

Main Centres: Core Retail Areas and Regeneration Areas

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1	Introduction.....	3
2	Town (St Peter Port)	6
3	The Bridge (St Sampson's/Vale)	9
4	Conclusion	11
5	Appendices	13

Cover image of Le Pollet and North Esplanade by Alan Howell

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This report has been prepared to inform the review of the Island's Development Plans under the provisions of The Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005.
- 1.1.2 It follows on from the findings of 'Retail in the Main Centres, July 2013'. That study defines a retail core (a Core Retail Area within the draft Island Development Plan) as an *"area within which planning policy favours the retention of retail uses and the addition of new shops over other town centre uses"* and sets out the current strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for retail within the Main Centres of Town (St Peter Port) and the Bridge (St Sampson's/Vale). It puts forward three possible options for the extent of retail cores within the Main Centres, as follows:
1. Prime retail areas, identified based on location of anchor stores, broad information on rents and footfall, with proposed options for possible future extension, and a mixed-use central area surrounding Town;
 2. Primary retail cores and secondary retail areas, also identified based on location of anchor stores, broad information on rents and footfall, with Town again surrounded by a mixed-use central area, or;
 3. Mixed-use central areas, made up of the areas identified as encompassing all the town centre uses and not including specific retail cores.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of the current exercise is the identification of precise boundaries of Core Retail Areas for Town and the Bridge.
- 1.1.4 Identification of precise boundaries is considered necessary in order to differentiate between locations suitable for particular forms of development. In the case of the Core Retail Areas, as set out in the definition, these areas will favour the retention of existing and provision of new retail uses over other town centre uses, such as estate agents or hair salons, the intention being to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Main Centres.
- 1.1.5 Regeneration Areas will also be defined which will enable a mix of development appropriate to the particular area to be brought forward, possibly including large floor plate shops, as expansions to the Core Retail Areas.

1.2 Policy context

Strategic Land Use Plan

- 1.2.1 Approved by the States in 2011, the Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP) sets an overarching spatial strategy for Guernsey and provides guidance and direction to the Environment Department in preparing the new Island Development Plan.
- 1.2.2 The Spatial Strategy concentrates development *"within and around the edges of the urban centres of St Peter Port and St Sampson/Vale with some limited development within and around the edges of the other main parish or local centres to enable community growth and the reinforcement of sustainable centres"*.

- 1.2.3 This strategy applies to retail uses to reinforce the role of the Main Centres as locations for shopping and by ensuring that development elsewhere does not dilute that role.
- 1.2.4 Town supports a wide range of business activities and is the Island's primary retail centre. The concentrated resident and working population support businesses which contribute positively to the commercial mix and viability of the Main Centre.
- 1.2.5 Commercial activity at the Bridge focuses on retail with peripheral industrial uses. As a Main Centre the Bridge is relatively small but provides an important commodity to Islanders, particularly those living in the northern parishes. Regeneration of Leale's Yard, to the north and west, may result in enhancement of facilities and provision of large floor plate shops. Whilst this would provide greater competition for Town, Town must remain the primary retail destination.
- 1.2.6 The SLUP directs the Environment Department to assess and identify the extent of the retail cores of Town and the Bridge in order to concentrate effectiveness and thereby sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Main Centres. Potential for regeneration is considered fundamental to ensure this can be achieved. The SLUP also suggests that there may be benefit in identifying primary and secondary retail areas to ensure land use policies adopt a more flexible approach to fringe areas where the market can best determine their future use whilst protecting the key retail areas from dilution by non-retail activities.
- 1.2.7 A proactive land planning system is promoted in Town, with the aim of making the most of opportunities, in particular to accommodate large floor plate shops, and to manage pressures such as from traffic, shopping habits, the finance industry and port operations within a historic environment whilst recognising the benefit of interrelationships between uses.
- 1.2.8 The SLUP defines comparison retail as the selling of goods including clothing and footwear, furniture, furnishings and household equipment, which generally involves comparing similar goods before buying. By contrast, convenience retail is the term used to describe the selling of often essential, daily items such as food, including fresh produce, and drink.
- 1.2.9 The SLUP directs the Development Plan to take account of the Retail Strategy for Guernsey, December 2013.

A Retail Strategy for Guernsey, 2013

- 1.2.10 The Retail Strategy identifies some scope for strengthening the role of Town in terms of comparison shopping, particularly from 2015 onwards. It stresses the need to make provision for new large floor plate comparison retail development within Town and the Bridge to meet modern demands and to enhance the vitality and viability of the Main Centres, ensuring that Town is maintained as the Island's primary retail centre. It identifies opportunities on flatter, undeveloped parts of the Town waterfront for regeneration and careful redevelopment of existing buildings for larger floor plate retail units, along with Leale's Yard at The Bridge. It

also seeks opportunities for enhancement of the Old Quarter of Town, the area climbing westward from Mill Street to Trinity Square.

Urban Area Plan, 2002

- 1.2.11 The current Urban Area Plan, 2002 (UAP) identifies Town and the Bridge as the Island's main centres for economic, social and cultural activity. These centres are particularly dependent on retail activity to maintain their vitality and viability but it is noted that a balance is required between accommodating development and protecting their attractiveness.
- 1.2.12 Central Areas are designated at both centres, within which a mix of development is encouraged and the improvement of retail facilities is accommodated in order to continue to provide an attractive and convenient shopping offer. Provision of safe and easy access for motorists and pedestrians is promoted. Policies require thoughtful choices concerning the public realm and variety of shop fronts which can contribute positively to the special character of Town and the Bridge.

1.3 Approach

- 1.3.1 The maps contained within 'Retail in the Main Centres' and 'A Retail Strategy for Guernsey', were used as the basis for the designated areas. These were built upon taking into consideration responses to the Key Messages, Issues and Options consultation, which incorporated the first of these reports.
- 1.3.2 Public comments received through consultation on the Plan Review indicate support for protecting the retail industry of Town and the Bridge using different elements of each of the proposed approaches, detailed in 1.1.2, in order to support comparison retail in those locations and to resist it elsewhere. The relationship with the Guernsey Ports Masterplan, opportunities to improve accessibility and concern that the Bridge is stagnating pending redevelopment of Leale's Yard were raised. People sought a flexible policy approach with regard to changes of use, whilst ensuring protection of the retail core where it was felt that service industries must not be permitted to outweigh the retail provision and that local retail outlets should be supported, encouraging entrepreneurial activity and keeping revenue within the Island.
- 1.3.3 A desktop survey was undertaken using aerial photographs and data assimilated through the Environment Department's annual Town Centre Audit. This, along with information collected during previous site surveys, such as work towards the characterisation of the Bridge, contributed to identification of the extent of the Core Retail Areas and Regeneration Areas.
- 1.3.4 In identification of the boundaries, some general principles have been adopted. Both sides of the road are included and the designation extends one building deep, unless the retail development lines the quay, or there is a significant change in use or form. In some cases, where a building projects a significant distance from the street and is not all in retail use, the distinction is made based on changes in architecture. The quays in both Main Centres are excluded as these are covered by the Harbour Action Area. Every attempt has been made to avoid cutting across pieces of land where no physical barrier is present. Where this does occur, the

boundary stretches between two physical points. This is in order to enable identification of the boundary on the ground.

- 1.3.5 The findings of this exercise, which include a description of the extent of the Core Retail Areas and Regeneration Areas and justification for the boundaries identified, are set out in the following sections.

2 Town (St Peter Port)

2.1 Extent

- 2.1.1 The Core Retail Area of Town covers an area of 2.5Ha (15v). It focuses on shops and services adjacent to, and climbing the hill above, the inner harbour of St Peter Port. Nearby office development and the port to the east support the retail function of the Main Centre, surrounded by a wide swathe of predominantly residential development. From a focal-point at Le Grand Carrefour (at the junction of Smith Street, the High Street and Le Pollet), the Core Retail Area extends approximately 100m north to Forest Lane and 230m south west to Le Petit Carrefour.
- 2.1.2 Travelling southward from the northernmost point of the Core Retail Area, the designation takes in buildings on Le Pollet, the lower part of Smith Street and the High Street, the Commercial Arcade and Market Street, including the Markets Building itself. Buildings on the Quay are also within the Core Retail Area, from The Albion public house northward to include the Tourist Offices.
- 2.1.3 Regeneration Areas are identified as possible areas for retail expansion to north and south of the Core Retail Area, at Le Pollet and at South Esplanade and Mignot Plateau and to the south west at Mansell Street/Le Bordage, adjacent to the Old Quarter.
- 2.1.4 Le Pollet Regeneration Area covers 1.5Ha (9v). It includes the taxi rank at the bottom of Le Truchot and buildings on each side of the Lower Pollet, continuing south to incorporate La Plaiderie and Moore's Hotel and west along Le Truchot to Sir William Place. The junction of Le Pollet and Forest Lane, where the Core Retail Area commences, marks the southern extent of the designation.
- 2.1.5 The Regeneration Area at South Esplanade and Mignot Plateau covers 1.9Ha (12v) and extends from the southern edge of the Core Retail Area to include the Town Church, the Mignot Plateau and buildings around the Albany. The full length of the bus station is encompassed within the designation.
- 2.1.6 Mansell Street/Le Bordage Regeneration Areas covers 0.9Ha (5v). It extends westward from Ruelle Marie Gibot to the far side of Trinity Square, encompassing the block of development between Mansell Street to the north and Pedvin Street/Le Bordage to the south.

2.2 Justification

- 2.2.1 St Peter Port's greatest concentration of ground floor retail uses occurs within the identified Core Retail Area which supports a wide range of shops, including UK chain stores such as Next and Monsoon, alongside a number of local establishments. Between the High Street/Le Pollet and the Quay shop floors descend down the escarpment and, particularly along the High Street and also in the Commercial Arcade, retail uses often extend up to the first floor. In most cases the latter is as a backroom use. Other than in the larger floor-plate shops, retail use rarely extends beyond the first floor.
- 2.2.2 Other uses, such as restaurants, banks and hair salons, complement the retail function. These vary in location, sometimes occupying ground floor premises but often situated on upper floors. The presence of offices, predominantly around the edges of the Core Retail Area but also occupying space above shops, benefits the retail sector through lunchtime-spend of workers. Only a handful of retail premises stand vacant at any one time and most of these are under renovation.
- 2.2.3 Other than for deliveries, the majority of the Core Retail Area is pedestrianised, the principal exception being the Quay where three lanes of traffic separate the shopping precinct from the water.
- 2.2.4 Justification for the extent of the Core Retail Area designation is as follows:
- The States Tourist Office makes a striking impression in views of St Peter Port. It stands on the quay and is surrounded by civic spaces. It supports and is supported by adjacent retail uses and makes an important contribution to the tourist industry;
 - When approaching from the north the cobbles at the bottom of Forest Lane, along with a pinch-point between buildings, mark the entrance to the Core Retail Area. Northward of this point the retail offer tails off and La Plaiderie opens out, reducing the feel of enclosure further south;
 - The steep slope of Smith Street, alongside a break in the prevalence of retail uses and in buildings at the junction with Le Marchant Street denotes the edge of the Core Retail Area where the sense of enclosure also diminishes;
 - The Core Retail Area does not extend beyond the first building on Berthelot Street due to the lack of shops and the steep, narrow nature of the lane, which does not encourage use;
 - The Commercial Arcade is an established retail area and provides a valuable link between the High Street and Market Square. Terrain is flat and so the Arcade accommodates better than other areas of Town those with mobility impairments;
 - Market Square is an important civic space used for performances and for al fresco dining. It is supported by surrounding retail uses, which extend along Market Street and into the Markets Building and are, in turn, important for the vitality of the area;

- The Quay provides important links between the harbour and the High Street. Preservation and enhancement of active frontages in this location is essential for the character of Town and its contribution to the Island's tourist offer.

2.2.5 The Regeneration Areas exhibit a range of uses, much of which is retail, albeit more diluted than within the Core Retail Areas. In each area there is an impression of having left the main shopping precinct. Many of the buildings are of relatively modern construction and, at the time of writing, few are protected structures. An exception is the western part of the Mansell Street/Le Bordage Regeneration Area, where the majority of the buildings are protected and opportunities exist for enhancement of the use and special qualities of the locality. In each Regeneration Area there are areas of underused space and conflicts between traffic and pedestrians which could be overcome through redevelopment.

2.2.6 Justification for Le Pollet Regeneration Area designation is as follows:

- The taxi rank is an open space at the north end of Le Pollet. It is underused during the day and provides opportunities for improvement, whether as an approach to the facilities on the Lower Pollet, or to serve them. An example might be parking relocated from the Lower Pollet to allow that area to be pedestrianised;
- Le Truchot is currently given over to offices where there is a change in feel and direction of the streets. Several large office buildings stand in this area which could present opportunities for redevelopment;
- Due in part to its narrow width, the Lower Pollet currently is dominated by vehicles. Surfacing is poor, especially to the south, and pavements are narrow. There is an opportunity for improvement of the public realm and retail offer, for example provision of space for al fresco dining should vehicle access be limited;
- Offices enclose La Plaiderie and the area displays potential for an improved civic space and public realm, bearing in mind the presence of protected structures, supported by adjacent retail uses and Moore's Hotel.

2.2.1 The South Esplanade and Mignot Plateau Regeneration Area designation is justified as follows:

- Further than possible improvements to the environs of the Town Church, that building is included within the Regeneration Area solely due to its location beyond the southern extent of the adjacent Core Retail Area and the linking vehicle and pedestrian routes around it;
- The area around the Albany is included for the potential for improved links with the Core Retail Area and opportunities for improvements to architecture;

- The bus terminus and adjacent paving represents a large area of underused land, exacerbated should the station be relocated. There is potential for a better relationship with the harbour and enhanced links between indoor and outdoor activities;
- Mignot Plateau is included for the potential to redevelop the western side of Cornet Street and the car park surmounting the Plateau, taking into account the impact of development of such a sensitive elevated site on the historic environment;
- Buildings on South Esplanade are excluded for their architectural merit which it would not be desirable to alter. Enhancement of links between these and the quay/harbour and buildings to the north, including the Core Retail Area, are of greater importance.

2.2.2 Mansell Street/Le Bordage Regeneration Area designation is justified as follows:

- The eastern part of the Regeneration Area, between Ruelle Marie Gibot and Contree Croix Mansell, is predominantly large scale modern office and residential buildings which might represent a redevelopment opportunity;
- To the west of Contree Croix Mansell, the Regeneration Area is characterised by protected buildings, a large proportion of which are in need of renovation. This could enhance the buildings and, along with development opportunities presented by the area of car parking to the south, provide a mix of uses to greatly enhance this area of Town;
- Trinity Square has the potential to provide a high quality civic space, supported by a range of uses. Opportunities exist for enhancement of the public realm, including through introduction of measures to reduce the dominance of vehicular traffic.

2.2.3 The extent of the Town Core Retail Area and Regeneration Areas can be seen in Appendix A.

3 The Bridge (St Sampson's/Vale)

3.1 Extent

3.1.1 The Core Retail Area of the Bridge covers an area of 1.1Ha (7v). It focuses on shops and services on the Bridge frontage and around the junction with New Road and Nocq Road, fronting on to the inner part of St Sampson's Harbour. Residential development predominates to the southwest with offices and industrial premises, often associated with the port, to the east on both North Side and South Quay. These support the retail function of the Main Centre. From a focal-point at the eastern end of Commercial Road, the Core Retail Area extends approximately 135m north to La Hougue du Valle, 55m east to the far side of the archway adjoining Charlie's Family Butcher, 125m south to King's Church and 45m west to the Salvation Army buildings.

- 3.1.2 Travelling southward from the northernmost point of the Core Retail Area the designation takes in buildings fronting the Bridge along with several which front the west-leading side roads of Commercial Road and Bridge Avenue. The designation excludes the Co-Op building on Nocq Road, continuing south eastward to encompass retail outlets on each side of the northern end of New Road.
- 3.1.3 Leale's Yard is identified as a Regeneration Area to the west of the Core Retail Area. It covers an area of 5.1Ha (31v) and is bounded to south and west by Nocq Road and Lowlands Road. To the east it encompasses the Core Retail Area designation and to the north edges the southern boundary of buildings within Lowlands Industrial Estate.

3.2 Justification

- 3.2.1 The greatest concentration of ground floor retail uses at the Bridge occurs within the identified Core Retail Area. This supports a range of typically small, local shops which rarely extend beyond ground floor level. These are supported by service industries including a laundrette and a number of banks. Upper floors are frequently in backroom use, or accommodate offices or residential units. Such uses complement the retail function.
- 3.2.2 A degree of stagnation has resulted from failure to bring forward development of Leale's Yard and this has led to a number of charity shops operating from prime frontage units although the range of shops and services and the footfall generated remain good. Few retail premises stand vacant at any one time.
- 3.2.3 The Bridge provides one of the few routes between the northern and southern parts of Guernsey and as a result, exacerbated by the retail presence, the volume of vehicular traffic is high. A wide pavement fronts the shops with pedestrian crossings present however the public realm remains somewhat divorced from the harbour.
- 3.2.4 Justification for the extent of the Core Retail Area designation is as follows:
- The northern boundary of the Core Retail Area coincides with the main retail frontage of the Bridge. It is at this point that retail premises and services to the north east are severed from the main area by the extensive and busy junction at the south end of Vale Avenue;
 - In depth, the designation accounts for retail premises on Bridge Avenue and Commercial Road also reflecting the extent of retail buildings on the main Bridge frontage and the location of service entrances;
 - The Co-Op is excluded as potential exists for its replacement within the Leale's Yard Regeneration Area and the location of the Nocq Road building detracts from its contribution to the Core Retail Area. This is a destination store which people often visit without visiting other places on the Bridge and it therefore has a separate draw and impact;
 - The designation extends along New Road and South Quay to a point at which the pattern of development changes. In the former location there is a clear

feel of a gateway to/from the retail area. In the latter is a pinch point where buildings stand in closer proximity to the edge of the kerb and where the feel becomes more enclosed and shops are interspersed with housing.

3.2.5 Leale's Yard Regeneration Area is, for the most part, made up of disused former industrial land which sits to the rear of roadside development. To the east, this development is predominantly retail and service based. Residential development stands to south and west. Lowlands Estate occupies land to the north. Few industrial premises remain within Leale's Yard and these are contained at the eastern periphery. The site is currently a Mixed Use Redevelopment Area within the UAP, and is subject of a Local Planning Brief.

3.2.6 Justification for Leale's Yard Regeneration Area designation is as follows:

- Leale's Yard Regeneration Area encompasses redundant land and buildings, bounded to the north by Lowlands Estate and extending eastward to include the buildings fronting on to the Bridge. Regeneration may complement and support the retail offer of the Bridge. A link exists with the Bridge via Bridge Avenue;
- Buildings on the eastern side of the south part of Lowlands Road and the north side of Nocq Road are included within the Regeneration Area with a link existing via Commercial Road. There is some scope for improvements to buildings in these areas, and for provision of additional links, whether vehicular or pedestrian.

3.2.7 The extent of the Bridge Core Retail Area and Regeneration Area can be seen in Appendix A.

4 Conclusion

4.1.1 The SLUP requires identification through the Development Plan preparation process of a hierarchical structure of Main and Local Centres. This, along with the spatial planning framework, applies to retail uses to reinforce the role of the Main Centres as locations for shopping and by ensuring that development elsewhere does not dilute that role.

4.1.2 This report meets the direction set out by the SLUP, identifying the extent of the Core Retail Areas of Town and the Bridge so as to facilitate concentration of their effectiveness in sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Island's main shopping areas. Regeneration Areas are also defined, with the intention that these will play a role in sustaining the Core Retail Areas through providing opportunities for large floor plate retail units alongside a mix of supporting uses in accordance with the requirements of the SLUP.

4.1.3 The Core Retail Area of Town covers approximately two times the area encompassed within the Bridge Core Retail Area designation, reflecting the current role of each centre as primary and secondary retail provider. In both cases, the Core Retail Area most closely follows Option 1, as set out in 'Retail in the Main Centres, July 2013' and in 'A Retail Strategy for Guernsey, 2013' with the Core

Retail Area of Town also incorporating an element of the secondary retail areas set out in Option 2.

- 4.1.4 Regeneration Areas in Town are all predominantly flat, with the exception of the ascent westward from South Esplanade to the Mignot Plateau. Opportunities for development are similar and each may be tailored to meet the needs of Town at the particular time that a proposal is brought forward, in accordance with any approved Development Framework.
- 4.1.5 Leale's Yard is a large Regeneration Area, measuring approximately twice the area of the Town Core Retail Area. The land is flat and the site provides strong opportunities for development. Depending on the development which comes forward at this site, the effect on the viability of the Bridge versus that of Town must be effectively managed to ensure that Town remains the Island's principal retail centre.
- 4.1.6 Maps of each of the Core Retail Areas and Regeneration Areas are appended to this report (Appendix A).

5 Appendix

Core Retail Area – St Peter Port

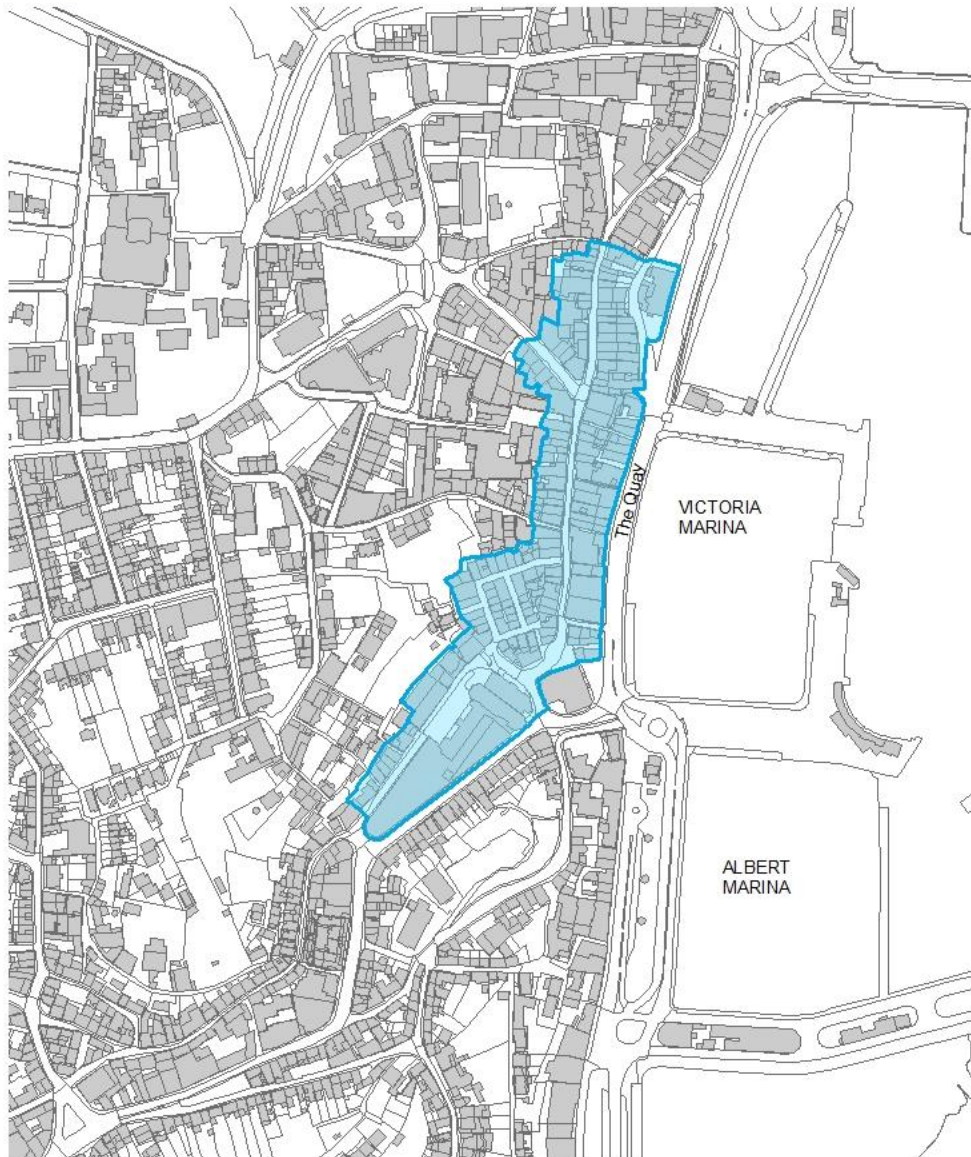
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 Retail Core Area

© States of Guernsey




Not to scale



Regeneration Areas – St Peter Port
(N-S: Le Pollet; South Esplanade & Mignot Plateau; and, Mansell Street/Le Bordage)

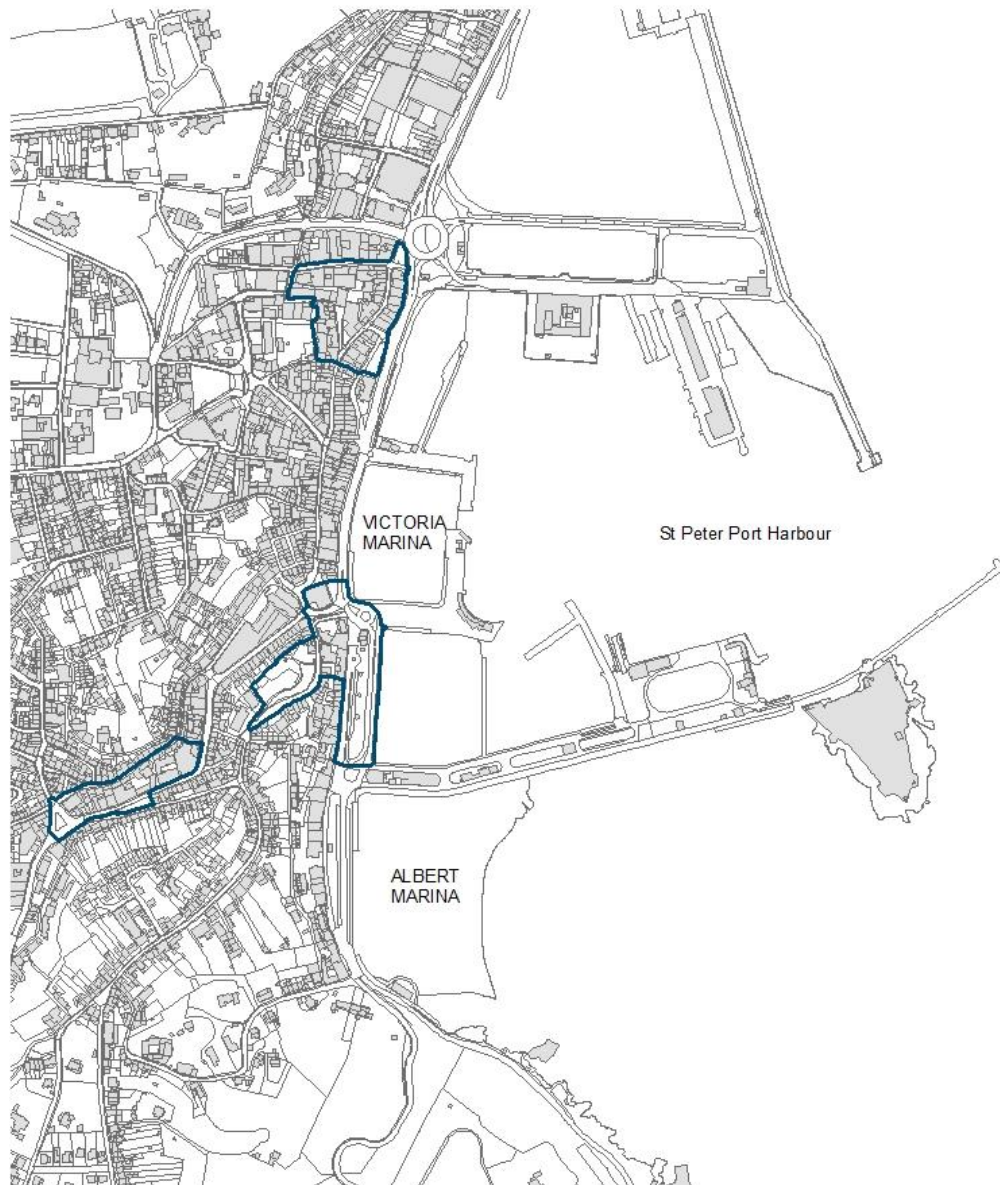
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 Regeneration Area

© States of Guernsey



Not to scale



Core Retail Area – The Bridge

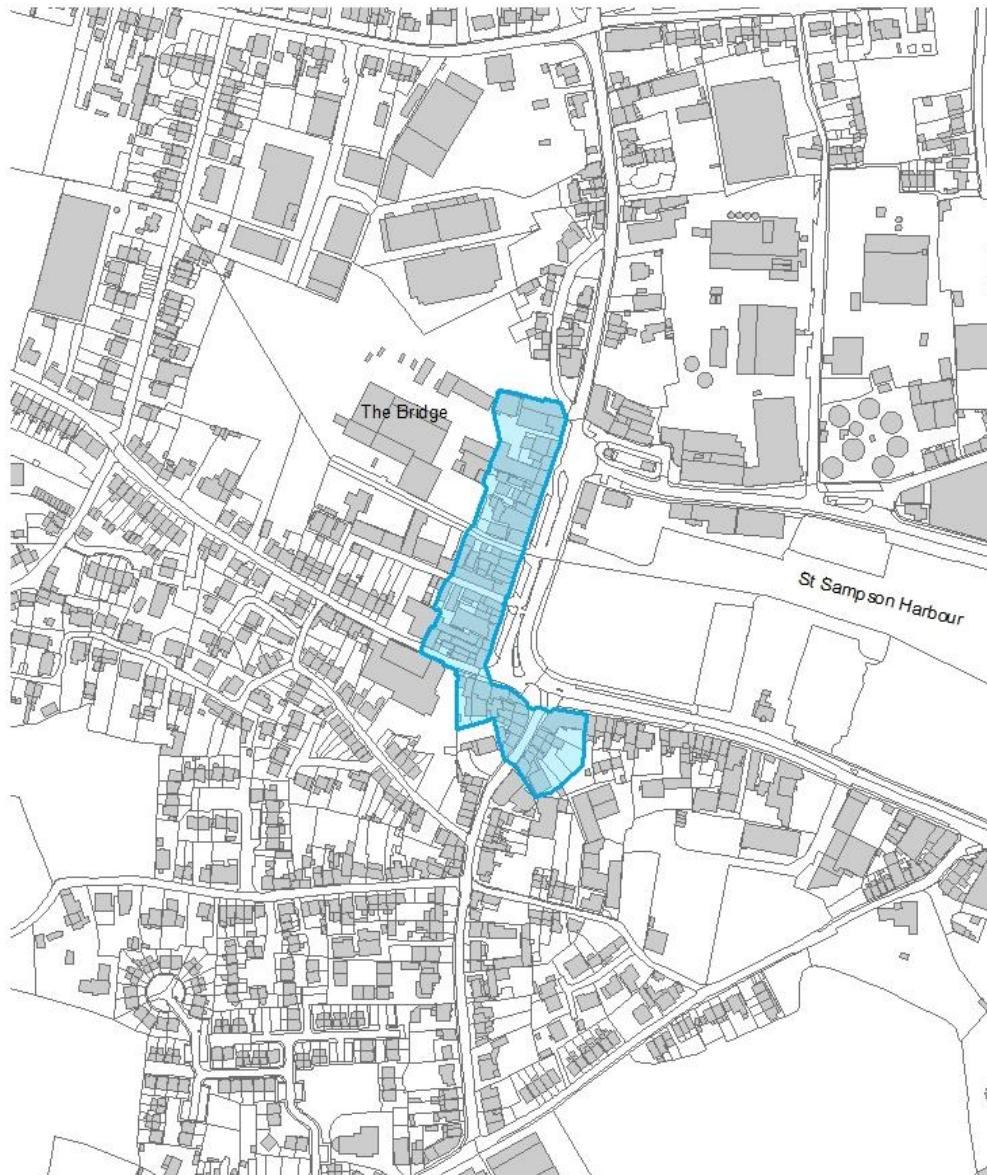
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 Retail Core Area

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Not to scale



Regeneration Area – The Bridge (Leale's Yard)

Legend

 Regeneration Area

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Not to scale

