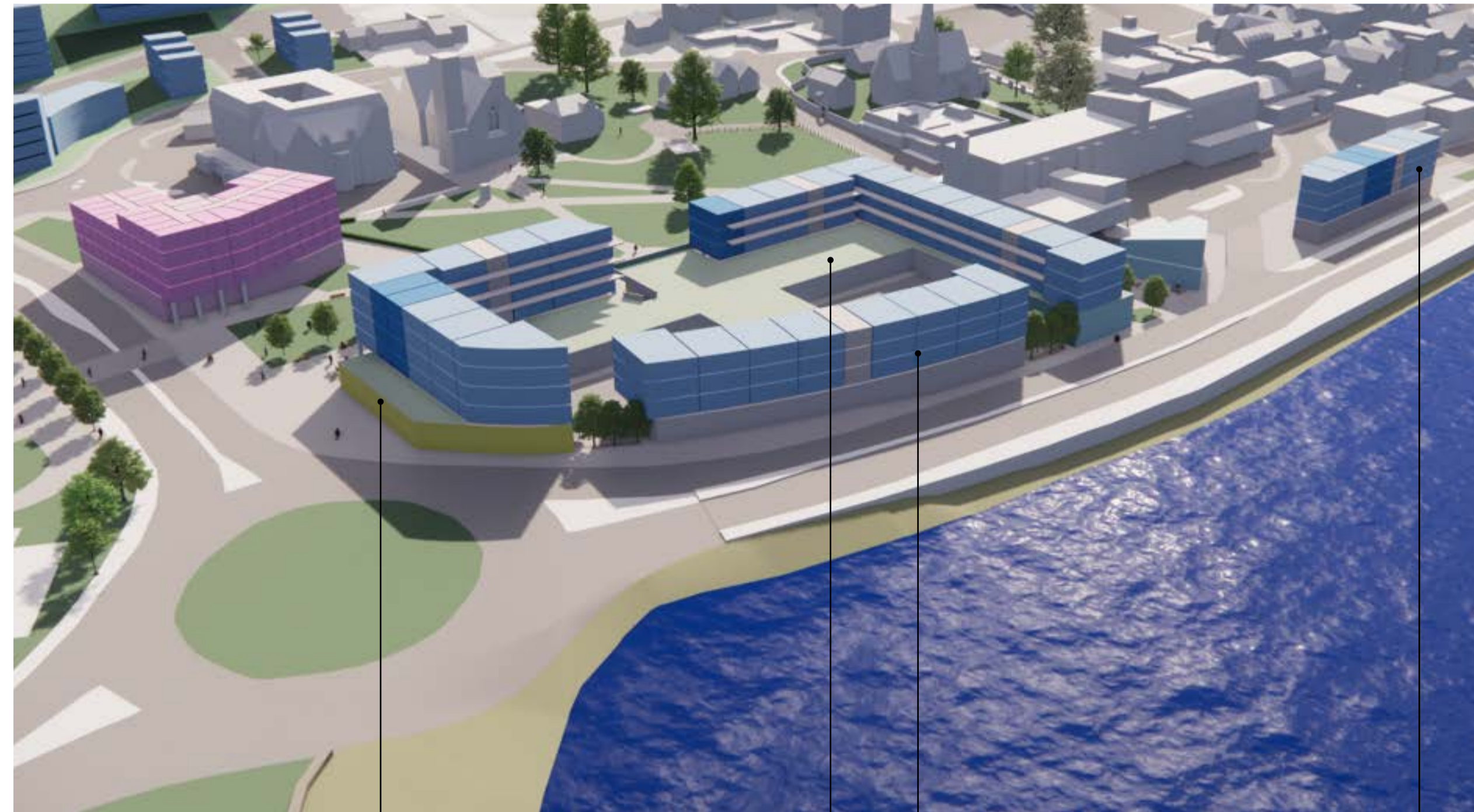


Former M&Co / Library Site



Concept Proposals

Above: View from Train Station
Right: Aerial views in context



A Key gateway site

This location provides an opportunity to introduce a significant amount of new residential in the form of a mixed use block / blocks that could contain a variety of tenures (private for sale, mid market rent, social rent, later living etc.) over an active ground floor and with car parking provided in the depth of the block.

The sketch proposal shown here is of a scale that gives a sense of enclosure to The Parade, provides a new lochside 'face' for the town centre and safeguards activity at street level, vital for town centre vibrancy.

Potential to provide circa 80 new homes

This site has also been explored as a new home for the Nevis Centre (refer to the Vibrant Town board for details)

Active ground floor accommodation at key 'gateway' corner with residential above

Residents amenity garden over active ground floor and parking area in centre of block

New residential units facing Loch linthe

New linear residential block with parking beneath

Hospital / St. Mary's Site

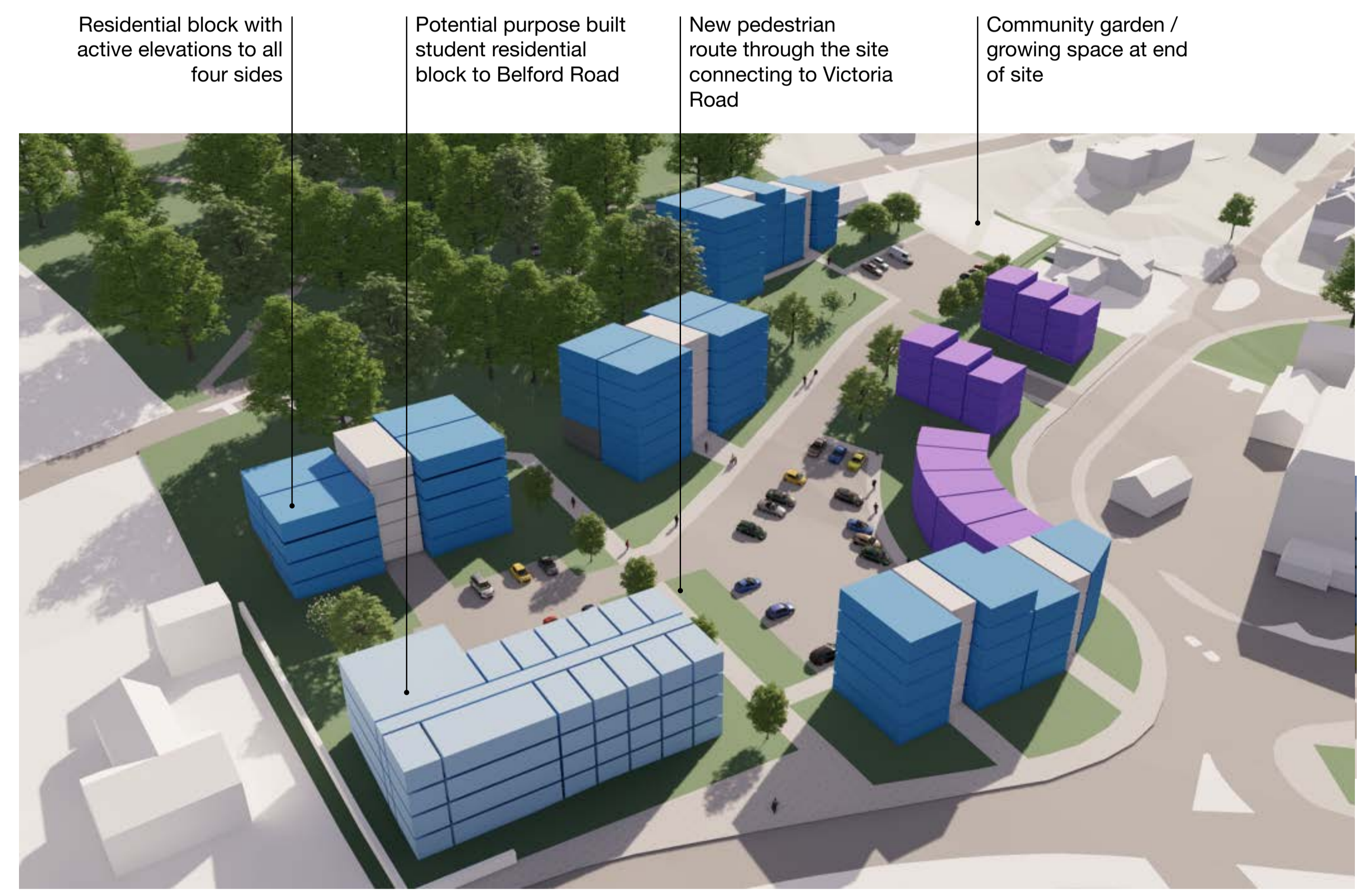
A significant residential opportunity

The combined hospital and former school sites are located on the edge of the town centre and in close proximity to both bus and train stations.

By maximising building footprints on the levelled 'platform' that houses the current hospital building and working sympathetically with the remainder of the site and its challenging topography it is possible to create a large residential development that could consist of a variety of types and tenures as shown here.

Vehicular access to the site has been moved away from Belford Road to a position on Fassifern Road, some distance back from the existing junction to maximise visibility.

Potential to provide circa 85 new homes (excl. potential student block)



Residential block with active elevations to all four sides

Potential purpose built student residential block to Belford Road

New pedestrian route through the site connecting to Victoria Road

Community garden / growing space at end of site

working town

Responding to Community Feedback
'Introduce measures to encourage business start-ups in the town centre'

Through our analysis we found that there is a lack of available co-work office space and maker spaces within Fort William town centre.

The masterplan proposes the incorporation of new opportunities for workplace within the town centre.

These new spaces could take over vacant retail properties at street level, providing a place for craft with a showroom component that would enliven the town centre and further diversify the offer on the High Street. Creative office space could be an ideal use to revitalise vacant upper levels over retail in many of the historic buildings within the town centre.



Town Centre Workplace Opportunities



The diagram above identifies a number of opportunities to introduce workplace to the heart of the town centre through a mixture of upper floor conversion, occupation of vacant or under-let street level retail units and the potential repurposing of a number of individual buildings.

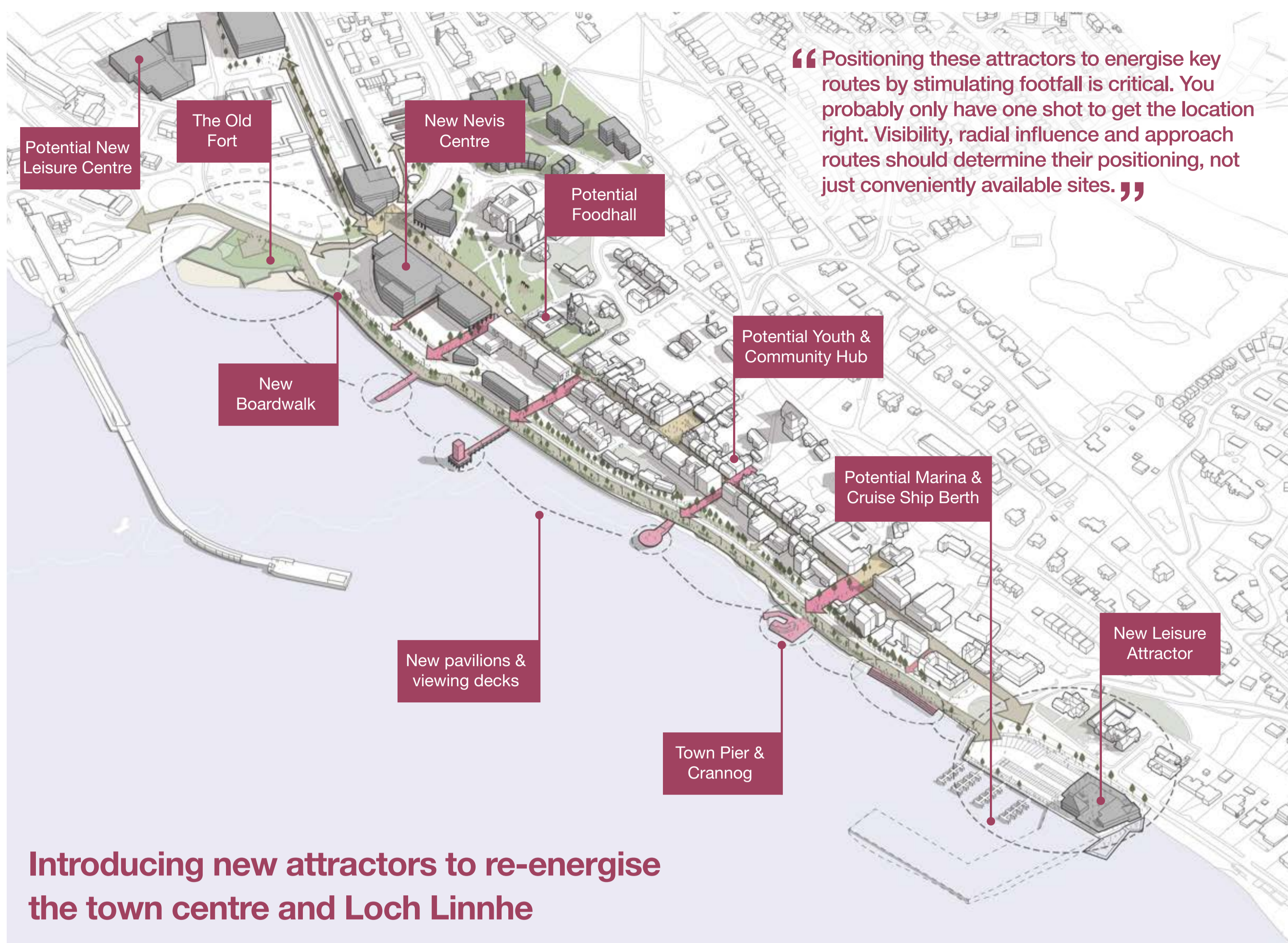


Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

vibrant town

Responding to Community Feedback
'Multiple responses expressed support for a town market (crafts, unpackaged fresh produce, and particularly a farmers market'

Responding to Community Feedback
'We need a wider range of entertainment offerings in the evening, particularly for families after 5pm'



Introducing Attractors

Social and cultural attractors are a major catalyst for positive change and offer important opportunities to drive more visits into the town centre. From community and civic destinations, to cultural centres, cinemas and European-style food halls, these uses can bring new life to old, cherished buildings.

In terms of existing attractors within Fort William town centre, the Highland Cinema on Cameron Square has had a positive and transformative effect. Adjacent to this, the West Highland Museum has ambitions to expand its offer.

Fort William benefits from a number of cultural and tourist attractions in the surrounding area (Inverlochy Castle, Ben Nevis Distillery, Lochaber Geopark etc.) and as the 'Outdoor Capital of the UK' attracts a huge proportion of its visitors from the walking, climbing, skiing and mountain biking community.

The Fort that gives the town its name has great potential in its position on the edge of Loch Linnhe but at the moment is difficult to reach on foot. This study seeks to maximise the potential of the Old Fort and the Loch as a significant 'attractor' for Fort William through forging stronger pedestrian connections from the town centre and creating an attractive environment with activity and potential to dwell for locals and tourists alike.

The Masterplan proposes potential additional uses that stimulate the day and evening economy with appeal to a wider demographic of residents and visitors.



A New Nevis Centre: An Essential Civic & Cultural Facility

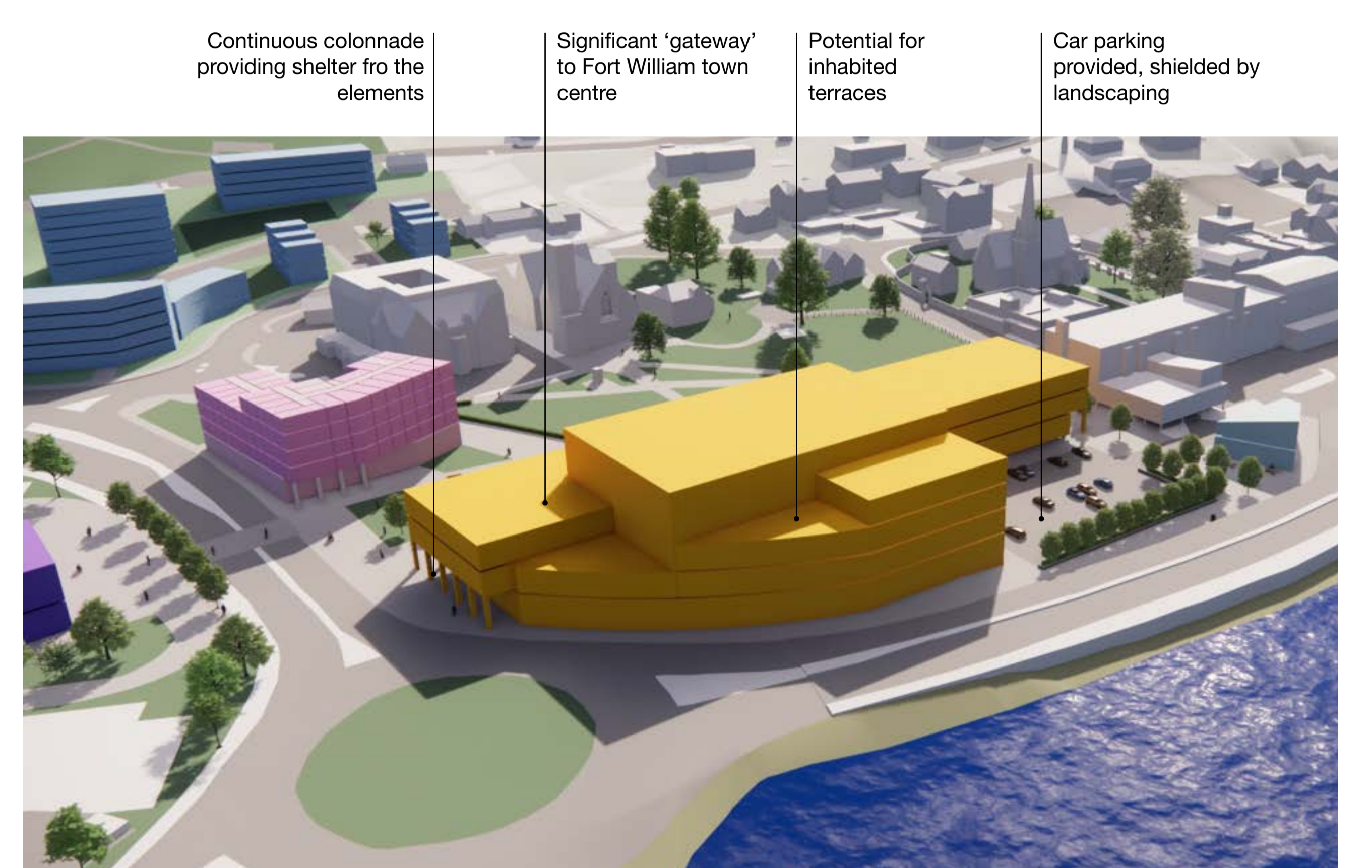
A study was undertaken in 2020 to develop options for a replacement facility. It recommended a new building with a civic / cultural focus. This is one of the key projects of the FW2040 Vision.

The Masterplan evaluated a number of potential locations and positions a new Nevis Centre adjacent to the Parade, a key 'gateway' location.

A new library and learning hub could also be incorporated as part of any new facility, as recommended by the options report.

The new building would permit the creation of active routes from the High Street to the Loch and Fort and still safeguard an element of public surface parking as shown.

The plan and sketches shown are indicative only and serve to highlight a potential approach to the site, not a developed scheme.



Responding to Community Feedback
'We need a dedicated cultural venue with a theatre space that would also draw in people from surrounding areas'

Responding to Community Feedback
'Consider a water sports centre to attract young people'
'We need better access to Loch Linnhe for wild swimming, this has positive physical and mental health benefits'
'The west end of the town looks depressing with nothing to attract visitors'



A New Leisure Attractor

Leisure uses are a vital component of any town centre. They offer considerable benefits to the local population in terms of activity, employment and wealth generation.

Introducing water based leisure activities on Loch Linnhe could be a welcome addition to the existing town centre offer and a catalyst for the transformation of the town's relationship with the loch.

Tourism is crucially important to the economy of Fort William and the introduction of new leisure attractors to provide a greater choice of activity will be essential to the future health of this market.

The West End Car Park is a significant component of the car parking that serves Fort William, however as an entry point to the town centre and a space with a direct connection to Loch Linnhe, it provides the opportunity to introduce a new 'gateway' building that announces the town centre from the western approach and establishes an active relationship with the loch whilst safeguarding a significant proportion of the existing parking.

It is envisaged as a leisure-led facility that could contain the following uses:

- Cruise passenger welcome centre
- Watersports hub
- Safe swimming zone
- Children's soft play and ten-pin bowling, to replicate these popular elements contained within the current Nevis Centre
- Other complementary leisure uses (mini golf etc)
- Cafe / bar
- External viewing area and childrens play deck overlooking the loch

Meanwhile Uses

Transformation takes time and not all proposals will be delivered in the short-term.

There is ample opportunity to enliven existing underused spaces and places within the town centre to create immediate vibrancy and impact in the short term. This could happen at different times of the year allowing 'pop-up' creative leisure or cultural ventures to make an impact and stimulate interest and activity.

Interventions of a 'meanwhile' nature on even part of a site can permit a phased approach to the delivery of larger developments, preventing their lying dormant and inactive in their entirety for the duration of their often complicated and protracted design, procurement and construction.

Opportunities for meanwhile uses within the town centre, now and in future



External Sites Buildings / Spaces

outer spaces nationwide

Outer Spaces, a national charity, have a vision for new, local, culture-led neighbourhood and community renewal.

Working collaboratively with artists, organisations and commercial property owners they temporarily occupy and activate empty commercial spaces, offering studios and workplace in vacant retail, office and industrial units.

Operating throughout Scotland in a number of towns and cities, including Glasgow their projects transform closed and boarded-up shops, streetscapes and empty commercial centres into highly visible, colourful, inviting spaces where people can experience the arts first hand.

gap filler christchurch, new zealand

Following the earthquake in 2011, while the government looked at the long term reconstruction over 100 citizen led projects sprung up all over the city, from community gardens, markets housed in shipping containers, cycle repair, temporary co-working spaces and performance venues.

These brought much needed activity back to the heart of the city, assisted in speeding the recovery and informed government investments.

More than 70 of these were conceived and organised by Gap Filler, an arts based community action group.

They created, amongst other things, a cycle powered cinema, a performance venue constructed from wooden pallets and a giant interactive outdoor arcade game.

They continue to innovate and come up with fresh meanwhile uses to this day.



Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

responsible town

It is important that this masterplan for Fort William town centre enshrines the shared values of the town, particularly equality and inclusivity.

Alongside this the town centre has a role to play in responding to the climate change challenge by delivering on the various strategies, increasing density and making the best use of what we have already.

Repurpose & Repair



A Presumption for Retrofit: A Carbon conscious approach

With the ongoing de-carbonisation of the grid, the carbon battle will increasingly focus on embodied carbon rather than just operational.

The carbon is locked ('spent') in existing structures and repurposing or extending these can take advantage of this investment. This is enshrined in national policy (NPF4).

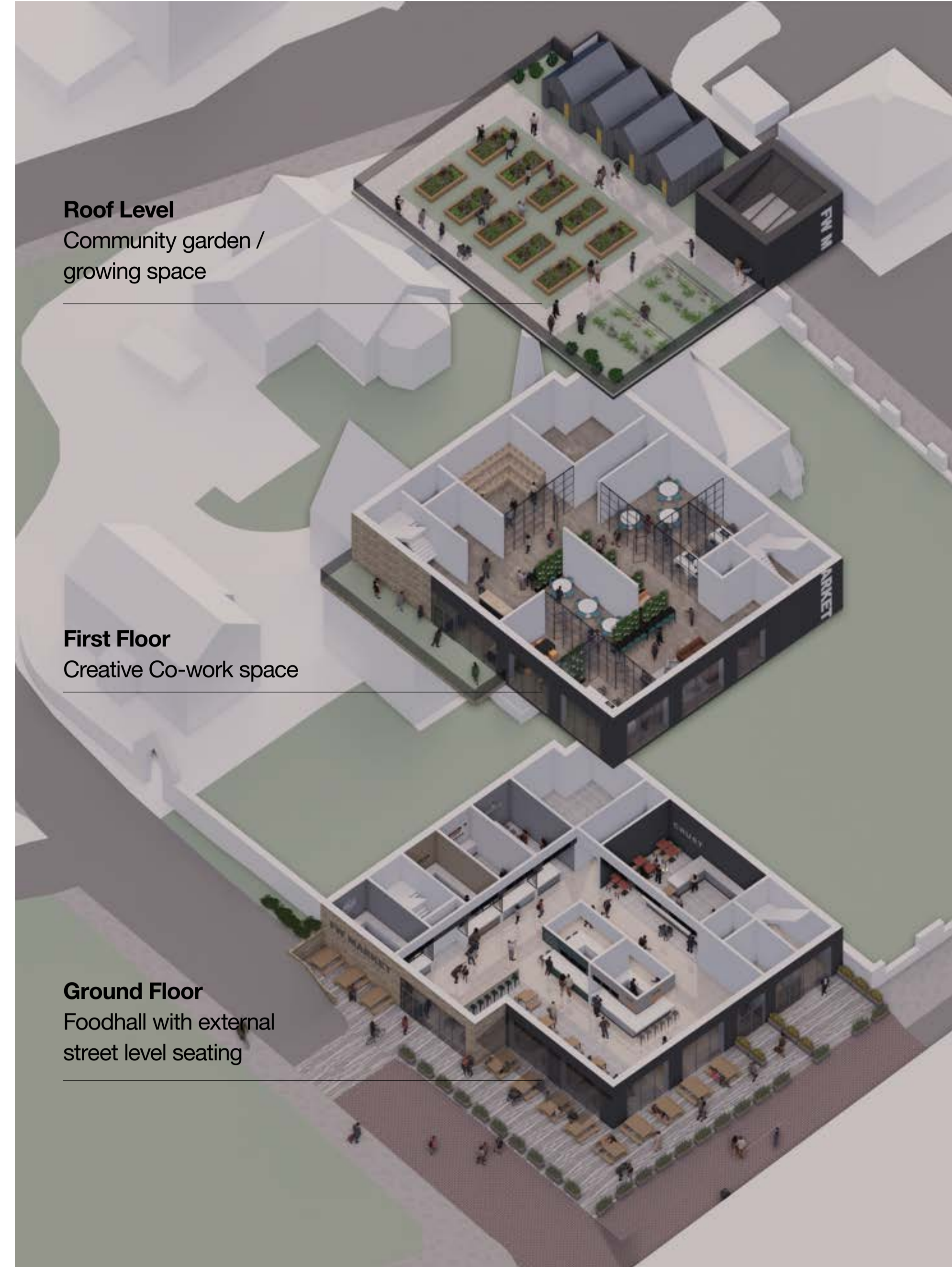
Upgrading and reusing existing buildings, rather than demolishing and building new, can dramatically improve a building's energy efficiency and implement substantial energy and carbon savings.

The Masterplan showcases the potential of two town centre buildings, the former Tesco Unit at the Parade and the 'Mairi Macintyre' building on High Street / Monzie Square.

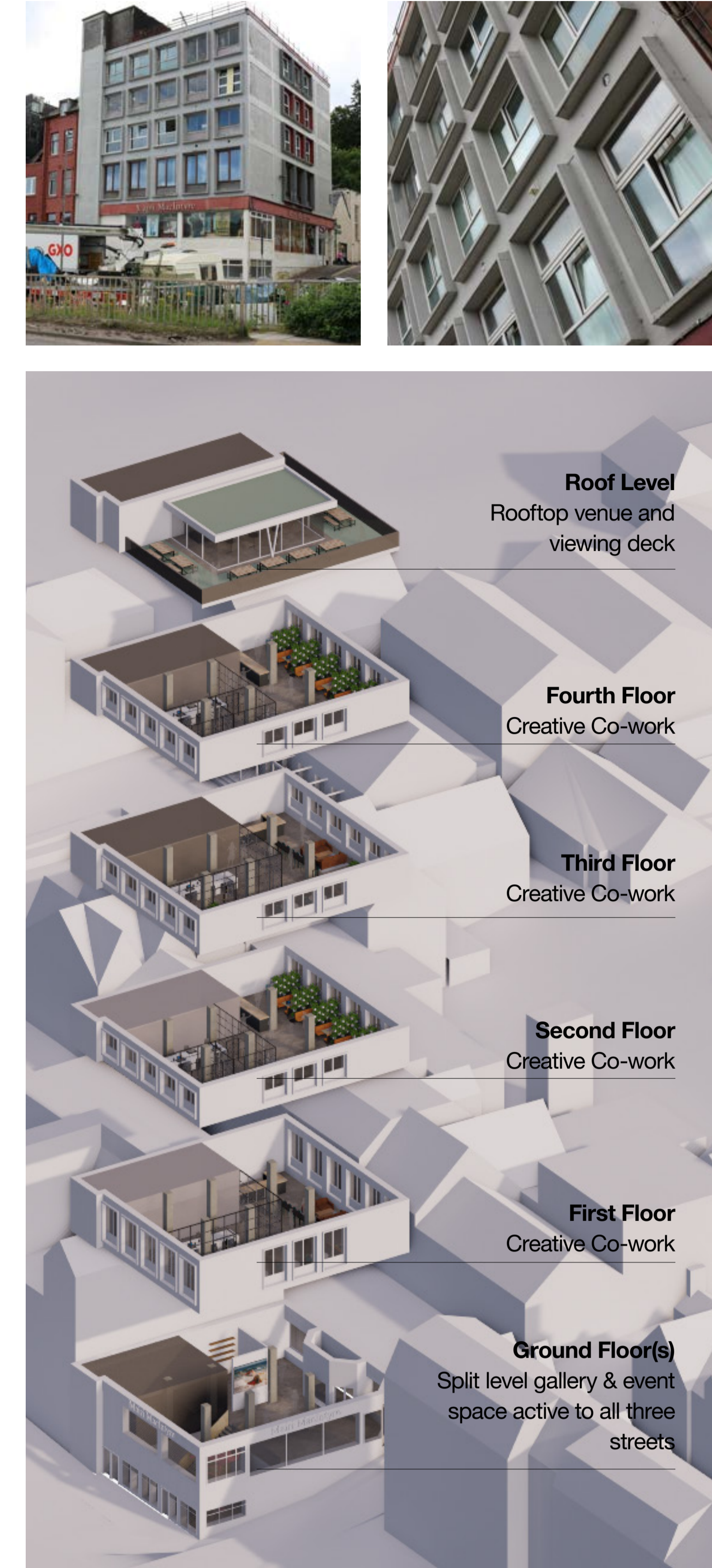
It also identifies opportunities where the introduction of new uses can be combined with replacement of buildings / facades that are detrimental to the quality of the urban environment.

It's important that any new interventions are of a high quality and make a positive contribution and at the same time enable the town to meet its net zero targets.

The Masterplan indicates considered volumes, height and density of development and suggests through precedent, a level of quality that is appropriate within its surroundings.



Former Tesco Building: Potential Mixed-use Repurposing Opportunity



'Mairi Macintyre' Building: Potential Repurposing Opportunity

kollider, sheffield

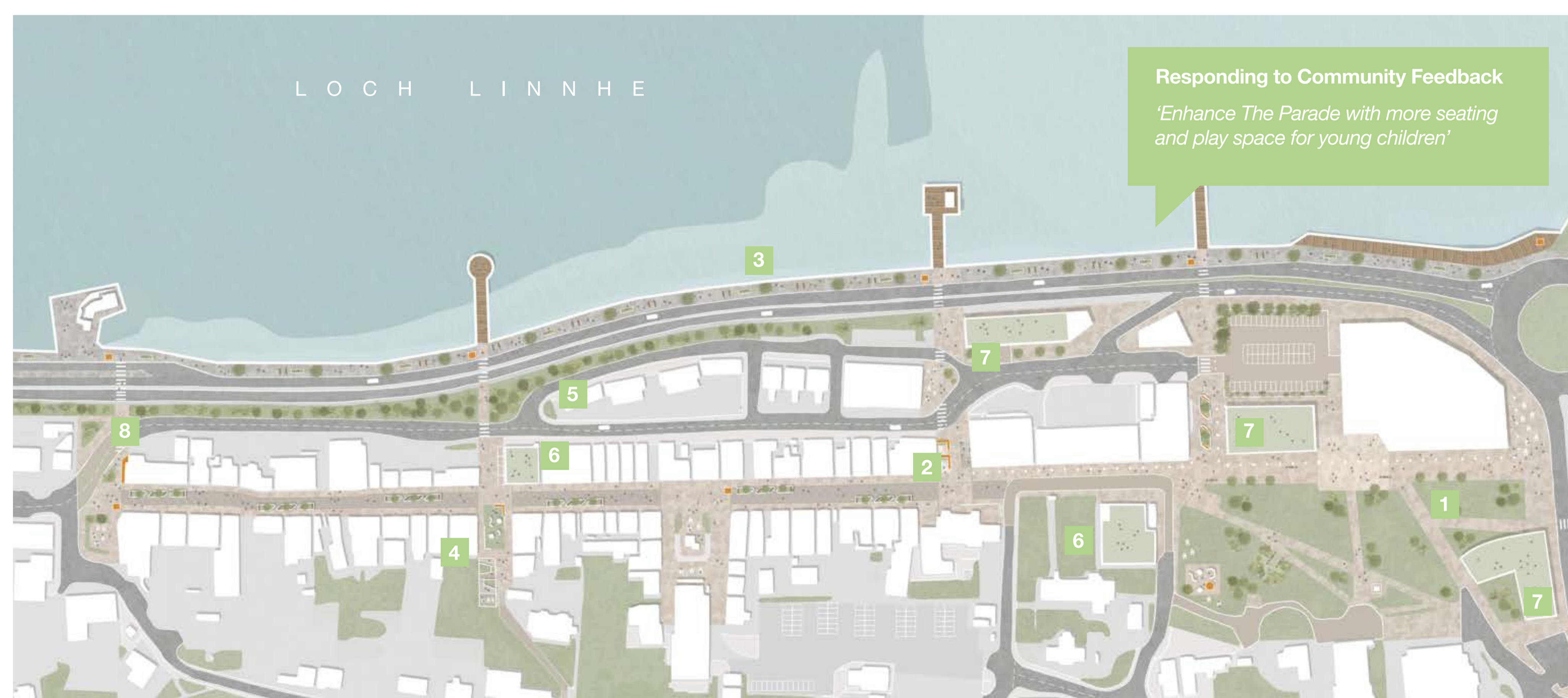


This listed former Co-op department store and well known city landmark has been transformed following the departure of the retailer into a multi-use community hub.

At street level, Kollider is home to Kommune, a 16,000 sqft european style foodhall offering a diverse choice of great tasting food by local operators, an artisanal bakery and specialty coffee, independent retail and an iconic bar.

Above the food hall the building contains the following diverse uses:

- The National Videogame Museum
- Kochoost, a series of impressive events and meeting spaces, including the listed former boardroom
- Kollider Eagle Lib, home to a myriad of start-up and high growth tech, digital and creative businesses, developed in partnership with Barclays.



Greening Opportunities within the Town Centre

Key Moves

1. Extended and improved Parade greenspace
2. Street trees and Rain garden planting introduced to High Street
3. Trees and planting to enhanced promenade to edge of loch
4. Monzie Square transformed with green terrace planting and childrens play space
5. Extensive planted buffer created adjacent to A82
6. Green roofs introduced to repurposed buildings
7. Green roofs to proposed new buildings
8. Additional planting areas to Station Square

Fort William: A Green Place

The FW2040 Vision is organised around 5 key themes, one of which is 'A Place that addresses the Climate Emergency'. Being a town with a strong sustainable agenda could be a unique part of Fort William's identity, attracting a population and businesses that are increasingly aware and concerned about living and operating responsibly.

With the exception of the Parade, there is very little green space within the town centre. The Masterplan introduces greenery and planting of a variety of types throughout the town centre, increasing biodiversity, improving well-being and encouraging healthy living practices.

The Parade: Fort William's Key Greenspace

The significance of the space in terms of its history and its use as a gathering space for memorialising is respected and retained but the proposals seek to increase its size and introduce (or reintroduce) other uses that serve all members of the wider community.

A dedicated area of childrens play with seating and shelter is proposed, along with the reintroduction of a leisure use.

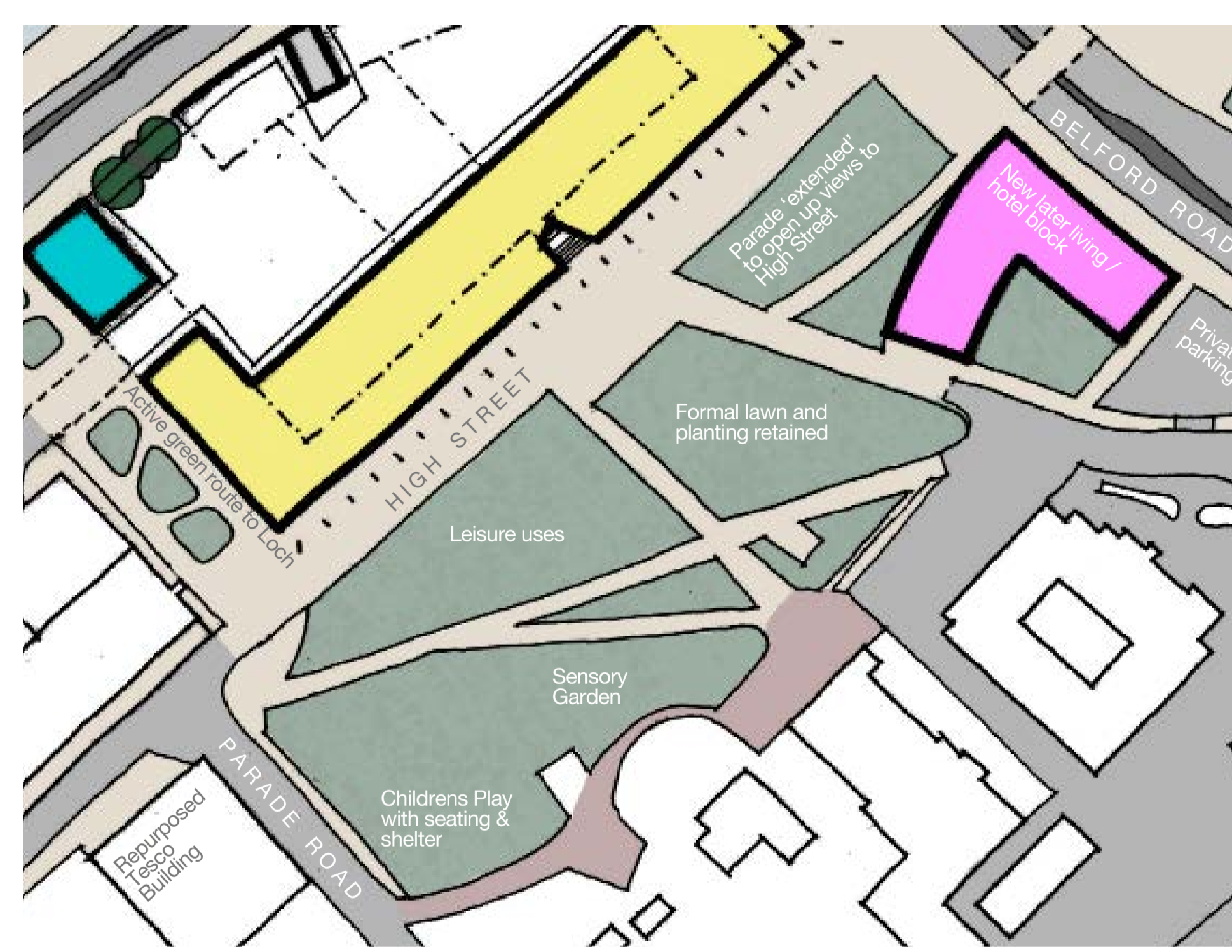
Finally, primarily for the elderly community, a stimulating area of sensory planting with seating is proposed.



Monzie Square:
A New 'Pocket Park' with Childrens Play



The Parade:
Extended & Revitalised with Additional Uses



Include: A Fort William Town Centre For Everyone

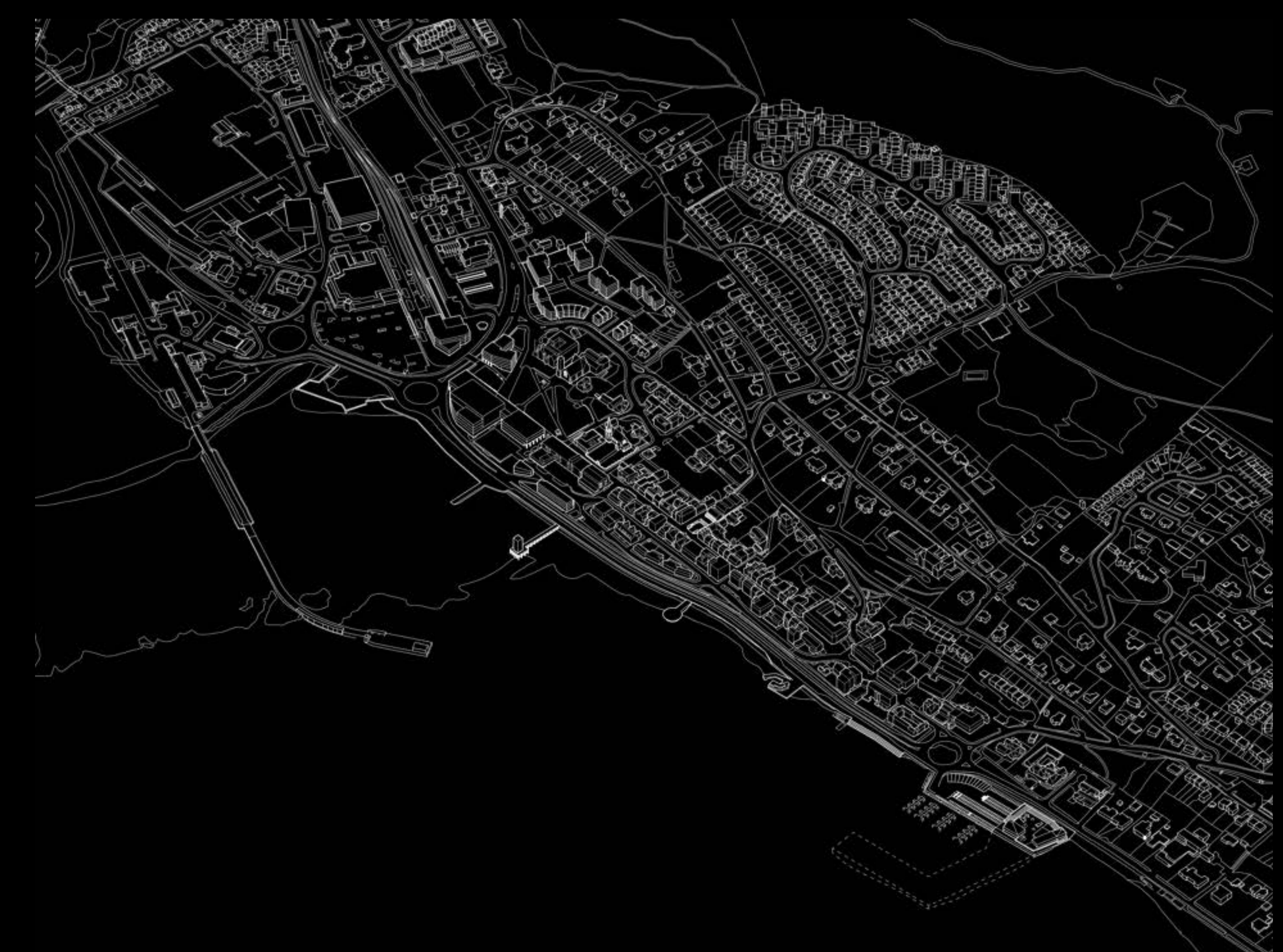
Key to the successful evolution of Fort William town centre will be ensuring that it is accessible and navigable by all.

The FW2040 consultation feedback of November 2022 called for the introduction of more seating, particularly on the Parade, and for more covered areas to shelter from inclement weather.

The masterplan has assessed current provision of welfare facilities, bench seating and shelter, vital in our often challenging climate. These are shown throughout the study area alongside existing wayfinding and proposed improvements to maximise the potential of the town centre to

appeal to all members of society, regardless of age, mobility or income. Improvements to these key elements will encourage pedestrian movement which in turn promotes active, healthy living.

Young people and teenagers should be included and invited to the town centre with active, engaging services and facilities that offer positive social interaction.



Fort William Town Centre Masterplan

A rebalanced, resilient, vibrant & welcoming town centre



The Masterplan sets out a series of physical and spatial changes in the town centre to achieve the social and cultural ambitions of the community.

It is deliberately focused in an area that 'feels' like the town centre as you experience it on the ground, extending from the train and bus station area to the north, bringing the edge closer to the High Street, down to the West End Roundabout at the southern end of the High Street.

This is the heart of the town, where we can support an improving local economy and opportunity.

The coordinated masterplan is a clear statement of ambition that can achieve alignment of intent and stand as a guideline to assess the appropriateness of future development.

The four key Policies concerning the built environment are 'Town Centre First', 'The Place Principle', 'A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres' and the recently published 'National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)'.

Along with the environmental agenda, the proposals enshrine the principles of these policies and recognise the imperative to ensure key players

stay focussed on the town centre in what they can contribute (vibrancy and connectivity) and how they will benefit.

Some of the proposed moves will need collaboration between all interested parties and some may need to happen in another guise.

It is the identifying of the moves and 'building blocks' to achieve a re-energised town centre that is the true value of the project.

Have Your Say.....

Email your thoughts to:
regeneration@highland.gov.uk
OR
Fill out one of the feedback forms
here today

