

CORE OBJECTIVE 6

Amenities along village High Street to thrive and continue to provide essential services to the local community

What does this mean?

- Retention of shops and services along the High Street and village green
- Encouraging the provision of new shops and services along the High Street and village green
- Traffic management and parking measures to facilitate passing car-based trade in Waterbeach Village Heart
- Public realm improvements in Waterbeach village centre

6.10 Policy WAT 10 – Maintaining and enhancing a vibrant Village Heart

Policy context and rationale:

6.10.1 Waterbeach village centre contains a diversity of different uses including shops, public houses, bus stop, the Green and churches. Whilst quieter during the day than during the business of the morning and afternoon rush hour, it has an ‘active’ feel throughout the day; there is rarely a time when the Green or the Gault is free from a dog walker or a carer pushing a pram or people arriving to use shops and service in the Village Heart. Some of the shops and services could be regarded as ‘spread out’ across a wider area but this is inevitable where there is a large green in the middle. To recognise the importance of the existing hub serving the village it was considered important to define a Village Heart as a way of planning the future. The following uses are found within the Village Heart:

Table 6.2: Waterbeach Village Heart amenities

Shops, restaurants, pubs	Community use
Village Stores	The Green
One Stop shop	The Gault
Pharmacy	The Baptist Church
White Horse	Bus stop
Sun Inn	Post office (within the village stores)
Chinese takeaway	
Hairdressers x2	
Bakers	
Physiotherapist	
Opticians (old butchers)	
Coffee Shop (Pharmacie)	

6.10.2 There are other important village centre uses beyond the defined Village Heart such as the Rosie's Childcare located just off St Andrews Hill, the Salvation Army meeting place on Station Road, the primary school along the High Street, the Beach Social Club located on Cambridge Road, Tillage Hall, St John's Church Hall, The Baptist Chapel, the Chip Shop further north on the High Street as well as the Brewery Tap. These uses can all be regarded as linked to the Village Heart by artery roads leading into it. During mid-way consultation, residents were specifically asked about the proposed extent of the Village Heart. Whilst most respondents agreed with the extent (73%), a number of comments were made stating that the boundary line should be larger to include the school and chip shop in the north and the Beach Club in the south. Existing shops, services and community facilities outside the Village Heart will have land use protection through existing Local Plan policies. But in order to ensure the Village Heart continues to thrive through a period of change we have defined an area where particular consideration should be given when planning applications are considered and where new development proposals for shops, services and community uses will be particularly welcomed. Where facilities are located close to one another, businesses are more likely to thrive and it also makes it easier for residents using the facilities.

On street parking around the Green:

6.10.3 The Village Heart is easily accessible from many parts of the village by foot and many residents will walk through it on their daily route to the railway station or the bus stop. This includes secondary school children. However, many customers to the shops in the Village Heart will have arrived by car. They are either parishioners on the way to work or home or because they are non-parishioners visiting the services whilst passing through. There are free car parking facilities all the way around the edge of the Green. Many of the spaces are in practice used up by commuters who leave their car for the day before walking to the railway station. Some of this parking around the Green can detract from the quality of the public realm and also presents pedestrian safety issues at crossing points. Policy WAT 11 (Public Realm Improvements in the Village Heart) supports improvements in the quality of the street scene environment (public realm) which itself may result in a reduction of on street parking provision in specific places. However, overall existing parking provision which supports businesses in the village should be retained or improved.

6.10.4 Many existing problems relating to village centre parking could be addressed through means outside of the Neighbourhood Plan. For example, different traffic management regimes could be introduced such as restricting parking to a maximum time limit and undertaking enforcement measures to pick up on dangerous on street parking. If the existing railway station is relocated (as is currently planned by SCDC), then this itself may remove the existing problems related to the extent of commuter

parking along Greenside; or it may shift the problem to the northern part of the village for example along Cody Road if commuters choose to park in residential areas rather than paying for a station car parking place.

Policy intent:

6.10.5 Due to the importance attached to current function of the Village Heart in providing a beating heart to the existing community, it is important to define it in planning terms so that any planning applications that come forward in this defined area are ones which either sustain the existing function and vibrancy of the Village Heart or strengthen and diversify them through introducing new village centre uses.

Policy WAT 10 – Maintaining and enhancing a vibrant Village Heart

1. Development proposals within the defined Village Heart (as defined on Map 6.8) will be supported where:

- a) existing town centre uses (shops, services, community facilities) are retained at ground floor level;**
- b) existing shop fronts which contribute to the character and appearance of the village are maintained or enhanced;**
- c) proposed development will otherwise not undermine the function of the Village Heart as a hub for village shops, services and community facilities; and**
- d) the proposal does not unacceptably adversely impact customer parking provision (in terms of quality and quantity) for the shops**

2. New village centre uses where proposals will support the vitality of the Village Heart and diversify and enhance the range of shops, services and community facilities will be encouraged and supported where access arrangements for deliveries and off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided without any significant negative impact on surrounding residential or village centre amenity.

6.11 Policy WAT 11 – Public realm improvements in the Village Heart

Policy context and rationale:

6.11.1 A key challenge for the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan is to make sure the village centre continues to provide essential goods and services to the village residents during the plan period. Significant changes such as the building of the new town, the relocation of the Waterbeach railway station and ongoing changes in the way people shop and secure services will have implications for the village centre. These may be positive or negative. The most effective way for the village centre to be prepared is to preserve the strengths (by protecting the quality of the built environment in the centre – see policy WAT 14, protecting the Green (SCDC Local Plan policy does this)

but also recognising and addressing the weaknesses including the specific areas of poor public realm in and around the Village Heart.

6.11.2 The specific areas shown on Map 6.8 have been identified and consulted on by the group. Unattractive areas of public realm in the village centre is also something identified in the Waterbeach Heritage and Character Assessment and Design Principles Document.

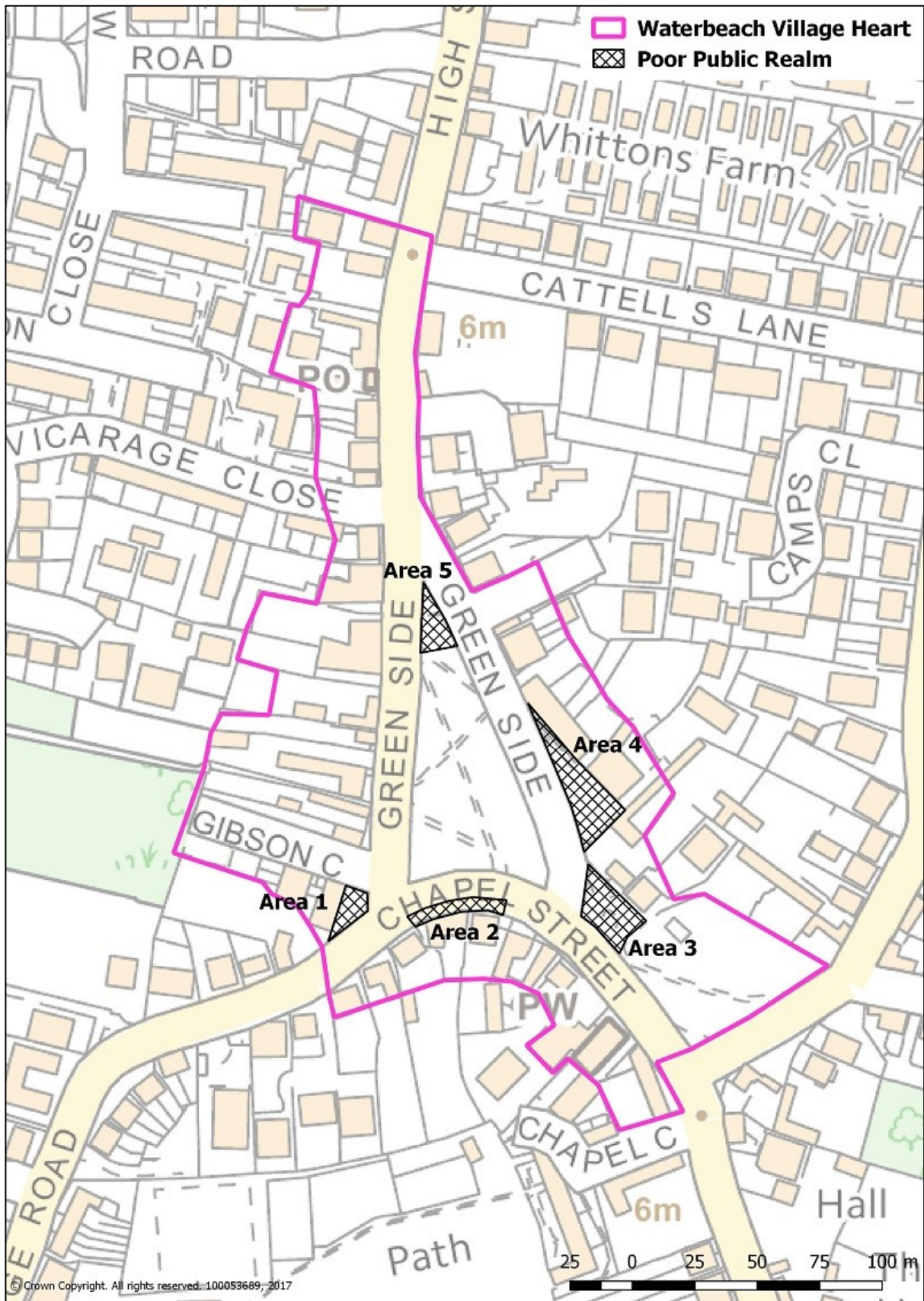
6.11.3 The area around the bus stop on Greenside has also been identified as needing improvement in order to improve its functionality for people (especially those with disabilities) to make their way from the bus shelter on to the bus. Currently, the positioning of the kerb prohibits easy access and the configuration of the hard surfacing makes it difficult to move with walking aides, wheelchairs or mobility scooter from the bus shelter area to the edge of the pavement in order to get on or off a bus. The bus stop is also often occupied by parked cars.

Policy intent:

6.11.4 It is acknowledged that the identified street scene improvements may not all be *delivered* through these policies in the Neighbourhood Plan (they can only be delivered this way where a development proposal necessitates the improvement as a result of impacts from the development in question). Waterbeach Parish Council is however committed to working with the relevant landowners and highways to deliver the aspirations identified in policy WAT 11. Please see the community aspirations chapter (Chapter 7) for more detail. It includes a non-planning policy commitment for the parish council to continue working alongside landowners and highways to explore appropriate solutions in the village.

6.11.5 The intent of the policy is to support in principle development schemes which would deliver or contribute towards their delivery and to resist proposals which would undermine the possibility of the public realm improvements coming forward.

6.11.6 As street scene improvements in Waterbeach Village Heart are essential to ensuring the village centre not only survives but thrives as a local parade for residents, development proposals elsewhere in the parish which may impact on the village centre, may be expected to contribute funds to the delivery of the street scene improvement projects.



Map 6.8: Areas for public realm improvement

Policy WAT 11 – Public realm improvements in the Village Heart

1. Development proposals which are otherwise acceptable, and which contribute towards the following street scene improvements will be supported:

- a) Reconfiguration of current Village Stores site along Chapel Street– see Area 2 on Map 6.8, to incorporate a wider and more accessible entrance and a safer and more accessible pedestrian environment allowing for safe access and safer crossing point.**
- b) Reconfiguration of land outside the current takeaway on Chapel Street/Greenside – see Area 3 on Map 6.8 to incorporate high quality soft landscaping, pavement resurfacing and maximise opportunities for formal bicycle parking**
- c) Reconfiguration of land outside the current White Horse Pub on Greenside – see Area 4 on map to incorporate high quality soft landscaping, pavement resurfacing and maximise opportunities for formal bicycle parking**
- d) Soft landscaping improvements to the northern part of village green – see Area 5 on the map)**
- e) Improving access for passengers embarking buses at the bus stop**
- f) Preventing through traffic using the road to the east of the village green (resident access only)**

2. The area outside the White Horse PH covering the road and the eastern edge of the green is also identified as an opportunity for resurfacing allowing for level pedestrian crossing from this part of the village hub to the green.

6.12 Policy WAT 12 - Waterbeach village public realm developer contributions

Policy intent:

6.12.1 This policy is intended to ensure the Village Heart continues to thrive as a local centre which provides essential services to the local community during a period of significant change as the Waterbeach New Town development comes forward.

Policy WAT 12 - Waterbeach village public realm developer contributions

Contributions towards the public realm initiatives identified in Policy WAT 11 will be sought from all major development proposals where this is necessary to ensure the Waterbeach Village Heart continues to thrive, and where directly, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed.