

# HAVERFORDWEST

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Pembrokeshire County Council

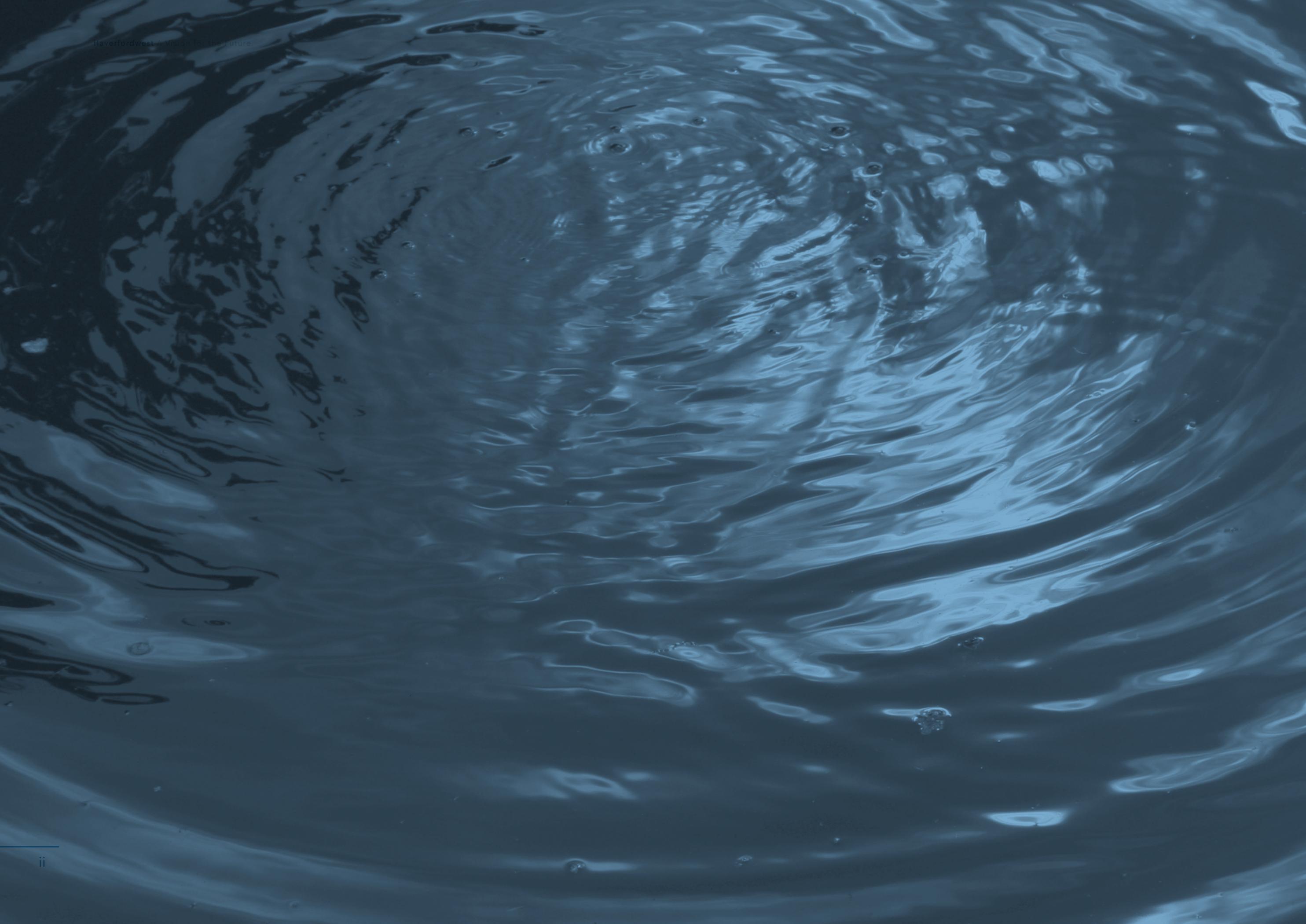


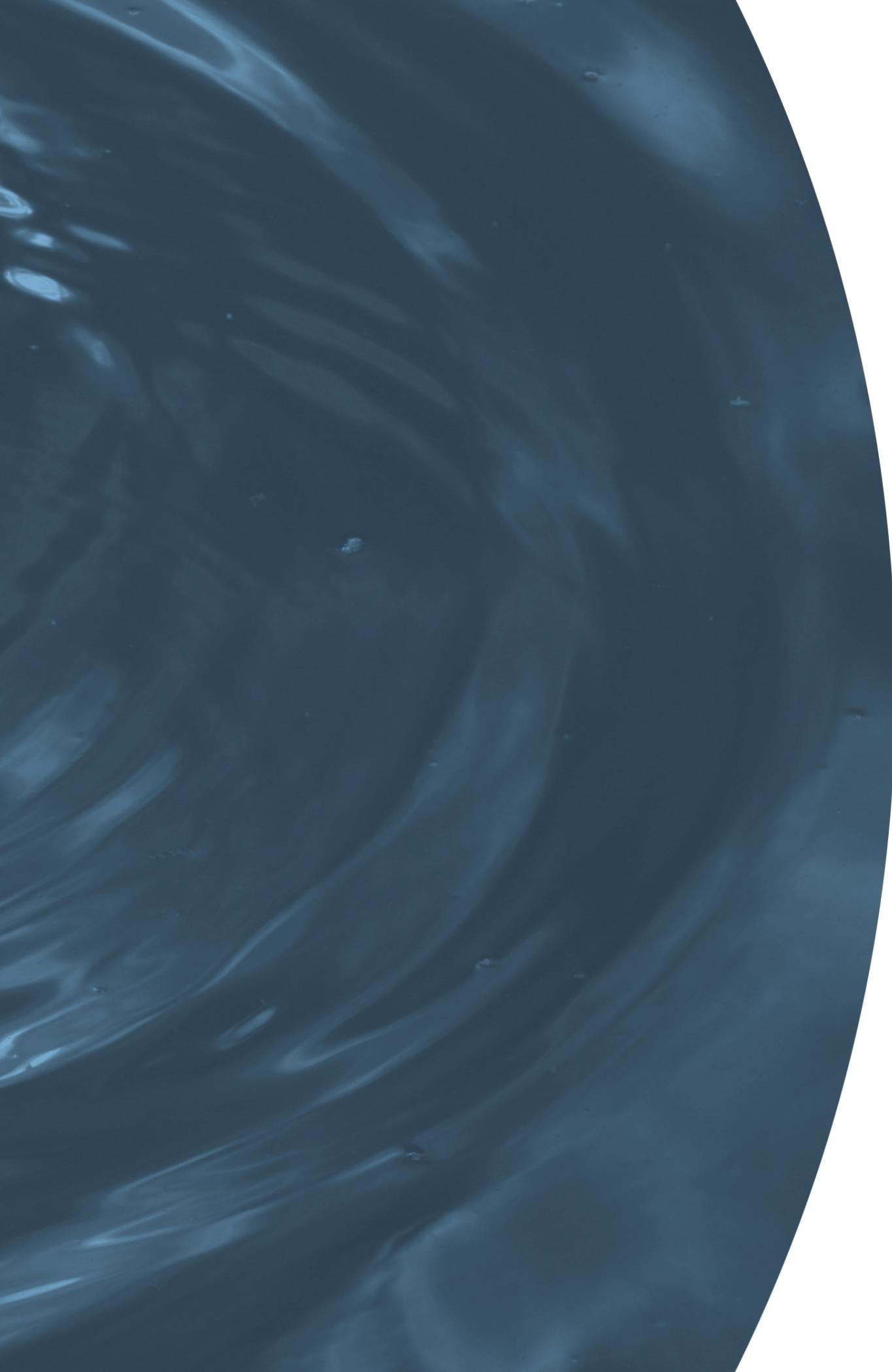
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# PREFACE

Pembrokeshire's County Town of Haverfordwest is steeped in history and centrally positioned at the heart of the County. The River Cleddau runs through the centre of the town and its bridging points have informed its urban morphology. The historic core has high intrinsic architectural and townscape quality however it is more often seen as place to pass through rather than a destination in its own right. The Masterplan sets out a framework to guide the regeneration of Haverfordwest.

The commissioning team would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Haverfordwest (4C) Town Team (the Chamber of Commerce, Haverfordwest Town Council, Pembrokeshire College and the County Council) who have provided a valuable steer in the preparation of the masterplan.

In recent years the town has declined as a centre. This has in part been due to the challenges created by the wider downturn in the economy and social changes in the way in which we shop. It is also partly created by local circumstances including increased out of town provision and comparatively high business rates. The result has been higher than average vacancy levels, a perception of a poor retail offer and, in some cases, poor quality maintenance of the built environment. There is a need to regenerate Haverfordwest, building on its key assets and specific opportunities.

The town's existing assets include:

- **Haverfordwest Castle** - established in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century it is Grade I Listed and designated as a Scheduled Monument
- **River Cleddau** - forms a 'blue' corridor, encouraging wildlife into the heart of the town
- **Topography** - provides the opportunity for extensive views into and out of the town, creating exciting vistas and charming glimpsed views
- **Historic Buildings and Sites** - engender a sense of Haverfordwest's colourful past, providing landmarks and points of interest throughout the town
- **Conservation Area** - encompasses a significant area of the town centre, providing a setting to the numerous listed buildings and ancient monuments
- **Natural Environment** - surrounds the town and extends through it along the river corridor, with pockets of green throughout the centre

Pembrokeshire's wider economy benefits significantly from tourism spend. Creating a vibrant, attractive Town Centre which offers visitors as well as local residents a positive and interesting wet weather day out is a key opportunity for the Town.

Improvements to the townscape character, investment in the building stock, improved usage of the river frontage, enhanced retail and leisure facilities, and the establishment of a clear identity, are all necessary to ensure that the town can move forward, becoming a more vibrant hub at the gateway to Pembrokeshire.





## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this document is to review and refresh the Haverfordwest Framework produced in 2008, incorporating current policy and proposals to produce a vision for the town which can steer positive change over the next 5-10 years and beyond.

1.2 Pembrokeshire County Council, working with its partners in the Haverfordwest (4C) Town Team, is committed to leading town centre regeneration. The commissioning of this work is a demonstration of its determination to lead on this vital task. The Council believes that more intervention is now required, but recognises that this comes at a time of continuing economic and budgetary restraint.

1.3 It is intended that the Masterplan Framework will help to transform Haverfordwest's current image, highlight key development opportunities and maximise the appeal of both its riverside and fine historic buildings.

1.4 At the outset of the preparation process the commissioning team laid out a number of key aims to guide the way forward for the regeneration and revitalisation of the town centre. These have formed the basis on which this report has been prepared:

- High quality mixed use retail and leisure town centre uses to complement existing edge and out-of-town retail offer. Retailers would be a mix of independent traders and national chain retailers.
- Regionally and nationally distinctive attractions including events, design features, public realm, river enhancements and 'quirky' retail, food and leisure facilities. This should also include an improved 'wet weather' offer.
- Significant increase, over time, in footfall and promotion including an eclectic range of events to generate additional footfall.
- Creation of a new night time economy.
- Significant reduction in vacancy levels. Target top quartile performance.
- Emphasis on safe, secure and family friendly with separate management/supervision and maintenance arrangements similar to large scale retail mall/ centre with zero tolerance to litter, anti-social behaviour.

1.5 This documents lays down a framework to regenerate the County Town. It sets out:

- Five strategic objectives for the town and a vision for its future;
- An approach to town centre regeneration, based on four inter-related key themes;
- Flagship projects set out under four broad headings;
- Key elements of the architectural heritage of the town;
- Development opportunities on three significant sites;
- Public realm enhancement proposals in seven areas within the town centre;
- Suggestions for improvements to movement and legibility, focusing on gateways, signage and wayfinding; and
- Proposals for management looking at town centre living, enhancing existing attractions, encouraging new attractions and marketing initiatives, including branding.





## 2.0 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND VISION

2.1 Haverfordwest is currently under performing as a county town. This document aims to focus upon the town as a destination at the centre of Pembrokeshire. The proposals are focussed upon five strategic objectives:

1. **Enhancing the town's offer (improvement of existing and creation of new)**
2. **Re-establishing a sense of arrival**
3. **Improving accessibility and linkages (town and country)**
4. **Maximising the townscape quality, historic assets and setting of the town**
5. **Harnessing local ideas and creativity**

2.2 The vision, which is derived from a series of consultation events, our analysis of the town and what needs to improve, is:

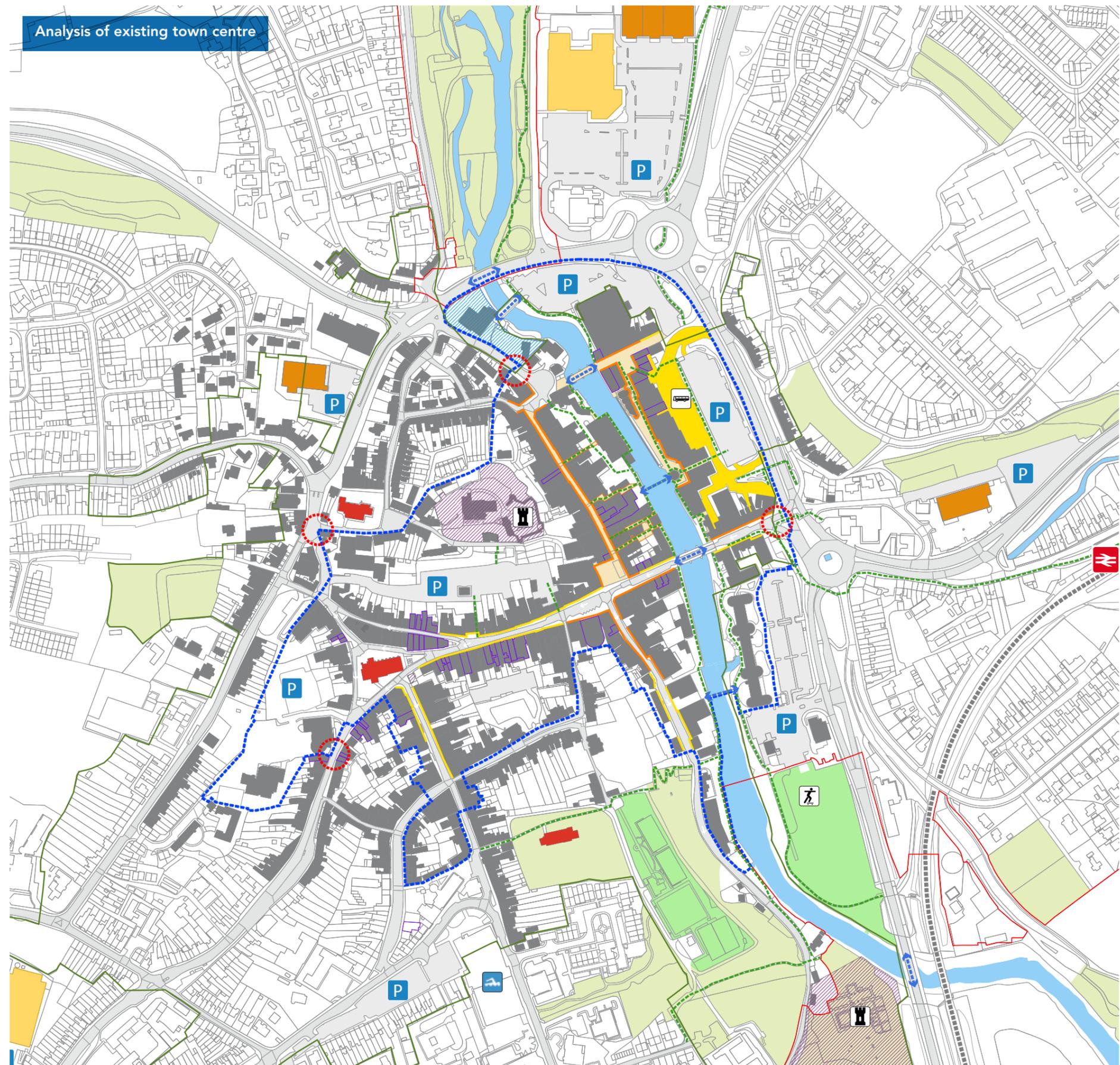
**To encourage a regionally distinctive, sustainable and vibrant town centre with a mix of independent and national retailers, strong cultural, arts and creative influences, a safe and secure environment for families, with an eclectic mix of events, a buoyant night-time economy and an improving aesthetic appearance.**



2.3 In order to achieve this vision it will be necessary to:

- Engender the engagement of all
- Gain cross party support
- Appraise structural changes within the town centre
- Embrace flexibility of uses
- Address the town's branding and marketing strategy
- Provide a framework that will encourage investment in the town
- Provide confidence to the private sector that a clear strategy is in place, which has widespread community support to drive the town forward.

2.4 To date this document or, at least, the process leading to its completion, has been subject to consultation with key stakeholders and members of the public (via events organised by both Pembrokeshire County Council and 'Confluence'). Consideration of current and forthcoming planning policy, together with discussions with National Resources Wales has also informed this draft. The Haverfordwest - A Vision for the Future - consultation responses have also helped to inform this report.



**KEY: ANALYSIS PLAN**

- Town Centre boundary 
- Conservation Area boundary 
- Settlement boundary 
- Primary retail frontage 
- Secondary retail frontage 
- Recreational open space 
- Amenity open space 
- Railway station 
- Bus station 
- Car Park 
- River Cleddau 
- Existing river crossings 
- Key vehicular routes 
- One way system 
- Key pedestrian routes 
- Key gateways 
- Pedestrianised street 
- Riverside Centre servicing 
- Leisure centre 
- Skate park 
- Scheduled Monuments 
- Supermarket 
- Out-of-town retail 
- Vacant property (Summer '15) 
- Landmark churches 
- Fred Rees Garage Site 

## Key Issues

- 2.5 Close liaison with Pembrokeshire County Council and NRW, together with discussions with land and property owners, and extensive wider public consultation has highlighted a number of key issues which include:
- River Cleddau - Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation
  - River Cleddau - under-utilised asset both in visual and recreational terms
  - Haverfordwest Castle - under-utilised asset
  - Haverfordwest Castle - poor signage, marketing and pedestrian access
  - Conservation Area - decline of quality due to increased vacancy rates and poor maintenance
  - Key listed buildings - vacancies and degrading fabric (impact upon Conservation Area)
  - Retail offer - vacancies and influx of charity shops, loss of high quality national and independent businesses
  - Retail opportunities - some constraints due to Listed Building status/Conservation Area but this is also an opportunity
  - Leisure offer - limited facilities within town centre

- Leisure opportunities - enhanced offer required within town centre
- Town gateways - poor legibility resulting from trunk road priority layouts
- Wayfinding - poor legibility resulting from inadequate signage and lack of town interpretation information
- Biodiversity - The Western Cleddau River is a designated SSSI (UK) and SAC (Europe). As a protected site it has the potential to maintain and enhance the biodiversity resource of the Town. These designations do not stop development (or re-development). However they are considerations (through Habitats Regulation Assessment) that should form a component of plans and projects on or close to the area.
- Lack of a clear marketing strategy for the town as a whole
- Challenge from out-of-town retail
- Limited visitor trips to Haverfordwest despite Pembrokeshire as a whole attracting significant visitor numbers
- The need to identify a wider range of town centre uses, for instance cultural, health-related and educational facilities.

## 3.0 APPROACH

- 3.1 The delivery of the strategic objectives will be implemented via four inter-related key themes:
1. Exploiting the River Cleddau corridor
  2. Capitalising on the town's unique heritage
  3. Enhancing the town centre offer
  4. Improving gateways and wayfinding
- 3.2 Specific actions have been distilled from the analysis and address these key themes. The actions focus upon the following:
- Flagship Projects
  - Architectural Heritage
  - Development Opportunities
  - Public Realm Enhancement
  - Movement and Legibility
  - Management
- 3.3 An implementation plan is included at the end of the report which provides:
- A clear and practical framework which identifies priorities and objectives for Haverfordwest; and,
  - Short term, medium term and long term actions and delivery mechanisms which sit alongside a Monitoring mechanism.



Poor quality route between river and Bridge Street



Pedestrian access to the Castle from Castle Lake car park



Vacant shop units in Bridge Street