7 Delivering the vision - opportunity areas

Within the town centre there are nine areas of the town which represent either immediate priority for action and/or they are already the subject of development pressure (in some cases the areas incorporate the opportunity sites identified within the UDP, policy DCT2). The remainder of this report and the accompanying implementation plan focus upon the potential of these opportunity areas to contribute to delivering the vision for Dudley town centre and the actions that will be necessary to secure change within the short to medium term. This does not preclude or diminish the importance of investment or the scope for change elsewhere within the centre. It simply reflects the council’s wish to prioritise use of its resources to kick start and progress projects which will have a significant impact and act as a catalyst for wider change.

The nine opportunity areas are:

- Priory Place
- Tower Street
- Prospect Hill
- Cavendish Quarter
- Central Union
- New Mill Gate
- Priory Street
- Trident Triangle
- South West Gateway

Each of the nine opportunity areas are described in more detail below. An overall vision for the opportunity area, which accords with the ADF objectives, is then presented along with guidance on the development and public realm components which developers should consider in assembling development proposals. The vision is flexible in nature. Reference should be made to the current development plan for specific requirements in relation to individual development proposals.
Priory Place

Area description

The Priory Place opportunity area is located in the north west of the town centre and is 3.19 hectares in size. It adjoins Priory Road, an important approach into Dudley town centre and Ednam Road. There are extensive school playing fields adjoining the site to the west. The site is currently used for a mixture of surface parking and playing fields with the Edwardian villas fronting Ednam Road used for office purposes.

The area corresponds with the opportunity site G designation for the Priory Road car park in the UDP (policy DTC2 XI). The UDP promotes residential and office uses on the site with design requirements focused on low rise, high density development with good quality elevations, sensitive boundary treatments and the retention of trees and vegetation.

Vision

Reflecting the areas established Edwardian character, Priory Place will be a high quality residential quarter with development focussed on the Priory fields open space and Priory Road.

A mixture of apartments and town houses will be set within a formal layout of tree lined streets and garden courts. Apartment buildings will front Priory fields to take advantage of the open aspect and town houses will be arranged on the remainder of the site, responding to the scale of development on Priory Road and Ednam Road.

Parking will be discretely accommodated within the centre of development blocks. As the town centre and Priory Park are only a short distance away a key feature of development at Priory Place will be creating good linkages to these places through the orientation and layout of streets.
Development components

**Access** – vehicular access should be taken from Priory Road with good pedestrian linkages to Priory fields and Priory Road. The principal site access should be a shared surface.

**Key frontages** – strong, well defined frontage development should be provided to Priory Road and Priory fields. The site access street should also be fronted by development.

**Gateways** – the principal access point onto Priory Road should be emphasised through strong built form at the corners.

**Viewpoints and vistas** – there is a key viewpoint from Priory fields and a strong development edge should be provided.

**Built form** – the form of the development should respond to the height and character of the Edwardian villas in the area with a mixture of two and three storey apartments and town houses provided.

**Density** – high density residential development should maximise the use of this brown field site.

**Mix of uses** – residential development only.

**Accommodating the car** – car parking should be provided within private courtyards and mews, enhanced and softened through appropriate tree and shrub planting. Provision must also be made for secure bicycle storage within the site as well as for visitors. Internal access and parking areas should be well surveilled from adjoining residential properties.

**Public realm** – development must complement the tree lined character of local streets, with ‘villa’ blocks set in well planted plots. There should be a clear distinction between the public street frontage on Priory Road and the more private parking and courtyard areas.
Area description

The Tower Street opportunity area is centrally located in Dudley town centre to the north of the Market Place and is focused on Tower Street and Castle Street. The area is broadly defined by The Broadway, Castle Street and Coronation Gardens to the north west. The area comprises a mix of vacant sites, currently used for surface parking. Empty buildings including the former fire station and retail units mainly fronting Castle Street. These will form the focus for development and re-development. Other uses include shops, public houses, small office units, the police station and Baylies’s Hall.

The area includes the Castle Street (site a) and Tower Street (site b) opportunity sites (policy DTC (III)and DTC (IV)) designated within the UDP. A broad mix of preferred uses are identified within the UDP including residential, retail, food and drink, office and business development, leisure and hotel uses within DTC2(IV) and residential and leisure within block DTC2(V).

There is a requirement for the provision of a multi level car park accessible from Tower Street. Design requirements focus on the provision of strong elevations with design that is in keeping with Dudley’s historic character. Servicing and parking should be within the centre of development blocks and particular attention should be paid to emphasising views to the castle.

Vision

With commanding views of the castle the Tower Street area will become a centre for high quality mixed use development. New development opportunities will focus on maintaining and enhancing the considerable townscape character of the area ‘stitching’ new buildings and development amongst the existing. New retail units with apartments above will be introduced along Castle Street to replace the current 1960’s units and a new multi deck car park will be incorporated discretely behind this frontage.

Development along Tower Street will utilise currently vacant sites and re-use existing buildings such as the fire station. A mixture of small office courts and apartments will be introduced around the Tower Street and the Broadway junction, strengthening the urban form of this area and providing an enhanced setting for Baylies’s Hall. Cafés and bars will be developed around the current fire station providing a courtyard development to the rear of the building and a mix of new apartments overlooking the public gardens beyond.
Accessibility and pedestrian routes will be improved through enhancements to the public realm and by strengthening the role and character of Green Man Entry between Castle Street and Tower Street.

Development components

Access – pedestrian access should be available to all development frontages with Green Man Entry retained and enhanced through new paving, lighting and landscape planting. Vehicular access to development should be taken from Tower Street.

Key frontages – strong, well defined frontage development should be provided along Tower Street, Castle Street, The Broadway and Coronation Gardens. Frontage development along Castle Street should be continuous.

Corners and landmarks – corners at the Tower Street and Broadway junction should be well defined by strong built form. Local landmarks including Baylies’s Hall, the old fire station and police station should be retained with enhanced settings.

Viewpoints and vistas – key views towards the castle, to the north east down Tower Street, must be maintained. Built form should guide the eye towards the castle through completing development frontages along Tower Street.

Built form – predominantly four storey development carefully designed and articulated to ‘stitch’ into existing retained development and complement the historic character of the town centre.

Density – high density development should maximise the re-use of these key town centre sites.

Mix of uses – a broad mix of town centre uses should be accommodated within the opportunity area. Retail, which might include a small foodstore, should front Castle Street with apartments provided above. A multi-deck car park should be provided within the centre of the block. Small office suites could occupy the area around the Tower Street and the Broadway junction with a mixture of apartments and A3 uses occupying the area around the old fire station and overlooking Coronation Gardens.

Accommodating the car – a principal component will be a multi-deck car park for around 400 spaces accommodated within the centre of the development block between Castle Street and Tower Street. Access should be from Tower Street. Residential development should provide semi basement or centre block parking as necessary. Secure bicycle parking should also be provided within development sites and on-street utilising Sheffield stands or similar.

Servicing – retail units should be serviced from the rear accessed from Tower Street.

Public realm – principal public realm components should include enhancements to the setting of Baylies’s Hall, the old fire station and to Green Man Entry. A new development edge will improve the setting of Coronation Gardens.
Prospect Hill

Area description

Prospect Hill opportunity area is located to the east of Market Place focused on the site of Dudley bus station. It is currently dominated by bus stops and roadway and lacks any character or buildings of note. It is a particularly hostile environment for pedestrians. To the south is a small food store currently occupied by Kwik Save.

Part of the site, around Birdcage Walk and the upper part of King Street, is identified within the UDP as a priority renewal area (policy DTC2 (II)). A mix of preferred and acceptable uses are identified including retail, financial and professional, food and drink, residential and office uses. Design requirements focus on the reconfiguration of Birdcage Walk and the King Street frontages including the redesign of the existing retail units and improvements to pedestrian circulation.

Vision

Prospect Hill is one the highest points in Dudley town centre commanding fine views to St Edmund’s Church (bottom church), the castle and towards Birmingham. The role of the area as a principal arrival point into the town centre will be considerably strengthened through the introduction of a modern public transport interchange between Midland Metro and bus services. The prominence of the location and its role as a gateway could be reinforced through the creation of a landmark structure which is visible across the wider area; this could incorporate an illuminated beacon that helps realise the Black Country urban park proposals.

To complement this role the quality of the public realm will also be enhanced through the formation of a new civic square with formal tree planting and a central pavilion building that could function as a tourist information/travel centre perhaps incorporating a café. In order to facilitate this transformation the existing 1970’s built Kwik Save foodstore will be relocated and the building demolished. This will provide a new frontage to Birdcage Walk.
New office buildings will help define and contain the space to the north and east with frontage development introducing small retail uses at ground floor level. Finally, Birmingham Street will be re-opened to the north carrying the tram and improving pedestrian routes to the castle and Dudley zoo.

Development components

Access – proposals will accommodate Midland Metro route from King Street through a new Birmingham Street alignment giving access towards the castle and zoo. Pedestrian accessibility will be improved along this route and also through opening up Birdcage Walk. Buses will access the bus station from Trindle Road.

Key frontages – frontages must define the proposed new square at the heart of the opportunity area. A strong built form should also front Trindle Road opposite Cavendish House and also at the Birmingham Street/King Street/Trindle Road junction.

Gateways – the whole opportunity area must be considered as a principal gateway into the town centre and as such should be developed to an extremely high quality.

Corners and landmarks – key corner sites at the Birmingham Street/King Street/Trindle Road junction should be re-enforced through built form, and opportunities should be considered for the installation of public art to provide further emphasis. Building corners on Birmingham Road should also be re-enforced when viewed from the northern approach into the opportunity area. A landmark opportunity should be considered within the public space through provision of a stand-alone structure which might incorporate a beacon.

Viewpoints and vistas – important views towards the castle, to St Edmund’s church spire and longer views towards Birmingham to the north west should be preserved.

Built form – buildings should respond to the scale of the new open space at the centre of the opportunity area, clearly containing and defining the space whilst preserving views out from it. Development of up to six stories should front the Trindle Road/Birmingham Street triangle, and development of up to three stories should front the north of the opportunity area, close to St Edmund’s Church, preserving views of the church tower.

Mix of uses – offices and/or residential units should be the predominant land use for new development with convenience retail at ground floor. This would be a good location for the council to meet its need for new office accommodation. Café, tourist information and travel shop uses would complement the overall function of the opportunity area as a transport interchange and gateway to the town centre and the Black Country.

Accommodating the car – car parking as required should be discretely accommodated within the centre of new development blocks. Secure cycle parking should also be provided for new development and within the new square to complement the interchange facility.

Public realm – enhancements to the public realm must set a quality standard for the town centre and establish the location as a key public space. Tree planting should be carried out along King Street, Birmingham Street, Trindle Road and around Birdcage Walk. Bus and tram infrastructure should be co-ordinated with the overall streetscape design.