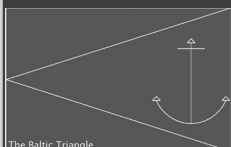


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University of Liverpool

December 2014



Baltic Triangle Scoping Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Brief The Baltic Triangle is a small area adjacent to Liverpool city centre. It is bordered by Park Lane/St James Street, Parliament Street and Wapping Street, and contains a mixture of small independent businesses in its southern two thirds, with the northern-most tip given over to residential development, much of it in the form of new apartment blocks. Following discussion with consultancy Engage, a group of fourth year undergraduate MPlan students^[1] from Liverpool University's Department of Geography and Planning were asked to prepare a report setting out the potential scope of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area, with a particular focus on the role of the creative industries.

Policy Context Neighbourhood Plans were introduced with the 2010 National Planning Policy Framework with a view to encouraging wider community involvement in the statutory local planning process via a Neighbourhood Forum. A Neighbourhood Plan must therefore support the strategic development needs set out in the Local Plan. In particular, it may not be used specifically to block development. The Local Plan covering the Baltic Triangle is currently Liverpool's 2002 Unitary Development Plan, but this will be superseded in 2017 by a new Local Plan.

There is also a 2008 Baltic Triangle Planning Framework, which envisages a mixed use area of small business, creative industries and residential development (much as is the case now). This is not a statutory document, but provides interim planning policy guidance pending the adoption of the 2017 Local Plan.

Area Appraisal The Baltic Triangle is in effect two separate areas. To the north of Sparling Street, it is residential, much of it apartments housing a probably transient population of students and young professionals. To the south it has a mixture of established independent businesses such as car maintenance workshops and bathroom suppliers alongside newer creative businesses. This split in land-uses raises the question of how unified the Baltic Triangle is in practice. The area is generally (though not always) readily accessible both by vehicle and on foot, and is reasonably easy to navigate by virtue of various landmarks: for example the Anglican Cathedral; Cains Brewery; Albert Dock; the Contemporary urban Centre (CUC).

SWOT analyses reveal that the Baltic Triangle's main strengths and opportunities lie in its potential role as a cultural hub, its independent businesses, its proximity to the city centre and its relatively cheap property. Its weaknesses and threats lie in the poor links with adjoining areas (main roads act as barriers), its dilapidated buildings, the

possibility of gentrification and the possible loss of local identity.

Creative Industries Some ex-industrial buildings have been given a new lease of life as spaces for creative companies, but this has generally happened organically, rather than as a planned process. Indeed, it is actually very difficult to plan for such changes. The risk is that in making the area more attractive, the creative industries act as a catalyst for rent increases that they cannot themselves afford, and so find themselves priced out of the area. It seems unlikely that a neighbourhood plan could prevent such change, although it may encourage creative industries as part of a wider economic policy for the area.

Recommendations for the Baltic Triangle Forum

- Identify members with relevant planning, policy or Council experience, along with links to other professionals who may be able to assist
- Identify roles and tasks for individual Forum members to take on, to spread the workload, which is likely to be considerable, both in terms of time and effort
- Continue to engage with all sections of the local community, to encourage the generation of new ideas and to maintain transparency in the neighbourhood planning process
- Continue to consult with Liverpool City Council's planning department in the run-up to the 2017 Local Plan, to ensure consistency and engagement with the local planning process
- Give early consideration to how the neighbourhood planning process (including the required referendum on a Neighbourhood Plan) is to be funded

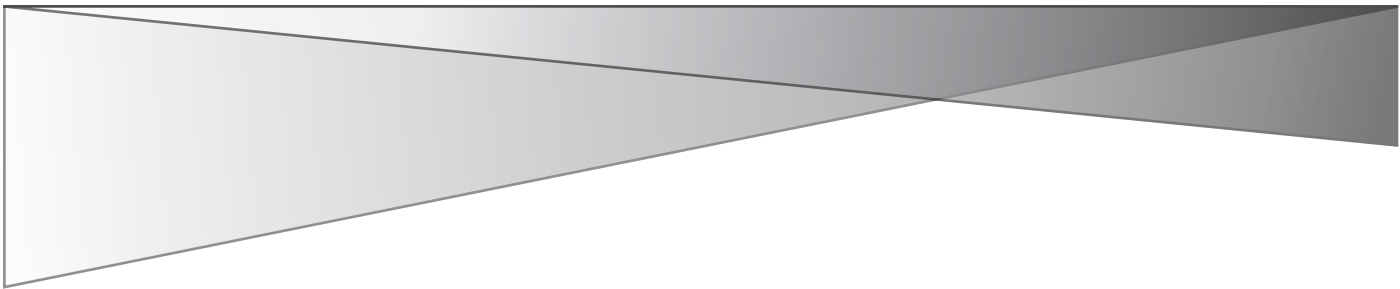
[1] The project was carried out and this report prepared as part of the Masters of Planning (MPlan) degree at Liverpool University's Department of Geography and Planning under the general supervision of Dr Nick Green.

The students and authors of this report are: Jonathan Blackburn, James Hills, Ellen Moore, Joseph Perkins, Tsz Yan Tsang, Yuk Tung. Gerry Proctor represented Engage.

This report was originally prepared in November 2014. Please note that policies and land uses may have changed since then.

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Policy Review

The following section explains the key areas of national and local planning policy that relate to neighbourhood planning. It provides an overview of where neighbourhood plans lie within wider planning policy and the scope neighbourhood plans are given. It is important to consider that whilst neighbourhood plans allow local people to produce local and distinctive plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities, they must also form part of the overall strategy set out in the local plan and show appropriate regard for National and European legislation. Particular focus is given to parts of the local plan and supplementary documents that pertain to the area identified as the 'Baltic Triangle' since guidance for this area is in greater depth compared to the neighbourhood plan area as a whole.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

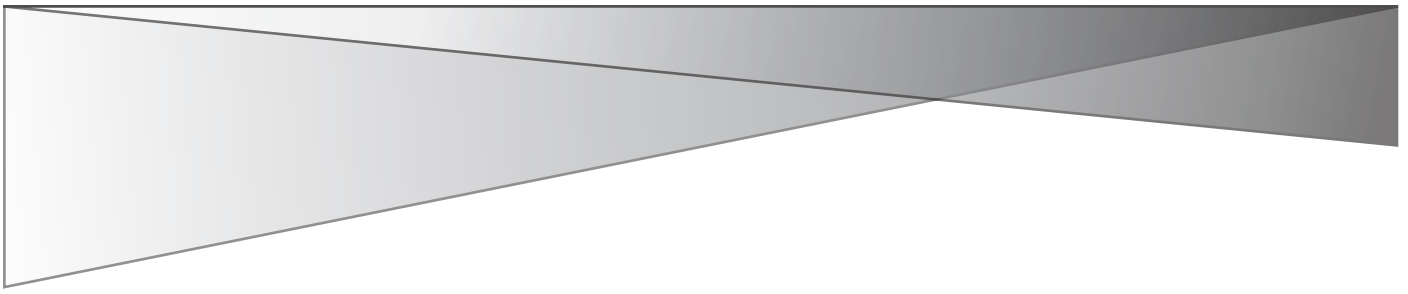
Planning policy at a national level is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), adopted in 2012. One key premise it sets out is a 'presumption in favour of development' (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Paragraph 16 of the document underlines how this should be implemented at the level of a local plan by stating that neighbourhoods should:

- Develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development
- Plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan
- Identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with their neighbourhood plan to proceed.

(Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012; pp. 4-5)

The NPPF explains that neighbourhood plans should be about empowering local people to shape their surroundings through succinct neighbourhood plans that set out a positive vision for the future of the area (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Furthermore they should provide a framework from which planning decisions can be made predictably and efficiently. Crucially, the ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Neighbourhood plans should not set out less development than that set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies. Once a general conformity with these strategic policies is demonstrated, neighbourhood plans take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012).





Unitary Development Plan (2002)

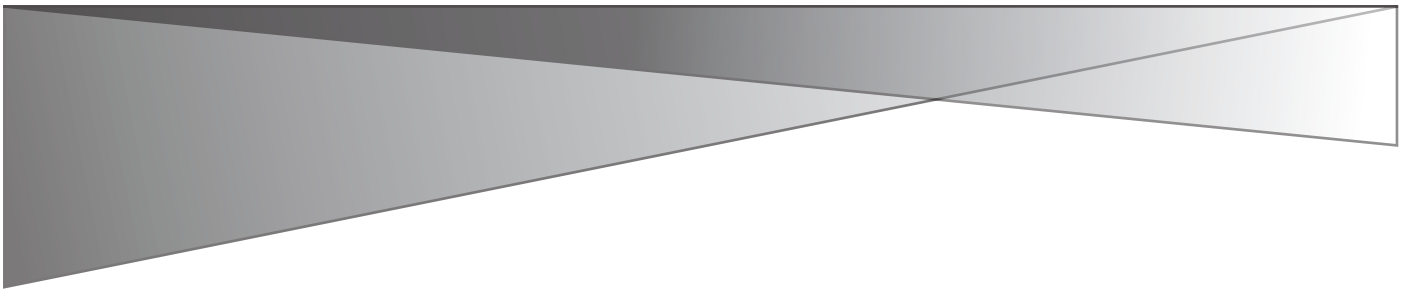
The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is the current local plan for Liverpool and was adopted by Liverpool Council in 2002. It is due to be replaced by a new Local Plan in 2017. Currently the Plan identifies the Baltic Triangle as an area of industrial and business use. However changes of use in the area have been rapid and it is likely that the Local Plan cycle has not kept up with this. For example, recent planning applications have been submitted for residential mixed use developments such as a proposed eleven-storey apartment block with ground floor business use on Norfolk Street. Recently, an application to alter this particular scheme to student accommodation with ground floor commercial use was submitted to the Council. A future Neighbourhood Plan could provide greater adaptability to areas of transition such as this.

The UDP identifies Parliament Street and Jamaica Street as 'Strategic Route Networks' that are given an enhanced status granting priority for investment in maintenance and improvements (Liverpool City Council, 2002). Additionally, Wapping and Parliament Street have been identified as 'Environmental Corridors' which provide scope for a future neighbourhood plan to explore transport and green infrastructure policies (Liverpool City Council, 2002).

Neighbourhood plans must generally conform to the strategic policies of the local plan. The Liverpool UDP lists the following as strategic policies in Chapter 5 of the Plan:

- Economic Regeneration
- Open Environment
- Heritage and Design in the Built Environment
- Housing
- Shopping
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Environmental Protection
- Liverpool City Centre





World Heritage Site SPD (2009)

The Baltic Triangle also falls within the 'Buffer Zone' for the World Heritage Area, which takes interest in protecting historic buildings that contribute to the visual character and setting of the World Heritage Area. Within the Baltic Triangle these are the surviving warehouses that create a 'prevailing historic character' (Liverpool City Council, 2009).

The Baltic Triangle Planning Framework (2008)

The Baltic Triangle Planning Framework forms part of the development plan, designated non-statutory planning guidance. Adopted in 2008, this is a more recent document than the UDP itself and provides more detail. It highlights the area's diverse land use pattern as a key asset that should be retained (Liverpool City Council, 2008). It promotes a mix of uses, with a focus on employment and business development. It also supports residential development within the area if it will support employment and provides active ground floor uses (Liverpool City Council, 2008). Therefore more recently approved applications for residential accommodation would be seen as in line with this.

The Baltic Planning Framework also states that it will not be overly prescriptive on the location of employment uses (Liverpool City Council, 2008). It envisages the area to remaining largely mixed use, with entrepreneurial businesses and creative industries complemented by residential development (Liverpool City Council, 2008). It is important to remember that this document is not statutory and is due to be replaced by the next Local Plan. It does however present some important ideas that a future Neighbourhood Plan could incorporate and build upon.



Area Appraisal

An area appraisal of the Baltic Triangle was conducted in order to define the characteristics and appearance of the area. The appraisal highlights permeability and legibility features along with land use patterns. The resulting maps that have been created are important mechanisms to highlight the features of the area and show the potential for area management and further development.

Permeability

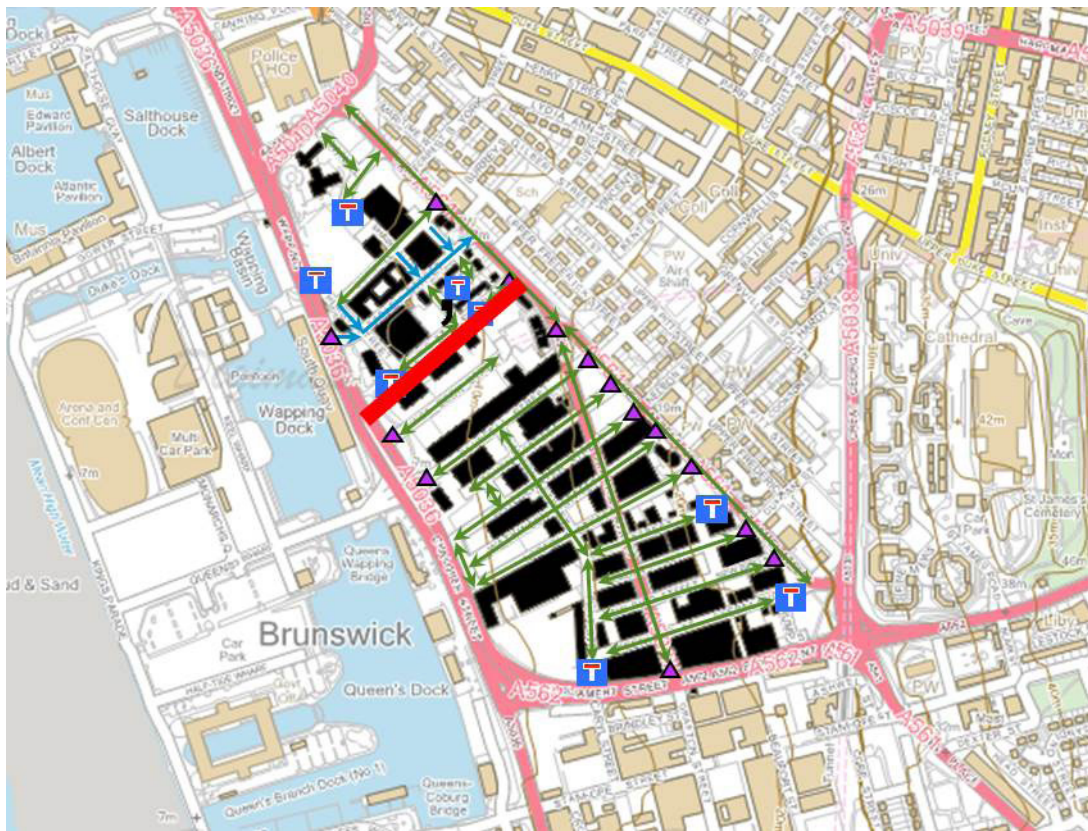


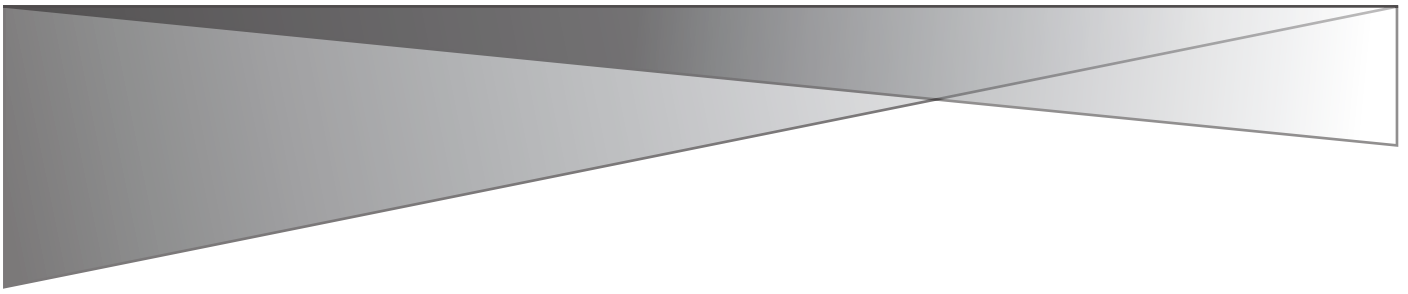
Figure 1 Permeability Map
(source: Author)

Legend:

- Barrier
- One-way Street
- ↔ Two-way Street
- ▲ Entrance
- T Cul-de-sac

The Permeability Map (*Figure 1*) highlights that the main access points to the Baltic and the way street patterns interact. This is important as it provides a platform to see how people can be encouraged to explore the Baltic and the current patterns of movement throughout the area. Entrances to the Baltic Triangle are mostly situated along St James' Street making it easy for people to travel to the Docks via the area. There are several cul-de-sacs throughout the Baltic, the majority of which do not





affect pedestrian movement but instead manage vehicle use, and attempt to restrict the use of the area as a rat run. All of the one way streets in the Baltic Triangle are located in the north of the area. This is the area's residential sector and thus the one way streets are congestion measures and do not impede accessibility to services. In contrast, the south side of the Baltic benefits from two-way streets, offering good access to the businesses and industries that branch off Jamaica Street. The red line on the Permeability Map ([Figure 1](#)) runs across Sparling Street, dissecting the Baltic triangle from east to west. It signifies a physical boundary; a wall that prevents easy access on foot to and from the northern and southern sections of the Baltic Triangle which is also contributed to by the substation shown in [Figure 4](#) (page 12). This red line is also important as the physical boundary also signals the perimeters of the southern business and northern residential areas of the Baltic. It is a clear barrier between unifying the Baltic Triangle's two major land uses and populations.



Legibility

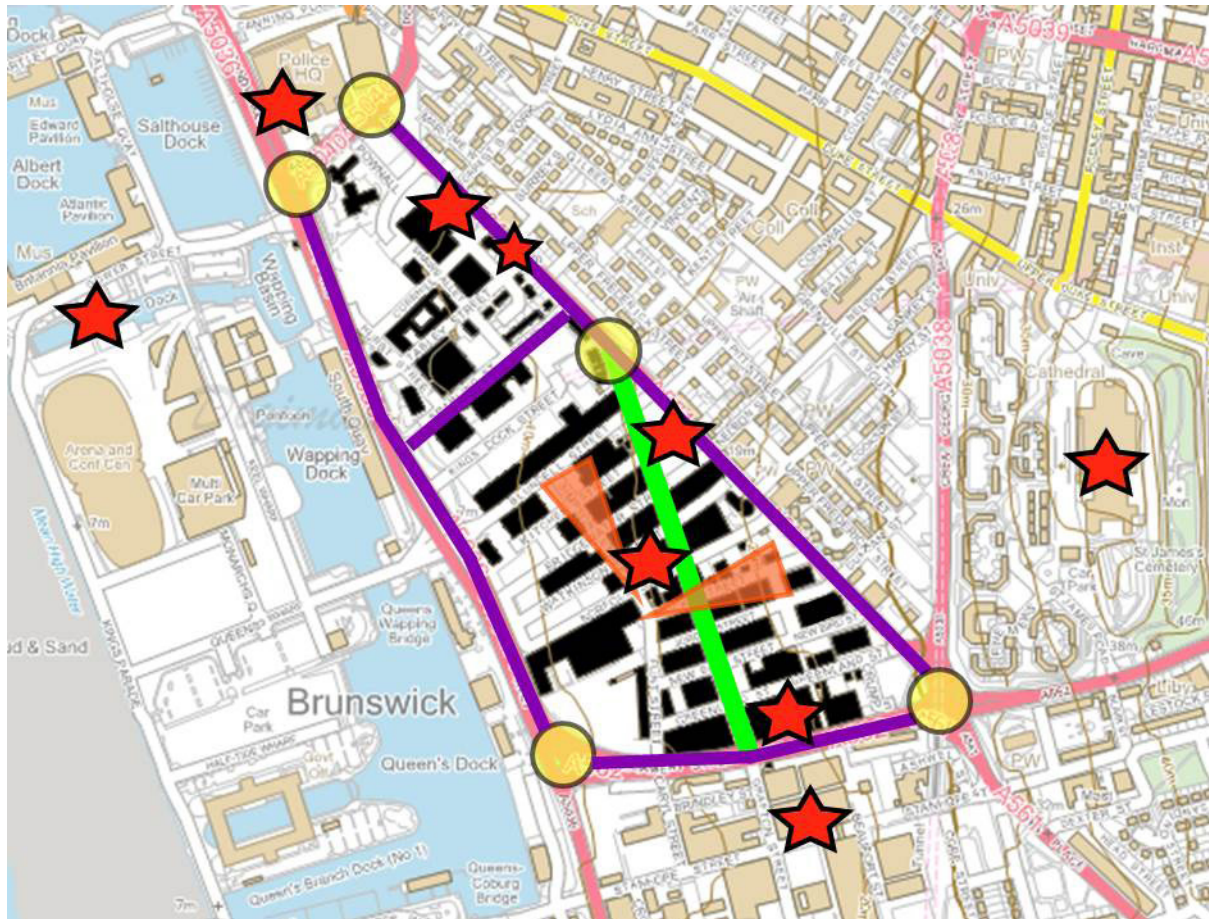
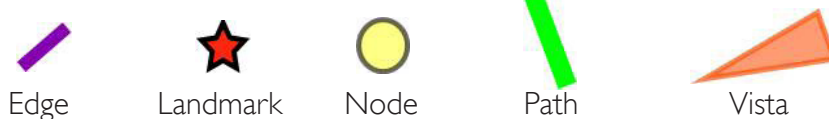
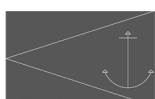


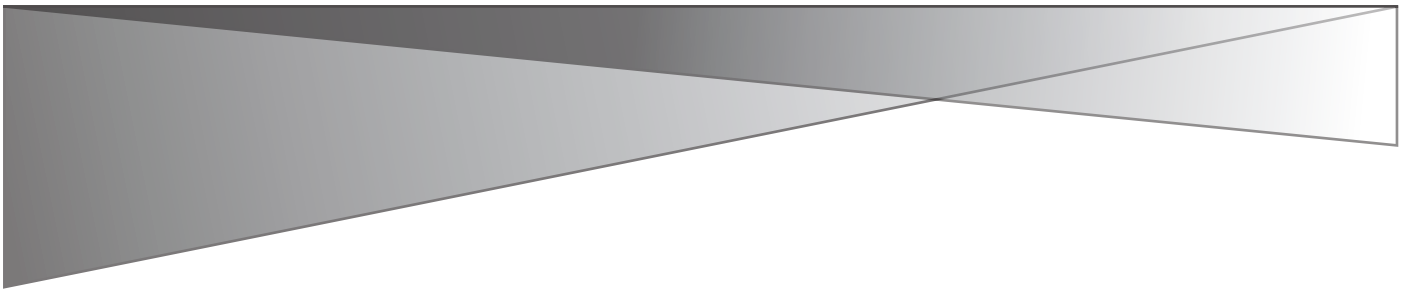
Figure 2 Legibility Map (source: Author)

Legend:



The Legibility Map (Figure 2) of the Baltic demonstrates the key design, physical and social features and thus their geographical relationship. In total, nine landmarks are highlighted on Figure 2, four of which lie outside the Baltic boundaries. However, these are important features for the Baltic as their close proximity creates engaging views from within the Baltic. The landmarks outside the Baltic: the Anglican Cathedral to the east; Cains Brewery to the south; Albert Dock to the north-west and the Police Headquarters to the north are also significant as people pass through the Baltic to get to these landmarks and thus this increases the vitality and use of the area. Landmarks identified within the Baltic boundaries are: the Grade II listed Heaps Rice Mill; the cultural Nordic Church; the artistic 'Days of Judgement' statue on Jamaica Street; the green space between the Jamaica and St James' junction and the Contemporary Urban Centre (CUC) on Parliament Street.





The CUC is an increasingly iconic landmark due to its location and previous community function. It represents the entrance to the Baltic on the south side as it is highly distinguishable in contrast to surrounding buildings. Additionally, it embodies the historical heart of the Baltic through its maritime, Victorian architecture but also the modern day creative movement that is evolving in the area. The former warehouse is a clear indicator of what successful plans can do to regenerate similar warehouses in the Baltic: maintaining its heritage, whilst becoming a creative space and now an educational facility for secondary school children (Houghton, 2012). A neighbourhood plan would enable the residents and workers of the Baltic to identify their own local landmarks rather than have them predetermined by policy makers.

There are five major nodes within the Baltic, which represent connection points between transport corridors. Four of the nodes are located on the outer perimeters of the Baltic Triangle along 'A' roads that are significant transport corridors to and from Liverpool City Centre and the Docks. The other significant node is also on an 'A' road, the junction between St James' Street and Jamaica Street. This is a busy interchange in the heart of the Baltic Triangle. The edges of the Baltic are identified as the areas perimeter with the exception of Sparling Street, which, as highlighted in the Permeability Map (Figure 2), is a physical boundary between residential and commercial land uses. The eastern edge of the Baltic Triangle along St James' street is equally obstructive, with a brick wall segregating the residential block on its northern side.

Two main vistas are acknowledged on the Legibility Map (Figure 2), highlighting engaging views of Beetham Tower, the tallest building in Liverpool towards Princes Dock. The Anglican Cathedral towers over the Baltic Triangle when looking easterly across Jamaica Street. Jamaica Street running orthogonally from Parliament Street is also identified as the main pathway in the Baltic Triangle. The Street dissects the area from north to south and runs through the heart of the business sector, providing opportunities for amenity development as a result of its good connectivity.



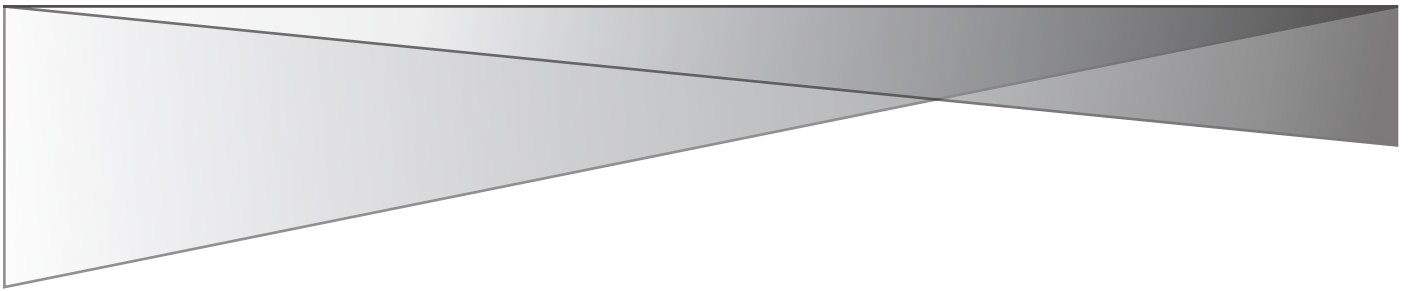


Figure Ground Map

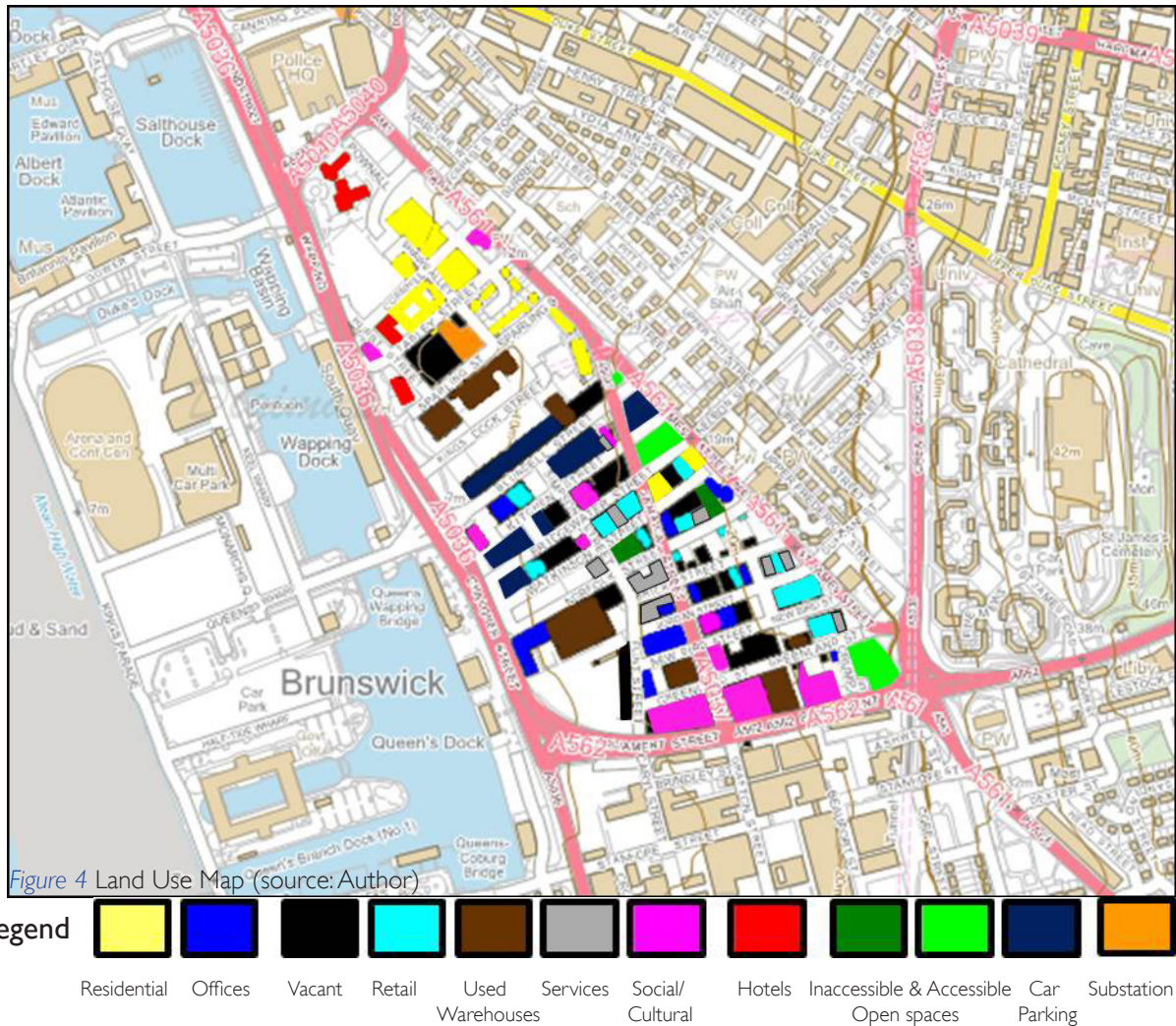


Figure 3 Figure Ground Map (source: Author)

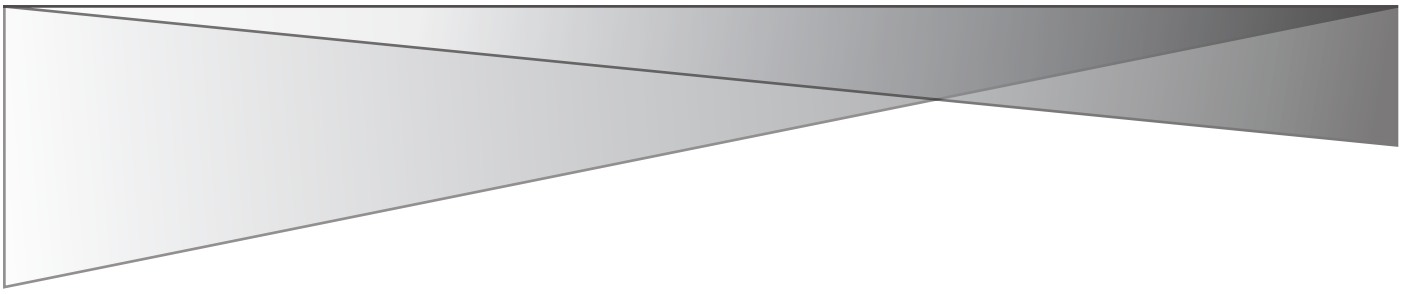
The Figure Ground Map (*Figure 2*) is a two dimensional diagram to highlight the relationship between the built and un-built space in the Baltic Triangle. Land that has been developed and built upon is represented by black shading, whilst the white space is vacant land which includes: roads, pavements, green space and derelict land. While this Map is simple in aesthetic terms, it is an important tool as it highlights the amount of open land within and surrounded by buildings; which may not be apparent at street level. These pockets of land, particularly in the business area, can potentially be given specific land allocations for development through a neighbourhood plan.



Land Use



The Land Use Map (*Figure 4*) identifies which uses occupy certain areas in the Baltic Triangle and allow land use patterns to be observed. It is an important tool for plans in highlighting where the current provision of services is good, and thus where more are needed. It is also an important mechanism in addressing the balance of amenities and ensuring the right development is located in the right place. From *Figure 4* you can see that the residential area is situated in the north of the Baltic Triangle accompanied by hotels, with minimal residential land use south of Sparling Street. Unifying the residential occupiers of the area with the commercial and business occupiers and workers will be a key aspect in the development of any future Neighbourhood Plan for the Baltic Triangle.

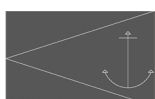


On *Figure 4*, offices are highlighted in royal blue and are scattered around the business end of the Baltic Triangle, these encompass a variety of uses ranging from graphic design to car rental offices. Vacant buildings are located throughout the area and are diverse in their plot size and height. There are large scale vacant buildings on Flint Street and spread sporadically throughout the area. This sporadic distribution is also common with car parks. The vacant buildings, along with smaller sites, offer the most obvious potential for development to immediately reinvigorate the area and will be most likely to interest property developers for commercial and residential investment. Warehouses that are currently occupied are scattered around the Baltic and are wide ranging in their size. Many of these warehouses have inactive frontages which can cause indifferent effects on the townscape potentially resulting in apathy towards the area from residents, workers in the area and prospective tourists. Within *Figure 4* 'services' have been defined as traditional services such as: carpenters, mechanics and car wash facilities, occupying smaller units branching off Jamaica Street. These industries characterise the area.

'Retail' on *Figure 4* is classified as businesses that sell goods; within the Baltic Triangle, this comprises a diverse selection of companies. This diversity adds to the character of the area and ensures the viability of businesses as they are not in direct competition with each other.

The two main social facilities in the Baltic are: Unit 51 Coffee and the award-winning Camp & Furnace bar and venue on Jamaica Street and Greenland Street respectively. Unit 51 occupies the same building as the Baltic Creative: a company providing low cost rental spaces to creative and digital companies. The Nordic Church is the primary cultural land use and is classified with cafés, restaurants and bars shown in pink on *Figure 4*. A future Neighbourhood Plan could identify other cultural facilities that citizens and workers use on a diurnal basis and that are considered important as social amenities. A major concern that *Figure 4* highlights is the lack of green space within the entirety of the Baltic Triangle. Thus developing green space could provide a key objective of a Neighbourhood Plan by the future Neighbourhood Forum.

There are two hotels and one hostel (shown as hotels on *Figure 4*) neighbouring the residential apartment blocks towards the north of the area, whilst retail outlets are located across the commercial area in the south. Although in some sense car parks represent vacant space, it is important to identify them within this area appraisal as they occupy a significant proportion of land in the Baltic Triangle. The areas currently used as car parks also offer the most attractive proposition for development (after the vacant buildings) with the land likely to increase in value as the area regenerates.



SWOT Analyses

The Baltic Triangle is identified as a mixed use area comprising many disused and demolished buildings. In recent years the Baltic Triangle has become a place for creative industries to locate, with the area slowly regenerating as a result. The Baltic Triangle is already considered as a unique place to live and work by those who currently occupy its businesses and dwellings. This is identified as a defining feature and opportunity for the area within the SWOT analysis, as illustrated by [Figure 5](#). Over time the Baltic Triangle has attracted creative industries, community organisations and small start-up companies. While its mix of uses will make it challenging to produce a neighbourhood plan, the area benefits from having an individual and recognised identity within the city of Liverpool. It is this identity which can be supported through a neighbourhood plan, allowing the area to develop and support the current and future community.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural hub • Strong identity • Independent businesses • Near the Docks, city centre and Ropewalks • Mixed use area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dilapidated buildings • Poor links with city centre and Ropewalks • Poor links across the area itself • Minimal green space • Poor access to amenities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap property • Large versatile land plots • Scope for independent businesses to become a defining feature • Unique identity • Green space provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentrification • Pricing out creative industries • Loss of identity • Large companies monopolise business

[Figure 5](#) Baltic Triangle SWOT Analysis (source: Author)

The 2011 Localism Act introduced neighbourhood planning powers, giving communities direct power to develop a vision for their area and promote appropriate development (UK Government, 2011, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Neighbourhood plans have the potential to bring different sections of society together to form policy which aims to meet the specific needs of the local area and community as highlighted within the SWOT analysis ([Figure 6](#)).



Neighbourhood plans are able to 'plug the gaps' of the local plan, providing in-depth policy with site specific allocations. While the planning process now offers this democratic right to citizens there are significant weaknesses as the process can be time consuming, and could require a large investment of funds put forward by the designated forum or through government finance. Arguably the most significant threat to the neighbourhood planning process is the potential for a change in legislation to occur after the 2015 General Election which could alter or remove these powers.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic right • Reinforce sense of community • Bring different groups of people together • Provide in-depth policy for the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not please everyone • Time consuming • Could require large investment of funds • Most people do not have planning or policy experience
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-led • Create identity for the area • Potential to influence future council policy • Establish a dialogue between individuals, businesses and the council • Site allocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts within the forum • Not deemed acceptable under the independent examination • Does not engage the majority of the community • Change in legislation could remove neighbourhood planning • Loss of funding

Figure 6 SWOT Analysis of the Neighbourhood Planning Process (source: Author)

Scope of Neighbourhood Plans

Potential Neighbourhood Plans need not focus on land allocation or large issues which can be covered by local policy, but can be focussed on area-specific issues which are too detailed to be included in the Local Plan. This can include the provision of green infrastructure, transport facilities and community spaces. The Neighbourhood Forum, once created, will decide the Neighbourhood Plan area and the policies which will be covered.





Viability of Creative Industries

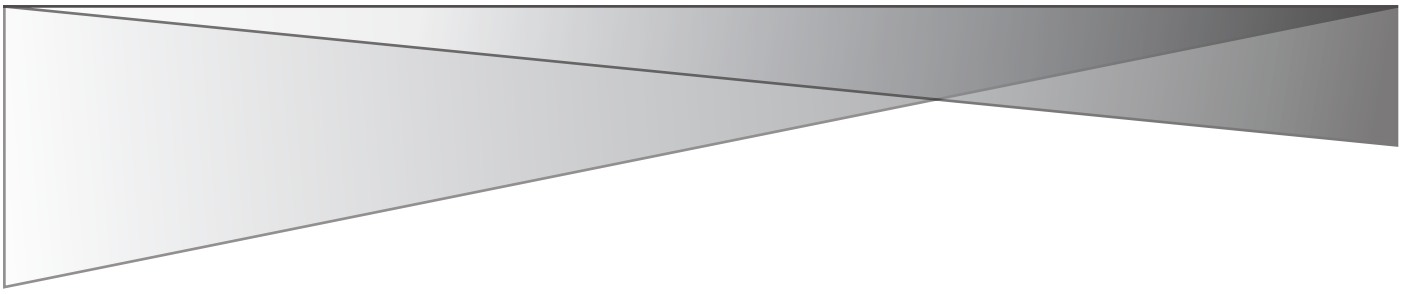
As previously discussed, the Baltic Triangle has seen a renewal of many ex-industrial buildings through the introduction of creative companies and small enterprises. As these industries have started to re-use spaces and create demand for land and buildings, it is likely that a future Neighbourhood Forum would envisage the creative industries as a defining part of the area, and any prospective Neighbourhood Plan.

The provision of land and buildings for new and existing creative industries may be a potential aspect that the Neighbourhood Forum wishes to address. Neighbourhood Plans can allocate land for particular uses as long as they are in general conformity with the Local Plan (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). However, it will be difficult to designate specifically for the creative industries currently located in the Baltic Triangle, as they do not fit into the discreet use class categories, but generally fall into three classes; B1, B2 and Sui Generis. This further raises the issue of defining which type of business constitutes a creative industry (Bishop & Williams, 2012). Many businesses now undertake a range of different activities, with some companies producing the entirety of their work online rather than in a physical format (Hartley, 2005a, 2005b). Any policy which would seek to promote the use of buildings and land to specific uses which do not correspond with the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) would likely be deemed unacceptable at independent examination.

In addition, it has been documented by many academics (Florida, 2005, Landry, 2008, Nowark, 2008), that creative industries and the areas they occupy cannot be planned for, but grow organically in areas which have many vacant buildings and low cost rent. Creative industries agglomerate in these areas as they are responding to their individual business needs for large spaces at a low cost (Bishop & Williams, 2012). This agglomeration of businesses promotes the area to other individuals and industries, in turn creating demand for land and building space. Subsequently, rent and land values increase and lower-income-generating businesses are priced-out of the area (Nowark, 2007). This process of gentrification also attracts property developers to the area, and results in more affluent residents and well established creative companies inhabiting sites that were once solely occupied by small creative, independent or start-up companies (Tay, 2005). The original creative businesses move out to new low rent vacant areas, in effect creating a cycle of urban renewal (Landry, 2005, 2008, Worpole, 1992). This process of regeneration and gentrification has started to occur within the Baltic Triangle, illustrated by the presence of new bars, apartments and social spaces.

In essence creative industries develop organically in low cost run-down areas where planning and the economic market have failed (Hospers & Van Dalm, 2005). As neighbourhood plans provide another level of planning policy and designation, it is likely that any future Neighbourhood Plan for the





Baltic Triangle will not be in line with the specific needs of creative industries. Neighbourhood Plans must promote growth and provide a positive vision for the area (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012), as per the NPPF regulations, and thus would not be able to promote unoccupied buildings of a poor condition merely to attract and retain creative industries.

There is significant potential for business use within the Baltic Triangle, as identified by the SWOT Analysis and within the current Local Plan. It is therefore recommended that the creative industries aspect is included in a wider economic or business policy which will encourage creative businesses to locate within the Baltic Triangle, rather than restrict every business in the designated area to a solely creative use. It has been documented that for creative areas to flourish planning policy needed to be more permissive and flexible (Bishop and Williams, 2012). The current Local Plan and Baltic Triangle Planning Framework seek to retain a mix of uses and to not be overly prescriptive over the location of employment within the area (Liverpool City Council, 2002, 2008). Less restrictive Neighbourhood Plan policies would also enable the Baltic Triangle to respond to changes in the market and adapt to future business and community needs.

Neighbourhood Plan Review

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the 2011 Localism Act (UK Government, 2011) and a number of neighbourhood plans have since been adopted by local authorities in England, including the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (2013), Lympstone Neighbourhood Plan (2013) and Upper Eden Neighbourhood Plan (2012). Although these adopted neighbourhood plans fall into rural areas, it was advantageous to review them in order to ascertain the level of detail that was considered acceptable in a neighbourhood plan, what kind of themes could be covered, how the vision and objectives are set out, and also what policies could be included.

The three neighbourhood plans previously mentioned have been reviewed to identify key aspects and defining features. The Upper Eden Neighbourhood Plan covering 17 parishes was the first Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted under the 2011 Localism Act (Carpenter & Geoghegan, 2013). While this Plan is set out in a clear and concise manner, with each policy clearly justified, it does not offer any maps or visual aids to support in the understanding of the policies (Upper Eden Community Interest Company, 2012). The Lympstone Neighbourhood Plan offers tables, maps and photographs throughout the document which will be of great benefit to the public and the policy staff within the Council (Lympstone Parish Council, 2013). The most recognisable disadvantage for this Plan was the 'Consultation and Engagement' section, which placed relevant information about community meeting in appendices rather than within the Neighbourhood Plan document itself. The Thame Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be the most advanced, and has therefore been reviewed in greater detail to identify best practice which could be utilised by any future Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Forum.



The Thame Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2013, and consists of three sections: the vision, the policies and the site specific requirements for housing allocation (Thame Town Council, 2013). A major strength of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan is its clear presentation, with a detailed vision statement and core objectives set out for the area. The Plan grouped the outstanding issues for the area into five themes: housing, working and shopping, getting around, leisure and wellbeing, as well as environment, sustainability and design quality (Thame Town Council, 2013). All the issues in the Neighbourhood Plan were raised by local residents at consultation events. Additionally, the Plan contains photographs which illustrate the current environmental conditions of Thame, as illustrated by [Figure 7](#). Maps at different spatial scales are also included, as shown by [Figure 8](#), including a small scale map of the key places within the town; a small scale map that shows the development constraints and opportunities in and around the town centre, and some large scale maps showing the site allocations for development. Several appendices are included in the Neighbourhood Plan, including the District Council policies, glossary and a list of Neighbourhood Plan policies.

2.18 Understanding the characteristics of the town is important in designing new development. New development within or next to either of the Conservation Areas or listed buildings must make sure it preserves and enhances the character of the area. Other areas may require a different design approach - for example, there may be opportunities for new development to change the character of less positive places such as the industrial area by introducing a new character.



Fig 2.4: Thame's historic High Street



Fig 2.7: Chiltern Vale area



Fig 2.8: Employment area



Fig 2.9: Moreton



Fig 2.5: Lea Park



Fig 2.6: East Thame



Fig 2.10: Southern Thame

[Figure 7](#)

Photographs included in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan to illustrate current conditions (source: Thame Town Council, 2013)



Fig 2.1: Plan showing key places in the Parish of Thame

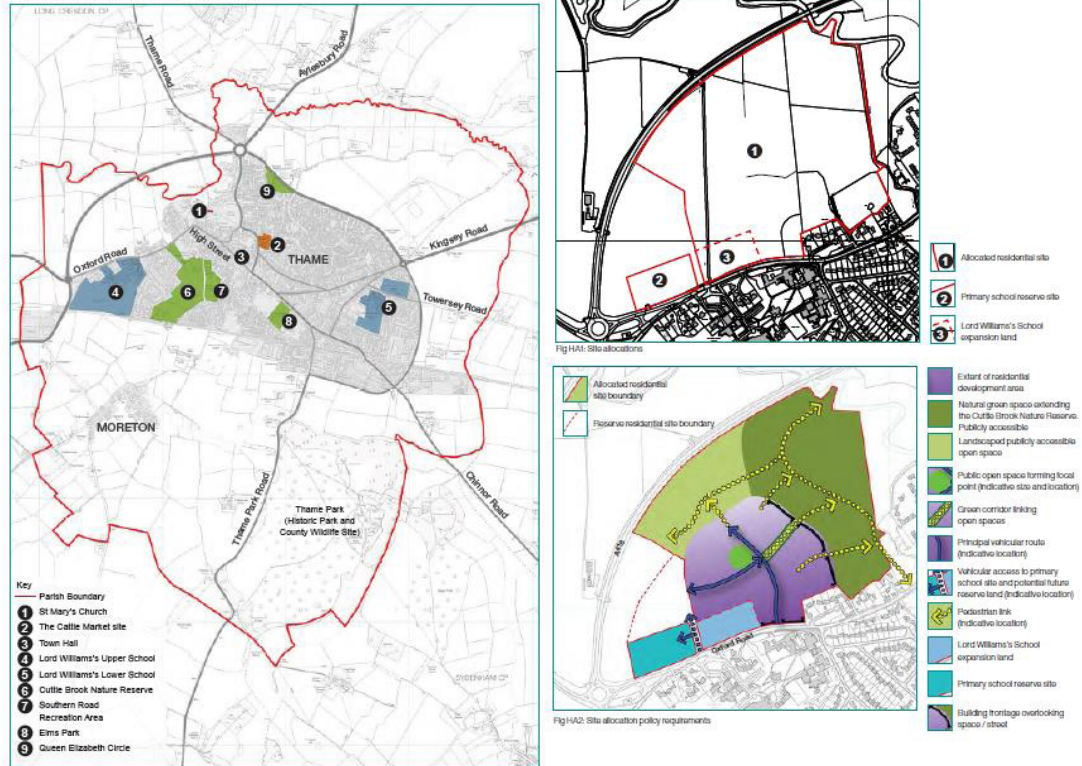
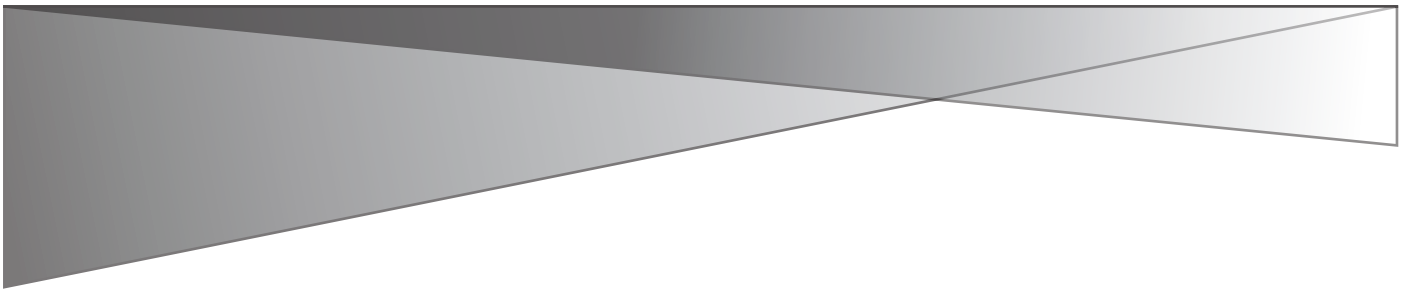


Figure 8 Maps at different spatial scales included within the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (source: Thame Town Council, 2013)

Arguably one of the most important aspects of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan is the public involvement aspect, explaining how the public was able to engage with the process and aid in the development of policies. Public involvement is a key consideration for a neighbourhood plan because it can ensure the plan is appropriate for the designated plan area and for the local people who reside and work there. Indeed, the vision statement and core objectives of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan were developed with the local community at a series of community engagement events. There were five consultation periods on the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (Thame Town Council, 2013). The first two consultation periods were for the public were held in order to let members of the public identify issues and concerns for the area, which ultimately shaped the vision and core objectives (Thame Town Council, 2012). The third consultation period involved a core group of representatives from the Town Council and Residents' Associations and two focus groups. The aim of this consultation was to use the feedback from the previous consultation to develop a number of options for the town and to test them. Once an appropriate option had been determined by the core group of representatives, all the local residents and businesses were invited to provide feedback and opinions (Thame Town Council, 2012). This ensured that the options and resulting policies developed by the Neighbourhood Forum met the expectations of the local citizens and businesses, and were appro-



priate for the area. The final consultation period was the Regulation 14 consultation on the Thame Neighbourhood Plan; its aim was to ensure all the local residents and businesses were aware of the draft plan and how to comment on it (Thame Town Council, 2012).

The SWOT Analysis of the neighbourhood planning process (*Figure 6*) identified that a lack of public support and consultation was one of the main threats to the overall success of the process. It is therefore recommended that public engagement becomes a priority for the Neighbourhood Forum once it is formed, using the consultation stages from the Thame Neighbourhood Plan as a reference. In addition, a number of different methods have been identified to engage local people in the neighbourhood planning process. First, leafleting is a key method which can promote the process, explaining its relevance to the community and encouraging people to get involved. Printed copies of the leaflets can be put in community centres, for example Unit 51 Coffee on Jamaica Street in the Baltic Triangle; with electronic copies sent out via e-mail or shared through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Second, a website solely dedicated to the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Plan could be set up; allowing the public to stay updated with the process if they are unable to attend meetings and to provide their views on policy preparation and prospective objectives. Additionally posters or banners could be displayed within the Baltic Triangle to draw the public's attention to the process and to advertise key website and media resources. Press notices can also be released by the Forum to local newspaper; helping to ensure that the information reaches a wide range of people and does not exclude those without internet access or computer knowledge. Finally, further workshops and consultation events are recommended, which will allow the public to provide their thoughts and aspirations for the area. This will aid the creation of a clear vision statement and core objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. Later workshops and exhibitions could be held to allow the public to comment on the drafts of the plan. By engaging the public from the start of the process the policies will be more appropriate to the local needs of the area, and support will be gained for the eventual referendum.





Suggestions for Future Actions

The analysis of the Baltic Triangle area and the examination of other Neighbourhood Plans have allowed future steps for the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Forum to be identified. Firstly it is recommended that the Forum identifies if any members have relevant planning, policy or Council experience, which will aid the development of coherent policies. Any links to useful individuals or organisations, such as planners and surveyors, should also be identified, as some of the work can be sourced out to external individuals or consultancies. The Forum members should try and breakdown the workload, possibly identifying key roles for each person. By assigning individuals or small groups these roles, it will be easier to manage the output of the Forum and to set specific deadlines for each section of work. Much of the work will be time consuming and many individuals may not be able to complete large tasks due to work or family commitments, so small teams or groups could be more advantageous in this instance. A further benefit of this type of organisation is that the work will be more coherent and as it has been produced as a result of the cooperation of individuals, and will likely be deemed more acceptable by the other Forum members and the local community.

The future Neighbourhood Forum should also continue to engage the public, allowing more ideas and opinions to be generated, and to ensure the Forum remains transparent in its undertakings. By continually consulting the local residents and businesses, individuals may step forward to join the Forum or offer expertise to aid the analysis of the area and the production of policies, for example. It would also be advantageous to continue to consult with Liverpool City Council's planning department, especially as a new Local Plan is currently being produced. By consulting with the Council and the local community, a vision and objectives can be formed which will help focus the policy onto specific themes. If the Waterfront Area also gains a Neighbourhood Forum, the members could explore a partnership or discussion to aid the development of cohesive Neighbourhood Plans, which support rather than hinder each other.

Finally, consideration should be given to the finance of the Forum and the preparation of the Plan. The majority of the funding for the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Forum will be provided through central Government grants, any other available funding should be identified. Many consultancies also undertake pro-bono work for local organisations, which the Forum may be also to utilise.

These recommendations should be considered as an initial step for the Baltic Triangle Neighbourhood Forum. It is up to the Neighbourhood Forum to decide how they prepare the Neighbourhood Plan and what tasks and policy they deem acceptable and relevant.





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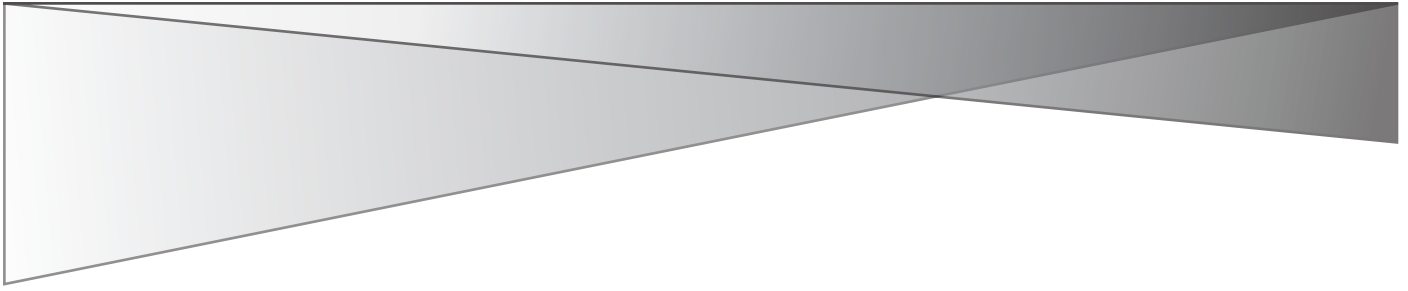
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