

## Scrutiny Task Group - Hidden deprivation in our town centre

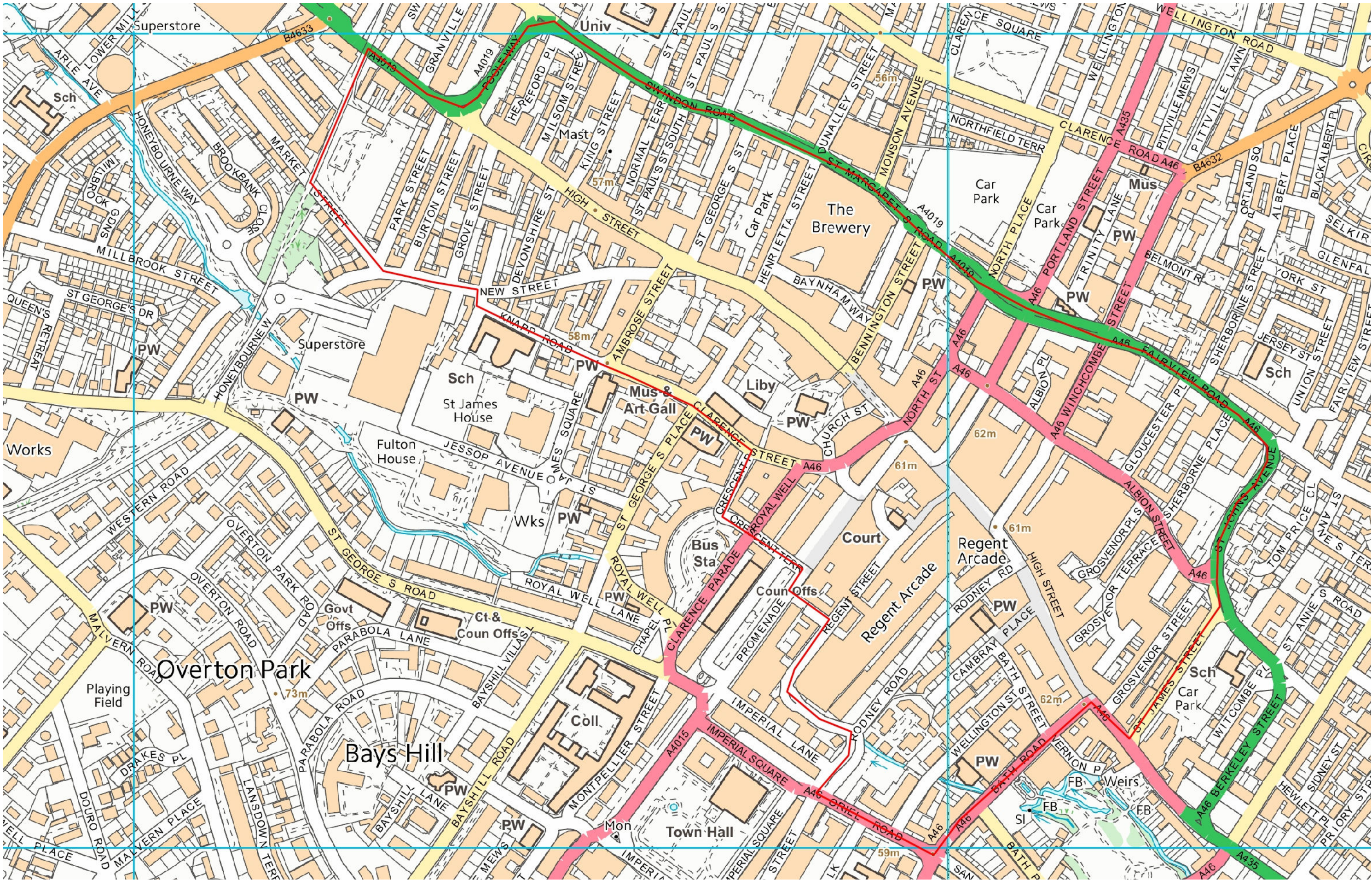
### Summary for O+S 3 March 2013

Issue	crime and disorder	housing	environmental quality	community integration
<b>What we did</b>	The STG reviewed crime data in the town centre Discussed crime and disorder with C/Insp Steve Gillett and Trevor Gladding and the Scrutiny Task Group (STG) attended the Town Centre NCG.	The STG reviewed housing data in the town centre and discussed the situation with CBC officers - Mark Nelson and Mike Redman.  The STG had a walk about around the town centre to identify housing related challenges.	The STG had a walk about around the town centre to identify environmental issues and any hot-spots.  The STG also met with officers from Ubico and Public Protection.	The STG reviewed census data on the different groups living in the town centre and attended a town centre NCG where integration issues were discussed.
<b>What we found out</b>	<p>In terms of crimes, shoplifting accounts for 25% of crime in the town centre, violence accounts for 13% of crime. Therefore key issues for the police are Shop lifting and the night time economy. But also aware of anti-social behaviour such as begging, street drinking, and cycling on pavements.</p> <p>The Town Centre Neighbourhood Coordination Group (NCG) is concerned about an apparent increase in visible drug dealing in the town centre and also issues like noise disturbances, domestic abuse and under-age drinking.</p>	<p>The service deals with 9,500 private rented properties, up 50% from 2006.</p> <p>Out of the 1,000 households in the town centre area; 64% of them are living in private rented accommodation. From the housing condition stock survey, the council knows that 38% of the private rented stock is non-decent; with 60% of this stock situated in the inner urban area.</p> <p>The main concerns for tenants are safety, security of tenure and the state of repair of their accommodation – generally being worse than in public sector rented accommodation. There is a perception that landlords can get away with poorer maintenance and management regimes as demand is higher than supply.</p> <p>In terms of statutory licensing, the council has to license any property if it's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rented to 5 or more people who form more than 1 household</li> <li>• At least 3 storeys high</li> </ul> <p>The council does not carry out additional licensing over the mandatory requirements; but consideration could be given to additional licensing. Other areas –such as LB Newham, have introduced compulsory licensing of all private rented sector property within their borough.</p> <p>The 50% increase in licensed premises outlined above has put significant pressures on the team to meet these statutory duties, the only discretionary work the team does is around taking action on vacant properties.</p>	<p>There are a number of areas in the town centre where the quality and maintenance of the environment could be improved. The STG found graffiti in alleyways, fly-tipping, uncared for empty properties and flats where tenants have to keep rubbish indoors as there's no where to store rubbish outside.</p> <p>From discussions with officers the STG found out that certain roads now received a twice-weekly collection of food waste, general waste and recycling on a Tuesday and Friday.</p>	<p>Out of the 2,000 residents living in the area, 73% are white British, 15% are other white (European) – with around 9% of these coming from the Accession Countries. 3% are Asian.</p> <p>The Town Centre NCG have identified that BME communities in the town centre are socially isolated and have set up a social integration group.</p>

<p><b>What can we do about it &amp; feedback for scrutiny</b></p>	<p>Ensure Town Centre NCG continues to act as a forum for local residents and businesses to address crime and disorder issues in partnership with the police and CBC.</p> <p>Keep an overview of the work of the reducing alcohol related violence project to ensure that it is effectively addressing levels of crime in the area associated with the night-time economy.</p> <p>Suggest using an element of the Late Night Levy to reduce the impact of night-time economy on local residents</p> <p>Suggest developing a more collaborative approach to tackling drug dealing through joining up enforcement and support agencies working on identified hot-spots</p>	<p>Explore the desirability of adopting a more pro-active approach to the licensing and enforcement of private rented accommodation.</p> <p>Discussion on how best the council could implement this will need to link in with the public protection and private sector housing commissioning review.</p> <p>Ensure that residents are aware of and can access housing advice provided by CCP at Cheltenham First Stop.</p>	<p>The group would like to see more pro-active enforcement regime to protect the environmental quality of the town centre – this would cover planning enforcement and street-scene.</p> <p>The group would like to continue the discussion with Ubico about the possibility of installing more communal waste and recycling collection points - it was noted that the one in Tescos had closed and that the one in North Place is likely to be shut whilst works take place in the New Year. The corner of Grove Street, St. Pauls Street South and Henrietta Street could be possible locations – though the group would like to see waste points distributed across the whole town centre area.</p> <p>The group to work with Ubico to provide information on waste and recycling services in different languages and distribute these to houses and shops in the area. It was noted that there are many people living in the area who might not have great English skills and who therefore might not understand the waste collection policy.</p> <p>The group to explore with Ubico how best to provide information to take-aways and shops in the area about trade waste collection arrangements.</p> <p>The group to work with officers from Public Protection to explore setting up an enforcement hot-spot to target enforcement activity on 1 or 2 streets and then also encourage a community litter pick-up, bike marking etc.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Town Centre NCG continues to act as a forum for integration and cohesion for residents living in the town centre – suggest a presentation to scrutiny after the community event on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2014.</p>
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**Other issues not yet addressed**

The STG has not yet had chance to consider education and health and whether there are particular issues facing town centre residents.



Superstore

Univ

Sch

Mast

The Brewery

Car Park

Mus

PW

PW

Superstore

Sch

St James House

Mus & Art Gall

Liby

Works

Fulton House

Wks

PW

PW

Court

Regent Arcade

Sch

Overton Park

Playing Field

Bays Hill

Coll

Mon

Town Hall

Regent Arcade

Sch

Car Park

Weirs