



COLEFORD COMMUNITY REGENERATION PLAN



Funded by
UK Government



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Roberts Limbrick



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UK Government

Author:	-
Project:	11070
Revision:	Coleford Regeneration Plan V5
Issued:	11 April 2025 2:25 pm



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This report has been prepared by Roberts Limbrick Architects on behalf of Coleford Town Council.



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Community Regeneration Plan is to present an evidence based approach to a series of town centre proposals that the local community has engaged with helped guide future areas for action.

The aim of the Plan is “to grow the wider well-being of Coleford town centre through using local assets, building on our Forest Identity, partnership working and placing our community and visitors within our streets, squares, local businesses and local services.”

The Plan has been shaped by a comprehensive understanding of the town centre but also how it relates to the wider town and its location within the Forest of Dean. It has many positive assets and opportunities but like many town centres it faces challenges that are seen at a UK wide level. Successful town centres are about places and its people within them, that create experiences for all. This Plan is about creating the Coleford experience.

To ensure the Plan has ownership, the process has provided opportunities for strategic and local organisations to get involved, as well as opening conversations around need and ideas with the wider community. Community drop in sessions, an exhibition at the Town Council offices and digital opportunities have been provided as well as discussions with the local business community. This has help us refine the Plan and where priorities should focus.

The Plan’s Vision is “Coleford town centre will have a range of interesting shops which provide local and regionally produced foods, goods and gifts for residents and visitors. There will be attractive gateways to the town and comfortable green places to sit and relax, surrounded by the well conserved natural and built heritage. Health and social support services will be easily accessed through good transport infrastructure and communication networks. Visitors of all ages will remember their enjoyable experience of a wide range of interesting tourist events and heritage trails around the town and surrounding countryside.”



Objectives

Our Objectives are:

- To support town centre businesses and amenities by providing the right foundations for them that help visitors arrive, explore, spend time and create a memorable experience
- To provide opportunities for people of all ages within the town centre that creates unity, belonging and pride
- To maintain the character and identity of the town centre that appeals to residents and visitors alike
- To create streets for people that supports events, festivals, markets and social life
- To connect the town centre with its neighbourhoods and villages through active travel but also to make it a convenient place for all to visit
- To support the town and the Forest of Dean in reaching its carbon neutral target by 2030

Its key themes and proposals are centred on 1) Streets and Spaces 2) Green and Active Community 3) Opportunities for New Uses 4) Community Life and Wellbeing and 5) Supporting Local.

Some of the proposals have ambition and will take time to develop, secure funding and implement – others providing us with smaller, bite-size actions that can benefit our town centre. Activities such as a new town map, cases, improved signage and investing in active travel have been some recent investments the Town Council has made. We want to build on this, but we want to maximise the impact with greater partnership working. The Plan outlines the need for closer ways of working between the public, private, community and voluntary sector so that we can collectively ensure Coleford is an attractive and enjoyable experience for all.



Key steps going forward are set out below in order of priority:

Communication and Working Together

- Support town centre business in reforming their traders group/network
- Help shape a town centre campaign and joint activity plan
- Closer working between all strategic and local organisations

Information and Promotion

- Working with town centre business group, FoDDC, GCC and other partners to develop the Coleford story and how this is delivered within the town centre, the wider community and digitally
- Continue to invest in town centre information such as additional maps, cases, signage, events board, interpretation, etc
- Implement and develop the Hidden Coleford heritage trail across the town centre, linking into town centre businesses and attractions

Town Centre Environment

- Complete active travel investments with cycle shelter, stands and missing link on Milkwall route by Pyarts Court
- Review and address town centre seating, opportunities for water refill points, etc
- Review town centre gateways, arrival spaces, key public spaces and frontages for greening opportunities that co-ordinate with seating and other furniture
- Work with FoDDC and town centre business on a practical design for buildings so that a co-ordinated palette and signs are developed

Town Centre Experience

- Working with town centre businesses, develop a themed markets campaign that complements shops, eating places and services and becomes a regular date in the Coleford calendar
- Build on the year round events programme that harnesses creativity, resources, capacity and benefits for the town centre

Development Physical Projects

- Need to work on consultation findings with FoDDC, GCC and local business community and agree on information needed to inform design process for St John's Street and Market Place e.g. traffic data
- Test some activities through other themed projects such as greening, events and improved seating
- Discuss the feasibility of the respective projects including the use of a trial before moving onto more significant works

What is a Community Regeneration Plan?

Regeneration is the long-term upgrading of existing urban, rural, industrial and commercial areas to bring about social and economic change.

For places like Coleford, regeneration is needed due to economic decline, changes in migration and deindustrialisation. Some semi-rural areas have a lack of opportunities for young people, create social isolation of minority groups and physical isolation due to a lack of reliable public transport and services.

Community regeneration works to improve areas facing these challenges. Some ways that this can be achieved are through the development of services, better transport links and improvement of the economy of a town.



What is the purpose of this Community Regeneration Plan?

The purpose of this Community Regeneration Plan is to present an evidence based approach to a series of town centre proposals that the local community has engaged with helped guide future areas for action.

Aim

To grow the wider well-being of Coleford town centre through using local assets, building on our Forest Identity, partnership working and placing our community and visitors within our streets, squares, local businesses and local services.

Objectives

- To support town centre businesses and amenities by providing the right foundations for them that help visitors arrive, explore, spend time and create a memorable experience.
- To provide opportunities for people of all ages within the town centre that creates unity, belonging and pride.
- To maintain the character and identity of the town centre that appeals to residents and visitors alike.
- To create streets for people that supports events, festivals, markets and social life.
- To connect the town centre with its neighbourhoods and villages through active travel but also to make it a convenient place for all to visit.
- To support the town and the Forest of Dean in reaching its carbon neutral target by 2030.

Tasks

This plan is centred on a number of key tasks:

- To assess and identify issues affecting both the town centre and the Conservation Area.
- To prepare an amended vision for the future of the town and its economy that reflects the increased sustainability and carbon-free agenda.
- To produce a strategic plan which realises the Coleford vision, noting what has worked well in similar places elsewhere.
- To identify development opportunities for key sites.
- To make recommendations for using existing or any new partnerships or management models.
- To identify appropriate sources of funding and write bids.



↑ Coleford Town

↓ Coleford Market Place



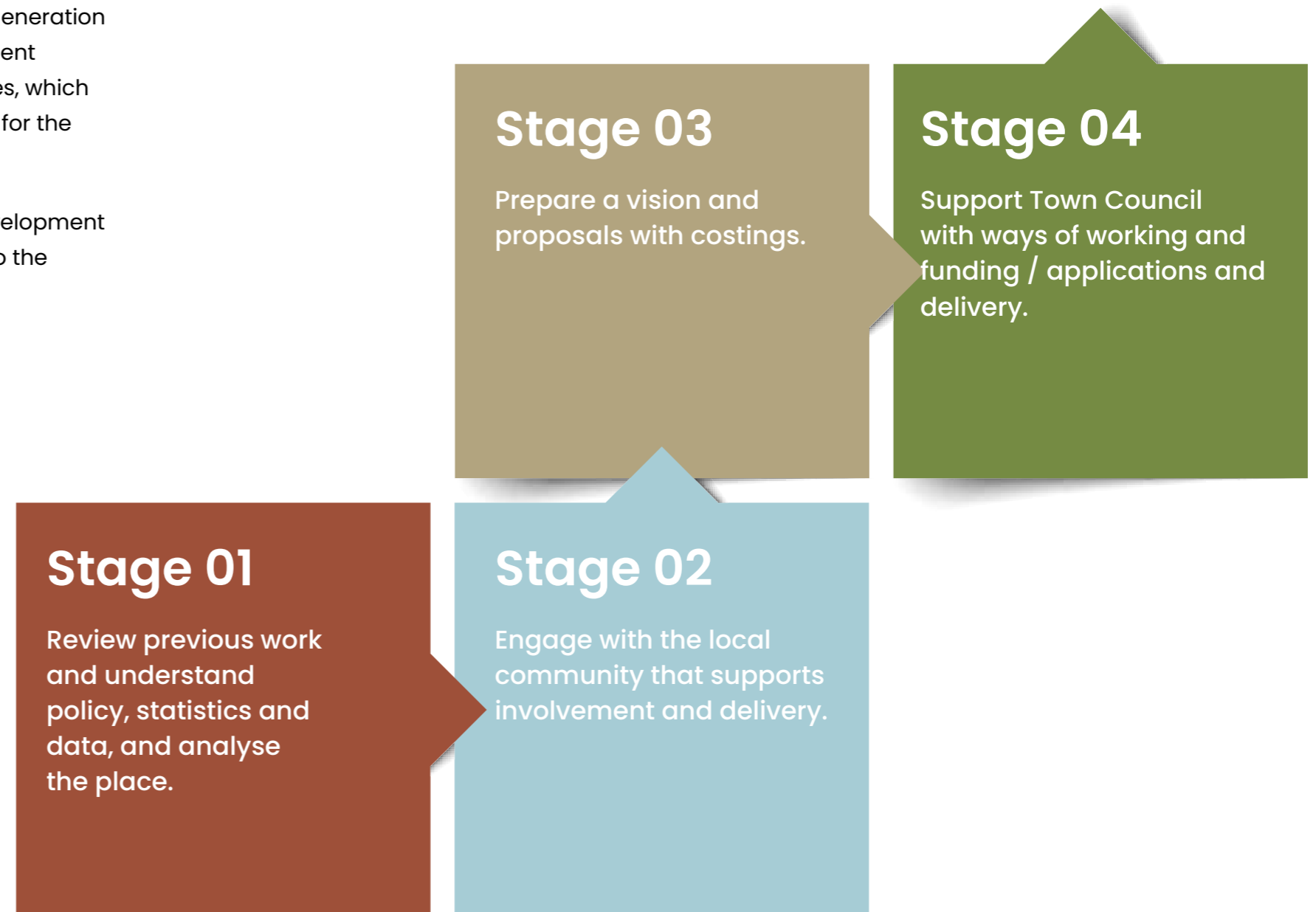
The Plan Process

Regeneration is the long-term upgrading of existing urban, rural, industrial and commercial areas to bring about social and economic change.

These are the key steps in the Community Regeneration Plan process:

1. To review previous studies, plans and projects within the town.
2. To review current policy at a national, regional and local level.
3. To analysis statistics and data that helps understand the well-being of the town.
4. To analyse the physical place, specifically the town centre and its relationship to its neighbourhoods and outlying villages.
5. To design, organise and host effective community engagement leading to greater community involvement, including the business community and key stakeholders.
6. To develop a community regeneration plan based on the engagement results and other local studies, which includes an amended vision for the future of the town.
7. To devise costed project development plans and bids as annexes to the main plan.

COMPLETE REGENERATION STRATEGY



Why does Coleford need a Community Regeneration Plan?

The Forest as a whole has seen different phases of development, from iron mining using charcoal to steel using local coal and iron, tramways and railways. The industrial heritage in Coleford peaked with the Mushet family and continued well into the twentieth century. The Deputy Gaveler, who is responsible for the remaining Freeminers, is still based at Forestry England midland HQ in Bank St. The Scheduled Monuments at Dark Hill and Whitecliff feature along with Puzzle Wood and Perrygrove Railway as tourist attractions now. Coleford has the only Tourist Information Centre for the whole Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB, funded through the Town Council.

Coleford takes a strategic approach to regeneration: with a Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) in place, a number of studies have given data and opportunities for ways forward. Coleford NDP is annually reviewed at its Annual Assembly and Full Council. The Council supports a strong events programme through the year, from the Carnival of Transport at Easter via the July Music Festival to the Christmas Lights. Coleford is also twinned with St Hilaire de Riez (Vendee) exchanging visits with schools, choirs and sports teams as well as making friends.

Coleford is a strong community, with independent small traders, significant tourist attractions, a mining and cultural heritage and distinctive Forest character. Post Covid, and with the current the economic pressures and a significant increase in population, we need to realise the potential for varied employment. The trends would be to increased tourism, better/different local services for people choosing to live here and work from home, and bring the Forest theme into town. Given the Town Council's concern with climate change and sustainability, it wants to enable local people to walk/cycle from the edges into town and neighbouring settlements. This is a time of rapid change, so even with a resilient base, we need to be clear and effective in our drive to regenerate. Significant opportunities which will not come again must not be missed but maximised now.

The Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan and FoDDC publishes annual town audits that reflect changes in the town over time. The People and Places Insight Ltd benchmarking report in 2020 suggested the following areas for improvement:

- **Footfall**
- **Business Confidence**
- **Transport**
- **Car Parking**
- **Public Toilets**
- **Physical Appearance**
- **Retail Offer**
- **Leisure Facilities**

The University of the West of England Masters Architecture and Planning students over the last five years have also carried out a series of studies for the Town Council:

- 1) Assessing youth provision and giving options for improvement,
- 2) Providing a new hub focus, and
- 3) Potential for improving local linkages to support Coleford as a cycle, and walking centre for the Forest of Dean Public toilets.

Location Context and Setting

Coleford is in the Forest of Dean, West Gloucestershire, only four miles from the Welsh border.

It is strategically located in the heart of the Forest of Dean and conveniently positioned within the South West.

The Forest of Dean, or 'The Forest' as it is known locally, has a rich natural and industrial heritage being within the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB, and in the Dean National Forest Park.

The Forest surrounds the town, and many people visit/move here because of the green environment.

The market town lies in a central bowl at the confluence of streams which filter into the River Wye.

The surrounding settlements: Five Acres, Mile End, Broadwell, Milkwall are found in a semicircle from north to south.

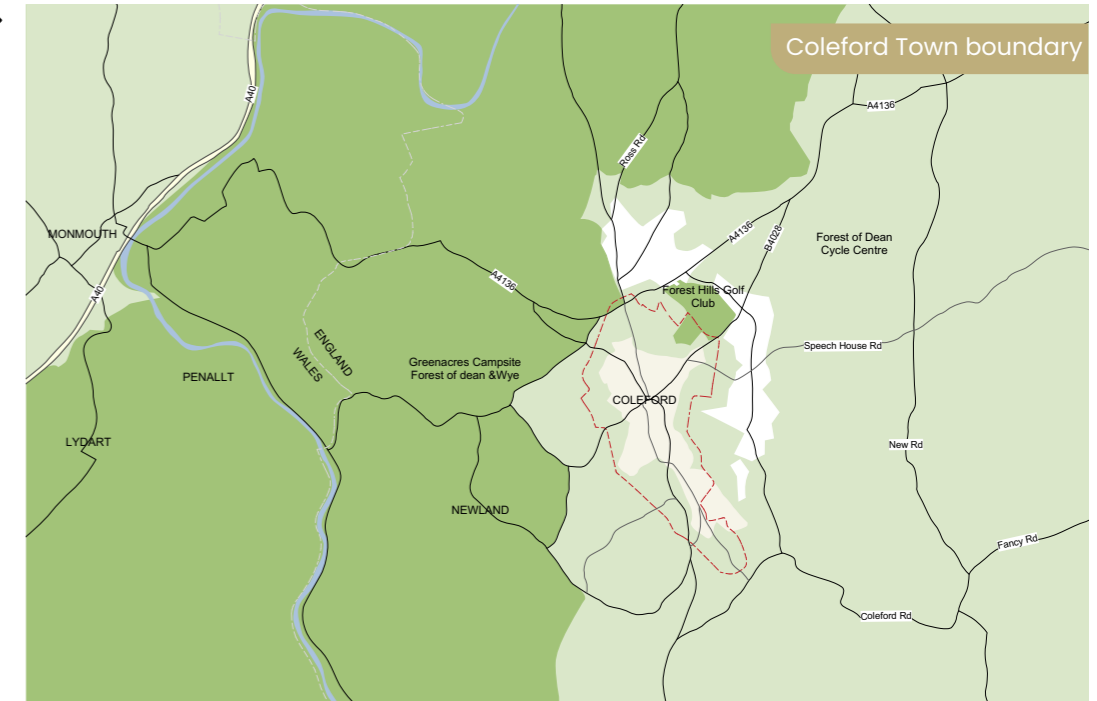
These originate from coal and iron mining, which has mainly died out, but leaves a spokes and wheel road pattern linking hamlets/villages with distinctive identities.

In 2011 the Parish population was 8359 but had risen by 2021 to 9275, almost 10% in the last ten years.

The Conservation Area in the town centre includes about 20 listings (mainly Georgian buildings/streetscapes) and is focussed on the Marketplace. The Clock Tower and Cross indicate where the central octagonal church once stood.

The Market House (Town Hall) was pulled down and the centre altered in 1968 for highways improvements. St John Street is one-way, with a cohesive street scene of independent shops/cafes/pubs.

Coleford town boundary inset



Coleford's strategic location within the south west



Policy, Studies , Data and Place

The policy setting for a place such as Coleford is important. It shows the relationships to national, regional and local agendas, providing strategic direction and alignment. It also shows the strategic opportunities and limitations to a place and its development.

Policy Setting

The planning policy documents relevant to the development of Coleford includes:	
1. National Planning Policy.	4. Emerging Local Plan.
2. National Regeneration Policy and Programmes.	5. The Adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Coleford.
3. The current Local Plan which includes the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan.	6. Other Local Town Documents.

Planning Policy Summary

The following summarises the applicable policies however a comprehensive detailed policy analysis can be found at the end of this document.

Planning and Regeneration Policies

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) emphasizes sustainable development, economic growth, town centre revitalization, affordable housing, environmental conservation, and promoting healthy communities.
- The UK Levelling Up Fund has allocated £20 million to infrastructure projects in the Forest of Dean, including transport, town centre regeneration, and cultural assets.
- Local Plans such as the Forest of Dean Core Strategy (2012) and the Allocations Plan (2018) set out housing and employment targets, promoting modest growth in Coleford while protecting green spaces and heritage sites.

Key Development Priorities for Coleford

1. Town Centre and Economic Growth
 - Support for independent businesses, tourism, and retail expansion.
 - Enhancing Coleford's role as a service hub while balancing competition with nearby towns.
 - Policies to promote employment growth, including industrial and commercial site development.
2. Housing and Infrastructure
 - 650 new homes planned by 2026, with 40% designated as affordable housing.
 - Several residential sites allocated for development, including Poolway Farm, Lawnstone House, and King's Head Public House.
 - Active travel improvements, including cycle and walking routes linking Milkwall and the town centre.

3. Community and Youth Support

- Development of The Hive at 4 Mushet Walk as a creative space for young people, arts, and music.
- Feasibility studies for youth-oriented facilities like skate parks, a community kitchen, and an art studio.

4. Heritage and Environment

- Restoration of the Coleford Clock Tower to improve accessibility and maintain its role in town events.
- Conservation efforts to maintain Coleford's natural environment and green spaces.

5. Transport and Accessibility

- Enhancing sustainable transport options, including cycle routes and better public transport connectivity.
- Addressing town centre accessibility and improving pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.

6. Challenges Identified

- Anti-social behaviour and lack of youth provisions.
- Limited leisure facilities and town centre events.
- Need for better parking, transport links, and retail diversity.

The policies outlined at the end of this document provide a road map for Coleford's future development, balancing growth with heritage conservation, economic sustainability, and community well-being.

Challenges and Opportunities

Place Based Data

Data and statistics are a part of understanding the well-being of a place like Coleford, its relationship to all England figures, and where consistency of the parish area boundary exists, we have compared 2021 census data with 2011. The following charts and figures illustrate some of the data behind Coleford, its place and its people.

People and Demographics

Coleford has a population of 9275 in March 2021 compared to 8359 in March 2011, which is an 11% rise in population over the ten-year period. The gender split is the same as the English average with 51% female and 49% male.

Figure 2 below shows the age distribution for Coleford compared to the English average with the chart showing on average a 1% drop after the age of 15 to 45. There is then a 1% increase for those people aged between 50 and 80, with almost a 2% increase in people aged 65 to 74. Coleford therefore experiences an out-migration of people leaving the town between school leaving age and adults in their 50s, with people returning to live here in their mid-50s as a result of quality of life and retirement plan choices.

Housing

Figure 3 illustrates the type of housing accommodation people live in and the type of tenure.

Close, to the English average, 89% of residents live in a whole house or bungalow, a greater propensity of people living in 1 bedroom accommodation (1.3% above English average) yet fewer people live in 4 or more-bedroom.

Figure 2 - Age Distribution for Coleford

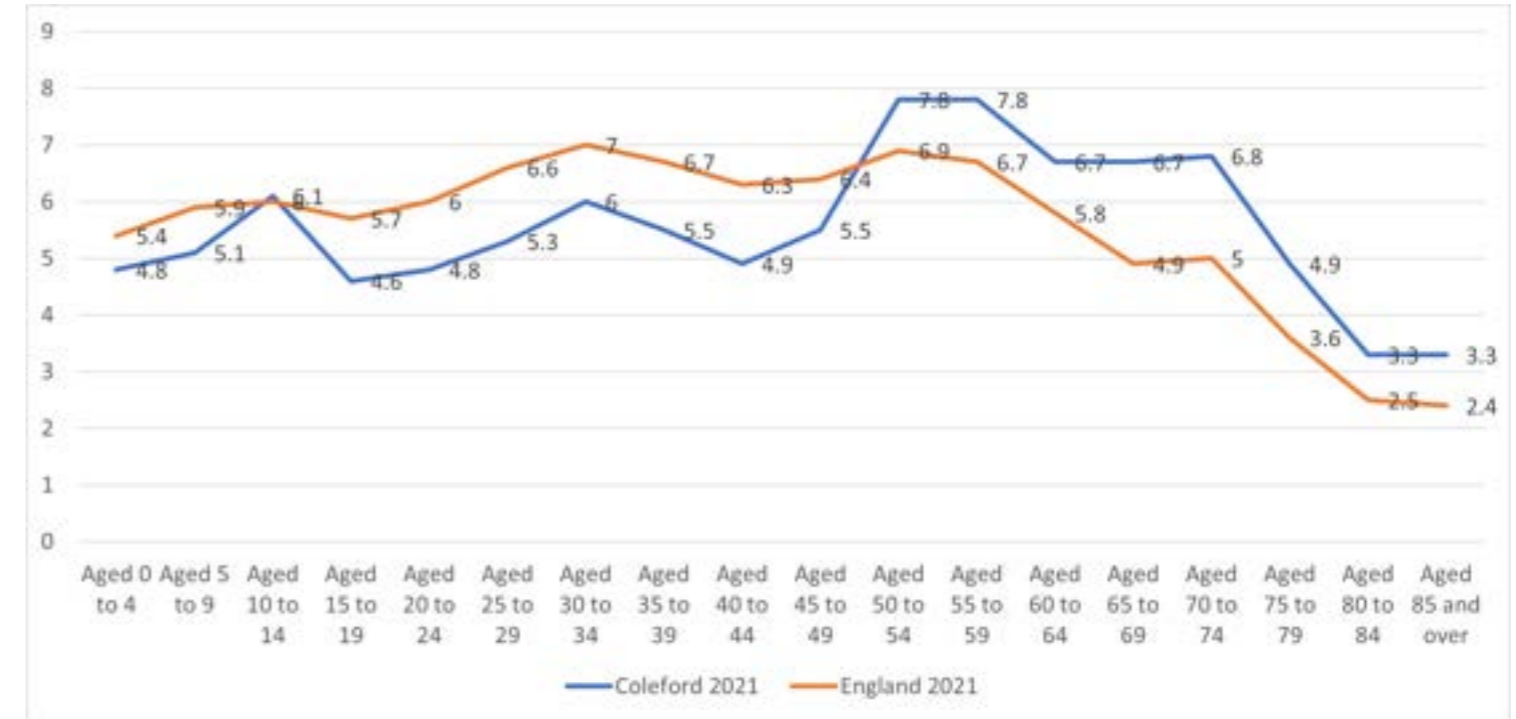
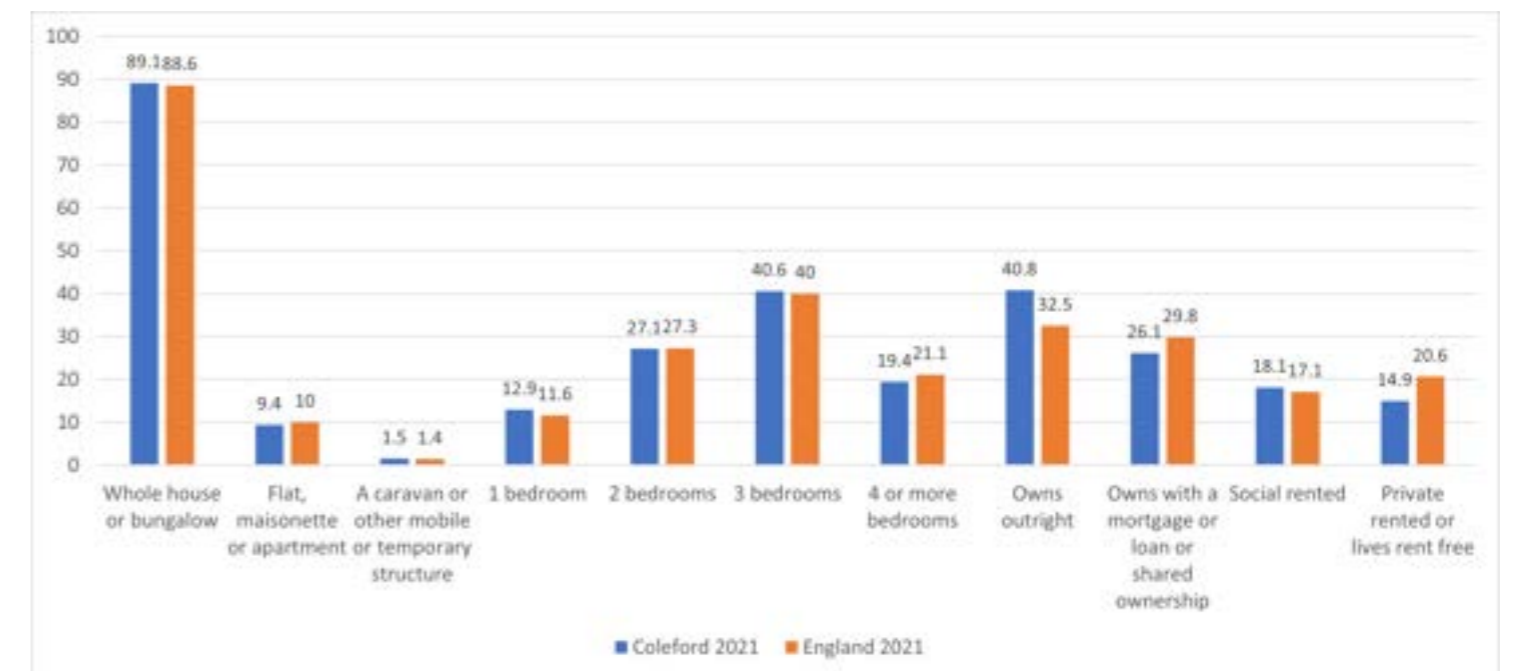


Figure 3 - Housing Accommodation and Type of Tenure



Sources: Census 2021

Challenges and Opportunities

Place Based Data

Health

When asking residents about their health, Figure 4 alongside shows to us that the town is above the English average for good and fair health but increases by 1% percentage point in terms of experiencing bad health.

There is however higher than normal levels of disability in the community, estimated at 20%.

Education

An indicator on the skills levels of those economically active within a town like Coleford is qualifications with Figure 5 showing how the town is performing compared to 2011 figures, and against the English average. It is clear there has been a swing on recent years from those with no qualifications, some 10% points above the English average, to a rise in apprenticeships and those with Level 4 qualifications and above (HNC, HND and Degree, amongst others).

Figure 4 - General Health of Residents

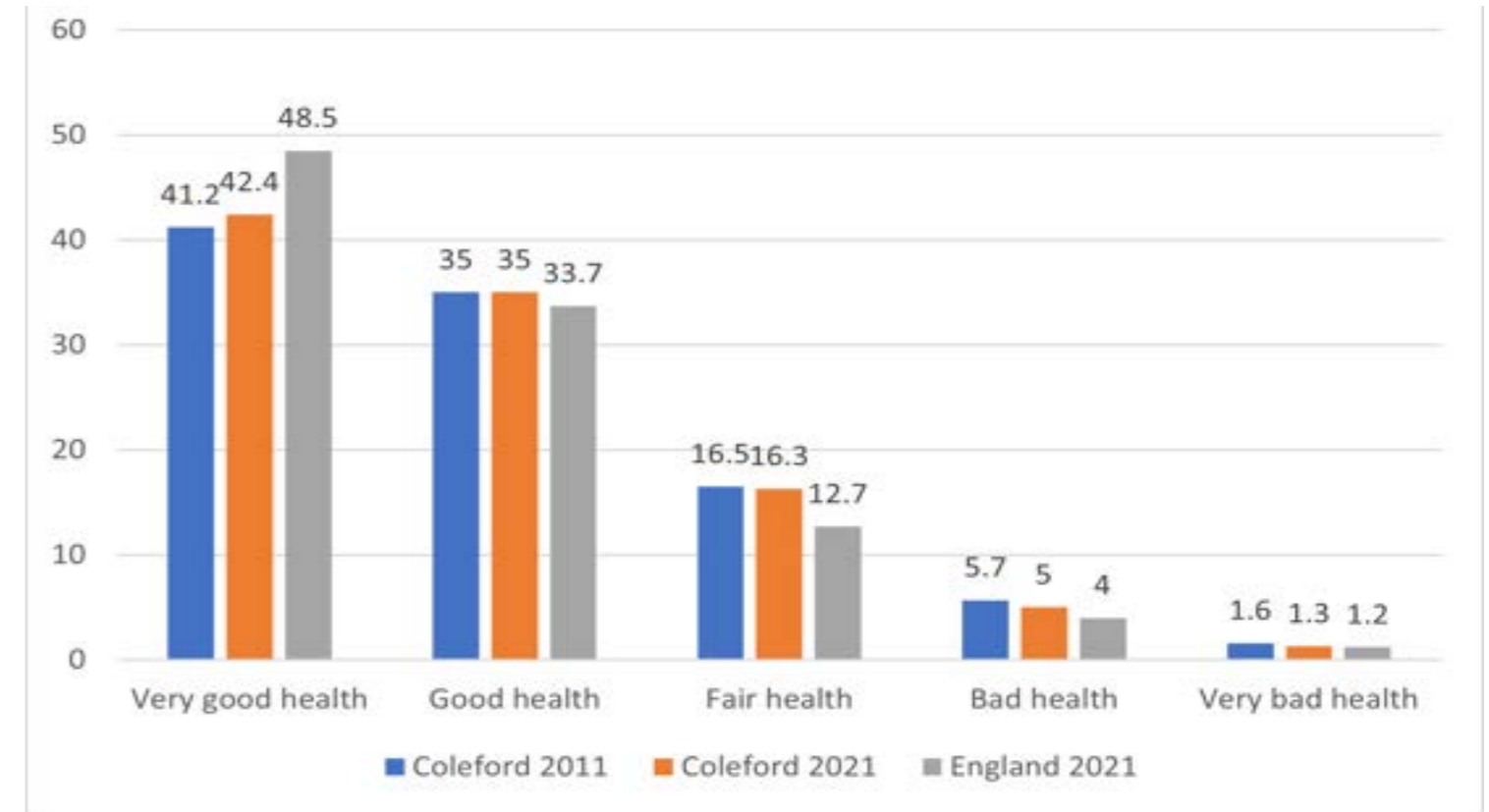
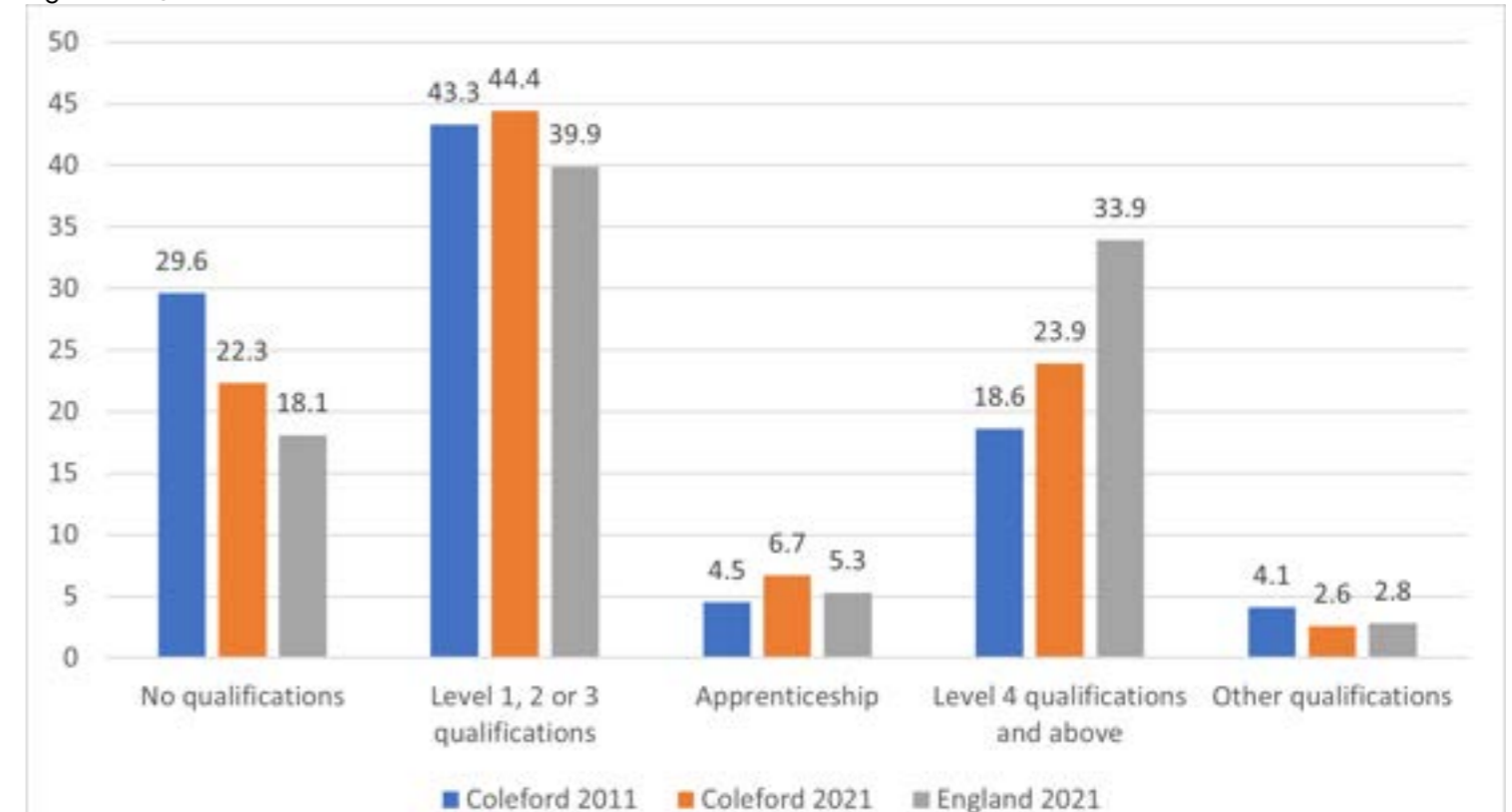


Figure 5 - Qualification Levels



Source: Census 2011 - 2021

Challenges and Opportunities

Place Based Data

Economic Activity

Figure 6 indicates that there are marginally higher levels of inactivity compared to all England averages which is related to the bias in the older age cohorts, as well as other structural factors. There is 8% more than the English average of people who have not been in employment for the last 12 months, but 4% lower for those who are never worked.

Types of job occupation have a pattern with Figure 7 illustrating that Coleford has less representation in managerial and professional occupations with a greater proportion of people working in skilled trades (5.2% above English average), service occupations (2.8% above English average) and process, plant and machinery some 3.3% above the English average.

Figure 6 – Economic Activity Levels

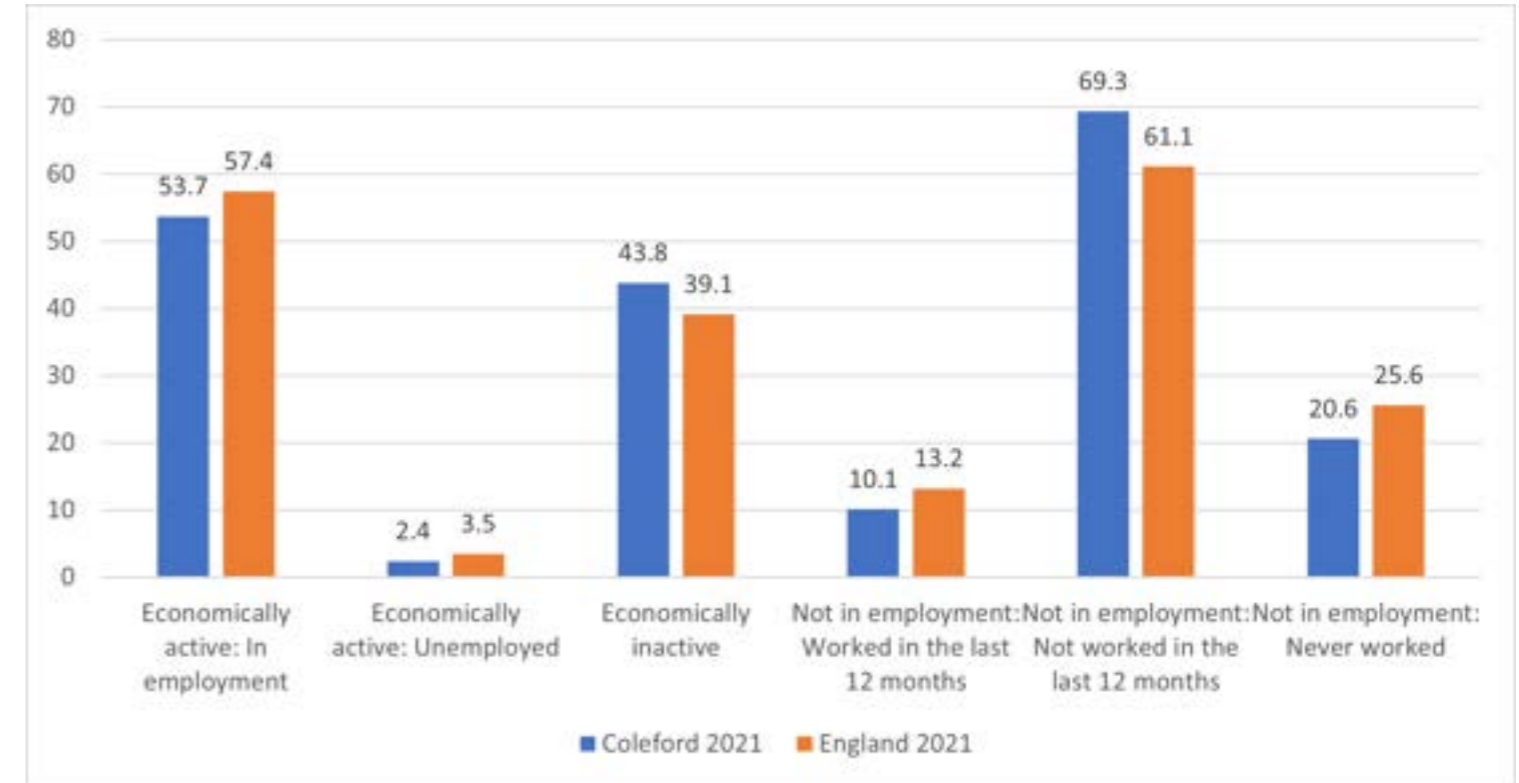


Figure 7 – Occupation Type

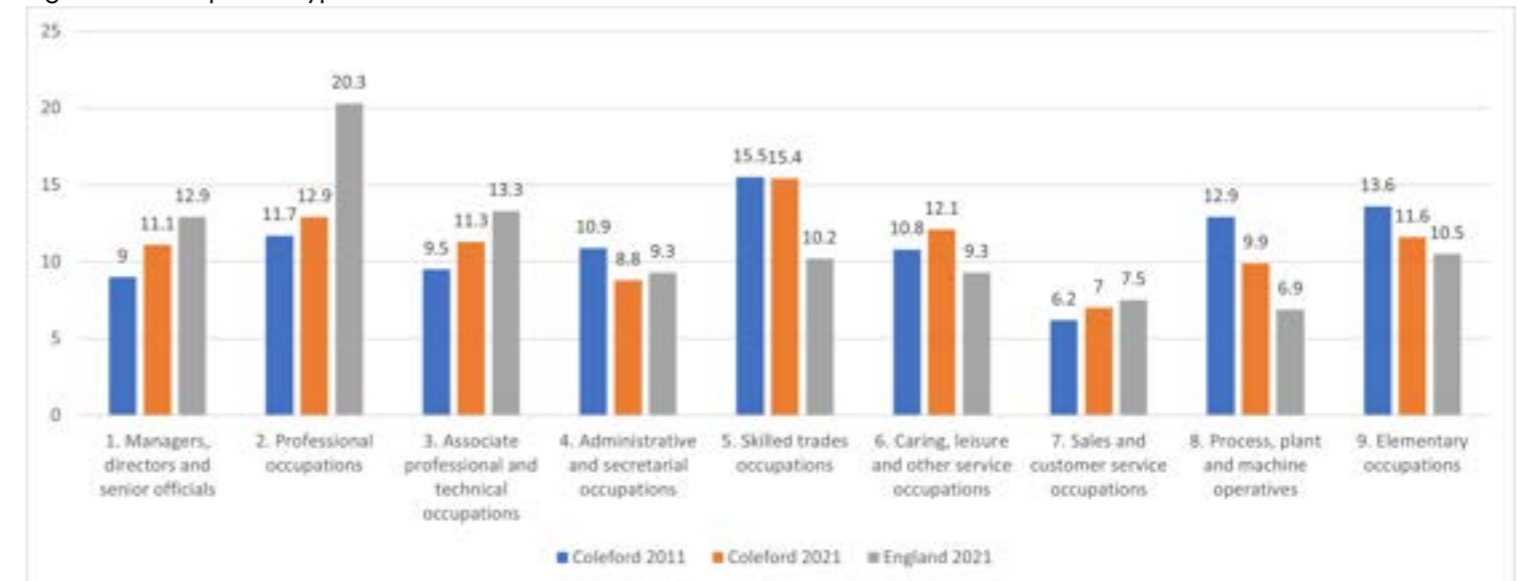


Fig 6/ Fig 7 Source: Census 2011 - 2021

Challenges and Opportunities

Place Based Data

Transport and Mobility

Figure 8 indicates that 16.6% of the town's population has no access to a car/van compared to 23.5% of the English population, with 40.2% and 29.4% of residents owning 1 or 2 cars/vans respectively, with the latter being above the English average. This relates to the semi-rural nature of the Forest of Dean, with the need to have access to a car for employment and other activities.

Figure 9 illustrates to us that residents work outside of the town, with almost 18% travelling 10km to less than 30km and 7% travelling over 30km. There is a marked 10% drop in those people working at home, compared to the English average of 31.5%.

In addition to this, there is a poor level of public transport for the town, with time taken to reach Gloucester and Cheltenham by bus, and commuting by train via Lydney not explored.

Figure 8 - Levels of Car and Van Ownership

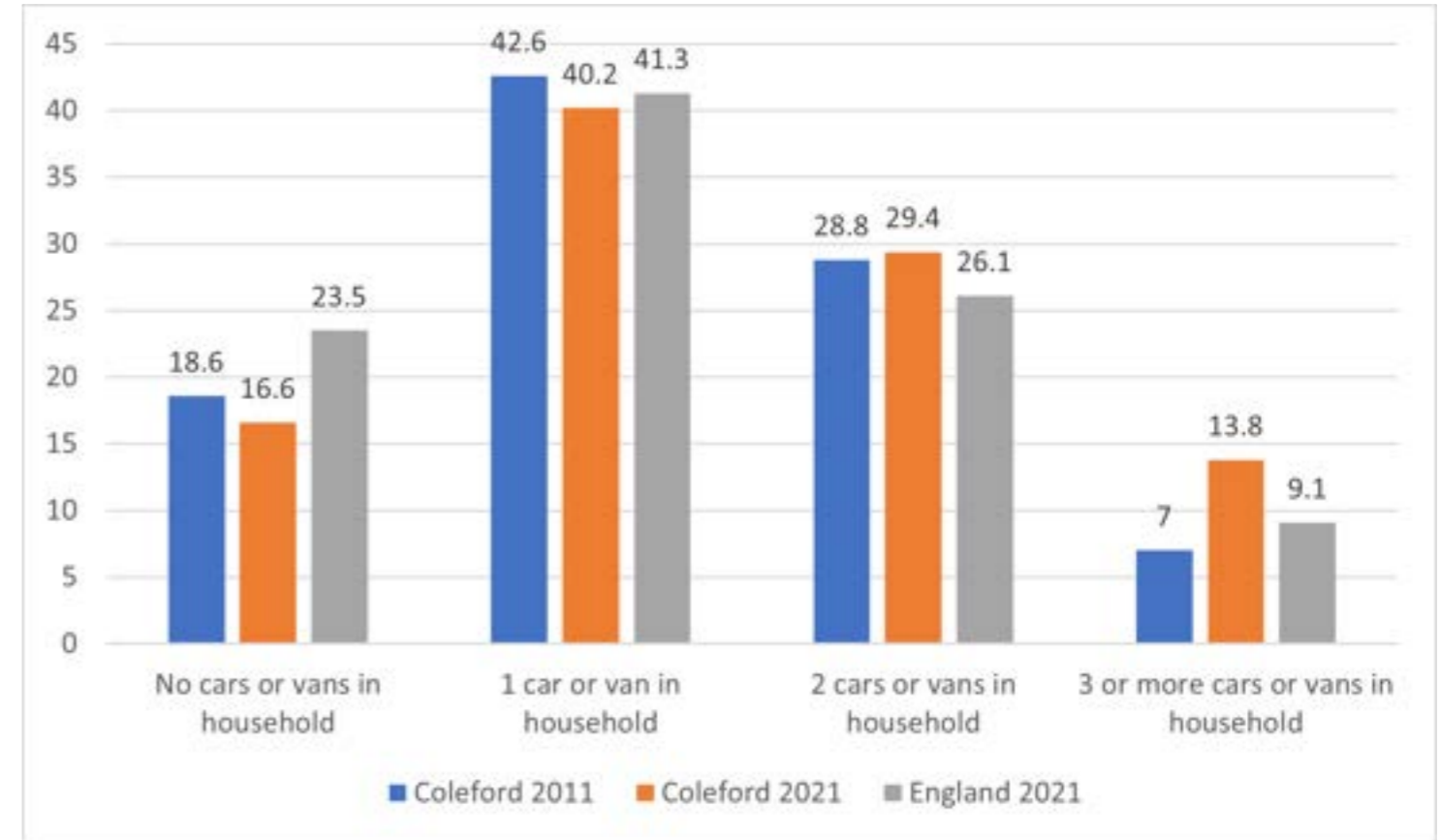
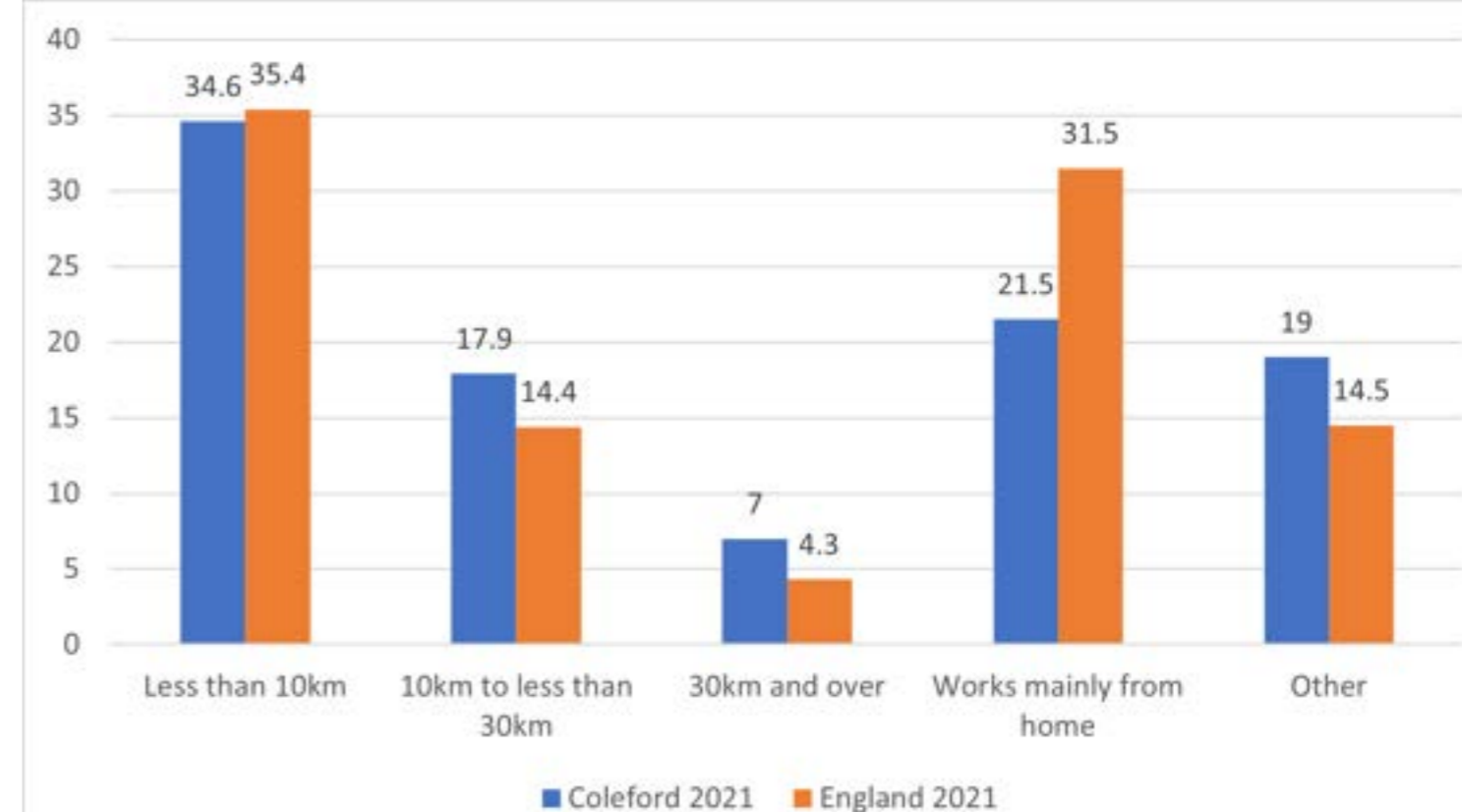


Figure 9 - Distance Travelled to Work



Source: Census 2011 - 2021

Challenges and Opportunities

Place Based Data

Figure 10 shows the main mode of travel to the workplace with 62.5% of residents driving by car/van which is 18% higher than the English average, with 4.7% being a passenger in a car or van. Only 1.6% use a bus/minibus or coach and 1% use a bike. For those that work in the town, 6.5% walk to work, which is like the English average of 7.6%.

Community Safety

Figure 11 - Crime Categories - 2019-2022 outlines crimes reported in Coleford during 2019 to 2022. Incidents where crime has dropped over the years include anti-social behaviour, drug related and vehicle crime. Categories which have risen include public order, shoplifting and violence and sexual offences.

These rates are generally low compared to similar size towns and locations.

Figure 10 - Method of Travel to Workplace

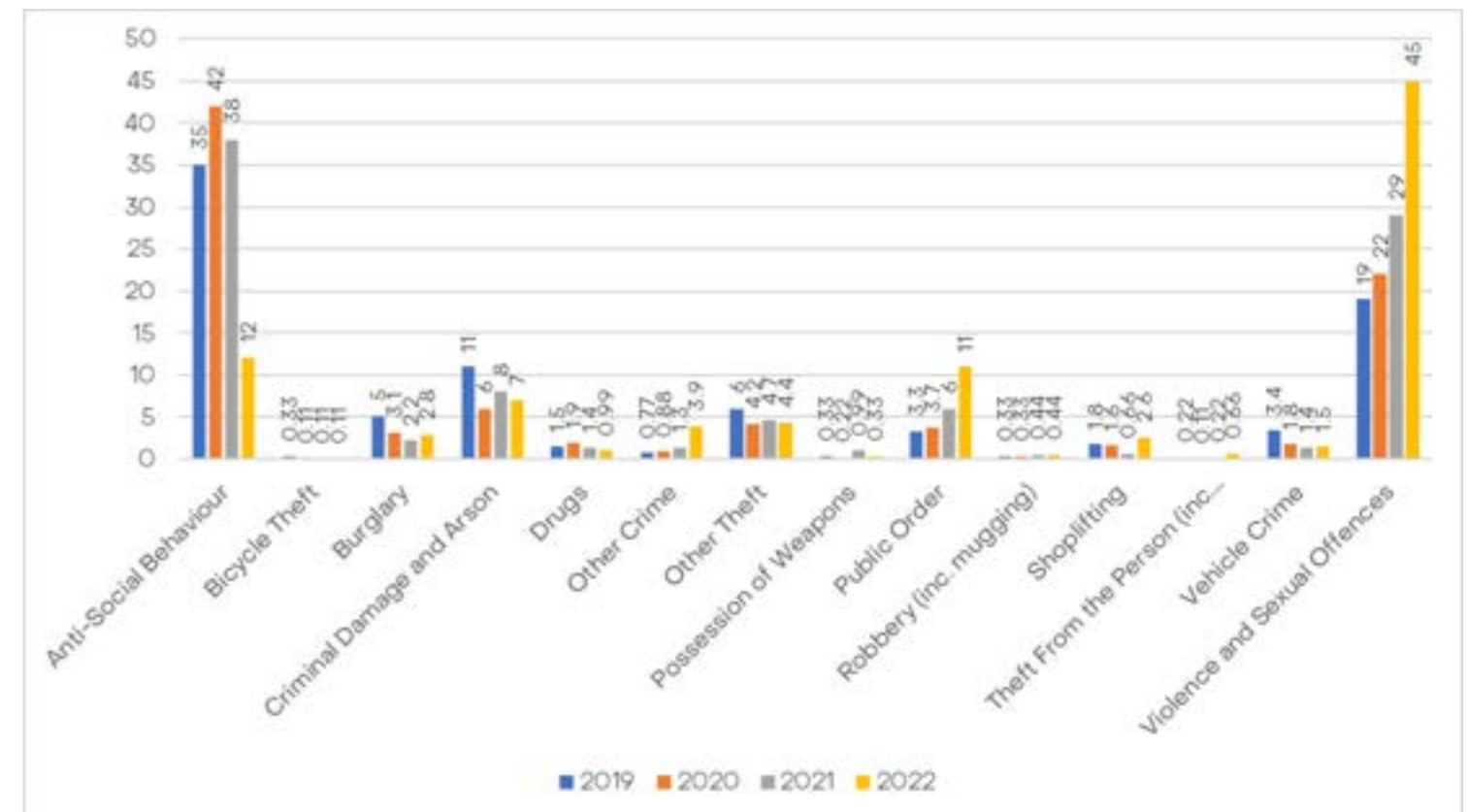
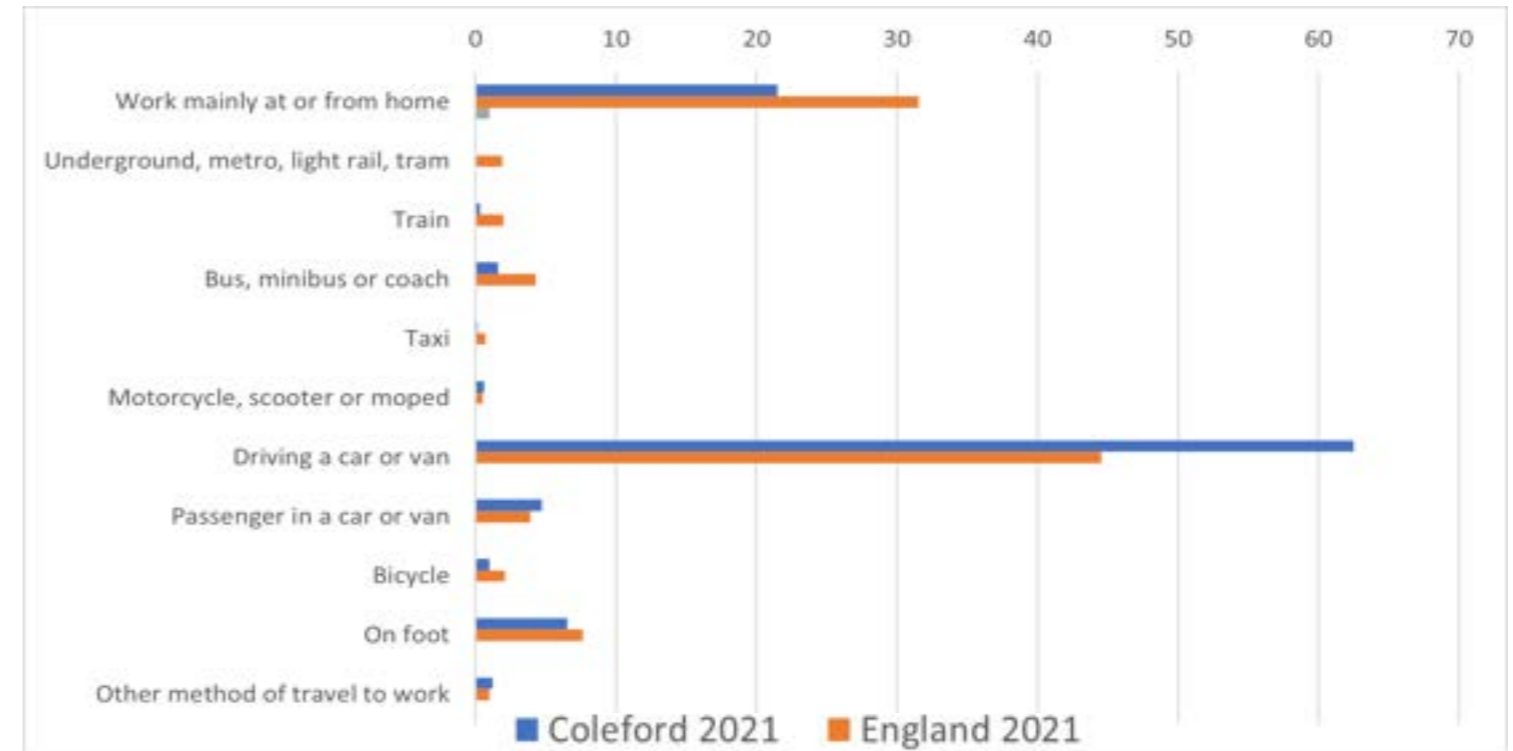


Figure 11 - Crime Categories - 2019-2022 Source:Crimerate.co.uk 2019-2022

Challenges and Opportunities

Place Based Data

Figure 13 overleaf else shows the breakdown of the same number of town centre units by sector with 10% being convenience such as a butchers, bakers or food store, 23% being comparison such as clothing, gift, hardware and other non-food items. 34% are services which include food and drink, health and beauty and professional services.

Figure 14 - Breakdown of Town Centre by Type of Activity shows the breakdown by type of activity of activity with the following ranking by frequency 1) health and beauty 2) coffee shops and cafes 3) foodstore/convenience and 4) homeware and DIY.

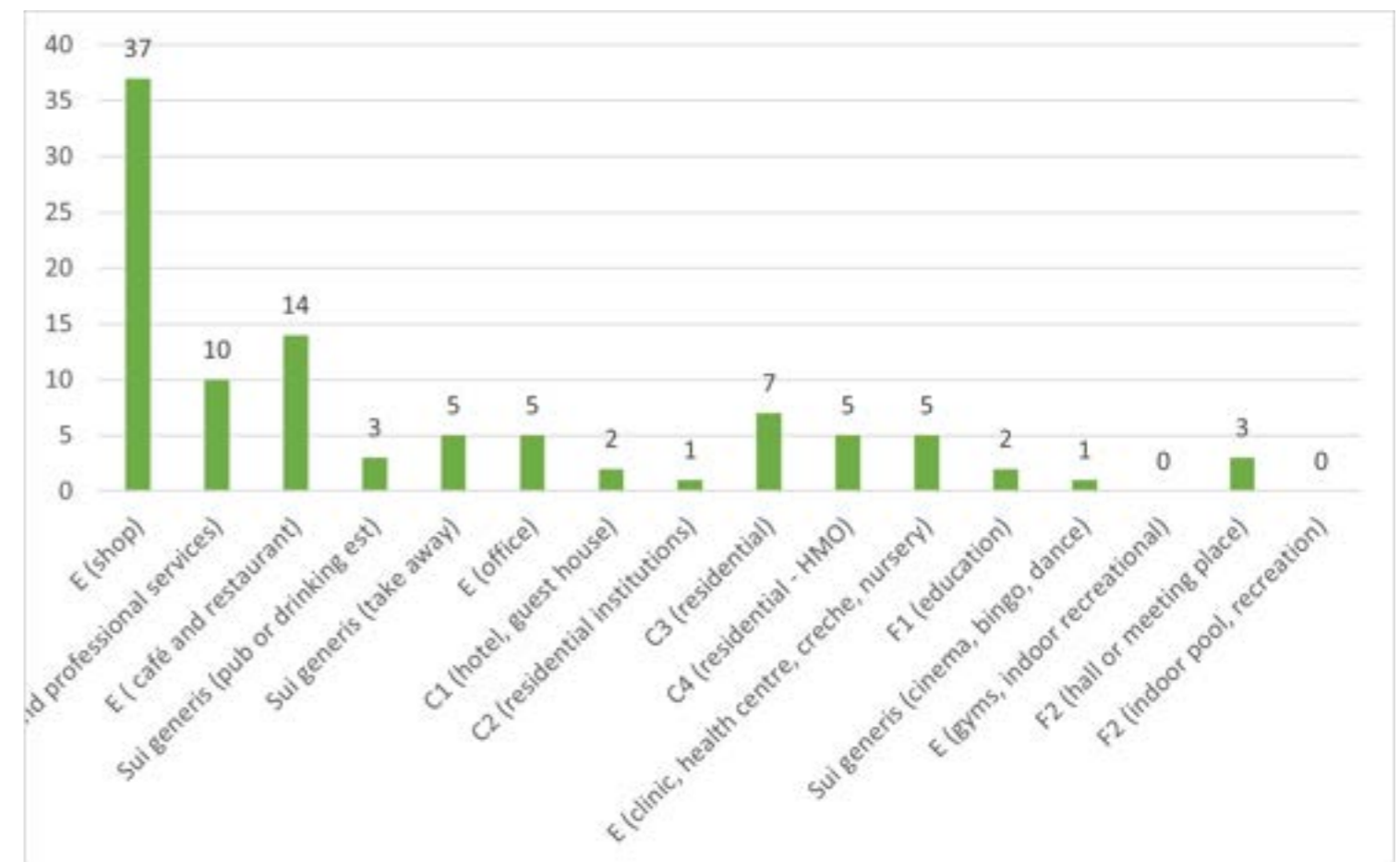
From our assessment, 7% (7 no.) of town centre properties are vacant which is relatively low compared to the UK average of 14.5%.

Town Centre Vitality and Viability

An independent assessment of the town centre uses and activities has been undertaken which is in addition to the District Council’s annual town centre audits. The survey was undertaken on the 26th September 2023.

Figure 12 shows the breakdown of uses by the English use class order which indicates that over 40% of the uses relate to shops, over 20% for café and restaurants, with 7% being takeaway and 10% being office.

Figure 12 - Breakdown of Town Centre Uses by Use Class Order



Challenges and Opportunities

Figure 13 - Breakdown of Town Centre Uses by Sector

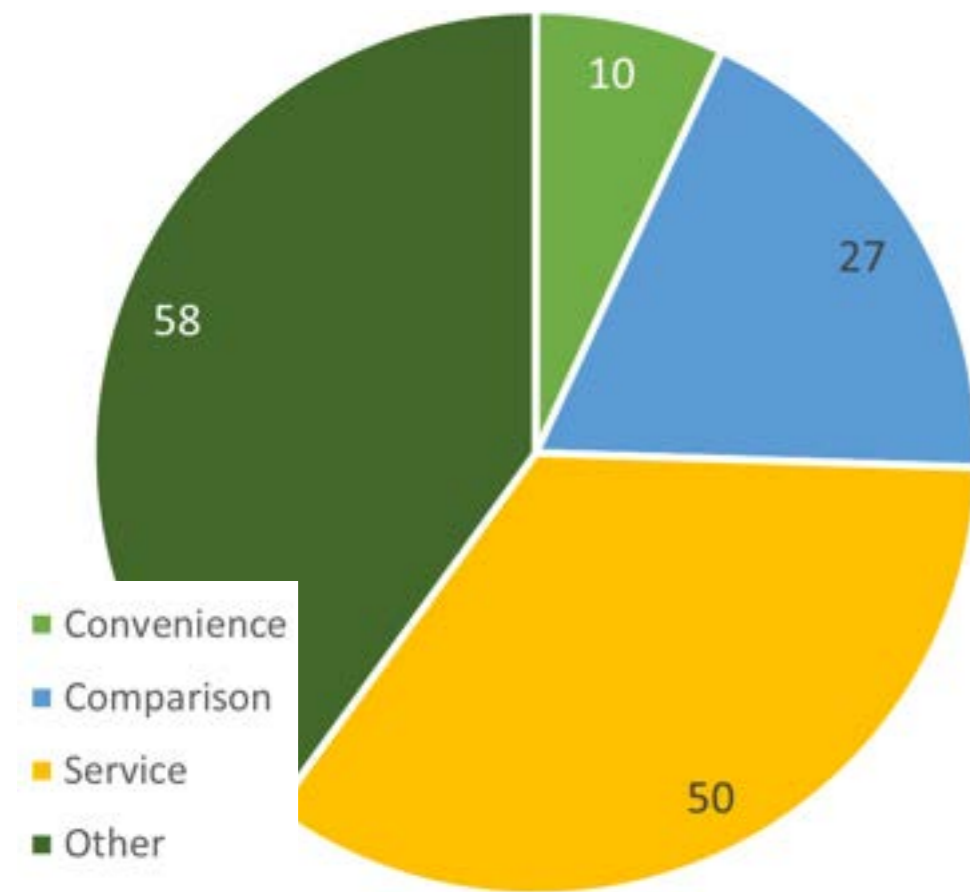
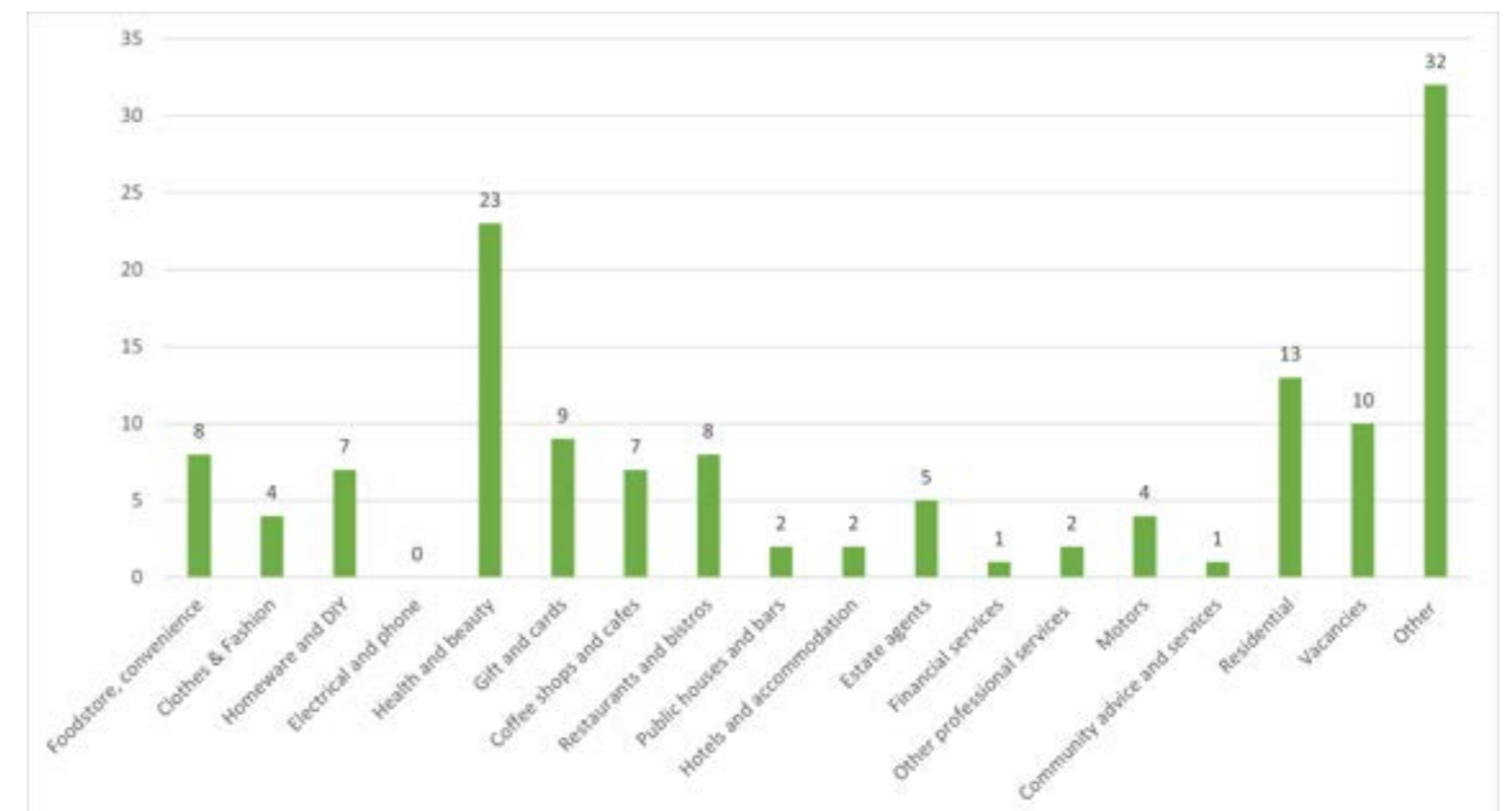


Figure 14 - Town Centre Uses



Figure 15 - Breakdown of Town Centre by Type of Activity



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration, September 2023

Place Analysis

Settlement and Wider Town

Coleford has a unique structure and context, with the identity of settlements derived from historic mineheads which is now protected by a green ring as outlined in the adopted neighbourhood development plan. The settlement consists of a main Town Centre and then a series of outlying neighbourhoods. Nothing particularly unique about this, however, these neighbourhoods are physically separated from the town by a 'ring of green' space. This engenders a feeling of mini settlements in their own right rather than a series of anonymous suburbs:

- Town Centre then, starting in the south,
- Milkwall
- Coalway
- Broadwell
- Mile End
- Although outside the Coleford 'settlement', Berry Hill to the north.

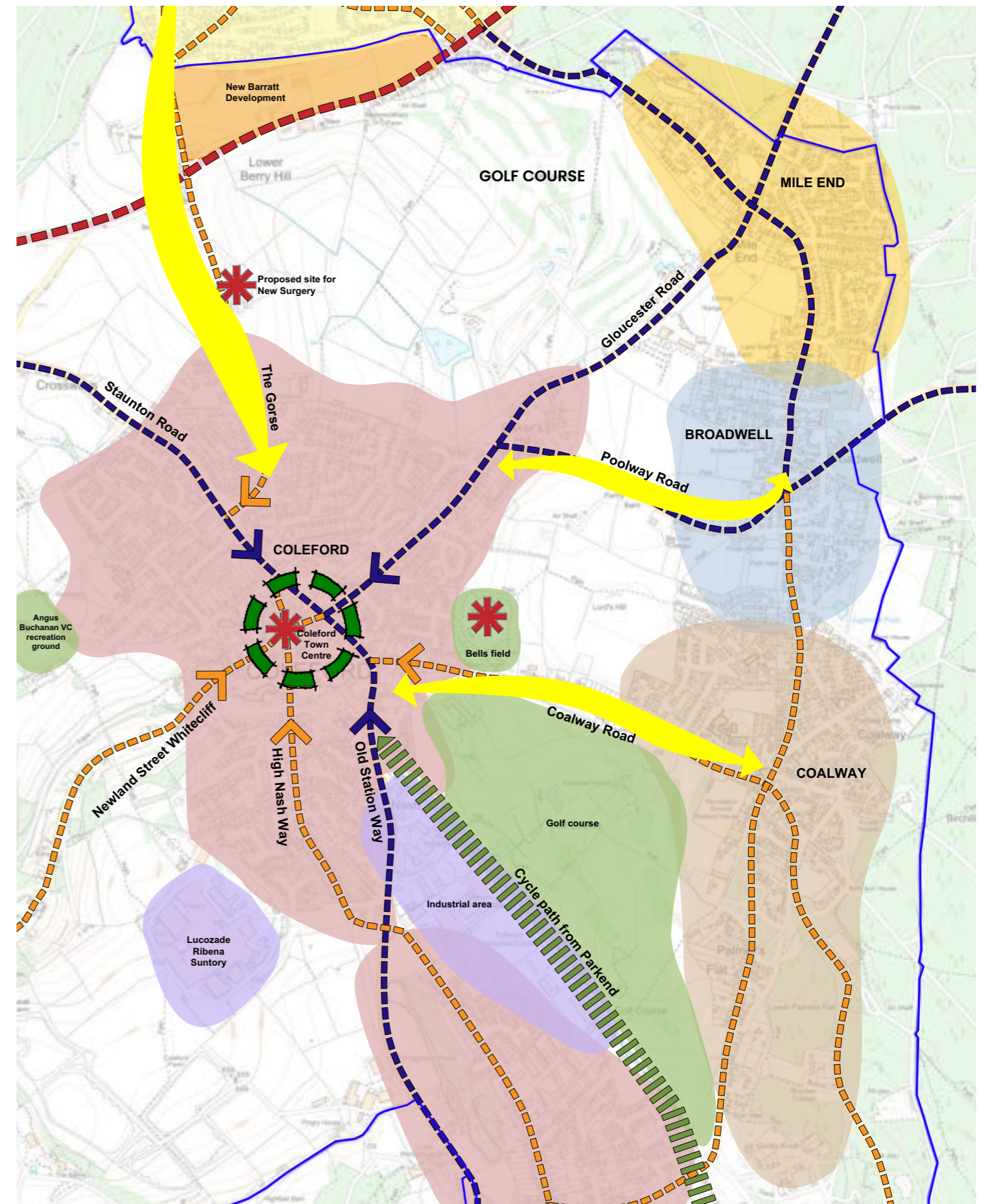
Each settlement offers its own range of local facilities including:

- Small convenience stores
- Community halls
- Pockets of employment
- Public houses
- Sport and recreation fields and clubs

Coleford town centre is, however, very much a primary hub for the outlying settlements. It sits in a bowl with a series of 'spokes' which radiate out from its centre, connecting to the outer settlements on higher ground. Then, in turn, an outer 'rim' links the settlements together.

The main employment uses are located to the south of the town centre with Tufthorn industrial Estate and the Lucozade Ribena Suntory factory which is the largest employer in the area. These benefit from being within walking and/or cycling distance of the town.

In addition to the 'spokes' which connect out to the wider settlements, there is also a pedestrian/cycle link which comes in from the south via a disused railway line. This offers both active travel and recreational links out to the wider forest area to the south and southeast.



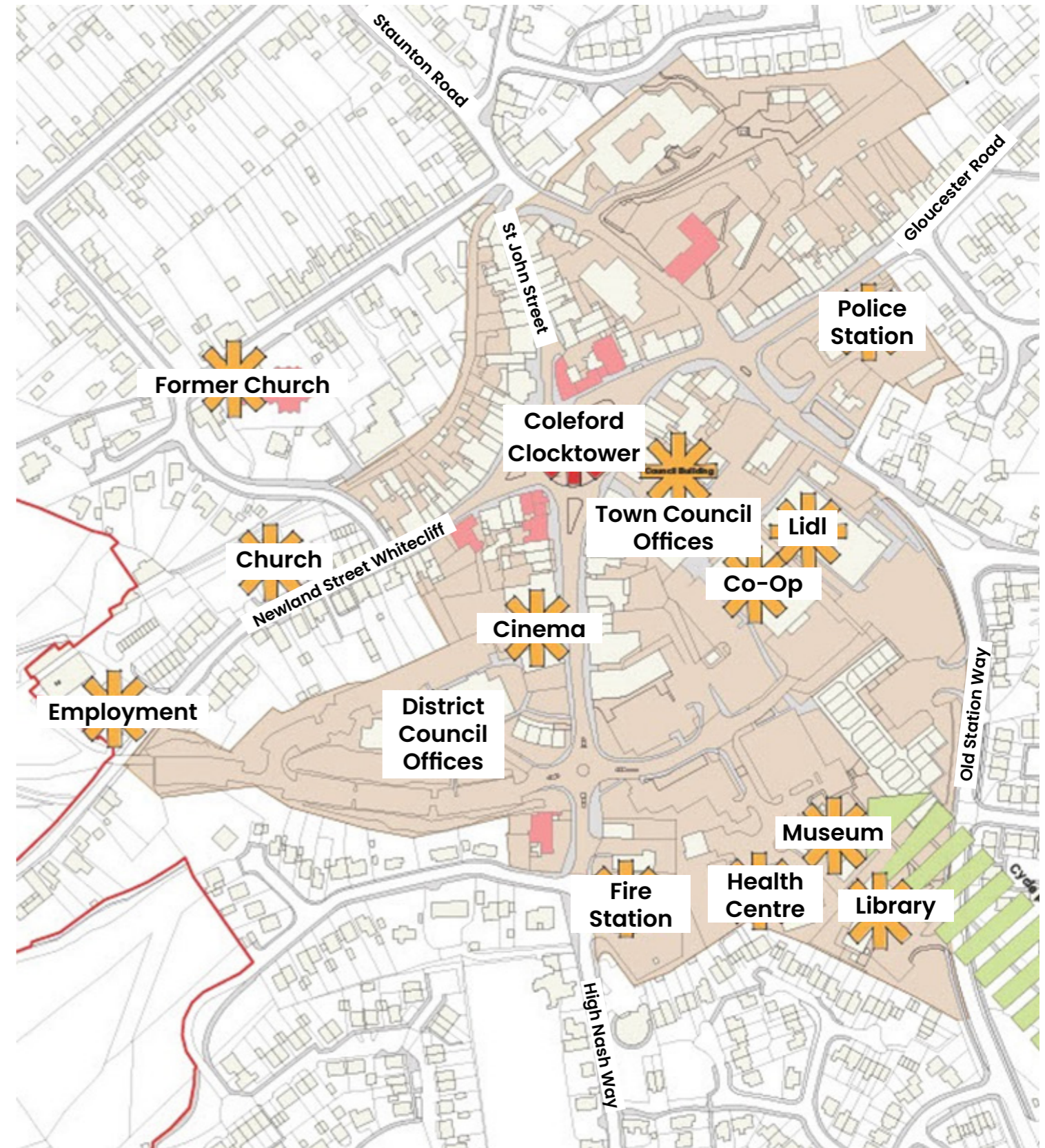
Place Analysis

Settlement and Wider Town

The town centre has a diverse offer including a number of successful independent retailers. This gives the town a comforting 'local' feel. In addition to this local offer, the town also benefits from a number of essential services and wider national offers. These are all located within the town centre giving residents and visitors easy access to them:

- Forest of Dean Council offices
- Coleford Town Council offices
- Various churches
- Employment
- Health centre (to be relocated to the northern edge of town)
- Library and Main Place building
- Museum
- Cinema
- Police station
- Ambulance station
- Fire station
- Bells Field recreation space
- Lidl food store
- Co-op food store

As discussed, the uses are all located within the town providing the opportunity for one stop multi-purpose visits. As opposed to the settlement of Coleford which reaches out to the wider neighbourhoods, this also gives the town a feeling of compactness.



Movement

Vehicular Movement

As previously discussed, the town centre acts as a 'wheel hub' with a series of 'spokes' leading to the outlying neighbourhoods which are, in turn, connected by a 'linking rim'. As can be seen on the Vehicular Movement diagram, many of these spokes culminate at the lighted junction of Bank Street, Gloucester Road and Lord's Hill, making this a key vehicular nodal point within the town. As such, it is a very vehicle dominated area that is unfriendly as a pedestrian or cyclist.

Newland Street and High Street merge at the central clock tower square. This is the heart of the town and was the original setting of the market, named the Market Place. The clock tower now sits in a public space in the centre of a traffic gyratory, this leads to issues around vehicle pedestrian conflict, noise and air pollution.

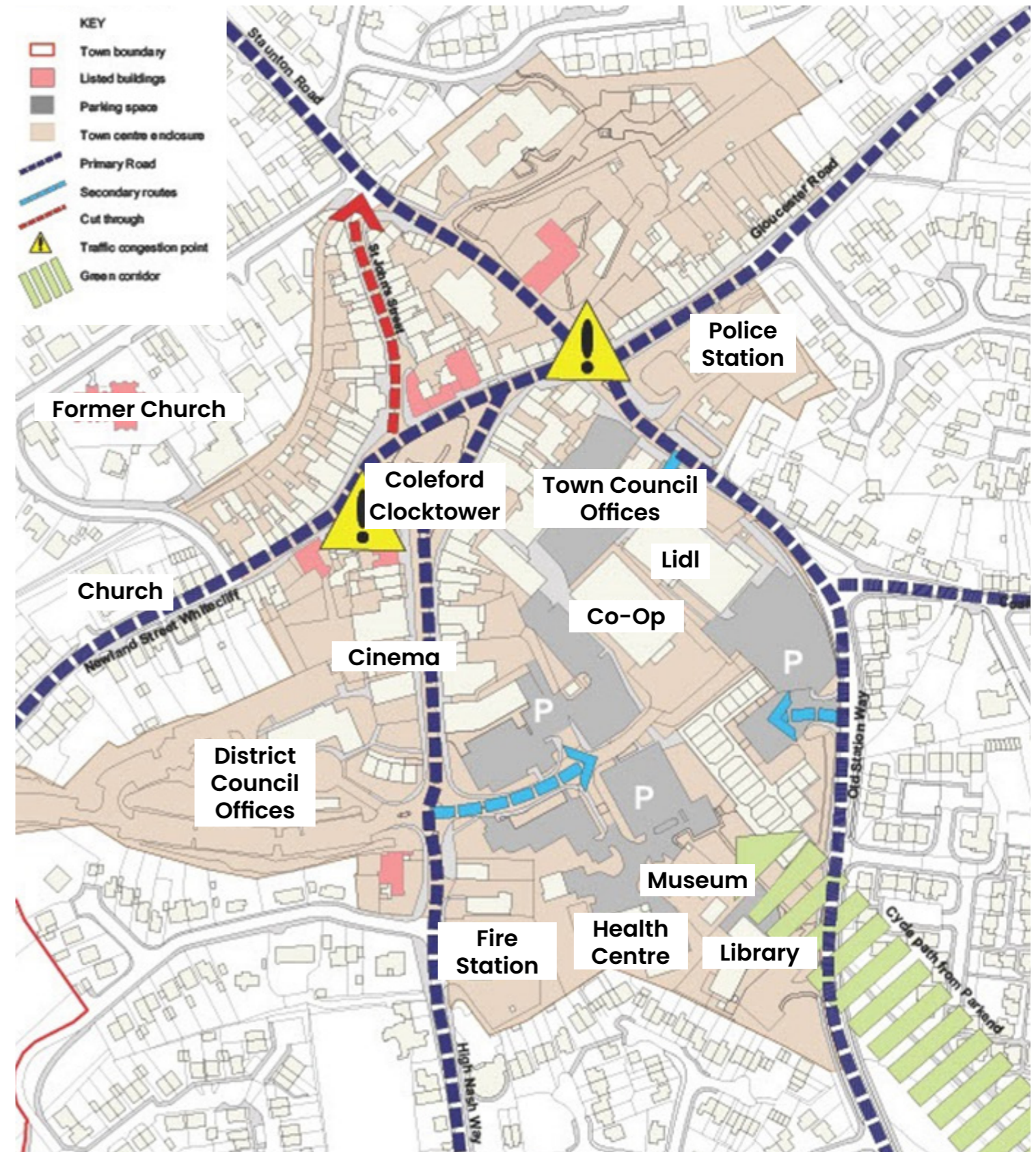
Leading off the Market Place is St Johns Street. This is a narrow and intimate street with a real sense of character. The Street is one way and links Newland Street to Staunton Road. In doing so it by-passes the busy lighted junction at Gloucester Road / Old Station Way / Staunton Road. As such it is used as a rat run or cut though for traffic leaving the town and heading

northeast. This makes the street busier than it ought to be with, potentially, 90% of its traffic using it for this purpose rather than actually stopping in the street for its services.

For visitors to the town by car, their initial destination would be one of the towns car parks. The town centre is well served by car parks:

- Public - Railway Drive Car Park - Paid - 107 standard, 15 disabled, 4 parent and child
- Public - Lord's Hill Car Park Free - 48 standard, 3 disabled
- Public - Newland Street - 19 standard, 1 disabled
- Private - Co-op car park - free
- Private - Lidl car park - limited stay
- Private - Pyart's Court - limited stay

Signage and wayfinding to these car parks is generally poor. Coming from the north, east or west to the main public car park, necessitates going through the Market Place exacerbating the volume of traffic in this area.

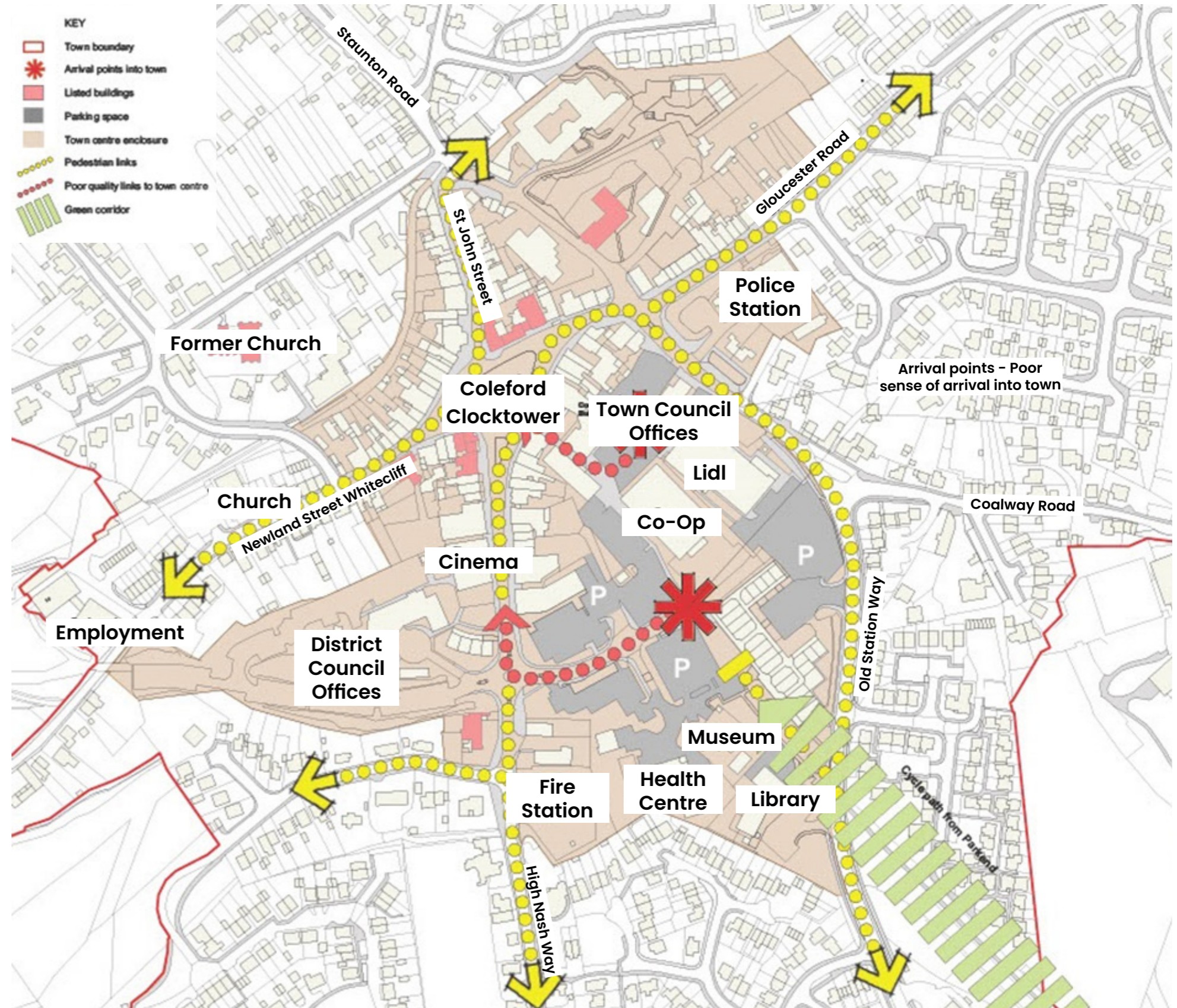


Movement

Pedestrian Movement

With the town movement being based around a hub and spoke concept, there are a good number of pedestrian access links leading into the town centre. These are, however, mainly via footpath to busy roads. As such, these can be noisy, intimidating and stressful for pedestrians and cyclists. There is an existing car free active travel route which comes into the town centre from the south, linking past the library and museum. This currently ends abruptly just alongside Pyarts Court.

With many visitors to the town arriving by car, links from the car parks to the town centre are important. Currently the car parks and the pedestrian links from them to the town centre, lack any sense of arrival. The routes are not obvious and feel of a low quality. They are, however, short and direct.



Street Scene

In terms of quality of street scape / scene, Coleford Town Centre has a high starting point. Its historic core is generally intact with an interesting blend of building types, facades and characters combining to create a characterful place. The diagram overleaf categorises the quality of the streetscape:

1. Best
2. Better
3. Lower
4. Lowest

Even the lowest quality is lower only due to era and style rather than state of repair. This can be found at the south-eastern tip of High Street. This does, however, impact on the gateway into the town from the south or from the main public car park. Having said that, the view down the High Street to the prominent clock tower does draw your eye in this location giving a far better first impression of the place.

As can be seen from the diagram, generally the western side of the town 'feels' better than the eastern side. With the exception of the southeast tip, this is not necessarily due to the character of the built form, which is generally high, but more to do with the quality of the uses on offer.

To the north of the town is St John Street. This has the 'best' feeling within the town. It is a narrow characterful street with a mix of local independent shops and services.

There has been some improvements to the public realm which is contributing positively to the character of the street. As previously mentioned, however, the feel of the place is compromised by the volume of traffic using it as a cut through to avoid the main town centre lighted junction for those travelling northeast.

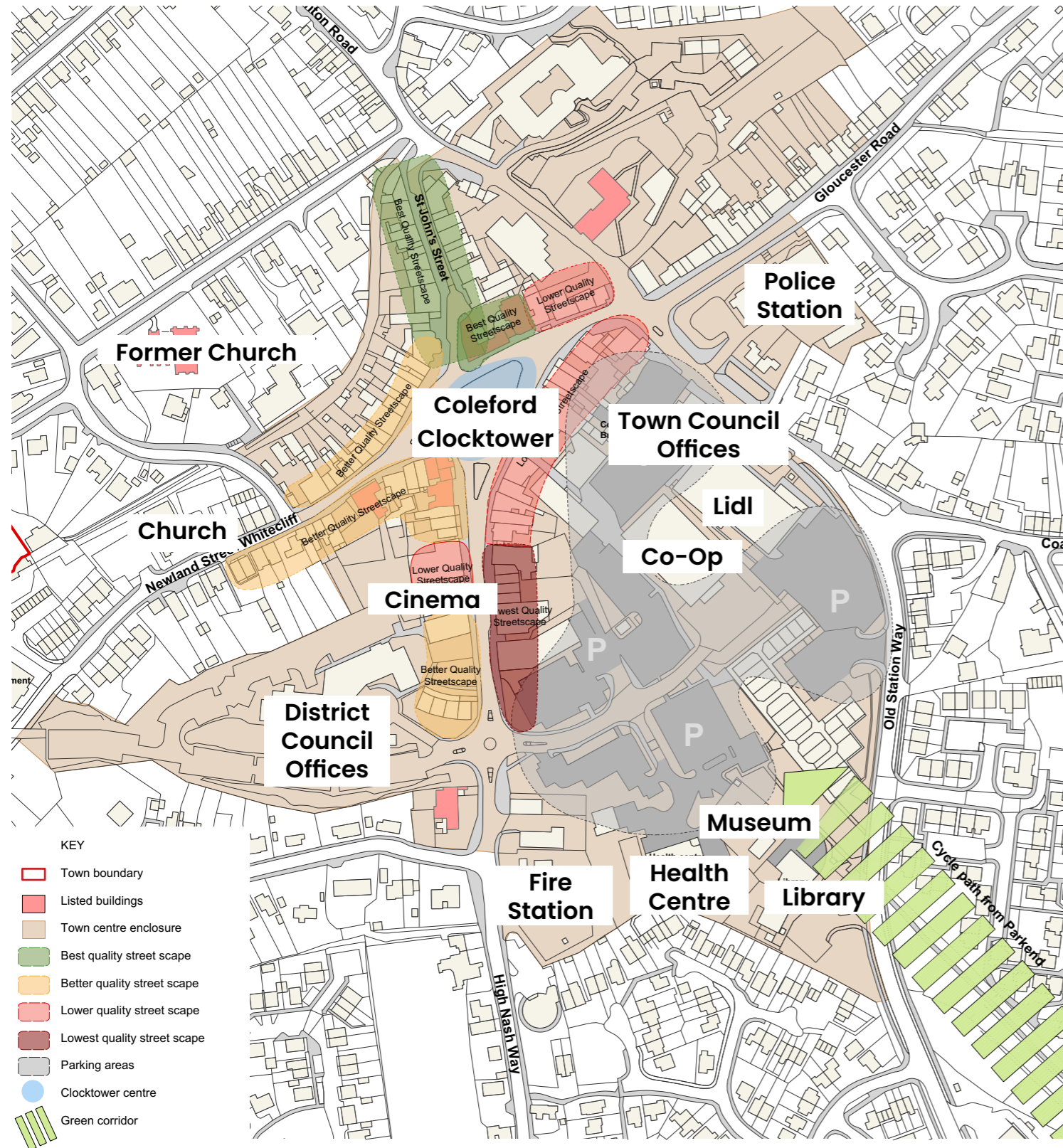
Good quality street scene along St John Street. Opportunity here for a robust shop front design which will add to the character of this street.



Good quality shop front design. Font is in keeping with the town character, colours and style keep the Market Town charm



Street Scene



← Good quality street scene examples

Lower and Lowest quality street scene examples



Key Buildings, Services and Destinations

The town centre has a diverse offer including a number of successful independent retailers. This gives the town a comforting 'local' feel. In addition to this local offer, the town also benefits from a number of essential services and wider national offers. These are all located within the town centre giving residents and visitors easy access to them:

- Forest of Dean Council offices
- Coleford Town Council offices
- Various churches
- Employment
- Health centre (to be relocated to the northern edge of town)
- Library and Main Place building
- Museum
- Cinema
- Police station
- Ambulance station
- Fire station
- Bells Field recreation space
- Lidl food store
- Co-op food store

As discussed, the above uses are all located within the town providing the opportunity for one stop multi-purpose visits. As opposed to the settlement of Coleford which reaches out to the wider neighbourhoods, this also gives the town a feeling of compactness.



Cinema



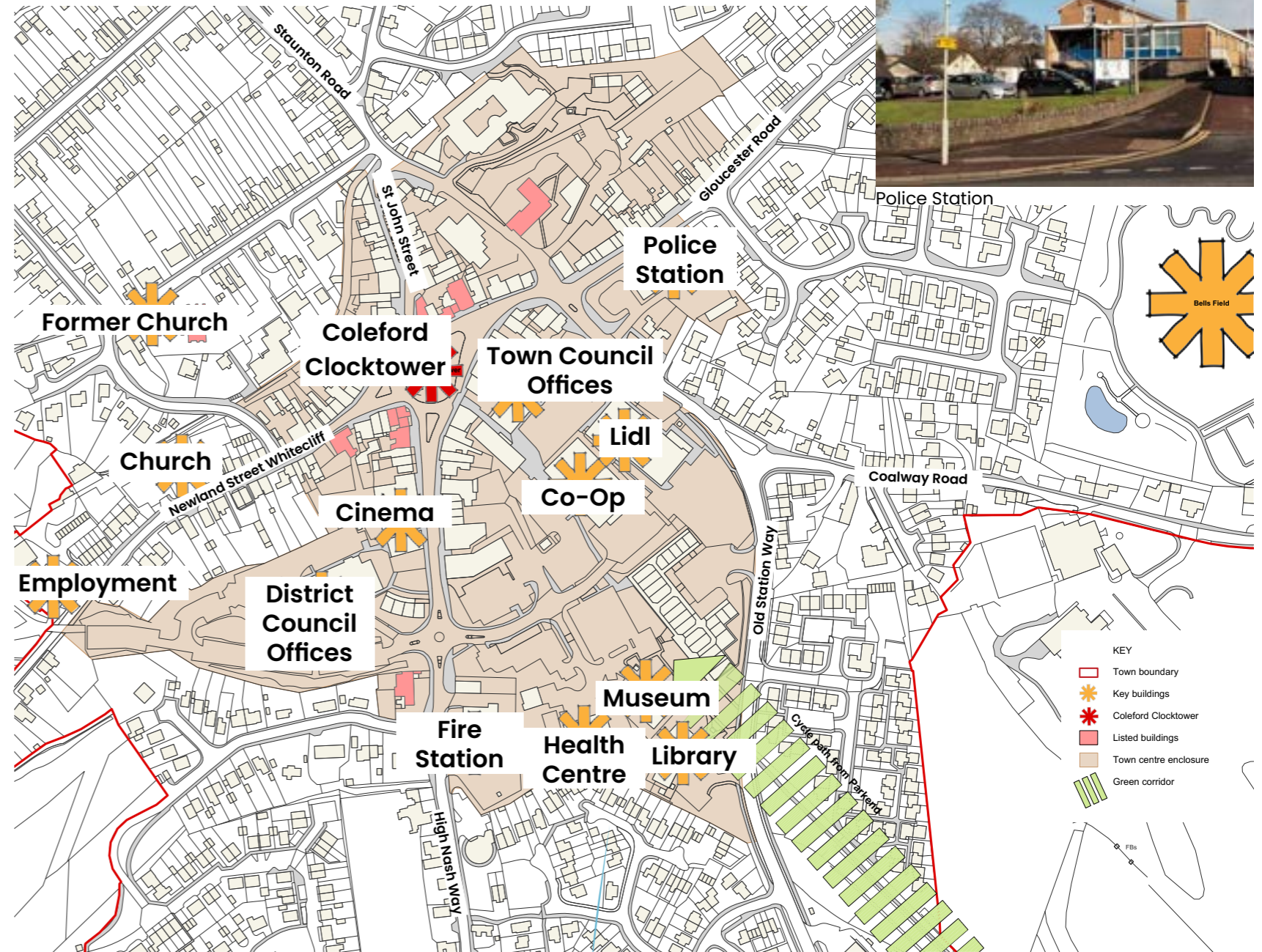
Fire Station



FOD Council



Railway Museum



Police Station



The Main Place (Library)



Lidl Supermarket



Bells Field

SWOT Analysis (People)

WEAKNESSES

- Proud people and strength of community spirit
- Population has grown by 11% between 2011 and 2021 indicating local growth
- The town is above the English average for reporting its health as fair to good
- There has been a reduction in residents having no qualifications, some 7% points lower than the 2011 census
- There has been an increase in residents having Level 4 qualifications, being 5% points higher than 2011 figures
- The town is above the English average for households owning more than two cars or vans (3.4% higher)
- Crime incidents related to anti-social behaviour, drug related and vehicle crime have dropped off in recent years
- Major employers such as Lucozade Ribena Suntory
- Coleford Town Council is a proactive Community Council that has project managed some keynote schemes and led on the NDP
- Good working relationship with University of the West of England Architecture and Planning students over the last three years
- Outmigration of people between 16 and 50, with a climb in people returning, post 65 with residents aged 70 and over, two points above the English average

- Outmigration of people between 16 and 50, with a climb in people returning, post 65 with residents aged 70 and over, two points above the English average
- Higher than the English average for residents that are economically inactive which is linked to greater proportion of retirees in the community but these still contribute through volunteering
- Less representation in managerial and professional occupations with a greater proportion in skilled trades (5.2% above the English average)
- 7.9% of population travel between 10km to 30km to get to work
- People tend to drive to work (62.5%) compared to 1% who uses their bicycle
- Crime incidents related to public order, shoplifting and violence and sexual offences has risen
- Dependency on some large key employers

STRENGTHS

SWOT Analysis (People)

- 21.5% work mainly from home, which is 10% less than English average but still an opportunity to tap into
- There is a mobile segment of the community that need to be drawn into town centre offer
- Building on "Forest" brand and identity
- Micro businesses that craft, make and produce in the rural Forest – direct them to showcase and trade in the town centre
- Neighbourhoods close to town centre
- Active travel network routes that connect communities and attractions
- Develop the town centre as a "community"

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

- Cost of living and trends in shopping activity and use of online
- Diversity of employment not attractive to young people to be retained
- Diminishing public sector expenditure and changing priorities
- Travel to work patterns leads to leakage of activity and spend

SWOT Analysis (Place)

WEAKNESSES

- Setting of the town within the central area of the Forest of Dean
- Outlying communities look into the town centre
- Strong heritage story in mining and other Forest industries
- Strong visitor offer nearby with Perrygrove, Clearwell Caves, Beechenhurst and outdoor activities and the Wye Valley
- Bell's Field Park is a key community asset on eastern side of town centre, with Angus Buchanan VC Playing Fields located to the western edge
- Key strategic facilities such as FODC main Council offices, Forest of Dean Police Station located in the town centre
- Neighbourhood Development Plan adopted in 2017 that guides the FODC Local Development Plan with site specific policies
- The clock tower "symbol" of the town centre
- Town centre experiences a low vacancy rate compared to UK average
- A town of "convenience" and "local services" and feels "community"
- A two screen cinema on the main High Street
- Food stores close to the High Street
- Some notable independent businesses
- Strong street scene and keynote buildings
- Generally, a good quality of streetscape within historic core
- Good number of parking spaces available within the town
- Outlying neighbourhoods are settlements in their own right rather than suburban
- Mix of independent shops supported by national retailer
- Compact centre offering all local services

- Road network and connectivity not direct to and from Coleford
- No train line or station – poor public transport
- The town's topography does create physical barriers for more sustainable forms of transport e.g. walking and cycling
- Arrival into town centre not clear at key gateways
- Journey from main long stay car park at Railway Drive not coherent
- Key public spaces dated and vehicle dominated
- Key edges and sites need improvements
- Some significant runs of commercial frontages need improvement
- Car parks lack a sense of arrival
- Pedestrian links from car parks lack legibility and are of a poor quality
- Exposed and unsightly recycling centre blights sense of arrival and gateway
- St Johns Street marred by cut through use
- Main town car park is over engineered: Whilst it has green infrastructure there is a high proportion of hard surfaces (tarmac) when compared to the number of spaces available
- Town Council office lacked sense of civic presence at previous location
- Main market square feels very traffic dominated. Noisy and unrelaxing – not a place that encourages dwell
- Active travel links into the town centre are very limited with most being on roads or footpaths to roads.

STRENGTHS

SWOT Analysis (Place)

- Allocations plan has indicated 379 units with the Coleford settlement area
- To celebrate the town being in the Forest through brand and activity
- Some redundant buildings could meet community needs
- Heritage led approach to regeneration
- Creation of more legible pedestrian links from car park
- Consider improvement to market square: traffic flow, public realm, dwell, events, green infrastructure etc
- Improve civic presence of Town Council
- Creation of 'Shopfront Design Code' linked to improvement grants to raise quality and create better co-ordinated shopfront streetscape
- Rationalise main town car park to create more GI and a far greater sense of arrival
- Better integrate active travel routes to the town centre
- Stop and/or discourage traffic through St John Street
- Improve main lighted junction on Gloucester Road – gateway to town
- Seek alternative uses for derelict church
- Redevelopment site: 14 Newland Street – opportunity for mixed use. Good traditional shopfront
- Creation of 'arrival collection place' at intersection of pedestrian routes from town council and main public car parks
- Provide new or improved public toilets
- Improve and relocate recycling centre
- Future proof town centre facilities e.g., car charging points, convenient cycle parking and infrastructure, dealing with surface water drainage and flooding, green infrastructure to help mitigate climate change
- Better promotion of the town as a destination within the Forest: improved visitor facilities – eating, drinking, cycling infrastructure etc

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

- A perception that the town is not a priority for investment
- Climate change and watershed nature of town e.g., run off and flooding
- Sense of losing community and social infrastructure with growing housing demand
- Relocation of GP practice away from town centre will impact on linked activities
- Doing nothing: Town currently feels like it has reached a standstill point. Doing nothing may tip the town into receding
- Shopping habits and cost of living may reduce trade further. Potential for businesses to close leaving empty shops and the sense of downward spiral
- Evolution: town centres are changing and becoming more social. Coleford needs to continue to adapt and evolve

Community Consultation

Coleford Town Council provided several opportunities for the local community to get involved and to have their say.

This was a mixture of face to face consultation in the town centre and out in the town neighbourhoods. Digital opportunities were also provided through the Town Council's website which hosted electronic versions of the consultation material and an online survey.

The consultation ran from Friday, the 15th of November to the 6th of December 2024.

Attendance

A total of 162 people engaged face to face with the community regeneration plan, as shown in figure 1 below.

On the 15th of November the community engagement was held at the Town Council offices in Mushet Walk.

On the 16th of November the community engagement was held at Milkwall play area, followed by a session at Broadwell AFC.

From the 18th of November until the 6th of December, the consultation display was brought back to the Town Council offices in Mushet Walk which was attended by members of the public, FoDDC officers, the local MP and District Councillors.



YOUR TOWN CENTRE, YOUR SAY

Coleford Town Council is developing a **Community Regeneration Plan** for its town centre. We want to hear from you as a resident, local business, voluntary organisation or someone who has an interest in the future of our town centre. This is your opportunity to look at our ideas and give us your views.

10am to 8pm, Friday, 15th November
Community Drop In Session
 Coleford Town Council Offices, Mushet Walk

10am to 5pm, Saturday 16th November
Roaming Consultation - Look Out for Us

- 10am to 1pm Foxglove Garden Play Area, Milkwall
- 2pm to 5pm Broadwell Football Club

10am to 1230pm, 18th to 22nd and 25th to 29th November
Display in Coleford Town Council Offices

Visit Town Council Website to view plans and fill in our survey
<https://www.colefordtowncouncil.gov.uk/home>

Get In Touch
 Email chris@chrisjones.studio or 07968 943084

Survey Closes: Sunday, 1st December

Funded by UK Government

↑ Publicity poster created to advertise the Public Consultation in November 2024

Community Consultation

Key messages

Strengths

- Whilst the location can present some difficulties in terms of accessing some services, the setting of Coleford close to the “Forest” landscape was seen to outweigh any negatives.
- This is followed by the people and community feel which is recognised by those that were born in the Coleford town area and by those that have chosen to move and live here.
- All the above contributes to a strong identity with a real sense of pride in the place.
- Followed closely behind, people rate the landscape, public space, local heritage, opportunities for walking and cycling (albeit areas for improvement) and finally car parking in relation to supply, location with mixed views on payment and charging.

Weaknesses

- Within movement, cycle parking and storage, routes into the town centre and public transport were rated poor to average, with the latter related to frequency, timetable, routes and general quality of service.
- Arrival and gateway into the town centre, mixes of uses and local facilities score average with a general feeling that the town has lost services and facilities over time.

Other Ideas from the Community

- Town centre business environment
 - Outdoor activity market – maximise more the role of the town in the Forest and its visitors
 - Develop a town Wi-Fi scheme
- Town centre buildings
 - Develop a town centre painting scheme for buildings
 - General building maintenance
 - Better shop frontages and signage
- Improve public toilets
- An inclusive and accessible town
 - Dementia-inclusive design approach
 - Older and disabled people – accessibility

Our Vision



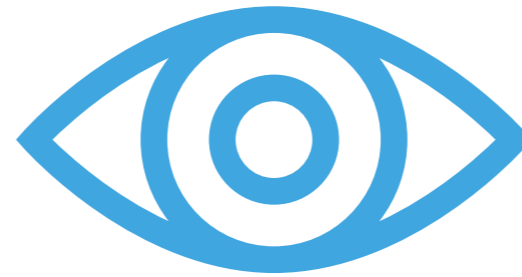
Coleford town centre will have a range of interesting shops which provide local and regionally produced foods, goods and gifts for residents and visitors.

There will be attractive gateways to the town and comfortable green places to sit and relax, surrounded by the well conserved natural and built heritage.

Health and social support services will be easily accessed through good transport infrastructure and communication networks.

Visitors of all ages will remember their enjoyable experience of a wide range of interesting tourist events and heritage trails around the town and surrounding countryside.

Our Aims



To grow the wider well-being of Coleford town centre through using local assets, building on our Forest Identity, partnership working and placing our community and visitors within our streets, squares, local businesses and local services.

Our Objectives




- To support town centre businesses and amenities by providing the right foundations for them that help visitors arrive, explore, spend time and create a memorable experience
- To provide opportunities for people of all ages within the town centre that creates unity, belonging and pride
- To maintain the character and identity of the town centre that appeals to residents and visitors alike
- To create streets for people that supports events, festivals, markets and social life
- To connect the town centre with its neighbourhoods and villages through active travel but also to make it a convenient place for all to visit
- To support the town and the Forest of Dean in reaching its carbon neutral target by 2030

Our Goals

- A place where Forest arts, culture and heritage is thriving
- A resilient town centre which uses local assets, ideas and its location in the Forest to its full potential
- An identity that is memorable and has a quality and warm reputation that is of The Forest
- A place of local well-being that is accessible to all
- Community passion that is about working together and getting things done


Key Themes

Streets and Spaces




- St John Street
- The Market Place
- Clock Tower and Tump

Green and Active Community




- Walking and Cycling into the Town Centre
- Greening the Town Centre

Opportunities for New Uses




- Repurposing the Health Centre
- Old Guardian Office
- Former Lloyds Bank

Community Life and Well Being



- 4 Musher Walk - The Hive
- The Main Place
- Former St John Ambulance Hall

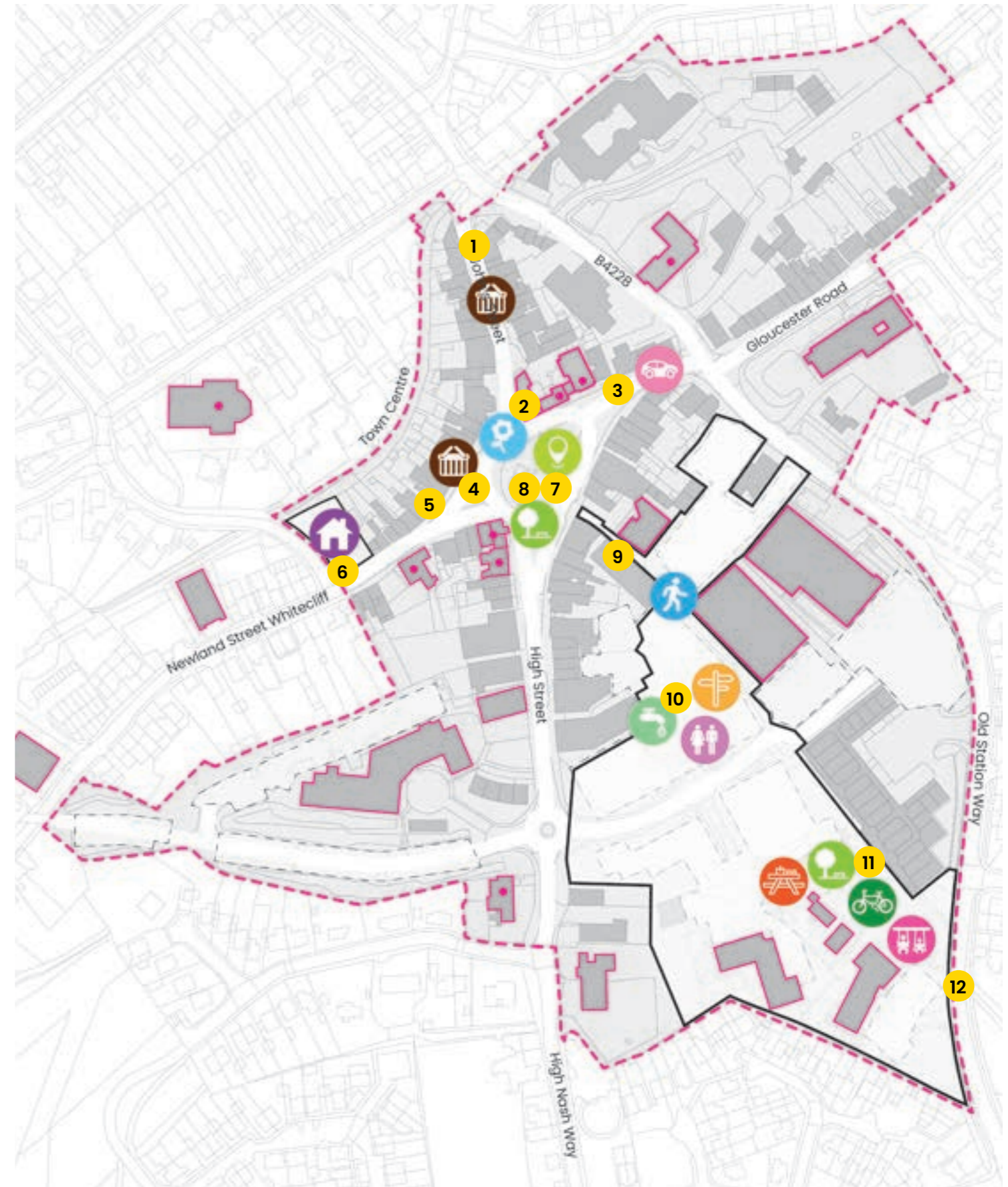
Supporting Local



- Promoting and Marketing the role of Markets
- Keeping the Market Town Charm

Proposals Diagram

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Re-imagining how traffic works in St John Street 2 Opportunities for planting and gateway landscaping to direct cars towards Gloucester Rd junction 3 Re-imagining movement towards the Gloucester Rd junction 4 Opportunity for shop fronts to become cohesive and 'of the place' through a shop front design code 5 More space outside businesses will allow 'spill out' onto the street 6 Opportunity site - Guardian office. Potential to continue run of houses along Newland Street here 7 Clock Tower, Market Square and Tump. Opportunity for public realm improvements and creating a 'place' here rather than just being a 'roundabout' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Improved planting and green landscaping to create a place people want to spend time in 9 Creating a strong link through Mushet Walk 10 Opportunity for way finding outside toilet block - creation of an arrival space within the carpark 11 Spaces to dwell, have a picnic and opportunity for play along this new green corridor 12 Strong links to wider cycle routes |
|--|---|



Streets and Spaces



St John Street

Challenges:

The street is strong in terms of diversity of use, some eating and social spaces but could have a better trading environment.

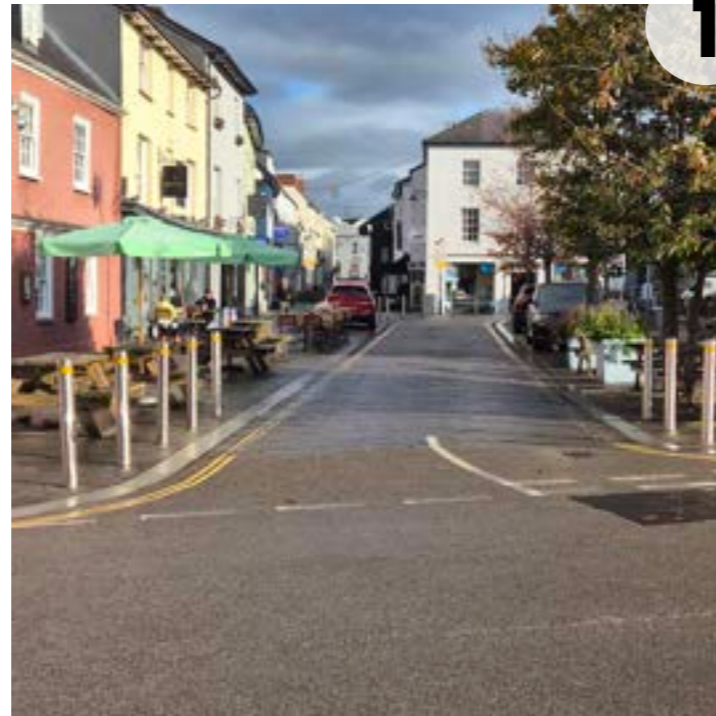
The street is used as a cut through by those vehicles that want to head north-west and avoid the traffic lights at Gloucester Road.

Three ideas were proposed at the public consultation. These are:

1. Reimagined junction
2. Part pedestrian (times) street
3. No change

Idea 1 and 2 would be aided with a street market and programme of events / agreed closures that forms part of a town centre events programme.

The use of pop-up seating, tables, stalls and items to animate the street during closure.



Change the junction of Market Place so vehicles have to negotiate at the junction of Market Place and St John Street to discourage cut-through traffic.

Opportunities to extend pavement space, whilst still providing for on-street parking and also larger vehicles such as loading.

Street trees and planted areas to continue Forest into the town.



Idea 2: Pedestrianisation of the street, with access only for example before 10am and after 4pm. This image of a similar street in Abergavenny shows how this can be achieved. Cars / deliveries would still be able to use the street at certain times and 24 hr emergency access would still be accommodated.

This idea would focus on places to sit out and enjoy the street increasing dwell time and encouraging a pedestrian mainly focused environment.

Street trees and planted areas would be used the green the street and continue Forest into the town. Trees and planting would also boost the biodiversity of the street and create opportunities for sustainable urban drainage.



Idea 3: Leave the street as it is with the same junction off the Market Place.



↑ Note the large portion of the street given over to cars and car parking and small area allocated to pedestrians and footpaths. No opportunities for planting, seating or public realm.

Streets and Spaces



St John Street

- 70% of people at face to face consultation want the street to be pedestrianised between specific hours e.g. 10am to 4pm
- 64% of people who responded through the survey either want

street based improvements that discourage cut-through traffic or pedestrianise the street between 10am and 4pm with 36% wanting no change and to leave it as it is

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To understand business needs within St John Street, specifically servicing and customer patterns across the day and week.
- To organise with Gloucestershire County Council the gathering of traffic data for the immediate highway network so there is an understanding on how vehicles use St John Street and its relationship to the Gloucester Road junction and other roads,
- To discuss with St John Street businesses how a trial scheme could be developed that:

- Supports their trading environment;
- Opens opportunities for additional outdoor space;
- Provides street-based events that leads to increased activity for businesses;
- Considers how a timed closure could be implemented – the way it is physically closed for example between 10am and 4pm;
- To agree a way forward.



↑ St John Street (1950's) Note how people and cyclists are using the space as there are fewer cars and more room for people

Less animation (today) fewer spaces for pedestrians to gather and dwell →



↑ St John Street (2024)

Streets and Spaces



St John Street



Place Making.

Potential resurfacing to reinforce this street is not vehicle focused.

Allowances still made for emergency vehicles etc and loading / cars during permitted times.

Opportunity to create a 'place' which will increase footfall, spend and dwell time.



Community and social facilities.

Opportunity for places to stop, sit and spend time promoting a cohesive community.

Improved opportunities for gathering.

Community focused activities eg markets / spill out stalls could be accommodated.



Active Travel.

Fewer cars will promote more walking leading to a healthier and happier Coleford.

Active travel and cycling will be promoted as the street will be more pedestrian focused.

Fewer emissions lead to a more attractive place for shops and shoppers - improved spending.



Biodiversity Net Gain.

Forest into the town - opportunities for planting, rain gardens and trees to bring the forest into the town.

Promote a healthy and biodiverse place to be through native species selection.



Altered road junctions and paving.

New paving will help direct cars to wards the Gloucester Rd junction.

Paving materials could mark out parking bays (which could become market stalls on certain days)

Surface treatment can reinforce pedestrian and cycle priority.

Streets and Spaces



The Market Place

Challenges:

The Market Place is a large roundabout where traffic does not contribute to a positive experience.

Clock tower needs a better heritage setting.

Some long-term vacant properties and new vacancies.

Full potential for regular events, festivals and market is not achieved.

Key ↓

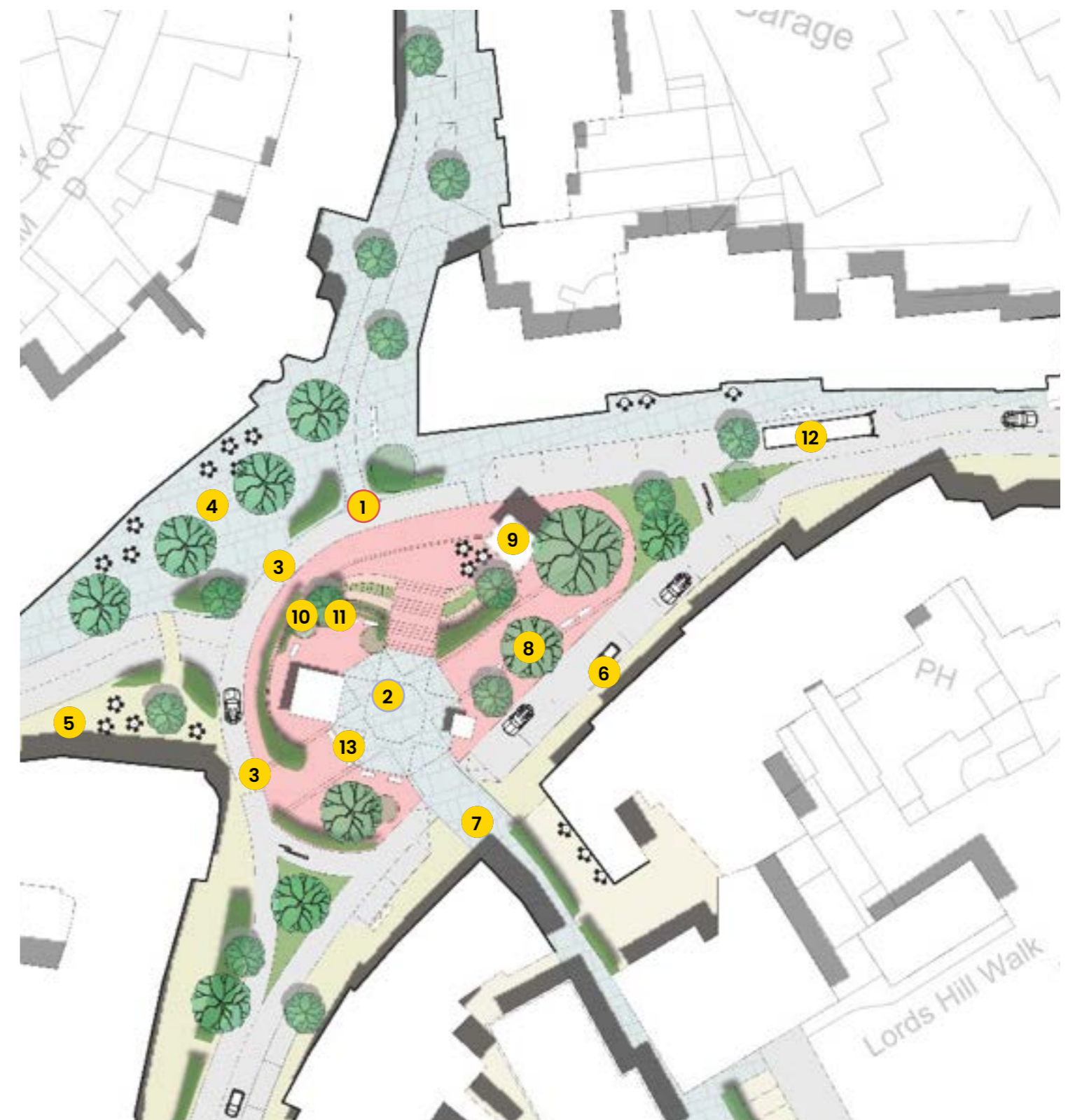
- 1 Rationalised junction to promote cars to continue east
- 2 New paving to reinforce clock tower
- 3 Dedicated pedestrian priority crossing
- 4 More space for shops to 'spill out'
- 5 Increased pavement width
- 6 On street - short stay parking bays
- 7 Dedicated crossing to Mushet Walk
- 8 Placemaking trees - forest into the town
- 9 Opportunity for kiosk
- 10 Planting and strategic landscape reinforces level change
- 11 Opportunity for integrated seating
- 12 New bus stop
- 13 Possible temporary, pop-up structure to provide focus and shade in the Market Place and to link with Clock Tower

Think about the relationship with St John Street?

There is an opportunity to change the junction into St John Street and still retain on-street parking (limited stay).

Introduce new street trees and ground planting which will green the area and create a public place around the clock tower

Create a space in lower Market Place for regular markets, events and activities.



↑ Maintain one-way clockwise traffic flow. Extend the pavement areas on the edges of Market Place specifically the western and northwestern sides.

Streets and Spaces



The Market Place

- 63% of people at face to face consultation want to maintain the one way around the Market Place but with wider pavements
- 53% of people who responded through the survey also want to maintain the one way clockwise traffic around the Market Place but create wider pavements; 31% want no change – leave it as it is

Small footpaths and not a lot of space for shops to 'spill out' into the street →



Opportunity to rationalise this space and create a heart Market Place for Coleford ↓

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To understand business needs specifically on the north western edge of the Market Place which has the greatest opportunity for better shop frontages, widening the pavement and public space;
- To discuss with Gloucestershire County Council an affordable and attractive way of widening the pavement area that provides increased public space that is safe, flexible and allows for mobile seating, planting amongst other measures;
- To develop an events, markets and activities programme for the central Market Place that supports the town centre's economy and immediate businesses around the space;
- To present a co-ordinated plan to Market Place businesses that forms part of a trial project which implements temporary changes that are monitored to understand their impact.



Streets and Spaces



Clock Tower & Tump

The Town Council is working up a Heritage Lottery funding application to restore, improve access and tell the story of Clock Tower. The Town Council is keen to bring activity nearby and link with the tower.

The Coleford Clock Tower, a Grade II-listed structure, is undergoing a significant refurbishment project in collaboration with Coleford Town Council. This was originally part of an 1821 church which was demolished in 1882.

The refurbishment aims to preserve and enhance the tower's structural integrity and historical features.

Approved plans include:

- Repairing existing structures, reinstating both internal and external historic elements, and improving the rainwater drainage system to protect the building from water damage.
- Increasing public accessibility, safety enhancements will be made to the narrow internal staircase, and the ground floor will be opened during

planned events. Additionally, the east entrance will be reopened, accompanied by a redesign of the existing war memorial.

- Implementing an accessible first-floor education room, providing space for exhibitions detailing the history of the clock and the tower.

The tower holds significant cultural value for the Coleford community and its refurbishment is seen as a vital step in preserving the town's heritage and ensuring that this iconic landmark remains a source of pride for residents and visitors alike.

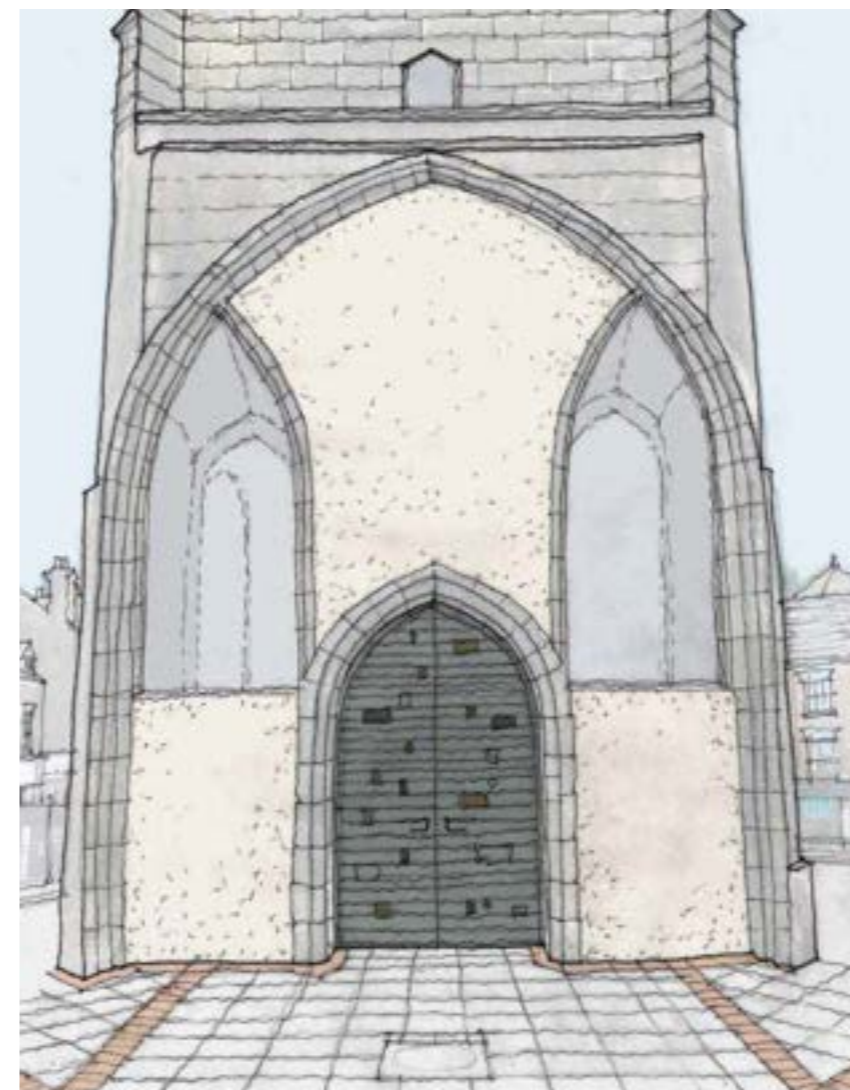
There is also potential for pop ups and temporary building which can help underpin the historic trail.



Proposed North East Elevations of Clock Tower (Source: Dittrich Hudson Vasetti Architects)

← Artist impression of the potential new facade of the tower - a new doorway and glass will enhance the clock tower

↙ Artist impression of the inside of the clock tower detailing new stairs providing views out over the market square



Streets and Spaces



Clock Tower & Tump

- 62% of people who responded through the survey are in favour of a covered area outside the Clock Tower;
- 62% of people who responded through the survey are in favour installing the bells in the Clock Tower.

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To develop an activity plan on how a covered structure could be used across the year and how it could complement the events, markets and activities programme for the central Market Place space;
- To hold initial discussions with the District Council's planning and conservation officers on the suitability of such a proposal;
- To consider the idea of installing bells in the Clock Tower as part of Heritage Lottery Funding bid.



↑ Coleford Clock Tower



Lancet window in the north external wall ↓

↑ Interior view of the second floor belfry with the bell and roof structure visible ↓ Metal balustrade detail to the stair



Green and Active Community



Walking and Cycling into the Town Centre

Challenges faced:

- Short trips still being made by car.
- Climate change is bringing us more intense rainfall and higher temperatures.
- Biodiversity and nature is at risk from development.

The Town Council, with the support of the Forest of Dean District Council, is committed to completing the final section of the active travel route from Milkwall into Coleford town centre. This project aims to improve accessibility and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring a safer, more convenient route that encourages sustainable travel. By finalizing this key link, the town hopes to make it easier for both residents and visitors to travel to and from the centre without relying on cars, helping to reduce congestion and promote a cleaner environment.

The completion of this route will have significant benefits for local businesses and the wider community. By improving footfall in the town centre, local shops, cafés, and other businesses

will see increased activity, strengthening the local economy.

The proposed improvements will include several key upgrades to ensure safety, convenience, and accessibility.

A safe shared route crossing on Old Station Way will be introduced, making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to cross this busy area without risk. Outside Pyart Court, a new amenity space will provide a welcoming area for people to gather, relax, or take a break during their journey.

The final active travel link into Mushet Walk will be completed, ensuring seamless connectivity between different sections of the route.



Additionally, better cycling facilities and infrastructure will be introduced, making it easier and more appealing for cyclists to use the route, whether for commuting, leisure, or exercise.

Overall, these improvements will create a more vibrant and accessible town, ensuring that Coleford remains a welcoming and dynamic place to live, work, and visit.



- ← Cycling and walking along the dedicated corridor will bring Active Travel into the town centre
- ↑ Opportunity to include secure and attractive bicycle stands to promote cycling along the new route



- ↑ More places to stop, dwell and spend time as a community incorporated with planting

Green and Active Community



Walking and Cycling into the Town Centre



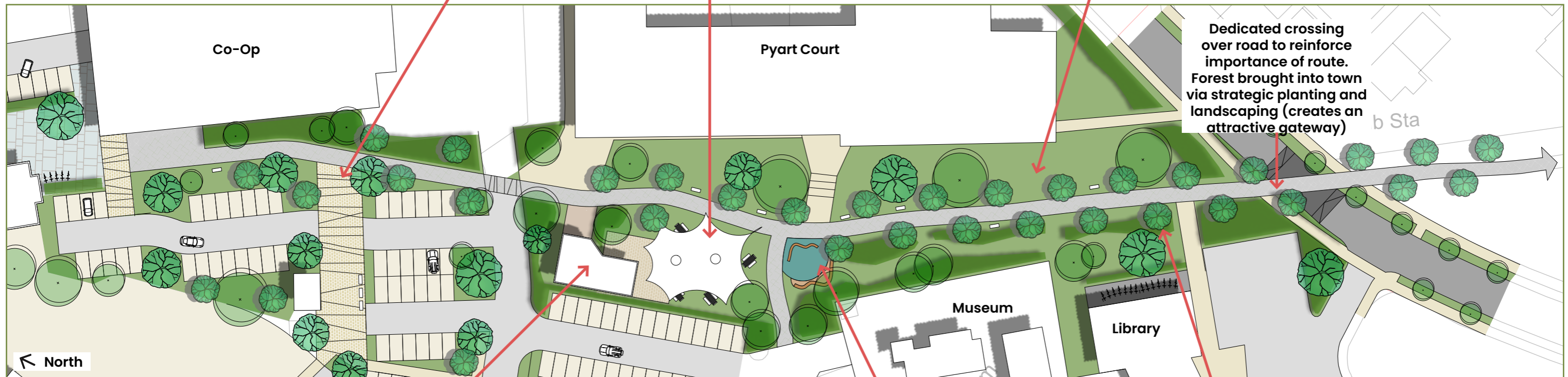
The improved infrastructure will create more opportunities for people to engage with community life, whether by visiting markets, attending events, or simply enjoying the town's amenities.

A well-connected active travel network also contributes to a healthier lifestyle, encouraging people to walk or cycle rather than drive, which in turn supports physical well-being and mental health.

Dedicated crossing points in carpark, space created outside the toilet block to create an arrival point.

Space for kiosk, opportunity for tensile structure providing picnic areas and shade.

Dedicated crossing over road to reinforce importance of route. Forest brought into town via strategic planting and landscaping (creates an attractive gateway)



↑ Active travel - green route to town concept plan



A new cycle space could be created outside Pyart Court providing a space for users to leave bicycles and helmets etc. This space could provide lockers and changing places to promote day trips via the cycle route into the town.

Stronger links via green corridor to Pyart Court, opportunity for some informal natural play here to promote dwell time. Links to museum and Library here.



A comprehensive wayfinding and signage strategy is also included to promote travel along this stretch as well as signposting further destinations (to Milkwall to Coleford Town Centre)

Green and Active Community



- 27% of people who responded through the survey want more town centre seating;
- 18% want a water refill point;
- 15% want more cycle stands;
- 75% want to see more planting at entrances into the town centre.

Developing a town centre that is green, not only makes it attractive, but also brings some of the Forest character into the heart of the town. It also helps with climate adaptation, reducing surface run-off and providing shade with trees, amongst other benefits. We also want to find ways of harvesting and recycling rainwater in the town centre in order to water civic planting.

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To explore locations for additional seating (benches and picnic tables) in the town centre;
- To support active travel investments (walking, cycling) in the town centre such as cycle stands/shelters, water refill points and other facilities;
- To develop a town centre greening scheme that identifies civic planting, wildflower areas, growing areas and other landscaping; suggested locations from the public include:
 - Market Place, Pyart Court, Mushet Walk, Boxbush Road, Gloucester Road and Various car parks.
- To consider town centre areas that are prone to flooding:
 - Newland Street / Lower end of Boxbush Road
 - St John Street pooling near White Hart
 - Bank Street
 - Poolway area outside of town centre
- To install heritage information, town maps and event notice boards.
- Some flood work improvement is already underway, with two sites to give protections along Thurstans Brook at the Gloucester Road junction.



- ↑ Opportunity for water point
- ← Way finding boards highlighting ecology / biodiversity
- ↓ Opportunity to bring re forest into the town



Opportunities for New Uses



Repurposing the Health Centre

The Railway Drive Health Centre is likely to become surplus in a few years' time. As part of the consultation process, NHS Properties will be seeking uses for the building and immediate land when it becomes vacant.

Challenges faced:

- Long standing vacant buildings contribute negatively to the overall town centre experience.
- Town centre facilities need to provide for peoples' health and well-being.

Community feedback for repurposing includes:

- Child focussed and soft play
- Community crafting and social activities
- A health, therapy and wellness hub
- A convalescence space

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To discuss with NHS properties on their process to dispose of the building and how options can be considered, and funding can be sought.

Health Centre which is currently located within the Railway Drive Carpark



Opportunities for New Uses



Former Lloyds Bank

This former bank is on a prominent corner looking onto Market Place and St John Street.

An active use would help confidence in the town centre and spill out into the neighbouring public space in Market Place.

Challenges faced:

- Ownership may be a challenge
- More detailed surveys would be needed of the internals of the building for example
- Some buildings such as banks are complex to re purpose and reuse.

Community feedback for repurposing includes:

- A banking hub or multi-agency banking hub
- An indoor market – space for business start ups
- A bistro or restaurant
- An arts, crafts or performance space
- A gym, yoga studio or fitness centre

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To work with some interested parties and the building owner to develop their ideas and proposals.



← Internal image of the Grade II Listed bank building

↓ The former Lloyds Bank building – a prominent location adjacent to the Clock Tower



Opportunities for New Uses



Old Guardian Office

Ideas for the redevelopment of the Guardian Office site that improves this edge of the town centre that brings to life this corner with Bowen's Hill and leads to commercial improvements within Newland Street.

Community feedback for repurposing includes:

- Affordable housing
- Community art space – craft studios, workshops, music and drama, art galleries
- Walkers/cyclists bunkhouse
- Speciality retail space – bike shop, book shop and antiques
- Café and gathering space

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- To share consultation findings with the owner of the Old Guardian Office and explore a way forward for the building.



Front elevation →
of existing building -
opportunity for redevelopment?



Approximate location of Guardian Office and site to rear ↓



Community Life and Well Being



4 Musher Walk - The Hive

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- Town Council to consider alongside other options for first floor of Musher Walk building.

The redevelopment of 4 Musher Walk, known as The Hive, will focus around, fostering creativity, inclusivity, and community engagement.

The area above the Town Council Offices, has the opportunity to become a vibrant creative space that supports young people, the arts, music, and wider community initiatives.

This project will address some key challenges facing the town, including pockets of anti-social behaviour, limited opportunities for young people, and a lack of accessible, functional spaces.

One of the primary motivations behind The Hive is to provide a positive and inspiring environment for young people. Currently, Coleford has few varied provisions for youth in the town centre, leaving many without engaging

activities or spaces to express themselves. By offering a dedicated venue for music, art, and creative projects, The Hive will give young people a place to develop their talents, socialise in a safe setting, and engage with constructive activities that foster personal and professional growth.

The Hive can also serve as a multi-functional hub for the entire community filling a gap in the town.

This could be through workshops, performances, exhibitions, and collaborative projects aimed at fostering new opportunities and community cohesion.

Community feedback for repurposing includes:

- Multi-use space
- Local history centre
- Community and arts hub
- A craft market hall



↑ The Hive sits above 4 Musher Walk which is the home of Coleford Town Council

Community Life and Well Being



Former St John Ambulance Hall

(Next to District Council Offices)
A practical space for designing, creating and making.

Community feedback for repurposing includes:

- Youth centre and activities
- Volunteer and group hub
- Social and wellness space
- Small business support space
- Arts and crafts space and workshop
- Bike centre and outdoor activities

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- Town Council to consider in its options appraisal for the building.



The Main Place

(Off Old Railway Drive) space for youth groups and individual support.

Community feedback for repurposing includes:

- Skills development and life skills
- Technology and gaming
- Arts, music and drama
- Youth orientated space

Arising Actions & Recommendations

- Town Council to consider in its options appraisal for other town centre buildings.



← The former St John Ambulance Hall

↓ Coleford Library - The Main Place



Supporting Local



Role of Markets

Markets bring vibrancy and visitors to Coleford, and we aim to develop speciality markets that complement, not compete with, existing businesses.

The types of goods and themes that the local community that would attract them to use a market include:

- Local food and produce that does not compete with established town centre businesses
- Craft and handmade goods
- Sustainable market – recycled and upcycled goods
- A monthly farmer’s market

- Antiques and collectibles
- Vintage clothing, items and records
- Clothing – general, school uniform, footwear, vintage fashion
- Incorporate live music, workshops, entertainment, demonstrations
- Branding Coleford – the market is a part of the town’s story and messaging

Actionable Points could include:

- Engage the community to shape market themes and working with businesses to ensure a positive economic impact.
- Promoting markets widely to attract more visitors.

Coleford’s festivals and events bring people together and boost the economy. We’ll continue to expand the programme, partner with local artists, and improve event infrastructure to enhance the town’s unique charm and identity.

Coleford is set to become a leading example of how markets and events can support community, business, and heritage for a thriving future.



↑ Varied markets could take hold → selling local and artisan items etc

↓ St John Street on a bustling Faddle Fair day



Supporting Local



Market Town Charm

The local heritage and character of the town centre is part of its main appeal.

Working with the District Council we want to develop a practical way to support building owners and tenants by improving their frontages, so that it is attractive to visitors and feels part of the Coleford experience.

Supporting town centre businesses that are established as well as attracting new enterprise is important to our local economy and community

Recent market research conducted by Forest of Dean District Council, states that “Coleford is unique as the only Market Town where Events and Festivals is not only considered a top 5 strength but is also recognised as the foremost strength of the town (65%), by both Coleford and residents and those from other towns.

The independent and artisanal nature of the shops, cafe and bars also contribute to making it uniquely special.

A **shopfront design code for Coleford** could enhance the town’s character by guiding businesses toward high-quality, heritage-sensitive designs. Inspired by best practice from

towns like Ludlow and Cirencester and Coleford itself, this would promote traditional materials, sympathetic proportions, and handcrafted signage to create a cohesive streetscape.

Key elements could include:

- Local fonts inspired by the Forest of Dean’s industrial heritage, with hand-painted or gilded lettering.
- A natural colour palette reflecting the local landscape, avoiding overly bright or modern tones.
- Architectural details such as pilasters, cornices, and traditional awnings to maintain historic character.

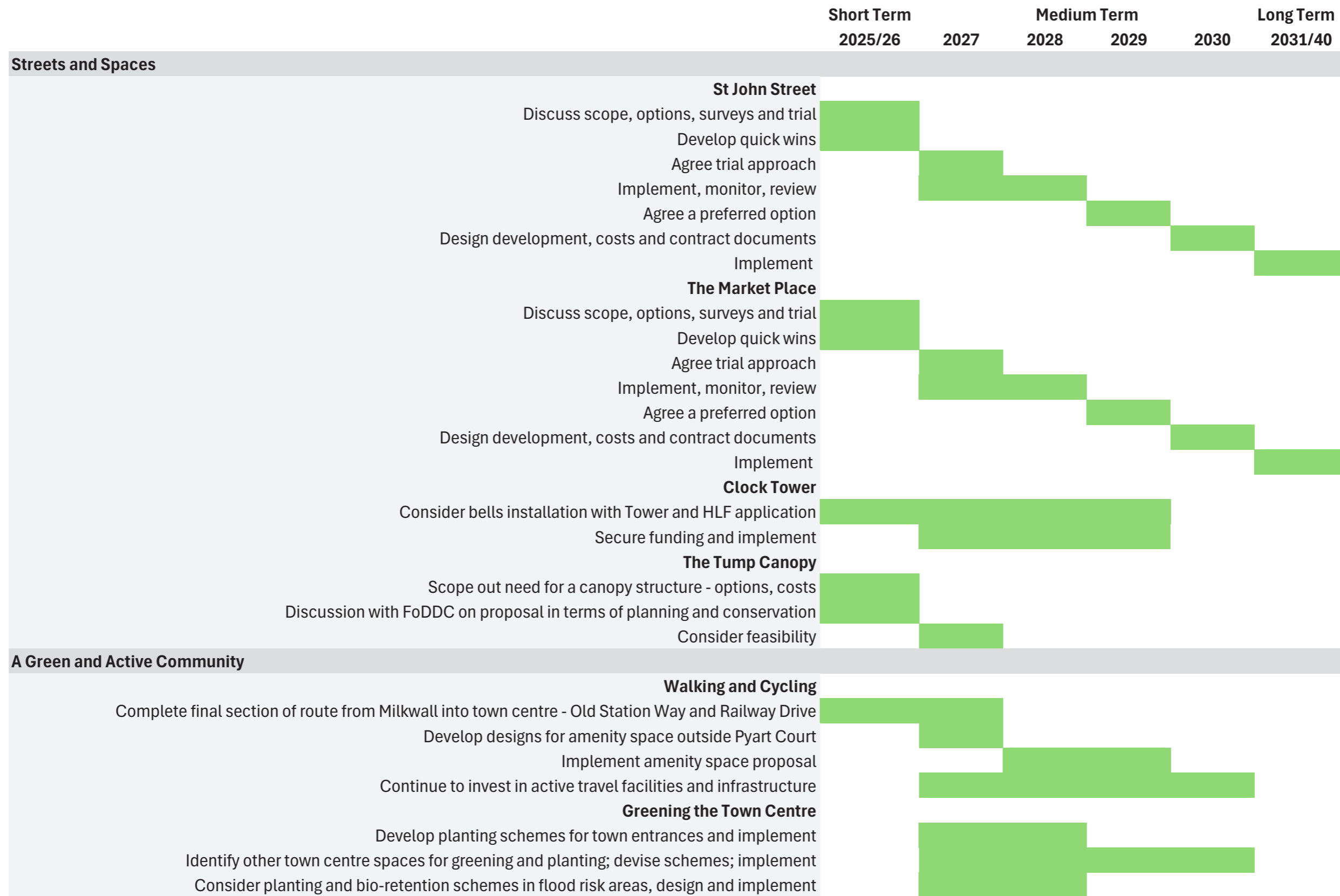
By ensuring consistency without uniformity, the code would strengthen Coleford’s identity.



Strong signage, fonts and colours are unique yet cohesive



Project Programme



Opportunities for New Uses

Repurposing Health Centre

Discuss with NHS Properties on Process

Develop business case

Submit proposal to NHS Properties

Preferred option agreed by NHS Properties

Old Guardian Office

Engage with landlord to understand position

Help promote and market the site

Former Lloyds Bank

Engage with landlord to understand position

Help promote and market the site

Community Life and Well-being

4 Musher Walk - The Hive

Develop preferred option, funding and delivery

The Main Place

Develop preferred option, funding and delivery

Former St John Ambulance

Develop preferred option, funding and delivery

Supporting Local

Develop a "local campaign" with town centre businesses

Develop a town centre markets programme

Develop a shopfront improvement scheme with FoDDC and traders

Measuring Success

The need to understand what success looks like is important when you are enabling and delivering change within a place like Coleford.

It helps to understand the outcomes that you are reaching and the process you need to follow to meet these.

Visualising success is also good for motivation and rally around a common purpose, building trust and relationships.

It also importantly demonstrates to those organisations that are funding projects, that you are attaining your outputs and outcomes and shows a return on investment.

The diagram following, shows examples of outputs and outcomes by theme, which form part of an evaluation framework that a place based partnership would use to monitor progress.



Visualising Success

Type	Town Centre Opportunities				
Theme	Streets and Spaces	Green Active Community	Opportunities for New Uses	Community Life and Wellbeing	Supporting Local
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total surface area of public realm improved Total surface area of green infrastructure added or improved as a result of support Diversity of town centre uses and activities No of events and activities Pedestrian footfall Vacancy rate Town centre user dwell time Town centre user spend Town centre satisfaction Change in town centre user perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear metres of active travel routes created or improved Total surface area of green infrastructure added or improved as a result of support No of walking/cycling movements Linear metres of active travel routes created or improved Air quality count 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of town centre uses and activities Number of community enterprises supported No of businesses receiving financial support No of energy efficient business premises No of businesses receiving business support/coaching/mentoring Diversity of town centre uses and activities Local business growth Vacancy rate No people economically active No of people employed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sqm of new community facilities improved or created No of community building users No of community groups supported No of new community groups formed No of people engaged in training No of people engaged in volunteering No of organisations receiving non-financial support No of people with improved social inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of businesses receiving financial support No of businesses receiving business support /coaching / mentoring Diversity of town centre uses and activities No of events and activities No of markets per year No of new supply chains developed Local business growth No people economically active No of people employed Vacancy rate Pedestrian footfall Town centre user dwell time Town centre user spend Town centre satisfaction Change in town centre user perception
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater sense of place and local destination Local economic growth and sustainability Improved health and well-being for the local community Increased mobility across the whole community Increased resilience to climate change Increased feeling of community safety Increased sense of welcome and community cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased resilience to climate change Greater levels of local biodiversity Increased mobility across the whole community Improved health and well-being for the local community Local economic growth and sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced economic and social well-being Greater opportunities for local enterprise and entrepreneurship Greater sense of place and local destination Increased sense of welcome and community cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater sense of community cohesion and welcome Greater inter-generational working and partnerships Enhanced community/social enterprise activity Improved health and well-being for the local community Increased feeling of community safety Pathways are opened to learning, employment and other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater sense of place and local destination Increased sense of welcome and community cohesion Local economic growth and sustainability Capacity within the local community enhanced Greater inter-group working and networking Improved partnership working Organisations are more viable and sustainable

Delivery

Development and Delivery

Relationship of Community Regeneration Plan to CNDP

The current Coleford Neighbourhood Plan (CNDP) is now seven years old and runs until 2026, so Coleford Town Council has decided it needs a Review.. This Plan, which covers the whole Parish, is included in the FoDDC Development Plan used to make planning decisions that will affect the way the settlements grow and flourish. The shape and look of the town, and the way it functions – and could be regenerated – is central. From January 2025 onwards the Review process will start with checking out the vision for Coleford, given changes which have already happened, and potential numbers of housing needing to be planned in. Initial consultation has begun, and as each theme

of the current CNDP is assessed as to how it is working, any improvements needed, or gaps to fill, there will be more opportunities for consultation. The following themes will be addressed: Town Centre; Economy; Housing; Communities and Community Facilities; Historic Environment; Natural Environment; Transport and Infrastructure, and all through a climate change lens. The Steering Group will comprise a mix of Councillors and local residents/workers/business people of Coleford who will bring together a final draft, submitted through the Town Council, and which it is likely will be voted upon at referendum. CNDPReview@outlook.com is the main contact route.



Delivery of this Coleford Community

Regeneration Plan is dependent on a partnership approach where strategic and local organisations bring their own individual objectives into a collective set of proposals that mutually benefit each other and importantly benefits Coleford town centre and its immediate neighbourhoods and villages. The opportunities within this town centre vision and strategy require different mixes of partners, resources and timetable for development and delivery.

The Town Council has taken a lead role in developing the Plan with the support of the respective local authorities and other community group and organisations. From here on, the key success factors for delivery within a town centre setting includes:

- Understanding individual strengths including knowledge, expertise and physical assets and how these can be aligned.
- Communication and co-ordination at both a strategic and implementation level.

- Working to a common design code that ensures consistency in built environment and public space and meets respective climate change and sustainability targets.
- Connecting the needs of local residents with various pathways to learning, health and well-being, physical activity and employment.
- Presenting a unified identity for a place like Coleford that appeals to its residents, business and visitors.

Delivery

Town Centre Operational Management

Town centres are complex areas with multiple stakeholders that need to be effectively managed if they are to function effectively.

Examples of ongoing day-to-day operational functions that are vital to Coleford town centre include:

- Highways, parking, traffic, public transport, highway inspectors, street lighting etc
- Policing, addressing crime and disorder, speeding, vandalism, theft, CCTV etc.
- Public toilets, litter bins, dealing with dog fouling, littering, street cleansing etc.
- Trading standards, licencing, planning consent, enforcement, building regulations etc.
- Grass cutting, managing green space and trees etc.

This list is not exhaustive and other operational functions are also important, including events and business support. The key public agencies involved are Gloucestershire County Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Coleford Town Council, and Gloucestershire.

Market Towns Officer

The Forest of Dean District Council is dedicated to creating a vibrant and sustainable future for our community. Its priorities are centred on fostering thriving communities by empowering and engaging residents, enhancing infrastructure, promoting community well-being, and ensuring social equity. At the time of writing this Plan, the District Council is recruiting a Market Town Officer that will help with the delivery of its Sustainable Economy Strategy, particularly through the Market Towns Regeneration Framework (MTRF).

The postholder will play a key part in driving initiatives that foster thriving and inclusive markets, tidy and accessible towns, and community wealth-building projects. Utilizing recent research on the sentiment, opportunities, and challenges faced by its four Market Towns, you will help implement the MTRF's objectives.

Responsibilities will include collaborating with town councils, businesses, and stakeholders to enhance the retail, leisure, and recreational offerings in our towns, while ensuring effective communication and partnership-building within the community.



Town Centre – Ways of Working

There is also a need to reform a town centre focussed business, so that there is one collective voice for town centre businesses that can coordinate and take action between themselves and importantly be a representative body that works with the Town Council, the District Council and other organisations. This business group should contribute and guide the day to day needs of the town centre as well as shaping some of the physical projects within this plan, in addition to marketing and promotion.

This group or network of businesses needn't be too formalised but will be of real value to the co-development and delivery of initiatives and projects going forward. In time it could become a formally constituted group such as a town team, business/community enterprise, community interest company type model or even formed on the principles of a business improvement district. It does need to reform and be organised in a way that is simple yet effective.

Such a group can therefore be:

- A Voice for Town Centre Businesses – lobbying and campaigning
- Talking amongst businesses – networking, cross-marketing, finding joint solutions

- Collaborating with Coleford Town Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and other strategic organisations
- Accessing funding once it becomes constituted
- Developing and co-ordinating ideas and action

Its focus could be on:

- Developing and rolling out the Coleford brand and story through a menu of promotional and marketing material
- Communicating to local residents and visitors what's on including promotions, events and activities
- Working with the Town Council on civic pride – planting, spring clean, painting, keep Coleford tidy, pockets of public realm
- Shape commercial frontage design codes that work for businesses, the respective authorities and the wider town centre experience
- Contributing to a year round calendar of events, festivals, markets and activities

Delivery

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- Shape commercial frontage design codes that work for businesses, the respective authorities and the wider town centre experience
- Contributing to a year round calendar of events, festivals, markets and activities
- Help shape some of the physical projects within the community regeneration plan



Delivery

Case Study: Example of Nevill Street Traders Group, Abergavenny

Nevill Street Traders Group is located in Abergavenny town centre and feeds into the wider Y Fenni Business Community group. It was formed, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic with an aim to reopen the town centre for shopping, eating out and other services.

After an initial meeting, an emerging group of retail, food and drink and office sector businesses was set up and organised through a WhatsApp group and held initially monthly meetings. A trading bank account was set up with 25 businesses now contributing £50 a year to the street based campaign.

The range of activities and support the traders' groups gets involved with includes:

- Running social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram
- Providing daily advice through WhatsApp on commercial waste, compliance, rates and other business issues
- B2B activity and cross-marketing
- Help start-up businesses in the street
- Developing a Litter Free Street initiative with Keep Wales Tidy

- Painting maps cases, bollards and fingerposts
- Developing feather flags and street banners that promote the street and town centre
- Developing an annual Christmas campaign that has involved:
 - ◊ A reindeer trail within the street and wider town
 - ◊ A Christmas Market which after 3 years has 50 stalls, community music stage, charity fundraising and more
- Aligning itself to the annual Food Festival
- Other marketing events, activities and street animation
- Represented on Town Council events committee group



Acknowledgements

The following organisations and people are recognised for the roles in developing this Community Regeneration Plan and other activities that have been delivered through this project:

With thanks to

→ Forest of Dean District Council,



→ Gloucestershire County Council



→ Coleford Town Centre Businesses, and,

→ The Residents of Coleford.



↑ Coleford Market Place and Clock Tower

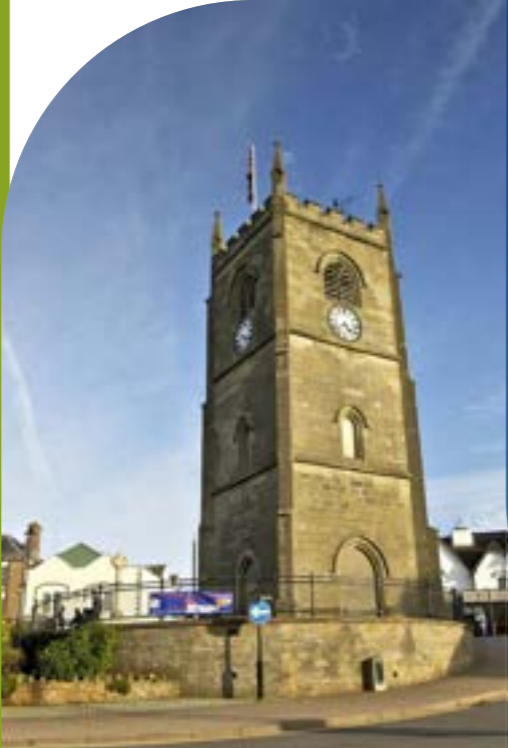
Coleford Community
Regeneration Plan

March 2025

**chris
jones**



Roberts Limbrick



Appendix 1

PLANNING POLICY ANALYSIS



Funded by
UK Government

**chris
jones**

rl
Roberts Limbrick

Policy, Studies , Data and Place

National Planning Policy (NPPF 2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The guidance contained in the NPPF relating to the different themes is outlined below:

Achieving sustainable development

The NPPF considers that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching objectives:

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy,
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment.
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

NPPF seeks to support the government’s

objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, including affordable housing. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community needs to be assessed.

Building a strong, competitive economy

NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

The NPPF stipulates that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to changes in the retail and leisure industries.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

The NPPF considers that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other.

Promoting sustainable transport

The NPPF encourages that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that: the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.

Achieving well-designed places

The NPPF considers good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the

process.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

The NPPF encourages the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk etc.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The NPPF stipulates that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and the NPPF considers that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Policy, Studies , Data and Place

The policy setting for a place such as Coleford is important. It shows the relationships to national, regional and local agendas, providing strategic direction and alignment. It also shows the strategic opportunities and limitations to a place and its development.

Policy Setting

The planning policy documents relevant to the development of Coleford includes:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. National Planning Policy. | 4. Emerging Local Plan. |
| 2. National Regeneration Policy and Programmes. | 5. The Adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Coleford. |
| 3. The current Local Plan which includes the Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan. | 6. Other Local Town Documents. |



National Regeneration Policy and Programmes

UK Levelling Up Fund

Announced in the UK Budget in March 2021, the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. Nationally, the £4.8 billion fund will support regeneration and town centre investment, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets. Projects should be aligned to and support the Government's Net Zero goals demonstrating low or zero carbon best practice.

The Levelling Up Fund is a competitive process open to all UK local authorities. Forest of Dean District is identified as a priority place in terms of the need for LUF capital infrastructure support. In June 2021, the District Council submitted a multiple project bid containing three interrelated projects and successfully secured £20 million capital grant support.

The Forest of Dean bid

As from April 2021 the Local Economic Partnerships no longer had the role of administering the Growing Place Fund and in its place local authorities were able to bid from the Levelling Up Fund. The Levelling Up Fund was announced at the 2020 Spending Review to focus on capital investment in

local infrastructure thereby building on and consolidating prior programmes such as the Local Growth Fund and Towns Fund. The fund was initially for smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas; town centre and high street regeneration; and support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets. The fund aims to invest in public transport, active travel, bridge repairs, bus priority lanes, local road improvements and major structural maintenance and accessibility improvements.

Forest of Dean District Council worked in partnership with Hartpury University and Hartpury College and Cinderford Town Council to prepare the successful bid.

Forest of Dean Capital Project Portfolio

To identify the final three projects included in the successful Levelling Up bid the council invited local organisations to submit expressions of interest (EOI).

A total of 16 EOIs were submitted and were assessed against the Government criteria to

The bid aims to:

- Build connections across the Forest, helping to join our communities
- Help our local entrepreneurs and homegrown talent find a home in the Forest, growing our economy and providing jobs by developing new, suitable space for businesses
- Provide more and better leisure opportunities, helping people stay active and healthy through new

leisure facilities and active travel options

- Provide new further and higher education opportunities so our young people have more choice to get a good education
- From the outset, all 3 project locations were designed with carbon reduction, renewable energy and electric vehicle/bike charging points in mind to help to tackle the climate emergency.

make sure they were eligible before the final bid proposal was pulled together, which the Council believes will have the best chance of success.

Projects that were not included in the Levelling Up bid have been compiled in a new Capital Project Portfolio. This document identifies a pipeline of short, medium and longer term projects and is intended to be a dynamic document.



Local Planning Policy

Current Local Plan

The current Local Plan for the Forest of Dean comprises the Core Strategy (CS) adopted in 2012 and the Allocations Plan (AP) adopted in 2018 which look forward to 2026. They provide policies which identify specific areas of land whether for protection or for development.

Adopted Core Strategy (2012)

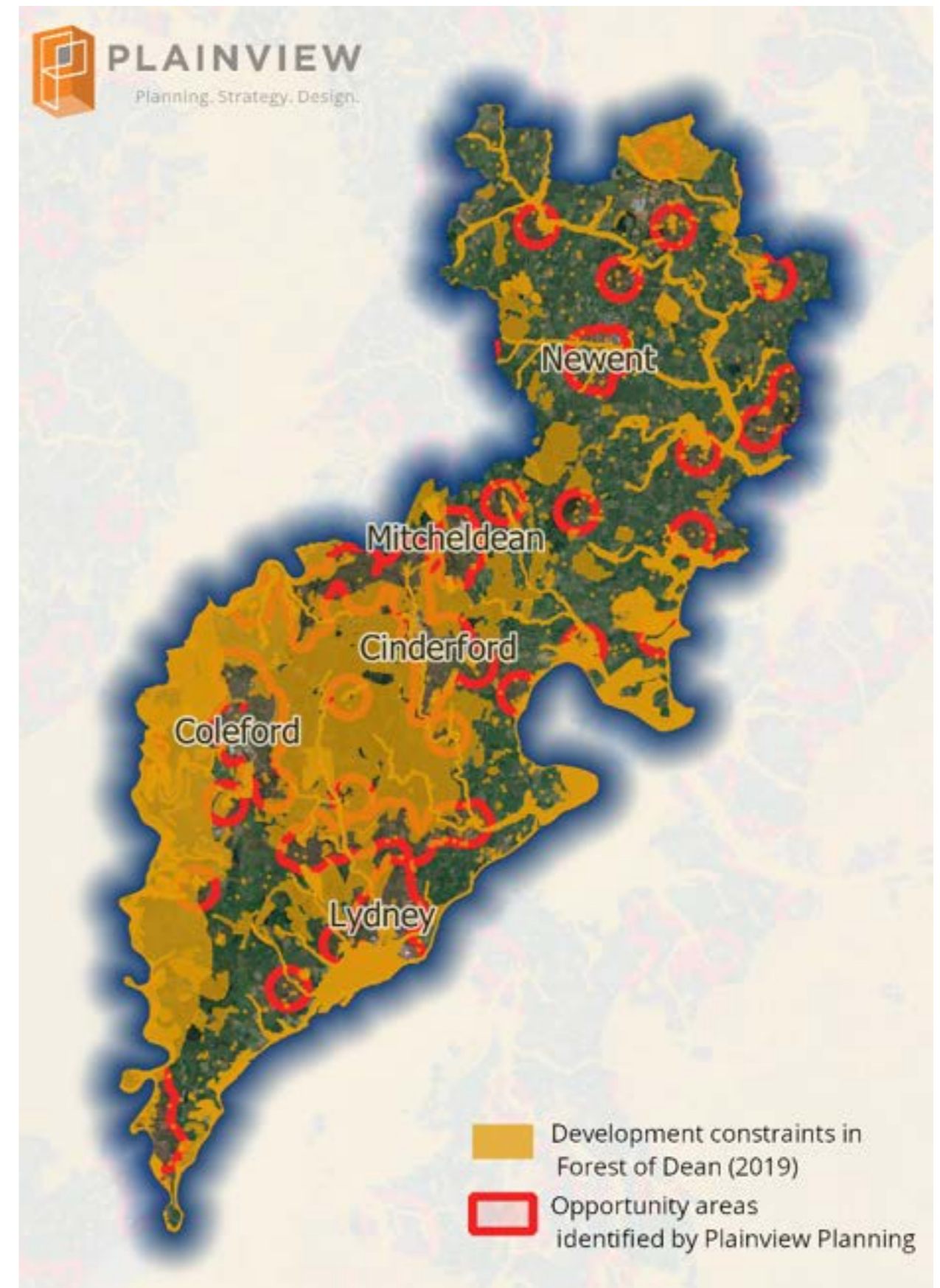
The adopted (2012) Core Strategy is the principal document in the current Local Plan for the Forest of Dean.

The Core Strategy recognises that the four towns within the Forest of Dean lose much retail trade to nearby larger centres such as Gloucester. While the strategy relies on developing the four towns as more self-contained centres it recognises that they need to complement one another while developing. This is especially true of the three southern towns, (Cinderford, Coleford and Newent) which are closely interrelated. It is recognised in the Core Strategy that undue competition between the towns could undermine the strategy and not make the best out of the assets that each of the towns possess, so their different characteristics

must be used in a positive manner. Lydney has greater capacity for change and can offer scope for a wider range of good employment sites than Cinderford, Coleford or Newent. It is considered that Coleford due to its location and nature is best suited to modest growth and further development of its service role.

The strategy is to support Coleford, to increase its range of employment, including tourism enterprises and to widen its service base.

The Core Strategy contains policy CSP.14 that is specific to Coleford and requires 650 new dwellings over the period to 2026 with 40% of those being affordable housing be sought. The policy also seeks to enable 6.8ha of employment land to be developed, including service provision and continue to support the development of tourism facilities or accommodation. Also, to support the continued redevelopment of the town centre including areas for mixed uses and further retailing (up to approximately 1200m² convenience and about 1300m² for comparison goods).



↑ FOD opportunity areas

Local Planning Policy

Current Local Plan

Allocations Plan 2006 to 2026 (Adopted June 2018)

The Allocations Plan (AP) shows how the proposals in the Core Strategy will be implemented. The Allocations Plan addresses the scale and sites for housing, employment, shopping and other built development but also areas that need to be protected including the green spaces within settlements and sites of ecological and historical importance.

The majority of the policies in the AP are site-specific, however, there are some which apply across the whole district in certain circumstances, or which apply to certain types of development or alternatively have more general themes. Several policies form a bridge between the CS (strategic) or the NPPF and the local (AP/ NDP) scale.

Within the Allocations Plan there are two main types of allocation, those which cover a particular site for a given use or uses and those which identify a particular area for a specific policy or policies to be applied.

The following sites not within or adjoining settlements are proposed to be allocated:

AP 28 'Christchurch/ Berry Hill Cycle Route' and Coleford/ Berry Hill – Policy to allow and encourage establishment of cycle route(s)

The majority of the allocated sites are located at settlements within their defined boundaries. They conform to the CS in terms of the general scale and location of the development proposed. The main allocations for development are listed below:

- AP 61 'Tufthorn Avenue and Pingry Coleford Farm – Employment sites' (Industrial area inc Old Station Way junction, Tufthorn Ave, Pingry Farm) – employment generating uses – 22.5 ha.
- AP 60 'Land Adjoining Suntory Factory Coleford employment generating uses – 6.7 ha.
- AP 62 'Staunton Road, Employment and Hotel Site – Coleford Employment or hotel – 1.7 ha.

- Development sites allocated for housing at settlements:
- AP 56 'Lawnstone House' Coleford conversion – mixed development including housing – 12 units, 0.2 ha .
- AP 57 Former Courts and Police Station The former courts and current police station site is allocated for community uses, which may include the use of all or part of the site as a place of assembly. In the event that the adjoining dwellings are also proposed to be redeveloped, then new housing (up to one third of the site area) will also be permitted.
- AP 58 'King's Head Public House' Coleford – 12 units, 0.04 ha.
- AP 63 'Land at Poolway Farm, Coleford' Coleford housing – 140 units 5.9 ha.
- AP 64 'Land at Ellwood Road Milkwall' – 48 units, 1.6 ha.
- AP 65 'North Road Broadwell' Coleford

housing – 70 units, 2.4 ha.

- AP 66 'Kings Meade Coleford' AP 66 'Kings Meade Coleford' Coleford housing – 48 units, 1.6 ha.
- AP 61 'Tufthorn Avenue and Pingry Farm – Employment housing – 60 units, 1.8 ha.

Local Planning Policy

Forest of Dean District Local Plan Second Preferred Option July 2022

The Second Preferred Option document sets out the revised (draft) strategy for the Forest of Dean District (FoDD) Local Plan. The plan review commenced with a consultation on issues and options in 2019 and another on a preferred strategy in 2020. Following that consultation, the strategy has been reviewed and this revised (2022) version sets out the overall approach for the Local Plan (LP) for the period 2021-41.

In its broadest sense the LP strategy for the FoDD is to meet the needs of the area in the best way possible that achieves the LP's aims and objectives. These include general aims and objectives e.g. reduce the impact of climate change and sets the overall approach for a LP which will provide planning policies and proposals for the FoDD for the period to 2041.

The revised LP strategy provides a direction for the LP and sets its overall approach as well as identifies the main spatial elements which will be taken forward in its proposals. The strategy proposed includes supporting and sustainable mixed-use developments at major villages and towns including Coleford.

The Strategy considers that Coleford (and Cinderford), in particular, are physically constrained and are not able to accommodate large-scale peripheral development.

The emerging strategy suggests the distribution of new housing for the towns and major villages including Coleford whereby the number of 107 units suggested which would be added to the existing commitment of 487 units.

The Second Preferred Option document also includes proposed general policies relating to sustainable development, town centres, economic development and housing development.



Local Planning Policy

Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 2017–2026

The Coleford NDP was prepared taking into consideration extensive community engagement and involvement and is effective for the period 2017–2026. It contains the following vision for Coleford:

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives are as follows:

1. To support a dynamic, vibrant and thriving town centre with an accessible, attractive environment for all.
2. To support the existing local economy and promote employment and growth in new businesses. In particular, tourism, by building on Coleford's position in the Forest using its outstanding built and natural heritage assets.
3. To promote sustainable development to meet local needs in terms of affordability and house types.
4. To enhance local services (public, private and statutory) and community facilities and to support investment in new services where needed.

5. To protect and enhance the unique historic environment of Coleford and to ensure the rich heritage assets are promoted as part of Coleford's growing role as a visitor destination.

6. To protect and enhance Coleford's natural environment and green spaces in the town and surrounding parished area for the benefit of wildlife and people.

7. To improve the appearance and function of the town's gateways and to improve car parking and public transport.

8. To increase the infrastructure such as for education, health, safety and well-being to cater to the increased needs of residents and visitors.

9. To improve accessibility for residents and visitors in all ways from safe pathways or routes, improved signposting, to broadband capacity.

The Neighbourhood Plan contains the following policies:

Policy CTC1 – Site Allocations in the Town Centre

Proposals for development on the five sites

listed below will be supported where they are consistent with the following development principles:

Marshes, Lords Hill. This site has permission for a retail convenience store to improve the range of existing town centre provision.

Lawnstone. This site comprises the land area remaining after demolition of Lawnstone, the Annex to the north and the Bungalow and garden to the south. The site is identified as site 5 on Map 5. The emerging Allocations Plan (Policy AP56) identifies land including Lawnstone as allocated for retail, business and/or community use and for starter homes (flats).

Old Guardian Office. This site is within the town centre Conservation Area with Grade II listing to the frontage onto Newland Street. It is allocated for re-use/redevelopment for mixed town centre uses such as retail/museum/business premises with residential accommodation above with some additional space for development (possibly residential) to the rear.

Kings Head. The Allocations Plan identifies

the King's Head Public House as allocated for redevelopment and conversion to residential use. The building is within the town centre Conservation Area and is a Valued Heritage Asset.

Police Hub. Policy AP 57 Former Courts and Police Station in the Allocations Plan identifies the former courts and current police station site as allocated for community uses, which may include the use of all or part of the site as a place of assembly.

Policy CTC2 – Site Allocations on the edge of the Town Centre

Proposals for development on the two sites listed below will be supported where they are consistent with the following development principles:

St John Church. This former traditional church building is allocated for community and visitor uses.

Coleford House. This former school building is allocated for a mixed-use conversion or for redevelopment for residential, services and

Local Planning Policy

Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 2017-2026 (contd)

tourism uses.

Policy CTC3 – Enhancing Coleford Town Centre

Proposals for development which allow for the enhancement of the public realm within the Town Centre including: shop front enhancements including restoration of traditional shop fronts and signage; provision of public art; introduction of areas of soft landscaping, planting, covered areas and seating to the area around the Clock Tower Improved signage and accessibility including interpretation linked to the town’s heritage.

Policy CTC4 – Supporting Town Centre Retail and Service Provision

Proposals for new retail and service facilities which enhance the vitality and viability of the existing town centre of Coleford.

Policy CE1 – Supporting Tourism Development

Proposals which expand and/or maintain the existing tourism and related facilities as part of the area’s economic development and growth will be supported provided that they: are sensitive to the distinctive character of

the location, are designed to be proportionate to the location in terms of scale and type n in particular, reflect Coleford’s unique industrial and other built heritage assets.

Policy CE2 – Protecting and Supporting the Development of Local Employment Outside the Town Centre

The Plan supports the retention and the improvement of the economic well-being of the neighbourhood area. Proposals to improve or expand existing employment-generating uses will be supported when they: are sensitive to the distinctive character of the location; are designed to be proportionate in terms of scale and type; would not have an adverse impact of the natural environment and biodiversity; and are designed to mitigate any traffic impact or congestion

Policy CE3 – Improved Connectivity

Subject to such proposals complying with other development plan policies new residential, employment and commercial development will be supported where it incorporates new digital connectivity or improves the existing provision.

Policy CC1 – Retaining and Enhancing Community Facilities

The Plan will support proposals that will safeguard and/or enhance the community facilities in the neighbourhood area. Proposals which enhance existing community facilities will be supported.

Policy CC2 – Shops and Services in the Arc of Settlements within Coleford Parish but outside the Town Centre

Proposals to enhance existing convenience shops and service uses will be supported when they do not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, the natural or historic environment or public access to the facility concerned.

Policy CC4 – Maintaining the Separation and Distinctive Identity of Settlements

Development in all of Coleford town’s surrounding settlements should seek to retain and, where possible, reinforce the distinct identity of the settlement(s).

Policy CHE1 – Protecting and Enhancing Local

Character

New development will be required to respond positively to the local context, be in conformity with the Forest of Dean District Council Residential Design Guide, Allocations Plan policies AP4 and AP5.

Policy CNE2 – Green Ring

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green Ring to protect the historic and natural setting of Coleford.

Policy CNE3 – Green Infrastructure

Development proposals should safeguard protected species and habitats. Subject to other development plan policies development proposals will be supported where they safeguard protected species and habitats.

Policy CITPA1 – Transport and Movement

Subject to other development plan policies development proposals will be supported where they can be satisfactorily incorporated within the existing highway network or where appropriate mitigation works can be undertaken.

Local Planning Policy

Coleford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 2017-2026 (contd)

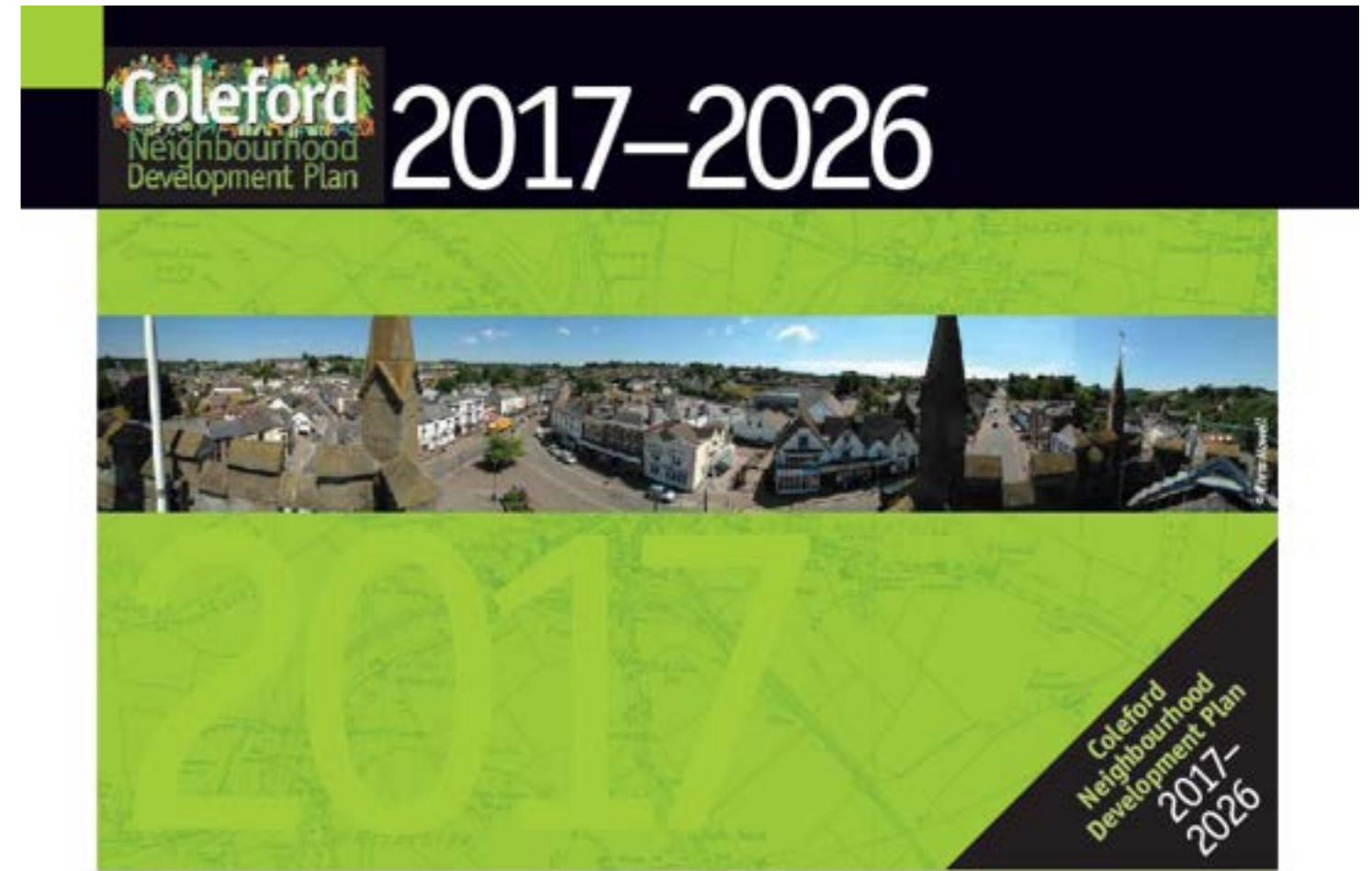
Policy CITPA2 - Through Routes and Gateways

Development proposals which would have adverse impacts on through routes or gateways will only be supported where they: Incorporate appropriate design of new building sympathetic to the streetscape and local character as defined in the character assessment for the area (Enhance landmark buildings/ views of landmark buildings; Use a mix of appropriate low maintenance, hard and natural landscaping; Improve safety, ease of access and environment for pedestrians and cyclists; Review use of signage and street furniture to reduce clutter and, where possible, help reinforce the identity and distinctiveness of the area; Incorporate public art; Opportunities for developer contributions could be used.

Policy CITPA3 - Local infrastructure for health and well-being

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of a primary care health centre and the Forest of Dean hospital in the neighbourhood area.

Monitoring and review reports are carried out every year since 2018.



Local Planning Policy

Forest of Dean Monitoring Project (2021–2022)

This document is the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the Forest of Dean District Council and covers the period of 1 April 2021 through to 31 March 2022. The main purpose of this report is to review the extent to which policies within the Local Plan are being successfully implemented, and how effective this implementation may be in meeting stated policy goals. This report will monitor the implementation of the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan, and the progress of emerging and completed Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs).

Policy CSP14: Coleford is reviewed in the AMR. The AMR states that there has been no major or significant applications in Coleford for this period. Applications have mainly been for single dwellings, some of which have been refused, as well as a refusal on an outline for 5 dwellings at Coalway. In terms of housing there is a target of 650 dwellings over plan period and of the 58 houses completed to 31 March 2021 all were affordable.

The following table taken from the AMR provides details of the class uses within the town of Coleford between 2020 and 2022 for retail and commercial offer (use classes):

Uses Classes	2020	2021	2022
E	93	92	93
F.1	3	3	3
Sui Generis	30	31	30
Total Units	126	126	126

The vacancy rate of retail units in the town centre in 2022 was 12 units which 8.6% of the 138 units surveyed, the same number as when surveyed in 2021.

Other Local Documents

Town Benchmarking, Coleford, People and Places Insight 2020

Coleford Town Council commissioned People and Places Insight Limited to undertake a Town Benchmarking Review, First Time Visitor Review and Disability Access Audit in the Town Centre. The detailed results of the Benchmarking Review can be found in the following report whilst the Executive Summary provides the headline findings.

Commercial Offer

- 46% of the occupied ground floor commercial units in Coleford are A1 Shops
- 75% of the A1 Shops mainly sell Comparison Goods which is 7% lower than the National Small Towns average.
- 80% of the A1 Shops are unique to Coleford, 19% higher than the National Small Towns average.
- 8% of the ground floor units were vacant at the time of the Audit in October 2020 which is 1% lower than the National Small Towns average.

- Over half of the Businesses surveyed have 'Changed opening hours' as a result of Covid-19 and will be continuing with this change.

60% of the respondents generally visit Coleford Town Centre for 'Convenience Shopping' which is 16% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Car Parking

- On the Market Day 29% of all car parking provision was vacant, similar to the National Small Towns (27%) figure. On the Non-Market Day vacancy rate increased to 37%, 4% higher than the National average.

Town Centre Use

- Replicating the National Small Towns trend of frequent visitors 85% of Town Centre Users travelled into Coleford at least once a week.
- 71% of Town Centre Users surveyed travelled into Coleford by Car which

is 16% higher than the National Small Towns figure.

- 87% of Town Centre Users stayed in Coleford for less than 2 hours, 8% higher than the National Small Towns average.

POSITIVE

Visit Recommendation

82% of Town Centre Users would recommend a visit to Coleford, 10% higher than the National figure.

Local Customers

Following the National pattern over three quarters of Businesses reported that 'Potential local customers' were a positive aspect of operating in Coleford whilst over half stated that 'Sense of local community'.

Potential Tourist Customers

69% of Businesses stated that 'Potential tourist customers' were a benefit of trading from

Coleford, 33% higher than the National Small Towns figure.

Lack of Crime

84% of Businesses reported that they had not suffered from any crime over the last 12 months.

Communication

88% of Businesses rated Communication with the Town Council as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'

Customer Spend

Perhaps highlighting the regular use of the Town Centre by locals for Convenience Shopping, 35% of respondents stated that on a normal visit they spend £10.01-£20.00 in Coleford with 32% spending £20.01-£50.00, 6% higher than the National average.

Commercial Offer

The commercial offer in Coleford is rated highly with 59% of Town Centre Users rating 'Retail Offer-Independent Shops', 43% 'Retail Offer-Supermarkets' and 49% 'Access to Services' as

Other Local Documents

Town Benchmarking, Coleford, People and Places Insight 2020 (contd)

positive aspects of Coleford.

Physical Appearance

'Physical Appearance' (47%) and 'Cleanliness' (52%) were considered positive aspects of Coleford by Town Centre Users.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Footfall

Footfall in Coleford on the Market Day, 39 persons per 10 minutes, is significantly lower than the National Small Towns average (110). On a Non-Market Day, the Coleford footfall figure (29) is a 72% reduction on the National Small Towns average (105).

Business Confidence

38% of Businesses reported that their Profitability had 'Decreased' from March 2019 to March 2020. In regard to Business Confidence, three quarters of respondents indicated that over the next 12 months their Turnover would 'Decrease', 56% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Transport

48% of Businesses stated that 'Transport Links' were a negative aspect of operating from Coleford, 33% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Car Parking

43% of Businesses and 36% of Town Centre Users stated 'Car Parking' was a negative aspect of Coleford. Qualitative comments highlighted the want for 'Free Parking'.

Public Toilets

27% of Town Centre Users stated 'Public Toilets' (27%) were a negative aspect of Coleford.

Physical Appearance

Qualitative comments illustrated that Town Centre Users felt that the appearance of some buildings within Coleford needed to be improved.

Empty Units

39% of Businesses reported that 'Number of Vacant Units' was a negative aspect of Coleford.

Retail Offer

Despite quantitative figures highlighting that Town Centre Users were happy with the 'Retail Offer' a large number of qualitative comments indicated the need for this to be improved with both better independent and named stores. Specific reference was made in terms of attracting clothes shops to the town.

Leisure Facilities/Events

43% of Town Centre Users rated 'Leisure Facilities' as a negative aspect of Coleford, 16% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Town Centre Users indicated that they would like more events based in Coleford.

Other Local Documents

Forest of Dean Town Centre Audit 2021/22

The annual monitoring report made the following conclusions.

People and Footfall

The footfall data shows a clear indication of how the High Street is recovering from the national restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. The analysis shows a clear indication of the rate at which the footfall returned to the High Street following these restrictions which ended in July 2021 with some months' figures doubling.

The data collected shows a steeper increase in footfall return in 2021/22 compared to the more cautious return in the previous period. The average visit length for the High Street was between 20-40 minutes indicating the main use of the High Street was targeted shopping. It is noted that the tracked area for footfall included both supermarkets (Co-Op and Lidl). This is a trend that is consistent throughout the 4 Forest of Dean market towns.

Whilst Coleford shows a lower level of footfall than Cinderford and Lydney trend lines suggest that in the subsequent period, this may vary.

Based on a monthly recording for car parking, the average ticket sales for Coleford between June 2021 and June 2022 have increased by 30%.

Diversity and Vitality of Place

The town centre's retail and commercial offer has changed since 1999 and this is consistent with national trends and the variety of ways consumers choose to shop, providing a level of resilience for the town of Coleford.

The District Council has compared 2021 & 2022 data and the results are very similar with very few variations.

Coleford's High Street has retained a strong presence of independent and non-national chain retailers with only 3.9% of the High Street being occupied by national chains.

Coleford saw a number of its annual events returning to the High Street, with 13 events licensed this year.

Coleford Town Centre has a strong culture and leisure offer. This collaborated with the Active Lives &2QU published in 2017 which indicated the Forest of Dean District has a strong participational relationship between the arts and cultural projects.

The number of reported crimes has decreased over the past year with an average of 11 crimes per month compared to 17 per month in the year previous. Mirroring last year's data, violence and sexual offences and anti-social behaviour are the most common types of crime.

Economic Characteristics

The vacancy rate for 2021/22 has remained the same as the previous year with 12 of the 138 vacant commercial units (at the time of the audit), compared to 13 in the 2019/20 period. This equates to a 8.6% vacancy rate which is also favourable when compared to the National High Streets Vacancy figure of 14% (source: Local Data Company).

Coleford Community
Regeneration Plan

March 2025

**chris
jones**



Roberts Limbrick