

# Nicholsons Shopping Centre Report Back Broadsheet

Friday 22 March to Tuesday 26 March 2019



Brewery Square

## A New Vision for Nicholson's Shopping Centre

It is proposed that Nicholson's Shopping Centre be regenerated to create a new vibrant, mixed use urban quarter for Maidenhead; build new streets and public spaces with a rich mix of uses including retail, restaurants, arts & culture, community uses, workspace and housing to serve the whole community; provide a flexible square as a new heart for the town; design-in accessibility for all and enhance the connections from the town centre to the rest of the town, including links to the parks and other assets around the town; restore the heritage and vitality of the High St / Queen St / King St triangle.

These were just some of the ideas to emerge from Nicholson's Shopping Centre Community Planning Weekend, which ran from Friday 22 March to Tuesday 26 March 2019.

### Background

The Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP), adopted in 2011, aims to revive the character of the town centre, creating a sense of place and a destination for shoppers, residents, businesses and visitors. It identifies "opportunities for new building, new streets and spaces, for improved shopping facilities and attracting new businesses, for creating new homes and providing social and cultural attractions as well as further improving the town's accessibility".

The Nicholson's Centre is an important element of the town centre and its redevelopment provides the opportunity for significant mixed-use regeneration in line with the aspirations of the AAP. The new owners of the shopping centre Tikehau Capital and partners Areli Real Estate bought the site from receivership and are committed to working closely with the local community to shape the future of the site and its relationship with the wider town. They have appointed architects and urban designers JTP to facilitate the Community Planning process and design the masterplan solution.

### Community Planning Weekend

The Community Planning Weekend was a chance to share local knowledge and contribute to creating a new Vision through facilitated workshops, walkabouts and hands-on planning groups. Some 500-people attended over 2 days.

### Report Back Presentation

After the public workshop days, the JTP-led team analysed and summarised the outcomes and drew up a Vision for The Nicholson's Centre, including an illustrative masterplan. This was presented back to the local community on Tuesday 26 March at St Mary's Church Hall.

Following the Community Planning Weekend, the design team will move forward to prepare a planning application, which it is anticipated will be submitted early in 2020.

# Illustrative Masterplan

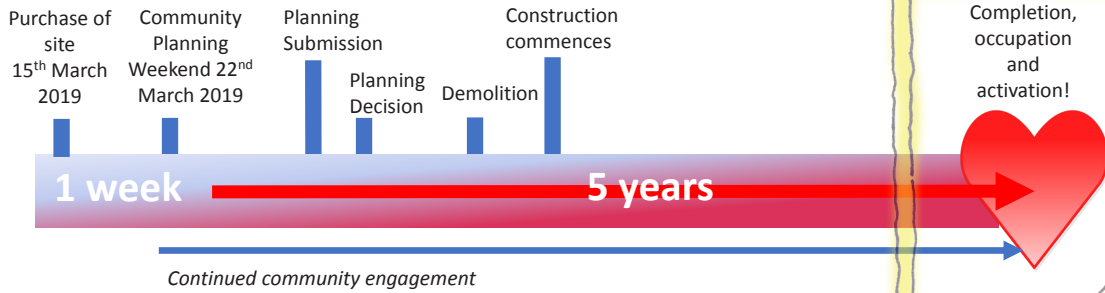
- 1 Brewery Square**  
An open square for markets, temporary structures, community events and water features. Square animated by a mix of active uses including cafes, restaurants
- 2 Something Unique**  
A unique opportunity for urban greening, bio-diversity and ecology, climbing wall
- 3 Arts Space/ Retail**  
A space to facilitate arts, culture and community events
- 4 The Pavilion**  
For open air events and performances and toilets
- 5 The Well MicroBrewery/ Restaurants**  
A new micro-brewery reflected the sites former use
- 6 Makers Space/ Office**  
Artists and makers studio and workshop space
- 7 The Lanes**  
Independent and small scale shopping linking Nicholsons Place to High Street
- 8 Broadway Landscape**  
A shared surface to enable improved pedestrian accessibility between King Street and Brewery Square. Greening of The Broadway including SUDs and wildflowers linking to Civic Quarter
- 9 Residents Gardens at Podium Level**
- 10 Brock Lane**  
Linking Queen Street, King Street and Brewery Square with a mix of larger retail shops and smaller independent shops
- 11 Nicholsons House**
- 12 Service Access for retail uses**
- 13 Car Park**  
A new multi-storey car park located between Nicholsons Place and Civic Quarter
- 14 Opportunity of future pedestrian route from High Street to West Street**
- 15 Breathing new life into the Maidenhead Triangle, King Street, Queen Street and the High Street**
- Housing**  
A mixed community with a range of housing to include senior living co-living, apartments for sale and rent.



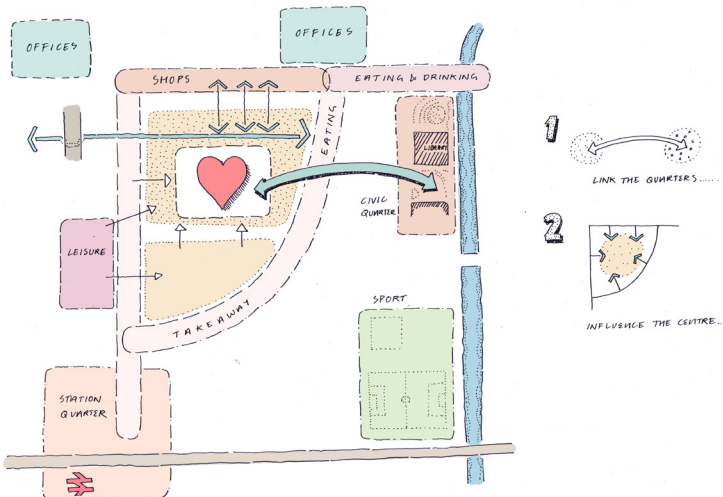
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## Indicative Development Programme



## Masterplan Framework



“ How often do you get a chance to change the entire town centre? This is a once in a century opportunity. ”



# Nicholsons Shopping Centre Key Themes

Friday 22 March to Tuesday 26 March 2019

The following key themes are a distillation of the discussions and design workshops that have taken place throughout the Community Planning Weekend. All quotes are from participants.

## One-off opportunity to “uplift” the town centre

In its heyday, Nicholsons Shopping Centre was an important part of a thriving Maidenhead town centre. However, in recent years, due to changing shopping habits and a lack of investment, the town's retail offer as a whole has fallen behind other places. Today around 90% of the town's retail spend leaks out from Maidenhead to neighbouring towns. The retail offer in the Nicholsons Centre has declined with the loss of many national brands, leaving many empty shop units, and causing the Centre to go into administration in 2018.

The imminent opening of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) has focused attention and participants at the Community Planning Weekend recognised that there is now a clear and unique opportunity for investment to transform the town centre into a vibrant, mixed use destination, with the redevelopment of the Nicholsons Centre site playing a key role.

*“How often do you get a chance to change the entire town centre? This is a once in a century opportunity.”*

## Mixed uses

It is crucial to use this opportunity to establish Maidenhead's town centre as a unique destination, giving people a reason to go there. The inclusion of housing, workspace, creative, cultural and community uses will add vitality and increase footfall to support existing businesses and attract new ones. Participants supported the need for a broad range of housing, including senior living and co-living, to bring life into the centre.

*“Make it a one stop shop - work, live, shop, enjoy.”*

## Be bold and create a new heart

The Nicholsons Centre occupies a key site within Maidenhead town centre. The current building is no longer fit for purpose - it is tired, outdated, with a limited and declining retail offer. There is strong support for the developers to be bold, redeveloping the site to bring forward a new town centre “quarter” with a rich mix of uses, with a new public square creating a new heart for the town and re-establishing a thriving day and evening economy.

*“Create a destination place which provides an interesting experience for people coming shopping. There should be sheer enjoyment in wandering around.”*

## Creating a new town centre retail experience

The decline of the retail offer means that the town centre doesn't live up to contemporary expectations and no longer provides many items that local residents need and want. Internet shopping and the proximity of other more attractive town centres draws people away from Maidenhead and the Elizabeth line is likely to compound this trend. However, there are still many valued local independent and national retailers who need an appropriate environment in which to trade. There was a strong desire to reinvent the town centre as a hub with varied and independent shops and other complementary uses that offer “an experience” and something unique. Rejuvenating the High St / Queen St / King St triangle will be key to the renaissance of the town centre.

*“If you picked up all the independent shops that are here already and put them on the High Street, you'd get Marlow.”*



# Nicholsons Shopping Centre Key Themes (continued)

Friday 08 March to Tuesday 12 March 2019

## Provision for arts, culture and leisure

An improved arts, culture and leisure offer should be part of the Nicholsons Centre regeneration, with daytime and evening provision, including a re-provided night club. There is a keen arts and culture focused community who work hard to promote Maidenhead as a creative town. As well as an opportunity for self-expression, artistic endeavour is used to enhance wellbeing and as a means to combat social isolation. There are however limited spaces for classes, studios and exhibitions and new facilities should be provided in the town centre.

*"Draw in arts and culture, make it a place where small groups can hire a space, join an art class, display their work, have a coffee, be inspired!"*

## Community focus and inclusivity

Maidenhead town centre should be designed around accessibility, empowerment and equity. Maidenhead has an ageing population and many vulnerable residents whose daily needs should be met in the town centre. Participants wanted a range of shops selling affordable necessities as well as more specialised and 'high-end' items. There should also be affordable places to socialise within the new development.

*"I appreciate the neediest members of our society are not seen as 'glamorous' but providing services for them is essential to a healthy town."*

## Young people

Young people wanted 'a reason' to come into the centre of Maidenhead and echoed adults' aspiration for a regenerated, mixed use town centre. However, some young people reported feeling stigmatised or excluded and they wanted to play a part in shaping the future. The teenagers at the Community Planning Weekend expressed a desire for a safe space to "hang out" and spaces that they could make their own.

*"Don't stereotype young people - we want to be part of the community."*

## Connectivity and parking

The ring-road is a physical barrier to the west and north of the town centre and improved pedestrian and cycle connections should be explored, together with greening. Whilst there is a desire to promote sustainable modes of travel such as improved bus services and Park + Ride, car parking remains an important element in the centre. The existing parking provision should be relocated to a less visually dominant part of the site with access from the Broadway made two way.

*"We are sitting in an opportunity area - we must connect things up."*

## Blue and Green Maidenhead

Maidenhead was described as an "island of brick in a sea of green" and participants want to ensure that Maidenhead's rural hinterland is protected. To that end, the provision of higher density housing close to the station and other amenities is important. Redevelopment of the Nicholsons Centre should provide defined streets and open spaces with opportunities for trees and planting in the town centre. Parks are a key asset and stronger connections with the town centre should be established. There was a desire from participants to encourage biodiversity, provide vertical greening and respond to the town's proximity to existing waterways.

*"A leafy space would be nice, a place where we are proud to spend time."*

## Development context and placemaking

Participants felt that the town centre needs a wider placemaking strategy to help bring forward coordinated retail, leisure and public realm investment and management. The reinstatement of streets, a flexible focal space for markets and performances and a well-designed landmark building could help give Maidenhead town centre an exciting new identity. The road network provides a clear distinction between dense town centre development areas and lower density outside the centre.

*"It's crucial to manage the change."*

## Next steps

Weekend participants appreciated the opportunity to participate in shaping the plans for the redevelopment of the Nicholson Centre site and want ongoing consultation with all sections of the community, including the development of a consultation app and the establishment of a Community Forum to continue face to face engagement. There are opportunities to learn from ideas and positive experiences elsewhere. Early wins, meanwhile uses and temporary installations should be encouraged.

*"There must be a fair process - where all groups can have their say."*

