6 The area development framework plan
The ADF plan provides a two dimensional interpretation of a potential new future for Dudley town centre. As an ‘end state’ plan it reflects an anticipated programme of both incremental and comprehensive redevelopment, change of use, conversion and environmental enhancement through the involvement of landowners, developers, businesses, residents and public authorities over a period of ten years or more.

The pattern of built development is the most prominent feature of the plan but is predicated upon:

- A rationale for strategic access
- A comprehensive car parking strategy
- An urban design framework in which the network and character of routes, public spaces and key linkages is highlighted
- A broad definition of activity and character which is determined by the predominant land uses and the nature of the public realm

### Strategic access

The priorities in terms of access are to:

- Remove extraneous traffic from the town centre
- Maintain parking levels targeted at meeting the needs of shoppers
- Encourage and facilitate use of public transport through provision of Midland Metro improvements to the bus station and the location of intensive uses (such as new council offices and retail development adjoining transport nodes)

The access strategy promotes a clear hierarchy of routes and priorities around and within the town centre. The ambition is to define a strategic outer route, to accommodate traffic by-passing the town. This will necessitate improvements at some key junctions and a new signage strategy.

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Key radial access routes feed into an inner ‘circular’ route from which the main town centre car parks are accessed. To discourage through traffic from using New Mill Street and the easterly section of Wolverhampton Street a new road link from the Flood Street roundabout to Martin Hill Street is needed. Priority movement around Top Church will need to be facilitated and access/egress from the junction of New Mill Street will need to be restricted.

Vehicular traffic will continue to be allowed into the core of the town centre but priority will be afforded to pedestrian and cycle movement, through a combination of design and regulatory measures.

Conventional two way traffic movement will be permitted wherever practicable. Vehicular access across the town centre and to the southern by-pass from the south-east is constrained with many drivers opting to take the shorter route along Blackacre Road, which is a residential street not designed for strategic traffic. Development proposals for the Flood Street/New Mill Gate area would restrict current access to the by-pass thus exerting more pressure on Blackacre Road. An alternative route would, therefore, be required to alleviate this problem and to maximise the development potential of the Flood Street area. A new link road between the Flood Street roundabout and Hall Street would provide a solution to this issue.

The strategy for parking seeks to maintain the current level of parking provision, ensuring that it is evenly distributed around the town, has minimal impact upon the public realm and is safe and convenient for users. This is to be achieved through a combination of measures:

- Meeting the needs of short stay visitors by maintaining and increasing the stock of on-street parking, where it does not conflict with other priorities within the public realm. The main opportunity for new on-street parking is as part of the environmental enhancement of King Street; somewhere in the order of 200 parking bays could be incorporated into the redesigned streetscape.
- Providing a new, light, modern and airy multi-deck car park between Castle Street and Tower Street to replace the existing surface car parks on the north-west side of the town and rebalance the distribution around the town.
- Condensing surface parking in the Flood Street area into multi-deck parking to release land for new development.
- Introducing a consistent charging and enforcement regime for the whole town centre.
- Encouraging the provision of undercroft or on-plot car parking discretely accommodated within courtyards within the centre of development blocks within new residential development.

The urban design framework

Building upon the hierarchy of routes defined above, the urban design framework acknowledges the importance of preserving key streets and public spaces within the historic parts of the town centre and creating a new structure of streets and urban spaces south of King Street.

King Street/Trindle Road emerges as the critical ‘seam’ between the new and established urban quarters. Its character and function is to be fundamentally altered to ensure it effectively knits together the two halves of the town centre. In terms of the public realm it is to be fashioned as a high quality, tree lined boulevard. Key points of connection across the route, particularly around the junction with Flood Street, should be designed to prioritise pedestrian movement and embody a sense of place (this might, for example, be achieved by setting back buildings to create a small square).

In addition to its function as an attractive pedestrian environment King Street will become an important public transport corridor. Bus stops can be
accommodated along the westerly section of King Street and the metro will be accommodated between the bus station and Flood Street. The removal of private vehicular traffic from the section between Hall Street and Flood Street will allow greater opportunity for the sensitive integration of the metro and improvement in the pedestrian environment.

Pedestrian movement is to be prioritised throughout the core of the town centre but the importance of examining the potential for new pedestrian links across the by-pass and into the castle/zoo from the Broadway are particularly highlighted.

A number of important long range views and vistas exist within the town centre, particularly to the castle, top and bottom church. It will be important to maintain and frame these views in bringing forward proposals for new development. The town centre possesses some of the most prominent topographical features within the Black Country and it is therefore particularly important to explore, as part of the urban design framework, the potential to create illuminated beacons, to facilitate delivery of the Black Country urban park, referred to in section 2 of this report. The castle and top church are the two most dominant historical features which could be illuminated with a sensitive lighting strategy. The area of the bus station (defined as ‘Prospect Hill’ in section 7 of this report) would lend itself to a more contemporary beacon structure which signalled the renaissance of Dudley. The beacon structure could be designed as a tourist attraction in its own right and might be combined with a facility to orientate visitors to the town centre and neighbouring tourist attractions.