



Renfrewshire centre strategy

Erskine



Renfrewshire
Council

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1. Introduction

This strategy provides a framework for the future growth of Erskine town centre. It considers the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the centre and sets out a range of actions which will assist in enhancing its role as a retail, employment, social, civic and cultural hub.

The strategy has been prepared to reflect Scottish Planning Policy in supporting the health

of town centres and to assist in delivering the spatial strategy and objectives set out in the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan

The key objective of the strategy is to enable the town centre to grow, ensuring that it is fit for purpose and can adapt to changing markets, needs and demands.

The strategy identifies a number of actions to deliver this objective. These include:

- Identifying new and complementary uses to support economic activity and increased footfall within the centre;
- Supporting public, private and community partners to deliver new uses, activities and events;
- Considering opportunities for improved civic identity and community space within the centre;
- Ensuring the town centre is more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport,
- Continuing to deliver an attractive, clean and secure town centre;
- Working with public and private sector partners, community groups and local residents to develop proposals which enhance the recreational focus of the riverfront adjacent to the town centre;
- Support new uses within the Riverfront Transition Area.



Actions in the strategy have been developed in consultation with local residents, community groups, businesses and Community Planning Partners. Their continuing support will be crucial for successful delivery. Actions will be taken forward in close partnership with these groups and all of those who have an interest in the future of Erskine.

2. Erskine Today

Erskine lies 6 miles north of Paisley and is one of the largest settlements in Renfrewshire with a population of just over 15,000.

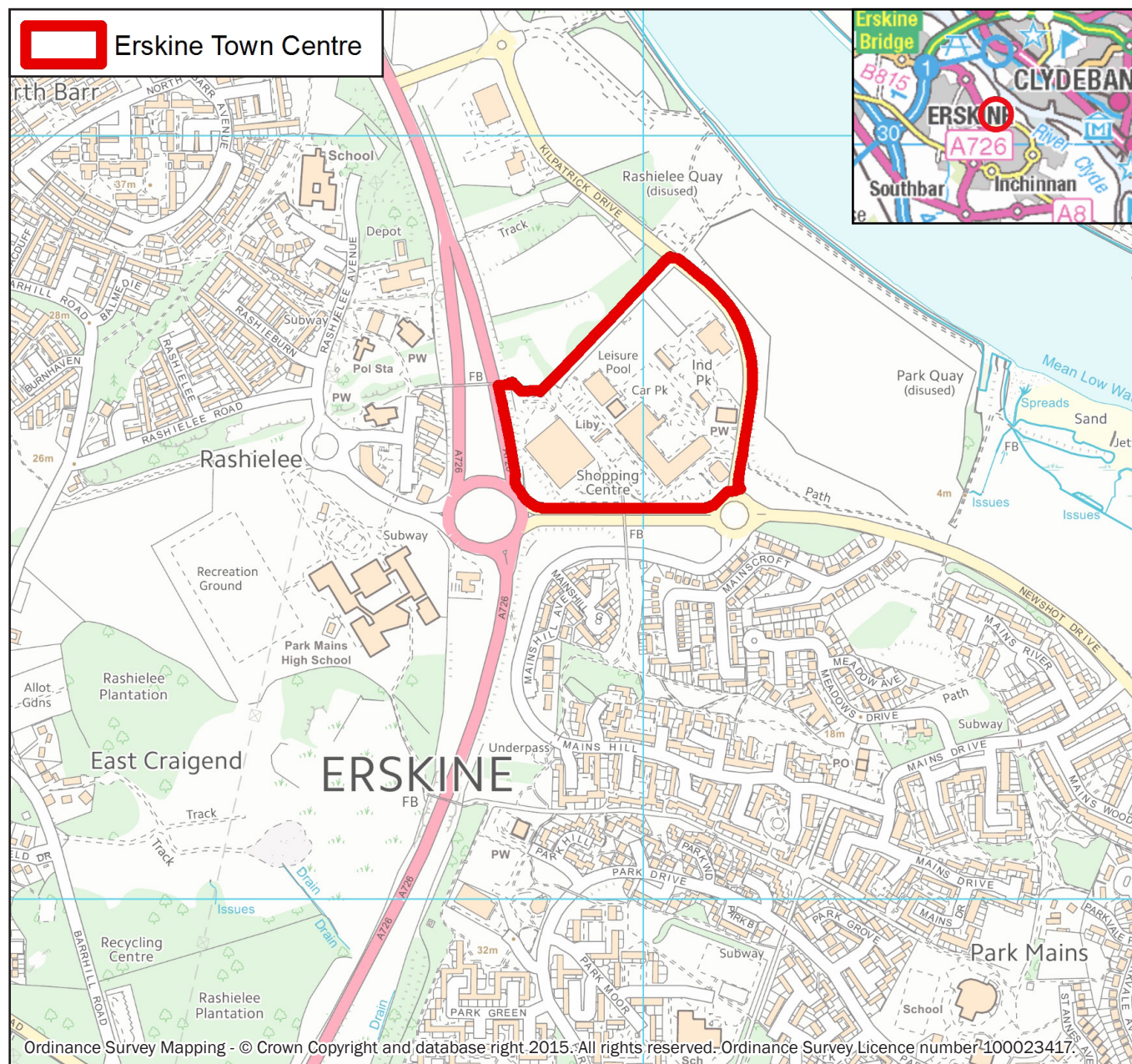
The town has strong road links to Glasgow and the wider central belt. The Erskine Bridge lies immediately to the west and provides links to the M8 motorway. The town is supported by extensive bus services providing connections to surrounding settlements and Glasgow. Bishopton Railway Station, two miles from the town, provides regular rail connections to Glasgow and Inverclyde.

The town centre lies to the north eastern edge of the town's built up area, between the main residential areas and the River Clyde.

Role

The mix of uses within the centre and strong transport connections mean Erskine is identified as a Core Town Centre in the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2014).

This recognises that the centre has an important role in providing key services for both the local population and settlements such as Bishopton and Inchinnan.

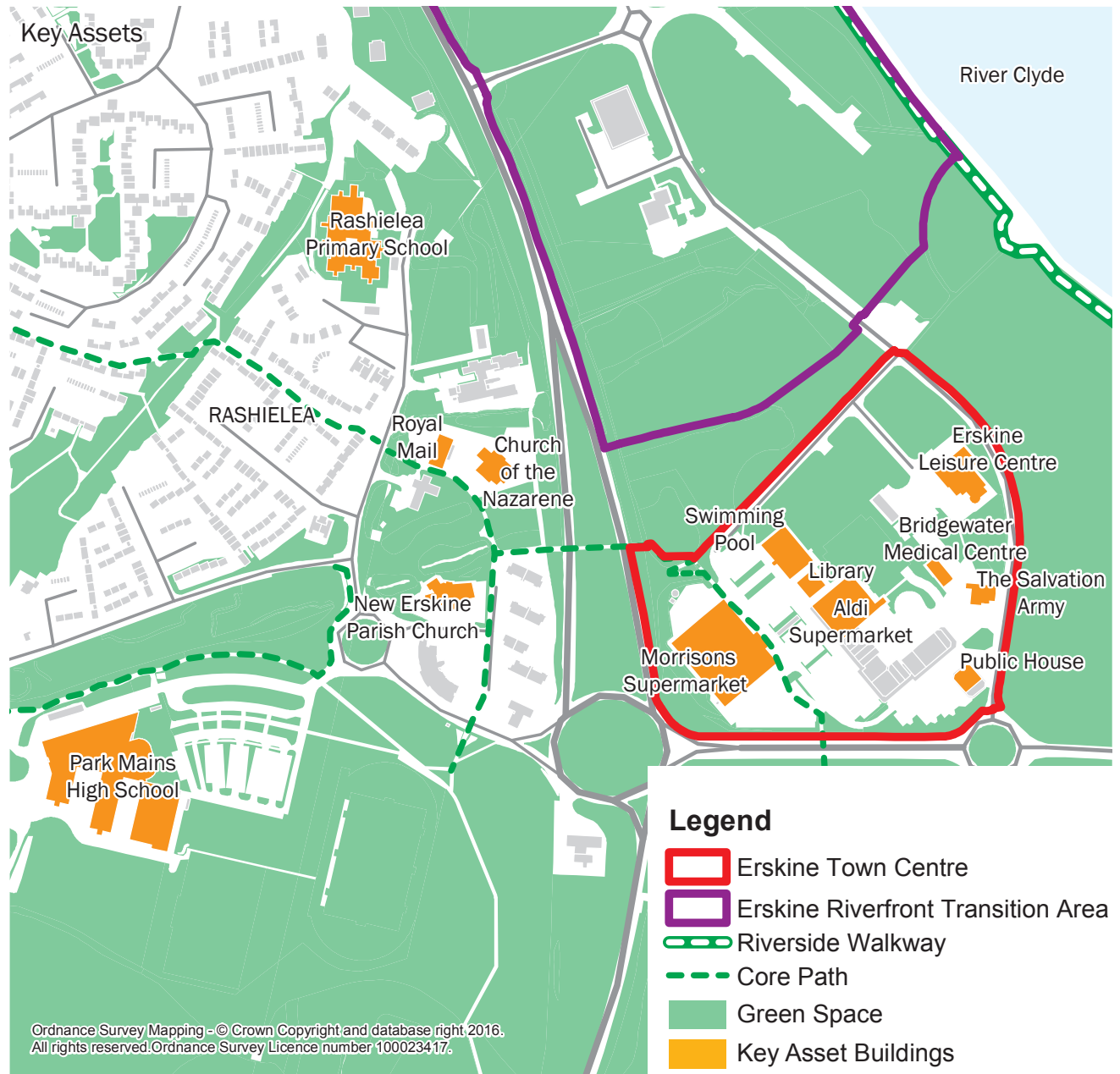


Town Centre

The town centre is based around the Bridgewater Shopping Centre. Retail provision is focused on two foodstores with a number of smaller units providing services and some non-food retail, including a bank and a public house. A swimming pool, leisure centre, library and doctors' surgery sit within the centre and provide a civic focus for the town.

Erskine Riverfront lies between the town centre and the River Clyde to the north. The riverside area has a walkway along the Clyde providing linkages to wider Green Network resources including Erskine Harbour and Boden Boo.

The riverfront area to the north west is identified as a Transition Area in the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2014) with potential for a range of uses to complement the town centre.



3. Health Check

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) identifies the need to monitor the performance of town centres.

Health Checks are used to collect a range of indicators which create a 'picture' of a town centre and help to show how it is performing. Findings should be used to develop a strategy to deliver improvements to the town centre.

The indicators below have informed the preparation of the Erskine Town Centre Strategy and will be used to monitor progress in the town centre.

Population

Data from the 2011 census indicates that the town has a population of just over 15,000 with some 6,000 households.

The demographics of the town largely reflect those of Scotland as a whole. The key differences from national averages are that Erskine has:

- More residents aged 5-16 (Erskine 14.4%, Scotland 11.8%)
- Fewer residents aged over 60 (Erskine 20.7%, Scotland 23.2%)
- Fewer one person households (Erskine 26.4% of households, Scotland 34.7%)



Built Environment

The form of the town centre reflects Erskine's beginning as a planned new community and is focused on a purpose built commercial centre providing a range of retail, commercial and community uses. The centre is characterised by modern, mostly single storey buildings.

The setting of the centre, immediately adjacent to open space and the River Clyde beyond, is an asset to the town which contributes to a sense of place.

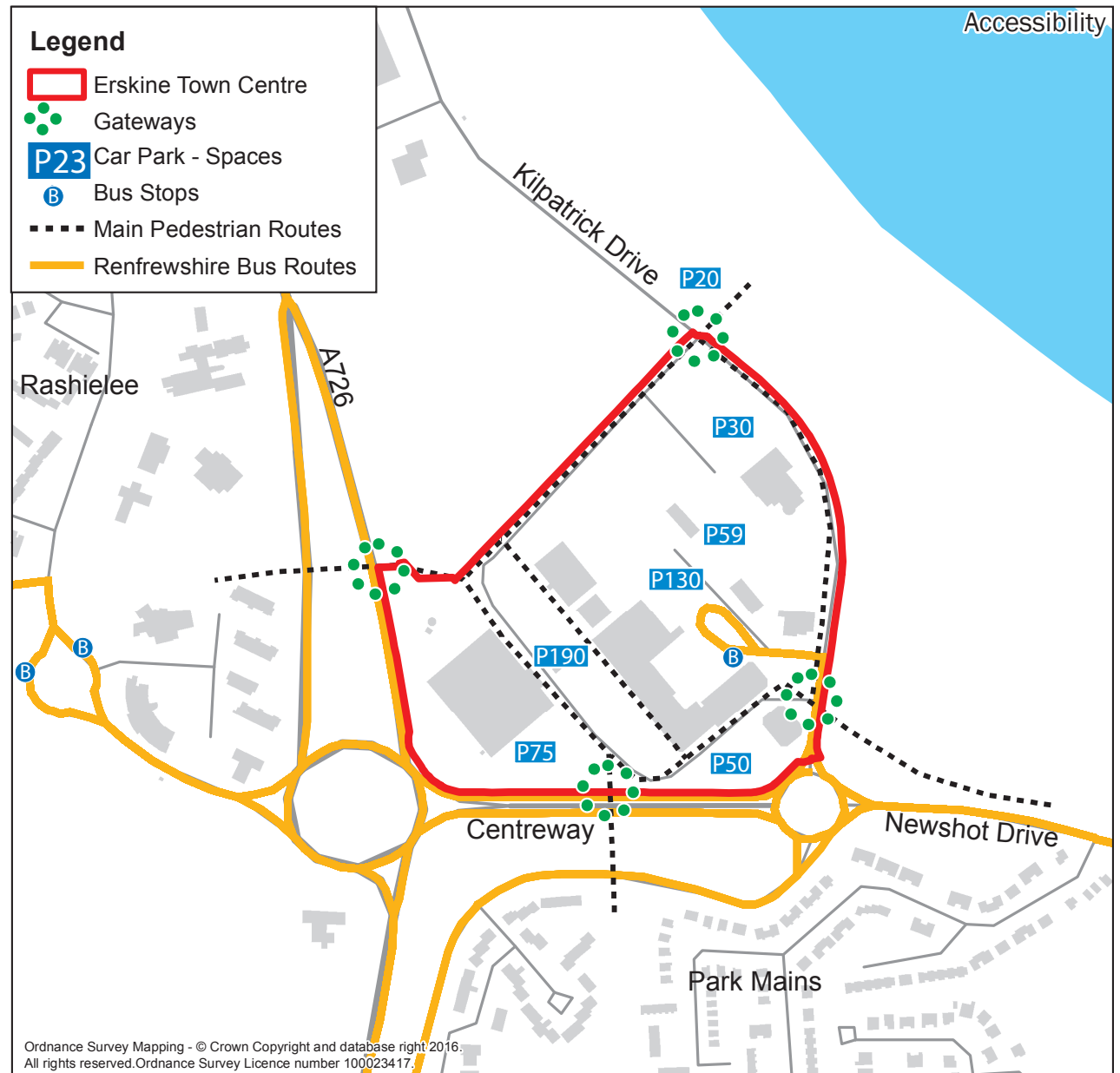
Pedestrian Environment

There are key pedestrian links between the centre and surrounding residential areas, with a number of dedicated footbridges and paths. Two key pedestrian gateways lie to the south of the centre with one to the north and one to the west. The centre has the benefit of three vehicular accesses from Kilpatrick Drive.

Key pedestrian routes are generally of good quality but opportunities exist to consider improvements which help to enhance the connectivity of the centre.

Parking

The majority of parking provision within the centre lies between the main shopping area adjacent to the Morrisons and Aldi foodstores, with smaller car parks behind the library and Aldi; close to the Sports Hall and doctors' surgery; as well as at the riverfront. These offer a total of 554 spaces.



Land Use

Erskine centre has a strong mix of uses which reflects the role of the centre for both local residents and settlements in the surrounding area.

Comparing the uses in terms of numbers and floorspace highlights the key characteristics of the town centre:

Convenience shops make up nearly half of the floorspace in the centre.

Leisure uses take up nearly a quarter of the floorspace within the centre across two units, Erskine Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool.

Commercial services make up a quarter of units within the centre.

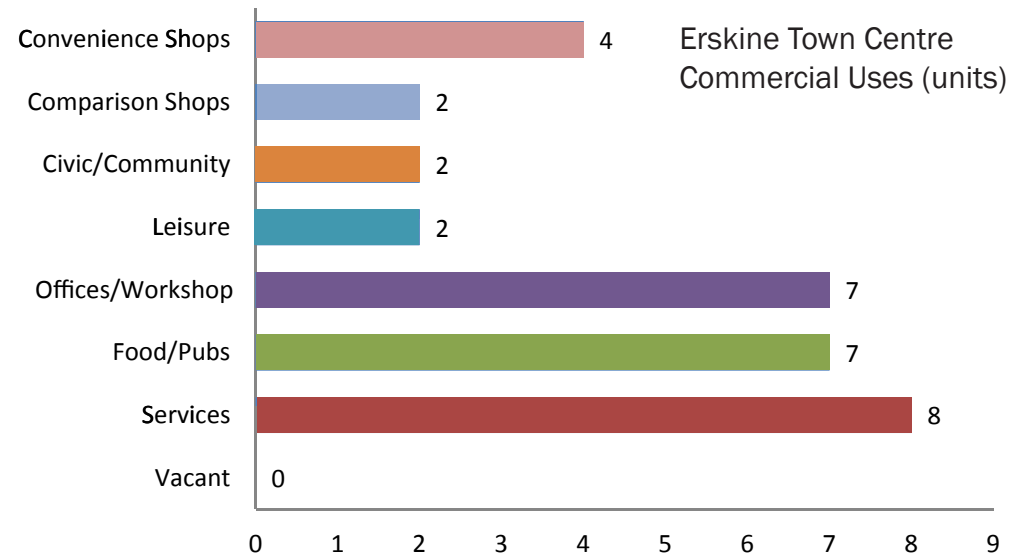
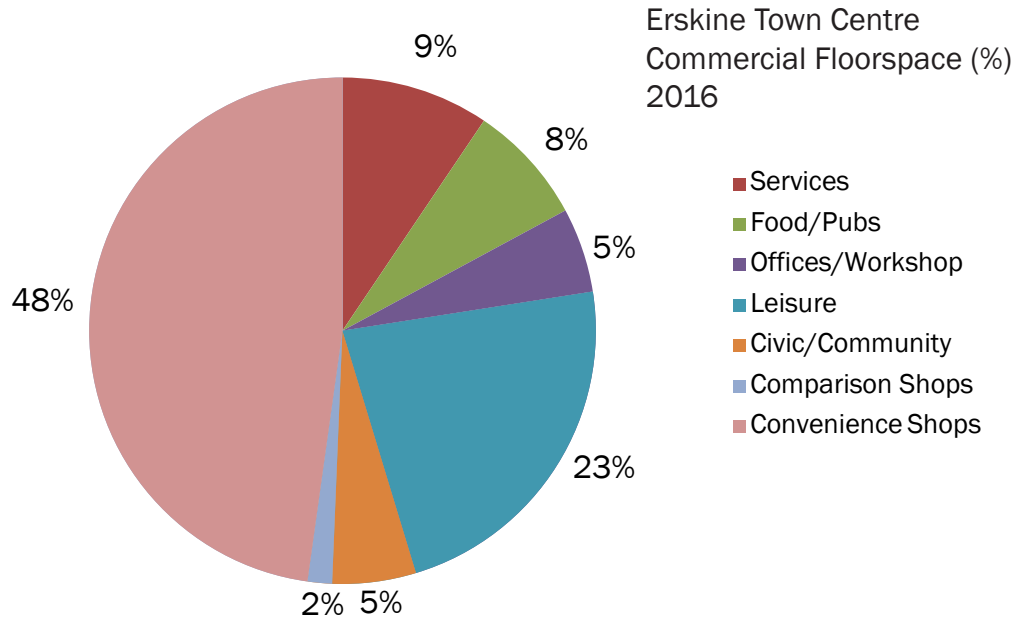
There are currently no residential properties within the town centre.

Vacancy levels have been very low over the last five years, reflecting the demand for commercial units. There are presently no vacant units.

Development Activity

Nine planning applications were approved over the period 2012-2015. These focussed on works such as changes of use, extension or improvement to existing premises.



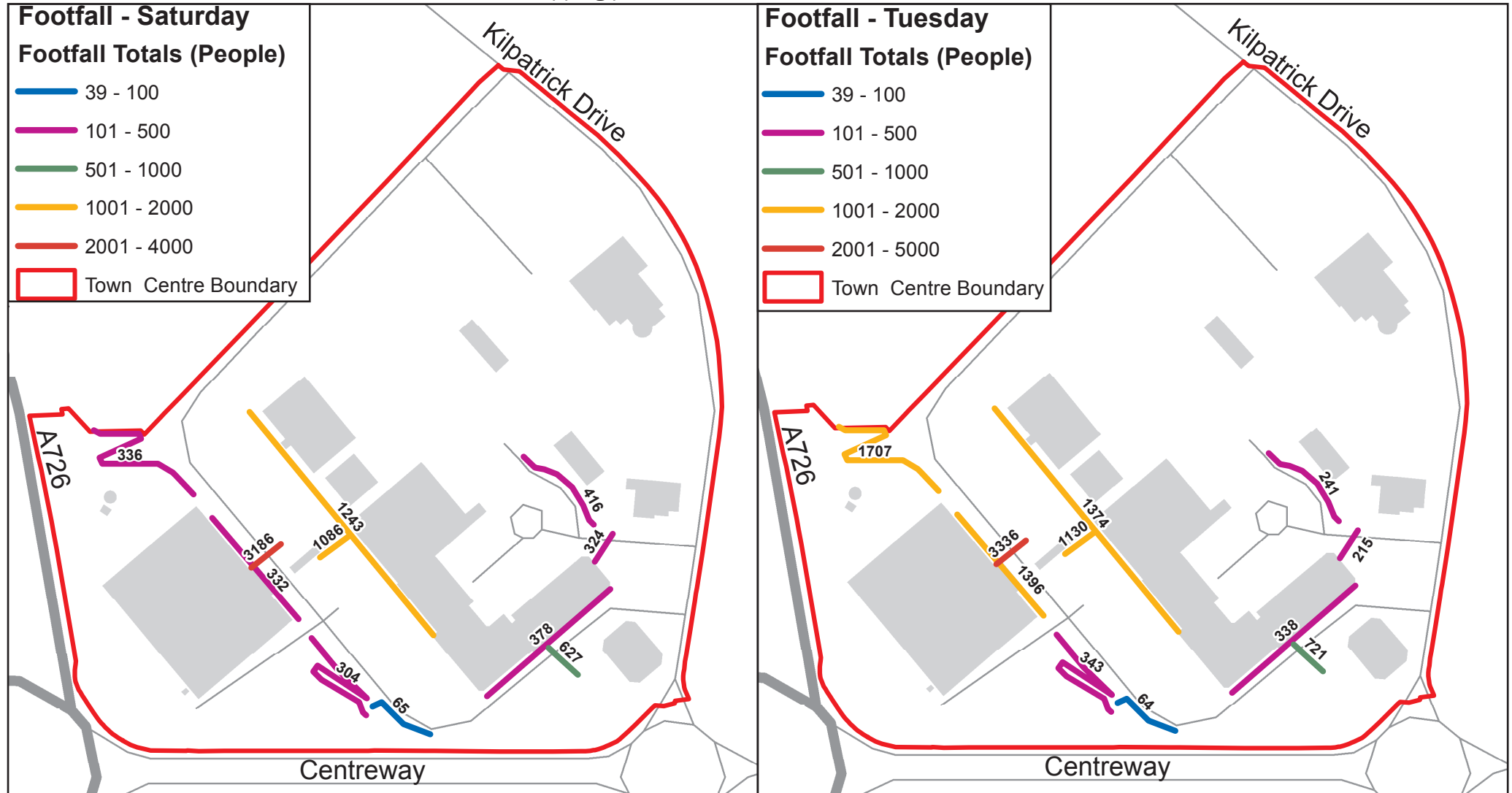


Footfall

A footfall survey was commissioned as part of the town centre Health Check. The results are based on an analysis of footfall between 7am and 9pm on both a weekday and a weekend.

The survey indicates that footfall is highest within the main shopping area adjacent to the Morrisons and Aldi foodstores, with a particularly high level of footfall from Morrisons to the shopping precinct.

The weekday survey also indicates strong footfall from the pedestrian route to the north west of the town centre, which may reflect the close proximity of Park Mains High School.



4. Key Opportunities

Opportunities exist to unlock the potential of underused and vacant land within the centre and to consider the future mix of uses. Renfrewshire Council is currently promoting a number of development opportunities in and around the centre. These could introduce further commercial and community activity and residential development.

Potential also exists to enhance the quality of public spaces and particularly to strengthen connections between the centre, residential neighbourhoods and the River Clyde.

The riverfront walkway is a focus for leisure and recreation and there is an opportunity to strengthen and enhance this role. In addition, potential exists to consider new approaches to the use and maintenance of green spaces in and around the centre.

Actions within the strategy aim to assist future change that make the most of these opportunities in ways that deliver positive physical, social and economic outcomes for the town.



5. Consultation

Actions within the strategy have been informed by consultation with local residents, businesses and stakeholders.

A draft Erskine Town Centre Strategy was prepared by the Council as a basis for a consultation process over three months in late 2015. To support the consultation exercise, the Council secured Scottish Government funding for a design charrette, which involved a series of workshops and events. The charrette was held during February 2016 and included:

- One to one contact with local organisations, community groups and businesses;
- A dedicated facebook page;
- On street presence in the centre, involving over 60 individual conversations;
- Group discussions with pupils at Park Mains High School and elderly residents of Bridgewater Housing Association; and
- Publicity including press releases, posters and flyers, social media and promotion through the Renfrewshire Council website.

The outcomes of the consultation exercise and charrette outlined issues and opportunities as well as priorities for action. In summary, these were:

- Developing the range and mix of retail, commercial and residential uses within the centre;
- Improving or creating community space to provide a civic 'heart' to the town centre;

- Improving pedestrian connections between the centre, Riverfront and existing path network;
- Better maintenance of existing green network resources, particularly the path network in and around the centre;
- Reuse of vacant land within the centre and at Erskine Riverfront; and
- Strengthening and enhancing the recreational role of Erskine Riverfront.



Renfrewshire centre strategy (draft)

Erskine



6. Proposals

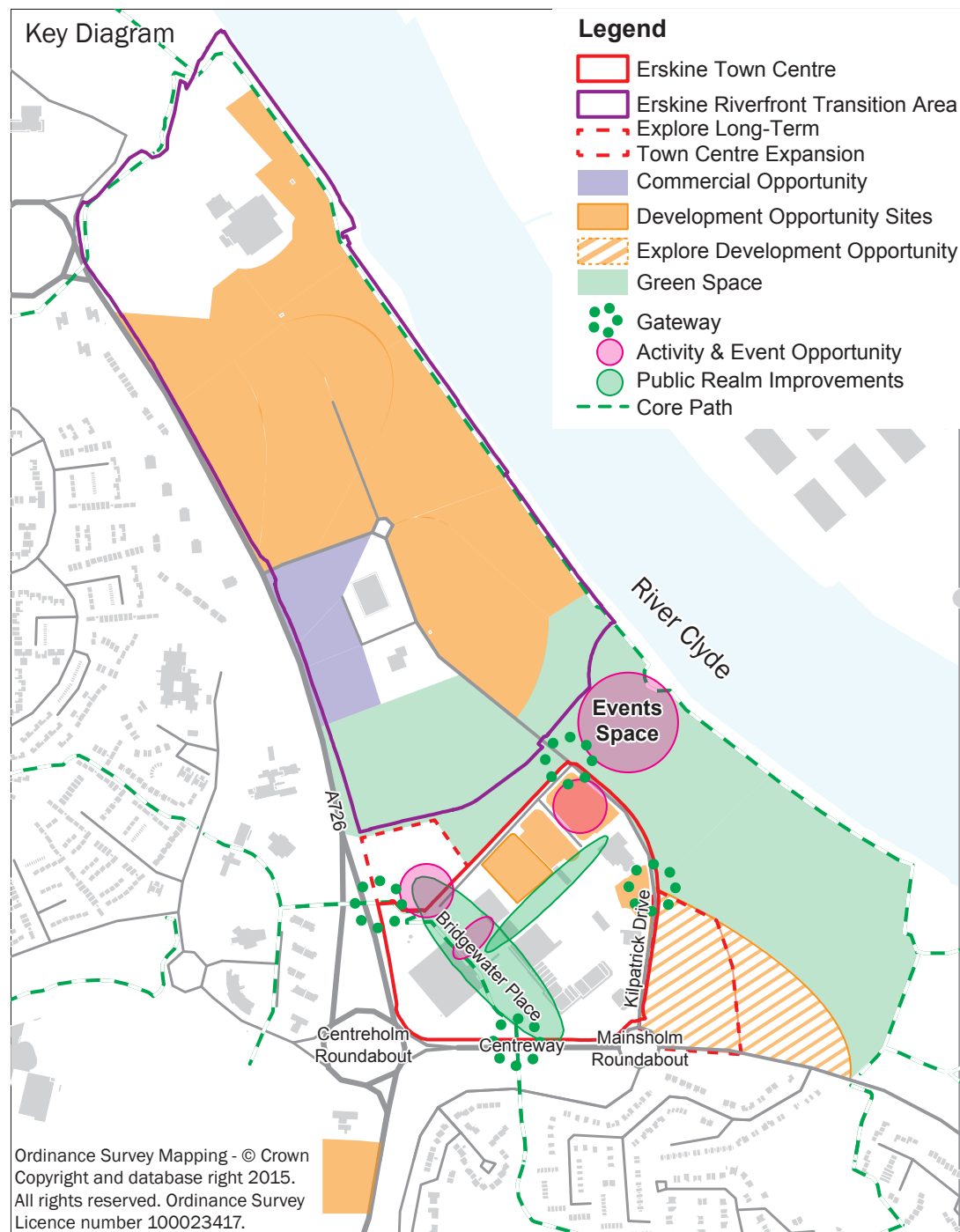
Through consultation a range of proposals have emerged which will support the physical, social and economic growth of the town centre.

The key actions are identified in the Key Diagram and are grouped into three themes as follows:

Theme 1:
Town Centre

Theme 2:
Riverside

Theme 3:
Looking after Erskine

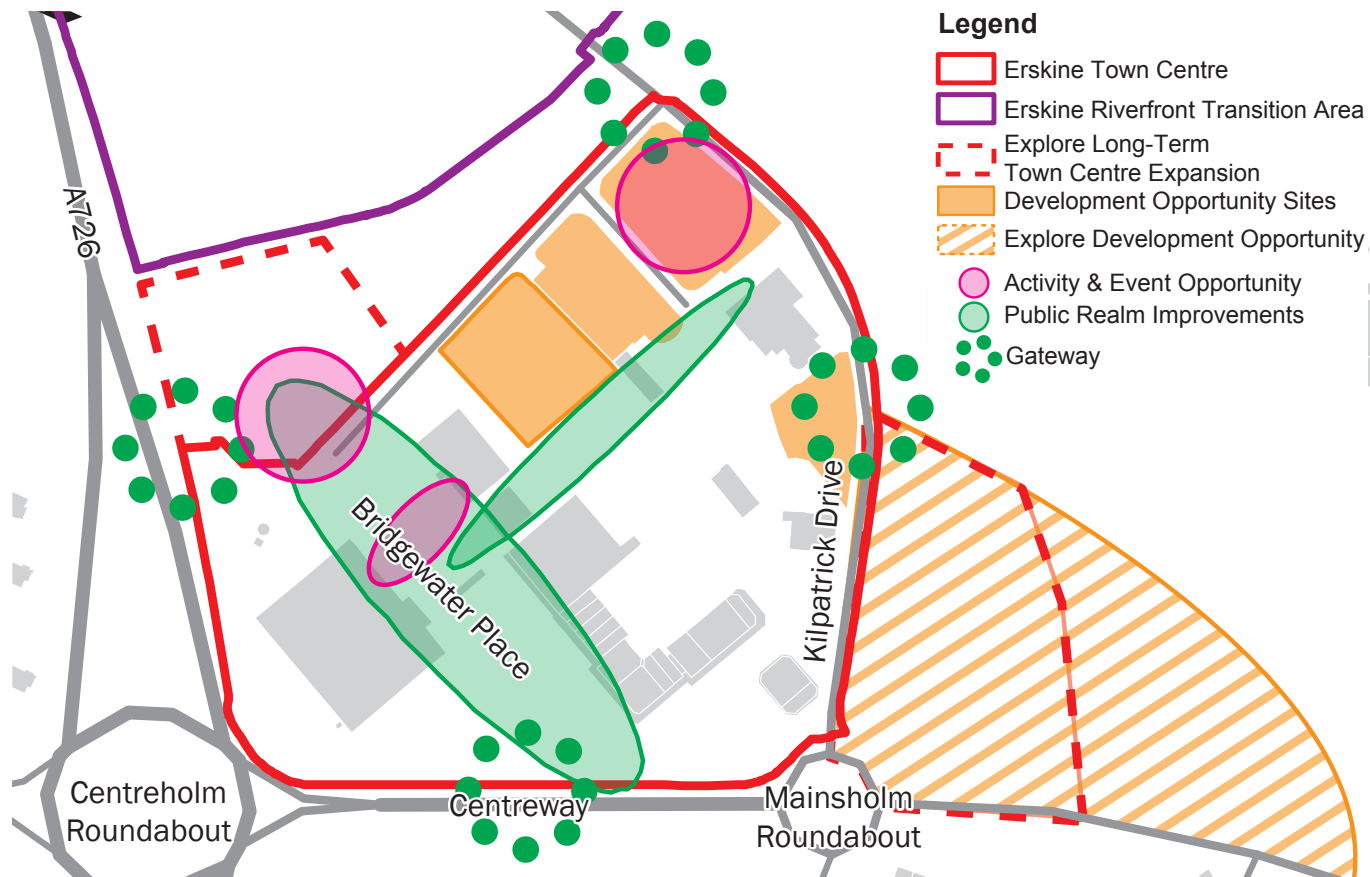


Theme 1: Town Centre

The key objective of this strategy is to support the future growth of Erskine town centre. To assist in delivering this, there is an opportunity to develop activities and uses which expand the “offer” of the town centre and enhance its role. This includes making better use of existing spaces for community uses, as well as considering the most appropriate location for new uses on vacant sites.

Vacant and underused sites within the town centre present a great opportunity to support a range of uses, which support the local economy and help to grow the town centre.

A key element of action under this theme is working with the public and private sector as well as community groups to deliver new uses, projects and events which support the local economy.



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Key Actions

- Work with public and private sector partners to support and assist in the delivery of new retail, office and residential uses;
- Support local community groups to deliver new projects, activities and events which support town centre activity and the local economy;
- Work with local community groups to consider opportunities for improved civic identity through indoor and outdoor community spaces. This will focus initially on an appraisal of existing assets to help identify opportunities;
- Prepare and implement development briefs which support redevelopment and changes of use at opportunity sites;
- Explore opportunities for delivery of affordable housing within the centre, in the context of the Council’s Strategic Housing Investment Plan; and
- Explore opportunities to improve and enhance gateways to the town centre, particularly pedestrian routes, to create a sense of arrival and links to the wider path network.

Theme 2: Riverside

The setting of the centre adjacent to the River Clyde is a key asset. Opportunities exist to strengthen and enhance the riverfront, introducing uses, which will enhance and complement Erskine's town centre.

Land within Erskine Riverfront Transition Area offers opportunities to develop new residential, business and commercial uses which complement and help to grow the centre.

Key Actions

- In the short term, support local groups to make temporary use of and deliver enhancements to the Riverside green spaces;
- Prepare a masterplan and development briefs which support a range of uses compatible with the town centre such as new residential, commercial and business uses within the Riverside Transition Area;
- Work with public and private sector partners to assist in the delivery of new uses in the short, medium and long term; and
- Work with public and private sector partners, community groups and local residents to develop proposals which enhance the riverside.



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Theme 3: Looking after Erskine

It is important that Erskine's town centre looks good, feels safe and attracts residents, businesses and visitors.

Key pedestrian routes are generally of good quality but opportunities exist to consider improvements which help to enhance the connectivity of the centre, particularly to the riverfront.

Maintenance of the existing greenspace in Erskine is an important issue and the opportunity exists to consider new approaches to paths, woodland areas and open spaces. Continuing investment in town centre maintenance is also key.

Community wardens patrol the town centre daily, responding to community safety and environmental concerns. Town centre locations are covered by manned CCTV.



Key Actions

- Work with local community groups to consider new approaches to the maintenance of paths, woodland areas and open spaces within and around the centre;

- Continue to invest in a programme of town centre maintenance including street cleaning, litter picks and grass cutting;

- Explore opportunities to improve connections between town centre, the riverfront and wider Green Network of paths and open space; and
- Use retail improvement scheme funding to support improvement of shopfronts.

7. Making it Happen

Implementation

Delivery of proposals identified in the strategy will be achieved through joint working between the public, private and community sectors. Timescales for delivery will require detailed discussion with partners however to help inform progress short and long terms actions are identified below.

The support of local residents, community groups, businesses and Community Planning Partners will be crucial in successful delivery of the strategy. Actions will be taken forward in close partnership with these stakeholders and all of those who have an interest in the future of Erskine.

Staying on Track

This strategy is non-statutory supplementary planning guidance.

The delivery of actions within the strategy will be monitored annually and progress reported to the Houston, Crosslee, Linwood, Riverside and Erskine Local Area Committee.

The strategy will be updated every two years.



Key Action Summary

Location/Project		Timescale
<i>Theme 1: Town Centre</i>		
Activity and Events	Work with local community groups to assist in the delivery of new activities and events.	0-2 years
Civic Space	Work with local community groups to consider opportunities for improved civic identity.	0-2 years
Development Briefs	Prepare and implement development briefs to support development of town centre opportunity sites.	0-2 years
Diversify Uses	Work with partners to deliver new retail, offices and residential uses.	2-5 years
Gateways	Explore opportunities to further improve town centre gateways.	2-5 years
Affordable Housing Delivery	Explore opportunities for delivery of affordable housing.	2-5 years
Civic Facilities	Partnership working to deliver new and enhanced civic facilities in the town centre.	5-7 years
Town Centre Expansion	Explore opportunities for town centre expansion.	5-10 years
<i>Theme 2: Riverside</i>		
Short-term enhancements	Support community groups to make temporary use of and enhance riverside greenspaces.	0-2 years
Masterplan	Prepare a masterplan to support a mixed use development at Riverside.	0-2 years
Deliver New Uses	Work with partners to assist delivery of new uses in accordance with masterplan.	2-3 years
Enhanced Recreational Use	Work with partners to develop and deliver proposals for recreational use.	2-5 years
<i>Theme 3: Looking after Erskine</i>		
Greenspace Maintenance	Consider new approaches maintenance of greenspace in and around the town centre.	0-2 years
Town Centre Maintenance	Continue to invest in programme of town centre maintenance.	0-2 years
Community Safety	Continue programme of environmental enforcement and improvement activities.	0-2 years
Shopfront Improvements	Use Retail Improvement Scheme funding to enhance retail shopfronts.	0-2 years
Pedestrian routes	Explore opportunities to further improve key pedestrian connections.	2-5 years

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