

TOTTON TOWN CENTRE DESIGN BRIEF

TOTTON & ELING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

DRAFT REPORT

AUGUST 2025 (UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2026)

TOTTON TOWN CENTRE DESIGN BRIEF

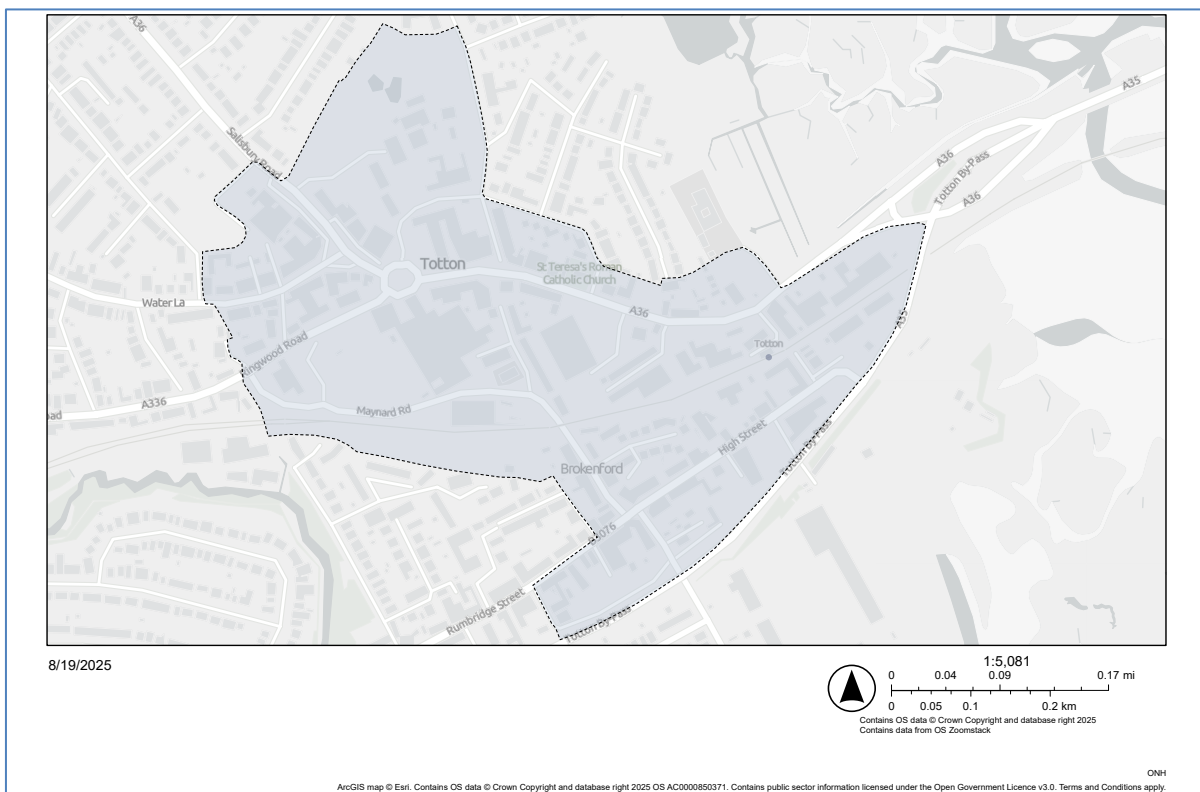
VERSION 2 – SEPTEMBER 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- 1.1 Totton & Eling Town Council (TETC) is producing the Totton & Eling Neighbourhood Plan (TENP). It has engaged with the local community on a range of planning and development related issues over the last few years to inform the plan scope and content.
- 1.2 One such issue is concern about the way in which Totton Town Centre (see Plan A) may change in future years and how that may harm the character of the centre and the wider town. The local planning authority and partial landowner, New Forest District Council (NFDC), has just commenced bringing forward a new Local Plan and has recently finalised a Totton Town Centre Framework Masterplan to promote the redevelopment of the centre.



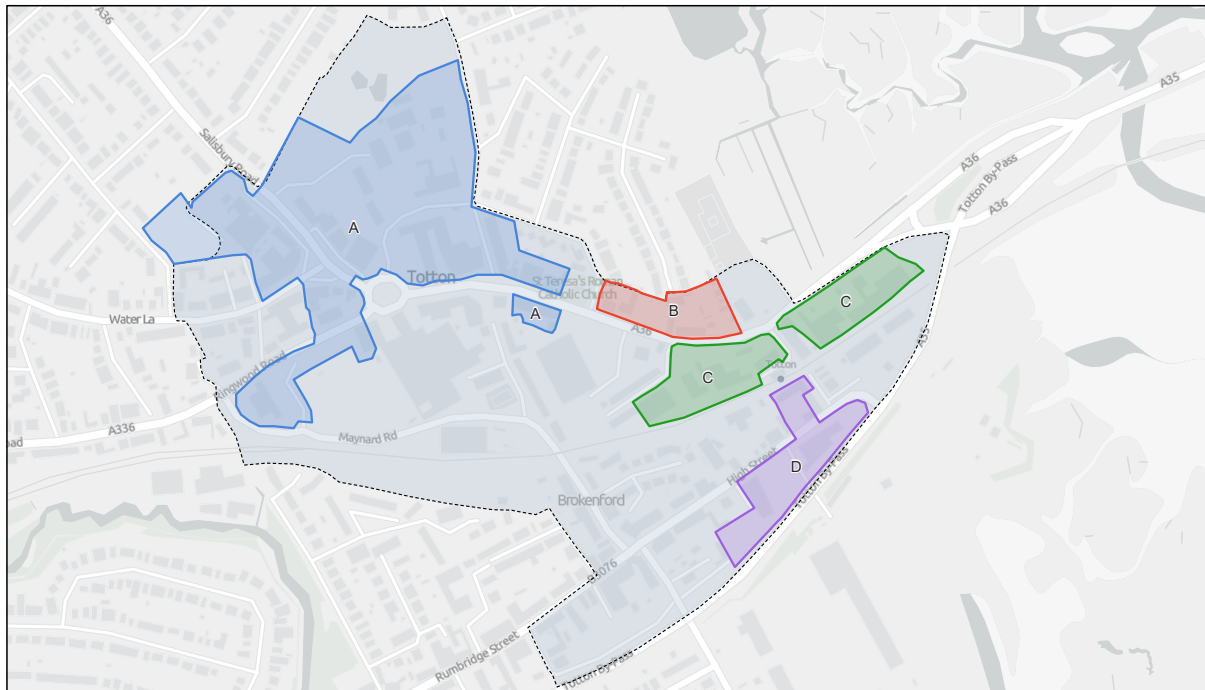
Plan A: Totton Town Centre

- 1.3 The Local Plan may favour the intensification of urban land within the town's boundary. The town centre offers the majority of brownfield opportunities on older industrial and commercial land and with the consolidation of civic buildings. The Masterplan has tested the extent to which this potential may be realised and to encourage co-ordinated planning applications for redevelopment to be submitted.
- 1.4 Neither TETC nor the local community disagree with these overall objectives but the town is very much characterised by its low density and even its town centre currently has no building taller than four storeys. TETC therefore wishes to use the Neighbourhood Plan to frame key design principles in a TENP policy as an expression of majority community opinion.
- 1.5 The Design Brief has been prepared by planning and design consultants, ONH Planning for Good, on behalf of TETC. Its method follows a conventional approach of establishing

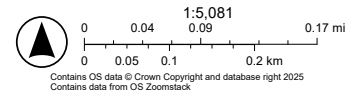
the baseline character and testing the extent to which the location, scale, height and form of new buildings may affect that character. It focuses on a small number of locations where change is more likely and where there is perceived to be a greater risk of adverse effects, most notably to heritage assets. The output is a draft policy for inclusion in the TENP and the Brief will be published in the evidence base.

- 1.6 This document was originally prepared in August 2025 before the Totton Town Centre Framework Masterplan was produced. The resulting document finalised in July 2026, has promoted a review of this Brief. As a result, there is a reduction in maximum height from 8 storeys to 6 storeys for the locations for the highest buildings, but the remainder of the document is unchanged, save for the resulting update to the proposed policy wording.
- 1.7 The TENP is content with this reduction in height but does not agree with the Framework Masterplan that this can be applied throughout the Town Centre. As such, the Areas of Change as set out below, continue to promote different design responses in terms of building height.
- 1.8 The goal of the study and policy is to help shape positive change in the town centre. In which case it focuses on those parts of the centre that are more likely to change through the intervention of the Masterplan. In which case, the following Areas or Change are defined (see Plan B):
 - A. the Shopping Core (comprising land on Commercial Road (east to No.65), Ringwood Road, Popes Lane, Water Lane, Salisbury Road, Library Road and Testwood Lane)
 - B. Commercial Road northside (comprising land at Nos 83-99)
 - C. Commercial Road southside (comprising all the industrial land between the Redbridge Causeway up to the Retail Park, except No.138, No.128, the Station Building and Nos. 12-28 Station Road North and the residential properties on Mill Road)
 - D. High Street (comprising the industrial land at Nos. 26A, 61-65 and 62-68 and the public car park behind Elingfield House)
- 1.9 There may be other sites that come forward for redevelopment but these appear to be those with the greatest potential for redevelopment and intensification.

Totton Tall Buildings



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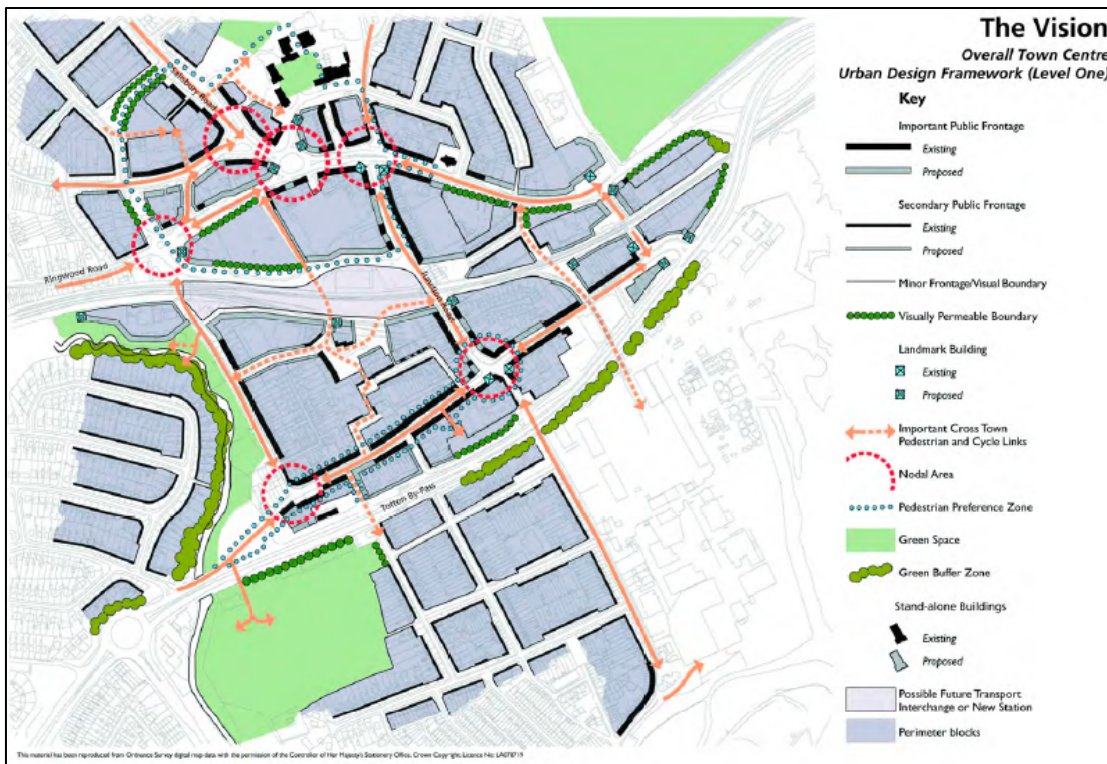
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Plan B: Areas of Potential Redevelopment

2. BASELINE CHARACTER ANALYSIS

2.1 The baseline character of the town centre has been well established by previous studies, most notably the 2003 Totton Town Centre Urban Design Framework. The Framework has a wider scope than is covered in this Brief but very little has changed in the town centre since then so its specific design findings remain relevant:

- A lack of character in the main 'Shopping Core' and along its Ringwood Road entrance
- Little sense of arrival into the centre from Salisbury Road or Commercial Road
- Poor definition of character in 'Old Totton' (Rumbridge Street/High Street)
- Attractive station building and nearby listed buildings
- The Bypass lacks identity and offers a poor view of the town centre
- A small number of existing landmark buildings and prominent other locations in the streetscene where new landmark buildings may create visual character and improve legibility
- Some 'nodal areas' at key junctions as more locations for new landmark buildings
- An incoherent urban form for the most part that would benefit from completing perimeter blocks to create clearer routes and spaces

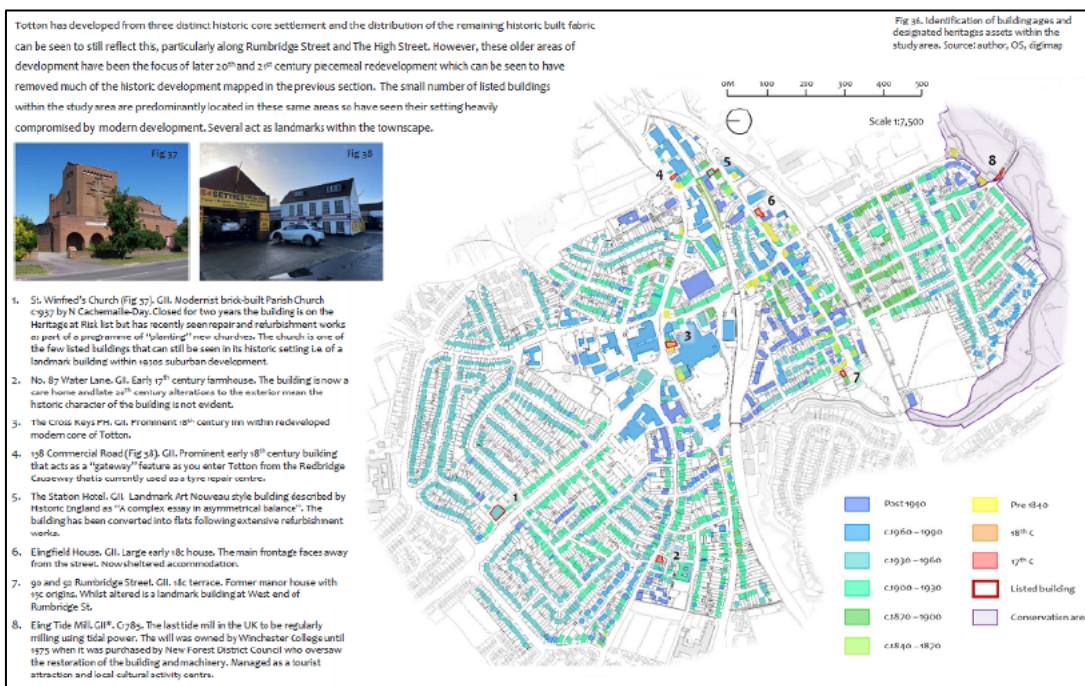


Separately, the oldest surviving buildings in the town centre can be seen on the 1869 maps. All are listed apart from the Methodist Chapel on Ringwood Road, the Elephant & Castle Inn on Commercial Road, 28 Station Road, the Station Building, the former Fairways School, and clusters of buildings along Rumbridge Street (especially 86-88) and Eling Lane (especially at Batts Corner and Nos 9A and 13).



Further analysis of the phases of building and of their typologies (by height and essential form) in the town centre reveals the following:

- The vast majority of buildings date from post 1930 and especially post 1960 – the exceptions are Station Road, Junction Road and the Rumbridge Street/High Street area
- The dominant building forms are commercial and residential blocks and residential terraces with the occasional detached residential and commercial building
- The dominant building height is two storeys but with some three storey blocks in the Shopping Core and its approaches from Ringwood Road and Water Lane
- the tallest and most substantial buildings are the Lloyds Bank, BT Exchange and County Council Office at 14m, with some others at 12m

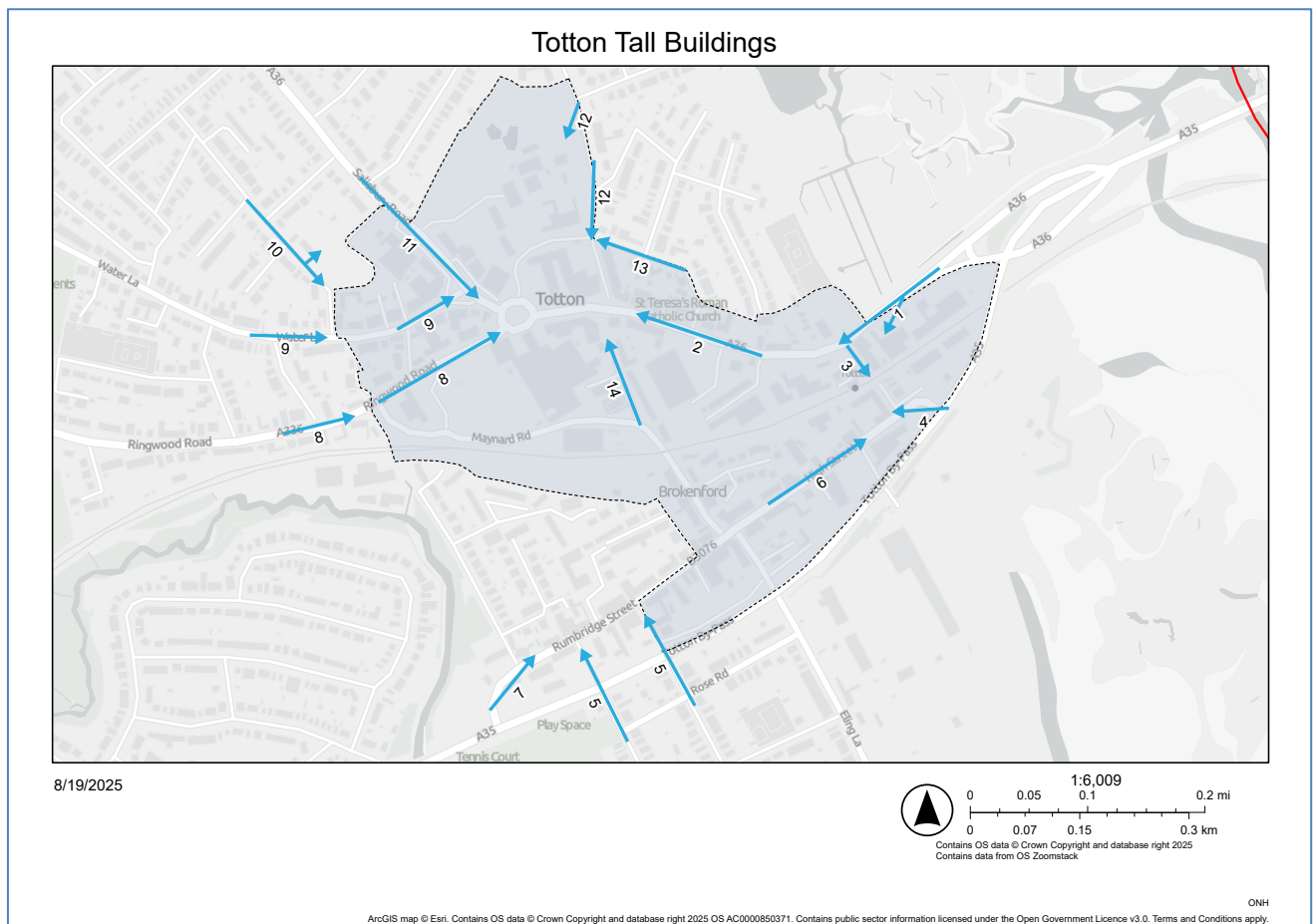


Finally, a visual survey to supplement the Framework has been undertaken. This was intended to identify key views into the town centre from key public vantage points, especially those roads that approach it. The nature of the vantage point as well as features that punctuate or terminate those views were noted:

1. a long view westwards on Commercial Road from the beginning of the commercial development on the left and expanse of the Test floodplain on the right – importantly punctuated by the oldest surviving building (the Grade II listed No.138) which is

- orientated perpendicular to the road and framed by the gable end and traditional roofscape of No.128 and buildings in Station Road – all of the brownfield land on the south side of Commercial Road is visible in this view but not that on the north side, which would be obscured by the fast food restaurant in the foreground
2. another long view westwards on Commercial Road from Chestnut Cottages on the left and the storage yard on the right framed by commercial buildings set back from the road on the left and by a sequence of two storey buildings on the right and then left – the view is terminated by the Shopping precinct
 3. the short view southwards from Commercial Road framed by the distinct and prominent mid 19C white rendered No.128 on the left corner and the cohesive, mid 19 C and early 20 C terrace on the eastern side of Station Road with a low industrial unit opposite – the view is terminated by the original decorated brick railway footbridge which leads to the right to reveal the station building of 1859, the gable of which is visible from Commercial Road above the industrial unit
 4. a glimpse view north-westwards towards the town centre from the westbound carriageway of the Bypass at its wide road junction with High Street – importantly with the distinctive former Station Hotel (Grade II listed) dominant in the middle ground but with longer views across its roof towards the brownfield land on Commercial Road and in the Shopping Core
 5. long view northwards along each of Fisher's Road and Bartram Road framed by the primarily Edwardian semi-detached, two storey houses on both – the views are terminated by buildings on Rumbridge Street: the taller gabled upper floor canted bay windows of No.38 (Fisher's) and the splendid, mid 19C three storey former brewery building at Nos. 60-62 (Bartram) – there are longer views between those buildings of the Shopping Core in the distance
 6. the long view eastwards along Rumbridge Street and High Street past Elingfield House from before Batts Corner framed by two and three storey buildings – the view is punctuated by the prominent gabled Nos. 1-2 Eling Lane to the right and the taller County Council to the left with the front of the large industrial site at No. 62A visible on the right in the distance – the is tightly framed by two storey buildings primarily at the back of pavement creating a narrowest street profile in the town centre – the view is arguably the least changed in the town centre over the last century
 7. the shorter view north-eastwards from the junction of the Bypass (eastbound) and Rumbridge Street framed by the enhanced public realm and relatively significant groups of trees at the junction and in the mid distance to the left – the view is dominated by the cottage terrace at Nos 90-98 (including the Grade II listed Nos. 90-92) and then, as the road bends right, in combination with Nos. 86-88, a pair of low, early 19C cottages in distinct painted render and lay tile roof, creating a special historic entrance to Rumbridge Street – through the gap between them there is a long distance view towards the Shopping Core
 8. the long view eastwards along Ringwood Road to the Shopping Core framed by a three storey block to the left and a large, landscaped car park behind a low brick wall to the right – the view is terminated by the main Shopping precinct (and gradually Nos 45-53 Commercial Road) and is punctuated by the taller Nos. 2-4 Ringwood Road on the right and earlier by the prominent site on the right (corner with Maynard Road) occupied by a large petrol station
 9. the long view eastwards along Water Lane from its Pope's Lane junction towards the Shopping Core framed by three storey (10m) buildings along its length – the view is terminated by Nos 5-9 Salisbury Road with the public realm around that junction appreciable in its foreground
 10. the short view south-eastwards along Westfield Road framed by low density, detached, suburban houses set back from the road on both sides – whilst the view is terminated by the low, two storey flatted residential scheme at Hayton Court, the public

- car park is gradually revealed on the left before that point is reached, with views across the car park to the rest of the Shopping Core
11. long views southwards along Salisbury Road at the entrance to the Shopping Core with a car park on the left and a two storey commercial block on the right – the view is framed by some mature street trees on both sides of the road and is punctuated by the taller roof at Testvale Surgery on the left and is terminated by Nos. 7-11 Water Lane – the main Shopping area at Commercial Road/Ringwood Road only becomes visible as the left bend in the road is almost upon the roundabout
 12. the long view southwards from Testwood Lane framed by low density suburban houses set back from the road on the left and the Park on the right – there are extensive views across the Park to the Shopping Core area (especially the rear of the civic buildings that adjoin it) and the view is eventually terminated by the rear of the Shopping precinct on Library Road as the road bends slightly right
 13. the shorter view westwards along Beaumont Road framed by detached, two storey suburban houses set back from the road – the view is terminated by the former Police building but the wider shopping area becomes visible on the left towards its junction with Testwood Lane
 14. the shorter view northwards along Junction Road towards the Shopping Core framed by St Mary's Hall and the former cinema (12m) on the left and a two storey terrace of houses on the right – the view is terminated by the Shopping precinct and punctuated on the left by the unusual octagonal roof of the tall Lloyds building



Plan C: Key Views into the Town Centre

3. DESIGN OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES

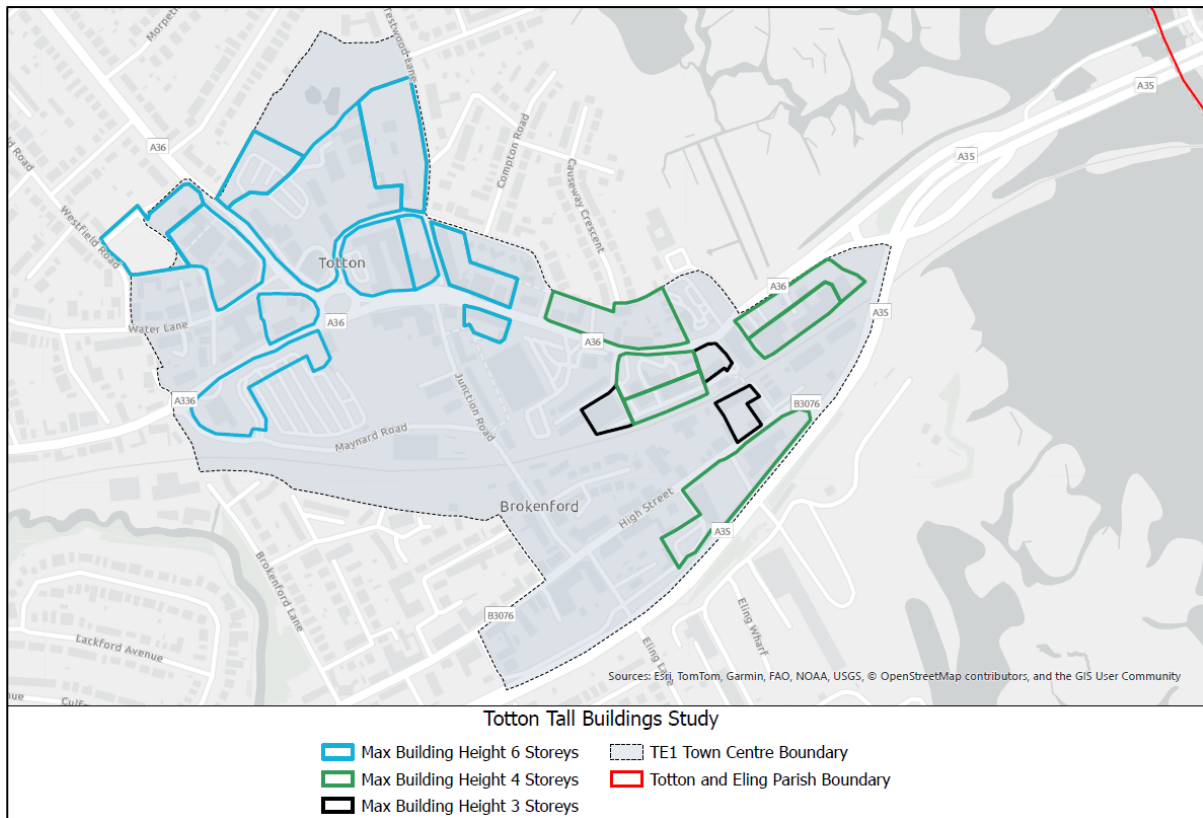
The analysis of the baseline, together with the community engagement work completed already, provides the basis for a set of design objectives:

- manage change that does not fundamentally alter the character of the town centre and its surroundings
- enhance the ways that the few historic buildings and areas in the town centre can be appreciated and enjoyed
- allow for a scale of intensification of the existing built form through plot coverage and building heights

With these objectives in mind, the following key design principles are proposed:

- no obscuring or substantial silhouetting of a listed building in a defined key view
- increase building heights from the existing to up to a maximum of six storeys as a transition rather than create a stark contrast
- the height of new buildings that serve to terminate a key view may be up to double the height of the existing buildings that frame the view, with taller buildings behind
- the height of new buildings that frame a key view may be up to double the height of the dominant building height on the opposite side of the view, with taller buildings behind
- the Shopping Core should be the location for the tallest cluster of buildings to define its commercial and civic function for the whole town
- new building heights on Commercial Road northside and southside should be subservient to the Shopping Core to define its secondary location before arriving at the Core beyond
- new building heights on Station Road North (westside) should be no more than three storey (with taller buildings behind) to conserve the locally special historic character of this space that is derived from its layout beginning with the station and ending with the completion of the terrace of office and retail units 70 or so later
- new buildings in High Street should be of a height that is subservient to those of the Commercial Road areas and should be built up to the back of pavement of High Street to reflect the lower buildings, tighter grain and narrower street profile of the historic urban form of the area, most especially enhancing the contrast of the open setting to the listed Elingfield House
- new buildings on the land to the rear of the former Station Hotel on Station Road South should be no higher than three storey, with an orientation and roofscape that complements that of the listed building

These principles are illustrated on Plan D below.



Plan D: Suggested Maximum Building Heights in the Town Centre

4. DRAFT POLICY PROPOSAL

To give full weight to these design principles, it is proposed that the TENP contains the following policy:

Policy TE1: Totton Town Centre Design Principles

Proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of land in Totton Town Centre, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported where they respond positively to the locally distinctive character of the Town Centre and the following design principles, informed by the Areas of Change, key views and townscape analysis identified in the Design Brief at Appendix A:

- i. they must not obscure or substantially silhouette a listed building in a key view identified on the Policies Map;
- ii. Building heights may gradually increase from adjoining building heights up to a maximum of six storeys, with taller elements confined to locations where they perform a clearly identified townscape, landmark, gateway, civic or wayfinding function, including where they terminate an identified key view, provided that the additional height responds positively to the character and significance of that view;
- iii. new buildings which frame an identified key view should generally be no more than one storey higher than the prevailing height of adjoining or nearby buildings, unless the site is identified as an appropriate landmark location under ii;
- iv. the Shopping Core (Area of Change A in the Design Brief) should be the location for the tallest cluster of buildings to define its commercial and civic function for the whole town;
- v. within Commercial Road northside and southside (Areas of Change B and C in the Design Brief) the height of new buildings fronting Commercial Road should generally be three – four storeys to define the subservient role of the area to the Shopping Core, with taller buildings behind per ii above, maintaining an appropriate transition between the Shopping Core and surrounding lower-scale townscape. Buildings of up to five storeys may be appropriate on larger regeneration sites and an isolated building of up to six storeys may be appropriate at the identified Eastern Gateway marker location, subject to its relationship with neighbouring development, heritage assets and identified key views;
- vi. the height of new buildings on Station Road North (westside) must be no more than three storeys, with taller buildings behind per ii above, to conserve the locally special historic character of this area;
- vii. new buildings fronting the High Street (Area of Change D in the Design Brief) must be no more than four storeys to define its subservient role to the Commercial Road areas and should reflect, its lower scale, tighter grain, small plots, traditional shopfronts and narrower street profile of the historic urban form of the area, including the contrast with the open setting to the listed Eling Field House; Lower 2.5–3-storey forms should be used where appropriate to transition to existing domestic-scale development; and
- viii. new buildings on the land to the rear of the former Station Hotel on Station Road South should be designed as a stepped composition, with development near listed

buildings no higher than three storeys, of a scale, orientation and roofscape that complements the listed building and conserves its significance and setting.

The supporting text to the policy should read:

- 3.1 This policy makes positive provision for regeneration and intensification in Totton Town Centre by establishing locally specific townscape and design principles.
- 3.2 The policy has been informed by the Neighbourhood Plan Design Brief, the final Totton Town Centre Masterplan Framework (June 2026) and the NFDC Settlement Character Assessment (March 2026). Together these provide updated evidence on town-centre regeneration, prevailing building scale, roofscape, traditional building groups, green spaces and the need for a context-led approach to increased height and density.
- 3.3 The Design Brief was originally prepared in August 2025 while the Totton Town Centre Masterplan Framework was still in its early stages. Following publication of the final Masterplan in June 2026, the Town Council reviewed the Design Brief and remains satisfied with its townscape analysis and design principles. The only substantive change made to the Design Brief approach in light of the Masterplan is to reduce the maximum building height from eight to six storeys. Policy TE1 otherwise continues to give effect to the Design Brief's locally specific approach to building height, key views and townscape character.
- 3.4 The Town Council supports the overall regeneration objectives of the Town Centre Masterplan Framework and has taken the Framework into account in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the approach to building height in Policy TE1 is based principally on the locally specific evidence and design principles contained in the Design Brief (Appendix A), subject to the revised maximum height of six storeys.
- 3.5 The six-storey figure in Policy TE1 is an upper limit and not a general building height for the town centre. The appropriate height on any site will be determined by its context and the principles in the policy, with five and six-storey elements expected only in the limited locations where they perform an identified townscape, landmark, gateway, civic or wayfinding function.
- 3.6 It is noted in respect of densification in the town centre that whilst Totton Station is within the Southampton Travel to Work Area it does not currently meet the NPPF definition of a well-connected station, so the specific station-led minimum-density provisions of Policy L3 do not currently apply.
- 3.7 The Town Centre Masterplan also identifies opportunities for the redevelopment of some existing car parks. The Town Council has raised concerns about the potential loss of parking, particularly given the different patterns of use of free, chargeable, short-stay and long-stay parking and existing pressures on surrounding streets. Although parking surveys undertaken for the Masterplan identified spare capacity across the town centre as a whole, the Masterplan also recognises that further detailed work is required to establish the amount, type and location of parking needed to meet existing and future demand before individual car parks are released for redevelopment. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore does not assume that existing public car parks are surplus to requirements. Proposals involving their redevelopment should be informed by up-to-date evidence of parking demand and should demonstrate how the parking needs of the town centre, including short-stay, long-stay and accessible parking and the potential effects on surrounding streets, will be satisfactorily addressed.