Tulley Bunting

Test Valley Brough Council

Andover Town Centre Masterplan

Andover Profile

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tulley Bunting and Newsteer Real Estate Advisors were appointed in July 2019 as part of the Wayne Hemingway and NEW Masterplanning team preparing a Masterplan for Andover Town Centre for Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC).

1.2 Tulley Bunting and Newsteer have provided high level development related inputs on the Masterplan and its delivery.

1.3 This report provides a "profile" of Andover and the town centre, focusing on the demographic, socio-economic factors and property market context.

1.4 Other aspects of the "baseline" and evidence base for the masterplanning work have been provided separately by other consultant team members. These include:

- **Hemingway Design and NEW Masterplanning** – design, environment, heritage, community, consultation responses
- **Currie and Brown** – Cost consultancy
- **Andrew Cameron Associates** - Transport and Movement

1.5 It should be noted that much of the evidence base set out in this report was compiled and assessed in 2019 (i.e. pre Covid 19) in order to support evolution of the masterplan and building a vision for Andover town centre.

2 THE NEW NORMAL

2.1 Since the beginning of 2020, we have witnessed the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2.2 At the time of writing, the impact of Covid-19 on our high streets, town centres, property markets and economy are beginning to be felt, but not yet fully understood. The "new normal" is likely to look very different.

2.3 For example, working from home (WFH) has been greatly empowered by technology, with some calling into question the future role of major office centres and the consequent need to live comparatively nearby in expensive London suburbs or commuter towns.

2.4 In some ways the pandemic has served to accelerate trends that we were already witnessing. This is particularly the case with "traditional" town centres where retail sales growth has slowed, an increasing proposition of sales have moved on-line, leading brands have folded, and real rental levels have fallen, hitting tenants, landlords and investors.

2.5 One scenario is that "local" town centres may become more desirable and cost-effective places to live, work and play if they can offer an attractive and diverse offer. For those local centres that can also offer good accessibility, including a direct rail link to London, could find themselves in an advantageous position.

2.6 In this context Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) had already adopted a proactive approach to Andover's regeneration - not least by building new leisure facilities, acquiring the Chantry Centre for repurposing, undertaking major public realm improvements at Town Mills Riverside, and commissioning a comprehensive masterplan for the town centre.

2.7 What was already apparent, namely that town centres need a much more diverse, multi-use, multi attraction offer if they were to survive and prosper, has only become more apparent.

3 GOVERNMENT PLANNING REFORMS

3.1 Government is seeking to substantially reform the planning system.

3.2 A comprehensive review of planning policy as it relates to the high street "use classes" has been implemented, focusing on a new use class (i.e. Class E - Commercial, business and service) which provides for a much wider range of commercial uses (including retail, restaurant, office, financial/professional services, indoor sports, medical and nursery uses) to exist within the same use class with any change of use not constituting development and therefore not requiring planning consent.

3.3 From September 2020, Shops (A1), financial/professional services (A2), cafés/restaurants (A3), indoor sports/fitness (D2 part), medical health facilities (D1 part), creche/nurseries and office/business use (B1) will be subsumed into a new single Use Class E. Other changes include added protection against the loss of learning, non-residential and community facilities, including museums public halls and local shops. These uses are now included in new Classes F1 and F2.

3.4 This new approach aims to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by allowing more diversification in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure sectors.

3.5 In August 2020 MCHLG also published its White Paper "Planning for the Future" for consultation, introducing proposals for comprehensive reform of the planning system, including introduction of a land use zoning approach. If enacted the proposals may have significant implications for how the Masterplan is translated in to planning policy.

4 ANDOVER PROFILE

4.1 Test Valley Borough is located in north-west Hampshire. It is predominantly rural in character, with only around 4% of the borough described as urban (i.e. Andover and Romsey).

4.2 Andover is a historic market town with a unique character including the Guildhall and Market Square at the core of the town. The town is on the River Anton, a major source of the River Test.

4.3 In the 1960 and 1970s Andover became an overspill town promoted by the London County Council and HCC. The current A303 (Andover bypass)/ring road, two industrial estates, Chantry Centre, five housing estates and infrastructure/utilities were developed from this period.

4.4 The town has excellent road accessibility (via the A303 to the M3 and close to the A34 linking the south coast to The Midlands via M40) and via rail to London Waterloo (75 minutes). The train station is 5-10 minute walk from the town centre.

4.5 TVBC note that the use of Andover railway station has more than doubled over the last 20 years and this seems set to continue with the recent completion of a new multi-storey car park at the Station.

4.6 TVBC as a whole has a population of approximately 130,000 (2019) rising to 140,600 by 2026 (Hampshire County Council Small Area Population Forecast (SAPF) 2019 based) – an increase of 8.1%.

4.7 Most of the growth is forecast in the population group aged 65 and over, with HCC (SAPF) estimating some 50% of the population growth will be in the 65+ year groups.

4.8 Hampshire County Council also report that for the TVBC area as a whole, that the Elderly Support Ratio (ESR) is forecast to increase from 38.8 to 45.1 elderly people for every 100 people of working age by 2026, whilst the Child Support Ratio is forecast to increase from 32.0 to 32.7 child dependents per 100 people of working age by 2026.

4.9 Andover town council area has a 2019 population of 50,063, with the 2026 population estimated at 54,810 (SAPF), an increase of 9.5%.

4.10 The Borough has relatively low levels of unemployment and economic inactivity compared to the south-east region and national average. In 2019/20 Test Valley had an unemployment rate of 2.7%, c/w 3.1% in the South East and 3.9% in the UK as a whole.

4.11 Andover's employment structure comprises storage/logistics hub (e.g. Ocado, Co-op, West Coast etc); financial services (e.g. Simplyhealth, Be-Wiser, Lloyds Banking Group and CloudPay) and manufacturing/engineering (e.g. Stannah Stairlifts, MRT Castings, PLP, Perfect Bore and Bioquell).

4.12 The British Army Land Forces Headquarters (HQ Land) are based in Andover as are, Test Valley Borough Council, and Andover College.

4.13 Andover's employment grew by 15% (3,500 jobs) between 2008-18 (Business Register & Employment Survey, 2019) and is set to grow further with the re-building of Ocado and new occupiers on Andover Business Park and as major employment allocations (including at Walworth) are taken up.

4.14 HCC (Andover Economic Profile 2020) notes that the town is home to over 2,000 businesses, a quarter of which are found in the transportation & storage sector. By number of businesses the largest sector is professional, scientific & technical, followed by wholesale & retail.

4.15 HCC also report that economic growth in GVA terms in Test Valley averaged 2.2% per annum (p.a.) since the 2008/9 recession, faster than the national average and faster than in Basingstoke & Deane and West Berkshire. Test Valley is now more prosperous than the national average in GDP per head terms.

5 PLANNING POLICY

National policy

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect in July 2018 (latest version February 2019) and aims to streamline the planning process. The Framework outlines a presumption in favour of sustainable development, taking account of the economic, social and environmental elements of sustainability.

5.2 To ensure the continued vitality of town centres, paragraphs 85 to 90 of the NPPF promote and support new development and investment within the settlement boundaries of town centres, recognising that town centres are the heart of communities.

5.3 The NPPF identifies that at suitable locations mixed use developments including residential development and leisure uses can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres. In addition, paragraphs 91 to 95 of the NPPF promote the achievement healthy, inclusive, and safe places.

Local Policy

5.4 The Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD (2011 – 2029) was adopted by the Council on 27 January 2016.

5.5 Within the Local Plan, Andover – the largest town centre in the borough - is classed as a Major Centre in the settlement hierarchy. The only other designated major centre in the borough is Romsey.

5.6 In terms of housing numbers, Policy COM1: Housing Provision 2011 – 2029 sets out the housing requirement for the Borough as a minimum of 10,584 homes. The delivery is to be met through completions, commitments, unplanned development and the allocation of strategic sites for Andover. For northern Test Valley this equates to 7,092 or 394 units pa over the plan’s 18-year period.

5.7 The affordable housing policy (COM7) states on 15 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.5ha of more) up to 40% of dwellings should be affordable, but notes also that in assessing the suitability of such sites for the provision of affordable housing the Council will take into account the size, suitability and the economics of provision.

5.8 The Local Plan supports the continuing vitality and viability of Andover town centre and contains a number of Strategic Policies relevant to determination.

5.9 There is one site specific policy and allocation for Andover town centre, namely Policy LE14 which promotes mixed development (comprising comparison retail floorspace together with offices, housing, leisure uses and car parking) at the George Yard/Black Swan Yard surface car parks owned by TVBC.

5.10 The car parks are located within the Andover inner ring road, fronting Eastern Avenue and adjoining the rear of buildings forming the High Street to the west. We understand the two car parks provide 341 spaces for long, short and ultra-short stay periods. Andover's long and short stay car parks have significant capacity. The site is located within the Andover Conservation area and is in close proximity to 25 Listed buildings and 24 buildings of local historical interest.

5.11 TVBC adopted a CIL charging schedule in 2016. The rate for residential development in Andover is set at £70 psm (indexed) and is due to be reviewed. TVBC may consider allocating funds from the CiL to help fund some infrastructure items. It is noted that current local plan site allocations are nil CiL rated.

Supplementary planning document (SPD)

5.12 In addition to the adopted local plan there are a number of SPD's which are material considerations in any planning determinations. These include:

- (draft) Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2019)
- Andover Town Access Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015)
- Infrastructure and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2009)
- Cycle Strategy and Network Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015)
- Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2010).

6 RESIDENTIAL

6.1 Nationally, after many years of growth, the UK residential market had seen price growth slow (pre Covid 19) and in places go into negative territory. Knight Frank commented that average UK house prices rose 1.2% in the year (2019) to May, down from 1.5% in April, according to the ONS.

6.2 The August 2019 RICS Residential Market Survey reflects many analysts when it's says that its results …" *point to a renewed deterioration in near term expectations, with respondents anticipating a decline in activity over the next three months. Brexit uncertainty is again highlighted as a significant factor causing hesitation amongst buyers and vendors. Nevertheless, a more stable trend in sales is envisaged at the twelve-month horizon".*

6.3 Nationwide Building Society in September 2019 reported that…. "*UK annual house price growth almost ground to a halt in September, at just 0.2%. This marks the tenth month in a row in which annual price growth has been below 1%."*

Test Valley

6.4 The Land Registry House Price Index reports on housing transactions by local authority area. It should be noted that Test Valley has effectively two distinct and different housing market areas, reflecting the close relationship the southern part of the Borough has with the South Hampshire Sub-Region.

6.5 The table below shows Land Registry House Price Index data for dwelling types in Test Valley over the 2018 - 2019 period. This shows an "all dwellings" overall % change 2018-2019 of 0.95% increase, with flats % change 2018-2019 of an 13.6% increase.

Test Valley average property prices		
	2018	**2019**
All dwelling types	£355,883	£359,281
Detached	£506,296	£506,294

Semi-detached	£300,636	£304,489
Terrace	£253,010	£265,398
Flat	£192, 124	£218,375

Land Registry House Price Index

Andover residential market

6.6 Over the last 10 years Andover's residential market has grown considerably both in the overall scale of development and annual completion rates. This seems likely to reflect the extension of local labour markets as indicated by the rise in rail commuting and Andover's ability to attract in-migrants from London and the Thames Valley.

6.7 The new build market in Andover is characterised by a combination of mixed-use town centre development providing predominantly 1- and 2-bedroom apartments; and larger residential developments just beyond the town boundary providing family housing within commuting distance of Andover train station. Some relevant developments include:

6.8 *Chantry Lodge - (Churchill Retirement Living)* - 70 retirement apartments. The development includes an owners' lounge for entertaining/ organized activities. There is also a "well-being suite", providing health and beauty treatments on-site, and rooftop terrace, but no on-site care facility. There are 26 car parking spaces to the rear. In this sense it is a "specialised" product in the marketplace. Agents report that 70% are sold or reserved.

6.9 *Wykeham Court* - a small development of eight new townhouses built to a high specification and traditional masonry construction, just outside the town centre/masterplan area on Osbourne Road en route to the train station. Completion due in Spring 2020.

6.10 *Saxon Heights (Taylor Wimpey*) - situated 1.4 miles from the centre of Andover, comprising 1- and 2-bedroom apartments as well as 2,3,4 and 5-bedroom houses. According the marketing agent, the sales rate for the latest phase of 170 units has been good with approximately 1-2 sales per week.

6.11 *Locksbridge Park (David Wilson Homes*) - Locksbridge Park is a development by David Wilson Homes situated 1.9 miles to the north-west of Andover town centre in a village called Picket Piece. The development is comprised predominantly of 2, 3 and

4 bedroom houses, but also includes a number of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments contained within low-rise blocks. The scheme provides a total of 392 residential units, with all homes containing open kitchen and living areas, en-suite bathrooms and off-street parking.

6.12 *The Paddocks, Twenty One (Persimmon Homes)*. The latest phase of a larger development at Picket Twenty providing 1,200 new homes, retail, leisure and community facilities on the south-east boundary of Andover. The Paddocks is currently under construction and will comprise 1 and 2 bedroom apartments in addition to 2,3 and 4 bedroom houses.

6.13 In terms of potential development sites in Andover town centre, as indicated above, Policy LE14 allocates George Yard/Black Swan Yard for "*comparison retail floorspace together with offices, housing, leisure uses and car parking*"

Summary

6.14 At present there is a comparatively small and specialised town centre housing market (e.g. the Churchill retirement living scheme), but a much larger out of centre housing market.

6.15 Given the town's attractions, including affluent catchment, low unemployment, access to high quality countryside (Andover adjoins the North Wessex Downs AONB, has several large nature reserves etc) as well as London, and the existing popularity of the area for housing developments, this suggests the town centre (especially in a post- Covid world), could be attractive to a variety of in town residential markets.

6.16 In this sense the town centre would have to create its own housing market. This will involve undertaking a more detailed profiling of likely occupiers. However, these markets might include wealthier "down sizers", WFH (part time commuters to London); later living groups; those looking for a move out of London to an attractive town centre in the countryside.

7 OFFICES AND BUSINESS SPACE

7.1 The Andover office and business space offers are mixed. There is a good local start-up and incubator offer (e.g. Basepoint Innovation Centre on Portway East Business Park, Walworth Enterprise Centre on Walworth Business Park and The Commercial Centre at Picket Piece.

7.2 However, with the exception of the financial service companies mentioned above, Andover has not been a headquarters office market in the same way that some neighbouring towns are.

7.3 For large business parks with office space there is an established market in Basingstoke and Newbury, while Reading has the largest office market in the South East. Elsewhere in the borough, the University of Southampton Science Park at Chilworth, Ordnance Survey HQ at Adanac Park, Chemring Group at Roke Manor near Romsey and Hampshire Corporate Park near Valley Park provide the focus on high quality modern office and research parks.

7.4 Within the town centre the most notable office occupier is Simplyhealth which provides health, dental and pet health insurance plans. It has three offices (the largest being Anton House next to Andover College) which it owns and occupies in Andover town centre.

7.5 Andover town centre is not therefore an established office location for occupiers or investors. In this regard, HCC (Andover Economic Profile – 2020) notes that "*….one of the constraints to faster growth in higher-value added service activities (GVA and employment) in Andover is the availability of office space. Andover has seen a small decrease in total office floorspace since 2009/10 - from 71,000 sqm in 2009/10 to 69,000 sqm by 2018/19".*

7.6 Andover town centre does however occupy a strategic location in central southern England. It lies on the A303 trunk road which links London with the West Country and is close to the A34 trunk road which connects the south coast ports of Southampton and Portsmouth with the Midlands, via the M40. As previously noted, it has a direct rail line to London Waterloo which takes 70-75 minutes.

7.7 It is therefore difficult to see a major expansion of grade A speculatively office space in the town centre, as this would mean creating an "in town" office market virtually from scratch, in the face of stiff competition from business parks and other more dominant centre.

7.8 However, Simplyhealth currently operate from three sites in Andover and would like to consolidate on to one site with the potential to operate their business from 1-2 buildings. They have an estimated floorspace requirement of approx. 75,000 sq ft. As all companies adjust to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, this floorspace requirement is likely to be reviewed.

7.9 One option could be to include a new HQ office space in and above a repurposed and redeveloped Chantry Centre. The original 5 storey office accommodation above Chantry Centre, previously largely occupied by the County Council - is now largely vacant.

7.10 TVBC has its own administrative offices in Andover on Weyhill Road at Beech Hurst - some 5 to 10 minutes' walk from the town centre/masterplan area. These are 1970's courtyard style offices with associated surface car parking – comprising some 2 ha. The offices lie between the town centre and the railway station, with Beech Hurst park immediately to the south. In addition to the TVBC offices, Beech Hurst also accommodates the local branches of Department of Work and Pensions, Hampshire CC and NHS offices.

8 RETAIL AND LEISURE

8.1 Traditionally town centres have been defined by the strength and resilience of their retail and more latterly commercial leisure offers. However high street (particularly comparison) retailing has been facing a myriad of challenges over many years. These include:

- waves of out of centre development that has attracted trade away;
- the economic crash of 2007/08 impacting on sales, expenditure and jobs;
- growth of on-line trade and other "special forms of trade"
- uncertainties surrounding Brexit
- slowdown in the growth of expenditure on comparison retailing (as consumers have spent more of their income elsewhere – e.g. leisure and hospitality)
- continuing consolidation of major multiples - including Arcadia, John Lewis and M&S, leading to action to reduce costs by losing staff and closing stores
- decline in real terms of rental levels as occupiers struggle to survive
- end of the 5 year upward only rent review and signing of long leases
- landlords having to come to terms with the revaluation of their asset values
- major landlords of prime assets – e.g. Hammerson, Intu – struggling with declining share price and asset values

8.2 Deloitte's 2020 Retail Trends comments:

"Retail is changing at an unprecedented speed, and with it come big challenges and opportunities. 2019 had the slowest rate of spending growth since 2010, largely driven by Brexit uncertainty. The industry faced large-scale business restructuring: 85,000 jobs lost, a third of FTSE 350 CEOs changing, and 9,169 store closures. Despite this, online sales continued to grow, reaching 21% of total sales. There was also a rise in activism, largely driven by millennials and Gen Z who are demanding their voices be heard. These factors combined are going to have a huge impact on the consumer world, not just for the next year but for the decade ahead."

Andover town centre

8.3 In Local Plan settlement hierarchy terms, Andover is described as a major centre, but in comparative market terms it may be considered more of a local centre as compared with Newbury and Basingstoke which carry sub regional importance, with a number of key anchor stores. The table below shows distances and drive times in the catchment area.

Andover to	Distance by main road: town centre to town centre	Approximate time by car midday Saturday
Newbury	17 miles (A343) 24 miles (A303-A34)	30-40 minutes
Winchester	18 miles (A303-A34)	26-40 minutes
Salisbury	18 miles (A343) 21 miles (A303-A338)	35-55 minutes
Basingstoke	23 miles (A303-M3)	24-40 minutes

8.4 Andover lacks the major high street department anchor stores (having lost M&S in 2018). In that regard it is less vulnerable to the "traditional" market of strong anchors which are now downsizing or retreating e.g. House of Fraser, Debenhams, M&S, John Lewis. That said as set out below, Andover's comparison retail offer remains vulnerable.

8.5 The latest full Retail and Leisure study for TVBC was undertaken by Carter Jonas in 2018.

8.6 It's health check assessment for Andover concludes:

"…. that although Andover is a relatively healthy centre, it is clearly vulnerable to further impacts from the continued growth of online shopping and competition from out- of-centre stores and centres located both within and outside the Borough area. The recent announcement that Marks & Spencer is to close its store in the town centre is a major concern and will inevitably impact on the centre's overall vitality and viability and turnover performance; including the additional loss off footfall and linked trip expenditure to other shops and businesses in the town".

8.7 Looking at market share, Carter Jonas concluded:

"Andover Town Centre achieves a market share of 21.6% within its PCA (Zones 4-5). However it faces significant competition from online shopping (with a market share of 36.3% in the PCA); retail facilities outside of the Test Valley Council Area, such Basingstoke, Salisbury, Southampton, and Winchester (drawing market share of 23.9%); and immediate out-of-centre facilities, such as Churchill Retail Park and Enham Arch Retail Park (market share of 18.1%). This would suggest that Andover Town Centre has a quantitative and qualitative gap in comparison floorspace provision, and there could be opportunities to potentially 'claw back' shoppers and trade to the Town Centre."

8.8 In terms of the social economic profile of Andover, Carter Jonas undertook its own in town surveys which found that:

"…Andover has a significantly greater proportion of higher social grades (A1 – B1) in the wider catchment area of Andover (26.7% for A1 and 33.9% for B1), compared to the respondents from the in-centre survey (16.3% for A1 and 28.6% for B1). Additionally, there is a higher proportion of respondents from the in- centre survey who are of a lower social grade (30.6% for C1 – 24.0% for DE), when compared to the wider population in Andover (21.2% for C1 and 19.0% for DE)."

8.9 These finding are of equal importance to the overall future of Andover town centre as they are to its retail offer.

8.10 Some important conclusions can be drawn from the above:

- Andover's "vulnerability" to retail changes has continued at pace. Whilst at the time Carter Jonas (2018) found 8.3% of the prime vacant, the Council's own AMR finds the rate to have grown from 9.86% in Oct 2016 to in 11.51% in October 2019 with large parts of the Chantry Shopping Centre and The Bridge Street Mall vacant;
- Andover captures only 21.6% of its primary catchment area for comparison goods – losing much trade to Basingstoke, Salisbury, Southampton, and Winchester and even in 2018 was losing a high level to online sales; and
- Andover is falling to catch its fair share of A1 and B1 social economic groups, i.e. traditionally the higher spending customer groups.

8.11 This suggests the future for Andover is not in trying to compete with surrounding centres in comparison large format retail, but rather to find its own "USP" which attracts more people, especially higher spending social economic groups from the catchment area to the town centre.

8.12 This is as much to do with the town centre's leisure, cultural, commercial, independent retailers and events offers as it is to do with traditional retail. In turn this will make the town centre a more attractive and desirable residential market to live in– as is the case with the likes of Winchester and Salisbury.

Impact of Covid 19

8.13 On the 23rd March 2020, HM Government stepped up its measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus and ordered that a large number of businesses and venues throughout the UK closed and remain so until further notice.

8.14 The easing of restrictions is only just now taking place with many businesses either opening or look set to reopen in the coming weeks, albeit not necessarily at their full capacity as social distancing measures are put in place that restricts the typical flow of consumer trade.

8.15 This has had a dramatic effect on the retail and leisure industry with shops, restaurants, pubs, bars, hotels and cinemas all shutting their doors overnight alongside other institutions and places of public assembly such as libraries, community centres, places of worship, museums and outdoor recreation space.

8.16 Since COVID 19 struck there have been over 25 national retail businesses that have undertaken a CVA or gone into administration, and over 15 restaurant fascias adopting a similar route. In addition, there are numerous retailers confirming their stores will not re-open including the likes of John Lewis.

8.17 The pandemic is therefore set to change the very shape of the retail and leisure industry. The changing nature of the way the UK consumer treats the retail landscape was inevitable, but the pandemic has caused the change to happen swiftly and the guardians of retail and leisure locations need to be able to adapt to the post Covid 19 world of retail and leisure space.

Chantry Centre

8.18 A focus of the town/shopping centre investor/developer market is now on “repurposing” existing assets to create an attractive, distinct multi use destinations.

8.19 Such repurposing may range from internal upgrades through to major refurbishment and/or redevelopment to accommodate new “commercial” uses (food & grocery, leisure, hospitality, offices etc), residential and as well as cultural, community and well-being uses.

8.20 The Chantry Centre is Andover’s only covered shopping centre and dominates the town. It was built in the 1960s, extended in 1989, but is now showing its age. The centre comprises some 22,000 sqm - approximately 10,000 sqm of which is retail/leisure on ground level with 60 units.

8.21 It is configured in three internal malls, a central internal “food court” area, and smaller shop units outward facing the Guildhall/Market Square.

8.22 It is anchored by a Waitrose food (circa 27,000 sq. ft gross) an adjacent 650 space MSCP, with other key retailers such as Boots, Sports Direct, New Look, Waterstones and a range of independents. However, levels of vacancies are increasing. For example, apart for Sports Direct, the High Street mall (the so called “ski slope”) is now largely vacant.

8.23 The Council acquired the Chantry Centre in 2019 with the objective of it playing a key role in the wider regeneration of the town centre. It is now ripe for “repurposing”. Illustrative repurposing plans are set out in the Masterplan.

9 PROFILE SUMMARY

9.1 Andover is an attractive "local" centre located within an outstanding rural catchment area with good road and rail access.

9.2 It's out of centre business and commercial parks are successful and there is significant new housing development taking place.

9.3 The town centre itself boasts new leisure facilities, the Lights theatre, Andover College and key occupiers – not least Simplyhealth, a health insurance company keen to remain in Andover town centre with new office accommodation.

9.4 However, the town centre faces a number of challenges and opportunities.

9.5 In common with many UK towns the high street retail/leisure offer has been eroding. This is most noticeable in the Chantry Centre where vacancy levels are high and appear to be growing. The Chantry Centre physically and figurately dominates the town centre.

9.6 The population of the TVBC area as a whole is growing, with the increases forecast mainly amongst the older age groups. This raises the question of the longer-term sustainability, vitality and viability of Andover's economic, social and community bases.

9.7 Whilst an attractive town centre with Town Mills and the River Anton alongside a range of ginnels running through and connecting up parts of the town, there is a limited in town residential market that could otherwise add vitality, viability and sustainability (social, economic, community) to the town centre by attracting new and additional households.

9.8 The town centre is not a recognised office or business centre itself, but Simplyhealth is major occupier and there are many other vibrant businesses within the town centre.

9.9 In this context it is important to note that the masterplan sets out an exciting vision whereby Andover town centre can capitalise on its attractions and opportunities and promote itself to accommodate more in town residential, leisure, cultural, commercial and entertainment space.

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