

5 Station Gateway

The critical remodelling of the key gateway to the city centre, with new business and commercial developments, providing city centre users and visitors with a radically transformed arrival experience, leading seamlessly northwards to Union Street.

1.0 The Vision

- 1.1 The Station Gateway is one of 7 Intervention Areas in the approved City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme (CCMP). Its position and influence in accessing these is critical as it has the potential to provide successful connection to other intervention areas.

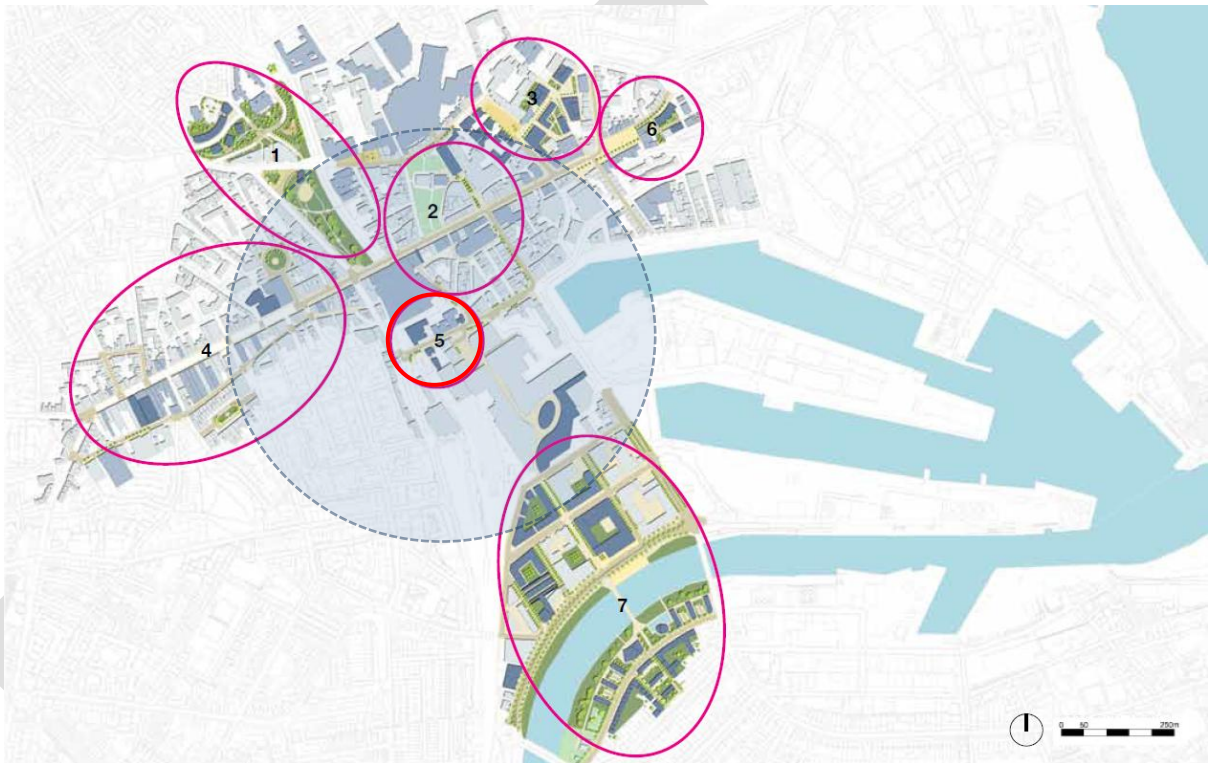


Figure 1: City Centre Masterplan Intervention Areas –

1 Denburn Valley; 2 Heart of the City; 3 Queen's Square; 4 Union Street West; 5 Station Gateway; 6 Castlegate / Castlehill; 7 North Dee/ Torry Waterfront

- 1.2 The statements below are extracted from the approved CCMP and set the context for this development brief. This brief is not intended to be prescriptive over specific site areas, rather it focusses on the relationship between the Rail Station, Union Square, Guild Street, Atholl House, Trinity Centre and the opportunity to improve connectivity and activity in the area. Station Gateway is a critical component in the delivery of the agreed masterplan. As the central focus of public transport activity in the city centre, the Gateway has connection with and influence on each of the other intervention areas in the city centre. Delivery of high quality public spaces enabling comfortable pedestrian connectivity and the conditions for efficient public transport movement will be integrated with each of the other intervention areas.

1.3 Extracts from City Centre Masterplan



Figure 2: Station Gateway: Indicative suggestion extracted from the CCMP

“A much enhanced gateway experience and better pedestrian routes between Union Street and the station will radically improve first impressions of Aberdeen and the attraction of access by rail. When emerging from the train station, people will be greeted with a more welcoming city. More generous public realm will create more space for people to meet and linger with new hotels and retail facilities helping to animate and enliven this important entrance to the city centre.”

The Opportunity

The removal of car born traffic on Guild Street necessitates the relocation of the station taxi rank and vehicular drop off area, creating the opportunity to expand and enhance the station concourse. This along with the redevelopment of Atholl House would provide a better gateway and enhanced connections to the Trinity Centre and Union Street beyond. Over the long term the complete restructuring of the Trinity Centre to provide a more contextually appropriate destination that integrates the medieval and Georgian layers of the city centre is an aspiration.”

1.4 Public Consultation

Thorough public engagement was undertaken during the CCMP process. During the final stage of consultation themes of the masterplan were well supported. Please see the themes below that show the support for those relevant to this design brief.

- Streets for people – do you support the principle of providing more space for people? Yes: 83.06%
- Keep on moving – do you support the theme of retained vehicle access and public transport permeability? Yes: 71.68%
- Urban living – do you support the theme of more housing, of different types, in the city centre? Yes: 75.10%
- City centre employment – do you support the theme of providing more employment space in the city centre? Yes: 76.12%
- Happy shoppers – do you support the theme of providing a better range and quality of shops for different ages? Yes: 87.65%
- Distinctive design for life – do you support the theme of providing distinctive new buildings that also respect the character of the city centre? Yes: 82.42%

2.0 Planning Policy, Strategy and other CCMP Projects

2.1 The current Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) designates the area as City Centre Business Zone (C2) to the north of Guild Street and east of the station, and Land for Transport (T1) at the station itself. The CCMP gives further guidance and suggests hotel uses at the north end of the station on Guild Street and also on the site opposite, currently occupied by Atholl House.

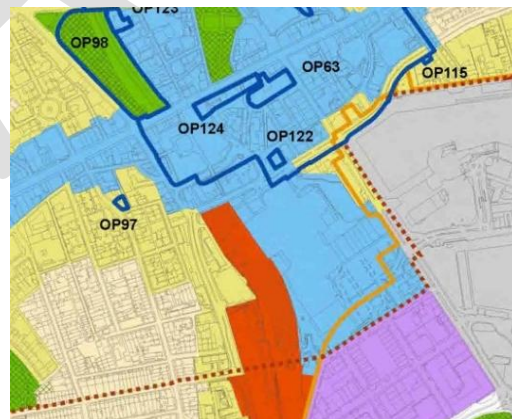


Figure 3: Extract from ALDP 2015

2.2 The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2015) Policy NC1 City Centre Development is clear that development within the city centre must contribute towards the delivery of the vision for the city centre as a major regional centre as expressed in the CCMP. City Centre Retail Core (Policy NC2) encourages new retail, commercial, leisure and other significant footfall generating development in the city

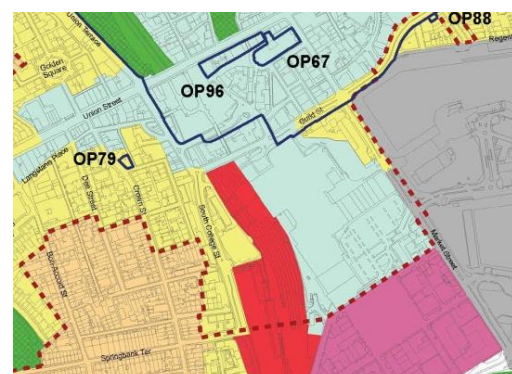


Figure 4: Extract from Proposed ALDP 2015

centre. Remaining land is covered by Policy T1 : Land for Transport, related to the Station, or Policy H2 : Mixed Use Areas , related to South College Street. Policy D3 Big Buildings promotes the city centre as appropriate for larger buildings and identifies that well-placed big buildings within the city centre can reinforce the city's urban experiences and opportunities. It is not the intention of this brief to reiterate all policies in the Proposed ALDP, however Policies D1 : Quality Placemaking by Design, D4 : Historic Environment, T3 : Sustainable and Active Travel, R7 : Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency and R8 : Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments are particularly relevant.

2.3 The Station Hotel, 78-80 Guild Street, was recently granted planning and listed building consent for an 8 storey extension, application ref 131683.

2.4 Both the Strategic Infrastructure Plan and proposed City Region Deal emphasise that a successful city incorporates a thriving urban core. One of the key goals identified is 'A Better Image for Aberdeen'. A high quality of life is integral to attracting and retaining the talent and investment needed to grow the economy. This sense of place, with a key emphasis on the city centre, is crucial in underpinning economic growth and essential in underpinning the necessary infrastructure requirements.

2.5 In response to this development brief it is essential that any project proposal takes into account the (often complex) relationships between the Station Gateway area and generic programme themes in the table below.

Key projects related to this intervention area:	Other project linkages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project CM10 Trinity Centre • Project EC08 New hotel development • Project EC11 Aberdeen works • Project IN01 Walkable Aberdeen • Project IN03 Cycle highways • Project IN04 Cycle hire scheme • Project IN05 Cycle hubs • Project IN06 Bus priority measures • Project IN07 Bus stop infrastructure and bus station • Project IN08 Aberdeen Station • Project EN02 Guild Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project EN05 Union Street • Project CM11 Union Street Conservation Area Improvement Scheme • Project CM12 Union Square • Project EN11 Aberdeen in colour

3.0 Planning and design principles

<i>project</i>	<i>CCMP reference</i>	<i>description</i>
Aberdeen Guild Street Station	IN08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation of the taxi drop off facility, potentially to South College Street Refurbishment/ expansion of the station concourse to the north Enhanced linkage for pedestrian and cyclists to the city centre to include commercial development at levels above the enhanced station facilities Commercial property development opportunities complimentary to the operational railway and railway station that enable enhanced connectivity Improve passenger services and facilities Passive provision for additional capacity, including future opportunity to reinstate platforms 8 and 9, considered in conjunction with commercial opportunities over and, as appropriate, beside the railway Potential vertical link to Guild Street and north through site of Atholl House
Aberdeen Bus Station	IN06	Bus priority infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement bus only streets on key city centre corridors Introduce bus gates on the approach to city centre junctions to annul the impact of congestion on journey times
	IN07	Bus stop infrastructure and bus station: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobility inclusive and significantly improved bus stop infrastructure Enhance the existing bus station as part of the expansion of Union Square shopping centre.
Union Square	CM12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope to expand the shopping centre Respond positively to its wider urban context Promote stronger linkages between the city centre core to the north and River Dee to the south.
Trinity Centre	CM10	The Trinity Centre occupies a strategic location in the core of the city centre but fails to provide a quality retail environment or a contextually appropriate setting to the Merchant Quarter, station and Union Street. The complete redevelopment (including partial or full demolition) of the centre is a long term aspiration.

Atholl House	Included in CM10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding focal point, public space and sense of arrival • Improve pedestrian access and flows from Union Square, the railway station, under Guild Street, up through the new development leading thereon to Bridge Street and to the Trinity Centre and then to Union Street • Provide a modern mixed use scheme with a central plaza – removing Atholl House, with a much higher visual quality. • Enabling project within the Intervention Area providing the catalyst for other projects
Station Hotel		78-80 Guild Street granted planning and listed building consent for an 8 storey extension, application ref 131683.

4.0 Uses

4.1 The CCMP gives broad guidance on intensifying uses within the city centre to contribute to a critical mass of population and animating streets, squares and spaces, thereby contributing to the vitality, vibrancy, economy and viability of the city centre. The CCMP outlines the following development for Station Gateway (these uses and floorspace figures provide an indicative guide only):

Station concourse	Class 1 (retail), Class 3 (food and drink)	2,700m ²
Above station concourse	New hotel	10,000m ²
Atholl House site	Class 7 New hotel / serviced apartments	8,600m ²

4.2 Notwithstanding the assumptions of the CCMP, given the area is defined as a 'gateway' and lies within the city centre boundary with excellent public transport links, a number of uses would be appropriate including, but not limited to: Office, Retail, Hotel, Leisure and Residential. Although not a specific requirement, opportunity sites such as at Atholl House, or above the Station concourse, could make a significant contribution to the economy of the city centre should they include office development.

4.3 Any development proposals in the area should demonstrate how uses can be flexible over the life of a building to ensure the best use of resources, maximise adaptability, enable the area to respond to changing market conditions and ensure that Station Gateway remains a vibrant area of the city centre.

5.0 Scale and Massing

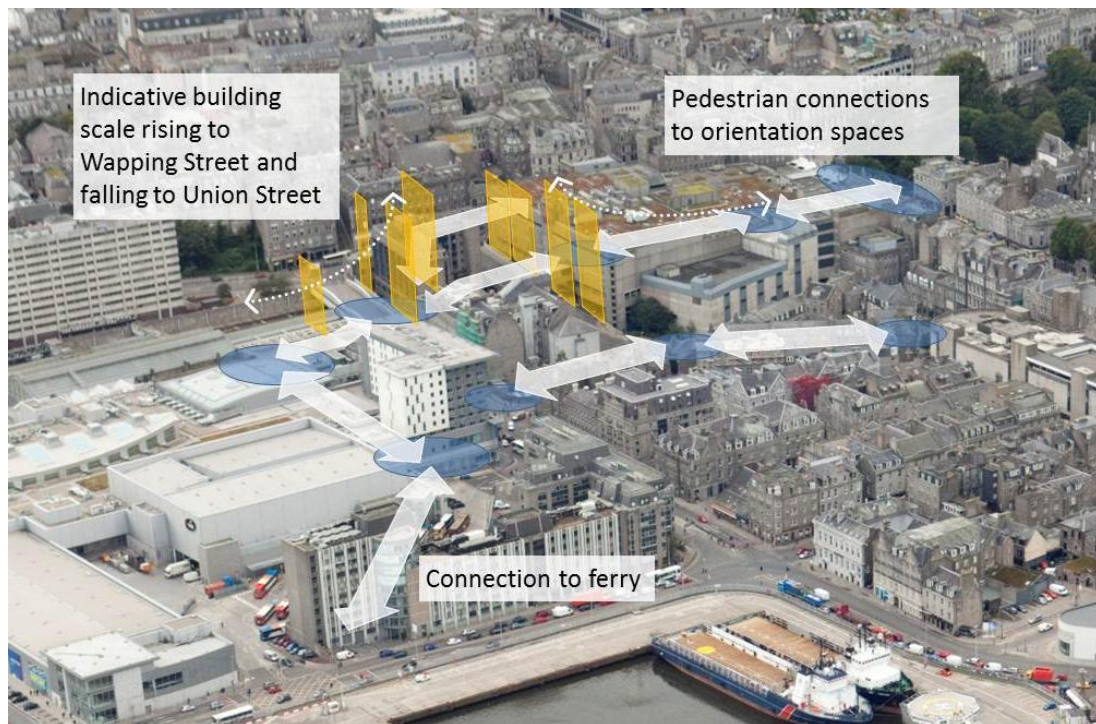


Figure 5: Building Scale

- 5.1 The study area includes Guild Street Station, Atholl House, the Trinity Centre, Station Hotel, Jury's Inn, Union Square and the BT building on South College Street. The area includes a number of large scale buildings in a variety of forms, many of which do not have a positive architectural relationship with each other or the surrounding public realm. In order to achieve the public realm and connectivity aspirations crucial for this area, it is necessary to consider an increase in urban scale and density in order to generate a critical mass of people of activity. Creating the conditions to enable development which will contribute to viability of interactive uses at street level, it will be necessary to consider maximising the potential of each site to increase the population of the area.
- 5.2 Increasing density is caveated, however, on two key principles:
- quality of public realm
 - quality of architecture

Densifying the urban core of the city creates the conditions to increase the viability of projects and in turn increase the potential for works such as enabling delivery of associated high quality public realm and as a result achieving better, more clearly defined pedestrian movement.

- 5.3 Acceptable building forms and architecture will be identified through further urban analysis relating to each project which will be detailed in design and access statements. Proposals for taller buildings in this location would be acceptable in principle, provided they comply with Proposed ALDP policy D3: Big Buildings. If increasing the density of the area is to be achieved, resulting buildings must have slender vertical emphasis and provide interactive and engaging public uses and access at ground and street levels.

- 5.4 Skyline is critical and should be breached only by a series of slender landmarks reflecting the tradition of steeples and spires as a means of wayfinding and legibility in the city centre. Such landmark buildings may contribute to identifying the station location for visitors; whilst at the same time create a positive image of the city centre on approaches from the south.
- 5.5 Architectural expression and urban form are critical to the perceived success of new development. It is expected that new development in the area will present a series of layers at the station and Atholl House, building up to screening the rear of the Trinity Centre. Whilst this is important in the short to medium term, it is essential that long term future opportunities for the Trinity Centre are not compromised, to either open up the mall or potentially comprehensively redevelop the site as is suggested in the CCMP. This will include consideration of architectural expression and materials when viewed from the north as well as the south at the site of Atholl House and the Station.
- 5.6 Any project proposals will require to be discussed in detail at pre-planning stages complete with massing studies clearly exploring buildings in the context of the immediate urban realm and wider city scape.

6.0 Conservation and heritage opportunities



Figure 6: Listed buildings by category



Figure 7: Guild Street Bridge

- 6.1 There are a number of listed buildings and structures in the study area, as well as conservation area designation to consider (see fig 6). Rather than be seen as constraints, the rail and other built heritage can be considered assets that contribute to creating the sense of place that Aberdeen must develop to differentiate from its competitors.
- 6.2 Structures such as the station, including the bow bridge on Guild Street (category A listed) and the former station ticket office (category B listed) are considered important components expressing the engineering and rail heritage of the city. Imaginative re-use of these structures is required, although it is acknowledged that the bridge construction on Guild Street provides a physical barrier to pedestrian movement should vehicular access through Guild Street be restricted as a result of wider city centre traffic management. There is an opportunity for the site of Atholl House to consider vertical circulation to station concourse level allowing direct access to the station underneath the bridge. The steelwork underneath the bridge could be cleaned and illuminated to provide a memorable gateway to the station at platform level.
- 6.3 Should vehicular movement on Guild Street be restricted to public transport only, a detailed review of the bow bridge structure will be required as the opportunity to create a pedestrian friendly environment on Guild Street may be compromised by the bridge structure.
- 6.4 It is acknowledged that there is development potential at the station, particularly above the concourse and facing onto Guild Street. This, together with review of the bridge structure, will require detailed liaison with Historic Environment Scotland and follow guidance detailed in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy.

7.0 Transport and access

7.1 The arrival experience in the City Centre is identified in the approved CCMP as a key area to be addressed, particularly by public transport at the rail and bus stations. The CCMP also identifies the strategic target to reduce city centre traffic by 30% over the next 20 years. The outcomes of achieving that target include increased pedestrian space, less vehicle/pedestrian conflict and improved air quality in the city centre. The CCMP is explicit about the need to create pedestrian friendly streets, squares and spaces in the City Centre that will encourage people to spend more time in the city centre, enhance the user experience, encourage more activity and boost the vibrancy and economy.

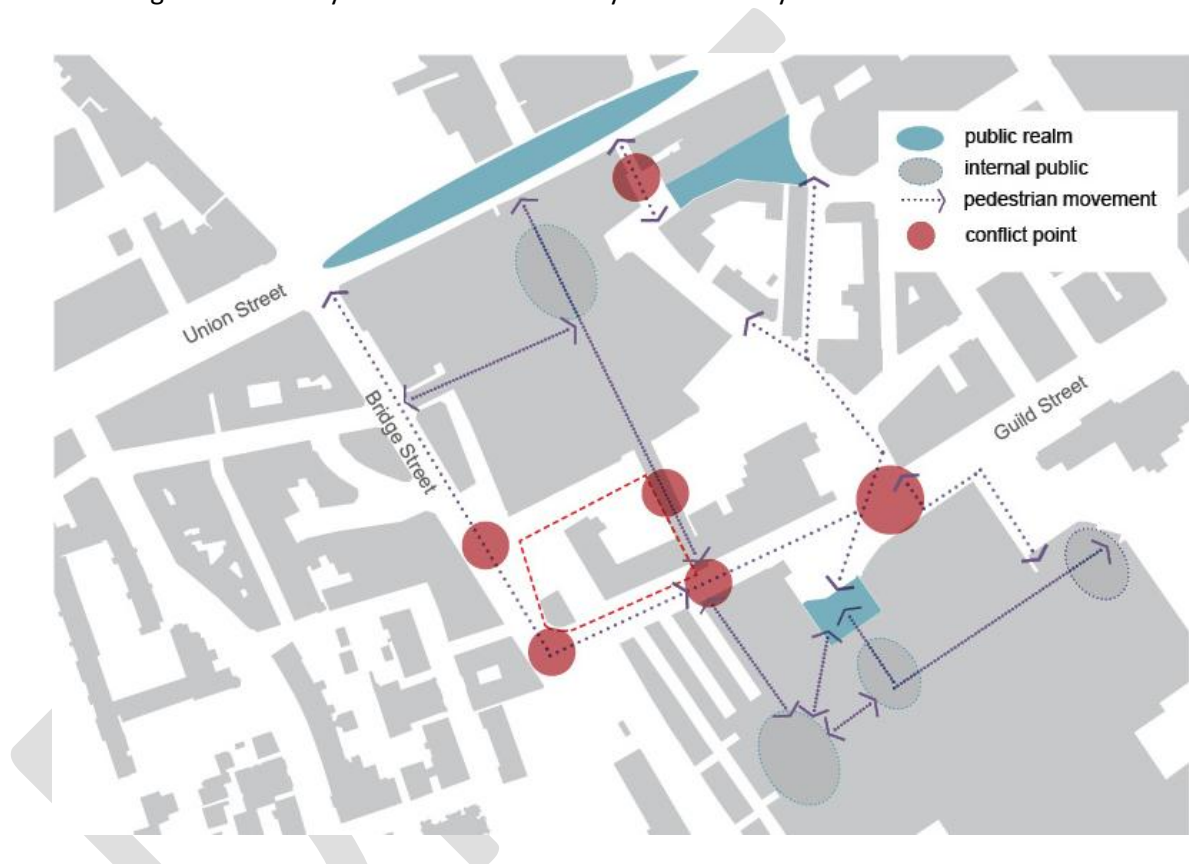


Figure 8: Current movement conflicts

7.2 Physical pedestrian links are currently compromised by road traffic conflicts, lack of clear routing, topography and lack of legibility and wayfinding for the pedestrian. The Guild Street / station area is currently accessible by all modes of transport without any clear priority or hierarchy and as a result, none of them work effectively. There is no clearly defined or preferred route from the station to Union Street and the rest of the city centre. Particular areas of conflict can be found at Guild Street / Rennie's Wynd and Bridge Street / Wapping Street.

7.3 Current transport modelling will identify opportunities to focus on public transport movement in Guild Street / Bridge Street / Union Street / Market Street, and will consider greater levels of restriction for general north / south movements around South College Street / Wapping Street / Denburn Road. This will be confirmed on completion of the transport modelling exercise in March 2016.

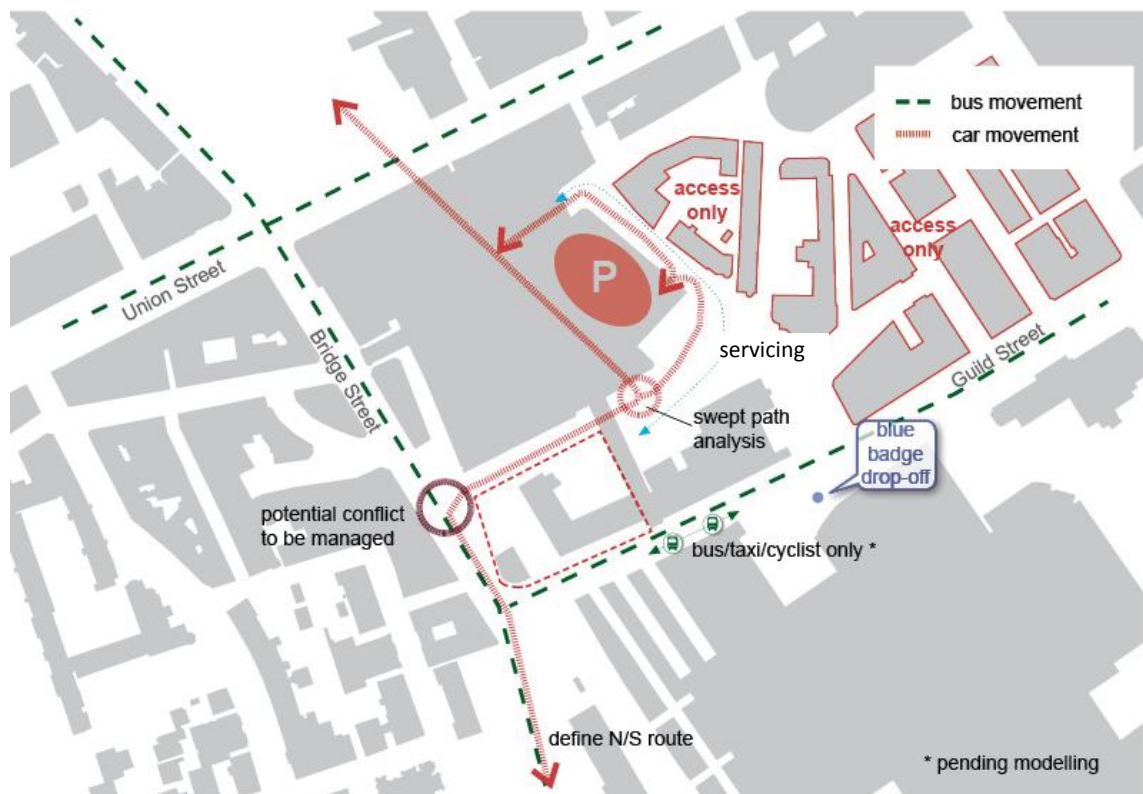


Figure 9: Possible future transport movement (dependent on analysis from the strategic transport model)

7.4 Scotrail/Abellio has made a commitment nationally to improve accessibility and pedestrian movement in and around stations and Aberdeen is one of the key targets. Coupled with the need for Union Square to be more closely linked with pedestrian movement related to Union Street (to reduce the need for travel by private car) and the potential that Trinity Centre could enhance the pedestrian gateway to and from the stations, the site of Atholl House is critical in the delivery of high quality public realm. Indeed this site could offer the opportunity to address multi-level connectivity between the lower station platform levels, Guild Street / Bridge Street and the upper level via Trinity Centre connecting directly to Union Street.

7.5 The opportunity must be taken to promote visitor information in and around the station area in conjunction with emerging totem signage currently being rolled out.

8.0 Public realm

8.1 As identified in the CCMP, topography, lack of legibility in wayfinding and movement, poor lighting and linkages , all combined with a minimal activity in the streetscape are all issues that contribute to a poor user experience in the area.

8.2 Although caveated by the completion of the strategic transport model for the wider city centre, a strategic approach as identified in fig 10 that prioritises pedestrian movement

along Guild Street and Bridge Street, would enhance the pedestrian experience, reduce pedestrian/ vehicle conflict and provide the following:

Orientation :	create spaces that people want to be in enabling them to get their bearings
Connectivity :	ease movement and wayfinding in favour of pedestrians and public transport
Animation :	create opportunities for activity and live frontage along all routes and spaces between the station and Union Street

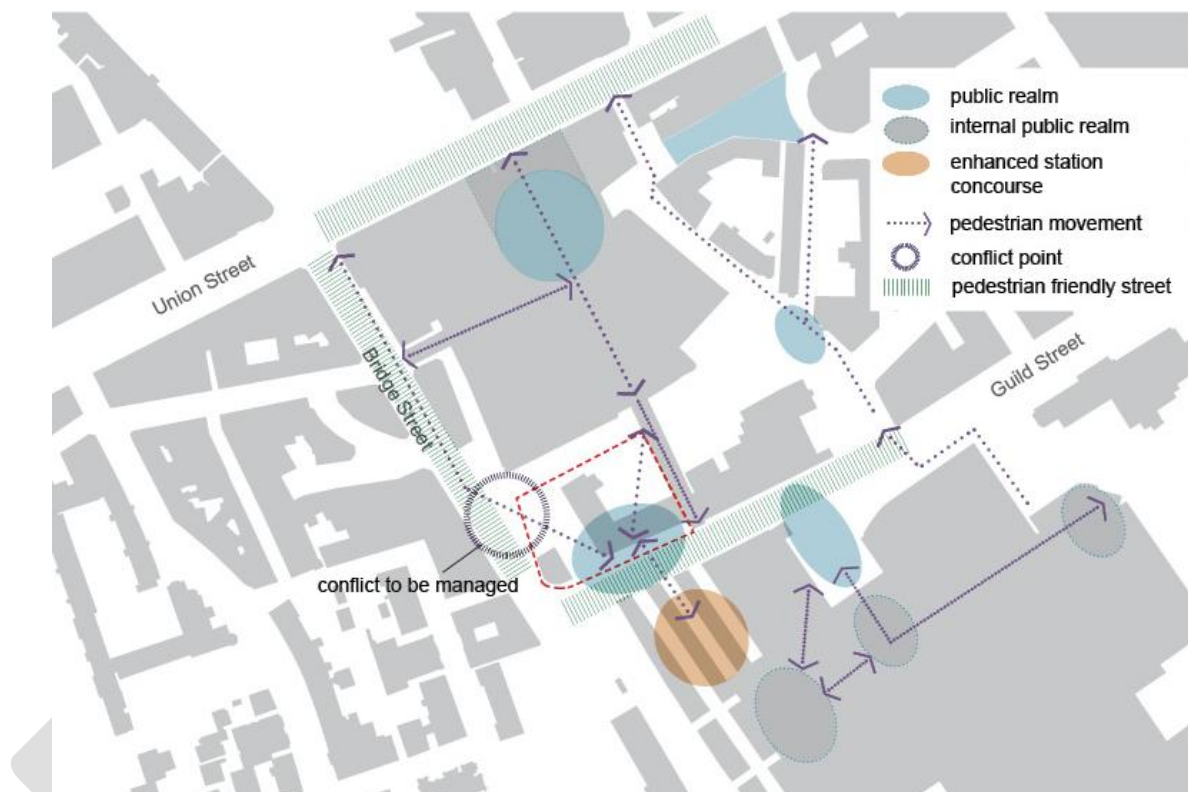


Figure 10: Proposed pedestrian movement

- 8.3 All streets, squares and spaces must be accessible, DDA compliant and finished in high quality materials consistent with the emerging Public Realm Strategy arising from the CCMP Project IN01 (Walkable Aberdeen): Creating a safer and more attractive city centre for pedestrians and other sustainable modes. Any proposed building forms must contribute to public spaces that clearly deliver comfortable pedestrian permeability. Public spaces must be flexible and functional and attractive to users (whether passing through or staying), comfortable (provide shelter and be safe/secure) and finished using high quality durable materials.
- 8.4 A series of sequential journeys via high quality, accessible and animated routes connecting populated spaces will improve the gateway experience and encourage footfall between Union Street and Union Square.
- 8.5 Actions for each area are described are below included, but are not exclusive.

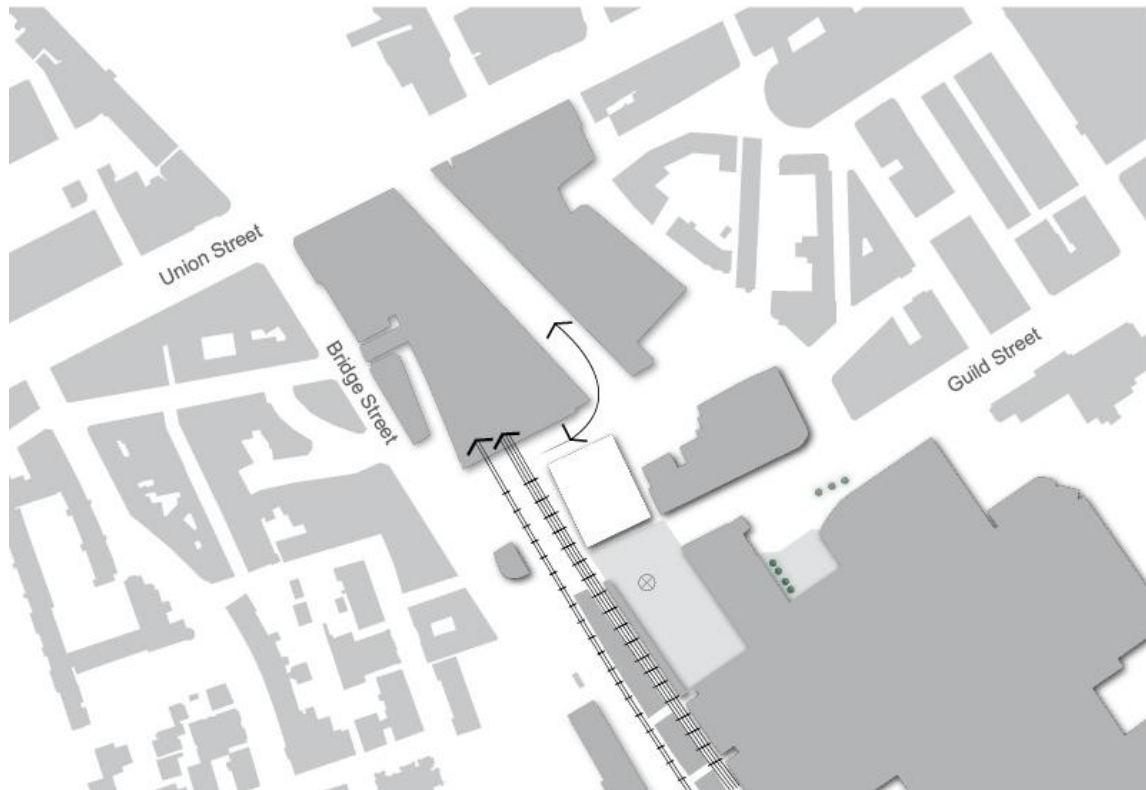


Figure 11: LEVEL 0 - Station Concourse /Atholl House (indicative only*)

- **Station concourse**

Comfortable and welcoming arrival/departure space populated with retail/café/etc (with opportunities for vertical circulation)

Enhance connectivity between Guild Street Station and Union Square Shopping Centre

Relocate taxi rank to South College Street

Cycle hub

Information to direct people to the variety of transport options for making their onward journey.
- **Guild Street/Atholl House**

Provide a pedestrian focus to Guild Street

Large area of public realm immediately adjacent to the Rail Station (with opportunities for vertical circulation) connecting to wider Guild Street pending consideration of the future of the bow bridge

Access through site of Atholl House connecting Bridge Street to Guild Street
- **Union Square**

Enhanced connection to bus station

Enhance links to taxi rank/South College Street car park

Redesign outdoor square in lieu of taxi relocation and blue badge drop off

Improve bus station waiting and boarding environment - waiting areas to be fully sheltered

Links to Harbour and ferry terminal

Cycle hub

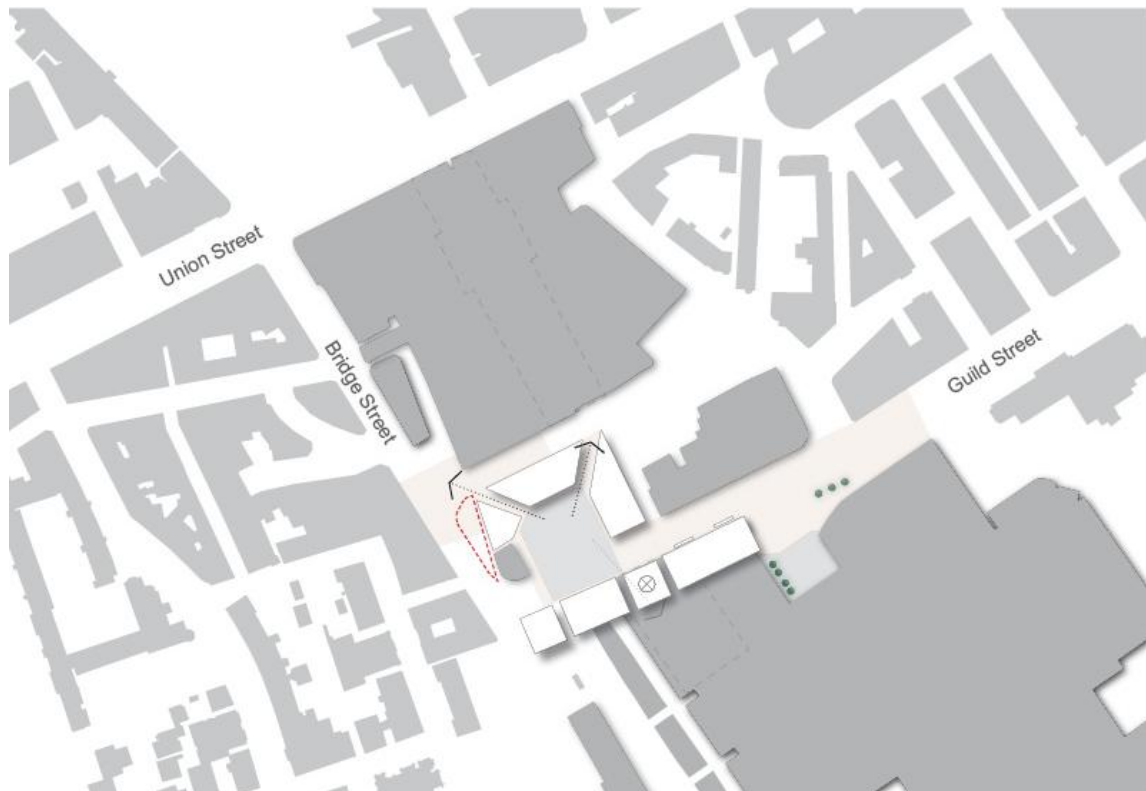


Figure 12: LEVEL 1 - Guild Street / Atholl House (indicative only*)

- **Guild Street**
 - Remove through traffic, except buses taxis and cyclists, to create the opportunity for increased pedestrian movement.
 - Blue badge drop off at Union Square
 - Bus stop immediately outside new station frontage
 - Segregated two way cycle lane on Guild Street
- **Bridge Street**
 - Improved and widened pedestrian footway connected with Guild Street via a 'managed access' route through site of Atholl House



Figure 13: LEVEL 2 - Atholl House / Trinity Centre (indicative only*)

- **Trinity Centre**
Improved and more open access from the south, potential for mall to open up more to north
- **Union Street/Union Bridge**
Pedestrian focus to the section between Bridge Street and Market Street

**All building forms shown are indicative only to demonstrate the principles of the development brief. All proposals for new development will comply with the principles of the brief, but may differ from the massing indicated.*

9.0 Integration with CCMP

A number of Masterplan initiatives are common to all areas. These include:

- 9.1 Project EN11 Aberdeen in colour: Although a comprehensive lighting masterplan has yet to be commissioned, the principle aim of introducing lighting proposals that enhance night time safety and improve the vibrancy and attractiveness of the night time environment can be implemented at Station Gateway.

Guild Street together with the key spaces and connections that comprise the sequential journeys identified in this brief require a co-ordinated approach to street and façade lighting that helps identify those routes, assist with wayfinding, create safe environments and contribute to vibrancy of the City Centre.

Taking care to avoid light pollution, lighting proposals will be developed to subtly enhance key listed buildings and structures, such as Guild Street bridge, should it remain, and the Station entrance. Lighting proposals must also take into account energy conservation.

The opportunity can be taken to introduce more dynamic forms of lighting within contemporary development, with the potential for innovative lighting on blank façades to animate dull spaces.

- 9.2 Project EC06 Aberdeen 365 Events Programme: The city centre events programme aims to increase year round activity and reposition the city centre as a 'happening' place. Station Gateway can provide a series of linked spaces that can contribute to the programme of animation and activity to enable the city centre to be more 'event ready'.

10.0 Land ownership, assembly



Figure 14: Ownership

Aberdeen City Council	Public Realm, Transport, Planning, Property
Network Rail	Rail infrastructure and Station
Scotrail/Abellio	Station and Rail Services
Stagecoach	Bus Station
Byline Group	Atholl House
Hammerson	Union Square
Ellandi	Trinity Centre
The Cairn Group	Station Hotel

11.0 Delivery/ phasing

ref	action	responsibility	target	linked to action
01	Strategic transport model to be complete	ACC	Mar 16	All
02	Define land requirements for Bridge Street / Wapping Street and Atholl House redevelopment and agree Heads of Terms	ACC/Byline/ Network Rail	Jan 16	01
03	Review of listing at the station with particular reference to Guild Street Bridge and former ticket office	ACC/HES	Dec 15	07, 11, 14
04	Liaise with Historic Environment Scotland re listed structures and carry out full SHEP test	Byline / Network Rail / ACC	Jan 16	07, 11, 14
05	Design and access statements clearly showing design development, urban analysis, justification for mix of uses, scale massing and architectural expression	Byline Network Rail/ Abellio	Jan 16 Mar 16	03, 04
06	Conservation analysis and plans	Byline/Network Rail/Abellio/HES	Mar 16	03, 04
07	Site of Atholl House design development and application for planning consent	Byline	Mar/ Apr 16	02, 03, 04, 05, 08
08	Guild Street detailed design options	ACC/ALL	Apr/ May 16	01, 03, 04, 07, 09
09	Union Square design development including review of public space and bus station	Hammerson/Sta gecoach/ Network Rail/ Abellio	Mar 16	01, 08
10	Design Opportunities and Development Capacity review for long term future of Trinity Centre	ScotEnt/Ellandi/ ACC/	May 16	07
11	Rail Station Phase 1 improvements, including relocating taxi rank and station concourse upgrade	Network Rail/ Scotrail/Abellio	Mar 16	01, 07, 09
12	Trinity Centre south access	Ellandi/ Byline/ ACC/ Network Rail	tbc	07
13	Economic benefits analysis	ACC/Scot Ent	tbc	All
14	New Station Phase 2 development feasibility study	Network Rail/ Scotrail/Abellio	Mar 16	11

12.0 SWOT Analysis

Collated from stakeholder workshop held in November 2015

Strengths	Weaknesses
Destination (Union Square) Rail Heritage (Bridge, former Ticket Office, Concourse) Access for all modes Bus and Rail Stations, Taxi, Harbour Growth of City and Region Collaborative working between all parties Limited no of landowners (eg Network Rail and Hammerson south of Guild Street) Previous working relationships	Topography and public realm obstacles Built form (architecture, spaces, roads) Infrastructure (City wide and locally) Lack of access hierarchy or priority at station Individual project timescales all different Political stability Council with enough commitment and power to deliver (eg CPO) Parking quality Public realm Signage/wayfinding Quality of experience Sense of Arrival Harbour – land adjacent to Market St if new harbour goes ahead Traffic and Wapping Street gyratory Listed building constraints Links to airport
Opportunities	Threats
Leadership (City Centre Director) City Region Deal (infrastructure) Philanthropic will to support projects? Investment in 7 cities Public and private funding Critical mass of people Rationalise movement and access Section 75 contributions Gap funding opportunities through Government Links to Harbour Links to Park and Ride Rail heritage (sense of identity and place) Extend the Green THI area City centre living	Strategic investment Sources of funding Spending Review Quality of bus station Out of town development Time/programme management and Impact on infrastructure Cultural change and comparison (car city) Disruption during construction Short term immediate goals v long term strategy

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