

# appendices

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# THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL A MASTERPLAN AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR FORT WILLIAM TOWN CENTRE

DETAILED PROJECT BRIEF  
AUGUST 2023



This study, commissioned by The Highland Council has a core brief to set a place making framework for **physical and spatial change** that will inform decisions about the infrastructure, development and management of Fort William town centre as part of the wider FW2040 Vision.

This framework has to be the “glue” that ties the complexities of all the current and emerging published policy and strategy and reflect an alignment of intent across all major stakeholders, governmental departments and politicians. It will be the guideline to assess and nurture future development, attract investment and ensure the town centre is the vibrant and attractive environment that the whole community needs.

The framework will be:

### Regenerative

A renewed regeneration direction for Fort William which builds on the Town Centre’s historic character and heritage to enhance its sense of place, legibility and liveability

### Proactive

Respond to current and future challenges

### Responsible

Support the Council’s net zero objectives through its approach to accessibility, and the use of resources and infrastructure

### Collaborative

Work with local stakeholders to reimagine the town centre and produce an ambitious and deliverable new masterplan & development framework to support its successful recovery, growth and evolution

### Ambitious

Provide an approach to regeneration opportunities which is both ambitious and deliverable

### Considerate

Consider changing retail and leisure trends, growing town centre living and repurposing of vacant sites

### Encourage Investment

Identify priorities for intervention and investment with focus on community wealth building

### A Catalyst

Encourage and accelerate mixed-use regeneration to reinstate and reinforce Fort William town centre as the vibrant commercial and community heart of the town

### Influential

Inform policy and design considerations and in relation to major planning applications which may come forward over the next 5-20 years

### Contextual

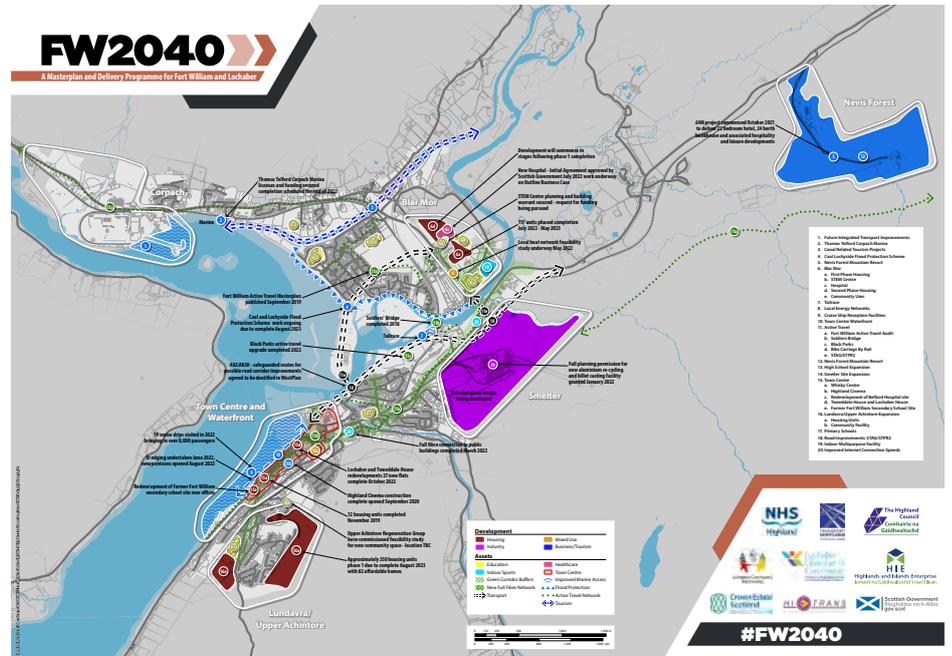
Develop a vision that considers how to best serve the wider Lochaber community and take cognisance of complementary projects contained within the FW2040 Vision

# CONTEXT: FW 2040 VISION

From the initial brief, we understand that the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the Lochaber Chamber of Commerce (LCC) are at a critical stage in the development and implementation of the Fort William 2040 (FW2040) Vision.

A number of key projects are either complete or nearing completion and there is now a need to position Fort William town centre at the core of the FW2040 Programme.

This Masterplan and Delivery Framework is absolutely critical as it will form a key component of the FW2040 programme moving forward.



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 of the larger FW2040 projects will be subject to further environmental assessment as they progress. All projects regardless of scale, will be encouraged to consider ways in which they can contribute to the net-zero target.



# CONTEXT:

## NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 [NPF 4]

On the 23rd February 2023 the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted by Scottish Ministers.

Consequently there is now an even greater need to take a fresh look at Fort William town centre.

### Key Considerations for Town Centres

Residential uses at ground floor in our centres should demonstrate they will create attractive frontages, would not affect the vitality and viability of a shopping area, and not result in an undesirable concentration of uses or dead frontages.

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Development proposals for non-mainstream retail uses will not be supported if the provision would undermine the character of the area or the health and wellbeing of communities.

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Given the need to conserve embodied carbon, NPF4 places a greater emphasis on the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.

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Proposals for the reuse of existing buildings, including listed buildings and other historic assets, will be supported- taking into account their suitability for conversion to other uses.

**NPF4 recognises the value of regeneration to transform our urban places, and improve wellbeing.**

The masterplan will be developed taking cognisance of the overarching spatial principles of NPF4:

### Just Transition:

Empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.

### Conserving and Recycling Assets:

Making productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon and minimising waste.

### Local Living:

Supporting local living, through the creation of a place that is well-connected and includes a mix of uses (including housing and associated green space/ play provision) where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options.

### Compact Urban Growth:

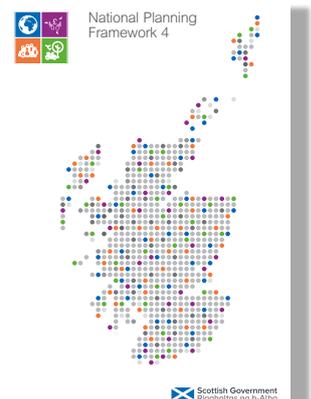
Optimise the use of land through the re-use and/or redevelopment of buildings and/or brownfield sites to support services and resources within the town centre.

### Rebalanced Development:

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

### Rural Revitalisation:

Encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities. Fort William serves an important function to those living a distance from the settlement, therefore it is important that this is also recognised.



# CONTEXT:

## FORT WILLIAM TOWN CENTRE

### STUDY AREA & OPPORTUNITIES

The adjacent map demonstrates the current town centre boundary as determined by The Highland Council (shown in black).

For the purposes of this study, we have introduced a concentrated town centre boundary (shown in red) that extends from the train station / bus station in the north east to the Council HQ in the south west. The reasoning for this is outlined later in this document under 'Concentrate' the first heading of our 18 point town centre manifesto.

This map also highlights a number of key assets and sites of opportunity that have been 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
6. Former Council Service Point (Lochaber House)
7. Site of former Fort William RC Primary (St Mary's)
8. Current hospital site (subject to funding for new hospital being secured)
9. Current Lochaber Leisure Centre site (potentially at capacity)

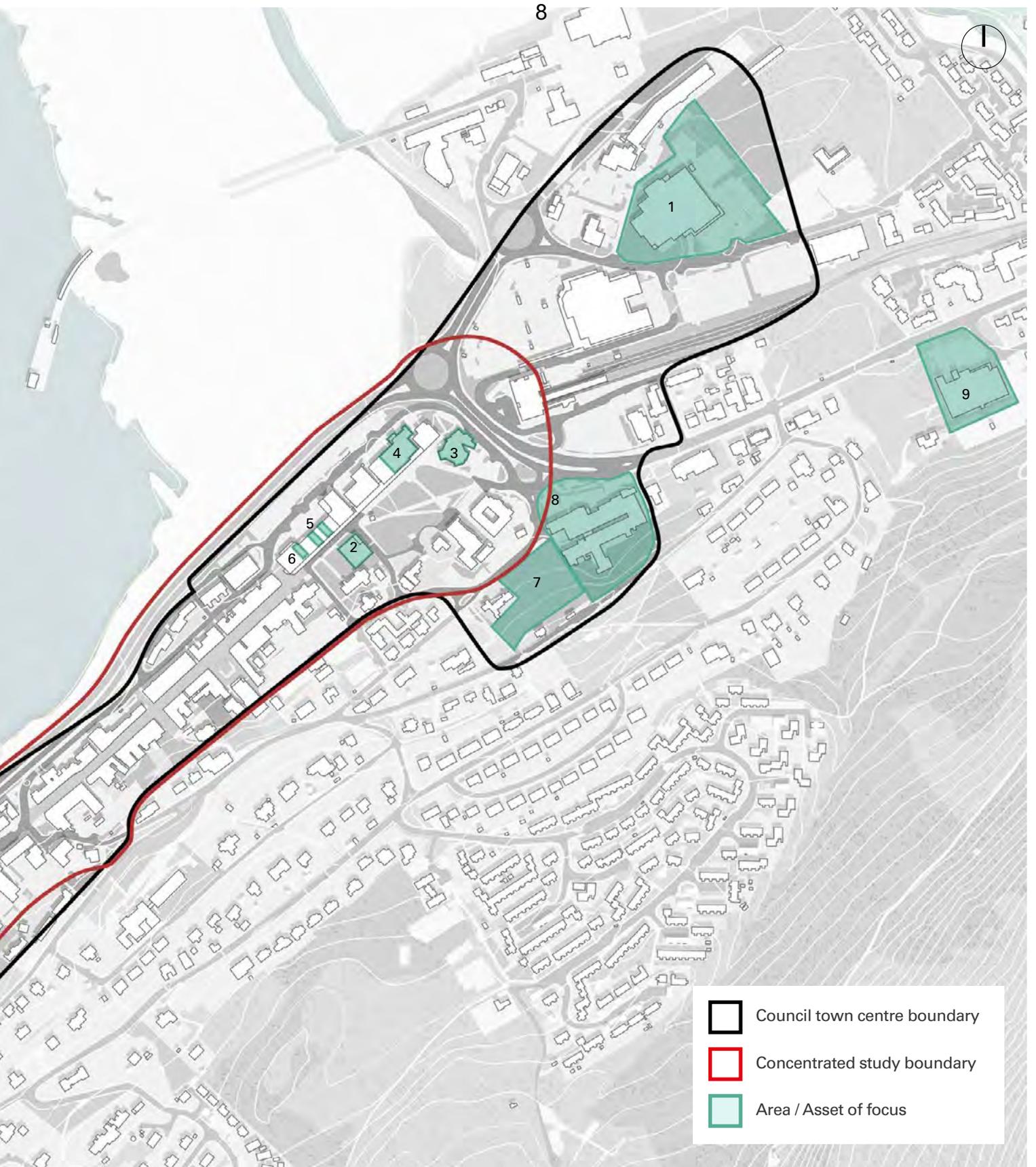
We will prepare finer grain design options for a number of these sites / assets and will also seek to identify further areas that require a similar focus within the agreed study area as part of the Visioning exercise.

The introduction of 'meanwhile uses' and other interventions to support economic and place recovery in the shorter term will be explored, together with longer term sustainable regen options.

Design ideas will be commercially tested against the recommendations of the base research documents and recently completed strategy papers that were supplied to the team at the outset of the project.



Former Tesco Store



# CONTEXT: CHALLENGES & DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

## Changing Retail Habits

The changes in consumer behaviour and the reducing demand for retail floor space over previous decades is well documented. Increasing online shopping has also had a significant impact.

In Fort William town centre, there has been a marked decline in national retailers over the past decade, (most recently evidenced in the closure of the large M&Co store that faced onto the Parade) creating higher vacancy rates. Indeed, the Town Centre Health Check notes that the vacancy rate has increased from 8.5% in 2018 to 12.3% in 2022.

The town centre is also affected by its proximity to the edge of town retail parks (Fort William and North Road) that contain among others M&S and Aldi which, by offering free surface parking, have led to a certain amount of diverted trade to the detriment of the established town centre.

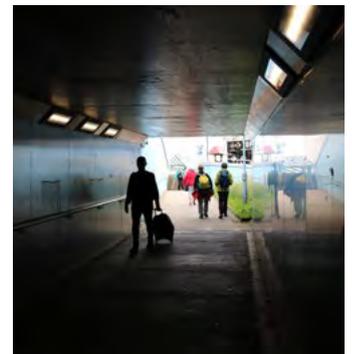
At the FW2040 public consultation event of November 2022, in response to the question how often and for what purpose do you visit the town centre? a number of respondents stated that they either only visit the town centre to eat out or that they seldom visit at all as their shopping needs were met by the retail parks.



## Lack of connection to Loch Linnhe and the Old Fort

The town centre feels disconnected from one of its key assets, Loch Linnhe. It has traditionally turned its back on the loch initially due to the presence of the railway tracks and station along the loch edge, replaced in more recent times by the partially elevated A82 trunk road. There are limited points of visibility and physical connection between the loch and the High Street and those that exist are of poor quality.

The presence of A82, combined with the extensive Morrison's Supermarket Car Park make it very difficult to visit the Old Fort on the edge of the loch, a historically significant site that gives the town its name. This is a real missed opportunity.



## 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. This is due to the presence of the A82 trunk road that cuts this arrival point off from the town centre.

# CONTEXT: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement was identified as a key deliverable within the outline client brief. As such, the team have developed a strategy that engages diverse audiences through a mix of modes to capture different levels of intelligence around change and ideas for the future: face to face focus meetings, in person and online; interactive vision and design workshops / exhibitions; and design focus reviews for key locations and sites.

We recognise that there is a body of recent consultation from the FW2040 Visioning work that is still valid and we have taken account of it in the development of this detailed project brief.

As the project progresses, there will be in-person stakeholder events held at key stages of the programme.

The first group stakeholder event will take place early into the 'Brief to Concept' stage (weeks 6-8) of the process where the detailed brief, analysis and initial high level concept proposals will be displayed and opinions sought from those attending as to the kind of future they envisage for Fort William town Centre.

The second event will take place during the 'Concept to Vision' stage (Weeks 8-16) of the process where more developed design proposals, shaped by the feedback received at the earlier event will be displayed and opinions sought that will influence the content of the final masterplan and development framework.



Stakeholder Engagement: Stornoway Vision



Stakeholder Engagement: Falkirk Town Centre Vision

## 1-2-1 Stakeholder Consultations

The project team are in the process of meeting a number of key stakeholders with a view to obtaining their aspirations for their assets, their thoughts on the Fort William town centre in general and to hopefully create enthusiastic ambassadors for this project, these include:

- Lochaber Chamber of Commerce
- UHI Fort William
- Lochaber Housing Association
- Crown Estates Scotland
- High Life Highland
- Nevis Centre (Linnhe Leisure Ltd)
- Moidart Trust
- HITRANS

Our 18 point manifesto has been developed with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Revo and the private sector to deliver a strategic tried and tested approach to both whole urban centre solutions or the repurposing of specific significant assets (normally a struggling shopping centre) set in the context of the wider town centre vision.

## **MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE**

### **18 STEPS TO REBALANCE, REPOPULATE & REPOSITION THE TOWN CENTRE.**

**To bring transformative change to your town centre, your vision needs to identify and meet the needs of the wider community while responding to the global climate emergency.**

From social cohesion and commercial regeneration to carbon reduction, energy conservation and flood resilience, our 18 point manifesto is a guide to creating sustainable urban centres. The manifesto highlights the right initiatives to regenerate the town centre, responding to the current and future needs and uses of the local and wider population.



## 1. CONCENTRATE

Take a deliberately focused approach centred around the High Street. This is the heart of the town, where we can repurpose and protect a valued legacy of buildings, support an improving local economy and create opportunity.



## 2. TELL YOUR STORY

Your town needs a clear, unique story and purpose that provide a clarion call and reason for your transformation. There are many parts to a town's story that can provide a basis for an authentic narrative. This is not about creating a simple strapline. One part of the story will not be enough. The richness of the narrative will come from the blend of a number of these strands, consisting of multiple messages and be chameleon-like, resonating differently with different groups.



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## 3. GO BOLD

While the changing patterns of retail have created new challenges, this shift provides us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to rebalance our town centres. Repurposing a large single use asset such as a shopping centre can transform a High Street in one bold move, repopulating the heart of the town centre and increasing permeability by breaking down large blocks into new streets and lanes. Now is the time to reintroduce uses that serve the needs of our whole communities.



## 4. CONSOLIDATE

Reduce retail to the right level for a re-energised and diversified High Street with the right-sized (smaller) units supporting the increasing trend for independent, artisanal traders. Relocate retail to street edges and concentrate the offer; don't bury it deep in the urban block.



## 5. REPOPULATE

Introduce significant levels of urban living to the town centre. Create mixed-use blocks with a variety of tenures (private for sale, affordable, social housing, student, elderly / supported / sheltered). Bring life back to upper levels over retail space through residential conversion.



## 6. ATTRACT

Social and cultural attractors are a major catalyst for positive change and offer important opportunities to drive more visits into your 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. Look to work with existing institutions and community groups to bring new galleries, museums and performance spaces to the heart of the High Street.

Positioning these attractors strategically and making them work together to energise key routes by stimulating footfall is critical. You probably only have one shot to get the location right. Visibility, radial influence and approach routes should determine their positioning, not just conveniently available sites.





## 11. ILLUMINATE

Public art and dynamic lighting can transform the existing environment for a relatively small outlay. Lighting, in particular, can create a variety of effects to suit the season or event, celebrate rich historic facades and elevate the everyday.



## 7. CREATE WORKPLACE

Reintroducing residential on its own to town centres could lead to areas devoid of life and activity during working hours. The way we work is changing. Introduce workspaces that create vibrancy during the day while offering flexible working and healthy live / work balance. With a new imperative to work from home accelerated by Covid-19, there is a greater need for local shared workspace in well-connected towns to bridge between home and town centre.



## 8. SHIFT PERCEPTIONS

Open up lanes and views that dramatically change how people remember the town. This enriches the experience and how we emotionally connect to our environment by providing greater connectivity, permeability and new ways to navigate through our urban centres.



## 9. REPLACE TO REPAIR

Take the opportunity provided by repurposing and rebalancing to upgrade or replace buildings that offer nothing to the urban environment. Many of our town centres benefit from a legacy of quality historic buildings and these new interventions should be of a contemporary architecture that matches them in quality and ambition.



## 10. REGENERATE

In response to the climate emergency, enshrine an ambition to achieve shared international goals within your Vision. This can be done by working towards a carbon zero objective and a more circular economy, generating localized renewable energy and recycling waste. Promote biodiversity and flood resilience in an inventive way that provides quality greened urban space for the community in the heart of our towns.



## 12. GATHER

Re-energise the centre by providing urban places that enrich day-to-day life and accommodate events that will attract local residents and visitors from outside the town. These external 'rooms' should encourage vibrant, year-round use.

Provide 'place not just space' with active edges, human-scaled enclosure, and greening for play and wellbeing. Enhance these places with degrees of shelter to allow all-weather use, safe gathering and social distancing when required.





## 13. INCLUDE & INVITE

Make your High Street accessible for all, regardless of age or ability, accommodating those with issues of dementia or mobility and providing pause points throughout. Offering welfare facilities accessible for all can have a significant impact on the footfall and dwell time of our high streets.

Create success for your High Street by helping people discover and enjoy it easily. Develop a memorable, cohesive and legible wayfinding strategy that helps people navigate their way around their town centre.



## 14. CONNECT

Introduce safe walking and cycle routes and better connect the wider community to their centre better with environmentally friendly public transport. This will reduce car journeys, promote health and wellbeing as well as rebalancing inequality for low car ownership groups.

The future is likely to bring reduced car ownership alongside increased use of electric vehicles. In the meantime, we need to accommodate cars to encourage the wider suburban community to use their High Street and maintain equality of access. However, this should not be to the detriment of the quality of urban places. Routes into town and parking should be made legible and consideration should be given to the careful use of pedestrianisation, striking a balance with access and visibility of High Street traders.



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## 15. REVIVE

Repopulate and re-energise your town centre to be safer and more welcoming. Increase activity and passive surveillance from new residents, workers and a vibrant and sustainable evening economy. These shifts will require changes to historical planning law use class and licensing restrictions to bring life to 'dead zones' in your urban centre.



## 16. EDUCATE

Encourage established education providers and community groups to take space on the High Street. Beyond conventional institutions, life-long learning encourages people from all walks of life to learn new skills and meet new people. This will create a sense of empowerment, increase wellbeing and combat digital poverty.



## 17. LOCATE SERVICES CENTRALLY

Key institutions such as education providers, health and civic establishments can be fantastic assets for a town centre. They offer essential accessible services right at the heart of the community, enhancing town centre vibrancy and greatly increasing footfall. For public funded developments, reinforce the responsibilities and all-round benefits in locating these assets and services centrally.



## 18. MEANWHILE...

Transformation takes time and not all proposals will be delivered in the short-term. Where a building or site is vacant, encourage 'meanwhile' uses that benefit the wider community, either through the creation of public space or temporary occupation for curated retail, commercial or cultural use.



# DEVELOPED BRIEF - PROJECT AMBITIONS

As outlined in our proposal, we have structured this project brief and ambitions using our 18 point Manifesto. This comprehensively covers all the myriad of factors to be considered in a logical and hierarchial sequence.



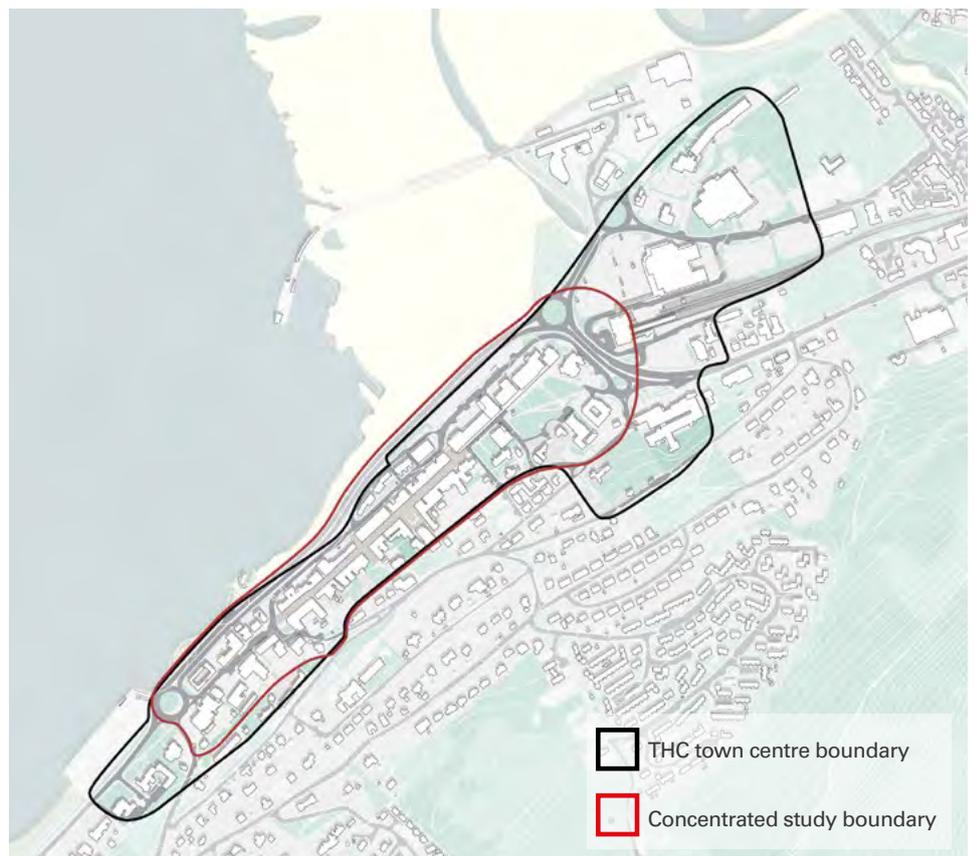
## 1. CONCENTRATE

Take a deliberately focused approach centred around the the heart of the town, where we can repurpose and protect a valued legacy of buildings, support an improving local economy and create opportunity.

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.

We have defined a more focused town centre boundary that 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 (demonstrated in the map below).

In addition to this, a number of key areas of opportunity have been identified (as shown on pages 6-7) which lie beyond the concentrated town centre boundary (Nevis Centre, Lochaber Leisure Centre, Belford Hospital & former St. Mary’s School site). These will still be taken into consideration as part of this study.



Fort William is rich in narrative and has a distinctive story to tell, often through certain buildings and structures both outwith and within the town centre itself (The Old Fort, the Parade, Inverlochy Castle etc.).

It benefits from the ready availability of all manner of outdoor activities (hillwalking, mountain climbing, mountain biking, skiing, watersports), the dominating presence of Ben Nevis and the termination / starting points of both the West Highland Way and the Great Glen Way, indeed the town has earned the title 'The heart of The Outdoor Capital of the UK'.

Both the town's storied history and its present will no doubt play a significant part in the future story of Fort William and this study will seek to weave a rich narrative that not only celebrates these but draws on the ambitions and aspirations the town has outlined in the FW 2040 Vision.

The purpose of this brief is not to pre-empt the future story for the town but to recognise the importance of this exercise in establishing a clear authentic narrative to both position Fort William on the national stage and nurture a sense of pride in place and belonging.



## 2. TELL YOUR STORY

Your town needs a clear, unique story and purpose that provide a clarion call and reason for your transformation. There are many parts to a town's story that can provide a basis for an authentic narrative. This is not about creating a simple strapline. One part of the story will not be enough. The richness of the narrative will come from the blend of a number of these strands, consisting of multiple messages and be chameleon-like, resonating differently with different groups.





### 3. GO BOLD

While the changing patterns of retail have created new challenges, this shift provides us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to rebalance our town centres. Repurposing a large single use asset can transform a town centre in one bold move, repopulating the heart of the town centre and increasing permeability by breaking down large blocks into new streets and lanes.

Now is the time to reintroduce uses that serve the needs of our whole communities.

The close grain <sup>17</sup> nature of the High Street affords little opportunity for large scale intervention with the exception perhaps of the mostly vacant retail block and library adjacent to the Parade, a key gateway to the town centre at the head of the underpass.

Beyond this, a number of the sites identified in the initial project scope that lie outwith the focused town centre area could accommodate mixed use developments of a scale that would deliver significant transformation, such as the current Belford Hospital site, the former St. Mary's Primary School site and the site currently occupied by the Nevis Centre, should a replacement facility be created elsewhere.

One site, not specifically identified at the outset but with great potential is the West End Car Park. This space, directly on the shore of Loch Linnhe could play host to a number of uses including a new culture / leisure offering or a welcome centre for cruise passengers to the town. Any development here would help to transform the town's relationship with the water, a key theme of the FW 2040 vision and work in tandem with the Old Fort to create a 'dumbell effect' along the lochside.

We will explore the potential of all of these sites as part of this study, considering carefully scale, permeability, views and the right balance of uses in the wider town centre context.





## 4. CONSOLIDATE

Reduce retail to the right level for a re-energised and diversified town centre with the right-sized (smaller) units supporting the increasing trend for independent, artisanal traders. Relocate retail to street edges and concentrate the offer; don't bury it deep in the urban block.

The overall requirement for retail floorspace has dramatically reduced and this will continue as department stores and national retailers continue to contract. This has been evidenced most recently in Fort William with the closure of the large M&Co. store facing the Parade, and the contraction of Tesco from their larger unit into an 'Express' offer.

The proximity of both Fort William and North Road Retail Parks has displaced a large proportion of potential retail from the core town centre / High Street and, moving forward, the High Street and surrounding streets and vennels are likely to benefit from continuing to focus on more distinctive and independent offers rather than national chain retailers.

This vision framework will look to further strengthen the existing mix of active street level uses of varying sizes throughout the town centre, with a particular focus on the High Street.



## 5. REPOPULATE

Introduce significant levels of urban living to the town centre. Create mixed-use blocks with a variety of tenures (private for sale, affordable, social housing, student, elderly / supported / sheltered). Bring life back to upper levels over retail space through residential conversion.

From the feedback<sup>19</sup> 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 residential 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.

There are a number of upper storeys along the High Street that contain residential accommodation and this study will seek to identify further opportunities to maximise this within the town centre, to increase footfall and provide greater passive surveillance.

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

We will develop a framework that focuses on the introduction of residential in a variety of types, tenures and affordability, influenced by market intelligence developed by Savills. This ensures that we appeal to as wide a market as possible. These proposals will largely be focused within the town centre area and on sites immediately surrounding the concentrated boundary including the current hospital and adjacent former St. Mary's Primary School.





## 6. ATTRACT

Social and cultural attractors are a major catalyst for positive change and offer important opportunities to drive more visits into your 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. Look to work with existing institutions and community groups to bring new galleries, museums and performance spaces to the heart of the town centre.

Positioning these attractors strategically and making them work together to energise key routes by stimulating footfall is critical. You probably only have one shot to get the location right. Visibility, radial influence and approach routes should determine their positioning, not just conveniently available sites.

In terms of existing attractors within Fort William town centre, the Highland Cinema on Cameron Square has had a positive and transformative effect, not only due to its introduction of a popular leisure and food and drink offer but also due to its central location at the heart of the High Street. Adjacent to this, the West Highland Museum has ambitions to expand its offer through extension into an adjoining building that will increase its display capabilities and in turn, it is hoped, its visitor numbers.

Fort William benefits from a number of cultural and tourist attractions in the surrounding area (Lochaber 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 due to the combination of the A82 and Morrison's car park. This study will seek to maximise the potential of the 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.

A recent study into the Nevis Centre has concluded that it should be replaced and concentrate more on cultural and community activity. This is also a central ambition of the FW2040 Vision that calls for a new multi purpose indoor venue and also suggests the creation of a Fort William Arts Centre. We will seek to locate any such facility strategically within the town centre to create a draw and an energy within the very heart of the town.

Beyond those already stated, working with Savills, we will identify potential additional uses that stimulate the day and evening economy with appeal to a wider demographic of residents and visitors whilst capitalising on the loyal local customer base.



## 7. CREATE WORKPLACE

Reintroducing residential on its own to town centres could lead to areas devoid of life and activity during working hours. The way we work is changing. Introduce workspaces that create vibrancy during the day while offering flexible working and healthy live / work balance.

With a new imperative to work from home accelerated by Covid-19, there is a greater need for local shared workspace in well-connected towns to bridge between home and town centre.

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

We will seek to incorporate new opportunities for workplace within the town centre, from co-work spaces that take advantage of a post COVID desire to be more flexible and local in our approach to working, to new craft & maker spaces.

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.



## 8. SHIFT PERCEPTIONS

Open up lanes and views that dramatically change how people remember the centre.

This enriches the experience and how we emotionally connect to our environment by providing greater connectivity, permeability and new ways to navigate through our urban centres.

We often find that a review of historic town maps can suggest opportunities to reintroduce lost patterns that have a depth of cultural resonance.

The historic street pattern of Fort William town centre follows the traditional pattern of narrow plots, closes and wynds off of the central spine of the High Street. Limited in number, these historic lanes have been neglected and are now in a state of disrepair. They offer the only visible and physical connection to Loch Linnhe and as such their improvement is vitally important in establishing a new relationship with the loch.

Opportunities to introduce additional lanes and closes throughout the town centre will be explored to improve permeability that will both change how we experience the physical nature of the town and how we emotionally connect with it.

The FW 2040 Vision is organised around 5 key themes, one of which is '**A Place Facing Water**'. The town has historically turned its back on the loch and the FW2040 Vision recognises that this needs to change. The desire to foster a stronger relationship with the loch through the introduction of an accessible and attractive promenade, shoreline development and enhanced marine access are key priorities of the Vision. The need to better connect with the loch and transform the view of Fort William from the A82 is also expressed in the Town Centre Action Plan in one of its four key themes, namely: '**Maximise the Potential of the Waterfront**'.

This study will seek to positively impact the physical and spacial relationship Fort William town centre has to Loch Linnhe.





## 9. REPURPOSE AND REPAIR

Take the opportunity provided by repurposing and rebalancing to upgrade or replace buildings that offer nothing to the urban environment.

Many of our town centres benefit from a legacy of quality historic buildings and these new interventions should be of a contemporary architecture that matches them in quality and ambition.

The built heritage<sup>23</sup> that enriches Fort William's town centre brings a strong distinctiveness and authenticity. Heritage assets are to be protected and cherished and the best way to ensure this is to bring them back into life through repurposing – particularly of upper floors (as noted in "Repopulate" and "Create Workplace" sections).

We will identify through our frontages study, opportunities where the introduction of new uses can be combined with the enhancement or replacement of buildings / facades that are detrimental to the quality of the urban environment.

The desired increase in residential provision and mix of uses will involve the need for new development. It's important therefore that any new interventions are of a high quality that make a positive contribution and at the same time enable the town to meet its net zero targets.

This study will indicate considered volumes, height and density of development and suggest through precedent, a level of quality that is commensurate with the surroundings.





## 10. REGENERATE

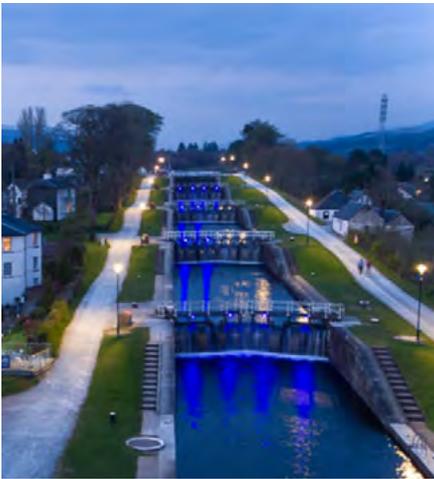
In response to the climate emergency, enshrine an ambition to achieve shared international goals within your Vision. This can be done by working towards a carbon zero objective and a more circular economy, generating localized renewable energy and recycling waste.

Promote biodiversity and flood resilience in an inventive way that provides quality greened urban space for the community in the heart of our towns.

The FW 2040 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. Working with our consultants Civic Engineers we will explore opportunities to introduce green-blue infrastructure initiatives in the form of new high quality urban green space and innovative surface water drainage solutions that will provide biodiversity, improve well-being and encourage healthy living practices.

Repurposing existing structures is the most environmentally responsible approach in terms of embodied carbon, but we need to be mindful that not all are readily adaptable or require extensive upgrades to achieve modern energy standards. We will seek out opportunities to take advantage of this where possible as we propose the introduction of new uses throughout the study area.



## 11. ILLUMINATE

Public art and dynamic lighting can transform the existing environment for a relatively small outlay.

Lighting, in particular, can create a variety of effects to suit the season or event, celebrate rich historic facades and elevate the everyday.

Opportunities to build on the existing public art throughout the town centre will be explored, with particular focus around the High Street and any proposed public routes and spaces, such as along the shore of Loch Linnhe.

We will explore the introduction of colour and light to celebrate the historic town centre fabric, transform the arrival experience and improve safety on key routes into the town centre.

A lighting strategy will be a key component in creating a quality of environment, enhancing feelings of safety and supporting the continued extension of activity into night time economies.



## 12. GATHER

Re-energise the centre by providing urban places that enrich day-to-day life and accommodate events that will attract local residents and visitors from outside the town. These external 'rooms' should encourage vibrant, year-round use.

Provide 'place not just space' with active edges, human-scaled enclosure, and greening for play and wellbeing. Enhance these places with degrees of shelter to allow all-weather use, safe gathering and social distancing when required.

Fort William town centre is fortunate to contain a number of 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 end of the West Highland Way but is the only one of these spaces with a direct visual connection to Loch Linnhe.

We will seek to enhance these existing spaces to maximise their potential through an analysis of the uses that surround them, the possibility of improving finishes and the incorporation of additional seating, planting and shelter.

A key focus of this study will be to propose the creation of new 'place' wherever the opportunity arises throughout the town centre, such as creating a more pedestrian friendly Monzie Square, another space directly connected to the High Street with a visual connection to the loch.

The lack of any meaningful public space at the edge of the loch has been identified in a number of the strategy documents and the creation of a new promenade is a central ambition of the FW 2040 Vision. As part of this study, we will explore the transformation of this edge, strengthen its relationship to the High Street and seek to create of new 'gateways' to the town centre.





## 13. INCLUDE & INVITE

Make your urban centre accessible for all, regardless of age or ability, accommodating those with issues of dementia or mobility and providing pause points throughout. Offering welfare facilities accessible for all can have a significant impact on the footfall and dwell time of our high streets.

Create success for your urban centre by helping people discover and enjoy it easily. Develop a memorable, cohesive and legible wayfinding strategy that helps people navigate their way around their town centre.

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.

We will assess current provision of welfare facilities, bench seating and shelter, vital in our often challenging climate, throughout the study area alongside existing wayfinding and propose 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.

'Changing Places' facilities provide a lifeline for those families and individuals with challenging health and mobility issues. The decision to visit a place is often determined by their availability. The only facility of this type in Fort William is located within the campus of UHI West Highland. We will explore opportunities to introduce one in a more centrally located and accessible position within the core of the town centre.

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





## 14. CONNECT

Introduce safe walking and cycle routes and better connect the wider community to their centre better with environmentally friendly public transport. This will reduce car journeys, promote health and wellbeing as well as rebalancing inequality for low car ownership groups.

The future is likely to bring reduced car ownership alongside increased use of electric vehicles. In the meantime, we need to accommodate cars to encourage the wider rural community to use their town centre and maintain equality of access. However, this should not be to the detriment of the quality of urban places. Routes into town and parking should be made legible and consideration should be given to the careful use of pedestrianisation, striking a balance with access and visibility of town centre traders.

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

Due to its predominantly rural nature, 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 will carry out a high level assessment of the current conditions for transport, accessibility and proximity to services, making reference to both the Fort William Strategic Transport Study and the Fort William Active Travel Masterplan Refresh. We will also explore 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. This severs any direct pedestrian link at street level and transforming this arrival experience for the better, encouraging greater visibility and legibility will be a key focus of this study.

We will also explore the creation of new and enhancement of existing legible and permeable routes throughout the town centre, to the various attractors, such as the UHI campus and the Old Fort, to name but two.



## 15. REVIVE

Repopulate and re-energise your town centre to be safer and more welcoming. Increase activity and passive surveillance from new residents, workers and a vibrant and sustainable evening economy.

These shifts will require changes to historical planning law use class and licensing restrictions to bring life to 'dead zones' in your town centre.

Feedback received as part of the FW2040 community engagement called for **'a revitalised town centre....a more vibrant night time economy including nightclubs.'** We will explore the expansion of the evening economy in the town centre, with a particular focus on ensuring this is introduced in locations that work with the existing offer and promote activity where desired, for example along the High Street.

In order to stimulate the town centre's economic recovery a proactive planning, conservation, regulatory and licensing system is essential. Getting the basics of stewardship right is vital to creating a positive visitor experience, so cleanliness and maintenance need to be high priority issues.

Feedback received from the 2022 FW2040 public event, in response to the question 'what would encourage you to come in to the town centre more?' stated **'More live events or live music and entertainment offerings in the evenings, particularly for families.'** We will explore the introduction of an expanded cultural offer and pop-up events to ensure the town centre is an attractive, safe and quality evening destination. Opportunities for a fuller calendar of events beyond the annual week long Highland Mountain Festival, the Scottish Six Day Motorcycle Trials and the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup can be drawn from other towns and cities across the UK such as Book, Film and Comedy Festivals.

New residential developments, including the repurposing of existing upper floors have to be considered carefully when located near evening activities but will provide passive surveillance to routes and spaces providing a safer, more welcoming environment for all.



## 16. EDUCATE

Encourage established education providers and community groups to take space in the town centre.

Beyond conventional institutions, life-long learning encourages people from all walks of life to learn new skills and meet new people. This will create a sense of empowerment, increase wellbeing and combat digital poverty.

UHI West Highland should be encouraged to make their presence felt more readily within the town centre through the introduction of more public facing activities and this study will explore opportunities for this.

The vibrancy of the town would further benefit if future expansion of educational activities could integrate with the centre by taking advantage of 'loose space' in existing buildings on the High Street particularly for incubator or life-long learning opportunities.

There already exists student specific residential accommodation on Camanachd Crescent in the town and this study will, following consultation with UHI, identify potential further opportunities to introduce this typology within the study area in appropriate location and scale. This, along with supporting new employment opportunities and optimising the positive benefits of links between established employers, UHI West Highland and new entrepreneurs will enable the development of further skillsets. This will create support and advice to prospective new businesses or social enterprises interested in locating in Fort William.





## 17. LOCATE SERVICES CENTRALLY

Key institutions such as education providers, health and civic establishments can be fantastic assets for a town centre. They offer essential accessible services right at the heart of the community, enhancing town centre vibrancy and greatly increasing footfall.

For public funded developments, reinforce the responsibilities and all-round benefits in locating these assets and services centrally.

Highland Council<sup>31</sup> opened its new offices and Customer Service Centre in 2018 within the repurposed and extended former High School building facing Loch Linnhe and so already has a significant presence within the town centre.

Following an options appraisal in 2020, it has been recommended that the Nevis Centre, a key community, leisure and arts facility for the town be replaced, perhaps with the 'sport' element removed from its program to create a more community and arts focused facility. We will explore the potential of locating such a facility within the heart of the town centre.

The existing library building, located close to the Parade and at a key arrival point within the town centre adjacent to the underpass that leads to the train station and beyond offers little in the way of street activation and a lack of urban scale. It has also been recommended that this function be absorbed into any new community and culture led facility.

Over and above arts and cultural attractions, town centres are the most accessible location for health facilities, driving footfall that is beneficial to other surrounding uses and preventing reliance on private car journeys.

The decisions on the location of these essential services must be based on ensuring the resilience of the town centre and not cost, in line with current government guidance such as the 'Town Centre First Principle', 'A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres' and NPF4. We will explore opportunities to encourage and accommodate more essential services in to the town centre as we develop the Masterplan.





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## 18. MEANWHILE...

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

Where a building or site is vacant encourage 'meanwhile' uses that benefit the wider community, either through the creation of public space or temporary occupation for curated retail, commercial or cultural use.

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.

The study will explore the introduction of temporary greenspace to accommodate family friendly outdoor amenities for active uses that support and enhance the visitor experience and connect the whole community to the town centre.

In terms of vacant retail forming part of a repurposing or redevelopment opportunity, landlords should be encouraged to consider their ESG agenda and provide meanwhile accommodation for community based and charity solutions that, although negating rates, is a great deal better than an empty unit on the street.

# METHODOLOGY: PROJECT PROGRAMME

## DATA

### 1.0 Strategic Brief

- Strategic ambitions
- Concentrated Boundary
- Timeline to realisation



### 2.0 Context & Analysis

- National & Local Policy
- Collate plans / Build 3D model
- Heritage & Use class analysis
- Transport & Connectivity



### 3.0 Scope Options

- Identify study focus area(s)
- Site assembly options/strategy
- Wider urban context



### 4.0 Engagement & Data

- Initial Stakeholder engagement
- Demographic /behavioural patterns
- Risk Analysis



### 5.0 Developed Brief

- Commercial, cultural & civic opportunities
- Relevant best practice
- Set deliverables and outputs



## DESIGN

### 6.0 Brief to Concept

- SMLXL feasibility appraisals
- Site Assembly & Phasing
- Capacity and viability studies
- Stakeholder Event 1



### 7.0 Concept to Vision

- Block massing, core & subdivision
- Use mapping & area schedules
- Plans & sections of geometry
- Urban realm strategy
- Stakeholder Event 2
- 3D model views /diagrams
- Concept images / sketch street view
- Architectural reference images
- Next Steps / Roadmap to Delivery

**MILESTONE: DEVELOPED BRIEF**  
Structured to 18 point manifesto and narrative

**MILESTONE: CONCEPT RESPONSE**  
Contextual analysis completed and presented graphically  
Developed structure and narrative plan  
Identified initial use and location responses

**MILESTONE: PUBLISHED VISION**  
All key graphical information structured in a compelling narrative.  
Presentation: graphical executive summary of the proposal in pdf format.

**Next Steps / Roadmap to Delivery**  
Delivery Strategy: Next steps, routes to Planning and Development

**Briefing Workshop**  
Week 0

**Publish Developed Brief**  
Week 4

**Design Review 1**  
Week 6

**Structure Published**  
Week 8

**Design Review 2**  
Week 11

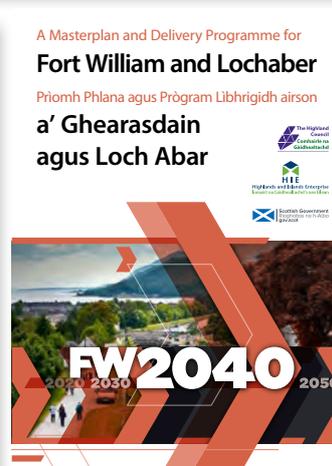
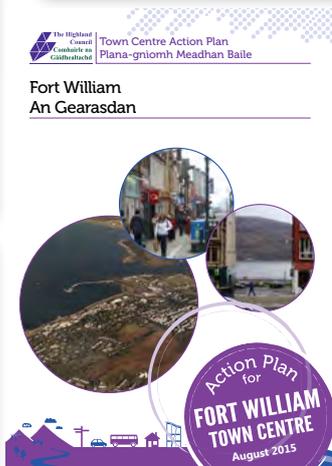
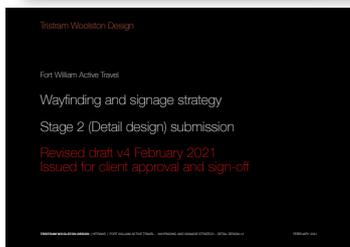
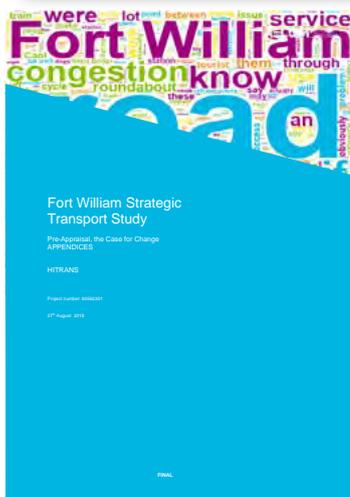
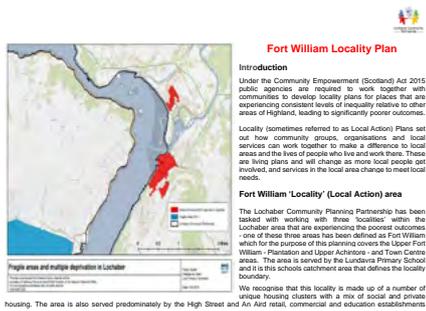
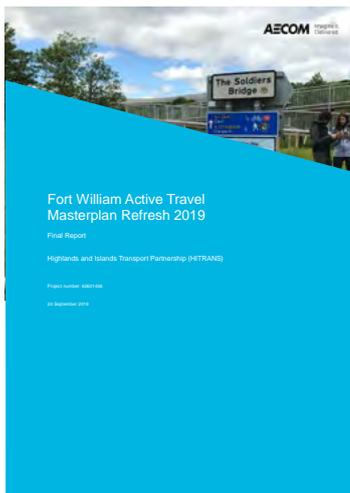
**Final Review**  
Week 14

**Publish Vision / Framework**  
Week 16

# APPENDIX: STRATEGY & POLICY: KEY LEARNINGS

There are various strategies & policies pertaining to Fort William Town Centre.

We have been furnished by The Highland Council with the most relevant and following our reading and summary of their key findings / recommendations, along with stakeholder engagement, used these to inform this brief document.







# A MASTERPLAN AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR FORT WILLIAM TOWN CENTRE

## STAKEHOLDER EVENT

2nd October 2023, 1:30 [for 2pm start] - 5pm

MacIntosh Hall at the Duncansburgh Church,  
The Parade, Fort William, PH33 6BA

# REPORT

# AGENDA

<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introduction:</b> Alastair Nicolson, HIE</p>	2:00 - 2:10pm
<p><b>Presentation 1:</b> <b>Project Context, Ambitions, Brief &amp; Analysis</b> Anthony Hubbert, Threesixty Architecture</p>	2:10 - 2:30pm
<p><b>Workshop 1:</b> <b>What do I need from my town centre?</b> (Demographic based analysis)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Families with young children</li> <li>2. Teenagers 13-17</li> <li>3. Young Adults 18-25</li> <li>4. Adults 26-60</li> <li>5. Seniors 60+</li> <li>6. Tourists &amp; Visitors</li> </ol>	2:30 - 3:10pm
<p><b>Tea / Coffee Break</b></p>	3:10 - 3:20pm
<p><b>Presentation by Green Action Trust</b> Derek Robertson</p>	3:20 - 3:30pm
<p><b>Presentation 2:</b> <b>Initial Concepts &amp; Ideas</b> Anthony Hubbert, Threesixty Architecture</p>	3:30 - 3:50pm
<p><b>Workshop 2:</b> <b>Feedback on Initial concepts &amp; ideas:</b> Discussion, Three key statements of feedback &amp; What's Missing?</p>	3:50 - 4:50pm
<p><b>Next Steps &amp; Thanks</b> Rory Kellett, Threesixty Architecture</p>	4:50 - 5:00pm

# INTRODUCTION

The stakeholder event was held in the MacIntosh Hall at the Duncansburgh Church in the heart of the town centre.

27 people outwith the design team were in attendance, made up from both members of the local community and from groups with a more regional / national interest.

## Feedback

A wide range of ideas were discussed in the initial demographic based workshop groups with a lot of common themes and issues emerging. From this group of participants there was a sense that the town centre needs a diversity of use and activity to bring a wider range of people in at different parts of the day and week.

The initial ideas put forward in the second workshop were positively received in the main, with some concern expressed around the potential loss of parking that would be a consequence of their introduction.



# ATTENDEES

Name	Company / Organisation
Eilidh MacLellan	Lochaber Chamber of Commerce
Karen Dean	FW Town Team
Jackie Wright	UHI NW+H
Scott Donald	Lochaber Chamber of Commerce
Phil Prentice	STP
Tom Campbell	Green Action Trust
Fraser Coupland	Lochaber Chamber of Commerce
Derek Robertson	Green Action Trust
Dot Ferguson	Highland Council
Lyn Kilpatrick	Voluntary Action Lochaber
Tricia Jordan	FITCC
Marie Macmillan	Voluntary Action Lochaber
Mark Linfield	FITCC
Elizabeth Loudon	FITCC
Gwyn Moses	Kilmallie Community Council
Che Scott	Scottish Fire + Rescue Service
Sarah Kennedy	FWMSCIC
James Kennedy	FWMSCIC
Kate Willis	Highland Council Councillor
Finlay Finlayson	Crannog
Lucy Prins	Highland Council
Julie Cromerty	Highland Council
Ewen Mcintosh	Highland Council
John Gillespie	Caol Community Council
Arther Cowie	Lochaber Disability Access Panel
Michael Foxley	FW 2040
Margaret Moynihan	Lochaber Housing Association
Alastair Nicolson	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Alan Webster	Highland Council
Anthony Hubbert	Threesixty Architecture
Rory Kellett	Threesixty Architecture
Morgan Macintosh	Threesixty Architecture
Jake Smith	Threesixty Architecture

## WORKSHOP 1

### What do I need from my town centre?

1. Families with young children
2. Teenagers 13-17
3. Young Adults 18-25
4. Adults 26-60
5. Seniors 60+
6. Tourists & Visitors

# WORKSHOP 1: KEY FEEDBACK



## Families and Young Children

- A dedicated meeting place
- A colour coded trail that is signposted which involves activities and history
- Leisure Centre + Library to have longer opening hours
- More centrally located activity space / venue
- Improved access to the Old Fort
- Activities on the waterfront
- Improved retail offer (clothing, shoes etc.)
- Improved e-bike provision for families (child carriers, baskets etc.)

## Teenagers

- *It would be best to speak to schools*
- Fun activities and games
- Activities that are cheap, affordable and accessible outside school time
- Decent takeaway food offers
- Safe hang out spots - made to feel welcome and part of the town centre
- Toilets
- Variety and Diversity

## Young Adults

- Housing and Affordability:
  - Currently a lack of affordable private housing
- Re-purposed buildings
- Employment opportunities and further education:
  - Encourage people to stay
- Evening entertainment:
  - More/different options
- Civic pride, encouraging more people to stay / settle / work



## Adults

- Better multi-use spaces (events / culture / sport)
- Community events / festivals / markets
- Better street furniture: flexible + useable
- A 'Greened' high street
- Sustainable transport links
- Co-work spaces
- Pop up shops (Flexible)
- A cleaner and safer high street
- Shelter: The world's biggest umbrella

## Seniors 60+

- Challenge perspectives, not all are in a care home
- E-bikes
- Better connectivity:           Public transport in the evenings / sundays  
  Train to Mallaig
- Consider elderly visitors and tourists:  
  Cruise passengers / coach tour /camper-van users
- Condition of street scape (cobble stones etc.)
- New housing (must be adaptable and flexible)

## Tourists + Visitors

- Better access and ramps to maximise accessibility
- Improved access from the high street to Loch Linnhe
- Better west end access and more activity
- Improved Wayfinding throughout town centre to direct visitors
- Find new uses for empty shops
- Places to sell local produce
- Promote / advertise what is going on - events, attractions etc.
- More public toilets
- Pop-up food outlets
- Improved safety on high street
- Audio guide as part of any potential tourism / heritage trail
- A tourist Information centre that is open after 5pm



## WORKSHOP 2

### Feedback on Initial concepts & ideas:

#### Discussion

Three key statements of feedback

What's Missing?

## WORKSHOP 2: KEY FEEDBACK



### Car Parking & Transport

- What happens to public transport if Middle St. is reconfigured?
- Liaise with Bus Partnership group
- Consider car parking for any new residential units particularly those shown on site of current Middle Street car park
- South bound traffic issues - particularly in summer months (peak tourism time)
- Location of surface crossing from train station: distance back from roundabout junction and sight lines for traffic
- Traffic problems on A82 begin before stretch of Belford Road north of Train Station
- Bus/Rail hub what is happening? can the bus station be relocated to car park to rear of cinema?
- Consider the creation of a dedicated travel hub
- Protect / Safeguard a significant amount of parking at West End Car Park, this is important for that end of the town
- Camper vans: Where can these be accommodated and with proper facilities?
- How does the masterplan encourage connection to the wider community?
- Potential to introduce an element of multi-storey parking to service the town centre
- The majority of people do not come by train or bus, they currently travel by car
- Local town centre retailers and businesses will not want to lose car parking



## Civic / Community Uses

- Play spaces should be an essential component of the town centre
- A New Nevis Centre: Both potential locations have merit but parking must be considered
- What will the existing site become? - too important to be merely parking, consider intensive reuse incorporating housing
- Could it be a new home for the local football team?
- If the Nevis Centre focuses on civic and cultural uses, where does the sport component go? How will this be provided for the community?

## General Comments for Consideration

- More needs to be done to turn the town to face the loch
- More needs to be done to enhance loch side experience
- We need to provide an ambitious identity for Fort William
- Building out into the loch: Will this be considered as part of the masterplan?:  
Ensure what is proposed will enhance future development
- Loch swimming can't be located along the A82 edge of the loch due to shallow water, edge of West car park is best location and currently used by local groups
- Consider extending west end car park to accommodate cruise ships (proposals being brought forward by FWMSCIC)
- Consider incorporation of redevelopment of climbing centre to provide elevated restaurant / viewing tower
- Where is funding coming from? How will the masterplan be delivered?



## Executive summary

### Introduction

This report provides information on Fort William's residential property market, population and household affluence.

### Scotland residential market

A combination of economic uncertainty, high inflation and a spike in mortgage rates, triggered by the UK mini budget at the end of September 2022, has translated into lower levels of residential transactional activity across Scotland. Going forward, strong levels of underlying demand provides some cause for optimism. But with relatively higher mortgage rates compared to previous years and more choice for buyers, there is increased price sensitivity, particularly in markets which are more reliant on borrowing. This means we are likely to see further pressure on pricing over the remainder of this year and into next.

### Highland residential market

The factors that have impacted the wider Scotland market have also played out across Highland, with a drop in transactions this year. With more availability, it is likely to remain a price sensitive market going forward as buyers are exercising more caution in their budgets and price offers due to stretched mortgage affordability. Having said that, availability remains below pre-pandemic levels and an underlying lack of choice will continue to apply upward pressure on prices going forward.

### Fort William population

Fort William's population has fallen gradually since 2012. This is due to the limited supply of new build homes in the local area, which has mostly included social housing and small scale flatted developments.

### Fort William household affluence

Compared to the wider Highland Local Authority area, Fort William has a higher proportion of lower affluence households, including those living in inexpensive homes in village communities. That said, there is a significant number of well-off owners in rural locations but a lack of affluent households living in modern homes given the lack of supply of private new build developments in the local area.

### Fort William residential market

There is a limited residential market in the postcode that includes Fort William due to the limited supply of private new homes that would have boosted transaction numbers. Nevertheless, the local market has remained steady supported by second hand sales. Whilst transactions have dropped over the last 12 months in line with the rest of Scotland, the average price has grown in the last three years as the market has shifted towards higher price bands.

### Gaps in the market

The increase in average prices in Fort William over the last three years is potentially encouraging for any future private new build development. Over the last 10 years, the area has witnessed mostly social new build housing and small-scale flatted sites and consequently there is lack of comparable evidence for pricing purposes. At present there are no plans for any medium to large private housing developments in the local area. Future private developments, if any, should consider attainably-priced small to medium sized two, three and four bedroom properties that can attract first time buyers, couples and growing families.

### Conclusions

The wider Scotland residential market is likely to remain price sensitive in the short to medium term, against a backdrop of economic challenges. Demand for attainably-priced housing will remain strong and this favours locations such as Fort William which has seen a lack of private new build supply.

## Introduction

This report examines housing market performance across Scotland and the Highland Local Authority area, where Fort William is located. This is followed by an analysis of population and household affluence in Fort William. The report also provides an examination of Fort William's residential market performance over the last decade. The report ends with gaps in the local housing market and our conclusions for the future market in Fort William.

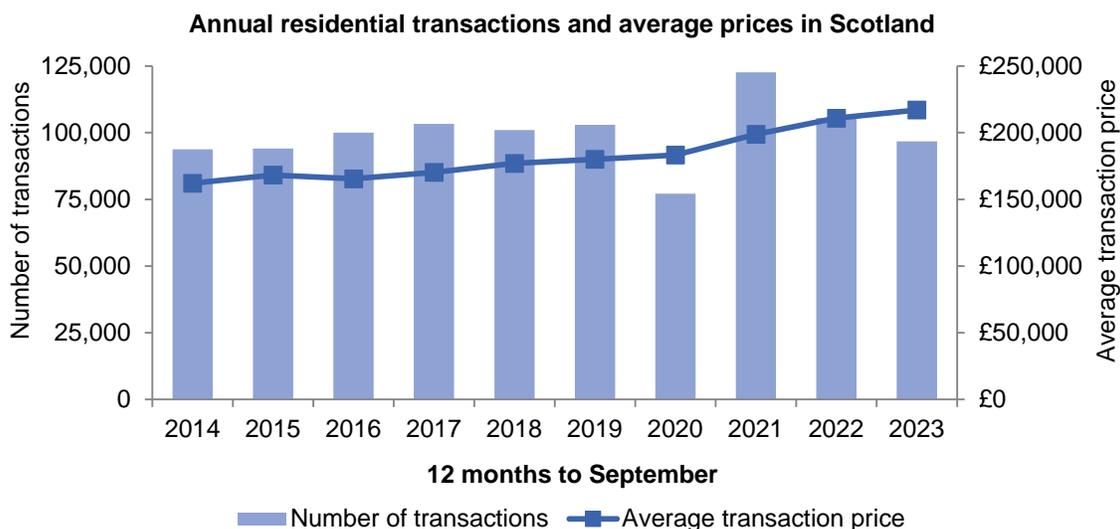
### Scotland residential market

A combination of economic uncertainty, rising inflation and increasing interest rates, triggered by the UK mini budget at the end of September 2022, has translated into lower levels of residential transactional activity across Scotland.

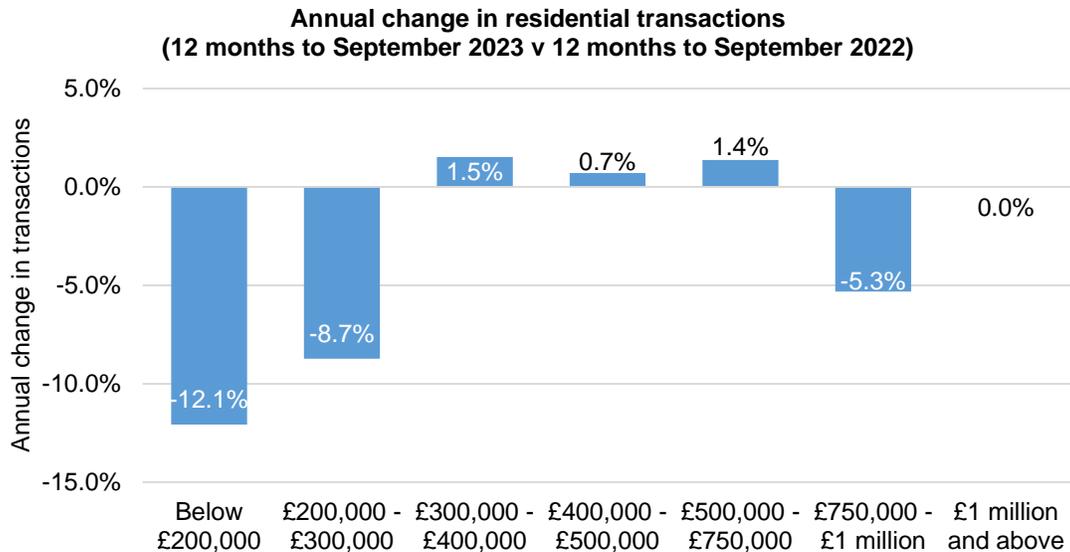
The annual number of residential transactions reached 96,779 during the 12 months ending September 2023, according to the Registers of Scotland. This was -8% lower than the number during the 12 months ending September 2022 and -3% lower than the 10-year annual average of 99,729.

The drop in transactions has been concentrated mostly in the mainstream market which is more reliant on mortgage lending. On the other hand, equity-driven markets, mainly above £300,000 have continued to see a rise in activity.

Consequently, whilst overall transactions have dropped, the average price increased by 3%, from £210,874 during the 12 months ending September 2022 to £217,043 during the 12 months ending September 2023. The average price of £217,043 was 18% higher than the 10-year average of £183,885.



Source: Savills Research using Registers of Scotland



Source: Savills Research using Registers of Scotland

### A price sensitive market

Supply has outweighed demand so far this year and as of November 2023 there are 55% more properties currently available on Rightmove across Scotland compared to the same period last year. However, it remains an inherently under supplied market with availability -18% less than the pre-pandemic level. Having said that, there has been a rise in properties undergoing a price adjustment this year compared to 2022. With mortgage rates remaining high against a backdrop of high inflation, it is likely to remain a price sensitive market.

Indeed, according to the Nationwide, average house prices across Scotland during Q3 2023 were - 4.2% lower compared to Q3 2022. However, well-presented and realistically priced properties in sought-after addresses are still commanding competition, and in some cases, buyers are prepared to pay more for the right home.

Going forward, underlying demand for prime Scottish properties provides some cause for optimism. During the third quarter of 2023, the number of buyers registering with Savills to find a Scottish home was up 3% on the same months in 2022 and 71% on the pre-pandemic 2019 level.

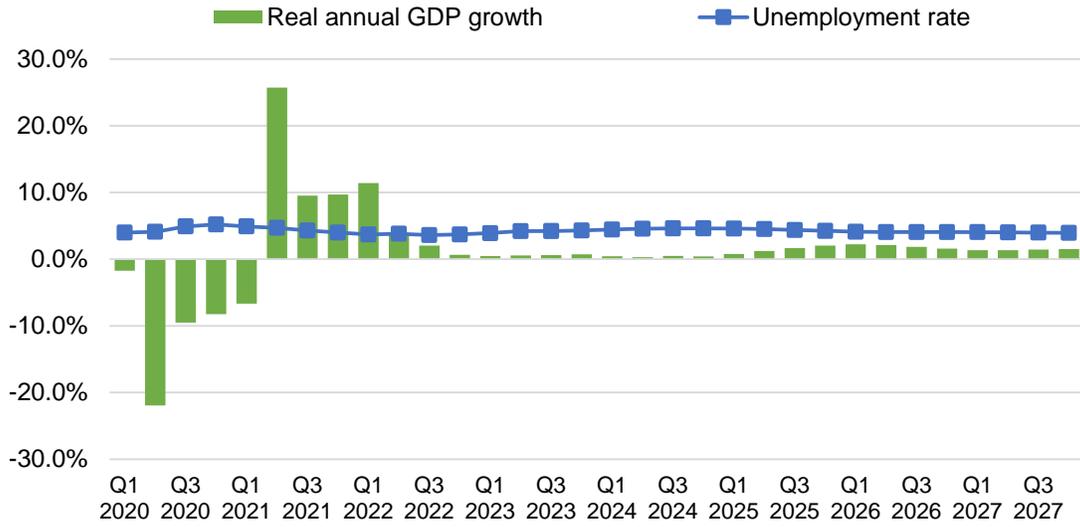
But with relatively higher mortgage rates compared to previous years, there is increased price sensitivity, particularly in markets which are more reliant on borrowing. This means we are likely to see further pressure on pricing over the remainder of this year and into next.

With stock levels continuing to rise, sellers who are realistic on pricing will continue to command the most interest and, ultimately, achieve the best prices.

### Forecasts

Our housing market outlook for Scotland is based on the outlook for the UK-wide economy, which is expected to remain flat in 2023. However, the level of unemployment is predicted to peak far lower than in previous recessions, as shown in the following chart. That contains the risk of unemployment-driven repossessions, which were a critical component of the market in the early 1990s.

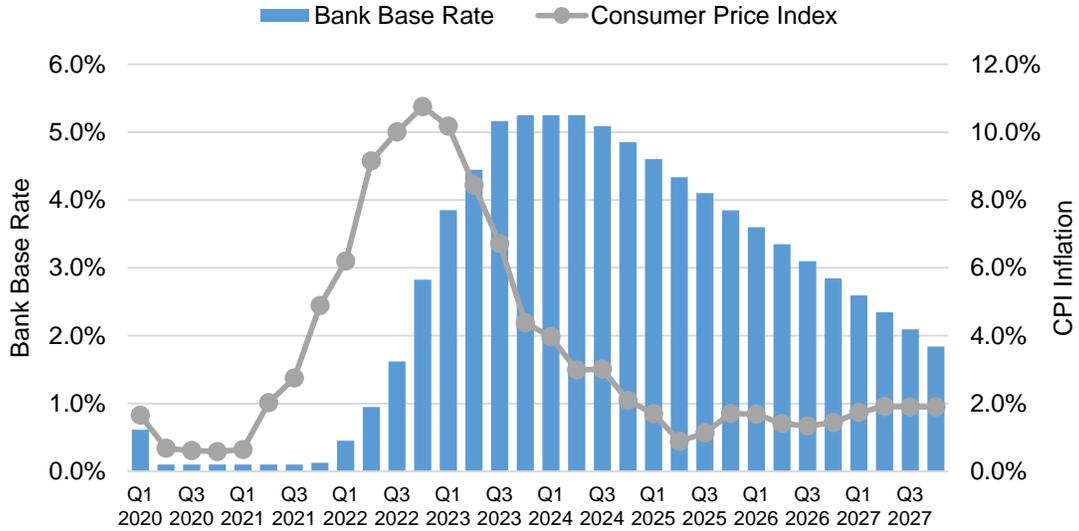
**UK GDP growth and UK employment rate forecasts**



Source: Savills Research using Oxford Economics

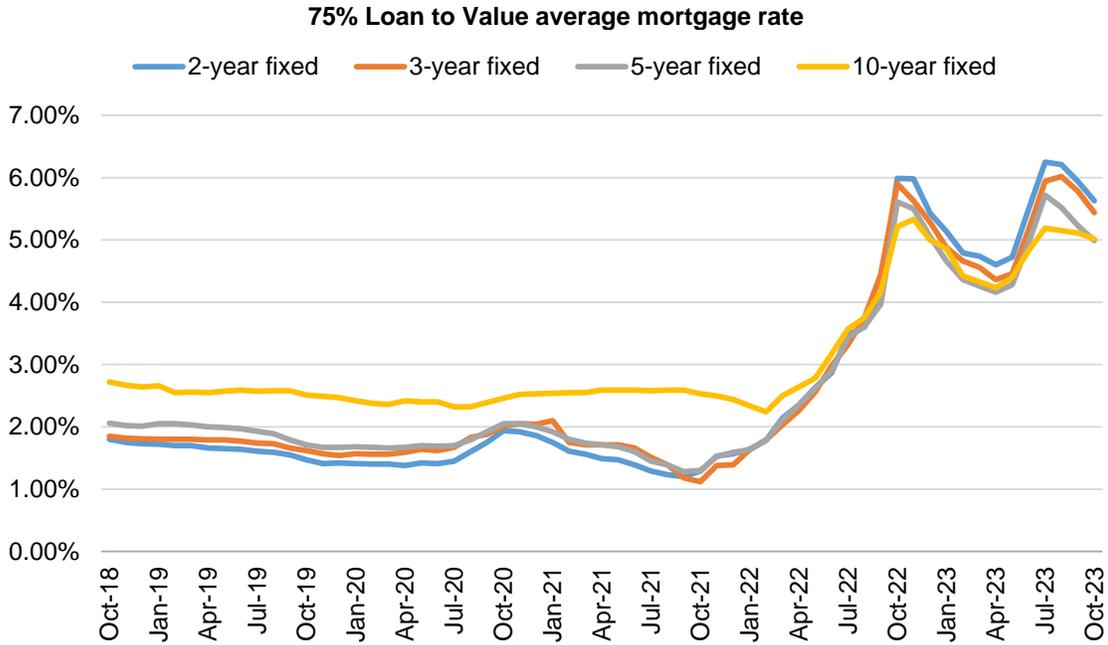
Our house price forecasts are based on the assumption that Bank of England base rate will remain at a relatively high level compared to previous years, as shown by the bars in the following chart. Mortgage affordability therefore will be stretched in 2024.

**Bank of England Base Rate and Consumer Price Inflation historic data and forecasts**



Source: Savills Research using Oxford Economics

With continued pressure on prices, we also expect a further drop in activity due to high rates and stretched affordability. Transactional recovery will then vary according to buyer type, with cash-buyers and home movers the first to recover, followed by first time buyers and mortgaged buy-to-let investors.



Source: Savills Research using Bank of England

Beyond 2024, on the basis that mortgage markets remained settled and the Bank of England base rate gradually reduces as inflation is tamed, we expect a marked improvement in mortgage affordability. That could gradually bring more buyers into the market and allow a return to house price growth from 2025 onwards, with a more pronounced rebound in 2026. Scotland, with its relative affordability, is expected to outperform the UK as a whole over the five-year period from 2024 to 2028.

Looking longer term, we expect activity to be weighted towards more affluent households even after a correction in values due to the higher underlying interest rate environment.

**Mainstream residential values current forecast**

Year	Scotland	UK
2023 year to date (Q3 2023 v Q4 2022)	-0.8%	-1.9%
2024	-2.0%	-3.0%
2025	+4.0%	+3.5%
2026	+5.5%	+5.0%
2027	+6.5%	+6.5%
2028	+5.0%	+5.0%
<b>Five years to 2028</b>	<b>+20.2%</b>	<b>+17.9%</b>

Source: Savills Research and Nationwide

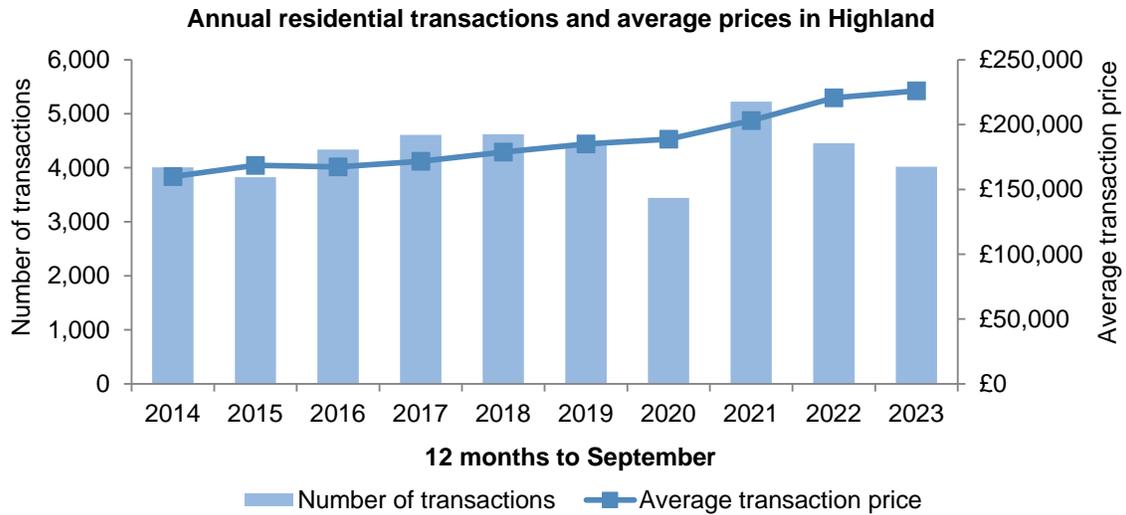
### Highland Local Authority area residential market

A combination of economic uncertainty, rising inflation and increasing interest rates, triggered by the UK mini budget at the end of September 2022, has translated into lower levels of residential transactional activity across Scotland.

These factors are also impacting the Highland market. The annual number of residential transactions here reached 4,020 during the 12 months ending September 2023. This was -10% lower than the number during the 12 months ending September 2022 and also -7% lower than the 10-year annual average of 4,300.

Whilst the number of transactions has dropped slightly, the average price increased by 2%, from £220,641 during the 12 months ending September 2022 to £226,015 during the 12 months ending September 2023, led by more sales activity between £400,000 and £700,000. The average price during the 12 months ending September 2023 of £226,015 was 21% higher than the 10-year average of £187,374.

Whilst sales have dropped across Highland, there is more supply and available stock. It is therefore likely to remain a price sensitive market going forward as buyers are exercising more caution in their budgets and price offers due to stretched mortgage affordability. Having said that, availability remains below pre-pandemic levels and an underlying lack of choice will continue to apply upward pressure on prices going forward.



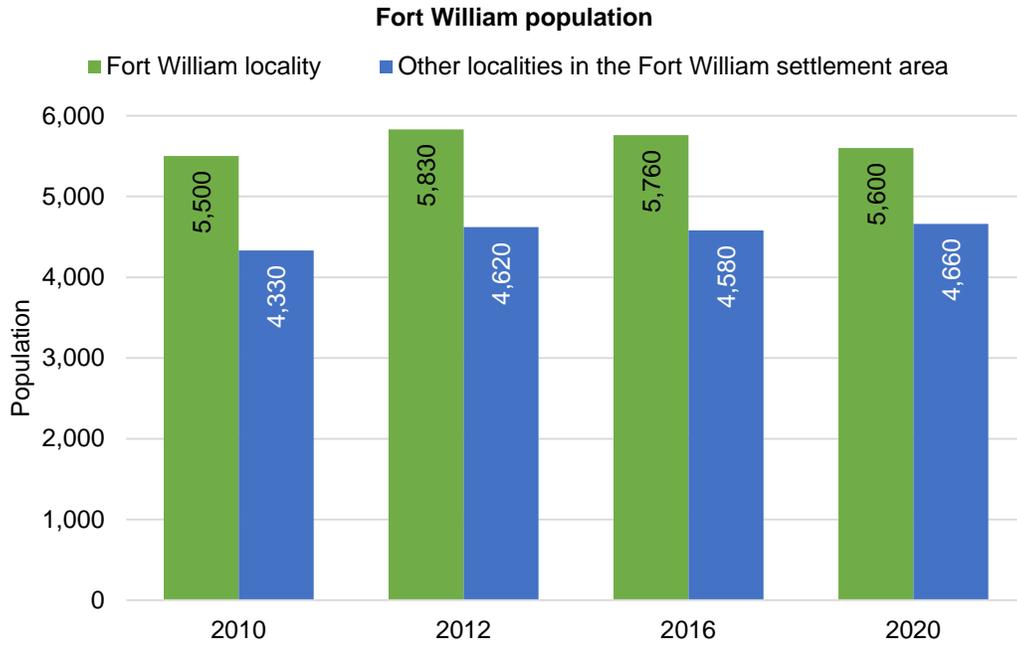
Source: Savills Research using Registers of Scotland

## Fort William population

The town of Fort William lies within the wider Fort William settlement area, which includes three localities, including Banavie/Corpach, Caol and Fort William. Fort William is the largest of the three localities with a population of 5,600 as of 2020.

The Fort William locality population in 2020 was 1.8% higher than the number in 2010 but has fallen gradually since 2012. This is due to the limited supply of new build homes in the local area, which has mostly included social housing and small scale flatted developments. The population across the remaining areas has been relatively stable over the last decade.

The following chart shows the change in population in Fort William and its surrounding areas.



Source: National Records of Scotland

## Fort William household affluence

We have used Experian data in our analysis of Fort William's households and their level of affluence. Experian's Mosaic UK consumer classification provides a detailed understanding of the demographics, lifestyles, behaviour and locations of all individuals and households in the UK. Mosaic UK classifies all individuals, households or postcodes in the United Kingdom into a set of lifestyle types. There are 15 groups, which breakdown into 66 household types.

A total of 332 data elements have been used to build this latest version of Mosaic UK. The majority of the information comes from Experian's UK ConsumerView Database, which combines public and Experian proprietary data and statistical models. These include the edited Electoral Roll, Council Tax property valuations, house sale prices, self-reported lifestyle surveys, term time students from HESA, social housing information from NROSH, broadband speed information from OFCOM and other compiled consumer data.

### Experian Mosaic Groups

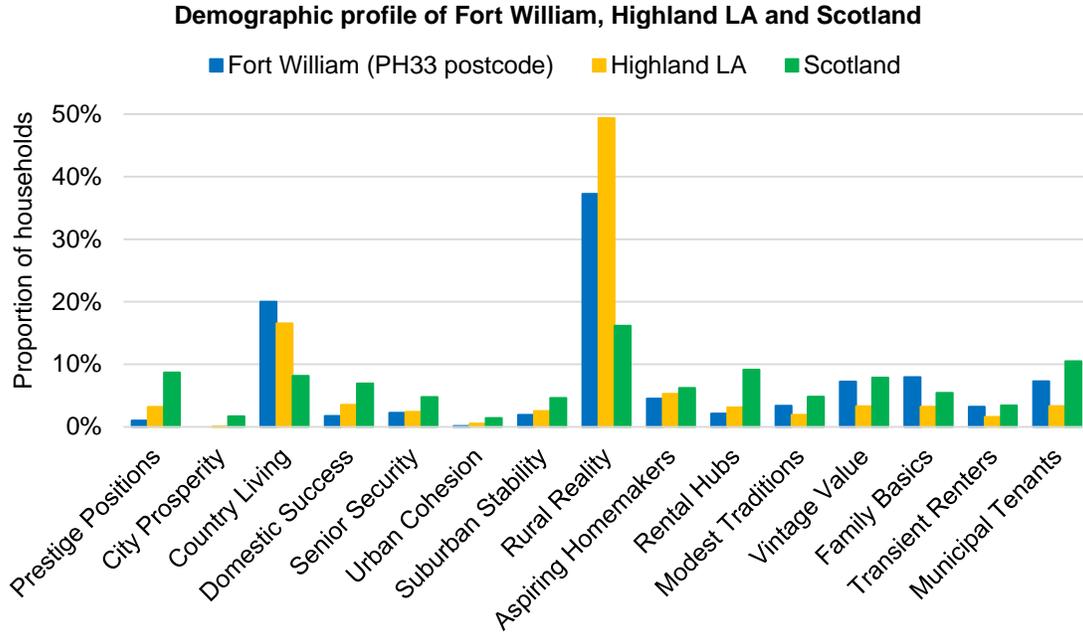
The table below shows the different Mosaic groups, a brief description and their level of affluence:

Mosaic Group	Description	Affluence level
<b>Prestige Positions</b>	Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles	1
<b>City Prosperity</b>	High status city dwellers living in central locations and pursuing careers with high rewards	2
<b>Country Living</b>	Well-off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life	3
<b>Domestic Success</b>	Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers	4
<b>Senior Security</b>	Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement	5
<b>Urban Cohesion</b>	Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity	6
<b>Suburban Stability</b>	Mature suburban owners living settled lives in mid-range housing	7
<b>Rural Reality</b>	Householders living in inexpensive homes in village communities	8
<b>Aspiring Homemakers</b>	Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means	9
<b>Rental Hubs</b>	Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods	10
<b>Modest Traditions</b>	Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles	11
<b>Vintage Value</b>	Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs	12
<b>Family Basics</b>	Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet	13
<b>Transient Renters</b>	Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short term	14
<b>Municipal Tenants</b>	Urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges	15

Source: Experian and Savills Research

The following chart shows affluence levels in the PH33 postcode district that includes Fort William in comparison with the Highland Local Authority area as a whole and Scotland.

Given their location, both Fort William and Highland have a high proportion of households classified as Country Living or Rural Reality. However, Highland has comparatively more higher affluence households, with Fort William having more households in some of the least affluent categories.

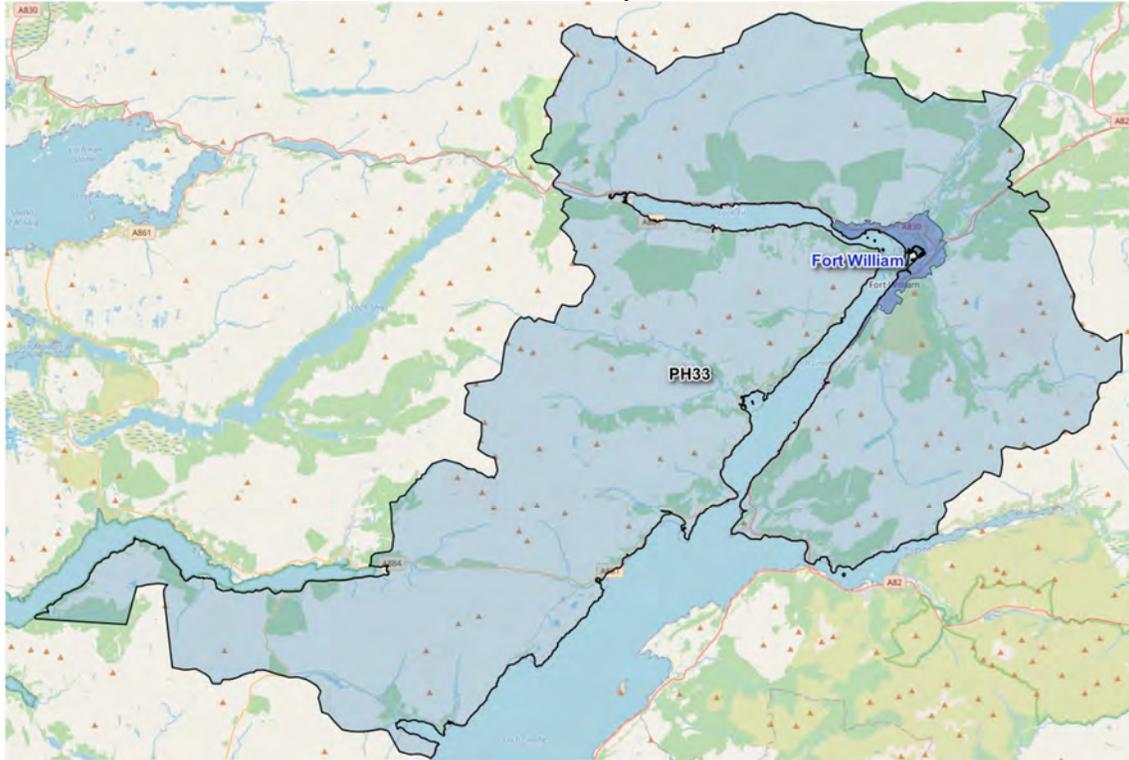


Source: Experian and Savills Research

## Fort William residential market

Our local residential market commentary is based on transactions in the PH33 postcode which includes Fort William, registered over a 10-year period, from October 2013 to September 2023. The following map shows the PH33 postcode district.

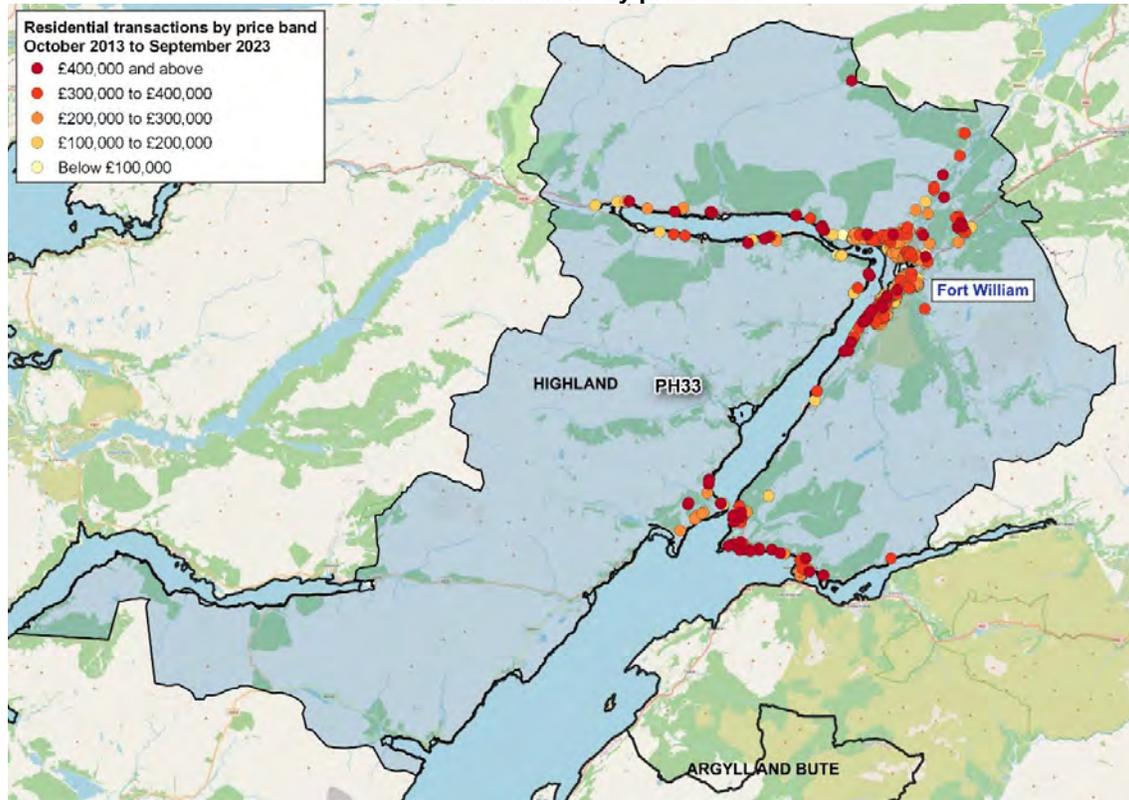
**PH33 Fort William postcode**



Source: Savills Research

The following map shows PH33 and transactions over the last 10 years by price band.

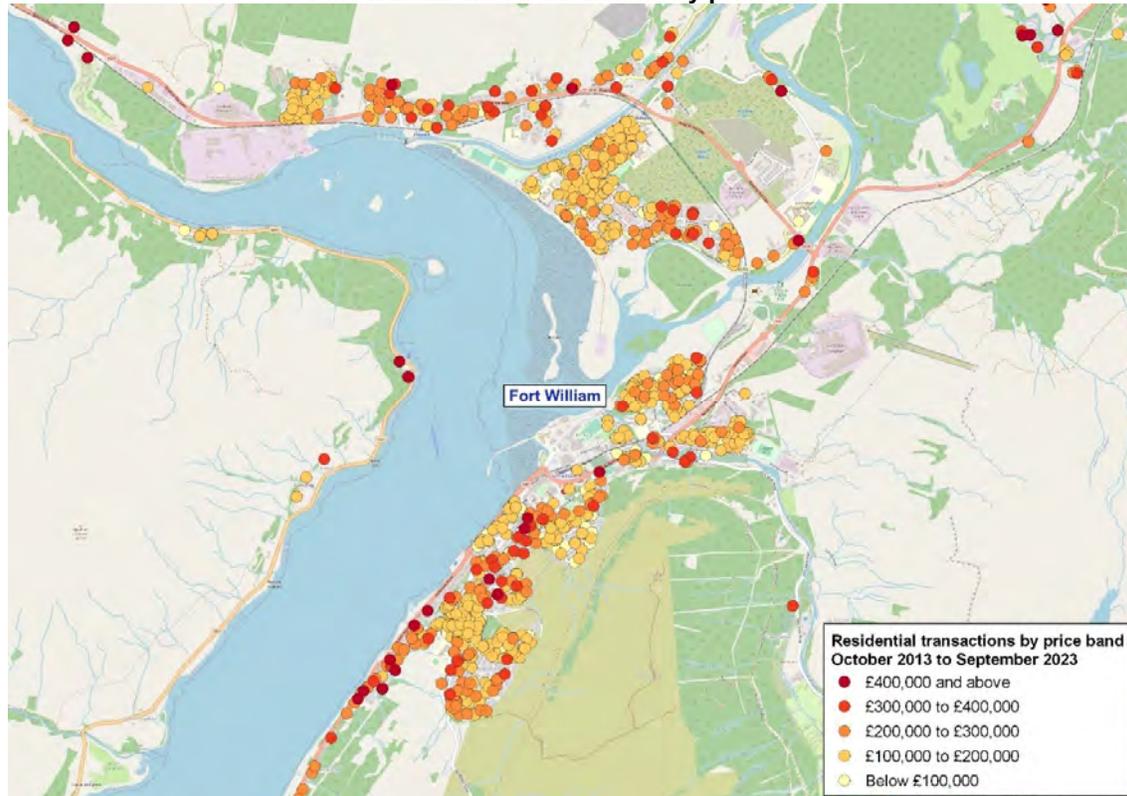
### PH33 transactions by price band



Source: Savills Research

The following map shows transactions by price band in the Fort William area.

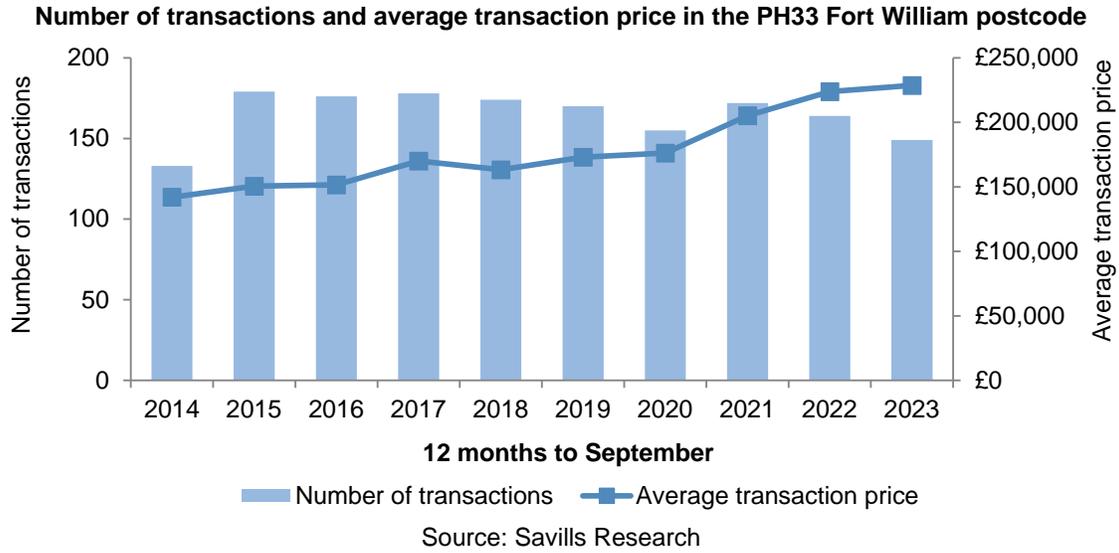
**Fort William area transactions by price band**



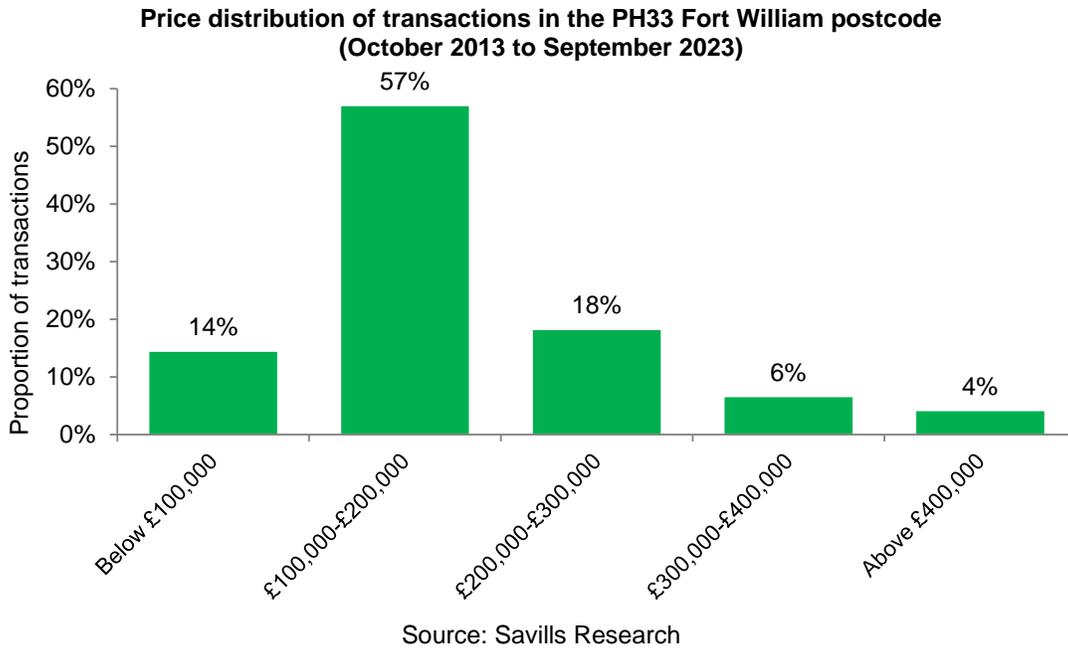
There is a limited residential market in the PH33 Fort William postcode, making up only 4% of Highland's residential transactions over the last decade. This is mainly due to the limited supply of private new homes, that would have boosted transaction numbers in the local market, as they have done in the Inverness area. Nevertheless, for most of the last 10 years, the local market has remained steady supported by second hand sales. Over the last 12 months however, annual transactions dropped to their lowest number since 2014, against a challenging economic backdrop and high interest rates.

Whilst transactions have dropped over the last 12 months, the average price has grown in the last three years as the market has shifted towards higher price bands. Above £200,000 for example, transactions over the last 12 months made up 46% of the market compared to a 10-year figure of 29%. Consequently, the average price in the PH33 postcode reached a 10-year high of £228,764.

The following chart shows average prices and transaction numbers in the PH33 Fort William postcode.



The following chart shows the distribution of residential transactions by price band in the PH33 Fort William postcode between October 2013 and September 2023.



### **Gaps in the market**

The increase in average prices in Fort William over the last three years is potentially encouraging for any future private new build development. Over the last 10 years, the area has witnessed mostly social new build housing and small-scale flatted sites and consequently there is lack of comparable evidence for pricing purposes. At present there are no plans for any medium to large private housing developments in the local area. Future private developments, if any, should consider attainably-priced small to medium sized two, three and four bedroom properties that can attract first time buyers, couples and growing families.

### **Conclusions**

The wider Scotland residential market is likely to remain price sensitive in the short to medium term, against a backdrop of economic challenges. Demand for attainably-priced housing will remain strong and this favours locations such as Fort William which has seen a lack of private new build supply.

## **Fort William – New Workplace**

Savills has undergone research on the currently supply of office accommodation to rent and buy in Fort William. According to CoStar data, there is no office accommodation and only retail/leisure uses available on the market either to rent or buy.

This demonstrates a lack of current supply of functional office space, which could suggest there is demand for some form of office/flexible work space provision in Fort William. Given the provision of retail space on the market there could also be opportunities to repurpose this vacant space to such uses.

According to Savills research (2023), flexible office space operators are benefitting from strong occupancy and desk rate growth across the UK due to the exceptional rise in demand post-Covid-19. Tenants now also have a desire for greater flexibility, with 72% of landlords now expecting tenants to require more flexible lease terms according to the Savills 2022 Landlord Flexible Office Survey.

Given the local market dynamics, it is likely flexible office workspace with a provision of smaller suites and hot desks would be appropriate. This would allow the space to attract smaller companies looking for flexibility or cater to individuals who are working remotely and looking for space to work.

Although the flexible office space market is increasing in popularity, with flexible operators expanding portfolios and seeking space across the UK, it is unlikely that larger operators would expand into smaller, more remote locations such as Fort William. Therefore, we would anticipate that any investment in developing new working space would likely need to be from the public sector initially and driven by Highland Council.

# Fort William

## Transport Appraisal



## Change list

Ver:	Date:	Description of the change	Reviewed	Approved by
1	02.11.23	Draft	RM	RM

Project Name: Fort William Masterplan  
Project Number: 65210512  
Client: The Highland Council  
Date: 02/11/23  
Author: CD  
Document Reference: Transport Appraisal

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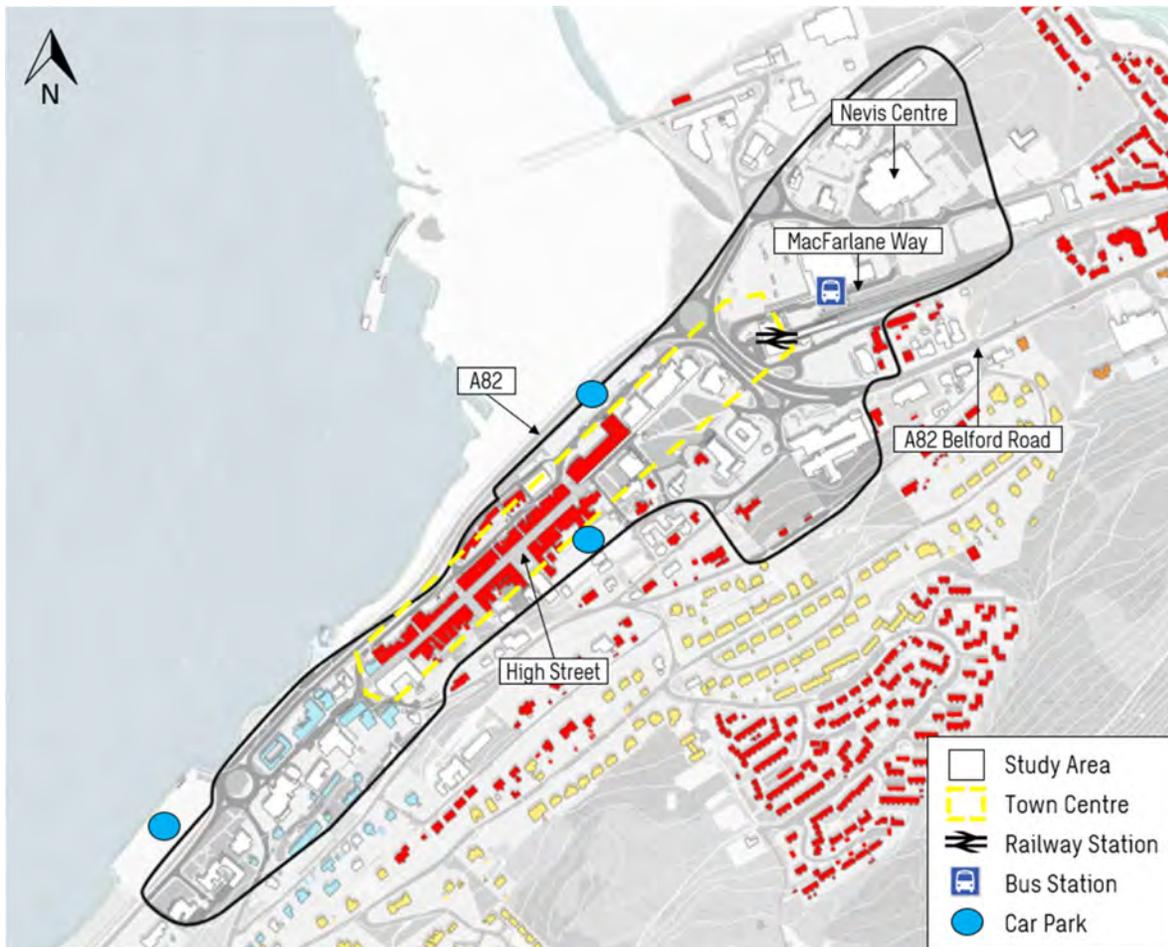
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Sweco was commissioned to provide strategic transport planning support for the preparation of the vision for Fort William town centre. Sweco are part of the project team led by 360architecture.

**Figure 1.1** highlights the extent of the study area incorporating the town centre.



**Figure 1.1 – Site Location**

**Figure 1** shows the town centre is bisected by the A82, which is dual carriageway throughout Fort William, separating the main town centre parade from Fort William railway and bus stations and the Nevis Centre. The A82, as it passes along the western edge of the town centre also acts as a boundary between this and Loch Linnhe.

### 1.1.1 Existing Transport Provision

#### Active Travel

There are various active travel routes running throughout the town centre, including a pedestrianised area within the main shopping thoroughfare. However, direct pedestrian access between the railway and bus stations and the town centre is limited to a single underpass on the A82 Belford Road. In addition, the A82 also creates a barrier for active travel movement between the town centre and the promenade running along the edge of Loch Linnhe.

The Fort William Active Travel Masterplan, prepared for The Highland Council, considers some improvements within the town centre, specifically highlighting a core route through the pedestrian area and the promenade. Funding was granted earlier in 2023 to implement improvements to the east of the study area.

#### Public Transport

The railway station is served by trains between Glasgow and Mallaig. It has a car park, which is accessed from the A82 Belford Road and Nevis Terrace and a one-way system is in place which sees vehicles exiting via Macfarlane Way, where the bus station is located. Bus services also use this one-way system, which can result in a relatively high volume of vehicles passing the railway station building entrance.

The bus station on Macfarlane Way is served by regional and local bus services, although it is understood that local bus services do not enter the bus station due to length of time taken. Further bus stops for local services are available on the A82 Belford Road and Middle Street.

#### Vehicle Movement and Parking

The A82, running through the town centre, is the main vehicle route between Fort William and the surrounding area. It is a trunk road and provides connections to the local road network via a series of roundabouts. Given its role, it accommodates all vehicle types with a destination in Fort William and further afield. It is a dual carriageway as it passes through the study area and the route is subject to seasonal congestion (refer to the Fort William Strategic Transport Study).

Given the rural nature of the town and a tourist destination, there are a number of off-street car parks throughout the town centre, with access via the local road network, as shown in **Figure 1.1**.

Servicing of occupiers within the town centre is via the local roads. Restrictions are in place.

## 2. The Masterplan: Transport Provision

### 2.1 Context

The Masterplan vision considers better connections between the town centre and the main transport providers, and how the town centre can better relate to Loch Linnhe. It takes account of the various studies for the area and aspirations of HiTrans, The Highland Council and Transport Scotland. All parties were consulted as part of this exercise.

The vision includes improvements associated with the railway and bus stations, the relocation of the Nevis Centre, introduction of further development along the western boundary, the connections with and improvements to the promenade, the role of the A82 and the changes to the way parking is provided to serve the town centre.

A high-level context plan showing the vision for the town centre is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

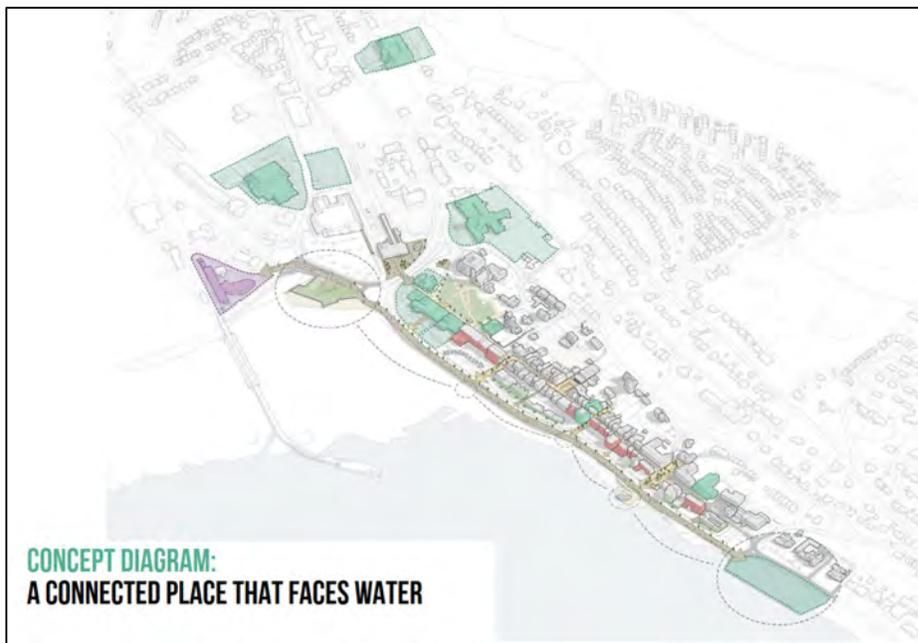


Figure 2.1. Context plan

### 2.2 Key Changes to Transport Provision Supporting the Vision

The potential key changes to the transport provision serving the town centre and their benefits are detailed below.

#### Active Travel

- Removal of vehicles from the front of the railway station building and introducing an active travel hub supporting better connections between regional and local public transport and active travel trips;
- At grade pedestrian/toucan crossing on the A82 Belford Road between the railway station and the town centre, facilitating safe and attractive active travel trips between the main regional public transport providers and the town centre;

- Relocation of the bus station from Macfarlane Way and the introduction of a high-quality active travel route connecting into the wider network to the north; improving the experience for those coming from the north / east;
- Widened promenade along Loch Linnhe through the reallocation of the A82 road space, encouraging active travel trips towards the Old Fort site and beyond from the town centre;
- Formal crossings on the A82 between the town centre and the promenade along Loch Linnhe to support better use of this infrastructure;
- Increasing the level of pedestrian only routes throughout the town centre encouraging higher footfall and managing vehicle movement, ensuring priority is given to those travelling actively;
- Supporting The Highland Council's Active Travel Strategy for the town.



**Figure 2.2. Potential mixed-use development on Middle Street**

### Public transport provision

- Improved arrival experience at the railway station through upgrades / provision of a new building;
- Relocation of the bus station from Macfarlane way to Nevis Terrace, with services entering and exiting via the same junction on the A82 Belford Road. This can assist with bus journey times and allows for a better-quality interchange between buses, rail users and those travelling actively;
- Relocation of Bus stops on Middle Street to best suit access to the town centre, these will be located to ensure there is no loss in service provision relative to that currently available.

### Vehicle movement and parking

- Reducing the A82 to single lanes along the Loch Linnhe frontage but retaining the two-lane approaches to the roundabouts. This will ensure that the route continues to facilitate the appropriate vehicle types whilst acknowledging the operational needs at the junctions which connect the strategic and local road network;
- Removal of a section of Middle Street between the A82 Belford Road and Linnhe Road to facilitate development, with the introduction of a new signalised junction on the A82 near to Linnhe Road, offering an alternative vehicle access to the town centre. This can improve the road layout in at this location, allowing for further development, whilst ensuring access is still available to the vehicles that require it;
- Relocation of off-street parking within the town centre and Nevis Terrace to a new multi-storey car park on the site of the existing Aird car park. It is acknowledged that there is still a parking demand and by relocating to a site that can be accessed by high quality active travel routes then it is ensuring

that parking and vehicle movement associated with the town centre is managed whilst prioritising active travel trips;

- Servicing will be developed as further detail emerges. However, the key principles will include dedicated servicing areas for larger retail with potential for kerbside servicing for smaller retail units and residential area. Potential for “last mile” servicing could be explored at the appropriate stage to support an efficient servicing model.

## 2.3 20-minute Neighbourhood

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) includes a focus on local living and the 20-minute neighbourhood concept. A 20-minute neighbourhood assumes that an individual can make a walking journey to local amenities and facility within a 20-minute round trip walk. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has a significant role to play in the vision for the town centre and as such the transport planning input focuses on how the redevelopment of the town centre can support this.

Policy 15 within NPF 4 states the following:

‘Development proposals will contribute to local living, including, where relevant, 20-minute neighbourhoods. To establish this, consideration will be given to existing settlement pattern, and the level and quality of interconnectivity of the proposed development within the surrounding area, including local access to:

- Sustainable modes of transport including local public transport and safe, high-quality walking, wheeling, and cycling networks;
- Employment;
- Shopping;
- Health and social care facilities;
- Childcare, schools, and lifelong learning opportunities;
- Playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, opportunities for food growth and allotments, sport, and recreation facilities;
- Publicly accessible toilets;
- Affordable and accessible housing options, ability to age in place and housing diversity.’

Analysis has been undertaken to understand how the emerging Masterplan/town centre contributes to the 20-minute neighbourhood. It is necessary to identify a focal point to conduct the analysis. Cameron square is considered, offering a public realm focal point for the town centre. The analysis is presented for both walking and cycling catchments.

**Figures 2.3** and **2.4** show the 20-minute neighbourhoods for walking and cycling respectively.



Figure 2.3. Future 20-minute neighbourhood (walking)

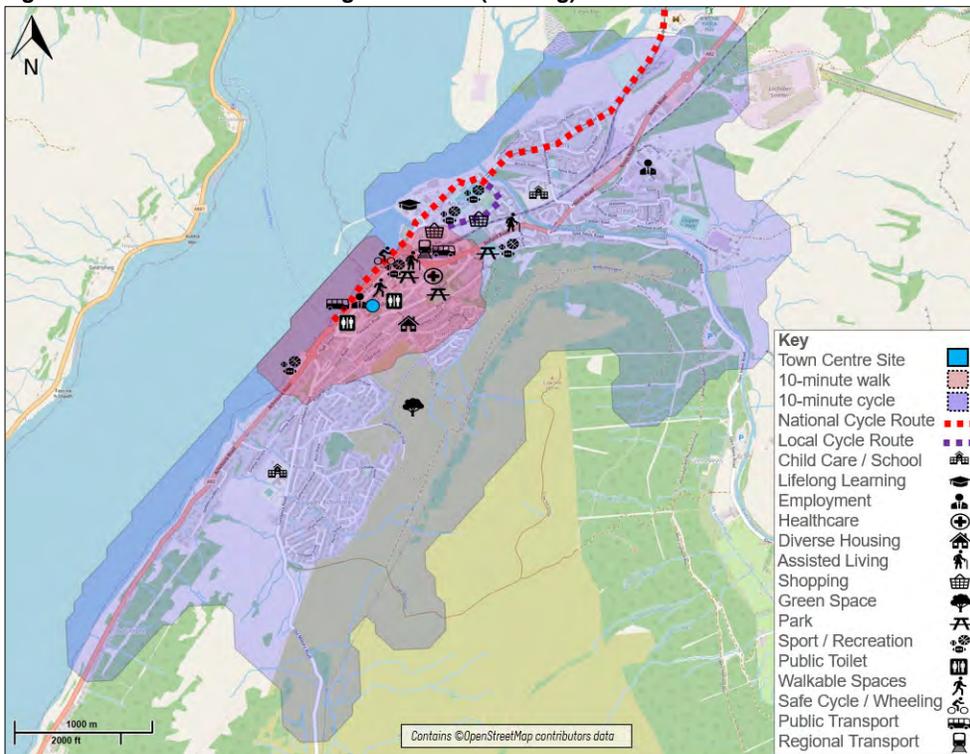


Figure 2.4. Future 20-minute neighbourhood (cycling)

**Figures 2.3 and 2.4** show that:

- The introduction of improved active travel routes and particularly the connection between the railway station and the town centre will provide very good connectivity between the key features of a 20-minute neighbourhood;
- The Active Travel Hub at the railway station introduces additional active travel and public transport opportunities for the town centre;
- New development within the town centre maximises the opportunity for residents to live and work in the same area, encouraging shorter trips;
- The relocation of the Nevis Centre to the west of the town centre will introduce a new land use in this part of the town, adding to the available facilities within a short walk and cycle of each other.

### 3. Summary

It is envisaged that the following transport planning input will be required to inform the next stages:

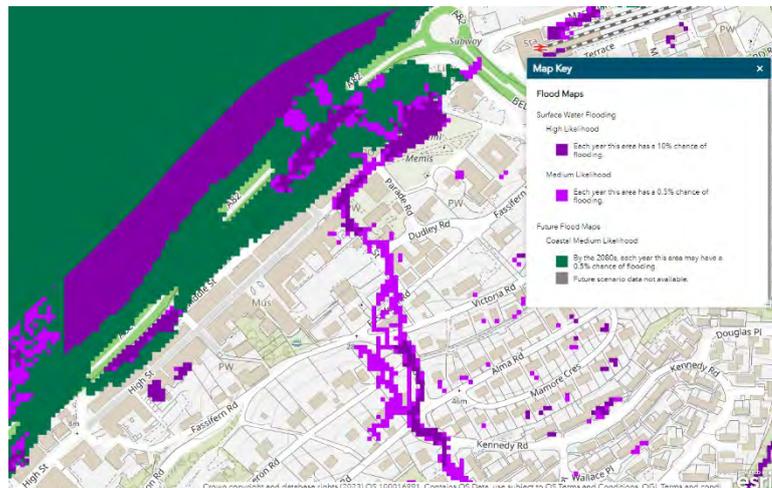
- Continue dialogue with HiTrans, The Highland Council, Transport Scotland, and other key stakeholders to coordinate the evolution of the town centre transport improvements;
- Develop the proposals further with respect to changes to the railway and bus stations including the introduction of an Active Travel Hub;
- Liaise with public transport operators to coordinate service provision in relation to planned and emerging development;
- Monitor the evolution of the Town Centre against the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, using the established criteria to help guide development and infrastructure decisions;
- Detailed assessment of the road network using new trip generation estimates for the Masterplan vision to understand the opportunities and constraints associated with the potential changes to the road network;
- Develop a parking management framework which supports sustainable travel patterns but acknowledges the need for parking and access for various vehicle types;
- Explore a servicing strategy to minimise the need for large delivery vehicles/servicing vehicles to enter the town centre;
- Prepare a Transport Assessment to support the Masterplan in its entirety, with more detailed assessments where required as detailed applications are made for development plots/areas.

## Promoting Green Infrastructure and mitigating Flood Risk

Fort William is adjacent to Loch Linnhe and in an area affected by future predicted sea level increases as shown on the SEPA future flood maps. A flood alleviation scheme will require to be developed in line with the Masterplan proposals to protect the area between the existing A82 and the Linnhe Road/Middle Street. This could be incorporated into the proposed improvements to the urban realm along the edge of the loch, made easier to implement through the widening of this zone thanks to the removal of one of the current traffic lanes.

The High Street while being out with the influence of the coastal flood extents is impacted by pluvial flooding which occurs during relatively frequent storm events. The SEPA flood maps show pluvial flooding occurring for the 1:10 year event or a 10% chance of flooding each year.

The area around The Parade Park, due to surface water pathways being blocked with existing buildings, is prone to localise flooding and during extreme events takes runoff from the higher surrounding streets via Parade road. The removal of this blockage to increase the capacity within Maciver Lane will be a key flood reduction measure.



### River Basin Region: Argyll

#### Peak River Flow Allowance

Total Change to 2100: 59%

#### Sea Level Rise Allowance

Cumulative rise from 2017 to 2100 in metres:  
0.86

#### Peak Rainfall Intensity Allowance

Total change to 2100: 46%

The prediction for climate change in the Fort William area is at 46% to 2100. This will see warmer wetter winters and hotter drier summers with periods of intense rainfall. This intense rainfall will manifest itself with increased runoff from the surrounding streets which is then directed towards High Street.

The current proposals are to incorporate Green infrastructure elements along the High Street, following feedback from the recent engagement workshops. This green infrastructure provides opportunities to manage pluvial runoff to avoid issues such as ponding on the High Street. Coupled with the outline development proposals the green infrastructure can be organised in such away as to manage rainfall at source and to store/direct flows away from The Parade. Each element will incorporate above and below ground storage for surface water which will then be discharged back into the local sewer network and a reduced flow rate. Reducing the flow rate from High Street and the surrounding streets (Station square/Menzie Square/Fraser Square/The Parade) into the Scottish Water sewer network which will reduce the pressure on the network and potential for sewer flooding.



Green Infrastructure can take many forms from raingardens and bio retention tree pits to Green roofs as well as larger SuDS features. The plans current

The incorporation of trees into streets also provides for increased shade during the summer period to protect against the sun's rays and reducing the street's ambient temperature.

The multi functional benefits of green infrastructure from adapting to climate change, eco system enhancements and improving human health and well being are well understood and documented. "CIWEM 2010. Multi-Functional Urban Green Infrastructure." They will also contribute to the aesthetic improvements to the town centre streets.

