



taylor young **ty**

thinkingplace

SK TRANSPORT PLANNING  
TRAFFIC TRANSPORT HIGHWAYS

## Flint Strategy and Masterplan 2021



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# Executive Summary

The Flint Strategy and Masterplan sets out a route map for the transformation of Flint, building upon its many assets and overcoming its challenges. It has been prepared by Flintshire County Council in partnership with local residents, local businesses and other key stakeholders.

## Harnessing Flint's Opportunities

The opportunities that Flint should seek to enhance are:

- Residential - the Town benefits from a large number of houses in its core and the surrounding area and enjoys strong community spirit
- Large number of opportunity sites of considerable scale across the Town
- Commitment of Public Sector Partners to invest in Flint
- Retail - a local High Street, with popular market and successful Retail Park, all in the Town Centre
- Industrial - wide range of local employment and business opportunities in the Town and good access to Deeside Industrial Park
- Leisure and Tourism - including the Castle and Waterfront



## A New Story for Flint

All places need to make themselves stand out in order to attract new jobs, residents, investment and visitors, as well as keeping existing businesses and residents.

The Strategy identifies what the Town has to offer, why it is special, what it is trying to achieve and what it will focus its efforts upon. Flint's special themes are:

**Castle, Centre, Coast, Countryside, County, Colour, Connected**

At the heart of the 'new story' for Flint is the idea of **'Quality Local'**, which brings a strong sense of retaining and building on the local strengths of the Town, while at the same time improving quality. This will emphasise the need to improve the quality of the public realm, the signage, the customer service offer and how we communicate, both internally and externally, about Flint. These improvements will lead to an enhanced experience for both residents and visitors alike.

## A New Vision for Flint

*Flint will be a local destination capitalising on its assets, especially its historic county market town and waterfront, and reassert its role in the region*

## Strategic Objectives

The Vision is supported by six strategic objectives for the Town:

- **To better serve the local catchment** and capture more local spend - re-establishing Flint as the first local choice retail and leisure destination
- **To reconnect Flint's assets** - to create better linkages between the Town and the Waterfront/ Castle, the Town and its hinterland, the High Street and Retail Park, employment opportunities and the Town
- **To transform Flint's physical image** - harness the redevelopment of the Maisonettes as an opportunity to kick-start the physical transformation of the heart of the Town, use opportunity sites to deliver quality new homes and facilities, and enhance Flint's historic and environmental assets
- **To encourage economic growth through job creation** - build upon Flintshire's economic success and create enhanced physical, business and environmental conditions to retain and attract businesses and retailers to Flint, thus generating momentum for local employment, spend and economic activity
- **To embed Flint within the sub regional tourism network** - join forces with other local visitor destinations and maximise opportunities such as the All Wales Coastal Path, the Iron Ring of Castles and Flint's close proximity to Chester
- **To more effectively promote the Town and its opportunities** - to create a clear and consistent communication strategy which people can use to promote the Town

## Delivering Change - Priorities for Action

The Strategy is framed by a series of cross cutting themes under which priority actions are identified as:

1. Enhanced housing offer
2. Enhanced employment opportunities
3. Thriving retail and leisure destination
4. Service excellence supporting enhanced quality of life
5. Arrival, access and movement
6. Quality public realm
7. Harnessing the environment
8. Enhanced communications

## Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework (see attached) identifies the physical priorities for change across Flint. It highlights the sites with potential to attract investment, set within a framework of improved linkages, enhanced gateways and green corridors. Overall the spatial framework objectives are to:

- Strengthen the identity and image of the Town
- Link together the Town's key assets into a more meaningful framework
- Improve gateways and sense of arrival
- Build on the Town's great history and use it to help shape a new future for Flint

- Ensure that key public realm and development projects lock together to ensure greater impact and value
- Improve legibility, access and connectivity to and through the Town, particularly for businesses and visitors
- Bring a better housing offer into the heart of the Town and in doing so repair the damage caused from earlier planning and development work
- Link closely to current initiatives such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

### **The Indicative Masterplan**

The Indicative Masterplan (see attached) demonstrates how the Town Centre Spatial Framework could take shape with new buildings, spaces and events. This plan seeks to deliver a new urban grain to the Town, focused around reinstating the traditional grid street patterns. The Indicative Masterplan is not prescriptive but rather seeks to provide a 'feel' of how the Town could develop given the spatial and physical components of the Framework.

### **The Action Plan**

The phasing of action to support the transformation of Flint is set out below:

#### **Flint Masterplan**

##### **Quick Wins - Priorities for the Next 12 months**

- Launch the Strategy and Masterplan and introduce the key people who will be driving forward its delivery
- Creation of a Flint Town Website which will host the Strategy and Masterplan, engaging key people involved in its delivery and providing an update on project progress
- Identify a Town Champion
- Determine and commence a phased programme of clearance of the Maisonettes
- Preparation of design briefs for the replacement housing for the Maisonettes
- Start to deliver new housing on vacant sites - Alwyn, Borough Grove and vacant units adjacent to Co-op
- Undertake car parking review of public and private car parking space to determine a more effective strategy for shopping, short term, medium term, worker and local resident parking
- Develop a streetscape guide for Flint setting out the quality and style of development, public realm and landscaping that will be expected in the Town
- Undertake environmental improvements in the vicinity of St Mary's and St David's Church
- Prepare a marketing strategy to raise the profile of the Town including the Castle, Market, and events
- Start engagement with Cadw to progress environmental improvements and enhanced visitor information including the proposed historic timeline between the Town and the Castle
- Determine and deliver a strategy to enhance and better promote the Market
- Identify and start to deliver a programme of wayfinding and signage improvements including 'welcome' signs at key gateways
- Determine and start to deliver a programme of landscape improvements for the A548 corridor into Flint from Oakenholt
- Continue improvements to historic buildings utilising THI funding
- Investigate potential of creating a Flintshire Connects service within Flint Council Offices - determine who would be involved, how much space they require, which existing services may need to be relocated from the Council Office

#### **Flint Masterplan**

##### **Short Term Projects (1-3 yrs)**

- Continue programme of demolition of Maisonettes
- Identify development partner for new homes on Maisonettes site, determine development schemes and commence delivery of new homes
- Utilise WG and THI monies to bring empty homes and upper floors of retail units back into use
- Develop and deliver an events programme focusing on the Castle and the Waterfront, the Town Centre (its shops and market) and utilising the themes of history, food and environment

- Investigate the potential of holding specialist markets in Flint on Saturday or Sunday (test potential to determine how regularly they could be held)
- Prepare detailed plans of how new places can be created in the Town to encourage people to dwell longer
- Develop a programme of support to assist existing and potential traders in the Town
- Continue discussion with Betsi Cadwaladr to determine who and what services would be delivered in a new primary health facility and commence detailed planning
- Collated health and social care services
- As part of the detailed redevelopment of the Maisonettes start to create improved quality pedestrian linkages between Church Street and Flint Retail Park
- Promote the Town within the local press and on the website
- Build supply chain links between local enterprises and retailers in Church Street to develop a unique retail offer in the traditional heart of the Town Centre - develop a Flint brand
- Prepare a regular newsletter (at least annually) to summarise success and progress in the delivery of the Strategy and Masterplan
- Set up a local business directory (hold on website) and establish local business networks
- Undertake detailed review of accessibility (by car, cycle and foot) and signage in the Town to create a more efficient local network
- Create new walk between the Castle and Town Centre including historic timeline celebrating the role of the Town
- Identify local ambassadors who will commit to promote Flint as they go about their day to day activities
- Develop a trader's support pack to identify how the Council can support existing retailers
- Building upon the messages within the Flint Strategy develop a series of products to be used to promote the Town more effectively
- Install better visitor information about what is on offer in the Town
- Improve the setting of the Memorial Garden through sympathetic residential development on the adjoining two sites
- Deliver new primary health care centre
- Commence refurbishment of Flintshire Connects facility
- Investigate the potential of converting one of the tower blocks to provide specialist housing e.g. extra care

#### **Flint Masterplan**

##### **Medium Term Projects (4-7 years)**

- Consider options for re-cladding the tower blocks to improve energy efficiency and their physical appearance
- Commence discussions with local landlords (retail and industrial) of worst buildings in Flint to investigate ways in which their buildings could be improved
- Consider how existing public buildings could be better utilised by the community especially Flint Town Hall
- Council to actively engage with local businesses and retailers to identify barriers to operation and work with them to overcome
- Investigate the potential of highways and pedestrian improvements around the Town Hall and along the A548
- Creation of a green link through the Town linking quality open space in the Town to the Waterfront, Coastal Path, cycleways, green corridors and beyond
- As part of the planning process consider the potential in the long term to deliver new housing in the vicinity of the Waterfront taking into account local environmental and access constraints
- Consider the potential to light some of Flint's historic buildings
- Ongoing delivery of maisonette redevelopment

#### **Flint Masterplan**

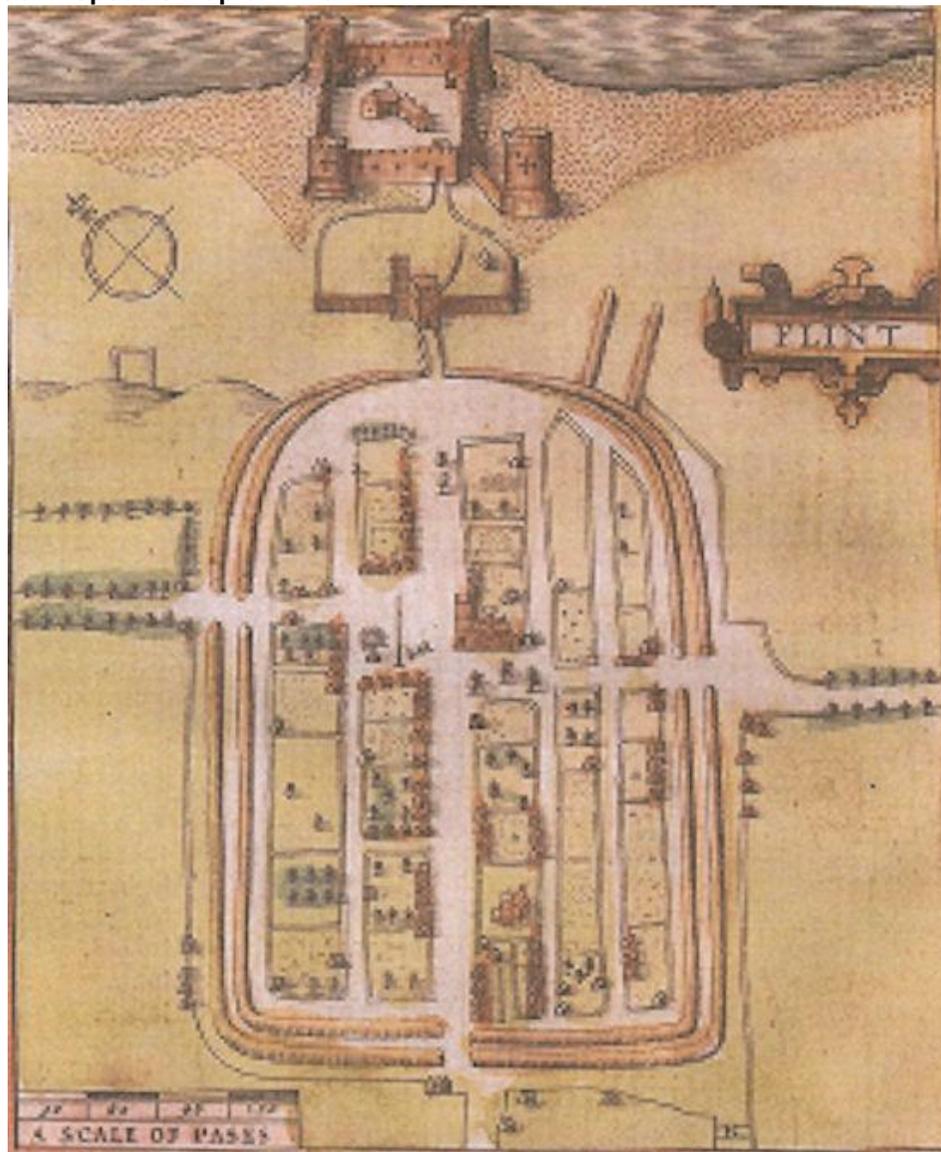
##### **Long Term Projects (8-12 years)**

- Engage with local businesses and developers to create new employment space
- Ongoing delivery of maisonette redevelopment
- Ongoing delivery of environmental improvements
- Ongoing delivery of new private houses on the edge of Flint Town Centre to ensure there is an appropriate portfolio of housing choice
- Ongoing improvements to historic buildings utilising THI funding
- Ongoing promotion of Flint, its assets, opportunities and events within the press and on the Flint website
- Continued delivery of an enhanced programme of events

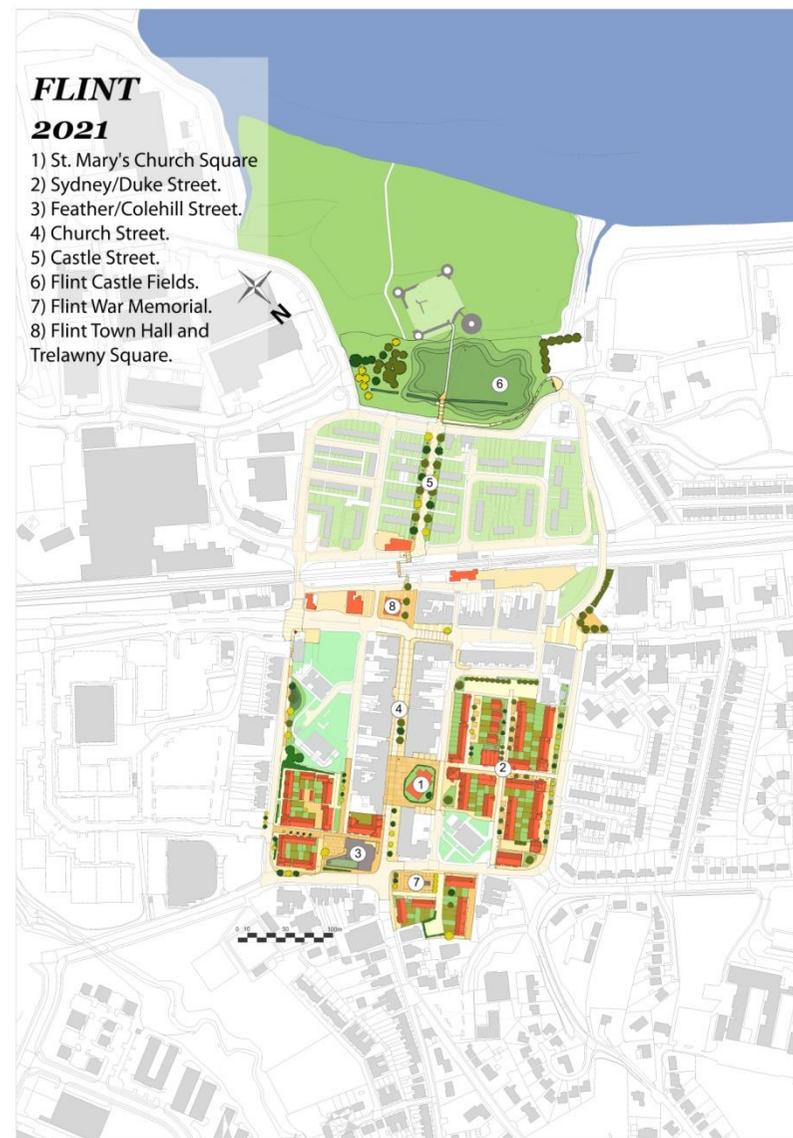
## The Spatial Framework



John Speed's Map of Flint



Indicative Masterplan

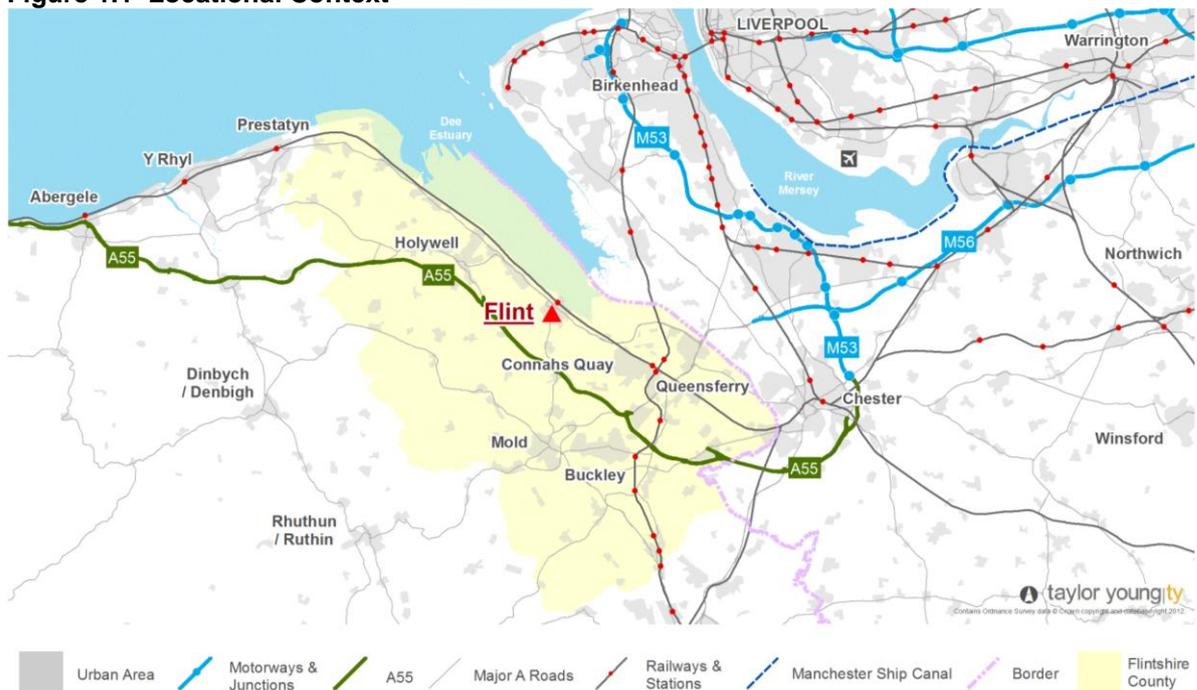


# 1.0 Flint Today

## Introduction

- 1.1 The County of Flintshire covers the length of the north east coast of Wales fronting the Dee Estuary and is well served by both the A55 trunk road and the West Coast Rail Line. The County benefits from strong cultural, social and economic ties with both the neighbouring parts of England such as Chester to the east, as well as with the adjoining Welsh counties of Wrexham and Denbighshire to the south.
- 1.2 Flintshire is considered to be the economic driver of North Wales and has been more resilient to economic changes than other parts of the sub-region. This is largely due to Flintshire’s success in diversifying its economy into the growing higher value manufacturing sector through internationally recognised companies such as Airbus UK, Toyota, UPM, Tata, Convatec, and Nice Pak.
- 1.3 Flint is one of eight town and district centres in Flintshire alongside, Connahs Quay, Shotton, Queensferry, Saltney, Mold, Holywell and Buckley. Currently, Mold operates as the administrative centre for the County. Flint gives its name to the County of Flintshire and Flint Castle, completed 1286, was the first of King Edward’s “Iron Ring” of fortresses to be built with the purpose of conquering Wales. The site of Flint Castle was chosen due to its strategic positioning in north east Wales, this positioning continues to have an important influence today in cultural, social and economic terms. Despite this, Flint continues to face a number of challenges constraining its future potential.

**Figure 1.1 Locational Context**



## Creating a New Future for Flint

- 1.4 DTZ together with Taylor Young, SK Transport Planning and Thinkingplace were commissioned in August 2011 by Flintshire County Council (FCC) to prepare a Masterplan for Flint that will transform the image, function and prospects of the Town.
- 1.5 This Strategic Framework for Flint is based upon the findings of a detailed assessment of the Town which has included desk based research, site visits and consultations with key stakeholders, local businesses and residents. For each of the opportunity sites (vacant sites or sites where change is likely to happen) probable uses were identified (e.g. employment, residential, retail). These options were tested against criteria including market attractiveness, likely contamination, ownership, flood risk and support to the Vision and Strategic Objectives. From this assessment, preferred uses for the opportunity sites were identified.
- 1.6 The Strategy sets out how Flint can build upon its assets and overcome its challenges to create an exciting and prosperous future. Local people and businesses have been involved throughout the process of preparing the Strategy for Flint and importantly will be involved in delivering the proposed changes. The Strategy will ensure that Flint is better able to position itself as opportunities arise, including bidding for funding. It will also help to inform the Local Development Plan process and decision making in respect of the Town.
- 1.7 At its core are a number of transformational projects; such as the redevelopment of the Maisonettes, delivery of a Flintshire Connects, delivery of new quality homes, improved health facilities and supporting the Town Centre. In addition, a range of other projects are identified which will support the transformational projects and improve the 'feel' and 'experience' of Flint.
- 1.8 The Report is structured as follows:
- **Section 1** - provides an overview of Flint's current role, assets and challenges
  - **Section 2** - sets out the Vision for Flint and strategic objectives and provides a framework on which to harness the Town's potential
  - **Section 3** - sets out the new strategy for the Town based on a series of priority actions for change
  - **Section 4** - presents the Spatial Framework and indicative Masterplan
  - **Section 5** - sets out the Action Plan to support the transformation of Flint
  - **Section 6** - provides advice on the delivery of the Strategy and Masterplan

## Flint's Existing Role

- 1.9 Flint performs a number of current roles:
- **A shopping centre** - Flint provides an important shopping role for the population of Flint and for surrounding rural communities. It accommodates a mix of independent retailers on Church Street and Chester Street together with the Friday Market and also benefits from having a high proportion of national retail chains operating from the adjacent Flint Retail

Park (including B&M, Iceland, Farmfoods, Littlewoods Clearance and Argos). The Town also has a large convenience food offer with Sainsbury's; Tesco Express; Asda; Aldi and Co-op (two stores) all having a presence

- **An employment location** - Flint functions as an important employment centre for its residents accommodating many local and regional businesses within the local employment areas of Aber Park; Castle Park; and Manor Lane Industrial Park. Flint is also well connected via the A548 and Dee Bridge to Deeside Industrial Park (DIP) for employment opportunities. Part of DIP has recently been designated as an Enterprise Zone
- **A service centre** - Flint currently provides its residents with a number of services including financial services, healthcare in the form of the 14-bed Flint Community Hospital, Flint Library and a range of Council services out of Flint's Council Offices. Flint Station forms part of the West Coast Mainline with direct services to Manchester, London Euston and Holyhead
- **A leisure and cultural destination** - for a town of its size (circa 12,000 people), Flint has a relatively good local leisure and cultural offer which includes the Pavilion Leisure Centre; Flint Football and Rugby Grounds; Golf Clubs (Flint Golf Club and Greens Lodge Golf Club); Red Pit Woods; Cornist Park; Swinchiard Brook and Tennis Courts, allotments and Cornist Wood. Flint Castle is a significant cultural and historic asset to the Town and provides a dramatic setting against the backdrop of the Dee Estuary. Other cultural activities include a Community Art Gallery within Flint Library and the annual Flint Festival

1.10 These functions serve a surrounding residential catchment which is predominantly made up of owner-occupiers, but with a high concentration of social rented households around the Town Centre core within the Maisonettes and high rises. Achieved house prices in Flint stood at around £164,100 in mid 2011, higher than the County wide average but lower than that across England and Wales. As such, Flint may be considered a relatively affordable location in the national context but the significant increase in property values since the early 2000s poses considerable difficulties for low income households in gaining a foothold on the property ladder.

## Flint's Assets

1.11 Flint has a series of existing assets which should be retained and built upon to the Town's best advantage, namely:

- **Strategic location** - Flint benefits from a strategic location in terms of both its transport connections and spatial positioning. The Town is well connected to Chester (12 miles away), North Wales and beyond through its proximity to the A55 link road and the A548 coastal road, and benefits from the mainline West Coast Rail Line with direct links to Holyhead, Cardiff, Manchester and London Euston (Flint direct to London four times a day within 2 hours 30 minutes). The A548 and Dee Bridge provide excellent access to the Deeside Industrial Park, a major regional employment centre. Spatially, Flint lies close to the Welsh/English border and has strong cultural, social and economic ties with both neighbouring parts of England including Chester as well as with the adjoining counties in Wales
- **Recent and ongoing investment** - in recent years there has been significant (public and private) investment in and around Flint particularly in terms of retail investment in the form of £1.6 million Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) funding, improvements to Flint Retail Park

by owners HMG, investment in the Castle Park Industrial Estate (£1.1 million (WG funded), investment in the All Wales Coastal Path and two new supermarkets (Sainsbury's and Aldi). A £1.8 million refurbishment and expansion of the Pavilion Leisure Centre is currently underway

- **Heritage and architecture** - Flint is a medieval planned town with a Castle, historic market and associations with Edward I, Richard II and Henry IV. Indeed, Flint was the first town in Wales to be granted the Charter in 1284 by Edward I. The area around Church Street is designated a Conservation Area and benefits from THI funding. These unique heritage assets attract the community and visitors alike although it is recognised that they are under utilised
- **Environmental assets** - Flint is home to significant environmental assets that have the ability to provide an important leisure and educational resource. Of particular note is the Waterfront on the Dee Estuary (which is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Wetland Site of International Importance (RAMSAR), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA)), Flint Dock and Swinchiard Brook. The local community are currently the key beneficiaries of these assets, but they could also help project a more positive image of Flint, drawing additional visitor expenditure into the Town. The All Wales Coastal Path will play a significant role in this. Work has already started on trying to increase the profile and quality of a number of the Town's environmental assets
- **Retail structure and provision** - in recent years, many towns have witnessed a shift in their retail provision to out-of-town retail parks to the detriment of their town centres. Flint benefits from having its retail park offer adjacent to its High Street within the heart of the Town Centre. However linkages between the two retail areas are limited in terms of footfall and spend. Flint Retail Park has also enjoyed significant investment into its retail offer in recent years accommodating a number of national retailers, and Church Street accommodates a number of independents
- **Economic opportunities** - Flint is situated within close proximity to Deeside Industrial Park (which recently gained Enterprise Zone status) and has three further established industrial/business estates within the Town (Aber Park, Castle Park and Manor Lane Industrial Park), all of which serve to provide local employment and supporting a lower than national average unemployment rate. Further, whilst pockets of deprivation remain within the Town, the wider Flintshire County has some clear socio-economic strengths in terms of skills, incomes and types of employment making the area attractive to potential business investors
- **Local commitment and the community** - Flint's community is sometimes an overlooked asset. Its high density community surrounding the High Street and Retail Park is an important source of spending power supporting local shops. The people of Flint are proud of the Town's heritage and are loyal shoppers, helping to sustain the independent retailers. They demonstrated throughout the consultation sessions that they are committed to ensuring that the Town thrives in the future. Flint also enjoys strong levels of involvement and commitment from Flint Town Council, Flint Town Partnership and Flint Communities First programme, who will be critical to driving the delivery of the Masterplan forward. Analysis of Census and Annual Population Survey data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) indicates that local residents are largely economically active, highly skilled and employed in higher occupational groups with relatively higher incomes than the national benchmark

## Flint's Challenges

- 1.12 However, the Town also faces a number of challenges which constrain the Town's ability to attract shoppers, visitors and investors:
- **Image and perception** - the physical appearance of parts of Flint, particularly the Maisonettes, detract from its image, especially for those from outside of the Town. These perceptions are further perpetuated by views of the Town from key transport routes i.e. A548 which fail to showcase the Town's assets. Flint needs to do more to 'shout' about and demonstrate its assets in order to raise confidence and attract new investment. It needs to harness its relatively wealthy catchment's spending power and enable them to spend within the local community
  - **Demographic changes** - it is clear that a key population challenge for Flintshire going forward will be to retain the young working age population in order to ensure a healthy economic future, as limits to the size of the resident labour force result in in-commuting and/or inhibit economic growth. In addition, thought should be given to supporting a growing post retirement population, particularly in terms of the housing offer
  - **Environment and public realm** - the condition of some of the Council housing stock and some of the publicly owned buildings; retail voids; and the dominance of car parking, inconsistent public realm and traffic do little to contribute to attracting visitors or investors to Flint
  - **Extending the visitor offer** - Flint lacks the scale of visitor attractions required to pull in and retain significant tourism numbers and spend to the Town Centre, but does have the potential to extend its current leisure, cultural and tourism offer by linking with other parts of the County. This will help to improve the Town's offer and a wider range of experiences will encourage residents and visitors to use the Town more. In particular, there should be a focus on supporting the existing offer with attractive places to eat and drink, an improved evening economy and extending and better promoting the programme of events. It must also be ensured that the correct infrastructure is in place to support the extended visitor offer
  - **Access and movement** - movement in and around Flint is hampered by challenging access routes, due to poor signage and an existing access strategy that takes motorists around, not directly through the Town Centre. At certain times this can lead to congestion as well as creating a car-dominated environment. Whilst the mainline railway is an asset it also severs the Town from the Waterfront and limits both pedestrian and vehicular access from Chester Street to the residential and employment areas located on the Waterfront side of the line. East-west pedestrian flow is also limited in the Town due to the severance caused by the Maisonettes, historic buildings and road layout. Resolving these issues would help improve movement and orientation within Flint and remove a potential deterrent to visitors
  - **Car parking** - Flint Town Centre is surrounded by a swathe of car parks; the County Council's parking stock amounts to over 500 spaces alone. Whilst the Town benefits from these free parking facilities, the quality of the car parking infrastructure is poor, including access routes to/from a number of the facilities. In addition, the signage to the eleven car parks is limited, with varying levels of information on their intended use (short, medium, long stay, residential or shopper parking)

- **Quality of life** - small pockets of Flint's Castle and Oakenholt wards suffer from heightened socio-economic deprivation levels and remain within the 20% most deprived nationally. This situation is not helped by the poor physical environment and current housing offer, although the town affords great potential for an excellent quality of life
- **Continuing economic and market conditions** - as with most other towns, Flint is under pressure from the national, regional and local factors resulting from the current global financial crisis and economic turmoil

## 2.0 Flint's Potential

2.1 Flint's future depends upon it harnessing its unique opportunities:

### Harnessing Flint's Opportunities

- **Residential** - the volume of residential sales and completions in Flint, as elsewhere, have suffered as a result of the difficult economic conditions and access to mortgage finance. However, whilst prices in Flint have remained lower than the England and Wales average, they continue to exceed County averages, demonstrating strength in demand for homes within this area, but also causing a challenge to local affordability for low income households  
  
Flint has a significant opportunity to provide an improved quality and mix of housing choices within the Town through the planned redevelopment of the Maisonettes. Consultations with local agents and developers have highlighted a greater appetite for private development towards the edges of the Town Centre, meaning that the sites in central Flint can be focused on meeting affordable housing needs. There is also a need to plan for extra care housing to meet the needs of an ageing population
- **Large number of opportunity sites of considerable scale** - analysis of Flint's potential development sites identifies that about a third of the Town has the potential for redevelopment and much of this is within the ownership of the public sector
- **Commitment of Public Sector Partners to invest in Flint** - FCC and local registered providers are keen to support investment in the existing public sector housing stock. FCC is also keen to support the creation of a one stop shop in the Town. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board will invest in improved health facilities in Flint. The WG funded Flint Communities First programme aims to improve the quality of life of the Town's most disadvantaged areas by bringing together funding and support to get local people involved in improving their local community and own prospects in a sustainable way that identifies and overcomes local issues. The Flint Communities First programme covers the area of Castle Heights, The Walks, part of The Avenues and north of the railway line
- **Retail** - generally Flint Town Centre serves as a convenience centre with Chester providing the main comparison offer. The three key headline conclusions of the 2011 Flintshire Retail Capacity Study are as follows:
  - There is a quantitative and qualitative deficiency in comparison goods provision within Flintshire and its town centre's including Flint
  - There is a significant degree of expenditure leakage from Flintshire (50.6%) to surrounding centres particularly Chester City Centre
  - The focus of planning policy should be to direct retail development to town centre locations to regenerate these centres and improve the competitive position of town centres to claw back expenditure leakage to shopping destinations, such as Chester, Rhyl and Wrexham

Regenerating Flint is a priority which the 2011 Retail Capacity Study and National Planning Policy support. The key retail opportunities for Flint include improving linkages between the retail areas of Church Street and Flint Retail Park; enhancing the non-food offer, expanding the supporting offer especially in terms of food and drink, continuing to support and promote the success of the new Flint Market; and reducing retail voids through enhanced physical environment, improved town profile and the consideration of potential temporary uses

- **Industrial** - whilst serving a predominantly local market, Flint has significant scale as an industrial location for a town of its size accommodating two industrial/business estates and convenient access and close proximity to Deeside Industrial Park. There is currently estimated to be a 4.6 year supply of available industrial space within Flint based on a five year (2006-10) average annual take up rate of 4,490 sq m (48,330 sq ft). However, a limited proportion of the available space is of a new or refurbished grade. There is an opportunity to build upon the established industrial base in Flint, including the presence of internationally recognised businesses such as Kimberley Clarke, to raise the profile of the Town. There is potential to enhance local networking to increase inter-business working and sales. Further consideration should also be given to the provision of smaller industrial units to appeal to changes in market demand
- **Leisure and Tourism** - Flint Castle was completed in 1286 and was the first of King Edward I's "Iron Ring" of fortresses to be built with the purpose of encircling North Wales, but due to its location within the Town, its scale and condition lacks the attention and draw of its sisters at Caernarfon, Conwy, Beaumaris and Harlech, and is unlikely to be significant enough to singlehandedly put Flint on the tourism map of North Wales. Despite this, Flint Castle clearly remains a significant asset to the Town in terms of tourism and is currently free to all visitors
- In terms of improving the Town's leisure offer, a £1.8 million investment into the existing Pavilion Leisure Centre is currently underway to provide an eight-lane tenpin bowling facility; four indoor bowls rinks; a soft play area for children; dance studio; and a refurbished fitness suite. Flint will also benefit from being on the 850 mile All Wales Coastal Path (the Path links Ellesmere Port to Chepstow in South Wales forming the World's first National coastal path). The route passes through Flint and the coastal Path is due to open from Flint in May 2012. The focus must be to mitigate the severance of the coast from the Town in order to harness the leisure and tourism opportunities to extend the Town's current food and drink offer to encourage people to stay longer in the Town and spend more

## Why Flint Needs a Place Proposition and 'New Story'

- 2.2 All places are competing and looking to differentiate themselves in order to attract new jobs, investment and visitors amongst other things, while at the same time improve things for existing communities and businesses. In this respect Flint faces the same challenges as other places. Places need to stand out, they must maximise their individuality.
- 2.3 Therefore, creating a compelling and differentiated 'new story' of Flint that fully reflects the area's assets, history, character and future ambitions will provide the platform for all partners and organisations to promote Flint as a place to invest or live. This new 'story' or narrative is for the entire place and articulates why it is different to other places, what it is trying to achieve, why it is special and what it needs to focus its efforts upon.

- 2.4 This approach thus leads to the development of the distinctive 'Flint experience' through the influence of the thinking on the development of the Masterplanning elements. These will include the design of physical space, the housing approach and public realm. This approach is ultimately about delivering things that are vital for the people of Flint - retaining business, attracting investment and new businesses, attracting visitors, encouraging people to live in the area and raising pride and aspiration. This requires the depth and insight that a compelling, distinct and clear story provides, that everyone can tell and that highlights place opportunities.
- 2.5 The story needs to be a 'coming together' of important facts, information and assets with the character, characteristics and personality of Flint. The idea is to tell the 'new story' of Flint to those that are or could communicate the place through their organisation or as part of their work, so that everyone in their own way can tell the same story and highlight the special things that will make a difference in interesting and attracting different audiences to the Town.
- 2.6 In turn this enables alignment of organisations and activity behind this 'new story' and direction for the Town. In the longer term this significantly alters the experience Flint offers and aligns it strongly behind the place story ensuring promise and delivery are consistent with expectations.

## Creating a Place Proposition and 'New Story' for Flint

- 2.7 Flint is a place that has a long and rich history but is struggling to lever its positive assets to its best advantage. It is a place with the potential to reconnect with the local community and to become a significant, relevant local centre which in time will offer the potential to become a more focussed and attractive sub regional location.
- 2.8 As a place it needs to:
- Harness its distinctiveness
  - Improve the experience of visiting the Town and to better showcase its assets
  - Improve how it communicates and promotes its offer
  - Maximise its accessibility to attract people into Flint
  - Have a focus on the public realm and introduce colour, energy and vibrancy
- 2.9 Flint does have an opportunity to develop and improve its image and positioning, and at the heart of the 'new story' are a number of themes that are fundamental to Flint as a place, what it stands for and where it's going. They represent what has shaped Flint but are also what the place needs to focus on to ensure that it is considered and chosen by those people it wants to attract, from new residents to businesses.
- 2.10 The Strategy is founded on harnessing seven themes which celebrate the Town's uniqueness and assets. These shape the Masterplan and provide a framework for the priority areas:
- **Castle** - making the most of this significant but under-utilised historical, cultural and leisure asset and the land around it
  - **Centre** - ensuring that Flint meets the needs of local people and becomes the 'local centre of choice'

- **Coast** - utilise the stunning coastal setting to attracting visitors to Flint and then encourage them to explore the Town. Encourage local residents to reclaim the coast as their public space
- **Countryside** - better promoting Flint's proximity to the surrounding countryside of North Wales and the opportunities this brings in terms of walking, cycling and tourism
- **County** - reinstating Flint as Flintshire's County Town and its role within the sub-region
- **Colour** - introducing colour to Flint to distinguish the Town from its current shades of grey within the sky, estuary and concrete structures
- **Connected** - building upon Flint's existing transport connections (especially its direct links to London) and improving local linkages between the Town's key assets including the Town Centre, Castle and waterfront, Flint Retail Park and areas of employment

2.11 These themes will articulate why Flint is special and should be considered and as an integral part of the story. At the heart of the 'new story' of Flint is the notion of '**Quality Local**' which brings a strong sense of retaining and building on the local aspects and strengths of the Town while at the same time improving quality. This will emphasise the need to improve the quality of the public realm, the signage, the customer service offer and communications leading to an improved experience for both residents and visitors alike.

## Vision for Flint

2.12 The Vision for the Town is:

*Flint will be a local destination capitalising on its assets, especially its historic county market town and waterfront, and reassert its role in the region*

## Objectives

2.13 The proposed Vision is supported by six **strategic objectives** for the Town:

- **To better serve the local catchment and capture more local spend** - re-establishing Flint as the first local choice retail and leisure destination
- **To reconnect Flint's assets** - to create better linkages between the Town and the Waterfront/Castle, the Town and its hinterland, the High Street and Retail Park, employment opportunities and the Town
- **To transform Flint's physical image** - harness the redevelopment of the Maisonettes as the catalyst to the physical transformation of the heart of the Town, use opportunity sites to deliver quality new homes and facilities and enhance its historic and environmental assets
- **To encourage economic growth through job creation** - harnessing Flintshire's economic success and create enhanced physical, business and environmental conditions to retain and attract businesses and retailers to Flint, thus generating momentum for local employment, spend and economic activity
- **To embed Flint within the sub regional tourism network** - to join forces within other local visitor destinations and maximise opportunities such as harnessing the All Wales Coastal Path, the Iron Ring of Castles and Flint's close proximity to Chester
- **To more effectively promote the Town and its opportunities** - to create a clear and consistent communication strategy which people can use to promote the Town

## 3.0 The New Strategy for Flint

3.1 Building upon the Vision and Strategic Objectives, the Strategy for Flint has three targets - making Flint work better for...

- ...local people (existing and new)
- ...local business (existing and new)
- ...visitors (existing and new)

### Delivering Change - Priorities for Action in Flint

3.2 The Strategy will be framed by a series of cross cutting themes under which priority actions will be identified:

1. Enhanced housing offer
2. Thriving retail and leisure destination
3. Service excellence supporting enhanced quality of life
4. Enhanced employment opportunities
5. Arrival, access and movement
6. Quality public realm
7. Harnessing the environment
8. Enhanced communications

3.3 Each of these priority areas are discussed below along with potential actions. Section 5 considers each of the actions in detail.

#### 1. Enhanced Housing Offer

##### **The Current Position**

3.4 Flint currently benefits from having a relatively large population resident within the 214 Maisonettes and three tower blocks which sit cheek by jowl around the central shopping area of the Town Centre. This local population serves to generate daily footfall within the Town, creating vibrancy, generating spend and supporting local retailers and businesses; and is in contrast to many historic market towns which are accessible on foot for those living in the surrounding residential areas, but have limited options for true town centre living.

3.5 Whilst externally dated, the tower blocks are relatively popular and do not present any real challenges to the Council. In contrast, the future of the Maisonettes has been heavily debated over the last decade as their physical condition has continued to deteriorate and the significant costs required to bring them up to national Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) would not serve to overcome the issues presented by their dated design which consequently impacts on the quality of life for residents.

- 3.6 In recognition of these challenges, the Council began a programme with residents in May 2011 to determine a long term future for the Maisonettes. Three public consultations have been held to date and resident support was gained for the proposal to demolish the Maisonettes.
- 3.7 It was agreed in December 2011 that the Maisonettes and council owned garages in the centre of Flint should not be relet and should be emptied to enable the sites to be developed. The Council has commenced a programme to move residents out of the Maisonettes. The Leas will be emptied first, followed by The Walks. The programme is expected to take up to five years.
- 3.8 A more general overview of Flint's residential market has revealed a predominance of semi-detached dwellings (45% of stock), and particularly high proportions of socially rented households (24% in Flint compared to 17% in Flintshire) coupled with low levels of and home ownership (70%) compared to 76% in Flintshire, indicating potential issues of affordability despite, on the whole, lower achieved house prices or potentially a lack of supply.
- 3.9 As in many areas, Flint is witnessing a growing ageing population with the number of people aged over 65 growing 4.9% between 2001 and 2009, which has significant implications on housing requirements. Smaller units which are safe and secure, easily accessible and in close proximity to local amenities will be in increasing demand in the future.

### **The Prospects**

- 3.10 The redevelopment of the Maisonettes represents a major opportunity as part of this Masterplan to make a significant contribution to meeting the Council's long standing ambition to regenerate the centre of Flint by improving the Town's physical appearance, layout, connections and parking. However, the redevelopment process should seek to retain as much of the current population within the heart of the Town Centre as possible, so as not to disadvantage the existing Town Centre offer or the attractiveness of the Town to potential new occupiers of the retail units. The retention of existing residents within Flint is a key objective of the Masterplan and it is therefore imperative that there is an appropriate supply of homes available to meet local needs and aspirations, not only for the residents of the Maisonettes but for all the Town's residents. As such, the replacement housing proposed for the Maisonettes site and any other residential sites that are brought forward must deliver a mix of housing in terms of size, type, tenure and affordability to enable local residents to choose to remain in Flint.
- 3.11 Discussions with local agents have revealed a lack of quality larger family accommodation within the Town resulting in growing families moving out to Flint Mountain and beyond. Such houses have reportedly sold well at Charles Church's Cornist View development on the outskirts of the Town; however the limited number of similar sized resale properties closer to the Town Centre are reportedly more difficult to sell, as those with the financial means to purchase such dwellings are choosing locations away from the Town Centre. By simultaneously lifting the physical appearance and perceptions of Flint together with delivering a better new housing portfolio in terms of quality and type, there is potential to attract some of this demand back into the Town.
- 3.12 There are also a number of vacant properties within Flint that could be brought back into sustainable use through the national Empty Homes Scheme which is funded by the Welsh Government (WG) and the Council's Housing Capital Programme. Such an approach would not only improve the physical appearance of such units but would also contribute to improving housing quality and choice within Flint.

- 3.13 Given the increasing demands placed on housing from a growing ageing population, the Masterplan must also consider the potential for longer term investment in more specialist accommodation to meet anticipated changing housing needs. Potential exists in the longer term to consider whether one of the three tower blocks could play a role in meeting specialist residential needs.
- 3.14 Ultimately the Masterplan must aim, through the opportunities presented by the redevelopment of the Maisonettes and the potential opportunity sites, to improve the quality of the existing housing offer and to provide greater choice in terms of housing size, type, tenure and affordability in order to retain and attract residents within the Town and support its economic future.

### **The Actions<sup>1</sup>**

- 3.15 The actions required to improve the housing offer in Flint include:
- Redevelopment of the Maisonettes
  - Delivery of new homes on appropriate opportunity sites to improve the choice of homes available in Flint
  - Bringing empty homes back into use
  - Longer term investment in the provision of more specialist accommodation
  - Improving the appearance of the tower blocks

## **2. Thriving Retail and Leisure Destination**

### **The Current Position**

- 3.16 Given the size of the Town, Flint has a relatively good volume and mix of retailers, particularly in terms of its convenience food offer which includes Sainsbury's, Asda, Aldi, Tesco Express and two Co-operatives. Further, whilst there are currently in the region of seven vacant retail units on Church Street, equating to 15% of the total, the high proportion of independent retailers in the Town has meant that Flint has not been as severely impacted by the collapse or reduction of units by national multiples as many towns.
- 3.17 Many town centres are increasingly losing out on potential retail occupiers and customer footfall to out of town retail destinations offering free car parking, modern larger footprint units, single ownership, longer trading hours and better access. Flint however benefits from having its Retail Park offering a range of convenience and comparison goods, almost immediately adjacent to the Town Centre retailers on Church Street. The Retail Park attracts in the region of 30-35,000 car visits per week. Despite this, the proximity of the Town's two retail destinations to pedestrians and drivers 'on the ground' is unclear due to a lack of clear signage and visible pedestrian routes through the Maisonettes, which are situated between Church Street and the Retail Park.
- 3.18 Flint's Friday Market was 'relaunched' around St Mary's and St David's Church on Church Street in May 2011 and has since been successful in attracting additional shoppers and stall holders selling a range of wares. Flintshire Council's figures indicate that the footfall figures on Church Street on the Friday market day are, on average, more than double that of the average Monday and Wednesday figures. Scope exists to build upon this success, to extend the size and offer of the market.

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 5 for details

3.19 In terms of the leisure offer, Flint is relatively well served in terms of its sporting and outdoor offer with The Pavilions Sports and Leisure Centre right in the Town Centre, Swinchiard Brook, Bowling Green and Tennis Courts, Flint Golf Club and Greens Lodge Golf Club, Red Pit Woods, football and rugby pitches on the waterfront, and the potential for walking along the coast is being improved and the All Wales Coastal Path, which officially opens in May. The annual Flint Festival also draws people into the Town and showcases the Castle, Flint's largest tourism opportunity. In contrast, the Town is currently lacking in a food and drink offer that supports a strong leisure and tourism offer and encourages people to increase their 'dwell' time and therefore spend. Other than rooms within public houses, the nearest hotel is the Mountain Park Hotel and Golf Club in Flint Mountain; there are very few quality restaurants in the Town; and the pub offer is limited to traditional drinking establishments rather than more welcoming family pubs and coffee shops, with a focus on eating rather than drinking.

### **The Prospects**

3.20 The redevelopment of the Maisonettes presents a key opportunity to improve the pedestrian connections between Church Street and the Flint Retail Park. Opening up this route as an attractive, clear and well marked connection should serve to improve footfall at both retail offerings and reduce the volume of car borne traffic generated by people driving between the two destinations due to the perceived walking distances between them.

3.21 Flint's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) covers the retail area of Church Street and part of Chester Street, and with a budget of £1.6 million to improve shop frontages and bring vacant floorspace back into use, represents a significant opportunity to improve the physical environment of the traditional retail centre. An attractive town centre environment has the potential to encourage greater dwell time and as a consequence, increase local spend whilst creating a more vibrant atmosphere for a longer period of the day and improving feelings of safety and security. Five THI shop front projects have been identified to date and this Masterplan can be used to promote further opportunities for funding and improvements within the Town Centre. These include a new community cafe and heritage centre within the former Court House on Church Street that is due to open in the near future.

3.22 Whilst vacancies in Flint Town Centre are not as severe as many town centres across Wales and the UK, support should be given to bringing empty units back into use. The improvements to the physical environment and shop frontages mentioned above will serve to enhance the attractiveness of Flint to potential occupiers, however other initiatives could include support to independent retailers and the potential of accessing empty homes funding to create opportunities for living over the shops in Flint.

3.23 Given that many market towns are struggling to revive their traditional markets, the success of Flint's relaunched market is a significant achievement that should be built upon through consideration of further improvements such as layout, positioning and stall appearance within the constraints of the existing streetscape in order to attract further traders and shoppers.

3.24 There is potential to improve the ease of navigation within and around Flint Town Centre for both drivers and pedestrians, making key retail and leisure destinations such as Church Street, the Retail Park, Pavilions, Castle and waterfront easier to find through clear signage and ensuring that there is sufficient, clearly defined public parking in a convenient and accessible location.

- 3.25 In terms of the leisure offer, it is recognised that Flint lacks the scale to be a key tourism destination in its own right. However, there are a number of significant assets, such as the Castle, that with an improved supporting accommodation, food and drink offer, could link in to other tourism destinations within the locality to provide a more comprehensive offer. Potential examples include, links to other castles within the 'iron ring' of North Wales, and harnessing the potential of the soon to be opened 850 mile All Wales Coastal Path that passes through Flint.
- 3.26 Other improvements to support an enhanced leisure and tourism offer include better pedestrian connections between the Town Centre and the Castle, through a heritage trail or timeline; and making better use of the attractive space around the Castle and waterfront. THI funding to convert the old court building on Church Street into a community facility and cafe is also proposed. This will help to make good use of this unused attractive building and help meet the gap in the existing offer for refreshments within Flint, all of which will serve to increase dwell and spend.
- 3.27 FCC has established a private sector led Destination Management Partnership which will seek to establish a clear strategy to manage and promote the County's key destinations. Although specifics have not been agreed at this point, it is hoped that Flint Castle and Waterfront will be marketed in conjunction with St Winefride's Well at Holywell, Mold and other North Wales castles.

### **The Actions<sup>2</sup>**

- 3.28 The actions identified to create and support a thriving retail and leisure destination in Flint are:
- Improve and expand the attractiveness of the Street Market
  - Improve the physical environment of the Town Centre
  - Support vacant retail units and vacant upper floors back into use
  - Develop a new approach to manage Flint as a destination for visitors, including a Flint brand for local produce
- 3.29 These actions will support the expansion of the convenience and comparison retail provision in the Town.

## **3. Service Excellence Supporting Enhanced Quality of Life**

### **The Current Position**

- 3.30 Flint already has a range of civic, education and health facilities and services supporting the Town and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. These include a base for all four emergency services (police, fire, ambulance and coast guard), the library, an FCC office offering customer services such as information and bill paying, and the 14-bed Flint Community Hospital which also has a Minor Injuries Unit (MIU).

### **The Prospects**

- 3.31 There is a commitment from the Chief Executive at FCC to deliver further improvements to the civic and health facilities of the Town.

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<sup>2</sup> See Section 5 for details

- 3.32 The aspiration is to improve civic facilities through the creation of a series of 'Flintshire Connects' facilities. The central aim of the Flintshire Connects Centres is to improve customer services by providing more 'joined up' and improved access to the County Council and other public and voluntary services in local towns, enabling greater decentralisation of County Council staff and services, and a more flexible way of working. It is proposed that six such centres will be delivered over the next three years. The first project is being developed in Holywell.
- 3.33 The delivery of a 'Flintshire Connects' project in Flint would ensure that public service delivery in the Town is enhanced. A modern and welcoming facility would provide a range of civic services including self service facilities for customers to access information, services and payment facilities provided by the Council and its partner organisations.

**Figure 3.2 Artist Impression of Typical 'Flintshire Connects' Facility**



- 3.34 Given the existence of the Flint Council Office building and its central location within the Town Centre it is recommended that consideration is given to remodelling the ground floor of the existing FCC offices to provide the proposed Flintshire Connects facility. This approach would not only be more cost effective than developing a brand new building, but would remove the need to use land within the Town Centre that could be better used to provide much needed new housing to replace the Maisonettes. The existing FCC offices occupy a prime position within Flint Town Centre on the corner of Church Street and Chapel Street at a highly visible gateway into the Town.
- 3.35 There is also an aspiration to provide a new health facility within the Town Centre that brings together GP, dental and pharmacy services into a single central location, although not at the expense of the existing Community Hospital. Senior managers within the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Authority and FCC are currently discussing potential options for such a facility.
- 3.36 It must also be recognised that in response to the public sector spending cuts a number of public sector providers are reviewing their service delivery and accommodation requirements. These include the following:
- **Court Service** - Flint's Magistrates Court closed in 2011 as part of a nationwide review of assets by HM Courts Service
  - **Police Station** - the Police Authority is undertaking a review of its services and facilities across North Wales and has indicated that it is willing to relocate from their existing Flint premises, which are larger than their requirements, to another location within the Town. This would create a new residential site adjacent to the Memorial Gardens

- **Ambulance Service** - as part of the Welsh Ambulance Service Estate Strategy Review, the Ambulance Service in Flint will leave its existing site and operate a 'Standby and Response Post' from within the adjacent Fire Station, freeing up a development site on the A548. Two new Ambulance Resource Centres will be provided at Dobshell (Buckley) and Wrexham
- **Job Centre Plus** - is in discussion with the Council about vacating its existing building and becoming part of a Flint one stop shop

3.37 Although it is inevitable that service delivery will be different, all the providers identified with the exception of the Magistrates Courts Service, are continuing to commit to maintaining a presence in Flint, albeit reduced in physical terms.

3.38 Flint Town Hall is not only a key historic building in the Town but also a major local resource. Consideration should be given as to how the building could be more effectively used by the local community. This should include wider access, particularly by schools, to its historic collection.

### **The Actions**

3.39 The Masterplan recommends the following actions to support service excellence and enhanced quality of life in Flint:

- Delivery of one stop shop offering a range of public services - Flintshire Connects
- Improve health provision in the Town
- Look at possibilities to expand the community use of the current local authority building

## **4. Enhanced Employment Opportunities**

### **The Current Position**

3.40 Flintshire is considered to be a key economic driver of North Wales. It has strong economic ties with neighbouring parts of England and has been more resilient to economic changes than other parts of the sub-region. This is largely due to Flintshire's success in diversifying its economy into the growing higher value manufacturing sector through internationally recognised companies such as Airbus UK; Toyota; UPM; Tata; Convatec; and Nice Pak.

3.41 As a County Flintshire performs well in terms of its labour force credentials, many of which achieve above the national Welsh averages including economic activity rates at 68% compared to 61% across Wales (ONS Census 2001), 29% of the working age population qualified to university level against 28% nationally (Annual Population Survey 2010), and resident based incomes of £24,667, above the national figure of £23,494 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2010). Coupled with a high quality of life, such statistics make Flintshire an attractive location to both employers and potential employees alike. However, Flint itself currently conceals small pockets of social deprivation and has a claimant count rate of 5%, higher than the County wide (3.4%) and Welsh national levels (4% (ONS 2011)). Flint's Communities First Programme aims to utilise WG funding to improve the prospects and living conditions of those in the Town's most deprived areas. It must be ensured that the opportunities and benefits of the success and attractiveness of the County as an employment location reach those in need within Flint.

- 3.42 Unusually for a town of its size, Flint benefits from having two established business and industrial locations within close proximity of the Town, namely Aber Park and Castle Park. These employment locations house a mix of occupiers ranging from nationally recognised brands such as Kimberley Clarke and Nice-Pak International to local businesses such as Anne's Patisserie and Premier Flexible Packaging Ltd. Manor Lane Industrial Park is also situated approximately 1.5 km (1 mile) north of Flint on the A548.
- 3.43 Further, Deeside Industrial Park (DIP) is a key Regional Employment Centre and is one of the largest employment centres in the UK. The DIP is located approximately 3 miles south of the Town on the A550/M56 close to the Wales/England border. This 574 hectare site is home to over 150 businesses including internationally recognised organisations such as Airbus UK, Toyota, UPM, Tata, Convatec, and Nice Pak, and employs in excess of 9,000 people across a vast array of sectors. Deeside has recently been confirmed as one of five new Enterprise Zones across Wales, with a focus on advanced manufacturing. Deeside Enterprise Zone (and Growth Zone in particular) should have positive impacts on Flint.

### **The Prospects**

- 3.44 The presence of two established business and industrial locations within Flint and the Town's proximity to Deeside Industrial Park provides important employment and business opportunities to the Town and should be supported and encouraged to grow through the Masterplanning process, ensuring wherever possible that the benefits of the County's wider economic success and higher value employment opportunities reach those in Flint.
- 3.45 FCC needs to better understand the current challenges, concerns and aspirations of its existing businesses in order that they can be better supported. Locally supported businesses will have increased loyalty to the Town, confidence to grow and awareness of the potential business opportunities available to them. Towards this aim, FCC Economic Development Officers should seek to proactively engage with major local businesses on a regular basis to identify any potential barriers to growth so that the Council can then try to help to overcome them. Any resources available to support businesses should be actively promoted.
- 3.46 A number of retailers have engaged in the Masterplanning process. Much of the focus on actions is on improving the heart of the Town (around the shops). It is therefore crucial that retailers play an influential role in determining and delivering change in Flint and therefore some form of traders association should be set up.
- 3.47 Greater local networking both by retailers and other businesses should be encouraged and supported. For example through regular breakfast events perhaps with guest speakers. Local networking will increase the chances of building local supply chains and helping businesses to support and promote each other as new opportunities emerge. There may also be potential for collaborative training sessions between businesses of a similar nature which can build inter-firm relations and enhance skills at a reduced cost to the employer.
- 3.48 Flint has a number of assets in terms of its potential as a business location including its existing business base; range of premises available; relative affordability particularly when compared to that of Deeside Industrial Park; accessibility by road and rail; proximity to the shops and services available within the Town Centre; and the potential for a good quality of life for employees. However, Flint is not currently actively promoting these assets to the wider business community and as a result the Town is often 'not on the radar' of employers looking to set up a business or relocate.

- 3.49 Rigorous review should also be made of enquiries for accommodation to the Council to determine whether there are any gaps in the employment space available in the Town and action taken to support developers to fill these gaps.
- 3.50 Where possible landlords should be encouraged to invest in their existing premises and improve their environmental credentials in order to create and maintain an enhanced business setting which is welcoming and attractive to new potential business occupiers, thus creating further opportunities for local employment and improving the commercial viability of the existing business and industrial parks.

### **The Actions<sup>3</sup>**

- 3.51 The actions required to enhance employment opportunities in Flint are identified as:
- Work with existing businesses to understand their challenges and provide assistance where possible
  - Promote Flint better as an employment and business location
  - Encourage more business networking to develop supply chains and cross sell local produce
  - Support investors to develop new business space
  - Encourage landlords to invest in their existing stock

## **5. Arrival, Access and Movement**

### **The Current Position**

- 3.52 Flint is strategically well located, benefiting from excellent road linkages to the A55 North Wales Expressway to the south, as well as the A548 coastal road which passes through the Town, although both routes provide little indication of Flint's offer. In addition, Flint benefits from a mainline rail station on the Chester to Holyhead line, providing frequent, direct access to local destinations, as well as four direct services each day to London.
- 3.53 However the area's transport assets also facilitate a higher proportion of out-commuting from the highly populated areas of north-east Flintshire, including Flint to the North West of England. This in turn is known to generate traffic congestion at Church Street and Chester Street junctions within Flint Town Centre during peak periods of the day. Congestion is further heightened in the Town during the spring and summer periods due to recreational traffic travelling to destinations to the north west of Flint.
- 3.54 Previous proposals for a Flint Bypass which ran parallel to the A55 along the coast have since been shelved and are unlikely to come forward again in the near future given the potential unacceptable environmental impact constraints, as well as former and current European Environmental safeguards which now prevent further progress in this area. Whilst such a proposal would have helped ease congestion, it would also have removed passing trade from the Town which the Strategy seeks to maximise in regenerating Flint.

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<sup>3</sup> See Section 5 for details

- 3.55 In terms of arrival by car, the three gateways to the Town do not have adequate signage and should be improved offering clearer directions for visitors to see the Town and its other assets. The limited landscaping does little to add to the sense of arrival. Flint is not easily navigated and as such, fails to capture passing trade.
- 3.56 For those arriving in Flint by public transport, their approach will either be via the railway station or the area around Trelawney Square for bus passengers. Both are conveniently located on the immediate edge of the Town Centre but are severed from local facilities by the traffic-dominated A548 Chester Street. This dual lane route makes limited provision for pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired. The use of guard railings on both sides of the carriageway limits space on the footways for the infirm and mobility impaired, particularly on the northern side of Chester Street.
- 3.57 The railway line itself is also a significant barrier between the Castle and the Town Centre, currently overcome by two pedestrian bridges and vehicular access over the railway line at Swan Bridge on Castle Road and under at Evans Street, although this route has a 2.8m height restriction thus excluding it to all but private cars.
- 3.58 Despite over 500 publically operated free car parking spaces in Flint, the lack of signage to the various car parks, and identification as to which car parks are available for short, medium and long stay results in a very confusing and poorly signed approach to car parking in and around the Town. Flint Railway Station is just one such example of where unmanaged parking has led to use by non-rail passengers, which then displaces rail parking into other town centre car parks, and residential streets. The lack of a coherent parking strategy for the town also impacts on the residents, who at certain times of the day are forced to compete with workers and visitors when wanting to park in on- and off-street parking facilities.
- 3.59 The County Council (as Highway Authority) has confirmed that they are considering introducing Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), to improve both on and off-street parking enforcement. If implemented the Council would look to introduce the on and off-street parking enforcement in late 2012. Any proposals should be considered as part of a wider review of car parking in the Town.
- 3.60 Whilst Flint's north-south pedestrian and cycle routes are strong due to the historic layout of the Town, east-west movements are less straightforward, with routes between the Retail Park and Church Street being cut off by the Maisonettes and limited alleyways between the shops of Church Street.
- 3.61 Whilst Flint does benefit from the National Cycle Network (NCN) routing through the Town (via Chester Street), there are limited cycle facilities to encourage cyclists to dwell. In a number of instances the NCN traffic free routes have limited connectivity back into the highway network (the route on the waterfront past the lifeboat station being one example).
- 3.62 The delivery of a section of the Dee Coastal Path between Aber Road and Dee Cottages is the first part of a scheme to provide a direct pedestrian commuter and leisure route linking residential communities, major employers and places of interest along the Dee corridor and reducing the dependency on the private car.

- 3.63 In summary, Flint currently struggles to balance the presence of its recreational, leisure and employment facilities with the traffic impacts they generate. There are also challenges to catering for both vehicular traffic and sustainable transport modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport, where there is limited space for improvements. Consideration also needs to be given as to how to link the cycle paths and All Wales Coastal Path to the east of the Town in the Oakenholt area. However, the masterplanning process identifies opportunities to reshape key locations in the Town and address some of the movement issues.

### **The Prospects**

- 3.64 As a town Flint has a number of very exciting traffic and transport ‘hooks’ to latch on to. Whilst being well located on the highway network can bring dis-benefits in terms of traffic volumes and associated congestion it also provides Flint with an ‘audience’ to sell its offer to. As part of a programme of improvements, it is believed that these important hooks, especially the station, provide Flint with the opportunity to attract more passing tourism. In order to do this the Masterplan needs to consider how to improve access for all users travelling to, from and around the Town.
- 3.65 The development of a Car Parking Strategy for Flint, would ensure that the circa 500 public car parking spaces in the Town are used in the most efficient way, with priority given to short-stay car parking at locations immediately adjacent to the retail areas, and more peripheral car parks identified for longer-stay parking at the Castle, Waterfront and the rail station. The signage strategy associated with this would provide motorists with appropriate levels of information on the type and location of the parking required to meet their needs as they enter the Town, thus reducing traffic circulation generated by searching for an appropriate space.
- 3.66 A robust parking strategy should also consider pedestrian desire lines to trip attractions. The development of well lit/overlooked routes linking Church Street with the rail station, the Retail Park and other local facilities can be developed as development opportunities are delivered. As part of the pedestrian access facilities, opportunities to improve crossing facilities and reduce the car dominance at key locations should also be considered.
- 3.67 Key locations in Flint include the section of Chester Street adjacent to Trelawney Square where the footway could be widened towards the existing central carriageway reservation to provide improved public realm and reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians on Chester Street.
- 3.68 Potential exists to extend the square around St Mary’s and St David’s Church to enhance the quality of the public realm and encourage more people to dwell in the Town and to spend more time and money. A shared surface scheme could be introduced which would still allow access for vehicular traffic in a north-south direction, but allow pedestrians equal priority when using this space.
- 3.69 Improved linkages should also be considered from the Town towards the Castle and Waterfront. Whilst the existing pedestrian bridges over the railway line at the station could be improved it is also important to consider greater use of the Evans Street link for pedestrian use through improved, way-finding and signage, and an improved junction at the Castle Road/Chester Street junction. The way-finding and signage strategy should be developed to highlight the most appropriate routes for visitors to take to agreed attractions; this includes pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes.

- 3.70 The North Wales Regional Transport Plan (2009) confirmed that public transport links along the Flintshire coastal corridor should be strengthened in terms of improvements in the quality of bus services and associated infrastructure. New smart ticketing systems are being introduced throughout the region including Smartcards for the Wales concessionary travel scheme. Not only does this make travel easier for the user, but it also provides journey pattern information that will allow existing services to be tailored to meet future demand.
- 3.71 A number of actions are put forward to improve arrival, access and movement in Flint, none of which are reliant on any significant highway infrastructure project to succeed. In this current economic climate such a strategy could hinder the delivery of a number of the smaller scale interventions. It should be remembered that any significant redevelopment both in and around the town would need to be considered in terms of its traffic impact on the existing highway network, and if found to require mitigation appropriate transport schemes (or funding for) confirmed. Notwithstanding redevelopment proposals there are a number of actions that can be progressed in the short term.

#### **The Actions<sup>4</sup>**

- 3.72 The actions to improve arrival, access and movement in Flint are:
- Ensure that Flint is easy to move around on foot, by bicycle and car
  - Clarify and improve signage into and around the Town through the preparation of a Wayfinding and Signage Strategy
  - Improve the sense of arrival from along the A548 (east and west), Flint Mountain and by rail
  - Strengthen links between the Castle and the Town, the High Street and Flint Retail Park and the Town and its main transport hubs and employment areas
  - Improve opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists
  - Review all signalised junctions in the Town in terms of phasing/signal timings
  - Preparation of a Town wide car parking strategy

## **6. Quality Public Realm**

### **The Current Position**

- 3.73 The public realm in Flint is undervalued; the Town has the elements of an attractive historic town, the High Street, remnants of a Market Square, the Cenotaph and Memorial Gardens and the Castle grounds. However, some of the charm of the place is undermined by the poor environment around the Maisonettes, the high rise blocks and missed opportunities to lift the quality of the Town Centre.
- 3.74 The spaces and streets around the Maisonettes and the high rise do not relate well enough to Church Street. Pedestrian links through the blocks are not well defined and the spaces between can feel semi-private and unsuitable to those who do not live there.

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<sup>4</sup> See Section 5 for details

- 3.75 Church Street itself is a fine example of a well proportioned High Street, the building to street space ratio is excellent. Though there have been improvements, the appearance of the carriageway still dominates the space and detracts from the attractive architecture. This street historically had a strong connection with the Castle to the north-east, however, the railway line and increased traffic on the A548 have constrained the views and links. Vehicular traffic flows west away from the castle directing views by car largely away to the east.
- 3.76 Crossing Church Street, the A548, Chester Road is for many the main route in and out of town. To the unfamiliar with Flint, it is easy to miss the significance of the town centre on this street, as it is not defined. The Town Hall is a key historic building on the junction of Church Street and Chester Road - known as Trelawney Square. The space directly outside the Town Hall has been greatly enhanced, however, Trelawney Square remains a four lane carriageway.
- 3.77 Flint market is held on Church Street beside St Mary's and St David's Church, every Friday. The Market is well represented and frequently hosts around 30 stalls on a first come, first serve basis. The stalls are mixed, and the offer is vibrant.
- 3.78 The Sydney and Earl Streets enclose the old town to the north and south, these are significant streets and though not physically remembered follow the alignment of the old ditch/walls. The fortified town was capped to the north-east at the Castle and the south-west along Coleshill Street. This envelope though not celebrated as the historic footprint, present day, still hold the core of Flint Town Centre.

### **The Prospects**

- 3.79 There are numerous opportunities to improve the public realm in and around the Town Centre. The primary and most transformational of these will be the proposed removal and redevelopment of the Maisonettes. The new layout for these large swaths of the Town Centre, should respond to the historic layout and the connections to and from the Town Centre.
- 3.80 The development of the area around St Mary's and St David's Church should be enhanced within a broader strategy for the Town Centre, opportunities through local authority funding and the above development opportunities should be exploited to create a centre piece on Church Street.
- 3.81 The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) concentrates on conserving and restoring historic architecture along Church Street, further projects to be supported should be assessed in terms of their ability to support the objectives of the Flint Strategy. There are opportunities to put some of the local historic and contextual character of Flint into the Town Centre. The removal of Maisonettes provides an opportunity to reinterpret the scale and form of the historic core of the Town. Amenity spaces should be considered as opportunities to introduce interest and attraction to the Town, linked together by green corridors and quality public realm, enhancing the overall townscape character and experience of its visitors.

### **The Actions<sup>5</sup>**

- Reinststate a central 'heart' to the Town and improve legibility by enhancing public realm and creating 'nodes' with convenient access to different parts of the Town Centre

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<sup>5</sup> See Section 5 for details

- Promote Flint (including the Castle) as an event destination
- Consider further improvements to the setting of the Town Hall and other historic buildings

## 7. Harnessing the Environment

### The Current Position

- 3.82 Flint is situated on the banks of the beautiful Dee Estuary and is surrounded by open countryside and the edges of the Clwydian Range beyond. The coast and the Castle grounds are not only part of the heritage of Flint but the open character of the area, is a definition of this part of Wales and one of the Town's key assets.
- 3.83 However, Flint's waterfront, its key environmental asset, is currently underutilised despite being within easy walking distance of the Town Centre and its resident population.
- 3.84 Flint also has a large swath of open green space wrapping round the north of the Town. This includes the densely wooded area of Swinchiard Brook (a strong wildlife corridor connecting the urban areas to the coast), The Meadows and the area of the Historic Dock. Generally, these spaces are not well used and there is a lack of good quality facilities. However, improvements are starting to be implemented, for example Swinchiard Brook has been the subject of improvement in the past two years with newly reinstated footpath (which links up with the All Wales Coastal Path at Flint Dock), regular litter picks and new signage. Many locals have the feeling there is little open space, maybe more correctly there is constrained usable open space.
- 3.85 There is some existing green space and tree planting within the Town Centre, however this does not reflect the Town's character as a market town. Existing small amenity spaces do not add to the character and can tend to detract, as lifeless closely mown open spaces. Although there are a few play areas across the Town close to the waterfront and to the rear of the job centre which serve local children.

### The Prospects

- 3.86 The opening of the All Wales Coastal Path will significantly improve access to one of the Town's key environmental assets. This route should be promoted in a similar way to that of the Flint Castle and Coast brochure where 30,000 copies are soon to be distributed to Tourist Information Centres throughout North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside.
- 3.87 Recent investment has been undertaken at the Pavilion Leisure Centre including a new bowling alley and bowling green. These are closely located to open space and leisure opportunities on the Meadows including the multi use games areas (MUGAs).
- 3.88 Public consultation drew out the local desire to provide better opportunities for young people and if the neighbourhoods in and around the Maisonettes really are to be family focused, development now and in the future, needs to give more emphasis on housing provision for the young. The skate park is a positive way to engage with youth groups and this is well located close to the existing MUGAs. There is however, more that could be provided for younger children and their parents and carers to help them create happy childhoods in the Town. Longer term the need for additional sports pitches should also be considered.

- 3.89 There are opportunities to draw in funding for the continued preservation and enhancement of the Castle and the surrounding coastal context. The existing coastal footpath works should be extended to create better recreation connections around the Castle and linking these to the dock and inland paths from there along Swinchiard Brook.
- 3.90 The Local Authority should continue to improve the inland route along Swinchiard Brook to the coast. This should consider additional cross cutting links which would better stitch the Brook and the Meadows into the Town and increase the number of access and egress points onto the Brook to improve security.
- 3.91 There may also be an opportunity to develop a 'green envelop' around the core of the town remembering the alignment of the Town Walls though careful and imaginative use of nature and natural materials.

#### **The Actions**

- Creation of green link harnessing the Town's existing open/green space and Waterfront
- Improve the quality of the landscape in the Town Centre
- Continue to enhance the attractiveness of the Castle and Waterfront

## **8. Enhanced Communications**

#### **The Current Position**

- 3.92 With a superb waterside setting Flint is a town which is proud of its history, people and of being Welsh. Built on a heritage of significant historical events and great industry, Flint has seen its fortunes fade a little in recent times. However, the Masterplan is a timely opportunity to redevelop the Town and enthuse people about what it has to offer.
- 3.93 Flint does not currently 'shout' about its assets which include excellent connections to major cities such as Cardiff, Chester, Liverpool, Manchester and even London by rail and road; proximity to the beautiful Dee Estuary and surrounding countryside; an abundance of characters and stories; strong heritage; good local amenities; and a community focus.
- 3.94 The annual Flint Festival is now in its seventh successful year and includes a series of events and attractions such as a parade, RNLI open day, dog show, music concerts, teddy bears picnic, displays and drama productions at various locations across the Town during two weeks in June. Further to this Flint will hold a high profile "Cauldrons and Furnaces" pageant event at the Castle in June 2012 as part of the UK-wide Cultural Olympiad.

#### **The Prospects**

- 3.95 The Masterplan presents an opportunity to shape Flint's future, to deliver improved housing, facilities and fortunes for its residents. However, if this is to be achieved, Flint needs to promote itself, why it is special, what it has to offer and its Vision as a place. The creation and roll out of a New Story for Flint will achieve this by focusing on what makes Flint distinctive and forms a shared realistic

ambition of how the Town wants to be known and seen. The Story can be used to showcase and 'shout' about Flint's future potential, to give focus, and to help stakeholders understand and play to the Town's strengths.

- 3.96 At the heart of the New Story for Flint are seven 'themes' that are fundamental to Flint as a place, what it stands for, where it has come from and where it is going. They also represent what the Town should be focusing on to ensure that it is considered and chosen by those Flint wants to attract from new residents to businesses. The themes are Castle; Centre; Coast; Countryside; County; Colour; and Connected. As described earlier, when these themes are brought together they create a sense of retaining and building on the local strengths of the Town, while at the same time improving quality. This will emphasise the need to improve the quality of the public realm, the signage, the customer service offer and how we communicate, both internally and externally, about Flint. These improvements will lead to an enhanced experience for both residents and visitors alike.
- 3.97 The New Story, Masterplan and Action Plan articulates a new Vision for the Town as a clear route map for delivering the transformation of Flint. The rollout of these will be driven by FCC, however, their success requires greater buy in and local ambassadors and champions need to be identified to support the promotion of Flint and delivery of the identified actions.
- 3.98 Whilst successful, there is an opportunity to better promote the annual Flint Festival to a wider audience in order to heighten attendance and profile and perhaps build on its success through the introduction of a series of new events. For example, work more closely with the tourism sector, such as Tourism Partnership North Wales and Flintshire Tourism Associates, establish an annual 'march' from Chester finishing with a picnic at the Castle could be organised in reference to Flint's important historical positioning as a day's march from Chester; the Castle could be utilised more for a series of plays, musical recitals and poetry readings during the summer months, perhaps through linkages with Theatre Clwyd. Such events would serve not just to enhance the interest and involvement of local residents but would showcase Flint to a wider audience who may not otherwise think to visit the Town, thus raising its profile. All would help generate additional spend within Flint and therefore support local businesses.
- 3.99 The creation of a new website for Flint can help to articulate the new Vision and Story for the Town, and provide a powerful information and promotion tool for the Town itself, its attractions, businesses and events.

### **The Actions<sup>6</sup>**

- 3.100 The actions required to enhance Flint's communications are:
- Creation and roll out of a 'new story' for the Town
  - Creation of place website for the Town linked to destination management and wider promotion
  - Enhanced programme of events for locals and visitors and better promotion
  - Identification of local ambassadors/champions to promote the Town in their every day roles
  - Work more closely with the tourism sector to develop links with other small Towns in the area to create a circuit of locations to visit
  - More tourist information points in the Town

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<sup>6</sup> See Section 5 for details

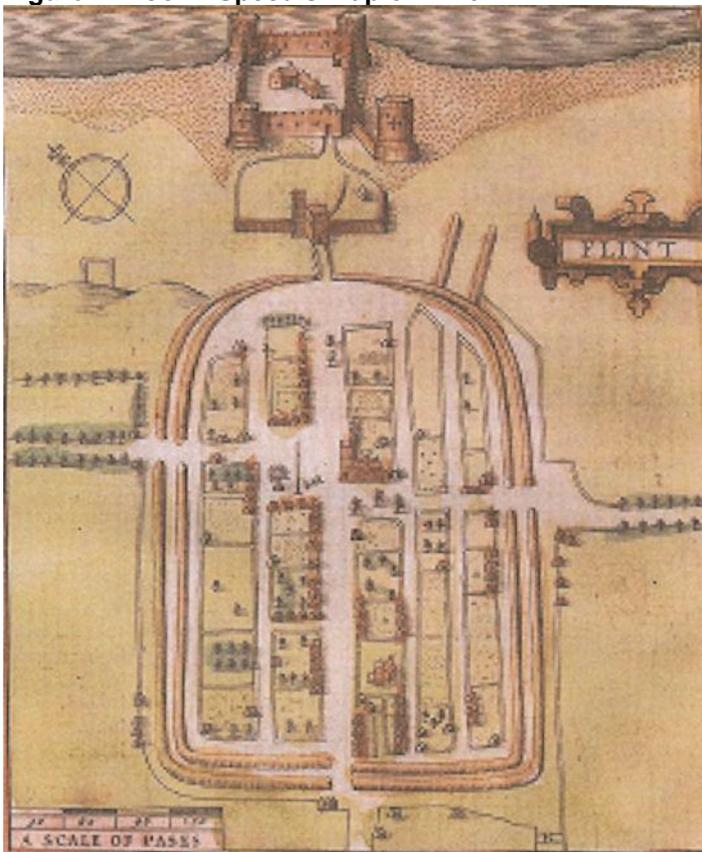
## 4.0 The Spatial Framework and Indicative Masterplan

- 4.1 This section considers the physical changes that underpin the Strategy. The design approach for Flint Town Centre is to 'repair' and 'heal'. This means assembling and orchestrating the various physical, spatial and economic projects into a framework which is inspired by Flint's pre-20th Century urban heritage in an effort to bring back a sense of history and place, and establish a new future for Flint.

### Flint's Historical Context

- 4.2 Flint was a planned town designed originally to serve the Castle. Its original structure was based on a 'cruciform' of the main streets of Chester Road and Church/Castle Street. This central street pattern divided a walled town into quadrants, which in turn were divided into smaller 'linear plots'. At the centre of the cross is located the Town Hall.

**Figure 4.1 John Speed's Map of Flint**



- 4.3 Current figure-ground analysis reveals that much of the original planned historic walled fabric of the Town has disappeared. Later mid-20th Century development such as the Maisonettes and tower blocks located between Sydney Street and Duke Street to the east of the Town and between Feather Street and Earl Street to the west, while maintaining a good town centre population have impacted significantly on the identity and character of the Town. Neither the towers nor the interlocking maisonette blocks refer to Flint's original block and street pattern.

**Figure 4.2 Flint Figure Ground Plan**



- 4.4 Similarly, the northern arm of the cruciform (Castle Street) was severed from the Town with the introduction of the railway. Whilst this provides Flint with excellent transport links it does make access to the Castle physically and visually problematic.
- 4.5 Flint has grown significantly beyond its orthogonal planned layout. Castle Park Industrial Estate developed on the northern promontory above the Castle. Whilst bringing employment, Castle Park Industrial Estate has done little to provide the Castle with a strong waterside setting. Similarly Flint Retail Park to the north west of Church Street is designed more as an 'out of town' shopping destination, and like the industrial settlements does little to acknowledge the historic character of the Town.
- 4.6 Some of the original urban structure of the Town remains. The north east arm of Church Street remains largely intact between St Mary's and St David's Church and Chester Road. On Chester Road some urban fabric remains to the south east of the Town Hall, although the original Trelawney Square has virtually gone. The Town Hall remains the Town's original focal point although the width and volume of traffic on Chester Road undermines its role. The only other remaining fabric is of course the Castle.
- 4.7 The original walls remain in memory as does some of the original secondary urban blocks. Castle Dyke Street marks the original location of the eastern wall, while Duke Street and Earl Street mark the south and north walls respectively. The western wall was originally located on or near Chapel Street. Feather Street and Sydney Street are the only remaining secondary grid streets which indicate the original orthogonal structure of the Town. St Mary's and St David's, like all churches, is oriented east-west which provides a very pleasing juxtaposition to Church Street and offers the potential to make a more memorable public space. Identifying these key assets helps to structure the direction and content of the concept framework.

**Figure 4.3 Remembering the Old Town**



## Strategic Framework

4.8 This Strategic Framework (see Figure 4.4) identifies the physical priorities for change across Flint. It highlights the sites with potential to attract investment, set within a framework of improved linkages, enhanced gateways and green corridors. Overall the spatial framework objectives are to:

- Strengthen the identity and image of the Town
- Link together the Town's key assets into a more meaningful framework
- Improve gateways and sense of arrival
- Build on the Town's great history and use it to help shape a new future for Flint
- Ensure that key public realm and development projects lock together to ensure greater impact and value
- Improve legibility, access and connectivity to and through the Town, particularly for businesses and visitors
- Bring a better housing offer into the heart of the Town and in doing so repair the damage caused from earlier planning and development work
- Link closely to the current initiatives such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

Figure 4.4 The Spatial Framework



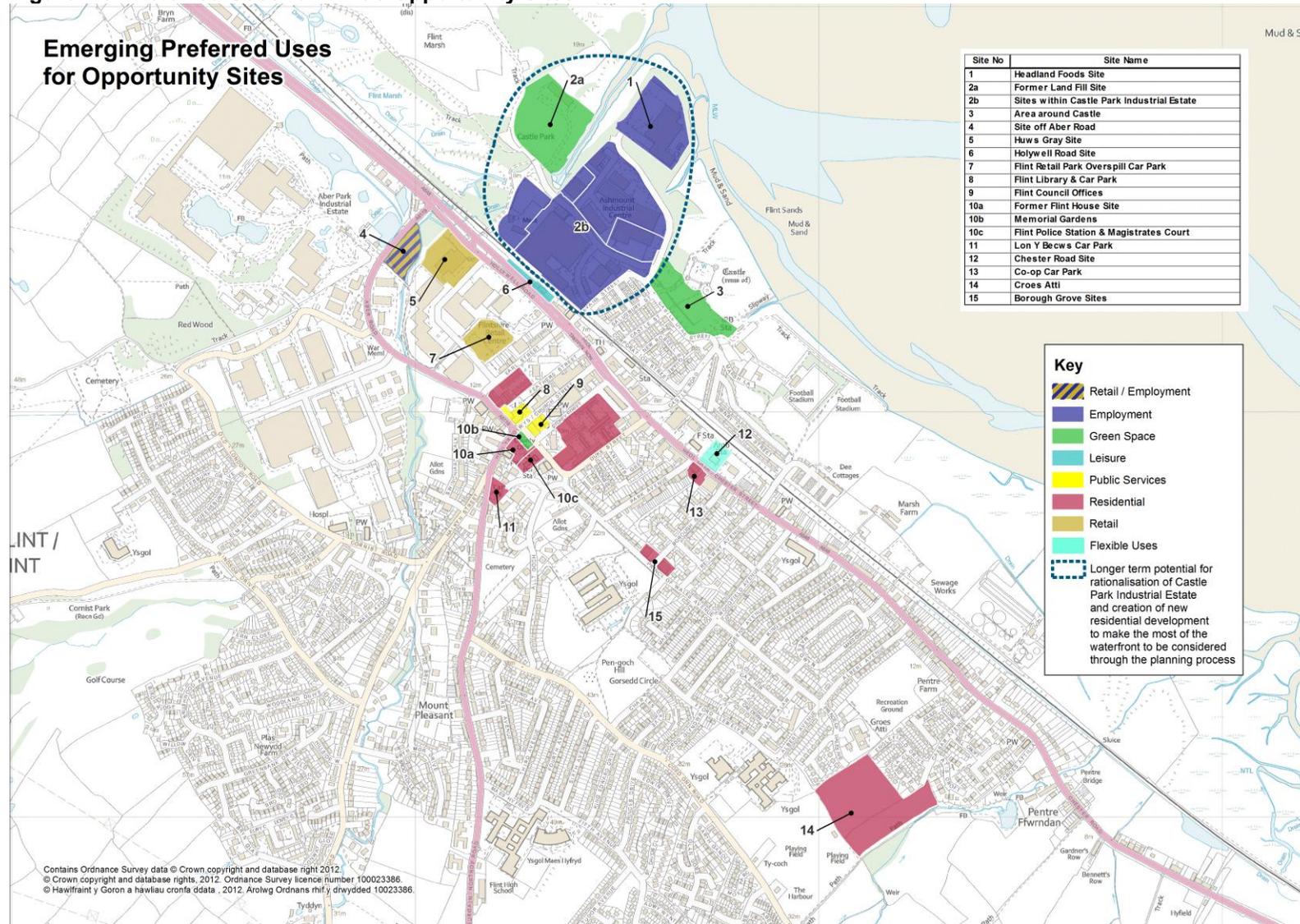
## The Opportunity Sites

- 4.9 Flint has a significant number of potential opportunity sites which could each contribute to the physical transformation of the Town and help improve its social and economic prospects. Figure 4.5 and Table 4.1 identify the preferred uses for Flint's opportunity sites based on a detailed assessment of the sites including market potential and deliverability, and feedback from the public and stakeholder consultations. It prioritises retail uses around the Retail Park and residential within the heart of the Town. A major potential area of change, which will need to be assessed through planning process, is around Castle Park where in the long term scope exists to reduce the employment footprint and introduce other uses.
- 4.10 Ultimately however, the actual uses that are brought forward on the sites will be determined by the landowners in accordance with planning, highways and other statutory requirements.

**Table 4.1 Preferred Uses for Flint's Opportunity Sites**

	Site	Size (Ha)	Ownership	Existing Use	Proposed Use
1	Headland Foods	2.4	Public	Employment	Employment
2a	Former Land Fill Site	3.0		Green Space & Employment	Green Space
2b	Sites within Castle Park Industrial Estate	2.48	Public/private	Employment	Employment
3	Area around Flint Castle	1.83	Public	Green Space	Green Space
4	Site off Aber Road, Flint	0.63	Private	Vacant Land	Employment/Trade Counter Retail
5	Huws Gray Site	1.17	Private	Retail	Retail
6	Walkers Carpet Shop, Holywell Road (A548)	0.24	Private	Retail (planning permission for residential)	Leisure
7	Flint Retail Park Overspill Car Park	0.82	Private	Car Parking	Retail
8	Flint Library	0.23	Public	Public Services	Public Services
9	Flint Council Offices	0.19	Public	Public Services	Public Services
10a	Former Flint House Site	0.22	Private	Vacant Land	Residential
10b	Cenotaph/Memorial Gardens	0.1	Public	Green Space	Green Space
10c	Flint Police Station and Magistrates Court	0.22	Private	Public Services	Residential
11	Lon Y Becws Car Park	0.22	Private	Car Parking	Residential
12	Chester Road Site		Private	Ambulance Service	Various uses harnessing A548 frontage
13	Co-op Car Park	0.19	Private	Vacant Residential	Residential
14	Borough Grove Sites	0.27	Private	GP & Green Space	Residential
15	Croes Atti	3.78	Private	Green Space	Residential

Figure 4.5 Preferred Uses for Flint's Opportunity Sites



## Residential

- 4.11 There are a number of opportunity sites in Flint that are identified as having potential to provide new residential development. The development of these sites will go some way to contribute to the aspiration to improve and diversify Flint's housing offer in terms of size, type, tenure and affordability within both the social and private housing sector.
- 4.12 The two **Maisonettes sites** have the greatest potential to transform the physical image of the Town through the development of a mix of good quality, housing (including social, affordable, intermediate and for sale) that retains a significant residential population within the Town Centre. However, there is a recognition that the redevelopment is unlikely to be able to provide the current volume of social units across the two sites, and there is therefore a need to consider alternative locations, preferably within close proximity to the Town Centre, to meet the needs of some of the existing residents of the Maisonettes.
- 4.13 There is potential to contribute towards this social housing requirement on a number of the opportunity sites that have been identified for residential development within the Masterplan. In particular, Housing Association discussions are already underway to bring the six vacant terraced units on the **Co-op Car Park site (Site 13)** back into sustainable residential use: Pennaf has received a grant allocation of £563,000 from WG to purchase the former youth club site and delivery of nine residential units on **Borough Grove (Site 14)** within the next 12 months to support the programme of relocation from the Maisonettes as they are demolished and redeveloped; and if a new community health centre can be delivered within the Town then there is potential to utilise the western Borough Grove site and **the Lon Y Becws Car Park (Site 11)** both of which currently serve the local health provision. Another, small infill site with potential to provide some social housing includes the **Chester Road Site (Site 12)** which is currently occupied by the Ambulance Service but is likely to become vacant in the near future as they relocate to a new hub in Dobshell, although it is understood they will retain a local response point in the adjacent Fire Station.
- 4.14 In terms of the private sector, consultations with both local residential agents and developers highlighted a greater demand for private housing on the edges of the Town and a general lack of interest in Town Centre sites due to issues of perception and viability. This can be evidenced at Anwyl's **Former Flint House Site (Site 10a)** which despite planning permission for 34 apartments has been placed on the market reportedly due to viability challenges presented in delivering the required affordable housing provision on a site of just 0.22 hectares.
- 4.15 Discussions with the agents for the site suggest that if a larger site could be assembled by incorporating the adjacent **Flint Magistrates Court and Police Station site (Site 10c)** for example, the viability of development could be improved. However, this is not without its challenges as the site remains constrained by the need to provide access to a sub-station at the rear of the site, which again reduces the developable area.
- 4.16 Further, developers are currently focusing on larger sites capable of delivering traditional family housing as the most viable development options. As such, the sites most suited to improving the open market housing offer, with the greatest potential of attracting new residents to Flint is **Croes Atti (Site 15)**.

- 4.17 At 2.4 hectares, the **Headland Foods site (Site 1)** accommodates a former frozen food product unit, and is currently vacant and marketed for sale. The site is currently allocated for employment uses within the recently adopted UDP, is within an area of potential flood risk and is likely to need significant remediation if it were to be considered for alternative uses. Despite this, should a new occupier not be found for the building, there is longer term potential to consider the development of a new residential community on the site making best use of the attractive vistas over the Dee Estuary and providing a more appropriate setting to the historic Flint Castle.

## Commercial

- 4.18 There are currently a number of vacant employment premises within **Castle Park Industrial Estate (Site 2b)**, some of which have not been occupied for a number of years. Agents report that this is due in part to a more attractive and accessible business premises offer at Aber Park. If new occupiers cannot be found for the vacant units and sites, there is some longer term potential to consolidate the employment uses on this site, provided planning and environmental constraints can be overcome, potentially releasing redundant employment land for residential development as part of a wider scheme with the **Headland Foods Site (Site 1)**. Such a use would have to be considered with key stakeholders such as the Environment Agency (Wales). The forthcoming Local Development Plan process provides a good opportunity to consider proposals set out in the Masterplan and Strategy against wider opportunities and specific constraints.
- 4.19 The **Site off Aber Road (Site 4)** is situated within Aber Park Industrial Estate and owned by Hollins Murray Group (HMG) who also own the adjacent Flint Retail Park. Discussions with HMG suggest terms are in place for the relocation of Huws Grey Builders Merchants to this site given its prominent positioning on the junction with the A548 Holywell Road. If this proposal is not delivered, scope exists for either additional employment or retail development on the site. This would free up the existing **Huws Grey site (Site 5)** for redevelopment for additional retail.
- 4.20 There is an existing planning permission for up to 25,000 sq ft of additional new retail development on the **Flint Retail Park Overspill Car Park site (Site 7)**. Owners HMG report current interest in bringing part of the site forward for new retail development which will serve to improve the scale of the local shopping offer. However, development will result in a further reduction in car parking, the impacts of which should also be considered in the wider Town Centre context.

## Leisure

- 4.21 As part of the aspiration to embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network and provide a more attractive visitor offer, there is potential to improve the physical appearance of **the area around Flint Castle (Site 3)**. This site should remain as open green space but should be enhanced to provide a more appropriate setting to the Castle and Dee Estuary; a more attractive destination for local residents; and an area that can be more easily utilised for the hosting of local events.
- 4.22 The **Walkers Carpet Shop, Holywell Road (A548) site (Site 6)** is currently occupied by a small and tired looking carpet store but has an existing planning application for 14 residential apartments which is recommended for approval subject to legal agreements. The development of this long thin site for residential uses, in particular apartments, is unlikely to be viable under current economic and market constraints. However, discussions with our in-house property agents suggests that given the

site's frontage to the A548 and positioning directly opposite Flint Retail Park, it could be attractive to a leisure operator such as a chained pub restaurant, an offer which is currently lacking within the Town. Such a use on this site would better serve the local visitor market by improving the food and drink offer in the Town and thus increasing dwell time and local spend.

## Public

- 4.23 There is an aspiration in Flintshire to provide enhanced public services to boost the quality of life for local people. The Council are committed to investing in public services and are keen to provide 'Flintshire Connects' hub within key towns within the County, which would provide a centrally located one-stop-shop of local services to residents as is being delivered within Holywell. However the development of a new facility in Flint would take up valuable land within the Town Centre which would be better placed to provide a new residential offer to replace the Maisonettes. Further, given the significant costs involved in the development of a new facility in a period of significant public sector funding cuts and restraints, the most advantageous option would be to utilise the ground floor space of the existing **Flint Council Offices (Site 9)**.
- 4.24 The existing **Flint Library (Site 8)** is a fairly modern building situated in a prominent location at the top of Church Street. Its future would need to be determined through review of the County's library services. The outcome of this review will consider the future options for the Library including continued use as present or collation within existing public sector facilities such as The Pavilion.
- 4.25 The existing **Cenotaph and Memorial Gardens site (Site 10b)** is an important local landmark and occupies a prominent position on the corner of Church Street and Chapel Street. The physical appearance of this area should be improved to provide a more appropriate setting to the Cenotaph and a more attractive gateway to the Town. Any development on the **Former Flint House Site (Site 10a)** to the rear should be considerate of the use of this site.

## Car Parking

- 4.26 It is important to note that the above table identifies a number of sites that currently provide car parking to the Town as potential sites for development. It is acknowledged that the full implementation of the Masterplan would result in a loss of a number of car parking spaces across the Town, and it is therefore important to carefully manage the car parking strategy for the Town going forward, in terms of volume, location, quality, access and signage in order to ensure that the Town is not disadvantaged by a lack of parking in the future. The focus must be on making it easier for shoppers to access appropriate parking - not more difficult! At the same time it will be important to ensure appropriate parking for local residents. There is also a need to enhance rail parking services in promoting Flint as a strategic commuting gateway to North Wales, Cardiff, the North West and London.

## The Indicative Masterplan

- 4.27 The Indicative Masterplan describes how the Spatial Framework could take shape within new buildings, spaces and events. This plan gives a 'feel' of how the Town could develop given the spatial and physical components of the Framework.

4.28 In summary the key urban and place making moves have been to:

- Strengthen the overall fabric and structure of the Town so that its original fortified town foot print is remembered and celebrated
- Develop a new urban grain to replace the Maisonettes which puts proper streets, lanes and terraces back into the Town, acknowledging the original, historic street fabric west and east of Church Street
- Strengthen the original central 'cruciform' of routes particularly when they meet at the Town Hall
- Improve links to the castle and improve its setting as a key North Wales visitor destination
- Strengthen gateways and arrival points into the Town
- Overall, within the town walls the emphasis should be on sensitive, smaller scale, context driven interventions providing a new more intricate scale of place that respects its unique heritage. Buildings should seek to address street edges, make new lanes and streets in keeping with the 'grid' of the Town. Suburban, ad-hoc layouts would not be acceptable in Flint. Terraces should be the norm
- Corners also need to be carefully developed as well as overall building scale and height, accepting that the existing tower blocks will be re-clad eventually

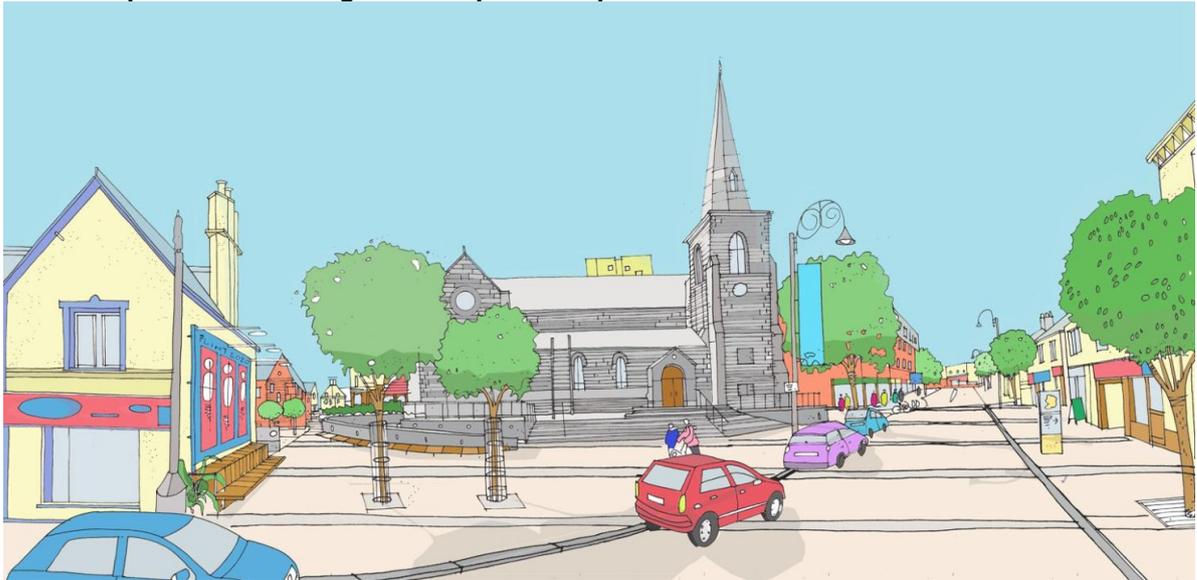
4.29 The key areas for change illustrated within the Masterplan are described below. These are:

- St Mary's and St David's Church Square
- Sydney/Duke Street
- Feather/Colehill Street
- Church Street
- Castle Street
- Flint Castle Fields
- Flint Cenotaph and Memorial Gardens
- Flint Town Hall and Trelawny Square

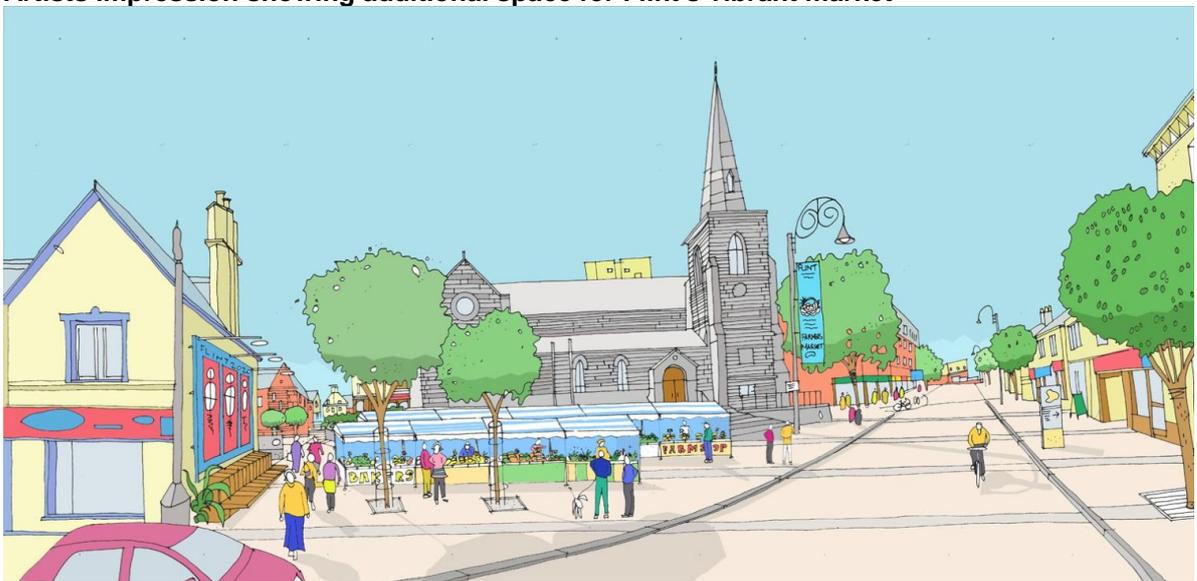
## 1) St Mary's and St David's Church Square

4.30 The church's traditional east-west alignment adds a pleasing relief to the line of Church Street. Public realm works have already been carried out here to create a small attractive square. The ambition is to enhance this to continue the space around the whole church, linking Church Street and Sydney Street. Church Street would remain open to traffic but the carriageway would be downgraded and materials adopted which enhance the space. New development wraps round the square. The overall ambition here is provide a focus for Church Street, encourage expansion of the market and provide a memorable setting for St Mary's and St David's Church.

**Artists impression showing a new improved square in front of the church**



**Artists impression showing additional space for Flint's vibrant market**



## 2) Sydney/Duke Street

- 4.31 Removing the Maisonettes block provides a new development opportunity that in plan represents nearly a quarter of the Walled town. Here the emphasis is on creating a new residential community made up of streets, gardens, squares and terraces. A pair of new streets is proposed which cross in the heart of this new neighbourhood. These link Church Street and Duke Street together with better connections to the north and south. Four distinct residential development plots providing a mix of tenure and residential types are established in the layout. On Duke Street the proposed buildings and landscaping mark the line of the original town wall. Two buildings appear as 'gatehouses' as one enters from the east.

- 4.32 A larger building of apartments marks the inner cross lanes as well on the corner of Sydney Street and Chapel Street which marks the corner of the old town. On Sydney Street new development is designed to enclose one side of St. Mary's Church Square.

**Artists impression showing Duke Street, and in particular the proposed 'Gatehouses'**



**Artists impression showing Swan Walk, connecting Duke Street to Sydney Walk**



### 3) Feather/Colehill Street

- 4.33 This development plot is created by the removal of the Maisonettes block. The original library is illustrated as being retained but remodelled to provide additional floorspace for other services. For example health. New development adjacent to the library helps define a new pedestrian route to the Pavilion and Flint Retail Park beyond. Two new residential plots are created to the west side of Earl Street, and should be designed to mark the line of the original town wall.

### 4) Church Street

- 4.34 The Indicative Masterplan retains the one-way traffic route on Church Street, but looks to provide a space that gives pedestrians the same priority within the space as vehicular traffic. Delivery areas and disabled parking spaces on Church Street would be retained.

### 5) Castle Street

- 4.35 The Indicative Masterplan seeks to enhance linkages between the Town and the Castle/Waterfront along Castle Street. New pedestrian way finding signage will encourage visitors to the Castle along a smart, inviting and improved Castle Street. New landscaping will frame and strengthen the link and view to the Castle, in addition bespoke time-line artwork will provide a magical new interpretation of Flint Castle and its role. New flood lighting on the castle will also help provide a new sense of drama and importance.

### 6) Flint Castle Fields

- 4.36 This dramatic but underused green open space will be remodelled to provide a new gateway to the castle and an events space for the whole of the Town. The Indicative Masterplan identifies the potential for improved interpretation. A walk leads directly across the castle gates emphasising the castle's unusual waterfront orientation.
- 4.37 The new landscape will respect the romantic and windswept setting of the castle. Links to the castle, the coast and the coastal footpath will be forged here. It is envisaged this will be a rugged expression of the north Wales coast.

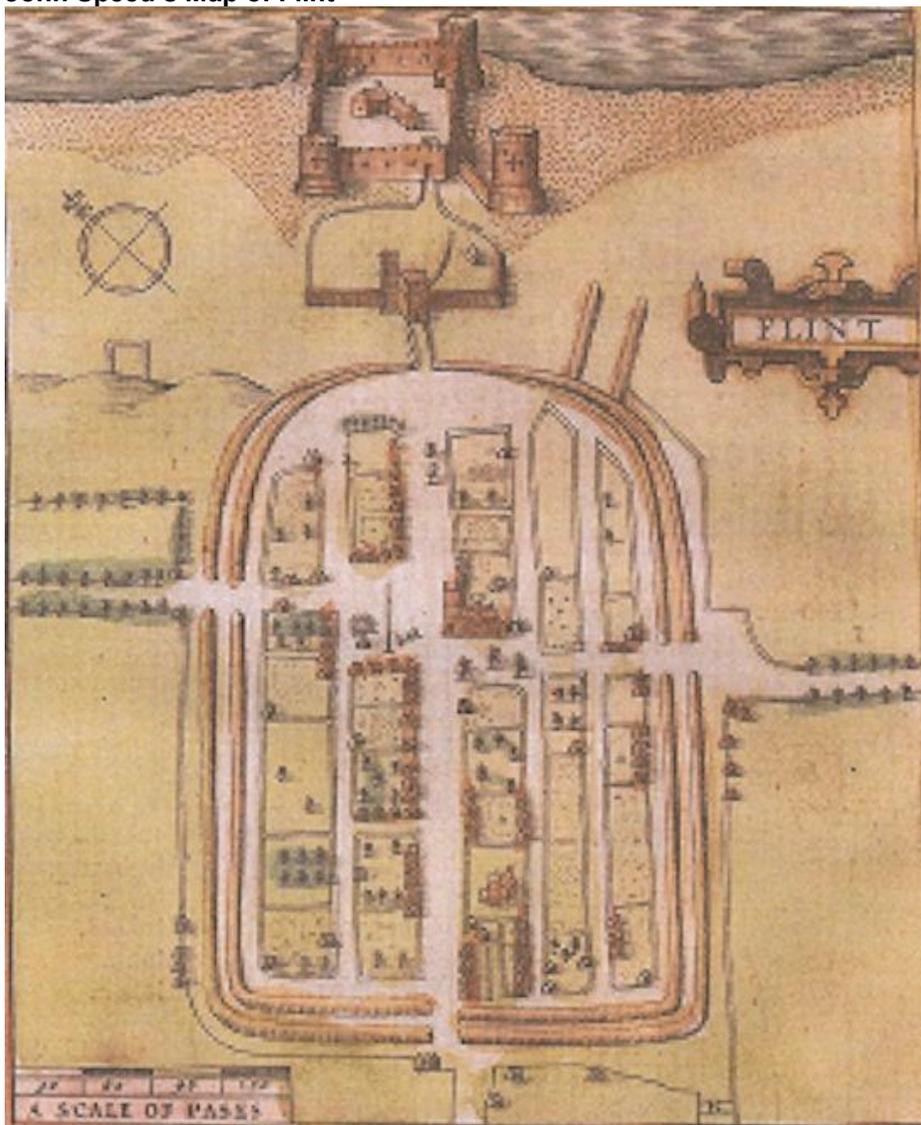
### 7) Cenotaph and Memorial Gardens

- 4.38 Flint's Cenotaph and Memorial Gardens is retained in its current position but fully renovated and remodelled in order to create a more appropriate and thoughtful space. New development will frame and enclose the memorial space, at a respectful distance to create improved shelter and enclosure and bring the memorial back into the fabric of the Town Centre.

### 8) Flint Town Hall and Trelawny Square

- 4.39 Trelawny Square and the Town Hall were planned in the original town layout as the centre of administration and commerce. The layout of Trelawny Square was designed to create a dog leg in the main east-west cross route, now the A548, slowing through movement and creating a punctuation point at the Town Centre. Trelawny Square has all but vanished. The Indicative Masterplan envisages an ambitious highway re-modelling to bring back a small public square on the north side of Trelawny. This project envisages extending the pavement to the central reservation and reducing the highway to two lane rather than four. This would create a new market space which would extend around the Town Hall along Church Street while decreasing pedestrian crossing distances improving links between the Castle and the Town.

John Speed's Map of Flint



Indicative Masterplan



## 5.0 Action Plan

5.1 This section identifies specific actions under the eight priority themes to support the priority actions. For each of the priority actions the following is identified:

- Actions to support its delivery
- The strategic objectives it supports
- Likely lead and partners
- Indicative phasing - immediate (next 12 months), short (1-3 years), medium (4-7 years), long (8+ years)
- Priority - high, medium, low

5.2 It then provides recommendations in respect of the delivery of the opportunity sites.

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
<b>Enhanced housing offer</b>					
Redevelopment of the Maisonettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council is currently undertaking one to one consultations with existing tenants to determine their preferred housing outcome when the Maisonettes are redeveloped. This will support the determination of appropriate mix and type of new residential units that will be required to be redeveloped on the site of the demolished Maisonettes and what additional units are required elsewhere</li> <li>A vote will take place in March 2012 to determine whether the Council should transfer their stock to Dee Housing or work with the local housing associations to invest in the stock</li> <li>Preparation of design brief (derived from the Masterplan) to be given to potential developer partners to support their briefs</li> <li>Delivery of the phased programme of decanting residents and demolishing the Maisonettes</li> <li>Commence demolition of Maisonettes</li> <li>Procure development partner and commence development of new homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC and selected Registered Provider	Immediate to Long Term	High
Delivery of new homes on appropriate opportunity sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Masterplan has identified a number of sites across the Town that could be brought forward for new housing to improve the choice of homes available in Flint. It is anticipated that those in the centre are more likely to be developed for social, affordable or intermediate housing whilst those towards the edge should be for private sale. These should, where viable, be brought forward as larger family homes to provide greater choice within the Town</li> <li>Initial discussions have been held with some local and regional house builders. The Strategy and Masterplan should be used to engage with potential developers to sell the Town more effectively to provide them with greater confidence to invest in Flint</li> <li>Develop new homes in partnership with Regional Providers to deliver new homes utilising public sector funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC; selected Registered Provider; and private sector	Immediate to Medium Term	High
Bring empty homes back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action is underway to bring empty properties back into residential use as part of the strategy to rehouse local tenants displaced by the redevelopment of the Maisonettes</li> <li>FCC is working closely with Registered Providers to access monies from the Welsh Government to bring empty homes back into use. The Council's Housing Capital Programme has also allocated monies to support empty homes to be brought back into use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC; selected Registered Provider; and private sector	Short to Medium Term	High

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By entering into a partnership with FCC and Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, owners of problematic vacant properties in areas of housing need can receive up to 75% of the total renovation costs over a five year period up to a cap of £25,000 for single dwellings or £20,000 per unit if converting a single dwelling into multiple self contained units, provided the dwelling has been in their ownership for a minimum of three years. The Council will then have letting rights of the property for an agreed period, and it will be managed by Clwyd Alyn for a proportion of the rent, with the remainder going back to the dwelling's owner. There is potential for FCC to raise further awareness of the scheme through direct contact with property owners</li> <li>Consideration should also be given to using THI monies to convert space above shops on Church Street into flats</li> </ul>				
Longer term investment in the provision of more specialist accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is anticipated due to the changing demographics of the Town that demand will be identified through the current consultations for new specialist accommodation within Flint</li> <li>The Strategy and Masterplan should be used to engage with specialist providers/developers and local Registered Providers to promote the potential of this sub sector given the Town's strategic location, flat topography and good transport links</li> <li>Consider the potential of using one of the tower blocks for specialist accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC; selected Registered Provider; and private sector	Medium Term	Medium
Improving the appearance of the tower blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration should be given to the potential for the refurbishment of Flint's three tower blocks to help improve the physical appearance of the Town and its perceptions</li> <li>Re-cladding of the tower blocks could provide an opportunity to add colour and vibrancy to the Town and also improve the energy efficiency of the buildings to the benefit of its residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC; selected Registered Provider; and private sector	Medium to Long Term	Medium
<b>Thriving retail and leisure destination</b>					
Expand and improve the attractiveness of the Street Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the current layout of the market - acknowledging the constraints of the existing streetscape (e.g. street furniture, road layout) - to ensure visitors to the market also shop in the existing shops on both sides of Church Street. Review whether some stalls could be located on the old market square so that road/rail users can easily see that the market is on and may make a detour into the Town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate to Short Term	Medium

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the Market alongside the programme of events to more effectively change perceptions of the Town and promote its offer to increase the number of regular stall holders and visitors and ultimately consider increasing the number of market days if sufficient demand is identified</li> <li>Consideration should be given to more specialist markets in addition to the regular Friday market, such as vintage or farmers markets on other days e.g. Saturday. Particularly those that are likely to attract tourists as well as local shoppers</li> <li>Ensure the sign says why Church Street is closed on Friday's e.g. "Street closed due to Local Market"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>			
Improve the physical environment of the Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise the THI funding to improve the physical appearance of the historical buildings within the eligible area on Church Street and Chester Street</li> <li>Enforce action by local landlords who are not adequately maintaining their properties to reduce eyesores</li> <li>Create new places where people can sit and dwell and appreciate what the Town has to offer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC and THI	Ongoing	High
Support vacant retail units and vacant upper floors back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support independent retailers to invest in the Town by promoting it as an attractive place to do business</li> <li>Develop a trader's support pack to identify how the Council can support existing retailers. Investigate whether small incentives can be offered to new independents</li> <li>Encourage existing landlords to be more flexible in their rental agreement to allow independents to 'test the market' by establishing pop up shops in vacant units</li> <li>Through other wider promotion of the Town, increase the confidence of the occupiers in the future of Flint and the number of shoppers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	High
Develop a new approach to manage Flint as a destination for visitors and develop a Flint brand for local produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCC to proactively engage with existing retail businesses to support them to overcome any potential barriers to success and then respond quickly to issues such as cleanliness, lighting, safety etc</li> <li>Consider promoting an existing officer within the Council as the 'go to' person/champion for Flint so that local businesses know that there is someone senior within the Council who has prioritised Flint and will seek to deal with any issues</li> <li>Bring existing businesses together more regularly and effectively in order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate to Medium Term	Medium

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
	<p>that they take a greater role in supporting the Town Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of formal Business Network and Traders Association to promote activities in the Town Centre</li> <li>Build supply chain links between local enterprises and retailers in Church Street to develop a unique retail offer/brand for Flint - a Flint brand for local produce</li> </ul>				
<b>Service excellence supporting enhanced quality of life</b>					
Delivery of one stop shop offering a range of public services - Flintshire Connects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby for Flint to be in the first wave of the roll out of the Flintshire Connect concept</li> <li>Determine what services could be delivered from the one stop shop - Police, Job Centre etc. to determine the extent of floorspace required and what space could be freed up elsewhere in the Town Centre</li> <li>Look at options for accommodating the identified uses within the existing Council office and what refurbishment works are required to enable this. Only if it is not possible to accommodate the proposed uses within the existing building should other options be considered</li> <li>Priority should be given to finding a new home for the Police in order to be able to free up their existing site for residential use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC and potentially other public sector partners e.g. Police Force	Immediate to Medium Term	Medium
Improve health provision in the Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level discussions to continue between FCC and BCUHB to determine the type of uses that could be accommodated within a new health facility</li> <li>Determine the potential sites that could be freed up - most likely for residential uses - as a result of the rationalisation of the current health facilities within a single location</li> <li>Design and deliver the new health facility scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (lead)	Short to Medium Term	Medium
Look at possibilities to expand the community use of the current local authority building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a good range of public sector buildings across the Town which could better promote their facilities in order to provide additional opportunities for local residents</li> <li>Once an audit of existing opportunities has been undertaken this should be promoted along with the opportunities for more intensive or effective use of public facilities</li> <li>Key buildings include the Town Hall, Council Offices, Library and the Pavilion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	Medium
<b>Enhanced employment opportunities</b>					
Work with existing businesses to understand their challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCC to proactively engage with existing businesses to support them in overcoming any potential barriers to growth and then respond quickly to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage economic growth through job creation</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	Medium

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
and provide assistance where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issues such as cleanliness, lighting, safety etc</li> <li>Rerun the Shop Doctors Workshop for Flint retailers to identify areas for assistance</li> </ul>				
Promote Flint better as an employment and business location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilising the messages set out in the Strategy/Flint Story, a better pitch has been established to 'sell' the Town to potential occupiers</li> <li>This could be supported with more economic information about the strengths of the County and its existing network of international and national businesses</li> <li>Promote local business successes to the wider area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage economic growth through job creation</li> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Medium
Encourage more business networking to develop supply chains and cross sell local produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building upon the Breakfast Briefings that have been set up during the preparation of the Masterplan a stronger network of businesses should be established</li> <li>FCC should facilitate regular training and information sharing breakfasts to inform local businesses about key issues but also to provide opportunities for networking</li> <li>Improved directory of businesses should be established setting out who does what and contact details to support more local supply chain networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage economic growth through job creation</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Medium
Support investors to develop new business space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some of the employment floorspace is dated and opportunities to encourage investment in modern flexible floorspace at affordable rents should be encouraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage economic growth through job creation</li> </ul>	FCC	Long Term	Low
Encourage landlords to invest in their existing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By promoting effectively the Masterplan and its Action Plan businesses should be more confident about the future of Flint and should be encouraged to invest in the Town</li> <li>In parallel FCC need to review the local environment and encourage local businesses to ensure their properties do not create eyesores in the Town. Opportunities for utilising funding for environmental improvements should be promoted to encourage take up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage economic growth through job creation</li> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium to Long Term	Low
<b>Arrival, access and movement</b>					
Ensure that Flint is easy to move around on foot, bicycle and by car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a clearer local road system, by simplifying the north/south vehicular access routes through the Town, to improve movement and to reduce the car-dominance effect of parallel traffic routes</li> <li>Ensure sufficient and appropriate parking</li> <li>Retain the one-way traffic route on Church Street, but look to provide a shared-space that gives pedestrians the same priority within the space as vehicular traffic, but also maintains delivery areas/disabled parking spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	High

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
Clarify and improve signage into and around the Town through the preparation of a Wayfinding and Signage Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve welcome signs at the key gateways to the Town</li> <li>Consider redirection of the 'Tour' signs into the Town from Queensferry</li> <li>Improve signage to car parks linked to clarification of car parking strategy providing a clearer link between car park and function</li> <li>Improve signage to the Castle from A548</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate to Short Term	High
Improve the sense of arrival from along the A548 (east and west), Flint Mountain and by rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider ways to improve the sense of arrival by public transport, with improvements to the rail station and bus boarding/alighting facilities at Trelawny Square</li> <li>More tree planting on the A548 from the south east (by Aldi)</li> <li>Reallocate road space on Chester Street adjacent to Trelawny Square, to improve the public realm, reduce crossing distance on the A548 and to reduce/remove the severance effect that this link has between the Station, Castle and Town Centre. A technical assessment would be required to determine if there is capacity to deliver this action</li> <li>It would also be worth trialling monitored lane closure on Chester Road to assess traffic impact of reducing the highway width in preparation for future design assessment and the potential widening of the pavement</li> <li>Remodel the A5119 junction to bring a stronger sense of arrival and identity to the Town and minimise the car-dominance effect at this location</li> <li>Explore development opportunities at the remodelled A5119 junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate to medium Term	High
Strengthen links between the Castle and the Town; the High Street and Flint Retail Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen sustainable travel and vehicular links between the Castle and the Town including improvements to the Castle Road/Church Street priority junction</li> <li>Creation of a timeline/heritage walk along Church Street and Castle Street to encourage linked trips between the Castle and the Town Centre</li> <li>Investigate the potential to improve the bridge access (and footpath) over the rail line from the Town Hall to the Castle</li> <li>As part of the redevelopment of the Maisonettes design a clear pedestrian route between the two retail areas which is attractive, well lit/overlooked, on expected desire lines and which encourages interlinked trips without the need to use a car</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC Cadw THI	Short Term	High
Improve opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Particularly between the Town Centre and the surrounding employment areas to reduce the number of unnecessary car journeys</li> <li>Improve opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists, by designing in appropriate crossing facilities at key junctions/crossing points and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Medium

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considering how new infrastructure can tie in with existing sections of the National Cycle Network and suitable quiet links</li> <li>Ensure that appropriate cycle parking facilities are provided at key destinations, such as Church Street, the railway station and the Retail Park</li> </ul>				
Review all signalised junctions in the Town in terms of phasing/signal timings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out an audit of all signalised junctions within the Town to consider whether they are designed and operate in the most appropriate way for all road users. Junction geometry, signal timings/phasing and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists should all be reviewed as part of this action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC	Short Term	High
Preparation of a Car Parking Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a parking strategy for the Town, to consider the best use of the parking facilities available to locals, workers and visitors to Flint, and develop a hierarchy of parking facilities in suitable locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate Term	High
<b>Quality public realm</b>					
Reinstate a central 'heart' to the Town and improve legibility by enhancing the public realm and creating 'nodes' with convenient access to different parts of the Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the overall fabric and structure of the Town so that its original fortified footprint is remembered and celebrated</li> <li>Develop a new urban grain to replace the Maisonettes which puts proper streets, lanes and terraces back into the Town, acknowledging the original , historic street fabric west and east of Church Street</li> <li>Strengthen the original central 'cruciform' of routes particularly when they meet at the Town Hall and Trelawny Square</li> <li>Creation of a new town square focused on St Mary's and St David's Church with scope to encourage people to dwell more and improved space to hold the market</li> <li>Scope to investigate the potential of small pop up units around the square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> <li>Better serve the local catchment</li> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	Medium
Promote Flint (including the Castle) as an event destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a greater sense of ownership of the Castle by local people</li> <li>Encourage local people to use the land around the Castle as their local park, for playing games and picnicking</li> <li>Introduce an enhanced programme of events for local residents and tourists, including theatre, music, poetry and space for other events</li> <li>Reintroduce the Castle 'symbols' trail</li> <li>Promote the new All Wales Coastal Path and build on opportunities for Flint to provide a 'stopping point' along the route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Short Term and Ongoing	High
Consider further improvements to the setting of the Town Hall and other historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The THI zone unfortunately does not cross the railway and stretch along Castle Street towards the coast, opportunities for funding through developer contributions and other national funding streams should be targeted on improving this link. The fulcrum of this being a new and improved Trelawny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	Medium

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
	<p>Square</p> <p>Invest in further environmental improvements around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town Hall</li> <li>St Mary's and St David's Church</li> <li>The Courts building on Church to support the current THI project to bring this building back into to use</li> </ul>				
<b>Harnessing the environment</b>					
Creation of green link harnessing the Town's existing open/green space and Waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider improvements to the Meadows, including improved play facilities for young people and better access and egress to the Brook</li> <li>Build on the excellent coastal footpath links, consider additional wayfinding and leisure routes, particularly around the Castle and links to the Town Centre</li> <li>Improve and connect the series of inland green links alongside the historic dock and Swinchiard Brook to create an interesting recreational route, encourage better use of the Meadows and open spaces</li> <li>Consider promoting the green character of Flint and it's context by incorporating nature and natural materials as part of a 'green envelope'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect Flint's assets</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Medium
Improve the quality of the landscape in the Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on opportunities to replace some of Flint's lost historical and cultural features into the Town Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Medium
Continue to enhance the attractiveness of the Castle and Waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the redevelopment of the Maisonettes site consideration should be given to creating usable space that is functional and attractive for use by local residents and the wider public</li> <li>Develop more promotional material like the walking brochure to promote the Castle, Waterfront etc</li> <li>Consider the potential for sensitive lighting of the Castle to raise awareness of this significant asset</li> <li>Explore the potential to expand the series of events that utilise the Castle and the Waterfront</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform Flint's physical image</li> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Medium
<b>Enhanced communications</b>					
Creation and roll out of a 'new story' for the Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Draft Story for Flint has been prepared. Once signed off this should be used to support the creation of marketing material to 'sell' the Town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Short Term	High
Creation of place website for the Town linked to destination management and wider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a website for Flint (potentially accessed via the Council website)</li> <li>This should include a directory of what Flint has to offer - local shops, facilities, tourism, employment opportunities, education etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate to Short Term	Medium

Priority Action	Actions	Strategic Objective	Lead	Phasing	Priority
promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It should be used to promote the market and other proposed events</li> <li>Prepare annual newsletter to update to everyone on progress with the delivery of the Strategy and Masterplan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> </ul>			
Enhanced programme of events for locals and visitors and better promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building upon the success of the Flint Festival and the turn on of the Christmas Lights a programme of 4 to 6 regular events per annum should be introduced to encourage existing residents to spend more time and money in the Town as well as encouraging new visitors</li> <li>Themes to consider focusing an event on include food, the Waterfront and history</li> <li>One idea is to establish a walk from Chester which will end up at the Castle with a BBQ celebrating the link between the two centres being “a day’s march”</li> <li>Engage with local transport operators to promote Flint. This could be through a promotional campaign for North Wales at linked destinations such as London Euston and Cardiff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	High
Identification of local ambassadors/champions to promote the Town in their every day roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building upon the significant number of local people that champion Flint, develop more formal mechanisms to formally promote the Town</li> <li>Create a network of local representatives who are willing to regularly promote better stories to the media and hold regular meetings with the press to ensure positive stories maintain a positive momentum in the Town</li> <li>This will be particularly important as change begins in respect of the Maisonettes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Immediate to Short Term	Medium
Work more closely with the tourism sector to develop links with other small Towns in the area to create a circuit of locations to visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within Flint and beyond engage with similar towns or those with a connection to create a “days” circuit of activities for visitors e.g. St Winefride’s Well in Holywell and one of the other Castles or linked coach trips to Chester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> </ul>	FCC Cadw Visit Wales	Short to Medium Term	Medium
More tourist information points in the Town	<p>Good progress has already been made at the Waterfront to provide interpretation boards but scope exists to deliver more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the bus stop by Flint Retail Park</li> <li>In the Town Centre</li> <li>At the Castle</li> </ul> <p>Consider with Cadw/Environmental Agency Wales potential to create an interpretation point about the Dee Estuary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Flint within the sub-regional tourism network</li> <li>More effectively promote the Town and its opportunities</li> </ul>	FCC	Short Term	Medium

## Opportunity Sites

	Site	Actions	Lead	Phasing	Priority
1	Headland Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over the longer term if an employment occupier cannot be found for the vacant building, consider the potential of a new residential development harnessing the Waterfront setting</li> <li>The attractiveness of the site to residential development and the improved setting it would provide to the Castle will need to be considered as part of the County wide planning process to secure a change of use</li> <li>Likely to require improved road access from the west rather than the existing access under the Evans Street bridge and over the Castle Road bridge</li> <li>Issues of decontamination and potential flooding will need to be considered for residential development</li> </ul>	Private Sector - owners Kerry Group or new purchaser	Long Term	Low
2	Sites within Castle Park Industrial Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given the number of long term vacancies, consider consolidation of the employment sites over the longer term</li> <li>Consider potential to utilise freed up land as part of a wider scheme linked to the Headlands Foods site (Site 1)</li> <li>Planning allocation, contamination and flood risk will be the key challenges to delivering a change of use</li> </ul>	Private Sector	Long Term	Low
3	Area around Flint Castle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the physical environment to improve the setting of the Castle and Waterfront</li> <li>Consider how more can be made of this area as an events space</li> <li>Test any proposals for impacts on adjacent SSSI; AONB and Flint Castle</li> </ul>	Cadw and FCC	Short Term	High
4	Site off Aber Road, Flint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support development proposals for employment/trade counter uses</li> <li>Consider potential flooding risk of development on the site</li> <li>Ensure adequate mitigation measures on Swinchiard Brook to the rear of the site</li> </ul>	Private Sector - HMG	Short to Medium Term	Medium
5	Huws Gray Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support proposals for redevelopment for retail or employment uses</li> <li>Consider potential flooding risk of redevelopment on the site</li> <li>FCC have land ownership adjacent to the site</li> </ul>	Private Sector - HMG	Short to Medium Term	Low

	Site	Actions	Lead	Phasing	Priority
6	Walkers Carpet Shop, Holywell Road (A548)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlikely to be delivered for residential based on current permission given the lack of appetite to deliver flats by banks and developers</li> <li>Reconnect site to promote potential to attract a leisure operator given main road frontage and proximity to Flint Retail Park</li> <li>Ensure development is of a high quality given adjacent Conservation Area and prominence to A548</li> </ul>	Private Sector	Medium Term	Medium
7	Flint Retail Park Overspill Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the implementation of the retail planning permission</li> <li>Ensure development is of a high quality</li> <li>Consider the implications of additional trips and a loss of parking through a Town wide Car Parking Strategy</li> </ul>	Private Sector - HMG	Short Term	Low
8	Flint Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As service providers review their requirements for the Town consider whether the Library could be remodelled to deliver additional services at this key gateway site</li> <li>Continue dialogue with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board to determine the potential size of the proposed new health centre to determine whether it could be developed on this site - linked to the library or other public sector facilities</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	Low
9	Flint Council Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider potential to house Flintshire Connects facility on ground floor</li> <li>Could accommodate Job Centre plus and thus release their existing building adjacent to Maisonettes</li> <li>Include police and potentially other public sector partners</li> <li>Ensure that any displaced retailers are retained within the Town</li> </ul>	FCC	Medium Term	Medium
10a	Former Flint House Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote residential development opportunity and encourage implementation of the planning permission</li> <li>Ensure development is respectful of the Memorial Gardens in front of the site</li> <li>Consider access requirements to sub-station at rear of site</li> </ul>	Private sector - Anwyl	Short Term	High
10b	Cenotaph/Memorial Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain and improve physical appearance of the green space</li> <li>May need to consider relocating the Cenotaph closer to the heart of Town as part of the option review for adjoining opportunity sites</li> <li>Design of any proposals to develop the site must enhance the setting of the Cenotaph</li> </ul>	FCC	Short to Medium Term	Low
10c	Flint Police Station and Magistrates Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If fully vacated FCC could consider purchase of the site for residential development or it could be sold to developer or Registered Provider</li> </ul>	North Wales Police; HM Courts Service and Developer	Short to Medium Term	High

	Site	Actions	Lead	Phasing	Priority
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police considering options and are likely to be willing to move out of their existing office if an alternative location can be found (see site 9). The Court is already vacant and owners willing to sell as a package with the Police Station</li> <li>Ensure any development is respectful of the adjacent Cenotaph Memorial Gardens (Site 10b)</li> </ul>			
11	Lon Y Becws Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the site is freed up by the delivery of a new health centre, consider the potential for residential development on the vacant site</li> <li>Need to consider the impact of a loss of parking through a Flint wide Car Parking Strategy</li> </ul>	Existing landowner FCC	Medium Term	Low
12	Chester Road Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider potential for residential development once Ambulance Service vacate the premises</li> <li>Most likely to be delivered by Registered Provider</li> </ul>	Ambulance Service and Developer	Medium Term	Medium
13	Co-op Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring vacant houses back into use to support the decantation of the Maisonettes</li> <li>Registered Provider is understood to be in discussion with Co-op</li> </ul>	Co-op and Housing Association	Short Term	High
14	Borough Grove Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pennaf has received a grant of £563,000 from WG to purchase the site and deliver the planning permission for nine units as social housing on the eastern site</li> <li>If the GP surgery is vacated as part of the provision of a new health facility, consider potential for residential development of the western site</li> </ul>	FCC and Developer	Short to Medium Term	Medium
15	Croes Atti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring forward proposed residential scheme for in the region of 650 units</li> <li>Planning permission has been granted for 138 units within the first phase</li> <li>Ensure traffic implications of development have been considered and improved linkages implemented to support the Town Centre</li> </ul>	FCC and Developer	Short to Medium Term	High

## 6.0 Implementation Strategy

6.1 This section sets out the Implementation Strategy to support the delivery of the Flint Strategy and Masterplan and covers:

- Delivery Mechanisms
- Phasing of Action Delivery
- Potential Sources of Funding
- Monitoring and Evaluation

### Delivery Mechanisms

6.2 Expectations have been raised in the process of the preparation of the Flint Strategy and Masterplan. The momentum that has been achieved throughout this work needs to be harnessed as we turn to the delivery phase. Having agreed a new Vision for Flint we need to be clear about *who* will do *what*, by *when* and *how*.

### Partners

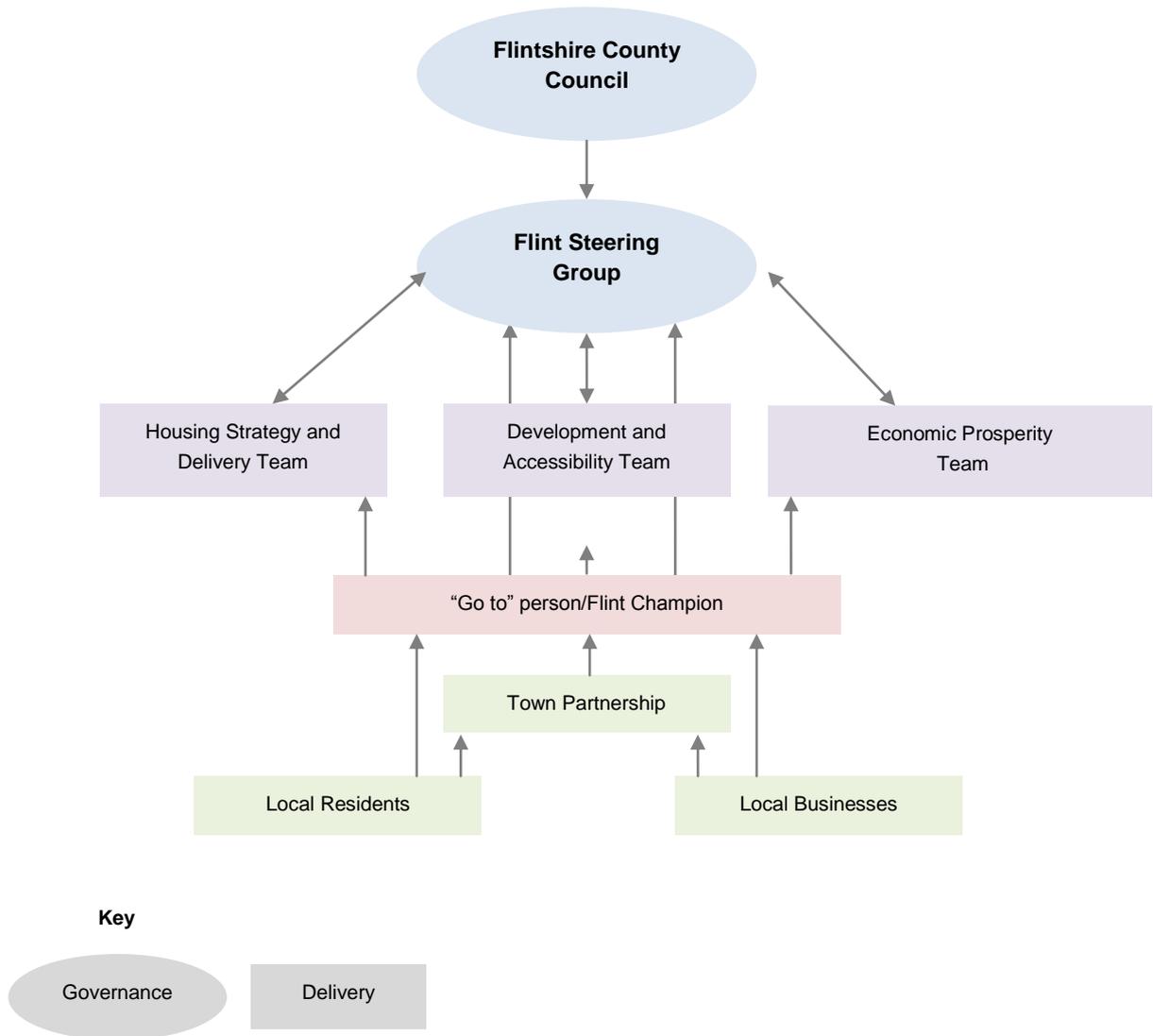
6.3 The key partners *who* need to be involved in delivering the transformation of Flint are identified below along with the roles that they can play.

Organisation	Role
Welsh Government	Funding - National and European
Flintshire County Council	Governance Delivery Funding
Betsi Cadwaladr	Delivery and Funding (of health related services and buildings)
Other public partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Police</li> <li>▪ Visit Wales</li> <li>▪ Cadw</li> <li>▪ Communities First</li> </ul>	Service Delivery Funding
Registered Providers	Delivery, Funding and Management (of new homes)
Private Developers	Delivery and Funding

### Governance

6.4 Although the Strategy and Masterplan sets the direction of travel for the Town, structures now need to be put in place to drive forward the delivery of specific projects and to ensure that the component parts will support the achievement of the overall Vision. This governance is not necessarily about creating new structures but rather being clear about *who* needs to co-ordinate or deliver *what*. Figure 6.1 identifies the proposed structure for ensuring that the key components of the Masterplan are delivered in a coherent and efficient manner.

**Figure 6.1 Suggested Governance and Delivery Structure**



6.5 Ultimately the **Council** will oversee the delivery of the Strategy but having established the **Flint Steering Group** this is the most effective mechanism to co-ordinate decision making and delivery in the Town to ensure that amongst all of the other Council priorities there is a group that understand the specifics of Flint and are championing change. It is envisaged that the Group will meet regularly to monitor progress and determine priorities. In the short term the Group should meet every 2-3 months. The members of the Group will vary depending on the priority projects being delivered or pursued at the time.

6.6 The Steering Group will not take responsibility for delivery. This will be undertaken by individual officers and other key partners. A number of delivery teams could be created to oversee the delivery of key projects. These could include the following:

- **Housing Strategy and Delivery Team** - this will comprise members of the Council's Housing Team and the selected development partner for the Maisonettes. It should also include tenant representatives and potentially a representative from Communities First
- **Development and Accessibility Team** - this will include representatives from the Council (Planning, Transport and Design) and Cadw and will be responsible for co-ordinating improvements in the built environment, public realm, accessibility and landscape. It could oversee the delivery of the THI and seek to identify new sources of funding
- **Economic Prosperity Team** - this team will comprise officers with a focus on supporting economic development and regeneration in Flint. It should also include representatives from local businesses. Its priorities will be to facilitate greater business networking and the creation of a Local Traders Association which should ultimately take responsibility for co-ordinating action in the Town Centre

6.7 It will also be important to have single point of contact in the Town (**Town Champion**) to whom **local residents and local businesses** know they can go to and who will ensure that issues are dealt with quickly. The **Town Partnership** will continue to be an important forum to bring together the interests of local residents, local businesses and the voluntary sector. It should take a proactive role in delivery of the Strategy.

## Phasing of Action Delivery

6.8 The table below sets out the suggested phasing for the actions - “*what*” needs to be done, “*how*” and “*when*” - identified in Section 5 based upon our experience and recommendations and the prioritisation of the actions by local stakeholders at the final round of consultations.

<b>Flint Masterplan</b>
<b>Quick Wins - Priorities for the Next 12 months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Launch the Strategy and Masterplan and introduce the key people who will be driving forward its delivery</li> <li>▪ Creation of a Flint Town Website which will host the Strategy and Masterplan, engaging key people involved in its delivery and providing an update on project progress</li> <li>▪ Identify a Town Champion</li> <li>▪ Determine and commence a phased programme of clearance of the Maisonettes</li> <li>▪ Preparation of design briefs for the replacement housing for the Maisonettes</li> <li>▪ Start to deliver new housing on vacant sites - Alwyn, Borough Grove and vacant units adjacent to Co-op</li> <li>▪ Undertake car parking review of public and private car parking space to determine a more effective strategy for shopping, short term, medium term, worker and local resident parking</li> <li>▪ Develop a streetscape guide for Flint setting out the quality and style of development, public realm and landscaping that will be expected in the Town</li> <li>▪ Undertake environmental improvements in the vicinity of St Mary's and St David's Church</li> <li>▪ Prepare a marketing strategy to raise the profile of the Town including the Castle, Market, and events</li> <li>▪ Start engagement with Cadw to progress environmental improvements and enhanced visitor information including the proposed historic timeline between the Town and the Castle</li> <li>▪ Determine and deliver a strategy to enhance and better promote the Market</li> <li>▪ Identify and start to deliver a programme of wayfinding and signage improvements including 'welcome' signs at key gateways</li> <li>▪ Determine and start to deliver a programme of landscape improvements for the A548 corridor into Flint from Oakenholt</li> <li>▪ Continue improvements to historic buildings utilising THI funding</li> <li>▪ Investigate potential of creating a Flintshire Connects service within Flint Council Offices - determine who would be involved, how much space they require, which existing services may need to be relocated from the Council Office</li> </ul>

#### **Flint Masterplan**

##### **Short Term Projects (1-3 yrs)**

- Continue programme of demolition of Maisonettes
- Identify development partner for new homes on Maisonettes site, determine development schemes and commence delivery of new homes
- Utilise WG and THI monies to bring empty homes and upper floors of retail units back into use
- Develop and deliver an events programme focusing on the Castle and the Waterfront, the Town Centre (its shops and market) and utilising the themes of history, food and environment
- Investigate the potential of holding specialist markets in Flint on Saturday or Sunday (test potential to determine how regularly they could be held)
- Prepare detailed plans of how new places can be created in the Town to encourage people to dwell longer
- Develop a programme of support to assist existing and potential traders in the Town
- Continue discussion with Betsi Cadwaladr to determine who and what services would be delivered in a new primary health facility and commence detailed planning
- Collated health and social care services
- As part of the detailed redevelopment of the Maisonettes start to create improved quality pedestrian linkages between Church Street and Flint Retail Park
- Promote the Town within the local press and on the website
- Build supply chain links between local enterprises and retailers in Church Street to develop a unique retail offer in the traditional heart of the Town Centre - develop a Flint brand
- Prepare a regular newsletter (at least annually) to summarise success and progress in the delivery of the Strategy and Masterplan
- Set up a local business directory (hold on website) and establish local business networks
- Undertake detailed review of accessibility (by car, cycle and foot) and signage in the Town to create a more efficient local network
- Create new walk between the Castle and Town Centre including historic timeline celebrating the role of the Town
- Identify local ambassadors who will commit to promote Flint as they go about their day to day activities
- Develop a trader's support pack to identify how the Council can support existing retailers
- Building upon the messages within the Flint Strategy develop a series of products to be used to promote the Town more effectively
- Install better visitor information about what is on offer in the Town
- Improve the setting of the Memorial Garden through sympathetic residential development on the adjoining two sites
- Deliver new primary health care centre
- Commence refurbishment of Flintshire Connects facility
- Investigate the potential of converting one of the tower blocks to provide specialist housing e.g. extra care

#### **Flint Masterplan**

##### **Medium Term Projects (4-7 years)**

- Consider options for recladding the tower blocks to improve energy efficiency and their physical appearance
- Commence discussions with local landlords (retail and industrial) of worst buildings in Flint to investigate ways in which their buildings could be improved
- Consider how existing public buildings could be better utilised by the community especially Flint Town Hall
- Council to actively engage with local businesses and retailers to identify barriers to operation and work with them to overcome
- Investigate the potential of highways and pedestrian improvements around the Town Hall and along the A548
- Creation of a green link through the Town linking quality open space in the Town to the Waterfront, Coastal Path, cycleways, green corridors and beyond
- As part of the planning process consider the potential in the long term to deliver new housing in the vicinity of the Waterfront taking into account local environmental and access constraints
- Consider the potential to light some of Flint's historic buildings
- Ongoing delivery of maisonette redevelopment

**Flint Masterplan  
Long Term Projects (8-12 years)**

- Engage with local businesses and developers to create new employment space
- Ongoing delivery of maisonette redevelopment
- Ongoing delivery of environmental improvements
- Ongoing delivery of new private houses on the edge of Flint Town Centre to ensure there is an appropriate portfolio of housing choice
- Ongoing improvements to historic buildings utilising THI funding
- Ongoing promotion of Flint, its assets, opportunities and events within the press and on the Flint website
- Continued delivery of an enhanced programme of events

## Potential Sources of Funding

- 6.9 The economic conditions nationally across the UK and Europe, coupled with public sector spending cuts, presents a challenge for all local authorities in accessing finance for the delivery of town centre improvements. Flintshire will not be immune to these challenges as it tries to bring together a package of finance to deliver this Masterplan for Flint.
- 6.10 Despite the challenges in accessing finance to deliver change locally, there are a number of options available for generating finance; maximising what finance is available and ensuring that funds are appropriately prioritised; together with generating other financial incentives at minimum cost to the Council.
- 6.11 Potential sources of funding include the following:

Source	Priority of Funding Source	Potential Projects
Welsh Government	Various current priorities include improving town centres, bringing empty homes back into use, and investing in rail stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bring empty homes back into use</li> <li>▪ Improve the physical environment of the Town</li> <li>▪ Improve the sense of arrival by rail</li> </ul>
ERDF	JESSICA Urban Development Fund totalling £55 million for investment in regeneration e.g. Mixed use development on brownfield sites. Council has been successful in securing £2m for streetscape and building enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extensive highway or infrastructure projects that facilitate development</li> <li>▪ Support investors to develop new business space</li> </ul>
Flintshire Council	The Council has a limited amount of capital resources that it can use to support the delivery of the Strategy. Other sources of funding will be realised through supporting new development including S106 contributions, CIL etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New housing</li> <li>▪ Public realm and landscape improvements</li> <li>▪ Accessibility improvements</li> </ul>
Regional Transport Plan	The Taith Consortia cover the six County Council's in North Wales. The Consortia develops and priorities initiatives and schemes to be considered as part of the annual funding programme (the programmes run from 2010 to 2015), which has around £4m funding for each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highway feasibility/modelling and delivery</li> </ul>
Communities First	Improving quality of life in most disadvantaged areas by bringing together funding and support to get local people involved in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the physical environment of the Town - through voluntary community projects</li> </ul>

Source	Priority of Funding Source	Potential Projects
	improving their own community and prospects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of green link harnessing the Town's existing open/green space?</li> </ul>
ARBED	Energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies in existing homes within deprived areas in Wales including the retro fitting of existing homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbishment of the tower blocks to improve quality and energy efficiency</li> </ul>
Sustainable Building Envelope Demonstration (SBED)	Pilot scheme to explore the use of integrated solar thermal and photovoltaic technologies on a range of buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbishment of the tower blocks to improve quality and energy efficiency</li> </ul>
Cadw	<p>Cadw aim to conserve Welsh heritage, help people understand their history and sustain the distinctive character of Wales. Available grants include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic Buildings Grant - up to £5,000 for historic building repair which stimulates regeneration and/or helps save listed buildings that are 'at risk'</li> <li>Civic Initiative (Heritage) Grants - up to £5,000 to voluntary organisations for small-scale projects which help to preserve, enhance or improve the historic environment of Wales and increase social awareness of Welsh heritage e.g. plaques</li> <li>Heritage Tourism Project - to develop heritage tours, trails and events packages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the attractiveness of the Castle and Waterfront e.g. lighting</li> <li>Better promotion of Flint Castle including reintroduction of 'symbols' trail</li> <li>Strengthen links between the Castle and the Town - Heritage timeline?</li> <li>Consider further improvements to the setting of the Town Hall and other historic buildings</li> <li>Creation of an interpretation point at the Castle</li> <li>More tourist information points in the Town - Interpretation point at Castle/Dee Estuary</li> </ul>
THI	£1.6 million (from consortium including Town Council, Lottery and Cadw) is available to improve shop frontages and buildings, and bring vacant floorspace back into use in Flint within THI area - Church Street and part of Chester Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the physical environment of the Town</li> <li>Consider further improvements to the setting of the Town Hall and other historic buildings</li> <li>Bring empty spaces above shops back into use</li> </ul>
EirGrid Disruption Fund	€100,000 to be spent in Flint to compensate locals for disruption on the A55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£20,000 agreed for environmental improvements to St Mary's and St David's Church</li> <li>New homes delivered</li> </ul>
Private Sector	Developers, RSL and developer contributions and S106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various</li> </ul>
Empty Homes Fund	Up to £25,000 (75%) towards renovation costs to bring problematic vacant properties in areas of housing need back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring empty homes back into use</li> </ul>

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- 6.12 Having engaged with a wide range of partners in the preparation of the Strategy and Masterplan, it will be critical to ensure that these partners receive regular updates on progress. To support this it will be critical to ensure careful monitoring is undertaken of key criteria to demonstrate progress.
- 6.13 Key indicators that could be monitored are as follows:

Indicator	Source
Retail vacancy rate of high street	Council
Retail ranking	VenueScore
Count of footfall	HMG and primary research
Annual number of visitors	Visit Wales
New homes completed	Annual Monitoring Report
Empty buildings (residential and commercial) brought back into use	Council
Average house prices	Land Registry
Business enquiries	Council
New business starts	Council and VAT Registrations
Hits to Flint website	Council
Buildings Improved (e.g. through THI)	Council
Incidences of street crime recording	Police Authority