

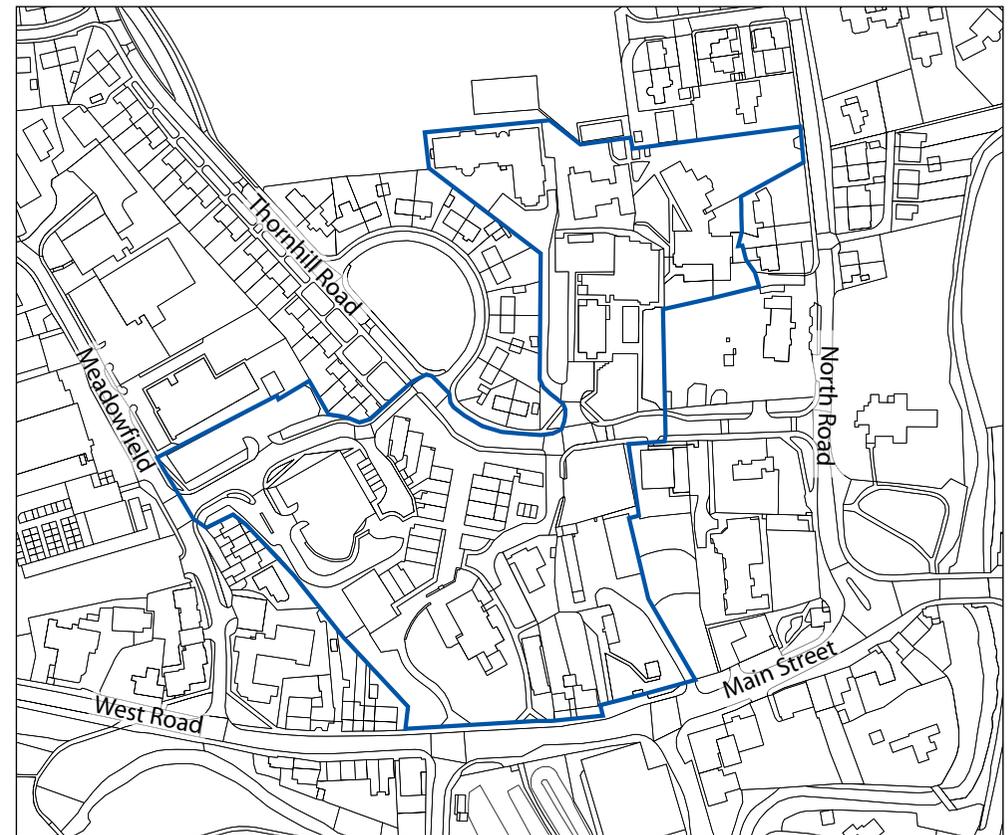
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introduction

purpose of the masterplan

- 1.1 In order to improve the physical character of Ponteland Village Centre, a steering group comprising of Ponteland Parish Council, Ponteland Community Partnership, Castle Morpeth Borough Council and Northumberland County Council has been established.
- 1.2 The aims of this group are:
 - To provide an inspirational vision for the heart of Ponteland
 - To provide a clear strategy towards achieving the vision
 - To ensure the community is able to maximise available opportunities by looking at a large, planned regeneration project
 - To provide “core purpose” for Ponteland, integrating the views of the community with the opportunities available
- 1.3 This group commissioned a team of consultants led by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP). In addition to NLP, Storeys:ssp provided market advice and assessed the viability of the options, whilst Mayer Brown provided advice with regard to transport and parking in the process of preparing a masterplan for Ponteland Village Centre.
- 1.4 The masterplanning process has been undertaken at a time of change in terms of both the planning policy framework and within the study area itself.



KEY

 Study Area Boundary



introduction

- 1.5 A number of existing facilities/uses within the study boundary have moved; (the health centre) or are likely to move in the near future, (Ponteland First School and Bellway Homes). Prior to the masterplanning process, consultation was undertaken by Northumberland County Council in relation to the relocation of the library. Arising from this earlier consultation process, the issue of the library has been a dominant theme in the development of the masterplan, particularly during consultation with residents.
- 1.6 Outline planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the existing Bellway Homes' office into flats. With the exception of the library, the decisions for the other uses to be relocated have been accepted as a given and have not been reviewed as part of this study.
- 1.7 In addition to the study boundary area, as set out in the plan overleaf, a number of adjacent sites have been examined in terms of their potential land use. This has been undertaken to identify whether there is scope to incorporate them within the masterplan. Sites examined include the Ponteland Auction Mart, the British Telecom Exchange, and Manners which are expensive to relocate and are unlikely to be justified financially. The existing uses on these sites should continue to be monitored as the masterplan is being taken forward, to identify any potential linkages or benefits that may arise if circumstances change.



introduction



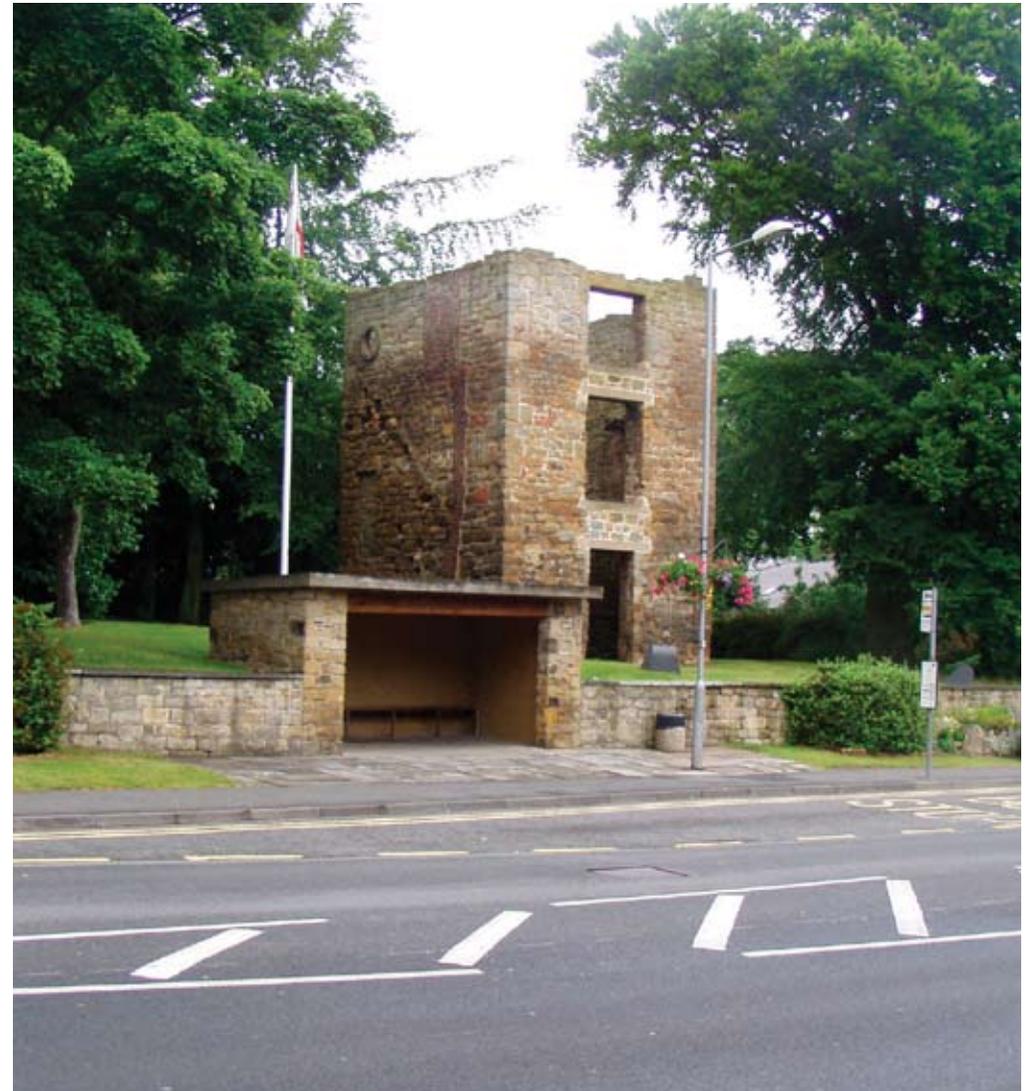
- 1.8 The challenge for the masterplanning process has been to arrive at a scheme which meets aspirations and is also capable of being delivered. Due to the complexity of landownership on the site and the limited amount of land owned by the public sector, it has been necessary to identify an option, which partners can take forward through the release of land in Ponteland.
- 1.9 The Steering Group has highlighted that this masterplan is to be used as the basis for the development of an Area Action Plan for Ponteland within the Local Development Framework up to 2021. The document contains a range of plans, proposed land uses and accompanying design principles which can be used to this end. The masterplan will also be used to engage developers, the community and businesses/landowners as well as to secure funding in the process of regenerating Ponteland Village Centre.

process/management structure

- 1.10 The development of the Masterplan has been derived from an extensive process. The Ponteland Regeneration Group was established to oversee and manage the masterplan on behalf of stakeholders. The Steering Group consists of representatives and Councillors from Castle Morpeth District Council, Northumberland County Council, Ponteland Parish Council and the Ponteland Community Partnership. A full list of those who attended the Steering Group meetings is included at Appendix 1. The Steering Group met on a regular basis throughout the project and provided an important input into the development of the Masterplan.

introduction

- 1.11 To arrive at the masterplan a comprehensive baseline assessment of the area has been undertaken. This included an urban design audit, market analysis, transport assessment, consultation with businesses, residents and stakeholders.
- 1.12 This information identified a series of opportunities and constraints that needed to be maximised or addressed by the Masterplan. To address the weaknesses and build upon the strengths of the area, four options were developed ranging from moderate environmental improvements to large scale redevelopment of the study area. These options were presented to the community at a series of drop – ins which were well attended and via articles included in the local press. The feedback from these events combined with stakeholder views and an assessment of the deliverability of the options led to the development of the preferred option.
- 1.13 The visionary option is set out in the masterplan and is accompanied by illustrations, information on phasing and delivery as well as the next steps to take the masterplan forward.



vision

2.1 The aim of this masterplan is to address the wide ranging issues identified in Section 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 which will lead to:

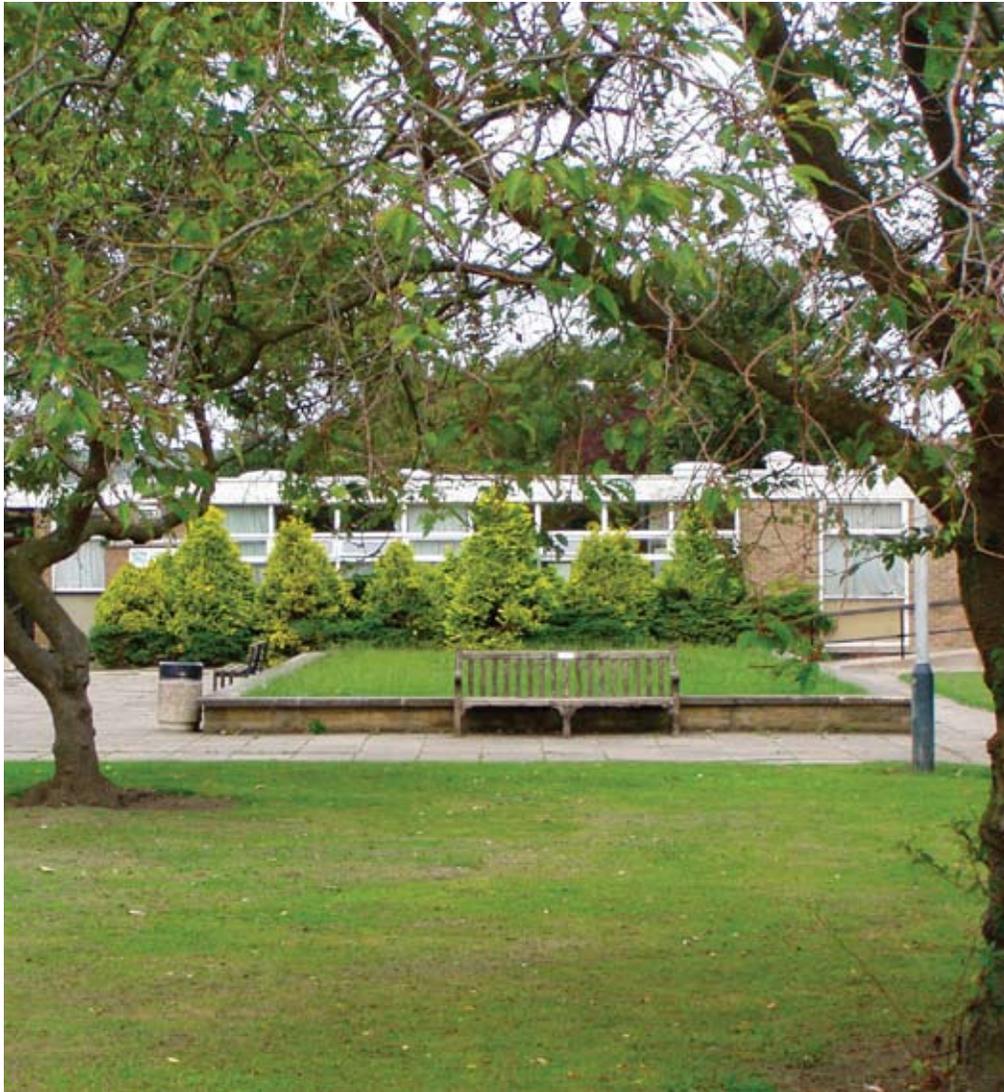
“A vibrant and attractive village centre offering a diverse range of retail and community facilities, set within a high quality built and natural environment, complemented by surrounding new residential communities, to positively impact upon the quality of life of the people living in Ponteland”

2.2 To achieve the above vision the following aims have been identified, which if fulfilled will assist in addressing the constraints identified and will harness the existing potential within the study area.

- Diversify the retail provision within Ponteland through the provision of modern, high quality retail units to create an improved shopping experience
- Consolidate and enhance existing community facilities within the area, to provide a focal point and to meet the aspirations of all sectors of the community
- Retain the village character of the area, through a co-ordinated and high quality streetscape, well maintained green spaces and the application of strong urban design principles
- Provide new sustainable residential communities, that add to the uniqueness of Ponteland through the promotion of high quality design and assist in retaining young people within the village
- Encourage alternative modes of transport by improving and prioritising pedestrian/cycle routes combined with active promotion of more sustainable methods of transport to improve traffic movement

- Implement and enforce traffic management policies, to increase the importance of pedestrian flows and safety within the study area
- Create active spaces which add to the diversity of the range of services/ facilities on offer as well as the vibrancy of the day and night time economy
- Ensure that the residents have an active role in shaping and taking forward the regeneration of Ponteland Village Centre; and
- Maximise the involvement and resources of the private sector in the delivery of a regenerated Ponteland village by working in partnership, to create a catalyst for change.





the regional perspective

- 3.1 The aim of the Northern Way is to reduce regional economic disparities between the north and the south. To achieve this, eight City Regions have been identified as drivers of economic growth, one of which is the Tyne and Wear City Region. Although definitive boundaries for the City Region have not been identified, there is a strong relationship between Ponteland and Tyneside, particularly Newcastle. Ponteland has therefore an important role to play within the Tyne and Wear City region.
- 3.2 Quality of place is highlighted as a key factor which will contribute to the City Region's economic competitiveness in terms of attracting and retaining people and businesses. In terms of creating a 'quality of place' the following objectives are being promoted:
 - Sustainable development in semi – rural areas is also important to the City Region, providing key centres of housing and local employment.
 - Commitment to design excellence at all levels. Whether this is the design of new housing development, public realm schemes, or at major employment locations, we will adopt a clear process to ensure quality and innovation in design remains a hallmark of the City Region.
 - Quality and diversity in the day and night economies are central to achieving creative places.
 - The potential quality of life within the City Region must remain a key asset.

policy context

- 3.3 These objectives have been central to the development of the masterplan for the regeneration of Ponteland Village, recognising Ponteland's role in the Tyne and Wear City Region.

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy

- 3.4 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), has been developed around forecasted higher levels of economic growth for the region, which will generate an increase in population, focused predominantly within the two City Regions. Policy 30 of the RSS sets out housing provision up to 2021, this averages at 125 net additional dwellings per annum for Castle Morpeth. The same level which is proposed within the Northumberland County and National Park Structure Plan.
- 3.5 The development of urban and rural centres in Policy 25 is identified as being important to the vitality of the region. It states that any new development should be consistent with a centre's current scale and function unless the development proposed is vital to the area's sustainability or regeneration and does not adversely impact on other town centres.

the Local Plan

- 3.6 Local Plan policies seek to protect and where appropriate enhance Ponteland Village, through a combination of policies that encourage high quality new development, with others seeking to maintain the existing character of the area. A range of policies in relation to landscape corridors (C4), new housing development (H15), protection of Industrial Estates (E7) (PE1) and retention of A1 uses within retail centres (PS1) aim to ensure that the primary function of the designated areas remain.



policy context

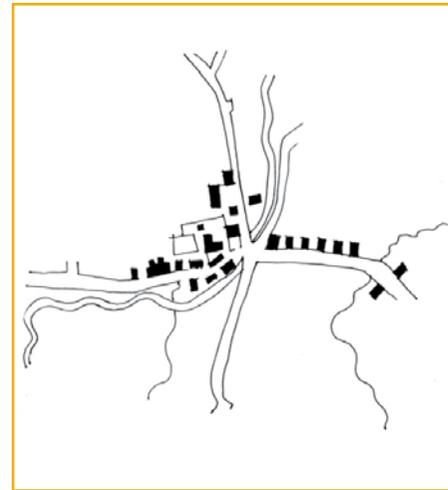


- 3.7 The Council seeks to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken to the enhancement (PS9) and redevelopment of shopping centres (PS10) so that the overall viability of shopping centres within the District is strengthened, and any such development reinforces their role within the local economy.
- 3.8 Due to high house prices within the area, any new housing development should consider whether an element of low cost housing is required, an interim policy in relation to affordable housing is under review.

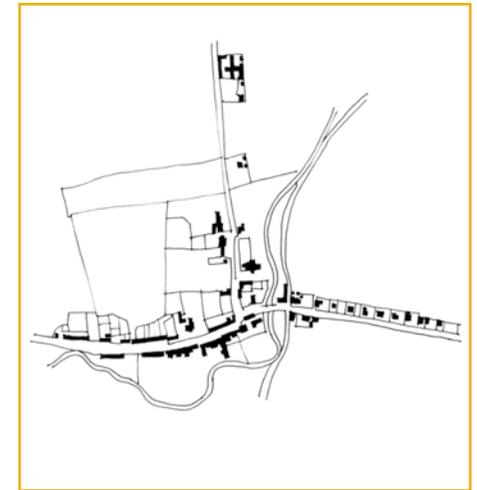
site and historical background

historical growth and conservation

- 4.1 Ponteland is a historic village built around the bridge over the River Pont which is crossed by the A696 Newcastle to Edinburgh Road. The study area lies 13 km north west of Newcastle city centre providing a local centre for the residents of Ponteland and for Darras Hall which can be found approximately 3 km south west from the village. Newcastle International Airport is located 3 km to the south east with the main administrative centre of Morpeth lying approximately 19 km to the north.
- 4.2 The first early settlement was established about 8000 years ago and was subsequently occupied by the Romans, Anglo Saxons and Normans. Over time the historic pattern of the settlement grew slowly with the reorganisation of land for agricultural improvements in the 17th and 18th centuries. The illustrations overleaf map these changes from the early 1800's, demonstrating the formation of the historical core, evident today. Economic opportunities flourished in the early 20th century with the construction of a railway station and this was followed by significant growth in the post war years resulting in the area becoming the second largest settlement in the district, trebling Ponteland's population to over 10,000.
- 4.3 Today the town retains many of its historic features within the central core. The Ponteland Conservation Area was initially designated in 1970. The boundary being changed to its present form in 1988.



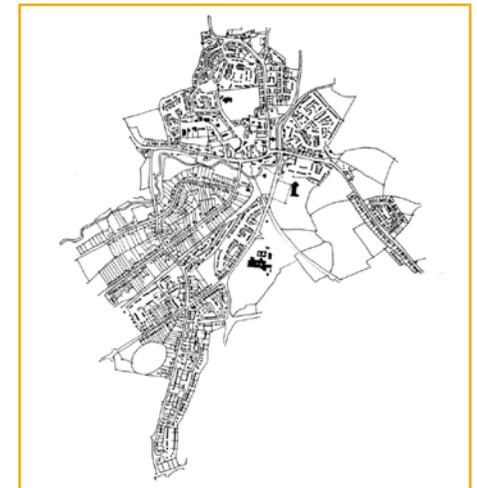
Ponteland 1828



Ponteland 1860



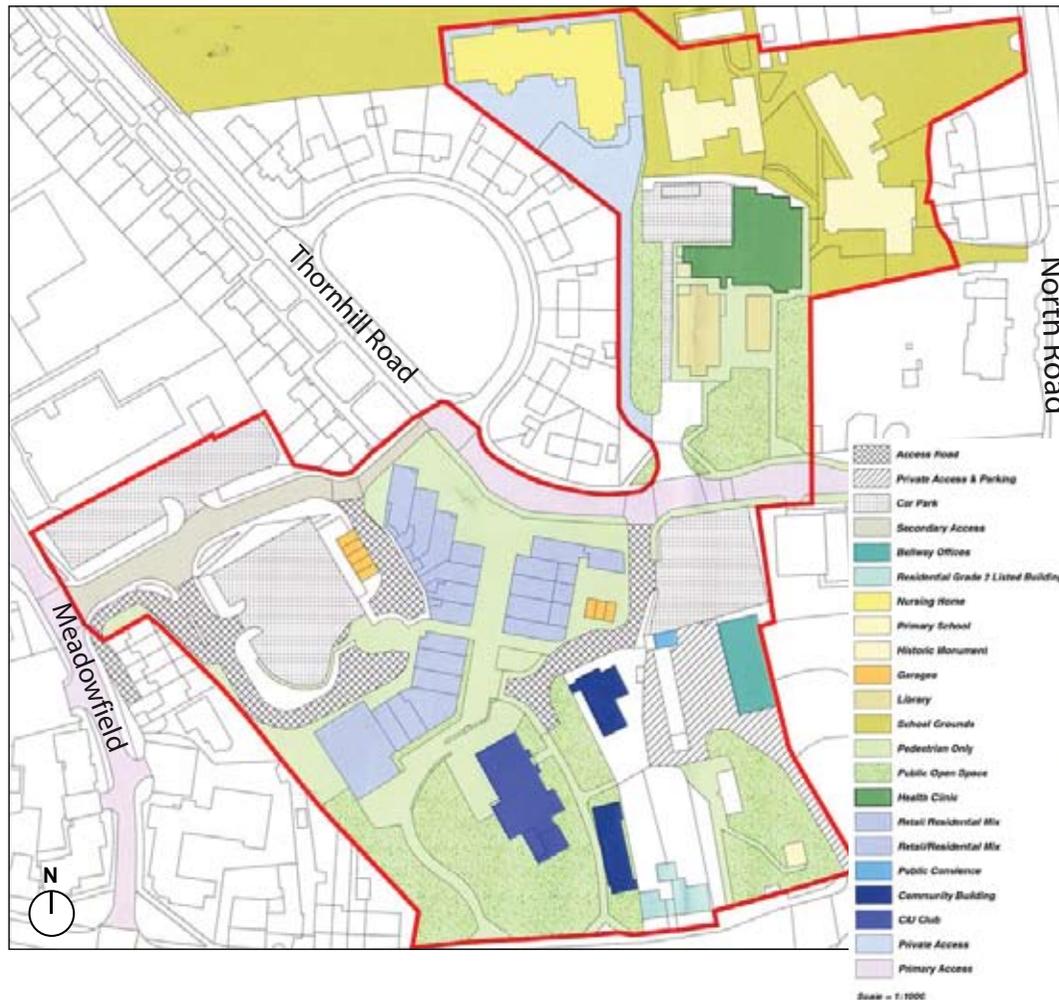
Ponteland 1920



Ponteland 2000

site and historical background

land use



- 4.4 There are several types of land uses within the study area including; commercial, industrial, community, educational, social, residential and public open spaces. There is also a scheduled Ancient Monument, The Pele Tower.
- 4.5 Merton Way is a centrally situated shopping centre accommodating approximately 20 retail units including a post office, chemist, bakery restaurants and other conveniences as well as a number of residential flats to the upper storeys. It is flanked to the west by a large car park of approximately 0.62 hectares and located northwest is the Meadowfield Industrial Estate. A smaller car park is situated to the east approximately 0.11 hectares and includes public conveniences. Ponteland Parish Council offices sit immediately south, adjacent to the car park and are accessed via a pedestrian entrance. Private retirement apartments are located south of Merton Road behind Merton Hall.
- 4.6 There are two pedestrian entrances to the south, north of West Road through an area of well maintained open space providing access to Castle Court, CIU club and Merton Hall. Further east, set back from West Road are grade 2 listed farmhouses and a cottage on the southern fringe of the site. The Vicar's Pele, a scheduled Ancient Monument, is located on the south east corner.
- 4.7 To the north of the study area is Ponteland County First School. Ponteland Manor (a residential home for the elderly) sits adjacent to the school and two community buildings; the former health clinic to the east and the village library are to the south. A formal area of open space fronts these facilities alongside Thornhill Road.

challenges and opportunities

5.1 Ponteland Village due to its location and historic character, faces a number of challenges and opportunities. The overarching opportunities are:

- Proximity to Newcastle which to a large extent dictates its function, impacting upon the range of services and facilities provided within the village
- A significant proportion of people within the higher socio – economic groups (37%) compared to the North East (20%) who can assist in underpinning the local economy.
- Its history and unique character which gives Ponteland a sense of place and provides an attractive environment
- A strong sense of community, who are keen to be involved in a range of activities, adding to the vitality of the area
- A diverse range of community and leisure facilities, which add to the vibrancy of Ponteland
- Strong interest in the area from the private sector, which can be used to enhance and add value to the existing service and community provision in the area

5.2 Key challenges facing Ponteland include:

- An ageing population, 24.5 % of Ponteland’s population is above 65, which is higher than the North East average of 16.5%, Ponteland also has a higher proportion of 44 to 65 year olds.

- The A696 intersects the study area and impacts upon the volume of traffic passing through the village resulting in congestion at peak times of the day. This is compounded by high levels of car ownership (90%) compared to 64% North East.
- Higher than average house prices, which is causing out migration by younger people
- The lack of a ‘village centre’, resulting in a fragmented built environment which could potentially impact on the longer term sustainability of Ponteland



challenges and opportunities

retail

5.3 Given Ponteland's proximity to the major retail centres of Newcastle upon Tyne, Kingston Park and the Metro Centre, the majority of provision within the local centre located along Main Street or at Merton Way is service oriented (64%) (Estate Agents, Banks). Other uses comprise of restaurants, takeaways, a post office, pharmacists, hairdressers, bakers, butchers, newsagents, off licence and Somerfields rather than comparison goods retailers (15%). The shopping areas have a low vacancy rate of less than 2% which indicates its strength as a local convenience retail and service centre. Rental values which are relatively low compared to neighbouring shopping centres will also contribute to demand in the area and low vacancy rates.

5.4 To gain an understanding of the issues that are impacting upon local retailers, a survey was undertaken both of retailers in Merton Way and those on Main Street. The main findings of the survey are set out below: (The full survey results are available in Appendix 3)

- The majority of retailers are either very or fairly satisfied with Ponteland as a retail location (89%)
- Retailers tend to be independent in Ponteland rather than part of established chains (only 5 national retailers), the majority of which have been operating for over 10 years
- Business confidence is positive, with retailers anticipating stronger performance in the future

- Retailers on main street were less satisfied with the condition of the shopping area than those at Merton Way, which is surprising given the appearance of Merton Way
- The amount of and the quality of parking as well as the volume of traffic are identified as problems for retailers in the village,
- Location, the catchment area and being close to other amenities are cited as strengths of Ponteland.



challenges and opportunities

- Crime, safety and anti – social behaviour is not a major problem, however lighting and evening safety in Merton Way was highlighted as an issue
 - There is a lack of diversity in the range of shops currently provided particularly in relation to its catchment area, with 70% of retailers stating that the range of shops is below average.
- 5.5 Consultation with residents reinforced a number of the above views, especially in relation to improving the range of shops available, increasing parking provision and ensuring that any new development does not impact on the existing vitality of local businesses. In comparison to the views of the retailers, residents feel that Merton Way is outdated and does not enhance the character of the area, or provide a pleasant shopping environment. It was felt that Merton Way should be demolished and replaced with a new shopping centre of a high quality, which can strengthen the shopping offer within the village. There were mixed opinions from residents on the need for a new supermarket in the village.



- 5.6 In terms of where future demand is likely to come from to diversify the shopping centre, there is currently stronger demand from restaurant operators compared to retailers. The relatively limited number of retail requirements is demonstrated by the long period of marketing prior to the redevelopment of the former petrol filling station. Here the proposal is for ground floor retail and a first floor restaurant, and whilst an occupier has been identified for the first floor, interest in the ground floor has been limited. The agents are quoting rents of £20 per sq ft on an overall basis, which equates to over £30 per sq ft on a Zone A basis. This level of rent is deterring retailers, but is required to develop a viable and profitable scheme. The development is also within a flood risk area but the agents consider that this is not having an adverse impact on the level of interest.

challenges and opportunities

- 5.7 The redevelopment of Merton Way Shopping centre is complex due to the amount of different land owners. To comprehensively redevelop the shopping centre, would require all the landowners to be involved in the scheme or for the centre to be acquired through voluntary acquisitions or compulsory purchase.
- 5.8 The Ponteland/Darras Hall residential area is currently served by a small Somerfield supermarket on Main Street and a CO-Op in Darras Hall. An analysis of the capacity of the settlement for further food retail has identified the potential for a supermarket of between 20,000 – 35,000 sq ft gross. Further detailed work to define a catchment area is required. Two major supermarket chains has an active requirement for Ponteland and this is for 35,000 or 38,000 sq ft gross. Significant new food retail provision within the village could be expected to increase interest from other retailers, including some national multiples, however this could also impact on the smaller independent retailers operating in the area.
- 5.9 Retail rents on Main Street equate to around £30 per square foot Zone A, compared with £20 per square foot Zone A at Merton Way. Rental growth at Merton Way is negligible, but capital values have increased as investment yields have improved. Rental increases as a result of a redevelopment at Merton Way are unlikely to be significant unless a major new supermarket anchored demand from a wider range of retailers.

industrial

- 5.10 Meadowfield Industrial Estate is the only industrial estate within Ponteland and Darras Hall. It principally comprises small and mid-sized units that are suited to the local market. The market for larger units in such locations is weak, and a large factory in the middle of the Estate was on the market for a prolonged period before it was bought for redevelopment. The new Health Centre has replaced it. Sites on Meadowfield Industrial Estate are increasingly being used by service providers and a conflict is starting to emerge between the two especially in relation to issues of access by vehicles and pedestrians.



challenges and opportunities

- 5.11 The rents and prices achievable on Meadowfield Industrial Estate are insufficient to allow the viable development of new speculative industrial premises. Public sector gap funding would be required unless the premises were pre-let or sold to a specific user.
- 5.12 The southern end of Meadowfield Industrial Estate backs onto Merton Way, and occupiers at this end of the Estate have been interviewed. Closest to Merton Way is the British Telecom Telephone Exchange. The cost of relocating an operational telephone exchange can run into millions of pounds. British Telecom (BT) has initiated a major strategy to upgrade the whole of its network within the next 5 years. This will require the closure of many telephone exchanges, but at this stage it is not known which exchanges will be affected. At present therefore the Exchange represents a barrier to redevelopment of the southern part of the industrial estate, but there is a possibility that if BT decides the site is surplus to its requirements, this would open up a future opportunity for redevelopment.
- 5.13 Redevelopment of the Ponteland Auction Market site has been considered at various times over the last 10 years. The profitability of the Market has been hit by the downturn in the agricultural sector, and it has diversified into the sale of other products. The Ponteland Auction Mart's lairage was sold to Bett Homes for the development of housing, which leaves a relatively small site separated from the village centre by the Industrial Estate road, which could be bought at relatively low cost.

- 5.14 To the north of the Cattle Market is Manners Meat. The business has been investigating options to expand onto adjoining land, but there are no immediate opportunities for it to do so. An attempt to relocate the company could only be done at significant cost as the current buildings incorporate extensive refrigeration areas.



- 5.15 Between them, Manners Meat and the British Telecom telephone exchange create a band of high value uses which currently prevent the expansion of Ponteland Village Centre into the industrial estate, except at prohibitively high costs. This needs to be monitored in the longer term when implementing the masterplan as if these sites become available then there may be the potential to identify different uses for these sites, creating a more integrated redevelopment of the village.

challenges and opportunities

offices

- 5.16 The office stock within Ponteland is principally located along Ponteland Road and Main Street. A significant proportion of it is first floor accommodation over shops. There are some units like this at Castle Court. Rents are around £10 per square foot on Main Street/Ponteland Road but less at Castle Court and on Meadowfield Industrial Estate. At these levels of rent the speculative development of new offices is not viable. In practice additional office accommodation has been provided through conversion of existing buildings. However with higher values attainable from residential, future opportunities will be limited to conversion of units on the industrial estate, and other buildings where planning policy prevents residential use.
- 5.17 One of the principal office occupiers in Ponteland is Bellway Homes who own Peel House in the eastern part of the Study Area. The company has outgrown this accommodation, and is actively looking to relocate. We have discussed with them the expansion of their premises in Ponteland, but this is not their preferred option, and it could potentially exacerbate problems of limited parking in the village centre, which can become dominated by all day parking of office users. Consideration of alternative commercial uses of the Bellway Homes site is academic, as the company has outline planning consent for the conversion of their existing building and new development to provide 21 residential apartments.
- 5.18 The demand for offices in Ponteland is relatively thin and has been insufficient to generate rental growth. At present office development within the study boundary is not considered to be commercially viable, and is likely to come forward only if a specific end user is looking to relocate within the village or public sector resource can be used towards providing office accommodation.
- 5.19 Elsewhere in the region there has been private sector provision of small self-contained offices within business park environments which have met the demand from companies requiring both accommodation and an investment for their pension plan. Developers have opted for highly accessible locations within the Tyne & Wear conurbation to ensure the catchment area for the scheme is as wide as possible. The centre of Ponteland would be regarded as a poor location for such a scheme.

challenges and opportunities

housing

- 5.20 Due to the recent buoyancy of the housing market and the popularity of Ponteland as a place to live, there is a perception by residents in the village that increasingly sites are being brought forward for residential use, a large proportion of which is flatted accommodation. Although this is bringing people into the area which will impact on the vitality of existing services, the brief for this work stated that new housing is having a detrimental impact on service provision, as there is a greater demand for housing compared to retail/office and leisure uses. Residents had mixed views on the need for more housing in Ponteland.
- 5.21 Housing in Ponteland commands prices above the North East average and this is clearly impacting upon the population composition of the area. Average house prices for the postcode sector NE20 which includes the study area, show that in 2005 the average price for a house was £464,313 compared to £160,000 in the North East. Its housing stock will also impact on its population, as this differs considerably compared to the North East average. 67% of the properties are detached compared to 14% in the North East and only 3.6% are flatted accommodation compared to 13% in the North East. Young people who are looking to buy their first house are moving outside of Ponteland due to properties being relatively expensive compared to adjacent areas. Residents also felt there was a need to provide more accommodation for elderly residents especially those who are looking to downsize.



challenges and opportunities

- 5.22 Housing provision within the Structure Plan and the Regional Spatial Strategy is quite low, therefore any new housing brought forward in the study area would need to be considered within the overall housing numbers for the District of Castle Morpeth. As outlined above Bellway Homes currently has outline planning permission for the conversion of their existing offices into 21 flats, which is likely to come forward once they relocate.
- 5.23 As set out in the interim policy on affordable housing, new developments within the study should consider providing an element of affordable housing to assist in retaining younger people within Ponteland. There was support from residents to provide housing which could enable young people to live in the village.
- 5.24 Demand for housing during the masterplanning period will continue to be strong, as a result of Ponteland's proximity to Newcastle and its role within the Tyne and Wear City Region.

community facilities and services

- 5.25 The masterplan has been produced at time when a number of decisions have or are in the process of being made in relation to community facilities and services. The Ponteland First School is to be co – located at Ponteland Middle School and the health centre has moved from its present location to a brand new purpose built facility at the Meadowfield Industrial Estate. Additionally consultation has been undertaken by Northumberland County Council on the future location of the Library and whether there is the potential for this also to be located at Ponteland Middle School. The area north of Thornhill Road which contains the library and former health clinic and First School is viewed by residents as a focal point of the village, despite the relocation of the health centre and Ponteland First School.

- 5.26 As a result of these decisions, there is a perception from residents that the 'heart of the community' is being destroyed and that community facilities are being moved to the periphery of the village centre. Due to the predominantly elderly population in Ponteland concern has also been raised about accessibility to these community services particularly for those without a car.



challenges and opportunities

5.27 With the exception of the library these decisions have already been undertaken prior to the masterplanning process and are accepted as a given. The decision on the library has been put on hold during the masterplanning process, but, as a result of earlier consultation on the library, this issue has been the dominant theme during consultation with the community. Due to the amount of change which has occurred recently within the village, at present the majority of people who attended the consultation are opposed to the relocation of the library. As cited earlier, some of the feedback from the drop – ins focused



purely upon the issue of the library rather than the overall schemes being proposed. The study team has acknowledged that this is an issue which has impacted upon the findings of the consultation and have taken it on board as a factor to consider when developing the masterplan.

5.28 Other community facilities within the study area, include Merton Hall, which is a well used community centre by local groups, although it is dated. The verger's cottage, this currently provides the office space for the Parish Council. There are a number of other community facilities which are outside of the boundary of the study area including Memorial Hall, which is also well used and the Leisure Centre.

5.29 The main issues which have been considered in relation to community facilities which have been incorporated within the Masterplan are:

- Erosion of the 'village heart' as perceived by the community due to the relocation of key community facilities
- The future location of the library
- The potential to co – locate community facilities into one centre to provide a focal point for the community
- Provide more facilities for young people within the village
- Ensuring that existing or new community facilities are accessible by pedestrians and have disabled access.
- Are sustainable in the longer term and do not impact upon the existing vitality of community services and facilities.

challenges and opportunities

transport

- 5.30 Ponteland has a number of strengths in transport terms including, the size of the village which enables it to support a range of services and transport facilities including regular bus services, its proximity to Newcastle, which makes it well served by roads and its compactness which can be used to promote increased pedestrian movement and cycle trips.
- 5.31 On the converse of this, the village faces a number of constraints in relation to transport, most notably the separation of services/facilities from residential areas, high levels of car ownership which is impacting upon congestion and parking and the high commuting flows to neighbouring areas which will affect the vitality of existing service provision.
- 5.32 Policy T17 of the Structure Plan sets out a policy to encourage improvements to the A696, in alignment with Policy T13, which links any improvements to a range of criteria including reducing accidents, improving environmental conditions, assisting economic development, reducing congestion, promoting sustainable transport methods and promoting access to essential services. The A696 currently acts as a barrier to north-south pedestrian movement, with the majority of the increase in recent traffic flows being generated locally. Initiatives including improved pedestrian crossings comprising of controlled crossings/ central refuges/dropped kerbs could assist in linking Main Street to the remaining shopping provision in the village.

- 5.33 At peak times movement within the village is problematic, with Meadowfield being the main road for both cars and commercial vehicles whilst Thornhill Road is the main road for cars. Congestion especially at peak times was viewed by residents as a major issue that needs to be addressed. Improvements to junctions, circulation of traffic and potential widening of roads may need to be considered to alleviate congestion.



challenges and opportunities

- 5.34 Although at present the level of parking (approximately 120) spaces appears to be sufficient, parking is cited as a major issue by residents within the village. This is predominantly because there are currently no time restrictions on the parking, which results in long stay parking. Additionally there is no enforcement of parking, leading to parking on the road adjacent to shops and community facilities. The relocation of the health centre and Bellway Homes should positively impact on the availability of parking within the village centre, however measures need to be considered to manage parking more effectively. Although not opposed to parking charges, residents felt that they had to be at a level so as not to impact adversely on local businesses and that charges had to be combined with enforcement.
- 5.35 Despite the compactness of Ponteland, pedestrian and cycle trips within the village are low. Clearly there is a need to encourage people to walk or cycle within the village to address the parking and traffic problems the village is currently experiencing. This can be undertaken through a combination of improving pedestrian and cycling routes as well as initiatives to increase take up, particularly focusing on larger organisations within the village i.e. the schools/health centre etc.
- 5.36 The village is currently well served by public transport, however better information on the existing routes and times could be made available to the public, again to increase the usage of public transport.



challenges and opportunities

urban design

5.37 An urban design assessment has been undertaken of the existing built and natural environment of the village. An opportunities and a constraints plan set out the main factors in relation to urban design qualities and requirements.

block structure

5.38 The village emanates along the main arterial routes these being the A696 (Ponteland Road and Main Street) which runs east – west, and North Road and Darras Road which run north – south. There are a variety of development blocks detailing the pattern of growth within the village resulting in an eclectic mix of new and old in terms of building types and architecture. New development has successfully merged with the historic linear layout of Main Street to maintain the original historic pattern and creating an informal quality on the fringe of the study area.

5.39 This quality and unique structure of the historic centre reduces further north within the study site and bares little resemblance to the historic core, presenting a distinct change in terms of structure, character and quality with buildings of varying scale and style.

5.40 Strengths of the urban layout include;

- Strong peripheral elements – particularly the historical core outside of the study area
- Mature landscape and open space within and outside of the study area ; and

- Landmark historical architecture – core of listed buildings and associated spaces.
- 5.41 Weaknesses of the urban layout include;
- Lack of clearly defined routes – particularly from Main Street
 - Poor streetscape – poor quality of materials, role and general appearance



challenges and opportunities

- Fragmented structure and lack of definition – areas developed without consideration of adjacent development
- Lack of high quality frontage – poor views along Thornhill Road and from the large car park.

routes, connections and public safety

5.42 There are two important busy arterial vehicular routes within close proximity to the study area. The heavily congested Main Street and West Road (A696) and to the east, North Road, which has safety issues in respect of the junction with Thornhill Road. The site has only one main connecting vehicle route, Thornhill Road which dissects the area heading north west in a loop back to North Road. There are two pedestrian routes from Main Road to Thornhill Road through Castle Court. Movement north/south is restricted mainly due to the 'ad hoc' layout of existing developments, the poor visibility of routes and poor signage. Two pedestrian walkways access the former health clinic site, library and school. Vehicle access leads to a staff car parking area and Ponteland Manor but not beyond. There are no designated safe cycle routes within or close to the site

5.43 The relatively large areas of car parking and the 'inward facing' design of the shopping centre creates a large area of inactive space after business hours. This renders the main pedestrian thoroughfare through Merton Way generally under used and due to the poor layout, lighting and connecting alleys, we perceive the journey as unsafe.



challenges and opportunities



landscape and open space

- 5.44 There are several smaller individual green spaces providing respite from the otherwise mundane 1960's block architecture and associated spaces. These are located at Merton Way, Merton Hall and beside Thornhill Road to the front of the public facilities. They are well maintained, containing mature trees and shrubs, and are bounded by mown grass providing quiet pleasant spaces in which to sit or walk through. The quality of the open space and its informality was viewed as a positive feature of Ponteland by residents that should be maintained and enhanced to retain the feeling of a village.
- 5.45 The eastern end of Thornhill Road is bounded by both good quality public and private green spaces presenting a green approach into the site. Mature tree planting and hedging maintains the existing village landscape character partially screening the 1960's Merton Way development on the rise to the west. Other open space includes areas surrounding Ponteland First School and the car parks flanking the shopping area.
- 5.46 There are a variety of strong landscape elements throughout the study area. The mature tree and shrub planting is particularly noticeable, providing a distinct village setting by integrating the old with the new. The landscape of the village has a distinct character and should be maintained and enhanced where appropriate.

challenges and opportunities

topography

5.47 The topography of the area is generally undulating and the highest land within the Parish is in the south at Callerton Common – 145m (AOD), and to the west of Milbourn – 135m (AOD). The lowest land is in the north-east of the parish – 45m (AOD), where the river Pont joins the River Blyth some 5km from the centre of Ponteland. From the east there is a gentle slope with progression towards Ponteland Bridge at the village centre, continuing to rise gradually towards the north-west. Ponteland itself lies within a flood plain, which over the years has become a persistent problem.

views and landmarks

5.48 Upon entering the historic core, views of history interspersed with modern ways of living are apparent. Central features of the village include St Mary's Church, the Old Rectory, the Pele Tower, the Blackbird Inn, the Seven Stars and the Diamond Inn, all providing a vision of Ponteland's past. Views from Ponteland Bridge expand along the river and fork in separate directions, south along Callerton Lane, north towards North Street and in a west direction following Main Street. Throughout, specimen trees, sculptures (Coats Green), open space (green and public) attractive paths and walkways and historic monuments such as the Pele Tower, create great views and clearly preservation of this is essential to Ponteland's future.



challenges and opportunities

public realm

- 5.49 The quality of publicly accessible hard landscaping within the study area is poor. Here the continuity of the built form and open space is eroded by the poor layout of piecemeal development and associated hard spaces.
- 5.50 Merton Way built in the 1960's has a significant impact upon the visual character of the overall village. The 'inward looking' layout is uninviting and together with adjoining car parking, creates dead frontages along what are important boundaries to the site.
- 5.51 The shopping units facing Thornhill Road overlook an extensive area of hard landscaping which forms an unsatisfactory entrance to the shopping area. Poor quality shop frontages further detract from any form of character. The large concrete planters are unsightly and dated.
- 5.52 In general the streetscene has a tidy appearance although highways are deteriorating and periodic repairs over the years have produced a mismatch of concrete and tarmacadam on existing footpaths.
- 5.53 There is an opportunity to consider as part of any new development a coherent network of green and hard spaces linking with, and reinforcing the existing character of the area.



challenges and opportunities

constraints and opportunities

5.54 The study area is compact in its layout and isolated with an internal focus due to its location. These characteristics, and issues both visually apparent, and as raised by residents provide us with a series of design orientated 'constraints' (which need addressing) and 'opportunities' (which require to be built upon).

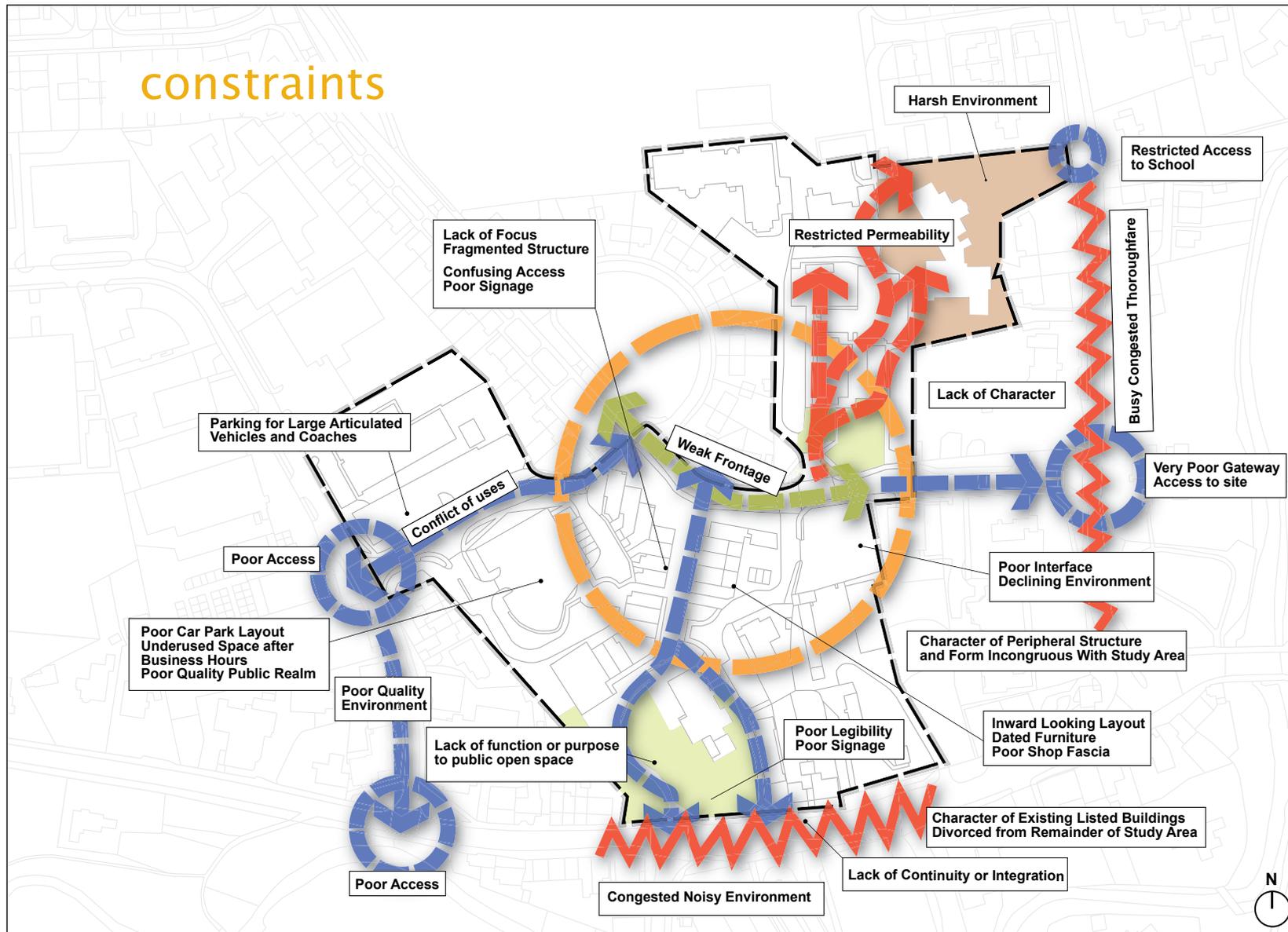
constraints:

- Road network – layout, dimensions, connections and principal routes
- Car Parking and Garages – quality, safety and accessibility
- Poorly defined routes and connections
- Poorly marked physical and visual entrances to study area
- Traffic dominated boundaries and close proximity to main highways
- Very poor street environment – hard landscaping, street furniture and street layout
- Safety – inactive spaces and a focus on daytime use
- Pedestrian movement to and through the site
- Fragmented development – poor layout of buildings and spaces
- No integration with existing character of village
- Lack of identifiable public open space with a purpose; and
- Lack of quality central focus/ community hub.

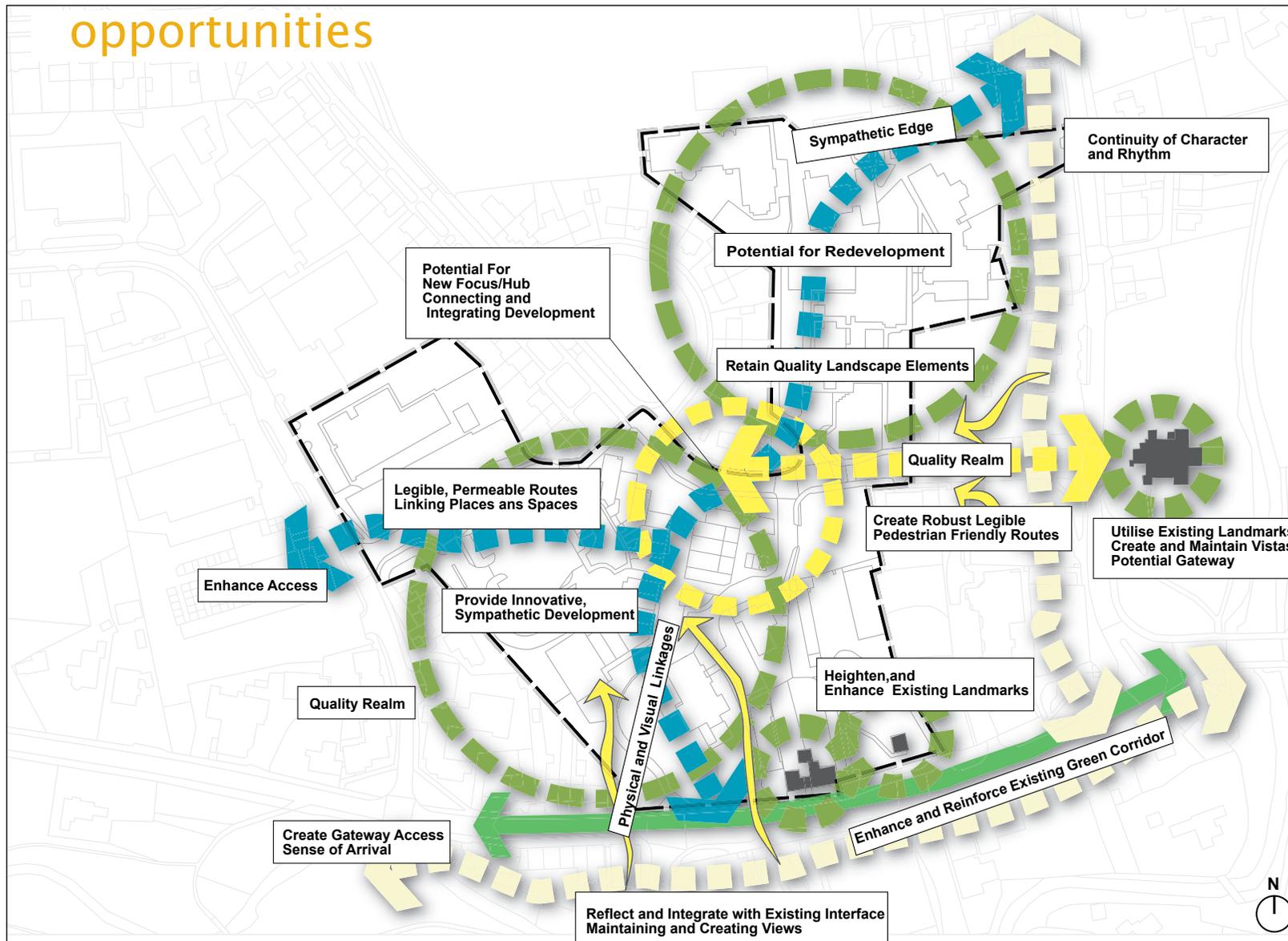
opportunities

- Listed buildings/ site archaeology provide key visual landmarks
- Existing gateways and views may be enhanced
- Existing character of periphery provides a strong context for new development
- Scope for new development within the study area
- Potential for image/perception change
- Community focus
- Create safe 24 hour pedestrian/cyclist routes
- Maintain the integrity of existing landscape character and open space provision
- Create clearly defined hierarchy of streets and spaces and;
- Provision of public art.

challenges and opportunities



challenges and opportunities



developing the masterplan

- 6.1 A series of options were developed focusing upon addressing the factors identified during the baseline assessment, which were subsequently consulted upon at a series of community drop ins. The options agreed by the steering group included limited change to large scale redevelopment.
- 6.2 Whilst focusing upon the need to address the issues identified at the baseline stage of the study, the options have to some extent been defined by the following parameters:
- the boundary of the study area, which as identified in Section 5.0 is difficult to expand due to the costs to relocate business interests,
 - decisions that had already been made in relation to the relocation of Ponteland First School and the granting of planning permission for the Bellway Homes site;
 - the amount of different land owners, and
 - the limited amount of land owned by the public sector and related to this the need to use any financial gains from the sale of sites owned by Northumberland County Council towards the new school and library facilities.
- 6.3 The four options and the issues they will address are set out overleaf.



developing the masterplan

limited change – option 1

6.4 This option focuses primarily on limited intervention within the study area, focusing mainly upon improving the quality of the environment, particularly the car parking and the streetscape of Merton Way Shopping Centre

Theme	Proposed Intervention	Issues Addressed
Environmental Improvements	New paving, street lighting, seating, signage and planters	Quality of streetscape
Car Parking	Removal of Thornhill Road Car Park Retarmac and reconfigure main car park to increase number of spaces	Improve quality of car parking
Housing	New housing to be brought forward on Ponteland First School and Health Clinic Site.	Potential to bring forward affordable housing
Retail	Investment in units to be retained consisting of converting flat roofs to pitched roofs, standardisation of shop fronts and windows and painting of the exterior of units in one colour.	Improve the quality of appearance of Merton Way Shopping Centre
Office Development	Expand Bellway Homes site for future office expansion.	Retention of local employment in the village.
Community Facilities	Retention of existing facilities	Retain community facilities within village centre.



6.5 The costs to undertake the above amount to £1.2 million against a land receipt of £75,000 if the car park is sold for office development or £450,000 if sold for housing. This would lead to a funding gap of either £1,125,000 or £750,000.

developing the masterplan

moderate change – option 2

6.6 As well as the above, this option seeks to establish a focal point for the community, through the provision of a multi purpose community facility incorporating a new library. The existing library site would be developed for housing, retaining the existing open space.

Theme	Proposed Intervention	Issues Addressed
Environmental Improvements	New paving, street lighting, seating, signage and planters	Quality of streetscape
Car Parking	Removal of Thornhill Road Car Park Retarmac and reconfigure main car park to increase number of spaces	Improve quality of car parking
Housing	New housing to be brought forward on Ponteland First School, Library, Bellway Homes and Health Clinic Site.	Potential to bring forward affordable housing
Retail	Investment in units to be retained consisting of converting flat roofs to pitched roofs, standardisation of shop fronts and windows and painting of the exterior of units in one colour.	Improve the quality of appearance of Merton Way Shopping Centre
Community Facilities	New community facility to include a library and multi – purpose community centre.	Provides purpose built community facility within the village centre.



6.7 The costs to bring forward this option amount to £3.4 million, against land receipts of £1.2 million. £2.2 million of funding would be required to deliver this option.

developing the masterplan

bolder redevelopment – option 3

6.8 To provide a pleasanter shopping environment, this proposal seeks to partially demolish Merton Way shopping centre. A small supermarket and new retail units would be provided, with grants to improve shop frontages for the remaining units in Merton Way.

6.9 Access to the car park behind Merton Way shopping centre would be improved and more spaces would be provided. A new community hub comprising of the community centre and the social club was proposed. The library would be retained on its current site.

Theme	Proposed Intervention	Issues Addressed
Environmental Improvements	New paving, street lighting, seating, signage and planters	Quality of streetscape
Car Parking	Removal of Thornhill Road Car Park Retarmac and reconfigure main car park to increase number of spaces	Improve quality of car parking
Housing	New housing to be brought forward on Ponteland First School, Bellway Homes and Health Clinic Site.	Potential to bring forward affordable housing
Retail	Partial demolition of Merton Way to be replaced by 5 new retail units and a medium sized supermarket of up to 2,000 sq metres. Scope for flats above the shops. Investment in units to be retained consisting of converting flat roofs to pitched roofs, standardisation of shop fronts and windows and painting of the exterior of units in one colour.	Replaces an element Merton Way shopping centre, to provide new retail units, to diversify the current retail offer. Improves the quality of appearance of Merton Way Shopping Centre.
Community Facilities	New community facility to include community centre. Library to be retained on existing site.	Provides community facilities within the village centre.



6.10 The costs to bring forward the above option amount to approximately £5.5 million, compared to land receipts of £2.1 million

developing the masterplan

radical redevelopment – option 4

6.11 Demolition of Merton Way Shopping Centre is proposed, to be replaced with a new shopping centre and supermarket with associated parking. The Ponteland First School, the library and former health clinic sites would be brought forward for housing development. The library, community centre and social club would be provided in a community hub.

Theme	Proposed Intervention	Issues Addressed
Environmental Improvements	New paving, street lighting, seating, signage and planters	Quality of streetscape
Car Parking	Removal of Thornhill Road Car Park Retarmac and reconfigure main car park to increase number of spaces	Improve quality of car parking
Housing	New housing to be brought forward on Ponteland First School, Library, Bellway Homes and Health Clinic Site.	Potential to bring forward affordable housing
Retail	Demolition of Merton Way Shopping Centre to be replaced by 19 new retail units and a supermarket of up to 2,600 sq metres. Scope for flats above the retail units, restaurants or other ancillary uses.	Provides new retail facilities within the village to diversify the shopping offer. Improves the quality of the shopping environment.
Community Facilities	New community facility to include a library, social club and multi – purpose community centre.	Provides purpose built community facility within the village centre.



6.12 Due to the complexities to assemble the site to deliver this option, costs amount to approximately £17 million compared to £8 million arising from the sale of land. The funding gap to deliver this scheme is approximately £9 million.

developing the masterplan

community feedback

6.13 The testing of the options with the community provided useful feedback, which has been incorporated within the masterplan. The key points raised were:

- Insufficient parking, especially as all of the options proposed the removal of Thornhill Road car park
- Support for the retention and expansion of the library on its existing site
- Concern in relation to a large scale supermarket and the impact on existing retail provision
- An element of support for a high quality supermarket
- Impact on existing retail in relation to viability if a new retail development is brought forward, due to an increase in rental values
- Mixed feelings with regard to new residential development
- The need to provide affordable housing for young people
- Preservation and enhancement of open space
- Increase in traffic flows as a result of proposed new development within the study area
- Recognition that the area has a number of constraints and that a number of initiatives have already happened or are underway
- The need to preserve positive attributes and that new schemes are of a high quality adding to the character of Ponteland.

6.14 The majority of residents were in favour of Option 1 limited change with the next preferred option being Option 3 bolder redevelopment. To some extent the preference for these two options was due to the retention of the library.

testing the options

6.15 The challenge has been to develop a masterplan which is both visionary and capable of being delivered as well as being supported by residents and stakeholders, who will have a key role in taking the masterplan forward.

6.16 The options were tested against the following range of criteria to inform the development of the masterplan.

Criteria
Fits with regional, local policy and regeneration objectives to reinforce Ponteland's role within the Tyne and Wear City Region
Creates a high quality environment and townscape which complements the natural and built environment
Contributes to an inspirational vision and generates a step change
Addresses constraints identified within the baseline work and is in alignment with sustainable development objectives
Market demand from the private sector
Meets community aspirations
Meets Stakeholder aspirations
Deliverable in terms of attracting finance and minimising risk

developing the masterplan

do nothing

- 6.17 As part of the option development process, a do nothing option was considered. This would not address any of the identified constraints especially parking, the environmental quality or the diversity of the retail offer. By doing nothing the area will deteriorate further which could deter private sector investment and result in people choosing to shop elsewhere, adversely impacting upon the viability of local businesses.
- 6.18 The aim of the masterplan is to provide a long term vision, to ensure that development is co-ordinated and of a high standard. As outlined earlier, a number of decisions have been taken in relation to the location of existing facilities and services within the village. If a do – nothing approach is adopted then when investment is required in the future, there is the danger that it will continue to be fragmented which could potentially impact upon the quality of the village environment. There is a need to undertake co-ordinated investment in the area, therefore a do nothing approach is not a feasible option.

limited change – option 1

- 6.19 Option 1, although potentially more deliverable due to the limited amount of resource required to implement the proposals, does not generate a step change or address the constraints identified particularly the environmental quality of Merton Way Shopping Centre and the need to diversify the retail offer. This option does have the support of the community but this is primarily due to the library being retained on its existing site. The intervention proposed does not deliver the aspirations of the steering group.

- 6.20 In the longer term, due to the age of Merton Way Shopping Centre, further investment would be required in the shopping centre and the surrounding environment, to continue to make it attractive and/or its future would need to be reconsidered. On this basis option 1 is not considered the best solution to regenerate the village centre.

moderate change - option 2

- 6.21 By creating a focal point for the community, Option 2 does address more of the identified constraints than Option 1. However, option 2 does not tackle the environmental quality of Merton Way Shopping Centre or provide an inspirational vision which will contribute to Ponteland's role within the Tyne and Wear City Region. This option in the longer term would also result in the need for further investment in Merton Way Shopping Centre, or for its future to be reconsidered.
- 6.22 The option did not generate a lot of support from the community and is less deliverable than Option 1. Due to all of the above factors, this option is not considered the best way forward.

bolder redevelopment – option 3

- 6.23 Partial demolition and new retail provision in Option 3, will to an extent contribute to improving the townscape of Ponteland Village Centre. However, this option only partially addresses the need to enhance the retail offer. In the future, there will be the need to consider options for the retail units that are to be retained. It is also likely to generate an increase in the volume of traffic. In terms of design, this option does not provide a co-ordinated solution to the identified constraints and could result in further fragmentation, when new development is brought forward.

developing the masterplan

- 6.24 There was more support from the community for Option 3 than Option 2 and 4, however this is partly due to the retention of the library on its existing site. This option provides better value for money than the other options but still results in a significant funding gap.
- 6.25 This option is preferable to option 1 and 2, however, it will not comprehensively regenerate the village centre to provide a high quality retail environment or offer. On this basis the option is not considered to be the best way forward to regenerate the village.

radical redevelopment – option 4

- 6.26 Option 4 will diversify the retail offer as well as improve the quality of the environment within the village, addressing a number of the identified constraints. It is however likely to increase the volume of traffic and could have an impact on the existing retail provision in the village. New retail, community and housing provision, will contribute to the long term sustainability of Ponteland and its role as a service centre to the wider area. Despite strong demand from the private sector, there is a considerable funding gap to deliver this scheme due to landownership in the study area. The option had limited support from the community but is more in alignment with stakeholder aspirations.

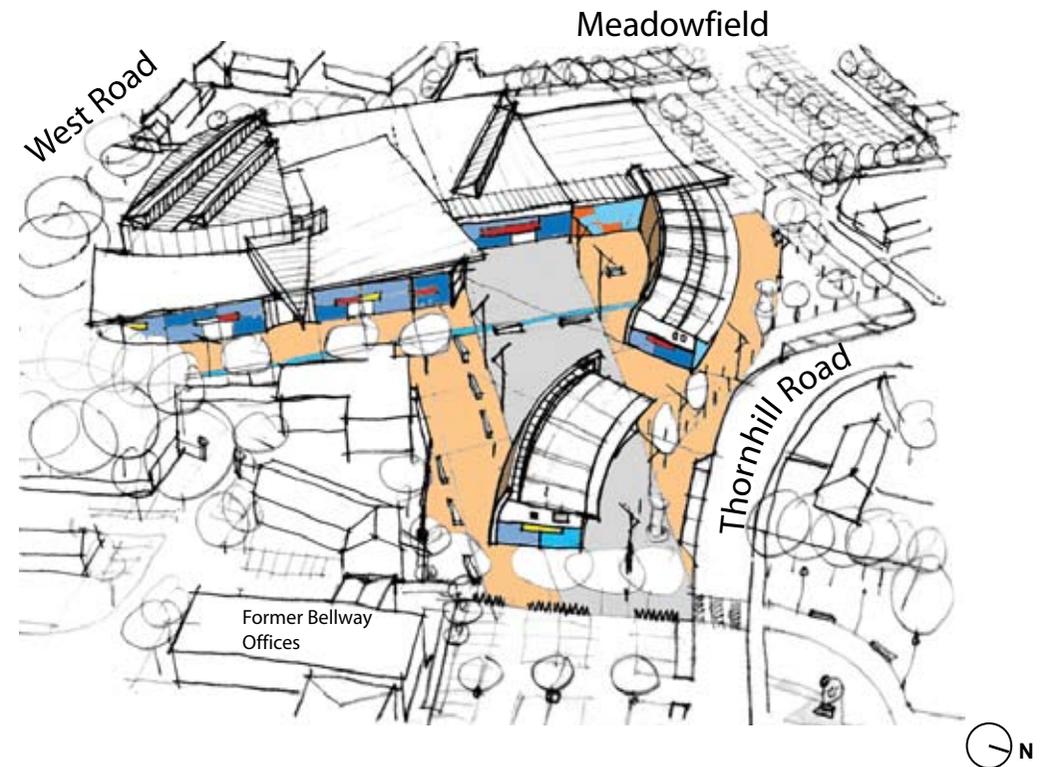
summary

- 6.27 In conjunction with views of the community and stakeholders, the challenge has been to develop a masterplan for the area which is both visionary and capable of being delivered.
- 6.28 Merton Way Shopping Centre has been identified as the main issue needing to be addressed. As outlined above, the other options do not provide a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the existing centre. Options 1 to 3 provide the opportunity for the existing centre to be improved, but this is viewed as a short term measure, as intervention is likely to be required in the future. Undertaking one of the other options, is likely to result in a piecemeal approach to rejuvenating the centre of the village.
- 6.29 Although the most expensive option to deliver, Option 4 has been identified as the preferred option for the regeneration of Ponteland Village as it:
- Enables a comprehensive and joined up approach to redevelopment to take place
 - It provides the opportunity to provide a new high quality retail centre and addresses the problems associated with the existing shopping centre
 - Will improve the quality of the streetscape and environment of the area
 - Has private sector support, which via competition, will should generate wider benefits for the regeneration of the area
 - Has support from stakeholders and provides a vision for the future
 - Addresses a number of the constraints identified prior to developing the options.

the visionary strategy

7.1 To achieve an exciting new retail experience within Ponteland which is complemented by a range of new community facilities, housing and environmental improvements the following elements are proposed:

- A new supermarket (up to 2,600 sq metres including servicing)
- 19 retail units and a restaurant
- 9 flats above the retail units
- 210 car parking spaces
- The conversion of the existing Bellway site and the verger's cottage into flats (Bellways already have planning consent for 21 flats)
- 11 houses on the Library site at 50 dwellings per hectare
- 40 houses on the school site
- A community hub comprising of a library, community hall, CIU, public conveniences and offices
- A public square and boulevard, enhanced and new green spaces
- Improved pedestrian linkages, reconfigured highways access and junction improvements from Meadowfield Road to the A696
- Restricted access within the main retail area for service vehicles and disabled access



the visionary strategy

commercial and community heart

- 7.2 The development of the commercial elements of the preferred option would require the demolition of the existing Merton Way Shopping Centre, the Village Hall, and the Social Club in their entirety. This demolition could occur prior to construction, but it would be preferable to phase demolition to limit disruption to occupiers and users, and thus ensure that Ponteland maintains a core of convenience retailers throughout the development.
- 7.3 The new commercial heart of the development should be built around a new public square, providing a focal point which could contribute to the vitality of the day and night time economy. To the west of the square would be a supermarket with a gross floor area of up to 2,600 sq m. The supermarket would have access both from the square and from the car park to the north.
- 7.4 The 19 retail units would comprise of 2,000 sq m of development and could depending upon their configuration, provide ancillary space, a restaurant and flats above the retail units to provide activity in the area both during the day and night.
- 7.5 The shops could be developed around a public square, creating a focal point which could be used for a range of community/business uses. Vehicular access along the pedestrian route would be permitted at certain hours to allow servicing of the shops, ensuring that priority is given to pedestrians.

- 7.6 At the southern end of the supermarket there would be a purpose built 2 storey community hub incorporating the library, village hall, parish council office, public conveniences and the social club. Clear pedestrian routes to the hub would be provided and vehicular access to the hub for servicing would be along the back of the supermarket. Additionally restricted access would be provided for disabled uses.



- 7.7 The scheme would provide high quality new local retail provision in Ponteland, to provide a more diverse offer. Linkages to the surrounding area would be reinforced through a high quality streetscape in terms of lighting, paving and street furniture to create a strong sense of identify within the village centre. To maintain the village characteristics of the area, the streetscape will be complemented through soft landscaping

the visionary strategy

and the existing green space to the south of the library would also be enhanced. This would be complemented by street planting, creating tree lined boulevards. The community hub would be an integral part of the development thus focussing pedestrian flows through the scheme.

- 7.8 Residential development of relatively high density would strengthen the catchment area population within walking distance of Main Street. Consideration should be given to the provision of an element of affordable housing to diversify the type of residents living adjacent to the village centre.

accessibility

- 7.9 A supermarket in itself is likely to attract more trips, vehicular and by sustainable means and there is likely to be an increase in traffic due to the proposed new development.
- 7.10 Housing developments on the Bellways and school/health centre sites will generate an increase in vehicles, which dependant upon the type of housing are likely to be commuter based trips. However, these developments will also provide the potential for sustainable access (on foot predominantly) to the village's facilities.
- 7.11 The vehicular access and circulation pattern to the centre will change and junction improvements at Meadowfield Road/A696 and North Road/Thornhill need to be considered.



- 7.12 Car parking has been highlighted as a major issue within the Village, in terms of quality, quantity and current enforcement of illegal parking. Consideration should be given to short stay car parking charges within the village. As the majority of the car parking would be provided alongside the supermarket, management arrangements would need to be in place if parking charges were to be applied. Additionally any charging policy would have to be implemented alongside stronger enforcement measures.

the visionary strategy

7.13 It is envisaged that the visionary redevelopment of the village centre, would provide Ponteland with the scale and variety of retail and community facilities required to meet the aspirations of both existing and new residents. Although primarily a local retail centre, it is anticipated that the new range of retail units may attract specialised retailers which could make the area more of a shopping destination than it is currently.

7.14 The current community facilities within the area, although well used, require updating to provide the services required that meet all sectors of the community, particularly young people. The community hub will provide a multi – functional space which can be used by a variety of groups, and the new library facility will significantly add to the range of community facilities that benefit the local community.

KEY

	Health Centre / School / Library
	Bellway / Parish Council Housir
	New Retail Units
	Community Hub
	Reconfigured Large Car Park
	Reconfigured Small Car Park
	Improved Public Realm
	Vehicular Access
	Pedestrian / Cyclist Access
	Restricted Vehicular Access



the visionary strategy

7.15 In conjunction with these large scale physical redevelopment a range of other measures are required to ensure that the regeneration of Ponteland Village is maximised. These include:

- Improved signage and marketing of the new retail facilities
- A formal mechanism for engaging with retailers to ensure that the new facility is well managed and is maintained to a high standard
- Management and enforcement of parking to improve the pedestrian safety of the area
- Initiatives to encourage other modes of transport other than the car
- Monitoring of adjacent sites to assess their longer term viability and to identify ways in which they can complement the development

7.16 The visionary redevelopment of the Village Centre will positively impact on Ponteland by:

- Generating a step change in the area, improving investor and consumer confidence
- Significantly enhance the quality of the townscape and the environment of the area
- Attracting new people to the area, increasing the vibrancy both during the day and evening, positively impacting upon the local economy
- Benefiting the community through an enhanced range of services and facilities as well as creating an attractive place at the heart of the village

- Reinforce Ponteland's strategic role as a key centre within the Tyne and Wear City Region both in terms of a place for housing, retail and employment

urban design

- 8.1 To create the desired positive effect and to ensure that the issues that have arisen with regard to Merton Way are not repeated, it is important that the proposed regeneration of the area is taken forward in a co-ordinated and uniform manner. This will help to create a sense of place and generate a unique identify for the area drawing upon the existing character. To achieve this a range of urban design principles have been developed, drawing upon best practice, which can be used to measure developer submissions against, to ensure that design is an integral part of the scheme.



strategic study area principles

legibility

- Signage – clear and appropriately placed signage will help in both informing and directing people through the area
- Movement – uncluttered, clear, safe and wide movement corridors with clearly designated areas for pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- Views – direct views of key public spaces and uses from outlying pedestrian and vehicular areas
- Accessibility – taking account of the landform changes across the site, provide smooth, uncluttered, safe and wide corridors for all users

urban design

safety

- Lighting – allow for a signature lighting scheme of the new public realm
- Sight lines – provide longitudinal views into and across the public realm and into the adjoining areas
- Parking – provide safe and convenient car parking close to all facilities
- Natural surveillance – ensure overlooked public realm during all hours of operation and high quality lighting scheme to allow safe 24 hour usage



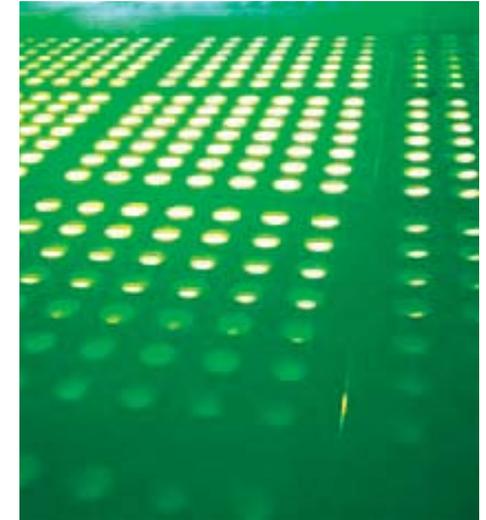
visibility

- Retail frontage – clear retail frontage to main pedestrian and vehicular routes, together with footfall generated through adjacent community uses for internal units
- Community frontage – clear and distinctive frontage onto Main Street with visual links to main central square
- Signage – clear and well positioned signage allows for free and considered movement through the area

urban design

quality public realm

- Quality materials and workmanship – chosen from a site specific palette, high quality materials used and installed to the highest workmanship
- Street furniture – again chosen from a site specific palette portraying the new modern approach and future for Ponteland
- Clear function – an uncluttered approach with each element having a precise and clear function
- Safety – consideration needs to be made with regards pedestrian, vehicular and staff safety
- 24 hour usage – need to consider 24 hour usage of the buildings and spaces
- Sense of place – the combination of building, space, function and quality will create a clear sense of place



sustainability

- Energy use – design and layout to ensure low energy usage, use of natural light sources and provision of solar panels
- Maintenance – design to allow lower levels of maintenance as well as ease of maintenance
- Design life – allow for flexibility in use and layout of all buildings and engineer for an extended design life

urban design

housing

8.2 The housing development needs to respond to its location within the centre of a village and its proximity to a Conservation Area. A mixed density response to create a rich diversity of urban spaces, frontages and landscaping to provide a high quality environment with clearly defined safe routes and linkages. The development should consider local building traditions, landscape, materials and pattern.

retail

8.3 The layout of the retail provision will allow for the creation of a large high quality public space with improved road frontage and connections to the existing retail offer and community facilities. The development will provide easy access, accommodating safe attractive routes for pedestrians/cyclists and include clearly defined carparking space. The use of modern building materials will allow the opportunity for building forms to respond to and reflect the locality as well as providing modern, well lit, low energy, flexible and low maintenance units.

community

8.4 The provision of new community facilities potentially combining library, social club, community hall and parish offices allow for the development of an exemplar building utilising modern techniques and materials to offer a multi purpose flexible space. The location will provides a clear visible link to both Main Street and public spaces, with easy access from car parks and Main Street bus routes.

8.5 The creation of public open areas will provide the opportunity for various outdoor events, generating full access and clearly defined functional spaces.

8.6 Car parking will be efficient and flexible allowing for dual purpose use, accommodating both retail and community facilities where possible. These will be designed to make better use of space and enhanced with tree planting to integrate with the existing landscape character.

delivering the masterplan

9.1 The site area poses a number of challenges with respect to its redevelopment, due to:

- Multiple site ownership and the amount of businesses operating in the area, this will impact on the financial and timetable aspects of the delivery of the scheme
- Limited public sector resource being available and the need to secure public and private sector investment
- The need to secure wider political, stakeholder and community buy in to the preferred option
- Potential land receipts have already been identified for future developments. The receipts from the sale of the Ponteland First School Site will be allocated to the building of the new school and the receipts from the library site (if it is relocated) will be allocated for re-provision of a library.
- Minimising disruption to existing retail/community and finding alternative accommodation

role of the steering group

9.2 The Steering Group which has been established to drive the masterplan forward, have an in depth understanding of the study area, as well as the challenges faced in implementing the masterplan. The group includes a range of organisations that currently work together within Ponteland for the benefit of the community. The group provides linkages with wider voluntary/community groups operating in Ponteland and can utilise these networks to maximise the benefits of the regeneration of the village centre.

9.3 The Steering Group should continue to meet until the Masterplan has been politically endorsed and the implementation stage is ready to commence. At this point the Local Strategic Partnership should take on the role of ensuring that the aims of the Masterplan are met. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should draw upon the expertise of members of the Steering Group and will require the support of Castle Morpeth Borough Council in taking the Masterplan forward. The LSP will play an important role in engaging the community in the process.

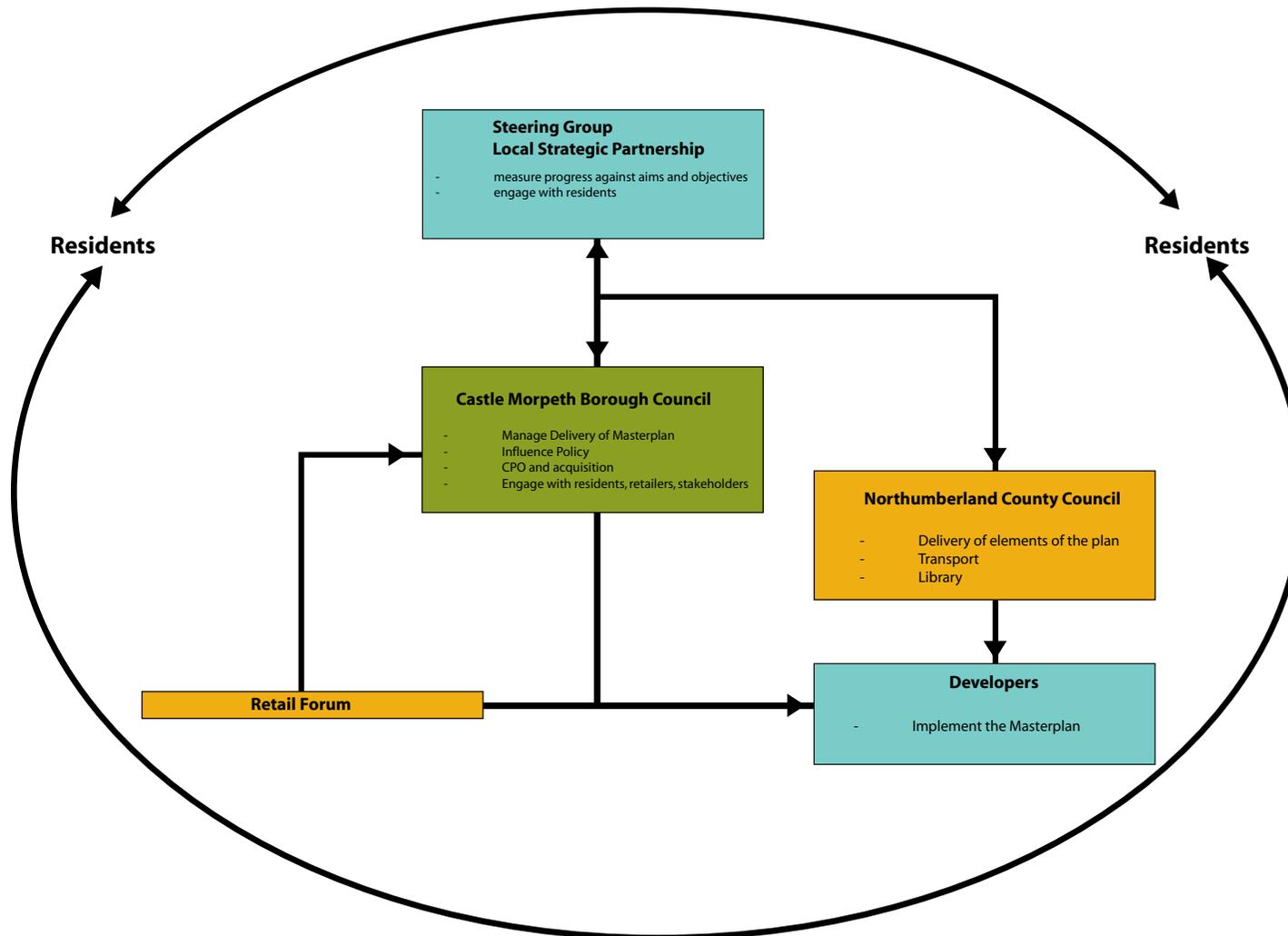
delivering the masterplan

9.4 Establishing a specialist regeneration vehicle to drive the scheme forward is likely to have resource implications and would impact upon the timetable for taking the project forward. Additionally as there are unlikely to be surplus land receipts arising from the development which could then be recycled within the scheme in the longer term, there does not appear to be the benefits of establishing a specific delivery vehicle.

9.5 Castle Morpeth Borough Council should therefore lead on the regeneration of the redevelopment of Ponteland, drawing support from partner organisations during the process. Following a competitive tendering process, the Council should engage with the preferred developer/s through Development Agreements. Representatives from the steering group should be involved in the selection process. For sites owned by Northumberland County Council, then a similar process should be undertaken, with Castle Morpeth Borough Council and representatives from the steering group involved in the process to appoint a preferred developer.

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9.6 The delivery structure and key responsibilities are set out below:



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9.7 The table below sets out the key tasks and associated timeframe for taking forward the masterplan.

Action	Timescale	Lead Organisation	Other Partners
Short Term Actions			
The location of the library and the amount of funding that is available towards a new library if it is to move	October 2006	Northumberland CC	
Identification of public sector resource towards the scheme to assist in identifying which scheme is going to be taken forward	October 2006/Ongoing	Castle Morpeth BC	Northumberland CC
Securing political support for the preferred scheme	October 2006	Castle Morpeth BC	Northumberland CC and Ponteland Parish Council
Communication of the preferred scheme to stakeholders, businesses and the community	Once the above has been agreed	All	
Translation of the masterplan into an Area Action Plan	2006/2007	Castle Morpeth BC	
Identification of a lead partner in relation to land assembly	November 2006 onward	Castle Morpeth BC	Northumberland CC
Liaison with developers in relation to the school and former health clinic sites that are to come forward in the near future	2006/2007	Relevant Land Owners	
Identify further work which is required in relation to transport, i.e. parking and traffic surveys, audit and feasibility of new walking/cycling routes, transport assessments	2006 and ongoing	All	
Medium to Long Term			
Establishing the criteria for a developer competition through the production of a development brief if the visionary strategy is the preferred strategy	October 2006 - March 2007	All	
Production of a brief for public realm improvements	October 2006 – March 2007	All	
Establishing a retail forum to work with retailers.	November 2006	Castle Morpeth BC	All
Begin voluntary negotiation of properties within the site or serve a CPO (if appropriate)	Spring 2007 onwards	Castle Morpeth BC	
Appoint and commence work with preferred developer	2008	Castle Morpeth BC	Northumberland CC
Begin work on site	Spring 2008 or later if a CPO is required or if the site is to be removed from the greenbelt	Developer	

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funding

9.8 The financial appraisal of the development option if it was to proceed within the site boundary (see Appendix X) identifies that the proposals could not be viably developed by the private sector. Funding of £9 to £10m would be required to take this forward. The size of the funding requirement results from:

- The high cost of acquiring property interests for site assembly
- The limited additional value created by the scheme relative to the existing shopping centre
- The inability to use the sale of land for housing to cross subsidise the scheme, because the proceeds are retained by third parties.

9.9 Development proposals within Ponteland will not be eligible to receive capital funding that might be available within other areas of the North East which have higher levels of deprivation. There may be scope to secure funding from charitable trusts in relation to the development of a community hub, depending upon the nature of the provision delivered from the facility. Larger funding organisations tend to include deprivation as a criteria or the extent to which the project identifies a specific need and it is therefore likely to be difficult to secure funding for the community hub.

9.10 The funding for the scheme would therefore largely fall on the Castle Morpeth District Council. A number of other measures could offset the funding gap, these are set out in the table opposite:

Action	Amount
Increase in rental values from £14 to £18 per sq ft	£2.5 million
Introduction of car parking charges of 40p per hour, to enable the Council to undertake prudential supported borrowing	£2.5 million
Contribution from Northumberland County Council towards the library	Approximately £600,000
Total	£5.4 million
Gap	£3.6 million

9.11 Northumberland County Council for instance would gain new library premises, and through the appraisal the receipts generated from the sale of the existing library site, do not cover the full cost of the new library, and thus a further contribution from the County Council would be reasonable.

9.12 There is some scope to use Section 106 Agreements on planning consents to raise finance in accordance with the Planning Obligations Circular. This is unlikely to generate significant sums of funding.

9.13 The Council currently owns a number of potentially developable site/s which may have to be disposed of, to offset the funding gap to enable the successful regeneration of Ponteland Village Centre. The Council will have to consider these sites against a range of factors, prior to their disposal, to assess whether the benefits of bringing the site/s forward outweigh the costs. Factors that will need to be taken into consideration include, planning policy, developability in terms of site constraints and also the impact on residents who live adjacent to the site/s.

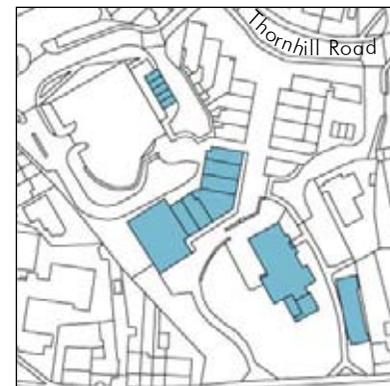
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phasing

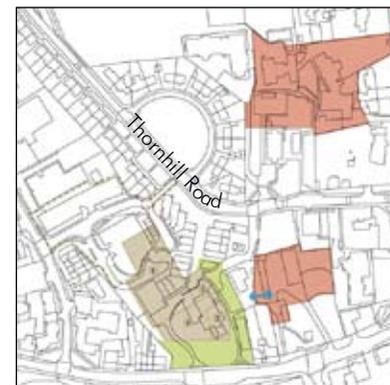
9.14 If development is to come forward within the study area boundary, it has been assumed that the development scheme will be phased which will limit the disruption to occupiers and users. It will ensure that Ponteland maintains a core of convenience retailers throughout the development. The primary components of the three phases are set out below and in the accompanying plans:

phase 1

Purchase	Social club Castle Court (30 – 54 Merton Way) Western block of garages Western car park Village Hall
Construction	Supermarket Community Hub Southern Retail
Externals	Car park and service yard Back Lane to serve Social Club Route from Main Street to Square New access to Bamburgh Court (s.106)
Sell / rent	Southern Retail Supermarket
Relocate	Library Hall Parish Council office Social Club



KEY
Phase 1 - Demolition
Demolition



KEY
Phase 1 New Build

- 1 New Food Retail
- 2 New Retail
- 3 New Community
- New Car Park
- New Public Open Space
- Housing Schemes
- New Access

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phase 2

Purchase	2-28 Merton Way
Construction	Western Retail
Externals	Merton Square Orchard (s.106)
Sell / rent	Western Retail Library Site Verger's Cottage

phase 3

Purchase	1-21 Merton Way Chu's land Eastern garages Public Conveniences Thornhill Road car park Merton Road
Construction	Eastern Retail Smaller Car Park
Externals	Replacement Merton Road Hard Landscaping
Sell / Rent	Eastern Retail



KEY
Phase 1 - Demolition
Demolition



KEY
Phase 2 - New Build
1 New Retail
New Public Open Space
Housing Scheme



KEY
Phase 3 - Demolition
Demolition



KEY
Phase 3 - New Build
New Public Open Space
New Retail/Residential
New Car Park

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- 9.15 The phasing of the scheme would also be dependent upon whether voluntary acquisition can be achieved or if a CPO is required. The use of CPO's would add significantly (at least 18 months) to the timescales of taking forward the scheme. Once a preferred scheme is identified it will be important to begin liaising with existing businesses in the area. Discussions can then begin to take place about their requirements in terms of relocation, compensation packages and decanting to other premises if they can be identified. Retailers are the group which are most affected by the masterplan and therefore clear lines of communication need to be established when taking the masterplan forward from the outset.
- 9.16 It may be beneficial to set up a retail forum so effective dialogue can be undertaken during the redevelopment of the village centre. This would provide a useful platform which the chosen developer could work with.

planning context

- 9.17 Castle Morpeth's LDF is currently being developed. If this document is to be translated into an Area Action Plan, there will need to be clear links with the core policies within the LDF. Additionally a sustainability assessment and an accompanying statement of community involvement will need to be prepared. By converting the masterplan into an Area Action Plan, greater weighting will be given to the land use and design principles identified than if they are solely contained within a masterplan. This will assist in ensuring appropriate and high quality proposals are brought forward.

- 9.18 The housing numbers proposed in this masterplan will also need to be considered within the wider housing supply context of the District, given the housing numbers that are currently allocated in the draft RSS. It is likely that the majority of the schemes, Bellway, the school and former health clinic site are likely to come forward in the first phase of the RSS allocation, whereas the residential above the flats will probably be developed in the latter stages.
- 9.19 Any other site/s that are to be brought forward to assist in delivering the masterplan, will also need to be assessed to ensure they are in accordance with national, regional and local planning policy. If the site/s are to be brought forward for other end uses than that set out in the Local Plan, then changes to current land use designations may also need to be incorporated within the Local Development Framework.

delivery risks

- 9.20 The following table highlights the key risks associated with the delivery of the Masterplan, however it is likely that new risks will arise during the development stage.

The table identifies:

- The risk
- The priority of the risk
- The Action to minimize the risk; and
- The lead organisation.

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9.21 The risk table is to be used as a tool to assist in the implementation of the project and can be updated during the process to ensure that the risks to the regeneration of Ponteland Village are minimised.

Area	Risk	Risk Type	Action	Lead Organisation
External	Changes in government policy, particularly in relation to planning	Red	Maintain regional government partner contacts re emerging national policy	Castle Morpeth Borough Council (CMBC)
External	Lack of support from the community, businesses and other stakeholders to change within Ponteland.	Amber	Continue to promote the project to the community, businesses and other stakeholders.	CMBC and the Steering Group
Governance	Poor communication between key partners, stakeholders and residents. Effective communication is key to the success of the project.	Amber	Development and Implementation of an effective communication strategy and framework	CMBC and the Steering Group
Governance	Securing Political Support for change	Amber	Strong leadership through key local politicians and senior officers	CMBC, Northumberland County Council (NCC) and the Parish Council
Governance	Ineffective performance management framework	Amber	Development of performance management framework.	CMBC
Management	Lack of clear leadership and clarity of roles and responsibilities	Green	From past experience establish management structure from outset	CMBC
Management	Lack of staff experience in managing large scale redevelopment.	Green	CMBC staff have undertaken similar programmes in other areas	CMBC
Management	Insufficient staff to meet delivery demands	Amber	CMBC need to assess staff and resource capacity for effective delivery of activity	CMBC
Delivery	Lack of funds to enable development to proceed	Red	Ongoing review of funding sources and identify process for releasing capital assets.	CMBC
Delivery	Insufficient capacity of private developers to deliver	Amber	Engage with developers in early stages. Ensure development brief is sufficiently attractive	

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summary

- 9.22 The Masterplan provides a framework for the regeneration of Ponteland Village. The scheme will bring about a comprehensive redevelopment of existing retail facilities, either within the study area boundary or on the site adjacent to the Leisure Centre, depending upon how the latter site is designated in the Local Development Framework.
- 9.23 The momentum for change within the village has already begun. It is now vital that any further change is undertaken in a co-ordinated manner and has the support of stakeholders, businesses and the wider community. The energy and vision of the Partnership, under the leadership of Castle Morpeth Borough Council will be central to ensure that in conjunction with the private sector that development makes a lasting and positive contribution to the vitality of Ponteland.



appendix 1

Members of the Steering Group

Frank Harrington - Chair

Bill Comb

David Butler

Shiela Campbell

Kevin Flaherty

Peter Charleton

Peter Jackson

Syd Cowan

Robin Ramsay

Trevor Walker

Ailsa Coverdale