

IN THE FUTURE ...

Druitt Gardens: creating a new Woodland Garden and centerpiece of the town's cultural centre.

The quality of public space affects the quality of our daily lives and contributes towards our sense of well-being¹. As a consequence, people place the quality of their local environment high on the agenda of issues that concern them and that most need improving. According to *“Living Places: Caring for Quality”*² public spaces can be distinguished by their:-

- **Cleanliness** – whether they are clean and well cared for;
- **Accessibility** – how easy they are to get to and move through;
- **Attractiveness** – how visually pleasing they are;
- **Comfort** – whether they are comfortable to spend time in;
- **Inclusivity** – how welcoming they are to different sections of society;
- **Vitality and viability** – how well they are used and allow complementary uses to thrive;
- **Functionality** – how well the different uses they accommodate can function;
- **Distinctiveness** – whether they have clear and individual character;
- **Safety and security** – whether they feel safe and secure places to be;
- **Robustness** – how resilient they are over time.

The area in and around Druitt Gardens has been characterized as *“... not effectively managed ... Stands of mature Holm Oaks, some dead, dying and dangerous, together with thick unkempt ground cover and poorly maintained footpaths characterize the woodland. Paths and desire lines are blocked by fallen branches. Visibility along paths and around the Gardens is generally poor reinforcing the hostile nature of the place ... Car park areas formed as blank areas of hard standing making no contribution to wider townscape or historic character ... Rear elevations of High street buildings present generally dilapidated and untidy boundary to spaces ...”*³. In consequence, the Town Centre Strategy identifies Druitt Gardens and its surroundings as an unfriendly and potentially hostile transition area ... *“Druitt Gardens ... is an environment with many*

lurking spaces. It is becoming a no-go area at night and an area that is increasingly avoided at certain times of the day”.

Using the criteria noted above, the following comparisons can be made between the present situation in the Gardens and what the Council seeks to achieve.



Pic. 43 *“Druitt Gardens ... is an environment with many lurking spaces. It is becoming a no-go area at night and an area that is increasingly avoided at certain times of the day”.* (Source – Town Centre Strategy)

¹ 85% of people believe that the quality of public space impacts upon quality of life and that the quality of the built environment directly impacts upon the way they feel, MORI / CABE, 2002.

² Bartlett School of Planning, UCL and ODPM, Jan. 2004.

³ Borough-wide Character Assessment, Christchurch Borough Council, 2003.

Criteria	Present Score (1 – 10) (poor – good)	Target Score (1 – 10) (poor – good)	Target period (years)	Responsibilities & Method of Achievement
Cleanliness	3	10	1	Overall responsibility for management and maintenance to be with the Council's Parks and Countryside Section. New revenue budget to be established under Countryside Service's 'Maintenance of Grounds' (code 30 06 3009). Routine maintenance / cleanliness regime to be established under an approved Management Plan.
Accessibility	4	10	3 – 5	System of new primary and secondary paths constructed to DDA standards. Paths to connect new and existing shopping areas and other destinations. Particular attention to improving links between The Avenue, Sopers Lane and The Creedy with Wick Lane, High Street and other destinations such as car parks, Twynham School and the Regent Centre. New pedestrian crossings installed in Sopers Lane (connecting Druitt Gardens with The Avenue) and the High Street (connecting The Lanes and Cornfactor sites with the eastern side of High Street). Pathway system to be well but appropriately lit. New street furniture (litter and dog bins; seating, directional signage etc) to be located and installed that fits in with woodland character. Existing boundary treatment to be refurbished / replaced as appropriate. Development works funded through Council's capital programme with funds for future replacements. Works completed by Direct Services under supervision of Parks and Countryside. Need to consult with English Heritage with respect to works affecting the SAM and or its setting.
Attractiveness	3	10	3 – 10	Improvement works to be managed by Countryside Services to include felling and other works to dead, dying and dangerous trees; a programme of replacing non-native tree species with native broad-leaved woodland trees; clearing and cutting back shrub and field layers and replacing bramble etc with native shrubs / ground flora (e.g. Hazel and Hawthorn) with the aim of creating a Bluebell Wood; encouraging new habitats for birds, bats, beetles and other invertebrates. Edges and boundaries between Gardens and surrounding development areas to be designed and managed to create soft transition zones between urban and woodland character. The aim of tree planting, management and maintenance along edges and within transition zones will be to create glimpsed views of surrounding development from within the Gardens. However, within the Gardens themselves good visibility must be achieved through the use of sight-lines, framed views and vistas for reasons of safety and security.
Comfort	2	10	3 – 5	Completion of capital improvement works together with on-going management / maintenance through wardening (Parks and Countryside) and the improvement of the adjacent urban environment (through the development of the ES 5 policy areas) will regenerate the area turning it from an unsafe and under-used backwater into the cultural centre of the town. Improvement of paths and creating new links to the wider pathway network; improving sight-lines and visibility; improving lighting and other street furniture; and the creation of seating / picnic areas will all add to making the place more comfortable in which to be.
Inclusivity	1	10	3 – 5	While the layout, infrastructure and management of the Gardens will be designed so as not to exclude any particular socio-economic, ethnic or age groupings careful attention will need to be given to minimize opportunities of crime and disorder, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The principal aim of the Gardens will be to provide for passive activities (walking, sitting, relaxing, picnicking etc). Ball games, cycling and skateboarding within the Gardens will be prohibited. The Gardens are already included within the town centre's Alcohol Free Zone.
Vitality / Viability and Function	1	10	1 – 5	While the Gardens themselves will be designed and managed as a place of peace and tranquillity providing a natural habitat for indigenous flora and fauna they will also provide the centrepiece and a setting to the adjacent commercial centre of the town. The inclusion of an outdoor performance area linked to the Regent Centre, while creating diversity and vitality, must not conflict with the overall 'atmosphere' of the Gardens. The development of The Lanes and Cornfactor sites together with the improvement / extension of the Library are being designed to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre and careful consideration will need to be given to how transition zones (between the woodland and surrounding built-up areas) are handled (see above). Careful consideration will need to be given to the location, design and management of 'spill-out' areas (ref. Town Centre Strategy) within / around transition zones so as to minimize any potential conflicts.
Distinctiveness	6	10	1 – 10	Druitt Gardens is to be improved and thereafter managed as a distinctive town centre bluebell / wild-flower woodland with an emphasis on passive human activity, a natural habitat for indigenous species and an area of cultural / historical significance; as opposed to a municipal park or an active recreational area.
Safety & Security	2	10	1 – 10	The Gardens will be warded on a similar basis to the Council's other countryside / nature reserve areas (e.g. Steamer Point / Stanpit Marsh etc). Positive and pro-active wardening, improvements to the infrastructure (paths, seating, lighting etc) and ensuring good visibility around the Gardens will all help to ensure that the place is safe and secure for users. The development of new residential and commercial uses around and over-looking the Gardens will improve natural surveillance throughout the day and night. This will be reinforced by CCTV and the use of Community Beat Officers.
Robustness	5	10	1 - 3	The layout and improvement works intended for the Gardens together with its new infrastructure are to be designed to minimize opportunities for crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and vandalism while maximizing accessibility for the disabled and mobility impaired. Furthermore, consideration is to be given as to how the Gardens can be best experienced by those suffering from learning, visual and hearing impediments.

Fig. 33 Assessment of Druitt Gardens against the criteria established through *Living Places: Caring for Quality*.

In comparison, the High Street is identified as an area of *Good Quality Townscape* and a *Friendly Face* with a sense of enclosure which is enhanced by views to landmarks. According to the Town Centre Strategy ... *"In preparing plans and proposals for the regeneration of the area it will be important to overcome the relatively hostile nature of the area ... by upgrading the Gardens, increasing the levels of day and night time activity, improving physical linkages and creating new public places ... Increasing community and business activities ... by creating spill-out areas ... will be important in generating an evening economy ... Furthermore, Druitt Gardens is an ideal location to provide an outdoor performance space"*. The Strategy identifies Druitt Gardens as a potential centrepiece of the Town Centre ... *"... this space could become an attractive woodland garden, a place for meeting people, having coffee, watching open-air performances and a link-space between the various cultural and community activities that take place around the Gardens already"*.

The Lanes, Cornfactor, Christchurch Library and Heritage Centre – creating a new mixed-use town centre development with an emphasis on retail, residential, heritage, cultural and community uses.

The key strengths of the town as a retail centre include its relatively affluent catchment, its attractive environment, its number of visitors, its present mix of national and independent businesses and its relatively low vacancy rate. However, its weaknesses include a lack of quality retailers, a lack of representation within certain sectors and the lack of appropriately sized units to attract multiple retailers. As a consequence the Strategy concludes that ... *"... there is the potential to improve the quality and choice of retail and service businesses in the town centre ..."*.

According to Drivers Jonus⁴ ... *Delivering retail-led regeneration of town centres is one of the most complex forms of development. It is extremely rare to find a site in an appropriate location, and ownership patterns tend to be complex. As a result, along with the usual problems of dealing with physical constraints, technical difficulties*

associated with brownfield sites and attracting end-users, promoters of such schemes must also tackle land assembly and potentially the relocation of diverse existing uses". They go on ... *An increasing move towards mixed-use schemes, whilst enhancing the role and diversity of town centre schemes, adds another level of complexity to the scenario"*.

The complexity of delivering new retail development within a town centre is further reinforced by the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment (CABE)⁵, in that it must:-

1. satisfy retailers in terms of unit requirements, generated footfall and the management and security of the environment; and
2. satisfy owners / investors in respect of long-term capital value based on the flexibility and longevity of the offer.

However, while given the difficulties and complexities, it must also be recognized that a good quality retail development will enhance its surroundings, help improve transport and access arrangements, add economic vitality and vibrancy, be a good neighbour by respecting historic environments and add to the civic asset base through good architecture and the creation of new public spaces.

The role of the local Council in promoting and delivering town centre redevelopment can be complex as it normally has to act as the local planning authority (shaping, guiding and controlling development), as a community leader (balancing often conflicting public / private interests) and possibly, as a landowner⁶ (balancing planning and development interests). Drivers Jonus suggest that an LPA must ensure its planning policy is robust as it has a number of important roles to play. It must be:-

1. responsive to commercial viability – if a scheme is not promoted in a location that will attract retailers, or does not provide sufficient critical mass, it is unlikely to be delivered;

⁵ Design Reviewed, Town Centre Retail, CABE 2004.

⁶ Public car parks are often in locations suitable for extending retail facilities (source: Delivering Town Centre Development, Drivers Jonus, Sept. 04)

⁴ Delivering Town Centre Development, Drivers Jonus briefing paper, Sept. 04.

2. provide clear guidance on the type of scheme envisaged, while not being too prescriptive, thereby allowing developers to use their experience and innovation. However, it should guide the type of scheme, the level of linkage required and the mix of uses desired; and
3. provide a platform for compulsory purchase if negotiated land assembly is not possible.

In order to distinguish between these different roles, Drivers Jonus recommend the preparation of planning and development briefs.

In order to achieve a well designed retail centre, CABA advise that it is important to choose the right strategy in order to ensure the right product is delivered through the right process. The strategy is likely to involve setting a design vision, preparing a masterplan and achieving good quality design. When considering town centre retail development a retail centre's design should be judged against a number of key principles, i.e.:-

- Good urban design – as set out in 'By Design'⁷ which stresses the importance of character, legibility, ease of movement, adaptability and mix of uses;
- Good architecture – buildings with civic quality that enhance both internal and external environments through their appropriate use of scale, massing, proportions and detailing etc.;
- Good for retail – must work for retail and leisure providers in their core business of selling products to customers; and
- Good for everyone – by minimizing negative impacts on the environment and promote safe / inclusive environments for all who use the town centre, including those with special needs.

The right product is more likely to be delivered if the development respects, and is sensitive to, existing grid and block patterns, creates

open street environments, maximizes active ground floor frontages⁸, improves footfall through good access and connectivity, improves existing public spaces and creates new 'distinctive' ones and mixes commercial and residential uses⁹.

With respect to the design of the retail development's roof-scape, CABA advise that this must be treated as the 5th elevation requiring its own 'design strategy' (based on landscape design principles). CABA advise against incorporating rooftop parking (unless integrated with the design of the roof to minimize visual impacts) and service plant. Instead, consideration should be given to incorporating such as rooftop gardens and restaurant terraces.

As previously stated, it is extremely important to ensure that any new retail-led mixed use scheme located on a brownfield infill site fits well with the existing movement network. In this respect, the aim is to create a legible and distinctive environment that makes use of views and vistas of existing and new landmarks (buildings and spaces) as well as ensuring connectivity between existing and proposed circulation routes.

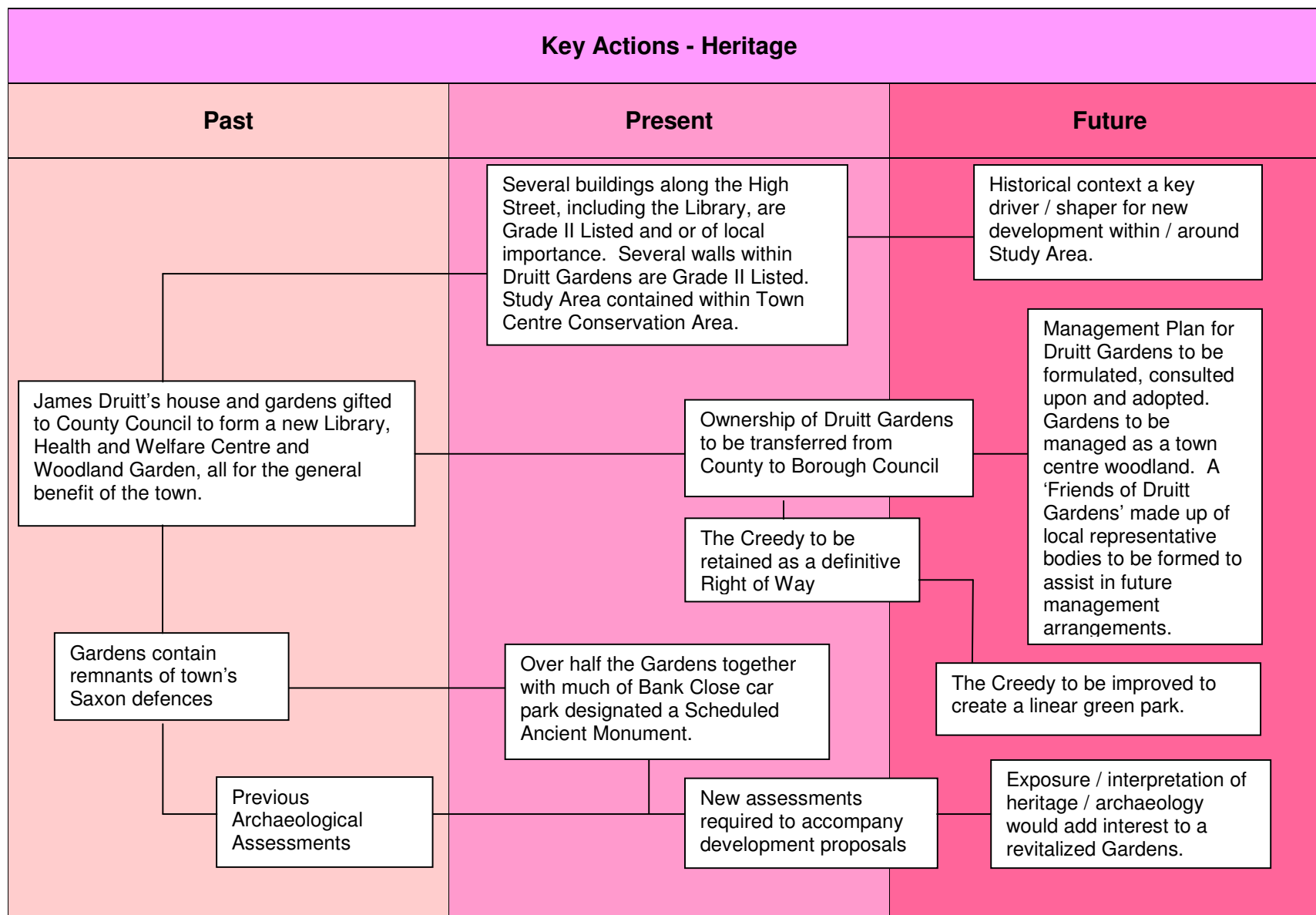
In terms of residential uses, the Character Assessment has identified that the greatest opportunity for increasing the Borough's supply of housing lies within the town centre. Taking this point further, the Strategy concludes ... "*... there is sufficient demand to support new housing in the town centre. Not only would this go some way to satisfying the Borough's housing targets, it would also bring new activity and community into the town centre*". It goes on ... "*homes for local people, and particularly first-time buyers, are in short supply and should therefore form part of the emerging strategy for the town centre*".

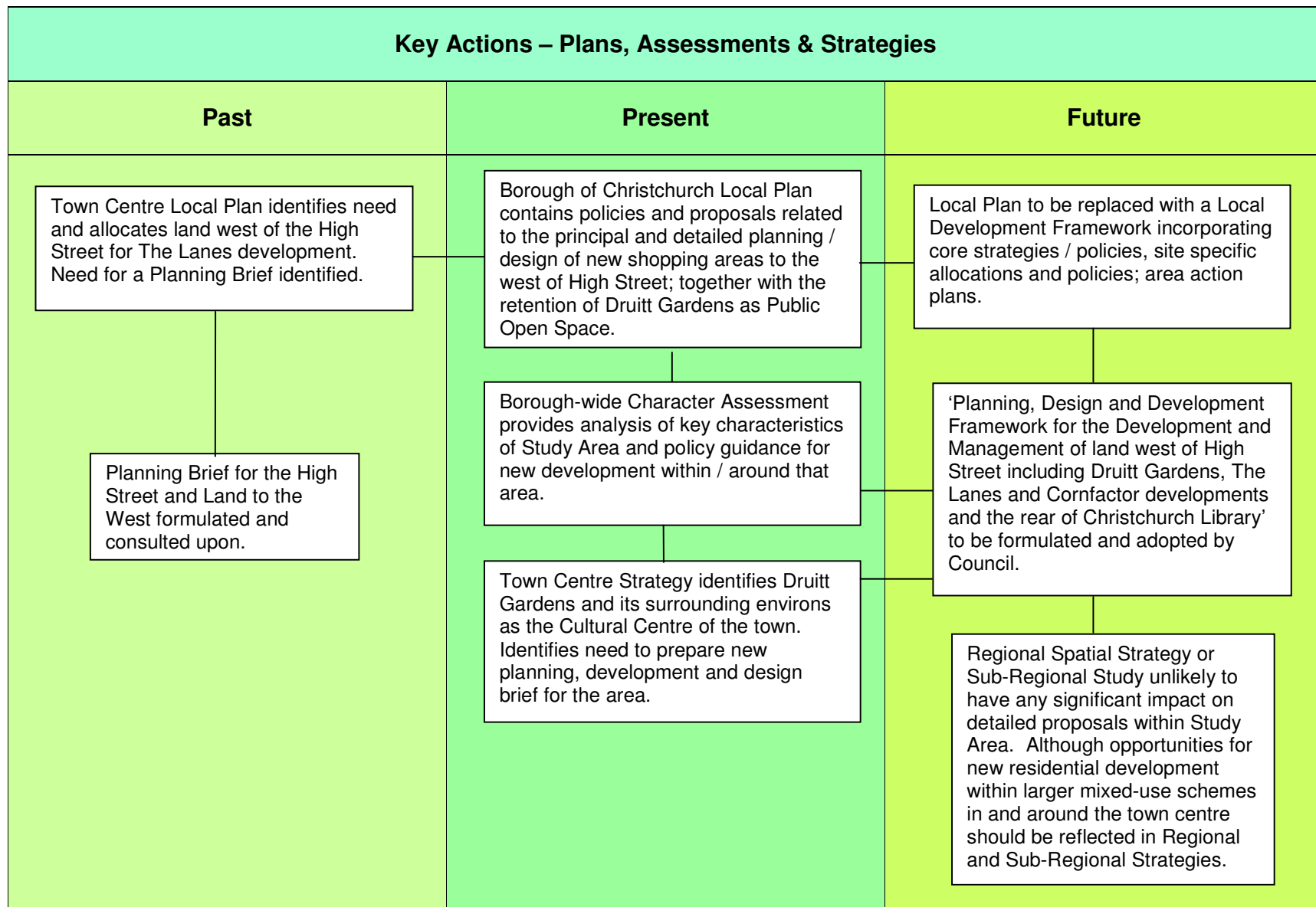
The following *flowcharts* identify the future key actions required to deliver a successful redevelopment of the core study area.

⁸ Use double aspect or back-to-back units.

⁹ In promoting mixed commercial / residential schemes, CABA advise against separating the retail and residential components (i.e. encourages combining these uses within the same buildings).

⁷ By Design, DETR & CABA, 2000





Key Actions – Policies		
Past	Present	Future
<p>Policy SH 2 of the Town Centre Local Plan identifies the need and allocates sites for new development to the west of High Street and furthermore, identifies need for a Planning Brief.</p>	<p>Policy ES 5 Borough of Christchurch Local Plan develops Policy SH 2. Built Environment Policies promote redevelopment of 3 – 9 High Street; provide guidance for development within conservation areas; development of / around Listed and local interest buildings; development affecting Scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological important sites; residential development; improvements to car parks together with the designation of Druitt Gardens as Public Open Space.</p> <p>Character Assessment Policies provide guidance on Design and Quality of new Development, Local Distinctiveness and Sustainability; Density of new Residential Development; Development affecting Conservation Areas, Special Character Areas, Streetscape Areas and Areas of Good Quality Public Townscape.</p> <p>Recommended proposals and actions of Town Centre Strategy look forward 10 – 15 yrs Druitt Gardens to be improved and managed as town centre woodland. Gardens, Library, Regent Centre, Druitt Hall and Heritage Centre to become focus for establishing town's Cultural Centre. Gardens used to help improve the town's footpath network.</p>	<p>Majority of existing Local Plan policies to be 'saved' under transitional arrangements until Local Development Framework complete. Policies ES 5, BE 7, L 4, P 1, H 6 & T 11 to be revised to reflect situation at the time. Policies T 8, L 1, BE 1, BE 13, BE 20 and BE 21 to be revised and included within proposed 'Core Strategy'. Policies BE 2, BE 3, BE 4, BE 14, BE 15, BE 16 and BE 19 to be 'saved' but possibly revised to reflect best practice and changes to national policy guidance.</p> <p>Character Assessment policies & Town Centre Strategy to be treated as supplementary planning guidance and considered as 'other material considerations' in determining planning applications,</p>

Key Actions – Development (I)		
Past	Present	Future
Proposals for redevelopment of Cornfactor site submitted (95) and finally approved (02). Scheme includes 2 retail units, 1 financial services unit, 5 café / restaurant units & 11 residential units.	Revised proposals for 4 retail units, 2 café / restaurant units, 2 financial services units and 18 residential units refused permission in March 2004.	The Borough Council acting as landowner and Local Planning Authority can shape / direct new development to ensure integration with its environs and conformity with adopted strategies, plans and policies.
Dorset County Council progress county-wide review of property assets.	County Council commences refurbishment of Library and makes plans for its extension.	Ownership of 'Library access' retained by DCC but 'pedestrianised'.
Informal discussions between County and Borough Councils and private landowners aimed at removing blockages to The Lanes development.	Principles of land transfers agreed. Third Party Landowners agree to work through Planning / Development Framework process.	Outdoor performance area to be created and managed by Regent Centre. Optimum location close to Centre to be identified.
Informal plans for development of northern ES 5 policy area submitted to DCC and later copied to CBC.	Town Centre Strategy proposes establishment of an outdoor performance area within Druitt Gardens.	Options to relocate Druitt Hall include rear of Library Gardens, retention of Hall within Gardens but relocated to Sopers Lane frontage or along boundary with Bank Close car park or locations within ES 5 areas (i.e. The Lanes or Cornfactor sites).
Christchurch Housing Society agrees to principal of relocating Druitt Hall.	Specification of new Hall to be determined.	Options for a Heritage Centre site include rear of Library Gardens or within ES 5 Policy areas.
Christchurch History Society working through the Community Partnership and endorsed by Town Centre Forum propose a Heritage Centre possibly in / around Druitt Gardens.		Part of the Library Gardens to be incorporated within Druitt Gardens.

Key Actions - Development (II)		
Past	Present	Future
<p>Several attempts over the past 50 yrs to bring forward various development proposals in / around Druitt Gardens created atmosphere of threat / mistrust.</p> <p>Land assembly and development of Bank Close and Wick Lane car parks.</p> <p>Extension of Regent Centre.</p> <p>Possibility of relocating Post Office Sorting Office.</p>	<p>Framework must make plans / proposals explicit & transparent. Public consultation & involvement in future management of Gardens.</p> <p>Town Centre Forum (July 04) endorsed preparation of framework with aim of ensuring The Lanes, Library and Cornfactor sites are considered as a single entity and that relationship between new development and Druitt Gardens is dealt with sympathetically. Forum of the view that there should be a 'soft transition' between new development and the Gardens sweeping through development areas towards the High Street. Druitt Hall to be relocated on boundary with Bank Close car park rather than Sopers Lane frontage and Library Gardens to become part of larger Druitt Gardens POS.</p>	<p>Use of Library Gardens and Library extension key to determining relationship (physical / uses) with The Lanes, Cornfactor site and Druitt Gardens. Issue of retaining Listed wall and Holm Oaks (Library Gardens). Outcome partially dependent upon whether Library Gardens integrated into POS or retained as site for Druitt Hall or Heritage Centre.</p> <p>Future management of Druitt Gardens:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a structured native broad leaved woodland comprising native tree species with rotationally coppiced understorey and a ground flora of a typical bluebell / wild flower wood. To protect / enhance wildlife value. To provide safe and managed public access and initiate regular wardening. To provide / restore boundaries, furniture / infrastructure and create sympathetic walking, viewing & seating areas etc. To provide interpretation (flora, fauna, archaeology, history) & encourage public use / participation. <p>Initial capital cost of works estimated at £30,000.</p>

Key Actions - Design (I)

Past / Present

Most significant area of good quality streetscape. A Conservation and Special Character Area. Retention of Medieval 'small grain' street pattern. Enclosure and intimacy of spaces. Area of mixed uses including public civic buildings and spaces. Retention of historic plot sizes / widths. Retention of some important historic buildings and facades. Glimpsed / framed views / vistas – serial vision. Key 'borough' and 'neighbourhood' landmarks include the Library, old Town Hall, Midland Bank, Millhams St Church and the Priory. Strong but varied building lines with set-backs to create difference and interest. 'Domestic' scale, proportions and building heights (generally 2 – 2½ storey). Irregular roof-lines with roofs sloping to a consistent eaves line and unbroken by dormers or rooflights.

Extensive areas of tree cover and green spaces create back-drops, settings and routes (The Creedy / Avenue across Barrack Rd Recreation Ground). A mix of open (long views; exposure; 'active' uses / spaces) and enclosed (short / glimpsed / framed views; shelter; intimacy; passive uses / spaces) areas. Tree cover acts as an 'edge' screening town centre commercial core from more westerly residential neighbourhoods.

Hostile / unfriendly 'faces / places'. Clutter of rear elevations and 'back-land' spaces. Bland areas of hard-standing (car parks). Poor connections and linkages (physical / visual).

Future

The Council has adopted the principles of 'By Design' (DETR / CABE, 2000). According to this, *"Good urban design is rarely brought about by a local authority prescribing physical solutions or by setting rigid or empirical design standards but by approaches which emphasise design objectives or principles ... Successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities tend to have characteristics in common. These factors have been analysed to produce principles or objectives of good urban design. They help to remind us what should be sought to create a successful place. There is considerable overlap between the objectives and they are mutually reinforcing"*.

In order to create **character**, i.e. *a place with its own identity*, the following guidelines should be followed:-

1. The layout of new development must positively respond to the site's form and character by conserving and enhancing natural features and ecology.
2. In broad terms, new development must be integrated into its landscape setting through the use of structure planting, shelter belts, green wedges and corridors and using local plant species. In specific terms, Druit Gardens should not be considered as providing a backdrop to development areas but the character of the Gardens should be used as a key design characteristic of the urban / landscape design of those new areas, i.e. the character of the Gardens should be reflected within the new development.
3. Respond to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces to ensure that adjacent buildings relate to each other, streets are connected and spaces complement one another. The use of narrow plots widths will promote active frontages, increase enclosure and allow higher density.
4. Respond to / interpret local building forms and patterns of development to reinforce sense of place. Make use of distinctive forms, treatments, materials, architectural detailing etc. Modern contemporary urban, landscape and architectural design that reflects and is sympathetic to its historic context will be encouraged.
5. Use local materials, building methods and detail to enhance distinctiveness. Consider how public art, lighting, boundary treatments, street furniture, paving and planting etc can enhance distinctiveness.
6. Ensure that the scale, massing and height of new development fits with that of adjoining buildings, the topography of the site, the general pattern of heights within the area while helping to enhance views, vistas and landmarks. Opportunities to 'mask' existing poor quality facades (e.g. backs of buildings) must be taken.

Key Actions - Design (II)	
Past / Present	Future
<p>Interesting building / architectural detailing above shop-fronts providing hints of historic character. Retail units mostly conversions of residential properties thus retaining domestic character and scale. Retention of historic plot sizes constrain size of retail units and thus market potential. High quality 'traditional' materials (brick; painted render; timber windows / doors; tiled / slate roofs).</p> <p>Unsympathetic / uncharacteristic contemporary commercial development resulting in loss of historic buildings, spaces, shop-fronts / facades. Unsympathetic / uncoordinated advertisements / signage.</p>	<p>In order to create continuity and enclosure, i.e. <i>places where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished</i>, the following guidelines should be followed:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buildings should relate to clearly defined building lines that reinforce and define the street. 2. Ensure that primary access into buildings is from the street. 3. Give careful consideration to 'fronts' and 'backs'. New buildings should not back-on-to public spaces / places. Dual and even quadruple frontages may be necessary in some locations. 4. Clearly define and enclose private space at the back of buildings to provide privacy / security. 5. Buildings should help define streets and public spaces. <p>In order to ensure a high quality public realm, i.e. <i>a place with attractive / successful outdoor areas</i>, the following guidelines should be followed:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the system of open and green spaces respect natural features and are accessible. 2. G.F. uses relate to passing pedestrians and create activity / interest. 3. Public spaces relate well to surrounding buildings. 4. Layout of development encourages natural surveillance. 5. Public art and street furniture are integrated into the overall design of public space and enhance identity. <p>In order to ensure ease of movement, i.e. <i>a place that is easy to get to and move through</i>, the following guidelines should be followed:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A network of connected spaces and routes is created. 2. Access and circulation contribute towards the fine grain network of existing routes within and beyond the site.

Key Actions - Design (III)	
Past / Present	Future
	<p>In order to ensure legibility, i.e. <i>a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand</i>, the following guidelines should be followed:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buildings, spaces and routes should be designed to enhance existing views and vistas, and create new ones. 2. The design, location and function of buildings must reinforce the identity and character of routes and spaces. 3. Corners should be well designed to enhance legibility by creating visual interest and distinctive identity. <p>In order to ensure adaptability, i.e. <i>a place that can change easily</i>, the following guidelines should be followed:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use simple, robust building forms that are flexible to allow a variety of future uses. 2. Ensure outdoor places are capable of being used for a range of activities. <p>In order to ensure diversity, i.e. <i>a place with variety and choice</i>, the following guidelines should be followed:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a mix of uses that attract people to live, work and enjoy the area. 2. Create diversity in layout, building form and tenure to contribute towards making successful living and working environments.

Key Actions - Uses (ES 5 Policy Areas) (I)		
Past	Present	Future
<p>Study Area contained a broad range of mixed uses including residential, retail, financial and professional services, public houses and Inns, breweries, small scale manufacturing together with education / community uses.</p> <p>Assembly of land to create two major town centre car parks.</p> <p>Domestic gardens amalgamated to ultimately create Druitt Gardens as woodland.</p>	<p>Study Area retains its mixed-use character.</p> <p>Permission granted on Cornfactor site for 2 retail units, 1 financial services unit, 5 café / restaurant type units and 11 flats.</p> <p>A revised scheme comprising 4 retail units, 2 office units, 2 café / restaurant type units and 18 residential units (6 houses & 12 flats) refused consent.</p> <p>Borough of Christchurch Local Plan recommends that the Lanes and Corn Factor sites are redeveloped for retail-led mixed uses including residential, service-type uses (A2), food and drink (A3) together with non-residential institutions (D1) and leisure / entertainment uses (D2).</p> <p>Town Centre Strategy rec. optimizing residential in town centre. Recognises that existing retail units are too small to attract high street multiples and that there are gaps in town's retail / A3 offer. Unlikely to attract large office users but could attract leisure development. Identifies opportunity to create Heritage Centre.</p>	<p>ES 5 policy areas developed as mixed use schemes to reinforce historical nature of Study Area and commercial vitality of High Street / town centre. Emphasis placed on establishing new A1 (retail) & A3 (food + drink) uses at G.F.L. to reflect development pattern of High Street / Saxon Square; to create interesting / vibrant open spaces and active G.F. facades; to reinforce commercial vitality; to increase footfall; and improve town's retail offer.</p> <p>New retail floor-space targeted at <i>comparison</i> sector and developed in the form of a mix of G.F. units of different sizes. Each ES 5 area to contain a mix of unit sizes and at least 1 'anchor' A1 or A3 unit with a min. net sales (trading) area of 100 sq m (1,000 sq ft). In overall terms, the Post Office Arcade / Sorting Office site will be expected to provide a minimum of 650 sq m of net retail sales area, the Lanes, 500 sq m and the Cornfactor site, 250 sq m.</p> <p>Each ES 5 area will be expected to deliver a mix of other uses e.g. business / services (A2 / B1), community / institutional (D1) leisure (D2) and residential (C3).</p>

Key Actions - Uses (ES 5 Policy Areas) (II)		
Past	Present	Future
	<p>Christchurch Retail Capacity Assessment recommends that there is no quantitative capacity for additional food and <i>convenience</i> floorspace in Christchurch up to 2011 but there is capacity to increase <i>comparison</i> retail floorspace by around 2400 sq m (26,000 sq ft) net sales.</p> <p>Christchurch Town Centre Healthcheck recommends development of new <i>comparison-goods</i> floorspace. New A3 floorspace should be designed to attract regional / national multiples.</p> <p>Existing medium – larger retail units (above 2,500 sq ft) should be retained to provide opportunities to attract regional / national multiples.</p> <p>Town Centre Forum and Increased Prosperity Action Group (Christchurch Community Partnership) support principle of establishing a Heritage Centre (see Town Centre Strategy) on a site within the Study Area.</p>	<p>The majority of development at G.F.L. must either be commercial (A1, A2, A3, B1 or D2) or for community use (D1). Residential should generally be at 1st floor level above G.F. commercial uses.</p> <p>Residential accommodation should be targeted at single households or couples without school-age children due to the lack of associated outdoor private amenity space within development areas.</p> <p>All ES 5 areas will be expected to deliver Public Open Space, circulation and servicing space.</p> <p>No on-site parking provision to be provided within The Lanes or Cornfactor ES 5 policy areas.</p> <p>Sites for Heritage Centre and new Druitt Hall to be agreed.</p>

Key Actions – Benefits & Finances (I)

Past / Present

Section 106 Planning Agreement linked to previous consent for development of Cornfactor site (Ref. 8/95/0269/F) makes provision for :-

- Off-site parking provision at £10,000 per space.
- Provision of new service bay within Wick Lane car park.
- Extension of CCTV coverage (£3,000).
- Maintaining and cleaning public thoroughfares.
- Pedestrian and emergency access.
- Deliveries and servicing.

Christchurch Borough Council has allocated £50,000 to purchase Druitt Gardens from Dorset County Council and £30,000 from the Town Centre Capital Programme for immediate improvement works. The Borough Council will be bidding for further finance from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Christchurch Borough Council has identified a budget of £23,000 to improve town centre signage and £19,500 to progress 20 MPH traffic management scheme in the High Street. Just over £90,000 remains of the Town Centre Enhancement budget for other environmental improvement works.

£200,000 is available through the Local Transport Plan for town centre enhancement.

Future

Development of ES 5 policy areas will be expected to make financial contributions towards off-site parking provision; the provision of off-site service infrastructure, as required; extension of CCTV coverage; maintenance and cleaning of public spaces / thoroughfares; off-site highway improvements, as required; and, public art. Agreements will need to cover emergency access and the control of deliveries and servicing. Developers will also need to factor-in the costs of archaeological surveys and any resulting works; tree and any other surveys deemed necessary and any resulting works.

£5,000 p.a. for annual maintenance of Druitt Gardens to be included in Borough Council revenue budget, from 2006/07.

Borough Council to bid for funding through Heritage Lottery Fund.

The following works are to be financed through a mix of public and private funding:

1. demolition of Listed wall (resp. of Heritage Centre developer and or Lanes developer)
2. felling of adjacent Holm Oaks to open up Library gardens (resp. of DCC).
3. demolition of boundary wall between Library gardens and Cornfactor site (resp. of Cornfactor developer).
4. removal of rear boundary fencing to Library gardens (resp. of DCC).
5. remodelling and resurfacing of Library access lane in form, style and materials to be agreed with CBC (resp. of Lanes developer and DCC).
6. landscaping and resurfacing of Library gardens as formal hard and soft POS, to be agreed with CBC (resp. of Heritage Centre developer, Lanes developer and DCC).
7. creation of new Gateway entrance to Library access lane in form of metal artwork arch – signing Druitt Gardens (resp. of Heritage Centre developer, Lanes developer and DCC).
8. agreed programme for the removal of parking and vehicular access from Library access lane (resp. of DCC).

Key Actions – Benefits & Finances (II)	
Past / Present	Future
	<p>The cost of demolishing and rebuilding a new Druitt Hall is to be borne by Christchurch Housing Society, although the Society has indicated that it would require external grant funding to proceed with implementation.</p> <p>The cost of developing and operating the Heritage Centre is to be privately funded.</p> <p>The cost of stopping-up the pedestrian access either side of the Regent Centre is to be borne by CBC.</p> <p>The cost of upgrading the access into the Lanes development / Bank Close car park, including formation of 'Gateway' from High Street, is to be borne by Lanes developer and possibly other adjacent landowners / occupiers).</p> <p>Cost of upgrading The Creedy and forming new 'Gateways' is to be borne by CBC as part of the overall upgrading of Druitt Gardens.</p> <p>The cost of developing an outdoor performance area is to be borne by CBC, supplemented by external funding, as part of the overall upgrading of Druitt Gardens.</p>

