

Leek Neighbourhood Plan

April 2020



AECOM

Town Centre Design Code

Quality information

Document name	Ref	Prepared for	Prepared by	Date	Reviewed by
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Second Draft	07/04/2020	Second Draft including Leek NPSG comments on first draft.	BM	Becky Mather	Regional Director
Final Draft	17/04/2020	Final Draft including Leek NPSG final comments.	BM	Becky Mather	Regional Director

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Market Place

Introduction

01

1.1 Background

Leek in Staffordshire has formulated a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) in order to shape and influence development within their area. The NPSG are in the process of writing their Neighbourhood Plan and aim to complete it in 2020.

Locality is the national membership network for community organisations that bring local people together to produce neighbourhood plans. Through Locality's support programme Leek's NPSG have appointed AECOM to undertake a number of studies which will underpin and provide an evidence base for their emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The NPSG have approached AECOM to conduct a design coding exercise within the Town Centre area alongside a design brief support package for a number of allocated housing sites to the east of the town centre.

1.2 Objective

The purpose of this report is to provide an appreciation of Leek's existing town character in order to create a set of Design Codes which must be adhered to in future development Town Centre developments. This will help to ensure that as new development comes forward, it supports and enhances the quality of the town's existing character and is in line with the aspirations of the local community, gathered from public consultation.

1.3 Timeline of Engagement

The process that was undertaken in order to produce this Design Code is as follows:

- AECOM's design team had an inception call on the 16th January 2019 with the Chair of Leek's NPSG in order to agree on the NPSG's preferred approach to the Design Code.
- On the 11th March 2019 AECOM representatives attended a site walkover in Leek followed by an inception meeting with members of Leek's NPSG in order to define the brief and direction for this Design Code document.
- AECOM produced a draft Design Code report and shared this with the NPSG for review.
- On the 9th October 2019 an engagement workshop was held in Leek in order to allow local opinion to be captured and represented in the final report.
- After capturing the feedback from the engagement workshop, AECOM completed and issued the final Design Code.

1.4 Document Structure

This Design Code document is divided into the following 7 sections:

- 1. Introduction:** outlining the background, purpose, process, study area and Design Code document structure;
- 2. Planning Review:** summarising the key policy and guidance documents which have an influence over development in Leek Town Centre;
- 3. Town Centre Assessment:** providing an understanding of the existing design qualities within the Town Centre to be reflected in the Design Codes;
- 4. Engagement:** presenting the results from the consultation process;
- 5. Design Codes:** illustrating the codes which have been developed with the NPSG;
- 6. Character Area Design Codes:** identifying which of the codes apply to different areas across the town; and
- 7. Next Steps:** Providing guidance on how the Design Code document should be used, by whom and how they should engage with the NPSG.



Design Code study area

1.5 Study Area

The Neighbourhood Plan area comprises of the whole of Leek including Leek's rural settlement edge. The focus of this study is on Leek's Town Centre, in particular the retail core, in order to focus the group's influence over the future of the Town Centre.



— Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary
 □ Design Code Study Area

Leek Neighbourhood Plan area boundary and Design Code study area



Town Centre Study Area

Planning Review

02

2.1 Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version February 2018

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan contains policies relating to; tourism and cultural development in town centres, primary shopping frontages, design considerations, the historic environment and development, Leek's area strategy and sustainable transport.

Within the Local Plan document, town centre uses which should be promoted are identified including; start-up businesses, B1(a) and B1 (b) service sector uses as well as knowledge based and creative industries. The uses promoted in the Local Plan will allow for the development of appropriate design coding for potential changes of use within the study area. This will be of particular importance to ensure that new development and new occupiers adhere to the Town Centre's character.

Sensitive design interventions can be identified in order to uplift the quality of the town centre offer. The Design Code will develop guidance on the appropriate design of public spaces, streets and buildings within the study area which will also help to improve links between key areas across the town. Connectivity, along with legibility, is key to increasing pedestrian journeys and footfall and a cornerstone of sustainability.

Many of the buildings within Leek Town Centre are heritage and cultural assets. The Design Code will support the conservation and enhancement of these buildings, prohibiting development which would undermine and negatively affect these assets or their setting.

The Design Code will suggest effective ways of establishing the Market Place as a central feature by providing codes which could improve the quality of this space as a gateway to the Town Centre.

Outside of Leek's retail core there are ambitions to improve the pedestrian and cycle links between the town centre and Brough Park, Westwood College, Leek High School and Churnet Valley Middle School. Increasing cycling contributes to a healthier town.

A key principle of the Design Code will be to ensure that future development within Leek Town Centre, relating to buildings or the public realm, is **designed to encourage cycling and is accessible for all**.

2.2 Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD 2018

The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide (SMDG) provides guidance on new development in a historic setting as well as shop frontage and signage design guidance. These elements of the SMDG document will help to develop Design Codes within Leek's historic Town Centre.

Important points will be taken from the SMDG to develop the Design Code. These will include:

- Adapting corporate signage and colour schemes to suit the local area;
- Designing shop frontages and signage and illuminations to respect and complement the host building and street scene;
- Using traditional and local materials and finishes such as timber with a painted finish as well as stone, slate, tile, brick;
- Improving dignified access to buildings and spaces and increasing security by overlooking public spaces;
- Applying locally distinctive paving features and boundaries;

- Landscaping to promote pedestrian priority over vehicles.
- Ornamentation and variations to window and door surrounds;
- Avoiding the use of UPVc windows and doors and carefully installing double glazing on historic properties.

2.3 Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

In relation to the study area the Design Principles for Development in Staffordshire Moorlands document discusses repairs and alterations to historic buildings. Specifically the document covers repairs and alterations to; roofs, walls, pointing, doors, windows and historic features. This will be referred to when discussing historic and listed buildings within Leek's Town Centre to protect and enhance these important assets.

2.4 Leek Town Centre Masterplan March 2014

The Leek Town Centre Masterplan identifies key town centre sites and sets design principles for a number of areas across the town. The focus areas identified in the Masterplan report will be reflected in the Design Code to help deliver these design principles consistently.

2.5 Leek Conservation Area Appraisal December 2017

Leek Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the key historic assets in Leek Town Centre as well as highlighting some of the **key views and vistas**. The Design Code will consider these assets and views. It will also code for the reinstatement of detailing on historic buildings, street furniture and signs and shop frontage design.



Leek Design Code Study Area, Town Centre Boundary and Conservation Area



Derby Street

Town Centre Assessment

03

3.1 Movement

Ashbourne Road, Buxton Road, Mill Street/Church Street, Broad Street and Compton are the main arrival roads providing access to Leek Town Centre from the surrounding towns.

Bath Street, Market Street, Ford Street, York Street and Deansgate are a grid of residential streets within the town centre.

Derby Street, Russell Street, Stanley Street, Sheep Market and Market Place are the town centre's core retail streets. Of these streets, Stanley Street and Sheep Market are a pedestrianised zone.

St Edwards Street, Brook Street, Haywood Street, Ball Haye Street and Stockwell Street form a loop around the town centre.

Access to Leek Town Centre by public transport is bus only. Bus stops are centrally located on Stockwell Street, Broad Street and at Leek's bus station behind The Smithfield Centre.

Accessing the town by private vehicle is convenient with a range of central surface car parks as well as on street parking bays. The result of this is cars dominate the public realm of the town centre streets.

The town centre can be accessed by bicycle however there are limited cycle parking facilities and no cycle lanes.

Leek is a walkable town centre with residential streets on all sides. However, there are no dedicated pedestrian crossing facilities on the west and south sides of the town over St Edward Street and Brook Street.



Russell Street



Stanley Street



Ashbourne Road



Brook Street



Haywood Street



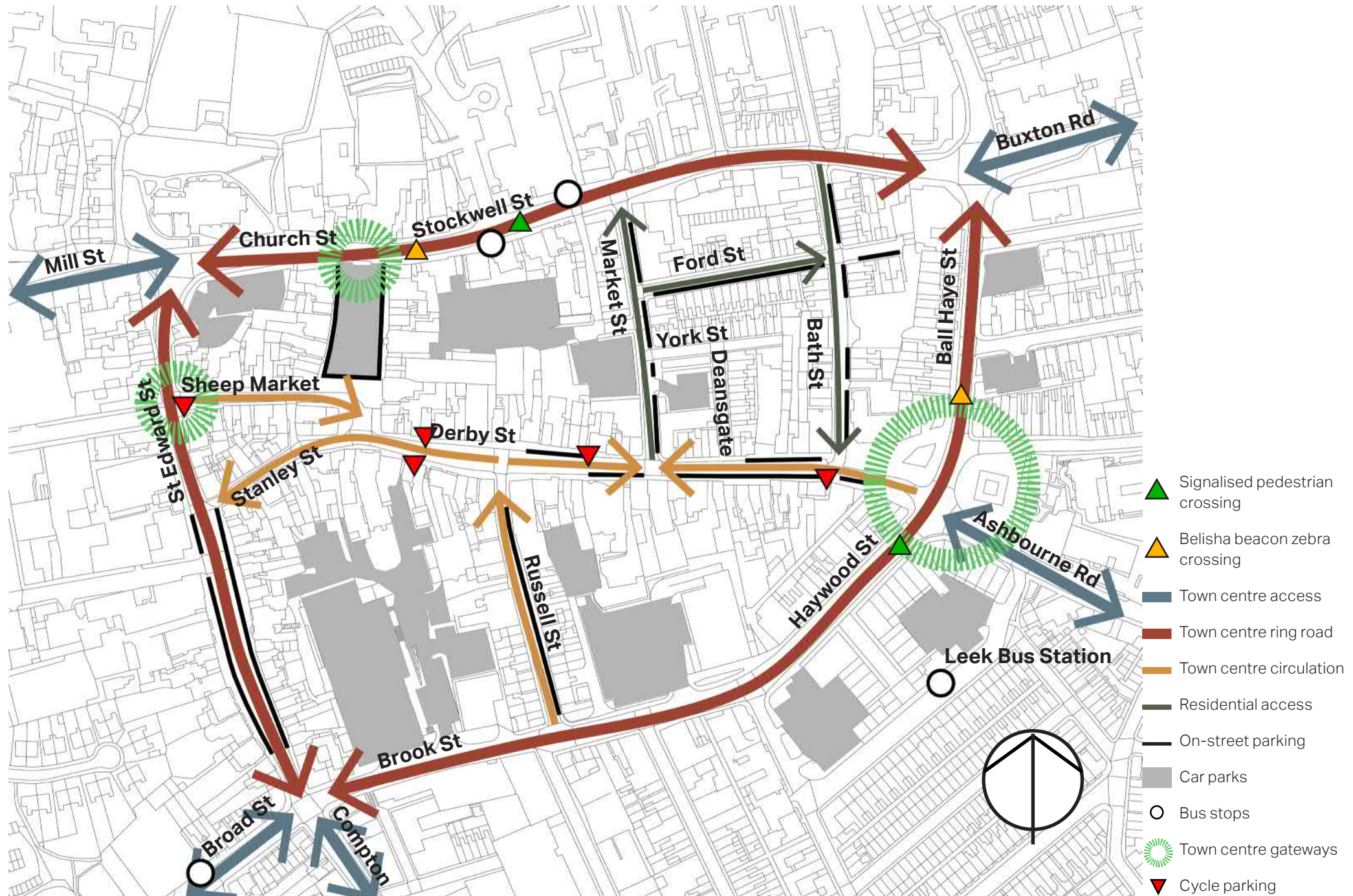
Market Place



St Edward Street



Derby Street



Town centre movement and arrival

3.2 Public Realm

Surfacing

The surfacing in the town centre is generally well maintained and helps to define the use of different spaces. The most recently surfaced area ties together the length of Derby Street with the Leek Monument using a natural stone material palette. The highway is surfaced with tarmac along this area with crossing points paved with natural stone and raised to the same level as the pavement to allow ease of movement for pedestrians. Temporary repairs of paved surfaces which have been carried out using tarmac should be replaced as soon as possible with materials matching the original and laid to the same surface pattern.

At the west end of Derby Street the surfacing scheme changes to a more dated herringbone brick shared surface zone which covers Sheep Market and Stanley Street. Areas where vehicular movement is permitted are defined in this area by a darker herringbone pattern brick surface which is slightly lower than the paving fronting the retail units.

The pavements on St Edward Street, the majority of Stockwell Street and the east end of Haywood Street are laid with square flag pavers. There are some points where the consistency of this paving scheme is fragmented with small areas surfaced with tarmac. Outside St Edward's Church on Church Street/Stockwell Street the pavement is covered with larger flag stones from a separate surfacing scheme.

The surfaces in the centre of Market Place and along Getliffes Yard are sett-paved retaining the historic character of these spaces. The paving around the edge of Market place is fragmented with a mixture of historic York stone flags, more contemporary flags and tarmacked areas where flags have been removed.

The public realm within the Smithfield Centre is paved with a natural coloured brick laid in a basket weave pattern.

The town centre residential streets and remaining paved areas are all surfaced with tarmac.



York stone flag paving around Market Place



Tarmac paving along Market Street



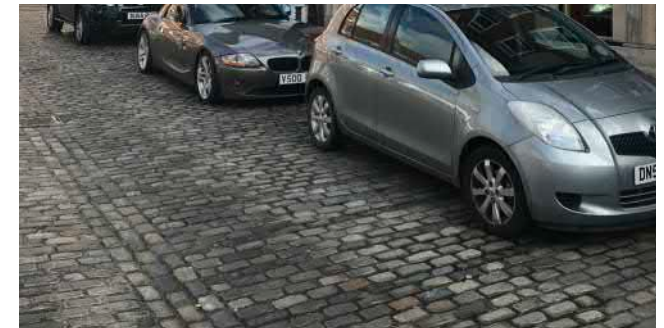
Basket weave pattern brick surfacing at the Smithfield Centre



Herringbone brick surface along Stanley Street



Natural stone paving scheme along Derby Street repaired with tarmac



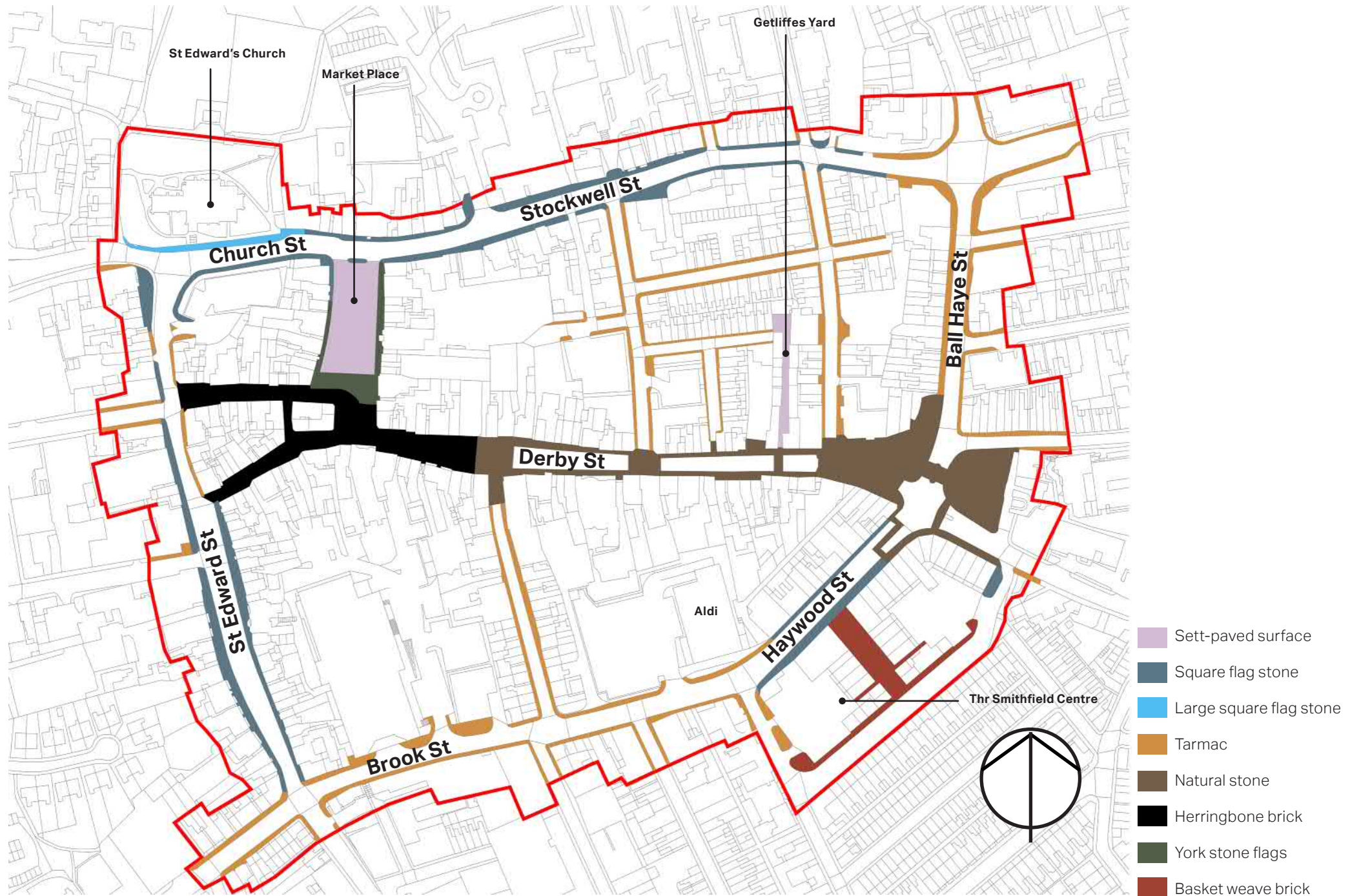
Sett-paved surface at Market Place



Square flag pavement along St Edwards Street



Sett-paved surfacing at Getliffes Yard



Surfacing

AECOM

Street furniture and landscaping

The adjacent plan illustrates the location of Leek Town Centre's street furniture and landscaping. The town centre character is well defined with a consistent use of street furniture which ties together Leek's streets and spaces. The following elements can be found across the study area.

Decorative street lighting

St Edward Street and Derby Street are lined with decorative street lighting which ties these streets together and contributes to the historic high street feel.

Street trees

Derby street is lined with contemporary tree planters which complement the high quality surfacing scheme.

Market Street (East) car park and Silk Street car park have tree planting along the perimeter of the car park which reduces the visual impact of the parked cars on the town centre.

Litter bins

Litter bins are generally conveniently placed along the main shopping streets and public spaces but none of these provide options to recycle.

Planters or raised beds

There are a number of planters and raised beds within the town centre which are irregularly distributed. At Sparrow Park the raised beds are a focal point surrounded by seating.

Wayfinding signage

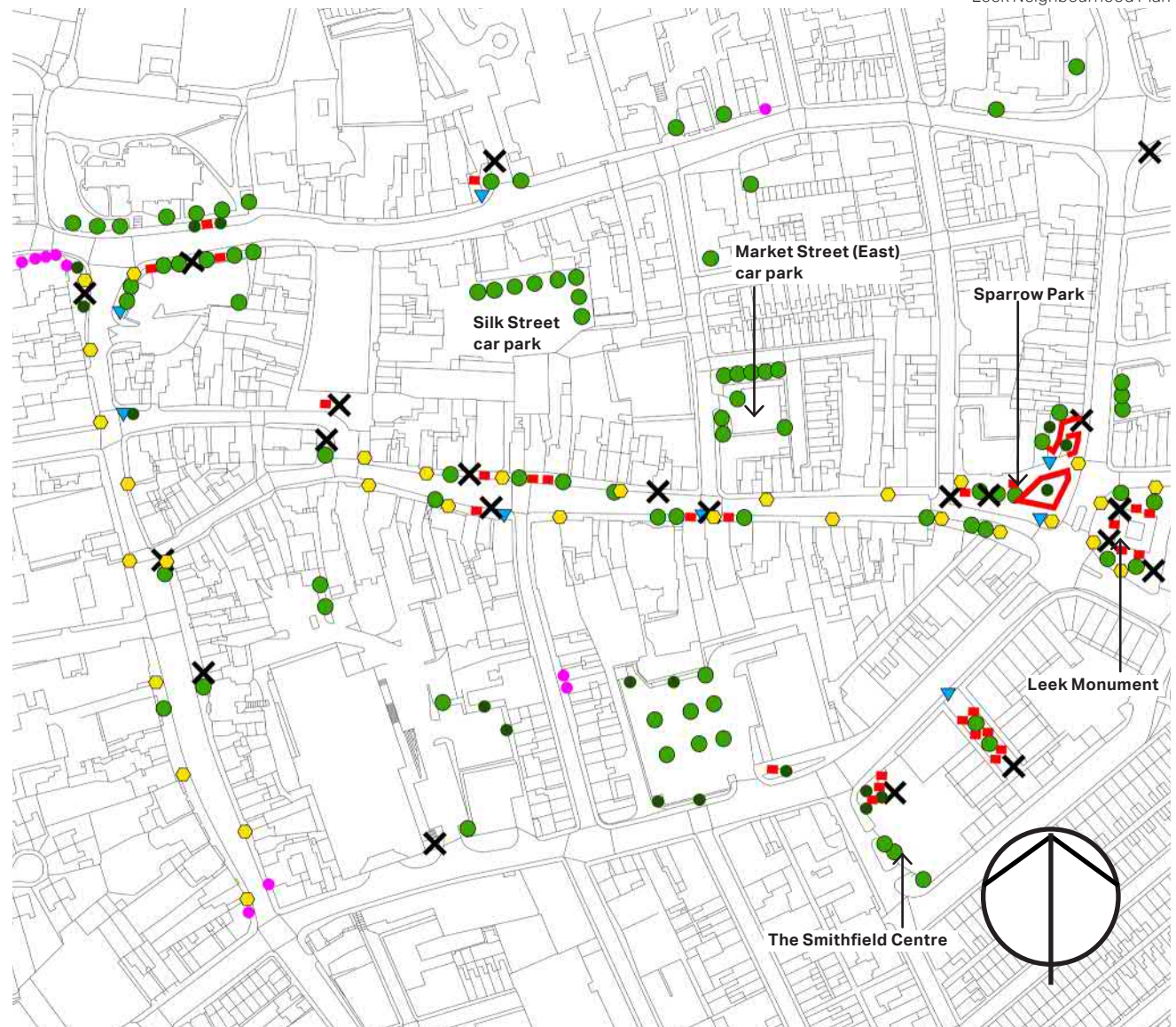
Wayfinding signage is located at a number of points across the town identifying key locations and attractions.

Hanging baskets

There are many hanging baskets and floral displays across the town which add vibrancy to the street scene.

Benches

Benches are well distributed across the town and are focussed in areas with a high quality public realm such as at Sparrow Park and around the Leek Monument.



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Street tree |  Bench |
|  Litter bin |  Decorative street lamp |
|  Planter or raised bed |  Hanging basket |
|  Wayfinding signage | |



Decorative street lighting on Derby Street



Tree planters on Derby Street



Wayfinding signage on Derby Street



A flowerbed and landscaping adjacent to the Smithfield Centre



Contemporary seating on Derby Street



Leek Town Council information board on Derby Street



Benches, sculptures and trees at The Smithfield Centre



A raised flowerbed on Sheep Market



Contemporary seating, landscaping and hanging baskets at Sparrow Park



Street tree on St Edward Street
AECOM



Hanging basket post on Derby Street



Street trees, benches and bins on Church Street

3.4 Townscape and Views

Within the Leek Conservation Area Appraisal Leek is described as a town which is 'on a hill, in a valley'. This elevated position has resulted with key points in Leek's town centre where fragmented long distance views towards the surrounding countryside can be seen.

Although these views are only small glimpses of the surrounding landscape they contribute to Leek's rural town character. In addition to the surrounding landscape, Leek has many key views of landmark buildings within the town's rich built heritage. The below images and adjacent plan illustrate these key view points.



1. Long distance view from Broad Street



4. Long distance view from Strangman Street



6. Long distance view from Stockwell Street



9. Long distance view from Ball Haye Street



11. Long distance view from Church Street



2. Trinity Church



7. Butter Market



3. View from Derby Street towards Leek Monument



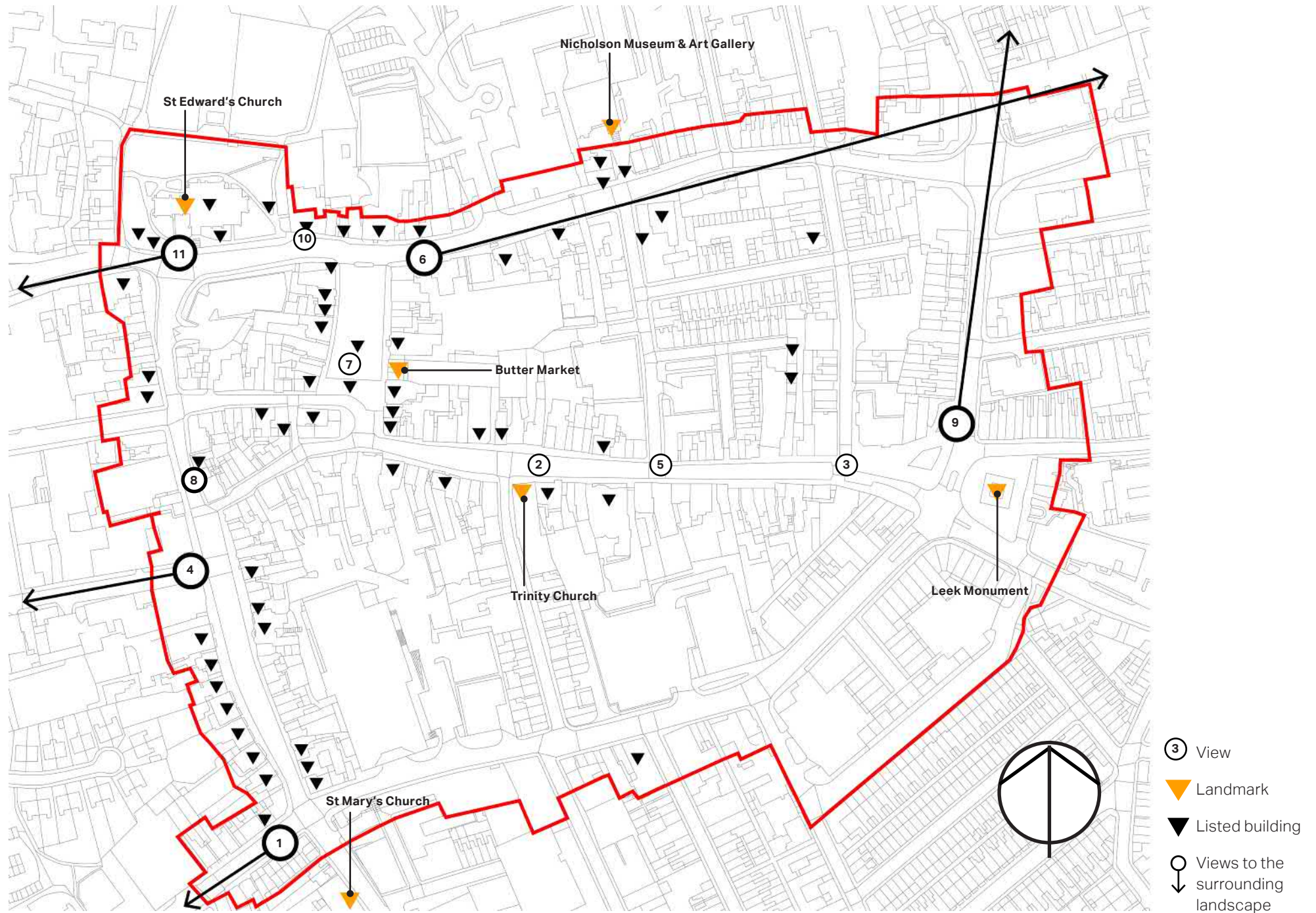
5. View down Market Street towards Nicholson Museum & Art Gallery



8. View down St Edward Street towards St Mary's Church



10. St Edwards Church



3.2 Place and Character

The site walkover conducted on the 11th March 2019 highlighted that Leek Town Centre has a number of definable character areas and streets. These were discussed in the following inception meeting and agreed on as areas where street or area specific Design Codes could be applied. These broadly align with the town centre areas defined in the Leek Town Centre Masterplan.

The areas are:

- 1. Smithfield Character Area**
- 2. Derby Street Character Area**
- 3. Town Centre Housing Character Area**
- 4. Russell Street Character Area**
- 5. St Edward Street Character Area**
- 6. Market Place Character Area**

1. The Smithfield Centre is a shopping centre on Heywood Street. Being a much later addition to much of the town centre building stock, The Smithfield Centre is not typical of Leek's historic town character. The structure is wrapped with business frontages with the paved area in front covered by a fixed canopy. The Centre also has a partially covered internal courtyard with outdoor seating and trees. In addition there are some other later additions in this character area such as Aldi on Haywood Street and Wilko on Brook Street.

2. Derby Street, Stanley Street and Sheep Market are well connected with active business frontages along the street which is reinforced by a consistency of street furniture and occupied business frontages for the whole length of this area. Derby Street suffers from excessive use by cars on Saturdays in particular. This has led to congestion, air pollution and pedestrian safety issues.

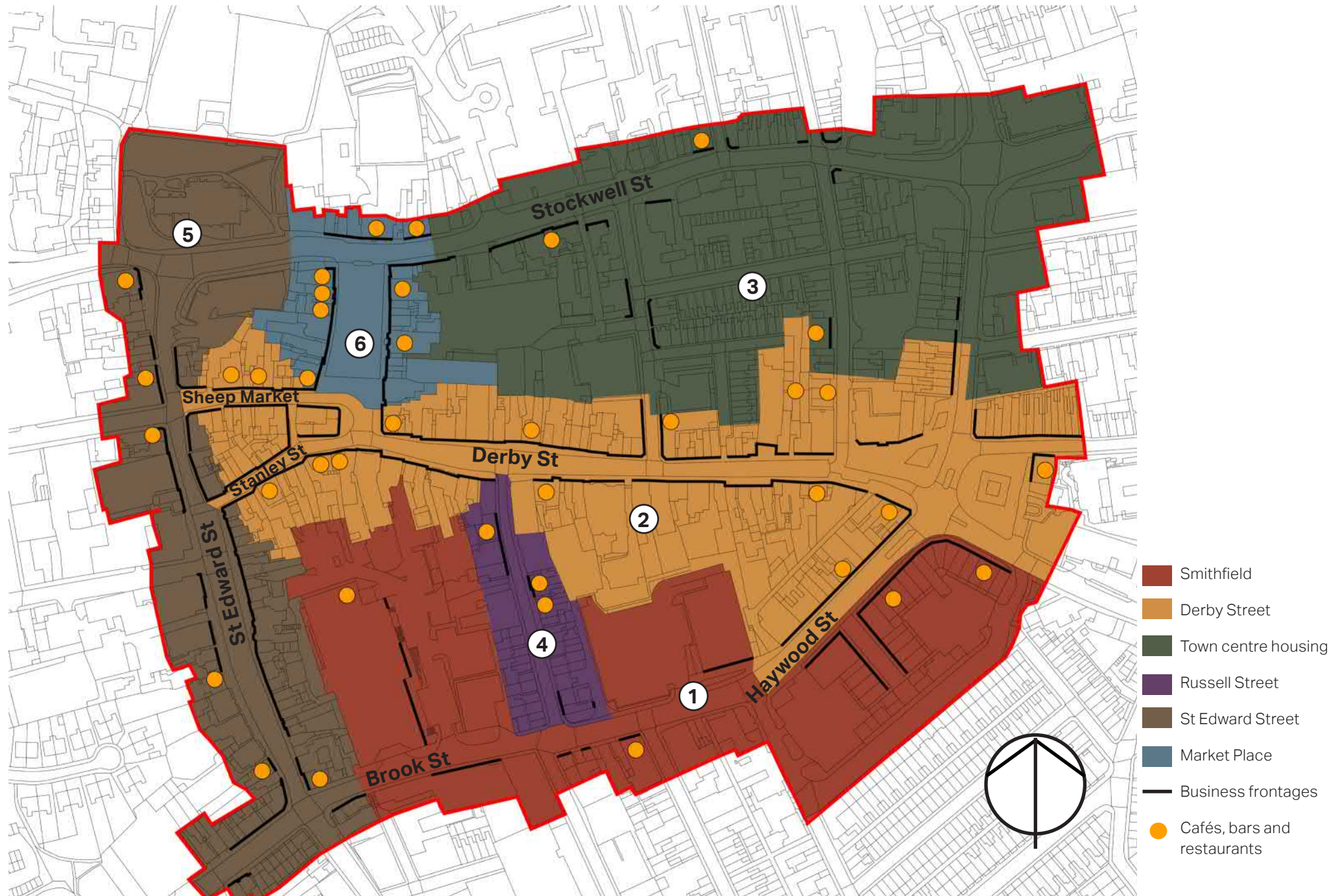
3. The Town Centre Housing Character Area comprises a number of streets including Market Street, Ford Street, Bath Street York Street and Deansgate which are predominantly occupied with red brick terraced housing. Stockwell Street passes through this area and parking is interspersed within the gridded streets.

4. Russell Street slopes down from Derby Street connecting to Haywood Street and is occupied by a mixture of terraced housing and independent businesses and bars. The narrow width of the street gives a sense of enclosure and a character which is well suited to the boutique style retailers. The street is more fragmented than the other retail streets in the town centre and has a sense of separation from the town as a result of lack of vegetation and an indistinctive public realm.

5. St Edward Street is a curved and sloping street which connects Church Street with the junction of Broad Street, Brook Street and Compton, occupied by independent businesses. The street is adorned with historic buildings alongside some more contemporary additions. The street is lined with wide pavements however the on-street parking dominates the street scene.

6. Market Place is Leek's historic town square and place where outdoor markets were and still are still held. The square is wrapped by historic buildings which are predominantly three storeys high with a wide range of detailing from the Tudor beams on The Bird in Hand pub to Georgian multi-paned glazing on several buildings. The variety of materials and detailing in the square establish Market Place as an interesting and characterful place.

The adjacent plan illustrates where these areas are and identifies where business frontages predominate and specifically where these businesses are cafés, restaurants, pubs or bars. It is clear that Market Place, Sheep Market, Stanley Street, Derby Street and St Edwards Street have the highest concentration of businesses in the town centre. There is also a focus of cafés, bars, and restaurants in the Market Place, Sheep Market and Stanley Street area.



Business frontages and character areas

Frontages

Leek's town centre has a market town feel with a buzz of activity along the main shopping streets. The historic buildings are largely to thank for this in addition to the way many of the retail frontages have been designed.

For example, many of the shops have adopted spill-out displays which bring their products out onto the pavement and give a more market stall feel to a shop.

The signage which has been used on many of the retail units has been toned down in order to reduce the impact that it has on the often historic host buildings. This is particularly prevalent with the national brands which are present in the town centre and has resulted in the historic character of the town centre being preserved.

A lot of the cafés, bars and restaurants in the town centre have tables and chairs outside bringing the activity out on to the street and livening up the town centre. Some of these also have traditional shop front canopies which further establishes the market town feel that Leek has.

On the opposite page is a selection of town centre business frontages which are in keeping with the Leek's historic character (notice the small size and placement of branding particularly).



A national high street brand with toned down signage on Heywood Street



A national high street brand with toned down signage at Market Place



A national high street brand with toned down signage on Derby Street



Outdoor seating and canopies on Sheep Market



Outdoor seating at Getliffes Yard



Outdoor seating on Derby Street



Spill-out product display on Broad Street



Spill-out product display on Fountain Street



Spill-out product display



Sheep Market

Engagement

04

4.1 Stage 1 Consultation

As part of Leek's NPSG's Neighbourhood Plan process a Stage 1 consultation was held which included a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of the following three questions:

1. What do you like about Leek
2. What don't you like about Leek
3. What improvements or changes do you want to see?

The following summaries were recorded based on the feedback from the questionnaire:

Q1. Leek Town Centre is highly valued for its unique character deriving from the good range of **independent shops, cafés, restaurants and public houses, the historic market**, its accessibility and welcoming atmosphere, and the active support for local traders provided by Totally Locally.

Q2. The main concerns about the town centre were the increasing number of empty shops, high business rates causing shop closures, the **unattractive Smithfield Centre**, the location of some markets outside Market Place, and the lack of a town vision.

Q3. The main improvements proposed for the town centre were to concentrate market activities in the Market Place and not use separate locations in the town, to support local businesses by reducing business rates, to put the Tourist Information Centre in a more accessible place and promote tourism, and to **protect the historic character** of the town by **preventing or removing inappropriate alterations to shop fronts**. Noteworthy individual suggestions were to use space above shops for residential accommodation, to create a programme of festivals in the town, to produce a town centre strategy, and to actively encourage quality retailers such as an M&S food store.

4.2 Design Code Consultation

In order to capture local opinion on which themes the Town Centre Design Code should be focussed, it was agreed with the NPSG that a further public consultation should be held. A questionnaire was prepared to focus the local responses on areas that could be influenced by the Design Code. The questionnaire comprised of the following:

1. Where in the town centre would you like to see bicycle parking facilities?
2. Do you think the car parks in Leek Town Centre need more vegetation?
3. Where are the blank walls in the town centre and would you like to see murals or green walls installed?
4. Would you like to see more seating areas in the town centre? If so, where?
5. Should the core streets within the town be shared with vehicles or used only by pedestrians and service vehicles? Do you think vehicular access to the core streets within the town centre should be restricted during shopping hours? If so, during which hours should vehicles be kept out?
6. Should there be parking on Derby Street? If so, should it be broken up by landscaping features?
7. Where should electric vehicle charging points be located in the town centre?
8. Should the surface materials along Stanley Street and Sheep Market be the same as Derby Street?
9. Should the sett paving on Market Place and Getliffes Yard be protected?
10. Do you think it is important that there are options to recycle waste for visitors to the town centre?
11. Do you think that wayfinding signage to the main town centre destinations should be improved?

For each of these questions space was provided to add further comments as well as a further box at the end of the questionnaire for additional comments. The feedback from the consultation which was held on the 9th October 2019 is summarised below:

- There was support for more **bicycle parking facilities**, particularly in Derby Street and Market Place.
- There was some support for more **vegetation planting in the car parks** and for **green walls**.
- There was some support for more **seating**, with **Sparrow Park and the Market Cross** area mentioned as locations.
- There was majority support for continuing the **shared use of town centres streets by motor vehicles**. However, at busy times this does cause congestion, pedestrian safety and air pollution problems, so needs to be limited.
- There was unanimous support for making **electric vehicle charging points** in all car parks mandatory.
- There was majority support for **paving Stanley Street and Sheep Market with the same materials as Derby Street**.
- There was unanimous support for **protecting areas of sett paving** in Market Place and Getliffe's Yard.
- There was unanimous support for **recycling waste bins** in town centre.
- There was unanimous support for **improved signage** to the main town centre facilities.

LEEK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PUBLIC MEETING



A FUTURE PROOF TOWN CENTRE

We would like to invite you to attend an open meeting to discuss what the emerging Leek Neighbourhood Plan can do for our town centre.

We want to hear your ideas, observations and opinions so that these could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.



Venue: The Churnet Room,
Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek

Date: Wednesday 9 October 2019

Time: 7:30 pm

www.loveleek.org

LEEK
TOWN
COUNCIL



A FUTURE PROOF TOWN CENTRE FOR LEEK

Town centres are changing due to internet shopping, out-of-town stores and new leisure activities. Leek's historic town centre, with its diverse range of local businesses, independent shops and role as a tourist and leisure destination, still performs well. But our town is coming under increasing pressure from these wider economic and social forces.

In addition rising awareness of climate change underlines the need to plan ahead and follow up with actions to deal with all of these issues in a sustainable way.

Leek Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which will bring in legally binding policies and proposals to enable the town to adapt to the changing conditions we will be facing in the years to come.

A DESIGN CODE FOR LEEK TOWN CENTRE

To create a high quality sustainable town centre we are working with consultants AECOM under a government support programme, to produce a design code for Leek town centre. This would be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as design "rules" to make sure physical changes in the town centre are co-ordinated to best effect.

Some themes that have been suggested for the proposed design code are:

- Parking – vehicles and cycles
- Signage for businesses
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Outdoor seating areas
- Pavement displays
- Recycling waste bins
- Street furniture
- Changes to shop fronts

We will present further details of this proposal at the public meeting, so that people can say whether they think they would be beneficial and useful.



WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

Neighbourhood plans are produced by local people for their local areas. They are statutory documents which must be taken into account when planning decisions are made affecting businesses, shoppers, residents and visitors.

The Leek Neighbourhood Plan will cover the whole of the Town Council area and will be part of the development plan for Staffordshire Moorlands. A draft Neighbourhood Plan will be published for consultation in 2020. It can only come into force after a majority vote in a local referendum.

For further information please visit our website: www.loveleek.org

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St Edward Street

Design Codes

05

5.1 The Codes

The following Design Codes have been produced to provide guidance for future development in Leek Town Centre. Each of the design themes in this section has been given a code which has been applied to the character areas in section 6. This will help to clarify the local community's view on what types of development are appropriate in each area of the town centre, giving certainty to potential developers.

Based on the results from the NPSG's Stage 1 Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code consultations, the baseline findings of this document and feedback captured in the initial engagement workshop, the following section has been broken up into the following five themes:

- 1. Parking** - identifying the appropriate ways for vehicular and bicycle parking to be designed and where this should be done;
- 2. Surfacing** - providing guidance on appropriate surface treatments to be used within the town centre and where;
- 3. Frontages** - demonstrating appropriate ways to address business frontages, signage and colour palettes as well as inactive frontages and blank elevations; providing guidance how to create vibrant spill out spaces and where these are not appropriate;
- 4. Street furniture and planters** - providing precedents of high quality street furniture and signage which will be appropriate and where this should be provided; and
- 5. Views** - providing guidance on protecting the long distance views which are identified within the town centre.

Code	Prefix	When to use the code
Parking	P1	Code to be applied when cycle parking provided
	P2	Code to be applied when on-street parking is provided
	P3	Code to be applied where car parks are provided
	P4	Code to be applied when electric vehicle charging points are installed
Surfacing	S1	Code to be applied when the public realm is being resurfaced
	S2	Code to be applied where sett paving is found in the town centre
Frontages	F1	Code to be applied where there are blank façades, inactive frontages or elevations
	F2	Code to be applied to business frontages
Street furniture planters	SF1	Code to be applied when seating is being provided
	SF2	Code to be applied when wayfinding signage is being provided
	SF3	Code to be applied when recycle bins are being provided
Views	V1	Code to be applied at locations where views of the surrounding landscape can be seen
	V2	Code to be applied where key views of Leeks townscape can be seen

5.2 Parking (Code - P)

(P1) Cycle Parking

Cycle parking should be provided across the town with greater numbers provided at the town centre's gateway arrival points (shown on the plan on page 15). Car parks and on-street parking areas should also provide cycle parking.

(P2) On Street Parking

On-street parking should be well integrated into the street and broken up by landscaped areas to reduce the visual and environmental impact of vehicles on the street scene.

(P3) Car Parks

Car parks should integrate landscaped areas into their design to reduce the visual and environmental impact of cars parking in the town centre. This applies to all surface car parks unless the surface materials are of historic importance such as sett paved areas.

(P4) Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Electric vehicle charging points should be provided across the town in preparation for a shift towards more environmentally friendly vehicles. These should be provided in all car parks as well as for on-street parking bays.



Cycle parking



Electric vehicle charging points



A poor example of a car park with no landscape features, electric charging points or cycle storage.



Cycle parking integrated into parking bay and landscaped verge.



Planting throughout a car park



On-street parking broken up by landscaped wedges

5.3 Surfacing (Code -S)

(S1) Contemporary Surface Treatments

The retail streets in the town centre should have a consistent paving scheme which ties the town centre together. New paving schemes should be holistically designed to avoid fragmentation of the public realm.

(S2) Heritage and Natural Stone Surface Treatments

Areas that are surfaced with sett paving, York stone or other natural stone in the town centre should be protected to retain Leek's historic market town character. Development should be designed around these heritage features.

Where decorative, natural stone, historic or other high quality surfaces are reinstated following street works of any kind the finished surface must be completed so as to match the original surface in terms of materials, unit size and laid pattern, in accordance with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways published by the Department of Transport.



A high street paved consistently with the same material



A high street paved consistently with the same material



Sett paving, Market Place



Sett paving, Getliffes Yard



Inconsistencies in quality and fragmentation of paving schemes should be avoided

5.4 Frontages (Code - F)

(F1) Inactive Frontages and Elevations

The installation of wall art / murals and green walls should be considered on walls which are inactive and detract from the vibrancy of the town centre.

So as to discourage the spread of unauthorised graffiti such installations should be located only on surfaces with clearly defined boundaries and carried out to a design first agreed with Leek Town Council

(F2) Active Retail Frontages

In accordance with the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD retail frontages should:

- Use signage of an appropriate scale that does not detract from the street scene or a host building's character;
- Install signage which is scaled down to cover a minimal area of the facade (including national retailers);
- Pick colour palettes that are subtle and do not detract from the host buildings built character;
- Ensure illumination of signage is discreet; and
- Use traditional materials and finishes including timber with a painted finish.

Any proposals to alter the historic and listed building frontages in Leek should refer to the guidance within the Design Principles for Development in Staffordshire Moorlands document.

Cafés, bars and restaurants are encouraged to provide outdoor seating areas. Spill out spaces for seating or outdoor displays should not impede pedestrian movement.

Pages 36 and 37 include more detailed guidance on appropriate frontage design.



Wall art on a blank elevation



A planted green wall



Spill-out space with outdoor seating



Spill-out displays



A poor example of a retail frontage where the shop front and branding have undermined the elevation of the host building



Subtle retail signage should be adopted with the building elevation and architectural detailing taking precedent

Fascia should be the full width with of a frontage. Sign lettering should be between 250-300mm to read well. A hierarchy of lettering enhances the readability and effectiveness of the signage

Existing features such as cornices and pilasters must be retained and enhanced

Hanging signs should be used where possible to reduce clutter on shop fronts

Timber framing should be used as panelling for doors, windows, stall-risers and other elements of shop front. Use of plastic or constructional timber should be avoided

Stall risers must be designed to full width of shop front and the height must be between 0.3-1.0m. Stall riser must be of timber, metal or masonry construction

Display should be organised to promote visual connection to the interior of the shop.



Precedent retail frontage, Biddulph



5.6 Street furniture and planters (Code - SF)

(SF1) Seating

Seating be provided across the town to encourage dwell time and must be retained and enhanced at the town centre gateways. Seating must be located at a minimum distance of 450mm from the edge of a public highway.

(SF2) Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage in the town must should be consistent in design, clearly visible and located at the town centre gateways.

(SF3) Recycle Bins

Litter bins in the town centre must provide the option to recycle waste. These should be provided across the town centre and should provide options to recycle paper, glass, plastic bottles and cans .

(SF4) Planters

The town centre should be well greened with vegetation. Where space permits street tree planters should be installed.

(SF5) Power Outlets

The provision of power outlets is encouraged for vehicles and trailers used for promotions, ice cream vans and public activities.



Street tree planter



Recycle bins



Seating



Wayfinding signage

5.7 Views (Code - V)

(V1) Views of Landscape

The views of the landscape surrounding Leek which can be seen from the town centre (see map on page 21) should be protected and new development which obstructs these views will not be allowed.

(V2) Views of Townscape

The key landmark buildings within the town centre should be celebrated. View points to these landmarks should be protected. Development must avoid obstructing the view of any of the following historic landmarks:

- St Edwards Church;
- Nicholson Museum & Art Gallery;
- Leek Monument;
- Butter Market;
- Trinity Church; and
- St Mary's Church.



View of Leek from the surrounding landscape



View of the Leek Monument landmark (see map on page 21)



NAVARA
Russell Street

Character Area Design Codes

06

6.1 Smithfield Character Area

Recommendations

The Smithfield character area has a large amount of town centre parking. At present all of these car parks have landscape features such as tree planting, hedges and raised beds which help to reduce the visual impact of parked cars. **Future upgrades to these areas should introduce electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking facilities.** These measures will encourage the use of sustainable means of transport to visit the town centre.

The Smithfield Centre character area has a fragmented surface treatment comprising of tarmac pavements, square flag stones and the basket weave surface in the Smithfield Centre. **Future upgrades to surfacing in this area should create a more consistent surfacing scheme around the Smithfield Centre which aligns with the character of the Derby Street.** This will strengthen the relationship between the Smithfield character area to the rest of the town centre.

The upper level of the Smithfield Centre comprises a blank white facade with windows overlooking Haywood Street and Ashbourne Road. The architectural quality of this frontage detracts from the appearance of one of the key gateways into the town centre. **Future upgrades to this building should explore the installation of green walls or wall art.** This will uplift the appearance of this focal point and reduce the visual impact of this building on the historic character of the town centre.

Pickwood Road is well used but is a very poor pedestrian environment with inadequate separation of vehicles and pedestrians. Improvements should be carried out in this area to provide safer and more easily navigable pedestrian routes.



Smithfield Character Area Existing Features

Parking	Surfacing	Frontages	Street furniture and planters	Views
P1	S1	F1	SF1	-
P2		F2	SF2	
P3			SF3	
P4			SF4	

The codes within the table above apply to the Smithfield Centre character area

Natural stone	
Square flag stone surface	
Basket weave brick surface	
Tarmac surface	
Bench	
Bin	
Tree	
Planter or raised bed or hedge	
Gateway	
Business frontage	
Negative or inactive frontage	
Cafés, bars and restaurants	
Car park	

6.2 Derby Street Character Area

Recommendations

The parking provision in the Derby Street character area comprises on street parking bays which are broken up intermittently with street tree planters. There are a number of cycle stands throughout the length of the area. **Future upgrades to this area should introduce further cycle parking facilities, particularly at the gateway points to the town centre such as at the Leek Monument and Sheep Market.** This will future proof the town centre and encourage more sustainable visits.

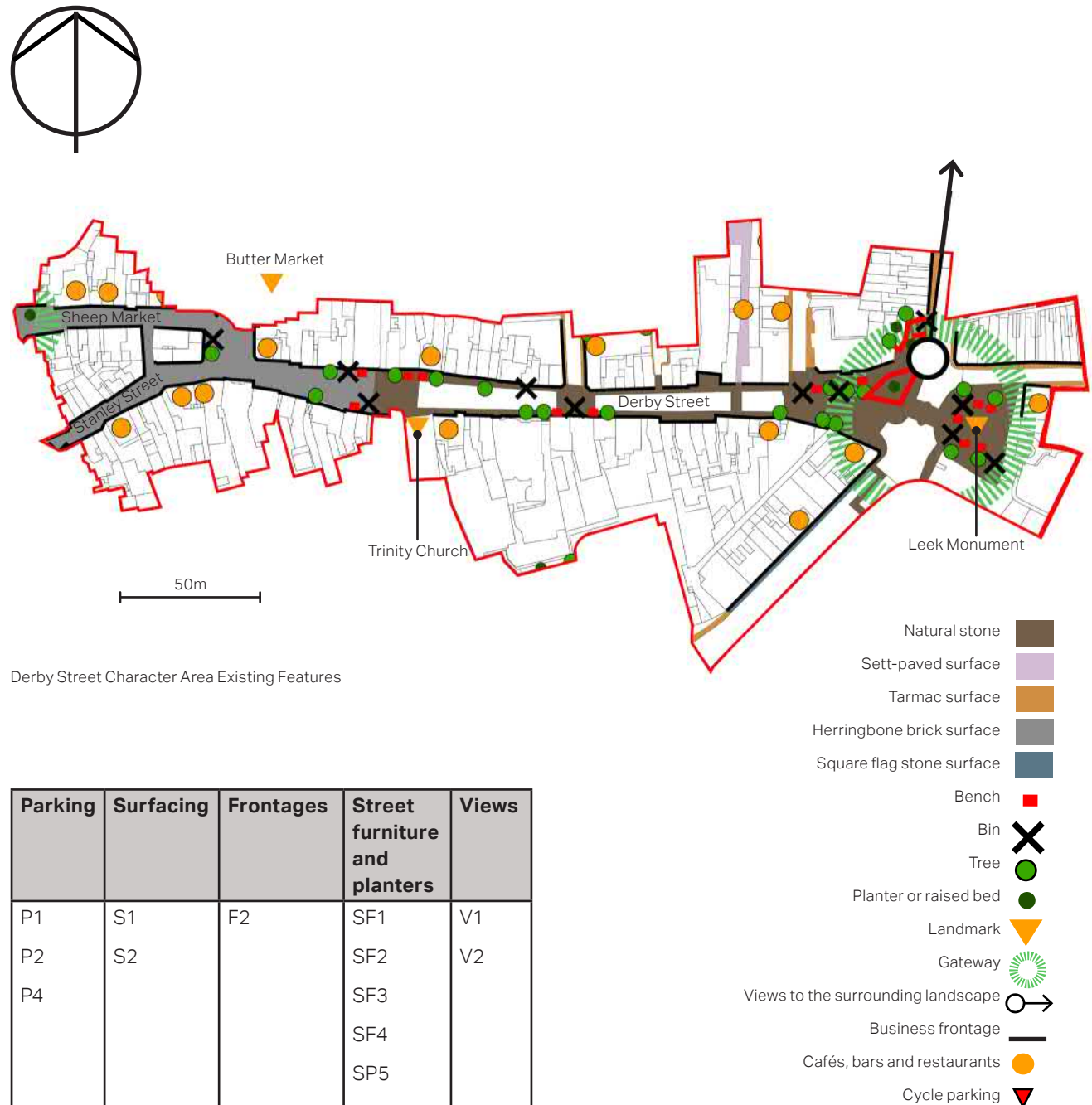
The Derby Street public realm scheme is successful and uses high quality natural stone surface materials. However, the success of this scheme contrasts against the dated herringbone brick paving at Sheep Market and Stanley Street. **Future upgrades to the surfacing in this character area should establish a consistent paving scheme which spans the whole length of this area.** This will tie the area together and give the high street a stronger sense of identity.

The surface materials in Getliffes Yard is a heritage asset within the town centre. **Sett paved surfaced should be retained.** This will protect the historic character of the town centre.

There are key views of both the landmark buildings and surrounding landscape within the Derby Street character area. **Development should be prevented that impedes the views of the town's heritage assets and landscape.**

Design Code F2 should be closely observed within the Derby Street character area to ensure Leeks High Street retains its market town character and historic buildings are not compromised by poorly design business frontages.

Recycling bins should be installed on Derby Street as a priority.



The codes within the table above apply to the Derby Street character area

6.3 Town Centre Housing Character Area

Recommendations

The residential streets within this area (Market Street, Ford Street, York Street, Deansgate and Bath Street) are dominated by parked vehicles. **Future upgrades to these streets should incorporate landscaping into parking areas.** This will uplift the appearance of the street scene.

There are no cycle parking facilities within this area. **Cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points should be provided within the car parks within this area** to encourage people to visit the town centre using sustainable modes of transport.

Within this area there are key views of both landmark buildings and surrounding countryside. **Development should be prevented that impedes the views of the heritage assets and landscape.** This will help to retain the town's historic character and strong relationship with the landscape.



Town Centre Housing Character Area Existing Features

Parking	Surfacing	Frontages	Street furniture and planters	Views
P1	S1	F2	SF1	V1
P2			SF2	V2
P3			SF3	
P4			SF4	

The codes within the table above apply to the town centre housing character area

- Square flag stone surface
- Tarmac surface
- Bin
- Tree
- Business frontage
- Cafés, bars and restaurants
- Car park
- Views to the surrounding landscape
- Landmark

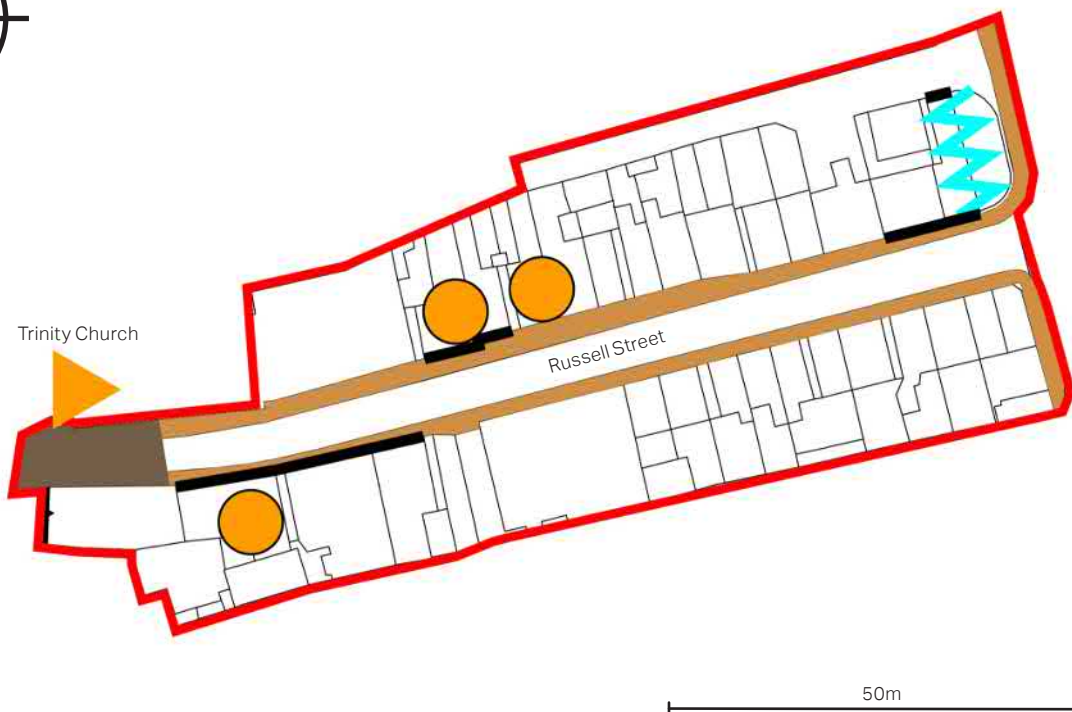
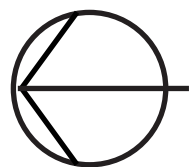
6.4 Russell Street Character Area

Recommendations

The on-street parking along Russell Street detracts from the vibrancy of this area. **Future upgrades to this area should include cycle parking and landscaping.** This will reduce the impact of parked vehicles on the street scene and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Russell Street has narrow footways on either side of the carriageway but particularly on the west side of the street. **Any spill-out space or display should not impede movement along the pavement.** This will ensure that the town centre remains accessible for all members of the community.

Russell Street provides access directly to the centre of the town. The blank facade and space at the southern end of Russell Street detracts from the visual amenity of this access point. **The installation of wall art or green walls should be explored to uplift unattractive blank elevations and spaces.** This has the potential to establish Russell Street as a vibrant and inviting gateway to the town centre.



Russell Street Character Area Existing Features

Parking	Surfacing	Frontages	Street furniture and planters	Views
P1 P2 P4	S1	F1 F2	SF3 SF4	V2

The codes within the table above apply to the Russell Street character area

Natural stone surface	
Tarmac surface	
Cafés, bars and restaurants	
Business frontage	
Negative or inactive frontage	
Landmark	

6.5 St Edwards Street Character Area

Recommendations

The paving along the St Edwards Street character area is fragmented consisting of square flag stones with small areas of infill tarmac, and large square flag stones. **A consistent paving scheme should be introduced which ties the street together.** This will uplift the quality of the public realm to complement the historic architecture within this area.

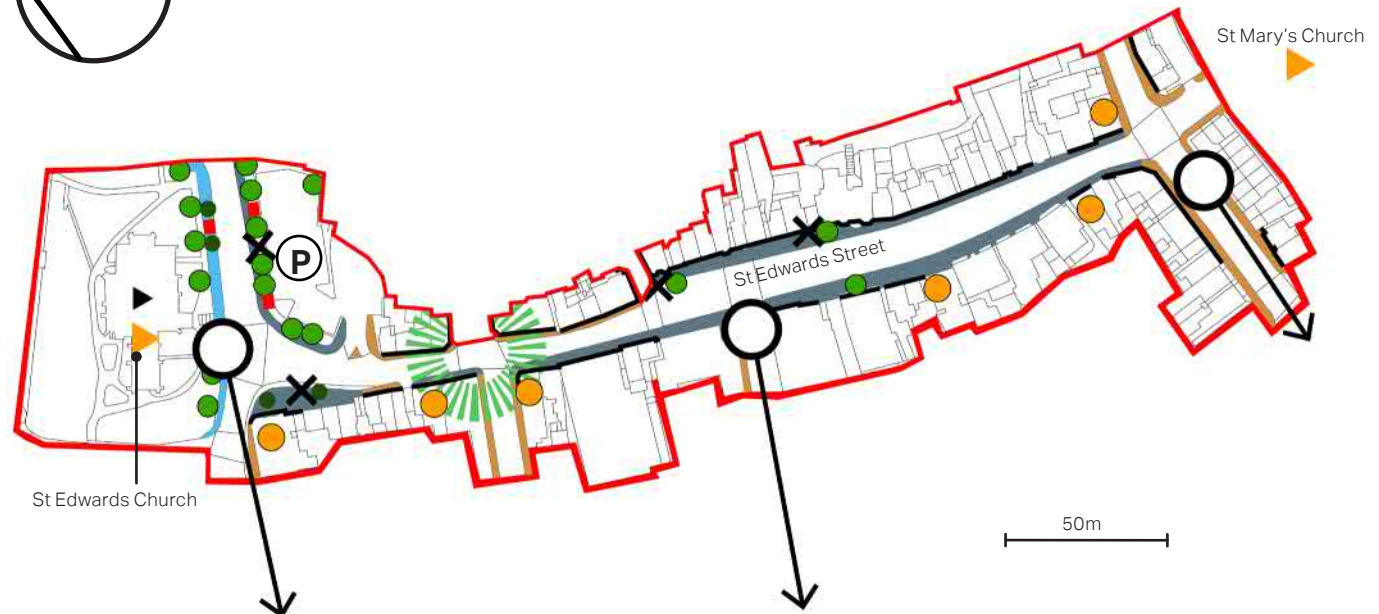
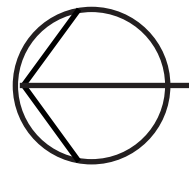
The on-street parking within this area detracts from the vibrancy of the street. **Landscaping and cycle parking should be considered when future upgrades to this area are introduced as well as electric vehicle charging points.** This will future proof this area in preparation for the shift towards more sustainable travel methods as well as reduce the visual impact of parking.

The St Edwards Street character area has many business frontages which occupy historic buildings. **These should closely observe code F2 when making changes to the design of the frontage.** This will ensure the historic character of the street is retained in the future.

There are currently litter bins provided intermittently within the St Edwards Street character area. **Recycle bins should replace the existing general waste bins within this area.** This will support the town's aspiration to become a more sustainable place.

There are views of historic landmarks and to the landscape in the west which can be seen from this area. **Views to the surrounding landscape and landmark buildings (see map on page 21) should be protected by preventing any development that impedes upon these key views.** This will ensure that the town retains its strong relationship with its historic built form and surrounding landscape.

Pedestrian crossing facilities should be provided connecting residential areas to the west and south sides of town to the town centre



St Edwards Street Character Area Existing Features

Parking	Surfacing	Frontages	Street furniture and planters	Views
P1	S1	F2	SF1	V1
P2			SF2	V2
P3			SF3	
P4			SF4	
			SP5	

The codes within the table above apply to the St Edwards Street character area

Square flag stone surface	■
Large square flag stone surface	■
Tarmac surface	■
Bench	■
Bin	✕
Tree	●
Planter or raised bed	●
Landmark	▲
Gateway	⊙
Views to the surrounding landscape	○→
Business frontage	—
Cafés, bars and restaurants	●
Car park	Ⓟ
Cycle parking	▼

6.6 Market Place Character Area

The Market Place is the heart of Leek Town Centre and the historic character of this space should be protected. The temporary provision of parking (not on market days) within the Market Place has greatly impacted on how the space is experienced by visitors. **A reduction in the number of parking spaces in this area should be considered.** This will make the Market Place a balanced place for people to dwell, drink and dine and enjoy Leek's rich architectural heritage.

There is currently no cycle parking facilities within this area. **As a key gateway to the town cycle parking should be provided within the area.** This will encourage active travel and sustainable journeys to and from the town centre.

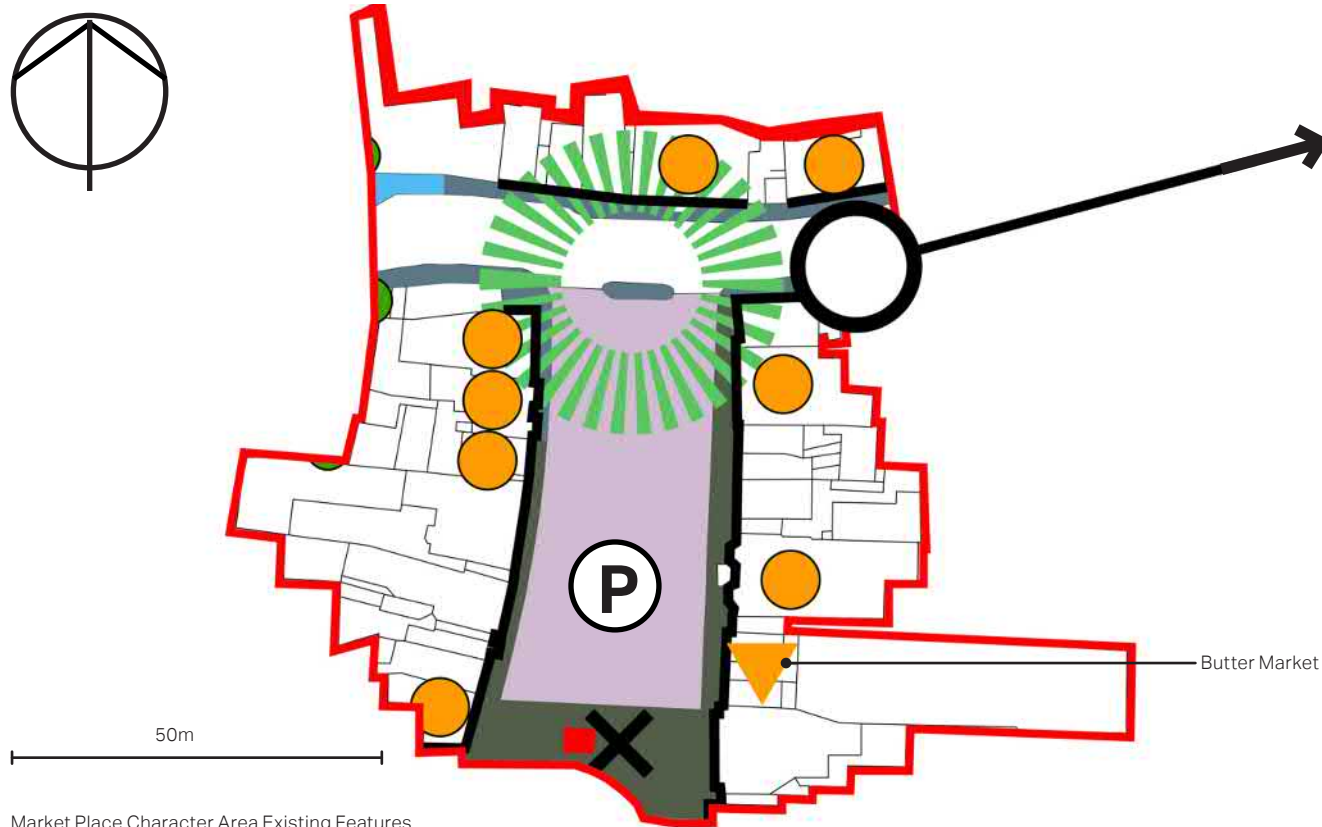
Although the sett paving within the Market Place has been adapted for car parking this surface remains a heritage asset. **Sett paved areas should be protected.** This will retain the historic character of the square.

The paving scheme which wraps around the sett paving is fragmented and varied in quality. **Future upgrades to this paving should consider a holistically designed paving scheme rather than piecemeal repairs.** This will uplift the public realm to complement the quality of the historic architecture.

There are numerous businesses with frontages facing on to the Market Place. **It is encouraged to provide outdoor seating and displays in front of a business.** This will bring activity and vibrancy to the square.

There is currently a small amount of seating provided within the area adjacent to the Market Cross. **The introduction of further seating should be explored.** This will encourage visitors to stop and enjoy the square.

Views to the east can be seen from the northern edge of the Market Place (see map and images on page 21). **Development which impedes views to the surrounding countryside should not be permitted.** This will protect the relationship that Leek has with the surrounding landscape.



Market Place Character Area Existing Features

Parking	Surfacing	Frontages	Street furniture and planters	Views
P1	S1	F2	SF1	V2
P3	S2		SF2	
P4			SF3	
			SF4	
			SP5	

The codes within the table above apply to the Market Place character area

- Sett-paved surface
- York stone flags surface
- Square flag stone surface
- Large square flag stone surface
- Bench
- Bin
- Tree
- Landmark
- Gateway
- Views to the surrounding landscape
- Business frontage
- Cafés, bars and restaurants
- Car park



Getliffes Yard

Next Steps

07

7.1 Next Steps

This document aims to identify the key design features present in Leek's retail core which contribute to the overall character of the town.

The focus of the Design Codes which have been recommended is on uplifting the visitor experience and future proofing the town. This will be done through public realm improvements, maintaining the retail offer, including its appearance through frontage design, and providing options for sustainable visits to the town centre.

This document will be used to support the design policies in the Leek Neighbourhood Plan and provides detailed design guidance for works in the town centre. The document should also be observed by developers in order to understand the local aspirations for the town.

Developer proposals should align to the design codes within this document.

