



SUTTON TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON
FEBRUARY 2009

GILLESPIES

FINAL ISSUE

February 2009

Prepared by:
GILLESPIES

On behalf of:
London Borough of Sutton

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A day in the life...

PART A

Introduction

- The Brief (Overview)
- Aim of the Report
- Report Structure
- The Study Area

PART B

The Starting Point: Sutton Town Centre Today

- Introduction
- Planning Context
- Historical Development
- Understanding the Issues - Baseline Analysis
- Identifying Constraints and Opportunities

PART C

Setting out the Vision

- Introduction
- Establishing the Vision: Vision Statement
- Vision Objectives

PART D

Setting Clear Urban Design Principles and Guidance

- Introduction
- Place Making Principles
- Specific Design Principles
- Development and Land Use Strategy
- Movement and Access Strategy

PART E

The Framework – Sutton 2025

- Introduction
- Illustrative Framework
- Key Elements of the Framework
- Proposed Figure Ground
- Proposed Land Use Plan
- Proposed Building Heights
- Proposed Movement and Access

PART F

Sutton Quarters- Design Guidance

- Introduction
- The Station Gateway: Station Quarter
- St Nicholas: Cultural Quarter
- The Exchange: Retail Quarter
- Sutton Green: Urban Village Quarter

PART G

Site specific Design Guidance

- Introduction
- Potential Development Sites: Cluster SQ
- Potential Development Sites: Cluster CQ
- Potential Development Sites: Cluster RQ
- Potential Development Sites: Cluster VQ

PART H

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Conclusion
- Action Plan

APPENDIX A

Baseline Analysis

APPENDIX B

Development Schedule

A day in the life...

Tom: The Station Quarter Worker

As Tom approaches Sutton, he thinks how nice it is not to have to cram onto the trains into central London anymore; he never thought he'd find such a great job so close to home. He catches a glimpse of his office as the train pulls into the station; it's such an amazing building, a real landmark for the town. Clients are always impressed when he tells them where they are located, as the building has become a bit of an icon having won a number of awards for its architecture and eco-credentials.

Tom decides to pop for some breakfast and a coffee before heading into the office. There is just so much choice around the station, but in the end he goes for a bacon sandwich from the friendly bakery, it is Friday after all, and he can always burn it off at the gym at lunchtime!

The morning whizzes by, business seems to be going really well at the moment and they have just won another contract which should please his boss. At lunchtime, Tom decides to avoid the crowds of the High Street and instead walks past the hotel on the corner and along the pleasant tree lined Grove Road. He remembers that one of his clients is staying at the hotel and that he'd promised to take him out tonight.

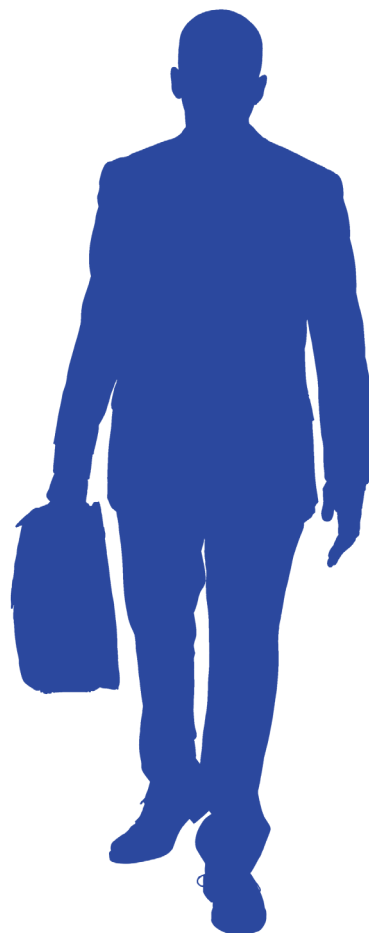
On his way to the leisure centre Tom books a table at the restaurant on the Civic Square. He then heads into the gym for a quick workout, and notices that there is also a 5-a-side football team advertising for players and that the pitches are actually on the roof of the leisure centre!

On his way back, Tom walks along the High Street, as he wants to pop into the music shop to get that new CD all his friends have been raving about. As he walks into Town Square he catches a music video on the projection screen, it's a shame he doesn't have time to sit down and enjoy it.

After a long afternoon, Tom heads out for a drink at his favourite pub on the corner, he loves the old building and the atmosphere is so laid back, people just enjoying the start of the weekend. His client turns up and they decide

to head over to the Cultural Quarter for the next drink where there are plenty of other options. The restaurant is packed when they arrive and Tom is pleased he has booked. The food is fantastic and the views from the restaurant's glass pod are amazing; the contrast of the old Church buildings, and the contemporary new Council offices, library and theatre just seems to work.

It's hard to imagine that this part of town used to be hidden behind that huge brick wall, and that the only way in was through that dark, creepy subway. Now the area seems to have been opened up, and is such a popular part of the town especially the Civic Square which just seems to draw people to it with its lights and public art. As they walk around the square, Tom spots his bus and decides to say goodbye to his client, he jumps on at the stop right next to the square and makes his journey home.



Cathy: The Nearby Resident

It was always going to be a compromise. Cathy wanted to come into Sutton to return some books to the library and do the food shopping, but her teenage daughters were on half term holiday and wanted to go clothes shopping. Still, the nice thing about Sutton now is that you really can do it all together, and getting there is so quick and easy, now that the tram goes right into the heart of the town centre.

Cathy decides she needs a coffee before they start, so they get off at the station gateway and stop at one of the many cafes and as it's a nice sunny day they decide to sit outside. Cathy remembers when this street was full of traffic, but now almost all the cafes and restaurants have tables and seats outside, it reminds her of being abroad.

After coffee (and cake!), they head off into the High Street where the girls browse around the wide range of clothes shops, the girls also discover that one of their favourite stores has just opened up along the High Street and has a sale on. As it's such a safe environment, and she imagines the girls will be some time, Cathy decides to leave them to it, while she heads off to the library.

As she walks passed a group of young musicians entertaining people in the Town Square, Cathy notices that one of the market stalls along the street is selling olives (her husband's favourite) and also can't resist the gorgeous smelling bread. It's such a lovely sunny day, but the trees offer some shade as she walks towards the Civic Quarter noticing as she passes the wonderful spire of the Church, how could she have never noticed the Church before? Cathy loves the library, it's so light and airy and the views from the upstairs windows into the square are fantastic, there seems to be so much going on in Sutton this weekend.

After returning some library books, Cathy meets up with the girls again, who have run into some of their friends and are sitting on the grass outside St Nicholas. They decide to have a late lunch in square and check out what's on at the theatre, perhaps a special treat for them all later in the week.

The girls decide to head into the urban village quarter to check out the independent shops they love so much while Cathy goes to the supermarket. They arrange to meet at the tram stop so Cathy won't have to carry the bags very far. As the girls excitedly show Cathy all their purchases, Cathy can't believe it's already teatime, her husband will be wondering where they have all got to!



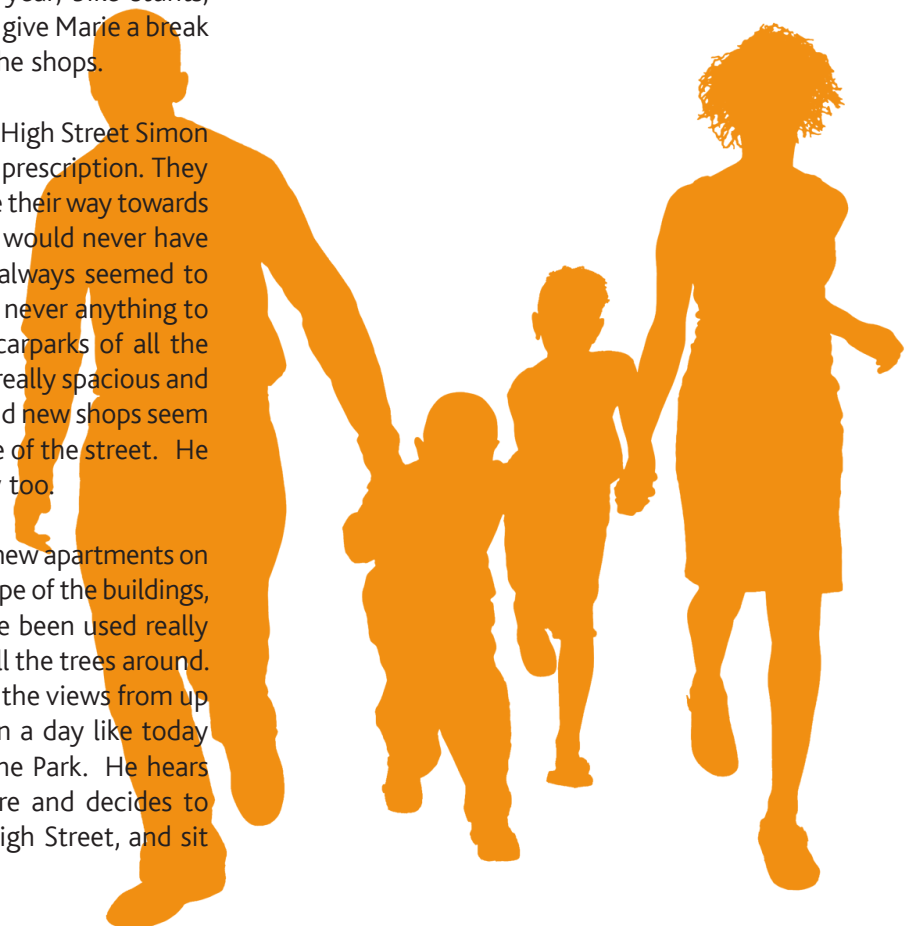
Marie and Simon: The Urban Village Quarter Residents

As he looks out of his office window, Simon sees Marie pushing Jack on the swing in the play ground below. It's great that they have managed to find such a nice house right in the heart of the town centre, better still Jack can also run his business from home with the extra space. There's also a real sense of community in the area; there's a play group close by and lots of other young families and couples in the area, and Simon has managed to pick up a new business contact, with his neighbour no less!

Simon decides to treat them all to brunch at the café on the Green, where they run into some of their friends who tell them about the Manor Park festival which is on today. Simon had seen flags on the High Street advertising the event and some images on the big screen in Town Square of some of the activities from last year; bike stunts, music, and a city farm. He decides to give Marie a break and take Jack, while she heads into the shops.

As they walk together up through the High Street Simon stops at the health clinic to drop off a prescription. They continue along Throwley Way to make their way towards the Park. Simon remembers how he would never have walked along this road before, as it always seemed to be so busy with traffic and there was never anything to look at except the blank walls and car parks of all the shops onto the High Street. Now it's really spacious and pleasant walking through the trees and new shops seem to be opening all the time on this side of the street. He loves the sight of the tram gliding by too.

As they approach, Simon admires the new apartments on the corner of the Park, the unusual shape of the buildings, and the natural materials which have been used really fit in with the green of the park and all the trees around. He catches someone on the balcony; the views from up there must be amazing, especially on a day like today when there is so much activity on the Park. He hears live music coming from Town Square and decides to take a slight detour back into the High Street, and sit and share an ice-cream with Jack.



Heading back into the Park Jack notices the number of people cycling to the festival and the number of bikes locked up on the racks at the entrance. After watching the skateboarders and bikes do their stunts at the edge of the park, Simon takes Jack to the city farm petting zoo. It takes a while to drag Jack away from the pigs, but Simon realizes they must head back to get Jack ready for bed as he's promised to take Marie to the cinema tonight. It's just so great to have everything within walking distance of home!

INTRODUCTION

PART
A

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Sutton Town Centre is at an important point in its development. The Town Centre has been identified in the London Plan as a Metropolitan Centre within the South West London sub-region and will need to accommodate significant amount of new homes, commercial, employment and cultural/ leisure uses within its central area over the next fifteen years, promoting sustainable lifestyles. The area is a vibrant, accessible and attractive part of London, which in parts inspires, excites and delights. It is the administrative, civic and commercial heart of the London Borough of Sutton.

The London Borough of Sutton is currently in the process of producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) which will map out the future of the Town Centre in planning, development and economic terms. The purpose of the Urban Design Framework is not; however, to override or duplicate ideas explored to date for the area but to complement and provide a spatial, design-led input into the approach being pursued. The Urban Design Framework will, therefore, form a key evidential component of the Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF) and will be the basis of a successful future for both the Borough and its' Town Centre.

The approach, policies and physical composition of the framework will provide extra guidance on the thoughts developed to date to capitalise on the potential of the Town Centre. This is critical in order to capitalise upon and optimise the regeneration opportunities within the Borough and wider South London area.

In this context, Gillespies were appointed by the London Borough of Sutton to prepare an aspirational masterplan for the Town Centre that will add clarity, design direction and vision to the AAP process. Its focus will be on urban design and place shaping, concentrating on built development, movement and the public realm.

The Brief (An Overview)

The Council have appointed Urban Designers Gillespies to prepare an Urban Design Framework for the Town Centre that:

- › Is needed to ensure a design-led, masterplan approach to the forward planning of Sutton Town Centre for the next 15 years;
- › To prepare more detailed design advice in relation to four key clusters of development sites, that were identified in consultation with Council officers. This involved, in effect, the preparation of outline urban design briefs, in consultation with Council officers;
- › To produce a three dimensional (3D) visual representation of how the town centre may appear in the future.
- › To provide clarity, direction and vision to the emerging Area Action Plan Preferred Options Document for Sutton town centre;
- › To assist the exploration and articulation of built development options for the T.C.

Aim of the Report

This report describes the overall concept design proposal for Sutton Town Centre and the ambitions that exist to create an improved, unique and interesting town centre. The study provides a summary of baseline issues identifying the main urban design and public realm issues currently affecting the town centre.

The document sets out a Vision for Sutton Town Centre that identifies the kind of place it could be in the future, not only from a physical point of view, but also from an economic and social perspective. This includes identifying a set of Vision objectives that constitutes a series of requirements and aspirations to achieve a sustainable long term Vision and actions to drive the future direction of the wider area.

The report formulates a framework that considers key sites within the Town Centre. The framework begins with an acknowledgment of those general principles considered essential in successful place making supported by a set of more specific design principles focused on Sutton Town Centre as a way of underpinning projects and proposals identified later in the report. Drawn from these two elements are a set of strategies within which there are a number of well defined projects. These projects contain a description, a rationale and guidelines to establish the intended form and function of the proposals.

Report Structure

This report is divided into a number of sections. Following this introduction, **Part B: The Starting Point: Sutton Town Centre Today** sets out a summary of the baseline analysis, identifying through a concise and comprehensive review of current data/ information and gathered evidence, the key issues, constraints and potential opportunities within which future design proposals will be created. This section of the report provides an important foundation for subsequent design ideas, summarising issues that are likely to affect the future aspirations of the town centre.

Part C: Setting out the Vision focuses on the vision and underlying vision objectives and design concept that will seek to rejuvenate and redefine Sutton Town Centre as a pivotal place within the Borough for people, new investment and an exciting public realm.

Part D: Setting Clear Urban Design Principles and Guidance is an exploration of the design guidance for the whole Town centre emerging from the Vision. This section sets out underlying design principles and strategies, and an overview of the land uses, potential development and movement and access approaches.

In **Part E: The Framework – Sutton 2025** the urban design principles and strategies are interpreted and applied in the final illustrative framework based on a series of clear design and access principles.

Part F: Projects and Proposals highlights the projects within the Urban Design Framework setting out key design principles for the identified Quarters and a description and explanation of development sites and projects illustrated by a number of appropriate illustrations and exemplars.

Part G- Site Specific Design Guidance outlines the proposed design briefs for the specific sites which are to be highlighted within the Sutton Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options Document (POD). The section details the suggested design principles, proposed character, land use, height, massing, form, public realm treatment and movement implications of each of the specific sites.

Part G- Conclusion is the final section, concerned with the steps necessary to take forward the framework, the responsibilities of key agencies and groups, the additional outputs needed to progress the framework and the relationship with the wider Area Action Plan and Local Development Framework.

It is important to note, that this report should be considered a draft UDF forming the basis for further consultation including that needed as part of the Area Action Plan process with key stakeholders, landowners, public bodies and the wider community. It is also intended to provide sufficient flexibility for the London Borough of Sutton to carry out their Core Strategy work as part of the Local Development Framework and the associated consultation.

THE STUDY AREA

Sutton Town Centre is one of the largest suburban centres in outer London and is classified as a Metropolitan Centre in the London Plan. It is the eighth largest centre in London with a total floorspace exceeding 400,000 sqm. The Study Area Boundary indicates the extent of the designated Town Centre and this Urban Design Framework.



Fig A1: Sutton Town Centre - Study Area

