



# Ipswich Local Plan

## *Supplementary Planning Guidance*

### **Portman Road area**



**IPSWICH**

**BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

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# Portman Road area

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This brief provides a framework for the development of land in the Portman Road area, centred on the Ipswich Town Football Club stadium. This area is ripe for redevelopment and the Council's strategy to increase economic activity in Ipswich is certainly seeing positive results and the time is right to set out plans for this area.
- 1.2 A multiplex cinema has opened and an entertainment complex is currently under construction immediately to the east, which is one of the major investments in Ipswich. This will transform the surrounding area into a vibrant and popular part of the town.
- 1.3 The large number of visitors attracted to the new entertainment complex will be only a short walk away from the Portman Road area. This offers an excellent opportunity for further investment to attract customers from the entertainment complex and secure economic growth and environmental improvements.
- 1.4 The multiplex development adjoins the Waterfront area that the Council is keen to see redeveloped for new mixed uses. A development framework has been prepared for this area and some schemes are under way. The issue of this brief will illustrate a development framework for a significant quarter of Ipswich.
- 1.5 It will be important to secure a development mix that will complement the adjoining commercial leisure development. This will be further enhanced by the appeal and national prominence of the Portman Road stadium to attract sports and events related uses.
- 1.6 This brief sets out the planning opportunities and design principles to advise prospective developers when preparing proposals for the area. It will also help members of the public to understand and assess the potential benefits which redevelopment of this area will bring about.
- 1.7 The objective is to achieve quality developments in the most appropriate location which are well integrated with the surroundings. It will help to improve the visual quality of the area, create the circumstances and incentive for economic regeneration, and contribute significantly towards the environmental improvement and the facilities offered by this part of Ipswich.

## Portman Road area

2.1 The site is located to the south west of the central area of Ipswich, immediately west of Princes Street close to the edge of the town centre. Appendix 1 illustrates the position of the site in relation to the central area of Ipswich. It consists of approximately 14 ha centred on the Portman Road football ground and extends to include Princes Street, West End Road, Constantine Road and the bus depot, and Great Gipping Street.

### 2. LOCATION AND LAND USE CONTEXT

2.2 This part of the town is home to Ipswich Town Football Club but also contains a disjointed collection of land uses, some of which are situated in unattractive buildings. It is likely to be the subject of change over the next 10 years, which will bring the potential for major reorganisation and changes of use.

2.3 Major inward investment for commercial leisure in association with the multiplex development is taking place immediately to the east of this site. This will greatly alter the appearance and nature of a run down part of the centre. Furthermore, better pedestrian and bus links are being established with the town centre itself. There is great potential to build on this investment and the links to the football ground and encourage the development of sports and events related uses to complement both the football ground and the commercial leisure uses associated with the multiplex to the east.

3.1 The site is currently in a mixture of uses. The core area covered by the brief is bounded by Portman Walk, Portman Road, Russell Road and Constantine Road, and is centred around the Ipswich Town Football Club ground and practice pitch. This is the focal point of the redevelopment area and any expansion or enhancement of the football club facilities may provide the catalyst for further investment in the surrounding area. Also within this core area are the offices of Eastern Group and the Staples retail outlet.

### 3. SITE CONTEXT AND HISTORY

3.2 To the north of this core area is the Alderman Road recreation area containing the recently designated Local Nature Reserve of Alderman Canal which acts as an important publicly accessible town centre wildlife site. Adjacent to the recreation area is a residential enclave extending to Civic Drive in the east. Recent residential development has consolidated the Victorian terraced housing and helped to sustain a thriving residential community.

## **Portman Road area**

3.3 To the east of the core area a mix of uses extends from Portman Road to Civic Drive and the recent multiplex development adjacent to New Cardinal Street. The predominate land uses are the Cattle Market surface car park extending from Portman Road to Princes Street, and the office buildings adjacent to Princes Street.

3.4 To the south of the core area a well established employment area extends from Russell Road to West End Road. This includes the Suffolk Enterprise Centre and the Russell Road surface car park with planning permission for a Crown Court building.

3.5 To the west of the core area is a further established employment area including offices of the Eastern Group and the depot and offices for Ipswich Buses.

### **4. LOCAL PLAN AND GOVERNMENT POLICY**

4.1 The Adopted Ipswich Local Plan (1997) identifies most of the site as employment areas (Policy EMP2 Sites i, j and k) with the exception of the playing fields and open space of the football and recreation grounds, a small housing development on the surface car park to the west of Portman Road (Policy H4 Site No.6.10), and a short stay car park east of Portman Road (Policy T14 Site No.11.6). The Ipswich Transport Strategy Parking Study identified a lack of demand for further short stay car parking and recommended that specific site proposals for short stay car parking should be deleted from the Local Plan.

4.2 Three recent developments have prompted the Council to look again at this part of the town and reappraise its potential for development.

4.3 Firstly there is a perceived lack of events centre facilities in the East Anglian region. There are a number of reasonably sized venues, but few that can cater for large exhibitions. The result is that not only do few companies bring their exhibitions to East Anglia, but some East Anglian based firms take their own events out of the region to London or the Midlands.

4.4 An approach has been made to the Borough Council about the possibility of developing an events centre in the town, and feasibility investigations suggest that such a centre would meet a gap in the market and enhance the role of Ipswich as a County and Regional centre.

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4.5 Secondly, there have been recent developments in Central Government advice which guides Council policy. In particular the publication of Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 in June 1996 provided updated guidance on planning for town centres which places a stronger emphasis on the retention of key uses including leisure, tourism, recreation and public facilities in town centres.

4.6 There is increasing concern over the vitality and viability of town centres in general and a growing importance attached to locating uses that generate a great demand for travel in locations where they are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

4.7 In these changed circumstances the Council has recently granted planning permission for commercial leisure use on a nearby site which is considered to be ideally located on the edge of the town centre, close to the Waterfront Area and accessible by public transport. The town centre area already contains the majority of arts and entertainment uses and the Local Plan strategy is to retain and promote the central area as the focal point for culture and entertainment.

4.8 The development of the multiplex land will contribute to the Local Plan strategy by extending the range of leisure opportunities available close to the central area of Ipswich. This investment provides an excellent opportunity to re-examine the Portman Road area to develop uses which are complementary to the adjoining leisure development and bring new life to this important part of the town.

4.9 The Portman Road area benefits from having probably the best known address in East Anglia, which can be used to full advantage in attracting investment to this area.

4.10 A successful events centre would be a major new attraction and would attract significant numbers of visitors from a wide catchment area. Both Central Government guidance and Borough Council policy is to locate such uses in central locations which are highly accessible by means other than the private car in order to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys. PPG13 states :

*"Facilities with wide catchment areas attracting large numbers of people should be located so that they are well served by public transport and as accessible as possible for those who wish to use them."* (para 3.13)

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4.11 Central Government Guidance sets out three main aims - to reduce the growth in length and number of motorised journeys, to encourage alternative means of travel and to reduce reliance on the private car.

4.12 To meet these aims local authorities should seek to locate major generators of travel demand in existing centres which are highly accessible by means other than the private car. Local authorities should ensure that major new attractions such as conference and events centres are readily accessible by a range of means of transport and where possible use sites in existing urban areas.

4.13 The Council in accordance with this advice seeks to ensure that all new developments which are likely to be major generators of travel demand are both centrally located and capable of being served by public transport. This area is particularly well situated in relation to both rail and bus links and is easily accessible for pedestrians.

4.14 *Rail* - This area is within walking distance (0.5km) of Ipswich Rail Station and adjacent to the main signed pedestrian route from the station to the town centre.

4.15 *Bus* - The Old Cattle Market Bus Station is within walking distance. The main high frequency bus route currently follows Princes Street from the railway station to the town centre providing 28 services each hour. The Council does not have direct control over the routes that private bus operators chose to take, but negotiations with promoters of the adjacent leisure site have resulted in an undertaking to contribute to the provision of a closer route. The bus route for the new park and ride facility at Copdock passes through the area with a drop off point at the Drum and Monkey pub on Princes Street and a pick up point on the opposite side of the road.

4.16 Careful consideration should be given to bus penetration to sites which are poorly served by public transport. Both technical applications and contributions could be used to achieve a suitable situation.

4.17 *Pedestrians* - The Council considers that development of a comprehensive pedestrian strategy will help to reduce reliance on the private car whilst maintaining the viability of Ipswich as a major shopping, commercial and leisure centre. Pedestrian priority measures are an important component of this strategy and development of this site represents an important opportunity to contribute and benefit from this strategy.

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4.18 The Ipswich Pedestrian Study of 1996 recommends an implementation programme of such schemes. A key recommendation is to develop a route between the railway station and the town centre to promote pedestrian movement in this corridor. This site is conveniently situated to benefit from increased pedestrian flows on this route. The opportunity must be taken to improve pedestrian facilities between the site and the Town Centre.

4.19 *Cycling* - The Ipswich Transport Strategy promotes cycling as an energy efficient form of transport which does little to cause traffic congestion. This site is situated close to, and will be able to take advantage of, signed cycle routes proposed along Princes Street, Portman Road and Portman Walk. The opportunity must be taken to improve cycle facilities from this area to the Town Centre and along radial routes.

4.20 When considered against the advice from Central Government and the key aims of the Council to retain and promote the central area of town as a focal point for culture and entertainment, it is considered unlikely that a more suitable site could be found within or close to the town centre of Ipswich for a large scale events centre.

5.1 There is potential for major reorganisation and strategic townscaping in this area, with the opportunity to build on the links to the football ground. This part of the town is considered suitable for sports and events related uses that will complement, not compete with, the commercial leisure uses associated with the multiplex development to the east of Princes Street.

5.2 Set out below and in Appendix 2 are some indicative uses for the overall site. The area should be treated as a whole and therefore there is great flexibility for prospective developers.

### 5.3 **The Portman Road Football Ground**

5.3.1 It is important to state that the Council would cooperate fully with the football club in discussing any development of the football stadium and practice pitch. The football club may not wish to see the ground or practice pitch brought in to future development proposals and, if so, this would be accepted.

## 5. PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT



## **Portman Road area**

5.3.2 However, it is envisaged that as with many football clubs, Ipswich Town Football Club will wish to see expansion and enhancement of its facilities. Whilst the ground is relatively up to date, there are major changes in other grounds throughout the country with approximately 10 new stadia opening in this 12 months together with a whole range of stands and facilities being developed in many existing grounds. The rapid changes in the football industry have seen much investment in improved facilities and to stand still is to go backwards. As part of the brief, the Council would wish developers to look towards providing ground improvements and other new facilities which encourage community use in consultation with the Council and Ipswich Town Football Club.

5.3.3 It is hoped that the football stadium facilities can be enhanced so as to provide other uses which result in more activity than just the football matches on 30 occasions a year.

### **5.4 The Portman Road Practice Pitch**

5.4.1 *Exhibition, conference and events centre* - This is likely to include a conference suite and internal exhibition area with the flexibility to stage events in order to meet the varying demands of different use types. Bars, restaurants and catering facilities are likely to be included.

5.4.2 Although a significant proportion of visitors are expected to arrive by rail or use park and ride, an element of car parking will be required on site for exhibitor and operational use.

### **5.5 Ipswich Buses Depot**

5.5.1 Consideration can be given to developing the Bus Depot site for other B1 employment purposes (Policy EMP3), with the relocation of the Bus Company to a more suitable site.

5.5.2 The Tram Shed is of considerable industrial archaeological interest and plans for new uses should consider its retention.

### **5.6 The Cattle Market Car Park**

5.6.1 *Ice Rink* - The provision of an ice rink will be dependent on market demand generated by the lack of such a facility in East Anglia.

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5.6.2 *Sports arena* - this may include a regional basketball centre. Ipswich has been identified by the English Basketball Association as a suitable location for a regional facility for basketball and other compatible sports such as netball and volleyball.

5.6.3 The site may be appropriate for an indoor tennis centre. Typically centres are provided via the Indoor Tennis Initiative where the Lawn Tennis Association and the Sports Council assist the procurement of pay as you play tennis facilities.

5.6.4 Development should incorporate provision for short stay car parking.

### 5.7 **West End Road**

5.7.1 *Law Courts* - Outline planning permission currently exists for a Crown Court building on a site between West End Road and Russell Road.

5.7.2 *Hotel with Leisure Facilities* - The Tourism Strategy for Ipswich highlights the importance of business related tourism to the local economy. The Local Plan directs uses such as new hotels and conference centres to appropriate locations away from residential areas.

5.7.3 Hotel accommodation is important for the viability of exhibition/conference centres, as it allows centres to move into the more lucrative residential market and would assist the centre to attract business from outside East Anglia.

5.7.4 The provision of a hotel and events centre in close proximity would enhance the potential of both. In this case a C1 hotel use is considered acceptable in an employment area which would normally be reserved for B1-B8 employment use if the development is integrated with the events centre.

5.7.5 The hotel is likely to include some leisure facilities such as squash courts, gymnasium, pool, aerobic studio, health suite etc.

### 5.8 **Portman Road**

5.8.1 *Housing* - The development of further housing in the Portman Road area will consolidate the existing residential community (Policy H4 Site No.6.10).

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5.8.2 *Indoor Bowls centre* - A study to determine local need has revealed a high level of demand for indoor bowls. There is currently a three year waiting list to join the indoor bowling club in Ipswich. Investigations into facilities in towns of a similar size to Ipswich have revealed that indoor bowls centres have full membership and are operating at a financial surplus.

### 5.9 **Staples Retail Unit**

5.9.1 Fitness First, a commercial health and fitness club has recently moved into the unused part of the Staples retail unit.

5.10 Other uses may be appropriate, as the above list is indicative only and not exclusive.

### 5.11 **Natural Environment**

5.11.1 The Alderman Canal Local Nature Reserve has only recently been designated (NE18 Site No.3.3). It is an important town centre site, isolated from other wildlife areas, with a path running alongside the canal to give access for people with disabilities. It forms part of the Alderman Road recreation ground which does not appear to be well used, but has great potential and would benefit from a comprehensive management regime.

5.11.2 The opportunity must be taken to upgrade this area and develop an east west green link via Portman Walk and Friars Bridge Road towards the town centre. This will help to raise the profile of the recreation area and the recently designated Local Nature Reserve and encourage pedestrian flows through the development area.

5.11.3 Another key green link will be the main route from the railway station to the town centre along Princes Street which will require a comprehensive landscaping scheme to increase its attractiveness to pedestrians. It will be important to provide a sense of arrival and an indication of the route to the town centre.

5.11.4 Redevelopment will provide the opportunity to further enhance the whole area by implementation of a landscaping scheme. This must consciously relate to the layout of the development as opposed to being left as an after thought and will include tree planting to soften the urban environment.

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### 5.12 Built Environment

5.12.1 *General Design* - The new development must be of high design quality and complement and respect the existing pattern of buildings and spaces around it with appropriate shape, form and massing (Policies BE1 and BE2). This is particularly important along the key route into the town centre along Princes Street. To facilitate this a townscape analysis should be made in order to determine the most beneficial location for buildings and so that building type can be decided. Good original architecture will be encouraged, and developers will be encouraged to finance new works of art on the site in order to further enhance the built environment (Policy BE3). These may take the form of paintings, stained glass, sculpture, murals, tiling or paving schemes.

5.12.2 *Accessibility* - The Council supports and promotes the concept of a barrier free environment in which all people can independently go about their everyday working and leisure activities. New buildings and their approaches and spaces around them should be designed in a way to avoid the creation of unnecessary boundaries to access (Policy BE10). For example :

All facilities will need to be built to at least the latest standards to meet the needs of disabled people.

Landscaping should take into account the needs of people with disabilities to move between various parts of the area.

Slopes should be kept to a minimum.

A full programme of dropped kerbs will be necessary with matching dropped kerbs on the opposite side of the highway.

5.12.3 *Design for a Safer Environment* - The problems and fears of crime can often be reduced by thoughtful design and layout of buildings and highways and the spaces around them. In particular public paths and circulation routes should include clear sight lines, be well lit and avoid unnecessary unused spaces and recesses. Materials and fittings used for buildings and structures should be selected to deter vandalism providing they are well designed and appropriate to their surroundings (Policy BE13).

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### 5.13 The Civic Subway Systems

5.13.1 *The Greyfriars Subway System* - This is the focus of routes from the development area into the town centre, and may provide the key to improvement and redevelopment of this part of the town. The issue of improving the pedestrian environment and facilitating links into the town centre must be satisfactorily addressed. This is likely to include at the very least a refurbishment, while the preferred solution is a surface crossing.

5.13.2 *The Elm Street Subway System* - Again the pedestrian environment should be improved and links into the town centre must be satisfactorily enhanced.

## 6. CONSTRAINTS

### 6.1 Transport Issues

6.1.1 A number of car parking spaces will be redeveloped at the Cattle Market, and many of the proposed new uses will require substantial long stay car parking provision which must be taken into account and incorporated into the redevelopment. There is also the issue of accommodating the demand for car parking when Ipswich Town plays home games.

6.1.2 The part of the site to the east of Portman Road is included within the Central Parking Core where long stay car parking is discouraged and only necessary operational car parking will be permitted (Policies T12 and T13).

6.1.3 Developers should consult the Borough Engineer and County Director of Environment and Transport at the earliest opportunity concerning transport issues.

### 6.2 Surface Water

6.2.1 Much of the Portman Road area is at risk of flooding during surge tides or fluvial flood events, particularly when flap valves on surface water sewers malfunction. Depending on the location and level of individual sites problems with foul and surface water may occur if floor levels are too low.

6.2.2 Developers should consult Anglian Water at the earliest opportunity.

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### 6.3 Foul Water

6.3.1 The Environment Agency has concerns about any new discharges to ground or to the River Gipping. If soakaways are to be employed they should be the void type with facilities for inspection and maintenance.

6.3.2 Developers should consult the Environment Agency.

### 6.4 Archaeology

6.4.1 The development area was largely pasture and marshland in the medieval and early post medieval periods but it is known to have some archaeological interest. Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) flint implements and mammoth/rhino remains have been found in the gravels in the western half of the area, and an Iron Age weaving comb was found in peat alongside Princes Street. The site of the medieval Friar's Bridge lies along the north east border of the site.

6.4.2 The below ground archaeological remains are not considered to represent a significant constraint on development, but archaeological monitoring of all major ground disturbances will be a minimum requirement.

6.4.3 In addition the Electricity Generating Station (1903) in Constantine Road and the adjacent Tram Shed, is of considerable industrial archaeological interest. Any plans for redevelopment should bear in mind the desirability of retaining these buildings.

7.1 It is expected that proposals for the development of this site will be carried out by the private sector. The Council owns a substantial part of the site freehold.

7.2 A schedule of land owners and occupiers is included at Appendix 3.

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION

## Appendix 3

## Schedule of land owners and occupiers

### Land south of Handford Road, Ranelagh Road, Portman's Walk, Russell Road, Princes Street, Commercial Road, Chancery Road and Constantine Road.

|                         |                                  |  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Former Firmin           | Handford Road                    | Vacant ( <i>site covered by 1/93/0162/FP</i> )                                   |
| British Telecom         | Handford Road                    | British Telecom  |
| VA Marriott             | Handford Road                    | VA Marriott  |
| P Lowery & Sons         | Portman's Walk                   | P Lowery & Sons  |
| RMC                     | Portman's Walk                   | Ready Mixed Concrete   |
| Astons                  | Portman's Walk                   | Astons   |
| Ipswich Borough Council | Portman's Walk                   | Ipswich Borough Council owned land   |
| Unit 1                  | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | McAVAC Car Valet   |
| Unit 2                  | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | Tyres to You   |
| Unit 3                  | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | MSJ Body Repairs   |
| Unit 4                  | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | MSJ Body Repairs   |
| Units 5-6               | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | John R Cox/Tune Up   |
| Units 7-8               | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | Marine and Auto Electrics  |
| Unit 9                  | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | Dudman Refrigeration   |
| Unit 10                 | Portman's Walk Industrial Estate | Belstead Car Services  |
| Ipswich Borough Council | Portman's Walk                   | Vacant Land  |
| Ipswich Buses Ltd.      | Portman's Walk                   | Ipswich Buses Ltd  |
| 88                      | Princes Street                   | Mr Clutch  |
| 90-92                   | Princes Street                   | Vacant   |
| 94-96                   | Princes Street                   | Vacant   |
| 98                      | Princes Street                   | Auto Rent  |
| 100                     | Princes Street                   | Drum & Monkey Public House   |
| Ipswich Borough Council | Princes Street                   | Ipswich Borough Council Car Park   |
| Portman House, 120      | Princes Street                   | CROEX Language Centre  |
| Brooklands Cars         | Princes Street                   | Brooklands Cars  |
| 153                     | Princes Street                   | British Telecom  |
| Fison House             | Princes Street                   | Fisons   |
| Royal Mail              | Commercial Road                  | Royal Mail Sorting Office  |
| Fire Station            | Princes Street                   | Fire Station   |
| Police Car Park         | Russell Road                     | Police Car Park  |
| Car Park                | Russell Road                     | Public Car Park ( <i>site has planning permission for 3 storey Crown Court</i> ) |

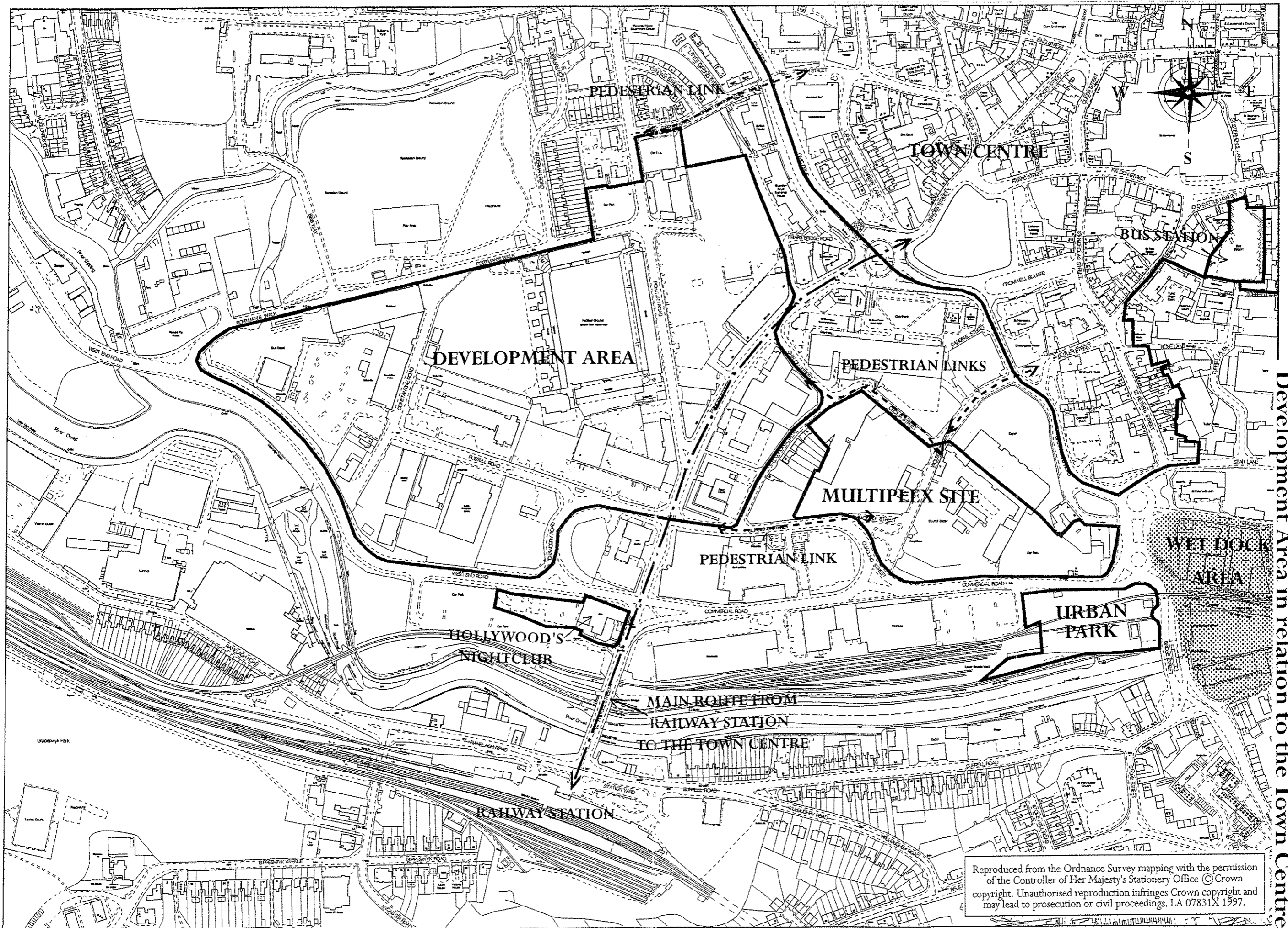
## Appendix 3

## Schedule of land owners and occupiers

|                                  |                  |   |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Suffolk Enterprise Centre        | Russell Road     | Ipsenta, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Business Link, ITEC, Hummingbird Express, Kidsons Impey, Richard Pipe Engineering, Likewise Ltd, Company Health, Elite Security, Eastern Electricity plc, Mr Kenmann-Lane, ICL Enterprise, Driver Hire (Ipswich), Creative Media and Entertainment, Audio Visual Unit Ltd, Ling Electronics, Legal and Trustee Services, PYBT, Inventec, Graham Nightingale, Bentleys Catering, Compliance 2000 |
| Alderman Printing and Binding    | Russell Road     | Alderman Printing and Binding   |
| Russell House                    | Russell Road     | Eastern Electricity plc   |
| 6                                | Russell Road     | Vacant  |
| 2 and 4                          | Russell Road     | Staples   |
| Part former Imperial Tobacco Ltd | Portman Road     | Vacant  |
| Gipping Court                    | Constantine Road | Eastern Electricity plc   |
| Former Ritehire Ltd              | Constantine Road | Eastern Electricity plc   |
| Former ICR Waste Paper Merchants | Constantine Road | Vacant  |
| Constantine House                | Constantine Road | Eastern Electricity plc   |
| Compair Reavell                  | Ranelagh Road    | Compair Reavell   |

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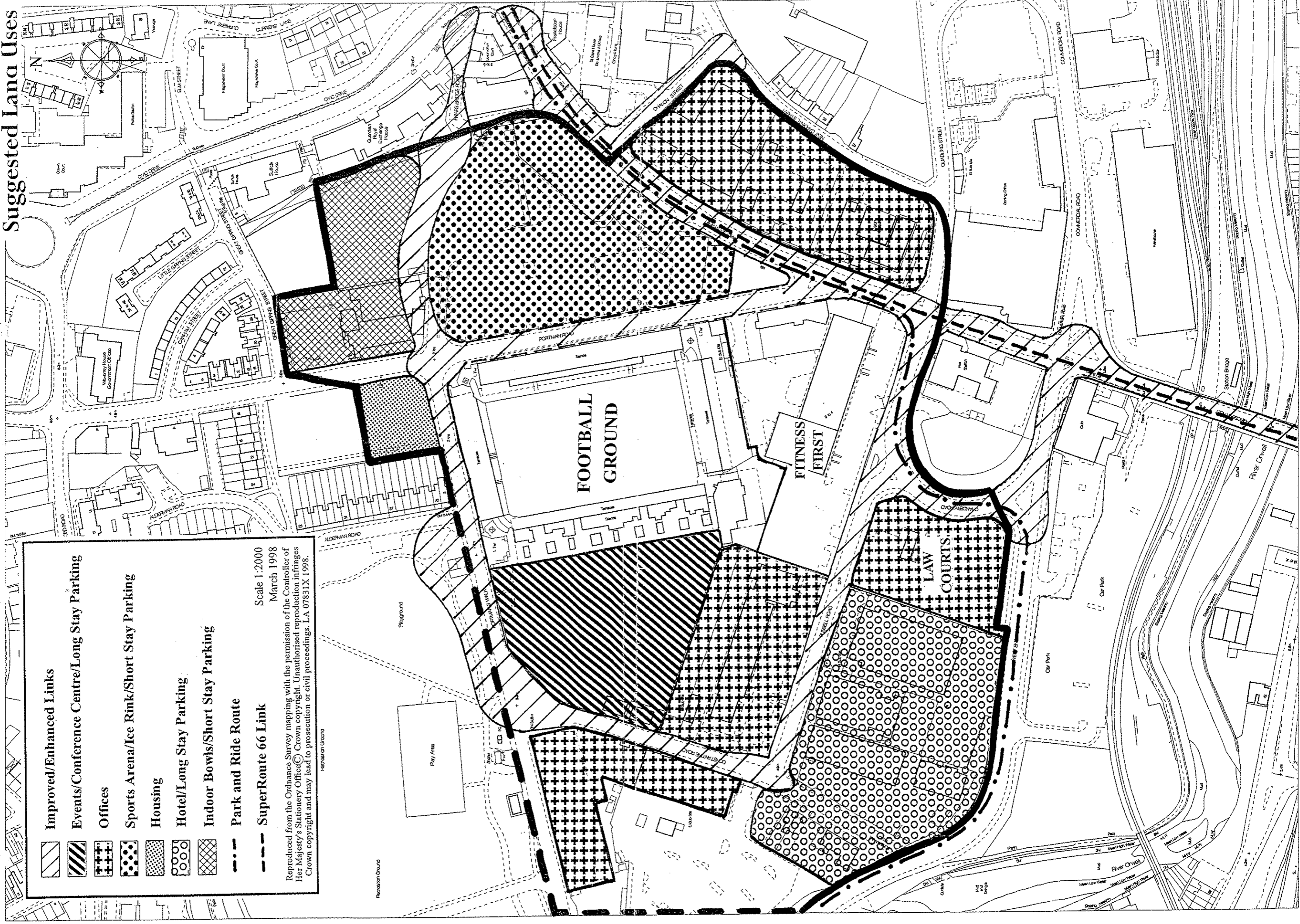




Development Area in relation to the Town Centre

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# Appendix 2 Suggested Lana Uses



- Improved/Enhanced Links
- Events/Conference Centre/Long Stay Parking
- Offices
- Sports Arena/Ice Rink/Short Stay Parking
- Housing
- Hotel/Long Stay Parking
- Indoor Bowls/Short Stay Parking
- Park and Ride Route
- SuperRoute 66 Link

Scale 1:2000  
March 1998

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