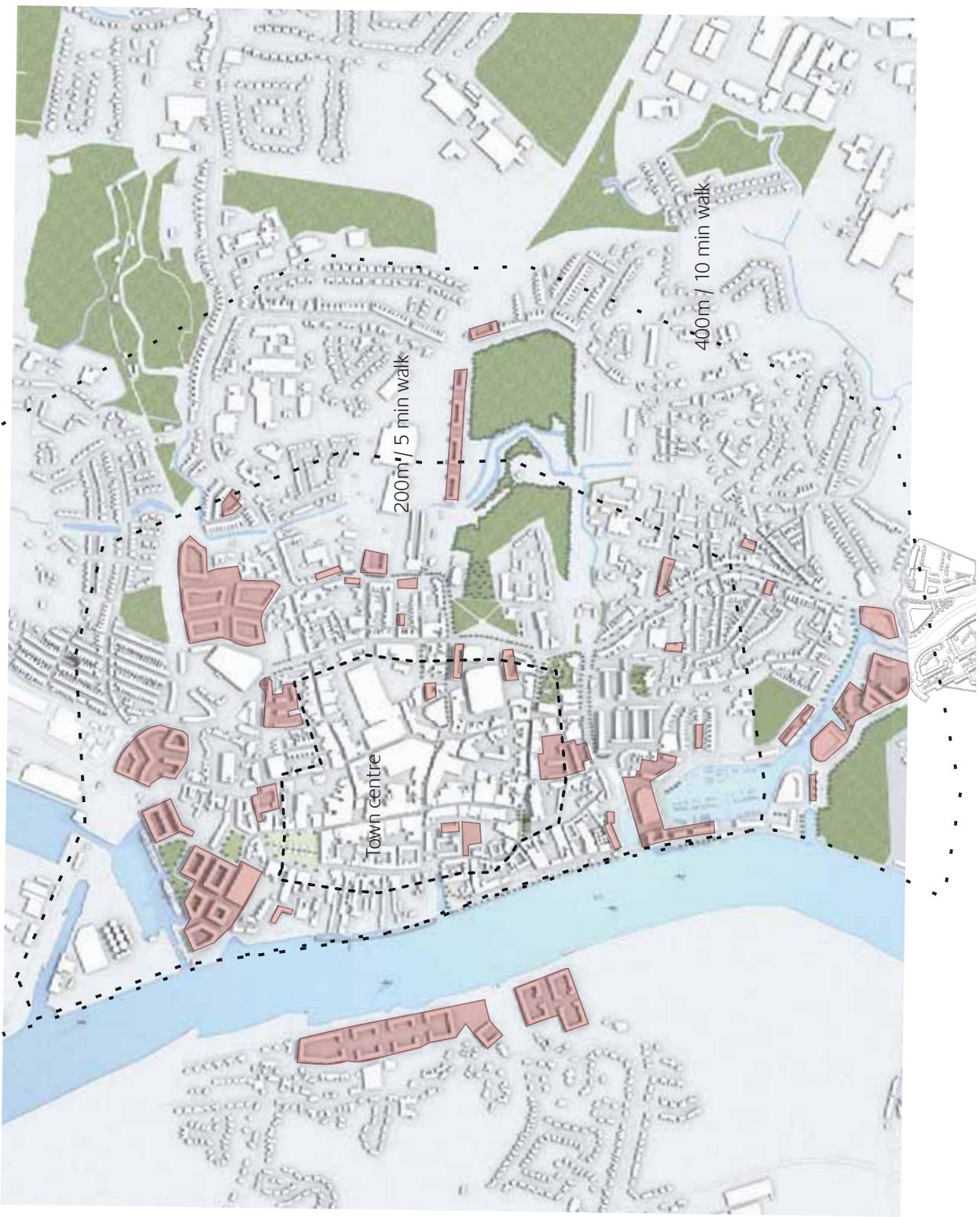


### Layer 3 - Residential development

KEY  
Suggested areas for residential development

- 200m and 400m distances



## Residential development

- The existing and future capacity of infrastructure;
- The ability to build sustainable communities with sufficient demand and supply of social and physical infrastructure;
- The physical and environmental constraints on the development of land.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough needs to accommodate 10,000 new homes over the next 16 years and it is envisaged that 4,500 of these will be in the town itself. Whilst this is a challenge in development terms, the challenge to the town in the wider sense is as great. To avoid following the pattern of growth over the last 40 years and succumbing to further sprawl, the town must be bold when deciding where residential development must go. As the historic centre of King's Lynn shows, relatively high density development can be attractive if well designed. Appropriate density but high quality development should be encouraged.

The following areas are considered suitable for substantial residential development:

- The Timber Yard;
- Baker Lane car park;
- Austin Fields;
- Boal Quay;
- West Lynn and
- the area along the River Ouse to the south of Boal Quay.

The first four of these are considered in more detail in the Outline Development Briefs, or Specific Development Areas.

Some further development in West Lynn is likely to be realistic and riverside development would be attractive. The Del Monte factory buildings currently dominate the West Lynn bank of the River Great Ouse. These buildings and adjacent brownfield sites represent an opportunity to create a new residential (and mixed use) quarter. Development could visually complement the historic core of King's Lynn on the eastern bank and be physically linked to the town by improved ferry connections.

Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG 3) advises that local planning authorities should follow a sequential approach to the identification of land for housing. This presumes that previously-developed sites or the re-use of buildings should be identified and developed before greenfield sites. PPG 3 sets out a range of criteria for determining the suitability of a site:

- The availability and suitability of previously-developed sites and empty or under-used buildings;
- The location and accessibility of a site in relation to employment and service functions by public transport now, and in the future;

In line with this requirement, the borough council has commissioned an urban capacity study to determine the potential for new residential development on previously-developed land in the borough's main settlements to 2021. The findings, and updates, of this study will help guide the borough's planning for residential development over this period. Only when previously-developed sources have been thoroughly examined and exhausted should sustainable locations for greenfield development (see criteria above) be considered.

The current estimates for residential capacity from the Urban Capacity Study are that of the 4000 homes required in the town, all (save fewer than 100) can be accommodated on brownfield land. The sustainability issues referred to in this section are elaborated upon in the accompanying Sustainability Report.

The following measures must be followed to create high quality development and ensure that the town is sustainable:

- A. Focus residential development in the town centre**, whilst having regard to issues of parking, access and design. New housing provides an opportunity to increase activity in the town centre which has two positive outcomes: increased population can lead to increased use of, and investment in town centre services and facilities and can lead to improvements in safety, especially at night. The living over the shop initiative aims to release disused spaces overlooking High Street locations which produces residential development for relatively little cost. A specific example of where this may be possible is the former Sorting Office in the town centre. This building may lend itself to being converted to flats at a relatively reasonable cost. The diagram overleaf shows the walking distances from the town centre. Concentrating development within a 10 minute walk of the town centre facilities reduces car dependence. This features as one of the key actions on page 19.

**B. Provide a mixture of uses where possible** and where the need arises for social facilities and employment uses. Areas that are 100% residential can be sterile and unsustainable. This applies particularly to development at the timber yard which has the potential not only to have sufficient critical mass to create its own high quality environment but also to provide a mixture of other uses. This features as one of the key actions on page 19;

**C. Develop flexible viability informed affordable housing policy** which is able to respond to site-specific factors. The type of affordable housing policy will affect the viability of development as affordable housing is generally a cost to the development. A rigid and flatly applied affordable housing requirement does not always respond to sites where there may be market or site constraints which might make development impossible, and therefore, affordable housing policy should have the flexibility to respond to viability assessments and have the potential to increase revenue from the development by either allowing reduced levels of affordable housing, or allow flexibility over tenure balance. Shared ownership properties for example generally create higher revenue to a development than properties for social rent;

**D. Diversify housing types** to widen King's Lynn's appeal to a variety of residents. Increasing the range of house types, for instance providing luxury flats and town houses as well as affordable flats and houses for first time buyers and families will aid the process of generating a new and more attractive image for King's Lynn as a place to live. King's Lynn wishes to attract new residents to the town and so small flatted developments should become more prevalent;

**E. Encourage use of space above shops/commercial units** to accommodate additional residential units. Floors above existing retail and commercial uses are often under utilised. Where appropriate, they offer the opportunity for conversion to flats and studio flats, increasing the residential population of, and activity in, the town centre;

**F. Provide funding** for small-scale regeneration and restructuring of existing peripheral housing areas to create better 'places', utilising opportunities for appropriate infill development and refurbishment. Area frameworks, for areas such as Fairstead, will aid this process by highlighting opportunities to upgrade movement networks, streetscape, public spaces and provide an indication of suitable redevelopment opportunities;

**G. Focus new development along the River Ouse waterfront** (King's Lynn and West Lynn), building on the character of this under used asset and encouraging activity in the historic core. Balanced mixed-use development that encourages tourism whilst retaining views and open character of waterfront should be promoted;



Water front housing such as this in Bristol can help to boost the town centre economy

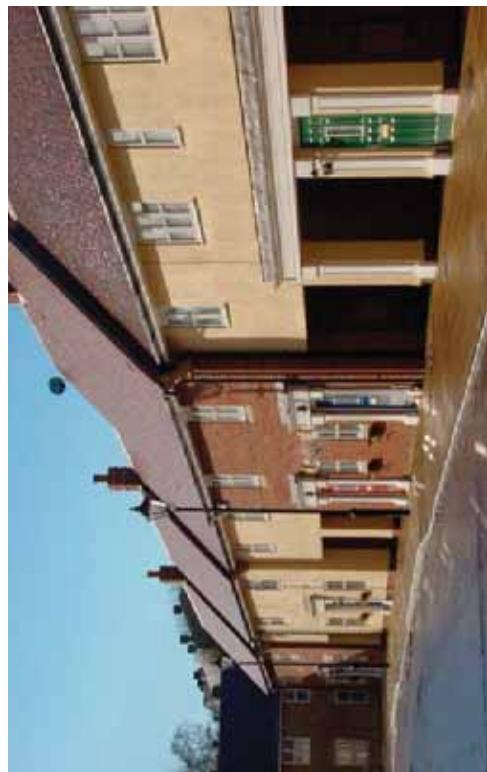


Housing can be contemporary and high density without being alienating

**H. Seek developer contributions from all residential developments** towards both towards site specific and immediate locality improvements, and wider Urban Development Strategy objectives (potentially to be administered through a central development fund – see implementation and delivery chapter). Residential development is

generally a high-value generating use, and therefore is most likely to offer additional development value which can be used to contribute to wider improvements. Site specific and immediate locality improvements can be delivered either through monetary contributions, or in kind, by requiring the developer to provide these through the construction of the scheme – the latter is likely to deliver improvements on the ground more quickly;

**I. Insist upon a high level of design quality and sustainability standards** for all new development. These standards should be an integral part of any new development, but can be reinforced by the planning process through the use of detailed development briefs key sites. Quality of design includes the provision of good contemporary architecture. There are some areas in the town that are suitable for more traditional styles but whilst there is always a place for modest housing that respects the surrounding vernacular, there are places such as Boal Quay and the Timber Yard that will happily accommodate contemporary styles. This will help to attract a wider range of buyers;



New housing can also be designed to fit in with historic surroundings

- Include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) incorporating swales and other methods to aid the removal and recycling of surface water as quickly as possible;
- Bolster the flood defences on the river bank, perhaps in conjunction with the construction of new riverfront homes;

**K. Market the town** selling a blend of the new development and leisure environments to try to link into the higher value commuter market potential, particularly from Cambridge. In addition to the marketing conducted by private residential developers, initiatives from the Council to underpin this (such as town centre regeneration initiatives) can assist in the marketing and re branding process;

**L. Improve the town's peripheral housing areas.** These areas such as Gaywood and Fairstead are low density often Radburn style developments that do not support local services and are too far away from the centre of the town to make walking an option. This creates a reliance on car use and breaks down communities. Wholescale redevelopment of these areas has been discounted on the basis that it would be too costly but what is possible is small levels of infill development in order to 'deradburnise' these areas. This may also be achieved through turning some houses around so that back doors become front and vice versa. In this way, densities could be increased which will go some way to improving the sustainability of these areas;

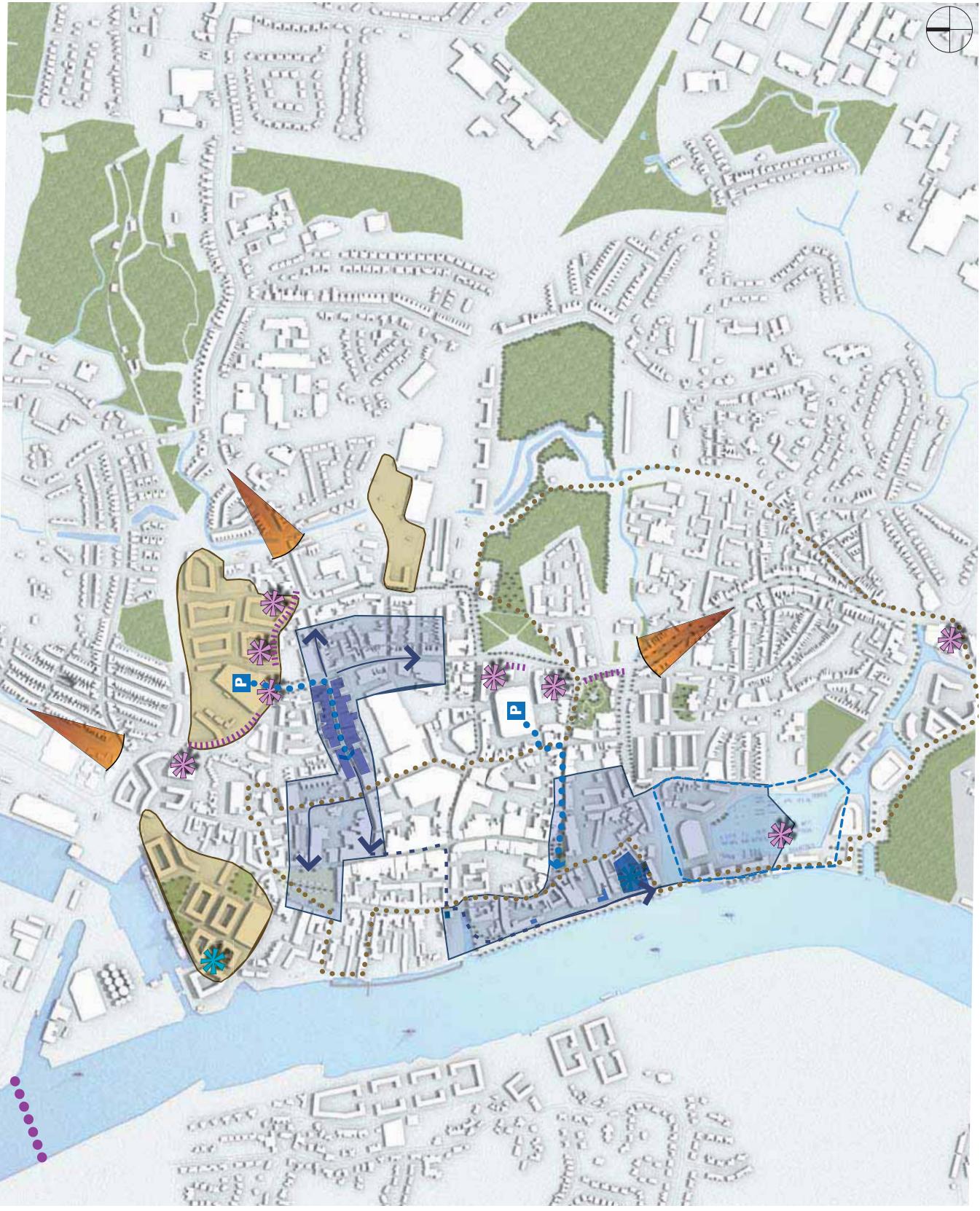
**M. Apply BREEAM, Eco-homes and Decent Homes Standards on all new-build and refurbished homes.**

For more information on the application of these standards, visit [www.breeam.org](http://www.breeam.org) and [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk).

**J. Design to ameliorate flood risk.** Whilst the entire town is category 3 tidal flood risk, measures can be pursued to mitigate the effects of flooding:

- Design some residences with non habitable rooms on the ground floor where suitable;
- Include as little impermeable surfacing as possible in housing developments;

## Layer 4 - Visitors and leisure



KEY

- Suggested River Great Ouse tidal gate or barrier
- Locations suitable for new hotels (indicated by the star)
- Clear and direct access to and from car parks
- Heritage trail linking historic buildings
- Create a strong frontage along main routes
- Locations where a landmark building could create a strong identity
- Areas incongruously dominated with industrial landuses
- Existing concentrated area of evening activity
- Areas to encourage evening economy and tourism
- Initial views into King's Lynn to be improved
- Encourage development of marina

related characters and will retain the employment in this sector. The specific market for the marina (whether yachts, barges or boats similar to those in Ely Marina or a mixture) will need to be investigated. The marina is intended to link with inland waterways so priority should be given to boats suitable in this environment. Other leisure activities should be encouraged in this area. This features as one of the Key Actions on page 19.



**Ely marina is within sight of the town centre and has a relaxed feel**



**Marinas such as Littleport have a 'working' character**

## Visitors and leisure

King's Lynn has a strong history based upon the river Great Ouse, sea trade and exploration. The river has been a busy place in the past although in recent years, apart from movements in and out of the port and the to-ing and fro-ing of the ferry, the river is a quiet place. This is due in part to a decline in trade conducted on the river and in part it is suspected, to the large tidal range periodically exposing large areas of mud on both banks. In many ways, the river, the very thing that gave King's Lynn its identity has been forgotten.

The pattern of development has gravitated away from the river, turning its back on the very reason for its existence. The waterfront has more potential than is realised and with an expected shift in the town's economic base to broaden its tourism and leisure offer, the waterfront is an ideal place to encourage development. Or put more strongly, it is an asset King's Lynn can not afford to ignore. The following measures are recommended to strengthen the town's attraction to visitors and improve waterfront use, and the leisure economy:

### A. Increase and crucially, diversify the leisure provision,

concentrating particularly in areas such as South Quay and spreading the provision from Norfolk Street to the areas around including Tuesday Market Place. This can be done by creating activity on the waterfront and Tuesday and Saturday Market Places and producing areas more conducive to open-air cafes, bars and restaurants. This can be done by regulating the speed of traffic through the square through design and by designating areas for trading. Elsewhere, aside from the grain silos site, only small pockets of new development seem to be possible so this may be best achieved through building conversions. The leisure provision can be diversified from bars and pubs to include restaurants, cafés, shops, museums, events, the arts - all open into the evening. Development should be designed to appeal to all ages and sectors of society.

### B. Create a marina at Boal Quay.

This should be a major attractor for the tourist industry. It has the chance to provide landmark buildings that locate Boal Quay in the minds of local residents and visitors alike and can open a river based/marine market not currently available in King's Lynn. There are huge opportunities for high quality residential development near the quay. The character of the existing working boat yard must however, not be diminished and the co-location of residential buildings and port must be considered carefully and managed sensitively to minimise conflict. The working facilities will retain the variety of area

### C. Increase leisure activity in areas other than the retail area

to create a more vibrant historic core in South Quay. The positioning of activities to the south will draw pedestrians through the town and through the historic core meaning that the area has more life throughout the day and evening. After thorough research, suitable activities may include:

- Pleasure trips to the Wash or to view wildlife
  - A marine centre, to complement the existing Interpretation Centre in conjunction with Green Quay and
  - A boat repair facility
  - A maritime museum
- in conjunction with True's Yard.

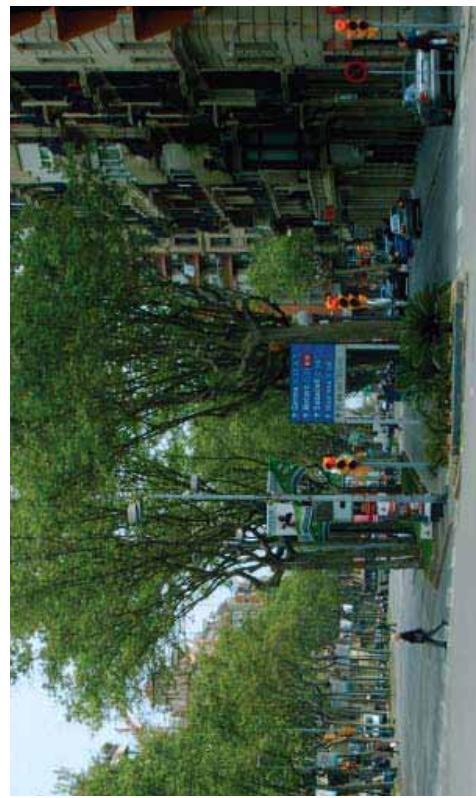
### D. Improve visitors' first impressions of the town

by improving entrance points. The following measures collectively feature as one of the key actions on page 21:

- Developing landmark buildings along major roads into and within the town such as London Road and Railway Road and Austin Street;
- Improving and clarifying the environment of the pedestrian route from the railway station by improved ‘way finding’ (see public realm);
- Encouraging the relocation of some low yielding land uses close to the town centre, such as parts of Austin Fields to Hardwick Industrial Estate. Not all of these landuses are incompatible and there is clearly a benefit to retaining a mixture close to the town centre but there are some industries that have a detrimental effect on the immediate environment and that could be located almost anywhere without affecting business; and
- Improve access to parking through good signage that allows the visitor to know immediately where they need to go once out of the car park nearest their destination.



The introduction of some social activity, during the day and evening will help to improve the feel of South Quay



The strong buildings along frontage give a clear sense of 'arrival'

### E. Improve the town's regional position in the tourism market.

A Marketing Strategy will bolster King's Lynn's position in line with, and to support the tourism in Hunstanton, Sandringham and other complementary tourist attractions. Potential visitors from other towns should have no problems in finding the town's tourism offer if efforts are made to improve signage outside and within the town.



**Higher water levels would improve the waterside conditions**

#### **F. Improve and increase the number of tourist attractions in the town**

and make the visitor's stay as easy and as pleasant as possible. It is also important for awareness of the town's historic core to be increased through an improved tourism strategy. This can be done by:

- increasing access to the town's historic buildings perhaps to the extent of creating museums to inform visitors and residents of the towns history. The town's existing heritage is its greatest untapped asset. Buildings such as the Hanseatic Warehouse, the Custom House, and Greyfriars Tower (when renovated) have the potential to attract many visitors;
- creating a heritage trail to enable visitors who wish to visit the town's attractions to see the tourism offer in a convenient way. The leading of the trail through the town centre will have an additional benefit in bolstering the retail provision. This features as one of the key actions on page 21;

providing more and better quality hotels in and around the town centre. The creation of a greater variety of accommodation is important. This could be done by allowing the construction of new budget hotels and the conversion of historic buildings for more traditional or boutique style hotel accommodation or guest houses. Again, waterfront locations would be successful and attractive to tourists and will assist in supporting the leisure economy in these areas; and

- ensuring where possible, areas of development contain a mix of uses to prohibit these areas from becoming exclusively night time or day time centres of activity. This will create a safer and more attractive environment.

#### **G. The construction of a tidal gate or barrier**

to the north of the town in the River Great Ouse should be investigated as a long term possibility. If it can be shown that the negative impacts upon ecology can be mitigated, and that it will have no detrimental impact upon the workings of the port, the raised water levels could provide a far more pleasant waterside environment and will make water sports and navigation of the river a much more viable activity. Much thought must be given to the benefits of this with regard to the considerable financial costs and engineering issues. Indeed the tidal nature of King's Lynn may indeed be worth retaining for the character it provides.