

# High Street, Lakenheath

## Neighbourhood Masterplan

April 2023  
Draft Report

## Quality information

| Prepared by                                       | Check by                                        | Approved by                  |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Hannah Waite, Graduate Landscape Architect, AECOM | James Dee, Principal Landscape Architect, AECOM | Ben Castell, Director, AECOM |
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## Revision History

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The background image shows a village square. In the center is a tall, white stone monument with a square top, surrounded by a black metal fence. To the left is a stone building with a red-tiled roof and a sign that says "n Rock". To the right is another stone building with a red-tiled roof. The ground is covered with fallen autumn leaves. A large green circle is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Introduction" and "01".

## Introduction

# 01

# 1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to the Lakenheath Parish Council, through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funded Neighbourhood Planning Programme, led by Locality.

This document is intended to support Neighbourhood Plan policies that encourage high quality design. It includes analysis of the High Street identifying a series of 'activity areas' and key themes, that inform a set of recommendations, in masterplan form. The masterplan aims to create a 'village centre' for Lakenheath, through a revitalised and reactivated High Street.

The physical, historical, and contextual characteristics of Lakenheath are set out in the Lakenheath Design Guide document; a separate document

from this report. The Design Guide should be referred to for contextual analysis of the area.

The ideas in the report can be used as a basis for further engagement with the community. They do not in themselves constitute part of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is hoped that they will stimulate broader discussion about how the area can be improved for the benefit of all. The suggested masterplan proposals are not detailed design and need to be worked up in consultation with Suffolk County Council Highways Department and statutory stakeholders where appropriate.

The content of this Neighbourhood Masterplan document comprises:

- **Theoretical analysis to aid design thinking;** highlighting relevant best practice guidance, and conclusions from stakeholder consultations. The following four themes have emerged from stakeholder engagement. These are

key areas of focus for the site analysis and masterplan: **traffic congestion and safety, greenspace, connectivity and sense of community.**

- **Analysis of Lakenheath High Street;** identifying considerations and opportunities at a contextual site-wide level based on the four themes. This analysis informs appropriate design responses in the masterplan.
- **High Street Neighbourhood Masterplan for Lakenheath;** suggesting and illustrating design solutions in response to the previously identified considerations and opportunities. The four themes provide a basis for proposals at a contextual site-wide level.
- **High Street 'Activity Areas';** considerations and opportunities are considered at an 'activity area' scale. The viable opportunities are then translated into possible design interventions.
- **Next Steps;** providing a series of small, medium and larger scale projects that aim to translate the masterplan into something meaningful and achievable on the ground.

## 1.1 Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:



## 1.2 Planning policy and guidance

An overview of the local and national planning policy and guidance is included in the Lakenheath Design Guide; a separate document from this report. The Design Guide document should be referred to for this information.

The following best practice guidance should be adhered to when developing design proposals, to create successful places.

**2021 National Design Guide** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

The National Design Guide (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021) illustrates how well designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

**2019 'Putting Health into Place'** NHS

10 principles for development and place making are outlined, as a consequence of working on 10 demonstrator sites.

**2020 Building for a Healthy Life** Urban Design Group

A design toolkit that should be used to create places that are better for people and nature. A 12 point structure and underlying principles are identified, which are presented to help designers understand the qualities of successful places and how to apply these at site level.



## Healthy Street Approach Lucy Saunders

The Healthy Streets Approach offers an evidence-based series of interventions that aim to create fairer, sustainable and attractive urban spaces. It is a human-centered framework that focuses on 10 aspects of human experience on a street. This is an approach that can be applied to any street across the world.

The 10 Healthy Streets indicators are:

1. Everyone feels welcome
2. Easy to cross
3. Shade and shelter
4. Places to stop and rest
5. Not too noisy
6. People choose to walk and cycle
7. People feel safe
8. Things to see and do
9. People feel relaxed
10. Clean air



**Figure 01:** A diagram illustrating the Healthy Streets Indicators

## 1.3 Public consultation feedback

In the summer of 2022, three public consultation events were held in Lakenheath. The purpose of the consultation was to gather ideas for improvements to the High Street from local residents, to influence the emerging masterplan proposals.

Four themes were identified through the public consultation events and verified by site visits. These provide areas of focus for analysis and masterplan proposals:

1. Traffic congestion and safety
2. Greenspace
3. Connectivity
4. Sense of Community



**Figure 02:** Unregulated on street parking in front of the Community Centre limits pedestrian movement



**Figure 03:** Ad hoc parking in front of the library and newsagents contributes to traffic congestion



**Figure 04:** Wide highway encourages speeding traffic along the High Street



**Figure 05:** Telephone exchange building on the High Street with unattractive boundary features and under managed green space to curtailage of the street

## 1.4 Glossary of terms

The following list is a glossary of terms used within this document and their definition in relation to this neighbourhood masterplan:

### **Green Infrastructure**

A network of natural or semi-natural landscape features, open spaces and public rights of way which deliver social and environmental benefits.

### **Rain garden**

An area of planting, generally along the street, designed to absorb and store surface water from the surrounding area, to reduce the risk of flooding.

### **Green Gateway**

An area with Green Infrastructure features, such as street trees, planters and / or grass and wildflower verges, that marks the approach / arrival to the High Street.

### **'Activity areas'**

Locations identified along the High Street with the opportunity for community centered activity.

### **Spill out space**

An area of the street or path to be used informally as an extension of the adjacent building usage, such as a cafe, restaurant or library.

### **Pocket parks**

A small park or outdoor space that is accessible to the public, often providing recreational and environmental value. Common characteristics may include benches, play features, planters and / or street trees.

### **Pop-up events**

Temporary events, such as a market, community fete or a sporting event.

### **Play on the way**

Features along the street that promote opportunities for play and social interaction, such as balance beams or stepping stones.

### **Community hubs**

An area of the street that promotes community interaction, socialisation and activity.



**Figure 06:** The War Memorial (Grade II Listed)

A photograph of a residential street scene. In the foreground, there is a paved road with a white line. To the right of the road is a grassy verge with fallen leaves. In the background, there are trees with autumn foliage, a brick wall, and houses. A large green circle is overlaid on the center of the image.

## Site-Wide Analysis

02

## 2. Site-Wide Analysis

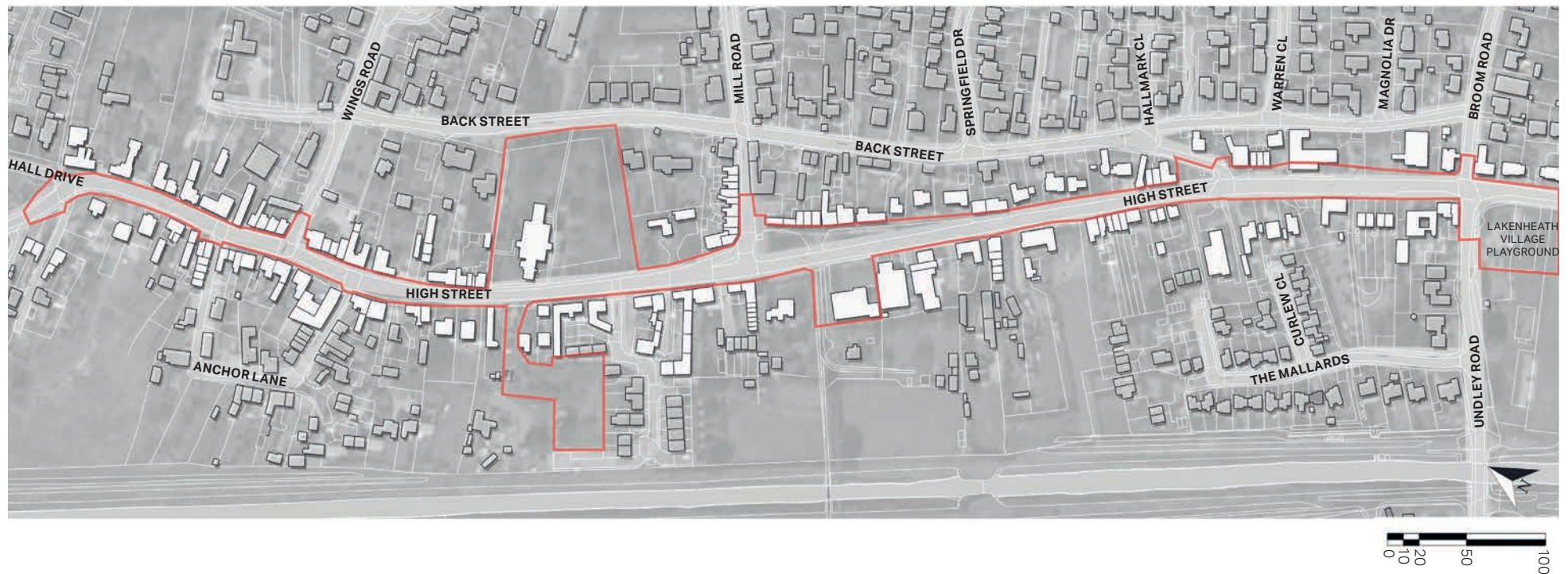
This section contains analysis of Lakenheath High Street. It has been structured using four themes identified through public consultation and site visits.

Considerations and opportunities have been made at a contextual site-wide level. These observations inform an appropriate and achievable design response illustrated in the Neighbourhood Masterplan in section 3.

## 2.1 Establishing the red line boundary

The red line boundary of the Neighbourhood Masterplan has been agreed by the Lakenheath Parish Council. It considers observations made at public consultation events and proceeding site visits. For the purpose of this document, the red line boundary is fixed, however, the High Street has influence on, and is influenced by, its wider context and therefore the red line boundary may be updated to include or exclude areas in the future.

Within this red line boundary is the Lakenheath Conservation Area, which has been considered at each stage of the design process. The developed designs of key interventions proposed in this report should respond sensitively to the Conservation Area, reflecting Lakenheath's existing and historic character.



**Figure 07:** Red line boundary of Neighbourhood Masterplan



**Figure 08:** High Street, Lakenheath

# 2.2 Contextual site-wide analysis: Considerations

The following site-wide considerations are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 09. These were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events.

## Considerations

- 1 Underused greenspace
- 2 Underused pavement space
- 3 Underused car park with potentially dangerous exit
- 4 Ad hoc street parking causing vehicular and pedestrian congestion
- 5 Potentially dangerous controlled pedestrian crossing
- 6 Co-op loading bay regularly blocks pavement when used by HGV
- 7 Wide pavements, with few green features or places to sit and dwell, contribute little to the character of the street
- 8 Wide carriageway encourages speeding traffic
- 9 Underused car park without prominent signage from High Street
- 10 Narrow and hidden public footpaths are underused
- 11 Cluttered pavement and large expanse of hard landscape materials contributes little to public realm and character of the High Street
- 12 Underused private car park
- 13 Underused community buildings
- 14 Busy and fast road junction

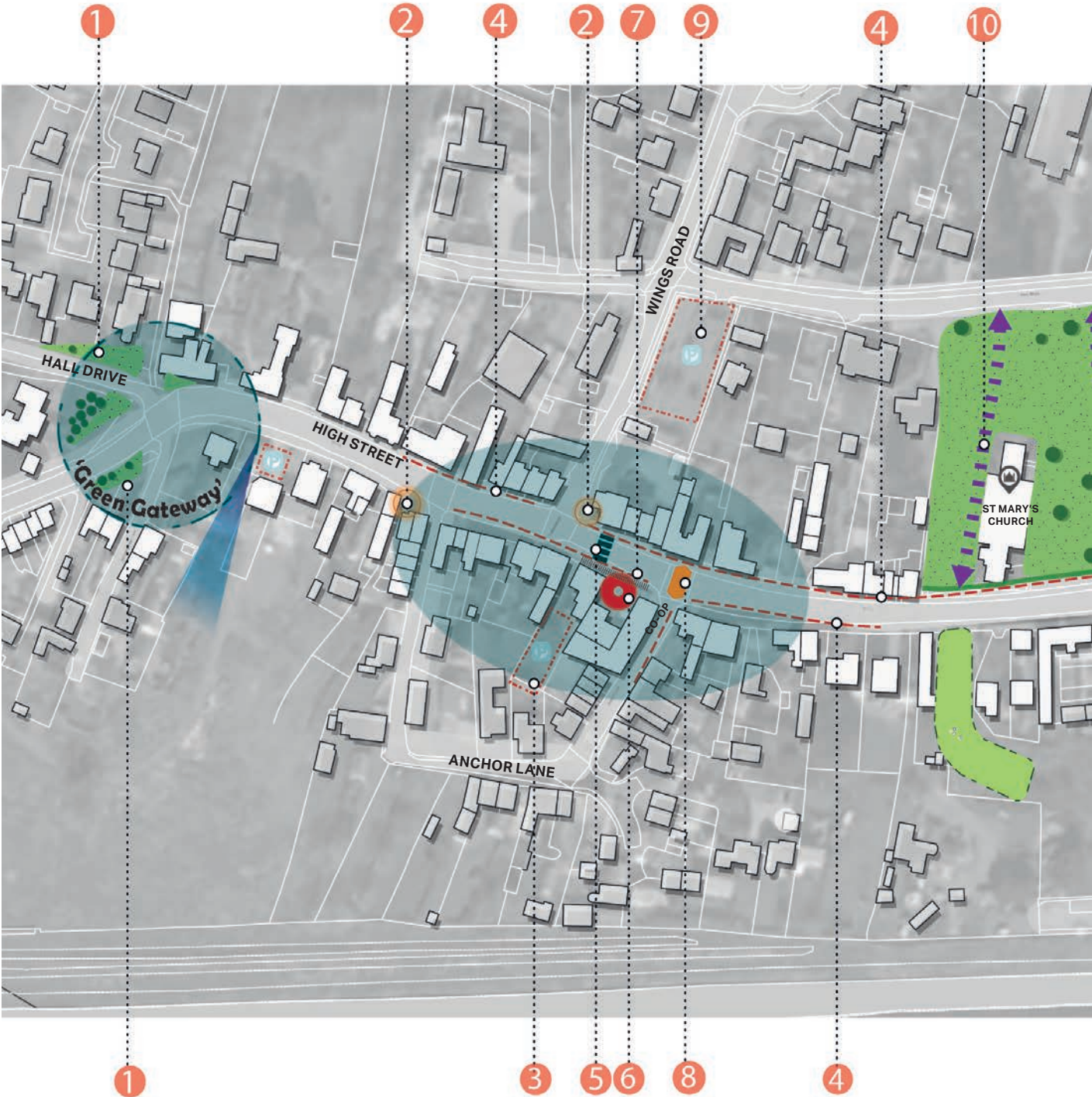


Figure 09: Plan to show considerations for Lakenheath High Street



## 2.3 Contextual site-wide analysis: Opportunities

The following site-wide opportunities are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 10. These were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events. Some of the opportunities are more achievable than others, these are translated into key interventions in section 4.

### Opportunities

- 1 Opportunity for enhancing greenspace
- 2 Important pedestrian footpath from High Street
- 3 Important view to countryside
- 4 Important community assets: farm shop, village sign, CJs sandwich shop and Lakenheath Village Playground
- 5 Opportunity for outdoor seating
- 6 Opportunity for street trees, planting and seating
- 7 Framed view to the High Street
- 8 Signage to promote car park use
- 9 Opportunity for edible growing space for community use
- 10 Few public benches along the High Street
- 11 Enhanced green links to provide important access for pedestrians and cyclists to and from the High Street
- 12 Church of St Mary (Grade I listed) and Lakenheath War Memorial (Grade II Listed) are landmark features to be protected and enhanced
- 13 Community activity could be focused at Lakenheath Community Centre and Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall

Prepared for: Lakenheath Parish Council



Figure 10: Plan to show opportunities for Lakenheath High Street



## 2.4 Traffic congestion and safety analysis: Considerations

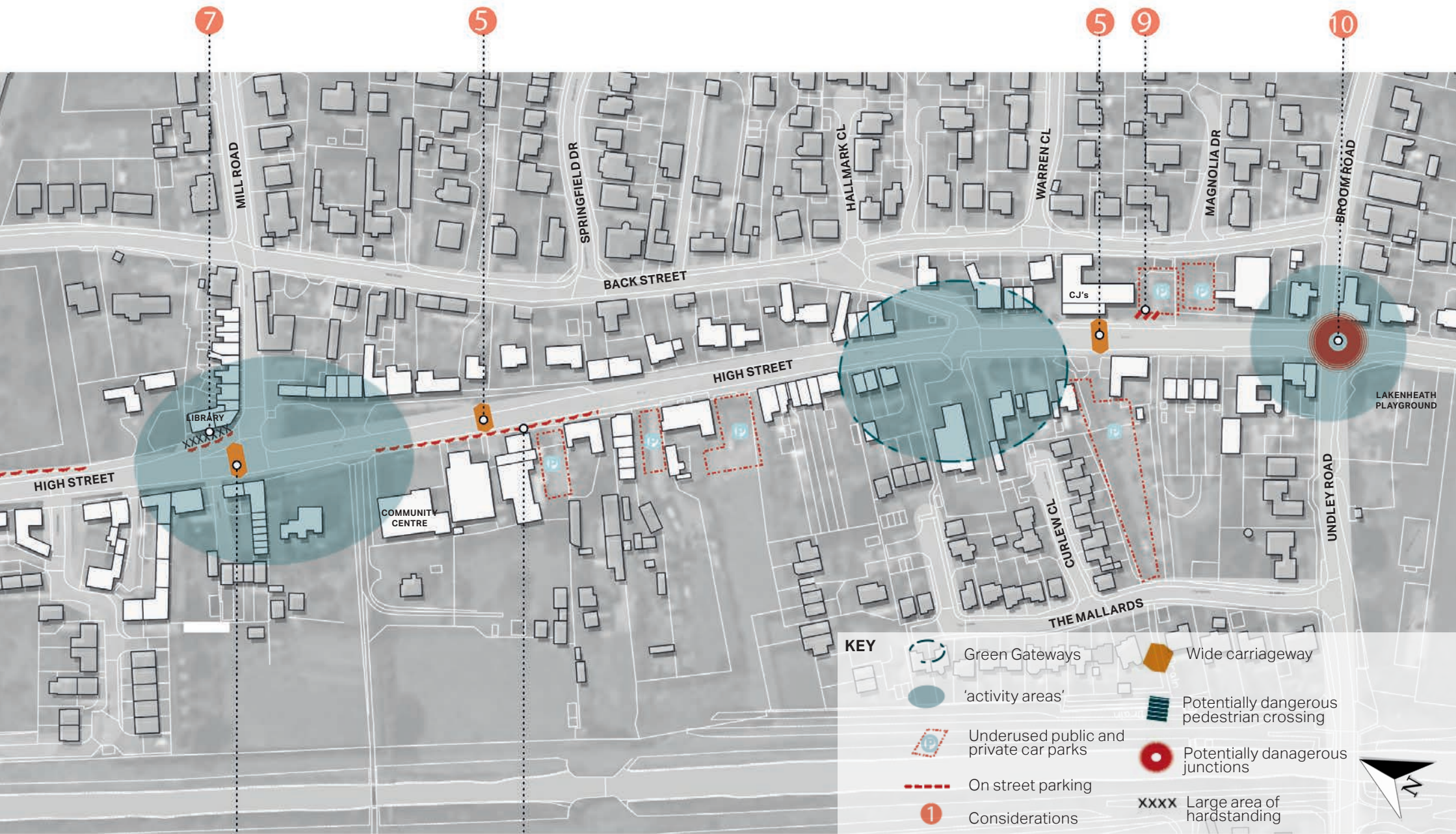
The following considerations and opportunities are focused on traffic congestion and safety. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 11 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events.

### Considerations

- 1 Potentially dangerous junction onto the High Street with fast moving traffic in close proximity to a controlled pedestrian crossing point
- 2 Ad hoc parking on both sides of the road creates a cluttered and congested streetscape
- 3 Potentially dangerous pedestrian crossing
- 4 Co-op HGV loading bay blocks the pathway regularly when in use
- 5 Wide highway encourages high traffic speed, increasing perceived dominance of vehicles
- 6 Underused car park without prominent signage from High Street
- 7 Large area of hardstanding outside the library contributes little to the character of the street, often used for ad hoc parking creating a congested and confusing space
- 8 On street parking near Lakenheath Community Centre restricts views and pedestrian access to the High Street from the building
- 9 Garage customers regularly use High Street pavement for parking, obstructing pedestrian movement
- 10 Potentially dangerous junction, caused by high speed traffic and lack of controlled pedestrian crossings



**Figure 11:** Plan to illustrate considerations concerning traffic congestion and safety in Lakenheath High Street



# 2.5 Traffic congestion and safety analysis: Opportunities

The following opportunities are focused on traffic. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 12 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events. Some of the opportunities are more achievable than others, these are translated into key interventions in section 4.

## Opportunities

- 1 Create a 20mph zone through the High Street, starting at the North and South 'Green Gateways'
- 2 Encourage the use of public and private car parks and available off street parking with clear wayfinding and signage
- 3 Discourage ad hoc on street parking with planting to define parking spaces (wide pathways and carriageway provide opportunity for these interventions)
- 4 Opportunity to reduce the width of the highway, to discourage high traffic speeds whilst maximising space for pedestrian movement
- 5 Change the surface material from the rest of the highway at locations through the High Street, to reduce the perceived dominance of vehicles and promote pedestrian priority

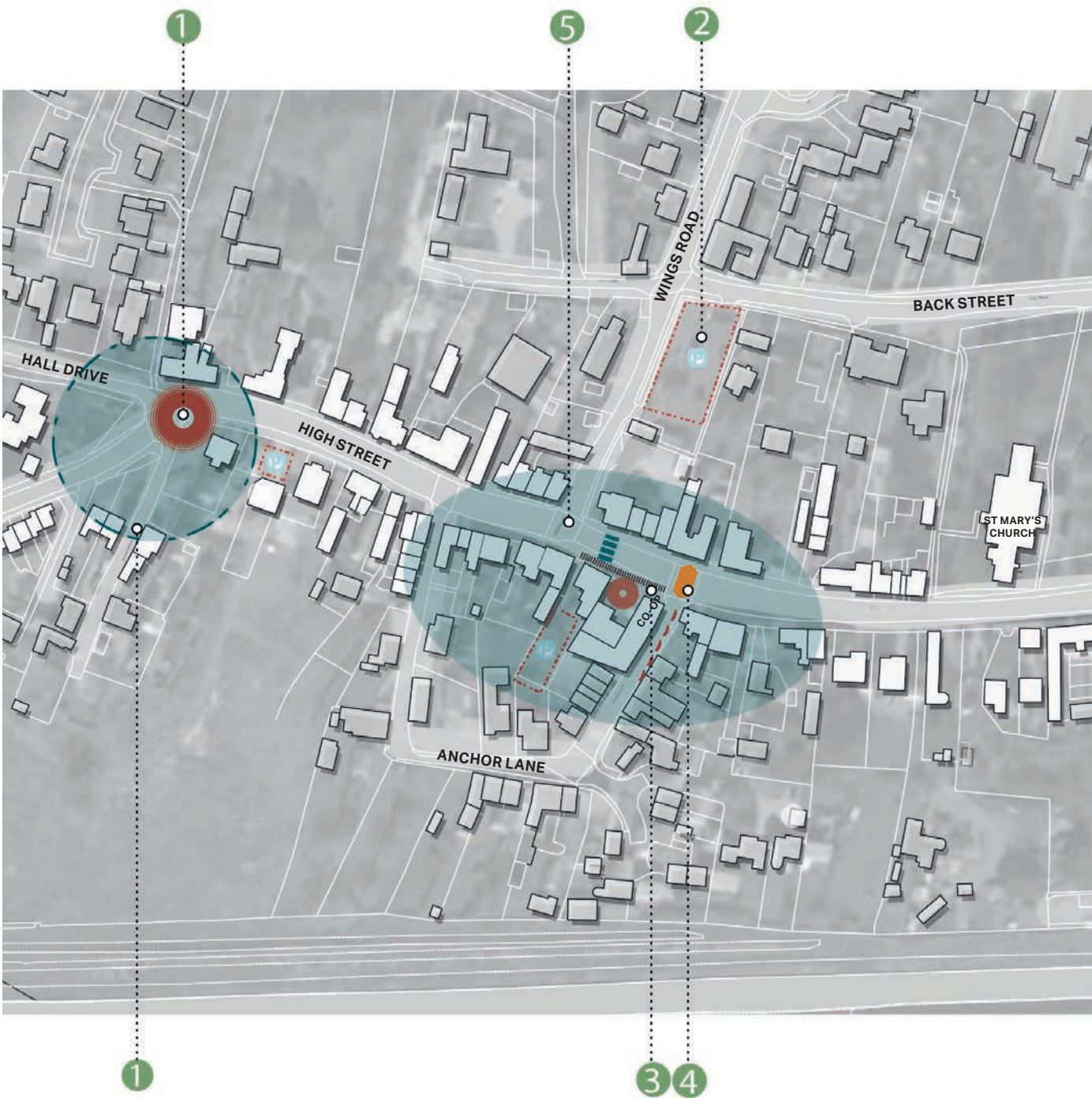


Figure 12: Plan to illustrate opportunities concerning traffic congestion and safety in Lakenheath High Street

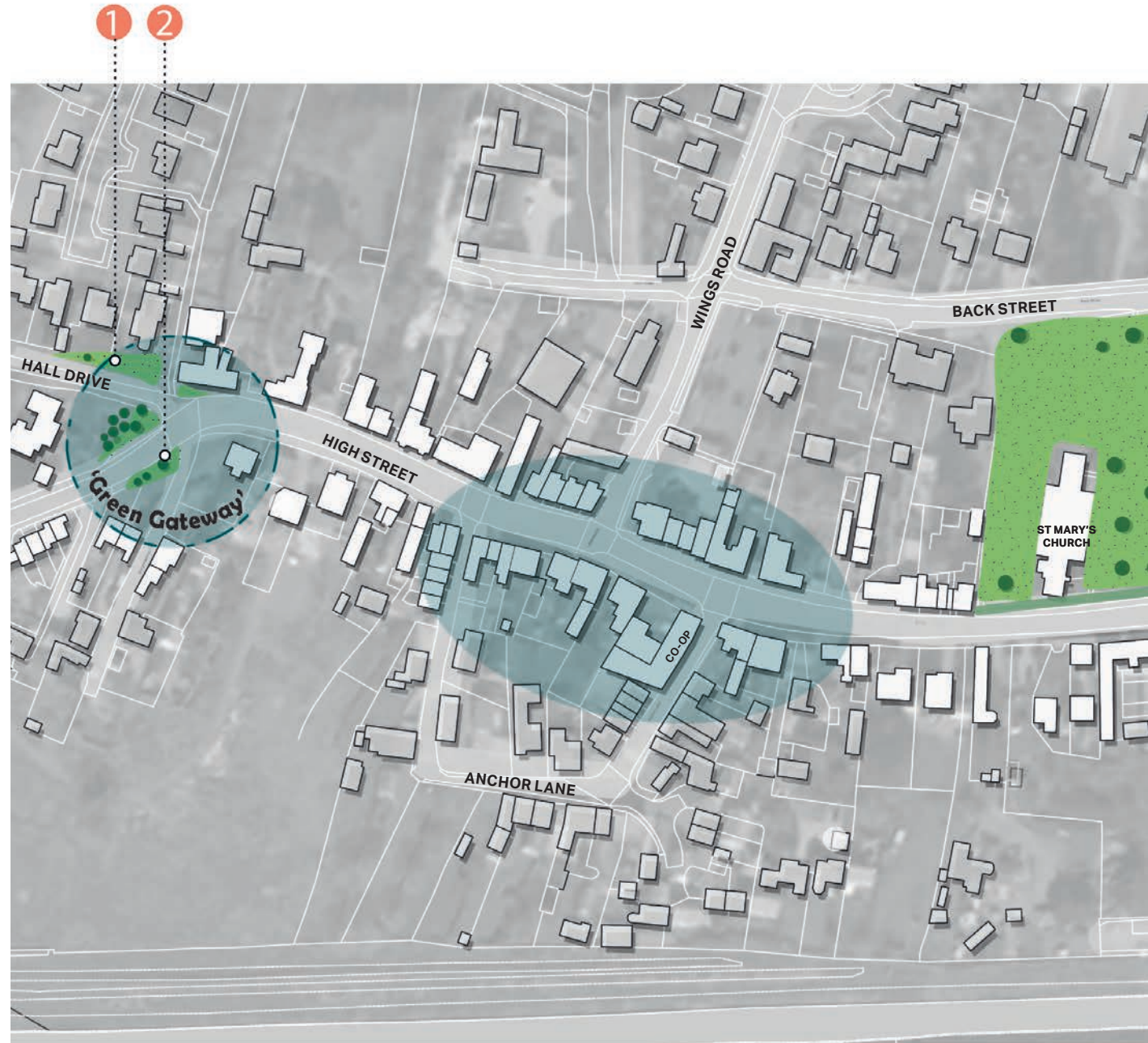


## 2.6 Greenspace analysis: Considerations

The following considerations are focused on greenspace. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 13 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events.

### Considerations

- 1 Publicly accessible greenspaces with minimal management contributes little to the character to the High Street
- 2 Degraded grass verges offer little environmental benefit and amenity value
- 3 Greenspace adjacent to War Memorial (Grade II Listed) is divided by parking and vehicular access arrangements. Large areas of grass offers little seasonal interest
- 4 Greenspace in front of Lakenheath Community Centre is disconnected from the street by level changes, shrub planting and metal boundary railings





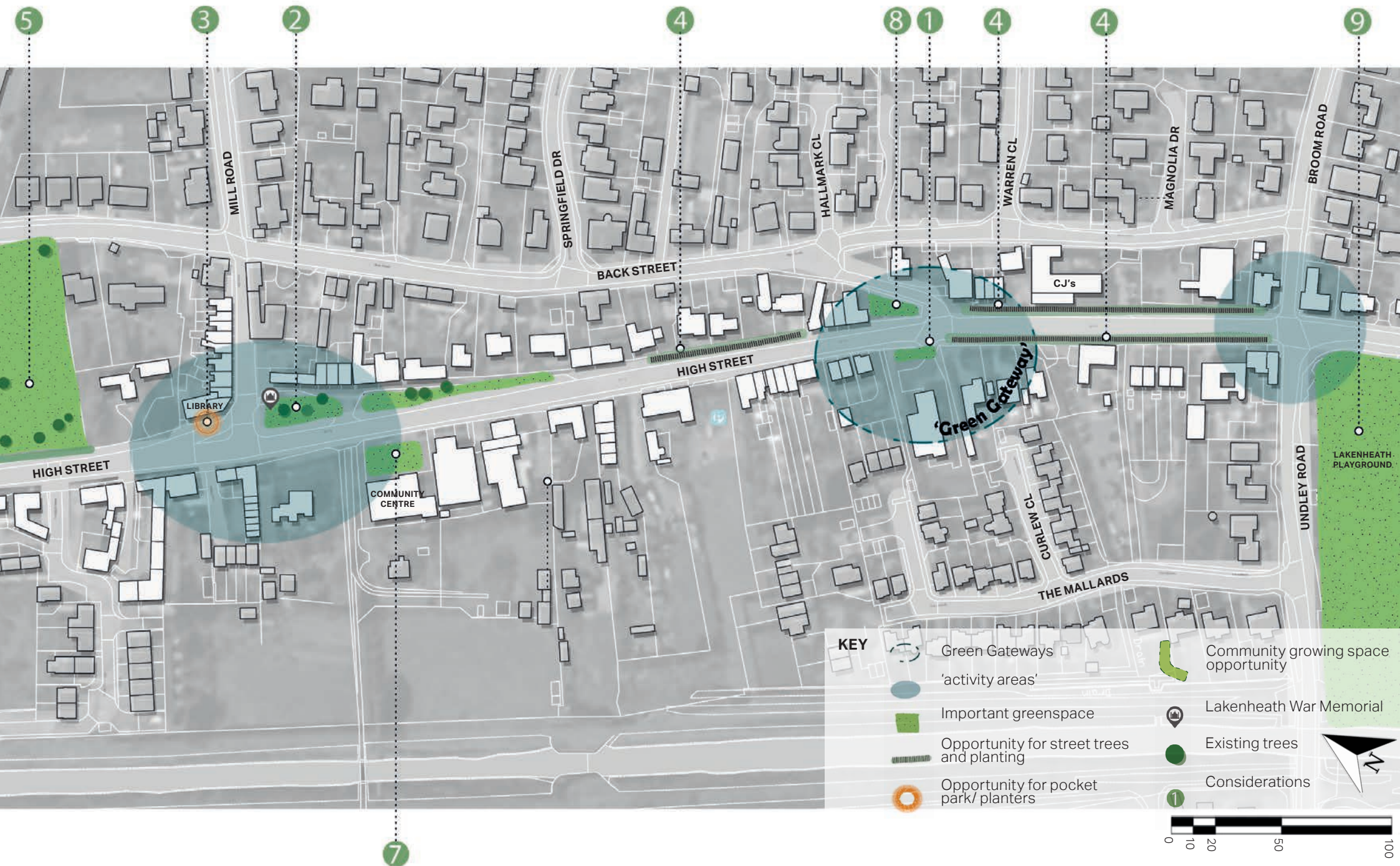
## 2.7 Greenspace analysis: Opportunities

The following opportunities are focused on greenspace. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 14 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events. Some of the opportunities are more achievable than others, these are translated into key interventions in section 4.

### Opportunities

- 1 Create North and South Green Gateways, maximising the amenity and environmental value of grass verges, providing welcoming approaches to the High Street
- 2 Create opportunities for pedestrians to sit and dwell within greenspace
- 3 Opportunity for pocket parks or planting to replace large areas of hardstanding, with a focus on planters as an early intervention
- 4 Opportunity to establish a Green Infrastructure network along the street with street trees and planters
- 5 The greenspace surrounding Church of St Mary (Grade I Listed) is an asset that to be protected and enhanced
- 6 An opportunity for community led edible growing space
- 7 Greenspace in front of the Lakenheath Community Centre could become an activated space facilitating pop-up events
- 8 Lakenheath village sign and associated greenspace provides a focal point, which should be celebrated with street trees and planting in the surrounding area
- 9 Lakenheath Village Playground provides an important asset for the village which should be promoted with user friendly access from the High Street.



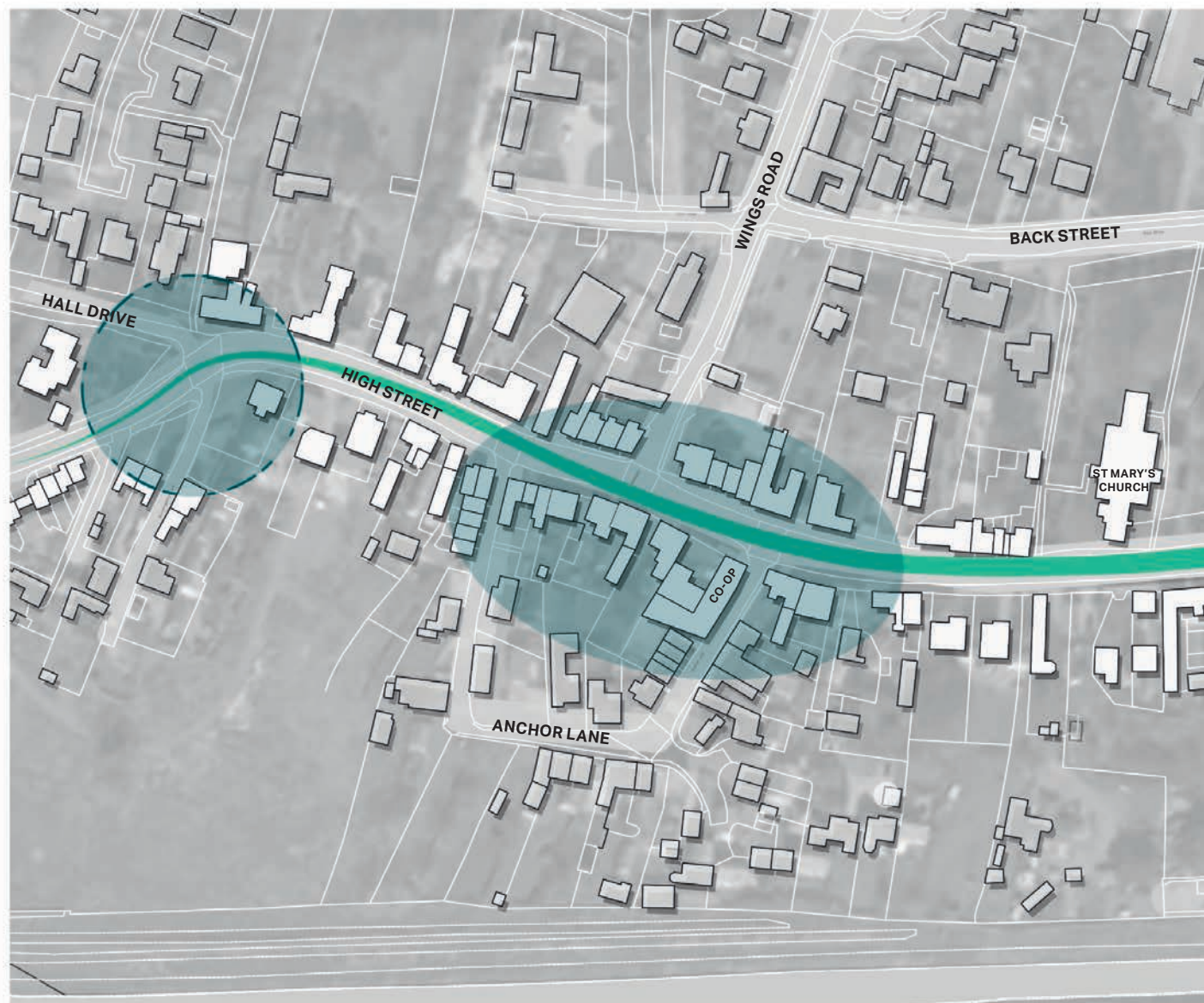


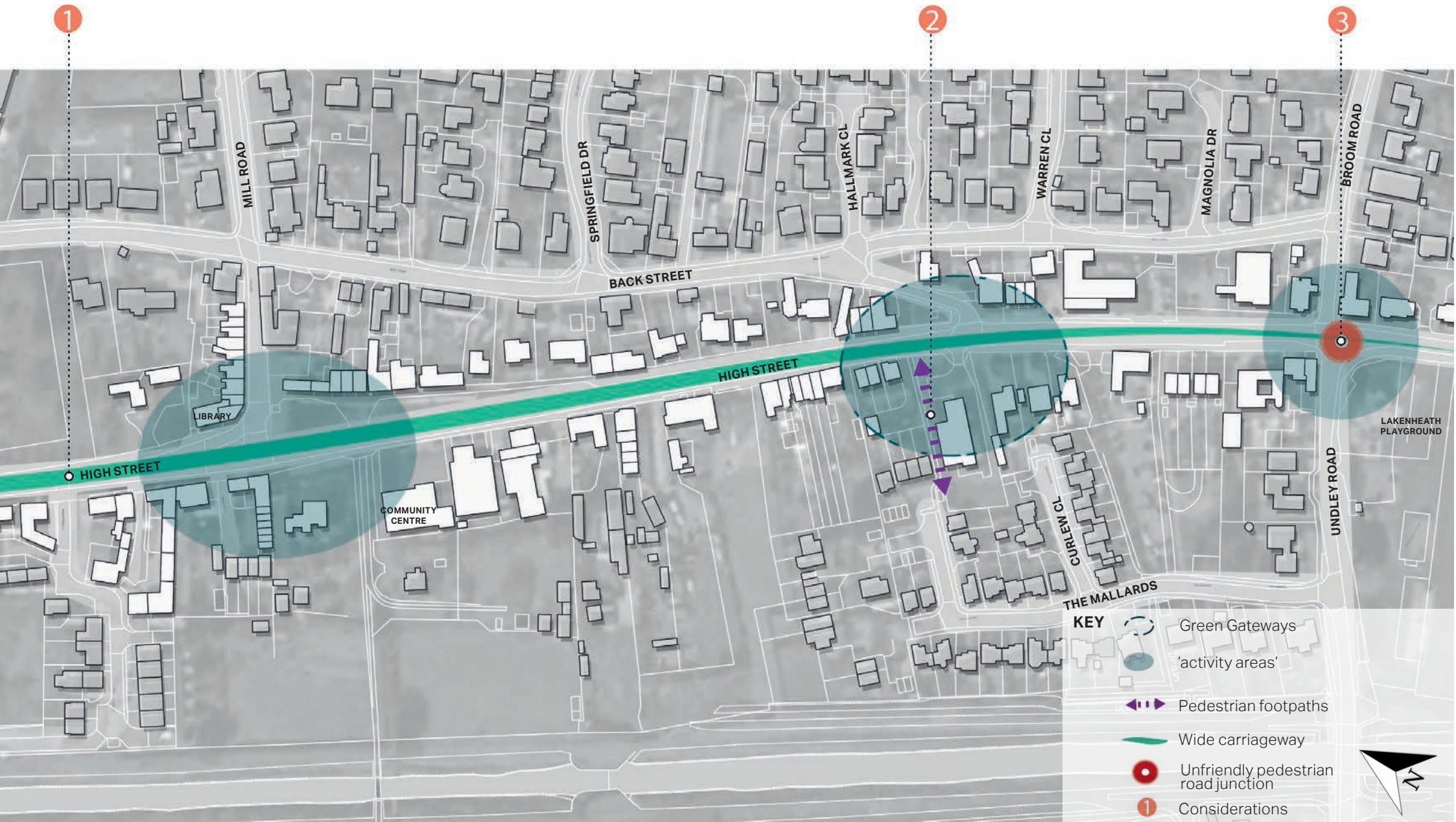
## 2.8 Connectivity analysis: Considerations

The following considerations are focused on connectivity. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 15 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events.

### Considerations

- 1 Wide highway and dominance of vehicles (moving and parked) restricts pedestrian movement especially when crossing the street
- 2 Narrow and dark pedestrian link to western residential areas is uninviting and underused
- 3 Potentially dangerous highway junction with no formal pedestrian crossing points disconnects Lakenheath Village Playground from the High Street



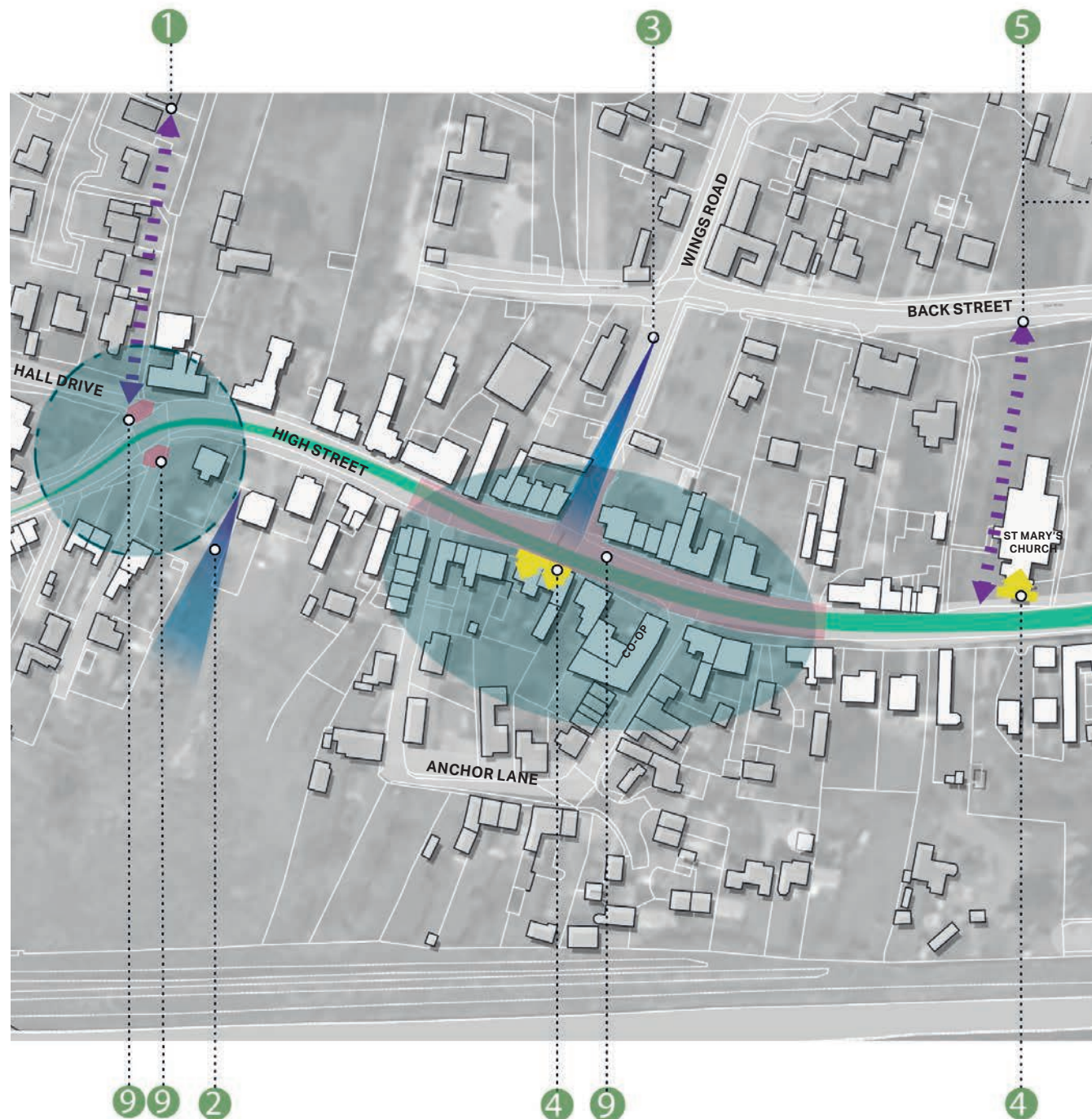


## 2.9 Connectivity analysis: Opportunities

The following opportunities are focused on connectivity. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 16 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events. Some of the opportunities are more achievable than others, these are translated into key interventions in section 4.

### Opportunities

- 1 Important pedestrian network connects eastern residential areas, which should be promoted with signage and lighting
- 2 Important view west to the surrounding countryside visually connects the High Street to the wider landscape and should be protected
- 3 Framed view of the eastern approach to the High Street should be enhanced
- 4 Celebrate landmark features, including 42 High Street (Grade II listed), Church of St Mary (Grade I listed) and War Memorial (Grade II listed), to act as visual reference points along the High Street
- 5 Important pedestrian links through the Church of St Mary churchyard should be enhanced with clear wayfinding
- 6 'Hidden' public footpath leading west to countryside could be better connected to the High Street with clear wayfinding
- 7 Unwelcoming pedestrian footpath could be enhanced to strengthen connections to southwestern residential areas from the High Street
- 8 Opportunity to reduce the width of the road carriageway and create a network of pedestrian and cycle links
- 9 Opportunity to create areas with a change in surface material, which promotes pedestrian connectivity across the High Street



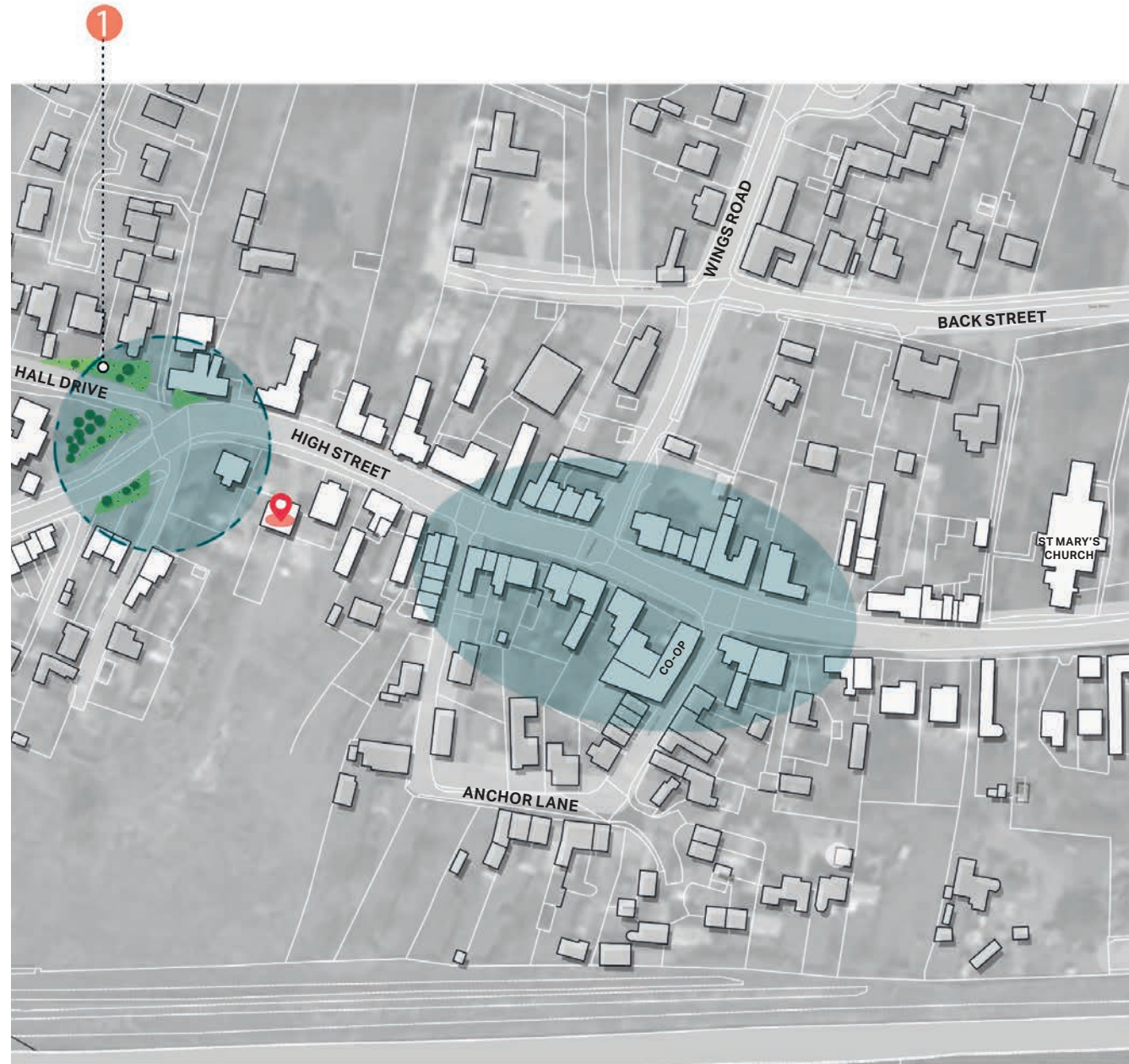


## 2.10 Sense of community analysis: Considerations

The following considerations are focused on sense of community. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 17 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events.

### Considerations

- ① The High Street is very functional, lacking interactive features, 'play on the way' initiatives and places to sit, that promote community inclusion and interaction
- ② The space outside the Lakenheath Library and newsagents contributes little to the character and amenity of the public realm
- ③ Lakenheath Community Centre and adjacent Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall needs repair and is underused, with few regular community events or one-off private functions
- ④ Grassed area to the front of Lakenheath Community Centre is disconnected from the street by level changes, shrub planting and metal boundary railings



**Figure 17:** Plan to illustrate considerations concerning the sense of community in Lakenheath High Street



## 2.11 Sense of community analysis: Opportunities

The following opportunities are focused on sense of community. They are illustrated on the analysis plan in figure 18 and were identified through stakeholder engagement and public consultation events. Some of the opportunities are more achievable than others, these are translated into key interventions in section 4.

### Opportunities

- 1 Introduce seating and interactive features along the High Street, such as stepping stones and balance beams, that encourage people to stop and interact
- 2 Important community assets, such as Tina's Country Kitchen, Lakenheath Library and CJ's Sandwich Bar should be maintained and enhanced, through introduction of spill out spaces to surrounding public realm
- 3 An opportunity for a community art installation or seating
- 4 An opportunity for community led edible growing space
- 5 An opportunity for the Lakenheath Community Centre and surrounding outdoor space to become an activity hub, through interactive features, flexible furniture facilitating pop-up events
- 6 Opportunity to involve the community with street planting and maintenance, to create a sense of ownership
- 7 A series of 'activity areas' along the High Street should combine to create a thriving village centre







**High Street, Lakenheath  
Neighbourhood Masterplan**

03

### 3. High Street, Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan

This section explores appropriate design solutions for Lakenheath High Street, informed by the considerations and opportunities identified in section 2. It includes design solutions at a strategic site-wide level. These design interventions are grouped into the four themes established in the analysis section.

Precedent studies have been used to illustrate the successful application of the suggested design interventions and promote best practice.

The ideas in the report can be used as a basis for further engagement with the community. They do not in themselves constitute part of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is hoped that they will stimulate broader discussion about how the area can be improved for the benefit of all. The suggested

masterplan proposals are not detailed design and need to be worked up in consultation with Suffolk County Council Highways Department and statutory stakeholders where appropriate.

### 3.1 High Street, Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan

The following possible interventions have been identified and illustrated on figure 19:

1. Create a 20mph zone along the High Street
2. Create a series of community hubs that encourage interaction and socialisation
3. Greening of the High Street, with planters and pocket parks. Focus should be on street planters as an early intervention with street trees being a long-term aspiration.
4. Improve connections between the wider village and the High Street, by enhancing current pedestrian links and connecting them to the High Street
5. Create areas of a single surface material (carriageway and footpaths) at key 'activity areas', to prioritise pedestrians and reduce dominance of vehicles
6. Narrow the carriageway to encourage reduced traffic speeds
7. Create spill out areas in large areas of pavement, to activate shop frontages and promote interaction
8. Discourage ad hoc, street parking, with trees and planting to define parking spaces at appropriate locations along the High Street
9. Enhance existing greenspace to encourage community engagement with features that promote sitting and interacting, such as benches and 'play on the way' initiatives
10. Strengthen connections between the Lakenheath Village Playground and the High Street, by creating an area at the junction that has a change in surface material, pedestrian crossing points and introducing planters



**Figure 19:** The High Street Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan



# KEY



Areas of a single surface -  
carriageway and footpaths



Proposed street trees and /or  
planters



Designated parking bays  
along the High Street



Designated parking bays at a 45  
degree angle



Pedestrian crossing



## 3.2 Traffic

Streets that are safe and functioning well are crucial to the success of a place – Lakenheath is no different. A common aspect throughout the High Street is the dominance of speeding traffic including HGVs and farm equipment as well as cars. This, coupled with long sections of ad hoc on street parking, creates a confused and unsympathetic pedestrian experience to the High Street. A few key design interventions, successfully applied, could help resolve these issues.

### Aspirational design interventions:

- Create a self enforcing 20mph zone through the High Street from the intersection at Hall Drive and Dumpling Bridge Lane (north) to the intersection at Back Street, near the village sign (south)
- To prioritise pedestrian movement across the High Street within the key 'activity areas', differentiate the surface material from the rest of the highway.
- Narrow the carriageway to discourage high traffic speeds
- Discourage ad hoc, on street parking with intermittent street planting, including trees, and designated parking spaces at intervals along the street
- Promote the use of off street parking by implementing wayfinding strategies to existing public and private car parks near the High Street



**Long Melford, Suffolk**

**Designated parking bays** along the street encourages vehicles to slow down, as a result of the narrow carriageway and the possibility of maneuvering cars and pedestrian movement.

Planting helps to define parking bays, discouraging ad hoc parking, whilst softening expanses of hard surfaces within the streetscape.



## Historic Core, Bury St Edmunds

The **change in surface material** in certain areas of the street forces people to become more aware and respectful of other road users and encourages vehicles to slow down.



### KEY

- Change in surface material
- Designated parking bays
- Pedestrian crossing points
- Verges to narrow the carriageway
- Designated parking bays, see **CS1**
- Change in surface material in key 'activity areas', to increase pedestrian priority, see **CS2**

**Figure 20:** The High Street Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan, highlighting key interventions for issues concerning traffic

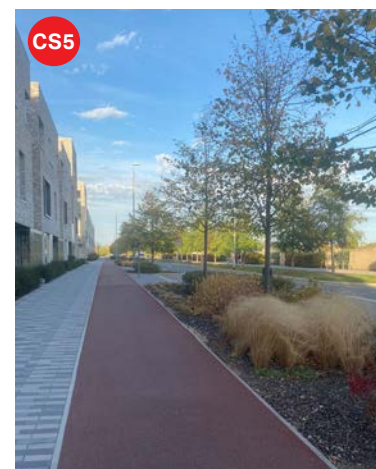


### 3.3 Greenspace

Existing greenspaces along or near the High Street are an important asset. They are however generally isolated, with limited connection or function resulting in a series of underused spaces that offer little to the streetscape or wider settlement. With considered design interventions, these spaces provide the opportunity to contribute to a vibrant community focussed High Street.

#### Aspirational design interventions:

- Introduction of street trees and planters / rain gardens along the High Street will strengthen green links, visually and environmentally, to existing greenspaces and neighbouring areas, whilst reducing the risk of surface water flooding. There should initially be a focus on planters as an early intervention, with street trees being a long-term aspiration.
- Group pockets of greenspace within 'activity areas' by opening up views and pedestrian access from the High Street
- Create a function to each greenspace with elements that encourage stopping and interaction, such as seating, wildflowers and 'play on the way' initiatives
- Promote biodiversity along the High Street with the use of native planting and wildflowers wherever practical, selected with the aim of avoiding onerous maintenance and watering schedules
- Existing amenity assists such as Lakenheath Village Playground and playing fields should be prominent and easily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists



**Eddington, Cambridge**

**Trees and planting** along a street softens areas of hard surface and provides ecological benefits, whilst connecting fragmented greenspaces.

Planting can also provide distinction and character to different 'activity areas'.

**Eddington, Cambridge**



← Trumpington, Cambridge

**'Play on the way'** initiatives add function to a greenspace, encouraging its use. Whilst these spaces don't have to be large they can provide an important contribution to the vitality of a street, promoting healthy lifestyles and cultures.

Mill Road, Cambridge →

Carefully positioned seating within a greenspace or **pocket park** encourages people to meet, sit and enjoy the outside.

Trees create areas of shade and shelter, allowing people to dwell for longer.



#### KEY

-  Strengthen the green links into and through the High Street
-  Street trees and planting along the street, centred around the 'activity areas', see **CS5** and **CS6**
-  'Play on the way' initiatives within the greenspace, see **CS7**
-  Provide places to sit within the greenspace / pocket park, see **CS8**

**Figure 21:** The High Street Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan, highlighting key interventions for issues concerning greenspace



### 3.4 Connectivity

The High Street is integral to Lakenheath, with many of its commercial assets (shops/restaurants/garages) and community facilities (community centre, library, playground) on or near it. Whilst there is a strong north / south connection along the High Street, albeit focussed on vehicular movement, the pedestrian and cycle connections to adjoining residential areas and countryside is either limited or not prominent. A series of design interventions can help with promoting these sustainable connections (pedestrians / cyclists) which is vital for the long-term success and vibrancy of the High Street.

#### Aspirational design interventions:

- Improve sustainable connections between the wider village, surrounding countryside and the High Street with prominent and legible wayfinding, street lighting and, where practical, wider level surfacing
- Create a pedestrian and cycle route along the High Street, either separated or part of a shared surface arrangement, strengthening connections between the 'activity areas'
- Enhance existing framed views to and from the High Street, as well as to the surrounding countryside with planting, art installations or signage reflecting the identity and character of Lakenheath
- Ensure access points from the High Street to car parks (private / public), drives and loading bays are kept clear

Creative **wayfinding and signage** can often contribute to the character and identity of place whilst functioning as an item of furniture or visual aid.



**Histon Road, Recreational Ground,  
Cambridge**





◀ **Eddington, Cambridge**

Pedestrian and cyclist movement can be successfully integrated into the street through planting, paving and **designated routes** that prioritise a certain mode of transport.

**High Street, Wokingham** ▶

Creating a safe **shared space** for pedestrians and cyclists to move through the street simultaneously, promotes a more connected and animated High Street. The lack of definition also assists with slowing all modes of transport.



- KEY**
- ➔ Key points of connectivity through the High Street, enhanced by the design
  - ➔ Key entrance/ exit points to the High Street

**Figure 22:** The High Street Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan, highlighting key interventions for issues concerning connectivity



### 3.5 Sense of community

What creates a strong sense of community is hard to define, each place with its own contributing or detracting elements. It can, however, be one of the main reasons people want to live, work and visit (and revisit) a place. The lack of features along the High Street that fosters this sense of community, such as; a prominent and well used community centre, incidental pocket parks and flexible spill out spaces is evident. These can be addressed by a series of design interventions in the emerging Neighbourhood Masterplan.

#### Aspirational design interventions:

- Create spill out spaces next to shop fronts with flexible seating and planting to energise the streetscape and encourage community interaction
- Refurbish the Lakenheath Community Centre and the adjacent Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall buildings and reimagine the associated greenspace by removing boundary features along the High Street and creating an area for pop-up community events with inclusive access points and flexible seating for all user groups
- Maximise the function of existing incidental spaces along the High Street with 'play on the way' features or pocket parks with seating, that promote stopping, community engagement and interaction
- Encourage community involvement in the design and maintenance of the interventions and greenspaces to instill a sense of ownership
- Promote a series of connected 'activity areas' along the High Street that combine to create an thriving village centre



Creating flexible space at Market Place, Wokingham that encourages community activity, facilitates pop-up events and encourages community integration is important.

Spaces should be designed to promote stopping and dwelling, in order to create informal opportunities for interaction.

◀ **Market Place, Wokingham**

**Accordia,  
Cambridge**



Play on the way' initiatives, with seating to encourage people to meet and play.





Community growing projects on street edges, encourages community engagement and activity, in turn instilling community ownership and value for the space.

Long Melford, Suffolk

Spill out spaces along the path activate street edges and encourage interaction and socialisation, as well as increasing public surveillance.



#### KEY

- Flexible space allowing for pop-up events, see [CS9](#)
- 'Play on the way' initiatives, which encourage stopping and interaction, see [CS10](#)
- Opportunity for community led growing project, see [CS11](#)
- Spill out spaces outside cafes and shops, see [CS12](#)

**Figure 23:** The High Street Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan, highlighting key interventions for issues concerning community



**High Street 'Activity Areas'**

**04**

## 4. High Street 'Activity Areas'

Following site-wide strategies and the masterplan, considerations and opportunities have been made at the 'activity area' scale, to provide a finer grained detail of analysis. Viable opportunities from this analysis are translated into possible design interventions. These interventions are illustrated within this chapter, through aspirational plans and sketches.

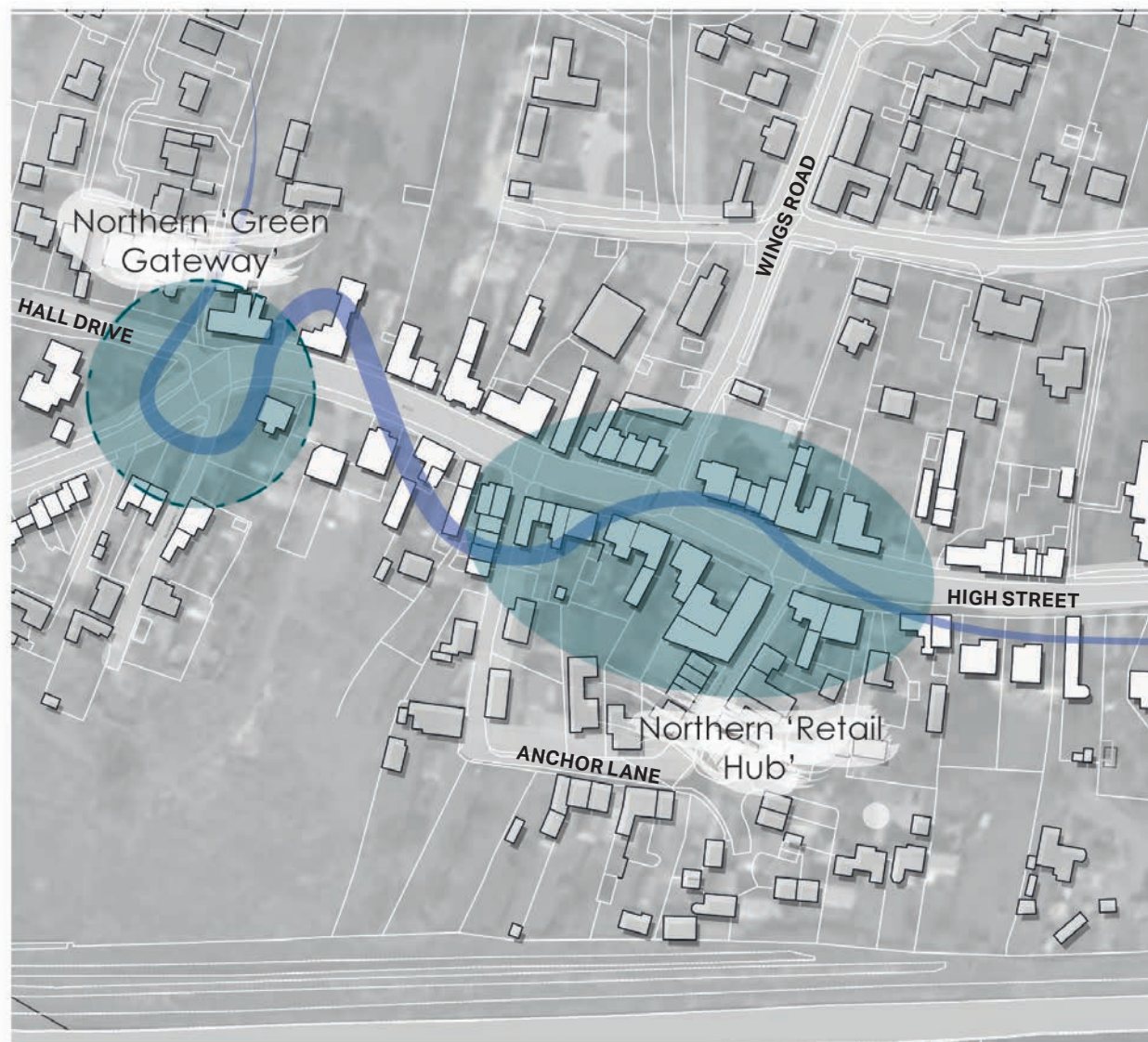
As with the site-wide interventions, it must be noted that whilst the interventions outlined in this chapter are influenced by industry best practice, they are not detailed design and need to be worked up in consultation with Suffolk County Council Highways Department and statutory stakeholders where appropriate.

## 4.1 'Activity Areas'

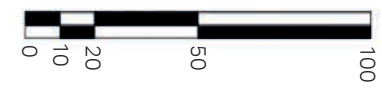
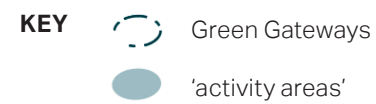
Five High Street 'activity areas' have been identified as opportune locations to promote formal and informal community centered activities. Each 'activity area' has its own character and distinctive features.

These 'activity areas' are illustrated in figure 24:

1. Northern 'Green Gateway'
2. Northern 'Retail Hub'
3. Central 'Community Hub'
4. Southern 'Green Gateway'
5. Playground Junction



**Figure 24:** A plan illustrating the location of the High Street 'activity areas'



# 1

## Northern 'Green Gateway'

### Considerations:

1. Potentially dangerous and fast northern approach to the High Street
2. Uninviting and unkempt grass verges that contribute little to the public realm or biodiversity
3. Disconnected and undervalued greenspaces

### Opportunities:

1. Opportunity to unify the existing greenspaces to create a 'Green Gateway' to the High Street, with subtle traffic calming measures that encourage slower traffic speeds
2. Use the 'Green Gateway' to mark the northern start of a 20mph zone
3. Introduce wildflower verges to promote biodiversity and contribute to the character of the 'Green Gateway'
4. Introduce features such as seating and 'play on the way' initiatives, that encourage people to stop and dwell



**Figure 25 :** Fast corner into the High Street with no clear place for pedestrians to cross



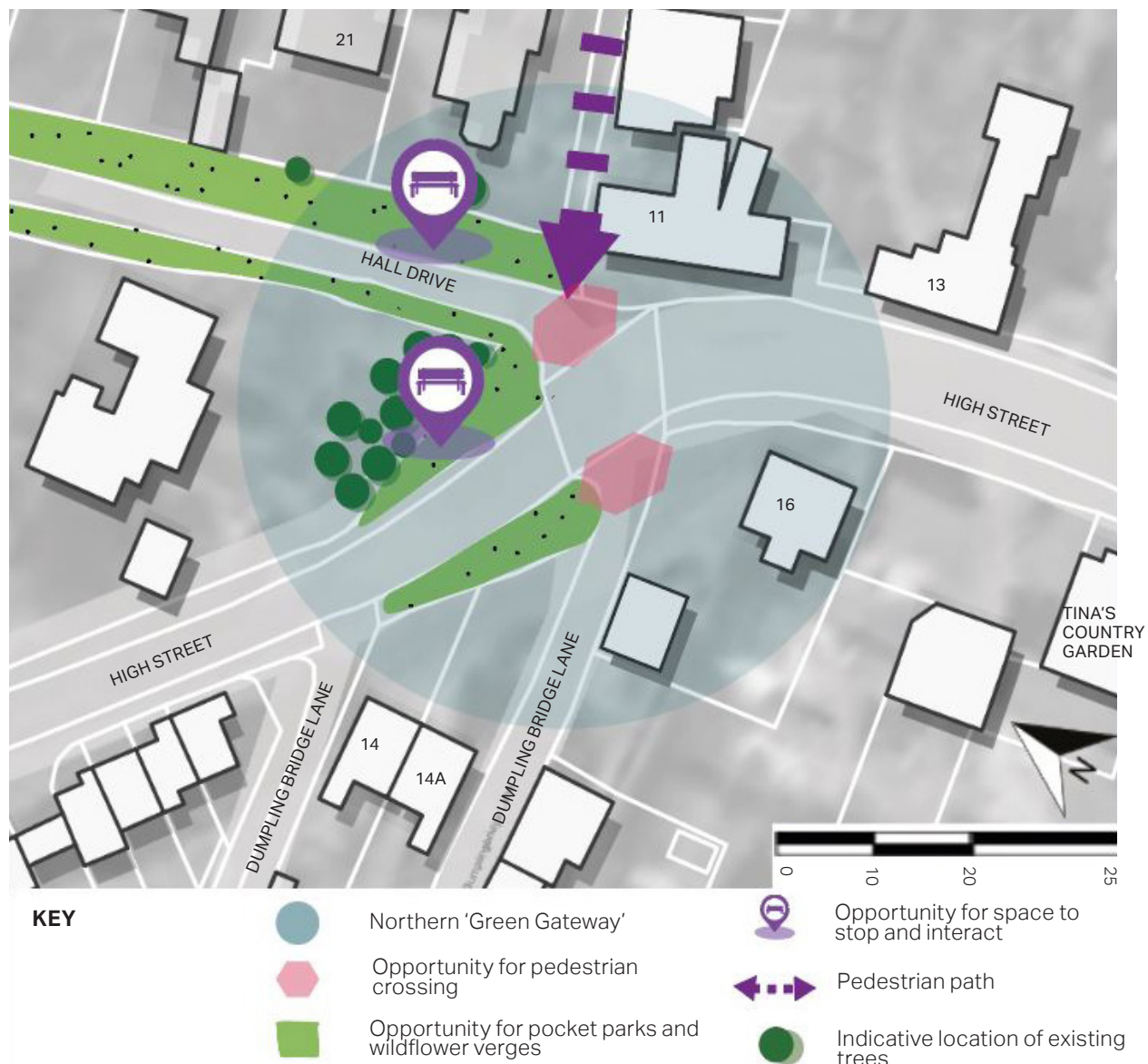
**Figure 26 :** Undermanaged grass verges contribute little to the character of the northern approach of the High Street



**Figure 27:** Unused greenspace lacking visual interest and interactive features e.g. places to stop and sit



**Figure 28:** Important footpath connection to eastern residential areas narrow and uninviting



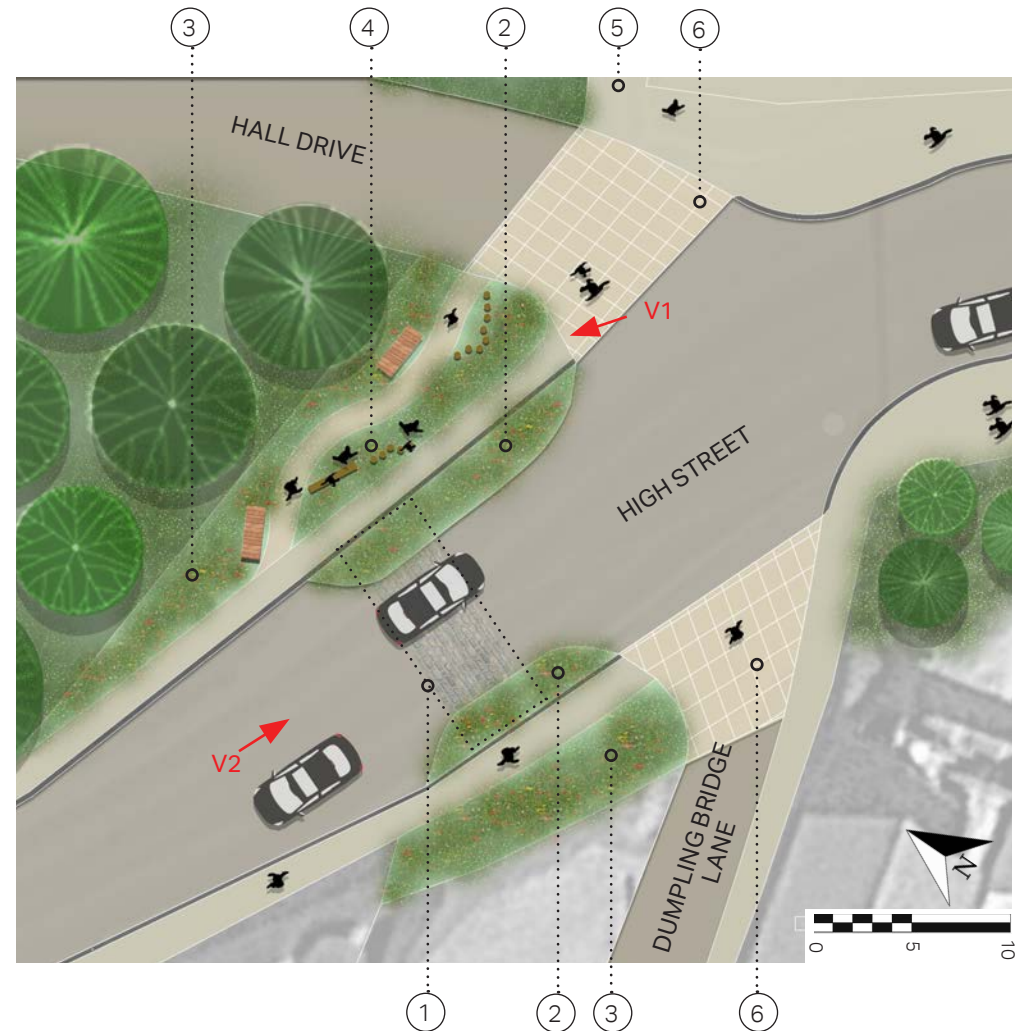
**Figure 29:** A plan illustrating the considerations and opportunities in 'activity area' 1, Northern 'Green Gateway'.

# 1

## Northern 'Green Gateway'

Possible aspirational interventions:

1. The combined effect of green verges, pocket park and a village sign celebrates the entrance to the 'Green Gateway' of the High Street. At this point a cobbled 'rumble strip' will define the start of the 20mph zone.
2. Carriageway width reduced with rain garden 'build-outs' to encourage slower and cautious driving whilst functioning as a sustainable drainage solution to surface water run-off
3. Existing grass verges extended and replaced with wildflower planting to promote biodiversity and increase the amenity value of the greenspaces
4. Existing grassed verge to be an informal pocket park, with benches and 'play on the way' initiatives, such as stepping-stones and balance beams to promote community interaction and vitality to the streetscape
5. Existing footpath leading to a neighbouring residential area signposted with artist wayfinding installation visible from the High Street - style to match wider wayfinding strategy
6. Pedestrian crossing points with a change in surface material to adjacent carriageway give pedestrians priority over crossing vehicles



**Figure 30:** Plan of proposed interventions within the Northern 'Green Gateway'



**Figure 31:** Illustrative view of pocket park within the Northern 'Green Gateway', with wildflowers and 'play on the way' initiatives as well as seating to encourage community interaction.



**Figure 32:** Illustrative view of wildflower verges along the road, creating a 'Green Gateway' to the High Street

## 2

### Northern 'Retail Hub'

#### Considerations:

1. Potentially dangerous pedestrian crossing in close proximity with Wings Road junction
2. Wide highway encourages high speed traffic, including HGVs and farm equipment
3. Ad hoc parking on both sides of the High Street creates a visually cluttered and congested space
4. Wide underused pavements with minimal features that reflect the character of Lakenheath
5. Co-op HGV loading bay blocks the pathway regularly when in use
6. Nearby public and private car parks are underused putting pressure on the on street parking capacity

#### Opportunities:

1. Large areas of pavement outside shop fronts creates opportunity for spill out spaces or pocket parks for people to stop and gather
2. Opportunity to reduce the highway width and strengthen the Green Infrastructure network with planting between on street parking spaces
3. Opportunity to create areas that have a change in surface material, to reduce the dominance of vehicles and reprioritise pedestrian movement
4. Distinctive facades promote unique character of Lakenheath and should be enhanced
5. Promote existing car parks with clear wayfinding and signage and provide a limited amount of defined on street parking bays.



**Figure 33:** Potentially dangerous pedestrian crossing on the High Street



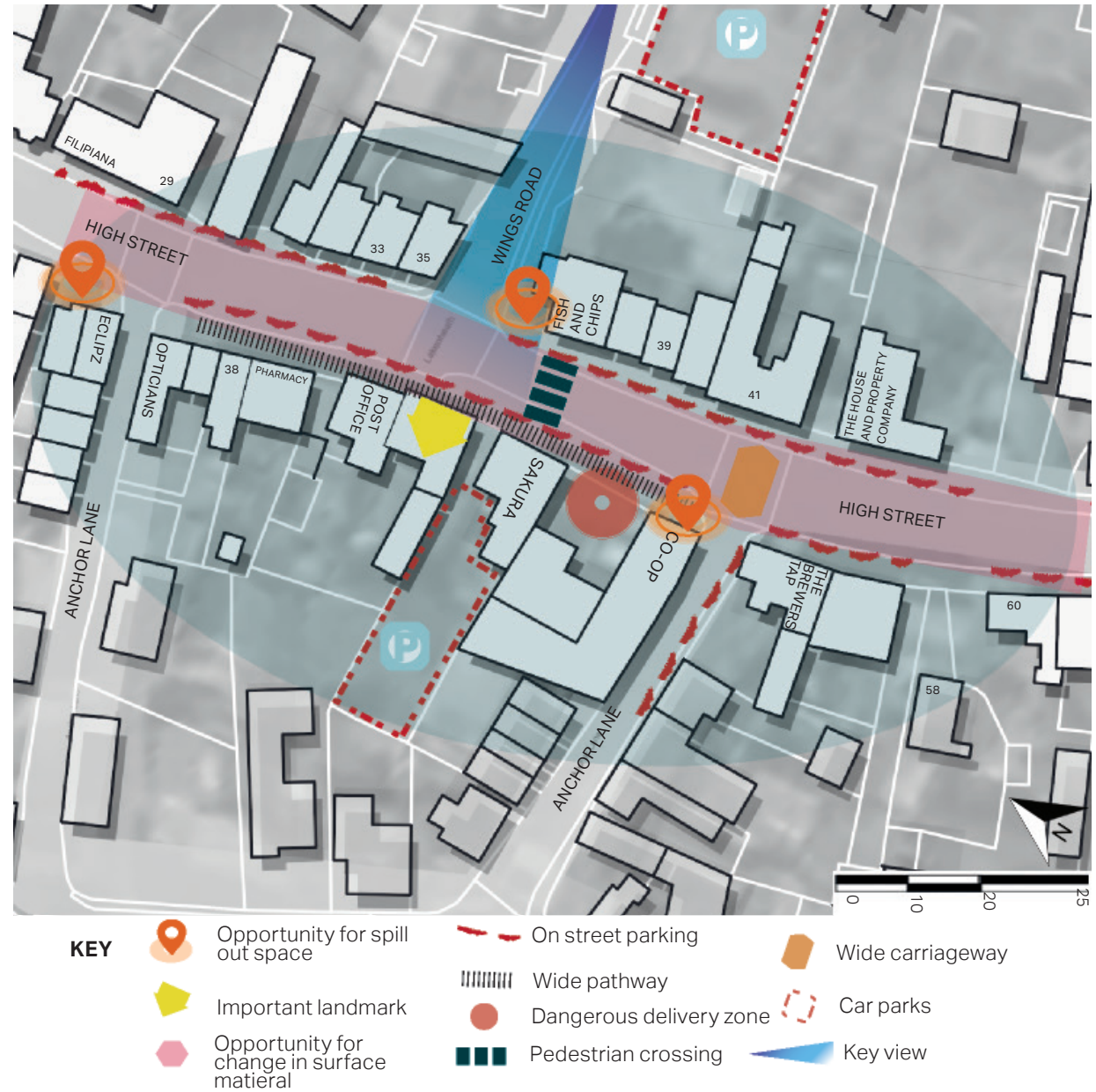
**Figure 34:** Underused paved area provides an opportunity for spill out space or pocket park



**Figure 35:** Ad hoc parking restricts pedestrian movement along and across the High Street



**Figure 36:** Distinctive facades of landmark building (42, High Steet: Grade II listed) acts and an important visual reference point along the High Street



**Figure 37:** A plan illustrating the considerations and opportunities in 'activity area' 2, Northern 'Retail Hub'.

# 2

## Northern 'Retail Hub'

### Possible aspirational interventions:

1. A change in surface material throughout the extent of the 'activity area' to denote a change of character and a priority for pedestrian movement. Vehicular approaches to be cobbled defining edges of footpaths, parking and loading bays.
2. Carriageway width reduced to discourage speeding traffic whilst facilitating HGV and farm vehicle movement
3. Increased width of footpaths allows for the creation of pocket parks or spill out spaces outside the Co-op and cafes, animating the streetscape and promoting community interaction. These interventions will accomodate the operation and functioning of the co-op, ensuring access to the goods entrance.
4. Intermittent, designated parking spaces, at a 30 or 45 degree angle along the street, with street trees and planters with integrated rain garden solutions, to reduce ad hoc, on street parking and increase the surface

water drainage capacity. Focus is on planters as an early intervention, with street trees being a long- term aspiration.

5. Wayfinding to raise prominence of nearby car parking.



**Figure 38:** Plan of proposed interventions within the Northern 'Retail Hub'



V3

**Figure 39:** Illustrative view of Northern 'Retail Hub' with parking at a 30 degree angle and intermittent planting and street trees .



V4

**Figure 40:** Illustrative view of spill out space, to create active frontages and promote socialisation and community interaction

# 3

## Central 'Community Hub'

### Considerations:

1. Wide road encourages high speed traffic along the High Street
2. Ad hoc parking outside Lakenheath Library and Lakenheath Community Centre, creates a barrier between buildings and the street, limiting pedestrian movement and creating visual clutter
3. Lakenheath Community Centre is underused and visually detached from the street with a degraded greenspace in front
4. Areas of greenspace are undervalued and underused with little opportunity to stop and dwell

### Opportunities:

1. Mix of retail businesses and community facilities creates potential for an important area of activity along the High Street
2. Opportunity to connect the greenspaces to the High Street encouraging their community use
3. Opportunity to enhance the public footpath green link to the east
4. Opportunity to create community focused spill out spaces from surrounding buildings
5. Create designated parking spaces, with intermittent planting
6. Opportunity to create a flexible space for contemplation and reflection around the War Memorial (Grade II Listed).



**Figure 41** : Large area of low quality hardstanding does not reflect character of Lakenheath



**Figure 42** :Lakenheath Community Centre and associated greenspace is detached from the streetscape by railings, planting and ad hoc street parking



**Figure 43:** Space surrounding the War Memorial is often used for parking limiting it's visual presence on the High Street



**Figure 44:** Hidden green link to the east could be promoted and enhanced to encourage increased pedestrian use



**Figure 45:** A plan illustrating the considerations and opportunities in 'activity area' 3, Central 'Community Hub'.

# 3

## Central 'Community Hub'

Possible aspirational interventions:

1. Outside space to the front of Lakenheath Community Centre to be reconnected to the High Street by removing railings and shrubs along the northern boundary and creating accessible, car free, access to the street. Greenspace to include seating and provisions for pop-up community events.
2. Provide a function to existing grassed areas with new meandering footpaths, flexible seating, and interactive features, such as 'play on the way' initiatives
3. Reduce large area of hard surface and traffic congestion outside the library, by creating a spill out space, with planting and seating
4. Define and celebrate space around Lakenheath War Memorial with bespoke seating designed for individuals or larger, formal ceremonial events
5. A change in surface material throughout the 'Community Hub' using a similar approach to the Northern 'Retail Hub' to denote a change of character and pedestrian priority
6. Intermittent, designated parking spaces, at a 30

or 45 degree angle along the street, with street trees and planters to reduce ad hoc, on street parking and increase the surface water drainage capacity. Focus is on planters as an early intervention with street trees being a long-term aspiration.

7. Existing footpath leading to countryside signposted with artist wayfinding installation visible from the High Street - style to match wider wayfinding strategy.



Figure 46: Plan of proposed interventions within the Central 'Community Hub'



**Figure 47:** Illustrative view of spill out space in front of the library reducing large areas of existing hardstanding and animating the streetscape



**Figure 48:** Illustrative view of greenspace in front of Lakenheath Community Centre reconnected with the High Street and the greenspace opposite to create a community centred 'activity area'

# 4

## Southern 'Green Gateway'

### Considerations:

1. Wide pavement using low quality hard materials contributes little to the character of the High Street
2. Underused telephone exchange building, with uninviting boundary features and a blank bricked facade detracts to the streetscape
3. Wide road carriage encourages speeding traffic along the High Street

### Opportunities:

1. Opportunity for a 'Green Gateway' encouraging slower traffic speeds along the High Street
2. Lakenheath village sign creates a focal point that should be celebrated within the 'Green Gateway'
3. Opportunity for wildflower verges, with benches
4. Opportunity to enhance pedestrian links to residential areas to the west, promoting important connections to the High Street
5. Reducing the width of the street will create an opportunity for interactive features and Green Infrastructure, whilst reducing the dominance of the traffic
6. Change in surface material to promote pedestrian movement across the street



**Figure 49:** Underused telephone exchange building, with unattractive building frontage and boundary treatment is a detracting feature to the wider street



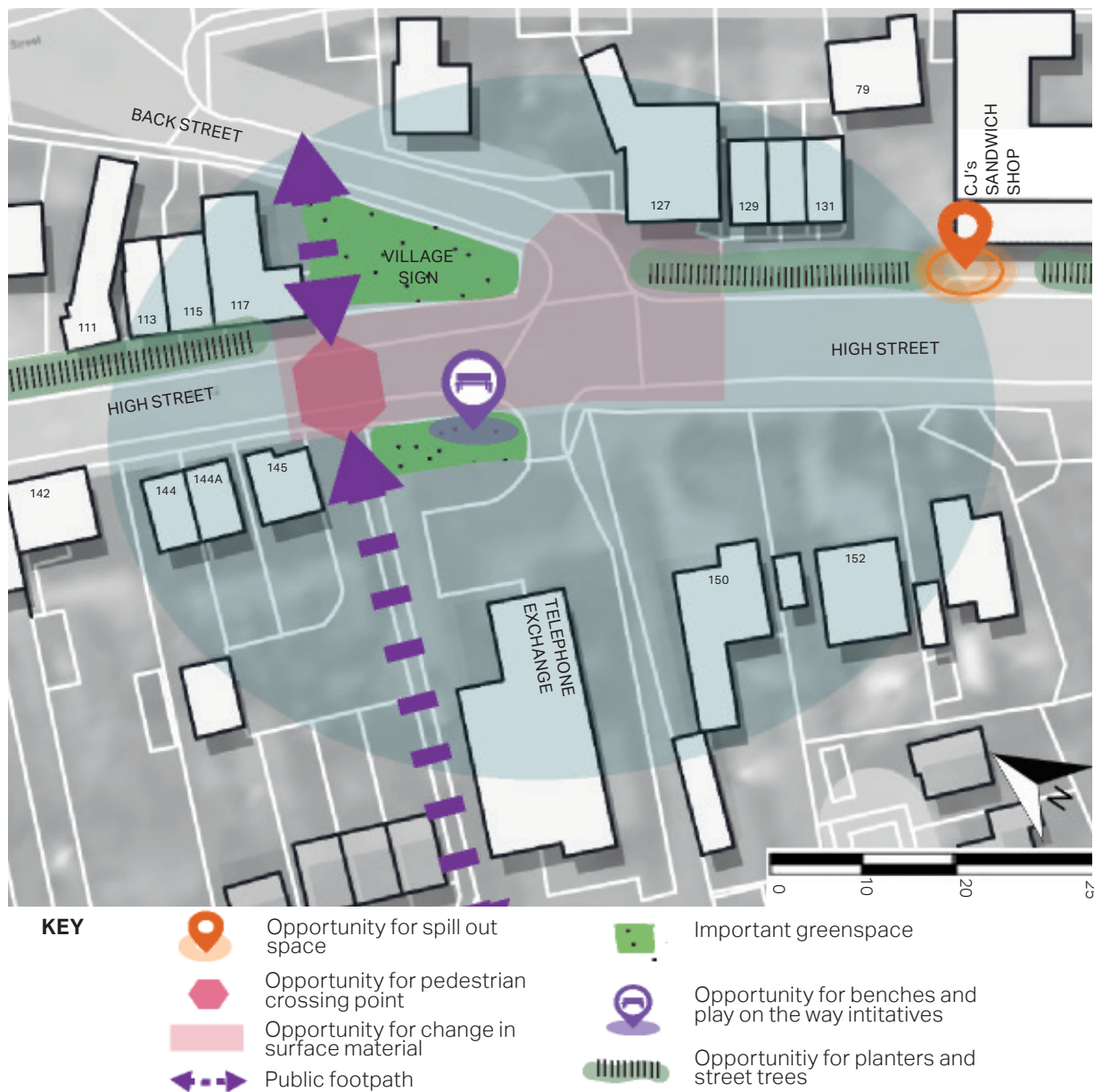
**Figure 50:** Low quality wide pathways contribute little to the public realm and encourage high speed traffic



**Figure 51:** Village sign creates a focal point to the southern 'Green Gateway'



**Figure 52:** Unwelcoming and therefore underused pedestrian link from residential areas to the High Street



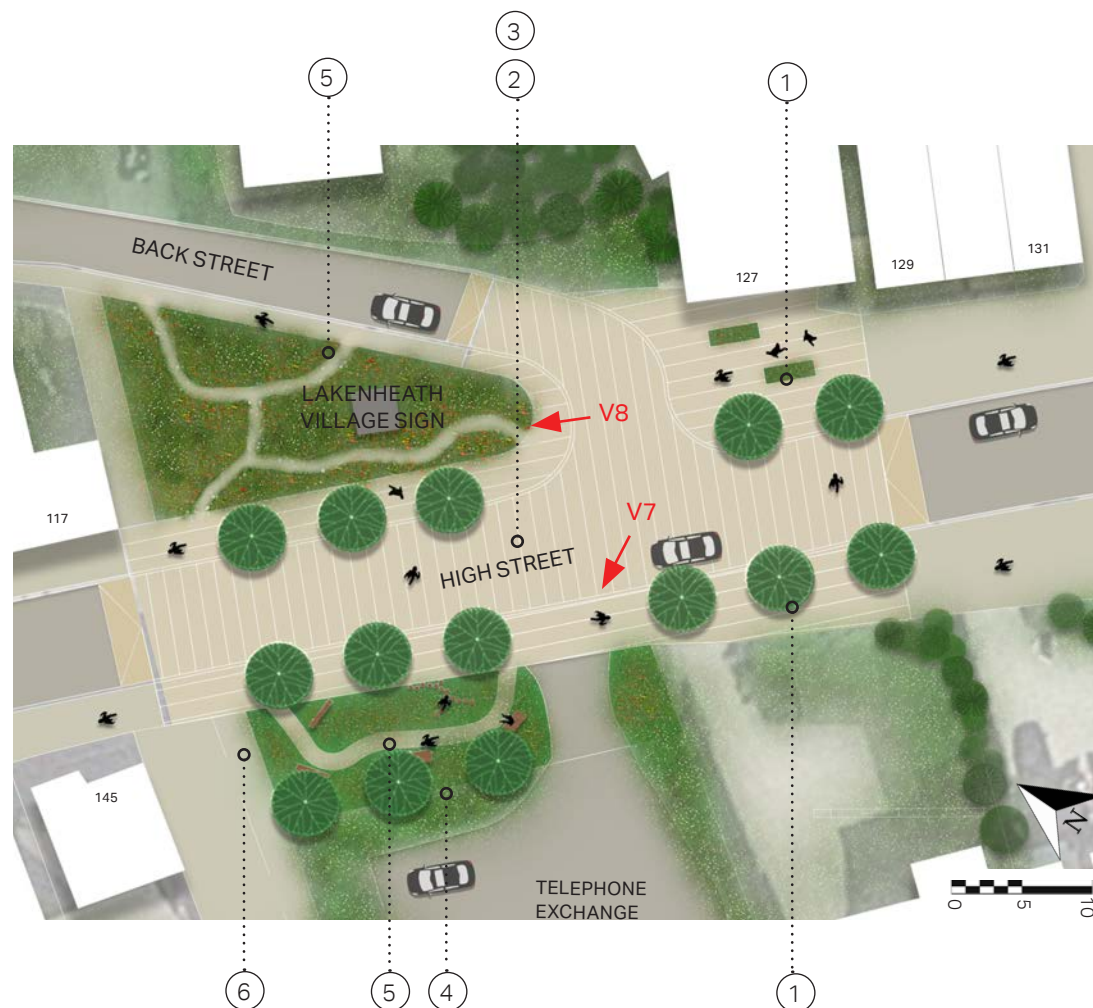
**Figure 53 :** A plan illustrating the key opportunities and considerations in 'activity area' 4, Southern 'Green Gateway'.

# 4

## Southern 'Green Gateway'

Possible aspirational interventions:

1. Visually combine existing greenspaces with a grid of trees and planters to create a Southern 'Green Gateway' into the High Street, centered around the existing village sign. Focus is on planters as an early intervention with street trees being a long-term aspiration.
2. Narrow carriageway to reduce the speed of traffic and create more space for pedestrians
3. A change in surface material throughout the Southern 'Green Gateway' using a similar approach to the Northern 'Retail Hub' to denote a change of character and 20mph speed, reduce the dominance of traffic and increase pedestrian priority
4. Remove or replace low quality uninviting boundary features in front of the telephone exchange building and soften blank building facade with climbing plants
5. Create pocket parks within greenspaces around village sign and in front of telephone exchange building with informal paths, seating and 'play on the way' initiatives
6. Signpost existing footpath leading to neighbouring residential area with artist wayfinding installation visible from the High Street - style to match wider wayfinding strategy



**Figure 54:** Plan of proposed interventions within the Southern 'Green Gateway'



**Figure 55:** Illustrative view of pocket park in front of the telephone exchange building with seating, street trees and 'play on the way' initiatives.



**Figure 56:** Image of the Village Sign in Spring to illustrate how planting can provide an inviting 'green gateway'

# 5

## Playground Junction

### Constraints:

1. Fast moving junction near the playground, prioritising vehicles with no designated pedestrian crossing points
2. Playground is an asset that is currently disconnected from the High Street by the nearby junction
3. Wide pathways with large areas of low quality hard surfaces contribute little to the public realm
4. Lack of Green Infrastructure along the High Street creates an unwelcoming approach to Lakenheath

### Opportunities:

1. The change of surface material at the junction will slow traffic, and a controlled pedestrian crossing will encourage the use of the playground
2. Opportunity to introduce a Green Infrastructure network into the streetscape, to narrow the highway and soften the large areas of hard surface



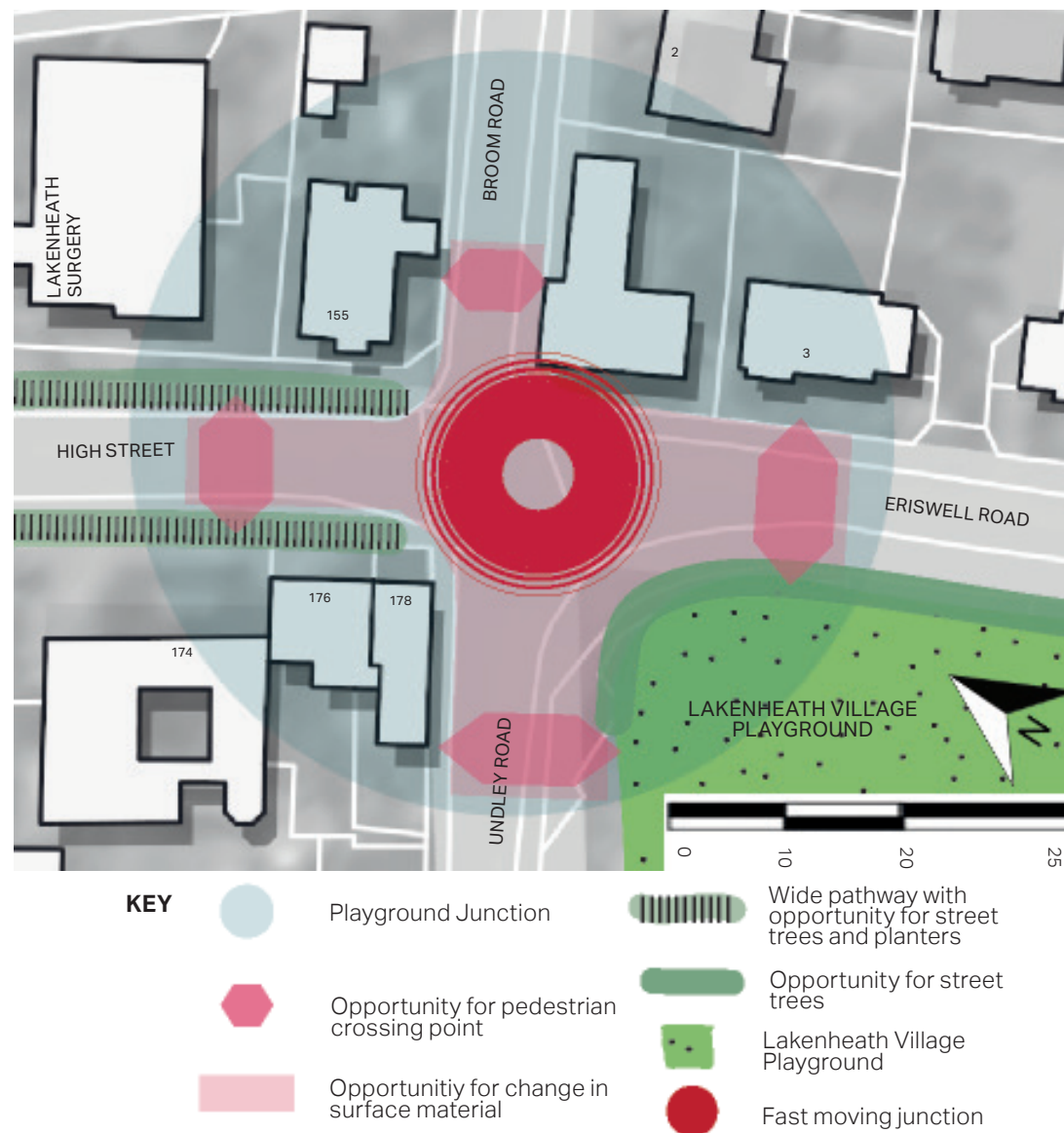
**Figure 57:** Fast moving junction at intersection of High Street, Eriswell Road, Broom Road and Undley Road, with no designated pedestrian crossing points



**Figure 58:** Playground is an asset that is currently disconnected from the High Street by a fast junction



**Figure 59:** Wide, low quality hard surface pathways contribute little to the public realm

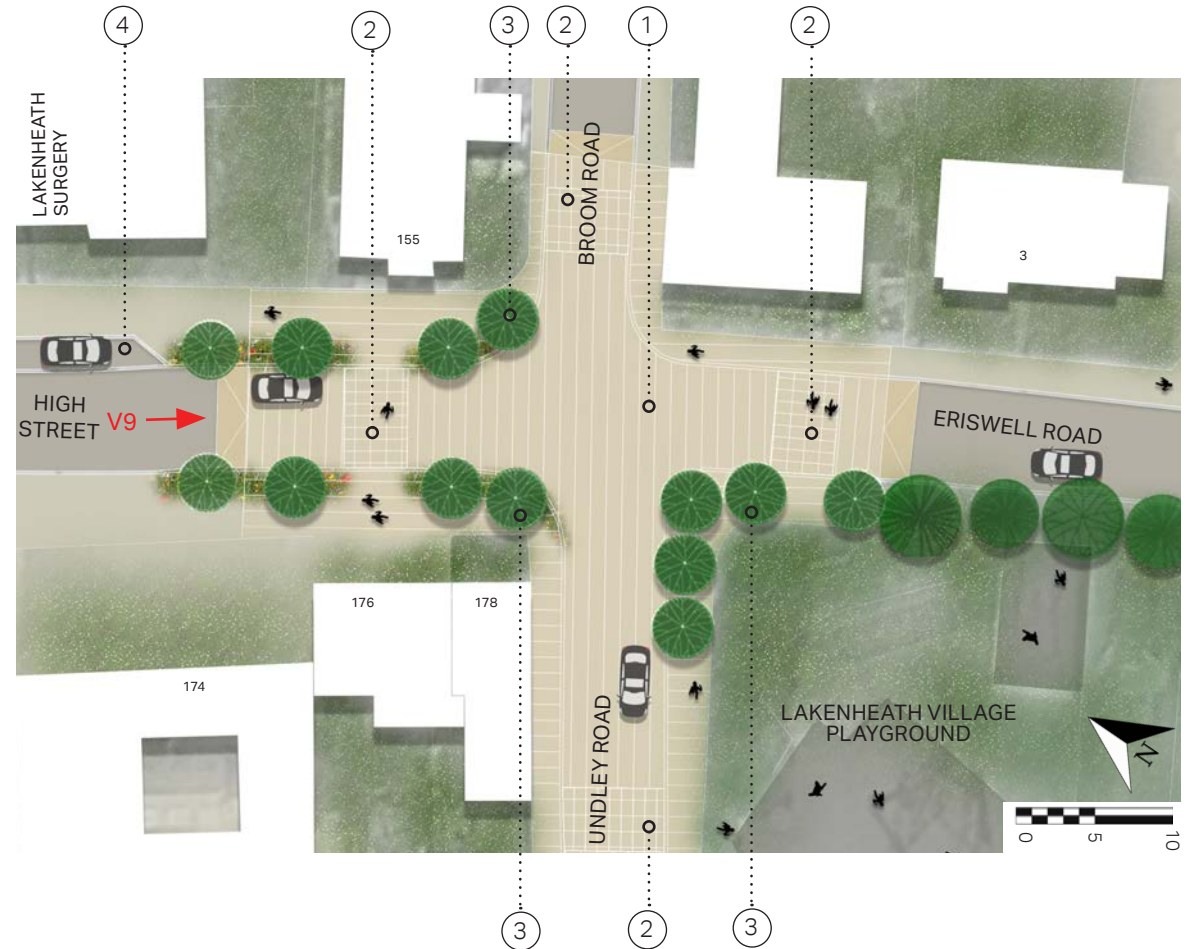


**Figure 60 :** A plan illustrating the key opportunities and considerations in 'activity area' 5, Playground Junction.

## Playground Junction

Possible aspirational interventions:

1. A change in surface material at the crossroad junction of Broom Road, Undley Road, Eriswell Road and High Street to denote a change of character from the village edge to the High Street, reducing traffic speed and increasing pedestrian priority
2. Four pedestrian crossing points within the activity area, marked by signage, a change of surface material and potentially formal traffic singals, reconnecting Lakenheath Village Playground to the High Street
3. Introduce planters and street trees around the junction, to frame views and emphasise the change of character from Eriswell Road to the High Street. Planters are focused on as an early intervention, with the introduction of trees being a long-term aspiration.
4. Designate parking spaces with planting and street trees along the High Street, to avoid long sections of ad hoc parking



**Figure 61:** Plan of proposed interventions within the Playground Junction



**Figure 62:** Illustrative view of change in surface material, with crossing points, to improve pedestrian priority and connect the Lakenheath Village Playground to the High Street



**Next Steps**

**05**

## 5. Next Steps

This document builds on the work already undertaken by Lakenheath Parish Council in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The recommendations are rooted in the engagement work that the Parish Council has undertaken, combined with the specialist skills of AECOM's landscape architects. The interventions in this report are not detailed design and need to be worked up in consultation with Suffolk County Council Highways Department and statutory stakeholders where appropriate.

The next section identifies a series of smaller, medium and larger projects illustrated on the The High Street Lakenheath Neighbourhood Masterplan to assist with translating

these proposals into something meaningful yet achievable on the ground.

## 5.1 List of actions

### Small scale projects

- Planting wildflower verges to increase the biodiversity and amenity value of greenspace along the High Street
- Locate benches along the High Street to encourage sitting and dwelling within the space
- Engage the community in maintenance and aftercare, to support the longevity of interventions

### Medium scale projects

- Create spill out spaces, with seating, pocket parks and planting to animate street edges
- Locate planters along the High Street, as part of the Green Infrastructure network
- Introduce a wayfinding strategy that improves navigation through the High Street with a focus on nearby car parks, footpaths to neighbouring residential areas and the surrounding countryside

### Large scale projects

- Reconnect greenspace in front of Lakenheath Community Centre, by removing existing boundary treatments, providing safe and inclusive access and including facilities for pop-up community events
- Create a change in road surface material within the 'activity areas', to improve pedestrian permeability across the street
- Reduce the width of the highway and create defined parking areas, replacing planters with street trees, planting and integrated rain gardens to reduce ad hoc, on street parking, increase the surface water drainage capacity whilst strengthening green links throughout the High Street.

## 5.2 Next steps

The recommended next steps for how to use the outcomes of the High Street Masterplan document are:

- Engage the community and apply for additional funding
- Engage the council to develop policies supporting the proposals
- Engage with residents and landlords to begin public realm improvements
- Work-up proposed Neighborhood Masterplan interventions with specialist design consultants to a detailed design stage.
- Work with local organisations that can help to implement the recommendations



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